

Measures to upgrade JFMC Sapangaon as tourist hub



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Jayanta Kumar Das 10 April 2014 Updated 11 Apr 22027 views

A high level delegation of Udalguri district administration visited Sapangaon JFMC (Joint Forest Management Committee) forest near Indo-Bhutan border at Sapangaon on April 9 recently to study and suggest its up gradation to an eco-tourism hot spot. The delegation included Sadhana Hojai, Deputy Commissioner, Udalguri; Girindra Adhikari, DFO, Raju Kumar Brahma, ACF of Dhansiri Forest Division and Jayanta Kumar Das, Hony. Wildlife Warden, Assam. The delegation along with the visiting environmental workers visited the 5 Sq KM picturesque man-made forest and had a discussion with the JFMC members and media persons to chalk out measures to make JFMC Sapangaon a world

famous place of positive environmental movement. The Deputy Commissioner advised the JFMC members to plant bamboo, lemon, orange, piper on commercial basis. The DC also advised the DFO to arrange training of bamboo plantation and craft for the members of the JFMC. The DC also assured that students of various schools of Udalguri district would be taken to JFMC Sapangaon under Jyan Yatra scheme of the government so as to make the students understand the necessity of conservation of flora and fauna. It needs mention that six villages on the India-Bhutan border at Bhairabkunda joined hands with the Forest Department in successfully regenerating a stretch of barren sandy forest land. The results of this quiet community initiative done under joint forest management (JFMC) are evident with the regenerated forest expanse of 5 sq KM already emerging as a shelter of wild animals and birds. The 22.24 sq KM Bhairabkunda Reserve Forest (RF) was left without a single tree by the early 1980s due to rampant illegal logging. Afforestation drive by forest Deptt. in association of people of six villages namely- Sonaigaon, Goroimari, Bhairabpur, Sapangaon, No.1 Mazargaon and No.2 Mazargaon started in April 2007 and within six years a spectacular man made forest known as JFMC forest has grown up at Sapangaon by converting plot of barren sandy lands measuring 500 hectare (5 sq KM) into a new picturesque forest by planting khoir, gomari, simul, shisum etc near Dhansiri river, very close to Bhutan and Arunachal. Thaneswar Malakar, former DC of Udalguri sanctioned an amount of rupees five lakhs for the construction of a guest house for visitors. Conservation activists hoped that the place would draw the attention of tourists all over the world, if government developed infrastructure of the area. The regenerated forest land now has rich vegetation and has given shelter to wild elephants, deer, monkeys, leopard, bears etc beside various species of flora. A small river with several canals - a few of those man made runs throughout the forest, providing replenishment for the green cover.

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BY JAYANTA KUMAR DAS

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