

MCD to develop 10 more mini forests in 5 zones in Delhi

TNN | Jun 18, 2023, 06.49 AM IST



NEW DELHI: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) hopes to develop 10 parks into mini urban forests this year. They will be located in five of the 12 MCD zones, mostly in north and east Delhi, and developed using the Miyawaki technique, said officials. The locations include parks at Dallupura village, DDA quarters in front of Dilsahd Colony, a mill in Karawal Nagar, C3 in Nand Nagari, near a petrol pump in Seelampur, JJ Colony in Keshavpuram, opposite the police chowki in Keshavpuram, Pocket 13 in Rohini Sector 22 and G Block in Rohini's Prashant Vihar in the Shahdara south and north, Keshavpuram, Narela and Rohini zones.

With these 10 parks, MCD will develop 24 parks into mini forests. In 2022, only one park was developed. "The Miyawaki method

provides faster growth of saplings, helps in growing denser forest and reducing dust, and supports better carbon dioxide absorption. In this process, the agency does close planting - about three-five saplings in one-square-meter area, and the height of each sapling is 1-3ft. Further, 20-50 different species are planted at one place. After two years, such forests require no maintenance," said an official.

Taking note of the feedback from the previous drives, some changes have been made in this year's plan. Earlier no visitor was allowed in such forests, but MCD wants to make sitting arrangements for the public in the new facilities.

"Considering that the majority of these parks are located close to residential areas, we want the public to use the facilities. That's why we have decided to create a sitting and walking area. This will also help in regular maintenance of the place," said the official.

MCD will adopt different techniques for ensuring survival of the majority of the plants, including planting of saplings at a distance, increasing depth of plantation, and manuring and regular monitoring by field staff. Indigenous plants such as pilkhan, arjun, banyan, jamun, neem, guava and mango are given preference. "We are arranging these saplings from our 20 nurseries and encouraging fresh plantations to ensure regular supply," said the official.

Before developing such a mini forest, inspection is done, followed by soil testing and revival of soil through natural processes. "Based on the testing report, appropriate biomass is selected for mixing into the soil. We also verify the type of waterbody nearby, if any, and its distance from the site," said the official. The site is then excavated, creating a trench of one meter after removing soil from the entire land. This is followed by mixing of husk, hay, manure, biomass etc in the dug-up soil. The soil is then spread loosely in the pit so that plants can grow easily.

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