

**Over 800 trees may have to go for revamped New Delhi railway station**

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NEW DELHI: Over 800 trees are expected to be felled or transplanted for the New Delhi railway station redevelopment project, which is currently awaiting clearance from the forest and wildlife department.

In the first week of September, lieutenant governor Anil Baijal had directed agencies to expedite all clearances for the project, but forest officials said a fresh submission would have to be made as the total number of trees had been miscounted during the first submission. Based on the fresh submission to be made by next week, the forest department would assess whether the proposal would require clearance under Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994 or the more-stringent Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

**THE GREEN COST OF A BRAND-NEW NDLS**

➤ Forest and wildlife department awaits fresh proposal from Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) over the total number of trees that will be impacted

➤ Forest officials say in the first proposal, the number of trees had been wrongly counted,  
 ➤ Over 800 trees are, however, expected to be impacted

➤ The trees are spread over three separate patches and depending on their density, the clearance will either be awarded based on the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994, or the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, the latter of which is more stringent and takes more time



**What revamped New Delhi Railway Station may look like**

➤ Dome-shaped terminal buildings with separate arrivals and departures at concourse level

➤ Two multimodal transport hubs on each side  
 ➤ 40-floor highrise twin towers, which will have offices,

retail shops and rooms  
 ➤ Pedestrianised streets  
 ➤ A high-end shopping street overlooking Connaught Place

Artist's impression



A senior forest official from the west division said three patches would be impacted. Inspections done in the past showed trees had not been counted properly. The executing body for the project,

Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA), was asked to submit a fresh proposal with the exact number of trees that would be affected.

“Each forest patch was numbered and we asked them to rectify the count and submit it again. However, it is estimated that 800-1,000 trees will be impacted. Once the submission is made, a fresh inspection will be done to determine whether it is a deemed forest or not,” said the official.

The forest department considers an area a “deemed forest” if it has more than 250 trees per hectare. Subsequently, permission has to be taken from the Centre under Forest Conservation Act to fell trees.

After inspection, the department would determine the number of trees that would be transplanted. “Each agency has been asked to expedite work and once we receive a fresh count, we can inspect these three forest patches and give the necessary clearance,” said the official.

In the meeting held in the first week of September, Baijal discussed the project with CEO of Niti Aayog Amitabh Kant, Delhi chief secretary Vijay Dev, DDA vice-chairman Anurag Jain and the RLDA VC, along with senior officials from stakeholder organisations. The LG asked the agencies to ensure clearances were given in a timely manner so that the project timeline could be adhered to.

At present, nine private companies have been shortlisted and a Request for Proposal would have to be submitted by October. The station is being redeveloped on the transit-oriented development policy. It would be built on world-class standards, consisting of dome-shaped terminal buildings with separate arrivals and departures. There would be 40-floor twin towers with retail and office space, apart from a pedestrian boulevard with high-end shopping outlets.

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