

Tamil Nadu to spend Rs 50 crore for geo-referencing of forests

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CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Friday announced geo-referencing of forest areas using a differential global positioning system at a cost of Rs 50 crore.

The Union environment and forests ministry told the state to take up geo-referencing as suggested by the Forests Survey of India to get the spatially accurate forest boundaries.

Making a suo moto statement in the assembly, the chief minister said the programme would be taken up for a period of three years. In the first phase, work would be taken up at Rs 31 crore,” he said.

The chief minister also said eight forest extension centres would be modernised in Coimbatore, Namakkal, Karur, Thanjavur, Kancheepuram, Dharmapuri, Virudhunagar and Chennai at Rs 2.4 crore. These centres were set up to raise and supply quality tree seedlings to the locals and strengthened by the combined effort of industrialists, educationists and environmental enthusiasts to provide technical support to farmers to market the produce.

The tiger reserves provide rare opportunities to see and enjoy wildlife closely besides allowing enthusiasts to trek.

The government will set up small halls equipped with audio-visual facilities to get to know wildlife and the benefits of the forests in three tiger reserves, Kalakad-Mundanthurai in Tirunelveli, Anamalai tiger reserve in Coimbatore and Tirupur districts,

and Sathyamangalam tiger reserve in Erode district, the CM said.

“As there is a plan to maintain the roads in forests at Rs 200 crore in the coming years, I wish to state that the 577km long roads will be taken up for maintenance at Rs 57.7 crore this year,” Palaniswami said.

The consolidated pay of 1,119 anti-poaching watchers of the state government would be increased to Rs 12,500 from the existing Rs 10,000, the chief minister said.