

Telangana forest department breathes life into 160-acre barren land

Soil moisture conservation and groundwater improvement works were also taken up and as a result, various animal species like monkeys, deer and Sambar were also spotted.

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A view of the green cover that Telangana forest officials grew in the in the core area of the Kawal Tiger Reserve. (Photo | Twitter Screengrab, @ErikSolheim)

By V Nilesh

Express News Service

HYDERABAD: How does one bring a dead forest back to life? The Telangana Forest Department has all the answers. The department managed to restore an encroached and degraded forest patch, spread across 160 acres in the core area of the Kawal Tiger Reserve, to its verdant glory. The forest patch is now lush green — as is evident from the satellite images — and alive with various species of trees and wildlife sightings.

The patch falls under the Khanapur forest division near Devunigudem village in Nirmal district. In 2015, the Forest Department had convinced the locals against staking claim to the forest patch and conducted a massive plantation drive at the site. They planted

one lakh saplings in a single day and the drive saw the participation of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.



Speaking to Express, Khanapur FDO U Koteswara Rao said, “We undertook a labour-intensive plantation drive rather than a semi-mechanical one to ensure that natural vegetation growth does not get affected. We then involved locals, who had once encroached the forest patch, in the plantation and protection activities.”

He added, “The saplings planted were of diverse local species, including wild fruit trees like neredu, regu and chintha. This ensured floral biodiversity. Plantation of thorny bushes was done around the forest patch to protect the saplings from cattle grazing. Soil moisture conservation and groundwater improvement works were also taken up. We are now seeing results. We have sighted spotted deer, sambar, monkeys and other animals here.”

Bravo Telengana!

This Indian state is a world leader in treeplanting and greening of the land. Kudos to Team Khanapur for their dedication of 7 years to convert 160 acres of encroached land into a lush green forest in Nirmal. On Sunday, former UNEP Ex-ecutive Director Erik Solheim tweeted a video made by the Te-langana gover nment on the greening efforts at Khanapur forest. He said, “Bravo Telen-gana! This Indian state is a world leader in tree planting and greening of the land. Ku-dos to Team Khanapur [sic].”

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