

Celebration of 70th Constitution Day at Arid Forest Research Institute, Jodhpur

26th November 2019

The 70th anniversary of enactment of the Indian Constitution was celebrated at Arid Forest Research Institute, Jodhpur on 26th November 2019. The Chief Guest of the function was Honourable Shri Ashok Kumar Mathur, the former Chief justice of Calcutta High Court, former Justice of the Supreme Court of India and the Chairman of 7th Central Pay Commission. The Chief Guest arrived at 10:00 AM along with the Special Guest Dr. Neeti Mathur, Jodhpur Law University. They were welcomed by the Director of the Institute, Shri M.R. Baloch, IFS at AFRI Guest House. Several senior scientists and Officers were present at the moment.



The Chief Guest and other dignitaries visited the Interpretation Centre of the institute and got appraised about the various activities that AFRI has been undertaking over the years. They then proceeded to sapling plantation site at the AFRI front lawn. Sh Ashok Mathur and Dr. Neeti Mathus planted a sapling of Red Sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) each to mark their presence on the occasion, making it immemorial.





The dignitaries then proceeded to the venue of the main event at the Conference Hall of the Institute. Besides the key dignitaries the hall was occupied by several environmentalists, school children, awardees of various events themed around the constitution of India and AFRI employees. Director AFRI, Shri M.R. Baloch gave a traditional welcome to the chief Guest with a Rajasthani Safa. Dr. Sarita Arya welcomed the special guest Smt. Neeti Mathur with a shawl. Children from Kendriya Vidyalaya No.2 (Airforce Station), Jodhpur sang a welcome song to honour the guests and dignitaries.





To mark the occasion, the Chief Guest then unveiled a beautiful wood-framed panel housing the Preamble of the Constitution of India and along with the dignitaries on dais, lit-up a lamp to mark the occasion.



Sh. M.R. Baloch, Director AFRI gave the welcome address. He introduced the Chief Guest, Former Justice Shri Ashok Kumar Mathur and the Special Guest, Dr Neeti Mathur by reading their meritorious biodata. He enlightened the august gathering about the constitution of the country and its importance in day to day life. He talked about how the constitution was developed by the Constituent Assembly of India having the drafting committee that was entrusted with the responsibility to prepare the Draft constitution. Drafting committee was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. B R Ambedkar. The constituent assembly took 2 years , 11 months and 17 days to draft the constitution. Sh. Baloch emphasized that the Preamble itself is a self-contained vision statement that should act as our guiding force to take our country ahead.



Sh. Kailash Gupta, also acting as the anchor-person for the program, read out the Fundamental Duties and appraised the house about its importance. A pledge taking ceremony was organised thereafter. The Chief Guest administered the oath of the Preamble of Constitution, which was read and recited by the entire house.

The special guest Dr. Neeti Mathur, then addressed the gathering with her views about the Constitution of India. She emphasized on responsible use of social media platform and requested everyone to refrain from spreading messages without first inspecting its worthiness and truthfulness. This approach will only help maintain solidarity in the society. She spoke on various provisions of the Constitution of India and how government has used the provisions to strengthen the society through various schemes for girl child from supporting her education to her marriage. She spoke on issues like social justice and empowerment, corporate social responsibility, freedom of expression and much more. She also took a pledge to plant trees, inspired by the green AFRI campus.



Dr I.D. Arya, Group Coordinator (Research), spoke on the occasion and briefed the house about AFRI's role in nation building through forestry research and extension activities. He highlighted the efforts by AFRI on sand dune stabilization, reclamation of wastelands, carbon stock taking biotechnological intervention etc.



As a mark of recognition to the extraordinary work done in the field of Environment, Forest and Wild life protection, following persons received the awards from the hands of the Chief Guest on the occasion – Smt. Vimla Sihag, Shri Om Prakash Rajoria, Shri Puran Singh, Shri Ashok Ram Panwar, Dr

Shravan Singh Rathore, Sh. Kan Singh and Sh. Sadul Ram Deora. The representative of the Kendriya Vidyalaya 02 Airforce Station, Jodhpur was also presented with a memento on the occasion.

Five different competitions with the theme “Constitution of India” were organized between 21st and 23rd November 2019, three at AFRI and two at school. These were Poster Competition for school children as well as for AFRI Employees and Competition on ‘Views and Expression on Constitution of India’. First three Prize winners of the said competitions were awarded on the occasion by the Chief Guest. The Prize winning posters were displayed for public viewing.



The Chief Guest of the function, Honourable Shri Mathur, then addressed the house and spoke about the importance of Constitution of India and what makes it such a novel instrument to run the democracy. He motivated the audience by sharing his rich experience as former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court and Justice of the Supreme Court of India. He emphasized that every citizen of the country is first the son/daughter of the motherland then of their parents and that the bond of the nation that we all share with our fellow countrymen should be treated as far more pious and important than the bond of blood between siblings. He talked about the Article 48A and importance of environmental wellbeing as being part of our constitution. He also emphasized on the Article 51(A), the Fundamental Duties and asked everyone to keep duty before rights. He said that the constitution

stands on three pillars, Parliament, Executive and Judiciary. He reiterated that no one is above the constitution, and we should always respect this sacred instrument that makes our nation what it is.





Director AFRI, Shri Baloch presented a memento and a Sandalwood sapling to the Chief Guest and the special Guest as a token to mark the event. Sh. Ramesh Kumar Malpani, DCF, proposed a formal vote of thanks.



Last but not least, everyone stood up and sang the National Anthem.

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