

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI  
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 555 OF 2024**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

News item titled “**India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000 Global Forest Watch**” appearing in The Indian Express dated 13.04.2024

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**Filed on 12.09.2025**

**Filed by,**



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**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI  
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 555 OF 2024**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

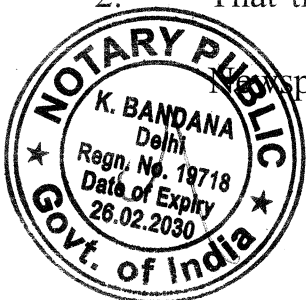
News item titled “**India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000 Global Forest Watch**” appearing in The Indian Express dated  
13.04.2024

**AFFIDAVIT IN COMPLIANCE OF  
ORDER DT. 29.01.2025 R/W ORDER DT. 09.05.2025  
BY THE RESPONDENT - STATE OF ASSAM**

I, Ranadip Dam, Joint Secretary, General Administration Department, Government of Assam and Officer on Special Duty in Office of Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhawan, 1, Sardar Patel Marg, New Delhi – 110 001, do hereby solemnly state and affirm as under:--

1. That in my official capacity as Joint Secretary, General Administration Department, Government of Assam and Officer on Special Duty in Office of Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhawan, New Delhi and in course of discharge of my official duties, I have become conversant with the facts of the instant case and being duly authorized on this behalf by Respondent-State of Assam, I am fully competent to swear the present compliance affidavit.

2. That the present *suo moto* proceedings have been initiated on the basis of a newspaper Report titled “India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since



2000 Global Forest Watch” appearing in The Indian Express dated 13.04.2024, wherein it is reported, *inter alia*, that the Country lost 4,14,000 hectares of humid primary forest (4.1 percent) from 2002 to 2023, making up 18 percent of its total tree cover loss in the same period.

3. That, vide Orders dt. 29.01.2025, 09.05.2025 and 07.08.2025, this Hon’ble Tribunal directed all the Respondents file a response / report containing complete information regarding Forest Cover, Tree Cover etc. for the period from 2001 to 2021.

4. That in compliance of the aforesaid directions, the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Government of Assam, vide correspondence No. 622026/I/1182110/2025 dt. 29.07.2025, furnished information / reply in the present *suo-moto* proceedings and the same is being filed herewith to bring it on record.

True copy of correspondence No. 622026/I/1182110/2025 dt. 29.07.2025 submitted by the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Government of Assam is annexed herewith as ANNEXURE - I (Page 4 - 6).

5. The answering Respondent – State of Assam craves leave of this Hon’ble Court to file further detailed affidavit, if required, in the facts and circumstances of the present case.



*Assam*

**DEPONENT**

Joint Secretary to the Government of Assam  
General Administration Department &  
Officer on Special Duty  
Assam Bhawan, New Delhi

**VERIFICATION:**

I, the above-named deponent, do hereby verify that the contents of the aforesaid affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. No part thereof is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

Verified at New Delhi on this the \_\_\_\_\_ of September, 2025.

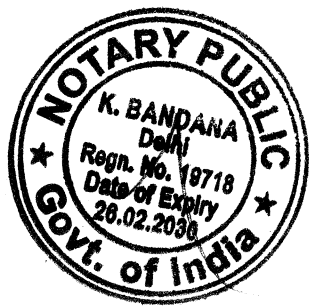
*Shuvodee P Roy*  
**IDENTIFIED**

12 SEP 2025

*Assam*

**DEPONENT**

Joint Secretary to the Government of Assam  
General Administration Department &  
Officer on Special Duty  
Assam Bhawan, New Delhi



ATTESTED  
NOTARY PUBLIC DELHI  
Govt. of India

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT  
DISPUR, GUWAHATI-6**

No. 622026/I/1182110/2025

Dated Dispur, 29-07-2025

To: 1. The Consultant (Judicial)  
National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi.  
  
2. The Standing Counsel,  
National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi.

Sub: Furnishing of Materials in connection with OA No. 555/2024 and OA No. 20/2025.

Ref : Letter No. FG.27/FG.35/General/FSI/2021 dtd. 24/4/2025 received from the DCF (FC Act), o/o PCCF & HoFF, Assam

Sir,

With reference to the subject cited, I am directed to submit herewith the information in connection with the matter OA No. 555/2024 and OA No. 20/2025 along with necessary annexures for onward necessary action.

Encl: As stated above.

Yours faithfully

Digitally signed by  
SACHINDRA DAS  
Date: 29-07-2025  
23:59:15

Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam  
Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Assam

Memo No. 622026/I/1182110/2025-A

Dated Dispur, 29-07-2025

Copy for information to:

P.S. to the Special Chief Secretary (Forests) to the Govt. of Assam, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Dispur, Ghy-6.

(e-signed)

Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam  
Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Assam

5

E-Mail

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS &  
HEAD OF FOREST FORCE, ASSAM  
ARANYA BHAWAN, PANJABARI, GUWAHATI-37.

E-mail: [hoff.assam@gov.in](mailto:hoff.assam@gov.in)

Date: 24/04/2025

FG.27/FG.35/General/FSI/2021

To,

The Special Chief Secretary (Forest), Govt. of Assam  
Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department  
Dispur, Guwahati-06.

Sub: - Original Application No. 20/2025 suo moto case in the matter of News Item titled "Assam's Forests shrink by 83.92 sq km in just two years Report" appearing in the Assamtribune.com dated 22.12.2024 before NGT (PB) New Delhi.

Ref: - Govt. of India Letter No. 22-514/2025-FGD-11 dated 04.04.2025.

Sir,

With reference to the subject cited above, I am directed to submit herewith the information regarding the suo moto case in the matter of News Item titled Assam's Forests shrink by 83.92 sq km in just two years appearing in the Assamtribune.com dated 22.12.2024 before NGT (PB) New Delhi, which is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

This is for favour of your kind communication and onward submission to MoEF&CC, Govt. of India as deemed fit and prayer.

Encl: As stated above.

Yours faithfully,

Deputy Conservator of Forests (FC Act)  
O/o the PCCF & HoFF, Assam  
Aranya Bhawan, Guwahati-37

Office Of The Special  
Chief Secretary  
To The Govt. Of Assam  
Environment & Forest Deptt.  
Reg / My. No. 1059  
Dated..... 29/4/25  
Dispur, Ghy-6

April 24 - 7:14 PM

**Annexure-I**

As per the Indian State of Forest Report 2023 Vol page XV (executive Summary), the Forest cover of State of Assam inside the RFA/GW has shown a decrease of 86.66 sq. km. However, attention is drawn to Forest Survey of India's Indian State of Forest Report 2023 Vol I chapter 9 page 256 which provides the decadal change in forest cover in States/Union Territories. It is seen that Assam has gained 748.65 sq km forest cover with an increase of 2.72% with respect to the 2013 Indian State of Forest Report. However, if we delve down in district-wise report of Vol II page 27, it is seen that maximum forest cover change happened in Dima-Hasao (93.27 Sq Km) followed by Cachar (16.77 Sq km), Hailakandi (16.66 Sq Km) and Chirang (14.38 Sq km). District wise analysis of the figure of forest loss is given below:

- i. The Forest cover of Dima Hasao District is 82.68 % of the total geographical area of the District as per latest assessment of Forest Survey of India published in State of Forest Report 2023. Though large area of the district is covered with vegetation, only a small fraction of it has been constituted as Reserve Forests & PRF (704.408 sq.km. i.e. 17.46 % of the total Forest area). Rest of the forest cover is in Unclassed State Forest (USF) areas with abundance of bamboo which are felled by tribal people and burnt as a traditional practice of Jhum Cultivation. The forest department has no administrative control over the USF areas. Also, 9555.497 Ha forest land has been diverted for developmental works under FC Act, 1980 during 2020-21 to 2024-25.
- ii. With regard to the Cachar and Hailakandi, it is to be noted that these districts are under severe encroachment from across the inter-state border with Mizoram and most of the area are slowly becoming out of the reach of the Assam Forest Department.
- iii. In Chirang, encroachment by local indigenous communities in forest area are there and the State Government is in the process of eviction in some of these areas which will come under Forest cover in subsequent years.

Further, the State Government has cleared more than 10,000 Ha of forest area from encroachment, but most of these areas are still barren and apparently not reported in Forest Survey of India's Indian State of Forest Report 2013. Therefore, the actual forest loss is very minimal or non-existent.