

# **Government Plan to Develop 42 Protected Forests in the Capital**

***Pratik Kumar***

Environment minister Imran Hussain on Saturday said the government plans to increase the green cover of Delhi from the present 20 per cent to 25 per cent in the next five years.

Mr Hussain was leading a drive to plant saplings in Northeast Delhi as part of the ongoing Van Mahotsava.

The government has set a target of planting 10 lakh new trees and 5 lakh shrubs in the current fiscal year.

According to Mr Hussain, more plantation drives will be undertaken in various part of Delhi in the current monsoon season – which is conducive for plant survival.

On Saturday, about 700 saplings of Neem, Peepal, Jamun, Amaltas, Arjun, Pilkhan, Sissam, Begonia, Barh, etc. were planted in 3 acres area in Gokalpuri's Mandloi Extension. Gokalpur MLA, Fateh Singh, officers of the forest department, members of the local resident welfare associations and children of eco clubs of local government schools participated in the Saturday event.

Mr Hussain urged schoolchildren to “adopt at least one tree and take a pledge to nurture them as one of their own family members”.

Starting from July 15, the plantation drives are being carried out in various parts of the city by the concerned MLAs and resident welfare associations with the help of the forest department, the government said.

The Delhi government is also working on the development of 42 city forests in the capital.

The initiative kicked off with Mitraon city forest in Najafgarh (West Delhi) earlier this week.

Around 250 saplings of medicinal plants were planted at Mitraon forest near Najafgarh.

The city forest in Mitraon is one of the 26 protected forests in Delhi.

The Delhi government has plans to develop 10 acres of the Mitraon forest land in the first phase by providing various facilities such as eco huts, meditation centres, watch tower, walking tracks, health club, butterfly garden and a waterbody.

*The Asian Age (New Delhi), 21 August 2016*