

# Indo-Thai venture for more bio-energy

■ Forest institute involved in research

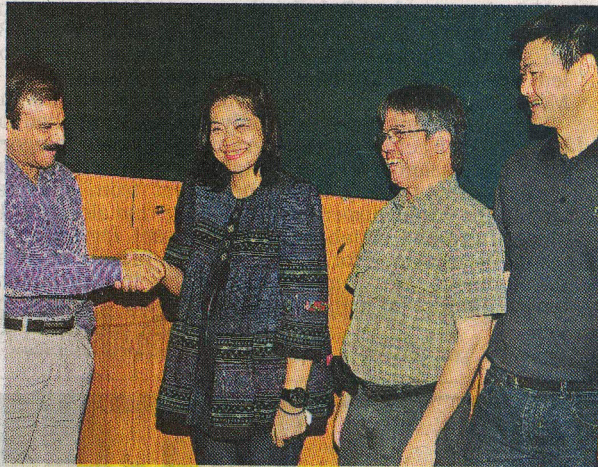
DC CORRESPONDENT  
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In an effort to address the increasing energy requirements of the nation, the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) has undertaken a collaborative research project with Thailand to enhance bio-energy production.

"The main aspect of this project is to develop bio-energy crops and transfer technologies on increasing production of trees meant for producing bio-energy. In fact, casuarina and teak are the commonly used trees in India for bio-energy production," said Mr N. Krishna Kumar, director of IFGTB.

As part of the collaborative programme, three scientists, Maliwan Haruthathanasan, Vitton Lauamg-ririyasaeng and Udomsak Lertsucnatawanch from Kasestart University in Thailand, took part in a discussion with scientists of the IFGTB here on Friday.

The scientists from IFGTB will, in turn, visit Thailand around January next year. This project, titled 'Yield improvement and adaptation of plantation technologies in bio-energy crops for increasing potential of bio-energy production', is funded by the department of sci-



Director of IFGTB greets scientists from Thailand during a meeting to discuss bio energy here Coimbatore Friday. —DC

ence and technology. "Apart from Thailand, we will also be associating with countries like Cambodia and Myanmar to share technology on developing bio-energy production," said Mr Krishna Kumar.

Pointing out that there was a huge demand for oil and fibre-yielding trees for bio-energy production, Mr Krishna Kumar said the supply-demand gap was huge in the country. "The problem can be addressed only by increasing bio-energy-producing trees. India has a total forest cover of 23 per cent and it is aimed to

enhance the forest cover to 33 per cent through afforestation and planting trees outside the forest cover," he said.

As 80 per cent of the fuelwood is extracted from the forests, there is always a demand for fuelwood whose extraction stands at 350 million tonnes per year.

"More than 300 paper mills are depending upon the wood from agroforestry, and, therefore, there is a need for energy plantations. Hence, this project will help to produce bio-energy plantations for user needs," Mr Krishna Kumar said.