



Work on mini Lalbagh in Jarakabande Kaval will begin soon, says Horticulture Minister

27 September 2022

Despite facing strong opposition from local residents, farmers, and environmentalists, the State government has decided to go ahead with the plan to develop the Jarakabande Kaval deemed forest area in Yelahanka into a park, which is now being called “mini Lalbagh”, and is proposed to be named after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Responding to a question raised in the recently concluded Assembly session, Minister for Horticulture Munirathna said work on the project will begin soon. He defended the decision to develop a park in the area to cater to the demand for green spaces in a rapidly urbanising Bengaluru. “We need to acquire 307 acres of deemed forest land for the project. The proposal has been made and as per norms alternative land in 1:1 ratio has also been identified. Once we get a clearance from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, the project will begin in phases,” he said, expressing confidence that they will get the MoEF clearance for transfer of land very soon. Alternative land patches have been identified in Shivalli (112 acres), Chennapura in Bengaluru Rural district (150 acres), Kotekoppa in Ramanagaram (100 acres), and in Chickballapura (30 acres), he said.

The project has faced opposition from residents and environmentalists from the proposal stage. “There is no point in converting a natural forest, one of the last remaining patches in the city into a park to cater to the need for green spaces in the city. This will only disturb the natural ecosystem of the forest,” said a volunteer from “Save Jarakabande Forest”.

However, local MLA S.R. Vishwanath claimed Jarakabande Kaval will remain a forest area and the trees will not be felled. “Only eucalyptus and acacia trees which are not well suited for the region will be removed. Instead of them, we will plant fruit trees and other eco-friendly trees in phases. Thousands of people already come to the forest for walking and cycling. We just need to develop some infrastructure and retain the ecosystem. For example, in place of mud walking and cycling tracks, we will provide sturdier roads,” he explained. He also said that to create environmental awareness among children, a centre will be established inside the forest.

“A lot of forests have disappeared in the city, especially in the northern part, in the last few decades. The trees in these forests were planted many generations ago and we should protect them. You cannot create a lung space by concretising a natural forest. These days, there is a bid to transform all the forests into a picnic spot where people can spend their or weekends or go cycling. But no one pays a thought about how a frog or a toad or another small creature could get trampled under bicycle wheels. The species inside forests are fighting for space. We should leave the forests as forests,” said a member of the ‘Save Jarakabande Forest’ campaign.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/work-on-mini-lalbagh-in-jarakabande-kaval-will-begin-soon-says-horticulture-minister/article65943004.ece>