Irreparable Loss: 1000 Trees Cut In Odisha To Build A Helipad For PM Modi's Arrival

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Thousand trees have been cut to make way for a temporary helipad to welcome PM Modi.

Photo: Representative Image

We wish for a time when we are more responsible towards other things living alongside us on planet earth. When it comes to trees, we seemed to have decided that no thought will be given before deciding to cut out main source of oxygen.

Thousand trees have been cut to make way for a temporary helipad to welcome PM Modi, the Hindu reported.

The Prime Minister is expected to visit Balangir town of Odisha and the felling has irked environment activists. Reportedly, under urban plantation programme that was undertaken in 2016, saplings were planted on 2.25 hectares controlled by the Indian Railways.

A vacant plot was needed for he construction of the helipad, therefore, 1.25 hectares of land had to be cleared. An environmentalist Biswajit Mohanty said even if a small patch of plantation had to be cut, authorities were required to take due permission before felling the trees. Once plantation programme is taken up in a land, trees cannot be cut down without prior permission.

The state forest department later conducted a preliminary inquiry into the tree felling and it was found out that the allegations are true. Samir Kumar Satpathy, Balangir Divisional Forest Officer told The Hindu,Â â€œThe allegation of tree felling is true. No prior permission was sought from us for it.â€•

Photo: AFP

He added that they were informed by Railway officials that from security point of view, trees were urgently cut down. Trees were four- to seven-foot tall and the survival rate was close to 90%. The Forest officer estimated that roughly 1,000 to 1,200 trees have been lost.

Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to flag off the inaugural run of a train on the Khurda-Balangir railway line before addressing a public meeting in the western Odisha town on Tuesday. Meanwhile, a local environmentalist in Ghaziabad complained that at least 60 neem trees had been cut in the Central Bureau Of Investigation Academy. Activist Pradeep Sunpura told TOI that the felling had been carried out by a resident on campus.

He also alleged that no prior permission was taken in this case.

Update: East Coast Railway spokesperson said that no major trees were cut to make way for the helipad. Only leaves/branches of few trees on Railway land had to be pruned to give full proper space for helicopter movements. Railway will estimate total loss of plants and replant more than two times of saplings lost, TOI Bhubaneshwar tweeted.

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