

Man clears forest land, told to plant 200 trees

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Hyderabad: Noting that a repeat offender needs to be taught to mend his ways, Justice NV Shravan Kumar of the Telangana high court has directed an individual to plant 200 saplings in a reserve forest area as a compensation to the two acres of forest area he ploughed with his tractor.

The judge passed this interim order while hearing a petition filed by one M Mallesh whose tractor was seized by forest officials after finding that he ploughed and cleared an area of 2 acres of reserve forest land in Bellampally's Kushenpally forest range.

The judge, while asking the authorities to release the tractor after taking a bond for 50,000 and two sureties of equivalent worth from the petitioner, said that he is not going to leave the offender to go scot free in respect of the forest land he destroyed. He directed the petitioner to plant 100 saplings per acre in the two acres he cleared.

Stating that the forest offences are on the rise despite clear directions from the Supreme Court to protect forest areas and green cover, the judge refused to believe the theory put forth by the petitioner in this case.

The petitioner said that he has got nothing to do with the alleged forest clearance. He contended that he only gave his tractor to some farmers on hire. However, the forest officials placed evidence before the court that showed him as a repeat offender in similar cases.

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