

# FOREST, TREE COVER IN INDIA UP BY 2,261 SQ KM IN TWO YEARS

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

Green cover: Total forest, tree cover is 80.9 million hectares, accounting for 24.62% of geographical area.

Forest and tree cover in the country has increased by 2,261 square kilometres since the last assessment in 2019, according to the India State of Forest Report-2021 released on Thursday.

Releasing the report, Environment and Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav said the total forest and tree cover was 80.9 million hectares, which accounted for 24.62% of the geographical area of the country. The report said 17 States and Union Territories had more than 33% of their area under forest cover. Mr. Yadav said the Narendra Modi government's focus was to enrich the forests qualitatively.

The report found that there had been a 1,540 sq. km increase in forest cover and 721 sq. km increase in tree cover since the last report in 2019.

## Top 3 States

"Increase in forest cover has been observed in open forest followed by very dense forest. Top three States showing increase in forest cover are Andhra Pradesh (647 sq. km) followed by Telangana (632 sq. km) and Odisha (537 sq. km)," a Ministry statement said.

Madhya Pradesh had the largest forest cover, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra. The top five States in terms of forest cover as a percentage of their total geographical area were Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%).

## Mangrove cover

The total mangrove cover in the country had increased by 17 sq. km, to reach 4,992 sq. km. The total carbon stock in forests was estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes, an increase of 79.4 million tonnes from 2019.

The Ministry said the survey used mid-resolution satellite data, followed by "rigorous ground truthing" and information from other sources.

"The accuracy level achieved in the current assessment is significantly high. The accuracy of forest cover classification has been assessed 92.99%. The accuracy of classification between forest and non-forest classes has been assessed 95.79% against internationally accepted accuracy of classification of more than 85%," the Ministry said.

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