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ECO-CLUB

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

Newsletter

For Members only

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Editorial

The International Earth day and Environment day fall in the second quarter of every year. In most parts of northern hemisphere, the spring season starts on 20/21st March. The prevailing environment is conducive for plant growth. But, the weather conditions during these months (summer season in arid zones) are not favourable for plant growth in arid and semi arid zones of India. Aligarh falls in the semi arid zone and weather from April to June becomes harsh for the plantation. Unlike, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, there are only 3 differentiable seasons in this zone, like Summer (mid March- June), Monsoon (July-September) and Winter (October- February). The plantation drive launched either on the occasions of Earth Day in April or Environment Day in June cannot be successful in the Arid and semi-Arid zones of India as the weather is marked by a very hot and dry climate and high speed wind (locally *Loo*) which blows for almost whole day. Most of saplings planted during summer immediately desiccate and wilt to complete drying or death. The societies and government bodies should launch plantation drives zone-wise in respective growth seasons conducive for establishment and growth of saplings. Such zonal plantation drives will be more successful and effective. The Eco-Club AMU has therefore, launched 4 month plantation drive to be carried out in several spells during rainy season so as planted tree saplings get required moisture to establish themselves.

The Environment and public welfare programs in India require ecological vision and effective planning like that of the first Prime Minister Mr Jawaharlal Nehru had for Irrigation and Electricity Production through Bhakra Dam project. The electricity and water are basic resources and forms the base of progress. The emphasis on Scientific Research Programs, modernization of communication means through computers and TV and sound economic reforms by later Indian Premiers helped in rising and shining India. There is an immediate need of similar vision for long term environment protection in India. An effective planning and fresh debate is required towards joining of rivers, watershed management and extensive plantation on every piece of land excluding agricultural lands. Such a planning will directly save our resources incurred annually in disaster management caused by floods and droughts often faced simultaneously in varying parts of India. The Tehri and Bhakra dam programmes may have caused some alterations in the ecosystems (conversion of terrestrial to aquatic ecosystem), but have also benefitted otherwise. The excessive water discharge by China and Nepal without advance warning in the rivers of Brahmaputra, Gogra (Ghagra), Rapti may be effectively planned to control flood and drought both. Sound planning may be more effective, useful, resource saving and reliable rather than depending on neighboring countries only on diplomatic persuasions and pacts for regulated water discharge.

Dr. Fareed Ahmad Khan

Recent Activities

ECO-CLUB LAUNCHES 4 MONTH LONG PLANTATION DRIVE ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT DAY 2012



Eco- Club of the Aligarh Muslim University launched a 4 months long plantation drive. Most of the organizations often spare only one day's time for the environment related issues. The Eco-Club of AMU has decided to carry on the drive for a period of 4 months to ensure that the planted tree saplings get the necessary care resume and resume within the monsoon season.

The Plantation drive of Eco-Club has been inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Mr. Zameeruddin Shah by planting one

tree sapling of Gul mohar (*Delonix regia*) at the house of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Mrs Sabiha Simi Shah (Mrs Vice Chancellor) also planted a tree sapling of Kachnar (*Bauhinia variegata*). Dr Mohd Muazzam, Additional Joint Secretary, MoEF, Govt of India, New Delhi took over the rest of the plantation drive. He along with his family members (wife and daughters) also planted few tree saplings at the site. Many more tree saplings were planted by Professor Abrar Hasan, Dept of ENT, JNMC, Prof Anis Ansari, AK Tibbiya College, Prof M. Anis, Dept. of

Botany and members of Eco-Club. Dr Muazzam has been Guest of Honour of Earth Day programme of the Eco-Club and promised to plant 100 trees on the occasion of Environment Day. He spared time and came again to Aligarh along with his family and participated in this Plantation Drive. Unfortunately, these days, the required weather conditions at Aligarh were not suitable for a larger plantation drive and a high mortality of saplings was expected. Therefore, the plantation drive was planned to be carried out in several spells and continued in the new academic session (beginning from August 2012). After reopening of the university a larger participation of students and staff is expected. In this session, the club shall also try to find out more student volunteers to look after the tree saplings planted by Land, Garden & Parks department of AMU and Eco-Club at number of places in the campus. This plantation drive of Eco-Club was fully sponsored and supported by the Land, Garden and Parks department, AMU. The Eco-Club acknowledges all the dignitaries for sparing their valuable time for the cause of environment and for their encouragement of the eco-volunteers.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AT AMU *The Kick Start...*

On World Environment Day, (5th June 2012), the Dr. Zakir Hussain Foundation, Aligarh, organised one day seminar on "Water Conservation and Impact of Climate Change on Environment", the Vice Chancellor of AMU, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Zameer Uddin Shah said in his inaugural address that in forthcoming times, water conservation, world peace and human

dignity will be the most burning issues. He stressed that water conservation is essential for the sustenance of future generations and a strong commitment is the need of the hour for checking misuse and wastage of water. Dr. Mohd. Muazzam, Additional Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India graced the occasion as the chief guest. Dr. Muazzam highlighted the activities of his Ministry in water conservation and

shed light on the impacts of climate change on environment. Prof. Arunima Lal, Dean, Faculty of Science said that human over indulgence in using natural resources for his own benefit had reached a stage where life on the planet was endangered. Dr. Safdar Ashraf, Chairman, Department of Preventive and Social Medicine at A. K. Tibbiya College urged the Vice Chancellor to establish a Faculty of Environmental Sciences at AMU.

ECO-CLUB CELEBRATED EARTH DAY-2012



Earth Day-2012 was observed by the Eco-Club in the cultural hall of Maulana Azad Library on 22nd April, 2012. On the occasion, a lecture series was organized to sensitize the university students and employees for their active participation in protecting the earth. Prof Abrar Hasan (Former Chairman ENT and Dean Faculty of Medicine, AMU) presided over the lecture series. Dr Humayun Rasheed Khan (ACJM) was the Chief Guest and Mr Mohammad Muazzam (Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt of India) was the Guest of Honour. Three brief talks on "Safety in Judicious Use of Earth Resources" were delivered by Prof Arif Inam (MIC Land & Garden, Former Chairman, Dept of Botany), Prof M. Anis (Chairman, Dept of Botany & Patron Eco-club), Dr Fareed Ahmad Khan (Assoc. Professor-Ecology & President, Eco-club). The prizes to the winners and participation certificates of the Essay Writing competition (organized on

the occasion of World Wetland Day) were also awarded. Two slide shows prepared by Eco-club members were also screened by Ms Anam Rais Khan, Programme comparer and Student Editor of Eco-club News Letter. Mr Arif Md Yeasin Jwadder, Secretary of the Eco-club presented a brief report and future plan of the club. Among those present were Dr. Shadab Khurshid, Dr. Seemin Hasan, Dr. Samina Khan, Dr. Ayesha Monira, Dr. Zaki Anwar Siddiqui, Mr. Ayub Shabab, Mr AR Khan (Station Superintendent, Aligarh Jn) and a number of students, Eco-club Executive members. The Treasurer, Mr. Shahab Ahmad presented vote of thanks.

Highlights of the Day-

Prof Arif Inam emphasized the need for utilizing solar energy more effectively to conserve the fast depleting earth resources. Prof M. Anis emphasized judicious use of plants and their conservation by all available scientific means. Dr. Fareed Khan compared the water

quality of Aligarh in 1872 (citing a report of the then Civil Surgeon) and current scenario of water quality. Targeting majority of Muslim students present there, Dr Khan cited two Verses of Quran and some Hadiths and explained that purpose of creation of earth by the Almighty was prime than the creation of mankind. The Prophet on various occasions emphasized that plantation is a charity even if only birds or beasts or mankind or none of these or all of these drive direct benefits from the planted trees. The Additional Secretary, MoEF, Mr Muazzam called for active participation of all AMU students in protecting the earth and offered plantation of 100 trees in the campus in participation with the students on Environment Day (5th June, 2012). Dr Humayun Rasheed Khan highlighted the role of India in the Environment protection with equal emphasis on eradication of poverty by Mrs Gandhi (then Prime Minister) and convinced the representatives of developed nations that both the issues are linked together. Now UN has taken up both the issues together. He presented to the Eco-Club, a book of Gadgil & Guha on historical accounts of ecology. Prof Abrar Hasan called for maintaining a balance between demand and earth resources and to respect the feelings of every creature on the earth. The slide shows highlighted the present and past environment of AMU and future scenario if vegetation cover and garbage disposals are not managed properly as the numbers of students in the campus have increased over two folds in the past 25 years.

HEALTHY HABITAT KAZIRANGA HAS OVER 100 TIGERS

"Kaziranga is one of the high density tiger habitats in the country and has a healthy breeding

source population," says a report. It has over 100 tigers, as estimated in 2009, 2010 and 2011 using the

camera trap method. The report, "Tigers of the Kaziranga National Park, Assam India, 2009-2011," says 118 tigers were recorded in the reserve over the three year-period. The figure includes six tigers died during the monitoring period. The study was a joint initiative of the Assam Forest Department and bio diversity conservation group Aaranyak. In 2011, it was carried out in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and WWF India. Senior biologist of Aaranyak M. Firoz Ahmed, who led the exercise, reported to have said that the individual tigers were identified on the basis of stripe patterns.

The report, released by Honorable Forest Minister of Assam Mr. Rakibul Hussain at a function held in the kaziranga park, says the tiger population in the reserve was extrapolated at 106 (minimum 81 to maximum 131) by Jhala et al (2011) as published by the National Tiger Conservation authority.

Kaziranga, which was declared a tiger reserve in 2008, covers 1000 square kilometres. Their major preys there, (according to the report), are hog deer, sambar, swamp deer, Asiatic wild buffalo and wild pigs.

Courtesy: The Hindu, May 1st 2012

HARYANA WARNS OF PENAL ACTION

Haryana Pollution Control Board on Saturday, 16 June 2012 warned all the industrial units in the state of penal action including prosecution and closure if they are found flouting environment norms.

The Board said, it will initiate

penal action against industrial units without effluent treatment plant (ETP) or if found discharging untreated effluent through the bore wells.

The Board said that in cases of units where the samples had failed, one opportunity would be given to them to submit their scheme of modification of air pollution control measures (ACPM) along with an undertaking to implement it, and a bank draft for the prescribed amount as performance security.

Courtesy: Times of India, June 17, 2012

STUDENT FINDS NEW WAY OF TURNING PLASTIC INTO BIOFUEL

A method for generating bio fuel by breaking down plastics using a low-cost catalyst is likely to be developed further in the United Kingdom by next month (2 July). The process was developed by a sixteen-year-old Egyptian student, Azza Abdel Hamid Faiad, from the Zahran Language School in Alexandria, Egypt. Faiad won the European Fusion Development Agreement award at the 23rd European Union Contest for Young Scientists involving 130 competitors from 37 countries held in Finland last year (23—28 September). Her prize is a week-long placement at the Joint European Torus (JET) facility, the focal point of the European fusion research programme at the UK-based Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, UK, where Faiad will present her project and receive help with its development.

Faiad reported that Egypt's plastic consumption, is estimated to be around one million tonnes per year.

"Plastic waste is a real problem in

Egypt and in most developing countries and her project provides simple solution to this problem", said Nourwanda Sorour, a student at Alexandria University, Egypt, and one of Faiad's mentors.

Courtesy: <http://www.scidev.net>, 29 June, 2012

AFRICA'S SAVANNAS MAY BECOME FORESTS

A new study published in June 2012 in Nature by authors from the Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre and the Goethe University Frankfurt suggests that large parts of Africa's savannas may well be forests by 2100. The study suggests that fertilization by atmospheric carbon dioxide is forcing increases in tree cover throughout Africa. A switch from savanna to forest occurs once a critical threshold of CO₂ concentration is exceeded, yet each site has its own critical threshold.

The savanna complex, are expected to respond sensitively to climate and atmospheric changes because the main players, grasses and trees, differ fundamentally in their response to temperature, carbon dioxide supply and fire and are in an unrelenting struggle for its dominance. The outcome of this struggle determines whether vast portions of the globe's tropical and sub-tropical regions are covered with grasslands, savannas or forests. In the past such shifts in dominance have played out in slow motion, but the current wave of atmospheric changes has accelerated the potential rate of change.

Courtesy: <http://www.sciencedaily.com>, June 28, 2012

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