

India's focus is on green growth and green jobs, says PM Narendra Modi

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday encouraged state governments and citizens to focus on green growth and green jobs to help achieve the net zero carbon emissions target by 2070.

“Now, the focus of the country is on growth, on green jobs. And to achieve all these goals, the role of the environment ministry of every state is enormous,” Modi said at the National Conference of Environment Ministers in Gujarat.

Ahead of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly referred to as COP27, the Centre reached out to states to encourage them for devising stronger climate action plans. COP27 will be held in Egypt

from November 6 to 18.

Modi also urged state ministers against unnecessarily allowing obstacles in the name of the environment and to ensure ease of living and doing business, while highlighting the importance of the PARIVESH portal for the single-window forest, wildlife, environment, and coastal regulation zone clearances. “Where environment clearance used to take more than 600 days 8 years ago, it takes 75 days today,” the PM said, calling for expedited clearance of more than 6,000 proposals for environmental and 6,500 for forest that were pending with the states.

“Expedited clearances should also take care of the rules and give priority to the development of the people. It is a win-win situation for both the economy and ecology,” he said.

Modi said the role of the environment ministry was more of a promoter of the environment than a regulator. “It should be our endeavour that by raising the name of the environment unnecessarily, no obstacle should be allowed to be created in the quest of ease of living and ease of doing business. We have to remember that the faster the environment clearance is available, the faster the development will also take place.”

Stressing the need to maintain equilibrium with nature, the PM said the role of the environment ministries of the states in achieving these goals was of vital importance.

Modi emphasised the need for a participative and integrated approach by the environment ministries and citizens to create awareness about biodiversity.

The PM went on to add that India is a rapidly developing economy and that it was continuously strengthening its ecology as well. “Our forest cover has increased and wetlands are also expanding rapidly,” he said, asking the states to work on measures, such as vehicle scrapping policy and ethanol blending.

The conference has been convened to improve synergy between the central and state governments in formulating policies on issues such as plastic pollution elimination and for action plans to combat climate change with a focus on the Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) Movement. Modi launched LiFE in June for people to have a lifestyle in tune with their planet.

Modi said India’s share in global emissions is negligible. In its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), India has put forth a target of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent by increasing forest and tree cover by 2030.