

# Diversion of forest land for Assam Police commando bn camp gets Centre's nod

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Guwahati: The forest advisory committee of the ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEF&CC) has granted in-principle approval for the diversion of 28ha of reserve forest land for the establishment of an Assam Police commando battalion camp at Assam-Nagaland interstate border in Geleky reserve forest in Sivasagar district.

The approval was granted on August 27 following the recommendations of the state govt, additional principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF) and DFO (Sivasagar) to give clearance for the "setting up of the battalion camp inside Geleky RF is urgent and essential and in the sole interest of forest conservation."

The state govt had submitted the proposal for seeking prior approval of the Centre under the provisions of "Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980" in favour of Sivasagar territorial forest division, Assam.

Recommending the setting up of the battalion camp, the additional PCCF stated that Geleky RF has already lost about 60% of the reserved forest area to Nagaland owing to rampant encroachment.

"Golaghat division has lost almost 98% of its reserve forest and Jorhat division about 85% of it to Nagaland, hence to resist further encroachment and occupation of land, the deployment of armed forces and construction of commando battalion camp is essential for the sole interest of forest conservation," the additional PCCF stated in its recommendation.

The PCCF further stated that to resist further attempts of "encroachment by miscreants from Nagaland side", the establishment of the commando battalion camp inside Geleky RF is the most feasible from the forest protection point of view.

On the other hand, the DFO, in its recommendation, stated that the unabated encroachment is continuing at an alarming rate and there is almost certainty of losing the remaining forest wealth of the RFs of Sivasagar division to the occupation of Nagaland.

“In order to resist further encroachment of the forest area and to prevent further destruction of forest resource by the ever-increasing pressure for occupation of land, the deployment of forest protection force and construction of battalion camps at strategic locations inside the forest area at the ever[1]expanding trans-state forest encroachment frontier is unavoidable, inevitable and must,” the DFO stated.

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