



16th National Meet of State Biodiversity Boards and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils held at Chandigarh; Deliberations to focus on effective Implementation of the Biodiversity Governance Framework at the State and local levels

Governor (Punjab) and Administrator (Chandigarh) highlights importance of combining Traditional Knowledge and Community Participation with Contemporary Approaches of Biodiversity Conservation

States, UTs need to align Rules, Institutional Mechanisms and Implementation Processes with amended National Biodiversity Governance Framework: Union Environment Minister

Dynamic Local Level Planning imperative for documenting Local Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge that contribute to Sustainable Development: Shri Bhupender Yadav

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The 16th National Meet of the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils (UTBCs) was inaugurated today at Chandigarh. Organised by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), the two-day National Meet, being held from 6–7 September 2026, brings together Chairpersons and Member Secretaries of SBBs and UTBCs from across the country, along with senior officials, experts and scientists.



The inaugural session was presided over by Governor of Punjab and Administrator, UT Chandigarh, Shri Gulab Chand Kataria; Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav; and Minister for Environment, Forest and Wildlife, Government of Haryana, Shri Rao Narbir Singh. Other dignitaries present in the occasion included Secretary, MoEFCC, Shri Tanmay Kumar; Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, MoEFCC, Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi; Additional Secretary (MoEFCC), Shri Ashutosh Agnihotri; Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Shri Virendra Tiwari; and other senior officials of the Union Ministry, besides those from SBBs and UTBCs.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Gulab Chand Kataria highlighted India's rich biological heritage and traditional environmental ethos. He emphasised that ecological security is closely linked with food and water security, livelihoods and sustainable development, and underlined the importance of combining traditional knowledge and community participation with contemporary approaches. The Governor drew attention to the ecological significance of its wetlands, riverine ecosystems and agricultural biodiversity. He stressed the importance of strengthening Biodiversity Management Committees and People's Biodiversity Registers and called for stronger coordination among biodiversity institutions and local communities.



In his address on the occasion, Shri Bhupender Yadav highlighted India's long-standing environmental ethos and referred to initiatives under the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi like Mission LiFE, Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, Amrit Sarovar and the Green Credit Programme. India takes along its scientific prowess as well as traditional community wisdom together in this conservation journey, he stated. Referring to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the Minister noted that the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the Biological Diversity Rules, 2024 have further strengthened and streamlined the biodiversity governance framework. He urged States and Union Territories to align their rules, institutional mechanisms and implementation processes with the amended framework.

The Minister appreciated India's progress in fulfilling its international biodiversity commitments, including the submission of the 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 1st National Report on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. Emphasising implementation at the grassroots level, Shri Yadav called for making the more than 2.76 lakh Biodiversity Management Committees functional and effective. He also called for People's Biodiversity Registers to evolve into dynamic planning instruments for local bodies, enabling information on local biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge to contribute to local planning and sustainable development.



On Access and Benefit Sharing, the Minister noted that the National Biodiversity Authority has shared over ₹200 crore of ABS funds with farmers, local communities, Biodiversity Management Committees, State Biodiversity Boards, Union Territory Biodiversity Councils and research institutions. He emphasised that ABS should deliver tangible benefits to communities while contributing to conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The event saw the release of knowledge products, including the document on last one year achievements of the NBA, giving an overview of the ABS scheme and efficient distribution of these funds among the stakeholders.

Highlighting the linkages between biodiversity and climate action, Shri Bhupender Yadav referred to how over the years India has regularly taken decisive steps aligned with International protocols in the field of biodiversity conservation, while following a 'Whole of Government' and 'Whole of Society' approaches. He talked about India's Updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2024–2030, which is aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). He called for measurable outcomes in ecosystem restoration, species and habitat conservation, agro-biodiversity and climate-resilient landscapes. He also encouraged States and UTs to become partners in contributing to the global 30-by-30 conservation target.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Rao Narbir Singh, highlighted Haryana's efforts towards conservation and restoration and emphasised the importance of strengthening biodiversity governance at the State and local levels. He highlighted the role of Biodiversity Management Committees in Haryana in conserving local biodiversity and called for enhanced training and capacity building of BMCs and local communities.



The two-day National Meet would provide a platform for States and Union Territories to share experiences, innovations and implementation challenges and to deliberate on practical measures for strengthening biodiversity governance. The deliberations are expected to contribute to stronger institutional mechanisms, improved functioning of Biodiversity Management Committees, better quality and utilisation of People's Biodiversity Registers, enhanced capacity building and more effective implementation of the biodiversity governance framework at the State and local levels.

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