

Panel to study forest land in NE

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Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar interacts with the traditional heads during his visit to Shillong on Tuesday. (ST)

SHILLONG: The Centre will constitute a committee to conduct a study on ownership of forest land in the Northeastern region. Informing this here on Tuesday, Union Minister of state for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar said the objective of the committee is to ensure forests and environment are protected vis-a-vis sustainable development is allowed at the same time. The committee will submit its report within 6 months, the Minister said during an interaction with the traditional heads and villagers. "In the Northeastern states, we have this community forests since land belongs not to individuals but to community. We will conduct a study on how to deal with their problems so that we will ensure that people really get what they need and development and protection," Javadekar said.

"In Meghalaya, there are Government, community and individual lands which needed to be studied indepth before coming up with some decision," the Minister said.

Forest mapping: Earlier addressing the gathering

after inaugurating the Regional office of Ministry of Environment and Forest here, Javadekar said that the Centre would roll out a programme to map all the forest land in the country. According to him, cases pertaining to Lafarge in Meghalaya brought a change and the government has to initiate forest mapping. He further said that 24 percent land in the country is forest land but so far no mapping has been done and therefore the Centre will start a programme to map the forest land in the country and it will take around 2-3 years. He also informed that the Regional Offices have been given the power to clear all the projects of public importance with the forest areas of 40 hectares.

He further said that the ministry will review the functioning of the regional office in Shillong in January next year. He also announced that the Union Government would launch minimum support programme for minor forest produce in the country for the benefit of tribals. Speaking on the occasion, Meghalaya Forest Minister, P.S. Tynsong informed that 77 per cent of the total geographical areas is forest covered area, which earns the state, as one of the best forest covered states in the Northeastern Region. Tynsong, however, clarified the due to the peculiarity of the land holding system in the state, the forest area under the Government is only 5 per cent and the rest belonged to the community, clans and individuals. Tynsong handed over a letter to the Union Minister to bail out some of the issues relating to forest management.

Source:

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