

Civic body to support forest dept's plantation drive on reserved land

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Pune: The civic body has requested the forest department to conduct plantations on reserve forest land within the city limits to increase green cover in the city.

The corporation will be financially supporting the forest department by providing funds received from the central govt for urban forestry under the National Clean Air Programme.

According to the forest department, approximately Rs 5 crore will be needed to conduct plantations on forest land in the city. The department has been instructed to conduct a Miyawaki style of plantation, which involves planting at least two types of indigenous trees within each square metre to densify the forest cover.

"We received a proposal from the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) recently for this activity. We will be the implementing agency for this, considering our experience and land access in the city. The department has submitted a proposal for the funding and once we receive it, work will begin," said Mahadev Mohite, deputy conservator of forest, Pune Forest Division.

The department's officials stated that the corporation cannot conduct plantation activities in forest areas due to varying landscape and the methods involved. "We need to take the time needed for growth into account and the protection to be provided for the same," said Mohite.

"They have given us a figure of Rs 5 crore. The cost will be divided, with approximately Rs 20 lakh reserved for each hectare of land, so it should be around 50 hectares of land. The funds include cost of plantation and maintenance for the upcoming ten years to ensure that the trees survive," he added.

Previously, the civic body stated that they had requested the department for forest land to provide space for compensatory afforestation conducted by project proponents after they uprooted permitted trees from their land. However, the department claimed that no such proposal was ever sent by the corporation. “Under the NCAP and the 15th Finance Commission, we received funds for tree plantation from the central govt, which has been directed to the forest department,” said additional municipal chief Prithivraj BP.

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