



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Indian Teenagers Win The Earth Prize 2026 for Tamarind Seed-Based Microplastic Filter

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Three Indian teenagers — Vivaan Chhawchharia, Ariana Agarwal, and Avyana Mehta — have won The Earth Prize 2026, a prestigious global environmental innovation award, for developing “Plas-Stick”, a low-cost and biodegradable solution that removes microplastics from contaminated water using tamarind seed waste. They became the first Indian team to win the global title.?

About the Innovation: Plas-Stick

Plas-Stick is a biodegradable powder made from discarded tamarind seeds. When added to contaminated water, the powder attracts and binds tiny microplastic particles, causing them to form larger clumps. These clumps can then be removed using a handheld magnet, helping to purify water without the use of expensive filtration systems, electricity, or harmful chemicals.

The idea was inspired by the students' visit to rural communities where families relied on shared water storage containers without access to advanced filtration systems. Observing the potential health risks posed by microplastic-contaminated drinking water motivated them to develop a practical and affordable solution.

About The Earth Prize:

The Earth Prize is one of the world's largest environmental competitions and innovation incubators for students aged 13–19 years. It is organized by the Earth Foundation, based in Geneva, Switzerland, and supports young innovators working on climate and environmental solutions. In 2026, participants from 169 countries and territories submitted projects for the competition.

What are Microplastics?

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Microplastics are plastic particles smaller than 5 millimetres that originate from the breakdown of larger plastic items or from industrial and consumer products. They have become a major environmental concern due to their presence in water bodies, soil, food, and human tissues.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Linked to the Project

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

SDG 13: Climate Action

SDG 14: Life Below Water

IIT Guwahati's Role

The students collaborated with researchers from Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati to test and improve the effectiveness of the Plas-Stick technology.