Government Plans to Turn South Haryana Greener

Why in News?

According to the forest department, **Six districts in south Haryana** are prepared to **plant 2.4 million saplings** in the 2024 monsoon season.

Key Points

- **Faridabad** will lead the initiative by planting **5 lakh saplings**, followed by **Mahendergarh with 4.9 lakh saplings.**
  - **Palwal** and **Gurgaon will plant 3.7 lakh and 3.4 lakh saplings**, respectively, while **Nuh and Rewari are planning to plant 3.3 lakh saplings each.**
- The **Gurgaon's urban area** has a **forest cover of less than 1%** despite yearly large-scale plantation efforts. 2024's extensive plantation campaign is focused on boosting the green cover.
  - To ensure the success of the plantation drive, the forest department plans to **involve local communities and raise awareness** about the significance of trees.
  - The planting initiatives will probably be paired with **educational initiatives to raise awareness** about the benefits of preserving and safeguarding the newly established green areas.
- This project aims to improve the air quality of Gurgaon which is one of the most polluted according to **IQAir,** a Swiss company.
  - According to the report by this firm, the **PM 2.5 concentration** in the city rose by 11% in 2021 compared to 2020.
- The **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** indicates a **decline of 2.47sq km of forest cover between 2019 and 2020.**
  - However, simply planting a large number of trees without ensuring their survival is not an effective solution. The survival rate of saplings in the region stands at only 10 to 20%, underlining the insufficiency of mass plantation drives.
  - Environmentalists stress the need for plantation drive audits and the revival of native species to enhance biodiversity in the area.

Forest Survey of India (FSI)

- FSI was **founded in June 1981 and headquartered at Dehradun** in Uttarakhand.
- It is under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.**
- This organisation conducts **forest surveys, studies and researches** to periodically monitor the changing situations of land and forest resources.
- It presents the data for **national planning, conservation and sustainable management of environmental protection** as well as for the implementation of social forestry projects.

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Air Pollutants

Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2)

It comes from the consumption of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas). Reacts with water to form acid rain.

Impact: Causes respiratory problems.

Ozone (O_3)

Secondary pollutant formed from other pollutants (NOx and VOC) under the action of the sun.

Impact: Irritation of the eye and respiratory mucous membranes, asthma attacks.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)

Emissions from road transport, industry and energy production sectors. Contributes to Ozone and PM formation.
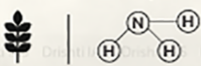
Impact: Chronic lung disease.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

It is a product of the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing compounds.

Impact: Fatigue, confusion, and dizziness due to inadequate oxygen delivery to the brain.

Ammonia (NH_3)

Produced by the metabolism of amino acids and other compounds which contain nitrogen.

Impact: Immediate burning of the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lung damage.

Lead (Pb)

Released as a waste product from extraction of metals such as silver, platinum, and iron from their respective ores.

Impact: Anemia, weakness, and kidney and brain damage.

Particulate Matter (PM)

PM10: Inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller.

PM2.5: Fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

Source: Emitted from construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, fires.

Impact: Irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function.

Note: These major air pollutants are included in the Air quality index for which short-term National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.

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