

Consultation on environment and natural resources

The Coalition on Environment and Natural Resources (CENRs) in association with Assam Times (AT) is set to conduct a consultation in Guwahati on "**Piloting NE Initiatives for the Protection of Environment & Natural Resources**" on September 14.

Since most communities in North East India struggle with understanding the issues around extractive industries and corporate development trend, the region as a result in general continues to remain neglected in spite of its huge potential and vast natural resources. The prevailing volatile political and security situation is in fact the product of the negligence that stands as a testimony to the 'step motherly attitude' of the successive Governments.

The strategic location of the region offers a wide opportunity for the country to forge a link with other South-East Asian countries and prompt India to adopt the 'Look East Policy' to serve its interests beyond its geographical boundaries. To meet the demands of the ever growing economy of the country, rivers and mineral resources are exploited exhaustively and new mega projects are being planned and implemented all over the region which requires the presence of huge military forces to protect it. Thus, the cycle of violence continues that results in violation of human rights and subjugation of the indigenous people's voices and their aspirations.

In the context of such a development trend the consultation will prepare civil societies and relevant actors for advocacy strategizing and developing opportunities for strengthening themselves in developing agendas and programs.

The consultation will help create opportunities for promoting a consolidation of CSOs and other actors in North East India and to advance the leadership among the young generation to protect and promote indigenous lands and resources.

It will be the objective of the consultation (1) to understand the growing challenges of extractive industries, development issues and gaps among the indigenous communities (2) to identify strategic approaches, key challenges and critical issues around development trend in NEI and (3) to develop a roadmap to advance civil society active participation and to enhance the voices of the local affected communities.

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