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Collector to officials: Help tribals get forest rights

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NASHIK: Nashik district collector Gangatharan D today said the process for clearing applications under Forest Rights Act is being carried out on a war footing.

The district administration has rolled out different projects in the tribal-dominated talukas. Recently, tribals and farmers had participated in a long march to raise their demands. One of their demands was addition of names of persons who have been tilling forest land before 2005.

Authorities said there is a process for the addition. The applicants have to provide relevant evidence to prove the claim. "There are rejections of claims. We have asked the authorities to help the farmers get their claims corrected," said the collector.

The collector said that the authorities will conduct surveys to select sites for putting up weirs across nullahs and rivulets. This, he said, would help in better percolation of water into the soil. The efforts would help the tribal areas get drinking water and even for irrigation for a longer period, said another senior officer from the district administration.

The need for a power sub-station is also felt in the region. It would ensure continuous power supply to the farmers for their fields. "The farmers from Surgana, Dindori and Kalwan talukas have been demanding stable and quality power supply. At Kanashi, a 120 KV sub-station has been sanctioned and it will soon be raised," collector added.

Thousands of farmers, tribals marched from Nashik towards Mumbai to raise their long-pending demands. The

presented a list of 17 demands to the government that need attention. The government had accepted most of the demands.

The state government has announced formation of a cabinet sub-committee to monitor appeals and claims related to FRA. The panel will prepare a report in a month. The committee will monitor the pending claims of farmers under the Forest Rights Act. The committee has former MLA Jeeva Pandu Gavit and MLA Vinod Nikole, both from CPI(M).