



The Times of Nature

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Issue #100

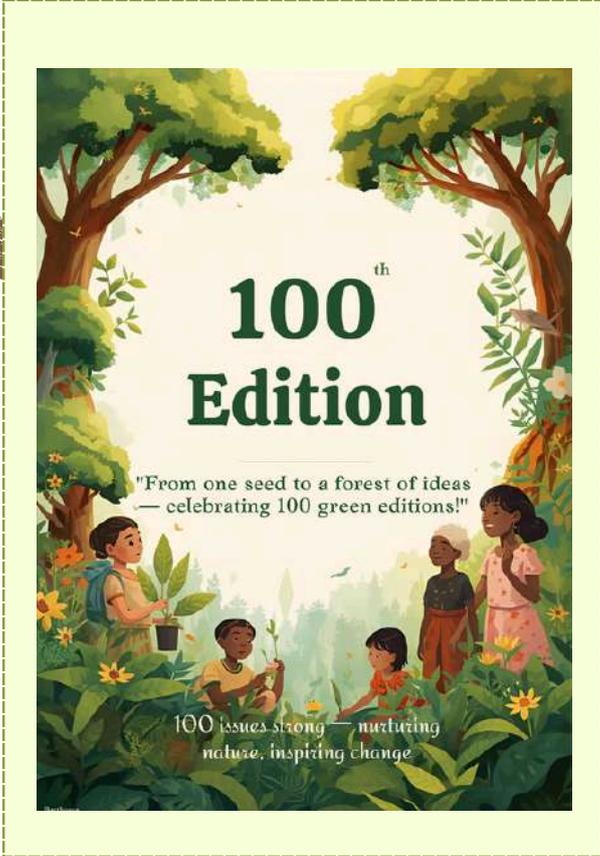
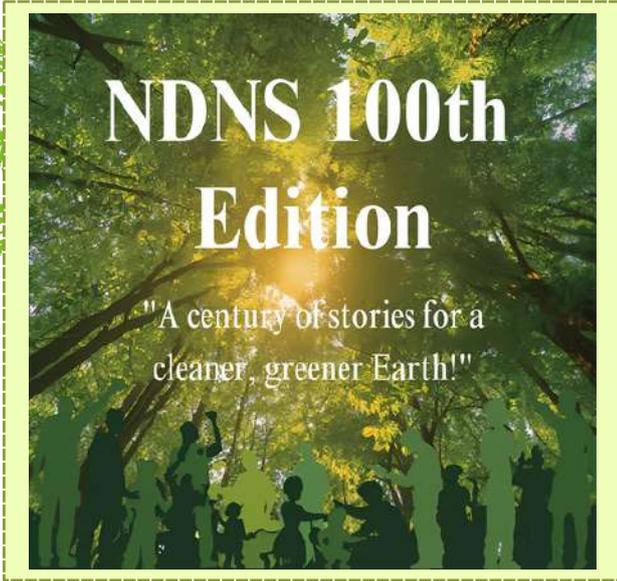
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October 2025

Celebrating 100 green milestones in our journey towards sustainability.



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mita zindagi

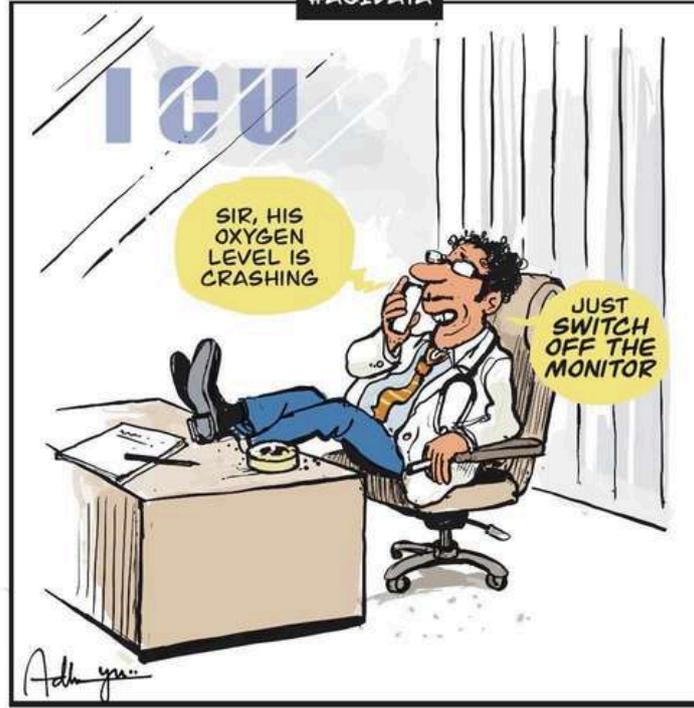
Mememes Of The Month



Memes Of The Month

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#AQIDATA



GOD IS A
FREQUENCY



TUNE

IN

Gulmohar Park Diwali Mela



The New Delhi Nature Society set up an interactive stall at a two days society Diwali Mela at Gulmohar park to spread awareness about environmental conservation and raise funds for its initiatives.

The vibrant stall featured eco-friendly merchandise, engaging games, and informative displays that encouraged residents to take small steps toward protecting nature.

Visitors enjoyed learning about the importance of trees, wildlife, and sustainable living while supporting a green cause.

The event successfully combined festive joy with environmental responsibility, inspiring communities to celebrate Diwali in an eco-conscious way.

NRI Society GK4 Diwali Mela



New Delhi Nature Society set up an engaging stall at a local society's Diwali Mela to raise awareness about Delhi's environment and support ongoing conservation efforts.

The stall featured eco-friendly merchandise such as recycled paper products, nature-themed games, and educational activities for visitors.

Through fun games and interactive displays, NDNS encouraged people to connect with nature and make sustainable choices.

The event successfully combined festive cheer with an important message — to celebrate responsibly and protect our planet.

Eco Art Workshop with SRCC



New Delhi Nature Society organised an Eco-Art Workshop with the NSS group of SRCC College at Lodhi Garden.

The event began with a refreshing nature walk, where students explored the rich biodiversity of the garden and learned about its trees, birds, and natural heritage.



After the walk, participants expressed their creativity through eco art, using natural materials like leaves, twigs, and fallen flowers to create beautiful artworks inspired by nature.



The session encouraged students to connect deeply with the environment, blending art and awareness to promote sustainability and appreciation for nature.



[Watch Video](#)

Tree Survey with AES

New Delhi Nature Society organised an engaging Tree Survey in collaboration with the American Embassy School around the lush green lanes of Malcha Marg.

The activity was part of an educational project designed to help students connect more closely with the trees in their own neighbourhood.

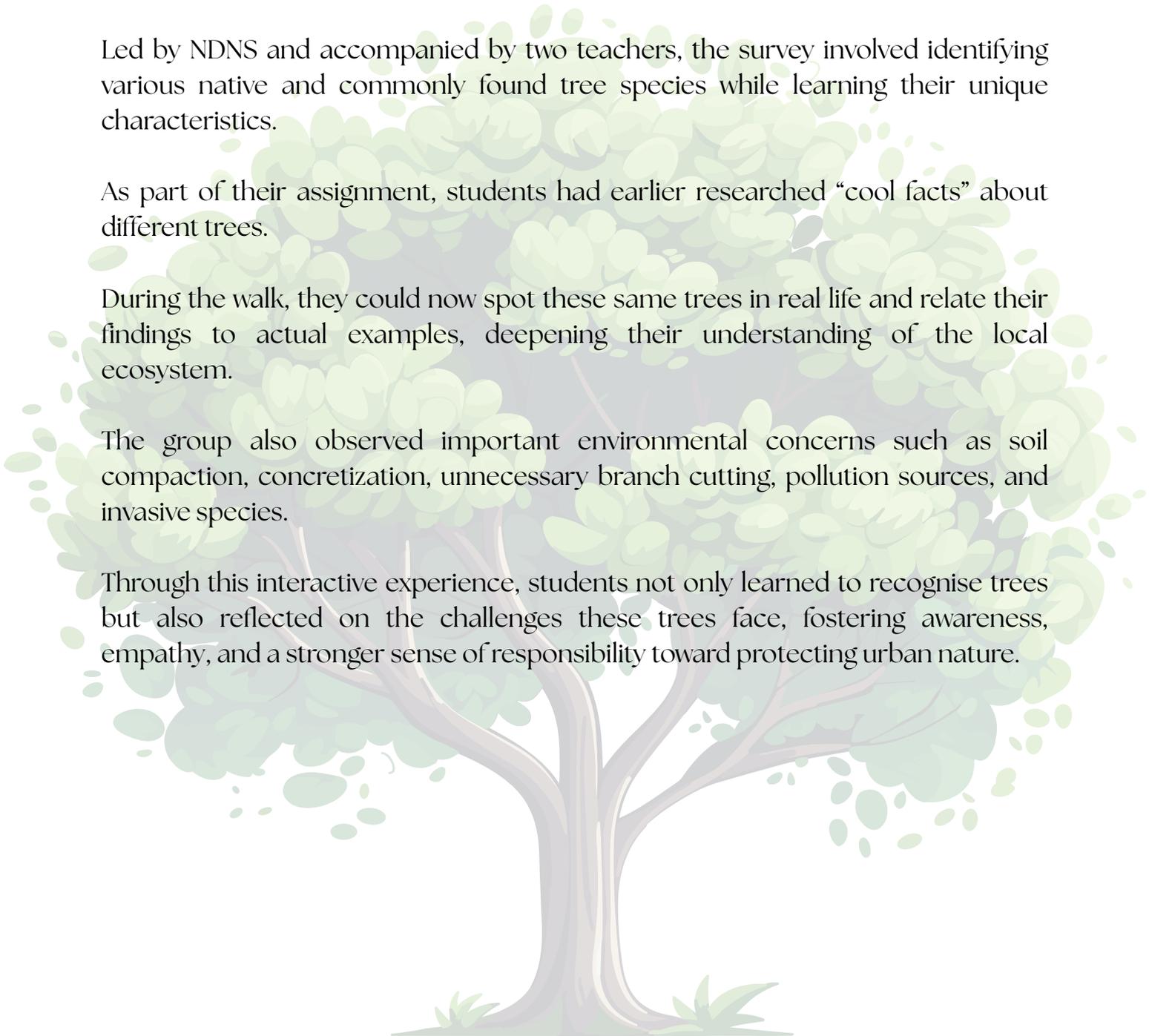
Led by NDNS and accompanied by two teachers, the survey involved identifying various native and commonly found tree species while learning their unique characteristics.

As part of their assignment, students had earlier researched “cool facts” about different trees.

During the walk, they could now spot these same trees in real life and relate their findings to actual examples, deepening their understanding of the local ecosystem.

The group also observed important environmental concerns such as soil compaction, concretization, unnecessary branch cutting, pollution sources, and invasive species.

Through this interactive experience, students not only learned to recognise trees but also reflected on the challenges these trees face, fostering awareness, empathy, and a stronger sense of responsibility toward protecting urban nature.



Water Purification workshop with Modern School Vasant Vihar



Students from Modern School Vasant Vihar visited the New Delhi Nature Society office to learn about the natural water purification system installed at Tughlakabad Biodiversity Park.

During the visit, they explored how the system uses natural elements like rocks, soil, plants, and microorganisms to clean and recycle water without chemicals.

The session helped students understand the importance of sustainable water management and how nature-based solutions can help restore ecosystems.

It was an interactive and educational experience that inspired them to think about eco-friendly ways to conserve water.

Green Fair @ MSVV



New Delhi Nature Society participated in the Green Fair at Modern School, Vasant Vihar.

The event served as a fundraising and awareness initiative, engaging students in conversations about nature and environmental protection.

Through interactive activities and our merchandise stall, we encouraged young minds to care for Delhi's green spaces.

The funds raised from this event will directly support NDNS's ongoing nature conservation projects across the city.

Diwali Celebration @ Manav Bharti

New Delhi Nature Society (NDNS) set up a stall at Manav Bharti India International School to raise awareness about environmental conservation and support our ongoing projects.

The stall featured eco-friendly products and interactive activities that engaged students in learning about Delhi's natural heritage.

Such events help us connect with young changemakers, inspiring them to protect nature.

The funds raised will be used to support NDNS's initiatives for conserving and restoring green spaces across Delhi.



NDNS November Nature Walk



NDNS 30 Days-30 Green Zones (November Nature Walks).

New Delhi Nature Society is back with its much awaited 30 Days-30 Green Zones Nature Walks!

Every year, NDNS organizes these walks to explore 30 big beautiful green spaces across Delhi.

This season, as migratory birds flock to the city and the weather turns pleasant, it's the perfect time to reconnect with nature.

Participants get a chance to discover Delhi's hidden natural gems, learn about local biodiversity, and spot some incredible birds.

Come join us in celebrating nature and exploring Delhi's wild side!

**30 Days
30 Greenzones**

Date	Venue
01/11/2025	Sunder Nursery
02/11/2025	Lodhi Garden
03/11/2025	Satpula Park
04/11/2025	Lado Sarai Forest
05/11/2025	Sanjay Van
06/11/2025	Rajghat- Shanti Van - Shakti Sthal
07/11/2025	Sanjay Lake
08/11/2025	Tilpath Valley Biodiversity Park
09/11/2025	Nehru Park
10/11/2025	Arun Jaitley Park
11/11/2025	Hauz Rani City Forest
12/11/2025	Kamla Nehru Ridge
13/11/2025	Buddha Jayanti Park
14/11/2025	Jahanpanah City Forest
15/11/2025	Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary
16/11/2025	Tughlakabad Biodiversity Park
17/11/2025	Vijay Mandal Park
18/11/2025	Rajokri Reserved Forest
19/11/2025	Kalindi Biodiversity Park
20/11/2025	Millennium Park
21/11/2025	Najafgarh Jheel
22/11/2025	Aravali Biodiversity Park, Vasant Kunj
23/11/2025	Aravali Biodiversity Park, Gurugram
24/11/2025	Mehrauli Archaeological Park
25/11/2025	Roshanara Park
26/11/2025	Mahavir Vanasthali
27/11/2025	Deer Park
28/11/2025	Garden Of 5 Senses
29/11/2025	Yamuna Biodiversity Park
30/11/2025	Okhla Bird Sanctuary

NEW DELHI NATURE SOCIETY

Book your seats now

www.ndns.in/events

Book Your Seat

Tree Care

HOW TO SAVE FALLEN TREES

When a tree falls down for any reason like storm, pruning, construction, etc. instead of removing them, efforts should be made to restore the tree back to its original location.



HOW TO SAVE A FALLEN TREE
Standard Operating Procedure

Scan this QR code for more details
OR
Click the link below
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sN5wKNEFmzrC5RZzO1tshd1AMDD/scw?usp=drivefsk>

Tree Care in the Colony

Do you have trees in your society?

- No → Plant Trees
- Yes → Are the trees cemented?
 - Yes → Remove the cement around the trees
 - No → Are there any wires/nails/boards on the tree?
 - Yes → Remove them
 - No → Pour Water around the trees and spread leaf compost around the trees

Tree Line- The tree line is the row of trees planted along roads, and boundary walls. It helps keep the colony green, cool, and full of life.

What is a gap in the tree line? A gap means a tree has fallen, dried, or been illegally removed and hasn't been replaced.

What Can You Do? Residents can plant a native tree in the empty spot, especially during monsoon. With basic care like watering and composting, the tree line can be restored and kept healthy.

Illegal Activities and Penalties



-  Driving nails into trees causes internal wounds, making them vulnerable to disease, decay, and even death.
Penalty is Rs 10,000/-.
-  Wrapping or hanging wires around trees constricts growth, damages the bark, and can lead to electric hazards or slow tree death.
Penalty is Rs 10,000/-.
-  Fixing boards onto trees is illegal. Trees are not advertising spaces. Defacing public property is a crime.
Penalty is Rs 10,000/-.
-  Digging Within 1 Metre of Trees damages roots, causes stress, and can destabilize the tree. It's illegal and harmful.
FIR will be filed against the person/department involved.
-  Cementing Around Tree Base (Within 1 Metre) blocks water and air from reaching roots. It suffocates trees, prevents them from growing wider and weakens them structurally. Forest department will charge the penalty based on the damage caused.

[Open Pdf](#)

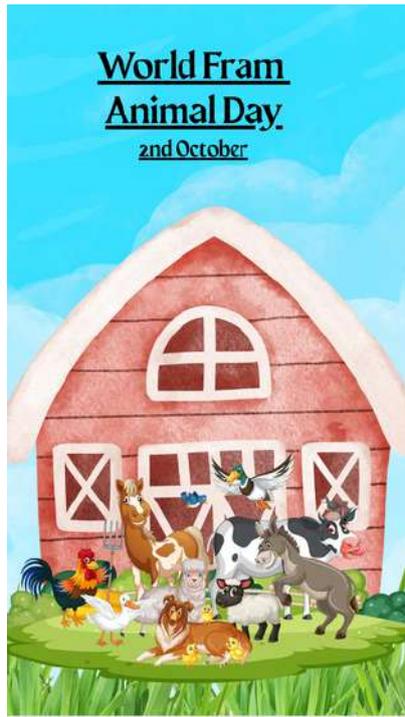
Raising Awareness

Raccoon Appreciation Day



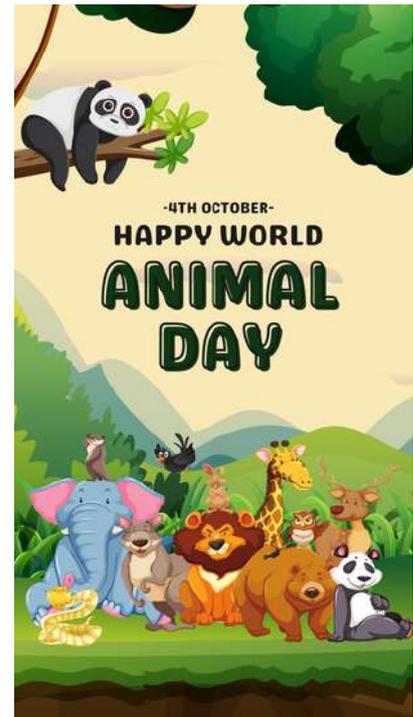
International Raccoon Appreciation Day celebrates the cleverness and adaptability of raccoons. It reminds us of their important role in keeping ecosystems clean and balanced. The day encourages people to respect, protect, and peacefully coexist with these fascinating creatures that thrive alongside us in both wild and urban spaces.

World Farm Animal Day



World Farm Animals Day is observed to raise awareness about the lives and welfare of animals raised for food. The day reminds us to treat all living beings with compassion and respect, encouraging kinder farming practices and mindful food choices. It aims to build a world where farm animals can live free from cruelty and suffering.

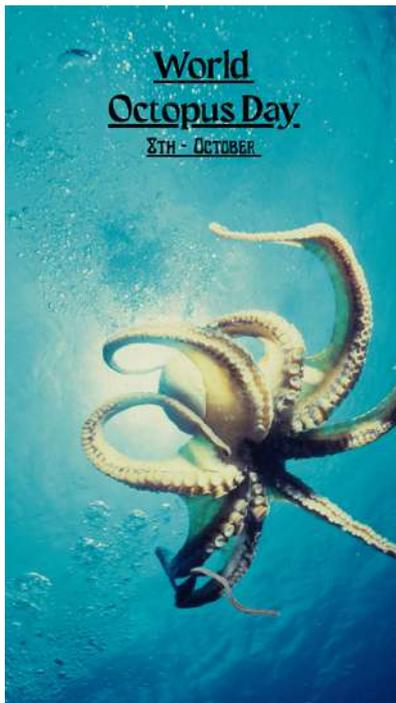
World Animal Day



World Animal Day is celebrated to honor all animals and the people who dedicate their lives to protecting them. The day spreads awareness about animal rights, welfare, and the importance of treating every creature with kindness and respect. It encourages collective action to safeguard wildlife, improve living conditions for domestic and farm animals, and promote harmony between humans and nature.

Raising Awareness

World Octopus Day



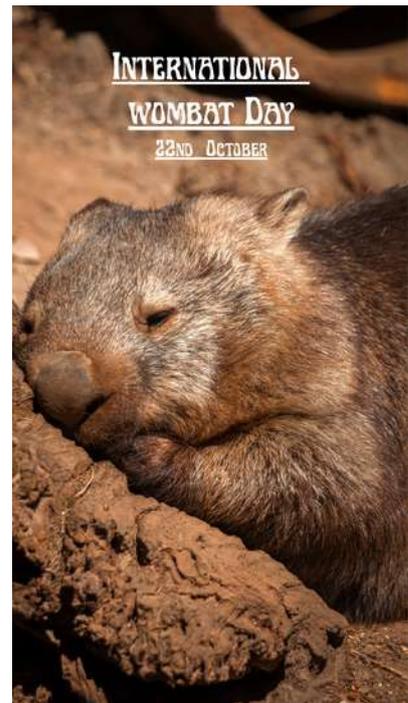
World Octopus Day is celebrated to appreciate the intelligence, creativity, and mystery of one of the ocean's most fascinating creatures. The day highlights the vital role octopuses play in marine ecosystems and raises awareness about the threats they face from pollution, overfishing, and habitat loss. It encourages us to protect ocean life and celebrate the wonders of the deep sea.

Reptile Awareness Day



National Reptile Awareness Day is celebrated to honor reptiles and their crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. The day aims to raise awareness about the conservation of snakes, lizards, turtles, and other reptiles, many of which face threats from habitat loss and human fear. It encourages people to appreciate these often-misunderstood creatures and support efforts to protect their natural habitats.

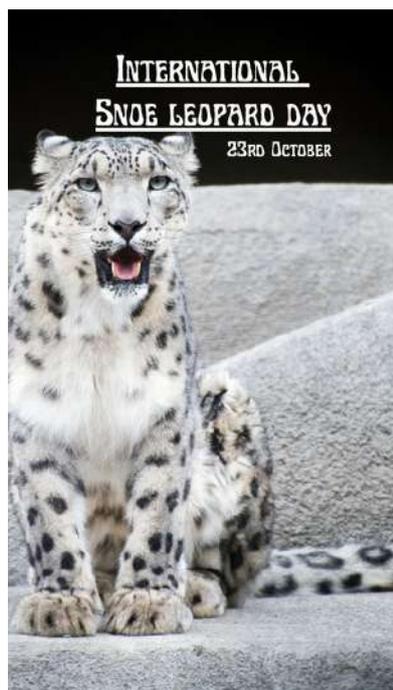
International Wombat Day



International Wombat Day is celebrated to appreciate these unique and lovable marsupials native to Australia. The day highlights the importance of wombats in their ecosystems, where they help aerate the soil through their burrowing habits. It also raises awareness about the threats they face from habitat loss, road accidents, and disease, encouraging conservation efforts to protect these gentle creatures for future generations.

Raising Awareness

Int. Snow Leopard Day



International Snow Leopard Day is celebrated to raise awareness about the conservation of these elusive big cats that roam the high mountains of Asia. The day highlights their vital role in maintaining the balance of fragile mountain ecosystems and draws attention to the threats they face from poaching, habitat loss, and climate change. It calls for global efforts to protect snow leopards and ensure their survival in the wild.

Freshwater Dolphin Day



International Freshwater Dolphin Day is celebrated to raise awareness about the endangered dolphins that inhabit the rivers of Asia and South America. The day highlights their importance as indicators of healthy freshwater ecosystems and the urgent need to protect their habitats from pollution, dam construction, and overfishing. It calls for collective efforts to conserve these gentle and intelligent creatures for a thriving planet.

Help Trees & Animals



The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Principal Bench, New Delhi in O.A. No. 62 of 2018 Aditya, N. Prasad & Ors. v Union of India & Ors. vide its Order dated 23.04.2018 directed:

"In the meanwhile, we direct all the public authorities, more particularly Municipal Corporation of Delhi, DDA, DTC, DMRC, NHAI and all Government respondents in this petition including the Director General of CPWD, the Chief Engineer, FWD, to ensure that:

- All the sign boards, names, advertisements, any kind of boards or signages, electric wires and high tension cables or otherwise are removed from the trees forthwith.
- They shall also ensure that the concrete surrounding the trees within one metre of the trees are removed forthwith and all the trees are looked after well and due precaution is taken in future so that no concrete or construction or repaving work is done at least within one metre radius of the trunk of trees. The Vice-Chairperson, the Commissioner, the Chief Engineer, the Director General and all other senior most officers of the Departments/authorities concerned shall be personally responsible for carrying out this order.
- The Departments/authorities concerned shall take all and every prohibitive measures to prevent the defacing of the trees in any manner whatsoever, save only its trimming in accordance with law.
- All the respondents whose boards are fixed on the trees shall be prosecuted by the respective authorities under in accordance with the relevant law."



Green Helpline : 011-23378513

TREE CARE

1. Remove cement around the tree, soil space around the tree should not be less than 1 meter on all sides.
2. Remove nails, wires and signboards from trees.
3. In case of holes in the tree caused by nails, you can put wet soil in the injured parts of the tree.
4. Ensure no digging or construction is done within 1 meter of trees.
5. Give water to trees daily.
6. In the forest, trees shed their leaves on the soil floor, those leaves mix with the soil and turn into nutrition for the tree roots to absorb. But around the city streets, all the fallen leaves are swept away, so the trees are not receiving that important nutrition from the fallen leaves. This is why it is extremely important to put leaf compost around trees, to make the trees strong and healthy.
7. If you see a tree cut, or with nails, wires, signboards on it or if the tree is cemented within 1 meter, then please call the Green Helpline and report the issue with the exact location, then they will send you the complaint number by SMS for you to follow up.

HOW TO SAVE FALLEN TREES



HOW TO CONDUCT A TREE CENSUS :

1. Number on the Tree :
2. Common name of the tree :
3. Location of the tree :
4. Girth (in cms) :
5. Approximate height (in ft) :
6. Health of the tree :
(D-Dry, H-Healthy, I-Infected, L-Lopped, N-Nails, Ch-Tree guard choking)
7. Width of open soil around the tree :
(A- Up to 1 ft, B- 1 to 2 ft, C- 2 ftft, D-4ft, E- Over 5ft)
8. Ground condition, outside the open soil :
(S- loose soil, C- cemented, M-metalled, T-illed)
9. Remark:

Download the form :



We're offering free reflective collars for street animals and tree care brochures to spread awareness and safety.

You can collect them from the NDNS headquarters, so simply contact us at newdelhinaturesociety@gmail.com

Let's work together to protect our animals and nurture our trees.

[Email us](mailto:newdelhinaturesociety@gmail.com)

Important Articles

Police crack down on dumping of illegal debris in Ridge area

Priyangi.Agarwal
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Delhi Police has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that all station house officers (SHOs) and assistant commissioners of police (ACPs) in the South District have been directed to patrol the Southern Ridge to identify hotspots where construction debris is being illegally dumped.

According to police, eight FIRs have been registered this year under the Environment Protection Act for illegal dumping in the Ridge—four in Fatehpur Beri, three in Maidangarhi and one in Neb Sarai.

The NGT is currently hearing a plea by activist Sonya Ghosh, who has sought removal of encroachments, demarcation of the Ridge area, strict action against debris dumping and notification of the entire Southern Ridge as a reserved forest under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act. In 2024, Ghosh filed an executive application seeking compliance with a 2021 NGT order, prompting the tribunal to ask various agencies, including Delhi Police, to sub-

mit a compliance report.

In the report submitted to the NGT, deputy commissioner of police (South District) Ankit Chauhan said, “Officers have been briefed to continue the special drives and surprise checks in the Ridge to monitor any illegal activity and take strict action against those dumping debris.”

The report clarified that the primary responsibility for removing encroachments lies with the forest department and civic agencies, while the police are tasked with providing support upon request. “Whenever police assistance has been sought, it has been duly provided,” the report added.

Out of the total 6,200 hectares that make up the Southern Ridge, 4,100 hectares are expected to be notified soon as a reserved forest under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act—a legal step pending for 31 years. The Ridge was initially notified under Section 4 of the Act in 1994, which offers only preliminary protection. Full legal safeguarding requires a Section 20 notification. To date, only 96.16 hectares have been granted this final protection.

 **Hindustan Times**

{ **GREENPIECE** }

LET DIWALI NOT OVERSHADOW GOVARDHAN PUJA

Bharati Chaturvedi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: In recent decades, a lot of the conversation related to festivals has been around Diwali on Amavasya, or the dark night. As a result, we tend to diminish the importance of Govardhan Puja, which comes just two days later. Yet, in these times of climate crisis, it must be revived.

According to the Bhagavata Purana, the story goes like this: Lord Krishna nudged his followers to think beyond worshipping Lord Indra, the Hindu God of weather, and pay homage to nature — trees, rivers and the Earth — which sustained them. They did this, and attracted the ire of Lord Indra, who sent them a flood. Terrified, they turned back to Krishna, who lifted the Govardhan mountain and shielded them from the torrential downpour.

As we enter the second quarter of the 21st century, India is besieged by floods, extreme heat, droughts, forest fires and melting glaciers. We must reduce our consumption of pernicious materials through policy and social shifts, and push the world to do the same.

Along with this, let's not lose a part of the festive season. Rethinking a fading festival, recovering it and reinterpreting the festivities is vital today. This Wednesday, step out and do something for nature: deconcretise a tree, remove artificial lighting from plants, get your Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificates, stop burning fireworks or even just compost.

We may not get shopping discounts during Govardhan Puja, but this beautiful Braj tradition reminds us that the Gods, too, believe that our planet deserves our attention.

(The writer is the founder and director of Chintan Environmental Research and Action Groups)

Important Articles

The days of the Aravallis in Haryana seem numbered



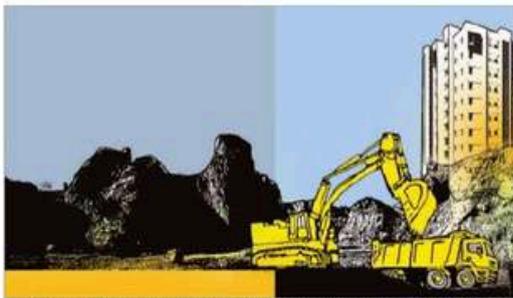
MD SINHA
FORMER PRINCIPAL CHIEF
CONSERVATOR OF
FORESTS, HARYANA

THE Supreme Court recently heard matters concerning the Aravalli hills in Haryana — complaints against the proposed Aravalli Safari project in Gurugram and another relating to the Forest Definition issue in relation to Haryana. Even as Haryana has defended the project in court, both these matters have an important bearing on the long-term ecological conservation of the Aravallis in Haryana.

ing the protection accorded by the judgments of the Supreme Court on such lands under the category of “forests as per dictionary meaning.”

Pursuant to this, the Government of Haryana came up with a definition which essentially lays down that areas below 40 per cent canopy density shall not be considered forests as per the dictionary meaning — taking a cue from the definition proposed by Goa. Notably, the average annual rainfall in Goa is 3,090 mm while it is around 500 mm in the Aravallis — which leads to very different kinds of forests, respectively. Thus, such a copycat approach only indicates a lack of due application of mind — or perhaps something else entirely.

The Aravallis in Haryana are scrub forest grasslands with canopy (total tree) density around 10-20 per cent — barring a few patches where better moisture has allowed magnificent Dhauk forests to come up. This definition effectively ensures that most of the Aravallis in Haryana, other than those areas protected under the forest laws, would lose what little protection they have till date due to the judgments of the Supreme Court in the *Godavarman/MC Mehta* cases. This would



FOREST ENDANGERED: That the Aravallis are vital to the ecological security of Haryana has been ignored in favour of the potential monetary gains. *SANDEEP KAPOOR*

yield a bonanza worth hundreds of thousands of crores to realty and mining companies, especially in Gurugram and Gurgaon.

While the spirit of the directions of the apex court was to guide the states to take positive steps towards forest conservation, this definition does the opposite. With only 2 per cent of the area under natural forest cover in the state, one would have expected a more proactive approach towards conservation, but it was not to be.

While still coming to terms regarding this restrictive for-

If an Aravalli hill is not a billion years old and 100 metres high, Haryana says it does not count.

est definition, in a coordinated move, the Department of Mines and Geology has proposed that the height criterion of 100 metres (only hills higher than 100 m shall be Aravallis — please do not ask me why!). In addition, it says that only “Mesoproterozoic rocks” should be considered the Aravallis and “Neoproterozoic” situations should be excluded as these are “vintage unrelated to orogenic events, do not form

linear, continuous ranges; their inclusion would dilute the geological identity of the Aravalli-Delhi fold belt.”

Let me explain this in simple words. The Mesoproterozoic era is the geological period from 1.6 billion to 1 billion years ago and the Neoproterozoic era 1 billion to 540 million years ago. So, basically, the proposal states that if the hillrocks are not at least 1 billion years old or greater than 100 metres in height, they don’t deserve protection — feel free to do as you will with them. Such erudition begets the indignities. The want of a better analogy, it is akin to saying that if my parents are below 80 years of age and above six feet in height, they won’t get medical treatment!

One shudders to even think of what new criteria such creative minds will come up with next. You don’t know whether to laugh or cry.

The Aravallis in Haryana have survived for nearly 3 billion years, but their days now seem to be numbered. The Amendments to the Forest Conservation Act enacted by Parliament; the definition of forests adopted by the Government of Haryana; this novel age- and height-related criteria and the amendment of the PFLA,

1800 Act enacted by the state which though notified is held in abeyance by the orders of the SC — all these are a series of adverse executive actions in recent years which will have severe long-term effects on the ecological state of Haryana.

Nearly 5,000 years ago, the Mahabharata war took place in this very region because the Kauravas refused Lord Krishna’s proposal to part with five villages for the Pandavas. We are still fighting over the same land, having learnt nothing from our past.

As far back as 2004, in the *MC Mehta* judgment, the SC had pronounced that “the Aravallis must be protected at all costs.” Even after the passage of two decades and innumerable judgments of the courts, not much has changed in the thinking and approach of the bureaucratic mandarins.

The fact that these hills are vital to the ecological and water security of the entire region, aside from serving as heat and pollution sinks, is completely ignored in favour of the potential monetary gains. One can now only trust in the sagacity and wisdom of the SC to protect these last vestiges of natural biodiversity left in the National Capital Region (NCR).



Navy gets nod for construction in morphological ridge at Cantt

jasjeev gandhiok

htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has given its nod to the Indian Navy to carry out construction in the morphological ridge adjacent to Nausena Bhawan in Delhi Cantonment, saying no trees will be felled and the construction project was of strategic importance.

According to the proposal sent by the Directorate of Naval Projects, the project will include a maritime operation centre and a communication centre, among other constructions. Of the 2.05 hectares, CEC said 1.90 hectares formed a part of the morphological ridge, necessitating clearance.

In its report dated October 28, CEC said a site visit on October 16 showed the area was devoid of any construction or tree growth. Further, the project site was found to be on

THE NAVY PROJECT INCLUDES THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MARITIME CENTRE AND A COMMUNICATION CENTRE ON 2.05 HECTARES

a secured campus, under the control of the Indian Navy.

“The proposed project is of strategic importance and does not involve any felling of trees for the construction of the proposed facilities. Accordingly, the CEC recommends that the Ministry of Defence may be permitted to utilize 1.90 hectares of land falling within the Morphological Ridge area for the said construction...” the report states, further recommending the project to the Supreme Court to give the final clearance. In order to carry out

construction, the applicant would have to undertake plantation of at least 500 saplings of indigenous species in and around the premises of the proposed project. “The applicant will have to ensure proper upkeep (of saplings) to facilitate their survival and growth into mature trees,” the report read.

The morphological ridge is an area that shows ridge-like features, such as rocky terrains and hills, but is not a notified or protected forest.

However, it enjoys the same protection as Delhi’s ridge and forest areas, with no commercial activity or construction allowed there.

CEC said the project was first submitted to the Ridge Management Board (RMB) — an ad hoc body that clears all projects related to the Ridge.

The RMB gave its nod to the project on July 18 last year, and recommended it further to the CEC.

Important Articles

4,100 Ha Of Southern Ridge To Be Notified. Why It's A Big Deal

Pending For 31 Years, Final Notification Will Grant It Full Legal Protection

Prityansh Agarwal

New Delhi: Of the total 6,200 hectares of Southern Ridge, 4,100 hectares will be notified under Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act soon. A quarter notification, which will declare the area as a reserve forest and grant it full protection, is pending for 31 years.

Chief minister Bhupendra Kumar Singh on Monday said the decision was a major step towards protecting the national capital from pollution and strengthening the environment in a sustainable manner. Environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said this decision would play an effective role in controlling pollution.

Southern Ridge was notified under Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act in 1994. However, for complete legal notification, notification under Section 20 is required. So far, only 962 hectares have been notified under this section.

A senior official said, "CM has approved the plan of notifying around 4,100 hectares in the first phase. The file has been under review for 31 years, and after his approval, a quarter notification will be issued."

The city has a total of five ridges spread over 7,264 hectares, which are termed as Delhi's green lungs.

HT had reported that the courts, National Green Tribunal (NGT), environmentalists and citizens groups have been fighting for decades to protect the Ridge. Based on a plan filed by activist Suresh Ghosh, the green tribunal, in an order dated Jan 13, 2023, directed Delhi govt to notify Section 20 notification within three months in respect of the area where there is no controversy. The forest department proposed to notify Southern Ridge in three phases.

However, Ghosh filed an executive application in 2024 and sought compliance with the NGT's order. The tribunal on July 4 this year observed that though substantial time has elapsed, the notification even in respect of the first phase (1,337 hectares) has not been issued.

In a hearing held on July 31, Delhi govt told NGT that it

DELHI'S GREEN SHIELD: RIDGE KEY TO COMBATING POLLUTION, DESERTIFICATION

THE RIDGE - DELHI'S ANCIENT GUARDIAN

The Delhi Ridge is the northernmost extension of the 1,200-million-year-old Aravalli Hills, stretching from Gujarat through Rajasthan and Haryana before ending in the capital.

SOUTHERN RIDGE: HEART OF NEW NOTIFICATION

Of the 6,200 hectares in the Southern Ridge, 4,100 hectares are encroached-free and will be notified as reserve forest. Currently, 962 hectares are already notified under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act (IFA).

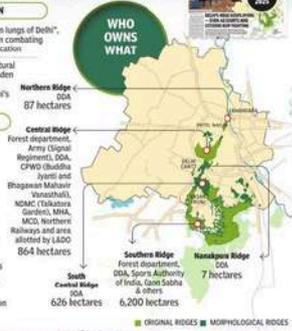
1.33-Year Wait for Full Protection

The initial notification under Section 4 of the IFA was issued in 1994. However, the final notification under Section 20 which grants the highest level of legal protection, was pending for 31 years.

Supreme Court's 1996 order

"Delhi has two distinct features. The Ridge, which is the rocky outcrop of Aravalli Hills and Yamuna. Some parts of the Ridge have been eroded in the central city area. No further infringement of the Ridge is to be permitted. It should be maintained in its pristine glory"

WHO OWNS WHAT



Often called the "green lungs of Delhi", it plays a crucial role in combating pollution and desertification. The Ridge acts as a natural barrier against sandblow winds from the Thar Desert, protecting Delhi's environment.

Section 20 formally declares an area a "reserve forest", safeguarding it from any diversion or development activity.

Delhi has two distinct features. The Ridge, which is the rocky outcrop of Aravalli Hills and Yamuna. Some parts of the Ridge have been eroded in the central city area. No further infringement of the Ridge is to be permitted. It should be maintained in its pristine glory"

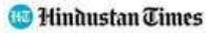
protest these areas. As a result, several parts of the Ridge suffered encroachments, and the greenery began to decline," said CM.

Other Ridge areas will also soon be declared as reserve forests, and the process for this is already underway," said Gupta.

Whereas there is open land within the reserved forest areas, indigenous and fruit-bearing trees will be planted to increase forest density, CM stated. These will include trees such as neem, peepal, shikam, mango, samard and jamun.

Sirsa said, "This decision will prove decisive in controlling air pollution and expanding greenery in the capital. Govt is conducting tree plantation drives based on scientific principles, planting native species and local varieties."

Welcoming the move, Ghosh said it was heartening to know that the authorities had finally acted as per law. "I am grateful to CM, ministers Raj Panjwani, and all forest officers who have worked since 2013 to get Southern Ridge notified. Now, the focus should be on clearing the encroachments and checking mis-



['VIOLATIONS IN FIRE SAFETY NORMS'] DFS rejects NBCC's plans for Sarojini Nagar GPRA colony

Snehl Sinha
htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) on Thursday rejected the building plans for the General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) colony at Sarojini Nagar, citing significant violations of fire safety norms under the National Building Code (NBC), officials aware of the matter said.

The department, in an order seen by HT, directed project developer NBCC Ltd to address the deficiencies and resubmit the plans for approval.

The Sarojini Nagar GPRA project - one of seven major government housing projects in south Delhi being developed by NBCC Ltd - envisions thousands of residential units and mixed-use spaces. But a technical review by DFS found that the submitted designs failed to comply with several core safety provisions of the NBC and Delhi Fire Service Rules.

According to the fire department's order, the project lacked adequate access for fire tenders, proper hydrant placements, and safe evacuation routes.

"The proposal could not be cleared as it did not conform to the required standards of fire prevention and life safety as mandated under the NBC. The

Fire certificate rejected for seven schools

Gargi Shukla
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Fire Service has rejected fire safety certificates for a total of seven private and government schools after inspections found serious lapses in safety infrastructure, officials said on Friday, adding that these schools were missing key components such as functional fire pumps, extinguishers, exit signages and emergency staircases.

"Safety certificates will be granted only after the deficiencies are rectified," an official said. Notices have been issued to three government and four private schools.

applicant has been asked to make necessary corrections and submit revised plans," the official cited above said.

According to the report by DFS, several high-rise residen-

tial blocks did not leave enough open space for rescue operations.

The layout also did not provide adequate refuge areas, exit doorways of the staircases were not provided as per the NBC and the space between two office compartments was also not found adequate. Additionally, basement parking did not have enough circulation space for fire tenders, the DFS inspection found.

HT's requests to comments from NBCC Ltd did not elicit any response till the time of this edition going to print.

Sarojini Nagar is among the seven GPRA colonies being redeveloped by the Union housing ministry in Delhi. Under the project, over 10,000 government flats are being constructed across 160 towers, along with a commercial hub of around 600 shops and office spaces in a "high-street" complex. Spread over 258 acres, the site lies between Ring Road and Safdarjung Airport, bounded by Africa Avenue to the west.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 2,500 completed type-II flats in Sarojini Nagar. The project's commercial component, known as "Downtown," was recently completed and auctioned.

Important Articles

New makeover plan for prime MCD land

Paras Singh
paras@indiantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has decided to engage NBCC for redeveloping six ageing properties at prime locations across the capital—an effort to generate at least ₹15,000 crore — but likely significantly more — and ease a financial crisis that has left the civic body unable even to repair its own crumbling staff quarters.

The properties slated for redevelopment house employee accommodation built over five decades ago at Minto Road near Connaught Place, Model Town, Azadpur, Dhaka near Delhi University's North Campus, Usmanpur, and Kamla Nagar. Under the plan, these structures would be razed and replaced with multi-storey residential-cum-commercial complexes, with the flats and commercial space sold to generate revenue.

Discussions with state-run NBCC (India) Limited are at an advanced stage, a senior MCD official said, with the proposal expected before the standing committee soon. The decision to involve NBCC follows the civic body's repeated failure to execute these projects on its own and the collapse of earlier talks with the Housing and Urban Development Corporation.

"The civic body has failed to take off these redevelopment projects and has finally decided to hand them over to NBCC, which is undertaking several such projects and has a proven track record," the official said.

In three of the six sites alone, according to past estimates, approximately ₹15,000 crore can be generated by constructing and selling around 5,000 flats.

Redevelopment goals

<p>SITES TO BE REDONE IN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model Town Minto Road, near Connaught Place Dhaka, near DU North campus Kamala Nagar Azadpur Usmanpur <p>At least ₹15,000cr Expected revenue</p>	<p>STUMBLING BUDGET</p> <p>₹17,000cr MCD'S ANNUAL BUDGET</p> <p>TOTAL LIABILITIES</p> <p>₹16,226.5cr</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees' seventh pay commission dues Gratuity Internal loans Loan from Delhi govt Dumpsite remediation Payment to contractors on development projects
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This estimate was part of the erstwhile North MCD that projected the revenue based on plans to redevelop plots in Model Town and Azadpur. The projections were made about eight years ago and substantial additional revenue is anticipated when the other sites and new market rates are taken into account.

Such an injection would prove transformative for a corporation that, despite an annual budget of ₹17,000 crore, is saddled with liabilities worth ₹16,226.51 crore—including employees' seventh pay Commission arrears, gratuity, and outstanding payments to contractors. The proceeds will not only help clear the corporation's debts but also provide significant savings for development projects," said a second official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The extent of the properties' deterioration is perhaps most starkly visible at Minto Road, where 41 municipal flats ranging from Type-2 to Type-5 have stood since the 1940s. These single-storey structures now house just 19 families, with 22 flats lying vacant due to uninhabitable conditions—a vacancy rate exceeding 50%.

The site's redevelopment potential, however, is considerable. The erstwhile North Delhi Municipal Corporation had envisioned a ₹2,000-crore revenue generation project there.

Under the revised plans, the existing structures would make way for five nine-storey towers at an estimated construction cost of ₹21.4 crore—a fraction of the anticipated returns.

NBCC did not respond to queries from HT seeking comment on the proposed partnership.

{ 'BRIJ' PROJECT } 'ADHERES TO ALL REQUISITE STANDARDS'

CEC clears construction of Vasant Kunj cultural centre

Jasjeet Gandhi
htreporters@indiantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has cleared the construction of a research-cum-museum and socio-cultural centre in Vasant Kunj's Institutional Area, saying the project has valid environmental clearance (EC) and does not require any tree felling.

Despite the site falling within the morphological Ridge, CEC said the area already houses several major institutions — including the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) headquarters — and said the project, titled 'Brij', would add significant cultural value to Delhi.

"The committee is of the view that the proposed construction serves public purposes," CEC said in its report dated September 28, 2025, recommending that the Supreme Court grant final approval. "The project not only adheres to all requisite legal and environmental standards but also stands to serve the public interest by fostering sustainable practices and contributing to the rich culture of our city and the nation."

The project is being developed by the KK Birla Academy, a not-for-profit organisation, which envisions it as a world-class cultural and research hub

DESPITE THE SITE FALLING WITHIN MORPHOLOGICAL RIDGE, CEC SAID THE AREA ALREADY HOUSES SEVERAL MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

spread across 30,600 sq m, with a built-up area of 127,721 sq m. It will house a performing arts centre, museum, library, academy, sustainability think-tank and offer a range of public learning programmes.

"It is envisioned as a cultural hub that bridges artistic practices with contemporary experimentation and technology, while serving as an inclusive public space dedicated to arts, culture, education, sustainability and innovation," the report said.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) had allotted the land to the academy on a leasehold basis in 1995, but construction began only in 2007, after environmental clearance was obtained. Around 30% of the structure was completed before the Delhi government's forest department halted the project over concerns about tree felling.

The issue was resolved by 2014, but by then the EC had

expired and new building by-laws required the earlier structure to be demolished up to the basement. A fresh EC was granted in May 2021 following a revised layout plan.

However, in May 2022, work was again stopped by the forest department, which cited that the land fell within the morphological Ridge and alleged that 75 trees had been felled, imposing a fine of ₹45 lakh. The department then directed the academy to seek permission from the CEC before resuming construction.

As per definition, the morphological ridge is an area that exhibits Ridge-like features such as rocky terrain and undulating landforms but is not a notified forest area. While it enjoys protection similar to Delhi's Ridge and forest zones, construction is permitted if no ecological harm or tree loss is involved.

After a site visit on September 19, 2025, the committee found that the land was in an excavated condition due to the earlier demolition, and that no trees were being cut for the new construction. "Adjacent to the proposed site, there are other constructed buildings, including the DRI headquarters, which were approved earlier by this court," the CEC noted, adding that the area was not notified as forest or Ridge land.

NDMC planning to relay jogging tracks in two parks

Vibha.Sharma
@timesofindia.com

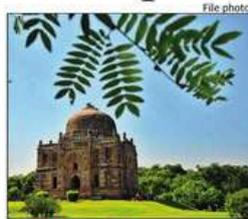
New Delhi: Nearly two years after making plans to redevelop jogging tracks inside Lodhi Garden and Sanjay Jheel, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) now plans to execute the projects next month.

According to officials, a 1.8-km synthetic track will be laid over the existing pucca pathway at Sanjay Jheel, while Lodhi Garden will get a 2.5-km gravel track. The two projects will cost approximately Rs 3 crore.

"We are finalising the tender process, and work orders will be issued in two weeks. The projects are expected to be completed within 3 months of work allocation. The contracts include provisions for long-term maintenance," an NDMC official said.

At Sanjay Jheel, the synthetic track will be constructed after removing the damaged red sandstone surface and decorative kerbstones on both sides. The track will be 1.5 metres wide. At Lodhi Garden, the track will be 2.5 metres wide and cover most of the garden's walking circuit.

NDMC laid the first synthetic jogging track at Nehru Park in 2020. Earlier, too, plans were made for Lodhi Garden, but it was later changed after officials found



IN THE RUNNING

out that construction would have to be restricted near heritage monuments. So, the civic body opted to improve the existing gravel track instead.

"The track will have a sprinkler system to control dust and maintain surface quality. The gravel surface is a cost-effective alternative to synthetic tracks," said an official.

To preserve the rubberised surface at Sanjay Jheel, NDMC will put up signboards advising joggers not to wear shoes with spikes "to avoid any harm to the patch as a similar problem had happened at Nehru Park," an official said.

The facility is spread over 16 acres along Brigadier Hoshiyar Singh Road opposite Laxmi Bai Nagar and features a canal and an artificial lake. It was inaugurated on June 23, 1982, by former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Important Articles

Zoo Safari Is A Disaster In Making: Retd IFS Officers

Tell Apex Court That It Will Spell Doom For Aravali Range

Continued from P1

On a petition alleging that the project would spell doom for the already-damaged Aravali range, a bench of Chief Justice B R Gavi and Justice K Vinod Chandran sought a response from Haryana govt within a week and directed the state "not to take any step" towards implementing the project till further orders.

'WILL DESTROY ECOLOGY OF ARAVALIS'

What the petition says:

- > Massive deforestation will destroy Aravali forest ecology
-> Zoo project threatens already scarce groundwater resources
-> Permanent constructions will fragment wildlife corridors
-> Animals will face distress in captivity, it will obstruct their free movement
-> Tourism will worsen the region's solid waste crisis
-> Artificial natural role in climate regulation will be disrupted

10,000 acres Of protected forestland in Gurgaon and Nuh districts come under the proposed project

Oct 15 Next scheduled SC hearing

surveys, hotels, restaurants, recreational and commercial establishments, as well as extensive infrastructure facilities such as roads, electrical and communication networks, and firefighting systems. Large-scale development of this scale within the Aravali region would inevitably result in severe and irreversible ecological damage to an already-fragile ecosystem, which is home to rich floral and fauna diversity," they said and alleged that the zoo-safari project is being financed with the compensatory afforestation funds, which is impermissible.

Evaluate impact of bamboo plantations at Baansera: LG

Vibha Sharma @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Lieutenant governor VK Saxena has asked Delhi Development Authority to evaluate the environmental impact of bamboo plantations at Baansera, particularly in terms of local temperature, air quality index and groundwater levels.

The directive aligns with the efforts by civic agencies to reclaim degraded land through bamboo plantations as part of their annual plantation initiatives. Over 1.8 lakh bamboo saplings have been planted since May 2022 by various govt agencies across parks, floodplain and rejuvenated spaces in the capital. "Bamboo is valued for its strength, flexibility and durability, owing to its unique cellulose microfibrils and lignin-rich fibre structure. It also requires less water and produces 30% more oxygen, making it a vital tool in land restoration," an official stated.

This initiative draws inspiration from the Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought project, launched in July 2021 under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, then chaired by Saxena. The project was designed to combat desertification by planting bamboo in arid and drought-prone areas, including Maharashtra, Jammu, Gujarat, Goa, Rajasthan and

30K BAMBOO SAPPLINGS PLANTED IN 3 YEARS

Baansera Inaugurated in 2022



1.8 lakh bamboo saplings have been planted in Delhi since May 2022. These include 30,000 saplings planted at Baansera

Over 2 crore saplings of different varieties planted in three years. These include 11,000 sandalwood, about 9.4 lakh tulips, 2,000 guava and grapes saplings, 500 chinara and 500 kg Meghalaya's turmeric

Dumping yard along Yamuna bank was removed to develop Baansera in Sarai Kale Khan

Leh. A total of 41,100 bamboo saplings were planted across 12 sites, covering 42.5 lakh square feet. One of these sites, Nichla Mandwa in Udaipur, was transformed into a green oasis where the bamboo plantation has reached a height of 30 feet.

Recalling his first visit to the site, Saxena shared on X, "When I first visited Nichla Mandwa in June 2021, no one could have imagined that focused greening efforts would create a whole new ecosystem of diverse flora and fauna within four years." He added

that the transformation began when villagers volunteered 25 acres of gram sabha land for the project. Fruit-bearing trees were planted to increase biodiversity.

Saxena had identified a barren 28-acre stretch along the Yamuna floodplain, opposite Sarai Kale Khan ISBT, for bamboo plantation. The wasteland was transformed into a lush green space within six months. Now known as Baansera, or "bamboo abode," the park hosts over 30,000 bamboo plants representing 15 different varieties.

Hindustan Times

Five roundabouts in Lutyens' Delhi are bottlenecks: Traffic police survey

Chronic traffic snarls at five key Lutyens' Delhi roundabouts, including Teen Murti Haifa and Sunehri Bagh, have prompted traffic police to recommend a structural overhaul. The proposed fixes involve widening roads and realigning footpaths to restore traffic flow.

Karn Pratap Singh karn.p@timesofindia.com NEW DELHI: The iconic roundabouts that once defined the nucleus of Lutyens' Delhi - designed to ease the traffic in central Delhi - have over the years morphed into constant bottlenecks, found a recent survey by the Delhi Traffic Police, which flagged five of these as the worst-affected in the region.

The week-long survey of 39 roundabouts in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area, conducted between June 3 and June 9 this year by the traffic police, observed a long string of issues - disproportionate road widths, misaligned and broader footpaths, large plantations spaces, and narrow diameters of the roundabouts were queuing traffic flow and leading to bottlenecks at the colonial-era circles, at least two senior traffic police officers aware of the survey told HT.

Thereafter, on June 12, the traffic police sent a letter to the NDMC, sharing their findings, shortcomings, and suggestions related to the five roundabouts. Based on traffic volumes, VIP convoy movements, and recurring congestion patterns, five roundabouts have been identified as the worst-affected: Teen Murti Haifa, Tughlak Road, Sunehri Bagh, Jaswant Singh (Panchmukhi Chowk), and Q-Point near India Gate.

Teen Murti Haifa



At the top of the list is the Teen Murti Haifa roundabout, often called the gateway to central Delhi. The junction channels vehicles from five arterial roads - Teen Murti Marg, Kumbhak Road, South Avenue, Mother Teresa Crescent, and Teen Murti Marg - toward Sansad Bhawan, Raj Bhawan, Krishna Bhawan, and the court complexes near India Gate. It is also a key route for VIP convoys travelling to and from the Delhi airport. The survey found that the 800-metre stretch between Teen Murti Haifa and Kaulitya Marg has just two lanes in each direction, separated by Jersey barriers. Each side also includes a three-foot wide footpath and 20-25 feet of plantation space. Our recommendation is to widen each carriageway to three lanes by reclaiming space between highwalls and footpaths. Even after expansion, at

Only two lanes per side for heavy VIP and police traffic
-Footpaths (3 ft) and plantation strips (20-25 ft) eat into road space
Recommendation: Widen to three lanes by reclaiming unused green buffer
At least 9-14 feet of green area will remain, said another officer. "It will substantially ease congestion during peak hours and VIP movements."
Traffic police are also examining widening options along the section of Teen Murti Marg leading to Gai Dai Khana, where assessed 10 feet of open space and a 4-foot footpath can accommodate expansion.
During a spot visit, HT observed five traffic personnel manually regulating traffic on each approach road. Digging work was also under way between the footpath and the plantation strip on the Teen Murti Marg carriageway towards Kaulitya Marg.



Located near Tughlak Road police station, this roundabout links Tughlak Road with APJ Abdul Kalam Road, serving as a major entry point for vehicles pouring in from South Delhi through Anandabhai Marg. Spot inspections revealed heavy traffic from both directions, particularly during peak hours. "The narrow approach of APJ Abdul Kalam Road from Bhinder Point towards



Narrow exit and 'bottlenecked lanes' cause multi-road backlogs. Recommendation: Increase roundabout diameter for smoother merges.

Sunehri Bagh



Misaligned footpaths encroach on carriageway space - Upcoming Executive Enclave likely to worsen jam
Recommendation: Realign greenery to free inner circle lanes. Diameter is adequate; the misaligned pavements have eaten into carriageway space. Realigning them will free up the stretch between the inner and outer circles," said a traffic officer.



The Jaswant Singh or Panchmukhi Chowk roundabout, where five busy roads including Aulokha Road and Rajendra Prasad Road converge, faces routine gridlocks every morning and evening. The survey attributed the congestion to its narrow 20-metre diameter, ongoing Central Vista construction, and its pro-

Q-Point

The Q-Point circle, near India Gate, connects six major roads - Shaheed Jhansi Road, Prithviraj Road, Manal Nehru Road, and APJ Abdul Kalam Road, among others. The survey called it one of the most complex intersections, suffering from "narrow exit points" and "bottlenecked lanes" during rush hours. "Narrow passages between Prithviraj Road and APJ Abdul Kalam Road, and between Man Singh and Shaheed Jhansi Road, trigger backlogs that stretch across multiple radials," said an officer. The police have recommended enlarging the roundabout's diameter to smoothen traffic merges.

Important Articles

HC upholds cancellation of forest rights of villagers

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Chhattisgarh High Court has dismissed a petition challenging the cancellation of community forest rights granted to villagers of Ghatbarra in the Hasdeo Arand forest, where an Adani Enterprises-owned entity is operating the Parsa East and Kete Basen coal mines.

The ruling, for the first time, addressed the question of whether forest rights granted under the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA) can be revoked or cancelled, given that the law does not explicitly provide for any such measure.

In an order dated October 8, Justice Rakesh Mohan Pandey stated that granting the community forest rights in itself was a "mistake" that was "rectified" through the cancellation, concluding that this made the order granting the rights "void *ab initio*".

The ruling addressed the question of whether 2006 FRA forest rights can be revoked or cancelled

The judgment came on a batch of petitions initially filed by the Forest Rights Committee of Ghatbarra village, a statutory body under the FRA, later joined by civil society organisations and petitioners. The petition, initiated in 2016, saw the Forest Rights Committee withdraw its application.

The petitioners submitted that three community forest rights titles were recognised and granted to the Ghatbarra villagers through an order in 2013. In 2016, the District-Level Committee (DLC) in Surguja district cancelled these rights, noting they had been erroneously granted as the patch of land fell under mining areas, for which diversion of forest

was already approved in 2012.

In citing its grounds for dismissing the challenge to the cancellation of forest rights, the High Court said that the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited had completed Phase I of mining over the past decade and had also received clearance for Phase II in 2022. "Three years have passed since then, and claims of the residents of village Ghatbarra with regard to individual or community forest rights, if any, can be compensated in terms of money," it said.

The court added that it cannot accept the arguments of the petitioners because the forest diversion was already cleared in 2013. It noted that the petitioners never challenged any of the initial orders allocating the coal mines or approving forest diversion for them in 2011, 2012, and 2015, even though the petition was filed in 2016.

Kaziranga grasslands shrunk by 300sqkm, equal to half of Mumbai, in a century: WII

Shivani Azad
@timesofindia.com

Dehradun: A new study by the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has revealed that Kaziranga's iconic grasslands — crucial for species such as rhinos, elephants and swamp deer — have shrunk by 318.3 square km between 1913 and 2023.

To put that in perspective, the grassland loss is nearly equivalent to the entire area of Kolkata city or about half the size of Mumbai, according to researcher Umar Saeed at Wildlife Institute of India.

Researchers integrated historical topographic maps, satellite imagery spanning 110 years and climate data from 1980 to 2022 to examine land-use and climate dynamics in the Brahmaputra floodplain. Researchers noted Kaziranga — a UNESCO world heritage site and one of India's most biodiverse floodplain ecosystems — has undergone striking ecological transformations over the past century.

The analysis shows that while grasslands have steadily declined, forest cover has expanded dramatically — from just 0.6 square km in 1913 to 229.2 square km in 2023.

Waterbodies, which initially expanded until 2013,



The analysis shows that while grasslands — crucial for species such as rhinos, elephants and swamp deer — have steadily declined, forest cover has expanded from just 0.6sqkm in 1913 to 229.2sqkm in 2023

have since begun shrinking over the next 10 years, reflecting shifts in river morphology and hydrology.

Climatic trends further indicate subtle but telling changes: maximum temperatures have dipped slightly (from 37.5°C to 36°C), while minimum temperatures have risen (from 6°C to 8°C), resulting in warmer nights. Relative humidity and rainfall have increased, improving soil moisture levels.

"Overall, the integration of land-use and climate records demonstrates that both anthropogenic pressures and climatic shifts are driving ecological transfor-

mations in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve," read the presentation. Titled 'A century of land use and climate dynamics transformation at Kaziranga Tiger Reserve', it was presented by scientists at the WII 18th internal annual research seminar.

Scientists further cautioned that while the growth of forests might appear positive, the loss of open grasslands — which sustain key herbivore populations — poses serious ecological challenges to Kaziranga's ecosystem. "The presence of invasive species of plants is impacting the grasslands of Kaziranga which in return

impacts the megaherbivores and cervid species there. Rhinos love foraging and require vast swathes of grassland, while swamp deer, hog deer and sambar mandatorily require grassland for their comfortable survival.

Similarly, Kaziranga is the home to the last remaining original species of water buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*) which are now left only here and in central India..." said Saeed and Rashmi Das, both of whom were part of the research works from 2019 to 2024.

Saeed added, "These are megaherbivores and they play a key role in the entire food web of the Kaziranga ecosystem (in Assam). If the grasslands continue to deplete, then it might impact their population and feeding behaviour in the long-term. The grasslands are primarily being invaded by at least eight invasive species of plants such as *Mikania micrantha* and *Chromolaena odorata*, among others."

Significantly, the findings by Wildlife Institute of India scientists emphasised the need for adaptive management strategies focusing on habitat regeneration, hydrological balance and climate-resilience to withstand this sensitive floodplain ecosystem.

Important Articles

 Hindustan Times

Green approvals pave way for initial work on Great Nicobar project

Jayashree Nandi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Recent approvals issued for the Great Nicobar infrastructure project indicate that preliminary work on the township and the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) will start soon.

To be sure, the quantum of forest land diversion — 1 square metre (sq m) in one case and 195 sq m in another — is almost insignificant, but the reasons for it, setting up an automatic weather station, and digging bores to test the soil suggest that this is an important step in the construction of the proposed port at Galathea Bay, and a township at Great Nicobar, both under the Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island Project.

Details of the diversions, approved October 15 and May 7, were uploaded on the environment ministry's Parivesh website. The Automatic Weather Station will collect meteorological data necessary for scientific analysis and the engineering design of coastal and port infrastructure planning. And the geotechnical investigation encompasses soil testing and related studies for the proposed reservoirs construction and arterial road network.

In Great Nicobar, the government has planned four projects — ICTT, Greenfield International Airport, Gas and Solar based Power Plant and Township; Area Development Projects — for which an area of 166.10 sq km is required. Of this, the forest area is about 130.75 sq km.

The Nicobar Islands fall in the Sundaland Biodiversity Hotspot. This region covers the western

EXPERTS SAY THE PROJECTS COULD LEAD TO LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY AND IMPACT THE AREA'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

half of the Indonesian archipelago, a group of some 17,000 islands stretching 5,000km, and is dominated by the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. Independent experts and scientists have raised several environmental concerns with the project. These include loss of biodiversity and impacts on the indigenous people like the Shompen and Great Nicobarese.

Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav last August said that "exemplary mitigation measures" have been incorporated to minimise the environmental impact of the project, "keeping the strategic, national and defence interests" in mind.

There is a petition pending in the National Green Tribunal challenging various aspects of the project including environment clearance granted to it.

On Thursday, a larger bench of NGT, Eastern Zone heard Ashish Kothari Vs the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. During the proceedings, the bench recommended that the Centre may wish to include heads of departments involved in the project in the monitoring of mitigation plans. ASG Aishwarya Bhati acknowledged that the projects are huge and will have an impact on biodiversity of the region. The matter has been posted for hearing on November 7.

Important Articles

DURING DRY SEASON, FLYING RIVERS SWEEP ACROSS SOUTHERN BRAZIL BEFORE REACHING THE ANDES — WHERE DEFORESTATION IS MOST INTENSE

As Amazon's 'flying rivers' weaken with tree loss, scientists warn of severe droughts

STEVEN GRATTA
BOGOTÁ, OCTOBER 1

DROUGHTS HAVE withered crops in Peru, fires have scorched the Amazon and hydroelectric dams in Ecuador have struggled to keep lights on as rivers dry up. Scientists say the cause may lie high above the rainforest, where invisible "flying rivers" carry rain from the Atlantic Ocean across South America.

New analysis warns that relentless deforestation is disrupting that water flow and suggests that cutting down too much forest, the rains stop reaching where

worsen droughts in the southwestern Amazon and could eventually trigger those regions to shift from rainforest to drier savanna — grassland with far fewer trees.

"These are the forces that actually create and sustain the Amazon rainforest," said Matt Finer, a senior researcher with Amazon Conservation's Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP), which tracks deforestation and climate threats across the basin and carried out the analysis.

"If you break that pump by cutting down too much forest, the rains stop reaching where

they need to go."

Most of the Amazon's rainfall starts over the Atlantic Ocean. Moist air is pushed inland by steady winds that blow west along the equator, known as the trade winds. The forest then acts like a pump, effectively relaying the water thousands of miles westward as the trees absorb water, then release it back into the air.

Brazilian climate scientist Carlos Nobre was among the early researchers who calculated how much of the water vapor from the Atlantic would move through and eventually out of the Amazon basin. He and colleagues



The forest acts like a pump relaying the water

coined the "flying rivers" term at a 2006 scientific meeting, and interest grew as scientists warned that a weakening of the rivers could push the Amazon into a tipping point where a rainforest would turn to savanna.

That's important because the Amazon rainforest is a vast storehouse for the carbon dioxide that largely drives the world's warming. Such a shift would devastate wildlife and indigenous communities and threaten farming, water supplies and weather stability far beyond the region.

The analysis by Finer's group found that southern Peru and

northern Bolivia are especially vulnerable. During the dry season, flying rivers sweep across southern Brazil before reaching the Andes — precisely where deforestation is most intense. The loss of trees means less water vapor is carried westward, raising the risk of drought in remote protected areas such as Peru's Manu National Park. "Peru can do everything right to protect a place like Manu," Finer said. "But if deforestation keeps cutting into the pump in Brazil, the rains that sustain it may never arrive."

Protecting intact forests, supporting indigenous land rights

and restoring deforested areas are the clearest paths forward, researchers say.

To avoid collapse we need zero deforestation, degradation and fires — immediately," Nobre said. "And we must begin large-scale forest restoration, not less than half a million square kilometers. If we do that, and keep global warming below 2 degrees, we can still save the Amazon."

Finer said governments should consider new conservation categories to protect flying rivers — safeguarding not just land but the atmospheric flows that make the rainforest possible. AP

The Indian EXPRESS Thu, 02 October 2025
https://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/78273046

epaper.indianexpress.com

How dry Vijayapura wooed rain with 1.5cr trees

A campaign launched in 2016 saw everybody, from netas to ordinary people, chipping in to script a green turnaround for what was once the second-most drought-prone district in the country

Vijayapura is not new to campaigns, or special shifts. But nothing in its history can match the scope or consequence of the one that was launched on its soil about nine years back. For once, an operation undertaken on a war-footing and featuring committed warriors sought to boost its resilience and leave it more prosperous. And, as greening or afforestation stories go, this has been as successful as they get. Because, the Koti Vruksha Abhiyan (KVA) has turned what was once classified as the second-most drought-prone district in the country — after Rajasthan's Jaisalmer — into a veritable green paradise.

The story of the transformation of the land once known as Bijapur begins in 2016. Over 1.5 crore trees and 17,000 saplings daily — it's still going strong. Karnataka minister M. B. Patil remembers the shock he'd felt all those years back when he learnt how little green cover was available in this district of 2.5 million hectares.

"One report says that at least 15% cover is suitable for living, but we had only 0.17%," says Patil, who was at the time the Karnataka minister of water resources and also the minister in charge of Vijayapura district. Seized of the need to draw up a long-term plan to increase its forest cover, Patil roped in various govt depts and agencies, NGOs and nature lovers as well as educational institutions, civil groups, and political parties to launch the campaign that aimed to plant 1 crore trees in five years.

"People came forward voluntarily, planted saplings, watered them, nurtured them and started growing forests. As a result, Vijayapura is now adorned with greenery," says Patil, who notes that it was something achieved through "collective responsibility along with social responsibility of govt, communities and organisations."

Once A 'Land of Five Rivers'
The success of the opening chapter — which covered community forests, village plantations and private farm forests — has whetted the ambition of Vijayapura's green warriors, who now want to plant 1 crore saplings. The campaign promises handsome returns. Prof. Murugesh Pattanaschetti, coordinator of KVA Pratishthana, told TOI that it will have long-term impacts for biodiversity, soil and moisture conservation, and groundwater levels.

The undivided Bijapur district, located in north Karnataka's semi-arid zone, was once known as the land of five rivers, or 'Pancha Nadigala Naadu'. Some also referred to it as the 'Panjab of Karnataka' with the Krishna, Bhima, Malaprabha, Ghatsrabha, and Doni flowing through it. But, after Basalkot district was carved out of it in 1997, the renamed Vijayapura district was left with just three rivers, the Krishna, Bhi-

Prof. Murugesh Pattanaschetti, coordinator of Koti Vruksha Abhiyan Pratishthana, said over 200 different native tree species, including tamarind, neem, mango, and other hardy local indigenous varieties, were planted in this campaign. The tree species, especially fruit-bearing trees and trees that control soil erosion, were used to match the local ecology

ma, and Doni. Notwithstanding these rivers, the district has struggled to provide adequate water to its people.

The Adil Shahi dynasty that ruled Vijayapura for almost two centuries laid the foundation of Bijapur city's water system. Their strategy revolved around the construction of big tanks. Major among these were Begum Talav in the south, Torvi Butt bawadi in the west, Basaling tank in the northwest, Machali Khandak and Alnapur tank in the east. They also constructed big wells like the Taas bawadi, Chand bawadi, Butt bawadi, Gunda bawadi, Torvi bawadi, and Ibrahim bawadi.

Despite this, the city and the district suffered an acute shortage of drinking water in the summer. Thus, when the British entered the picture, they classified the district as drought-prone.

Multi-Pronged Strategy
KVA was designed based on a global



Community land, village plantations and private plots were covered as part of the Koti Vruksha Abhiyan with locally sourced saplings was critical to the success of the campaign

HOW GREENING HAS HELPED

2.4% Increase in Vijayapura's forest cover, according to Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, since the campaign started

37 Vijayapura's average air quality index score in 2024, placing it at 3rd in the country on clean air

Locals say the greenery has once again made blackbucks, leopard snakes, and several species of birds a common sight in the district

2-3°C Drop in summer temperature in Vijayapura post the greening drive

650mm Average rainfall in Vijayapura after the campaign was launched. It hovered at 500-550mm earlier with the number of rainy days going up from 20-30 to 30-40 days annually



environmental goals like reforestation and sustainability as well as local objectives such as improving air quality providing green cover, and supporting the ecosystem. Tree-planting took place in rural, urban, and semi-urban areas, schools and colleges, roadsides, graveyards, and BHA gardens, says Pattanaschetti.

Various Karnataka govt departments worked on about 200 black plantations in the district. The KRNRI, Almat forest division was involved in a mega plantation of 500 acres and planted 90,000 saplings of 25-40 different native species. It used drip irrigation to ensure the survival of the saplings. The Territorial Forest division planted 1.5 lakh saplings on 820 hectares of reserve forest land at Mamasagar. The mission has been aided by an unprecedented sapling survival rate of 90% to 98%, thanks to solar drip irrigation and a focus on round-the-clock maintenance. Availability of water was also aided by minister Patil's move to divert water from the Krishna into the tanks and lakes in the district via pipelines.

66 People came forward voluntarily, planted saplings, watered them, nurtured them and started growing forests. As a result, Vijayapura is now adorned with greenery

— M B Patil, minister, Karnataka govt

Pattanaschetti said over 200 different native tree species, including Ficus, Bauhinia, Dalbergia sissoo, Erythrina, tamarind, neem, mango, and other hardy local indigenous varieties were planted as part of KVA. Tree species, especially fruit-bearing trees and trees that control soil erosion, were used to match the local ecology, focusing specifically on the needs of a particular area. The saplings were either distributed free of cost by businesses as part of CSR initiatives or were handed out at a subsidised price of between Rs 1 and Rs 10.

The campaign was promoted by programmes like 'plant a tree on your birthday', 'Vruksha Bandhan', 'April Cool' and 'Vrukshahati'. In 2017, 20,000 people participated in the 'Vrukshahati' during the Gol Gumbaz Half-Marathon. As for funding, about Rs 300 crore was raised from various sources to drive its implementation.

N D Patil, a retired Zilla Parishad official and resident of Domansal village, said KVA "has become a people's movement and all the open spaces, schools, colleges, burial grounds, barren hillsides, are now covered with greenery".

KVA has given positive results as there has been a dip in the temperature, increase in rainfall, etc. A barren hillside in my village Domansal is now wearing a green look with the plantation of trees," he said.

Important Articles

TOI The Times Of India @timesofindia X.com

#Delhi | November is here, brace yourself for most polluted fortnight; #AQI back in 'very poor' zone

More details toi.in/hCJOta

WHAT ARE YOU SMOKING ?

> Delhi's AQI worsened to 'very poor' category on Saturday

> The air quality is expected to stay within the 'very poor' range for the next 10 days

AQI on Nov 1

8 am	245
12 pm	275
4 pm	303
8 pm	331

Worst polluted locations in Delhi at 4 pm

North 311
Adash Vihar 309
Bawana 310
Asokanagar 304
Ballia 347
Wazirpur 374
Chanderi Chowk 341
88 Puram 309
Siti Fort 337
Anand Vihar 336

AQI in the past few days

Nov 1	303
Oct 31	218
Oct 30	371
Oct 29	279
Oct 28	294
Oct 27	301
Oct 26	315
Oct 25	292
Oct 24	305

AQI Avg (2018-2023)
The period from Nov 1 to 15 is usually the most polluted fortnight in Delhi.

Wazirpur
Wazirpur has the highest AQI of 374, which is nearly 7.5 times higher than good.

आज तक AQI 20 RADIO LIVE

Hindi News / भारत / दिल्ली

रियलिटी चेक: दिल्ली में प्रदूषण पर 'डेटा का खेल'! कहीं पेड़ों में छिपे AQI स्टेशन, कहीं डिस्प्ले बोर्ड बंद

आजतक के रियलिटी चेक में राजधानी के कई इलाकों में एयर क्वालिटी मॉनिटरिंग स्टेशन (AQI स्टेशन) और डिस्प्ले बोर्ड या तो खराब पाए गए या पेड़ों के बीच इस तरह लगाए गए कि सही आंकड़े मिल ही नहीं सकते. सरकारी वेबसाइटों पर दिख रहे आंकड़ों और जमीनी हकीकत में भी गंभीर खामियां मिलीं.

Important Articles

6 Of 28 Waterbodies Don't Exist, NGT Told

Forest Dept Gives Update To Green Tribunal

Priyangi.Agarwal
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The forest and wildlife department has told National Green Tribunal that of the total 28 waterbodies under its jurisdiction, six do not exist.

Last year, the green watchdog took suo motu cognisance of a media report on the missing waterbodies of Delhi.

An earlier report, submitted by the Wetland Authority of Delhi to the tribunal, had stated that only 631 of the 1,045 waterbodies listed in the revenue records were found to exist during ground verifications.

Additionally, of the 322 waterbodies identified by Geospatial Delhi Limited (GSDL) through satellite imagery, just 43 were found on the ground.

In an order dated Feb 14, the tribunal asked agencies to disclose the status and area of the

Last year, the green watchdog took suo motu cognisance of a report on the missing waterbodies of Delhi

waterbodies that are under their management and what effort had been made by them to clear encroachments and restore the lakes and wetlands.

The forest department said the highest number of waterbodies — 21 — were in the south division, followed by 3 in the west and 2 each in the central and north divisions. Of the 21 waterbodies that revenue records show as existing in the south division, five do not exist. Two waterbodies — spread over 1,520 square metres each — have been encroached upon by two farmhouses. A third waterbody of 9,490 square metres has an unauthorised

colony, while the fourth, with an area of 4,680 square metres, has been encroached upon by a dharamshala and temple, the report said. The department said the fifth waterbody, spanning 19,930 square metres, does not exist, but it has removed encroachments from the area and fenced it.

One wetland was also reported as non-existent in Shashtri Park under the central division. The forest department added that for the other wetland at Garhi Mandu under the central division, it had written to the DDA for demarcation.

Of three waterbodies in Rajokri under the west division, two have dried. The department has proposed digging to restore these in a year.

In the north division, one wetland is partly encroached upon. Its demarcation is on. Encroachments will be removed after that, the report said.

Mum metro re-greening drive botched up, SC lambasts state

Keeps Tree Felling Nod Pending, Asks Govt For Affidavit

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Supreme Court Monday took the Maharashtra govt to task for its poor execution and maintenance of compensatory afforestation sites as it had persuaded the court to permit several Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) projects and grant in principle approval to tunnelled Goregaon-Mulund road link as part of East-West Connectivity project.

Finding that only 50% of the 20,460 trees planted under the compensatory afforestation plan for Mumbai Metro projects have survived, a bench of CJI B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran said, "If this is the status of implementation of the affor-

SLAMS STATE GOVT, SEEKS GUIDELINES

- > Only 50% of 20,460 trees planted under compensatory afforestation plan for Mumbai Metro projects have survived
- > SGNP says most surviving plants are 1-20ft tall, others perished due to little protection, maintenance of sites, most of which do not have required fertility



Tree-cutting in Aarey

> CJI Gavai slams gross negligence by state & authorities. SC asks chief secy to frame guidelines for afforestation plans, warns he will be held personally liable for violations of guidelines

estation plan on ground, we will recall all previous permissions for felling trees to lay metro lines and stations."

The deputy director of Sanjay Gandhi National Park informed the court most of the surviving plants are between one and 20 feet in height and others have perished as there is little protection and maintenance of the afforestation sites, most of which do not have

required fertility with the soil being rocky in character.

CJI Gavai said, "It is gross negligence by the state and its authorities. We had permitted felling of trees keeping in mind the principle of sustainable development by which the public interest is served through requisite infrastructure but causing minimal harm to existing tree cover. Your conduct shows other-

wise. Is this the way afforestation plans are implemented?"

SC, which had earlier given in principle approval for cutting trees at the entry and exit points of the tunnelled road, said the BMC application would be kept pending till the Maharashtra chief secretary files an affidavit on or before Nov 10 detailing the steps to be taken for effective implementation of compensatory afforestation plans, framed in lieu of development projects.

The bench asked the chief secretary to consult all stakeholders, including BMC and MMRCL and related bodies, while framing the guideline for implementation of afforestation plans in letter and spirit. "Unless we are satisfied with the plan, we will not allow any more projects requiring forest clearance," the bench said and warned the chief secretary that he would be held personally liable for future violations of the afforestation implementation guidelines.

The Char-Dham Development A Boon or A Bane

The road widening project at the Chardham is a big question mark on the mindsets of the development authorities.

The area designed for the mountains and river by the Lord is challenged by the authorities to visit the same Lord, which seems absurd.

The recent landslides are a clear example of what all can go wrong in the mountains if their nature is disturbed.

The environmentalists from all around India have come together to file a letter against this project in the Supreme Court.

Here are some links highlighting the information about the same.

[Murli Manohar Joshi Karan Singh appeal to CJI Review and recall judgement on Char Dham project | Jansatta](#)

['Review and recall' judgment on Char Dham project, BJP veteran M M Joshi, Karan Singh appeal to CJI | India News - The Indian Express](#)

[Recall Char Dham project judgment: Murli Manohar Joshi, environmentalists to Supreme Court - The Hindu](#)

[Urgent Appeal to Supreme Court: Activists and Experts Demand Review of Char Dham Highway Project Amid Rising Himalayan Disasters - <https://indianmasterminds.com>](#)

[Sr BJP leaders MM Joshi, Karan Singh, 50 others write to SC for review of Char Dham road project order | Dehradun News - The Times of India](#)

Media Coverage



[As Delhi chokes again post Diwali, residents seek crackdown.](#)



Here are some hot nature gossip tweets from our @NDN_HQ page in August.

Dive into these juicy stories by clicking the links and get ready to be wowed!

Follow our Twitter page for your daily dose of nature and conservation buzz!

From toxic air to poisoned water and now chemicals in air, what's left to treasure Delhi

[Click to View](#)

Cloud seeding trial held.

[Click to View](#)

Health emergency in Delhi

[Click to View](#)

WTE, bane or boon.

[Click to View](#)

Govt. vehicles lack a valid PUC

[Click to View](#)

Delhi's air is not just hurting the lungs but eyes too.

[Click to View](#)

Tying wires, internet cables, sign boards etc. leads to Girdling of Trees.

[Click to View](#)

KMC students to keep the campus dogs safe.

[Click to View](#)

AQI of a city is inversely proportional to IQ of its decision makers

[Click to View](#)

Nicobar's coral disappeared on the government map.

[Click to View](#)

Will sprinkling water heal the Delhi pollution?

[Click to View](#)

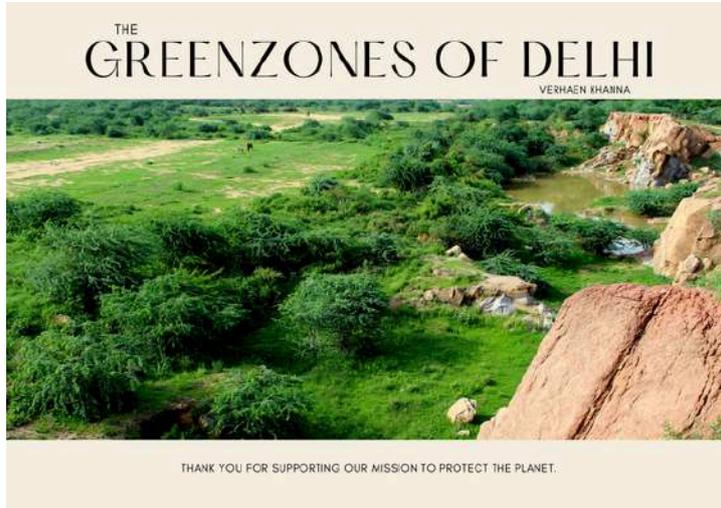
First fire lit, Delhi holds its breath for winter smog

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How is the capital planning to tackle the long haze?

[Click to View](#)

NDNS Coffee Table Book



This beautifully illustrated book showcases the lush greenery and vibrant ecosystems found in the heart of India's capital. Each page offers a glimpse into the diverse flora and fauna that thrive in Delhi's green zones, from bustling parks to serene gardens. By purchasing this coffee table book, you not only bring a piece of nature's beauty into your home but also support the efforts of NDNS (New Delhi Nature Society) in their mission to protect and conserve these precious natural habitats. Your contribution helps promote environmental awareness and ensures that future generations can enjoy the city's green treasures.

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[Adoption Form](#)



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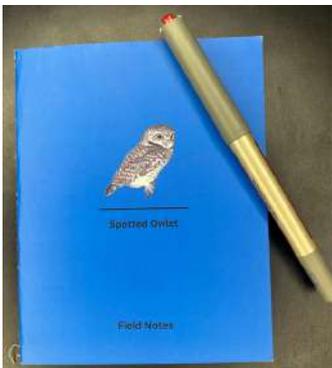
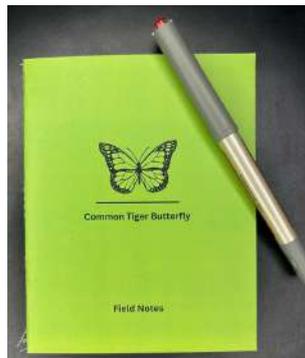
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NDNS Diary



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4. Members are granted access to the NDNS library.

[**Internship Form**](#)

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We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the amazing individuals who have donated nature-related books towards the #newdelhinaturesociety library. Your generosity will help us in building a comprehensive library that will be a valuable resource for nature enthusiasts and students alike. If you too would like to contribute to our library, we welcome book donations and encourage you to get in touch with us for more information. You can visit our website at www.ndns.in to learn more about our organization and our various initiatives.

De-Choke Trees

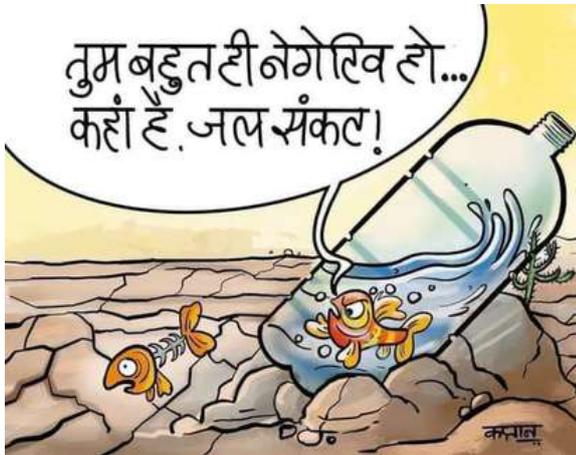
The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in its order dated 23rd April 2013 has directed all Public Authorities to ensure that all the sign boards, names, advertisements, any kind of boards or signage's, electric wires and high tension cables or otherwise are removed from the trees.

They shall also ensure that the concrete surrounding the trees within one meter of the trees are removed and all the trees are looked after well and due precaution is taken in future so that no concrete or construction or repairing work is done at least within one meter radius of the trunk of trees.

NAILS, WIRES (10,000 RS. FINE)

NGT ORDER FOR DE-CHOKING TREES

DELHI PRESERVATION OF TREES ACT



SOS NUMBERS

(TREES AND ANIMALS)

- NDNS - 9711115666
- Wildlife Rescue - 9810129698, 9810639698
- People For Animals - 011 23719293 / 9294.
- For Cows - Dhyani Foundation - 9999099423

A TREE IS BEING CUT?

- Click pictures
- Tell them to stop immediately
- Ask them to show the Forest Department permission.
- No permission, then Call 100 and wait till help arrives.
- Report the matter on the Green Helpline 011-23378513
- Write a letter to the Forest Department
- If they do have permission, then take the supervisor's details who must be present there and contact the Forest Department .

FOREST DEPT. EMAILS

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