



Forest conservation high on agenda

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Imphal, September 30 2011: A two-day national level workshop on "Impact of Climate Change on Biodiversity Management in North Eastern India with Special Reference to Manipur" hosted by the State concluded at Classic Hotel here today with a call to conserve forest. Attending the workshop, Planning Commissioner BK Chaturvedi underscored the need to conserve forest areas of the North-eastern States where the percentage of forest cover is relatively higher. The workshop which began yesterday was jointly organised by the Manipur Biodiversity Board and Forest Department. The workshop was participated by experts from the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, Indian Institute of Forest Management Bhopal, Wildlife Institute of India Dehradun, Ministry of Forest and Environment and Manipur University. Talking to media persons after the workshop, Chaturvedi said that the North East region has the highest forest cover in India for which conservation is of utmost importance. Stating that India is targeting reduction in greenhouse gas emission by 20-25 per cent, he remarked that recommendations of the Imphal workshop would be very helpful in formulating a plan at the national level.



A hill side shorn of its forest cover

To a query on the Loktak conservation project being implemented with funding from the Planning Commission, Chaturvedi informed that the Loktak development/cleansing work was completed last year though the State Government wished to extend the project till 2013. Before initiating second phase of the project, the Commission decided to conduct a mid-term evaluation. For this, Karunay University, Kerala has been making an assessment. Not all phumdis would be removed from Loktak lake. Only thick phumdis would be removed, the Planning Commission Member told media persons. The concluding day of the workshop witnessed intensive deliberations on such topics as forestry, wildlife and eco-tourism, shifting cultivation and other indigenous agricultural practices, wetlands and fisheries, biodiversity and livelihood support etc. Some of the recommendations adopted at the end of the workshop were harvesting forest produces in scientific manner so as to reduce emission of greenhouse gases, proper regulation and management of jhum cultivation, checking deforestation activities, preparation of special fire management plans and use of remote sensing techniques to control forest fires. Development of agro-forestry models for reducing impact of climate change on small and marginal farmers, introduction of integrated farming system in hill slopes and compilation of a GIS digital data base for jhum croppers were some other recommendations. The workshop further recommended scientific management of all river basins and wetlands under a long term plan and conservation of indigenous fishes/fish biodiversity. Peoples biodiversity registry for Mondum Mahadev, L Gunphai and N Songlung were released by BK Chaturvedi who was chief guest of the concluding function. A bulletin on local health tradition of Manipur was also released by Planning Commission Advisor Bromo Chaudhury. The closing function was graced by Meghalaya PCCF VK Nautiyal, MU VC Prof HNK Sharma, Tripura PCCF Dr RL Srivastav, Chief Secretary DS Poonia and Planning Commission Advisor Bromo Chaudhury as presidium members.