



No transplant nod for IGNCA trees yet

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New Delhi: Over 1,800 trees are to be transplanted from the plot where the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts stood in the area that is being redeveloped as the Central Vista. Transplantation, however, is yet to begin after the section was recently discovered to be a 'deemed' forest under the Delhi forest and wildlife department.

A deemed forest is an expanse with more than 250 trees growing per hectare. With the categorisation of the IGNCA plot as such, permission now has to be obtained under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, to transplant or fell trees. Forest officials in Delhi said such a permission can only be availed of from the central government. The Central Public Works Department will need to send a fresh project proposal to be able to transplant the displaced trees.

A forest official revealed that transplantation was yet to begin on the site despite a list prepared for the shifting of 1,838 trees. While it is easier to get permission to prune, fell or transplant a tree under the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994, the process is stricter when it relates to a forest. "CPWD had submitted a list of trees to be transplanted, complete with their height and details of the species. That work is yet to commence because an inspection of the site later qualified it as a deemed forest area," the official explained.

Navneet Srivastava, deputy conservator of forest (West), under whose jurisdiction the IGNCA site falls, confirmed the development. "Upon checking, we found the site met the criteria for a deemed forest and informed CPWD. Fresh permission will have to be sought under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, and felling or transplanting trees under that law is not as easy," said Srivastava.

The forest department said that the new request had to be sent to the central government, with the Delhi department required to pass on the project details once CPWD reapplied for permission. "We have received the fresh request and a proposal will now be submitted to the Centre," said an official.

The project details show that 1,838 trees of 60 species are to be relocated. The most abundant species at the site were Gular (172), Shahtoot (114) and Pipal and Ashok (112 each).

Eco activist Bhavreen Kandhari said she wrote a letter to the DCF (West) requesting an inspection of the site to ascertain where it was a deemed forest or a part of the morphological Ridge area. "If it is indeed a deemed forest, then it is strange how the permissions to transplant were given in the first place. We have sought details of all the trees being transplanted," said Kandhari.

Source:<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/no-transplant-nod-for-ignca-trees-yet/articleshow/85193427.cms>