

Set up taskforce, clear hurdles to recover forest land: Min

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Bengaluru: Noticing lapses in the recovery of encroached forest lands across Karnataka due to laxity of officials, forest minister Eshwar B Khandre has directed the forest department to set up a dedicated taskforce to recover encroached land in and around Bengaluru Urban district.

Legal obstacles will have to be cleared in coordination with the revenue department. The taskforce will have officials from the forest, revenue, urban, home and rural development and panchayat raj departments along with subject experts.

Expressing displeasure over the lack of commitment in pursuing encroachment cases to their logical end, the minister had written to the additional chief secretary of the forest, environment and ecology department a few days ago and directed officials to submit a proposal to set up the taskforce. "Karnataka has the highest encroachment of forest lands. At the outset, it is evident that in most cases, forest officials have failed to coordinate with the revenue department to evict the encroachment and have no interest in safeguarding forest wealth for the future generation," he stated.

He pointed out that the loss of green cover will have a severe impact and a slight imbalance would affect the ecosystem. "It is important to resolve legal disputes spanning several years, surrounding these encroachments. All

these cases have to be dealt with in a timely manner. Bengaluru has the largest extent of encroached forest land in Karnataka and hence, a separate taskforce needs to be formed,” he added.

Referring to documentation of changes in the land-use pattern, he directed officials to make use of information technology and satellite map inputs to record changes in forest land. “In most cases, there is hardly any provision to provide necessary documents as evidence, register FIRs in cases of illegal axing of trees and encroachment of forest land. An online FIR registration mechanism shall be created within the department for speedy and hassle-free registering of cases,” he said.

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Karnataka forest minister orders special task force to recover encroached forest land
The forest minister of Karnataka, Eshwar B Khandre, has directed the forest department to establish a dedicated task force to recover encroached forest land in and around Bengaluru. The task force will involve officials from various departments and subject experts, and will aim to clear legal obstacles in coordination with the Revenue department. The minister expressed concern over the lack of coordination and commitment in pursuing encroachment cases, and stressed the importance of resolving these disputes in a time-bound manner. He also emphasized the need for using technology to record changes in forest land and creating an online FIR registration mechanism.[103940665](#)

Arikomban surfaces at Manjolai, forest department sounds alarm
A tusker named Arikomban, captured in Theni district and released in Tirunelveli district, has reappeared near human settlements in Manjolai area. The forest department has alerted residents and deployed a team to monitor the elephant. Arikomban had previously caused damage in Idukki district before being released with a radio collar. The elephant is currently roaming between Nalumukku and Oothu areas and authorities have banned tourist movement in the area. Efforts are being made to drive the elephant back into the jungle. No injuries have been reported.[103797199](#)

Sighting of tigers on forest fringes keeps foresters on their toes
A team of personnel in Mysuru are keeping a close watch on the fringes of the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve after the recent rescue of a big cat. Camera traps have captured images of three tigers and a leopard in the area where a boy was mauled to death. The operation, which involves over 40 personnel, is ongoing to ensure the safety of villagers living on the forest fringes. The director of the reserve confirmed the movement of the big cats and the need for continued vigilance.[103879663](#)