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## Miyawaki forests turn new rage in Kerala

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### HIGHLIGHTS

Prof Akira Miyawaki , the noted botanist from Japan, turns 93 on Friday, but his "Miyawaki model", presented in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit in June 1992, has become a rage in Kerala with the state government and private players developing these forests which could be cultivated even in a small area

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Prof Akira Miyawaki , the noted botanist from Japan, turns 93 on Friday, but his "Miyawaki model", presented in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit in June 1992, has become a rage in Kerala with the state government and private players developing these forests which could be cultivated even in a small area. In the 1994 Paris climate summit also this proposal was a major hit.

It was MR Hari ,Managing Director of Invis multimedia, who set out to meet Prof Akira Miyawaki of the Yokohama National University in Japan to get a personal feel on this type of forests and to understand about it in person.

Kerala now has 1.6 acre land of "Miyawaki model " in the state spread across 10 districts with minimum of 10 cents and maximum of 20 cents of land.

Miyawaki who won the "Blue Planet" award - one of the most prestigious awards in environment conservation after accepting the award at the age of 78 has said "I want to cultivate plants and trees for 30 more years, I want to create forests of live and nothing else".

The first Miyawaki forest in Kerala became operational three years ago and it was at the property of MR Hari in Puliyaakonam, a 15-km drive from Thiruvananthapuram city. The forest was in 3 cents of plot and in this three cents of land a variety of 500 plants, trees, creepers have formed in this forest.

Hari, while speaking to IANS, said: "The trees touched 30 ft in height in three years and I had to prune these trees as their branches could fall in heavy winds and create problems. This is not in line with the Miyawaki idea of not cutting the branches but I had to make certain changes for practical purposes".

He further said, "This forest has slowly started growing with insects and large numbers of birds coming in and finding this as their habitat and it's a great feeling. More than that the environment in the surrounding areas has improved much and we could directly feel it".

According to the Miyawaki theory, 162 plants can be cultivated in 1 cent of land and these plants will shoot straight up instead of towards side for sunlight. In three years these trees will grow 30 feet, and in 20 years this will have the tone and tenor of a 100-year-old forest.

Kerala Tourism has now taken up the project of Miyawaki Forests after the success of Hari's project at Puliyaakonam. A consortium of Natures Green Guardian foundation, Organic Kerala Mission society and Cultural shoppe are promoting Miyawaki forests for state tourism department.

Miyawaki forest is one of the flagship programmes of Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC), a state government body. The organisation's first project was in Chalai government girls high school which was implemented on January 29,2020 commemorating the 92 birthday of Akira Miyawaki. In a year ,the area has grown into a good forest.

Prof Miyawaki's student, Prof Fujivaro, was present during the planting of the seeds and saplings.

K-DISC is now planting Miyawaki forests at 12 places in 10 districts of the state.

Shakeela KT, Miyawaki Project Coordinator and Assistant Programme officefr of K- DISC told IANS that the organisation has implemented the project in 12 places in 10 districts in the past one year. "After this we will be monitoring the environmental and climate changes in the area after these forests have come into being and we will be studying in detail on the quality of air in the atmosphere, quantity of oxygen, ground water situation and pollution in water and air."

Environmental activists are on cloud nine following the success of Miyawaki forests in the state.

Hari, who runs a You Tube channel on Miyawaki Forests, said: "I am receiving two to three enquiries per day from people who are interested to implement the project in their lands. State tourism department is also satisfied that the people of the state are taking up the cause and this could be the best tribute to the great plant botanist on his 93rd birthday."