

Uttarakhand forest department to use GIS to check for encroachments

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In the last two surveys conducted by the Forest Survey of India over a period of four years from 2015 to 2019, Uttarakhand has not reported an increase of even 1% forest cover. (Representational Photo/HT)

To keep a check on encroachments on forest land, the Uttarakhand forest department has now asked all officials to use the Geographic Information System (GIS) technique to measure encroachments.

Jai Raj, the head of forest force (HOFF), Uttarakhand forest department, issued the directions to all divisional forest officials in the state in a letter Wednesday.

The letter read, "Encroachment on government land has been increasing continuously in the state, including forest land. It is important to vacate or remove encroachments from forest land with regular checking, but till then, it is important to ensure that more land is not encroached upon. Instead of routine checks, encroachment must be checked effectively, for which Geographic Information System (GIS) technique should compulsorily be used."

The forest department has further asked all divisional forest officers to check satellite imagery of forest areas of the past years to check for changes in encroachment. The divisional forest officers have also been asked to employ stricter measures to check encroachment and not just erect boundary pillars.

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In the latest report, Uttarakhand has reported its recorded forest area (RFA) as 38,000 sq km, which is 71.05% of its geographical area. The reserved, protected and unclassified forests comprise 69.86%, 26.01% and 4.13% of the recorded forest area in the state, respectively.

In June this year, seven forest officials were injured in a clash over alleged forest land encroachment by Van Gujjar families in Rajaji Tiger Reserve.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/environment/uttarakhand-forest-department-to-use-gis-to-check-for-encroachments/story-X1i3Lz4f7tyhKHV19ySdqJ.html>

