

Vilayati kikar

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The National Security Guard (NSG) has recently cleared the vilayati kikar (*Prosopis juliflora*), after it was found to be responsible for the depleting **water table**.

The most common invasive plants found in NCR



Vilayati kikar
(*Prosopis juliflora*)



Subabool
(*Leucaena leucocephala*)



Lentana
(*Lantana camara*)



Jal Kumbhi
(*Eichhornia crassipes*)



Gajar ghas
(*Parthenium hysterophorus*)

Photos: Wikimedia commons; Gajendra Yadav

[ref-IE]

About the Vilayati kikar:

- Vilayati kikar or *Prosopis juliflora* is an invasive species native to **Mexico**.
 - The invasive plants are plants not native to the region and which does **not** allow other plants to grow around it.
- It can quickly **colonise** an entire area, and its **roots** and **leaves** secrete **certain alkaloids** that prevent the growth of other species.
- It is hard and expensive to remove them as they can regenerate from the roots.
- The **roots** of kikar spread across underneath the surface and **suck** up all the **moisture** in the soil.
- Since **herbivores** do **not** prefer to **consume** it, it has a **negative** impact on the **biodiversity** of an area.
- Its **canopy blocks** the **sun**, preventing the growth of smaller saplings.
- Also, as they **shed leaves** for a very **short period**, they need **water** all year, **depleting** the **water table**.
- It helps in **transmission** of **malaria** by providing mosquitoes the sugar that the native plants may fail to provide.
- It was brought to **Delhi** by the **British** in the **1920s**, when the **national capital** was being built.

Which plant species will the NSG plant to replace kikar?

- In rocky areas- dhok, dhak, salar, ranjh, phulai, pahadi papri, bistendu, gundi, chamroth, moringa, amaltas and peepal will be planted.
- In valley areas- barna, kala siris, kaim, amaltas, moringa and neem will be planted.
- In the sandy plains- khejri, pillu, jaal, roheda, amla, kanker and ashok will be planted.

About NSG:

- Also known as **Black Cats**, it is a **counter-terrorism** unit of India under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- It was founded in **1984**, following **Operation Blue Star**, to combat **terrorist activities** and **protect** states against **internal disturbances**.
- It is one of the 7 **Central Armed Police Forces** of India.

Other key facts:

- **Nilgai** is the **largest** Asian antelope.
- **Miyawaki plantation** is the **Japanese method** that relies on overcrowding the **plantation area** with saplings of **different varieties** to create competition that propels faster growth.