BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026

30th October - 3rd November
Guwahati, Assam



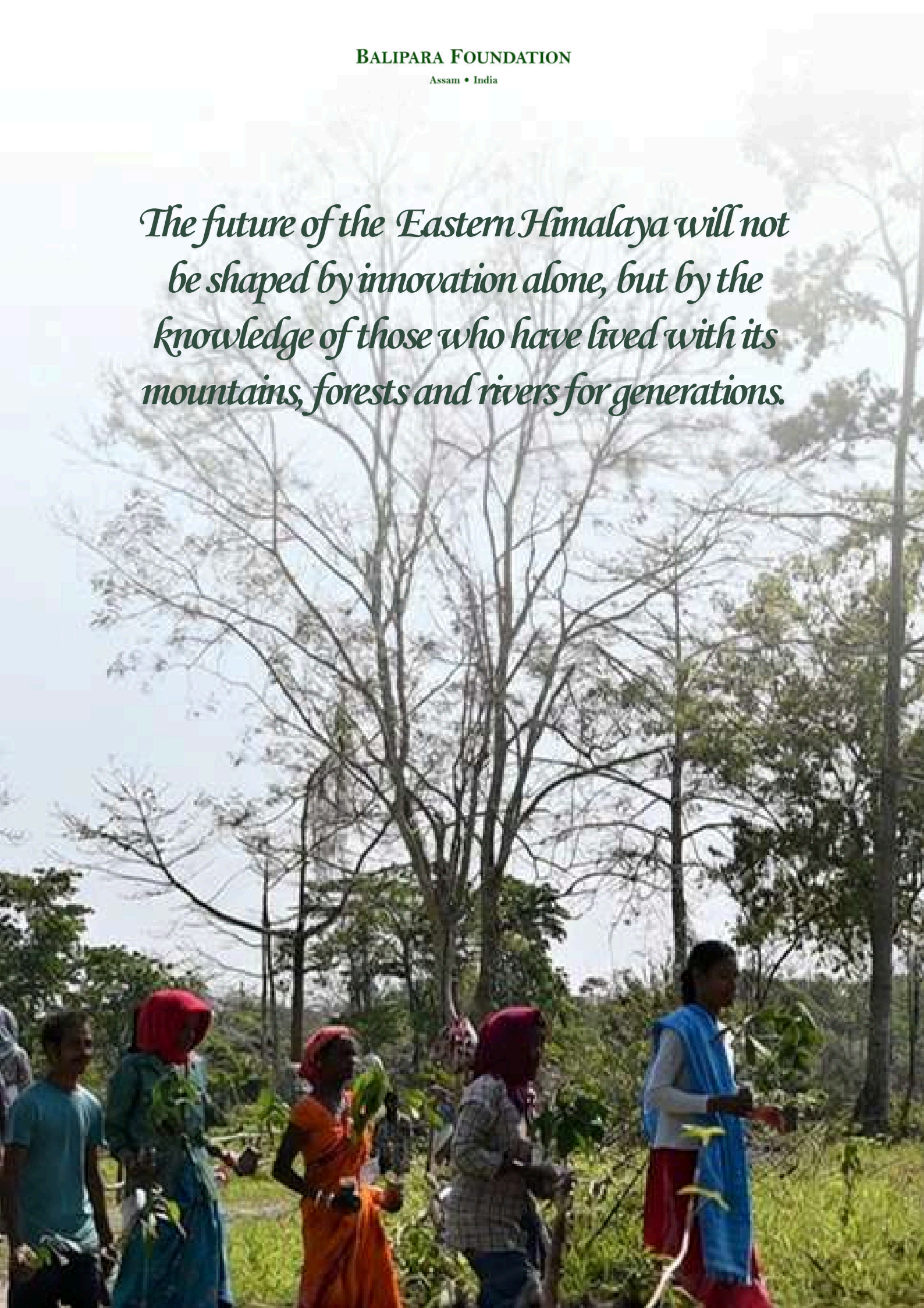
COMMUNITIES, CULTURE, AND INDIGENOUS FUTURES

PROGRAM AGENDA

30th OCTOBER 2026

TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, GUWAHATI

The future of the Eastern Himalaya will not be shaped by innovation alone, but by the knowledge of those who have lived with its mountains, forests and rivers for generations.



COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & INDIGENOUS FUTURES

Culture, community and the future of conservation

TISS Guwahati | 30 October 2026

Connecting coexistence, living heritage, Indigenous voices and community-led conservation across the Eastern Himalaya.

CONNECTED PROGRAMME THEMES



1. **Stories of Coexistence**
   Community voices on protecting gibbons, elephants, Himalayan salamanders, red pandas and black-necked cranes.
2. **Culture as Conservation**
   Food, language, stories and craft as living ecological knowledge, identity and livelihoods.
3. **Listening Before Leading**
   Bridging community knowledge, research and government so Indigenous voices can shape policy.
4. **Communities Leading Conservation**
   Locally led models restoring forests and biodiversity while sustaining livelihoods and traditional knowledge.
5. **Indigenous Futures**
   Closed-door policy roundtable on knowledge, language and rights-based governance in the Eastern Himalaya.
6. **Stories from the Forest Fringe**
   Indigenous knowledge, eco-tourism, education and livelihoods at the meeting point of communities and forests.

Living traditions, stories and participation

- **Pottery Workshop**
  Mud Hill Pottery
- **Natural Tie Dye Workshop**
  Suravi Textile
- **Bamboo Craft Workshop**
  Rangman Xilpa Udyog
- **Mask Making Workshop**
  Samuguri Xatra, Majuli
- **Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea**
  Student research poster presentations
- **Film Screening & Conversation**
  The Khamyang Story (2026) and Daughters of the Polo God (2018)
- **Eastern Himalayan Cultural Mosaic**
  Textiles, crafts, oral histories and archival displays
- **Community-Led Enterprises**
  Indigenous collectives, women-led enterprises, food, textiles and crafts
- **A Promise to the Forest**
  Personal commitments to community-led conservation

Opening: The Forest Remembers • Closing: A Shared Commitment

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Communities, Culture and Indigenous Futures: Sessions Overview

The forests, rivers and landscapes of the Eastern Himalaya are shaped as much by the people who live in them as by the ecosystems themselves. Indigenous and local communities hold knowledge, languages, food traditions, crafts and stewardship practices that have sustained these landscapes across generations. Their value extends beyond individual traditions to the relationships between people and nature that support resilient landscapes and communities. Conserving this diversity calls for attention to nature and culture together, alongside the people whose lived experience and everyday decisions shape the future of these landscapes.

Against this backdrop, the **14th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum (EHNF)** will convene its **Communities, Culture and Indigenous Futures programme at TISS Guwahati** on 30th October 2026, under the theme ***The Future of the Third Pole and Himsagar (Eastern Himalaya)***. The programme moves from stories of coexistence to culture and living traditions, from listening and policy to examples of community-led conservation, and closes with a policy roundtable on Indigenous futures. Storytelling, practitioner experience, policy reflection and hands-on learning will connect these discussions with the future of the Eastern Himalaya's communities and landscapes.

Objectives:

1. **Learn from lived experiences of coexistence** through stories from community leaders and youth on living alongside and protecting species such as the Western Hoolock Gibbon, Asian Elephant, Himalayan Salamander, Red Panda and Black-necked Crane, highlighting local stewardship, challenges and hope.
2. **Understand how culture, living traditions and food shape conservation** by exploring what food, language, stories and craft teach us about living with and caring for nature, and how living traditions can evolve while strengthening livelihoods, identity and conservation.
3. **Examine the role of listening and Indigenous communities in policy** by asking what keeps community voices and traditional ecological knowledge out of environmental and development policy, and how communities can move from being consulted to shaping the decisions, institutions and policies that affect their lands, cultures and futures.
4. **Showcase examples of communities leading conservation** through locally led models that restore forests and biodiversity, strengthen livelihoods and sustain traditional ecological knowledge, alongside stories from the forest fringe on eco-tourism, education and livelihoods.
5. **Advance dialogue on Indigenous futures** through a closed-door policy roundtable on knowledge, language and rights-based governance in the Eastern Himalaya.

Scope of the Discussions

The five main discussion sessions follow a connected sequence: (i) coexistence learning; (ii) culture, living traditions and food; (iii) listening and the role of Indigenous communities in policy; (iv) communities leading conservation; and (v) a closed-door policy roundtable on Indigenous futures. Complementary activities include an inaugural cultural performance, ***The Forest Remembers***, ***Naturenomics*** Pitch Your Idea poster presentations, a film screening and conversation featuring ***The Khamyang Story*** and ***Daughters of the Polo God***, and the Living Forest Lab, a parallel experience zone of pottery, natural tie dye, bamboo craft and mask-making workshops. Together, these formats link storytelling and policy dialogue with practical skills, cultural engagement and participation.

Expected Outcomes

The sessions seek to build a shared understanding of how coexistence, culture and living traditions sustain landscapes; draw lessons from community-led conservation; and strengthen the case for listening to Indigenous communities in policy. The discussions also aim to identify pathways for living traditions to thrive alongside livelihoods, bridges between community knowledge, research and government systems, and stronger rights-based governance. Workshops, poster presentations, film and cultural performances offer complementary opportunities for learning and exchange among community practitioners, researchers, policymakers, students and other participants.

Ultimately, the programme aims to connect culture with conservation and listening with leadership: honouring the knowledge of Indigenous communities, sustaining living traditions and supporting the communities whose lives and futures are intertwined with the forests, rivers and landscapes of the Eastern Himalaya.

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THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD POLE AND HIMSAGAR (Eastern Himalaya)



COMMUNITIES, CULTURE, AND INDIGENOUS FUTURES

PROGRAM AGENDA - 30th OCTOBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
09.00-09:30 AM	**Welcome and Refreshments**
09:30-09:35 AM	**Inaugural Cultural Performance: *The Forest Remembers*** *An immersive opening performance weaving together music, theatre and spoken word to amplify the voices of Indigenous communities, youth and forests*
09:35-09:40 AM	**Inaugural Address by Prof. Jagannath Ambagudia, Campus Director of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati**
09:40-10:00 AM	**INTRODUCING THE 14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS FORUM** ***Ranjit Barthakur, Founder Forester, Balipara Foundation,*** *in conversation with* ***Shri Subramanian Ramadorai, Chairman of Karmayogi Bharat.***
10:00-10:10 AM	**Leadership Address by Mr. Debdoot Mohanty, Chief Operating Officer, Tata Steel Foundation**
10:10-11:10 AM	**Stories of Coexistence: Indigenous Voices from the Eastern Himalaya** *Storytelling session featuring community leaders and youth sharing lived experiences of coexisting with and protecting iconic Eastern Himalayan species, including the Western Hoolock Gibbon, Asian Elephant, Himalayan Salamander, Red Panda and Black-necked crane, highlighting local stewardship, challenges and hope.* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Dr. Barkha Subba, Conservation Scientist, 2026 Whitley Award Winner, Darjeeling • Pemba Tsering Romo, Grassroots Wildlife Conservationist, Zemithang, Arunachal Pradesh • James Gabil Momin, Range Forest Officer, Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Meghalaya • Mahendra Basumatary, Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society, Assam **Moderator:** Tanuz Kalita, National Co-ordinator, Alliance for Conserving Freshwater Ecosystems
11:10 – 11:30 AM	**Refreshments & Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation** *Refreshments accompanied by exhibits and research ideas by students on indigenous knowledge, community governance, livelihoods, and cultural resilience*

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RE-IMAGINING FUTURES
TISS GUWAHATI

PROGRAM AGENDA - 30TH OCTOBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
11:30 AM- 12:30 PM	**Culture as Conservation: Food, Language & Living Traditions** *> What can food, language, stories and craft teach us about the ways communities have learned to live with and care for nature?* *> How can living traditions survive and evolve without losing the knowledge, identity and ecological relationships embedded within them?* *> How can communities, cultural practitioners and social entrepreneurs create new pathways for living traditions to thrive while strengthening livelihoods, identity and conservation?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Tripti Shukla, Founder of Vanwasi-Aadiwasi Foundation • Janice Pariat, Poet and Author, Meghalaya • Namrata Tiwari, Founder, Itsallfolk • Avantika Haflongbar, Social Entrepreneur, Dima Hasao, Assam • Jatwang Wangsa, Teacher and Author, Wancho community, Arunachal Pradesh **Moderator:** Mesha Murali, Cultural Heritage & MEL Specialist, Independent Qualitative Researcher
12:30- 01:30 PM	**Listening Before Leading: Reflections from Science, Policy & Practice** *> What prevents community voices and traditional ecological knowledge from being meaningfully reflected in environmental and development policies, and how can these gaps be addressed?* *> How can Indigenous communities move from being consulted to having a meaningful role in shaping decisions, institutions and policies that affect their lands, cultures and futures?* *> What would it take to build stronger bridges between community knowledge, research and government systems so that policy becomes more locally grounded, inclusive and responsive?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Dr. Mafiul Hussain, Former Secretary, Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission • Sentila T. Yanger, State Director- Nagaland, INTACH, and Founder Director of Tribal Weave • Ambika Aiyadurai, Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar • Bhogtoram Mawroh, Senior Consultant, Social Research and Policy, NESFAS **Moderator:** Boka K Rochill, Chief Climate Action Officer, Directorate of Municipal Affairs, Govt. of Nagaland
01:30-02:20 PM	**Lunch & Conversations,** **Followed by Cultural Performance**

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 30TH OCTOBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS

02:20-03:20 PM

Communities Leading Conservation: Custodians of the Landscape

Community practitioners showcase locally led conservation models restoring forests, and biodiversity, strengthening livelihoods and sustaining traditional ecological knowledge.

Conversation Leaders:

- Obed Bohovi Swu, SFS Divisional Forest Officer, Zunheboto, Nagaland
- Banwang Losu, Founder, Wancho Literary Mission
- Kesang Lhamu Khrimey, Chairperson, Arunachal Pradesh Art & Culture Eco Tourism Society

Moderator: Barasha Das, Science Journalist

Closed Door Policy Roundtable:

Indigenous Futures in the Eastern Himalaya: Knowledge, Language and Rights-Based Governance

Stakeholders:

- Dr. Mafiul Hussain, Former Secretary, Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission
- Boka K Rochill, Chief Climate Action Officer, Directorate of Municipal Affairs, Govt. of Nagaland
- Bhogtoram Mawroh, Senior Consultant, Social Research and Policy, NESFAS
- Michael Islary, Senior Program Associate, WRI
- Rajkamal Goswami, Fellow, ATREE
- Ivan Zhimo, Team Lead TVBCLN, Nagaland
- Ledo Thungon, Chairman, Garung Thuk
- Chechilly B Marak, Social Entrepreneur , Garo Hills

Film Screening and Conversation:

Stories on Screen:
Voices, Heritage & Identity

1. *The Khamyang Story (2026)*
A documentary on the endangered Khamyang language of Assam, centred on Bhogeswar Thomung, believed to be the last surviving speaker.

2. *Daughters of the Polo God (2018)*
Winner of the Best Documentary Short Award at the 19th New York Indian Film Festival, the film tells a unique story of conserving the endangered Manipuri pony while empowering women in polo.

Followed by:

Dialogue & Q&A
Mrinal Talukdar, Journalist & Producer, The Khamyang Story,

in conversation with

Roopa Barua, Director, Daughters of the Polo God

An intimate conversation on storytelling as a tool for preserving cultural memory, amplifying Indigenous voices and bringing endangered languages, traditions and living heritage into public consciousness.

03:20-04:20 PM

Stories from the Forest Fringe: Indigenous Knowledge, Eco-tourism, Education & Livelihoods

Conversation Leaders:

- Archana Barthakur, Social Worker and Entrepreneur
- Uttam Teron, Founder, Parijat Academy
- Michael Islary, Senior Program Associate, WRI

Moderator: Tonmoy Talukdar, Fundraising Strategist, Assam Investment Advisory Society

04:20-04:30 PM

Vote of Thanks and a Shared Commitment to the Culture and Communities of Eastern Himalaya

Collaborative closing performance celebrating the enduring relationship between people and nature, ending with a collective call to protect the forests that sustain us all.

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 30TH OCTOBER 2026

READING MATERIALS

Journal Articles

1. Integrating Ethnobiological Knowledge into Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Himalayas
2. Traditional Use and Management of NTFPs in Kangchenjunga Landscape: Implications for Conservation and Livelihoods
3. Community Reserves: Their Significance for the Conservation of Mammals in a Mosaic of Community-Managed Lands in Meghalaya, Northeast India
4. Assessing the Effectiveness of Community Managed Forests for Plant Diversity Conservation in Meghalaya, Northeast India
5. Building Sustainability in the Eastern Himalaya: Linking Evidence to Action
6. Towards Greater Clarity of the Science–Policy–Practice Interface: A Framework to Address Environmental Challenges
7. Resurgent Diversity: Upland Agriculture, Indigenous Crops and Foodways in Eastern Himalayas
8. Evidence That Cultural Food Practices of Adi Women in Arunachal Pradesh, India, Improve Social-Ecological Resilience: Insights for Sustainable Development Goals
9. Assessing Livelihood–Ecosystem Interdependencies and Natural Resource Governance in a Tribally Controlled Region of India's North-Eastern Middle Himalayas
10. Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities for Tribal Communities Through Inclusive Ecotourism

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

1. Idu Mishmi Protect Ancestral Land Through Community Conservation
2. Two Indian Tribes Help Reconstruct a Forest's History, in War and in Peace
3. Community Conservation Model in Western Arunachal Pradesh Protects Wildlife Habitats
4. Communities Rally to Conserve Marbled Cat
5. How the Yak Rearing System in North Sikkim Is Coping with Climate Change
6. Hunting for Answers: The Scale and Impacts of Hunting, and the Importance of Listening to Hunters
7. From Forest to Feast: The Food Wisdom of Arunachal's Tribal Communities
8. No Steel, Concrete, or Cement: Meghalaya's Living Bridges Take 30 Years to Grow but Get Stronger with Age
9. How the Green Hub Project Is Working with the Youth to Create an Ecologically Secure Future
10. In Arunachal's Sessa Orchid Sanctuary, Communities Collaborate with Forest Officials to Conserve Orchids

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PARALLEL EXPERIENCE ZONE: THE LIVING FOREST LAB

TIME	EXPERIENCE	FORMAT	LED BY
11:25 AM- 1 PM 2 PM- 3.30PM	Pottery Workshop (20 participants per session)	Sustainable pottery demonstration and hands-on workshop	Mud Hill Pottery
11:25 AM- 1 PM 2 PM- 3.30PM	Natural Tie Dye Workshop (20 participants per session)	A hands on natural dyeing workshop using eco friendly dyes made from plants, flowers, and locally sourced pigments	Suravi Textile
12:25- 01:25 PM	Bamboo Craft Workshop	Hands-on bamboo crafting session along with a display of their handcrafted bamboo artworks.	Rangman Xilpa Udyog
11:25 AM- 4:25 PM	Mask Making Workshop	• Traditional mask painting workshop • Cultural storytelling and artistic immersion • Participants take home their painted masks as souvenirs	Samuguri Xatra (Majuli)

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ALL-DAY IMMERSIVE INSTALMENTS AND DISPLAYS

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation

Postgraduate students and early-career researchers are invited to submit action-based research ideas and abstract aligned with the key track (indigenous knowledge, community governance, livelihoods, cultural resilience), focusing on the Eastern Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspot, for a chance of winning a seed support of up to ₹50,000.

A Promise to the Forest

Participants are invited to write a personal commitment towards supporting community-led conservation and contribute it to a collective installation, creating a shared vision for the future of the Eastern Himalaya.

Eastern Himalayan Cultural Mosaic

Poster displays showcasing the rich cultural diversity of the Eastern Himalaya through textiles, crafts, archival collections, oral histories and documentation from Balipara Foundation and partner organisations.

Community-Led Enterprises

An exhibition featuring Indigenous collectives, women-led enterprises, sustainable textile initiatives, non-timber forest produce, ethical food products, traditional crafts and community-based nature enterprises from across the Eastern Himalaya.

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Forests and Biodiversity

PROGRAM AGENDA

31st OCTOBER 2026

अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यम्

COTTON UNIVERSITY





The forests of the Eastern Himalaya are living reservoirs of biodiversity sustaining wildlife, water, livelihoods and cultures, and shaping the resilience of communities and ecosystems.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

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FORESTS AND BIODIVERSITY

One landscape. Five connected conversations.

Cotton University | 31 October 2026

From understanding biodiversity's value to protecting species, sustaining ecosystems and strengthening collective action.



1 **Valuing Biodiversity Assets**

Why biodiversity matters as an ecological, economic and social asset.



2 **The Return of the Wild**

Species recovery and rewilding through case stories on hornbills, Himalayan salamanders, vultures and Asian elephants.



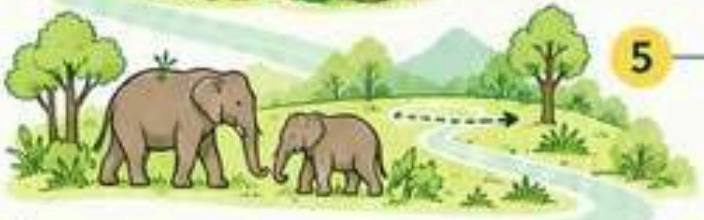
3 **Biodiversity Under Pressure**

The freshwater and wildlife crisis: rivers, wetlands, forests and connected habitats.



4 **Forest Biodiversity and Governance**

Closed-door policy roundtable on community forestry, ecological corridors and communities' rights and agency.



5 **Asian Elephant Secretariat**

Collaborative conservation, coexistence and transboundary partnerships.

Learn, experience and participate

Vulture rescue and rehabilitation
Hands-on training

Spirited Away: In Search of the Deo Haanh
White-winged wood duck film and Q&A

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea
Research poster presentations

Wildlife Photography Exhibition
Species documentation and community stories

A Promise to the Forest
Personal commitments to community-led conservation

Opening addresses • Closing reflection and cultural performance: The Forest Remembers

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Forests and Biodiversity Session Overview

The forests and freshwater ecosystems of the Eastern Himalaya sustain wildlife, water, livelihoods and cultural connections. Their value extends beyond individual species to the ecological processes and relationships that support resilient landscapes and communities. Conserving this diversity calls for attention to species and habitats together, alongside the people whose knowledge, stewardship and everyday decisions shape these ecosystems. Habitat loss and fragmentation make connected landscapes, effective restoration and inclusive governance central to conservation.

Against this backdrop, the **14th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum (EHNF)** will convene its **Forests and Biodiversity programme at Cotton University** on 31st October 2026. The programme moves from valuing biodiversity to species recovery, freshwater and wildlife pressures, forest governance, and collaborative Asian elephant conservation. Scientific perspectives, field experience, community participation and practical learning will connect these discussions with the challenges of protecting the Eastern Himalaya's forests and biodiversity.

The Sessions focused on Forests and Biodiversity aim to:

1. **Recognise biodiversity as an ecological, economic and social asset** by examining its contributions to ecosystem functioning, livelihoods and resilient societies, establishing the case for conservation beyond the protection of individual species.
2. **Learn from species conservation and recovery efforts** through case stories on hornbills, Himalayan salamanders, vultures and Asian elephants, considering the relationships between species protection, habitat restoration and community involvement.
3. **Examine pressures on freshwater ecosystems and wildlife** by connecting the needs of individual species with the rivers, wetlands, forests and habitats that sustain them, and exploring why conservation must work across ecological systems.
4. **Explore forest governance, community forestry and ecological corridors** through dialogue on the roles, rights and agency of communities, and the policy conditions needed to support connected habitats and durable conservation.
5. **Strengthen collaboration for Asian elephant conservation** by exploring coexistence, landscape connectivity and transboundary partnerships, linking species conservation with the shared landscapes on which people and wildlife depend.

Scope of the Discussions

The five main discussion sessions follow a connected sequence: (i) valuing biodiversity assets; (ii) species recovery and rewilding; (iii) freshwater and wildlife under pressure; (iv) forest governance, community forestry and ecological corridors; and (v) a collaborative future for Asian elephant conservation. Complementary activities include vulture rescue and rehabilitation training, the screening of Spirited Away: In Search of the Deo Haanh with discussion, research posters, a wildlife photography exhibition and a collective personal-commitment installation. Together, these formats link scientific and policy dialogue with practical skills, cultural engagement and participation.

Expected Outcomes

The sessions seek to build a shared understanding of biodiversity's ecological and social value; draw lessons from species conservation and restoration efforts; and connect freshwater and wildlife pressures with the need to protect functioning ecosystems. The discussions also aim to identify opportunities for community participation, stronger forest governance and collaborative elephant conservation. Training, research presentations and public engagement offer complementary opportunities for learning and exchange among researchers, practitioners, forest personnel, students and other participants.

Ultimately, the programme aims to connect the value of biodiversity with collective responsibility: protecting species, sustaining ecosystems and supporting the communities whose lives and futures are intertwined with the forests of the Eastern Himalaya.

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THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD POLE AND HIMSAGAR (Eastern Himalaya)

Forests and Biodiversity

PROGRAM AGENDA - 31ST OCTOBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
09.00-09:30 AM	Registrations & Welcome Tea
09:30-09:35 AM	**INTRODUCING THE 14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS FORUM** ***Shri Subramanian Ramadorai, Chairman, Karmayogi Bharat,*** *in conversation with* ***Ranjit Barthakur, Founder Forester, Balipara Foundation***
09:35-09:40 AM	**Inaugural Address by Prof. Ramesh C Deka, Vice Chancellor, Cotton University**
09:40-09:50 AM	**Keynote Address by Prof. Toru Terao, Kagawa University, Japan**
09:50-10:00 AM	**Address by Chief Guest: Leena Nandan, Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Govt. of India**
10:00-11:00 AM	**Valuing Biodiversity Assets: The Primary Case for Conservation** *Opening plenary session establishing why biodiversity matters beyond conservation, as an ecological, economic and social asset.* ***Conversation Leaders:*** ***Leadership Address:*** Prof. Kazuya Ishii, Kagawa University, Japan • Shri R.K. Samal, PCCF and HoFF, Government of Tripura • Dr. Yash Veer Bhatnagar, Country Representative, IUCN, India • Vaishnavi Prabhakaran, Head Sustainability, Tata Power • Dr. Oinam Sunanda Devi, Scientific Officer, Assam State Biodiversity Board **Moderator:** Dr. Pranab J Patar, Climate Specialist, PMU - Clean Development and Climate Finance, Govt. of Assam **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *What we cannot value, we struggle to protect; biodiversity is foundational to resilient societies and sustainable economies.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *But the value of biodiversity becomes real when we see what happens to individual species and ecosystems—and what is possible when they recover.*

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TIME	DETAILS

11:00 – 11:25 AM

Refreshments & Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea Poster Presentation

Refreshments alongside exhibits featuring innovations in wildlife conservation, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity monitoring.

11:25 AM-12:25 PM

The Return of the Wild: Stories of Species Recovery and Rewilding

Moving from the abstract value of biodiversity to tangible stories of species coming back through conservation and restoration.

Case Stories by

- **Dr. Aparajita Datta** (Senior Scientist, Nature Conservation Foundation) presenting her work on conservation of **Hornbills**
- **Dr. Barkha Subba** (Conservation Scientist, 2026 Whitley Award Winner), presenting her work on conservation of **Himalayan Salamanders**
- **Dr. Sachin Ranade** (Scientist, Bombay Natural History Society) presenting their work on **vulture conservation.**
- **Pranjal Talukdar** (Range Officer, Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary) presenting their work on conservation of **Asian Elephants**

Moderator: Mesha Murali, Cultural Heritage & MEL Specialist, Independent Qualitative Researcher

KEY TAKEAWAY → *Recovery is possible when species protection, habitat restoration and communities work together.*

BRIDGE TO NEXT → *But recovery stories sit alongside a much larger question: what happens when the ecosystems supporting these species come under increasing pressure?*

12:25-1:25 PM

Biodiversity Under Pressure: Confronting the Freshwater and Wildlife Crisis

Broadening the lens from individual species to the systems that sustain them - rivers, wetlands, forests and connected habitats.

Speakers:

Leadership Address: Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury, Ornithologist

- Dr. Umesh Srinivasan, Assistant Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science
- Ambika Aiyadurai, Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar
- Neha Singh, Founder, FORREST
- Usha Lachungpa, Retd Principle Research Officer (Wildlife), Govt of Sikkim

Moderator: Dhritimoni Mahanta, PhD Research Scholar, Department of English, Cotton University

Interactive Workshop: Vulture Rescue and Rehabilitation Training

Hands-on training in vulture rescue, rehabilitation and safe release practices, highlighting their ecological role and the need for species conservation.

Participants:

- Dr. Sachin Ranade, Scientist, Bombay Natural History Society
- Forest Guards and Rangers of the Eastern Himalaya
- Scholars and Practitioners

KEY TAKEAWAY → *A species cannot be protected in isolation; protecting biodiversity means protecting the ecosystems and ecological processes on which species and people depend.*

BRIDGE TO NEXT → *Understanding what's under pressure, and seeing how it's changing, are only the first steps — lasting conservation depends on how these landscapes are actually governed.*

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TIME	DETAILS
1:25 – 2:15 PM	**Lunch & Conversations**

2:15-3:15 PM

Film Screening
Led by RoundGlass Sustain and Cotton University Alumni Group

'Spirited Away: In Search of the Deo Haanh'
(Directed by Jayshree Borgohain)

Trailer Link

The white-winged wood duck is so rarely seen that it has inspired several folktales in Assam's swamp forests. Locals, who hear its ghostly call after dark, call it deo haanh or spirit duck. When filmmaker Jayshree Borgohain went looking for it, her search turned part-exploratory, part-spiritual. Will the forest spirits guide her quest?

Followed by

Interactive Q&A and Discussion

Participants:
- Bhaskar Goswami, Deputy Lead - Videos, RoundGlass Sustain
- Department of Environmental Biology, and Wildlife Sciences, Cotton University
- Forest Guards and Rangers
- Student-run youth clubs
- Handique College
- B. Barooah College
- School students

Closed Door Policy Roundtable:

Forest Biodiversity in the Eastern Himalaya: Strengthening Forest Governance, Community Forestry, and Ecological Corridors

Shifting from science to systems, this discussion asks how policy can create conditions where forests, biodiversity and communities can thrive together.

Participants:
Facilitator: Anushka Saikia, Project Officer, Aaranyak
- Shri R.K. Samal, PCCF and HoFF, Government of Tripura
- Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Strategic Advisor and Distinguished Fellow, ATREE
- Narayan Sharma, Assistant Professor, Cotton University
- Dr. Sachin Ranade, Scientist, BNHS
- Dr. Oinam Sunanda Devi, Scientific Officer, Assam State Biodiversity Board
- Dr. Yash Veer Bhatnagar, Country Representative, IUCN, India
- James Gabil Momin, Range Forest Officer, Garo Hills Autonomous District Council
- Ivan Zhimo, Team Lead TVBCLN, Nagaland
- Dr. Umesh Srinivasan, Assistant Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc
- Rajkamal Goswami, Fellow, ATREE
- Dr. Vishal Singh, Executive Director, Centre for Ecology Development and Research (CEDAR)

KEY TAKE AWAY → *Conservation lasts when communities have a meaningful role, rights and agency in governing the landscapes they depend on.*

BRIDGE TO NEXT → *And some species demonstrate this interdependence more clearly than any other—the Asian Elephant.*

BALIPARA FOUNDATION
Assam • India

14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026
30th October - 3rd November
Guwahati, Assam

COTTON UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM AGENDA - 31ST OCTOBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS

3:15-4:15 PM

Asian Elephant Secretariat: Building a Collaborative Future for Elephant Conservation

Exploring collaborative approaches to elephant conservation, coexistence and transboundary partnerships.

Speakers:

- **Leadership Address:** Leena Nandan, Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Govt. of India
- Heidi Riddle, Chair of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AESG)
- Khyne U Mar, Veterinarian and Conservationist, Myanmar
- Bibhuti Lahkar, Deputy Executive Director, Aaranyak
- Pankaj Sharma, DFO (retd.), Assam Forest Department
- Dr. Naresh Subedi, Member Secretary, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal

Moderator: Himparna Das, M.Sc. Environmental Biology & Wildlife Sciences | Cotton University

KEY TAKEAWAY → *The future of wildlife conservation lies not only in protecting species, but in designing landscapes where people and wildlife can coexist.*

04:15-04:30 PM

Vote of Thanks and Closing Cultural Performance: The Forest Remembers

A closing reflection inviting participants to reflect on and reaffirm their shared responsibility to protect the Eastern Himalaya's forests and biodiversity through collective action.

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READING MATERIALS

Journal Articles

1. Quantifying habitat and biodiversity services and hotspots of Indian forests: A GIS-Based assessment
2. Contribution of forest ecosystem services in India using meta-regression approach
3. Feasibility of reintroducing grassland megaherbivores, the greater one-horned rhinoceros, and swamp buffalo within their historic global range
4. Delineating the environmental justice implications of an experimental cheetah introduction project in India
5. DNA barcoding of freshwater fishes from Brahmaputra River in Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot
6. River interlinking and biodiversity risks in Indian freshwater ecosystems
7. Assessing the effectiveness of community managed forests for plant diversity conservation in Meghalaya, Northeast India
8. Decentralization for cost-effective conservation
9. Conservation opportunities and challenges emerge from assessing nuanced stakeholder attitudes towards the Asian elephant in tea estates of Assam, Northeast India
10. Landscape determinants of human-elephant conflict in Assam, India: insights from two decades of spatial analysis

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

1. Understanding the true value of forest ecosystem services
2. Rewarding the custodians of forests: Payments for ecosystem services can help foster community conservation
3. Reintroduced rhinos breed, but recovery remains fragile
4. Rewilding rhinos as part of a long-term conservation plan
5. Warming lake threatens fish habitats and the wetland economy
6. A newly-described fish sheds light on a biodiversity blind spot
7. FRA 2006 needs urgent reforms to bridge the gap between promise and delivery
8. Uttarakhand's van panchayats survived the British. They may not survive a state steadily governing communities out of their own forests
9. Corridors with high human activities may not ease elephant connectivity: study
10. Linking your cup of Assam tea to elephant conservation

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ALL-DAY IMMERSIVE INSTALMENTS AND DISPLAYS

A Promise to the Forest

Participants are invited to write a personal commitment towards supporting community-led conservation and contribute it to a collective installation, creating a shared vision for the future of the Eastern Himalaya.

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation

Postgraduate students and early-career researchers are invited to submit action-based research ideas and abstract aligned with the key track (wildlife conservation, ecosystem restoration, protected areas, species monitoring), focusing on the Eastern Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspot, for a chance of winning a seed support of up to ₹50,000.

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14TH

EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM

2026

30th October - 3rd November

Guwahati, Assam

ENERGY & WATER

PROGRAM AGENDA

1st NOVEMBER 2026

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, GUWAHATI

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14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026

30th October - 3rd November
Guwahati, Assam

ENERGY

PROGRAM AGENDA

1st NOVEMBER 2026

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, GUWAHATI

ENERGY

THE NORTHEAST
AN ENERGY POWERHOUSE
YET TO BE FULLY UNLOCKED



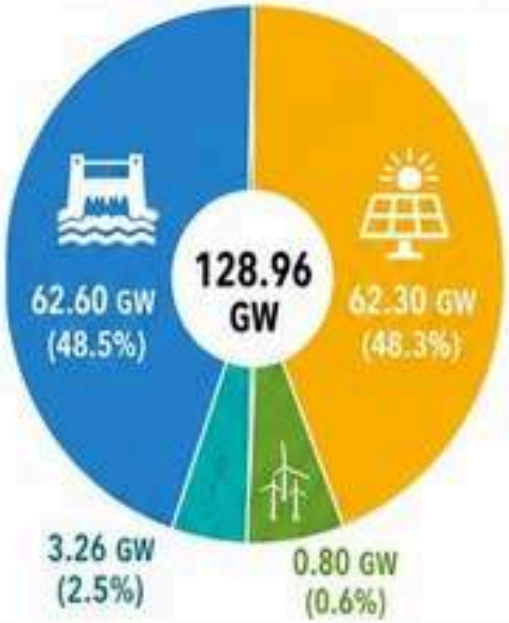
UNTAPPED RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL IN NORTH EAST INDIA

128.96 GW

Total Estimated Renewable Energy Potential

The North East is rich in clean energy resources that can power India's green future while supporting local livelihoods and resilience.

RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL – BY SOURCE



- Large Hydro 62.60 GW (48.5%)
- Solar Power 62.30 GW (48.3%)
- Small Hydro 3.26 GW (2.5%)
- Wind Power & Bio-power 0.80 GW (0.6%)

RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL – BY STATE (GW)



WHY IT MATTERS

- Clean Energy for a Low Carbon Future
- Energy Access and Livelihoods for Communities
- Strengthening Climate Resilience of the Region
- Driving Sustainable Growth and Green Economy

SOURCE: Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDONER)



The overall narrative -

Powering Progress, Protecting Nature

1 THE OPPORTUNITY

Unlocking the Region's Energy Potential

Establishing the Eastern Himalaya's energy ambitions, renewable energy opportunities and the relationship between energy security, economic development and ecological sustainability.

- RENEWABLE POTENTIAL
- CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION
- ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES
- PEOPLE-CENTRED DEVELOPMENT

2 THE SYSTEMS

Understanding Energy, Water and Economic Interdependencies

Examining the systems that shape the region's energy future—from hydropower and river-basin governance to electricity supply, consumer affordability, hydrocarbon dependence and transportation energy.

- WATER–ENERGY NEXUS
- INFRASTRUCTURE & SUPPLY
- AFFORDABILITY & ACCESS
- HYDROCARBON DEPENDENCE
- TRANSPORTATION ENERGY

3 THE ACTION

Accelerating Innovation and Collective Action

Identifying the technologies, investments, policy frameworks and partnerships needed to translate the discussions into scalable solutions for a resilient, affordable and ecologically responsible energy future.

- CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES
- INVESTMENTS & FINANCING
- POLICY FRAMEWORKS
- PARTNERSHIPS
- SCALABLE SOLUTIONS

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Energy Session Overview

Northeast India's energy future will depend not only on the availability of natural resources but also on how effectively these resources are harnessed, distributed and managed to meet the region's evolving development needs. Decisions concerning electricity generation, energy procurement, consumer affordability, industrial demand and transportation fuels will have far-reaching implications for regional economic competitiveness and long-term energy security. At the same time, the diversity of the region's geography, infrastructure and resource endowments calls for solutions that are economically viable, technologically appropriate and sensitive to local ecological conditions. A systematic assessment of energy demand, supply options, costs and implementation challenges is therefore essential to inform future policy and investment decisions

.

Against this backdrop, the **14th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum (EHNF),** organized by **Balipara Foundation** in collaboration with **IIT Guwahati**, will convene policymakers, industry leaders, researchers and other stakeholders on 1st November 2026 to deliberate on pathways towards a reliable, affordable and ecologically responsible energy future for Northeast India. The sessions will connect regional energy challenges with Assam's electricity system and hydrocarbon economy, providing a basis for examining practical solutions, investment priorities and opportunities for collaboration.

The Sessions focused on Energy aim to:

1. Evaluate sustainable energy pathways for Northeast India by comparing alternative energy sources, technologies, system costs and infrastructure configurations, considering energy security, affordability, reliability and ecological trade-offs.
2. Examine Assam's electricity supply, consumption and costs to understand generation capacity, power procurement, interstate imports, consumer demand, tariffs and the economic feasibility of alternative electricity solutions.
3. Assess hydrocarbon dependence and transportation energy transition by examining crude oil and petroleum-product supply, transport fuel demand, electrification, alternative fuels and opportunities for lower-carbon mobility.
4. Strengthen integrated water–energy planning by examining the implications of hydropower development for river systems, climate resilience, biodiversity and livelihoods, and identifying governance approaches that align energy security with water security.
5. Identify actionable priorities and partnerships for technology deployment, investment, policy coordination and industry–research collaboration to advance a resilient and ecologically responsible regional energy transition.

Scope of the Discussions

The five sessions will address: (i) pathways to a renewable energy future suited to the Eastern Himalaya's landscapes, communities and development aspirations; (ii) the water–energy nexus, including hydropower, river health, climate resilience and livelihood security; (iii) the comparative costs, feasibility and ecological implications of alternative power mixes, including centralized and decentralised systems; (iv) Assam's electricity supply, consumption, affordability and future demand; and (v) Assam's hydrocarbon economy and the transition towards lower-carbon transportation. Together, these discussions will connect regional energy strategy with practical questions of technology choice, infrastructure investment, energy economics and ecological safeguards.

Expected Outcomes

The Energy Sessions seek to generate a shared understanding of the opportunities and constraints shaping Northeast India's energy future; identify conditions under which alternative power mixes can deliver reliable and affordable electricity with lower ecological impacts; draw actionable lessons from Assam's electricity and hydrocarbon systems; and strengthen recognition of water security as integral to energy planning. The deliberations will also seek to identify priority areas for investment, technological innovation, policy coordination and collaborative action among industry, government, research institutions and communities.

Ultimately, the sessions aim to advance a diversified, resilient and economically viable energy pathway for Northeast India, one that strengthens energy security, supports inclusive development and safeguards the rivers, ecosystems and communities of the Eastern Himalaya.

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THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD POLE AND HIMSAGAR (Eastern Himalaya)

ENERGY

PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

Shared Sessions

TIME	DETAILS
09.00-09:30 AM	Conversations Begin : Welcome & Refreshments
09:30-09:40 AM	Inaugural Address by Prof. Devendra Jalihal, Director, IITG
09:40-09:50 AM	Words of Wisdom: Shri Subramanian Ramadorai, Chairman, Karmayogi Bharat (PMO)
09:50-09:55 AM	INTRODUCING THE 14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS FORUM by Ranjit Barthakur, Founder Forester - Balipara Foundation
09:55-10:15 AM	Keynote Address on the 'Future of Energy and Electricity Pricing' by Jishnu Barua, Chairman, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)
10:15-10:25 AM	**Voices of a Living Eastern Himalaya: Strengthening Water and Energy Security** *A short film or act portraying the changing realities of rivers, floods, erosion, hydropower and energy across the Eastern Himalaya, setting the context for the day's conversations.*
10:25-11:40 AM	***Strategic Plenary Dialogue – Moderated Panel Discussion with a Keynote Address*** ***Building a Roadmap for Energy, Water, & Ecological Futures in the Eastern Himalaya*** *> Why is the Third Pole critical to the region's ecological, economic and human security, and what is at stake as its climate and ecosystems change?* *> How are changing glacial, river and ecological systems reshaping water security, livelihoods and energy futures across the Eastern Himalaya?* *> Why must water and energy be planned as interconnected systems, and what does an integrated approach mean for the region's future?* ***Keynote Address:*** *Prof. Joyashree Roy, Distinguished Professor and Director, SMARTs Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand* **Conversation Leaders:** • Himal Tewari, Chief CSR and Sustainability, Tata Power • Divya Datt, Senior Programme Manager, UNEP, Nairobi • Antara Maitra, Manager, Sustainability, JSW Energy **Moderator:** Rajesh Thadani, Senior Advisor, Tata Trusts **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Healthy rivers power healthy economies—water security and energy security are inseparable foundations of a regenerative Eastern Himalaya.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *Before we discuss how to power the future, how do we first secure the natural systems that make that future possible?*

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
11:40 AM– 12:05 PM	***Refreshments Break & Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation*** *Refreshments alongside exhibits featuring innovations in water management, clean energy and climate resilience tech and AI.*
12:05 PM - 01:05 PM	**Powering the Eastern Himalaya: Pathways to a Renewable Energy Future** *> What renewable energy pathways are best suited to the unique landscapes, communities and development aspirations of the Eastern Himalaya?* *> How can clean energy accelerate economic growth, strengthen energy access and create sustainable livelihoods while protecting the region's ecological integrity?* *> What partnerships, investments and innovations are needed to scale a resilient and future-ready renewable energy transition across the region?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • ***Session Lead:*** **Bhaskar Jyoti Phukan**, Managing Director, Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) • Abhishek Chatterjee Vice President, Regulatory & Power Sales, JSW Energy • Manoj Gupta, CEO, Tata Power Renewable Microgrid • Netra Walawalkar, Vice President, Net Zero Energy Transition Association (NETRA) **Moderator:** Indranil Gupta, Founder-Director of BrandNEW Associates **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *The Eastern Himalaya's renewable energy future must be diversified, resilient and rooted in the region's ecological strengths, ensuring that clean energy drives sustainable development while safeguarding nature and communities.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *As renewable energy expands across the Eastern Himalaya, how can the region balance hydropower development, climate resilience and livelihood security while ensuring that water remains at the heart of energy planning?*
01:05-2:05 PM	**Assam's Hydrocarbon Economy and Transportation Energy Transition** *> How can Assam balance oil production, refinery capacity and demand to strengthen energy security?* *> How can Assam reduce dependence on petrol, diesel and aviation fuel?* *> Which low-carbon transport solutions can best reduce emissions in Assam?* *> What infrastructure and partnerships can accelerate cleaner mobility in Assam?* *> How can Assam build a viable transport energy strategy for 2030–2050?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • ***Session Lead:*** **Trailukya Borgohain,** Director (Operations), Oil India • Bhaskar Jyoti Phukan, Managing Director, Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) • Prof. Vikram Vishal, Professor, Department of Earth Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay • Bibhu Parida, Vice President - Subsurface and Production Engineering), Essar Oil & Gas Ltd **Moderator:** Dr. Rupam Bhaduri, Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Disaster Management and Research, IIT Guwahati **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *A comparative assessment of energy options and the conditions under which different combinations could deliver reliable, affordable and ecologically responsible electricity.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *As Assam explores pathways to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and decarbonise transportation, the focus shifts to how locally available renewable resources can power a cleaner, more circular, and economically viable energy future.*

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
2:05-2:55 PM	Lunch & Conversations

02:55 - 03:55 PM

Evaluating the Energy Mix: Technologies, Costs, and Ecological Trade-Offs

> How can Northeast India balance energy sources while protecting the Eastern Himalaya?
> What balance of centralised grids and decentralised energy systems is best for the region?
> How can Northeast India achieve an affordable and reliable energy transition?
> How can energy infrastructure protect ecosystems and community livelihoods?
> What policies and innovations can accelerate a sustainable energy transition?

Conversation Leaders:

- **Session Lead:** Dr. K.K Dwivedi, Chairman, Assam Power Distribution Corp & Assam Electricity Grid Corp
- Suresh Agasti, BU-Head (SVP) P&L Green Hydrogen & Derivatives and New Business Development,TKIL Industries
- Matrika Ghimiray, Programme Manager, IIT Bombay Research Hub for Green Energy and Sustainability

Moderator: Prof. Hemanta Hazarika, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyushu University, Japan

KEY TAKE AWAY → *A comparative assessment of energy options and the conditions under which different combinations could deliver reliable, affordable and ecologically responsible electricity.*

BRIDGE TO NEXT → *Building on the trade-offs between energy technologies, costs, and ecological impacts, the next session examines Assam's electricity supply, demand, and pricing to identify pathways towards reliable, affordable, and equitable energy access.*

Beyond Carbon: Biomass & Biochar for Clean Energy

> What is the realistic potential of biomass and biochar in the Eastern Himalaya's clean energy and carbon-management landscape, alongside solar and hydropower?
> How can agricultural and forest residues be converted into viable energy, biochar and other value-added products?
> What would it take to move biomass and biochar from individual projects to scalable, economically viable solutions?
> How can carbon markets and innovative finance help scale these solutions while ensuring that benefits reach local communities?

Conversation Leaders:

- Dr. Sunayana Sarkar, Assistant Professor, Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management and Engineering, NMIMS University
- Dr. Pankaj Kalita, Associate Professor, School of Energy Science and Engineering, IIT Guwahati
- Prof. Vikram Vishal, Professor, Department of Earth Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

Moderator - Deeptanshu Kotru, Manager (Himalayas Lead), SYSTEMIQ

KEY TAKE AWAY → *Biomass and biochar can turn agricultural and forest waste into a genuine clean energy and livelihood opportunity for the region — if the technology, policy and market linkages are in place to scale it.*

BRIDGE TO NEXT → *Building on the potential of biomass and biochar as scalable energy solutions, the next session examines Assam's energy supply, consumption and costs to understand the state's energy realities and opportunities for a more sustainable transition.*

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
03:55 - 04:55 PM	**Assam as a Case Study: Energy Supply, Consumption, and Costs** *> How can Assam strengthen electricity reliability and energy security?* *> How can Assam ensure affordable and equitable electricity access?* *> When can rooftop solar and storage compete with grid electricity?* *> How will Assam's electricity demand and costs evolve by 2050?* *> What can Northeast India learn from Assam's energy experience?* **Conversation Leaders:** • **Session Lead:** Harpreet Singh Pruthi, Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) • Rajesh Kumar Jha, Advisor, NTPC - Renewable Energy Projects • Masfick Hazarika, Program Manager- Energy, WRI • SEROS **Moderator:** Dr. Pankaj Kalita, Associate Professor, School of Energy Science and Engineering, IIT Guwahati **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *An evidence-based understanding of Assam's electricity supply–demand balance, consumer costs and infrastructure challenges, together with practical insights into the affordability, reliability and scalability of alternative electricity pathways across Northeast India.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *With a clearer understanding of Assam's energy demand, pricing challenges, and investment needs, the discussion moves towards actionable strategies for strengthening long-term energy security and advancing a resilient, low-carbon energy future for the Northeast.*	**The Future of the Siang Valley: Mega-Dams, Himalayan Fragility and the Science of Sustainable Development** *> Geological and tectonic stability of the Siang Valley* *> Hydrology, river dynamics and downstream repercussions* *> Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss* *> Climate change and extreme-event vulnerability* *> Dam safety, disaster preparedness and risk governance* *> Sustainable energy development versus ecological costs* *> Indigenous communities, displacement and cultural heritage* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Dr. Sunayana Sarkar, Assistant Professor, NMIMS University • Oken Tayeng, Member of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly • Varun Sikand, Managing Director and India Region Head, India at Maccaferri • Prof. Vikram Vishal, Professor, Department of Earth Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay • Prof. Hemanta Hazarika, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyushu University, Japan • Dr. Dibakar Goswami, Head Hydrologist, Washington State Department of Ecology, USA • Raj Kumar Das, Team Lead, PRASARI, West Bengal • Sarbani Nandy, Director, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Northeast Centre, Agartala **Link: Session Note** **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *The future of the Siang cannot be decided in isolation; it must be understood and governed within the interconnected ecological, hydrological and socio-economic realities of the entire Brahmaputra Basin*

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

Shared Sessions

TIME	DETAILS
02:55 - 04:55 PM	***Closed Door Policy Roundtable:*** **Governing Water and Energy For Integrated Basin-Level Planning in the Brahmaputra Basin** Stakeholders: • Dr. Nitin Bassi, CEEW • Ishleen Kaur, Engagement Lead (Sustainable Water), CEEW • SEROS • Prof. Joyashree Roy, Distinguished Professor and Director, SMARTs Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand • Divya Datt, Senior Programme Manager, UNEP, Nairobi • Prabhakar Kale, Chief of Hydro, Tata Power • Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Strategic Advisor and Distinguished Fellow, ATREE • Madhusmita Nanda, PhD Scholar, IIT Guwahati • Dr. Kalyan Das, Professor, Cotton University • Dr. Indira Khurrana, Chairperson, India Himalayan River Basin Council (IHRBC) • Dr. Vinod Kothari, Executive Director, Himmotthan Society • Dr. Ashwini Keskar, Blue Pulse Foundation • Dr. Rupam Bhaduri, Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Disaster Management and Research, IIT Guwahati • Pranab Patar, Climate Specialist, PMU - Clean Development and Climate Finance, Govt. of Assam • Dr. Partha Jyoti Das, Prof.of Practice, Dibrugarh University & Dept.of Env. Science, Gauhati University • Ms. Usha Das, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Bridging research and action requires better data, stronger science-policy connections and partnerships that can translate evidence into scalable solutions.*
04:55 - 05:55 PM	**The Water-Energy Nexus in North East India: Balancing Hydropower, Climate Resilience and Livelihood Security** *> How can Northeast India balance growing energy demands with the protection of its rivers, ecosystems and communities?* *> What governance models, policies and partnerships are needed to ensure that water and energy planning strengthen climate resilience, biodiversity and livelihood security together?* *> How can the Great Brahmaputra, Clean Brahmaputra Initiative become a regional platform for restoring river health, strengthening scientific collaboration and advancing integrated water–energy governance across the Brahmaputra Basin?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Dr. Nitin Bassi, Fellow and Lead-Sustainable Water, CEEW • Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Strategic Advisor and Distinguished Fellow, ATREE • Prof. Kalyan Das, Professor, Cotton University • Prof. Joyashree Roy, Distinguished Professor and Director, SMARTs Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand **Moderator**: Dr.Sumi Handique, Asst. Prof, Dept. Of Environmental Science, Tezpur University **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *A set of actionable recommendations for integrated water–energy governance that balances hydropower development with river health, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and livelihood security across the Brahmaputra Basin.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *The discussion brings together the Forum's key priorities for a resilient Eastern Himalaya, setting the stage for the closing session to reflect on shared commitments and pathways for collective action.*

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05:55 PM

Vote of Thanks and a Shared Commitment to the Rivers of the Eastern Himalaya

A closing reflection inviting participants to reaffirm their collective responsibility towards protecting the region's rivers through collaborative action, followed by a cultural performance celebrating the enduring relationship between rivers, communities and nature.



ALL-DAY IMMERSIVE INSTALMENTS AND DISPLAYS

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation

Postgraduate students and early-career researchers are invited to submit action-based research ideas and abstract aligned with the key track (river systems, springsheds, hydropower, renewable energy, water security), focusing on the Eastern Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspot, for a chance of winning a seed support of up to ₹50,000.

Green Innovations Showcase

An interactive showcase of local startups and clean energy leaders, featuring sustainable products, tea tasting, and green innovations from Tata Power, Deroi Tea, Guwahati Greens, and more.

A Promise to the Rivers

Participants are invited to write a personal commitment towards protecting the rivers of the Eastern Himalaya, contributing to a collective installation that reflects a shared vision for resilient and thriving river systems.

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

READING MATERIALS

Journal Articles

1. A feasibility study on Balarbhita for advancing rural electrification with a solar–Micro-hydro hybrid system
2. Optimising hybrid renewable energy systems for remote tribal villages: A techno-economic case study from central and Eastern India
3. The 'double-exposure' of riverine communities in Northeast India to dams and climate change
4. Hydropower Politics in Northeast India: Dam Development Contestations, Electoral Politics and Power Reconfigurations in Sikkim
5. Prospects of Biochar for Sustainable Agriculture and Carbon Sequestration: An Overview for Eastern Himalayas
6. Influence of biochar and vermicompost on labile and stable carbon pools in degraded jhum soils of northeast India

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

1. Eastern Himalayan hydropower risks locking in climate maladaptation
2. In the Arunachal Pradesh mountains, India is looking to tap geothermal energy
3. Assam tea gardens experiment with solar for reliable power supply and cutting costs, emissions
4. Caught between a dam and a hard place
5. Manipur's push for dams threatens local ecology and communities
6. Fallen pine needles could help India cut carbon emissions
7. The hills of India's Northeast cannot be on the peripheries of its story; they must be at its green frontier

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WATER

PROGRAM AGENDA

1st NOVEMBER 2026

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, GUWAHATI

WATER

THE JOURNEY OF WATER
FROM THE HIMALAYA TO OUR LIVES

The Eastern Himalaya is the source of mighty rivers like the Brahmaputra.
Every drop that flows through our rivers sustains nature,
powers economies and supports millions of lives.

THE JOURNEY



SNOW & GLACIERS
Store and slowly release water throughout the year

SPRINGS
Sustain communities and ecosystems

RIVERS
Power economies, support biodiversity and connect lives

LIVELIHOODS & BIODIVERSITY
Provide food, water, energy and cultural well-being

THE BRAHMAPUTRA BASIN – A LIFELINE

592
BILLION CUBIC METERS
Average annual water availability of the Brahmaputra Basin (1986–87 to 2022–23)

=
1,184
TRILLION LITRES
of water every year

=
808
LITRES PER PERSON EVERY DAY
for over 2 billion people downstream

WATER FOR FOOD, ENERGY, NATURE & LIFE

WHY IT MATTERS TO ALL OF US

OUR FOOD
Water irrigates fields that grow our food.

OUR ENERGY
Rivers generate clean power and support sustainable energy.

OUR HEALTH
Clean water means better health and sanitation.

OUR ENVIRONMENT
Rivers sustain forests, wildlife and the climate we depend on.

OUR FUTURE
Water security today ensures a better life for future generations.

SOURCE: Central Water Commission (CWC) – Water Resources Assessment of India 2024
ICIMOD – Water in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

The overall narrative -

From Snowline to Sealine: The Himsagar.



1 SOURCE

Water Sources of the Third Pole:
Securing Springs, Rivers & Communities

Where the river begins.

Exploring glaciers, snowmelt, springs and headwater ecosystems that sustain rivers and millions of people downstream.

- GLACIERS
- SNOWMELT
- SPRINGS
- HEADWATERS

2 MIDSTREAM

The Living River:
Ecosystems, Livelihoods & Water Security

Along the river's journey.

Examining how forests, wetlands, tributaries, agriculture, settlements and infrastructure influence river health, water availability and community livelihoods.

- FORESTS
- WETLANDS
- AGRICULTURE
- COMMUNITIES
- INFRASTRUCTURE

3 DOWNSTREAM

Downstream Futures:
Floods, Erosion, Pollution & Resilient Communities

The challenges that emerge downstream.

Addressing floods, riverbank erosion, sedimentation, pollution, biodiversity loss and the growing vulnerability of river-dependent communities, alongside nature-based solutions and basin-wide cooperation.

- FLOODS
- EROSION
- POLLUTION
- BIODIVERSITY LOSS
- RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

BALIPARA FOUNDATION
Assam • India

14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026
30th October - 3rd November
Guwahati, Assam

IIT GUWAHATI

WATER SESSIONS OVERVIEW

The Eastern Himalaya, often referred to as the Third Pole's downstream lifeline, sustains an intricate network of glaciers, snowmelt systems, springs, headwaters, rivers and floodplains that support biodiversity, livelihoods and human settlements across the region. However, changing climatic conditions, catchment degradation, shifting river dynamics and increasing pressures from development are intensifying concerns around water security, floods, riverbank erosion, pollution and ecological degradation. These challenges extend from the mountain headwaters to the downstream reaches of the Brahmaputra Basin, highlighting the need to understand rivers as interconnected systems rather than isolated water resources.

Against this backdrop, the Water Sessions of the 14th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum, organized by Balipara Foundation in collaboration with IIT Guwahati, will bring together policymakers, scientists, development practitioners, river-management institutions and other stakeholders on 1 November 2026. The discussions will trace the journey of water from the sources of the Third Pole to downstream communities, examining how river health, climate resilience, biodiversity, livelihoods and governance are interconnected. The overarching rationale is to advance integrated, science-informed and community-centered approaches to water security that strengthen ecological resilience across the Eastern Himalaya.

Objectives of the Water Sessions
The sessions aim to:

1. Understand and safeguard the sources of the Third Pole by examining the challenges facing glaciers, snowmelt, springs, headwaters and watersheds, while exploring the role of scientific research, indigenous knowledge and community stewardship.
2. Examine the interconnectedness of rivers, ecosystems and livelihoods by assessing how catchment conditions, forests, wetlands, agriculture, infrastructure and changing river flows influence water availability, biodiversity and community well-being.
3. Identify approaches to strengthen river health and downstream resilience by exploring responses to floods, erosion, sedimentation, pollution and shifting river channels, including nature-based solutions and community-led restoration.
4. Advance integrated basin-level water governance by identifying opportunities for stronger scientific collaboration, data-sharing, institutional coordination and partnerships across the Brahmaputra Basin.

Scope of the Discussions
The Water Sessions will follow a source-to-downstream narrative. The discussions will begin with securing springs, rivers and communities through improved understanding of the Third Pole's water sources. They will then explore the living river and its relationship with forests, wetlands, agriculture, infrastructure, biodiversity and livelihoods. The focus will subsequently shift downstream to river health, floods, erosion, pollution and resilient communities, including the role of nature-based solutions and basin-wide cooperation. A dedicated policy roundtable will examine how research, governance and institutional partnerships can translate these discussions into integrated water and basin-management approaches.

Expected Outcomes
The sessions seek to establish a shared understanding of the challenges affecting the Eastern Himalaya's river systems, identify practical approaches for protecting water sources and restoring river health, and highlight opportunities to strengthen climate resilience and safeguard vulnerable communities. They also aim to promote stronger connections between scientific evidence, policy and implementation, encouraging collaborative approaches to catchment management, nature-based restoration and integrated basin-level planning. The discussions will help identify priorities for future research, institutional partnerships and community-led action, including opportunities to advance the Great Brahmaputra, Clean Brahmaputra Initiative as a platform for river restoration and regional cooperation.

Ultimately, the Water Sessions aim to advance a source-to-downstream vision for healthy rivers, resilient communities and long-term water security across the Eastern Himalaya.

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THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD POLE AND HIMSAGAR (Eastern Himalaya)

WATER

PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

Shared Sessions

TIME	DETAILS
09.00-09:30 AM	Conversations Begin : Welcome & Refreshments
09:30-09:40 AM	Inaugural Address by Prof. Devendra Jalihal, Director, IITG
09:40-09:50 AM	Words of Wisdom: Shri Subramanian Ramadorai, Chairman, Karmayogi Bharat (PMO)
09:50-09:55 AM	INTRODUCING THE 14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS FORUM by Ranjit Barthakur, Founder Forester - Balipara Foundation
09:55-10:15 AM	Keynote Address on the 'Future of Energy and Electricity Pricing' by Jishnu Barua, Chairman, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)
10:15-10:25 AM	**Voices of a Living Eastern Himalaya: Strengthening Water and Energy Security** *A short film or act portraying the changing realities of rivers, floods, erosion, hydropower and energy across the Eastern Himalaya, setting the context for the day's conversations.*
10:25-11:40 AM	***Strategic Plenary Dialogue – Moderated Panel Discussion with a Keynote Address*** ***Building a Roadmap for Energy, Water, & Ecological Futures in the Eastern Himalaya*** *> Why is the Third Pole critical to the region's ecological, economic and human security, and what is at stake as its climate and ecosystems change?* *> How are changing glacial, river and ecological systems reshaping water security, livelihoods and energy futures across the Eastern Himalaya?* *> Why must water and energy be planned as interconnected systems, and what does an integrated approach mean for the region's future?* ***Keynote Address**: Prof. Joyashree Roy, Distinguished Professor and Director, SMARTs Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand* **Conversation Leaders:** • Himal Tewari, Chief CSR and Sustainability, Tata Power • Divya Datt, Senior Programme Manager, UNEP, Nairobi • Antara Maitra, Manager, Sustainability, JSW Energy **Moderator:** Dr. Rajesh Thadani, Senior Advisor, Tata Trusts **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Healthy rivers power healthy economies—water security and energy security are inseparable foundations of a regenerative Eastern Himalaya.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *Before we discuss how to power the future, how do we first secure the natural systems that make that future possible?*

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TIME	DETAILS
11:40 AM– 12:05 PM	***Refreshments Break & Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation*** *Refreshments alongside exhibits featuring innovations in water management, clean energy and climate resilience tech and AI.*
12:05 - 01:05 PM	**Water Sources of the Third Pole: Securing Springs, Rivers & Communities** *> What are the greatest threats facing the water sources of the Third Pole, and what do they mean for the future of the Eastern Himalaya?* *> Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have each faced their own version of the same story this year - heavy upstream rain, swollen tributaries, catastrophic flooding downstream. Why does this keep happening, and what does it say about the health of the Third Pole's water sources?* *> From science and policy to indigenous knowledge and community stewardship, what approaches are actually proving effective at securing these water sources — and could any of them have changed how this year's floods played out?* **Conversation Leaders:** • ***Leadership Address:*** **Ankit Todi**, Chief Sustainability Officer, Mahindra Group • Madhabananda Ray, Executive Director, Centre for Microfinance and Livelihoods • Dr. Vinod Kothari, Executive Director, Himmothan Society • Sabyasachi Dutta, Executive Director, Asian Confluence • Nagato Aye, State Head (Nagaland), NEIDA • Dr. Ashwini Keskar, Co-Founder and Executive Director - Blue Pulse Foundation **Moderator:** Arun Pandhi, Founder and Managing Director of P-Green Solutions **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Securing the springs, rivers and watersheds of the Third Pole is the foundation for ecological resilience, sustainable livelihoods and a water-secure, energy-secure future.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *If healthy water systems are the foundation of resilience, how can the Eastern Himalaya meet its growing energy needs while protecting the very ecosystems that sustain them?*

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
01:05 - 02:05 PM	**Reflections on Water & Transportation: In Conversation with Dr. Indira Khurana** ***Session Focus:*** > What key insights from Reflections on Managing Water: Earth's Greatest Natural Resource can guide better water management? > How can we balance water use, conservation and food security? > How do rivers support transportation, connectivity, and communities across the Eastern Himalaya? > How can better water governance, ecological stewardship, and collective action ensure water abundance? **Conversation Leaders:** • **Session Lead**: Dr. Indira Khurana, Chairperson, India Himalayan River Basin Council (IHRBC) • Er Tridipa Biswas, Scientist - C, GBPIHED, North East Centre • Dr. Medalson, Ronghang Dept. of Civil Engineering, (BBEC), Kokrajhar • Raj Kumar Das, Team Lead, PRASARI, West Bengal • Dr. Dibakar Goswami, Head Hydrologist, Washington State Department of Ecology, USA **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *Effective water management requires an integrated approach that balances river conservation, infrastructure development, and community needs, recognising rivers as vital lifelines for ecological resilience, connectivity, and livelihoods across the Eastern Himalaya*
	Research & Innovation Showcase: Technology & AI for Water-Energy and Disaster Resilience ***Session Format:*** *Case study presentations showcasing research, emerging technologies and field-based innovations, followed by an interactive dialogue on translating science into scalable solutions for the Eastern Himalaya.* *> What practical solutions are emerging from research, AI and new technologies to address the region's interconnected water, energy and ecological challenges?* *> How can technologies such as AI, remote sensing, sensors, data analytics and digital tools move from promising pilots to field-ready solutions?* *> What partnerships, policies and investments are needed to scale youth-led research and innovation across the Eastern Himalaya?* ***Facilitator*** *- Deepa Subramaniam, Balipara Foundation* ***Context setting address*** *-* *Deeptanshu Kotru, Manager - Himalayas Lead, SYSTEMIQ* **Presentations by:** • Prof. Hemanta Hazarika, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyushu University, Japan • Prof. Vikram Vishal, Professor, Department of Earth Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay • Neha Lal, Senior Program Manager, WRI **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *Bridging research and action requires better data, stronger science-policy connections and partnerships that can translate evidence into scalable solutions.*
	BRIDGE TO NEXT → *From strengthening water governance to translating research into practical solutions, the focus now shifts to the health of the river itself—examining how upstream changes shape downstream ecosystems, flood risks, and community resilience.*

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TIME	DETAILS
2:05-2:55 PM	**Lunch & Conversations**

Shared Sessions

02:55 - 03:55 PM

Midstream & Downstream: River Health, Floods, Erosion, Pollution and Resilient Communities

- *How does water flow from the Third Pole's glaciers to the rivers and floodplains of the Eastern Himalaya?*
- *How do climate change and catchment degradation affect downstream ecosystems and river flows?*
- *How can we address floods, riverbank erosion, pollution and shifting river channels?*
- *How are changing river systems affecting biodiversity, livelihoods and vulnerable communities?*
- *How can nature-based solutions and community-led restoration strengthen river health?*
- *How can protecting rivers from source to downstream ensure long-term water security and ecological resilience?*

Conversation Leaders:

- Dr. Jyoti Nale, Deputy Team Lead, FREMAA
- Dr. Mala Dutta, Dept. of Geography, Gauhati University
- Mirza Zulfiqur Rehman, Researcher and Consultant
- Namrata Kabra, Kubernein Initiative (tentative)

Moderator: Prof. Anamika Barua, Professor, IIT Guwahati

KEY TAKEAWAY → *Addressing floods, erosion, pollution, and river degradation requires more than local interventions.*

BRIDGE TO NEXT → *The next discussion brings key stakeholders together to explore how coordinated policy, shared data, and basin-level planning can align water and energy governance across the Brahmaputra Basin.*

02:55 - 04:40 PM

Closed Door Policy Roundtable:

Governing Water and Energy For Integrated Basin-Level Planning in the Brahmaputra Basin

Stakeholders:

- Dr. Nitin Bassi, CEEW
- Ishleen Kaur, Engagement Lead (Sustainable Water), CEEW
- SEROS
- Prof. Joyashree Roy, Distinguished Professor and Director, SMARTs Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand
- Divya Datt, Senior Programme Manager, UNEP, Nairobi
- Prabhakar Kale, Chief of Hydro, Tata Power
- Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Strategic Advisor and Distinguished Fellow, ATREE
- Madhusmita Nanda, PhD Scholar, IIT Guwahati
- Dr. Kalyan Das, Professor, Cotton University
- Dr. Indira Khurrana, Chairperson, India Himalayan River Basin Council (IHRBC)
- Dr. Vinod Kothari, Executive Director, Himmotthan Society
- Dr. Ashwini Keskar, Blue Pulse Foundation
- Dr. Rupam Bhaduri, Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Disaster Management and Research, IIT Guwahati
- Pranab Patar, Climate Specialist, PMU - Clean Development and Climate Finance, Govt. of Assam
- Dr. Partha Jyoti Das, Prof.of Practice, Dibrugarh University & Dept.of Env. Science, Gauhati University
- Ms. Usha Das, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

KEY TAKEAWAY *Integrated basin-level planning requires stronger coordination across science, policy, and energy institutions, with shared priorities and collaborative approaches.*

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Shared Sessions

TIME	DETAILS
04:55 - 05:55 PM	**The Water-Energy Nexus in North East India: Balancing Hydropower, Climate Resilience and Livelihood Security** *> How can Northeast India balance growing energy demands with the protection of its rivers, ecosystems and communities?* *> What governance models, policies and partnerships are needed to ensure that water and energy planning strengthen climate resilience, biodiversity and livelihood security together?* *> How can the Great Brahmaputra, Clean Brahmaputra Initiative become a regional platform for restoring river health, strengthening scientific collaboration and advancing integrated water–energy governance across the Brahmaputra Basin?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • ***Session Lead:* Dr. Nitin Bassi,** Fellow and Lead-Sustainable Water, CEEW • Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Strategic Advisor and Distinguished Fellow, ATREE • Prof. Kalyan Das, Professor, Cotton University • Prof. Joyashree Roy, Distinguished Professor and Director, SMARTs Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand **Moderator**: Dr.Sumi Handique, Asst. Prof, Dept. Of Environmental Science, Tezpur University **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *A set of actionable recommendations for integrated water–energy governance that balances hydropower development with river health, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and livelihood security across the Brahmaputra Basin.* **BRIDGE TO NEXT** → *The discussion brings together the Forum's key priorities for a resilient Eastern Himalaya, setting the stage for the closing session to reflect on shared commitments and pathways for collective action.*
05:55 PM	**Vote of Thanks and a Shared Commitment to the Rivers of the Eastern Himalaya** *A closing reflection inviting participants to reaffirm their collective responsibility towards protecting the region's rivers through collaborative action, followed by a cultural performance celebrating the enduring relationship between rivers, communities and nature.*

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READING MATERIALS

Journal Articles

1. Grand Challenges of Hydrologic Modeling for Food-Energy-Water Nexus Security in High Mountain Asia
2. Quantifying water-related ecosystem services potential of the Kangchenjunga Landscape in the eastern Himalaya: a modeling approach
3. Community-led spring rejuvenation in the Indian Himalayas: Toward an AI-supported scaling framework
4. Springshed management and rural water Security: Seen and unseen infrastructure in the Eastern Himalaya

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

1. Melting Himalayas put billions at risk
2. Overlooked urban springs can strengthen water security in Himalayan cities
3. The silent crisis of mountain springs and its implications

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ALL-DAY IMMERSIVE INSTALMENTS AND DISPLAYS

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation

Postgraduate students and early-career researchers are invited to submit action-based research ideas and abstract aligned with the key track (river systems, springsheds, hydropower, renewable energy, water security), focusing on the Eastern Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspot, for a chance of winning a seed support of up to ₹50,000.

Green Innovations Showcase

An interactive showcase of local startups and clean energy leaders, featuring sustainable products, tea tasting, and green innovations from Tata Power, Deroi Tea, Guwahati Greens, and more.

A Promise to the Rivers

Participants are invited to write a personal commitment towards protecting the rivers of the Eastern Himalaya, contributing to a collective installation that reflects a shared vision for resilient and thriving river systems.

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SUSTAINABLE LAND FUTURES

PROGRAM AGENDA

2nd NOVEMBER 2026

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

The Eastern Himalaya contains 38.9% of the Himalayan biodiversity hotspot and its landscapes are under growing pressure from habitat loss and fragmentation.

Sustainable land futures begin with keeping these landscapes connected and productive.



14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM

Sustainable Land Futures

Gauhati University | 2 November 2026

Connected landscapes, shared futures



1 LAND AND LIVELIHOODS

Regenerating the Land: Case Stories from the Field

11:25 AM–12:25 PM

Agroforestry and regenerative farming strengthen soils, livelihoods and habitats.

2 LAND AND WASTE

Grasslands, Floodplains & River Islands: A Circular Transition

12:25–1:25 PM

Waste reduction and circular resource use protect productive landscapes.

3 LAND AND WATER

Wetlands in Focus: Securing Water, Biodiversity & Livelihoods

2:15–3:15 PM

Wetland restoration and responsible industrial water use sustain ecosystems and communities.

4 LAND AND CITIES

Urban Landscapes Under Pressure: Heat, Waste & Resilience

3:15–4:15 PM

Ecological planning connects heat resilience, waste management and healthy settlements.

5 LAND AND WILDLIFE

AI for Human-Elephant Coexistence

3:15–4:15 PM | Parallel roundtable

Connected habitats, local knowledge and early warning support coexistence.

GOVERNANCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Shared foundations for all five land themes

STRATEGIC PLENARY

Building a Roadmap for Regenerative Landscapes in the Eastern Himalaya

9:55–11:00 AM

POLICY ROUNDTABLE

Towards Sustainable Land Governance in North East India

12:25–1:25 PM | Parallel roundtable

GEOSPATIAL WORKSHOP

Remote Sensing, GIS and GeoAI for Natural Resource Management in the Eastern Himalaya

2:15–3:15 PM | Parallel workshop

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GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

SUSTAINABLE LAND FUTURES SESSIONS OVERVIEW

The Eastern Himalaya's land futures depend on how its farms, forests, grasslands, floodplains, wetlands and settlements are managed as connected landscapes. Choices about agriculture, infrastructure, industrial waste, water use and habitat protection shape biodiversity, livelihoods and resilience together. Regenerative land stewardship therefore requires coordination across ecological systems, institutions and communities, supported by locally grounded knowledge and practical evidence.

Against this backdrop, the **14th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum,** organised by **Balipara Foundation** in collaboration with Gauhati University, will convene policymakers, industry leaders, researchers, conservation practitioners and communities on 2 November 2026. Under the theme Sustainable Land Futures, the programme links field experience with land governance, circular economy approaches, wetland conservation, urban resilience and human–elephant coexistence.

Objectives

1. Develop a shared roadmap for regenerative landscapes by aligning land policy, investment, science and community priorities.
2. Draw lessons from regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and locally led restoration, including the conditions needed to replicate successful approaches.
3. Examine how industrial waste reduction, recycling and producer responsibility can support circular land use and protect grasslands, floodplains and river islands.
4. Connect wetland restoration with responsible industrial water use, biodiversity conservation and community livelihood security.
5. Identify ecological planning and heat-management approaches that strengthen urban resilience and reduce waste pressures.
6. Explore how remote sensing, GIS, GeoAI and community knowledge can improve natural resource management and human–elephant coexistence.

Scope of the discussions

Eight substantive sessions comprise a strategic plenary, four thematic conversations, two closed-door roundtables and an interactive geospatial workshop. The thematic conversations address land and livelihoods, land and waste, land and water, and land and cities. The coexistence roundtable adds land and wildlife, while the policy roundtable and geospatial workshop provide connections across the programme. Poster presentations, a landscape gallery and a collective land commitment extend participation throughout the day.

Expected outcomes

The discussions seek to identify practical priorities for regenerative land management; lessons that can inform restoration and livelihood programmes; policy and industry opportunities for circular resource use; and approaches to wetland protection and ecologically responsive urban planning. They will also explore stronger links between geospatial evidence, local knowledge and implementation, alongside partnerships for community-led coexistence and coordinated land governance.

Together, the sessions aim to advance a landscape approach that keeps the Eastern Himalaya's ecosystems connected and productive while supporting the communities that depend on them.

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THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD POLE AND HIMSAGAR (Eastern Himalaya)

SUSTAINABLE LAND FUTURES

PROGRAM AGENDA - 2nd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
09.00-09:30 AM	**Registration & Welcome Tea**
09:30-09:35 AM	**INTRODUCING THE 14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS FORUM**
09:35-09:45 AM	**Inaugural Address by Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University**
09:45-09:55 AM	**Special Address by Prof. Dipjyoti Rajkhowa, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University**
09:55-10:00 AM	**Book Launch:** ***Wild Plants of Assam*** (Authors: Dr. Dipankar Borah, Mr. Niku Das, and Dr. Jintu Sarma)
10:00-10:10 AM	**Keynote Address by Sushant Dash, CEO, Starbucks India**
10:10-10:20 AM	**Leadership Address by Dr. Meg Lowman, CEO, TREE Foundation**
10:20-11:10 AM	**Building a Roadmap for Regenerative Landscapes in the Eastern Himalaya** *> What does "regenerative" mean in practice for land governance in the Eastern Himalaya – beyond restoration, toward long-term resilience?* *> What cross-sector partnerships – government, finance, science, community – are essential to turn a shared roadmap into coordinated action?* *> What are the biggest barriers to aligning land policy, investment and community priorities in the region today?* **Conversation Leaders:** • Nilesh Prakash Rajadhyaksha, Country Programme Manager, UN Habitat, India • Prof. Dipjyoti Rajkhowa, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Assam Agricultural University • Dr. Ram Boojh, Environmental Expert & Sustainability Advisor • Gauhati University **Moderator:** Rituraj Phukan, Founder, Indigenous People's Climate Justice Forum **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Regenerating the Eastern Himalaya's landscapes requires cross-sector alignment – government, science and finance moving in the same direction.*
11:10 – 11:35 AM	***Refreshments Break & Pitch Your Idea Poster Presentation*** *Refreshments alongside exhibits featuring sustainable agriculture, land restoration technologies, geospatial tools and community-led innovations.*

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TIME	DETAILS
11:35 AM-12:35 PM	**Regenerating the Land: Case Stories from the Field** *> What does regenerative agriculture and agroforestry actually look like on the ground, and what results are farmers and communities seeing?* *> What makes some locally-driven land restoration efforts succeed where others stall?* *> How can these grassroots solutions be scaled or replicated across the wider Eastern Himalaya without losing what makes them locally rooted?* **Conversation Leaders:** • Parismita Gogoi, Farm2Food Foundation • Dr Kitboklang Nongrum, Senior Consultant, Research and Ecology, NESFAS • Dr. Anchal Dass, Principal Scientist, Division of Agronomy, ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute • Dr. Puranjoy Mipun, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, Bhattadev University **Moderator:** Professor Ratul Mahanta, Department of Economics, Gauhati University **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Locally-driven solutions in agroforestry and regenerative agriculture prove that resilient livelihoods and land restoration can reinforce each other.*
12:35-1:35 PM	**Grasslands, Floodplains & River Islands: Landscapes in Transition** *> What's driving the transformation of these Eastern Himalayan landscapes and how much of it is natural cycle versus human pressure?* *> How are changing land use, floods, erosion and climate variability affecting the biodiversity, livelihoods and ecological functions of these landscapes?* *> What regulations and incentives can strengthen waste reduction, recycling and extended producer responsibility in the FMCG industry?* *> How can land-use planning and waste management policies work together to protect biodiversity, sustain livelihoods and advance a circular economy?* **Conversation Leaders:** ***Session Lead:*** *PepsiCo* • Prof. Mitul Baruah, HoD, Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University • Rajeev KG, Senior General Manager (Diversification), Tata Coffee Limited • Professor Ashalata Devi, Department of Environmental Science, Tezpur University, Assam **Moderator:** Indranil Gupta, Founder-Director of BrandNEW Associates **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Grasslands, floodplains and river islands are dynamic ecosystems, not wastelands, and their future depends on managing natural processes alongside human needs through informed, landscape-level stewardship.* ***Closed Door Policy Roundtable:*** **Towards Sustainable Land Governance in North East India** **Venue: GU Guest House Conference Room** **Stakeholders:** **Facilitator:** Deeptanshu Kotru, Associate, SystemIQ • Nilesh Prakash Rajadhyaksha, Country Programme Manager, UN Habitat • Dr. Pratibha Ganesan, Principal Scientist, MSSRF • Dr. Rupesh K Bhomia, Director – Wetlands, MSSRF • Dr. Ritesh Kumar, Director, Wetlands International South Asia • Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Strategic Advisor and Distinguished Fellow, ATREE • Dr. Kuladip Sarma, Assistant Professor, Gauhati University • Dr. Kripaljyoti Mazumdar, Project Officer, Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Govt. of Assam • Prof Lalitha Kamath, Chairperson, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance, TISS Mumbai • Dr. Arpana Barman, Social Management Specialist, Office of the Chief Engineer, PWRD, Govt. of Assam • Dr Kitboklang Nongrum, Senior Consultant, Research and Ecology, NESFAS

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TIME	DETAILS
1:35-2:25 PM	**Lunch & Conversations**
2:25-3:25 PM	**Wetlands in Focus: Securing Water, Biodiversity & Livelihoods** *> What are the biggest threats facing the Eastern Himalaya's wetlands today, and what's at stake if they are lost?* *> How can wetland conservation be designed to serve water security, biodiversity and community livelihoods together, rather than trading one off against another?* *> What does effective wetland restoration require in policy, funding and community involvement to work at scale?* ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Vishwa Bandhu Bhattacharya, Director, Global Sustainability, Tata Consumer Products • Dr. Barkha Subba, Conservation Scientist, 2026 Whitley Award Winner • Dr. Rupesh K Bhomia, Director – Wetlands, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation • Dr. Ritesh Kumar, Director, Wetlands International South Asia **Moderator:** Karuna Singh, Regional Director - Asia, Earth Day Network **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *Securing the Eastern Himalaya's wetlands is how we secure its water, its biodiversity, and the livelihoods that depend on both – protect the wetland, and the rest follows.*	***Interactive Workshop:*** **Remote Sensing, GIS and GeoAI for Natural Resource Management in the Eastern Himalaya** ***Venue: Geography Department Conference Hall*** ***Conversation Leaders:*** • Dr. P.L.N Raju, Director, Assam State Space Application Centre (ASSAC), Govt. of Assam • Department of Geography, Gauhati University.

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 2nd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
03:25-04:25 PM	**Urban Landscapes Under Pressure: Heat, Waste & Resilience** *> How are unsustainable infrastructure, ecologically insensitive planning and poor waste management reshaping Northeast India's urban landscapes and weakening resilience?* *> How are rising urban heat and waste pressures affecting health, ecosystems and quality of life, and who is most vulnerable?* *> How can Northeast cities integrate ecological planning, Heat Action Plans and nature-based infrastructure before these risks become harder to reverse?* **Conversation Leaders:** • Parmita Sarma, COO and Founding Trustee, Akshar Foundation • Dr. Partha Jyoti Das, Prof.of Practice, Dibrugarh University & Dept.of Env. Science, Gauhati University • Prof. Hemanta Hazarika, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyushu University, Japan • Prof Lalitha Kamath, Chairperson, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance, TISS Mumbai **Moderator:** Barasha Das, Science Journalist **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *Urban resilience starts with planning cities around ecological realities, not against them.* ***Closed Door Roundtable Discussion:*** ***Venue: MMTTC Conference Hall (Top Floor)*** **AI for Human–Elephant Coexistence** *> How can AI, real-time monitoring and predictive modelling help anticipate elephant movement and identify conflict hotspots before incidents occur?* *> How can technology integrate local and Indigenous knowledge with ecological data to develop more effective early-warning and response systems?* *> What is needed to move from technology pilots to reliable, community-led systems that protect both people and elephants?* **Conversation Leaders:** • Dr. Meg Lowman, CEO, TREE Foundation • Heidi Riddle, Chair of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AESG) • Khyne U Mar, Veterinarian and Conservationist, Myanmar • Dr. Anupam Sharma, Team Lead, WWF • Rathin Barman, Director, Wildlife Trust of India • Dr. Kushal Konwar Sarma, Chief Veterinary Advisor, Vantara • Dr. Tenzing Lopsang Lachenpa, Veterinary Consultant, Vantara • Dr. Bhrigu Prasad Saikia, Senior Environmental Specialist, L&T • Dr. Naresh Subedi, Member Secretary, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal • Pankaj Sharma, DFO (retd.), Assam Forest Department • Koustav Choudhury, Executive Director, SNAP Foundation **Moderator:** Dr. Kuladip Sarma, Assistant Professor, Gauhati University **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *AI can strengthen early warning and coexistence, but lasting solutions depend on combining technology with local knowledge, community participation and responsive governance.*
04:25-04:35 PM	**Vote of Thanks and a Shared Commitment to the Landscapes of the Eastern Himalaya** *A closing cultural celebration honouring the diverse landscapes and the communities they nurture, reaffirming the shared responsibility to protect and restore them.*

BALIPARA FOUNDATION
Assam • India

14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026
30th October - 3rd November
Guwahati, Assam

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM AGENDA - 2nd NOVEMBER 2026

READING MATERIALS

Journal Articles

1. The transition from shifting cultivation to indigenous agroforestry as nature-based solution for land restoration in the Indian Eastern Himalayas
2. Agrobiodiversity and agroecological practices in 'jhumscape' of the Eastern Himalayas: don't throw the baby out with the bathwater
3. Tree crop interactions, productivity and physiological efficiency of understorey crops in Alnus nepalensis and Gmelina arborea based agroforestry systems in Eastern Himalayas
4. Effect of land use change on soil aggregates and soil carbon inventories in the India's eastern Himalaya
5. Climate change impacts on socio-hydrological spaces of the Brahmaputra floodplain in Assam, Northeast India: A review
6. Ecosystem services assessment of Beledanga oxbow lake in the Gangetic plains: pathways to sustainable conservation
7. Piper agroforestry in the Indian Himalayas: indigenous peoples' practices, policies and incentives
8. Classification and management of community forests in Indian Eastern Himalayas: implications on ecosystem services, conservation and livelihoods
9. Grassland loss threatens endemic birds in Arunachal sanctuary
10. Grasslands in Flux: A Multi-Decadal Analysis of Land Cover Dynamics in the Riverine Dibru-Saikhowa National Park Nested Within the Brahmaputra Floodplains
11. Urbanization and its impact on microclimate dynamics and thermal comfort: A predictive assessment of Guwahati's evolving landscape
12. Understanding urban atmospheric variability: Implications of vegetation (canopy cover) dynamics in Assam's urban landscapes
13. An automated approach for human-animal conflict minimisation in Assam and protection of wildlife around the Kaziranga National Park using YOLO and SENet Attention Framework
14. Promoting human–elephant coexistence through integration of AI, real-time alerts, and rapid response

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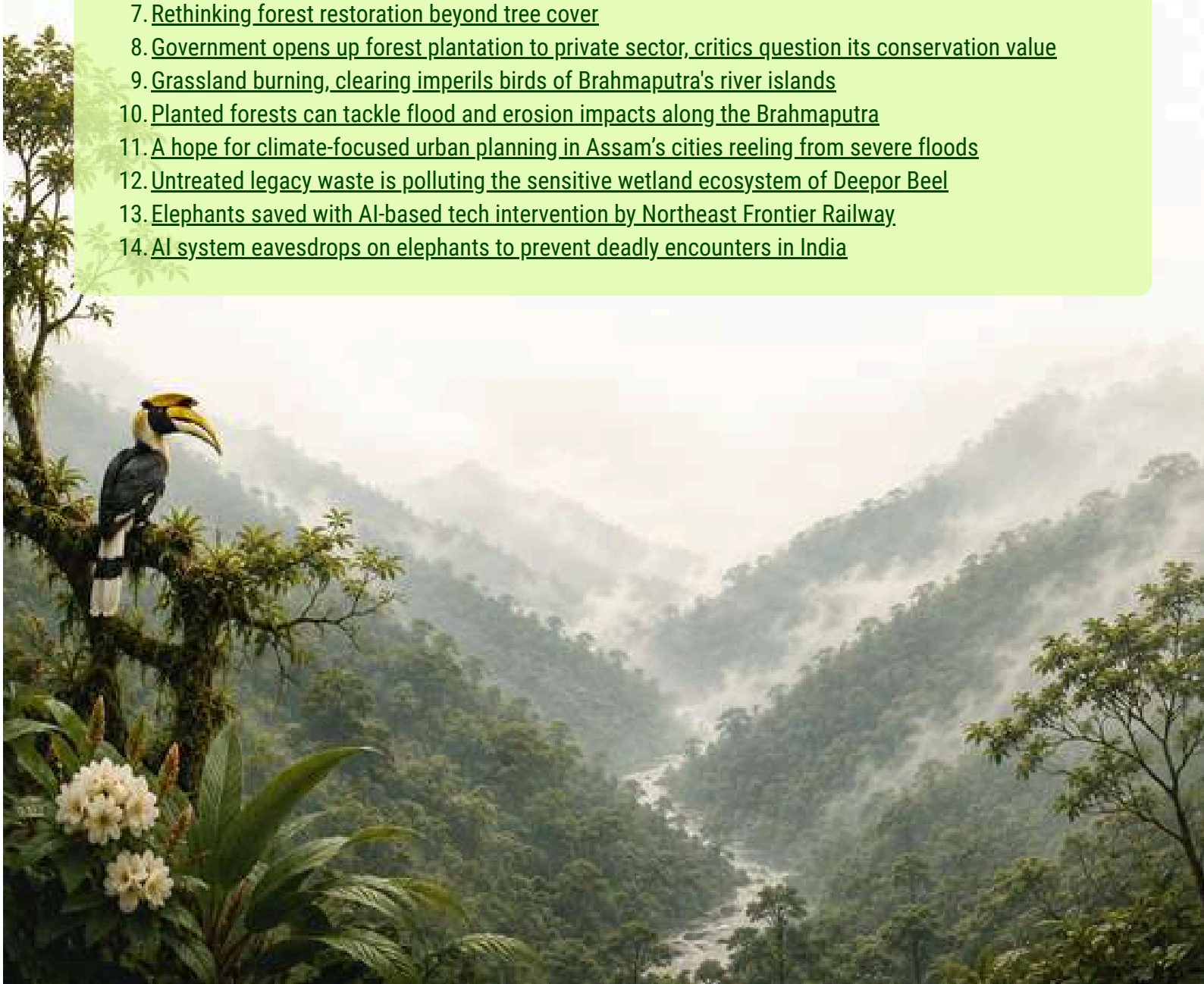
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM AGENDA - 2nd NOVEMBER 2026

READING MATERIALS

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

1. A combined agroforestry model shows sustainable ways to mitigate climate change
2. Building up carbon sinks in northeast India's shifting cultivation landscape
3. Sweet pineapples and a variety of trees nurture each other in this patchwork plantation
4. World Environment Day: How Khasi farmers are reviving Meghalaya's soil
5. Majuli's shrinking wetlands and their fight for survival
6. Farming, settlements and shifting cultivation degrading lake catchment
7. Rethinking forest restoration beyond tree cover
8. Government opens up forest plantation to private sector, critics question its conservation value
9. Grassland burning, clearing imperils birds of Brahmaputra's river islands
10. Planted forests can tackle flood and erosion impacts along the Brahmaputra
11. A hope for climate-focused urban planning in Assam's cities reeling from severe floods
12. Untreated legacy waste is polluting the sensitive wetland ecosystem of Deepor Beel
13. Elephants saved with AI-based tech intervention by Northeast Frontier Railway
14. AI system eavesdrops on elephants to prevent deadly encounters in India





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ALL-DAY IMMERSIVE INSTALMENTS AND DISPLAYS

A Promise to the Land

Participants are invited to write a personal commitment towards protecting and restoring the landscapes of the Eastern Himalaya, contributing to a collective installation that reflects a shared vision for regenerative land stewardship.

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation

Postgraduate students and early-career researchers are invited to submit action-based research ideas and abstract aligned with the key track (agriculture, agroforestry, restoration, land-use planning, soil health), focusing on the Eastern Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspot, for a chance of winning a seed support of up to ₹50,000.

Living Traditions & Green Innovations Gallery

An interactive showcase by EcoTask Force featuring indigenous seed banks, traditional crafts and community-led conservation, alongside sustainable local enterprises like Deroi Tea, India's first carbon-free dried tea, and Bath Science's handcrafted, plant-based soaps.

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14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026

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Green Tech, Innovation & Entrepreneurship

PROGRAM AGENDA

3rd NOVEMBER 2026

THE ASSAM ROYAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

GUWAHATI



The future of enterprise lies in recognising that nature is not outside the economy-it is the foundation of it. Innovation must help us value, restore and grow that natural capital while creating prosperity for people.

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14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2026
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THE ASSAM ROYAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
GUWAHATI

GREEN TECH, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Eastern Himalaya's transition towards a nature-positive economy depends on aligning innovation, enterprise, technology and investment with ecological conservation and community well-being. Green entrepreneurship, circular value chains, natural capital valuation and conservation technology can create economic opportunities while safeguarding biodiversity, livelihoods and the region's natural resources.

Against this backdrop, the **14th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum**, organised by **Balipara Foundation in collaboration with Assam Royal Global University**, will convene policymakers, business leaders, entrepreneurs, researchers, conservation practitioners and students on **3 November 2026**. The programme explores how green innovation, responsible business practices, climate finance and emerging technologies can advance sustainable development across the Eastern Himalaya.

Objectives

- Identify the partnerships, investments and enabling policies needed to accelerate green innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Examine pathways for strengthening women's leadership in environmental science, conservation and decision-making.
- Explore how AI, remote sensing and other emerging technologies can improve conservation outcomes while remaining accessible and responsive to community knowledge.
- Promote circular, nature-positive value chains across regional sectors, including tea, bamboo, forestry, textiles and agriculture.
- Examine how natural capital valuation, climate finance and regional cooperation can align economic growth with ecological conservation.
- Identify the ecosystem support, capital and market linkages needed to scale viable green enterprises and clean technology solutions.
- Explore the role of storytelling, film and creative technologies in strengthening conservation awareness and public engagement.

Scope of the Discussions

The programme brings together a leadership address, thematic conversations, a fireside chat, an interactive student engagement, a film screening and a closed-door policy roundtable. Discussions will cover green innovation and enterprise, women's leadership in environmental science, AI-enabled conservation, circular economies, natural capital and climate finance, and pathways for scaling green startups.

The programme will also examine the potential of bamboo and other regional resources to support circular industries, alongside opportunities to integrate natural capital into business strategy and investment decisions. A student interaction with Dr. Meg Lowman will explore conservation leadership and science communication, while the screening of MAYA will open a conversation on human–elephant conflict, ecological destruction and creative storytelling. The closed-door roundtable will focus on scaling clean technology solutions across the Eastern Himalaya.

Expected Outcomes

The discussions seek to identify practical opportunities for strengthening the region's green innovation ecosystem, scaling circular business models and mobilising investment for conservation and restoration. They will explore policy and industry pathways for natural capital integration, clean technology adoption and environmentally responsible entrepreneurship. The programme will also highlight opportunities to connect conservation science with emerging technologies and community knowledge, strengthen women's environmental leadership, and expand public engagement through storytelling and student participation.

Together, the sessions aim to advance a nature-positive economy for the Eastern Himalaya, where enterprise, innovation and investment contribute to ecological resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

GREEN TECH, INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

From green ideas to a nature-positive eonomy

Assam Royal Global University | 3 November 2026

Connecting leadership, enterprise, technology, circular business and natural capital across the Eastern Himalaya.

CONNECTED PROGRAMME THEMES



1. **The Green Economy**
   Innovation, enterprise and partnerships: the roles of business, startups, academia and government.
2. **Women in Science & Environmental Leadership**
   Women shaping environmental science, policy and institutions, with stronger pathways and mentorship.
3. **From Ideas to Impact**
   Building green enterprises through incubation, mentors, capital, market access and commercially viable models.
4. **Tech & AI for Conservation**
   AI, remote sensing, IoT and drones; accessibility for grassroots practitioners and ethical use of community knowledge.
5. **Business Leadership for Circular Economies**
   Nature-positive value chains in tea, forestry, textiles and agriculture, including bamboo-based materials.
6. **Scaling Clean Tech Solutions**
   Closed-door policy roundtable on scaling clean technology in the Eastern Himalaya.
7. **Valuing Natural Capital**
   Climate finance, policy, legal frameworks and regional cooperation, with benefits for local communities.

Conversations, showcases and participation

Meet Canopy Meg
Stories, science and conservation leadership with students

Book launch
The Sanctuary Guide to Kaziranga and Wetland Birds of Kaziranga

MAYA: film screening and conversation
Human–elephant conflict, creativity, technology and visual storytelling

Words of Wisdom
His Eminence Palga Rinpoche

Startup & Innovation Showcase
Startups, student innovators and green technologies

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea
Research poster presentations

Community-Led Enterprises
Indigenous collectives, women-led businesses and sustainable products

A Promise to the Future
Innovative ideas and personal commitments

Opening addresses • Closing performance: Nise Meruno and student choir

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THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD POLE AND HIMSAGAR (Eastern Himalaya)

Green Tech, Innovation & Entrepreneurship

PROGRAM AGENDA - 3rd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
09.00-09:30 AM	Registrations & Welcome Tea
09:30-09:35 AM	INTRODUCING THE 14TH EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS FORUM
09:35-09:45 AM	Leadership Address by Dr. Pisupati Balakrishna, Head, United Nations Environment Programme, India
09:45-09:55 AM	Inaugural Address by the Vice Chancellor, Assam Royal Global University
09:55-10:55 AM	**The Green Economy: Innovation, Enterprise & the Future of the Eastern Himalaya** *> How can innovation and entrepreneurship become key drivers of a nature-positive economy in the Eastern Himalaya?* *> What role should businesses, startups, academia and government play in building a thriving green innovation ecosystem?* *> Which investments, partnerships and enabling policies are needed to accelerate green innovation from ideas to impact?* ***Speakers:*** • Shrashtant Patara, CEO, Development Alternatives • Dr. Ram Boojh, CEO, Mobius Foundation • Monica Kishore, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Jorhat **Moderator:** Babita Baruah, CEO, VML India **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *A nature-positive economy in the Eastern Himalaya won't emerge from any one sector alone — it needs business, government, academia and entrepreneurs building toward the same future together.*
10:55-11:25 AM	Camopy-Walkways - Presentation by Dr. Meg Lowman, CEO, TREE Foundation

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 3rd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
11:25 – 11:50 AM	**Refreshments Break & Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea Poster Presentation** *Refreshments accompanied by a showcase of student innovations, startups, research prototypes and green technologies addressing conservation and climate resilience.*
11:50AM -12:50 PM	**Fireside Chat: Women in Science & Environmental Leadership** *Followed by* **Book Launch: *The Sanctuary Guide to Kaziranga* and *Wetland Birds of Kaziranga*** *> How can women move from being participants in environmental decision-making to shaping the science, policies and institutions that define our environmental future?* *> What must change in institutions, workplaces and ourselves to create stronger pathways for the next generation of women environmental leaders?* *> What does mentorship look like when it's done well and what's missing in how young women scientists are currently supported?* ***Speakers:*** • Dr. Meg Lowman, CEO, TREE Foundation • Heidi Riddle, Chair of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AESG) • Khyne U Mar, Veterinarian and Conservationist, Myanmar • Dr. Sonali Ghosh, APCCF and Council Head - Forest, Bodoland Territorial Council, and Manas Tiger Reserve **Moderator:** Bittu Sahgal, Founder, Sanctuary Nature Foundation **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *Environmental leadership needs more diverse voices at the table, and stronger pathways for women to shape the science, decisions and institutions that determine our future.* **From Ideas to Impact: Building Green Enterprises & Startup Ecosystems** *> What does it take to move a green idea from pilot to a scalable enterprise in the region?* *> What gaps remain in the region's startup ecosystem today — incubators, mentors, capital, market linkages?* *> How can green entrepreneurs build businesses that are commercially viable and genuinely nature-positive, rather than simply nature-branded?* ***Speakers:*** • Kanika Verma, Executive Vice President and Lead - Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Development Alternatives • Zeinorin Angkang, Founder, The Hill Wide, Manipur • Rohit Anand, Founder, WondrBridge • Upamanyu Borkakoty, Founder, Woolah Tea • Rasika Kisan Kaware, Senior Program Manager, SELCO Foundation **Moderator:** Anvitaa Rastogi, Vice President - Strategy & Growth, Alsisar Impact **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *Moving a green idea from pilot to scalable enterprise takes more than a good idea — it takes incubation, mentorship, capital and market access working together, not in isolation.*

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 3rd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
12:50-01:50 PM	**Tech & AI for Conservation: Shaping the Future of the Eastern Himalaya** *> What emerging technologies — AI, remote sensing, IoT, drones — are already being used for conservation here, and where are the biggest gaps?* *> How can AI and data tools be made accessible and useful to grassroots conservationists and community-based organisations, not just large institutions?* *> What ethical and practical considerations come with applying AI to conservation work that involves indigenous knowledge and community-held land?* ***Speakers:*** • Dr. G. Areendran, Director -Tech for Conservation, WWF India • Dr. Arpit Deomurari, Conservation Technology Specialist and Spatial Ecologist, WWF India • Koustav Choudhury, Executive Director, SNAP Foundation **Moderator:** Dr. Sunayana Sarkar, Assistant Professor, Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management and Engineering, NMIMS University **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *AI and emerging technology can meaningfully strengthen conservation — but only if it's built to reach grassroots practitioners and community-based organisations, not just large institutions.*
	Meet & Greet with Canopy Meg: Stories, Science & Leadership for Nature *An interactive conversation with students and participants exploring conservation leadership, science communication, innovation and the power of storytelling to inspire action for nature.* **Dr. Meg Lowman, CEO, TREE Foundation** *In conversation with* Students and research scholars of Environment and Forestry Departments of schools and universities **KEY TAKEAWAY** → *The best conservation science in the world doesn't move people — the story of it does. The next generation of conservation leaders needs both.*
01:50-02:30 PM	**Lunch & Conversations**
02:30 - 02:45 PM	**Words of Wisdom: His Eminence Palga Rinpoche, Motivational Speaker and Spiritual Guru, Ladakh**

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PROGRAM AGENDA - 3rd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS
02:45-03:45 PM	**Business Leadership for Circular Economies: Building Nature-Positive Value Chains** *> What would a circular, nature-positive value chain look like in sectors specific to this region — tea, forestry, textiles, agriculture?* *> What role can established businesses and corporate leadership play in shifting supply chains away from extraction and waste?* *> Bamboo is one of the region's most underused circular resources. What would it take to build bamboo into a nature-based infrastructure and materials industry at real scale?* **Speakers:** • Chiraagdeep Dhillon, Partner at Equilex • Kamesh Salam, Founder and Executive Director, South Asia Bamboo Foundation • Aroty Panyang, Founder & Principal Architect, STUDIOARO • Upamanyu Borkakoty, Founder, Woolah Tea • Rupali Walia, Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Program Lead, Climate Smart Forest Economy Program (CSFEP) **Moderator**: Bittu Sahgal, Founder, Sanctuary Nature Foundation **KEY TAKE AWAY** → *Circular business models can turn regional resources into sustainable, nature-positive value chains.*
	Closed Door Policy Roundtable **Scaling Clean Tech Solutions in the Eastern Himalaya** **Stakeholders:** • Dr. Rizwan Uz Zaman, Senior Technical Consultant, Assam Climate Change Management Society (ACCMS) • Shrashtant Patara, CEO, Development Alternatives • Rasika Kisan Kaware, Senior Program Manager, SELCO Foundation • Rohit Anand, Founder, WondrBridge • Deeptanshu Kotru, Manager (Himalayas Lead), SYSTEMIQ • Faculty and Research Scholars of Assam Royal Global University



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PROGRAM AGENDA - 3rd NOVEMBER 2026

TIME	DETAILS

03:45-04:45 PM

Valuing Natural Capital: Climate Finance, Policy & Regional Cooperation in the Eastern Himalaya

> How can regional and sub-regional cooperation strengthen natural capital governance and mobilise investment to address shared ecological challenges across the Eastern Himalaya?
> How can natural capital — including forests, water systems and community-held landscapes — be better recognised and valued in economic and industrial decision-making to support long-term resilience and investment?
> How can industries integrate natural capital considerations into business strategy, resource efficiency and sustainability practices, and what financing models can accelerate investment in conservation and ecological restoration?
> What policy, institutional and legal frameworks are needed to align industrial growth, regional development and natural capital conservation, while ensuring that local communities share in the benefits?

Speakers:
- Dr. Monish Tourangbam, Fellow, Chintan Research Foundation
- Manoj Kumar Rustagi, Chief Sustainability and Innovation Officer, JSW Cement
- Deep Roy, Founding and Managing Partner, Equilex
- Meghana Mungikar, Senior Research Manager, Economic Growth Center and Inclusion Economics, Yale University

Moderator: Anuj Sharma, Founder, Alsisar Impact

KEY TAKE AWAY → *Unlocking investment in nature requires credible valuation, innovative finance and policy and legal frameworks that enable communities to benefit from natural capital.*

Film Screening & Conversation: *MAYA*

Created by: Rajeev Chaurasia
Directed & Visually Generated by: Sanjay Ghosh

MAYA is an eco-thriller centred on human–elephant conflict, ecological destruction and institutional betrayal, exploring the consequences of humanity's strained relationship with nature.

Followed by

Dialogue & Q&A
Rajeev Chaurasia, Creator of MAYA

In conversation with

Sanjay Ghosh, Director of MAYA

A conversation on the intersection of creativity, technology and visual storytelling, exploring how emerging tools are reshaping the future of film and creative expression.

04:45 PM — ***Vote of Thanks and Closing Performance: Nise Meruno (Yamaha Artist) and student choir***

PROGRAM AGENDA - 3rd NOVEMBER 2026

READING MATERIALS

Journal Articles

1. Exploring the Factors Influencing Green Entrepreneurship Among the Northeast Entrepreneurs—An Approach of Gray-decision Making Trial And Evaluation Laboratory (DEMATEL)
2. Determinants of environmental entrepreneurship in secondary agriculture in Assam, India
3. Reliable and efficient integration of AI into camera traps for smart wildlife monitoring based on continual learning
4. Wildlife habitat mapping using Sentinel-2 imagery of Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh, India
5. Women leaders improve environmental outcomes: Evidence from crop fires in India
6. Challenges and supports for women conservation leaders
7. The interplay of challenges, support, and venture growth in sustainability entrepreneurship
8. Circular value creation through environmental entrepreneurship initiatives: A case-based exploration
9. Impact of circular economy adoption on sustainable business performance in Indian automobile manufacturing firms using a DEMATEL, PLS-SEM, and ANN framework
10. A comprehensive decision framework to support circular economy transition in modern supply chains
11. Legal readiness towards climate finance in India: a critical evaluation
12. Contribution of forest ecosystem services in India using meta-regression approach

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

1. Fueling Green Entrepreneurship in the North East: Pernod Ricard India Foundation supports 12 Circular Economy Startups enabled by IIM Calcutta Innovation Park
2. Plates, yarn & baskets: How Assam entrepreneurs are turning waste into livelihood
3. Community-led initiatives safeguard marbled cats in northeast India
4. How AI helps gather remote biodiversity data: Interview with Microsoft's Juan Lavista Ferres
5. Assam: Karbi Anglong hosts panel on women's role in conservation, development
6. Kaziranga University hosts international conference on science and sustainability
7. Inside India's green startups: Purpose, profit, planet
8. Waste is a resource, not a liability: Wilma Rodrigues of Saahas Zero Waste
9. How these social enterprises are turning India's waste crisis into livelihoods
10. Community buy-in, economic gains drive voluntary carbon market success
11. Green credit rules tweaked to favour canopy cover, remove trade provision



ALL-DAY IMMERSIVE INSTALMENTS AND DISPLAYS

Startup & Innovation Showcase

A platform featuring emerging startups, student innovators, social enterprises and green technology solutions, providing visibility, building collaboration and supporting the growth of nature-positive enterprises.

Naturenomics Pitch Your Idea: Poster Presentation

Postgraduate students and early-career researchers are invited to submit action-based research ideas and abstract aligned with the key track (Nature-tech, AI, GIS, remote sensing, green businesses, circular economy, conservation entrepreneurship), focusing on the Eastern Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspot, for a chance of winning a seed support of up to ₹50,000.

Community-Led Enterprises

An exhibition featuring Indigenous collectives, women-led enterprises, sustainable textile initiatives, non-timber forest produce, ethical food products, traditional crafts and community-based nature enterprises from across the Eastern Himalaya.

A Promise to the Future

Participants are invited to write one innovative idea or personal commitment and contribute it to a collective installation, creating a shared vision of shaping a resilient and nature-positive future for the Eastern Himalaya.