

THE SIS YRS ZEITGEIST

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The School's Favourite Newspaper

2015
YRS: Code Green

SIS
Mumbai

Another Milestone

SIS finally opened its floodgates to a fun-filled interactive Young Round Square Conference with 20 schools coming in to share their thoughts and experiences and savour the delightful moments that SIS has to offer.

The Welcome Ceremony commenced with Ms. Patricia sharing her ideas about the ethos of the event and leading the young audience into some thought-provoking interactive discussions about an environment-friendly world. Mr. Abhimanyu Das Gupta giving information regarding the logistics to the participants, it was time for the SIS participants to sing to the tunes of the 'Anthem' – The Power of One, composed by a few of the SIS students under the able guidance of Mrs. Meera Bhalla with music by Jennifer D'Souza. The sound of "Why not we, why not we, The Power of One – It's up to me" reverberated under the azure blue sky heralding in a sense of unity and harmony amidst diversity. With the aim of inculcating the ideals of the Conference and reaching beyond to become global citizens and leaders of tomorrow, the member schools then become actively involved in all the various activities.



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SIS Candid MOMENTS



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The Curtain Raiser- YRSC

2015 With 300 plus student delegates, teachers, mentors and Guests-of-Honour, Singapore International School added another feather to its cap with the lighting of the Diyas followed by the 'Saraswati Vandana' to mark the opening of the YRSC. Amidst the roar of a thunderous applause, the flag-bearers and representatives of all the participating schools marched in their smart uniforms, carrying flags bearing the insignia of their respective schools. The gathering then was witnessed to a spectacular dance performance by the students of SIS – the 'Ganpati Vandana'. This traditional song took a completely different dimension when Ganesha was represented with green leaves fittingly signifying 'CODE GREEN'.

The key note speakers – Brian Dawson, Papri Ghosh, Agatha Sangma and Atul Sathe reached out to the audience with their enlightening words to arouse in them a sense of belonging with the world at large. Personal anecdotes and experiences, heroic acts by young enthusiasts who strove to make a difference in the lives of the underprivileged were all incorporated in their speeches creating a sense of 'oneness'. As the minutes passed by, the words of wisdom touched the minds and hearts of many a young delegate ultimately drawing the ceremony to a close with the traditional trumpet blowing.

The ideals of the YOUNG ROUND SQUARE CONFERENCE found their way into the hearts of the members of the community to initiate a sense of being environment- friendly and acknowledge the 'Power of One'.



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The Baraza...Ice Breaker Sessions

After the registration procedure, the delegates moved into their Baraza groups for the first interaction. Each Baraza's mentor had arranged a variety of Ice Breaker activities. These were mostly fuelled by the objective of interacting with each other and getting to know each other in their groups. It was interesting to note the corridors of SIS buzzing with anxious excitement as young delegates walked around locating the venue of the groups. Doors of classrooms were bedecked with names like 'Himalayan Quail', 'Pondicherry Shark' and 'Pink Headed Duck' to name a few. These are the Baraza names in keeping with the spirit of the conference. Ice breaker activities in some rooms elicited great laughter as games with interesting names like Blanket Game were in progress. Some other activities were typical of introductory games like the Round Robin and the Donut wherein delegates walk to music in circles and when it stops they interact with the person beside them or in front of them. The ever popular Bingo was not to be left out as one particularly enthusiastic delegate ran around the room in order to complete their Bingo sheet first. Some groups viewed thought provoking videos on the 'Power of One', the effect of 'Carbon Footprints' and the domination of large industrial nations over weaker economy generating nations. As they filed out for their evening snack followed by the group photograph there was a noticeable difference in the carriage of the delegates. They seemed to have benefited from the ice breaker activities as they displayed an easy camaraderie.



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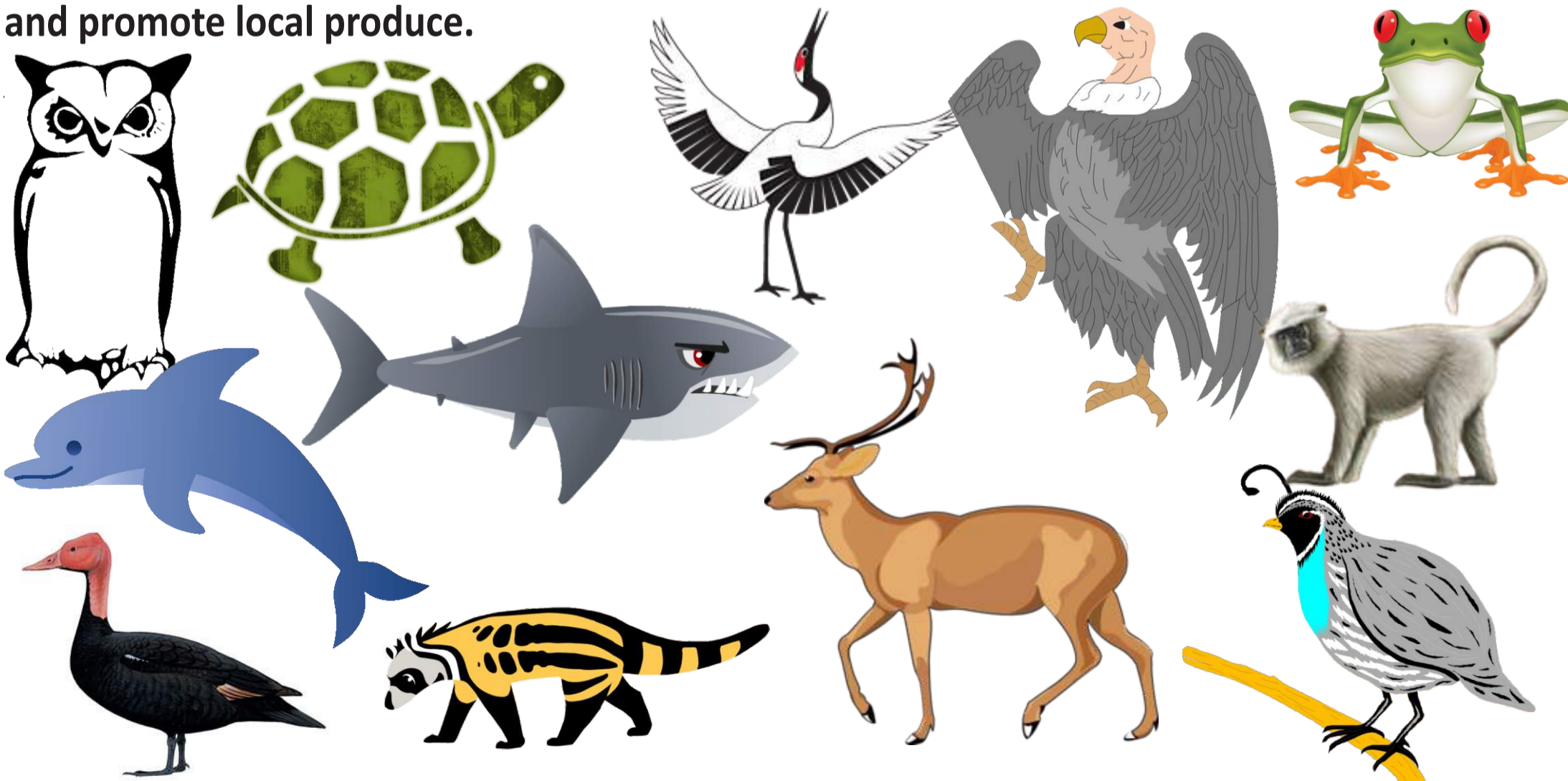
The BARAZA.....

The Young Round Square Conference hosted by Singapore International School had twelve Barazza groups named after endangered species. Their discussions centred on current critical environmental issues; carbon emission, consumer choices and under utilisation of resources.

As one student leader, Thea Shroff mentioned, 'Carbon emission is a big problem that cannot be resolved completely but can be reduced by conscious efforts on the part of everybody involved.'

Andrea Maria Johny, a student mentor from Rajmata Krishna Kumari Girls Public School was eloquent with the decisions reached by the Malabar Civet Group on steps to support endangered species of animals. They were determined to boycott branded goods that contained animal products. Hence they pledged to avoid products that were made from leather and ivory. The delegates used recycled chart paper instead of the regular plastic mat to play a game called Twister. Leftover pieces of charcoal were used to record scores of the teams playing the game. Thus recycling was the essence of every activity in which they were involved.

The delegates showed unanimous support not only for endangered animals but also for local retailers who are threatened by MNCs. They were in favour of responsible shopping, avoidance of malls in favour of grocery stores, desist from buying overly packaged products and promote local produce.



THE SIS YRS ZETTGEIST



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Magic from Waste

The delegates started off on their artistic journeys after the Welcome Ceremony by making exquisite Dream Catchers from waste. Innovative strategies were used to make these Dream Catchers that are an intrinsic part of Native American tradition. The Dream Catcher is a hoop from which dainty little beads, strips of coloured paper and multi-hued wisps of twine that sway in the breeze.

The Native Americans believe that the night air is redolent with dreams and the sturdy little Dream Catcher filters out the nightmares and ensures that only the good dreams slide down the heart of the device to enter the mind of the person sleeping on the cot below.

The concept of recycling, an important theme of the Young Round Square Conference, was also incorporated into a few other items that the delegates made in their different Baraza groups. Ever heard of an empty milk carton being transformed into an elegant little purse or a discarded snack container decked up to furnish a refined pen stand for your table? Well, our young delegates managed it all and carried away wonderful mementos that were a synthesis of creativity and teamwork.



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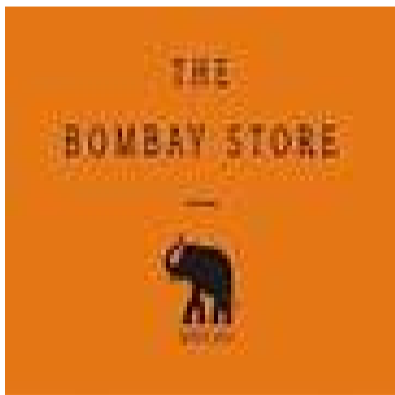
Street Fair

With an objective to spread awareness of an eco-friendly community, Day 2 was also witness to a vibrant Street Fair where a few NGOs had put up stalls with their unique products like tees, cups, caps, magazines all carrying pictures of the wildlife.



Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is one of India's biggest Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) that was founded in 1883. The sole aim of this organization is to conduct research activities and observations on natural history and displaying rare specimens. The BNHS specializes in the conservation of nature and natural resources as well as organizing education activities and exploration of natural history.

SIS is proud to have this organization as part of its Event.



THE BOMBAY STORE

The Bombay Store founded in 1906 by Lokmanya Tilak was originally called the Bombay Swadeshi Cooperative Stores Co. Ltd. It was a joint stock company that was founded to promote the sale of Indian products. The first store was visited by the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vijayalakshmi Pandit and was opened in what is now the Times of India building and was inaugurated by Dadabhai Naoroji. The company tries to remain true to its essence and sells only Indian products crafted by artisans and Indian manufacturers. The products are mostly sourced from parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Agra in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of north India.

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Street Fair

The YRSC 2015 is privileged to host its stall on the school grounds on Day 2.



Kids for Tigers was launched by *Sanctuary Asia* magazine in the year 2000 as an environmental education programme for schools across India. The programme aims to bring out the vital connection between the survival of the tiger and the ecological security of the Indian subcontinent. Through 'edutainment' workshops, tiger fests, nature walks, film shows and tiger information kits, Kids for Tigers seeks to increase awareness among children about India's biodiversity and sensitize them to the fact that saving tigers and their forests will also secure our water supply and help save ourselves. Its stall on the SIS school premise with its printed T-shirts, cups and other curios stole the hearts of many a buyer.



Maharashtra is known for its Warli folk paintings.

Warli is the name of the largest tribe found on the northern outskirts of Mumbai.

Warli Art was first discovered in the early seventies and is a vivid expression of daily and social events of the Warli tribe the paintings are used by them to embellish the walls of their houses. This was the only means of transmitting folklore to a populace not acquainted with the written word.

Its stall during the YRSC was a fitting addition to the spirit of India and its ethnicity.

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Street Fair



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Rendezvous with Brian Dawson

We met up with Mr. Dawson in Tabasco, the coffee hangout in Singapore International School. Befitting the venue, the interview began with Mr. Dawson, requesting for a steaming cup of coffee!

Chandreyee: Has your tie been chosen deliberately for wearing to this conference? Its printed with zebras!

Brian Dawson: Ah yes! Its an interesting one, isn't it? Well, it actually symbolises my love for the wild life It is one of my passions. I live in South Africa, a beautiful country. Whenever we can, my family and I pack up for a trip to the wilderness to be close to wild life. So yes, the zebras signify that.

Chandreyee: Mr. Dawson, you have been associated with Round Square for a great many years. What has motivated this long association?

Brian Dawson: The principal motivation for me was the change I saw in my 3 children. All three of them are Round Square kids. They have been to numerous conferences, contributed in many service projects and have friends from all over the world which has made them culturally aware and accepting. I wanted to be a part of this wonderful movement to create opportunities for more children. Over the years I have witnessed the effect of Round Square on many more children.

Chandreyee: What has been your greatest achievement in these years in the organisation?

Brian Dawson: Well, when I joined we had a membership of 55 schools. When I left last year, we had membership of 144 schools. I am very pleased about that. I must tell you , that we have protected the ethos of Round Square and the schools have all been selected and granted membership after close scrutiny. The schools haven't been taken on just to increase numbers.

Chandreyee: Could you share with us the story of the birth of Young Round Square?

Brian Dawson: Ah! Now... it actually happened over a cup of tea, or coffee I think, in a restaurant in London. The principal of Fernhill School in Toronto and I discussed the possibility of opening up Round Square to younger students. This was in 2011. We discussed plans, ideas and logistics. In 2012, the Fernhill school organised the first Young Round Square Conference. It was a success. In 2014 we had our first International Young Round Square Conference in South Africa and 55 schools participated. So yes, it has grown tremendously in a short while. It gives me great joy to visit your school and see what a wonderful success this conference is too. There is so much energy and enthusiasm in the environment.

Chandreyee: Lastly, you retired from Round Square last year. What now?

Brian Dawson: Well, now I am associated with an organisation called Global Study Pass that is involved in creating innovative online resources for educational institutions.

Chandreyee: Thank You Mr. Dawson! We hope you enjoy the rest of the conference and the remainder of your stay in India.

Brian Dawson: Thank You. And yes, we love visiting India and have enjoyed every visit here.

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The Code Green Initiative



The Plantation Drive was inaugurated by Mr. Brian Dawson, former Executive Director Young Round Square Conference and Mr. Bittu Sahgal by planting a marigold sapling.

All the school delegates who had assembled at the school grounds along with their teacher mentors continued the drive by planting saplings of various kinds.

Teacher mentor of Punjab Public School, B.R. Gordon, who participated in the drive enthused, 'I think it is an excellent activity for any age group. It should be emulated all over the state, the city and the world.'



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Global Pagoda Faith In Green



The student delegates visited the global Vipassana Pagoda as a part of the 'Faith Green' activity planned for them. The students were enthralled by the magnificent structure of the Pagoda located at such a soothing and Tranquil environment away from the hustle and bustle of a visit to city life. One may ask why the Global Pagoda during this conference?

Well the goal of Vipassana is to decontaminate the mind from all negativities like greed, hatred and delusions. Not only does it eradicate negativities but also gives room to positive qualities like kindness, compassion and empathy. It believes that when one is filled with positivity this energy is passed on to the environment at large.

The delegates had an opportunity to practice the ten minutes 'Anapana Meditation' which helped them to calm down and become more aware of themselves.

They returned back with pleasing and peaceful memories to the SIS campus.



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Green Coded Celebrities

Rendezvous with Irrfan Khan



Pallavi: What is it that has motivated you to take time out to visit our conference?

Irrfan Khan: I love interacting with kids. Any opportunity I get to talk with them, I do so. They are very important for me as they will determine the future.

Pallavi: How important do you think it is, to create awareness about the environment?

Irrfan Khan: We don't have a choice. We have to care. You see, we don't live in a bubble. Everything is interconnected. We are all part of the bigger picture. So each of our actions affect the bigger picture. So, I try to be aware in all my choices in my life.

Pallavi: Can you share about what encourages you in your life?

Irrfan Khan: Well, its my passion for drama. I hated school. I felt it was an imposition. But when in college I began to study what I loved, I began doing very well. I am happy with what I do and I feel it is everyone's natural instinct to express themselves. I was very shy when I was young but as I started doing drama, I was happy and began finding it easier to speak. I never imagined would be speaking to students in a school!

Chandreyee: As we often see students battling shyness, do you share your experience of overcoming it?

Irrfan Khan: Well we can't tell someone to overcome it. It has to come from within. It happens when you are given an opportunity to express something you love. Kids these days have many options so they find things they love easily. They are much more knowledgeable and confident.

Pallavi: What do you think is there in the movie industry that has contributed to environment awareness?

Irrfan Khan: Well I don't think it is about any industry. It is about each one of us.



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The Sewage Way..

Essel World

The third day of the conference started off with an exciting trip to Essel World but with a different purpose in mind. The delegates were introduced to the concept of conservation of natural resources such as water and recycling of non – biodegradable material such as plastic.

The Natural Sewage Treatment Plant at Essel World is modelled on artificial reed bed systems that are used as a method of removing pollutants from [wastewater](#) that is generated in the park. The striking feature about this Sewage Treatment Plant is that it generates enough clean water to irrigate ten acres of land but does not require high maintenance. The system is made from indigenous material and does not require highly skilled manpower to operate it making it a crucial power and labour saving system. Delegates were amazed at the use of humble local flora such as the water- lily to remove any residue from the processed water.

A visit to the organic waste converter in the theme park convinced the delegates that recycling only requires a positive attitude for there are ample, cost-effective machines to facilitate the task. They actually saw a bone crusher which is a machine that grinds bones from leftover meat dishes served in the many restaurants of the theme park. An organic waste converter in the park that generates manure from discarded food in just fifteen days, covers the need for fertilizers of the greenery in the entire theme park. Waste from plastic in the form of bottles was compressed into a smaller volume in the Compactor Room. Thus the delegates observed the steps involved in making the storage and transport of waste material , convenient and user – friendly.



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Rendezvous with Mayur Shah



The Power of One

“With a 1300+ residents, the village of Dethali, 90 kms of Ahmedabad was water-starved and drought-prone before year 2000. Mr. Somchand Shah's relentless efforts supported by villagers over a decade converted this very same village into a water-abundant and famine-proof one. It also inspired the villagers to believe that anything is possible with the power of a visionary's dream.”

The positive spill over is an increase in the income of villagers through the forming of self-help groups, adapting new animal husbandry and agricultural technologies. The improved natural environment did not only affect humans but also had a positive impact on other living beings (especially birds).

Now, the main lake of the village is being redeveloped as a natural abode for resident and migratory birds – a close to 146 species.

This vision of the 'one man' is now driven forward through the exemplary contribution of his son and grandson, Mr. Mayur Shah and the young and budding environmentalist, Shaimay Shah, respectively. With a set of multifarious activities involving 'Pitcher Irrigation' and various bird conservation strategies, we find the father-son duo having their future plans of planting more trees and ensuring more floating nests. SIS is proud to have them as two of their key-note speakers in their YRSC 2015.



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Make A Bird's Home ... How?

Bird's Nest



Inspired by the interactive session with multi-faceted personalities such as Ms. Dia Mirza and Mr. Sunjoy Monga, the delegates proceeded to 'build' nests for birds. They had comprehended the message that Ms. Dia Mirza had conveyed so succinctly, 'We need Nature more than Nature needs us.'

Members of the Magic Bus India Foundation that actively works towards the conservation of the environment guided the delegates along with teacher and student mentors in this activity. Delegates created nests for displaced birds using dry leaves, twigs and recycled plastic bottles. They took care not to pad the interior of the nests; it is the natural instinct of birds to cushion their own homes. The idea behind the whole exercise was that birds would explore these man-made nests and select them for raising their families. Land encroachment which has resulted in the large scale destruction of trees has left very little natural habitat for birds to breed. Aquatic birds regularly choke on plastic that litter water bodies. Thus the members of the Young Round Square Conference did their best to make a difference in the lives of these two-legged feathery creatures that harm nobody and are an integral part of the food chain.



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Celebrating the POWER OF ONE



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Celebrating the POWER OF ONE



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Green Coded Celebrities Rendezvous with Dia Mirza



Interview

❖ What has been the turning-point in your life that motivated you towards being an environmentalist?

Ms. Mirza – I had been to a very special school in Hyderabad where I was privileged to be a part of an environment-friendly community. My teachers were exceptional human beings who engaged us and helped us in many nature-friendly activities. We had nature trails and our leisure hours spent with the villagers have left behind an indelible impression in me.

❖ Where do you see yourself in the long run?

Ms. Mirza – It feels good to be a part of this eco-friendly drive where I am currently associated with the Anandana Foundation which works towards sustainable energy solutions. I am privileged to be associated with some phenomenal personalities like Bittu Sahgal, an Environmentalist and writer and founding editor of Sanctuary Asia, Asia's premier wildlife and ecology magazine. With every passing year, we need to move towards a better world and I am optimistic about a genuine change that will impact our land positively. The Sanctuary Cubs I am associated with arranges kids' programmes and raises an awareness that 'nature has the ability to regenerate'. The Tiger, for me, is a metaphor for life and I believe that the future would usher in a better world to live in.

❖ How do you relate yourself to the significance of the YRSC?

Ms. Mirza – As I have mentioned, the early years for every child shape their value systems and I was exposed to a similar circumstance where we had everything that went into shaping me as the person I have become – a strong aspirant to conserve nature in all possible ways.



THE SIS YRS ZEITGEIST KOLI and TARPA - Back to our green roots

Unknown to the delegates, in a shady nook in the school building adjoining the amphitheatre, were women dressed in bright jewel hued navvari saris, with the Maharashtrian nose pin and traditional golden necklaces adorning them. The men wore short dhotis with kurtas and a colourful bandanna on their heads. They were dressed as typical fishermen in Maharashtra and were going to be performing the Koli dance. The stage was bedecked with fishing nets and fish baskets reminiscent of a fishing village.

The air was rent with loud rhythmic music as the dancers made their way to the stage. They swayed gracefully in time with the music, their steps often punctuated by claps. Enthusiastic teacher mentors joined them on stage and delegates ran up on the stage too as they attempted to mimic the steps of the dancers.

The next dance was announced as being from the Warli community, called the Tarpa Dance.

These dancers too were dressed in colourful saris and dhotis but what set them apart from the Koli dancers was that each Tarpa dancer had some fresh leaves attached to their head gear. Their dancing reminded one of the Warli paintings as they held hands and went round and round in circles on the stage. This time too the dance ended with almost all the delegates dancing on the small stage. Not an empty space could be spotted and the stage became a living, pulsing entity as children jumped and swayed.



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Rendezvous with Sanjay Monga-an avid naturalist, bird lover and photographer.



The INTERVIEW

❖ What has been your driving force that has made you one of the environmentalists of the highest order?

Mr. Monga As a kid, I was given an opportunity to travel and experience nature. When I was 6 years old, I used to go on the nature trails with my father and was enraptured by the peacock dancing in the monsoon. My first encounter with a snake still sends a chill down my spine when I recollect those moments during one of those forest walks. These have slowly crystallised into what is now a deep-seated desire in me to 'Protect Nature' in all its forms.

❖ Do you have anything to say about the many legendary guided tours you have conducted for the children?

Mr. Monga Yes, Nature can only be explored through a leisurely stroll.

❖ Do you feel that there is hope for a more environment-friendly world in the future?

Mr. Monga To ensure a more eco-friendly world, the young generation has to be made more conscious about the need to preserve and conserve nature.

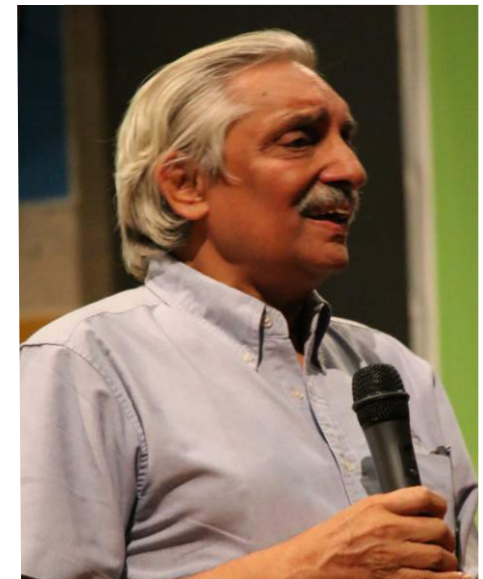
❖ How far is your family an intrinsic part of your passion for the wildlife?

Mr. Monga The very fact that my daughter is named after a Himalayan bird, Yuhina, is testimony to the fact that my family is an intrinsic part of my passion to be a committed conservationist.



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A conversation with Bittu Sahgal- Environmental activist and founding editor of Sanctuary Asia



An interactive session with Bittu Sahgal, Environmental activist and founding editor of Sanctuary Asia made the closing ceremony memorable. He captured the essence of the four days of the Young Round Square Conference with a clip on Mother Earth.

There were many pertinent messages regarding the need to save the earth but the most conspicuous one stated that 'She is worth defending.' It is ironical that human beings need to be reminded about the most critical hygiene issue in their lives; if you do not repair and maintain your home then very soon there will be nothing left to call *home*. Human greed is destroying the earth at a faster rate than the rate at which it can replenish itself.

However, this bleak scenario is lightened up to an extent when one observed the enthusiasm of the student delegates to do their bit to save Mother Nature. Many thought provoking questions such as 'Does technology have a relevant role in saving nature or does it only destroy nature?' revealed that delegates were pondering over the feasibility of several steps to conserve the environment. Sahgal had expressed firm faith in the young audience that was interacting with him and their responses augured that Mother Earth would soon be in safe hands.



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Of Tigers and Forests

A conversation with Bittu Sahgal



The press began by asking the vibrant Mr. Sahgal to share with us the origin of his love for nature. He said that he grew up surrounded by forests and therefore developed an awareness and appreciation of nature. He then smilingly said that he could be called a pantheist as he believes in the interconnectedness of man and nature and aspects of the planet. As a boy, he said, he was fascinated by everything natural, even as being “your ordinary everyday boy.”

When he asked him what worries him about the environment he unhesitatingly said that as human inhabitants, we are walking a tightrope between enjoying what we have and what will go. He said, we must enjoy what we have but to remember that irresponsibility will result in it going. He said that regretfully we think we have become the Gods we invented. “trust, we must trust nature to look after us.” He said humans are taking over the planet like a swarm of termites. Termites aren't bad, he continues, but then said sadly that only if each one of us take action will it make a difference to the environment.

Yeh Sab Kyun? His reflective rhetorical question echoed long after the interview concluded.

The last thing we asked him was why has he singled out tigers as his mission?

He smilingly said, “ for me a tiger is a metaphor of life.” His words, echoed that of Dia Mirza's who too equated a tiger to life.





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SIS Testimonials

Mrs. Mullick:

Don't be shy. Be active. Find solutions to your own problems. Carpe Diem!

Agatha Sangma

Ditch gadgets. Go out, play in the midst of nature. Plant a tree.

Angela

The Opening Ceremony revolving round the Power of One was beautiful. SIS is an absolutely amazing school – open, bright, cheerful and incredibly serene and tranquil.

Papri Ghosh

An absolutely novel idea giving the young minds the opportunity to take part in the conference and allowing them to understand the very objectives of the Young Round Square. This helps them in gaining the perspective of global citizenship with social responsibility. This Round Square ethos built at this very young age spurs them on to take part in such global conferences and ensures a sense of belonging.

Pranab Mukherjee

This event would lead the students into questioning the fact about being urban and how urban do we need to be at the cost of our roots.

Dia Mirza

“What affects others affects me. If I want a better future, I have to care more and do more for the environment. What you do to the world, you are doing it to yourself.” – Dia Mirza's enlightening words who came in as one of the key-note speakers to spread awareness among the young delegates of the power of one and the need to conserve and preserve our 'mother earth'.

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