



Compensate tree by tree: Uttarakhand high court to forest department

13 September 2021

Nainital: The Uttarakhand high court has told the state forest department that it would like a "commitment" that the department would compensate "tree by tree" for over 1,600 Sal trees in Rajaji National Park which are to be felled for the Dehradun-Delhi expressway that aims to cut travel time between the two cities by half.

The bench of Chief Justice R S Chauhan and justice Alok Kumar Verma was hearing public interest litigations (PILs) that have raised concerns over the environmental impact of the six-lane expressway on Rajaji.

The expressway is expected to cut travel time between Delhi and Dehradun from five hours to two.

Environmentalists have raised concerns about a 19.7-km section between Ganeshpur (UP) and Dehradun that goes through forests. Most of it is in UP, except the 3.4-km stretch in the eco-sensitive zone and reserve forests of Shivalik hills. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has informed the court that it is planning to build a major chunk of the road in Uttarakhand as elevated but it will still require felling some trees.

On Wednesday, Abhijay Negi, counsel for one of the petitioners, said that even if the NHAI were to build an elevated road through a portion of the forest, it would still require felling of 1,622 Sal trees. The counsel added that the move will affect the ecology of the forest as Sal trees are very difficult to grow.

The court has now directed the forest department to inform it of the number of Sal trees growing in Rajaji as well as details about re-planting, including where they would be planted and who will be responsible for ensuring their maintenance for ten years.

The court has also asked the forest department to answer whether these trees could be easily grown or which species would beneficially replace them. The forest department has been directed to file its response by September 21.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/compensate-tree-by-tree-hc-to-forest-dept-as-1-6k-trees-to-be-axed-for-del-doon-e-way/articleshow/86072330.cms>