

Miyawaki forest to be developed at eight locations in Thane

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Thane The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) planning to create Miyawaki forests at eight locations in Thane as a part of turning the city into a green space in the future. The civic body has joined hands with an NGO to protect and conserve the environment and a total 7.6 acres of land will be forested.

“This is to create more green space across the city. Primarily, we will have a Miyawaki forest in 3,000 sq meters of land. Along with cleanliness and beautification campaign undertaken by the municipal corporation, the initiative of creating green belts in the city is being undertaken,” said Abhijit Bangar, commissioner, TMC.

“Projects like the Nature Park at Koparkhairane, the true jewel of Navi Mumbai, are benefiting the environment. On these lines, we held a meeting with the Green Yatra organization to build such green spaces in Thane city,” added Bangar, who was the commissioner of Navi Mumbai in previous posting.

“The city of Thane is blessed with a land rich in biodiversity like Yeoor Hills. But due to increasing urbanization, the number of trees within the city are decreasing day-by-day. As an alternative to this, Miyawaki forest will ensure maximum afforestation in a small space and this will certainly maintain the balance of the environment along with increasing urbanization,” said the young IAS officer.

The tree fall cases in Thane vicinity were also on rise during the monsoon this year. On some occasions, more than 15 tree fall cases on an average were recorded within 24 hours in August. The TMC data showed that in calendar year 2021, 628 tree fall cases and 3350 branch fall cases were reported, while this year from January to September, 540 tree falls and 400 branch falls were reported due to heavy downpour and strong windy conditions, officials said.

A total of eight locations have been identified for setting up Miyawaki forests including 8,000 sq m at Nisarga Udyan at Mullabagh, 5000 sq m at Mogharpada, Dubhajak, 7,300 sq m at Mogharpada reserved open plot A, 1500 sq m at Plot B, 4700 sq m at Kopari in Thane East, 1,000 sq m at Nagla Bunder and 3,000 sq m near Parsik Visarjan Ghat. The Miyawaki forest will be built through the CSR fund and there will be no financial burden on the municipal corporation. Also, the organization will bear the cost of tree planting and maintenance for three years.

Although space is currently limited, Miyawaki is a method of planting trees where a forest can be created in a small space. 300 different types of trees can be planted in a small space where six four-wheelers are parked.

An attempt will also be made to plant trees in the Miyawaki style in the area developed under the Waterfront Development Project in the municipal area. The commissioner has directed that Hiranandani Meadows, Waghbil, Central Park areas should be included in this development.

“We have undertaken several such projects of tree plantation across Mumbai metropolitan region. Thane being one of the developing cities after Mumbai, we also approached the civic body there. We surveyed the spots before choosing them. Things are presently at the primary stage. However, we are very positive about implementing it soon,” said a representative of Green Yatra, who did not wish to be named.

What is Miyawaki method?

In Miyawaki dense forest system, trees grow 10 times faster than traditional plantations and these forests are 30 times denser, and offer more biodiversity. The method, developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki in the 1970s, tree plantation is done scientifically, indigenous species of trees are planted in these forests, and forest surveys are conducted to study indigenous trees in that area. These trees are planted in a specific way. For this plantation, the required nutrients are added to the soil after soil testing. The trees are cultivated organically without the use of chemical fertilizers. Dense plantations retain large amounts of soil water and help raise groundwater levels. In addition, the forest attracts birds and insects and helps improve air quality. Interestingly, Miyawaki solids become self-sustainable in two to three years. Such forests are becoming very important for urban areas.

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