

Separate Policies for Each State to Achieve 33 Per Cent Forest Cover

A new forest policy is on the anvil. The environment ministry has asked the respective States to frame their own policies for achieving the target of 33 per cent forest cover in the country.

According to the sources in the ministry, a meeting of State Forest and Environment Ministers will be convened next month in this regard. The meet will also deliberate on other aspects pertaining to the improvement of forest quality, their scientific management, etc.

The forest policy is presently being reviewed by the experts in the ministry. The Indian Institute of Forest Management has done the ground work with public consultation and field visits. Next it will be discussed with stakeholders and taken to a logical conclusion to have a new forest policy.

Subsequent to this, the state governments are also being urged to come out with their comprehensive and relevant forest policies so that there is a substantial increase in forest cover and the 33 per cent target is achieved.

The main agenda of the proposed meeting with State Environment Ministers would be how to restore and protect forests. Further, it also has to be planned how to use degraded land which is 30 per cent of forest area, besides incentivise more forest cover outside forest area.

The sources further informed that with timber worth Rs. 40,000 crore being imported, the ministry has prepared guidelines for a PPP model in which degraded land will be given on lease to private companies who can harvest wood, use it and continue the chain which will help in creating more carbon sink. Further, the ministry will also frame courses aimed at enhancing skills for people working in the field of environment, forest and climate change.

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