

# 763

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

**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.**

**WITH**

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION 20/2025**

**NEWS ITEM TITLED "ASSAM'S FORESTS SHRINK BY 83.29 SQ KM IN JUST TWO YEARS REPORT" APPEARING IN THE ASSAMTRIBUNE.COM DATED 22.12.2024**

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# 764

	PLANNING AND AGROFORESTRY, LUCKNOW IS BEING ANNEXED HEREWITH AS ANNEXURE-1	
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*THROUGH COUNSEL*



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Date: 25.04.2026

Place: NOIDA

765

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



NEWS ITEM TITLED "INDIA LOST 2.33 MILLION HECTARES OF  
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RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 30, STATE OF UTTAR  
PRADESH IN COMPLIANCE WITH ORDER DATED 29.01.2026 BY  
THE HON'BLE TRIBUNAL

I, Rajanikant Mittal, aged about 42 pyears, S/o Shri Ramesh Chand Gupta,  
posted as Divisional Forest Officer, Gautam Budha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh do  
hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:



1. That I, the Deponent in the above captioned matter, am fully conversant with the facts of the case and am competent and authorized to swear the present reply.
2. That, I state that the contents of this reply have been drafted by my counsel on my instructions, and the contents of the same are true to my knowledge and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

### ***BACKGROUND OF THE MATTER***

3. That, the present Original Application pertains to the issue relating to the loss of 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000 in India, equivalent to a six per cent decrease in tree cover during this period. The article cites the Global Forest Watch, which tracks forest changes in near real-time using satellite data and other sources.
4. That the Hon'ble Tribunal vide its order dated 29.10.2025 had passed the following directions:  
  
***“1. It will be open to other States/UTs to file their reply, if not already filed within four weeks. Learned Amicus Curiae can examine and indicate the States/UTs whose reply is not filed till the next date of hearing.***

*2. In OA No. 555/2024, submissions on behalf of the learned Amicus Curia have been filed on page 456 and in OA No. 20/2025 the report of the learned Amicus Curiae starts from page 35. It will be open to all the States/UTs to download the copies of the report of the Amicus Curiae and respond to the suggestions/observations made therein within four weeks, if they so desire.”*

**REPLY IS AS FOLLOWS**

5. That, in consonance of the Amicus’s 12 recommendations for all respondent states, the following has been reported by the Additional Chief Principal Conservator of Forests, Planning and Agroforestry, Lucknow for the State of Uttar Pradesh:

<b>S.NO.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSE OF THE STATE</b>
1	Forest Cover Expansion – Target is to achieve National Forest Policy goals of bringing 33% geographical area under forest/tree cover nationally and 66% in hilly areas. Aim is to enhance green cover, support rural livelihoods and create carbon sinks.	To increase forest and tree cover, large scale tree plantation campaign is going on in the State of Uttar Pradesh.
2	Agro forestry Promotion – Integrating trees with crops/livestock to improve soil productivity, farmer income and biodiversity. Recommended to strengthen agro forestry research and mass adoption.	Special efforts are being made to strengthen agro forestry and make it a mass movement. Free saplings are distributed to farmers.

		Participation of FPOs, SHGs and others is encouraged. Plantation raised by farmers are assessed for carbon credit.
3	Forest Fire Management – Need to adopt National Programme on Forest Fire Management (NPFFM) and use satellite-based systems, AI and real-time monitoring.	Use of FSI data for early warning, ground truthing and immediate steps to control fire are being ensured.
4	Forest Inventory & Monitoring – Accurate and timely forest data collection through satellites, drones, GIS and PDA-based mapping systems.	E-governance and information technology are being extensively used. Satellite data provided by FSI, drones and GIS are also used.
5	Mangrove and Wetland Protection – Protection of mangroves under Ramsar obligations and shoreline habitat schemes.	There is no shoreline or coastal area in U.P.
6	Biodiversity and Forest Health – Regular monitoring of forest health including surveillance of invasive species, soil conditions and disturbances such as overgrazing and illicit felling. Mixed-size tree classes encouraged.	Regular monitoring of forest health is being ensured. Enforcement activities, smart patrolling, constant monitoring and informer systems are used to check illicit felling and encroachment. Plantation of

		mixed sized tree classes are encouraged.
7	Community Participation – Local communities should be incentivized through JFM, eco-tourism opportunities and inclusion in carbon credit mechanisms.	Local communities like Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC), Eco Development Committee (EDC), Bio Diversity Management Committee (BDMC) at gram panchayat level etc. are actively involved in forest conservation.
8	Urban Forestry – Urban areas should include green belts in planning. Additional rooftop forestry and citizen-led afforestation should be promoted.	To ensure sufficient greenery in urban areas, many Nagar Vans and Nagar Vatikas have been established. High density plantations are raised in urban areas. Trees are planted on roadsides and in housing colonies.
9	Legal and Policy Measures – National Forest Policy (1988) should be revised to reflect climate change, carbon trading and SDGs. Laws on illegal logging and encroachment need tightening.	To be done by Central Government.
10	Education and Awareness – Forest conservation should be integrated into school curricula.	To increase widespread awareness, citizens, officers,

	Training programmes for local bodies and large-scale awareness campaigns should be launched.	employees, students, NGOs, farmers etc. participate in plantation campaigns. Cultural programmes, debates/discussions and street plays are organised.
11	Transmission Line Management – Dwarf species preferably medicinal plants to be planted within right of way of transmission lines.	Dwarf species are being planted below transmission line.
12	Reclamation of Dumping Sites – Native species are planted on dumping sites as per approved reclamation sites.	For reclamation of dumping sites, native species as per agro climatic zones are being planted.

A copy of the report of the Additional Chief Principal Conservator of Forests, Planning and Agroforestry, Lucknow is being annexed herewith as **ANNEXURE-1**

6. Hence, this response is respectfully submitted for kind perusal of this Hon'ble Tribunal.

7. That, everything stated above is true and correct to my knowledge, derived from official records, and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

*Raj*  
**DEPONENT**

## VERIFICATION

Verified at NOIDA on this 25th day of April 2026, that the contents of the above affidavit from paragraphs 1 to 7 are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. No part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

*Rohit*  
DEPONENT



ATTESTED  
K.P.S. YADAV  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
Reg. No.-4123

25 APR 2026

## Before National Green Tribunal (Principal Bench, New Delhi)

OA No. 555/2024 with OA No. 20/2025

## State's response on suggestions/observations

Sl. No.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	Response of the State
1	<b>Forest Cover Expansion</b> -The target is to achieve the National Forest Policy (1988) goals of bringing 33% of India's geographical area under forest and tree cover nationally, and 66% in hilly areas. The aim is to enhance green cover, support rural livelihoods, and create carbon sinks.	To increase Forest and Tree cover, large scale tree plantation campaign is going on in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
2	<b>Agro forestry Promotion</b> - Agro forestry involves integrating trees with crops and livestock to improve soil productivity, increase farmer income, and enhance biodiversity. This reduces the dependence on natural forests for resources and contributes to carbon sequestration. It is recommended to strengthen agro forestry research and create a mass movement for its adoption.	Special efforts are being made to strengthen agro forestry and to make it a mass movement. To encourage tree planting and promote Agroforestry, free distribution of saplings to farmers is being ensured. There is active participation of FPOs, SHGs etc along with support from government agencies, NGOs and corporates. Plantation raised by farmers are assessed for carbon credit for which they are getting payments.
3	<b>Forest Fire Management</b> -There is a need to adopt the National Programme on Forest Fire Management (NPPFM) as outlined in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023. Recommended measures include the use of satellite-based systems for early warning and real-time monitoring, deploying artificial intelligence to predict high-risk zones, and integrating forest fire response into disaster management systems.	Use of FSI data for early warning, ground truthing and immediate steps to control fire are being ensured.
4	<b>Forest Inventory &amp; Monitoring</b> -Accurate and timely forest data collection should be ensured through the adoption of modern technologies such as satellites, drones, GIS, and PDA-based mapping systems.	E-governance and information technology are being extensively used for Forest data collection. Satellite data provided by FSI, drones, GIS etc are also used.
5	<b>Mangrove and Wetland Protection</b> - Mangroove ecosystems are carbon-dense, despite occupying less than 1% of tropical forest and sequestering approximately 3% of world's tropical forest carbon. Mangroves should be protected as part of India's obligations under the Ramsar Convention. The Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) scheme should be expanded to promote shoreline afforestation and improve coastal livelihoods.	There is no shoreline or coastal area in UP.
6	<b>Biodiversity and Forest Health</b> - Regular monitoring of forest health is essential, including surveillance of invasive species, soil conditions, and	Regular monitoring of Forest health is being ensured. Regular enforcement activities, smart patrolling, constant monitoring, sound

	disturbances such as overgrazing and illicit felling. Forests with mixed-size tree classes should be encouraged as they offer better resilience to climate change.	informer system etc are being used to keep a check on illicit felling, encroachment etc . Plantation of mixed sized tree classes are being encouraged.
7	<b>Community Participation-</b> Local communities should be incentivized through Joint Forest Management (JFM), eco-tourism opportunities, and inclusion in carbon credit mechanisms to ensure active participation in forest conservation efforts.	Local communities like Joint Forest management committee (JFMC), Eco Development Committee (EDC), Bio Diversity Management Committee (BDMC) at gram panchayat level etc are actively involved in Forest conservation.
8	<b>Urban Forestry-</b> Urban areas should be required to include green belts in planning. Additionally, rooftop forestry and citizen-led afforestation should be promoted to help tackle urban challenges such as air pollution and rising temperatures.	To ensure sufficient greenery in urban areas, many Nagar Vans and Nagar Vatikas have been established. Moreover, high density plantations (Miyawaki plantation etc) are being raised in urban areas by many departments of the state. Also, trees are planted on road sides and in housing colonies.
9	<b>Legal and Policy Measures-</b> The National Forest Policy (1988) should be revised to reflect modern environmental challenges such as climate change, carbon trading, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Laws related to illegal logging and forest encroachments need to be tightened and better enforced.	To be done by Central Government.
10	<b>Education and Awareness-</b> Forest conservation should be integrated into school curricula. Training programs should be conducted for local governance bodies, and large-scale awareness campaigns should be launched to build a culture of environmental stewardship.	To increase widespread awareness, all citizens, public representative officers, employees, students, NGOs, farmers, etc. participate in the massive plantation campaign of the state. Cultural programs, debate/discussion, Street play etc are organised in every district to spread awareness on importance of plantations, river rejuvenation, environmental conservation etc
11	<b>Transmission Line Management-</b> Dwarf species preferably medicinal plants are plants within the right of way of transmission lines to mitigate environmental impact.	<u>Dwarf species</u> are being planted below transmission line.
12	<b>Reclamation of Dumping Sites</b> - Native species are planted on dumping sites as per approved reclamation sites.	For reclamation of dumping sites, native species as per Agro climatic zones are being planted.

(Deepak Kumar)

Addl. Principal Chief Conservator Of Forest,  
Planning and Agroforestry,  
UP Lucknow

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