



ECOLOGY & SUSTAINABLE LIVING

REPORT

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER



**JESUIT ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA (JAAI),
WEST ZONE, CONGRESS 2025, MUMBAI**

November 14th - 16th 2025

FOCUS AREAS

CARBON NEUTRAL



ZERO WASTE



WATER POSITIVE



TREES & BIODIVERSITY



A COLLECTIVE JOURNEY TOWARDS A GREENER, RESPONSIBLE FUTURE
BY THE JESUIT ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA - WEST ZONE

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DAY 1 Nov 14th

CONGRESS HOSTED BY JAAI WZ BEGINS AT XAVIER'S COLLEGE



Saloni Nande and Alister Augustine

The Jesuit Alumni Association of India West Zone (JAAI WZ), Champions for Sustainability, hosted their tri-annual Congress this weekend. The inaugural event took place on 14th November 2025 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. All alumni of Jesuit educational institutions were delighted to attend the event.

The crowd gathered at the registration desk and then inside the premises. The Alumni hugged each other, talking and laughing while eating snacks. Seated around the tables, conversations ranged from good old memories and how far they have come. There were also discussions about the Congress initiatives towards ecological and sustainable living and how these are helping the environment.

"It feels very nostalgic to come here after 48 years," said Joy Vivian Tellis, Delegate from St. Mary's High School (ISC) and currently working as an Addiction Councillor helping people quit toxins.

"St. Xavier's College is the most iconic college of Asia and it feels like a privilege to stand in this ground," said Sharookh Contractor, Mary's High School (ICSE), Mazagaon, 1979.



Fr. Lawrie Ferraro, ex-Director of Xavier Institute of Communications (XIC) said, "Xavier is an experience by itself. It's a lifestyle. Everything is possible, but with your love."

Talking about the event, Neelmani Rangesh, President of JAAI said, "We have come here for a purpose. We have a team for the ecological and sustainable living projects, and especially the West Zone is working pretty hard for this."

Speaking about the event, Fr. Frazer Mascarenhas, ex-Principal of St. Xavier's College, felt the Congress is an opportunity for the Jesuits and their alumni to get together once again to do something good for the world. He said, "the most important topic in today's world is caring for nature, for the environment. So I think it's a very exciting event, because many good things can come out of this for the ecology, for saving Mother Earth, and for future generations."



LIGHTING OF THE LAMP



The Congress opened with an invocation to the Almighty. The lamp was lit by Archbishop John Rodrigues, Archbishop of the Bombay Diocese; Fr. Dr. Keith Dsouza, S.J., Rector of St Xavier's College; Mr. Vivek Gandhi, President of JAAI West Zone; Shloka Nath, keynote speaker; Neelmani Rangesh, JAAI President. This was followed by a short prayer led by Fr. Dr. Keith D'Souza S. J.

DAY 1 Nov 14th

A Call for Active Participation

Saloni Nande

Creation is not a problem to be solved, but a gift to be cherished," said Fr. John Ravi, S.J., National Alumni Advisor to JAAI. He talked about how, as an alumnus of JAAI, one should take steps to protect the environment.

"Every Jesuit institution has always believed that education is not merely for personal advancement, but for the transformation of the world," said Fr. John Ravi S. J.

He expressed concerns over melting glaciers, polluted rivers, disappearing forests, and displaced communities. He believes that as Jesuit alumni, one cannot stand by as passive observers or mute spectators. According to him, everyone is an active agent of reconciliation with God, with others, and with creation.

"This Congress, therefore, is an invitation to reawaken our ecological consciousness, to revisit our lifestyles, and to discover sustainable ways of living that honour both the Creator and His creation," he said.

Fr John believes that, as an alumnus, apart from nostalgia and reunions, there is a lot more that needs to be brought to the table - professional expertise, social influence, and community networks to promote sustainable practices, support ecological education, and build greener, more equitable communities.

He concluded by saying, "When Jesuit alumni across provinces act together, we become a powerful force for good – a network of hope for our planet."



Fr. John Ravi, S.J. National Alumni Advisor to JAAI

OTHER NOTABLE SPEAKERS



Fr. Luke Rodrigues, S.J. , Province Co-ordinator



Mr. Neelmani Rangesh, JAAI President



Mr. Vivek Gandhi, President, JAAI West Zone

"As we gather here tonight, surrounded by the alumni of Jesuit institutions and lots of memories, I am reminded of the profound impact we can have when we unite for a common cause. This Congress is not just a celebration of our past; it is a call to action for our future. Together, we can champion sustainability and ecological stewardship, ensuring that our legacy is one of care for the earth, and compassion for all its inhabitants"

Fr. Luke Rodrigues S.J.

DAY 1 Nov 14th

Archbishop John Rodrigues highlights the Church's Commitment to Ecology



Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Alister Augustine

His Grace Archbishop John Rodrigues, in his address at the JAAI West Zone seminar, emphasised on the crucial role of ecology as the Church's mission. His speech on environmental care drew on both historical and contemporary Church teachings, urging greater responsibility towards creation.

He gave references to several saints and popes who emphasised the care for creation. Foremost among them being, St. Francis of Assisi, the 12th-century saint, who greatly impacted the Church by reviving spirituality with emphasis on keeping a deep connection to nature. He was renowned for calling all creatures his brothers and sisters, preaching to the birds, and even taming a troublesome wolf by negotiating peace with the townspeople. In his Canticle of Creation, he referred to the sun as "brother Sun" and the moon as "sister Moon," - he is fondly remembered for his love for nature and encouraging others to care for it, which he believed went hand-in-hand.

He also referred to Pope St. John Paul II's teachings on ecology, specifically from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, where he stated, "Human dominion over creation is not absolute. It is limited by concern for the quality of life of others, including future generations." Archbishop Rodrigues stressed the importance of fostering a deep connection with the environment in today's children. He asked, "Will today's generations' kids get to touch a leaf?"

Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have also contributed to the Church's ecological mission. Archbishop Rodrigues highlighted Pope Francis' Laudato Si encyclical, as emphasising its call for integral ecology, which links environmental issues with social justice and he quoted the Pope's vision, saying "There is an intimate link between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

Concluding with a personal reflection, the Archbishop shared his childhood experience, he recalled as he said, "As a child, I loved climbing mulberry trees to pick fruit and I'd spend hours trying to reach higher branches. I also enjoyed just sitting there and taking it all in together. We would see beautiful golden orioles from our window as well. I'm thankful and grateful to God for these amazing experiences of being close to nature."

He concluded his speech urging the seminar participants to strive for sustainability and to work for "the greater glory of God" through ecological care.

DAY 1 Nov 14th

HOPE HAS A CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ITS OWN:

Shloka Nath

Shriyangsh Biswas and Shivam Mishra

Mumbai: Shloka Nath the CEO of India Climate Collaborative (ICC) and the keynote speaker for the evening, spoke about the responsibility that people have towards climate and reversal of climate change. She named her speech: 'What humanity has to offer the world', because she explained that in an average climate conference human values are not discussed. Rather, at such conferences they talk about compliance, losses, and metrics. She continued to take examples of the irreversible melting of the Greenland ice sheets, extreme summers in Delhi that recorded temperatures up to 52.9 degrees Celsius, 1500 percent excess rainfall in Mumbai in the month of July and,

"The vision and values you carry, is the only way change is going to happen in the world

overall, 300 heat-related deaths in India. "The vision and values you carry, is the only way change is going to happen in the world," said Nath.

According to her, deforestation is destroying habitats of wildlife and causing loss of soil quality, which is teeming with microorganisms essential for healthy plants. The population of pollinators necessary



Shloka Nath the CEO of India Climate Collaborative (ICC) and the keynote speaker

DAY 1 Nov 14th



for the growth of crops is declining as climate patterns change. Nath said, "So, as our technology is growing powerful, our compassion feels more fragile." In her speech she added that the planet has crossed its first major climate tipping point. To reverse this she appeals to people to contribute to the intricate web of nature rather than conquer it. That is how the climate crisis can be reversed in due time.

She continued to speak about the human relationship with environment. To enforce her point she used examples of annual Indian rainfall. 70 per cent of India's annual rainfall arrives in just four months; without it, two-thirds of our land will be semi-arid or arid desert. Over 53 percent of India's farmlands are entirely rainfed, and 80 percent of our major rivers are fed by the monsoon. A delay of just ten days in the monsoon shaves up to two percent of India's GDP.

However, she emphasised the fact that 29000 hectares of degraded coastlines are being revived by human intervention, which shows that it has been a collaborative effort by the community. It conveys a message that if people put in a collaborative effort to reverse the damage caused to the environment, it is possible to do it. And for the first time every district of India can see its own climate profile using the 'Climate Risk Atlas', which helps them assess the threats. According to Nath, the combination

"So, as our technology is growing powerful, our compassion feels more fragile

of scientific precision and human compassion can produce results at the deepest form of intelligence and stewardship.

Towards the end of her powerful speech she said, "A philanthropist once asked me if their small contribution will matter?" and her answer to that was yes because climate is not a battle between giants, it is a choir and every voice strengthens the song. For her, true giving is not measured in Rupees, but in recognition that it is not someone else's pain, it is 'our' pain. She exemplified this by stating that she saw corporate leaders who once said they don't do climate change and only work in health, shift their entire portfolio after realising that extreme heat was driving maternal and child health emergencies in the very communities their foundation served.

She ended her speech with an urge to the delegates to build a world where science, faith, generosity, justice and humanity culminate into a force of renewal.

DAY 1 Nov 14th

Day 1 concludes on an Entertaining Note

Saloni Nande and Shivam Mishra

Before the close of Day -1 of the JAAI West Zone Congress, Benison Vaz, Secretary of JAAI WZ delivered the Vote of Thanks. He thanked the various delegates for their contribution to the event and the Alumni Association. Gratitude was expressed to the keynote speaker, Shloka Nath, for her insight and vision towards sustainability and ecology. He thanked Archbishop John Rodrigues for setting the tone of the Congress and to Fr. John Ravi for providing his valuable guidance. A special thanks was given to Fr. Dr. Keith D'Souza, Rector of St. Xavier's College and his entire team for the tremendous hospitality and coordination extended to the organising committee. A special mention was given to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) for providing the 'Tree of Life'. The association thanked Nilesh for providing the wonderful catering and Roger Drego for the sound and lighting in the quadrangle.



After the Vote of Thanks, the Bombay Jesuit Alumni Band, consisting of alumni of Jesuit institutions in Mumbai, gave an electrifying performance. The alumni ranged from the age groups of 20s to 60s. They regaled the crowd with songs of old and new. Everyone grooved to the beats. People even came in front of the stage and danced their hearts out.

The selfie point named 'The Tree of Life' was packed with enthusiastic, photogenic people. They had their pictures clicked together with their peers, alumni mates and Jesuit fathers, reliving their good old college and school memories.

The evening wound down with dinner and conversations around tables and the anticipation of the next two days of events to follow.

SELFIE-POINT

THE TREE OF LIFE



BMC Installation of a Selfie-point: The Tree of Life. Delegates line up to take pictures of themselves and instantly receive a framed copy of it.



DAY 1 Nov 14th



THE BOMBAY JESUIT ALUMNI BAND

Brendan Alphonso-keyboard (St. Mary's High School ICSE); Joshua Vaz - Guitar (St. Stanislaus); Aldridge Dsouza - Bass; Zayne Chaves - Drums and Bass (St. Mary's High School ICSE); Sylvester Chaves - Drums (St. Mary's High School SSC) Singers: Nathan Pereira (St. Mary's High School SSC), Dominic Rose (St. Mary's High School SSC), Brendan Alphonso, (St. Mary's High School ICSE); Sachin Awasti - Hindi (St. Mary's High School SSC), Dr. Ashwin Correia - saxophone and singer (St. Stanislaus)

Comperes for the evening:

Joann Fernandes (alumnus of St. Xavier's College)
Shubham Jadhav (alumnus of St. Mary's High School, SSC)

COMMENTS FROM DELEGATES



"I was very inspired by Shloka's speech and when she said, the two-fold approach we have to take is to heal the world and heal relationships."

Dr. Karuna Gokarn,
Principal of St. Xavier's College

After the program, the delegates expressed their views on the initiative by the JAAI WZ and how the program serves as a platform to raise climate concerns.

Shloka Nath, expressed her wish to make climate conversation topics like ecology compulsory in elementary school. **"We need blue and green infrastructure. And I really believe in the young generation because I genuinely think that the most imaginative and creative ideas are going to come from there."**



DAY 2 Nov 15th

ART MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

At the Second Day of JAAI WZ Congress on Ecology and Sustainable Living

Nandinee Keluskar

Day two of Jesuit Alumni Association of India West Zone (JAAI WZ), Champions for Sustainability began as the morning sunrays hit the campus of St. Mary's School ICS, Mazagaon. People were welcomed by the beautifully decorated pathway with pinwheels, plants, tassels and other green decor leading to the registration desk. The volunteers were ready with Id cards and a welcome card made of eco-friendly materials. After registration, the attendees were handed tote bags with a flask, a plant, a diary and a pen, and bamboo straws showing the commitment to the Congress's theme—'Ecology and Sustainable Living: Our Collective Responsibility'.

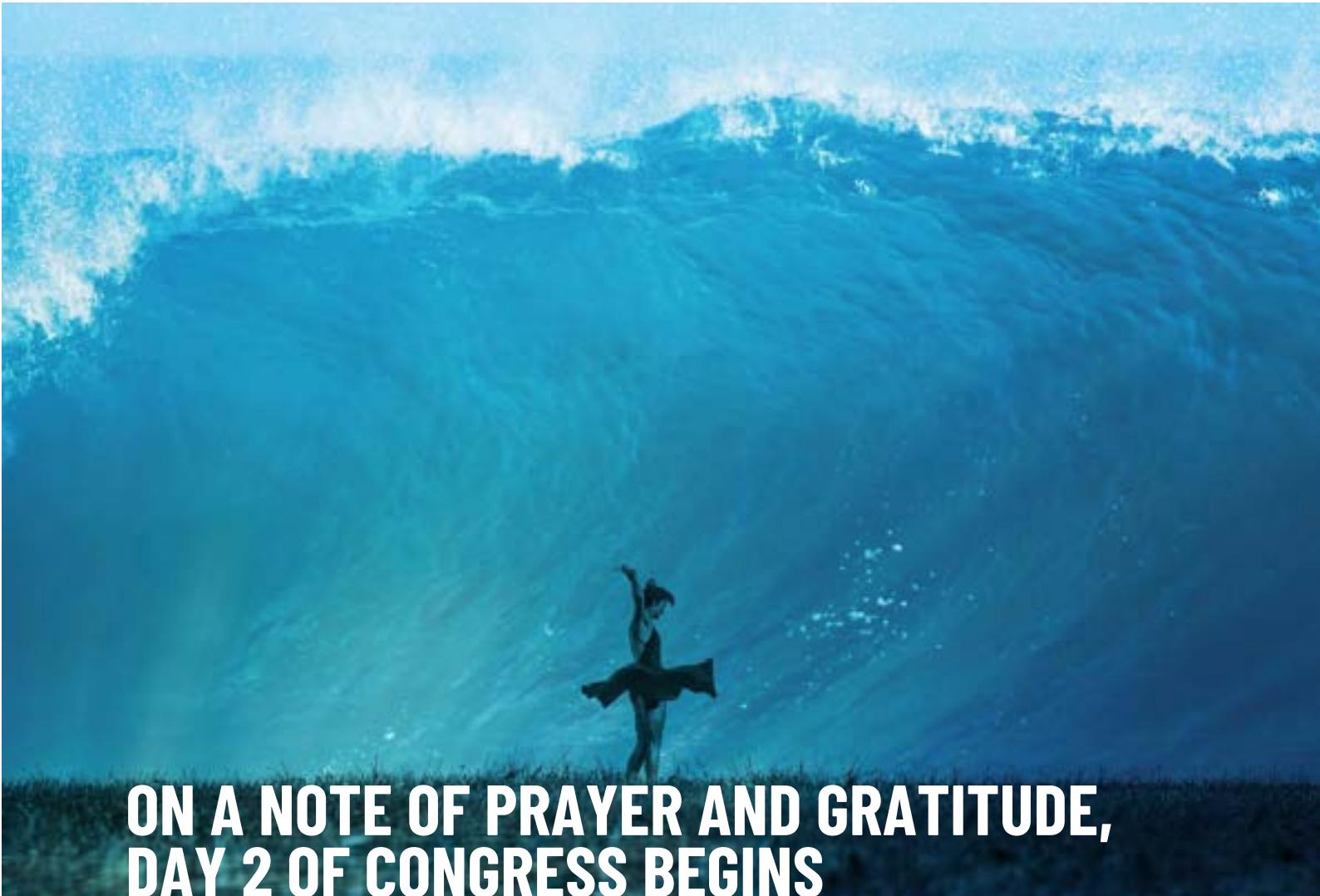
The way up to the auditorium was lined with thought-provoking art installations highlighting the importance of sustainability. "It took two months of planning for the decor. It was the combined efforts of students, parents, staff, and teachers to come up with ideas that show different ways to sustain our nature," said Nicole Gomes, delegate volunteer and teacher of St. Mary's School ICSE. All the decor was made keeping nature in mind.





From BMC installations of a large butterfly made from flowers and a green corner of plants, to the best-of-waste installations created by the teachers of St. Mary's High School ICSE, art at its ultimate showcasing Ecology and Sustainability





ON A NOTE OF PRAYER AND GRATITUDE, DAY 2 OF CONGRESS BEGINS

Oshin Rakshit

In silent remembrance of the Lord in our hearts, the JAAI WZ Congress began their second day meet with a prayer service. Keeping this year's theme in mind, the Champions for Sustainability, the alumni group quietly gathered in the auditorium hall of the school after breakfast, to begin their day by reiterating the goals and values of this alumni meet.

The prayer service was conducted by the St. Mary's ICSE team. "I Hope You Dance" a soulful song was played at the start after a small recitation of the same poem by the St. Mary's team. The poem helped put forth a sense of passion for life with the refrain: "I hope you're no longer a passive observer but a passionate participant (of life)". The prayer proceeded with the St. Mary's team invoking God's help and guidance through the important themes that would be covered in the Congress. Themes of Humility and Reverence, Hope and Renewal, Courage and Stewardship, Awareness and Gratitude, and Commitment and Action were covered. Each of these themes were met with a response that were recited by the alumni in unison. The prayer was concluded with the recitation of Psalm 8, ending the prayer session on a note of calmness, humility and gratitude.



Prayer Intercessions on Stewards of Creation

*inspired by the song:
"I hope you dance"*



For Wonder & Gratitude



For Humility & Reverence



For Hope & Renewal



For Courage in Stewardship



For Awareness & Gratitude



For Commitment & Action



DAY 2 Nov 15th

Fr Anil highlights the Jesuit's stand for Climate Justice and Ecology



Varun Srinivas

Father Anil Pereira SJ, Provincial of the Bombay Province of Jesuits delivered the inaugural speech at Day 2 of the JAAI West Zone Congress.

Fr. Anil welcomed everyone indicating the significance of such events, "On these occasions we come to meet friends, network with companions, for many of you there is a sense of nostalgia like walking down memory lane." Yet he reiterated how such events can allow for conversations and actions on themes as the one this year on ecology and sustainable measures.

He highlighted how historically the Jesuits have always been ecologically conscious since 1983 through advocacy, awareness, research, education, agriculture and much more.

Citing the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si', Fr. Anil mentioned how all of these have influenced their mission in creating a more ecologically conscious world. He referred to the African Philosophy, 'ubuntu' which means: "I am because we are," where he reiterated the fact that ecological conservation is a joint effort by all to create a better sustainable future.

He stressed the need for ecological conversion at the personal level and the community level and reconciling with the Creator to create a better planet for all. "God labours in creation and we are called to collaborate with God to heal the planet," added Fr. Anil.

God labours in creation and we are called to collaborate with God to heal the planet

DAY 2 Nov 15th

JESUIT WZ ECOLOGY INITIATIVE

WHO SAID WE CAN'T DO WITHOUT FOSSIL FUELS?:

Fr. Frazer Mascarenhas S.J.

Eshisha Java

In 2024, coal proposals in India were found surging at an alarming rate. At a time when many countries are reducing their coal proposals, India is witnessing a rise in new projects. To illustrate how prioritising green energy and planetary care for creation is possible, Fr. Frazer Mascarenhas S.J., Province Development Director of Society of Jesus Bombay Province highlighted the networks established by JAAI (West Zone). "Who said we can't do without fossil fuels? Our goal is to demonstrate that care for creation and the use of renewable energy is possible," said Fr. Mascarenhas. Adding a humanitarian aspect, he said the poor are the worst affected by this environmental degradation, and we must push governments to act, to prevent an "eco-genocide." This requires major economic changes, but those changes are possible via the advocacy created by the Province Development Program, JAAI WZ and Schools.

the poor are the worst affected by this environmental degradation, and we must push governments to act, to prevent an "eco-genocide"

Fr. Frazer spoke about Renewable Energy Network (REN) which aims to adapt solar powered energy and further move towards a full dependency on green energy. He made a mention that of the four provinces of the West Zone the Goa Jesuits have implemented this network by installing solar panels across their institutions. The institutions assembled and commissioned the panels themselves, showcasing their commitment, vision, and hard work.

For a holistic approach to sustainability, Fr. Mascarenhas spoke about adopting the SEAL framework—Spirituality, Education, Awareness, and Lifestyle. Under this model, initiatives like "Eco Club 2.0" become more effective, as they help schools and parishes build teams that promote sustainable practices. SEAL encourages leaders to focus on creating environmentally responsible schools by



tracking per-capita use of energy, water, waste, transport, and biodiversity. "With an integrated effort all around, there comes the vision of a sustainable school," concluded Fr. Mascarenhas.

THE 'REN' SUCCESS STORY IN GOA PROVINCE

"We began with two institutions and schools in Goa, but when we saw the influence of saving cost on fossil fuels and technology, many other institutions across Goa began the implementation," said Fr. Nigel Alphonso, S.J., Jesuit House Goa. The Goa province currently leads with 95% green energy generation, followed by Mumbai at 60%. By June 2027, all four provinces are expected to achieve 100% green energy generation.

DAY 2 Nov 15th

JESUIT WZ ECOLOGY INITIATIVE

CLIMATE HAS ALREADY CHANGED, NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION:

Fr. Joel Noronha S.J.

Nandinee Keluskar

In the auditorium of St. Mary's School, located in the heart of Mumbai's urban metropolis, a much-needed conversation about collective conservation efforts took place. Fr. Joel Noronha, Director of Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal, (a charity in Nashik working towards sustainable living and a self-reliant economy of small and marginal rural farming families), spoke about the interconnectedness of the environmental struggles faced by residents of urban and rural areas. He mentioned that the issues faced by urban dwellers, such as air pollution, heavy rains, and food inflation, as well as the problems of rural people, including loss of livelihood, water scarcity, and soil infertility, are caused by the same climate issues: deforestation, climate change, and excessive use of chemical fertilisers.

Talking about how the number of trees in rural areas affects pollution levels in urban areas, Fr. Noronha said, "Everybody has to breathe. A person on an average per year breathes about two lakh litres of oxygen, for which around 6 to 29 trees are required to absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. So when the trees go on decreasing, the factor of pollution goes on increasing." He further explained the similar correlation when it comes to water, where less harvesting of water by forests results in a low underground water table, which in turn results in scarcity of water in urban areas.

Fr. Noronha highlighted the cause of the rise of cancer in urban areas, which is in the heavy use of fertilisers and pesticides in farm produce, that is consumed by city dwellers. With advanced research at Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal, the soil from various regions can be studied and treated to restore their fertility in a sustainable way. "Above all, the interconnected value of being humans and trusting each other and understanding the lives and struggles of each other instead of suffering independently is the key to solving environmental issues for both urban and rural regions," said Fr. Noronha, calling for joint efforts.



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COMMENTS FROM DELEGATES

"We knew bits and pieces of the efforts in sustainability by the Jesuit institutions, but to understand the concrete values that are being put into place by institutions across the country, Fr. Joel's video and speech were helpful. We would like to share his videos with our students to make them understand the same."

Anneth Fernandes, a teacher at St Xavier's High School, Fort.

DAY 2 Nov 15th

CARBON NEUTRALITY

A DEVELOPED NATION IS NOT ONE WHERE POOR PEOPLE DRIVE CARS, IT IS ONE WHERE RICH PEOPLE USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

Dr. Milind Kulkarni

Oshin Rakshit and Varun Srinivas

Dr. Milind Kulkarni, who is an expert in the field of environmental engineering and management, did a workshop on Carbon Neutrality. His talk focused on three main aspects, the global scenario of carbon emissions and the green movement, a quiz for the audience to help understand how they can reduce their footprint in their personal lives and finally ways in which alumni can help out Jesuit institutions to greener methods of operation.



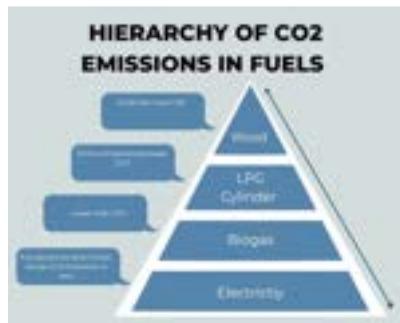
Dr. Milind Kulkarni, Founder, Prachi Services and Consultant for Green Companies

Global Scenario

The session began with Dr. Milind Kulkarni explaining what greenhouse gases are and why carbon emission is so dangerous. Quoting Elon Musk, he says, "Only 10% of our planet's life is remaining." He explained what the greenhouse gases are and how human activity emissions are 25 Gt of CO₂e higher per year than the possible natural absorption. And how that is contributing to the increased warming leading to life threatening climate-change effects. Important parts of the world including Mumbai will "drown" in the next few years if the global temperature is not reduced

by 2°C by 2070, a goal set by India. To achieve this, the need for change in public habits was necessary. By proposing the idea that the definition of developed nations needs to be changed, Dr. Kulkarni said, "A developed nation is not one where poor people drive cars, it is one where rich people use public transport."

To help the audience get a better understanding on carbon consumption a quiz was conducted on the topic by Mr. Baba Prasad Lanka, Vice President, JAAI West Zone. This highlighted the various ways through which CO₂ emissions can be managed through travel, renewable methods, waste management, etc.



Dr. Kulkarni then emphasised on how alumni can help schools manage their carbon emissions. He introduced the concept of 3 Scopes of Carbon Reduction. Scope 1 refers to the direct emissions made by entities owned by the institutions, e.g. schools owning LPG Cylinders for cooking, Diesel Generators etc. Scope 2 and 3 referred to indirect carbon emissions where the sources are not owned by the institutions directly, e.g. purchased electricity for Scope 2, and students using their own private vehicles to come to school for Scope 3.

"Scope 3 requires the most work as students come in their private vehicles and they produce a lot of carbon emissions," said Dr. Kulkarni. "This is because mostly Scope 1 and 2 have been outsourced or publicised by the schools, e.g. outsourcing school buses and canteens," he further adds as the main areas of focus for the schools.

The talk also expanded on methods for schools to audit and monitor their own carbon emission through an online form. Updating this form regularly over the years will help institutions to study and evaluate themselves, analyse their strengths and weaknesses and improve themselves on their own.

How can the alumni help this cause?

Through CSR initiatives, alumni can invite their own contacts to invest in schools, put up solar panels and thereby empower them to become energetically greener and self-sustained.

They can help draft green policies, give financial support, install green electronics like BLDC Fans, LED Lamps etc., equip schools with electric buses, understand the hierarchy of fuels and aim at becoming as green as possible

"Carbon Neutrality is not the end of a journey - it is the beginning of living rightly with our common home," concluded Dr. Kulkarni.

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DAY 2 Nov 15th

ZERO WASTE

WASTE IS WEALTH IN THE WRONG PLACE:

Baba Prasad Lanka

Eshisha Java & Nandinee Keluskar



Mr. Baba Prasad Lanka, MD of 3D Foundry Tech Mumbai, Vice-President, JAAI WZ

The Kanjurmarg dumping ground spread across 250 acres is 10 - 18 storey mountain of solid waste that comes from across the city of Mumbai. Due to the lack of segregation of waste in dumpsites, anaerobic reactions take place leading to the emission of methane gas which can cause health hazards. Due to the severity of these issues at dumping sites, waste management was one of the topics that was highlighted at the Congress held by JAAI WZ. "If we change our mindset, waste is a resource that can be used," said Baba Prasad Lanka, Managing Director, 3D Foundry Tech, Mumbai while addressing the talk on zero waste.

Citing the example of Indore, a city that has been consecutively ranking Number One since the last eight years, he stressed on how managing waste effectively is achievable. "Previously 35% of the waste was segregated,

now 90% of the waste is segregated," said Lanka.

Waste Management Hierarchy

"Dumping grounds are mirrors of our own habits," said Lanka stressing on how our personal habits impact waste generation. He further mentioned the "3Rs" of waste management, which are 'Refuse', 'Reduce' and 'Reuse'. "Cleanest waste is the waste that is not generated," said Lanka talking about refusing to use certain materials like single use plastic. "19 items were banned in India under the single-use plastic ban," he further added. He highlighted how waste is a resource in the wrong place while stating some examples like the right place for food waste finds its proper purpose when composted and plastic can be recycled into benches, tables and chairs. With the rise of ecommerce and quick commerce, our usage of packaging has also increased which in turn calls for a higher need for reusing. Recycling is the next step, which is more machinery driven. The way to zero waste generation is rooted in community efforts.

Potential of India's Waste Management Recovery

India's waste-management recovery shows potential with the resource-recovery industry valued at Rs 10-15 lakh crore and driven by initiatives

like plastic-to-pellet conversion and food-waste composting and the creation of over 3 million green jobs, supported by community composting and reverse logistics for e-waste and packaging. It also includes an additional potential of 5-10 GW of energy and materials from waste, enabled by waste-to-energy plants and biogas production from food waste.

Lanka gave the example of how recent events have been generating huge amounts of waste, suggesting that decorations can be reused and repurposed so they can serve multiple events rather than becoming single-use disposables. He further underscored how JAAI WZ has shifted to using fabric for all their printed materials instead of relying on flex printouts — an intentional move towards reducing waste and creating long-lasting resources.

The larger vision behind this change is to build a system where every material used for the Congress can be returned to the school, stored, and reused for future editions. Over time, JAAI WZ aims to reach a stage where the entire Congress is conducted using fully reused materials.

After a Menti-quiz that exhorted the delegates to think deeply on the subject, he took them through the possible areas that alumni can help in Policy formation, Audit, training / awareness, processes and funding.



As a teacher, I feel it's my responsibility to pass on this new perspective to my students because they are the future. Today I learnt so much about waste segregation and multilayered plastics, things we still haven't implemented in our school and frankly, even Mumbai hasn't fully adopted.

I really want to take this information back and start working on it.

Gaspar Britto, teacher at St. Xavier's High School, Mumbai,



DAY 2 Nov 15th

WATER POSITIVE

INDIA IS MONSOON-RICH BUT WATER POOR:

Dr. Milind Kulkarni

Aarushi Giria and Husaina Ujjainwala

Dr. Milind Kulkarni took the next workshop on 'Water Management: Becoming Water Positive'. Kulkarni showed, using statistics, that although India receives nearly 4,000 BCM of water annually, and has only 1200 BCM of demand, still water stress remains constant, because the water received through rainfall is not managed effectively.

Kulkarni highlighted the growing pressure on resources, overpopulation, chronic shortages, and the fact that India, despite having 80 per cent of the world's population, has only 4 percent of the world's water sources. "The next war will be for water," he warned, pointing to Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka's recurring disputes.

However, there is a silver lining and Kulkarni believes

institutions adopting water positivity— where humans restore water, more than the fresh water consumed— is the solution

"institutions adopting water positivity— where humans restore water, more than the fresh water consumed— is the solution." He cited research on how schools unknowingly end up using treated water for cleaning and mopping, rather than using the harvested recycled water. The session's focus was on Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting as one of the major sources for restoring water.

Addressing how the alumni can give back to their schools, Kulkarni discussed a software where water dashboards are created to provide alerts on when water is found to be wasted. Through CSR funding, he showed how the alumni can become a collaborator in this journey of water positivity.

The session concluded with the audit and reflection form, quizzes, and interaction with the audience.

COMMENTS FROM DELEGATES

During the breaks and after the program, the delegates expressed their views on the Day 2 sessions of the JAAI, West Zone Congress and how the program serves as a platform to raise climate concerns.

The session on carbon footprint really opened my eyes. I never realised that even using Google or ChatGPT emits carbon. I use it so much, and now I genuinely want to tell my students about this. It's something we all need to be aware of."

Reonilda Pereira,
Loyola High School,
Goa

"Kulkarni made this crisis less daunting with all those stats and solutions,"

Andrew Williams,
an alumnus of St Xavier's College,
Kolkata

Very practical things, things that you really give a thought to see how they would work out. The session on water positive by Dr. Milind Kulkarni stood out to me. Preserving water is the need of the hour and the solutions he mentioned were something that in our own limited way we can do. His example of student throwing their left over water from the bottle, that can be reused in plants and all I think are doable in own households, so yeah water preservation is something I'm keen on doing,"

Merilen Borges,
a retired professor of
St. Stanislaus High School, Bandra

DAY 2 Nov 15th

TREES & BIO-DIVERSITY

EVERY LEAF COUNTS WHEN WE MEASURE, WHAT WE TREASURE:

Deepti Talpade

Adithi Nemani and Alister Augustine

Deepti Talpade, Program Lead at the World Resource Institute and Dnyanedev Mundhe who is the Deputy Superintendent for Gardens, Brihanmumbai Mumbai Corporation (BMC) conducted the workshop on Trees and Greenery. The session began with Talpade talking about biodiversity and heat exposure and the challenges faced by the people due to extreme heat. Talpade's main goal is to promote climate resilience initiatives and to implement ways for climate adaptation.

The session was divided into three parts: understanding urban heat and how tree covers reduce heat, scientific approach to greening, and promotion of possible greening interventions. "These issues are caused mostly due to climate change, but also due to how our cities are built: dense, inadequate vegetation, and heat-absorbing surfaces," said Talpade.

She elaborated on how extreme temperatures and loss of internal temperature controls lead to heat rams, heat exhaustion, heat strokes, and also worsens health conditions like diabetes and chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease.

The session was then concluded by Talpade talking about the number of initiatives implemented and taken by them towards promoting the climate resilience initiatives through various case studies and real-life examples.

"Not just plant a tree—become a steward of shade, soil and soul," concluded Talpade.

These issues are caused mostly due to climate change, but also due to how our cities are built: dense, inadequate vegetation, and heat-absorbing surfaces



Deepti Talpade
Program Lead,
World Resource Institute
Dnyanedev Mundhe
Dy Superintendent (Gardens)
BMC

What role can Alumni play in increasing accessible green cover in their schools or societies?

5 KEY STEPS FOR SCIENTIFIC URBAN GREENING

To avoid random planting of trees, different ecosystems attract different species, greening should strengthen the existing ecosystem. This avoids monocultures and promotes biodiversity.

Baseline assessments – temperature, biodiversity and soil

measure temperature using the thermal guns, biodiversity assessments (native/ non-native, bees, butterflies, birds, etc) assess soil quality

Ecosystems approach

Engage with Alumni or outside botanists, create public biodiversity register, promote native planting as much as you can

Engage with local communities

Eco-clubs, green forum, greening beyond the gate, adopt part of campus, make educational signages for all

Integrate water circularity

Use recycled water, harvest rainwater, recharge aquifers, used water from bottles and on-campus composting.

Create a Monitoring plan

Tree Tagging & Data Drive, Annual Tree Audit, Vegetation Dashboard

DAY 2 Nov 15th

PLENARY

Alma Mater goes Greener, JAAI WZ on Sustainability



JAAI WZ plans to have one Eco-ambassador, who can and make others take charge, from each province (on fulfilling Vision of Sustainable Schools/College by 2028)

Husaina Ujjainwala and Aarushi Giria

The plenary session at the Jesuit Alumni Associations of India (JAAI) West Zone Congress on the evening of November 15 brought together the alumni, Province Coordinators for the Alumni (PCAs), and school representatives under one roof. With the panel of PCAs and one alumnus/a from each province, as well as the National Adviser for Alumni, with a moderator on the stage and all other Jesuits and alumni in the audience, it became a platform of discussion, suggestions and questions.

From alumni raising questions on policy guidelines to signing of the 2025 vision of sustainable schools, the major question asked was how will it be implemented and passed on to other schools? "We need to acknowledge we have come so far... However, having said that, being water positive, zero waste management, and working with the government are the areas we still have to work on," said one of the PCA panelists.

Furthermore, to fulfill the vision, JAAI WZ plans to have one eco-ambassador, who can and make others take charge, from each province. "Conviction comes from awareness," said one of the panelists. The session saw a lot of stress on the collaborative efforts of alumni and schools.

The plenary and the sessions for the day culminated with the resolution of transforming Jesuit alma mater into institutions driving towards and achieving by 2028, as per the Vision of Sustainable Schools/Colleges, the four pillars of Carbon Neutral, Zero Waste to Dumpsites, Water-Positive and Trees with Biodiversity, through the collaboration of alumni with their alma maters, while the province eco-ambassadors coordinate the same.

6 COMMENTS FROM DELEGATES

"One word to describe this event would be, we are required to have a direction, and the direction should be that all are together in that and another important word is policy. We require policies with all these ideas- which are so good that sometimes it makes one think- what we think is impossible can become possible if we have a policy"

Fr Lawrie Ferrao, ex-Director, XIC, ex-Principal, St. Stanislaus

DAY 2 Nov 15th

JAAI WZ Cultural Event

Students bring Maharashtra's Spirit and Sustainability Message to Life

Alister Augustine, Adithi Nemani and Shriyangsh Biswas

The cultural evening at the Jesuit Alumni Association of India West Zone (JAAI WZ) Congress opened with a graceful classical welcome dance performed by students of the Xavier Institute of Engineering. Their performance set the tone for an evening rooted in culture, emotion and the theme of the Congress: Ecology and Sustainability with a powerful message for the cultural event 'Save Earth, Save Land.'

Teachers of St. Mary's School then took the stage with a short and meaningful performance, delivering a strong message on environmental responsibilities. The audience next witnessed a vibrant showcase of Maharashtra's culture, complete with traditional dhols and students dressed as Maratha warriors.

Speaking about the performance, Rudra Suryakand Jadhav, a 14-year-old student from St. Mary's High School (SSC), studying in Class 9 said, "Our performance is on Maharashtra and especially on farmers who are facing so many problems like crop failure, climate change and sudden rains destroying their fields. As the event is on Ecology and Sustainability, I hope that all the farmers get justice for their hard work and our performance reaches a wider audience."

His mother, Shena Suryakand Jadhav, shared her pride, she said, "This is not about one group or one issue in particular place, but it's a theme that includes everyone. Small changes today will help others in the future. Seeing my son perform on such a big stage makes me very proud and to me this event motivates action and helps people understand the pros and cons of a huge topic. To explain in one line it will be like - 'Shivrayanche Maharashtra, Sujalam Sufalam Maharashtra.'"

The evening concluded on a lighter note with an energetic performance. Shubham Jadhav, 21, an alumnus of St. Mary's High School (SSC) from the 2020 batch, and the host for the event. Reflecting on his experience, he said, "Hosting the JAAI WZ cultural event was a great learning experience for me. Since the audience was mostly older, I realised anchoring is not always about high energy but it's about matching their mood. I got the hosting call only a day before, so everything was improvised, but meeting my teachers, younger students and alumni made it special. Seeing the performances on Maharashtra and the classical dance by students was truly wonderful. I'd describe this event as impactful, unforgettable and motivating."



performances by Xavier Institute of Engineering and St. Mary's High School SSC students, teachers and alumnus

COMMENTS FROM DELEGATES

"Our school has already taken big steps as we use solar panels, we have a Green School award and we've done three audits for the Green Schools Programme. The first time we submitted, we were rated yellow, but now we are working hard to become green. We have improved in the areas where we lost points earlier and we are also using a compost pit to build a vegetable garden. Being part of the JAAI WZ Congress makes me very happy because the speakers give such useful insights. It really helps us stay committed to protecting the environment in the long run."

Rachel D'Souza, teacher
St. Mary's School (SSC), Mumbai

DAY 3 Nov 16th

GREEN MESSAGES



St. Mary's High School (ICSE) was teeming with green messages as delegates made their way to the sessions in the auditorium.

Above (from left to right): Sustainability Maps of each Jesuit Province in the West Zone The Green Seat installation by BMC (a mini-forest of potted plants around a bench); a mural made solely of bottlecaps calling for attention that Plastic is not Fantastic—artwork created by the teachers, parents and students of St. Mary's High School)



ACCREDITED DELEGATES MEETING

New Leadership, Green Resolutions JAAI West Zone charts course for 2025-2028

Husaina Ujjainwala and Alister Augustine

Day 3 of the Jesuit Alumni Association of India (JAAI) West Zone Congress, began with a General Body Meeting of Accredited Delegates at St. Mary's School ICS.

The three agendas discussed were: (a) the formation of the West Zone Council for the year 2025 to 2028, (b) to elect the new office bearers for the council, and (c) to approve the resolutions discussed in the plenary on Day 2. The decisions were taken by the accredited delegates.

The new Council will consist of existing Province Coordinators for Alumni (PCAs), ex-officio members, and three representatives from alumni associations from each province. The following representatives were nominated and elected unanimously: From Bombay - Benison Vaz, Dr. Vini Sebastian, and Sayli Maria; from Goa - Dr. Madhav Prabhu, Gerald DeSouza, and Armindo Gonsalves; from Pune - Shabbir Poonawala, Goretti Fernandes, and Baba Prasad Lanka; and from Gujarat - Shridhar Derasari,

Keshav Chowdari and Manthan Goswami.

The meeting progressed with the election of new office bearers, one from each province for the council. The following were elected unanimously: Benison Vaz, from Bombay as the President; Dr Madhav Prabhu from Goa as the Secretary; Shridhar Derasari from Gujarat as the Vice President and Goretti Fernandes from Pune as the Treasurer.

Among the resolutions the plenary recommended at the Congress was to nominate eco-ambassadors from each province. The eco-ambassadors from Mumbai, Pune, Goa, and Gujarat were Dr. Vini Sebastian, Baba Prasad Lanka, Gerald DeSouza, and Keshav Chowdari, respectively.

The meeting was then opened for a discussion where the role of the council, attempts at assimilating Hindi as another medium of communication specially at such events, and the ways to be connected in the future, via, groups and meetings, were discussed.

DAY 3 Nov 16th

Jitendra Pardeshi Addresses the JAAI West Zone Congress



We should have 3 trees visible from our window, 30% tree canopy cover in the neighbourhood and there should be a garden within 300 metres distance from our house where we can go for a walk daily. This is how we can have a healthy lifestyle

Saloni Nande

"Every sector of society should work like the Jesuit Alumni Association of India West Zone," said the Chief Guest of the program, Jitendra Pardeshi, Superintendent of Gardens and Tree Officer, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation. According to him, no matter where we are, the importance of nature is the same for everyone, whether you are from Mumbai or any other city.

He believes that the JAAI WZ has initiated a very good platform for environmental talks. He also appreciated the association's initiative of conducting audits in different institutions across different categories. "These initiatives should get more limelight from the media, so people get to know about them," he added.

During his speech at the event, he also mentioned the 3-30-300 rule. "We should have three trees visible from our window, 30% tree canopy cover in the neighbourhood and there should be a garden within 300 metres distance from our house where we can go for a walk daily. This is how we can have a healthy lifestyle," he explained.

He feels that the most important topic the future generation should be taught is about the Environment. For that, school students should be aware of all the environmental issues. "To make this happen, everyone should give support to the schools, and the Garden Department of BMC, which are taking initiatives for the same," he added.

"Mumbai is not a city that has water around it, but it is a city that is situated on land that is reclaimed from water. Other cities develop horizontally, but Mumbai's development happens vertically, so to tackle this, the BMC has made sure to create green spaces wherever possible in this city," he said. He also mentioned there are multiple ways of greening including making a vertical garden, a kitchen garden, a terrace garden, around the boundary, and urged citizens to support these BMC initiatives.

Lastly, he gave a message to today's generation: "Plant as many trees as you can."

DAY 3 Nov 16th

Celebrating Change-Makers

Inside the Green Awards at JAAI WZ's Ecology Congress



Nandinee Keluskar

The last phase of the JAAI WZ Congress on Ecology and Sustainable Living, began with an Awards Ceremony, acknowledging the efforts put in by alumni, institutions and their students. Mr Jitendra Pardeshi, Superintendent of Gardens and Tree Officer, BMC, graced the ceremony with his presence. After Mr. Pardeshi's short speech and felicitation, the distribution of awards began with Green-School awards, which were chosen after a detailed audit under categories like Water, Waste Management, Energy, and Trees.

Loyola High School, Pashan, Pune, dominated the award show by winning awards under every category- 1st in Green-School Water and Trees and runners up in Waste Management and Energy. While St. Paul's High School, Belgaum, won two awards- first in Green School Energy and runners-up in Green-School Trees. Fr. Nelton Thomas, principal of Loyola High School, expressed pride in his school's efforts in sustainability. He shared, "We recycle all the water we use, black water, grey water. We segregate plastic from our waste and turn it into manure that is used for ourselves. We have 80 kilowatts of solar power that we use." He also mentioned that it is a long process involving leadership recognising the importance, permeating the practices, and working collectively to make a difference.

The ceremony proceeded with awards across more categories, like Green-Student, Green-Alumni, and Green-Ambassador, presented in an effort to encourage sustainable campuses. Gerry Mascarenhas and Baba

Prasad Lanka won Green-Ambassador award for spearheading the audit and Congress on Ecology and Sustainable living. Carrying forward the momentum, the Green-Alumni Awards highlighted powerful stories of long-term commitment. Mansoor Goawala from St. Xavier's High School, Kolhapur, was recognised as the winner for his extensive ecological work—ranging from waste management to tree plantation—carried out over 380 consecutive Sundays. The runner-up, Sameer Majli of St. Paul's High School, Belagavi, was celebrated for planting trees every Sunday for nearly a decade, contributing significantly to afforestation efforts in the Western Ghats.

The Green-Student Awards showcased the next generation of sustainability advocates. After an essay competition held across provinces, Jitanshu Rout of Loyola High School and Junior College, Pune, won the first prize in the English category, while Hassan Tayyab Khan of Holy Family High School, Andheri, secured the second. In the Marathi section, a joint first prize was awarded to Tanvi Uday Shirke from Holy Family High School and Sai Subhash Pakle from Dhyankalaya Vidyalaya, Sangamner. In the Gujarati section, Hetvi Hitendhai Shah from St. Xavier's School, Khambat, Gujarat won the first prize. All the winners had submitted essays reflecting deep ecological awareness.

As the awardees assembled for a final group photograph, the hall resonated with a shared sense of purpose and an affirmation that sustainability thrives when communities, across generations, commit to collective action.

DAY 3 Nov 16th

GREEN AWARDS & CITATIONS TO MEMBERS & COMMITTEE



TODAY IS NOT A CLOSING IT IS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW STEWARDSHIP

Benison Vaz



Saloni Nande

At the closing session of the 7th JAAI West Zone Congress 2025, Benison Vaz, Secretary of the JAAI WZ expressed gratitude to everyone who contributed to the seamless execution of the event. The organizers, speakers, volunteers, partners, performers and over 250 delegates were delivered a heartfelt thanks. The Vote of Thanks highlighted how the organisers worked tirelessly for this three day Congress. The event ended with the National Anthem and a farewell lunch.