

## News

---

### [Electric fence at Pussellaya gives hope to villagers](#)

An interesting project has brought hope that the ongoing human-elephant conflicts prevalent in most parts of the country could be solved at least in part.

Pussellaya is a village on the borders of the Wasgamuwa National Park in the Matale district. This village was constantly raided by wild elephants that came out of the park. Every season these elephants damaged the crops that the villagers had cultivated and destroyed their sole means of income. So much so that the villagers gave up cultivating crops on their highlands. Latterly they only cultivated their paddy fields.

Representations made to all the authorities possible were of no avail. The elephant depredations continued and they even damaged dwellings. On hearing of their predicament Ravi Corea, President of the Wildlife Conservation Society based in New York, contacted the Biodiversity & Elephant Conservation Trust and requested their involvement to assist this village. He obtained funds for this project from the Disney Wildlife Fund and the Wildlife Preservation Trust in the USA. The Department of Wildlife Conservation when consulted approved of the project and gave technical advice through Deputy Director, Dr. Nandana Atapattu.

Jayantha Jayewardene Managing Trustee of BECT, Ravi Corea and Chandeeep Corea who was to be the Project Manager met the villagers of Pussellaya along with the village priest and discussed the problem at length and decided to erect electric an fence round the village to prevent the elephants from coming into the village. The villagers welcomed this proposal and said that they would cooperate and also give of their labour to erect the fence. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed where the villagers signed agreeing to work free on the project and also give up bits of their land for the electric fence line.

After almost a year of sustained effort the fence around the village, 8 kilometers in length, was completed. "There were many problems along the way but with a lot of effort we finished the job" said Jayewardene. The fence keeps the elephants away quite effectively. The villagers have now cultivated 175 acres of the 200 acres of their highland that they had abandoned completely. Cowpea, Green Gram,

Chillie, Maize are some of the crops that they have cultivated.

---

[POLITICS](#) | [DEFENCE](#) | [FEATURES](#) | [OPINION](#) | [BUSINESS](#) |  
[LEISURE](#) | [EDITORIAL](#) | [CARTOON](#) | [SPORTS](#)