

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 688
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.02.2026

Decline in forest cover

688. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry is aware that as per the US-based Global Forest Watch, India's forest is at 440,000 sq km, roughly 15 per cent, therefore, forest cover is declining and not increasing in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of India's forest cover from 2014 to 2025, year-wise; and
- (d) the steps taken, if any, to improve India's forest cover?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out biennial assessment of forest and tree cover, carbon stock and publishes the findings in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The assessment is a wall-to-wall remote sensing exercise supported by intensive ground verification and National Forest Inventory data.

As per ISFRs, the forest and tree cover of the country has continuously increased between 2013 to 2023. The details are as under: -

ISFR Year	Total Forest & Tree Cover ((in square kilometer)
ISFR 2013	7,89,979
ISFR 2015	7,94,067
ISFR 2017	8,02,088
ISFR 2019	8,07,276
ISFR 2021	8,25,911
ISFR 2023	8,27,357

The criteria, parameters and definitions adopted by the US-based Global Forest Watch for assessment of forest cover are different and not tailored to reflect India's unique ecological and socio economic conditions. On the other hand, the assessment and methodology of FSI in ISFR is based on maximum possible precision and extensive ground truthing by field verticals.

(d) The Ministry provides technical and financial support to the States and Union Territories through various schemes and programmes of the Central Government for increasing forest and tree cover, including protection, conservation and sustainable management of forests in the country. These include, inter alia, the National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Nagar Van Yojana (NVY), Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI), Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, and forest fire prevention and management schemes.

In addition, States and Union Territories implement State-specific afforestation, reforestation and forest conservation schemes in accordance with their ecological, climatic and geographic conditions.

Further, a plantation campaign “एकपेड़माँकेनाम #Plant4Mother” has also been launched on the occasion of World Environment Day 2024 and in the current year also to undertake plantation activities across the country. This campaign follows the “Whole of Government” and “Whole of Society” approach with participation of all stakeholders for increasing the green cover in the country. The campaign has contributed to large scale plantation aiding the enhancement of green cover in the country.
