

# State's forest mgmt plans out of 50-year hibernation

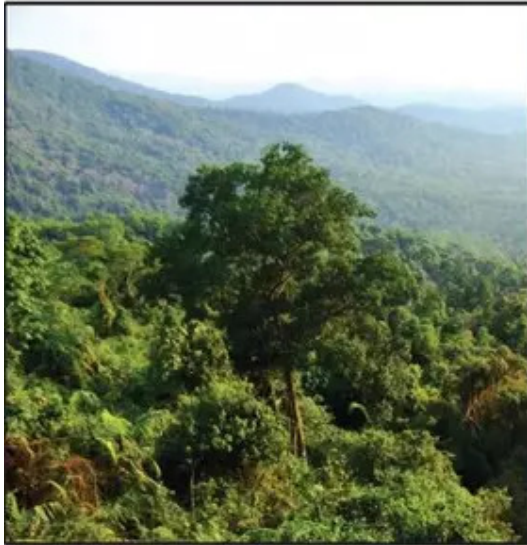
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PANAJI: After being neglected for over five decades, comprehensive forest management plans will be prepared by the forest department, with forest minister Vishwajit Rane setting an “ambitious timeline” of 12 months to complete the task.

# GOA'S GREEN ASSETS

(All areas in sqkm)



Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary | **133**

Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary | **85.6**

Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary | **7.9**

Mollem National Park | **107**

Dr Salim Ali Sanctuary | **1.7**

Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary | **208.5**

Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary | **211**

Rane said that the plans will chart a sustainable future for the state's forests.

He said that forest department officials will visit wildlife sanctuaries in other states to study the best practices and learn how forest management plans are prepared and implemented. "This progressive initiative is driven by our commitment to safeguard our precious forests and preserve our environment," said the minister.

Rane said that forest department officials will visit Ranthambore (Rajasthan), Tadoba (Maharashtra), Bandhavgarh (Madhya Pradesh), and Jim Corbett Park (Uttarakhand). But he did hint that Goa will try to emulate the "exemplary model" of Madhya Pradesh.

"We are in the process of sending our deputy conservators of forests and range forest officers to various wildlife sanctuaries to learn the implementation of forest management plans and methodology," said Rane. "This will help us further enhance the ecosystem in wildlife sanctuaries. We are working on providing exposure to the officers to create the required ecosystem in Goa."

The vision, said Rane, is to create a thriving ecosystem that fosters the well-being of wildlife. Mining activities, the expansion of agriculture and horticulture, forest fires, and various developmental activities have degraded the state's forest cover.

The forest management plans will provide a roadmap for the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources within a sanctuary. They set management goals for specific protected areas and provide a strategy for species management, anti-poaching, patrolling, and curtailing illegal trade in wild animals and plant species. Once approved, these plans will be in force for 10 years with periodic reviews.

Forest department officials said that the management plans will record the topography, humidity, rainfall patterns, soil, flora and fauna as well as waterbodies.

The Goa government had begun the process to formulate wildlife management plans for all seven protected areas in the state several years ago, but progress has been lethargic.

Wildlife management plans for the Bondla and Cotigao sanctuaries were drafted and kept ready in 2021. The work on plans for the remaining sanctuaries and the national park is in the final process.