

# Palm seed planting drive on Cauvery banks

## **The Hindu Bureau**

TIRUCHI

Non-governmental organisations Green Needa (GN), Tiruvarur, and Chennai-based Tamil Nadu Volunteers are launching a seed bank and plantation drive aimed at sowing one crore palm seeds along 416 km of land along the banks of the Cauvery river in a bid to boost the number of palmyra trees in the delta region.

“Palmyra grows deep and binds the soil layers, preventing erosion. The trees used to be an integral part of the Tamil Nadu’s green cover, but they are getting rarer to spot, especially in the Cauvery delta districts, where farmers do not consider them to be commercially useful. Our initiative will require joint effort of students, environmentalists and local authorities to be successful,” M. Rajavelu, coordinator, GN, told *The*

*Hindu*. The groups will be meeting in the city this week to discuss the drive, which will cover the districts of Dharmapuri, Salem, Erode, Namakkal, Karur, Tiruchi, Thanjavur and Mayiladuthurai.

Palm seeds that grow and drop naturally from mature trees will be collected for the drive, said Mr. Rajavelu.

“These seeds thrive better in the wild than nursery-grown saplings. Volunteers will visit farmlands with palmyra trees in the State and gather the seeds from mid-August. These will be then transported to at least a thousand designated spots in the selected districts,” he said.

Farmers in the Delta region were overlooking the benefits of palmyra by-products such as palm seed powder that is now being used as an alternative to refined flour, Mr. Rajavelu added.