

Day 31 & 32

Day 31 of the 'Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan' began with the earnest and bittersweet flag off of the rafting expedition team, led by Wing Commander Paramvir Singh, by the officials and residents of Chandannagar in West Bengal, as the team continued its soon-to-culminate journey towards Barrackpore in the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The rich history of the city as the oldest cantonment in India, and later, the home to some of the most prominent rebellions against the British, welcomed the Wing Commander and his team like old brothers in arms.

The team was given a warm welcome with open arms at Gandhi Ghat in Barrackpore by the officials of the District administration and the Air Force, the Director-CIFRI, and the representatives of CGWD. The officers of the Air Force then led the team to Palta, a locality in North Barrackpore Municipality of North 24 Parganas district, for a cultural programme that made the evening unforgettable.

The next day - Day 32 of the 'Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan' - arrived and with it came the time for the rafting expedition team to continue its journey towards Ganga Sagar. The next stop was to be Fort William, sitting proudly on the eastern banks of the River Hooghly, the major distributary of the River Ganga, in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The rafting team reached Prinsep Ghat at Fort William, West Bengal, where it was given the warmest of welcomes by the *jawaan* of the Kumaon regiment, one of the most respected infantry regiments of the Indian Army. The team was greeted by Sh. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, DG-NMCG, Major General Alok Joshi, and other officials.

Sh. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, DG-NMCG, addressed the teary-eyed gathering at the Prinsep Ghat, and assured the people of Fort William that even though the rafting expedition was nearing its end, the mission it stands for will continue and, as a people, we have a long journey ahead of us.

The expedition team, led by Wing Commander Paramvir Singh, along with DG-NMCG and other officials then went on to Army Public School in Kolkata, where Sh. Mishra, DG-NMCG was the honored guest at the prize distribution ceremony of a painting competition held at the school. The talent of the little hands at display proved that we have a lot to work for, and we would be leaving the future in more than capable hands.

The day ended with emotions high and bated anticipation of the following day to come.