

DBT-IBSD organizes meet on “Cherry Blossoms for Sustainable Tourism & Bioeconomy”

New Delhi, Feb 11: Although the India International Cherry Blossom Festival Shillong 2020 (held every year during November) was cancelled due to COVID-19, the beautiful Cherry Blossoms flowers have caught the eyes of Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



He mentioned these vibrant flowers during his 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, on November 29, 2020. In the Programme on All India Radio, He said, "We are stepping into (the) winters. The internet is replete with pictures of Cherry Blossom flowers, but they are not from Japan, but from India's Shillong." He also said that the Cherry Blossoms have further enhanced the beauty of Meghalaya.

But for the global pandemic, Shillong would have been loaded with tourists from across the country as well as the world. People come to the city during November -December to witness the hues of white and pink strewn across every street corner. The blooming cherry blossoms of Shillong are currently trending on social media.

DBT-Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (DBT-IBSD) had popularised this local phenomenon, along with the Forest and Environment Department, Govt of Meghalaya and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Govt of India, over the last several years, to make this into a mega annual international event.

However, a lot remains to be done for the development and management of this Bioresource and its utilization for future development of the region. A Consultation meeting on “Himalayan Cherry Blossoms for Sustainable Tourism and Bioeconomy” to debate on various issues and identify the priority areas of research to be undertaken, was organised on Jan 20, 2021 through virtual mode.

Panellists that deliberated in the meeting include Dr AA Mao, Director, BSI, Shri Harish Chandra Choudhary, Chief Wildlife Warden, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Govt of Meghalaya, Shri WS Manner, Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry), Govt of Meghalaya, Dr N Munish Singh, Regional Director, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Prof Pulok K Mukherjee, Director IBSD, Dr JK Shukla, Dr Nanaocha Sharma and Dr Albert Chiang (Scientists at IBSD).

One of the key resolutions was to put up a fresh proposal for the India International Cherry Blossom Shillong 2021 Festival for support from the State and Central Governments.

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