

Tri-nation meet on BSL



SHIBA NANDA BASU

shiba@thestatesman.net

KOLKATA 29 June

India joins hand with China and Myanmar to develop a framework for regional cooperation on conservation and sustainable development in the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape (BSL) to protect the enriched biodiversity.

The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape is considered one of the most biodiversity rich areas in the world. The landscape lies at the junction of three global biodiversity hotspots and between two important river systems ~ the Brahmaputra and the Salween. It is one of the seven trans-boundary landscapes in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region which is now on focus for regional-level conservation and development interventions.

Dr P P Dhyani, Director of G B Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, an autonomous institute of the Ministry of Environment, said that India is keen to cooperate in the management of the BSL, and is already collaborating with China, Nepal, and Bhutan. He said this in an event ~ Regional Cooperation Framework ~ co-organised by The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Myanmar recently.

ICIMOD which organised the programme along with Government of Myanmar stated during the event that it will work on ensuring effective implementation of regional and national level actions in the landscape. The landscape has its own ecological importance as it includes parts of Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve in India, parts of northern forest complex and six townships of Kachin state and Sagaing region in Myanmar, and Gaoligongshan region in Yunnan, China.

Dr Dong Qi, a Chinese representative at the event, was quoted in a press release issued by ICIMOD as saying: "The Chinese Academy of Sciences encourages the exchange programme for researchers and visiting scholars, and we look forward to working with Myanmar and India on trans-boundary biodiversity research and monitoring in the landscape."

Studies have already confirmed that the Hindu Kush Himalayan region, which is the source of water for more than one billion people in the downstream, is becoming vulnerable due to the rise of black carbon in the atmosphere. Mr Arnico Panday, senior atmospheric scientist of ICIMOD, earlier said: "Black carbon is a carcinogen and has major impact on people's health. It is also a short-lived climate pollutant (SLCP) - an air pollutant that has significant impact on local and regional climate."

Environmentalists have already urged the new Central government to create effective policies to protect the vulnerable ecosystem of the Hindu Kush Himalayan region from the effects of climate change.