

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1029
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2025

Loss of Forest Cover in NE Region

1029. SHRI JOYANTA BASUMATARY:

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

- (a) the details of total present green forest area in the North Eastern Region (NER);
- (b) whether it is a fact that hundred of acres green forest/trees have been removed in the North Eastern Region due to infrastructure development and illegal forest cutting;
- (c) whether it is a fact that NER loses over 3,100 sq. km. of green cover in last ten years;
- (d) whether any study has been under taken on the impact of decadal change in forest cover or various ecological, environment and socio-economic aspect of the region, if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the change in forest cover also has substantial implications on carbon sequestration, soil fertility and watershed stability, if so, the details in this regard; and
- (f) the details of action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for replantation and check on illegal cutting of forests in the said Region?

ANSWER

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

(a)to(f) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry, carries out the assessment of forest and tree cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per ISFR 2023, the total forest and tree cover in the North Eastern Region is 1,74,394.70 square kilometre, which is 67% of the geographical area of North Eastern States.

There is an increasing trend of forest cover in the country since last decade. As per ISFR 2023, there is a net increase of the forest cover to the extent of 16,630.25 square kilometers between 2013 and 2023 assessment. However, there has been increase in forest cover in some of the states and decrease in some of the states of the country, details of which have been provided in the ISFR 2023.

The decadal change analysis of various forest parameters has been carried out in ISFR 2023. As per analysis of important characteristics of forests, there is a general improvement in soil health reflected by improvement in humus, which in turn, reflected in better grass cover and better undergrowth. There is an increase of 81.5 metric tonnes of carbon stock as compared to estimates of

ISFR 2021 which includes increase of 5.19 metric tonnes of carbon stock in North Eastern Region.

The protection and management of forest and tree resources is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. There are legal frameworks for the protection and management of forest and tree resources of the country which include, the Indian Forest Act 1927, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980, Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the State Forest Acts, Tree Preservation Acts and Rules, etc.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issues advisories to the State Governments/UT Administrations to protect forests and trees as per the provisions of the law. Further, in order to protect forests, various measures are taken by the State Forest Departments, which include survey and demarcation of forest areas, fixing of pillars along forest boundary and regular patrolling by field staff.

In addition, the Ministry provides technical and financial support to the States /UTs for protection, conservation and management of forests in the country. For afforestation, the Government is providing funds under various schemes and programmes such as National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Development of Wildlife Habitats (DWH), and Nagar Van Yojana (NVY). Afforestation is also carried out by the States/ UTs under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).
