

City to host Indian Biodiversity Congress

Meet and exhibition to be held from December 27 to 31

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The capital city is gearing up for the largest colloquium of biodiversity experts and stakeholders in the country — the first Indian Biodiversity Congress (IBC 2010) and Expo, to be held in December.

Initiated by the Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA), the Kerala State Biodiversity Board, the University of Kerala and the Navdanya, the congress will be held on the University of Kerala campus, Karyavatam, from December 27 to 31.

The programme will be supported by the National Biodiversity Authority. The congress aims to forward developmental paradigms and policies for conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity and strategies and action plans to mainstream biodiversity into policy making, besides taking stock of the current biodiversity pro-

file of the country.

CISSA has been selected by the United Nations as the partner organisation to celebrate International Year of Biodiversity in India. The congress comprises the Indian Biodiversity Expo, pre-conference workshops, a national seminar, a national photography exhibition, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) meet and book fairs.

A press note issued by the organising committee said the conference would focus on the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity in all developmental policies in order to realise the dream of sustainable development and achieve food security, alleviate poverty and fight globalisation. The congress will hold a special session on 'Biodiversity conservation in Western Ghats - status, challenges and opportunities.'

The presentations by the delegates are arranged in 10

parallel sessions. Leading international experts and biodiversity experts in the country will participate in the event. Nearly 1,500 delegates expected for the congress, represented by a cross-section of people working in biodiversity and related fields in India, include leading scientists and researchers, NGOs, bureaucrats, policy makers, community members and conservationists.

The Indian Biodiversity Expo, organised in connection with the event for the public, will showcase the rich biodiversity heritage of the country and present a kaleidoscopic spectacle of the variety of life in India. The National Biodiversity Authority, State biodiversity boards, research and development centres, universities, commercial firms and NGOs will participate in the event.

The thematic areas of the exhibition include State biodiversity profiles (showcase of biodiversity heritage of Indian States), variety of life, biodiversity heritage, ecosystem diversity, living on the edge, institutional profiles,

Supported by National Biodiversity Authority

Focus on sustainable development

invasive species, biodiversity education, threats to biodiversity, green business and technologies and innovations.

There will be a special section on cultural linkages of biodiversity, highlighting Indian wisdom.

The pre-conference workshops for young researchers, teachers, NGOs and environmental educators will focus on designing and implementing biodiversity projects, environmental impact assessment and biodiversity education.

The details of the congress are available on the web sites of the congress (www.ibc2010.org) and CISSA (www.cissa.co.in).

An organising committee has been set up for the con-

gress with Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan and Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh as chief patrons, and Minister of State for Agriculture K.V. Thomas; Minister for Food and Civil Supplies C. Divakaran; Minister for Education and Culture M.A. Baby; Minister for Forest Benoy Viswom; Minister for Agriculture Mullakkara Ratnakaran; Shashi Tharoor, MP; and P.L. Gautam, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority; as patrons.

Biodiversity expert Madhav Gadgil will chair the advisory committee and C.S.P. Iyer will be the convener. The national steering committee will be headed by P. Pushpaganadan, chairman, and J.K. Sharma, convener.

To highlight the crucial role nature's rich diversity plays in our lives, raise awareness among the public and pressure world's leaders to curb the unprecedented loss in biodiversity owing to human activity, the United Nations (UN) has declared 2010 as International Year of Biodiversity.