

VANA PREMI

Nau Say Navvay Sall Tak Ke Bachon Ka Sathi

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No.2

***Vana Premi wishes Happy, Prosperous & healthy
Maha Shivaratri***



***Wetland of our country,
With common water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes)***



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EDITORIAL

World Wetlands Day: - World Wetlands Day is celebrated internationally each year on 2 February. The World Wetlands Day is an annual recurring event to provide attention for the benefits and fragility of the world's wetlands. It marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971. Around 163 countries have signed the Treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Initially only 21 nations signed up as contracting parties, but over the years this number has risen to 163 and play an important role in maintaining the Ecosystem. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997. Since then government agencies, non-government organizations and community groups have celebrated World Wetlands Day by undertaking actions to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands. These activities include seminars, nature walks, festivals, and launches of new policies, announcement of new Ramsar sites, newspaper articles, radio interviews and wetland rehabilitation. World wetlands day celebration has inspired people around the world to work for wetlands. People became more and more aware of the connection between a healthy

wetland eco-system and human health. Wetlands can prevent the contamination of ground water and it helps in water recycling too.

Wetlands are found near the sea e.g. Chilika lake in Odisha or inland lake like Kolleru in Andhra Pradesh, and can also be seasonal – they are water logged only during parts of the year or perennial. They include lakes, rivers, ponds, marshes, swamps, beaches and reefs,. Paddy fields are also considered as wetlands. Forests play a crucial role in the hydrological cycle and as a consequence, in the health of wetlands. Forested wetlands include habitats such as mangroves, freshwater swamp forests, forested peat lands and seasonally flooded forests. These wetlands are important as they deliver significant ecosystem services, are cradles of biological diversity, and support populations of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates. Wetlands provide important hydrological functions such as the recharging of groundwater. There is no doubt that wetlands are among the world's richest ecosystems, supporting all humankind in various ways – by providing freshwater, supporting fisheries including aquaculture, helping to regulate the water cycle, providing flood and storm protection, supporting some of the world's most stunning biodiversity, playing a significant role in climate change mitigation and adaptation,

providing sustainable livelihoods to some of the world's poorest people, and offering a place to 'play' for those of us with leisure time. Wetlands are indeed more than just a muddy swamp. Wetlands provide unique habitat for waterfowl, certain mammals and amphibians, reptiles, aquatic insects, fish and birds. Depending on the type of wetland, whether it is a fresh water marsh, a tidal estuary, a peat bog or fen, forested wetland or swamp, headwater streams or saltwater marsh, a wetland performs different types of "services" for a watershed. Wetlands are often known as the "kidneys" of a watershed because they filter out toxins, which improve water quality for surrounding streams, rivers, lakes and other wetlands. But they also perform other functions, such as flood attenuation, water storage, providing habitat for wetland-dependent species and recreation opportunities for people, including nature-watching, birding, hiking, paddling and fishing. Wetlands also help natural resource managers better understand climate change impacts, such as sea level rise and natural hazards like hurricanes. For all of these reasons and many more, it is essential to protect and conserve wetlands. Wetlands play a crucial role in the ecosystem by:

- ◆ Preventing flooding by absorbing water or surface water storage and maintaining a high water table
- ◆ Ensuring that the soil provides a unique

breeding ground for vegetation that feed fish and maintaining characteristic plant communities

- ◆ Giving shelter to animals.
- ◆ Purifying water by removing sediment.
- ◆ Food chain support.

As wetlands are the most diverse and productive ecosystems on our planet, by saving them we can preserve ecosystems and their species. Wetlands are home to an immense variety of species ranging from plants, insects, freshwater fish, amphibians, marine turtles, mammals and birds. Wetlands are sites for resting, breeding and feeding for many migrating species. Wetlands purify and replenish our water, and provide the fish and rice that feed billions. Wetlands act as a natural sponge against flooding and drought and protect our coastlines. They burst with biodiversity, and are a vital means of storing carbon. Unfortunately, these benefits are not widely known. Often viewed as wasteland, 64% of our wetlands have disappeared since 1900.

All living organisms contain water and depend on it in order to maintain survival. It is crucial for all biodiversity, including mankind and it is a dominant component in a wide range of ecosystems. The future of humanity depends on wetlands. Wetlands provide a multitude of benefits. Wetlands offer substantial economic, social and environmental values which, if managed sustainably, will provide benefits to

future generations. Raising awareness and understanding of wetland values and services is essential for ensuring their wise use and conservation. Infact, healthy wetlands can assure food security; water security; 'insurance' through the formation of natural buffers to storm damage; as well as spiritual, recreational and educational value. Degradation of wetlands results in the spread of infectious diseases and the resurgence of water-related diseases. It will also reduce the availability of wetland plants and animals that have medicinal values. Because wetlands work for us: we have to work for wetlands as well. Restoration, creation and protection of wetlands can result in an improved health of our local, national, and international waterways. Each year the Ramsar Convention selects a theme and produces material which raises awareness on different aspects of wetland values, functions or management. This material is disseminated worldwide. Each country can customize the Ramsar material, add national or regional information or can simply create their own. Each year, World Wetlands Day focuses on a different theme. The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2015 is *Wetlands for Our Future*. The theme and slogan for 2014 was "Wetlands & Agriculture". The theme for 2013 was Wetlands Take Care of Water. The theme for World Wetlands Day celebration, 2012 was "Wetlands and Tourism". Wetlands tourism is an advantage for people and wildlife both locally and nationally.

Realistically, resource managers face a number of challenges to protecting wetlands. Sprawl and development pressure, climate change impacts and invasive species, plus the public's general lack of understanding about the value of wetlands hinder the wetland manager's ability to protect wetlands. This is not just a regional or national issue of importance—it is a global issue. Young people of today will be the future leaders and decision makers of tomorrow, so it's important they take an interest in environmental issues. For World Wetlands Day 2015, teens and young people, in particular, are being asked to spread the word about wetlands and their vital importance for future life on earth.

To celebrate World Wetlands Day, this year the Ramsar Convention Secretariat is also conducting a photographic competition for 15-24 year olds. The winner will receive a free flight to a famous wetland of their choice anywhere in the world. To enter, take a picture of your favorite wetland with your phone or digital camera between 2 February and 2 March 2015, and upload it to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat's World Wetlands Day 2015 website. Vana Premi wishes that all will take part in world wetlands day celebrations and bring awareness to the common man and protect wetlands of our Country. Vana Premi also wishes that people of 15 to 24 years age group should take part in photographic completion and win the prizes.

QMK

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I read the Vana Premi (January 2015) yesterday. I was delighted to read the magazine and I heartily congratulate Sri J.V.Sharma and Sri Navaratan Singh for such wonderful articles. My best wishes, respect, and regards to them

With regards

Yours sincerely

SurendraPande

Dear sir,

One need not be great-looking by having perfectly sculpted and chiseled features, nor the physique of a Greek god. Nevertheless if one has the requisite attributes of head, heart and soul with requisite resources of inner strength, the lofty and admirable qualities and traits will help to win a legion of genuine admirers. One should gird loins, fight back and win over critics with never say die grit. Inner attributes are definitely more important to garner success in life. Starting low in life is not a deterrent to those with talent and tenacity. And I find you have justifiably introduced latest easy-on- the eyes, texts and headline fonts in your constant endeavor to bring the best to the readers, by carrying out innovative changes as a part of exercise commencing from the issue no.1 of the 16 Vol. of the favorite journal VAN APREMI, proposed to come every month with the said brand new masthead. I am happy to express my opinion and comment about the matching fresh approach through your editorial to make certain new year's resolution, such as replacing the existing electric bulbs with LED bulbs to save power / money to help agriculturists & industrial workers. I congratulate you for the same with the hope that such letters of encouragement sharing the readers' thoughts will help you to feel content for the said alterations and forge you ahead with more and more innovative ideas.

Also find attached here with an article got up on the lines I had suggested during our talk over phone the other day. You may shortly be getting separately a copy of my review on the Autobiography by a 93-year-old retired IFS officer (S Syed Ahmed) in Urdu by post at your address, for perusal which might be to your liking. Who knows if it even makes way to fill a couple of pages of a future issue of VANA PREMI! Sincerely

Dr. Raghotham Rao Desai

Editor's Note: Thank you very much sir. It is only because of blessings and suggestions of seniors like you and many others.

Sir,

Your editorial on the New Year's Resolutions as usual is enjoyable. J.V.Sharma has very painstakingly prepared his paper on first impressions on High Level Committee. We look forward to the next installment. Needless to say it is very informative. Dr.Raghotham's essay is like a small piece of Thesaurus of synonyms. Navratan has contributed a good account of a travel. Santhaseela Babu has made an interesting report of XV Alumni meet and the editor's concluding note with an Urdu stanza is lyrical and an ode to Periaswamy. Sharma in the obituary column has paid deservedly rich tributes to the late Munnawar Sahib. All these and other contributions have made the VANA PREMI to stay. The younger generation of foresters should take some time off to write their present day experience including some anecdotes.

K.B.R. Reddy

EICHHORNIA CRASSIPES

Eichhornia crassipes is a free-floating aquatic macrophyte growing generally to 0.5 m in height but to nearly 1 m in height in some southeast Asian locations. *Eichhornia crassipes* forms dense, floating mats. As a free-floating plant, all its nutrients come from the water column. Leaves are thick, waxy, rounded, and glossy and rise well above the water surface on stalks. The leaves are broadly ovate to circular, 10-20 cm in diameter, with gently incurved, often undulate sides. Leaf veins are dense, numerous, fine and longitudinal. Leaf stalks are bulbous and spongy. The stalk is erect, to 50 cm long, and carries at the top a single spike of 8-15 showy flowers. The flowers have six petals, purplish blue or lavender to pinkish, the uppermost petal with a yellow, blue-bordered central splotch. Water hyacinth reproduces vegetatively by short runner stems (stolon) that radiate from the base of the plant to form daughter plants, and also reproduces by seed. Its roots are purplish black and feathery. *Eichhornia crassipes* forms a shoot consisting of a branched, stoloniferous rhizome, 6 cm in diameter and up to 30 cm in length, with several short internodes. Each node bears a leaf and roots. Axillary buds, which can also form stolon, grow at an angle of 60 degrees from the rhizome and remain at that angle or bend upward in dense stands, or become horizontal in open stands. Plants on the edge of a mat form stolon buds

while those in the middle may not. Stolon, is purplish violet and extend up to 50 cm or more in length and are highly variable in diameter. Leaves form as the axillary bud grows, rupturing a tubular leaf-like structure called a prophyll. As the internode between the first leaf and the prophyll elongates, roots are produced at the node bearing the primary leaf. Foliage leaves are formed after. Foliage leaves are petiolate with a glossy sheen, and are arranged spirally, appearing to be in a rosette. Each leaf consists of a petiole, isthmus (between petiole and blade). The petiole bears a large membranous stipule, which forms a sheath around the next younger leaf. Petioles are spongy and measure up to 5 cm in diameter and 30-50 cm in length (maximum 125 cm). They may be elongated, swollen in the middle and tapering towards the blade or they may form a bulbous float containing air-filled lacunae tissue. As much as 50% of a single water hyacinth's biomass can be roots. Roots are adventitious and fibrous, 10-300 cm in length. As many as 70 lateral roots per cm give the roots a feathery appearance. They are dark violet to bluish or pinkish violet (though whitish if grown in total darkness) and contain soluble pigments, including anthocyanin's that may protect the root from herbivores. Flowers are borne terminally on a lavender spike on an elongated peduncle and

are subtended by two bracts. The lower bract has a distinct blade. Each spike has 4-25 flowers (maximum 35) with 8-15 being the most common. Flowers are sessile. The perianth tube is 1.5-1.75 cm long with a green base and pale top. Petals are ovate to oblong, thin, lilac and up to 4 cm long. The posterior petal (labellum) has a central bright yellow diamond-shaped region surrounded by a deep blue border with bright red radiating lines. When young, this labellum has a green spot. There are six stamens (sometimes 5 or 7) having curved filaments with glandular hairs. Three are small and close to the perianth tube. Anthers are violet and measure 1.4-2.2 mm long. The gynoecium is tricarpeal and superior. The ovary is nearly conical and produces approximately 500 ovules. The style is variable in length and bears a nearly capitate stigma with three closely oppressed lobes. Sometimes the stigma is shorter or intermediate in length compared to the stamens. This heterostyly makes *E. crassipes* trimorphic. The fruit is a thin-walled

capsule enclosed in a relatively thick-walled hypanthium developed from the perianth tube. Mature seeds can number 450 per capsule, are 4 x 1 mm, with an oval base and tapering apex. The coat has 12-15 longitudinal ridges. *Eichhornia crassipes* can be distinguished from most other floating and mat-forming aquatic plants by its highly glossy leaves, the almost one-sided swelling of its petioles, and its showy lilac flowers. *Eichhornia crassipes* can float freely, unlike its congener *E. azurea* which must root to the substrate and is therefore confined to shallow ponds and the edges of lakes and rivers. *Eichhornia azurea* is a USA federal noxious weed which has been imported from South America to decorate ponds and occasionally escaped into local environments. It often produces a much showier inflorescence than *E. crassipes*, one sometimes carrying more than 60 flowers. The species is listed as a noxious weed in Arizona. It is often regarded as the most troublesome aquatic weed in the world.

(Source Internet)

India is the cradle of human race, the mother of history, the great mother of legend and great grandmother of tradition. The most valuable and the most instructive materials in the history are treasured up in India only. – Mark Twain

STATE OF FOREST IN TELANGANA STATE AND PLAN FOR REVIVAL

By
S.D.Mukherji

Sri .Chandrasekhar Rao, the first Chief Minister of newly formed Telangana State, is working hard and trying his best for the development of the State. He is aware of the importance of forest and has planned to turn one- third of the land with green cover by launching '*Harita Haaram*' to plant 210 crore seedlings and saplings over the next three years across Telangana. He directed the HMDA and GHMC to plant 10 lakh saplings in three years in Hyderabad. It has been decided to plant 40 lakh saplings in each assembly segment and 33,000 saplings in every village in a year. Surely it is a good idea to cover the open spaces, devoid of trees, with new plantations to improve the green cover. However, plantation alone is not sufficient as every year the ritual of planting saplings on the occasion of *vanamahotsava* has failed to improve the greenery. On the other hand most of the existing trees have disappeared. Assessment of tree cover outside the forestland, as per the Forest Survey of India (FSI) 2011 report, is 91,266 km² forming 2.78 percent of the geographical area (GA) of the country. The need

is, therefore, to find methods of protecting the saplings planted and allow it to grow as a tree. Moreover, there should be control on the felling of standing trees that has wiped millions of grown up trees that covered large extent of landscape.

The 'India State of Forest Report (ISFR)-2013' prepared by the Forest Survey of India and released by the Minister of Forest and Environment on the 8th July, 2014 gives the condition of the forests of India, State wise. The total forest and tree cover in the country is 789164 sq. km out of which forest cover is 697898 or 21.23 per cent of the total GA. The trees outside the forest cover an area of 91266 sq. km or 2.78 per cent of GA. Therefore, there should be more concentration in protecting and improving our forests. The report of 2013 is for the State of Andhra Pradesh before its bifurcation. 'State of Forest-2013 in Telagana State' is derived from the district wise details and it gives the following picture of the forest cover:

Area in Sq.Km.

District	Geographical Very Area (GA)	dense forest	Moderately Dense forest	Open forest	Total Forestcover	% of GA	Change with reference to year 2011	Scrub
Adilabad	16128	127	3638	2280	6045	37.48	-21	04
Hyderabad & Ranga Reddy	7710	0	47	340	387	5.02	-4	249
Karimnagar	11823	0	974	695	1669	14.12	-9	365
Khammam	16029	28	5003	1722	6753	42.13	-177	39
Mahaboobnagar	18432	329	537	1076	1942	10.54	0	323
Medak	9700	0	79	501	580	5.98	-5	139
Nalgonda	14240	0	12	142	154	1.08	0	359
Nizamabad	7956	0	217	973	1190	14.96	-6	139
Warangal	12847	0	2409	630	3039	23.66	-29	153
Total	114865	484	12916	8359	21759	18.94	-251	1770

The total forest cover in the State of Telangana is only 21759 sq.kms. or 18.94 per cent of the GA of the State as against 33 per cent required to maintain ecological balance. Moreover, majority of the forests are in degraded to, much degraded condition. Very dense forests (forest density above 0.7) is confined to only 484 sq. km forming 2.22 per cent of the total forest area of the State. Moderately dense forest (forest density of +0.4 to 0.7) cover 12916 sq. km covering 59.36 per cent of total forest. The rest of the forest covering an area of 8359 sq. km, forming 38.42 per cent of the total forest, is open forest where the density of forest cover varies 0.1 to 0.4 per cent only. The most distressing part of the report is Telangana State alone accounts for a loss of 251 sq. km of forest cover from FSI report of 2011

and 2013 against the total loss of 273 sq. km in the whole country, representing 91.94 percent of the loss of forest cover in India. Khammam district tops the loss of forest to the extent of 177 sq. km which accounts for 70.52 per cent of total loss of forest in the State and 64.83 per cent of loss of forest in India. It is followed by Warangal losing 29 sq. km and Adilabad losing 21 sq. km. All the three are districts with sizeable tribal population who are dependent on forest and live in and around the forests. According to the ISFR-2013 the loss of forest is due to huge forest areas found under encroachment in Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal districts and illegal cultivation by the nearby villages. Before the entire forest of the State is wiped out, inviting ecological disaster and hurting the livelihood

of the poorest of the poor depending on forests, government must act and take necessary steps to protect the remaining forests and develop the degraded forests to restore the past glory of the forests. The following steps are, therefore, suggested.

1. The first task is to bring out a clear picture of the present status of forests. This can be done by using the remote sensing data and its interpretation with the use of modern technology. There should be complete information, beat wise, on the density of forests, status of wildlife, encroachment on forestlands and forestlands released under Forest Rights Act (FRA). Fortunately, forest department has the requisite expertise and manpower to do the job. They should be given a reasonable time to complete the job duly supported by ground verification.

2. With the promulgation of FRA the tribal people and other forest dwellers were given *patta* on the forestland. Unfortunately, there is no permanent demarcation of such lands on the ground. This is creating difficulties to the tribal people as they are not sure of the boundaries of their land for development. At the same time it is creating difficulties for the protection of forestlands that are prone to encroachments. Immediate steps are, therefore, necessary to demarcate the forest boundaries on the ground. This will allow the tribal people to develop the lands given under FRA and improve its productivity for a better livelihood. At the same

time the forestland under degraded condition can be regenerated to bring back the lost forests to its pristine glory.

3. The tribal and other forest fringe villagers should be involved in developing the degraded forests by keeping their interest for a better livelihood. Soil and moisture conservation should be given the top priority to stop the soil erosion and improve the ground water for increasing the productivity of the land, including the *patta* lands of the local people. The choice of species for the regeneration of degraded forests should be based on sustainable yields and the preference of the local people and for their benefit. Regeneration of degraded forests will also provide regular employment opportunity to the forest dependent communities.

4. Forest Beat, the lowest administrative unit of forest management, should be the focus of development. It is necessary to reduce the area under a Beat to enable the Beat officer, Forest Guard, to perambulate his forest on daily basis, keep vigilance on its boundaries and prevent damage to the forests by fire, grazing, tree felling or poaching. He should be provided with Geographical Positioning System (GPS) to survey and report on encroachments, illicit felling of trees, fire or any other matter to safeguard the forests. Unfortunately, the Forest Department has become top heavy with least attention to basic facilities at the base level. There is urgency to alter this situation by

providing better man power and other facilities of communication and equipment to the Forest Officers working at the grass root level.

5. Special measures should be initiated to check the forest fires and cattle grazing in areas under regeneration. The cooperation of the forest fringe villagers should be taken for this by empowering them suitably and providing incentives for preventing fires and grazing in forests under regeneration. Government may have to issue necessary guidelines on free grazing so that the regenerating of degraded forests is not hampered.

6. Continuous stretch of forests is necessary for the movement of wildlife and its safety. However, with the grant of *pattas* and encroachments on forestlands scattered habitations have come up inside the forests, breaking the continuity of forests. Moreover, the poor people living in such habitations are deprived of proper communication and other facilities - safe drinking water, schools, medical assistance, market, etc. - to lead a better life. It may, therefore, be necessary to consolidate the fragmented land holdings on the fringes of the forests where all government facilities can be extended to the poor people for a sustainable livelihood. This will leave the forest free for the wildlife to roam and grow to its past glory.

7. With the introduction of Joint Forest Management (JFM) the barrier between the Forest Officers and the forest dependent people

was broken. However, the Forest Officers took it as a means to develop the degraded forests. The partnership between the people and the Forest Department should be used to improve the livelihood of the forest dependent communities. The JFM committees, therefore, must take the responsibility to ensure the holistic development of the forest fringe villages. While conducting the JFM meetings in the villages the problems faced by the people regarding health, education, public distribution system and other programmes of the government should be discussed in addition to the forestry issues. The matter related to other departments should be heard, recorded and communicated to the concerned officers. The Divisional Forest Officer should consolidate such issues and keep the district administration informed. A sustainable livelihood to the forest dependent people is a prerequisite for a better forest. Forest Officers, therefore, must play a more constructive role in the development of forest fringe villages. Government may issue necessary guidelines to give this added responsibility to the Forest Department.

8. An action plan on the points mentioned above should be drawn. The senior officers of the Forest Department should be given the full responsibility for each forest division. Government should be kept informed of the progress. It should be closely monitored and periodically reviewed at the highest level.

DEVILISH ATTEMPTS TO GRAB FOREST LANDS OF HYDERABAD DIVISION

By

K.B. R. Reddy

It was the year 1954. I joined the Madras Forest College (M.F.C) at Coimbatore and passed out from the Southern Forest Rangers College (S.F.R.C) in 1956. During the two-year period of training in forestry, our batch of trainees visited Hyderabad once, to see and learn afforestation techniques in the then Hyderabad State. We went to a place where the afforestation work was carried out. It was known as the Hyderabad technique of afforestation – continuous contour trenching and sowing seed of miscellaneous species on the mound formed on the lower side of the trench. It was in fact a technique for soil and moisture conservation. We were introduced to Sri Mazharuddin Ahmad, the then Conservator of Forests, and Sri Mohd. Sharfuddin Khan, the then Sate Silviculturist.

Sri M.S. Khan explained to us with twinkling in his eyes on the success of the technique and proudly declared that by greening the barren land, the water table in the villages around has risen.

The afforested area which we visited is a portion of the land in Sy. No. 201 of Sahebnagar kalan village of Ranga Reddy district allotted to the Forest Department by the erstwhile Board of Revenue of Government of Hyderabad in the year 1953 for establishing Soil Conservation Research Centre.

The said Sy. No. had a total extent of Acs. 770-21 Gts. Out of this area, the Forest Department was allotted an extent of Acs. 550-21 Gts. An extent

of Acs. 102 out of the area taken over from Sy. No. 201 of Sahebnagar Kalan along with other lands of Gurramguda and Turkayamjal villages with a total extent of Acs. 412-20 Gts. constituting Gurramguda Forest Block was proposed to be constituted a Reserved Forest. Government issued a notification under Sec. 4 of the Forest Act in 1971 vide G.O. Ms. No. 778 Food & Agriculture (For. III) Department dated 18.6.1971. Consequently the Forest Settlement Officer (F.S.O) appointed for the purpose of considering objections about the proposal of the Government and to enquire into the existence of any rights in the lands, issued proclamation under Sec. 6 in 1972. There were no objections and no claims. The proposal reached final stage for declaring the land as reserved forest.

After nearly 34 / 35 years, when the period of limitation fixed under Sec. 6 of the Forest Act expired, Mir Jafar Ali Khan and 2 others filed a petition dated 2.12.2006 before the F.S.O. claiming ownership over the proposed reserved forest in Sy. No, 201 of Sahebnagar Kalan and requested the F.S.O. to order exclusion of the land from the proposed reservation. The Divisional Forest Officer (D.F.O) opposed the claim and raised the question of laches and limitation. Yet the F.S.O. took the matter on file. The petitioners through an Advocate filed papers which relate to centuries old events and bristle with a maze of voluminous documents and baffling

statements. The then F.S.O. Smt. I. Achyutha Kumari considered the claim carefully, diligently, and dismissed the claim petition on 3.9.2010. The F.S.O. passed the order after enquiry with the Revenue Officers concerned on the legal position of the land. The F.S.O. also recorded in the order, the information relating to the land as recorded in the *pahanis* for several years. It was noted that the land was classified as "*kancha Poramboke Sarkari*" and in the Pattedar's column it was recorded as "*Arazi Maktha Salar Jung Sarkari*".

The party felt aggrieved with the order of the F.S.O dated 3.9.2010 and filed appeal in the District Court of Ranga Reddy district. The appeal was allowed in part on 10.12. 2012 and the matter was remanded to the F.S.O.

The successor F.S.O. was one Sri S. Yadagiri who took the matter on file and passed an award on 15.10.2014 directing the D.F.O. to exclude the land from reservation. The order is entirely based on the contentions raised by the petitioners, without proper application of mind.

The D.F.O had a Herculean task before him, for filing appeal In the District Court, Ranga Reddy district, against the award of the F.S.O. dated 15.10.2014. He had to garner material evidence from various sources and had to make good effort in explaining the intricacies and complexities of the case to the Government Pleaders. Of course, he had their good counsel.

It would be interesting to know the diabolical plans and devilish attempts of the various forces to grab this very land of Saheb Nagar Kalan which has been genuinely, legally and physically till this date in the possession and management of the Forest Department. The possession of the land

in question is continuous and uninterrupted.

Nawab Yousuf Ali Khan, popular as Salar Jung-III, was the Prime Minister during the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan - the VII Nizam. The Nizam granted under *Firman* many villages to him as *Jageers*. He succeeded Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad as the Prime Minister in 1912 and died in 1949. He was not married and died intestate. He had huge properties, moveable and immovable. After his death, a multitude of legal heirs, like mushrooms, exceeding a hundred in number, appeared on the scene. They claimed succession to Salar Jung III and fought legal battles among themselves for share in the properties including commutation amount under the *Jageer Abolition (Commutation) Regulation* for *Jageer* lands of Salar Jung III, taken over by the Jageer Administrator on 20.9.1949 under the *Jageer Abolition Regulation*.

In the year 1958, a suit was filed in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in Civil Suit No. No. 13 / 1958 by one of the heirs, viz. Syed Hassan against Syed Kazim Hussain and 115 others for partition of all movable and immovable properties of the Salar Jung Estate. The Hon'ble Justice Kumarayya passed a preliminary decree on the basis of compromise deeds made in 1958. In the suit, the State Government, Central Government, Salar Jung Estate Committee, and *Jageer* Administrator were defendants. They withdrew from the suit. The Government of India took over the Salar Jung Museum housed in a portion of the Diwan Devdi together with the land measuring 28,390 Sq.Yds. on the banks of River Musi, where the prestigious Salar Jung Museum was built and it stands now as a tourist attraction.

In C.S. No. 13/1958, one Sri Mirza Najaf Ali Khan, a former Secretary to Government of Hyderabad, was appointed as Receiver –cum-Commissioner and in his affidavit submitted to the High Court stated among other things that he has handed over possession of Sy. No. 201 of Saheb Nagar Kalan with an extent of Acs. 100.00 to one Syed Ahmed, Defendant No. 2, on 15.6.1963. On appeal, the order dated 25.9.2013 passed by the single judge was set aside on various grounds on 29.8.2014 by a Division Bench comprising R. Subhash Reddy and A. Shankar Narayana, JJ. It was held that the State through its Secretary, Forest Department, is a necessary party, and without impleading such party, application was filed and orders were obtained. It was also observed that there has been a fraud before the court to obtain orders with regard to valuable land by suppressing the material facts.

In 2005, Baqtawar Begum and 11 others through their G.P.A. holder V. Satyanarayan Reddy filed Writ Petition No. 19942 of 2005 against the Government in Forest Department and Government in Law Department and 6 others, and prayed for releasing the land admeasuring Acs. 100.00 in Sy. No. 201 of Saheb Nagar Kalan village from the proposed reserved forest. They also questioned the constitutional validity of Sec. 3 of the Forest Act alleging that the said section conferred unguided and unbridled power on the State Government to constitute any land as reserved forest.

The D.F.O. filed counter affidavit in opposition of the writ petition. The Collector and District Magistrate of Ranga Reddy district also filed a counter separately quoting the factual position based on the record of rights. The writ petition is

pending in the High Court. During the pendency of the writ petition, Smt. Humayun Begum filed implead petition. Syed Abdul Wahab (claim petitioner No. 1 before the F.S.O.) also filed implead petition in the High Court.

On the question of succession and legal heir of Salar Jung III, a suit was filed in the Court of Senior Civil Judge; City Civil Court at Hyderabad and it was decreed declaring that the late Nawab Syed Abdullah, maternal uncle of Salar Jung III, was legal heir and successor of Salar Jung III. This order was confirmed by the III Additional Chief Judge, City Civil Court on 1.8.2007. Two sons of Syed Abdullah, viz Nawab Syed Abdul Waheb and Nawab Abdul Hameed are the second and third claimants before the F.S.O, in addition to Mir Jafar Ali Khan, the first claimant.

Claiming patta over Sy.No. 201 of Saheb Nagar Kalan among other lands, one Mahmood Hasan Khan Maharaj Kumar of Mahmoodabad of U.P., posing himself as a relative of the late Salar Jung III, approached the Sub-Collector, Hyderabad for rectification of records for the alleged wrong entries made in the revenue records. His plea was that the lands claimed by him were shown as his patta lands in the past in the village records. As no action was taken on his application, he approached by petitions to the Chief Minister and later Advisor to the Governor during the President's rule in the State. The Government finally passed order in G.O.Ms. No. 1029 Revenue (Q) Department dated 14.11.1973, rejecting the petitions. In the said G.O. it was categorically stated that in respect of Sy. No. 201, the Government is in open, continuous and uninterrupted possession and

enjoyment of lands for over 12 years.

Aggrieved by the Government's decision, Mahmood Hasan Khan Maharaj Kumar filed suit in O.S. No. 906 of 1977 on the file of the II Additional Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad. The suit was decreed for payment of compensation for Acs. 1547.24 gts. at the rate of Rs. 10,000/- per acre with interest at 6 % per annum from the date of filing of the suit till the date of realization.

The Government filed appeal in the High Court against the judgment and decree of the II Additional Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad. The High Court by a Division Bench comprising the Hon'ble Justice Seetharam Reddy and the Hon'ble Justice Lakshman Rao considered the appeal of the State Government with care and precision and passed a land-mark judgment on 16.8.1985 covering 65 pages. The court was very critical of the claim of Mahmood Hasan Khan Maharaj Kumar and made several observations on tampering with the village records. The following observation is unique:

"Exhibits relating to various revenue records in respect of Sy. Nos. in both the villages (Qutbullapur & Saheb Nagar Kalan) amply demonstrates that they have been highly tampered with by additions, alterations, substitutions and replacements of the paper sheets and contents. It is not at all safe to rely on the authenticity of such entries. It is very hard also to reconcile various anomalies that have occurred and also there has been inconsistency in regard to the description of the lands in question being Government Lands except the alterations here and there, and if they are Government Lands it is incomprehensible as to how any patta is said to have been granted in respect of the said lands.

So, these various entries so caused are highly dubious on which no reliance could be placed."

The High Court also held that the Government in Forest Department perfected the title by adverse possession for more than 12 years.

The present claimants before the F.S.O. contended that they were not parties before the High Court in the appeal filed by the Government and therefore the judgment of the High Court is not binding on them. The F.S.O. blissfully conceded to the contention and had ignored the observations of the High Court made after a strenuous scrutiny of the revenue records.

The petitioners took the plea before the F.S.O. that the land in Sy.No.201 of Saheb Nagar village is part of "Arazi Maqtha" and for the same reason, the lands in Saheb Nagar Kalan village, taken over by the Jageer Administrator as jageer lands, were released because they were not jageer lands. The petitioners are emphatic about the letter bearing No. 808/CH dated 24.4.1954, which only says that that the lands being "Arazi Maqtha" are released. As a matter of fact, 'Arazi Maqtha' is an Inam and as such, the lands attract the liability of abolition under the Inam Abolition Act. As per this Act, the Inamdar is entitled to only compensation from the Government. Under the A.P. (T.A.) Abolition of Inams Act, 1955 all Inams have been abolished and they vested in the State. According to Sec. 3 (2) (b) of the said Act, waste lands, pasture lands, forests, mines and minerals etc. shall be vested absolutely in the State free from all encumbrances.

In the year 1979, the R.D.O., Hyderabad has issued Occupancy Right Certificates (ORC)

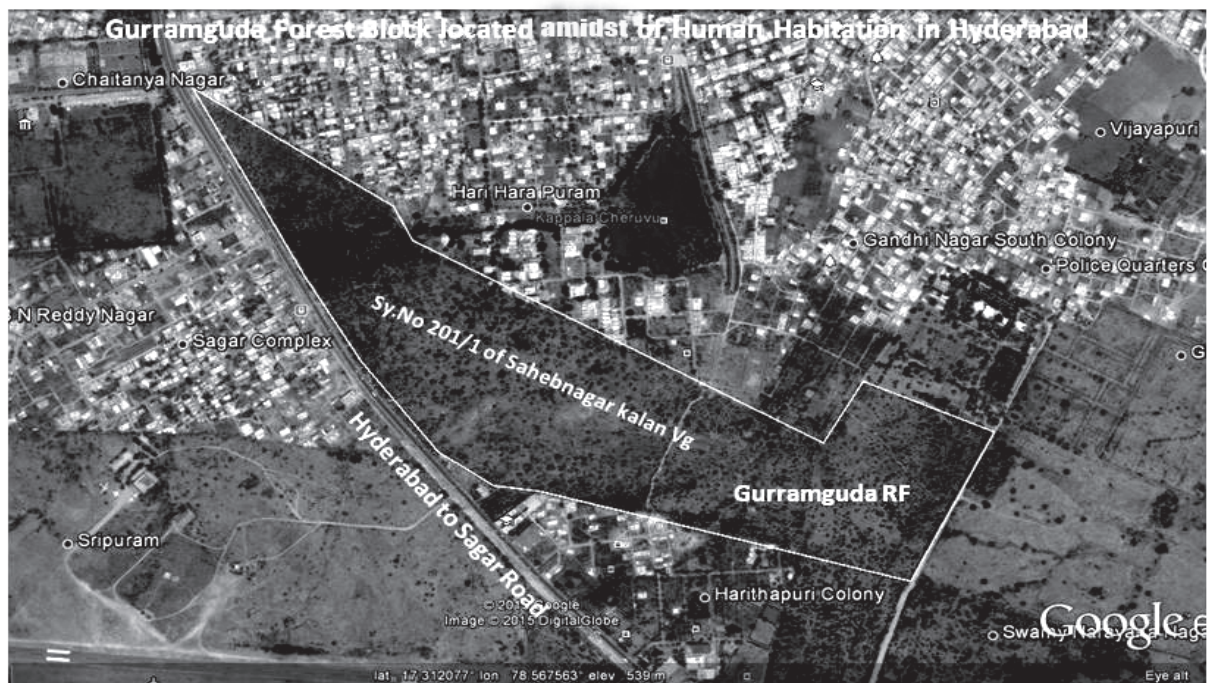
under the *Inam* Abolition Act to certain persons treating the lands under occupation as *Inam* Lands. But the O.R.Cs. were cancelled in 1997 because the lands ceased to be *Inam* lands and they had become Government Lands as they had vested with the Government.

The land in Sy. No. 201 of Saheb Nagar Kalan has been classified as "*Kancha Poramboke Sarkari*". It has been so reflected in all the records viz. *Wasulbaqui, Sethwar, Khasra Pahani, pahani Patriks etc.* and the Revenue Officers have been consistently of the view that the land in question is a Government Land.

The evil eye on the land is mainly because of rapid urbanization in the areas around and escalation of value of the lands. This is the only piece of land remaining unoccupied in the protective possession of the Forest Department; and if it can be saved from the land grabbers, it

will hopefully sustain trees and improve the environmental and ecological status of the land. Losing land will be too big a loss for the humanity in the area. The State must move beyond the rhetoric of speaking loud on natural resources and the need for their conservation. The appeal against the award of the F.S.O, dated 15.10.2014 is filed in the District Court of Ranga Reddy district on Friday the 16th January 2015. The District Judge is pleased to admit the appeal on 27th January 2015 and the appeal petition is assigned C.M.A No. 5/2015. Further, the court ordered stay of operation of the impugned order of the F.S.O. Let us hope for the success of the appeal.

I am grateful to the CCF/ CF, Hyderabad Sri P.V. Ramana Reddy, D.F.O. Hyderabad Sri D. Nagabhushanam and their officers and staff in helping me to produce this paper by giving me access to their office records.



HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE REPORT: FIRST IMPRESSIONS (PART – II)

By
J. V. Sharma

(Note: This is in continuation of the article “High Level Committee Report: First impressions (Part – I)” by this author published in January 2014 Issue of ‘VANA PREMI’. Part –II starts discussion on Recommendation 5 onwards under ‘Forests’)

The Fifth recommendation under ‘Forests’ is for revision of procedure for clearance under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 ‘to reduce the time taken without compromising the quality of examination’. In fact this recommendation is by far the most important of all recommendations made. It is also the most crucial and must have been the main objective of the review sought. It would have been appropriate if the HLC had made it the very first recommendation. The word ‘Objectives’ in the third of the Terms of Reference “To recommend specific amendments needed in each of these Acts so as to bring them in line with current requirements to meet the objectives” (emphasis added), says it all as to what was required of the Committee. The readers will please note that the Government is interested to bring all these legislations in line with current requirements and did not even pretend to have any concerns for the future of forests or environment, and the same is not reflected in ToR even in diluted form. The Govt.’s intentions are clear and candid that ‘current requirement’ is to divert forest lands for non-forest purpose and the task given to Committee is to ‘facilitate’ it.

Keeping aside the rhetoric whether the legislation is retrograde and anti-development, it is an acknowledged fact that the FC Act proved to be an effective deterrent to a great extent against diversion of forest lands on flimsy grounds. The Act simply stipulates prior approval of diversion by the Central Government. It also provides for a statutory committee in the name of Forest Advisory Committee to scrutinize the proposals for diversion and advise the Central Govt. whether to accord Forest Clearance. Things appeared to go well for the forests for some time but a well perceptible discontent was also evident among the State Governments since they were barred from exercising the power they enjoyed till the enactment of said law. As for the User Agencies, it is only natural for them to be unhappy with this law and any regulatory mechanism in the form of a restriction is unwelcome to them. A well-orchestrated campaign has been set in motion that Development Projects are delayed and stalled for want of forest clearances. And this is a deliberate disinformation

floated with sinister designs while the facts speak otherwise.

1. FC Act came into operation in 1980 and it is since 34 years it is being implemented. The forest land diverted for non-forest purposes during the 10-year tenure of UPA (2004-14) is more than double the area diverted in the first 24 years.

2. A whopping 2.43 lakh hectares of forests have been cleared for industrial and development projects under the UPA regime between 2004 and 2013 (as in late 2013). Oil and mineral exploration has been permitted over another 1.64 lakh hectares during the same period. Proposals for another 3.30 lakh hectares of forests were under consideration of the Central and State Governments in the country. Given the frenzy with which MoEF operated in according clearances in the last phase of the UPA rule, these pending cases must have been surely cleared. Only 331 projects were rejected against the 10,294 projects received under the UPA regime. The rejections thus work out to less than 0.032% and all the rejected cases add up to an area of 10,153 hectares, a mere 2.50% of the forest land given away by government over the same period. The forest areas diverted for non-forest use during the first nine years of UPA tenure accounts for 7.36 lakh hectares which works out to one and half times of the geographical area of the State of Punjab. By the time they were voted out, they may have ceded forest land equivalent to Haryana in addition.

3. Statistics gathered from Government sources show that the MoEF cleared 1390 out of 1600 projects it received in 2010 which works out to 87%. In 2011, the approvals were 1177 out of 1657 projects received working out to 71%. In 2012, the clearances were 1024 out of 1129 projects working out to 90%. In 2013, 915 projects of the 924 have been cleared (up to date of data collection) which works out to 99%. It is said that generally less than 15% projects are sent back for further formalities or rejected. Even a casual look at the figures suggests that the percentage of disposal has been fairly high and healthy. It is ranging from the lowest 71% to even 99%. I wonder if there is any other government department at Centre which achieved better performance level. Pendency together with rejections is contained to less than 15%. The moot question is, *where then is the need to amend the existing procedure and where is that much trumpeted delay in clearances when the efficiency level is so high with existing procedure?*

4. The Minister, MoEF in UPA Government wanted to amend the rules by fixing timelines to expedite the process of clearances even when the efficiency level of clearances was 99%. It was not clear what exactly the Minister wanted. Was it necessary to change rules which ensured 99% disposal? It is a different matter that the Minister was squeezed out of the Cabinet before anything tangible happened in this regard. But what was more interesting is; the successor Minister holding

additional charge, with heavy responsibilities of his own regular charge proved to be a more efficient and faster performer by clearing 70 cases in 20 days that too after his predecessor in office swept the Ministry clean with 99% efficiency! There appears to be some unexplainable enigma in the very work culture of the Ministry. Or else, the present Minister of a totally different hue, philosophy & mindset could not have been led to follow the suite.

A closer look at the events could throw some light over the issue. India is a populous country. Land is a fixed asset. There is always pressure on land resource. Developmental activities, mining, industry etc. need large extents of land. Having exhausted revenue lands and community lands for all kinds of unjustifiable causes already, forest lands happen to become the targets now. Governments, irrespective of their color and philosophy have an obligation to promote development to survive in power. The previous Government resorted to all sorts of shortcuts to promote this agenda and this present Government cannot be expected to be anything different. That this Government is doing exactly what the previous government sought to do by changing rules to expedite the process, is proof enough that there is nothing to differentiate between them on this score. The NDA is known for its bias for industry and particularly in private sector. The role given to HLC is to make the task easy and hassle-free.

But the HLC could have been more pragmatic and objective in going about its task to justify its status. Even a casual look at the working of the Ministry in the light of statistics given above and critical examination of some of the processed cases would have given them an insight into the problem on hand. Cases where the forest lands were diverted for unjustifiable reasons galore. They could have picked up a few cases at random where there was abnormal delay. They could have seen into cases where the clearance was denied initially but granted subsequently. The general view in informed circles is that most of the undeserving cases are delayed for one reason or the other and are eventually cleared. The pending cases are really hard cases which even the devils fear to handle. If such hard cases are in large number in a country like India, it is not unusual. They are bound to be in proportion to the size of population and greed and avarice are the other factors which cannot be ruled out. It is about this pendency the vested interests shout loud about.

There is another important aspect grossly ignored by the HLC. When terms of reference are as wide and holistic as to include statutory amendments and recommendations to improve the working of the existing system, a duty is cast on the Committee to address at least the two vital aspects of the issue; One, to examine the existing system critically and identify the grey areas,

systemic as well as implementation, and Two, to find the needed solutions with foolproof checks and balances. Any exercise bereft of these elements can only be perfunctory.

To explain it in practical sense, the FC Act provided for a statutory Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) to examine the requests from User Agencies in detail and to advise the Central Government on the merits. Detailed guidelines have also been issued to streamline the process at different levels. It is a statutory obligation for the FAC to be independent, fair, professional and free from any pressure or influence in their functioning. It is painful to say that the FAC did not live up to standards expected of it in the statute and acted many a time for cross purposes. There are instances where Forest Clearances, accorded by Central Government on the advice of the FAC, are reversed by Courts and Tribunals and the FAC changed its recommendation time and again, evidently under pressure and influence. Instead of asserting its position as a statutory body, it chose to mortgage its exclusive status to political bosses and possibly to User Agencies. It has devalued itself to the level of a ministerial cell to push files rather than offering credible advice of substance on the basis of sound technical and professional expertise. The HLC did not have a word about this malady nor suggested a remedy to eradicate it.

It is not that the HLC is not aware of these happenings. In response to the notification to offer comments and suggestions to HLC, I had submitted a representation bringing these facts to their notice and also furnished sufficient supporting material. It is evident that the Committee did either not care to go through the material or ignored it as unworthy of their august indulgence. The FAC acted quite often as a handmaid of the powers that be and its performance stands reduced to be the art of the possible. Indisputably, the functioning of FAC needed a performance audit. Strangely, it did not occur to HLC.

The MoEF invented a strange system of circumventing the obstacles, if any, either from the executive or the FAC. In matters where it felt that it would look too obvious to help the User Agency in the face of inconvenient situation on record, the Minister would constitute a Special Committee and resurrect a superannuated officer to head the committee to go into the matter and make recommendations. The functioning of such committees despite existence of a statutory committee (FAC), is a travesty mocking at the law in force. What is worse, the statutory FAC signs on the dotted line finally clearing the project. These are brazen abuses of the law and procedures in force which merited notice of the HLC.

The functioning of officers, particularly of the Forest Department, in dealing with processing of

applications in many cases, leaves a lot to be desired. While some officers committed to profession are staking their career prospects to uphold values of profession, some others appear to prefer to serve as agents of User Agencies. It is really unfortunate that there is no effective mechanism in place to keep an eye on irregular diversions and there are no instances of action against errant officers taken to its logical end. The HLC did not look into this aspect either.

If we are really serious to find an honest and durable solution, it is not correct to pick up threads where it is convenient. We must have the will, sagacity and commitment to examine the issues with courage in their entirety. Kneejerk reactions like identifying and pre-specifying 'no-go' areas and opening up all other forest areas for mining and industries are no solutions of durable value. There is all the likelihood of breach of environmental equilibrium. The HLC should be complimented for highlighting disasters that occurred in Uttarakhand and Kashmir Valley and one wished that this sentiment gets translated into some effective precautions and reflected in recommendations. The Nation needs to be more cautious as the damages are irreversible and costs are incalculable.

The debate on 'Development Vs Forests' and 'Development and Forests', now feverishly pursued, should in fact be extended to the higher level of 'Nation, National interests and National priorities'. Mundane considerations like 'instant development' should yield ground to matters of more importance of durable long term benefits in the larger interests of the country. Such an enlarged debate can help prioritization of tasks on hand. Whatever emerges out of the exercise will be free from subjectivity as well as exigencies of contingent temporary solutions. To explain it by example, the defense of the country is sacrosanct. No constraints, however important, count when a decision is to be made for the security of the nation. Forest and Environmental Clearances should not come in the way of defense projects. The only rider is the purpose should be genuine and not maligned by extraneous considerations. It is a priority which cannot be questioned. It should be noted that that the FC Act does not bar diversions and accommodative enough wherever genuine and bonafide needs exist.

We should be aware that good environment is a Fundamental Right. Advanced countries and civilized societies reckon environment next only to defense in national priorities. The concept is simple. Once the country is secured against external threats, the next most important priority is to secure pollution-free air, water and land for the people. GDP, affluence, poverty, education, employment, housing etc can only follow the first two priorities but can't replace them. It should not be the case of "Act in haste to repent in leisure".

In the present context when public opinion is being manipulated to see devil in FC Act, it is time for the Nation to find credible answers to these hard questions before a final call is taken on the main issue:

1. Whether the development projects which require land have been impartially assessed and evaluated for their indispensability, on the touchstone of need, size, cost-benefit, viability and public interest? To explain it further, a Chief Minister had recently unveiled his plans to establish no less than a dozen seaports and a dozen airports within a total distance of about 700 kilometers within the next five years. These ventures are essentially need based. A seaport needs, beside a suitable location, a catchment area to cater to and viable size of cargo to handle, both for imports and exports. Similarly adequate air traffic is essential for airports to take shape. I do not think the country will progress in coming five years to a stage (though I fervently hope it does) where it can make use of this infrastructure. We have forgettable examples of completing the irrigation canal network a decade ago at great cost while the project itself is not ready yet. To compound the foolhardiness, huge sums are spent on the maintenance of the canals year after year. Had the concerned projects been properly assessed, this shameful situation could have been avoided.

2. Are there no alternative solutions? Point in question here is; Energy is the primary requirement for any development activity. Protagonists of instant development have the tendency to opt for thermal power which needs large quantities of coal. Similarly, they have no patience to examine whether the coal identified is of good quality. There are a number of instances where the low grade coal of 20% calorific value is used for power production. So, we go for mining low grade coal which by its very simple logic is economically indefensible and creates 80% excess adverse impact on the environment. It also gives rise to another question; should thermal power be the sole option? Wind energy or nuclear energy might cost much more as initial investment but works out much economical in the long run. It needs much less land and with no environmental concerns. Discretion whether to go for opencast mining or underground also makes lot of difference on the resources and environment. General tendency is to opt for opencast mining as it would fetch large extents of land and suits the temporary logistic requirements of the developers. As for environment, opencast mining is catastrophic as it would cause irreversible damage to soil and quality of life of the people. The example can be extended to any industry with the potential of environmental hazard like pharmaceutical, chemical etc.

3. Then arises the important question to determine the role of Government in development

projects. Charged with the responsibility to govern, the government should certainly be keen to promote development activities. But its involvement and responsibility will be dictated by sectoral considerations and the nature and size of the project. The State cannot afford to shoulder the responsibility of projects in Private and Public sector alike. Its responsibility also varies depending upon the funding source and pattern. While the responsibility of the State in catering to needs in public sector is understandable, it is not obliged to provide facilities to all and sundry who come for land, tax concessions, sops in water and power supply. Money bags in private sector invest their money to reap rich harvest and do not establish industries for charity. Industrialists or miners in private sector can as well pay and avail the facilities directly in the open market. Extending concessions where not necessary is against public interest and is certainly no good governance.

4. And finally, why forest lands? If forest land is sought for mining or prospecting or any such activity, does it mean that minerals exist only in forest areas? If minerals are available on private lands, they can deal with land owners directly. State's intervention is primarily unwarranted and can at best be facilitative. As the forests, irrespective of the 'no-go' or 'go' value are acknowledged environmental assets, they are by law out of contention for diversion. It is still beyond comprehension as to why the HLC desired identification and pre-notification of 'no-go' zone forests. What they want the remaining areas to be is an enigma.

Recommendations 6 and 7 under 'forests' made by the HLC call for revision of guidelines of Compensatory Afforestation (CA) to enhance the CA to 2:1 on revenue land as against 1:1 at present; CA in degraded forest land be now fixed at 3:1; the NPV should be at least 5 times the present rates fixed. It is recommended that the quantum of NPV for CA should be sharply increased and a reliable mechanism for ensuring that CA is actually implemented, utilizing either private or forest land, needs to be put in place. These recommendations are of symbolic nature made as a gesture of sympathy for the loss of forest lands likely to happen in future, There are no revenue lands worth taking notice nor is there the possibility of enriching the degraded forest areas. If plantations are sacrificed for non-forest purposes, there is no guarantee that these CA areas will not be given away to another User Agency in future. These recommendations are cosmetic and inconsequential in nature and offer no credible relief to forests or its size & content. They add to monetary allocations but without ensuring matching benefits. Experience of CA done so far, particularly in degraded forests, is not encouraging.

(To be continued as Part – III in the next issue of VANA PREMI. As it deals with Wildlife, Part – III will be authored by Sri Qamar Mohammed Khan)

NEWS - THE FOREST RIGHTS ACT COURT CASES:

As the readers are aware, the very first Petition in the country challenging the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (Forest Rights Act) was filed in High Court at Hyderabad in WP No. 21497 of 2007 (J V Sharma & 2 Ors. Vs Govt. of India and Ors.), followed by spate of petitions in different High Courts and Supreme Court of India. The scope of litigation has since increased enormously with as many as 35 contending parties entering the arena. Union of India approached the Supreme Court in Transfer Petitions (Civil) No. 414-417 of 2008 (Union of India Vs. J V Sharma & Ors.) praying for transfer of petitions on the subject pending in various High Courts to Supreme Court for combined hearing and disposal to avoid conflicting judgments from different High Courts.

The matter came up before a SC Bench on 06.01.2015 and the Apex Court allowed the Transfer Petitions and ordered them to be posted along with WPs filed directly in the Supreme

Court. The cases pending in different High Courts over this issue will not be heard there as they stand transferred to SC. Thus, the legal battle now shifts to Supreme Court.

It is relevant to mention that the Petition No. 4533 of 2008 filed in Madras High Court (V. Sambasivam Vs. Union of India & Ors.) on the subject came up for final hearing in November 2014. As Mr. Sambasivam was abroad, I had the privilege of briefing his Counsel at Chennai. The matter was heard partly by Madras High Court on 26.11.2014 and the Hon Court desired to know the fate of Transfer Petitions filed by the Central Government and directed the Govt. Counsel to apprise the Court of the factual position. Now, in the light of orders issued by Supreme Court on 06.01.2015, the matter stands transferred to Apex Court. We have reason to apprehend that the Respondents in this case may now try for vacation of restrictive order (in Tamil Nadu) in Supreme Court.

-J V.SHARMA

HERE'S AN ENGLISH LESSON FOR THE DAY! "COMPLETE" OR "FINISHED"?

No dictionary has ever been able to define the difference between "complete" and "finished." However, during a recent linguistic Conference, held in London, England, Samsundar Balgobin, a Guyaneselinguist, was asked to make that very distinction.

The question by a colleague in the erudite audience was this: "Somesay there is no difference between 'complete' and 'finished.' Please explain the difference in a way that is easy to understand."

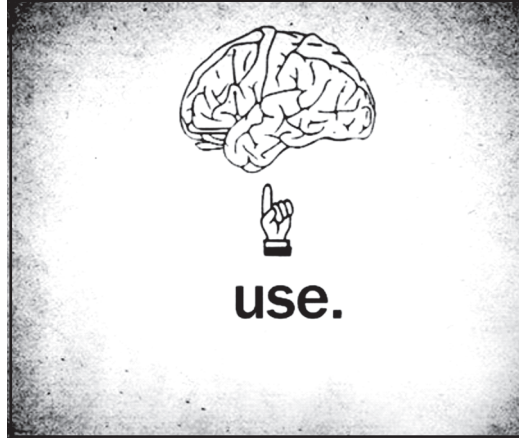
Mr. Balgobin's response: "When you marry the right woman, you are 'complete.' If you marry the wrong woman, you are 'finished.' And, if the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are 'completely finished.'" His answer received a five minute standing ovation.

ASHRAF-UL-MAQHLOOQAT

(THE MOST EMINENT OF CREATED BEINGS)

By
Qamar Mohammad Khan

In Urdu man is known as "*Ashraf-ul-Maqhlooqat*" which means the most eminent of created beings, or "most superior of created beings" or who is most intelligent among all the living organisms on this planet. This is because



there is difference between human beings and all other living organisms that are created on this planet. Despite the similarities, there is a fundamental difference between human beings and animals. What is that difference? The distinction between the human form of life and the animal form of life is not that humans sleep on beds and animals sleep on the ground; it's not that humans walk on two legs and many animals walk on four legs; it's not that humans eat at a dining table with utensils and napkins while animals just eat with their mouth to the ground in some way. Humans are not meant to be simply refined animals. There is marked difference between humans and animals.

The theory of evolution (Darwin's theory) teaches

us that all life started from a simple one-celled organism and then gradually evolved during millions of years into the complex forms of life that we see today. Today *Homo sapiens* (human beings) are placed in the category of the most advanced

stage among all the organisms which are created on this planet. The human brain is normally two or three times larger than the brain of the largest ape, which is the gorilla. Animals don't have the frontal lobe as we do. The cognitive abilities of a human compared, to an animal are incredible. Humans can critically think, invent, find solutions to problems, and much more. Animals are much more simple-minded. I think that the main difference between human beings and the animals is that humans have been blessed with well-developed brains. That is the reason why human beings are known as *Ashraf-ul-Maqhlooqat*. (The Most eminent of created beings). Here I would like to ask a question to

the readers, whether human beings who are termed as the most eminent of created beings are really living up to their nomenclature? If yes then why is man cutting the branch on which he is sitting. The following are some of the examples.

The importance of Forests and Wild life is well known to us. Without Forests and Wild life human beings cannot survive on this planet. For the survival of all the living organisms on this planet oxygen is needed and without oxygen no living organism can survive even for a few minutes. We know that the oxygen which we inhale is produced and released by the leaves of the trees. Hence forests are the factories which produce oxygen free of cost for all the living organisms of this planet. In the absence of these natural factories no other factory can produce oxygen in such large quantities nor supply it to the living organisms that have to carry the oxygen cylinders on their shoulders, nor can we afford to produce and purchase oxygen in factories. Forests are also absorbing the Carbon dioxide which all the living organisms are exhaling. Leaves of the trees absorb the carbon dioxide which we exhale and produce oxygen for us and keep the atmospheres free from the carbon dioxide. If there are no forests this planet will be full of carbon dioxide and no organism can survive on this planet as the atmosphere will be full of carbon dioxide. We also know very well that the forest soils absorb the rain water during

the rainy season, prevents the runoff and soil erosion, silting of the *nallas*, rivers, tanks lakes and dams. Forests prevent floods during heavy rains and release water during the summer which would have caused drought, and provide water to all living organisms for drinking and other uses. Though this fact is well known to the human beings yet it is the man who clears forests for various reasons and chiefly for material gains. Man always tries to cut the branch on which he is sitting.

Once Albert Einstein said "If the honey bees disappear from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years left to live". The reason is that the honey bees are responsible for the pollination of over 90 fruit and vegetable crops worldwide, so it would be devastating if we were to lose a majority or all of our honey bee pollinators for these crops which are not self-pollinating and rely on insects and other pollinators such as birds to help them reproduce. Today the number of honey bees has drastically reduced and their numbers are continuously being reduced. Man is only responsible for the reduction of the number of not only honey bees but other wild animals also.

Hyenas, jackals, crows, and vultures are some of the examples of scavenging animals who keep this planet clean and without these scavenging animals this world would have been

stinking and replete with diseases. Thanks to these animals that are cleaning this planet for us. We cannot survive without these wild animals but wild animals can survive much better without us, than what they are today. Saving the wild animals including the scavenging animals is our necessity and not due to any charity or kindness on our part to save them. Knowing fully this fact is it not the human beings who are felling thousands and thousands hectares of forests for various reasons and destroying the habitat of wild animals, which are becoming rare and or extinct. This is done by man himself and not by nature or any other living organism.

The **ozone hole**: - The ozone hole is an annual thinning of the Ozone layer. The cause of the ozone holes is generally agreed to be CFC (chlorofluorocarbon). The main public concern regarding the ozone hole has been the effects of surface UV on human health. Who is responsible for the Ozone hole? Is it not human beings who are mismanaging the CFC for their refrigerators and air conditioners?

Climate Change: - Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is an important heat-trapping (greenhouse) gas, which is released through human activities such as deforestation and burning fossil fuels, as well as natural processes such as respiration and volcanic eruptions. Except little quantity by natural process who is changing the climate? Is it not by human beings or is it by any other organisms?

The planet is warming, from North Pole to South Pole, and everywhere in between. Globally, the mercury is already up more than 0.8 degree Celsius, and even more in the sensitive Polar Regions. The effects of rising temperatures aren't waiting for some far-flung future. They're happening right now. Signs are appearing all over the globe, and some of them are surprising. The heat is not only melting glaciers and sea ice; it's also shifting precipitation patterns and setting animals on the move. Some impacts from increasing temperatures are already happening. The following are some of the ill effects of climate change.

- ◆ Ice is melting worldwide, especially at the Earth's poles. This includes mountain glaciers, ice sheets covering West Antarctica and Greenland, and Arctic sea ice.
- ◆ The rise in sea level has become faster over the last century due to melting of the ice.
- ◆ Some butterflies, foxes, and alpine plants have moved farther north or to higher, cooler areas.
- ◆ Precipitation i.e. rain fall has reduced across the globe, in many countries on an average.
- ◆ Spruce bark beetles have boomed in Alaska thanks to 20 years of warm summers. The insects have chewed up 4 million acres of spruce trees.
- ◆ Sea levels are expected to rise between 18 and 59 centimeters by the end of the century.

- ◆ Hurricanes and other storms are likely to become stronger. Tsunami which was not known will be occurring frequently.
 - ◆ Species that depend on one another may become out of synchronization. For example, plants could bloom earlier than their pollinating insects become active.
 - ◆ Floods and droughts will become more common.
 - ◆ Less fresh water will be available due to which acute shortage of drinking water will occur.
 - ◆ Some diseases like Malaria, Filarial, Cheekunguniya, and Brain fever will spread which are caused by mosquitoes due to increase in the population of mosquitoes.
 - ◆ Ecosystems will change and many wild animals will become extinct. With less ice, polar bears will become considerably skinnier. If sea ice disappears, the polar bears will as well.
 - ◆ Yield of rice millet and maize in South Asia could decrease by up to 10%. By 2080, yields in developing countries could decrease by 10% to 25% on an average while India could see a drop of 30% to 40%. The food production will decrease but human population will increase tremendously, thereby causing starvation deaths of human beings in most of the countries.
 - ◆ In small islands and mega deltas, inundation as a result of sea level rise is expected to threaten vital infrastructure and human settlements. This could lead to issues of homelessness in countries with low lying areas
- National Forest policy of 1988 says that nation should have a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two third of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system. The policy further says that a massive need based and time bound programme of afforestation and tree planting, with particular emphasis on fuel wood and fodder development, should be taken up on all degraded and denuded lands in the country, whether forest or non -forest land. Knowing very well that in our country we have only 21% of the land area under forest which is much less than prescribed by the National Forest Policy, the people's elected representatives of our Parliament have enacted an Act known as "The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006" which gives right to schedule tribes and other forest dwellers in the reserve Forest over the land if he had occupied forest land before the 13th day of December, 2005, fully knowing that this action of the Government will have negative effect on the

environment. Lakhs and lakhs hectares of forest land, was destroyed by the implementation of this Act, and instead of increasing the percentage of area under forest we have tremendously lost areas of our country under forest, which is against the National Forest Policy of 1988. In October 2003, *Vanashakti*, a group based in Mumbai, ran TV advertisements against the Act. This is the first time any Indian legislation has been attacked through a TV campaign. Six advertisements were run by the organization across major Indian news and TV channels, ads which continue to be available on their website. The group criticized the Forest Rights Act as having the potential to cause huge floods, droughts, and to increase global warming. They also decried it as an effort to keep "tribals in the forest" instead of assisting their "development". Numbers of retired forest officers of various States have appealed in the High Courts of various States against this Act. The act of our Government in enacting this Act is it not cutting of the branch on which man is sitting?

The above mentioned acts of human beings are only few examples which I can remember but

in reality there are many more ill effects caused by the actions of human beings. It is an accepted fact that only human beings are responsible for the above enumerated disasters due to climate change and other actions of human beings and no other organism is neither capable of nor responsible, for the climate change. Here once again I would like to ask a last question to the esteemed readers whether the human beings are rightly termed as the *Ashraf-Ul-Maqhlooqat* (The Most eminent of created beings) or not? If he is correctly termed as "*Ashraf-Ul-Maqhlooqat*" (The Most eminent of created beings) why is he doing all acts which are not only dangerous for his own survival but is dangerous for the survival of all other living organisms also? If human beings are not correctly termed as "*Ashraf-Ul-Maqhlooqat*" then which species should be called as "*Ashraf-Ul-Maqhlooqat*"? (The Most eminent of created beings) (This article was first published in Souvenir 2014 of Retired Forest Officers Association of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh)

***If a drop of water falls in a lake, there is no identity.
But if it falls on a leaf of lotus, it shines like a pearl.
We need to choose the best place where we can shine.***

A SEQUEL TO QMK'S ARTICLE: "THE MOST EMINENT AMONG CREATED BEINGS"

By
Dr. B. Raghotham Rao Desai

The human being is no doubt considered as the highest of all created beings because he is more capable than all other living creatures — his intelligence is of a high order and this has enabled him to alter any existing conditions and overcome many limitations. Though poorly armed and small of nature when compared to a number of mammals, he has succeeded in subduing fierce animals and defeating hostile environments. He has ensured easy access to food, water, shelter, safety and companionship. It is surprising therefore that he is not as happy as his condition might suggest. Dissatisfaction dogs him because of the many challenges that he faces. What could they be?

His superior brain that has endowed him with many advantages burdens him with disadvantages as well. He, more than any animal, can remember his past which causes him to recall and brood over his failures. He can envisage a future, but it is one that is filled with uncertainties. Worst of all he knows that death is inevitable but is completely ignorant of what can follow. His mind stretches towards the benign Creator, but his faith is shaken when he sees avoidable suffering and cruelty. Denial of His existence is of no use either, because it robs him of ideals and hopes. In short, his ability to think and analyze is a boon as well as a bane, for

it makes him a prisoner of his own mind.

"Count no man happy until he is dead" said a Greek lawyer. Was he right?

Man always desires happiness and wishes to avoid sorrows. This is inherent in human nature. Nobody would like to face difficulties, hardships and misfortunes. It is everybody's dream to always have a smooth, hassle-free existence and avoid the undesirable as far as possible. But men are ignorant of the means to "achieve the desirable and avoid the undesirable." It is the knowledge "of the means above" that can help men to accomplish this task. It is the gradual removal of this ignorance by giving reasons for the evolution, dissolution of the universe, the unity of the individual self with the universal self, etc., is the aim of sacred texts and literature which are held in reverence by the followers of several religions, since there is no denial of the fact that men should lead a life of righteousness as enjoined in the said texts which are indeed moral codes and guides — though there is variation in achieving this aim.

When such firm understanding and awareness sets in, there is no room in the mind for anything contradictory to it, for, the two are mutually unsustainable. Admitting to anything contrary to such knowledge would be as foolish as saying that there is coldness in fire or immortality and

freedom from old age for men.

There are times when we willingly succumb to distractions and thus lose sight of our aims. When we do realize that we have gone astray, our natural response is one of denial. We often indulge in a blame game or find excuses for our lapses. Our ego prevents us from acknowledging our mistakes.

There are also times when we decide to drop the idea altogether because we have traversed too far from the goal post. At such times it is

natural for us to feel regressed and indulge in self-sympathy or self-reproach — none of the two can help us constructively.

On the other hand if we introspect we can zero in on our fault and take suitable measures to repair the condition. Patience and humility can go a long way in salvaging the situation.

Man's biggest and perhaps only challenge, then is to let go of fear and envy and to ask for guidance from the Higher Self during one's considerable yet impermanent tenure here on earth.

5 REASONS WHY FENUGREEK (METHI) SEEDS ARE GOOD FOR YOU

With a strong smell and bitter taste, fenugreek (*methi*) seeds are widely used as an herb, spice and vegetable in the Indian kitchen. Belonging to the family of Fabaceae, it is cultivated worldwide as a semi arid crop.

They come handy to prepare pickles, curries and salads and have immense health benefits. Fenugreek seeds are a rich source of various nutrients like carbohydrates, protein, calcium, phosphorus and iron.

Here are a few more reasons why fenugreek (*methi*) seeds are good for you:

- ❖ They are effective in reducing cholesterol levels.
- ❖ Due to presence of a compound called *galactomannan*, it helps combat against cardiovascular diseases.
- ❖ Eating fenugreek seeds also help in aiding digestion process and cures acidity.
- ❖ Applying paste of fenugreek seeds on scars works wonders as it helps cure sunburns, eczema and other skin problems.
- ❖ If you encounter hair fall problem, *methi* seed is the answer for it. Soak fenugreek seeds overnight and grind it into a fine paste. Apply this on the scalp for 10-15 minutes and then wash it with a mild shampoo

ECOLOGICAL SUCCESSION AT CLIMAX IS ALSO A CAUSE FOR MAN-ANIMALS' CONFLICTS!

By
B.M.T.Rajeev,

The man-animals' conflicts like crop depredation by elephant, black buck, wild boar, and bisons; cattle lifting by tigers and leopards; and human injuries or deaths by elephants, tigers, leopards, and bears have become common and a major cause for concern to the government in wildlife management, especially in Karnataka. The reasons for man-animals' conflicts are many like shrinkage and degradation of habitats, increase in population of wild animals, lack of corridors for movement of animals for spread of gene. In addition, '*ecological succession*' and invasion of forest floors by '*exotic weeds*' causing reduction in the '*carrying capacity*' of the wildlife habitats are also the reasons for the man-animals' conflicts as could be witnessed in the famous Bandipur Tiger Reserve and other Protected Areas (PAs) of Karnataka.

Bandipur Tiger Reserve (TR) has a long history of wildlife conservation, as it was started as a 'game sanctuary' in 1931 over 90 sq. km by the then Maharaja of erstwhile Mysore State exclusively for his hunting. It was extended over 800 Sq.km in 1941 and named as '*Venugopala Wildlife Park*' with a '*sanctum sanctorum*' over 60 Sq.km. This sanctum sanctorum was left to nature

without any forestry operations to provide undisturbed habitats to wildlife. This sanctum sanctorum of the erstwhile park was further continued as '*tourism zone*' with the establishment of Bandipur TR in 1973 over 880 sq. km including the entire Venugopala Park. Thus, the present tourism zone of Bandipur TR has a long history of wildlife conservation for more than 8 decades, since 1931; and the present tourism zone has a history of 7 decades of habitat management '*left to nature*' since 1941, as practiced in the present day wildlife management of '*core zone*' in TRs and the habitats in NPs. The tourism zone of Bandipur TR is the area now in "*ecological succession of vegetation*" at climatic climax and it is fit for analysis to decide on the pros and cons of the conditions of the vegetation to sustain the available population of wildlife.

Analysis of Vegetation in the tourism zone:

It is in the foot hills of Nilgiris, with tropical climate, where the average annual rainfall is about 625 mm from both the monsoons and the mean annual temperature ranges from 22 - 27 degree Celsius. The vegetation in the tourist zone which is limited to Bandipur RF was said to be - open forests with dwarf trees, meadows

and swamps with plenty of fodder resources. It was one of the most suitable habitats for herbivores like elephant, bison, sambar, chital, four horned antelope and barking deer and omnivorous like wild boar and sloth bears that supported the predators like tiger, leopard, wild dog and hyenas etc. and a host of other animals like reptiles, amphibians, fishes and birds as per the status report on the Bandipur sanctuary by the then Head of the Forest Department, YML Sharma in 1970s. The gregarious flowering of bamboo was said to be happened in 1960 and the dead bamboo was harvested for Paper mills. Natural regeneration of bamboo came up well in the tourism zone and the author himself was a witness for it since 1978 and again it has flowered in 2010s.

The vegetation in the tourism zone improved with the passage of time. This Dry Deciduous Forests had abundant fodder wealth for the herbivores (Ref: *First Management Plan of Bandipur TR, 1973 by S G Neginhal*). The herds of herbivores could be seen from the roads up to 1 km by the tourists till 1980s. The visibility of animals was excellent for tourists with ample opportunity for photography because of the openness and the light. The only obstruction was elephant grass.

By 1980s, the vegetation had all stages of vegetation (different stages of succession) with regeneration and abundant source of fodder

(grasses). The exotic weed *Lantana camara* was seen in fringes, along banks of streams/ water holes and in plantations of teak/ Eucalyptus. *Eupatorium odorata* and *Parthenium hysterophorus* were showing their heads here and there in opens. The TR management did not initiate any action to check these exotic & invasive weeds. The *Lantana* was considered to be beneficial to animals as its fruits were liked by birds, deer and bear and it was also considered as a good cover for small animals and also for predators, since, the fodder wealth was abundant. The exotic weeds were treated as part of succession along with local weed species like *Desmodiums*, *Indigoferas*, *Ixora*, *Lea chinensis*, *Termericis* etc.

By 1990s, the ecological succession of vegetation further improved exhibiting different storeys of vegetation most liked by diverse animals in the area. The regeneration of tree species, with lot of *Kydia calycina* was liked by elephants; bamboo and grasses growths were very conducive to rate Bandipur as one of the best habitats for wildlife. The improvement in the water regimes of the area was remarkable. The local weeds were looking dangerous and the *Lantana* was picking up fast.... the *Eupatorium* started establishing in patches with *Parthenium*. Even then, no plan was initiated to check the exotic weeds. (Ref: *The 20 years Review Report of Bandipur TR, 1993 by Sri B*

S Ramaiah& the author).

By Y2K: By the dawn of 21st century, the succession of vegetation started showing the signs of its '*climatic climax*'- the stage of aged trees, lack of regeneration of tree species, absence of tree spp. in the under storey became conspicuous. The exotic weeds (*Lantana*, *Eupatorium* & *Parthenium*) became rampant and started occupying the forest floor by giving no scope for the grasses (light demanders) to flourish.

The wild animals' population especially bison, sambar, chital, wild boar, elephant, leopard and tiger increased in numbers with demand for better resources for food, water, shelter and space for spreading of their gene. They started going out of PA more frequently in search of food/ water during pinch periods, creating more *man-animals conflicts*. The success rate of animals' sighting increased for the visitors along with the succession of vegetation.

By 2010s: The deciduous vegetation in the tourism zone attained '*ecological succession to the stage of climatic climax*'-culmination stage of succession or a stage of gray i.e. absence of different stages of vegetation, absence of regeneration, more of fuel wood load with more number of dead trees inviting fires; and the presence of flowered and dead bamboo and thick mat of under growths like *Lantana*,

Eupatorium and *Parthenium* wiped out the grasses beneath them; a state of non-conductive vegetation for the survival of herbivorous animals. The local weeds disappeared from the competition. The grasses degenerated and limited only to opens and some swamps and the elephant grass-*Imperata arundinacea* that was most common in this habitat found degenerated and lost to exotic weeds. But, the rate of success of tiger sighting improved in the tourism zone- since the tiger population considerably went up and tigers started moving in the safari roads and the view lines as they could not move in the forests infested with thick mat of weeds.

Tigers cannot dream of crossing the present vegetation even the elephant paths, which have been closed by prickly *Lantana* and other weeds. It is the case with other animals also, since the mat of exotic weeds is so thick and allows no animals to cross or no vegetation to come up below them. Only wild boar is happy to hide and move below these weeds. With this condition the prey animals- herbivores are forced to forage in open view lines/ road sides or meadows and predators find it easy to prey on them. Predators are lucky to have high success rate of predation with in their home range. Hence, there is more sighting of tigers in Bandipur TR tourism zone compared to previous years.

This sighting of tigers is most spectacular for the tourists, profitable for the tour operators and a boost to the tourism. The tourists think that the forests in Bandipur TR are dense, green and wealthy; animals are in plenty and wildlife management is good. In reality, this stage of *climatic climax of vegetation* is with full of fuel wood load prone for fire hazards; and this status is most disliked by the wild animals as it cannot meet the diverse food requirements of diverse animals. The herbivores started concentrating in fringes to indulge in crop raiding and predators following them and also indulging in lifting cattle and thus causing man-animals' conflicts.

The Management Practices: The Bandipur TR management is committed to total protection against fire, poaching, disturbances and non-interference with the vegetation that was initiated 4 decades back. Now, the vegetation has reached the stage of grey and it is non-conductive to sustain diverse animals. But, no plan is available to manipulate static vegetation in climax to make it conducive for diverse animals. The principle of wildlife management prescribes that the habitats should possess

different stages of vegetation or different stages of succession to meet the diverse food and cover requirements of diverse animals to be called as ideal habitat. This is possible with scientific manipulation of the vegetation in to different stages. Bandipur tourism zone in *climatic climax* is in need of scientific manipulation to overcome its climatic climax conditions. If not, it will face the severe fires and end up in deterioration of carrying capacity.

Possible Solutions: The remedy for the climatic climax conditions of the deciduous vegetation in PAs is a challenge to the wildlife management as it is a new problem and is going to be the big problem in future in all the deciduous habitats (PAs) left inviolate since 4 decades..... The possible resolution could be **reviewing the existing practice** of 'leave the habitats to nature' with manipulation of the habitats with controlling of weeds, removal of fuel wood load and rejuvenation of vegetation and grasses to improve the carrying capacity of the PAs.....and to resolve the man-animals' conflicts.

Stature is the charm of a man. Character is the charm in the stature. Knowledge is the charm in the character. And forgiveness is the glory of knowledge.

HISTORICAL EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM AT ATAPAKA OF KOLLERU WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

By
Sriramarao Bobbili

Kolleru is one of the largest Fresh Water lake in Asia and it is located between Krishna and Godavari Deltas. The lake serves as a natural Flood balancing reservoir for these two rivers. The lake is fed directly by water from Tammileru, Budameru canals and also connected by more than 60 inflowing drains.

In 1986, the MoEF, Government of India identified Kolleru as a wetland of National importance for intensive conservation and Management purposes under National Wetland Programme for its ecological and socio economic importance. With an intention to declare this area as Sanctuary, the Government of Andhra Pradesh issued a preliminary notification under section 18 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 vide G.O, Dt: 25.09.1995. After settlement of rights, Final notification for Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary has been issued under section 26-A of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, vide G.O.Ms No. 120, dt: 04.10.1999. The notification covers an area of 77,138 Acres spread over 2 mandals in Krishna District and 7 mandals in West Godavari District and covers an area of 308 Km². The lake was also designated as wet land of international importance in 2002 under the international

Ramsar Convention. The lake is having 50 bed villages and 98 belt villages.

Ecological Importance of Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary: Being one of the largest Fresh Water lakes in Asia, the lake has sustained the rich native Flora and Fauna.

Flora: Invasive species such as *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Pistia stratiotes*, *Salvinia molesta*, *Ipomea aquatic*, *Nymphae* and *Phragmites karka* are predominant species in the area. Generally these species interfere with navigation but they offers important habitat for a large number of birds.

Fauna: The lake Kolleru has been habitat for a variety of water fowls, resident, migratory, rare and endangered species since time immemorial. It acts as a staging post and refueling station for migratory birds on their onward journey. The waterfowl in the lake includes various species of storks, ducks, teals, egrets, herons, ibises, bitterns, cormorants and also rare species such as Garganeys, shovellers, Poachards etc. Mr. Mackenzie, the then Collector (1883) of Krishna District in the Madras Presidency recorded that colonies of Pelicans fostered in several villages. In 1949, Professor Nilakantan discovered breeding

colonies of Spot billed Pelicans in this area. In 1972, Mr. Pushpa Kumar, the then Chief Wildlife Warden, recorded some pelicans. But, on visiting again on 1973, he could not find any Pelicans. The species considered a “globally threatened species” under the category “vulnerable”.

Exploitation of Kolleru Lake and Restoration:

In 1940's the British Government granted *pattas* to the local villagers on payment of market value for the lands. In 1954 the Government of Andhra Pradesh accelerated rice cultivation and initiated cooperative farming in the region by introducing 93 farming societies. By 1969, almost entire lake area was bought under cultivation and bunds were constructed to keep the water out to protect the crops. However, the cyclone in 1969 devastated the agriculture, because of this most of the people had become skeptical of agriculture and abandoned it.

In 1970's the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri. J. Vengala Rao encouraged fish farming by establishing registered cooperative societies and loans were provided to the societies. In due course, the principal land use became pisciculture which became most profitable.

At this time, the better off sections of community taken the entire situation into their hands and taken the lands of the societies on lease basis and started large scale Aquaculture. By 1990's the aquaculture in this area was totally under the control of rich people.

In these Circumstances, Dr. T. Patanjali Sastri an

environmentalist filed a writ Petition vide 33587/98 in 1998 in the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh pleading for appropriate measures to restore the Kolleru lake to its pristine glory. Through another Writ Petition in 2001, in the same court Mr. Y. Nagendranath, a former drainage board member, sought for the removal of all kinds of obstructions in the Kolleru lake to facilitate free flow of water and also to prevent discharges of all types of effluents into Sanctuary area.

To counter the above petitions, several individual farmers and cooperative fish culture societies also filed many writ petitions in the Hon'ble High Court, requesting the court not to disturb fish tanks located within the Sanctuary area.

The Division bench of the Hon'ble High Court, Andhra Pradesh by its judgment dated 30.07.2001 has upheld the validity of Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary notification vide G.O.Ms No. 120 dt. 04.10.1999 and directed that no Pisciculture to be undertaken within the Sanctuary area.

Mr. Pranay Waghrey, Executive Director of Nallamalai Foundation filed an application (No. 381) before the CEC (Central Empowered Committee) raising the issue of destruction and degradation of Kolleru lake in general and Kolleru Wildlife sanctuary in particular. The CEC heard parties concerned on 08.07.2004 and 31.01.2006.

In a parallel development, heavy floods

occurred in the month September, 2005, caused devastating losses to Agriculture in thousands of hectares in upstream areas of West Godavari and Krishna Districts. The inundation continued for a prolonged period of 30 to 40 days. This alarming situation drew the attention of the State Government and led to the allegation that the fish ponds in the lake and surrounding areas are responsible for the floods and resultant inundation and losses. The Cabinet Sub-Committee headed by the Minister of Agriculture after touring in that area directed the Collectors of the West Godavari and Krishna Districts to take immediate measures to remove the obstructions in the lake to ensure free flow of flood water.

Immediately, the destruction of Fish tanks started and ended in Four Phases. The First Phase of Kolleru operation started in the month of November, 2005. The Second Phase started in the First week of January, 2006. The Third Phase started in the month of February, 2006. The final Phase i.e. Fourth Phase started in the month of May, 2006 after C.E.C declared its decision to demolish all the remaining fish ponds located in the Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary. On 10.04.2006, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India instructed the State Government to implement the directions of the C.E.C. After this the Fourth Phase started in the month of May, 2006. The total operation completed within 15th June 2006, the deadline fixed by the C.E.C.

Development of Eco-tourism: After

completion of my A.R.O training, I joined as F.R.O in the Kaikaluru Wildlife Management Range of Wildlife Management Division, Eluru in the month February, 2008. At that time the Sanctuary was facing a lot of problems in the form encroachments, illegal repairs to the demolished fish tanks, illegal use motors for draining the water from the Sanctuary area, Court litigations etc. In addition to these problems, poaching of wild birds was also a major problem. But with the cooperation of my superior officers and subordinate staff, we used to tackle the problems in an effective manner. In addition to that the Department also concentrated on the developmental works in the Sanctuary area and also development of Eco-tourism at Atapaka. Atapaka is very near to Kaikaluru town. At this place about a 300 Acres of water tank, which was demolished during Kolleru operation was present. In that tank on the Eastern side a few Toddy plants were present. On those plants we have noticed a few Pelican birds and other species of birds. On the Western side of the water tank an old E.E.C building and two other small buildings were present.

As per the instructions and able guidance of Sri. A.K. Sinha, I.F.S, the then Conservator of Forests, the D.F.O, WLM, Eluru and the Sub D.F.O, Kaikaluru, we have renovated the old E.E.C building and also placed the native bird photographs in the

building. Within in the water tank to provide roosting and nesting facilities for the birds, we have raised earthen mounds by collecting the soil from the demolished fish tank bunds. After raising the earthen mounds, in the monsoon season we have planted *Acacia nilotica*, *Barringtonia acutangula*, *Syzygium cumini* plants on the mounds.

The earthen mounds used to provide resting place for the increasing bird population. To provide nesting facilities for the birds, the senior officers instructed me to erect iron stands in the center of the water tank. I have followed their instructions and erected 5 Iron stands; each Iron stand was having a circle shaped Iron mesh at the top to provide resting facility for the birds. In the initial days, the birds did not prefer to rest on the Iron stands, but slowly and steadily the birds used to come and rest on the stands.

As part of providing amenities for the visitors, the department has laid one walking track having a length of about 250 mts. from Entry point of the aviary to the EEC building and we have also provided cement benches on the walking track for the visitor to sit. The department also purchased one high speed boat and two pedal boats for the visitors, by using these boats the visitors used to go inside the tank and watched the birds from nearest distance. Slowly and steadily the population of the pelicans as well as other birds increased. The number of visitors has been slowly and steadily increasing. The people surrounding the Atapaka village as well

as tourists used to call this place as "Pelican Paradise". In the month of September, 2010, I was transferred from Kaikaluru Wildlife Management Range.

In the month of December, 2014 I have visited the Atapaka to my surprise the bird population especially Pelican population almost increased 10 to 15 times. The plants which were planted during my time were grown to a sufficient height and are now providing roosting and nesting facilities for the birds. After seeing the success of erecting 5 number of Iron stands during my time, now the department has erected around 150 number of Iron stands. Hundreds of birds are taking rest on the stands and also noticed hundreds of baby birds all around the tank area. I have also noticed a multifold increase in the tourist population. The EEC Centre was also improved by providing Bird Call Interactive wing and 3D relief maps, a children park outside the EEC building etc. A new ticket Counter was also constructed at the entry point.

The success of Atapaka is a live example for Eco-tourism development. The success of Atapaka Ecotourism is dedicated to the far sightedness and determination of all cadres'of officers, who are working for the protection and improvement of Kolleru wildlife Sanctuary.

(Editor's Note : About 45 years back a telugu film by name Kolleti Kapuram was produced on the Kolleru wetlands)

Birth Day Greetings

We wish the following born on the dates mentioned
“ A very Happy Birth Day ”

S.No. Name of Members

	Sarva Sri	
1.	M.G.Purushotham Naidu	10-02-1932
2.	A.V.Ramakrishna Rao	23-02-1935
3.	K.Rajasekhar	12-02-1936
4.	Sultan Mohiuddin	17-02-1942
5.	L.Krishna Bhoopal Rao	02-03-1942
6.	V.V.Rajam	02-03-1945
7.	B.Chandramouli	08-02-1944
8.	P.Bhushanam	10-02-1947
9.	A.Kishan	20-02-1952
10.	P.Rajender Reddy	27-02-1956
11.	Mohd. Thayyab	16-02-1956
12.	Mohd. Thayyab	16-02-1956

8.	P.Ramulu	14-02-1963
9.	K. Mohan Rao	04-02-1963
10.	Chiranjeevi Chowdhary	16-02-1965
11.	Sharda Prasad	20-02-1966
12.	Ch.Suryanarayana	15-02-1966
13.	R.K. Suman	03-02-1966
14.	Smt.A.Soni Bala Devi	01-03-1974
15.	VSNV Prasad	10-02-1979
16.	K.Vinod Kumar	05-03-1979
17.	Smt.P.Shyamala	12-02-1980
18.	Ms.J.Vasantha	23-02-1980
19.	V.Saibaba	04-03-1980

S.No. Name of Serving Officers

	Sarva Sri	
1.	B.S.S.Prasad	01-03-1956
2.	P.K.Sarangi	06-02-1959
3.	Anil Kumar Mourya	21-02-1960
4.	N.Kondala Rao	03-02-1961
5.	Smt.R.Shobha	01-02-1962
6.	Sanjay Gupta	05-03-1962
7.	Y.Narasimha Rao	02-03-1962

Secretary



NEWS AND NOTES

This Is What Caused the Biggest Extinction

in Earth's History: -Extinction is a scary word and a scary topic — but it's one that needs talking about. Why? Because it seems to be happening now. Scientists believe Earth is on the verge of its sixth mass extinction, an event that could devastate ecosystems all over the globe.

Habitat destruction and overexploitation are some of the major reasons so many plants and animals are disappearing around the world, and most scientists agree that human-caused climate change is soon to be the number one threat.

The topic has inspired fascination and dismay from scientists and science communicators alike. Earlier this year, science writer Elizabeth Colbert published her book "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History," and the Smithsonian Channel recently released a new documentary called "Mass Extinction: Life at the Brink." Both works describe some of Earth's previous mass extinctions and explore what they can teach us about the impending one.

The Great Dying

Out of the previous five extinctions, the most famous is the Permian extinction — the worst of them all. It happened about 250 million years ago, and scientists believe it killed off about 90 percent of all life on Earth, earning it the

nickname "The Great Dying." Clues from the fossil record give us information about what species went extinct and when, but how the extinction happened in the first place has been a puzzling question for scientists.

One of the biggest theories involves a series of volcanic eruptions, which took place about 250 million years ago in Siberia. According to Smithsonian's "Mass Extinction," these eruptions spewed enough lava to bury the continental US under a layer 1,000 feet deep. In fact, there's an area of about 2 million square kilometers in Siberia that's still covered by volcanic rock today — scientists call it the "Siberian traps."

But it's not the lava that would have caused the extinction: The eruptions would have also released massive amounts of climate-changing carbon dioxide into the air — enough to cause the kind of disturbance that might kill off nearly every life form on Earth.

Carbon dioxide is a heat-trapping gas. With trillions of tons of CO₂ being released into the atmosphere during the eruptions, the Earth would have grown warmer over time. Many land animals would have been unable to adapt to the rising temperatures.

In addition, the ocean would have absorbed much of the excess carbon dioxide in the air.

When CO₂ mixes with water, a chemical reaction occurs that causes the sea to become more acidic. This phenomenon, called ocean acidification, can be devastating for certain kinds of marine animals, like corals, because it prevents them from completing the chemical processes that allow them to build their protective shells. Many of these life forms would have gone extinct as a result.

What we don't know

There are still some mysteries to be solved. Research published last March in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* suggests that the Permian extinction took place over an extremely rapid timescale: only about 60 million years, or "a geological blink of an eye," according to "The New York Times". The Times article also reports that most scientists believe the Siberian eruptions lasted 1–2 million years, so nobody is quite sure yet why the extinction itself happened so fast.

There are also other theories besides the Siberian eruptions, although they tend to circle back to the idea of massive amounts of greenhouse gases changing Earth's atmosphere. For instance, some researchers believe that a microbe called *Methanosarcina* belched tremendous quantities of methane into the atmosphere, changing the climate and causing many of the same issues the Siberian eruptions

theory describes.

For now, it's impossible to know the truth for sure.

These are issues worth studying, though. With Earth at the cusp of yet another mass extinction, scientists are eager to understand the processes that led to such events in the past, especially if they're linked to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. With human-caused climate change at the forefront of scientific discussions these days, information on past carbon-related events could give scientists insight into how we can deal with, or even prevent, such catastrophes in the future.

It could also help us understand and deal with the impacts of human-caused climate change that are coming.

Centre's Rs.5, 800-crore investment plan, a big boost to solar power: - Even as the solar power industry is expecting more favorable policy and funding support in the upcoming Union Budget, Central Governments proposed spend to the tune of Rs.5, 800 crores in solar sector is expected to give a much-needed fillip to the industry.

It has been proposed to establish 1,000 MW of grid-connected solar PV power projects by Central Public Sector units (CPSUs) and other government organizations. These projects are

to be established with VGF (viability gap fund) support of Rs.1,000 crores over a period of three years (2015-18).

Organizations such as NTPC, NHPC, CIL, IREDA and Indian Railways, among others have agreed to set up solar plants.

In addition to central PSUs, Defense organizations will also be joining the solar bandwagon. With Rs.750 crores supports through VGF under the National Solar Mission, Defense establishments under Ministry of Defense and Para Military Force under Ministry of Home Affairs will set up over 300 MW of grid-connected and off-grid solar PV power projects during 2014-2019. . These two schemes will have to use only locally made PV cells and modules, a move aimed at helping the domestic manufacturers.

Meanwhile, Centre has also proposed to establish 25 Solar Parks, each with a capacity of 500 MW and above with a target of over 20,000 MW of solar power installed capacity over a period of 5 years (2014-19). This scheme is expected to entail an investment of Rs.4,050 crores. 12 States — Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Odisha — have so far given consent for building Solar Parks.

Industry experts point out a wave of optimism

in the industry and expect 2015 would be an eventful year for the sector. PashupathyGopalan, Head of Indian operations and President-Asia Pacific, Sun Edison, feels that India has developed enough talent pool over the past 5 years to execute solar projects rapidly. So, solar is not a new technology anymore and the concept of mega solar plants is very much happening. "It is not something which is difficult. And, solar projects generally use unusable barren land. Those are the lands that are not used for agriculture and located away from cities," he added.

Black cobra's bite kills white tiger at Indore zoo, snake paralyzed: - A black cobra killed a white tiger in its enclosure at Indore zoo on Saturday 28th December after a fight that left the snake paralyzed.

On Saturday morning, the zoo officials found the two-year-old tiger, Rajan, unconscious, bleeding from the nose and foaming at the mouth. Though doctors were rushed in, he was declared dead. Postmortem has confirmed the tiger died due to snake bite.

And away from dead tiger's paws, inside a small burrow in the enclosure, the snake hid itself. The tiger had died after inflicting a bloody blow on the snake. Indore zoo in-charge Dr.Uttam Yadav said the cobra had been paralyzed in the fight and they were trying to save it.

"We will start the treatment of cobra from Sunday as it is angry today (Saturday)," added Yadav.

About 2 years ago, a snake had entered the enclosure of two tigers, but the tigers killed it after a brief encounter. Rajan's death is a blow to Indore zoo as he was brought to zoo about a month ago from Chhattisgarh for breeding. The zoo is now left with three white tigresses — Diya, Shivani and their mother Sita.

Hand Over your dry waste and get paid for

It. BENGALURU: If you have a bag full of papers, milk packets or plastic bags and want to earn some money out of it, here's where you head: take the road under the Silk Board flyover along Hosur Road and you come across these colorful makeshift garage stores. This is the new garbage market opened by BBMP, where you can come and sell your segregated dry waste.

On Saturday, BBMP opened the market for people to sell 20 types of dry waste and make capital out of their efforts to segregate. Any individual household or apartment or gated community can segregate their dry waste and sell it to this market that will be open on all days of the week from 10am to 6pm.

The move comes after the not-so-good response to various dry waste collection points set up in different parts of the city. The centers were not able to draw people due to lack of marketing

and none to champion the cause. That's when BBMP decided to set up what's essentially a mega dry waste collection centre with a private entity as market operator-Nirmal Enviro Solutions. This firm will pay you as you sell the waste right at the spot. BBMP spent Rs. 25 lakhs to set up this Centre.

Vinod Reddy, MD, Nirmal Enviro Solutions, said, "The low-grade plastic is very harmful to environment and regulations have not been strong enough to ban their use completely. Our intention is to promote segregation and tap this low-grade plastic that can be combusted and/or reused in other forms. We have tie-ups with recyclers and companies who will accept the different types of dry waste."

The dry waste collected by BBMP will also be further segregated in the Centre and bought by the company. The money will be split between pourakarmikas or drivers of the cans that ferry the waste, Reddy said.

Mayor N Shanthakumari said the move was not only a good effort to manage the garbage %problem dynamically but also the beginning of the rightful use of a public space like the road underneath the flyover.

BBMP solid waste management chief engineer Venkatesh MR told STOI that the BBMP plans to set up four more such markets across the city but is yet to identify places.

Tiger population goes up in India: -

New Delhi, Jan 20 (IANS) Union Environment and Forest Minister Prakash Javadekar Tuesday said while the population of tigers faced a threat globally, India recorded an increase to the tune of 30.5 percent in the recent national estimation. "The tiger population has gone up from 1,706 to 2,226 tigers...We are proud of our efforts. This corresponds to a little over 30 percent increase," Javadekar said.

He was releasing the tiger estimation report at the inaugural session of the meeting of field directors and chief wildlife wardens on best practices and wildlife crime monitoring systems organised by National Tiger Conservation Authority.

The report - All India Tiger Estimation 2014 - indicated a considerable jump in India's tiger population. In a consistent escalation in the last decade, the numbers scaled from 1,411 in 2006 to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014.

"At a time when the global tiger population is under threat, it is heartening that India's tiger numbers are increasing. This was not the situation a decade ago," the minister said.

A total of 3,78,118 sq km of forest area in 18 tiger states was surveyed with Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala registering an improvement in tiger population,

said an official statement.

As many as 1,540 individual tigers were identified through images collected from 9,735 camera trap locations across the country's tiger landscapes.

Because of the extensive survey effort and camera trap results collected from 43 tiger reserves as well as national parks, which identified nearly 70 percent of the estimated tiger number, these figures are most accurate ever, said director Dipankar Ghose, Species and Landscapes at World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) India, a partner in the survey.

Feeling proud of rising to the challenge of saving the tiger, Javadekar said India turned the situation around and was now "ready to exchange tigers and share our good practices with other countries".

Crediting effective tiger habitat management and community participation to streamline their conservation, Javadekar attributed the improved result to the success of official measures like Special Tiger Protection Force, Special Programme for Orphan Tiger cubs, efforts to control poaching, and initiatives to minimize human-animal conflict and encroachment.

He said India was willing to donate tiger cubs to the international community and contribute

to the global effort to save the tiger.

Lauding the Tiger Reserves Management and Project Tiger Team for the achievement, Javadekar said India's good practices could be adopted and practiced by the international community as a step towards sustainable forest management.

Ghose said the number 2,226 is an estimation premised on the statistical calculation of the data available, while the real count may lie anywhere between 1,945 and 2,491.

He credited the front line workers for efficient tiger reserve management as well as the strong political will at the centre and the state that was a "tremendous support" in ensuring "more than half of the world's tiger population was in India". However, there was "no room for complacency" he cautioned. "The tough task is to maintain that lead... We need to ensure that they (tigers) are safe for posterity."

Sri Lankan snake sighted in Seshachalam: -

Chrysopelea taprobanica Smith 1943, a snake considered endemic to the dry and intermediate zones of Sri Lanka, has been sighted for the first time in India in the Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve, Andhra Pradesh.

The development, which significantly expands the known area of presence of this species, also

indicates its probable movement between the dry zones of peninsular India and Sri Lanka, which remained connected around 17,000 years ago.

The rare sighting has found a mention in the tenth anniversary issue of 'Checklist', the journal of biodiversity data. The January 2015 edition released on Thursday indicates that the sighting of the snake in Chamala area of Seshachalam is the first-ever confirmed record of *C. taprobanica* from India and anywhere outside Sri Lanka.

The study was conducted by researchers Bubesh Gupta and N.V. Sivaram Prasad of the Biodiversity Lab in the Tirupati Wildlife Management Circle under the guidance of the Conservator of Forest M. Ravikumar, in collaboration with Simon T. Maddock of The Natural History Museum, London and V. Deepak of Centre for Ecological Studies, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.

In fact, an unidentified specimen suspected to be *chrysopelea taprobanica* was sighted in the year 2000 in Rishi Valley, Andhra Pradesh and even photographed by V.Santharam, but the specimen was not collected. "In November 2013, we collected the specimen in the dry deciduous forest of Chalama and conducted morphological studies and DNA test to prove that it is the same," Mr. Bubesh Gupta told *The Hindu*. (Pls see last cover page for photo)

THE MAGNIFICENT AND ANCIENT AJANTA CAVES

According to archaeologists, construction of the Ajanta caves in Maharashtra, India, began about 2200 years ago. Over hundreds of years of work and more than 30 monuments were laboriously cut into the rock face of the mountains. According to speculation, the use of the caves stopped around 1000AD for unknown reasons, letting a thick jungle canopy grow around them, hiding them away for many generations.

No human eye saw the caves again until centuries later, when, in 1819, an Englishman by the name of John Smith was hunting a tiger when he discovered a hidden doorway to one of the temples. We know this because he unfortunately left his name on the wall of the temple - and a date, which can still be seen today.

But although that first English discoverer did not go immediately public with his discovery, the existence of the caves became known, and soon after Indian and European tourists started pouring into the ancient site - after much digging and cleaning that is (the caves were home to many species of animals for centuries).

Experts have dated the caves from the second century BC - 200 years before the birth of Christ. Their function seems to be ritualistic, used as prayer halls. Much use of Roman design is evident in the columns and arches of the caves. The hard rock face of the caves was apparently chiseled with rough tools and even bare hands.

It seems that the first hallowed caves were dug during the time of The Sâtavâhana Empire, which dates back to about 230BC.

Almost every surface but the floor is covered in paintings - literally. They have lost much of their former glory, of course, but efforts are being made to restore them. Poems are also painted on the walls - 547 of them - which tell stories of Buddha's previous lives.

To create them, a chisel was used to make room for plaster on the walls which was spread on the surface. Before it dried, the painter would paint on it, soaking it into the plaster so it became part of the surface. This method has been proven to survive over 2000 years.

No one knows why the caves were deserted, and we may never know the answer to this mystery. But they continue to draw many visitors who marvel at the art of the ancients that came before them. (For photos please see last cover page)**Universal formula** Swami Vivekananda said "there is no power in the universe to interfere with CAUSE AND EFFECT theory. It is universally applicable to all human beings at all times irrespective of religion, faith, rituals, etc. The circumstances of our birth depend upon our past deeds. We reap what we sow. Deeds are three types. 1. Experiencing the results of past deeds 2. Deeds carried over for future experience 3. Good deeds for future good results. Unfortunately we are bound by tradition of our ancestors and have no choice to use our discretion. Ultimately the life of every individual depends on his or her deeds." "There is no power in the universe to interfere with CAUSE AND EFFECT THEORY" Contributed by Sri P.V. Krishna Murthy *(Pls see last cover page for photo)*

LEGAL NOTES

Nagarhole Budakattu Hakku Vs. State of Karnataka & Ors And

M/s Gateway Hotels & Gateway Resorts Ltd Vs. Nagarhole Budakattu Hakku

Nagarhole National Park was constituted in the year 1983. It has an area of 571.55 Sq. Km. in the districts of Mysore and Coorg.

In a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), the petitioners challenged the legality and propriety of creating leasehold rights in certain properties situated within the precincts of the Nagarhole National Park under lease deed dated 25.6.1994 by the Government of Karnataka in favor of M/s Gateway Hotels and Gateway Resorts Ltd. for running their business of boarding, lodging and restaurant for a period of 18 years.

The case was heard by the Hon'ble Justice G. Bharuka of the High Court of Karnataka and it was observed that on and after the declaration by the State Government of its intention to declare an area as National Park under Se. 35 (1) of the Wildlife Protection Act for the purpose of preserving wildlife therein or for reasons of ecological importance of a forest area, no one can acquire any right in, on or over the land comprised therein either by way of transfer within the meaning of Transfer of Property Act, 1882 or by easement or license as understood under the Easement Act, 1882.

The Court further observed that the State Government has assigned a portion of the forest

land by way of lease or otherwise thereby creating a right in the properties in question which forms a part of the National Park, a reserved forest in favor of the lessees which is a private company without seeking the prior approval of the Central Government. There is an absolute prohibition on the grant of such rights under Sec. 20 read with Sec. 35 (3) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. As such the grant of lease in question is void and cannot be acted upon by the Hotel and Resorts Ltd. Further, the transaction is also hit by Sec. 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, for want of prior approval of the Central Government

The court said that there cannot be any escape from directing M/s Gateway Hotels and Gateway Resorts Ltd. immediately to stop all its activities on the forest land and hand over its possession to the Government. The PIL succeeded and it was allowed with costs.

Aggrieved by the judgment, M/s Gateway Hotels and Gateway Resorts Ltd. filed appeal which was heard by a Division Bench of the High Court of Karnataka, comprising the Hon'ble Justice R. Sethi and the Hon'ble Justice G. Goud. Their Lordships were in agreement with the single judge on the point of application of the

Forest Conservation Act to the area in question. But the Division Bench has taken a different view on the acquisition of right under Sec. 20 of the Wildlife Protection Act.

Sec. 20 of the Wildlife Protection Act prohibits acquiring any right in, on or over the land regarding which declaration is issued under Sec. 18. Their Lordships explained the scope and meaning of the expression 'acquisition', with reference to its dictionary meaning. What is prohibited under Sec. 20 is acquiring any right. It may be equated with the term 'transfer'. Acquisition in relation to land would mean the possession as an owner or purchaser or as dominant user of the property according to his wishes and desires. The impugned lease deed, therefore, could not be termed to be amounting to acquisition of right in or over the land forming part of the National Park.

Their Lordships have adverted to the relevant laws, considered the grievance of the PIL petitioners, the contentions of the appellants as well as those of the Government of Karnataka, and following the rulings of the Supreme Court allowed the appeal in part and held that ———

1. The judgment of the single judge in so far as it

declares the impugned order and the lease deed to be contrary to Sec. 20 of the Wildlife Protection Act, is set aside.

2. The respondent State and the appellants are at liberty to seek the approval of the Central Government in terms of Sec. 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, which applied for, may be granted or refused strictly in accordance with the provisions of law.

3. Till such time the approval is granted, the appellant–hotel shall not undertake any renovation/modification activity on the basis of the impugned orders and the lease deed.

The court also laid down guidelines, that in the event of receiving approval of the Central Government, for constituting committee representing officials, representatives of public including tribals etc. to monitor towards completion of the works and compliance with the various laws. If the approval of the Central Government is not received, the State shall be obliged to revoke the lease.

The appeal is partly allowed with costs on 11.4.1997

A.I.R. 1997 Kar 288 & 1999 (5) KarLJ 63
K.B.R

Whether you have Maruti or BMW, the road remains the same. Whether you travel economy class or business, your destination does not change. Whether you have the Titan or Rolex, the time is the same. Whether you have apple Samsung or lava people who call you remain the same. There is nothing wrong in dreaming a luxurious life. What needs to be taken care of is to not let the NEED become GREED. Because needs can always be met...but greed can never be fulfilled. - Rajnikanth.

(Contributed by Sri K. B. Ram Reddy)

“నేను”

వి.వి.హరిప్రసాద్

నేనా !

ఎవరంటే ఏంచెప్పను?

పైయోళ్ళు అంటే నాకు దడ

కిందోళ్ళకు మాత్రం నేనంటే దడ దడ

నా పైవాడికి నేనొక గులాంనైతే

కిందోడికి మాత్రం నవాబును.

చిల్లర జనాలంటే నాకు మహా చులకన

నాతో పనంటూ వస్తారు

ఆగమంటే ఆగమాగం చేస్తారు

“గీతం” సంగతేంటంటే

జీతం ఉందికదా అంటారు

అందుకే నాకోసం పస్తులుండైనా

వస్తూ పోతూ

చెప్పులరిగేలా తిరిగి తిరిగి ఛస్తారు.

నాకు “నెత్తిన కళ్ళు” అనే ప్రతీడికి

నేనంటే మహా కుళ్ళంటాను

శతాధిక కోట్ల జన బాహుళ్యంలో

భారతావనిలో సామాన్యుడి భరతం పట్టే

నాలాంటోళ్ళు కొందరే

మా బ్రతుకు వడ్డించిన విస్తరి

నేనంటే మాటలా మరి !

నేనో మేధావి నంటే

గిట్టనోళ్ళు మాత్రం “మేత” ఆవునంటారు

రాజకీయ పెద్దలతో నే కలిస్తే

స్వాములు అవుతాయంటే నే నొప్పను

నే నెవరా ?

తెల్ల కార్డు ఇచ్చినా నేనే

నల్లా కు నీళ్ళు ఇచ్చినా నేనే !

ఖాకీ చొక్కా నాదే

తెల్ల కాలరూ నాదే

అంతెందుకు బిల్లు కలెక్టరు, జిల్లా కలెక్టరు

ఇద్దరూ మా నాణానికి బొమ్మా బొరుసులు

అంతేకాదు

సామాన్యుడి గుండెల్లో నేనో భయాన్ని

కిందోళ్ళ మనస్సుల్లో ఓ జంకును

అలా ఒప్పుకోకుంటే నేనో బొంకును

నేనేం అల్లాటప్పాగాడినా

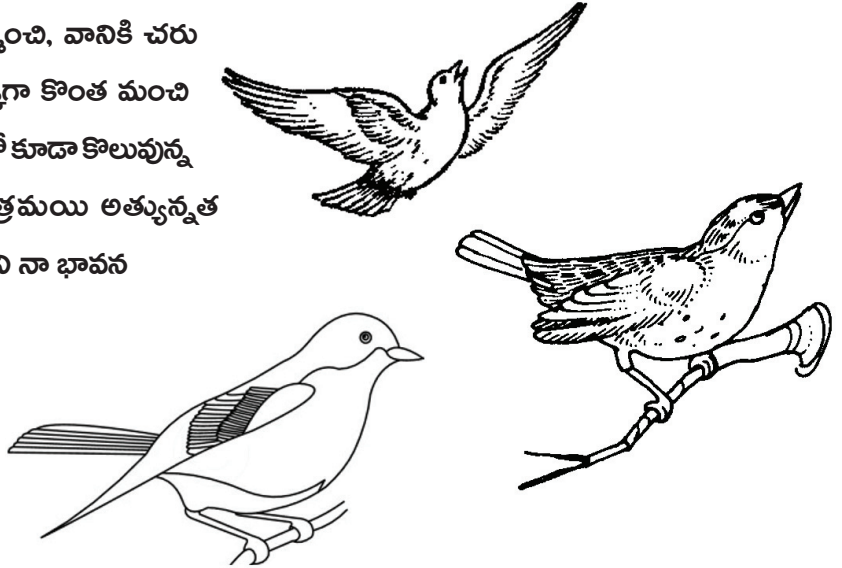
తెలియకపోవడానికి

నేనో సర్కారు అధికారిని !!

జీవ వైవిధ్యం

రచన : ఉషా రాజవరం

జీవ వైవిధ్యమును మానవుడు కాపాడాలి ఎందుకంటే భూమి పై భగవంతుడు సృష్టించిన జీవ రాశులు 84 లక్షలు ప్రతి జన్మను అంటే కీటకము, జల చరము, గగన చరము, వృక్ష జంతు జాలముల జన్మల నుండి మనావుడు ఈ జన్మలో మానవునిగా జన్మించాడు. ఇక పై జన్మము ను మరల నీచ జన్మలకు పడిపోకుండా పూర్వ జన్మ వాసనలు కొద్దిగా ఉన్నా దైవ బలముతో మానవత్వముతో తన తోటి జీవ రాశులపై మానవత్వముతో ఉంటూ వాటిని కాపాడుతూ మంచి పనులు చేస్తూ ఉంటే భగవంతుని నోచుకొని ఉన్నతమైన స్థానం సంపాదించి కడకు మహాత్ముడౌతాడు... పిచ్చుకలు ఒకప్పుడు అమ్మ చాటలో బియ్యం చెరుగుతుంటే కింద పడ్డ వడ్లు నూకలను ముచ్చట్లాడుతూ ఏరుకునేవి... సందడిగా పిల్లలు వాటి చుట్టూ తిరుగుతూ ఉంటే అవి కూడా సరదాగా కిచ కిచమంటూ కొద్ది దూరం ఎగిరి మళ్ళీ తిరిగి దగ్గరకు విచ్చ ఒక్కొక్క గింజను ఏరుకొని తింటూ ఉంటే చూడ ముచ్చట వేస్తూ ఎన్నో గంటలు గడిచిపోయేవి. మరి ఈ నాడు మానవుడు చెట్లను నరికి ఆ స్థలములలో ప్లాట్ లు కట్టి, వాని పక్కన సెలక టవరకలు కూడా కట్టగా, అవి వదిలే రేడియేషన్ వలన పిచ్చుకల జాతికే నేడు ప్రమాదం సంభవించింది. భగవంతుని సృష్టినే మానవుడు ఇలా సవాలు చేస్తే త్వరలో తన జీవితమే ఈ ప్రపంచములో పెను సవాలుగా మారుననుట సత్య దూరము కాదు, కానేరదు కనుక ఇప్పటికైనను మానవుడు తను చేసిన తప్పులు సరి దిద్దుకొనుటకై చెట్లను పెంచి ఎన్నో పిచ్చుకలకు ఆలవాలమైనటుల చేసినచో, అటులనే పిచ్చుకలు, ఇతర పక్షులకు, పావురాలకు, చక్కని పిచ్చుక గూళ్ళను నిర్మించి, వానికి చరు ధాన్యములను చల్లి, ఒక ప్రక్కగా కొంత మంచి నీరు పాత్రను పెట్టినచో వాటిలో కూడా కొలువున్న భగవంతుని కరుణకు పాత్రమయి అత్యున్నత స్థానమునకు పాత్రుడవుతాడని నా భావన



భూగోళం భగ్గుమంటుంది

రచన : కొండా మోహన్

ఆకాశం అల్లెతున్నది
 భూగోళం బుల్లెతున్నది
 మనిషి బ్రతుకు మసియైతున్నది
 భావి తరం ఏ కానున్నది?
 మన తాతలు తండ్రులందరూ
 మన కోసం కాపాడినది
 మన తరానికిచ్చిన కానుక
 అమేయమగు ప్రకృతి సంపద!
 వందలు వేవేల ఏళ్ళుగా
 కాపాడిన అటవీ సంపద
 స్వార్థమనే కాలకూటమున
 నేడది నాశనమౌతున్నది!!
 నాగరికపు ముసుగును కప్పి
 శాస్త్రమనే సాకును చెప్పి
 అశాస్త్రీయ విధమున జగతిని
 వనక్షీణం చేసెను మనిషి!
 నేటి మనిషి నీతిని తప్పగ
 ఋతువులు తమ రీతులు తప్పెను
 పచ్చదనం కనుమరుగవగా
 భూగోళం భగభగ మనెను!!
 ప్రకృతి కెదులీదామంటే
 మనిషి బ్రతుకు సర్వనాశనం
 ప్రకృతితో మమేకమైతే
 భూలోకం సత్యశ్యామలం!
 ఇకనైనా కళ్ళు తెరుద్దాం
 వేవేలుగ చెల్లు నాటడాం
 భూగోళం హరితవనంగా
 విలసిల్లగా చేయి కలుపుదాం!!



The Sole coal producer in South India and a key partner in the country's economic and industrial progress, Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL) is more than committed to caring for the environment. Company's mission statement aptly reflects the emphasis given to protection of environment and ecology. Company has established benchmark practices and internationally accepted soil conservation, Overburden bio-engineering measures in its Open Cast mines. Mine plans include development of Siltation ponds, timely back filling and regeneration of original species on the back filled areas etc.



- Monitoring of air / water / noise / ambient pollution at each mine on a regular basis. Establishment of 16 effluent treatment plants (Oil and Grease traps) at mines / stores / workshops
- Constructed 7 Sewerage Treatment Plants
- Introduced LPG to its staff for cooking in lieu of the supply of 20,000 tonnes of coal per month
- Rehabilitation of mine sites / over dumps with a due emphasis on biological engineering. This has been done through protective and mechanical engineering works like gabions, cribs, rock fill dams, toe walls, garland canals, siltation ponds and contour stretches along with plantation of sapling of local suitable species
- Large scale greening of colonies through plantation of suitable shade and flowering species, free supply of saplings to households
- Adoption of environment friendly technologies like Input Crusher, Conveyors for reducing consumption of diesel and oil. Replacement of timber supports in mines with steel supports resulting in a 20% reduction in usage of wood and protection of natural resources
- Introduction of "Environment" as a subject in 13 schools run by SCCL, about 200 of SCCL's teachers trained on environment by WWF
- Construction of 641 rain water harvesting structures and 236 Sulabh complexes

AWARDS

- Best practices in Bio-medical waste disposal in the State during the 2007 from APPCB, Hyderabad
- Greentech Environment excellence Gold Award -2006 from Greentech Foundation
- Good Green Governance Award-2006 from Srishti Publications (P) Ltd
- Golden Peacock Environment Management Award - 2006, by the World Environment Foundation
- TERI Environmental Award - 2004/05
- Fly Ash Utilisation Award, jointly instituted by Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Environment & Forests and Ministry of Power
- Indira Priyadarshini Vriksha Mitra (IPVM) award 2004 from Ministry of Environment and Forests, Gol



THE SINGARENI COLLIERIES COMPANY LIMITED

Kothagudem, Khammam District, A.P. 507 101. India. www.scclmines.com

One Family. One Vision. One Mission-The Spirit of Singareni



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