

Himachal to plant 1.20 crore saplings

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SHIMLA: The Himachal Pradesh government has set a target of planting about 1.20 crore saplings on 12,000 hectares of land in 41 forest divisions, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said on Tuesday.

Presiding over the 71st state-level 'Van Mahotsav' here, Thakur also planted a Chinar sapling in the premises of The Peterhof.

The Chief Minister said the government has started six new schemes for promoting afforestation in the state, which include Vidyarthi Van Mitra Yojna, Samudayik Van Samvardhan Yojna, Van Samridhi Jan Samridhi Yojna, policy for setting new industries based on pine needles and providing weapons to forest guards.

Thakur said that in order to sensitise the people regarding the rights of the girl child and also to associate the community in the process of afforestation, the government has started the 'Ek Buta Beti Ke Naam' Scheme.

He said that under this scheme, the family of a girl child at the time of her birth is provided five saplings, tree guard, a nameplate of the girl child, 20 kg vermi compost and technical knowhow.

Education Minister Suresh Bhardwaj said that the Forest Department has been playing a key role in increasing the forest cover in the state.

He urged the Chief Minister to transfer the forests around Shimla town to the Municipal Corporation for their better management and protection.

He said the Education Department was also helping in the afforestation process by motivating the students and teachers to plant saplings.

Forest Minister Govind Thakur said the Forest Department is ensuring that more and more areas of the state are brought under the forest cover.

He said that several afforestation schemes have been initiated in the state and the department is also ensuring the survival of the saplings planted during that 'Van Mahotsav'.