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Mohali | GMADA's urban forest project gasping for air

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GMADA had originally procured the land UniWorld City, Sector 97, from Unitech builders around ten years ago to develop a city park. In March last year, however, the body proposed development of a near-35-acre forest area, which entailed the plantation of varieties of trees, both medicinal and others, at the cost of ₹32 crore instead of building a city park.

In December last year, GMADA floated the tenders to hire a private firm to maintain the area, which was to be developed in 18 months, for a three-year period. A pre-bid meeting called on April 11 this year, however, was later cancelled.

GMADA chief engineer Balwinder Singh said the viability of the project was currently being reviewed, before mentioning the possibility of a change in location.

Unitech resident welfare association, Sector 97, president Dr Megha Singh, meanwhile, said the land that GMADA was to develop has been classified as 'prime land and was earmarked for a city park project 15 years ago, before alleging that a few GMADA officials, in connivance with encroachers, were stopping the development of the land.

Megha Singh added that they would take the issue up with higher authorities and the Punjab chief minister.

Notably, the project was GMADA's first attempt at developing a dedicated forest cover in the city.

Another GMADA official who did not wish to be named said the aim was to develop a novel, dedicated green belt or forest area to mark a shift from city parks. The official added that the decision to review the project was taken by senior GMADA officials.

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