

## **Jatropha may secure energy**

Every week, Sumit Sarkar and his sport utility vehicle cover 3,000km across Chhattisgarh in search of the perennial green bush, jatropha—the seeds of which might help guarantee the country's future energy security.

In a symbolic statement of Chhattisgarh's support to promoting both the cultivation and use of alternative energy, chief minister Raman Singh's official car runs on biofuel. But elsewhere, the hunt goes on for jatropha, locally known as *bagaranda*

Last year, daily wage earner Santosh Yadav, who lives in Garka village in central Chhattisgarh, assisted in planting 4,000 saplings along a 2 km stretch of the national highway known as Singanpur. Today, only half the saplings survive. "We've heard these plants will give us petrol and diesel. But we can't see it," says Yadav, who earned an average Rs67 a day for the fortnight he worked through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

About 290 million saplings have been planted by separate government agencies across the state's fallow land, covering roughly 1.6 million hectares (mha). Under NREGS, about Rs55 crore was spent to plant jatropha.

Source: MINT <http://www.livemint.com/2007/11/21004643/Jatropha-may-secure-energy-bu.html>