

PRESS RELEASE

Villagers empowered to co-exist with wild elephants using seasonal solar fence

Guwahati, Dec 20: As many as 61 community members from villages under Charaguwa Grant in Sivasagar of Assam have been trained on installation, monitoring and maintenance of seasonal solar-powered fences that are being installed around their crop areas and homesteads in order to prevent damages caused by herds of wild elephants frequenting their villages.

Premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak and British Asian Trust with support from Darwin Initiative (UK Aid), facilitated the training to members of village community so as to empower them to mitigate conflict and coexist with wild elephants by using such seasonal solar fences.

Seasonal solar-powered fence has proved its efficiency in protecting standing crops as well as lives and homesteads of farming community in human-elephant conflict ridden areas and hence considered an efficient mitigation tool in respect HEC and facilitation of coexistence.

The primarily agrarian community of Charaguwa Grant in Sivasagar of Assam where exists some areas affected by HEC, is in need of such a mitigation tool to protect their crops and homes against herds of wild elephants.

The training was a composition of theory and hands-on sessions, on installation maintenance, monitoring of non-lethal solar-powered fences and types of materials and skills required for the exercise. There was also a live demonstration of solar fence installation.

The training was conducted by Aaranyak's Anjan Baruah, who is an expert on solar fences, and he was assisted by Dibakar Nayak and Rupam Gayari in presence of British Asian Trust officials Belinda Stewart-Cox, Auro Shashwat and Aaranyak's senior scientist Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, senior conservation biologist Dr Alolika Sinha and team members including Zakir Islam Bora.

Aaranyak and British Asian Trust, with support from Darwin Initiative are working in eastern Assam districts and West Garo hill district of Meghalaya to promote human

elephant coexistence through educating people, supplementing livelihood and protecting subsistence livelihood using seasonal solar-powered fences.

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