

Trees critical for conservation of biodiversity, says minister

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Patna: State environment and forest minister Neeraj Kumar Singh on Sunday said trees play a big role in biodiversity conservation.

“Trees which are large in size, more than 50-year-old, rare species and have cultural importance should be preserved,” the minister said at an event organized to mark International Day for Biological Diversity at Patna zoo.

The minister said a mobile application, ‘Heritage Tree App’, has been developed by the state government to keep record of old trees. “Photos of trees will be uploaded to the app with details of species, the name of the site and latitude and longitude and girth of the tree at chest height. This information will be stored in the Bihar State Biodiversity Board office

through the app,” the minister added.

Singh said 9,101 biodiversity management committees have been constituted in the state. “As panchayat elections were recently conducted in the state, these committees will now be reconstituted and gram sabhas will be included. These committees will work for conservation of biodiversity in panchayats, panchayat samitis, zila parishads and all municipal areas,” he said.

The minister planted a sapling of ‘phalsa’ tree (*grewia asiatica*) on the zoo premises in the presence of chairman of Bihar State Biodiversity Board, D K Shukla and principal secretary of the environment and forest department Arvind Kumar Choudhary.

The minister distributed prizes and certificates among schoolchildren who won various competitions organized ahead of the International Day for Biological Diversity. In drawing and painting competition, Nandini and Ishani Singh of Delhi Public School (DPS) bagged first and second prizes, respectively, in Grade A category (for classes I to IV). Jayshree of St Michael's High School (SMHS) got third prize. In Grade B (for classes V to VIII), Raushani of St Joseph's Convent High School (SJCHS), Swarna of St Karen's Secondary School and Zayaan of DPS got first, second and third prizes, respectively. Nandini and Yukta of SMHS got first and second prizes, respectively, in Grade C (for classes IX to XII) and Karan of Kilkari Bihar Bal Bhawan received third prize.

In team debate contest, students of SJCHS grabbed the first spot, Notre Dame Academy (NDA) stood second and DAV Public School, BSEB third. Shubhra of SJCHS got first prize in individual debate contest while Anjali and Anushka of NDA bagged second and third prizes, respectively.

Sanaj Shruti of Radiant International School, Rita of Nari Gunjan and Aditya of DPS got first, second and third prizes, respectively, in creative writing competition for Grade B. For Grade C category, Ryan of DPS, Dikshita of Don Bosco Academy and Shiksha of Radiant International School bagged first, second and third prizes, respectively.