

**HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
(PRINCIPAL BENCH AT NEW DELHI)**

ORIGINAL APPLICATION 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**

**AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 10
STATE OF GOA**

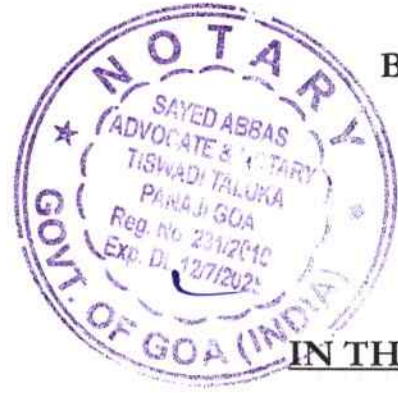
PAPER BOOK

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**ABHAY ANIL ANTURKAR
ADVOCATE FOR RESPONDENT NO. 10
STATE OF GOA**

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BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN
TRIBUNAL
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AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 10
STATE OF GOA

I, Nandakumar E. Parab, IFS, being the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Goa, having my office at: Goa Van Bhavan, Forest Department, Altinho, Panaji, Goa, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. I am the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Government of Goa, and am authorised to file this Affidavit on behalf of Respondent No. 10 State of Goa. I have examined the documents pertaining to the captioned Application as available in my office and am filing this Affidavit based on these documents.
2. By its orders dated 20.05.2024 and 18.11.2024, this Hon'ble Tribunal directed the parties impleaded in the captioned Application to file affidavits stating details such as the status of

tree cover and the reasons for loss of tree cover in their respective States. The answering Respondent is filing the present Affidavit in compliance with the directions of this Hon'ble Tribunal.

3. The Forest Survey of India assesses forest and tree cover in India biennially and publishes this data in the Indian State of Forests Report. As per the State of Forests Report of 2023, the total forest cover (includes Inside and Outside Recorded Forest Area/Green wash) in the State of Goa is 2,265.72 sq. km, which amounts to 61.20% of Goa's geographical area.
4. The following table depicts Goa's Forest cover ((includes Inside and Outside Recorded Forest Area/Green wash) assessment and its proportion with total geographical area for the period between 2000 to 2023:



YEAR	FOREST COVER (As per the ISFR)
2023	2,265.72 sq. km. (61.20%)
2021	2,267.22 sq. km. (61.24%)
2019	2,237.49 sq. km. (60.44%)
2017	2,229.00 sq. km. (60.21%)
2015	2,224.00 sq. km. (60.08%)
2013	2,219.00 sq. km. (59.94%)

2011	2,219.00 sq. km. (59.94%)
2009	2,151.00 sq. km. (58. 10%)
2005	2,164.00 sq. km. (58. 45%)
2003	2,156.00 sq. km. (58. 24%)
2001	2,095.00 sq. km. (56.59%)

5. The aforesaid data clearly indicates a consistent and steady increase in forest cover in Goa since 2001. The State of Goa and other authorities in Goa take several proactive measures to enforce all applicable statutory provisions for protecting and enhancing the State's Forest cover. In particular, the answering Respondent State takes the following steps in this regard:



- (i) Enforcement of statutory provisions: The answering Respondent State strictly enforces the applicable statutory provisions and applicable norms to protect Goa's forests and tree cover. These include provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, Goa Preservation of Trees Act, 1984 and the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006.
- (ii) Details of other steps taken: The answering Respondent State that the Department is taking following steps for protecting and enhancing the States Forest Cover;
 - a) Regular patrolling is carried out in Govt. Forest areas.

- b) Check gates and Protection camps are established at strategic locations to prevent illegal logging and transportation of illegal timbers.
- c) Compensatory afforestation carried out in lieu of forest division, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) is being carried out under CAMPA.
- d) Other Schemes implemented are Intensification and Forest management, Social and Urban Forestry, Forest Conservation and Development, Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests under which plantations are created and maintained in forest area for conserving and enriching the forest cover of the State.
- e) Government of Goa issued a notification to exempt registered Commercial Plantations in private non-forest land from all the provisions of Goa Preservation of Trees Act, 1984 to promote, encourage and motivate people to take up plantation on private land which will further increase tree cover outside forests.
- f) Extensive tree plantation programmes in various parts of Goa are carried out every year during monsoon i.e. July to September wherein tree saplings are distributed free of cost to the public, and Government and Non- Government institutions for plantation.



g) Avenue /Road side plantations and block plantations around cities are taken up.

h) Awareness is generated among the local people residing in fringe areas of the forest, regarding the necessity to preserve the flora and fauna, and to conserve ecology through celebration of various forest festivals.

6. There has been a decrease in forest cover of 1.55 sq. m. (i.e. 0.04% of Goa's total geographical area) in 2023 when compared with the data of 2021. The reasons for this decrease include forest clearances, permitted and lawful tree felling for developmental activities such as the laying of railway lines, extension of national highways/roads, laying of electrical lines, and projects of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). Also, the trees on private and government forest areas got damaged due to occurrence of tropical cyclone 'Tauktae' in May ,2021.



7. The answering Respondent State undertakes to ensure that it shall continue taking active measures for increasing its forest cover and tree cover. It shall also take concrete steps for protecting Goa's Forest resources.

8. The answering Respondent State craves the liberty of this Hon'ble Tribunal to file a further detailed affidavit, if so directed or advised.


DEPONENT

VERIFICATION

I, the abovenamed Deponent, do hereby state on solemn oath and affirmation that the facts stated hereinabove in this Counter Affidavit are true and correct to the best of knowledge, information and belief, and nothing has been concealed.

Verified at Panaji on this 25th day of March, 2025.


DEPONENT



SOLEMNLY AFFIRMED AND VERIFIED
BEFORE ME BY Nandakumar E. Parab
WHO IS IDENTIFIED TO ME BY Krishna Cavd. WHO I KNOW.
SR. NO. 1896/2025
DATED: 25/03/2025


SAYED ABBAS
Advocate & Notary
Tiswadi Taluka
Panaji-Goa 403001
Reg. No. 231/2010