

# Declare Ajni a deemed forest, demand greens

TNN | Dec 8, 2020, 04:13 AM IST

Nagpur: Citing a judgment by the apex court, environment activists have demanded Ajni's lush green area be declared a deemed urban forest.

In a letter to the principal chief conservator of forest, former honorary wildlife warden of Nagpur Jaydeep Das stated the area had rich biodiversity including over 50 indigenous tree species, with some of them over 100 years old. "The area has dense tree canopy cover with over 7,000 trees and is home for numerous species of birds, like yellow-footed green pigeon (state bird) and oriental honey buzzard (city bird). The area fits into the category of identified forest as directed by the Supreme Court," he stated.

In a December 1996 judgment, the Supreme Court had asked state governments to form committees to identify forests. Deemed forests are "land having the characteristic of forests irrespective of the ownership."

Das has requested the forest chief to survey the area and give it much-needed protection. "This is not only the need of the hour but the patch of forest is one of the last green areas in the city, especially on the eastern side," he added.

As is being reported by TOI, thousands of trees on the Central Railway land in Ajni are facing the axe for construction of a transport hub and an inter modal station. In a proposal submitted to the garden department of Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC), NHAI in its two applications has sought permission to cut nearly 2,000 trees. Experts however feel the real damage will be much more.