

ITA calls Industry meet on human elephant conflict in Assam tea gardens



Guwahati, December 22, 2018: The Indian Tea Association organized a meet at Kolkata to moot an industry wide collaboration to address Human Elephant Conflict faced by the tea gardens of Assam and West Bengal. The Industry meet was initiated by Karan Paul, Chairman of Apeejay Tea, a member of ITA, which has been implementing conflict mitigation strategies with WWF for the last three years to significant impact.

WWF presented a strategy to the ITA members and success stories of its three year long collaboration with Apeejay Tea which saw participation of 15 top tea companies and senior management of WWF.

“Karan Paul Apeejay Surrendra Group and Apeejay Tea Chairman, said “Apeejay Tea was perhaps the first tea company to fund an intensive conflict management strategy in Sonitpur because four of our gardens were in the hot zone. As a donor as well as a victim of HEC, the successes of Apeejay Tea’s partnership with WWF-India for the last three years have brought us valuable insights on solutions to human elephant conflict issue. We have shared these with the Indian Tea Association and hope to see a multi-party collaboration that will lead to the development of a broad human-elephant conflict management protocol followed by all tea gardens uniformly. The industry meet called by ITA of similarly afflicted companies with gardens in conflict zones has showed that there is a positive inclination in all companies to work together on solutions. We hope that we will be successful in creating a platform of collaboration as it will lead to implementation of large scale interventions, tried and tested in Apeejay Tea gardens, and stem the loss of life and injury to people working in tea gardens and elephants across the Brahmaputra landscape.”

Vivek Goenka, ITA Chairman said, “ITA has studied the Project Outcomes of Apeejay Tea - WWF collaboration and is sensitive to the issue. I believe that a multi-stakeholder collaboration including the Government will aid implementation of large scale interventions across the tea sector. Today was our first meeting involving tea companies and I am looking forward to a collaborative approach emerging to take this forward.”

Dr. Dipankar Ghose, Director, Species and Landscapes programme, WWF-India, said, “With the support of multiple stakeholders such as the Apeejay Tea, Assam Forest Department, elected public representatives, civil administration, and local communities, WWF-India has been utilizing multi-pronged approaches to address human-elephant conflict. We believe that we will be able to scale up these initiatives in Assam with the Indian Tea Association’s participation in effectively managing human-elephant conflict along with other stakeholders.”

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