

TERI commemorates World Environment Day with a Felicitation Ceremony for Winners of GO4Youth

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INDIA harbours the world's largest youth population, accounting for the larger share of the working-age population worldwide between 2020 and 2030. Connecting with the younger generation is important as they learn about sustainability and the environment to nurture an environment-conscious future citizenry and decision-makers. Since formally adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, governments and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have urged youth to participate meaningfully in decision-making. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Mission LiFE, promoted by the Government of India, are

also aligning novel experiments in the field of Environment Education (EE) to promote youth consciousness about environment protection and the adoption of sustainability in thought, action, and impact.

Aligning with the same, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, conducts an annual environment Olympiad for schools and youth aged 18-25 years enrolled in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. This Olympiad promotes interdisciplinary learning and catalyses youth behavioural changes, thereby ensuring holistic development.

GREEN Olympiad, one of the leading flagship programmes of TERI, is designed innovatively to test students' knowledge levels regarding environmental and sustainable development issues. GREEN Olympiad enriches interdisciplinary knowledge,

skills, and eco-values necessary for achieving sustainable development. The information gained through participation in this Olympiad is translated into environment improvement activities at the school level. Over the last two decades, GO for schools has evolved as an asset of immense academic potential.

A felicitation ceremony on 5 June 2024 at TERI, Habitat Centre, coinciding with World Environment Day, celebrated the exemplary achievements of young participants who have demonstrated dedication towards sustainability and environmental stewardship. The programme was held



Youth speakers sharing their experiences

in collaboration with the University Grants Commission (UGC), The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). In the year 2023-24, 10,225 students from 28 states and 8 Union Territories of India participated in the Olympiad conducted in English and Hindi. MCQ-based questions are designed to evaluate youth's environmental awareness, behavioural choices, and aptitude. This examination uses an interdisciplinary approach and covers information about Mission LiFE and other national priority schemes. It engages youth in a systemic exercise designed to check students' levels of awareness about climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living.

Senior dignitaries, including Dr Vibha Dhawan (Director General TERI); Ms Nameeta Prasad, Joint Secretary, MoEFCC, GoI; Ms Rina Sonowal Kouli, Joint Secretary (HE), Department of Higher Education, MoE (MoE), GoI; and Dr Dipankar Saharia, Senior Director, TERI, graced the programme.

Emphasising the need for individual consumption through Mission LiFE, Ms Nameeta Prasad said in her keynote address, "We are a generation who can make peace with our land. While we cannot turn back the time but can grow forests and bring back our soil." This was highlighted in the context of this year's World Environment Day theme — 'land restoration, desertification and drought resilience.' "This strategic endorsement highlights GO4Youth's role in preparing young people to be responsible, knowledgeable citizens and future leaders, in line with national priorities," she added.

Ms Rina Sonowal Kouli applauded the young citizens and said, "The aim of NEP is to develop well-rounded individuals not only in academia but as responsible individuals to lead a

sustainable lifestyle" encouraging the young participants who are an inspiration for their peers, she urged, "Be the brand ambassadors in your own immediate environment."

Dr Livleen K Kahlon, Associate Director, Environment Education and Awareness (EEA) Division, TERI, said, "The power of youth is undeniable. A lot is happening in the global arena today where the youth is being brought forward into dialogues, policy discussions, debates and deliberations; we are now looking up to the youth vote to identify and support sustainability in all walks of life, as they are our *Amrit Peedhi*."

Sharing their experience as part of GO4Youth 2023-2024, youth speaker and winners Mr Mani Gupta from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Mohali, Punjab, and Mr Arnav Bayan from Tezpur University, Assam, shared their transformative experiences and invaluable insights, igniting inspiration and driving motivation among attendees.

In his closing remarks, Dr Dipankar Saharia expressed gratitude to all the dignitaries, special guests, partners, collaborators, and participants for their unwavering support towards the success of the event.

Some other esteemed guests and special invitees representing renowned institutes, including UGC, TERI School of Advanced Studies, Bharat Soka Gakkai, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Delhi, Delegation of the European Union to India and CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR), New Delhi, also attended the programme. The remarkable success of GO4Youth (2023-24) is seen in the overwhelming response received through participation.

To know more, <https://www.terigreenolympiad.com>

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