

Indian Prime Minister dedicates Mahindra United World College's biodiversity park to the nation

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MUWCI celebrates 10th Anniversary

Pune: The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh today presided over the 10th Anniversary celebrations of the Mahindra United World College of India (MUWCI) at Paud near Pune. He also dedicated his Republic Day to the nation first ever 75 acre Bio Diversity Park, which is a special MUWCI project committed to promoting the conservation of our environment. Also present at the occasion were Mr. Keshub Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, Mr. Anand Mahindra, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of the Mahindra Group and other dignitaries..... Instituted in 1997, MUWCI is part of the international United World Colleges movement, which also has colleges in Canada, Hong Kong, Norway, Singapore, Italy, Swaziland, UK, USA and Venezuela.

Dedicating the Nation's 1st Bio Diversity Park to the country Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India said, 'As our world inches towards the ominous shadow of global warming, it is rather pleasant and satisfying to stand here in the middle of our nation's first ever Bio Diversity park. It is a great responsibility taken up by the Mahindra Group and I congratulate them on helping us sustain our precious environment. India has abundant flora and fauna in dire need of conservation and uncontaminated reserves such

as the Bio Diversity Park on the MUWCI campus are the need of the hour. The Mahindra United World College Bio Diversity Park is a vociferous reassurance for our country that such globally renowned conglomerates are on a mission to not only mitigate the adverse effects of global warming but also to help India take its rightful place on the world stage.'

Mr. Keshub Mahindra, Chairman, Mahindra Group further added, 'The primary aim of this unique Bio Diversity project is to help preserve the already existing species of flora and fauna in this part of the Western Ghats, which is one of the world's Biodiversity Hotspots. By showcasing the interdependence of all life, I am certain that this project will help us learn how to safeguard our fragile ecosystems and prevent humanity from destroying the benefits provided by nature.. Our dream is to help restore this much degraded land through the Bio Diversity Park and Conservation Reserve.'

Mr. Anand Mahindra – Vice Chairman and Managing Director of the Mahindra Group said, 'The environment, education and health are three areas that have always been very critical for the Mahindra Group. We believe that by investing in the environment and education, we will ensure a better quality of life not only for now but for many generations to come. MUWCI was a cherished vision of my father, the late Mr. Harish Mahindra and I stand here today, an immensely proud man for what this institution has achieved in the last decade. My congratulations to all the students and faculty for having made the Bio Diversity Park a reality and many thanks to the Prime Minister for taking time off his busy schedule to come over to Paud.'

Dr. David Wilkinson, Principal – Mahindra United World College, congratulated his students and thanked the Mahindra Group stating, 'It is indeed a proud moment for all of us at MUWCI as the Prime Minister of

India today dedicates what we consider our contribution to the Nation. At MUWCI, we strive to sensitize our students to issues such as global warming and its implications and I am sure initiatives such as the Bio Diversity Park will help them understand the importance of our environment that much better. I hope that when our students graduate, they will be adequately equipped with the knowledge that will enable them to create a difference in the world around them.'

About the Biodiversity Park

The VAN VIHAR Biodiversity Park and Reserve is divided into two parts. The first part is the BIO-DIVERSITY PARK and the second is a CONSERVATION RESERVE.

The Bio-diversity Park, consisting of about 75 acres, includes the built up area of the college and consists of diverse flora and walking trails with informative signage for the benefit of students, visitors, researchers, etc.

The Conservation Park, consisting of about 95 acres, is intentionally kept away from human activities. This continuous piece of land provides the large corridors and private areas that higher fauna need. The forest department has agreed to add an additional 80 acres of forest land to this area to make it a larger reserve. The park includes a well developed Medicinal Garden, a Butterflt Garden, an Art garden and a Sacred Grove which will collectively inspire students to take up research projects related to ethno-medicine, alternate energy sources, eco-conservation and gene-pool restoration.

The Bio Diversity Project at the MUWCI will focus on water harvesting and stream restoration, pathways and trails, and cataloguing of birds, moths, butterflies, shrubs, climbers, and trees on campus. In the next ten years the college will be totally dependent on renewable energy sources that will be

generated on campus.

Van Vihar will also function as an invaluable research resource for colleges and research institutes in and around Pune and also aims to inspire other educational institutions, corporates and NGOs to develop projects such as this in future.

About Mahindra United World College

The Mahindra United World College of India, part of the United World College movement, was founded by the late Harish Mahindra in 1997. It is the Group's endeavour to promote world-class education with an emphasis on the ideals of peace and understanding, central to the ethos of the United World Colleges. The school is global not only because of the International Baccalaureate degree, but also because of the true international culture in which the students study, live and learn. Each year's batch of about 100 students accommodates about 65 to 70 from abroad. The faculty includes professors from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa, UK and USA. The teacher-student ratio is 1:9. This international mix facilitates global exposure and helps students transcend all artificial barriers based on race, religion, ethnicity, class, gender or nationality. Keen focus is given on all-round development, and students are encouraged to think innovatively by involving themselves in socially and environmentally relevant issues. The students also contribute to the local neighbourhood through unique community service programmes.

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