

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 364  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2026

**Rapid Loss of Green Cover in Protected Areas of Assam**

364. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of a satellite imagery-based study revealing significant loss of forest and grassland cover within Panidihing Bird Sanctuary in Assam due to conversion of protected land into cropland and built-up areas;
- (b) if so, the extent of decline in forest cover, core forest and grassland within the sanctuary and the increase in cropland during the said period;
- (c) whether the Government has examined the findings regarding limited patrolling and inadequate protection enabling smallholder agriculture inside the sanctuary;
- (d) the steps taken or proposed to prevent encroachment, land-use change and habitat fragmentation in Panidihing Bird Sanctuary and other protected areas of Assam; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to strengthen satellite-based monitoring, enforcement mechanisms and periodic ecological audits of protected areas and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (d) As informed by the State of Assam, no area of Panidihing Bird Sanctuary is converted to crop land & build up areas and agriculture is not practiced inside the Sanctuary. The important steps taken for protection of Protected Areas in Assam, including Panidihing Sanctuary are:

- (i) Regular patrolling by frontline forest staff, including GPS enabled patrolling, joint patrols with district administration and strengthening of anti-encroachment drives.
- (ii) Surveillance measures such as installation of trap cameras, drone surveys, GPS monitoring, wireless communication, intelligence gathering for monitoring and detection of illegal activities.
- (iii) Physical demarcation of boundaries, through boundary pillars, signages to prevent encroachment.
- (iv) Habitat management activities like removal of invasive species, restoration of wetlands and grasslands.
- (v) Constitution of Eco-Development Committees (EDC's) in fringe villages and carrying out awareness programmes.
- (vi) Constitution of Rapid response teams, strengthening of enforcement against forest offences including encroachment.
- (vii) Coordination with Departments such as Revenue, Police, local administration to prevent land conversions and ensuring timely action against violations

(e) The State of Assam has informed that detection of encroachments and assessment of land use changes are done frequently and protection measures through regular patrolling, surveillance, anti-

encroachment drives and coordination with Eco Development Committees are also undertaken. Further, periodic ecological assessments and habitat monitoring are conducted and necessary corrective measures are undertaken based on the findings for long term conservation.