

In Patiala, plant 10 saplings to get arms licence, 5 to renew it

30 July 2020



Patiala Division Commissioner Chander Gaiind said that the idea was based on encouraging people to plant more trees as well as nurture them. Express Photo: Praveen Khanna (Representational)

With a resolve to check land degradation and declining ground water levels in Punjab and ‘nudge’ Patiala residents to lead this combat against deforestation, Patiala Division Commissioner Chander Gaiind on Wednesday introduced his initiative ‘Trees – For – Gun’.

Under this, anyone desirous of attaining a new arms license or renewing an existing one would have to plant 10 trees for a new license and 5 for renewal. One would have to submit a selfie with each planted sapling at the time of filing an application. After a month, before marking the application for police clearance and dope test, the applicant would have to furnish the fresh status of the planted trees by submitting new selfies with the grown trees.

Gaiind said that the idea was based on encouraging people to plant more trees as well as nurture them. This will automatically contribute to an increased tree and forest cover, he added.

When he was deputy commissioner of Ferozepur, he had launched a similar scheme there as well.

Member of Parliament Preneet Kaur launched the scheme via video call. While appreciating the idea, she appealed to other districts to follow this initiative in the wake of depleting ecological and environmental balance.

She pointed to the fact that India had recently hosted the 14th COP to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, wherein it was stressed that there has to be a worldwide concerted effort to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). LDN, she said, is also a crucial sub-target for sustainable development, and Patiala has a great potential to lead this effort.

Gaiind said Patiala is among districts with the highest number of weapon licensees — more than 42,000 issued so far, adding that around 200 renewal applications are received every month. “If every applicant plants five saplings, we will end up with a thousand saplings planted per annum in Patiala district itself. If implemented across the state, then the figure may be 2.64 lakh annually,” he added.

For applicants who do not own land for plantation, Gaiind said they can choose public places (educational institutions, religious places, roadsides etc.) for the purpose, provided they take the responsibility for its nurturing and care. This, he added, would also then contribute to social forestry.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/patiala-plant-10-saplings-arms-licence-5-renew-it-6530423/>