

Japan-funded forestry project to revive 'bhojpatra' in Himachal

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Shimla, Dec 27 (IANS): The Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Forestry Project will revive 'bhojpatra' in Himachal Pradesh in collaboration with the Himalayan Forest Research Institute to empower forest-fringe communities, particularly women, through sustainable livelihoods, government officials said on Wednesday.

A decision in this regard was taken at the 18th executive committee meeting of the JICA Forestry Project chaired by Chief Project Director Nagesh Guleria here.

He said it was decided to start an e-commerce portal of 'bhojpatra'.

Found at a height of 3,000m or above, bhojpatra (Himalayan birch) is a tree whose bark acts as paper on which text can be written.

This portal will be ready by next month and the products manufactured by self-help groups will also be sold through it.

Guleria said JICA's herbal cell will start production of rhododendron, wild marigold and 'satuva' (Paris polyphylla smith).

"Self-help groups will be able to earn their livelihood by producing rhododendron, wild marigold and 'satuva'." At the meeting, it was also decided to open outlets in all forest divisions.

Guleria said the project would also organise fairs to exhibit and sell products prepared by the self-help groups. Also the JICA Forestry Project will work in coordination with the Chief Minister Forest Extension Scheme.