

CIDCO hands over 68.40ha mangrove forest in Panvel Taluka to forest department

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A total of 68.4 hectares of mangrove forest area in Panvel Taluka was handed over by CIDCO to the forest department on Monday.

In a tweet, CIDCO Vice-Chairman & Managing Director, Sanjay Mukherjee, informed about the transfer done with the mangrove cell of the forest department and termed it to be a step towards sustainable development. This was the second phase of land transfers done.

Of the 68.40 hectares of mangroves transferred, 24.20 hectares are in Ulwe, 3.15ha in Wahal, 39.94ha in Waghiwali and 0.75ha in Sonkhar. With this transfer, the total land handover by CIDCO is stated to be a total of 2,000ha.

In the first phase of transfer, CIDCO had transferred 281.77ha of mangroves in 2021. Environmentalists have sought more transparency in the transfers.

“The mangroves in Nerul and Kharghar areas are still with CIDCO and the nature of encroachment and resultant damages happening to the ecosystem are huge. If CIDCO is claiming to have actually transferred 2,000ha of mangroves, let it clearly state how much more is remaining because as per our understanding, a total of 349.40ha hectares of mangroves land has only been transferred till date,” said environment activist and Nerul resident, Sunil Agarwal.

Sharing a similar view is NGO Vanashakti, which filed a PIL in the Bombay High Court in 2021, seeking the transfer of all mangrove lands in possession of all government departments. “There needs to be more clarity on the exact area transferred,” said the founder of the NGO, Stalin Dayanand.

The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Virendra Tiwari acknowledged the latest transfer and stated that the department is pursuing with the organisation to transfer the remaining. “CIDCO has over 1800ha of land in Uran and Panvel regions, out of which as per our records, it has transferred 281 and 68ha, respectively. Prior to this, some lands from this region were procured many years ago through the Collector’s office, though we are still pursuing with CIDCO as to how much total land is transferred and to transfer the remaining land as well,” he said.

Mukherjee termed the handover to be aimed at protecting and conserving mangroves as ‘reserved forest’. “While planning Navi Mumbai, CIDCO had kept about 40% area for green cover. So far, CIDCO has handed over approx. 2,000ha of land to the forest department, making it the only government organisation and public sector undertaking to hand over such large pieces of mangrove lands.”

CIDCO also claimed to have planted mangroves across over 370ha with the help of mangrove cell.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/cidco-hands-over-68-40ha-mangrove-forest-in-panvel-taluka-to-forest-department-101645460837720.html>