

Tree plantation programme: State to create 31L man-days

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Kolkata: The state Forest department has set a target of creating 31 lakh man-days through its massive plantation initiative titled Re-Greening Bengal that will kick off from July 14- the opening day of weeklong Ban Mahotsav.

"We have decided to plant 5 crore mangrove and 3.5 crore saplings across the state to augment the green cover that has been badly damaged due to the severe cyclonic storm Amphan that hit the state on May 20.

We will involve people under MGNREGA and the plantation programme will be scientific and village based. We will also involve the migrant workers in this initiative and have plans of creating 31 lakh mandays," said Rajib Banerjee, state Forest minister. The district administration has already prepared a database of the migrant workers who have returned to the state amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, that had devastated Bengal. This is perhaps for the first time in the recent past when the state Forest department will take up mangrove plantation both within and outside the forest area of the Sunderbans. 20 per cent of the plantation will be within forest area and 80 percent in non forest with the dual objective of restoration of green cover damaged by Amphan and creating a proper shield of mangrove which will mitigate the effect of similar cyclones in future," said a senior official of the department.

The department has already identified areas at different blocks in Sunderbans like Gosaba, Patharpratima, Gobardhanpur, G Plot, Mousuni Islands to name a few where greening will be taken up. The programme of augmentation of mangrove is already

going on in the forest areas. According to sources in the Forest department greenery spanning across 1,600 sq km area in the state and more than 16 lakh trees have been uprooted in various districts due to Amphan. "Our aim is to transplant as much trees as possible," the official added. The state government inaugural programme to celebrate Banmahotsav will be held near Nivedita Setu in Bally on Tuesday.

In presence of Banerjee and Urban Development minister Firhad Hakim. The department has appealed to all MLAs in the state, the schools, the NGOs , the district administration as well as the common people to join hands in the 'Regreening Bengal' programme. Meanwhile, on the occasion of All India Plantation Campaign, the Bengal sector headquarter of CRPF launched a tree plantation drive at its Salt Lake campus with hundreds of different varieties of trees being planted.

Source: <http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/tree-plantation-programme-state-to-create-31l-man-days-412609>