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Chala school to raise a Miyawaki forest on 10 cents - The Hindu

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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### STAFF REPORTER

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Student Police Cadets (SPCs) sang 'Happy Birthday..' as the city celebrated the 92nd birthday of Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki here on Wednesday.

Miyawaki-san, the man behind the renowned Miyawaki forests, was live on Skype to see the cadets and students of Government High School, Chala, plant an urban micro forest. Kazue Fujiwara of Yokohama National University, who was one of the first students of Mr. Miyawaki, and Elgene O. Box of the University of Georgia, Athens, U.S., who authored a book with Mr. Miyawaki, were present to guide the students.

Mr. Miyawaki expressed his best wishes for attempts to create forests using the Miyawaki method in the State.

### 1,600 saplings

At the Chala school, a Miyawaki forest is being grown on 10 cents of land. Nearly 1,600 saplings were planted, three each in one sq m. Nearly 400 of these saplings belong to native trees found in the forests of the State, while the rest include deciduous and local trees and will form an arboretum.

Ms. Fujiwara demonstrated how the saplings are to be planted, the gap between them, and the mix of saplings. Soil preparation using organic manure, coir pith, and rice husk, the depth at which the saplings are planted, and how wood chips help retain water in the soil and prevent weeds from sprouting were demonstrated.

Factors such as altitude and water content were kept in mind while deciding the saplings to be planted, entrepreneur M.R. Hari who is popularising the Miyawaki afforestation said.

He explained how Mr. Miyawaki used trees such as 'ooravu' when he started planting Miyawaki forests around the world. Not only was it native to the Western Ghats, it grew up to 30 m and could even survive natural disasters.

### Rapid afforestation

V.K. Damodaran of the NGO, Nature's Green Guardian Foundation (NGGF), said they planned to give demonstrations of Miyawaki forests in each district.

In the first phase, 20 cents of land in 10 districts was being transformed into Miyawaki forests by the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC). The plants are expected to grow into dense forests through rapid afforestation, thus helping create green urban spaces that give the impression of growth of 50-60 years within two-three years.

Experiments with growing medicinal plants to see how much plant interaction is there will be taken up.