

# The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

## Now, drones to curb illegal mining in Punjab forests

29 March 2022

Forest and Civil Supplies Minister Lal Chand Kataruchak today launched surveillance drones to curb illegal mining and deforestation.

Briefing mediapersons after a meeting with officials of the Forest Department, Kataruchak said it had set a target to increase area under the forests and trees to 7.5 per cent of the total area of the state by 2030.

To achieve this goal and to make Punjab a greener state, around 1.15 crore saplings would be planted by the Forest Department during 2022-23, he said and added that 60 lakh saplings would be planted on the forest land and 55 lakh saplings would be planted by farmers and locals.

He said the department has also launched a toll-free number **1800-180-2323** for the convenience of people and an online portal to facilitate transparency in the process of issuing permits to owners of Kandi area.

The minister said a procedure would be formulated to remove illegal occupants from the forest land.

He directed the officials to start a timber market in the state to ensure the growth of agro-forestry.

Seema Jain, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest Department, informed that the work related to digitisation of forest boundaries would be started on a war footing to curb encroachments and illegal mining.

He said the government would take a call on filling vacancies of forest guards and forest range officers.

Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/punjab/now-drones-to-curb-illegal-mining-in-forests-in-punjab-381604>