

Gurugram to have own forest

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Grasping for breath and struggling with severe air pollution for the major part of the year, Gurugram will — very soon — have its own city forest.

Slated to be the Millennium City's urban lungs, the forest will be planted in Sakatpur village. It will compensate for the 17,000 trees chopped in past years for urbanisation. The forest will be developed and conserved on the lines of Delhi's Ridge area and is expected to reduce pollution by 70 per cent.

State Forest Minister Rao Narbir Singh, who will initiate the plantation tomorrow, claimed that the forest is the only solution to the critical air quality of Gurugram as the Aravallis can no longer solely bear the burden of urban air cleansing.

It was also announced that a dam would be constructed to harvest rainwater on 40 acres in Ghamroj village.

"We have identified the land. It will be a model to reckon with in NCR. Local trees and plants will be planted and taken care of as part of the central Jal Shakti Abhiyaan. This forest will be a compensation for the trees axed for urban and infrastructural development in Gurugram," said Narbir.

The environmentalists, however, want scientific planning and execution of plan to ensure success. "Planting a forest is not like setting up a park. The plantation has to be carefully researched, executed and eventually conserved. Planting of trees, their nurturing and restricting human interference are major parts of it. The state government should get expert help to make this project a success or it might end up being just another park," said environmentalist Jatinder Bhadana.

The authorities, riding high on the highest plantations in the state in the past one year, claim they have set a target of planting one crore trees. They have actually run short of saplings and are lending those from nearby districts.

Having struggled with high PM 10 and PM 2.5 in its air that has forced residents to live behind masks for a major part of the year, Gurugram has, in the past few months, emphasised on afforestation.

The city has topped in state government's ambitious Paudhagiri Campaign with 29,000 plantations by July 31. The saplings have not only been planted but also geo-tagged.

According to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Haryana in 2014-17 topped the chart among states to have diverted its forest land (7,944 hectares) for non-forest activities. Haryana has the second-lowest forest cover in the country.

Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/g-gram-to-have-own-forest/815162.html>