

Herbal garden opened in Langol reserved forest

Source: The Sangai Express

Imphal, **January 14 2014** : A herbal garden developed within Langol reserved forest with the objective of preserving medicinal plants found in Manipur was opened today by Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) AK Rana. The garden was developed since 2008-09 with monetary assistance from the National Medicinal Plants Board. More than 200 medicinal plants found in different parts of Manipur were collected and re-planted in the garden. The garden which is expected to give a data base to future generations apart from educating and creating awareness among the people about medicinal plants is 15 hectares in area. Speaking to media persons after officially opening the garden, PCCF AK Rana remarked that Manipur is rich in terms of biological resources. Many tribal people have been collecting and selling these medicinal plants to other States, he said. On account of over-exploitation of medicinal plants growing in wild, the number of medicinal plants found in the State has been diminishing. He suggested development of herbal gardens instead of exploiting medicinal plants growing in wild without any restraint. Illegal over-exploitation of medicinal plants is a huge challenge to the department. There is acute shortage of field staff in the department. The existing strength of 600 field staff is too little. Nevertheless, Forest Department staff have been instructed to take up stringent measures in order to check smuggling of medicinal plants and wildlife produces outside the State. To check export of wildlife produces and medicinal plants to other States, it is necessary to open integrated check posts at Mao, Jessami, Moreh, Jiribam and Tipaimukh.

To a query, the PCCF said that no officer or field staff was appointed in the department for twenty seven (27) long years. Acting on a proposal submitted by the Department, Government has recently initiated due procedures to recruit some new staff. Reserved forests located in the valley would be developed by planting by commercial plants. Moreover Wildlife Institute of India has been assigned to identify a suitable site for developing a third home of Sangai. There is strong possibility of wiping out the entire Sangai population if the endangered species is confined only at Keibul Lamjao when there is outbreak any disease/epidemic. That was why the new step of developing a third home of Sangai was initiated, Rana added.