

Applying for a gun license? Plant ten trees first, Indian district says

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi plants a sapling as part of a wider plantation campaign, in New Delhi, India, July 26, 2019. Prospective gun owners in Ferozepur district will each have to plant ten saplings and take selfies with them, which they must show to authorities when they go to pick up gun license application forms. CREDIT: Raj K./Hindustan Times/Getty Images

(CNN Newsource) — Indian officials have launched a creative new initiative to boost the number of trees in a Punjab state district, requiring all prospective gun owners to plant 10 tree saplings before their application will be considered.

Potential applicants in Ferozepur district will each have to plant ten saplings and take selfies with them, which they must show to authorities when they go to pick up gun license application forms.

A month later, they need to once again take photographs with the trees to prove they are taking care of them. Only after this is done will the applicant be "considered" for license approval and background checks carried out.

"Punjabis are crazy about smartphones, cars and guns. Let them be crazy about planting," Chander Gaiind, Ferozepur district commissioner, told CNN.

Applicants must go through a rigorous process to be allowed to possess a firearm in India.

The scheme, launched on June 5 to coincide with World Environment Day, has already had more than 100 applicants who have each planted ten saplings.

Between 20 and 25 people have already had been granted a gun license as part of the scheme, Gaing told CNN.

The scheme was initiated because "a large number of trees are being cut down," Gaing said.

"There has been no resentment and it has been received in a very positive way," he added.

24.39% of the total geographical area of India is covered by forest and tree cover, a 2017 India State of Forest report found.

As per the country's National Forest Policy, Indian authorities have been aiming to bring one-third of the country's total land area under forest or tree cover -- a target which the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change says is now under revision.

Source: <https://cbs12.com/news/offbeat/applying-for-a-gun-license-plant-ten-trees-first-indian-district-says>