

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

O.A. No. 555/2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

"News item titled "India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000 Global Forest Watch" appearing in Indian Express date 13.04.2024."

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THROUGH COUNSEL



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PLACE: NEW DELHI

DATE: 28.01.2025

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

**RESPONSE AFFIDAVIT**

*(On behalf of Respondent No. 31 i.e. Principal Secretary, Forest and  
Environment, Govt. of Uttarakhand, Dehradun)*

*(In Compliance to the Hon'ble Tribunal's Order dated 18.11.2024)*

IN

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION No. 555 OF 2024**

**IN THE MATTER OF (Suo-Moto):**

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.

Versus

Central Pollution Control Board & Ors.

.....Respondents



Affidavit of Kahkashan Naseem  
(Female), aged about 44 years, D/o  
Sh. A. S. Ansari, presently posted  
as Additional Secretary, Forest and  
Environment, Government of  
Uttarakhand, Dehradun.

  
**(Deponent)**

I, the above-named deponent, do hereby solemnly affirm and state on  
as of:

1. That the deponent is presently posted as Additional Secretary, Forest and Environment, Government of Uttarakhand, Dehradun and has been arrayed as a Respondent No. 31 in the present matter as such she is fully conversant with the facts of the case and competent to swear the present Affidavit.

2. That this Hon'ble Tribunal has registered the present application by taking *suo-moto* cognizance on the basis of news item titled 'India lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000 Global Forest Watch' appearing in The Indian Express on 13.04.2024.
3. That after the course of hearing on 18.11.2024, this Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to pass certain directions to several States by impleading them as Respondents. And whereby, the State of Uttarakhand has been arrayed as Respondent No.31. The direction part of the said Order dated 18.11.2024 has been quoted here for kind perusal of this Hon'ble Tribunal:

*"14. Having also considered the issue that loss of trees is Pan India and therefore individual States and Union Territories should also submit their reports with regard to such loss of trees and the reason therefore addressing relevant issues i.e. status of forest as on date, factor responsible for loss and action taken report for conservation and management of forest, we accordingly implead all States and Union Territories as respondent 5 to 40 through Secretary, Environment, Forest and Climate Change:-*

.....

*27. Respondent 31 – State of Uttarakhand through Secretary, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Integrated Regional office Deputy Director General of Forests (C) Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Regional office, 25 Subhash Road Dehradun –248001 Uttarakhand India".*

4. That since the present application has been registered on the basis of an article published in the news-paper The Indian Express on 13.04.2024 and the same was published on the basis of the report/data released by US based online platform 'Global Forest Watch', related to the Nation. It is relevant to mention that the report released by the Global Forest Watch is related to several States of India including the State of Uttarakhand.



5. That it is relevant to mention the relevant contents of the report related to the State of Uttarakhand, released by the Global Forest Watch on its official website [www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org), which is as follows:

*“According to data from Global Forest Watch, between 2000 and 2020, in Uttarakhand the top 5 were responsible for 56 % all tree cover gain between 2000-2020. Haridwar had most tree cover gain at 5.01 Kha compared to an average of 3.05 Kha in that time period.*

.....  
*From 2000 to 2020 Uttarakhand gain 39.6 Kha of tree cover region wide equal to 2.1 of all tree cover gain in India.*

.....  
*In Uttarakhand from 2000 to 2020, 84% of tree cover gain occurred outside of plantations.*

.....”.

Copy of the relevant pages of the report of the Global Forest Watch is being annexed and marked herewith as **ANNEXURE-1**.

6. That it is submitted that the Forest Survey of India carries out biennial Forest cover and Tree Cover assessment at National level, the results of which are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). A comparative analysis of data of forest and tree cover for the State of Uttarakhand between ISFR 2001 and ISFR 2023 is given below as under:

Sr. No.	Forest Cover (Sq. Kms)	Tree Cover (Sq. Kms.)	Total Forest and Tree Cover (Sq. Kms.)	Change (Sq. Kms.)
ISFR 2001	23,938	448	24,386	Positive change of 1148.97
ISFR 2023	24,303.83	1231.14	25,534.97	



*[Handwritten signature]*

From the analysis of the above data, it is seen that between ISFR 2001 and ISFR 2023 there is an increase in forest and tree cover of 1148.97 Sq. Kms. in the State.

7. That in compliance to the directions passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal in para 14 of the Order dated 18.11.2024, it is submitted that forest management in the State of Uttarakhand focuses on the sustainable use and conservation of the region's rich forest resources. The State, known for its diverse ecosystems relies on its forests and biodiversity conservation, water regulation and livelihood support. The Government employs a participatory approach involving local communities in forest protection, restoration and sustainable resource extraction. Van panchayat is key institution of community participation in forest management in the state. Additionally, the State of Uttarakhand has implemented measures to prevent deforestation and forest fires, along with reforestation and afforestation projects to restore degraded land. The Forest Department carries out the plantation exercise in every season across the State. The details of plantation carried out in the State from year 2000 is being narrated as follows:

Year	Plantation in (Hectares)
2000-2001	23,154
2001-2002	28,713
2002-2003	22,133
2003-2004	20,545
2004-2005	21,635
2005-2006	28,483
2006-2007	28,934
2007-2008	28,829
2008-2009	25,727
2009-2010	20,945
2010-2011	10,561
2011-2012	17,029
2012-2013	13,838
2013-2014	16,991
2014-2015	13,922
2015-2016	12,799



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2016-2017	12,971
2017-2018	12,432
2018-2019	13,795
2019-2020	17,403
2020-2021	15,770
2021-2022	16,229
2022-2023	15,498

Detailed plantation report, carried out by the Forest Department, Uttarakhand, across the State from year 2000 is being annexed and marked herewith as **ANNEXURE-2**.

8. The state's forestry policies focus on balancing ecological conservation with socio-economic needs, ensuring that forest management contributes to the well-being of local communities while preserving the environment.

In State of Uttarakhand, the management of forests is carried out according to detailed Working Plans approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India. These are Ten-year plans that outline sustainable forest management practices, based on scientific principles, and are designed to achieve ecological, economic, and social goals. The Working Plans for the state's forests take into account the following key aspects:

A. **Forest Zoning:** Forests are classified into different zones based on their ecological importance and human usage. For instance, areas with high biodiversity are designated as conservation zones, while areas suitable for timber production or non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are marked accordingly.

B. **Sustainable Harvesting:** The plans specify guidelines for the sustainable extraction of forest resources, such as timber, firewood medicinal plants, and other NTFPs. This helps in avoiding over-exploitation and ensures that these resources are replenished.



*[Handwritten signature]*

C. Biodiversity Conservation: Specific measures are included to protect endangered species, prevent illegal hunting, and conserve critical habitats.

D. Forest Protection and Fire Control: Forest fires are a major challenge in Uttarakhand. The working plans include strategies for fire prevention, early detection, and control. Fire lines are cleared, controlled burns are conducted, and local communities are involved in fire management practices.

E. Afforestation and Reforestation: The Working Plans outline programs for afforestation and reforestation to restore degraded forests, improve soil and water conservation, and enhance carbon sequestration. These initiatives are critical in tackling deforestation and combating climate change.

F. Community Participation through Van Panchayats indecision-making, protection, and the sustainable use of forest resources. They are also incentivized through access to resources and a share in the benefits from forest management.

G. Ecological Monitoring and Research: Continuous ecological monitoring is conducted to assess the health of forests, track biodiversity, and evaluate the effectiveness of management practices. Research is also promoted to adapt forest management strategies to changing environmental conditions, such as the impacts of climate change.

H. Protection of Watersheds: Given the importance of forests in regulating water flow and preventing soil erosion, the Working Plans include provisions for managing watersheds to ensure water security for the region's population and agricultural systems.

These Working Plans are updated periodically based on the evolving conditions of forests and the state's socio-economic needs.



By following these Working Plans, guidelines and strategies, the forests in the State of Uttarakhand are managed to meet both ecological and socio-economic objectives, ensuring their sustainability and resilience in the long run.

9. That the deponent undertakes to comply the further directions, to be passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal in the present matter.

I, the above named deponent, do hereby verify that the contents of Para nos. 1-4 & 8 of this affidavit are true to my personal knowledge, those of Para nos. 5, 6, & 7 of this affidavit are based on records, those of Para nos.                      of this affidavit are as per the legal advice received and those of Para nos.                      of this affidavit are as per the information received which all I believe to be true. That no part of this affidavit is false and nothing material has been concealed.

**So help me God**

**DEPONENT**

I, Dharmendra Singh, Section officer, Forest Section-03, Govt. of Uttarakhand, Dehradun, do hereby identify the deponent who has produced the records of the case before me and I am satisfied that she is the same person as alleged.

**IDENTIFIER**

Solemnly affirmed before me today, the 27 day of January, 2025 at 9:30 am/pm by the deponent who has been identified by the aforesaid person.

I have satisfied myself by examining the deponent that he has understood the contents of this affidavit, which have been read over and explained to him.



This affidavit is sworn before me by  
Shri. Rajender Singh Negi  
who is identified by Shri. Dharmendra Singh  
at Dehradun on 27-1-25

**OATH COMMISSIONER/NOTARY**

(Rajender Singh Negi)

gory=forest-change&map=eyJjYW5Cb3VuZC6dHj1ZX0%3D&scrollTo=forest-loss



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2010 tree cover extent (100% tree canopy)

tree cover loss

FOREST GAIN

LOCATION OF TREE COVER GAIN IN UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

In **Uttarakhand**, the top 5 were responsible for **56%** of all tree cover gain between **2000** and **2020**. **Hardwar** had the most tree cover gain at **5.01 kha** compared to an average of **3.05 kha** in that time period.

1	Hardwar	5.01 kha
2	Garmal	4.96 kha
3	Nainital	4.18 kha
4	Almora	4.03 kha
5	Pithoragarh	3.85 kha

TREE COVER GAIN IN UTTARAKHAND, INDIA COMPARED TO OTHER AREAS

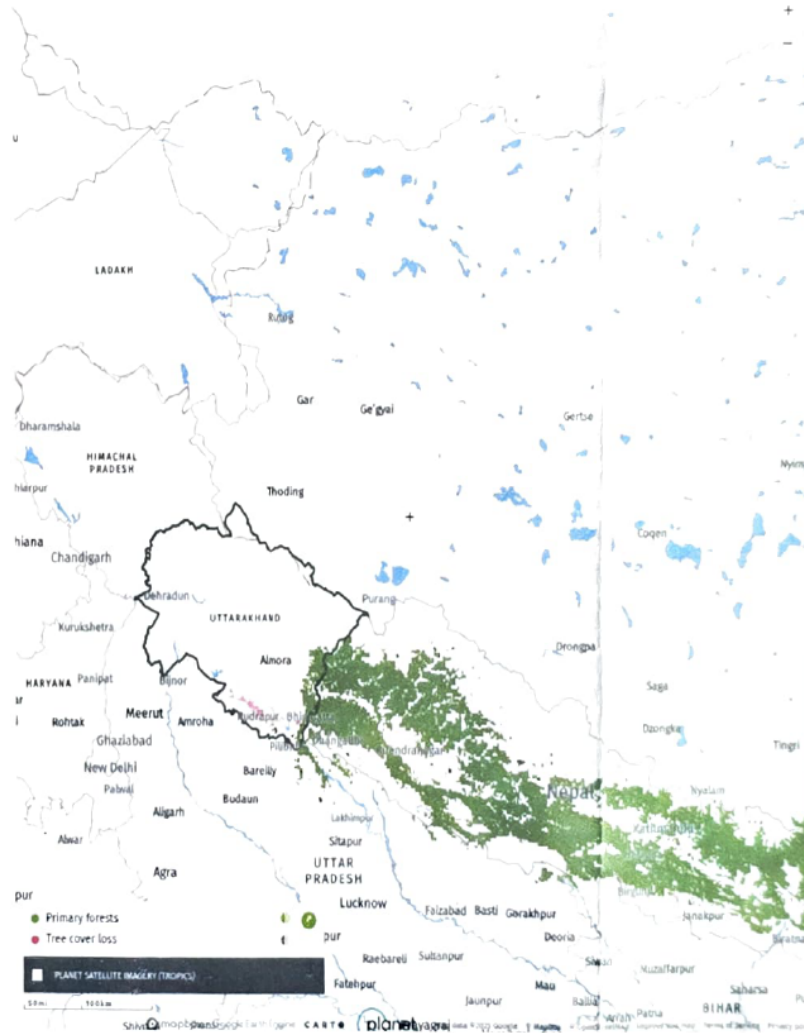
From **2000** to **2020**, **Uttarakhand** gained **39.6 kha** of tree cover **region-wide** equal to **2.1%** of all tree cover gain in **India**.

1	Karnataka	222 kha
2	Andhra Pradesh	196 kha
3	Tamil Nadu	164 kha
4	Assam	163 kha
5	Odisha	140 kha

TREE COVER GAIN OUTSIDE PLANTATIONS IN UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

In **Uttarakhand** between **2000** and **2020**, **84%** of tree cover gain occurred outside of plantations.

●	Tree cover gain outside plantations	<b>33.3 kha</b>
●	Tree cover gain within plantations	<b>6.29 kha</b>



(Rajender Singh Negi) Advocate & Notary, Dehradun

at Dehradun on...

who is identified by Shri...

Shri... This affidavit is sworn before me by

*[Handwritten signature]*

## विभागीय वृक्षारोपण के अन्तर्गत किये गये वृक्षारोपण का वर्षवार एवं योजनावार का विवरण

(वृक्षारोपण क्षेत्र हे० में)

क्र.सं.	वर्ष	विभागीय वृक्षारोपण (हे० में)	बहुउद्देशीय योजना	रामगंगा के जलागम क्षेत्रों में वनीकरण	सिन्धुगंगा के बाढग्रस्त क्षेत्रों में जलागम पबंध	टिहरी बांध के जलागम क्षेत्रों में वनीकरण योजना	कुल कैम्पा योजना का योग	ईको टास्क योजना का योग	वन पंचायत	रोजगार परक वृक्षारोपण योजना	बांस व रिगाल वृक्षारोपण	नंदा देवी बायोस्फेयर रिजर्व की स्थापना	प्रोजेक्ट एलीफेंट
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	2000-01	23154											
2	2001-02	28713											
3	2002-03	22133	4880	495	471	4009		900				35	50
4	2003-04	20545	5463	745	225	5073		980				40	60
5	2004-05	21635	3895	485	485	768		1000				40	60
6	2005-06	28483	0	170	495	403		0				0	100
7	2006-07	28934		1160		200		0				40	40
8	2007-08	28829		510	711	0				343	250	30	110
9	2008-09	25727		355	485	694		1500		1080	1404	30	
10	2009-10	20945		480	237	143		1700		2055	1192	30	110
11	2010-11	10561		664	0	209		1800		710	312	30	100
12	2011-12	17029		1044		209		1694		320	0	25	
13	2012-13	13838	1070				1279	1700	5291				
14	2013-14	16991	1646				4310	1700	3906				
15	2014-15	13922	689				5307	1700	1235				
16	2015-16	12799	1134				4443	1303	629	25			
17	2016-17	12971	2737				5013	1800	334		237		
18	2017-18	12432	3736				3740	1700	52				
19	2018-19	13795	2654				3026	1300	60		110		
20	2019-20	17403	3304				4040	1321	126		204		
21	2020-21	15770	1768				3897	1367	382		30		
22	2021-22	16229	3882				3937	1657	108			70	
23	2022-23	15498	3245				5384	1602			250		
24	2023-24	14407	3789				5224	1043	118		197		
25	2024-25	10602	3050				4940	1356	39		205		

नोट- वर्ष 2000-01 तथा 2001-02 की सूचना इस कार्यालय में उपलब्ध नहीं है।



(वृक्षारोपण क्षेत्र हे० में)

क्र.सं.	वर्ष	आरक्षित तथा सिविल सोयम वनों का विकास	वनों की सुरक्षा हेतु/अतिक्रमण रोकने के लिये बाउण्ड्री पिलर्स	उत्तरांचल बानिकी परियोजना (विश्व बैंक पोषित)	ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में ईंधन प्रजातियों का वृक्षारोपण	कुमाऊं एवं गढ़वाल मण्डलों में सिविल एवं सोयम वनों का विकास	पार्कों एवं पक्षी विहारों का विकास	वन विकास अभिकरण (एफ.डी.ए.)	12वें वित्त आयोग के अन्तर्गत वनों का अनुरक्षण	जेट्रोफा आदि बायोफ्यूल प्रजाति का रोपण	हबल गार्डन व सेंटर ऑफ एक्सलेंसी की स्थापना
1	2	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	2000-01										
2	2001-02										
3	2002-03			4223	287	3230	10	3339			
4	2003-04			0	0	2417	0	5483			
5	2004-05			0	0	2821	0	10356			
6	2005-06	8975		0	0	0	0	4035			
7	2006-07	10843					10				
8	2007-08	9900	305					13051	567	3052	
9	2008-09	9567	0						206	650	11
10	2009-10	9620	109						322		27
11	2010-11	1911	300						0		0
12	2011-12	2172	310								
13	2012-13										
14	2013-14										
15	2014-15										
16	2015-16										
17	2016-17										
18	2017-18		92								
19	2018-19		90								
20	2019-20										
21	2020-21										
22	2021-22										
23	2022-23		116								
24	2023-24		126								
25	2024-25										



3

4

(कृषारोपण क्षेत्र हे० में)

क्र.सं.	वर्ष	औषधीय पौधों का संरक्षण	कुल 13वां वित्त योजना का योग	जनजाति उपयोग	स्पेशल	जायका	नमामि गंगे	आई.डी. डब्ल्यू.एच	एन०एम०पी०ब०	वैम्बू मिशन	एन०टी०ए० फ०पी०	ग्रीन इण्डिया मिशन	जीवों के वास स्थलों का विकास	अन्य योजनाओं
1	2	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
1	2000-01													
2	2001-02													
3	2002-03													204
4	2003-04													59
5	2004-05													1725
6	2005-06													14305
7	2006-07													16641
8	2007-08													
9	2008-09													9745
10	2009-10													4920
11	2010-11													4525
12	2011-12		3679											7576
13	2012-13	541	3958											
14	2013-14	199	4777											453
15	2014-15	78	4776											137
16	2015-16	140	2974	60	71									2020
17	2016-17	86	89	70		1400								1206
18	2017-18	80			10	1816	1000	5	50					151
19	2018-19			60	20	2014	1913	1657	80	45				766
20	2019-20			20	5	3487	2172	464	40	325	40	1415		440
21	2020-21			20	5	3093	881		145	225	38	3862		59
22	2021-22	213		85	40	2204	2234			94		1706		
23	2022-23				45	1314				60	115	3347	20	
24	2023-24	111		140	40	708				220	114	2250	100	230
25	2024-25	90		39	270							587	27	

This affidavit is sworn before me by

Shri.....

who is identified by Shri.....

at Denradun on.....

(Rajender Singh Negi)

Advocate &amp; Notary, Dehradun

