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**Sonowal attends World Environment Day celebration
Urges people for a pledge for preserving ecology and planting saplings**

Dispur, June 5: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on the occasion of World Environment Day urged upon the people of Assam to take a pledge to devote time for nature and work to preserve the ecology and increase the green cover of the state.

Participating in the celebration of World Environment Day at Chakardo in Rani today where the day was observed in a very restrained manner amid Covid 19 pandemic, Chief Minister Sonowal planted a sapling to inaugurate a plantation drive in the area along with Forest and Environment Minister Parimal Suklabaidya.

Chief Minister Sonowal said, "Assam is known for its rich biodiversity and its green coverage. However, though urbanization and its manifestations have had dwindling effect on the green coverage of the state, may I urge upon all the residents of Assam to take a pledge to plant sapling on this auspicious day and take the responsibility to take care of the sapling unless it grows into a tree".

Sonowal said, "Government of Assam is very clear in its objective to make Assam a bio-diversity hot-spot and set the objective to transform Assam into a pollution free state in the year 2016. Therefore, our government is working assiduously on this front and planting saplings to increase the green coverage to make Assam a zero-pollution state". He also said that every year the period from May to July is considered as the plantation period and during this time more and more plantation drive should be initiated. Even this year also steps have been taken to plant more saplings to strengthen the biodiversity to make the state more beautiful.

Underlining the importance of maintaining the sanctity of the nature as the aberration of it might prove detrimental to the ecological balance and the survival of humanity, Sonowal said that during Covid 19 pandemic, Government of Assam has decided to plant 1.5 crore saplings throughout the state as the process would complete in the month of July this year. Synchronising with the occasion, Chief Minister Sonowal presented saplings to the journalists and asked them to work as force multiplier for green and clean Assam.

Environment and Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya, Chief Minister's Media Adviser Hrishikesh Goswami, Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna, Principal Secretary Forest and Environment Avinash Joshi, PCCF A.M. Singh and several senior officers of the government were present on the occasion. Earlier, Sonowal also planted saplings at this official residence.

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