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Kasganj takes lead in creating Ganga 'vans'

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Lucknow: Over 400 hectare land, that was encroached upon in Kasganj's Nardauli village along the Ganga, was reclaimed and taken up for plantation under the Vriksharopan Jan Andolan this year.

The forest department has planted around 1.25 lakh saplings on 120 hectare of the total 456 hectare reclaimed land so far. With this feat, Kasganj has taken a lead in creating Ganga 'vans' (green belts) along the river under the Namami Gange programme. Kasganj has over 80-km of the Ganga riverbed, making plantation in the district along the river easier.

In the last three years huge land was reclaimed from encroachers along the Ganga in Kasganj district. This land was used for planting trees. Ganga Van was raised on around 100 hectare in 2019 and Bhagirathi van, another green belt, was set up in 2020 on approximately 300 hectare. Both these vans were raised on the land which was reclaimed from encroachers.

The district administration has acted strictly against encroachers, most of whom are farmers. In the present case, the remaining land will constitute the land bank for plantation in coming years. The district administration has got a trench dug around the land to keep squatters away.

The forest department will plant saplings on 100 hectare of the reclaimed land every year in the next four years. The state government has set a target of planting 175 crore saplings in five years. Of the target 35 crore will be planted this year.

Kasganj was given a target of 25 lakh trees this year to be planted by forest and other departments collectively. Plantation has been done in other gram sabhas also where encroachment was removed by the local administration like 80 hectare in Kumarua village. The Ukarri gram sabha of the district has got plantation done on 100 hectare land every monsoon since 2019.

"Once these forests get developed they will become natural sites for eco-tourists," said DFO, Kasganj, Diwaker Kumar Vashisht. The land that has been brought under plantation in the district is part of its land bank created by reclaiming land from encroachers.