

Government to increase green cover in Punjab

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DFO Surjit Singh Sahota and others initiate a plantation drive at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar on Wednesday. Tribune Photo

“The Punjab Government is working on raising green cover on 15 per cent of the total geographical area in the state during the upcoming plantation drive,” said Surjit Singh Sahota, District Forest Officer, Amritsar and Tarn Taran, while launching a campaign to plant 2,500 varieties of saplings at Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) here on Wednesday.

Saplings of tahlī, teak, srinivasa, mango, jasmine, neem, sukhchain, dharek, pipal, bohar, tun, chakramiya, gulmohar, satpati, amaltas, jakaranda and chandni, keshia and zetrofa were planted on Wednesday.

Sahota said a campaign to plant 400 saplings in every village on the 400th Prakash Purb of Guru Tegh Bahadur has been started by the state government.

He said the country’s forest policy mandates that 33 per cent of the total geographical area must be under green cover, but the situation in Punjab at present was worrisome. “Including both forest and non-forest areas, 6.5 per cent of the geographical area is under saplings, thus 26.5 per cent of additional area has to be brought under plants. In this direction, the state government has set a target to plant saplings on 15 per cent of the area under the first phase of the plantation drive,” he said.

He said farmers were being encouraged to plant trees by skipping the paddy crop cycle. “It will increase their income as well as save groundwater, along with ensuring cleanliness of environment. It is the responsibility of all of us to keep the environment clean and create maximum awareness about it,” he said. He said anyone who wanted to plant saplings could contact the Forest Department through Haryali App.

The university had earlier assisted the department in setting up sacred forest comprising around 2,000 plants that were planted on the campus by volunteers of the Baba Sewa Singh Society.

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