

# Will shift sandalwood museum to palace: Minister

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Mysuru: The state government has planned to set up a sandalwood museum in Mysuru Palace premises as it will be a value addition to the thousands of visitors visiting the palace, said district minister S T Somashekhar here on Monday.

Speaking to reporters after inspecting the sandalwood museum set up by the forest department at Aranya Bhavan, the minister said it will be shifted to the palace premises. He said it will be difficult for people to visit the museum in Aranya Bhavan.

“Chief minister BS Yediyurappa is planning to visit the city on November 24 to inaugurate a slew of development projects. I’ve asked the Mysuru Palace Board, headed by the chief secretary, to send a proposal to set up the museum. I’ll discuss with forest minister Anand Singh and seek his approval,” he said.

He said the state government is motivating farmers to cultivate sandal trees. The forest department must market the sandalwood after buying it from farmers as there is huge demand for sandalwood and its products in national and international markets, he said.

The objective behind establishing the museum is not only to help showcase the varieties of sandalwood products, oil and soaps but also help educate farmers about the significance of cultivation of sandal trees. Sandal cultivation was one of the major farming activities in Karnataka for long, which the forest department is now seeking to promote.

The museum is also aimed at providing technical support, information on availability of saplings, marketing facilities, pest control measures, incentives and schemes provided for sandalwood growers by the government. The other idea behind this museum is to enhance the area of sandalwood cultivation as farmers can earn revenue of a minimum of Rs 3 crore by growing sandalwood trees in per hectare, a forest official said.

The country can earn sizable revenue by exporting sandalwood and its products, the foresters said.