

PRESS RELEASE

University of Cambridge book unveils Northeast India's Gibbon conservation scenario

Guwahati, May 11: A senior primatologist of Northeast India's foremost research-oriented biodiversity conservation organisation, Aaranyak, Dr Dilip Chetry recently contributed to a newly published book of 'Cambridge University Press' of the prestigious 'University of Cambridge' describing the diverse scenario of Hoolock gibbon conservation in Northeast India.

The chapter titled 'Challenges and Prospects in the Conservation of Hoolock Gibbon in India' of the book 'Gibbon Conservation in the Anthropocene' is authored by Dr Dilip Chetry, Rekha Chetry and Parimal Chandra Bhattacharjee on the conservation aspects of Western hoolock gibbons (*Hoolock hoolock*) and Eastern Hoolock Gibbons (*Hoolock leuconedys*) is edited by primatologists Susan M. Cheyne, Carolyn Thmpson, Penf-Fei Fan and Helen J. Chatterjee.

Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Manipur hold the entirety of the Gibbon population in India, where they can be found along the southern banks of the River Dibang-Brahmaputra.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Western Hoolock gibbons are endangered and their numbers are dropping rapidly. Although the Eastern Hoolock Gibbon is listed as vulnerable, its population trend is constantly decreasing as well.

"Research shows that habitat loss, fragmentation, and hunting are major factors affecting Gibbon population in northeastern India. During and after the Indo-US primate project, a healthy environment was created in Northeast India for gibbon conservation through education, awareness, training, capacity building, and socioeconomic development projects. Conservation practices like rescue and rehabilitation, translocation, conservation breeding programmes and community-based conservation have been the result of collaborations between the government and non-governmental organisations over the past two decades, thus raising new hope for the survival of these species.", Dr Dilip Chetry, said.

"The recent declaration of protected areas will ensure the long-term survival of the gibbons and its habitats. We feel that all stakeholders should emphasise the development of workable plans for the conservation of gibbons after the COVID-19 pandemic.", he added.

Aaranyak along with the effort of the Assam Forest Department and locals, have succeeded in establishing a natural canopy bridge that connects Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam with both sides of after it had been separated by a railway track installed by the British Government in 1887. As a result, the gibbon population of two compartments of the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary has been unified and the Gibbons' conservation has been aided.

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