

BID TO PROMOTE ECO-FRIENDLY BAGS

IIT students aim to free campus of plastic

SUBHANKAR
CHOWDHURY

Kharagpur: Thirty students of IIT Kharagpur have shunned plastic bags in favour of cotton, jute or paper ones on trips to the market to buy vegetables, fish or meat.

Vision Prabaho, a forum floated by the students, is also urging teachers and other students of the institute to go plastic-free. The campaign was formally launched on June 5, World Environment Day.

"The best way to rid the campus of plastic is not to use it at all. That's why we have been procuring jute and paper bags so that we don't have to use the single-use plastic packets that the vendors give out. While refusing plastic bags, we are explaining to the vendors why it is important to avoid plastic and the threats it poses.

Spreading awareness is the key to our campaign," said Pragnaditya Malakar, a research scholar working on groundwater management.

The group is working under the tutelage of Barnali Chakrabarti, a botanist and the wife of institute director Partha Pratim Chakrabarti.

Barnali has been promot-



A street play by IIT Kharagpur students against use of plastic

ing green activism on the campus for the past few years. "We are trying to engage self-help groups who work with us in villages adjoining the campus so that jute and cotton bags can be made on a large scale. Bulk production would reduce the cost of procurement," she said.

The research scholars have been enacting street plays on the campus to popularise the use of eco-friendly bags. "The market on the campus is also frequented by outsiders. Our volunteers are telling both buyers and sellers to use eco-friendly bags for carrying purchases. Once we start producing green bags in bulk through self-help groups, we will

start supplying them to sellers," Barnali said.

The group's next target is to stop the use of water packaged in plastic bottles, which are common at conferences and symposiums held on the campus.

"We will use glasses made of paper, steel or glass instead. The water will be stored in a large container nearby," said said William Mohanty, president, Technology Students' Gymkhana at IIT.

The volunteers of the group will also interact with students of three schools on the campus to spread awareness about the need to stop using plastic. They will also focus on finding better ways for disposal of e-waste.