



## **New private forest areas come to light**

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Panaji: The review committee carrying out ground verification of additional private forest areas in the state, as identified by the Thomas & Araujo committees, has found in the process new private forest areas. The body's sub-committees carrying out the groundwork have found land adjacent to areas identified as private forests by the committees. The ground officers have told the review committee that these new areas also appear to qualify as private forests.

The review committee has decided to inform the state government about these new private forest areas.

"The member secretary invited the attention of the committee members that as per the patches provided by the Forest Survey of India, there are large green areas of more than 5ha and more than 40% canopy density found outside the survey numbers provisionally identified by Thomas & Araujo committees. However, the review committee is reviewing only the areas provisionally identified by the Thomas & Araujo committees as per the mandate given to the committee," the review committee was informed at its meeting in August this year.

The sub-committees felt that the ground verification can only be complete if these adjoining new patches of forests are taken into account.

"It is also noticed that in some cases, the patch extends to the areas adjacent to the survey numbers which are not identified by the Thomas & Araujo committees and that the review can only be completed if the entire patch is verified in the field," the review committee was told.

The example of two survey numbers at Velim in Salcete taluka were shown to the committee. However, the review committee decided that it will only work within the mandate provided to it for now.

"The committee observed that its mandate is to review only the areas identified by the Thomas & Araujo committees, but this issue may be brought to the notice of the government," the review committee has said.

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