

Plantation of banana trees for wild elephants near Indo-Bhutan border

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Can planting of banana trees in the forest end man- elephant conflict? Yes, some people think so, and so offering hands of friendship, more than hundred members of Green Valley Forest and Wildlife Protection Society, Nonaipara (an NGO formed for the protection of wild animals and birds particularly wild elephants) along with locals have started planting banana trees in the Samrang forest, near Indo-Bhutan international border in Udalguri district. The areas of plantation belong to Khalingduar Reserve Forest under Dhansri Division. It needs mention that man-elephant conflict has taken serious turn in northern bank of Brahmaputra valley, causing death to both man and elephant. Large scale destruction of forests and encroachment of forest lands belonging to elephant corridors could well be the cause of man-elephant conflict, which had forced herds of wild elephants roam in the villages in search of food.

The inaugural ceremony of plantation was held on August 5 at Samrang Beat Forest Office premises at 10 am. Speaking on the occasion as the president of the meeting, Ananta Bagh, CEO of Green Valley Forest and Wildlife Protection Society, Nonaipara highlighted the salient features of the plantation programme. He said that the conflict would continue if remedial measures were not taken in time. According to him, plantation of more banana-like trees would not only help solve wild elephants' food scarcity, but it would check global warming. More than two hundred people of the villages—Samrang, Nonaikhat, Bhutiajhar and No.2 Samrang attended the programme. Kushal Deka, i/c, Samrang Forest Beat Office; Golap Behra, secretary, Mahendra Chubba, asstt. secretary of the NGO and senior citizen Gobinda Sarma also spoke a few words on the occasion. The officers and jawans of the SSB company stationed at Nonaipara attending the programme offered full cooperation to the organizers. More than one thousand banana trees had been planted on the opening day. Ananta Bagh, CEO of the NGO told this correspondent that more than nine thousand banana trees would be planted in different parts of the elephant corridor within August 2009.

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BY JAYANTA KUMAR DAS

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Noted astronomy activist UN Deka passes away

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