

World Environment Day conducts

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Every year, millions of trees are mercilessly cut down in the urban areas of our country owing to urbanization, and to make space for construction or industrial projects. The ecological disturbance caused by felling of trees and excessive consumption of fossil fuels and vehicular pollution in cities like Ghaziabad has raised serious concerns on the environmental front in the recent past. In a first-of-its-kind initiative to create mass awareness on the significance of preserving nature and shedding light on the current state of the environment, Columbia Asia Hospitals, Ghaziabad in association with CROMA conducted a walkathon in the city on the eve of World Environment Day this year. Covering a distance of 1.5 kilometers, the initiative was aptly titled 'Revive Ghaziabad: Walkathon for Greener city', and witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 150 residents of the city, who walked the distance starting from Crossing Republic Main Gate and ending at Galleria Market. Members of various walkers' clubs in the city also participated in the event. "Keeping pace with the rapid pace of urbanization, our generation is faced with multiple environmental challenges such as pollution of water, air and land. However, the most daunting challenge faced at the moment is probably keeping the green cover of our planet intact. More than 50% of total tree cover on earth has disappeared due to human activity in the past, and if the trend continues, the day is not far when greenery will be endangered. Beyond doubt, lack of awareness about the adverse effects of cutting down of trees leads to irresponsible behavior by many. The more trees we have the better will be the oxygen levels in our environment, and the healthier our future generations. Not only should we engage in planting more trees in our households and neighborhoods, but rather, we should do every bit to make sure that we do not harm the environment. Today's walkathon is a small effort the

direction to initiate meaningful action around issues pertaining to our environment that need urgent attention, and needs to be pointed out to the public and society at large” said Mr. Atul Bhell, General Manager, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad. According to statistics revealed by the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board recently, the air in Ghaziabad and adjoining areas is more hazardous than the national capital, with PM 2.5 pollution levels found to be an alarming 382 per cubic metre. Besides vehicular air pollution, the industrial clusters in and around the city has been contributing heavily towards the emission of sulphur dioxide and other harmful and toxic gases and chemicals which also result in land and water pollution. “The major focus of today’s Walkathon was sensitizing the concept of greening in the minds of everyone to fuel voluntary action in order to revive the virginity of nature and our environment along concrete greenbelts. With the effects of global warming and climate change so apparent at the moment, there is no way we can underestimate the importance of planting trees and preserving the nature. We must understand that ‘acche din’ for our environment will only come with collaborative efforts, when individuals, institutions and governments join hands. To reduce the impact of greenhouse gases and restore a sustainable healthy environment, adopting concepts like green urbanism and compensatory afforestation are the need of the hour,” added Mr. Atul Bhell. Thematic areas including planting and maintaining trees for sustainable change of air quality, promoting organic foods for the future, cultivating nutrition gardens or kitchen gardens at homes, understanding importance of biodegradable waste, among others were addressed with pamphlets carried by the participants, who pledged to be the ‘agents of change’ when it comes to betterment of the environment. After the walk was over, free saplings were distributed to the participants and members of local clubs to further enhance the year-long greenification drive titled ‘Go Green Revolution 2030’, which was also kick-started today. Columbia Asia Hospitals, Ghaziabad sincerely believes that the responsibility to be good stewards of the environment can only be fulfilled with community initiatives at the grassroots level.

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