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Major reforms in Assam forest department soon: CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

The chief minister said that drone surveys will be conducted for verifying the authenticity of tree plantation programmes carried out under CAMPA and other biodiversity projects.

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Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma (Photo | PTI)

By PTI

GUWAHATI: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said major reforms will soon be initiated in the forest department so that incidents like elephants death in Bamuni Hills in Nagaon, where rampant deforestation had taken place, do not reoccur.

At an event to celebrate the 72nd Van Mahotsav week organised by the environment and forest department, Sarma said, accountability will be fixed and strict action will be taken against erring officials if forests are put at risk.

Eighteen elephants, including five calves, died due to electrocution by lightning at the Kondoli Proposed Reserve Forest under Nagaon Forest Division in May.

The chief minister said that drone surveys will be conducted for verifying the authenticity of tree plantation programmes carried out under Compensatory

Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and other biodiversity projects.

Asserting that the reforestation drive under Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC) will have to be monitored for quantifying the performance, Sarma stressed the need to increase the use of technology like satellite imaging by the forest department.

The chief minister also said that the state government is considering the option of giving one month of compulsory paid leave to forest guards working in sanctuaries and forests. Officials of the forest department must work for preserving the resources like sand, stones, he said, adding that forest beats and gates will now be abolished to check corruption and illegal supply of forest resources.

The chief minister also advocated simplifying rules for enabling people to grow agar, red sandalwood, and other valuable trees in their private lands.

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/jul/07/major-reforms-in-assam-forest-department-soon-cmhimanta-biswa-sarma-2326854.html>