

# WWF-India, Apeejay Tea successfully managing man-elephant conflict



Officials of Apeejay Surrendra Group and WWF-India addressing a press conference in Guwahati on Friday. – UB Photos

## STAFF REPORTER

**GUWAHATI, Aug 24:** Apeejay Tea and WWF-India today announced the outcomes of their three-year successful partnership (2015-18) to prevent and manage human-elephant conflict at select areas.

The partnership has yielded positive impact for managing human-elephant conflict in Sonitpur district. Through an intensive conflict management strategy in plantations, a range of initiatives have been implemented that were found to be successful in reducing losses related to human-elephant conflict, Dr Dipankar

Ghose, director, species and landscapes, WWF-India, told the media today.

WWF-India worked closely with the Apeejay Tea management, and the local community to manage human-elephant conflict in four tea estates – Borjuli, Ghoirallie, Dhulapadung and Sessa – located in Sonitpur.

Renu Kakkar, director, CSR, Apeejay Surrendra Group, said, “More than 50 per cent deaths caused by human-elephant conflict were recorded from tea gardens in Sonitpur when Apeejay Tea and WWF-India decided to work together.”

Low-cost solar-powered fences installed across the tea estates demonstrated the effectiveness in minimizing human-elephant conflict related loss to human life and property. A scalable bio fence using thorny bamboo was also introduced to prevent the entry of wild elephants. Regular village level meetings and street plays were conducted to create awareness.

The two organisations said that a broad human-elephant conflict management strategy across all tea gardens was the need of the hour.

“Apeejay Tea will set up a

‘Platform of Collaboration’ with other tea companies and WWF-India to enable WWF to collaborate with them. Based on our learnings from the three-year project, we believe that a multi-party collaboration will aid WWF to implement largescale interventions across all tea gardens,” Kakkar added.

Dr Ghose added, “We believe we will be able to scale up these initiatives to other plantation areas with the support of the local community, Forest Department, elected public representatives like MPs and MLAs, and the civil administration.”