

DELHI

# 'Tree transplantation for new Parliament violates govt. terms'

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## Permission was to transplant trees near India Gate, but being taken 22 km away

Trees being transplanted from a plot next to the current Parliament, for construction of a new Parliament building, are being transplanted in an Eco Park, about 22 km away, in violation of approval given by the Delhi government. The approval was given for transplantation of a total 404 trees to the Central Public Works Department.

The trees were supposed to be transplanted near the existing Parliament, close to the India Gate area. "Transplantation of 404 trees which are standing on the site shall be done by user agency at eight pockets in Central Vista, New Delhi," the permission for transplantation of the trees given by Delhi government on September 16, read. These eight pockets are close to the artificial ponds near India Gate, according to officials.

When contacted about the issue, the official concerned of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, under which the CPWD falls, did not offer a comment.

## 'Under pressure'

When asked about the violation, a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*, "A CPWD official now said that they were under pressure and transplanted trees in the NTPC Eco Park and were planning to inform us afterwards. But it's in violation of the permission given and action will be taken."

Workers at the NTPC Eco Park in Kalindi Kunj also confirmed the development and said that at least "15-20 big trees" from the Parliament work have been transplanted at the park. This reporter also saw photos of these trees at the park and also videos of them in the process of being transplanted at the park.

Multiple drivers of trucks transporting the trees and another CPWD official also confirmed that "large trees" were being taken to the park at night. "The smaller trees are being taken to a plot in Kirti Nagar," a worker at the new Parliament site said on Tuesday, which was confirmed by two more workers. When asked about the violation, Ashwani Mittal, CPWD executive engineer, to whom different permissions regarding the work have been sent by the Delhi and Union

# Transplantation row

## What was decided then

**June 17:** Union Environment Ministry gives environmental clearance for the new Parliament project, says there are 333 trees on the plot and 233 of them need to be transplanted

**Sept. 16:** Delhi government gives permission for 404 trees on the plot to be transplanted at eight pockets in Central Vista area. These pockets are close to India Gate, as per officials



Uprooted trees near Parliament, being taken for transplantation. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## What is happening now

- Large trees from the plot are being moved at night in trucks to NTPC Eco Park in Kalindi Kunj, about 22 km away. Transplantation of these trees happening here is in violation of the permission
- According According to many workers, smaller trees are being moved to a plot in Kirti Nagar
- There is no official clarity on how many trees have been transplanted in the new locations so far

governments, said that he was “not competent to communicate to the media”.

Officials did not comment on how many of the total 404 trees have been transplanted at the park.

Some of the trees, which were given permission to be transplanted, were as tall as 16 metres — taller than a three-storey building. The trees include Peepal, Banyan, Neem, and Ashoka, among others and were 5 to over 50 years old, as per officials.

When asked why the government is not doing transplantation close to India Gate, as said in the permission, Kanchi Kohli, senior researcher at Centre for Policy Research, said, “The Delhi government, CPWD and Urban Development Ministry are aware that the massive Central Vista redevelopment is proposed for the PM’s residence, common Central Secretariat and other buildings, apart from the new Parliament. An application seeking environment clearance for these has already been floated. This makes the transplantation on these same plots, where massive redevelopment may be under way soon, highly improbable and misleading.”

She also said that if transplantation is being carried outside the Central Vista area, then it is a violation of the approval given by the Delhi government.

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