



NHAI to Develop 'NHAI Arogya Van' - Thematic Medicinal Tree Plantations on Vacant Land Parcels Along National Highways

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In a significant step towards enhancing biodiversity and integrating ecological sustainability in National Highway development, NHAI has taken the initiative to develop '*Arogya Van*', the thematic medicinal tree plantations on vacant land parcels along the National Highways. The initiative aims to enrich biodiversity along the National Highways by introducing medicinal tree species that support pollinators, birds and microfauna, thereby strengthening ecosystem resilience.

In the first phase of developing '*Arogya Van*', an action plan has been formulated covering 17 land parcels spanning over 62.8 hectares, where around 67,462 medicinal trees will be planted along different National Highway projects in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

Also, around 36 tree species with established medicinal properties such as Neem, Amla, Imli, Jamun, Lemon, Gular, Maulsari etc. have been identified and will be planted at land parcels as per suitability to the respective agro-climatic zones. Priority will be given to land parcels near toll plazas, wayside amenities, interchanges, cloverleaf junctions and other prominent stretches along National Highways to maximize public awareness and outreach. Implementation of initiative will be in accordance with Government of India guidelines on landscaping and tree plantation.

Traditionally, plantation activities along National Highways have been undertaken using a mix of native and avenue tree species aimed at greening and ecological stabilization. NHAI has identified approximately 188 hectares of vacant land for plantations during the forthcoming monsoon season to ensure higher survival rates and long-term sustainability. Adoption of a thematic model focusing on medicinal tree species will enhance the ecological, educational, and cultural value of such plantations.

Initiative also aligns with the Government of India priority to promote traditional systems of medicine such as Ayurveda and contribute towards conservation of indigenous medicinal flora. Further, these plantations are envisaged as living repositories that will create public awareness about traditional medicinal knowledge systems and their relevance in contemporary times.

The '*Arogya Van*' initiative reinforces NHAI's commitment towards developing environmentally sustainable infrastructure. By integrating ecological restoration with public outreach, the initiative aims to create a network of green corridors that not only enhance roadside ecology but also serve as knowledge hubs, promoting awareness about India's rich heritage of medicinal plants and sustainable living practices.

GDH/DS

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