

Principal raises a mini-forest inside Puducherry college campus

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PUDUCHERRY: A principal of a government arts and science college in the Union territory has transformed a 13-acre land inside the campus into a lush green mini forest with more than 3,000 trees with help from students, staff members and volunteers within a span of five years.

Sasi Kanta Dash, who was appointed principal of the Tagore Government Arts and Science college in 2017, said the mini forest has a diverse species of trees ranging from neem, banyan, mango, fig, casuarina, Asoka and cannonball. While the foliage is now home to several birds, Dash's kitchen garden where brinjal, bottle gourd, snake gourd, ridge gourd, green chillies and tomatoes are raised supplies organic vegetables to the college canteen. During the pandemic, when the canteen was closed, the college donated the vegetables to the needy. The vegetables and fruits were also used to feed the birds. The government recognised his efforts and honoured him with an award for 'proficiency in public administration'. Chief minister N Rangasamy presented him the award during the Independence Day celebrations.

The principal and the students also planted several flowering plants including hibiscus, bougainvillea, jasmine and Spanish cherry. "I have been planting tree saplings since my student days at Hyderabad Central University. When I took charge as the principal here, the 13-acre campus was idle and unproductive barren land. The campus had the bare minimum number of trees. I wanted to transform the campus into an eco-friendly place," he said.

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