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# 'Four crore saplings planted since June'

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Patna: Of five crore saplings targeted to be planted across the state in this financial year, nearly four crores have been planted so far. These saplings have been planted under 'Mission 5.0 crore' scheme launched by CM Nitish Kumar in June last year with an aim to increase green cover in the state.

During the launch of this mega programme, the CM had planted a mahogany sapling at his official 1, Anne Marg residence.

State environment, forest and climate change department principal secretary Dipak Kumar Singh on Monday said nearly four crore saplings have been planted so far. "An ambitious target of five crore was intentionally kept so that a milestone could be reached. Timber saplings have been mainly planted under the scheme," he added.

Asked about the status of green cover in the state after the addition of new saplings, Singh said the department was calculating the number of trees and would announce the exact numbers soon.

The government had earlier said that the forest cover in the state was 15% and the fresh initiatives would make it 17%.

Singh added various plans were made to create awareness among common people about the importance of green cover, but some of them could not be executed due to Covid pandemic. "We are using media platforms to take the message to the people. We had earlier planned to organise programmes for schoolchildren and hold 'nukkad natak' for awareness. However, the Covid pandemic derailed our plans," Singh added.