

Govt to implement Uttar Pradesh's 1st agroforestry policy

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Lucknow: The state government is mulling to implement the state's first agroforestry policy. It will promote plantation of trees on the agricultural land along with the crops.

As per forest department sources, the policy is ready and the department will seek the cabinet's approval soon. The Yogi government is keen to promote agroforestry which has multiple benefits. The first and the foremost benefit is that it increases the green cover. The state government has made agroforestry (trees outside forest area) as one of the main constituents of the annual plantation drives since 2017. Farmers are given free saplings of their choice to plant on their land. Out of 163 crore trees planted in the state since 2017, 105 crore have been planted outside forest.

"If green cover has to be increased in the state, trees need to be planted in huge numbers outside the forest. At least 70% of non-forest land may be with farmers," sources said, adding that motivating farmers to plant on their land is the key content of the policy, said sources.

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The forest department will rope in NGOs to reach out to farmers and create awareness on types of tree species to be planted under agroforestry, nurturing of trees, sourcing the high-quality planting material besides others. The forest department has also tied up with the forestry research institutes to introduce high-yielding species of some of the tree varieties, like neem, bamboo and others.

The state's first agroforestry policy will be another significant step taken by the Yogi government in the forestry sector in the last six years, after it implemented the first forest policy for UP, following the division of Uttarakhand, in 2017. The forest policy for undivided UP was implemented in 1998.