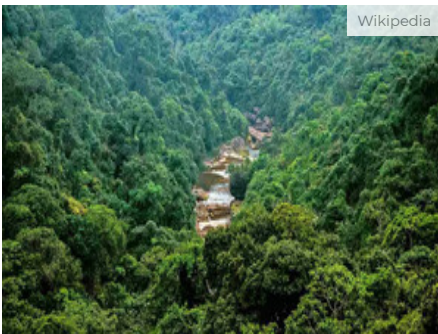


Assam government striving towards increasing forest cover from 36% to 38%

Synopsis

Saying that Assam Government is striving towards increasing forest cover in the State from present 36% to 38%, Forest Minister Patowary stated that TOFI Programme is going to augment these efforts in a big way. He underlined the need to increase livelihood opportunities for people living near forest areas to decrease their dependency on the forests and programmes like TOFI's importance in achieving that goal.



Representative Image

Assam's Environment and [Forest](#) Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said that Government is striving towards increasing forest cover in the State from present 36% to 38%,

He launched [Trees Outside Forests](#) in India (TOFI) Programme in Assam at a function organised by Centre for International Forestry Research and [World Agroforestry](#) in collaboration with Assam Agroforestry Development Board at Assam Administrative Staff College.

Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) is a five-year joint initiative by the [United States Agency](#) for International Development ([USAID](#)) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) of the [Government of India](#). With the [united force of](#) eight consortium partners led by CIFOR-ICRAF, the initiative is committed to expanding the area under trees outside forests for the benefit of livelihoods and the ecosystem in the seven participating states — Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and [Uttar Pradesh](#).

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The Minister Informed that a memorandum is going to be placed in the next cabinet meeting to abolish the system of seeking permission from Forest Department for felling trees planted in one's own land. He urged Forest Department officials to encourage people to plant trees of high commercial value such as Agar, Sishu, Sandalwood etc in their lands for economic benefits and growth of wood based industries in the state.

Saying that adverse effects of climate change are palpable as rain and drought patterns have become erratic in recent years, Patowary asserted that there is an urgent need to aggressively pursue agendas for environment protection by all sections. Calling for innovative thinking from Forest Department, the Minister urged the officials to take advantage of Assam's fertile land and abundant water bodies and rivers to rapidly increase forest cover to mitigate climate change.

Deputy Mission Director of USAID India Karen Klimowski said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President

Joe Biden launched the India-US Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership at their summit in April 2021 and both countries have set ambitious 2030 targets for climate action and clean energy. TOFI is part of that initiative as the partnership is working to mobilize finance and speed clean energy deployment; demonstrate and scale innovative clean technologies needed to decarbonize sectors including industry, transportation, power, and buildings etc, she said.

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