

# mountains CONNECT



The 12th Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS XII) at Doon University, Dehradun, organised by the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) and Sustainable Development Forum of Uttarakhand, was inaugurated by Shri Subodh Uniyal, Uttarakhand's Minister for Forests, Language, and Technical Education. SMDSXII began with a two-minute silence in memory of lives and livelihoods lost in recent Himalayan disasters.

Shri Uniyal emphasised Himalaya's vital role in providing nearly 70% of India's water and urged coordinated, nature-aligned, and community-driven development to address increasing climate disasters.

IMI President, Shri Ramesh Negi and Secretary, Shri Roshan Rai stressed the urgency of rethinking Himalayan development pathways in light of the region's growing disasters.

Prof. Anil Kumar Gupta, in his Inaugural keynote, highlighted the gap between policy intent and implementation regarding environmental priorities, advocating for the integration of modern science with traditional wisdom. He cautioned against unregulated tourism.

Dr. Devinder Sharma, in his SMDSXII keynote, underscored the importance of agroecology for resilience and called for promoting safe, fair, and sustainable food systems rooted in traditional Himalayan farming practices.

Across seven technical sessions and Mountain Legislators Meet, participants discussed key themes such as climate change, water management, agroecology, and disaster resilience—central to achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat. The valedictory and "Dehradun Declaration" called for a dedicated national mountain policy, participatory planning, and adequate financial support to strengthen resilience and ensure sustainable development in the Himalaya.

The two-day event hosted around 250 participants, including scientists, policymakers, farmers, and students from across Himalayan states. An exhibition showcasing local foods, handicrafts and publications celebrated the region's cultural and ecological diversity.

## Thematics:

- Agroecology Resilience for Climate Change
- Biodiversity and Agroecology in Himalaya: Changing Patterns in Livelihood and food and nutrition security; Voices from the Community
- Financing Solutions for building resilience in the agroecology of IHR
- State Action Plan for Climate Change and the National Mission Himalaya through the lens of agroecology and Viksit Bharat (Review, Revisit & Respond)
- Beleaguered Waters of Himalayas Blessings and a curse: Water access and security in agroecological landscapes in the Himalaya.
- Mountain Legislators Meet with focus on "Ever Increasing Disasters in the Indian Himalayan Region"

## Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS XII) 26, 27 September 2025 Dehradun Uttarakhand







**The Mountain Legislators Meet**, at the SMDSXII, chaired by Hon'ble Speaker, Uttarakhand Assembly, Ms. Ritu Khanduri Bhushan, brought together legislators, scientists, and experts to discuss sustainable development and disaster resilience in the Himalaya. Key participants included Mr. Nabam Tuki, Mr. Munna Singh Chauhan, Mr. Kishore Upadhyay, Ms. Savita Kapoor, Ms. Asha Nautiyal, Ms. Anuradha Rana, Ms. Hekani Jakhalu, Mr. Wangpang Konyak, Mr. Tikender S. Panwar, along with IMI President Mr. Ramesh Negi, former President Mr. P.D. Rai, and MLM Convenor Mr. Anoop Nautiyal.

Ms. Khanduri emphasised the need for community participation, and integration of science with traditional knowledge to ensure a resilient Himalayan future. Mr. Trivendra Singh Rawat highlighted that true development must link resource conservation with local livelihoods, while Mr. Tikender S. Panwar urged a redefinition of development to move away from extractive models imposed on the Indian Himalayan Region.

Shri Ravi Chopra and Prof Durgesh Pant provided technical presentations at the MLM.

## IMI Updates

### The Himalayan Cleanup 2025 (THC)

The Himalayan Cleanup 2025 has put the spotlight on the Himalayan waste crisis and a call to action against plastic pollution. THC waste and brand audit insights becomes more pertinent at the time of global discussions to end plastic pollution. It highlights the need to have a vulnerable areas approach to the plastic waste crisis, while adopting a complete life cycle perspective, with producers taking responsibility, as well as intersecting it with food and nutrition security, climate and biodiversity crisis.

PepsiCo, Coco-Cola, Kaisha Industries, Natural Water Industries, Parle, Vinayaka Industries, Hornbill Industries, ITC, CG Foods, Perfetti Van Melle were revealed as the top 10 polluters of the Indian Himalayan Region for 2025 at the webinar 'The Himalayan Cleanup Speaks: Insights to Action' 8 August 2025 – Zero Waste Himalaya Day. The top polluters were identified through THC audits that were conducted across 8 IHR states in which 12500 volunteers cleaned 148 sites and audited 217854 plastic waste collected.

Food packaging was consistently the highest trashed item at 93% of all plastics that shows the continued trend in the consumption of junk ultraprocessed food and beverage and the contribution of Big Food to the Himalayan waste crisis. 52% of food packaging audited was non-recyclable which highlights the limitations of recycling as a solution.

## Message from President

### Greetings from IMI

The 12th Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS XII), held at Doon University, marked yet another milestone in IMI's journey to strengthen dialogue and action for a sustainable and resilient Himalayan region. The summit took place against the backdrop of increasing disasters across the Indian Himalayan Region, underscoring the urgency to reimagine development—one that is rooted in science, guided by traditional wisdom, and centered on the well-being of mountain communities.

As the Dehradun Declaration affirmed, the path forward lies in coordinated, nature-aligned, and community-driven planning, supported by a dedicated national framework for mountain development. Our collective resolve to advance agroecological resilience, disaster preparedness, climate adaptation, and inclusive policy processes reflects IMI's enduring commitment to the vision of Viksit Bharat.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our partners, experts, policymakers, legislators, farmers, and youth participants who made SMDS XII a meaningful platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Together, we shall continue to amplify mountain voices and ensure that the Himalaya remains a source of life, stability, and inspiration for generations to come.

Ramesh Negi  
President, IMI





# "Agro-ecology, Climate Resilient Farming and Livelihood Enhancement in Border Villages of Indian Himalayan Region"

## Participatory Rural Appraisal Held in Project Sites

A series of Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) was conducted in the pilot sites of the project from January to March. The PRA with farmers from Spiti was held in Rewalsar, Himachal Pradesh; for farmers from Niti Valley, it was conducted in Birahi, Chamoli, Uttarakhand; and for Dzongu farmers, it took place in Lingthem, Hee-Gyathang, and Pentong in Dzongu, North Sikkim.



## Training on Biodynamic and Organic farming

Researchers attended training on Biodynamic and Organic farming at SARG, Training Centre, Nainital, Uttarakhand on 20-21<sup>st</sup> March 2025.



## Field visit and focus group discussion

The project team conducted field visits to the project sites to gather detailed information about the villages through focus group discussions and direct observations



## Crops of interest for the project

Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and black pea (*Pisum sativum* ssp. *arvense*)



Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)



Black Pea (*Pisum sativum* ssp. *arvense*)



Uwa Jau (*Hordeum himalayense* rittig)



Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum tataricum* L.)



Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* L.)



Red Paddy (*Oryza sativa*)





Mr. Ramesh Negi called on Honourable Chief Minister Shri Pema Khandu of Arunachal Pradesh and discussed about issues related to flood disaster preparedness in the Himalayan region, including Arunachal Pradesh and the need for policy dialogues and interventions. During recent time, floods in the Himalaya have caused huge devastations leading to loss of lives, livelihoods and ecology.

Shri Khandu expressed his concern about the threat to our fragile environment and agreed with the proposition for advance preparedness before the disaster struck.

## Meet a Member

### Dr. M.P. Sood



Dr. M.P. Sood is from Himachal Pradesh, born on 2nd April 1958 completed B Sc. Agriculture with Gold Medal and M Sc. in Plant Breeding and Genetics and PhD in the same subject. Dr. Sood joined the H.P. Administrative Services in 1985 and during his long tenure of 31 years he served the State on various important posts.

#### IMI Association & Current Affiliation

Dr. M.P. Sood is associated with IMI as life member since the past twelve years and currently in the Governing Council representing Himachal Pradesh.

He is a Founder General Secretary of Sustainable Development Forum Himachal Pradesh –state chapter IMI.

#### Challenges

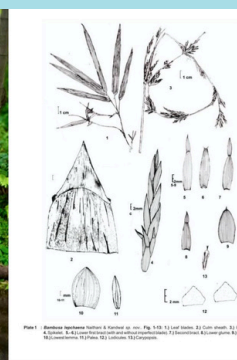
The Indian Himalayan region, which is characterised by its stunning natural beauty and cultural richness, is facing a range of modern challenges that are increasingly impacting its environment and people. These challenges are often driven by the intersection of rapid development, environmental degradation, social shifts, and political dynamics.

#### Future Plans:

- To advocate for mountain specific policies aimed at ecological sustainability and well being of habitats.
- Planning for mass awareness about preserving delicate habitats of mountains by associating with Urban and Rural local bodies.
- Work for associating Youth in promoting Sustainable Tourism in the mountains

### "3rd International Biodynamic Research Conference: The Whole and Its Parts"

Ms Binita Shah was the Keynote Speaker as an Organic and Biodynamic farming pioneer in India at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester - United Kingdom.



### *Bambusa lepchaena*

named in honour of  
Ryen S. T. S. Lepcha, IFS (Retd.)

#### A proud moment!

A newly discovered bamboo species *Bambusa lepchaena* has been named in honour of Shri S.T.S. Lepcha, IFS (Retd.) who is also a founding member of RLCWS, and President of SDFU recognizing his longstanding contribution to bamboo research and conservation.



#### Zero Waste network Himalaya Meet 2025:

Mr. R.P. Gurung and Mrs. Archana Vaidya joined with Zero Waste Himalaya alliance to discuss the future organisational structure and action plan of Zero Waste Himalaya. The event was supported by GAIA, BFFP and hosted Deer Park Institute. IMIs close collaboration with ZWH was emphasised.



#### World Environment Day:

Sustainable Development Forum HP (SDFHP) organized an interactive Workshop on World Environmental Day. Chaired by Sh Shreenivas Joshi IAS(Rtd), President, SAGES (Shimla Amateur Garden & Environment Society), Mr. Dinesh Malhotra IAS (Rtd), Mr.Sanjeev Mahajan, Treasurer, (SDFHP), Dr Harinder Thakur Member(SDFHP), Mr. Deepak Kumar, Environment Engineer, SJVNL, Mr. Sanjeev Datta Social Activist, Ms Gita Datta Environment Activist, Mr. R L Jain Secretary, SAGES, Dr R L Sharma, Joint Director Education and Mr. Amit Kumar, Distt Panchayat Officer, Shimla.

### "One day workshop on harmonizing local & central legislation for forest conservation: A special focus on Garo Hills, Meghalaya"

MIMDI organised an event on application of Jhum and forest laws in Garo Hills of Meghalaya with the Nokmas and Garo Hills District Council. The Nokmas are the heads of the traditional institutions, also the owner with authorities for dispensation on management of land under customary laws and practices. The programme was supported by MoEFCC, Government of India.







**Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment in Rural South Asia: Sustainable Pathways, Thimphu (May 8-10, 2025)**, organized by SWAN (South Asian Women's Network) with support from the World Bank, underscored the transformative potential of rural tourism as a catalyst for women's economic empowerment and regional cooperation in South Asia. The World Bank's South Asia Regional Integration, Cooperation, and Engagement (RICE) programme emphasises leveraging regional tourism to address barriers to women's economic participation and promote sustainable, inclusive growth.

Mr. P.D Rai and Mr. R.P. Gurung attended the conference representing IMI and led a small team of Homestay Owners from Sikkim to the Conference. Mr. Rai highlighted how IMI can also connect to the interesting developments in the Arc of Rural Tourism in the Himalaya spanning Nepal, India and Bhutan. Many issues facing women in South Asia and especially in the Rural Entrepreneurship were explored in the workshop. One of the key outputs was the integrating factor of Buddhist Circuits and also how IMI should explore connections for representation. In the run up to the conference, the team also discussed with Ambassador Veena Sikri the convener of the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN).

IMI will explore the outcomes and connections holistically and explore definitive role in implementation. Representatives from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India attended the conference and made powerful presentations. Other side meetings with Ambassador Dalela also featured issues like the research being done by Bhutan on GLOF issues with many of their high-altitude lakes expanding.

## Mountain Matters

**Dzomaal festival at Pentong, North Sikkim started with paddy sowing**



**'Snow persistence' in Brahmaputra and Ganga basins showing alarming decline, at vicennial lowest in Indus basin: ICIMOD report.**

Hindu Kush Himalaya experienced third consecutive below-normal snow year in 2025, HKH Snow Update Report 2025 finds. [Read More](#)

**Caught between a dam and a hard place**

China's plans to build a 60,000 megawatt dam on its side of the Brahmaputra has renewed the Indian government's interest in building its own mega dam, the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) in Arunachal Pradesh. [Read more](#)

**Journey Through Dzongu In Sikkim: Of Leeches, Local Legends, And The Deification Of Kanchenjunga** [Read more](#)