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Trunk call: Chandigarh trees being strangled

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CHANDIGARH: The city's beautiful tree lines are threatened. The trunks are drying up rapidly because paver blocks leave no space around the base to let air and water into the roots.

With the coming up of more footpaths, more trees are dying. Environmentalists disapprove of the practice and demand a breathing space for the trees. After months of trying to persuade the civic authorities to save the environment, a local voluntary organization has filed a petition in National Green Tribunal (NGT) against concrete sidewalks.



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Environmentalist L R Budaniya said: "Paver blocks are killing the roots and the trees with it. Even gardeners know that you must leave a protected zone around the roots for the health of trees. When concrete is laid over the roots or earth dug up to build patios or driveways, the damage to the root structures is critical." He has been working for long to save the city's green cover. Most concrete-covered trees are near government buildings, including the forest department's office.

Be it the southern roadsides of sectors 31, 46 and, 40 or Udyog Vihar and the posh sectors of 3, 4, 8, and 9, trees are being choked everywhere. Not many cities in the country have this kind of a planned tree cover, so it is surprising that the threat to this wealth is being ignored.

Budaniya said: "Tree bases are being cemented even in protected forest and nobody seems

to have noticed. The other departments can be unaware of its effects but being a custodian of our environment, the forest wing has no excuse for negligence."

In June 2019, the municipal commissioner had ordered the horticulture department to create a breathing space around the trees to save them from dying. The executive engineers of the roads and horticulture divisions claim to have finished 70% of the job and promised to complete the rest quickly but the ground reality is that only four to five dying trees can be spotted on every roadside of the city.

The commissioner wanted avenue planting, group planting, mixed planting, and informal planting of tree species for their long life and health. He had ordered adequate spacing of avenue trees, for which he had told all the government institutions and private organizations to consult horticulture division and its experts.

The civic body had passed instructions to its officers to plant taller trees on roadsides and nurse those well. It had recommended perforated paver, wherever possible, for proper water recharge. Engineers of the municipal corporation had also received clear instructions to implement green guidelines strictly. Despite this, they have taken no action for a year since.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/trunk-call-chandigarh-trees-being-strangulated/articleshow/73237101.cms>