

GB Nagar targets planting a million sapling in 2020

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Aiming at increasing city's green cover, Gautam Budh Nagar will see another plantation drive this year in July with the district administration setting a target of planting over 10 lakh trees over a week's time. Officials said this target is to plant two lakh more saplings than they did in July 2019 in the last plantation drive held in August 2019.

Earlier in December 2019, the state government had set an annual target of planting 8.5 lakh trees in the district, which was revised to 10 lakh by the district administration.

"The target set for 2020-21 is 10,00,956, of which 2,71,360 will be planted by the forest department, three lakh by the Noida Authority and one lakh by the Greater Noida Authority. We have already started the preparation, which includes preparing enough saplings at the different forest department's nurseries," GB Nagar divisional forest officer PK Srivastava said.

According to the order, the drive is to be held between July 1 and 7, unlike in 2019 when the plantation happened on a war footing within a single day on August 15.

The drive will see participation from 26 government departments in the city, including Noida authority and the police department. While almost all departments have been given a plantation target, seven departments, including education, labour, transport and the police, have been exempted from a fixed target and will conduct the afforestation drive depending upon the availability of the land with them.

"We have gained experience from last year's massive plantation drive, which was a success. The administration is concerned about providing land for plantation to the departments that do not have enough land. Focusing on developing and augmenting the dense forest system here, we will also ask the industry owners to participate. Last year, 225 acres saw plantation from the private organisations alone," GB Nagar district magistrate BN Singh said.

Last year, the government had set a target to plant 7.5 lakh trees which was increased to 8.5 lakhs by the administration. The Uttar Pradesh government aims to have a total green cover of over 15% (36,146 sq kms) of its geographical area by 2021, against the present 12.09 % (29133.5 sq kms).

Officials said that in order to ensure that the old saplings survive and are well looked after, the forest department will ensure geo-tagging of the locations where the plantation will be held.

“We have achieved 100% geo-tagging of last year’s plantation. The task is not easy or small, but the department will see that it is carried out without any issues. Lucky for us, we have already held a successful drive last year,” Srivastava said.

Currently, the city has a total of 5sqkm of moderately dense forests (density 70%-40 %), while 15sqkm are open forest (39%-10% density). There are no scrub forests in the city.

The plantation drives held by the forest department have, however, been questioned as the India state of forest report (ISFR) 2019 showed that there had been no increase in the green cover over the years.

According to the report (2017-19) of its total area of 1,282 sq km, district Gautam Budh Nagar had 1.56%, around 20sqkm, area under forest cover. The forest cover, according to the previous assessment IFSR-2017, was also 1.56% which is around 20sqkm of total area. Officials, however, stated that while it takes 5-6 years for the plantations to compliment the green cover, there had been no organised massive plantation drives in the district before 2019.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/noida/gb-nagar-targets-planting-a-million-sapling-in-2020/story-eu1VBDMZvwLYKKXDtatYLL.html>