

Press Release

Stakeholders voice for coordination for HEC mitigation in Baksa district

Guwahati, October 14: A consultation among representatives of various government departments held in Mushalpul Civil Administration Office premises in Baksa district of Assam on facilitating human elephant coexistence (HEC) evolved a consensus on adopting a holistic approach towards mitigation of the crisis precipitated in human settlements by roaming herds of wild elephants.

In fact, all the representatives of various government departments taking part in the workshop agreed to work in coordination for mitigation of the Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) and enable coexistence.

The workshop organised by on October 11 by premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) was participated by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Baksa Arun Kumar Brahma along with 30 participants from Baksa Civil Administration and departments of Forest, Veterinary, Agriculture, Soil Conservation, Irrigation, Police, Education, Health, KVK as well as representatives from the tea estates of the area.

Inaugurating the workshop ADC Arun Brahma underscored the need for a holistic approach from different departments and all stake-holders to mitigate the Human Elephant conflict not only in Baksa but also all over Assam.

Mentioning that explosion of human population, depletion of forest cover, loss of elephant habitats and scarcity of fodder as root causes of the conflict, the ADC condemned elephant deaths due to electrocution, poisoning, use of pesticides in crop area etc.

He focused on 'one earth, one family and one future' concept for enabling coexistence and advocated that all the stake-holders, govt departments should to come forward to mitigate human elephant conflict.

In the interaction session, Badrul Islam Mazumdar, DSP, Baksa shared some of his experiences on human elephant conflict situation and assured forest department of help from the district police force any time during patrolling to watch over elephants movement and tackling HEC situation.

Birendra Boro, Forest Range Officer of Kumarikata deplored noises created by some resorts established in elephant habitat areas which disturb the wild elephants. He said large number of illegal electric connections have become a major threat for elephants.

Satyajit Neog, Circle office, Jalah, Baksa suggested putting up sufficient number of signages in different areas to alert people about the presence of wild elephants in that area.

M. K. Das, Joint Directorate of Health, Baksa, assured to provide some consultation and training on injury and mental trauma caused by the HEC situation.

Munindra Kumar Sarma of Agriculture Department suggested promotion alternative crop to generate alternative livelihood for the farmers affected by HEC.

During the interaction session which was coordinated by Jayanta Pathak, Deepanjali Brahma of Soil Conservation Department suggested to circulate the list of elephant habitats, corridors etc. to the concerned departments to restrict the construction of linear infrastructures so as to facilitate elephants' movement.

The Aaranyak team participating in the workshop was led by Dr. Bibhuti Lahkar, Senior scientist and comprised of Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Anjan Baruah, Rabiya Daimary, Anushka Saikia, Jibon Chetry, Mondeep Basumatary, Reshma Narzary, Jauga Basumatary, Pradeep Barman and Bijoy Kalita.

Dr Bibhuti Lahkar made a presentation on the HEC situation, mitigation measures to facilitate coexistence along with the roles of different government department and stake holders in mitigating the problem. He also detailed the participants on mitigation measures undertaken by Aaranyak in a multi-stakeholder approach with community participation.

Anushka Saikia of Aaranyak described about the objectives and moderated the workshop. Jayanta Pathak talked about Aaranyak and its activities on various field.

Dr. Debojit Deka of KVK, Baksa suggested for lemon plantation which will deter elephant while lemon fruits will boost farmers livelihood. He offered to provide different training from the KVK to the farmers through NGOs.

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