

VANA PREMI

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Vol .19

APRIL -2018

No.04



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Email: vcmd.tsfdcl@gmail.com

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April - 2018

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Editor : Qamar Mohd. Khan

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

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

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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.)
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1. Editorial Q.M.K 4
2. Is Astrology A Science or An Art
 of the Possible? J.V. Sharma 8
3. Supreme Court Commences
 Hearing Forest Rights Case
 J.V. Sharma 12
4. To Be Sure, Reality Bites
 Dr. B. Raghotham Rao Desai 14
6. Forests of North East India
 Akula Kishan 15
7. Forest Rights Act - Who Lost and
 Who Gained .M.Padmanabha Reddy 20
8. How did you people live before? 23
9. Brithday Greetings ... Secretary 24
10. Thotla Konda - A Buddhist Monastery
 V. Santhaseela Babu 25
9. Trading in Snakes - Arrest of
 Poachers.. M. Raja Ramana Reddy 31
10. Our National Bird-Is it a Problem To
 Farmers of Tamil Nadu?
 R. Deepak Kumar 34
12. Cheetal Or Chital.. Internet 36
13. News and Notes 40
15. Minutes of the 87th General Body
 Meeting of Retd. Forest Officers... 47
16. Legal Notes K.B.R Reddy 50
18. Obituaries 53

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Total pages 56

EDITORIAL

Sri S. Manikandan IFS:- It is a shocking and tragic incident in which Conservator of Forest & Field Director of Project Tiger Nagarhole Tiger Reserve S. Manikandan belonging to Indian Forest Service died in an elephant attack on World Wildlife Day i.e. on 03-03-2018. On March 1, there was a fire incident in one of the ranges under his jurisdiction. The staff had managed to put off the fire. Two days later, i.e. on 3rd March, World Wildlife Day he wanted to inspect the spot to assess the damage caused and records the GPS readings of the burnt area. He proceeded to the spot and got down from the vehicle. He was following the staff by walk to the spot which was hardly 100 to 150 mtrs. It was a narrow forest track and they were marching in a single line. All the staff was in front of him. Mr. Manikandan was the last in that row. A lonely tusker, perhaps in *musth*, was standing quietly in the nearby bushes and not seen by anybody. It allowed the six to pass through perhaps as all of them were wearing Khaki (dull) colored dresses and charged the seventh Sri Manikandan who was wearing a whitish cream-colored shirt. Elephants have poor eye sight and target bright colored cloths. Perhaps the elephant saw bright colored dress, got annoyed and attacked Sri Manikandan. Out of shock, Sri Manikandan couldn't run and lost his balance, fell down, making it easy for the elephant to trample and kill him

instantaneously. This tragic and shocking incident happened only in 45 seconds. A Forest Range Officer was also sustained injuries in this scuffle. After that, the tusker vanished into the forest. It is extremely unfortunate that a man who had been protecting the forests and wildlife had to suffer this. There is also rumor that there were two elephants and there were about 20 staff members. Truth will come out only after thorough enquiry. Sri Manikandan always used to advice all officers of the department to wear khaki or a camouflaged dress whenever they go inside the forest. What an irony and bad luck on that fateful day that he was not wearing Khaki cloths which rule he used to insist for all other officers. It is learnt that he hardly used to sleep during the fire season and used to be always alert.

He was a very simple, sincere, extremely humble, hardworking, down to earth, honest, and a dedicated forest officer. More than that, he was totally committed to conservation. He contained most of the problems in Nagarhole. Earlier too he did an excellent job in Bellary despite political pressures. He would go only by the rulebook. This is an extremely unfortunate incident. He was a very good officer and used to manage wildlife very well as he was a Diploma holder in wildlife management. He never yielded to anybody for anything. He was

invited to the World Wildlife Day celebration in Aranya Bhavan, Mysuru on 3rd March. Instead of going to the field for inspection of burnt area had he attended the World Wildlife Day celebrations on 3rd March at Mysuru he would have been survived and had been with all of us, but fate makes its own decisions. In another celebration in which PCCF was given farewell he too was invited but did not attend it and when his colleague contacted him on phone he said "celebrations may come and go, but if something goes wrong inside the forest, say, a forest fire or something, it's me that the whole department will question. This year, the PCCF (Wildlife) had especially told me to maintain a zero fire forest area. So it is better for me to stay here in the forest than come to Mysore to attend a farewell function".

He was born on 15th of July 1972, and was only 45 years old. He belongs to 2001 batch of IFS. He was promoted to Conservator's rank on 1-1-2015. He had four sisters and a brother. Having lost his father long ago, it was his mother who brought them up. Sri Manikandan hailed from Tamil Nadu's Theni district. He did his BSc Agriculture from AC&RI, Madurai, and then got an ICAR fellowship to do his Masters from Pusa, New Delhi. While doing his PhD, he was appointed as a Scientist in Indian Wood Science and Technology, Bangalore. From there, he wrote the IFS and got selected in 2001 batch, and

allotted to Karnataka cadre. He was a probationer in Honnavar, Uttara Kannada district, and then worked in Medikeri, Bidar, Raichur, Bellary, Bengaluru, and Nagarhole.

It is not the first death by attack of an elephant, of a senior I.F.S. Officer. In December 1977 Mr. N.R. Nair Director and head of wildlife wing of FRI who came along with his 11 Wildlife trainees and was camping in Forest Guest House at Bandipur Tiger Reserve was also attacked by an elephant and died in Bandipur. Mr. Nair along with Mr. A.J.T. John Singh than a Ph.D. Scholar from Madras University and was doing research on wild dogs started early in the morning from the guest house to click photos of wild elephants. (Mr. John Singh recently retired as head of wildlife institute of India Dehradun. They walked only a furlong from the road and sighted an elephant in a water pond. Mr. N.R. Nair took his telelens Camera and started shooting photographs and walked very close to the elephant, though cautioned by Mr. Singh not to move very close to the elephant. Elephant charged Mr. Nair and Mr. Singh ran away from the spot to guest house and informed all the other trainees about the attack by elephant on Mr. Nair. (Please see page 37 to 39 of Vana Premi July 2010 issue.) It is not that only senior officers of the Forest Department but many other lower rung Forest officers and civilians were also attacked by wild animals and in some cases

killed in the recent past. Man animal conflicts are increasing day by day, especially with elephants, tigers, panthers, and bears. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States also people residing in and around wildlife areas are attacked by wild animals, and sometimes also lost their lives. The same must be the situation in all other States also. A Forester by name Mr. Pratap Singh was killed by a bear near Achampet Forests division and Mr. M.A. Waheed DFO was injured in the same incident. This may be because we human beings the most intelligent of living creatures are encroaching upon the habitat of wild animals without bothering for next generations. We also don't learn lessons from experiences and still continue to encroach upon forest lands illegally. Forest fires were very few about 100 years ago, and the condition of forest and Wildlife was much better than today. The reason perhaps is, in olden days the growth of forests and grass was very good and green throughout the year as water was available in the forest throughout the year. Perennial rivers were flowing in the forests. The forest was not invaded by weeds and forest fires were also not many and severe. There were not many man animal conflicts. Perhaps the reason is that our forests are now invaded by Lantana, Eupatorium and many other weeds, which are depriving the growth of grasses, and food to the herbivores. These weeds, due to increase in temperature

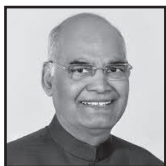
become fire hazard during summer. Due to increase in temperature and global warming water holes in the forest are drying up much faster and before the start of summer which in the past these Rivers used to be perennial. Most of these forest fires today are actually manmade. Wild animals including elephants are in constant pressure and under stress due to scarcity of food, water, encroachments & forest fires by human beings, and invasion of various weeds in the forest due to which visibility of animals and human beings is restricted.

Of all the Government jobs Forest Service is the most vulnerable and prone to accidents, since they have to deal with men and wild animals at the same time, and all other personnel of other services deal only with human beings. Time has come now that Wildlife Institute of India and other allied institutions of our country should now start research/study to know how best to mitigate man animal conflicts by studying the best time to enter into the wildlife areas, color of dress to be put on in the forest, which part of the day animals are calm, or otherwise, articles to be carried with men and officers of Forest Department, like arms and ammunition, tranquilization guns, any wildlife repellent or sprays to scare away the wildlife or any sound producing equipment which will keep the wildlife away from human beings, incidents of grazing cattle inside the forest area

and habitat development. I have enumerated very few but those doing research may consider many other parameters. After the study a code should be prepared and followed strictly by all the ranks of Forest Department. We cannot afford to lose the precious lives of our officers', men and civilians. Human life is more important than wildlife. The conservation of wildlife is for the betterment of human life only and at the cost of human life wildlife should not be protected. We have to be more cautious, and strict in following the code or the rule book as it involves human lives.

Vana Premi wishes that wife of Mr. Manikandan should be given full salary till the age of superannuation and then should be given pension which he would have got, as he

sacrificed his today for our better tomorrow. His family should also be given a house either at Bengaluru, Mysuru or at any other place as per the choice of family. His children should get education at the cost of the Government to the extent they want to study. 3rd March should be observed throughout country as "Manikandan Day", honoring the life and legacy of Mr. S. Manikandan who was a very good and noble forest officer and sacrificed his life while discharging his official duty away from his family, as done in the case of Steve Irwin who was known as the crocodile man of Australia and was an Australian zookeeper. 15th November is observed internationally as Steve Irwin's day that was killed by a stingray. **QMK**

**President of India**

Sad to learn of the very unfortunate death of Shri S. Manikandan, a dedicated Indian Forest Service officer who lost his life in a freak incident while on duty in Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. The nation salutes him. Thoughts with his family, friends and colleagues

**PMO India**

My thoughts are with the family, friends and colleagues of Shri S. Manikandan, who lost his life while on duty at the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. The country will remember him for his rich service and passion towards wildlife and forest conservation

**Wg. Cdr. Anuma Acharya**

Dear Sir, the forests are diminishing in our country. The sincere forest officers live under constant threats and they are not given security against the threats considering them to be mild. Since they are the savers of Country's forests, let's consider befitting security for them.

IS ASTROLOGY A SCIENCE OR AN ART OF THE POSSIBLE?

By
J. V. Sharma

The 'UGADI', the Telugu New Year Day, was celebrated by the people of both the Telugu States with lot of fervor and enthusiasm on 18th March 2018. Incidentally, it is also the New Year Day for Karnataka and Maharashtra. People, in general, are relatively at ease from their occupational engagements at this part of the year which makes the occasion all the more enjoyable and festive. The New Year 'Vilambi', according to lunar calendar commences on the day and it is one of the sixty-year cycles, which come one after the other. Its significance is all the more pronounced because it happens to be the first of festivals in a year and people tend to make it as best as they can in the belief that a good & happy beginning of the year augurs well for all good things to follow in the year.

Man lives on survival instincts of curiosity and hope. But for these traits, the human species would have remained primitive tribal even today. Without the curiosity it would not have been possible for him to conquer new frontiers setting forth the process of evolution in motion and the hope always provided the motivation. It is this relentless pursuit which made the person all that ingenious and powerful as to dominate his surroundings and other creations with ruthless abandon. As for the scope of this article, it would be enough to say that curiosity and hope continue to be essential features of human nature and the New Year Day is the day when people will be more eager to know what is in store for them in the year and how they can plan for their welfare, comfort, progress and rise.

But who can provide them an answer to their curiosity? It is in this context, the astrologers step in. In Indian context, Great sages of ancient era explored this otherwise unknown arena beyond the realm of human reach and authentic texts can be found in ancient literature. Case in point is *Varahamihira*, *Kalidasa*, *Parasara* etc. The concept of astrology was thus born in ancient India and there is unimpeachable evidence to suggest that it was believed, practiced and even patronized by the rulers. Modern lexicographers describe 'Astrology' as the study of the alleged influence of stars, planets, sun and moon on human affairs.

But the above description of astrology does not convey the degree of authenticity it needs. It does not answer the query whether it is a science. They only say it is a study and do not go the extent of accepting it as a credible scientific knowledge. The influences of stars, planets etc. on human affairs is considered to be only 'alleged'. So, it is natural that an element of subjectivity is injected by those who are not convinced of the concept.

A few months back, I had an occasion to watch a television debate on the subject in a Telugu Channel. An astrologer, *pandit*, was on the show to espouse the cause of astrology and on the opposite side was the representative of a rationalist organization, Jana Chaitanya Vedika (I hope I got the name right). As the debate progressed, it was clear that the debate was disoriented. For any meaningful debate, specific identified issues of contention must form the basis of the debate or else the whole exercise could be directionless. Instead of taking the core values of the system which alone can authenticate its credibility and strength, the discussions veered round astrological predictions which can only be contentious. The rationalist was organized in his tirade against astrology and being an activist and participant in several such discussions, he was experienced. The basis for astrology did not come to be explained nor tested for veracity. The astrologer on the other side seemed lacking experience of such occasions and only knew how to address the amiable clientele. He was found trying to justify the interpretations which can turn out to be subjective in the absence of rational explanation. The activist was aggressive, vocal and marshalled his argument effectively. Needless to say that the rationalist activist had the last laugh, not because he proved the astrology a sham but because he managed to dictate the course of debate without dwelling upon the its basis and fundamental principles. Nor the merits and demerits of astrology were tested on the altar of objectivity. But the whole episode gave out a lesson. Cases can be lost not only on merits but also by default.

Having dabbled into the field of astrology and spent some precious years in trying to understand it, I can claim to have gained only some elementary peripheral knowledge of it. Though it is beyond me assert anything, I am inclined to believe that the astrology, as such, cannot be dismissed as unacceptable. People begin questioning astrology more and more in this scientific era because they look for rational explanation for every event. It therefore becomes necessary for astrologers to get their basics right and fortify them with verifiable objectivity. It is easier said than done. In Indian context, people, for centuries, are used to bank upon the rich ancient literature as a treasure passed on to posterity and took it for granted for centuries. They learnt to follow it more as faith. In the process, they failed to undertake critical study of the scripts to understand the core values and strengthen the essence to hone their skills and interpret the same rationally. This gap, perhaps, is the disadvantage the astrology is laden with.

Let me try to explain the concept of astrology, not for authenticity for which I am ill-equipped, but to provide a layman's understanding. As already said, astrology is a study of influence of stars, planets etc. on human affairs. So, the very basic question that crops in the context is; do the stars and planets have any influence on the human affairs at all, collectively or individually? Certainly, it is not an easy question with readymade answer. It requires one to have a thorough understanding

of the planets, their position, size, strength, gravitational pulls & pushes, inter-planetary dynamics, relationship, proximity, aspect and several such factors which should define and quantify the 'influence'.

Scientific community, the world over, accepts the solar system and the role it plays in running of the universe. As the scientific research and exercise took place on earth, the orientation as well as focus is more on earth. Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn and Venus besides earth are the notable planets in the solar system. Their inter-relationship and dynamics are established scientifically and unquestionable. They, together, regulate the universe with uncanny precision and regularity which has been witnessed for millions of years.

Even a casual look at the Indian astrology will reveal that its fundamentals are firmly based on the same solar system. The same planets, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn and Venus share the zodiac and the entire concept of astrology is based on the influence the same planets exert in all their characteristics reckoned in permutations and combinations. Evolution of concepts give rise to new ideas as a result of which some grey areas or even introduction of some additional factors may take place which could at best be in addition to the existing but not derogatory to them. Thus the sanctity and proven authenticity of world order is never disputed or hijacked. It is very significant that all astrological exercises are strictly governed by the position of planets in the zodiac as at the time of contention in all its minute details like hours, minutes and seconds and position of planets in degrees, minutes and seconds co-related to international standards.

The astrology, with such its seemingly acceptable 'background continues to be doubted for its credentials. I can readily see two reasons for its predicament. One, the practitioners of astrology are not concentrating to fortify its value system with acceptable scientific evidence and two, they seem too eager to opt for predictive astrology to cater to the large section of society anxious to know answers to their curiosity and hope. Because of the huge size of such clientele, they resort to quick and instant predictions, without evaluating the facts, to please the customers. No wonder, such predictions are bound to be flawed and questionable.

To drive home the point, I could recall the congregations held by astrologers on the Ugadi Day. Purpose was to apprise the gathering of the likely scenario of the Year on the basis of the Almanac unveiled for the New Year. Excerpts of the News reports of the said *Panchanga (Almanac) Shravana Celebrations* are reproduced below:

"As usual, *pandits* have come out with customised *panchangams* for various political parties on the occasion of Ugadi. The *pandits* who read out almanac during the *panchanga shravanam* programme conducted at offices of political parties predicted bright future for respective parties and higher chances of coming to power in 2019 elections."

"The Congress has a bright future in Telugu New year. TPCC Chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has *rajayoga* after October. The party will receive huge response from the public. The agitation programme to be conducted by Congress demanding resolution of problems faced by people will succeed."

"At the Ugadi almanac predictions in TDP office, the *pandits* forecast TD emerging as a decisive force in Telangana in ensuing elections. They predicted that the Party which is going through a tougher phase at present would recover and play role in forming the government in TS with its support."

"The YSRCP *panchangashravanam* predicted the party will capture power in AP by bagging 135 seats. The *pandits* said the adverse conditions being faced by the party chief Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will end by October and he will attain *rajayoga* later and will become the ruler. A *pandit* has also predicted that he will rule the State for over 12 years."

The *Ugadi panchanga shravanam* at BJP State office in city predicted good days for the party in the election year. The *Pandit* predicted that BJP will emerge stronger in Telangana this year and is heading towards capturing power in the State.

It can be seen from the above that the astrologers had given favorable predictions to all the political parties in Telugu States which on the face of it, unthinkable. There can't be a win-win situation for all the major political parties in any State and if one party wins the other has to lose. It is a political battle where all the feuding parties cannot occupy the victory podium. In the process, the astrology stands reduced to an art of the possible.

It is apparent that the practicing astrologers are playing to the gallery trying to cater to the interests of their chosen clientele. Reasons could be any; it could be lack of in-depth understanding of the subject they are dealing with or bias. In either case, the predictions are grossly subjective weighed down by extraneous considerations. It is this situation that leads astrology to look suspect in the eyes of intellectual community. Once, this trend sets in, it is 'ignorance is bliss' syndrome. With such self-styled practicing astrologers with half-baked knowledge parading in drones, astrology as an academic subject does not receive the attention and the study it deserves. Astrology, as an academic study, does not need any rationalist activists to question its credibility so long as such practicing astrologers are around.

I am of the strong opinion that most of the astrologers in their enthusiasm to succeed fast are indulging offering predictions looking at the given planetary position in the zodiac in a two-dimensional form which is patently erroneous. Our vision of the situation gets restricted to what we can see and imagine only in the two dimensions. A genuine astrologer must have the vision to look at the planetary position in all its details from where he can accurately imagine and understand the planetary dynamics and assess the situation.

SC Order

070318

SUPREME COURT COMMENCES HEARING FOREST RIGHTS CASE

By
J. V. Sharma

It is heartening to learn that the Honorable Supreme Court of India had commenced hearing of the Writ Petitions (Civil) filed in the Apex Court in Original Jurisdiction by Wildlife Trust of India and Wildlife First together with Transferred Petitions (Civil) filed in various High Courts. The Supreme Court Bench comprising Hon Judges Madan B. Lokur, Kurien Joseph and Deepak Gupta took up the case on 7th March 2018 and issued directions requiring the States to furnish the updated information on the claims received and admitted and to apprise the Court of the progress of evictions of encroachers from the forest lands in which the claims stand rejected. States are given four weeks time to furnish the information and ordered the case to be posted on 18th April 2018 for further hearing. The text of the Order is reproduced below:

COURT NO.4
S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Writ Petition(s)(Civil) No(s). 50/2008

WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA & ORS : Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

UNION OF INDIA & ORS : Respondent(s)

Date : 07-03-2018

These matters were called on for hearing today.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MADAN B. LOKUR

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE KURIAN JOSEPH

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK GUPTA

This writ petition will be taken as a lead case for final hearing.

Our attention has been drawn to the order dated 29.01.2016 wherein certain information was required to be furnished by the State Governments.

We have been informed that most State Governments have filed affidavits in compliance with the order of 29.01.2016 but some of them have not filed any affidavit of compliance. Be that as it may,

whatever information has been supplied pursuant to our order dated 29.01.2016 is about two years old. This outdated information may not assist us in disposal of the present batch of writ petitions and transferred cases. Under the circumstances, we issue a fresh direction to all the State Governments to file a tabular statement in the form of an affidavit indicating the following:-

- (i) The number of claims for the grant of land under the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006;
- (ii) The claims should be divided into claims made by the Scheduled Tribes and separately by other traditional forest dwellers;
- (iii) The number of claims rejected by the State Government in respect of each category;
- (iv) The extent of land over which such claims were made and rejected in respect of each of the two categories;
- (v) Action taken against those claimants whose claims have been rejected;
- (vi) The status of eviction of those claimants whose claims have been rejected and the total extent of area from which they have been evicted;

(vii) The extent of the area in respect of which eviction has not yet taken place in respect of rejected claims.

The cut-off date for providing this information is 31.12.2017.

The information, as required above, shall be furnished within a period of four weeks. To follow up on the progress of the case, list the matter for further directions on 18th April, 2018. We may indicate that learned counsel for the petitioner has challenged the constitutional validity of the Act as well as legislative competence of Parliament to enact the Act. He submits that discriminatory grant of *pattas* is objectionable and steps must be taken to evict those persons whose claims have been rejected those persons being encroachers. It is submitted by learned counsel for the petitioners that at a later stage, he might request for a performance audit being conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India or by any other appropriate authority. His concern, as expressed, is to preserve the forest and wild life of the country which according to him is in a critical state.

(MEENAKSHI KOHLI) COURT MASTER

(KAILASH CHANDER) COURT MASTER

TO BE SURE, REALITY BITES

By

Dr B. Raghotham Rao Desai

My wife's younger brother Y A Srinivas Rao ("Seeni") and his wife Chitralekha ("Chitra") are likely to go once again in another 2 month to the U.S. for one more prolonged stay, due to compulsion of circumstances, to be with their son Abhijit ("Abhi"), his wife Archana, and two grandchildren, despite the fact that they had concurred with me and my late wife earlier (on their return from their first visit) that one will have to think twice before undertaking such another visit!

Prior to the departure from India as they planned their first visit, their excitement was palpable, and the exorbitant air fares fully justified at the mere thought of spending quality-time with their son and his family, while simultaneously enjoying the many attractions which the U.S. offered.

On their return, they confessed "Our visit did not turn out as expected—— we hardly spent any time with our son and his family. Both Abhijit and his wife Archana used to leave for work early-morning and used to return only late-evening, so tired. Our grandchildren used to be fully occupied with their schools and other activities. So, we both were generally on our own in unfamiliar surroundings, compelled to follow a routine which we were not used to.

"Severely handicapped without a car, our outings were confined essentially to walks in a nearby park, as visiting friends and relatives residing some distance away was out of question. There were no shopping malls nearby, which could have provided welcome-break from the drudgery. Neighbors were hardly to be seen, and we yearned for company. How much can you walk, see TV or read? Most of the day, therefore,

hung heavy on our hands," they lamented.

Their **feeling of isolation gets further magnified without Indian News Papers** and gossip with friends—— the reality had begun to dawn on them gradually! Their experience is not a solitary one we ourselves had even faced and seen several others too face similar experiences. No doubt, the thought of spending a long holiday with children in the U.S. is attractive—— apart from the emotional satisfaction of reuniting with family, there is the added excitement of a foreign holiday! But, **reality belies anticipation:** many visiting parents have discovered that **there is nothing more boring than small-town America**. Even the allure of a big city cannot alleviate the tedium of months spent without friends, familiar surroundings, and the daily routine we are so used to. The loneliness is compounded if your visit coincides with the winter months, when the house turns into a glorified-prison!

And worse still can be imagined of a single parent who does not have even a companion to share and tide-over the monotony.

It is true that most children are keen to have their parents visit them, and try their utmost to make their stay as comfortable as possible. But the harsh truth is that **life in U.S. is not easy for a young working couple with small children——there being no easy answer to this dilemma.**

Family-bonds cannot be jeopardized merely because of the grim realities of a prolonged stay in the U.S. Perhaps then the answer lies in the parents keeping their visit relatively short, and venturing on their own to nearby tourist attractions during the weeks/months of their stay.

FORESTS OF NORTH EAST INDIA

By
Dr. AKULA KISHAN

The North eastern region of the country comprising eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are endowed with rich forest resources. The region which constitutes only 7.98 percent of the geographical area of the country, accounts for nearly one fourth of its forest cover. According to data made available by the India State of Forest Report 2015 the total forest cover of the region is 171,964 Sq.km, which is 65.59% of its geographical area in comparison to the national forest cover of 21.34%.

State wise forest cover of the region as per India State of Forest Report 2015, is shown as follows

States	Geographical Area	2015 Assessment				Percent Of G.A.
		VDF	MDF	OF	Total	
Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	20,804	31,301	15,143	67,248	80.30
Assam	78,438	1,441	11,268	14,914	27,623	35.22
Manipur	22,327	727	5,925	10,342	16,994	76.11
Meghalaya	22,429	449	9,584	7,184	17,217	76.76
Mizoram	21,081	138	5,858	12,752	18,748	88.93
Nagaland	16,579	1,296	4,695	6,975	12,966	78.21
Sikkim	7,096	500	2,160	697	3,357	47.31
Tripura	10,486	113	4,609	3,089	7,811	74.49
Grand Total	262,179	25,468	75,400	71,096	171,964	65.59

The rich forest resources are being harvested by some people and the denudation was seen by Chief Justice of Supreme Court and it gave rise to the now famous **Godavarman case**.

As per the directions of the Supreme Court the removals from the forests of North –Eastern region are controlled, and the transportation restriction is put in force. The timber cannot be transported except by railway wagons, and it has restricted the large scale movement of timber by trucks from this region to outside.

Forest Landscape Characterization in Northeast India: In a project entitled 'Biodiversity Characterization at Landscape Level in North-East India using Satellite Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System' various forest vegetation types were classified and mapped

with high accuracy using satellite remote sensing technology (Anon., 2002). The project is a pioneering effort to create geospatial database on vegetation cover types, fragmentation, disturbance regimes and biological richness. The landscape ecological principles have provided insight to the natural and human indices factors, which may bring dynamics in the forested landscape of the region. Twenty one forest vegetation cover types and seven associated forest vegetation types were mapped. The account of the land use cover is given in below

Land Use/Land Cover in Northeast India. (Source: Anon., 2002a)

Land cover	States	Area (km ²)	Area (%)
Vegetation Type			
Tropical Evergreen Forest	Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura	5246.202	2.001
Hollong Forest (<i>Dipterocarpus</i>)	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam	980.87	0.374
Tropical Semi-Evergreen Forest	Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram	15363.42	5.86
Moist Deciduous Forest	Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura	19727.24	7.524
Riverine	Arunachal Pradesh	209.36	0.08
Hollock (<i>Terminalia</i> sp.)	Arunachal Pradesh	108.87	0.042
Sal (<i>Shorea robusta</i>) forest	Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura	526.61	0.201
Teak (<i>Tectonagrandis</i>) Plantation	Assam	15.71	0.006
Dry Deciduous	Forest Manipur	79.00	0.03
Subtropical Evergreen I	Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya	20866.83	7.959
Subtropical Evergreen II	Arunachal Pradesh	3559.08	1.358
Sub-Tropical Broad leaved Forest	Mizoram	509.95	0.195
Broad-leaved Hill Forest	Sikkim	1876.18	0.716
Mixed Pine	Meghalaya	1020.07	0.389
Pine Forest	Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya	1647.27	0.628
Temperate Broadleaved	Arunachal Pradesh	20785.02	7.928
Mixed Temperate Forest	Nagaland	509.95	0.195
Wet Temperate Forest	Mizoram	448.16	0.171

Wet Temperate Forest	Mizoram	448.16	0.171
Temperate Coniferous Forest	Arunachal Pradesh	3190.60	1.217
Fir Forest	Arunachal Pradesh	159.11	0.061
Sub-alpine and Rhododendron	Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh,	276.35	0.105
	Total	97104.60	37.04
Associated vegetation type	Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh	20065.36	7.653
Abandoned <i>Jhum</i>	Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura.		
Open Bamboo Brakes	Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura	9501.57	3.624
Degraded Forest	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura	15189.12	5.793
Subalpine and alpine Scrub	Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim	2654.88	1.013
Alpine Pastures	Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim	4697.66	1.792
Other Grasslands	Assam, Meghalaya	1971.18	0.752
Shrub/Scrub	Assam	581.14	0.222
	Total	151765.51	57.89
Orchards (including tea gardens)	Arunachal Pradesh and Assam	6896.67	2.631
Non-forest/Current shifting cultivation/Fallow/Barren/ Alpine Barren/Agriculture/Settlement/Others	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur	83032.75	31.67
Cloud/Snow/Shadow		16164.00	6.165
Water Body	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya	4320.07	1.648
Total		262179.00	100

Over-exploitation, habitat loss and fragmentation are the three major factors that threaten the biodiversity of this region. Different forest vegetation types mapped were primarily based on their spectral response. Stages of abandoned jhum lands were mapped under one class, however, the fresh shifting cultivation/denuded areas were mapped separately.

The shifting cultivation is a factor in the degradation and loss of neighboring forests. The highly fragmented forests have fewer plant species.

Conclusion: Forest and forest ecosystems of north-east India are under severe pressures, both from biotic and abiotic factors, due to population explosion, encroachments on forest lands, loss of forest cover for other non-forest uses, shifting cultivation practices and degradation caused by illicit felling, lopping for fuel wood forest and fodder, removal of forest cover for litter, forest fires etc. Given the rich biodiversity of this region, its conservation has become a major challenge. Studies have identified that four general factors leading to forest fragmentation in the northeast regions are – *Jhum* cultivation, human population pressure, industrial logging and weak government policies.

The socio-political situation is playing a very important role in the deforestation rates in spatial and temporal domain. The Hollock and Hollong forests of the north-eastern Himalayan region have been cleared with the highest rate. The sustainable forest management in this region prescribes 60-80 rotation cycle. The apex court imposed an interim ban on felling in forests on December 12, 1996. Being the owner of India's one-fourth of forests in the fragile location, the region has to be restored and the resources are to be used in a sustainable way. The order has come at a very proper time wherein the region was losing 31,700 hectares of forest every year, mostly due to government and traders' nexus. Most of the forest (80%) in the region is controlled by the traditional community. The concept of people's participation has failed in the region to restore the natural resource and its optimum utilization. Non-scientific forest management practices have resulted in the fragmentation of the landscape in the region. The permit system, introduced to help the local people, has become instrumental for siphoning huge number of trees out the region. The rampant felling has changed the scenario of the dense evergreen forest to denudation. Except few parts of Arunachal Pradesh, the whole region is harboring only the open or degraded forest. The present image of the regions' forested landscape is due to the non-scientific and weak management policies.

The ban has been imposed to restore the fragile and most unique ecosystem of the nation. It says that forests should be operated based on scientific management. It has been misinterpreted on account of financial losses, unemployment and the livelihood issues. The local communities claim to use only 1% of the forest resource for their livelihood, but hillocks have been leased to traders at throwaway prices. The joint forest management was not found of much value in this region. The community forest and the private forest practices could not preserve much of the areas. The unique land ownership system could not manage the community forest or exercise any control on

the over-utilization of the resources. It can only be achieved with a scientific-cum- social management practice. A complete inventory of the total forest areas and growing stock is thus a task of the highest priority. Stratification is required at the growth level as well as the individual tree level. It is required to develop systematic database on geo-information of the entire region. The established database will provide resource availability, requirement and utilization pattern. Scientific management would need comprehensive information on varying scale, forest cover type, resource component, land use practices, socio-economic set up and administrative details in the format of national geospatial data frame. Remote sensing based database should finally help the effort of saving forest resources of Northeast.

The sustainable use of forest resources can be ensured with the administrative policies and the directions of Supreme Court of India.

AMITABH BACCHAN AND J.R.D. TATA

Amitabh Bacchan says..."At the peak of my career, I was once travelling by plane. The passenger next to me was elderly gentleman dressed in a simple shirt and pants.

He appeared to be middle class, and well educated.

Other passengers perhaps recognizing who I was, but this gentleman appeared to be unconcerned of my presence... He was reading his paper, looking out of the window, and when tea was served, he sipped it quietly.

Trying to strike a conversation with him I smiled. The man courteously smiled back and said 'Hello'. We got talking and I brought up the subject of cinema and movies and asked, 'Do you watch films?'

The man replied, 'Oh, very few.

I did see one many years ago.'

I mentioned that I worked in the movie industry.

The man replied" oh, that's nice. What do you do?'

I replied, 'I am an actor'

The man nodded, 'Oh, that's wonderful!' And that was it...

When we landed, I held out my hand and said, "It was good to travel with you. By the way, my name is Amitabh Bacchan!"

The man shook my hand and smiled, "Thank you... nice to have met you, I am J. R. D. Tata!"

I learned on that day that no matter how big you think you are, there is always someone bigger than you.

Be humble, it costs nothing.

FOREST RIGHTS ACT – WHO LOST AND WHO GAINED

By

M. Padmanabha Reddy

There were series of articles in Vanapremi regarding the damage caused by enactment of “The scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (F.R.A.). The information furnished in the articles published in Vanapremi on F.R.A. appears to be one sided. In this write up I am attempting to put the other side of F.R.A. from civil society’s point of view and am to be taken in a right spirit.” There are two extreme points of view on F.R.A. One is that no right must be recognized in Forests and all people living in the forests must simply be moved out. The others suggest that all forests should be handed over to communities except protected areas like wild life sanctuaries etc. They argue that the local people for centuries have lived in harmony with nature and thus protected the forests better than the bureaucracy. Between these two extreme views there is a need to take more balanced position, there is therefore a need to examine provisions contained in F.R.A. and the prevailing conditions in the country.

The preamble of F.R.A. inter-alia, says “The Forest rights on ancestral lands and their habitat were not adequately recognized in the consolidation

of state forests during the colonial period as well as in independent India resulting in historical injustice to the forest dwelling S.T.s and other traditional forest dwellers who are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest eco system. It has become necessary to address the long standing insecurity of tenure and access rights to forest dwelling S.T.s and other traditional forest dwellers.

Sub Sec. (3) of Sec. 4 of the Act says “Recognition and vesting of Forest rights in respect of Forest lands and their habitat shall be subject to condition that they have occupied forest lands before 13th day of December 2005. Sub Sec. (6) of Sec. 4 says the forest rights recognized shall be restricted to the area under actual occupation and shall not exceed an area of four hectares”.

The F.R.A. came into effect from 29th December 2006. Subsequently on 12th February 2007 a technical support group for framing the rules was constituted which included 11 non officials like S.R. Shankaran, Prof. MadhavGadgil and others. Added to it 10 official members from various ministries were also included in technical support group.

The committee called for suggestions and objections if any on the F.R.A. and taking into consideration of all suggestions finalized the rules and published them on 1st January 2008.

The proclaimed goals of F.R.A. are

1. To redress past serious injustice perpetrated against S.T.s and other forest dwellers and improve their socio economic condition.

2. To protect India's natural bio-diversity under a new conservation paradigm in the traditional ecological wisdom of the tribal people. The F.R.A. provides for recognition and vesting of rights only to S.T.s and other Traditional forest dwellers who have been primarily residing and depending on forest land (for more than 75 years) and were in actual occupation of forest land before the cut-off date of 13th December 2005. The F.R.A. proposes to provide legal rights to such persons (after due verification process) only to the extent of land actually under occupation and not exceeding 4 ha. Here it is pointed out that F.R.A. is not an instrument of distributes forest lands as some people believe but facilitates recognition of rights over the land which is already under occupation. Reservation of wooded areas into R.F.s is faulty, though the forest Act provides for settlement of rights by a forest settlement officer (Deputy Collector), in practices it is rarely followed. Once the notification constituting a piece of land into R.F.,

is issued the S.T.s living in the area become encroachers and aliens in their motherland. Thanks to F.R.A. these address-less people be eligible for bank loans and other welfare measures of Government.

Adverse effects of F.R.A. are also needs to be analyzed. The F.R.A. provides grants of land to forest dwellers – in situ. Here lies the major problem with the legislation. Over the last 5 decades habitat fragmentation has been identified as the single largest threat to Bio-diversity and also leads to serious human - Wild life conflict.

With the implementation of F.R.A. Fragmentation of forest lands takes place. Forests shrink into smaller patches to become honey-combed with settlements and connectivity gets eroded. Fragmentation directly effects ecological and behavioral factors of such as foraging movements, dispersal migration and colonization abilities of animal species. Agriculture on steep hill slopes leads to soil erosion and silting of rivers. F.R.A. may encourage further extension of cultivation in forests on the hope that at later date the extensions may be regularized.

India having 2% of geographical area of the world has 20% of human population and 16% of world's cattle population is putting tremendous pressure on forests for land and forest produce leading to shrinkage of physical

area as well as degradation of forests. In the first week of March 2018 about 40 thousand farmers mostly tribal marched from different parts of Maharashtra to Mumbai to press for their demands. One of their demand is F.R.A. was not properly implemented in the state. They withdrew their agitation only after the government of Maharashtra gave assurance (in writing) that their problem will be redressed and all the claims will be considered.

What is needed is to redress the past injustice meted out to the forest dwellers, but not with the same old fashion of distributing Forest lands. The S.T.s now needs decent livelihood

opportunities, education, roads, medical facilities and other modern social amenities. In spite of creating special purpose vehicles like I.T.D.As there is not much improvement in their condition.

To sum up, F.R.A. is not a bad Act as projected by some of us on the other hand it is an opportunity to redress the injustice done in the past to S.T.s. The legal battle in Supreme Court on the constitutional validity of the F.R.A. will drag on for some more time and die its natural death. One should not forget that survival of humans (especially the neglected section of society) is more precious than the trees and wild life.

Very Heart Touching (A Bitter Truth)

**An old man took his phone
to a Repair shop.**

**Repairer told : NOTHING IS
WRONG with this phone.**

**Old man with tears in his
eyes said : Then why DON'T
my children ever call me ?**



HOW DID YOU PEOPLE LIVE BEFORE?

A youngster asked his father: How did you people live before with:

No access to technology, No aero planes, No internet, No computers, No dramas, No TVs, No air cons, No cars, No mobile phones?

Dad replied:

"Just like how your generation lives today":

No prayers, No compassion, No honor, No respect, No character, No shame, No modesty, No timeplanning, No sports, No reading

We, the people that were born between 1950 and 1985 are the blessed ones. Our life is a living proof:

- ◆ While playing and riding bicycles, we never wore helmets.
- ◆ After school, we played until dusk. We never watched TV.
- ◆ We played with real friends, not internet friends.
- ◆ If we ever felt thirsty, we drank tap water not bottled water.
- ◆ We never got ill although we used to share the same glass of juice with four friends.
- ◆ We never gained weight although we used to eat a lot of rice every day.
- ◆ Nothing happened to our feet despite roaming bare-feet.
- ◆ our mother and father never used any supplements to keep us healthy.

- ◆ We used to create our own toys and play with them.
- ◆ Our parents were not rich. They gave us love, not worldly materials.
- ◆ We never had cellphones, DVDs, play station, Xbox, video games, personal computers, internet chat - but we had real friends.
- ◆ We visited our friend's home uninvited and enjoyed food with them.
- ◆ unlike your world we had Relatives who lived close by so family time and ties were enjoyed together.
- ◆ We may have been in black and white photos but you can find colorful memories in those photos.
- ◆ We are a unique and the most understanding generation, because we are the last generation who listened to their parents. Also, the first who have had to listen to their children.* and we are the ones who are still smarter and helping you how to use the technology that never exist while we were your age!!!

We are a LIMITED edition! So you better:

Enjoy us.

Learn from us.

Treasure us.

Before we disappear from Earth and your lives...

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		8.	B.N.N Murthy 19-04-1979
1.	Iqbal Singh	09-04-1953	9.	M. Siva Prasad 20-04-1981
2.	V. Subbaraghavaiah	10-04-1935	10.	K.Rajasekhara Rao 20-04-1968
3.	S. Mahadev	10-04-1951	11.	C.Sridhara Rao 24-04-1965
4.	S.Krishnaiah	15-04-1952	12.	Bolleddu Vijay Kumar 24-04-1968
5.	J.V.K.T Prabakar Rao	15-04-1953	13.	C. Selvam 24-04-1986
6.	S.Veerabhadram	17-04-1950	14.	M.J Akbar 26-04-1962
7.	S.V.Kumar	21-04-1953	15.	Poojari Venkateshwarlu 01-05-1962
6.	K.N. Benarji	26-04-1954	16.	Ravuri Hanumantha Rao 01-05-1961
10.	N.Manohar Rao	01-05-1942	17.	B.Nagaraju 01-05-1963
11.	D.Basava Sankara Rao	01-05-1954	18.	R.U Kasappa 01-05-1958
12.	C. Sammi Reddy	01-05-1951	19.	Padal Sagar 03-05-1964
13.	K.Prabhu Prasad	02-05-1946	20.	Kallol Biswas 04-05-1964
14.	G.Prabhakar Reddy	02-05-1952	21.	P.MallikarjunRao 04-05-1958
15.	P.Kanaka Ratnam	05-05-1949	22.	Maddela Joji 04-05-1967
16.	G.Satya Narayana	05-05-1950	23.	Tadepalli Sreenivasa Rao 04-05-1969

S.No.	Name of Serving Officers	D.O.B.
1.	Ms. Nandani Saleria	06-04-1988
2.	Dr.Shanthi Priya Pandey	08-04-1972
3.	G.Kista Goud	08-04-1974
4.	R.M. Dobriyal	10-04-1965
5.	Bora Raja Rao	12-04-1965
6.	Leli Bheemaiah	17-04-1963
7.	R. Jagannath Singh	18-04-1985



Secretary

THOTLA KONDA – A BUDDHIST MONASTERY

By

V.SANTHASEELA BABU

Recently I had the opportunity of visiting this Buddhist Monastery when some Rotarians from Thailand came to Visakhapatnam Rotary Clubs on Friendship Exchange programme and I had taken them to this place. I was very much impressed by the history of this Monastery and I thought of sharing this with the readers of our 'Vana Premi'.

Thotlakonda a Buddhist Monastery is located on a hill near Bheemunipatnam about 15 kilometers from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, India. The hill is about 128 meters (420 ft.) above the Mean Sea Level overlooking the Bay of Bengal. In Telugu '*Thotti*' means water storage tub and '*Konda*' means a Hill. There are about 12 such tubs. Thus the name '*Thom lakoG a'is*' derived from the presence of a number of rock-cut cisterns hewn into the bedrock of the hillock.

Thotlakonda was well within the influence of the Kalinga region which was instrumental in promoting Buddhism to Sri Lanka, Burma and many other places. A hill on the sea coast with salubrious climate was an ideal attraction for the Buddhist monks to build a monastery complex here. The placid sea sheltered by the deeply in curved coastline here, provided a safe haven for anchoring ships.

Thotlakonda came to light during an aerial survey by the Indian Navy for setting up a Naval

Base. After its discovery, major excavations have been conducted by the Andhra Pradesh State Archaeology Department during 1988 - 1993. The excavations established the existence of a '*Hinayana*' Buddhist complex which flourished 2000 years ago. To the South of the complex there is a tank which served as a water source to the inhabitants of the monastery.

Thotlakonda was identified as '*Hinayana*' Buddhist complex and AP tourism with the help of Visakhapatnam Urban Development Authority has taken up many development works to promote this place in tourism map of Andhra Pradesh. Welcome gate by the side of the beach road with an entry fee and good tar road at the top of the hill is constructed by the Urban Development Authority.

The excavations reveal Satavahana dynasty lead and Roman silver coins indicating foreign trade; terracotta tiles, stucco decorative pieces, sculptured panels, miniature Stupa models in stone, and Buddha footprints were also found. The excavations also yielded twelve inscriptions in the Brahmi script. From polygraphist's studies, it appears that the hill might have been known as *Senagiri*; *Sena* in Pali language means "elder, superior".

This Buddhist Monastery consists of Stupas, n Chaityas and Viharas.

STUPAS: A **stupa** (Sanskrit: "heap") is a mound-

like or hemispherical structure containing relics (úaríra - typically the remains of Buddhist monks or nuns) that is used as a place of meditation. There are two different types of Stupas available here.

VOTIVE STUPA: This Stupa is meant for prayers for fulfilling the desires. These Stupas are smaller in size.

MAHA STUPA: Maha Stupa is the main Meditation Centre. It has different Platforms for meditations. The first platform is meant for doing 'Pradakshinas' and the other platforms for Meditations.

CHAITHYAS: There are two types of ChaithyaGruhas.

Vruthakara Chaitya Griha- 1: This Chathya has two entrances, one on the eastern side and the other on the western side. In the morning prayers were performed facing towards East and the evening prayers were being performed facing towards western side.

Vrithakara Chaitya Griha-2: This is used to perform prayers during the night times.

Vrithakara Chaitya Griha-3: This is used to perform the prayers on Vaisakha Purnima, (Full Moon day of Vaisakha month) the birthday of Lord Buddha.

Ardha Vruthakara Chaitya Griha: (Apsidal Chatya Griha): Here general prayers were being conducted at all times.

Viharas: Viharas are the residential places of Buddhist monks at this monastery.

The following structures are also available here.

Store Keeper's Room: Just by the side of the store room is located the store keeper's Room.

Dining Hall: Just near the kitchen a very big Dining hall is located which can accommodate hundreds of people.

Thus this Buddhist Monastery throws light on the flourishing of Buddhism around Visakhapatnam in the years 200 BC to 200 AD. The old refractory of Hinayana culture gives examples of maritime trade during the period. Monks visiting this Buddhist school from far places like China, Burma and other countries came through the sea route and used to stay here for months and years before completing their study.

The eagle shaped hill top gives a panoramic view of the sea and the curved coastline. This was one of the ideal spot for the Buddhist monks to establish a monastery here. The proximity of other Buddhist site nearby like Bavikonda, Sankaram and some other places has made Vizag as one of the Buddhist heritage destination place. Thotlakonda witnessed peak activity between the 2nd Century B.C. and the 2nd Century A.D. owing to brisk Roman trade and religious missions sent abroad. Thotlakonda did not exist in isolation. There appears to have been no royal patronage for this monastery. However traders and local believers seem to have supported the complex. In its heyday Thotlakonda might have accommodated more than 100 Buddhist monks.

(For photos please see page No. 25)







Snake racket busted; 14 persons held



IN SAFE CUSTODY: A Red Sand boa seized by Forest Department officials in the city on Tuesday.

గ్రీన్ఎపి మొబైల్ యాప్ GreenAP Mobile App



APUG&BC

- ◆ With a vision to increase green spaces and to improve the quality of life of citizens, **Andhra Pradesh** Government has come up with a unique initiative with the support of APUG&BC in launching **GreenAP** mobile application.
- ◆ This app shall help bridge the gap between consumers and the vast vendor eco-system across the country who are dealing with green products and services.
- ◆ Consumers will now have access to vendors to procure plants of various kinds including Indoor, exotic, lawns, roof top gardens, vertical gardens, etc.
- ◆ With this mobile app they will have access to pot vendors, pesticides, aquariums, landscape designers and many more.

Salient Features



Vendor Directory



News



Enquiries



Forums



Events

Consumers can select vendors who are closer to their city or town for any purchase by browsing through the hundreds of profiles available in the **GreenAP** mobile app. Consumers can access vendors via WhatsApp, SMS or Phone.



Download **GreenAP** app today!



For more information, please contact our help line number: **+91 7997650835**

TRADING IN SNAKES - ARREST OF POACHERS

By

M. Raja Ramana Reddy

The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 is an enactment passed by Parliament intended to afford protection to wild animals and their habitat. The wild animals are listed in Schedules attached to the Act. Snakes are also recognized as wild animals. Different species of snakes have a role in maintaining natural balance. The snakes of different species are included in Part-II of Schedule-I and Part-II of Schedule-II, and also in Schedule- IV. One of the snake species that finds a place in Schedule-IV is 'Boidae', which in common parlance is known as "Sand Boas". During most of part of September 2009, there was smuggling of this species which in the code language of the smugglers/traders is referred to as "Double Engine" and "Two Wheeler". It is believed that the snake brings luck to anyone who possesses it. Several stories and myths are woven around this snake. There is a common belief that it can cure cancer, HIV etc. Another myth is that it has 'iridium', a hard yellow-white metal which is very valuable. The tail of the snake resembles another head and therefore the reptile is referred to as 'two-headed snake'. Because of the myths around the snake, there was a spurt of illegal poaching and trading of the

snake spreading over to many states of South India. The snake is non-venomous and lives in burrows of cold red soils. The Sand Boas lives on rats and it is raised in the paddy storages. It is in deed a farmer's friend. Capturing or trading in wild animals is an offence punishable under the Wildlife Protection Act.

While I was working as Range Officer, Anti Poaching Squad at Hyderabad, I received a call on 16-07-2009 from the Inspector of Police, Lalaguda, P.S., Secunderabad. The information given to me was that he had detained four members of a gang in the police station in connection with a kidnap case. They were also said to be trading in Sand Boa Snakes. The Inspector was willing to transfer the case to me, along with the snakes and the car (Tata Indica No. AP 3 TV 4471) used in transporting the snakes.

On the information given by the Police Inspector, I proceeded to Lalaguda Police Station at Secunderabad. The Inspector handed over the case to me along with the seizures, two snakes including the car. I took the two persons into my custody. They disclosed that the snakes were kept in the house of another

person, B.Sudhakar Phani Raj, from where one snake is said to have escaped. I brought the two persons to the Aranya Bhavan and produced them before my superior. Later, I took the two persons along with me to the KBR Park for further investigation. Out of the four members taken into my custody, two persons are B.Tech students and two other persons belonged to the Railway Protection Force (RPF), Kachiguda. One student was a nephew of B. Sudhakar Phani Raj and the latter had asked the two youngsters to bring the snakes to Hyderabad from their village as they would get on sale good price in the city.

On further investigation, the accused B.S. Phani Raj and the Head Constable of RPF spilled the beans and had given the names of four more persons involved in the trading of snakes Viz. V. Rajendra Prasad, Dharampal, Abdul Wajeed and Syed Zubair Ahmed, who were lured into the trap laid by me by making Phani Raj as decoy to invite them to the place of investigation. On further persistent and persuasive interrogation, the four persons gave out the name of Venkata Ramana Reddy, a native of Kadapa to be the chief culprit in the racket. He was called to Hyderabad using the services of Rajendra Prasad about the availability of Sand Boa Snake for sale. Venkata Ramana Reddy disclosed that he is acting only as an agent for Sharavanan of Tamil Nadu. Using the medium of Venkata Ramana Reddy, Sharavanan of Madurai, Tamil Nadu State was

contacted over mobile phone and he was informed that there is a catch of good sized Sand Boas snake available for sale. He was advised to go over to Hyderabad immediately, but Sharavanan insisted that a sum of Rs. 10,000/- may have to be deposited in his account and on receipt of the money, he would send his agent by air to Hyderabad. The amount was deposited and Sharavanan's agent A. Magim Raj, S/o Anthony arrived at Hyderabad by flight.

Magim Raj was identified by Venkata Ramana Reddy and he was soon taken into custody and brought over to KBR National Park on the pretext of showing the snake to him. A snake was borrowed and brought from the Nehru Zoological Park for the purpose of his examination of the snake on the quality and its marketability, so as to strike a deal. Magim Raj was then told that he was in custody of Anti Poaching Squad. He realized that he was caught up in a web and decided in his heart of hearts that the best way to escape would be to help the investigation.

As promised by Magim Raj to co-operate with the investigation, he suggested to Sharavanan that the snake was of good size and weight, and fit for purchase. The main person and kingpin of smuggling of the snakes, Sharavanan found no reason to reject the transaction. But, he was in a dilemma as to how he could escape from this as he smelled a rat. He told his agent Magim Raj

that there was no demand for the snake at that moment and nobody would be willing to buy the snake at that heavy price. He therefore advised Magim Raj to withdraw from the deal.

Sharavanan had been controlling the business and acting as a middleman between seller and buyer with agents around him. There was no sale-purchase transaction at such huge price. It was only cheating gullible and innocent persons who were lured in to the trade. He was mischievously cheating people. He made fast buck and easy money like 'Nigerian Fraud'.

By tactfully dealing with the culprits, I was able to book (7) cases of contravention of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 against (14) persons and registered Preliminary Offence Reports during the period between 16-07-2009 and 21-07-2009. As the accused were willing to compound, I have collected a total sum of Rs. 1,75,000/- at Rs. 25,000/- in each case. As for the involvement of Sharavanan is concerned in the illegal trade of snakes, I have informed the Wildlife Crime Bureau, Southern Region, Chennai with all the details of the culprits of this case for further investigation. I was given to understand that Sharavanan was absconding and had become a fugitive.

In October 2009, I came across another racket of poaching Boidae and selling at high price

clandestinely. I came to know that the culprits were using modern technology in striking deals on the website www.ricepuller.com. I posed myself as a person interested in buying a snake and settled the deal for Rs. 8 lakh. The contact person was one P. Srinivas, an MBA graduate of Dilsukhnagar. The meeting for exchange was fixed at Bibinagar. We went in an autoirickshaw as prospective buyers. When Srinivas and his partner appeared before us with the snake, we seized the snake and arrested the culprits. On interrogation and with the help of mobile phone, the arrested persons disclosed details of another gang. We nabbed them too consisting of (7) persons against whom seven cases were booked. The accused were ready to compound the cases and a total sum of Rs. 1,75,000/- was collected as compounding fee at the rate of Rs. 25,000/- in each case. Taking prompt action had paid.

Wide publicity was given in print and electronic media about the fraudulent rackets operating like 'Nigerian frauds'. With these and other cases detected by me and by imposing heavy compounding fee, the poaching and smuggling of Sand Boas snakes had come to a standstill.

The author is presently working as ACF (Law) in the O/o PCCF (HoFF), Telangana, Hyderabad and can be accessed on acflaw1.ts@gmail.com

(For photos please see page No. 27)

OUR NATIONAL BIRD – IS IT A PROBLEM TO FARMERS OF TAMIL NADU?

By
R. DEEPAK KUMAR

Introduction: Our national bird the Indian peafowl (*Pavocristatus*). The genus name *Pavo* refers to peacock, *cristatus* mean crest. Indian peafowls belonging to the *Galliformes* order of Family *Phasianidae*. It is an omnivorous which is the largest among the pheasants, living as flocks. Indian peafowl widely distributed throughout countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Indian peafowl are usually found in semi-desert areas, grasslands, scrublands, open and deciduous forests, agricultural fields with roost in trees sometimes high places like building, high tensioned electric towers in absence of trees. However, these are quite common in Tamil Nadu, the districts like Coimbatore, Salem, Tiruchirappalli, Pudukkottai, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Virudanagar and also other drier districts.

Protection status: Peacock was declared as the national bird of India during 1963 due to the persisting Indian mythology from time immemorial. Indian peafowls were included in Schedule I, part III of Indian wildlife (protection) act of 1972 due to declining of peafowl population. Also included in the appendix III of Convention on International Trade of Endangered

Species (CITES) in Pakistan. The Government of Tamil Nadu has declared Peacock as Vulnerable species and very contradictorily the IUCN has reported the species as Least Concern. This effort helps to increase the viable population of peafowls abundantly.

Agricultural landscapes: During 1990s, seeing the peafowl was not possible in most of the districts in Tamil Nadu especially agricultural landscapes. Most commonly wild vegetation (Bushy type) like trees, shrubs, herbs etc., is maintained in and around the agricultural fields. This offers the suitable hiding ground and also ample food source for wide range of animals like snakes, birds (including peafowls) and also other predators. Actually, these animals were helped the farmers in several ways by pollination, seed dispersal, scavenging dead materials, reducing weeds, controlling the insect, reptiles and rodent populations, nutrient cycling and restoration of ecosystem etc., in the agricultural landscapes.

Problems of modern farming: With advent of modern agriculture technologies, the indiscriminate, clearance of bushy vegetation is taking place in these regions. In addition to

this changing cropping patterns, hunting for bush meats and less awareness among the farmers leads to the breakage of food chains especially predators like foxes, jackals, dholes, monitor lizards, mongoose, etc., population are under the threat. Since, no predator for peafowls like birds, drastic increase in the peafowls populations. Since it is facing food problems, it voraciously feeding the seeds, leaves, flowers and fruits of paddy (*Oryzasativa*), ground nut (*Arachis hypogea*), tomato (*Lycopersiconesculentum*), aggregatum, onion (*Allium cepa*), pearl millet (*Pennisetumglaucum*), jowar (*Sorghum bicolor*), cowpea (*Vignaunguiculata*), green gram (*Vigna mungo*) and black gram (*Vigna radiate*). In addition to these trampling, lodging and cutting down these crops. Even it eats all small snakes in agricultural landscapes, the snake population also drastically going down.

Way forward: Even though peafowls are damaging the agricultural crop, the farmers are not willing to kill the bird due to religious mythology (mount for Lord Murugan). Hence

they try to control the peafowl damages by monitoring the field in peak feeding hours, use of reflective ribbon and making thunder sounds, etc., if the peafowl population is kept as such, it may lead to severe conflict between farmers and peafowls. Hence the government has to come forward for the protection of peafowl as well as poor farmers. In order to avoid the conflicts we can use strategies like detailed mapping of habitats and distributions, estimation of peafowl periodically and necessary rehabilitation if needed, undertaking the outreach programmes for farmers, assessing damage involved and timely compensation to the farmers. There is an urgent need to undertake research on the ecology, rapid assessment of damage, will safeguard both the farmers and peafowl.

(The author is a faculty member in the Department of Natural Resource Management, Forest College and Research Institute, Mulugu, Telangana. His email I.D. is deepakkumarforestry@gmail.com)

(For photos please see page No. 27)

Grandpa was celebrating his 100th birthday.

Everybody complimented him on how healthy, athletic and well-preserved he appeared.

“I will tell you the secret of my success,” Grandpa said, “My wife and I was married 75 years ago. On our wedding day, we made a solemn pledge. Whenever we had an argument, or fight, the one who proved wrong would go outside and take a walk for 5 kms. Gentlemen, I have been walking in the open air day after day for some 75 years now.”

One friend further asked, ‘But your wife is also slim and energetic?’

Grandpa said, ‘that is another secret, my wife use to follow me behind checking whether I go for 5 kms or sit in a park!’

CHEETAL OR CHITAL

Axis axis

Source: Internet

Range description: -The Chital occurs in India (including Sikkim), Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The western distribution boundary is formed by eastern Rajasthan (e.g. Sariska, Ranthambore and Keoladeo Ghana) and Gujarat (e.g. Sasan Gir). The northern boundary runs along the bhabar-terai belt of the foothills of the Himalaya from Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal through Nepal, northern West Bengal and Sikkim to western Assam and the forested valleys of Bhutan below 1,100 m. The eastern boundary runs through western Assam (Golapara and Kamrup district as far east as the Dhunsiri River in Darrang district) to the Sunderbans of West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh. Sri Lanka is the southern limit. Chital occur throughout the rest of peninsular India sporadically in the forested areas, but in Bangladesh, it now occurs only in the Sunderbans, having vanished from the central, northeast and southeast regions. Chital has been introduced to the Andaman Islands (India, during 1925–1930, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Croatia, Moldova, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Ukraine, Uruguay and the USA. Not all introductions have succeeded: for example, some were introduced to west-central Slovenia in the late 1940s or in 1950, but this introduction failed.

Populations: -Chital declined drastically throughout its range up until the first two-thirds of the 20th century. It is however “locally” abundant in well protected parts of its range in mixed deciduous habitats. In India it occurs in 123 protected areas and forest tracts. There are some large subpopulations in Nepal where the population is probably currently stable and is anticipated to remain so in the immediate future. Thousands survive in the Sunderbans mangrove forest, Bangladesh, and there are a few introduced subpopulations on coastal islands in the south.

The reported ecological densities of Chital mostly fall within three to 50 animals per km² in India: Some parts of the well-protected areas in Nagarhole and Bandipur are known to harbor densities as high as 80–100 Chital per km² (Kumar 2010).

Habitat and Ecology: -Chital thrive in a variety of habitats, but avoid extremes such as dense moist (evergreen) forests and open semi-desert or desert. Moist and dry deciduous forest areas, especially adjoining dry thorn scrub or grasslands, appear to be optimal, and highest densities of Chital are reported from these habitats. Short grasslands of the *terai*, swampy meadows and glades adjoining forest areas,

coastal dry evergreen forests, mixed forests or plantations with Teak *Tectonagrandis* and Sal *Shorearobusta* are also used, and indeed over much of northern and southern India, its distribution closely matches that of Sal and Teak, respectively. Chital is particularly frequent in grassland–forest interface, edge, and other ecotones. Eisenberg and Sticker (1976) opined that dry deciduous habitats with scrub is the favored habitat, while Karanth and Sunquist (1992) found mixed forests with teak plantations, moist deciduous patches and swampy grasslands to support high abundance of Chital. Kumar (2010) found that well-watered and well-protected moist deciduous forest patches in gently undulating terrain supported high Chital densities. Short grasslands are important because they provide little cover for predators such as Tiger *Pantheratigris*. The introduced subpopulation in Andaman Islands inhabits evergreen forests but native subpopulations are absent from the rainforest areas of the mainland. They tend to be only visitors to dense forests, to those adjoining more open habitats. Riverine forests within the Bardia National Park in lowland Nepal are highly used by the deer for shade and cover during the dry season. The forest also provides good foraging with regard to fallen fruit and leaves that are high in nutrients needed by the deer. Four factors were identified by Schaller as delineating Chital's distribution: (1) the need

for water; (2) the need for shade; (3) an avoidance of high, rugged terrain; and (4) a preference for grass as forage. Although several observers have noted that Chital occurs mostly in flat areas and avoids hills and slopes

Habitat use varies seasonally, reflecting food availability. Chital uses more wooded habitat during the cool-dry season and early summer (November to May), where fallen fruit, leaf litter, and browse are available. In open grassland and tropical dry thorn forest, Chital density increases with the onset of monsoon rains and flush of plant growth. In areas of their distribution with a mosaic of forest and grassland habitats, seasonal patterns in habitat use may be complex. In the Himalayan terai, Chital use of habitats with high grass availability increased substantially in the weeks following cutting and burning of grasses in January–February, attributed to fresh flush of grass growth after the burns and with the onset pre-monsoon and monsoon rains nearly two months later. Similar behavior has been reported from the grasslands of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Chital easily habituates to human presence, and herds often congregate in open areas near habitation or forest camps to spend the night, possibly due to greater safety from predators and poachers that shy away from these areas.

Chital eats a wide variety of plants: about 160–190 have been recorded from across the

species' range. It is predominantly a grazer but consumes more fallen leaves, flowers and fruits in winter/dry season. In addition to plant soft matter, crabs (in the Sunderbans; Stanford 1951), mushrooms and rarely, bark are eaten. Close to human habitation, rubbish and even human faeces are occasionally taken (Raman *et al.* 1996). Antler and bone chewing is also common. In Wilpattu, Sri Lanka, all age and sex classes are osteophagous, but such feeding was more common in velvet-antlered males, doubtless reflecting mineral needs during antler growth and mineralization (Barrette 1985). Chital usually drinks water once a day, more frequently in summer. This restricts them to forest tracts with assured presence of water, even if only widely scattered.

In lowland Nepal, an individual's total range incorporates a core area of about 32 hectares surrounded by foraging and covers areas of about 140 ha for females and 195 ha for males. Variation in range size occurs with site, season, sex and age of the animal. The basic social unit is a matriarchal family group, normally consisting of an adult female, her offspring from the previous year, and a fawn. The usual herd is composed of two or more such family units and is often accompanied by individual deer of mixed sex and age-classes. Chital exhibits a fission-fusion system, or fluid group formation and dissolution. Group composition changes frequently, during

feeding periods, during the rut when males frequently join groups of females, and while fleeing from predators. These social groupings of Chital do not remain permanent. Groups may number up to 150 or more individuals, sometimes even more: N.S. Kumar counted 211 in one group during rainy season in Nagarahole and 203 in one group at Pench-Maharashtra near a water reservoir in summer.

Chital is a prolific breeder, as documented by several empirical studies of the speed of increase by newly introduced subpopulations or in those where a factor restraining subpopulations was removed. In Bhadra, following the departure from the park of human settlements and consequent removal of anthropogenic pressures on Chital and habitats, Chital subpopulations bounced back by nearly seven times in fewer than four years earlier documented their empirical observations of the recovery of Chital subpopulations in Nagarahole. This and its diverse diet and habitats allow high density where threats are controlled. It is even considered to be a pest in the Andamans.

The main causes of death are predation, diseases and accidents. Occasionally, stags kill each other when fighting. Predation is by far the major cause of Chital mortality. Older Chital stags are more susceptible to it than are younger stags. This may be due to their being

less vigilant during rut, to their separation from the group after the rut, or to weakening from injuries from conflicts. In Kanha, Chital remains were found in about 52% of Tiger faeces and 59% of Leopard *Pantherapardus* faeces analysed. In Bandipur, Chital is the most important prey in terms of the biomass taken by Dhole (78%), Leopard (55%) and Tiger (19%).

Each Chital spends a major portion of its life in foraging, resting, and wandering within its range, with the relative extent of these activities determined by season. In a day, peak feeding times are around dawn and dusk. There are usually two major resting periods, before dawn and mid-day. Considerable further detail on ecology, drawn from the relative wealth of studies on the species, with each item precisely referenced to source, is provided by Raman (2013).

Use and Trade:- Chital are hunted for food, sport, and a variety of other purposes. It is unclear as to the numbers of captive animals kept within the native range and even if such animals are used to supply the same markets as wild caught animals. Introduced subpopulations almost certainly do not supply the same markets as wild caught animals from the species native range.

The most serious threat, in areas where poaching and habitat conversion are well controlled, is the reduction in carrying capacity through competition with livestock, especially during the pinch season as observed in Sariska; Chital are susceptible to livestock-borne diseases such as rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease but the current population is too widespread for these to rank as potential global-level threats. Accidents, especially from speeding vehicles, are a cause of Chital mortality but occur rarely within protected areas and cannot be significant at the global level. Many Indian forest areas are severely encroached by exotics such as *Lantana camara*, *Parthenium* spp. and *Chromolaena odorata* (= *Eupatorium odoratum*), and these are suspected to effect major changes to forest structure.

Conservation Action:- Chital is protected under Schedule III of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act and under the Wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1974 of Bangladesh. It occurs in many protected areas. Legal protection as a species and a network of functioning protected areas are the two cornerstones of its current healthy conservation status.

Strong minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, Weak minds discuss people.(Socrates)

NEWS AND NOTES

Remembering S Manikandan, Karnataka IFS officer who lived for and died in the forest:-

In a cruel irony, a man credited with reducing incidents of man-animal conflicts, among many other achievements, suffered a tragic death on World Wildlife Day after being attacked by a wild elephant.

On Saturday, Conservator of Forests and director of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve for two years, 45-year-old S Manikandan (IFS) along with other officers had ventured into the forests of Dodda Byrana kuppe by the Kabini backwaters to inspect a minor forest fire.

According to reports, the 2001-batch officer was briefing his colleagues when a lone tusker came from behind and charged at the group. Unfortunately, Manikandan lost his balance while trying to escape and was trampled by the jumbo. Another officer in the group, RFO Subramanya, sustained minor injuries.

Doctors at the HD Kote Hospital declared him brought dead. Following his demise, the Karnataka government presented state honors to the departed soul in the presence of senior forest officers. His mortal remains were sent to Madurai.

Manikandan had previously served in the northern districts of Ballari, Bidar, Raichur and had even been part of the BMTC as the conservator and director (IT) in Bengaluru.

He had studied Agricultural Sciences at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University before pursuing a master's and then PhD in Agricultural Entomology. Before securing a rank in the IFS, he served as a faculty in the Institute of Wood Science and Technology for a brief period.

He was a favourite among villagers from the surrounding areas for his efforts to conserve nature and in the process reducing incidents of man-animal conflicts. He had worked extensively to limit instances of cattle smuggling and elephant killing.

It was not only locals who took a liking to Manikandan to his colleagues he was an inspiration.

Incidentally, questions have been raised if the foresters followed the standard protocol of carrying firearms while entering the forest.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Punnati Sridhar told TNM, "He was very good with people, and also bridged the gap between the locals and the department," Sridhar added. "Yesterday's incident was unfortunate. These are hazards which are part of the job. Yes, there were no weapons with them but it's hard to say if that would have helped. It was a sudden attack by a lone male elephant. There must have been a strong camouflage... we usually keep a distance from wild animals. I would not say there was any neglect on anyone's part, but I

have sought a report," he said.

"These sorts of incidents happen in the wild despite all precautions. It was a core area, it was only because there was a fire that he had gone to inspect," he explained.

Dipika Bajpai (IFS), currently posted as the Deputy Conservator of Forests, remembers Manikandan as an honest, upright officer who never compromised on rules.

Speaking to TNM, Dipika said, "I worked under him for a year when he was the Conservator of Forests in Bengaluru in 2015. Initially it was difficult to work with him since he was very strict; slowly with time I realised that he was also a warm person."

"He was an honest officer who stuck to the rules whatever happened. He was very academic but also someone who always smiled," she added.

Similarly, Mallapa Puttanna, a retired forest officer (DCF rank) who worked with Manikandan for some time, expressed shock over the tragedy. Terming the officer's contribution invaluable, he said his death was a loss to the IFS fraternity.

"It is very sad. He was a very good officer and used to manage wildlife very well. He was especially able in handling elephants. It is strange that there was a 15-member party present when this happened. But it will be wrong for us to speculate sitting here," Puttana told TNM.

An activist and forest department volunteer,

Sunil Baber, who has worked with Manikandan termed him as a man of humility.," Sunil said.

Sunil claimed it was people with ill intentions who were responsible for this tragedy, "All When unprovoked, elephants are the most peaceful animals.," he said.

A source close to the Kabini Forest Division said, It was not only those who knew Manikandan personally that had words of respect for the man. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, former CM Yeddyurappa and President Ramnath Kovind tweeted messages of condolences to his family while Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi Palaniswami gave a media statement.

Leopard Invasion in Indore Housing Colony

Caught On Camera, 3 Injured: A leopard strayed into a housing colony in Indore today, triggering panic among the residents in the locality.

The big cat strayed in the Palhar Nagar area in the morning and was spotted entering an under-construction building and a residence before it was captured by forest officials.



Residents even clicked pictures and filmed videos of the ordeal that left three people injured.

"The leopard, around 8 years old, had come from a forested area near here and caused panic among local residents. It injured two forest staffers and one employee of the Indore Municipal Corporation while efforts were on to capture it," Uttam Yadav, in charge of the civic-run Kamala Nehru Zoo said.

The leopard was first spotted around 10 am, following which a call was made to the local police station. The animal first entered an under-construction house and then moved to another residence where it stayed for three hours.

The leopard was finally captured after being hit by two tranquilising darts. A forest official was injured after he approached the animal after it was hit by the first dart thinking the animal had been sedated, but the leopard pounced on them injuring him and tried to escape.

The second dart sedated the leopard. Once the animal became unconscious, it was trapped in a steel cage by the forest officials.

The big cat would be released into the forest after mandatory medical tests.

To tackle Delhi pollution, Centre spent Rs 36 lakh on 140 air purifiers for Narendra Modi's offices and six federal depts. between 2014 and 2017: - New Delhi: As pollution choked India's capital Delhi in recent years, a total of 140

air purifiers were purchased for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's offices and at least six other government agencies, according to previously unpublished government data.

The purchases came as Modi faced criticism for not taking effective steps to improve air quality in Delhi, one of the world's most polluted cities. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who belongs to an opposition party, called the city a "gas chamber" last year as levels of airborne PM 2.5, tiny particulate matter that can reach deep into the lungs, far exceeded levels classified as "hazardous."

A British medical journal, The Lancet, has estimated air pollution was responsible for almost 10 percent of the total disease burden in India in 2016.

Each year, when pollution levels shoot up in the winter months, the capital's schools are often forced to shut. Last year, all schools in the city were closed for five days.

A federal body that manages more than 45 government schools in the capital said it had made no purchases of air purifiers and had no plans to do so.

"Offices are generally air conditioned, so air purifiers will function. Our schools aren't air conditioned, windows are open, so air purifiers won't make a difference," said Santosh Kumar Mall, commissioner of the body, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.

The World Health Organisation has recommended keeping windows closed when air pollution is high. It also says air conditioners should not be used if they draw air from the outside.

Asked if any steps were taken to safeguard school students from Delhi's dirty air, Mall told Reuters: "I don't think so, when pollution increased a lot, our schools were shut".

The federal government, however, spent 3.6 million rupees, or about \$55,000, to buy air purifiers for Modi's offices and at least six federal departments between 2014 and 2017, according to government data reviewed by Reuters.

Besides Modi's offices inside parliament house, the agencies included federal economic planning think tank NITI Aayog and the ministries of health, agriculture, tourism, home affairs and foreign affairs.

"This initiative is like giving gumboots to city officials when the drainage system collapses and the city is covered in muck," said Oommen C. Kurian, a health researcher at the New Delhi-based think tank Observer Research Foundation. "This is just not the response we are looking for." A government spokesman directed questions on the subject to the federal environment ministry, which did not respond to a request for comment. Modi's office and the six departments for which data was available did not respond to Reuters' queries.

Air purifiers are devices which use filters to reduce indoor air pollutants. Such machines are beyond the means of most people in India, where the annual per capita income was \$1,709 in 2016, according to the World Bank.

Still, air purifier sales have been surging in Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people. The sale of such units at Amazon.com Inc's India website grew by more than 3.5 times in 2017 over the previous year, the company said.

The home ministry spent about \$20,000 in the last three years to buy 44 of the devices, while Modi's parliament house offices accounted for 25 units which cost about \$11,000, the data showed.

NITI Aayog, which also spent about \$11,000 on air purifiers, said the devices were "issued to officers at the level of joint secretary & equivalent and above, as per their requests", according to a right to information response reviewed by Reuters.

A senior government official familiar with Modi's pollution-control planning said there was no federal policy allowing officials to buy air purifiers and such purchases were made only if departments received requests from bureaucrats.

"Ideally, no one should need air purifiers and we're trying our best to ensure that," the official said, referring to the government's attempts to improve air quality in Delhi.

After years of criticism that Modi's government was not doing enough, this year's federal budget outlined a scheme for pollution control that will include spending \$177 million on reducing crop residue burning—one of the main causes of pollution.

Modi's environment minister last month said pollution was "now linked to our national image."

International Day of Forests: 5 Reasons why Greens are Essential for Urban Survival; -

International Day of Forests is observed on March 21 every year since 2012. The day is dedicated to raise awareness of role of forests amidst urbanization that has been the harbinger of urban sprawl, but at the cost of converting green forests to concrete jungles. Trees are the core of forests and a walk amidst sprawling trees itself is so stress relieving that urbanites spend thousands of rupees every year to holiday in green resorts and national parks located distant from urban locales.

The beauty of countryside gives innate peace and we must make an effort towards making our cities as beautiful, for the sake of our elders, our next generation and off course ourselves.

Climate change is apparent around the globe. The summers are arriving much before their schedules, monsoons are reduced to scanty rainfall, the average temperature in winters has dropped and increased in summers. Here are certain facts about trees and forests that will

make you consider your choice of contributing towards a green urban locality:

1. Natural Air Conditioners

In the scorching heat, trees act as natural air conditioners and have the capability of reducing the temperature by 2 to 8 degree celsius. Grow trees around your urban landscape to witness an instant difference in your local climate. Forests soak greenhouse gases and reduce global warming.

2. Natural Air Purifiers

Metropolitan cities in India are engulfed in a thick layer of carbon and other harmful gases due to pollution. No wonder people are investing hefty sums of money on air purifiers at home. But did you know, trees are natural air purifiers as they absorb and store carbon, remove fine particles and harmful pollutants, thereby reducing the air pollution and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

3. Reduce Noise Pollution

We've dawned into a phase where the hustle and bustle of a city is loud even at the midnight. Trees reduce noise pollution by creating a barrier between roads and residences. Also the chirps of sparrows and other birds render a soothing vibe to your vicinity.

4. Maintain Groundwater Level

Forests around urban areas help maintain groundwater level by absorbing rainwater in their roots and branches. The Urban Water

Crunch is a big pain for urbanites and green layers of forests around urban vicinities is the answer to address it.

5. Mental & Physical Wellbeing

Forests and trees around urban locales are essential for mental as well as physical wellbeing of the urban dwellers. A morning jog amidst trees is much more impactful visibly, mentally and physically, than a round on a high street surrounded by sky scrapers.

Aranya Bhavan Road renamed after forest

Officer Manikandan :- Bengaluru : Four days after Indian Forest Service Officer Manikandan was trampled to death by a wild tusker in DBKoppa forest range near Mysuru, the BBMP council on Wednesday decided to rename Aranya Bhavan Road in malleswaram as Manikandan, IFS Road.

The road runs in front of Aranya Bhavan, the head quarters of the Karnataka forest department.

The proposal was mooted by Manikaandan's IFS colleague Manoj Rajan, currently special commissioner with the BBMP and council members agreed unanimously. The change in name comes in to effect immediately.

Manikandan, 46, conservator of forests and director, Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, died on March 3, he was a 2001 batch officer and hailed from Madurai, Tamil nadu, He's survived by his wife, son and daughter. He was posted to Nagarahole two years ago.

The officer had gone to assess damage caused by a fire allegedly set by miscreants, Officers said Manikandan, forest range officer Subramanya Swamy and around 15 staff were taking GPS readings of the blaze when an elephant charged out of a bush.

Manikandan and his colleagues had got off their jeep and were walking when the elephant attacked him from behind. While others managed to escae, Manikandan was trampled to death. The staff tried to drive away the elephant.

Even before the staff lifted Manikandan and shifted him to HD Kote Government Hospital, he had breathed his last, Foresters rushed him to Hoshalli Gate checkpoint, the border of the tiger reserve, to a waiting ambulance.

'Manikandan knew a lot about animals particularly those found in the Nagarahole forest. He was documenting every elephant in the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, Said forest officials who worked with him.

NGT fines security agencies Rs 10 lakh for building offices on ridge forest: -

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh each on the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) for building offices on the ridge forest without obtaining environmental clearance (EC).

The two central organizations have built their

headquarters on a 102 bigha patch of land in Mahipalpur area, opposite Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, that is part of the southern ridge forest. The rocky Aravalli hill range is considered to be the last functioning lungs of the city with variety of flora and fauna, and a groundwater recharge zone.

Besides imposing a fine of Rs 10 lakh or five per cent of the project cost whichever is higher, NGT also quashed allotment of a part of the complex to BPRD and CISF that amounts to 3.06 hectares. Since their buildings were already 75 per cent complete at the time of filing of the application in the court, they have been spared demolition. However, NGT also ordered them to pay an additional Rs 1 lakh to the Central Groundwater Authority (CGWA) for utilizing water for commercial construction activity without a valid No Objection Certificate.

A bench consisting Dr. Justice Jawad Rahim and expert member Dr. Nagin Nanda said, "In a letter issued by the Forest department, (they have conceded that) Khasra No. 1007/1/2 comes under the morphological ridge (therefore), the allotment of land by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to BPRD and CISF vide order date 29 April, 2009, in respect of allotment in this khasra is quashed."

"They shall handover the land in question to DDA which shall be protected and maintained as a reserved forest/morphological ridge. Any construction activity on it or any damage caused to ecological on this area shall be restored," it observed.

The CISF is directed to pay a sum of Rs 10 lakhs or 5 per cent of the project cost, whichever is higher, towards Environmental compensation to be deposited with the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the court said. The same orders were issued for BPRD. And both the project proponents are directed to pay sum of Rs 1 lakh to CGWA, it said.

The Delhi Ridge is a 'reserved forest' as ordered by the Government of NCT in 1994 under Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act 1927 and forms part of the Draft MPD 'Master Plan for Delhi' 2021.

Consisting of a total area of 7,784 hectares, it is of great ecological importance to an urban jungle like Delhi, experts say. It also consists of the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary and Aravali Biodiversity parks. However, both private and governmental encroachments on it are rampant.

Recently, the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was also fined by NGT for similar violations on the ridge.

“Environmental Pollution is an incurable disease. It can only be prevented.” (Barry Commoner)

MINUTES OF THE 87TH GENERAL BODY MEETING OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF TELANGANA AND ANDHRA PRADESH HELD ON 11.03.2018 AT ARANYABHAWAN, HYDERABAD.

The Secretary Sri. A.V. Govindarajulu welcomed the Members to the meeting. Here requested Sri. S.K. Das President, Sri. T. Narayan Swamy Vice-President, Sri. Narsimha Reddy Treasurer, Sri. A. Shankaran, Joint Secretary and Sri. QamarMohd Khan, Editor, VanaPremi to occupy their seats. Sri. S.K. Das, President was requested to preside over the meeting. The agenda was placed before the President with a request to conduct the proceedings.

Shradhanjali: The Secretary informed with regrets that, in the interim period between the last General Body Meeting and this meeting the following members of the Association passed away.

1. Sri. M. SitaramaRao
2. Sri. N. ManoharRao
3. Sri. A. Rama Rao
4. Sri. M. NarayanaRao
5. Sri. S. Rama Rao.
6. Sri. S. Manikandan

Sri. K. Buchi Ram Reddy readout the obituary of the members who passed away and proposed two minute's silence to be observed as a mark of respect to the departed souls.

After this, Sri.S.K.Das, President of the Association took up Agenda and requested the Secretary to present the Action Taken Report on the decisions

of the previous meeting of Executive Committee and General Body.

Action Taken Report of the Secretary:

The Action Taken on the decisions taken in the General Body Meeting on 17.12.2017 and the Executive Committee Meeting on 18.02.2018 was presented.

He informed with satisfaction that, the attendance of the Members in the General Body Meeting is increasing when compared to previous meetings. He also expressed happiness that the members are voluntarily coming forward and hosting the lunch during the General Body Meetings.

Decisions in the General Body Meeting on 17-12-2017

Election of Executive Body of the Association:

Sri. T. Krishna Murthy Senior most Member was the election officer and conducted the elections of the Association. The office bearers were elected to all the posts unanimously which shows the unity among the members and also the willingness of the members proposed for accepting their office positions in the Executive of the Association and Editorial Board of VanaPremi. He thanked Sri. S.K. Das, President and his team for the services rendered during their tenure as office

bearers.

The General Secretary also thanked Sri.T.Narayan Swamy,Sri.K.Buchiram Reddy and Sri.J.V.Sharma for accepting to be the permanent invitees of the Executive Committee of the Association.

He thanked Sri. QamarMohd. Khan, Editor,VanaPrami for accepting the post and rendering the services for publishing of VanaPremi monthly Journal promptly during his tenure as Editor VanaPremi.

He also thanked all the members for approving and confirming the amendments to the Rules and Regulations of the Association and informed that all the Amended rules are being implemented.

The Secretary stated that, in the last General body Meeting the term of office bearers was increased from two years to three years which was approved. The same amendment is being placed before this General Body for approval as the By-laws of the Association requires approval of the General Body in two consecutive meetings.

The Secretary stated that, the newly elected office bearers under the President ship of Sri. S.K. Das assumed their officers and are discharging their functions.

Decisions in the Executive Committee Meeting held on 18.02.2018:

The Secretary informed that, the newly elected members attended the E.C.M. on 18.02.2018 presided by Sri. S.K. Das, President and the following decisions were taken.

1. To conduct the 87thG.B.M on 11-03-2018 at AranyaBhawan.
2. To invite the Dr. S. Ramakrishna, ENT Specialist &HoD as Chief Guest.
3. To invite all the Officers who retired recently to be the members of the Association.

Felicitations to the members:

Felicitations to the members who attained 85 years:

Sri. T. NarayanaSwamy was felicitated by the General Body on attaining the age of 85 and for being an active member of the Association since inception. Members expressed their wish that, Sri. T. NarayanaSwamy will continue to actively associate with the activities of the Association.

Felicitations to the members who attained 80 years:

Sri. R.D. Reddy and Dr. C.N. Rao were felicitated on attaining the age of 80 years. The members expressed their view that, both these members have rendered immense service to the association and have always supported the cause of the association. Every one hope that, both the members will continue to take part in the activities of the association.

Mrs. K. V. S. Babu who attended the meeting stated that, two awards in the name of K.V.S. Babu Memorial awards were instituted in the Forest Department for best serving Officers in the Forest Department and best Field level staff in the Zoological Parks. She expressed that, the Zoo awards are not being presented

regularly and they are not receiving invitation for the award ceremony in the Zoo Park. The President assured that, he would take up the matter with the concerned authorities and ensure that the award function is conducted regularly and the family members of late K.V.S. Babu will be invited to the award ceremony.

Printing of Telephone Directory:

The Secretary requested all the members to provide their photos as the Association is proposing to bring out a telephone directory with photos of each member.

Talk by Sri.Sudheer Reddy:

Sri.Sudheer Reddy son of Sri. K. Buchi Ram Reddy shared his experiences of visiting a small and remote village ChinnaMadurnear Jangaon where large number of Painted Stork Birds are nesting and breeding. He projected some lovely pictures of Painted Storks and spoke about need to conserve such areas which are home for animals and Birds. Sri. S.K. Das, President presented a shawl and a Memento.

Talk by Chief Guest Dr. S. Ramakrishna:

Dr. Ramakrishna who is an ENT Specialist and Professor and H.O Dept., of ENT spoke on "Otorhinolaryngology" which is a problem related to aging where the senses of speech, hearing, diminish with age. He informed the gathering that, these problems are to be first understood and managed without resorting to surgical interventions. Most of these problems can be managed medically and with disciplined life style. He advised that one should accept such

problems and not get disturbed by them.Sri. S.K. Das, President of the Association honored the Chief Guest with a Shawl and a Memento.

Felicitation of Officers promoted as PCCFs:

The General Body felicitated Sri. P. Raghuveer and Sri. PrudhviRaju on their promotion to the rank of Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests. Their services and contribution to the Department was recollected by the membersand views were expressed that they would achieve greater heights in the rest of their career. Both the Officers thanked the association for inviting them and felicitating them.

Other issues discussed with permission of the chair:

Dr. C.N. Rao, informed the members that, several cases of violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, is taking place in both the states and requested the association to play active role in bringing this to the notice of the concerned authorities. The President requested the member to give details of such cases so that the association can take up such matters.

Vote of Thanks:

Sri. A. Shankaran, Joint Secretary thanked all the Members and ladies for attending the meeting in large numbers. He thanked Sri. Sudheer Reddy and Dr. S. Ramakrishna for accepting our invitation and for attending the meeting and delivering meaningful talk on important issues. He also thanked Sri. K. PrakashRao, Sri. JayantBabu and Sri.M. Prasad Rao for coming forward to host the lunch for all the members.

sd/-

Secretary

LEGAL NOTES

Divisional Forest Officer, Nalgonda vs. Forest Settlement Officer, Hyderabad & Others

This is the story of a Forest Settlement Officer, who taking forest officers for a ride reopened a case after his predecessor passed award 30 years ago and the forest was eventually declared as reserved forest by the Government. It is the very alert DFO who took timely action by challenging the wrong order of the FSO and getting a historic and significant judgment from the High Court of Andhra Pradesh which exposed the 'Fraud and Deceit' of the FSO. The facts are interesting to read.

Chintalapalem Forest Block in Huzurnagar taluk, Nalgonda district with an extent of Acs.6,809.23 was proposed to be constituted a reserved forest and therefore, the Government of Hyderabad issued a notification under Sec. 7 of the Hyderabad Forest Act 1326 F. which was published in the Government Gazette dated 06.09.1343 F. (01.01.1934). The notification specified the area to be reserved and appointed Forest Settlement Officer, Hyderabad to inquire into and determine the existence, nature and extent of any rights by any person. Consequently, the FSO issued a proclamation under Sec. 10 of the forest Act requiring every person claiming any right to put up his claim before the FSO with supporting documents within a period of six months from the date of proclamation. The proclamation was published in the Government Gazette and was widely publicized at the taluk office and the villages concerned.

One Sri Velamakanti Lakshmana Rai Sastry filed a claim petition before the FSO on 11.03. 1935 in respect of certain lands situated in Weltur and Chintalapalem villages of Huzunagar taluk and requested the FSO to order exclusion of the claimed land from the proposed reservation or alternatively to pay compensation. After an elaborate enquiry, the FSO passed an order on 01.11.1938 against the claimant's petition under Se. 14 of the Forest Act in the following manner:

- (i). Sy. No. 96 of Weltur village had not been included in the Reserved Forest.
- (ii). Sy. No.269, of Weltur village and Sy. Nos. 290/ 1 & 290/2 of Chintalapalem had not been proved as claimant's patta; the claim in so far as these lands is concerned is dismissed.
- (iii). the claim of patta over of Sy. Nos., 244, 267, 270, 273, 274 of Weltur village and Sy. Nos. 266, 8/1 of Chintalapalem village was subject to approval of Forest Department under Circular No. 84 dated 21-12-1305 F. As the Forest Department had refused patta, for these lands, these Sy.Nos.should be excluded from the patta and included in the reserve forest.

Aggrieved by the order of the FSO, Claimant V. Lakshmana Rai Sastry filed an appeal before the Subedar, Gulshanabad (Medak) under Sec 16 of the Forest Act. The appeal was allowed on 30.09.1939 for the reason that the FSO did not

have the power to order cancellation of pattas. As against the order of the Subedar, a revision petition was filed before the Government in the Revenue Department. After hearing the arguments in the revision petition, the Secretary Revenue observed that the FSO had considered the matter in detail and had justly rejected the claim of pattas.

The revision petition was allowed and the original order of the FSO was confirmed. The forest block was notified as reserved forest under Se. 19 of the Forest Act of 1355 F. and the notification was published in the Government Gazette dated 18.02.1954

More than three decades after the Forest Block was notified as reserved forest, one Sri V.V. Sobhanadri Rao claiming himself as the adopted son of the late V. Lakshmana R. Sastri, approached the FSO with a petition that the lands of an extent of Acs. 1,804.02 situated in Weltur village belonging to his adopting father had been included in the reserved forest without payment of compensation. The lands are still recorded as patta and that the officials are collecting land revenue. He therefore claimed compensation for the lands of Weltur village as also similarly placed lands of Chintalapalem village.

On 03-09-1985, the FSO while, forwarding a copy of the new claim petition for the two village lands and also another petition from Sri Venkateshwar Rao for lands in Thammavaram village to the DFO, asked for the particulars regarding the name of the forest block, its legal status and whether the lands in question are included in

the forest. The DFO informed the FSO stating that all the records were submitted to the Government and that the matter was pending with the Government.

On the question of reason for the delay, the FSO enquired from the claimants and he was told that original owner Lakshman R. Sastry was murdered when the present claimants were 4 years and 2 years respectively. The FSO held that the limitation did not apply as the properties were under the Court of Wards. Without taking into consideration the background, facts and circumstances of the matter, the FSO passed an order on 23.09.1986, fixing compensation at Rs. 600/- per acre for Acs. 3,033 and for payment of Rs. 2, 10, 31,428 towards compensation plus payment of interest at 9% per annum from 01.01.1934 to 31.12.1934 and at 15 % per annum from 01.01.1935 to 31.12.1986 and 30 % solarium on the market value which, according to FSO, worked out to Rs. 6,934/- per acre

As against the award of the FSO, the DFO filed appeal in the District Court at Nalgonda in A.S. No. 6 of 1989. The said appeal was disposed of by order dated 27.12.1994 reducing the compensation from Rs. 600/- to Rs. 250/- per acre as well as statutory benefits.

The DFO Nalgonda impugned the order of the FSO as partly confirmed by the District Court Nalgonda, in W.P. No. 13048 of 1995. The opposite parties/ claimants of compensation also filed W.P. Nos. 25421 and 25422 of 1995 against the judgment and decree in A.S. No. 6 of

1989 reducing the compensation from Rs. 600/- to Rs. 250/-

The matter came up for consideration before the Hon'ble Justice Ramesh Ranganathan. It was argued by the Government Pleader in the High Court that, the FSO became *functus officio* after issue of notification under section 19 of the Hyderabad Forest Act. The respondents/claimants, having kept quiet for more than three decades could not reopen concluded issues to unsettle the settled matter. The G.P. further submitted to the court that the subsequent order of the FSO dated 23.09.1986 is nothing but act of fraud and deceit. The other points urged by the G.P. before the Court is summarily stated as follows:

(1) The impugned order is passed without notice to the DFO and is passed behind the back of the Forest Departme.

(ii).The letter of the FSO dated 03.09.1985 merely solicited information from the DFO and it did not state anything about the enquiry which the FSO was obligated to conduct.

(iii). No forest officer was examined before passing the impugned order. The order was therefore illegal.

(iv). It was submitted before the appellate court that the order of the FSO was barred by *res judicata* but the District Court chose not to deal

with any of the contentions of the appellant DFO.

(v).The order of the District Court suffered from errors apparent on the facts of the record requiring it to be quashed by writ of certiorari under the Constitution of India.

The opposite parties had no good ground to plead their case before the High Court.

The Hon'ble Justice R. Ranganathan quoting extensively from the case law held that all the proceedings taken earlier by the FSO, Subedar, Government in Revenue Department are quasi-judicial in nature and therefore the principle of *res judicata* applies to them and necessitates the subsequent order of the FSO as confirmed by the District Court being quashed. The respondents placing reliance on non-existent order could only be to defraud Government revenue and consequently, the order of the FSO dated 23.09.1986 must be held vitiated by fraud and deceit. The District Judge failed to adjudicate on the several contentions of the DFO. The order of the District Court and the second order of the FSO are quashed. While allowing the writ petition of the DFO, His Lordship dismissed the writ petitions of the respondents. The order of the High Court was passed on 15.09.2008.

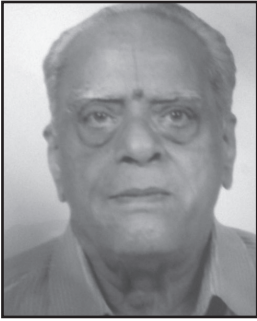
2008 (6) ALD 541

K.B.R

***When life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, show life that you have a thousand reasons to smile.
(A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)***

OBITUARY

M. Sitarama Rao, 19.03.1933 – 03.03.2018



Sri Malapallikar Sitarama Rao passed away on March 3, 2018 due to cardiac arrest in Apollo Hospital, Hyderguda. He was 85. On the discomfort in the chest and other health complaints, he was admitted into the Apollo Hospital and the best

possible medical attention was paid to him for five days and yet, as ill luck would have it, he could not be saved.

Sri Sitarama Rao was the third son born in Hyderabad among the five siblings of Sri Narsing Rao and Smt. Rama Bai. He had his school education in VivekVardhini High School, graduated from Nizam College and earned degree in Science & Maths. He was selected in 1956 for undergoing training in forestry, and for appointment in the Superior Forest Service. He passed out in 1958 from the Indian Forest College, Dehra Dun with a diploma, AIFC. He started his career as ACF/Sub-DFO and by dint of hard work, sincerity and dedication, rose to the top position as the Principal CCF before retirement in March 1991. He was appointed by promotion to the Indian Forest Service in 1966. The entire period of his service is a reflection of an excellent record of dedication to the cause of forestry.

Sri Sitarama Rao worked as DFO Kadapa, Nandyal, Karimnagar(E), Warangal (S) and Mancherla divisions. He was promoted to Super Time Scale in 1976. He was Conservator of Forests of Adilabad Circle covering the entire district of Adilabad. For 4 years he taught 'farm forestry' to the undergraduates at the Agriculture University. Sri Rao was the Chief General Manager in the A.P Forest Development Corporation and became the Vice-Chairman & Managing Director of the Corporation in 1989. For a short period he was Addl.CCF., and became the Prl.CCF in Aug. 1990 and held the post

till his retirement on 31.03.1991.

Sri Sitarama Rao was married to Smt. Viraja on 07.03.1961 and they had one daughter, Rama married to Narayan Inamdar, settled in USA. The couple has one daughter, Gautami. And son, Rajesh Kumar was married to Veena and the couple is blessed with a daughter Rachana and son Ruchir. Smt. Viraja, wife of Sri Sitarama Rao predeceased him on 17.07.2003.

Even after retirement, Sri Sitarama Rao had an urge for serving the society. He was Secretary of the Karnataka Sikshana Samithi (Nrupatunga School / College) for 6 years. He was the President of the Association of Retired Forest Officers for almost one-and-a-half year between 19.01.1997 and 06.07.1999.

He led a noble, simple and purposeful life.

He had intense love for his duty. His simplicity is worthy of emulation by all. He was a good penman and a good speaker in English, Urdu, Telugu and Kannada. His book on 'Social Forestry' published by Oxford IBM and his numerous articles are immensely useful to students and researchers. His professional conduct and competence is too well known. He introduced a new technique of increasing yield of bamboo in natural forests of erstwhile Adilabad district.

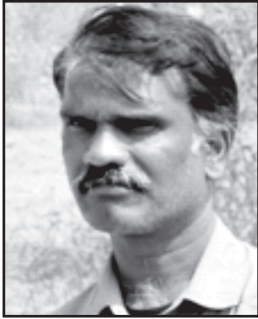
The Kinnera Art Theatres under the auspices of U.B. Raghavendra Rao Memorial Award felicitated Sri Sitarama Rao, recognizing him as an outstanding civil servant. It is stated in the citation, "If the forests are treasure houses of nature's wealth, the true upholders of these treasures are the technocrat forest officers, among whom Sri M. Sitarama Rao commands an esteemed position." Very well said All those who worked with him feel privileged to know many things of office work and gained professional field knowledge.

Sri Sitarama Rao left for the abode of God leaving his family members, colleagues, friends and relatives to mourn the loss. **May the Lord bless his soul to rest in peace!**

K.B.R

OBITUARY

Sri S. Manikandan, 15.07.1972 -03.03.2018



Sri S. Manikandan was born on 15-07-1972 at Theni district of Tamilnadu. He did his BSc Agriculture from AC&RI, Madurai, and then got an ICAR fellowship to do his Masters from Pusa, New Delhi. While doing his Ph.D,

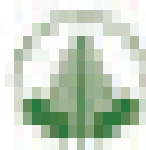
he was appointed as a Scientist in Indian Wood Science and Technology, Bangalore. From there, he wrote the IFS and got selected in 2001 batch, and allotted to Karnataka cadre. After completion of the training at Dehradun he was posted as a probationer in Honnavar, Uttar Kannada district, and then worked in Medikeri, Bidar, Raichur, Bellary, and Bengaluru. He was promoted as Conservator of Forest on 01-01-2015 and took charge of Field Director Project Tiger Nagarhole on 16-07-2016 after working for about one and a half year at Bengaluru. He had four sisters and a brother. Having lost his father long ago, it was his mother who brought them up.

It is a shocking and tragic incident in which Conservator of Forest & Field Director of Project Tiger Nagarhole Tiger Reserve S. Manikandan died in an elephant attack on World Wildlife Day i.e. on 03-03-2018. On 3rd March, World Wildlife Day he wanted to inspect the fire accident spot to assess the damage caused. He was following the staff by walk to the spot which was hardly 100 to 150 mtrs. It was a narrow forest track and they were marching in a single line. All the staff was in front of him. Mr.

Manikandan was the last in that row. A lonely tusker, perhaps in *musth*, was standing quietly in the nearby bushes and not seen by anybody. It allowed the six to pass through perhaps as all of them were wearing Khaki (dull) colored dresses and charged the seventh Sri Manikandan who was wearing a whitish cream-colored shirt. Out of shock, Sri Manikandan couldn't run and lost his balance, fell down, making it easy for the elephant to trample and kill him instantaneously. This incident took place in the D.B. Kuppe range. He was cremated with full police honors including a 21-gun salute in his home town Cumbum of Theni district. In the funeral held several IFS officers including Manikandan's batch mates in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka participated along with local residents and relatives, and bid him a tearful adieu. Forest officials in Theni district were also present. Manikandan was an inspiration and always guided his subordinates on forest management and other related issues.

He was a very simple, sincere, extremely humble, hardworking, down to earth, honest, and a dedicated Forest Officer. More than that, he was totally committed to conservation. He contained most of the problems in Nagarhole. Earlier too he did an excellent job in Bellary despite political pressures.

He is survived by wife (Sangeeta) a son (Kavinessh) who is about 10 years old, a daughter (Tejas Nithila) who is 14 years old, many relatives and friends to mourn his untimely death. **May his noble soul rest in peace**



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- Interpretive programs provide information about resources of the forest and its history, and are designed to be relevant and significant to visitors.
- The program will be developed in a way that is relevant and significant to visitors, and will be designed to be relevant and significant to visitors.
- Interpretive programs will be developed in a way that is relevant and significant to visitors, and will be designed to be relevant and significant to visitors.

APPENDIX A: LANDMAN FORESTAL SYSTEM

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475 mm	5 feet	5 feet x 6 feet	Green	16 Nos.

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