

Digitally map forest limits: Govt to states

The case, Lafarge Umiam Mining Pvt. Ltd. vs. Union of India & Ors dealt with environmental clearance conditions for limestone mining in Meghalaya

Published on: Apr 15, 2026 10:58 AM IST

By [Jayashree Nandi](#)



New Delhi: The Union environment ministry has asked states and UTs to begin the process of demarcating forest boundaries digitally in keeping with its order in a 2011 case in a move that it expects to help address issues such as misclassification of forest areas, prevent encroachments, and resolve overlapping claims under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 .



Since 2011, only Odisha has completed more than 90% of the settlement and digitisation process. (File picture)

Advertisement

The case, Lafarge Umiam Mining Pvt. Ltd. vs. Union of India & Ors dealt with environmental clearance conditions for limestone mining in Meghalaya, and the order addressed a number of issues related to environmental governance in India. It ordered the creation and regular updating of a GIS based decision support database with coordinates of forests as defined in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; the core, buffer and eco-sensitive zone of the protected areas constituted as per the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; the important migratory corridors for wildlife; and forest land diverted in the past.

States and UTs can claim funding for the exercise from Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) funds, it said adding that CAMPA will take up the task of providing technical, financial and managerial support to the States and UTs to accomplish demarcation of forest areas.

“This initiative will enable accurate identification of all forest lands irrespective of their legal notification status, strengthen monitoring of forest diversions and compensatory afforestation sites. It will further protect customary and statutory rights, and ensure compliance with Supreme Court mandates and national forest policy,” the ministry added.



Siddhanta Das, Chairman of SC’s Central Empowered Committee who is advising the ministry on the demarcation process said the process may be expensive and time consuming. “To effectively manage forest resources, it is critical for forest departments to know their boundaries. This process may be a bit expensive and time consuming, but it is not only legally binding but also essential. However, it is very important that this demarcation exercise is carried in association with the revenue department to make the demarcated boundaries have robust legal backing.”

Advertisement


“It is found that CAMPA plantations continue to affect land and forest rights of local communities and biodiversity across the states. Some plantation projects are implemented under annual plan of operation (APO) without any compliance of FRA and without getting consent of the Gram Sabhas- a mandatory legal requirement under FRA. In recent years creation of land banks in the states for implementation of CAMPA has seen alienation of forest and common land which communities have been depended on for their livelihoods and rights. These issues need to be addressed,” said Tushar Dash, independent researcher and expert on forest rights act.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jayashree Nandi

I write on the environment and climate crisis and I believe these are the most important stories of our times.

Forest Righ

| Check [India news](#) real-time updates, [latest news](#) from India on Hindustan Times and more acro... 

ADVERTISEMENT

Next Story



'No moral right': Who said what as resignations pour in after TMC's poll upset

The resignations of ex-bureaucrats, journalists and economists come at a time when a defiant Mamata continues to accuse the BJP of polling rigging.

Updated on: May 06, 2026 10:05 PM IST

