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Telangana government to fill 2,000 vacancies in forest department soon

HYDERABAD: Apart from inducting modern vehicles for the forest officials to patrol deep forest areas, the state government will soon fill up the 2,000-odd vacancies in the department for effective preservation and conservation of forest assets, forest minister Jogu Ramanna has said.

Ramanna announced this at the National Forest Martyrs' day observed by the state forest department at the Nehru Zoological Park here on Sunday.

Ramanna said the forest department, with the help of tribal and non-tribal watchers, have set up 144 base camps in the forest interiors. This is to prevent illicit felling of trees, smuggling and encroachment.

To patrol vulnerable areas, 62 strike force have been constituted and 57 forest checkposts have been established to curb smuggling activities.

To establish better control over forest areas 2,142 vehicles have now been provided to officers and front line staffs.

To help officers work effective in their job, the state government has inducted 25 Mahindra Scorpios, eight Toyota Innovas and nine Honda City cars into service, he added.

“Chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has assured to fill the 2,000 vacant posts in the department,” the minister said.

During 2015-16, forest staff had booked 11,555 number of offense report(OR) cases amounting to Rs 4.15 crore of timber and collected compounding fees of Rs 13.15 crore.

The officials had also impounded 1,575 vehicles used for smuggling purposes. A total of 2,786 number of undetected offence reports (UDOR) cases have been registered, worth Rs 7.45 crore timber. The seized materials have been transported to government timber depots.

The Centre had earlier notified September 11 to be observed as National Forest Martyrs' Day to pay homage to forest officers who had laid down their lives for protection of forest and wildlife.

In Telangana state, 22 officers of various ranks have died due to violence from drug smugglers and naxalites.