

## **News & Views**

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### **Climate inversion makes Himachal hills warmer**

The climate inversion for the second consecutive year has made the hill not only warmer than most places in the plains of north India but also fog free. Locals and tourists can be seen enjoying the bright sunshine in Himachal Pradesh, but the prolonged dry spell is giving cause for concern to fruit growers. Particularly the apple belt is the most worried lot, as lack of snow in the last few years has already ruined the apple crop.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES: January 6, 2000

### **Sunny Darjeeling faces water crisis**

The unusual sunny weather for past few days might delight the tourist in Darjeeling hills, but both residents and the civic authorities fear an impending water crisis. The reason being that, there has been little rainfall since the monsoons ended here. The first sign of water crisis are already visible, as supplies from the local municipality are available only once in three days.

THE STATESMAN: January 6, 2000

### **Arunachal hydel projects to improve power situation**

The 21,000 mw hydel power projects of Dehang and Subansiri in Arunachal Pradesh, would bring about significant changes in the power sector on their completion within a decade. The world's biggest hydel power project at Dehang, three dams would be created at Puding (11,000 mw), Kaylng (700 mw), and Rotung (1700 mw). Work for the two giant projects has been entrusted to National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) and the centre has asked to complete the first phase of projects by 2008 and the remaining phases by 2012.

EXPRESS: January 12, 2000

THE FINANCIAL

### **Parbati project 'can meet' power crisis**

The 800 mw Parbati Hydroelectric Project (stage II), can go a long way in easing the power crisis, provided the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) takes up work on a war-footing. Parbati, a tributary of the river Beas, has an identified hydel potential of 2051 mw. The project will be executed in three stages by the NHPC under an agreement entered into with the Himachal Pradesh Government last year. Considering the feasibility, stage II will be taken up first for execution. The work of remaining stages I and III with capacities 750 and 501 mw respectively, would be taken up later.

THE TRIBUNE: January 17, 2000

### **HP's go-ahead for felling**

Plagued with perennial financial crisis, the fund starved Himachal Pradesh Government has finally given the go-ahead for felling of green trees. The decision, to lift the 16-year-old moratorium on felling of green trees was taken by the Cabinet last month, is likely to double the state's forest revenue from the next financial year. However, felling will be carried strictly in accordance with the forest working plans for each division duly approved by the Centre as laid down by the Supreme Court. As a result over one lakh cubic metres of additional timber will be extracted from the state's forest annually.

THE TRIBUNE: January 21, 2000

### **Promotion of medicinal plants necessary for rural uplift**

Promotion of cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants was needed to uplift the living standards of the rural people, said science and technology minister of Sikkim. Inaugurating a four-day training programme on production and processing of medicinal and aromatic plants at Gangtok, the minister said that the state has excellent climatic condition for cultivation of improved and high-yielding varieties of those plants and asked the farmers to adopt these techniques.

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE: January 22, 2000

### **Mining poses ecological threat**

Palampur, a famous tourist resort and one of the beautiful town of Himachal Pradesh, has been facing serious environmental threat because of reckless and unscientific mining. In the absence of political and administrative 'will' the deforestation and mining is still going on unchecked in the state. At present the state government has no policy for the grant of mining lease in the state resulting in

largescale felling of trees, barrenness of hills and heavy pollution. Besides, the government is also losing huge revenue causing loss of the state exchequer.

Ravinder Sood for THE TRIBUNE: January 26, 2000

### **Jhum farming threatens Nagaland bio-diversity**

Nagaland's rich agro-biodiversity is under threat due to the age-old practice of 'slash and burn method of cultivation', popularly known as jhum cultivation. About 80% of the Nagas depend on jhum cultivation. After two consecutive years, they leave the field for the next nine years for the jhum cycle to come. This practice has led to disastrous consequences for the eco-system in the state. However, an agro-forestry project called Nagaland Environment Protection and Economic Development (NEPED) has been operating since 1995. The main objective of NEPED is not to leave the jhum field fallow after cultivation by planting trees before jhum cycle comes, thus make jhum cultivation remunerative.

THE STATESMAN: January 31, 2000

### **Plan to construct airstrip annoys environmentalists**

The Uttar Pradesh state government's decision to construct an airstrip near the famous Valley of Flowers has not gone down well with social activists and environmentalists of the area. The area located near the famous Sikh shrine of Hemkund Sahib, is a virtual treasure trove of countless varieties of high altitude alpine flowers. The construction of the airstrip is apparently aimed at providing additional facilities to pilgrims as well as tourists visiting the area. However, environmentalists fear that the construction of the airstrip would harm the fragile ecology and expanse of flower meadows.

THE TIMES OF INDIA: January 31, 2000

### **Wildlife management poor**

Despite a vast network of sanctuaries, zoological parks and mini zoos, the management of the ever-dwindling wildlife reserves in Himachal Pradesh continues to be a state of neglect. Irrational and inadequate set-up of the wildlife wing coupled with the shortage of funds and trained manpower are coming in the way of the effective management of wildlife. While the Centre has been insisting that each state should have an independent set-up for the proper management of wildlife, in Himachal the control of many sanctuaries remains with the territorial wing.

THE TRIBUNE: January 31, 2000

### **भेद्यज विकास योजना खतरे में**

उत्तर प्रदेश के पर्वतीय क्षेत्र में जड़ी-बूटियों के उत्पादन, शोध और विकास के लिए पचास वर्षों पूर्व स्थापित भेद्यज विकास योजना का अस्तित्व खतरे में है। पर्वतीय क्षेत्र में जड़ी-बूटियों के विकास की गहन सम्भावनाओं को देखते हुए सरकार ने 1949 में सहकारिता विभाग की भूमि पर भेद्यज योजना की स्थापना की। योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य औद्योगिक वनस्पतियों का शोध, विकास, संग्रहण और विपणन करना था। 1987 में इसे भेद्यज एवं जड़ी-बूटी विकास योजना का नाम दिया गया। प्रदेश सरकार के गंभीर वित्तीय संकट के दौर से गुजरने से प्रदेश की कुछ संस्थाओं को बंद करने के साथ ही भेद्यज विकास योजना को भी बंद करने पर विचार चल रहा है। वर्तमान में जहाँ उत्तराखण्ड की आर्थिक समृद्धि के लिए जड़ी-बूटी विकास के लंबे चौड़े वायदे किए जा रहे हैं ऐसे में 50 वर्षों पूर्व स्थापित भेद्यज विकास योजना को अधिक चुस्त-दुरुस्त बनाने के बजाय बंद कर देना उत्तराखण्ड के हित में नहीं होगा।

अमर उजाला: फरवरी 8, 2000