

PRESS RELEASE

SECOND NORTH EAST BAMBOO FESTIVAL

The Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC), Guwahati in collaboration with the Government of Meghalaya will organize the second three-day International Festival, "BAMFEST 2005" on the Bamboo heritage of North Eastern Region of India at the Central Library, Shillong from May 02 to 04, 2005. This Festival will be complemented by a number of Technical Sessions on Bamboo Technology. A unique feature of this event is the fact that for the first time, an event on bamboo in India has been accorded recognition by the World Bamboo Organization (WBO) based in Boston, USA. The NEHHDC, MHHDC, NEHU, IFAD, GTZ, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India will be supporting the Festival. The Ministry of DONER and the North Eastern Council, Shillong will facilitate the holding of the Festival.

This Festival will bring together on a platform, a number of international experts in bamboo, who will focus their combined attention on this versatile grass by way of brainstorming, sharing and exchanging views. The Technical Seminars complementing the event will focus on the following themes:

- Management of bamboo resources -- plantation to replenish diminishing resources for supply of raw materials as well as research and development aspects;
- Processing technologies -- machinery and their adaptation to Indian needs;
- Bamboo for economic development -- employment opportunities, production management and design of bamboo products, and their marketing, and human resource development;
- Bamboo housing technologies -- for earthquake-prone areas, rural and hilly areas.

Together with the Festival, an Exhibition named BAM-EXPO is also being held at the Central Library campus at Shillong. The participating teams are crafts people from the seven north-eastern States, SFRI, RFRI, NID, IPIRTI, ICAR, HPC, NERAMAC, NEHHDC, INBAR, TIFAC, NSIC, MHHDC, etc. There will also be participation from Machine manufacturers, Tissue culture Units and Industrial and International Houses. The Exhibition will have showcase the ethnic and cultural heritage of the North Eastern Region. A Bamboo Food Festival, Music Festival, Film Shows, Traditional Bamboo sports, Essay and Painting competitions will also be held.

A number of international experts from abroad will be participating in the Festival, prominent among them being Dr. Walther Liese from Germany, Dr. Victor Brias from Belgium, Mr. Antonios Levissianos of UNIDO, Vienna, Dr. Shozo Shibata from Japan, Jorge Campos from Chile and host of National experts.

BAMFEST is conceived to be an annual event with the venue shifting from year to year within and outside the North East. The first such event was held in Guwahati in March 2003 along with BAMTECH 2003, an International Seminar on Bamboo Technology and its adaptation in the North Eastern Region of India.

The objectives of the festival are:

- 1) Revival of traditional crafts of the region;
- 2) To highlight local customs and usage of bamboo;
- 3) To exhibit the capabilities and export potential of craftspeople who are involved with processing and semi-processing of bamboo;
- 4) To forge closer linkages and networking amongst craftspeople from different States through exchanging and sharing of experience;
- 5) To discuss common issues for adopting newer technologies in the field of craftsmanship;
- 6) To provide a brand name and a common platform to the crafts groups from the North East;
- 7) To generate awareness about the cane and bamboo sector which is largely ignored by the media;
- 8) To help project bamboo as the essential substitute for timber in the years to come.

The Technical Seminars will highlight the industrial and scientific aspects of bamboo, management of resources, introduction of newer technologies for economic development and cost-effective housing while the Bamboo Festival will bring to light the pivotal role that bamboo plays in the social life of the people of this region. This versatile grass occupies pride of place among the bountiful natural resources for daily use of the people of this region and is the main fabric of the cultural tapestry of the rural people of this region.