Climate change ‘Terminator’

Visiting New Delhi as an environment crusader, Arnold Schwarzenegger highlights the need to come together to fight pollution.

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While playing his favourite on-screen character of The Terminator in Hollywood blockbusters, he wiped off the face of earth the baddies and the meanest persons. And now, as an environment crusader, Arnold Schwarzenegger seeks to "terminate" pollution from our towns and cities and mitigate climate change.

When the visiting Hollywood actor says with seriousness and intent, "I am here to terminate climate change once and for all but you have to think differently to win this battle." you have to lend belief to every word he utters. He weighs his words carefully and smiles occasionally like when he is proudly referred to as "Terminator" by the host of his unimpeachable track record of creating sustainable green environment in California he spoke in subdued terms. The former Governor of California was the cynosure of all eyes at the 13th edition of Delhi Sustainable Development Summit.

"I have the ability to step out of the fantasy world into the real. I have just finished Terminator 2 but climate change is not science fiction. It is impacting us right now." Referring to India, which is one of the most polluted countries, Arnold says during an interaction with the media, "It is easy for the outside world to make statements but when people are dying because of pollution, nothing urgent has to be done. It is good that R.K. Pachauri of TERI has started introducing solar lanterns in India."

"In California, we have left no stone unturned to ensure that pollution is reduced. Even Jerry Brown, the current Governor of California, has said that he would reduce fuel consumption by 50 per cent."

It might sound outrageous but Californians meet such goals, Arnold says while he was at the helm of affairs in California, the Republicans and the Democrats put their differences aside to come together to fight pollution and create sustainable solutions.

"Republicans and Democrats drink the same water, drive down the same road, so why not work together to make clean and green environment?" Asserting that fighting against global warming and working for the betterment of the economy had to be worked methodically, Arnold says it was also important to create livelihood opportunities. "When you work for the environment, like I was doing as Governor, it improves the economy. As a result, it leads to creating of jobs, stimulates economy. Meeting environmental goals protect the economy.

Economy of the U.S., particularly California, has picked up due to work in environmental solutions." Refuting all alarming statistics, Arnold says, "Seven million people are dying due to pollution-related illnesses. This is more than the rate of suicides and other causes of death. In India, a million lives are snuffed out. So we have to communicate facts and work together. We have to create our own energy. Solar and wind energies are God's gift."

Asked whether he would be collaborating with Shankar, director of L, in future projects as he had appreciated his filmmaking ability during his Chennai visit, he remains tight lipped: But one cannot blame him when media people are more interested in taking his autographs and selfies with him than engaging him in a conversation or perhaps a light banter.