

PRESS RELEASE

Aaranyak leads conservation outreach at Majuli's Charaichung Festival

Guwahati, March 12: The pristine river island Majuli of Assam witnessed a festival celebrating the importance of bird conservation and its ecological importance to nature and well-being of people. The festival called “Charaichung Festival” was organised by a Majuli-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) "Majulir Sahitya" and people from the local community from March 9-11.

The outstanding efforts to promote biodiversity conservation in Majuli have inspired region's notable biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak to participate actively in the festival held at Swargadeo Pratap Singha Kshetra in order to protect and promote Charaichung, also a bird sanctuary. Ahom King (Swargadeo) Pratap Singha established the Charaichung 390 years ago to provide habitat for birds.

In the festival, Aaranyak's senior scientist Dr Partha Jyoti Das spoke in a session on 'Environmental movement in Assam' on March 10. The research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation also organised a session called 'Aaranyak Adda' on 'Manuh, Prakriti aru Majulir Bhabishyat' held on March 10 on the sidelines of the festival.

“More than 40 people from local villages as well as from some of the local organisations participated enthusiastically in this unique conversation held in the form of a free-flowing conversation (Adda).”, a press statement released by Aaranyak quoted.

The participants presented many interesting facts and perspectives concerning the past and present environmental conditions of Majuli and put forward realistic views about the concerns and hopes that the future poses for the dwellers of this world's largest freshwater island.

Jugal Hazarika, a member of Aaranyak and a well-known environmental activist of Majuli welcomed the audience while Dr Partha J Das provided the background of the event which was moderated by Bipin Hazarika, a reputed educationist of the area. The Adda resulted in several salient recommendations for ensuring the overall ecological security of the river island while dealing with the challenges of socio-economic and infrastructural development in the near future. Some practical suggestions also

emerged from the participants specifically for restoring the historic bird habitat of Charaichung to convert it into an ecotourist attraction.

Majuli is considered one of the most important bird habitats of the country. With an unmatched natural beauty, Majuli alone various wetlands of different sizes, making it one of the world's most diverse wetlands areas. It is a region with a wealth of aquatic and avian bio-forms, along with tremendous flora and faunal values.

An exhibition stall demonstrating Aaranyak's conservation efforts in the region also featured at the exhibition space of the festival. Notably, Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) is an associate organisation for the seminar on Nature Movements in Assam held on March 10.

In the winter season, Majuli is home to more than 186 species of birds, including threatened species, as well as an innumerable number of migratory birds. For bird lovers, Majuli is an ideal place of importance to visit. It is not only a cultural center, but also a paradise for birdwatchers and nature lovers. A number of bird species are found in and around Majuli and all along the Brahmaputra River course along the island, and these wetlands make up an important bird habitat.

As an organisation dedicated to nature conservation, Aaranyak will look forward to supporting future initiatives in Majuli to protect and conserve this unique and historical bird habitat.

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