

Centre to start 'urban forest' programme in cities: Prakash Javadekar

The environment ministry will also start a pilot project next year where children would be encouraged to set up nurseries in schools in urban areas

PTI



A file photo of Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar. Photo: Shankar Mourya/Hindustan Times

Mumbai: The Union government has decided to start "urban forest" programme under which trees would be planted in those parts of urban areas which have been marked as forest lands but do not have any tree cover, environment minister Prakash Javadekar said here on Saturday.

"There are about 200 cities in the country which have municipal corporations and have areas marked as forest land. But there is no forest cover there. We have decided to create forests on such lands with the help of state governments and municipal corporations," the minister said. "The cities today have gardens, but not forests. Mumbai at least has the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, but not other cities," he said, speaking to reporters.

The minister also said that mangroves are a natural part of coastal ecosystem, therefore, wherever the development works affect the mangroves, state governments will be asked to plant twice the number of affected plants.

"I have told the (Maharashtra) chief minister to look for about 500 hectares or more of land where a mangrove park can be created. This will also create eco-tourism. Besides, such parks can become a great source of education for people. The CM has agreed to this," he said.

The Union environment ministry will also start a pilot project next year where children would be encouraged to set up nurseries in schools in urban areas, he said.

"If there are 500 children studying in classes 5th,6th,7th (in a school), a nursery of 500 plants will be created. The students will be responsible for sowing the seeds and taking care of it for one year. The plant would be given to them along with their final results. They can take the plant home and ensure that it grows further. This will be give natural education about the environment," Javadekar said. **PTI**

Source:

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/VhwUmEWrqJGMFYDnxpKVvN/Centre-to-start-urban-forest-programme-in-cities-Prakash.html>