



Environment minister attends Sustainable Mountain Development Summit

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NEW DELHI : Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav attended the inaugural session of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit-XI (SMDS-XI) held at Leh, Ladakh UT from 10-12 October, 2022.

Addressing the session, the minister said unique landscapes of the country like the Himalayas, Western Ghats and Thar desert need special attention of the scientific community. "The G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (GBPNIHE) and its one Regional Centre at Leh, under MOEFCC is particularly mandated on research and development activities for sustainability of the Himalayan environment."

Yadav added that Ease of Living is as important as Ease of Doing Business. "The government is promoting mindful use of resources rather than mindless use of the same. Ideas for such practices are already available in our culture and traditions. People living in harsh Himalayan conditions have all these values and the region is not only popular for tourism but also for cultural harmony."

He said that tourism should be expanded for various aspects while keeping the environment fragility, sports, mountaineering, cycling and peace in mind. "The recent World Forest Conference in US passed a declaration that forests are not only for enjoyment but are an important source of peace. Himalayan forests have been promoting peace for centuries. Tourism in the Himalayas should be promoted for nature seekers, pilgrims, and spiritual seekers. Involvement of local communities in tourism is most important for integrating such initiatives. All our activities should be round the year and our educational institutions should have formats aligned with it."

Yadav said that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has disposed all wildlife related proposals and applications submitted on Parivesh portal to expedite the development journey of Ladakh. The Parivesh portal is further being redesigned to integrate all environmental clearances in a centralized manner. The ministry will extend all support to the Ladakh administration for awareness and training of local stakeholders on Forest Rights and other related issues.

He added that solar power is a big source of energy. "India has started International Solar Alliance which now has 106 members globally. In Glasgow, the Prime Minister highlighted the concept of 'One sun, one world, one grid' which was praised by the international community. India with United Kingdom had formed Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) on climate change to address the issue of loss and damages due to climate change."

The Minister said that the work on connecting remote landscapes by building tunnels like Atal Tunnel and ongoing Zoji La Tunnel will reduce carbon emission in the mountain environment.

The Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS) is a flagship annual event of IMI, a civil society-led forum working across the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) that comprises 10 mountain states, two union territories and four hill districts. In addition to the central event, two integral components of the SMDS include the Mountain Legislators' Meet (MLM) and the Indian Himalayan Youth Summit.

Source: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/environment-minister-attends-sustainable-mountain-development-summit-11665413678667.html>

