

GPS-enabled monitoring of forest plantations

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In a bid to improve survival rate of saplings planted by the forest division, GPS-based regular monitoring will be undertaken of the plantation site so that the target of enhancing the forest cover to 30 per cent in the next decade can be achieved.

With the Forest Department all set to observe Van Mahotsav across the state tomorrow, special initiative has been taken to incorporate this new monitoring system through GIS. "The field staff will now upload the pictures of the plantation site, pre, during and post plantation so that the survival can be monitored," revealed Sanjay Gupta, Principal Secretary, Forest. He added that this would help senior functionaries of the Forest Department in monitoring survival of the saplings.

Gupta said this new feature had been added as per Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur's directions to enhance the survival rate of the plantation undertaken every year to ensure that there is proper monitoring. "We have set a target of planting 1.25 crore plants over 12,000 hectares in the next 10 years so that we can achieve 30 per cent target of forest cover," he stated.

The survival rate of the plantation undertaken by the Forest Department every year is presently about 70 per cent even though there are apprehensions over this percentage. Official said that even third party validation by an agency like Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) has put the survival rate at 69.70 per cent.

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