



## **Devpt plans with axing of 500+ trees to be sent to tree authority**

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Panaji: The chief minister and forest minister have approved the proposal of constituting the 'Tree Protection Fund' and the file is with the finance department for necessary approvals, principal secretary (forest) told the high court.

The court was told that the tree authority has communicated to the forest department that the developmental project proposals involving felling of more than 500 trees may be sent to it before making recommendations to the government.

Following a petition by Living Heritage Foundation seeking revival of the tree authorities, the high court had directed the state government in July to constitute the tree protection fund mandated by Section 35-A of the Trees Act within six months.

The foundation had told the high court that the tree authorities have been non-functional since 2012 and had failed to discharge their duties since its constitution in 1998 as a result of which Goa is rapidly losing its tree cover.

Permissions granted under the Goa Preservation of Trees Act, 1984, are being regularly uploaded by the member secretaries of the Tree Authorities (DCF, North and DCF, South) on the departmental website and the location for planting of saplings in lieu of trees felled are being identified before granting permission for tree felling where user agencies are being advised to plant tall saplings to ensure better survival percentage, the two authorities submitted to the high court.

The forest department, while examining tree felling proposals, recommends only the bare minimum trees for felling and for each tree felled, the user agency has to plant three saplings and depending on the site and other factors, the user agencies may be advised to use mechanical tree transplanter for transplanting of trees or carry it out through an agency, which has the necessary experience in the field, the authorities stated.

There is already a mechanism in place to replace dead, dying, diseased and other trees which are dangerous to life and property and every year, before the onset of monsoon a committee identifies the trees that pose a risk and require pruning or felling, the authorities told the court.

The committee includes members from the revenue department, public works department, forest department and agriculture department.

Source:<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/devpt-plans-with-axing-of-500-trees-to-be-sent-to-tree-authority/articleshow/89026637.cms>