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DEVELOPMENT

Dr Robin Banerjee Memorial lecture held



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“The Brahmaputra (/taxonomy/term/2226) and its adjoining flood-plain lakes hold hundreds of species of macroinvertebrate, herpeto and avian fauna and the most fascinating fauna of the Brahmaputra (/taxonomy/term/2226) is the endangered, Ganges dolphin, *Platanista gangetica gangetica*. Only a few pockets are now left in the Brahmaputra (/taxonomy/term/2226) which may be the last habitats for this national aquatic animal,” said Prof (/taxonomy/term/2077) S P Biswas, head of department of Life Sciences, Dibrugarh University. Prof (/taxonomy/term/2077) Biswas was delivering the Dr Robin (/taxonomy/term/2230) Banerjee Memorial Lecture organized by Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122) Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society at the AASSIA Conference (/taxonomy/term/1966) Hall in Guwahati as part of celebration of the late conservationist’s birthday on August 12. Delivering the memorial lecture on ‘Threats and Conservation (/taxonomy/term/2218) of Aquatic Fauna of the Region’ Prof (/taxonomy/term/2077) Biswas added that “Siltation of river bed and widening of the river is a common scenario in almost entire stretches of the Brahmaputra (/taxonomy/term/2226). Further, the erratic nature of water discharge, high rates of erosion and siltation, and habitat destruction have negative impacts on the commercial fishery and on the mega-faunas like giant cat fishes, feather-back, mahseer and turtles. Their numbers are dwindling sharply in the upper stretches. The Ganges dolphin is the hardest hit among the aquatic fauna.”

Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122) Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society (KWS), the oldest conservation NGO (/taxonomy/term/2157) of the region has been observing August 12, the birthday of its founder-president Dr Robin (/taxonomy/term/2230) Banerjee as Nature (/taxonomy/term/14) Conservation (/taxonomy/term/2218) Day since 2013. “It is important to gather knowledge on the present status of wildlife and the threats they are facing, before working on conservational strategies,” said Mubina Akhtar, secretary, KWS and added that the NGO (/taxonomy/term/2157) has been organizing the memorial lecture with this view and invited experts to throw light on some of the most urgent issues on important wildlife, especially of those in the region. Internationally acclaimed filmmakers S Nallamutthu and Mike Pandey, wildlife experts Dharanidhar Bodo and Dr Anwaruddin Chouhury were guests on earlier occasions.

The Nature (/taxonomy/term/14) Conservation (/taxonomy/term/2218) Day celebrations also included presentation of the Society's Lifetime Achievement Award. The three recipients of this year's award—that carries cash and a citation—are Majnur Hussain of Hajo (/taxonomy/term/1653), Ananda Khataniar and Nagen Choudhury of Bajali. They were selected for their single-handed efforts to increase green (/taxonomy/term/1719) cover by planting and taking care of thousands of saplings in their respective areas. Ex-principal, Cotton College, Dr Anil Goswami, Retired Information Commissioner Mohan Chandra Malakar and Indrajit Dutta , ex-president of KWS gave away the prizes. Managing editor, Dy 365 and vice president of the Ngo, Pranay Bordoloi lauding the efforts of the awardees said that the state (/taxonomy/term/2332) needs more such efforts in the grass root.

Padum Borthakur, president KWS, who chaired the meeting, summarized the journey of Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122) Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society founded in 1969. Earlier, ex- presidents of KWS, Ramani Kanta Deka and Abani Baruah reminisced events from the life of Robin (/taxonomy/term/2230) Banerjee and the immense contribution he made in the field of conservation.



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