

# Fresh lungs: Four more forests for Delhi

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NEW DELHI: To boost Delhi's green cover, the forest department will soon create four more forests, some of which are likely to be ready by the year-end. The city already has 12 forests. The new ones are being developed at Aya Nagar, Jaunapur, Dera Mandi and Mamurpur in Narela, each of which will include butterfly zones, cacti gardens, waterbodies and herbal patches. Dominated primarily by native trees, the forests will also have shrubs and smaller plants.

# ADDING TO GREEN COVER

Forests coming up at



## Features

Waterbodies



Cycling and walking tracks



Forest patches



Herbal garden



Butterfly park



Yoga zones



Gazebos



## Delhi's green cover on the rise



Taj Enclave city forest, near Geeta Colony

A forest department official said they were looking at replicating successful models like Taj Enclave near Geeta Colony or Garhi Mandu near Shahdara, which were inaugurated by Delhi government in the past few years. Walking tracks, gazebos, bridges to cross waterbodies and recreational zones for activities like yoga have also been planned at the city forests.

“Monsoon is the best time to plant shrubs and native saplings. Work at the four forests is already under way and a couple of them might get ready by the end of the year,” said the official, adding that Covid-19 had slowed down their progress.

The other forests that were developed recently include Nasirpur (28 hectares), Alipur (19.5 hectares), Mitraon (35.15 hectares), Taj Enclave (56 hectares) and Hauz Rani (28 hectares).

At a recent meeting with Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar, Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai had given information about the ongoing development work. Rai said 10 lakh saplings had been planted this season, while the annual target of 31 lakh would be met by the end of the year.

Delhi’s green cover has grown rapidly over the past few years. It currently stands at 21.9% (324.4 sq km). In 2017, it was 20.6% (308.4 sq km) and 20.2% (299.8 sq km) in 2015.

The forest department officials said they had set an internal target of 25% green cover by 2025, which would be aided by the creation of the city forests. Delhi government had set a target of planting two crore saplings over the next five years.

“With the creation of a city forest, you get more area to plant saplings. This ends in creation of mini green zones across the capital. With the current rate of plantation, reaching the 25% green cover target is quite possible,” said the official.