



REGIONAL:

International meet on religion and ecology

[Back To Main Regional](#)



(Picture: Dr N.Gopalakrishnan, director of Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage, delivering the keynote address at the international meet on 'Religious response to ecological challenges' on the second day at the Ecumenical Centre at Angamoozhi on Wednesday.)

Hinduism teaches that everything on earth is the manifestation of God and the Hindu principles are closely linked to nature, said Dr N. Gopalakrishnan, director of Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage.

Dr Gopalakrishnan was delivering the keynote address at the session on Hinduism and Ecology at the international meet on 'Religious response to ecological challenges', organised by the Nilackal St Thomas Church and Ecumenical Centre Trust, at the Ecumenical Centre at Angamoozhi on Wednesday.

According to him, understanding nature was a must for environment conservation. Hindus believed that the soul could be reincarnated into any form of life and that all life was considered sacred and deserving of compassion and respect.

Dr Gopalakrishnan said many stories in the Hindu religious texts and scriptures treat planets, rivers, stars, animals, etc, as divine. Hindu scriptures, especially Atharva Veda, were highly respectful of nature, he added.

He said Hindus worshiped sun, air, water, sacred groves, mountains, and other features of nature. Hindus reverently treat the Earth as mother.

Addressing the evening session, Dr Kuriakose Mar Cleemis, Metropolitan of the Thumpamon diocese of Malankara Orthodox Church, said humanity did not have the right to destroy what it cannot create.

Humans have to realise the interconnectedness of living entities and emphasise the idea of moral responsibility to oneself, the society, and the world as a whole, the Metropolitan said.

Mr Abdulla Manhan from Santhauram spoke on 'ecological perspectives in Islam'.

Ms Nadja Furlan Sante from Slovenia, Ms Helen Fox from South Africa, Mr Branden Green from Pennsylvania State University in the US, and Dr Mathew Koshy Punnackadu, Nilackal Ecological Commission Trust secretary, also addressed the meet on Wednesday.

Two separate sessions on green theology and waste management will be held on Thursday forenoon.

Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos of the East, Baselius Mar Thoma aulose-II, will inaugurate the valedictory session, later, in the afternoon.

Revenue Minister, Adoor Prakash, will inaugurate the Ecological Study Centre on the occasion and Dr Jospheh Mar Thoma will deliver the valedictory message.

Fr Ignatius George Kadiyamkunnii, Nilackal Ecumenical Centre administrator, will deliver the vote of thanks.

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