

Bengaluru civic body not equipped for tree survey this year

BBMP will tie up with Institute of Wood Science and Technology to generate funds



By Express News Service

BENGALURU: The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) will not be carrying out the tree census, stating that it has no required expertise to do so. While the much-awaited tree census will not be carried out in the city this year, the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) will be doing it as a project next year. This will be done after a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed with the civic body and funds are granted for the project.

Until then, BBMP and the state government will have to rely on the recently-released 'Declining tree cover in the city' - a report released by Indian Institute of Science (IISc). Succumbing to increasing pressure from various quarters, including Karnataka High Court, state government, councilors and citizen welfare groups, the BBMP reached out to IWST for its rescue.

BBMP admitted to the IWST that it did not have the required expertise, technology and staff strength to carry out the tree census and that the latter must do the census for the BBMP. But IWST officials want to do it as a project and they need a MoU to be signed beforehand.

BBMP Commissioner Manjunath Prasad on Tuesday admitted before the council that BBMP had no record of the number of live and dead trees in the city. The census had not been done earlier as it did not have the technology.

“So far only one meeting has been held and we have told the BBMP that we can do the work but as a research project. As per IWT rules, a MoU will have to be signed, a detailed project report prepared and then the BBMP will have to release the finances. After which only the study will be done. All these procedures will take at least six months, only after which the census will commence,” an IWST senior official said.

It may be recalled that for a year, the two departments held discussions on translocation of trees, instead of axing them down. Since IWST has the expertise and tie up with private firms, it had said that translocation can be done, provided BBMP identifies the suitable locations. However the discussion did not materialise as BBMP could not find the space. “In wake of this IWST has also raised its scepticism if at all the census will be done,” the IWST official added.