

Forest Minister launches State-wide tree plantation drive 'Trees planted on 22,730 hectares in 4 years'

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Celebrating the achievements of the Government on completion of 4 years, Forest Minister Awangbow Newmai kickstarted a State-wide tree plantation drive at Cheiraoching, Imphal West today. The drive was observed today across all the districts. Addressing media persons, Newmai said that the objective of the programme is to relook at the achievements of the Forest Department in the last 4 years and to continue various developmental programmes to increase green cover in the State. He stated that Chief Minister N Biren Singh is pushing the State forward towards development in all sectors. Highlighting the achievements of the Forest Department, he said the department under various drives planted trees on a total area of 22,730 hectares during the last 4 years. He mentioned that Agro Forestry projects (tree plantation programmes) are being taken up for the first time in 10 villages of Tamenglong and Churachandpur district.

He stated that a draft Jhum Regulation Policy has been completed and it will be implemented in the State with the Forest Department as the nodal department. The State is pursuing a project proposal at the Centre which will provide an alternative for jhum cultivators. He said the State Government fully understands that it is impractical to stop people from practising jhum cultivation without providing an alternative means.

The Minister further stated that the department has distributed 48 tablets to Forest Beat Officers to enable the officials on field duty to issue online Transit Pass (TP), which is a first of its kind in India. For the first time in India, the State Forest Department had also launched a portal to ensure proper monitoring of transit of forest produces, revenue generation and prevent illegal transport and wildlife crimes, he added.

He said Manipur has been named as a 'Champion State' in the country for its successful implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY). Since the launch of the PMVDY in 2019, 100 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) have been established with the formation of 1557 SHGs (self help groups) benefiting 30,189 tribal entrepreneurs in 14 Forest Divisions of Manipur. He said Manipur is among the States which have the highest forest cover (as per percentage of total geographical area) in India with 75.46 percent.

Stating that the forest guards face many challenges while performing their duties, Newmai said single and double barrel cartridge guns will be issued to them. Equipping the forest guards with weapons would help them guard the forest and its produces effectively, he said. Talking about the importance of conserving water, he said a project for rejuvenation and conservation of Nambul River is underway and more such projects would also be taken up in future.

Conserving forest, wildlife sanctuaries need collective efforts of all stake-holders including the media. The Department had recently conducted a month-long media campaign 'Know Your Sanctuaries and Wetlands', he said seeking cooperation from all sections of the society to extend their cooperation to the Forest Department in conserving the forest, wetlands and wildlife in the State.

Additional Chief Secretary MH Khan, officials of Forest Department led by Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Head of Forest Force K Angami, officials of district administration, Imphal West led by Deputy Commissioner, Nao-rem Praveen attended the event. The tree plantation drive at Cheiraoching was organized jointly by Imphal West administration and Central Forest Division.

Source: <https://www.thesangaiexpress.com/Encyc/2021/3/12/IMPHAL-Mar-11-DIPR-Celebrating-the-achievements-of-the-Government-on-completion-of-4-years-Forest-Minister-Awangbow-Newmai-kickstarted-a-State-wide-tree-plantation-drive-at-Cheiraoching-Imphal-.html>