

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,
EASTERN ZONE BENCH, KOLKATA

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 133/2025/EZ
(Earlier O.A. No. 313/2025/PB)

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTO based on the News item titled "Largest green zone in south Bengal Jungle Mahal's forest cover shrinks by more than half: Study" appearing in the Telegraph Online date 05.06.2025

Reply on behalf of Respondent No. 2
(Director General, Forest Survey of India)

I Nagaraja S.V. S/o Late Sh. Vasantha Shetty, aged about 45 years, presently working as Assistant Director in Forest Survey of India, Headquarters, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dehradun do hereby solemnly affirm on oath and state as follows:

1. That I, Nagaraja S.V. holding the post of Assistant Director, in Forest Survey of India Headquarters, Dehradun and I have made myself acquainted with the facts and circumstances of this case and I have been duly authorized and empowered to make and swear this Affidavit and submit the report for and on behalf of Respondent No. 2 (Director General, Forest Survey of India) and I am competent to do so.
2. I, the deponent named above do hereby verify and say that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge and are based on official records and nothing material is concealed therein.
3. It is respectfully requested that in view of the foregoing submission this Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to accept the report or pass further Orders as it may deem fit in the interest of justice and proper in the given circumstances of this case.

Date: 17.09.2025

Place: Dehradun

Deponent

Identified by:



(MUNDHE ARVIND DATTU)

Head of the Office
Forest Survey of India
Dehradun


नागराज एस.वी./Nagaraja S.V.
सहायक निदेशक / Assistant Director
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण / Forest Survey of India
कौलागढ़ रोड, देहरादून / Kaulagarh Road, Dehradun

Response of the Forest Survey of India in OA 133/2025/EZ

The matter concerns loss of forests between 1992 and 2022 in Jungle Mahal Districts of West Bengal. The study quoted also points out that in certain areas sal has been replaced by other species.

District-wise forest cover data from the India State of Forest Report 2023 is as under:

District	Calculated Area by Sol	2023 Assessment				% of Calculated Area by Sol	Change w.r.t. 2021 Raster based*	Scrub
		Very Dense Forest	Mod. Dense Forest	Open Forest	Total			
Alipurduar	2,801	438.92	319.19	791.26	1,549.37	55.31	12.42	20.55
Bankura	6,882	232.33	420.02	656.43	1,308.78	19.02	41.18	24.22
Birbhum	4,545	0.54	39.29	146.71	186.54	4.10	2.34	7.17
Cooch Behar	3,387	0.00	26.88	335.96	362.84	10.71	-1.39	0.00
Dakshin Dinajpur	2,219	0.00	5.17	76.77	81.94	3.69	-0.06	0.00
Darjeeling ^H	2,054	397.04	338.90	666.63	1,402.57	68.28	-2.82	6.82
Hoogly	3,149	0.00	13.36	142.17	155.53	4.94	-1.54	0.00
Howrah	1,467	0.00	48.04	243.57	291.61	19.88	-14.36	0.00
Jalpaiguri	3,426	297.45	113.15	868.18	1,278.78	37.33	1.35	23.43
Jhargram	3,097	126.71	310.63	445.40	882.74	28.50	12.83	13.70
Kalimpong ^H	1,095	324.66	343.09	265.82	933.57	85.26	0.37	0.90
Kolkata	185	0.00	0.05	1.79	1.84	0.99	0.55	0.00
Malda	3,733	0.00	214.56	294.40	508.96	13.63	20.87	0.00
Murshidabad	5,324	0.00	52.21	287.80	340.01	6.39	-2.86	0.17
Nadia	3,927	1.04	154.95	309.55	465.54	11.85	0.26	0.00
North 24 Parganas	4,094	13.44	179.01	509.58	702.03	17.15	-5.95	0.00
Paschim Bardhaman	1,812	47.77	45.79	97.62	191.18	10.55	0.12	4.07
Paschim Medinipur	6,271	135.16	319.44	857.37	1,311.97	20.92	29.61	10.13
Purba Bardhaman	5,212	11.93	51.75	85.53	149.21	2.86	1.51	1.30
Purba Medinipur	4,713	1.68	110.22	678.12	790.02	16.76	-16.30	2.25
Purulia	6,259	40.23	311.59	582.70	934.52	14.93	3.94	23.21
South 24 Parganas	9,960	968.20	754.47	1,047.39	2,770.06	27.81	-28.21	0.00
Uttar Dinajpur	3,140	0.00	3.62	229.10	232.72	7.41	-3.64	0.00
Grand Total	88,752	3,037.10	4,175.38	9,619.85	16,832.33	18.97	50.22	137.92

**Area figure calculated without normalization factor.*

District-wise forest cover data from the India State of Forest Report 1993 is as under:

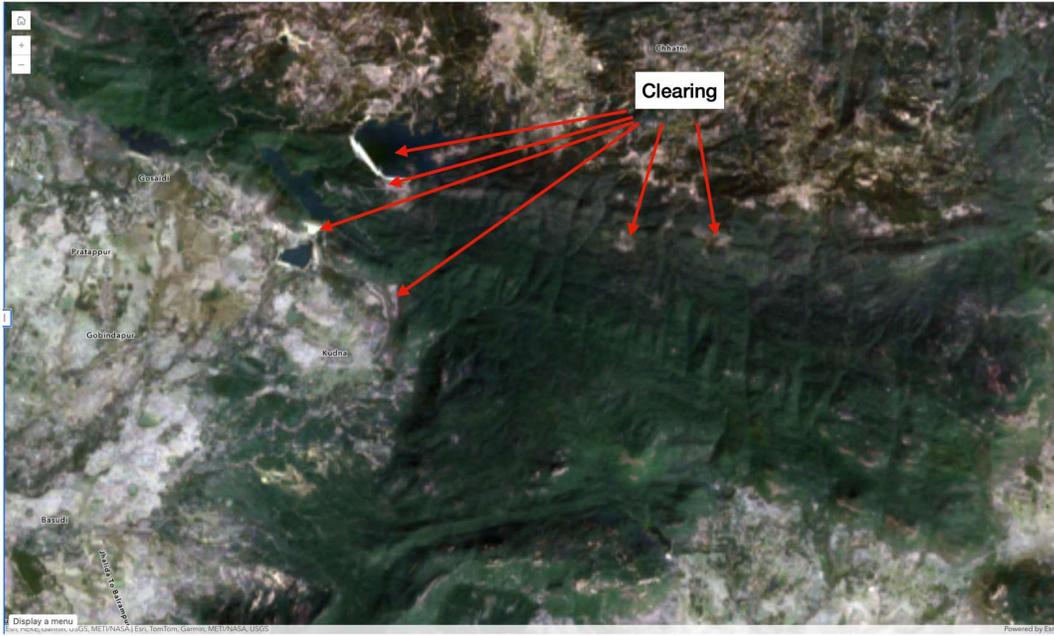
TABLE 2.3
DISTRICT-WISE FOREST COVER ASSESSMENT FIGURES-1993.

(Area in sq. km.)

S. No.	Districts	Geographical area	Forest Cover-1993 assessment			Total	% of forest cover to geographical area
			Dense	Open	Mangrove		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
West Bengal							
1.	Bankura	6882	160	660	-	820	11.92
2.	Birbhum	4545	}	}	}	3,726	5.93
3.	Bardhaman	7024					
4.	Calcutta	104					
5.	Hoogli	3149					
6.	Howrah	1467					
7.	Maldah	3733					
8.	Medinipur	14081					
9.	Murshidabad	5324					
10.	Nadia	3927	}	}	}	31	0.92
11.	24 Parganas	14136					
12.	West Dinajpur	5358	7	24	-	31	0.92
13.	Cooch Behar	3387	1,093	362	-	1,455	46.21
14.	Darjiling	3149	1,396	175	-	1,571	25.23
15.	Jalpaiguri	6227	183	400	-	583	9.31
16.	Puruliya	6259					
Total :		88752	3,362	2,705	2,119	8,186	9.22

It is important to note that the methodologies and district boundaries were different at the time of publication of the two reports. Since National Forest Inventory began in the year 2002, we do not have data to comment on change of species composition between 1992 and 2022.

Jungle Mahal Changes Left Panel: 1991-1993 Right Panel: 2021-2023



a. Clearings observed in 2021 – 2023 satellite composite image.

Jungle Mahal Changes Left Panel: 1991-1993 Right Panel: 2021-2023



b. 1991 – 1993 satellite composite image for comparison.

Figure 1. Clearings observed in Ajodhya Hill and Forest Reserve Area, Purulia District.