

Update on quarterly activities

Naturole

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Aaranyak

Nourishing nature to secure our future

Our tributes to legendary cultural icon Zubeen Garg



Aaranyak family paid tributes to beloved musical maestro and cultural icon, Zubeen Garg on September 20. We remembered with deep reverence the legend whose timeless melodies and inspiring spirit touched countless lives, in our Administrative Headquarter in Guwahati and field stations across Assam-including the Manas Conservation & Outreach Centre near Manas National Park, Kohora Field Station in Kaziranga, and Dibrugarh Field Station.

Reflecting on his commitment to nature, we recall a special moment of June 14, 2014, when Zubeen Garg joined the Aaranyak team at Subankhata in Baksa district of Assam for a plantation programme. Alongside his wife, Garima Garg and guided by our senior scientist Dr. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, he planted trees demonstrating his deep love for the environment. On that day, he passionately spoke about:



- Building a mass movement to conserve the rich biodiversity of the Manas landscape,
- Using sports like football to spread awareness on wildlife and biodiversity
- Inspiring people to support Aaranyak's mission to protect the natural heritage of Northeast India.

Zubeen Garg's devotion to greenery and his unwavering commitment to environmental conservation continue to inspire us all. His legacy will remain a guiding light for generations to come.

Assam needs robust NGOs like Aaranyak to expedite development: Minister Ranoj Pegu



Commending the 35-year-long successful journey of Aaranyak, Assam minister for Education and Tribal Affairs (Plain) Dr Ranoj Pegu on September 9 said that such a robust NGO can be of great significance for the government to achieve primary goals of human wellbeing.

Addressing the valedictory function of the year-long 35th Anniversary celebration of Aaranyak at the NEDfi House as the chief guest, Dr Pegu said, "It is an occasion of pride for not only the Team Aaranyak, but also the people of Assam that the NGO has completed such an eventful journey in the service of conservation of environment and the grassroots people."



"The government of Assam and the people of the state pin a lot of hopes on research-based conservation organisation Aaranyak to undertake awe-inspiring works in the days to come particularly in key sectors like mitigation of human elephant conflict (HEC) to facilitate coexistence, wetlands and grasslands conservation for moderation of flood and erosion. Aaranyak has really helped in conservation of wetlands and connected water streams in the state at this juncture," said the minister who is known for its avid interests in environment conservation, bird watching and wildlife photography.

Saying that having a strong corporate sector and a robust NGO sector were pivotal for any government to facilitate rapid overall development of a country, Dr Pegu rued that NGO sector in the country has lagged far behind the corporate sector in this regard and 'Aaranyak is like a silver lining in this context'.



Addressing the occasion as the Guest of Honour, Chairman of Pollution Control Board, Assam, Dr Arup Kumar Misra lauded the dedicated and sustained contributions of Aaranyak towards environment and wildlife conservation as well as science communication. “There is big difference between ‘being good’ and ‘doing good’. Aaranyak has been doing tremendously good,” he said while tracing back his long association with the organization over the 35 years.

The landmark event was graced by a host of dignitaries including former senior Assam Government and Forest Department officials including Dr Anwaruddin Choudhury, M C Malakar, Dr Abhijit Rabha, Narayan Mahanta.

Earlier, in his welcome address Aaranyak’s president Er. Ranjan Bhuyan mentioned highlights of Aaranyak’s journey so far including awards and recognitions showered on the organization and its conservation leaders especially the recent recognition of wildlife genetics laboratory of the organization and its expert by Government of Assam. He said the organization remained committed to complement the efforts of the government for conservation of nature and biodiversity.

Grassroots Conservation Awards 2025 were conferred by the dignitaries in the event. The awards in Individual Category were presented to Lakshman Teron, Arup Shandilya, Pranjal Talukdar and Tunu Basumatary While the awards in Group Category was presented to Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS), Nagaland. The Award presentation was anchored by Dr Dipankar Lahkar, a senior conservation biologist of Aaranyak.

All the cyclists who took part on Aaranyak's 'Ride for Conservation' as part of the 35th Anniversary Celebrations were also felicitated on the occasion while leader of the cyclist expedition and convenor of the 'Ride for Conservation' Arif Hussain, a senior Aaranyak official, made a detailed presentation of the 1500 km route covered by the ride covering all the eight national parks, five wildlife sanctuaries and two Reserve Forest in the state since March 2025.



The Organising Secretary of Aaranyak and Convenor of the Core Committee on 35th Anniversary Celebrations Udayan Borthakur apprised the select gathering through a presentation on how the entire Team Aaranyak worked in absolute cohesion in various areas to make the year-long celebrations a grand success. He appreciated the frontline TV channel News18 Assam (NE) for being the media partner of the year-long celebrations.

Wildlife Genetics Laboratory, its expert recognised by Assam government



In a path-breaking move, the Government of Assam has recognised the pioneering Wildlife Genetics Laboratory (WGL) of Aaranyak and its Director Udayan Borthakur, for the purpose of utilizing the expertise in wildlife genetics and wildlife forensic analysis, pursuant to Section 329 (4) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

In Assam, this marks the first recognition of a laboratory and an expert in the wildlife sector under the BNSS, 2023 for the purpose of assisting wildlife crime investigations and control through forensic evidence gathering using DNA sampling methods.



Following an order from the Governor of Assam on August 4, 2025, the Special Chief Secretary of the Govt. of Assam, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department has issued a notification recognising the laboratory and Mr. Borthakur under the relevant provision of the Act.

Reacting to the landmark achievement, Udayan Borthakur, the founder of WGL, Aaranyak, stated, "We regard the Government's notification as a significant acknowledgement of our nearly two decades of work in this field. We also regard this notification as a significant responsibility that falls on our shoulders, and we are grateful of the Government of Assam for entrusting us with this critical responsibility."

Borthakur says that the notification under Section 329 (4) of BNSS, 2023 will allow the lab and its biologist as scientific expert to support law enforcement agencies to gather evidences for forensic analysis in wildlife offences that will facilitate increased conviction rates in coming days.

Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director, Aaranyak offers his sincere sense of gratitude to Assam Forest Department and the competent authority in Assam Government for bestowing faith and responsibilities to Wildlife Genetics facilities of Aaranyak that has been complimenting the efforts of the government to achieve conservation goals and shall continue to do so in years to come.

WGL Aaranyak, founded in 2008, is northeast India's only conservation genetics and wildlife DNA forensics facility. Over the past decade, the lab has provided genetic analysis and on-ground DNA sampling support to 135 wildlife crime investigations by government authorities. In addition to forensic work, the lab has conducted over two dozen conservation genetic research projects on threatened wildlife species in India and overseas.

Independence Day cricket match with Dhansiri Forest Division

Dhansiri Forest Division in Bodoland Territorial Council defeated Team Aaranyak by a margin of 34 runs in an enthralling and engrossing match of 15-overs cricket organised in the playground of Orangajuli Tea Estate in Udalguri district of Assam on Independence Day and as part of our continued celebration of World Elephant Day, at the initiative of the Divisional Forest Officer Mustafa Ali Ahmed in collaboration with Aaranyak. The match was enjoyed by a large gathering of Forest and Aaranyak officials.

Batting first, the Dhansiri Forest Division team led by the DFO made a huge score of 218 losing seven wickets in 15 overs with the aid of explosive batting of Dipankar Saikia (79) and Jintu Buragohain (50).

In reply, Aaranyak team, led by Arif Hussain, recovering from early loss of wickets made a fighting total of 184 runs losing six wickets, thanks to scintillating batting by Nirmal Kalita who made a century (100 runs), in the later part of the innings. Arif Hussain contributed with a well-made 36 runs.

Addressing the gathering at the end of the match, the DFO Ahmed appreciated the active role played by Aaranyak team as well as the Forest Department staff in facilitating the entertaining cricket match that, he said, would go a long way in enhancing cooperation. He thanked the players for playing the game in the right spirit of the game.

Aaranyak's Assistant Director Jayanta Kumar Pathak appreciated the DFO and the Forest department for taking the initiative and lauded the Udalguri (Dimakuchi) based field team of Aaranyak led by Rabiya Daimari for their efforts to organize the cricket match in coordination with the Forest Department. He said the match reflected the sustained coordination between Aaranyak and the Forest Department for the greater cause of biodiversity conservation.

Dipankar Saikia of Dhansiri Forest Division was adjudged the Man of the Match. Nirmal Kalita of Aaranyak emerged as the Best Batsman while Jintu Buragohain of Dhansiri Forest Division was adjudged the Best Bowler. The Best Fielder of the match award went to Bibungsha Barglary of Dhansiri Forest Division. The selection panel comprised of Bijay Sankar Bora, Dr Dipankar Lahkar and Moushumi Saikia Bora.



The medals and prizes were presented by the DFO Ahmed and Aaranyak's Publicity Secretary Bijay Sankar Bora who said more such friendly sporting events between Aaranyak and Forest Department staff would go a long way in cementing the continuing coordination between the two.

36th Foundation Day celebrated

On September 9, the Aaranyak family came together to mark the 36th Foundation Day of Aaranyak in nature conservation and human well-being since its inception in 1989.

The day began with a solemn programme at the administrative office in Guwahati, featuring:

- Flag hoisting ceremony
- Inspiring words from our senior leadership
- Smriti Tarpan in memory of our late colleagues and K9 heroes
- A special cake-cutting to celebrate the milestone

The morning was made even more memorable with another solemn function at Aaranyak's Manas Conservation and Outreach Centre, located near Manas National Park.

It was truly a memorable day of reflection, gratitude, and renewed commitment as we step into the future of our conservation journey.



Members attend AGM 2025 with great enthusiasm



Aaranyak held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025 on September 14 in Guwahati, with the active participation of its members from across Assam and Northeast India.

The meeting was set on the roll by the opening remarks of Aaranyak's President, Er. Ranjan Bhuyan, followed by self-introduction by all the participants.

The agenda of the AGM was focused on -- Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM held in 2024, Presentation of the Secretary General's report on key activities undertaken by the Team Aaranyak across all its divisions and programmes in the last year, Adoption of the Consolidated Financial Statements for the previous year and the Annual Budget for the current year as presented by the Financial Secretary, Election/selection of the Executive Committee and Zonal Coordinators for the period 2025-2027, Discussion on proposals for appointment of a new external auditor (from among some prospective CA firms).

A new 11-member Executive Committee was formed in the AGM to lead Aaranyak for the next two years (2025-27) in its continued mission of advancing nature conservation and human well-being across Northeast India and the Eastern Himalayas.

The meeting concluded with an interactive session, during which participating members shared valuable suggestions for consideration and future implementation.



Bibhab Talukdar urges Shillong students to focus on NE's biodiversity

The Department of Zoology, St. Edmund's College, Shillong in collaboration with IQAC of the college organised an awareness programme on "Wildlife Conservation: A Shared Responsibility" on the forenoon of September 2. Passionate conservation scientist Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak, as the invited speaker delivered a talk on the topic. The programme was participated by over 200 students and faculty members from the college.



Dr. Talukdar emphasised on the ecological significance of Northeast India in terms of its rich biodiversity and highlighted the opportunities available for students to contribute, not only through research but also by engaging in on-ground conservation efforts where expertises from diverse disciplines are in demand as on date.

Dr. Talukdar also spoke about Aaranyak's wide-ranging initiatives, encouraging students to explore the organisation's internship and volunteering programmes to work jointly for biodiversity conservation.

He further underlined the importance of collaborative training programmes to enhance students' capacities in the field of biodiversity conservation and human well-being.

The Principal in-charge of the college, Br. Sunil Britto also attended the event and felicitated Dr. Talukdar prior to his address.

In the afternoon same day, Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar delivered another invited talk on "Research Opportunities in the Field of Bioresource Conservation in Northeast India," at Shillong College in the capital city of Meghalaya. Addressing the students of Zoology, he spoke about the wide range of research avenues available in the region and encouraged them to devote time to understand and learn from nature.

Here too he highlighted Aaranyak's internship and volunteering programmes and emphasised the need for collaborative training initiatives to help students strengthen their skills and capacities in conservation.

The faculty members of both colleges expressed strong interest in collaborating with Aaranyak to create opportunities for skill development of the students, with the aim of creating a pool of conservation-minded and research-oriented students and scholars in their institutions.

Vulture conservation campaign with Gram Pradhans rolled out in Kamrup



A conservation education, awareness, and sensitisation campaign was organised at the Chhaygaon Revenue Circle Office in Kamrup District of Assam on August 21 with in pursuit of the objective to achieve zero vulture deaths in the district in the coming years.

Aaranyak in partnership with Chhaygaon Circle Office, Assam Forest School, Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC), BNHS, and Bonyabondhu organised the event that was attended by a large number of Gram Pradhans of Chhaygaon Circle, as well as members of local communities. The programme was supported by Oriental Bird Club.

In Kamrup District, hundreds of vultures died in the previous decade and a half as a result of devouring pesticide-laced carcasses. These poisoning incidents are mainly the result of some members of the communities attempting to combat cattle predation by wild carnivores and feral dogs mentioned by one of the Gram Pradhans attending the programme.

In his address, Chiranjib Das, Circle Officer of Chhaygaon Revenue Circle, urged everyone to contribute towards vulture conservation and emphasized that Gram Pradhans could play a pivotal role in spreading the conservation message across villages. He also assured full support and necessary assistance for vulture conservation efforts.

Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Senior conservation biologist and Assistant Director of Aaranyak said that the Kamrup district is very sensitive to vulture conservation. We have lost at least 600 vultures in the last one and a half decades owing to chemical poisoning. Educating people and increasing their participation in vulture conservation is critical for the future of vultures. “We are attempting to bring everyone on board through our flagship Sagun Mitra and Nest Guardianship initiatives,” Dr. Lahkar said adding that poison-free food shall rebuild the vulture population.

The programme began with singing of the National Anthem, led by students from Guwahati College, Arya Vidyapith College, and Handique Girls' College. Dharanidhar Boro, Assam Gaurav Awardee, interacted with the participants and administered a green oath targeting vulture conservation.



Dr Dipankar Lahkar, engaged with the audience using unique IEC material designed to promote the conservation message of vultures, discussing conservation challenges associated with vulture decrease and potential solutions.

Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director of Aaranyak stretching on the convergence of vulture conservation with panchayat level planning for institutionalisation of conservation efforts.

During the occasion, vulture-preferred nesting tree saplings were presented to the audience. The plants were provided by the Assam Forest School. Dimpri Borah, IFS, Director of the Assam Forest School, has spearheaded to establish Assam's first nursery with the goal of raising vulture nesting tree saplings at the Assam Forest School. The nursery raised over 80% saplings preferred by vultures like that of Simolu, Arjun, Jamuk for distribution and plantation.

Dr Manisha Sharma, Samiran Kalita of ASTEC, Panchali Hazarika and Dharmendra Baruah of Assam Forest Department, Prasanna Kalita and Parash Moni Rabha of Bonyabondhu, Nitul Kalita and Wasima Begum of Aaranyak were also present in the occasion.

Purnima Devi leads community conservation training in Cambodia



The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Cambodia hosted Dr Purnima Devi Barman, UN Environment Programme Champion of the Earth, Wildlife Biologist at Aaranyak in Assam, India, to lead an innovative training programme for 20 Cambodian women conservationists and park rangers.

The transformative community-led conservation initiative took place on July 28 at the Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary, a Ramsar site in Cambodia's Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve.

The day long training aimed to adopt the women-led conservation movement that has successfully protected the rare Greater Adjutant Stork Hargila in Assam under the leadership of Dr Purnima.

By integrating traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and ecological science, Dr Barman during the training sessions inspired participants to develop community-centered conservation strategies tailored for Cambodia's prevalent natural environment.

A highlight of the programme was the inauguration of educational posters showcasing the behavioural ethogram of the Greater Adjutant, designed by Dr Barman. Unveiled by local community members and rangers, these posters symbolize a renewed commitment to conservation awareness and coexistence with storks and wetland wildlife.

The training featured engaging and creative activities, including leadership exercises to map women's strengths in conservation, cultural integration activities connecting local traditions with environmental values, "textile hunt" exploring nature reflected in fabrics and folk expressions and "web of life" game illustrating biodiversity interdependence.

A collective pledge ceremony affirming dedication to protecting Cambodia's natural and cultural heritage was also done during the training.

Phearun Sun, WCS Tonle Sap Landscape Programme Manager, who coordinated the event, expressed enthusiasm for future collaborations between the Assam Hargila conservation team and Prek Toal communities. He highlighted the Dr Purnima-led women conservation brigade's behaviour change model as an inspiration for community-driven conservation efforts to protect the Greater Adjutant Stork.

This training is construed a milestone in South-South cooperation for biodiversity conservation, gender equality in field-based wildlife conservation programmes and strengthening ties between Assam and Cambodia through a shared commitment to ecological protection and women's leadership.

Summer workshop introduces students to forensic science

Aaranyak under its Student Engagement Learning Programme organised a summer nature workshop titled 'Nature Detective 2025' in Guwahati for young minds.

The workshop organised from July 22-25 was aimed at taking the future stewards into the wild world of discovery, curiosity, and eco-exploration.

Distinguished forensic scientist from Assam, Dr Padmapani graced the workshop on July 24 with over 50 enthusiastic participants that comprised students, researchers, biologists, and nature lovers. Dr Padmapani discussed his lifelong experiences as a forensic scientist, emphasising the diverse applications that forensic science has in the field of crime investigation.

Notably, Dr Padmapani is the only individual from Northeast India to hold a Ph.D. in forensic science with over 30 years of service to the Forensic Science Laboratory, Assam, where he retired as Director in 2009.

Dr. Padmapani highlighted the potential of forensic science in detecting wildlife crime. He also emphasised the importance of being a good human being, especially for the younger generation, by sharing several heartfelt experiences from his own life. He advocated sowing the seeds of love and empathy towards nature and society in young minds to create a beautiful world around us.

Shikha Mahanta, an anchor with All India Radio also appreciated the consistent efforts made by Aaranyak in conserving biodiversity.

Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak, in his welcome address, inspired the participants for joining such a workshop during their holidays—an act that reflects their love and responsibility towards nature.

Throughout the four-day workshop, participants were introduced to the world of wildlife through engaging, STEM-based learning experiences that focused on spreading awareness about wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade while nurturing curiosity and love for nature. The participants took part in various activities—Whose Track Is That?, Who Dung It, Plaster of Paris (POP), Wild clues - Tracks, Furs and Feathers, Wild Beats, The Leaf Code – Secrets Hidden in Plants, Plant Clue Patrol, Plant Evidence Lab, Build Your Clue Book, and Mystery at Nature Scene - Solving Eco-Crimes, that helped participants to understand the basics of forensic techniques for animal tracking methods and analyse forest trails and growth patterns to decode natural evidence in wildlife & environmental crimes.

The summer nature camp came to a close with a field trip that the students had taken to the Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden. The students were taken on a trek inside the zoo premises and were oriented on nature in the Nature Learning Centre led by biologist of Assam State Zoo, Pranjal Mahananda. The students were also presented with certificates upon completion of the workshop.





The workshop was organised with support from the Mobius Foundation as part of its outreach and engagement initiatives with school students. It was led by Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director, Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak. Project Coordinator at EECBD, Prajnyan Sarma, Young Professionals Andrew Roy, Dipankar Mazumder, Disha Haloi, Geetashree Sarma, Jyotismita Kashyap, Kaushik Ranjan Saikia, Purba Paul, and Purna Paul coordinated the workshop and delivered various sessions. Intern Danish Hussain also provided their valuable support in making the event successful.

Enhancing functionality of Dong's catchment with eco restoration

Aaranyak in collaboration with Raimona National Park authorities and Hajiraguri Forest Village carried out an innovative community-led eco-restoration initiative to improve the functionality of the catchment of a Dong located in the Hajiraguri Forest Village.



Dong is a traditionally managed irrigation system primarily seen in the BTR districts. This movement intends to revive communal community practices for judiciously using surface water, mainly in agricultural applications.

Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director and Senior Conservation Biologist at Aaranyak, spearheaded this programme under the supervision of Dr Firoz Ahmed, Director and Head of TRCD. Gayatri Dutta, Nwajam Basumatary, and Birdutta Basumatary contributed with field coordination.

Dr Paris Basumatary, Range Officer of Central Range (Kachugaon), Ranen Narzary, Gram Pardhan and Mwasman Narzary, who is residents and also working for the forest department, persuaded and mobilized about 40 villages to participate in the plantation initiative. More than 600 saplings were planted in the first phase of this initiative.

Workshop focuses on vulture conservation; logos unveiled

Aaranyak, in partnership with the Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC), with support of Oriental Bird Club (OBC) organised a workshop entitled "Workshop on the implementation of awareness and conservation education initiatives for vulture conservation in Assam" at the Administrative Office Conference hall of Aaranyak on July 5. Thirty-three college students from Handique Girls' College, Guwahati College, and Arya Vidyapeeth College attended the event.



During the event, two conservation logos - 'Sagun Mitra' and 'Nest Guardianship' - dedicated to vulture conservation were inaugurated by Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak.

Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director of Aaranyak, who conceptualised the logos, provided participants an outline of vulture conservation efforts in India. The logos are designed by young visual artist Manjit Gogoi.

Mridu Paban Phukon, who is renowned for his pioneering vulture conservation work in Assam, attended the workshop as an expert and conducted a session with the students on development of outreach materials for awareness and outreach. Manisha Sarmah of ASTEC and Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director, Environment Education and Capacity Building Division of Aaranyak has also attended the workshop and interacted with the students. Wasima Begum, Nitul Kalita and Pranab Goswami of Aaranyak also attended the event.

Pobitora fringe communities trained in climate-resilient farming

Aaranyak led a comprehensive two-day capacity building training programme on Climate-Resilient Agriculture Practices at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, famed for Assam's pride the Greater one-horned rhinos.



The event was a collaborative effort by the Sanctuary Authority, SHIPA (a local organisation), SANJOG (a development-oriented NGO from Nalbari District, Assam), and the Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

The initiative engaged ninety participants, including thirty women, from seven surrounding villages, aiming to mitigate crop losses, reduce conservation costs, and enhance the income of the fringe communities living around the sanctuary.

The programme organised from July 22-23 focused on promoting the Rain Shelter Model (nutrition garden), specifically emphasising the cultivation of King Chillies — including the famed Bhoot Jolokia — and seasonal vegetables. This sustainable agricultural practice is expected to improve local livelihoods while supporting biodiversity conservation efforts.

The sessions featured expert guidance from Protush Nath, agricultural scientist and Project The programme was inaugurated by Paranjali Baruah, Range Officer of Pobitora, in the presence of Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak.

Aaranyak's Ujjal Bayan coordinated the programme along with team members Ayush Debnath, Jomi Rongchon, Debojeet Rajbongshi, and Aaranyak's K9 handler, Rupak Bora.

The interactive sessions concluded with a Q&A segment where community members discussed prospects for commercial cultivation of Ghost Pepper in nearby regions such as Mayang and Pobitora.

Wildlife protection awareness along Indo-Bangladesh border

In a concerted move to strengthen wildlife law enforcement along the Indo-Bangladesh border, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Jaintia Hills Wildlife Division, Government of Meghalaya, spearheaded a three-day awareness programme on the Wildlife (Protection) Amended Act, 2022 and the identification of species involved in illegal wildlife trade.

The programme organised during July 21 to 24, engaged border security forces and local communities in safeguarding the region's biodiversity.



Organised under the leadership of Ms. N. Laloo, DFO, Jaintia Hills Wildlife Division, the programme was held at three key locations: Dawki BSF Border Outpost (July 21), Umkiang BSF Border Outpost (July 23), and the Lungwalieh Panaliar Community Hall in Jowai (July 24). The sessions witnessed participation from 33 personnel of the 4 BN BSF at Dawki, 31 personnel from the 172 BN BSF at Umkiang, and 24 community members from the Jowai region of Meghalaya.

The initiative of the DFO, Jaintia Hills WL Division was complimented by the Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) of Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org), one of India's premier biodiversity conservation organisations by offering resource persons.

Representing LAD were, Dr. Jimmy Borah, Deputy Director of LAD, Binita Baruwati (Deputy Manager), Ivy Farheen Hussain (Senior Project Officer), and Bijit Boro (Assistant Project Officer), who delivered technical sessions on wildlife species identification, legal frameworks, and community-based conservation strategies.



The awareness drive focused on key aspects of wildlife crime, including provisions under the WLPA, penalties for violations, and the ecological impact of illegal hunting and trade.

For local villagers, the programme emphasized the importance of building positive attitudes towards wildlife and encouraged community vigilance in reporting illegal activities.

This collaborative effort between the Meghalaya Forest Department and the BSF, with the support of Aaranyak, marks a significant step forward in integrating enforcement, community outreach, and conservation awareness to tackle illegal wildlife trade in Meghalaya's sensitive border areas.

BSF sensitised on human-elephant interaction, wildlife crime

The East Khasi Hills Wildlife Division of Meghalaya Forest Department organised an outreach programme for the personnel of the 193rd Border Security Force (BSF) Battalion at Ranikor, Gumaghat Border Outpost (BOP) on the Indo-Bangla border in South-West Khasi Hills (SWKH) district on July 3.

The main objectives of the outreach programme were to sensitise the BSF personnel on how to deal with herds of wild elephants they often encounter while discharging duty on the international border as well as raise awareness among BOP officials about various forms of wildlife crime, current trends in wildlife trafficking, and trade activities within their area of responsibility. A team from Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) was involved in the orientation as resource persons.

Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar and Abhijit Baruah of Elephant Research and Conservation Division (ERCD) of Aaranyak delivered talks to create awareness among the BSF personnel about behaviour and basic knowledge about the characteristics of Asian elephants to help them avoid confrontation with elephants they come across during the course of duty. Wild elephants often move across the international border in the area posing hazards to the BSF personnel.

Dr Jimmy Borah, Senior Official from Aaranyak's Legal and Advocacy Division, led an informative discussion on wildlife crime and illegal trade along border areas. His presentation highlighted key crime trends, challenges faced in enforcement, impacts of illegal trade, and practical preventive measures that BSF personnel could adopt within their operational areas.

Sankupar Kharsyntiew, Forest Range Officer (FRO), Nongstoin Wildlife Range, also interacted with BSF personnel and said that the department was going to develop joint future strategies, including joint patrolling to deal with wild elephants.

Around 33 BSF personnel attended the session, and participated in the sensitisation programme in the presence of Shравan Kumar, Inspector of the 193rd BSF battalion. Joseph Sawkmie, Beat Officer, Mawkyrwat Wildlife Beat, oversaw the programme's overall arrangements.

This collaborative initiative reflects the growing need for frontline forces to be equipped not only to discharge duty for national security but also to respond effectively to emerging conservation challenges along international borders.



Van Mahotsav 2025 celebrations

Celebration around Raimona National Park

Aaranyak celebrated the Van Mahotsav 2025 in collaboration with Raimona National Park (RNP) authority and Araisopara Forest Village with an innovative community-led plantation drive of citrus species along the forest boundary on July 7. This initiative aims to promote sustainable human-wildlife coexistence. Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director and Senior Conservation Biologist of Aaranyak mobilised this initiative under the guidance of Dr Firoz Ahmed, Director and Head, Tiger Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak. Gayatri Dutta, Nwajam Basumatary and Birdutta Basumatary assisted in field coordination. Dr Paris Basumatary, Range Officer of Central Range (Kachugaon), Ranen Narzary, Gram Pardhan attended the event. Approximately 50 villagers participated in the initiative and volunteered in the plantation initiative.

Aaranyak in collaboration with the Raimona National Park authority, Hajiraguri Forest Village and St. Luke C.N.I Church, Dumbazar conducted an innovative community-led plantation in Hajiraguri Forest Village as part of Van Mahotsav celebration on July 7. This initiative aims to promote sustainable self-reliance, promote social change, empowers community to strengthen their village resources while also fostering park-people interactions.

Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director and Senior Conservation Biologist of Aaranyak mobilised this initiative under the guidance of Dr Firoz Ahmed, Director and Head, Tiger Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak. Gayatri Dutta, Nwajam Basumatary and Birdutta Basumatary assisted in field coordination.

Dr Paris Basumatary, Range Officer of Central Range (Kachugaon), Ranen Narzary, Gram Pardhan attended the event. Approximately 50 villagers participated in the initiative and volunteered in the plantation initiative.



Awareness on Hargila conservation

On the occasion of Van Mahotsav Week, Aaranyak's Greater Adjutant Conservation Programme team in collaboration with community members and The Hargila Army organised several awareness events to sensitise the masses.

As a part of the celebration, plantation drives and awareness sessions were conducted with community members, members of The Hargila Army and school children to raise awareness for a safe and greener world for both communities, wildlife and storks.

Team members from GACP -- Barasha Das, Karishma Das, Nitali Devi and Pratima Rajbongshi coordinated the events.

Plantation drive in Udalguri

In celebration of the 76th Van Mahotsav Week, a collaborative plantation drive was conducted on July 4 at Samrang, located within the Khalingduar Reserve Forest of Udalguri, Assam.

The initiative was jointly organised by the Nunai Forest Range, Barnadi Forest Range, Aaranyak, and the 37 Bn SSB (Samrang BOP), demonstrating a strong spirit of inter-agency cooperation towards ecological restoration and sustainable green development.

The event was formally inaugurated by Mustafa Ali Ahmed, Divisional Forest Officer of Dhansiri Forest Division, who, in his address, emphasised the importance of tree plantation and the critical role of collective action in reversing the trend of declining forest cover.

In addition to the plantation drive, a significant and impactful component of the programme was a targeted effort to raise awareness about the impact of invasive alien plant species, which pose a serious threat to native biodiversity and forest regeneration in the area.

Pranjal Talukdar, Range Officer of Nunai Forest Range, and Rabiya Daimari from Aaranyak, jointly led this initiative by mobilising teams to identify and clear infestations of IAP's like *Mikania micrantha*, *Chromolaena odorata*, and *Lantana camara*. An on-site sensitisation session, accompanied by the physical removal of invasive plant species, was conducted to highlight the ecological threats posed by these species. The session emphasised the urgent need to control their spread to promote natural forest regeneration and enhance the survival rate of both native vegetation and hand-planted saplings.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from key officials and partner representatives, including Rajen Daimari, Range Officer of Barnadi Forest Range, and his staff; Nabin Ch. Das, Assistant Commandant of the 37 Bn SSB Samrang BOP, along with his team; Mrinmoy Hazarika, Deputy Ranger of Nunai Forest Range; Dr. Lohit Boro, Assistant Medical Officer, NHM Udalguri, with his supporting staff; and Mondeep Basumatary, Abhijit Saikia, and Dibakar Nayak, along with a dedicated team from Aaranyak.

Members of the Elephant Conservation Network and local communities also actively took part, bringing the total number of participants to around 100.

Furthermore, an awareness session was held on the prevention, symptoms, and treatment of vector-borne diseases, such as Japanese Encephalitis, malaria, and dengue, adding a vital public health dimension to the programme, which Lohit Boro, AMO, NHM, Udalguri led. This integration of environmental and health awareness enriched the overall initiative, aligning it meaningfully with the One Health, One Earth concept, which emphasises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental well-being.

Conservation workshop on Hoolock gibbon held in Namdapha NP&TR

A two-day workshop on conservation of endangered Western Hoolock Gibbon (Hoolock hoolock) was successfully conducted from July 10th and 11th at the headquarter of Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve, Miao, Arunachal Pradesh.



Aaranyak organised the workshop in collaboration with the Namdapha National Park authorities, with support from the Arcus Foundation and the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group's Section on Small Apes (SSA).

The Western Hoolock Gibbon, found only in the north-eastern states of India south of the Dibang-Brahmaputra River system, is facing serious threats due to habitat fragmentation, hunting, and a widespread lack of awareness, particularly in Tripura and parts of Arunachal Pradesh. In light of these challenges, the workshop aimed to raise awareness, build capacity among forest staff, and initiate the formulation of a Hoolock Gibbon Conservation Action Plan for the Kamlang–Namdapha landscape.

The event was inaugurated by Arup Kumar Deka, IFS, Director of Namdapha National Park & Tiger Reserve, who served as the Chief Guest. Mr Deka emphasised the significance of the workshop and urged participants to use the platform to exchange knowledge and collaboratively plan for the species' future.

The Guest of Honour, Jumdo Geyi, DCF and Divisional Forest Officer of Kamlang Tiger Reserve, shared personal insights about the disappearance of the gibbon from his native area. He called on local communities to actively participate in the conservation of the Hoolock Gibbon, which is also the state animal of Arunachal Pradesh.

Dr Dilip Chetry, Director and Head of the Primate Research & Conservation Division at Aaranyak, welcomed all participants and highlighted the urgent need for coordinated conservation efforts. He also emphasised that the Hoolock Gibbon could serve as a flagship species for protecting biodiversity in the region and called for support from all sectors to ensure its survival.

15 HEC-affected villages equipped with solar street lights

As part of its sustained effort towards mitigating the human-elephant conflict (HEC), Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, have installed 20 solar-powered streetlights at strategic locations across fifteen villages in Tamulpur, Baksa and Udalguri districts of Assam. The initiative has been undertaken recently by a field team of Aaranyak involving local communities and members of the Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) comprising grassroots volunteers dedicated to work towards mitigation of HEC.

The workshop brought together forest officials from Namdapha and Kamlang Tiger Reserves, local community members from fringe villages like Maithingpun, Khachang, and Miao, as well as primatologists and experts from Bodoland University, Gauhati University, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya, and Aaranyak. Prof Hilloljyoti Singh, Head of Zoology at Bodoland University, shared his experiences of gibbon sightings across the Northeast and expressed hope that the workshop would generate valuable local insights. He urged participants to contribute towards creating a robust conservation blueprint for the region. Prof. Singha also co-ordinated the workshop in formulation of action plan.

A total of 80 participants attended the workshop. Key resource persons included Dr H.J. Singha (Bodoland University), Dr Prabal Sarkar of University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, Mridu Paban Phukan from Wildlife Conservation & Study Centre, Arup Kumar Das (GIS& remote sensing specialist), Simanta Medhi, Akshay Kumar Upadhyaya, and Dr Dilip Chetry from Aaranyak.

This landmark workshop marked the first focused attempt in Arunachal Pradesh to integrate forest staff, scientific experts, and local communities for the long-term conservation of the Western Hoolock Gibbon in the Kamlang-Namdapha landscape.



Out of the twenty lights, nine streetlights were installed at HEC-prone villages in Tamulpur, eight in Baksa and other three in Udalguri districts of. These districts are vulnerable to frequent HEC, with incidents often intensifying at night. Limited visibility during night hours increases the risk of unexpected encounters between villagers and wild elephants, sometimes leading to injuries or even fatalities.

The solar street lights have been installed at strategic locations as identified by the local communities and ECN members. These locations include known elephant movement pathways frequently used by villagers and passers-by after dark.

The lights aim to enhance night-time visibility, reduce fear and panic during elephant movements, and help prevent accidental confrontations between people and wild elephants.

This effort is a step towards building safer, more informed communities that can coexist with wildlife. The illuminated paths not only support the movement of villagers after dusk but also serve as a subtle deterrent for elephants, guiding them away from human settlements.

The entire installation process was carried out by an Aaranyak's field team comprising of Abhijit Saikia, Mondeep Basumatari, Hemanta Phukan, Bistirna Burhagohain, Jaugashar Basumatary, Rangjalu Basumatary, Bikash Tossa, Pradip Barman, Rupam Goyari and intern Kishore Kumar Basumatary, along with strong support from the local ECN members and residents of the villages.

Eye camp for conservation warriors



In an effort of gratitude towards the frontline forest staff and the local community for their tireless conservation efforts, an eye check-up camp was organised at the range office of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary on July 27.

Beneficiaries were provided with essential eye care services by Aaranyak in collaboration with Gauhati Lions Eye Hospital, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary authority, and SHIPA (a local NGO).

The initiative is supported by Zoo Berlin, aimed to improve access to specialised medical care in a region where such services are scarce.

About 90 individuals—including villagers, forest personnel, and their families—benefited from comprehensive eye screenings and basic medical treatment provided by a team led by optometrist Amrit Deka, technician Palash Kalita, and Nurse Mamoni Devi from Gauhati Lions Eye Hospital.

The programme was organised under the guidance of Sunil Agarwal, a member of Gauhati Lions Eye Hospital, and Dr Bibhab Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak.

During the camp seven residents were diagnosed with cataracts and referred for surgery, while twenty others received prescriptions for corrective glasses.

Dr Deba Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, Researchers Ujjal Bayan and Kakali Baishya, K9 handler Rupak Bora, Mitul Das Forester-I, Tapan Nath of Pobitora WLS played an important role in ensuring the smooth execution and broad impact of the event.

This eye check-up camp not only addressed urgent medical needs but also strengthened the commitment of frontline staff and local residents to the long-term conservation of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. The initiative fostered a sense of trust, partnership, and shared responsibility, motivating all involved to play an active role in preserving the sanctuary's unique biodiversity.

Solar street lights, field gear aid to HEC mitigation efforts

Aaranyak provided 10 solar street lights to Lakhipur Forest Range under Goalpara Forest Division in western Assam on July 4 for installation in certain human elephant conflict (HEC) affected villages on Assam-Meghalaya boundary as a mitigation tool.



In the same day Aaranyak also provide 25 rain coats to forest frontline staff who render 24x7 services for mitigation of HEC in Lakhipur area.

Six of the solar streetlights and 25 rain coats were sponsored by KPML (Karad Projects and Motors Ltd.) while 4 solar street lights were sponsored by Goalpara Forest Division under its Elephant Deterrent Solar Fence Project.

The solar street lights and rain coats were handed over to the Range Officer Dharmendra Das in a formal ceremony organised at Lakhipur Forest Range Office.

The solar street lights were installed in Mogho Part-2, Borjhora, Fakirmara, Kurung, Jurigaon, Kochpara and Suwarkona villages.

The Aaranyak team comprising Anjan Baruah, Ripunjoy Nath, Bijoy Kalita supervised the installation of solar street lights.

Torchlights, raincoats provided to ADS members at Neamatighat

Aaranyak provided 30 torchlight and raincoats to Anti-Depredation Squad (ADS) under Jorhat Forest Division in collaboration with Jorhat Forest Division with the support of Karad Projects and Motors Limited (KPML) on July 2.

The field gears were handed over by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCDD) of Aaranyak in presence of Rupak Bhuyan, Range officer, Jorhat Forest Range at a programme held at Neamatighat Beat Office in Jorhat, Assam.

Topon Gogoi, Beat Officer, Neamatighat Beat Office, Krishna Saikia, village head, Akash Morang, member of Aaranyak, officials and staff of Jorhat Range Office and Neamatighat Beat Office were also present in the programme.

Arif Hussain interacted with the ADS members from different villages including Gusaigaon, Khongiya, Ujoni Khongiya, Nahatiya, Khutiaputa, Balichapori, Amlokhisiga, Bejorsiga, regarding the protection of wildlife. Range Officer Rupak Bhuyan expressed his gratitude to Aaranyak for the support.

HEC mitigation training for ECN members in Tamulpur

Aaranyak, with the support from the SBI Foundation organised the initial phase training of the Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) programme for the newly-formed Kumarikata Anchalik ECN on July 2 at N.C. Angrakata in Tamulpur district.

The training was designed to build the capacity of ECN members by deepening their understanding of root causes of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) and by equipping them with the knowledge and preparedness required to play an active role in mitigating conflict and fostering coexistence in their respective areas.

During the programme, Aaranyak's team shared insights on elephant behaviour, their natural habitats, and the underlying factors contributing to the rising frequency of human-elephant conflict (HEC).

The session emphasised a range of field-applicable coexistence strategies and mitigation techniques, tailored to the needs of ECN members working in high-conflict zones.



Students, community sensitised in Baksa on human-elephant coexistence

The discussion also highlighted Aaranyak's broader conservation efforts, particularly its focus on community-based conflict mitigation approaches.

The session was further enriched by the active participation of ECN members, who shared their personal experiences and challenges during past conflict incidents, making the session more engaging and grounded in real-life scenarios that fostered mutual learning and reflection.

An important component of the session was the presentation of Gajah Katha, Aaranyak's signature educational and visual storytelling tool designed to raise awareness about elephant conservation, while fostering empathy and coexistence within communities.

To support the field-based efforts of the ECN, 14 torchlights were distributed among members representing seven chubas (neighbourhoods), enhancing their preparedness for night-time monitoring and response.

The training saw participation of 20 ECN members, engaged in building their capacity to address human-elephant conflict in their respective areas.

The programme was facilitated by Aaranyak's team members, Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Jiban Chetry, Bikash Tossa, Jaugashar Basumatary, and intern Kishore Kumar Basumatary.

Aaranyak with support from the SBI Foundation organised a school outreach programme at Indralal Pathak Girls' High School in Baksa district of Assam, where 240 students took part.

The programme emphasised the importance of biodiversity conservation, the ecological significance of elephants as keystone species, and the alarming consequences of plastic pollution. The session was highly interactive, encouraging students to reflect on their daily habits and share ideas to protect the environment.



In another occasion, a community outreach programme was organised at Nepaligaon village, Udalguri, a location frequently visited by wild elephants. The session was attended by 46 villagers and included the presence of Pranjal Talukdar, Range Officer, Nunai Forest Range, who addressed local concerns and encouraged coordination between the forest department and the community.

Cleaning of riverbank; discussion on rejuvenation of Basistha River

Participants learned about the causes of human-elephant conflict, especially due to loss of forest habitat and search for food, and were introduced to practical conflict mitigation techniques like early warning systems, crop protection, and community managed solar powered fencing.

Continuing these efforts, another community outreach programme was organised at No. 1 Bholatar village in Udalguri, attended by 28 villagers. We introduced “Gaja Katha”, our signature campaign to help communities understand elephant behaviour, practical mitigation strategies and preparedness during encounters.

By combining scientific knowledge, traditional wisdom, and participatory engagement, it continues to build resilient, informed, and empowered communities capable of protecting both wildlife and human livelihoods in conflict-prone landscapes.

These whole programmes were successfully facilitated by Aaranyak’s Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Mondeep Basumatari, Abhilasha Boruah, Hemanta Phukan, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatary, Bikash Tossa, Pradip Barman and intern Kishore Kumar Basumatary.

Aaranyak, with the support from the SBI Foundation, continues to strengthen its commitment to fostering human-elephant coexistence and environmental stewardship through impactful outreach initiatives across the Baksa and Udalguri districts of Assam.

Aaranyak, in collaboration with Renergy Solutions Pvt. Ltd., jointly organised a cleanliness drive on the riverbank of the Basistha River near the Beltola-Bhetapara. The engaging initiative was titled “Let’s Act for Nature: Spare 1 Hour for Basistha River.”

Along with members from local community, a youth-led group of 15 participants carried out the drive and conducted an awareness campaign promoting proper plastic waste management and sustainable living practices. The event began with a cleanliness drive, followed by a tree plantation and open discussions with community members on rejuvenation of Basistha river while managing plastic waste.



As part of the campaign, leaflets on plastic waste management were distributed to local residents, a few dustbins were provided to local vendors, and a hoarding with the message “Do Not Litter into the Basistha River” was installed to encourage responsible behaviour.

The event was conceptualised and coordinated by Pranab Goswami from Aaranyak, with valuable support from Dhrubajyoti Kalita, a senior member of the organisation.

Rhino Goes to School sensitises students

Aaranyak, in collaboration with Kaziranga Study Centre, JDSG College and Gormur Higher Secondary School, organised an event of under its flagship 'Rhino Goes to School' in Gormur Higher Secondary School.



This event supported by the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, UK, aimed to create awareness about significance and importance of rhinos and wildlife in our ecosystem among the students. The event focused on providing a platform for building a pool of future stewards for our State Animal (one-horned rhino) and conservation of wildlife of Assam.

The event consisted of a visual presentation on rhinos, an interactive session, presentation on a rhino sculpture and an open quiz. Over 200 students participated in the programme.

Sasanka Dhaval Saikia, Asst. Prof. JDSG College and Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak were present in the programme as resource persons.

Rofiul Hussain, Principal, Gormur Higher Secondary, Satyan Gogoi, Noziur Rahman, teachers of the school, Akash Morang, member of Aaranyak and 25 Intern students were also present.

3-km solar fence handed over to community at Rangagarah

A 3 km-long community-managed solar-powered fence installed to secure human elephant conflict (HEC)-affected Rangagarah village under Goalpara Forest Range of Goalpara Forest Division in Assam was inaugurated and handed over to the community July 5.



The solar fence installation work was successfully completed in June this year by Aaranyak team, Forest Department and the local community –level committee in a collaborative effort under the sponsorship of the Goalpara Forest Division Solar Fence Project.

The Rangarah village has around 55 households. The residents of the village belong to indigenous Rabha community and 95% of the villagers depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

The villagers have been facing a serious HEC issue for the last 20 years. The local community has been losing crops, properties even lives due to HEC.

The Range Officer Sashi Mohan Sinha of Goalpara Sadar Range inaugurated the fence by cutting the ceremonial red ribbon. Later, in a formal inauguration meeting the solar fence was handed over to the Rangarah local community and an MoU was signed between local community, Forest Department and Aaranyak.

Around 60 local villagers participated in that meeting presided by Narah Rabha, Gaon Burah of the village. Range Officer Sashi Bhusan Sinha delivered a lecture on the HEC issue and the importance of solar fence for mitigation mentioning about the responsibility of the local villagers to establish coexistence between human and elephant.

From Aaranyak, Assistant Manager Anjan Baruah spoke on the effectiveness of solar fence, responsibilities of community in maintaining the fence and highlighted dos and don'ts regarding management of solar fence.

Others from the Aaranyak team attending the meeting included Swapan Das, Ripunjoy Nath, Bijoy Kalita and Rohit Nath.

The Forest Department team included Makri Beat Officer B Kalita, Forest Guard Pradyumna Baruah besides the Range officer and some other staff.

Empowering farmers affected by HEC

Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, facilitated the distribution of 700 lemon saplings to two farmer families in Abhayapur village, located in Tamulpur district of Assam on July 12.



The village is located within a high human-elephant conflict (HEC) zone and experiences frequent crop depredation by wild elephants and the fear of losing entire harvests overnight has become a persistent and distressing challenge.

The Assam lemon saplings will be planted in a strategic three-row zigzag pattern to establish a biofence around the farmland. Elephants are known to avoid citrus plants due to their strong scent and thorny texture, making lemon trees an effective deterrent.

Beyond serving as a deterrent, this nature-based solution will also offer long-term economic benefits to the farmers through the sale of lemon fruits, making this initiative a thoughtful step toward coexistence, conservation, and community resilience.

The initiative was facilitated by Aaranyak's team comprising Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Arindam Saikia, Didom Daimari, Jaugashar Basumatary, and intern Kishore Kumar Basumatary. The team efficiently coordinated the entire process, including beneficiary identification, sapling distribution, and on-site planning and demonstration.

'Frog Watch and Photography' held at Karbi Anglong



Aaranyak organised a Frog Watch and Field Photography session in Phumen Engti village, Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

The event brought together a diverse group of participants, including a PhD scholar from Royal Global University, two zoology students from Debraj Roy College, Golaghat, a faculty member from IIT Gandhinagar, and an Assistant Professor and a graduate student from Zoology Department, Digboi College, reflecting a diverse mix of academic backgrounds and interest levels.



The walk organised on July 12 was led by our resource person and herpetologist Dr Jayanta Kumar Roy, accompanied by community members Mongal Rongphar and Bidaram Tokbi, who have been actively involved in biodiversity-related activities in the region.

The trail covered a portion of the forested areas near the village, where participants had the opportunity to observe and photograph various species of reptiles and amphibians, including lizards and geckos.

Village walk: Connecting urban youth with rural communities

As the group progressed along the trail, they engaged in conversations around habitat identification and species behaviour, while navigating the forest terrain under dimming evening light.

A short refreshment break was taken in the forest, where participants gathered to share their thoughts on amphibian conservation. This informal exchange of ideas was complemented by a traditional Karbi folk tale narrated by a community member, offering insight into the region's ecological wisdom and oral storytelling traditions.

The session once again highlighted the role of collaborative learning in the field, blending scientific exploration with cultural context. Participants left with not only photographs, but also a deeper understanding of the landscapes and stories that shape Karbi Anglong's unique biodiversity.

Notably, the species observed during the session included -- *Euphyctis cyanophlyctis* (Indian Skipper Frog), *Minervarya teraiensis* (Cricket Frog), *Minervarya pierrei* (Cricket Frog), *Leptobrachium smithi* (Red-eyed Frog), *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* (Asian Common Toad), *Amolops assamensis* (Assamese Cascade Frog), Bent-Toed Gecko, Garden Lizards, 2 species of Skinks

Aaranyak and Help Aid Foundation, with support from Wipro Earthian organised a "Village Walk" in Khamrenga village, adjacent to the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary in Kamrup Metropolitan on July 6.

The objective of the programme was to bridge the gap between urban youth and rural communities while fostering a sense of responsibility for sustainable development within their local community through direct engagement.



The programme witnessed active participation from 20 students (4th semester) at Narengi Regional College, Kamrup (M). The participants conducted a field study using questionnaires and oral interviews to understand the socio-economic conditions, biodiversity and sustainable practices of the community in Khamrenga village, which comprises approximately 150 households.

Throughout the survey, Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer at the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak, guided the participants in investigating the water related issues and sustainable management, the plants in homestead gardens that yield the highest income, medicinal plants, indigenous rice varieties, vermicomposting practices etc.

Anjulina Chowdhury, the Chief Executive Officer of the Help Aid Foundation said that the participants engaged in discussions on various important aspects essential for sustaining a vibrant rural life. They also gained knowledge and insights into how the changing landscape over time has impacted their lives and livelihoods.

Spanning over 78 sq km of land, the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary is recognized as an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA), which is dedicated to safeguarding the delicate balance of urban ecosystem and protecting the rich biodiversity of Kamrup Metropolitan City.

Solar fence secures 60 households at Rangatari village

A 3-km solar-powered community managed solar fence was installed at human elephant conflict (HEC) affected Rangatari village having 60 households, under Lakhipur Forest Range of Goalpara Forest Division of Assam for facilitating coexistence.

The solar fence was installed and put into operation on July 25 last in a collaborative mode by Assam Forest Department, Aaranyak and the local village-level committee under the sponsorship of the Goalpara Forest Division Solar Fence Project.

The residents of Rangatari village are belonged to indigenous Bodo community and 90% of the villagers depend on agriculture for livelihood. The villagers have been facing a serious HEC problem for a long time. The local farmers have been losing crops, properties even human lives too due to HEC. The solar fence has covered all the 60 HH and secured a population of around 312 in the village.

The Range Officer Dharmendra Das of Lakhipur Range inaugurated the fence formally by cutting a red ribbon. Later, in a formal inauguration meeting held at Rangatari Kali temple campus where the solar fence was handed over to the Rangatari local community and an MoU was signed between the Local committee, Forest department and Aaranyak.



Around 30 local villagers participated in that meeting that was initiated by ECN member and Solar fence committee secretary Bijoy Boro and presided over by Ripunjoy Basumatary, Gaon Burah of the village.

Michel Goyary, A.P. Member also participated the meeting. He thanked Forest Department and Aaranyak for facilitating the solar fence to protect the lives and property of their village.

Range Officer Dharmendra Das spoke on the HEC issue and the effect of the solar fence mentioning about the responsibility of the local villagers to establish coexistence between human and elephant. He also mentioned about importance of tree plantation and restoration of animal habitat. He suggested for massive awareness campaign for the coexistence with elephant.

Aaranyak's solar fence expert and Assistant Manager Anjan Baruah underlined the effectiveness of solar fence, responsibilities of community to maintain the fence and some dos and don'ts for management of the fence.

He also suggested for strengthening activities of ECN (Elephant Conservation Network) for information sharing with villagers to reduce HEC. The Aaranyak team of Goalpara-Garo Hills landscape comprising Anjan Baruah, Nipul Chakma, Manjit Das, Ripunjoy Nath, Bijoy Kalita and Rahit Ch. Nath and the Lakhipur Range Forest team comprising the Range officer Dharmendra Das, Dhon Chandra Doloi and other staff participated in the programme.

Workshop on coexistence for HEC-affected community

Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, conducted community outreach events in Udalguri and Baksa districts of Assam on our ongoing efforts to raise awareness about human-elephant conflict (HEC) and promote peaceful coexistence between people and elephants.

On July 15 and 17, 2025, similar outreach events were conducted in Amjuli village in Udalguri and Madhapur village in Baksa, respectively, as part of our ongoing 'Gaja Katha' signature campaign.

These sessions focused on enhancing community understanding of Asian elephants in their habitat, behaviour, types, and the key reasons behind their movement into human settlements and crop fields.



Participants were introduced to the complexities of human-elephant conflict and engaged in discussions on practical, locally tested mitigation strategies such as lemon bio fencing, cultivation of non-palatable crops for elephants, etc.

Participants were introduced to the complexities of human-elephant conflict and engaged in discussions on practical, locally tested mitigation strategies such as lemon bio fencing, cultivation of non-palatable crops for elephants, etc.

The events also served as a platform for villagers to share their personal experiences with elephants, fostering dialogue and local insight.

Altogether 62 participants from across these villages took part in these awareness and interactive sessions.

The outreach programmes were facilitated by Aaranyak's team members Rabiya Daimari, Mondeep Basumatari, Abhilasha Boruah, Bikash Tossa, Jaugashar Basumatary, Rangjalu Basumatary and Pradip Barman, who led the sessions and interacted with the communities in a participatory and engaging way.

Students in Kamrup (M) attend workshop on urban ecosystems



Aaranyak and Help Aid Foundation, with support from Wipro Earthian organised a three-day summer workshop on nature learning at Bonda, Kamrup Metro to deepen students' understanding of urban natural ecosystem and cultivate a sense of environmental stewardship among younger generation.

The workshop engaged thirty students in hands-on nature-based learning activities to foster scientific temperament and enhance observation and documentation skills.

The participants explored plant biology, types of pollination, and experienced microscopic examinations of various flower pollens and ferns to understand local biodiversity and relation to the ecosystem.

Participants were also engaged in a "Trash to Wealth" craft making session and art competition focused on waste management. They were also interacted with personnel from the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) project, who are providing reliable and safe drinking water to the city's residents under the Guwahati Metropolitan Drinking Water and Sewerage Board (GMDW&SB) or Guwahati Jal Board.

The interaction proved crucial for younger generations to better understand the urban water crisis and the role of government initiatives for its management in Kamrup Metro City.

Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer at Environment Education and Capacity Building Division of Aaranyak, conducted a detailed session on waste auditing and management in residential and industrial settings followed by practical assessment of waste management patterns in the Bondajan area of Kamrup Metropolitan.

The workshop organised during July 12-14 was facilitated by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Arnab Borgohain, Prajnyan Sarma, Disha Haloi, Geetashree Sharma and Jyotismita Kashyap of Environment Education and Capacity Building Division at Aaranyak.

‘Gajah Katha’ promotes human-elephant coexistence

Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, conducted a community outreach programme on July 22 in 1 No. Sathgharia village, a village frequently impacted by incidents of human-elephant conflict (HEC).



The session engaged 25 proactive participants, including local residents who regularly encounter the challenges posed by elephant movement in the area.

The event focused on creating awareness and deepening understanding of the causes and consequences of HEC, while promoting practical, community-based strategies for mitigating conflict and fostering peaceful coexistence.

A major highlight of the event was the presentation of “Gaja Katha”, an Aaranyak’s flagship HEC mitigation signature campaign. Designed to be both informative and interactive, “Gaja Katha” introduces participants to the ecology and behavioural patterns of Asian elephants while also addressing the root causes of elephant incursion into human-dominated landscapes, such as habitat loss, fragmentation, and declining forest resources.

The session also introduced context-specific mitigation measures, such as the use of bio-fencing through the plantation of thorny lemon plants along boundaries of home and crop lands, and the promotion of crop varieties less attractive to elephants.

Participants were also encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and engage in open dialogue, resulting in a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.

The programme was facilitated by Aaranyak team members Mondeep Basumatari, Abhilasha Boruah, Bikash Tossa, and Pradip Barman.

Summer nature camp enlightened students on nature and wildlife

Aaranyak and Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve Authority in collaboration with Wild Wings organised the Summer Nature Camp 2025 in Sankardev Jatiya Bidyalay. The initiative was supported by the David Shephard Wildlife Foundation (DSWF).



The camp was inaugurated by Pradipta Baruah, Director, Orang Tiger Reserve, in presence of Arif Hussain, Sr. Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division, Aaranyak, Nejb Ahmed, renowned wildlife photographer, Sanjay Laha, Teacher, Sankardev Jatiya Bidyalaya.

This is a yearly summer camp organised during the summer vacation in the month of July. The programme targets high school students to create awareness towards wildlife conservation.

The summer camp is intended to promote environmental awareness and education, in addition to academic classes and extracurricular activities. The camp includes 25 days of academic instruction from school staff and guest teachers, and two days of environmental awareness training from experts in the field of environment, wildlife and conservation.

Pradipta Baruah, Director, Orang Tiger Reserve, Nejb Ahmed, Wild Wings, Arif Hussain, Aaranyak, Pranjit Deka, FR 1, Orang took sessions in various topics which was attended by over 50 participants.

Abdul Malek, President, Bechimari Eco Development Committee, Baharul Islam, President, Fatasimolu Eco Development Committee and Akash Morang, member of Aaranyak were also present in the programme.

Workshop on "Planning and execution of conservation education, outreach for mission culture conservation"

Aaranyak organised a workshop entitled "Planning and execution of conservation education and outreach for Mission culture conservation" at the Administrative Office of Aaranyak. Twenty-six college students from Handique Girls' College, Guwahati College, and Arya Vidyapeeth College attended the event.



Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Senior Conservation Biologist and Assistant Director of Aaranyak has introduced the conservation education and outreach materials to the participants and engaged them in discussions.

Dr M Firoz Ahmed, Director of Tiger Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak and Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director of Environment Education and Capacity Development Division of Aaranyak has actively interacted with the participants and provide them inputs on public outreach.

About 15 students were trained and prepared to begin field outreach operations. The workshop was supported by Oriental Bird Club.

Aaranyak's primate scientist speaks at International Primatological Society congress

In Madagascar, Aaranyak's senior primatologist Dr Dilip Chetry attended the 30th Congress of the International Primatological Society (IPS) Antananarivo from 20-25 July, which was graced by 657 registered participants from 53 countries of the planet.

Dr Chetry, who is also the Director and Head of Primate Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak had presented two papers in the congress.

He presented one paper under Paper Session: Conservation-Asia under the title of Conservation of Golden Langur *Trachypithecus geei* in and around Kakoijana-Bamuni Hill Wildlife Sanctuary(proposed) in Assam, India and another one under Paper Session: Conservation Education under the title Education and Awareness as tool for the Conservation of Western Hoolock Gibbon in Kamlang-Namdapha Landscape in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

During the congress, he highlighted the conservation need of the Golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) and Western hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) in India. Dr Chetry who is also vice chair of IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group, South Asia also attended the executive meeting of IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group and highlighted the different issues.

'Nature's Wonderland-a journey of curiosity' at Amchang WLS

To help people reconnect with nature, Aaranyak in collaboration with the Guwahati Wildlife Division and the Eco Club of Guwahati Refinery Higher Secondary School hosted the 11th chapter of its 'Nature's Wonderland—a journey of curiosity' event at Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary, with support from Wipro Earthian.



The programme highlighted the role of biotic and abiotic factor, ecosystem significance, environmental challenges, and benefits received by the city dwellers of the sanctuary.



The programme drew a total of 25 participants, including students, teachers, parents, and officials from Aaranyak and various government departments.

After an introductory briefing by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer at Aaranyak and Gargaraj Nath of Guwahati Wildlife Division, the participants were guided by experts Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director and Acting Head of the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division at Aaranyak, Genius Teron, Project Officer at Aaranyak, and Manab Jyoti Kalita, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, M.C. College, Barpeta. They spoke on biodiversity conservation and the ecological significance of Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary in maintaining the delicate ecosystem of Guwahati City. Purna Paul and Purba Paul from EECBD, Aaranyak, inspired the participants by sharing fascinating facts about butterflies. They also discussed how to initiate a butterfly garden at home by planting various host plants.

Manoj Kumar Sarma, Assistant Professor, Govt B.T. College (Teachers' Training), Goalpara, highlighted the importance of education in fostering environmental sensitivity among citizens. On the other hand, Manash Phukan, a Sub-Inspector of the Central Bureau of Investigation (Anticorruption Division) in Guwahati, addressed the often-overlooked legal aspects of wildlife crime to the participants.

The entire programme was coordinated by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Geetashree Sarma and Disha Haloi of Aaranyak in support with Guwahati Wildlife Division, Gargaraj Nath, Lankeswar Deka & Ramen Daka.

First aid training for HEC-affected community



Aaranyak, with support from SBI Foundation, continues its dedicated efforts to mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC) through a multi-pronged approach, that combines ecological conservation with community safety and empowerment.

As part of this initiative, on July 28, a first-aid training programme was organised at Madhapur Mainaguri village of Baksa, to strengthen local preparedness in responding to emergencies commonly encountered in conflict-affected areas. The training session, attended by 27 local participants, provided hands-on knowledge and practical skills essential for addressing injuries and emergencies in remote areas where access to medical facilities is often limited.

During the session, participants were trained in practical, life-saving techniques relevant to their local context. They learned how to construct makeshift stretchers for safely transporting injured individuals, and how to apply proper bandaging methods for common injuries such as fractured elbows, legs, and wrists.

response procedures for snakebites an often-encountered risk in rural settings were also covered in detail. In addition, the training included safe and effective methods to control gas cylinder fires, helping participants prevent and respond to potential household accidents. These essential skills are particularly valuable in remote, conflict-prone areas where immediate medical assistance is not always accessible.

The programme was organised in collaboration with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). Experienced AAPDA Mitras from Baksa, Nabajyoti Talukdar and Ritupan Kalita, conducted the training. The event was successfully facilitated by Aaranyak's dedicated team members, Jiban Chetry and Jaugashar Basumatary.

Celebration of International Tiger Day

Aaranyak, the Directorate Manas Tiger Reserve, and ASTEC celebrated the International Tiger Day 2025 in Daodhara, Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve, BTR, Assam.

Suman Mahapatra, IFS (CHD- Forest, BTC) and Dr C Ramesh, IFS, Field Director- Manas Tiger Reserve graced the event. Along with the event, an eco-restoration plot was developed in Daodhora with the aim of ensuring a better future for tigers and their natural habitats.



The plantation programme was graced by Vivekananda Pathak, Range Forest Officer- Bhuyanpara Range, Babul Brahma, Range Forest Officer- Salbari Range and Sanatan Deka, Manager & Project Head of Wildlife Trust of India, Kalen Basumatary, Chandrakanta Basumatary, (Advisors of MMES). A large number of local villagers and community members also participated in the plantation initiative.

Braveheart K9 Emy's demise leaves Aaranyak grief-stricken

The entire Aaranyak family is heartbroken while sharing that we have lost K9 Emy, a seven-year-old Belgian Malinois from Aaranyak's K9 Sniffer Dog Unit.

K9 Emy was stationed at Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve to assist the authority in anti-poaching efforts. She passed away around midnight due to a cardiac arrest.

K9 Emy's contribution towards protecting wildlife around Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve will always be remembered with gratitude and pride by Aaranyak.

She had earlier served at Burapahar Range in Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve and also at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, where she played a significant role in complementing the efforts of authorities of these protected areas to keep the wildlife secured defeating designs of wildlife criminals.

With Emy's untimely death, we have not only lost a dedicated working dog, but also a much-loved member of the Aaranyak family.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Assam Forest Department for acknowledging K9 Emy's contributions as well as to People for Nature and Peace for their continuous support to K9 Emy whose legacy and outstanding service will always be cherished.



Nature and wildlife photography exhibition receives enthusiastic response in Nagaon



“Van Sobi 2.0”, Aaranyak’s Nature and Wildlife Photography Exhibition in Nagaon was successfully concluded on August 3 at Pranab Baruah Kalakshetra. The inaugural event was graced by the Hon’ble MLA of Nagaon-Batardava Constituency, Rupak Sarmah and the Hon’ble District Commissioner of Nagaon, Devasish Sarma amidst an excited and engaged audience. The exhibition is the second in a series of exhibitions organised across Assam as part of Aaranyak’s celebration of 35 years of dedicated service in nature conservation. The Nagaon edition has been organised in collaboration with Kallol, a cultural group with long-standing engagement in arts and literature.

The event was anchored by Dr Partha J Das, Member of the Executive Committee, Aaranyak. The inauguration was also attended by Udayan Borthakur, Organizing Secretary, Aaranyak, and Naushad Akhter Hazarika, Secretary of Kallol.

Following the inauguration, a panel discussion on “The Importance of Photography as a Medium for Nature Conservation and Awareness” was held. The session was moderated by Dr. Partha J. Das and featured noted film director Arup Manna, young critic Arindam Borkataki and a noted conservationist Dr. Smarajit Ojha. The discussion highlighted how nature photography blends technology and creativity to generate powerful, multi-dimensional narratives about nature.

The day also featured a technical session on “Use of Art and Technology in Photography for Nature Appreciation and Conservation”, conducted by renowned wildlife photographer Mr. Udayan Borthakur. He described the interesting flow of photography, starting from creating an image in the mind, using the right technique and enhancing further value through adding a meaning to a photograph to tell a conservation story.

The exhibition features over 45 remarkable photographs captured by 31 talented photographers from across the country. Over 30 young nature enthusiasts and several other noted personalities took part in the sessions.

The two-day event concluded on 3rd August with an intimate adda (discussion) titled “Looking at Nature Through the Lens: The Synergy Between Nature and Creativity”, followed by a closing ceremony.



Elephants Cup Football bolsters coexistence and conservation

Community members, youths and forest staff from Assam and Meghalaya played three competitive and entertaining football matches on the occasion of World Elephant Day on August 12 in front of over thousand people from villages on both sides Assam and Meghalaya boundary, in the playground of Borjhara High School in Lakhipur block of Goalpara district in Assam.

Goalpara Forest Division of Assam Forest Department, Wildlife Divisions of East and West Garo Hills of Meghalaya Forest Department and premier biodiversity conservation organization Aaranyak collaborated to organize the Elephant Cup Football Tournament for the third consecutive year to mark World Elephant Day meant for conservation of the gentle giant.



The collaborative initiative under the aegis of Goalpara Forest Division, is driven by the urgent need for facilitating coexistence along the inter-state boundary areas of Assam and Meghalaya with wild elephants through people-oriented mitigation efforts.

The football matches supported by Darwin Initiative, British Asian Trust, and Elephant Family, were played in presence of a host of forest department officials from both the states, officials and field executives of Aaranyak, members of Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) and community members.

The significance of playing football for elephant conservation and coexistence was well highlighted by the presence of senior forest officials including Central Assam's Conservator of Forest Sunnydeo Indradeo Chaudhury his counterpart from Meghalaya (Garo Hills) M J Sangma; Goalpara DFO Tejas Mariswamy and his counterparts from Meghalaya Arpiush Ch Sangma, Rimse Sangma and Rupankar Marak, Meghalaya's ACF B K Lohar, Meghalaya Forest Range Officers Anneie Valentina, Dokchi R Marak, Lakhipur (Assam) Range Officer Dharmendra Das, Goalpara (Assam) Range Officer Khalilur Rahman.

Aaranyak's Deputy Executive Director and conservation scientist Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar led the form the front in organising the event with help of team members Anjan Baruah, Abhijit Baruah, Anushka Saikia Choudhury, Jyotibrata Mahanta, Swapan Das, Nipul Chakma, Monjit Das, Subhash Ch Rabha, Rupam Goyari, Ripunjoy Kumar Nath and Rohit Chandra Nath.

The first football match was played between community teams from Assam and Meghalaya and won by the Assam team. The second match between teams from Assam Forest Department and Meghalaya Forest Department was won by the Assam team and the third and most entertaining match between U-19 teams from Assam and Meghalaya were won by the Assam team.

The prizes were distributed by the senior forest officials from both Meghalaya and Assam. Assam U-19 team captain Pankaj Rabha was awarded the best player's trophy of the tournament this year.



Students orientation on conservation, coexistence at Pobitora WLS

Aaranyak in collaboration with its partner organisations, has been conducting a series of awareness programmes over the last few years around Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary under the theme “Conservation and Coexistence.”

As part of this initiative, Aaranyak, in collaboration with the wildlife sanctuary authority, local NGO SHIPA and with support from IUCN CAG organised another programme on August 18 at various locations within Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. The event featured two key components—outdoor exposure and indoor interactions—aimed at helping students explore local natural resources and reflect on their roles and responsibilities in conservation.



During the outdoor session, students were introduced to the seasonal flora and fauna of Pobitora, including the iconic Greater one-horned rhino. They learned about the impacts of rising temperatures, floods, and erratic rainfall on the ecosystem and local livelihoods. The discussions also highlighted how unplanned road construction, bridge building, and landscape alterations threaten rhino habitats and pose challenges to the long-term sustainability of the sanctuary.

The indoor session featured interactive activities, including drawing and quiz competitions, designed around the students' observations from the outdoor exposure.

Sixty students from Mayang High School, Minerva Academy, Lokapriya GNB High School, and Shankardev Shishu Niketan took part, accompanied by 6 teachers, along with 10 local villagers and tourist guides.

Resource persons included Aaranyak's Deputy Director of Rhino Research and Conservation Division Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, officials from NGO SHIPA Binod Deka and Nripen Nath, Forest officials Naurattam Deka and Mitul Das and local tourist guide Umesh Deka. Aaranyak official Ujjal Bayan coordinated the event, while Aaranyak's K9 unit handler Rupak Bora and volunteers Ayush Debnath and Jomi Ronchar assisted to make the event successful.

Celebration of 79th Independence Day

The Aaranyak family celebrated the 79th Independence Day of our nation with pride and enthusiasm at our administrative office in Guwahati, as well as in various field stations across Assam.



Aaranyak expert trains SSB personnel on wildlife crime mitigation

Aaranyak was invited to depute an official as a resource person during a workshop for the Border Interaction Team at BOP Darranga, 64th BN SSB Barama on September 25.

Representing Aaranyak, Ivy Farheen Hussain, Senior Project Officer and Wildlife Crime Analyst from the Legal and Advocacy Division, delivered sessions on two key aspects--

Perspectives of Wildlife Crimes in Manas Landscape & Indo-Bhutan Border Areas - She highlighted ongoing wildlife crimes in the region, the modus operandi of criminals, routes and areas of concern related to illegal wildlife trade, and stressed the importance of intelligence-gathering and constant coordination with the forest department.



Fake vs Real: Identification of Wildlife Products - She explained the technicalities of identifying genuine versus counterfeit wildlife products, the disguises used in smuggling, and how fake products also pose challenges in crime mitigation.

The 2.5-hour training session was attended by over 40 SSB personnel, including 6 women cadres, equipping them with critical knowledge to strengthen their role in combating wildlife crime.

Eco Talk conducted on the role of forensic investigation in wildlife crime control

Aaranyak organised an Eco Talk on the Role of Forensic Investigation in Wildlife Crime Control at its administrative office in Guwahati on August 18.



Dr. Keshav Kumar, IPS (Retd.), renowned for his expertise in forensic sciences having significant contributions to wildlife crime investigations, graced the event as the invited speaker.

In his talk, Dr. Kumar elaborated on various facets of wildlife crime, sharing some of his field experiences, and explained how forensic science can be effectively applied in investigating and combating wildlife crime. Addressing an audience of over fifty participants, including students, forensic scholars, wildlife biologists, staff and members from Aaranyak as well as people from diverse backgrounds, Dr. Kumar shared insightful perspectives on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to nature conservation, wildlife protection, and sustainability.

The Eco Talk was held under the leadership of Udayan Borthakur, Director of Aaranyak's Wildlife Genetics Division, who outlined the objectives of the event and highlighted the role of Aaranyak's Wildlife Genetics Laboratory in supporting forest authorities through evidence-based wildlife crime investigations.

The event concluded with an engaging question-and-answer session, marked by a host of thought-provoking questions from the participants. The Eco Talk was coordinated by Aaranyak's Senior PRO Pranab Goswami.

Dr. Keshav Kumar is a distinguished officer, served actively in the Indian Police Service (IPS) for 35 years and retired in April 2021 and currently acting as the Advisor to Govt. of Assam. His illustrious career includes serving as the Director General of Police and Director of the Anti-Corruption Bureau in the Gujarat State Police, Consultant to Government of Assam, Home Department & Political Affairs, Resource Faculty – National Forensic Sciences University – Gujarat, and many more.

VDP members in Baksa engaged in sensitisation programme



"Rhino Goes to School" conducted in Jorhat

With support of the SBI Foundation, Aaranyak organised a comprehensive awareness and training programme for the Village Defence Party (VDP) at Nayabasti, under the jurisdiction of Barbari Police Station in Baksa district on August 2.

This initiative was aimed at empowering VDP members by equipping them with essential knowledge, practical skills, and strategic tools to effectively confront and manage the escalating challenges posed by human-elephant conflict in the region.

The session was led by Anjan Baruah, Assistant Manager of Aaranyak's Elephant Research and Conservation Division, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on Asian elephants, their behaviour, as well as the underlying factors driving their frequent incursions into human settlements.

Additionally, the programme featured a significant address by the In-Charge of Baganpara Police Outpost, who provided an overview of the current human-elephant conflict scenario and shared valuable insights on broader community issues.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from 42 VDP members representing 11 Village Defence Parties, who actively engaged in discussions and shared their experiences and concerns. The entire programme was smoothly facilitated by Aaranyak's team, Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatry, Bikash Tossa and Bijoy Kalita.

An event of the flagship 'Rhino Goes to School' campaign was conducted by Aaranyak in collaboration with Annapurna Seed Library on August 30 in Chaukhat ME School, Dhekiakhuwa, Jorhat.



The programme was supported by the David Shephard Wildlife Foundation. The goal of the programme was to create awareness about rhino conservation and build future stewards for the conservation of this iconic species. Students were acquainted with basic knowledge on rhinos, their distribution, importance and local flora and fauna by Arif Hussain, Sr. Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak. The programme was able to sensitize a participation gathering of 50 students. Mahan Chandra Bora founder of Annapurna Seed Library and a known farmer of Assam spoke on how the students can contribute towards sustainable environment. The programme also included an open quiz to maintain the dynamism of the programme by Bijit Dutta, founder, Annapurna Seed Library. Bhupesh Dutta and Nabin Pachoni ex teachers and Lily Phukan, Headmistress of the school also interacted with the participants. Akash Morang, member of Aaranyak was also present in the programme.

Another such event was organised in Sankardev ME School, Ladoighar on 29th August with participation of over 50 students.

Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak, Mohan Chandra Bora and Bijit Dutta, Founders of Annapurna Seed Library, were present in the programme as resource person. Poromeswar Krishnatreya, Headmaster of the School, Akash Morang, members of Aaranyak were also present in the programme.

Promotion of lemon cultivation near Raimona National Park

Aaranyak in collaboration with Raimona National Park authority organised a training on lemon cultivation at Bahalpur, BTR, Kokrajhar on August 21.



The aim of the training was to promote lemon cultivation among the communities living on the edge of the forest boundary.

Haidor Ali Sarkar, a known nursery practitioner particularly lemon cultivator conducted the hands-on training in his nursery. Ten community members from four different fringe villages of Raimona National Park participated in the training programme.

Local Community Members Namely-Ronen Narzary (Gaonburha- Dombazaar F.V), Jimir Narzary, Pranjit Narzary, Raju Brahma, Derhasat Narzary, Rinjoy Narzary, Sobit Narzary, Utpal Brahma, John Wary and Biliphang Boro participated in the training.

Dr Paris Basumatary, Range Officer of Central Range (Kachugaon) actively supported in organising the training. Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director and senior conservation biologist at Aaranyak oversaw this programme under the supervision of Dr Firoz Ahmed, Director and Head of Tiger Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak. Gayatri Dutta, Birdutta Baro, Nijwm Basumatary, facilitated the field coordination.

Traditional snacks-making training in Phumen Engti village



As part of its ambitious community-driven initiative, Aaranyak successfully conducted a traditional snacks-making training at Phumen Engti village of Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape of Assam. The initiative aimed to strengthen culinary skills, revive and preserve the rich culinary traditions of the Karbi community by sharing practical knowledge on the preparation of age-old snacks.

The session focused on the preparation of six traditional delicacies, locally known as Sang Aduk, Sang Karnu, Him Karnu, Him Ki-uh, Bara An-ke-uh, and Keteli-a-him made using three different types of rice. Participants learned the step-by-step process, from grinding rice in a traditional mortar (Ural) to cooking on a traditional fireplace (Chouka), gaining hands-on experience in age-old culinary techniques.

The training was led by Samili Beypi, a respected elder and culinary knowledge-holder from the village, who served as the group instructor. Under her expert guidance, participants- Lucky Beypi, Kache Engtipi, Sabet Terangpi, and Parboti Hansepi actively took part in the hands-on cooking process, gaining valuable experience in traditional cooking techniques. The session was made even more memorable with the soulful Karbi songs related to cooking, sung by the women participants. Such initiatives not only build skills but also foster intergenerational learning within the community.

'Frog Watch and Photography' inspires students



To raise awareness among students about the amphibians found in Kaziranga, Aaranyak organised a 'Frog Watch and Photography' session in Phumen Engti village, Karbi Anglong, the last session of the year on August 10.

Fifteen students from the 9th and 10th standards of Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School, Chandrasing Rongpi village, Karbi Anglong, and two students each from Tezpur University and Debraj Roy College, Golaghat, attended the session.

During the Frog Watch walk, participants encountered a variety of frog and lizard species. They learned about the life cycle of frogs, their habitats, and behaviours. Knowledge is best absorbed outside traditional classrooms. The session offered them an opportunity to connect theory with real-world observation, deepening their appreciation for amphibians and the local ecosystem.

The session, led by Aaranyak's senior herpetologist Dr Jayanta Kumar Roy, featured storytelling by community member Bidyaram Tokbi. The storytelling session took place in Mandu, at a jhum field, where participants enjoyed refreshments.

Through engaging narratives, participants learned about the Karbi community's traditions, values, and close relationship with nature. These stories provided cultural insights that added a meaningful layer to the day's experiences, blending ecological learning with indigenous heritage.

The programme concluded with an insightful talk by Aaranyak's Senior Scientist, Dr M Firoz Ahmed, who emphasised the importance of learning about local species and understanding how they support the ecosystem.

Solar fence at Thakurbila to secure 53 households

A 2-km solar-powered community-managed fence was installed at Thakurbila village under Krishnai Forest Range of Goalpara Forest Division of Assam in July, 2025 by Aaranyak, Forest Department and the local committee in a collaborative effort.



The community solar fence was formally inaugurated and handed over to the local community of Thakurbila village on August 22. The said solar fence has been sponsored by the Goalpara Forest Division solar fence project.

Krishnai Forest Range Officer Debabrata Sarma inaugurated the solar fence but cutting the ceremonial ribbon with and officially handed it over to the community and solar fencing committee through signing of an MoU signed by local community, Aaranyak and Forest Department.

Thakurbila village has around 53 households. The residents of the village belong to indigenous Rabha community and 99% of the villagers are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.

The village is situated in Assam-Meghalaya border area. The villagers have been facing a serious human elephant conflict (HEC) problem for a long time. The local farmers have been losing crops, properties even human lives too due to the raging HEC.

The solar fence has secured all the 53 households of Thakurbila village. The meeting was initiated by the solar fencing committee president Ananta Rabha and presided over by Bapon Rabha, Gaon Burah of Thakurbila village.

The Aaranyak team of Goalpara-Garohills landscape was comprising Manjit Das, Ripunjoy Nath, Subhas Rabha and Rahit Ch. Nath and Krishnai Forest Range Officer Debabrata Sarma, Forester Jagadish Barman and other forest staff were present in the programme that was participated by around 65 villagers.

Indigenous People's Day celebrations in Karbi Anglong

Aaranyak in collaboration with Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School and the Kohora Area Protection Committee organised a vibrant event with indigenous Karbi community members at the Community Hall, Chandrasing Rongpi Village, Kohora, Karbi Anglong, Assam on World's Indigenous People's Day.



Following the talks, traditional game competitions were held, featuring popular Karbi games such as Kengdongdang Kedam (Bamboo Stilt Walk), Sang Kangkrung (Winnowing Rice), and Sonsuri Kachivung (Tug of War). The celebration culminated with an entertaining showcase of cultural dances, followed by the distribution of certificates and prizes to the winning participants. The event was successfully organised by Aaranyak team members and local community volunteers.

Seventy-three community people attended the event organised commemorating the theme “Indigenous Peoples and AI: Defending Rights, Shaping Futures”.

The day began with an interactive session with students of Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School on the importance of AI in preserving and documenting traditional knowledge. Aaranyak’s Uttaran Dutta and Semson Engti led the orientation.

The formal inauguration of the event commenced with a felicitation ceremony honouring esteemed resource persons -- Rupsing Engleng (KAPC), Moina Kramsapi, and Anjana Rongpharpi, along with teachers from Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial School.

Speakers delivered insightful visual presentations on the significance of traditional knowledge, the challenges faced by indigenous communities, and the importance of laws in defending indigenous rights and shaping their future.

Moina Kramsapi spoke about the importance of indigenous community rights and the provisions in the Indian Constitution that protect the identity and culture of indigenous peoples.

Events celebrating World Elephant Day

On the occasion of World Elephant Day, Aaranyak in collaboration with the Dhansiri Forest Division of Assam Forest Department and with support from the SBI Foundation, brought together students, community members, and forest officials to promote creativity and raise awareness for human-elephant coexistence in the present day context. Held on August 12 at Laxminath Bezbaruah ME School, Bamunjuli, Udalguri, the event was marked by a day of vibrant activities blending art, learning and powerful messages of conservation.



Representatives from the Forest Department including Mustafa Ali Ahmed, Divisional Forest Officer of Dhansiri Forest Division, Pranjal Talukdar, Range Officer of Nunai Range and Rajen Daimari, Range Officer of Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary, actively participated in the celebration. A standout feature of the programme was a coexistence-themed wall painting led by a local artist. Students, teachers, and community members enthusiastically joined to use vibrant colours and creativity to depict the importance of living harmoniously with elephants. The event also featured a “Hator Chapa” (handprint pledge) activity, where participants imprinted their hands as a symbol of their commitment to coexistence. Adding to the day’s significance, community members Bhairab Nath and Purna Basumatary from the Elephant Conservation Network (ECN), were felicitated in recognition of their sustained efforts and dedication to elephant conservation

Aaranyak organised another event on the occasion of World Elephant Day on 12th August at Indralal Pathak Girls’ High School, Baksa, engaging 61 enthusiastic students. Held in collaboration with WWF-India and The Green Globe, with support from the SBI Foundation, the programme aimed to raise awareness on elephant conservation and promote sustainable coexistence. The day featured interactive sessions where Suravi Dutta from WWF-India spoke on elephants as keystone species, the threats they face, and community-led solutions for reducing conflict. Rajesh Dutta Baruah from The Green Globe added an important perspective on plastic waste management and its link to habitat degradation.

A lively quiz competition on wildlife and conservation tested knowledge, sparked curiosity, and strengthened the students’ connection to nature.

The event was facilitated by Aaranyak’s Jiban Chetry and Jaugashar Basumatary, WWF-India’s Suravi Dutta, Mrinmoyee Sarma, and Bipul Nath, along with Rajesh Dutta Baruah from The Green Globe, whose collective efforts made the sessions engaging, educational, and inspiring.



The day was celebrated in Ujani Sadiya Higher Secondary School of Sadiya, Tinsukia on August 12 in collaboration with Ujani Sadiya HS School, Eco club of Ujani Sadiya HS school and Doom Dooma Forest Division (Sadiya Forest Range). The event kicked off with opening remarks and welcome address by Kamal Borah, subject teacher from Ujani Sadiya HS School followed by introduction of the invited guests. A brief on Aaranyak was presented by Aaranyak’s Zakir Islam Bora. We honoured four elephant mahouts and two elephant owners across Sadiya area with traditional gamocha, flower bouquet, and a letter of appreciation for their works on elephant conservation.

World Elephant Day was celebrated with great joy at Bejorchiga, Jhanjimukh cultural centre, Jorhat. The celebration began from 8 AM with a wall painting (elephant themed) session in Jhanjumukh Janajati HS School. Local artist Manash Jyoti Bora led this painting session with the involvement of school students. In this programme, Aaranyak official Niranjana Bhuyan and Chiranjib Kalita coordinated along with the school principal. Eighty students and eight school teachers attended the painting session.

In Jhanjimukh cultural centre, another awareness programme started with opening remark and felicitation of invited guest led by Niranjana Bhuyan and Ananta Dutta, where we honoured three elephant mahouts from Jhanjimukh area. Members from Jhanjimukh Gaon Panchayat, RRU members, members of solar fence committee, President and Secretary of local NGO ‘Keteki’, community members across Jhanjimukh area -- Sagunpara, Hatishal Chapori, Sumoni Chapori, Major Chapori, Chutal Bagh were present in the meeting.

First Aid training to support human-elephant coexistence

Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, recently took another step forward on in its mission to address human–elephant conflict (HEC) by strengthening community preparedness and safety.



As part of its ongoing multi-pronged approach, blending ecological conservation with local capacity building, a first-aid training programme was organised in Jharbasti village, Baksa district, a place where the realities of living alongside wildlife intertwine with the challenges of everyday emergencies.

The training aimed to equip residents with essential skills to respond quickly and effectively when professional medical help is distant. Twenty-six participants took active part in hands-on sessions tailored to their rural realities, learning life-saving techniques such as constructing makeshift stretchers to transport injured persons from remote locations, applying correct bandaging for fractures and limb injuries, administering first aid for snake bites, a frequent hazard in forest-edge communities and practising fire safety, including how to safely extinguish gas cylinder fires.

These skills hold value not only during human–elephant conflict incidents but also in a range of emergencies that rural families may face.

Conducted in collaboration with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), the training was led by AAPDA Mitras Nabajyoti Talukdar and Ritupan Kalita. Aaranyak’s field team members Jiban Chetry and Jaugashar Basumatary facilitated the programme, ensuring smooth coordination and strong community engagement throughout the day

School outreach to raise awareness on community-elephant coexistence

Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, organised two school outreach programmes in Udalguri district, Assam, to raise awareness among students about elephant behaviour and the importance of peaceful coexistence.

The first session was held on 6th August 2025 at Naobandha ME School, and the second session took place on 11th August 2025 at Atrikhat ME School in Udalguri district. Both these programmes carried a participation of 128 students.



During both the programmes, we presented our educational campaign, designed as “Gajah Katha”, to help students understand elephant behaviour types, their habitats, and movement patterns and also the deep cultural and spiritual connections that people share with elephants. The sessions explained and encouraged viewing such moments with empathy and to recognise the importance of safe, respectful responses that reduce conflict and support coexistence.

The sessions were made interactive through storytelling, discussions, and simple examples that connected with the students' own daily experiences at their localities. This approach helped them relate to the challenges of living in elephant-prone areas and think about practical ways to reduce conflict while also protecting these gentle giants.

Both programmes were successfully facilitated by Aaranyak's Abhilasha Boruah, Mondeep Basumatari, Bikash Tossa, and Pradip Barman. Through such initiatives, Aaranyak continues to empower communities and inspire the younger generation to play an active role in wildlife conservation, fostering harmony between humans and elephants for a sustainable future.

Capacity building programme on wildlife tourism near Pobitora WLS

A capacity development and sensitisation programme for community members aimed at bolstering efforts for rhino conservation through community participation, was organized at Elephant Camp of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam on August 23 last in a collaborative mode.



This long-awaited initiative was highly appreciated by the local community and the Pobitora Jeep Safari Owners' Association, reflecting a strong demand for skill development in wildlife-based tourism.

The programme was jointly facilitated by Aaranyak, WWF-India, Pobitora Jeep Safari Owners' Association, local NGO SHIPA, and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary authority, with support from IUCN CAG and Zoo Berlin.

Forty participants, including both men and women from local communities, participated in this knowledge-sharing session aimed at equipping participants with skills and knowledge aligned with sustainable wildlife tourism in Pobitora.

Although the wildlife sanctuary known for its treasure trove of one-horned rhinoceros, is in the proximity to Assam's capital city Guwahati, the tourism industry here has remained at its nascent stage despite significant potential for community participation and livelihood generation.

The programme commenced with a message from Alekh Saxena, DFO, Guwahati Wildlife Division, who emphasized the role of tourist guides as ambassadors between nature and visitors, advocating for responsible and respectful tourism. His message, read by Aaranyak official Kakali Baishya, set the tone for the session. The program was eloquently anchored by Jomi Rongchon and Kakali Baishya.

Empowering rural youth with electrical wiring skills

Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCD) of Aaranyak explained the programme's objectives, followed by an engaging technical session led by Dr Anupam Saramah, Team Leader – Brahmaputra Landscape, WWF-India, who highlighted the ethical dimensions of wildlife tourism, focusing on sustainability, cultural preservation, and local enterprise development.

An inspiring interaction was led by Axom Gaurav awardee Dharanidhar Boro, who shared his journey in rhino conservation, motivating participants to stay committed to the cause. Pranjal Baruah, Range Officer, underscored the importance of adhering to legal norms for the protection of Pobitora and its rhinos.

Arif Hussain, Senior Manager of RRCD, Aaranyak, conducted an insightful session on "Birding Skills for Tourist Guides," introducing techniques for bird identification and promoting ethical bird-watching practices.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Executive Director and Secretary General of Aaranyak who joined online, expressed his vision for empowering local communities through conservation-based employment opportunities so as to reinforce harmony between people and wildlife.

The programme concluded successfully, thanks to the coordinated efforts of Ujjal Bayan, Ayush Debnath, Rupak Bora, and Abhinav Bardaloi, leaving participants motivated and better equipped to contribute to sustainable wildlife tourism and rhino conservation.

Aaranyak in collaboration with Ideal Abhijan and ITI Kohora organised a seven-day hands-on training programme on Basic Electrical Wiring for the youth of the Kohora-Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL) of Assam from August 20-26 last at the premises of ITI Kohora.



Twenty-three youth participants from different parts of the landscape took part in the training that was designed to enhance the employability and self-reliance of rural youth by equipping them with practical technical skills that can open avenues for both wage employment and self-employment.

The training combined theoretical knowledge with intensive hands-on sessions, enabling participants to gain first-hand experience in electrical wiring, safety measures, and the use of essential tools.

At the closing ceremony on August 26, participants were awarded certificates of completion in recognition of their newly acquired skills. To further encourage their practical application of learning, each participant was also provided with a basic electrical tool kit that will enable them to undertake small-scale electrical work independently in their communities.

The valedictory session was graced by several invited guests who encouraged the youth with their words of support. Photik Bora, President of the Kaziranga Hotel and Resort Association, stressed the need for skilled youth to boost tourism and hospitality in Kaziranga. Dibajyoti Bora, President of Ideal Abhijan, praised the participants' enthusiasm and reaffirmed his organisation's commitment to youth empowerment.

President of PIRBI and Secretary of Duwarbagori Cooperative Society Horiram Engti highlighted the importance of self-reliance for resilient rural communities, while Swapan Nath, President of the Greater Kaziranga Media Forum, emphasised that skill development must translate into livelihood opportunities.

This programme marks a significant step towards promoting sustainable livelihoods in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape while engaging youth in constructive skill development. Aaranyak and its partners plan to continue such capacity-building initiatives to empower more young people in the region.

Seasame cultivation promoted in HEC-hit areas of Udalguri, Baksa

Aaranyak in its interventions supported by the SBI Foundation, to promote human-elephant coexistence takes initiatives to enhance livelihood security of vulnerable communities residing in conflict-prone landscapes.



As part of such an initiative, Aaranyak team distributed 7.5 kilograms of sesame seeds to three farming households from Village No. 1 and Village No. 2 of Sathgharia of Udalguri district and 6.5 kilograms of sesame seeds to two villagers from Madhupur Mainaguri in Baksa district on August 20, 2025.

Udalguri and Baksa are two of the most severely affected districts in Assam in terms of human-elephant conflict (HEC). Majority of people in these two districts are entirely dependent on agriculture, particularly paddy cultivation, for food and income. However, shrinking forest resources and habitat degradation in these districts have forced elephants to increasingly raid croplands, with paddy fields being among their prime targets.

Recurrent conflicts result in devastating losses for farmers, aggravating their already fragile livelihoods while simultaneously elevating tensions between people and elephants.

In response to the adversity, Aaranyak has been promoting the cultivation of alternative crops such as sesame, which are less palatable to elephants. Unlike paddy, sesame is rarely targeted by elephants, and even if raiding occurs, crop losses are minimal.

Such alternatives crop not only safeguard household income but also help reduce the risk of direct encounters between people and elephants. This approach represents a practical, community-driven pathway towards resilience, ensuring that local livelihoods are protected while easing pressures on coexistence.

The distribution sesame seeds were facilitated by Aaranyak team members Mondeep Basumatari, Abhijit Saikia, Jaugashar Basumatary and Pradip Barman, who worked closely with the beneficiary households to ensure effective engagement and understanding.

Training on solar fence system at Kurshapakhri, Goalpara

A training on maintenance, management and installation of solar-powered fence meant for mitigation on human elephant conflict (HEC) was conducted by premier biodiversity conservation organization Aaranyak for the local community members of Kurshapakhri village under Lakhipur Forest Range of Goalpara District on Aug 25 and 26, 2025 at Dr Bhupen Hazarika Open Stage, Kurshapakhri.

Around 30 community members including the members of solar fence committee participated the training programme.



Kurshapakhri village located under Lakhipur revenue circle consists of 120 households. The people of this village have been facing HEC problem since 2005. The people here usually have to spend sleepless night apprehending depredation of wild elephants.

Forest Department in collaboration with Aaranyak has come forward to erect a community-managed solar fence to protect lives and property of the community of Kurshapakhri village.

The local community, Aaranyak and Forest department will carry out installation of solar powered fence installation a collaborative effort with support from Goalpara Forest Division's Solar-powered Fence Project. The installation work of the solar fence will be started immediately after the training.

Aaranyak's Assistant Manager and solar fence expert Anjan Baruah conducted the training session on the entire process solar fence installation and management besides explaining about the machinery and equipment involved. The complete process of the installation and maintenance of the solar fence was demonstrated during the training session.

The Aaranyak team comprising Anjan Baruah, Nipul Chakma, Manjit Das, Ripunjoy Nath, Subhas Rabha, Rahit Nath and Bijay Kalita conducted the training programme.

Joint patrolling by Forest Depts of Assam, Meghalaya wanted for HEC mitigation



Nondescript Lahapara village is located at the inter-state boundary between Assam (Goalpara) and Meghalaya (West Garo Hills). The nearby villages of Khokapara, Belguri, and Naguapara are part of the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. Some other neighbouring villages, such as Besorkona, Batapara, and Pukhuripara, belong to Assam.

The residents of these villages in both Assam and Meghalaya have been facing hardships because of raging Human elephant conflict (HEC) for a long time.

Aaranyak in partnership with the Lakhipur Forest Range in Goalpara, Assam and the West Garo Hills Wildlife Range in Meghalaya organized an awareness-cum- community interaction programme on HEC mitigation and coexistence on the ground of Lahapara L.P. and M.E. School on August 25, 2025.

One of the key suggestions made by community representatives during the interaction was to form joint patrolling teams by Assam and Meghalaya Forest Departments to bolster elephants' protection and HEC mitigation.

The programme was supported under the joint sponsorship of the Darwin Initiative, the British Asian Trust, and the Goalpara Forest Division, Assam.

Approximately 90 including 40 women from various bordering villages from Assam and Meghalaya attended the awareness programme that featured interactions with community members by Lakhipur Forest Range team, led by Range Officer Dharmendra Das and the West Garo Hills (Wildlife) Range team, led by Oshim B. Sangma.

The Aaranyak team was represented by Anjan Baruah, Nipul Chakma, and Subhas Ch. Rabha, Manjit Das, Ripunjoy Nath, Rahit Nath, and Bijoy Kalita. Additionally, Aaranyak ECN member Nabajyoti Basumatary, along with Bankim Rabha, Manjay Rabha, and Rapid Response Unit (RRU) member Norway Rabha, participated in the event.

Notable attendees included Madhuram Rabha, the former Executive Member of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council; Aswini Basumatary, President of Pukhuripara GP; Sanjib Rabha, Village Head of Khokapara village and Nripen Rabha, Village Head of Batapara village.

Range Officer Dharmendra Das talked about efforts for conservation of elephants, forests, and nature. He emphasized the importance of understanding elephant movement areas and suggested that the community avoid mono-crop practices.



Oshim Sangma, Forester-1 of the West Garo Hills Forest, discussed the ongoing implementation of HEC mitigation measures in villages along the Assam-Meghalaya border. He highlighted several upcoming activities aimed at further mitigation. Anjan Baruah from Aaranyak spoke about elephant behaviour and the causes of HEC, as well as various mitigation techniques designed to protect both lives and property. He provided some helpful dos and don'ts to help reduce HEC.

The residents of both states also suggested the formation of a joint patrolling team comprising members from the Assam and Meghalaya Forest Departments to enhance elephant protection efforts.

School outreach focuses on nature conservation and coexistence



Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, conducted a school outreach programme at Teliya Para M.E. School in Udalguri district on August 21, 2025.

The initiative aimed at nurturing environmental consciousness among young learners by fostering awareness on the importance of biodiversity and wildlife conservation, with a particular focus on promoting human-elephant coexistence.

By encouraging students to take small yet meaningful steps for nature conservation, the programme aimed to develop a deeper sense of responsibility towards safeguarding the ecosystems they are directly connected to.

During the session, we highlighted the interdependence of all living beings-plants, animals, and humans -- and emphasised that biodiversity conservation is not only about protecting wildlife but also about maintaining the ecological balance that sustains human life and well-being.

Special emphasis was placed on the conservation challenges unique to Assam, particularly the recurring human-elephant conflict in regions like Udalguri.

Students were also sensitised about the reasons leading to human elephant conflict, and the pressing need for coexistence strategies that prioritise the safety of both people and elephants. The participation of 60 students, marked by their curiosity, questions, and eagerness, highlighted how strongly young minds resonate with the idea of conservation when issues are made relatable to their daily lives and surroundings.

Their keen engagement reaffirmed the importance of introducing coexistence values at an early age, especially in communities that share space with wildlife, where awareness can serve as the foundation for long-term harmony between human beings and nature.

The session was facilitated by Abhilasha Boruah, Bistirna Burhagohain, and Pradip Barman from Aaranyak, who guided the discussions with insightful presentations and interactive activities, ensuring that the learning experience was informative and inspiring.

SSB personnel sensitised on tackling HEC situations

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Nunoi Forest Range under Dhansiri Forest Division, Udalguri district and with the support of the SBI Foundation, organised a training-cum-awareness programme for the personnel of the 37 Battalion Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) at the Nunoi Forest Range Office on August 23, 2025.

The programme was aimed at equipping the personnel of the elite border-guarding force with essential knowledge and skills to deal with human-elephant conflict (HEC) situation, with a special emphasis on ensuring their own safety while on duty in HEC-prone areas.

The training focused on understanding elephant behaviour and movement patterns, practical mitigation strategies that can be applied on the ground, as well as long-term measures to reduce conflict and promote coexistence between people and elephants.

Around 100 SSB personnel actively participated in the sessions, sharing their own field experiences of dealing with elephant encounters and HEC and engaging in meaningful discussions, which added practical depth to the learning process.

This interactive exchange not only enhanced their understanding but also helped identify realistic approaches that can be used in varied field situations.

The presence of Range Officer Pranjal Talukdar further motivated the participants, while facilitators from Aaranyak, Rabiya Daimari and Abhilasha Boruah, ensured the content was delivered in a practical and engaging manner.

Such initiatives are instrumental in involving security forces directly in conservation actions, enabling them to play a proactive role in mitigating human-elephant conflict while ensuring their own safety on duty, and thereby contributing to safer ecosystems for both communities and wildlife alike.



Awareness event on biodiversity for students near Orang NP

Aaranyak in collaboration with Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority and Wild Wings organised an awareness programme in Sankardev Jatiya Vidyalaya, Orang with support from Zoo Berlin to sensitise students about flora and fauna around Orang landscape, importance of biodiversity conservation and related aspects.

Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, Nejb Ahmed of Wild Wings, Hirak Jyoti Das of Aaranyak were present as the resource persons in the programme where 50 students participated.



Some of the students who had earlier attended the nature camp, have now taken up conservation efforts in their locality and shared their experiences.

Sofikul Islam, Head Master, Sanjay Laha, Assistant teacher and Baharul Islam, President, Fatasimolu Eco-Development Committee were also present in the programme.

Field gear presented to forest staff of Laokhowa WLS

Aaranyak in collaboration with Nagaon Wildlife Division, Kaziranga Tiger Reserve and LBCS organised an interactive and field gears distribution programme in Gorajan Range, Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary on August 28. During the event, Aaranyak provided charge lights and raincoats to 20 volunteers under Gorajan Range and Dhania Range with the support of the David Shephard Wildlife Division.

The field gears were handed over by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak in presence of Rajib Hazarika, DFO, Nagaon Wildlife Division, Harish Ch. Nath, ACF, Pankaj Bora and Mukut Rabha, Range Officers of Gorajan and Dhania Range, Dilwar Hussain, Senior conservationist LBCS.

During the interaction session, DFO Rajib Hazarika elaborated about their role and responsibilities, importance of conservation etc. Dilwar Hussain said the field gear will help volunteers and encourage them to carry out their duties. Range Officers Pankaj Bora and Mukut Rabha expressed their gratitude to Aaranyak for the support.



Workshop, skill development training on water hyacinth crafts

Aaranyak in collaboration with Nagaon Wildlife Division, Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve and LBCS organised a consultative workshop and water hyacinth craft training at Gorajan Range on August 28. The programme was supported by International Rhino Foundation.

The aim of the programme is to empower women groups around Laokhowa Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary, through skill development and sustainability.



The training commenced on 28th August and ended on 3rd September, 2025. Twenty-five individuals participated in the training. Several products have been made which include pen stand, mobile purse, container, basket, ladies purse etc. The trainees were guided by Anjuma Begum, Master Trainer.

The programme was inaugurated by Rajib Hazarika, DFO, Nagaon Wildlife Division, in presence of Harish Ch. Nath, ACF; Range Officers Pankaj Bora, Mukut Rabha; Dilwar Hussain of LBCS and Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak.

In the consultation session various topics were discussed including production, marketing, value addition, marketing linkage, raw material supplies, online marketing etc. Some of the products were sold during the programme and women groups thanked the organizer for the initiative.

Final leg of “Ride for Conservation” flagged off from Pobitora WLS

The final leg of the ‘Ride for Conservation’ – bicycle rally undertaken by Aaranyak to spread mass awareness for conservation of biodiversity as part of the year-long celebration of the organization’s 35th Anniversary, was flagged off at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) in Morigaon district on September 8.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), Morigaon district, Dhruva Jyoti Nath and Range Officer of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary Pranjal Baruah jointly flagged off the cycle rally in presence of Aaranyak’s Publicity Secretary Bijay Sankar Bora, Public Relations Officer Gunajit Mazumdar and forest staff of Pobitora WLS.

Cyclists participating in the final leg of ‘Ride for Conservation’ included Arif Hussain, Swapan Nath, Suraj Bawri, Diganta Kumar Das, Luson Prakash Gogoi, Ankur Barman, Shyam Urang, Jahir Uddin Ahmed, Bipul Ganju, Shiva Sarkar, Nagar Basi Mandal, Vishal Raj Khanikar.

The ASP Nath lauded Aaranyak's efforts to raise mass awareness on conservation of biodiversity at this crucial juncture when the people the state along with the rest of the planet are facing the adverse impacts of global warming and climate change.

Range Officer Baruah said such an effort for promoting mass participation in conservation of nature is crucial for protection of wildlife and biodiversity and hoped that Aaranyak would undertake more such initiatives in days to come. "Authorities in all concerned national parks and other wildlife protection areas, Assam Forest Department, Assam Policy and concerned district administration have extended overwhelming support to the conservation ride across the state to make the initiative a grand success," said Bijay Sankar Bora who congratulated the cyclists showing tremendous resolve in undertaking the ride overcoming all challenges.

The cyclists participating in the rally were felicitated at the Administrative Headquarter of Aaranyak in the city on culmination of the "Ride for Conservation" that has been successfully led by senior Aaranyak official Arif Hussain who is also one of the key members of the riding team.

The "Ride for Conservation" has covered fifteen wildlife protection areas in the state of Assam including National Parks and several other wildlife sanctuaries and Reserve Forests since it was ceremonially flagged from Orang National Park in the month of March, 2025.

"The conservationists participating in the rally have held several mass contact programmes involving school students, college students, community members along its routes over the period to promote awareness for conservation of biodiversity," said Arif Hussain.

A large number of local cyclists participated in the ride in different legs of the event over the months making it a grand success.



Police, Forest officials take part wildlife crimes workshop in Hailakandi

Assam Police officials from three districts of Barak Valley and Assam Forest Department participated in a workshop on ‘Wildlife Crimes Scenario and its Various Dimension’ organised at Hailakandi by the Assam Police, Southern Range, in association with Aaranyak and District Legal Services Authority, Hailakandi recently during September 2025.



Welcoming the participants and resource persons, the DIG (Southern Range) of Assam Police, Kangkan Jyoti Saikia reminded the participants about Assam’s rich wildlife heritage and underlined the need for organising such workshops especially in Barak Valley for its strategic location and in view of the changing wildlife crime scenario in the region.

The Member Secretary of District Legal Services Authority, Hailakandi, Pranab Sharma, was also present in the workshop.

Delivering the keynote address on the theme of the workshop, reputed wildlife conservation scientist and the Executive Director of country’s one of the premier biodiversity conservation organisations, Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar highlighted how the illegal wildlife trade has emerged as the fourth largest after illegal trades in narcotics, arms smuggling and human trafficking across the globe.

He also talked about the rhino poaching situation in Assam context as well as in South Africa or other African countries. Highlighting the steps taken by the Assam government to protect wildlife and prevent wildlife crimes, Dr Talukdar commented that because of the proactive actions by the Assam government rhino poaching has come down from 41 incidents in 2013 to only two in past few years while it was zero poaching during the year 2022. Dr. Talukdar also highlighted how illegal wildlife trade also brings illegal arms into India from neighbouring countries posing threat to national security. He thanks Assam Police Southern Range for organising this workshop in Hailakandi.

Dr Talukdar also sensitised the participants on various sections of Wildlife Protection Act that can be used by police and forest officials alike. He underscored that the Wildlife Protection Act is a special Act and hence it sometimes supersedes other Acts.

“Like the forest officers, the police officers, especially the sub-inspectors and above, have the power as per the provisions of Wildlife Protection Act to file a complaint case. Any wildlife offence case is generally registered based on a complaint to the CJM court,” Dr Talukdar said.

Participating in the discussion, legal experts, especially the advocates, highlighted various provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act as well as its limitations. The Hailakandi Police also shared their experience in seizure of some exotic animals Red and Blue Iory bird.

About 30 police officials from three Barak Valley districts – Cachar, Hailakandi and Sribhumi -- participated in the workshop along with forest officers of various forest divisions from Barak Valley including the Divisional Forest Officer of Hailakandi, Akhil Dutta who opined that such workshops would be of immense benefit for forest and police officials.

Participating in the discussion SSP Hailakandi Amitabh Sinha spoke about provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act 1962 specially in the context of Hailakandi.

It was acknowledged by all that such a workshop was very much needed in Barak Valley. Although the wildlife cases are few in the region, forest and police officials deployed in Barak Valley have to remain alert to detect wildlife crimes because of the rising trend of wildlife trafficking through the international border in the neighbouring state of Mizoram.

Vulture conservation campaign in Kamrup involves police, VDPs

A conservation education and sensitisation campaign was organised at the Chhaygaon Police Station, Chhaygaon, with the goal of achieving zero vulture deaths in Kamrup District in the next years.



The event was organised by Aaranyak in collaboration with the Chhaygaon Police Station, Assam Forest School, Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC), Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building, and Livelihood Programme (EIACP), BNHS, and Bonyabondhu. The event was attended by a large number of members of the Village Defence Party (VDP), as well as police and forest officials.

In his talk, Kamakhya Mishra, Officer in Charge (OC), Chhaygaon Police Station, urged everyone to help with vulture conservation. He urged the Village Defence Party may play a pivotal role in communicating the conservation message and assisting police and other departments in preventing fatalities in their respective areas. He vowed to provide all essential support in the conservation of vultures.

In addition, Mishra, said that VDPs may act as vigilance mechanism and serve as a first line of protector if any vultures folk visit their locality.

Dr. Dipankar Lahkar, Senior Conservation Biologist and Assistant Director of Aaranyak, has urged the VDP and police personnel to work as a conservation force to protect vultures in Kamrup District. He explained the role of VDP and police in vulture conservation and they may act as conservation force to achieve zero vulture deaths in the next years. Dr. Lahkar further stated that poison-free food would rebuild the vulture population.

The programme began with the National Anthem, led by students from Guwahati College. Sri Dharanidhar Boro, Assam Gaurav Awardee, spoke with the participants and administered a green oath targeting vulture conservation.

Dr. Dipankar Lahkar engaged the audience with unique IEC material designed to promote the conservation message of vultures, outlining conservation challenges linked with vulture decline and potential solutions.

Suraj Chetry, the in charge of the VDPs taken the lead in organising the event. Panchali Hazarika of Assam Forest Department, Prasanna Kalita and Parash Moni Rabha of Bonyabondhu, Nitul Kalita of Aaranyak were also present in the occasion. The programme was financially supported by Oriental Bird Club.



Street play raises awareness on vulture conservation on International Vulture Awareness Day

Aaranyak, in collaboration with Rani High School and BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society), organised a street play on the occasion of International Vulture Awareness Day at Rani Market to raise awareness about the importance of vulture conservation. This programme was supported by Oriental Bird Club.

Guided by Dr Prarthana Mudoi, teacher of Rani High School, students delivered a powerful performance that highlighted the alarming decline in vulture populations and the devastating impact of accidental poisoning on these nature's scavengers. The play drew a large audience, encouraging community members to better understand the threats faced by vultures.

"Vultures need support to help them survive to carry forward the important ecological role to keep our environment clean and healthy. To complement the efforts in vulture conservation Aaranyak initiated conservation activities in parts of Assam since 2024", said Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak.

The programme was coordinated by Aaranyak officials Wasima Begum and Kakali Baishya, who emphasised the need for collective efforts to protect vultures and safeguard ecological balance.

"We don't usually think much about vultures since they're still around, but once they're gone, the difference will be huge. In places where vultures have disappeared, diseases spread quickly. Their presence is a sign of a healthy ecosystem, which we cannot afford to lose," added Kakali Baishya, Researcher, Aaranyak.



Karbi Anglong's rich culture, cuisine celebrated on World Tourism Day

On the occasion of World Tourism Day 2025, a special community event was held at the Community Hall of Chandrasing Rongpi Village, Kohora, Karbi Anglong, celebrating the rich local culture, food, and sustainable tourism practices of the region. The programme brought together community members, homestay owners, and tourism practitioners in a vibrant exchange of traditions and skills.

The event was also graced by Aneena Lakshmanan M V BNHS official, Mr. Jayanta Kumar Rabha, and a BNHS intern, Jyoti Gupta whose presence inspired the students and reinforced the collaborative spirit necessary for successful vulture conservation. Teachers Barnali Thakuria, Jayanti Boro, and Lakshyadhar Daimary of Rani High School were also present and actively supported the students during the street play, motivating them throughout the performance.

Aaranyak also extended its sincere appreciation to Dipak Kumar Sarma, Head of Rani High School, for organising such awareness programmes at the school and encouraging students to actively participate in conservation activities.

“Even today, many people are not fully aware of the vital role vultures play in maintaining the ecosystem. Therefore, raising awareness about vulture conservation from school students to adults is crucial to saving these important scavenger birds,” said Wasima Begum, Outreach Facilitator of Aaranyak.



The event featured three main competitions: Traditional Food, Handmade Tea Processing, and Homestay Housekeeping. In the Traditional Food Competition, judged by Anup Kakoti, Culinary Director of Center Point Group Enterprise, participants showcased indigenous recipes prepared with locally sourced ingredients. The judge appreciated the effort to preserve traditional knowledge and highlighted the importance of keeping these food practices alive.

The Handmade Tea Processing Competition showcased the skill of local participants in preparing natural tea using traditional methods, while the Homestay Housekeeping Competition allowed homestay owners to present their hospitality standards. Judged by hotelier Rehaan Ali from Kohora, the segment was praised for its cleanliness, presentation, and attention to detail. Alongside the competitions, community members engaged in discussions on the importance of traditional food, its deep connection to lifestyle, and the need to pass this knowledge to future generations. The event concluded with a unifying message: “Our culture is our identity.” By sharing traditions through tourism, the community fosters cultural pride, sustainable livelihoods, and meaningful connections with visitors.

Talents across India exhibit artistic skills to promote rhino conservation

On the occasion of World Rhino Day 2025, Aaranyak organised a national-level online illustration competition to celebrate India’s rich wildlife heritage and promote awareness on rhino conservation.

The competition provided a platform for participants across the country to showcase their creativity while highlighting the importance of protecting the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros, a species that is not only iconic but also deeply connected to the culture and heritage of Assam. Participants were invited to illustrate their ideas on three themes – Breaking Myths, Saving Rhinos; Rhino: The Pride of Assam’s Culture and Heritage and Rhinos for Tomorrow: Conservation and Community Prosperity.

The competition received an overwhelming response from 45 participants across Indian states, including West Bengal, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and various districts of Assam. Participants in the age-group of 12 to 40 years, exhibited diverse and enthusiastic engagement for wildlife conservation.

After careful evaluation, the winners were announced. The Winner of the competition was Tabin Choudhury (18) from Shrimanta Shankar Academy, Dispur, for his illustration on the theme Rhinos for Tomorrow: Conservation and Community Prosperity. The Runner-up was Azadur Rahman (27) from Tezpur University, also under the same theme. A Special Mention was accorded to Bhanujit Sarma (18) from Nalbari, Bidyapur, for his work on the theme ‘Breaking Myths, Saving Rhinos’.

Aaranyak congratulates all the winners and extends heartfelt appreciation to every participant for their creativity and dedication.

Aaranyak aims to engage people in conservation efforts through such initiatives and inspire collective action to safeguard the future of the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros, a symbol of pride for Assam and India.

The programme was coordinated by Kakali Baishya, a researcher from the Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCDD) of Aaranyak, under the guidance of Dr. Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director of RRCDD and with valuable support from Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak.



- RHINO HORN HAS NO MEDICINAL VALUE .
- PROTECTING RHINOS MEANS PROTECTING BALANCE IN NATURE .
- COEXISTENCE IS NECESSARY - RHINOS AND PEOPLE CAN THRIVE TOGETHER .

" AN ALIVE RHINO IS PRICELESS "
" A HORN IS WORTHLESS "

THE RHINO'S HORN IS MADE ENTIRELY OF KERATIN - THE SAME PROTEIN THAT MAKES UP HUMAN HAIR AND NAILS .

SAVE OUR ONE-HORNED RHINOS
NO RHINO CALF SHOULD LOSE IT'S MOTHER TO GREED OF POACHERS

Aaranyak promotes climate-resilient agriculture for coexistence around Pobitora WLS

In a pioneering effort to promote human-wildlife coexistence around the rhino abode of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam,) has launched an innovative initiative introducing climate-resilient agricultural practices in vulnerable fringe areas. This programme is being implemented in collaboration with the wildlife sanctuary authority, Eco-Development Committees, and a local NGO SHIPA.



Communities living on the fringes of Pobitora face dual challenges- seasonal floods caused by the Brahmaputra during summer and year-round crop depredation by rhinos and wild buffaloes.

These issues impose significant conservation costs on local farmers. For mitigating these challenges and enhance livelihood security, Aaranyak has initiated alternative climate-resilient agricultural practices in areas surrounding the sanctuary.

The programme aims to directly benefit 200 farmers across 13 villages. As part of the first phase, Aaranyak organised a capacity-building programme on climate resilience, followed by the distribution of rain shelter equipment, vermicomposting bags, and high-quality seeds.

These resources were provided to five women's groups, each consisting of 10 members, thereby strengthening women's empowerment and leadership in climate-resilient farming. This initiative is designed to support vulnerable communities while reducing human-wildlife conflict and ensuring ecological sustainability," said Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCD) of Aaranyak who is guiding the initiative. On-the-ground implementation is being led by Ujjal Bayan, a researcher with Aaranyak. This effort is supported by the IUCN-CAG programme and forms part of Aaranyak's broader mission to build community capacity and foster sustainable coexistence with wildlife in and around Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

Community awareness campaign series to tackle human-elephant conflict

Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, organised a series of community outreach programmes in Udalguri, Baksa, and Tamulpur districts during September, 2025, to raise awareness about elephants and to share practical ways to reduce Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC).

These initiatives are part of Aaranyak's ongoing efforts to strengthen community knowledge and encourage safe and respectful coexistence with wild elephants.



One of the outreach programmes was conducted on September 13 in No. 2 Bamunjuli, Udalguri district, where 20 villagers attended the session. During the programme, Aaranyak presented Gajah Katha and the mitigation set, which introduced important information about elephants and ways to deal with HEC.

More such programmes were held on September 16 in Bogribari and Bilpar villages of Baksa district. In these sessions, Aaranyak again showcased Gajah Katha and the mitigation set. These events saw the active participation of 42 villagers.

Later, on September 17, another outreach programme was organised at Khwirw Juli village in Tamulpur, where 13 villagers attended. In this session, too, Gajah Katha was presented to help the community understand elephants and their behaviour.

Each programme started with a discussion on Human–Elephant Conflict, where villagers were encouraged to share their personal experiences, concerns, and suggestions. This created an open and interactive space for dialogue.

The sessions then moved on to the presentation of Gajah Katha and the HEC mitigation part, which explained: Elephants’ behaviour and habitat. Reasons why elephants sometimes enter villages or crop fields. Practical and simple steps that people can take to reduce conflict and stay safe.

The sessions were made interactive and engaging with discussions, storytelling, and relatable examples. By linking the challenges faced in their daily lives with the knowledge shared, the villagers gained a clearer understanding that peaceful coexistence with elephants is possible through awareness, patience, and collective action.

These outreach programmes were facilitated by Aaranyak’s team members Rabiya Daimari, Mondeep Basumatari, Abhilasha Boruah, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatary, Dipankar Haloi, Bistirna Burhaghohain, Dibakar Nayak, Bikash Tossa, and Rupam Gayari.

Block level awareness on agroforestry organised at Pukhuripara

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Assam Agroforestry Development Board (AADB), organised a Block Level Awareness Programme on Promotion of Agroforestry under the RKVY, Assam initiative.

Altogether 38 farmers participated in the programme, which aimed to spread awareness about the benefits of agroforestry and encourage its adoption at the grassroots level.

Resource persons explained how agroforestry integrating trees with crops and livestock can improve soil fertility, provide sustainable income opportunities, and help farmers adapt to climate change. The farmers were also briefed on various government schemes, subsidies, and scientific practices related to agroforestry.

The interactive session created a platform for farmers to raise their concerns and share local experiences, making the programme both practical and participatory. Aaranyak representatives emphasised that the active role of farmers is vital in scaling up agroforestry for ecological sustainability and rural prosperity.

The programme concluded with a collective call to promote agroforestry as a nature-based solution for better livelihoods and environmental conservation.

Mrinalini Khanikar of Assam Agroforestry Development Board explained about the agroforestry and its relevancies. She talked about the outcome of Agroforestry practices.

Dharmendra Kumar Das, Range Officer, Lakhipur Forest Range described the Tree Out of Forest, selection of trees for Agroforestry and preparation of nursery bed.

Dr. Putul Bhuyan of Aaranyak explained about the various Agroforestry Models and site selection for nursery. Anjan Baruah of Aaranyak moderated the programme and he talked about Bio-fence and its benefits & effectiveness. The Pukhuripara Panchayat President Aswini Basumatary and Aaranyak ECN members of that area participated in the awareness programme.

Hospitality training held at Chandrasing Rongpi Village

A hospitality training session was organised by Aaranyak at Chandrasing Rongpi village in Karbi Anglong on September 21 with the participation of the Kindulangso Self Help Group.



The session aimed to strengthen homestay management practices and enhance the overall guest experience for visitors.

The training saw enthusiastic participation from eight homestays in the village, namely Jina's Homestay (Jina Rongpipi), Anjana's Homestay (Anjana Rongpharpi), Kareng's Homestay (Kareng Rongpipi), Margareth's Homestay (Margareth Terangpi), Manai's Homestay (Manai Terangpi), Prity's Homestay (Prity Tokbipi), Larbin's Homestay (Larbin Timungpi), and Charne's Homestay (Rupsing Enleng).

Each homestay owner actively engaged in discussions and shared their experiences of hosting guests, which enriched the learning process for all participants.

The training focused on effective guest communication, emphasising warm greetings, local introductions, and maintaining clean, well-prepared rooms and bathrooms with fresh linen and basic amenities.

Participants were encouraged to enhance the dining experience through local cuisine, cultural immersion in the kitchen, and neat food presentation. It further enhanced the capacity of the group in hospitality and service, strengthening their ability to deliver memorable guest experiences.

Aaranyak is committed towards conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem and supporting the indigenous communities residing in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape and Manas Landscape through promotion of Alternative and Sustainable Livelihoods activities, education and awareness. The initiative is supported by IUCN - Kfw and USFWS.

Students sensitised on conservation of hoolock gibbon, vultures

An awareness programme was organised at Pub Sadiya ME School, 12th Mile on September 3 to sensitise the villagers on biodiversity conservation with special reference to Hoolock Gibbon and Vulture found in nearby Kukuramora Reserve Forest.



Students along with the Locals of Kukuramora, Bahalharam, Alisinga, Sunpura Deori Gaon, Na-Saki were present in the programme. Chakra Thapa, Head Master and staff, Dr Jai Dayal Mali, Assam Science Society, Sadiya, Gaon Pradhans of Kukuramora and Bahalharam village, Gunadhar Baruah, Teacher along with students of Ujani Sadiya HS School were present in the programme.

Kamal Borah, Staff of Ujani Sadiya HS School and member of Aaranyak started the programme with a warm welcome. Dr Jai Dayal Mali gave a brief view on local concepts of Conservation.

Forest Official Churamoni Guzrel delivered a suitable lecture on how Forest Department and the indigenous communities of Sadiya can help in conserving the biodiversity.

Aaranyak's Rubul Tanti gave the people an idea about hoolock gibbons available in the region and what are the threats that need to be addressed.

Aaranyak's Rimpee Moran made a presentation on biodiversity conservation and human well-being. She also highlighted few flora and faunal species that are found in the nearby reserve forest.

Kamal Borah ended the programme with slides showing various species of vultures found in the region and their conservation threats. Debojit Gogoi, Tonmoy Gogoi and Jiaur Rehman were present in the programme.



Students, researchers in Barak Valley encouraged to contribute towards wildlife conservation

In an effort to encourage students and researchers of Barak Valley to contribute towards biodiversity conservation in the region, one of the widely acclaimed conservation leaders and scientist dedicated to protection of biodiversity in the region, Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar delivered a lecture at the Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Assam University, Silchar on 4th September on “Current Wildlife Conservation Picture in Global and Local Context”.

Dr. Talukdar underscored the role of government support and public awareness in effective conservation of biodiversity. He has highlighted the constitutional duties and rights of citizens of the country in safeguarding the environment, as enshrined in the Article 21 (Right to Life) and Article 51(a)(g) (Fundamental Duty to Protect the Environment).

Being Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org), one of Northeast India’s premier biodiversity conservation organisations, Dr Talukdar highlighted Aaranyak’s diverse projects and shared insights into ongoing efforts to assist conservation of species and habitats through multi-stakeholder approaches supported scientific research, community participation, education and awareness campaigns, livelihood support. He has also mentioned about Aaranyak’s Wildlife Genetics Lab that has taken some pioneering non-invasive research in Assam for past two decades. He has highlighted how the GIS and Remote Sensing Lab of Aaranyak has contributed towards decision making by making thematic maps on threatened species distribution including land use and land change map of the region.

He was warmly welcomed by Professor Aparajita Dey, Head of the Department in presence Senior Professor Parthankar Chowdhury at the beginning of the programme.

The lecture programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Associate Professor Dr. Panna Deb. It was smoothly moderated by researcher Priyanka Sarkar.

On 6 September morning, Dr. Talukdar delivered a talk at the Cachar College, organised by the Department of Zoology on “Opportunities for students and researchers in the field of Wildlife conservation”. The Principal of Cachar College Dr. Apratim Nag delivered a welcome address before the keynote address by Dr. Bibhab Talukdar. Dr. Talukdar highlighted the research needs to document wildlife of Barak valley and to assess key challenges the wildlife is facing in Barak Valley to find out possible solutions.



He mentioned that landscape of Barak Valley is unique with inner line forests along with Mizoram border and as such students and researchers have unlimited opportunities to opt for applied research so that their research outputs can help management authorities to conserve key landscapes in support of wild flora and fauna. He has mentioned about Aaranyak's internship and volunteer programmes for kind interest of students. Prof. Parthankar Chowdhury, President of the Governing Body of Cachar College was also present and made concluding remarks encouraging students and researchers to come forward to undertake research to contribute towards wildlife conservation. He has also flagged the current state of elephants in Barak valley.



Nature enthusiasts flock to spectacular exhibition in Dibrugarh

We organised Van Sobi 3.0, an exquisite Nature and Wildlife Photography Exhibition in Dibrugarh, showcasing the works of over 30 photographers from across India. The event also featured a special collection of curated photographs highlighting Aaranyak's 35-year journey in conservation.



Held at the Sarbananda Sonowal Sports Complex, Jalan Outdoor Stadium, Dibrugarh, the exhibition drew an encouraging number of visitors from diverse walks of life.

Following the successful editions in Guwahati and Nagaon, this third edition in Dibrugarh was organised in collaboration with Khuj, Dibrugarh, as part of Aaranyak's 35th anniversary celebrations.

Students sensitised on International Vulture Awareness Day

An awareness programme was organised at Palengi High School in Sivasagar district of Assam on the occasion of International Vulture Awareness Day 2025 to sensitise students about vulture conservation.



The event was conducted by Aaranyak in collaboration with ASTEC, Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP), Assam Forest School, BNHS, and Bonyabondhu, with support from the Oriental Bird Club.

Around 120 students along with teachers of Palengi High School participated in the programme. Aaranyak's Tibrajyoti Gogoi delivered a visual presentation highlighting the vulture species found in the region, their ecological importance, and the threats they face. Ejaj Ahmed from Aaranyak spoke about the role of students and communities in protecting these vital birds from extinction.

The programme concluded with Headmaster Rajani Kanta Gogoi's remarks on the need for vulture conservation in the local context. Aaranyak team members Jiaur Rahman, Deepjyoti Buragohain, and Digonta Saikia were also present during the event.

Inspiring Assam's future guardians of nature

As part of an innovative initiative, Samagra Shiksha, Assam (formerly RMSA) is bringing virtual studio-based special educational sessions to government school students across the state covering diverse and engaging educational topics.



On September 13, in collaboration with Apps'n'devices Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (formerly Gumbi Software), the Samagra Shiksha, Assam hosted a special invited session by globally acclaimed conservation scientist and Aaranyak's Secretary General & Executive Director Dr. Bibhab Talukdar.

Dr. Talukdar shared inspiring insights on wildlife conservation, environmental protection and career opportunities in conservation biology, motivating young learners to dream big and contribute to a sustainable future.

The session telecasted through the Tele-Education platform (Analytics Powered E-Classroom) projected to reach 4000+ rural schools and impacting the minds of over 10 lakh students from Grades 6–12 across Assam.

Event celebrating International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies

The Assam Pollution Control Board, in collaboration with Aaranyak and the Institution of Engineers (India), Assam State Centre, celebrated the "International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies" on 6th September 2025 with great enthusiasm.

This event was graced by the presence of Dr G K Misra, Member Secretary of Assam Pollution Control Board; Er. Mahesh Borkotoky, Chairman, IEI (India) ASC; Er. Gokul Bhuyan, Ex-Member Secretary, APCB; Dr. Rashmi Agarwalla, Assistant Professor, AIIMS Guwahati; Mr Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director, Aaranyak; Dr. Pranamika Bhuyan, Lead Consultant, Net Zero Think Pvt. Ltd.; Mr Shrishendu Shekhar Das, Founder of The Midway Journey; Dr. Jyotilima Saikia, State Consultant, NCAP Assam; Mr Kanteswar Kalita, SPRO of Assam Pollution Control Board.

Students and research scholars from various parts of Assam also delivered audio-visual presentations on the theme "Air Quality and Environment: Human Health Challenges and Community Mobilization." The top three presentations were recognized with cash awards and certificates, presented by the Assam Pollution Control Board.

The event highlighted the growing concern of rising air pollution in the state, its adverse impacts on human health, and the importance of community-driven solutions for a cleaner and healthier environment.



Alternative crops promoted to reduce HEC in Udalguri

Aaranyak with support from the SBI Foundation has initiated a programme to promote alternative crops to mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC) in Udalguri district of Assam, such alternative crops ensure livelihood security while reducing elephant depredation.

Aaranyak distributed 310 Assam lemon saplings to a household in No. 2 Tankibasti, Udalguri earlier this month (September 1). These saplings, to be planted across four bighas of land, will serve as a bio-fence around an arecanut plantation. Lemon plants not only provide farmers with an additional source of income but also act as a natural deterrent to elephants.



Continuing the initiative, on September 8, Aaranyak distributed 6.5 kilograms of mustard seeds in No. 2 Bamunjuli for cultivation across 5 bighas of land. Mustard, being less attractive to elephants compared to paddy, helps reduce crop depredation while ensuring sustainable income for farming families.

Udalguri remains one of Assam's most affected zones of human-elephant conflict, with recurring economic losses for farming households as elephants frequently raid paddy fields during the harvest season.

Aaranyak's science-driven interventions aim to build elephant-resilient farming systems that protect farmlands, strengthen rural livelihoods, and foster long-term coexistence between people and elephants.

The initiative was successfully implemented by Aaranyak's dedicated field team comprising Abhijit Saikia, Mondeep Basumatari, Dipankar Haloi, Bistirna Burhagohain, Bikash Tossa, and Pradip Barman.

Street play on human-elephant coexistence in Baksa

Aaranyak with support from SBI Foundation recently organised a meaningful street play at Uttarkuchi Market, Baksa district of Assam to spread awareness on human-elephant coexistence.



The play, “Koka Nati aru Hati”, was performed by talented students of Sri Panchmi Himalee High School, Bhutankhuti and drew a crowd of 250+ people, including villagers and market-goers.

The skit beautifully showcased how the bond between humans and elephants has changed over time, highlighting the urgent need to restore respect and harmony with nature.

The young performers inspired the community to reflect on their role in protecting the environment and adopting practices for peaceful coexistence.

This impactful initiative was facilitated by Aaranyak team members - Abhilasha Boruah, Abhijit Saikia, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatary & Pradip Barman.

Over 60 community members from six nearby villages actively participated, joined by the DFO of Baksa Forest Division and the Range Officer of Batabari Range.

The session helped communities understand elephant behaviour, habitat needs, and the challenges driving elephants into human settlements—such as shrinking forests and scarcity of natural food. Villagers also shared their own experiences of HEC.

Locally adaptable, low-cost mitigation practices were introduced, and seven torchlights were distributed to volunteers in Jartaluk to strengthen night-time vigilance and community safety.

This initiative was facilitated by our dedicated team — Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Bistirna Burhagohain, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatary & Rupam Gayari.

Together, we are building safer communities and fostering human–elephant coexistence.

Community comes together for human-elephant coexistence

Aaranyak, with support from SBI Foundation, recently organised a community outreach programme at Jartaluk, Tamulpur district to raise awareness and share practical solutions for mitigating human–elephant conflict (HEC).

Celebrating International Day for Preservation of Ozone Layer

On the occasion of World Ozone Day, the Regional Office Guwahati of the Assam Pollution Control Board, in collaboration with the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD), Aaranyak, organized an awareness program at Krishna Nagar Vidyapeeth High School on 16th September 2025. The program witnessed active participation of 60 students from Classes VIII to X.



The event began with a warm welcome address by the Headmaster, Mr. Jayanta Barman, who encouraged the students to learn and act responsibly towards protecting the environment. Officials from the Regional Office Guwahati, Assam Pollution Control Board - Rishikesh Bhattacharya, Kankana Choudhury, and Nabanita Sarma were present during the programme.

The awareness session covered crucial topics such as the importance of the ozone layer, the adverse impacts of ozone depletion, and steps that individuals can take to reduce ozone-depleting activities. The students actively engaged in the discussions, enhancing their knowledge of environmental conservation. To make the event more interactive, a quiz competition on World Ozone Day was conducted by Ms. Geetashree Sarma of EECBD, which saw enthusiastic participation from the students. Teachers of the school, including Bhaskar Sarma, Mina Devi, Ms Minashi, and Kulesh Sarma, extended their full support in organizing the event. The program was successfully coordinated and led by Geetashree Sarma and Andrew Roy of EECBD, Aaranyak. The dedication of the headmaster, teachers, and the enthusiastic participation of the students made the program truly meaningful and impactful.

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In another occasion, Abhayapuri College, through its Eco Club in collaboration with Aaranyak West Zone and the Departments of Botany & Chemistry of Abhayapuri College organised a special programme to raise awareness on the importance of protecting our ozone layer and promoting sustainability. The programme began with a tree plantation ceremony conducted by Prof. Pranjit Kalita, Principal (in-charge) of Abhayapuri College, who planted saplings within the college campus as a symbolic gesture of commitment to ecological conservation.



The highlight was an engaging popular talk & presentation on “From Depletion to Restoration – The Ozone Story”, which shed light on ozone depletion, its impacts, and the success of global efforts like the Montreal Protocol. Students actively participated, making the session interactive and insightful. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Ashoke Kumar Das, Joint Coordinator of the Eco Club, who extended heartfelt gratitude to the Principal, faculty members, and students for their active involvement and commitment to promoting a sustainable environment. The programme not only deepened awareness about the ozone layer’s role in safeguarding life but also inspired participants to contribute towards a greener, more sustainable future.

School awareness campaign for human-elephant coexistence



Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, has been carrying out several school outreach programmes in Udalguri and Tamulpur districts to create awareness among students about elephants, their behaviour, and ways to reduce Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC). These programmes also included sessions on environmental issues like plastic pollution, encouraging young minds to care for both wildlife and nature.

On 6th September 2025, an outreach programme was organised at Natun Basti Angrakata M.E. School, Tamulpur. During the session, we presented Gajah Katha along with our mitigation set. A total of 40 students actively took part in the programme.

Two more school outreach programmes were conducted on 16th September at Paneri Tea Gardens Model HS School, Udalguri, and Gopinath Bardoloi HS School, Tamulpur. In both sessions, we presented Gajah Katha Part 1 and also held an interactive discussion on plastic pollution and its harmful impact on our environment. Together, these programmes reached 195 students.

Again, on 18th September 2025, Aaranyak visited Atrikhat M.E. School, Udalguri, where we presented HEC Mitigation Part 2. This session focused on why elephants sometimes move into human settlements or crop fields and how people can respond safely. Altogether 60 students attended this programme.

In all these sessions, Gajah Katha served as the main educational tool. It included simple but important facts about elephants’ behaviour, habitat, and different types. The second part, which focused on HEC mitigation, explained how shrinking forests and the food search often force elephants into human areas. Students learned about the root causes of conflict and understood the importance of finding safe and respectful ways to deal with elephants.

The programmes were made interactive through storytelling, discussions, and simple examples that connected with the students’ own daily lives. This approach helped them imagine real situations in elephant-prone areas and think about practical solutions to reduce conflict while also protecting these gentle giants.

All these sessions were successfully facilitated by Aaranyak’s team members: Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Jiban Chetry, Jaugashar Basumatary, Bikash Tossa, and Pradip Barman.

Aaranyak observes Big Butterfly Month

Aaranyak, through its WeForNature programme and in collaboration with the Kamrup East Division of the Assam Forest Department, organised an event titled 'Nature Walk with Butterflies' to mark the observance of Big Butterfly Month 2025.

The event was held at the South Guwahati Range of Garbhanga Reserve Forest on September 27.

Sixteen participants, along with two officials from the Assam Forest Department, actively took part in the event. The event was dedicated to the memory of Assam's legendary artist and cultural icon Late Zubeen Garg and commenced with a tree plantation activity as a tribute to his enduring love for nature. The event began at 7:00 AM and concluded at 10:15 AM.

The favourable weather conditions contributed to a successful field experience, with participants recording 42 species of butterflies representing all six families found in the North East region of India.

The resource team comprised of Monish Kumar Thapa, Research Scholar; Rumana Maheen, Senior Researcher at Aaranyak; Akshay Upadhyaya, Researcher at Aaranyak; and Lakhinandan Dutta, Member of Aaranyak. The event, which was open to all, attracted participants from diverse age groups and professional backgrounds.

Lakhinandan Dutta and Pranab Goswami from Aaranyak took lead in coordinating the event.

Aaranyak extend sincere gratitude to the DFO, Kamrup East Division and Range Officer as well as other officials from South Guwahati Range of Garbhanga Reserve Forest for providing support and collaboration to the success of the event.





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