

# Ziro gets first wild orchid conservation trail

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**PANGE, Oct 8:** India's first wild orchid conservation trail was inaugurated by Environment & Forests Minister Nabam Rebia here in Lower Subansiri district on Monday, marking the 64th National Wildlife Week celebration.

He also inaugurated a tourist felicitation centre, and released a book titled Medicinal Plants of Talle Wildlife Sanctuary, co-authored by Hapoli Forest Division DFO Koj Rinyo and Dr Dekbin Yomgam. Pange is located around 15 kms from district headquarters Ziro and is the gateway to the Talle valley wildlife sanctuary. Lauding the efforts of the Hapoli forest division, Rebia said: "The world today is broiling with environmental issues and changes in the ecological systems. The Hapoli forest division's conservation initiative is the need of the hour and should be emulated by others." The minister was also impressed with NGOs, civil society groups, panchayat leaders and the local communities volunteering as guardians of the jungles. "Harmonious coexistence of man with nature, animals, and birds is possible only if the public sentiments can be moulded to love nature and stop killing wildlife. I am glad and proud that all of you have collectively taken up the responsibility of protecting nature and wildlife," he said. Rebia said the natural beauty of Ziro valley "should not be compromised in the name of development," and suggested that developmental activities should be planned without disturbing the ecological balance.

Local MLA Tage Taki said conservation of the forest cover of Talley valley is crucial for maintaining the delicate environmental balance in and around Ziro. "The rain-fed streams and rivers that cater to the water needs of the entire plateau will eventually dry up with the decrease in the forest cover. The government and the local communities will have to protect the forests jointly," he said. The MLA urged Rebia to facilitate construction of a "guard track" around Talle valley and equipping the forest guards with tools to trek around the valley "to prevent theft of our forest wealth (by people) from the neighbouring areas."

PCCF Rabindra Kumar suggested developing a medicinal plant garden and a rhododendron garden "to increase the tourism USP of the area." NGO NgunuZiro, the Hapoli forest division, and the MLA together presented a memorandum to the minister for declaring Talle Wildlife Sanctuary as a butterfly sanctuary and Kaiser-e-Hind as the state butterfly of Arunachal Pradesh. Rebia assured to provide all possible assistance, and promised to prioritize the memorandums submitted. He also released the 'people's biodiversity register' of Hong-based Biodiversity Management Committee, besides brochures on the birds, butterflies, bamboos, canes, rhododendrons, and wildlife of Talle valley. Earlier, the minister, accompanied by the MLA, DC Chukhu Takar, the PCCF, and others traversed the one-and-a-half km hilly orchid trail and viewed the 70-odd orchids relocated from various parts of the forest since 2017. Talley valley is home to over 200 butterfly species. According to butterfly experts, the coexistence of three very rare butterflies – Kaiser-e-Hind, Bhutan Glory, and Brown Gorgon – in a single place is a rarest-of-the-rare case. Butterflies are highly sensitive indicators of the biodiversity of an area. (DIPRO) First published by **The Arunachal Times** on 9 Oct. 2018