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Rio bats for bamboo growth

OUR CORRESPONDENT



Bamboo craft

Kohima, Sept. 16: Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio today said bamboo was tailor-made for rural development and could change the face of the state's village economy.

Rio while speaking at the inaugural function of the two-day international seminar on Bamboo for Livelihood and Community Development to observe World Bamoo Day at the Heritage Bamboo Hall, Kisama.

He said unlike other industrial raw materials, bamboo can be mechanically processed and it is an ideal enterprise for poor farmers, as it is a good substitute for timber.

Its ability to sequester about 35 per cent more carbon than trees in its growing process also makes it an ideal tool against global warming.

Handicraft is another viable option that can create better income avenues for rural people.

Nagaland announced the Bamboo Policy in 2004 and perhaps is one of the first bamboo policies initiated by any state in India, Rio said.

He said the policy looks at the development of bamboo as a "resource", covering the area of plantation and regeneration, and bamboo "enterprise" covering the area of livelihood, applications, industries and technology.

He said the state has progressed substantially since the policy was put into effect, and since then, Nagaland has also managed to set up a Nagaland Bamboo Resource Centre at Dimapur which is one of the largest of its kind in India.

In Nagaland, Rio said the basic approach for the development of bamboo in the rural areas has been the formation of village bamboo development committees, through which funds for bamboo development are transferred to the village and the beneficiaries.

He said over 21,000 hectares of plantation were created in three years and one of the successful experiments has been the Anaki village cluster which has earned over Rs 36 lakh per annum from bamboo mats that are supplied to Arunachal Pradesh Industries Ltd.

Member, NEC, P.P. Shrivastava, who was the guest of honour, said the Northeast has two-thirds of the total bamboo resources in the country and that maximum advantage should be taken from the natural resources, as the Northeast is familiar with bamboo and its exploitation would help in poverty eradication and protection of the environment.

Special Director, World Bamboo Organisation (WBO), Jeffree Trudeau, in his speech said the WBO has been working on different projects around the world and sees a lot of potential in Nagaland.

In his welcome speech, president of the bamboo organisation, Kamesh Salam, said the declaration of World Bamboo Day is an effort to increase the awareness of bamboo globally.

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He also outlined the various activities lined up for the next two days.

The North East International Bamboo Festival also began today with the inauguration of the crafts bazaar by the parliamentary secretary for industries and commerce, K.C. Nihoshe, at the Naga Heritage Village, Kisama.

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