

## Press Release

### **64 students re-wild in rhino abode of Pobitora WLS**

Guwahati, March 29: Firsthand field experience is always much more enlightening than what is taught inside the classroom. Exposing a young student to the richness of a protected biodiversity area is bound to be more attractive to learn about the nature and acquire a deep liking for nature than sitting in the class listening to their teacher talking about nature and its resources.

Rewilding, is what the premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak ([www.aaranyak.org](http://www.aaranyak.org)) has attempted when it has taken 64 high school students in two groups on an education tour inside Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) on March 28 and 29 and also engaged them in nature-oriented exercises and interactions with conservation educators, forest officials, wildlife biologists, wildlife photographer/filmmakers.

“All these 64 students belong to six different schools located close to Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and they have grown up in this biodiversity-rich area without getting an opportunity so far to visit Pobitora WLS. We have facilitated them a trip inside the sanctuary so that they can see and feel for themselves the rich biodiversity. It will definitely create a lasting impression on young minds and inspire them to conserve the natural heritage,” said Jayanta Kumar Pathak, senior environment educator of Aaranyak.

The students were engaged in various exercises and games like brain mapping session, tree hugging, landscape observation and expression, leaf album making, Jeep Safari and creative leaf collage making. Effectiveness of Forest Therapy also introduced in the programme.

Aaranyak organised the programme in collaboration with Authority of Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Pobitora Ecotourism Development Society (PETDS) under the sponsorship of LEA Associates South Asia Pvt. Ltd (LASA).

Nayanjyoti Das, Range officer of Pabitora WLS, wildlife photographer and filmmaker Champak Deka who is also President of PETDS and Dr Ruby Das, Consultant of LASA interacted and spent substantial time with the students as external resource persons besides the Aaranyak team of resource persons comprising Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Dr Alolika Sinha, Wasima Begum, Sultana Sharmin and Ankita Sarma.

Two senior officials of LASA, Deputy General Managers Gautam Patnaik, Basanta Bezbaruah too interacted with the students participating in the ‘rewilding’ programme.

The tiny Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary is located about 40 kilometers away from Guwahati city boasts of the highest density rhino population on this planet.

The 38.81 sq. km. sanctuary, has very rich biodiversity in its about 16 square kilometer core area that houses 107 one-horned Indian rhinoceros besides Asiatic water buffaloes, wild boars, a wide range of bird species, amphibians and reptiles, dominating habitats of grassland, woodland and wetland. There

can't be a much more suitable place close to the bustling Guwahati for the students to enjoy the warmth of nature and its richness.

*Press statement issued by Dr Alolika Sinha, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.*

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