

## Celebration of World Environment Day 2023

The World Environment Day 2023 was celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 at the Meghnad Saha Auditorium, University of Calcutta, Rashbehari Siksha Prangan, Rajabazar Campus, Kolkata jointly by The Science Association of Bengal (SAB) and the Indian Science News Association (ISNA). The programme started in the afternoon by planting the saplings of a few trees within the campus by Dr. Amit Ray (Secretary, University College of Science and Technology, University of Calcutta) and Professor Basab Chaudhuri (Vice-President, ISNA; Principal, Heritage Institute of Technology Kolkata; formerly, Vice-Chancellor, West Bengal State University, Barasat) along with Professor Manas Chakrabarty and Dr. Amit Krishna De (Honorary Secretaries, ISNA), Dr. Subhabrata Roychoudhuri (Secretary, SAB) and Shri Prasanta K Bose (Council Member, ISNA).

The main programme started with the introductory speech by Dr. Amit Krishna De. He briefed the members of the audience about the role of microorganisms in decomposing plastics. The welcome address was given by Prof. Manas Chakrabarty. He mentioned about the importance of World Environment Day, this year's theme 'Beat plastic pollution' and described the glory of the

organization, ISNA. Dr. Subhabrata Roychoudhuri then talked about various activities of SAB and gave a speech on adverse effect of using plastics in our life, advocated against the use of plastic bags, bottles etc. and emphasised on the planting of trees. He further informed that microplastics are now found in human body, and even in mother's milk. Prof. Basab Chaudhuri delivered a speech on green technology, mercury pollution, and specially gave emphasis on bioaccumulation. He strongly advocated against the use of plastics. Since life without the use of plastics is incomprehensible at present, he suggested the use of biodegradable plastics. He earnestly requested all to work with a holistic approach towards solving this global problem. Thereafter, Shri Prasanta K Bose introduced all the Guest Speakers and asked everyone to come under one umbrella and work together. Dr. Parijat Chakrabarty, GB, SAB and Director V&P Engineering-Education & Management Consultants LLP delivered a lecture on Green Technology covering Green Chemistry, Greywater and Green Hydrogen. He elaborated on the reuse of used plastics for many useful purposes like preparing the roads, garbage collection, etc. He made a special mention of an automatic waste segregator machine which has been patented by him and his three students. Dr. Jayanta Sen and Mrs. Swarnali Chattopadhyay then delivered a



(L to R) Dr. Amit Krishna De, Prof. Manas Chakrabarty, Dr. Amit Ray, Prof. Basab Chaudhuri, Dr. Subhabrata Roychoudhuri and Shri Prasanta K Bose

historical account of the past and present conditions of the Sundarbans. In their slide-show presentation, they stressed on the gradual decrease in (i) the area of the forest part of the delta, (ii) the number of indigenous flora (including the Sundari plants) and fauna (iii) the population in the Sunderbans affected by soil erosion, tropical cyclone, accumulation of plastics, tourism and poverty. They further stated that Ecotourism, mangrove plantation and scientific approach can save the Sunderbans from danger.

The final programme, comprising an extempore contest on environment, was conducted by a Moderator, Dr. Arnab Kumar Banerjee, Assistant Secretary, SAB. Students from various schools and colleges from Kolkata took part in the contest. Students from Bethune Collegiate School, Tarasundari Balika Vidyabhaban, Vijaygarh Jotish Ray College, Jogamaya Devi College were winners. Prof. Julie Banerji, Vice-President, ISNA and Dr. Sumitra Chaudhuri, Council Member, ISNA distributed the Prizes, Medals and Certificates to the participating students. The programme ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Amit Krishna De. □

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### **Inauguration of XXXVI Training Programme on Science Communication and Media Practice 2023-2024 by ISNA**

The Fifth Professor The XXXVI Training Programme on Science Communication and Media Practice 2023-2024 was inaugurated today (15<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 at 4.30 p.m.) in the N.R. Sen Auditorium in the Rashbehari Siksha Prangan, University of Calcutta. The programme is organised by the Indian Science News Association, Kolkata and Vigyan Prasara, Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India. Many luminaries were present in this event both as speakers and guests. The programme was started by officially welcoming the invited speakers. The first to speak was Shri Prasanta K Bose, Chairman, Training Programme. He gave a brief introduction to the course and

also talked about late Professor Biswapati Mukherjee who was the former Chairman of the programme. Next, Professor Manas Chakrabarty, Honorary Secretary of ISNA, informed the gathering about the history of the organisation and its significance. The organisation was founded in 1935 through the initiative of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, Professor Meghnad Saha and others. He also talked about how the society's journal, *Science and Culture*, has been running continuously since its first publication in June, 1935. The training programme which was being inaugurated today was first introduced in 1983. The next speaker was Dr. Rajarshi Mitra, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Environmental Science, Vivekananda College, Thakurpukur. He focused his speech on how this course of which he was a student more than twenty years back, completely changed the course of his life by equipping him with several skills which proved to be very useful throughout his career. He stated that he would not be where he is today if he had not joined the training programme. Veteran journalist and public relations expert Mr. Biswarup Mukherjee was the next Guest of Honour to speak at the event. He recounted his experiences in the field of science journalism and shared important insights about science communication and the practices associated with it. After his talk, Swami Kamalasthananda Maharaj, Principal of Ramkrishna Mission Vivekananda Centenary College, who was the Chief Guest, delivered his speech. He started off by recounting some fascinating events from his own life as a student and went on to talk about the nature of science and science communication. After this, the students who joined the XXXVI Training Programme were handed out bags containing certain materials



(L to R) Dr. Amit Krishna De, Shri Prasanta K Bose, Prof. Manas Chakrabarty, Prof. Sudhendu Mandal, Swami Kamalasthananda Maharaj, Dr. Rajarshi Mitra, Mr. Biswarup Mukherjee and Prof. Prabir Kumar Saha

pertaining to the organisation and the programme.

The last speech was the Third Professor Biswapati Mukherjee Memorial Lecture which was delivered by Dr. Atanu Pal, Assistant Professor, Department of Nephrology, Ex-Assistant Professor, Department of Rheumatology, Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (IPGME&R) and SSKM Hospital. The theme of this speech was the linkages between Ayurveda and Allopathy and the trajectories of their development. Dr. Pal highlighted how Ayurveda, like modern medical science, also has specialisations, although in lesser numbers. He traced the history of the growth and development of both these bodies of knowledge and stressed on the importance of detoxification and prevention of diseases through ayurvedic means. He expressed his hope that in the future both these corpuses of knowledge could be drawn upon to make medical science more effective, instead of viewing ayurveda and allopathy at odds with each other. The programme was presided over by Professor Sudhendu Mandal, Editor-in-Chief of *Science and Culture*. He stressed on the significance of communicating and spreading scientific knowledge and temperament and also gave some interesting snippets from history related to the cultivation of science. Throughout the event, all the guests



(L to R) Dr. Amit Krishna De, Shri Prasanta K Bose, Prof. Sudhendu Mandal, Dr. Atanu Pal, Prof. Manas Chakrabarty and Prof. Prabir Kumar Saha

were introduced by Dr. Amit Krishna De, Honorary Secretary of ISNA and Convener, XXXVI Training Programme 2023-2024.

The event, which saw the congregation of various personalities linked to science and science communication, along with students, ended with the vote of thanks delivered by Professor Prabir Kumar Saha, Honorary Treasurer, ISNA. □

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### Students Award on Basic Science Research

Indian Science News Association (ISNA) with generous donation received from Professor Mrinal K. Dewanjee, USA, is inviting nomination from XI and XII standard students for **two awards-one in Physical Science and the other in Life Sciences**. Each award contains a cash prize of Rs. 10,000.00 (Rupees ten thousand) and a certificate.

#### *Procedures*

- i. A write-up on a proposal (no more than 2000 words) on the **Importance of Basic Science Research including Translational Research** and their impact on Society is to be submitted to the Honorary Secretaries, Indian Science News Association, 92, A.P.C. Road, Kolkata 700009.
- ii. Applicants must be residents of West Bengal.
- iii. Applicants must have scored at least 85% average marks in Science subjects in Class X of the Board examinations.
- iv. Application should be forwarded through the Head of the Institution.
- v. Last date of receiving applications is **27<sup>th</sup> September, 2023**.
- vi. The write-up will be screened by an expert committee appointed by the competent authority.
- vii. Selected candidates would have to present the proposal stated in the write-up before an Expert Committee, as decided by the competent authority.
- viii. Awardees are required to deliver a powerpoint presentation during the Award-giving ceremony.

#### *Brief Profile of Professor Mrinal K. Dewanjee*

Prof. Dewanjee completed his M.Sc. in Chemistry from Dakha University (Bangladesh) and Ph.D. in nuclear chemistry/physics from McGill University, Canada. In early 1970s, Dr. Dewanjee was the humble beneficiary of "Lab Bench-to-Bedside" Translational Research from NIH on developing the radioactive tracers for noninvasive imaging and measuring tools in cardiovascular diseases (Myocardial infarct [MI]-Heart attack) at Harvard Medical School, Boston, coronary thrombosis (Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN) and platelet emboli in neurovascular disease (Stroke; Brain attack, University of Miami, FL) in animal models with clinically relevant endpoints. He made the algebraic equation for measuring the platelet density on injured walls of artery and artificial surface of cardiovascular prostheses. After getting Federal Drug Administration's (FDA), USA, approval with preclinical evaluations, they used the noninvasive nuclear imaging methods for imaging site of MI and arterial platelet-thrombi and evaluated the effect of several platelet-inhibitors in animal models and patients (Aspirin, Plavix, Prostacycline and recombinant Hirudin). He also measured the platelet emboli in brain from carotid injury and showed the linear relation of shear and platelet fragmentation. At present Dr. Dewanjee is an Honorary Guest Scientist at Neurobiology, Neurodegeneration & Repair Laboratory, National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health, USA. His present interest is on Neuronal Synapse, Longevity and STEM Cell Research, one of the latest and advanced biomedical research arena to treat some of the deadly diseases, e.g., stroke, retinal blindness, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

**Honorary Secretaries, ISNA**