

PRESS RELEASE

PIRBI ethnic haat bolsters Karbi presence in Kaziranga Heritage Site

Kohora (Assam), March 14: Pirbi-Karbi Ethnic Haat by the national highway at Kohora in Kaziranga National Park of Assam, is a new destination for those who have penchant for varied ethnic and organic products that bear the hallmark of quintessential Karbi people of the state.

Pirbi, a Karbi word meaning biosphere, implies closeness to the purity of nature. Pirbi-Karbi Ethnic Haat where the business is based on local ethnic products, was inaugurated in a solemn function in presence of a group of people who are closely associated with Karbi tribe, their tradition and culture and those whose home, hearth, passion and profession are intricately related to Kohora-Kaziranga basin.

Tiny but substantive, Pirbi is a one-stop showroom of a wide range of Karbi ethnic products with judicious value addition including edibles, handwoven dresses, handicrafts, mementos that bears the stamp of sublime Karbi ethos. As on date Pirbi is one-of-a-kind ethnic haat in the entire landscape of the much-visited Kaziranga National Park. It is a pride of place for Karbi people who have been guarding over the Kaziranga biosphere for centuries from atop the hills that demarcate the southern reach of the UNESCO Heritage Site.

Pirbi is a baby step of the community-owned business model promoted by Aaranyak (www-aaranyak.org) in tune with IUCN biodiversity business model that focuses on community-based conservation and management of biodiversity and allows bioprospecting with value addition and without causing disturbance to biodiversity. A certain part of the profit earned from such business has to be ploughed back for biodiversity conservation.

“Pirbi is a fruit of an effort that was initiated way back in 2019 under Aaranyak’s ‘Community-based Natural Resources Management initiatives in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape. Our entire team along with community members have been working very hard till date to make Pirbi fructify to start with. There are miles to go,” said Dr Firoz Ahmed, senior scientist at Aaranyak.

“Pirbi is a community collective for business that aims to support and promote ethnic products that empower communities and create market linkages. The business is owned by the community,” said Jayanta Kumar Sharma, Senior Programme Associate at Aaranyak who has been working with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) programme team of Aaranyak in respect of socio-economic survey and strategic planning.

The business ethics of Pirbi model revolves around the spirit- Fair for People, Fair for Biodiversity. It believes in fair trade with farmers and promotes conscious production and consumption.

Pirbi is committed to contribute 12 percent of its profit to biodiversity conservation and community development in the same region and an additional five per cent profit is shared with the growers, collectors and artisans.

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“The ice-breaking took quite some time. It took our team almost two years to elicit effective and efficient cooperation from the community for the Pirbi initiative. We had to spend a lot of time convincing them that it is for them and to be owned by them,” said Dr Jayanta Roy and Sarlong Jon Teron of NRM team, the prime mover behind Pirbi.

Inaugurating Pirbi haat on March 11, former MP Dr Jayanta Rongpi appreciated Pirbi initiative and Aaranyak for promoting Karbi ethnic products and highlighted importance of marketing support to the marginalised growers/producers so that the environment is preserved through limited exploitation.

Benting Terang, ex-EM of KAAC, lauded the inception of the Pirbi marketing channel for Karbi ethnic products and urged the local government to support the initiatives. Dhruvajyoti Nath, Addl SP, Kaziranga, Cory Brown, Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service graced the inauguration where Jayanta Kumar Sharma made a presentation on genesis of Pirbi.

For the NRM team that also includes Deepika Chhetri, Bhargavee Rava, Avinash Phangcho, Rangsina Phangcho, Joshna Terangpi, Bhaskor Barukial, Prakash Ingti and Rowel Ingti, it is just the beginning of a long journey ahead till Pirbi gets established as a sought-after brand of Karbi ethnic products.

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