

**CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE
GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**

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Honourable Chief Minister Sri K Chandrashekar Rao has seriously warned that the Government will act very firmly with iron hand in protecting the forests, and will revoke PD act on wood/Timber smugglers in the state. He said that the intelligence wing is involved in identifying those who illegally fell the forests and smuggle timber/wood. The Chief Minister has instructed the forest department to appoint officers of highest integrating, commitment and dedication in forest areas to protect the forests. The CM said that check posts are to be deployed in large numbers in forest areas to see that not even a small piece of wood will be taken out of forest illegally. The CM has instructed to form joint flying squads comprising of armed police and police officials. He said that these squads in addition to continues checks should also keep an eye on all routes to and fro to the forest areas. He said that district collector, superintendent of Police and DFO together should evolve an action plan to protect the forests. At the field level the Police inspector and the forest range officers together should shoulder the responsibilities of protect the forests.

The Chief Minister said that the existing forest act of Telangana needs to be thoroughly reviewed and relooked and also to bring new act if necessary, to protect the forests and to punish the forest encroachers and smugglers.

Chief Minister held a high-level review meeting on Saturday at Pragathi Bhavan with senior police and forest officials on forest protection and afforestation. Chief advisor to the government Rajiv Sharma, Chief Secretary SK. Joshi, DGP Mahender Reddy, PCCF PK Jah, additional DG Jitender, IGS Naveen Chand, Stephen Ravindra, Nagi Reddy, CCF Raghuv eer, CMO Officers Bhoopal Reddy, Priyanka Varghese, MLAs Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Balka Suman, MLCs Karne Prabhakar, Shambhipoor Raju, Corporation Chairmen Sheri Subash Reddy, Gyadari Balamallu, Mareddy Srinivas Reddy and others participated in the review meeting.

“For improving greenery in the state, a multipronged strategy should be developed and implemented. This requires four types of actions to be initiated. Firstly, the existing forest need to be protected in toto. Second the lost forest needs to be rejuvenated. Third in rural areas social forestry has to be taken up. Fourth including Hyderabad and Warangal in all towns and cities and urban areas to avoid pollution greenery has to be developed” directed the CM.

“With the slogan Protect the forest, increase the forest (Jungle Bachaavo, Jungle Badaavo) the forest missionary should proceed. There is no use in conducting programmes like Haritha haram to grow trees when from one side we lose the forests. Unless we protect the forests, any many programmes like Haritha Haram will not yield results. We should be very harsh in taking decisions to protect the forests. For this police and forest officials should work hand in hand. Armed police will help the forest department. The intelligence wing is totally at the work of identifying those who fell the forests illegally and smuggle the timber. Once they are identified action should be initiated against them. Smuggling should be brought down to zero level. PD act should be applied against those who indulging smuggling. There is still forests in the erstwhile Adilabad, Khammam, Karimnagar and Warangal districts. Smuggling is largely taking place in these districts only. We should identify the areas where illegal felling of forests is on large scale. There we should take care that not even a single tree is lost. The forest department to be prepare list of very tough officers with high integrity, commitment and dedication right from forest rangers, DFO to be deployed in forests areas that are susceptible for wood smuggling. Armed police protection will be provided to them. Check posts in the large numbers on all routes to and fro the forest areas are to be arranged jointly manned by police and forests officers. Even there also armed police are to be kept in vigil. Not even a single tree should be subjected to illegal felling and subjected to encroachment in the forest” said the Chief Minister.

“The Government obligation to the people and we have to be loyal to the people. There is no political interest for us. We have taken up forest protection and improving greenery with a view that the future generation are protected. We will deal with forest smugglers. However influential the smugglers may be, action has to be taken against them. In

case if TRS leaders or workers found involve in the smuggling action should be taken first against them” said the CM.

“Only when there is 33% of greenery then there would be environment equilibrium. In Telangana according to official data there is 24% forests but in effect it would be only 12%. In forest areas the situation is not so encouraging and very pathetic. In erstwhile Andhra Pradesh forest felling large scale. Even when losing lakhs of acres of forests, the Government remained as silent spectator. It did not bother when there were large scale encroachments. Let us realize this now at least. Unless environment equilibrium is not maintained it is difficult to the human being to exist. The lost forest has to be rejuvenated. The whole of forest should be filled with green trees” said the CM.

“In Telangana rural areas trees are to be grown on a large scale and in every vacant area, and in every house. For compulsory plantation of saplings and to protect them we brought changes in New Panchayat raj Act. In every village nursery are to be developed compulsorily. Plantation of saplings on large scale and their protection should be the responsibility of local bodies” said the CM.

“Many of the urban areas, towns and cities are with pollution. In capital Delhi there is large scale pollution resulting in serious illness. Same with other cities. We are fortunate that we are living in Hyderabad. Unless we are careful, we may also face the same situation like the other cities. Pollution increases due to vehicles and population. To compensate this and to protect future generation we need to go for greenery. Hence in cities like Hyderabad, Warangal and others we need to grow trees on large scale. We need to identify forest blocks there and convert them in to parks and provide walking tracks. Walkers clubs are to be formed and management of these forest blocks are to be handover to them. There need to be special strategy for growing trees in cities and towns” said CM.

The CM said that the present forest act has to be reviewed and relooked. The object should be making the state green, protect the forests and punish the smugglers. The CM told officers that in accordance with this idea for protection of environment a new act is required. The CM said that in addition to making use of CAMPA funds green cess will be collected. Donation will also be collected from MPs, MLAs, MLCs and other people’s representatives besides making use of the CSR funds for forest development programme. Thus, to see that there is no deficiency of funds a “GREEN FUND” will be created for this purpose.

CPRO TO CM