

Assam district to swap sapling, cloth bag for a kilo of plastic

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A file photo used for representational purpose only.

‘Plants for plastic’ campaign to promote women SHGs.

A district in western Assam is offering a sapling and a cloth bag in exchange for a kilogram of plastic from Tuesday. Apart from making a statement against plastic pollution, the “barter system” is expected to promote an array of cloth bags to be made exclusively by women self-help groups (SHGs) in the Bongaigaon district.

“We are launching the ‘plants for plastic’ campaign to encourage the people to collect and remove plastic from their houses, commercial establishments and educational institutions. We hope the idea catches on to enable us to open cloth bag outlets manufactured by the SHGs,” the district’s Deputy Commissioner Adil Khan told The Hindu.

Local species

The initiative entails depositing a kilogram of plastic at the municipality office in district headquarters Bongaigaon, about 180 km west of Guwahati, and get a cloth bag and a sapling free in return. The saplings are of species of trees that grow locally, such as gooseberry, olive, mango, jackfruit and mahogany.

“If a person does not have a place to plant the sapling at his or her own premises, the district administration will help plant it in that person’s name during mass planting,” Mr. Khan, who designed the exchange offer, said.

‘Plants for plastic’ will become a permanent offer after the inaugural event at Bongaigaon’s Gandhi Maidan, he added.

Social forestry

Mr. Khan acknowledged the role of Robinhood Army, a local volunteer organisation for spreading awareness on cleanliness, for the authorities to think of innovative schemes for a plastic-free district. Saplings for the exchange offer are being provided by the Social Forestry wing of the State’s Forest Department.

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