

Day 34

Before we knew, we found ourselves on the 34th and the final day of the ‘Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan’. It can only be divine intervention that the end of the expedition fell on one of the most auspicious days of the year. The 12th of November was also the day of Dev Deepawali. It is believed that on this day, the Gods descend from the heavens to Earth, to take a dip in the holy water of river Ganga. It is celebrated on the full moon night, or *Poornima*, of the Hindu month of Kartika, and hence is also called *Kartik Poornima*.

The 12th of November was special for another reason. It marked the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, and the entire country celebrated this pious occasion of *Prakash Utsav*.

On this auspicious day, the rafting expedition team was given a teary-eyed and warmhearted send off by the children of Nischinta Pur, West Bengal, along with the officials of NMCG. The team left for its final destination of the month long expedition - Bakkhali Beach of West Bengal.

In preparation for the arrival of the expedition team, Dr. Bharat Pathak, National Convenor - Ganga Vichar Manch, and the volunteers of Ganga Vichar Manch conducted a cleanliness drive at the beach. The rafting team was given a grand welcome by Dr. Bharat Pathak, National Convenor - Ganga Vichar Manch, Dr. Nandita Pathak, Ambassador, SBM (Grameen), and other officials of NMCG and Ganga Vichar Manch, at the point of culmination of this grand journey.

To honour the 34-day long rafting journey of the expedition team, led by Wing Commander Paramvir Singh, the residents gathered in large numbers, congratulating the team for an extraordinary feat. They also pledged to honour the efforts of the team, and keep the river clean. Wing Commander Paramvir Singh also commended WII, IITR and Doordarshan News, for staying committed to the expedition, and partaking in it right from the beginning to the very end.

The day ended with the team, the officials and the residents coming together, and paying a heartfelt tribute to the country through the National Anthem. The one voice held a promise to the future of the country and the river flowing right beside them, to play their own part in ensuring that the river Ganga remains as pious as it was.

They say that every end gives birth to a new beginning. The expedition might have ended, but the mission has only but began. Our river Ganga needs the contribution of every citizen in ensuring that it continues to flow in a clean and uninterrupted way for an eternity to come, and we hope you will support up in this journey to continue.