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## **Measures to promote energy conservation**

Special Correspondent

*Green fund to be set up in 5 years*

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*Rs.100 crore initial allocation for*

*'green fund'*

*Moots energy*

*credit system,*

*energy audit*

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac has announced a clutch of measures to promote energy conservation in his budget for 2010-'11, the chief among these being a Rs.100 crore initial allocation for a Rs. 1,000-crore 'green fund' to be set up over the next five years.

Dr. Isaac told the Assembly in the course of his budget speech on Friday that one-fourth of the income generated by selling the silt and sand removed from the reservoirs in forest areas would be used for this purpose.

Desilting of the dams, he pointed out, would improve the irrigation and power potential of the dams by 20 per cent and said the government considered the desilting of the dams as the "most critical environmental intervention".

The Finance Minister said the Central funds for rejuvenation and restoration of degraded forests (Rs.24 crore this month and Rs.40 crore during 2010-'11, would be merged with the green fund).

The government, he said, would give a fixed amount per hectare to individuals who own tracts with mangroves and would launch a scheme to promote planting of 10 lakh saplings in two years at a cost of Rs.100 crore by coordinating MNREGS, Horticulture Mission and various other agencies and missions.

Dr. Isaac said it was also proposed to introduce an energy credit system by giving fixed credit for every unit of electricity conserved from the level in the previous year. This credit would be given every six months. Using this credit, students could buy books from approved publishers or households could buy commodities from Supplyco. A sum of Rs.25 crore would be earmarked from the green fund for the scheme, which was expected to cost Rs.100 crore.

He said that, henceforth, all industrial and commercial establishments would have to submit themselves to a mandatory energy audit. The Kerala Financial Corporation (KFC) and the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) would provide loans at 5 per cent interest to install systems to reduce energy consumption. Fines would be realised from those high tension and extra high tension consumers who did not attain the standards prescribed by the energy audit. The Minister said it was also proposed to encourage the construction of green building complexes in respect of flats and other buildings. In future, all building complexes constructed by the government would use green building technologies, he said and pointed out that it was also proposed to fix the optimum consumption level for government offices and institutions through a process of energy audit with the participation of the employees concerned. Pre-paid meters would be installed at all offices. This would be universalised in three years.

He said an 'energy efficiency company' would be formed under the Energy Management Centre to promote measures to prevent energy waste by government and quasi-government institutions.

As an experimental measure, a pilot scheme would be implementing covering the Legislature Complex, State secretariat, Kerala High Court, Mascot Hotel and the Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram.

It was estimated that these buildings would require an investment of Rs. 106.09 lakh which would bring about energy savings to the tune of Rs.160.31 lakh. The gains from the reduction in energy expenditure would be handed over to the company.

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