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No.03

This issue is dedicated to Martyrs of Pulwama



A grizzled giant squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*)

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS TELANGANA & ANDHRA PRADESH
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**VANA PREMI SALUTES AND
PAYS RICH HOMAGE TO
ALL CRPF AND ARMY
JAWANS WHO SACRIFICED**



**THEIR TODAY FOR OUR
BETTER TOMORROW AND
TO THOSE WHO WERE
INJURED AT PULWAMA.**

EDITORIAL

World Forest Day: The World Forestry Day celebrations was started in the year 1971 in order to increase the public awareness among communities about the values, significance and contributions of the forests to balance the life cycle on this planet, for the benefit of all the living organisms' present and future. Countries are encouraged to undertake efforts to organize local, national, and international activities with the help of different countries' Governments. International Forest Day was first established in the year 2012 on 28th November to be celebrated on 21st of March every year by the decision of United nations General Assembly by uniting the two international commemorations; the World Forestry Day and International Forest Day is now celebrated as International Forest Day. The first International Day of Forests was observed on March 21, 2013. World Forestry Day or International Day of Forests is celebrated worldwide every year on 21st of March. On each International Day of Forests countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns. The theme for each international Forest day is chosen. The theme for 2019 is "Forests and Education". The theme for 2018 year was the "Forests and sustainable cities".

Forests comprise an inter-dependent web of animals, plants and microorganisms, which together provide a wide range of goods and services and products that, are crucial to the

livelihoods of local forest dependent and indigenous people. Today, forests cover more than 30% of the world's land and contain more than 60,000 tree species, many as of yet unidentified. Forests provide food, fiber; water and medicines for approximately 1.6 billion of the world's poorest people, including indigenous peoples with unique cultures who depend on forests for their livelihood. A forest just doesn't mean trees but it's an entire complex, a living community. Many interdependent species of plants and animals dwell beneath the forest canopy. We and all other animals breathe in what Forests breathe out and Forests breathe in what we and all animals breathe out. What a beauty of God's design. Perhaps this is known as symbiosis between animals (including human beings) and Plants. Forests are vital to the planet for many reasons. Forestry is an important field which requires the public attention to be taken which is for the benefit of all the living organisms. It is very necessary for the common public to understand the forest value and importance in our daily lives as a raw material source, local employment source as well as the national income source. Forests are the complex living community of the trees which provide home and shelter to a big range of animals and the soil beneath it inhabits the variety of invertebrate, fungi and bacteria playing significant role in balancing the nutrients cycle in the soil and forest. Forests are providing

shelter for more than half of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects. Forest plays a great roll in gathering and releasing the water on the earth and maintains the flora and fauna habitat balance. Forests are natural beauty on the earth which is very necessary to be conserved to go everything in balance. Forests are also very essential part of the life on earth. They also fulfill the demands of human beings and animals by providing shadow shelter, clean air and clean water. The forests help to control our planet's temperature.

Mangrove forests are among the most productive ecosystems on earth, and serve many important functions, including water filtration, prevention of coastal erosion, coastal protection from storms, carbon storage, food, timber, and livelihood provision, and biodiversity protection, among others. Mangrove forests are home to a large variety of fish, crab, shrimp, and mollusk species. Mangrove wood is resistant to rot and insects, making it extremely valuable. The dense root systems of mangrove forests trap sediments flowing down rivers and off the land. This helps stabilize the coastline and prevents erosion from waves and storms.

Sand dunes are common features of shoreline and desert environments. Dunes provide habitat for highly specialized plants and animals, including rare and endangered species. They can protect beaches from erosion. Plants are also planted to reduce the wind velocity and stabilization of sand dunes. Desserts are also stabilized by planting trees.

Chopping down forests in hilly areas is loosening

the soil, giving rise to floods landslides and uncontrolled rain. This was seen in Kerala state during 2018 rainy season. The benefits provided by forest ecosystems also includes goods such as timber, small timber for agriculturists of our country, food, fuel and bi products, ecological functions such as carbon storage, nutrient cycling, water and air purification, and maintenance of wildlife habitat. To resume our planet's good health and well-being, deforestation and over-gazing need to be avoided. We have the power to transform our world, but the choice is between "for the better" and "for the worse." Upper layer of fertile earth is eroded due to felling of the forests which is leading to uncontrolled rain and flood, siltation of rivers and dams. India is a country which is highly dependable on its agriculture, hence it becomes even more important for us to protect our forests and prevent them from any ill practices. The reckless felling of trees is creating many problems in the surroundings so the need of the hour says that everybody should ponder seriously over this issue and stop activities that are against the welfare of forests. Everybody should actively involve themselves in prevention of felling of existing forests and creation of new forests.

Every year large areas of forests are lost for various purposes and reasons, which should be avoided and alternate areas, should be taken up for other non forestry purposes. According to one estimate there is 32 million acres or 13 million hectares of loss of forests every year, which is increasing year after year. Loss of forests

enhances the loss of inhabitant wild animals, deforestation imbalances the balance of natural climate which leads to the global warming by increasing the carbon dioxide and decreasing oxygen percentage without which any living organism can survive, across the world. Deforestation accounts for 12 to 20 percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

Haritha Haram programme is a large-scale tree-planting program implemented by the Government of Telangana to increase the amount of tree cover in the state from 24% to 33%. *Neeru-Chettu* programme of Government

of Andhra Pradesh is aimed at planting trees and protecting water bodies simultaneously spreading awareness among them about rejuvenating and revitalizing natural resources. All other States of our country should also take up all such programmes to increase the area under Forests and save the living organisms of this planet.

Vana Premi wishes that not only people living in India, but all the people living on this planet should understand the importance of all types of Forests and plant trees for the betterment of people and all other living organism. **QMK**

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Referring to the issue of VP (February, '19) which carried an article by KBR Reddy under the caption 'Travails of the Editor' wherein he quotes the familiar Telugu poet Srirangam Srinivasa Rao or 'Sri Sri' to stress the point that 'what is needed is *will* and *passion / fervor / ardour*', not the '*material/subject-matter*' of which there is no dearth, which I find to be just in line with the idea similarly expressed by the renowned litterateur AG Gardner or '*Alpha of the plough*' as '*any peg will do to hang the coat on*'. Further, not of 'his liking' but of 'an acquaint' (who stayed with him) and like him, he also was a stakeholder in the affairs of the Globe Theatre, William Shakespeare penned such a beautiful drama, under the caption '*As You Like It*', since he '*willed it with the ardour*', and there is no surprise that it turned out to be a masterpiece! As if to prove the said point, I have mailed separately an Article under the caption '*The ghosts who vanished, and the stories that got buried*', for a possible inclusion in the ensuing issue of VP, with the hope that it will be appreciated by KBR and other readers.

Digressing from the main topic, I would like to make some observations on an article by JV Sharma under the caption '*Yet another bout of assault on Forests*' (appearing in the earlier VP of Jan., '19

issue) wherein he *continues the history of Forest Rights Act* at length (from para 8 to the last). He had extensively dealt the subject on several earlier occasions too, quite a few of his Articles having been carried by our VV as well. **Given the facts, only a naïve individual can believe that the Act will be implemented as envisaged, particularly when an important stakeholder — the Forest Department — is not in agreement in principle on major issues.** It is true that it has become indeed tough when there is no *political will* to see it through by the regimes at the Centre and in the States alike. The fact remains that it eventually ended up in the *pro-rights lobby* having its way in the legislation, causing the conservationists label the FRA as *a hurried political pressure exerted by its alliance partners* — the Joint Parliamentary Committee and the Group of Ministers (constituted to resolve the differences between the important stakeholders), too, having failed in their purpose. So, the best option remaining, seems to be **revisiting the Act and amending the populist clauses that emerged dramatically in the last stages of the legislation process, leading to an increase in the number of claimants over forestlands** — it will then largely help the cause of the tribals whose claims are genuine but have not received their rights yet, while providing ample scope (at the same time) to Soothe the nerves of the conservationists.

The said number of VP (Vol. 20, No. 2) is embellished with an ably deciphered Editorial on a topical subject of 'Cancer' (a dreaded scourge) — a day (on which is) observed by the world on 4th of February every year. Incidentally, it happens to be Sri Lanka's National Day. Additionally, the said issue includes exhaustive articles by Dr. A.K. Jha, J.V Sharma, Dr US Singh, Dr. A Kishan, V. S. S. Babu and others: all of which being eminently readable — which speak volumes of your inexhaustible efforts (to seek the same) for which you deserve to be complimented as you have succeeded in mobilizing the available resources. May you continue to get the required response, Amen! **With best wishes to everyone for the happy 'Chaandramaana Ugadi',**

I remain, Sincerely, **Dr. Raghotham Rao Desai**

Climate change is the greatest threat to humanity, perhaps ever. Global temperatures are rising at an unprecedented rate, causing drought and forest fires and impacting human health.

A LESSER-KNOWN GRIZZLED GIANT SQUIRREL SPECIES IN KERALA IS AT THE RISK OF DYING OUT

Source Internet

For about a year now, PO Nameer and Kiran Thomas have been walking the slopes of Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala looking for a special kind of squirrel. Called the grizzled giant squirrel, it has a body length of 25-45 Cms with an equally long or slightly longer tail. It can weigh anything between 1.5-3 kg.

To put that in context the common squirrel we see around our homes, called the Indian palm squirrel, (*Funambulus palmarum*) weighs about 150 Gms. and is 23 to 35 cm in length, inclusive of the tail.

The grizzled giant squirrel has made its home in riverside plants growing in the sanctuary for centuries. Two rivers – the Chinnar and Pamban – weaving through the sanctuary create the perfect riverine habitat preferred by them. And yet, the year-long survey by Nameer and Thomas revealed that a mere 15-24 grizzled giant squirrels now inhabit the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. The researcher duo from the College of Forestry, Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur, has published the results of their survey recently in a paper, where they say that the population has declined by 78%-85% percent from previous estimates in 1993 and 2007.

The grizzled giant squirrel is one of the four giant squirrels found in the world. India has the unique distinction of being home to three of them. Apart from grizzled giant squirrel, the other two are the Malayan giant squirrel from northeastern India and Indian giant squirrel, found across the Western Ghats.

Though the Indian giant squirrel and the grizzled giant squirrel are both found in southern India, their habitat requirements are quite different. The Indian giant squirrel is a generalist and is “is seen in a wide variety of habitats from the deciduous forests to evergreen forests to shola forests,” said Nameer. The grizzled giant squirrel, on the other hand, is entirely dependent on riverine vegetation, the kind that grows along the rivers, to thrive.

The grizzled giant squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*), a near threatened species, is found in parts of southern India and Sri Lanka.

The result of this specificity in habitat requirement is that the grizzled giant squirrel is now limited to “nine severely fragmented locations” in India: the Grizzled Giant Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary, Srivilliputhur, Theni Forest Division, Palani Hills, Anamalai Tiger Reserve,

Sirumalai, Thiruvannamalai Forest Division, Hosur Forest Division and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary (all in Tamil Nadu), the Cauvery basin in Karnataka and Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala.

Like other rodents, the grizzled giant squirrel plays an important ecological role in seed dispersal. They live on the canopy of forest trees and have a preference for tamarind and mango. They also feed on the leaves and bark of the trees. A decrease in canopy cover not only decreases the amount of real estate available to them but also exposes them more to their predators.

The grizzled giant squirrel faces a variety of threats. For example, in the Cauvery wildlife sanctuary which sustains a small population of grizzled giant squirrel, "the riverine forests are used for picnics. People even gather firewood and cook under the canopy of the riverine forest. In addition, there are natural predators like the black eagle (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*), changeable hawk eagle (*Nisaetus cirrhatus*), python (*Python molurus*) and leopards (*Panthera pardus*)," said Mr. AJT Johnsingh, eminent wildlife biologist at the Nature Conservation Foundation. In Chinnar, particularly, the problem is "the extremely restricted habitat," he added.

Another significant threat to grizzled giant squirrel at Chinnar comes from the "pilgrimage at Kodanthur temple which is situated within Anamalai Tiger Reserve along the Chinnar River"

said Mr. A Veeramani of Department of Zoology, Government Arts College, Kumbakonam. Veeramani too has been studying the status and distribution of Grizzled Giant Squirrel in Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Potential hybrids: During their forays into the Chinnar Sanctuary, Nameer and Thomas made an interesting observation. They spotted some giant squirrels that looked like inter-specific hybrids between the grizzled giant squirrel and the Indian giant squirrel. These hybrids could be identified because they showed a mix of skin colour from both types of giant squirrels. Other sources, such as [here](#), have also noticed these inter-specific mating. Though the exact reason for the existence of these hybrids is not known, Nameer said, "it is not a healthy sign for either of the species."

Inter-specific hybrids are relatively uncommon in nature. The biological definition of a species is a group of individuals that can mate to produce fertile off-springs. When animals cross the species barrier to mate the hybrids are mostly infertile, (for instance the mule, a hybrid of horse and donkey). However, instances of fertile hybrids that evolved into new species have also been reported in the past.'

Matings between the grizzled giant squirrel and the Indian giant squirrel were "first seen by Justus Joshua in the Ayyanarkoil valley in the Rajapalayam hills which is part of the

Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel Sanctuary,” said Johnsingh. Chances of such “hybridizations increase when two closely related species occur together in one location,” he added.

As of now, we know very little about these hybrid giant squirrels. “Detailed investigation on the fertility status, exact reasons for hybridization, and a study on the genetics of the grizzled giant squirrel need to be undertaken at the Chinnar wildlife sanctuary to find out the genetic purity of grizzled giant squirrel there,” said Nameer.

“The mix-up and hybridization between the grizzled giant squirrel and Indian giant squirrel should also be monitored, to find out its effect on the long-term survival of the grizzled giant squirrel, which has a restricted distribution. Being a near-threatened species, the interbreeding could be a challenge to the long-term conservation of the grizzled giant squirrels at Chinnar wildlife sanctuary,” he added.

While on the one hand, a decline in the population of grizzled giant squirrel has been recorded, on the other hand, reports of new sightings from areas where grizzled giant squirrel was never seen before are also coming up. Earlier this year in January, a group of

researchers from Pondicherry saw a pair of grizzled giant squirrel in Pakkamalai reserve forest in Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu. The researchers also observed seven dreys (the nest of a squirrel, typically in the form of a mass of twigs in a tree). The Pakkamalai forest is an offshoot of the Eastern Ghats, and this is the first time grizzled giant squirrel have been seen in this area.

The exact reason behind these “random and scattered sightings” is “unknown and needs to be investigated,” said Nameer. Johnsingh said the reason behind new sightings could simply be that “people may not have looked for it.” Whatever the reason, it is clear that several gaps exist in our understanding of grizzled giant squirrel’s habitat range.

Without more studies and improved understanding, effective conservation strategies for grizzled giant squirrel cannot be devised, and the species will continue facing threats. “If the grizzled giant squirrel is wiped out from Chinnar, then the Sanctuary will be poorer by losing one of its mammalian species,” said Johnsingh.

“When I find the guy who torched that forest, I’m going to eat him. And I’m only going to half-cook him first.”

SUPREME COURT SETS TIME-LINE FOR EVICTION OF FOREST ENCROACHMENTS

By
J. V. Sharma

The Supreme Court of India reviewed the progress of eviction of encroachments in forests by those whose claims for recognition of their rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (Forest Rights Act) were rejected. A Special Bench of Apex Court comprising Hon Mr. Justice Mr. Arun Mishra, Hon Mr. Justice Navin Sinha and Hon Justice Ms. Indira Bannerjee heard the case on 13th February 2019 and issued directions in respect of each State with reference to the affidavits filed by them.

The Hon Court took notice of the fact that though substantial number of claims made under Forest Rights Act stand rejected, the incumbents continue their occupation of forest land and the State Governments have not taken any action to evict them. The court issued strict directions making the Chief Secretary of the State responsible for compliance of directions requiring him to file an affidavit before the next date of hearing i. e. 24th July 2019. In all, the Hon Court reviewed the affidavits filed by (20) States and excerpts of the Court Order relating to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are reproduced below. Substance of the order is almost the same for all the States.

"AFFIDAVIT OF STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH"

Perused the affidavit

The affidavit indicates that the extent of land covered by rejections in respect of STs is 1, 14,400 acres and 66351 claims have been rejected. But the action taken indicates that not even a single order has been complied with. Once the orders of eviction have been passed, the eviction ought to have taken place. Let the Chief Secretary to the State of Andhra Pradesh file an affidavit as to why the orders of eviction have not been carried out so far in respect of the incumbents whose claims have been rejected as per the affidavit filed on 24.04.2018 filed by Mr. Gandham Chandrudu, Director of Tribal Welfare Department. Let action be taken on or before next date.

Let the requisite affidavit be filed with necessary details and other matters mentioned in the order on or before 12.07.2019."

"AFFIDAVIT FILED BY THE STATE OF TELANGANA"

The affidavit filed by the State of Telangana indicates that 1, 83,252 claims have been filed by STs. Out of the above, 82,075 claims of STs have been rejected. Let Chief Secretary to the State of Telangana indicate, by way of an affidavit, as to why after the rejection of the claims, which have attained finality, eviction has not been made in spite of the order passed by this Court. The Chief Secretary shall ensure that where the rejection orders have been passed, eviction will be carried out on or before the next date of hearing. In case the eviction is not carried out, as aforesaid, the matter would be viewed seriously by this Court."

The Hon Apex Court has also directed:

"It is directed that where the verification/re verification/review process is pending, the concerned State shall do the needful within four months from today and report be submitted to this Court." It is also directed; "Let Forest Survey of India (FSI) make a satellite survey and place on record the encroachment positions and also state the positions after the eviction as far as possible. Let the requisite affidavits be filed on or before 12.07.2019."

"List the matters on 24.07.2019."

The environmentalists and the forest fraternity in particular, welcome the directions and hope the forests of the country will have some solace once the forest land under the illegal occupation of those whose claims have been rejected under FRA, revert back to its fold which will provide the much needed opportunity to develop them into an environmental asset. It is particularly gratifying that the Hon Court directed the Forest Survey of India to take stock of position of forest encroachments which can as well be seen as a cross check of forest land alienated under FRA.

NOTICE

The 90th GENERAL BODY MEETING of the Association of Retired Forest Officers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will be held on 31-03-2019 (Sunday) at 11.00 a.m. in Aranya Bhavan, Hyderabad. Sri T.Shambhoji Rao DFO (Retd.) will be hosting the Lunch. All the members of the Association are requested to make it convenient to attend the meeting with their spouses.

Secretary

DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE IN INDIA: CHARITY SHOULD BETTER BEGIN AT HOME

By
J. V. Sharma

The Deccan Chronicle (Hyderabad), carried a news report on dispensation of justice in India as opined by some retired judges of the higher judiciary. Judges are known for their equanimity, circumspection, decorum and frankness in their performance of duty and not known to waste words on public reaction and much less inclined to join issues with others.

Of late, we see some departure from this tradition and the case in point is the appearance of four serving senior judges of Supreme Court before the Press. While all public utterances which do not harm the credibility of the institution can as well be glossed over, the four learned Judges openly criticized the procedure followed by their Chief in constitution of Benches to hear the cases. The truth or otherwise of the allegation apart, the very fact they aired their opinion in public dented the abiding faith of many a people in Indian Judiciary. It provided an avoidable opportunity to people to understand and interpret the matter in their own way which ranged from arbitrariness to conflict of interest. The Judges would have served the cause better if they shared their views with brother/sister Judges and tried to find an in-house efficacious solution. This is not to underrate the Judges' concern for probity but to protect the more important sanctity attached to the institution. The credibility of an institution is, after all, how the people think of it. Claiming to stem arbitrariness in the process of dispensation of justice, they have perhaps raised doubts on justice dispensed. The Learned Judges appear to have forgotten for once that the targeted group included them as well.

The Judges' Press Meet was like throwing stone in placid waters. The waves it made disturbed the Nation for a while and subsided soon like as it happens when they reach the shore. I am sure they will have a dialogue with their conscience in leisure when they lay down their office. I am confident of it because they are learned judges of the highest court with impeccable record, who dispensed justice the whole of the productive period of life and the wisdom they cultivated in the process, can neither be doubted nor disputed and it will follow them like a shadow. Mercifully, the common man in India did not lose his composure. He continues to repose his faith in judiciary. It is proved time and again that of all organs created by the Constitution judiciary is the best bet any day in India, its weaknesses, if any, notwithstanding.

It does not mean that everything with judiciary is hunky-dory. There may be several areas where it

has not reached the level of perfection. But deficiencies, even if there are, can be taken care once the structure is strong and the ethos is compulsive. Let us not forget that there are several instances where the judiciary stood its ground despite onslaughts.

The DC report mentioned above is another kind of departure from the routine. According to the report, it appeared that the scribe filed the story after he interacted with two retired judges. Their observations, in brief, are:

- a) "It is unfortunate that judges today lack the tendency to respond to public cause, unlike earlier. This is more particularly seen in cases pertaining to the have-nots and would certainly lead to criticism from a cross-section of the society."
- b) "In cases where prominent people are involved, a galaxy of senior advocates appears on their behalf which places some sort of psychological pressure on the judges of the Supreme Court and High Court to take such cases on priority."
- c) "Judges have to change their tendency to give priority to sensational cases as this reflects poorly on the decorum of the judiciary."
- d) "The judiciary alone cannot be blamed for the pendency of cases. The police and the executive and sometimes – particularly in civil and arbitration cases – even advocates are responsible for the mounting arrears in courts across states."
- e) "The procedure is for every High Court in the country to notify the vacancy of a judge six months prior to his/her retirement and recommend the name of either an advocate from the Bar or an in-service officer to be inducted to the post. Though many High Courts follow this system scrupulously, the Central Government is not responding to such requests. This attitude of the Centre is seen in many of the appointments of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts."
- f) "It is the responsibility of State Governments to fill up the vacancies in the lower courts and also sanction required new courts and judges' posts as per the judge to people ratio."
- g) "The Centre and the Supreme Court must look into the need for constituting a committee to study the reasons for the delay in appointment of judges and disposing of cases so that a rational system is adopted for rendering justice."

Incidentally, the Chief Justice of India, Sri Ranjan Gogoi happened to inaugurate the Andhra Pradesh Transit High Court on the same day (3rd Feb '19). Speaking on the occasion, he said that pendency of cases in India was alarmingly high at 3 Crores of which 61 lakh cases were a year-old that cannot be treated as pending. He said 50 lakh cases were petty cases which can be disposed by High Courts. About 25 lakh ten-year-old cases are the black spot on judiciary and they should be cleared as quickly as possible. The CJI revealed that there are 400 vacancies of High Court judges for which the Courts are yet to make recommendation for 270 posts. Emphasizing that dispensation of

justice and morality travel together, he called upon the members of Bar to play greater role to ensure a dynamic judicial system.

The DC Scribe also furnished the figures in respect of pending cases. According to the said report, there are 53,346 cases pending in Supreme Court while the corresponding figure in High Courts is 42,44,072 and the pendency in Trial Courts is close to 3 Crore cases.

Of the grey areas listed above, a), b) & c) are perceptions. To say that the judges lack the tendency to respond to public cause is perhaps an overstatement. And to say that the judges exhibit this tendency in case of have-nots is an allegation questioning the judicial acumen of the judge. Litigation in respect of public cause has become very popular and the Courts are seized with several issues of public interest. Courts may not entertain frivolous petitions but issue *per se* has become an important aspect of adjudication. Similarly, to state that a galaxy of senior advocates would exert psychological pressure on the judges of Supreme Court and High Courts is an open expression of lack of faith on the very character and competence of the higher judiciary. It is necessary to understand that the judicial process in India takes care of any aberrations that crop up in administration of justice. In case a judge of High Court comes under psychological pressure, an appeal is available before the Division Bench and the Supreme Court thereafter. As far as Supreme Court is concerned, it is always a collective decision of more than one judge with power of dissent and it has invariably to be a majority judgments. There is an observation that judges have a tendency to give priority to sensational cases and that it is a breach of decorum on their part. I am of the view that prioritization of the cases for hearing and the choice of the judge is not that arbitrary and there exists a mechanism to take care of this aspect. However, there is a possibility of maneuvering by interested parties to try for early posting or to stall the hearing but it may not be fair to attribute bias and prejudice on the part of judges. It is not uncommon to see interested parties trying to subvert and abuse the procedure.

The matter in observation d) of the list primarily deals with delay in adjudication and the causes thereof. All will agree that justice delayed is justice denied. Unfortunately it is such a complicated issue that the blame cannot be placed at the door of single agency. Quite often a combination of causes becomes instrumental in delays. Insufficiency of Courts, large scale vacancies of presiding officers, advocates representing conflicting interests are among the important causes. It is further said that Government is the biggest litigant, particularly in High Courts and Supreme Court and proverbial lethargy in government sector largely dampens the disposal tempo.

Observations e) and f) deal with filling up vacancies of judges in higher and lower judiciary. Appointment in higher judiciary has become a contentious issue and it had become a sort of blame game between the Central Government and the Supreme Court. Bone of contention is

whether the selection should rest with Supreme Court Collegiums' or the Executive. Contending parties appear to have reconciled to the existing procedure and things appear moving to fill up the vacancies.

That there are some grey areas in system of dispensation of justice in India is an undeniable fact. I may cite some examples as to how the avoidable delays short-circuit the justice.

Situation A: An 80 year-old man approaches the High Court with a claim for Freedom Fighters Pension. After going through the usual delays, the case is heard after nearly six years by the judge and the petitioner was asked to file an amended affidavit changing the name of Respondent from Government of Andhra Pradesh to Government of Telangana State following the bifurcation of State. Though the affidavit was promptly filed and the Part-heard Case never reaches the line of hearing while several cases taken up later are heard and disposed. Age of the petitioner should have come for reckoning for early disposal. A Part-heard case should normally be taken up for hearing before taking up other cases. It is unfair to keep the case pending indefinitely and expect the petitioner to live that long as it finds convenient to dispose the case.

Situation B: A divorce case runs for six years in the family Court and for another six years in High Court on Appeal. Thus the husband and wife get caught in a litigation and waste their precious prime time of their life going round the Courts.

Situation C: This is the specific case of my own experience. I approached the High Court challenging the Constitutional validity of Forest Rights Act and its provisions. The case happened to be transferred to Supreme Court to be heard along with Petitions on the same matter filed in the Apex Court and other similar cases filed in various High Courts. A Special Bench was formed and the Bench heard the case in several sittings. We understand that the Bench could not meet to complete the hearing and the Presiding Judge happened to retire. The case remains undecided even after 11 years. But the damage caused to forests during the pendency is colossal and the Nation is deprived of its already inadequate precious tree cover resulting in environmental degradation. Delay has given rise to new challenges of intractable forest management. Prompt adjudication could have saved many of the problems the Nation is now made to face.

The three examples mentioned above are not the result of any failure or personal shortcoming on the part of judges. Nor is there any complaint against any judge. Prompt hearing taking the circumstances of the case into account would have enhanced the stock of judiciary. There may be procedures and guidelines in place for posting of cases. All that is required to do is 'urgency evaluation' of the pending cases by a judicial officer other than the judge who will hear the case and take up the cases accordingly. This method, if followed, will ensure justice in time and save the litigants from suffering by default. It is always good if the charity begins at home.

THE GHOSTS WHO VANISHED AND THE STORIES THAT GOT BURIED!

By
Dr. B. Raghotham Rao Desai.

Most of the readers agree that listening to ghost-stories or reading them was such an obsession as children during our growing-up years. In the remote village of the then Nizam's State where I was born and brought up for the first eight years, myself and my brother — younger by four years — would huddle around our mother and grandmother and would listen intently, as the eerie-stories were reeled-off about the supernatural.

As the teaching at the village-school was found very wayward and inadequate, I was shifted to a faraway town of Hanamkonda (Warangal) immediately thereafter, to stay with a relative, while getting admitted there to a distant primary-school (located near the ruins of a thousand-year-old '*Dewal Hazar Sutoon*'), to study there in 4th ('*Chaharrum-Telangi*') & 5th Standards. During the first year, we the students had to sit in the class on the mats provided (spread between the rows of the small desks), the outer-walls having low-windows; and I was allotted a place near one of the windows (through which an abandoned graveyard that lay on the other side of the adjacent road was visible).

It was also a hot-topic for discussion about the ghosts and there were stories doing rounds that this was a haunted-spot. The occasional bark and howls of stray dogs only gave credence to the stories.

The graveyard, though, held no terrors and turned into our favorite-haunt during playtimes — we would hop, skip and jump over the graves: though that meant no disrespect to the dead. We would play tops, marbles, cricket, hockey and football within its confines during the holidays. A rectangle (marked with chalk) on the base of a tree, would transform into a 'wicket' for a game of cricket — the rules being bent whereby a batsman could be dismissed by a catch taken 'after the ball had bounced'! Since only a few of us could afford a good bat, it meant frequent exchange of the willow during the course of an innings — matches having just 10 overs a side and the team consisting of only five players!!

On occasions, we would bump into human-skulls and bones, which had managed to extricate themselves from their final resting-places, and we would wonder at the



The Indian giant squirrel or Malabar giant squirrel (*Ratufa indica*)



Indian palm squirrel (*Funambulus palmarum*)



ప్రజల ముందు

రైతు సంక్షేమమే ఈ ప్రభుత్వ లక్ష్యం

- ◆ ఇప్పటి వరకు ఇచ్చిన ఋణ ఉపశమనం రూ. 14,710 కోట్లు (3వ విడతతో కలిపి).
- ◆ లబ్ధి పొందిన వంట ఋణము ఖాతాల సంఖ్య 57.57 లక్షలు.
- ◆ ఉద్యాన వంటల ఋణ ఉపశమనం రూ. 384.47 కోట్లు.
- ◆ రూ. 4495 కోట్లతో, రూ. 50 వేల లోపు ఋణాలు తీసుకున్న 23.45 లక్షల రైతు ఖాతాలకు ఒకేసారి ఋణ ఉపశమనం
- ◆ ఋణ ఉపశమనంలో కొలు రైతులకు ప్రాధాన్యత ఇవ్వబడినది.
- ◆ మరణించిన రైతుల ఖాతాలకు కూడా రూ. 51.54 కోట్ల పూర్తి ఋణ ఉపశమనం కల్పించబడినది.
- ◆ ధ్రువీకరణ పత్రాలు ఇవ్వక అర్హత కోల్పోయిన రైతులకు అవకాశము కల్పించి ఇప్పటికీ కూడా పూర్తి పారదర్శకతతో ఋణ ఉపశమనంకు చేయూత.



రైతు సాధికార సంస్థ, ఆంధ్ర ప్రభుత్వం

దేశ చరిత్రలోనే 24 వేల కోట్ల రూపాయల రైతు ఋణ ఉపశమనం చేస్తున్న ఏకైక ప్రభుత్వం

ఋణ ఉపశమన పథకము 3వ విడత రూ. 3600 కోట్లు విడుదల, రెండు సంవత్సరాలకు వార్షిక 10% వడ్డీతో



uncertainties of life!

The few houses that lay scattered around that graveyard were 'the only signs of life' and many of us thought that these residents had 'the nerve to live' in the said god-forsaken place. After passing 4th Std (Telugu), I had to study 'the 4th Urdu Text Book' (during that summer-vacation, when in fact I should have gone to my native place in Mahbubnagar Dist.), and succeed in an entrance-test before becoming eligible to be promoted to 5th Std. (Urdu medium), or else to spend one more year in 4th (Urdu) Std. and pass it to enter 5th Std! For this purpose, I had to go to a tutor at *Machhli-Bazar*, by passing through the courtyard of a dilapidated-temple, which was teemed with 'fruit-bats' who we thought to be agents of the devil — the odd manner in which those creatures hung upside-down also was so fascinating to look at.

I was fortunate to get through the said entrance-test, thus saving a year in the Primary Section — but not before denying myself the pleasures of spending the summer vacation with my childhood-friends & parents, etc. at the place of my birth!

I continued to stay at the town for the next eight years to complete Intermediate by March, 1952. [Incidentally, I was joined by KBR Reddy in 6th Std (when he came to the same 'New Middle School' from Central Primary School 'Markazi', Lashkar

Bazar) and we continued to be together for the next 11 years (June, '45 to June, '56) till the completion of training at Forest College, which is so unusual — rare to find another example of the sorts!]

During the said period (in later years), we were introduced to a few books like *Count of Monte Cristo* (by Alexander Dumas), and periodicals like *Reader's Digest* which carried chilling horror-tales that were guaranteed to make us squirm, by giving us the specter of ghost-tales. Viewing movies like *The Exorcist* used to invariably give us our fill of ghostly-thrills! Before I finally left for Hyderabad for further studies, I paid a visit to the said premises (of the Govt. Branch Primary School) on some pretext, to see for myself the metamorphosis which the place has undergone: the graveyard of yesteryears (which appeared to have been leveled long time ago), had by then been transformed into a busy residential area. Alas, the huge trees in the graveyard, which included a number of tamarind trees as well (of which we would clamber-up the tall, strong branches to fill our pockets with the harvest whenever they were laden with fruits), which were of many hours of fun and frolic to us, have sadly disappeared. The hustle & bustle and cacophony of traffic gave little evidence of a cemetery that once stood there. And while the ghosts had done the

vanishing-act, the ghost-stories had also got a quiet burial.

Epilogue: The last decade or two of modernity have seen our children and grandchildren — — and even our generation perhaps ——— grow lazy for easy living: with the televisions playing their Tele-serials and movies, everyone of us had literally forgotten how to 'listen' or 'read' detective, ghost-stories, for, the audio-visual treat that is dished-out happens to be more alluring!

Even though, the inventions have technically made our lives more 'advanced', somewhere along the way something has surely gone missing ——— the simple attitude of hard-work

has gone 'out of vogue' as one no longer needs to sweat-out to earn a day's upkeep ——— brilliance and hard-work becoming conspicuous by its absence!

Complacency having been set in, no longer we feel it essential to perform basic mathematical calculations ——— for, the Smartphone calculator does so in seconds! And a calendar is no longer needed or a wristwatch, or an alarm-clock, or a dictionary, or a radio, or a camera ——— for, a Smartphone doubles-up for all these. Even the pen is found to be redundant, for, one has just to notch-up the touch-screen and lo, the keyboard appears! The car has made everyone forget how to 'walk' and Whats App has made to forget how to 'talk'!!

Climate change is a global problem. The planet is warming because of the growing level of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. If this trend continues, truly catastrophic consequences are likely to ensue from rising sea levels, to reduced water availability, to more heat waves and fires.

THE UNIVERSE

BY

V. SANTHASEELA BABU

The **Universe** is all of space and time and their contents, including planets, stars, galaxies, and all other forms of matter and energy. Earth is a tiny portion of this vast Universe and we, the human beings living on Earth, have been trying to unfold the hidden secrets of the Universe in which we are surviving. We are also trying to explore the existence of any living organisms in the other planets and live able conditions prevailing in those celestial bodies. While the spatial size of the entire Universe is unknown, it is possible to measure the observable universe. The earliest scientific models of the Universe were developed by ancient Greek and Indian philosophers and were geocentric, placing Earth at the center of the Universe. Over the centuries, more precise astronomical observations led Nicolaus Copernicus to develop the heliocentric model with the Sun at the center of the Solar System. In developing the law of universal gravitation, Isaac Newton built upon Copernicus' work as well as observations by Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler's laws of planetary motion.

COSMIC BEGINNINGS: We on Earth think of the universe as a vastness containing everything we know of and much that we cannot ever imagine. For millennia, humans have struggled to make

sense of what they see all around them. They have observed, calculated, and conjectured, trying to articulate an explanation for a puzzle whose pieces are slowly being revealed with each scientific breakthrough.

The investigations of astronomy, astrophysics and mathematics join the cosmological inquiries of seeking minds in all cultures and at all times – those of philosophers, scientists, religious scholars and poets. Questions about the universe have always involved beginnings and endings. Now science is finding answers to questions long answered only by means of myth.

THE BIG BANG: Accepted astrophysical theories conceive that at one point there was nothing: no stars, planets, or galaxies-not even space itself. The matter that makes up everything that now exists was concentrated in a single, extremely dense point known as a singularity. The force of gravity in a singularity is so great that the fabric of space time curves in on itself. In an instant known as the '**Big Bang**', however, the contents of the primordial singularity escaped-and formed the universe. The big bang is catchy shorthand for a complex astrophysical theory, backed up with

sophisticated calculations. The term was coined in the 1950s by British astronomer Fred Hoyle, a proponent of a theory of the universe as a steady state. In fact, Hoyle used the term derisively. Though the name stuck, it gives a false impression, making it seem as though the event that unleashed all the energy of the universe almost 14 billion years ago was an explosion. Astro-physicists see the big bang more as an instantaneous expansion that within a few seconds created nuclear reactions and produced the protons, neutrons, and electrons that form the structure of matter today. Not long after, the nuclear reactions stopped. The universe was roughly one-quarter helium, three-quarters hydrogen—a ratio exhibited in the universe's oldest stars today. The formation of the universe played out over billions of years. Our own Earth, along with our solar system, is a product of a stellar explosion almost five billion years ago. The Big Bang theory is the prevailing cosmological description of the development of the Universe. Under this theory, space and time emerged together 13.799±0.021 billion years ago with a fixed amount of energy and matter that has become less dense as the Universe has expanded. After an initial accelerated expansion at around 10^{-32} seconds, and the separation of the four known fundamental forces, the Universe gradually cooled and continued to expand, allowing the

first subatomic particles (particles much smaller than atoms) and simple atoms to form. Dark matter gradually gathered forming a foam-like structure of filaments and voids under the influence of gravity. Giant clouds of hydrogen and helium were gradually drawn to the places where dark matter was most dense, forming the first galaxies, stars, and everything else seen today. It is possible to see objects that are now further away than 13.799 billion light-years because space itself has expanded, and it is still expanding today. This means that objects which are now up to 46.5 billion light-years away can still be seen in their distant past, because in the past when their light was emitted, they were much closer to the Earth.

The story of the universe still is being written and refined. By all scientific accounts, it continues to expand and the question of an eventual end looms large in current investigations. The universe itself provides some concrete support for the big bang theory in the form of cosmic background radiation, the “afterglow” of the cosmic inflation. In 1965 engineers looking for the source of the static interfering with satellite communications found a consistent signal emanating from every point in the sky at the wavelength predicted for this radiation.

STARS: Stars form the important portion of the Universe. When we look at stars in the night sky,

we are looking back in time. Many stars were formed millions, if not billions, of years ago. Furthermore, the starlight that reaches our eyes was emitted from them some time ago - ranging from a few minutes (the Sun) to four years (Alpha Centauri, the Sun's nearest star neighbor) to a much longer time ago (objects at the edges of our galaxy). We measure these distances in light years. One light year is equivalent to approximately 6 trillion miles, or the distance light travels in one 365 day Earth year. Alpha Centauri, at 25 trillion miles from Earth, is about 4 light years away. The light we see today from the Andromeda Galaxy left it two and a half million years ago: Andromeda is 2.5 million times 24 trillion miles away. Stars, which are balls of gas (mostly the gases hydrogen and helium), emit radiation. They create energy by fusing hydrogen and turning it into helium in their cores. We see the resulting energy as starlight. Astronomers classify stars based on their size, temperature, colour, and luminosity. Size in this case relates to mass rather than linear measurement, such as diameter. Stars start the same way, but their lives play out according to their size and mass. The mass of a star determines all of its other characteristics, including how hot it is, what color it is, and how long it will live. Massive stars are hot and blue, whereas small stars are cool and red.

IS STAR SIZE MATTERS? Small stars continue to

burn for hundreds of billions of years. The largest stars, about a hundred times the mass of the sun, live shorter lives, burning out after a few million years and dying with a bang. They become exploding super novae that may leave behind a remnant of glowing gas. Shock waves from super novae tend to compress interstellar gas, which may ignite and become a new star: stellar recycling.

NEBULAE: BIRTH PLACE OF STARS: Stars are born in an enormous cloud of interstellar dust and hydrogen gas called a nebula. Nebulae represent the building blocks for stars, galaxies, and planets in the universe. Emission nebulae are hot, discrete clouds of primarily ionized hydrogen that glow with their own light. Reflection nebulae emit a bluish glow by reflecting the scattered light of nearby stars. Absorption nebulae, or dark nebulae, comprise dense clouds of gas and dust. They appear as silhouettes against the light of brighter objects. Nebulae form when stars die. When the end comes for our sun for example, its outer layers will heat swell, and eventually blow off. The hot, dead core will create a glowing nebula, which will in turn become a nursery for new stars.

CONSTELLATIONS: Stars seem to move across the sky through the night, but that movement is due to Earth's rotation. As Earth spins on its axis, objects appear to rise in the east and set in the west. In the Northern Hemisphere, some

stars never appear to set. Called circumpolar stars, they circle at a point projected in the sky above the North Pole near Polaris, the Pole Star. A corresponding situation exists above the South Pole near the star Sigma Octantis. In ancient cultures sky-watching played an important role in navigation, agriculture, religion and even entertainment. Those who observed the heavens connected stars to form patterns that related to the heroes, gods, and legends of their culture like '*Saptha Rishi Mandalam*', what we refer to today as constellations. Most cultures named constellations and attached cultural meaning to their patterns. Native American sky lore, for instance, often used constellations to teach moral lessons.

Besides them, the Vedic texts identify the seven stars in the constellation of Ursa Major with the seven Vedic seers (*sapta-rishis*) who are credited with the revelation of the Vedas and knowledge of Brahman. The star of *Arundhathi*, the wife of *Vashistha*, is also found in the same constellation near the star which is identified with him. Stars in Hinduism represent femininity, motherhood, and angelic beauty. They impart to the heaven glamour and glitter. They personify the diversity of creation and its immensity. The *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* describe Stars in Hinduism represent femininity, motherhood, and angelic beauty. They impart to the heaven glamour and glitter. They personify the diversity of creation

and its immensity. The *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* describe the 27 stars of the lunar calendar as the daughters of Daksha, who were married to the moon god, Chandra. According to the legends, he spends one day with each of them in a lunar month and keeps them happy. Since Daksha was also the father of Sati, wife of Shiva, all the stars in the sky are considered the sisters of Mother Goddess. Apart from him, each of the stars is also associated with a particular planetary god as her presiding deity. Since there are nine planets and 27 stars, each planet controls three stars. According to legends, Kartikeya, the son of Shiva, said to have been brought up by six mothers who form part of the six stars in the constellation of Krithika.

Today, the Western world acknowledges the constellations that originated in Mesopotamia more than 5000 years ago. Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek astronomers also made contributions during the classical ages of their cultures. In 1928 the International Astronomical Union (IAU) determined which constellations would be officially recognized. Of the 88 constellations on the IAU list 48 were identified in ancient times with just the naked eye. The remaining 40 were added in more recent centuries.

The IAU also defined each constellation's border so that the groups represent not only star patterns but specific regions of the sky.

These borders ensured that each star would be restricted to only one constellation. Constellations change over time as the stars in them move through space. The dipper part of the Big Dipper in the constellation Ursa Major (Great Bear) appeared much squarer in the past. Now the dipper's bowl is starting to elongate. About 100,000 years from now. It will look more like a soup bowl with a handle.

GALAXIES: The universe contains more than 125 billion galaxies, immense aggregations of stars, gas, dust, and dark matter bound by their own gravity. Galaxies vary in size, luminosity, and mass. The largest are a million times brighter than the faintest. Galaxies take one of three primary shapes: elliptical, spiral, and Irregular. Many galaxy names begin with the letter M followed by a number. This naming tradition began when French astronomer Charles Joseph Messier (1730-1817) cataloged stellar bodies and gave them numbers in sequence following an M for his name. Galaxies often have a common name as well. M3 (above), for example, is also known as the Andromeda galaxy. Our solar system resides in an arm of the Milky Way, a spiral galaxy some 100,000 light-years long from end to end. Our sun and planets revolve once around the center of the Milky Way every 250 million years. Scientists studying galaxies have recently discovered that they are not randomly distributed but rather clump together in clusters,

lined up at the same distance from one another, forming a kind of great wall. The Milky Way belongs to a cluster called the Local Group, which contains the Andromeda and M33 galaxies as well as about 35 dwarf galaxies. "Local" is a relative term here. The cluster's diameter is more than 10 million light-years, which means our neighbors in the Local Group are millions of light-years from the Milky Way. Gravity holds the galaxies together even as clusters, groups, and individual galaxies fly away from each other as the universe expands.

THE MANY DIFFERENT SHAPES OF

GALAXIES: Investigators have collected images of galaxies as far as 10 to 13 billion light years away. Galaxies are classified according to the shape they present to telescopes on Earth or in space. A small galaxy can have a diameter of a few thousand light-years and contain a billion stars or fewer, while a large galaxy can have a diameter of half a million light-years and contain more than a trillion stars. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is a medium-size galaxy: It is estimated to have a diameter of about 100,000 light-years and to contain about 100-400 billion stars.

BLACK HOLES & DARK MATTERS: What we can observe in our sky — planets, stars, gas, dust, galaxies, nebulae, asteroids, meteors, and more — is a small fraction of what exists. Bright matter, the visible stuff of the universe, forms only about

a sixth of its mass. What forms the rest, and how do we know it's there?

Scientists know there must be more out there than meets the eye because the unseen substance has gravity and appears to be holding together the parts of the universe that we can see, galaxies in particular. Because the unseen matter does not emit radiation, scientists call it dark matter.

Believed to constitute about 95 percent of the universe's total mass, dark matter and dark energy may comprise unfathomable numbers of tiny subatomic particles. Candidates for dark matter include Cold Dark Matter (CDM), sluggish elementary particles; Weakly Interacting Massive Particles (WIMPs), heavy hypothetical particles that rarely interact with other matter; and Massive Compact Halo Objects (MACHOs), known objects such as planets, neutron stars, and white dwarfs that are presumed to be in the

halos of galaxies.

WHAT IS A BLACK HOLE: A black hole forms when a large, dying star collapses? The gravity created by this condensing matter completely overpowers any outward forces, including light. Although a black hole emits no light, its presence is detectable by radio astronomy equipment. It's extremely strong gravitational pull sucks gas and dust toward itself, forming a whirling accretion disk around the hole. The disk heats any matter that crosses it, emitting x-rays (opposite).

This is about the Universe, in which we are living, where the millions of hidden secrets are embedded which the human being has to still explore and take advantage for his comfortable existence in this Planet Earth. **SOURCE: Internet & National Geographic Answer Book.**

I'd rather fight 100 structure fires than a wildfire. With a structure fire you know where your flames are, but in the woods it can move anywhere; it can come right up behind you.

WHERE IS THE TINY SPARROW?

By
NAGABHUSHANAM DASARI

The concrete jungles where crows couldn't enter
Disappointed fallow world in swirling danger lights
In feelings less mechanical monster lives
In roaring heartening sounds of bottle field
Where are the lovely chirping sounds of little sparrows?
Where are the sharing happy dancing sounds of their wings?
Where are the tied hanging maize corns on the edge of drooping roofs?
Where are the earthen water bowels in front of houses?
To satisfy the thirsty, beautiful sparrows?

All the bald heads of multi-storied buildings
Ruthlessly occupied by spiny Eiffel tower antennas
The electromagnetic "*brahmasthras*" are aimed at small sparrows
The tiny lives are in suffocating state of breathlessness
In spite of striving efforts they are turning into micro ashes
Before becoming as dolls in the shelves of museums
Let us awaken the tender touch of human beings
Which is sleeping in, selfish deep burrows of rigidity
Please extend everyone hands like devotion of squirrels
to protect safely the entire family of sparrows
From hazardous whirl wind pollution furrows

(On the occasion of 20th March World Sparrow's day)

THE RELEVANCE OF RUDIMENTARY KNOWLEDGE OF LAWS

By
V. V. Hari prasad

Ignorance of law is not an excuse. Basing on this tenet justice is dispensed. The state vested with the authority of formulation and enforcement of laws goes by and large by the letter of the law. In the process of having checks and balances in our democracy the theory of separation of powers was incorporated in the Constitution of India in the form of Executive Legislature and Judiciary. In view of the judicial activism that has been prevalent in India for quite some time there has been a check on the arbitrary attitude of both the executive and legislature in our country.

It is desirable that all the educated people if not the literate of India should keep themselves abreast of the changing laws of the land from time to time more so in case of criminal justice system. We come across number of senior citizens of our country who were well placed both socially and economically in the society during their hay days being ignored or looked down upon by their children or relatives during the periods of evenings of their lives. The enactment passed by Indian parliament in case of welfare of senior citizens should be known to every senior citizen of India. In the same manner

now a day when most of us have to deal with software technology and digital economy we have to have the fundamental knowledge of Cyber laws and its intricacies. As already discussed above criminal or civil justice is dispensed basing on the law of the land and every citizen should keep himself well informed of the limitations of the police in dealing with the accused as Indian judiciary functions basing on the dictum that Let 99 accused go unpunished not even single innocent shall be punished. I remember that the other day one of the top Bollywood film directors of India who basically hails from Andhra Pradesh while giving an interview on one of the popular news channels exuded confidence while informing the interviewer that he knew law better than number of press persons while adding that in India even blasphemy was not an offence. On number of occasions when the media shouted from the roof tops that he was going to be arrested on some grounds in a couple of days the calculations of the enthusiastic and sensationalizing media always went wrong and

he came out of the controversial situations unscathed because he knew law better than the media personnel.

Under these circumstances the following information which deals with the matters related to senior citizens, Cyber laws and the limitations of the police in dealing with the accused under the protection of fundamental rights enunciated in the Constitution of India is elaborated upon to keep the citizens informed of the intricacies of such important legal provisions

THE MAINTENANCE AND WELFARE OF PARENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS ACT, 2007

Intention of the Act: Traditional norms and values of the Indian society laid stress on providing care for the elderly. However, due to withering of the joint family system a large number of elderly are not being looked after by their family. Consequently many older persons, particularly widowed women are now forced to spend their twilight years all alone and are exposed to emotional neglect and to lack physical and financial support. This clearly reveals that aging has become a major social challenge and there is a need to give more attention to the care and protection of the older persons. Though the parents can claim maintenance under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the procedure is both time-consuming as well as expensive. Hence, there is

a need to have simple, inexpensive and speedy provisions to claim maintenance for parents.

2) "Senior citizen" means any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above and includes parents whether or not a senior citizen. A senior citizen including parent who is unable to maintain himself from his own earnings or out of the property owned by him, shall be entitled to make an application Under Section 5 of the Act in case of —

(i) Parent or grand-parent, against one or more of his children not being a minor;

(ii) A childless senior citizen, against such of his relative referred to in clause (g) of Section 2.

In Section 2 (g) "relative" means any legal heir of the childless senior citizen who is not a minor and is in possession of or would inherit his property after his death. (Section 4).

3) Action to be taken on making application

On an application is made, the Tribunal shall take cognizance. It can also take *cognizance suo motu*. The State Government shall constitute for each Sub-Division one or more Tribunals for the purpose of adjudicating and deciding upon the order of maintenance. Such Tribunal shall be presided over by an Officer not below the rank of a Sub-Divisional Officer of a State. When two or more Tribunals are constituted, the State Government may regulate distribution of

business among them.

The Tribunal may, during the pendency of the proceeding make or refer a monthly allowance to be paid by such children or relative as interim maintenance payable by such children or relative. (Section 5 (2)).

To determine the amount of maintenance, the Tribunal shall give notice of application to the children or relative and give the parties an opportunity of being heard.

Such application shall be disposed of within a period of ninety days. (Section 5(4)) Such allowance for the maintenance and expenses for the proceedings shall be payable from the date of the order, or, if so ordered, from the date of the application for maintenance or expenses of proceedings, as the case may be. If, children or relative so ordered, fail, without sufficient cause to comply with the order, the Tribunal may for every breach of the order, issue a warrant for levying the amount due in the manner provided for levying fines, and may sentence such person for the whole, or any part of each month's allowance for the maintenance and expenses of proceedings, as the case may be, remaining unpaid after the execution of the warrant, to imprisonment for a term which may extend' to one month or until payment if sooner made whichever is earlier.

Transfer of property is avoided in certain Circumstances.

Where any senior citizen, after the commencement of this Act, has transferred way of gift or otherwise, his property, subject to the condition that the transferee shall provide the basic amenities and basic physical needs to the transferor and such transferee refuses or fails to provide such amenities and physical needs, the said transfer of property shall be deemed to have been made by fraud or coercion or under undue influence and shall at the option of the transferor be declared void by the Tribunal.

Offences for exposing or abandoning senior citizens

Whoever, having the care or protection of senior citizen leaves, such senior citizen in any place with the intention of wholly abandoning such senior citizens, shall be Punished with imprisonment up to three months or fine up to Rs.5000/- or with both.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal procedure, 1973, every offense under this Act cognizable and bailable and it shall be tried summarily by a Magistrate.

Important provisions of Cyber laws:

DATA THEFT

According to the IT Act, 2000 as amended by

Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008, Crime of data theft under Section 43(b) is stated as If any person without permission of the owner or any other person who is in charge of a computer, computer system or computer network - downloads, copies or extracts any data, or information from such computer, computer system or computer network including information or data held or stored in any removable storage medium..

Illustration

Ms Riya visits her cousin Ms Ruchi's house, Riya finds the desktop computer switched on, when Riya surfs into the hard disk, she likes certain pdf files, Riya fraudulently copies certain files to her pendrive without Ruchi's permission, and this act of Riya constitutes crime of data theft.

Under The IT Act, 2000 as amended by Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008, Section 43(b) read with Section 66 is applicable and under Section 379, 405 & 420 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 are also applicable. The victim can file a criminal complaint in the nearest Police Station where the above crime has been committed or where he comes to know about the said crime. He also can claim compensation upto Rs. 5 crores with the adjudicating officer of the state and compensation above Rs. 5 crores with the civil court of the relevant jurisdiction.

Punishment

If crime is proved under IT Act, accused shall be punished for imprisonment which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to five lakh rupees or both.

CREDIT CARD FRAUD

Credit card fraud is a wide ranging term for theft and fraud committed using a credit card or any similar payment mechanism as a fraudulent source of funds in a transaction. The purpose may be to obtain goods

without paying, or to obtain unauthorised funds from account. There are billions of rupees lost annually by consumers who have credit card and calling card numbers stolen from online databases.

Law Applicable

Under The IT Act, 2000 as amended by Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008, Section 43(a), 43(b) & 43(g) read with Section 66 is applicable, and Section 420, 467, 468 & 471 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 are also applicable. The victim can 'register a complaint in the nearest police station where the above crime has been committed or where he comes to know about the said crime.

The complainant can also file for a compensation up to 10 lakhs with banking ombudsman or compensation up to 6 crores

with the adjudicating officer of the state and compensation above 5 crores with the civil court of the relevant jurisdiction. He can also opt for arbitration.

Punishment

If crime is proved under IT Act, accused shall be punished for imprisonment which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to five lakh rupees or both.

Illustration

At the Kings International hotel in Mumbai four tech-savvy youngsters from Andheri, two of them software engineers, got together to earn a quick money and ended up siphoning off over 3 lakh of citizen's money. The mastermind of the gang was 19-year-old Leo Paul. A second-year engineering student at a Bandra college teamed with Akash Kamble, a 19-year-old Lokhandwala resident and ordered the card-reader or credit card skimming device which can store data of 12 credit cards from USA, using the Internet, since it was directly not available in India.

The boys befriended a waiter at Kings International hotel at Juhu to take their plan ahead. Every time someone ate a meal in the hotel and paid by credit card, the waiter would discreetly swipe it through the magnetic card-reader, which is no more than 6-inches long and

can be stored in the pocket. Once the waiter has done, he would hand over the device to Paul who would download the data from the cards on to Kamble's personal computer. The duo would then feed the data into blank cards available in the grey market. The cards were now ready to be used in shopping malls and theatres or to withdraw money from an ATM. The boys forged information from more than 22 cards in this manner

Criminal justice system:

The limitations of the police in dealing with the accused:

The Supreme Court formulated following guidelines regarding arrest with a purpose to enforce the safeguards guaranteed under the Constitution; in the case of ***Shri D.K. Basil v State of West Bengal***:

- 1) Arresting or interrogating officer should wear clear identification and name tags with their designations. Those particulars have to be recorded in register.
- 2) Officer should prepare a memo, which has to be attested by one witness, countersigned by arrestee containing date and time of arrest.
- 3) Arrested person shall be entitled to have one friend or relative or other person being informed as soon as practicable about his arrest, place of detention.

- 4) If the next friend lives outside the district or town, the time place of arrest and venue of custody of an arrestee must be notified by police through the Legal Aid Organisation in the District and the police station of the area concerned within a period of 8 to 12 hours after the arrest.
- 5) Arrested must be made aware of this right to have someone informed.
- 6) Entry must be made in the diary at the place of detention along with the name of next friend of arrested and names and particulars of the police officials in whose custody the arrestee is.
- 7) On his request, the arrestee has to be examined at the time of his arrest any major or minor injuries present on his body and must be recorded as inspection memo which must be signed both by the arrestee and the police officer affecting the arrest and its copy provided to arrestee.
- 8) Arrestee should be subjected to medical examination every 4 hours of his detention by a

doctor on the panel approved by Director Health Services State of Union Territory.

- 9) Copies of all documents should be sent to concerned magistrate for record.

- 10) Fact of arrest should be informed within 12 hours, to police control room which has to display it on conspicuous notice board.

- 11) Failure to comply with the requirements render the official liable for departmental action and also for punishment for contempt of court and the proceedings of contempt of court may be instituted in any High Court.

Conclusion: There is an imperative need for all the educated citizens of India to be well informed of the basic laws of the land lest they would be caught unawares on number of occasions in our day to day lives which is more so in case of all law abiding citizens

(The author is a retired Deputy conservator of forests from Telangana is an advocate and a consultant in IFB Govt. of India, Hyderabad.)

“A house you can rebuild; a bridge you can restring; a washed-out road you can fill in. But there is nothing you can do about a tree but mourn.”

CLINICAL APPROACH OF TREE TRANSPLANTING TECHNIQUES – AN OVERVIEW

By

Dr. B. Palanikumaran Dr. G. Chandrashekar Reddy and Yashpal Kshirsagar

Introduction: Tree establishment and success stories of transplanting depends on various sequence of event viz., tree size, type of root system, shoot and root pruning methods, health of the tree, distance of transportation, season of transplanting, soil and local weather condition at both sides, pre and post transplantation care of the tree, long period of observation and risk management. Tree transplanting is an old practice which has been employed to rescue, save, or salvage certain trees, which are under threat of cutting or removal or damage due to various reasons. Such of those trees which are under threat and which also assume importance due to their rarity of occurrence, species type, endangered status, size, age, location, religious importance, medicinal value, emotional value, aesthetic value, etc., can be considered for Transplanting. Again, though the practice is not new, the technique cannot be applied for all species of all ages at all places. It cannot be done on a large scale basis, also. Hence, this technique can be employed for a small scale, exigent situation and site specific reasons where few trees of immense importance can be tried for Transplanting.

Methodology: The entire process of the Tree transplanting experiment has to be planned as

below: (These methods are applicable for One meter and above girth class trees also. Changes can be adopted as per local conditions and size and girth of the tree).

Various teams should be formed like, Tree treatment team, Transport team, Machine/material procurement team, Logistics team, Liaison team etc., with designated work chart and responsibilities.

- Various Agricultural scientists (for plant protection measures), NGOs, related Departments, agencies should be contacted to gather information on the subject and the field techniques, procurement of machines, plant care details, etc.

- After gathering all the required information, the list of trees suitable for transplanting has to be prepared and the suitable locations should be identified for their transplanting.

- The points to be kept in mind are that the tree undergoes several shocks during its removal from the original site, like, Root injury, exposure to Sun, detachment from mother soil, lack of moisture, infection, injury during transport, alien new soil conditions, duration of travel, etc.,

- The machines like JCBs, 10 to 20 tone capacities Crane, Long vehicle for transport,



GreenAP Mobile App



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

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



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



Sri N.Sridhar, I.A.S., C&MD, SCCL inaugurating Telanganaku Harithaharam in Singareni



- SCCL contributes 10% of country's total coal production. SCCL achieved the highest ever coal dispatches of 64.6 M.T. during 2017-18.
- SCCL planted 3.72 crores of saplings in 10,932 Hectars of land (up to July 2017)

Rehabilitation of RF land (Non mandated)

- SCCL honoured with "Indira Gandhi Vriksha Mitra Award - 2004", "Teri Corporate Environment Award - 2004", "Golden Peacock Environment Management Award-2005" and "Golden Peacock Innovative Product/ service award -2015" and many more for it's Eco & Environmental friendly mining.
- Sri N.Sridhar I.A.S., C&MD SCCL honoured with "Asia Pacific Enterprenuer Ship Award - 2018" and "Outstanding Leadership Award - 2018".



THE SINGARENI COLLIERIES COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government Company)
Telangana State

Lorries, Ropes, Gunny bags, packing materials, Water tankers, etc., have to be procured. Almost all these machines are required in two sets, one at original Tree site (for lifting the tree) and the other at the Receptor/Transplanting site (for inserting into pit and making it stand firm).

- Adequate men force at both sites to facilitate smooth handling of the tree while lifting, loading, transport, transplanting, etc.
- Support from other departments like, District administration, Health department, Police, Telecom, Electricity, Municipality, Agriculture, etc., is essential.

After procuring all the information about pre & post care details and identifying the target trees, receptor site, suitable season, etc., the operation can be scheduled for execution.

Treatment at the receptor/transplanting site:

The receptor site should be selected in such a way that it is very close or almost similar to the original site conditions and the treatment should start at least 5 to 7 days prior to transplanting. A 3x3x3 M or 2x2x2 M or any convenient sized pit is to be dug depending on the size (girth & height) of the tree and its intact root ball that is being transported along with the tree. The

thumb rule is, the transplanted tree should have at least Two feet extra space/radius in the pit, after its placing in the pit which helps the roots to establish in a well-treated, nutrient rich, infection free soil. This pit should be watered daily, proper drainage given and cut surfaces may be drenched with antifungal/antibacterial/ anti-termite/dung slurry or solutions. After three days, the pit should be filled to a height of One meter (from bottom of the pit) with adequate good quality organic manure/vermi-compost/ FYM and Mother Soil or good local soil. Mother soil is the soil from the original site of the Target tree that is to be transplanted. This will help the transplanted tree to find a comfortable root zone. Then continue watering till last day but care should be taken to keep the soil well drained.

A. Tree transporting: After the tree is loaded on to the vehicle, it should be tied to the vehicle at suitable points to keep it in good hold and position during travel. The roots and the soil ball should be constantly kept covered with wet gunny bags and watered to reduce the impact of exposure to sun and desiccation. The Mother soil from the root zone should be loaded into

Name	Chemical	Active Ingredient	Quantity per Tree
Anti-termite	Chlorpyrifos 20% EC	4 ml / 3 L water	8 L
Antibacterial	Bactinash 200	17 gms / 3 L	2 L
Antifungal	Corbondazim (Bavistin)	2 gms / 3 L water	15 L
Root hormone	IBA	20 ppm	20 L
Vermi-compost	—	15-25 g / pit	

the vehicle, covering the gaps so that the tree gets the required cushion during travel. This soil can be used for filling into the pit at the transplanting site. The tree branches can be tied, without breaking them, to enable smooth movement. The vehicle should move at such a speed which should not cause any injury to the tree. All the overhead cables/wires/obstacles should be kept free all along the route. The traffic police should facilitate smooth movement of the vehicle. The Health officers and the Ambulance services should be kept at site at all times during the operation to attend any emergency.

B. Tree insertion into pit: When the tree arrives at the transplanting site, about another 0.5 meter height of mother soil is put into the pit along with vermi-compost. Now, the 3.0 M deep pit has become 2.0 M deep. Water the pit adequately to keep the soil moist. Make the tree erect with the help of Crane and keep its balance by using the ropes already tied to it. Now, slowly lower the tree into the pit and with the help of the ropes, bring it to the centre of the pit and insert it orienting to its original East –West position. The gunny bags covering the root ball can be removed. There should be at least two feet space all around the edge of the root ball and the walls of the pit.

C. Tree transplanting: Now, the tree has occupied almost One meter height in the pit leaving only One meter space above its trunk base (Collar). Fill the pit with Mother soil and already stored good soil to a height of about One meter above the ground level. Keep watering

till good compaction is achieved. Now, there is One meter mother soil below the roots of the tree and another one meter above it. Over and above this, there is another One meter of good soil (above ground level). This will ensure providing proper balance/compaction to the tree.

D. Post-Care: Watering needs to be done frequently depending on the season, type of soil, drainage and water quality. But, proper drainage has to be ensured and mulching will help a lot. Plant protection measures can be taken depending on the pest/disease. Growth regulators can be used if necessary. Mild pruning of those branches which are injured or damaged during transport may be done, to avoid further infection. Apply Dung paste or Neem paste to the abrasions or injured portions of the trunk or branches. Water spray can be given if the weather is very harsh. Fertilizers and nutritional supplements can be given to enhance its establishment.

Conclusion: This article recommend that treatment for tree before and after transplanting, tree lifting procedure and transportation from one place to another place. Perhaps issue of legal clearance from government departments for successful tree transplanting. Finally, transplant success and establishment in the landscape is dependent on a chain of events from propagation, to maintenance on the job site, to transplanting techniques, to aftercare.

POLICY VS POLICY

Government's afforestation schemes are undermining the Forest Rights Act ISHAN KUKRETI

The Union government's latest forest survey, "India State of Forest Report 2015", states that forest cover in the country increased by 3,775 Sq.km, between 2013 and 2015. Experts attribute this rise to the inclusion of private farm forests in the definition of forest cover.

Afforestation is currently being done under the Green India Mission (launched under the National Action Plan on Climate Change), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), National Afforestation Programme (NAP), National Rural Livelihood Mission, Integrated Watershed Management Programme and Programmes run by the National Rain fed Area Authority and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

However, the idea of afforestation – as good as it sounds – is becoming a problem for forest dwelling communities across the country. This is evident in the way the CAMPA plantations are uprooting communities in the name of afforestation. It seems the forest departments are taking the discourse around forest dwelling communities back to viewing them as

"encroachers".

In one such case, 19 thatched huts belonging on the Korwa tribal community in Sijo village, Bhanderia district of Jharkhand, were bulldozed by the state's forest department on October 7, 2016. In the same month, four houses were bulldozed in Jamwati village and 10 in Marada village in the same state. This act of the forest department would have been legally justified, though unacceptable on humanitarian grounds, if the department was acting within the law. But it was not.

The hutments bulldozed were set up on lands that were being claimed by the Korawas under the Schedule Tribe and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, (FRA), 2006. Unless the claims were settled, the forest department had no authority to raze the houses. "No member of a forest dwelling scheduled tribe or other traditional forest dweller shall be evicted or removed from the land under his occupation till the recognition and verification process is complete", section 4(5) of FRA says.

WASTE OF SPACE

.Alliance –I government gave them what

Independence had failed to—land rights—by enacting FRA. The Act recognized the land rights of the communities living in forests, legally ending the tutelage of the forest department that they were living under. Since 2006, one would think that things must have come a long way. However, the reality doesn't live up to the vision of FRA. While enacted more than a decade ago, only about 3 percent of the claims made by the communities under the Act have been settled. The cases from Jharkhand are not the only ones. All over the country the forest departments have been violating FRA and denying forest dwellers their rights. The latest measure being employed by the forest departments in undermining FRA is the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Act of 2016. CAF mandates compensatory afforestation in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purposes, like mining. For this purpose, money is charged from the agency diverting land and is used to plant trees.

Studies on forest rights by Community Forest Rights – Learning and Advocacy (CFR –LA), an informal network of organizations fighting for forest rights, establishes that the bare minimum estimated potential forest area over which Community Forest Rights (CFR) can be recognized in India is 34.6 million hectare (ha). This is more than half the forests cover of the

country. But in a country like India, land to carry out this afforestation is not easy to find. The result is that CAF comes in direct conflict with FRA. Even in Jharkhand, the land was cleared to set up plantations under CAF.

Similar incidents where FRA provisions have been completely ignored have been reported from 10 states. Various non-profits working in the field of forest rights have observed a trend of dilution of FRA by imposing CAF plantations on lands that were either owed by communities or individuals under FRA or on lands on which the rights of people were to be settled. Through field visits to forests, CFR-LA has found various ways in which forest departments have been obstructing communities from exercising rights over their legally acquired land. The data collected by Vasundhara, a non-profit working on tribal rights in Odisha as part of CFR-LA, shows that CAF plantations have been set up in 10 villages in Lanjigarh, Thuamul Rampur and Junagarh blocks in the Kalahandi district. In these blocks, all but one village has applied for CFR under FRA. The land on which these plantations have been set up on have unsettled rights claims.

"In all these villages, plantations have done over the CFR lands of communities. In seven villages, plantations have also been done over

Individual Forest Rights lands, Apart from one instance, the gram sabhas weren't consulted before diverting the land for compensatory afforestation", says Sanghamitra Dubey of Vasundhara, who has been recording instances of compensatory afforestation in the state.

Apart from disregarding rights of the forest dwelling communities, these plantations in Odisha have another bias – 60 percent of the plantations are of commercially beneficial species, shows data collected by Vasundhara. These species are of no use to communities because their access to these plantations is restricted. The restriction comes in the form of either fencing the plantation area off or its monitoring by the forest department. By planting commercial varieties of trees and blocking access to forest, the forest departments are denying forest dwelling communities their rightful means of sustenance.

In another instance, in February, the Pidikia village gram sabha had to write to the state's Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste Development Department in the face of plantation done on forest land claimed under CFR. While the claims were pending the forest department planted 60,000 teak saplings and fenced off 300 ha. "The people in the village are dependent on the forest which has Mahua trees.

After the petition of the gram sabha, the forest department allowed people to access the forest and even said that the teak belongs to them. But teak is a regulated species and people cannot sell timber under FRA" says Sanghamitra Dubey of Vasundhara.

In Uttarakhand too, the government is planning to start compensatory afforestation on Forest council land, which is owned and managed by the community. In Chhattisgarh, at least five villages are facing the burnt of compensatory afforestation. In one of the villages, Arjuni in the Kasdol block of Raipur district, the plantations set up under CAMPA and MGNREGA have blocked access of the local Gond and Bhinjwara communities to the cremation ground. Their grazing rights, explicitly granted by FRA, also stand violated. In essence, these developments seem to be taking the fight for rights over land by forest dwelling communities to the pre-FRA era, making mockery of the entire law and the struggles that have gone into making it a reality.

This article was published in "STATE OF INDIA's Environment 2018" Down to Earth annual. Hope it is of some interest to readers of Vanapremi. - M. Padmanabha Reddy

Birth Day 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		
1.	D.Satyanarayana	11-03-1949	13. Gadamsetty Rama Moahan Rao 29-03-1957
2.	S.Ashiah	15-03-1949	11. G.Satish 29-03-1984
3.	D.V.Jayaram Prasad	15-03-1942	12. B.Venkataramana 31-03-1960
4.	S.M.Rasheedullah	15-03-1939	13. V.Srinivasa Rao 01-04-1965
5.	I.Janardhan	23-03-1954	14. Ch.Prakasa Rao 02-04-1963
6.	K.Muralidhar Rao	01-04-1946	15. Y.Srinivasa Reddy 03-04-1971
7.	B.Rangiah	05-04-1946	16. Chalumari Santhi Swaroop 05-04-1968

S.No.	Name of Serving Officers	D.O.B.	Secretary
1.	B.Shafiullah	13-03-1976	
2.	Smt.Shivani Dogra	17-03-1980	
3.	Vinay Kumar	26-03-1968	
4.	Ravi Sankara Madugula	07-03-1967	
5.	P.Srinivasa Rao	10-03-1966	
6.	B.Chandrasekhar	13-03-1962	
7.	B.Dhanunjaya Rao	15-03-1960	
8.	Ch.Nagabushanam	15-03-1967	
9.	R. Ravinder	24-03-1962	
10.	K.Ravinder	27-03-1961	
11.	D.Phani Kumar Naidu	27-03-1988	
12.	M.Guru Prabhakar	28-03-1965	



NEWS AND NOTES

Climate change impact: Royal Bengal Tiger will vanish along with Sundarbans soon! :-

Sundarbans the iconic Bengal tiger's last coastal stronghold and the world's biggest mangrove forest — could be destroyed by climate change and rising sea levels over the next 50 years, scientists say. Spanning more than 10,000 square kilometers, the Sundarbans region of Bangladesh and India is the biggest mangrove forest on Earth, and also the most critical area for the endangered Bengal tiger, researchers said.

"Fewer than 4,000 Bengal tigers are alive today," said Bill Laurance, a professor at the James Cook University in Australia.

"That's a really low number for the world's biggest cat, which used to be far more abundant but today is mainly confined to small areas of India and Bangladesh," Laurance said.

"What is most terrifying is that our analyses suggest tiger habitats in the Sundarbans will vanish entirely by 2070," said Sharif Mukul, an assistant professor at Independent University Bangladesh.

The researchers used computer simulations to assess the future suitability of the low-lying Sundarban region for tigers and their prey species, using mainstream estimates of climatic trends from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Their analyses included factors such as extreme weather events and sea-level rise.

"Beyond climate change, the Sundarbans are

under growing pressure from industrial developments, new roads, and greater poaching," said Laurence.

"So, tigers are getting a double whammy — greater human encroachment on the one hand and a worsening climate and associated sea-level rises on the other," he said.

However, the researchers emphasize that there is still hope.

"The more of the Sundarbans that can be conserved — via new protected areas and reducing illegal poaching — the more resilient it will be to future climatic extremes and rising sea levels," said Laurence.

"There is no other place like the Sundarbans left on Earth. We have to look after this iconic ecosystem if we want amazing animals like the Bengal tiger to have a chance of survival," he said.

Plants that don't need soil or water to feature at Chelsea Flower Show in bid to attract Millennial gardeners: -

Plants that require neither soil nor water to grow will make their debut at this year's Chelsea Flower Show as organizers hope to encourage young novices into gardening.

Photos of air plants displayed neatly in glass terrariums are expected to be uploaded all over social media after the country's top horticulturists said their low maintenance made them a good match for millennials.

Houseplants in general are becoming more and

more fashionable among young people, who are increasingly strapped for time and space in their homes.

This year air plants are expected to lead the way because they require minimal attention, can fit in small spaces and brighten up house shares and flats. They only require occasional misting and sunlight.

A whole section at the Chelsea Flower Show will be dedicated to them. Guy Barter, the chief horticulturalist at the RHS, said: "Air plants are compact, exotic and stylish, making them a great addition to rooms of any size.

"As relatively low maintenance plants, they are a good match for young novices taking the first steps into the wonderful world of gardening.

"These strange and outlandish plants are a great introduction to the wonders of botany and fit very well into any sized space.

Courses on how to assemble terrariums are becoming popular Credit: Joshua McCullough
"People aren't born to be gardeners. Now space and time are often short, gardening courses fit the bill nicely.

"They are often included in glass bowls or terrariums, which are ideal for their warmth and humidity needs as well as being attractive and offering the chance to put your own stamp on how they are displayed."

Last year, the charity provided Andrew Gavin, who specializes in the plant, with a bursary to travel the world and discover new examples of the species.

Mr Gavin, who will be showcasing his finds in the Great Pavilion in May, said: "Air Plants are booming in popularity due to the fact that they are so versatile and easy to grow.

"You can just hang them from a piece of wire or place them on your windowsill, you can tie them on to drift wood to mimic how they grow in the wild or you can arrange them on an ornament or among semi-precious stones or sea shells.
"Mist them with rainwater and place them in a position where they get bright light or half a day of sunlight."

His unusual collection of plants includes those that are easy to grow, have scented flowers and plants that change colour.

Popular varieties of air plants include the silvery green *tillandsia usneoides*, which produces small, fragrant yellow flowers, and the *tillandsia xerographica* which has color-changing leaves that go from silvery green to blush-pink in bright light.

They are typically found in the West Indies, Mexico and much of Central and South America, and grow well on shells and rocks.

Terrarium workshops across the UK have started to spring up in anticipation of the trend, which teaches curious gardeners how to make self-contained ecosystems for air plants from £30 a session.

Other websites are also set to take advantage. One such company, Patch Plants, sells house plants including air plants in pretty, fashionable pots. It gives all its varieties human names and

delivers them to your door, encouraging customers to post their new “pets” on Instagram.

Virus-infected bacteria can aid in fight against climate change: - New York, Feb 18

(IANS) Viruses do not always kill their microbial hosts, say researchers who found that virus-infected bacteria could thus provide help in the fight against climate change.

The study showed that viruses develop a mutually beneficial relationship with their microbial hosts. The virus establishes itself inside the microbe and, in return, grants its host with immunity against similar viruses.

Understanding this relationship is beneficial not only for medical research and practical applications but also in marine biology as well as climate change, said Alison Buchan, Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

“Marine microbes are uniquely responsible for carrying out processes that are essential for all of earth’s biogeochemical cycles, including many that play a role in climate change,” she said.

The function of a microbial community is in large part dictated by its composition - what microbes are present and how many of each.

Within the community, bacteria compete with one another for resources. In the course of this fight, some bacteria produce antibiotics and use them against other types of bacteria. This kind of interaction has been known for some time.

But there is another fight strategy that scientists are now considering - bacteria might use the

viruses that infect them as weapons against other types of microbes, Buchan explained during the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, DC.

“We have recently discovered that while they are in the process of dying, microbes can produce new viruses that then go to attack their original invader. This is a form of resistance we had not observed before,” she said.

This type of competitive interaction, Buchan said, is important for stabilizing the size of microbial populations in marine systems. This balance may be crucial for biogeochemical processes, including many related to climate change, Buchan noted.

Pangolin, the most trafficked mammal in the world on verge of extinction: - New Delhi,

Feb 19: They may not make headlines like tigers, elephants or rhinos, but Indian pangolins, the most trafficked mammal in the world are critically endangered and need as much protection as those better known mammals.

Last year, TRAFFIC’s study had found nearly 6000 pangolins in illegal wildlife trade in India during the period 2009-2017, closing to nearly 650 pangolins every year since 2009. However, this is a conservative estimate as only a fraction of illegal wildlife trade is detected, and actual numbers are likely to be higher.

TRAFFIC’s study had also found the states of Manipur and Tamil Nadu as the hotspots for pangolin smuggling, based on the majority of

seizures that took place.

Most trafficked wild mammal

Globally, pangolins are considered the most trafficked wild mammal and their meat is consumed as a delicacy and as a “tonic food” because of its unproven yet alleged medicinal properties. Pangolin scales are traded in huge quantities for use in traditional Chinese medicines. Most of the poaching and smuggling across pangolin’s range countries is targeted for international markets in China and Southeast Asia, says WWF statement.

India home to two kind of species

India is home to two species of pangolins- Indian Pangolins *Manis crassicaudata* and Chinese Pangolins *Manis pentadactyla*. Hunting and trade in both the pangolin species is banned under India’s Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 while international trade is prohibited under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Despite this protection, the trade continues unabated threatening the future of species in the wild, the press release state

Dr Saket Badola, Head of TRAFFIC, India office said, “Improving an understanding about this elusive animal is important for curbing its illegal trade. Poaching and smuggling of pangolins and their body parts is driven by consumer demand and if buying can stop, supply of pangolins in illegal wildlife trade will cease to exist eventually.”

Pangolins often called scaly anteaters are considered farmer’s friends as they help to keep

a check on populations of ants and termites and help improve soil quality. Therefore, is it important that efforts are directed to stop poaching and smuggling of pangolins in India.

Pangolins and superstitions

But superstition is killing these gentle animals. They are poached for their scales, which are used in traditional medicine although science does not endorse this. Unscrupulous witch doctors known as “tantriks” are responsible for the large-scale slaughter of these creatures due to superstition.

80% decline in 5 years

Pangolins are used in Chinese medicine and the meat is considered an exquisite delicacy. Of its three main sub-species, the Chinese pangolin’s population has been in regular decline, down 94 percent over the past 60 years. The animal is described as “critically endangered” in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

But it is the Indian pangolin that is suffering the swiftest decline. The population of this animal is down by 80 percent in just the past five years, according to the WWF.

Australian rat becomes first mammal to go extinct due to climate change: - Melbourne

[Australia], Feb 20 (ANI): According to the Australian government, a small brown rat which lived on a tiny island off northern Australia is the world’s first mammal known to have become extinct due to “human-induced climate change.”

The mammal, Bramble Cay melomys, which had not been seen for almost 10 years, was initially pronounced extinct after “exhaustive” conservation efforts failed, a report by the University of Queensland in 2016 stated.

That finding was confirmed by the Australian government on Monday.

According to the 2016 report, the cause of its extinction was from rising sea levels over the past decade which led to major habitat loss.

Notably, the Bramble Cay melomys inhabited a small coral island on the Great Barrier Reef, measuring about five hectares (12 acres) and located in the Torres Strait, between Queensland state and Papua New Guinea.

Speaking to the members of the Senate, Geoff Richardson, assistant secretary for environment and energy, said that it’s not a decision to take lightly adding, “When something is listed as extinct it essentially ceases to get any protection.”

While several hundred of the rodents occupied the island in the 1970s, their population rapidly declined thereafter and by 1992, the population had dropped so sharply that the Queensland state government classified the species as endangered.

Critics of Australia’s conservation efforts say the extinction of the melomys highlights the lack of resources for preserving wildlife.

Greens party senator Janet Rice said that the melomys’ extinction is “an absolute tragedy,” adding, “Labor and Liberal’s addiction to coal is

the death warrant for many of our other threatened animals.”

Notably, Rice is chairing a senate inquiry into the country’s extinction crisis.

Tiger skinning: Whistleblower NGO named as main accused: - Forest and police officials

seized a tiger skin from a house in Mandamarri on January 24. Ramagundem police arrested 16 accused, including forest department animal trackers and Chandrapur based NGO ‘Tiger Hunting End’ representatives and brokers for allegedly killing and skinning a tiger.

Forest and police officials seized a tiger skin from a house in Mandamarri on January 24.

Giving details to media persons about the tiger skin case, while producing the 16 accused in Mancheri on Wednesday, Ramagundem police commissioner V. Satyanarayana, additional DCP N. Ashok Kumar and Mancheri DCP M. Venugopal Rao said that the police successfully investigated the case and brought all the accused, who were directly or indirectly involved in the case, to book.

Police had shown NGO president Kishore Pimple as the main accused in the case. In a surprise, the Task force team that investigated the case had shown the president of Chandrapur based NGO ‘Tiger Hunting End’ as an accused in the case.

The ‘Tiger Hunting End’ NGO’s representatives had only informed the forests officials about the poaching of a tiger and finding the tiger skin.

The police said that representatives of ‘Tiger

Hunting End' had contacted the poachers and wanted to buy the tiger skin but they did not do so as there were unable to pay the `30 lakhs demanded by the poachers for the skin.

The police said that then, the NGO representatives changed their track and informed the matter to the forest officials concerned about the tiger skin with the intention that they may get a reward from the forest department.

Forest department's animal trackers Mohammed Sharief and Thokala Rajalingu had allegedly informed about the movement of a tiger to the poachers, hoping that they will get their share if the poachers sell the tiger skin.

Poachers killed the tiger by electrocuting it in Shivvaram forest area in Jaipur mandal in Mancherial district.

Gujarat lost 204 lions in 2 years:-

Gujarat has lost 204 lions in two years, the government told the state assembly on Friday. In reply to a question, the government said the figure included 94 cubs. In all, 34 lions were lost to disease outbreaks, of which CDV and

babesiosis

were most deadly, having claimed 27 lives.

Forest minister Ganpat

Vasava

, replying to a question by Talala MLA Bhagabhai Barad about the number of

lion

and leopard deaths, said that 204 lions and 331

leopards died in 2017 and 2018.

Out of these, 177 lions died due to natural causes while 27 lions died of unnatural causes.

Of the leopards, 86 died of unnatural reasons.

AJT Johnsingh, ex-dean of Wildlife Institute of India and Indian

vertebrate

ecologist, said that the lion deaths is alarming.

"The figure is high considering the fact that majority births in Gujarat is due to in-breeding.

This exposes lions to a high risk of disease outbreak. It is time Gujarat government

expedited translocation of 20 lions to Kuno Palpur which is ready for the shift," said

Johnsingh. He warned that this is imperative to protect lions from a complete wipe-out in case

of a major disease outbreak.

Vasava said that Gujarat is set to take a final call on shifting lions locally to Barda in Porbandar

and an announcement will be made soon.

Lion expert and member of National Board for Wildlife H S Singh said the exact number of lions

in Gujarat is not known."If we consider 523 lions as per Lion Census 2015, 204 deaths in two years

come to 20%, which is high. But if we consider 600, the death rate comes to 15%, which is

acceptable," said Singh.

Principal chief conservator of forest A K Saxena said the rise in natural deaths can be attributed

to outbreak of CDV and babesiosis infection.

Tiger killers arrested in Kaziranga: - Sleuths of the Kaziranga national park in Assam have arrested seven poachers for their alleged involvement in killing a Royal Bengal tiger, forest officials said on Saturday.

Kaziranga Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Rohini Saikia said the guards arrested seven persons after they were found in possession of tiger skin and bones from Kahara range of the park.

"The tiger was killed in Korjutpahar area in Karbi Anglong. We believe that they killed the tiger about 25 days back and were trying to smuggle it out," Saikia said, adding they were produced in the court and taken in remand of the department for questioning.

Animal body parts are in huge demand in some of the South East Asian countries for their use in traditional medicines and some prevailing superstitions. Poachers here often target the one-horned rhino to smuggle the horn for a huge price in some countries.

The Assam government has taken several steps to stop the wildlife crimes, including poaching of rhinos and tigers leading to a substantial reduction in the crime.

Assam Forest and Environment Minister Parimal Shuklabaidya appreciated the effort of the frontline staff and officers of the department which led to the arrest of seven poachers, saying the government has removed political intervention in the department so that officers and staff can work freely.

A decomposed carcass of a leopard was found in Goregaon: - Forests and Wildlife Protection Society found close to a set inside Film

City near Goregaon a decomposed carcass of a leopard. The incident is expected to be a glaring case of poaching since 11 nails of the leopard were found missing, while the remains of a sambhar deer whose head and flesh were also missing were also found about 50 meters away from the leopard. Wildlife activists say the leopard must have struggled for at least four to five days with its abdomen portion stuck in the wire snare before dying. The activists have said this proves poaching continues unabated in the forests of Mumbai.

Tiger and tigress found poisoned to death near Nagpur, rangers suspect 'revenge killing' by locals: The bodies of a tiger and a tigress were found in Maharashtra's Umred-Karhandla-Paoni Wildlife Sanctuary near Nagpur. Forest rangers suspect that locals might have poisoned the animals to death as 'revenge'.

Villagers petrified after leopard and her cubs spotted drinking water in Gurugram fields: - Villagers of Nuh district were terrified after a leopard and her two cubs were sighted twice in the fields near Gurugram on the nights of Thursday and Friday. Villagers suspected that the animals could have been wandering in search of water Gurugram: Residents of Nuh district were terrified after a leopard and her two cubs were sighted twice in the fields near Firozpur Jhirka on the nights of Thursday and Friday. A team of Wildlife officials visited the area on Saturday morning to find fresh pug marks.

According to a report in Hindustan Times, villagers of Maholi, Dhadoli Kalan, Hasanpur Bilonda, Bhond and Sidhrawat informed the

wildlife officials after they spotted the wild beasts. Sarpanch of village Maholi, Harun, had had gone to his field on Friday when he sighted the mother leopard drinking water from a pit build for field work barely 20 meter away from him. Petrified Harun could neither breathe nor move for a few seconds. The leopard was followed by her two cubs. As soon as they left the field after drinking water, the sarpanch informed the wildlife officials.

Another farmer, Jan Mahommad, went to the fields at around 1:45 am for watering the plants and plucking vegetables to sell in the market the next morning. On spotting the animals, he spent the night in a nearby wheat field. When he heard villagers passing by, he decided to come out and return home.

Reportedly, villagers alleged that 25 goats and hens have been missing. Wildlife officials have

denied attack on domestic animals by a leopard.

Villagers suspected that the animals could have been wandering in search of water. However, wildlife officials said that there was enough water in the forest for the coming months. Officials think that since the villages were close to their natural habitat in Aravallis, the leopards might have crossed over.

Vinod Kumar, additional principal chief conservator of forests said that many leopards had been spotted over the past three months but none had been caught yet. Since the animals are roaming around in their natural habitat, they cannot be rescued or relocated. Therefore, the villagers have been asked not to enter the jungle and to take the cattle for grazing inside the village only.

THE INVISIBLE LABEL

Source: internet

A car ahead was moving like a turtle and not giving me way in spite of my continuous honking! I was on brink of losing my cool when I noticed the small sticker on the car's rear!

"Physically challenged; please be patient."

And that changed everything!!

I immediately went calm & slowed down!!

In fact, I got a little protective of the car & the driver!!!

I reached home a few minutes late, but it was ok!

And then it struck me.

Would I have been patient if there was no sticker?

Why do we need stickers to be patient with people!?

Will we be more patient & kind with others if people had labels pasted on their foreheads?

Labels like —

"Lost my job",

"Fighting cancer",

"Going through a bad divorce",

"Suffering Emotional abuse", "Lost a loved one",

"Feeling worthless",

"Financially broken"

....and more like these!!

Everyone is fighting a battle we know nothing about.

The least we can do is to be patient, kind & compassionate

Let us respect the Invisible Labels!!

LEGAL NOTES

Divya Pharmacy vs. Union of India & Ors

Divya Yog Mandir is a Trust, registered under the Registration Act 1908; and Divya Pharmacy is a business understanding of the Trust. The Pharmacy manufactures Ayurvedic medicines and Nutraceutical products at Haridwar in Uttarakhand State. The Trust and Pharmacy were founded by Swami Ramdev and Acharya Balakrishna. There was a demand raised by Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board (UBB) under the head "Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing" (FEBS) as per the Biological Diversity Act and the Regulations made under the Act.

The Divya Pharmacy felt that the demand is not legal as the Board has no powers and that the Divya Pharmacy is not bound to pay any contribution under FEBS. The contention is based on the following points:

1. Conservation of biodiversity;
2. Sustainable use of its components; and
3. Fair and Equitable Sharing of the benefit arising out of the biological reserves.

The Divya Pharmacy, aggrieved by the demand, filed Writ Petition No. 3437 of 2016 in the Uttarakhand High Court at Nainital. The case was heard by The Hon'ble Justice Sri Sudhanshu Dhulia. The court expressed the opinion that they are concerned with the adjudication of the third point which is "fair and equitable sharing". The

court adverted first to the definition of biological resources which means plants, animals and micro-organisms and their parts etc. The court further examined the scope of Section 3 which deals with persons not to undertake biodiversity related activities without prior approval of the Biodiversity Authority. The persons or entities under Sec. 3 have some "foreign elements", NRIs. FEBS means sharing of benefit as determined by the National Biodiversity Authority. Sec. 21 lays down terms and scope of determination of equitable benefit sharing by the National Biodiversity Authority.

The court found that FEBS has not been defined. Its definition is based on reference to other provisions of the statute but "payment of monetary compensation" is one of the means of grant of the benefit. As far as the Indian entity like the petitioner is concerned, the provisions of Sec. 7 are relevant which requires "prior intimation, to be given, that too not to NBA but to the State Biodiversity Board".

As the petitioner feels that it does not fall in any of the categories as defined under Sub-Sec. (2) of Sec. 3, there is no question of prior approval from NBA by the petitioner, and logically therefore there is no question of any

contribution under FEBS, as a contribution under FEBS comes only from those who require prior approval from NBA.

It is argued on behalf of the petitioner that, there is no provision in the Act where a contribution in the form of fee/monetary compensation, or a contribution in any manner to be given by an "Indian Entity". FBES is only for foreigners. The Counsel for petitioner submitted that the statute is clear about it.

For an Indian entity such as the petitioner, the provision is given in Sec. 7 of the Act which speaks of "prior intimation" to be given that too not to NBA but to the State Biodiversity Board concerned.

The counsel for petitioner also argued that the State Biodiversity Board (SBB) has no power to impose FBES in respect of persons referred in Sec. 7 of the Act 2002, i.e. in respect of "Indian Entities". Even NBA does not have powers to delegate these powers to SBB as the NBA itself is not authorized to impose FEBS on the "Indian Entity". It is emphatically contended that FEBS is only for foreigners.

It is argued on behalf of the State Biodiversity Board that the FEBS is one of the major objectives sought to be achieved by the Act 2002 and this has always to be seen as a continuation of the

long history of international conventions and treaties viz. Rio de Janeiro convention, and Johannesburg declaration and Nagoya protocol.

There is no distinction between foreign entity and Indian entity. Foreign entity has to take prior approval and Indian entity has to give prior intimation. As far as Indian entity is concerned, the regulation and control is given to SBB. Imposing FEBS is one of the regulatory functions of SBB.

The court, considering India's international commitments, took a broad based and purposive interpretation by interpreting the FEBS definition broadly so that both Indian and foreign entities were obligated to share benefits with the local and indigenous communities when a biological resource was exploited. It pressed upon the fact when the plain reading defeats the very purpose of the Act then it is the duty of the court to assign a proper meaning to it. The petitioner is bound to comply with the SBB's direction to share profits with the local and indigenous communities and consequently, the petition fails and it is dismissed on 21.12.2018.

Source: Internet

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