



## Deepak Sharma & Gajyatra Team honoured with 'Gaj Gaurav' National Award

### Why is News?

On August 12, 2023, on the occasion of World Elephant Day, Forest Guard Deepak Sharma posted in General Forest Division Mahasamund and the team of Gajyatra were honored with the Gaj Gaurav Award at a nationwide function organized in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

### Key Points:

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India Bhupendra Yadav, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey and Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister of Odisha Pradeep Kumar Amat, forest guard Deepak Sharma and the team of Gajyatra Honored with Gaurav Award.
- Divisional Officer Pankaj Rajput said that according to the intention of the Forest Minister to stop the human-elephant conflict, the Gajyatra was started on October 8, 2021, on the instructions of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.
- Villagers are being made aware through Gajyatra every day in 3 phases by telling them the measures to stay safe from elephants, so far about 70 thousand people have been made aware through Gajyatra.
- In the elephant-affected areas of the district, Sirpur and elephant movement areas, Mohandi, Arand, Bagbahra, Koma, Kona, Bakma, Khatti, Tumgaon, the arrival of elephants has decreased. Earlier, the village used to become deserted as soon as the elephant knocked in the area. People used different measures to drive away the elephant.
- Elephants were driven away by burning fireworks, chillies, torches and risked their lives. This made the elephants aggressive, due to which the villagers, the elephants were becoming victims of violence. Seeing all this, the Gajyatra program was started.
- Forest guard Deepak along with the team went from village to village setting up chaupals, showing the film in the projector and discussing with the people, explaining the behavior and safety measures of elephants to the villagers.
- A successful attempt has been made by the Gajyatra team to sensitize the villagers towards elephants through songs and stories in their normal language and style and the details of the compensation provided by the government were explained to the villagers in detail and the elephant-human conflict was described as amicable. Due to which violence has decreased and incidents of people getting injured and causing loss of people have become zero.
- Deepak Sharma and team have been awarded the Gaj Gaurav Award at the national level by the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India for the commendable work of Gaj Yatra and Mahasamund Forest Division alone has been honored for the All India Gaj Gaurav Award.

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