

PR on Media Workshop, Dibrugarh, 28th Feb, 2025

Media workshop roots for sustained media-NGO coordination in HEC mitigation

Guwahati, Feb 28: Aaranyak-British Asian Trust in collaboration with Dibrugarh Press Club, Greater Dibrugarh Press club and Naharkatia Press club conducted a media workshop at the conference hall of Dibrugarh University's Guest house on Friday (Feb 28) to flag the role media can play in mitigation of human-elephant conflict (HEC) and promote coexistence.

This workshop emphasised the importance of using the right kind of language/words, use of scientific and credible field data so as to grab the attention of policy makers while mobilising support from local communities for the HEC mitigation efforts. Fifteen journalists from these press clubs attended the workshop.

The workshop began with an introductory note by Aaranyak official Zakir Islam Bora followed by a statement on the objective of the workshop by Aaranyak's Rimpee Moran, and an opening remark by journalist Ripunjoy Das from North East Live and Secretary of Dibrugarh press club.

Aaranyak's senior conservation biologist, Dr. Alolika Sinha gave a presentation on "Promoting human-elephant coexistence" with a special emphasis on media's role in enabling the same.

She mentioned how multi-pronged approach engaging multi-stakeholders is essential for promotion of coexistence to ensure well-being of both elephants and people.

In line with this discussion, Aaranyak's senior official Jayanta Kumar Pathak, interacted with the participant through his presentation on "Media on Biodiversity Conservation & Human Wildlife Coexistence" wherein he highlighted that instead of emphasising on "spot reporting", more concerted, comprehensive and strategic coverage of the developments can help change the conflict-narrative to a coexistence one. Pathak also argued that HEC mitigation approaches should be revisited along with the reporting of the unfolding developments.

The participant journalists interacted with Aaranyak officials, and made some important suggestions. They opined that this kind of workshops should be conducted at regular intervals, both with on-ground reporters and the senior journalists of the media houses.

Another suggestion came in the form of data/information sharing, and inclusion of media houses with the members of Rapid Response Unit- a community based early warning system to manage HEC alerts, can help in better sharing of information between the media and local communities.

It was unanimously believed that a collectively and holistic approach can help towards biodiversity conservation, and enabling human wildlife coexistence, and both media and Aaranyak can complement each other in their efforts of protecting regions' rich biodiversity.

The programme concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Aaranyak's Bidisha Borah. The event was facilitated by a team of Aaranyak officials including Ejaj Ahmed and Jiaur Rahman who coordinated the workshop, with support from Darwin Initiative.

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