

## 5-member panel to suggest changes in forest laws

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Nagpur: The state government has set up a five-member committee to be headed by principal chief conservator of forest (head of forest force) and four officials to suggest changes in forest laws.

In 1976, after the 42nd constitutional amendment, forests were brought under Concurrent List. This means that both the state and Centre can make laws on the subject but in case of a dispute between the two, the law of the Centre would prevail.

Barring Indian Forest Rules, 1976, in the last 44 years no changes or new forest laws have been framed despite forestry sector undergoing major changes like forest cover under mangroves, ecotourism, bamboo development, channelling plantations in private forests, etc.

Considering the above, Maharashtra government has constituted a 5-member committee to suggest changes in forest-related rules. The panel will study present laws and suggest amendments.

The HoFF-headed committee includes PCCF (wildlife), APCCF & nodal officer, APCCF (conservation) as members and APCCF (protection) as member-secretary. Scope of work of the committee will include studying existing forest and wildlife laws and suggest changes in view of the present situation.

The panel has been asked to suggest rules to strengthen conservation of forests by making plantations mandatory while giving permissions for any construction activities by PWD, zilla parishads, gram panchayats and other agencies.

The panel will also suggest rules for plantations on private forests. The committee has been asked to submit its report by February 29, 2020. It has also been asked to seek services of retired forest officials, lawyers and experts, if needed. The panel can also form separate sub-committees and organize workshops for which the budget, planning and development department will allocate requisite funds

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/5-member-panel-to-suggest-changes-in-forest-laws/articleshow/71811413.cms>