

PRESS RELEASE

Aaranyak trains HEC-hit villagers to install solar fence for mitigation

Guwahati, Jan 29: The sustained efforts of biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak for mitigation of human-elephant conflict (HEC) and facilitation of coexistence reached another far-flung village close to Assam-Meghalaya boundary.

A team from Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) conducted a training session to capacitate villagers of Batapara in Goalpara district in Assam on installation and maintenance of solar-powered electric fence on January 23 at the Batapara community hall.

Aaranyak plans to support the Batapara village, with a population of 42 households with a 1.5 km stretch of community-managed solar powered fence, an effective HEC mitigation tool that promotes coexistence with wild elephants.

This village located at the border area of Assam and Meghalaya, is inhabited by the indigenous Rabha community who are mostly farmers. This village is frequented by a herd of wild elephants which forage on their crops.

Aaranyak's expert on solar fencing installation and maintenance, Anjan Baruah conducted the training for 31 villagers including women. The training had both theoretical and hands-on sessions on how to use the equipment, installation procedure and maintenance of the fence were discussed.

This training helped the villagers to gather knowledge on solar fences, and built their capacity to install and maintain the fence to protect lives and livelihood in the HEC-affected village. The training programme was supported by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Goalpara Territorial Forest Division of Assam Forest Department.

A solar fence committee was formed that is entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and maintaining the fence, once installed.

The training was attended by the village head, frontline forest staff from Lakhipur Forest Range, members of Elephant Conservation Network in Lakhipur and college students. The villagers shared vital information on elephant movement patterns in the area during the training session.

The training event was facilitated by Aaranyak's Ripunjoy Nath, Subhas Rabha and Bijoy Kalita, which concluded with handing over of the equipment to the villagers for installation of the fence.

***Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
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