

Union Ayush Minister Shri Prataprao Jadhav Appreciates Delhi's Afforestation Drive, Urges Integration of Medicinal Plants in Urban Forest Development

Shri Prataprao Jadhav Calls for Dedicated Medicinal Plant Forests in Delhi to Strengthen AYUSH and Biodiversity Conservation

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ayush and Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, has welcomed the Delhi Government's ambitious initiative to expand green cover through large-scale plantation and conservation of the Delhi Ridge ecosystem. In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister of Delhi, Smt. Rekha Gupta, the Minister described the initiative as a significant step towards environmental conservation and sustainable urban development.

In his letter, Shri Prataprao Jadhav commended the proposed plantation of over 70 lakh indigenous and climate-resilient trees, development of more than 70 water bodies, and notification of nearly 6,000 hectares of land as forest area, describing these measures as a significant step towards strengthening Delhi's ecological security and improving urban air quality.

The Union Minister particularly welcomed the proposal to replace invasive species such as *Vilayati Kikar* and *Babool* with indigenous species including Peepal, Banyan, Neem, Arjun and Jamun, noting that the initiative would transform the Ridge into the "lungs of Delhi" and create a healthier and greener urban environment for future generations.

Highlighting the need to integrate environmental conservation with public health and traditional medicine systems, Shri Jadhav suggested that at least 20 per cent of the plantation in the proposed eight forests be devoted to medicinal plant species, or alternatively, that a minimum of two forests be developed as dedicated Medicinal Forests (Aushadhi Vans).

The Minister stated that such medicinal forests would help create a sustainable source of quality raw material for the Ayush sector, promote biodiversity conservation, strengthen ecological restoration efforts and encourage eco-tourism in the National Capital Region.

Shri Jadhav also shared with the Chief Minister an indicative list of medicinal plant species suitable for plantation in Delhi's agro-climatic conditions. The suggested species include Ashwagandha, Giloy, Tulsi, Brahmi, Shatavari, Amla, Arjun, Ashok, Neem, Bel and Jamun, among others.

Reiterating the Ministry of Ayush's commitment towards promoting medicinal plants and sustainable healthcare ecosystems, Shri Jadhav expressed confidence that the proposed initiative would serve as a model for integrating urban afforestation with India's traditional systems of medicine and environmental

stewardship.

SR/SV/SG

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