

## **Reclaiming our future: World environment day calls for urgent action**

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*World Environment Day, celebrated on June 5 every year, serves as a global call to action to address pressing environmental challenges. As we stand at the intersection of environmental crises, we must reflect on the state of our planet and take decisive action to safeguard our future. It is imperative for nations to step up their efforts to protect and preserve our planet. India — home to diverse ecosystems — is among the countries at the forefront of this global movement.*

### **Recognising the scale of the crisis**

Environmental degradation is no longer a distant threat but a reality affecting us all. The evidence is clear — rising temperatures, extreme weather events, collapsing ecosystems, and dwindling natural resources. World Environment Day reminds us that we cannot afford to be complacent or wait for others to take the lead.

India faces numerous challenges that threaten its fragile ecosystems. Rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and population growth have put immense pressure on our natural resources. Deforestation, air and water pollution, and habitat destruction have become pressing issues. Additionally, climate change-induced phenomena like extreme weather events and rising temperatures threaten vulnerable communities.

### **India's environmental initiatives**

Recognising the gravity of the situation, India has undertaken several environmental initiatives. The country has made significant strides in renewable energy production, becoming one of the world's leading nations in solar energy capacity. The ambitious target of achieving 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030 reflects India's commitment to transitioning towards a low-carbon economy. Moreover, initiatives like the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* have aimed to improve sanitation and waste management practices, promoting cleanliness and sustainable living.

India's commitment to biodiversity conservation is demonstrated by its vast network of protected areas, national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries. The Project Tiger and Project Elephant programmes have been instrumental in the conservation of the Bengal tiger and wild Asian Elephant, respectively, focusing on habitat preservation and anti-poaching measures. These efforts aim to protect India's natural heritage and contribute to global biodiversity conservation.

Considering the importance of community participation in environmental conservation, local communities have been involved in initiatives like watershed management, afforestation drives, and sustainable agricultural practices. Through education and awareness programmes, India strives to empower citizens to become custodians of the environment. By promoting sustainable practices, including organic farming, water conservation, and waste reduction, India aims to achieve a harmonious balance between development and environmental protection.

### **Individual responsibility**

Individual actions may seem insignificant in the face of complex environmental problems but play a crucial role in driving change. From reducing waste and conserving energy to adopting environmentally friendly practices, such as recycling and using public transportation, our individual actions can collectively make a significant impact.

In this regard, India's mission 'LiFE' is a public movement to mobilise individuals to become 'Pro-Planet People'. This further emphasises the need for all citizens to unite, reflect on our own ecological footprint, and make sustainable choices in our daily lives.

### **Collaboration and innovation**

World Environment Day highlights the need for collaboration and innovation to address environmental challenges effectively. Governments, businesses, civil society organisations, and individuals must come together to find holistic solutions. Collaboration can foster knowledge sharing, leverage resources, and promote innovative technologies to transform our current trajectory. By pooling our expertise and resources, we can conserve biodiversity, restore ecosystems, and create a more resilient planet.

World Environment Day serves as a powerful reminder for us to be catalysts of change and bear the responsibility to protect our planet. The challenges we face are immense, but by embracing individual responsibility, demanding government action, and fostering collaboration and innovation, we can create positive change.

Let us use this day to drive long-term action, reclaim our future, and secure a sustainable, thriving planet. Together, we can make a difference and build a better world where both nature and humanity can flourish side by side.

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