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Mining, dams - threat to Eastern Ghats

OUR BUREAU

Tirupati: Indiscriminate mining activities, construction of dams and temple tourism proving a bane to Eastern Ghats' eco system, noted environmentalist K Purushottam Reddy observed.

Speaking at the two-day national conference on 'Conservation of Eastern Ghats' which concluded here on Friday, he said mining in the forests as well as the construction of large dams ultimately saw the extinction of various species of flora and fauna while the commercial temple tourism accelerated the adverse trend. In the same breath he said that the dams were essential but it should be in such a way tempering the ecological balance. Same is the case with temple tourism, he said, citing that Tirumala was turning into a concrete jungle in the name of providing facilities. Though laws and regulations

- Two-day conference on conservation of Eastern Ghats concludes
- 23 lakh saplings planted in AP and Telangana States



(Inset) Retired DFO Tulasi Rao speaking at the international conference on 'Conservation of Eastern Ghats' at SVU Senate Hall in Tirupati on Friday Photo: HANS

were framed, they remain impotent in protecting the environment as vested interests 'purchasing the laws' Purushottam Reddy said, pointing at officials for one reason or other remaining silent against violations.

While the selfish politicians stopped bothering about fast depletion of natural resources and increasing environmental pollution, he said that 'the wealth of the plains depends on the health of the mountains'.

Retired DFO Tulasi Rao who played a key role in the development of Tiger Sanctuary in the Nallamala forests, said the 30 per cent of the forests of Eastern Ghats were eroded. He stressed on peoples' partici-

pation to check smuggling and poaching to preserve the trees and animal wealth. GRACE (Green Alliance for Conservation of Eastern Ghats) president Leela Lakshma Reddy said that the Tirupati conference which was the fifth such regional-level meet aimed at bringing various NGOs as well as the environmentalists together to build up area-wise campaigns to press the government to evolve a policy for protection of Eastern Ghats.

Apart from building up the campaign for a policy change for protection of Eastern Ghats, the GRACE also took up a massive tree plantation programme in which so far about 23 lakh saplings involving as many as 18,000 school and college students in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, planted to improve green cover.

Earlier, a students' rally was taken out from Govindaraja Swamy temple to SV University where the meet was held.