

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1651
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.03.2025

Unclassified forests

1651. MS. SUSHMITA DEV:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the non-notified forests under Government ownership, mainly belonging to the revenue department or other departments, are referred as 'unclassified forests';
- (b) the number of square kilometres (sq km) of 'unclassified forests' lost, according to the Indian State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, if so, the reasons behind the forest cover lost; and
- (c) whether Government has noted that experts have highlighted various discrepancies in the ISFR 2023 published by Forest Survey of India (FSI), if so, the steps taken in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) to (c) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out assessment of Forest Cover of the country biennially and publishes the findings in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). Assessment of forest cover published in ISFR includes both in the recorded forest areas and outside forest areas as per definition of forest cover which refers to all lands, more than or equal to one hectare in area, with a tree canopy of more than or equal to 10%, irrespective of ownership and legal status and includes orchards, bamboo, and palm.

Recorded Forest Areas includes the Reserved Forests, Protected Forests and Unclassed Forests. Unclassed forest includes all forests other than reserved forests and protected forests as reported by the State/UT Forest Departments. In due course, many unclassified forests are notified/classified as reserved forests and protected forests by the concerned State/UT, resulting in corresponding decrease in extent of Unclassed Forests. As per ISFR 2023, there is a difference of 1,488 square kilometer in the area under unclassified forests as compared to ISFR 2021. However, there has been an overall increase of 89 square kilometer in the Recorded Forest Area as per ISFR 2023 when compared with ISFR 2021. In addition, as per ISFR 2023, the forest and tree cover of the country has increased by 1445.81 square kilometer as compared to the ISFR 2021.

There are no discrepancies in ISFR 2023.
