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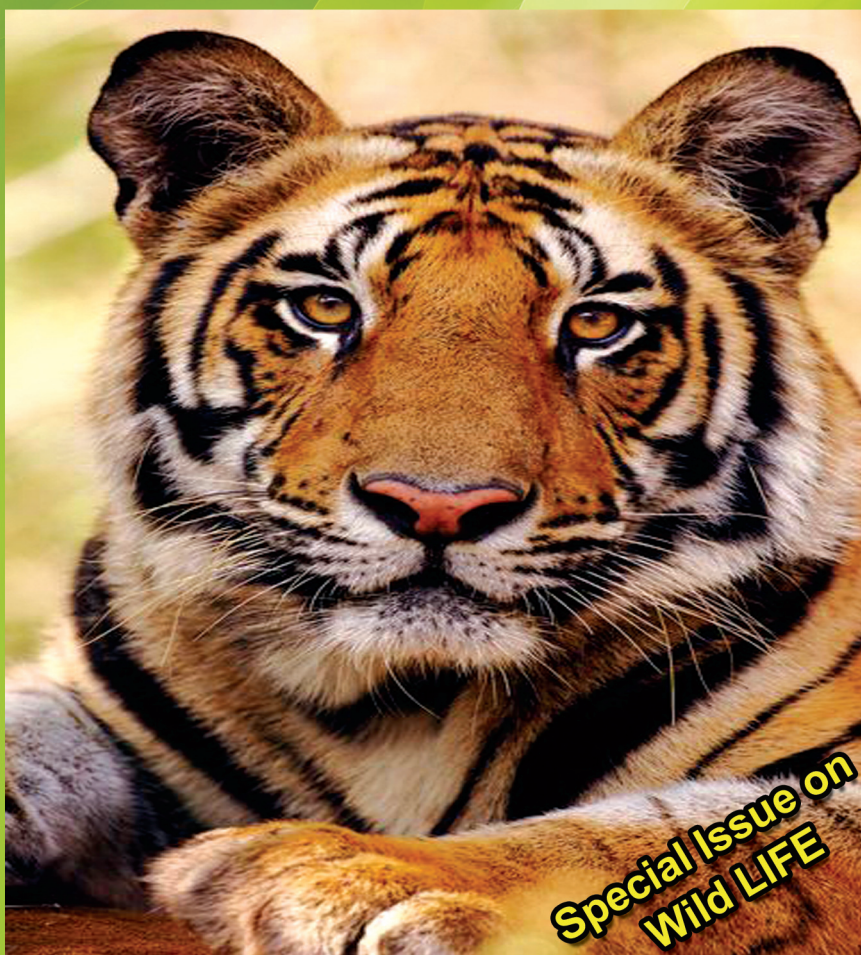
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Strong people don't put others down...They lift them up.



Special Issue on
Wild LIFE

The greatness of a Nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. (Mahatma Gandhi)



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Website: <http://apfdc.gov.in> Email: vcmd_apfdc@yahoo.co.in

Editor : Qamar Mohd. Khan

Associate Editor : D. Nagabhushanam, I.F.S. (Retd.)

Contents**The Association of Retired Forest Officers, Telangana & Andhra Pradesh**

(Regd. No. 557/1990)

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2. Editor	: Qamar Mohd. Khan Tel:040-40205831, 9849233624 e-mail : qamar_asima@yahoo.com
3. Associate Editor	: D. Nagabhushanam, I.F.S. (Retd.) 8096511200
4. Member	: Sri. J. V. Sharma, IFS (Retd.) e-mail : jvsharma32@gmail.com 9441319151
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EDITORIAL

Wildlife week in India: - Wildlife Week is celebrated all over the country in the month of October from 2nd to 8th every year with the view to preserve the fauna, i.e. the wildlife of the Country. It was first started in the year 1952, with the great vision of saving the life of the Indian wild animals by taking some critical steps. Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October and he was the apostle of peace, ahimsa and nonviolence. This is the reason Mahatma Gandhi's birth week is chosen to celebrate wildlife week throughout the country. India has varied climatic and geographical conditions with luxuriant tropical forests. Wildlife is unique by its richness and heterogeneity. Indian wildlife comprises about 350 species (30 families) of mammals, 2100 species (66 families) of birds and plenty of reptiles like crocodiles, lizards, snakes and turtles. India is home to more than 45,000 species of plants.

Due to the growing impact of deforestation, continuous efforts are being made both by the Central and State Governments and some anxious animal lovers to protect the endangered species of wildlife as well as those that are on the verge of extinction and thus save the world from running out its green heritage. Wildlife is important for four main reasons: Beauty: By their unique way of existence, wild creatures exaggerate the natural beauty of the earth. Economic value: The financial value of wild

species is important to the economies of several nations, as it provides many valuable substances like wood and other plant products, fibers, meat and other foods, and skins and furs.

Scientific value: By studying wildlife, scientists have gained valuable knowledge about various life processes and discovered important medical products.

Survival value: Wildlife helps in maintaining the balanced living systems of earth, which consequently ensures survival of life. The most important and which is above all the four reasons is, as Albert Einstein once said that if the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man. We all have to understand this and act seriously. India is home to about 60-70% of the total biodiversity found across the world and about 33% of plant species are endemic. There are 172, or 2.9%, of IUCN-designated threatened species in India. Under this some of it is the Asiatic Lion, the Indian white-rumped vultures and the Bengal Tiger. Cheetah has already become extinct in our country.

From time immemorial, our wildlife has been closely associated with our legendary beliefs and our folklores, with our epics and our history. Our lives would be very much poorer without these varied forms that build up the balance of

nature. Wildlife preservation in fact implies active and planned wildlife management under which all forms of life would progress side by side with human progress, each in its own sphere of influence and utility and without any detriment to human interests.

To promote wildlife awareness among the people, the Central and State governments have started various natural projects and programs such as Project Tiger, Project Elephant, National Parks, Sanctuaries, Biospheres reserves, Conservation reserves, Community reserves, Nature Camps and Jungle Lodges. These projects not only help to preserve our natural heritage, but encourage eco-tourism as well. The wildlife network of India includes 543 wildlife sanctuaries. Network also includes 166 National parks, 47 conservation reserves and 4 community reserves. It covers a total area of 1, 61,221.57 sq. kms. (4.90% of total geographic area). Besides, there is the Gir National Park, the only habitat for Asiatic lions in India. The Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam is renowned for protecting the endangered one-horned Rhinoceros. There's also Dachigam National Park, which conserves the Hangul or Kashmiri Stag. Project Elephant, a centrally sponsored scheme, was launched in February 1992 by the Government of India to provide financial and technical support for free ranging populations of wild Asian Elephants for protection of elephants, their habitats and corridors. The Project, involving 25 Elephant Reserves across

the country, is being implemented in 13 States and Union Territories in India. There are seventeen Biosphere Reserves in India at present. All these reserves act as Conservation Centers for wildlife in India.

People in ancient India had recognized the animals, rights to co-exist with man and therefore they were loved, nurtured and even worshipped. Prophet Mohammad used to say "whoever is kind to the creatures of God is kind to him". Ancient Indian texts-the Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas have meticulously described and recorded the 'plants and wildlife' that surrounded the human habitation and laid down rules that would guide the interaction between man and nature. Ashoka depicted exemplary compassion for wildlife. He provided medical facilities to animals even beyond the territories of his own empire. He brought game laws under the category of Dharmaniyamas or the 'Law of Piety'. Moghal King Jahangir's observation on birds was as close and scientific as that of the modern bird watchers.

In India, legislative measures for protection of wildlife have a long history. The first game laws were promulgated by "Kautilya" the famous teacher and adviser to Chandragupta Maurya. In recent years, the following legislative measures have been adopted for the protection of wildlife in our country. Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Indian Forest Act, 1927, and various State Forest Acts, Forest Conservation Act 1980,

Biological Diversity Act, 2002, Environment Protection Act, 1986, and National Green Tribunal Act. It is generally felt that India has the best Acts but the implementation of the Acts is very poor. In our country 67 tiger deaths were reported in the first half of 2017, i.e. on an average 11 tigers died every month. Growth of illegal international trade of animal articles, in tigers, panthers, sloth bears, elephants, black bucks, crocodiles, snakes, birds and many more wild animals' is resulting in a extensive in poaching in India. India is home to around 60% of the world's tigers that live in the wild. Out of about 200 countries there are only 13 countries with tigers in the wild. It is estimated that there are 2500-3000 Tigers in India in wild. Last few decades have seen emergence of human encroachment to an extent that has never been seen. This is one of the greatest threats to India's wildlife. Red Data Book lists about 600 species of animals which are on the verge of extinction.

Causes of Wildlife Destruction: There are two types of destruction of wildlife by man, direct and indirect.

Direct Destruction: Many species are destroyed by man by hunting and capturing. Man also indiscriminately kill animals for entertainment, flesh, fur, feathers, hides, hair, nails, Ivory, and trophies etc.

Indirect Destruction: This is due to deforestation, destruction of natural habitat, spread of deserts, pollution, industrialization, insecticides, pesticides, herbicides etc.

Many people are under the impression that India does not have strong wildlife conservation laws. On the contrary, we have some of the most stringent legislations to protect wildlife and habitats but as mentioned above implementation is bad. The lower staff of law enforcing agency is not trained properly to deal with the situations and the Forest Protection System is an age old system. In this system a single person patrols very large areas like 10 to 15 sq. kms. on foot without arms and ammunition, whereas the offenders are in large groups with modern arms and ammunition and they use very fast moving vehicles. The facts and figures quoted above tell us that legislation alone is not going to stop hunting, and illegal trade in wildlife. Government should have political will to protect wildlife, and should increase the protective staff of the Forest Department. The people of our country should come forward and fully cooperate with the law enforcing agencies in controlling, the illegal felling of the forests, encroachments, hunting, smuggling and trade in wildlife articles.

Vana Premi hopes that people wake up to the fact that every living organism has a right to live, and that the existence of how the wildlife is indispensable to the survival of the human race. Therefore protection of wildlife should be a matter of serious concern not only for the Governments but also for the citizens to ensure a safe an healthy life on this planet. **QMK**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

This is with reference to the letter of Sri K.B.R Reddy, with regard to Legal Notes. This column, published every month, in the Vana Premi, is very useful to the officers in service. As ACF (Law), O/o PCCF (HoFF), Telangana, I interact with many of our colleagues and they are of the opinion that the Legal Note is beneficial and educative to all forest officers in service.

I have read with great interest the article written by Sri K.B.R. Reddy at Page 22 of the Vana Premi (Sep 2017 issue) about saving of Karlapalli forest and the effort made by Sri Reddy. Ancient laws like law on *Ijara* are obnoxious as they aimed at destroying the forests. The govt. realized the importance of conserving the forests and ordered cancellation of irregular *pattas*. As a result not only the law on *Ijara* was revoked but also enacted *Ijara* Abolition Act. I feel Sri Reddy deserved recognition and reward for the best effort made in saving a couple of thousands of acres in the Karlapalli forest of Warangal District.

M. Raja Ramana Reddy, Asst. Conservator of Forests (Law)

Dear K.B.R. Reddy garu,

Greetings! Today I had the pleasure of reading your article in September issue of Vana Premi. I am very touched and feel grateful for your positive reference to my father. He also had a high regard for you.

I wish officers of your and my father's caliber, commitment and values were still in public services. Thanking you with personal regards.

Anil K. Epur S/o E.V. Ram Reddi

Mobile: 91 944 042 5999

“No matter how few possessions you own or how little money you have, loving wildlife and nature will make you rich beyond measure.” (Paul Oxton)

“If you are not filled with overflowing love, compassion and goodwill for all creatures living wild in nature, you will never know true happiness.” (Paul Oxton)

GREY JUNGLE FOWL NECK HACKLE FEATHERS ILLEGAL TRADE IN A.P.

By
Sri A.V. Joseph

While working as CF wildlife management circle Tirupati, the Regional Deputy Director, Chennai had come on camp to review the bottlenecks encountered in implementation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of sanctuary. He informed that from Andhra Pradesh snake skin and grey jungle fowl neck hackle feathers are being illegally traded. After he left, I had a detailed discussion with the staff and they were confident that no such activities were taking place in their jurisdiction. Sometime later I went on a training to Tasmania and the Dean of the Sciences, an avid angler took me on an angling trip. From his collection of artificial flies (fish lures), the one made from grey jungle fowl neck feathers was the choicest one and its origin is from India. This immediately reminded me about the conversation I had earlier with the Regional Deputy Director, Chennai.

In the year 2004, Sri Sundar, I.F.S DFO Rajampet contacted me and stated that while conducting a check for red sanders smuggling activity, he caught a person carrying some chicken feathers in plastic sachets. He was not sure of its nature and said that it could be country chicken feathers used in some strange rituals. I asked him to send

a sample across to me at Hyderabad and gave the specimen to Dr Naveen, the zoo vet for cross verification with the known stock of grey jungle neck feathers available at the zoo. Dr Naveen confirmed it as grey jungle fowl neck feathers and this was conveyed to the DFO, Rajampet for immediate investigation and enquiry. In total, they seized 845 nos. of pieces of neck hackle feathers from the smugglers. The grey jungle fowl occurs abundantly in the Seshachalam Hill forests of Tirumala Tirupathi. The Yenadis, a primitive tribe inhabit the fringe area of the forests, lay noose traps for catching small ground birds to supplement their protein intake. The Yenadis are very good trackers and collect MFP from the forests including honey from rock cliffs which they barter for essential items. When the Yenadis lay noose traps for ground birds, some of the grey jungle fowl get caught inadvertently. After consuming the bird, they collect and store the neck hackle feathers which are collected by agents who operate in that area. The remuneration offered to the Yenadis by the agents for neck feathers is a pittance. The agent's handover the illegally procured stock to the, commission agents at Rapur,

Venkatagiri and Chitvel. From Chitvel it is taken by the local smuggler by road to Chennai, from where it sent by parcel to Singapore. This fact came out on detailed investigation. Mr.Sundar, DFO Rajampet and Mr.Khader Vali, present DFO Rajampet did an excellent work in unravelling the entire modus operandi and the network operating in that area. But their investigation was confined within Indian jurisdiction.

The grey jungle fowl is a very majestic and beautiful bird occurring in endemic evergreen hill forests of southern and western India, extending roughly from Mount Abu to the mouth of Godavari River. The bird is named *Gallus sonneratii* after the French naturalist and explorer Pierre Sonnerat. It is listed in Schedule II of part II under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. In Andhra Pradesh, grey jungle fowl is found well distributed in the jungles of Nallamai and Seshachalam hills. Only the adult male grey jungle fowl develops the neck hackle feathers during the breeding season after which it is moulted. In local telugu language the neck hackle feathers is called "Eekalu". The red jungle fowl, red spur fowl and painted spur fowl are also found distributed in AP forests. The red jungle fowl is not affected by avian influenza and poultry

scientists are interested in studying the gene which gives this protection to the bird. A similar claim for grey jungle fowl was made in an international World Pheasants Association Workshop that it does not suffer from leukemia. Andhra Pradesh has taken up conservation breeding of grey jungle fowl at Sri Venkateshwara Zoological Park with initial funding from Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi and the project is very successful. The founder stock of grey jungle fowl was genetically studied for its purity, diversity and a planned breeding program was undertaken. At present the zoo has a stock of 80 plus number of birds and planned release programme of restocking the forest areas depleted of grey jungle fowl population and supplemental release in areas with thin population of grey jungle fowl is under active consideration. The biggest threat grey jungle fowl faces, in the wild is the contamination of the genetic base with inter breeding with domestic country fowl reared near the fringes of forests.

When you have wildlife existing in the forests and there is a market demand for its products, it is essential to be always vigilant against illegal trade.

Saving one animal won't change the world but it will change the world for that one animal.

THE DIVERSITY OF HUMMING BIRDS COMPILED

By
Sri C.R. Rao

Introduction:

While watching my son's small garden in the Bay Area one morning, I happened to see a flash of color and could focus my attention and watched this small bird hopping from flower to flower for the nectar. Its flight and hovering near the flower to put its beak inside is very fast and this made me read and 'search' for more information of its habits, food and its long history of evolution. I want to share the info with our esteemed friends of Vana Premi, about this smallest bird in the world!

The tiny humming bird, sometimes smaller than your thumb is one of the most amazing and interesting birds in the Americas, i.e. the USA, South America and There are over 300 different species of humming birds living between Alaska and southern Chile. This is not an article but only a compilation of some interesting facts I collected from about a dozen videos on the humming bird. Dr. Joseph Morlan presented a very interesting report on the diversity & evolution of the Humming birds. It is noteworthy to see that this wonderful bird is only common in the Americas. Fourteen different species are reported from California,

of which "ruby throated" humming bird is very rare. Dr. Morlan works in the University of Berkeley in California.

Flight pattern:

The hovering and flying steady in one particular spot, going backwards and forward like you see in a helicopter (did our aeronautical engineers copy this.?) is common only to the humming bird.

Evolution of the beak:

According to the Darwin's theory, the beak of the humming bird has evolved over a long period of time, to enable the sucking of the nectar. Different species have different types of beaks. For example in the Caribbean islands, the Heliconia flower and its nectar glands can be approached by one particular species of "Hummer" only.

Color of the Male Bird:



It is the male bird which has colorful plumage and special appendages, mostly in the tail feathers to attract the mate, in the interesting nuptial dance. You must see the dance the male bird does, before it is accepted, for the final mounting. Recently, the "birders" and an expert photographer went to record a rare "hummer" called the "spatula tail" in the deep forests of north-eastern Peru, recorded the entire show of the Spatula-tail humming bird, doing the dance before the female.

The long flight of annual migration:

The winter migration of some species of "hummers" (the colloquial word used by the experts on humming birds) can be as far as 6000 miles, "non-stop" flight over a time lapse of 18 hours. This was established by a method called "ringing", where birds are ringed with numbers and date before they take the long flight and recorded when they are caught and released.

The nest:

It is about the size of a walnut and incubating the two or three eggs several times per year. The eggs are about the size of jellybeans and take 15-18 days to hatch. Young chicks grow very fast on the regurgitated food of nectar & insects and chicks are ready by about 20 days for the first flying lesson. They have enough feathers to regulate body temperature in 9 days.



Some of the surprising facts:

The bird weighs less than 4 grams and they have no sense of smell. They cannot walk. They have a special tongue like a tube to suck nectar 10 drops in 15 milli-seconds. They are the only birds who can fly backwards and stay at a point like you see in a helicopter. They can rotate the wings upside down by a special socket joint in its structure. No other bird has this aerial agility! (Talent for flight). They have the largest brain per body size than all other birds. The heart-beat of this bird is about 1200 beats per minute with a breath-rate of 250 per minute. Its brilliant throat color is created by iridescence in the arrangement of the feathers, but by not the pigmentation of the feathers.

Some amazing facts of humming birds

There are 350 different species of humming birds. A humming bird can drink ten drops of nectar in ten milli seconds. An aggressive and attack bigger birds with courage and audacity, to drive them away from their territory. They migrate over long distances of 3000 miles nonstop from Mexico to Canada and back. The humming birds' brain is 4.2 % of body weight, while it is only 2 % of the body weight for other birds. No other bird can do stunt – fly like the humming bird which can "hover" in the mid-air, fly backwards and forwards and upside down. About 8000 species of flowering plants in America are pollinated by humming birds. It is the smartest bird in the world which you will never forget if you see one or two videos about this bird on youtube.

Source: From internet

PROUD TO BE A FORESTER

By
KONDA MOHAN

I am a Forester ! I am a Green Soldier !!
I feel always proud to be a Forester !
While all people taking rest in the nights,
I will be in the Jungle to protect the Forests! .. I am

My blood is Green !
My thoughts are serene !!
My mind is always thinking for
Making our Nation green! ..I am

I love, Mother Nature !
I strive for Green Future !!
I leave aside my mother and father !
I never think for care of my near and dear !! ..I am

I sing with the colorful birds !
I speak with the animal herds !
I play with the innocent cubs and calves !
I stay in the Woods for days and nights !! ..I am

I am the soldier without gun!
I sacrifice my life to protect the green !
Golden Telangana is our CM's ambition !
Haritha Telangana is its only solution !! ..I am

Join the hands in making Telangana Green !
For making reality of KCR's TKHH dream !!
Through planting and protecting Forests by everyone !
For the health and wealth of future Generations !! ..I am

SHOULD INDIA TOO BAN ALL COMMERCE IN IVORY?

By

Dr. B Raghotham Rao Desai

“Laws develop as much through case-histories as by formulations—judgements are welcome-additions to the positive and evolving judicial-interpretations.”

1. Preamble: Due to unlimited compassion & tolerance towards the **‘flagship’ and ‘National Heritage’ Animal of India** that the magnificent pachyderm had throughout been since ancient times, human-elephant relationships had been extremely good in most parts of the Country. Even during modern times **when depredation by elephants often resulted in the loss of crops/property/human life, local people by and large**—as was observed by me during my long tenures in Western *Ghat* Region—**do not have any wrath against the marauders and often justify by blaming themselves for their own sins/wrong-doings!** It is my personal view that **this excellent relationship should not be allowed to be frittered away** just because a few belligerent young ones occasionally stray out into the agricultural fields during their seasonal movements. On the other hand, the cultivators’ miseries be redressed at the earliest and mitigated expeditiously. To chase them, gunshots are made use of, but the wounds on account of them do not heal easily in

elephants as their days roll by and they become festering sores—usually maggot ridden, causing considerable pain & irritation—handicapping the animal for years on end.

The impact of human invasions on elephants’ habitats had deleterious and even irreversible one at places. Most other diurnal animals retreat to their hide-outs (before humans invade the depths of forests) or turn into fugitives of the night, hiding in cover by day. On the contrary elephants are not entirely diurnal in their activities—**they are both diurnal and nocturnal, being the only ones feeding by day as well as by night with a brief respite of about four hours anytime!**

As a consequence of the said invasion, their range of distribution has been reduced considerably. Old habits having the tendency of dying hard, the elephants tend to freely stray out in those areas which belonged to them once! Unfortunately primitive methods are adopted to scare them away, one of them being by using gun as mentioned above, while others happen to be bursting of crackers, digging of elephant-proof trenches and erecting electric fences. **There appears to be an urgent need to search for newer methods to keep them**

effectively at bay, using science and technology.

As each year rolls by, compression of the elephants' range continues unabated, with exponential growth of human population. Looking at the sequence of things going on at present, the fact appears to be an established one that **human-elephant clash seems to have come to stay.** It is unrealistic to contemplate any significant reduction in the growth-rate of human population of India and it would seem realistic to propose that the **wildlife be integrated into our land use planning by restructuring it at the earliest.**

It is fair to mull over, that if all the land on earth is needed to support the exploding human population, why the elephants and tigers (and the forests providing them food & shelter) be protected! And the answer has both environmental & emotional dimensions, of biodiversity conservation on which survival of human society depends, **while the elephant plays its role in maintaining the ecological health, the tiger (at the apex of biological pyramid) plays a pivotal role in maintaining biological equilibrium.** On the emotional side, the elephant has long held a special place in the hearts of Indians —a symbol of wisdom, strength and gentleness— similarly, the tiger symbolizes with his charm, power and ambush-hunting.

Apart from being most intelligent and deemed-technical, elephants have complex vocal and

ultrasonic communication system, capable of learning astonishing varieties of behaviors when they come in contact with humans within their niche. **It is ethically unacceptable of their commercial use, not to be kept in captivity/servitude and never subjected to cruel treatment or killed.** One wonders if the perpetrators give a second thought to not only the deeds they so mercilessly execute but also to the ramifications of such cruel acts. A lot had been spoken about the divinity, wisdom and benefits of the woodlots and the denizens which thrive in them, but we also need to reconsider our symbolic relationship with them. Those who are bent upon to destroy the habitats should recall the fact that at any given point of time, what the trees breathe out is what we breathe in and what we exhale they inhale —a relationship that surmounts and surpasses every other facet of life. We are here because we breathe and if it is breath that is keeping us alive, it wouldn't be a gross assumption to make that it is our synergetic relationship with trees that is breathing life into everything we do, being partners in the dance of life. **Its seasons and times have been wonderfully choreographed by the tentative blossoms of spring, elucidating rebirth and hope; the blazing bloom of summer, underscoring the paradoxes of sun & shade; the learned russet of autumn, talking of maturity; the lush of winter, beckoning rest & the need to find peace!** Nothing is more hallowed, more

sagacious or more archetypal of beauty than a beautiful virgin forest and the undisturbed wildlife inhabiting it ——we should never fail to understand our symbiotic connection with it.

2. Background:As we all are aware of, Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*, Proboscidea) are of five strains: Indian, Burmese, Ceylonese, Sumatran and Malaysian, having been classified into 7 sub-species (based on their geographical distribution). **Asian elephant is considered as the 'keystone species', because of its overall influence over other animals, including the ecosystem, keystone species being one that contributes significantly more than other species to the overall integrity of a habitat** within which each species interacts while depending on other species, simultaneously contributing to the functioning of the habitat as a whole. A keystone species being a pivotal mammalian of the forest ecosystem, without it the overall habitat changes markedly. Tusks grow on male Asian Elephants which are the status symbol and are potential lethal weapons in self-defense —— they having regenerative capacity, like nails in humans. Ivory is got from these tusks, which is a hard creamy white substance composing their main part. The tusk is an outgrowth or extension of the upper incisors or teeth——in males, they start showing in 2 or 3 years and grow 3"-4" every year. **The Asian cow elephants have the tuskers but African cows have tusks.** The pulp, which is conically shaped, is present along inside the tusk——one has to

be careful not to damage the pulp while trimming or shaping the tusks, **the tusks having the capacity to continue to grow even after trimming.** The elephant uses its tusks in a variety of ways——a particular one for removing tree bark & another for digging mud. Further, the fact is that out of several terrestrial and marine ecosystem species in the country, some 16 have been identified so far as the ones needing urgent attention.

Demand for elephant ivory appears to have skyrocketed in recent decades, spurring poaching-levels that are driving Asian elephants towards extinction. About 60% of all smuggled elephant-ivory ends up for commerce, reaching countless ivory-workshops and showrooms. Wildlife advocates always held the opinion for years that **the most important step in putting poachers out of business would be shutting down the behemoth ivory industry,** its success however, depending on how strictly the policy is enforced. "Over the past few years, around 5,000 Asian elephants (about 10 percent of the remaining population) have been killed, says Elizabeth Kemf, an Asian elephant expert for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in a ruthless scramble for ivory driven by commercial demand. An announcement towards ban might be the biggest sign of hope for elephants since the current poaching crisis on a large scale began around the last two decades of the preceding century when Veerappan —— who

poached the male elephants (for tusks) and also hacked sandalwood-trees ruthlessly——ruled the roost in the three Southern States. Though he was eliminated, yet his accomplices and others in the trade continue the legacy.

3. Need for the ban and Methodology suggested:The decision to ban all commerce in ivory will certainly be a game changer for elephant conservation, giving wildlife protection advocates hope that the threatened extinction of certain elephant population in the country can be averted.

Rules could be framed allowing people who own ivory-products to keep them, or give them as gifts, and owners can sell them at supervised auctions, after getting official approval, the only requirement being sincerity in not allowing any domestic ivory market. The move may require negotiations at senior levels between the Centre and the States, unanimously agreeing for early complete ban on ivory import & export, and take significant & timely steps to halt domestic commercial-trade of ivory as the goal, addressing simultaneously economic and strategic issues arising thereupon. It should not be forgotten that even with the ban, smuggling may continue as long as domestic market exists. The ban will be critical to save the species, since illegal ivory ends up on the legal market, after being smuggled from the forests, chiefly by the Criminal Syndicates, through the backdoor transit points they themselves ingeniously happen to know.

4. Conclusion:Corruption and chaos in many parts of the country, where Asian elephant herds roam, are fueling the trafficking. Poachers have exploited mutual conflicts arising out of the loopholes in the procedure followed from State to State, as also break down to massacre dozens of elephants, and used portions of the proceeds from ivory to buy more sophisticated weapons. For the first time in years, when Veerappan and his associates were active, more elephants were killed than born, causing the population steadily decrease, the tusks were often sold to middlemen who greased the palms of corrupt men in authority, inducing them to either look the other way, or to take part in the smuggling themselves.

The Wildlife Conservation Protection Act, 1972 and the Rules made thereunder as also seven sequential amendments though made significant progress on the protection issue in most parts of the country, still the fact remains that protection is facing new challenges. The proposed ban, therefore, to all commerce in ivory could do more to bolster enforcement of protection laws.

Elephants are a valuable commodity and need to be handled with care and respect. Chanakya (of Mourya Period) described the value of elephants as equivalent to Gold and **wrote further in his Arthashastra that a man deserves capital punishment if charged of killing an elephant.**

DOES NATIONAL FOREST POLICY 1988 NEED ANY CHANGE?

By
J. V. Sharma

An article titled "A forest policy on today's terms" published in *The HINDU* dated 11th September 2017 (Hyderabad Edition) made out a case for refreshing the National Forest Policy 1988 on the plea that it contains concepts that have been long discarded. The author, Mr. Peter Smatacek who runs the Butterfly Research Centre at Bhimtal, Uttarakhand, has thus raised curtain for a wider debate whether there is any need for any change in the document and if there is, the scope and content thereof. This is an opportunity which the forest fraternity should avail without fail particularly in the context of author's statement that "in the 30 years since it was formulated, no officer of the Indian Forest Service has pointed out these shortcomings. There is clearly an urgent need to review the curriculum of the Indian Forest Service since it seems to rely on concepts that have been discarded more than century ago".

While conceding partially that the forest fraternity in general and the officers of Indian Forest Service in particular, have not discussed and debated the National Forest Policy and its contents at the level and to the extent it deserved, especially the issues raised by the author, it is necessary to have a close look at least now, at the points under discussion. It has however to be stated that the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) has conducted Workshops in various regions on Review and Revision of National Forest Policy 1988 during 2015. I happened to attend the one held in Telangana State Forest Academy, Hyderabad on 3rd September 2015. I reproduce below the mail I had sent to the Director, IIFM soon after the Workshop and this should set at rest the speculation that "no officer of Indian Forest Service has pointed out these shortcomings". The generalized comment, which may however spur the in-service IFS officers for more intensive deliberations and substantive contribution, is avoidable.

"At the outset I thank you and TSFA for providing me an opportunity to have some idea about how the present generation of foresters see the forest sector as a whole, at the Workshop on Review and Revision of National Forest Policy, conducted by your Institute at Telangana State Forest Academy, Dulapally (Hyderabad) on 03.09.2015. I could not stay till the evening as I was feeling a little uncomfortable due to old age and I could not attend the concluding session on the second day as well. I think I surely missed valuable inputs.

To share my view on the RR of NFP frankly, I have an apprehension that there is much behind this exercise that does not meet the eye. The existing NFP is not that bad or outdated to need a revision,

particularly so when some of the key items of the policy remain either unaddressed or grossly flouted. With the recent experience of Review of Forest & Environmental Laws by a High Level Committee under TSR Subramanian, it is difficult to digest the present Forest Policy revision on its face value.

Let me express my fears in this regard. The Supreme Court of India, in its Civil Original Jurisdiction, while disposing I.A. Nos. 1868, 2091, 2225-2227, 2380, 2568 and 2937 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202 of 1995 (T. N. Godavarman Thirumalpad Vs. Union of India & Ors.), in the operative portion of the its Order dated 6th January 2014 directed the Union of India to appoint a Regulator with offices in as many States as possible under sub-section (3) of Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 as directed in the Order in the case of *Lafarge Umiam Mining Private Limited* and file an affidavit along with the notification appointing the Regulator in compliance of the direction by 31st March 2014.

The above order was necessitated when the Government did not comply with an earlier Order dated 6th July 2011 of the Court in the same case wherein it laid down certain guidelines in Sub-paragraphs (i.1) to (i.5) of paragraph 122 of the order, be followed in all future cases in respect of Environmental Clearances under Environment Protection Act, 1986. The Honorable Court, in essence, found that the EIA Notification is beset with deficiencies and there is conflict of interest in MoEF exercising ultimate powers in granting both the Forest Clearances under FCA and Environmental Clearance under EPA. Above all, the Court felt that the spirit of National Forest Policy 1988 is not adequately addressed. I reproduce below Sub-paragraphs (i.1) and (i.3) for clarity: "(i.1.) The time has come for this Court to declare and we hereby declare that the National Forest Policy, 1988 which lays down far-reaching principles must necessarily govern the grant of permissions under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as the same provides the road map to ecological protection and improvement under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Principles / guidelines mentioned in the National Forest Policy, 1988 should be read as part of the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 read together with the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. This direction is required to be given because there is no machinery even today established for implementation of the said National Forest Policy, 1988 read with the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 confers a power coupled with duty and, thus, it is incumbent on the Central Government, as hereinafter indicated, to appoint an appropriate authority, preferably in the form of regulator, at the State and at the Central level for ensuring implementation of the National Forest Policy, 1988."

"(i.3.) The basic objectives of the National Forest Policy, 1988 include positive and proactive steps to be taken. These include maintenance of environmental stability through preservation, restoration of ecological balance that has been adversely disturbed by serious depletion of forests, conservation

of natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests with the vast variety of flora and fauna, checking soil erosion and denudation in the catchment areas, checking the extension of sand dunes, increasing the forest/tree cover in the country and encouraging efficient utilization of forest produce and maximizing substitution of wood."

It is a landmark judgement and curiously the Central Government continues to defy the order. The order was not complied within the time stipulated i.e. 31st March 2014 and the situation continues to be the same till today. Evidently, the Central Government should be seeing the NFP '88 as a red rag and the present exercise of review and revision could be an effort to dilute its provisions, a *la HLC*. I enclose herewith my article "Supreme Court orders systemic change for Environmental Clearances" published in March 2014 issue of *Vana Vikas* to explain the context of the Order. Hence the need to be wary of the impending threats, the environment in general and the forests in particular, are to be exposed to.

Some views aired at the Workshop:

Coming to the substantive issue of Review and Revision of Forest Policy, participants raised some points to which my responses are:

1. It is said that stipulation in NFP of aiming at one-third of geographical area under tree cover is not supported by any scientific evidence. It is true that the evidence does not find place in the Policy Document. To be frank, no authenticated study appears to have been made in support of the stipulation. None the less, efforts have been made by zealous foresters to substantiate the need by logic, experience, example, threat perceptions & abstract calculations. I have seen even senior foresters engaging in rhetoric on this issue. What is conveniently forgotten is that India is a populous country with no effective measure in place to control the spiraling population. It almost quadrupled from the time of Independence. That itself should clinch the issue in favor of keeping sizeable extent of land under vegetation. The next consequential issue is; Why 33%? Why not 30 or 40 or 50 or 25 or 10 ...? In this context, it needs to be appreciated that what we are trying to determine otherwise is the capacity of the flora to create a comfortable environment for all the life-forms. It is not only for humans but to all life-forms we live with. The scope and variability is very huge & imponderable and we do not have any reliable inventory of the life-forms or their environmental parameters and needs. Having been convinced of the indispensability of good environment, it cannot be wished away nor ignored simply because of our inability to spell out specifics. It is under these circumstances, an educated guess and enlightened reasoning should come handy. That is what the policy makers did. In my view, they did a wonderful job balancing our limited land resource on one side and unimaginably wide range of environmental needs on the other. When I was confronted with a similar situation nearly a decade ago, I collected some base

data of human life requirement and tried to work out the human environmental need and incorporated in an article published in *Vana Premi* of AP Retired Forest Officers Association. I do not claim it to be foolproof or a flawless scientific explanation and my limited objective was to drive home the point that we need lots of tree growth for healthy living. I reproduce the excerpts of the article below for your perusal, not so much for its worth but to plead for forests.

"It indicates that the public opinion does change according to needs and time. Likewise, the dissenters of Forest Policy too need to be receptive to the changing needs and changing role of forests. It should therefore be sufficient to confine the debate to the present day needs on how much tree cover should India have? The objective of keeping one-third of land area under tree cover is justifiable by logic as well as on scientific basis. India's population, which was around 33 crores when the first National Forest policy in Independent India was made, had exceeded one billion mark now. This phenomenal increase in population exerts compounded stress on environmental resources. Hence the need to boost up the extent of tree cover to meet the challenges of increased population. This apart, when developed nations with far lesser population and abundant resources are not prepared for less than one-third of land area under tree cover, India with its huge population and severe constraints of land resource, simply cannot afford to settle for any lesser figure. So much so far, for the logic."

"Coming to the environmental needs derived on scientific basis, the country has a population of 1.02 billion and with its two-child norm; it is likely to out-beat China in another two decades. Situation warrants defining our priorities and requirements not only to suit the needs of the day but also the future needs. Environmental planning is not like a five year plan or a scheme of fixed duration. Environment is an eternal concern –as long as the country and the people have to survive."

"To sustain a healthy human life and its purposeful activity, it is necessary to ensure basal metabolic rate and aerobic respiration process. A normal human body breathes about 15 to 18 times per minute exchanging 500 ml. of air. Important by-product of this activity is the release of energy mostly in the form of heat. A normal human being releases about 10,000 kilo-joules of energy, on an average per day, including the periods of intense activity and rest (sleeping). Human body needs 720 liters of atmospheric air, in ideal composition per day of which Oxygen will be 150 liters. When these standard requirements are projected for the entire nation, the total atmospheric air requirement is 7, 34,400 million liters of which Oxygen component alone will be 1, 53,000 million liters per day."

"The atmospheric air requirement calculated above is exclusively for human consumption. There are other countless life forms which also cannot survive without air. Every living creature and plant life needs air in right proportion. There are checks and balances in nature and their overall impact,

in ideal form, is the atmospheric equilibrium. Any disturbance caused to this equilibrium is likely to trigger a chain reaction adversely affecting the environment at large. The emphasis here is to highlight the point that immeasurable quantities of pure atmospheric air, probably in astronomical quantities, can be ensured only by keeping as much area as possible under tree cover and the prescription of one-third land area under tree cover, is very modest and is rather minimum imaginable."

"Some experts calculated 40 sq. meters of area as minimum per capita requirement for living purpose alone. It works out to 250 persons per hectare. It does not include land required to provide the required atmospheric air, the land required for sustenance, the land required for activities/avocations and the extra land required to take care of aberrations caused in the environment. 4.08 million hectares of area is required as living space alone for 1020 million people of India."

I am not sure whether my passion got better of the reason. Bottom line is I am not a scientist either by training or by profession. I feel a lot of work needs to be done in this regard

1. One participant at the Workshop very enthusiastically questioned the failure of achieving the objective of having one-third land area under tree growth. This failure does not need answer. It needs introspection. Though the foresters cannot increase the extent under tree cover, they could strive that it is not reduced at least. Unfortunately reduction is a fact –the Forest Departments are no mean contributors to this digression. Cases in point are loss of forest land under FRA and diversions under FCA.

2. Emphasis by many participants at the Workshop was on loss of forests in quality and extent. There is all the need to understand the forests not only in the context of flora and fauna but also in the wider sense of physical and a-biotic characteristics of hills, rivers, topography, soil etc. not to speak of more popular features of ecology, biodiversity, climate change, etc.

3. I noticed two participants, evidently stakeholders from outside the forest fraternity, articulating tribal rights. I beg to submit that I have a different perception of the whole issue and it may need a separate workshop for itself. All the same, I am of opinion that the tribes, by and large, do enjoy their traditional rights over NTFP in most States. FRA shifted the balance heavily in their favor to the detriment of forests. The issue needs to be addressed seriously without romanticizing it. Community Forest Rights of FRA need a re-look.

Key areas needing discussion:

In my opinion there are two important areas which need serious discussion. One is Forest-Tribal equation and the other is Forests & public participation. There is ample reason to conclude that the Forest –Tribal equation is romanticized beyond the limit on the basis of fertile imagination and for populist reasons. It is a matter on which a final word cannot be said at the drop of the hat. It

needs to be discussed threadbare taking the ground reality into account. Fact and fiction are woven together and they need to be separated with objectivity and without sentiment. My articles on this issue are attached for perusal.

The second issue is equally contentious as it is pre-supposed that forests cannot be protected and managed without people's participation. Public participation *per se* is not bad and is in fact desirable. JFM and CFM are being experimented for nearly two decades. Thousands of crores were spent on forestry projects and most of it is a debt repayable. General perception among the public is there are no matching results. Participation for gain and without the responsibility/accountability is undesirable. People have not reached that stage yet to shoulder the responsibility. This issue too needs serious discussion. Forests are to lose heavily if things are taken forward without proper exercise, -case in point management of CFM & CFR areas.

Changes suggested:

As I stated earlier, the National Forest Policy 1988 is not that deficient as to need a full scale revision. Should there be a revision at all, it should better be to make the Policy more forthright, expressive, and assertive in key areas to ensure meaningful compliance. I am of the opinion that the Preamble of the Policy can be strengthened by a brief mention of:

- a. Constitutional Provisions of Articles 48-A and 51-A (g). And Article 51 (c).
- b. Judicial Pronouncements of Supreme Court that breach of environment amounts to violation of Art. 21 (protection to Life); Public Trust Doctrine applicable to forest; and intergenerational equity.

Following suggestions may be put to wide ranging discussions:

1. Among the Basic Objectives under 2.1 of the NFP '88, the 5th objective regarding "Meeting the requirements of fuel-wood, fodder rural and tribal populations", may require reconsideration. Condition of forests has worsened from 1952 to '80. They have shrunk in size and in content and they are under pressure. People living in and around forests certainly depend upon the forest for their needs and there is no shying away from the responsibility. Moot question is whether the depleted forests can meet the demand. Further, even the forest dependent farmers are moving away from their traditional farming methods. These developments need to be tracked closely and dependents need to be identified. The Objective needs to be modified with emphasis on regulation and constraints of availability.
2. Protective staff is finding it extremely difficult to safeguard the forests. Reasons could be many, the result being scant respect for regulatory mechanism. Another Objective may be added under 2.1 "to strengthen and to evolve if necessary, stringent procedures for effective regulatory

mechanism.”

3. Para 2.2 can be made emphatic by adding “Environment is sacrosanct and cannot be compromised under any circumstances.”

4. Para 3.2 can be deleted.

5. It is time we come out of the old mindset that tribals are totally dependent upon forests for their sustenance. They are full-fledged farmers what with lands vested under FRA. Benefits that accrue from forests can only be marginal or supplemental. Para 3.5 can be suitably modified.

6. In view of the poor condition of the forests, the ‘strategy’ in various sub-paragraphs of Para 4 may require suitable changes. Policy must be more forthright on crucial issues of management by adding “No further reduction in area under forests is permissible except for defense and strategic purposes.” Policy document should be practical without being overambitious and populist. It should speak out against issues like unrestricted grazing etc.

7. Forests occupy about 20% of the geographical area of the country. Taking the forest fringe areas into account, the forest impacted territory may easily exceed a quarter of TGA in which the forester has an active role. Yet, the forester is not very popular on account of his regulatory functions. That he is not associated with welfare measures in the area will only make him more unpopular. Primacy of the Forest Department and that of the forester should be ensured in such forest areas by entrusting it with administrative responsibility and as a nodal agency in all developmental and welfare activities.

Given the importance of Forest Policy recognized by the Supreme Court, it is only logical that the Policy becomes the bedrock of all forest related activities. Hence the need to make it comprehensive, and purposeful. Kindly consider the points stated above and I will be looking forward to hear from you in this regard.”

The National Forest Policy Document is of vital importance as it defines the perception of the State on the forests and also lays down the broad guidelines and operational roadmap. Not only the salient features of the Policy are defined in the Preamble, but the Basic Objectives and Essentials of Forest Management are also spelt out in the Text. Also incorporated in the body of the Policy is the Strategy to be followed in different spheres of activity concerning forests. Couched in crisp terminology, it is brief and mostly unambiguous.

Coming to the actual points raised in the article published in *The Hindu*, the author articulated the following:

Point- 1:

While appreciating the first basic objective of the National forest policy of “Maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and, where necessary, restoration of the ecological

balance that has been adversely disturbed by serious depletion of the forests of the country" as laudable aim, the author opines that it is obscured by the fact that there is no such thing as an "ecological balance" and the concept of "environmental stability" is questionable and myth because the natural processes are never stable or stagnant but are always in the process of change and succession. He based his observation on fact that the term 'ecological balance' originated as 'the balance of nature' in ancient Greece and was quoted off and on through Middle Ages. He contends that the concept was completely rejected by the beginning of last century and does not find mention in text books of ecology.

He is of the opinion that the forest is not defined anywhere despite the term being used freely in governing systems and its definition is a prerequisite to provide credibility to Forest Policy. He suggests that the forest is a self-sown and self-regenerating community of plants that supports a community of creatures dependent on those plants, and on each other, for food and shelter. He argues that the self-sown concept is very relevant in Indian context in as much as large sums of public money are spent on planting forests which is an oxymoron. He laments that there are no matching results for money spent on planting and cites the example of Haryana which has since dispensed with artificial regeneration programme and strongly pitched for protection and permitting existing vegetation to grow.

He suggests that the first item of basic objectives under 2.1 of the National Forest Policy be amended, only after the term 'forest' is defined, to read as "Maintenance of a healthy natural environment through preservation, and, where necessary restoration of original natural ecosystems that have been adversely affected by over exploitation of the forests and other natural resources of the country."

Point- 2:

The second point made by him is to amend the second item of basic objectives under 2.1 of the Policy to read as "Conserving the natural heritage of the country by preserving the natural forest and other ecosystems with their vast variety of flora and fauna, and encouraging such ecosystems to expand into areas they had formerly colonized, but from where they have been extirpated" in place of existing "Conserving the natural heritage of the country by preserving the by preserving the remaining natural forests with vast variety of flora and fauna, which represent the remarkable biological diversity and generic resources of the country". He based his suggestion on the ground that the policy should include grasslands, wetlands and other ecosystems to ensure that degraded lands are protected so that the original ecosystems can establish themselves on those lands. He opines that the degraded lands should improve with the usual succession of grasses, shrubs, bushes and finally trees and that by making plantations directly the buildup of top soil and soil

microorganisms that accrue in succession process will be missed.

Point- 3:

Suggesting that the 3rd item of basic objectives under Para 2.1 of the Policy should read as “Protecting the catchment areas of rivers, lakes reservoirs to enable natural regeneration to grow back unhindered to conserve soil, help groundwater recharge, for mitigating floods and droughts and for retardation of siltation of reservoirs” to replace the existing “Checking and denudation in the catchment areas of rivers, lakes, reservoirs in the interests of soil and water conservation, for mitigating floods and droughts and for retardation of siltation of reservoirs”; the author justified his suggestion arguing that the natural vegetation of an area had evolved over millennia to adjust to the rainfall regime, soil conditions and the subsurface water system of an area. He says that in places where the catchment areas have untouched natural vegetation, rainfall percolates into the soil and is released over a period of months resulting in perennial streams and rivers. Where this has been damaged, the streams, rivulets and rivers have become seasonal as in peninsular India.

Point- 4:

The author also calls for modification of Para 2.2 of the Policy to read as “The principal aim of Forest Policy must be to ensure a healthy natural environment and the maintenance and healthy functioning of life support systems, including the water cycle and nutrient cycle, by protecting natural forest and other ecosystems native to the area. The derivation of direct economic benefit must be subordinated to this principal aim since the indirect economic benefit of healthy life support systems is incalculable.” as against the existing text of “The principal aim of Forest Policy must be to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium which are vital for sustenance of all life forms, human, animal and plant. The derivation of economic benefit must be subordinated to this principal aim.”

Point- 5:

The author unequivocally supports the rest of the policy document saying that “the remainder of the Forest Policy document is stated in valid language and needs no modification.”

My response:

Evidently, the author is not a forester though he happens to be associated with a nature related Research Centre in Uttarakhand. His interest in nature and initiative to grapple with the issue from academic point of view is amply evident from the details articulated by him. At the very outset he deserves compliments for the interest evinced on issues concerning the forest sector. The points raised by him are open for debate which is eminently advisable.

I must however state that the issues concerning the environment have been under intense scrutiny for over three decades. Forest being one of the major environmental assets, it is certainly an issue

about which environmentalists are greatly concerned. It is really unfortunate that despite increasing awareness about good environment and the role the forests play in ensuring good environment, forests are subjected to increased onslaught as never before. It is in public knowledge that 43 lakh hectares of forest land was diverted by the States in first thirty years of the Republic from 1950 to 1980 at an average 1.43 lakh hectares per annum. It is believed that roughly half of these diversions were made for projects, industries, mining and agriculture. Encroachments took heavy toll of forests accounting for the loss of about 70,000 hectares per annum. This irresponsible forest management by States may have prompted inclusion of subject 'Forests' in the Concurrent List of Schedule VII of the Constitution and a little later, the enactment of Forest Conservation Act in 1980. FCA arrested the momentum of forest loss considerably to 40,000 hectares per annum between 1980 and 2004. UPA rule proved particularly disastrous for forests as the extent of forest lost more than doubled to 82,000 hectares per year in the decade they were in power from 2004 to 2014.

According to a report filed in the media, a whopping 2.43 lakh hectares of forests have been cleared for industrial and development projects under the UPA regime between 2004 and 2013. Oil and mineral exploration has been permitted over another 1.64 lakh hectares during the same period. It is further said that proposals for another 3.30 lakh hectares of forests were under consideration of the Central and State Governments in the country. The report said that 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 the all 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 nine years of UPA tenure (till 2013) accounts for 7.36 lakh hectares and the news report claims that the figures are obtained from the Ministry.

As if it is no big loss of forests, the Government embarked upon a scheme of regularization of illegal encroachment of forest lands in favor of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers through legislation (2006) and the nation lost as much as 137 Lakh Acres of forest land till 31st March 2017 on this account alone. The spirit behind the principal aim of Forest Policy enunciated candidly in Para 2.2 of National Forest Policy, 1988 to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium which are vital for sustenance of all life forms, human, animal and plant and the derivation of economic benefit must be subordinated to this principal aim, has thus been flagrantly violated.

A closer look at the points raised in the *Hindu* article will reveal that modification has been suggested only in respect of Para 2 of the Policy dealing with 'Basic Objectives' and the author clearly stated that all the other provisions are valid. It needs to be stated in this context that the Supreme Court has gone into several aspects dealing with forest including the Forest Policy in question. It has

given landmark judgements which become the law of the land as per Art. 141 read with Articles 131, 132, 133 and 134. Author's assertion that the fact of ecological balance been adversely disturbed by serious depletion of the forests of the country is obscured by the fact that there is no such thing as an "ecological balance" and the concept of "environmental stability" is questionable and myth, has therefore to be seen in the light of various judicial pronouncements in the matter. Much water flowed down the rivers of India since the days Greeks abandoned the concept referred to. The terms as well as concepts of ecological balance and environmental stability had come stay in India acquiring legality and to substantiate my point I invite the attention of readers to the Supreme Court Judgement dated 6th January 2014 quoted in the Paras supra. The Apex Court took notice of the basic objectives of the National Forest Policy and environmental issues wherein the terms like environmental stability and ecological balance were freely used. It may also be stated that judicial interpretation is ultimate in understanding a fact.

A word needs to be said about the definition of the word "forest". I am of the opinion that the author raised the issue in an academic sense because the forests stand defined in law according to their status. While the dictionary meaning of the term 'forest' is; "a large uncultivated tract of land covered with trees and underwood; woody ground and rude pasture; a preserve for big game; a royal preserve for hunting; governed by a special code called the forest law" (Chambers 20th Century Dictionary), the Forest Law recognizes any area to be a forest if it declared to be so under the Forest Act. It implies that that forest is not merely a group or bunch of trees and bushes but covers the entire declared land as a whole with all its biotic and abiotic contents. This apart, the Supreme Court provided the definition of forest to set at rest any doubts or disputes in understanding the forests. Mr. Ritwick Dutta, an Environmental Lawyer from Delhi stated in his book that the Apex Court in judgement dated 12.12. 1996 said that there is misconception in certain quarters about the true scope of Forest Conservation Act and the meaning of the word "forest" used therein. The Court did a purposive interpretation of the Act and held that the Act was enacted with a view to check further deforestation which ultimately results in ecological imbalances, and therefore, the provisions made therein for conservation of forests must apply to all types of forests irrespective of the nature of ownership or classification. The Court held that:

- The word 'forest' must be understood according to the dictionary meaning. The Court clarified that the description covers all statutorily recognized forest, whether designated as reserved, protected or otherwise for the purpose of section 2 (1) of the Act.
- The term 'forest land' as occurring in section 2 will not only include 'forest' as understood in the dictionary sense, but also any area recorded as forest in the Government record irrespective of the ownership.

The provisions enacted in the Act for the conservation of forests must apply clearly to all forests so understood irrespective of the ownership or classification thereof.

This clarification by the Supreme Court should allay the doubts on the definition of forest adequately. Given the Constitutional position as explained above, the clarification by the Apex Court is the law of the land and no further discussion should be necessary on the issue. As for the amendment suggested in Point 1, it may perhaps be better to continue the existing text as the amendment suggested gives room for an avoidable debate over determination of health parameters *vis-à-vis* nature and of original ecosystems.

As regards Point 2, it lays emphasis on natural succession of grasses, shrubs graduating to trees instead planting trees as they do not afford opportunity for buildup of top soil. Preservation of existing ecosystems includes taking care of all that remains and dedicated care will certainly yield benefits suggested by the author in the amendment. To look at the situation objectively, India is a populous country with severe land constraint. However we environmentalists may desire, restoration of the past glory to its pristine form and to the extent it existed in the past, is farfetched. Mother earth is so benevolent that if left untouched, it re-clothes itself with vegetation it can support but it takes years and years to materialize. Moot question is whether the environmental concerns of the country can wait that long? If not, what is the best option? Under the circumstances, it is not possible to ensure *status-quo-ante* of reclaiming lost ecosystems.

In respect of Point 3, it needs to be stated that the suggestions are mostly operational details. Constitutional provisions under Art.48-A and 51-A (g) enjoin upon the State and the Citizen to protect and improve environment and all connected thereto. Broad guidelines now available in the Policy should take care of all the improvements suggested by the author.

As for suggestion under Point 4, I am of the opinion that since the terms 'environmental stability' and 'ecological balance' are part of acceptable agenda of environment in the light of explanation offered in the above paras, the existing text of the para 2.2 of Policy can remain unchanged.

The author in his article published in *Hindu* raised basic issues concerning professional aspect of forests and forest management. The issues are vital and the forest fraternity should seize this opportunity to debate over them to arrive at credible solutions, their inclusion in Forest Policy or otherwise notwithstanding. He deserves to be complimented for bringing the forests into focus. As there are vested interests working overtime to garner forest lands in the name of development, regularization of encroachments, socio-economic reasons, they will be keen to ensure that the provisions of National Forest Policy are diluted. So, it will be better to not provide scope for such machinations in the first place. Should the review and revision become necessary, my suggestions made to IIFM may also be kept in view.

RARE AND THREATENED SPECIES OF WILDLIFE IN INDIA

By
V. SANTHASEELA BABU

India possesses a very rich variety of wildlife. There are about 410 species of mammals known from India, which is about 8.86% of the world species. India has the most number of cat species than any other country. It is a home for Indian Lions, Asian Elephants, varieties of Bison, Bengal Tigers, variety of Deer and Antelope species, Monkeys, Wolves, Foxes, Wild dogs, Dhole, Pythons, Snakes, Crocodiles, Indian Leopard, Indian Sloth Bear, Indian Rhinoceros, Asian Water Buffalo, Gaur, Indian Wolf, etc.

The following are the National Symbols (Animals) declared by Govt. of India:

- **National Animal:** Royal Bengal Tiger
- **National Heritage Animal of India:** Elephant
- **National Mammal of India:** Hanuman Langur
- **National Aquatic Animal:** Ganges River Dolphin
- **National Bird:** Peacock

The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 defines wildlife as "any animal, bees, butterflies, crustacean, fish, moths and aquatic or land vegetation which forms part of any habitat. In their report the committee of the Indian Board for Wildlife defines wildlife as "the entire natural uncultivated flora and fauna of the country".

The human encroachments on the forests, the homes for the wildlife, have resulted in the depletion of not only the quantity and quality of the forests but also on the numbers and species of wildlife. Capturing of wild animals for food and hunting them for sport in the past decades has resulted in the extinction of wild animals and dwindling of their numbers.

Animals which became extinct in India in the recent past:

1. Indian Cheetah: Indian Cheetah which is known as Asiatic Cheetah was known to exist in India for a very long time. Due to Hunting, Deforestation and Habitat loss, this fastest land animal on earth become extinct in India. The Asiatic Cheetah is a rare and critically endangered species of Big Cats family, now found only in Iran so also known as the Iranian Cheetah, world's last few are occasional sightings in neighboring countries of India.

2. Indian Aurochs: The Indian Aurochs once lived in the hot and dry areas of India. The huge wild cattle were larger than most modern domestic cattle with height of 6.6 ft and weight of 1,000 kilograms. The Indian bison or the gaur is the largest species of wild cattle found in India.

Zebu and Gaur are the Indian cattle, quite similar to the extinct wild Indian Aurochs. Extinct type of cattle was the most challenging hunting wild animal like the Wild Water Buffalo and Wild Boar.

3. Sivatherium: Sivatherium was a very large approximately 7ft tall extinct animal which was found in India. The giant beasts were first discovered in India, where they were called as "Sivatherium" due to the Hindu God Lord Shiva. The Sivatheres were the tallest and fastest monsters found in India ever.

4. Sumatran Rhinoceros: The Sumatran Rhinoceros has been declared as one of the extinct animal in India. The Sumatran Rhinoceros is the smallest Rhinoceros with two horns and only species of the genus Dicerorhinus. The extinct Sumatran Rhinoceros once roamed and inhabited rainforests of India and neighboring northeast Asian countries. They are now critically endangered species and estimated to number fewer than 275 only and found in neighboring countries of India.

5. Pink-Headed Duck: Pink-headed Duck was a large diving blackish-brown duck; it was one of the most beautiful birds in India. The long-necked duck was once found in throughout India, but its beautiful appearance made it most haunted bird. Due to access of hunting this

beautiful bird has become extinct bird in India. There is hope that this critically endangered species could be found still surviving in some parts of India or our neighboring countries.

The following species of wildlife are threatened with extinction and are classified as the most endangered species:

1. The Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros: The International Union for Conservation of Nature listed the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros, (Indian Rhinoceros) as one of the vulnerable species for extinction. This animal is generally found in India and Nepal especially along the foothills of the Himalayas. Poaching of these animals for their horns is responsible for the decline of their numbers. But however it is noticed that since 1975, there was an increase in their numbers. In spite of increase in their numbers, there is an imminent threat due to the increase in hunting cases. Kaziranga National Park in India remains the main area for this species with at least half of the total population of these animals. Still consolidated efforts have to be undertaken for the conservation of the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros. In addition to the Kaziranga National Park, these animals can be seen in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve a Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

2. Nilgiri Tahr: The Nilgiri Tahr lives in the tropical rain forest of Western Ghats and it is a

threatened mountain ungulate. This endangered species have a stocky coat with a bristly mane, curved horns, and coarse and short fur. It is the State Animal of Tamil Nadu. The Nilgiri Tahr is facing a major threat in the Western Ghats because of the continuous poaching activities and shrinking of its habitat due to the cultivation of Eucalyptus. This animal is also available in Eravikulam National Park, Nilgiri Hills, Anamalai Hills, Periyar National Park, Palni Hills etc. places.

3. Royal Bengal Tiger: Bengal Tiger is the National Animal of India and Bangladesh. These big cats are threatened with extinction as their natural habitats are getting depleted due to the unruly intrusion by the humans. There are 50 tiger reserves in India which are governed by Project Tiger which is administrated by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). India is home to 70 percent of tigers in the world. In 2006 there were 1,411 tigers which increased to 1,706 in 2011 and 2,226 in 2014. Bengal Tigers are best seen in Jim Corbett National Park, Tadoba National Park, Ranthambore National Park, Sundarbans National Park, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Bandhavgarh National Park

4. Asiatic Lion: Gujarat in India is the only home to a large population of Asiatic Lions. It is considered to be the King of the Jungle and a supreme animal of the forests in India. The Asiatic Lion is found only in India that too mainly in Gir Forests of Gujarat. In 2010 the Lion population

in and around Gir Forest National Park was 411 which has steadily increased. In May 2015, the 14th Asiatic Lion Census was conducted over an area of about 20,000 km². The population of Lions was estimated at 523 individuals, comprising 109 adult males, 201 adult females and 213 cubs. However their lives are in danger due to human-animal conflict where the local people kill the Lions in retaliation for attacks on livestock and humans by the Lions.

5. Black Buck: Blackbucks are also known as the Indian antelopes. They are found in the plains, grasslands and scrubs of India. Human interferences like hunting, poaching, habitat destruction, overgrazing has led to a drastic reduction in the population of blackbucks. Inbreeding is also another cause for the decrease in their numbers. The strong reason for the dwindling of blackbuck population is the large-scale conversion of their habitats into agriculture fields and poaching. In addition to India, Blackbuck can be found in Nepal and Pakistan in the Indian Sub-Continent. Black Buck is also the State Animal of Andhra Pradesh State.

6. Lion Tailed Macaque: The Lion Tailed Macaque is one of the most endangered animals in the world. The Lion Tailed Macaque is an old world monkey and is one of the 16 Macaque species. The Lion Tailed Macaque can be found in the tiny, isolated pockets of the tropical forests in the Western Ghats. A recent

assessment for IUCN reports 3000-3500 of these animals live scattered over several areas in Kerala and Karnataka, The silent feature of the macaque and its appearance are its outstanding characteristics. This animal can be seen in Silent Valley National Park in Kerala, Papanasam part of the KalakkadMundanthurai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu and Sirsi-Honnava rainforests of North-Western Ghats in Karnataka. The Lion Tailed Macaque ranks among the rarest and most threatened primates. Their range has become increasingly isolated and fragmented by the spread of agriculture and plantations of Tea, Coffee, teak and Cinchona and construction of water reservoirs for irrigation and power generation followed by human settlements to support such activities. They do not live, feed or travel through plantations. Destruction of their habitat and their avoidance of human proximity has led to the drastic decrease of their population.

7. Snow Leopard: The Snow Leopard is the inheritor of the wild cat and panther families. It is mostly found in the steep and rocky region of the Himalayas. Snow Leopards have thick, long fur and their skin color varies from yellowing tan to smoky gray. The Snow Leopard can be easily identified by its tail as it is 80-105 cm long. There are 6,000 snow Leopards in the world, but its population is gradually declining. With the loss of habitat and widespread hunting, there has

been a 20% reduction in the population of Snow Leopards over the past 20 years. In addition, Snow Leopards are hunted for their valuable fur for the manufacturing of luxury coats and their bones are sought after for traditional Asian medicine. The Snow Leopard is found in Hemis National Park, Ladakh; Nanda Devi National Park, Uttarakhand; Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh; Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, LahaulSpiti, Himachal Pradesh; Pin Valley National Park, LahaulSpiti, Himachal Pradesh; Great Himalayan National Park, Kullu, Himachal Pradesh.

Conservation Measures Initiated: In India there are about 543 Wildlife Sanctuaries covering an area of 1, 22,802.66 ha. Similarly there are about 103 National Parks declared by the Govt. of India covering an area of 50,085.58 ha. for conserving a variety of Fauna. But however it is needless to say that these measures are inadequate to put an end to the onslaught of wildlife by the human beings for their selfishness and greediness.

Public awareness has to be created on a large scale and still some more stringent measures have to be adopted for protection of wildlife otherwise there is going to be a day when our grand and great grandchildren may ask us **"PAPA ! WHAT IS A WILD ANIMAL?"**

Author's e-mail ID: vssbabu@gmail.com.

Mobile No: 8019722292

——Source: Internet

OPERATION CHEMICAL IMMOBILISATION OF A WILD TUSKER (MEMOIR OF A PIONEERING EVENT OF 3 DECADES OLD SAID TO BE FIRST IN INDIA)

By

B.M.T. Rajeev

Reports in newspapers about the Human-Elephants Conflicts in the states of

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are common. The elephants' depredation in to farm lands/ human habitations/ coffee and tea estates causing vandalism to crops / property and human death; and retaliation by human with gun shots/ electrocution causing injury/deaths to elephants; and capturing/ translocation of rogue elephants to other locations or to elephants camps for taming etc. are common. While reading the news of capturing of elephants, my memory goes back to the incidence of Chemical immobilization of a wild tusker in Bandipur Tiger Reserve (BTR) in 1986, which was said to be the first wild elephant in India as per the expert Dr. Cherian, Veterinarian from Kerala.

My diary (1986) which was feared to have been destroyed after my retirement in 2006 had luckily escaped and by chance it was shown to me by my partner before discard-recently, which I was remembering to refer and to refresh my memory about the dates of training and '*Operation first chemical immobilization/ tranquilisation of a wild tusker in BTR in 1986*'.

Training on tranquilization:

I was ACF, heading Forest Mobile Squad in Mysuru Circle and I was put in additional charge of Research Officer, BTR on transfer of an IFS probationer in Jan, 1986 by Sri A.S.Sadashivaiah,



Pic: Photo of a male elephant's drawing whose trunk is locked by its tusks...similar to the hero of this article

CF, Mysuru and Field Director (FD) A/c...I use to visit BTR and manage the show as I was familiar with it due to my earlier service in it for 3 years and I was also busy with my vigilance work in the Circle.

Sri M. K.Appayya, CWLW, Karnataka arranged for a training of the officers on "Tranquilization/ chemical immobilization of wild animals" at Mysuru Zoo by inviting Dr. Cherian, an expert veterinarian in immobilization of tamed elephants in Kerala State for 2 days in Feb, 1986 (a visionary act that made Karnataka experts in

India). After lecture a chital was immobilized in the Zoo which was succumbed to the trauma of sedation as chitals are very sensitive. Then, all the officers who attended the training were asked to move to BTR for practical work next 2 days. The officers attended were Sriyuths MK Appayya, SK Ramalinge Gowda, BG Mugdur, BMT Rajeev, M. Laxmana, Vet Dr. Khadri, Vet Dr. Nagaraj and UllasKaranth (A Research scholar on wildlife Biology, stationed in Mysuru) on 13 & 14th, Feb, '86. There was a shooting session of balloons tied to a rope with gun to practice the shooting of dart to animals with the gun. I and Sri Ramalinge Gowda (DIGF in 2004) were the two who could hit the bull's eye.... balloon.

Back ground for tranquilizing of a wild tusker:

Sri B.Natarajan came on transfer as FD to BTR during fire season. The post of DD was vacant and the other ACF in BTR went on leave and I was asked to take charge of both the posts. BTR was riddled with the problem of elephant poaching for ivory theft by the poachers suspected to be from Kerala with the onset of monsoon from June.... generally every year. There were no organized anti-poaching camps or task force or vehicles as we have now in TRs. Brigand Veerappan too was active in Male Mahadeshwara&Biligiriranganbetta Hill ranges which were not WLSs-then, he once shot 4 elephants of a herd to poach the ivory of two tuskers including a sub-adult for not having deserted the dead tuskers in a valley of BRT Hills in 1985.(*This was the incidence which forced Late*

Sri P.Srinivas- hailed from Rajmundri AP- DCF, Chamarajnagar to take on the poacher Veerappan seriously and operate continuously against him even after his transfer to Chickamagaluru and became a victim of him in Nov, 1991 at MM hills- A recipient of posthumous Shourya Chakra in 1997 R-day, New Delhi). There used to be scare of elephant poaching continuously in BTR and neighborhood forests too..... Sri B. Natarajan, FD was like a Captain readily in the field to cross check all the reports of fires and poaching....This was the scenario in the monsoon of 1986.. (*This attitude of sensitiveness in protection duties earned Sri B.Natarajan a 'National gold medal' as the best FD for his meritorious anti-poaching operations against the culprits in BTR during his tenure- on the occasion of '20 Years of Project Tiger' all India Celebration held in Feb, 1993' in New Delhi.*)

There were reports on entry of poachers and poaching of two elephants in Beerambadi RF in the first of July, 1986; for which we arranged for immediate combing operation with the assistance of Forest cell-CID team to drive out the suspected poachers from the Berambadi RF of BTR. After combing on 4.7.86 I saw an aged wild tusker near Alegowdanakatte by the side of Calicut -Mysuru Road in the BTR with "heavily built tusks locking its trunk between/below the tusks, preventing to lift the trunk up without lifting its whole head for foraging.... I enquired with the staff about it..... who briefed me stating, that it is generally seen along the road side and they fear about its possible poaching....

The poaching was severe headache at that time... my training in chemical immobilization of wild animals struck to my mind with questions... why the said technique should not be tried on this wild jumbo to ease its trunk for easy foraging?

Then, I met the FD in office on 10.07.86 and explained about the sighting of the wild tusker along the Mysore-Calicut road side in BTR and its difficulty in lifting its trunk for foraging of bamboo and other tree shoots without lifting its whole head.... and its exposure for the danger of possible poaching in the near future with suggestions to take up the operation immobilization of wild tusker to ease the locked-in trunk by cutting and partially removing the locking tusks. He agreed and asked me to give a report with suggestion for the operation by inviting the expert from Kerala. I gave a report and went on a day's CL and after availing 2nd Saturday... I returned and got the information from my family that the FD had sent a word for me to meet him.

Operation immobilization:

On Sunday the 13.07.1986, I went to FD's quarters to see him (neighbor) and got information that CWLW had come and they are camping in BTR.... and I did not get any information on operation wild jumbo. Then, casually I took my staff and went to BTR.... at Forest Checking Gate, Gundlupet got the information about the operation wild jumbo in Maddur Range, Project Tiger. Went there, and found the Van of the FD on road side and learnt about the operation in the

nearby ChannaveerayyanaKatte (pond) in BTR.

I left my jeep on the main road and went with FMS staff along the D. line towards ChannaveerayyanaKatte- a seasonal water hole in the foot hills of Karadikalgudda contiguous to Himavad Gopalaswamy hills surrounded by a meadow with a type of grass-creeping flush to the ground and limited to only marshy lands without tree or weed growth. After the pond we came across the section forester Chickaranagaiah at a junction of elephant tracks... who asked us to stop and wait.....we heard the sound of a gunshot-darting and a rushing sound of the elephant; we were guided by the forester to leave the track through which the darted tusker was in amok and rushing towards us in the track in which we were moving, without forester's presence, we could have gone straight in the track of darted tusker and might have met the destiny!!!!..... The Forester was with 4 watchers, a gun, a 6 ft cross cutting saw and three pots of water. When questioned with amusement about the saw.....



he said it is to cut the tusks of the male elephant.

The darted tusker came rushing in the track in

front of us and disappeared in to a stream with thick forest cover.. .. a meadow and a stream We saw it running amok in a flash and could not trace where it had gone... The team in charge of operation came on two elephants back... Dr. Cherian, RFO Shyam Prasad (marks man) and a Vet (Dr.Khadri) on one and Mr.FD, Mr CWLW and a Vet (Dr. Nagaraj) on another elephant's back. We joined them and started searching to where the jumbo has gone ... all the team members got confused to find where the animal has gone from the midst of the meadow..... Luckily, I had in FMS, an youngster FG -Basavaraju who had worked in Nagarahole WLS then-before his transfer and he came forward to find where it has gone... *he fell on his knees to ground at a point and started crawling on by observing the blade of the grasses trampled by the jumbo's legs flush to the ground in the meadow and crawled to the other end leading to a stream... and found the elephant trying to claim out of the stream and shouted...* By the time the team approached, the sedated tusker fell down in-head downwards position... with the effect of chemical injected by dart to make it unconscious.

Dr.Khadri, Vet of BTR jumped down from the tamed elephant's back and climbed on the lying jumbo and shouted for water.... for which 3 pots of water were ready; he poured the water on patient elephant to keep its temperature cool and started the next operation of amputing the tusks by deciding where to cut...(at midpoint of the projected tusks of the elephant by considering that the tip of the tusks equal to ¼

will be solid and the rest with marrow). The Vets brought hand saws for amputing the tusks. While Dr.Khadri's saw broke in to two... Dr. Nagaraj, vet of Mysuru Zoo started with his saw and it also met the same fate... The CWLW was busy with his camera. It was already half an hour out... and Dr.Khadri was looking in to his watch and was warning for watering and to finish it within an hour to revive the sedated jumbo. Luckily, there was water in the stream and it was sufficient to the requirement. When water was continued to pour more and more.... the elephant's body started sliding head downward in to a crevices in the stream..... there was no crow bars or spade to level the ground to ease its head.... Or ... We managed to cut straight Anogeissus latifolia poles and dig the wet ground and ease the head of the elephant to remain in flat position as it was sliding downwards.... The cross cutting saw brought by forester was put on the job..... and all the staff of FMS Sriyuths Rajanna, Edwin, Satyanarayan including me and also the FD worked to our strength to cut the two tusks and separate them from the darted jumbo. The moment the job was done, Dr.Khadri gave the revival dose of medicine to the tranquilized jumbo.... Who took deep breath and sprang to vertical position instantly and tried to charge the CWLW who was clicking photos from the front.... and escaped in to the forest with brisk walk with relieved look....

when jumbo sprang up, the expert Dr Cherian was on elephant back and he did not

get down by telling that wild jumbos cannot be underestimated and he was giving all suggestions from elephant's back. The tribals who said to be more sensitive and quick in escaping from the danger of wild elephants did the same... all tribal Watchers and Kawadis did ran instantly either and thither..... when the jumbo surprised all. The operation was declared success and winded up. The tusks amputated weighed more than 50 kgs were taken by me to hand over to Sandal Koti, Mysuru for safe custody. (The details of the chemicals & dosage calculations etc. can be seen from the article written by Sri MK Appayya CWW in MYFOREST, Sept. or Dec, 1986) *I wish to appreciate the Experience of a FG / Forester in wildlife that came to the rescue at the point of despair.*

While taking late lunch at Maddur Range office, the expert Dr. Cherian gave full account of his work in Kerala where he had tranquilized 99 tamed elephants mostly for treating injuries and some to treat musth etc. and this wild jumbo operation of chemical immobilization in BTR was his 100th elephant tranquilization.... and it happened to be the wild one and happily declared that it was the **'first chemical immobilization of wild jumbo in India'**.

After, the operation wild jumbo, we returned to Hqrs. and I was relieved from the additional charge of Research Officer, BTR on 16.7.86. The press followed this operation and managed to take photos of the hero- jumbo and published news items....some with appreciation and some with criticism. Sri Deshmukh was the Forest

Minister, Karnataka at that time who paid a visit to Mysuru on 24.7.1986. The press reporters gathered and cornered him with multiple questions about the amputation of the tusks of a jumbo in BTR with the fear of its poaching etc. and termed it, equal to be an act of removing the mustaches of a warrior fearing the attack from enemies etc...and there were adverse news headlines from Mysuru against the act of KFD.

Taking responsibility/ risk works::

The reports hurt me a lot.... as I happen to be a root cause....then I prepared a press note and published in Deccan Herald after getting it approved by my boss CF, Mysuru and defended our action of amputating locked up tusks in the interest of freeing the male jumbo from the difficulty in lifting its trunk for feeding bamboo and other tree shoots.... since the elephants likes to feed more than 50 % of the food by foraging than grazing.... as an experiment with good intension. It worked and the criticisms subsided.

Visit of the Brigand to BTR:

After this operation, the notorious poacher Brigand Veerappa and his gang entered BTR in the night of 27.8.1986 in a vehicle through Calicut-Mysuru road and camped in Berambadi RF unknowingly near to a tree top anti-poaching camp established by then at Alegowdanakatte-main road side. The alert staff noticed the camp fire (*Fire is a must in BTR forests during nights in monsoons to be free from the bites of flies, insects and bugs for anybody's camp in open*) of the

gang and informed the young RFO-Narasimha swamy HC, who raided the poachers camp with staff and encountered the gang.... one poacher Arjuna (Br in-law of the brigand) and a Daily Wage watcher by name Siddarama died in exchange of fire- shootout. This was the first instance of Veerappan's entry to BTR which met with shootout. A big haul of imported and other arms and ammunitions were seized as I saw in my visit on 28.8. 86. (RFO late Narasimha swamy and his staff were honored with State bravery awards for this action) Again in 1996-97 Brigand Veerappan planned and abducted the famous photographers Kripakara&Senani (Thinking them as forest officers), a driver and a few visitors from the tourism zone of Bandipur TR which ended without any booty to the Brigand before abducting the famous Kannada star DrRajkumar for booty. But, Kripakara & Senani became famous by publishing their tales as captives of the brigand and also from their film on wild dogs of BTR which earned them international award in 1990s.

Conclusion:

The KFD became an expert in the field of translocation of wild elephants in India after it handled successfully the translocation of strayed herd of rogue elephants from Katteपुरa-Coorg to Nagarahole in 1980s. It worked as an expert in North India by deputing the Vet- Dr.Khadri (which was filmed by a Documentarian, who got worldwide recognition & awards). Recently a herd of 25 crop raiding jumbos in Hassan District (2014) in Karnataka and three rogue jumbos in Maharashtra state by deputing expert staff with 4 trained jumbos in 2016, in addition the stray incidences of translocation of rogue elephants in Karnataka has become very common.

The Author is a Retired Dy. Director, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, author of books on wildlife, and freelance writer on wildlife, forestry and environment.

E-mail: bmt.rajeev.ifs@gmail.com. **Mob: 9632781811**

NOTICE

18th FRC alumni meet will be held at Nagpur from 6th to 8th January 2018. The organizers of meet requested all those who were trained in Forest Rangers Colleges of India to attend the meet. Those who are interested may contact Sri R.S. Bhangu Chairman and Sri Naveen Agrawal Vice Chairman whose telephone numbers are 09373107836 and 07972120531 respectively.

A LEAF FOR LIVELIHOOD

By
M. Padmanabha Reddy

Tobacco Smoking is as old as human civilization. It manifests in different forms at different times in different places. Cigar a rolled bundle of dried and fermented tobacco leaf is prevalent in many countries. Cigar is produced in a variety of types and sizes to be smoked. The cigar tobacco is grown mainly in Central America and Caribbean. It is also produced in Eastern United States, Italy, Spain, Indonesia and Philippines. The origins of Cigar smoking are still unknown. A Guatemalan ceramic pot dating back to the tenth century features a Mayan smoking tobacco leaves together with a string.

Explorer Christopher Columbus is generally credited with introduction of tobacco to Europe from Haiti and Cuba during their journey in 1492. Smoking primitive Cigars spread to Spain Portugal and France. In 1542 tobacco started to be grown commercially in North America where the Spain yards established a first Cigar factory on the islands of Cuba. In 19th Century, Cigar smoking was common, while cigarettes were still comparatively rare. Cigar business was an important industry, growing tobacco leaf and preparing cigars employed many people as small scale industry before mechanized manufacturing of Cigar picked up. Cigar workers both in Cuba and the U.S. were active in labor strikes and disputes from early 19th Century and the rise of modern labor unions can be traced to the Cigar workers union of USA.

Tobacco leaves are harvested manually and aged using a curing process that combines heat and shade to reduce sugar and water content, this takes 25 to 45 days, curing varies by type of leaf color. A slow fermentation follows, where temperature and humidity are controlled to exchange flavor, aroma and burning characteristics while fore stalling rot or disintegration.

Quality Cigars are still handmade, an experienced Cigar-roller can produce 400 to 500 good quality identical Cigars per day. Cigar advertising companies argues that Cigars are safer than Cigarettes, since they do not have the chemical additives that Cigarette manufactures add to tobacco used as Cigarette filler.

Hookah: Hookah is another type of smoking tobacco. It is a single or multi-stemmed instrument for vaporizing and smoking flavored tobacco whose vapor or smoke is passed through water basin before inhalation. It is reported that hookah was invented in India during Mughal Empire. The use of hookahs in India was not only a custom but a matter of prestige, rich and landed classes would smoke hookahs. Hookah smoking is now becoming popular among youth in India there are several Chain clubs, Bars and Coffee shops in India offering Hookah smoking.

Cigarettes: The earlier forms of Cigarettes were

similar to their predecessor, the Cigar. Cigarette is a small cylinder of finely cut tobacco leaves rolled into thin paper for smoking. Most modern manufactured Cigarettes are filtered. Nicotine the Primary psycho active chemical in Tobacco makes Cigarettes addictive. German doctors were the first to identify the link between smoking and lung cancer. During the second half of 20th Century the adverse health effects of tobacco smoking started to become widely known and health warnings became common on Cigarette packets. The graphic warning labels were found to be more effective method to communicate to the public the dangers of Cigarette smoking. Many governments impose restrictions on smoking tobacco especially in public areas. The primary justification has been the negative health effect of second hand smoke (or passive smoker). Bhutan is currently the only Country in the world to completely outlaw the cultivation, harvesting, production and sale of tobacco and tobacco products. In many countries tobacco advertising and sponsorship has been outlawed. Annually about 5.5 billion Cigarettes are produced globally and are smoked by over 1.1 billion people.

Electronic Cigarettes: Electronic Cigarettes (E-Cigarettes) are battery- powered vaporizer that stimulates the feeling of smoking but without tobacco. The user activates the e-Cigarette by taking a puff or pressing button. The benefits and the health risks of e-Cigarettes are uncertain. There is tentative evidence that they can help people quit smoking.

Beedi: Beedi is a thin Cigarette filled with

tobacco flake and commonly wrapped in a '*Diospyros melonoxylon*' (Tendu, Abnus) leaf tied with a string. It originates from Indian subcontinent the name is derived from Marwari word Beeda – a mixture of Betelnuts, herbs and spices wrapped in a leaf. Indian tobacco cultivation begun in the late 17th Century and Beedies were first created when tobacco workers took left over tobacco rolled it in leaves and smoked. The commercial Indian Beedi industry saw rapid growth during 1930s probably driven by expansion of tobacco cultivation at the time. Gradually it has become a highly competitive industry leading to creation of many new Beedi brands employing thousands of Beedi rollers, and in course of time it has become a cottage industry with home based women work force predominantly employed in Beedi rolling while men continue to be employed in other aspects of Beedi production. In India over 8 million people are employed in manufacture of Beedies – a cottage industry that is typically done by women in their homes. Workers roll out about 500 – 1000 Beedies per day earning anything from Rs. 100 to 150 per day. Unfortunately studies have shown that Nicotine levels in the bodily fluids of Beedi workers are elevated even among those who do not use tobacco. The production of Beedies is also popular in Bangladesh.

Prior to 1964 forest departments in India auctioned Tendu leaf collection rights to contractors who collect the leaf through local poor people who pluck the leaves from bushes

and trees in hot summer, bundle them into 50/100 leaves and deliver them in collection centers (Khalla). At khalla site which is normally located on a dry river bed, the leaf bundles are sun dried (cured) exposing one side every day (Ultai – Paltai) and after 10 days the bundles are bagged in gunny bags and transported to storage centers. This operation of curing provides lot of employment. Plucking of Beedi leaves provide employment to about 7.5 million people across the country. In the year 1964 Madhya Pradesh was the first state to Nationalize Tendu leaf trade as progressive measure and to prevent exploitation of leaf collectors. It was followed by Maharashtra 1969, A.P. 1971, Odisha 1973, Gujarat 1979 and Rajasthan 1974. Then started a big debate, why should the government not withdraw from the trade of Tendu leaf and hand it over to forest dwellers. After all, the leaves, primarily used to wrap Beedies provide the largest seasonal income and employment to 7.5 million forest dwelling people in 12 states. The leaf is classified as M.F.P. and Tribals have a right over M.F.P.

On June 26, 2017 M.P. Lokayukta registered a case against the state M.F.P. Co-operative federation for not distributing the revenue of Tendu leaf or should have spent the money on development projects for forest dwelling communities who collect the produce.

In the year 2013 Odisha Denationalized Tendu leaf trade, Maharashtra transferred the rights to 18 *Grama Sabhas* and provides them financial support to manage it. Today these *Grama Sabhas* sell the leaf at highest rate. In Telangana a

truncated arrangement of collection of Beedi leaves is in vogue. Forest department supervises the collection of Beedi leaves, while Forest Development Corporation acts as agent to provide the initial funding and ultimately the government gets the sale proceeds of leaves, the scheme is a half cooked and half backed arrangement. In some forest divisions the revenue realized from Beedi leaves is shared with V.S.S. In many Beedi leaf units where size of the leaf is small, contractors are not willing to purchase the leaf, with the result, the leaf go waste and laborers denied of wages. It is high time that the government of Telangana Denationalize the scheme of Beedi leaf collection, shift to old system of auctions and transfer the revenue to V.S.S. or Panchayat to take up local developmental works. This step saves the time of field staff in summer season to concentrate on protection.

As a statutory warning a label showing bones and head has to be pasted on packet of Beedies with caption **“Tobacco smoking is injurious to health”**. There was a big agitation from Beedi workers to delete this label but Government of India did not agree to it. Further GST is imposed on Beedies which may make the Beedies costly.

The tobacco leaf grown in U.S.A. and other countries, making into Cigars, likewise collection of Beedi leaf and manufacturing Beedies provide employment to millions of people across the globe. **Truly it is a LEAF FOR LIVELIHOOD.**

References : 1. Down to Earth (16-31 August 2017)Internet

Birthday Greetings
We wish the following born on the dates mentioned
"A very Happy Birth Day"

S.No.	Name of the member	D.O.B.		
	Sarva Sri		6.	P.Krishnamachary 07-10-1964
			7.	A.Laxman 10-10-1058
1.	A.Rasheed Khan	06-10-1937	8.	P.Ramesh 10-10-1959
2.	T.Krishna Murthy	07-10-1926	9.	M.Ashok Kumar 13-10-1965
3.	L.Lohith Reddy	08-10-1931	10.	R.D.Venkateshwarlu 13-10-1960
4.	U.Govind Rao	08-10-1953	11.	D.Sudhakar Reddy 14-10-1966
5.	M.Narayan Rao	10-10-1932	12.	Smt. G.A. Prasuna 21-10-1979
6.	R.K.Rao	20-10-1935	13.	K. Kamalakar 02-11-1958
7.	V.Ranga Rao	20-10-1945	14.	K.Appala Narasimha Chary 03-11-01961
8.	C.Subba Rao	24-10-1943		
9.	B.M.Swamydas	24-10-1954		
10.	K.Ramakrishna	28-10-1926		
11.	G.Prakash	02-11-1950		
12.	K.Jagan Mohan Rao	05-11-1941		
13.	D. Nagabhushanam	05-11-1955		

Secretary

S.No.	Name of Serving Officers	D.O.B.
1.	Dr.Harish Chandra Misra	07-10-1955
2.	C.P.Vinod Kumar	21-10-1963
3.	Lokesh Jaiswal	22-10-1963
4.	Dr.G.Narsaiah	24-10-1957
5.	Y.Madhusudan Reddy	04-11-1963



**MINITUES OF THE 85TH GENERAL BODY MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS OF TELANGANA
AND ANDHRA PRADESH HELD ON 17-09-2017 IN ARANYA
BHAVAN, HYDERABAD**

1. As Sri B.M. Swami Das, Secretray of Association is out of the Country to US Sri A.V. Govindrajulu Jt. Sec. cum Treasurer welcomed ladies and members to the 85h General Body Meeting of the Association. As Sri S.K. Das, President is out of the Country to US, Sri T. Narayan Swamy, Vice-President was requested to preside over the meeting. Sri Qamar Mohd. Khan was requested to accupy the chair. The agenda was placed before the president with a request to conduct the proceedings of the meeting.

2.Shardhanjali : Sri. M.G. Puroshottam Naidu a senior member of the Association expired on 24th Aug 2017 at Hyderabad, after a brief illness. Sri. K. Buchi Rami Reddy, spoke about late M.G.Purushottam Naidu and his services and contribution to Forest Dept. and the Society during his long service in Forest Dept. Sri KBR Reddy has also refered to the sad damise of Sri Arjun Singh, Marshal of the Indian Airforse at the age of 92 and remembered his services to the nation. The congregation stood and observed silence for two minutes as mark of respect and prayed for the souls of the departed to rest in peace.

3.Action Taken Report of the Secretary :

The Jt. Secretary cum Treasurer presented the Action taken Report on the decisions taken at the Executive Committee meeting held on 19.08 and at General Body

meeting held on 02.07.2017.

a) To conduct the 85th General Body Meeting on 17th Sept 2017 by notifying in Vana Premi, the Journal of Assoication in Sept 2017 issue complied.

b) Justice Ramaswamy, retired Judge of Supreme Court was personally contacted by Vice President Sri. T. Narayan Swamy to be the Chief Guest at General Body Meeting scheduled on 17.09.2017 to deliver a lecture on legal issues concerning the Sr. Citizens. Justice Ramaswamy regretfully informed that he is not moving out of the House due to health reasons and espressed his inability.

c) To felicitate Sri K. Santhok Singh on attaining the age of 80 years and Sri Madan Mohan on attaining the age of 75 in the General Body Meeting on 17.09.2017.

d) Sri. S. K. Das President, before leaving for U.S. requested the Vice President Sri. T. Narayan Swamy to convey to the Executive Committee his proposal to place on record the appreciation for the services rendered to Association and Vana Premi by Sri. J.V. Sharma, Sri.T.Narayan Swamy and Sri.K.Buchi Rami Reddy and suggested to avail their services by drafting them as Permanent invitees of Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee discussed in detail and accepted

the proposal of the President. The proposal was put up for approval of the General Body and to amend by laws accordingly.

e) In view of the improved membership, the Executive Committee unanimously resolved to increase one more member as Treasurer by separating the post of Jt. Secretary cum Treasurer as Jt. Secretary and Treasurer.

f) For the same reasons stated in "e" above, the Executive Committee unanimously resolved to increase the strength of Executive Committee members from existing five to seven and to amend the bylaws accordingly.

g) On request by the editor Sri. Mr. Qamar Mohd. Khan, that he needs assistance in works connected with Vana Premi, the number of elected members in Editorial Board be increased from one to three. The Executive committee unanimously resolved to increase the strength of Editorial Board from "a member" to "three members".

The proposals unanimously recommended by the Executive Committee under c,d,e and f above were put up to the General Body for approved. The General Body discussed the proposals and unanimously approved the resolutions stated under c,d,e and f above.

4) Talk by Sri Qamar Mohd. Khan Editor Vana Premi : Sri. Qamar Mohd. Khan informed that the process of electing Editor and others members has to be informed to Registrar of News Papers of India, and the registration has to be revised. The concessional postal charges for sending Vana

Premi to members will get stopped in case the Registration is not renewed. Accordingly the following resolution was put to General Body for Approval.

"The General Body of the Association discussed various issues concerning the management of its Journal Vana Premi and reiterates that Vana Premi is the Journal of the Association and authorises the Editor to Print and Publish the Journal in his name and also to take all such actions as are necessary from time to time in that regard".

The General Body discussed in detail and unanimously approved the Resolution.

5) The General Body unanimously approved the following Amendments to the Rules and Regulations of the Association of Retired Forest Officers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh consequent to the approval of resolution mentioned under c,d,e,f and g above:

i) By law 7 (iv) shall be read as "Jt. Secretary" Only

ii) By law 7(v) shall be read as "Treasurer" Only

iii) The existing by Law 7(V) shall be renumbered as 7(vi) and shall be read as "seven elected members".

iv) Another By law 7(VII) will be added to read as "three permanent invites, namely Sri. J.V.Sharma, Sri.T.Narayan Swamy and Sri.K.Buchi Rami Reddy who will participate in Executive Committee meetings but without any voting rights".

v) By law 13 (iv) shall be amended to read as

"three memmbers" instead of 'a member'

vi) By law 13(vi) shall be amended to read as "The Editor, Associate editor and three members of Editorial Board shall be elected by General Body and their term of office shall be "two years" and be co-terminous with the term of the executive committee. The members of General Body unanimously approved the ammendments.

The following note shall be added the bottom of the text under executive committee.

Note : a). In the absance of the President, the Vice President shall discharge all functions of the President and like-wise the Jt. Secretary shall discharge all the fuctions of the Secretary in his absence.

b). The President, the Vice President and the Secretary of the Association shall be authorised signatories on behalf of the Association

6) Talk by Sri Narayan Swamy Vice President on pensioners issues.

Sri T. Narayan Swamy spoke about medical facilities available at A.G. Office. Specialist consultation in Hospital and as well and Home visits in case of urgency and need. The super senior citizens will have out of turn priority in Cental Govt. Hospitals and in settlement of Medical claims.

1. Dearness Relief : Based on All India Price Index at the end of June 2017, the GOI increased 1% DR w.e.f July 2017.

2. Medical Specialists : The following Medical

Specilists are available in CGHS Polyclinc in AG's Office Complex:

Gynocologists : All days

Skin Specialist : All days

Physician : Thu, Fri, Sat

Eye Spccialist : All days

Paediatrician : Mon, Tue

3. Benefits to CGHS. beneficiaries : Special provisions to CGHS beneficcaries aged 80 years and above

i) Consultation of Doctor at CGHS Wellness centre without standing in queue.

ii)CGHS Doctors shall enquire by phone at least once in a month about their well being / make a home visit if residing within 5KMs of CGHS Wellness centre.

iii) Settlement of Medical Claims on priority out of turn

iv) Following treatment from same specialist in non empanelled Hospital from where he / she was taking treatment as a special case in view of advanced age and difficulty to change physician subject ot the reimbursment limited to CGHS and collection of medicians as per CGHS guidelines.

4. Increase in FMA : The GOI increased the Fixed Medical Allowance from Rs. 500/- per month to Rs. 1000/- per month in areas where there is no CGHS facility.

5. Chief Guest for General Body Meetings: Experiencing difficulty in getting chief Guests. It is suggested to select speakers from among our own members.

6.VII CPC :The VII CPC recommended two options :The first option as recommended by the VII CPC is stated by GOI as not feasible for implamentation. Therefore the Govt. issued orders in accordance with 2nd formulation to fix revised pension w.e.f 1-1-2016 by multiplying the pension by 2.57% as had been fixed at the time of implemmentation of the VI th CPC.

Later the first option recommenced by 7th CPC was entrusted to a committee headed by Secretary,Dept of Pensioners,Pensioners welfare. The committee submitted its report and the recommendations made by the Committee have been considered by the Govt. It has been decided that the pension wef 1-1-2016 may be revised by notionally fixing the pay in the pay matrix recommended by the 7th CPC in the level correspoding to the Pay in the Pay Scale / Pay band and grade pay at which they retired.

7. Felicitations - Above 80 years : Sri. K. Santokh Singh has been felicitated by presenting a shawl and flower Bouquet and wished him a long healthy and happy retired life. Sri. K. Santokh Singh thanked the members of General Body and recalled the happy moments of his life and service in Forest Dept. and his contribution to Association as a member, secretary and Executive Committee member on attaining 80 years of age. Sri Madhan Mohan who attained 70 years is out of country and was not present.

8. Any other items.

Sri Padmanabha Reddy spoke about the importance of the date 17th september for the

State of Telangana, which incidentally hapens to be the day of General Body Meeting. He recalled that the Telangana region together with Marathwada and Karnataka were parts of erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad. ruled by the Nizams. The Hyderabad state was still under the tyrannical rule of the Nizam when India attained freedom from the British on 15th Aug 1947. The People of the State had to agitate and pay heavy price for responsible Govt. by courting arrests and resisting the excesses perpetrated by the Razakars. He recollected his boy-hood days when the struggle was in progress. He said that the State had to be liberated from the tyranny of the Nizam and Razakars by Sardar Patel, as Home Minister of GOI through a Police Acction. It was on 17th Sep. 1948, the armed forces of the Nizam surrendered before the Indian Army led by Maj. General J.N. Chowdary. The People of the Telangana state there fore selebrate the day as Libratory Day.

9. Vote of thanks : Sri A.V. Govinda Rajulu, Jt. Secretary, presented the vote of thanks for all those who atteneded the meeting and Forest Dept. for sparing the Conference Hall. The G.B. Meeting was follwed by lunch hosted by Sri.D.V. Jairam Prasad.The next meeting will be held in December 2017.

A.V. Govinda Rajulu

Jt. Secretary & Treasurer

NEWS AND NOTES

Killers of Sri R. Gangiah FRO convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment:-

14 persons who brutally murdered Sri Gangiah the then Forest Range Officer Kamareddy, on the intervening night of 14-15 September 2013 after throwing Chilli powder in the eyes of Forest staff headed by Sri Gangiah, who went to Nallavelli forests on a falls smuggling information are convicted and awarded life imprisonment on 25-9-2017. 37 persons who assaulted injured forest staff and killed Sri R. Gangiah were charged sheeted by Police. 23 persons were acquitted and 14 were convicted by the Court.

How high is air pollution in your city and how does it compare to the most polluted cities in the world?

According to its recent report, one in four deaths among children under five are now due to environmental hazards such as air pollution and contaminated water.

Previously this year, air pollution levels in London were worse than those in Beijing for a brief period - with the UK capital's pollutants frequently breaking UK limits.

Now, the UK Government plans to tackle such dangers by banning diesel and petrol cars by 2040.

But how bad is air pollution in other areas of the UK?

Search for your postcode to see how bad air pollution is in your area

How does the UK compare to the world?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), London is just a mid-table city when it comes to the international league table of polluted places. London only ranked 1,389th out

of the nearly 3,000 cities and towns around the world monitored in the WHO's database of annual air pollution readings.

WHO guidelines state that, cities should aim to have an annual average of no more than 10 micrograms of PM2.5 (very fine particulate matter) for every cubic metre of air. London had an annual PM2.5 average of 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2013, far lower than Beijing's average of 85.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

These particles are very small in diameter and are classed as carcinogenic by leading health organizations. Thousands of deaths a year are attributable to air pollution in the UK.

Which cities have the highest air pollution levels worldwide?

According to the WHO, the most polluted city in the world is Zabol in Iran. Zabol's PM2.5 measurements were found to average a massive 217 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for the latest available year - more than 20 times higher than the recommended level.

The next two entries on the list are both located in India (Gwalior and Allahabad) while the first non-Asian city on the list is Bamenda in Cameroon which came in eighth place. Tetovo in Macedonia was the most polluted European city in the database, followed by Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The most polluted city in the UK isn't actually London. Glasgow topped that list, followed by Scunthorpe and Leeds with London in sixth place.

However, given that these rankings are based on figures taken in 2013, the situation may have changed since. London may also experience greater peaks in air pollution but these figures

are all annual averages.

Asian cities tend to be more polluted

The WHO's database is by no means a comprehensive list of every city in the world - many places will simply not be able to provide air pollution figures of sufficient quality to be included.

However, from the figures available, Asian cities were the likeliest to exceed the $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ guideline for PM2.5.

Just four of the 632 Asian locations included in the data were found to be below this level, meaning that the equivalent of 99.4 per cent of Asian cities exceeded it.

African cities were the next most likely to annually exceed their recommended levels of air pollution while towns and cities in Oceania were the least likely.

Climate change not as threatening to planet as previously thought, new research suggests:

-Climate change poses less of an immediate threat to the planet than previously thought because scientists got their modelling wrong, a new study has found. New research by British scientists reveals the world is being polluted and warming up less quickly than 10-year-old forecasts predicted, giving countries more time to get a grip on their carbon output. An unexpected "revolution" in affordable renewable energy has also contributed to the more positive outlook.

Experts now say there is a two-in-three chance of keeping global temperatures within 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, the ultimate goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

They also condemned the "overreaction" to the US's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, announced by Donald Trump in June, saying it is

unlikely to make a significant difference.

According to the models used to draw up the agreement, the world ought now to be 1.3 degrees above the mid-19th-Century average, whereas the most recent observations suggest it is actually between 0.9 to 1 degree above.

We're in the midst of an energy revolution and it's happening faster than we thought Professor Michael Grubb, University College London

The discrepancy means nations could continue emitting carbon dioxide at the current rate for another 20 years before the target was breached, instead of the three to five predicted by the previous model.

"When you are talking about a budget of 1.5 degrees, then a 0.3 degree difference is a big deal", said Professor Myles Allen, of Oxford University and one of the authors of the new study.

Published in the journal Nature Geoscience, it suggests that if polluting peaks and then declines to below current levels before 2030 and then continues to drop more sharply, there is a 66 per cent chance of global average temperatures staying below 1.5 degrees.

The goal was yesterday described as "very ambitious" but "physically possible".

Another reason the climate outlook is less bleak than previously thought is stabilizing emissions, particularly in China.

China has now acquired more than 100 gigawatts of solar cells, 25 per cent of which in the last six months, and in the UK, offshore wind has turned out to cost far less than expected.

Professor Michael Grubb, from University College London, had previously described the goals agreed at Paris in 2015 as "incompatible with democracy".

But yesterday he said: "We're in the midst of an energy revolution and it's happening faster than we thought, which makes it much more credible for governments to tighten the offer they put on the table at Paris."

He added that President Trump's withdrawal from the agreement would not be significant because "The White House's position doesn't have much impact on US emissions".

"The smaller constituencies - cities, businesses, states - are just saying they're getting on with it, partly for carbon reduction, but partly because there's this energy revolution and they don't want to be left behind."

The new research was published as the Met Office announced that a "slowdown" in the rate of global temperature rises reported over roughly the first decade of this century was now over.

The organization said the slowdown in rising air temperatures between 1999 and 2014 happened as a result of a natural cycle in the Pacific, which led to the ocean circulation speeding up, causing it to pull heat down in the deeper ocean away from the atmosphere.

However, that cycle has now ended.

Claire Perry, the climate change and industry minister, claimed Britain had already demonstrated that tackling climate change and running a strong economy could go "hand in hand".

"How is the time to build on our strengths and cement our position as a global hub for investment in clean growth," she said.

VAN SHAHEED DIVAS: According to the order of the Government of India, Forest Martyrs Day will have to be observed on September 11, each year. It was on this day in 1730 that over 360 people of Bishnoi tribe were killed in Khejarli (presently in Rajasthan) by the king of Jodhpur when they

had objected to the felling of khejri trees.

Accordingly, the Martyrs Day was organised on Sept. 11, 2017 at the Nehru Zoological Park at Hyderabad to commemorate the cruel killing of Dy.C.F Srinivas in Karnataka by the sandalwood smuggler Veerappan and 22 officers of various cadres killed in the state of Telangana while discharging their duty. Many forest officers including foresters in uniform and retired forest officers were present for the solemn occasion. A running commentary was arranged for the event.

Forest and Environment Minister JoguRamanna was the chief guest. On this day, the Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao in his message paid rich tributes to those who had laid down their lives for the protection of forests. The Chief Minister said further that the State Government had taken up the programme of *Telngana-ku-HarithaHaaram* to rejuvenate the forests in Telangana. He exhorted the forest staff to emulate the spirit of the martyrs and dedicate themselves in protecting the forest wealth.

Forest Minister JoguRamanna in his speech on this occasion said that maintenance of environmental equilibrium is the duty of every citizen of the country. The Forest Department is endeavoring to Conserve biodiversity and raise social forest plantations. We are observing the Forest Martyrs Day every year to commemorate the sacrifices of the forest personnel. Rich tributes were paid to those heroes who died in harness

A contingent of Police with arms also joined the ceremony. Wreaths were placed at the Memorial. The bugler played the last post. Two minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect to the departed souls. The solemn ceremony then came to a close. **K.B.R.**

OBITUARY

M.G. Purushotham Naidu
10.02.1932 – 24.08.2017



With profound sorrow we record the demise of Sri Purshotham Naidu, Rtd. ACF on 24.08.2017 at Hyderabad. He was admitted into a private hospital at

Range Officer in 1971, In recognition of his hard work and sincerity, he was promoted as ACF and was posted in the Nehru Zoological Park as Assistant to the Curarator, Sri Pushp Kumar. The Curator was impressed with his performance. Purshotham Naidu was married to Smt. Sashirekha in 1954 and they had three sons and one daughter. The eldest boy predeceased him. All his children got married and well settled in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad on 22.08.2017 when he complained of uneasiness. He breathed his last due to cardiac arrest on 24.08.2017 in spite of good medical attention.

Muthyala Gurunatham Purshothm Naidu was the youngest of the four siblings of his parents Sri M. Gurunatham and Smt. Laxmi Bai. Sri Naidu was born on 10.02.1932.

He received his early education at Hyderabad. After completing matriculation from Methodist High School at Secunderabad, he joined V.V. College for Intermediate but had to discontinue further studies as he was selected for appointment as Forester in 1951. His first posting was at Bucharam in Wanaparathi Range in Mahbubnagar district. He rose to the rank of Dy. R.O. in 1961 and got further promotion as

Sri Naidu was a disciplined officer and always received encomiums from his superiors.

He treated well his subordinates and they all worked together with mutual confidence.

Most of his service as Forester and Ranger was in Khammam district. He retired on superannuation in 1990 after creditable service in the Forest Department. Sri Pushp Kumar, impressed with his sincerity and dedication to work, gave some assignments even after retirement.

Purshotham Naidu is survived by his wife, two sons, five grandchildren and a large number of friends and relatives to mourn his loss.

MAY HIS NOBLE SOUL REST IN PEACE!

J.V.S. Rao



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- The TSFDC is harvesting about 1,50,000 Lakh MTs of pulpwood every year. Besides this, it also produces about 15 Lakh Long Bamboo and 1500 MTs Bamboo industrial cuts for use as pulpwood.
- The TSFDC has also taken up the challenging task of Eco-Tourism development in the State. Already open to public – Hyderabad Botanical Garden near Hi-Tech City, Madhapur, Mahavir Nischal Van Eco-Tourism Centre, Vanasthalipuram and Shameerpet Deer Park, attracting increasing number of visitors.

Vice Chairman & Managing Director,

T.S. Forest Development Corporation Ltd.,
3rd Floor, UNI Building, A.C. Guards, Hyderabad - 500004.
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