

Xihu as Assam State Aquatic Animal



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Marking the World Environment Day, the Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi today announced that the highly endangered river dolphin, locally known as the "Xihu" would now be the State Aquatic Animal. Earlier today Shri Rokibul Hussain, Minister for Forest flagged off a colorful march of about 300 children dressed in caps and T- shirts through the heart of Guwahati, calling for dolphin protection. They were taking part in a two day Children's Summit organized by the Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research(C-NES) to focus attention on the threat to the river dolphin, a fresh water mammal with a population of over 260 in Assam. There are just about 2000 river dolphins in South Asia due to their getting entangled in gill nets and frequent poaching.

The first ever such Summit saw a unique and uniform interaction between the Chief minister and the students at an hour long programme where the young boys and girls grilled the political leader on issues as varied as global warming, cutting of trees for highway construction and waste management. Shri Gogoi said that he was impressed with the growing environmental consciousness among the youth and said they could teach the older generation. The Summit included painting, essay and quiz contests: The winners were Priyasa Kundu, Suriya Khalid and Simanta Kalita, first, second and third respectively, from the BRPL Vidhalaya, Dhaligaon and the consolation prizes going to Manjima Sarkar, Namrup and Himakshi Talukdar, Sankardev Jatiya Vidyalaya, Kukurmara in GroupA (classes 5-7) and Mintu Moran, Jatiya Vidhalaya, Kakopathar, Partha Pratim Nath Jatiya V idyalaya

"The Governments decision will strengthen efforts not just to protect the dolphin but also to develop public awareness on the need to protect wildlife," said Sanjoy Hazarika, Managing Trustee of the C-NES, which has led a sustained campaign to get official recognition for the dolphin, as part of its effort to connect field realities to government policies.

Photo: UB PHotos

editor

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