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Once badlands, Chambal to be on eco-tourism map under Green Agriculture project

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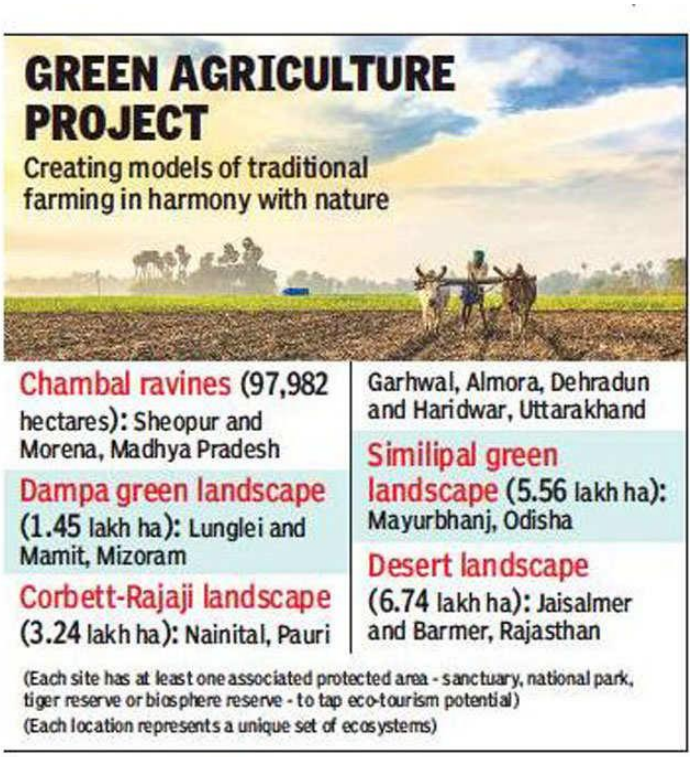
Mansion Global Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson Picks Up $9.5 Million Georgia Farm Ad File photo The ravines of Chambal, a unique geographical feature having gullies up to 15-20 feet deep which once used to be hideouts of dreaded dacoits, will turn into a hub of ecotourism and improved farm practices in the next seven years.



Being treated as a model of landscape conservation, the ravines in Sheopur and Morena districts of Madhya Pradesh will be developed by the Centre as part of its 'Green Agriculture' project in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

Work to transform the area without disturbing its ecological features will begin soon. The project concepts and processes were discussed in detail with inputs from FAO officials from its headquarters in Rome in the presence of agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar in Gwalior on November 9.

"The project in Madhya Pradesh will focus on the ravines, in and around the National Chambal Sanctuary which provides a habitat for 'gharial' and Gangetic dolphin. It will turn the ravines into an eco-tourism hub once landscape restoration is done," said R B Sinha, national project director of the GEF-funded experiment.

Sinha told TOI that the concept of the project revolves around conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscape, and transforming agriculture in these areas. "It will be in sync with India's commitment of restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030," he said.

Four more sites will be developed under the 'Green Agriculture' project during the 2019-26 period. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has sanctioned $33.5 million (around Rs 240 crore) for this.

The other project sites include Dampa in Mizoram Similipal in Odisha desert landscape of Barmer and Jaisalmer districts of Rajasthan and Corbett-Rajaji in Uttarakhand. The project will collectively restore 1.8 million hectares of land.

The areas around these project sites will also be developed as replicable models for augmented livelihoods of marginal and small farmers through traditional agricultural practices. The project will collectively restore 1.8 million hectares of land where over 1 lakh hectares will be utilised to conserve the genetic diversity of at least 10 globally significant traditional and endemic plant and animal species.

“Each location represents a unique set of ecosystems. The diversity of locations will facilitate the development of unique models for conservation interventions that can be modified and scaled up for similar ecosystems in other parts of the country,” Sinha said.

In MP, the project landscape covers 97,882 hectares covering deeply eroded gullies (ravines), formed over centuries, as a result of surface run-off and monsoon rainfall on deep alluvial soils. Besides, indiscriminate land-use practices too led to severe land degradation. The project is, therefore, also intended to stop further degradation. The state government too has committed to co-finance the project.

In Mizoram, the identified landscape covers 1.45 lakh hectares in Lunglei and Mamit. The largest landscape of this project is located in Rajasthan (6.74 lakh hectares) followed by 5.56 lakh hectares in Similipal, Odisha and 3.24 lakh hectares in Nainital, Pauri Garhwal, Almora, Dehradun and Haridwar districts in Uttarakhand.

SOURCE:-https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/once-badlands-chambal-to-be-on-eco-tourism-map-soon/articleshow/72101280.cms