

A brief note on the steps taken up by State Government for protection and conservation of Reserved Forests and Protected Forest of Manipur.

The State Government in the year 2019-20 took cognizance of the ever-increasing degradation and deterioration of forests and the resultant non-availability of water to the general public for drinking and other uses.

The State Government decided to reconcile and consolidate the boundaries of Reserved Forests and Protected Forests in the State and to secure healthy vegetation in these forest areas by planting tree saplings. The State Government constituted a State Level Committee headed by the Chief Secretary, Manipur with senior officers of Revenue and Forest Department as members to look into the matters pertaining to Reserved Forests, Protected Forests etc. and to cause survey of these areas by using modern equipment and GIS technologies. The Deputy Commissioners and Divisional Forest Officers of each District and Forest Divisions were asked to take up the survey work in a time bound manner.

Initially, joint survey was taken up along the boundary of the Langol Reserved Forests under Imphal West District and later in Heingang RF, Chignkheiching RF, Khema RF, Sambei Purum RF etc. of the Imphal East District.

Similarly, joint survey works of Revenue and Forest Department were taken up simultaneously in Thoubal, Kakching, Bishnupur Districts in the valley.

The joint survey of RFs and PFs were also taken up in Kangpokpi, Noney, Tamenglong, Jiribam, Churachandpur, Tengnoupal, Chandel and the same are ongoing at present.

At present, joint survey of 9(nine) Reserved Forests and 3(three) Protected Forests have been completed and maps have been prepared by using GIS applications. These maps have been re-verified and accorded necessary approval by the State Level Committee headed by the Chief Secretary, Manipur.

There are 36 number of Reserved Forests and 22 number of Protected Forests in the State. Some of the Protected Forests were notified in pendency of inquiry and settlement of rights.

Similarly, there are Reserved Forests where preliminary or initial notifications have been made and settlement of rights as per procedures laid down under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 are remaining pending.

In order to complete the pending processes of inquiry in PFs and settlement of rights in RFs, the State Government in June 2021 had appointed an Officer belonging to the Manipur Civil Services (Grade-II) as the Forest Settlement Officer (FSO). The process of inquiry and settlement of rights, wherever applicable, has been initiated.

Eviction of encroachers within the Reserved Forests is a continuous process of the State Government through its Forest Department and other machineries. Eviction of encroachers were taken up from the Nongmaiching RF, Chingkheiching RF, Langol RF, Heingang RF, Waithou PF, Churachandpur-Khoupum PF etc.

The latest eviction was taken up in the Langol Reserved Forest near Lamlongei on 11th April 2023 wherein, 29 number of houses were removed from the Reserved Forest area.
