

Green cover drive: Govt to launch 'urban forests' scheme to mark World Environment Day

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Sachin Tendulkar

Cricketers to participate in countrywide sapling plantation drive

The government will launch a scheme to create 'urban forests' by planting trees in forest land lying vacant or degraded around cities this week to mark the World Environment Day on June 5. The scheme is aimed at increasing the country's green cover and reducing rising air pollution in cities. The Environment Ministry has also invited sportspersons, mostly cricketers such as Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli, to plant saplings as part of the countrywide sapling plantation drive.

Pune launch

A pilot project will be launched in Pune on June 6, a day after the World Environment Day, with the planting of 4,000 saplings on 70-acre land, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said at a press conference on Wednesday. "There are many cities where the forest department has its land but there are no forests on it or are degraded. We have now asked State governments to identify

such places. In these places, through people's participation, we will establish urban forestry," Javadekar said. Citizens will also be allowed to contribute to the urban forests by planting saplings in the memory of their loved ones after making a donation of Rs. 2,000 for each. The sapling plantation drive on World Environment Day will be kick-started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will plant saplings at his official residence. Indian test cricket captain Virat Kohli and wrestler Sushil Kumar have been invited to plant saplings at the Environment Ministry, Javadekar said. In Mumbai, Sachin Tendulkar will plant saplings with fellow cricketers Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane, while in Vadodara cricketing brothers Irfan and Yusuf Pathan will participate in the drive.

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