



G20: Bengaluru to host first Environment Working Group meeting from 9 February

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New Delhi: The first meeting of the Environment, Climate & Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) under the Sherpa Track of G20 will be held in Bengaluru from 9-11 February, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) said in a statement.

India will be holding the Presidency of G20 for one year till November 30, 2023. The forum will bring together the G20 member countries, guest countries and international organisations invited by India. Through the Sherpa Track, 13 working groups and two initiatives will meet under India's presidency to discuss priorities and provide recommendations.

Environment, Climate and Sustainability is a working group under the Sherpa Track.

"Four meetings of the ECSWG in total are scheduled to be hosted by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) during India's G20 presidency which ends on November 30 this year. The discussions at ECSWG will focus on the agenda 'Promotion of Blue Economy along with Coastal Sustainability', 'Restoration of Degraded Lands and Ecosystems' and 'Enhancement of Biodiversity' and 'Strengthening of Circular Economy'," the ministry said.

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Leading to the first meeting in Bengaluru, Mysuru Zoo in coordination with Central Zoo Authority organised a two-day National Conference for Zoo Directors of India on January 18-19. The Mysuru zoo was chosen as a venue to focus on best practices in zoo management. It is one of two self-sustaining zoos in India with the unique concept of the adoption of zoo animals, which started in this zoo. The conference mainly focused on 'Master Planning and Building the National Capacity for species Management and Conservation Breeding'.

As many as 59 participants from 25 states and a union territory participated in this conference.

For preparedness and better coordination, a meeting between Leena Nandan, secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and Vandita Sharma, chief secretary to Karnataka government was held on Saturday in Bengaluru. Aspects pertaining to branding, security, venue management, and cultural events showcasing Karnataka's traditions etc., and other logistic arrangements were deliberated upon.

Nandan requested the state government to provide branding spaces at prominent locations for highlighting the meeting. While appreciating the ambience of Bengaluru and its green environs, the union secretary also requested the chief secretary to facilitate an excursion tour of the G20 delegates to Bannerghatta Biological Park.

The union secretary, during her discussions with the chief secretary, highlighted and appreciated the innovative information technology solutions devised by the Karnataka State Forest Department to ensure faster delivery of public services and real-time monitoring of natural resources. One key initiative is e-Parihara, an online application that helps in processing and sanctioning ex-gratia claims in cases of man-animal conflicts; thus, bringing transparency and efficiency in processing claims.

Similarly, e-Gastu an Android-based platform captures forest patrolling/field activities undertaken by frontline staff of the forest department, which can be visualized by supervisory officers over satellite imageries, on regular basis. Likewise, e-timber facility provides near real-time wood stock available in

government timber depots and enables e-auction facilities for timber/ other forest produce in government timber depots.

According to the official statement, the geo-spatial forest information system developed by the Karnataka Forest Department is a unique platform which uses remote sensing and GIS technology and provides a spatial database of all notified forest lands in the state, providing access to the forest land notifications, village maps, forest maps and digitised notified forest at the cadastral level.

The forest fire management system is a comprehensive solution for planning, mitigation and analysis of forest fire which provides forest fire risk zonation mapping, fire start vulnerability mapping, burnt area assessment along with a robust system for dissemination of active forest fire alerts to ensure that all fire incidences are addressed and mitigated in a time bound manner.

The G20 delegates are scheduled to visit the Kalkere Arboretum and Bannerghatta Biological Park in Bengaluru. At Kalkere, the delegates will have an opportunity to visualise and experience four predominant forest ecosystems of Karnataka state. The State Forest Department will also showcase the forest restoration models adopted in these ecosystems and the successful revival of faunal biodiversity in these areas.

The Bannerghatta Biological Park will showcase the state-of-art butterfly park and animal safaris to the delegates. The Karnataka Forest Department will also highlight the flagship ecotourism model, the Jungle Lodges Resort, which is extremely popular among nature lovers, globally.

The commissioner of tourism stated that the rich legacy of Karnataka handicrafts and textiles would be showcased through the pavilions at the venue. The secretary, Culture stated that the artistic depiction of Karnataka by nadeswaram, performance by the Ayana Dance Company and the flute recital by Sumukha Rao are planned.

These events will showcase the rich cultural and artistic heritage of Karnataka, ensuring that the delegates carry a flavour of Karnataka with them.