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Sonowal unveils anti-depredation quick response vehicle to aid wildlife surveillance

New tool to be helpful in reining over man-animal conflict: CM

Dispur, July 24: In a move to intensify surveillance and rein in man-animal conflict by the State Forest Department, chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal unveiled a Surveillance Quadcopter (Drone) and an anti-depredation quick response vehicle at a programme held at the conference hall of chief minister's block in Janata Bhawan here today.

It may be noted that with the inauguration of the vehicle an intensified 24X7 surveillance would be made possible over the forest cover of the state helping to rein in the increasing incidents of man-animal conflict. This surveillance drone would be able to narrow-cast any purported movement of the poachers and would delve a blow to poaching in the national parks, wild life sanctuaries and other reserve forests. Under this new initiative, the Forest Department introduces three numbers of Special Surveillance Quadcopter and an Antidepredation Quick Response Vehicle in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sonowal said that the 21st century is the century of information and technology. In this century making good use of science and technology, the Forest Department has been taking several steps to intensify surveillance over the forest cover and thwart any purported move of poaching and illegal forest trade. He also said that Assam is the treasure trove of wild life tourism and the tourists from all over the country and outside come to Assam to cherish the unparalleled beauty and diversity of its wildlife. He also stated that immediately after coming to power, the present State government attached tremendous importance to enhance the green coverage of the state including protecting the pristine wildlife. As a result of his government's proactive steps, wild life poaching including poaching the world famous one horned rhinoceros came down phenomenally. Giving a new dimension to the government's vigour, vitality and vengeance towards wild life poaching, his government in the last few years apprehended 259 poachers. Moreover, starting its actions against encroachment of forest land, his government recovered 502 hector land from the clutch of the illegal encroachers. The poachers were tried in the fast track court to hand them over unprecedented justice.

To transform the forest cover of Assam into world famous tourist destinations, their protection is of paramount importance. He, therefore, called upon the larger fraternity of Forest Department to lend its synergistic efforts to enrich the wild lives of the state. Considering the immense inherent potential of the forest resources of the state, the Forest Department has to bear

responsibility to enable the younger generation of the state to take pride of the verdant possibilities of the state's flora and fauna. He also said that as a result of sequel of actions taken by the State government, the forest coverage of the state increased to 222 sq. km. Moreover, State government has also taken steps to plant 10 crore saplings and has already erected 33 high lands in Kaziranga for the wild animals to take refuge during seasonal floods.

Chief Minister Sonowal also announced to set up a forest division for Borail forest range in Barak Valley and asked the Forest Department to take necessary steps in this regard. He also said that in sync with his government's priorities, Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary would be upgraded to national park besides upgrading Poba Reserve forest in to a wild life sanctuary.

Environment and Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya also spoke on the occasion. Chief Minister's Media Advisor Hrishikesh Goswami, his Legal Advisor Santanu Bharali, Principal Secretary to Environment and Forest Avinash Joshi, PCCF A.M. Singh and few other senior officers of the Forest Department were present on the occasion.

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