

AIIA and 132 ECO Task Force Join Hands for Ashwagandha Plantation and Research in Aravalli Landscape

10,000 Ashwagandha Saplings to be Scientifically Monitored at Terriers Herbal Garden, Bhatti Mines

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The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi, and 132 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) ECO RAJPUT have launched the Ashwagandha Plantation and Research Initiative at the Terriers Herbal Garden, Bhatti Mines, South Delhi. The initiative brings together Ayurveda, medicinal plant research, biodiversity conservation and environmental restoration.

The programme was held on September 24, 2026, under the leadership of Prof. (Vaidya) Pradeep Kumar Prajapati, Director, AIIA, and Colonel Mohan Singh, Commanding Officer, 132 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) ECO RAJPUT.

Under the collaborative initiative, 10,000 Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera* (L.) Dunal) saplings will be planted and subjected to scientific monitoring. The initiative combines AIIA's expertise in Ayurveda, medicinal plants and scientific research with the Ecological Battalion's experience in plantation, biodiversity conservation and environmental restoration.



The Ashwagandha plants will be regularly monitored, observed and documented to generate information on their growth and adaptation under the local climatic and environmental conditions of the Aravalli landscape. The initiative will also provide an opportunity to link traditional Ayurvedic knowledge on medicinal plants with scientific research.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. (Vaidya) Pradeep Kumar Prajapati, Director, AIIA, said, “This initiative brings together the rich Ayurvedic knowledge of medicinal plants with scientific research and ecological restoration. Ashwagandha is an important medicinal plant of Ayurveda, and its systematic cultivation, conservation and scientific documentation can contribute to both knowledge generation and biodiversity conservation. Such collaborations reflect our commitment to taking Ayurveda beyond clinical practice and strengthening its connection with nature and sustainability.”



The programme brought together Dr. Meena Deogade, Head, Department of Dravyaguna, AIIA, faculty members Dr. Shivani Ghildiyal, Associate Professor, and Dr. Bidhan Mahajon, Assistant Professor, along with PhD Research Scholars of the Department and officers and personnel of 132 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) ECO RAJPUT.

The planning and implementation of the plantation initiative between the two organisations was coordinated by Major Jai Singh Shekhawat of 132 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) ECO RAJPUT and Major (Dr.) Ashish Kumar of AIIA.

The initiative at Bhatti Mines has environmental significance as the area forms part of Delhi’s Southern Ridge and the Aravalli landscape. The 132 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) ECO RAJPUT has been engaged in plantation and restoration activities in areas affected and degraded by mining.

The Terriers Herbal Garden already houses around 200 species of medicinal and Ayurvedic significance, which have been planted and conserved. These include Parijata (Harshringar), Amla (Indian Gooseberry) and Ghritkumari (Aloe Vera). AIIA has been entrusted with providing technical support for the proper maintenance, scientific management and guidance of the herbal garden.

Ashwagandha is regarded in Ayurveda as an important medicinal plant for promoting health. The National Medicinal Plants Board, Ministry of Ayush, has also undertaken the “Ashwagandha – A Health Promoter” campaign to raise awareness about its health-related importance.

The initiative seeks to link scientific research on medicinal plants with environmental restoration at Bhatti Mines, supporting biodiversity conservation and the development of an eco-friendly ecosystem.

The initiative carries the message: “Roots in Ayurveda – Conserve Biodiversity – Restore Ecosystems.” It seeks to connect India’s traditional medicinal-plant knowledge with scientific research, biodiversity conservation and efforts to restore the green landscape of the Aravallis.



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