

Key Shimla projects delayed as forest clearances awaited

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The work on the Sanjauli-IGMC smart path could not start on patches where forest clearance is required.

The work on some major Smart City projects has been badly hit due to pending forest clearances. These projects include the planned lift and escalator at Lakkar Bazaar, escalator to the Jakhu top, smart path from Sanjauli to Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital, a vending zone in Khalini, the Krishnanagar-Combermere nullah and the widening work in the Dhalli area.

“There’s a proper procedure for seeking clearances under the Forest Conservation Act (FCA). We have uploaded most of these cases on the website of the Forest Department. All these cases are at various stages of the clearance process at the moment,” said Abid Hussain, MD, Shimla Smart City Mission Limited.

The FCA clearance is a long and laborious process, often taking a lot of time. Smart City, however, doesn’t have much time left to start and complete these projects – the deadline for the project is ending next year.

“We have limited time to complete these projects. We are vigorously pursuing these cases to get the required permissions and complete the pending projects within the given time period,” said Hussain.

For the speedy execution the projects, the Smart City had initiated several processes simultaneously. “The processes for tendering work, land status and forest clearances were initiated simultaneously. Due to the pending clearances, the work on many of these projects has been hit,” said Smart City GM (Technical) Nitin Garg.

“These cases are being reviewed regularly at the level of UD Minister and Chief Secretary to ensure they are cleared as early as possible,” said Garg.

While not much work could be done on the ground in the absence of forest clearances in most of these projects, the

PWD has carried out some work on the Sanjauli-IGMC smart path.

“Wherever the forest clearances are not required, the executing agencies are carrying out work on those portions,” said Garg. “As and when the clearance comes, work will be started on the entire project,” he said.

Meanwhile, the widening of narrow roads, especially on the circular road, is being carried at several spots. The traffic flow will become a lot smoother once these bottlenecks are removed.

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