

'Devpt is needed but balance with nature is more important'

Freny Fernandes| Jun 4, 2016, 09:17 PM IST



Thane: As political activists, housing society members and voluntary groups are preparing to flag off a string of campaigns to mark the World Environment Day on Sunday, activists lament about the 'pollution and plunders that continue to spoil the city of its once-pristine greenery.

Stalin D, director of Vanashakti, a non government organization, said, "The pollution resulting from burning forests and dumping grounds is overlooked. Rampant encroachment and concretization across green spaces in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park area and creek-side mangrove patches are upheld in the name of development. The green city of Thane is turning into rubble of waste."

Citizen activist Dr Lata Ghanshamnani said that one needs to stop talking about protecting the environment and learn to alter the way of living to stop harming it. "Environment is an amalgamation of earth, water, air, life and the energy it holds. Harming either of these elements impacts the entire system. When we cook extra, we waste food, which adds to the dumping ground or the waste in the rivers and creeks. While the former pollutes the air when burnt, the latter pollutes the water and marine life. This, in turn, affects the environment."

Another activist, P K Das stressed on recreation space for buildings. "Every building should have four to six sq mt of recreation space. The civic body has to ensure that 15 to 25 per cent of the city's land has to be reserved for gardens. This has to be further divided into parks and gardens with zero construction, including paver blocks. Sports grounds and recreation grounds for social and cultural functions are also needed. These gardens will further ensure that rain water is absorbed into the ground, thus restoring the level of the underground water reservoirs," he said.

Das explained that development is needed. However, a balance needs to be maintained with nature. "Over the years the builder-politician nexus has taken up recreation spaces to create a myriad of unplanned buildings, malls and other structures," he added.

Meanwhile, activists are also hopeful that the growing awareness and active participation will help protect and conserve Thane's flora and fauna and coastline.

"It is only when citizens or Advanced Locality Management groups join hands with the government and monitor the safeguard of every aspect of the environment, will we actually be moving ahead in the direction of environmental conservation," said Das.

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