

Press Release on inter-departmental consultation workshop on HEC at Rangjuli

Consultation workshop on HEC mitigation in Rangjuli attended by various govt depts

Guwahati, January 22: A consultation workshop on human elephant conflict (HEC) among representatives of concerned government departments was conducted by Aaranyak in collaboration with Rangjuli Revenue Circle at Rangjuli Block conference hall in Goalpara district of Assam for the purpose of facilitating synergized action for mitigation of HEC and pave the way for coexistence.

Around 40 participants from the civil administration, Assam Forest Department, APDCL, Agriculture Department, Veterinary Department, Assam Police, Health and Family Welfare Department, P&RD, DDMA, Revenue Department, Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Rangjuli Block Development Office etc., took part in the workshop on January 18 last that was chaired by the BDO Samarendra Sarma.

The BDO appreciated Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) for conducting the workshop on HEC mitigation and urged every department to join hands to tackle the HEC effectively.

Dr. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Senior Conservation Scientist of Aaranyak, made a presentation on elephant behaviours, key causes of HEC, and different mitigation techniques. He also mentioned the roles various government departments and stakeholders could play to mitigate the HEC.

Earlier, Aaranyak's senior official Anjan Baruah explained the objectives of the workshop that was supported by the USFWS.

In the open session, the participants from different departments flagged various ways for dealing with the HEC and put forward some valuable suggestions.

Dr. Chandrama Rabha, Veterinary officer of Rangjuli, lauded the efforts put up by Aaranyak to facilitate coexistence between human and elephant while Parakram

Baruah of Health Department suggested for raising mass awareness on HEC with the help of some IEC materials, signages etc.

In response to a question, Aaranyak's Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar suggested conversion of normal power transmission cables into insulated cables in some elephant hotspots to prevent electrocution of the giant animals. Rituraj Sharma, SDE, APDCL assured that he would propose the higher authority for the power cable conversion process.

Rajib Kataki, Deputy Ranger of Rangjuli Forest Range explained field activities carried out by the department to control HEC. He also highlighted collaborative works with Aaranyak, Assam Police and other stakeholders. Dr. Rumi Nath of the Folklore Department discussed the cultural and ritual relations between people and elephants in Assam.

Aaranyak staff Swapan Das, Ripunjoy Nath and an intern from TISS Soundarya Mongre also attended the workshop.

In the concluding remarks, the BDO, Rangjuli lauded Aaranyak for their sustained contributions towards elephant conservation, HEC mitigation measures and raising awareness among the stakeholders and community. He thanked the participants for sharing thoughts for the way forward in dealing with the raging HEC.

The BDO also thanked the Circle Officer of Rangjuli Circle for organizing the workshop while appealing to all the departments to come forward together to try mitigating the HEC and facilitating coexistence.

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