

FSI survey to assess trees in non-forest areas

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Ghaziabad: On directions of the Uttar Pradesh government, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) is conducting a survey in Meerut and Saharanpur divisions to assess trees outside forest areas. The UP forest department said Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar will be included in the survey, which are part of the Meerut division.

The department generally takes up tree plantations in protected and reserved forest areas while there is hardly any assessment of tree cover in non-forest areas. The survey is being done with the help of remote sensing.

“Through remote sensing, sampling points will be generated. The assessment will be done by about 90 personnel of the forest department. Once the sample is ascertained, it will be extrapolated to give an assessment of the number of trees in non-forest areas which will also include trees on private land,” said Diksha Bhandari, divisional forest officer, Ghaziabad.

The remote sensing will assess trees in scattered, linear, dense and in block formation.

“The work has already been done in Saharanpur division and now it is going on in Bulandshahr and Gautam Budh Nagar. Besides assessment, the survey will also help assess availability of timber,” said SK Janu, chief conservator of forests (Meerut).

The ‘State of Forest - 2019’ report states that Ghaziabad district, with its geographical area of about 1,179 square kilometres (sq km), has forest cover on about 25.22 sq km, which is about 2.14% of its geographical area. The district also suffered a negative growth of forest cover of 0.78% in comparison to the last 2017 assessment by the FSI, the report adds.

Gautam Budh Nagar on the other hand has 1.56% of forest cover, about 20 sq km, of its 1,282 sq km of geographical area, as per the 2019 report. In comparison to the 2017 report, the district did not make any addition to its forest cover in 2019.

“Despite plantation of lakhs of trees during the annual plantation drive, the forest cover has gone down in Ghaziabad. The survey is a welcome step as it will provide a baseline of tree availability. Once the baseline data is available, it will be helpful in assessing the per capita of tree cover available and ways to increase it further,” said Akash Vashishtha, a city-based environmentalist.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/noida/fsi-survey-to-assess-trees-in-non-forest-areas/story-DH9Req1Uy80Ndl69EqSaFM.html>