

PRESS RELEASE

Meghalaya Forest Dept-Aaranyak sensitises BSF men on coexistence with elephants

Guwahati, Feb 17: A team of Aaranyak has extended support to Meghalaya Forest Department in conducting outreach events to generate awareness on Asian Elephants for personnel of country's elite border guarding force, the Border Security Force (BSF) deployed along the India- Bangladesh border in Garo Hills region of Meghalaya.

The BSF personnel guarding the country's frontier with Bangladesh in that region often encounter the gentle giants (Asian elephants) which are sometimes in conflict with human beings living in the region.

The Border Security Forces, invited the Meghalaya Forest Department for such an outreach event to generate awareness on Asian elephant behaviour and potential measures of coexistence. A resource team from Aaranyak extended the support to the department and conducted the sensitisation event on February 16 for the 1st Battalion of the BSF based at Mahadeo in South Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

Aaranyak official Abhijit Boruah delivered a lecture on 'Encountering the giants: understanding elephant behaviours', while another official Anushka Saikia spoke on 'From human-elephant conflict to coexistence'. Aaranyak's Rupam Goyari provided valuable assistance during the programme.

The Deputy Commandant of the BSF battalion, Sanjay Singh along with 35 jawans participated the awareness programme. Forest Range Officer from Baghmara, Chinchin Sangma and Officer in-charge of Siju Wildlife Sanctuary, Skilson D. Marak along with 17 forest frontline staff were also present during the event.

"Aaranyak with support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service has been working in Assam and Meghalaya on conservation of elephants using a multi stakeholder and multipronged approach. The sensitisation programmes are part of a holistic elephant conservation initiative," said conservation scientist Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar of Aaranyak.

It is worth mentioning that Friday's (16th February) programme was part of the on-going sensitisation series in Garo hills region of Meghalaya. Earlier, on January 22, another similar sensitisation workshop was conducted for the 50th Battalion of the

BSF in South West Garo Hills district. The next sensitisation workshop is scheduled for February 19 for the 100th Battalion of the BSF in Dalu of East and West Garo Hills.

***Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
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