

TIMES CITY

'Pressure to restart mining from MLAs'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Panaji: The pressure on the state government from its MLAs from the mining belt to begin mining again is building up, environmentalist Rajendra Kerkar said, after receiving a lifetime achievement award for his work in conserving Goa's environment at the end of the two-day Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival on environment held at Kala Academy at Panaji, on Sunday.

"We want mining but not at the cost of the environment and people," Kerkar said. He said that many mining leases are within the Netravalli and Mhadei wildlife sanctuaries, which is the source of many of the states rivers and that Netravalli is the source of rivers in Karnataka.

Speaking about the presence of tigers in Goa, Kerkar said that there are more than 25 temples across the state dedicated to the tiger and that there is evidence linking Goa to tigers since pre-historic times. "Wagh dongor in Cotigao is named after the tiger," Kerkar said.

He said that Goa is among states that have the highest forest cover and is one of the most ecologically fragile areas, but is being destroyed in the name of development by mining.



"We need to not just conserve water for the future by safeguarding forests which act as sponges, but we also need to preserve it by not polluting our water bodies

S W Naqvi | DIRECTOR, NIO

"Last weekend, since eco-tourism began in my area, we have collected 400 bags of plastic and glass bottles from Amboli Ghat," Kerkar said.

Director of the National Institute of Oceanography, S W Naqvi, the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the environment film festival, said that upto four to five milligrams of manganese is found in the water reservoir at Selaulim and that lakhs of public money has to be spent to purify the water for drinking by separating the manganese content.

"We need to not just conserve water for the future by safeguarding forests which act as sponges, but we also need to preserve it by not polluting our water bodies," Naqvi said.

The guest of honour at the event S T Nadkarni, CEO of the water resources depart-

ment of Goa, said the state is presently at a comfortable position where only 33% of the ground water is being utilised and that the state needs to maintain this figure to be self-sufficient in water in the future.

"We are doing everything to protect the Mhadei from being diverted by Karnataka. Karnataka is using many ploys to divert the water. But we are doing our best and will not allow the diversion to take place," Nadkarni said.

He said that Goa has sufficient amount of water but there needs to be better management of water in the state to be safe in the future. "We need to go for methods like rainwater harvesting and even if we are able to utilise a fraction of the amount that falls on our rooftops, it will go a long way," Nadkarni said.