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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Cotton University and Aaranyak signed a five-year MoU to collaborate on biodiversity conservation, climate change, environmental governance, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development through joint research, internships, capacity building, publications and knowledge exchange.
- Cotton University postgraduate students received hands-on wildlife genetics training at Aaranyak's Wildlife Genetics Laboratory.
- Aaranyak participated in the Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWEC) 2026, co-organising discussions on community-based approaches to combat illegal wildlife hunting and trade.
- Aaranyak and the Asian Youth Network for Protected Areas (AYNPA) were represented at the 8th Asia Protected Areas Partnership Technical Meeting in Sabah, Malaysia.
- Aaranyak contributed expertise to the national workshop on Vikshit Panchayat, highlighting the role of geospatial technology in evidence-based local planning.
- Aaranyak took part in a field exchange with the IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group to strengthen community-centred approaches to human–elephant coexistence.
- Aaranyak held its 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Guwahati, reviewing organisational achievements and future priorities.
- Aaranyak celebrated its 38th Foundation Day, marking 37 years of biodiversity conservation and community engagement since its inception in 1989. Foundation Day was also celebrated across multiple field stations, bringing together communities, students, staff and conservation partners.
- Aaranyak celebrated India's 80th Independence Day at its Guwahati office and field stations across Assam, reaffirming its commitment to conserving the country's natural heritage.
- Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Founder Secretary General and Executive Director, was elected Fellow of the Linnean Society of London (FLS) in recognition of his contribution to biodiversity conservation.
- Dr. Talukdar also received the Parivesh Mitra Award 2025 on September 16, 2026.
- Didom Daimari, team member and community conservationist, was invited to the President of India's 'At Home' reception, recognising his grassroots conservation leadership.
- Rabiya Daimari and Dibakar Nayak received Commendation Awards on Global Tiger Day for their contributions towards human-wildlife conflict mitigation.
- A 3-km community-managed solar-powered fence was inaugurated at Boro-Sigri, Goalpara, strengthening conflict mitigation and community-led conservation.
- Three community-based Rapid Response Units (RRUs) were formed in Sivasagar and Dibrugarh, engaging 58 community members.
- 51 rechargeable torchlights were distributed among RRU members to strengthen elephant monitoring and early-warning systems.
- 26 rechargeable torchlights were distributed among community members in Rangjuli to support HEC mitigation.
- Field shoes were distributed to 25 ECN members to support safer night patrolling and emergency response.
- The Uttar Zone Budlapara Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) in Udalguri was strengthened through a programme with 28 participants.
- Three Village Champions from Dibrugarh and Sivasagar were oriented to strengthen community-led coexistence.
- Aaranyak organised a programme with communities and the Forest Departments of Assam and Meghalaya to strengthen coordination and promote coexistence along the inter-state landscape.
- Elephant Cup Football Tournament: Assam and Meghalaya communities and Forest Departments came together at Naguapara for the fourth Elephant Cup, using football to promote friendship and elephant conservation.
- Aaranyak sensitised communities and students on elephant behaviour, safe responses and conflict mitigation, and provided searchlights for safer night-time monitoring.
- Aaranyak joined a stakeholder consultation in Dibrugarh on human-elephant conflict, solar fencing challenges and community-led solutions.

- Aaranyak engaged tea estates, ADS members and local snake rescuers in discussions on wildlife conflict and shared its HEC mitigation experiences.
- Aaranyak participated in a programme on conflict mitigation, community safety and eco-tourism, focusing on leopards, wild buffaloes and monkeys.
- Aaranyak held elephant awareness sessions for students and screened a conservation documentary for communities.
- Gajah Kotha Phase I engaged 111 community members and students across Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Majuli.
- Aaranyak engaged RRU members and women from Majuli villages in an interactive elephant conservation session and community activities.
- Aaranyak conducted student role-plays, planted around 400 *Alpinia rhizomes* and created a conservation mural to promote coexistence and habitat improvement.
- Aaranyak experts took part in programmes in Ranchi and Jamshedpur, contributing expertise on elephant ecology, behaviour and HEC management.
- Around 130 participants joined a community-led tiger conservation programme in Manas, strengthening awareness and local stewardship.
- Sixty students took part in tiger conservation learning at Laokhowa–Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary, gaining insights into tiger ecology and wildlife monitoring techniques.
- The Tiger Cup football tournament in Biswanath engaged local communities and promoted awareness on tiger conservation and habitat protection.
- 225 students participated in the Rhino Goes to School programme at Khatiakhuli ME School, learning about greater one-horned rhino conservation, biodiversity and environmental stewardship.
- The Rhino Goes to School programme reached approximately 430 students across three schools in Assam.
- World Rhino Day was observed across Sikhna Jwhwlao National Park, Pobitora, Manas and Laokhowa–Burhachapori landscapes.
- A week-long cross-state training on Western Hoolock Gibbon conservation was held for 15 forest guards from Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland.
- International Primate Day awareness programmes were organised in Garbhanga and at Bodoland University.
- Primate conservation awareness and community interaction programmes were organised in Garbhanga.
- Colours of Vultures brought together 30 artists and over 50 artworks to promote vulture conservation.
- International Vulture Awareness Day activities at Gelapathar engaged 37 community members.
- Under National Moth Week, Aaranyak's WeForNature campaign organised "Moths Through Photography" and "Moths Through Art", celebrating moth diversity and promoting appreciation for these overlooked insects.
- K9 Leon retired from active duty after nearly eight years of frontline service, following an exceptional career in anti-poaching operations and wildlife crime investigations in Kaziranga.
- A health camp in Majuli supported 68 frontline forest personnel and community members, and field gear including 60 torch lights and 60 raincoats was distributed to strengthen preparedness.
- Essential field gear were distributed to frontline forest personnel at Sikhna Jwhwlao National Park to strengthen wildlife protection and field preparedness.
- Conservation volunteers in Sonitpur were supported through field gear distribution and stakeholder interaction.
- 34 Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) personnel at Daranga Border Outpost were sensitised on wildlife crime prevention and illegal wildlife trafficking.
- ‘The Seizure is Not the Story’ workshop series was conducted at Tezpur University, Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University, engaging journalism and mass communication students in ethical wildlife crime reporting, wildlife laws and practical investigative approaches.
- The 4th Product Development Training Programme under the THREAD Project strengthened the skills of 62 artisans in Udalguri through advanced Jacquard weaving techniques, design development and product diversification.

- Thirty indigenous women weavers took part in a 15-day product development workshop to strengthen traditional Bodo handloom products through design, skills and value addition.
- Twenty women weavers from Koklabari received hands-on training in warping drum technology to reduce drudgery and strengthen traditional handloom livelihoods.
- Nine Karbi women were trained in handmade Green Tea and Orthodox Tea processing to promote value addition and sustainable livelihoods.
- Eight Karbi women were trained in practical baking skills to promote home-based entrepreneurship and alternative livelihoods.
- At Laokhowa-Burhachapori, twenty-five women received hands-on training in pickle, sauce and squash making.
- At Orang, fifteen women from fringe villages of Orang Tiger Reserve received training in food processing and pickle-making, along with equipment to support continued livelihood activities.
- Twelve farmers and rural youth from the Manas landscape received hands-on training in scientific beekeeping, promoting biodiversity-friendly livelihoods and sustainable enterprise.
- A farmer-to-farmer exposure visit involving 10 farmers promoted improved and sustainable banana cultivation in the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong Landscape.
- Six farmers received hands-on training on Assam lemon and black pepper propagation and backyard nursery management.
- Community-based learning on sustainable ecotourism was facilitated among the Diring Lekthe, Langkiri and Kindulangso communities.
- The Orang Ethnic Trail was inaugurated, promoting community-led ecotourism through local culture, traditional food and nature observation.
- Eco-tourism training at Fatasimolu village strengthened hospitality skills and community-based tourism opportunities.
- Solar-powered mobile charging stations were inaugurated across six villages in the Dampa Landscape, Mizoram.
- Under the Aaranyak Flood Relief Initiative, hygiene and safety kits were provided to 300 flood-affected families across Jorhat, Sivasagar and Charaideo.
- Summer and Monsoon Nature Camps in Manas and Orang landscapes engaged students and young nature enthusiasts through biodiversity learning, wildlife awareness, indigenous knowledge sharing and community conservation experiences.
- A World Ozone Day awareness programme at Rajdhani ME School, Guwahati, engaged 25 students.
- Aaranyak collaborated in the Sundays on Cycle special edition in Guwahati, promoting environmental awareness and community participation.
- A hundred teacher trainees were oriented on Environment and Sustainability Education (ESE) at DIET Kamrup, focusing on integrating sustainability into classroom learning.
- At the "Eco-actions for Water and Soil" workshop, families learned water quality testing, household water audits and practical water conservation measures.
- Indigenous Peoples' Day at Raimona: Aaranyak engaged indigenous communities at Dumbajar in discussions on traditional knowledge, native tree conservation and sustainable natural resource management.
- A pictorial brochure documenting 125 butterfly species of Garbhanga Reserve Forest was released.
- A book documenting five years of the Orang Nature Camp initiative was released.

Aaranyak holds 38th Annual General Meeting

Aaranyak successfully held its 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Guwahati on September 27,2026, bringing together members for meaningful discussions and information sharing on various aspects of organisational works relayed to all the divisions, programmes and department of the premier research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation. A collective deliberation on the ‘way forward’ also marked the event.

The meeting commenced with the welcome address by the President of Aaranyak, Jimut Prasad Sarma followed by self-introductions by all members present.

The Secretary General Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar presented the actions taken report on the decisions taken in the previous AGM of 2025 and also presented a lucid report highlighting key achievements of various divisions, programmes, departments scientists and researchers of the organisation since the previous AGM till today.

It was followed by a detailed overview of Team Aaranyak's major activities and achievements during the financial year 2025–26 that was anchored by the Programme Secretary, Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar.

The Organising Secretary Udayan Borthakur presented an overview of activities conducted under his guidance including activities of all the zonal committees of the organisation and their impacts.

Publicity Secretary, Bijay Sankar Bora presented an overview of publicity and communication initiatives of the PR team under his guidance during the reporting period.

Directors and Heads of all the 14 Divisions and one Programmes also presented on impact-oriented work and key accomplishments of their respective divisions, highlighting the vast domain of Aaranyak's conservation, research and community-focused initiatives.

The Finance Secretary, Kaushik Bora presented the Financial Report for FY 2025–26 in a very structured manner that was subsequently adopted by the General Body (GB).

The Secretary General took the lead in facilitating deliberation on various the other relevant matters as raised by different members present and that was followed members' views and deliberations on the way forward.

The meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks offered by the Publicity Secretary who on behalf of the organisation expressed gratitude to all participants in the AGM particularly to the esteemed members for their valued presence and active participation in the deliberations. He lauded the contribution of the organisation's President, Secretary General Secretary, Finance Secretary and other EC members for facilitating smooth conduct of the AGP and appreciated the efforts put in by the Administration as well as Finance and Accounts Department of Aaranyak for making the AGP a smooth sailing throughout.

Cotton University and Aaranyak sign MoU on academic, research initiatives

A premier institution of higher education in the country, Cotton University (CU) signed an MoU with Aaranyak on July 27, 2026, to foster collaboration in academic and research initiatives focusing on biodiversity conservation, climate change, environmental governance, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

The MoU was signed by Dr Hiren Deka, Registrar, Cotton University, and Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General, Aaranyak, in the presence of Prof. Ramesh Chandra Deka, Vice Chancellor, Cotton University.

The five-year partnership will promote joint research, student internships, faculty and researcher exchange, capacity-building programmes, collaborative publications, and knowledge-sharing through seminars and workshops.

The MoU signing was witnessed by Prof. Santanu Sarma, Dean, Research & Development; Prof. Eeshan Kalita, Dean, Students' Welfare; Dr Narayan Sharma, Department of Environmental Biology and Wildlife Sciences, along with two senior scientists and Directors from Aaranyak Dr Partha Jyoti Das and Mr Udayan Borthakur.

This collaboration marks an important step towards advancing interdisciplinary research, environmental stewardship, and meaningful academic engagement for the benefit of society and the region.

Reacting to the landmark development, Aaranyak's Secretary General Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar said, "On behalf of Aaranyak I offer my sincere gratitude to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Cotton University and his team members for making this MoU signing a reality. This will indeed provide a great opportunity for us to work together in the diverse field of applied research and conservation which will benefit the students and researchers."

62 artisans of Udalguri hones skills in 4th PDTP

The Fourth Product Development Training Programme (PDTP) under the THREAD Project was successfully completed from June 17 to July 3, 2026 at Simoluguri and Merbangchuba villages of Udalguri District of Assam.

Sixty-two weavers, including 31 participants each from Simoluguri and Merbangchuba villages, participated in the training programme. The initiative provided artisans with hands-on experience in Jacquard machine operation, design development, pattern creation, and product diversification while ensuring that the cultural identity of traditional weaving practices was preserved.

The 15-day programme aimed to enhance the technical skills of local artisans through advanced Jacquard weaving techniques, encourage innovation in traditional handloom products, and strengthen sustainable livelihood opportunities for weaving communities.

The training combined with classroom sessions with extensive practical demonstrations, enabling participants to understand Jacquard mechanisms, punch card systems, intricate motif development, improved weaving techniques, and quality finishing standards suitable for commercial markets.

The programme encouraged artisans to experiment with new designs, colour combinations, and innovative product concepts. Through continuous practice and expert guidance, participants developed new Jacquard patterns and enhanced their confidence in creating value-added handloom products with improved market potential.

As part of the initiative, 3 kg of yarn was distributed to each of the 62 participating artisans to support continued production after completion of the training. The yarn-support will enable weavers to apply their newly acquired skills, develop innovative products, and strengthen their handloom-based livelihood activities.

The valedictory programme was organised at both the venues, Simoluguri Village and Merbangchuba village, where certificates were distributed to all participating artisans in recognition of their successful completion of the training programme and their commitment towards skill enhancement.

In the Simoluguri village, the occasion was graced by National Award-winning weaver Mrs. Kamal Das, who delivered an inspiring and insightful address to the artisans. In her deliberation, she highlighted the importance of preserving traditional weaving heritage while embracing innovation, improving quality, and exploring new market opportunities. Her valuable interaction with the artisans greatly motivated the participants.

The programme was successfully guided under the leadership of Assistant Director Manas Kumar Bhattacharjya, whose continuous supervision and coordination contributed significantly to the smooth implementation of the training.

Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCD) of Aaranyak, played an instrumental role in supporting and strengthening the programme. The contribution of the technical

team was also highly significant, with Ms. Anjima Daimari, Community Development Expert (CDE), providing excellent coordination and support throughout the programme.

Nandeshwar Deha, Master Trainer, played a vital role in imparting technical knowledge and practical training on Jacquard weaving. Arjun Hazarika, Textile Expert, and Darshana Boro, Junior Designer, provided valuable technical guidance and design inputs that helped artisans improve their skills and develop innovative products.

The valedictory session in Merbangsuba was also attended by officials from the Forest Department, including Kameshwar Boro, Deputy Range Officer and Beat Officer, Paneri under Nunai Range, and Durga Basumatary, Forester-I, Santipur Beat, who extended their encouragement and support to the participating artisans.

Representatives from Aaranyak, including Rabiya Daimari and Abhijit Saikia, also graced the occasion and appreciated the achievements of the trained artisans.

125 butterflies of Garbhanga Reserve Forest featured in a new pictorial brochure

A new pictorial brochure on the butterflies of Garbhanga Reserve Forest, jointly published by Aaranyak and the Kamrup East Forest Division, was released today at Lokhora Kona, Garbhanga RF, by Jayanta Malla Baruah, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Finance; and Mines & Minerals, Government of Assam.

The brochure release was attended by Mrigen Sarania, Mayor of Guwahati, along with senior officials of the Assam Forest Department and other dignitaries.

The brochure features 125 butterfly species documented from Garbhanga Reserve Forest in recent years, providing an accessible pictorial resource for nature enthusiasts, students, researchers, conservation practitioners and visitors to the forest. It seeks to encourage greater awareness and appreciation of the rich butterfly diversity of Garbhanga and promote informed engagement with its natural heritage.

Situated along the southern edge of Guwahati, Garbhanga Reserve Forest is an important biodiversity-rich landscape. More than 270 butterfly species have been recorded from the area so far, underscoring its significance as a habitat for butterfly diversity and the wider ecological values of the forest.

The brochure was prepared by an Aaranyak team comprising Nayanjyoti Moran, Dr. Pranjal Kr. Das, Rumana Maheen and Udayan Borthakur.

The documentation and dissemination of such biodiversity information contribute to strengthening public awareness and supporting conservation efforts for Garbhanga's unique natural heritage.

"Beyond Headlines: the Seizure is not the story" at TU, GU and DU

The resource team from Legal and Advocacy division of Aaranyak conducted a series of well-attended workshops on wildlife crime reporting under the theme "Beyond Headlines: The Seizure is not the story" for students of mass communication and journalism in Tezpur University, Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University on September 1, 16 and 30 respectively.

A large group of students from the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ) of Tezpur Central University attended the substantive day-long workshop conducted on September 1 at the department. Key resource person Senior Project Office of the LAD, Aaranyak, Ivy Farheen Hussain sensitized the students on various aspects of wildlife crime prevention in a structured way having multiple modules that included application of various provisions Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act ,2022; how to go about wildlife crime investigation staying within the ambit of permissible limit and ethics of journalism. A key part of the workshop was a hands-on practical session on 'Finding the story' that was participated by all the students attending the workshop.

Consultant of the LAD and well as Publicity Secretary of Aaranyak Bijay Sankar Bora set the ball rolling for the workshop by flagging how burgeoning wildlife crime is posing threat to biodiversity that sustains life and livelihood on the planet earth. He also explained how the common people are the major stakeholder in the efforts to protect the biodiversity and prevent wildlife crimes as well as the professionals in the field of mass communication have an important role to play in raising mass awareness level for conservation of biodiversity especially in biodiversity-rich region like frontier Northeast India that stands susceptible to global illegal wildlife trafficking cartels.

Professor Abhijit Bora of the MCJ Department while introducing the team Aaranyak resource persons to the students underlined the importance of the focused theme of the workshop for the students of mass communication and journalism.

The Head of the Department Dr Manoi Deori felicitated the Aaranyak team and appreciated their efforts to sensitise the students on a key aspect of biodiversity conservation. The inaugural session was graced by Dr Shishir Kumar Singh of the MCJ Department.

AT GAUHATI UNIVERSITY: A group of around 60 students from the Department of Communication and Journalism of Gauhati University, Assam, a similar day-long workshop laced with engrossing practical sessions, on “Beyond Headlines: The seizure is not the story -- understanding a reporting wildlife crime” conducted on September 16 at the department conducted by the same team of resource persons from LAD, Aaranyak.

Ms Ivy Farheen Hussain was the key resource person for the workshop that the participating students on various aspects of wildlife crime reporting in a structured way. The workshop content dealt with application of various provisions Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act ,2022; how to go about wildlife crime investigation staying within the ambit of permissible limit of professional journalism. A key part of the workshop was a hands-on practical session on ‘Finding the story’ that was participated by all the students attending the workshop.

Consultant of the LAD and as well as Publicity Secretary of Aaranyak Bijay Sankar Bora set the tone for workshop by highlighting how burgeoning wildlife crime has posed grave threat to biodiversity that sustains life and livelihood on the planet earth. He also explained how the common people are the major stakeholder in the efforts to protect the biodiversity and prevent wildlife crimes.

He stated that professionals in the field of mass communication have a very important role to play in raising mass awareness level for conservation of biodiversity especially in biodiversity-rich region like frontier Northeast India that stands susceptible to global illegal wildlife trafficking cartels. He said the workshop meant to sensitise the mass communication students how to go about wildlife crime reporting in a scientific and convincing way staying within the ethical framework.

Head of the Department of Communication and Journalism, Professor Ankuran Dutta while introducing the team Aaranyak resource persons to the students underlined the importance of the workshop theme for the students of mass communication and journalism.

Dr Arunav Baruah, a teacher in the Department, felicitated the three-member Aaranyak team involved in conducting the workshop.

AT DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY: Fifty-nine students of the Centre for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication, Dibrugarh Universiry, Assam, participated in the interactive and substantive workshop on wildlife crime reporting under the title "Beyond Headlines: The seizure is not the story" that was conducted in the Indira Miri Conference Hall of the varsity on September 30 under the aegis of the Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) of Aaranyak in collaboration with university's Centre.

Inaugurating the workshop Dr Pranjal Protim Buragohain, Chairman of the Centre for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication flagged the importance of the workshop theme for the students of journalim in view of the rich biodiversity of the region and appreciated the initiative of Aaranyak behind organising it.

Key resource person Ivy Farheen Hussain explained nitty and gritty as well as nuances of wildlife crime reporting across various sessions to the participating students who could put into practice what they could understand in these sessions in the hands-on session towards the end of the workshop.

Earlier, beginning the technical sessions of the day-long workshop, Aaranyak LAD's consultant and Publicity Secretary Bijay Sankar Bora, enlightened the participating students and attending varsity faculty members about the Aaranyak's journey, organisation structure, divisions, programmes, works and expertise in various fields of biodiversity conservation in the Northeast India and outside the region.

He underlined how rising incidents of wildlife crime pose grave threat to biodiversity conservation in the region bounded by long international borders. He explained how journalists could contribute towards deterring wildlife crime.

The workshop was coordinate by varsity's faculty member Abhilash Baruah and the sessions were moderated by another faculty member Ms Pranamita Das.

It was also graced by faculty members Dr Kanta Kumari Sonowal, Tanuj Nath and Dr Abhijit Ray.

The performance of students in the hands-on session was found excellent and that added credence to the collaborative initiative.

Gunajit Mazumdar, PRO of Aaranyak digitally documented all the three the workshop besides assistimng in smooth conduct of the workshopds.

Cotton University students get hands-on training in wildlife genetics

The Wildlife Genetics Laboratory (WGL), Aaranyak today conducted a day-long training programme for Master's students from the Department of Environmental Biology and Wildlife Sciences, Cotton University.

WGL welcomed a group of students led by Dr. Narayan Sarma, Assistant Professor, Cotton University, for a programme comprising theoretical sessions and an exposure visit to the laboratory facilities at Aaranyak's Research Office.

The programme began with a welcome address by Mr. Udayan Borthakur, Director and Head, Wildlife Genetics Division, who also delivered a session on the fundamentals and applications of conservation genetics. Dr. Pranjal Kumar Das, Conservation Geneticist, introduced the students to various tools and techniques used in DNA analysis, while Ms. Rumana Maheen, Senior Researcher, provided an overview of DNA sequence data analysis, including the basics of molecular phylogeny reconstruction.

The students also had an opportunity to visit WGL's molecular laboratory facilities and gain practical exposure to key techniques used in wildlife genetic research. The laboratory orientation covered DNA extraction, PCR operations, and DNA visualisation, providing the students with a better understanding of how molecular techniques are applied in biodiversity research and conservation.
The training programme and laboratory exposure visit were organised as part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Aaranyak and Cotton University, which facilitates academic and research collaboration between the two institutions. The programme provided the students with an opportunity to interact with researchers and gain insights into the application of molecular genetics in wildlife research and conservation.

Beekeeping for conservation, livelihoods in Manas landscape

Strengthening the link between biodiversity conservation and resilient rural livelihoods, Aaranyak successfully conducted 'Hands-on Technical Training on Scientific Beekeeping Practices and Market Linkages' for the second batch recently for communities living around the Manas National Park landscape in Assam, India.

The three-day training brought together 12 farmers and rural youth from fringe villages and adjoining areas of Manas National Park and equipped them with skills on scientific beekeeping as a sustainable, biodiversity-friendly enterprise.

By promoting nature-based livelihoods that generate income while supporting pollination and ecosystem health, the initiative contributes to both community resilience and long-term conservation of one of South Asia's most important biodiversity landscapes.

The training was facilitated by Naba Mahanta, an experienced beekeeper and resource person, who provided participants with technical knowledge and field-based guidance on scientific beekeeping using Apis cerana, an indigenous honeybee species well adapted to the ecological conditions of Northeast India.

Participants received comprehensive training on hive establishment, colony management, seasonal maintenance, multiplication, routine inspection, honey harvesting, processing, filtration, storage, and quality

management, alongside practical approaches to preventing and managing pests, predators, and diseases affecting bee colonies.

The inaugural session was graced by Mrinal Daimary, Forest Range Officer, Bhuyanpara Range of Manas National Park, who encouraged participants to take up scientific beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood that complements forest conservation and biodiversity protection while enhancing household income.

Recognising that successful livelihood development requires both production and market readiness, the programme included dedicated sessions on honey value chains, market linkages, packaging, labelling, record keeping, and basic enterprise planning.

These sessions strengthened participants' understanding of how scientific beekeeping can evolve into a viable rural enterprise while promoting responsible use of natural resources.

The first two days combined technical classroom sessions with practical demonstrations, while the final day featured an exposure visit to Dakshin Makhra, where participants observed both traditional and scientific beekeeping systems. They gained firsthand experience in colony division, hive maintenance, seasonal management, and the careful transfer of naturally established colonies from traditional bee boxes into scientific bee boxes for improved productivity.

Participants also learned about stingless bees, their ecological significance, specialised honey production, and the growing market value of stingless bee honey, along with demonstrations on honey packaging, sealing, and quality assurance.

To encourage long-term adoption of scientific practices, Aaranyak has planned regular follow-up field visits and continued technical handholding support. A dedicated WhatsApp group managed by the resource person will facilitate ongoing mentoring, knowledge exchange, and peer learning among participants, ensuring that newly acquired skills translate into sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The training programme was led and coordinated by Aaranyak's Detsung Basumatary, with logistical and technical support provided by Momita Narzary, Bijay Basumatary, Daimalu Basumatary, and Pankaj Das, ensuring effective implementation throughout the programme.

The programme was organised under the IUCN-KfW-supported project, "Securing Population of Tigers, Habitats and Biological Corridors in Assam, India." The initiative reflects a shared commitment to strengthening community stewardship, conserving globally significant ecosystems, and promoting inclusive, nature-positive development.

Pre-flood awareness programme in Sootea

Aaranyak took part in a pre-flood awareness campaign organised on July 1, 2026 by Biswanath Wildlife Division (BWLD) of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNP&TR) in collaboration with other organizations working around BWLD.

Theprogram was conducted at Dr. Jakir Hussain M.E. School, 1 No. Adabheti, Sootea, under Nagshankar Range, Biswanath Wildlife Division. The aim of the programme was to sensitize school students and villagers on the importance of wildlife conservation and community responsibility during the annual flood season.

The awareness session focused on the challenges faced by wildlife during inundation, and the need for local communities to play a proactive role in ensuring the safety of displaced animals. Participants were sensitized on appropriate actions to be taken upon encountering wildlife during floods, including avoiding disturbance or harassment of animals, promptly informing the Forest Department about wildlife sightings, and discouraging activities that may endanger animals during their movement.

The participants were also sensitized to the threat posed by stray dogs in the area, particularly to wildlife displaced during floods. They were informed about the increased vulnerability of flood-surviving animals to attacks by stray dogs and were encouraged to remain vigilant and promptly report such incidents to the Forest Department, EDC and VDP members. The programme emphasized the importance of spreading these

messages within their families and communities to foster greater public awareness and support for wildlife conservation.

The programme was attended by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD Aaranyak; Soidur Rahman, President, Upaityaka, and Rajib Ahmed, Forester, Nagshankar Range, and Gitartha Bora, BNHS who served as the resource persons for the session.

Akash Morang, member Aaranyak, was present in the program and provided valuable support and assistance. A total of 100 participants participated in the program and actively engaged in the discussions and interactive awareness activities.

As part of the flood preparedness and community awareness initiative, flood awareness hoardings were installed in the villages of Koroioni, Goral, Tewaripal, and Kolakati under the Nagshankar Range of the BWLD, Kaziranga Tiger Reserve. The hoardings were strategically placed at prominent public locations to maximize visibility among local residents.

The hoardings display awareness messages encouraging local communities to take appropriate measures for the safety of wild animals during the annual floods. They emphasize the need to avoid disturbing or harming displaced wildlife, report wildlife sightings to the Forest Department, and support safe animal movement across flood-affected landscapes. The initiative aims to enhance awareness among fringe communities, and promote safe coexistence between people and wildlife during the annual floods. Team Nagshankar Range, Aaranyak and local VDP and EDC members and Ikramul Rahman, Village head, Koroioni village extended their help during installation.

Aaranyak organises health camp, field gear distribution in Majuli

Majuli, the world's largest riverine island, is home to an estimated 1.96 lakh people whose livelihoods are anchored in agriculture, while its landscape sustains wildlife populations throughout the year. This proximity requires the Forest Department to work around the clock, often in difficult weather and low visibility, in close and constant coordination with the Village Defence Parties (VDPs) of the island. Reinforcing its commitment to the welfare of frontline conservation personnel and local communities, Aaranyak's Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCD) organised two initiatives in Majuli on 10 July 2026: a Health Camp, held in collaboration with the District Health Department, Majuli, and a Field Gear Distribution Programme to strengthen frontline preparedness ahead of the monsoon season.

Health Camp supports frontline staff and local community-

A total of 68 participants attended the health camp, comprising 45 frontline forest personnel from the Majuli Forest Division and 23 local community members. The initiative aimed to provide accessible healthcare services, promote preventive health awareness, and support the well-being of individuals working and living in remote conservation landscapes.

The medical team from the District Health Department, Majuli, led by Dr. Dimpi Pegu, Medical Officer, with support from Ms. Pinki Saikia, Ms. Upasana Hazarika, Ms. Mousumi Saikia Dutta, and Ms. Monju Das, and working under the guidance of Dr. Kishore Kumar Kaman, conducted general health examinations and consultations and distributed essential medicines to participants.

The programme was attended by Mr. Abhijeet Dolley, Range Officer, Majuli Forest Division; Dr. Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCD), Aaranyak; and Ms. Madhusmita Barthakur, who underscored the importance of ensuring regular healthcare support for frontline conservation personnel and local communities. The dignitaries noted that the health and well-being of frontline staff and communities are essential to effective conservation and the sustainable management of Majuli's ecological landscape, and commended the collaboration between Aaranyak, the Forest Department, and the District Health Department in delivering the initiative.

Field gear distributed to enhance safety and preparedness-

Aaranyak's RRCD also organized a Field Gear Distribution Programme for frontline forest personnel and Village Defence Party (VDP) members, aimed at enhancing safety, preparedness, and operational efficiency during wildlife protection, anti-poaching, and emergency response activities under demanding field conditions, particularly through the monsoon season.

A total of 60 high-beam rechargeable torch lights and 60 raincoats were distributed, with 30 torch lights and 30 raincoats provided to frontline staff of the Majuli Forest Division and an equal number distributed among VDP members in recognition of their role in supporting conservation activities and maintaining vigilance in vulnerable areas. The remaining gear has been earmarked for additional frontline personnel and community volunteers engaged in conservation and emergency response across the Majuli landscape.

The programme was graced by Ms. Somalin Subhadarsini, IPS, Senior Superintendent of Police, Majuli; Mr. Abhijeet Dolley, Range Officer, Majuli Forest Division; Dr. Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, RRCD, Aaranyak; and Ms. Madhusmita Barthakur, who together emphasized the importance of equipping frontline personnel with essential gear to improve their safety and effectiveness under demanding environmental conditions. Ms. Subhadarsini highlighted the need for strong collaboration among the Forest Department, Police Department, local communities, and conservation organizations to safeguard Majuli's natural heritage, and expressed appreciation for Aaranyak's continued efforts in supporting frontline personnel through capacity-building and welfare initiatives.

Both initiatives were coordinated and organized by Ujjal Bayan, Senior Researcher, Aaranyak, under the guidance of Dr. Bibhab Kr. Tlukdar and Dr. Deba Kr. Dutta who led the planning and implementation in close collaboration with the Majuli Forest Division, the District Health Department, and local stakeholders. Together, the Health Camp and Field Gear Distribution Programme reflect Aaranyak's continued commitment to strengthening the link between community welfare and biodiversity conservation, recognizing that healthy, well-equipped, and resilient frontline workers and communities are vital to safeguarding Assam's natural heritage.

The Health Camp was implemented with the generous financial support of Zoo Berlin, while the field gears were provided by the generous financial support of Disney and IRF, whose continued partnership with Aaranyak has been instrumental in advancing community welfare and conservation initiatives across Assam's priority wildlife landscapes.

Van Mahotsav celebrated with community-led plantation drives across Assam

The Kachugaon Division of Raimona National Park, in collaboration with Aaranyak, observed the Van Mahotsav on 4 July with a community-led plantation drive in the Ripu Reserve Forest under the Central Range (Kachugaon), part of the Raimona landscape. Community partners came together to plant around 300 native saplings representing 20 indigenous tree species at an eco-restoration site, reinforcing a shared commitment to restoring degraded forest habitats and conserving native biodiversity. This inspiring collective effort reflects the importance of community participation in building healthier forests for the future. Let us continue to nurture the spirit of Van Mahotsav and work together towards a greener, more resilient landscape.

In another occasion, we celebrated Van Mahotsav at Gelapathar, Demow, Sivasagar in collaboration with Demow Forest Beat Office, Kokilamari Youth Club, Ajanti Youth Club. As a part of the programme an orientation on Van Mahotsav was conducted and after that two separate plantation drives took place at Gelapathar Laxmi-Naranyan Mandir and Tengapani Tribal School field. Altogether thirty saplings were planted in collaboration with the villagers led by the Village Head, Forest officials. Twenty-five community members actively participated in the programme. From Aaranyak’s side Rimpee Moran, Nipul Chakma, Tibrajyoti Gogoi and Jiaur Rahman coordinated the programme supported by Elephant Family, British Asian Trust (BAT) and The Fable Fund.

Summer Nature Camp in Manas promotes community-led conservation

More than a recreational outdoor programme, a three-day Summer Nature Camp in the Manas Landscape gave young participants an immersive understanding of biodiversity, indigenous knowledge, sustainable livelihoods and community-led conservation, demonstrating how people and nature can thrive together.

Held during July 4-6 at Koklabari, the camp brought together students and young nature enthusiasts for experiential learning across forests, rivers and villages surrounding the Manas World Heritage Site.

The camp was inaugurated by Mrinal Daimari, Assistant Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve; Chandrakanta Basumatary, Range Officer, Bhuyanpara; Kamal Azad, Assam Gaurav awardee and noted social worker; Rustom Basumatary, research scholar and social worker; Ms Rina Daimari, renowned bird watcher; Chairperson of Kamardisha VCDC; and Dr. M. Firoz Ahmed, Head of the Tiger Research and Conservation Division, Aaranyak. The programme opened with a traditional Bodo Aros (prayer) performed by members of the Ferenga Ecotourism Group, a local youth collective promoting ecotourism as a sustainable livelihood.

Addressing the gathering, Chandrakanta Basumatary recalled the historic Maozigendri Movement of the early 2000s, which strengthened community participation in conserving wildlife and habitats in and around the Manas World Heritage Site. Mrinal Daimari highlighted the importance of blending traditional knowledge with local resources to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and encouraged wider recognition of conservation success stories emerging from Manas and the Bodoland region.

Dr. M. Firoz Ahmed said Aaranyak's long-term collaboration with local communities has helped restore wildlife populations while improving community well-being. He noted that integrated conservation efforts have contributed to the recovery of tiger numbers in Manas from 14 individuals in 2015 to nearly 60 in 2026, supported by habitat protection and reduced dependence on forest resources.

Throughout the camp, participants explored village ecosystems, interacted with community elders, documented local biodiversity and learned about indigenous weather forecasting, traditional rainfall classifications and cultural conservation practices. They also experienced authentic Bodo cuisine prepared by the Dwisa Sher Bodo Cuisine Women's Group.

Field sessions included a river walk to understand freshwater ecosystems and a visit to traditional homestead agroforestry systems in Hatijan village, where participants observed how biodiversity, agriculture and culture remain closely interconnected.

One of the camp's highlights was a guided nocturnal walk along the boundary of Manas National Park led by Dr. M. Firoz Ahmed, during which participants observed frogs, learned about their ecological importance and witnessed thousands of fireflies illuminating the forest. For many, it was their first such experience in more than a decade.

On the final day, participants learned indigenous fishing techniques in the Sewali River using traditional gears such as Jekhai and Khada, alongside hand-fishing methods practised for generations. Guided by local women, they also explored sustainable harvesting of wild edible plants through a community-led foraging session.

The technical sessions and field activities were led by Jayanta Kumar Sarma, Ms. Gayatri Dutta, Kamal Azad and Bijit Baro, with coordination and support from Nibedita Talukder, Momita Narzary, Detsung Basumatary, Sunny Paul, Pankaj Das, Majammil Hoque, Bijay Basumatary, Barnali Baro, and members of the Ferenga Ecotourism Group, whose collective efforts made the immersive learning experience possible.

Training on solar-powered fence at Boro-Sigri, Lakhipur

A training on solar-powered fence for the community was conducted by Aaranyak in collaboration with Lakhipur Forest Range office at Boro-Sigri village of Goalpara district.

Around 40 villagers including the members of solar fencing committee for the proposed community-managed solar fence installation at Boro-Sigri village, participated in the training programme that

enlightened villagers on functions, operation, installation and maintenance of solar fence. The villagers were trained by the Aaranyak team.

The training session was conducted by Aaranyak's senior official Anjan Baruah. Forest staff from Lakhipur Forest Range took part in the training programme.

During the training, Aaranyak team handed over the solar fence materials to the Boro-Sigri Solar fencing Committee which will be implemented soon in the area by Goalpara Forest Division in collaboration with Aaranyak.

Promoting human–elephant coexistence through community awareness

A community outreach programme organised by Aaranyak, with the support of the SBI Foundation, at No.2 Mainaoguri Village in Udalguri district on July 7 for promoting human–elephant coexistence and strengthening community preparedness for reducing human elephant conflict (HEC) was attended by 30 villagers.

The session featured Gajah Katha, Aaranyak's flagship awareness initiative, which engaged villagers through interactive storytelling and discussions on elephant behaviour, the ecological importance of elephants, and the factors driving increasing human–elephant interactions.

Participants also discussed practical and non-lethal HEC mitigation measures, including safe behaviour during elephant sightings, timely reporting to the Forest Department, coordinated community vigilance, early warning systems, lemon bio-fencing, and the protection of elephant corridors.

The programme was facilitated by Aaranyak team members Abhilasha Boruah, Bikash Tossa, and Manav Nayak.

IWEC 2026: Aaranyak and WTI lead discussions on community-based approaches to combat wildlife crime

A team from Aaranyak's Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD) participated in the Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWEC) 2026, held at Ashoka University, Sonipat, Haryana, during July 10-11, last, where the team co-organised a Special Interest Group (SIG) with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) on the theme "Establishing a Community of Practice to Address Illegal Wildlife Hunting and Trade through Integrated Community Surveillance and Evidence-Based Protection."

The two-day SIG brought together researchers, conservation practitioners, law enforcement professionals, policymakers, and community representatives to deliberate on innovative and collaborative approaches for tackling illegal wildlife hunting and trade (IWHT).

The SIG was jointly inaugurated by Dr. Jimmy Borah, Deputy Director, LAD, Aaranyak, and Jose Louies, CEO, WTI, who introduced the objectives of the session and provided the context for discussions. They highlighted the urgent need to bridge ecological research, community participation, governance, and evidence-based protection to strengthen wildlife crime prevention and establish a long-term community of practice dedicated to addressing illegal wildlife trade.

Ms. Binita Baruwati, Deputy Manager of LAD, Aaranyak, presented a session on "Open-Source Information on Wildlife Crime Data Collection and its Applications in Real-World Problem Solving," demonstrating how publicly available digital information can be systematically collected, analysed, and applied to support wildlife crime investigations and conservation decision-making.

Ms. Ivy Farheen Hussain, Senior Project Officer of LAD, Aaranyak, delivered two presentations. Her first presentation, "Pet Shops as Trafficking Nodes: A Case Study from a City-wide Survey in Guwahati, India," highlighted findings from an extensive survey examining the role of urban pet shops in the trade of exotic and protected wildlife species.

Her second presentation, "Integrated Surveillance Approaches for Emerging Wildlife Crime Threats: The Concept of Community Surveillance and Monitoring Teams (CSMT) and Success Stories from Arunachal Pradesh," demonstrated how community-led surveillance has strengthened wildlife crime prevention and conservation outcomes.

Further highlighting Aaranyak's evidence-based conservation efforts, Mizing Boro, Project Officer, and Bijeet Baro, Assistant Project Officer, jointly presented "Evidence-Based Wildlife Crime Prevention: Using SMART to Tackle Wildlife Crimes through Data-Driven Approaches." The presentation showcased how SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) has been used to improve patrol planning, analyse threats, strengthen monitoring systems, and support adaptive management for wildlife protection.

The SIG also featured presentations by experts from the Wildlife Trust of India and partner organisations covering diverse themes including community participation in pangolin conservation, trade in threatened plants, cyber-assisted wildlife crime, criminological approaches to understanding illegal wildlife trade, and species-specific trafficking dynamics.

The interactive discussions throughout the two-day SIG generated valuable recommendations for strengthening community-based surveillance systems, improving the use of technology and intelligence in wildlife crime prevention, and fostering stronger collaboration among researchers, practitioners, government agencies, and local communities. A key outcome of the session was the collective commitment to establish a cross-sectoral Community of Practice that will facilitate continued knowledge exchange, collaborative research, policy dialogue, and the development of innovative approaches for combating illegal wildlife hunting and trade.

Aaranyak sincerely acknowledges the generous support of the Resilience Fund – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) and the Weeden Foundation, enabling its team to participate in IWEC 2026.

Well-attended Rhino Goes to School in Khotiakholi ME School

An awareness programme under the "Rhino Goes to School" initiative of Rhino Research Conservation Division (RRCD) of Aaranyak was conducted at Khatiakhuli ME School. The programme is supported by David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF). Altogether 225 participants, including students and other members of the school fraternity attended the programme.

The objective of the programme is for disseminating information about the greater one-horned rhinoceros and sensitizing students towards rhino conservation and environmental stewardship.

The programme commenced with an interactive session by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak, who introduced students to the rich biodiversity surrounding them and emphasized its ecological significance through a PowerPoint presentation. He further elaborated on the greater one-horned rhinoceros, covering its distribution, habitat, behaviour, unique characteristics, ecological importance, and the need for its conservation.

This was followed by an engaging session by Ms. Sabrina Begum, Consultant, RRCD, Aaranyak, who interacted with the students on various forms of pollution and how they directly and indirectly impact wildlife and natural ecosystems. The discussion encouraged students to reflect on their everyday actions and their role in protecting the environment.

Participating students were engaged in an interactive quiz, followed by an activity on the dos and don'ts for a healthy environment to make the programme more participatory. This led to "Pledge for Our Environment" activity, where students wrote their individual environmental commitments. These pledges were collectively displayed on a chart in the form of a tree, symbolizing their shared responsibility and commitment towards protecting nature.

The winners of the quiz were awarded prizes in recognition of their enthusiastic participation. The programme concluded with reflections shared by Pabitra Saikia, School Principal, Jiten Hazarika, CRCC,

Bubul Dutta, Senior Journalist, teachers, school management committee, and students, who appreciated the initiative and highlighted its importance in fostering environmental awareness among young learners.

The School Principal and the CRCC member expressed their gratitude towards Aaranyak and conveyed their interest for organizing more such awareness programme in the future. Akash Morang, member Aaranyak, was present in the programme and provided valuable support and assistance.

90 students take part in nature, wildlife learning at Summer Camp

The Summer Nature Camp 2026, was organised successfully by Aaranyak in collaboration with Orang National Park Authority and supported by the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF) during July 11-12, 2026 at Vallabh Bhai Patel Higher Secondary School, Koupati, Orang, with the objective of fostering environmental awareness and conservation values among the 90 participating students through interactive and experiential learning.

The two-day camp provided students with an opportunity to get familiar with a wide range of themes related to biodiversity, wildlife conservation, environmental stewardship, and sustainable living. Designed to be participatory and activity-based, the programme encouraged students to learn through discussions, demonstrations, quizzes, and group exercises.

The inaugural day focused on introducing students to the concept of biodiversity and its importance in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Sessions highlighted the ecological significance of biodiversity and the need for its conservation, particularly in landscapes surrounding Orang Tiger Reserve.

Students were also introduced to mapping technologies and their applications in wildlife conservation, where they learned how maps and spatial information are used to monitor habitats, track wildlife, and support conservation planning. The day's activities concluded with an engaging Orang Tiger Reserve quiz and interactive environmental games, reinforcing key concepts through enjoyable and collaborative learning experiences.

The second day of the programme included a series of informative sessions on wildlife and environmental themes. Students were introduced to the diversity of snakes, enabling them to distinguish between venomous and non-venomous species, while addressing common myths, misconceptions, and unnecessary fears associated with snakes. Guidance on safety measures, appropriate responses during snake encounters, and essential do's and don'ts was also provided to promote coexistence.

A dedicated session on the Pygmy Hog, associated with Orang Tiger Reserve, highlighted its ecological importance, conservation status, and the need to protect its fragile habitat. Students also explored the fascinating diversity of birds, learning about their identification, ecological roles, and significance as indicators of healthy ecosystems.

The programme also featured an interactive session on environmental pollution, introducing students to the major forms of pollution, their causes, impacts on ecosystems and human well-being, and responsible everyday choices for healthy environment.

The learning sessions were complemented by a wildlife and environmental quiz, followed by a participatory group activity in which students identified and classified everyday practices into environmentally responsible behaviours and environmentally harmful behaviours. This exercise encouraged critical thinking and reflection on how individual actions influence environmental sustainability by promoting the adoption of eco-friendly habits in daily life.

The camp concluded with an Environmental and Wildlife Conservation Pledge, where students collectively reaffirmed their commitment to protecting nature, conserving wildlife, and adopting environmentally responsible practices, which was displayed in charts, symbolizing their role as future custodians of the environment.

The programme was graced by Pradipta Baruah, Field Director, Orang Tiger Reserve. The camp was enriched by insightful sessions delivered by Dr. Pranjit Sarmah, Assistant Professor, Mangaldoi College;

Swapan Nath, Senior Journalist, Kaziranga; Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak; Mousumi Das, Forester-I, Orang Tiger Reserve; Hirokjyoti Das, Aaranyak; and Sabrina Begum, Aaranyak.

Akash Morang, member Aaranyak; Khairul Basher and Baharul Islam, local conservationists; Utpal Deka and Abdul Rashid, Teachers of the school, provided invaluable support.

Families learn to test water quality at Aaranyak workshop

Promoting responsible water use and sustainable household practices, Aaranyak organised an interactive workshop titled "Eco-actions for Water and Soil" at its research office on July 19, bringing together parents and children from different districts of Assam to learn practical techniques for water quality testing, household water auditing and water conservation.

The workshop, organised by Aaranyak's Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD), aimed to build public awareness on the importance of conserving freshwater resources and empowering families with simple scientific tools to assess the quality and quantity of water they use every day.

Opening the programme, Jayanta Kumar Pathak, Assistant Director of Aaranyak's EECBD, underlined the growing global concern over water scarcity, pollution and unsustainable consumption. He stressed that while households routinely monitor their financial expenditure, very few keep track of their daily water use.

He urged participants to adopt responsible water-use practices, understand the quality of the water they consume and develop the habit of conducting regular household water audits as an effective step towards water security.

The workshop combined expert-led discussions with practical demonstrations, enabling participants to gain hands-on experience in assessing both water quality and household consumption patterns.

Participants brought water samples from their homes and used portable water testing kits to analyse key drinking water parameters, including pH, Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), iron, hardness and fluoride. The exercise helped participants understand how these indicators influence water quality and whether the water is safe for drinking.

The workshop also introduced participants to the concept of a household water audit, where families estimated the quantity of water used daily for drinking, cooking, bathing, washing and other domestic purposes. Each participant received a water audit format to record and monitor household water consumption over time, encouraging evidence-based water conservation and behavioural change.

The technical sessions and practical demonstrations were conducted by Tikendrajit Gogoi, Geetashree Sarma and Ashatora Sarma of Aaranyak's Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD). Through interactive learning, participants developed a better understanding of water quality monitoring, efficient water management and sustainable practices that can be incorporated into everyday life.

The programme concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony followed by an interactive discussion, during which participants reflected on their learning experiences and pledged to adopt more sustainable water-use practices within their households and communities.

With freshwater resources facing increasing pressure from climate change, pollution and rising demand, initiatives such as *Eco-actions for Water and Soil* seek to strengthen community capacity and encourage informed, science-based action towards achieving long-term water security and environmental sustainability.

Awareness programmes on human-elephant coexistence at Suwarkona

Aaranyak, in collaboration with Goalpara Forest Division of Assam Forest Department, conducted an awareness programme on the need for human elephant coexistence at Hari Mandir community hall in Suwarkona village under Lakhipur Forest Range on June 18.

Around 40 participants including women attended the programme besides the staff members of Lakhipur Forest Range Office.

Pranoy Hajong, Village Headman presided over the meeting that was moderated by local social worker Anil Hajong.

In this programme Subhas Chandra Rabha, resource person explained about the elephant behaviours, elephant habitat, causes of human elephant conflict (HEC) and different mitigation measures to establish coexistence.

Dhon Doloi of Lakhipur Forest Range talked about the HEC scenario of Lakhipur area and explained about some tips to maintain coexistence between human and elephant.

Skill enhancement training empowers Karbi youth

Bolstering the line between development of indigenous community and biodiversity conservation, Aaranyak, in collaboration with Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School near Kaziranga National Park in Assam , successfully conducted a four-day 'Advanced Electrical Wiring and Basic Plumbing Training' for six participants during July 20 to 23 last at the Community Resource Centre, for empowering rural youth from Karbi Anglong with practical, market-oriented skills for sustainable livelihoods.

The training primarily benefited six Karbi youth from the Kohora and Diring areas, equipping them with technical expertise in advanced electrical wiring and basic plumbing to improve employability, encourage self-reliance and create alternative livelihood opportunities for them within their own communities.

Conducted by experienced electricians and plumbers, the programme combined theory sessions on electrical safety, wiring standards and plumbing fundamentals with extensive hands-on training covering advanced wiring techniques, household electrical installations and repairs, fault diagnosis, pipe fitting, leak repairs and basic plumbing maintenance.

Recognising that technical skills alone are not sufficient for entrepreneurship, the programme also included practical guidance on sourcing materials, pricing services and engaging with customers.

Upon successful completion of the training, every participant received a basic electrical and plumbing toolkit, enabling them to immediately apply their newly acquired skills and pursue self-employment opportunities.

By building local technical capacity, the initiative is expected to reduce communities' dependence on external technicians while creating reliable income opportunities for rural youth.

Reflecting on the impact of the training, Welson Kramsa of Sarbura Singnar village said, "I used to depend on outside technicians for basic household repairs. This training has given me the confidence to safely handle electrical wiring, reduce repair costs, and earn additional income by offering these services in my community."

Another participant, Prokash Engti of Englepothar, said, "Learning basic plumbing, leak repairs, and pipe fitting has shown me how practical technical skills can improve water access while creating a reliable source of daily income."

Highlighting the broader significance of the initiative, Uttaran Dutta of Aaranyak said, "Our rural youth have immense potential but often lack the technical skills needed to turn it into sustainable livelihoods. Through hands-on training in electrical safety and basic plumbing, we are equipping them with practical, market-relevant skills that build confidence, meet local needs, and create opportunities for self-employment."

The programme began with an introduction to its objectives by Swapan Nath, Principal of Chandrasing Rongpi Memorial High School. The technical sessions were facilitated by demonstrators Pradip Naidu, Rocky Enghi, and Shiva Tanti, while Semson Engti, a team member of Aaranyak, coordinated logistics and documentation throughout the training.

The training was conducted under the aegis of the Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak based in the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong Landscape and supported by IUCN-KfW, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Disney Conservation Fund.

International Tiger Day celebrated in Manas landscape

Demonstrating that the future of tiger conservation depends on strong partnerships between protected area managers and local communities, leading biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Forest Department, BTC, MMES and EIACP (PC Hub) Assam, ASTEC, celebrated International Tiger Day 2026 with a large-scale community awareness programme at the MMES Conference Hall, Lwkhibazar, Kharadwisa, in the globally significant Manas Landscape.

The programme brought together around 130 participants, including students, village leaders, conservation volunteers, community members and representatives of various institutions, reinforcing a shared commitment to protecting tigers and the biodiversity of one of India's most important tiger landscapes. The event focused on strengthening community stewardship, promoting coexistence between people and wildlife, and inspiring greater public participation in conservation.

The programme was graced by Shri Bomol Basumatary, Headmaster of Khamardwisa M.E. School, as the Chief Guest. Distinguished guests included Shri Moidul Islam, Officer-in-Charge, Simla Outpost; Shri Yuvraj Singh Digra, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Manas National Park; Shri Mrinal Jyoti Daimary, Range Forest Officer, Bhuyanpara Range, Manas National Park; Shri Hemen Nath, S.I., SSB; Smt. Rinu Daimary, VCDC Chairperson; Shri Argeng Basumatary, ABSU NK Unit Secretary; Shri Satish Das, President of the Eco-Development Committee (EDC); Shri Parmadhar Basumatary, Gaonbura of Daodhara; and Shri Gokul Basumatary, Gaonbura of Gorumara.

The celebration began with a vibrant Cycle Rally through the Lwkhibazar area, where participants carried conservation messages and engaged local residents on the importance of protecting tigers and maintaining ecological balance. The rally reflected the growing role of communities in safeguarding the forests and wildlife of the Manas Landscape.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest and other dignitaries highlighted the tiger's role as an umbrella species whose conservation safeguards entire ecosystems. They emphasised that the long-term survival of tigers depends not only on effective protection within forests but also on the active support and participation of people living alongside these landscapes. Participants, particularly young people, were encouraged to become ambassadors for conservation within their communities.

A technical session on Tiger Conservation in Manas National Park was delivered by Shri Nitul Kalita, who presented the current status of tigers in the landscape, ongoing conservation interventions, emerging challenges, and the critical importance of community participation in securing the future of the species.

To encourage greater public engagement, an Open Quiz Competition on wildlife and tiger conservation was organised for students and community members, while the event also recognised young conservation champions through the prize distribution ceremony of the Art Competition held on 26 July 2026 as part of the pre–International Tiger Day celebrations in the Koklabari area.

In the senior category, Akhrang Muchahary secured the first prize, Bhumika Brahma the second prize, while Sanfung Ramchiary and Mwikhwm Brahma were awarded third prize. In the junior category, Kushmita Ramchiary won the first prize, followed by Hayensa Brahma in second place and Jamuna Swrgiary in third.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of Dr Sonali Ghosh, Field Director of Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve; Dr M. Firoz Ahmed, Director & Head, Tiger Research and Conservation Division (TRCD), Aaranyak; and Dr Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director, TRCD, Aaranyak. The event was coordinated by Shri Detsung Basumatary, Shri Nitul Kalita, Ms. Momita Narzary, Shri Bijay Basumatary, Shri Daimalu Basumatary, Shri Pankaj Das, Ms. Barnali Boro, Ms. Bubli Basumatary, Ms. Binita Baruwati, Shri Mizing Boro, Shri Bijeet Baro and Shri Dhananjay Muchahary, in collaboration with officials from the Forest Department, MMES and Ferenga Ecotourism.

The celebration formed part of the IUCN-KfW-supported project, "Securing Population of Tigers, Habitats and Biological Corridors in Assam, India." Through initiatives that combine conservation awareness, community participation and collaborative action, Aaranyak continues to strengthen community-led conservation across the Manas Landscape, helping secure a future for tigers while conserving the region's exceptional biodiversity.

Solar-powered fence inaugurated at Boro-Singri village in Goalpara

A three-kilometre-long stretch of community-managed solar-powered fence meant for mitigation of human elephant conflict (HEC) and facilitating coexistence was inaugurated and handed over of the solar fence management committee of Boro-Singri village in Goalpara district at a programme organised in the village on July 31, 2026. Around 50 villagers including women participated the meeting.

The Boro-Sigri village is located in the Southern part of Goalpara District under Lakhipur Block and Lakhipur Forest Range. The village has around 100 households dominated by indigenous Rabha and Rajbongshi community. HEC was a day-to-day issue faced by the residents of the village.

The Forest Department of Assam with cooperation from Aaranyak and the local community has installed a 3-km community- managed single strand solar-powered fence in the village. The fence has been funded by Goalpara Forest Division. The installation of this fence was successfully completed in July 26, 2026.

The Range Officer of Lakhipur Forest Range Mou Pran Gayan inaugurated the fence in a public meeting attended by the villagers. He suggested the villager to maintain the fence properly to protect their lives and property.

Dhon Chandra Doloi, Forester and other staff from Lakhipur Forest Lange also participate the programme. Aaranyak official Anjan Baruah enlightened the participating villagers on the properties of solar-powered fence and its efficacy in establishing coexistence between human beings and wild elephant. He advised the villagers look after the maintenance of the fence for their safety.

Aswini Basumatary, President of Pukhuripara Gaon Panchayat talked about the past and present scenario regarding elephants' presence in the area and appreciated Aaranyak and Forest Department for their initiative for the HEC mitigation in their area.

Other members/officials of Aaranyak attending the meeting included Ripunjoy Nath, Rupam Gayari and Rahit Nath.

The meeting was presided by the Village Head of Boto-Sigri , Paresh Rabha. The ECN member of Soto-Sigri village Jadikanta Rabha coordinated the programme.

An MoU was signed among the Forest department, Aaranyak and the local community representatives at the end of the meeting before formal handing over the solar-powered fence to the solar fence management committee from local community.

Young minds learn art and science of Tiger conservation

Aaranyak joined the global celebration of International Tiger Day at Dhania Range of Laokhowa–Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary under the Nagaon Wildlife Division. The programme was organised by the Nagaon Wildlife Division and Kaziranga Tiger Reserve Authority in collaboration with Aaranyak, WWF-India, LBCS, and Wild Aid Assam.

The event featured interactive sessions, presentations on tiger ecology and conservation, practical demonstrations on camera trapping and tiger monitoring techniques, and an open quiz to engage students and raise awareness about tiger conservation.

The programme was attended by Rajib Hazarika, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Nagaon Wildlife Division; Dilwar Hussain (LBCS); Pranab Bora and Sushanta Borthakur (WWF-India); Arif Hussain and Akash Morang (Aaranyak); and Niraj Bora and Nawman Islam (Wild Aid Assam).

A total of 60 students from Dhania and Gorajan Ranges participated in the programme, gaining valuable insights into tiger conservation and wildlife monitoring.

Football for conservation: Global Tiger Day celebrated in Biswanath

Aaranyak participated in the Global Tiger Day celebration organised by the Biswanath Wildlife Division of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve in collaboration with Aaranyak, WWF-India, and AWRRO.

As part of the celebration, the 'Tiger Cup', a football tournament involving six local teams, was organised to engage the community and promote awareness about tiger conservation. Alongside the matches, participants and spectators were sensitised to the importance of protecting tigers and their habitats. Before the tournament commenced, a solemn tribute was paid to the victims of the recent floods in Assam.

The programme was attended by Ritupaban Bora, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Biswanath Wildlife Division; Nayanjyoti Gogoi, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF); Arif Hussain and Akash Morang (Aaranyak); Tridip Sarma (WWF-India); Soidur Rahman (Upaityaka); Niharika Gogoi, Range Officer, Biswanath; and Tilak Pradhan (AWRRO).

100 teachers oriented on ESE at DIET Kamrup

Aaranyak's Environment Education & Capacity Building Division (EECBD), in collaboration with the District Institute of Education & Training (DIET), Kamrup – Centre of Excellence, Mirza, organised a Capacity Building Programme on Environment and Sustainability Education (ESE) on 30 July 2026. Aligned with NEP 2020, the programme engaged 100 teacher trainees in practical approaches to integrating sustainability into classroom teaching and community action.

The session was led by Mr. Tikendrajit Gogoi, Sustainability Facilitator, EECBD, Aaranyak, who demonstrated participatory teaching methods and highlighted Aaranyak's sustainability initiatives with Samagra Shiksha Axom (SSA), including school biodiversity documentation, water quality testing, water audits, and soil sustainability programmes. He also showcased Aaranyak's broader research-based and community-driven conservation initiatives across Northeast India.

Ms. Pritipuspa Barua, Principal, DIET Kamrup, appreciated the efforts of SSA and Aaranyak in promoting the Wipro earthian Sustainability Education Initiative in Assam and emphasised the importance of partnerships in advancing sustainability education.

Dr. Shiromoni Bhuyan, Lecturer, expressed DIET's interest in strengthening future collaborations with Aaranyak, while Ms. Bandita Pathak and Ms. Taslima Ahmed, Lecturers, felicitated the resource person. Ms. Pallavi Bhattacharyya, Senior Lecturer, also acknowledged Aaranyak's contributions to environmental conservation in Northeast India.

Aaranyak thanks DIET Kamrup, Mirza, for its support and looks forward to continued collaboration in promoting environmental conservation and sustainability education.

Torchlights provided for HEC mitigation at Rangjuli

Aaranyak provided rechargeable torch lights to local community members engaged in elephant patrolling as a tool for mitigation of human elephant conflict (HEC) and enable coexistence at programmed organized at Rangjuli Forest Range Office in Goalpara district of Assam.

Thirty-four torch lights were distributed to the participants including Gajamitras and women community members in the programme hosted by Mukut Rabha, Range officer and Bhupen Sarma, Dy Ranger of Rangjuli Forest Range.

Aaranyak official Anjan Baruah in his speech sensitized the community members about the efficient use of these torch lights and other mitigation tools. Range Officer Mukut Rabha handed over the torch light to the

beneficiaries. The Dy Range Mr. Bhupen Sarma moderated the programme. The Aaranyak team comprised of Anjan Baruah and Rupam Gayari.

Torch lights were distributed to members of the local community and elephant committees hailing from Nalduba, Salpara, Madang, Jyotigaon, Mariampara,Batabari, Seshagaon, Taparpur etc., villages under the Rangjuli Forest Range.

Celebrating hidden beauty of moths through photography and art

As part of National Moth Week, Aaranyak's WeForNature campaign organised "Moths Through Photography" and "Moths Through Art" initiatives that brought together passionate photographers and talented artists to celebrate the fascinating world of moths, one of nature's most overlooked wonders.

Through captivating photographs and creative artworks, participants showcased the intricate patterns, colours, and beauty of moths, encouraging people to pause, look closer, and appreciate the incredible diversity of these remarkable insects that play a vital role in our ecosystems.

The events provided a platform for nature enthusiasts, photographers, and artists to share their creativity and curiosity while transforming observations into powerful stories of appreciation and conservation.

A heartfelt thank you to all the photographers and artists who participated and helped highlight the hidden beauty of moths through their unique perspectives.

Monsoon Nature Camp in Manas promotes community-led conservation

A three-day Monsoon Nature Camp (July 4-6) in the Manas Landscape brought students and young nature enthusiasts closer to nature through immersive experiences in biodiversity, indigenous knowledge, sustainable livelihoods and community-led conservation.

The inaugural session was graced by Mr. Yuvraj Singh Digra, Assistant Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve; Mr. Mrinal Daimary, Range Officer of Bhuyanpara Range, Manas Tiger Reserve; Mr. Chandra Kanta Basumatary, Founder President of Manas Mauzigendri Ecotourism Society and recipient of the Assam Gaurav award; Mr. Kamal Azad, research scholar and social worker; Mr. Rustom Basumatary, renowned bird watcher; Ms. Rina Daimari, Chairperson of Kamardisha VCDC; and Dr. M. Firoz Ahmed, Head of the Tiger Research and Conservation Division, Aaranyak.

Participants explored forests, rivers and village landscapes, learned from community elders, experienced traditional Bodo culture and cuisine, observed nocturnal wildlife, discovered indigenous fishing practices, and witnessed how conservation and community well-being go hand in hand.

The camp was made possible through the dedicated efforts of Mr. Jayanta Kumar Sarma, Ms. Gayatri Dutta, Mr. Kamal Azad, Mr. Bijit Baro, Ms. Nibedita Talukder, Ms. Momita Narzary, Mr. Detsung Basumatary, Mr. Sunny Paul, Mr. Pankaj Das, Mr. Majammil Hoque, Mr. Bijay Basumatary, Ms. Barnali Baro, and the Ferenga Ecotourism Group.

Dr. Bibhab Talukdar elected as a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London

Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, founder Secretary General & Executive Director of Aaranyak and a globally recognised conservation biologist, has been elected as a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London (FLS), one of the highest international recognitions in the field of natural history and biological sciences.

The Linnean Society of London, founded in 1788, is the world's oldest active biological society. It is dedicated to the study and dissemination of knowledge on natural history, evolution, and taxonomy. Past Fellows include luminaries such as Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. Fellows (FLS) are elected based on their significant contributions to these fields. Election to its Fellowship is a significant academic and scientific honour.

Dr. Talukdar, an Ashoka Fellow (2007) and recipient of the IUCN SSC Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership (2024), has dedicated over three decades to biodiversity conservation, with a special focus on Asian rhinos. He served as the chair of IUCN SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group from 2007 till end of 2021-2025 IUCN quadrennium and has played a pivotal role in rhino conservation, habitat protection, prevention of illegal wildlife crime efforts, and community-based conservation in Northeast India's biodiversity hotspots.

Didom Daimari invited to 'At Home' at Rashtrapati Bhavan on I-Day

In a heart-warming recognition to grassroots conservation efforts, Didom Daimari, an Aaranyak team member and community conservationist from Angarajuli village at Bhairabkunda in Udalguri district of Assam, has been invited to attend the prestigious 'At Home' reception hosted by the President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of the Independence Day.

Currently serving with Aaranyak as a Field Coordinator, Daimari has been actively involved in community-based conservation initiatives across the Bhairabkunda landscape. With over a decade of grassroots conservation experience, he has worked closely with the Dhansiri Forest Division of the Bodoland Territorial Council Forest Department of Assam. He is also an active member of the Dhansiri–Sikaridanga Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC), and has provided on-ground conservation support to several organisations and individuals.

Over the years, he has played a key role in habitat enhancement, human-elephant conflict mitigation, wildlife conservation, community mobilisation, environmental education, nature guiding and eco-tourism promotion. His dedication has earned him recognition as one of the leading community conservation champions in the Bhairabkunda landscape.

Beyond conservation, Daimari is also an eco-tourism guide certified by BTC Tourism and Assam Tourism and currently serves as the President of the Bhairabkunda Eco-Tourism and Conservation Society.

He also leads the Angarajuli Homestay Committee, promoting responsible nature-based tourism that showcases the region's rich biodiversity while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

The invitation to the Presidential 'At Home' reception is construed as a recognition of Daimari's unwavering commitment to conservation and reflects the invaluable contribution of grassroots conservation leaders in protecting forests, restoring wildlife habitats and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Didom Daimari said, "I am grateful to the Border Protection and Development Department, Assam for facilitating this prestigious opportunity for me under Vibrant Village Programme by Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI."

Aaranyak congratulates Didom Daimari on this well-deserved honour and considers it a proud moment not only for the organisation but also for the Dhansiri Forest Division, the Dhansiri–Sikaridanga JFMC, the Bhairabkunda Eco-Tourism and Conservation Society, and the people of Angarajuli village, whose collective efforts continue to strengthen conservation in Bhairabkunda landscape.

Conservationists honoured with Commendation Award on Global Tiger Day

On the occasion of celebration of Global Tiger Day on July 29 at Kachugaon Central Range, Kachugaon Forest Division in Raimona National Park of Assam, two conservationists of Aaranyak Team Rabiya Daimari,

Senior Project Officer (ERCD) and Dibakar Nayak, Field Assistant (ERCD) were conferred Commendation Award in recognition of their contributions towards the mitigation of human-wildlife conflict (HWC).

The award was jointly presented by the Forest Department and Department of Tourism, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). They were among 40 awardees, including frontline forest personnel and members of local communities, who were recognized for their dedicated contributions to wildlife conservation.

The event was attended by Mr. James Basumatary, Executive Member, Forest and Wildlife, BTC; Mr. William Narzary MCLA of Jomduar Constituency; Dr. Sonali Ghosh Addl. PCCF cum CHD, Forest, BTC and the Field Director of Manas Tiger Reserve and Mr. Jayanta Sarmah, Director-cum-CHD, BTC Tourism Department, besides senior and retired forest officials of the Assam Forest Department, representatives from the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Eco Task Force, Tourism Department, and several organisations functioning from the Bodoland Territorial Region.

The recognition acknowledges the awardees' dedicated efforts in supporting community-based human-wildlife conflict mitigation through stakeholder engagement, awareness programmes, and the implementation of practical conservation interventions.

K9 Leon retires from wildlife protection duty

After nearly eight years of tracking suspects, assisting anti-poaching operations and guarding some of Assam's most precious wildlife, K9 Leon, an exceptionally sharp and agile Belgian Malinois, retired from active service on August 15.

Trained in scent tracking and anti-poaching operations, Leon spent much of his distinguished career protecting wildlife and supporting conservation efforts across Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve (KNP&TR). Working alongside his dedicated handlers, Anil Kumar Das and Mrigen Das, he became much more than a working dog — he emerged as a vigilant guardian of Kaziranga's natural heritage.

Following an intensive 12-month specialised training programme, Leon joined active field duty in November 2018. Over the years, he undertook more than 200 patrols and participated in over 30 specialised tactical operations, working closely with frontline personnel of the Assam Forest Department and Assam Police.

Among the many operations that marked his remarkable career was a major tracking exercise during the devastating floods of late 2019. Displaying extraordinary endurance, Leon followed a suspect's scent trail for nearly 20 kilometres across several forest camps and security checkpoints. His relentless tracking eventually helped identify and apprehend a rhino poacher.

In another significant operation at Bokakhat in 2023, following the discovery of a poached deer carcass, Leon led frontline forest personnel to crucial incriminating evidence and helped track down and apprehend four suspected poachers.

His abilities were not confined to wildlife crime investigations. In 2025, Leon assisted the Assam Police in a high-profile gold theft case in Golaghat town, demonstrating the versatility of his scent-tracking skills beyond forest boundaries. His intervention helped investigators identify and arrest four persons involved in the theft.

Through extreme weather, challenging riverine terrain and complex operational conditions, the super sniffer consistently displayed exceptional discipline, sharp instincts and unwavering loyalty. His contribution strengthened anti-poaching efforts and supported the protection of the endangered greater one-horned rhinoceros and other wildlife in the region.

K9 Leon has been supported by NABU International since 2017 as part of efforts to strengthen wildlife crime prevention and enforcement.

As Leon officially hangs up his boots after years on the conservation frontline, Aaranyak's K9 Sniffer Dog Squad, the Assam Forest Department and Assam Police have expressed their deep gratitude for his courage, dedication and steadfast service.

For Aaranyak and the people who worked beside him through the years, Leon's retirement marks the conclusion of an extraordinary chapter of service. The organisation has wished the four-legged conservation hero good health and a peaceful retirement, while assuring that he will continue to receive proper care throughout the rest of his life.

Leon may no longer be heading out on patrol, but the trails he followed, the cases he helped crack and the wildlife he helped protect leave behind a lasting legacy in Kaziranga and Assam's conservation landscape.

HEC awareness in WGH explores greater inter-state coordination

Wild elephants' herds moving about the Assam-Meghalaya boundary in Goalpara (Assam) and West Garo Hills (Meghalaya) landscapes don't recognize the man-made geographical boundary between the two states and that requires people-to-people and Assam Forest Depart- Meghalaya Forest Department coordination to decide on ways for coexistence.

With this objective, an engaging awareness programme on coexistence with wild elephants took place at bordering Naguapara village community in West Garo Hills (WGH) of Meghalaya on August 1 at Naguapara Upper primary School under the aegis of Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Lakhipur Forest Range of Assam Forest Department and Wildlife Protection Range, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya Forest Department. This programme aimed to inculcate in villagers from both sides of the inter-state boundary a deeper understanding of conservation and human elephant coexistence.

Villagers from Meghalaya side requested Assam Forest Department for instant help, if possible, during elephant patrolling near border villages. The participants from both Assam and Meghalaya area wished for greater people-to-people coordination in mitigating the HEC in Assam-Meghalaya boundary area.

In Naguapara village, located in WGH of Meghalaya near the inter-state boundary with Assam, the local community belongs to Rabha and Garo tribes. The residents of these villages have been experiencing human elephant conflict (HEC) for a long time.

Around 50 participants including farmers, teachers and Nokmas from Naguapara and different nearby villages belonged to Meghalaya and Assam namely Khasiapara, Ganarugre, Kalapara, Mauriapara, Besorkona, Joyramkuchi, Medhipara Part-II, Kasubari attended the awareness programme. Nokmas from West Garo Hill along with local farmers attended the meeting and shared their issues and present status of HEC mitigation.

The meeting was attended by Lakhipur Forest Range team comprising Range Officer Mou Pran Gayan, Forester Dhan Chandra Doloi etc. and Aaranyak team comprising Anjan Baruah, Ripunjoy Nath, Rahit Nath, Rupam Gayari along with ECN members Nabajyoti Basumatary, Niren Koch, Jadikanta Rabha Aswini Basumatary and Borogobal village champion cum RRU member Nabin Rabha.

The programme was moderated by Nabajyoti Basumatary of Lakhipur ECN group. Anjan Baruah from Aaranyak discussed with the participants probable HEC mitigation measures in that area through a presentation. He also discussed on various important dos and don'ts displaying some slides for the promotion of coexistence.

Lakhipur Range Officer Mou Pran Gayan talked on the present scenario of elephant in the Assam-Meghalaya border area. Forester Dhon Ch. Doloi shared some of the experiences with elephant and discussed provided some tips for coexistence. Oshim Sangma of Wildlife Protection Range, WGH informed the gathering about different HEC mitigation measures undertaken by the Meghalaya Forest Department.

Nokma Nalemson Sangma, Head Teacher of Naguapara UP School Prafulla Rabha, retired teacher Chandra Nath and Village Champion & RRU member of Borogobal Nabin Rabha, talked about the present HEC related issues in their areas and support provided from the Meghalaya Forest Department.

Aaranyak Flood Relief Initiative

The recent floods in eastern Assam have caused immense hardship across affected communities, disrupting lives and livelihoods and resulting in significant losses of homes, property and essential belongings. Aaranyak extends its heartfelt solidarity to all those affected by the floods during this difficult time.

In response to the situation, members and staff of Aaranyak came together through voluntary contributions to initiate a flood relief effort in the affected districts of Sivasagar, Charaideo and Jorhat. The initiative

reflects Aaranyak's commitment to standing with communities during times of crisis, while responding to immediate needs with care and dignity.

As part of the first phase of the initiative, an Aaranyak team visited Dorikamari village in Jorhat district, where they met with affected families, listened to their experiences and understood some of the immediate challenges they were facing. Relief kits containing essential hygiene and safety items were subsequently provided to 70 families in the village.

The field team included Pranab Goswami, Gunajit Mazumdar, Wasima Begum, Ashatora Sarma, Pradip Barman and Himangshu Deka. The overall planning and coordination of the initiative was led by Udayan Borthakur, Organising Secretary, Aaranyak, with support from Pranab Goswami and Dr Pranjal Kr. Das, Coordinator, Central Assam Zone of Aarayak.

The initiative has been made possible through the collective efforts and voluntary contributions of Aaranyak's members and staff. Their support has enabled Aaranyak to take the first steps towards reaching communities affected by the floods at a time when timely assistance is especially important.

This is only the beginning. Aaranyak will continue to explore ways to extend support to more affected families across the flood-impacted landscapes of eastern Assam, working with sensitivity to local needs and circumstances and with the hope of contributing, in whatever modest way possible, to the recovery and rebuilding of lives and livelihoods.

Karbi women brew a new future through traditional tea

A simple tea leaf is taking on a new meaning for rural women in Karbi Anglong, as Aaranyak organised a one-day hands-on training programme to help nine Karbi women turn locally grown tea into higher-value handmade Green Tea and Orthodox Tea - creating a potential source of sustainable, home-based income while keeping traditional knowledge alive.

Women from Chandrasing Rongpi, Barking Engti, Sem Engti and Hemai Lekthe villages, many of whom are engaged in tea cultivation and homestead farming, participated in the training. The programme focused on a practical question: how can communities earn more from resources they already grow?

Instead of selling freshly plucked leaves as raw produce, the participants learned how careful processing can transform them into speciality teas with greater market value. The approach requires relatively low investment and can be practised at the household level, making it particularly relevant for women dependent on subsistence farming and seasonal agricultural labour.

Mrs Manai Terangpi, an experienced green tea and orthodox tea practitioner from Chandrasing Rongpi village, served as the Resource Person. The training began at a nearby tea farm, where participants learned how to select and properly pluck leaves for tea processing. They then received practical demonstrations and hands-on instruction in preparing hand-rolled green tea, including boiling, hand rolling and sun drying, followed by the preparation of orthodox tea.

For the participants, the training was not simply about learning a new technique—it was about adding value to what they already know.

Rebeka Rongpipi of Chandra Sing Rongpi village said, *"I have learned something very interesting in tea processing that will enhance my skill to make better quality green tea and orthodox tea for a better market, rather than simply selling raw tea leaves that have less market value."*

Mrs. Kusum Teronpi of Sem Engti village said, *"I have learnt how small but careful details like proper selection of tea leaves, plucking, rolling, and drying can enhance the quality and look of the tea, giving me hope that it will fetch more in the market."*

The training also introduced participants to the importance of quality in developing a marketable product. Moromi Nath of Aaranyak spoke about the quality and demand for handmade Green Tea and Orthodox Tea and explained the standards required for procurement under PIRBI. She said the tea produced by the women would be procured and paid for according to its quality, determined by factors such as leaf size, rolling and

proper drying. She encouraged the women to begin with small quantities and practise regularly to gradually improve the quality of their products.

Larbeen Teronpi of Aaranyak introduced the participants to PIRBI, a community-based business and food processing unit operating in the village. She also highlighted other value-addition opportunities involving locally available products, including turmeric, ginger powder, tapioca flour and moringa powder. Such processing, she noted, can help rural households generate additional income from resources already available within their communities.

Beyond livelihood generation, the initiative carries a deeper cultural significance. Traditional tea-making knowledge, passed down through generations, can gradually disappear as livelihood patterns change. By helping women practise, refine and potentially market these skills, the training seeks to keep tea-making alive as a living community heritage.

The initiative demonstrates how local resources, traditional knowledge and women's skills can come together to create sustainable livelihood opportunities while keeping communities connected to their land and cultural practices. With continued skill development and appropriate market linkages, handmade tea from Karbi Anglong could emerge as an authentic village-based speciality product, creating opportunities for local enterprise and economic growth.

The programme was conducted with the support of Team Aaranyak, with active participation from women representing Chandrasing Rongpi, Barking Engti, Sem Engti and Hemai Lekthe villages.

Aaranyak remains committed to conserving the rich biodiversity and natural heritage of Northeast India by supporting indigenous people and local communities through alternative and sustainable livelihoods and nature-based solutions. The Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak is supported by IUCN-KfW, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Disney Conservation Fund.

Celebrating International Day of World's Indigenous People

Aaranyak, in collaboration with the Forest Department and local communities, observed the International Day of the World's Indigenous People at Dumbajar F.V. located in the fringe of Raimona National Park of Kokrajhar district on August 9. The programme brought together around 40 participants and provided a meaningful platform for community members to share and reflect on their traditional knowledge, cultural beliefs, ecological practices, and folk tales and stories passed down through generations.

The discussions highlighted the deep connection between indigenous communities and their surrounding natural environment and explored how traditional knowledge and locally rooted practices can contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management. A key component of the programme was a discussion on the declining availability of native tree species and the importance of seed conservation. Community members visited a community-managed backyard nursery and actively participated in discussions on conserving native tree species.

Biswajit Basumatary Range I/C Sanfan Range along with a team attended the event and actively supported and participated in the programme. Gayatri Dutta, Birdutta Baro, Bijeet Baro, and Raj Bahadur Limbu participated in the programme.

Celebration of the 80th Independence Day

The Aaranyak family proudly celebrates the 80th Independence Day of India with patriotism and pride at our administrative office in Guwahati and across our field stations in Assam. As we honoured the spirit of freedom and the journey of our nation, let us renew our commitment to conserve India's rich natural heritage. Together, let us conserve our forests, wildlife and biodiversity and build a resilient, sustainable future for generations to come.

Warping drum tech training to weavers in Manas Landscape

In a significant initiative to strengthen sustainable livelihoods around Manas National Park, Aaranyak organised a specialised training programme on warping drum technology and its applications in handloom weaving at Gorumara, Koklabari, under the Bhuyanpara Range of Manas National Park, on August 26 2026.

The initiative seeks to bring appropriate modern technology into traditional handloom practices, while improving productivity, product quality and income opportunities for women weavers living in the fringe areas of the landscape.

Twenty women handloom weavers from the Koklabari area participated in the training, which was designed to enhance their technical skills and reduce the physical drudgery associated with traditional weaving practices. The programme focused specifically on the use of warping drums, a technology that can make the warping process more efficient, safer and less dependent on outdoor working conditions.

Warping is an essential stage of handloom weaving. Traditionally, many weavers across the landscape carry out the process along roadsides or in open spaces, which can be time-consuming, physically demanding and risky, particularly during adverse weather conditions. Through hands-on demonstrations, the participants were provided with a step-by-step understanding of the process, beginning with bobbin winding and continuing through the completion of the warping activity.

While warping drum technology is not new to the wider handloom sector, its use is relatively new among the participating weavers. The adoption of the technology is expected to reduce drudgery, save time and energy, and improve the efficiency and consistency of their work. By combining traditional weaving knowledge with appropriate technology, the initiative aims to create better working conditions while strengthening the economic potential of rural handloom production.

Women are central to the rural handloom sector, and strengthening their technical capacities can contribute significantly to household income, economic independence and long-term livelihood security. The initiative also seeks to ensure that improved skills and knowledge are passed on to future generations, helping traditional weaving practices remain relevant and economically sustainable.

The training was conducted by Mrs. Rekha Baro, a well-known handloom weaver and professionally qualified trainer from the region, who has extensive experience in handloom technology and its applications. She provided practical, step-by-step guidance to the participants throughout the programme.

Sharing her experience, Mrs. Pokhila Boro, one of the participating weavers, said, *"It will now be very easy for us to do warping inside the room even if it is rainy or sunny days; it will reduce working hard in coming days."*

Rekha Baro said, *"The trainees are learning quite attentively and are able to complete the module very fruitfully."* She also shared her contact number with the trainees to provide assistance for any post-training requirements.

The purpose and objectives of the training were explained by Dr M. Firoz Ahmed, Director & Head, Tiger Research and Conservation Division (TRCD) as well as Herpetofauna Research and Conservation Division (hrcd), Aaranyak, and Detsung Basumatary, Manager, TRCD & HRCD, Aaranyak. Other Aaranyak team members who actively participated in the programme included Ms Momita Narzary, Shri Pankaj Das, Shri Daimalu Basumatary, Smt. Barnali Baro, Ms Bubli Rani Basumatary and Ms Sonia Basumatary.

The initiative is part of Aaranyak's broader efforts to promote alternative and sustainable livelihoods and nature-based solutions among indigenous peoples and local communities living around ecologically important landscapes. By strengthening community-based livelihoods and enhancing the capacities of women, such interventions seek to build greater economic resilience while contributing to long-term conservation outcomes.

Aaranyak is committed to conserving the rich biodiversity and natural heritage of Northeast India by working closely with indigenous peoples and local communities and supporting sustainable livelihood opportunities that contribute to both community well-being and conservation. The Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak at the Manas Landscape is supported by IUCN-KfW.

Football matches dominate World Elephant Day celebration

Forest Departments of Assam and Meghalaya in collaboration with Aaranyak, celebrated World Elephant Day 2026 on Wednesday organising the fourth edition of the Elephant Cup Football Tournament at Naguapara Upper Primary School playground.

The event brought together forest officials, local communities and footballers from both states to celebrate friendship, community participation and the shared responsibility of conserving elephants across the Assam–Meghalaya landscape.

Football served as a platform to strengthen age-old ties between communities and institutions in a landscape which is shared by people and elephants. The programme featured three competitive matches.

In the first, the Meghalaya community team defeated Assam 2–0, while the Assam Forest Department team secured a 3–1 victory over their Meghalaya counterpart. The women's teams of Assam and Meghalaya also faced each other, highlighting women's participation in sport, community engagement and conservation. The Meghalaya women team won the match by 2-1.

An additional friendly match between a combined Assam–Meghalaya Forest Department team and the Naguapara regional team further strengthened the spirit of camaraderie. All the winning teams received token prizes of ₹10,000 and ₹5,000 from Goalpara Forest Division in Assam along with certificates and medals.

The programme was attended by senior forest officials and dignitaries, including Ms. Maureen Jannie A. Sangma, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Garo Hills, Meghalaya, along with ACFs B. K. Lohar and Anil Patil and Range Officer Annie Valentina from Garo Hills Forest Department.

Assam was represented by Goalpara District Commissioner Pradip Timung, Goalpara Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Tejas Mariswamy, ADC Pallabi Bora, District Development Commissioner Pranab Kumar Bora, Circle officer Sailen Das, Lakhipur Range Officer Moupran Gayan, Barpeta Road Range Officer, Dharmendra Das and MLA, West Goalpara, Pabitra Rabha.

Aaranyak representatives in the event included Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Anjan Baruah, Abhijit Boruah, Anushka Saikia, Jyotibrata Mahanta, Seemanta Jyoti Baishya, Rupam Goyari and Ripunjoy Nath along with members of Elephant Conservation Networks (ECNs) from Lakhipur, Amtola and Rongjuli -- Sasibhushan Brahma, Bonkim Rabha, Nabajyoti Basumatary, Jadikanta Rabha, Bikash Rabha, Pradip Daimary, Tirtha Roy, Kamal Hajong, Ramu Rabha, Tikiram Rabha, Bijoy Boro, Samar Sarma and Dhwnsa Brahma.

Adding a cultural dimension to the celebration, local singer Robert Sangma of Raksangre village performed in Garo and Rabha, bringing indigenous music into the festivities and engaging both players and spectators.

Observed annually on August 12, World Elephant Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness about elephant conservation, the threats facing their habitats and the need for sustainable coexistence. In Northeast India, elephant populations move across administrative and state boundaries, making cooperation among forest departments and local communities essential.

For the past four years, the Elephant Cup in the Goalpara–West Garo Hills landscape has used football to create a shared space for interaction, friendship and dialogue between communities and forest personnel from Assam and Meghalaya. The participation of women's teams has further strengthened the event's message of inclusive community engagement.

The Naguapara celebration ultimately went beyond the football field. It reaffirmed that conservation can be strengthened when neighbouring communities and institutions come together around a shared landscape and a shared responsibility - to secure a future where people and elephants can coexist.

World Elephant Day celebrated in Majuli

Aaranyak celebrated World Elephant Day on August 12 with Rapid Response Unit (RRU) members and womenfolk of Haladhibari, Jaborchuk kathoni and Gazera village of Majuli. As part of the celebrations, an open session on "Elephant Conservation and its Future" was conducted in the presence of I/C Nayabazar Police Station kulajyoti Roy. Some games like blindfold pot breaking game, tug of war, throwball, spoon and marble, were also conducted for the RRU members and womenfolk. Fifty persons (M: F - 13:37) attended the programme.

Community awareness on HEC mitigation held at Mikirchang

An awareness programme on Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) mitigation was organised on 15 August 2026 at Mikirchang in the Bihara area, with the support of the Assam Tea Tribes Student Association : ATTSA, Mikirchang Branch.

The programme was organised following a recent incident in which Bihara Mikirchang Primary School was damaged by wild elephants.

The programme aimed to sensitise local residents, students and community members about elephant behaviour, safe responses during encounters, and precautionary measures to reduce the risk of casualties to both people and elephants during HEC incidents.

The programme brought together local residents and community members, along with conservation professionals and forest personnel. Mr Aihom Shyam, Beat Officer, Numaligarh Beat; Eminent journalist and conservation communicator Mr Uttam Saikia; and Dr Pranjal Kr. Das, Coordinator, Mid Assam Zone, Aaranyak were present and interacted with the participants.

During the awareness session, the speakers explained the behaviour, movement patterns and habitat use of wild elephants, particularly in landscapes where elephant habitats overlap with human settlements and agricultural areas. Emphasis was placed on adopting safe and responsible practices during elephant encounters.

Community members were advised to keep a safe distance, avoid approaching, chasing or provoking elephants, and give them enough space to move safely.

As part of the HEC mitigation initiative, search lights were provided to the local community with support from Aaranyak’s Elephant Research and Conservation Division (ERCD). The lights will assist residents in safely monitoring elephant movements during night-time hours and taking appropriate precautions.

The programme highlighted the importance of community awareness, preparedness and responsible behaviour in reducing human-elephant conflict and promoting safer coexistence between people and elephants.

Students’ play promotes coexistence with elephants

On the occasion of World Elephant Day on August 12, Aaranyak, with the support of the International Elephant Foundation (IEF), organised a series of awareness and conservation activities in Udalguri district of Assam to highlight the importance of elephants and promote responsible human-elephant coexistence. A role-play-based student act was conducted at Hattigarh High School, focusing on human-elephant interactions in tea garden areas. Students portrayed the roles of local people, Forest Department personnel, police, and NGO representatives, depicting how different stakeholders respond during an elephant-related incident.

Through realistic situations, the role play highlighted the importance of timely reporting, safe crowd management, coordinated response, understanding elephant behaviour, and responsible actions within tea garden areas. The performance emphasised that reducing human-elephant conflict in tea garden landscapes requires effective coordination and shared responsibility among local communities, government agencies and conservation organisations.

The celebration continued with an Alpinia plantation drive at Bhairabkunda Reserve Forest, in collaboration with Dhansiri Forest Department, 23rd Battalion of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and FXB India Suraksha for a shared habitat improvement effort.

Around 45 individuals participated in planting approximately 400 Alpinia rhizomes, focusing on strengthening grassland habitats and improving fodder availability within the elephant landscape, recognising that healthy feeding habitats are vital for long-term elephant conservation.

By enhancing these areas, the effort aims to ensure elephants have better access to natural resources within the forest while reducing pressure on human settlements. Mr Barin Boro, Forest Range Officer, Mazbat Range, highlighted the importance of conserving elephants as a celebrated and heritage animal, protecting their habitats, reducing pressure on human settlements, and creating conditions for safer and more sustainable human-elephant coexistence.

Another event was organised at Samrang in collaboration with Dhansiri Forest Department and 37 Bn SSB (Samrang BOP), featuring a conservation-themed mural on the school wall of Samrang Jorip Basti LP School. The mural was conceptualised around two key ideas: partly portraying elephants as "ecological engineers" and partly presenting a vision of human-elephant coexistence.

The colourful artwork transformed the school wall into a lasting visual learning space, allowing students and visitors to engage with the conservation message every day.

Around 50 participants, including students and teaching staff of the school, local people and participating departments, joined the activity. Mr Shakir Beg, Inspector, 37 Bn SSB, Samrang BOP, emphasised that we all share the same natural environment, and elephants were part of this landscape long before us. Therefore, it is our responsibility to understand, respect and coexist with them, working together to build a peaceful and harmonious relationship with these magnificent animals.

Aaranyak participates in World Elephant Day events in Jharkhand

On 12 August 2026, World Elephant Day 2026 was celebrated at BNR Chanakya Hotel, Ranchi, by the Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Government of Jharkhand, with the objective of promoting elephant conservation in the state. During the programme, Mr. Hiten Kr. Baishya (Deputy Director, Elephant Research & Conservation Division, Aaranyak), Mr. Imon Abedin (Biologist, Elephant Research & Conservation Division, Aaranyak), and Mr. Shiladitya Acharjee (Senior Project Officer, Elephant Research & Conservation Division, Aaranyak) were invited as experts and were felicitated for their work on elephants in the state.

On 13 August 2026, World Elephant Day was also observed in Jamshedpur by the Jamshedpur Forest Division, Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Government of Jharkhand, in collaboration with Tata Motors. As part of the programme, a training session was organised for the Rapid Response Teams of the Jharkhand Forest Department to strengthen their capacity for managing human–elephant interactions. Mr. Hiten Kr. Baishya (Deputy Director, Elephant Research & Conservation Division, Aaranyak) and Mr. Imon Abedin (Biologist, Elephant Research & Conservation Division, Aaranyak) were invited as guests and delivered talks on elephant ecology, behaviour, habitat use, and human–elephant conflict, sharing their field experiences and insights into the broader elephant conservation scenario in the state.

Looms to livelihoods: Manas weavers hone traditional craft skills

In Gwthwibari village on the fringes of the famed Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve, the rhythmic movement of household looms carries more than the making of fabric. For indigenous women of the greater Manas landscape, weaving remains closely tied to identity, tradition and livelihood.

Thirty such weavers recently came together to strengthen that craft through a 15-day Product Development Workshop (PDW), held from July 30 to August 13 at Gwthwibari village in Baksa district of Assam.

The workshop was the fifth in a series of PDWs organised by Aaranyak under Project THREAD, which is being implemented in partnership with WWF-India and Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG), with co-funding support from the European Union.

Through the initiative, Aaranyak seeks to strengthen sustainable livelihood opportunities for indigenous communities living in the Manas landscape while helping traditional handloom practices continue and adapt to changing times.

Over the course of the workshop, the participating weavers worked on different aspects of product development, including design, weaving techniques, colour combinations and finishing. Particular emphasis was placed on value addition—helping artisans refine their products without losing the distinctive identity of traditional Bodo weaving.

The participants were encouraged to explore contemporary designs and colour palettes that could appeal to wider markets while allowing the cultural character of their handloom traditions to remain at the heart of each product.

An important moment during the programme came on August 9, when a yarn distribution programme was organised at the residence of Hagaram Basumatary in Gwthwibari. Each of the 30 participating weavers received three kilograms of premium-quality cotton yarn.

The support was intended to ensure that the learning did not end with the workshop. With yarn in hand, the women can now return to their household looms, practise the techniques they have learnt and gradually translate new ideas into finished products.

Speaking to the weavers during the programme, Manas Kr. Bhattacharjya, Assistant Director, Conservation Livelihood Division (CLD), Aaranyak, underlined the importance of maintaining quality in handloom production. He encouraged participants to make effective use of the high-quality yarn and experiment with contemporary designs and colour combinations while preserving the traditional character of Bodo handloom.

The workshop was therefore envisioned as more than a short-term training programme. It sought to create a space where artisans could learn, experiment and build the confidence needed to develop products with the potential to reach larger markets. The provision of yarn formed an important part of this process, helping bridge the gap between training and actual production.

For communities living in conservation landscapes such as Manas, strengthening locally rooted livelihoods can also contribute to a broader relationship between people, culture and the landscape they call home. Traditional weaving, passed through generations, offers one such pathway—where cultural continuity can move alongside new livelihood opportunities.

The workshop and associated activities were conducted under the guidance and support of Dr. Deba Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research Conservation Division (RRCD), Aaranyak, who has been supporting the planning and implementation of livelihood initiatives under the programme.

Technical support for the PDW was provided by Project Coordinator Swapan Kumar Das, Master Trainer Nandeswar Deka, Junior Designer Darsana Boro, Textile Expert Arjun Kumar Hazarika, Master Trainer Bijoy Boro, and Community Development Executive Raj Khungur Daimary.

As the 15-day workshop concluded, the looms of Gwthwibari carried forward a simple idea at the heart of Project THREAD: strengthening livelihoods need not mean leaving tradition behind. Sometimes, it can begin by giving an old craft new possibilities while keeping its roots firmly intact.

Training on food processing and pickle making

A two-day training programme on food processing and pickle-making was organised in Bwisang na Borunguri-Bongaon for 25 women from fringe villages of Laokhowa-Burhachapori WLS, with the aim of developing practical skills for food processing, value addition and potential livelihood opportunities. The program was organised by Aaranyak and Nagaon Wildlife Division of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve (KTR) in

collaboration with Laokhowa-Burhachapori Conservation Society, with support from International Rhino Foundation.

The first day focused on the preparation of different varieties of pickles using fruit, vegetable, meat and fish as basic raw materials, while the second day covered sauce and squash preparation. Participants were also introduced to techniques for value addition, product development and improving the marketability of processed food products. The sessions were conducted by Mrs. Rinku Dutta, who provided hands-on guidance throughout the training sessions.

The programme was graced by Rajib Hazarika, DFO, Nagaon Wildlife Division; Dibyoti Deuri, ACF; Rathin Barman, WTI; Sushanta Borthakur, WWF; Dr. Purnima Devi Barman and Arif Hussain, Aaranyak.

The dignitaries encouraged the participants to make the most of the training, develop confidence in their newly acquired skills and explore ways to apply for livelihoods. The programme provided the women with practical knowledge and skills that can be further developed into income-generating activities while strengthening community participation in conservation-linked livelihood initiatives.

‘Gajah Kotha’ and film screening held in Majuli

Aaranyak team conducted Gajah Kotha Phase I at Sankardev Shishu Niketon, Ratanpur Gayan Gaon, in Majuli on August 19 with 47 students, in the presence of the School Principal and teachers. The initiative is part of Aaranyak's sustained efforts to sensitise the people on possible ways for coexistence with the gentle giant.

I another occasion, Aaranyak team conducted a documentary screening at Haladhibari LP School, Haladhibari village in Majuli on August 19 last which was attended by 23 community members (M: F 4:19). The documentary is titled "Living with Giants: A story of Coexistence" and by Aaranyak with support from The Fable Fund, British Asian Trust. The initiative is part of Aaranyak's sustained efforts to sensitise the people on possible ways for coexistence with the gentle giant.

‘Gajah Kotha’ organised in Sivasagar

The Elephant Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak conducted the first phase of Gajah Kotha at Tengapani Tribal High School, Sivasagar, on August 21 engaging 28 students in an interactive session on Asian elephant ecology, cultural significance, and conservation status.

Through a pictorial poster presentation, students explored the fascinating world of elephants and the importance of their conservation. Pre- and post-session evaluations were also conducted to assess their learning and understanding.

The programme was coordinated by Tibrajyoti Gogoi of Aaranyak, with the participation of the school teachers.

Senior Assam govt official visits Aaranyak’s research facilities

Mr. Pallav Gopal Jha, IAS, Secretary to the Govt. of Assam for the Dept. of Science and Technology and Climate Change visited our Research Office in Guwahati on 25th August. He visited our Wildlife Genetics Laboratory and the GIS laboratory housed within our Research Office and interacted with the officials and scientists of Aaranyak.

During his visit, he toured our Wildlife Genetics Laboratory and GIS Laboratory, and interacted with our scientists and team members, learning about Aaranyak’s ongoing work in conservation science, our approaches towards understanding and mitigating human wildlife conflict, wildlife genetics, forensics and spatial research.

We are deeply grateful to Shri Jha for taking the time to visit our research facilities and for his interest in Aaranyak's scientific and conservation initiatives. Such encouragement and engagement are invaluable in strengthening science-led approaches to conservation and environmental management in the state.

We sincerely thank him for his time, encouragement and support.

Awareness programme on human-wildlife conflict held at Jokai

The Jokai Forest Beat Office under the Dibrugarh Forest Range on August 24 organised an awareness programme on man-animal conflict at the Jokai Interpretation Centre, focusing on conflict issues in and around the Jokai Reserve Forest.

Representing Aaranyak, an audio-visual presentation was made on man-animal conflict and prospects of eco tourism, with particular focus on leopards, wild buffaloes, and monkeys.

The presentation highlighted the causes of conflict, community safety measures, and the importance of coexistence between local communities and wildlife.

Several village heads from forest villages, along with other community members, ACF, Dibrugarh, Forest Range officer, Dibrugarh and other forest officials, Trikendrajeet Gogoi, Life Member of Aaranyak and Aaranyak officials and staff members Zakir Islam Bora, Ejaj Ahmed and Jiaur Rahman attended the programme and actively participated in the discussion.

Standing by flood-affected

Aaranyak's flood relief initiative continues to extend support to families across flood-impacted landscapes of eastern Assam, with a focus on helping communities recover and rebuild their lives.

In its second phase, the initiative reached 230 families across Bamunpukhuri Village in Sivasagar district and Seujipam, Chutia Gaon and Nara Gaon in Charaideo district.

Following a preliminary assessment by Aaranyak members Susanta Tanti and Mrinmoy Jyoti Das, a team of Aaranyak staff and members visited the affected communities on August 21 and 22. The team met families in their homes, listened to their experiences and challenges, and distributed 230 hygiene and safety kits to support their immediate needs.

The visits were supported by Aaranyak members Susanta Tanti, Mrinmoy Jyoti Das, Ashraf Ahmed, Hiren Dutta, Co-coordinator, Eastern Zone and a local teacher Pankaj Chowloo.

The field team comprised Pranab Goswami, Seemanta Jyoti Baishya, Nayanjyoti Moran, Pradip Barman, Himangshu Deka, Susanta Tanti, Mrinmoy Jyoti Das, Hiren Dutta and Ashraf Ahmed.

Aaranyak remains committed to standing with flood-affected communities and extending support in every possible way as they work towards recovery and rebuilding.

Aaranyak engages stakeholders in Namrup for coexistence

Aaranyak participated in the Human-Animal Conflict Mitigation Measures and Awareness Programme held on 24 August 2026 at the Guest House of BVFCL, Namrup. The programme was organised by the Jeypore Forest Range under the Dibrugarh Forest Division.

Representatives from several tea estates, ADS members, and local snake rescuers participated in the programme and shared the challenges and wildlife conflict related issues faced in their respective areas.

Representing Aaranyak as a resource person, Zakir Islam Bora highlighted Aaranyak's interventions in the Jeypore area, particularly its initiatives for mitigating human elephant conflict.

From Aaranyak, Zakir Islam Bora, Ejaj Ahmed, and Jiaur Rahman attended the programme.

Training on food processing, pickle making at Orang

A two-day training programme on “Food processing and Pickle-making” was organised at Fatasimolu, Orang for 15 women from the fringe villages of Orang Tiger Reserve to help them acquire practical skills for food processing, value addition and take up it as a potential livelihood opportunity. The programme was organized by Aaranyak and Orang National Park authority with the support from International Rhino Foundation.

The first day of the programme focused on the basic learning and preparations needed for pickling, making of different fruit and vegetable pickle, and sauce preparation. The second day included pickling of meat and fish, and squash preparation.

Participants were also introduced to techniques for value addition, product development and improving the marketability of processed food products. The sessions were conducted by Mrs. Rinku Dutta, who provided hands-on guidance throughout the training.

As part of the training support, essential utensils and a mixer grinder were handed over to the participant group by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager-RRCD, Aaranyak, to facilitate the training sessions and support the women in continuing the food-processing activities in the future.

The programme was graced by Ankur Prasad Hazarika, Range Officer, Orang NP; Sofikul Islam, Dy. Range Officer, Orang NP ; Mousumi Das, Forester, Orang NP; conservationists Nejib Ahmed, Baharul Islam and Khairul Basher ; Arif Hussain, Hirok Jyoti Das and Sabrina Begum from Aaranyak.

The dignitaries encouraged the participants to make the most of the training, develop confidence in their newly acquired skills and explore ways to apply the skill acquired for creating livelihood opportunity for themselves.

The programme besides providing the women participants with practical knowledge and skills that can be further developed into income-generating activities, also facilitated community participation in conservation-linked livelihood initiatives.

Consultation on HEC at Lezai, Kalakhowa in Dibrugarh

Khowang Forest Range Office of Assam Forest Department on August 27, 2026, organised an awareness and stakeholder consultation meeting on human-wildlife conflict (HEC) in the Lezai and Kalakhowa regions in Dibrugarh district.

The meeting was held at Bordoibam with Bitupon Sonowal, President of Kalakhowa Gaon Panchayat, as the chairperson.

Dharitra Konwar, Deputy Forest Ranger, Khowang, spoke about the significance of elephants and emphasised the importance of promoting coexistence between elephants and local communities.

Jayanta Tayeng, a local resident of Sessa Kinar village, shared his experience regarding the solar-powered fence installed in the village and discussed the reasons why the fence failed to provide the expected results.

Rupan Bhorolua, a resident of Bordoibam, highlighted the current human-wildlife conflict situation in the village and shared the concerns raised by the local community.

Akshay Borgohain, Forest Range Officer, along with other forest officials, attended the meeting. Village heads from nearby villages, ward members, ADS members, and community members also participated in the meeting.

Aaranyak team comprising Zakir Islam Bora, Nipul Chakma, Ejaj Ahmed, and Jiaur Rahman participated in the discussions.

Bibhab Kumar Talukdar receives Parivesh Mitra Award 2025

Aaranyak founder Secretary General and Executive Director Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar receives Parivesh Mitra Award, 2025 in an official ceremony held in Guwahati on September 16, 2026.

Secretary of Science and Technology and Climate Change Department, Government of Assam Pallav Gopal Jha, IAS, and Director of Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, Jaideep Baruah graced the award presentation ceremony.

Forest staff from 3 NE states attend training on Hoolock Gibbon conservation

A week-long residential training on Western Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) conservation concluded at Aaranyak's Gibbon Conservation Centre, Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary, from September 19–25.

The first batch brought together 15 Forest Guards from Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland - the first dedicated cross-state training of its kind—building practical skills in gibbon census, habitat monitoring, field data collection, GPS use, rescue and rehabilitation, restoration and wildlife laws.

The programme was organised by Aaranyak in collaboration with the Jorhat Forest Division and Assam Forest Department, with support from The Habitats Trust and the IUCN Primate Specialists Group.

Training and field sessions were led by Dr. I.C. Baruah (Assam Agricultural University), Gunin Saikia, AFS (former DCF), Dr. Prabal Sakar (USTM), Avisekh Sarkar, Simanta Medhi, Nandita Medhi, Dr. Khanin Changmai and Dr. Dilip Chetry (Aaranyak).

The training was inaugurated and concluded by Dr. Dilip Chetry, Director & Head, Primate Research and Conservation Division, Aaranyak, and Vice Chair, IUCN Primate Specialist Group South Asia, who urged participants to translate their learning into meaningful field action for Hoolock gibbon and habitat conservation.

The programme concluded with certificates, training manuals, conservation resources and books on Hoolock gibbons being presented to the trainees.

World Rhino Day observed at Sikhna Jwhwlao National Park

World Rhino Day (WRD) was celebrated at the Ultapani Forest Range of Sikhna Jwhwlao National Park, with a focus on strengthening wildlife conservation, frontline protection, and collaborative efforts among the Forest Department, local communities, and conservation organisations.

The programme was attended by P.K. Bhuyan, Divisional Forest Officer, Haltugaon Forest Division; Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and Executive Director, Aaranyak; Mintu Boro, Forest Range Officer, Ultapani Forest Range; and Rajib Narzary, President, Evergreen Charitable Trust, along with frontline forest personnel.

During the programme, the discussions focused on the current status of conservation and protection efforts in Sikhna Jwhwlao National Park (SJNP) and ways to further strengthen these efforts.

The participants highlighted the importance of regular training and capacity building, improved field logistics, and enhanced coordination among the Forest Department, communities, and non-governmental organisations.

The need to bring together the expertise, experience, and available resources of different stakeholders to support effective forest and wildlife protection was also emphasised.

As part of the World Rhino Day programme, Aaranyak provided essential field gear to frontline forest personnel of the Ultapani Forest Range. The equipment included field shoes, rain gear, and rechargeable ranger torches.

The initiative is aimed at improving the safety, mobility, comfort, and preparedness of frontline personnel who work in challenging terrain and weather conditions while undertaking patrolling, habitat monitoring, prevention of illegal activities, and other wildlife protection duties.

The programme seeks to strengthen field preparedness and operational capacity, thereby supporting effective forest and wildlife protection in and around the national park.

The programme was coordinated by the Aaranyak team comprising Binita Baruwati, Wasima Begum, Bijeet Baro, Mizing Boro, and Dhananjoy Mashahary, who worked closely with the stakeholders to ensure the successful organisation of the event.

World Rhino Day celebrated at Pobitora WLS

World Rhino Day was observed at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary on September 22 with a special tribute to Muna Wala, one of the sanctuary's oldest and most recognisable rhinos, who died in August this year.

Organised by Aaranyak in collaboration with the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary authorities, the programme brought together around 85 students, teachers, frontline forest staff and conservation practitioners from Minerva Academy and Lokapriya GNB High School.

The programme featured a screening of *"She Will Never Wake Up"* by wildlife filmmaker Champak Deka, followed by an experience-sharing session with frontline forest staff, including Range Officer Ujjal Choudhary, who shared insights and memories of working with rhinos.

Aaranyak Senior Researcher Ujjal Bayan spoke on rhino ecology and the importance of community and youth participation in conservation. Binod Deka (SHIPA) conducted a session on responsible wildlife photography, while Dr. Somoyita Sur anchored the programme.

Students also participated in a rhino and wildlife conservation quiz and a drawing competition on *"গঁড় আৰু প্ৰকৃতি (Rhino and Nature)"*.

The programme was supported by Aaranyak Field Assistant Dhritiman Sonowal, K9 Handler Shailendra Daimary and Forest Guard Naurattam Deka, with collaboration from WWF, SHIPA and conservation practitioners.

Funded by Fondation Segré, the celebration honoured Muna Wala's memory while reaffirming the collective commitment to protecting the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros and its habitat.

World Rhino Day observed at Manas

From a landscape where rhinos had disappeared, Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve has now witnessed their return and recovery - a journey powered by protection, science, communities and collaboration.

During the World Rhino Day 2026 celebration in the National Park, participants highlighted how rhino recovery has also strengthened tourism, livelihoods, landscape protection and community pride.

The World Rhino Day was observed at the Bansbari Range of Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve, in presence of forest officials, conservation practitioners, EDC members, frontline staff and members of local communities who reflected on the remarkable journey of rhino recovery in Manas.

Organised by the Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority in collaboration with Aaranyak, the programme featured insightful discussions led by Dr. Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director at Aaranyak's Rhino Research and Conservation Division.

The event was graced by Yuvaraj Singh, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Manas Tiger Reserve; Nitesh Boro, Range Officer, Bansbari Range; Jyotishman Deka, Biologist, Manas Tiger Reserve; Dr. Khanin Changmai, Veterinarian; and Kiron Basumatary, along with forest officials, EDC representatives and frontline staff.

The programme renewed the commitment to strengthen rhino populations, restore habitats, empower communities, advance rhino identification and monitoring, and promote a One Health approach for a shared future for people and wildlife.

World Rhino Day celebrated at LBWLS

Nagaon Wildlife Division of Assam Forest Department in collaboration with Aaranyak and Laokhowa Burhachapori Conservation Society celebrated World Rhino Day 2026 in Dhania Range of Laokhowa-Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

The celebration was laced with lively interaction, power-point presentations, documentary show, demonstration on rhino food habits, quiz and extempore speech. Forty students from fringe areas of Gorajan and Dhania Forest Ranges participated. They were provided certificates of participation while winners of the various competitions were awarded.

The programme was graced by Rajib Hazarika DFO, Nagaon WLD, Dilwar Hussain, Member Secretary LBCS, Kaushik Bikash Baruah, RO Dhania Range, Priyanku Bhuyan, RO Gorajan Range and Devida Krishnatreya, RO Addition, Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak.

Sonatan Mali, staff Aaranyak, Pranab Jyoti Baruah, forest staff and, other officials, forest staff of Dhania Range were also present and extended their support to the programme.

Aaranyak celebrates Foundation Day on Sept 9

On completion of a 37-year-long eventful and remarkable journey focused on conservation of biodiversity and facilitating human wellbeing especially in its areas of operation across the Northeast India and some other parts of the country, Aaranyak today (September 9, 2026) celebrated its 38th Foundation Day through a solemn function in its headquarter in Guwahati and with varied programmes across all its field stations located across the state including the ones in Kaziranga landscape, Manas landscape, Dibrugarh and Udalguri landscape.

The celebrations very well reflected the profound team spirit and coherence that have steamed the inspiring journey of the organization since its humble inception as a neighbourhood Nature Club at Beltola area in Guwahati on this day in 1989 under the leadership of a group of young green warriors led by the present Secretary General of the organization Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar and with blessings, support of scores of well-wishers whom the Team Aaranyak saluted today.

The celebration in the organisation's headquarter in Guwahati was set off by hoisting the organization flag by the vice-president of the organization Narayan Mahanta amid singing of 'Jatiya Sangeet of Assam' by a large group of Aaranyak staff, members and researchers besides Executive Committee members including Programme Secretary Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Organizing Secretary Udayan Borthakur, Publicity Secretary Bijay Sankar Bora. Other senior conservation leaders present included Dr Purnima Devi Barman, Arup Kumar Das, Dr Pranjal Kumar Das, Avishek Sarkar and Madhumita Borthakur.

Addressing the occasion Mr Narayan Mahanta, a former Conservator of Assam Forest Department, described research-driven conservation journey of Aaranyak as an outstanding and awe-inspiring one that has made various stakeholders including the Forest Department to look forward to consistent complementary cooperation from the organization in protecting the rich biodiversity of the state as well as the region. He explained how the mission of Aaranyak is well reflected in the composition of Assam's Jatiya Sangeet (O' mur aponar desh ….").

Earlier, Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar while welcoming the gathering congratulated the Team Aaranyak for completing successful 37 years long journey of conservation and learning that has transformed Aaranyak from a Nature Club in 1989 to a global-level conservation organization as on date.

Addressing the gathering Organising Secretary Udayan Borthakur underscored the need for persistent efforts on part of the Team Aaranyak to consistently live up to the high bench mark set by the Aaranyak as a

scientific and research-driven organization in the field of biodiversity conservation. He called for proper documentation of Aaranyak works in varied fields for the growth and robust future of the organization.

Publicity Secretary Bijay Sankar Bora while saluting the vision of the group of founders who had set the sail for Aaranyak's conservation journey, emphasized the need for tremendous team spirit and cohesiveness among different divisions, wings of Aaranyak so that the organization remains robustly well-equipped to overcome new challenges that may crop up on its path in coming days.

One of the most decorated conservationists of the country and a senior conservation leader in Aaranyak, Dr Purnima Devi Barma in her speech highlighted her inspiring journey with Aaranyak since 2002 when she joined the organization as a researcher. She recounted how Team Aaranyak supported her journey throughout and said that underscored the inherent strength in the organization. She called for promoting innovations for further growth of the organization.

The Foundation Day Celebration programme in the Headquarter was anchored by Senior Public Relations Officer Pranab Goswami while the administration team led by Head of Operation Ms Mridusmrita Devi made it a smooth sailing.

The flag hoisting ceremony was marked by 'Smriti Tarpan and lighting of earthen lamps' participated by all present. It was followed by an hours-long vibrant 'Aaranyak Adda' programme that was coordinated by Dr Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director of Rhino Research Conservation Division of Aaranyak and participated by all staff members, researchers and conservation leaders present including senior conservation scientist Dr Dilip Chetry, life members Dr Namita Brahma and Mr. Pranab Kumar Sharma.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) Gunajit Mazumdar and Documentation Officer Seemanta Jyoti Baishya digitally documented the entire Foundation Day celebrations in the headquarter of the organization.

Foundation Day celebration across field stations

From Rangjuli to Manas, Udalguri, Kohora and Dibrugarh, Aaranyak's Foundation Day celebrations across field stations in Assam brought together communities, students, field teams and conservation partners to celebrate 37 years of conserving nature and strengthening people–nature connections.

From cake cutting and community camaraderie to torchlight distribution, student interactions and tree planting, each celebration reflected the spirit that drives us forward - together, for nature and people.

Karbi women empowered with baking skills as sustainable livelihood option

In a step towards strengthening rural livelihoods and women's entrepreneurship, leading biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak conducted a two-day hands-on bakery training at Chandrasing Rongpi Village, Kohora, under Rongmongve Block of Karbi Anglong, Assam.

Led by Ms. Klarlin Tissopi and Ms. Sertalin Tissopi, young bakers, entrepreneurs and founders of She Bakes, Diphu, the training equipped eight women with practical baking skills and foundational knowledge to explore income-generating opportunities from home.

The first phase of a four-phased programme covered the preparation of cakes, cookies, bread, buns and rusk. Participants gained hands-on experience in hygienic food processing, ingredient measurement, baking techniques, product finishing and quality checks, alongside guidance on costing, pricing and basic business development.

Beyond learning a new skill, the training opened up possibilities for community-based bakery enterprises in Kohora, where demand for bakery products continues throughout the year, particularly during the tourist season.

For participant Ms. Beauty Engtipi, the experience was both enjoyable and therapeutic, offering the prospect of an additional source of income from home. Ms. Larlin Singnarpi expressed her aspiration to establish a small rural bakery serving her village and neighbouring communities with freshly prepared bakery products

after completing all four phases of the training.

The programme was facilitated by Ms. Joshna Terangpi, Senior Project Officer, and Ms. Presila Terangpi, Field Volunteer, with support from Team Aaranyak. Participants represented Englepathar, Sarbura Singnar, Diring Lekthe and Chandrasing Rongpi villages of Karbi Anglong. Mr. Rustom Rongpi, Rong Asar of Chandrasing Rongpi, actively supported the training.

Through its Natural Resource Management Programme, Aaranyak works to promote alternative and sustainable livelihoods for Indigenous peoples and local communities while supporting biodiversity conservation and natural heritage in Northeast India. This activity was supported by IUCN-KfW.

The initiative marks a promising first step towards building local skills, strengthening women's economic opportunities and nurturing rural entrepreneurship in the Karbi Anglong landscape.

RRU formation, torchlight distribution programme

A Rapid Response Unit (RRU) was formed at Gela Pather, Sivasagar with the presence of 30 community members on September 28 under the aegis of Aaranyak's Elephant Research and Conservation Division.

The same formation was constituted at Gojai Gaon, Dibrugarh on September 29 with 12 community member and at Gayan Gaon on September 30 with 16 people.

The RRU is one of the important community-based HEC mitigation measures (early warning system). "Rapid Response Units" (RRUs) comprise of volunteers from local communities, to monitor elephant presence/movement in their vicinity year-round, and alert villagers about elephant presence/movement through dedicated "WhatsApp" groups.

As a part of the programme a visual presentation was conducted for the RRU members to give them the idea on RRU and its functions like Monitoring of elephant presence/movement, conflict incidents and send out alert to villagers; inform Forest Department; papid action by villagers for community crop guarding and increase vigilance where the rapid alert system can help people to prepare or alert form conflict situation.

After the RRU group formation torch light distribution ceremonies were conducted. Twenty-one torch lights were distributed at Gela Pather while 10 torch lights were distributed at Gojai Gaon and 20 torch light were distributed at Gayan Gaon among the RRU members.

'Colours for vultures' -- a confluence of art and conservation in Jorhat

Aaranyak, in collaboration with Universal Creative Point, Jorhat, organised 'Colours of Vultures' at Gallery Vision Art, Asom, on September 26–27, bringing together 30 artists and 50+ artworks to spotlight vulture conservation through art.

The exhibition was coordinated by Wasima Begum (Aaranyak) and Nayanika Borah, Founder, Universal Creative Point, creating a vibrant platform connecting artists, conservationists, students and the public.

The inaugural programme featured Dr. Sangeeta Das, Pranab Kumar Baruah, Bhupen Kumar Baruah, Parikshit Baruah, Hiren Dutta (Aaranyak) and was anchored by Darshana Barthakur. Purabi Borgohain, Curator & Vice-Chairman, Vision Art Asom, also graced the exhibition.

The speakers highlighted the ecological importance of vultures and the threats they face, including harmful veterinary drugs, pesticides, poisoned carcasses and habitat change.

Participating artists were felicitated, with special appreciation to Diganta Baruah for his support. The organisers also acknowledged Ashraf Ahmed, Jyotshna Bora, Nibedia Boruah, Chandramika Borah and Padum Dutta for their valuable contributions.

'Colours of Vultures' showed how creativity can become a powerful tool for conservation awareness, dialogue and action.

Aaranyak brings solar-powered solutions to six villages in Dampa Landscape

Solar-Powered mobile charging stations for six villages in the Dampa Landscape of Mizoram were also inaugurated during a stakeholder meeting conducted at Damparengpui on September 8, 2026 under the aegis of Aaranyak, in collaboration with Conservation Mizoram, Department of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (DEF&CC), Village Councils of the six villages, Young Mizo Association (YMA), Young Chakma Association (YCA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), and Chakma Mahila Samity (CMS).

The meeting was attended by community leaders, village representatives, government officials, researchers, school staff and local communities totalling 100 participants with 70 male and 30 female participants.

Prof. Dr. H.T. Lalremsanga, Head of the Department of Zoology, Mizoram University, attended the programme as chief guest and inaugurated the mobile charging stations in the presence of Dr. Dipankar Lahkar, Assistant Director, Tiger Research and Conservation Division, Aaranyak ; V.L.K. Vaiphei, Second-in-Command, 191 Battalion BSF and representatives from the six project villages.

Prof. Dr. H.T. Lalremsanga highlighted the importance of adopting renewable energy solutions in rural landscapes. He noted that the abundance of sunlight in the landscape makes solar energy a practical and sustainable option for local communities.

He further emphasized that villages surrounding the Dampa Tiger Reserve possess significant potential for ecotourism development due to their rich natural heritage and proximity to Aizawl.

The community leaders thanked Aaranyak for recognizing the proper needs of the community and supporting solutions that directly benefit local residents. Lalrinkimi Apeto, VCP of Damparengpui said, “Since Aaranyak began its activities in our village, we have witnessed its commitment to supporting local communities. The installation of these solar-powered charging stations addresses a real need of our people and will be greatly beneficial, especially during power outages and emergencies. We remain committed to supporting the project and its conservation efforts”.

She further highlighted the socio-economic challenges faced by communities living along the fringe of Dampa Tiger Reserve, where dependence on forest resources remains high. She noted that improving livelihood opportunities and access to essential services can help reduce pressure on natural resources and strengthen community participation in biodiversity conservation.

The programme was chaired by C. Vanlalrema, Liaison Officer, Aaranyak, while overall coordination and technical guidance were provided by Dr. Dipankar Lahkar and Joyason Chakma. Members of the Aaranyak Dampa Landscape team, including Jeetu Saikia, Lalhmunsiami Pachuau, Benjamin Lalnunkima, Linda Vanlalhmangaihi, Lalhmangaihkima Sailo, Susangka Chakma, and Doyamoy Chakma, actively participated in the event.

Sensitization session on WL crimes with SSB personnel

A sensitization session on deterring wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trafficking was conducted on September 25, 2026 for 34 personnel of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) at Daranga Border Outpost (BOP) close to India-Bhutan border in Assam.

The session aimed to enhance awareness and strengthen the role of frontline personnel in preventing wildlife-related offences in the Manas Landscape.

The session was conducted by Aaranyak official from Legal and advocacy Division (LAD) Mizing Boro, with assistance from Bijeet Baro and Dhananjay Mushahary. Participants were sensitized to various forms of wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade, with emphasis on the ecological importance of the Manas Landscape as a biodiversity-rich transboundary region along the India-Bhutan border.

The session covered commonly-encountered wildlife offences, methods used for the illegal movement and trade of wildlife and wildlife products, and the importance of vigilance, early detection, timely reporting, information sharing, and inter-agency coordination. Particular emphasis was given on the strategic role of

SSB personnel as a frontline border-guarding force in detecting suspicious activities and preventing wildlife trafficking.

The session concluded with an interactive discussion, where participants shared field experiences and discussed challenges and possible approaches to strengthening wildlife crime prevention and detection in border areas.

Such capacity-building initiatives help strengthen coordination among SSB, forest authorities, and conservation organisations and contribute to collective efforts to protect wildlife and biodiversity in the Manas Landscape in Assam.

International Primate Day observed in Garbhanga

International Primate Day is observed annually on 1 September to raise awareness about the conservation of primates and the threats faced by humanity's closest relatives in the animal kingdom. The observance was initiated in 2005 by Animal Defenders International (ADI), an international non-profit organisation.

As part of the observance, the Primate Research and Conservation Division (PRCD) of Aaranyak organised an interactive awareness session with community members of Garbhanga village. Forest staff from the Garbhanga Beat Office also participated in the programme.

The session began with a welcome address by Nandita Medhi, Consultant, PRCD. Simanta Medhi, Researcher, PRCD, delivered a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the primate species found in Assam and Northeast India, the threats they face, the need for their conservation, and the important role of local communities in protecting primate populations.

The interactive session provided an opportunity for community members to share their observations and experiences regarding primate species found in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest. Participants also discussed the conservation challenges faced by primates and suggested measures that could be undertaken to address these threats.

Bipin Phangso, Village Headman, expressed his appreciation to Aaranyak for organising the session and emphasised the importance of shared responsibility between local communities and civil society organisations in addressing threats to primates and their habitats.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Nandita Medhi, marking a meaningful community engagement initiative towards strengthening awareness and collective action for primate conservation.

Book on Orang Nature Camp released

Orang Nature Camp (ONC) for students from fringe areas has been conducted by Aaranyak for the past five years without any break, in Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve in collaboration with the park authorities.

A book has been compiled to document the journey and experiences of ONC. Special thanks to Mr. Pradipta Baruah, IFS, Director of Orang Tiger Reserve (OTR) and Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General & Executive Director, Aaranyak for their continued support and guidance to the programme and the book.

The book is authored by Arif Hussain and co-authored by Dr. Sabrina Begum, with contributions from people closely associated with the ONC programme.

The contributors include Dr. Debakumar Dutta, Bijay Sankar Bora, Swapan Nath, Dr. Dipankar Lahkar, Nejib Ahmed, Bimal Chandra Das, Abdul Maleque, Pranjit Deka, Sayanika Phukan, Samim Sultana, Khairul Basher and Baharul Islam.

The book was released on September 30, 2026 during the official farewell programme organised for the OTR Director Pradipta Baruah, IFS (retired) on his superannuation. The book was unveiled made Mr

Baruah in the presence of Arif Hussain, Swapan Nath, Nejib Ahmed and Abdul Maleque and members of the Orang Nature Camp organising team.

Primate Day observed at Bodoland University

The remarkable diversity of primates in India especially in Northeast India was underscored during an invited talks delivered by Dr. Dilip Chetry, Director and Head of the Primate Research and Conservation Division (PRCD) of Aaranyak and Vice Chair of the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group, South Asia Section, on the occasion of "Observance of Primate Day" at the Department of Zoology, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar.

The programme was organised by the Centre for Wildlife Research and Biodiversity Conservation.

In his address, Dr. Chetry highlighted that of the 535 recognised primate species worldwide, 24 species are found in India, including 13 species in Northeast India and nine in Assam.

He particularly highlighted the Western Hoolock Gibbon, India's only ape, and the Golden Langur, an endemic primate of the region while emphasising the urgent need for greater public support for their conservation.

Dr. Chetry stressed that community participation is vital for the long-term conservation of primates and wildlife as a whole. He highlighted the need to address human-induced threats to primate survival in Northeast India and called for meaningful action rather than awareness alone, underscoring the message that "action speaks louder than words."

Urging students to play an active role in conservation, Dr. Chetry encouraged the student community to become torchbearers of the conservation movement and contribute towards securing a future for the region's unique non-human primates.

Farmer-to-farmer exposure visit advances sustainable banana cultivation in KKL

Aaranyak promoted improved banana cultivation as an alternative and sustainable livelihood option for indigenous rural communities in the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL) through a farmer-to-farmer learning exposure visit at Englepathar village on September 2.

Ten farmers from the Kohora River Basin (KRB) and Diring River Basin (DRB) learned practical techniques on healthy planting materials, pest and disease management, nutrient management, crop care, value addition and market linkages.

Progressive farmer Boronson Tokbi demonstrated improved banana cultivation at his homestead, including sapling selection, mulching with locally available materials and bunch covering. He also shared his experience of improving his practices through training, Aaranyak's technical guidance and support from the Department of Agriculture.

Participants Ramsing Engti of Sivoram Terang village, Wilson Taro of Diring Lekthe village and Kohora Terang of Phumen Engti village shared their experiences and learning from the exposure visit, including challenges related to livestock, wild elephants, nutrient management and crop care.

Larbeen Teronpi of Aaranyak highlighted the importance of combining traditional knowledge with scientific farming practices and using locally available resources. She also emphasised the market potential of bananas in the Kaziranga region and the role of PIRBI in strengthening market linkages and value addition.

PIRBI's Food Processing Centres in the KRB and DRB provide opportunities for communities to process and add value to local agricultural produce, including turmeric, ginger, tapioca and moringa.

The initiative aims to diversify rural livelihoods, strengthen local markets and promote sustainable income opportunities while supporting biodiversity conservation.

The Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak is supported by IUCN-KfW, the US Fish and Wildlife Services, and the Disney Conservation Fund.

International Vulture Day observed at Gelapathar

In order to mark International Vulture Awareness Day, a community-focused awareness programme was successfully organized at Gelapathar village by the Sivasagar Forest Division.

The programme brought together local residents, conservationists and community leaders to highlight the crucial ecological role of vultures in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

The session focused on the importance of vultures as nature's cleaners, Scenario of Human wildlife conflict, especially elephant and snakes.

A total of 37 participants attended the programme, including 33 males and 4 females, reflecting active community engagement in wildlife conservation initiatives.

The programme concluded with a pledge by the villagers to support vulture conservation.

From Aaranyak's side Tibrajyoti Gogoi and Hiren Dutta coordinated the programme.

Rhino Goes to School

Aaranyak, with support from the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF), took its 'Rhino Goes to School' programme to three schools in Assam - Potiya Pathar High School, Ghiladhari ME School and Namtemera Chitrakala Vidyalaya - engaging around 430 students in September 2026.

Through presentations, discussions, interactive activities, art, extempore speeches and quizzes, students explored rhino conservation, biodiversity and the importance of protecting wildlife and nature.

At Potiya Pathar, Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak, led the session. Ghiladhari saw participation from Taiyabur Rahman, Conservationist, Orang; Arif Hussain; Khairul Basher, Conservationist, Orang; and Asif Ahmed, nature lover, Kaziranga.

At Namtemera, Arif Hussain and Dr. Sabrina Begum, Consultant, RRCD, Aaranyak, served as resource persons, with support from Akash Morang and Ivan Loying, members of Aaranyak.

Aaranyak joined hands for "Sundays on Cycle (SoC)" special edition

Aaranyak collaborated in the special edition of "Sundays on Cycle (SoC)" held this morning at 6:30 AM organised by The Sports Authority of India, Regional Centre, Guwahati under the Fit India Movement.

This edition, themed "Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar", highlighted conservation of waterbodies with community participation aligning with the values of fitness and sustainability.

The event was flagged off by Mr. Udayan Borthakur, Organising Secretary and Director of Aaranyak who was invited as Chief Guest.

A team of 38 persons including members and staff of Aaranyak represented Aaranyak in this event. The participation was coordinated by Pranab Goswami from Aaranyak.

Aaranyak marks World Ozone Day in Guwahati

Aaranyak observed World Ozone Day, 2026 at Rajdhani ME School, Guwahati on 16 September, engaging school students in an interactive awareness programme on the importance of the ozone layer and the need for its protection.

World Ozone Day, officially observed as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, is commemorated every year on 16 September to mark the signing of the Montreal Protocol in 1987. The 2026 theme is “Global Action for a Cooler Planet”, highlighting the importance of sustainable cooling solutions for protecting both the ozone layer and the climate.

The programme began with an address by the Headmistress of Rajdhani ME School, who spoke to the students about the significance of World Ozone Day and the vital role of the ozone layer in protecting life on Earth from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

An interactive awareness session was subsequently conducted for the students, focusing on the ozone layer, the causes and impacts of ozone layer depletion and the importance of collective responsibility in protecting the atmosphere. The session also encouraged students to reflect on how everyday choices and responsible environmental practices can contribute to reducing environmental impacts.

An open quiz on the ozone layer and environmental protection was also conducted allowing the students to participate actively and demonstrate their understanding of the topics discussed.

Twenty-five students from Classes VII and VIII participated enthusiastically in the programme. The interactive approach encouraged the students to ask questions, share their understanding and engage in discussions on ozone protection and environmental responsibility.

The programme was coordinated by Geetashree Sarma, Environment Education and Capacity Building Division (EECBD), Aaranyak with the cooperation and support of Jayanta Kumar Pathak, EECBD, Aaranyak and the school authority of Rajdhani ME School.

Through such school-based awareness initiatives, Aaranyak continues to promote environmental literacy among young learners and encourage them to become informed and responsible stewards of the environment.

Torch lights provided to community members in Rangjuli for HEC mitigation

Aaranyak distributed rechargeable torch lights among local community members on September 9 to facilitate patrolling for mitigation of human elephant conflict (HEC) in Rangjuli area of Goalpara district of Assam in the interest of coexistence.

The torchlights distribution programme was organised in Rangjuli Forest Range Office premises on the occasion of Aaranyak’s 38th Foundation Day. Twenty-six torch lights were distributed among the beneficiaries from Chechapani, Bangalpara, Karipara Fulguri, Sarapara, Banabashi, Shristipara, Salpara Tinikanya, MejengparaDeilguri, Bogadoba, Bakaitari, Upar Baguan, Khara Medhipara, Baguan, Tilapara and Rong Para village.

Around 40 participants including Gajamitra members, Forest Department staff and Aaranyak Goalapra team attended the programme that was hosted by Mukut Rabha, Range officer and Bhupen Sarma, Dy Ranger of Rangjuli Forest Range.

Aaranyak official Anjan Baruah sensitised he villagers about the use of torch lights and other HEC mitigation tools.

The Forest Range Officer, Deputy Forest Range Officer and Anjan Baruah handed over the torchlights to beneficiaries.

The Aaranyak team comprising Anjan Baruah, Ripunjoy Nath, Bijoy Kalita and Rahit Nath later organised celebration of the 38th Foundation Day in the same programme with the local communities and forest staff with a cake-cutting ceremony.

Strengthening Village Champions for human-elephant coexistence

An orientation programme of Village Champion (VC) was conducted at Dibrugarh Field station of Aaranyak on September 17, where three VCs attended -- two from Dibrugarh (Bordoibam and Sesakinar gaon) and one VC from Sivasagar (Gelapathar gaon).

A Village Champion is one of the important components towards HEC mitigation and facilitation of coexistence, who works as a bridge between the community and Aaranyak. VCs worksfor conservation and overall development of the community where their work is totally inspirational and voluntary in nature.

As a part of the programme, welcome address and briefing on Aaranyak was done by Zakir Bora followed by a PPT on "VC's roles and responsibilities" by Rimpee Moran. A feedback session was conducted by Rubul Tanti and Zakir Bora at the end the informal discussion.

Zakir Bora, Rubul Tanti, Rimpee Moran, Ejaj Ahmad, Tibrajyoti Gogoi, and Jiaur Rahman from Aaranyak coordinated the programme.

Gajah Kotha: Building awareness for human–elephant coexistence

Aaranyak's Elephant Research and Conservation Division conducted Gajah Kotha Phase I across eastern Assam, engaging 111 community members and students in Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Majuli.

Through pictorial presentations, discussions and pre- and post-session evaluations, participants explored elephant ecology, cultural significance, conservation status and coexistence.

The campaign was coordinated by Aaranyak team members Ejaj Ahmad and Tibrajyoti Gogoi, with sessions engaging communities and Class XI–XII students at Lezai Higher Secondary School.

Building nursery skills among farmers in KKL

Hands-on training on Assam lemon and Black pepper cutting techniques and backyard Nursery Management in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape (KKL).

Six marginalised farmers from the Kohora River Basin gained hands-on skills in Assam lemon and black pepper cutting propagation and backyard nursery management - opening pathways to supplementary income and sustainable livelihoods.

Led by progressive farmer Phumen Terang, the training at Englepathar village covered practical propagation, nursery preparation and plant care, with a focus on turning local knowledge into small-scale livelihood opportunities.

Farmer Dorsing Engti shared how the training could help him produce saplings at home and explore market opportunities through PIRBI.

Aaranyak's Larbeen Teronpi also introduced participants to opportunities in homestead cultivation, nursery enterprises, value addition and market linkages through PIRBI's community-based initiatives.

With participation from Sivoram Terang, Phumen Engti and Englepathar villages, the initiative connects skills, local enterprise and sustainable livelihoods in the landscape.

Aaranyak is committed to the conservation of rich biodiversity and natural heritages of NE India by supporting our indigenous people and local communities for Alternative and Sustainable Livelihoods and other nature-based solutions. The Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak is supported by IUCN-KfW, US Fish and Wildlife Services and the Disney Conservation Fund.

Peer learning for sustainable ecotourism

On World Tourism Day, 27 September, Journey for Learning (J4L), an eco-cultural tourism initiative supported by Aaranyak, brought together members of Diring Lekthe village for a community exposure programme with the Langkiri and Kindulangso groups at Phumen Engti village, Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape in Assam.

Through an eco-cultural village walk, Ingnaam Kengkam and a visit to Parvati's Homestay, participants exchanged practical insights on guiding, local cuisine, hygiene, hospitality, teamwork and community-led tourism.

Facilitated by Mongol Rongphar, Sanjit Bey, Kache Engtipi and Mina Beypi, the session highlighted how existing homes, indigenous knowledge, nature and culture can become meaningful tourism experiences and livelihood opportunities.

Samili Engtipi reflected: "An existing room can be transformed into a working homestay with basic amenities."

Bikram Lekthe added that the experience showed how their own natural and cultural assets could create meaningful tourism experiences.

Nibedita Talukdar and Sunny Paul of Aaranyak highlighted the value of indigenous knowledge and shared responsibility in creating a meaningful 'Journey for Learning' for guests.

Community-to-community learning can build confidence, strengthen local participation and open pathways for new community-led tourism initiatives.

Aaranyak is committed to the conservation of rich biodiversity and natural heritages of NE India by supporting our indigenous people and local communities for Alternative and Sustainable Livelihoods and other nature-based solutions. The Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak and this activity was supported by IUCN-KfW.

ECN early warning, rapid response systems reviewed, bolstered in Udalguri

Aaranyak, with support from the International Elephant Foundation, organised a strengthening programme for the Uttar Zone Budlapara Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) at Bogrital, Udalguri, bringing together 28 participants.

The programme focused on strengthening the ECN's early-warning and rapid-response system, improving coordination with the Forest Department, and enhancing the safety and effectiveness of community volunteers involved in elephant tracking and night patrols.

Munindra Barman, Range Officer, Nunai Forest Range, and Kameswar Boro, Beat Officer, Paneri Forest Beat, joined the interaction, highlighting the crucial role of ECN members in early warnings, elephant movement tracking and community mobilisation.

To support safer field operations, sturdy field shoes were distributed to 25 ECN members for night patrols, monitoring and emergency response.

The programme also emphasised systematic documentation of solar-fence monitoring and compensation support to improve follow-up, coordination and recognition of community efforts.

The initiative was facilitated by Rabiya Daimari, Anushka Saikia, Abhilasha Boruah, Dibakar Nayak, Bikash Tossa and Rupam Gayari (Aaranyak).

Interaction, field gear distribution for conservation volunteers

An “Interaction and field gear distribution program" was organised at Bhumuraguri by Aaranyak on September 16 in collaboration with Sonitpur Division, Assam.

Forty volunteers under the Sonitpur West Division, Tezpur of Assam Forrest Department, were provided with essential field gear to support their conservation-related activities.

The programme was graced by Dr. Bibhuti Ranjan Gogoi, ACF, Sonitpur West Division and Jukti Bora, Beat Officer, Bhumuraguri Beat Office. The field gear were handed over by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research & Conservation Division, Aaranyak.

Support with field gears aim to strengthen the volunteers with the basic equipment required for their field engagements and acknowledge their role in supporting conservation efforts at the local level.

“Orang Ethnic Trail” opened for visitors

The "Orang Ethnic Trail" was inaugurated on September 29, marking the realisation of a long-cherished vision for community-based eco-tourism in the Orang landscape. It is the first initiative of its kind in Orang, bringing together nature, culture and community-based eco-tourism.

The Orang Ethnic Trail offers holistic visitor experience in a judicious combination of culture, traditional food and nature observation so that the visitors to the landscape experience a slice of Orang’s traditions, flavours and natural surroundings, while creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for the local community.

The inauguration was graced by Pradipta Baruah, IFS, Director, Orang Tiger Reserve; Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General & Executive Director, Aaranyak; Dr. Debakumar Dutta, Deputy Director of RRCD, Aaranyak; Swapan Nath, Senior Journalist, Kaziranga; Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD, Aaranyak; Nejib Ahmed, renowned wildlife Photographer, Orang; local conservationists Abdul Malek, Abdul Salam, Baharul Islam and Khairul Besher.

Eco-tourism training organised at Fatasimolu

A two-day training on eco-tourism was conducted at Fatasimolu village, located on the fringe of Orang National Park, during September 18–19, 2026.

The programme was organised by Aaranyak in collaboration with Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve Authority, with support from International Rhino Foundation and Disney Conservation.

The training focused on strengthening community-based eco-tourism while encouraging local hospitality and showcasing the cultural traditions of the village. Participants received practical training in guest hospitality, presentation of traditional food, plating, and table scaping guided by Asif Ahmed.

They were also introduced to preparation of few additional dishes and snacks, non-traditional options, recognising that visitors may have varied food preferences. Alongside they were guided on creating a welcoming and culturally rooted visitor experience. Essential utensils and equipment were also handed over by Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, RRCD Aaranyak, during the training to support the community in taking forward these activities.

The initiative aims to promote responsible eco-tourism, preserve and showcase local culture, and create opportunities for communities living around the protected area. By strengthening livelihood opportunities and involving local communities as partners in conservation, help build greater support for the protection of the landscape and its wildlife.

The training was organised with the broader vision that conservation and community well-being go hand-in-hand, with communities living around protected areas playing an important role in long-term conservation.

Field reflections

During September 10–13, Aaranyak hosted a four-day field visit with Mr. Khurseed Ahmad Shah, Communication Officer, IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group, across our ongoing and proposed intervention landscapes in Tamulpur, Baksa and Goalpara, Assam.

The visit brought together ecological and communication perspectives to reflect on human-elephant coexistence on the ground. A key learning from the visit was that HEC landscapes cannot be understood only through human and elephant casualties, crop losses or property damage. Understanding coexistence also requires looking at community vulnerability, social systems, education, access to institutions, local knowledge, communication pathways and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

The exchange also encouraged us to reflect on communication not as a one-way process of disseminating information, but as a dialogue between scientific knowledge, institutional experience and community knowledge.

We sincerely thank Khurseed Ahmad Shah and the IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group for this meaningful exchange. Such engagements help us critically reflect on our work and strengthen our efforts towards conservation approaches that are inclusive, participatory, holistic and grounded in the realities of the landscape.

Aaranyak at the National Workshop on Vikshit Panchayat

Assistant Manager, Geospatial Technology & Application Division (GTAD), Aaranyak, Ms. Madhumita Borthakur, was invited as a speaker at the national workshop on "Vikshit Panchayat: Connecting People, Places, Resources and Opportunities."

Her session on "Spatial Planning for Panchayats: Identifying Priority Sectors" drew upon the work of Aaranyak's GTAD in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management research. The discussion explored how spatial datasets and research insights can inform evidence-based planning, help identify local priorities and support more effective resource management at the Panchayat level.

Aaranyak remains committed to advancing science-based approaches that connect ecological knowledge, spatial planning and community-level development.

Aaranyak official represents AYNPA at 8th APAP Technical Meeting in Sabah

Ivy Farheen Hussain, Senior Project Officer, Legal and Advocacy Division (LAD), Aaranyak, represented the Asian Youth Network for Protected Areas (AYNPA) at the 8th Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) Technical Meeting, held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, from September 21–23, 2026.

Convened by IUCN Asia, Sabah Parks and Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation, the meeting focused on *"Delivering Quality 30×30 in Asia: Partnerships, Innovation and Effective Area-Based Conservation."*

Ivy joined the panel "Regional Partnerships Driving Global Conservation Leadership", highlighting the importance of meaningful youth participation in conservation decision-making and stronger connections between science, policy, communities and field realities.

Her return to Sabah marked a full-circle moment from participating in the Asia Parks Congress Youth Forum in 2022 to representing a regional youth network at a key conservation platform in 2026.

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