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Press News:

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Forests, Wetlands, Water: A Powerful Relationship Celebration of World Wetlands Day at Gujarat Science City

Gujarat Science City working under the aegis of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of Gujarat is organizing a series of activities and programmes to mark the World Wetlands Day on 2nd February 2011.

A two-day workshop on "Forest, Wetlands and Water: A powerful relationship" has been organized to provide a hands-on training and activity based modules to aware and educate the science teachers as well as the DNA Club members of the state. In addition, there is an illustrative poster exhibition, screening of video films and slide shows on wetlands and its environmental significance have been organized for the students and visitors. The participants will go for a on-job training and exploration to "Thol" wetlands on 3rd February morning.

School students (5 – 16 years age group) are encouraged to participate in the poster painting and quiz competition on the wetlands theme to be held on this day between (11.00 hrs to 16.00 hrs). There is no registration fee, meritorious students will be rewarded with prizes and certificates.

In association with Gyan Vani Radio Channel, a live phone-in programme on the theme was also organized this morning, where the experts clarify the queries and questions of the listeners.

The celebration aims to raise public awareness of wetlands value, benefits and promote the conservation and judicious use of wetlands for sustainable development. In the line of because UN declaration of 2011 as the International Year of Forests, the theme of the World Wetlands Day is 'Forests for Water and Wetlands.

The World Wetlands Day is being celebrated since 1997 every year on 2nd February worldwide to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971. The Ramsar Convention provides a framework for international cooperation in the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ravi S. Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary, DST, Government of Gujarat mentioned that the Science City is taking a bold step in designing exciting hands-on activities and minds-on exposure in environment education integrating with awareness generation, knowledge validation, and building of skills related to understanding our natural world.

"The activities are found to be an ideal way to integrate classroom curricula, stimulate the academic and social growth of young people, and promote the conservation of the natural environment and aims to provide opportunities to be actively involved in restoring, preserving, and protecting the environment" - expressed Shri Ravi S. Saxena.

The theme also captures this sense of how interconnected we all are within the biosphere. Healthy wetlands are good for delivering quality ecosystem services for the benefit of people, while at the same time meeting the demands for water for growing crops, supplying energy and responding to the needs of industry. What is important is to value correctly the ecosystem services that intact, healthy wetlands supply when decisions on the human uses of available water are made.

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In addition to Science City celebration, the program is being celebrated by the DNA Club schools of Valsad, Surat, Vadodara, Godhra, Dehgam, Amreli, Surendranagar, Junagadh, Dantiwada, and Bhuj, by visit to their nearest wetlands and organizing activities to mark the celebration of the World Wetlands Day.

DNA Clubs activities being catalyzed and supported by the Department of Biotechnology, Govt of India and is being coordinated in Gujarat by the Gujarat Science City. The DNA Club school students are being engaged with a variety of hands on activities on environment and biodiversity throughout the year to mark the celebration of the UN International Year of Forests

Gujarat Science City is also developing a unique wetlands park in its sprawling campus over an area of 8.5 hectares to bring the art and science of the wetlands to the classroom curriculum.

Gujarat has more than 1,000 wetlands of which nearly 440 are coastal and around 390 are inland, including several small and big reservoirs. The state has remarkable bio-diversity and therefore provides a rich habitat for a fascinating variety of birds. There are seven wetlands in Gujarat including the recently six declared, accorded the status of 'Wetlands of National Importance' bringing them at par with reserves like Chilka lake in Orissa. These includes: Nalsarovar (Ahmedabad), Little Rann, Greater Rann, Pariyej (Anand), Wadhvana (Vadodara), Thol (Mehsana) and Khijadia (Jamnagar).

Wetlands are among the least protected ecosystems in developing countries, and India is particularly vulnerable to their degradation and loss. There are thousands of lakes, ponds, marshes, lagoons, estuaries, backwaters and mangrove swamps that are vital to the country's water needs, food production and biodiversity, but environmental policy has largely failed to acknowledge their contribution.

On the World Wetlands Day, we invite one and all to work together to spread the awareness to make our wetlands healthy and wealthy for the sustainable development.


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