

Bengal to identify plants with medicinal value in tribal areas

Team MP

Kolkata: State Environment minister Manas Bhunia directed the West Bengal Biodiversity Board (WBBB) to explore the tribal areas in South Bengal to identify more plants with medicinal value so that they can be used extensively for curing various diseases.

“In the hills, we have identified several plants that have medicinal value and it is also being used as an alternative medicine for the treatment of various diseases. However, in the tribal belt of Purulia, Bankura, Jhargram, West Medinipur, etc., I have seen that the tribal people use certain plants whose medicinal value has worked wonders. So, I have asked the WBBB to go to this tribal belt and explore more such medicinal plants,” Bhuniya said addressing a programme to mark the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity 2023 on Monday.

He asked the WBBB to involve the respective district administration and educational institutions like universities’ botany teams in their study.

According to Bhunia such medicinal plants can be used effectively to even reduce surgical intervention in some cases.

He maintained that extensive use of chemical fertilisers has been instrumental in the destruction of much natural biodiversity which is beneficial for humans.

Jawhar Sircar, Rajya Sabha MP from the Trinamool Congress said that the new biodiversity act which is expected to come out by the end of this year will ensure the aspect of biodiversity access benefit sharing.

“Some companies have been using medicinal plants for the manufacturing of medicines and are making huge profits,” Jawhar Sircar said at the event. “The new biodiversity act will ensure that those who are responsible for the conservation of such plants year after year get a share of the profit,” Sircar said. Chairman of WBBB, Himadri Sekhar Debnath spoke about the various activities of the Board that includes notifying ten sites as Biodiversity Heritage Sites in the state, creation of a biodiversity park to promote conservation of local biodiversity, restoration of indigenous species, and serving as an interface between nature and human.

He said that the Board has recently reported the discovery of new fish species *Garra jaldhakaensis*, and a new prawn species *Macrobrachium ramae* which are new to science.

A portal titled West Bengal Biodiversity Information System with comprehensive information about the state’s flora and fauna and a Biodiversity Map of West Bengal in Patachitra was released on the occasion.