

Ranchi to get 2 urban forests soon

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Ranchi: Ranchiites may soon find themselves drawn to jogging, picnicking and hanging out with friends and family in natural forests complete with modern amenities just outside the city limits.

If everything goes as per plan, the state department of forests, environment and climate change will be setting up two urban forests outside the city limits by early next year. The sites will offer nearly 90 hectare of lush green and dense vegetation which will make denizens feel at one with nature.

The urban forests, also known as Nagar Van, are a part of the Union government's scheme to set up such sites in 200 cities across the country by 2025. The scheme was launched in June this year by the Union forest minister Prakash Javdekar.

After the scheme's launch, the Union ministry of forests, environment and climate change had asked respective state governments to send in their proposed cities and its sites. The primary criteria for the scheme were that a city had to have a municipal corporation and the proposed site was already a forest patch within the municipality limits.

While Jharkhand government proposed Nagar Vans in Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Dumka and Giridih, it advocated for taking up Ranchi in the first phase, which includes 40 cities nationwide. The size of the forest patch must be between 10-50 hectare.

Under the scheme, the Centre will pay Rs 4 lakh per hectare for the patch's fencing to save it from human encroachment and grazing of animals. Inside the forest, the state government will have to arrange for amenities such as benches, jogging tracks, parking, water, toilets, lighting, cafeteria and others by pooling in money from civic bodies, corporate social responsibility funds and through public donations.

"Since there are no forest patches within Ranchi Municipal Corporation (RMC) limits, we have proposed a 39-acre protected

forest in Cheti-Sohdag in Sithio near the upcoming core capital area in Dhurwa. Another patch measures 50 acre and is in Badam in Mahilong on the Outer Ring Road. Both the forest patches come under Ranchi Regional Development Authority (RRDA),” D K Tewatia, additional principal chief conservator of forest (APCCF) of state’s forest development authority (FDA), said.

Tewatia said the scheme envisages the protection of forest patches from human encroachment and its rejuvenation, which in turn will provide a getaway for residents. “We are expecting to hear from the Centre by next month,” he added.