

Miyawaki forest along B canal a mess

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Chennai: A Miyawaki forest and landscaped area along Buckingham Canal from Kasturba Nagar to Thiruvanmiyur are in bad shape. More than 500 saplings were planted in 10,000sqm in 2022. But now some trees have been uprooted, many have withered, and heaps of garbage are dumped on the walkway meant for the public. Alcohol bottles, food waste, and cloth waste dominate the overflowing bins abandoned inside the 'forest'.

A landscaped area has been destroyed with construction debris dumped everywhere. The trees that remain need watering.

Greater Chennai Corporation had roped in private companies and NGOs to create the Miyawaki forest using corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds. Chennaiyil Vanam, an NGO, and Tamil Matrimony, are among the organisations that contributed.

Hafiz Khan of Communitree, the agency that executed this project, said the trees need watering for the first three years, and they audit them every three months. "Some trees may have been uprooted for maintenance. We have been watering them too," he said. They had planted saplings of badam, mango, guava and some canopy trees. "It costs about 199 to plant a tree and maintain it. We will check the trees," he said.

GCC commissioner J Radhakrishnan said the corporation is supposed to supervise the maintenance, and he would check with the parks department. "The place will be cleaned up. I will check with the parks department on the maintenance contractors for the firms or whether we directly have to maintain it," he said.

Radhakrishnan said the Miyawaki forest had become a spot for debris dumping illegally, and they had caught offenders twice. As the compound walls around of the forest are low, people find it easy to dump debris inside.

D Balaji of the Kasturba Nagar Residents Welfare Association said the landscaped area too is a mess due to constant sewage outflow into Buckingham Canal. "The encroachers living along the canal let out sewage daily, causing a stench," he said.

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