

PRESS RELEASE

Aaranyak's school awareness campaign aims to rejuvenate urban water bodies in Guwahati

Guwahati, December 27: Northeast India's prominent research-based biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) is conducting a school awareness campaign on the need of cleaning, protecting, and conserving the degraded water bodies of the city of Guwahati.

The main objective of this campaign is to sensitize students and teachers at selected schools located near various rivers and wetlands of the city to understand the causes and impact of water pollution and ecological degradation on the urban environment and human health. At the same time, the organisation under its flagship division Water, Climate and Hazard Division (WATCH) is encouraging them to think and act to reduce pollution in the water and around the water bodies and dispose solid and liquid waste sensibly and scientifically so that we can correct our environmental behaviours as responsible citizens and contribute to rejuvenating the degenerated water bodies through collective efforts.

The focus of the programme is on realizing the potential of teachers and students as primary change makers for the families, schools as well as the society at large. Awareness sessions have been conducted by Aaranyak in four schools -- Beltola High School, Hatigaon High School, South Beltola ME School and South Beltola High School in the southern part of the city during December 21-23.

"It is to be noted that the Basistha and the Bahini, two rivulets that flow from the Meghalaya hills as pristine streams of clean water, drain through this area of the city, and become dirty and heavily contaminated producing many adverse environmental and health effects on the people. About 200 students and teachers actively participated and supported this awareness campaign. More schools will be covered in the next one month covering areas of different degraded water bodies of the city.", Senior scientist with Aaranyak and head of WATCH, Dr Partha Jyoti Das said.

During these sessions, researchers and educators of Aaranyak delivered presentations to selected classes in the schools about the present condition of the water bodies, including both rivers and wetlands of the city, explained causes of their degradation, and discussed with them about the observed and possible impact of the same on environment, public health, and other aspects of the lives of the citizens. Power Point

presentations and printed flexes containing the educational information in simple language both in English and Assamese were used to sensitise the students.

The campaigners of Aaranyak interacted with the students and the teachers based the following basic questions: Why must we keep the rivers and wetlands of the city clean and flowing for the environmental and health security of the citizens? How has the environment and public health suffered from the pollution and ecological degradation of the water bodies? What can we do as conscious citizens to improve the ecohydrological health of these water bodies? How can students and teachers contribute to the cause of rejuvenation of our defiled water bodies complementing the efforts of the government?

“This programme will benefit more than 20 schools situated close to urban water bodies such as the Basistha River, the Bahini River, the Pamohi River, the Bharalu River, the Mora Bharalu River, the Horusola Beel, and the Borsola Beel. We want to promote a set of sustainable good practices among the citizens starting with the schools.”, Dr Das added.

Aaranyak hope through this and other upcoming programmes, people will understand more about the beneficial outcomes of restoring and protecting our urban water bodies such as preservation of biodiversity, improvement of public health, cleanliness, augmentation of ground water recharge, creatin ambience for ecotourism, public recreation, visual and aesthetic beauty, and overall well-being of the citizens.

The Aaranyak team that is conducting this campaign consists of Hemanta Phukon, Kakoli Sarma, Leena Sharma, Jyotismita Kashyap and Bhanita Deka and they are working under the supervision well-known environmental scientist Dr Partha Jyoti Das.

***Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
Contact No. 8638229722, Email ID: bijaysankar@aaranyak.org***