

Press Release

Footballing to woo mass support for rhino conservation in Pobitora WLS

Guwahati, Oct 3: In the soccer-crazy Northeast, a game of football always helps to win support of the masses for a noble cause even in the far flung areas of the region. The game has been instrumental in consolidating intra-community bond across the region.

With objective to tap the popularity of the game of football among the rural masses premier biodiversity conservation non-profit organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) has resorted to footballing as part of its multi-pronged strategy to woo the community support for conservation of one-horned India rhino in Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS), which is known for the highest rhino density on the planet with over 100 rhinos thriving in just over 16 square kilometer core area of the sanctuary that is flanked by populous human settlements.

Aaranyak in collaboration with the Murkata Ankuran Youth Club of Morigaon district of Assam organised a two-day footballing event on Sunday and Monday to spread rhino conservation message among masses living close to Pobitora rhino habitat.

The football tournament was participated by 20 football clubs from the area to flag the need for rhino conservation in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and promote rhino-oriented eco-tourism in the area for the benefit of local entrepreneurs.

The 34-year-old Aaranyak lauds the constant support the villagers around Pobitora WLS have been extending since recognition of Pobitora as a WLS. There has been no rhino poaching incident in Pobitora WLS for over eight years.

“Aaranyak also appreciates the contributions of all frontline forest staffs of Pobitora WLS and Morigaon police to keep Pobitora safe from rhino hunting syndicates,” said the Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, a globally acclaimed rhino conservation expert.

During the inauguration ceremony of the football tourney on Sunday, Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Senior conservationist of Aaranyak, underscored the pivotal role of the local community in successful rhino conservation. He hailed the local community for their selflessness contribution towards protecting rhinos in Pobitora WLS. He also underscored the huge potential of responsible eco-tourism through protecting rhino in this area and said the youth should take lead in this venture.

Dipak Bhattacharjya, Head of Operation of Aaranyak started the event by cutting ribbon. Aaranyak also displayed different IEC materials to create mass awareness on rhino conservation with active involvement of team members Pranjal Deka and Ujjal Bayon.

Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
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