

# Business Standard

## **If we save elephants, forests will prosper: Union Minister Bhupender Yadav**

*Yadav stressed on the need to reduce human-elephant conflicts, a problem also prevalent in parts of Chhattisgarh, in the country*

Press Trust of India | Raipur



There Are 33 Elephant Reserves And 150 Corridors For The Pachyderms In The Country, He Said | Photo: PTI

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Union minister Bhupender Yadav has said if elephants are saved, the forests will prosper as the tuskers serve to protect them and called for steps to reduce human-elephant conflicts in the country.

Elephants have been an integral part of religious and cultural traditions in India, Yadav said on Monday.

Addressing an event organised in Raipur on the occasion of World Elephant Day, the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change highlighted the efforts being made by the government for pachyderm conservation through a range of participatory efforts.

"In India, elephants have been a part of religious and cultural traditions. If we save elephants, the forests will prosper as elephants are actual rangers of forests and serve to protect them," he stated.

Yadav stressed on the need to reduce human-elephant conflicts, a problem also prevalent in parts of Chhattisgarh, in the country.

There are 33 elephant reserves and 150 corridors for the pachyderms in the country, he said.

The minister hailed the Chhattisgarh forest department's innovative programme to use radio medium to alert people about movement of wild elephants, which allows villagers to take preventive steps to avoid loss of life and minimise damage to crops.

He also said the Centre was committed to promote natural farming to address the issue of land degradation.

The Union minister pointed out that land desertification (a form of degradation by which fertile land becomes desert) has become a major cause of concern and therefore the Centre has included natural farming in the budget.

Conserving biodiversity is also a major challenge and all countries should come forward to ensure their active participation in this direction, Yadav added.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai was also present at the function.

Earlier in the day, Sai and Union minister Yadav inaugurated an e-auction system of the state forest department, officials said.

The e-auction system will bring competition and transparency in the auction of wood in various timber depots of the forest department, they said.

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First Published: Aug 13 2024 | 8:59 AM IST

Page URL :[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/if-we-save-elephants-forests-will-prosper-union-minister-bhupender-yadav-124081300082\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/if-we-save-elephants-forests-will-prosper-union-minister-bhupender-yadav-124081300082_1.html)