

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Endangered Golden langur habitat in Assam under threat of high-powered transmission lines, says Aaranyak**

Guwahati, March 6: A proposed reserve forest in Bongaigaon district of Assam- Bhairab Reserve Forest, under the Aie Valley Forest Division of the Assam Forest Department, has a forest cover of 36.04 square km and is an ideal habitat for the Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*), which is present in sizeable numbers (+150) in the forest.

Golden langur is an arboreal and mainly leaf eater langur. The distribution in Assam is mainly on north bank of Brahmaputra in between Manas river in the east and Sankosh river in the west and southern Bhutan. This endangered, endemic primate species, is threatened by increasing encroachment, habitat degradation, fragmentation and isolation throughout its range, in Assam.

In an unwarranted development two high-voltage double circuit transmission tower lines are being set up in the Bhairab Reserve Forest under the Nangalbibra-Bongaigaon ISTS power transmission project. An expert team from Aaranyak visited the area for a suo moto survey and noted that the power lines will lead to fragmentation of the habitat of the endangered Golden langur on the southern side of the Bhairab Reserve Forest.

“Our concern is over the plan to build high-power transmission lines that could threaten its golden langur population. The Assam Forest Department (Aie Valley Division) had already enumerated 2330 trees mainly of Gamari (*Gmelina arborea*), Sal (*Shorearobusta*), Segun (*Tectona grandis*), Koroi (*Albizia procera*), Demaru (*Ficus* species) and many more species which are the food and lodging plants of the langur, to be cut for the clearing of space for the proposed power line. Given, we would like to request the concerned departments to come up with effective alternatives to safeguard the Golden Langurs, various species trees and the wildlife habitat.”, Dr. Dilip Chetry, senior primatologist and Head of Aaranyak’s Primate Research and Conservation Division, and also Vice Chair of IUCN Primate Specialist Group, South Asia, stated.

He further said that Aaranyak had already submitted the letter regarding this matter with proposed alternate route with map to the Head of Force and Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Chief Wildlife Warden, Conservator of Forest, Bongaigaon and Divisional Forest Officer, Aie Valley Division and also to the deputy commissioner of Bongaigaon district, Assam.

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