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Karnataka to make deemed forest maps available online soon

Karnataka Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre on Thursday said a joint survey with the revenue department is the solution to resolve confusions created by any errors in the deemed forest notification. Khandre said that the state government has already finalised the list of deemed forests in an affidavit submitted before the Supreme Court.

PTI (/pti-stories) | Bengaluru | Updated: 09-11-2023 16:57 IST | Created: 09-11-2023 16:57 IST



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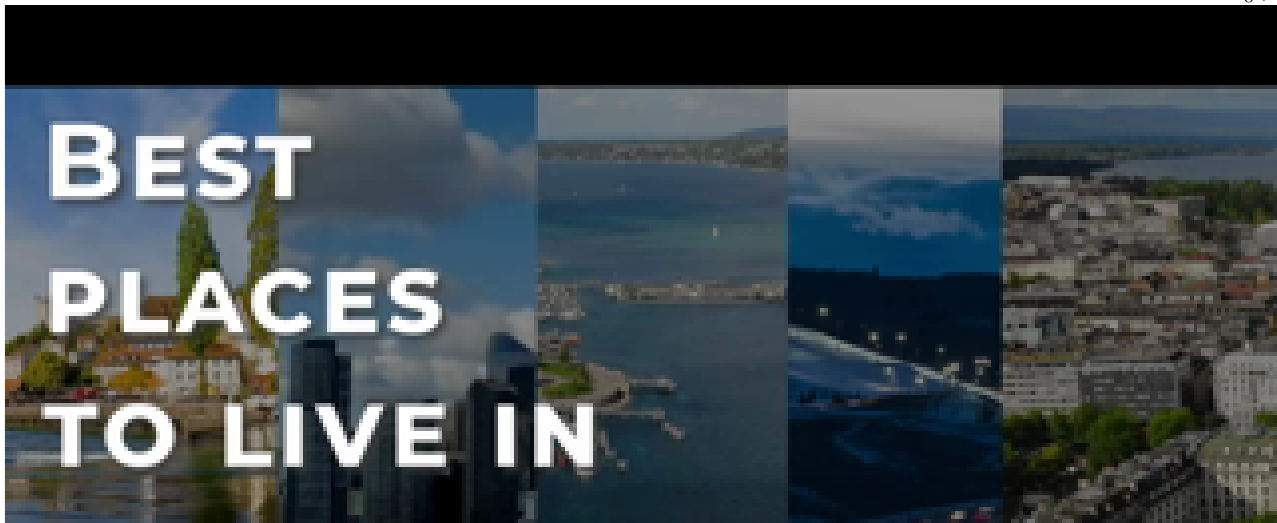
Karnataka Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre on Thursday said a joint survey with the revenue department is the solution to resolve confusions created by any errors in the deemed forest notification. He also asked the officials concerned to make the map of 3.3 lakh acres of deemed forest available to the public to bring transparency over the ownership claims.



'Deemed forest' - forest revenue land is generally known to be forest technology as such by central or state authorities in official records.

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The issue regarding the forest-revenue land was discussed by Khandre at a high-level meeting held with Energy Minister K J George, who is also the in-charge minister for Chikkamagaluru district. Khandre said that the state government has already finalised the list of deemed forests in an affidavit submitted before the Supreme Court. "It is also said that there is some 'patta' (cultivated land with ownership claims) land and even schools included in the revised list. But it is not possible to submit a separate affidavit for each district. "So, if deputy commissioners in all the districts come together with the Forest Department, a joint survey can be conducted and the information will help to remove errors and a (revised) affidavit can be submitted," he said, adding that only then this problem can be solved.

The minister also assured that the exercise to evict encroachments will be put on hold until the joint survey is completed.

Addressing the rising incidents of human-animal conflicts, the minister said that the lack of adequate rain has caused problems, and that railway barricades will be erected to prevent wild elephants from straying into human habitats. In this context, the department has been instructed to submit a proposal, he said. Efforts are being made to send wild elephants back to the forest and troublesome tuskers to the elephant camp, he added. Revenue Department Principal Secretary Rajendra Kumar Kataria said that efforts are being made by the department to make the deemed forest maps available online within a week. He also said that with equipment like a sophisticated drone, a joint survey can be done.