

HYDERABAD

3,825 hectares of degraded forest lands to be rejuvenated this year

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KHAMMAM, JULY 06, 2021 22:08 IST

UPDATED: JULY 07, 2021 07:30 IST

Forest Dept. takes up intensive planting of an array of native varieties in the 20 identified reserve forest blocks

The Forest Department has rolled out an action plan to rejuvenate a little over 3,825 hectares of degraded forest land spread in as many as 20 reserve forest blocks in both Khammam and Sattupalli forest divisions in the district to conserve and improve forest quality in the current fiscal 2021-22.

The department has identified nearly 15,392 hectares of forest land with 0.1 to 0.4 canopy density under the forest rejuvenation plan. So far 9,936 hectares of forest land under this category has been treated through Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) and other techniques.

Plans are afoot to rejuvenate 3825.64 hectares of degraded forest land in the current fiscal and the remaining 1,630 hectares of degraded land subsequently, Forest Department sources said.

Nearly 354 km of fire lines were constructed to prevent forest fires, trenches were dug along the periphery of the reserve forest blocks, intensive plantation of native species of saplings, soil and moisture conservation works were taken up in the earlier phases of the ambitious programme.

A multi-pronged strategy for effective implementation of the forest and wildlife conservation efforts with a special focus on Haritha Haram, the State government's flagship afforestation programme, was finalised at the District Forest and Wildlife Protection Committee (DFWLPC) meeting chaired by Collector R V Karnan here last week.

The Forest Department has taken up intensive planting of an array of native varieties of plants in the 20 identified reserve forest blocks as part of the action plan to rejuvenate 3825.64 hectares of degraded forest land this year -- 2021-22, District Forest Officer Praveena told *The Hindu*.

Weed control, soil and moisture conservation efforts and other cultural practices will form the crux of the action plan to rejuvenate the degraded forest lands and improve quality of forests through natural regeneration and various other cultural practices.

A wide variety of fruit bearing saplings such as berry and amla are being planted as part of the afforestation drive to create "monkey food courts," the DFO added.

As part of measures to protect forests and wildlife, as many as 797 Offence Report (OR) cases and nine Undetected Offence Report (UDOR) cases, 108 vehicle cases and 46 encroachment cases were booked against the offenders in the past one year.

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Printable version | Jul 7, 2021 2:30:40 PM |

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