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Int'l meet on river health, restoration begins at IIT-BHU

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VARANASI: A three-day international conference on condition of Indian rivers and ways to restore them began at IIT-BHU in Varanasi from Thursday with experts drawing parallels between health of rivers to that of humans.

The event-- river health: assessment to restoration (RHAR-2019) is organised by department of civil engineering (IIT-BHU) along with IC-IMPACTS Canada, Namami Gange, MNNIT Allahabad and NIT Patna.

"The objective is to provide a platform to scientists and policy makers across the globe to discuss the issues pertaining to river health and suggest ways to restore them," said prof Prabhat Kumar Singh, the head of Department of civil engineering, BHU.

He said various diagnostic methods to improve the river health would be discussed in the seminar. The rivers of Varanasi such as Ganga, Asi, Varuna will be the area of concern.

Prof Herve Piegay, research director, National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), University of Lyon, France said "Green growth was the demand of the time. This could be

achieved by striking a balance between the growth and environment."

Environmental engineering that includes waste water management and industrial waste water treatment is the need of the hour, he added.

Guest of honour, prof Basant Maheswari from Western University, Australia, said change in attitude was required to bring about behavioural changes about environmental concerns associated human and river interdependence.

He said trans-disciplinary approach, which includes experts from various fields to come together to solve the complex river problem, was needed.

Prof Mukand S Babel, water engineering & management, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand said rivers were the lifelines and civilizations around the river thrived from ancient to modern times.

Rajendra Singh, popularly known as waterman and Stockholm Water Prize awardees, were also the guests of honours.

He said health of river and society was interrelated. About Kumbh, he said "In earlier days, such gatherings were utilized to discuss challenges being faced by rivers where the King used to take such issues publically, now we miss this culture."