

Centenary Celebrations of Sikkim Forest Dept at Rabdenste, West Sikkim on 21st Feb, 2009

People know my works for environment protection: Chamling

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on Saturday laid the foundation stone of Sidkeong Tulku Bird Park at Rabdenste during the centenary celebrations of the State forest department.

In his address, the Chief Minister said that he was present only to speak on forest and environmental issues and the performance of the State forest department over its 100 years in service. “We must seriously think on whether we have increased or decreased the forest cover in the past 100 years”, he said.

Expressing his concerns over the rapid biodiversity loss from Sikkim’s forests in the past, Mr. Chamling said that it was only after the coming of his government, the losses were stemmed. “Forests are the property of people and they must take care of it”, he said.

The Chief Minister said that earlier lot of bird species and massive trees used to abound in Sikkim. But they are not found today as they were sold and destroyed by unscrupulous people, he said. Now even the seedlings of some tree species cannot be found, he added.

“After my party came to power, I have put in a check on all these threats to the forests”, said Mr. Chamling. People know what works have I done, he added. Among his works done towards the protection of environment and forests, the Chief Minister particularly highlighted the objectives behind the removal of yak sheds from forests.

People accused that I destroyed the yak sheds and some even filed a case against me but now they have realized the positives behind the removal of yak sheds from forests, said Mr. Chamling. “I want to make Sikkimese people a guide for tourists”, he added. He said that the Sidkelong Tulku Bird Park will become a tourist attraction and appealed the local people to take benefits from this park. Highlighting his vision for Sikkim, the Chief Minister said that he wants to make Sikkim a ‘school’ and people as ‘teachers’. He further directed the State forest department to record the edible items in the forest.

A time may come in the world when food grains production will drop and people have to survive on forests, Mr. Chamling said. ‘There were so many products in forest eaten by wild animals and birds. It will be a unique achievement if the department brings out a book recording such forest produce, he said. He also directed the forest department to work for the protection of forests and its resources with a mission. The Chief Minister also appealed the people not let bush fires take place in forests. Earlier, State forest minister SB Subedi reminded that he has few days left as in charge of the forest department. Even I may go from the forest department, I will serve the forests and environment in the remaining days of my life, he said.

Courtesy: Sikkim Express, February 22