

Address of Honb. Lt Governor Shri K. Kailashnathan at "Green Campuses for Green Cities" program org. by APSCC, Puducherry

Venue : Hotel Accord, Puducherry

Date : 12th March 2025

Distinguished Guests, esteemed academicians, environmentalists, dear students, & fellow citizens of Puducherry, very Good Morning and warm greetings to you all.

Today, I stand before you not just as the Administrator of this UT, but as a person who shares concern for our environment and our future.

It is indeed a privilege to launch the "Green Campuses for Green Cities" program a national initiative that aims to transform our Universities and Higher Education Institutions into beacons of environmental restoration of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The launch today is more than a program. It is our commitment for collective responsibility to combat the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

We look around. Our cities are changing. Where once stood magnificent trees, where birds sang, now stand concrete structures. The air now comes with health warnings in many cities. This is not the legacy we wish to leave for our generations. Today, we begin a journey to reclaim our green heritage.

I appreciate APSCC for this initiative focusing on universities and higher education institutions where the future of India is shaped every day. They have a crucial role in leading society towards a sustainable future.

When a campus of education institution creates a forest, then the impact extends beyond academics & campuses. The surrounding community notices.

...2/-

They visit, they learn and slowly the idea spreads from campus to homes, from educational institutions to corporate offices, from academic theories to community practice.

I hope, by transforming university campuses into green spaces, we contribute significantly to broader ecological restoration. In our climate-challenged world, this is nothing short of revolutionary.

I remember, recently in Puducherry I declared open an Eco-Tourism Park - a one year old Miyawaki Forest developed in a garbage dump space, a municipal land into a dense forest. Puducherry has planned to plant 1 lac trees under this campaign. Several Universities and Cities across India have already adopted Miyawaki forests. Miyawaki afforestation technique is one of the most effective rather a revolutionary approach to restore urban green spaces.

We combinedly, take this opportunity to honour the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for launching a unique initiative 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign in June 2024, combining environmental responsibility with tribute to mothers for active engagement of youth, local authorities and communities in environmental action.

The success of this campaign lies in its simplicity and emotional appeal, encouraging people across the nation to plant a tree as a tribute to their mothers. Because, trees are life-sustaining, and just like a mother, they provide sustenance, protection, and a future for the next generation.

In line with Prime Minister Modi's call, this initiative has seen remarkable participation, with over 100 crore trees planted across India within five months. Various Public, PSUs, NGO & communities have embraced the campaign enthusiastically

and made substantial contributions to this initiative demonstrating a collective commitment towards sustainability and environmental conservation. The campaign has also garnered international attention, inspiring global participation and reinforcing India's dedication to sustainable development.

Today, I invite every educational institution in Puducherry to join this movement. Begin with what you can manage - perhaps a small Miyawaki forest of 100 square meters. Within one year, we aim to have at least one forest in every higher education campus in Puducherry.

Within five years, we envision our Union Territory becoming a national model for sustainable educational institutions. We declare that our educational institutions will not just prepare students for the world as it is, but will help create the world as it should be.

We realize the simple truth: Great changes begin with small actions and the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Today, we take that step together.

Rather, it is a mark of pride that the transformative Green Campus initiative was conceived and originated in Puducherry and has gained global recognition earning endorsements from the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. I hope this initiative will bring distinction to students, scholars, universities, other higher educational institutions and the nation as a whole.

Let us remember that environmental conservation is not new to India. Our ancestors worshipped trees. They designed step wells and tank systems that harvested every precious drop of rain. This wisdom is our heritage.

It is our duty to restore and to create a greener, healthier and more sustainable Indian for future generations. I urge academicians, students and policymakers to take up this responsibility with commitment and passion.

I wish, the Green Campuses for Green Cities initiative is not just a policy framework but a movement that requires collaboration between Government Bodies, Educational Institutions, Industries and Civil Society and is highly commendable - poised to become a landmark initiative in the near future.

I extend my best wishes to this noble initiative and congratulate the Association for Promoting Sustainability in Campuses and Communities (APSCC) based in Puducherry has been appointed as the 'Global Lead' for two of the twelve UN Decade challenges- 'Cities and Youth'.

Thank u.

Jai Hind