

Aaramyak

Nourishing nature to secure our future



Update on quarterly activities

Naturole

Volume 5, Issue 4

October-December, 2025

Participation at IUCN WCC at Abu Dhabi

Aaranyak participated in the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) 2025 in Abu Dhabi, UAE where conservation leaders Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar and Dr M Firoz Ahmed represented the organisation in key discussions on wildlife and environment conservation issues.



Dr M Firoz Ahmed spoke on “Strengthening IP&LC Leadership in Tiger Conservation”, while Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar deliberated on “Scaling Up CSO-Led Environmental Solutions” on October 12.

During its decades-long journey, Aaranyak has forged a strong partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), highlighting its unwavering commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in Northeast India.



Academia, conservationists flag need to conserve India’s only ape

Aaranyak in collaboration with the Arunachal University of Studies, celebrated International Gibbon Day 2025 with great enthusiasm to raise awareness about the conservation of India’s only ape - the Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*).

International Gibbon Day which is observed annually on October 24, 2025 draws global attention to the plight of gibbons- the smallest and fastest of all apes - many of which are on the brink of extinction mainly due to habitat loss and hunting.

The celebration held at Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, brought together students, researchers, faculty members and local communities. The day featured a series of engaging activities including an awareness event, a drawing competition on the theme “Save Forest, Save Gibbon,” and interactive talks by primatologists and field biologists.



The event began with a welcome address by Prof. Ajith Kumar K, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Arunachal University of Studies. Prof. Ajeya Jha, Vice Chancellor of the University, highlighted the pressing issues of biodiversity conservation and encouraged students to take active roles in protecting local biodiversity.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Dilip Chetry, Director and Head of the Primate Research and Conservation Division, Aaranyak and Vice Chair of the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group (South Asia).

Dr Chetry emphasised- “The Hoolock Gibbon is not just a species - it is our closest relative and a symbol of the health of our forest ecosystems. Protecting gibbons means protecting our forests and countless other species that depend on them.”

He said the distribution of Hoolock Gibbons in India was restricted to the areas south of the Brahmaputra River and east of the Dibang River in Northeast India. He expressed concern over the severe threats the species faces due to habitat loss, hunting and deforestation.

The Hoolock Gibbon, listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, was recently included in the world’s 25 most endangered primates list at the International Primatological Congress 2025 in Madagascar - underscoring the urgent need for its conservation.

He described gibbons as the “singers of the forest” for their melodious calls and crucial ecological role as seed dispersers, which aid forest regeneration and biodiversity maintenance.

Dr. Chetry also called for the establishment of a National Gibbon Project to address conservation challenges across all Northeast Indian states and urged students and local communities to be “torchbearers” in safeguarding the Hoolock Gibbon within their regions.

During the celebration, participants pledged to raise awareness and contribute to protecting gibbon habitats across Northeast India. A drawing exhibition showcased artworks highlighting the importance of gibbons, the threats they face, and the role of canopy connectivity and community participation in their conservation.

Mridupaban Phukan Consultant of Aaranyak also highlighted different issues of Conservation in the eco-sensitive zone of protected areas. The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Dr. Biswajyoti BK Deori, Faculty of Agricultural and Life Science, Arunachal University of Studies.



APCB-Aaranyak launches 'Pollution Abating Schools in Guwahati'

Guwahati, the largest city in Northeast India, is undergoing rapid urbanization, leading to growing environmental challenges such as air, water and soil pollution. Schools, as centers of learning and behavioural transformation, are ideal spaces to demonstrate and cultivate sustainable practices. Recognizing this, Aaranyak has initiated the project "Pollution Abating Schools in Guwahati", with support of the Assam Pollution Control Board.

The inception workshop of this noble initiative was organised on October 31, 2025 at the conference hall of Assam Pollution Control Board (APCB). Delivering the inaugural speech, Dr. G K Misra, Member Secretary of the Assam Pollution Control Board highlighted the need of civic participation in environmental conservation and pollution abatement.

Dr. Misra said that APCB likely to expand the support to more schools based on the result of this pilot initiative. "Pollution Abatement Schools in Guwahati", marking a new step towards abating pollution in Guwahati City, he said.

The programme is part of an umbrella scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, aimed at curbing environmental pollution.

He also appreciated the students' curiosity and explained several simple yet impactful steps that young people can adopt to minimize pollution in their daily lives.

He formally launched the programme and expressed his enthusiasm to continue collaborating with Aaranyak in future initiatives aimed at environmental conservation and education.

“Aaranyak has been providing necessary guidance to the new generation of the NE region to usher a new era of ecological security,” said Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director of Environment Education and Capacity Building (EECB) division of Aaranyak while presenting about the pollution abating initiative.

Dr Simanta Kalita, Senior Consultant at Aaranyak while highlighting detailed roadmap for Pollution Abatement Schools also presented some key findings of KAP study carried out among students on Pollution Abatement.

Kanteswar Kalita, Senior Planning & Research Officer, APCB, in his welcome address emphasized the need to inculcate positive behavioural changes among students through experiential learning in daily life.

The workshop was attended by the representative of students, teachers, research scholars, official of Dakshin Beltola High School, Aaranyak and APCB. The workshop was moderated and coordinated by Geetashree Sharma and Tikendrajit Gogoi of Aaranyak along Dr Kakoli Das Kalita.



Assam Forest staff empowered with GIS training on GIS Day

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Assam Forest School, Jalukbari celebrated GIS Day 2025 on November 19 under the theme “GIS for Frontline Forest Staff.”

The event held at the GIS Lab of Assam Forest School highlighted how geospatial tools and map-based analyses are increasingly shaping informed decision-making in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Twenty-five forest officials participated in the workshop.

The KAP study was conducted recently by the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak in some schools in Guwahati.

The day-long programme featured thematic sessions, practical demonstrations and hands-on training using open-source GIS platforms, allowing participants to directly engage with tools that support habitat monitoring, patrolling, planning and conservation interventions. The workshop concluded with an interactive Q&A session, encouraging knowledge exchange between trainers and participants.



The inaugural session of the workshop was graced by N. Anand, CCF, Research, Education and Working Plan; Dimpri Bora, IFS, Director of Assam Forest School, Jalukbari, and N. K. Sood, ACF.

The technical sessions were led by the GIS expert team from Aaranyak's Geo-Spatial Technology & Application Division (GTAD) comprising Arup Kumar Das, Asst. Director & Head In-Charge; Madhumita Borthakur, Assistant Manager; Avishek Sarkar, GIS Analyst and Shivani Khalote, Project Officer. They guided participants through practical, field-oriented applications of GIS in conservation and forest management.

Given the rapidly growing importance of Remote Sensing, GIS and GPS technologies in environmental research, landscape planning, capacity building and conservation decision-making, Aaranyak continues to strengthen its contribution in this domain.



“Deterring wildlife crime – a transformative impact” unveiled

A book titled “Deterring wildlife crime – a transformative impact”, published by the Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) of Aaranyak was released on December 20, 2025 by the Shri Rannish Geer, Joint Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), North East India, in a solemn function organized at the Aaranyak headquarters in Guwahati in presence of Jimut Prasad Sharma and Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, President and Executive Director of Aaranyak, respectively and a group of senior conservation leaders, researchers, executives and other staff of the organization.

The highlight of the book unveiling programme was the substantive invited talk, aided by a lucid presentation, delivered by Shri Ramnish Geer on the topic “Wildlife and Forest Conservation and Crime Control” that underscored importance of coexistence and wildlife and human beings and how precious the forest resource for sustaining life and livelihoods on the planet.



The book documenting the divisions sustained efforts since its inception in 1996 to help prevention of wildlife crimes in the Northeast India landscapes through multi-stakeholder and multi-pronged strategies that encompasses grassroots communities, law enforcement agencies, border guarding forces, legal fraternity and judiciary.

The book which is an outcome of a collective effort of the LAD team headed by Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar. Aaranyak Publicity Secretary and senior consultant in the LAD Bijay Sankar Bora is the Editor-in-Chief. Dr Jimmy Borah, Deputy Director of the LA is the Managing Editor and Ivy Farheen Hussain and Binita Baruwati are Content Editors of the book which would not have been possible but for the sincere efforts put in by Data Collectors Kakali Baishya, Wasima Begum and Mizing Boro.

Ivy Farheen Hussain, Himadri Bhuyan, Avijan Saha, Bidyut Baishya and Tanushree Ghosh contributed photographs and Avishek Sarkar prepared the map for the book that has been splendidly designed by Mississippi Hazarika.



Education emerges as key tool for Hoolock gibbon conservation in Namsai

Aaranyak in collaboration with the Namsai Forest Division and with support from the Arcus Foundation has been conducting Hoolock gibbon conservation education and awareness programmes since November 12, 2025 in Namsai district in Arunachal Pradesh.

This first of its kind initiative in Namsai district, began at Government Upper Primary School (GUPS), Deobil, Namsai November 12, 2025 and was inaugurated, by N. W. Namchoom, Head Teacher of the school.

This programme reached 18 schools ranging from upper primary to higher secondary levels within the Namsai district. Altogether 1092 students, 80 teachers and local community were benefitted from this programme.



The initiative highlights the value of structured, interactive educational interventions in strengthening environmental awareness and academic learning outcomes. By empowering students with knowledge and fostering a sense of responsibility towards nature, Aaranyak's programme has made a measurable and meaningful impact across participating schools, reinforcing the critical role of education in long-term wildlife conservation.

Dr. Dilip Chetry, senior primatologist, Director & Head in the Primate Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, who also serves as the Vice Chair of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group, South Asia Section, emphasised that the Western Hoolock gibbon is the only ape species found in India and is genetically very close to humans.

He noted that this endangered, arboreal, frugivorous primate, found in the seven northeastern states of India, is restricted to areas south of the Brahmaputra and east of Dibang river system. The Namsai Forest Division having 7 Reserve Forests, 3 Anchal Reserve Forest and 3 Village Reserve Forest forms a crucial habitat for the gibbons.

Dr. Chetry stressed that habitat loss, fragmentation, and hunting are the major threats to the Hoolock gibbon across its distribution range. He believes that this education programme will boost efforts to conserve not only the Hoolock gibbon but also the overall biodiversity of the region.

Akshay Kumar Upadhyaya, researcher of Primate Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak acted as resource person during the programmes. The programmes primarily targeted students from the fringes of the Reserve Forest, aiming to create a community of motivated students who can contribute to future gibbon conservation efforts. The sessions employed pre-and post-assessments using carefully designed questionnaires to evaluate students' knowledge levels before and after the intervention.

Interactive learning methods - including audio-visual aids, PowerPoint presentations, live discussions, and illustrations were used to explain the ecological importance of primates, the role of hoolock gibbons in forest ecosystems and the broader significance of biodiversity conservation. Pre-assessment results revealed limited baseline understanding, with correct responses ranging between 11% and 29%. Following the awareness sessions, post-assessment scores showed a significant improvement, increasing to 60%–90%, with an average knowledge gain of over 50–60%. These results clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme in enhancing students' understanding and engagement.

Solar street lights installed under LIC HFL CSR project

Aaranyak with support under the CSR initiative of LIC Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL), has installed 10 solar street lights across several villages—Rangapani, Kukurbhukia, Paharpur, No. 1 Sikaridanga, No.2 Sikaridanga, Angrajuli, Jamuguri, and Kuchubil—located under the Udalguri and Mazbat blocks of Udalguri district of Assam.



These villages fall within areas that are highly vulnerable to Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC), where frequent elephant movements during night hours pose serious risks to the safety, livelihood and well-being of local communities.

The installation of solar street lights is aimed at improving night-time visibility in strategic locations such as village entry points, common pathways (for animals and people), community junctions, and areas with recurring elephant movement.

Adequate lighting helps villagers identify elephant presence early from a safe distance, take precautionary measures and avoid sudden encounters. It also enhances overall community preparedness and contributes to reducing fear and uncertainty that often arise during the night in HEC-prone zones.

Since the lights operate on solar energy, they provide a sustainable and environment-friendly solution without adding burden to local electricity infrastructure. The intervention is also in sync with the Government of India’s climate change mitigation strategy through promotion of renewable energy.

Mustard cultivation raises hopes for human-elephant coexistence in Baksa

In order to strengthen support for communities living in high human-elephant conflict zones, Aaranyak with support from the SBI Foundation continued its initiative of promoting mustard cultivation as a less palatable crop for elephants.



Under this effort, 44 kg of mustard seeds were distributed across two villages in Baksa district - 25 kg in No. 2 Simlabari and 19 kg in Barikadanga.

Baksa is among the districts in Assam that faces frequent crop damage during elephant movement, particularly in the paddy-growing season. As most households rely on agriculture, even moderate crop loss can severely affect income and food security.

Mustard cultivation has, therefore, emerged as a safer alternative as elephants may enter the fields but seldom feed on the crop, thereby reducing the incidence of crop-raiding and enhancing livelihood stability for local farmers.

The seed distribution was carried out by Aaranyak team members Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Hemanta Phukan and Bikash Tossa, who worked closely with the community to ensure efficient delivery and continued support towards fostering human-elephant coexistence.

Seasonal solar fences installed in eastern Assam for HEC mitigation

In a continued effort to mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC) and safeguard rural livelihoods, Aaranyak in collaboration with the Assam Forest Department has handed over seasonal solar fences to communities across three eastern Assam districts of Jorhat, Tinsukia and Sivasagar.

These community-managed solar fences are designed to protect farmlands from crop depredation by elephants while promoting coexistence between people and wildlife.



The series of handover meetings took place during October 8 to 10, bringing together representatives from local communities, Village Fencing Committees (VFCs), Assam Forest Department officials, Gaon Pradhans, Village Champions formed by Aaranyak and other stakeholders.

Around 160 participants took part in these events held across the three districts. One such meeting was held at Padumfula Community Hall on October 8 in the Sadiya region of Tinsukia district where approximately 6 km solar fence was officially handed over to the VFCs of Balijan Nagaon, Padumfula, and 1 No. Basagaon villages.

The initiative continued on October 9, at Demowmukh in Sivasagar district where nearly 18 km of fence was handed over to protect agricultural lands in Majumelia, Charagua Grant, Demowmukh Mising Gaon and Demowmukh Gohain Gaon.

The final handover took place on October 10 at Bezorchiga Community Hall in Jorhat district where about 30.1 km of solar fencing was handed over to communities of Hatishal, Bezorchiga, Sagunpara, Major Chapori, Sumoni Saponi and Chutalbagh.

These fences installed strategically along vulnerable crop zones, will be managed by local Village Fencing Committees to ensure sustainability and community ownership. The initiative not only aims to reduce crop loss due to elephant raids but also strengthens local people's participation in wildlife conservation.

The events were facilitated by the Aaranyak team comprising Anjan Baruah, Zakir Islam Bora, Rubul Tanti, Nirajan Bhuyan, Tibrajyoti Gogoi, Deep Jyoti Gogoi, Debojit Gogoi, Tonmoy Gogoi, Ananta Dutta, Lakhinath Taid, Chiranjeev Kalita and Jiaur Rehman.

This community-based conservation effort highlights Aaranyak's ongoing commitment to fostering human-wildlife coexistence through practical, locally driven solutions.

Community support essential to help wildlife flourish in D'Ering Sanctuary: DFO



Biodiversity rich Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary (DEMWS) at Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh has huge potential of eco-tourism that can uplift lives of fringe area communities if the latter support the forest department's sustained efforts to protect wildlife of the sanctuary including fishes and bird species.

This was stated by Ms Kempie Ete, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), DEMWS while addressing a community awareness programme on deterring wildlife crimes to protect wildlife in the sanctuary on December 25 last at Sika Tode village.

The awareness programme was organized by the local Community Surveillance and Monitoring Team (CSMT) supported by Aaranyak.

"Shoot the magnificent wildlife resources with your camera and share in social media to attract wildlife lovers to the sanctuary. It will go a long way in promoting eco-tourism in fringe villages," the DFO said adding that community support is a must for protection of wildlife in D'Ering Sanctuary as only a handful (40-50) forest staff deployed here are not sufficient to secure it fully.

She appealed to the community members to remain alert against hunting especially of bird species and unregulated illegal fishing and warned that all the wildlife species are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (Amended in 2022).

"Hence attempt to kill or killing wildlife when caught, will lead to severe punishment under the Act and it will jeopardise unemployed youth's chances of getting government jobs if charge-sheeted under the provisions of the Act," the official said while lauding Aaranyak's initiative to form CSMTs to generate public support for prevention of wildlife crimes in D'Ering Sanctuary.

Aaranyak conducts 2-day Basic Patrol Technical Training for frontline forest staff

Dr Jimmy Borah, Deputy Director of Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) of Aaranyak told the large gathering of community members, village heads and village council members that Aaranyak would continue to support the efforts by the Forest Department and the community to protect wildlife of D'Ering Sanctuary in various ways through the CSMTs. "The people of the area will benefit most when eco-tourism flourishes around the sanctuary," he said.

"Profit from hunting is illegal and short-lived, but eco-tourism will change your life for better for years to come," said Ms Ivy Farheen Hussain, Senior Project Officer, LAD, Aaranyak who constantly coordinates with the CSMTs. Assistant Project Officer of LAD, Bijeet Baro assisted in digital documentation of the programme.

Tatem Jamoh, the president of the CSMT unit, Anchalghat underscored the need for such community awareness programmes on a regular interval to secure sustained community support for wildlife protection in D'Ering Sanctuary. His remarks were echoed by Maksam Tayeng, Honorary Wildlife Warden of East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh and Chairman of the CSMT and EDC. Tayeng also pointed out that once protection measures are upgraded in the sanctuary it will lead to creation of jobs also for locals.

The awareness programme was also addressed by the Zila Parishad Member, Ms Annu Paboh Komut, Range Officer Nalo Tasing and CSMT coordinator Okii Modi, Gaon Burah and village secretary among others.

A team of resource persons from Aaranyak successfully conducted a two-day Basic Patrol Technical Training to strengthen the capacity of frontline forest staff in effective data-driven patrolling and wildlife crime prevention.



The training, conducted at the Makum Forest Guards School, a Makum in Tinsukia district of Assam, on October 14 and 15, 2025 was attended by altogether 43 participants comprising newly-recruited as well as in-service Forest Guards, who actively engaged in both classroom and field-based exercises that simulated real-world patrolling scenarios.

The training aimed to enhance the technical skills of participants in data management, GPS use, and wildlife threat documentation to support efficient protection of biodiversity within Protected Areas.

The training was facilitated by Aaranyak's Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD), represented by Deputy Director Dr. Jimmy Borah, Binita Baruwati, Ivy Farheen Hussain, Mizung Boro, Bijeet Baro.

Binita Baruwati conducted an interactive session on data management, emphasizing its importance, systematic storage, and analysis for improving patrolling efforts and building reliable databases of wildlife threats.

Ivy Farheen Hussain conducted two sessions - one on providing a global and local perspective on wildlife crime, and another focusing on identification of wildlife products commonly trafficked in the illegal wildlife trade.

Mizing Boro and Bijet Baro jointly facilitated a technical session on understanding threats to wildlife, detecting signs of illegal activities, and the practical use of GPS devices to enhance patrol coverage and data accuracy.

Dr. Jimmy Borah discussed the broader framework of preventing wildlife crime, highlighting linkages between illegal trade, incidence of zoonotic diseases in human beings because of close contact with wildlife, and human-wildlife conflict.

The programme also witnessed the presence of Saidul Islam, Superintendent of Makum Forest Guards School, who addressed the participants during the closing ceremony and appreciated Aaranyak's continued efforts in strengthening field-level enforcement capacities.

The smooth facilitation and logistical arrangements for the training were coordinated by Dipak Changmai, Physical Training Instructor (PTI) and Arunav Dutta from the Makum Forest Guards School.

This training is a part of Aaranyak's sustained commitment to empower frontline forest personnel with practical tools and data-driven methods for effective enforcement of conservation initiatives across the Northeast region.



Aaranyak hosts British conservation delegation in Majuli

Aaranyak team was honoured to welcome Akash Mehta - renowned British entrepreneur, influencer and conservationist along with Hilary Thomas and Auro Shashwat, both senior officials at the Elephant Family and British Asian Trust respectively, for a two-day visit to the enchanting island of Majuli.

Throughout their journey, the guests immersed themselves in our community-driven conservation efforts, connecting deeply with the people and landscapes shaping human-elephant coexistence in Majuli.



'Xogun Mitra' campaign in Sivasagar educates future stewards

Aaranyak has been conducting awareness programmes under its Vulture Conservation Initiative across vulture-inhabited areas of Assam since last year. The initiative aims to achieve zero vulture deaths in Assam in the coming years.



On October 13, 2025 the guests explored solar-powered fencing sites, interacted with Rapid Response Unit (RRU) members to understand their on-ground roles and visited a bio-fencing site that promotes human-elephant coexistence.

The next day, they participated in the inspiring 'Gajah Katha' awareness programme at Ratanpur Higher Secondary School, engaged in a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) at Borbuka Pathar Village and enjoyed a community lunch at Haldhibari Village. The day ended with a serene boat ride on the mighty Brahmaputra from Tekeliphuta Ghat and enriching interactions with project beneficiaries at Jaborshuk Kathoni Village.

The visit was a celebration of collaboration, learning and shared commitment towards building a future where communities and wildlife thrive together.

Titled as 'Xogun Mitra', this campaign is designed to involve students, farmers, village elders, administrative & forest officials and agricultural officers in the protection and conservation of these scavenging birds.

A latest session of the campaign was organised at the auditorium of Khanamukh Higher Secondary School in Sivasagar, where the event commenced with an inspiring audio-visual presentation delivered by the school principal and renowned orator, Anand Kumar Bora.

The programme was formally inaugurated by school teacher Bhagyalakshmi Saikia with a signature vulture conservation oath prepared by Aaranyak emphasising a personal commitment to vulture conservation.

'Gajah Katha' strengthens coexistence efforts across schools and communities in Assam

The session featured a comprehensive audio-visual presentation on the importance of vulture conservation presented by Aaranyak's environmental enthusiast Hiren Dutta.

During his address, Mr Dutta highlighted Aaranyak's ongoing initiatives to safeguard vultures and expressed concern that without collective vigilance these ecologically critical and magnificent birds could vanish from our landscapes in the near future.

He encouraged participants to plant trees suitable for vulture habitats, conserve existing greenery and refrain from activities harmful to these birds. Adding to the discourse, local environmental enthusiast Hemanta Tay stressed on the ecological significance of vultures and urged all attendees to prioritise the protection and restoration of their natural habitats.

The 'Xogun Mitra' campaign is spearheaded by Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak and Dr. Dipankar Lahkar, an Assistant Director in Aaranyak. The initiative receives support from Aaranyak team members Wasima Begum and Hiren Dutta.

The programme concluded on a high note with insightful remarks and the formal closing by Assistant Teacher of the school Binod Kumar Gogoi, leaving participants motivated and informed about the urgent need for vulture conservation.

Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation continues to expand its flagship awareness campaign Gajah Katha across Udalguri, Tamulpur and Baksa districts of Assam, engaging both students and local communities in meaningful conversations on elephants, human–elephant conflict (HEC) and peaceful coexistence.



As part of the school outreach programme, Aaranyak conducted interactive sessions at Paneri Tea Garden Model High School on October 13, Nehru Memorial M.E. High School, Udalguri on October 14 and Parkijuli M.E. School, Tamulpur on October 17, engaging over 311 students.

Later in December, additional school programmes were held at Bishnu Rabha M.E. School on December 11 and Sonajuli M.E. School on December 15 in Udalguri, and Indira Gandhi M.E. School on December 19 in Baksa, reaching another 130 students.

Through storytelling, discussions and interactive activities, students learned about elephant behaviour, habitats, movement patterns and the causes of rising HEC in Assam. The sessions highlighted how expanding settlements and agriculture are shrinking elephant corridors, while encouraging students to adopt community-friendly solutions and become young ambassadors for wildlife conservation.

Building community resilience for coexistence

Alongside school outreach, Aaranyak conducted a series of community outreach programmes in Udalguri and Baksa districts to strengthen local capacity for managing HEC.

On November 4, a programme at Bhooteachang, Udalguri engaged 27 community members, followed by two outreach sessions on November 5 at Simlabari and Khairajuli in Baksa, involving 30 and 24 participants, respectively.

Further engagements were organised on December 16 at No.1 Amjuli village, Udalguri, and on December 18 at Chechapani and Kuhipar Boro Bazar, Tamulpur, where nearly 200 community members participated. The outreach continued on December 19 at Kaliban, Khairani, engaging around 30 participants.

These interactive and practical sessions provided platforms for villagers to share local challenges related to elephant movement, understand elephant behaviour and learn safe, effective response strategies. Emphasis was placed on protecting lives and livelihoods, securing farmland and strengthening community cooperation and trust for long-term conflict mitigation.

The programmes were facilitated by Aaranyak's dedicated field team - Rabiya Daimari, Abhilasha Boruah, Abhijit Saikia, Dipankar Haloi, Pradip Barman, Jiban Chetri, Bikash Tossa, Manav Nayak, Bistirna Burhagohain, along with ECN members and volunteer Sachin Basnet.

Through Gajah Katha, Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, continues to work alongside schools and communities in elephant landscapes fostering awareness, dialogue and shared responsibility to enable safer, sustainable coexistence between people and elephants.

Karbi farmers explore solar energy use in farming during exposure trip



Aaranyak, in collaboration with World Resources Institute (WRI), India organised an exposure visit for a group of progressive farmers from the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL) to Kardaitola, Baksa District of Assam on October 26 to help them learn and interact with local farmers on use of solar energy in agriculture practices in vogue in the district.

The visiting team from the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL) interacted with local cultivators and visited the farmlands where solar water pumps for intercropping were installed by Gramya Vikash Mancha (GVM) as a part of their project activity in the district.

The exposure aimed to give participants a practical understanding of how solar water pumps were implemented by the GVM and develop an understanding of improved irrigation facilities and reduced dependency on conventional energy sources. Farmers noted that these technologies have significantly enhanced productivity while lowering operational costs.

Participants also gained hands-on knowledge about innovative inter-cropping techniques and resource-efficient farm management. In the visited farms, crops such as Thai Jujube, Lemon and Amrapali Mango were cultivated alongside winter vegetables like brinjal, cabbage and leafy greens grown between orchard rows. This integrated farming model demonstrated efficient land use, improved soil fertility, and ensured year-round income for farmers.

Expressing his learning from the visit, Bronson Tokbi from Englepothar village said, “I learned how intercropping and solar irrigation can make farming both profitable and environmentally friendly. Seeing these successful practices gives us confidence to try similar approaches in our own villages.

The visit facilitated farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange, encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices across the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong region. Aaranyak’s initiative reinforces its commitment to supporting rural communities in building resilient livelihoods through environmentally sound agricultural innovations.

Pranjal Chakraborty and Jillul Hoque from Gramya Vikash Mancha (GVM), Nalbari, provided their support to make this visit successful.

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.

Community awareness on wildlife crime prevention in fringe areas (Mer village) of D’Ering WL Sanctuary

Forest officials, community leaders and conservationists came together to flag the significance and immense importance of wildlife resources of Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary (DEMWS) at a well-attended awareness meeting on deterring wildlife crime organized at Mer village on the fringe of Sibiyamukh Range of the sanctuary in East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh on December 26.



Speakers in the programme also highlighted that there are provisions for handing out stringent punishment under various provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 2022 (Amended) for poaching and attempts to kill various species of wildlife.

Over 50 community members including village council members and members of local NGOs participated in the awareness meeting organized by the Community Surveillance and Monitoring Team (CSMT) supported by Aaranyak.

Addressing the community members, Ms Oyam Mize, Range Officer of Sibiyamukh Range of DEMWS, elaborated how protection of wildlife with active community support would lead to development of wildlife tourism in the area that would benefit local economy and people in a sustained manner.

She said the Forest team of the sanctuary in coordination with the local CSMT has been trying to woo community support for wildlife protection in the sanctuary. She called upon the community members to remain alert against hunting and unregulated and illegal fishing in the area.

Jonai-based Range Officer of Poba Wildlife Sanctuary in neighbouring Assam, Debabrata Gogoi while expressing his awe at the natural beauty and bio-resources on the area stated that the community must extend help to protect wildlife to protect their culture as well as improve their economic condition. He said, besides protection of wildlife, the local community must put in place SoPs for picnic parties coming to enjoy the natural beauty in the area.

Dr Jimmy Borah, Deputy Director of Legal and Advocacy (LAD) of Aaranyak, pointed out that D'Ering Sanctuary is gradually coming to the focus of wildlife enthusiasts for some of the rare species found in it and the local community now has the added responsibility to protect wildlife in coordination with the Forest Department. He explained how the CSMT units supported by Aaranyak has been relentlessly trying to elicit constant community support to improve surveillance against hunters and wildlife crimes.

Senior Project Officer of LAD, Aaranyak, Ms Ivy Farheen Hussain explained how CSMTs have been working with the communities as many as 13 villages on the fringe of the DEMWS for three years to monitor wildlife related issues to complement efforts of the forest department.

Mera village secretary Larsing Doley assured support from the villagers in prevention of wildlife crime in the area while flagging need for installation of solar-powered fence to protect villagers' crops from wild elephants.

U S Preme, the president of Namsing CSMT unit pointed out that the efforts put in by the community for protection of wildlife in the sanctuary will pay rich dividends for the new generation in near future in form of eco-tourism and other related livelihood options.

Honorary Wildlife Warden of East Siang district and Chairman of CSMT/EDC Maksam Tayeng called upon the community for sustained support for prevention of wildlife crime for their own benefit. The programme was anchored by the CSMT Coordinator Okii Modi.

Aaranyak's expert highlights community's role in mitigating HEC for coexistence

An engaging awareness programme on human-elephant conflict (HEC) was organised on October 6, 2025, at the North Eastern Regional Centre (NERC), Zoological Survey of India in Shillong, which brought together experts, students and conservation enthusiasts to explore pathways for peaceful coexistence between human beings and elephants.



Dr. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Deputy Executive Director and Head-Elephant Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, who was one of the distinguished speakers in the programme, delivered an inspiring talk on “Community-based Human-Elephant Conflict Management in Assam.”

Drawing from his vast field experience, Dr. Lahkar emphasised the significance and importance of community engagement in mitigating conflicts and promoting coexistence.

He highlighted Aaranyak's initiatives such as early warning systems, solar-powered fences, grassroots awareness, youth-led elephant monitoring and livelihood diversification for facilitating long-term harmony between people and elephants.

Other notable speakers in the programme underscored the power of collaboration between communities, forest departments and conservation organisations in building a sustainable future for both humans and elephants.

Organised by NERC, ZSI as part of Wildlife Week celebrations, the event witnessed participation of around 60 students and faculty members from leading colleges in Shillong including -St. Anthony's College, St. Edmund's College, St. Peter's College, St. Mary's College, Shillong College, Sankardev College and Lady Keane College.

Nature walk in Dehing Patkai National Park

On the occasion of the 71st Wildlife Week, the Eastern Assam Zone of Aaranyak organised an inspiring Nature Walk in the breath-taking Dehing Patkai National Park following a public meeting graced by esteemed guests - Taranga Gogoi, MLA, Naharkatia; Nanda Kumar, DFO Dibrugarh; B V Sandeep, DFO Digboi; along with officials from Jeypore Range, Beat Officers, and Zilla Parishad members.



The event brought together over 29 participants, including students, local youths, and forest personnel, fostering awareness and appreciation for the park's rich biodiversity.

Resource persons Lakhindra Sonowal from Forest Department; Rekib Ali, nature enthusiast & tourist guide and Rajib Gogoi, a local youth shared valuable insights on forest ecosystems, conservation, and the importance of protecting our natural heritage.

The programme was facilitated by Aaranyak's Zakir Islam Bora, Ejaj Ahmed, Dhantu Gogoi, and Jiaur Rahman, with active support from dedicated forest guards.

Aaranyak marks Wildlife Week 2025 with wide-ranging awareness and outreach programmes across Assam



To commemorate 71st Wildlife Week 2025, Aaranyak collaborated with key institutions and partners to organise a series of sensitisation, awareness and community outreach programmes across Assam, engaging students, educators, forest officials, community members and conservation practitioners in meaningful dialogue on wildlife protection and coexistence.

Sensitisation programme at Jagiroad College

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Government of India in collaboration with Aaranyak and the Department of Zoology, Jagiroad College (Autonomous), organised a one-day sensitisation programme on “Wildlife Conservation through Wildlife Crime Mitigation.” The programme, held on the occasion of World Wildlife Week, was attended by around 190 students and faculty members from multiple disciplines.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Bhaben Ch. Neog, Principal of Jagiroad College, who underscored the responsibility of every citizen to protect nature and be a voice for wildlife. Key sessions were facilitated by Robin Borah, Operation Assistant, WCCB (SRO), Guwahati, who highlighted the growing threat of wildlife crimes, and Nabajit Barman, noted conservationist, who spoke on wildlife laws and dos and don'ts for living responsibly alongside wildlife.

Technical sessions included a presentation by Ivy Farheen Hussain, Senior Project Officer, Legal & Advocacy Division, Aaranyak, who discussed ecological balance, interdependence of species, links between wildlife crime and zoonotic diseases, and the current status of wildlife in India and globally.



Another session by Arpan Baruah, Bird Guide from Tesia Camp, Lakhimpur, focused on venomous and non-venomous snakes and safe practices related to snakebite incidents. The programme also featured Champak Deka, Jagiroad College alumnus and photographer, who screened a documentary on Kaziranga inspiring students to contribute to biodiversity conservation. Wildlife photographer Himadri Bhuyan supported documentation of the event.

Wildlife Week outreach at Orang National Park

An awareness and community outreach programme was organised on October 6 at Orang National Park in collaboration with Aaranyak, WWF-India, KACF and the Orang National Park Authority, focusing on conservation of the Greater one-horned rhinoceros, tiger and other threatened species.

The event brought together around 130 participants, including students from seven schools, members of nine Eco-Development Committees (EDCs), Village Defence Parties (VDPs), Assam Police personnel and local media.

The programme was inaugurated by Pradipta Baruah, Director, Orang Tiger Reserve, who highlighted the critical role of local communities and frontline groups in safeguarding the park's biodiversity.

Distinguished speakers, including wildlife professionals, veterinarians, forest officials, conservationists and photographers, shared insights on conservation challenges, community participation and wildlife protection.

As part of the celebration, 20 forest officials and conservationists were felicitated for their contributions. Student-led art and quiz competitions themed on Orang and its Wildlife and a short film screening added vibrancy to the event, which concluded with prize and certificate distribution.



Wildlife Week celebration at Jorpukhuri High School, Udalguri

With support from the SBI Foundation and in collaboration with the Nuno Forest Range under Dhansiri Forest Division, Aaranyak celebrated the 71st Wildlife Week on October 8 at Jorpukhuri High School, Udalguri, engaging 80 students.

An interactive art competition on wildlife and conservation encouraged students to creatively express their connection with nature. Thirty students participated enthusiastically, and two outstanding entries were awarded trophies to inspire continued interest in conservation.

The programme was attended by Mrinmoy Hazarika, Deputy Ranger, Nuno Forest Range, along with range staff, who motivated students to appreciate and protect biodiversity.

These programmes were made possible through the collaborative efforts of Aaranyak's team members, partners, forest officials, educators, students, interns and community members.

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Lecture on 'Human-Animal Coexistence' at Meghalaya varsity

As part of the Wildlife Week Celebration, the East and West Garo Hills Wildlife Division, Tura, organised a valedictory programme at Captain Williamson Sangma State University, Balalgre, West Garo hills of Meghalaya.



The highlight of the event was a lecture on 'Human-Animal Coexistence' delivered by Anushka Saikia, Project Officer of the Elephant Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak. Saikia's talks highlighted the diversities of human-wildlife interactions across ecological niches and emphasised the importance of incorporating non-human perspectives in future urban and developmental planning. Drawing from case studies in the Garo Hills, she urged students to understand coexistence as essential to sustainable living.

The programme was graced by Conservator of Forests, Morinjio J. Sangma as the Chief Guest, while Divisional Forest Officer, Arpiush Ch. Sangma delivered the keynote address. The Deputy Registrar of the university also attended the event. Assistant Conservator of Forest, B.K. Lohar offered the vote of thanks. Range Officers Suman B. Marak, Annie Valentina, and Docchi R. Marak were among the dignitaries present.

Students from various schools and colleges across West Garo Hills participated in the week-long celebration, which featured essay writing, painting, extempore speech, and quiz competitions under the theme “Human–Animal Coexistence.” A prize distribution ceremony followed the lecture, honouring the winners and runners-up.

From Aaranyak, Assistant Project Officer Pranjal Deka and team member Bijoy Kalita were also present during the event.

“Wildlife Through the Lens”



Aaranyak collaborated in a field study and orientation programme titled “Wildlife Through the Lens” organised by the Department of Zoology, Bhattadev University. The event took place on October 25–26 at Mayong Eco Resort, Raja Mayang, Morigaon district and was attended by 45 students led by Associate Professor Akshay Kumar Haloi, along with Arundhati Gogoi and Dr. Rajashree Deka, Assistant Professors of the department.

Eminent wildlife photographer and Director & Head of the Wildlife Genetics Division, Aaranyak, Udayan Borthakur conducted an engaging and interactive session titled “The Essentials of Capturing the Wild: The Impact of Visuals in Wildlife Conservation.” Mr. Borthakur discussed the importance of visual storytelling in conservation, key skills for effective wildlife documentation, ethical practices in the field and how impactful imagery can shape conservation communication and awareness.

Ujjal Bayan, researcher at Aaranyak delivered an interactive talk on “Pobitora and the People Who Keep the Wildlife Alive.” He highlighted Aaranyak’s long-term contributions to the conservation of the one-horned rhinoceros in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, focusing on community-based conservation, human–wildlife coexistence, and empowerment of fringe communities.

Pranab Goswami, Senior Public Relations Officer at Aaranyak also interacted with the participants, discussing opportunities for youth engagement and collaboration with Aaranyak in the field of wildlife conservation.

Community knowledge exchange and learning programme in KKL

Aaranyak in collaboration with the North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), successfully organised a three-day community knowledge exchange and learning programme in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL) of Assam during October 13-16.

The programme was facilitated by Journey For Learning (J4L) with the objective of strengthening cooperation and knowledge sharing among community groups to promote sustainable and resilient livelihoods.



The initiative brought together participants from diverse community backgrounds, fostering mutual learning and collaboration on themes such as sustainable water management, agroforestry, eco-restoration and livelihood diversification. A total of six participants from the Barak Valley took part in this immersive exchange.

The programme began with an introductory briefing and a session on community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) practices. Participants engaged in discussions on water supply systems and the use of activated charcoal filters, followed by a tea processing demonstration that highlighted sustainable livelihood practices. The participants also gained an overview of nursery management, river water monitoring and participated in a village walk covering restoration plots, weaving units and agroforestry fields.

During these interactions, the group learned about Pirbi's collective business model, which empowers local producers through sustainable and inclusive practices. These engagements allowed participants to observe and understand community-led conservation and restoration initiatives that strengthen both local economies and ecosystems.

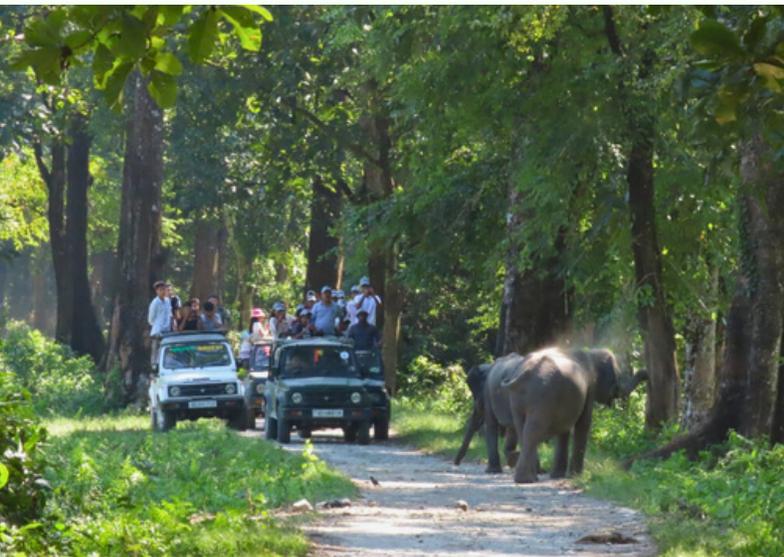
This exchange programme served as a valuable opportunity for community representatives from the Barak Valley to learn directly from practitioners in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape. It promoted cross-learning on water governance, ecosystem-based livelihood practices and sustainable resource management-reinforcing the importance of community participation in conservation efforts.

The initiative is supported by IUCN - KfW and US Fish and Wildlife Service.



Educational exposure tour to Manas National Park

Aaranyak with support from the SBI Foundation organised an educational exposure tour to Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve in Baksa district on October 19, offering students an enriching opportunity to experience the region's rich natural heritage up close.



Sixteen students from Paneri Higher Secondary School, who had earlier performed the street play “Koka Nati Aru Hati” to promote human-elephant coexistence participated in this inspiring learning journey. The tour allowed them to connect with real-world experiences by observing wildlife in its natural environment.

The visit served as a hands-on lesson in ecology, helping students understand how diverse species - including elephants, rhinos, primates and birds contribute to maintaining ecological balance. Witnessing these interactions deepened their appreciation for conservation and the importance of protecting natural habitats for sustainable coexistence.

This initiative was coordinated by Aaranyak team members Rabiya Daimari, Dipankar Haloi, Bikash Tossa and Pradip Barman, whose dedicated efforts continue to inspire and nurture a new generation of passionate guardians of the wild.

Awareness programmes on agroforestry held across Goalpara district

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Assam Agroforestry Development Board (AADB), conducted two block-level awareness programmes on the promotion of agroforestry under the RKVY, Assam initiative in Goalpara district, aiming to encourage the adoption of sustainable, nature-based farming practices at the grassroots level.

The first awareness programme was held on October 14 at the J.F.M.C. Sabhaghar, Dahikata, under Matia Block, and was attended by 32 farmers from villages including Harimura, Barbari, Lalabari, Dahikata, Rajapara, Tinkoniapara, Kadamtola and Trinathpara.

The programme was introduced and moderated by Anjan Baruah of Aaranyak, who explained the objectives, role and expected outcomes of the RKVY scheme.



A special focus was placed on bio-fencing using lemon plants as a nature-based solution to mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC). Anjan Baruah explained lemon plantation techniques, maintenance practices and the additional livelihood benefits farmers can gain through fruit production.

Priya Baruah briefed participants on relevant agricultural schemes and encouraged farmers to leverage government support for adopting agroforestry practices, while appreciating the efforts of AADB and Aaranyak in organising the awareness programmes.

Both programmes featured interactive sessions that allowed farmers to share local experiences, raise concerns and discuss practical solutions, making the engagements participatory and field-oriented.

Local community leader and Aaranyak volunteer Tirtha Lochan Ray played a key role in organising the Dahikata programme, while Aaranyak's Goalpara field staff - Ripunjoy Nath, Manjit Das and Rahit Nath supported coordination and implementation.

Aaranyak representatives emphasised that the active participation of farmers is essential for scaling up agroforestry as a pathway toward ecological sustainability, climate resilience and rural prosperity.

The programmes concluded with a collective call to adopt agroforestry as a sustainable, nature-based solution that supports both livelihoods and environmental conservation.

Dr. Putul Bhuyan of Aaranyak, the resource person, elaborated on how agroforestry integrating trees with crops and livestock can improve soil fertility, enhance farm productivity, provide sustainable income opportunities and help farmers adapt to climate change. He also explained various agroforestry models, highlighting the benefits of beekeeping, scientific forest nursery development and maintenance, and the use of bio-fencing.

The second awareness programme was organised at Chaplengkata Community Hall under Balijana Block, with the participation of 36 farmers from the Chaplengkata area. Officials from the Agriculture Department, Priya Baruah (A.D.O, Agia) and Suren Kalita (A.I, Goalpara), also attended the programme.

Anjan Baruah provided an overview of the Assam Agroforestry Development Board, its objectives, and the role of RKVY in promoting agroforestry.

Dr. Putul Bhuyan further explained diverse agroforestry models, stressing the role of beekeeping, forest nurseries, and alternative crops as components of alternative and resilient livelihoods.

Advocacy on human elephant coexistence, children rights at Jagannathpara

An awareness campaign on children rights and human elephant coexistence held at Jagannathpara community hall organised recently by Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood of Tata Trust under collaboration between Aaranyak and Tata Trust, Goalpara.



Around 70 participants including children, women and local community attended the programme on September 24. The advocacy campaign series has been started by Tata Trust and Aaranyak team collaboratively in Balijana block of Goalpara District from September 24 last.

Kuldeep Das of Tata Trust moderated the programme and described about the children rights. Anjan Baruah of Aaranyak explained about the elephant behaviours, causes of human elephant conflict (HEC) and different mitigation measures through a power point presentation.

A short drama was enacted by the Tata Trust team focused on human elephant coexistence. A documentary on elephant was also screened during the awareness programme.

Continuing our conservation efforts, Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, conducted three school outreach programmes across Udalguri and Tamulpur districts to raise awareness about elephants and promote harmony between humans and wildlife.

Held at Paneri Tea Garden Model High School (13 October), Nehru Memorial M.E. High School, Udalguri (14 October), and Parkijuli M.E. School, Tamulpur (17 October), the sessions drew enthusiastic participation from 311 students.

Through our signature campaign, “Gajah Katha”, students learned about elephants: their behaviour, types, habitats, and the causes of rising human-elephant conflicts in Assam.

The sessions used storytelling, discussions, and interactive activities to help children understand elephants’ ecological importance and the urgent need for coexistence.

Discussions highlighted how expanding human settlements and agriculture are shrinking elephant corridors, leading to conflicts, while encouraging students to adopt community-friendly solutions and become young ambassadors for wildlife conservation.

These initiatives were successfully facilitated by Aaranyak’s team members- Rabiya Daimari, Abhilasha Boruah, Abhijit Saikia, Dipankar Haloi, and Pradip Barman.

Celebrating International Gibbon Day at Amchang & Garbhanga

Every year on October 24, we celebrate International Gibbon Day - a day dedicated to these agile, melodious apes that play a vital role in maintaining the health of our tropical forests.



Among them, the Western Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) holds a special place as India's only ape species, now listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List and inclusion in the world's 25 most endangered primates at the International Primatological Society congress 2025, Madagascar.

To mark this occasion, Aaranyak organised awareness programmes in collaboration with Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary and Garbhanga Reserve Forest of Assam Forest Department.

At Amchang WLS, students from Bonda Ancholik High School and forest frontline staff joined a nature trail and interactive session led by Akshay Kr. Upadhyaya and Nayan Sarma, learning about gibbon ecology, behaviour and their vital role as "singers of the forest."

Meanwhile, at Garbhanga Reserve Forest, often called the "Lung of Guwahati," 57 participants - including students, forest officials and local villagers engaged in talks, documentary screenings and discussions on the conservation of Hoolock Gibbons. Deputy Ranger Khijir Ali Talukdar and Simanta Medhi emphasised the need for coexistence, habitat protection and eco-friendly livelihoods.

Simanta Medhi delivered an awareness lecture on the Western Hoolock Gibbon, covering its distribution, ecological role as a seed disperser and the need to address threats such as habitat loss and hunting.

An interactive session followed, where students and villagers actively discussed conservation challenges and solutions. Forest officials encouraged participants to protect forest resources, avoid hunting and explore eco-tourism as a sustainable livelihood. The programme also featured screenings of wildlife documentaries - "Kalia the Hoolock Gibbon" and "Wild You Were Sleeping - Episode 5" - which boosted understanding of gibbon behaviour and conservation needs. The event concluded with participants pledging to act as conservation ambassadors in their communities, reaffirming the importance of Garbhanga Reserve Forest as a vital green zone safeguarding both wildlife and the ecological balance of Guwahati.

Both events concluded with heartfelt pledges to safeguard gibbons and preserve Northeast India's rich biodiversity.

“Nature Learning” outreach activity at Bhaskar Nagar LP School

Aaranyak organised a “Nature Learning” outreach programme at Bhaskar Nagar LP School, Railway Colony, Kamrup (M) on October 27 aimed at nurturing curiosity, observation and a deeper connection with the natural environment among young students.



Twenty-six students from Classes 3 to 5 participated in interactive, hands-on activities designed to promote experiential learning and cognitive development. The session included exploring plant-animal interactions within the school campus, observing pollen under microscopes, studying leaf and flower venation, understanding camouflage in animals, and creating eco-prints.

The programme was coordinated by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer and Geetashree Sarma of the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD), Aaranyak with support from Wipro Earthian.

“Nature-based learning activities for school children in urban areas like Kamrup Metropolitan are vital to foster curiosity and strengthen the bond between humans and nature. Aaranyak has been consistently engaging with the education sector in Assam to inspire students to think critically and actively contribute towards nature conservation and sustainability,” said Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director and Head-In charge, EECBD, Aaranyak.

Workshop on individual elephant identification and profiling

As part of the Ph.D research by Mihika Sen (in collaboration with Aaranyak and The Shola Trust) on human-elephant conflict mitigation in Udalguri, a hands-on workshop was conducted on 26th October at the Paneri Beat Office in Udalguri district of Assam.



The session aimed to train forest department staff of the Dhansiri Forest Division on techniques for individual elephant profiling - learning to identify elephants based on physical traits such as tusks, ears, tails, backs and other markings. These skills are crucial for monitoring elephant movements, tracking sex ratios and understanding behavioural differences in crop-raiding elephants.

Participants were also introduced to Jumbo Radar (jumboradar.org) — an innovative app developed by The Shola Trust and the Tamil Nadu Forest Department for systematic elephant monitoring — and were trained to use it effectively in the field.

The workshop was attended 26 persons including Forest Department staff and representatives from WWF-India, The Shola Trust and Aaranyak.

Demise of K9 Jubi a great loss

Eight-year-old K9 Jubi, a brave member of the K9 Sniffer Dog Squad of Aaranyak, breathed her last at 7.08 pm on November 7 after providing years of outstanding service of aiding the authority in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNP&TR), in fighting wildlife crime including poaching.

Jubi, a Belgian Malinois Dog, was born in 2017. She was stationed at Bagori Range of Kaziranga National Park for over 7 years with her handler Sanatan Mali.

“Salute to our Braveheart for tireless service in protecting the park. Your keen nose and loyal heart kept wildlife safe and guarded our sanctuary. May you find peace and joy in your happy hunting grounds. Forever remembered, forever missed,” said Director of KNP&TR, Dr Sonali Ghosh while condoling the demise of Jubi.

Jubi’s death has left a big void in Aaranyak’s K9 Squad and the entire Aaranyak team in grief.

“Jubi was one of our most skilled and energetic K9 members for the past 8 years and her sudden loss is heart-wrenching, ” said Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, passionate conservation scientist and Executive Director of Aaranyak.

K9 Jubi was equipped to track poachers and sniff out wildlife parts during investigation in wildlife crime cases. K9 Jubi was well appreciated for her efficient role in anti-poaching and anti-crime operations, particularly in the Kaziranga National Park area. K9 Jubi assisted in solving many cases undertaking enormous numbers of patrolling operations.

K9 Jubi was supported by David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF) in collaboration with Aaranyak and Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

K9 Jubi’s handler Sanatan Mali said, “I have lost my companion, a loyal, skilled and brave companion. K9 Jubi may be gone but her services, bravery, loyalty and memories will be cherished and forever will be in the heart.”



Some of the major achievements of K9 Jubi are:

- Assisted the forest patrol team to find a poacher's home and nabbed the poacher in the Agoratoli area in 2018.
- Assisted the police patrol team to detect and detain the main culprit of a murder case in Geleki area near Kaziranga in 2018.
- Assisted police patrol team in detaining a thief near Bagori Range 2019.
- Assisted police patrol in detaining a thief and recovering money and valuable assets in Bagori area in 2020.
- Assisted the forest patrol team to find a poacher's house and to detain poachers near Burapahar area in 2023.
- Assisted the forest patrol team in two major operations against rhino poachers in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve 2025.

This year on 26 January K9 Jubi took part in a Dog Parade at Bagori Range with the other K9 Sniffer Dogs deployed in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on the occasion of India's Republic Day.

The team of Aaranyak and the entire staff of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve will always remain grateful to K9 Jubi for her outstanding services.

Bibhab Talukdar flags need to prioritise Asian rhinos' conservation at CITES CoP20

Passionate conservation scientist Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, has underlined the need to accord priority to conservation of Asian rhinos at the global dialogue on conservation of rhinos during a high-level side event titled "How can CITES best support impactful rhino conservation?" at the Twentieth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP20) to CITES, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from November 24 to December 5.

An acclaimed rhino conservation expert, Dr. Talukdar was attending the CITES CoP20 as part of IUCN Delegation.



Hosted by the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) and Save the Rhino International, the event reviewed three decades of international collaboration to curb illegal poaching and horn trafficking under CITES Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19).

The side event was graced by Ben Janse van Rensburg, Chief Enforcement Unit, CITES Secretariat, who has highlighted on background on CITES approach on support to rhino conservation, framing from the Rhino Enforcement Taskforce.

Participating as a distinguished panellist, Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Chair of the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group and also the Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org), strongly advocated for advancing Asia's rhino conservation priorities.

He highlighted success stories of rhino population recovery while drawing attention to persistent as well as emerging threats across Asian rhino habitats with special reference to iconic Greater one-horned rhino.

'Rhino Goes to School' across Kaziranga and Orang landscapes

Dr. Talukdar appealed to CITES Parties to enhance collaboration within Asian Rhino Range Countries to learn from each other to bolster policy implementation and increase investment in community-led protection programmes.

“CoP20 presents a pivotal opportunity to intensify global commitment against the illegal horn trade and to safeguard the future of every rhino species,” remarked Dr. Talukdar, who was recently honoured with the prestigious Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership by the Species Survival Commission of IUCN.

Dr. Talukdar has mentioned that rhino range countries need to engage with other law enforcement agencies like police, border forces more proactively besides forest and wildlife officials to facilitate shared responsibility to curb illegal rhino killings and international wildlife trade.

It is hoped that some of the actions Dr. Talukdar talked about shall be picked up to secure Asian rhinos by the range country agencies.

The session concluded with a unified call for stronger international enforcement mechanisms, better compliance across borders, and sustained conservation financing - essential to ensure that both African and Asian rhinos continue on their path to long-term recovery.

Aaranyak, with the generous support of the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF) continues to strengthen conservation awareness among young learners through its dynamic Rhino Goes to School campaign across Kaziranga and Orang landscapes.



In November, the programme reached multiple schools including Jakhalabandha Higher Secondary School, Dukhutimukh Higher Secondary School, Amguri ME School (Burhapahar), No. 1 Bochasimolu LP School, No.2 Bochasimolu LP School and Bochasimolu ME School engaging hundreds of enthusiastic students through interactive learning experiences.

Led by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCD) of Aaranyak, each session featured - insightful talks on the Greater One-Horned Rhino, discussions on local biodiversity and wildlife conservation, engaging power point presentations, a short wildlife documentary screening, captivating live rhino sculpture demonstrations, Open quizzes that sparked curiosity and enthusiasm.

The programmes also saw the presence and support of teachers, principals and forest officials across all locations including Bobby Bora, Deep Kumar Bori, Sashi Gogoi, Mangal Ingti, Champa Doley, Kuldeep Bania and many others who made the sessions memorable. Valuable support from Aaranyak members Akash Morang, Ivan Loying, and community leaders like Baharul Islam further enriched the outreach.

With participation numbers ranging from 90 to over 300 students per school, these sessions offered a meaningful blend of knowledge, creativity, and inspiration encouraging children to become future custodians of Assam's rich natural heritage.

'Chirp O'Clock' celebrates the legacy of the Birdman of India through birdwatching and learning

Aaranyak, in collaboration with Wipro Earthian, launched a month-long birdwatching and learning initiative titled 'Chirp O'Clock' to inspire citizen-led action for sustainability and environmental stewardship. The initiative was organised to commemorate the 129th birth anniversary of Dr. Salim Ali, fondly remembered as the Birdman of India, and aligns with the nationwide Young Birders' Month (YBM) 2025.

Dr. Salim Ali, one of India's greatest ornithologists and naturalists, devoted nearly eight decades to studying and documenting the birds of the Indian subcontinent. Through his research, writings and public engagement, he made birdwatching accessible to citizens and inspired generations to view wildlife conservation as a shared responsibility.

The first phase of Chirp O'Clock was held on November 12 across ecologically significant locations in Kamrup Metropolitan district, including Deepor Beel - Assam's only Ramsar site-Dakshin Beltola High School, and Amrit Udyan, a prominent urban green space in Guwahati. Over 100 participants, including students, teachers, research scholars, bird enthusiasts, local residents and Aaranyak officials, took part in the day-long programme.



The initiative was also conducted in Golaghat and Jorhat districts, engaging students and teachers from Karaiyani High School, Golaghat, and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Titabor, with 95 participants actively joining the sessions.

On November 14, the sixth edition of Chirp O'Clock was organised at Dilaojan High School, Karbi Anglong, coinciding with Children's Day. A total of 128 students and teachers participated in interactive activities, including open quizzes, storytelling and discussions on local birds and their habitats, designed to spark curiosity and strengthen children's connection with nature.

During the programme, Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer and Sustainability Educator at Aaranyak, emphasised the importance of nature-based learning alongside classroom education. Drawing parallels between the educational philosophies of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Salim Ali, he highlighted how early exposure to nature helps nurture curiosity, observation skills and a sense of responsibility toward the environment.

Highlighting the benefits of birdwatching as an outdoor learning tool, Kharga Bahadur Chetry, Senior Teacher at Dilaojan High School, noted that regular observation and documentation of birds can support students' mental well-being, scientific temperament and pro-environmental behaviour.

On November 25, Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden and Wipro Earthian, organised the seventh edition of Chirp O'Clock, engaging 20 students and teachers in a guided birdwatching and learning session.

The event began with an introductory briefing by Tikendrajit Gogoi, who reflected on Dr. Salim Ali's approach to nurturing curiosity and observational skills among young learners. Participants were then guided by Pranjal Mahananda, Biologist at the Assam State Zoo, who introduced birdwatching basics and explained the role of avifauna in sustaining urban biodiversity. He also highlighted the importance of urban green spaces and zoological parks in biodiversity documentation and environmental education.

The programme concluded with an interactive visit to the Nature Learning Centre, where participants shared observations and reflections on birds, wetlands and rivers of urban Kamrup Metropolitan.

The month-long Chirp O'Clock initiative was smoothly coordinated by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Jyotishmita Kashyap and Geetashree Sharma of Aaranyak.

Through this initiative, Aaranyak and Wipro Earthian continue to honour the legacy of Dr. Salim Ali by inspiring young learners, educators and citizens to observe, appreciate and protect birds—strengthening a culture of environmental awareness and shared stewardship for nature.



Multi-stakeholder campaign by Aaranyak-SBIF for coexistence

As part of its multi-stakeholder approach to facilitate mitigation of raging human elephant conflict (HEC), Aaranyak with support from the SBI Foundation (SBIF), has been carrying out a series of sensitisation campaigns that focus on facilitating coexistence amid HEC in the districts of Udalguri, Tamulpur and Baksa in Assam.

These sensitisation campaigns centred around making the stakeholders understand the HEC scenario within the village and surrounding areas, discussion on practical solutions to cope with the same for coexistence.

These solutions include installation of solar street lights and LED blinking lights on vantage points in HEC-affected areas so as to prevent both human beings and wild elephants coming very close to each other.



The affected stakeholders are also sensitised on efficacy of solar powered fences to keep the wild elephants off the cropland and human settlements as well as the benefit of taking to cultivation of crops that are less palatable to wild elephants to prevent loss of income because depredation of traditional crops by wild elephants.

These campaigns also strive to raise awareness on elephant behaviour and adverse impacts of illegal electrocution of wild elephants.

One such outreach programme was conducted by Aaranyak Team at Hajwgudi village in Tamulpur district in collaboration with the Kumarikata Range Office under Baksa Forest Division, 24 Bn SSB (Bihangapur BoP), and MSKETS NGO. The session focused on addressing prevalent HEC in the area.

Over 50, community members participated in discussions on the conflict issues, and practical mitigation strategies along with representatives of collaborating partners.

The programme was attended by SSB Inspector Dhenu Singh and several other staff of the paramilitary force. Forest Department was represented by Lachit Borgoyari, Boloram Deka Kachari and several other staff. Aaranyak Team that facilitated and conducted the meeting comprised of Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Baruah.

Similar outreach programme was organised in Teliyapara village of Tamulpur district of Assam on Monday where about 60 community members were present.

The programme, supported by the SBI Foundation (SBIF), included a presentation of Gajah Katha, Aaranyak signature campaign on HEC mitigation, and an interactive discussion on various HEC mitigation measures for addressing human-elephant conflict.

As part of the initiative, a local Solar Fence Management Committee was formed to support the village's newly-installed solar fencing system. Prior to the committee's formation, Aaranyak team conducted a short briefing on proper maintenance and operation of the system. Altogether 60 community members participated in the programme facilitated by Aaranyak's Rabiya Daimari, Abhijit Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Bikash Tossa, Manav Nayak and Pradip Barman.

National Bird Day celebrated at Panidehing Bird Sanctuary

To mark National Bird Day, Aaranyak organised a special awareness programme at Panidehing Bird Sanctuary, Sivasagar district of Assam, with active participation from school students and officials of the Forest Department.

The event was aimed at fostering awareness about the importance of bird conservation and inspiring young minds to appreciate avian diversity.

The day began with an early morning bird-watching session at Foklai Beel and Demow River, where students learned the basics of bird identification and observed a variety of resident and migratory species in their natural habitats.

The interactive session helped participants understand the ecological significance of birds and the need to conserve their habitats.

Following the field activity, a poster presentation session was conducted to highlight the importance and conservation measures of both local and migratory birds of the Panidehing landscape. The creative expressions of students reflected their growing awareness and concern for avian life.

Forty-two students from Charaguwa High School participated in the event, joined by four Forest officials from the Charaguwa Forest Beat Office. The programme was coordinated by Aaranyak's team members Tibrajyoti Gogoi and Deepjyoti Buragohain with valuable support from the Forest Department.

Speaking on the occasion, the organisers emphasised that initiatives like these help nurture the next generation of conservationists and build community support for the protection of critical bird habitats such as Panidehing Bird Sanctuary - a vital haven for migratory and resident birds in Upper Assam.



J4L takes Kolkata students to Manas National Park

Aaranyak, through its Manas Conservation and Outreach Centre (MCOC) successfully organised a three-day educational exposure visit from 11 to 13 November for 27 students and 3 teachers from the Department of Zoology, Acharya Prafulla Chandra College, Kolkata.

The programme was conducted under the Journey for Learning (J4L) initiative, designed to offer immersive, field-based learning experiences in wildlife conservation, habitat ecology and traditional ecological knowledge within the Manas Landscape of Assam.



The visit commenced with introductory sessions highlighting Aaranyak's ongoing conservation efforts and the ecological significance of Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Participants also received a detailed briefing on the conservation of the threatened Pygmy hog, followed by an interactive session on the avifauna of Manas that covered bird identification techniques and responsible birding practices.

As part of J4L's newly-introduced forest-walk module, the group explored Daodhara Reserve Forest where students learned to interpret natural signs and sounds within the forest ecosystem.

During the guided walk, they observed hoof marks of hog deer, bison, sambar, tiger scat and calls of hog deer and elephant. The participants documented several bird species, gaining valuable hands-on experience in species behaviour, habitat assessment and field observation techniques.

The group also enjoyed a traditional breakfast under the forest canopy near the scenic Pota River, followed by a live demonstration of traditional fishing using the "Jakoi". This cultural interaction provided deeper insight into local livelihoods and indigenous ecological practices.

The educational exposure visits mark a significant milestone in J4L's mission to foster experiential learning among students in the Manas Landscape. By engaging young learners through forest walks, community interactions and ecological briefings, J4L aims to deepen environmental awareness, encourage scientific curiosity, and strengthen connections with the region's rich natural heritage.

Aaranyak remains committed to conserving biodiversity and ecosystems while supporting indigenous communities in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong and Manas Landscapes through sustainable livelihood promotion, environmental education and awareness initiatives. The Journey for Learning programme is supported by IUCN-KfW and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Cycle rally in Sivasagar highlights need for vulture conservation

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Eco Club of Na-Katani High School organised a cycle rally to draw public attention to the alarming decline in vulture populations and promote vulture conservation awareness.

Seventy students and teachers participated enthusiastically in the rally held under 'Shogun Mitra (Friends of Vultures)' initiative of Aaranyak on November 18. Carrying placards and awareness messages, the participants highlighted the critical ecological role vultures play in maintaining a healthy environment.



The rally began at the premises of Na-Katani High School and proceeded through Baliaghat, Bagharachuk, Fakum Harmati Garh, Na-Katani Makum, Koi-Jan, Chiripuriya, and Bokabil village before returning to the school.

Prior to the flag-off, environmental enthusiast Hiren Dutta and school headmaster Dipok Arandhara lit ceremonial lamps before a portrait of Assamese cultural icon Late Zubeen Garg, honouring his memory on his birth anniversary.

The rally is part of a series of vulture conservation awareness initiatives being carried out across Assam under Aaranyak's Vulture Conservation Initiative. The event was coordinated by Aaranyak's Member Hiren Dutta, symbolising the organisation's ongoing commitment to conserve the species.

Following the rally, a meeting was convened under the presidency of Padum Saikia, President of APCU, Sivasagar district. The programme initiated with a welcome address by headmaster Deepak Arandhara, after which environmental activist Hemant Teye delivered a keynote speech emphasising the duties and responsibilities of citizens in protecting vultures and conserving biodiversity.

Aaranyak's Member Hiren Dutta said, 'Every living being on earth has value and purpose. When a species disappears, the loss may not seem significant at first glance, but it is an irreparable one. Because this loss happens gradually, we often fail to notice it. If vultures vanish from our ecosystem, the damage we will face can never be compensated.'

Environmental enthusiasts Hemant Teye, Rituparna Saikia and Sikha Dutta were also present and actively participated in the initiative. Aaranyak's vulture conservation initiative is spearheaded by its Secretary General and Executive Director Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar and senior conservation biologist Dr. Dipankar Lahkar, with dedicated support from Aaranyak member Hiren Dutta and official Wasima Begum.

Adi, Karbi communities connect through J4L

Aaranyak hosted a knowledge exchange programme under its 'Journey for Learning' (J4L) initiative in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape of Assam during November 23-25.

Eleven participants from the Adi community of Gobuk, Arunachal Pradesh, joined the initiative through Titli Trust for the three-day exposure visit.

The programme featured interactions between the Adi community members and homestay owners from the Karbi community, a visit to the PIRBI Ethnic Haat, Ingam Kengkam, an eco-cultural village walk and an engaging session with members of the Langkiri Self Help Group involved in eco-tourism. The participants also explored weaving centres managed by the Forest Department of Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve.

A cultural exchange session introduced the rich Karbi cultural heritage to the visiting group, while members of the Adi community shared aspects of their own traditions. This mutual exchange fostered a deeper understanding of each other's lived experiences. Through dialogue, hands-on activities and shared meals, participants built mutual respect and appreciation while exchanging ideas on community challenges, cultural practices and sustainable livelihoods.

'Rhino Goes to School' sensitises 600 students around MNP

Three 'Rhino Goes to School' (RGS) outreach initiative was carried out across schools surrounding Manas National Park on November 25 and 26, with the primary aim of building a strong foundation of knowledge and awareness on Greater One-horned Rhino conservation among young students.



The programme was hosted at Good Shepherd English School in Salbari under the Bhuyanpara Range, Manas ME School, and Seuj Jyoti Vidyalaya of the Basbari Range, engaging around 600 students over two days.

session led by Aaranyak researcher Ujjal Bayan, designed to educate students about the Greater One-horned Rhinoceros-Manas's flagship species. This session formed the backbone of the entire initiative.

Bayan introduced the students to the biology, behaviour, and conservation status of rhinos, and placed strong importance on their ecological role as a keystone species. He highlighted how rhinos shape grassland ecosystems, support biodiversity, and act as indicators of a healthy environment. Students gained a deeper understanding of why conserving rhinos is essential not only for wildlife, but for the ecological balance of Manas landscape as a whole. The session encouraged active questioning and reflection among students-making it the intellectual core of the programme.

The programme continued with a discussion by Wasima Begum on "The Role of Communities and Students in Strengthening Rhino Conservation Efforts." Her session underlined how collective action, local stewardship, and youth involvement are vital for long-term conservation success in the region.

To reinforce learning, interns Jomi Rongchon and Abhinav Bordoloi conducted an engaging quiz competition, testing students' knowledge of rhinos, wildlife, and conservation practices.

The programme culminated in an art competition, where students creatively expressed their understanding of rhino conservation. WWF representatives Suravi Dutta and Saunde Basumatary were present during the art segment, offering guidance, encouragement, and engaging directly with the students.

The programme was led by Researcher Ujjal Bayan under the guidance of Dr. Deba Kr. Dutta, Deputy Director of Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak.

The initiative was organised through a collaborative effort involving WWF, MEWS, and MMES, and was generously funded and supported by KACF.

Art competition at Chiring Chapori

An art competition was organised on November 16 at the premises of Jeoti Morol Sangha, Chiring Chapori, Dibrugarh in collaboration with Jeoti Morol Sangha as a pre-celebration event for NAHOR - Tumi Nothokar Aanuvabi Hondhya, marking the 53rd birthday of legendary Assamese artist Late. Zubeen Garg. Students from across the Dibrugarh area were invited to participate.



The competition featured five categories. For students from Nursery to Class V, the theme was open. Class VI and VII participants created artworks on "Different Shades of the Nahor Tree (Indian Rose Chestnut, *Mesua ferrea*) and Birds in Urban Areas." Students from Class VIII to X illustrated the "Relationship Between Nature and Culture," while Class XI and above explored the theme "Any Portrait of Zubeen Garg / Zubeen Garg and His Connectedness with Nature."

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation, with a total of 88 students taking part in the presence of club members and guardians.

On November 18, Aaranyak team also attended the NAHOR - Tumi Nothokar Aanuvabi Hondhya, programme and presented certificates to the participants in appreciation of their efforts.

From Aaranyak - Zakir Bora, Rimpee Moran, Ejaj Ahmed, Diganta Saikia and Jiaur Rahman coordinated the initiative.

World Sanitation Day observed

A sensitisation programme was held on November 19 at Dakshin Beltola High School, Kamrup Metro, Assam to mark World Sanitation Day and address rising pollution and environmental challenges.

The event was jointly organised by Aaranyak, Assam Pollution Control Board, SSA Kamrup (M) and Dakshin Beltola High School, engaging 48 students and teachers to promote sustainable waste management, improved sanitation and environmental stewardship through the UN's "One Health" approach.

An art competition on "Waste, Sanitation, Hygiene and Pollution Abatement" encouraged students to illustrate the importance of responsible waste disposal, hygiene and eco-friendly habits. Their artworks highlighted urgent environmental issues and proposed thoughtful, visual solutions.

Speaking at the event, Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer, Environment Education & Capacity Building Division of Aaranyak emphasised the crucial role of daily hygiene and responsible waste management in reducing pollution and protecting public health.

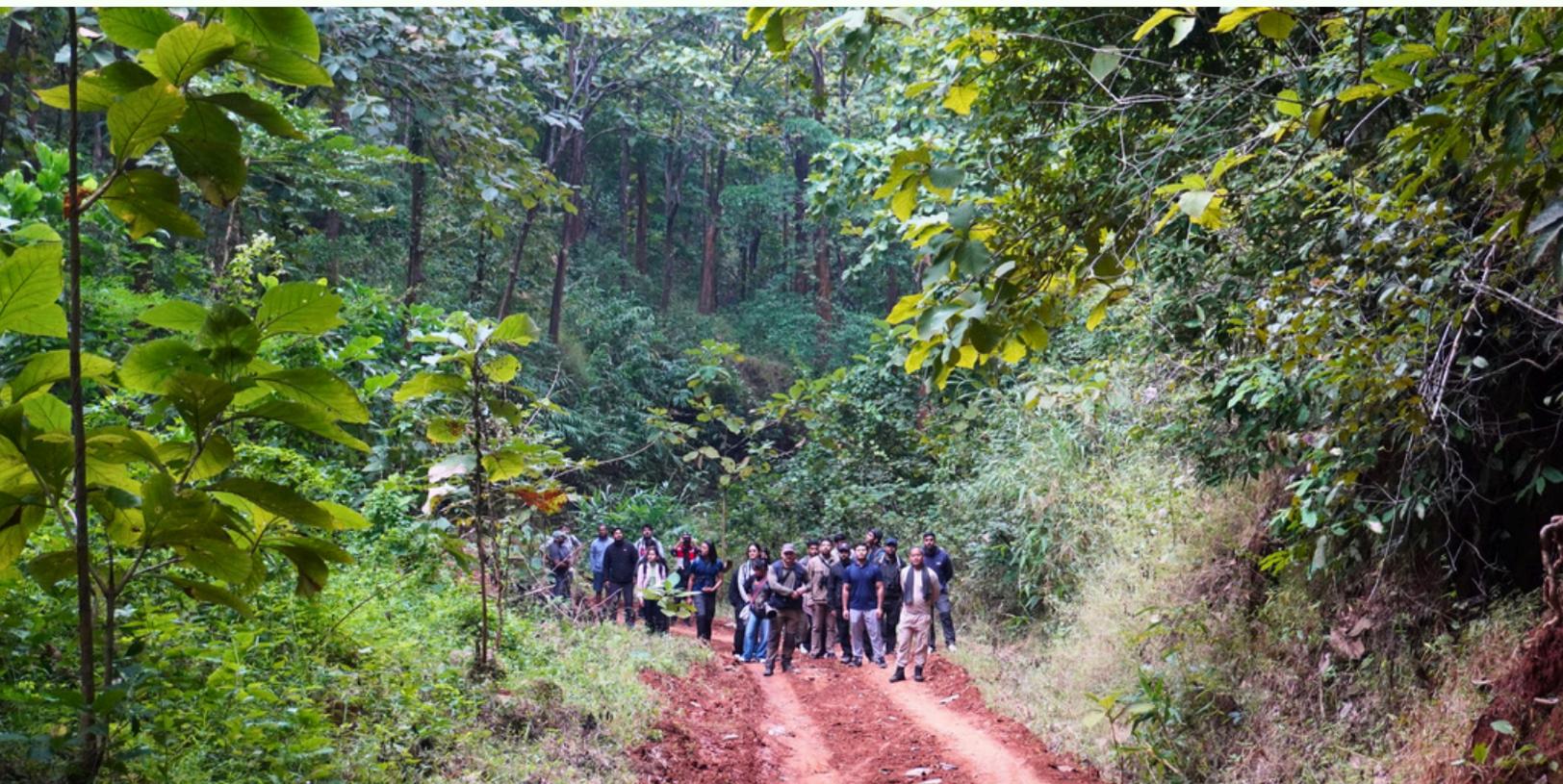
The division continues to advance behavioural change through a citizen science approach, involving students, teachers, parents and communities in fostering pro-environmental practices aligned with the UN SDG on Good Health and Well-Being.

The programme was coordinated by Aaranyak's Tikendrajit Gogoi, Dr. Kakoli Das Kalita, Geetashree Sarma and Jyotishmita Kashyap.

At COP30, public health and pollution were highlighted as global priorities, with UNEP and WHO identifying the climate crisis as a growing public-health emergency and calling for urgent action on "super pollutants." UN agencies and partners also adopted the first international climate-adaptation framework for health-the Belém Health Action Plan aimed at building climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health systems, with sanitation recognised as a key pillar.



Nature walk at Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary



Amidst the serene landscapes of Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary, Aaranyak under its flagship WeForNature programme, in collaboration with the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary authority, organised a vibrant Nature Walk at the Amchang Wildlife Range on November 22. The event offered participants an enriching opportunity to reconnect with nature and renew their bond with the wilderness.

The event brought together 25 enthusiastic participants, including nature lovers, researchers, and conservationists, who immersed themselves in the sanctuary's rich biodiversity. Over the course of the walk, along with taking part in guided wildlife observation, identification, participants documented 32 different wild species, ranging from birds, butterflies and insects, highlighting the ecological wealth of Amchang.

The initiative aimed to share the enriching experience of observing wildlife, exploring their habitats and forest ecosystems in Amchang WLS, and engaging in discussions on the role and responsibility of individuals in conserving wildlife and biodiversity and citizen science-based documentation. Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary, part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, is home to diverse species and habitats that are vital for ecological balance and community well-being.

Udayan Borthakur, a wildlife expert and Organizing Secretary of Aaranyak led the walk, accompanied by Manmath Bharali, a herpetofauna expert, Avishek Sarkar, GIS specialist from Aaranyak. The event was smoothly coordinated by Pranab Goswami from Aaranyak.

Aaranyak is thankful to the DFO, Guwahati Wildlife Division, Range Forest Officer of Amchang wildlife Range, and the officials of the sanctuary for their valuable support in conducting the event.

SBIF-Aaranyak installs solar street lights in HEC-hit villages

In order to mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC) in areas experiencing regular night-time movements of wild elephants, Aaranyak with the support of the SBI Foundation (SBIF), has installed 20 solar street lights in a number of villages across Baksa, Tamulpur, and Udalguri districts during the last week of November, 2025.



The intervention covers Mwithabari, Habranguri, Simlabari, and Daoraibari villages in Baksa; Hajwgudi, Khoirajuli, and Santipur in Tamulpur; and Jorpukhuri, Nunaikhuti, NC Orangajuli and Saglijhar in Udalguri district.

These villages are located close to traditional elephant movement routes, where low visibility after dark often limits mobility and increases the risk of unexpected encounters.

Lights have been placed along vulnerable zones such as key approach roads, pathways to agricultural fields, road bends, and community gathering points to ensure clearer visibility at night.

By illuminating the surroundings, villagers can monitor elephant movements more easily and thereby reduce chances of accidental encounters with the animals that may lead to harm, while also boosting locals' confidence and preparedness for HEC mitigation.

The improved lighting supports both HEC mitigation and daily activities, allowing children, farmers, and essential workers to move safely after dark. With better visibility, communities feel more at ease at night, and local volunteers involved in monitoring movement of wild elephants can coordinate more effectively. Overall, the solar lights strengthen night-time safety and contribute to more secure and sustainable coexistence in these areas.

The installation was carried out with assistance from Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) members, local residents, Forest Department officials, and SSB personnel coordinated by Aaranyak's dedicated team. The initiative reflects a strong collaborative effort to address safety requirements in high-conflict zones.

Mustard cultivation for human–elephant coexistence in Udalguri,

In order to strengthen support for communities living in high human–elephant conflict (HEC) zones, Aaranyak with support from LIC HFL’s CSR initiative, has continued its efforts to promote mustard cultivation as an elephant-resistant crop.

Mustard, being a less palatable crop for elephants, offers a practical and sustainable alternative for farmers frequently affected by depredation on crops like paddy by elephants.



As part of this initiative, 150 kg of mustard seeds were distributed to 45 farmers during October–November 2025, across the villages of Rangapani, No. 1 Sikaridanga, No. 2 Sikaridanga in the Mazbat Development Block and No. 1 Samrang, No. 3 Bholatar, Nonaikhas, No. 2 Samrang, and Garuajhar under the Bhergaon Development Block of Udalguri District, Assam.

Udalguri is one of the districts in Assam that experiences frequent crop damage during seasonal elephant movements, especially during the paddy-growing and harvesting periods.

Since a majority of households depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, even moderate crop loss significantly impacts their income and food security.

In this context, mustard cultivation has emerged as a safer and more viable option. While elephants may occasionally enter mustard fields, they rarely feed on the crop, leading to a marked reduction in crop-raiding incidents and subsequent loss and damage to crops. This shift not only supports human–elephant coexistence but also enhances livelihood stability for local farming communities. The intervention was implemented following a need assessment survey conducted among the local communities for identifying the most feasible choices of alternative crops to address the impact of elephant depredation, and climate change.

Professional report writing training session conducted

Aaranyak successfully conducted a Capacity Development Training on Professional Report Writing on November 29 at its Administrative Office in Guwahati. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Anupam Sarmah, Head of Brahmaputra Landscapes, WWF-India.

The day-long training brought together team members from various divisions of Aaranyak and aimed to enhance their ability to produce clear, structured and impactful professional reports.



Aaranyak biologist contributes to IUCN assessment of Millard's Rat

In a significant recognition for regional conservation science, Sourav Gupta, senior wildlife biologist at Aaranyak has contributed to the latest IUCN Red List assessment of Millard's Rat *Dacnomys millardi* (O. Thomas, 1916).

The assessment was undertaken jointly with Abi Gazzard, Programme Officer, IUCN SSC Small Mammal Specialist Group of which Mr Gupta is also a member.

The programme began with participant registration, followed by a welcome address from Dr. Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division. The session was formally inaugurated by Mridusmita Devi, Assistant Director (Operations), who highlighted the importance of effective documentation in strengthening organisational accountability and communication.

Throughout the day, participants engaged in comprehensive sessions covering the fundamentals of report writing-including the definition, importance and conceptualisation of reports, followed by detailed discussions on report structure, types and best practices for project reports.

The training concluded with an interactive Q&A and case study discussion, where participants exchanged ideas and explored practical applications. The programme ended on a positive note, with participants feeling more confident and better equipped to enhance documentation quality across Aaranyak's initiatives.



The species, previously classified as Data Deficient, has now been reassessed as "Least Concern (LC)" in the 2025 update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

The updated assessment highlights that while Millard's Rat remains poorly known, it has a wide distribution across parts of South and Southeast Asia, including Nepal, India, China, Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Conservation experts call for focus on drivers of human elephant conflict for coexistence

Within India, the species is found in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim and West Bengal, inhabiting upper montane tropical and subtropical evergreen moist forests between 1,000 and 3,000 metres. The species is primarily terrestrial in habit.

“Millard’s Rat is an important seed disperser and a key component of the forest food web; serving as a strong indicator of habitat integrity and overall ecosystem health,” said Sourav Gupta.

According to the IUCN assessment, *Dacnomys millardi* has an extent of occurrence estimated at approximately 1.32 million km², and is known from multiple sites. However, data on population abundance and trends remain limited.

However, experts emphasise the need for further research on its population dynamics, ecology and potential threats. There are also indications that populations from India and Southeast Asia might represent distinct taxa, suggesting the need for detailed taxonomic and field studies.

In South Asia, potential threats include habitat loss due to deforestation, shifting cultivation, and logging, as well as occasional culling when the species is perceived as a crop pest though such incidents remain unverified. In Southeast Asia, no major threats have yet been documented.

The IUCN highlights the need for continued monitoring and field research to better understand the species’ ecological role and ensure that emerging threats do not jeopardize its long-term survival.

Conservation experts and researchers representing various organisations based in different states across the country including Karnataka, Odisha, West Bengal, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have shared their field activities and research-based experiences in mitigation of human elephant conflicts for the sake of elephant conservation of elephants and facilitating human – elephant coexistence.



Most of the speakers besides sharing different mitigation measures that are being practiced in respective landscapes/states, also flagged the need for focusing on various drivers behind the increasing trend of HEC including the glaring one, rapid loss of habitats across the country.

One of the speakers has flagged that forest cover in the country is being disappearing at an alarming rate of four-square kilometre per day which, he said, has been a key driver behind the human-elephant conflict.

The workshop on December 4, 2025 was set on the roll at Dibrugarh in Assam, by acclaimed elephant conservation expert Belinda Stewart-Cox, of Elephant Family, who highlighted the need to share experiences of various organisations from various parts of the country to prepare a future roadmap for conservation of elephants in the country.

This workshop on ‘Human Elephant Coexistence’ has been organised by Aaranyak, British Asian Trust and Elephant Family with support from Darwin Initiative.

Notable among those who made presentations on their work on HEC mitigation and elephant conservation issues related to respective regions of the country included Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Sanjay Gubbi, Anupam Sarmah, Surendra Verma, Dr Rajasekhar Niyogi, M Ananda Kumar, Imnawapang Jamir and Mukti Roy among others.

The post lunch session began with a presentation on “Mapping of Emerging Human Elephant Conflict areas in India” by Auro Shashwat of British Asian Trust and a subsequent participatory discussion on working out a strategy for the purpose.

Later in the afternoon, the conservation experts and researchers divided in to three groups to engage in thematic discussion on following themes – “Coexistence approaches in emerging conflict areas” led by Sanjay Gubbi; “HEC mitigation interventions in emerging conflict areas” led by M Ananda Kumar and “Lessons learnt and best practices” led by Anupam Sarmah.

Aaranyak’s ERCD team based in eastern Assam under leadership of Assistant Manager Zakir Islam Bora has efficiently done the spadework to facilitate the workshop.

Aaranyak at Choraichung Festival 2025, Majuli



The vibrant Choraichung Festival was held from December 7–10 at the historic Sargadeu Pratap Singha Khetra, Bhakatiduar, on the iconic river island of Majuli. Aaranyak joined the celebrations with a dedicated stall, highlighting its wide-ranging interventions aimed at conserving Northeast India’s rich biodiversity and natural resources.

On the opening day, visitors engaged enthusiastically with the Aaranyak team, learning how community-based conservation, guided by sound scientific approaches, comes together to safeguard the natural heritage of our region. The Aaranyak team warmly invites everyone in and around Majuli to visit the stall and be part of the ongoing symposium.

Goalpara district set to bolster collaborative strategy for HEC mitigation

A high-level inter-departmental meeting discussed threadbare the rising trend of human elephant conflict (HEC) incidents in Goalpara district of Assam and recommended for a coordinated, science-based multi-stakeholder strategy to mitigate HEC for facilitating coexistence between people and wild elephants.

The high-level strategic line-departmental meeting was organised on December 9 by the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Goalpara in collaboration with the Office of the District Commissioner (DC) at the DC Office.

Chaired by Prodip Timung, District Commissioner of Goalpara, the meeting witnessed active participation from key officials, including Tejas Mariswami, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer of Goalpara; Nikhamoni Kalita, Assistant Commissioner of Goalpara; officials from DDMA, Goalpara, officials from various government departments, representatives from leading biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak, and local NGOs.



Addressing the gathering, District Commissioner Prodip Timung, highlighted the urgent need for a unified and multi-sectoral approach to effectively address the growing challenges of human-elephant interactions in the district.

A comprehensive evaluation of existing elephant movement routes was conducted during the meeting that led to a decision to initiate a scientifically informed mapping, validation and continuous updating of elephant corridors across Goalpara district.

A key decision included the development of an Integrated District Elephant Corridor Map designed to support sustainable land-use planning, maintain ecological connectivity, and improve long-term conflict mitigation measures. Speaking at the meeting, Anjan Baruah, Assistant Manager, Elephant Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, elaborated on the burgeoning HEC issues in Goalpara district and highlighted Aaranyak's ongoing efforts toward community-based mitigation and harmonious coexistence between people and elephants.

Aaranyak and Majulir Xahitya host symposium on sustainable development of Majuli

The forum also emphasised strengthening habitat protection-endorsing the expansion of elephant-deterrent plantations in vulnerable zones, including species such as lemon, chili, lemongrass, mint, sisal and thorny hedges. Additionally, the use of beehive fencing was recommended as a sustainable and nature-friendly method to reduce crop-raiding incidents. Increased bio-fencing initiatives around farmlands and habitation areas were also prioritised.

Community engagement formed a crucial part of the discussions. Participating officials underscored the need for regular awareness programmes, promotion of early-warning systems, capacity building for local youth and measures that respect traditional elephant movement patterns to minimize conflict.

Other recommendations included strengthening Rapid Response Teams, intensifying nocturnal patrolling in high-conflict zones and enhancing coordination among key stakeholder departments.

In his concluding address, the District Commissioner reaffirmed the administration's unwavering commitment to implementing a holistic and proactive strategy to safeguard human lives while ensuring the conservation of elephants.

He stressed that collective and collaborative action between the district administration, Forest Department, DDMA, veterinary services, local communities, and conservation organisations such as Aaranyak is essential to achieving long-term human-elephant coexistence in Goalpara.

Aaranyak and Majulir Xahitya jointly hosted a thought-provoking symposium on 'Sustainable Development of Majuli through Community-based Nature Conservation and Ecotourism: Present and Future'.

The symposium was held on December 8 last, as part of the Choraichung Festival being celebrated in the Swargadeo Pratap Singha Khetra in the playground of the Bhakati Duwar Higher Secondary School, Majuli from December 7.



This is the second time that Majulir Xahitya, a reputed socio-literary-cultural organisation of Majuli is organising this major event in collaboration with the people and host of institutions of the island with an aim to promote the legacy of bird conservation in the place called Charaichung having about a 400-year-old history as a habitat of birds with the patronage of several kings of the Ahom dynasty of Assam since early 17th century. The organisers of the festival intend to promote Charaichung as an important destination in the global tourist map for nature lovers.

It is to be noted that Aaranyak also participated in the first edition of the Charaisung Festival in March 2024 and co-organised an informal citizens' discussion in its exhibition stall.

The symposium aimed to explore how participatory conservation approaches, combined with environmentally responsible, culturally respectful, and economically beneficial ecotourism models, can help conserve and preserve Majuli's unique ecological and cultural heritage.

The symposium was inaugurated by Padma Shri Jadav Payeng (Forest Man of India) who delivered a brief but inspiring speech and committed to disseminate information about the historical significance of the Charaichung bird habitat as well as the festival to the global audience wherever he travels as an international emissary promoting the spirit and action for conservation of forests and environment throughout the world.

The invited panellists participating in the event were Mr. Rituraj Phukan, a well-known environmental chronicler and activist in the field of wildlife and climate change and Ms. Abantika Parashar, a researcher in the field of ancient history of Assam and museology who is also the District Museum Officer, Jorhat. Mr. Phukan spoke about the rich biodiversity of Majuli and the potential of enveloping sustainable ecotourism around the natural beauty and resources.

Mrs. Parashar dwelt on the possibility of applying museological approaches to preserving the traditional knowledge and socio-cultural heritage of the indigenous communities of the island. Other notable guests who contributed to the discussion on the theme were including Dr. Ananda Hazarika, Mr. Kishorimohan Pal, Sri Jugal Hazarika, Dr. Rabin Dutta and Sri Kamal Dutta.



The discussion highlighted raised important issues pertaining to the need of preserving natural habitats, forests and cultural traditions of the indigenous communities of the island while pursuing the cause of socioeconomic development and improving livelihood security of the people.

Dr. Partha J. Das, Senior Environmental Scientist from Aaranyak moderated the discussion. Dr. Das also explained the objectives of organising the symposium and provided the background of ongoing collaboration between 'Aaranyak' and 'Majulir Xahitya' that has led to this event this year. In his remarks Dr Das spoke about the major factors that held the key to the sustainability of the natural systems and the socioeconomic development in the island district, referring mainly to the impact of development of connectivity, anticipated socioeconomic transformations, and expected alterations in the landuse-landcover, degradation of wetlands as well as climate change, especially the hydroclimatic hazards like flooding and erosion. A diverse group of people representing the prominent citizenry, educational institutions, civil society organisations, district administration and socio-cultural-literary organisations of Majuli attend the symposium.

The deliberations made in the symposium resulted in several important recommendations that would help ensure the sustainable future of Majuli such as conducting scientific research on Majuli's environment, natural resources, and biodiversity; Create database from such research to facilitate conservation, restoration and sustainable management of the aquatic ecosystems in particular; Documenting regularly the diversity of birds species and their habitats across the island focussing on the historic bird place of Charaichung; Preserving the traditional knowledge and practices of the indigenous communities; Establishment of a water-museum in Majuli; Rejuvenating the Tuni and Kherkotia rivers with free flow from the sources to the sink along with rejuvenation of associated wetlands; Establishing Charaichung as an eco-tourism hub to position Majuli on the global map.

The symposium underscored the importance of community-driven conservation and ecotourism as vital pathways to safeguard Majuli's ecological and cultural legacy.

Pranab Goswami, Organising Officer of Aaranyak presented the salient recommend actions and offered the vote of thanks.

Nature's Wonderland - A Journey of Curiosity (Chapter XII) concludes successfully at Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary



Rapid urbanisation has devastating impacts on natural ecosystems, which in turn negatively affect the well-being of urban populations. The United Nations Climate Action emphasised that biodiversity plays a vital role in addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. To strengthen conservation efforts in urban landscapes, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is promoting meaningful youth engagement through targeted capacity-building initiatives and its UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration campaign, to advance a climate-neutral, nature-positive, and pollution-free future.



Guwahati, a unique urban landscape within the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot, is home to a rich and treasured array of biological diversity. To foster nature learning & strengthen conservation efforts in urban landscapes among younger generations, Aaranyak, in collaboration with Assam State Forest Department, Guwahati Wildlife Division (Amchang range), with support from Wipro Earthian, YouthNet & Mobius foundation, organized its Chapter XII of “Nature’s Wonderland: A Journey of Curiosity on December 2025 at Amchang. Covering 78.64 sq. km in eastern Kamrup Metropolitan district, Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary is one of Assam’s most significant protected areas, known for its rich tapestry of flora and fauna.

Nature’s Wonderland - A Journey of Curiosity” is a nature-learning initiative of Aaranyak’s Environment Education & Capacity Building Division. The programme follows an experiential learning approach, highlighting the importance of urban biodiversity. Participants are guided by experts to gain field-based understanding of biotic and abiotic components, ecosystem significance, environmental challenges, and conservation strategies.

The event began with an introductory briefing by Ms. Preenita Singh, Range Officer of the Amchang Range, Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary. She remarked, ‘Understanding Guwahati’s landscape is essential to recognising the impacts of climate change on the city. We must also understand how Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary provides vital ecosystem services that help maintain the delicate balance of this urban environment.’ She further praised Aaranyak’s consistent efforts to engage urban youth in connecting with nature and fostering pro-environmental behaviour.

Forty students including teachers from North Guwahati Girls’ High School actively participated in the programme. The event was successfully concluded through a knowledge sharing session among the participants. The entire event was coordinated by Mr. Tikendrajit Gogoi, Ms. Ashatora Sarma, Ms. Geetashree Sarma, and Mr. Andrew Roy of Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD), Aaranyak.

Efforts for bolstering grassroots coordination for mitigation HEC on Assam-Meghalaya boundary areas



Aaranyak in partnership with the Krishnai Forest Range in Goalpara, conducted an engaging awareness event on December 15 to facilitate a deeper understanding among the local community of the need for sustained efforts for environmental conservation.

Ketekibari village is located at the inter-state boundary between Assam and Garo Hills areas of Meghalaya. The local community in Ketekibari village comprises of Rabha and Garo tribe people.

The nearby villages of Chaplengkata, Thakurbila and Borjhora including Ketekibari share the inter-state boundary between Goalpara district of Assam and West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. The residents of these villages have been facing issues related to the HEC (Human elephant conflict) for a long time.

The primary goal of this meeting was to enhance awareness regarding the mitigation of human-elephant conflict (HEC) and to promote harmonious coexistence among the villages of both states. Through this gathering, we aimed to unite community members on a shared platform, fostering understanding and collaboration to effectively tackle the challenges posed by the HEC. By engaging in open dialogue and exchanging insights, we hope to create sustainable solutions that benefit both people and elephants in the region.

Around 50 participants from that area, both from Assam and Meghalaya attended in the awareness programme. Nokmas from Garo Hill side and Gaon burhas along with local farmers attended the meeting and shared their issues and present status of HEC mitigation.

The Krishnai Forest Range team comprised by Dy Ranger Rajib Kataki, Forester 1 Jitan Talukdar, Forest Guards Barasha Gogoi and Gitali Borah. The Aaranyak team comprised of Anjan Baruah, Subhas Ch. Rabha, Manjit Das, Ripunjoy Nath and Bijoy Kalita.

The programme was moderated by Subhas Ch. Rabha of Aaranyak. Anjan Baruah from Aaranyak discussed with the participants probable HEC mitigation measures in that area. He also discussed on various important dos and don'ts displaying some slides for the promotion of coexistence.

From the Krishnai Range Rajib Kataki and Barasha Gogoi interacted with the participants.

The Nokmas and people from Garo hills side spoke about non receiving of HEC mitigation tools from Meghalaya side. They requested Assam to provide some support for HEC mitigation. While participants from Assam side also requested for some more torch lights and solar street lights to mitigate the HEC issues in those areas. All the participants from both Assam and Meghalaya area expressed their solidarity to the present efforts for mitigating the HEC.

After the meeting following decisions were taken by the local community: –

- 1) A joint elephant protection committee will be formed soon in that area with members from both the state. This new group will work as an Elephant Conservation Network (ECN).
- 2) People of Goalpara and West Garo Hills will ask for help to any forest patrolling team whichever present during elephant raiding time.
- 3) The villagers of Assam and Meghalaya side will help each other during elephant patrolling. All the villagers will coordinate to move out the elephant without obstruction.
- 4) Each Forest team will help people from Assam as well as Meghalaya areas during elephant patrolling.

Engaging school students in nature learning and biodiversity assessment in Guwahati

In an effort to reconnect children with nature and foster environmental responsibility at an early age, Aaranyak successfully organised a 'Nature Learning cum Biodiversity Documentation' programme at Khanapara Adarsha LP School, Guwahati.



The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and teachers and aimed to strengthen the bond between young learners and their natural surroundings through experiential learning.

In today's rapidly urbanising landscape, especially in cities like Guwahati, the direct connection between humans and nature has significantly diminished, with children being among the most affected. Recognising this growing disconnect, Aaranyak has been consistently working to inspire positive attitudes, emotional well-being, social harmony and environmental awareness through nature-based education.

The programme was led by Aaranyak's Young Professionals (YPs) under the guidance of Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director, Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak. Students actively explored local biodiversity by observing their immediate environment and identifying various species of flora and fauna. They were also introduced to basic scientific field techniques, including the use of instruments such as an anemometer, helping them understand practical applications of science in nature studies.

A key highlight of the programme was the nature journaling activity, where students closely observed their surroundings and expressed their learning through drawings and written reflections. This activity not only enhanced observation and analytical skills but also nurtured creativity and a deeper emotional connection with nature.

The programme was facilitated by YPs Bhanita Deka, Dipankar Mazumder, Hrishita Nath, Jyotishmita Kashyap and Kaushik Ranjan Saikia, who guided the students throughout the activities. The event was coordinated by Prajnyan Sarma, Project Coordinator, and Andrew Roy, Young Professional, whose support ensured active and enthusiastic participation by the students.

Aaranyak expressed sincere appreciation for the cooperation and support extended by Namita Baishya, Head Teacher, along with faculty members Sabina Zesmin and Tarpana Phukan of Khanapara Adarsha LP School.

The programme was conducted under the "Mobius Young Climate Leaders for Himalayan Development – North East India Initiative", implemented by Aaranyak in partnership with YouthNet and the Mobius Foundation.

Strengthening community preparedness for human-elephant coexistence in Assam

Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation conducted two focused community outreach programmes in Tamulpur and Baksa districts of Assam to enhance local preparedness for human-elephant conflict. On December 5 at Santipur in Tamulpur district, the team conducted a practical awareness session using Gajah Katha, an interactive educational module. Participants gained insights into behaviour of Asian elephants, habitat pressures and the key drivers of conflict, along with simple, actionable mitigation measures applicable at both household and village levels.

Thirty-two community members from four chubas participated, sharing experiences and engaging in open discussions on prevailing challenges. The second programme, held on December 7 at Belguri, Baksa brought together 18 community members for an interactive exchange on safe responses during elephant encounters and understanding elephant movement patterns around their settlements. The session helped participants better understand actual risks and encouraged more informed and safer approaches to everyday coexistence. Both outreach programmes were coordinated by Jiban Chetty and Jaugashar Basumatary.



Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, conducted a series of school outreach programmes in Udalguri and Baksa districts in the month of December, engaging young minds in conversations around Human-elephant conflict and coexistence.

Through interactive sessions and storytelling under Gajah Katha, students were introduced to elephant behaviour, movement patterns, and simple ways to reduce conflict.

Sessions held on 11 December at Bishnu Rabha M.E. School, Udalguri, 15 December at Sonajuli M.E. School, Udalguri, and 19 December at Indira Gandhi M.E. School, Baksa, collectively engaged 130 students, encouraging awareness, empathy, and shared responsibility towards living alongside elephants.

The sessions were facilitated by Aaranyak's team- Abhilasha Boruah, Abhijit Saikia, Bistirna Burhagohain, Bikash Tossa, and Manav Nayak.

Aaranyak collaborates in Dhemaji exhibition showcasing traditional knowledge, conservation

Aaranyak participated as a collaborator in an outreach event - an exhibition on traditional and indigenous knowledge and technology organised by Dhemaji Girls' Higher Secondary School at the school premises. The event was sponsored by the Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC), Government of Assam.



The exhibition highlighted a rich display of traditional dresses, ornaments, utensils, agricultural implements, fishing tools, musical instruments, handloom equipment, and various household items of cultural significance to the people of Assam. Students from different parts of Dhemaji district actively took part in the exhibition.

The programme also featured a handmade wall magazine competition, art competition, and leaf art competition on themes related to nature conservation. In addition, an interactive audio-visual session was conducted on the importance of traditional and indigenous knowledge and technology in nature conservation, along with discussions on the identification and significance of local bird species.

At the exhibition venue, the Aaranyak team showcased the organization's interventions in biodiversity conservation, with a special emphasis on IEC materials related to elephant behaviour and ecology, and presented a model of human-elephant coexistence. Aaranyak also distributed pamphlets highlighting the role of traditional and indigenous knowledge and technology in nature conservation.

The resource persons for the event included Labanya Lahon Chutia, Retired Teacher, President of the Dhakuakhana Branch of the Assam Science Society and Co-Coordinator of the Eastern Assam Zone; Satyabrat Gogoi, Teacher, Dhemaji Girls' Higher Secondary School; Biman Handique, Secretary, Dhakuakhana Branch of the Assam Science Society; and Dhrubajyoti Kalita, Life Member of Aaranyak.

The Eastern Assam Zone team of Aaranyak, led by Zakir Islam Bora (Coordinator), along with Ejaj Ahmed and Jiaur Rahman, actively interacted with the students during the event. Aaranyak expressed special thanks to Bandana Hazarika, Principal of Dhemaji Girls' Higher Secondary School, for her initiative and efforts in successfully organising the programme.



Empowering farmers with alternative crops in Assam's HEC hotspot

With support from SBI Foundation, Aaranyak organised an alternative crop training programme at 2 No. Dimakuchi village in Udalguri district on December 12. The programme was designed to address the growing challenge of human-elephant conflict (HEC) by introducing safer and more sustainable farming practices for local communities.

Udalguri district is one of Assam's major HEC hotspots, where frequent elephant movements into agricultural fields lead to recurring crop damage and economic losses for farmers. In response to this situation, the training focused on promoting alternative crops that are generally avoided by elephants.

Participants were introduced to crops such as mustard, sesame, chilli, ginger, Assam lemon and mushrooms, which are less attractive to elephants and can help reduce crop losses while enabling farmers to continue agricultural activities more safely.

Special emphasis was placed on mushroom cultivation as an additional and low-risk livelihood option. A hands-on training session was conducted to demonstrate basic mushroom farming techniques, including cultivation methods and maintenance practices. This practical exposure enabled participants to understand how mushroom cultivation can be adopted at the household level as a supplementary source of income.

The session also highlighted how alternative cropping practices and mushroom cultivation can diversify livelihoods, reduce dependence on elephant-vulnerable crops, and contribute to long-term coexistence between local communities and wildlife.

The training was led and facilitated by Rabiya Daimari, Didom Daimari, Haben Mochahary, Abhilasha Boruah, Bistirna Burhagohain, Bikash Tossa, and Pradip Barman from Aaranyak. Twenty-five participants, including local farmers and community members, attended the programme and actively engaged in discussions and practical demonstrations.

Aaranyak continues its efforts to promote human-elephant coexistence, strengthen community resilience and support sustainable livelihood options in conflict-prone landscapes of Assam.



'Rhino Portrait' engages young minds around Orang National Park

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority, organised a series of art workshops and competitions themed 'Rhino Portrait' to promote wildlife conservation awareness among students living in fringe villages of Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve, a prominent rhino habitat in Assam.



The initiative supported by the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, UK aimed to sensitise young minds towards conservation while providing them a creative platform to express their thoughts and emotions through use of artistic skill and vibrant colours.

As part of the programme, art competitions were held at Keramot Ali ME School and Sealmari Higher Secondary School. Over two-hundred students enthusiastically participated in the events, showcasing their creativity and understanding of the importance of protecting the iconic Greater one-horned rhinoceros and its habitat.

The programmes were coordinated by Baharul Islam, President, Fatasimolu Eco Development Committee (EDC) and Khairul Basher, a local conservationist from Orang, under the guidance of Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak.

The events were attended by Indra Nath Jha, Head Master, Sealmari Higher Secondary School; Abul Basher, Assistant Teacher, Sealmari Higher Secondary School; Keramot Ali, Head Master, Keramot Ali ME School; and Anuwara Begum, Sahidul Islam, and Dilu Deka, Assistant Teachers of Keramot Ali ME School, who appreciated the initiative for effectively blending education, creativity, and conservation.

Aaranyak continues its efforts to engage local communities, especially children, in conservation dialogue and foster a sense of responsibility towards protecting Assam's rich wildlife heritage through such art-based outreach initiatives among various other engaging programmes.



Aaranyak nurtures young nature guardians in Guwahati

In an effort to promote environmental awareness and deepen children's connection with nature, Aaranyak organised the 2nd 'Nature Learning-cum-Biodiversity Documentation' at Bhaskar Nagar LP School, Guwahati on 16 December.



Students of IV and V standards actively participated in the programme and displayed great enthusiasm throughout the learning sessions. The initiative aimed to encourage young learners to explore their immediate surroundings and develop curiosity about local biodiversity through hands-on and experiential learning.

During the programme, students observed and documented the flora and fauna present within the school campus, gaining insights into their morphology, uses, and ecological importance. These activities helped students understand nature not just theoretically, but through direct observation and interaction.

The Headmaster of Bhaskar Nagar LP School, Amal Kumar Sarma, appreciated the initiative and noted that such programmes significantly enhance students' interest in nature and enable learning beyond textbooks. Mr Sarma, highlighted the importance of early exposure to nature-based education for the holistic development of children. Emphasising the urgent need to reconnect children with the natural world, Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director in the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak, highlighted how interaction with nature plays a vital role in shaping young minds and social skills. Pathak said that the interaction with nature could stimulate children's cognitive development including imagination, curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and boosts social relationships.

The teaching staff of the school extended full support and cooperation, which contributed to the smooth and successful conduct of the programme. While guiding students Prajnyan Sarma, Project Officer, EECBD of Aaranyak highlighted the organisation's focused approach towards building a strong pool of human resources dedicated to protecting biodiversity. Sarma emphasized that Aaranyak has been making conscious and sustained efforts to inspire students to develop scientific temper, environmental responsibility, and conservation leadership from an early age.

The programme was conducted under the "Mobius Young Climate Leaders for Himalayan Development – North East India Initiative", implemented by EECBD, Aaranyak, in partnership with YouthNet, Mobius Foundation, Samagrah Siksha Axom, and Mission LiFE, which was coordinated by the Geetashree Sarma, Young Professional at Aaranyak.

The success of the program was furthered by the contributions of the Young Professionals team, comprising Andrew Roy, Bhanita Deka, Dipankar Mazumder, Disha Haloi, Hrishita Nath, Jyotismita Kashyap, and Kaushik Ranjan Saikia.

Torch lights distribution to Kuruabhasa Elephant committee



Aaranyak team distributed a few rechargeable torch lights to the community elephant patrolling team of Kuruabhasa village at community hall campus in Goalpara District. The six-member team is led by the Gaonburah of Kuruabhasa village.

Beside the Gaonburah, the Secretary of Kuruabhasa Rabha Samaj Jamad Committee and other villagers are in the team. They have been trying to tackle the HEC in their village continuously. The Aaranyak Goalpara team met them and discussed over the HEC issues and probable mitigation measures in their village. As per their request Aaranyak provided six rechargeable torch lights as an initial support for the HEC mitigation measure.

Aaranyak promotes alternative livelihoods to reduce HEC in Baksa and Udalguri

Aaranyak, with support from the SBI Foundation, continues to work closely with local communities to promote human elephant coexistence, strengthen livelihoods and develop solutions to human-elephant conflict (HEC) in elephant-prone landscapes.



In the Baksa and Udalguri districts of Assam, in areas severely affected by recurring HEC, crop loss, and livelihood insecurity, Aaranyak has taken a significant step by promoting alternative livelihood options.

To reduce crop-related HEC, alternative crops that are less attractive to elephants were introduced, offering safer and sustainable income options for local families. Between 12-19 December 2025, coriander seeds and mushroom spawn were distributed to beneficiaries across Baganpur in Baksa; No. 2 Dimakuchi, Tenki Basti, and Badla Para villages in Udalguri, encouraging low-cost, high-return livelihood practices.

These initiatives not only support livelihood diversification but also help minimise conflict by promoting farming practices that reduce elephant attraction. Community members warmly welcomed the initiative and showed keen interest in adopting these alternatives.

The activity was successfully facilitated by the dedicated Aaranyak field team, ensuring smooth implementation and strong community engagement.

Insightful talk on cutting-edge optical tools for biodiversity conservation

In the face of the present environmental crisis, collaboration among experts from diverse disciplines along with active participation of local communities is essential to achieve impactful and sustainable conservation outcomes, said Dr Iftak Hussain, a noted scientist based in Singapore.

Dr Hussain was speaking at an interactive session titled “Scope of Optical Engineering in Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation in North East India”, organised by Aaranyak under the aegis of its Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD). The event was held on December 22 at the administrative office of Aaranyak, a leading biodiversity conservation organisation of Northeast India.

During the session, Dr Hussain highlighted how modern optical technologies can play a significant role in supporting biodiversity and wildlife conservation efforts in the region. He elaborated on the application of optical engineering, artificial intelligence and smartphone-based technologies for environmental monitoring, particularly in resource-limited settings.



A scientist at Singapore’s Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), Dr Hussain interacted with Aaranyak team members and students from various schools, sharing his scientific journey and research experiences. A native of Dergaon in Assam’s Golaghat district, Dr Hussain is a recipient of the prestigious Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (GYTI) Award (2017), conferred by the then President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, for his contributions to science and technology. His research spans smartphone-based optical diagnostics, fluorescence imaging, biosensing and machine-learning-enabled medical image analysis.

Emphasising the growing potential of smartphones as advanced and accessible tools, Dr Hussain noted that the integration of optics and artificial intelligence can transform environmental education, research and conservation practices.

He underscored the role of STEM education in bridging classroom learning with real-world applications, enhancing digital literacy, fostering teamwork and preparing students for technology-driven careers while supporting national sustainability goals.

Delivering the inaugural address, Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director and Head (In-charge), EECBD, Aaranyak highlighted the urgent need to expose students and practitioners to appropriate, low-cost and effective technologies to tackle pressing environmental challenges in Northeast India.

Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Deputy Executive Director at Aaranyak delivered the welcome address. The programme was successfully coordinated and moderated by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Project Officer of EECBD, Aaranyak.

The interactive session reinforced the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and innovative technologies in strengthening conservation science and environmental education in the region.

Nature learning and biodiversity documentation programmes for students

Amid rapid urbanisation and growing climate challenges, the conservation of urban green spaces has become increasingly critical to address issues such as heatwaves, pollution, flash floods, landslides, water scarcity and rising stress levels in cities like Guwahati. Emphasising this need, Aaranyak continues to strengthen nature-based education through hands-on learning initiatives for schoolchildren.



As part of this effort, the Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak successfully organised Nature Learning-cum-Biodiversity Documentation programmes at Ambari Navajug LP School and Tetelia LP School and Tetelia Bori LP School in Guwahati.

The programme at Ambari Navajug LP School, held on 23 December 2025, engaged enthusiastic students and teachers in exploring the biodiversity of their immediate surroundings. Speaking on the occasion, Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director and Head (In-charge), Environment Education Division, Aaranyak, highlighted that conserving and scientifically managing Guwahati's natural resources can significantly help mitigate the urban heat island effect, improve air and water quality, and reduce the risks of flash floods and landslides. He also underlined the growing disconnect between children and nature in urban landscapes.

Aaranyak's Young Professionals (YPs) led students through interactive field-based activities. Children identified local flora and fauna, learned to use basic scientific tools and measurement techniques, and participated in nature journaling, where they recorded observations through drawings and written reflections. These activities enhanced creativity, observation skills and fostered a deeper emotional connection with nature.

Continuing this initiative, Aaranyak conducted another Nature Learning-cum-Biodiversity Documentation programme at Tetelia, engaging students from Tetelia LP School and Tetelia Bori LP School. The programme aimed to reconnect children with nature and instil environmental responsibility through experiential, hands-on learning approaches.

Students actively observed their surroundings to identify various species of plants and animals and were introduced to basic scientific field instruments and techniques. Special emphasis was placed on nature journaling, encouraging students to mindfully observe nature and express their learning creatively. The activity helped reinforce values of conservation, mindful resource use and care for the environment, aligning with the vision of Mission LiFE.

It is noteworthy that Aaranyak, in collaboration with Samagra Shiksha Assam, Kamrup Metro, has also been working consistently to build awareness on water conservation in schools. Through these efforts, students gain a better understanding of water sources, their importance and the need for conservation—nurturing environmental curiosity and responsibility from an early age.

Both programmes were conducted under the “Mobius Young Climate Leaders for Himalayan Development -North East India Initiative”, implemented by Aaranyak in collaboration with Samagra Shiksha Assam, Kamrup Metro, in partnership with YouthNet, Climate Studies and Knowledge Solutions Centre, Nagaland, and the Mobius Foundation.



Year-end celebration amidst birds at Deepor Beel with inquisitive young minds

A foggy winter morning, flocks of birds, and the enthusiasm of young learners created a refreshing and meaningful way to celebrate the year-end with a noble cause. The Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD) of Aaranyak organized a bird-watching programme at Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary on December 24, offering participants an enriching opportunity to connect with nature while learning about avian diversity.



Dr. Mahanta also provided an overview of Ramsar Sites and explained the importance of waterbodies for human well-being and ecosystem balance. He explained concepts such as bird migration, methods to identify bird species and how to differentiate between similar-looking birds. Students actively participated and raised thoughtful questions, including why birds migrate, how birds are counted in a flock, how birds get their names, how scientists track birds etc. All queries have been addressed with scientific explanations, making the session engaging and informative.

The program also featured an interaction session with Mr. Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director of Aaranyak, who emphasized the urgent need to conserve avian as well as aquatic biodiversity. Mr Pathak further discussed the importance of birding and how it can be ecologically beneficial and pursued as a career option.

The event proved to be an enriching learning experience, nurturing curiosity, environmental responsibility, and conservation ethics among young minds, while offering a memorable introduction to the enchanting realm of birds. The event conducted under Aaranyak's flagship educational initiative "Nature's Wonderland - A Journey of Curiosity" with support from YouthNet, Mobius Foundation and Wipro Earthian. The event was actively coordinated by Bhanita Deka, Ashatora Sarma with active assistance from Tikendrajit Gogoi, Prajnayan Sarma, Andrew Roy, Dipankar Mazumder, Disha Haloi, Geetashree Sarma, Hrishita Nath, Kaushik Ranjan Saikia of Aaranyak.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, teachers from Dakshin Guwahati Lachit Garh High School offering them a practical experience in the field of bird watching. Dr. Nilutpal Mahanta, a renowned Wildlife Biologist, guided the participants throughout the programme. Dr. Mahanta shared essential tips and techniques of birdwatching, helping students understand how to observe birds carefully and scientifically.

Sharing her experience, a participant Jyoti Boro said, "It was a wonderful experience to gain ideas about bird observation and identification." Like all others, she experienced birdwatching for the first time, making the event both educational and inspiring.

AWARDS, HONOURS AND RECOGNITIONS

Balipara Foundation honours Aaranyak on completion of 35 years in nature conservation



Balipara Foundation honoured Aaranyak on completion of its 35 years of unrelenting efforts to complement conservation of biodiversity in the Northeast India since 1989, in a solemn ceremony held in Guwahati on December 11.

Aaranyak's Secretary General and Executive Director as well as founder Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar accepted the honour on behalf of the entire Aaranyak team comprising about 220 full-time employees and over 500 members.

Accepting the recognition Dr Talukdar while expressing gratitude to Balipara Foundation, lauded the efforts of the entire Aaranyak team for the eventful and wonderfully rewarding conservation journey of the organisation since 1989 from a neighbourhood nature club to the largest Northeast-based science-driven biodiversity conservation organisation as on date.

J4L awarded best community-based tourism initiative by NEITA



'Journey for Learning' (J4L), a community-based eco-cultural tourism initiative supported by Aaranyak, was awarded the best community-based tourism initiative by Northeast India Tourism Awards (NEITA), 2025 as announced on October 11 last.

The Northeast India Tourism Awards (NEITA) 2025 marks the inaugural edition of a landmark initiative celebrating individuals and organisations shaping the future of tourism across the eight states of Northeast India. Envisioned as the "Oscars of Northeast Tourism," NEITA aims to recognise excellence in travel, culture and innovation across the region.

The Journey for Learning (J4L) combines experiential learning with the conservation of indigenous knowledge. Operating in the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong and Manas landscapes of Assam, it promotes sustainable tourism with the approach of participatory natural resource management and livelihood opportunities for local communities.

By connecting visitors with the Karbi community's nature, wildlife and culture related traditions, J4L showcases how community-led models can strengthen both conservation and rural development.

Similarly, the indigenous philosophy-inspired 'live with nature principle' of Bodo community is core of tourism activities in Manas Landscape where one can understand the spirit of co-existence, community conservation initiatives for water and forest as well as get new insights to wildlife habitat.

J4L has made notable progress in promoting community-based eco-cultural tourism in Karbi Anglong, Assam, through the active involvement of local communities who have been central to its success.

With 10 women-led Kindulangso homestays and 11 community-led Langkiri guiding groups, and 10 women-led 'Theso SHG' for providing catering and food services, the initiative has generated sustainable livelihoods while conserving local ecosystems.

Together, these efforts have hosted over 1,614 bed-nights, served over 4,000 meals, and welcomed 788 guests so far for guided nature experiences, supported by transparent benefit-sharing and biodiversity conservation models.

Annual income from 'Ingnam Kengkam' has steadily grown, peaking in 2024, underscoring how community ownership and participation have driven J4L's success in blending traditional knowledge, women's leadership, and eco-friendly tourism to strengthen both resilience and environmental sustainability.

The initiative is supported by IUCN - Kfw.

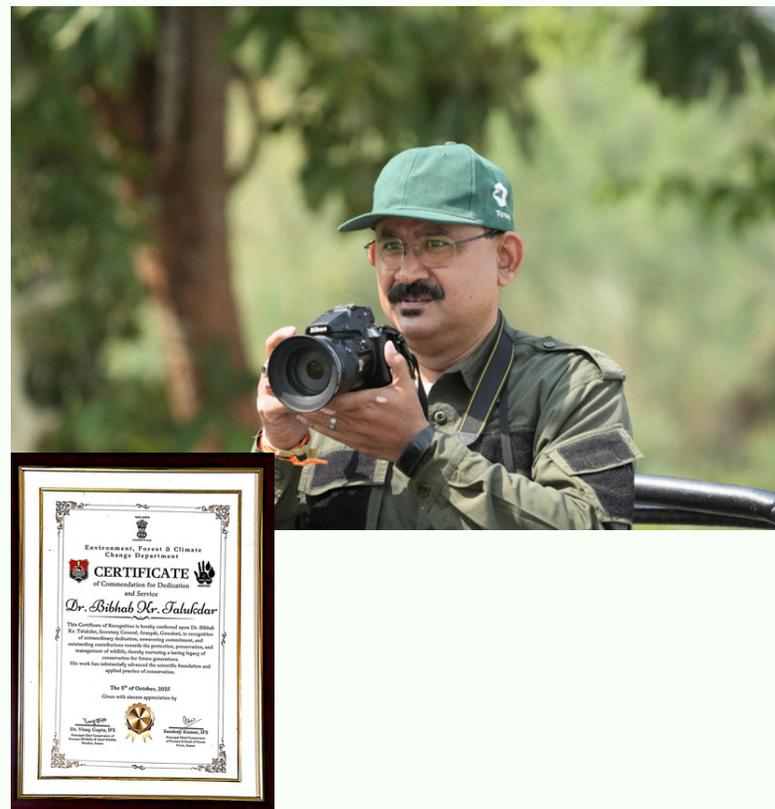
Certificate of Commendation to Dr. Bibhab Talukdar

Passionate conservation scientist, Secretary General and the Executive Director of Aaranyak, Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar was conferred Certificate of Commendation for Dedication and Service by the Assam Forest Department on October 8, 2025 at the state-level function on celebrations of Wildlife Week, 2025 held at the auditorium of Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati.

The function was graced by Assam Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary in presence of all the senior Assam Forest Officers including the PCCF and HoFF Sandeep Kumar, IFS; the PCCF (WL) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Assam Dr Vinay Gupta, IFS, and a distinguished gathering that included several retired senior officials of the department, forest department staff, noted conservationists, conservation workers and others.

Dr. Talukdar has been conferred the appreciation in recognition to his extraordinary dedication, unwavering commitment and outstanding contributions towards the protection, preservation and management of wildlife, thereby nurturing a lasting legacy of conservation for future generations.

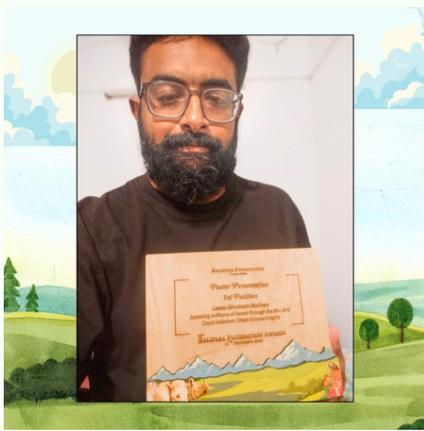
"His work has substantially advanced the scientific foundation and applied practice of conservation" the citation reads.



Expressing his gratitude Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, said, "It has been a great opportunity and privilege to work with officials of Assam Forest Department for over 35 years in Aaranyak's endeavour to compliment the efforts of the department. Recognition of my efforts by the Assam Forest Department will further enhance my zeal to work in tandem with the department to achieve the common goals of conservation in Assam. I offer my sincere sense of gratitude."

Aaranyak's research excellence showcased at Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum

Young researchers from our team splendidly showcased impactful conservation research during the Research Conclave of the 13th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum, organised by the Balipara Foundation during Dec 10-11 at Gauhati University.



We are delighted to share their accomplishments- Dr. Leons Mathew Abraham, Project Officer in the Threatened Species Recovery Programme (TSRP) of Aaranyak along with Dr. Rupam Bhaduri, won first position for their poster titled “Assessing avifauna of Assam through the Bihu Bird Count Initiative: Citizen Science Insights,” an initiative proudly conducted under the Assam Bird Monitoring Network.



Karishma Sharma Chamlagain, Assistant Project Officer at the Threatened Species Recovery Programme (TSRP), presented her poster on “Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*) monitoring in the human-dominated landscape of Kokilabari Agriculture Farm” and bagged first position as well. Her study highlighted how Kokilabari’s mosaic of crop fields, remnant grass patches, canals and village-use areas supports the critically endangered Bengal Florican. Using point counts, transects, triangulation, camera trapping and habitat assessments, she demonstrated how grass structure, farming cycles and human activity shape Florican presence and breeding. The work underscored the conservation importance of such production landscapes and the need for collaborative management with farmers and local communities.

Avishek Sarkar, GIS Analyst at the Geospatial Technology & Application Division (GTAD) of Aaranyak with co-authors Dr. Dhruba Jyoti Das, Dr. Prosanta Hazarika and Shivani Khalote, presented a poster on “Spatial assessment of invasive alien plants across Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam.” The excellent work secured the third position at the Conclave, followed by a felicitation at the Balipara Foundation Awards 2025 on December 11.

Congratulations to all three for their outstanding contributions to conservation science and for bringing pride to Aaranyak!



Dr Debjani honoured with Sons of the Soil Emerging Achievers Award

Dr. Debjani Borah, Project Officer (Veterinary) with the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme under Aaranyak's Threatened Species Recovery Programme, has been honoured with the 'Sons of the Soil Emerging Achievers Award' by Care Luit. This recognition celebrates her dedication, hard work and commitment to conserving one of the world's rarest mammals, the Pygmy hog.



On 15 November, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal presented the prestigious award to five exceptional young talents from Assam at the 5th Biennial Son of the Soil Awards Assam 2025 in presence of several notable dignitaries.

The event highlighted inspiring contributions across diverse fields and showcased Assam's growing potential in India's development journey.

Arif Hussain receives 'Prokritir Bondhu Botah'

Arif Hussain, Senior Manager in the Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak has been honoured with the "Prokritir Bondhu Botah", an award conferred by Assam Gana Parishad on the occasion of the 53rd Birth Anniversary of Zubeen Garg, celebrated as Jatiyo Swabhiman Divas.



The award ceremony was graced by Atul Bora, Cabinet Minister, Govt. of Assam and President of Assam Gana Parishad, along with several distinguished dignitaries.

This honour reflects Arif Hussain's steadfast commitment to wildlife conservation and his impactful efforts in conserving the iconic Greater One-Horned Rhino while uplifting local communities under Aaranyak's banner.

Purnima Devi Barman appointed Professor of Practice

Dr Purnima Devi Barman, eminent conservationist and senior biologist at Aaranyak has been appointed as Professor of Practice (Honorary) by Pandu College, Guwahati in recognition of her outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation, biodiversity management and community engagement for sustainable development.



Under this role, established as per UGC guidelines and aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Dr Barman will inspire and mentor students through lectures, workshops and field-based learning on key environmental and conservation topics.

Dr. Barman, a UN Champion of the Earth, two-times Whitley Gold Award (Green Oscar) recipient, Nari Shakti Puraskar awardee and Time Magazine Women of the Year 2025 continues to inspire generations through her tireless efforts for nature and people.

Aaranyak's conservationist honoured by ONP&TR authority

Arif Hussain, Senior Manager of Aaranyak's Rhino Research and Conservation Division has been honoured by Assam's Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve (ONP&TR) Authority for his dedicated service and contribution towards conservation of the park's rich biodiversity.

He was felicitated was by Pradipta Baruah, Field Director of Orang National Park & Tiger Reserve during the closing ceremony of the 71st Wildlife Week 2025 celebrations.



Arif Hussain has expressed heartfelt gratitude to Pradipta Baruah and the entire team of Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve for their unwavering support and extended special thanks to Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director of Aaranyak and everyone else involved, for their invaluable guidance and encouragement.

Aaranyak

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Cover: Partha Pratim Das Back cover: Akshay Kumar Upadhaya

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