

Satellite images to be used to protect forest lands in Mulugu

The forest department will also take up the plantation in forest lands that were allegedly cleared by the Gotti Koyas or Gothi Koyas, who migrated to the Eturnagaram forest area from Chattisgarh.

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Mulugu: The Forest Department will use satellite images available with them and other government agencies to check illegal 'Podu cultivation' to protect forest lands in Mulugu district.

The department will also take up the plantation in forest lands that were allegedly cleared by the Gotti Koyas or Gothi Koyas, who migrated to the Eturnagaram forest area from Chattisgarh. Speaking to the media at the Eturnagaram forest office on Thursday, Forest Divisional Officer (FDO) Veenavani said that some Gotti Koyas were creating hurdles for the forest staff when the latter were trying to plant saplings in about 50 acres of forest land at Chintalamori Gotti Koya Gudem near Chinnaboinapally in Eturnagaram, claiming that they had been cultivating the land for years. "The Gotti Koyas have illegally occupied the land in recent years for Podu cultivation. But they are trying to mislead the media saying that they have been cultivating the lands for the last 20 to 30 years. They are threatening us that they would commit suicide if the government took up the plantation. This is not right. We are verifying the records by comparing them to satellite images," she explained, adding that the forest officials would also book those who encroach forest lands. She also found fault with the government departments/agencies that had given house numbers, Aadhaar cards and ration cards to Gotti Koyas who migrated from Chattisgarh. "As they are getting government-authorized documents like ration card, voter ID and others, they are moving court claiming rights over the forest land. This has to be stopped," Veenavani added. There were already cases against 22 people at Chinthlamori Gudem, she said. It may be recalled that Gotti Koyas, who are called 'Muria Gonds' in Chattisgarh, migrated to the forests of erstwhile Karimnagar, Khammam and Warangal district several years ago. They settled down in the Eturnagaram wildlife sanctuary. Apparently, they practice very unsustainable farming methods. They are said to have illegally encroached thousands of acres of forest lands by felling trees. Now you can get handpicked stories from Telangana Today on Telegram everyday. Click the link to subscribe.

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