

MGNREGS Aid to Increase Green Cover

By Express News Service

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BHUBANESWAR: As the Forest and Environment department has failed to achieve its afforestation target during the last few years, the State Government has decided to take up plantation activities in convergence with MGNREGS funds. The district collectors have been directed to involve village committees in all

plantation activities as per the convergence plan for plantation in respective districts. Chief Secretary Gokul Chandra Pati reviewed the plantation programmes of all the districts through a video conference with the district collectors. He asked the collectors to monitor the plantation activities regularly.

PLANTATION ACTIVITIES

COLLECTORS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO INVOLVE VILLAGE COMMITTEES IN ALL PLANTATION ACTIVITIES AS PER THE CONVERGENCE PLAN

Since rainy season is drawing near, land for plantation, seedlings and nurseries will be kept in all readiness



Directorate of horticulture was asked to ensure supply of fruit seedlings to the districts in time

Wage component of plantation activities to be utilised from MGNREGS funds and materials cost is to be met from departmental funds

Since rainy season is drawing near, the land for plantation, seedlings and nurseries should be kept in all readiness for planting activities, he said. Pati further directed the district collectors to take up horticultural activities in convergence with MGNREGS funds. The Directorate of Horticulture was asked to ensure supply of fruit seedlings to the districts in time. However, the district collectors were advised not to take up banana plantation under convergence scheme as it is not permissible under MGNREGS funds. Panchayati Raj Secretary D K Singh told the collectors that the wage component of the plantation activities could be utilised from MGNREGS funds, while the materials cost is to be met from departmental funds. He, however, clarified that wherever departmental fund is not available, both the costs can be met from MGNREGS funds maintaining the prescribed ratio of labour component at district level. Of the Rs 718.62 crore budgetary provision of the Forest and Environment department, State Plan outlay of

Rs 256.54 crore has been made. For increasing green cover in the State, Rs 121.36 crore is provided in the budget. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pulled up the State Government for shortfall in achievement of target fixed for plantation by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). The MoEF had fixed target for afforestation over 2.15 lakh hectare (ha) in 2011-12, over 1.73 lakh ha in 2012-13 and over 1.72 lakh ha in 2013-14. While the department achieved 85 per cent of the target in the first year, the shortfall in achievement in subsequent two years was 38 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. Though annual targets could not be achieved even after full utilisation of funds allotted under various schemes, the department did not record the reason for the shortfall, the latest CAG report said.

Source:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/MGNREGS-Aid-to-Increase-Green-Cover/2015/05/26/article2833581.ece>

