

Ludhiana municipal corporation to seek PAU, forest department's help for plantation

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LUDHIANA: Grappling with lack of staff and experts in proper planning of landscaping and plantation in the city, the Ludhiana municipal corporation (MC) will now get technical assistance from experts at the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) and forest department. The MC will soon start the plantation along roadsides, inside parks and newly developed green belts; and the officials have been directed to form a committee of such experts for this work.

While confirming the move, a senior MC official said that plantation would be carried out in the coming season under the National Clean Air Program, and they have sought help from the PAU and forest department to bring in species with a better

survival rate in the city.

He informed some plants had died in the past as they couldn't survive in Ludhiana, and the civic body didn't wish to repeat its mistakes.

However, this is not the first time that the officials have considered getting suggestions from PAU or other experts, but it is for the first time that they will actually form a committee for the same.

As of now, the horticulture branch of the MC has remained the most neglected wing in absence of technical staff, and designing is difficult for them due to an acute shortage of staff.

Against 640 sanctioned posts of gardeners and beldars, only 170 are working, of which only 90 are permanent staff while others are on daily wages. There are total 870 public parks in the city that fall within the MC limits, and out of these, over 600 parks are being handled by park management committees comprising active area residents who are taking care of these parks.

Still, the civic body maintains over 250 public parks, including big parks in the city like Rose Garden, Leisure Valley, Children's Park, Mini Rose Garden etc, besides the 76km-long central verge that they are developing. The charge of the horticulture branch lies with the officials of the building and road department.

Last year, the MC had handed over the maintenance of plants to a private contractor, who not only provided the saplings but also planted them due to this staff crunch.



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