

Greater Kashmir

Forest survey to begin in J&K this month

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The Forest Survey of India (FSI) under the aegis of Union Ministry of Forests and Environment will be conducting the national biennial forest survey in Jammu and Kashmir this month. The survey is followed by issuing the India State of Forest Report (ISFR), which comes after every two years. The ISFR- 2021 report will be the 17th such report by the FSI whose primary job is to conduct survey and assessment of forest resources.

As per officials, the FSI survey will be conducted in Jammu between March 3 and 6 while it will be conducted in the Valley between March 8 and 11. As per officials, prior to the survey 3-day training will be held for forest department officials. The ISFR is based on satellite data and subsequent “ground truthing” which reveals the increase or decrease in forest cover.

“Remote sensing-based forest cover assessment in a periodic manner helps in knowing a broad trend of forest cover in the country. The forest cover broadly signifies the expanse of forest resources,” said Conservator of Forests, North Circle, Irfan Rasool Wani.

It may be recalled that the ISFR-2015 report had said that in J&K at least 79 sq kms of very dense forest cover had been lost. But this category of forest has grown by 14 sq kms to a total of 3652 sq kms, the report had said. The ISFR- 2017 report had said that J&K’s forest and tree cover has increased marginally by 253 sq kms between 2015 and 2017.

The forest cover in Jammu and Kashmir had increased as per the ISFR-2019 report and the area under very dense forest category has also grown between 2017 and 2019, the report had revealed.

In 2019, Jammu and Kashmir managed to be among the top five states/UTs that had registered maximum increase in forest cover during 2017 and 2019. The state/UTs showing significant gain in forest cover were Karnataka (1,025 sq km), Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km), Kerala (823 sq km) and J&K (371 sq km including 348 sq km in UT of J&K and 23 sq km in Ladakh UT).

Assessment of the forest resource on a relatively large area basis (catchment basis) using a statistically robust approach and aerial photographs began in 1965 when the Pre investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR) was launched in the country. Besides, trained and committed team from India, foreign experts were also involved in designing the methodology of forest inventory and data processing. This was also the beginning of an era where assessment of the forest resources was linked to the requirement of wood based industries. The forest inventory was continued in different parts of the country with varying sampling design till 1981 when PISFR was reorganised as Forest Survey of India.

Source: <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/todays-paper/forest-survey-to-begin-in-jk-this-month/>