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Forest officials directed to identify trees choked with concrete in city

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Ludhiana: In the ongoing execution application forwarded by National Green Tribunal to the district court with regard to the removal of concrete around trees, the court has asked the divisional forest officer to identify trees in the city. This has been done because the chairman Ludhiana Improvement Trust (LIT) Raman Balasubramaniam had requested the court for appointing the DFO so that trees could be identified.

Engineer Kapil Dev had filed petition in NGT about damage to trees by municipal corporation (MC), LIT and Greater Ludhiana Area Development Authority (GLADA), as they are fixing concrete tiles around trees. The NGT had forwarded the case to local court.

Kapil Dev, (petitioner in person) said the court has directed that, “Since the trees on the roadsides are being numbered by the forest department, the court deem it appropriate to seek the assistance of DFO, Ludhiana for effective implementation of the orders of the NG. As such, report be called from DFO, Ludhiana regarding the number of trees that are existing in the city to ensure that concrete/interlocking tiles within 1 meter radius of the trees are removed forthwith.”

He informed the media that vide its orders dated February 1, the court had directed that, “Above said respondents like MC, LIT and GLADA are directed to make necessary compliance of the order of NGT forthwith and submit status/action report on next date.” However, the MC as well as LIT, both have continued to fix interlocking tiles in ongoing works within area of their

jurisdiction and despite informing them on WhatAspp, they deliberately and intentionally continued to defy court orders even after February 1 and such an act of both the respondents is contempt of orders of the court.

Thus an application (along with some photographs) has been submitted to the court with a plea for initiation of contempt proceedings against both the respondents. The petitioner has further requested the court that both the respondents may be directed to deposit Rs 10 crore as security deposits that will stand forfeited, if they fail to obey directions of law in a fixed interval of time.

After hearing the plea of the petitioner, the court further directed that, “At the cost of repetition, MC, LIT and GLADA are directed to ensure meticulous compliance of the directions of NGT in pending as well as further projects/works.” The court further directed both MC and LIT to submit necessary reply on the next date to the application moved by the petitioner apprising disobeying directions of NGT as well as contempt of orders by continue to fix tiles within one meter radius of the trees in the works executed after February 1 by both the respondents.

LIT chairman Raman Balasubramaniam said, “We do not know which trees are already dead or what is the number of these trees that is why I had requested the court to attach some experienced forest officer in the case for further directions. When DFO will be involved, at least we will know what we have to do.”