

Goa: Soon, norms to standardise planting of trees in public areas

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PANAJI: Government departments often take up tree plantation in public spaces like parks and gardens, by the seashore, along roads and by banks of rivers and lakes. To ensure that this helps and suits the local ecology, Goa is set to get norms to standardise the practice.

The high court of Bombay at Goa recently issued directives to the state tree authorities to set a prescribed standard for planting and maintenance of such trees in public places. The authority has accordingly formed a technical committee tasked with studying the practices in other states and framing guidelines for government departments in Goa to follow with respect to tree plantation.

“The technical committee may take up this work and after studying all aspects, guidelines/norms, case studies of different states, may submit a comprehensive report by November 30, 2021,” the tree authority said.

The authority has also decided that from now on only bigger saplings should be planted as part of compensatory afforestation. Any agency taking up infrastructural projects, like construction of roads, etc, will also have to plant mature saplings to ensure better survival of the plant.

Planting saplings of at least 8-10 feet height will also ensure that loss of a tree is compensated in a shorter period, the tree authority said.

“Committee also considered that, to compensate for the loss of each tree in the shortest feasible time, the practice of planting small saplings generally followed by the user agencies, may be discouraged. To compensate for the loss at an early date user agency may be advised to plant tall saplings with good endurance with minimum 8-10 feet height and 10cm diameter at one meter height from ground,” the tree authority said.

The committee in its report will draw a list of trees suitable for each type of terrain in the state and the forest department will ensure that compensatory afforestation is carried out using tree species as per this report. Monitoring of such compensatory afforestation will be carried out by forest officials.

The committee will include experts from the agriculture department, the Goa State Biodiversity Board, the botany department of Goa University, forest department, wetland authority of Goa, PWD and WRD.

Once the report is ready by November 30, it will be sent to the forest department, which will get the approval for the norms from the government for implementation.

From now on, for any projects that require felling of trees, it will also be ensured that transplantation of trees that need removal from site is carried out as far as possible, the authority said.

“User agencies may be advised to carry out tree transplantation to the extent feasible considering all criteria including age, height, girth, edaphic factors, root development, etc. The transplantation has to be invariably carried out through the expert agency/company who have experience in the relevant field to ensure that transplantation is carried out with minimum damage to trees and survival percentage is maximum,” the authority said.

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