

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY CELEBRATED ALL OVER THE
COUNTRY**

NATIONAL-LEVEL CELEBRATIONS HELD AT GOA

New Delhi, May 22, 2017

The International Day for Biodiversity (IDB) 2017 was celebrated all over the country today, by different States and various organisations. The national level celebrations of IDB were held at Dinanath Mangeshkar Auditorium, Kala Academy in Goa, with enthusiastic participation of all stakeholders. Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Manohar Parrikar was the chief guest on the occasion.

In his address, Shri Parrikar stressed upon the community connect and people's participation for Biodiversity Conservation. He also gave a message on afforestation and called for responsible development through effective and scientific pollution control system by citing the experiences of solid waste disposal of Goa, which is a model system for others to emulate. The Chief Minister inaugurated an exhibition on the theme and Green Haat, which had exhibits from 12 States including Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh besides stalls from UNDP, GIZ, Zoological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, Goa Forest Department, Goa State Biodiversity Board and NBA. Exhibits, posters and other material highlighting the role of biodiversity in sustaining livelihoods were depicted at the exhibition. Several students and others interested participated enthusiastically in the exhibition. The dignitaries too walked through the exhibition.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Amita Prasad referring to the theme and key objective of the Day (Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism), highlighted the important role played by biodiversity in various economic sectors. Referring to the intrinsic linkages between biodiversity and tourism, she said that the country has succeeded in making the crucial paradigm shift from development and environment being seen as two ends of a spectrum, to having development while protecting the environment. Referring to the contribution of tourism industry in creating jobs, promoting local culture and fueling development, she highlighted the challenges and opportunities that sustainable tourism presents, while supporting nature conservation.

Recalling the teachings and preachings of ancient texts and philosophers on environment and biodiversity, Dr B. Meenakumari exhorted the people to contribute towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism. Referring to the diversity in gastronomic tourism in different parts of the country, she in particular highlighted the delightful and unique culture and cuisine of Goa.

Ms. Marina Walter, in her remarks, said that protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services is a shared responsibility that requires coordinated action among several actors - the industry, the policy makers, civil society and local communities.

During the event, Call for 2018 India Biodiversity Awards, and a newsletter 'Biodiversity Matters' was launched. The dignitaries presented awards to the winners of a photography contest, organised as a pre-event to celebrate India's incredible biodiversity. Some knowledge products and communication material were also released on the occasion.

In India, a recognized megadiverse country rich in biodiversity, nearly 300 million people are dependent on biodiversity for subsistence and livelihoods. Across India, people, communities, governments and civil society organizations are demonstrating ways to conserve biodiversity, sustain livelihoods, and contribute to sustainable development.

Additional Secretary MoEFCC, Dr Amita Prasad, Chief Secretary, Government of Goa, Shri Dharmendra Sharma, Principal Secretary, Department of Environment & Forests, Goa, Dr. Ranbir Singh, Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority, Dr. B. Meenakumari, and Deputy Country Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ms. Marina Walter attended the celebrations. Other representatives from Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, National Biodiversity Authority, Goa State Biodiversity Board, UNDP, representatives from other States, specialised Central and State Government institutes, State Forest Departments, civil society organisations, academic institutes, students, local communities, and biodiversity enthusiasts were also present at the event.

A two-minute silence was observed in the memory of Late Shri Anil Madhav Dave, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment Forest and Climate Change, who was to preside over this event, but Shri Dave suddenly passed away on May 18, 2017.

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