

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Over 70 village heads, panchayat members in Namsai sensitised on wildlife crimes**

Guwahati, March 17: Over 70 village heads, panchayat presidents/members and zila parishad members (ZPMs) of Namsai district of eastern Arunachal Pradesh were sensitised to keep their eyes and ears open to the poaching and illegal trade of wildlife in their area that may have been used as transit route for illegal wildlife because of its proximity to India-Myanmar border.

The awareness meeting conducted by resource persons from frontline biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak ([www.aaranyak.org](http://www.aaranyak.org)) under the aegis of the Extra Assistant Commissioner (EAC) of Lekang Revenue Circle at Mahadevpur of Namsai district on Friday with support from US Fish and Wildlife Service.

A resource team from Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) of Aaranyak comprising consultant Bijay Sankar Bora, Senior Manger Dr Jimmy Borah and Project Officer and Wildlife Crime Analyst Ivy Farheen Hussain through elaborate facts and examples-based presentations sensitised 72 participants who came from different corners of the district, about the Aaranyak's sustained efforts for facilitating synergised action in a multi-stakeholders ecosystem for prevention of wildlife crimes in the region known for its rich biodiversity.

The EAC of Lekang Circle Dr Tojum Ete who took the lead in facilitating the awareness event at the Indoor Stadium Hall in Mahadevpur, set the ball rolling for the programme by raising the alarm that though Namsai district may not be a hot bed for poaching of wildlife, the village heads and Panchayati Raj institutions should keep a constant vigil against any design to use the bordering district as a route for illegal wildlife trade.

He informed that village heads in Arunachal Pradesh are empowered to take local crime cases and could help checking wildlife crimes if they are properly sensitised. Bijay Sankar Bora, publicity secretary of Aaranyak, in his presentation explained about the hitherto 34 year-long journey of Aaranyak in biodiversity conservation sector, about various operations of the organisation and how it has worked taking the grassroot community in confidence besides other stakeholders like forest personnel,

police, paramilitary forces and civil administration across the region and in some parts of eastern India.

Ivy Farheen Hussain through her substantive presentation loaded with examples of cases of wildlife crimes including some recent incidents in Arunachal Pradesh sensitised the participants about the danger posed by the burgeoning crime to the society as a whole because of its links to illegal arms trade, terrorism and drug smuggling.

She highlighted how Namsai region of Arunachal Pradesh stands vulnerable to illegal wildlife trade because of its proximity to Myanmar border and the key role the grass root community in the village and panchayat levels could play in mounting vigil against illegal trade and poaching of various Schedule species as listed in the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 amended in 2022, in coordination with forest, police, border guarding forces and civil administration.

Dr Jimmy Borah summed up the basic goal of organising the workshop and expressed gratitude on behalf of Aaranyak to the local civil administration and the participants for making it happen in a fruitful manner.

Addressing the programme, a senior Zila Parishad Member, Jogesh Tai raised alarm over the diminishing number of various wildlife species in the area because of many factors including poaching by hunters from Myanmar who used to sneak into India territory through jungle routes on the border. He said the awareness workshop, a first of a kind organised in the area, would go a long way in sensitising members of the PRI institutions against wildlife crimes.

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