Greens to develop tree canopy along NH

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Mangaluru: Environmentalists in Mangaluru are all set to create a green canopy on the 17-km stretch of the national highway from Talapady to Nanthoor by planting Kadamba Vriksha, also known as burflower tree or Neolamarckia Cadamba.

The initiative is being taken up jointly by the forest department and National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) in association with green warriors led by Madhav Ullal. They are inspired by Saalumarada Thimmakka, who planted 385 banyan trees along a four-kilometre stretch of highway between Hulikal and Kudur.

Madhava Ullal told TOI that the team has a target of planting 2,000 saplings on the NH stretch from Kerala – Karnataka border at Talapady to Nanthoor in the city. "This is a 9-year old concept that bloomed in my mind through the inspirations from Saalumarada Thimmakka. Finally, the project has been kick-started by involving forest department, NHAI and local residents on June 18. As per the suggestions of forest department, we have been planting saplings leaving five meters gap. While the forest department has been supplying saplings, the NHAI has demarcated spots to plant them. It may take another month for us to complete the project by planting 2,000 trees from Talapady to Nanthoor. We expect to convert the NH stretch into a tree canopy within four to five years," he said.

In addition to Kadamba, they also have been planting other species like Renje (Mimusops Elengi) and Kakkemara (Cassia Fistula). "Kadamba has a lot of medicinal value that it helps people improve their immunity against contagious diseases as per Ayurveda. We have plans to plant Kadamba in more than 50% of the stretch. Meanwhile, in selected area,s canopy of cassia fistula, which gives yellow flowers in summer, also will be created," he said.

"Range forest officer P Shridhar has not only been arranging saplings, but also deputed staff to help us. Meanwhile, Kudroli Sri Gokarnanatha Temple has arranged an earthmover machine to dig pits and clear land," he added.

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