

## Forest Department launches afforestation drive in Ariyalur

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Saplings being watered under a massive afforestation programme at a nursery near Pazhuvur in Ariyalur district.—

**PHOTO: M. SRINATH**

A total of 2.09 lakh saplings had been planted across the district this year under an afforestation programme. About 50 per cent of the saplings have been planted by workers of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in village panchayats in the district, said K.S. Sathyamoorthy, District Forest Officer, here on Friday.

The saplings have been raised on the central nursery farm at Melakaruppur village and the varieties, among other things, included teak, rain tree, ‘pungan’, and ‘ayan vagai’ so on and so forth.

Apart from the MGNREGS, the saplings were raised on the banks of the Marudayar River basin, schools, and colleges besides either side of

highways. The banks of the Karavetti bird sanctuary was covered under the programme, he added.

1.50 lakh saplings on private lands

Under the “Tree Cultivation in Private Land” scheme, 1.50 lakh teak saplings have been planted in select villages in the district this year. He said that 15 villages were identified and 10,000 saplings planted in each village.

He said the work on setting up an Interpretation Centre at the bird sanctuary at Karavetti was in progress.

It would provide information about birds at the sanctuary.

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