

Paucity of land hits compensatory afforestation plan

Of 136 hectares of non-forest land needed for compensatory afforestation in the last yr, DDA has only been able to provide 116 hectares

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With several large-scale development projects requiring “diversion of deemed forests”, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is finding it difficult to make available non-forest land for compensatory afforestation (CA) in the Capital and is currently exploring if such land can be provided in neighbouring states.

DDA officials said that for diversion of deemed forests -- process by which the land is reclassified for non-forest purposes -- equivalent non-forest land has to be provided for CA.

Of the requests for 136 hectares of non-forest land for CA in the past one year, DDA officials said they have only been able to provide nearly 116 hectares. “The green cover in Delhi is 23% and most of the spaces earmarked as green are saturated. It is difficult to find large land parcels for CA,” said Rajeev Kumar Tiwari, principal commissioner, DDA.

Due to paucity of land, the land-owning agency is now exploring if such land can be provided in neighbouring states for proposed central government projects in Delhi.

Vax drive picks up pace in the Capital

Despite issues, city's free Wi-Fi scheme is still a hit

In May this year, the DDA wrote to the Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change seeking clarity on the issue, following which the ministry's forest advisory committee (FAC), which discussed the matter in June end, has asked Delhi authorities to provide additional information about their plan for the Capital's green cover.

"The FAC has been conscious that any relaxation in the compensatory afforestation norms will ultimately lead to reduction in forest cover of Delhi which is not desirable..." as per the minutes of the meeting.

DDA officials said that they are yet to get an official communication in this regard.

"Delhi is largely urbanised. Most of the areas identified as recreational green under the Master Plan have already been used either as parks or for plantation. So, availability of Master plan green areas for the purpose of CA are now very limited," said an official, who did not wish to be named. Another DDA official said the limited vacant land parcels available in Delhi also need to be reserved for planning public utilities.

DDA's plan has also been opposed by many. "This is an ecologically flawed idea. The move, if allowed, will defeat the purpose of compensatory afforestation," said Vijay Dhasmana, ecologist and curator of Aravalli Biodiversity Park, Gurugram.

A DDA official said that with Yamuna rejuvenation work going on at a fast pace, "most of the floodplain area has already been committed to the compensatory plantation requirement of various agencies".

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/paucity-of-land-hits-compensatory-afforestation-plan-101629068638201.html>