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St Mark's hosts Asia-Europe Classroom Network Meet
Eighty delegates from 28 Asian and European countries are taking part in the 9th Asia-Europe Classroom Network on climate change in Gurgaon from November 12 to 16. To read about this, turn to Pg2



MANOJ KUMAR/HT

(Clockwise from top) Students perform a dance at 9th Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference at Gurgaon; foreign delegates take part in a session during the conference from November 12 to 16



Gen Green meets to talk climate change, vows action

● **Khimi Thapa**
New Delhi, November 14



IT'S NOT just the world leaders but each one of us that have to take positive steps in our everyday lives to heal the planet from the perils of climate change. This was the concern voiced by the 80 delegates -secondary high school teachers and students -from 28 Asian and European countries taking part in the 9th Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) in Gurgaon from November 12 to 16. The AEC-NET, co-organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation and St Mark's Senior Secondary Public School, Meera Bagh, and supported by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, was inaugurated on Saturday. The students and the teachers from different countries converged to discuss the common global concern-the lackadaisical attitude of the people towards the Earth. A student from Singapore, Lee Rou Urn, said: "Many people do not realise the far-reaching effects of climate change and, therefore, do not make any conscious effort. Only if each of one of us is receptive about inculcating eco-friendly habits like taking public transport,

not using plastic, etc, then only can we bring change. I will do my bit by acquainting my classmates with what I have learnt here and what I will learn in the next few days during the conference."

Corroborating Urn's view, Nillo Alhovaara, a language teacher from Sweden, also emphasised on the need for collective action. Alhovaara said that the best way to bring in change is to talk and he'll do his bit by writing about the conference for a webzine and encourage his students to work collectively with their Asian counterparts to bring about the change.

Drawing attention on how schools in India are proactive in fighting climate change, principal, St Mark's, Meera Bagh, Anjali Aggarwal, said her school already has an eco club which is actively involved in vermin-composting, paper recycling, maintaining medicinal garden and aero-composting of garbage within school premises. Besides this, forget plastic bags, even plastic tiffin boxes are banned in the school.

Another student from St Mark's, which is the only Indian school currently to be part of member of AEC-NET, Prateek Bajaj, said how the whole discussion was truly enriching. Bajaj was in touch with other participants via Internet till he met them on Friday and this is what he had to say: "It's amazing to be here among people

with different backgrounds and cultures."

Among others who graced the event included Delhi Deputy Mayor Azad Singh; Asia-Europe Foundation, Director, People-to-People exchange Zhang Hongtie; St Mark's group of schools' chairman TP Aggarwal; and global coordinator, St Mark's School, Geeta Rajan.

The Asia-Europe Foundation, director, People to People exchange, Zhang Hongtie said, "Teachers are best medium to disseminate eco-friendly values among the next generation".

Agreeing to Hontie, Komal Ghai, a biology and chemistry teacher at St Mark's, said that she will include the eco-activities discussed at the meet in her teaching methodology.

Aarti Khosla, senior manager, programme communications and campaigns, WWF-India and Rolando A Inciong, head, communications and public affairs ASEAN centre for biodiversity, dispelled some myths about climate change and emphasised on the need for collaborative action on urban biodiversity.

The event will conclude with the awarding of the Asia-Europe Classroom Award, an annual prize which recognises the outstanding online collaborative learning project designed by teachers, on Monday. A cash prize of ₹ 1,22,078 (euro 2,000) will be given to the three winners to further develop their projects.