

VANA PREMI

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EDITORIAL

World Population Day: World Population Day is a very important and great event being celebrated all over the world. World Population Day was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. World Population Day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987, the approximate date on which the world's population reached five billion people. The World Population day was suggested by Dr KC Zacharia when he worked as Sr. Demographer at World Bank. The population had been deemed to be growing out of control, and awareness was being spread about the need for family planning, ways to offset poverty. World Population Day comes along each year to remind us that our present rate of population growth is unsustainable, and the present social and logistical issues we are experiencing to meet the demand of that population will only get worse if we don't do something. World Population Day reminds us that we are part of an ever growing world. It was the huge challenge for the development when the population on the earth

has reached to around 7 billion in the year 2011. Every year the world continues to get more and more crowded. The power clothing, housing, water and food needs of the world continue to place a greater and greater strain on our ability to meet them, and resources in general are becoming harder and harder to come by. I have already mentioned in the Editorial of June issue of Vana Premi about the carrying capacity of any country or globe. Today Worlds population is 7,632,819,325 and India ranks number **2** in the list of countries by population. The current population of **India** is **1,353,645,944** as of Saturday, June 23, 2018, based on the latest United Nations estimates on which date the editorial was written. China which is having population of 1,414,910,289 is number 1 with highest population. The population density in India is 406 per Km². Population density in China is reported at 147 persons per sq. Km., according to the World Bank. Though the total population of China is the highest in the world there are only 147 persons per Sq. Km as against in India which is 406 persons per sq. Kms. Monaco is the most densely populated nation with a population density of 25,718 people per sq. km. If I put it in the simple words it is like this.

Suppose the capacity of a car is 5 persons and of a bus is 50 persons and if we put 25 persons in the car and 200 persons in a bus imagine the condition of the passengers. Today the condition in India and Asia is exactly the same. The population of our Country will further increase as number of reproducing couples is increasing day by day and we may shortly surpass China's population. As per an estimate released in 2015, it was projected that the population of India will surpass that of China by 2022.

The major disadvantages of over population are more mouths to feed, lower standard of living, poverty, overcrowded cities towns and villages, insufficient natural resources to provide adequate goods and services, inadequate

facilities, such as housing, medical etc, problem of starvation and malnourished population, illiteracy, unemployment, higher crime rate due to unequal distribution of wealth and insufficient financial resources, birth rate is high, Child labor is rampant, people live in unhygienic conditions, extinction of plant and animal species, climate change, shortage of drinking water and environmental pollution.

When we observe the table given below we can see that 58.12% of population lives in continent Asia which is the highest populated Continent though the land area is only 30% of total world area and the lowest is 0.01% in Antarctica.

Place	Area	% of area	Population	% of population
World	510.1 million km ²	100%	7,632,819,325	100%
Asia	44,579,000 Sq. Km	30.0%	4,436,224,000	58.12%
Africa	30,065,000 Sq. Km	20.3%	1,216,130,000	16.593%
North America	24,256,000 Sq. Km	16.3%	579,024,000	7.585%
South America	17,819,000 Sq. Km	12.0%	422,535,000	5.535%
Antarctica	13,209,000 Sq. Km	8.9%	1,106	0.01%
Europe	9,938,000 Sq. Km	6.7%	738,849,000	9.68%
Australia	7,687,000 Sq. Km)	5.2%	39,771,060	0.521%

Hence there is immediate need to reduce our population especially of continent Asia including India as shortly India will be the highest populated country of the world. We can do it! Though it is not an easy task, in fact it is the most difficult task for all of us. There are two ways of reducing population 1. By legislation which should be strictly implemented and 2. Is voluntarily reducing the population by following family planning methods. If voluntary method fails then Government should bring strict legislation and implement it strictly. We can stop overpopulation by dramatically reducing births around the world in general and in Asia including India in particular. This has to be brought down at least by 50 percent. Awareness should be brought to the people and give incentives like free education, give 50 % housing subsidy, and give subsidy in Agriculture to those who voluntarily and dramatically reduce births to only one child per family, so that total numbers drift back down to a truly sustainable level. Those who don't follow family planning and have more than one child should not be given any subsidies and penalized by charging double GST rate. The most important single action each of us can do to help create a truly sustainable planet and India, population is to choose to have no more than one child and encourage others to do the same. It is estimated that one child average would reduce total population by over a billion people by 2070 — back to about 6 billion. And by 2100 we would be below 4 billion – cutting our total human consumption by nearly half from its current levels. This can be achieved by following

"Ham Dou Hamara Ek". This lowering of population will ensure a world where no one suffers in dire poverty and misery for lack of enough food, water, housing, clothing and other basic needs. We see a world where all species thrive and where lower consumption and population are in balance with Earth's finite resources. If we are successful in reducing our population to half, all our problems will automatically get solved and people will live very happily.

World population day is celebrated by organizing variety of activities and events to draw attention of people to work together on the issues of growing population. Some of the activities include seminar discussions, educational competitions, educational information sessions, essay writing competition, public contests on various topics, poster distribution, songs, sports activity, speeches, poems, artwork, slogans, themes and messages distribution, workshops, lectures, debates, news distribution through press conferences, TV channels and news channels, relay of population related programmes on radio and television and many more. Various health organizations and population divisions work together to solve over population. It is not health Department but all Departments of Government should be involved in lowering of population.

Vana Premi wishes that we all understand the problems of over population, and reduce our population to half as early as possible for the betterment of all human, plant and animal life.

QMK

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Sir,

The front cover page of a herd of Indian Bison and an informative essay on the Indian Bison at page 39 of the May issue of Vana Premi is a good idea. The editorial on World Environment Day, particularly in the context of its celebration with the theme "Beat the Plastic" in India is a good coverage. We have to watch its impact on the Government and the public. On your part you have done well in choosing the topic.

The article by Shri P.K. Sharma is a biographical description of his grit and courage in achieving his objective. This article should enthuse younger generation in pursuing their career. The narration of APJ Abdul Kalam of his experience of visiting a small village in the middle of the desert, reproduced by Padmanaba Reddy, is highly informative and interesting.

Swathi's "My Daddy" is a reflection of a daughter's love for her father. Her four 'lessons of life' are full of emotional expressions and will bring tears to any reader.

Coming back to the controversy of forestry vs. social activism, I am of the opinion that nobody should have any grudge against the issue of certificate of title to the occupant of forest land who is truly qualified. Yes, it is only recognition of his right over the land under the law. The validity of law is questioned and the matter is sub judice. Fresh fellings have occurred and are still taking place uncontrollably for the purpose of agriculture, and the encroachers feel that they would also get the right of occupancy at a future date. This is a byproduct of the FRA. It must be realized that forests and trees are for the benefit of the society.

K.B.R. Reddy

Dear Sir

Greetings. Read the article captioned as "How I chose forest service as my career" in Vana Premi written by Mr. P.K. Sharma. It is very interesting and a very good narration of the humble career seeker from schooling to college to PG and finally competitive field to make it a success. It should find place in career magazine. It helps parents to make their wards to read and follow. Congratulations.

Regards

B. M. T. Rajeev

MY FIRST DAY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

By

Paresh Kumar Sharma

I was attending the **XXXIX Foundation Course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussourie** (U.P.), having finished the two years training at the **Indian Forest College** (now Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy), Dehradun, from 1st of April 1982. It was 3 month long course. Along with us IPS Officers of 1980 batch and IAS Officers of 1982 batch were also trained. In the last month of our course I got intimation from the Chief Conservator of Forests, AP, Hyderabad regarding my allotment to Adilabad Circle for the 8 month's **"On the Job Practical Training"** and the schedule thereof. I was excited about the OJPT in Adilabad, as I was told it was a very thick forested district. I enquired from my AP Cadre batch mates about the route to reach Adilabad. My friends could not tell me the route from Rajasthan. They told me that I could reach Adilabad via Hyderabad or Mancherial (on New Delhi-Madras train route). We were relieved from LBSNAA on 3rd of July 1982, on completion of Foundation Course. We were to report at our Circle HQ by 13th of Jul 82.

I came to my native place Shahpura (Bhilwara) Rajasthan before leaving for Adilabad. A slow train, though named **Meenakshi Express** (used to run on Meter gauge-single track), used to run between **Ajmer** in Rajasthan and **Hyderabad** in AP. The travel time was about 60 hours. I boarded this train from Bhilwara. Before boarding I

enquired at the Rly station up to which station shall I take the ticket in order to change train to go to Adilabad, as I could see that there was a train route to Adilabad. The Booking Clerk had not heard the name of the Adilabad Rly station he suggested I might be confusing with Allahabad. Then I approached the Station Master, who could understand my problem and advised to take ticket up to **Purna Jn** and told that the TTE, down Akola Jn. would be the right person to guide me properly to reach Adilabad. Hence I purchased train ticket up to Purna Jn. and started for Andhra Pradesh on the morning of **11th July 1982**.

The Journey was quite long and boring as the train had more halts, halting time than the running times. Further it was running very slow, it halted for long durations of up to 2 and half hours at **Ratlam, Indore, Khandawa and Akola**. One could easily go out, have lunch/dinner or see a movie and come back. One did not get a good cup of tea or snacks, once the train crossed Indore. I had reached Purna Jn. by 5.00 p.m. of **12th July 82**. TTE at Akola on enquiry had informed me that there is a passenger train from Purna Jn to Adilabad and that it leaves at 5 am every day. I spent the night in the Waiting Room of the Purna Rly. Station, got ready by 4.45 am of **13th Jul 1982** for boarding the train. It had all General Class coaches, there were no coaches of higher classes or reserved class. I

boarded the train and it chugged off being pulled off by a steam engine, to Adilabad. Distance between Purna and Adilabad is only about 300 km, but it took full 12 hours to reach Adilabad. The journey from Purna to Adilabad was really amusing; barely the train left Purna, people started hanging Firewood bundles with the help of S hooks to the window bars of almost all the coaches of the train. Once this space was fully utilized, firewood and Teak poles started arriving in the coaches. By the time it reached a place called **Kinwat**, there were more of Firewood and Bamboo bundles and Teak poles in the train than passengers. The train compartments, including passages to the Toilets were full of forest produce. Had I had a camera, the picture of the train would have been amazing as well as amusing. The train had many un-scheduled halts, by way of Chain pulling, to facilitate loading and unloading of Firewood etc. At last the train was chain pull stopped a few meters before the Outer Signal of the Adilabad Station and the train was quickly emptied off all the Forest produce. This experience later on helped me in organizing raids on this train, before it reached the outer signal of the Adilabad Station.

The news of our Cadre allotment had been given to us even when we were in Indian Forest College (IFC) in the month of December 1981, just 4 months before the end of our two year long Training. Just then our South India Tour had commenced. As I had been allotted to Andhra Pradesh, I considered it necessary to learn the Telugu language as early as possible. Hence I had

purchased a Hand Book titled "**Learn Telugu in 30 Days**" from Delhi Rly Station. I had started learning the alphabets of Telugu even while I was in Train. By the time we reached Andhra Pradesh, I could easily recognize the names of Railway Stations written in Telugu. In the LBSNAA those Officers who did not hail from AP (Outsiders) but had been allotted to AP, were taught Telugu for 3 months during the FC. I learnt it whole heartedly. By the time I left Academy, I had acquired good knowledge of Telugu (reading, writing and speaking). Hence I was fully prepared to converse in Telugu when I reached Adilabad.

Before starting for Adilabad from Bhilwara, I had addressed the Conservator of Forests, Adilabad Circle, Adilabad about my tentative schedule of reaching Adilabad by train, though I was not sure of timings. Hence I had faint hope of seeing a Govt. Vehicle at the Adilabad Railway station to receive me. It turned out to be true when, at about **5.00 p.m. on 13th of July 1982**, I stepped out of Railway Station Adilabad. On stepping out, the station wore a deserted look, as not many passengers had travelled in the train. Most of the passengers, I could guess were smugglers of Forest Produce and had already descended before the outer signal. There were no Auto Rickshaws or Taxis. I could see only 2 Cycle Rickshaws. I approached one of the Rickshaw Pullers and asked him in chaste / bookish Telugu "**Atavi shakha karyalayamu ekkada untundi?**"(Where is the Forest Department's office?) I found that the

Rickshaw Puller was perplexed. I thought probably I had not conveyed my query properly, hence repeated the question. This time he replied. **“Kya Saheb, Janglat ke daftar jana hai?” in Urdu. (Sir, do you want to go to Forest Office?)** It was my turn to be amused. All my tension, of speaking only in Telugu all the time, had vanished. I was relaxed at once, having realized that in this part of the State people speak Urdu/Hindi; hence one could manage with no or little knowledge of Telugu. I told him “Yes!”. The Rickshaw Puller told me *“Ye bahut hi kharib mein hi hai, aap saman laiye.”* (It’s very close by, please bring your luggage). Now I had full glance at the Rickshaws. These appeared to be different from what I was accustomed to in Northern part of the country. These had very low seats, where in one had to sit in squatting position. I brought my hold-all, suit case, bag and a steel trunk. He said *“Sahab aap baith jaiye”* (Please occupy your seat). I told him please bring other Rickshaw also and adjust my luggage in both the rickshaws; I will walk along. They were surprised, but readily agreed to my proposition. We walked to the Forest Complex, which was about a Kilometer away from the Railway Station.

The Forest Complex was not impressive, no way comparable to the Forest Complexes and Offices I had seen in UP and other parts of country during our Tours. No uniformed Guards or Sentry at the entrance. In fact it was not manned by anybody. I could see semblance of an Office, long Verandah and tiled roof in L shape. I entered the first visible Office.

The Attender led me to the Head Clerk, **Sri Mohd. Azeemuddin**. The Office was not tidy. A Jute twine, full of House flies, was hanging from the beam above the head of the Head Clerk. I introduced myself and informed him that I have come here to join as IFS (Probationer) for 8 month’s “On the Job Practical Training” and enquired if there was a Rest House where I could find accommodation. He informed me that the Conservator of Forests, **Sri M. Sita Rama Rao, IFS**, was on camp and will be returning on Friday. The DFO Adilabad **Shri Rajesh Mittal, IFS** was on leave on account of his marriage and will be returning by the week end. However, he also informed me that I need not worry, as he was aware of the training programme and the same will go on as per schedule. He told me that there was a Forest Rest House, but it had only one suite and it had been occupied by one Audit Officer from the Office of the Accountant General, Hyderabad, who had come there for audit. However, he told me that he would enquire from the Officer and if he had no objection, I could share the Room with him.

He went to the FRH in the adjoining Building in the complex itself. In the meantime, I got my luggage un-loaded and kept it in the office verandah. The Head Clerk returned from the FRH and informed me that the AO had agreed to share Room with me and ordered the Attender to shift my belongings to the Rest House. I thanked him profusely.

I proceeded to the FRH. It looked more like a timber yard/ware house than a Rest House. Logs

of Teak and firewood and were lying stacked as well as scattered in the compound, besides some cycles. The entrance lobby / Reception area of the FRH was jam packed with beautiful Teak logs, leaving a passage to the lone livable suite through "Dining Hall". The Dining Hall was also packed with seized Teak timber logs. The other suite of the FRH was filled with seized Bi-cycles (used in the smuggling of Teak logs and / or firewood), which had been locked, I was told. On reaching the livable suite, I found the Audit Officer, who introduced himself as **Sri G. Srinivas Rao**, relaxing on a cot. We both exchanged pleasantries; I introduced myself to him. He welcomed me wholeheartedly to the State. It was getting dark by then. Monsoon had already struck Andhra Pradesh and weather was already cloudy throughout the day. When we were in the FRH, just after shifting the luggage, lightning started flashing in the sky and clouds thundering and lo it started raining heavily. Head Clerk had sent two cups of tea inside the FRH. We were sipping and enjoying it. Suddenly I found rain water on my head through roof of the room we were sitting. The roof was leaking. Soon we noticed water leaking at another place on my bedding/hold all. I quickly moved it to a safer place. Then it was the turn of water dripping on my suitcase, I shifted it too. No sooner did I shift it, water was found dripping on the cot on which we both were sitting, and we shifted it. Now it was the turn of Hold all again at the new place, then the dripping followed in quick succession

on the other articles. We kept shifting articles from one place to another. It was musical chairs by the rain water for the luggage and other articles in the room. Finally we found that water was leaking simultaneously from many points from the Mangalore tiled roof and we were forced to keep the Cot also in standing position in order to prevent it from getting drenched. Practically "**barish ne hamari khatiya khadi kar di**". And we both had hearty laugh while protecting our belongings by shifting from one place to another, but in vain. Relief came only with the cessation of rains!

Finally, we asked for dinner. There was no kitchen, nor cook in the FRH. So, the 'dinner' was brought by the Attender from a Hotel in the market. The curry was so hot and spicy that I could not swallow even one tea spoon full of Rice with it. Strangely, curd was not available. I thought of eating Bread with butter or jam, but Bread was not available in whole of Adilabad market. Finally, I settled down for banana, the only fruit available in the market to satisfy my hunger. I continued with this menu for my breakfast, lunch and dinner till the DFO returned from leave.

This is how I got a Wet and Chilly Hot Welcome to the State. It was a memorable day, which I thoroughly enjoyed and memories of which I cherish till day!

Author is former PrI. CCF & HoFF, T.S. Hyderabad and can be contacted at + 91 63000 30519 and e-mailed at pareshvyas22@gmail.com.

THE SAGA OF BIRTH OF A SANCTUARY

The story of sagacity of a mighty Chief Minister and tenacity of a puny D.F.O.

**By
S. B. Singh***

The following is an account of successful effort made to prevent the sure destruction of a Reserved Forest during the days when legislative instrumentalities like Forest Conservation Act 1980 and such other enactments were not available to the foresters. Compare this to present scenario when in spite of availability of plethora of legal instruments, the forests are destroyed by vested interests with impunity and cases like Niyamgiri (Odisha) take place.

The closing months of 1971 were truly historic. On 16th of December of that year India won the only decisive war in its recorded history when the army of Pakistan posted in the then East Pakistan laid its arms before Indian Forces after 13 days of swift and efficient operation paving the way for the birth of a new nation of Bangladesh. Nearer home, The North Eastern Areas Reorganization Act 1971 was passed by the Parliament leading to reorganization of Assam and adjoining areas of the North East. This resulted in formation of a number of new States and Union territories. Meghalaya which was till then an autonomous region within the state of Assam was carved out into a full fledged state. The new state consists of Garo Hills and Khasi & Jaintia Hills areas of erstwhile Assam. At this juncture I was posted at Goalpara as the Assistant

Conservator of Forests of Goalpara Forest Division on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in lower Assam. The southern boundary of Goalpara runs along the foot hills of Garo Hills from the east to west which then takes a turn towards south touching Mymensingh District of erstwhile East Pakistan. Thus I got an opportunity to watch unfolding of epoch making events from quite close quarters.

It was the first week of January 1972, when I received a notification from the Government of Assam placing my services at the disposal of the newly formed state of Meghalaya. The same day I received another notification from the Government Of Meghalaya posting me as the Divisional Forest Officer (D.F.O.) of Garo Hills with head quarter at Tura (25° 30' 50" N, 90° 15' 45" E). In those days entire Garo Hills was under one district with its headquarters at Tura which is now covered by as many as five districts. As per the Government orders regarding my new posting, I proceeded for Tura via Agia-Phulbari-Garobadha road on 10th January 1972 to take up my new assignment. In those days, that was the only link connecting Tura to places in Assam. The road was yet to be black topped. All along my route from Phulbari onwards and specially so between Garobadha and Tura, I came across

numerous refugee camps of displaced persons from erstwhile East Pakistan who after birth of their new nation, were all very keen to return to their country as soon as possible. They were however apprehensive of how they would go about building their houses which had been razed to the ground by marauding army of Pakistan for want of construction materials.

It was getting dark when I arrived at Tura. The weather was quite pleasant at Tura as opposed to Goalpara which in those days was experiencing chilly conditions. After my arrival, I called on Mr. A. Wahlong, whom I was to replace as the D.F.O. Garo Hills, at his official residence where we held discussion about the problems of the Division. During the discussion, Mr. Wahlong informed me that Capt. Williamson A. Sangma who was the Chief Minister (C.M.) of the autonomous state and was to take over as the C.M. of the new state on its inauguration on 21st January, desired to de-reserve a major portion of Sizu Reserved Forest (R.F.) for allotting the land to the villagers of Sizu and adjoining areas for cultivation. Further enlightening me about the matter, he informed that the Chief Minister hailed from Sizu village located near the Reserve and that he had already assured his kinsmen of the village that the R.F. would soon be deforested after inauguration of the new state and the land would be distributed amongst them for cultivation provided they offered land in exchange to the Forest Department. The C.M. was waiting for the inauguration of the new state because the control and management of R.F. was

still under Govt. of Assam and the autonomous state of Meghalaya had no control over R.F._s. He further told me that he himself has not been able to inspect the area and examine the proposal.

Next morning after the formalities of handing over and taking over the charge of the Division had been completed, he handed over to me a bunch of petitions of the villagers of Sizu area, all praying for allotment of land from Sizu R.F. for 'wet cultivation' as promised by their leader and that they all agreed to give land in exchange from their clan land known as A'king'. The villagers of Sizu were eager to part with their barren land in exchange for the rich forest land where they desired to do permanent cultivation. No doubt the idea of permanent cultivation on the forest land had originated from their leader Capt. W.A. Sangma who was then undisputed leader of not only of Garos but of entire Meghalaya. Since he hailed from the Garo Hills district, and was the M.L.A. from Sizu Constituency of the district, he used to visit Tura quite frequently. In all such visits he used to hold informal meetings of the district officers at his residence at Tura where the problems of the district were discussed.

Mr. Wahlong gave me this background and then informed me that the Chief Minister was due to visit Tura on the coming 19th January in connection with inauguration of the new state on the 21st January and that the matter regarding the disforestation of Sizu R.F., was sure to come up for discussion in the district officers'

meeting.

Mr. Wahlong after thus handing over charge of Garo Hills Division to me, left for Shillong leaving me with numerous other urgent matters including the gigantic task of organizing supply of timber posts and shelter materials to Bangladesh for rehabilitation of lakhs of refugees who had already started returning to their homeland.

The next few days were spent in familiarization with the Division and meeting various district officials. Before I could plan and visit Sizu R.F., the Chief Minister arrived at Tura on 19th January 1972. The next day as usual, he called a meeting of the officials where I was also present. As was expected, after my introduction, he asked me about the case of de-reservation of Sizu R.F. to which I submitted that I had not inspected the area which I promised to do soon and send my report by end of that month. After this assurance from me, he took up other important matters. After consulting late Sri Adhar Chand Rabha who was then the Range officer (R.O.) of Baghmara Forest Range within whose jurisdiction the Sizu R.F. fell, I fixed 28th January as the date of my visit to Sizu. On the appointed day I left Tura quite early and reached Baghmara – a distance of about 100 km., by 7 A.M. from where I picked up the R.O. and proceeded to Rewak on way to Sizu. In those days Baghmara – Nongalbibra road was still under construction. Only bridges and culverts had been completed but the road work was yet to start. However, the track up to Rewak, a few kilometers short of Sizu village, was

somehow negotiable by jeep. We therefore moved by jeep and managed to reach Rewak on the west bank of Someshwari (Garos call it Simsang) river by about 10 A.M. From Rewak we boarded a dugout boat and moved upstream to Sizu reaching there in about 2 hours. Rewak - Sizu boat journey was quite enjoyable. The river in this stretch is quite narrow but deep with crystal clear blue water. Its banks on both sides are quite steep rising at places to 50 – 100 feet high. Dug out boats laden with heaps of glistening oranges were seen moving down stream. This was quite captivating sight. At a place not very far off from Rewak there is a deep pool in the river which the locals call 'wari' where a few Garo fishermen in a dugout boat were seen fishing using their traditional skilful method of diving and spearing the fish - usually a big carp. One of the groups of the fishermen with a spear attached to his body dives into the pool, spots a fish, follows it till it is in his striking range when he spears it and comes back to his dugout. A thin rope is tied to the spear and at the other end of which a float is attached to it. The spear with its attachments is left behind stuck to the body of the fish. There after the men in the dugout chase the float as it is dragged along by the fleeing fish. This is allowed for some time till the speared fish gets tired. Eventually the fish is caught hold off with help of the line and the spear, dragged and landed on the boat. The entire operation was quite thrilling. It required quite deft handling on the part of the diver who spears the fish. Watching

these beautiful scenes eventually we reached SIZU village in about two hours of rowing. At Sizu village we left our boat and started climbing up for the R.F. A few petitioners from the village also joined and led us to the R.F. The Reserve Forest is at a plateau overlooking the river and the Sizu village and hence its name. It is bound by a gorge which runs in a west – east direction and forms the northern boundary of the Reserve. The path to the Reserve is through this narrow gorge. After walking up some distance through the gorge, the path meanders up the southern face of the gorge and involves steep climbing along a zigzag passage. The path was wide enough to allow for only a single file movement. It must have taken over an hour to reach the plateau though the vertical distance must not have been more than a thousand feet above the river. This may give an idea of the steepness of the climbing involved. We thus reached the north- western point on the boundary of the Reserve.

We had to further walk through a gently sloping ground. The terrain was sloping towards the central region of the Reserve where a small lake of the same name is located. All through our climbing, we quite occasionally heard resonating call of 'hoolock' (Gibbon). Though the forest appeared to be virgin one, the growth of trees specially Sal (*Shorea robusta*) in the R.F. was seen to be stunted. Other miscellaneous trees present also did not give very healthy appearance. The Range Officer stated that there was no record of any felling ever having taken

place in the Reserve. This was supported by the fact of presence of huge expanse of forest all around and extremely difficult terrain with very sparse population (about 50 souls/Km² for the entire Garo Hills as per census data then available and far lower figure in this part of the district). Further inspection of the area and discussion led us to conclude that perhaps the cause for stunted growth of sal and other trees was because of adverse edaphic factor. With a well distributed precipitation of more than 400 Cms. per annum and diurnal temperature never going to extremes for most part of the year allowing for optimum growth regime for vegetation, there appeared to be no other reason for stunted growth of trees. Presence of exposed underlying rocks at places revealed that the depth of soil was the limiting factor. Under such conditions, removal of tree cover was sure to result in accelerated soil erosion which may lead to silting up and finally the death of the tiny lake.

As we approached the lake, the local staff advised us to walk silently lest we disturb the birds in the lake. On the edge of the lake there was a fallen tree which provided a camouflage to approach right up to the edge of the lake which was then full of the winter visitors. The birds were so numerous that hardly any water could be seen. The lake was hitherto totally undisturbed affording ideal habitat for the birds. After remaining still for a while and observing the birds, we started our return journey to Sizu. On the way back I made further inquiries from

the staff and the petitioners who all told that they were eagerly waiting for the order of deforestation of the Reserve so that they may move in early for wet cultivation. The petitioners were all interested for allotment of land only around the lake which area appeared to be suitable for paddy cultivation. I however expressed my opposition telling them that such a tranquil undisturbed habitat was fit to be converted into a bird sanctuary rather than deforesting it. The Range Officer was pessimistic and expressed his doubts if it could be possible to resist the popular demand of the area. He further stated that it would be very difficult for him to give an adverse report though personally he also wanted to save the lake and the habitat of migratory birds. Such was the extent of clamouring for the deforestation! I however told him that he need not give any report as I had personally seen the area and as such I did not require any report from him to make up my opinion on the issue. I returned to Sizu and then by the boat to Rewak and thence to TURA, reaching there quite late at night.

After coolly considering the matter over the next few days I sent my report to the Conservator of Forests where in I briefly described the flora and fauna of the Reserve and pointed to the existence of the lake which provided an undisturbed habitat for migratory birds and some locally migratory ones like cotton teal etc. and that as a forester I did not feel it was an appropriate case for deforestation. But, I further added, *since there*

were no Government guidelines available for examining such proposals for exchange of Reserved Forest land with private one, the government may be moved to issue such guidelines to examine this one and other such cases which were bound to come up once the present demand was conceded.

The Chief Minister visited Tura during March when the matter regarding the de-reservation of part of Sizu R.F. came up again in the meeting. I then pointed that the report in that regard had already been sent wherein the Government have been requested to issue guidelines to examine such proposals.

Sometimes thereafter I received a letter from the Government addressed to all the Deputy Commissioners and Divisional Forest Officers etc. of the state asking us to suggest criterions for examining proposals for exchange of government forest land with private land if and when proposals are received from private individuals/tribal clans. This was as I had expected. In the light of what I had seen on the ground in Sizu R.F., I suggested the following parameters for accepting proposals for exchange of Government Forest land.

1. The R.F. land to be deforested for exchange should be located on the periphery of the Reserve concerned and not inside it unless the whole R.F. was proposed to be disforested. This was to avoid honeycombing of the Reserve which if allowed may lead to destruction of the remaining forest due to

presence of islands of private lands inside the R.F.

2. The private land to be taken over by the Government should be located contiguous to a Reserve Forest. If that was not possible then the land offered for exchange should be of sufficient extent so as to form a viable protection unit.

3. As the fertility of the Government forest land is generally higher than that of private lands, the extent of land should be proportionately higher than the government land.

4. Removal of tree cover always results in soil erosion and more so in hilly terrain. Therefore the depth of soil and the gradient of terrain should also be considered before deciding deforestation of Government forest land. Areas with steep gradients and with shallow depth of soil should not be exchanged.

After a couple of months, during a visit of the Chief Minister I learnt that Government have issued an order detailing therein the condition for exchanging Government Forest land with private land if offered. The Chief Minister in the ensuing meeting inquired if I had sent my report in the light of the Government Order (G.O.) already issued on exchange of land. To that I humbly submitted that I would do so the moment the G.O. was received at our end.

After a few days thereafter I received the order. I was pleasantly surprised to see that it contained all the conditions which was recommended by me. It appeared the other district officers who were asked to submit their views on the matter

either did not submit their views or else they all concurred with my views. Since I had already visited the area, I examined the issue in the light of the Govt. guidelines and found that proposal did not fulfil the very first condition as the land demanded by the villagers was located in the central region of the R.F. Similarly on other counts except one, the proposal was found wanting. Accordingly I submitted my report recommending rejection of the proposal.

The Chief Minister was furious at me in the next meeting. On his asking me about the issue when I replied saying that the proposal did not fulfil the condition as laid down by the Government, he snapped at me saying that the conditions were all the same as were suggested by me and that I did not have empathy with the people and that I did not realise what sort of hard life these villagers had to lead due to want of suitable land for cultivation. He further hectorated us on the issue. When I tried to point out about unfavourable edaphic factors for settled agriculture, he snubbed me. Finding the atmosphere getting very tense, the then Deputy Commissioner Garo Hills who was present in the meeting, volunteered to inspect the area and have a relook over the issue. The C.M. then relented and took up other matters for discussion.

I did not come to know about the Deputy Commissioner's report if any submitted by him. But I did learn subsequently that he visited the area and indulged in shooting of birds which

matter I took up with then Chief Secretary late Mr. Nari K. Rustomjee I.C.S. when he visited Tura and had called a meeting of the district officers. The concerned Deputy Commissioner was also present when I raised the issue of poaching of birds by him. However nothing happened of the de- reservation issue and it was only a couple of months later during the usual informal meet of district officers on the occasion of the C.M.'s visit to Tura that I learnt that the Govt. had accepted my views opposing the de-reservation proposal of Sizu R.F.

I was extremely happy to learn about the dropping of the case regarding the proposed de-reservation of the R.F. But the credit for saving the R.F. should go to the C.M. It was the C.M.'s sagacity that he elected to play by the rules of the Govt. and went along with the views of foresters when he could have easily over ruled us and ordered the disforestation. At that point of time there was neither the Forest Conservation Act nor any other legal provision to prevent state governments from de - reserving a R.F. In any case the forest hierarchy then headed by (late) Shri B.N. Das IFS apparently supported me and the then Forest Secretary, Shri S.L. Khosla IAS, who later on rose to the rank of the Secretary to the GOI and retired from the post of the Chairman Indian Oil Corporation, also obviously sided with us in saving the R.F.

Thus SIZU R.F. survives. But it could not be notified as a sanctuary then as no legal instrument for doing so was available in Meghalaya. Afterwards

Wildlife Protection Act 1972 was adopted by Meghalaya in 1978. Thereafter Shri N. Goswami IFS, who was then the Planning Officer in the Forest Directorate, and who rose to the post of the Chief Conservator of Forests Meghalaya, made concerted efforts to notify SIZU R.F. into a sanctuary and as a result during 1979, it was notified as a sanctuary. Incidentally it was the first sanctuary of Meghalaya. With amendment to the Act by Wildlife Protection Act 2002, now it is very difficult to denotify any sanctuary and thus Sizu Sanctuary, is likely to survive. However with the Central Government itself now busy devising means to bypass established authorities for environmental conservation in its misguided zeal for development one can not be sure about survival of any protected area. Nevertheless with success of our Sizu efforts, later on efforts on constitution of a number of other protected areas from out of private forests owned by the tribal clans was taken up which led to creation of Baghmara Pitcher Plant Sanctuary, Nokrek National Park and finally Balphakram National Park. Story of these latter two protected areas is long drawn struggle. These, I intend to describe subsequently.

During mid 1990s once again dark clouds started hovering over Sizu and adjoining areas when important industrial houses started probing the area for setting up of industries specially for cement and coal. During 1994 I was posted as the Chief Wildlife Warden of Meghalaya and came to know about the

alarming developments. The area around Sizu has extensive and rich deposits of lime stone and coal. Lured by presence of these minerals, a number of proposals had come up for examination. One of these proposals was from the ACC Ltd. who had then finalised a project for setting up of a large cement plant around Rewak area not far off from Sizu. The plant was bound to result in bio disaster.

Here it may be pointed out that NE India has been identified as one of the thirty four hot spots of mega-bio diversity in the world and the southern part of Meghalaya including the South Garo hills is one of the richest of them. Rewak – Sizu –Baghmara corridor falls on the migratory route for wild animals specially for the elephants who because of high banks of the river Simsang up stream, can not migrate from western side to the east except through this corridor. Allowing for mining of these minerals and setting up of industries based on them in this area was bound to cause severe damage to the fragile ecology of the area. The famous Dobakhol caves at Sizu were also bound to get destroyed. It was therefore decided to oppose the ACC project but as it happens in all such cases, the concerns of the Forest Department are sought only at the last stage and the blame for delay of the project is then always laid at the doors of the Department.

In the instant case some of the active NGOs of the area were sounded who raised this issue before various forums. Mrs. Anne Wright and her

daughter Ms Belinda Wright also got involved with the issue. She called a meeting to discuss the matter where the representatives of ACC were also invited. The meeting was held at her residence at Tollygunj Club Calcutta (now Kolkata) which was attended by Mr. Ganguly the then Vice President of the ACC Ltd. I was also invited by Mrs. Wright to attend the meet which I did in my individual capacity. We explained our point of view and requested the Company to withdraw their project from the area and relocate it some where else to avoid ecological disaster. The company's representative seemed to be convinced with our views but did not give any categorical assurance then. After a few months, we learnt that the ACC has withdrawn its cement project and has informed the Government accordingly. Though this was a very happy ending for the protected areas, it signalled trouble for me. I was summoned by the Chief Secretary and asked to explain my conduct in attending the meeting at Calcutta where we persuaded the ACC to withdraw from its proposed Cement project. I then pointed out that what I did was not only in my personal capacity but was also in consonance with the Government's policy of preservation of wild flora and fauna of the region. The Govt. was apparently not happy with the development but no further direct action appeared to have been taken by it in the matter.

*The writer was formerly Chief Wildlife Warden Meghalaya.

INDIA, THE NATION

By
J. V. Sharma

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,

Having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a

SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST

SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

And to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY, of status and opportunity;

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity

and integrity of the Nation

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

This twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do

HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO

OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

26th November 2017 – Hyderabad

I set to start writing an article on this day about the sanctity of the Constitution and the present trends in the Society *vis-à-vis* the Constitution, given the importance of the Day portrayed in its Preamble reproduced above. The day is called National Law Day and also the Constitution Day. Since the rule of law is the backbone of the Constitution, it is only appropriate the people of India recapitulate the vital ingredients of the Constitution and resolve to honor them in letter, spirit and action. Even as I was readying to go about it, I realized that the Day has been extremely eventful. Things moved thick and fast and mercifully, the spotlight was on the 'Law'.

I did not know much about our President Ramnath Kovind. Like me many Indians outside the political stream have no clear idea of the person and personality until he was chosen as ruling party's presidential candidate earlier in the year. Mr. Kovind was the Bihar Governor at that time.

Spontaneous and unequivocal acceptance of his selection as presidential candidate by Bihar Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar who was not friendly to the ruling party BJP, surprised many –it is a different story he built bridges with the ruling party not much late thereafter. The President, while addressing a distinguished gathering comprising the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India, former CJs, Supreme Court Judges, Judges of High Courts, Cabinet Ministers, several members of the bar and other dignitaries, brought up to celebrate the National Law Day, spoke of some crucial issues befitting the occasion.

President Kovind, having practiced law and seen the legal and judicial system intimately, felt that the poor are often deterred by costs and duration of legal processes. He said that while the Country takes pride in Courts and their independence, it is a paradox that the poor often stay away from a legal battle and the Well-off sometimes use the judicial process and its intricacies to delay resolution to issues they simply do not want resolved. He said that the disparity needs to be addressed and suggested that in an age of instant communication, technology and modern tools could speed up the justice delivery process. He expressed concern over an expensive legal system, saying this was in part because of delays but there is also the question of affordability. The idea that a relatively poor person cannot reach the doors of justice for a fair hearing only because of financial or similar constraints violates our constitutional values and our republican ethic. "It is a burden on our collective conscience. I leave it to our legal fraternity; our lawyers and advocates and our bar associations to find an answer" he said. Emphasizing that all three organs of the State, the judiciary, the executive and legislature, need to be careful not to cross into each other's finely defined spaces, or give the opportunity to read transgressions even when none is intended, the President sent candid message to the entire nation in general and the 'organs' in particular that the existing situation of the system is not acceptable and it is time to reflect on the social diversity if they are not to be seen as citadels of the socially privileged. He also observed that sometimes extraneous comments and other dicta come to dominate the public debates crowding out a substantive understanding and deliberation of a well thought out judgment.

The President is the custodian of the Constitution. When he enters the office of the President, he is required to take oath or affirmation under Article 60 to 'preserve, protect and defend' the Constitution. The executive power of the Union is vested in him and it is exercised by him through officers subordinate to him. Though he is expected to act under the advice of the Prime Minister and his council of ministers, the President, besides being the Supreme Commander of Defense

Forces of the Union, exercises the exclusive power of appointing the Prime Minister. Article 78 of the Constitution mandates as duty of the Prime Minister to communicate with the President all decisions of the Council of Ministers relating to administration and furnish to any information on administration sought by the President. It is of common knowledge that the executive power in the country is exercised by the Prime Minister but it would be regulated by law. The President, thus, besides being the Head of the Nation, also happens to be a watch dog with enormous powers to ensure that the affairs of the Union are run as per Constitution.

Further, not many are aware that the Parliament of the Union comprises of, not only the two Houses of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha but also the President. A careful reading of Article 79 makes one to understand that the President enjoys primacy even among these three components of the Parliament. A legislation passed by Parliament can become law only when it is assented by the President. It will not be out of place to recall that the Parliament is suffering from a strange malady for quite some time; it does not transact the listed business due to repeated interruptions, protests, boycott etc. The Houses get paralyzed for days together and it is not uncommon to see that session after session is washed out without any meaningful parliamentary business. Barring very few exceptions the Hon Members do not have any qualms to claim and receive the remuneration and perks for not performing their ordained duty. I always felt that the President has the necessary powers to make the Parliament function. He has the right under Article 86 to send messages to either House of Parliament or the House to which the message is sent, shall consider any matter required by the message. I am of the opinion that the respective Presidents in office did not take to this recourse to secure the overall image of the Parliament as it may be seen as a hiccup in parliamentary democracy.

Coming back to the topic under discussion, none is more suitable than the president to tell the nation what it should be like. A few days ago, the President observed, in a different context, that diversity is India's strength. This comment has gone mostly unnoticed. The following statistics should be handy to appreciate the magnitude of the diversity in the country:

1. India is a Nation of 1.21 billion people. India has at present 17.5% of world's population which is more than one-sixth of global population. Population which was 36.11 crores in 1951 had escalated to 121.02 crores by 2011.
2. India occupies a mere 2.4% of the land area of the world. It is a severe space constraint seen in the context of its huge population.

3. India has more than 2000 ethnic groups and every major religion in the world is represented. The complexity is pronounced on account of variations in population on social parameters of income, education and backwardness.
4. The City States and Union Territories apart, the density of population varies greatly from a least of 43 per sq. km. to a maximum of 2855 in Bihar.
5. Demographic picture on the basis of religious faith in India is; Hindus - 80.5%, Muslims – 13.4%, Christians – 2.3%, Sikhs – 1.9%, Budhists – 0.8%, Jains – 0.4% and others 0.6%.
6. The national average of literacy is 74%. It is 75.5% for Hindus, 60% for Muslims, 90.3% for Christians, 70.4% for Sikhs, 73% for Budhists, 95% for Jains and 50% for others. Kerala is ahead of all other States with a literacy of 93.91%. Very significantly, the States of North-East have higher literacy rate than the larger and the so called civilized States of the rest of India. Mizoram with 91.58%, Tripura with 87%, Nagaland with 80%, Manipur with 79% and Meghalaya with 75% are in the forefront, the other States coming in the rear.
7. There are as many as 1652 languages and dialects in India.
8. In respect of the most crucial parameter of work participation, it is 40.4% for Hindus, 31.3 for Muslims, 39.7 for Christians, 37.7% for Sikhs, 40.6% for Buddhists, 32.9% for Jains and 48.4% for others of their population. Literacy together with work participation can be taken as a reliable indicator for the financial stability of the community to some extent.
9. While only 22 languages are recognized as official languages, there are 216 languages with more than 10000 native speakers. If we are to catalogue all the languages and dialects in the country, they are as many as 1652.
10. Population includes 16.2% Scheduled Castes and 8.2% Scheduled Tribes as per 2001 Census. The SCs and STs have sub-sects and sub-castes running into thousands.
11. If all the castes and sub-castes and their variations among the OBCs, OCs and others are to be counted, the figure will run into several thousands.
12. According to a survey done in 2006, 22% of the country's population is below poverty line. Magnitude of the diversity in the country is mind boggling and can only be imagined but cannot be precisely assessed, given the wide spectrum of inequities in economic, social, literacy, cultural, ethnic, religious and several other factors, as against the constraints. No other country on the globe can compare even remotely as far as diversity is concerned. Sheer size of population itself is a challenge for any model of governance. It should be more difficult for India because it is a functional

democracy where every citizen irrespective of color, creed, religion, race, caste, economic status, gender, education etc has equal participation. In addition, Fundamental Rights of each citizen are guaranteed under Part-III of the Constitution. Even the Parliament of the Country is barred from interfering with these rights. There is neither scope nor room to interfere with electoral process as there is an independent Election Commission, a Constitutional Authority to conduct elections. There is a robust framework of Judiciary which is fiercely independent free from any shadow of cloud of the Executive or Legislature. There are checks and balances to take care of unforeseen situations. The institutional support so provided will also be required to meet equally challenging situations in as much as every citizen has his own mind and his own thinking and will always aspire to promote his own interests. Thus the privileges, at times, tend to become challenges a nation has to contend with. It is certainly not easy to reconcile different issues, which quite often could even be conflicting. It is seventy one years since India became independent. It is more than 68 years the country has been trying to march in step with the dictates of the Constitution. But certain areas which the constitution makers thought would be covered within certain time frame could not be accomplished. Some new unforeseen issues too cropped up making the resolution of the main issue that much more difficult. But the goals are identified and have to be reached to make the constitution succeed. The Issue I have in mind in the present context is the solemn pledge of the people of India incorporated in the Preamble to secure to its citizens not only the justice and liberty in all conceivable aspects of orderly life but also 'equality' and to promote 'fraternity' assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation. The Constitution thus mandates a society which is not discriminatory on one side and to strive to ensure dignity to deprived sections, on the other. It is this aspect President was referring to in his address mentioned above. He has chosen the right occasion and the platform which included the highest of all organs of the constitutional machinery in the country and placed the agenda before them in a dignified manner to reflect upon it seriously.

The Prime Minister also spoke on the occasion. He was pragmatic in assessment of the situation. He said that the legislature, judiciary and the executive are part of the same family and the three wings need to brainstorm as to how to move forward. Pointing out that one should not forget the duties while fighting for rights, he emphasized that the balance between the three organs has been the backbone of the Constitution. He observed that self regulation and a system of checks and balances is good health of any institution and invoked Dr. Ambedkar's view that there should

be a limit for any authority.

From the above, it is clear that the President chose the right occasion to remind the constitutional functionaries of constitutional obligations and called upon them to look ahead to do the needful. The President simply highlighted the disadvantages the poor will encounter in legal and judicial processes. Expenses, delays and affordability are by implication depriving the poor of the benefits available in full and as a consequence, the rich tend to benefit by default. Unless such aberrations are corrected and a level playing ground is provided, ideals of the Preamble remain elusive. The Prime Minister reminded the audience of the need to function as members of the same family and respect checks and balances. There is no blame game in what the President and Prime Minister said. It does not mean that no efforts are made to bring in a semblance of balance in the system. A number of initiatives have been taken by various governments to reach the goal of a welfare State. As the statistics cited above could vastly compound the problems, the diversities and their impact, in their permutations and combinations, from time to time, pose herculean challenge defying resolution. To illustrate the point; the population of India had grown four-fold from the days of Independence which could also mean that the problems too multiplied at least four times. Corrective measures taken in the meantime got mostly lost to offset the population increase. Now that the growth indices look positive, there is every possibility of ensuring better results in not too distant future.

Even as the National Law Day Celebrations were in progress, the Central Ministers present raised some contentious issues to which the Chief Justice of India reacted equally strongly. It was an avoidable unpleasant interlude in an otherwise solemn occasion where enlightened views for the good of the nation need to be mentioned instead of raising operational glitches which should have been resolved by top most constitutional functionaries with maturity and wisdom and without giving room for public controversy.

Even as this article remained unpublished, a fierce debate raged in the country. It is about 'Nationalism'. Ruling party's concept of nationalism was not acceptable to some opposition parties and to the main opposition party, Indian National Congress in particular. Hair splitting arguments ensued from contending parties and the nationwide debate degenerated into an exercise of blame game. Genuine intellectuals wondered why should there be a debate at all on nationalism. Congress adopted nationalism as an article of faith in the closing years of 19th Century when the party was founded and there shouldn't be any quarrel if their arch rival ruling party also speaks of nationalism. Whatever interpretations the warring political parties may propagate, the common man in India has a clearer view of the 'nationalism' –an unwavering love for the country.

The former President of India, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee visited the RSS Headquarters at Nagpur on 6th June 2018 and participated in the concluding ceremony of RSS's third year training programme.

Evidently, with the ongoing controversy over nationalism in mind, he spoke of nation, nationalism and patriotism. He briefly traced the history of the country from ancient times and exhorted upon the audience that "Our national identity has emerged through a long drawn process of confluence, assimilation and co-existence. We derive our strength from tolerance. We accept and respect our pluralism. We celebrate our diversity. These have been a part of our collective consciousness for centuries. While emphasizing that any attempts at defining our nationhood in terms of dogmas and identities of religion, region, hatred and intolerance will only lead to dilution of our national identity, he said that "Constitution is not merely a document but a Magna Carta of socio-economic transformation. It represents the hopes and aspirations of billion plus Indians. From our Constitution flows our nationalism. The construct of Indian nationalism is constitutional patriotism, which consists of an appreciation of our inherited and shared diversity. The soul of India resides in pluralism and tolerance."

Mr. Mukherjee's speech was statesmanlike to put it briefly. Indisputably one of the most senior and experienced persons in public life, he struck balance with clinical precision to leave the contending parties with no agenda. One should remember that though he was a diehard congressman for decades, he conducted himself as an ideal apolitical incumbent at Rashtrapathi Bhavan when he was President. He remained so even thereafter deserving respect from all sections of the society. His Delhi based daughter who is an active Congress person and spokesperson of the party, was critical of his visit to Nagpur. But Mr. Mukherjee did not relent. Evidently, he wanted to prove that interaction and dialogue are necessary to take the country forward as against confrontation and isolation. Mr. Mukherjee's speech evoked a matching response and it was heartening to hear Sri Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS *Sarsanghchalak* to declare that "Diversity is our ethos. Unity in diversity is our culture. We are all one." Mr. Mukherjee's message at Nagpur was the need of the hour when people who matter need to rise above narrow minded political considerations and go by Constitution and there is no place for political or any other type of ostracism and untouchability. It therefore becomes the duty of every citizen to rise above the petty considerations of mundane nature and become a value added partner to make the Nation strong, prosperous and livable for all. So, it is the Nation First and let the Preamble of the Constitution be our motto.

"Life begins with our cry. And life ends with others cry. Fill this gap with as much as possible" Always be happy and makes others too.

- APJ Abdul Kalam.

DUTY OF A LIVING PENSIONER TO HIS SPOUSE IN TELANGANA AND ANDHRA PRADESH

By
K.B.R. Reddy

PENSION IS A DEFERRED PAY:

According to the judgment of the Supreme Court in *D.S. Nakhara Vs. Union of India*, pension is a deferred pay. All those, who were in service of Government of State or Centre and who eventually retired, are drawing pension. It is held that pension is a right and one can assert his right to property as a fundamental right. Pensionary benefit (called **service pension**) is enjoyed during the lifetime of a pensioner. If the pensioner dies, the widow is entitled to get what is called **family pension**.

CLAIMING LTA, FAMILY PENSION AND DEATH RELIEF:

A notion is prevalent among pensioners that the family pension, after the death of the pensioner, is automatically granted to the widow. It is not so; separate applications have to be filed for sanction of family pension and for other benefits. For the period the pensioner was living, proportionate amount of pension, from the 1st of the month till the date of death, is payable to the survivors and this is called Lifetime Arrear (**LTA**), which will also include undisbursed arrears due to revision of pension etc. All the legal heirs are entitled to their share in the Lifetime Arrears, unless the pensioner during his life time has nominated wife only to receive the LTA. There is a separate Form for LTA nomination which should form a part of record in the pension file. There is an application for payment of **LTA**

and Death Relief, which has to be filed before the Assistant Pension Payment Officer (Asst. PPO).

Death Relief is payment of money to the family of a deceased government servant as well as pensioner under a scheme of welfare measure; under this scheme, in the event of death of a pensioner, an amount equal to last drawn pension is paid to the nearest relative of pensioner to meet expenses on funeral etc. The amount is paid by the Asst.PPO. The scheme is extended to the Pensioners of All India Services (AIS). But the sanctioning Authority is the Collector of the district where the AIS pensioner settled down after retirement. The application to the Collector has to be filed along with original Death Certificate issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, Certificate of last drawn pension issued by the Assistant Pension Payment Officer, Proof of residence, Copy of Savings Bank Account Pass Book.

There are a few enclosures to be filed along with application for payment of LTA and Family Pension before the Asst.PPO, which are enumerated below:

A*B*C*D Forms —A: Photograph of the applicant duly attested by a Gazetted Officer
B: Thumb and Finger Impressions
C: Specimen Signatures
D: Identification Particulars — all certified by a Gazetted Officer

Annexure –II Application Form as prescribed under the Family Pension Rules has to be filed along with a few declarations.

A set of Application Forms is available in any of the stationary shops around pension office on M.J. Road.

The procedure apparently is cumbersome and there is scope for simplification. Until then, we may have to follow the prescribed rules and satisfy the authorities.

MY EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH DEATH RELIEF CASES:

At this stage, I feel I must share my experience with the readers about how I helped families in getting the family pension.

The first case which comes to my mind is that of a very senior and respected officer who called me one day to seek my help. I visited him. He is no other than Mr. Mazharuddin Ahmad, Retired Adl. CCF of Andhra Pradesh. He said: "Reddy, I am getting my pension regularly. I want to ensure that my wife also gets her pension after my death without any undue delay. Is that possible?" I replied to his question, "Yes, it is possible". I guessed he had some premonition of his death and therefore he wanted to do something for his wife before his demise. On my reply he felt happy. I explained to him the procedure and took leave of him. I visited him again with all the family pension forms. All the columns except the date of death were filled up and I asked Mrs. Mazharuddin to keep the papers safe. Mazhar sahib passed away. I requested one of his relatives to get the Death Certificate. No time was lost in getting the certificate of death. I filed all the papers before the Asst.PPO. Within a month, LTA

and Family Pension were sanctioned to Mrs. Mazharuddin. I felt satisfied for the help I rendered to the family of a nobleman.

Another case of Mohd. Rafiuddin, after his death, was processed quickly.

Next is the case of Mr. Panduranga Reddy. He went to USA to visit his son and daughters. He was in perfect health. But as ill luck would have it, he passed away due to cardiac arrest. The body was cremated in USA; other rituals were performed by all the family members in India. I helped the widow in claiming all the benefits following the death of Mr. Panduranga Reddy. It took about 2-3 days to visit the lady and take out the record. After all the amounts were received and credited to her account, I used to draw the money from the bank for a few months for her monthly expenditure as there was no one else since all the family members had returned to their respective places abroad.

Mr. Sarvotham Rao was so healthy but he could not defy the age related ailments; he fell ill and was bed ridden. I used to get medicines for him from the CGHS dispensary. After a few days of suffering, he passed away. His wife predeceased him and therefore there was no question of family pension. However death relief was claimed on behalf of his son with my help in submitting the application to the District Collector, Hyderabad City district and our Vana Premi Assistant BSN Prasad pursued the matter till the payment was made.

I guided the widows of Mr. M. Ramachandra Reddy and Mr. P. Lakshma Reddy in preparing the pension papers and rest of the job was followed up efficiently by Mr. BSN Prasad. All the benefits of the widows reached them

without undue delay.

In the more recent cases of the late M. Sitarama Rao; the late M. Narayan Rao and the late M. Kamal Naidu. Pension Application forms had to be filled up after collecting information from the personal record of the individuals. A thorough search had to be made for gathering the required particulars. The two cases of Sitarama Rao and Kamal Naidu were cleared in a record time, thanks to the vigorous pursuit by Prasad. The case of M.N. Rao is taking more time because of some internal problems. Hopefully it will also be resolved soon.

All I want to make it clear is that the required information must be kept handy by the pensioners for getting an easy access to it to avoid delay in claiming family pension etc.

OBITUARY COLUMN IN VANA PREMI:

I have discussed at length in this paper what the survivors of a pensioner are entitled to and how quickly the benefit goes to them if the procedure is followed. I want to turn my attention now to — how we are immortalizing the departed souls by publishing Obituary in our journal, the Vana Premi. The idea and the format are borrowed from the Indian Forester. For writing an Obituary, we need life details and it is a tough job to gather particulars by visiting the bereaved families. It was therefore suggested to collect Bio Data of the colleagues and keep in the Association's office, so that it could be used whenever needed.

I recall with reverence a unique example of the late P.S. Rao, who was the CCF of AP for about eighteen years. After retirement he went to Guwahati (Assam) and settled down there. He

sent to me, while living, his own Obituary in which there was every detail of his life and career, except the date of death. This gives an idea how meticulous he was.

There is another instance of K.V.S. Babu, retired PCCF and Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, had settled down in Hyderabad. He was out of station for some time. On his return, he had seen the Obituary of Mazhar Sahib in Vana Premi and rang up to me to express his shock. Of course, he conveyed his grief and sympathy to the family.

In the recent past, on seeing the Obituary of Kamal Naidu in Vana Premi, written by me and the tribute paid to him by Prof. B.C. Choudhary of Wildlife Institute of India, Mr. A.R. Maslekar, Rtd. PCCF of Maharashtra and Mr. BMT Rajeev in letters to the Editor, expressed their shock as the news to them was sudden. He recalled his memories with the late Kamal Naidu.

CONCLUSION:

The objective of writing this article is to help the fraternity; highlight the growth of the Association and project the popularity of its organ, the bewitching Vana Premi. I draw my inspiration from the following words of wisdom.

1. *Paropakaraardham idham shareeram* – An old Sanskrit axiom (This body is created for helping others)

2. *Parula kosam paatu padani naruni brathuku deniki?* – A stanza from Telugu gazal by C.NarayanaReddy (What for is the life of a human who does not strive to help others?)

3. It is through serving others that we become fully human. —Marsha Sinetar

SO MUCH REMAINS TO BE STATED ABOUT BAMBOO!

By

Dr. B. Raghotham Rao Desai

(A sequel to my earlier article "High time that you had an 'affair' with Bamboo", published in Vana Premi of June, 2017)

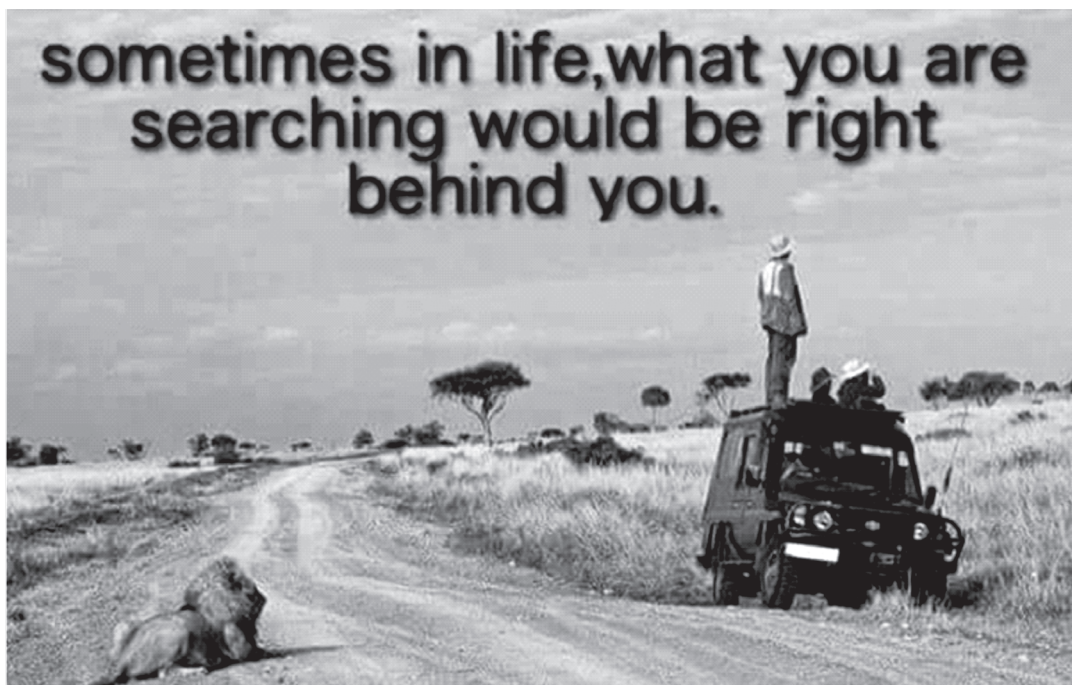
Bambuseae is the fastest growing woody plant on the planet, being an environment-friendly, renewable, strong and versatile member of Monocotyledons, belonging to Graminea family to which barley, corn, oats, wheat and other grasses also belong. Monocotyledons have their roots fibrous, often fascicled at base, devoid of separate bark and cambium, leaves sheathing; nerves parallel; flowers as a rule trimerous and embryo with one cotyledon. **Of the many species, following six have proved to be most suited for development of bamboo-connected industries in our country: *Bambusa bambos* or *B.arundinacea* (found on rich moist soils, alluvial stretches, having imperfect blade of culm-sheath, broadly triangular, erect, pericarp thin), *Dendrocalamus giganteous, hamiltonii* & *strictus* (invades open soil areas, their spikelets being in globose congested heads), *Oxytenanthera* spp., (persist in evergreen forests, having staminal filaments free & united into tube), *Mellocalamus compactiflora* (found in wet evergreen forests), as they are known to produce mature fibre in three years — sooner than any tree species — and can be grown quickly & sustainably harvested in three-to five-year-cycles.**

Bamboos produce 35% more oxygen than any other trees and are effective carbon sinks. Additionally, their biomass is cheap, while being efficient-fuel for power-generation-units. An enabling environment for the cultivation of bamboos helps creation of several job-opportunities — 350 man-days-employment is estimatedly generated by a tonne of bamboos! **Growing bamboo is only the first step — larger benefits being occurred from value-added products,** such as manufacturing of wood-substitute & composites, energy, charcoal and activated carbon.

Ecological benefits too are many, such as soil-moisture conservation, landslide prevention & rehabilitation (since bamboos adapt to most climatic conditions & soil types and act as soil stabiliser), **conserving wildlife habitats, enhancing source of biomass, while providing immense benefit of serving as a substitute for timber.** Despite all this, **it was an irony that bamboos were perceived all along as a wild growth in forest-areas and not as a cultivated crop that could be harnessed for profit!** If commercially cultivated, though taxonomically a grass, bamboo will be

replacing surely so much of timber as the material of choice for buildings: success on this score thus helping stop felling of trees — thus saving the environment from further degradation. As an avenue to generate income for the rural poor, bamboos' role in community-agro-forestry is indeed very significant, bamboo as we all are well aware of that had traditional association with our culture. In this context, the latest budgetary allocation of Rs. 1290 crores for the **"National Bamboo Mission"** (established in 2004 under MoA to promote bamboo-cultivation across the country, its precursor having earlier been designated as "National Mission for Bamboo Applications", to focus on value-addition to the bamboo-crop, brought into being by an initiative of the Dept. of Science and Technology, aiming to develop a viable industry

around bamboo-products; it's specific mandate being to promote bamboo plantations) — **a separate mission a very salutary step to improve India's Bamboo economy which was hitherto shackled by several legal and regulatory restrictions.** The mission's mandate was to alter the misperceptions about bamboo. Further, the Government in December, 2017 exempted thoughtfully **bamboos grown in non-forest areas from the definition as a "tree" by bringing an amendment to Indian Forest Act, 1927,** which can also be considered as a significant step, **the twin objectives of this amendment aim being an to promote bamboo cultivation in non-forest areas (in order to increase rural incomes) and expand the country's green-cover.**



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		5.	Swargam Srinivas 15-07-1962
			6.	G.Chandrasekhar Reddy 18-07-1965
1.	K.Buchiram Reddy	07-07-1932	7.	Dr.K.Gopinatha 21-07-1963
2.	K.Madan Mohan	10-07-1942	8.	Ajay Kumar Naik 03-08-1965
3.	N.Varaprasad Rao	10-07-1948	9.	Ratnakar Jauhari 02-08-1970
4.	M.Prasada Rao	10-07-1947	10.	N.Khadar Vali 06-07-1960
5.	C.Ramakrishna Reddy	11-07-1931	11.	P.Premkumar 10-07-1983
6.	M.Padmanabha Reddy	14-07-1941	12.	S.Ravishankar 16-07-1964
7.	M.K.Prasad	14-07-1945	13.	Smt.S.Sujatha 18-07-1975
8.	N.Shyam Prasad	16-07-1955	14.	B.M.Chanakyam Raju 18-07-1957
9.	A.Shankaran	16-07-1956	15.	Smt.T.Jyothi 23-07-1975
10.	B.Pratap Reddy	18-07-1928	16.	Mrs.G.Krishna Priya 24-07-1982
11.	K.Santokh Singh	21-07-1937	17.	V.Anjaneyulu 24-07-1966
12.	Mohd.Ibrahim	22-07-1954	18.	Smt.I.Padmaja Rani 26-07-1976
13.	Rajesh Mittal	25-07-1955	19.	B.Janaki Rao 26-07-1961
14.	Onkar Singh	27-07-1953	20.	Ms.M.Babita 26-07-1972
15.	S.M.Selvaraj	01-08-1953	21.	P.Dhanraj 28-07-1963
16.	L.Ch.Tirupaelu Reddy	01-08-1956	22.	A.V.Ramana Murthy 28-07-1969
17.	V.Parthsarathy	02-08-1944	23.	Smt.M.Hima Sailaja 29-07-1980
18.	Hitesh Malhotra	03-08-1952	24.	Jagarapu Ganesh 04-08-1963
19.	P.Adivappa	03-08-1953		
20.	A.V. Joseph	05-08-1956		

S.No.	Name of Serving Officers	D.O.B.
1.	Prashanth Kumar Jha	07-07-1959
2.	N.Pratheep Kumar	07-07-1963
3.	Rahul Pandey	14-07-1974
4.	D.Nalini Mohan	15-07-1962



Secretary



**BEST WISHES
ON YOUR RETIREMENT**

*Wishing You a New Journey
of Success and Happiness
in the New Page of your life.
May you be Showered with abundant
opportunities to do what
your Heart Desires*

Best Wishes From :
NVS Prasad,
 Forest Section Officer
 Vigilence - II, O/o PCCF(HoFF), Guntur
Y. Vasantha Rao
 Forest Section Officer
 Vigilence - I, O/o PCCF(HoFF), Guntur

Sri PRATHIPATI PURNACHANDRA RAO
 Forest Section Officer, Vigilence - II
 O/o PCCF (HoFF) A.P., Guntur
 AP State Award Holder
 "Vana Samrakshana Pathakam"
 Retirement on 31/07/2018

COMPENSATORY AFFORESTATION - A NON STARTER IN THE STATE OF TELANGANA

By
M. Padmanabha Reddy

Forests received a raw deal in independent India. Large tracts of virgin forests were cut and brought under plough. Further, for irrigation projects, and infrastructure development large tracts of forests were lost, added to it, the state governments, treated the forests as source of revenue and in the name of scientific management large quantity of timber was extracted through contractor agency.

This vandalism of forests evoked public resentment throughout the country, chief among them is Chipko movement in Gadwal region. Sensing the mood of the nation, Indian Parliament enacted Forest Conservation Act (F.C.A.) in the year 1980. F.C.A. is a watershed in the forest management in the country. Though Forests is in concurrent list, F.C.A. has taken away the powers of state governments to divert forests to non forest purpose.

Inter-alia, F.C.A. states that no state government shall make, except with the prior approval of the central government any order directing any Reserve forest shall cease to be reserved, that any forest land may be used for any non-forest purpose. F.C.A. provides for constitution of a committee to advise the government with regard to grant of approval for diverting forests for non-forest purpose. To operationalise the F.C.A. rules were framed in the year 1981 and subsequently revised in 2003, wherein, a detailed procedure regarding application by

user agency, processing the application by Deputy Conservator of forest (Dy. C.F.) etc. is given. The rules further prescribe that clearance of proposals will be done in two stages. In 1st stage the proposal shall be agreed in principle and after receipt of compliance of the stipulated conditions from the state government regarding transfer and mutation of non forest area identified for Compensatory Afforestation and transfer of funds in favor of forest department etc, second stage approval shall be issued. The F.C.A. is very specific about identified land for Compensatory Afforestation. The Act says that, as far as possible the land should be contiguous to or in proximity of Reserve Forest to enable the department to effectively manage the newly planted area. Where non-forest lands are not available compensatory Afforestation may be carried out over degraded forest twice in extent to the area being diverted. It further prescribes that the D.C.F. should inspect the land identified for C.A. and gives a suitability certificate regarding the area (soil) suitable for plantations. In some special cases concerned C.F. also should inspect the area and give his opinion on the report of Dy. C.F.

As there was no proper arrangement for management and planning of the funds received from user agencies by central or state government, Supreme Court of India directed

the union government to create an authority at state and central level. It is observed that by 2006 an amount of Rs. 38 thousand crores were collected and is with state governments. Finally in the year 2016 government of India enacted "The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016. The Act provides for constitution of an authority at national and state level for administration of the fund and to utilize the money so collected for taking up C.A. works, Protection of forests, forest related infrastructure development, wild life protections etc. As on the date, more than 50 thousand crores is lying with central government deposited by user agencies for C.A. purpose. There is a general feeling that C.A. works are not taken seriously with the result once the forest land is handed over to user agency no follow up to monitor the C.A. works. A study of forest lands diverted for non forestry purpose and action taken for Compensatory Afforestation in the state of Telangana reveal interesting things.

In December 2017 there was a news item in a section of the media that Telangana stood second in the country diverting 7150 ha. of forest land during last 3 years. Again during the meeting of Telangana Legislative committee for wild life and environment protection, Prl. C.C.F.T.S. stated that after the enactment of F.C.A. during 1980 to 2014 (i.e. in 34 years) about 24,000 ha. of forest land was diverted for non-forest purpose in the combined state of A.P. and from 2014 to 2018 in the state of Telangana in just four years forest area of 8400 ha. was diverted for non forest purpose. The Prl. CCF briefed the committee that forest department processed the applications for diversion of forest land on fast track and got approval from Government of India

in few months.

To know the progress of Compensatory Afforestation I have filed a R.T.I. application with Public Information Officer O/o Prl. CCF. Initially there was no response and on appeal Addl. Prl. CCF (vide his letter 5102/2018/TS-RTI dated 2-6-2018) has provided details of area diverted, area identified, amount deposited and spent. The details furnished by Addl. Prl. CCF are reproduced here.

During last 4 years (position as on 31-3-2018)

1. Area of forest land diverted - 8916 ha.
2. Number of Cases (projects) for which forest land was diverted - 52 cases
3. Non-forest land identified for C.A. - 6122 ha.
4. Degraded forest land identified for C.A. - 7180 ha.
5. Total land (3+4) identified for C.A. - 13,302 ha.
6. Amount deposited to take up C.A. (in 13,302 ha.) - Rs.658.77 crores
7. Amount spent for C.A. (up to 31-3-2018) - Rs. 6.34 crores
8. Percentage of amount spent during last 4 years - 0.96%

There is a feeling that the Forest department which processed the cases for diversion of thousands of ha. of forest land on fast track did not show the same zeal and enthusiasm to complete C.A. works in quick time. There is also a feeling that many of the areas identified for C.A. are not suitable for Afforestation, as the areas identified are eroded, cut up and sheet rock areas where even the grass refuses to come. It is also learnt that in some places areas are existing only on paper and in the field they are under occupation. When asked for

information about the area planted under C.A. the reply given is, head office has no information and they are calling details from forest divisions and will be furnished later on.

In the past we had some success stories of Compensatory Afforestation. In the year 1990 Forest Department has taken up Compensatory Afforestation of Telugu Ganga project. Under the able leadership of Sri B. Mallareddy Conservator, Sri Bhoopal Reddy and Sri Bhaskar Reddy did excellent job, the works were so meticulously planned and executed that before the irrigation project could complete, C.A. works were completed. The team has virtually created forest in large tracts of area. Such success stories unfortunately are few and far apart. In drier regions of Mahaboobnagar and Nalgonda the success of C.A. works are unsatisfactory.

Few examples of C.A. works in Telangana (as furnished by Aranya Bhavan) are listed below :

1. An area of 108 ha. of forest land was diverted and handed over in Bellampally forest division in the year 2014-15. For C.A. purpose an amount of Rs.176 lakhs was deposited by user agency. So far an amount of Rs.19 lakhs only spent. As on date no planting was done, proposed to raise plantations in 2018-19.
2. An area of 106 ha. of forest area was diverted in Kareemnagar east division and area handed over in the year 2016-17, For raising C.A. an amount of Rs. 114 lakhs was deposited by user agency. So far no amount was spent. Proposed to raise C.A. in 2018-19.
3. An area of 430 ha. of forest land was diverted in Paloncha division for Singareni

Collieries and area handed over in the year 2017-18. Only an area of 145 ha. land could be identified. For C.A. an amount of Rs.135 lakhs deposited by user agency, so far no amount spent, proposed to raise C.A. in 2019-20.

4. An area of 232 ha. forest land was diverted in Kothagudem division for Singareni Collieries and area handed over in the year 2017-18. As government lands were not available outside R.F. double the diverted area of 464 ha. degraded forest was identified. An amount of Rs. 1704 lakhs was deposited by user agency so far no amount was spent, proposed to raise C.A. in 2019-20.

5. An area of 776 ha. of forest land was diverted in Khammam division for coal mines and area handed over in the year 2017-18. As there was no land available outside R.F. C.A. was proposed in degrade forests (double the area). i.e. 1552 ha. An amount of Rs.6979 lakhs was deposited by user agency so far no amount was spent. C.A. is proposed from 2018-19.

6. An area of 3168 ha. of forest land was diverted to Kaleshwaram Project and area handed over in the year 2017-18. An amount of Rs. 38678 lakhs was deposited by user agency, so far no amount was spent C.A. proposed in 2020-21.

Diverting 8916 hectares of forest area in just 4 years period, however for good purpose it may be is painful. Prl. CCF is requested to monitor the progress of C.A. works regularly and see that the damage caused is adequately compensated by taking up C.A. programme in a big way.

THE MIRROR

(Edmund Burke 1729-1797, Irish Philosopher)

I look in the mirror
And what do I see
A strange looking person
That cannot be me.

For, I am much younger
And not nearly so fat
As that face in the mirror
I am looking at.

Oh, where are the mirrors
That I used to know
Like the ones which were
Made thirty years ago

Now all things have changed
And I'm sure you'll agree
Mirrors are not as good
As they used to be.

So never be concerned,
If wrinkles/ extra flab appear
For one thing I've learned
Which is very clear?

Should your complexion
Be less than perfection,
It is really the mirror
That needs correction.

Editors Note:

*Kal Apne Aap Ko Dekha Tha Maan Ki Aankhon Mai
Ye Aaina Hamme Boodha Naheen Batata Hai.*

(Munnawar Rana)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK - A TREASURE TROVE OF NATURE

By
B M T Rajeev

Preamble: I happen to hear about the world famous Yellowstone NP (YsNP), A treasure trove of nature; its tourism attractions and the worst fires it suffered, its potentials of natural regenerations etc from Mr. N. V. Ramachandra Chetty, former PCCF of Karnataka state, while sharing with him the experience of my visit to Kenyan Safaris in 2011 to Massai Mara NR, Nukura NP, Lake Naivasa and Mount Kenya. This brief made me to indicate my son in USA to plan for my visit to YsNP in 2012, but I couldn't make it due to cancellation of my trip; but, my son made it as he could not get the reservations made for me cancelled. This experience, made my son to plan for my visit to YsNP in 2013 by avoiding the inconveniences he experienced with conducted tours; and made us to see/ enjoy most of the features/ wildlife by driving himself.

We went from Findlay, Ohio state to Jackson-Wyomi via Detroit & Denver by air and operated our visit from it to YsNP by road. It involved a total journey of 12 hours by air, 35 hours by road for 4 days with 3 days' camp July 12 to 15 th, 2013. The YsNP is a Mecca of Geo-physiological features and bio-resource of the mother earth and is fascinating to nature lovers, geologists, Foresters & wild lifers to learn and rejoice once in lifetime.

Introduction: Yellowstone National Park (YsNP) is located primarily in the state of Wyoming, although it extends into Montana and Idaho states of U.S.A. It was established in 1872. It is widely held to be the first national park in the world. It is known for its wildlife and its many

geothermal features. It has many types of ecosystems, but the sub alpine forest is dominant.



Pic: Author and his wife (center), son and daughter at the Entrance of YsNP

Native Americans lived in the Yellowstone region for 11,000 years. It was explored in the early 19th century and brought under National Park Service created in 1916. About 1,000 archeological and historical sites built in the past are protected there.

Area: Yellowstone National Park spans an area of 8,983 km² comprising mountain ranges interspersed with saddles, lakes, canyons and rivers. Yellowstone Lake spread over 352.20 sq km. is one of the largest high-altitude lakes in North America and is centered over the Yellowstone Caldera, the largest super volcano on the continent.

Geology: The caldera is considered an active volcano. It has erupted with tremendous force several times in the last two million years. Half of the world's geothermal features are in Yellowstone, fueled by this ongoing volcanism. Lava flows and rocks from volcanic eruptions cover most of the land area of Yellowstone.

Yellowstone experiences thousands of small earthquakes every year, virtually all of which are undetectable to people. Yellowstone is known for its many geothermal features, especially '*Old Faithful Geyser*', one of the most popular features in the park. Now 10,000 geothermal features are said to be active in YsNP, hundreds of them are identified and nicely exposed to the visitors.

Three deep canyons are located in the park, cut through the volcanic tuff of the Yellowstone Plateau by rivers over the last 640,000 years. The Lewis River flows through Lewis Canyon in the south and the Yellowstone River has carved two colorful canyons, the *Grand Canyon* of the Yellowstone and the *Black Canyon* of the Yellowstone in its journey north.



Pic: Lake Yellowstone

The average altitude of the park is 8,000 feet and the highest point in the park is atop Eagle Peak (11,358 feet) and the lowest is along Reese Creek (5,282 feet).

The YsNP is with full of wonderful active volcanoes in the form of *Geysers* (steam emitting volcanoes), *Hot springs* (hot water oozing volcanoes), *Mud pots* (mud boiling volcanoes mostly with gasses-sulphur).



Pic: Old Faithful geyser before eruption/ after eruption

After Landing in Jackson Hole Air Port: We took a self driving taxi and drove to the town and settled in the hotel booked in advance. Next day, on the way to YSNP, we could see hundreds of *American bison* foraging in the valley of Teton NP. But we were hurrying to not to miss the 12 noon show of old faithful geyser.

By noon we landed at the site of the most attracting and the popular Geyser the '**Old Faithful Geyser**' (OFG). The reason for naming it as OFG is, the OFG remains active by oozing gas and at every hour without fail.... it starts emitting / oozing hot water- an indication of the Geyser of eruption, then the geyser erupts in full swing to a height of 130 feet to the surprise of all the on lookers for 3-5 minutes and gradually goes to dormancy and repeats its beaming after 1.15 hour @ 18-20 times per day.



Pic: Old Faithful Geyser in swing

It is common that many of the geysers or hot springs or mud pots gone dry and many have taken birth in YsNP; but, the OFG has remained like as it was, since it was discovered and faithfully continues to thrill the visitors who, goes to it at every hour. This has been made as a show to the visitors, who throng at every hour to see the wonder of this geothermal feature in rhythm.

We also rushed for this nature's exhibition at

12.00 noon and enjoyed the show along with the hundreds of visitors gathered. The place of OFG is the star attracting center for tourists with all facilities and an Hq of YsNP Service with visitors' center.

My visit with family to **varieties of geysers, mud pots** and **hot springs** at Black Sand Basin, Biscuit Basin, Lower Geyser Basin, Norris Geyser Basin, Mammoth Terraces, West Thumb Geyser Basin, Dragon Mouth and Sulphur Caldron etc are wonderful, colorful and breath holding to watch the glimpses of the-external shows due to the '*internal thermal activities of the mother earth*'. We continued to explore till sunset and reached north end of YsNP and returned to Jackson Hole by 10.00PM and hardly find something to eat. Next day, we started early to YsNP and continued to explore....



Pic: Emerald Hot spring.

The geysers/ hot springs along the banks of streams/ rivers and the Lake-Yellowstone were found to be most wonders to watch. All Geyser basins have been provided with '*rised wooden walking trails*' for the visitors as it is dangerous to walk on the hot ground/ water.



Pic: Mud Pot



Pic: Visitors on walking trails of hot spring basin



Pic: Dragon hole



Pic; Hot spring, causing change in landscape at Mammoth (Marble stones in benches-melting due to hot spring)

The Lake Yellowstone is awestruck in its beauty with blue waters, surrounding mountains and forests. The Ys river valley after the lake is wonderful with surrounding mountains and saddles, nursing rich pine forests and meadows till it reaches the wonderful region of rugged '*Grand Canyon of Yellowstone*' and famous for sighting of bison, elks, birds, grizzly bears

The Yellowstone River falls at two places; the first one is the *Upper falls* to a depth of 132 feet and next one is *Lower falls* to a depth of 308 ft in to the '**Grand Canyon**', a V shaped gorge in strata of yellow and unstable rocks - said to be

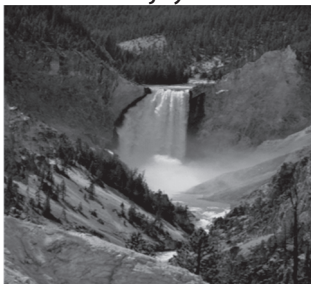
500 ft deep.



Pic. Upper Falls of River Ys

The **Grand Canyon of Yellowstone** with Lower water fall in the back drop has its own awe-struck scenic beauty. The YsNP Service has made arrangements to watch from either side of the Upper Falls. The *South Rim*- gives full view of the falls; the *North Rim* takes the visitors to the head of the falls- to have a breath holding experience of the falls by standing on its head.

The spectacular view of the Lower Falls and the Grand Canyon can be had from 'Artist Point' and trail of the gorge from the North Rim at 'Point of Inspiration'. All points are made to tourists' safety and convenience connected by good roads, and left to the visitors to enjoy.



Pic: Lower Falls in to the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone

We could enjoy the glimpse of all the scenic features and took photographs of the canyon from all the sighting points with family.

Climate: The Ys PN is situated in temperate country with recorded high and lowest

temperature of 37 °C in 2002 and "54 °C 1933 respectively. During the summer days highs are normally 21 to 27 °C range and nights are below 0 °C. The annual rainfall ranges from 380 mm to 2,000 mm in NW section of the park. The average annual snowfall is 3,800 mm near Yellowstone Lake. Tornidos are rare in this NP.

Flora: Over 1,700 species of trees and other vascular plants are native to the park. Another 170 species are considered to be exotic species. Of the eight conifer tree species documented, Lodge pole Pine forests cover 80% of the total forested areas. Other conifers are found in scattered groves throughout the park. Quaking Aspen and willows are the most common species of deciduous trees.



Pic: Interior forest with full of Lodge pole Pines

Fauna: There are almost 60 species of mammals in the park, including the gray wolf, the threatened lynx, and grizzly bears. Other large mammals include the bison (buffalo), black bear, elk, moose, mule deer, white-tailed deer, mountain goat, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, and mountain lion. Fish, reptiles, amphibians and 311 spp of birds

Pic: Male elk in velvet at a road side



The YsNP's bison herd is the largest public herd of American bison in the United States. Bison once numbered between 30 and 60 million individuals throughout North America, and Yellowstone remains one of their last strongholds. Their populations had increased from less than 50 in the park in 1902 to 4,000 by 2003. The YsNP's bison herd reached a peak in 2005 with 4,900 animals. *(Park culled about 500 bison in 2016 to keep their population within the carrying capacity of the NP)*



Pic: Bison' herd at Hudson valley along Ys River course.

Starting in 1914, in an effort to protect elk populations, the wolves, prairie dogs were permitted for hunting that caused for extirpation of wolf that forced to end the practice by

1935. Population figures of elk are in excess of 30,000—the largest population of any large mammal species in Yellowstone.

By the 1990s, Mackenzie Valley wolves, imported from Canada, were reintroduced into the park. Reintroduction efforts have been successful with populations remaining relatively stable.



Pic: A calf following mother in a bison herd on the L/B of River Ys.

Observation: The sighting of a few species of animals was great and memorable. We could see, enjoy and take photographs herds of bison at Hudson valley along the River Ys between Lake Ys and the Grand Canyon; While returning from Grand Canyon of Ys, a bull bison was found struck in between the flowing traffic of the visitors (not the high way). We were lucky to frame it as close by as 5 ft, while it was walking along the median of the road for a while. This indicates that wild animals can adjust to the moving visitors / traffic that do not harm them.



Pic: A bison bull on the middle of road in between moving traffic in YsNP
Forest fire management:



Pic by Wiki: Fire in Yellowstone National Park
Wildfire is a natural part of most ecosystems, and plants found in Yellowstone have adapted in a variety of ways. Some species of firs, pines, spruce derive benefits from fires in regeneration but, suffers when big fires occur and kill the tree growth in vast areas.

. The YsNP experienced the worst fires in the driest year 1988, in which 3,210 sq km of forests, 67 structures, 2 personnel were burnt in six big fires; the first fire started in mid July, continued In spite of involving army/ fire brigades for fire



fighting with a cost of 120 million dollar and could extinguish it only with the start of snowfall in September. With this worst lesson, the Park adopted a new fire management from 1992.

The new fire management focuses on

monitoring dead and down wood quantities, soil and tree moisture, and the weather, to determine those areas most vulnerable to fire to carry out Controlled burns or prescribed fires, which are deliberately started to remove dead timber under conditions which allow fire fighters an opportunity to carefully control where and how much wood is consumed.



Pic: A burnt area of 2013 fires near Lake Ys.

Observation: The moment, I entered the YsNP, the heart burning sights were the fire burnt areas in vast stretches from south to north entrance of the NP during my run in it in car for 2 days. I could see different stages of professed regeneration of 'Lodge pole Pine' trees in the park. More areas under pole crop were said to be of the areas burnt in 1988-big fires, in different stages depending on the site quality.

Pic: 1988 burnt area with natural regeneration of Log pole pine & burnt poles yet to be decomposed in the 25th year.

Even a board displayed as '*Forests naturally recessed in 1988*' was visible. The prescribed burning is practiced with mechanical removal of fuel wood load from fire threatening areas. *YsNP is lucky that there is no threat of exotic weeds and there are God blessed tree spp. like Log pole pine, fir and as per naturally regenerate, and bring back the forests to past glory without any artificial*

efforts other than protection against fires. If not, what would have been the position of this NP after 1988 fires is unimaginable

In India, we are continuing with the assumption that, the fire is hazardous in PAs since, 1970s. But, we are sacrificing big areas for big fires without realizing the problem that the accumulated dead woods/ flowered bamboo / debris are the 'fuel wood load for fires' like what happened in the forests of Uttar kand and Karnataka and other states. It is time for Indian wildlife management to realize the importance of reducing the fuel wood load in the PAs by adopting the 'selective removal of dead wood/ dead bamboo from the areas prone for fires' in addition to adopting 'controlled burning or selective/ advance burning in areas under threat of fire' with a policy to overcome the danger of big fires happening in PAs in the 5th decade of our modern wildlife management.

Recreation/ tourism:

Yellowstone is one of the most popular national parks in the United States. Since the mid-1960s, at least 2 million tourists visit the park almost every year.



Pic: Visitors (part) awaiting the OFG eruption at noon on 13.7.2013 at YsNP.

Hunting is not permitted, though it is allowed in the surrounding national forests during open season. Fishing is a popular activity.

Observation: Contrary to the efforts in providing more facilities to tourists in this Park and other NPs in US, Indian PAs management is trying its best to curb the tourism to the minimum with the guise, tourism is disturbing to the peaceful living of animals. The Indian PAs management prescribes Maccadam mud road in PAs for the reasons best known to none. Where has in YsNP, most of the roads are Asphalt roads with speed limits 25, 35, 45 MPH with strict obedience, depending on the intensity of movement of the wild animals in the zone. The intensity of visitors in June-peak season for tourism is about one million and rest of the year is about 1.3 million in YsNP; most of the visitors have rounds in their own cars compare to hired busses.

Photos by: Mr Krishna Mohan Rajeev and the Author.

Author: B.M.T.Rajeev, IFS (Retd)

Former Deputy Director, Project Tiger, Bandipur / Bannerghatta NP (Karnataka). He has authored 3 Books- Glipmses of Indian Wildlife, Art of Indian Wildlife Management and Hand book of Indian Wild Animals and a free lance writer on wildlife, forestry and environment and has tour experience of wildlife PAs in SEA, Australia, Kenya and USA.

THIS (FROM A GOOD FRIEND) IS A GOOD READ AND GOOD INFORMATION TO FOLLOW...

Many of us are between 65 and death, i.e. old. A friend sent me this excellent list for aging . . . and I have to agree it's good advice to follow. The guy, who sent this hi-lighted #19.

1. It's time to use the money you saved up. Use it and enjoy it. Don't just keep it for those who may have no notion of the sacrifices you made to get it. Remember there is nothing more dangerous than a son or daughter-in-law with big ideas for your hard-earned capital. Warning: This is also a bad time for investments, even if it seems wonderful or fool-proof. They only bring problems and worries. This is a time for you to enjoy some peace and quiet.

2. Stop worrying about the financial situation of your children and grandchildren, and don't feel bad spending your money on yourself. You've taken care of them for many years, and you've taught them what you could. You gave them an education, food, shelter and support. The responsibility is now theirs to earn their own money.

3. Keep a healthy life, without great physical effort. Do moderate exercise (like walking every day), eat well and get your sleep. It's easy to become sick, and it gets harder to remain healthy. That is why you need to keep yourself in good shape and be aware of your medical and physical

needs. Keep in touch with your doctor, do tests even when you're feeling well. Stay informed.

4. Always buy the best, most beautiful items for your significant other. The key goal is to enjoy your money with your partner. One day one of you will miss the other, and the money will not provide any comfort then, enjoy it together

5. Don't stress over the little things. Like paying a little extra on price quotes. You've already overcome so much in your life. You have good memories and bad ones, but the important thing is the present. Don't let the past drag you down and don't let the future frighten you. Feel good in the now. Small issues will soon be forgotten.

6. Regardless of age, always keep love alive. Love your partner, love life, love your family, love your neighbor and remember: "A man is not old as long as he has intelligence and affection."

7. Be proud, both inside and out. Don't stop going to your hair salon or barber, do your nails, go to the dermatologist and the dentist, keep your perfumes and creams well stocked. When you are well-maintained on the outside, it seeps in, making you feel proud and strong.

8. Don't lose sight of fashion trends for your age, but keep your own sense of style. There's nothing worse than an older person trying to

wear the current fashion among youngsters. You've developed your own sense of what looks good on you – keep it and be proud of it. It's part of who you are.

9. ALWAYS stay up-to-date. Read newspapers, watch the news. Go online and read what people are saying. Make sure you have an active email account and try to use some of those social networks. You'll be surprised what old friends you'll meet. Keeping in touch with what is going on and with the people you know is important at any age.

10. Respect the younger generation and their opinions. They may not have the same ideals as you, but they are the future, and will take the world in their direction. Give advice, not criticism, and try to remind them that yesterday's wisdom still applies today.

11. Never use the phrase: "In my time." Your time is now. As long as you're alive, you are part of this time. You may have been younger, but you are still you now, having fun and enjoying life.

12. Some people embrace their golden years, while others become bitter and surly. Life is too short to waste your days on the latter. Spend your time with positive, cheerful people, it'll rub off on you and your days will seem that much better. Spending your time with bitter people will make you older and harder to be around.

13. Do not surrender to the temptation of living with your children or grandchildren (if you have

a financial choice, that is). Sure, being surrounded by family sounds great, but we all need our privacy. They need theirs and you need yours. If you've lost your partner (our deepest condolences), then find a person to move in with you and help out. Even then, do so only if you feel you really need the help or do not want to live alone.

14. Don't abandon your hobbies. If you don't have any, make new ones. You can travel, hike, cook, read, dance. You can adopt a cat or a dog, grow a garden, play cards, checkers, chess, dominoes, golf. You can paint, volunteer or just collect certain items. Find something you like and spend some real time having fun with it.

15. Even if you don't feel like it, try to accept invitations. Baptisms, graduations, birthdays, weddings, conferences. Try to go. Get out of the house meet people you haven't seen in a while, experience something new (or something old). But don't get upset when you're not invited. Some events are limited by resources, and not everyone can be hosted. The important thing is to leave the house from time to time. Go to museums, go walk through a field. Get out there.

16. Be a conversationalist. Talk less and listen more. Some people go on and on about the past, not caring if their listeners are really interested. That's a great way of reducing their desire to speak with you. Listen first and answer questions, but don't go off into long stories

unless asked to. Speak in courteous tones and try not to complain or criticize too much unless you really need to. Try to accept situations as they are. Everyone is going through the same things, and people have a low tolerance for hearing complaints. Always find some good things to say as well.

17. Pain and discomfort go hand in hand with getting older. Try not to dwell on them but accept them as a part of the cycle of life we're all going through. Try to minimize them in your mind. They are not who you are, they are something that life added to you. If they become your entire focus, you lose sight of the person you used to be.

18. If you've been offended by someone – forgive them. If you've offended someone – apologize. Don't drag around resentment with you. It only serves to make you sad and bitter. It doesn't matter who was right. Someone once said: "Holding a grudge is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die." Don't take that poison. Forgive, forget and move on with your life.

19. *If you have a strong belief, savor it. But don't waste your time trying to convince others. They will make their own choices no matter what you*

tell them, and it will only bring you frustration. Live your faith and set an example. Live true to your beliefs and let that memory sway them.

20. Laugh. Laugh A LOT. Laugh at everything. Remember, you are one of the lucky ones. You managed to have a life, a long one. Many never get to this age, never get to experience a full life. But you did. So what's not to laugh about? Find the humor in your situation.

21. Take no notice of what others say about you and even less notice of what they might be thinking. They'll do it anyway, and you should have pride in yourself and what you've achieved. Let them talk and don't worry. They have no idea about your history, your memories and the life you've lived so far. There's still much to be written, so get busy writing and don't waste time thinking about what others might think. Now is the time to be at rest, at peace and as happy as you can be!

REMEMBER: "Life is too short to drink bad wine and warm beer."

Something our Prime Mistaker never learned...

"The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits." ~ Albert Einstein

If you feel lost, it's because the heart and mind are not working in harmony, when they work together you will find peace.

NEWS AND NOTES

In a first, tiger Trans located from Madhya

Pradesh to Odisha: - Forest personnel carry the tranquilized tiger from Kanha National Park. It was later released in Satkosia in Odisha. Setting a record in wildlife conservation history, forest officers have successfully trans-located a tiger from Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh to Satkosia reserve forest in Odisha. The male tiger weighing 195 kg was captured in the National Park and then tranquilized before being transported to Satkosia tiger reserve in a specially designed cage.

"The entire operation of capturing, tranquilizing and then putting the tiger in a specially designed cage for its transportation took around one hour on Wednesday," Kanha tiger reserve field director Sanjay Kumar Shukla, who oversaw the exercise, told this newspaper on Thursday. This was the first time in the history of wildlife conservation a big cat from a tiger reserve was successfully trans-located to another state for reintroduction, he added.

Forest officers, veterinary doctors and conservationists from MP, Odisha and Delhi had supervised the translocation of the tiger. The exercise was part of a special project prepared jointly by the ministry of environment, forests and climate change, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, to relocate three pairs of tigers from Madhya Pradesh to Satkosia tiger reserve for reintroduction.

Satkosia tiger reserve has lost almost its entire tiger population owing to reasons such as alleged poaching and deteriorating habitat conditions forcing the Odisha government to place a request to the MP government to relocate three tiger couples.

Horses can read human facial expressions:-

Studies show horses possess high communication capabilities and can read emotions of peers through facial expressions and contact calls. Scientists from Hokkaido University demonstrated for the first time that horses integrate human facial expressions and voice tones to perceive human emotion.

Washington DC: Forget dogs, horses can read humans too, a new study has claimed.

Scientists from Hokkaido University demonstrated for the first time that horses integrate human facial expressions and voice tones to perceive human emotion, regardless of whether the person is familiar or not.

Recent studies showed the herd-forming animal possesses high communication capabilities and can read the emotions of their peers through facial expressions and contact calls, or whinnies. Horses have long been used as a working animal and also as a companion animal in sports and leisure, establishing close relationships with humans just like dogs do with people.

Dogs are known to relate human facial expressions and voices to perceive human emotions, but little has been known as to whether horses can do the same.

In the present study, researchers Ayaka Takimoto and Toshikazu Hasegawa used the expectancy violation method to investigate whether horses cross-modally perceive human emotion by integrating facial expression and voice tone.

They also tested whether the familiarity between the horse and the person affected the horse's perception.

The expectancy violation method was used to study infant cognitive development. Horses were shown a picture of a happy facial

expression or an angry facial expression on a screen, and they then heard a pre-recorded human voice - praising or scolding - from a speaker behind the screen.

Horses received both the congruent condition, in which the emotional values of facial expression and voice tone were matched and the incongruent condition, in which they were not.

Results of the experiment showed that horses responded to voices 1.6 to 2.0 times faster in the incongruent condition than in the congruent condition regardless of familiarity of the person. In addition, the horses looked to the speaker 1.4 times longer in the incongruent condition than in the congruent condition when the person was familiar.

These results suggested that horses integrate human facial expressions and voice tones to perceive human emotions, therefore an expectancy violation occurred when horses heard a human voice whose emotional value was not congruent with the human facial expression. "Our study could contribute to the understanding of how humans and companion animals send and receive emotional signals to deepen our relationships, which could help establish a better relationship that emphasizes the well-being of animals," said Ayaka Takimoto.

The study appears in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

Baobab under threat: Climate change killing 430-year-old 'elephant tree' at Golconda Fort:-

The 'elephant tree' at Golconda Fort, the biggest baobab outside Africa and Australia, is now under threat by climate change and 'artificial environment' induced by increased human activity in the 500-year-old fort complex. Heritage activists said senior botanists and baobab experts should do an immediate 'health check-up' of over 430-year-old tree, known as *Hatyan-ka-jhad*, in view of a scientific

publication last week in *Nature Plants*, which revealed that some of the oldest baobab trees in Africa are suddenly dying due to changes in climate. Baobabs in Africa that were healthy six months ago have died due to climate change and pollution, the scientists suspect.

Hyderabad has about a dozen baobab trees. Baobab trees do not show external signs of damage, but fall suddenly due to drying up of the trunk from inside. Apart from golf course, construction of a 'protection platform' with cement and bricks, and visitors climbing on its branches and entering its false cavity has robbed the giant tree of its natural environs.

Meanwhile, *Pillalamarri*, the great banyan in *Mahbubnagar* is on death bed. It is one of the biggest banyans in the world and was under the care of tourism department till it was nearly eaten by termite infestation. It was handed over to forest department and its revival became a herculean task. *Golconda baobab* is under the care of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Some of the baobabs in the city were pulled down for road widening and ORR works. They are now found in *Attapur*, *Secunderabad Club*, *Ranganath temple*, *Vanasthalipuram*, *Chapel Road* and *Chengicherla reserve forest*. All these trees are over 200-year-old.

INTACH city convener *P Anuradha Reddy* said the baobabs were introduced to Hyderabad by African and Arab traders, following the *Surat-Machilipatnam* trade route during the *Qutub Shahi* period and earlier *Bahmani* period during 15th or 16th century CE. "We can find baobabs even in the northern trade route – *Delhi-Golconda-Machilipatnam*. Baobabs are part of botanical and natural heritage of Hyderabad and they need to be protected," Reddy said.

Govt. to scrap subsidy for private electric cars:- The Centre plans to scrap cash incentives currently offered to buyers of electric cars

despite having incentivised these clean fuel technologies till just a few months back. The move, experts said, will further dampen sales of private electric cars.

Policy-makers justified the move, saying the government has now decided to give cash subsidies to electric vehicles used by shared-mobility operators such as Ola and Uber, "as their vehicles will run much more than private cars". Official sources said the government seeks to withdraw the cash incentives for private electric cars because it neither makes a "substantial difference in promoting sales nor serves the purpose of a clean environment".

Currently, the government offers a discount of up to Rs 1.3 lakh on an electric car as part of its clean-energy programme, FAME (faster adoption and manufacturing of hybrid and electric vehicles). This is being proposed to be removed in the new FAME Phase 2 draft policy drawn up by the heavy industries ministry.

While the inaugural FAME scheme had a budget of under Rs 1,000 crore, the ministry has proposed to raise it to over Rs 9,000 crore in the second phase. "The real utility of electric vehicles is in public transport. How much are the private cars driven?" asked an official?

The government feels that the addition of cab aggregators like Ola and Uber to the list of subsidy beneficiaries would prompt these companies to go for electrics, which offer highly-lucrative running costs as compared with conventional diesel/petrol or CNG alternatives (except for the high acquisition cost). "The maximum utility for the maximum number of people will be through public transport," another source said.

The stance, however, runs contrary to the broader mobility vision that the government had projected just a few months back. As pollution rises across many top cities and smog and

poisonous gases are difficult to control, the government had said it wants the entire car industry in India to switch to electric by year 2030. Last year, only around 1,500 electric passenger vehicles were sold against petrol/diesel/CNG car sales of 32 lakh.

The 2030 transition was pushed by former power minister Piyush Goel (now in-charge of railways and finance), and found strong resonance with the road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari. "I am going to do it, whether you like it or not. I will bulldoze. Petrol-diesel banaane walon kaa band-baja bajana hai (We will take the makers of petrol/diesel engine vehicles to task)," Gadkari had said in September last year.

Car companies and their lobby platform Siam, had disagreed with the government's deadline for the e-switch, and have been petitioning for a more easy transition. Official sources said government will continue to give incentives on the purchase of electric buses and two-wheelers. However, for buses, incentives will be bought down. The current incentives on electric buses cover 60% of the cost of the vehicle. This will come down to 40%.

Thaw of Antarctic ice lifts up land, might slow sea level rise:

- Antarctica's bedrock is rising surprisingly fast as a vast mass of ice melts into the oceans, a trend that might slow an ascent in sea levels caused by global warming, scientists said on Thursday. The Earth's crust in West Antarctica is rising by up to 4.1 centimeters (1.61 inches) a year, an international team wrote in the journal *Science*, in a continental-scale version of a foam mattress reforming after someone sitting on it gets up.

The rate, among the fastest ever recorded, is likely to accelerate and could total 8 meters (26.25 feet) this century, they said, helping to stabilize the ice and brake a rise in sea levels

that threatens coasts from Bangladesh to Florida. "Its good news for Antarctica," lead author Valentina Barletta of the Technical University of Denmark and Ohio State University told Reuters of the findings, based on GPS sensors placed on bedrock around the Amundsen Sea in West Antarctica.

Much of the West Antarctic ice sheet, which has enough ice to raise world sea levels by more than three meters (10 feet) if it ever all melted, rests on the seabed, pinned down by the weight of ice above.

The fast rise of the bedrock beneath will lift ever more of the ice onto land, reducing the risks of a breakup of the sheet caused by warming ocean water seeping beneath the ice.

The uplift "increases the potential stability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet against catastrophic collapse," the scientists wrote.

Last week, another study said that three trillion tones of ice had thawed off from Antarctica since 1992, raising sea levels by almost a centimeter - a worsening trend.

It often takes thousands of years for the Earth's crust to reshape after a loss of ice. Parts of Scandinavia or Alaska, for instance, are still rising since the end of the last Ice Age removed a blanket of ice more than a kilometer thick.

A further report this month found that the West Antarctic ice sheet expanded about 10,000 years ago, interrupting a long-term retreat after the last Ice Age, because of a rise of the land beneath. But it said the process was too slow to save the ice sheet from a possible collapse triggered by global warming.

One of the lead authors of that study, Torstein Albrecht at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, told Reuters on Thursday: "The expected eight-meter (26.4-foot) uplift in 100 years in the Amundsen Sea region ... seems rather small in order to prohibit future collapse."

What is a solar eclipse and why are they important?

There's nothing like a good solar eclipse to distract the news agenda from the misery of global events, whether it's Donald Trump looking straight at it without any protective eyewear, or other Americans swapping said protective eyewear to instead squirt sunscreen in their eyes.

Seven million-plus people are estimated to have watched the event as it swept across the US from Oregon to South Carolina in August this year, but how many of them actually know what a solar eclipse is?

A solar eclipse is when the moon moves between the sun and the Earth so that a shadow is cast onto Earth because the moon blocks the light of the sun.

There are also three types of solar eclipse, the first of which, a total solar eclipse, is what Americans were treated to this year.

A total solar eclipse occurs only when the sun, moon and Earth are in a direct line, so is only visible from a small area on Earth - from the centre of the moon's shadow. The sky becomes dark, as if it were night. A partial solar eclipse is when the sun, moon and Earth aren't exactly lined up, which results in the sun appearing to have a shadow across part of its surface.

The third type, an annular solar eclipse, creates a dark ring around the moon. It occurs when the moon is further away from Earth, so appears smaller and does not block out the sun completely. The crucial safety advice, which may have not reached the White House, is that looking directly at the sun during a solar eclipse can damage your eyes.

According to Associated Press, the 2017 total solar eclipse was the "most-observed and most-photographed eclipse in history".

The next total solar eclipse anywhere on Earth will be in South America in 2019, but Europeans

will have to wait until 2026. Even then, Brits may have to travel to Iceland, Greenland or northern Spain to get a proper glimpse.

What about lunar eclipses? A lunar eclipse is when the Earth moves between the sun and the moon. We can see the moon at night because it reflects light from the sun, so when the Earth blocks this light, it causes a lunar eclipse. A total lunar eclipse happens when the sun and the moon are aligned on either side of Earth. The moon appears red because the small amount of sunlight that reaches the moon goes through the Earth's atmosphere, which filters out most of the blue light.

Unlike solar eclipses, lunar eclipses usually last hours and it is safe to look directly at them.

But why should we care? Eclipses are not just simply brief spectacles for us to gaze at in awe, but important events used to study the Earth and the moon.

Centuries ago, people discovered the shape of the Earth was round by observing the moon during an eclipse, and scientists are still using eclipses to study the moon's surface in detail.

World's hungry population on the rise again, says U.N. report: - Conflicts, climate change are main hurdles in meeting development goals. The number of hungry people in the world has risen for the first time in more than a decade, according to a United Nations report released on Wednesday. There are now approximately 38 million more undernourished people in the world, rising from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016, the year for which the latest statistics are available.

According to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2018 report, conflict is now one of the main drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries. "After a prolonged decline, world hunger appears to be on the rise again. Conflict, drought and disasters linked to climate change

are among the key factors causing this reversal in progress," said the report. Violent conflicts also led to the forced displacement of a record high 68.5 million in 2017.

Noting the increasing impact of extreme events related to a changing climate, the report said economic losses attributed to disasters were estimated at over \$300 billion in 2017. This is among the highest losses in recent years, owing to three major hurricanes affecting the United States of America and several countries across the Caribbean.

While there is little country-specific data in the report, it does examine the performance of various regions in meeting the 17 SDGs, which were adopted by U.N. member nations in 2015. The deadline to meet them is 2030.

South Asia, which includes India, has seen child marriage rates plunge, with a girl's risk of getting married in childhood dropping by 40% from 2000 to 2017. On the other hand, water stress levels for many countries in the region are above 70%, indicating fast-approaching water scarcity. More than nine out of 10 people living in urban areas around the world are breathing polluted air, with southern Asia scoring the worst in this area. While electricity and sanitation deficits in south Asia are still poor, the report noted efforts are being made to close the gap.

Sense of urgency

"With just 12 years left to the 2030 deadline, we must inject a sense of urgency," said U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres in the foreword to the report. "Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires accelerated actions by countries along with collaborative partnerships among governments and stakeholders at all levels. This ambitious agenda necessitates profound change that goes beyond business as usual."

LEGAL NOTES

Dr. Emerico D'Souza Vs. Deputy Conservator of Forests

This case raises an important question as to whether the statements of accused recorded by Range Forest Officer during the investigation of a forest offence are hit by Sections 25 or 30 of the Evidence Act. The petitioner before the High Court of Bombay was involved in an offence punishable under the Forest Act for possessing timber illegally. The transaction involved as many as nine accused persons. The petitioner is A1 and all others are A2 to A9.

The Range Forest Officer seized illegally cut wood. Soon after the seizure, the officer recorded statements of the accused. It was disclosed from the statements that all the accused were involved in cutting, removing and possessing illegally cut wood from a government forest. All the nine accused were prosecuted in a criminal court.

The learned Magistrate in CrI.C. No. 22/N/1992, on elaborate consideration discharged the accused / petitioner Dr. Emerico D'Souza and A8 and A9 on the ground that except his statement and statements of other accused, there was no other independent evidence. The learned Magistrate further observed that statements of other accused, implicating the petitioner were not admissible as they were hit under Section 30 of the Evidence Act. It was also observed that those statements were in the nature of confession and the same are hit by Section 25 of the Evidence Act. The present petitioner was discharged by order dated

15.09.1992.

Aggrieved by the order of the Magistrate, a revision petition and an appeal in CrI.R.No. 37 / 1992 and CrI.A.No. 2 / 1992 were filed on behalf of the State in the Court of Sessions Judge at Panaji. The learned Sessions Judge found that the approach of the Magistrate was erroneous, and that it was incorrect in law to say that the statements of accused were not admissible because the Range Forest Officer is not a police officer and the statements were therefore, statements not amounting to confession and that the statements could be read against all the accused inter se. The Magistrate was directed by order dated 09.06.1993 to proceed with the trial of the accused.

The petitioner Emerico D'Souza preferred revision in the High Court of Bombay. The matter was heard by the Hon'ble Justice A.A. Halbe. The main thrust of the argument in the revision petition was that except the statements made before the Range Forest Officer, there was no other evidence and it was urged that the Magistrate's order was wholly warranted and the order of the Learned Sessions Judge should be quashed. Referring to the powers of forest officers to arrest persons without warrant etc. the power was likened to the powers of a police officers.

The argument of the Public Prosecutor was that so long as the forest officer has no power to file

charge-sheet and investigate crimes under the Code of Criminal Procedure, the question of forest officer being branded as a police officer cannot be sustained. In this connection, the Public Prosecutor relied on a judgment of the Supreme Court in *Baduka Joti Savant Vs. the State of Mysore and the Attorney General of India* (AIR 1966 SC 1746) where the Court had observed that statements made to the Dy. Supdt. Of Customs and Excise would not be hit by Section 25 of the Evidence Act. It was held that the officers were not empowered to file Charge-Sheet under Sec 173 of Cr.P.C. This was followed by the Court and it was held that the ruling is

equally applicable to forest officers; the case law cited by the petitioner's counsel was held as not applicable.

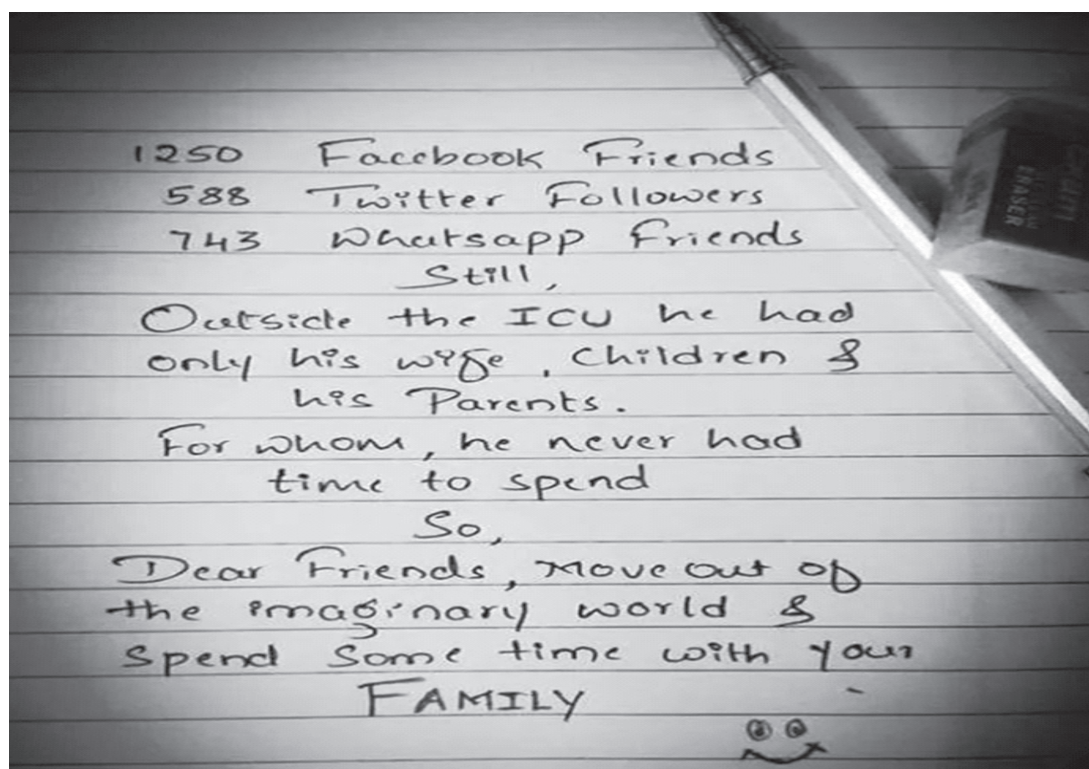
The wood of sissum was recovered from different places at the instance of the accused / petitioner. It was

finally held that the Range Forest Officer is not a police officer. In the light of the matter, it was held that the

revision petition was liable to be dismissed. The Crl. M. A. was dismissed on 08.07.1994.

1995 (1) Bom C R 266

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