

Workshop on wildlife crime scene



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GUWAHATI: The clandestine but burgeoning trade in illegal wildlife parts/products has reached an alarming proportion across the globe posing serious threat to wildlife resources in the planet. Prevention of wildlife crimes like poaching and trade in wildlife parts remains a Himalayan task for enforcement agencies across frontiers and demands sustained high-level coordination among various agencies including police, intelligence agencies, security forces, frontier guards, transport sector key stake holders etc.

An adequate level of awareness about the alarming global scenario of wildlife crimes and law provisions in vogue to deal with such crimes in respective country among all concerned agencies and forces is of prime importance to motivate the personnel from these agencies to act prompt on wildlife crime cases.

In this backdrop, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak has launched an initiative to hold a series of workshops with key stake holders in transport sector who can help mitigate or check the illegal trade in wildlife parts.

As part of the initiative, the WCCB and Aaranyak today organized a day-long workshop on sensitizing the staffs of Railway Protection Force (RPF) on dealing with wildlife crime and detecting wildlife products. The main purpose was to emphasize the importance of transport sectors in curbing wildlife crime by intervening in the supply chain of illegal wildlife trade through proper detection.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr. Shamsul Arfin, Assistant Security Commissioner, RPF, Guwahati, and attended by around 35 RPF personnel. The workshop started with a presentation by Dr. Jimmy Borah, Senior Manager of Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) of Aaranyak who spoke about the transportation industry and illegal wildlife trade. He also mentioned how railways can play a critical role in identifying and strengthening key risk points in the supply chain and they are becoming increasingly vulnerable to exploitation by illegal wildlife traffickers.

Examples were shown on how high-value as well as lesser-known wildlife products are hidden in carry-on or checked-in luggage. Stress was also given on cooperation and collaborations among different enforcement agencies for reducing wildlife crime.

Mr. Hiten Borah, Intelligence Assistant from WCCB spoke about the laws and regulations to help RPF in handling wildlife crime cases. He spoke extensively on different sections under WLPA (1972). He also spoke about how to identify wildlife products during checking and scanning of baggage. Practical session was organised with the staffs to help them identify with common illegal wildlife products seized across the country.

It was stressed that awareness campaigns aimed at the public and railway authorities were required to widen the understanding of illegal wildlife trade and trafficking of threatened species involved which in long term can help conservation of biodiversity of the region.

Aaranyak in collaboration with WCCB will now work with agencies like Indian Railways and Airport Authority to highlight on how such frontline transport agencies can help curbing wildlife crimes and trade in wildlife products.

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