

Hara Bhara campaign

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In news- The Telangana government recently launched the drone-based afforestation project named 'Hara Bhara'.

About the campaign-

- India's first aerial seeding campaign by a **Seedcopter drone at the KBR Park in Hyderabad** was launched by Actor Rana Daggubati, who is the brand ambassador of the project.
 - The **state Department of Information technology, Electronics and Communications and Department of Forest have partnered with Marut Drones**, a Hyderabad-based drone technology startup, for the first-of-its-kind project in India.
 - This project **uses drones to disperse seed balls** prepared by the local women and welfare communities, **over thin, barren and empty forest lands to turn them into lush green abodes of trees.**
 - Under rapid reforestation by drones, **50 lakh trees will be planted in about 12,000 hectares of land** in forests across all the 33 districts in the state.
 - The campaign is expected to accelerate the mission of Green Telangana under the 'Haritha Haram' programme.
- The process begins with a field survey and mapping of the terrain area to understand the ecosystem and demarcate the areas needing urgent attention.
 - This is used to determine the number and species of trees that can be planted in the barren land based on the soil, climate, and other parameters.

What is aerial seeding?

- Aerial seeding is a technique of plantation wherein **seed balls – seeds covered with a mixture of clay, compost, char and other components**, are sprayed on the ground using aerial devices, including planes, helicopters or drones.
- These pellets will then sprout when there is enough rain, with the nutrients present within them helping in the initial growth.

Advantages-

- Areas that are inaccessible, have steep slopes, are fragmented or disconnected with no forest routes, making conventional plantation difficult, can be targeted with aerial seeding.
- As the process of the seed's germination and growth is such that it requires no attention after it is dispersed, hence seed pellets are known as the "fire and forget" way of plantation.
- They eliminate the need for ploughing and digging holes in the soil and the seeds do not need to be planted, since they are already surrounded by soil, nutrients, and microorganisms.
- The clay shell of these pellets along with the other items in the mixture also protects them from birds, ants and rats.

However, the species selected have to be native to the area and hardy, with seeds that are of an appropriate size for preparing seedballs, and have a higher survival percentage.