

Cell soon for growth of mangroves in non-forest zones, Kol gets 1,200 plants

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KOLKATA: The state forest department is setting up a mangrove cell comprising government officials, experts and mangrove specialists, to protect and expand mangrove in as many non-forest areas in the state as possible.

Last week, the forest department planted about 1,200 mangrove saplings at Babughat on the sides of the Hooghly.

“A resolution has been taken to protect the mangrove forest in Sundarbans, which is one of the largest natural mangrove forests in the world. The plan is to have a mangrove cell on the lines of the one in Maharashtra,” said a forest official.

Forest department officials said large-scale mangrove plantation has been taken up in non-forest areas, like on the sides of canals, roads and creeks in Sundarbans and in the districts like North 24 Parganas and East Midnapore. On the occasion of International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem on Wednesday, a mangrove plantation programme was organised at Kaikhali Ramkrishna Mission Ashram in Kultoli. Mangroves were planted along the Matla river embankment. Two floating tableaux for awareness generation were launched and will ply along Sundarbans for the next seven days and mangrove seedlings will be distributed at jetties.

The office of the divisional forest officer (DFO) South 24 Parganas, has given permission for mangrove plantation and maintenance on over 1,000 hectares of non-forest land in Sundarbans to Kolkata Society for Cultural

Heritage, a city-based social organisation which has been working on mangrove plantation in the Sundarban area since 2017.

“We have plans to plant and maintain nearly 2 crore mangrove in the area in the next five years. We will engage villagers in the plantation and maintenance to create an alternative income opportunity,” said Sourav Mukherjee, founder director of KSCH.