

MoEFCC Organizes One-Day National Workshop on “Strategies for Combating Desertification and Drought” at AFRI, Jodhpur

Union Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav Calls for Community-Led Restoration of Aravalli Range to Combat Desertification

Union Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat Highlights India's Significant Progress in Increasing Forest Cover Amid Global Decline

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On the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2025, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, organized a one-day national workshop at the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education – Arid Forest Research Institute (ICFRE-AFRI), Jodhpur. The theme of the event was “Strategies for Combating Desertification and Drought”, focusing on sustainable land management in arid and semi-arid ecosystems.

The event was graced by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, as Chief Guest in august presence of Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Shri Rajendra Gehlot.

Speaking on the inaugural session, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, highlighted India's proactive measures to combat desertification and promote ecological restoration. He emphasized the importance of sustainable agricultural practices, community-driven initiatives, and the preservation of natural ecosystems.

Addressing an event for national observance of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2025 in Jodhpur today. <https://t.co/FgH8EJmEW7>

— Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) [June 17, 2025](#)

Union Minister Shri Yadav pointed out that significant portion of India's land is facing challenges due to desertification, primarily caused by unsustainable agricultural practices, excessive use of fertilizers like urea, and indiscriminate pesticide application. He stressed that such practices not only degrade the land but also pose a threat to food security and biodiversity.

In line with India's commitment to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the government has adopted a comprehensive approach focusing on ecosystem restoration, drought resilience, and biodiversity enhancement. Shri Yadav emphasized that healthy land is crucial for regional stability and economic

prosperity, urging nations to join efforts in combating land degradation.

To address these challenges, following steps could help in restoring the ecological balance:

- Amrit Sarovars: Aiming to rejuvenate water bodies to combat desertification and support biodiversity.
- Matri Van: Encouraging communities, especially in the Aravalli region, to plant trees in the name of their mothers, fostering a deep connection with nature.
- Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam: A nationwide movement initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where citizens plant trees in honor of their mothers, symbolizing respect for 'Mother Earth'.

Shri Yadav highlighted that these initiatives are not just about planting trees but about restoring ecological balance and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come. He further said that the Aravalli Mountain range, spanning 700 kilometers across 29 districts, holds significant ecological and cultural importance. Shri Yadav emphasized that the Aravallis are not only a natural barrier against desertification but also a cradle of India's civilization and heritage. He urged local communities to actively participate in conservation efforts and restore degraded areas through collaborative actions.

Looking ahead to 2047, Shri Yadav expressed confidence that India will achieve its green economy goals by integrating ecological sustainability with economic development. He reiterated that the nation's development trajectory will be aligned with ecological preservation, ensuring a harmonious balance between growth and environmental stewardship.

Addressing on the occasion, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, emphasized the vital role of the Aravalli Mountain range in combating desertification and preserving ecological balance.

Union Minister Shri Shekhawat highlighted that while global forest cover has been declining, India has made significant strides in increasing its forest cover. He noted, "The Aravalli Mountain range has been instrumental in water conservation, groundwater recharge, and maintaining biodiversity. It serves as a natural barrier against the advancing Thar Desert, protecting regions like Eastern Rajasthan, Haryana, and the National Capital Region.

The Minister further stated, "Our responsibility is immense. The Aravallis have sustained our civilization for thousands of years, and it is our duty to preserve this heritage for future generations." Shri. Shekhawat also acknowledged the contributions of local communities in safeguarding the environment. He remarked, "Many individuals have dedicated their lives to environmental conservation, embodying the spirit of vigilant environmental stewardship."

The important publications and initiatives were also released on the occasion are:

- Information Booklet on Aravalli Districts
- Revised Mission Document of the Green India Mission
- Book on Sustainable Land Management (SLM)
- Launch of the National Afforestation Monitoring System (NAMS)
- Distribution of AFRI Shesham Clones to ten farmers by the Hon'ble Environment Minister

The soft copies of the released documents can be accessed at <https://moef.gov.in/guidelinesdocuments>.

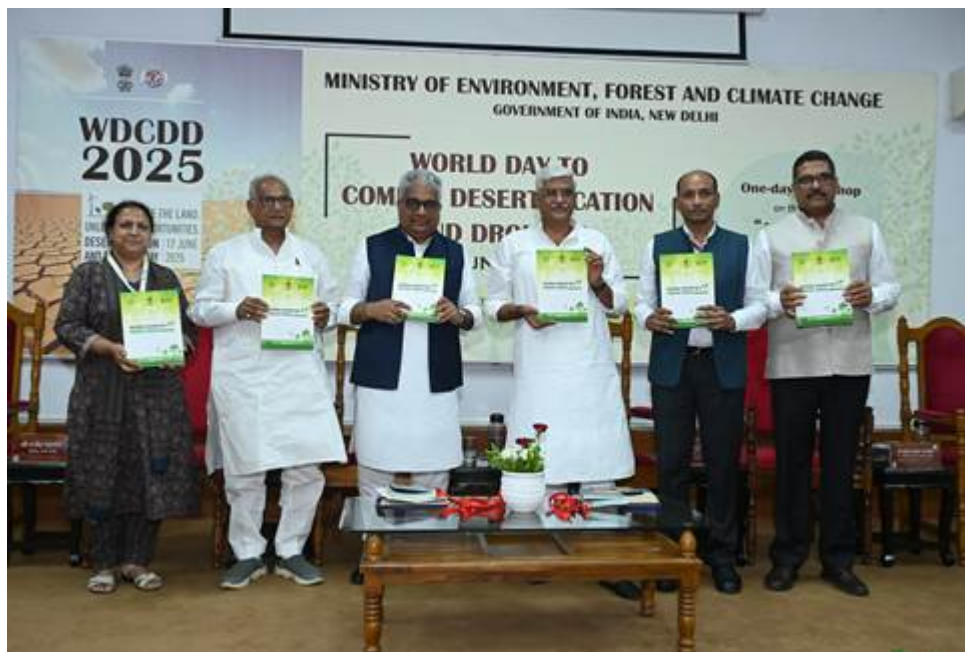
The workshop featured a series of technical sessions covering key themes in land restoration and desertification control. Discussions on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) highlighted MoEFCC and ICFRE institutes integrated, community-led restoration efforts. This was followed by presentations on Global and National case studies by development partners like UNDP, ADB, GIZ, KfW, AFD and World Bank. A dedicated session on the Aravalli Green Wall Project focused on inter-state collaboration to restore ecological balance in the Aravalli region. The final session addressed Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) through multi-stakeholder actions involving state governments, SAC, CAZRI, NGOs, and others. The event concluded with a wrap-up session affirming India's commitment to science-based, participatory, and policy-driven desertification mitigation.

This event reaffirmed India's leadership role under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and demonstrated its progress toward achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030, with a strong focus on

knowledge exchange, collaboration, and field-level impact. This workshop is also part of India's broader efforts to address the environmental challenges of desertification, especially in vulnerable regions such as the Aravallis and the Thar Desert

The event was attended by DG, Forest Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi, ADG (Forest) A.K.Mohanty, Smt.Kanchan Devi, DG, ICFRE and Dr. Tarun Kant, Director, AFRI and other dignitaries and officials of central and state governments.





Virat/Gaurav/Ashish

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