

UPDATED Press Release on Solar fence inauguration

Solar fences for HEC mitigation energized at four HEC-hit villages in Assam's Goalpara

Guwahati, January 20: Four different units of community-managed solar fences were energised and handed over to the local community of Narayanpara, Barmanpara, Puthimari, and Jagannathpara villages under Goalpara Forest Division in Assam recently for mitigation of human elephant conflict (HEC). The fences were installed by Aaranyak in collaboration with the Forest Department, Assam.

In a programme held at Narayanpara, the Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) of Goalpara Subimal Kundu cut the ribbon to inaugurate the 1.25-km-long solar fence unit installed at Narayanpara village as well as 1.5-km-long solar fence unit installed at Jagannathpara village.

Both the fences were handed over to the local community after signing of an MoU among the local community of both the villages, Aaranyak and Forest Department. The solar fences will protect around 26 households of Narayanpara and 27 households of Barmanpara from the wild elephant and will help to reduce HEC in these villages.

The meeting was presided over by the local village headman. The grateful local fence committee felicitated Aaranyak and Forest officials in the programme where Aaranyak team comprising Anjan Baruah, Swapan Das, Ripunjoy Nath took part.

The forest officials of Krishnai Forest Range including Taijuddin Ahmed, Dy Ranger Jagadish barman, Forester 1 Pradyut Baruah, Dipjyoti Das etc. participated the programme.

Subimal Kundu, ACF, Goalpara spoke about the HEC issues in that area and compensation disbursement procedure for crop and property damages and life loss due to HEC. He also highlighted the responsibility lies with the community to maintain the fence. Anjan Baruah of Aaranyak explained about the necessity of the solar fence as a mitigation tool and how to maintain the solar fence.

Another programme held at Jagannathpara village the same day, other two units of community -managed solar fences installed at **Puthimari** and **Jagannathpara** were inaugurated by cutting the ceremonial ribbon by Tejas Moriswami, DFO, Goalpara Forest division.

The 2.2-km-long solar fence will protect around 56 households in Puthimari village and the 2-km-long solar fence will protect 54 households of Jagannathpara from wild elephants and be able to control the HEC issues.

The fence was handed over to the community after signing of an MoU between the local community, Forest Department and Aaranyak. Anada Barman, District Secretary of VDP, Goalpara district presided over the meeting.

The DFO, Goalpara during his speech said the fence would secure the lives of the villagers as it would mitigate the HEC in the villages.

He said that the partnership between the Forest Department, Aaranyak and the local community could control the HEC in that area if all the stakeholders came forward in one platform.

Aaranyak's senior official Anjan Baruah spoke about the maintenance and care that will be required for the fence to efficiently secure the lives of the village people for a long term.

In that meeting the ACF and Ranger in-charge of Krishnai Range Subimal Kundu, Range Officer of Lakhipur Range Dhruva Dutta, Range Officer of Goalpara Range Sashi Mohan Singha, Dy Ranger Taijuddin Ahmed, Forester Jagdish Barman of Krishnai range participated.

From the Aaranyak team, Swapan Das and Ripunjoy Nath also took active part. In that meeting Dipjyoti Das, a forest staff of Krishnai Range was specially felicitated by the DFO for his performance during the fence installation work along with Aaranyak's staff.

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