

Widespread deforestation in Assam

SHRI AJIT KUMAR BHUYAN (Assam): Thank you, Deputy Chairman, Sir, for allowing me to raise an important issue about the country, particularly, for Assam. It is a matter of pride to see the hon. Prime Minister representing India in the Global Climate Summit including the latest COP28 in Dubai. However, that feeling of pride wanes when we witness widespread deforestation undergoing unabated in our own country, more so when we see India's criticism at the international level, especially in scientific journals like the Science.

Let me take you to my State, where the State Government continues to destroy forests at an unprecedented scale. We are seeing thousands of valuable 'sal trees' cut down in the Kamrup and Goalpara districts. Even after protests and concerns, this has not stopped. Not only in Goalpara, Karbi Anglong, Dihing Patkai Hills, the capital city of Guwahati, and Nagaon in the entire State, the destruction of forests is unprecedented. The Dihing Patkai region also sees illegal coal mining alongside the forest destruction. The State Government, under the scheme of "Amrit Brikho" boasts about the plantation of 1,00,00,000 saplings. But the reality has been unveiled now -- around 90 per cent of the saplings have died. These schemes have many crores of investment but are unfruitful. Who will answer the huge loss of money invested in such unfruitful works? Can't Modiiji hold the Himanta Government accountable?

Let me remind you that Assam has lost 18.2 thousand hectares of forest in 2022, according to Global Forest Watch. Moreover, Assam has 15 of the first 25 districts in India vulnerable to climate change. I urge the Central Government, through you, Sir, to take immediate action against widespread deforestation in Assam. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri Ajit Kumar Bhuyan: Shri Niranjana Bishi (Odisha), Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala), Shri Jawhar Sircar (West Bengal), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shrimati Jaya Bachchan (Uttar Pradesh), Dr. Amar Patnaik (Odisha), Dr. V. Sivadasan (Kerala), Dr. Santanu Sen (West Bengal), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Shrimati Vandana Chavan (Maharashtra), Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra), Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas (West Bengal) and Shri M. Shanmugam (Tamil Nadu).