

Quarterly newsletter

Naturrole

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35 YEARS
Aaranyak

Nourishing nature to secure our future

Training organised on conservation of Hoolock gibbon

Aaranyak successfully completed a week-long training programme on Hoolock gibbon conservation in Assam on April 2. The field-based training which was initiated on March 28 at the Gibbon Conservation Centre of the Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Jorhat was organised in collaboration with Jorhat Forest Division of Assam Forest Department with support from The Habitats Trust, IUCN SSC Primate Specialists Group, IUCN Primate section of small apes. The motive of the training was to carry out research, training and conservation activities in Northeast India for the conservation of threatened Hoolock gibbon.

This training course which was organised for 30 forest guards, foresters and range officers was week long and residential. A wide range of related topics were covered including, biodiversity in Northeast India and conservation, primates conservation in Northeast India with special reference to Hoolock gibbon, Gibbon census or population estimation, Gibbon Data collection, maintaining & reporting, Techniques of floristic study, Gibbon habitat characteristic and restoration, Population and habitat monitoring, Gibbon rescue and rehabilitation, GPS & use in field, and Legal orientation (Wildlife Laws and its application).



This course has provided participants with an initial understanding of the basic principles of primatology, experience with the methods and techniques used in field research. The course consists of daily lectures and field exercises. The training programme featured Nandha Kumar, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Dr Dilip Chetry, Head of the Primate Research & Conservation Division of Aaranyak, Animesh Medhi, Range officer of Mariani, Dr I.C. Baruah from Assam Agricultural University, Dr Prabal Sarkar from University of Science and Technology Meghalaya, Ajoy Kumar Das, of Guwahati High Court, Gunin Saikia, Former Deputy Conservator of Forest, Mridu Paban Phukan from Wildlife Conservation & Study Centre, and Aaranyak's Arup Kumar Das, Akshay Upadhyaya, Simanta Medhi, and Pitam Jyoti Gore.

Yarn for livelihood, human- elephant coexistence



Aaranyak and British Asian Trust, has distributed yarn among human-elephant conflict (HEC) affected women in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya to help them supplement income. Twenty-six such women received yarn with support from the Darwin Initiative (Biodiversity Challenge Funds). On April 3, Aaranyak sent a team of experts led by Anjan Boruah and comprising Nipul Chakma, Subash Chandra Rabha, Ripunjay Nath, and Rupam Goyari to Bordubi to engage in interaction with the women of the community to know how the current human elephant conflict situation affects them, as well as to distribute yarn among them as a livelihood support. These women were earlier provided special training to hone their handloom skills. We hope that the yarn provided to these marginalised women who have received our handloom training, will empower them economically by providing them with the resources to create marketable products. As a result, their economic independence will be facilitated through an alternative livelihood options. This also marks our contribution towards the development of communities in HEC-hit areas in the interest of coexistence.

Raimona National Park staff get GPS training

On April 4, a team of Aaranyak conducted a capacity building training on GPS handling in the field for the newly appointed forest staff of Raimona National Park. The training was organised in the Sanfan Range of the National Park. The training was planned and organised by the Range Officer of Sanfan Range Biswajit Basumatary. Two officials from Aaranyak Mukesh Kherkatary and Bijet Baro conducted the training as resource persons. A total of 14 participants attended the GPS handling training.



Pabhoi Greens exposure trip

Aaranyak, facilitated a training cum exposure visit for the indigenous women of Badlapara village in Udalguri to Pabhoi Greens at Biswanath Charilai of Assam on establishing and managing a homestead garden & nursery.

On April 4, the women of the village had the opportunity to interact with the owner of Pabhoi Greens Neelam Dutta (Assam Gaurav Awardee, 2023) who is an excellent example of entrepreneurship in this field. The HEC-affected women were elated to see hundreds of varieties of tomatoes, capsicum, chillies, eggplants, lettuces, herbs among other vegetables. They were introduced to concepts which were new to them such as Zero tillage farming, Paddy cum Fish cultivation, Tissue culture, Seed conservation methods and panchagavya, jivamrit, cow urine and neem based biopesticides.



They were exposed to the whole process starting from field to collection, preservation and packaging of seeds. Land preparation to post harvest management for selected crops in their homestead garden was also a part of the training. Apart from farming practices they were also exposed to fisheries farming, paddy cultivation, paddy cum fish cultivation and vermicompost preparation. The participants were spellbound by the beauty and potential of the farm.

This initiative was part of Aaranyak's ongoing project "Community based integrated approach to facilitate Human Elephant Coexistence and Biodiversity Conservation" in Udalguri District, Assam under the aegis of UNDP-GEF Small Grant Programme and Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India Implemented by TERI. The programme was led, managed and coordinated by senior official of Aaranyak Jayanta Kumar Pathak. Other Aaranyak officials Bobby Nath, Arup Kumar Das, Dr Banasree Sharma, Rabiya Daimary, Bikas Tossa and Haben Mochahary also attended the programme.



Foresters exposed to Karbi way of life



Aaranyak, on request of the Assam Forest School, Jalukbari, organised an exposure programme at the Chandrasing Rongpi Community Resource Centre (CRC) in Kohora, Karbi Anglong on April 6 for foresters engaged in two Northeastern states. The event was attended by 31 foresters Grade I, comprising 25 officials from Assam and 6 officials from Sikkim.

They learned how to work with the forest-dependent Karbi Community in Kaziranga and Karbi Anglong landscapes. The aim of the event was to provide an insight into community engagement, Natural Resource Management and conservation, alternative sustainable livelihood (ASL), principle and approach of community based eco-culture tourism with reference to Kohora River Basin experiments.

An orientation session taken by Aaranyak team members first introduced the organisation's interventions and showcased its conservation initiatives and livelihood interventions such as Journey for Learning and PIRBI. These efforts aim to conserve nature, wildlife, and promote sustainable livelihoods among the Karbi community in correspondence to their cultural and traditional beliefs related to nature.

The visit included a tour of the PIRBI store, a community collective business based at Kohora, Kaziranga, which provided insight into the role community-based enterprises play in conservation and community development. The event's objective was to foster a collaborative relationship between Aaranyak and forest officials, promoting mutual understanding and support for conservation efforts in the region. The orientation and tour of the PIRBI store not only provided valuable insights into community-based enterprises but also strengthened the bond between Aaranyak and the forest officials.



Human-wildlife conflict mitigation in Pobitora fringes

Aaranyak provided twenty torchlights to the villagers living on fringes of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Morigaon district of Assam to deal with frequent face-off with wild animals in the area on April 6. The wildlife sanctuary known for the highest rhino density -- 107 one-horned rhinos in 38.8 square kilometre area -- and a large population of Asiatic Buffalo is fringed by densely populated villages leading to frequent human-wildlife interactions.



The torchlights were distributed by the Aaranyak team after holding an awareness meeting on human-wildlife negative interaction among the villagers from fringe areas of wildlife habitat. The initiative was supported by Zoo Berlin. During the event, beneficiaries from five villages namely, Kamarpur, Gorubandha, Nakara Habi, Noloni, and Burha Mayong received the torchlights which are expected to enhance their ability to spot from a safe distance wild animals mainly rhinos and buffaloes, that stray out to villages.

This will ensure safety to both villagers and wild animals. The programme was attended by Range Officer of the wildlife sanctuary Nayan Jyoti Das along with other forest staff deployed in the sanctuary. Senior official from Aaranyak Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, and officials Ujjal Bayan, Pranjal Deka, and K9 handler Rahul Das attended the programme and carried out the distribution of torchlights.

Aaranyak CEO flags wildlife crime prevention in Ranthambhore meet

The Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak, as well as a senior conservation scientist Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar attended the United for Wildlife, Royal Foundation India Chapter Launch during April 22 to 24, as a guest speaker and made a presentation on “Fringe Communities: Second Line of Defence in Wildlife Crime Prevention” on April 23. The event themed on combating the illegal wildlife trade was organised in Ranthambhore Heritage Haveli, Village Khilchipur, near Ranthambhore National Park of India.

Consultation on integrated management of Doloni Beel



A 'District Level Stakeholder Consultation on Integrated Management' of the Doloni Beel was organised on April 6 at Conference Hall, District Commissioner's Office, Bongaigaon.

The meeting was attended by a total of 54 participants consisting of mainly government officials from relevant line departments, representatives of communities from 10 villages located around the Doloni Beel and a few local educationists from various colleges of Bongaigaon.

The meeting was convened jointly by the District Administration, Bongaigaon District and Aaranyak. Nabadeep Pathak, ACS, District Commissioner, Bongaigaon District chaired the meeting, while Apurba Nath, ACS, Additional District Commissioner was the Co-chair. Usha Dewani Das, Communication Advisor, NERAQ, GIZ-India was also present in the meeting.

The purpose of the consultation meeting was to sensitise the stakeholders about the salient findings of the assessment that Aaranyak has done and share the major recommendations for the IWMP that is under preparation.

Dr Partha Jyoti Das, a senior scientist of Aaranyak who is leading the Doloni Beel Project, delivered a presentation on the major findings of the study and the salient recommendations put forward in the draft IWMP of the Doloni Beel. While Dr Ashoke Kumar Das, Coordinator, Western Assam Zone of Aaranyak, also pitched in during this presentation with a brief narration on the biodiversity wealth of the Doloni Beel. The meeting was also attended by other officials and members of Aaranyak.

Presentation on Deepor Beel at Kolkata conference

Aaranyak's senior scientist Dr Partha Jyoti Das attended a national conference on 'Freshwater Ecosystem Conservation: Status, Needs and Future Actions' held at the Fairfield by Marriott, New Town, Kolkata from during April 20-21. The conference was organised by the Alliance for Conserving Freshwater Ecosystems and IISER Kolkata. Dr Das made a presentation on "Degeneration of freshwater ecosystems and consequences for their socioecological characteristics: The case of Deepor Beel, Assam" on April 20.

ADS members sensitised on coexistence

We conducted an awareness programme on April 10 for the Anti Depredation Squad (ADS), under the Kumarikata Forest Range of Baksa Forest Division in collaboration with Baksa Forest Division with an aim to build capacity of the ADS members on effectively mitigating human-elephant conflicts (HEC).

We provided the ADS members with field gears such as the raincoats, and boots with support from the SBI Foundation. Aaranyak's senior scientist, Dr Bibhuti Lahkar through his presentation emphasised on how community participation is essential to minimise HEC in the region. He further added that the with active participation, we can minimise HEC significantly, and coexist with these gentle giants.



Ranjit Konwar, DFO of Baksa mentioned that the solution to HEC depends on learning how to live harmoniously with the elephants. He further encouraged the ADS members to share their experiences, and potential steps to be taken to ensure a healthy relationship between the people and the Forest department.

The forest range officers, Biren Boro, and Kameswar Boro emphasised the importance of active involvement of the ADS, as they play a crucial role in communicating HEC concerns and raising awareness among villagers. The outreach event was moderated by Madhab Chetri, who is an ADS member and the President of GoibariSaipatri Foundation. Aaranyak's officials, Rabiya Daimari, MondeepBasumatari, Reshma Narzary, Jiban Chetry, Jaugasar Basumatary, Bijoy Kalita and Pradip Barman facilitated the event with display of the IEC material on HEC mitigation measure.

Developing conservation partnerships with scientists

Scientists Bhaskar Adhikari from Royal Botanical Garden, Edinburgh, UK, Lila Nath Sharma from Forest Action, Nepal and a team visited Aaranyak office on May 28 and interacted with our scientists and researchers on how they are restoring the ecosystem in Jalthal Forest in Nepal. In line to this Aaranyak's conservationists too presented about our work on restoration of grassland ecosystem by managing Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) and woody plant encroachment. We had a productive and educational experience.

Earth Day 2024 : Packed with events

For Earth Day 2024 on April 22, we have organised multiple outreach programmes throughout Assam under the theme "Planet vs Plastic".



At Raimona National Park, we celebrated the day in partnership with the Kachugaon Division and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). This year, we observed the day for a week with students of four schools namely Kachugaon Public High School, Takampur ME School, Mainaguri ME School, and Mohendrapur ME School, all of which are located on the fringe of Raimona National Park. About 70 kids from classes 7-10 participated in our pre-day events. All total sixteen kids were selected from each of the four schools and taken on a park safari. During safari, our experts discussed with them on basic animal identification skills and experiencing them on the ecosystem services. At Pepsu camp, students participated in activities such as "whispering" and "web of life".

We presented quick animal drawing techniques for field observations. An award ceremony was held at Kachugaon IB to recognise the students. The valedictory function was graced by Bhanu Sinha, AFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Kachugaon Division, Arunjoy Khungur Brahma, BEEO-Kachugaon, Jashmanik Mashahary, I/C Central Range, teacher representatives of all four schools, Sanatan Deka, and Kaushik Deb of WTI. As a gesture of thanks, guests received Aaranyak's initiative PIRBI products. Aaranyak's Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Gayatri Dutta, Momita Narzary, Mariyam Deka, and Poojitha Dopati oversaw the programme.

We collaborated with local schools and communities to launch a seeds collection drive across Udalguri and Baksa districts of Assam. Engaging 60 students from Rajiv Gandhi Memorial High School, Sapangaon and 50 students from Saint Paul School, Bhairabkunda in Udalguri and community members from Madhupur and Subankhata in Baksa and Kundarbil in Udalguri, the endeavour aimed to raise awareness about biodiversity conservation through active contribution to ecosystem restoration. Guided nature walks around Rajiv Gandhi Memorial High School and a plantation drive in which the students of Saint Paul School we engaged, provided educational opportunities for participant, fostering a deeper connection with their natural surroundings.



In another occasion, we organised outreach programmes for school children in the Dibrugarh district of Assam as well as in the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. School kids from Kakojan Habi LP School, near the Dehing Patkai National Park, participated in an awareness programme organised by Aaranyak and British Asian Trust in collaboration with Dehing Patkai National Park authority and with support from Darwin Initiative (Biodiversity Challenge Funds).

Together we collected seeds of native species such as Bel (*Aegle marmelos*), Odal (*Sterculia villosa*), Arjun (*Terminalia arjuna*) and Thekera Tenga (*Garcinia pedunculata*), for raising it on nursery and eventually planting them at the our restoration site in Udalguri. Aaranyak with support from SBI Foundation is working towards reviving habitat to promote human elephant coexistence.

Twenty-seven students participated in a drawing contest in Dibrugarh on various aspects of nature and harmful effects of single use plastic and how we can reduce their usage to protect the environment. Aaranyak team members engaged the students in discussions about plastic waste and coexistence between humans and elephants. Aaranyak's Ejaj Ahmed and Dhantu Gogoi, Village Champion Rajib Gogoi, along with volunteer Rekib Ali coordinated the programme. While twenty students attended the outreach event held Photamati LP School, Photamati in West Garo Hills of Meghalaya which was organised by Aaranyak and British Asian Trust with Darwin Initiative (Biodiversity Challenge Funds) support. The programme was coordinated by Aaranyak's Subhash Chandra Rabha.

We also, procured Atlas (Custard Apple) (*Annona reticulata*) seeds to be raised in another community-managed nursery of Aaranyak at Badlapara in Udalguri. By promoting collaboration with schools and communities, these initiatives not only contribute to the conservation of biodiversity but also empower individuals to become stewards of respective local ecosystems. This initiative was made possible through the coordination of Aaranyak's officials Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Mondeep Basumatari, Didom Daimari, Bineswar Daimari, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatary, Dibakar Nayak, Bikas Tossa, and Pradip Barman. Community volunteer Binay Kumar Boro also played a key role in the success of the event.



First-aid training for HEC-affected community

Sixty-four villagers including 28 women affected by human elephant conflict (HEC) in Baksa and Tamulpur districts of Assam have been provided training on administration of first aid in two comprehensive workshops facilitated by Aaranyak. The training workshops were conducted in HEC-affected Madhupur of Baksa and Sonmoni of Tamulpur on May 2 and 3 as part of our relentless effort to facilitate human elephant coexistence in the state.

As part of the training, local indigenous residents were taught these lifesaving skills and were prepared to deal with medical emergencies in the event of accidents related to the HEC. These capacity building workshops are part of promoting human elephant coexistence by Aaranyak with support from SBI Foundation. A total of 28 women and 36 men actively participated in these sessions, highlighting the community's enthusiastic response and commitment to building resilience.



These workshops were particularly crucial due to the remote nature of these villages, which often lack access to medical facilities, emergency services and are also prone to negative human-elephant interactions. By imparting practical first aid skills, the workshops also aimed to minimise the impact of such incidents and enhance the safety of local residents while promoting coexistence between elephants and communities. The success of these workshops was possible because of Aaranyak's collaboration with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Baksa. The event was facilitated by dedicated AAPDA Mitras from DDMA, including Dalim Kalita, Nabajyoti Talukdar, Ritupan Kalita, and Sunjil Daimary, along with Aaranyak's Abhijit Saikia, Jiban Chetry, Jauga Basumatary and Pradip Barman.

We organised two trainings on administration of first aid on 2nd and 3rd June at No.2 Lebra Santipur of Tamulpur district and Jhalabasti of Baksa district respectively. These villages, which are frequently visited by wild elephants, face potential negative interactions that may necessitate first aid, especially since they are remote from medical facilities.

Additionally, the training provided an opportunity to educate the communities on snake bite treatment and fire safety. The sessions were attended by 22 and 38 participants from each village, respectively. The training programmes were facilitated by Aapda Mitras Dalim Kalita, Ritupan Kalita, Nabajyoti Talukdar, and Sunjil Daimari of DDMA, Baksa, along with Abhijit Saikia, Jauga Basumatary, and Pradip Barman from Aaranyak with support from SBI Foundation.

SC Judges grace wildlife crime prevention workshop in Mizoram



The Mizoram State Legal Services Authority and Aaranyak with objectives to facilitate synergy among various stakeholders including the judiciary in prevention of burgeoning wildlife crimes, organised a crucial workshop on wildlife crime prevention in Mizoram.

Hon'ble Judge of the Supreme Court of India, Justice Ujjal Bhuyan has highlighted that the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) becomes relevant in dealing with wildlife crimes for money laundering and wildlife crimes are 'intrinsically connected'. Addressing a workshop on 'Deterring Wildlife Crimes: Challenges and Opportunities' organised in Mizoram Bench of Gauhati High Court on April 11, as the chief guest Justice Bhuyan said since proceeds from wildlife crimes could be dealt with provisions of the PMLA Act, the offences under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act are also included in PMLA Act.

The Guest of Honour Justice Prasanna B Varale of the Supreme Court said, "India is a goldmine of biodiversity and boasts a rainbow of wildlife species. Wildlife crimes pose danger to the ecological balance in the globe and India is no exception to it." In his welcome address Justice Machael Zothankhuma of Gauhati High Court said the workshop which was also graced by another two Judges of the High Court Justice Nelson Sailo and Justice Marli Vankung, was of great importance at this crucial juncture when wildlife crimes have posed grave threat to delicate balance of the ecosystem.

The Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar addressing the workshop highlighted the utmost requirement of synergy among various stakeholders including the legal fraternity in combating and preventing organised wildlife crimes. The Inspector General of Mizoram Police Lalbiakthanga Khiangte and senior Customs official Malsawmtluanga made elaborate presentations on the sustained efforts by Mizoram Police and Customs Department in prevention of wildlife crimes in the bordering state.



Senior Law Consultant of Aaranyak and a lawyer in Gauhati High Court Ajoy Kumar Das in his presentation highlighted the enhanced efficacy of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in the wake of Amendments 2022 and explained how the investigating agencies and the judiciary can exploit the amended Act for increasing conviction rate in wildlife crime cases. The workshop attended by an august gathering including three the chief secretary and DGP of Meghalaya, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden of Mizoram, senior officials of Mizoram Police, Customs officials, senior officials of the state Judiciary, President of Mizoram Bar Association and Bar members, faculties and students of Aizawl Law College.



Aaranyak's team comprising Rabiya Daimari, Mondeep Basumatari, and Abhijit Saikia conducted the programme, with assistance from Bikash Tossa and Pradip Barman. This outreach event is a part of Aaranyak's initiative, supported by SBI Foundation to promote human-elephant coexistence and protect biodiversity.

Outreach at Udalguri schools on coexistence with elephants

A series of events were conducted in various schools of Udalguri district of Assam with an aim to raise awareness on how to coexist with the gentle giants. In Nunaipara TG LP School, Uttar Sekhar ME School, and No1 Milanjyoti Amjuli ME School, we conducted our signature outreach campaign Gajah Kotha using the well-illustrated IEC materials on 3rd, 13th and 14th May respectively, and reached out to around 250 students from these three schools.

We delved into the importance of elephants and their role as ecosystem engineers, and how we all need to proactively work towards protecting the species and its habitat, which is also intricately linked with our own well-being. Additionally, we highlighted the climate change crisis which we encounter in our day-to-day life, and how with little actions we can cumulatively combat this crisis.

Dibrugarh students learn about forest conservation

Aaranyak facilitated a programme at Kamargaon ME School in Jeypore in Dibrugarh district of Assam on May 6 highlighting how the wellbeing of the forests is intricately related to wellbeing of people and to achieve this we all must contribute towards protecting our rich biodiversity. An audio-visual presentation was made on this subject and a nature game 'Web of Life' was played with the students to demonstrate the interconnectedness of life-forms. Sixty-four students and school teachers attended the event. The programme was coordinated by Aaranyak's Ejaj Ahmed with support from Rakib Ali, a nature enthusiast. This outreach event was part of the initiative of Aaranyak and British Asian Trust for promotion of human elephant coexistence in Assam and Meghalaya with support from Darwin Initiative.

First-aid training and outreach on HEC in Udalguri

Aaranyak conducted a training on administration of first-aid for around 69 villagers in Bhootechang village of Udalguri district on May 7. The event primarily focused on women from the areas affected by human elephant conflict (HEC). The training was conducted as part of building capacity of the local communities and equipping them with basic knowledge on pre-hospital treatments.

These HEC-affected villages are remotely located and medical facilities are limited and fear of encountering elephants on the way always looms large, while the emergency medical services are hardly reached in time. Thus, through these workshops, we imparted practical first-aid skills.

We collaborated with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Udalguri, and the dedicated "AAPDA Mitras"- Gwmsar Boro, Moneswar Boro, and Nondeswar Boro conducted the training which was coordinated by Aaranyak's Mondeep Basumatari, and Abhijit Saikia with assistance from Pradeep Barman. Taking advantage of this workshop, we interacted with the local communities on how we can effectively manage HEC. Aaranyak with support from SBI Foundation has adopted a multi-pronged approach, engaging multi-stakeholders to facilitate human-elephant coexistence in high human-elephant conflict affected areas of Baksa, Tamulpur and Udalguri districts.

A community outreach programme on human elephant coexistence was conducted on May 15 at No. 2 Mwinaguri village in Udalguri district to foster a harmonious relationship between humans and wild elephants. The primary objective was to promote coexistence and mitigate negative interactions between the two species. Altogether 29 villagers attended the event, wherein we displayed the IEC material to raise awareness on how to effectively mitigate human-elephant conflict. Using the IEC material, we discussed elephant behaviour, emphasising the importance of understanding these aspects for better conflict management and ensuring well-being. The outreach event was a part of Aaranyak's initiative to promote coexistence with support from SBI Foundation.



Students explore Mising way of life, learn coexistence initiatives

In a quaint countryside, nestled amidst serene and beautiful villages, where we are undertaking human elephant coexistence initiatives, a group of nine students embarked on a journey of experiential learning. Facilitated by the ANVESHN Experiential Learning & Unlearning Centre, AUROVILE, their objective was a unique exploration of the lives of the indigenous Mising community. The group of students were led by the team members of Aaranyak at Jeypore, Dibrugarh on May 9 and at Jaborchuk Kathoni LP school, Majuli on May 11.



On May 9, an outreach event was conducted at Jeypore in for the students to educate them about the importance of forest conservation with a session on 'Understanding the Symbiotic relationship between Forests and Humans' followed by a nature trekking near Dehing Patkai National Park which was coordinated by Aaranyak's Ejaj Ahmed, Tibrajyoti Gogoi and nature enthusiast Rekib Ali in collaboration with Dehing Patkai National Park Authority and Assam Forest Department.

On May 11 at Jaborchuk Kathoni, the students participated in a session on 'Understanding complex & interdependent relationships between communities and rivers' setting the stage for a profound understanding of the history and intricacies of the Mising community and their tradition, resilience, and the delicate balance between the river and its people.

They were attended by Pranjit Borah, Ejaj Ahmed and other members of Aaranyak. Tibrajyoti Gogoi and Junak Boruah guided the students to observe different residential birds found in the riverine areas of Majuli. The students immersed themselves in the vibrant tapestry of community life. From the distinctive house patterns of the Mising community to their time-tested weaving practices and the unique boat culture. The students also had the opportunity to witness first hand our innovative bio- fence model. The villagers of Jaborchuk Kathoni and ZPC Debojyoti Patir also participated in the programme.



Nature camp for indigenous Karbi students



A three-day nature camp for young Karbi students was organised by Aaranyak in collaboration with Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School in Kohora, Karbi Anglong of Assam from May 10 to 12.

The aim of the nature camp was to facilitate a deep connection with nature from an early age and to create awareness about the natural world around us and its importance in sustaining our lives. The event was organised to promote environmental awareness and education, and it featured various engaging sessions and activities led by experienced resource persons and supported by dedicated team members of Aaranyak.

A total of 23 students from 9 villages namely, Bakring Engti, Chandrasing Rongpi, Diring Lekthe, Engle Pathar, Khailun Terang, Phumen Engti, Sivoram Terang, Diring Lekthe and Sarbura Singnar of the Kaziranga Karbi Anglong Landscape, participated in the three-day long event. The event would not have been successful without the support and dedication of Aaranyak team members and Theso Group of Chandrasing Rongpi village respectively. The whole initiative is supported by IUCN, KfW.

Promoting biodiversity conservation among students

In order to encourage students to come forward for biodiversity conservation and give them a basic understanding about its importance, an event was conducted by Aaranyak and British Asian Trust for 87 students at Pub Majuli Kherkotiya High School, Majuli on May 10. A power-point presentation on 'Biodiversity and its Importance' was also delivered for better understanding on the subject. The programme organised with support from Darwin Initiative, was coordinated by Aaranyak's Pranjit Borah, Ejaj Ahmed and Tibrajyoti Gogoi.

With an aim to foster the knowledge on biodiversity conservation and how it is related to human wellbeing and interdependencies of species and their importance in an ecosystem, we conducted outreach events on May 20 for the students of No. 1 Basa Gaon ME school and Ujani Sadiya High School in Tinsukia district of Assam. Altogether, 116 students participated in these two outreach events in two different schools. We interacted with the students using an audio-visual presentation titled- "Species Interdependence" and "Biodiversity Conservation and Human wellbeing", and conducted a nature game called 'Web of Life'. Aaranyak partnered with the British Asian Trust, and with support from the Biodiversity Challenge Funds, UK has adopted multi pronged approaches to promote human-elephant coexistence. These outreach events were coordinated by Aaranyak's Rimpee Moran, Ejaj Ahmed, Debojit Gogoi, Tonmoi Priya Gogoi with support from the teacher of the school.

Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day



Aaranyak and British Asian Trust with support from Darwin Initiative celebrated the World Migratory Bird Day with 104 students at Gazera High School, Majuli on May 11. A Powerpoint presentation on “Migration of Birds and their role in environment, and role of Insects in Bird Migration” was delivered by Aaranyak experts. A documentary ‘Chasing Whispers’ by Sandeep Dhumal based on White-winged Duck and its conservation was also screened. While a nature game ‘Bird Species Game’ was held for the students to give them an idea on the role of insects in Bird Migration. The Programme was coordinated by Aaranyak’s Tibrajyoti Gogoi, Ejaj Ahmed, Pranjit Borah and Junak Boruah.

Workshop on HEC mitigation for community in Dibrugarh

We collaborated with Jeypore Forest division of Dibrugarh district to organise outreach events on May 14 and 16 for the local communities in Lebankula Gaon and for the students of the Holy Child High School, respectively.

We interacted with the villagers on how we can effectively reduce human-elephant conflict (HEC) by using various HEC mitigation tools and nature-based solutions, with the aid of well-illustrated IEC material under the signature outreach campaign Gajah Kotha. We highlighted how intricately we are related to Biodiversity Conservation for ensuring our well-being for the students of Holy Child school. We made audio-visual presentations to the 92 students present during the event.

This event was attended by two forest officials and teachers of the school along with the students. Aaranyak's Ejaj Ahmed, Dhantu Gogoi coordinated the events with assistance from Rekitab Ali, and support from Forest Range Officers, Jigyas Boruah and Kabyashree Borah. These outreach campaigns are part of Aaranyak – British Asian Trust's initiative of facilitating human-elephant coexistence with support from Biodiversity Challenge Fund, UK.



Hands on training on handling open source GIS software

A hands-on training on “Introduction to Handling Open source GIS software” was conducted at Goalpara Division (T) of Assam Forest Department for the newly recruited forest guards of the division by experts from Geospatial Technology and Application Division (GTAD) of Aaranyak on May 16.

The participants were trained on handling GPS data in Microsoft Excel and subsequent application of the data in Q-GIS software. They were also trained on data management for GIS, handling Google earth compatible KML data and preparation of map layout using all the different data prepared during the training using Q-GIS software. Altogether 20 participants were trained by Aaranyak’s Madhumita Borthakur, Assistant Manager (GTAD), Avishek Sarkar, GIS Analyst (GTAD), and Evangel Lyngdoh, an Intern.



Aaranyak scientist speaks at international workshop on water management



Aaranyak scientist Dr Partha Jyoti Das delivered an invited talk on 'Water management for adaptation: Experience from the Brahmaputra River Basin, Northeast India' on May 16, in the two-day International Scientific Networking Workshop on “Climate Change Adaptation: Emerging Perspectives, Ideas and Practices” organised by the GIZ at The Lalit, New Delhi.

IUCN Primate specialist visits Aaranyak office

Dr Susan M. Cheyne, Vice-chair for IUCN Primate Specialist Group Section on Small Apes visited our office on May 17 in Guwahati. Dr Dilip Chetry, Head of Aaranyak's Primate Research and Conservation Division, welcomed Dr Cheyne and discussed the different conservation efforts that Aaranyak is undertaking for Hoolock gibbons in Northeast India. A discussion about the conservation of Western Hoolock gibbons in India was also held between the senior primatologists. Dr Cheyne appreciated the initiatives of Aaranyak on Gibbon Conservation in India and requested state wise Gibbon Conservation action on the species. Cheyne was accompanied by her researcher Siddarth Badri and Florian Magne, Director at HURO Programme, Tura, Meghalaya.

Workshop on Digital Post-Processing in Wildlife Photography



As part of a series of workshops on communication skill development, Aaranyak organised a workshop on “Essentials of Digital Post-Processing in Wildlife Photography” on May 19 in Guwahati.

The workshop was coordinated with the facility and expertise available within the Media Production and Communications Division of Aaranyak that covered various topics such as various essentials of image-making using digital tools, including the need and ethics of processing, image management and cataloging, various image formats and processing RAW files, use of Adobe Lightroom etc.

Udayan Borthakur, a Senior Scientist of Aaranyak and a well-published wildlife photographer from northeast India conducted the workshop. Munmita Boruah, Manager of Media Production and Communications Division and Chinmoy Swargiary, Documentation and production officer of Aaranyak coordinated the overall organisation of the workshop.

Distribution of saplings for biofence and alternative crops

Aaranyak provided 260 lemon saplings to a household in Kawli, Tamulpur for growing them as biofence as human-elephant conflict (HEC) mitigation tool on May 19. Lemon, when planted in a certain manner, acts as an effective biofence and protects crops and properties from elephants thereby facilitating coexistence. The lemon saplings are planted in three rows at alternate positions, which when thickens can't be penetrated by wild elephants.

This tried and tested biofence has been effective, and people can also earn an additional income by selling the lemons. In Baksa-Tamulpur-Udalguri landscape, HEC is intense and we are implementing multi pronged approaches to reduce the conflict. This initiative has been supported by SBI Foundation.



Aaranyak officials Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Mondeep Basumatary with assistance from Pradip Barman coordinated the event in presence of Forest Range Officer of Kumarikata Range, members of Anti Depredation Squad and villagers. Furthermore, on the same day, we distributed 2000 chili saplings at Barikadanga in Baksa district as part of our initiative to promote alternative crop cultivation, adding on to the 2500 saplings that had been provided earlier. Based on the farmers' interest to adopt alternative crops as mitigation tools, we have supported farmers from Baksa and Udalguri districts with over 10000 chili saplings within the month of April and May.

From Kaziranga to Orang, cyclists promote wildlife conservation

Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve authority and Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve authority in association with Aaranyak organised "Ride for Conservation"- a cycle expedition from Kaziranga to Orang during May 19 to 21 with support from David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF). The programme was organised with the aim to encourage people to cooperate with and contribute towards efforts for conservation of nature and wildlife. The rally tried to spread the message of conservation from Kaziranga to Orang, generate awareness among students and promote eco eco-friendly lifestyle.



The rally was formally flagged off by Dr Sonali Ghosh, Director, Kaziranga Tiger Reserve on May 19 in presence of Dr Firoz Ahmed, senior Scientist, of Aaranyak, senior journalist of Bokakhat Bhabananda Kalita, Manjit Sonowal, Range Officer of Bokakhat Range, known birder Abidur Rahman, Gitanjali Kalita, Puwati Sahitya Sabha, Bokakhat and senior journalist of Kaziranga Swapan Nath. Dr Sonali Ghose welcomed the participating cyclists during the flag-off event. The cycle rally reached Bhumuraguri on the first day covering a distance of 90 kilometres.

The rally resumed its journey from Bhumuraguri to Orang National Park on May 20 and on the way the cyclists organised two awareness campaigns, one in Borsola High School and another in Borsola Jatiya Vidyalaya and reached out to around 2500 students.

In the evening the rally reached Orang covering a distance of 80 kilometres. The group of cyclists were welcomed and felicitated at Silbouri by a group of local youth supervised by Nejb Ahmed, renowned photographer of Orang area and Abdul Malek, Social worker. Director of Orang Tiger Reserve Pradipta Baruah formally welcomed the group of cyclists on May 21 with Fulam Gamusa and Cap of Orang in presence of Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, Senior Manager of Aaranyak, Dibyajyoti Deuri, Range Officer and Pranjit Deka, Forester Grade I of Orang Park. Pradipta Baruah then flagged off the rally to Kopati. A group of local youth and forest staff also joined the rally from Orang National Park to Kopati. AAMSU unit at Silbouri honoured the cyclist team on the way to Kopati.

A closing programme was organised in Vallabhai Higher Secondary School where the students welcomed the cyclist. A brief meeting cum awareness programme was held among the students. Dr Deba Kumar Dutta and Arif Hussain of Aaranyak, Range Officer Dibyajyoti Deuri, Swapan Nath of Kaziranga, Abu Bakkar Siddik Mandal, Teacher of Vallabhai Higher Secondary School, Nejb Ahmed and Abdul Malek interacted with the students on different topics. Arif Hussain, a Manager of Aaranyak led the programme where eight cyclists participated namely, Arif Hussain, Swapan Nath, Luchan Prakash Gogoi of Kaziranga, Diganta Das of Numaligarh, Ritom Bora of Geleki, Jehir Ahmed of Bokakhat, Aaranyak members from Bonkual Akash Morang and Bipul Ganju, and Ganjubasti of Burapahar. The team covered a total distance of around 200 km and reached out to around 2600 students and other people.

Foresters receive conservation training on Hoolock gibbon

Aaranyak in collaboration with Jorhat Forest Division of Assam Forest Department with support from The Habitats Trust and IUCN Primate Specialists Group carried out a training programme for foresters titled “Training of Foresters for the Conservation of Hoolock Gibbon in Assam in 2024” at Gibbon Conservation Centre of Aaranyak in H. Gibbon Sanctuary, at Mariani in Assam from May 20-26.



This training course was week-long and residential. A wide range of related areas were covered including, Biodiversity in Northeast India and Conservation, Primates Conservation in Northeast India with special reference to Hoolock gibbon, Gibbon Census or Population Estimation, Gibbon Data Collection, Maintaining and Reporting, Techniques of Floristic Study, Gibbon Habitat Characteristic and Restoration, Population and Habitat Monitoring, Gibbon Rescue and Rehabilitation, Global Positioning System & use in field, and Legal Orientation (Wildlife Laws and its application).

This course had provided participants with an initial understanding of the basic principles of Primatology, experience with the methods and techniques used in field research. The course consists of daily lectures and field exercises.

Third batch of training was inaugurated by Dr Prabal Sarkar Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM).

Twenty-six Foresters from 12 forest divisions of Assam -- Cachar Forest Division, Dima Hasao East Forest Division, Dima Hasao West Forest Division, Doomdooma Forest Division, FRS Forest Division Haflong, Golaghat Forest Division, Hailakandi Forest Division, Karbi Anglong East Forest Division, Karbi Anglong West Forest Division, Karimganj Forest Division, Sivsagar Forest Division, South Nagaon Forest Division -- were trained. During the training Dr I C Baruah of Assam Agricultural University, Dr Prabal Sarkar of University Science and Technology Meghalaya, Dr Bhaskar Choudhury from Wildlife Trust of India, Ajoy Kumar Das from Guwahati High Court, Gunin Saikia, Former Deputy Conservator of Forest, Animesh Medhi, Forest Range Officer, Mariani Forest Range, Mridu Paban Phukan from Wildlife Conservation & Study Centre, Aaranyak's Dr Dilip Chetry, Avishek Sarkar, Akshay Kumar Upadhaya, Simanta Medhi, trained these forest officials.

On May 26, the convocation of this training was held under the chair of Dr Dilip Chetry, Head, Primate Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak. The chief guest of this occasion was Iqbal Ahmed, Forest Range officer, Jorhat range. The training programme concluded with distribution of the study material like training manuals, Gibbon books, Posters, stickers certificates, among the trainees.

During a field exercise and learning session on primates, 31 trainees from Assam Forest School, Guwahati (Foresters grade I, comprising 25 officials from Assam and 6 officials from Sikkim) were exposed to diverse aspects of primates and its conservation. The team was led by Ranger officer Pallabi Das to the Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Jorhat district of Assam.

Aaranyak organised the field trip to provide exposure to the trainees on different species of primates of Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in collaboration with the sanctuary authority. Dr Dilip Chetry, Aaranyak's senior scientist and well-known primatologist, led the group on the field. The group spotted Hoolock gibbons, Capped langurs, Stumptailed macaques and Rhesus macaques along with Dr Chetry and Aaranyak's Akshay Upadhaya, Simanta Medhi and Pitam Jyoti Gore.

The trainees were engaged in discussions on the different issues on the conservation of the habitats and primates. During the field exercises, we also organised a lecture and visual presentation on the primates of Assam and its Conservation at Gibbon Conservation Centre and discussed different aspects of primate conservation in Assam. Additionally, we demonstrated about the natural and artificial canopy bridges for Gibbons and other arboreal species.



Celebrations of International Day for Biological Diversity



In celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, we have organised a number of outreach events across Assam and Meghalaya on May 22.

Aaranyak in collaboration with Bengali Higher Secondary School of Guwahati with Wipro Earthian support organised an awareness campaign on the eve of the day. The event aimed to educate students about the importance of biodiversity conservation for a sustainable city.

Recognising the exceptional adaptability and learning capabilities of young minds, Aaranyak, in collaboration with Maidam Gaon Vidyapith, organised an enriching awareness programme aimed at fostering an appreciation for nature and biodiversity among children. The programme, held in celebration of the day, featured a series of educational initiatives designed to make a lasting impact on the participants.

A highlight of the event was an engaging activity where students drew and coloured various animal faces, allowing them to express their creativity while learning about different species. The interactive session concluded with an exciting ice-breaking activity where children formed sentences about birds, butterflies, and insects, reinforcing their newly acquired knowledge in a fun and memorable way.

On another occasion, Aaranyak observed the day in collaboration with Dhansiri Forest Division and 61 Bn SSB, Bhairabkunda with our habitat revival efforts by resuming plantation for the second year in Bharibakunda. Aaranyak in collaboration with Sikaridanga JFMC is working towards reviving habitat for elephants and other wildlife in Bhairabkunda as a long-term solution towards human-elephant conflict mitigation. This initiative is supported by SBI Foundation.

In Kohora, Karbi Anglong, Aaranyak in collaboration with Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School and PIRBI- a biodiversity business initiative, celebrated the day and organised an exhibition cum competition on “Wild edibles and associated traditional Knowledge” at Chandrasing Roongpi village, Kohora, KarbiAnglong. The objective of the exhibition was to sensitise the women about the richness of their surroundings with food biodiversity, their rich traditional knowledge, disappearing trend and values of wild edibles as vegetables, fruits, medicinal plants and tubers, etc. Thirty women from five villages, namely Phumen Engti, Chandrasing Rongpi, Englepathar, Khailun Terang and Sarbura Singnar respectively participated in the event.



A total of 101 species of wild edibles and herbs were exhibited by the women in the event. All the wild edibles were collected by the participating women from their respective village and community forests. Various information related to their names, niche environment, uses, present status etc., were also recorded in the event. Aaranyak is committed towards conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem and supporting the indigenous communities through alternative sustainable livelihood activities, education and awareness programmes residing in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape. The whole initiative is supported by IUCN, Kfw.

Aaranyak conducted a series of programmes across eastern Assam and West Garo Hills to generate awareness on how crucial it is to safeguard our rich biodiversity and reiterate this year's theme of how we all need to, "Be a Part of the Plan ". In eastern Assam's Charaguwa High School, Kamar Gaon ME School and Haladhibari LP School, and West Garo hill's Lower Kharsengdap School we reached out to around 187 students and interacted with them through audio-visual presentations on biodiversity conservation. Besides, other fun activities such as quiz competitions related to biodiversity, nature game (Web of Life), and a "biodiversity walk" as well as screening of documentaries were conducted. We collaborated with the Assam Forest Department to conduct these events. Aaranyak partnered with the British Asian Trust and supported by Biodiversity Challenge Funds, UK is working with a bottom-up approach to promote coexistence and protect biodiversity through education, supplementing livelihood and support communities with HEC mitigation tools. The outreach programmes were a part of this initiative.

Promoted eco-friendly living through a bicycle rally

Aaranyak in collaboration with Tilinga Sports Club, organised a bicycle rally in Guwahati to spread awareness on sustainable living on May 26. The event united 27 avid cyclists and environmental enthusiasts, all fervently pedalled towards a greener, healthier future. Beyond merely emphasising the significance of sustainable practices, this rally aimed to nurture a sense of community spirit and heightened awareness surrounding eco friendly living.



The bicycle rally was participated by individuals from all walks of life. Their enthusiasm and commitment underscored the collective responsibility we share in protecting our environment and securing a sustainable future for generations to come. Guwahati's diverse ecosystems, including its hillocks, sanctuaries, and wetlands, harbor a rich variety of plant and animal species. By preserving these habitats, we safeguard the biodiversity of the region, ensuring the survival of native flora and fauna.

HEC mitigation workshop in Sivasagar tea estate

The natural landscapes of Guwahati provide vital ecosystem services such as clean air, freshwater, and soil fertility. Wetlands act as natural filters, purifying water and mitigating floods, while forests help regulate the climate and maintain soil stability. The conservation of natural habitats like forests and wetlands enhances the resilience of Guwahati's ecosystem to climate change impacts. They help mitigate the effects of extreme weather events, regulate temperature, and sequester carbon dioxide, thereby contributing to climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Preserving Guwahati's natural resources is integral to achieving sustainable development goals. By promoting eco-friendly practices and balancing conservation with development, we can ensure the long-term prosperity and well-being of both people and the environment.

In essence, safeguarding Guwahati's natural resources is not only a matter of environmental conservation but also a prerequisite for sustainable development, resilience, and the overall quality of life for present and future generations. The rally was flagged off by Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Senior Scientist in Aaranyak in presence of Aaranyak's senior official, Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Arif Hussain, along with the dedicated team from Aaranyak and Tilinga Sports Club, accompanied by media persons.

The entire programme was coordinated by Wasima Begum, Aaranyak's Environment Facilitator, Ratnamala Sarma, the General Secretary of Tilinga Sports Club and Event Coordinator of Tilinga Sports Club Geetarth Pratim Dey.

Aaranyak organised an awareness programme on human elephant conflict (HEC) mitigation at Manjushree Tea Estate under Sonari range, Sivasagar district of Assam on May 26. A total of 64 attendees including villagers', forest and police officials attended the programme. The programme began with a self-introduction after which social worker Rebo kanta Gogoi pointed out the objectives for the awareness programme. Babul Baruah, AFS (ACF, Sivasagar Division) delivered a short talk on the scenario of HEC and how it can be minimised whereas Krishna Hanse, AFS, Range officer, Sonari range joined him and focused all the points related to HEC under his range.



Amir Hamja, Officer in Charge, Namtola discussed the issues related to HEC and told that they will be giving support to minimise the conflict from the area whenever needed. Rubul Tanti, an official in Aaranyak's Elephant Research and Conservation Division delivered a talk on HEC mitigation and a short intro of Aaranyak whereas Project Officer Rimpee Moran showed various pictorial diagrams and explained Gajah Katha in detailed manner. Field Assistant Jiaur rehman supported the team in every possible way thus making the programme a successful one. Sukhram Tamaria, VDP Secretary and Mukul Hussain, Old Towkok VDP President also attended the outreach programme.

Sharing knowledge on HEC mitigation through radio programme



Aaranyak and British Asian Trust conducted a live radio programme on June 1 to generate mass awareness on how to mitigate human elephant conflict (HEC) and promote coexistence. The programme was aired through AIR Dibrugarh centre. Questions posed by the people of Assam during the programme were responded efficiently.

The programme was well appreciated and the people shared their stories, suggestions and asked for effective measures to deal with HEC from various districts of eastern Assam. Aaranyak's team comprising Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Jayanta Pathak, Zakir Islam Bora and Rimpee Moran was in the panel to answer the various questions such as how the people can mitigate HEC? Whether planting banana and bamboo is good for elephants and what are tools to mitigate HEC ? etc. Arun Morang, Programme Executive of AIR Dibrugarh and Parasha Konwar, Moderator facilitated the programme.

Moreover, Aaranyak team made extra efforts and reached out to the villages with a radio, gathered people around so that they could take part in this discussion, and exchange knowledge. With this effort we reached out to 84 villagers besides the other listeners across eastern Assam. This programme was supported by Biodiversity Challenge Funds, UK.

World Bicycle Day celebrated

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNP &TR) authority, Aaranyak and Kaziranga Cycling Club celebrated the World Bicycle Day 2024 in Bokakhat and Kaziranga by organising a cycle rally from Bokakhat to Kaziranga National Park in Assam.

The programme aimed at promoting 'Health, Equity, Sustainability and Eco-friendly environment' through cycling. The rally was formally flagged off on June 3 by Arun Vignesh, DFO Eastern Assam Wildlife Division in presence of Bhabananda Kalita, senior journalist from Bokakhat, Bidyut Bikash Bora, Range Officer of Agaratoli Range, Swapan Nath, senior Journalist based in Kaziranga, Arif Hussain, Coordinator, Aaranyak Central Assam Zone, Hariram Ingti, President, of Inglepathar Eco Development Committee, Kaziranga, Gautam Dahal , a Teacher from Bokakhat. During the flag off ceremony all the dignitaries interacted with the cyclists on importance of the world bicycle day, benefits of cycling and sustainable environment. After the flag off, the rally move from Bokakhat town to Kohora in Kaziranga National Park. During the 25-kilometer ride the rally created awareness among the school students and visited four schools on the way namely Diffolopathar High School, Kaziranga Girls High School, Kaziranga High School and Kaziranga National Park High School.



Dr. Firoz Ahmed, Swapan Nath and Arif Hussain interacted with the students on sustainable environment through cycling and importance of cycling. Altogether 2650 students from these schools could be contacted during the cycle rally. Bibhuty Ranjan Gogoi, Range officer of Kohora Range interacted with the cyclists in Kohora Range. Twenty-three cyclists -- Swapan Nath, Gautam Dahal, Arif Hussain, Suraj Rabha, Hariram Ingti, Najirul Haque, Luchan Gogoi, Diganta Das, Jehir Ahmed, Ritom Bora, Numal Das, Vishal Gogoi, Saurav Kurmi, Dev Tanti, Dipok Sharma, Yubrat Chetia, Mintu Das, Dilip Upaidhay, Rameswar Singnar, Dhonsing Ingti, Junasing Ingti, Bijay Ingti and Amarsing Tokbi participated in the rally.

Events celebrating World Environment Day

Pre-celebration of World Environment Day

Aaranyak in collaboration with Assam Forest department organised an outreach event as a pre-celebration of the World Environment Day 2024 in Namrup College, Dibrugarh on May 25.

We reached out to 117 students in presence of the Principal of the college, Durga Prasad Gogoi, and faculty of the Botany Department. Aaranyak's Ejaj Ahmed talked about "Environment Conservation and its importance", whereas, Zakir Islam Bora stressed on the relentless conservation efforts of Aaranyak in the region. Hijam Homendro Singh, a faculty of the Botany Department highlighted a very important subject, 'Moisture Content in Soil'. This outreach campaign is a part of efforts of Aaranyak and British Asian Trust, supported by Biodiversity Challenge Funds to educate people to promote human-elephant coexistence.

Celebration in Guwahati

As part of the World Environment Day celebration, B Barooah College in Guwahati in collaboration with the Regional office of Pollution Control Board Assam and Aaranyak, organised an event in the college campus where the Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak, Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar addressed the gathering of students, faculty members of the college, officials from the Pollution Control Board Assam and Aaranyak and many other dignitaries.

In another occasion, Aaranyak in collaboration with the Institution of Engineers (India), Assam State Centre, Guwahati organised an event in the premises of Institution of Engineers (India). During the event, Dr Parimal Chandra Bhattacharjee delivered a talk on the theme of this year's World Environment Day. The Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak, Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, also shared his thoughts on the subject. Aaranyak's Manas Kumar Bhattacharjya and Barnali Chakraborty took part in the programme as well.



Dr Partha Jyoti Das, Head of the Water, Climate and Hazard (WATCH) Division of Aaranyak participated in an invited lecture programme held at the seminar room of the Department of Environmental Science, Gauhati University on June 5. The programme was organised jointly by the Department of Environmental Science and the Society for Environmental Protection, Education, and Research (SEPER) celebrating the day. Dr Das delivered a talk on the topic 'Restoration of Degraded Landscapes for Present and Future Generations'.



The meeting was also graced by Prof (Retd) Hari Prasad Sarma, former HOD of the Department, who spoke on the topic 'Our Land, Our Future'. Dr Pallavi Sharma, the present Head of the Department welcomed the guests and the participants. The closing remarks were given by Dr Bidyut Bikash Sharma, General Secretary, SEPER. Dr Minakshi Bora, Assistant Professor of the Department, offered the vote of thanks. The meeting was attended by students, research scholars and the faculty members of the Department.

On the occasion of World Environment Day of this year, Aaranyak joined hands with VV Rao Research Scholars' Hostel and Geography Department of Gauhati University along with Pollution Control Board of Assam to organise an inter-school Quiz Competition at the Seminar Hall of Geography Dept, Gauhati University. Concentrated on the current theme of the day as well as other environmental aspects, the competition was participated by a number of student groups from IX to XII standards. The event was attended by the HoD of the Geography Department Dhruvajyoti Shariah and research scholars from the university and Kanteswar Kalita, official from the Pollution Control Board of Assam. Aaranyak's Gunajit Mazumdar along with members Chiranjeeb Sarma and Lakhinandan Dutta represented the organisation in the programme.

Celebration in Raimona National Park

The day was celebrated in the Raimona National Park with Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Department of Environment and Forests- BTC, Kachugaon Division and Wildlife Trust of India with a plantation programme followed by a meeting. The plantation programme was held at the newly prepared eco-restoration plot located near Takampur SSB camp.

The plantation programme was graced by Ranjit Basumatary, honourable Executive Member (EM)- Forest of BTC, Wilson Hasda, honourable EM- BTC, Suman Mohapatra, IFS, Addl. PCCF cum CHD-Forests, Bhanu Sinha, DFO Kachugaon Division, Assam Gourav awardee Dharani Dhar Boro, Somnath Narzary, Secretary, UPPL, Col. Gourab Negi, Sanatan Deka of WTI, Range officers of the four Range of Raimona NP, SSB personals, local villagers and school students.

The plantation programme was led by Aaranyak's Dr Dipankar Lahkar. Aaranyak established an experimental plot for Ecological eco restoration in collaboration with the Kachugaon Forest Division. A total of 25 different native species of plants found in Raimona National Park were planted in the plot. More than 1500 saplings were planted in the plot. Moreover the idea of the eco restoration effort was praised by all the dignitaries present during the plantation. Aaranyak's Gayatri Dutta, Momita Narzary, Birdutta Baro, Binod Deori, Bijeet Baro, Mizing Boro, Stephen Basumatary attended the programme.

Celebrations in western Assam

The day was observed with full fervent in western Assam by Aaranyak, with support from SBI Foundation. Aaranyak was invited by Auxilium College, Udalguri, where Aaranyak's Rabiya Daimari delivered a talk on "Ecosystem Restoration- Let's Fix Our Planet's Health First", while Junmoni Rabha, a student from TISS and an intern at Aaranyak, presented on "Sustainable Living Practices", and reached out to around 300 students.

In Tamulpur the Forest Ranges Offices of Tamulpur and Kumarikata collaborated with Aaranyak and the Goibari Saipatri Foundation to observe the day at Gopinath Bordoloi H.S. School. We conducted a variety of activities such as quiz competition, a plantation drive in the school campus, and an awareness campaign using IEC materials.

The event was graced by DFO, Baksa along with the Range Officers of Tamulpur and Kumarikata and their frontline staff, SSB personnel from 24th Battalion, members of the Goibari Saipatri Foundation, teachers of the school, and local student bodies.



Aaranyak's officials- Abhijit Saikia, Mondeep Basumatari, and Pradip Barman facilitated the event. Additionally, we provided both the ranges with 100 saplings of native species to support plantation drives in other schools and villages. We also supported the youth of Sonaigaon village in the Udalguri district by providing saplings for a plantation drive. The youths planted the saplings along a road and protected them from cattle grazing by upcycling cement bags.

Our western Assam Zone in association with the Botany and Chemistry Department of Abhayapuri College organised a day long programme at Gobinda Memorial HS School of Jogighopa on the occasion of WorldEnvironment Day. During the morning, a plantation drive was conducted in the school grounds, followed by a spot essay writing and a poster competition.

An interesting part of the event was an exhibition of science models by student groups on environmental awareness. The open meeting started in the afternoon which was presided over by the principal of the school Chandana Chakraborty.

Aaranyak's Coordinator of the Zone as well as Asst. Professor of Botany Dept, Abhyapuri College, Dr Ashoke Kumar Das delivered a talk on the theme 'Land restoration, combating desertification and drought resilience' and urged the students to get involved in plantation, waste management and organic farming. Dr Rekibul Islam from the Chemistry Dept. of Abhyapuri College also interacted with the students.

Ankur Barman, Assistant Zonal coordinator from the zone, and Mr Ankur Barman conducted a quiz contest on environmental theme and honoured the winners with a book packets from Aaranyak. Celebrating the day in Goalpara, we collaborated with Indira High School in Pukhuripara and Forest Range office, Lakhipur to observe the day with a variety of outreach activities. The day started with a Cycle Rally by around 60 students from the school, displaying placards with conservation messages, followed by plantation of Bonsum saplings in the school campus.



This was followed by holding of art and quiz competitions, and concluded with a talk by Aaranyak's Anjan Baruah on the theme of WED 2024 and prize distribution. A total of 200 people were reached, including around 180 students, teachers and forest officials. The outreach event was supported by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This outreach is a part of educating people on human elephant coexistence.

Alternative livelihood training on WED

World Environment Day was observed focusing on this year's theme – Land Restoration, Combating Desertification, and Drought Resilience to safeguard our planet. Plantation drive and saplings distribution of Assam Lemon and Black Pepper were carried out in three villages namely Badlapara, Samrang and Sonajuli of Udalguri district of Assam. This will help the villagers in combating human elephant conflict and economy generation.



Women-led Jaikhleng Community Nursery Members carried out a plantation drive in the nursery in Badlapara established as part of Aaranyak's ongoing project "Community based integrated approach to facilitate Human Elephant Coexistence and Biodiversity Conservation" in Udalguri District, Assam under the aegis of UNDP-GEF Small Grant Programme and Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India Implemented by TERI.

A training session was conducted in Samrang village by Aaranyak's Field Assistant Haben Muchahary on various propagation techniques of Assam lemon and Black Pepper followed by an interactive session led by Environment Facilitator, Wasima Begum. Plantation drive and interactive session was led by Wasima Begum in Uttar Sekhar ME School, which filled the students with enthusiasm and joy, they were overwhelmed by the thought that these saplings in near future will provide food and shelter.

Celebrations in mid-Assam zone

During WED, Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority and Aaranyak jointly organised a programme in Burapahar Range which was attended by students of four schools located around Burapahar Range. The programme included visual presentation, talks, art competition and open quiz. The programme was graced by Arun Vignesh, DFO, Eastern Assam Wildlife Division, Nilay Baruah, Range Officer of Burapahar Range, Pradip Goswami, retired Range Officer, Arif Hussain, Coordinator Aaranyak's Middle-Assam Zone and Deep Bori, Teacher, Jakkhalabandha Higher Secondary. A total of 50 participants attended the programme.



Another programme was held on the day at Nagaon Girls' College led by the college authority. The programme was graced by Jayanta Deka, DFO, Nagaon Wildlife Division, Ruhini Das, DFO Nagaon Social Forestry, Dr Kulen Ch Das, Principal, Nagaon Girls' College, Dilwar Hussain of Laokhuwa Burhachapori Conservation Society, Smarojit Ojha, Asst. Prof. Nagaon Girls' College, Arif Hussain, Coordinator, Aaranyak's Middle-Assam Zone. The programme included plantation, art and craft exhibition, district level quiz competition, meeting and prize distribution. The top five winners of the essay competition held on June 1 were awarded on the same programme.

Earlier, during the run-up to the World Environment Day, in an essay competition organised on June 1 in collaboration with Kaziranga Tiger Reserve authority, Nagaon Wildlife Division, Nagaon Girls College, Laokhuwa Burhachapri Conservation Society and Panthoru, Nagaon. Around 650 students from 12 schools around Laokhuwa Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary participated in the competition. The officials and staffs of Dhania and Gorajan Range office of Laokhuwa Burhachapori supervised the event and made the event a success.

On June 2, Art competitions were organised in three art schools, Kaziranga Chitrakala Vidyalaya, Kohora, Trinayani Chitrakala Vidyalaya, Bokakhat and Bonkual Chitrakala Vidyalaya with the support of all three art schools. Around 300 budding artists participated in the competitions. Dignitaries present in the programmes were Swapan Nath, senior Journalist based in Kaziranga, Chinmay Dhar, Principal of Kaziranga Chitrakala Vidyalaya, Bibekananda Goswami, Principal of Trinayani Chitrakala Vidyalaya and Inamul Haque, social worker, Bokakhat ; Promod Bori and Prasanta Morang, Teachers of Bonkual Chitrakala Vidyalaya ; Babukanta Daw and Sayanika Phukan, Members of Aaranyak.



Celebrations in eastern Assam

The World Environment Day celebration in eastern Assam began with a mini marathon for women and girls in the morning hours of June 5. The mini marathon of 2 km from the campus of Ujani Sadiya HS School to Padumphula village was a means of outreach for promoting human elephant coexistence, as the area is affected by HEC. A total of 60 people participated from local communities and senior girls students from Ujani Sadiya HS School and Sadiya College. This was followed by a nature photography. The winners of both the events received token of appreciation. This activity was a part of Aaranyak-British Asian Trust's efforts with support from Biodiversity Challenge Funds, UK to promote human elephant coexistence. The event was conducted in collaboration with the Forest Department, Sadiya College, Ujani Sadiya Science and Eco club, Assam Science Society and 1 No Basa Gaon Yuva Sangha.



Celebration of the day under the leadership of our eastern Assam Zone Coordinator Hiren Dutta started with a plantation drive with support of local community. The team selected important locations including academic institution, healthcare centre, agriculture office premise as well as some other public places and planted several fruit-bearing trees while involving local people for proper maintenance of saplings. Also, they took responsibility to look after the saplings that other environment enthusiasts had planted previously.



A series of outreach events were conducted in eastern Assam and West Garo Hills (WGH) by Aaranyak and British Asian Trust with support of Biodiversity Challenge Funds to observe the World Environment Day. The team from Aaranyak conducted various outreach activities to educate people on the importance of biodiversity conservation in line with this year's theme of "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience". We reached out to around 80 students and delivered a talk on this year's theme and screened a documentary, Elephant Whisperers at Shiksha, The Gurukul at Hapjan of Tinsukia district. The Principal of the school, Ruma Sharma along with other teachers attended the event. Aaranyak's Tibrajyoti Gogoi and Ejaj Ahmed coordinated the event.

We collaborated with the Assam Science Society, Sadiya branch, Department of Zoology, Sadiya College and Aryabhatta Science Centre, Sadiya to celebrate the occasion at Buraburi Sal ME school in Sadiya of Tinsukia district. A talk was delivered using audio-visual presentation by Aaranyak's Rubul Tanti, while Bidisha Borah and Rimpee Moran conducted environmental games for the students. Debojit Gogoi and Jiaur Rehman Assisted in smooth execution of the event. The day was celebrated in collaboration with the Forest Department Majuli (T) Division, local NGOs- Poribekh Bondhu, and Donyi Green Foundation (NGO) in Namoni Majuli Senior Secondary School, Mohorichuk in Majuli.

The event featured tree plantation in the school campus, speech by the invited dignitaries, a painting competition, a talk by Aaranyak's member and a teacher at Ratanpur High School Sunil Kumar Borah, followed by an exhibition organised by Aaranyak.

The event also showcased a spectacular cultural programme by students of the school and concluded with prize distribution. A total of 167 students, and local communities were reached. Aaranyak's Pranjit Borah, Junak Boruah, Deepjyoti Buragohain, Bijoy Kalita, and intern Mousam Mahanta facilitated the event.

In West Garo Hills, we worked with the students from Borogobal LP School, Borogobal UP School, and Mother Teresa School for a cleanliness drive in their school campuses, followed by plantations. Aaranyak's Anjan Baruah and Subash Ch Rabha delivered a talk on the importance of Restoring Ecosystems to protect biodiversity and combat Climate Change. This was followed by an art competition with a participation of 50 students. The event was coordinated by Aaranyak's Nipul Chakma with assistance from Village Champion, Nobin Rabha.

We conducted an outreach event with 90 students, teachers and community members at Luitporiya Mising High School in Jorhat. The programme started with Tree Plantation, interaction on Human Elephant coexistence and Biodiversity Conservation. Aaranyak's Niranjana Bhuyan, Chiranjib Kalita, Ananta Dutta, Lakhinath Teye along with Village Champion Makhan Kalita and members of TMPK (Mising Student Union) conducted the event.



Celebration in Kamrup

At Majgaon High School in Kamrup District, Aaranyak and the Pub Kamrup College jointly organised an engaging programme on World Environment Day to promote pro-environmental awareness among schoolchildren. Pub Kamrup College branch of Assam Science Society and Majgaon High School were the associate partners in the event. During the programme, Aaranyak Member Mitali Baruah, a lecturer in a government B.ED college and a botanist, delivered the keynote address and discussed the significance, causes, and collective responsibilities of land restoration and environmental issues while relating local references. Pranab Goswami from Aaranyak spoke on different interventions of Aaranyak for conservation of biodiversity including land restoration. Aaranyak Member Chandamita Goswami, led in the nature journaling programme conducted in the premises of the school. Aaranyak officials appreciated the student teams who prepared eco-friendly model for conveying message of sustainable living. The programme was attended by 92 students and 13 faculties including faculties from Pub Kamrup College.



Celebration in Kaziranga – Karbi Anglong Landscape

Celebrating the day, Aaranyak’s Kaziranga – Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL) team distributed 300 saplings among various groups and community members in the Kohora region of Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The partners of the initiative included Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School, Kaziranga National Park High School, Diring Lower Primary School, Theso Cooking Group, Kindulangso Self Help Group, the Youth Groups of Chandrasing Rongpi village and the residents of Engle Pathar and Phumen Engti villages respectively.

The plantation drive commenced at the schools, where enthusiastic students participated in the activity and learned about the importance of afforestation. The members of the Kindulangso SHG planted 5-6 saplings each within their household premises besides avenue plantation, assisted by the local youths and supported by the Aaranyak team members. Villagers from Engle Pathar and Phumen Engti also carried out avenue plantation along their village road and within their respective property.

The day concluded with a small community lunch, attended by guests from neighbouring villages such as Rongtara, Bakring Engti, Chandrasing Rongpi, and Hemai Lekthe and well-wishers in and around the Kohora area. The event aimed to raise awareness about environmental conservation and encourage collective efforts towards a greener future. Overall, the plantation drive organized by Aaranyak in KKL was a resounding success that left a lasting impact on the participants, inspiring them to prioritize environmental conservation and tree plantation promoting Sustainable Future and Greener Earth.

Moreover, our conservation biologist Dr Deba Kumar Dutta was invited for an interactive session with students and science community of Barpeta Road at GLC College.

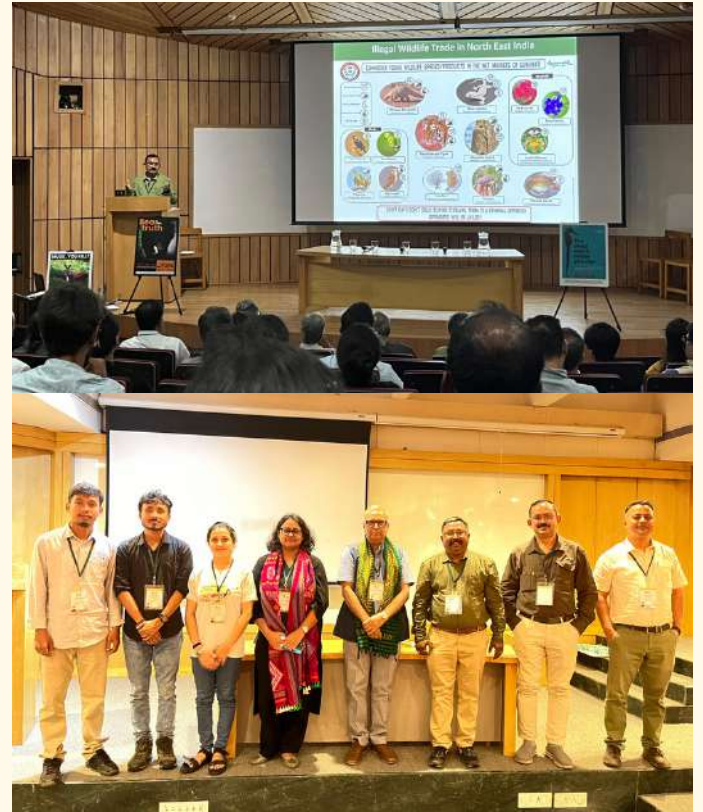


Our presence in IWEC 2024

The Team Aaranyak has made a strong presence at the first Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWEC), conducted at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore. In a symposium on Grassland Conservation in this 3-day conference organised since June 14 to 16, Aaranyak's conservationists highlighted their work on how we are building science-based evidence on population of grassland obligate species such as the Pygmy Hog, the Bengal Florican, and securing the Grassland Ecosystem through management of Invasive Alien Plants and unwanted woody plant in Assam. Another talk presented by Aaranyak highlighted how to sustainably manage the rhinos that tend to stray out of protected areas. Besides, we have made poster presentations on our research on elephant distribution in Meghalaya.

During the event, Aaranyak's Secretary General and CEO Dr Bibhab Talukdar delivered a talk at the plenary session on Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) from Northeastern India's perspective. The co-panellists also discussed the current trend of IWT in India.

Aaranyak's staff Dibakar Nayak attended the event as a resource person in a Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting on 'Mixing Formal and Experiential Ecological Knowledge'. The SIG meeting initiated a dialogue between professional ecologist and experiential knowledge-holders from local communities from Western and Eastern Himalayas, Northeast India, Central India, Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats.



Dr Purnima Devi Barman conferred Whitley Gold Award

Once again highlighting the power of a committed woman in spurring sustained community-oriented efforts for biodiversity conservation, Aaranyak's senior biologist Dr Purnima Devi Barman has been conferred Green Oscar Whitley Gold Award 2024 as recognition to her tireless work in conserving the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork (GAS) or Hargila as called locally by the community in Assam - one of the rarest stork - and its habitats. This recognition marks a significant achievement not only for Dr Barman but also for Assam and the rest of the country as it brings to focus women power in biodiversity conservation on the global stage.



Her remarkable efforts have mobilised local women in Assam especially those from her key conservation project site at Dadara-Pachariya in Kamrup district of the state and attracted attention worldwide for the conservation of this species through sustained involvement of community women. This award had added to Purnima's impressive list of achievements, including the UN Environment Champions of the Earth Award she received in 2022. Her efforts serve as a beacon of hope for conservationists worldwide and exemplify the impact of grassroots movements in safeguarding biodiversity. Team Aaranyak says thanks to Whitley Fund for Nature for honouring its acclaimed conservation biologist Dr Purnima Devi Barman with this year's prestigious Whitley Gold Award.

Collaborative approach for wildlife crime mitigation

A meeting of representatives of various NGOs from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam has highlighted the urgent need for organising sensitisation and awareness programmes for grassroot communities residing near the fringes of the D'Ering Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh) and the Pabo Reserve Forest (Assam) for prevention of wildlife crimes.

The first-ever such an inter-state NGO level coordination meeting was held in Jonai on June 8 with an objective of achieving the common goal of tackling wildlife crime along the Arunachal Pradesh and Assam border.

The gathering saw the participation of 22 dedicated individuals from NGOs including Aaranyak, Save Pabo Rainforest (SPRF), Jonai, and the Community Surveillance and Monitoring Team (CSMT), Pasighat.

Aaranyak officials Dr Jimmy Borah and Ivy Farheen Hussain attended and deliberated on various topics on deterring wildlife crime in the area in the meeting which was also actively participated by SPRF's secretary Royal Pegu and president Rajib Pegu and their representatives, as well as CSMT lead from Pasighat, Maksam Tayeng and his team.



“Rhino Goes to School”, goes on

Aaranyak's flagship “Rhino Goes to School” campaign was organised as a series for students of three schools located near two rhino bearing areas of Assam with attendance of over 400 students.



One of the programmes was organised in Luit Jatiya Vidyalaya, Sengelimora, Orang in collaboration with Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority with participation of over 250 students. As part of the awareness campaign, students were educated on diverse aspects of rhinos, the animal's characteristics and habitat as well as the role they play in ecosystems and for our well-being. An engaging open quiz contest was also organised in conjunction with the visual presentation on the subject, interactions on our state animals Greater one-horned rhinoceros and talks on local flora and fauna. Babul Islam, Headmaster of the School, Baharul Islam, President of Fatasimolu Block EDC, Abul Kalam, President, Fatasimolu NC, EDC, Khairul Basher, local conservationist, Babukanta Daw and Bipul Gonju, members of Aaranyak were also present in the programme.



Another such awareness event was organised by Aaranyak in collaboration with Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority in Vidyasagar Jatiya Vidyalaya, Rowmari, Orang with a participation of over 120 students. One more such outreach event was conducted in Medokgaon ME School, Bonkual, Golaghat district of Assam with participation of over 50 students. Babukanta Daw and Akash Morang, members of Aaranyak also present in the programme. Arif Hussain, Manager of Aaranyak's Rhino Research and Conservation Division attended the series programmes as resource person which was supported by the UK-based David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation.

Conservation campaign for Hoolock gibbon reaches nearly 2000 students



Aaranyak has launched a series of educational campaigns about Hoolock Gibbon conservation targeting schoolchildren living in the fringes of Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in the Jorhat district of Assam. This ambitious series of campaigns aimed at conserving this precious species of ape is supported by The Habitats Trust and Assam Forest Department.

These educational and awareness campaigns were focused on introducing the students with Hoolock gibbon (Hoolock Hoolock)- the only ape of India and to motivate them to come forward for the conservation of Hoolock gibbon. As of now, the Primate Research and Conservation Division of the organisation has reached 18 schools and taught around 2000 students about various aspects of conservation of this threatened ape.

The campaign began with a presentation on the importance of Hoolock gibbons as well as the primate diversity of Assam and the need to conserve them. Additionally, cartoon films with a wildlife theme were screened. The education campaign concluded with the distribution of posters, stickers and a book on Hoolock gibbon.

Vermicompost tanks provided to Kaziranga fringe farmers



In the wake of positive experience with the practice of vermicomposting by a group of farmers -- who were trained by Aaranyak in Dhanía village, near Dhanía Range of Burhachapori WLS, Kaziranga Tiger Reserve -- two more farmers from the village have expressed interest in learning and practicing this method of making Organic Fertiliser.

In response, Aaranyak with support from International Rhino Foundation has provided these two farmers with vermicompost tanks so they could initiate the practice. The tanks were handed over by Arif Hussain, Manager of Aaranyak's Rhino Research and Conservation Division, in presence of SK Gupta, Range officer of Dhanía Range in Burhachapori WLS and Sanjib Chetry, President of Dhanía EDC. Vermicompost aids conservation by enriching soil fertility, reducing chemical fertilizer use, enhancing water retention, promoting plant growth and recycling organic waste, thus supports sustainable agriculture and reduce adverse impact on the environment.

Training in cooking, catering, and hospitality provided to fringe community

The second phase of skill development training on cooking, catering, and hospitality was conducted at "Bwisang-Na," an ethnic food hub operated by the Borunguri-Bongaon Eco Development Committee, on the fringes of Laokhuwa Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary. The initiative aimed to create alternative livelihood opportunities for fringe communities, particularly women. Organised by the Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve, Nagaon Wildlife Division, and Aaranyak, in collaboration with LBCS and Nagaon Girls College, the training received support from the International Rhino Foundation.



Asif Ahmed, an expert in catering and cooking, introduced participants to the fundamentals of cooking and catering through hands-on food preparation demonstrations. The training programme was attended by Kamal Bora, Beat Officer of Laokhuwa Beat Office, Arif Hussain, Manager in Aaranyak's Rhino Research and Conservation Division, and Bonojit Lalung and Boluram Balari, Presidents of Borunguri and Bongaon Eco Development Committees.

HEC-affected Udalguri women receive nursery management training

A group of community women affected by human-elephant conflict (HEC) in Assam's Udalguri district have been provided hands-on training on Nursery Management to hone their skills in nurturing community-operated nurseries. Aaranyak conducted the training with support from UNDP-GEF Small Grant Programme and Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India and implemented by TERI. A women-led community nursery has been developed under Aaranyak's ongoing project "Community based integrated approach to facilitate Human Elephant Coexistence and Biodiversity Conservation" in Udalguri district.



One of the purposes of this programme is to sustain the community and make them self-reliant besides contributing towards Land Restoration, sustainability and human elephant coexistence. Production and maintenance of the plants are one of the major goals of the nursery. The nursery will mainly harbour mother plants of Assam Lemon which will be used as biofence for mitigation of human elephant conflict. Black Pepper will be used in the home gardens with Betel Nut along with various other vegetable and fruit plants by the community.

The training was provided by Dr Naba Kumar Goswami, Senior Fellow and Regional Coordinator of TERI and Prafulla Boro, Field Assistant of TERI. Debabrata Barua from TERI also graced the programme. Dr Goswami elaborated on different aspects of nursery management starting from preparation of nursery bed, media preparation, types of propagation methods and various types of diseases and pest attack in nursery plants and their solution. Prafulla Boro demonstrated techniques such as grafting, cutting and air layering in plants like Assam Lemon and Black Pepper. Boro also translated the educational materials of Dr Goswami's presentation in Bodo language for better understanding of the community.



The community members replicated the techniques in presence of the trainers. Various issues faced by the community related to nursery plant management were addressed by trainer Dr Goswami. The programme was coordinated by Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Senior Manager in Aaranyak's Environment Education and Capacity Building Division and Rabiya Daimari, Field coordinator in Aaranyak's Elephant Research and Conservation Division. Other team members helped in smooth running and successful completion of the programme.

Aaranyak's expert addresses students in DCB College

The Department of Geography in Devi Charan Baruah Girls' College, Jorhat organised a one-day workshop in collaboration with IQAC and Aaranyak on inquiry-based experiential learning through fieldwork on June 11.



Dr Jayanta Kumar Sarma, Senior Programme Associate, Natural Resource Management Programme (NRMP) of TRCD, Aaranyak, was invited to facilitate the workshop that aimed at creating awareness and generating interests in inquiry-based Experiential Learning besides introducing students to the approach and modalities of fieldwork.

The workshop also intended to create an environment where the student participants can hone their skills in designing, conducting, executing fieldwork and writing appropriate reports. Sixty-three students from DCB Girls' College and various other colleges nearby attended the workshop.

The workshop was focused on the students from Social Science, Earth Science, Life Science and Environmental Science background due to the extensive fieldwork component involved in these disciplines.



The workshop commenced with a welcome speech by Dr Jinamoni Bhuyan, Principal, followed by a talk delivered by Dr Rashima Kachari, HoD of the Geography Department of DCB Girls' College. The whole event was coordinated by Dr Juri Baruah, a faculty member of the Geography Department of the college.

In the interactive session, Jayanta Kumar Sarma covered theoretical aspects of inquiry-based experiential learning, fieldwork methodologies, data collection techniques, and practical guidance on planning, executing, and documenting fieldwork effectively across the represented disciplines. He also spoke about the Journey for Learning initiative of Aaranyak and how it is designed for students and professionals alike to experience and learn from nature. Sarlongjon Teron, Senior Project Officer and Sushmita Baruah, Project Officer of Aaranyak, were also present to support and organise the event.

Connecting kids to homestead gardens



Aaranyak organised a two-day awareness and education programme for school children at Karebari, Bhuyanpara Range, Baksa district of Assam. The programme was organised as part of the education and capacity building programme titled “Connecting Children to their Homestead Gardens”, conceptualised by the Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak for children of age groups 15 to 17 years.

The programme aims to sensitise the children about biodiversity with special reference to their homestead gardens by fostering their critical observation skills and by encouraging them to undertake discussions with their parents and grandparents on the rich diversity their homestead gardens offer. Through the programme, a pre-knowledge assessment would be conducted on the knowledge of the students on biodiversity and observation, identification, documentation and analytical abilities of rare and locally threatened floral species, followed by their restoration in homestead gardens. The programme was organised at the Karebari Jwngsar Bijab Khuli Afad (the village library) from April 7-8 and was attended by 31 children and their mothers and members of the village youth group.

The programme was made successful by trained volunteers of Aaranyak and a field team of Aaranyak comprising Saikhong Basumatary, Bijay Basumatary, Barnali Chakraborty, Swapan Kumar Das and Shri Stephen Basumatary, working in the fringe villages of Manas Tiger Reserve and National Park, under the guidance of Dr Jayanta Kumar Sarma. The programme was organised with support from the IUCN-KfW project “Securing population of tigers, habitats and biological corridors in Assam, India”. The sensitisation programme marked the commencement of a series of ten similar programmes across the 10 selected villages under the project around Manas Tiger Reserve.

Solar fence facilitates community-elephant coexistence

To mitigate human elephant conflict (HEC) so as to facilitate coexistence, Aaranyak has installed a 2.3 kilometre-long solar-powered electric fence in Padumphula area in Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district in Assam. The farmers in the area have been unable to secure their crops from depredation by wild elephants every year. After doing a field study on the HEC problem and its ramification on the local population in the area, Aaranyak has taken the initiative to mitigate the problem in the area by installing a 2.3 km long single-strand community-managed seasonal solar fence on the periphery of the vegetable crop field at Padumphula.



A number of households located in Padumphula, Bacha Gaon No.1, Bacha Gaon No. 2 and Na-Basa Gaon will be benefitted from the solar fence in respect crop security. The initiative has been taken by Aaranyak in collaboration with British Asian Trust, supported by Darwin Initiative (Biodiversity Challenge Funds).



In this connection the community of the Padumphula had been trained by the Aaranyak team to build their capacity to install and maintain the solar fence at the community cultural centre of Padumphula a few months back. After the training, the local community members were involved in installing the 2.3 km -long solar fence to protect their vegetable fields with technical guidance and supervision of the Aaranyak team. The installation work was completed on April 5. The Aaranyak team was led by Rubul Tanti and comprised of Dibakar Nayak, Tonmoy Gogoi, Debojit Gogoi and village champion Debananda Gogoi.

In Goalpara's human-elephant conflict affected villages of Besorkona and No.1 Pukhuripara, we installed a 2.5 km long, single strand community-managed solar-powered electric fence as human elephant conflict (HEC) mitigation tool.

Aaranyak, with support from the Forest Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with multi stakeholders in high HEC-affected districts like Goalpara to promote coexistence. With this fence we have secured around 90 households. The fence was formally inaugurated on June 8 by the Divisional Forest Officer of Goalpara Forest Division, Tejas Mariswamy in presence of Aaranyak's senior scientist Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, and Aaranyak's expert on solar fences Anjan Baruah. The inaugural ceremony was held in Besorkona temple campus, which was attended by around 150 villagers from both the villages, members of solar fencing committee, who are responsible for proper maintenance and monitoring of the fence to ensure its efficacy and forest officials.

During the inaugural event, the villagers felicitated the DFO, senior officials of Aaranyak and a dignitary from the local area. This was followed by speeches by the DFO and Aaranyak's officials, and signing an MoU with the solar fence committee, Forest Department and Aaranyak to ensure proper functioning of the fence. The event was moderated by Nabajyoti Basumatary of Pukhuripara village and facilitated by Aaranyak's Swapan Das, Nipul Chakma, Ripunjoy Nath, Subhas Rabha and Bijoy Kalita.

Students participate in Udalguri nature camp



A 2-day residential Nature Camp under 'Mission Life in Assam' was conducted in Bhairabkunda of Udalguri District. This Environment Education programme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India was implemented by Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTECC) which was organised by the Green Environment task Force (GETF) in association with Aaranyak.

The program saw the participation of a total of 50 students from 10 schools of Udalguri District. Debojit Borah, Coordinator of the Green Environment Task Force GETF, moderated the programme. He also provided a concise explanation on the importance of protecting nature and preserving biodiversity, ensuring the participants gained a clear understanding of their role in safeguarding the environment. Various engaging sessions were conducted, including Experiential Learning activities led by Aaranyak's Wasima Begum, focusing on environment and biodiversity. Aaranyak's Abhijit Saikia & Mondeep Basumatary led a session focused on wildlife conservation and on human wildlife interactions.

Eco-therapy sessions were also held. While another official Reshma Narzary, guided the students through a nature walk in the Gethsemane made forest. She also translated the entire event's discussions in Bodo language to ensure better understanding. Aaranyak's Didom Daimari, provided an overview of various bird species and their habitats. He also demonstrated the process of Aaranyak's ongoing restoration works at Rowta Reserve Forest highlighting processes from raising seedlings at the nursery to transferring those saplings for plantation. The programme was coordinated by Debojit Borah, Jinu Pathak and Aaranyak's Rabiya Daimary.

Karbi students from forest fringe facilitated career counselling by Aaranyak

Aaranyak honoured with Seuj Sandhan Award



Aaranyak was honoured with the Seuj Sandhan -- In search of Green -- Award 2024 for its visionary and transformative contributions to environmental sustainability. The Meghmallar Art Foundation (Meghmallar Group) presented this distinguished award in the presence of prominent figures from a wide range of fields at function held in India Club, Guwahati on June 22.

The Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer of Aaranyak, Dr Bibhab Talukdar received the award on behalf of Aaranyak. Aaranyak thanks Meghmallar Art Foundation (Meghmallar Group) for the initiative and congratulates all the other awardees.

Aaranyak in collaboration with Chandrasingh Rongpi Memorial High School (CRMHS) organised a day-long student felicitation and a Career Counselling at the Community Resource Centre at Chandrasingh Rongpi Village in Kohora of Karbi Anglong district of Assam on June 23.

Twenty-six students who have passed HSLC and HSSLC examinations this year from Diring and Kohora areas under the Kaziranga Kohora Landscape, participated in the event that was graced by distinguished resource persons -- Uttam Teron from Parijat Academy in Guwahati, Krishna Rongpi from JDSG College, Bokakha, and Jirsong Rongpi from Harlongbi Velongbi College, Deithor, Karbi Anglong.

The primary objective of the event was to address career-related issues and guide students in understanding various career options and educational qualifications required. The whole initiative is supported by IUCN, Kfw.

Aaranyak is committed towards conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem and supporting the Indigenous Communities through alternative sustainable livelihood activities, education and awareness programmes.



Bihu celebration highlights conservation of Hargila

Greater Adjutant Stork Conservation Programme team of Aaranyak collaborated with The Hargila Army to celebrate Bihu based on the Greater Adjutant Stork (Hargila) conservation theme. Dr Purnima Devi Barman, Aaranyak's senior conservation biologist, led the team to celebrate the Bihu and raise awareness about Hargila conservation in Kamrup district through a very melodious song. Young conservationists Barasha Das and Karishma Das, facilitated and moderated the event. Boys and girls from Dadara village also join in the celebration of Bihu.

Securing habitat of Hargila



Aaranyak's Greater Adjutant Conservation Programme (GACP) team in collaboration with villagers of Bongolarah, Kamrup and the Hargila Army has begun a drive to plant Hargila nesting trees along with other species of trees in Bongolarah. The plantation drive will be carried out throughout the month under the leadership of Aaranyak's renowned conservationist Dr Purnima Devi Barman. These villages have wetlands that provide Hargila (Greater Adjutant Stork) with feeding grounds and places to rest. Therefore, the villagers invited the team to plant trees to secure the habitat.

A total of 250 kadam trees of 8 feet height, 500 small saplings including Kadam, Simul, fruits-bearing trees such as guava, mango etc., were planted for securing the future. The team plans to plant another 5000 nesting trees within two months out of which 500 will be 8-foot tall kadam trees, along with other 5,000 trees of different species, including Hargila nesting trees, and fruits-bearing trees.

For the last 17 years, the team distributes 5,000 saplings among villagers each June and July, as well as organises plantation drives.

Members from the village were led by Dhiraj Das, a social worker actively working in the village. The Hargila Army team includes Barasha Rani Das, Karishma Das, Manab Das, Dipankar Das, Goutam Das, and Ajay Das.

Brown-spotted pit viper recorded for first time in Assam

Scientists and researchers from Aaranyak recorded the presence of the Brown-spotted Pit-viper in Assam which is the first record of the viper that has been found in the state, as stated in scientific journal “Reptiles & Amphibians”, where this research finding was published under the leadership of Aaranyak’s Dr M Firoz Ahmed, and with research team Dr Jayanta Kumar Roy, Sourav Gupta and Arijit Dutta from Aaranyak.

The article by the Aaranyak team has confirmed the existence of Brown-spotted Pitviper in the Kohora River Basin of Kaziranga - Karbi Anglong Landscape. The team reported the discovery while conducting a research work in the landscape. In Southeastern Asia, the viper can be found in countries such as Myanmar, Laos, China, Vietnam, and Taiwan.

In India, it has only been recorded in a few localities in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland at elevations of 500–2,500 meters. Assam is the fourth state in India where this species has been reported as of yet. Aaranyak’s senior scientist Dr M Firoz Ahmed, senior researcher Dr Jayanta Kumar Roy, and researchers Sourav Gupta, and Arijit Dutta, discovered the viper during a research work in the Kohora River Basin, adjacent to Karbi Hills. Arijit Dutta successfully captured a photograph of the viper. According to the team, the viper measures approx 45 cm long. Also, the photograph was deposited as photographic voucher at the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, National University of Singapore (ZRC(IMG)2.606).



Mainland Serow photographed for first time in Raimona National Park



In the Raimona National Park, officials from Assam Forest Department along with conservationists have recorded the first photographic proof of the Mainland Serow, a vulnerable mammal species notified by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Aaranyak, and Assam Forest Department, captured the photographic evidence of Mainland Serow in two independent events near the Ganda Bajrum Anti-poaching camp, located in the western range of Raimona National Park, using white flash passive Panthera (New York, USA) V6 digital camera traps.

The finding is published as a scientific paper on Journal of Threatened Taxa authored by Aaranyak's senior scientist Dr M Firoz Ahmed, senior conservation biologist Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Nibir Medhi, Nitul Kalita; Bhanu Sinha AFS, DFO of Kachugaon Forest Division, Forest official Pranjal Talukdar, Biswajit Basumatary, Tunu Basumatary; Dr Ramie H. Begum, Associate Professor, Assam University (Diphu campus); and Dr Abishek Harihar, Director of Tiger Program, Panthera.

This is the lowest elevation record (96m) of the world. According to IUCN, the species was previously recorded between 200 to 3000m elevation. The species is recorded near the human habitation (in 1km radius). The Mainland Serow population is widely distributed in the neighbouring Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and the Royal Manas National Park of Bhutan, which may contribute to Raimona National Park's population recovery.

CEO inspires young veterinarians ‘

The World Veterinary Day was observed in a solemn function in the College of Veterinary Science at Khanapara here today. The Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar attended the event as a Chief Guest. In his address, Dr Talukdar discussed the broader scope of veterinarians' role in shaping life and facilitating well-being for humans. Further, he encouraged students and researchers at the college to acquire diverse skills in addition to their degree in the field of veterinary science to create job opportunities by becoming entrepreneurs. Notably, College of veterinary Science, Khanapara has been a foremost institution in the Northeast India which has been instrumental in creating a huge pool of local human resources in the field of animal welfare and husbandry.

HEC areas equipped with LED lights for coexistence

Aaranyak as part of its unrelenting endeavour to facilitate coexistence in human-elephant conflict (HEC) hotspots in the region has started installing LED lights in those areas to mitigate the raging conflict thereby save loss of lives and property. As per the initiative solar-operated standalone blinking LED light is used in human settlements to ensure peaceful coexistence. This device is customised with two LEDs powered by an inbuilt lithium-ion battery which is charged by a top mounted solar panel. The LEDs blink at a regular intervals like flashing lights creating the illusion of human presence and deter the elephants without any harm towards the elephants. Thus, it reduces negative human-elephant interactions and facilitates human-elephant coexistence. Aaranyak aims to install 40 LED lights in different areas of Udalguri, Baksa and Tamulpur districts in the first part of the initiative supported by SBI Foundation.





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