

Tiny hamlet steps up to flush out jumbos in Udalguri



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Jayanta Kumar Das 3 December 2011 13736 views

In view of the deteriorating man elephant conflict in Udalguri district, particularly in Bhergaon Subdivision, Udalguri district administration has taken up steps to protect both people and wild elephants. DN Hazarika, Circle Officer, Harisinga Revenue Circle, Tangla organized a public meeting recently at No 4 Gitibari Durga Mandir premises in Neapaligaon near Paneri tea garden to find ways to minimize the conflict and loss of lives of both man and elephants. The meeting which was presided over by journalist Hareswar Kalita. High level civil, police and forest officials of the district including DC, SP, PD and DFO of the district attended the meeting to exchange views with people. All departmental officials, representatives of WWF (World Wildlife Fund), journalists and social workers of the subdivision also attended the meeting. It needs mention that presence of nearly 150 wild elephants in the Paneri tea garden (section 4 and 11) has created panic in the near by villages namely- Kasubil, Nepaligaon, Gitibari, No. 4 Bhutiachang, Uttar Gejerkuchi, Phulkuchi etc since November 21. Prominent villagers of the area Krishna Bahadur Giri, Bhupen Nath and ramesh Kumar explained about the damages done by the wild elephants. According to them non payment of compensation to affected people in time had made people angry causing retaliatory activities.

Dr. Anupam Sarma of WWF while addressing villagers highlighted on a few long term steps to control the situation permanently. Bankim Sarma, DFO, Dhansiri Forest Division explained the causes of the wild elephant's presence in the villages. He said that due to scarcity of food and shelter female wild elephants had given birth to calves in Paneri tea garden and would likely to move away only after ten to twelve days time when the calves would be fit to travel to Bhutan hills. He further said that destruction of forests due to encroachment, construction of buildings, establishment of new tea gardens, firing ranges etc on historic Chirang-Ripu elephant corridor had compelled wild elephants to roam in the villages. He suggested that creation of new forests under JFMC (Joint Forest Management Committee) would help solving the problem permanently by providing food and shelter for the wild elephants and other wild animals.

Noted writer and Deputy Commissioner of Udalguri, Thaneswar Malakar attending the meeting as the chief guest requested people, officials, journalists, organizations etc to think positively so as to solve the problem without causing harm to both man and elephants. He asked officials immediately to visit affected people to avoid retaliation and to create awareness among people. According to him district administration would soon launch a campaign titled "Let us visit villages". Debajit Deuri, SP, Udalguri said that like man elephants had also right to express anger. He suggested that a few tracks could be kept reserved for wild elephants and people must not venture out in the vulnerable areas during night time. To provoke elephants would cause more damages, he said. Prof. Binoy Medi, Madhaw Prasad Sarma, PD, DRDA, Udalguri also addressed the meeting.

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BY JAYANTA KUMAR DAS

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