

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH AT NEW DELHI  
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION  
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 date 13.04.2024.

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**Filed by:**

Filed on: 31.05.2025  
New Delhi



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**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
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**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 date 13.04.2024.

**REPLY ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO.20  
STATE OF MEGHALAYA**

I, R. Nainamalai, IFS, the Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Forest and Environment Department, having office at Secretariat, Secretariat Hills, Shillong, Meghalaya – 793 001, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. That I am presently posted as the Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Forest and Environment Department and as such in my official capacity I am conversant with the facts and records of the case and competent and authorised to swear this affidavit on behalf of the Respondent No.20- State of Meghalaya.
2. That the present affidavit is being filed to place on record the status of encroachment on forest and tree cover in the State of Meghalaya

SL / Instrument No 37  
Date 26-05-2025



as per the directions issued by this Hon'ble Tribunal. The summarized information, up till March 2025 is as follows:

State	Total Forest Cover (Sq. Km.)	Area under encroachment (in Sq. Km)	Percentage loss of forest due to encroachment
Meghalaya	17046.07	98.23979	0.44%

That in respect of the above forest encroachment, offence reports have been drawn against the encroachers and the matter is pending in the respective courts. A detailed chart showing break-up of above data and type of forest encroached, district-wise is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE R-20/1**.

3. That it is most respectfully submitted that the State of Meghalaya has taken certain steps to reduce encroachment of forest in the State which are detailed as follows:

a. Government owned recorded forest areas have been digitised and have been communicated to the Forest Survey of India Dehradun. The boundaries of registered private forests and community forests, sacred groves, biodiversity heritage sites etc. have also been digitised. The process of identification and demarcation of the remaining forests under the control of private owners and community is already in progress. North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC) was entrusted with



the project to dealineate such areas through remote sensing and GIS technique which has been completed, and now the field verification and ground truthing is underway.

- b. Advanced technological interventions which are resource intensive are also being harnessed to manage and combat encroachment in forests. The development of a highly advanced digital application titled "Integrated Forest Management Command And Control System" is at an advanced stage of installation and implementation in the state of Meghalaya which will ensure detection and removal of encroachment in real time.
- c. Cognizance of encroachment of forest land, whenever detected, is taken immediately and offence reports (complaint cases) under section 119(a) of CrPC, 1973 (now BNSS) are being filed before competent court of law. Further, serving eviction notices and conducting eviction drives are done periodically on a priority basis under the provisions of Meghalaya Forest (Ejectment Of Unauthorised Person From Reserved Forest) Rules, 1979 and Meghalaya Forest Regulation, 1973. It may be mentioned that most of the encroachments had occurred prior to 1980 and several Offence reports (complaint cases) filed in respect of these cases are still pending in competent courts. Further, the State is also ascertaining pre-1980 encroachment



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where are fit for regularization by identifying 'eligible' and 'ineligible' cases as the case may be keeping in view the guidelines of MOEF issued vide letter No.13.1/190-F.P.(1) dated 18.09.1990.

4. That the aforesaid information submitted on behalf of Respondent No.20- State of Meghalaya may kindly be taken on record and the captioned case may kindly be disposed of with appropriate directions.

It is prayed accordingly.

  
Secretary  
DEPONENT  
to the Govt. of Meghalaya  
Forest & Environment Department

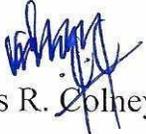
**VERIFICATION:**

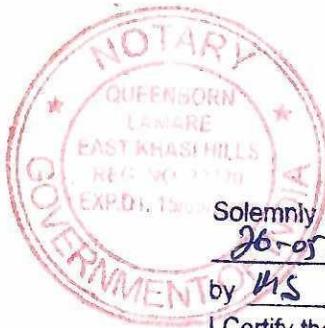
Verified at Shillong on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of May 2025 that the content of the above affidavit is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief derived from official records of the Respondent No.20- State of Meghalaya and that nothing is false and nothing material is concealed therefrom.

  
DEPONENT

Secretary  
to the Govt. of Meghalaya  
Forest & Environment Department

**Identified by:**

  
(Miss R. Colney)  
Advocate, Shillong



Solemnly Affirmed before me this Day on  
26-05-2025 The deponent is identified  
by MS R. Colney Advocate

I Certify that the contents of the Affidavit are  
read over and Explained to the Deponent   
who verified the same before me. **Queenborn Lamare**  
**NOTARY**  
East Khasi Hills District

## ANNEXURE R-20/1

Details of Encroachment of Forest in Meghalaya

Sl. No.	Name of District	Total Forest Cover (in Sq. km)	Details of encroachment					Total encroachment upto March, 2024 (in Ha.) (District wise)	Action taken for removal of encroachment year wise (District wise)	Percentage (%) loss of forest as on March, 2024 (District wise)
			Protected Forest (in Ha.)	Reserve Forest (in Ha.)	Deemed Forest (in Ha.)	Sanctuaries and Protected Areas (in Ha.)	Any other typer of Forest (in Ha.)			
	East Khasi Hills	1716.21	0.23	-	-	-	-	0.23	Offence Reports have been drawn against the encroachers and the matter is pending in the respective Courts.	0.000083%
	Ri-Bhoi	2138.31	-	2.01	-	-	-	2.01		0.00082%
	East Jaintia Hills	2531.00	-	8281.91	-	-	-	8281.91		2.17%
	West Jaintia Hills		-		-	-				
	West Garo Hills	2832.45	-	100.508	-	-	-	100.508		0.03%
	South-West Garo Hills		-		-	-				
	East Garo Hills	2255.92	-	1415.1	-	-	-	1415.1		0.54%
	North Garo Hills		-		-	-				
	West Khasi Hills	3880.26	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	South-West Khasi Hills		-	-	-	-				
	South Garo Hills	1691.92	-	24.221	-	-	-	24.221		0.012%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17046.07</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>9823.749</b>	-	-	-	<b>9823.979</b>	<b>0.44%</b>	

**Details of Encroachment of Forest in Meghalaya**

Sl. No.	Name of State	Total Forest Cover (in Sq. km)	Details of encroachment					Total encroachment upto March, 2024 (in Ha.) (District wise)	Action taken for removal of encroachment year wise (District wise)	Percentage (%) loss of forest as on March, 2024 (District wise)
			Protected Forest (in Ha.)	Reserve Forest (in Ha.)	Deemed Forest (in Ha.)	Sanctuaries and Protected Areas (in Ha.)	Any other type of Forest (in Ha.)			
1	Meghalaya	17046.07	0.23	9823.749	-	-	-	9823.979	Offence Reports have been drawn against the encroachers and the matter is pending in the respective Courts.	0.44%