

REPORT
On
Celebration of
International Day for Biological Diversity

Held on 22nd Day of May 2022



WEST BENGAL BIODIVERSITY BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

A Brief Report on The Celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity, 2022 By the West Bengal Biodiversity Board (W.B.B.B.)

Date & Time: 22nd May 2022, 10.00 a.m.

Place: Science City Mini Auditorium Kolkata

Background: The International Day for Biological Diversity 2022 (IDB 2022) is observed on 22nd May each year as a reminder to all for our duties towards conservation and sustainable utilization of vast resources of biodiversity that envelops us. It is also a reminder that we need to arrest the pace of degradation of our biodiversity mainly due to over bearing acts of humans, which are all but sustainable.



The state level observance with different stakeholders, has very rightly justified the main theme of IDB-2022 *i.e.* **Building a shared future for all life** to generate

awareness by involving all varied stakeholders who need to be appraised of their dual roles, both as a protector and as sustainable consumer to live a harmonious life in tune with nature.

Dignitaries on Dias: Dr. Ratna De Nag , Minister-of-State, Department of Environment, GoWB
Sri Bankim Chandra Hazra, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Sundarban Affairs, GoWB
Smt. Neelam Meena, IAS, Secretary, Department of Environment
Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board
Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath, Chairman, West Bengal Biodiversity Board
Smt. Tripti Sah, IFS, Member Secretary, West Bengal Biodiversity Board

Session I

Inauguration: The State programme to mark the commemoration of International Day for Biological Diversity 2022 was held during a one-day long programme at Science City Mini Auditorium Kolkata on 22nd May, 2022. About 400 people from different segments of the society that included representatives of BMCs/ Research Institutes/Govt. Organizations/SHG Members/NGOs/Students/Teachers of Schools, Colleges, Universities and others took part in the event.

Respectable dignitaries were requested to come on the dais. Minister-of-State, Department of Environment, GoWB, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Sundarban Affairs, GoWB, Secretary, Department of Environment, GoWB, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board, Chairman, West Bengal Biodiversity Board, Member Secretary, West Bengal Biodiversity Board took their seats on stage.

The seminar was opened by watering a potted Tulsi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) Plant by the dignitaries with a Sanskrit sloka recitation by the Adhakshya, Ramakrishna Math Naora.

Deliberation -

Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath, Chairman, West Bengal Biodiversity Board delivered his welcome address and set the tone of the programme. Before initiating his deliberation, he requested all to observe one minute silence to pay homage to the species got extinct due to anthropogenic activities all over the globe. At the outset, he welcomed the dignitaries and all the distinguished participants attended the programme. In his address Dr. Debnath unveiled the theme of this year - '**Building a shared future for all life**' and highlighted the significance of the day and theme in the light of the provisions of Biological Diversity Act, 2002 for betterment of millions of lives by sustaining biodiversity. He expressed his concern about the impact of biodiversity loss on human life.



He informed about completion of constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) and preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR) in all levels covering 3341 Gram Panchayats, 342 blocks, 125 Municipal Corporation and in 22 Zilla Parisads. Preparation of PBR of Kolkata, first of its kind among Indian metros, also found a mention. He also mentioned about declaration of four biodiversity rich

areas as Biodiversity Heritage Sites.

He reported that by analysing the PBRs pilot projects are being undertaken to conserve/restore nearly extinct indigenous crops by using microbial fertilizers/pesticides. Seed banks for conservation of indigenous crops are also being developed, 8 such banks are in operation. Biodiversity Parks are also being created in different parts of the state. He informed that an interdepartmental convergence committee of different line departments has been formed to ensure secured and greener future. Dr. Debnath concluded his welcome address with a hope that people will realise the importance of biodiversity as their only shelter and change their attitude irrespective of cast, class or ideology to get united to save biodiversity.

Sri Bankim Chandra Hajra, Minister-in-Charge, Sundarban Affairs Department, GoWB expressed his gratitude to all the participants for being present in the programme. In his deliberation he mentioned about the serious threat to the biodiversity of world heritage site 'Sundarban Mangrove forest' in the context of global trends and warnings raised by various agencies both national and international about immediate need to minimise the adverse human activities on biodiversity. Sundarban was declared as World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987, he mentioned, which needs protection and conservation to sustain its unique, diverse and fragile wildlife, biodiversity and habitat. He stressed on the need of a joint meeting of all line departments to chalk out an inclusive development plan for the low-lying archipelago.



He reported about various initiatives taken by his department for environmental, socio-economic and livelihood development of the island inhabitants to reduce dependency on forest resources. A research centre to create a database on the Sundarbans is on the cards, he informed. He pointed out the need for integration of biodiversity conservation in all the development initiatives being undertaken in a convergence manner. This day, he asserted, will definitely act as a trigger for generating awareness among all about sustainable use of biodiversity and a roadmap for the same to fulfil the theme of this year.

Dr. Ratna De Nag, Minister-of-State, Department of Environment, GoWB expressed her gratitude to all the dignitaries and participants for being present in the programme. Life on earth is sustaining by using the natural resources, she said, and loss of the resources is threatening life on earth. The rich biodiversity of our state, which is 12.3% of the country, is harbouring different



eco-system, flora-fauna etc. From Himalayas in the north to Bay-of Bengal in the South, this diversity of landscape is sustaining different ecological-zones nurturing unique flora, fauna, microbes and other amazing life forms in the state, she said. She expressed her hope that further study of the still unknown plants and animals will open up new avenues for humankind.

Over consumption and overuse of natural resources is threatening the existence of many plants and animals which will not only impact biodiversity in an isolated manner but also impact human's dependence of food and health on biodiversity besides loss of livelihood.

She expressed her satisfaction on various conservation initiatives taken up by the State Board e.g Biodiversity Park, Butterfly garden, Avay Pukur etc. and narrated about various environment related initiatives taken up by the State Government. She invited participation of all from all sections of the society for protecting the environment in the light of the environment related thinking of Rabindranath Tagore before signing off.

Next session was award distribution.

- **Theme Lecture**

Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) delivered the theme lecture. In his deliberation he highlighted the overbearing anthropogenic activities causing large scale environmental and biodiversity degradation. He reported that in the time period between 1970-2016 species population has decreased by 68% because of expansion of urban centric life with cascading effect on forested land, water bodies, air and almost all aspects of environment causing pollution and degradation of environment. This overgrowing dependent on biodiversity for the sustenance of humankind which is damaging the nature. He warned about the gradual increase of chemicals in agriculture sector



contributing to various serious health issues. The threat of increasing percentage of infertility of cultivable lands is threatening food security in near future. Infrastructural development at the cost of destruction of natural vegetation, habitat and landscape is causing various abnormal weather patterns. 10 lakh species are facing extinction as per IPCC report, he said. He cautioned that food production will not be able to cope up with expected 900 crore people in future. Climate change, GHGs, biodiversity loss, heat wave, shrinking of habitat all are posing threat to our very existence. We are living by destroying natural capital stocks of earth without hardly any replenishment. He reported that 3200 crop/leaf burnings have been noticed through satellite imagery, in West Bengal, which is threatening grassland species. Unscientific and irrational infrastructure development has created fragmentation of habitat threatening existence of various species. He concluded by recollecting environmental thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore and other luminaries of literature & thinkers, which are still contemporary under the present circumstances and inviting everybody to come forward to save nature in their own capacity.

- **Award distribution:**

- **Poster Drawing & Photography**

In this year the Board organized two competitions to promote awareness on biodiversity among all especially in the young minds.

In the award category of State Level Poster Drawing competition on the theme ‘Biodiversity for All’ following participants were awarded. A certificate of merit, books and a cash prize were given to the winners.

Sl.No.	Name	District/Block	School
1	Koustav Dutta	Birbhum	Birbhum Zilla School
2	Parsi Saren	Hooghly	Dainhata Rajeswari Girls’ High School
3	Dalia Bachar	North 24 Pgs.	Sasan Union High School

In the award category of State Level Photography competition on the theme ‘Building a shared future for all’ following participants were awarded. A certificate of merit, books and a cash prize were given to the winners.

Sl.No.	Name	District/Block/City
1	Rajendra Chowdhury	Kolkata
2	Ganesh Chowdhury	Nadia
3	Umasankar Das	Bankura

- **Biodiversity Award**

Annual Biodiversity Award in the individual category was given to Sri Radheshyam Garai from Jamuria block of Paschim Bardhaman for his commendable drive of tree plantation in almost barren regions and colliery belts of Paschim Bardhaman district. Since 1989 he has planted almost 5 lakh trees, mostly indigenous fruit varieties, covering 300 acre land area. A certificate of merit and cash prize was awarded to Mr. Garai.

Annual Biodiversity Awards in the BMC category (best PBR) was conferred to three BMCs who were nominated for 2023 Indian Biodiversity Awards. Contai Municipality BMC of Purba Medinipur district, Moynaguri Development Block BMC of Jalpaiguri and Nadia Zilla Parisad BMC were awarded for their activities & achievements involving local people. Certificates of merit and cash prizes were awarded to the respective BMCs.

The next session was book release programme.

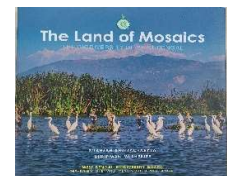
- **Book Release**

On the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity 2022 West Bengal Biodiversity Board has officially released two books on biodiversity matters.



One Bengali book titled ‘Tales of Sundarban’ written jointly by Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath and Sri Biswajit Roy Chowdhury encapsulating the ecological history, characters, diversity, heritage, culture, anthropology, inhabitants and threats on Sundarban was released on the occasion.

Another book titled ‘The Land of Mosaics’ written jointly by Dr. Silanjan Bhattacharyya and Mr. Dhritiman Mukherjee was also released on the occasion. The writer shared his thoughts on the book highlighting the high quality photographs on different components of biodiversity from land, air and water.



Smt. Tripti Sah, IFS, Member Secretary, WBBB proposed formal Vote of Thanks. She acknowledged the illuminating talk of the distinguished guests and expressed the gratefulness of the Board for their valuable time. She extended hearty thanks to Dr. Ratna De Nag, Minister-of-State, Environment Department, Sri Bankim Chandra Hajra, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Forests, Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, W.B. Pollution Control Board, Smt. Neelam Meena, IAS, Secretary, Environment Department. She made a special mention to Dr. H. S. Debnath, Chairman, WBBB for extending his support in organizing the programme successfully. She also extended thanks to the National Biodiversity Authority, Department of Environment, Govt. of West Bengal, BMC officials, academia, student communities, press fraternities, officers & staff of WBBB, all the support staff of Science City, Event Management Agency and Sri Malay Ghosh for anchoring the programme; making the event a grand success.

The first session ended.



The first session was followed by a cultural programme performed by a drama group 'Bolpur Nrityaniketan Dance Group & School' from Birbhum district themed around the concept of mother nature as the provider of life to all living beings and the perilous effect of anthropogenic activities and greed of human.

Next a team of *Baul* singers from Bolpur, Santiniketan performed some soulful folk songs of Bengal which depicted the rural agrarian culture, simple life around nature with an appeal to save green, love nature.

Member Secretary
West Bengal Biodiversity Board