

## PRESS BRIEF ON THE OCCASION OF 69<sup>th</sup> VANAMAHOTSAVA, 2018

- The 69<sup>th</sup> Vanamahotsava observed with much enthusiasm at a state level function in the premises of Bhagabanpur Government High School, Patrapada, Bhubaneswar on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2018.
- The Hon'ble Chief Minister was the Chief Guest and planted a 'sal' plant. The Hon'ble Minister, Forest & Environment Department, Shri Bijayashree Routray, Hon'ble Minister, Tourism and Culture, Shri Ashok Chandra Panda, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Bhubaneswar, Dr. Prasanna Kumar Pattasani, Hon'ble Member of Legislative Assembly, Bhubaneswar Central, Shri Bijay Kumar Mohanty, Hon'ble Member of Legislative Assembly, Bhubaneswar North, Shri Priyadarsi Mishra, Hon'ble Member of Legislative Assembly, Jatani, Shri Bhagirathi Badjena, Hon'ble Mayor, Municipal Corporation, Bhubaneswar, Shri Ananta Narayana Jena as well as Addl. Chief Secretary to Government of Odisha, Forest & Environment Department Sri Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, IAS & Principal Chief Conservator and Head of Forest Force Dr. Debabrata Swain, IFS, other luminaries including retired & serving Forest Officials, students, teachers, intellectuals, people and media persons participated.
- The current forest and tree cover in the state is 55,338 square kilometre which is 35.54 % of the total Geographical area of the state. This is 2.54% more than the National Goal of 33% of Geographical area of the country.
- The state has gained 885 sq. km. forest cover during the last two assessment years i.e. from 2015 to 2017, as per Forest Survey of India Report.
- The Forest Department is organising a Mass Tree Plantation programme for planting of 4 million saplings on a single day this year on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 involving local communities, dignitaries school children etc.
- In six years, a total of 15.50 lakh ha area has been afforested along with the avenue plantation over 26,047 RKM with plantation of about 46.83 crore seedlings including distribution of 20.48 crore seedlings.
- 40.68 lakh saplings have been planted in all urban local bodies of the state in last 3 years including planting of 5.51 lakh saplings in and around the State Capital Bhubaneswar.
- To preserve the perennial flow of our river systems, about 2 crore seedlings will be planted on Government Revenue, forests and private lands stretching on the river banks of Mahanadi and its tributaries Tel & Ib under a newly launched programme **Green Mahanadi Mission** covering 1303 villages of 19 Forest Divisions in 15 districts of the state for the benefit of the people of the state.

- Under the scheme of **Preservation of Sacred Groves**, 2161 number of identified sites of Sacred Groves have been preserved and developed with plantations of 2,16,100 indigenous plants over the period of five years.
- Ama Jungle Yojana has been introduced to restore the degraded forests with the involvement of 7000 Vana Surakshya Samitis from the 30 forest divisions of 17 districts within a period of six years.
- 12,793 Vana Surakshya Samities (VSS) have been constituted in the State for considerable improvement of 11,962 sq. km of degraded forest area in the State.
- Baliaput VSS of Ganjam district and Oram-Niktimal VSS of Sambalpur district received Rs. 1 lakh each and citation under prestigious State Biju Patnaik Award for Forest Protection and Conservation.
- A brochure titled, "69<sup>th</sup> Vanamahotsava," highlighting the afforestation activities of the State Forest Department and a Book named "Increasing Forest Cover in Odisha" were released during the occasion.
- In 2018-19 there is a target of planting 6.71 crore seedlings covering an area of 3.40 lakh ha area under different plantation programmes and avenue plantation over 5594 R.K.M.. Out of this, a total of 9.55 lakh saplings will be planted in urban local bodies including planting of 2.35 lakh seedlings in and around capital city of Bhubaneswar during this year. In addition, 4.15 crore seedlings will be distributed at a nominal (Rs. 1 per seedling) cost to individuals and NGOs and free of cost to Government institutions to plant trees in backyards, school premises etc.

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