

PRESS RELEASE

Village Champions in WGH sensitized on ways for human elephant coexistence

Guwahati, June 15: A group of 'Village Champions' and Nokmas in West Garo Hills (WGH) district of Meghalaya on Wednesday were sensitised on the need for facilitating human-elephant coexistence and the prevalent issue of human elephant conflict (HEC) in a training workshop organised by biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak at Bondukmali village in the district.

Villages champions are members of local communities, who are engaged in raising community awareness and facilitating community cooperation for promoting human elephant coexistence at the village level under a collaborative project. This project is implemented in partnership with the British Asian Trust (BAT) and Aaranyak under the sponsorship of Darwin Initiative.

The programme was held in Bondukmali village of West Garo Hills district in the office premises of Integrated Village Co-operative Society. Around 15 participants attended the programme.

Aaranyak has been implementing a project on Human Elephant Coexistence in Assam and the WGH landscape comprising the villages in Photamati area and of Bondukmali, Borogobal and Jamdangre. These villages are inhabited by a mixed population of indigenous communities including Garos, Rabhas, Bodos. Human-elephant-conflict has been prevalent in this area since 2013.

Village Champions from these project villages participated and interacted in the programme besides the Nokmas and villagers from different villages.

From Aaranyak senior officials Jayanta Pathak, Anjan Baruah and project personnel Vendo Theodore, Subhas Rabha and Bijoy Kalita along with an intern from Ajim Premji University attended the programme. A renowned environment film maker of Assam, Champak Deka also attended the programme.

Jayanta Pathak made a presentation about different characters and traits of elephant while Anjan Baruah presented on different factors of human elephant conflict and various mitigation measures including lemon bio-fences. Vendo spoke about the process of payment of compensation to the victims of HEC by the authority.

*Press statement issued by Dr Alolika Sinha, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
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