

Soon, robust Biodiversity Informatics Network

Express News Service

Puducherry: Efforts are on to build a robust biodiversity informatics network to enable Internet-based documentation and dissemination of information on this critical natural resource, said Balakrishna Pisupati, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority.

He was speaking at a workshop on 'Biodiversity Informatics and Ecological Sciences in India' organised by the French Institute of Pondicherry on Tuesday. Pisupati said the Central government aimed at harmonising information on biodiversity in India by collecting data and allowing open access to resources such as the India Biodiversity Portal (www.indiabiodiversity.org). Although the portal was launched in 2008 by a group of like-minded institutions and individuals, its efficacy has been hindered by lack of relevant information and validation mechanisms to verify data.

Pisuapathi declared that the government aimed at bridging the gaps in the biodiversity portal and for this, it was imperative for various stakeholders to interact. This would help further understanding of the state of biodiversity informatics in India.

Outlining the concept of building biodiversity infrastructure, Pisupati said it had to be an inclusive mechanism and more contributions were needed from civil society. The Right to Information

Act had helped in this regard by making government data available to public.

"It is well known that bio-habitats were declining and these websites help the public and policy-makers decide on whether to lose them while planning development activity like dams, industries, mining and building of similar infrastructure."

India is the chair of Convention on Biological Diversity till 2014 and the



Pierre Grard, director of French Institute of Pondicherry, speaks at the meeting | EXPRESS

country has an opportunity to lead the world by setting high standards on biodiversity protection. K Vijay Raghavan, secretary, department of Biotechnology, Government of India, spoke via remote presentation. He outlined initiatives taken up by his department to build a system to protect biodiversity. He claimed that grants for research on biodiversity were open to civil society and eligibility would be on basis of merit.