

Rourkela Forest Division doubles plantation target

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ROURKELA: Rourkela Forest Division (RFD) in Sundargarh district has embarked on a massive drive to plant and distribute a whopping 25 lakh saplings doubling its previous year's target.

The RFD, as part of the plantation drive, which was started on July 1 with Van Mahotsav programmes, has set a target to plant 16 lakh saplings and distribute another nine lakh. Last year, it had planted 10 lakh saplings and distributed another 2 lakh.

The ongoing plantation drive has been taken up in Block and Added Natural Regeneration (ANR) modes under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and Green Mahanadi Mission (GMM) programmes.

CAMPA is focused on regeneration of degraded forests while GMM focuses on thickening green canopies along banks of Brahmani river and its two tributaries, Sankha and Koel, and their adjacent villages.

Rourkela Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) Dilip Sahu said people of villages along these rivers are being encouraged with supply of free saplings to grow more trees on government and private land.

He said in order to ensure community participation, committees have been formed under GMM at village and block levels involving locals, elected rural representatives and various government agencies.

Sahu said education and public institutions, voluntary outfits and local industries have also been requested to take free saplings for plantation.

The ACF said the target is to wrap up the drive by July 31 and till now, about 50 per cent of the plantation programme is over.

He admitted that the distribution process has slowed down due to erratic rainfall and it may continue beyond July 31.

Sahu claimed the survival rate of the saplings after one year is 90 per cent and it comes down to 80 per cent after the third year.

The total geographical area of Sundargarh district is 9,712 sq km, including forest cover of 4,662.62 sq km. RFD limits has forest cover of 912 sq km, which is less than the Sundargarh Forest Division and Bonai Forest Division.

Source: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2019/jul/18/rourkela-forest-division-doubles-plantation-target-2005675.html>