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CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CELL, DISPUR

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CM Dr. Sarma launches Chief Minister's Institutional Plantation Programme

CM calls for larger role by Forest Department to reclaim green cover

Dispur, July 17: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today launched Chief Minister's Institutional Plantation Programme (CMIPP) by planting a sapling at the Janata Bhawan premises. He also took part in a meeting which was held to mark the launching ceremony and stressed on larger role by the Department of Environment & Forest in reclaiming forest cover and maintaining greenery in the state.

An initiative of the Science, Technology and Climate Change Department of the Government of Assam, the CMIPP launched today will continue till 15th August 2022. This plantation initiative will cover more than 80,000 institutional campuses of all the offices, councils, urban local bodies, corporations, autonomous councils, registered societies and educational institutions under Government of Assam.

During the month-long programme, native saplings of plant species will be planted in the institutional premises, which will be followed by proper care by the officials and will be monitored through a dedicated web-portal where the institutions will continue to upload Geo-tagged photographs of the plants for three years.

This initiative is aimed at enhanced carbon stock through plantation, conservation for the native plant species, aesthetic beautification of the institutional premises and collective participation for climate action.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma asked the Education, Health and Home Department, which have maximum number of field offices to give major focus in implementing the programme and urged all state government departments to register in the web-portal developed for uploading Geo-tagged photographs of the plants so that success of the programme can be properly monitored.

Dr. Sarma also urged all institutions to plant 75 saplings in and around the campuses calling such plants as *Amrit Briksha* to transform the CMIPP to Amrit Briksha Mahotsav coinciding with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration.

Underlining the factors for recurrence of flood and resultant devastation, the Chief Minister termed loss of forest cover as a major reason for natural calamities of such magnitude and called for larger role by the Forest Department in reclaiming forest cover through plantation, clearing encroachment and working in coordination with local people to address the issue.

He said that the Forest Department during all these years has maintained its focus mostly towards Kaziranga National Park, while there was a need to focus rationally towards others forest areas as well. This has led to depletion of forest cover due to deforestation, encroachment etc. Therefore, the Forest Department now should focus towards reclaiming forest cover and for this he directed the department to conduct bi-annual drone survey of all

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forests and compare the data with previous drone survey to ascertain the loss or gain in forest cover apart from ensuring survival of saplings planted on various occasions.

The Chief Minister asked the Forest Department to prepare modalities for shifting settlers who are genuinely landless from forest areas to non-forest areas and adopt zero tolerance approach against all recent encroachments in forest areas. Dr, Sarma also asked the department to take steps for turning Nursery business commercially more profitable by following success models from other states.

While Secretary of Science, Technology and Climate Change Department Laya Madduri delivered the welcome speech, the programme was also addressed by Minister of the Department Keshab Mahanta.

The programme was also attended by ministers Atul Bora, Dr. Ranoj Pegu, Parimal Suklabaidya, UG Brahma, Jogen Mohan, Nandita Garlosa and Jayanta Malla Baruah, Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua and other senior officials of the state government among others.

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