

# Forests

QUARTERLY UPDATE

August  
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## IN THIS NEWSLETTER

01

### State of Forests

Increasing Forest cover

02

### De-Desertification

Ningxia Hui (China)

03

### News

- Cheetah in Kuno & Gandhi Sagar, MP
- Tree transplantation policy
- India Tiger count up 24%
- Forest amendment bill



# 01 State of Forests

## Steady Forest Cover Improvement Over the Past Decade with Promising Projections for 2023

According to 2021 report published by Forest Survey of India, Indian Forest Cover increased by 3.3% or 3,270 sq. km. between 2009 to 2021. Despite the prevailing perception that the environment health is declining, this data points that things are improving, and measures taken are working. Some of the initiatives include Green India Mission, National Bamboo Mission, National Afforestation Programme, and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management & Planning Authority (CAMPA) etc. The people of India also have a role in this, and their environmental consciousness is improving.

While 2023 ISFR report is awaited, Primus Partners, through its Remote Sensing & GIS based analysis predicts that 2023 forest cover may further improve by ~0.5%. The significant enhancement in this aspect can be attributed to two main factors: favorable weather conditions experienced over the past three years, along with the implementation and adoption of advanced scientific plantation techniques.

## Vast Forest Diversity Across Regions: A Brief Analysis

The % forest cover and type of forests differ widely based on factors like geography, weather, anthropogenic activity, conservation activity etc. High forest cover is seen in North-East region because of its hilly terrain, humid climate, rich biodiversity, and the presence of protected areas. Industrialization and large-scale agriculture have been limited. The forest cover is also high in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand & Orissa in East, and hilly states of Uttarakhand, J&K and Kerala. The forest cover is low in states that are mostly in plain areas.

The management of forests falls under the purview of both the Central and State governments. Given the vast diversity in the types of forests and the associated challenges, there arises a greater necessity for decentralized decision-making processes and the development of localized solutions. This approach acknowledges the unique characteristics and issues faced by different regions, thereby facilitating more effective and tailored strategies for sustainable forest management.

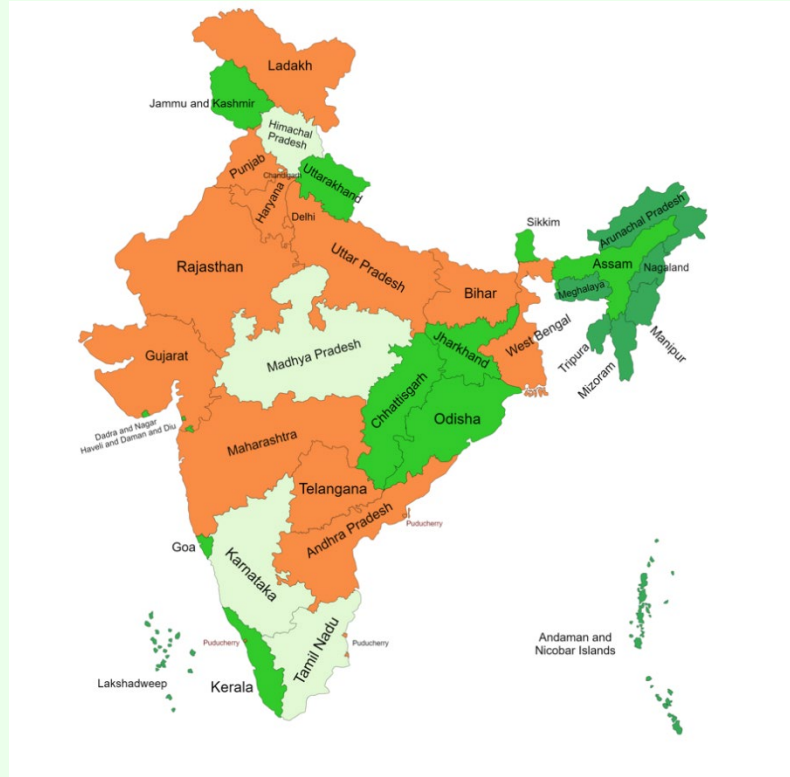
India Forest Cover

Source: ISFR 2021, Forest Survey of India  
 Primus Partners analysis



Forest Cover by States

Source: ISFR 2021, Forest Survey of India  
 Primus Partners analysis



Dark Green	Forest Cover > 70%
Medium Green	Forest Cover 30-69%
Light Green	Forest Cover 20-29%
Orange	Forest Cover <20%



# 01 State of Forests

## Uneven Growth: Disparities in the Expansion of Forest Cover

The Indian Forest cover has seen an overall increase of 3,975 sq. km. or 0.8% gain between 2017 and 2021 assessments.

States that experienced an above-average increase in forest cover i.e.. Telangana, Andhra, Odisha & Bihar have run successful plantation drives.

States that lost forest cover are concentrated in North-Eastern states of India. They have higher forest cover %, and the highest decline in the forest cover as well. The two key reasons for this decline are Jhum cultivation which employs slash & burn technique, and forest fires.

It is encouraging to notice that the growing stock is robust.

## Forest's Foremost Challenges: Identifying the Top 3 Concerns

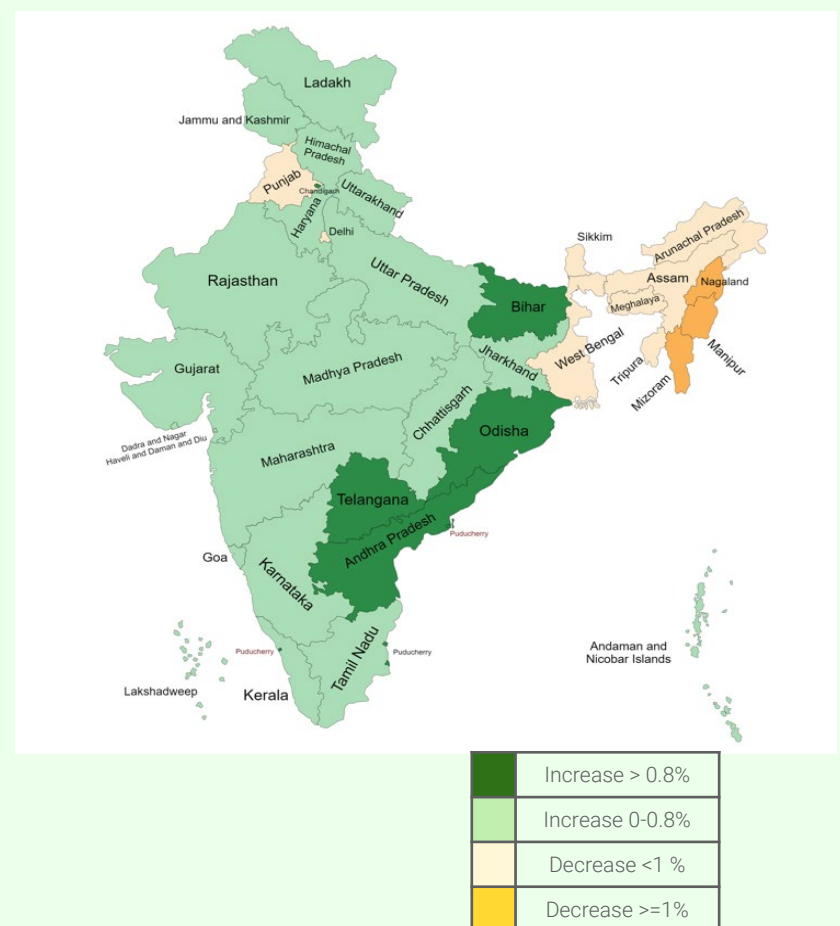
**Legal:** Large part of India's forests are unclassified, where the legal rights of the Government and people are not very clear. In most places, if a family or community wants to do scientific agro-forestry, there is no provision for harvest. Thus, interestingly, strict anti logging laws encourage illegal activities and discourage agro-forestry.

**Climate:** Climate change is real, and changes in temperature and rainfall patterns have a profound impact on forests. The Government of India has taken the climate challenge seriously and is acting on it.

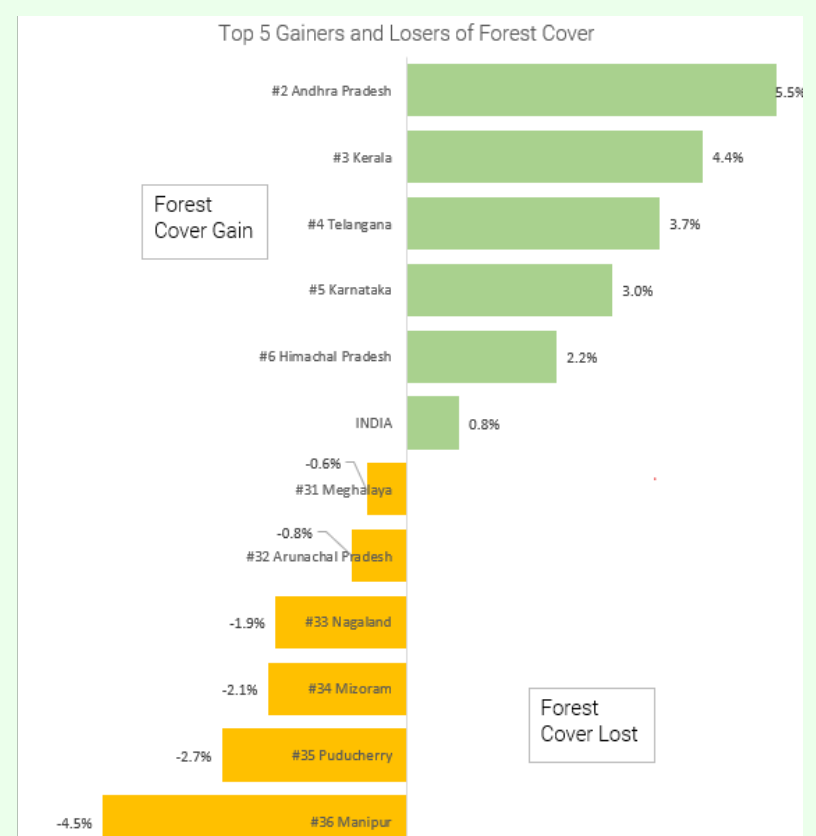
**Anthropogenic / Livelihood:** The per capita income rise is not so equal, and people depending on forests have a disadvantage. To keep up, they need to exploit the forest even more. The solution to this is to create alternative livelihoods .

States as per Gain in Forest Cover 2017-2021

Source: Forest Survey of India  
 Primus Partners analysis



Top 5 Gainers and Losers of Forest Cover 2017-2021





## 02 De-Desertification

### Ningxia Hui (China) story

In Ningxia Hui Autonomous region in northwest China, the sand dunes were shifting, and the desert was increasing. Overgrazing and lack of water or irrigation contributed to decrease in vegetation, and hence the protective cover. Without protective cover the sand dunes become mobile. By 2010, 57% of Ningxia's territory was affected, with more than 3 million people suffering the consequences.

The Government of Ningxia initiated the Desertification Control and Ecological Protection Project with the help of World Bank in 2010 to combat desertification in the region.

The project utilized various techniques such as multi-shrub plantation, sand enclosure, soil and water conservation measures, and sustainable land use planning to combat desertification in the affected areas.



### Analysis

The project has been successful in many respects. The 2023 sandstorms have reversed some of the gains.

#### What worked

- ❑ Under this project, shelterbelts of trees and vegetation were created to act as windbreaks, which protected the areas from wind erosion and sand encroachment.
- ❑ Degraded grasslands were restored through land management practices to prevent soil erosion.
- ❑ Erosion control and sand fixation measures were undertaken to stabilize sand dunes and prevent desertification by reducing sand movement. Some of these measures include creation of gabion walls, sand traps, and terraces or steps on dunes to slow down movement of sand.

#### What did not work

- ❑ Failure to engage local communities in the planning and implementation of project had led to conflicts and lack of ownership of the project by local communities.
- ❑ In terms of technical implementation, this project faced the challenge of selecting appropriate tree species and ensuring their survival and managing the vast area of the green belt.
- ❑ Structures and plantations created under this project were vulnerable to severe dust storms and other natural calamities.

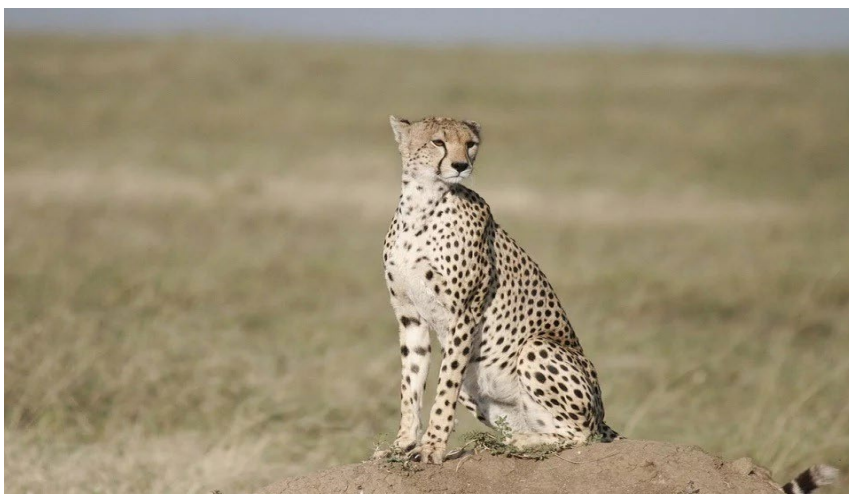
#### Important issues

- ❑ Strong financing is essential for such projects as they typically have longer durations.
- ❑ The project's successful outcomes are more dependent on the application of scientific techniques and active community participation rather than relying on high funding.



**03 News**

**Forest News**



**UP Forest Dept to Aid with Cheetah Conservation; MP's Gandhi Sagar could be New Cheetah Home**

*July 7, 2023*

The Cheetah Steering Committee discussed the status of Project Cheetah. The progress at Kuno has been good despite some losses. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary could be the next home for cheetahs in India.

[Read more](#)



**Forest Dept Recommends fine-tuning Tree Transplantation Policy**

*May 25, 2023*

A report submitted by the Delhi Forest Department to the government has recommended fine-tuning the implementation of the Tree Transplantation Policy, which was notified in 2020.

[Read more](#)

**J&K Forest Produce Policy 2022**

*January 18, 2023*

The J&K Administration has recently notified an important policy for sustainable collection and utilization of Non-Timber-Forest Produce (NTFP). The said policy was launched by J&K Forest Department in December 2022 with the objective to extend livelihood support for the people residing around forests, by promoting maintainable extraction, value addition and development of market linkages.

[Read more](#)

**New Forest Policy in Raj aims at raising vegetation cover to 20%**

*June 6, 2023*

Rajasthan's new forest policy, which was released on Monday, aims to increase vegetation cover to 20% of geographical area within the next 20 years, with focus on increasing vegetation cover outside forests.

At present, 9.6% of the state's geographical area comes under forest area, but as per the India State Forest Report, 2021, the forest cover in terms of vegetation cover is only 4.87% of the state's geographical area.

[Read more](#)





**Forest Amendment Law raises some concerns**

*August 01, 2023*

The Forest Conservation Amendment Bill of 2023 has recently been passed and aims to address evolving challenges faced in conservation of forests. Three main issues are i) removal of protection to as much as 28% of forests, ii) allowing of infrastructure projects in forest land and iii) 100 km radius of country's international borders.

[Read more](#)



**India's Tiger Population up 24%**

*July 30, 2023*

India's tiger population has gone up by 24% since 2018 to 3,167. This is about 75% of the world's tiger headcount. There is a worry that the growth is not even, and some states saw the tiger population dip.

[Read more](#)

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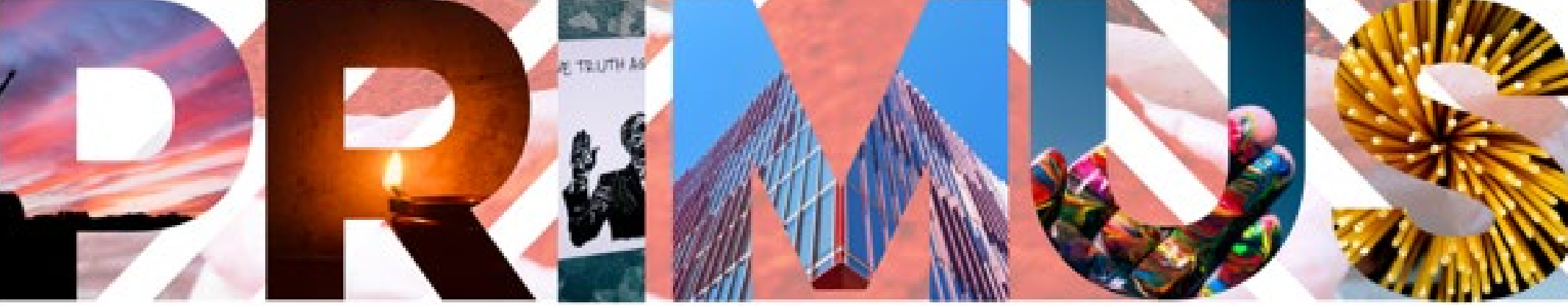


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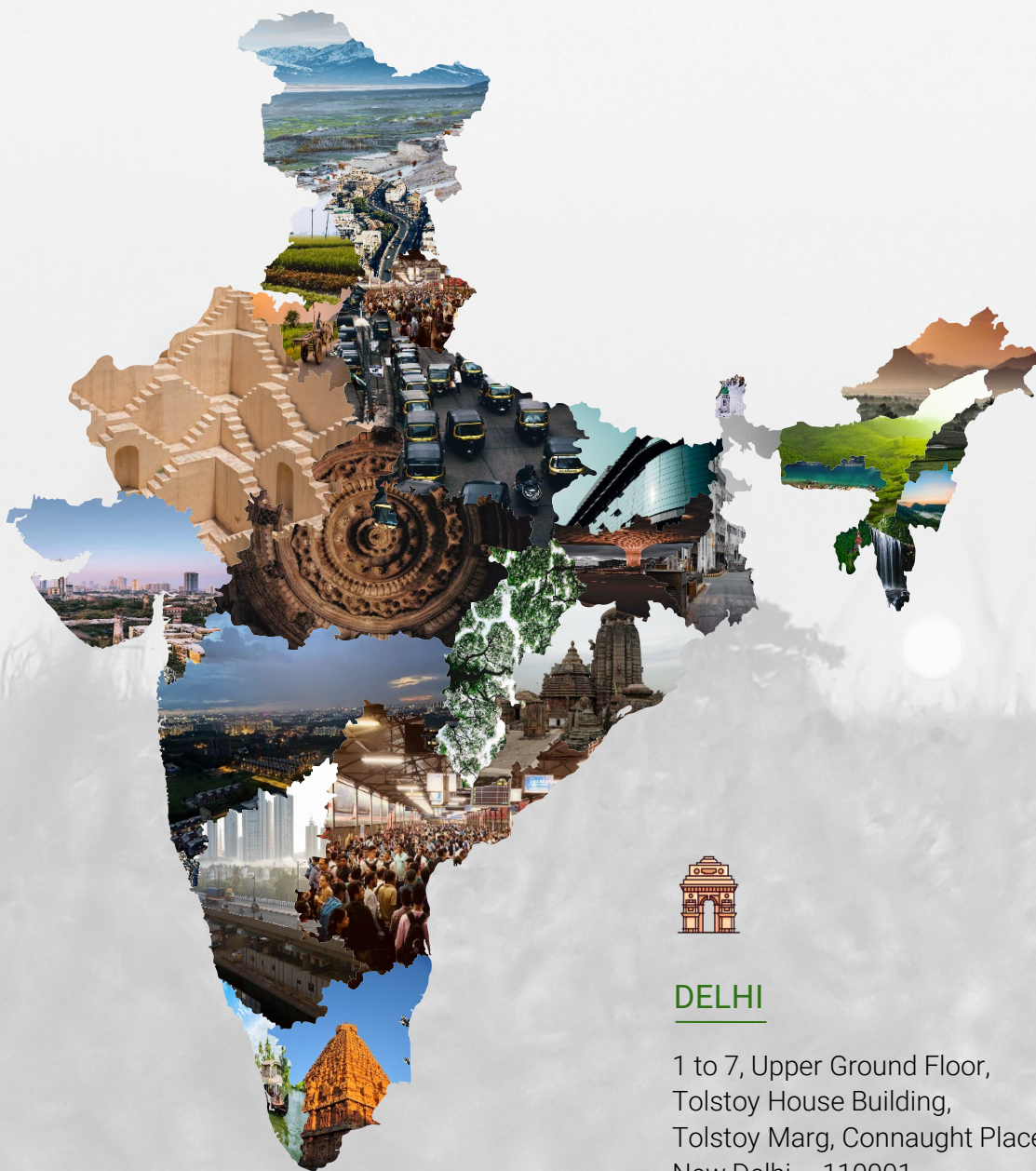
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# About Primus Partners

Primus Partners has been set up to partner with clients in ‘navigating’ India, by experts with decades of experience in doing so for large global firms. Set up on the principle of ‘Idea Realization’, it brings to bear ‘experience in action’. ‘Idea Realization’— a unique approach to examine futuristic ideas required for the growth of an organization or a sector or geography, from the perspective of assured on ground implementability. Our core strength comes from our founding partners, who are goal-oriented, with extensive hands-on experience and subject-matter expertise, which is well recognized in the industry. Our core founders form a diverse cohort of leaders from both genders with experience across industries (Public Sector, Healthcare, Transport, Education, etc.), and with varied specialization (engineers, lawyers, tax professionals, management, etc.).



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