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State to hire agency to audit mangroves: Forest minister

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Panaji: To ensure conservation of mangroves, the state environment ministry will be hiring a special agency to audit mangroves in Goa, forest minister Vishwajit Rane said on Saturday.

“The agency along with @goaforests will prepare a plan for maintenance of mangroves & work on conservation, protection and improve quality of mangroves. Mangroves are extremely important to our coastal ecosystems, we will work persistently to take all measures to protect and conserve them,” Rane tweeted.

In May, a police complaint was filed on Rane’s directions after the tenant association of the local comunidade was found to be responsible for destruction of 29 mangrove trees at Mercês.

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The forest minister had said that several cases of mangrove destruction have come to light in the state and that actions like dumping of garbage and filling up of mangrove areas will be viewed seriously. Rane said awareness about the importance of mangroves to the coastal ecosystem is lacking, which is leading to mangrove forests in the state being neglected or destroyed.

Destruction of mangroves is an offence under the Goa Preservation of Trees Act, 1984.



Rane had instructed forest officials to identify the cause of deterioration of the mangrove forest at Mercas and also to take action against those involved in disturbing the health of this coastal ecosystem.

Goa has a good cover of mangrove vegetation, about 27sqkm in its estuarine zone. Around 900ha of mangroves are found along the Zuari estuary, 700ha along the Mandovi estuary and 200ha along the Cumbharjua canal.

A total of 12 species have been documented in Goa out of 45 species found in India.

Extracts from mangroves and their dependent species are rich in bio-active compounds useful for effective treatment of diseases, but the full potential of this biodiversity is yet to be investigated and utilised.

Mangrove cover in Goa has gone up by around 1sqkm recently. Natural mangrove regeneration is often noticed in saline ecosystems like the khazan lands, while some re-plantation activities have also been spearheaded by the Mangrove Society of India.