

**Maharashtra: Over 1000 hectares of mangroves in Uran Taluka get 'Reserve Forest' tag**

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In a major development, the Revenue and Forest Department of the Maharashtra State Government has notified a total of 1463 hectares (Ha) of mangroves land as the Reserve Forest under section 4 of the Indian Forest Act.

Of the total 1453 ha, around 1090 ha of mangroves land are in Uran Taluka. The remaining is located in Mhasala Taluka and Andheri Taluka of the Mumbai suburban district.

Environmentalists welcomed the decision and demanded that around 1250 ha of mangroves in the NMSEZ should also be transferred to the Forest Department.

In a notification issued early this month, the state government has proposed to declare mangroves land in Uran taluka, which is spread in 37 villages, as the Reserve Forest land. A few of them are located in Panje, Sonari, Koproli, Dongari, Funde and other villages.

Virendra Tiwari, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF), mangrove cell, said that the whole process of transferring the mangrove lands from the Revenue Department to the Forest Department will take at least a year.

“The Sub Divisional Officer of Panvel, in charge of Uran Taluka, is appointed as the Forest Settlement Officers who will visit the villages mentioned in the notification and enquire into the ownership of the said mangrove lands and accordingly submit a report,” said Tiwari.

He added that if anyone is not satisfied with the report, the person or villagers can appeal to the district collector. “After completion of the whole process, a final notification will be issued,” said Tiwari.

“After mangroves land is transferred to the Forest Department, we can take action against people destroying the mangroves under the Indian Forest Act,” said Tiwari.

At present, any violations in such places which are not reserved or protected under the Forest Act, action is taken under the Environment Protection Act or CRZ Act.

Welcoming the move, Kharghar-based activist Nareshchandra Singh said that the process of handing over mangroves to the forest department is very slow and this gives an opportunity to landgrabbers.

Source: <https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/maharashtra-over-1000-hectares-of-mangroves-in-uran-taluka-get-reserve-forest-tag>