Unique Urban Forest at the Office of Comptroller

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Over the years, the Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi has become an increasing cause of concern. In response to these developments and keeping in view its community responsibilities, the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has taken steps to establish an Urban Forest in the office park.

Urban Forest in Delhi

The forest is **made up of trees which are native to the area** and are three dimensional, **multi-layered communities** having 30 times the surface area of the greenery of single-layered lawns, and have more than 30 times the ability to protect against natural disasters and to conserve the environment. **Miyawaki method** of forest creation is employed which could help in reducing the temperature by as much as 14 degree & increase the moisture by more than 40%.

[Miyawaki is a technique pioneered by **Japanese botanist** Akira Miyawaki, that helps build dense, native forests. The approach is supposed to ensure that plant growth is 10 times faster and the resulting plantation is 30 times denser than usual. It involves planting dozens of native species in the same area, and becomes maintenance-free after the first three years. Since they're planted close to each other, it ensures that the **plants receive sunlight only from the top, and grow upwards than sideways**].

With minimal maintenance, including watering and de-weeding, the urban forest will be **self-sustainable by 2021.** The Urban forest has an ecosystem which has the capacity to restore habitat for birds, bees, butterflies and microfauna. These are essential for pollination of crops and fruits and to help

maintain a **balanced ecosystem**. A dense forest ecosystem has been created in an area that is little over 1 acre in size. The multi-layered forest has shrubs, small to medium-size trees and tall trees carefully arranged as **peripheral and core plant communities.** Urban forests are often cited as the **lungs of the cities,acting as an oxygen bank and carbon sink.**

Some of the rare native species planted here include Anogeissus pendula (Dhonk), Diospyros cordifolia (Bistendu), Ehretia laevis (chamrod), Wrightia tinctoria (Doodhi), Mitragyna parvifolia (Kaim), Butea monosperma (Palash), Prosopis cineraria (Khejri), Clerodendrum phlomidis(Arni), Grewia asiatica (Falsa), Phoenix sylvestris (Khajoor) and Helicteres isora (Marodphali). The species selected are **part of Delhi's potential natural vegetation and are best suited to the region's terrain, climate and soil.**

In-depth field surveys of potential natural vegetation, well planned native species' propagation and restoration projects like these are the need of the hour. Recently on the occasion of World Environment Day, the government announced implementation of the **Nagar van scheme to develop 200 Urban Forests across the country in next five years** with a renewed focus on people's participation and collaboration between the Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates and local citizens.