

Numbering of trees sparks protest by eco-activists fearing green cover loss

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Dehradun: Environmental activists, locals and social activists gathered on Sunday morning against potential tree felling in Dehradun.

The protest was sparked by the recent marking of trees along Canal Road, which has many mango and jamun trees, raising fears of a road-widening project and subsequent tree felling. Their concerns follow recent proposals to fell 2,000 trees at Khalanga forest reserve and nearly 250 trees along New Cantt Road for road expansion, projects that were temporarily halted due to public outcry.

“In past five years, nearly 25,000 trees have been felled in and around Dehradun, and 40,000 are expected to be chopped for new projects. Tree numbering has been done along Canal Road and in Ladpur. Over the past two decades, temperatures have risen by 7°C. There has been no census indicating population growth in Dehradun, and the 2021 master plan has not been implemented to account for the increase in vehicles. Despite the lack of information, blind infrastructure work continues,” said environmentalist Dr Ravi Chopra.

“Unfortunately, our planners are not stakeholders. They will leave once the work is done and we will be left to face the consequences of their rash action,” said Lokesh Ohri, founder of citizens’ group, Been There Doon That. Officials of the Mussoorie forest division said marking was done by Dehradun PWD division in the presence of forest department officials for proposed road widening. However, the project is now being denied, with officials claiming it was ‘merely a census’.

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