

Governor hails steps to preserve forest



ITANAGAR, Mar 12: I am very happy that this year, I didn't see any forest fire, said Arunachal Pradesh Governor while interacting with public leaders, Goan Burahs, Panchayat leaders and officials of Environment and Forest Department at Raj Bhavan here on March 10 last.

Appreciating the concentered effort of district administration and the department of Environment & Forests and GBs in preventing forest fire in nearby hills of capital complex, Governor said, the initiative is a step towards preservation of our precious natural vegetation as the future generation will get to see the much-treasured Arunachalee flora and fauna.

Realizing the importance of Jhuming among the agrarian community, Gen Singh proposed for some kind of compensation schemes to discourage the farmers against the practice. "But, we have to ensure that only genuine farmers get the benefit out of the scheme. Panchayati Raj institute members should certify that concerned individual has been practicing for last ten years or so in the area", he added.

While suggesting some sustainable alternative means, the Governor urged upon them to go for horticultural farming, medicinal and organic tea plantations. As long time measure on the patches leftover after Jhuming, he went on suggesting for planting of new variety of teak, which gets matured in thirty years' time.

It is the duty of Forest, Horticulture, Veterinary & Animal Husbandry and Agriculture departments to ensure that the farmers get some means of sustainable livelihood and do not suffer, Gen Singh pointed. He also asked the Forest department to ensure that every student in the state plants one plant a year.

While appreciating the proposal suggested by the public leaders and GBs for preservation of environment in the state by highlighting the importance of Mithun, Governor agreed to take it up on the lines of 'Save Tiger, Save Forest'. He added, Mithun has its socio-cultural importance in Arunachalee community and focusing on its danger due to deforestation, we can make it a compulsion on the part of tribal peo-

ple to save the flora and fauna.

Showing enthusiasm on the proposal, he assured to take up the matter with the Prime Minister as a pilot project. It is a national asset and care should be taken as it is found only in this part of the world.

Gen Singh was also very pleased by the suggestion for forming of Mithun owners' club and competitions of Mithun and expressed hope that it will help in preservation of the animal and also of the forest, which is diminishing due to Jhuming.

Taking part in the discussion, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), J L Singh informed that to arrest Jhuming, a proposal is in the pipeline termed as 'Agro-Horti-Forestry' scheme, which is being prepared to compensate the affected people. Highlighting the scheme, Singh said, it will be a joint effort by the departments and the affected people, wherein highland will be used for aforestation programme and the lowland for terrace cultivation, such as wet rice cultivation. This will help in confining cultivation in localized areas, he added. *(Contd. on P-3)*

Governor hails... *from P-1*

Earlier, with the help of power-point presentation, the president of Arunachal Chambers of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), Lala Techu explained in detail on the proposal 'Save Mithun' and the socio-economic importance of Mithun among local communities. He said, Mithuns are used in rituals, religious festivals, marriages and during election process, commercial proposals and as penalty during disputes. Due to Jhuming, unregulated extraction of forest resources, human settlement, forest fire, urbanization and change in land use pattern, the Mithun habitat is getting destroyed.

Techu advocated for demarcation of areas locally called 'Lura' under the project with proper fencing.

The programme coordinator of Papum Pare KVK, Dr Taba Heli highlighted propagation of Mithuns and other initiatives in the Mithun Farm at Sagalee with its sub-centre at Lichi, Dr Taba informed that an average Mithun dam yields 1.5 litres milk and it is equivalent to 3 litres milk of a cross-bred cow (cattle).

Deputy Chief Wild Life Warden, Naharlagun, C Loma and Borum anchal samiti chairperson Gyamar Jeri also spoke on the occasion. (PRO)