

Gautam Buddha University Commemorates World Environment Day 2024 through a “Sustainable Celebration”

On the 5th of June, 2024, the Department of Environmental Science at the University School of Vocational Studies and Applied Sciences (USoVSAS), Gautam Buddha University (GBU), celebrated World Environment Day-2024 with great commitment. This day is globally celebrated to commemorate the historic "1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment," the inaugural Global Environmental Summit held in Stockholm, Sweden which advocates the protection and restoration of Earth's ecosystems, and to raise awareness about environmental challenges, anthropogenic climate change, and deteriorating global environmental conditions.



The event, marking the 51st World Environment Day, featured eco-friendly gestures, such as, welcoming dignitaries with environmentally sustainable bouquets. A poster exhibition of highly informative and educative posters was showcased where Professor N.P. Melkania, Dean Academics, GBU and Dean, USoBT and USoVSAS, explained the evolution of Laws and Policies related to Environmental Protection as well as the significance of diverse native plant species representing the “Nakshatra Vatika”, “Rashi Vatika”, “Navagraha Vatika” as well as the snake-repellent and snake attractant plants that can be easily cultivated in Home and Kitchen Gardens (excluding the snake attractant plants!). He also highlighted the institution's environmental conservation efforts.

The Esteemed Chief Guest, Professor Ravindra Kumar Sinha, Vice-Chancellor of GBU, engaged with students and faculty while observing the second edition of the Departmental Wall Magazine "EcoVerse," which aligned with the theme "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience". The World Environment Day-2024 celebration formally began with an invocation to Goddess Saraswati, a ceremonial lamp lighting, followed by felicitation of the Dignitaries with eco-friendly mementoes, minimizing the use of plastics at every step.



In his welcome address, Professor Melkania emphasized 2024 as a "Super Year for Sustainability," noting six major global environmental events, including the Rio Conventions and the UN Environment Assembly. He discussed historical environmental issues like Acid Rain in Scandinavia and Germany's Forest Decay, and commended Rachel Carson's pioneering work in raising awareness about the detrimental effects of pesticides. He highlighted the contribution of Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, former Indian Prime Minister, in environmental advocacy that was instrumental in making India a global representative of developing nations for the environmental cause while ensuring their rights for sustainable development validating it with example of G20 Summit held in India. He also mentioned about India's efforts for environmental conservation through celebration of Conservation Day on the 19th November

their rights for sustainable development validating it with example of G20 Summit held in India. He also mentioned about India's efforts for environmental conservation through celebration of Conservation Day on the 19th November

every year with subsequent celebration of Conservation week. Mentioning the enactment of Environment Protection Act 1986 as a consequence of Bhopal Gas Tragedy, 1984, his talk included a famous quote of A.J.P. Taylor *“Nothing is inevitable until it happens”*. Concluding his words of wisdom citing example of soil in a pot and its spread outside when turned down he mentioned *“Problems are small but its repercussions are long term”*.

Professor Sinha, in his address, lauded the organizers for commemorating World Environment Day and underscored the significance of timely events. He advocated for the implementation of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and applauded the incorporation of Environmental Education in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He highlighted GBU's initiative in introducing B.Sc. Environmental Science and stressed the importance of integrating environmental education across disciplines. He highlighted that the ongoing research in other fields should align with the idea of sustainability at core, as preservation of environment is a collective responsibility. Professor Sinha called for collective efforts to mitigate technological impacts on the environment, urging audience participation in initiatives, such as, reducing vehicular usage and promoting plantation drives.



The engaging address of Chief Guest, Prof. R.K. Sinha was followed by a brainstorming and interactive session in which the faculty members and students among the audience raised various concerning and pertinent points. The Gautam Buddha University boasts of a rich biodiversity, rain water harvesting system and huge solar panel installations which makes it a sustainable campus. Nevertheless, the suggestions of further improvements in this regard were taken into consideration by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor who pledged to divert sufficient funds towards transforming the university into an inspiration for sustainable life-

style practices for environmental preservation. The discussion was wrapped up with audience reflections and insightful closing remarks from Prof. Melkania, underscoring the collective commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable living.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks conveyed by the Head of the Department of Environmental Science, Dr. Bhaswati Banerjee, who expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the dignitaries, participants and organizers.

