

Odisha adds highest number of mangrove forests in country, says CM Patnaik

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The Hental forests are expanding in Odisha as in two years the mangrove forest has grown by 8 square kilometers between 2019 and 2021. Odisha has become the first state in the country to increase Hental forests and is also ranked third in the country in terms of maximum forest area growth. At a two-day divisional forest officers (DFOs) conference where the data was released, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik instructed to draw a roadmap to improve the living conditions of the forest dwellers.

Speaking over various issues, the CM urged officials to take necessary steps to reduce human-elephant conflict, wildlife trafficking, and forest fires.

The Hental forests have increased in Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, and Balasore districts. It is usually the Hental forest that prevents coastal erosion during natural disasters such as floods and storms. As per the India State of Report 2021, Odisha has become the first state in India to have the highest number of Hental forests.

"Odisha has added the highest number of mangrove forests in the country and it is the third highest in the country in terms of the total increase of forest cover between 2019 and 2021. It has been possible due to the constant support of people. Prepare a concrete roadmap to improve forest health and enhance the living standards of forest fringe villagers," the CM said and urged officials to carry out a plantation drive.

"Besides usual functions of forest conservation and wildlife protection, the department now has a larger role to facilitate projects that provide livelihood support for people living in forest areas," said Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra.

According to senior environmentalists, Hental forests are very helpful in protecting the coast from natural disasters. So, the growth of the Hental forest is a good sign. So not only the forest department but also the public need to play an active role in creating this forest.

Environmentalist Dr Jaykrushna Panigrahi said, "It is a good sign. It is very much necessary to increase Hental forest due to climate change. Not only the forest department but also the public need to play an active role to save and create new forests."

The forest officials also discussed in detail the causes and remedies of forest fires. Action plans are being developed at the district level at the initiative of the state government and the forest dwellers are being widely alerted in various ways. In addition, the forest department has been using modern technology to douse forest fires. The Chief Minister emphasized at the conference to make the state government's 'My Forest, My Environment' campaign even more successful.

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