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Citizens urge Government for pro-active Role in Wildlife Conservation



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A citizens meeting at Guwahati Press Club yesterday expressed serious concern at the increasing rate of killing of tigers in various parts of Assam and urges the State government to activate the forest department and its public relation wings to fight against the superstition involving the wildlife parts. Attended by a number wildlife and environment activists, the meeting also appealed to the government to enlighten the police personnel on wildlife issues as well.

Initiated by activist-journalist Mubina Akhter, the meeting was attended and addressed by Soumyadeep Datta of Nature's Beckon, Bibhab Talukder of Aranyak, Purnima Sarma of Early Birds, Satyaranjan Bora of Seuji Dharani Dhunia, Nava Thakuria of Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists with many others.

The countrywide census of tiger in January 2008 reveals that India had only 1,411 tigers alive. But the statistics say that the number was 3,508 in 1997, showing a drastic drop of 60%. A recent government estimates in March 2011, discloses that the number of tigers is not more than 1,875.

“Tiger and other wildlife are being regularly poached for use in some Chinese traditional medicine. Many times, the superstition among various sections in the society instigates the killing of wildlife. Hence public awareness is the need of the hour,” said Soumyadeep Datta.

He also criticized the forest department for its ineffectiveness to make common people a partner in the conservation effort. Datta particularly pointed out that the publicity wing of the State forest department has done a little in this respect.

“If a tiger is killed by some villagers and even the flesh is taken for eating, the forest department must take prompt actions against them. More over, its publicity wing should rush immediately to the location to understand the reasons behind this kind behavior of the villagers and pursue for conservation of wildlife in those localities,” Datta added.

Bibhab Talukder also emphasized on sensitization of forest officials and massive public awareness. He appeals every one to take a pledge in the new year to preserve the wildlife and the environment. Talukder argued that even being pro-people, we could be active conservationists.

Both Purnima Sarma and Satyaranjan Bora emphasized on the community involvement in the mission to preserve nature and conserve wildlife.

They also insisted that the government and forest department must play a pro-active role. Mubina Akhter in her speech expressed anger that the authority has not taken any visible actions against the responsible police personnel who was involved in the killing of a tiger near Kaziranga National Park and also some villagers in Kamrup who killed a tiger very recently where some villagers took away its flesh for eating. While wrapping up the meeting, Nava Thakuria argued that a group of reporters should be specifically oriented on environment and wildlife issues. At the same time, he maintains that the editors of newspapers and news channels should come forward providing more space on these issues, such that the attention of policy makers can be drawn and general populace be made more aware of the conservation efforts going on around the world.



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