

ARUNACHAL FRONT

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Governor to move PM to de-list bamboo as timber

NBM to help Arunachal earn green gold

JOTE, Jul 24: Governor JJ Singh today assured to move the prime minister to get bamboo de-listed as timber as per the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

The Indian Forest Act, 1927 has put bamboo and cane under the category of 'tree' as a result of which these two forest products are regarded as 'timber' although scientifically they should come under the category of non-timber forest products.

As this correspondent drew the attention of the governor, Guwahati-based Cane & Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC) director Kamesh Salam pitched in to support.

Earlier, talking to reporters, Salam, who is also president of World Bamboo Organization, said India is importing timber worth Rs 50 crore every year. Bamboo could be a substitute to check the import of timber



Governor (with hat) interacting with villagers as Salam (R) looks on

provided bamboo is not treated as tree.

Its cultivation is not a problem but its transportation requires timber permit and payment. Once bamboo is de-listed from the Act as a timber its movement would be easier, facilitating its commercial viability, he said.

The governor said that

bamboo, which grows naturally in Arunachal Pradesh, if exploited commercially could improve the local economy, and assured to put his weight behind the proposal to give bamboo its correct status for of the entire country, particularly North East. While 10 million hectares is covered by bamboo in India, of which 28%

is in the North East that represent 66% country's bamboo resources.

Salam, who on behalf of CBTC had identified Ziro as the bamboo hub of the state and few years later had assessed that the growth of monopodial bamboo there was very satisfactory, today disclosed that under the National *Contd. P. 3*

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From P.1...Bamboo Mission of the government of India, the CBTC will identify two districts each in Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh for taking up monopodial bamboo cultivation on trial basis to help these states earn green gold.

"If China earns around \$5.5 million from bamboo products annually, there is no reason why India, particularly NE can not take a cue from China to do so," Salam observed. The need of the hour is to commoditize bamboo and begin the value addition process at village level after skill development training, he said.

Salam, who has been giving techni-

cal support to the Bamboo processing project at Poma (a brainchild of the governor) that had impressed the Union Home Minister P Chidambaram in April last, informed that he would get the support of United Nation's Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for capacity building for next four years.

In fact, anticipating that bamboo plantation would be exhausted soon, about 52 hectares of land have been brought under bamboo cultivation within two years in Poma area at the initiative of the governor.

When asked if Tripura could earn in crores from bamboo products, why not Arunachal, Salam said in Tripura

bamboo was the only source of livelihood for want of land, whereas in Arunachal it was part-time vocation and all products are for self consumption without any value addition.

The cost of labour is too high in Arunachal whereas it is hardly Rs 30 to Rs 50 in Tripura, and the same is the case in Barpeta and Dhubri in Assam with the migrants providing cheap labour, Salam disclosed.

Asked how to create empathy among the locals to free themselves from their dependence on government aids, Salam quoted NCP stalwart PA Sangma: Teach the people of NE not only how to eat fish but how to catch them too.