

Press Release

Seasonal solar fence to protect paddy from wild elephants in Assam crop fields

Guwahati, Nov 8: ‘Ready-to-be-harvested’ paddy spread over 20 hectares of cropland at Maliata area near Mirza in Kamrup district of Assam has been protected from a herd of wild elephant through installation of a seasonal single-wire solar-powered fence in a collaborative initiative of Aaranyak and WWF.

“Seasonal solar fence has been adopted as a new mechanism for protection of standing paddy in areas prone to human-elephant conflict (HEC). These single-wire solar-powered fences are removed once the paddy is harvested so as not to restrict movements of wild elephants throughout the year. We have adopted this mechanism extensively in many areas in eastern Assam so far,” said Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Senior Scientist in premier biodiversity conservation organisation, Aaranyak.

A herd of 10 wild elephants used to damage standing paddy in crop fields of Maliata area near Mirza around the harvesting season causing hardship to farmers who have been spending sleepless nights to protect their crop.

On being requested by the Forest Department which was exploring options to protect the ripe paddy of farmers without causing harm to the herd of wild elephants, Aaranyak and WWF have joined hands to install the single-wire seasonal solar fence at Maliata village under Palashbari Revenue Circle of Kamrup district to protect the paddy on crop fields of Gossaihat, Uparpara and Doapara areas on November 1 last. An extension of this solar fence was installed on Tuesday (November 7).

Experts from Aaranyak hand-hold the local farmers of this area during installation of the solar fence. A one-km-long single-strand seasonal fence is expected to protect standing paddy on about 20 hectares of land. Around 300 households in the area have directly or indirectly been protected by this solar fence.

A group of local farmers including Sukleswar Boro, Mridul Boro, Sarat Boro, Hareswar Boro etc., led by D.D. Boro of Gossaihat village extended support to the Aaranyak team during the installation work. The farmers are happy as “elephants cannot damage their paddy after the installation of the solar fence, now they can harvest the crop properly”.

The solar fence materials have been mobilized through collaboration between Aaranyak and WWF. Aaranyak official Anjan Baruah along with Bijoy Kalita oversaw the installation work with proactive support of local farmers.

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