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Beyond Headlines



Participants of the conservation biology course at Gibbon Conservation Centre in Jorhat. A Telegraph picture

Five-day date with conservation biology

From learning how to use the Global Positioning System (GPS) and **sampling** animals in the wild, students, teachers and forest officials had a wonderful insight into the fascinating world of conservation biology right in the wilds.

A total of 16 enthusiasts attended the first annual field course in conservation biology at the Gibbon Conservation Centre, Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Jorhat, from February 6 to 10.

"The course provided an introduction to the discipline of conservation biology with a focus on non-human primates. A wide range of related topics were also presented, including primate behaviour and ecology, field study methods, population assessment," Dilip Chetry, a primatologist with Aaranyak, a Guwahati-based NGO, said.

Conservation biology is the scientific study of nature and status of Earth's biodiversity with the aim of protecting species, their habitats, and ecosystems from extinction.

The programme was inaugurated by divisional forest officer Rajiv Kumar Das and was attended by Randell C. Kyes of Washington University.

This field course is part of a collaborative international programme between the Gibbon Conservation Centre of the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, India and the Center for Global Field Study and Washington National Primate Research Center of the University of Washington.

At a snail's pace

It appears that nothing moves in Manipur until a bandh or a blockade is called.

On the day the Senapati District Students' Association lifted the economic blockade along Imphal-Dimapur highway, an NGO in Manipur valley threatened to impose a bandh in Thoubal district, this time over non-functioning of a health centre.

The Indigenous Pangal Cultural Organisation said in a statement on Tuesday that a government primary health centre at Lilong Haoreibi Makha Leikai in Thoubal district had remained closed for nearly a month.

"No doctors or nurses turned up at the health centre for nearly one month. Our pleas to health minister Ph. Parijat Singh have failed to reopen the health centre," the organisation said.

The NGO said it would impose a Thoubal bandh from February 22 if the health centre did not reopen by February 21.

Given past experiences, the health centre would reopen only after a few days of the bandh.

Footnote

To create awareness on ways to avail of several central schemes, a public information campaign on Bharat Nirman programmes like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the National Rural Health Mission, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and the Right to Information Act was held at Pynursla, near Cherrapunji, on February 11.

During the technical session, Pynursla block development officer P. Tynsong and secretary of the village Rinton Diengdoh thanked the media for organising the awareness campaign on central schemes for the benefit of the people. They also urged



Children attend a photo exhibition, a part of the campaign on Bharat Nirman programmes, at Pynursla in East Khasi Hills. A Telegraph picture

the people to participate in the programmes for the overall welfare of the community.

The assistant project officer of District Rural Development Authority, Pynursla, E. Lyngdoh, stressed the need for setting up village employment councils and area employment councils for the effective implementation of NREGA.

She said job cards should be distributed to deserving candidates, besides conducting social audit.

The experts also highlighted the usefulness of the RTI Act to get information on the functioning of the government.

The district community mobilisation co-ordinator on community participation for implementation of the SSA, D.L. Shylla, said the role of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan was to improve the universal enrolment in the schools.

He said village education committees have been set up through the block resource centres to monitor the implementation of the SSA programmes.

Block programme manager of Pynursla B. Mitri said infant and maternal mortality rates would be reduced and basic health services are expected to improve in the rural areas through the Janani Suraksha Yojana under NRHM

