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# Bura Chapori Sanctuary Expansion — Assam Strengthens Conservation Corridor

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# Bura Chapori Sanctuary Expansion — Assam Strengthens Conservation Corridor

23 March 2026 · 4 min read

## WHY IN NEWS

The Assam government has issued a notification (dated March 15, 2026) under Section 5 of the Assam Forest Regulation, 1891, proposing the creation of a new Reserved Forest named Burhachapori No. 5, covering 224.325 hectares adjacent to Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary in Sonitpur district.

## Bura Chapori Sanctuary Expansion — Building a Conservation Corridor

### Background: Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary

Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary, covering **44.06 sq km**, lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra River in Sonitpur district, Assam. It forms part of the larger **Laokhowa-Burachapori ecosystem** — a mosaic of wet alluvial grassland, riparian and semi-evergreen forests, and wetlands.

FEATURE	DETAIL
Area	44.06 sq km
Location	South bank of Brahmaputra, Sonitpur district
Declared Reserved Forest	1974
Upgraded to Wildlife Sanctuary	1995
Ecosystem	Laokhowa-Burachapori
Key species	Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros, Tiger, Bengal Florican

### The Expansion Proposal

The proposed **Burhachapori No. 5 Reserved Forest** covers 224.325 hectares within the Dhaniala Range under the Nagaon Wildlife Division. The area is ecologically strategic — it is bordered on the north by Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary and **Orang National Park** (Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park).

This expansion is linked to **compensatory afforestation obligations** arising from multiple infrastructure and industrial projects across Assam. Under the Forest Conservation Act and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) framework, states must compensate for forest land diverted for non-forest purposes.

### Why Wildlife Corridors Matter

The new Reserved Forest will serve as a **habitat bridge** between Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary and Orang National Park. Such corridors are critical for:

- **Genetic exchange** among isolated populations of rhinoceros and tigers
- **Seasonal migration** of large herbivores like wild buffalo and elephants
- **Reducing human-wildlife conflict** by providing alternative movement routes
- **Ecosystem resilience** against habitat fragmentation caused by roads, railways, and settlements

India’s National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) specifically emphasises the identification and protection of wildlife corridors as a conservation priority.

### The Broader Assam Conservation Landscape

Assam is a conservation powerhouse in India’s northeast:

PROTECTED AREA	TYPE	AREA	KEY SPECIES
Kaziranga National Park	National Park	858 sq km	~70% of world’s one-horned rhinos
Manas National Park	National Park	500 sq km	Tiger, Golden Langur, Pygmy Hog
Orang National Park	National Park	78.81 sq km	Rhino, Tiger (“Mini Kaziranga”)
Bura Chapori WLS	Wildlife Sanctuary	44.06 sq km	Rhino, Bengal Florican
Dibru-Saikhowa NP	National Park	340 sq km	Feral Horses, White-winged Wood Duck

### The Bengal Florican — A Critical Conservation Target

Bura Chapori is one of the few remaining habitats of the **Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*)**, classified as **Critically Endangered** by the IUCN. This grassland bird has fewer than 500 individuals remaining globally. The expansion of protected habitat around Bura Chapori directly benefits this species by increasing undisturbed grassland area.

### Compensatory Afforestation in India

The **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA), 2016** governs how states must compensate for forest loss:

- States deposit compensatory afforestation funds with the **National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority**
- **90% of funds** go to State CAMPA; **10% to National CAMPA**
- Funds are used for: afforestation, regeneration of forest ecosystem, wildlife protection, forest fire prevention, and soil conservation
- Total CAMPA corpus: over Rs 70,000 crore (accumulated since 2004)

### Legal Framework for Reserved Forests

In Assam, the creation of Reserved Forests follows the **Assam Forest Regulation, 1891**:

- ① **Section 5:** Notification of intent to constitute a Reserved Forest
- ② **Section 6:** Appointment of Forest Settlement Officer
- ③ **Sections 7-17:** Settlement of rights of existing forest dwellers
- ④ **Section 18:** Final notification declaring the Reserved Forest

This process ensures that the rights of local communities are settled before formal declaration.

#### UPSC RELEVANCE

Bura Chapori WLS (location, area, year), Orang NP, Bengal Florican IUCN status, CAMPA Act 2016, Section 9 of Assam Forest Regulation 1891.

#### MAINS GS-3:

Wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity; compensatory afforestation as a conservation tool; balancing development with ecological preservation in the Northeast.

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### BURA CHAPORI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

Location: South bank of Brahmaputra, Sonitpur district, Assam

Area: 44.06 sq km

Reserved Forest status: 1974; Wildlife Sanctuary: 1995

Ecosystem: Laokhowa-Burachapori

Key fauna: Indian One-Horned Rhino, Tiger, Wild Buffalo, Bengal Florican

### PROPOSED BURHACHAPORI NO. 5 RESERVED FOREST:

Area: 224.325 hectares

Range: Dhania Range, Nagaon Wildlife Division

Notification: March 15, 2026 under Assam Forest Regulation 1891

Purpose: Habitat connectivity with Orang National Park

### ORANG NATIONAL PARK (RAJIV GANDHI ORANG NP):

Area: 78.81 sq km

Location: North bank of Brahmaputra, Darrang and Sonitpur districts

National Park status: 1999

Known as: "Mini Kaziranga"

### BENGAL FLORICAN:

IUCN Status: Critically Endangered

Population: Fewer than 500 globally

Habitat: Grasslands of South and Southeast Asia

Key Indian habitat: Assam (Kaziranga, Manas, Bura Chapori), Uttar Pradesh (Dudhwa)

### CAMPA ACT 2016:

Full name: Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act

Fund split: 90% State CAMPA + 10% National CAMPA

Total corpus: Over Rs 70,000 crore

Administering body: National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority

**OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:**

India has 106 National Parks and 567 Wildlife Sanctuaries (as of 2024)

Protected Area network covers ~5.26% of India's geographic area

National Wildlife Action Plan: 2017-2031

India's rhino population: ~3,262 (2021 census)

Assam has 5 National Parks and 18 Wildlife Sanctuaries

Sources: [Sentinel Assam](#), [PIB](#), [Vajiram & Ravi](#)

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