



**Press Brief**

**MANAS OFF ‘WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN DANGER’ LIST**

*22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011*

In a historic decision, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC), has decided to **remove Manas National Park, Assam, from the “List of World Heritage Sites in Danger”**. The decision was announced during the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the WHC in Paris (19-29<sup>th</sup> June 2011). This makes Manas the only site out of sixteen world heritage sites in this category, to be taken off the list.

**Monitoring Mission gives positive review**

The UNESCO-IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission which visited Manas in January this year took the decision. Members of the visiting mission were impressed to see the range of species and habitat management restoration activities at the site, including the re-introduction of the Indian one-horned rhinoceros. The WHC said significant improvements in the preservation and restoration of the park, and maintaining the ‘Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs)’ of the site were the key factors in the decision.

Shri Vinay Sheel Oberoi, India’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to UNESCO thanked the WHC, UNESCO and IUCN, and said that India’s positive engagement with the local communities and the leadership provided by the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) had played a decisive role in restoring the heritage values of the site.

**Road to recovery**

The Manas Wildlife Sanctuary was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1985 and was put on the “List of World Heritage Sites in Danger” by UNESCO’s WHC on account of the social problems in the area, in 1992. An improving political situation in the 2000s and the signing of the Autonomous Bodoland Territorial Council under the Bodo Accord (2003) brought back normalcy to the region, and began the process of local communities’ involvement in pro-conservation activities.

Since then, concerted efforts from the local people, State Government and Central Government, has lead to this outcome. The personal intervention of Minister for Environment and Forests Mr. Jairam Ramesh, the “Bring Back Manas’ initiative of the BTC and the Assam Forest Department and training and equipping frontline staff; technical collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India; and follow up on programmes such as the “Recovery Plan for Swamp Deer”, and development of an “Integrated Ecosystem-based Monitoring Framework” by Shri Jagdhish Kishwan, Additional Director General (Wildlife), have together led to this positive outcome.

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