

'Chiko' team takes lead in ecotourism promotion in Ukhrul



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Ever since nine educated youngsters from Ukhrul district came together in the spring of [2016](#) to form an expedition team called "Chiko -- Explore With Us", there is no looking back for them. Before long, the youngsters began to chip in their mite of resources for procuring prerequisite equipments and [soon](#) in July, the team made its maiden venture in to the forest of Tolloi village.

" It was such a good experience for all of us [as](#) we rode our brand-new Mountain Bikes all the way from Ukhrul town for the first time. We camped at the Tolloi Reisang Youth Club's reserved forest for a few days where we planted trees," narrated Wungmaso Rungsung convenor of Chiko in an interaction with media persons at Community Cafe Viewland on Thursday.

"In the same month, we undertook a cycle trekking to the Hoyang Kachui Mount this is where beautiful Singcha Phiyowon blooms," he said adding that they cycled through 45 kms to reach Singcha village towards [east](#) from Ukhrul township.

But these strong willed youngsters do not undertake such exhausting expeditions merely for recreation and pleasure. "Our motive behind forming this team is to promote ecotourism in the district through adventurous activities like trekking, mountaineering, cycling, camping and others," said Chiko secretary Lingsang Vashum and continued that the team has also started providing tourist guide services to visitors.

Describing the team's emergence [as](#) a humble beginning, Vashum said that to begin with, the team could only acquire [ten](#) each of Mountain Bikes, wind breakers, tents and sleeping bags from whatever amount the members contributed on their own. "We do not have sponsors and [as](#) of now, our only means of sustenance is through lending our basic equipments to trekkers both from local and outside," he maintained.

So far, the team has rendered tourist guide services to a few visitors from Poland and America, apart from guiding a cycling team from [Nagaland](#) while visiting Hoyang Kachui Mount at Singcha village recently.

Currently, the team is also officially associated with Wilderness Adventure [Manipur](#) (WAM), [Manipur](#) Tourism Forum (MTF) and [Manipur](#) Mountaineering & Trekking Association (MMTA). "Two of our members recently enrolled in 15 day [training](#) organized by MMTA wherein one of them bagged first position in cross country race held at Lamdeng, [Manipur](#)," Vashum said.

Meanwhile, an official launching ceremony of the "Chiko" team was held at Community Cafe on Thursday.

In his keynote address, convenor Rungsung said that the team is just beginning and has a long way to go. While highlighting activities of the team, he announced that Chiko is gearing to [start](#) a camping expedition where five students from each of the schools will be encouraged to take part.

He also announced that the team will procure more equipments to accommodate 50-60 persons in one trip within the coming festive season.

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Ukhrul, Manipur

BY LESTER MAKANG

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