



**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**

**PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 555/2024**

News item titled "Indian 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 NO. 20/2025**

News Item titled "Assam's forests shrink by 83.92 sq km in just two years Report" appearing in the Assam tribune.com dated 22.12.2024

STATUS REPORT IN THE FORM OF AFFIDAVIT BY THE CHIEF ENVIRONMENT OFFICER , ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL, RESPONDENT NO.32

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**Filed by:**

*MBL*  
 Madhumita Bhattacharjee  
 Advocate  
 Supreme Court of India  
 for State of West Bengal  
 J-1921, LGF, C.R. Park,  
 New Delhi -110019

SL. NO. 441/2026



**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**

**PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 555/2024**

News item titled "Indian 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 NO. 20/2025**

News Item titled "Assam's forests shrink by 83.92 sq km in just two years Report" appearing in the Assam tribune.com dated 22.12.2024

**BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC  
AT BIDHANNAGAR  
DIST.-NORTH 24 PARGANAS**

STATUS REPORT IN THE FORM OF AFFIDAVIT BY THE CHIEF  
ENVIRONMENT OFFICER, ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT,  
GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL, RESPONDENT NO.32

**Most Respectfully Sheweth**

I, Smt. Sumana Bhattacharyya (IFS), W/o- Shri Sanjib Kumar Kundu , aged about 57 years, by occupation service, having office at Prani Sampad Bhawan, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, LB-2, Sector III, Salt Lake, Kolkata- 700106, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as follows:-

1. That, I am holding the post of Chief Environment Officer, Environment Department, Government of West Bengal and I have made myself well acquainted with the facts and circumstances of instant case and have gone

**21 APR 2026**

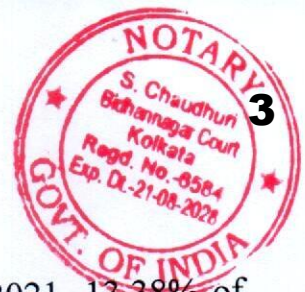


through the documents and reports pertaining to the subject matter of the instant Original Application. Hence, I am competent to affirm the instant affidavit before the Hon'ble Tribunal.

2. That, this affidavit is being affirmed in pursuance of the solemn Order passed by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench dated 07.08.2025 wherein the Hon'ble Tribunal has directed all the States/UTs to file the responses and Status report with complete information regarding forest and tree cover.
3. That the Forest Department, Government of West has reported that the learned Amicus Curae has highlighted a particular type of forest being "humid primary forest". However, as evident from the Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department 2021-2022 there is no such classification or type of forest which falls under the category of "humid primary forest".

It is pertinent to mention that the Forest Survey of India has adopted the Geographic Information system (GIS) Mapping System along with Remote Sensing and publishes India State Forest Report every two years. Likewise, the GIS cell in the Directorate of forests, Government of West Bengal was created in July, 1999. Thereafter, the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal takes part in ground truthing of Remote Sensing data of Forest Cover whenever Forest Survey of India conducts such survey and is engaged in the preparation of digital maps, interpretation of satellite imageries and also organizes training for field staff regarding GIS applications. This provides use of advanced technical methods that allows in better monitoring of Forest Covers across the State. Based on such mappings, reports as published in the Annual Administrative Report of

21 APR 2026



the Forest Department 2021-2022, it appears that from 1981-2021, 13.38% of the total geographical area was recorded as 'Forest Land'. It further appears from the same report that in 2021, the amount of Forest and Tree Cover was 21.10%.

That it is also to mention that as per the Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department, 2021-2022, there are categories of land which are recognized for Forestry and Plantation Activities.

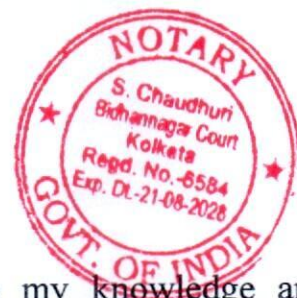
- (a) Very dense forest (VDF) where it is found to change from 2994 in 2017 sq.km to 2963 sq.km in 2019.
- (b) Open Forest (OF) where it is found to change from 9706 in 2017 sq.km to 9581 sq.km in 2019.

The Indian state of Forest Report, 2023 published by the Forest Survey of India has also given its data on the Forest Cover in the State of West Bengal. It has given distinctive data on the Forest Cover pertaining to the whole of West Bengal.

Copy of the report of the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal is marked and annexed as **Annexure R/1**.

4. That it is humbly prayed that the present reply on behalf of State of West Bengal be taken on record.
5. That it is respectfully prayed before the Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to pass such further Order/Orders as is deemed fit for the ends of justice.

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6. That the statements made in paragraph 1 is true to my knowledge and paragraphs 2 and 3, are based on information derived from the record and which I believe to be true and rest thereof are my humble submission before this Hon'ble Tribunal.

*Sumana Bhattacharyya*  
DEPONENT

### VERIFICATION

I, Smt. Sumana Bhattacharyya (IFS), Chief Environment Officer, Environment Department, Government of West Bengal do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that the contents of the report in the form of affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. No part of the Report is false and nothing has been concealed.

Verified at Kolkata this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2026.

*S. Chaudhuri*  
S. CHAUDHURI  
★ NOTARY ★  
GOVT. OF INDIA  
Regd. No.-6584/08  
Bidhannagar Court  
Dist.-North 24 Pgs.

21 APR 2026

*Sumana Bhattacharyya*  
DEPONENT



Government of West Bengal  
Directorate of Forests

Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Head of Forest Force  
Aranya Bhawan, Block-LA-10A, Sector-III, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700 106  
Phone: (033) 2335 8581/7751, Fax: (033) 2335 8756, e-Mail: [pccfhoff.office-wb@gov.in](mailto:pccfhoff.office-wb@gov.in)  
Visit us at: [www.westbengalforest.gov.in](http://www.westbengalforest.gov.in)



No. 7376/CS/LAW/7R-2(1377)/2025

Date 13/11/2025

- From : The Chief Conservator of Forests,  
Public Grievances, Law and Information, West Bengal.
- To : The Joint Secretary to the Government of West Bengal,  
Department of Forests
- Sub : OA 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. with OA No. 20. Of 2025 in the matter of News Item titled "Assam's forests shrink by 83.92 sq km in just two years Report"

With reference to the subject mentioned above please find enclosed herewith report in connection with OA 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. with OA No. 20. Of 2025 in the matter of News Item titled "Assam's forests shrink by 83.92 sq km in just two years. Report"

This is for your kind information and necessary action.

Encl: As stated above.

*Lipika Ray* 13/11/25

(Lipika Ray, IFS)

Chief Conservator of Forests  
Public Grievance, Law & Information.  
West Bengal.

Received -  
*[Signature]*  
13/11/25

REPORT

The Report of the Ld. Amicus Curae dated 11.09.2025 in the instant matter was perused and the following observations are made :

1. That the Learned Amicus Curae has highlighted a particular type of Forest being "humid primary forest". However, as evident from the Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department 2021-2022 there is no such classification or type of Forest which falls under the category of "humid primary forest". The list of different classes of Forest as per the Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department 2021-2022 is attached herewith and marked as "A".
2. It is pertinent to mention that the Forest Survey of India has adopted the GIS Mapping System along with Remote Sensing and publishes India State Forest Report every 2(two) years. Likewise, the GIS cell in the Directorate of Forests, Government of West Bengal was created in July, 1999. Thereafter, the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal takes part in ground truthing of Remote Sensing data of Forest Cover whenever Forest Survey of India conducts such survey and is engaged in the preparation of digital maps, interpretation of satellite imageries and also organises training for field staff regarding GIS applications. This provides use of advanced technical methods that allows in better monitoring of Forest Covers across the State. Based on such mappings, reports as published in the Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department 2021-2022, it appears that from 1981-2021, 13.38% of the total geographical area was recorded as 'Forest Land'. It further appears from the same Report that in 2021, the amount of Forest and Tree Cover was 21.10%. A copy of the said data as per Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department 2021-2022 is attached herewith and marked as "B".
3. That it is also pertinent to add that as per the Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department, 2021-2022, there are categories of land which are recognised for Forestry and Plantation Activities. They are as follows:


- (a) Very dense Forest (VDF)- where it is found to change from 2994 <sup>in 2017</sup> sq.km to 2963 sq. km. <sup>in 2019.</sup>

(b) Open Forest (OF)- where it is also found to change from 9706 sq. km to 9581 sq.km. in 2019.

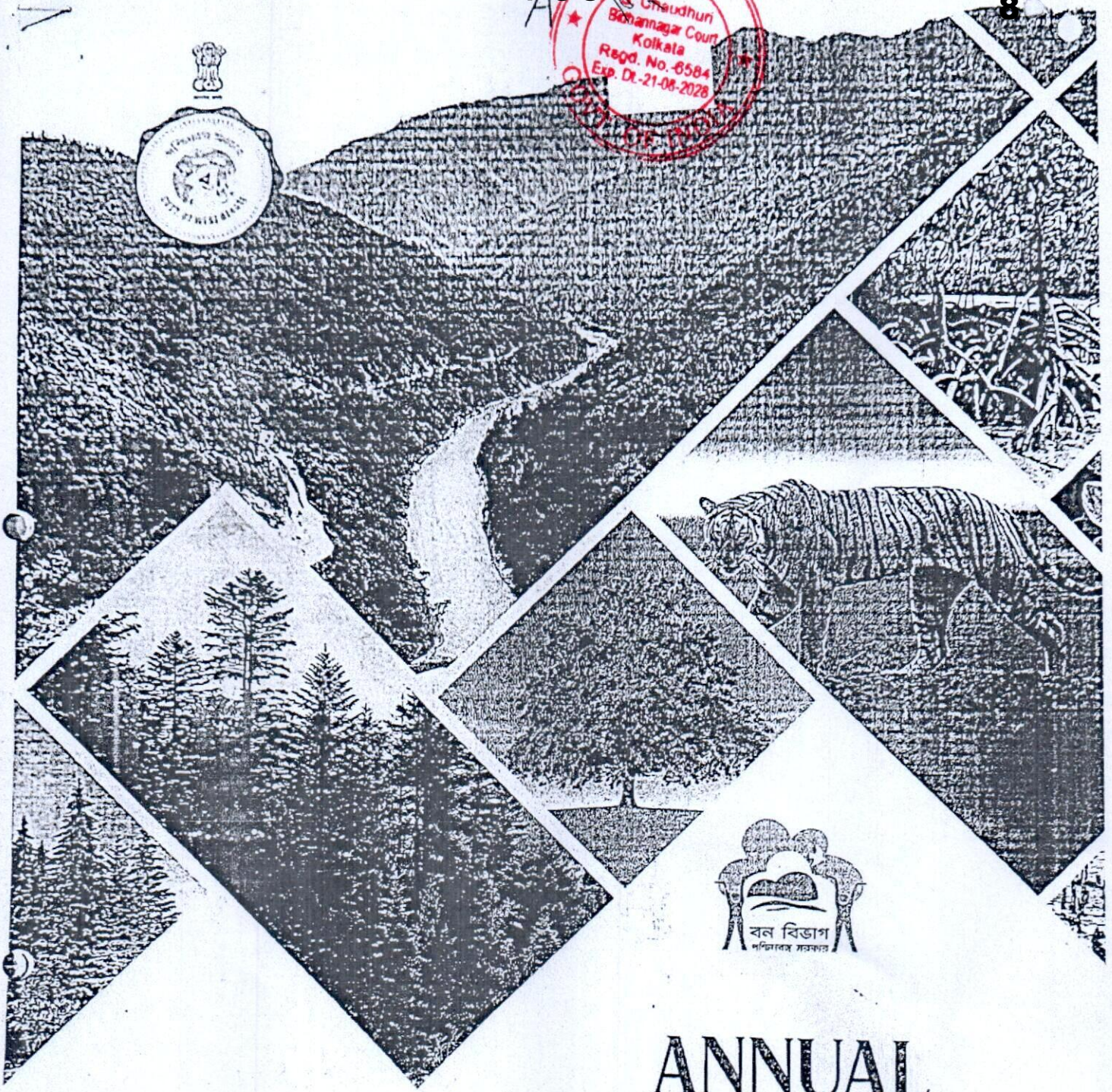


A copy of the Matrix Table as per Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department 2021- 2022 is attached herewith and marked as "C".

4. The India State of Forest Report, 2023 published by the Forest Survey of India has also given its data on the Forest Cover in the State of West Bengal. It has given distinctive data on the Forest Cover pertaining to the whole of West Bengal, the district wise Forest Cover in West Bengal and also the Forest Cover inside and outside Recorded Forest Area (or Green Wash) in West Bengal. All these datas are attached herewith and collectively marked as "D".

  
 13/11/25  
 (Lipika Ray, IFS)  
 Chief Conservator of Forest  
 PGLI, W.B

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# ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

## 2021 - 2022

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Table 3.3: Forest Cover Within Recorded Forest Area

Forest Type	Area (sq km)
Very Dense Forest	2,603 sq km
Moderately Dense Forest	2,353 sq km
Open Forest	2,116 sq km
Sub Total	7,077 sq km



Table 3.4: Forest Cover Outside Recorded Forest Area

Very Dense Forest	411 sq km
Moderately Dense Forest	1,807 sq km
Open Forest	7,607 sq km
Sub Total	9,825 sq km
Total Forest Cover	16,902 sq km
Tree Cover	2,006 sq km
Total Forest & Tree Cover	18,908 sq km
Per capita Forest & Tree Cover	0.02 ha
Of State's Geographical Area	21.304%
Of India's Forest & Tree Cover	2.34%

Table 3.5: Forest Cover in different Slope Classes

Slope (in degrees)	Geographical Area	VDF	MDF	OF	Total	Scrub
0-5	85,130	2,209	3,244	8,729	14,182 (83.90%)	131
5-10	1,227	141	217	227	585 (3.46%)	6
10-15	508	119	151	152	422 (2.50%)	3
15-20	539	147	157	171	475 (2.81%)	2
20-25	514	149	148	168	465 (2.75%)	2
25-30	404	122	117	134	373 (2.21%)	1
>30	430	132	126	142	400 (2.37%)	1
Total	88,752	3,019	4,160	9,723	16,902	146

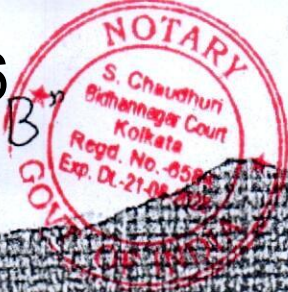
(Based on SRTM, Digital Elevation Model, 30 m, 2016)

Table 3.6: Percentage area under different forest types of West Bengal

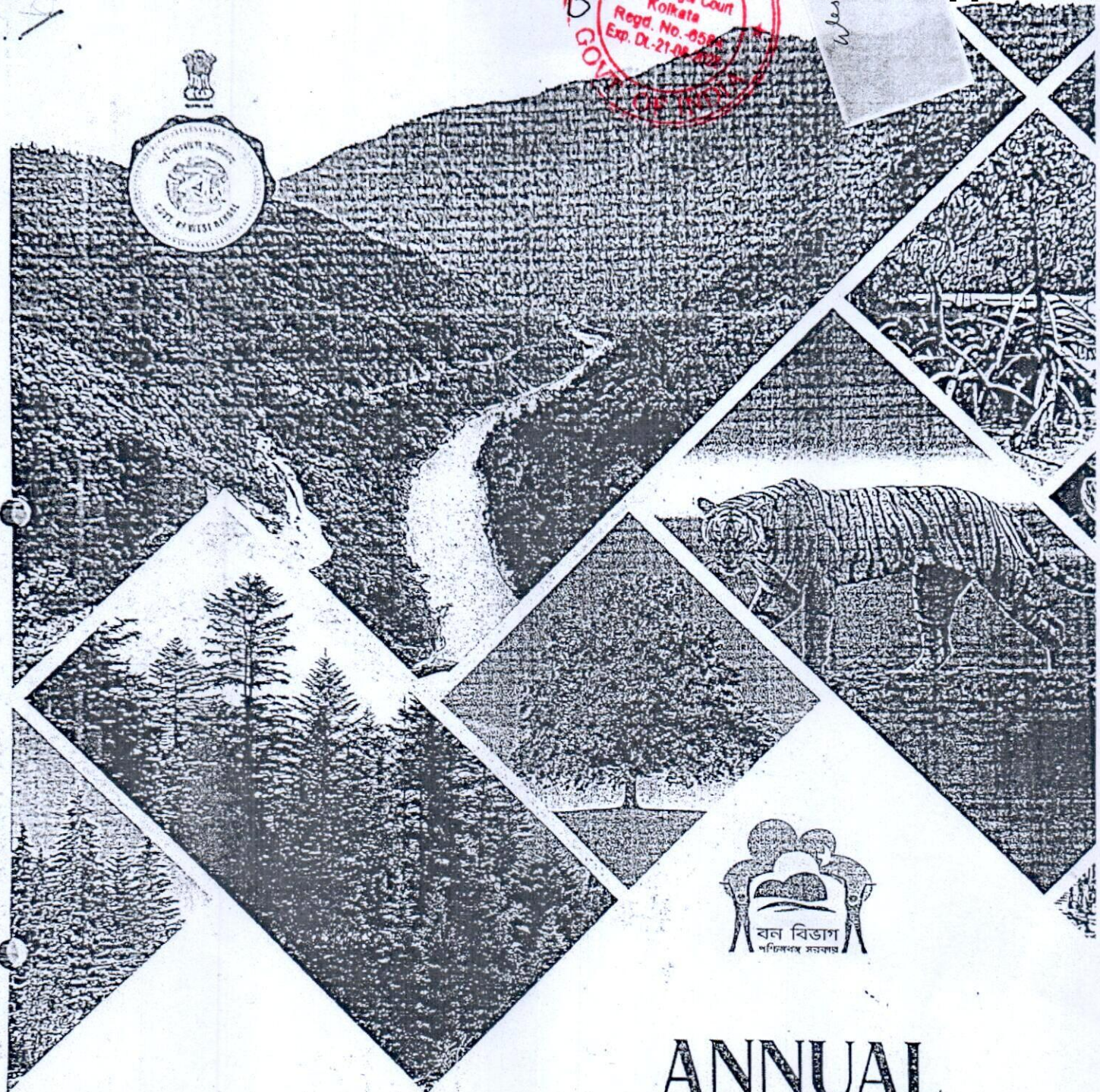
1.	2B/253 Sub Himalayan Secondary Wet Mixed Forest	2.09
2.	3C/C1a (I) East Himalayan Sal	2.35
3.	3C/C1b (I) East Himalayan Upper Bhabar Sal	0.90



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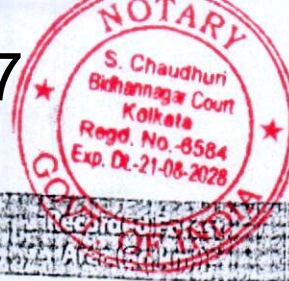
West Bengal  
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# ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

## 2021 - 2022

### FOREST DEPARTMENT



District	Geographical Area (Squ. Km)	Forest Area (Squ. Km)	Percentage of Forest Area
NADIA	3,927	12	0.30%
MURSHIDABAD	5,324	8	0.15%
MALDA	3,733	20	0.54%
UTTAR DINAJPUR	3,140	10	0.32%
DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	2,219	8	0.36%
KOLKATA	104	0	0.00%
HOWRAH	1,467	0	0.00%
24-PARGANAS (SOUTH)	10,159	4,221	41.54%
24-PARGANAS (NORTH)	3,977	43	1.08%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88,752</b>	<b>11,879</b>	<b>13.38%</b>

\* Undivided District data [Census, 2011].

#### 2.4 COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FOREST COVER AS ENUMERATED THROUGH GIS & REMOTE SENSING

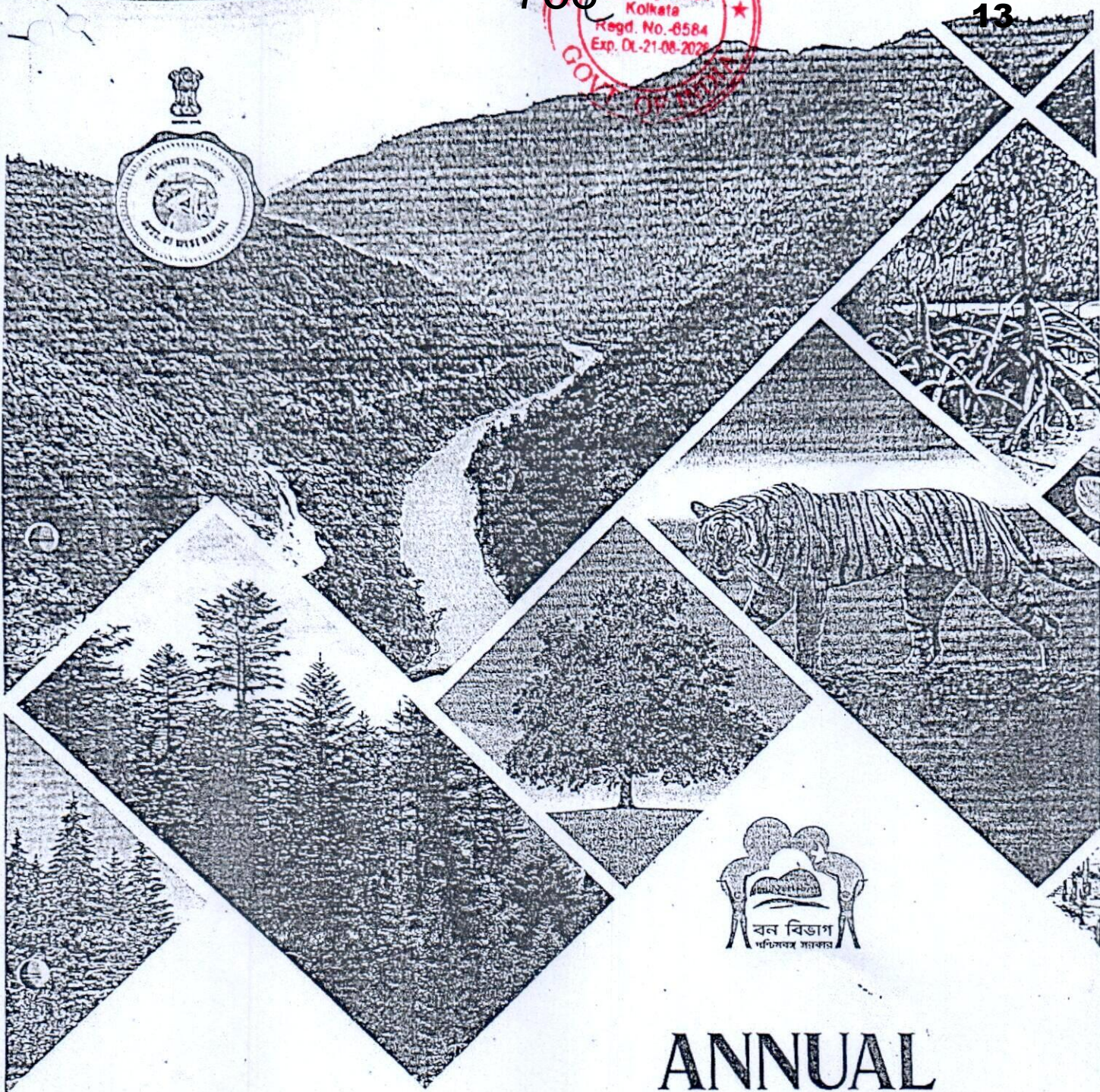
Survey Period	% Recorded Forest Land	% Forest & Tree Cover
1988	13.38	14.32
1991	13.38	14.97
1994	13.38	15.06
1997	13.38	15.16
2000	13.38	15.30
2004	13.38	15.52
2006	13.38	15.68
2007	13.38	16.67
2008	13.38	16.67
2009	13.38	16.67
2011	13.38	17.27
2013	13.38	21.35
2015	13.38	21.31
2017	13.38	21.39
2019	13.38	21.30
2020	13.38	21.30
2021	13.38	21.10

(Source: Forest Survey of India, 2017)

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# ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

## 2021 - 2022

### FOREST DEPARTMENT

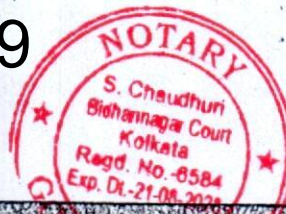


Table 3.10: Change Matrix of West Bengal

Class	Change Matrix of West Bengal (Area in km <sup>2</sup> )					Total ISFR 2017
	VDF	MDF	OF	INF	2019 Assessment	
Very Dense Forest	2,963 ✓	19	7	1	4	2,994
Moderately Dense Forest	53	4,070	17	1	6	4,147
Open Forest	3	65	9,581	9	48	9,706 ✓
Scrub	0	0	17	115	4	136
Non Forest	0	6	101	20	71,642	71,769
Total ISFR 2019	3,019	4,160	9,723	146	71,704	88,752
Net Change	25	13	17	10	-65	

Table 3.11: Altitude-wise Forest Cover of West Bengal

Altitude zone (m)	Geographical Area	Altitude-wise Forest Cover (Area in km <sup>2</sup> )				
		VDF	MDF	OF	Total	Scrub
0-500	86,650	2,389	3,612	9,035	15,036 (88.96%)	146
500-1000	807	141	272	262	675 (3.99%)	0
1000-2000	970	267	228	383	878 (5.19%)	0
2000-3000	292	196	44	40	280 (1.66%)	0
>3000	33	26	4	3	33 (0.20%)	0
Total	88,752	3,019	4,160	9,723	16,902	146

## Reasons for change detected in 2019 assessment:

Main reasons for the increase in forest cover in the State are plantation and conservation activities.

"The forest spoke to my soul in a language I already knew; a distant lullaby from the womb of peace & solitude."

— Angie Welland-Crosby

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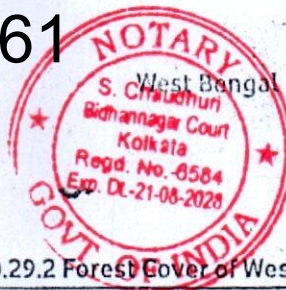


# INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT 2023

VOLUME II



**FOREST SURVEY OF INDIA**  
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change



10.29.1 Forest Cover

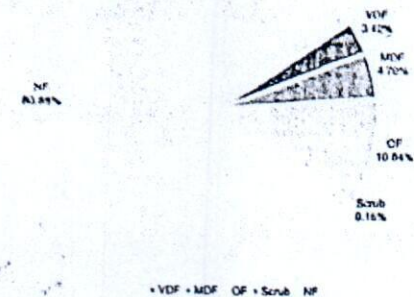


Table 10.29.2 Forest Cover of West Bengal

Class	Area	% of Calculated Area by Sol
VDF	3,037.10	3.42
MDF	4,175.38	4.70
OF	9,619.85	10.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,832.33</b>	<b>18.96</b>
Scrub	137.92	0.16

Figure 10.29.1 Forest Cover of West Bengal

Table 10.29.3 District-wise Forest Cover in West Bengal

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 <sup>H</sup>	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 <sup>H</sup>	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
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>88,752</b>	<b>3,037.10</b>	<b>4,175.38</b>	<b>9,619.85</b>	<b>16,832.33</b>	<b>18.97</b>	<b>50.22</b>	<b>137.92</b>

\*Area figure calculated without normalization factor.



Table 10.29.4 Forest Cover in Municipal Areas of West Bengal

Sl. No.	Name of Urban Local Body	Area as per Digitized Boundary*	2023 Assessment				% of Total Forest Cover w.r.t. Area of Digitized Boundary	Scrub
			Very Dense Forest	Mod. Dense Forest	Open Forest	Total		
41	Halisahar	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.74	0.74	8.14	0.00
42	Barrackpore	8.60	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.35	4.07	0.00
43	Bhadreswar	8.49	0.00	0.18	2.37	2.55	30.04	0.00
44	Baranagar	8.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
45	Bansberia	8.46	0.00	0.00	0.68	0.68	8.04	0.00
46	Kanchrapara	7.78	0.00	0.00	0.44	0.44	5.66	0.00
47	Naihati	7.54	0.00	0.15	0.68	0.83	11.01	0.00
48	Srerampore	7.26	0.00	0.03	0.12	0.15	2.07	0.00
49	Khurdah	6.04	0.00	0.02	0.10	0.12	1.99	0.00
50	Champdani	5.72	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.40	6.99	0.00
51	DumDum	5.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
52	Rishra	4.85	0.00	0.04	0.10	0.14	2.89	0.00
53	Titagarh	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05	1.50	0.00
54	Ulberia	34.02	0.00	0.54	18.56	19.10	56.14	0.00
55	Haldia	104.60	0.00	0.72	12.56	13.28	12.70	0.00
Grand Total		1,539.71	1.22	25.35	142.39	168.96	10.97	0.69

\*Shapefile of digitized boundary as provided by State Mission Directorate, AMRUT.

### 10.29.2 Forest Cover Inside and Outside Recorded Forest Area (or Green Wash)

The Forest Cover inside and outside Recorded Forest Area (RFA) has been analysed in different categories and presented in table given below.

Table 10.29.5 Forest Cover Inside and Outside Recorded Forest Area (or Green Wash) in West Bengal

Forest Cover Inside the Recorded Forest Area (or Green Wash)				Forest Cover Outside the Recorded Forest Area (or Green Wash)			
VDF	MDF	OF	Total	VDF	MDF	OF	Total
2,781.11	2,654.27	2,253.18	7,688.56	255.99	1,521.11	7,366.67	9,143.77
36.17%	34.52%	29.31%		2.80%	16.64%	80.56%	

\*In case of West Bengal, RFA boundaries have been used.