

# GIC now green drive across country, 16 cr saplings planted

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Hyderabad: The Green India Challenge (GIC), which was taken up with a slogan Hara Hain Tho Bara Hain (If it is green, it is complete) three years ago to improve green cover, has now turned into a green movement across the country. Over 16 crore saplings were planted in 10 states under the green movement. Many people right from celebrities, political personalities and environmentalists participated in the GIC in the past three years.

The GIC was initiated by TRS MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar taking inspiration from Telanganaku Haritha Haram (THH) programme launched by Telangana CM KCR five years ago. The Haritha Haram programme was started by the state government to increase the forest cover in the state from the existing 24% to 33%. “THH is a testimony of KCR’s vision for the overall development of state and its citizens. The logic behind is simple. The thick, dense forest cover ensures timely arrival of seasons, rains, which in turn increases the agricultural productivity, reduces environmental pollution, instils healthy living and the list of benefits will go on, right? And I too wanted to do my bit for the environment,” Santosh Kumar told TOI.

The founder of GIC, Santosh adopted 2,042 acres of Keesara reserve forest as a part of ‘Gift A Smile Challenge’ on the occasion of minister KTR’s birthday. It was perhaps the first time an entire forest was adopted by an individual with an aim to care for it. Later Bahubali star Prabhas came forward to protect 1,650 acres of Kazipally reserve forest and Hetero Pharma agreed to shield the greenery and life in 2,543 acres of Mumbapur-Nallavelli reserve forest. The challenge gained momentum with people from all over the world sending in images, videos, responses, positive opinions about taking part in GIC, Santosh said.

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The GIC announced May 10, 2020 as a Sweet Lime Day or Battayi Day and urged public to buy it in large quantities. The unique concept paid off, with various NGOs, companies, apartment, gated community associations, even individuals stepping forward and buying around 200 metric tonnes of sweet lime. This generated ample income for the farming community. KCR expressed his happiness on this initiative and planted a Rudraksha sapling. “I hope that Green India Challenge will grow forever and continue to motivate all of us around to be a part of nurturing and saving the environment. I congratulate Santosh Kumar and his team for this wonderful programme,” he said.