

A report on International Biodiversity Day 2018 Celebration
(Venue: Navdanya Biodiversity & Conservation Farm, Dehradun)

The 18th International Biodiversity Day was celebrated on 22 May, 2018 in the Navdanya Biodiversity & Conservation Farm, Dehradun. The celebration was jointly organized by Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board and Navdanya. The Chief Guest of the function was Dr. Harak Singh Rawat (Honourable Forest & Wildlife Minister, Uttarakhand Government) and the function was chaired by Padma Shri Dr. V.C. Thakur (Director (Retd.), Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun).

The list of participants of the said function is enclosed as **Annexure-1**.

Chief Guest Dr. Harak Singh Rawat (Honourable Forest & Wildlife Minister, Uttarakhand Government) inaugurated stalls of different organic products and agriculture implements of the local entrepreneurs. Thereafter, Shri L.M. Kaul welcomed Chief Guest, Chairman and all participants and invited all delegates for Lamp lightning ceremony.



The function commenced at 11:15 am with a Lamp Lighting Ceremony by Chief Guest Dr. Harak Singh Rawat, Chairman Padma Shri Dr. V.C. Thakur, Dr. Rakesh Sah (Chairman, UBB), Dr. D.V.S. Khatri (PCCF Wildlife, Uttarakhand), Dr. Vinod Kumar Bhatt (Director, Navdanya) and Shri Dhananjay Prasad (Deputy Director, UBB).

Thereafter, Shri Dhananjay Prasad (Deputy Director, UBB) welcomed Chief Guest, Chairman and all participants of the function. After a brief welcome address, Shri Prasad requested Dr. Rakesh Shah to deliver the key note address on the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day 2018.

Dr. Rakesh Shah (Chairman, UBB) once again welcomed the Chief Guest, Chairman, all delegates and participants and gave a brief introduction about the importance of Biodiversity Conservation and the importance of celebrating the International Biodiversity Day. He informed the guests about the practice of designating a particular theme for the celebration of International Biodiversity Day every year. He informed that the theme for IBD 2018 is 'Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Biodiversity'.

In his key note address Dr. Shah mentioned that there has been a long history of people's involvement in conservation of both Wild and Domesticated Biodiversity in the State of Uttarakhand and he recalled the efforts made by Gaura Devi Ji – the World renowned Pioneer of Chipko Movement in Uttarakhand. He also mentioned that the women of Uttarakhand are still continuing the tradition of biodiversity conservation set by Gaura Devi Ji and he announced that in order to honour such efforts, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board has decided to institute an annual award in the name of Gaura Devi Ji to honour any woman who renders extraordinary service for the conservation of biodiversity in the state. He announced that UBB has decided to honour Shrimati Sushma Juyal, a progressive farmer involved in undertaking commendable work in the field of the organic farming and conservation of Dehraduni Basmati, by naming her the first ever recipient of **Gaura Devi Biodiversity Award 2018**.



Dr. Shah further informed the honoured guests that besides Shrimati Sushama Juyal, five more farmers namely – Shri Surya Prakash Bahuguna (Chairman, Amulya Nidhi), Shri Yashpal Rana, Shri Mukundi Lal, Shri Umed Bora and Shri Rajot Singh Negi would also be honoured by Chief Guest for their exemplary commitments towards the conservation of Dehraduni Basmati.

Thereafter the Chief Guest Dr. Harak Singh Rawat and the Chairman of the function Dr. V.C. Thakur honoured Shrimati Sushama Juyal by handing over a cheque of ₹ 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand Only), a certificate of merit and a shawl. The five other selected farmers were also honoured by handing over a certificate and a shawl by the Chief Guest.



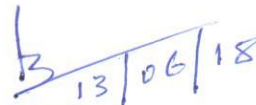
After the Award Function, the Chief Guest, Chairman of the function, Chairman UBB and CEO of Navdanya released a report titled "उत्तराखंड में जैव विविधता के अविस्मरणीय 25 वर्ष" compiled by Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board and Annual News Letter started by GIZ.

Thereafter, Padma Shri Dr. V.C. Thakur addressed the audience and stated that decade of 2010-2020 is being celebrated as Biodiversity decade by United Nations. He further stated that Population of house sparrow has significantly decreased since last two decades due to rapid urbanization. He also said that squirrels are moving from the plains to the mountains because of climate change and will cause challenges to humans and other creatures in the coming days. He further added that there has been rise in global temperature up to 0.5-1°C since last 100 years and this continued rise in the temperature will cause extinction of various species including Polar Bears. He also pointed out that India is biodiversity rich and among the 35 global hot spots of biodiversity, 4 hot spots of biodiversity namely- Western Himalaya, Western Ghat, Indo-Burma and Sundaland have atleast some of the territories of India.

Dr. Harak Singh Rawat, Honourable Forest Minister, Uttarakhand Government during his address stated that global population is about 730 Crore and it is expected to become 1000 Crore by the 2050. It is estimated that rate of population increase is about 8 Crore per year globally. He also pointed that the earth can support only 300 Crore individuals and thus increasing population is posing a great threat to biodiversity for the fulfilment of their needs. He further pointed out that the Geographical area of India is 2.7 % of global geographical area but India houses about 8 % of the global biodiversity. He further stated that Uttarakhand houses about 28% of Indian Biodiversity. He also raised the demand of Green Bonus for the Uttarakhand. He also praised works of Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board and stated that in spite of minimum resources and manpower, board has excelled in various areas under the guidance of Dr. Rakesh Shah. He also pointed out that biodiversity of the state needs to be documented for conservation purposes. He also urged that every person should plant trees in their garden and nearby areas for the betterment of the humankind.



Finally Dr. Vinod Kumar Bhatt (Director, Navdanya) was requested to present a vote of thanks to the honoured guest and other participants. In his vote of thanks address, Dr. Bhatt gave a brief account about the efforts of Navdanya for the conservation of agro-germplasm. He stated that about 6000 seeds of different races, 700 varieties of rice, 205 varieties of wheat and more than 40 different races of Basmati rice have been conserved by Navdanya. He also pointed out that Navdanya actively took part for revoking patent rights of Texmati by Ricetec. He further expressed deep gratitude to the Chief Guest, Dr. Harak Singh Rawat, Chairman of the function Padma Shri Dr. V.C. Thakur, Dr. Rakesh Sah *IFS*, Dr. DVS Khatri *IFS* PCCF Wildlife, Shri Dhananjay Prasad Deputy Director, UBB, Shri LM Kaul RO, UBB and all farmers and all the participants.


13/06/18

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