

250 Million Trees Planted in Uttar Pradesh to Tackle Climate Change

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A social activist dressed as a tree attends an awareness campaign on 'World Environment Day' in Allahabad on June 5. (Sanjay Kanojia/AFP via Getty Images)

LUCKNOW — More than 2 million people gathered July 5 at river banks, farmlands and government buildings in northern India while trying to practice social distancing to plant 250 million trees as part of a government plan to tackle climate change.

Officials in Uttar Pradesh distributed millions of saplings to be planted across the state to help India's efforts to increase its forest cover. India has pledged to keep a third of its total land area under forest and tree cover, but a growing population and increasing demand for industrial projects are placing greater stress on the land.

Those who gathered for the tree planting on Sunday included lawmakers, government officials and volunteers from nonprofit organizations. With India fourth in the world in coronavirus cases, those who gathered kept their distance from each other.

India reported 24,850 new virus cases on July 5 — another 24-hour record for the country — raising its total to 673,165, including 19,268 deaths.

"We are committed to increase the forest cover of Uttar Pradesh to over 15% of the total land area in next five years," the state's chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, said in inaugurating the campaign in Lucknow, the state capital. "In today's campaign, over 20 million trees will be planted at the banks of the Ganges river, which will help in keeping this mighty river clean."

"India has pledged to increase its forest cover to 235 million acres by 2030, and it starts now," Adityanath said.

Other states will also be involved with the drive.

Uttar Pradesh government spokesperson Awanish Awasthi said the entire plantation drive is being video taped and trees are being tagged so records can be kept.

The long-term survival of trees planted in such mass campaigns remains a concern. Usually, only 60% of saplings survive, with the rest succumbing to disease or lack of water.

Source: https://www.indiawest.com/news/india/250-million-trees-planted-in-uttar-pradesh-to-tackle-climate-change/article_c6c67140-c08c-11ea-b25b-9b78c29df584.html