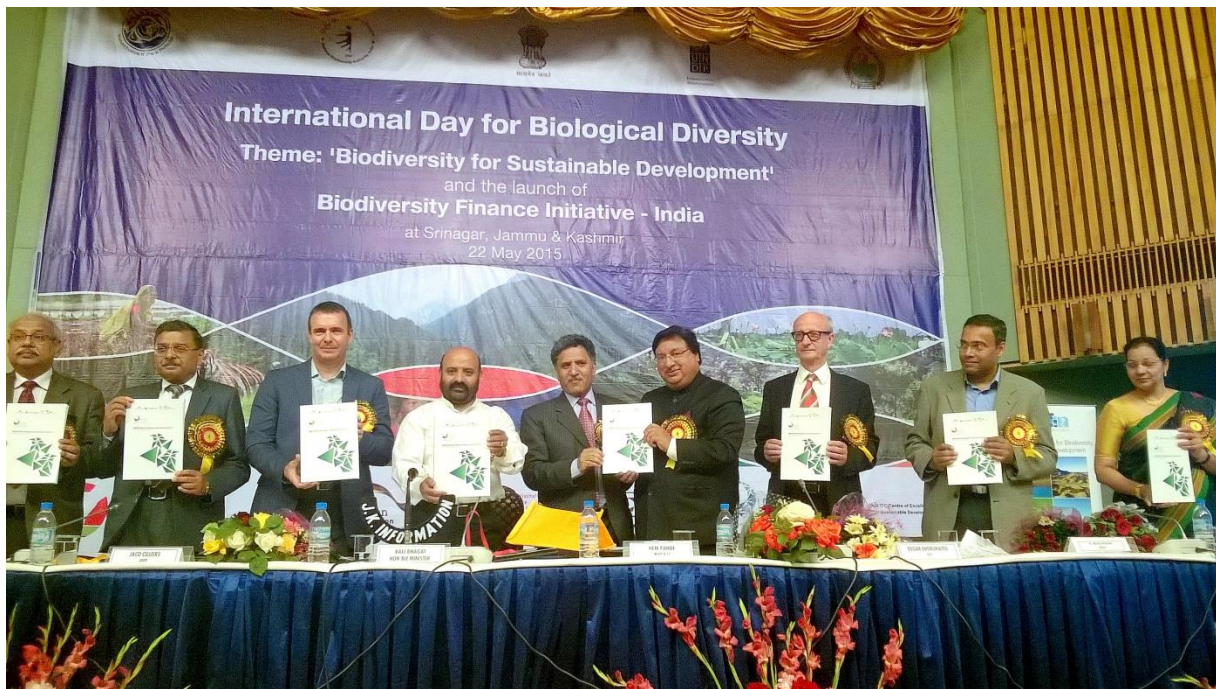


Indo-German Biodiversity Programme celebrates International Day for Biological Diversity Day, 2015

The GIZ Indo-German Biodiversity Programme jointly organised events on the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity, with the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir** with the **Department of Environment & Forests in Delhi**, and with the **Maharashtra Forest Department in Maharashtra**.

The details are mentioned below:

National level event of MoEFCC in Jammu & Kashmir with the release of 'Bridging Business and Biodiversity: Innovative Approaches'
Friday, 22 May 2015
Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre, Chashma Shahi, Srinagar, Kashmir



Launch of the publication: Bridging Business and Biodiversity: Innovative Approaches

Indo-German Biodiversity Programme implemented by GIZ, supports IBBI under its project, 'Incentives for Sustainable Management of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (ISBM)', commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

On 22nd May 2015, IBBI celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity and the first year anniversary since the launch of IBBI as part of an event organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, in Srinagar. During

the inaugural session, the Chairman of IBBI Mr. R Mukundan, Managing Director, Tata Chemicals Limited declared that industry will be an equal partner to the Government to conserve biodiversity.



Mr. Edgar Endrukaitis, (Director, Indo-German Biodiversity Programme, GIZ) addressing the guests

Mr. Edgar Endrukaitis, Programme Director, Indo-German Biodiversity Programme, GIZ India appreciated the industry coming forward by stating, "Businesses are key stakeholders for biological diversity. I am delighted that Indian industry has embarked on this journey to mainstream sustainable management of biodiversity into business."

The released publication presents a step-wise process to understand business impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and ecosystem services across entire value chain. It highlights best practices of IBBI signatories that have undertaken the assessment using IBBI tools for quick scan and baseline assessment. As part of the project, six IBBI member companies have undertaken assessment of impacts and dependencies on natural capital and developed strategies in management of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The event was attended by a huge gathering of more than 500 people, including senior state and central government officials, Mr. Bali Bhagat, Minister for Social Welfare, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, and Mr. Hem Pande, Additional Secretary, MoEFCC, and Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, Khurshid Ganai, Financial Commissioner Industries, R.K. Gupta, Principal Secretary Forest were amongst the dignitaries present at the event. Mr. Pande also had a discussion with the IBBI member companies like Ambuja Cements Limited and Vedanta Limited, who have positively contributed to conservation of biodiversity and improved the bottom line of their business.

Engaging with the young nature enthusiasts
22nd May 2015
Maharashtra

The GIZ's Indo-German Biodiversity Programme, through its Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (CMPA) project, has partnered with the Forest Department, Government of Maharashtra, to support the conservation and sustainable use of the rich coastal and marine biodiversity in select areas, like Velas, Ansure Creek and Thane creek in the coastal state of Maharashtra.

Velas

Velas is a tiny coastal hamlet, in Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra, with a population of about 1500, tucked away amidst the Sahyadri mountain range. It is a one-street verdant village, in which the families have been living for generations, tending to their mango and areca palm orchards. Life is simple but hard - electricity is erratic, and internet access is a precious commodity. It is also renowned as the nesting site of the threatened Olive Ridley turtles.

This year, Biodiversity Day was celebrated at all the pilot sites in Maharashtra, and saw active participation from the local population. The Mangrove Cell of the Forest Department organised all events. At Velas, school children were taken for a nature walk by the local Forest Department coordinator who explained the benefits of the indigenous flora. The coordinator also helped the children to identify several birds that thrive on the rich natural mangroves along the coast. The children then participated in a drawing competition, on the topic "What I love about Nature", held on Velas beach, under the shade of swaying casuarina trees. This was followed by a screening of the film 'Biodiversity for Sustainable Development' and interactive discussions.



Nature walk with school children of Velas village

Mr. N. Vasudevan, Chief Conservator-Forests, Government of Maharashtra, expressed his appreciation of GIZ's selection of Maharashtra as a target state, and in particular, remote villages along the Konkan coast. He stated that the interventions, that included strong community participation, had gone a long way in putting the spotlight on local issues, including the Turtle festival. According to him, it had also helped encourage tourism, which, in turn, has given a fillip to the homestays in the villages.

"We are very appreciative of the support and interventions of the Forest department and GIZ, because this has helped us to really understand the significance of our rich habitat", says Mrs. Joshi, a local homestay owner.

A robust discussion was held with the Gram Panchayat (village governing body) at Velas, where various measures were discussed to strengthen community participation. A similar meeting was also held with the Gram Panchayat at Anjarle, another nearby coastal village. The Panchayat members were happy to learn about GIZ's proposed initiatives, and committed to their active participation.

A drawing competition and a film screening were held at Ansure village. School children also attended a dialogue on the mangrove ecosystem, the flagship species in the area, sustainable use of biodiversity and its importance for the village.



Young girls engrossed in bringing their ideas to life on paper

Thane Creek



Tansa village school children all geared up for Biodiversity Day celebrations

The International Day for Biodiversity was celebrated at the creek along with school children from the neighbouring tribal village of Tansa, local community members and senior government officials from the Forest Department. The event was organised by the Forest department.

The children performed a street play that demonstrated the harmful effect of indiscriminate urbanisation and resultant pollution on the natural environment.

Mr. Vikas Kharge, Forest Secretary, who was present at the occasion, congratulated the children on the extremely evocative play. He also thanked GIZ for its continuous support not only at Thane creek, but also for penetrating into remote coastal villages to bring the significance of conservation of biodiversity to the forefront. He hoped that the state government would be able to declare the Thane



Mr. Vikas Kharge, Forest Secretary, Government of Maharashtra, distributes caps and books to the children

creek area as a RAMSAR site (wetlands of international importance, under the Ramsar Convention). Mr. Suresh Thorat, Additional Principal Conservator-Forest, speaking about the partnership between GIZ and the Forest Department, said that he had witnessed such proactive collaboration for the first time in his service of 34 years in the government.

Mr. N. Vasudevan, Chief Conservator-Forests, Government of Maharashtra, and Mr. K.P. Singh, Chief Conservator-Forests, Thane, were also present, along with other members of the Forest department and the GIZ team. The event concluded with a boat ride on the river, which enabled a glimpse into the lush avian life that thrives among the mangroves, with Mumbai's urban skyline on the horizon.

**Nature walk with students and teachers of Eco-Clubs
Friday, 22 May 2015, 8:00-13:00 hrs,
Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, New Delhi**

The Indo-German Biodiversity Programme in collaboration with the Department of Environment & Forests, Govt. of NCT of Delhi organised a half day event with school and college students at the Asola Wildlife Sanctuary, located along the northern terminal of Aravalli Hills, one of the oldest mountain system of the world. A verdant green protected area in the southern-most part of Delhi boasts of diverse species of animals, birds, butterflies and natural flora. The sanctuary also has a conservation education center, runs in partnership with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) with excellent interpretative material.



Tryst with nature: students and teachers on nature trail

In spite of the scorching heat in Delhi, the Asola Wildlife Sanctuary was buzzing with activity since 8 in the morning! The event saw a huge turnout of more than 100 young nature enthusiasts, from public and private schools in and around Delhi with their teachers. The group participated in the nature walk in the park, guided by experts from BNHS and Earthwatch Institute. The students also got a chance to interact and put forward their ideas and opinion through the various group activities and quizzes, planned for the day. The interactive session enabled the students to orient themselves on environment, biodiversity and its linkages with sustainable development.



*Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Manish Sisodia
awarding the winners of poster/essay competition
in center (L-R: Mr. Asim Ahmed Khan, Minister,
Environment & Forest, Dr. Michael Vakily, GIZ)*

Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Mr. Manish Sisodia, graced the occasion. The Minister enthusiastically, along with the Environment Minister and other officials, visited the education awareness center, took a round of the nature trail and adjoining butterfly garden and the pond ecosystem in the sanctuary. Impressed with the vast spread of greenery, he emphasised on the need to increase green spaces all around Delhi.

Dr. Michael Vakily represented GIZ at the event and gave away prizes to the students. He expressed gratitude to the students and teachers for turning up in huge numbers inspite of the scorching heat of Delhi.

On this occasion, a poster and essay competition was also declared in schools across Delhi, from which winners were chosen to be awarded by Mr. Sisodia. The Minister handed over the prizes encouraging the students to actively participate in organising such events in the future. Mr. Asim Ahmed Khan, Minister, Environment & Forest and Sanjiv Kumar, Secretary, Environment & Forests, Mr. A.K. Shukla, Chief Conservator of Forests, Delhi and Dr. Michael Vakily from GIZ, Dr. B.C. Sabata from Environment Deptt. were also present at the function along with other officials from Delhi Government.



Dr. Michael Vakily greeting Mr. Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi



Students performing enthralling street play on nature and biodiversity

The Deputy CM also enjoyed taking a view of the colourful display of the poster competition entries and appreciated the students for their creativity and talent. He was also enchanted by the impressive performance of streetplay/nukkad natak by the students. The half day event was successful in its endeavor to propagate conservation of biodiversity on the rightful International Day for Biological Diversity.

For more information, please visit: www.indo-germanbiodiversity.com