

Forest dept gets Rs 650 cr from JICA for several projects

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Kolkata: State Forest department has taken up several projects with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which has already given a fund of Rs 650 crore. The allotment of funds has been increased from last year when the department had received Rs 250 crore from JICA.

The department will carry out animal-related welfare schemes utilising the funds. The state Forest department has been assigned to carry out massive mangrove plantations along the coastlines of India. It will carry out the project of mangrove transplantation as it has the expertise.

The main objective of the programme is to protect, sustain, conserve and augment forests in the country. The promotional measures are being implemented through a Central Sector Scheme under the National Coastal Mission Programme on 'Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs'.

Under this programme, the annual Management Action Plan (MAP) for the conservation and management of mangroves are formulated and implemented in all the coastal states. The department has received Rs 200 crore under the G-20 corpus for initiating the project and will start conducting mangrove plantations along the coastlines. Nine states, including Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha, Bengal and Karnataka joined hands on mangrove conservation through the "Magical Mangroves" campaign. Bengal's mangrove plantation had been highly appreciated by the Centre.

It had sent an invitation to the state government last year for a presentation before nine states so that they can learn about the exercise. Mangroves provide a range of services like fisheries, medicines, recreation, eco tourism, nursery and coastal protection. An integrated coastal zone management project was piloted in coastal stretches of three states like Gujarat, Odisha and Bengal, with the objective of conservation and protection of coastal resources. In another development, the state Forest department will also conduct the installation of flexible aluminium nets to check tigers from entering localities. Meanwhile, the department has urged the Centre to implement eco-sensitive zones in all the national forests in Bengal and restrict polluting industries within a shorter length.

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