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Develop Urban Forest Parks in the Twin City: Chief Secretary

CMC and BMC and OFDC to work in convergence for rollout of the facility

All ULBS asked to have urban forest with dense greenery

JayadevVatika emerges as a successful model in urban forest management

Bhubaneswar, 7 Sept

The denizens of the twin city have a news to cheer that more number of urban forest parks will soon come up in the vicinity of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. Chief Secretary Sri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra gave this order today while reviewing the progress of greenery and plantations in the urban areas in a high level meeting held on digital mode from *Lokseba Bhawan* wherein Additional Chief Secretary Forest and Environment Dr Mona Sharma outlined the issues for discussion.

Reviewing the progress of plantation and green coverage in the twin city area, Sri Mahapatra asked Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC), City Forest Division,

Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to work at tandem with ground level convergence for developing the urban forest parks in and around the twin city. Sri Mahapatra directed to develop at least seven such urban forests in the first phase and open those for the public. Sri Mahapatrasaidthat opening the urban forests to public would infuse a sense of belongingness towards city forests among the denizens, and, that itself would be a deterrent against the destruction and encroachment of the areas. The urban forest parks would be provide the facilities for morning walk, recreation, outing, fresh air and refreshment to the urban dwellers.

Further, Chief Secretary Sri Mahapatra said that the forest patches like *EkamraKanana* and *JayadevVatika* in Bhubaneswar is being managed well. Management of *Jayadevvatika* has proved a successful model. Additional Chief Secretary Dr Sharma added that the urban forest parks could be managed on the basis of self-sustaining revenue generating model by OFDC.

It was decided that the urban bodies line BMC and CMC would provide infrastructural support like pathway, drinking water, electricity, picnic *pindisetc* in the urban forest parks and OFDC would maintain the parks. Commissioner, BMC Sri Sanjay Kumar Singh said that the Mo Busroute would be extended near to the urban forest locations so that people could reach the spot easily. The online ticket booking for the places could be done through BMC site. It was also decided to publicize the spots through BMC's website, hoardings and electronic messages.

PCCF Sri HarishankarUpadhaya appraised that six dense urban patches were developed in and around Bhubaneswar city. These included EkamraKanana, Medicinal plant knowledge center, Smruti Van, Ekamra Van and JayadevVatika. Another upcoming urban forest was Nagar Van which would also be a potential spot for Urban Forest Park. Similarly, two urban patches namely Nadna Van and Arogya Van were also developed in the Cuttack city area. These spots could be developed to urban forest parks with basic infrastructure, parking and amenities.

The meeting also explored the possibilities for development similar such urban forests surrounding the twin city. Regional Chief Conservator of Forests Sri ManojMohapatra presented the different plantation sites at Begachhia, Kishannagar, Odapada, Arilo, Brjabiharipur, Kampur, BhusauniPitha, Badagaon, Atoda, Mahanadi and Kathjodi embankment, CDA Sect-8, Nakshyatravana, Karadakanta, Madhupur, Baliapada, JagatpurAtoda, Orilo and Uttampur. Managing Director OFDC Sri Rajiv Kumar said that plantation done in these areas under the programmes like Urban tea plantation, Odisha environmental fund management, Green Mahanadi Mission and Increasing green cover *etc.* had witnessed lofty growth with high density. These spots could be developed to the urban forest parks.

It was decided that a joint committee consisting of senior officers from concerned departments would make a field visit soon for identifying the spots to be taken up for urban forest in first phase.

Additional Chief Secretary Forest and Environment Dr Mona Sharma, Principal Secretary Housing and urban Development Sri G. Mathivathnan, Principal Secretary Revenue and Forest management Sri BishnipadaSethi, Principal Secretary General Administration and Public grievance Sri Surendra Kumar, Commissioner BMC Sri Sanjay Kumar Singh, PCCF Sri HarishankarUpadhaya, Special Secretary Water Resources SmtArchanaPattanaik, Collector Cuttack Sri Bhwani Shankar Chayani, Commissioner CMC SmtAnanya Dash along with senior officers of concerned department participated in the deliberations.

**** U.K. Mohapatra ****

PRO to Chief Secretary