

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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EDITORIAL

Forests and wildlife in the Supreme Court An initiative to track the developments

For almost a decade now, two significant cases related to forests and wildlife have been and continue to be heard and argued in the country's apex court in New Delhi:

- The TN Godavarman Thirumulkpad vs Union of India and ors (WP No 202 of 1995) concerning the implementation of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 &
- The Centre for Environmental Law (CEL), WWF vs Union of India and ors (WP No 337 of 1995) concerning the issue of Settlement of Rights in National Parks and Sanctuaries and other issues under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

The cases are a part of what is termed as "continuing mandamus", whereby the Courts, rather than passing final judgments, keeps on passing orders and directions with a view to monitor the functioning of the executive. They have led to fundamental changes

in the pattern of forest governance and decision making, orders that have been far reaching in their implications and consequences and often controversial at the same time.

Examples of these include the decision that no forests, national park or wildlife sanctuary can be dereserved without the explicit permission of the apex court; no permission to any non-forestry activity in a national park or wildlife sanctuary even if prior approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been obtained; and the interim order dated 14.2.2000 prohibiting the removal of any dead or decaying trees, grasses, drift wood etc. from any area comprising a national park or sanctuary notified under Section 18 or 35 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Despite its wide impact and implication on forest and wildlife management and governance, most environment, human rights and activists groups, as also government and forest officials are often not fully aware of the latest developments or their full implications. Existing methods of reporting of Court's orders and judgments are generally inadequate and do not reach those concerned in time.

It is with this in mind that a joint initiative, *Forest Case Update* has been launched with the support of the Anand based Foundation for Ecological Security.

Forest Case Update, has been envisaged as a neutral entity that will keep a watch on the happenings in the Supreme Court and disseminate information on what is happening there. In some ways it is very much like the *Protected Area Update* itself, but with obvious differences in terms of the area of focus.

Availability of limited resources means that *Forest Case Update* will initially only be an electronic information service. With time and more resources, it is hoped to make the outreach wider and also diversify into a printed newsletter. Needless to say those behind the initiative are looking for partners and support. To receive the newsletter, more information or figure out ways by which the initiative can be taken forward please write to forestcase@yahoo.com

Henceforth the *PA Update* will also regularly carry excerpts from the issues of the *Forest Case Update* (see Page 21)

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Kolleru lake dries up; fisheries activities affected

Dry weather conditions have badly affected the Kolleru lake, which is reported to have dried up, resulting in an estimated loss of Rs. 4000 crores related to aqua culture and fisheries. According to official records, aqua culture here is spread over an area of two lakh acres producing over seven lakh metric tons of produce annually. Additionally, there are a number of unauthorised aqua culture farms here that are estimated to cover a larger area than the official ones.

The area is also receiving a large amount of sea water, which is polluting the ground water table and in turn affecting the drinking water availability here. Nearly 120 villages have been affected forcing them to depend on water tankers for their drinking water needs.

Three rivulets, the Tammileru, Ramileru and Budameru that bring flood waters to the lake have all dried up. The Tammileru and Ramileru had experienced floods in 1993, while the Budameru had experienced one in 1999. After that however, there has been no flooding here and this has left the rivulets completely dry.

Source: 'Dried-up Kolleru hits aqua culture in Krishna Delta', *Deccan Chronicle*, 28/04/04.

ASSAM

Pre-monsoon rains raise fear of floods in Kaziranga

Heavy pre-monsoon rains reported in the month of May had raised fears of flooding and the impacts on the Kaziranga National Park. The authorities in the park were said to have readied themselves to deal with the situation. Boats had been readied and small streams were cleared of debris, rotting foliage and broken branches to facilitate the free movement of water and boats. Rainfall was also being monitored on a daily basis.

There was also concern regarding the heavy erosion caused by the Brahmaputra in the northern part of the park. Last year, a forest camp in this part

had to be shifted due to erosion. This year, two camps, Banaswar and Debeswari, were in readiness to be shifted if required.

The annual floods take a heavy toll of the denizens of the park every year. In 2002, the annual floods had occurred in June and in 2003 in July. (Also see *PA Updates* 45, 44, 38, 34, & 29).

Source: 'Erosion by Brahmaputra now a serious threat; KNP authorities on alert to counter floods', *The Assam Tribune*, 20/05/04.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga National Park, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam.

Mahout training institute proposed in Manas NP

The dying art of elephant-capturing might get a new lease of life with the setting up of a mahout training institute at the Manas National Park. The institute will also try to solve some of the basic problems behind rising incidents of human-elephant conflict. The Assam State Government has sent a proposal for the institute to the Centre, and has also taken up initiatives on its own.

Following the restrictions on forestry operations and the ban on the transport of forest timber, nearly 1,500 elephants used in the operations were forced to become unemployed. With less demand for elephants in the forests, fewer elephants were required to be caught from the wild, and the art of elephant-trapping was on its way out. The proposed institute will be opened to keep alive this tradition of Assam.

The announcement of the proposed institute was made during a six-day workshop for mahouts that was being conducted at the Manas National Park under the guidance of celebrated elephant expert Parbati Barua. More than 15 mahouts and veterinary experts participated in the workshop and training program that was being held under the aegis of Project Elephant.

Source: Assam to have mahout training institute. *The Sentinel*, 26/05/04.

Contact: **Director**, Manas NP, PO Barpeta Rd. Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666 – 61413. Fax: 60253

Protection for Orang NP to be upgraded

The Assam Forest Department and the Darrang District Administration have decided to launch a joint

effort along with NGOs to curb poaching in the Orang National Park, the only home of the rhino on the northern bank of River Brahmaputra. The initiative will be launched with participation of the people living in the vicinity of the park.

The district administration has already decided to form at least five Village Defence Parties (VDP) in the fringe areas of the park for the protection of the park and its wildlife. It has also been decided to upgrade the Silbori Police Outpost adjacent to the park as a tourism and eco-friendly police post. This will be done by providing basic facilities, information and security arrangements to the tourists.

These decisions were taken after a visit to the park, a few days earlier, by Superintendent of Police, Darrang; DFO (Wildlife) and DFO (Territorial) to review the situation here. The SP had reportedly assured the park authorities of all assistance and co-operation in protecting the park.

Source: 'Plan to protect Orang National Park', *Sentinel*, 02/03/04.

Contact: **DFO, Mangaldoi Division**, Forest Department Bheberghat, Mangaldoi, Dist. Darrang, Assam.
Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhary, C/o The Assam Company Ltd., G Bordoloi Path, Bamuni Maidan, Guwahati 781021, Assam.
E-mail: badrul@sancharnet.in
Chief Wildlife Warden – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam.

GOA

Rs. 77 lakh for forest protection in state; another Rs. 48 lakh for the Wildlife Division

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has sanctioned a Rs. 77 lakh 'Integrated Forest Protection Scheme' for Goa. The sanction was granted in March earlier this year. The Centre will contribute Rs. 58 lakh for the scheme and the rest will come from the state. The activities to be undertaken under the scheme include measures to protect against fires, tree felling and poaching, particularly in the forests of the Cotigao, Mollem and Bondla Wildlife Sanctuaries.

The money will be used to procure fire-fighting equipment, set up watch towers, provide water storage facilities and vehicles to improve mobility of the forest staff in the protected areas. The

money will be sanctioned on a yearly basis for a period of four years.

The MoEF is also said to have sanctioned Rs. 48 lakh for the state's wildlife division. This money will be used for the creation of water holes, planting trees and setting up of information centres for visitors in Cotigao, Bondla, Mollem and Salim Ali (Chorao) Wildlife Sanctuaries. Additionally, it is proposed to create facilities for tourists to promote eco-tourism, organise nature camps and procure boats with outboard engines to be used for conducting nature trails and adventure tours.

Source: 'Centre spreads wings to protect State's forests', *Herald*, 05/03/04.

GUJARAT

State Wildlife Board constituted

A new 30 member Gujarat State Wildlife Advisory Board was constituted on May 31, 2004. The Chief Minister of the State is its Chairperson, while the Vice Chair is the Minister in Charge of Forests.

The other members of the board are as follows: Shankarbai Chaudhari, MLA, Radhanpur; Shankarbai Rathava, MLA, Chhotaudepur; and Kantibhai Kachoria, MLA, Palanpur (all members of the state legislature); Dr. Piyush Matiliya, Sree Coral Nature Foundation, Jamnagar; Revatubha Rajada, Sky Forest Youth Club, Junagadh, Director, GEER Foundation, Gandhinagar (all NGO representatives); Sonubhai Chaudhari, Dr. SA Chavan, Deshalbhai Pagi, RD Zala, Sonalben Shah, Vasudevabhai Mori, Urvashidevi, Bhavansinh Mori, Shivbhadrasinh Gohil (all in the category of eminent conservationists, ecologists and environmentalists); and Addl. Chief Secretary / Pr. Secretary / Secretary, Forests and Environment Department; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests; Principal Secretary, Tribal Development Department; Managing Director, Gujarat Tourism Development Corporation; Director General of Police; A representative of the armed forces not below the rank of a Brigadier, to be nominated by the Central Government; Director, Animal Husbandary; Commissioner, Fisheries; Representative of the Director, Wildlife Preservation, MoEF, New Delhi; Representative of the WII, Dehradun; Representative of the Botanical Survey of India; Representative of the Zoological Survey of India; and Chief Wildlife Warden of Gujarat (as Member Secretary of the Board)

Oil spill near Gulf of Kutch

An oil tanker registered in Panama broke into two after a head-on collision with another cargo ship in the Gulf of Kutch near Vadinar. The accident happened in the month of March earlier this year and was reported to have been caused due to heavy fog at a site 40 nautical miles from the Kandla Port. All the crew on board were rescued. Initial concerns indicated that this could lead to a major oil spill affecting the marine life in the area.

Of the two ships — a container vessel MV APL Pusan and oil tanker MT Delta-I — the latter broke into two and the crew had to abandon it as it started sinking. The tanker had emptied Naphtha at the Kandla Port and was headed for Bandar Abbas in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At the mouth of the Gulf of Kutch, it collided with the container ship, which was on way to Mundra Port from the Gulf.

A report sent by the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) from Jamnagar to the head office in Gandhinagar said MT Delta-1 had emptied 3,704 metric tonnes of Naphtha at Kandla before departing. At the time of collision, however, it still had oil for 'captive purposes' including 678 metric tonnes of diesel, 4,530 litres of lube oil, 790 litres of gear oil and 1,022 litres of heavy oil.

Wildlife officials said that they did not have any reports of spillage in the sanctuary or in the Marine National Park (MNP). The latest in the matter is however not known.

Source: 'Oil spill may affect Gulf of Kutch', *Times News Network*, 20/03/04.

Contact: **DCF - Marine National Park**, Forest Department Near Nagnath Gate, Van Sankul, Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Wild ass population on the rise in Gujarat

The recently conducted population estimation has put the number of the Wild Asses in the Little Rann of Kutch at 3863. This is substantially higher than the figure of 2839 from the last estimation in 1999. The importance of this can be judged from the fact that the population of the animal had dwindled to only about 362 in 1963. The Little Rann of Kutch was notified a wildlife sanctuary in 1973 with the aim of protecting the threatened wild ass.

This count was carried out on January 31 and February 1, 2004. A preliminary survey was first undertaken to establish the current geographical

distribution of the animal. The identified geographical area was then divided into three regions, 17 zones and 75 sub-zones spread over 17 *talukas* and six districts. About 455 field staff were trained through eight training programmes for the technical procedure of population estimation. About 24 officers and 435 field staff finally participated in the estimation exercise that was carried out under the leadership of Chief Wildlife Warden of the state. 15 NGO representatives and experts and two scientists also participated.

Besides mapping the wild-ass population, the participants also looked at the occurrence of other rare and endangered species found in this unique ecosystem including wolf, chinkara, blackbuck and the winter visitor, Macqueen's Bustard (Houbara bustard).

The Gujarat Forest Department, while congratulating local communities and NGO's for their co-operation in successful conservation of the wild ass (locally called *Ghudkhar*), has also appealed to them to extend support in the future as well.

Source: 'Wild ass population shows upward trend', *Times News Network*, 03/04/04.

Contact: **Sanctuary Suprintendant**, Wild Ass Sanctuary Morbi Road, Dharangadhra - 363310, Gujarat.

Rs. 221.5 crores tourism project planned around Nal Sarovar

The Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited (TCGL) is planning a Rs. 221.5 crore tourism project along the 15 km periphery of the Nal Sarovar Wildlife Sanctuary. The project includes the creation of the following: an eco-activity zone that will include a 18 hole golf course for corporate guests, foreign tourists and Non Resident Indians (NRIs); a nocturnal animal zone with night safaris; an exclusive eco-resort with food courts along with five star luxury facilities; an entertainment zone which would provide recreational facilities like boating, angling and camping on the fringes; and a tourist village with accomodation and entertainment facilities which will be located away from the eco-zone.

The project also envisages the creation of the 'ecozone' of 600 acres that will be kept aside for the migratory waterfowl that Nal Sarovar is famous for. It is also proposed to build an education, interpretation and research institution on ecology which would be built and managed with the help of

academic institutions, NGOs and government agencies. The 250-odd boats here would also be upgraded with noiseless propeller systems so that any activity on the lake does not disturb the birds

Each of these projects will be handed over to private developers who would be responsible for devising an integrated plan for the project involving a development plan and the management and marketing of the individual projects.

The estimated project costs are as follows: Rs. 30 crore for the eco-zone; Rs. 25 crore for a nature park; Rs. 50 crore for the golf course; Rs. 50 crore for the resort; Rs. 25 crore for boating facilities and the communication system; Rs. 3.5 crores for the wildlife research centre and educational park for children and Rs. 31.5 for the entertainment zone.

The project promoters are calling this an eco-tourism project.

The TCGL estimates a five time increase in tourist inflow once the project is completed. An estimated one lakh people, mostly students visit the lake every year primarily to see the migratory birds. The Corporation has also decided to sign MoUs with Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Maharashtra tourism boards to increase domestic tourist inflow into the state.

Source: Paul John. 'Nalsarovar to be new eco-tourism site', *Times News Network*, 17/05/04.

Contact: **Range Forest Officer**, Forest Department, Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, PO Vekaria, Virangam Taluka, Dist. Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Private security for Nal Sarovar

In view of the increasing incidence of poaching at Nal Sarovar, the Forest Department (FD) plans to deploy private security guards in the 120 square km area of the bird sanctuary. Authorities have said that the existing network of forest guards was inadequate for the sprawling sanctuary, which plays host to over 2,00,000 migratory birds every winter.

The guards will be provided patrol boats to check poaching of birds and will also keep a watch on illegal fishing in the lake. The FD has also sought financial help from the central government for purchasing specially-designed mechanised boats to enable bird watchers to have a close glimpse of the birds.

Source: Anil Pathak. 'Guarding the feathered guests' *Times News Network*, 27/04/04.

Special development plans for bird sanctuaries

The Gujarat Forest Department has submitted a comprehensive 'Wetland Development Project' to the Central Government for approval. The Centre is likely to release a sum of Rs. One crore for the project which would be spent on development of over 100 small and big wetlands in Saurashtra and in Central Gujarat areas. These include Nal Sarovar, Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary in Jamnagar, Porbandar Bird Sanctuary and Thol Bird Sanctuary in Mehsana.

It has also been decided to hire a private firm to remove weeds from Nal Sarovar and Thol Lake. A proposal has also been prepared to clear silt from wetlands in the coming months.

The wildlife management cell in the forest department has sought Rs Three crore for better and efficient management of 22 wildlife sanctuaries in the state. (Also see *PA Update* 47)

Source: Anil Pathak. 'Guarding the feathered guests' *Times News Network*, 27/04/04.

Chief Wildlife Warden - Gujarat, Block 14, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Old Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-30007. Fax: 21097.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Timber smuggling from Sainj Valley in the Great Himalayan National Park

Timber worth crores of rupees is, allegedly, being transported out of the Sainj Valley, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) in Kulu District. This is being facilitated by the misuse of the provisions of the provisions of the Land Preservation Act.

According to one estimate, more than 35000 scants worth more than Rs. 10 crore have been transported to other places in the state. In Mandi district alone, more than 5000 scants were transported from the Sainj Valley. There are five divisions in the district and approximately 4000 scants were transported from the Sundernagar Forest Division.

The timber actually comes from local people who get it under the timber distribution scheme. It is meant only for local use for construction purposes and cannot be transported out. The modus operandi

involves purchase of land in the area by unscrupulous persons. Orders to fell trees under the timber distribution scheme are then obtained with the alleged connivance of Forest Department officials. It has been reported that in many cases no timber actually exists on the lands purchased and neither is the value of timber included in the cost of land at the time of sale. Using the permissions that have been granted, timber is then purchased from the local residents at throw away prices and then exported out of the region. In addition to the smuggling that happens, the government also incurs a loss of revenue as no tax is paid on the evaluation of the trees.

The government, after receiving complaints, ordered an inquiry into the matter and has written to the respective Conservators of Forests to investigate the cases. It is feared that the matter will be hushed up, as a majority of officials who are said to be involved are themselves in the office of the GHNP.

The Director of the park, Sanjeeva Pandey, is reported to have said that they were unable to do anything as the documents were all duly completed. It has been suggested to the authorities to frame a policy under which no felling orders should be issued for a period of two to five years from the date of purchase of the land.

Source: Mahesh Chander. 'Timber smuggling from Sainj valley', *The Tribune*, 24/04/04.

Contact: **Sanjeeva Pandey**, Director, GHNP, Shamshi, Dist Kullu 175 125 Himachal Pradesh. Email: dirghnp@vsnl.com

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Bursar and Palkar hydel projects to affect Kishtwar NP; other wildlife areas

The Jammu & Kashmir State Government has asked the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) to submit a report by July 2004 with the details and land requirements for the construction of an alternate road, and the area likely to get submerged due to construction of Bursar and Palkar Hydel projects.

The instructions were conveyed at a high level meeting held in March earlier this year under the chairmanship of State Minister for Forest and Environment, Mr Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Sofi.

The meeting was attended by MLAs, Sajad Ahmad Kitchloo, Ghulam Mohammad Saroori; Financial Commissioner, Forests, Vijay Bakaya; Principal Secretary, Power Development Department,

Anil Goswami; Principal Chief Conservator Forests, P. Patnaik; Secretary, Law, General Manager, NHPC, Chief Conservator of Forests CCF), Jammu and other senior officers.

A detailed discussion was held on various issues regarding the construction of the alternative road, rehabilitation of affected families and conservation of wildlife. The meeting also decided that a comprehensive project report with joint survey of Forests and NHPC would be completed by 31st July 2004, following which an application would be filed in the Supreme Court for permission for re-mapping / realigning the high altitude Kishtwar National Park.

Source: 'NHPC asked to submit report about Bursar, Palkar hydel projects', *Daily Excelsior*, 10/03/04.

KARNATAKA

Fire destroys large part of Bhadra WLS

80 % of the forests of the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary were reportedly destroyed in a massive fire spread over the first three weeks of the month of March, earlier this year. An estimated 270 sq. kms of the Muthodi range of the sanctuary had been burnt in fires that started on March 2, subsequently intensified and swept through upto the 20th of the month.

Conservation groups have accused the Forest Department of not taking timely action to contain the flames and have demanded an investigation into the causes of the fires and the reasons why it took so long to bring under control.

Some of the villages living in the area have suggested that the fires may be linked to the rehabilitation program, as part of which 16 villages were moved out of the sanctuary. They suggest that the fires might have been started by some of these displaced villagers.

Source: Nupur Basu. 'Fire destroys Bhadra wildlife sanctuary', <http://www.ndtv.com/environment/sanctuary>, 23/03/04.

▪ Response from Sanjay Gubbi

Let me clarify that 80% of Bhadra Tiger Reserve is not burnt. Probably 80% of Muthodi range might be burnt, but this can all be clarified only we have

proper data. The resettlement of people from the sanctuary or the dry bamboo does not have any bearing on this fire instance.

Let me clarify some of the points. Devarayanadurga, Ramadevarabetta in Tumkur, Aramballi, Kaskal, Megaramakki, Gabbaga, Mallandurgudda of Koppa Division and Muthodi, Aldooru ranges of Chikmagalur division have all suffered severe forest fires though bamboo has already been extracted in these areas. Fire has also taken its toll in Bhagwathi, Sambrani, Barchi of Haliyal division and Kirvatthi of Yellapur division and bamboo has been harvested here as well. If the theory of dry bamboo giving way to extensive fires is true, the forests where it has been removed should have been completely safe from forest fires!

Forest fires go uncontrolled due to the presence of dry bamboo is the other theory, which is floating around. Interestingly Thimmapura, Udevu, Thygadabaagi in Tarikere taluk, Kaamenahalli and Yemmedoddi of the Kenneth Anderson fame in Kadur, Indhavara in Chikmagalur does not have bamboo at all, but these areas have also suffered extensively due to forest fires. Then how could these forests burn without the catalyst - the dry bamboo?

Bhadra Tiger Reserve had no forest fires for the last four years though bamboo was dry during this period. It is to be accredited to the good work the Forest Department had carried out there during that time. The hard truth is only good protection, efficient fire management and preventive measures can save our forests from fires during summers and the culprits are certainly not dry bamboo, neither are the dead and fallen trees.

The other factor is that widespread fires have also occurred in Nagarahole and Bandipur where no bamboo has flowered and died. In fact Maaladaadi in Antharasanthe range of Nagarahole doesn't have any bamboo at all.

To sum up, fires have occurred in areas where bamboo has flowered and died and has not been harvested, it has occurred in areas where bamboo has not died, and it has also occurred in areas where both bamboo and dead and fallen trees have been extracted. So there is no sound reasoning to say that dry bamboo or dead and fallen trees leads and spreads forest fires.

Contact: **Sanjay Gubbi**, 2208/B, Sadhana Road, K.R.Extension, Tumkur - 572 101, Karnataka. Tel : 0816 -2273030 Email: greenwatchers@yahoo.com

Forest fires in Dandeli

A huge forest fire was reported in the Joida area of the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary in the month of April. Two houses in a village at the Vinorli Range and at Chapoli were also burnt down. The financial losses were estimated to be around Rs. 25, 000.

The extended dry season and carelessness of the villagers has been blamed for the fire in this region which had not been affected by this problem for the last few years.

Source: 'Forest fire wreaks havoc', *Deccan Herald*, 02/05/04.

Forest staff raids NGO working Kudremukh NP; CEC orders inquiry into FD actions

The office of the Kudremukh Wildlife Foundation (KWF) was raided by forest officials in the month of April and the NGO was asked to explain the sources of its funding.

The KWF had earlier highlighted a series of alleged violations by the forest officials in the Kudremukh National Park. These included the illegal removal of dead and fallen bamboo, indulgence in unnecessary civil works in the park and the failure to notify a portion of the national park in spite of orders of the Supreme Court. The NGO had also questioned the decision of the FD to cut a new road through the national park's evergreen forests (see *PA Update* 43), and had additionally, sought information on the overall management of the park under the Karnataka Right to Information Act - 2000. When this information was denied, a complaint was sent to the Principle Secretary, Department of Personnel and Administration, who in turn, recommended disciplinary action and a fine to be imposed on the Conservator of Forests (CF), KS Sugura and the Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Anita Arekal, the officials incharge of the park.

Following this, a list of 78 questions were sent to the NGO by the FD ranging from their sources of funding, their registration details and permissions sought to work within the forest. Charges were also slapped with retrospective effect under the Wildlife Protection Act and the Karnataka Forest Rules for trespassing in the park in 2001. On April 19, the DCF then issued summons to the KWF to appear and three days later, raided the premises of Mr. Niren Jain of the foundation and seized

computers, diaries and documents without a search warrant.

The KWF then approached the Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which in turn issued an order setting up of an independent inquiry and staying the summons issued by the FD against the NGO.

Source: Sonu Jain. ' SC panel to shield Kudremukh NGO from forest staff', *The New Indian Express*, 29/04/04.

Contact: **Ullas Karanth**, Wildlife Conservation Society, India Programme, 403 Seebo Apts, 26/2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore - 560042, Karnataka. Tel: 080-5591747 / 5591990. Email: ukaranth@vsnl.com
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KERALA

Meenachil Fish Count 2004

The Kottayam Nature Society (KNS) with the help of the Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS), Kumarakom; the Department of Forests and Wildlife, Government of Kerala and the Government of India, Department of Field Publicity, Kottayam conducted the 'Meenachil Fish Count 2004' on April 4, 2004. The count was conducted at 15 different points along the river Meenachil flowing from Idukki district and through Kottayam district reaching the Vembanad Lake which is a part of Vembanad-Kole Ramsar site.

The aim of the count was to collect basic data about the river; to know the present status of the river which is almost dead due to soil erosion, pollution, uncontrolled sand mining, fishing using explosives, poisons, gillnets and purse seine nets; and to train interested public and forest officials.

About 150 participants were given training on March 7 and 21 at RARS. They were then assembled at RARS on April 3 afternoon and dispatched to their sites after being divided into 15 groups. Each group consisted of a group leader who coordinated with the local public and conservation groups at their sites through previous visits; a fish expert who is qualified in fisheries and a fisherman, skilled in using various types of nets.

The groups walked along the side of the river for between one to three kms and noted the diversity and frequency of fishes. The sampling was done with various types of nets at about five different spots in a single count site. Local peoples at the count sites participated in the programme with great interest. This fish count is considered the first of its in Kerala and probably even in the entire country.

Contact: **Dr. B Sreekumar**, President Kottayam Nature Society, Srinilayam, Near Union Club, Kottayam 686 001, Kerala. Email: ktm_bskumar@sancharnet.in

Pampa River Board mooted

A workshop organised recently in Thiruvananthapuram by the Centre for Earth Science Studies (CESS) has recommended the setting up of a Pampa River Board to save the river from pollution.

It has been suggested that the Board should consist of members of the local self-government institutions, temple administration, Forest Department and representatives of plantations. Among other things, the workshop also discussed the findings of a study about the problem of accumulated waste in and around the banks of the river, especially in the Sabarimala region that is within the Periyar Tiger Reserve. According to the study, the Pampa River gets polluted during the Sabarimala pilgrimage season because of insufficient treatment of the wastewater before it is released into the river. The number of public toilets too, are grossly inadequate and the study has suggested the installation of high tech toilets with automatic cleaning and sterilisation.

It was also pointed out that nearly 100 drinking water projects are dependant on the river located in the districts of Pathanamthitta and Alapuzha. (For other reports on the pollution and other problems in Periyar see *PA Updates* 44, 41, 40, 34, 30, 27, 24, 23 & 21).

Source: 'Pampa River Board mooted', *The New Indian Express*, 28/04/04.

Contact: **Asst. Field Director**, Forest Department Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady 685536, Kerala

Wildlife deaths reported due to drought

A large number of drought related deaths of wild animals were reported from the various parts of Kerala in the first three months of the year. This included 10 elephants: six in Wayanad, three in Neyyar and one in Thekkady in the Periyar Tiger Reserve. 12 bison and one deer were also reported to have perished for the same reasons.

Severe drought conditions had caused most water sources to dry up totally or become stagnant and therefore unhealthy. Post-mortem of the carcasses found in the forest showed that the animals had suffered from serious dehydration.

Source: 'Drought takes toll on wildlife', *Hindu Business Line*, 01/04/04.

MAHARASHTRA

Forest Owlet discovered in Yawal WLS

A team from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Satpuda Foundation recently recorded the presence of the endangered Forest Owlet in the Yawal Wildlife Sanctuary in Jalgaon District. The two nearest known locations for the bird are at Shahada, 120 km west to Yawal and Melghat, 150 km to the east

Source: Email from Kishor Rithe. 25/05/04.
Contact: **Kishor Rithe**, Satpuda Foundation, 1st Floor, "Pratishtha", Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Near Sainagar, Amravati - 444607, Maharashtra. Tel: 0721- 2511966 / 09422157123. Email: kishorrithe@yahoo.com

Bird sanctuary proposed at Bhigwan

The Bhigwan wetland located some 80 kms from Pune is being proposed as a wildlife sanctuary. Spread over an area of roughly 180 sq. kms, the wetland attracts a large number of migratory waterfowl every winter. The wetland is part of the backwaters of the Ujni dam built on the River Bhima.

The proposal is an outcome of a major 'Inland Wetlands of India, Research Project' that has been undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and an initial amount of Rs 9 lakh is also reported to have been sanctioned. The study team has been asked to submit another detailed report

after three years following which the MoEF will take the final decision regarding the sanctuary.

Source: Gaurav Thakur. 'Pune scores a sanctuary', *Times News Network*, 31/05/04

Chief Wildlife Warden – Maharashtra, Jaika Building, Civil Lines, Nagpur – 440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712 – 526758 / 530126.

ORISSA

Irrawaddy Dolphin population in Chilka rises

A count carried out in March in the Chilka Lake has revealed that the number of the endangered Irrawaddy Dolphin has gone up from 89 last year to 124. This included 113 adults and 11 calves. Approximately 37.9 % of the dolphins were seen in the main lake, with uniform distribution in the southern and central sectors.

The count was carried out by the Chilka Development Authority (CDA). A total of 72 people, with 18 data recorders, 18 boatmen and 36 observers, conducted the survey using nearly 20 boats.

Although the dolphins in Chilika are not hunted for their meat, mechanised fishing trawlers and tourist boats with large propellers have resulted in a lot of dolphin mortality in the last few years. Officials have said at least 11 dolphins were killed in 2001-02 due to mechanised boats. (Also see *PA Updates* 41, 36 & 29).

Source: Jatindra Dash. 'Dolphin population rises in Chilika lake', *Indo-Asian News Service*, 21/03/04.

Contact: **AK Patnaik**. CDA, BJ-45, BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Fax: 0674 – 434485. Email: ajitpatnaik@hotmail.com
Website: www.chilika.com

Bhitarkanika mangrove forests destroyed by fire

Large patches of mangrove forests were destroyed by fires at Narayanpur and Krushnapuriyapur villages in the Bhitarkanika National Park in the month of April. The fires were reportedly caused by honey collectors who had lit fires to scare away bees while illegally collecting honey from inside the park.

The local fire brigades at Pattamundai and Kendrapada could not help due to lack of expertise

and inadequate equipment. The absence of a dedicated fire protection system or equipment in the park is said to be the reason for the loss, due to fire, every year of valuable tracts of mangrove forests here.

Source: Biswajit Mohanty, Email dated 15/04/04.
Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, Wildlife Society of Orissa, Shantikunj, Link Road, Cuttack – 753012, Orissa. Tel: 0671 – 334625. Fax: 610980. Email: biswajit@cal.vsnl.net.in

Crocodile menace around Bhitarkanika WLS becomes election issue; entry to tourists stopped for three months starting May

The Forest Department (FD) has decided to close the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary to tourists for three months starting from May, earlier this year. This had been done keeping in mind that this is the breeding season of the salt water crocodiles and that there have been a number of cases of attack on humans and cattle during this period in earlier years. While earlier the sanctuary was closed for two months in May and June, this year it was extended by another month.

There are nearly 20 villages in and around the sanctuary, which is home to an estimated 1500 crocodiles. According to the villagers, nearly 50 people have died here in the last four years due to attacks by crocodiles. They also claim that hundreds of heads of cattle have been similarly killed. Villagers are reported to have killed some crocodiles in retaliation as well, but this is done clandestinely because of the protection accorded to the animal under the law.

This issue, in fact, was reported to have become a major poll issue in the villages here during the recently concluded assembly and Lok Sabha elections. Just before the elections, the villagers had organised a meeting to appeal to all political parties to take up the matter with the FD. They had also appealed that the crocodile attack compensation amount, which at the present is Rs. 10,000, be adequately raised.

The former Biju Janata Dal (BJD) minister and six time MLA from the Rajnagar constituency who contested the recently concluded elections on a Congress ticket, Nalini Mohanty, said the government had failed to take any action to arrest the crocodile menace even though the issue had been raised several times in the state assembly.

Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary comes under Rajnagar assembly constituency.
(Also see *PA Updates* 45, 44, 43, 40)

Source: Crocs on the rampage; wildlife sanctuary closed for three months', *Deccan Herald*, 30/04/04.

Contact: **DFO**, Bhitarkanika NP, At/PO Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapada – 745225. Orissa. Tel: 06729-72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775.

Elephants from Chandka become election issue

Elephants from the Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary near Bhubaneswar were an important election issue during the recently concluded assembly and Lok Sabha elections. Candidates campaigning in Chandka, Andharua and Bharatpur villages of the Bhubaneswar constituency were trying to convince voters on the single issue that they will save them from the attacks of wild animals. The villages are part of the Jatni Assembly constituency.

Villages in this region and as also those around Bhubaneswar, have for many years been suffering because of the elephants. More than 24 villagers have died in the last decade due to elephant attacks (see *PA Updates* 47, 46, 41, 39, 34, 32 & 29).

Congress candidate Soumya Ranjan Patnaik promised to divert a portion of his MP Local Area Development (MPLAD) Fund for better metal fencing and trench digging work around the sanctuary. Biju Janta Dal (BJD)'s Prasanna Patsani assured villagers that he would make 'elephant trespassing' a big issue in parliament.

Mr. Prasanna Patsani was elected as the MP from the Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat, while Mr. Sarat Paikray was elected as the member from the Jatni Assembly segment

Source: Himanshu Sahoo. 'Jumbo problem a big poll issue in Bhubaneswar', *Hindustan Times*, 17/04/04.

Village youth come together to prevent Akhand Shikar in Simlipal

Green Brigades, comprised of village youths, locally called '*Sabuja Bahini*', were formed to help forest officials prevent hunting during the traditional annual ritual of *Akhand Shikar* in the forests of Orissa, particularly in the Simlipal Tiger Reserve. This year

the ritual was said to have started in the first week of April and was to continue for about a month.

The Green Brigade was reportedly working in 20 of the 1200 villages that are found in and around the forests in Simlipal. Each brigade consists of about 10-15 members, mostly from villages known to have a large number of hunters. The youths try to persuade their co-villagers not to enter the forest. The brigade members wear a green cap on their head and a green scarf around their neck, and roam in the forests in their free time.

The Forest Department said that they had sealed the wildlife zones in the park to prevent the tribals from entering for the purpose of their ritual hunt. At least 20 policemen, a large number of forest officials and mobile anti-poaching squads had also been put into service.

More details of what happened during the month, however are not available.
(Also see *PA Updates* 41, 26, 21 & 17).

Source: Jatindra Dash. 'Charge of the green brigade in Orissa forests', *Indo Asian News Service*, 07/04/04.

GPS collars for elephants in the Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve

Elephants in Orissa's Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve which includes the Simlipal Tiger Reserve are to be fitted with Global Positioning System (GPS) collars in an attempt to protect them from the twin threats of encroachments and poaching. The initiative is being funded by the Central Government.

Simlipal is the home to about 100 tigers in the wild and about 500 Asian elephants.

Source: Jatindra Dash. 'Orissa employs GPS collaring to protect elephants' *Hindustan Times*, 21/05/04.

Tiger population on the rise in Orissa

A six day long census in January in Orissa has indicated that the tiger population in the state is on the rise. 192 tigers (male - 57, female - 75 and cubs - 60) and 487 leopards (male - 196, female - 487, cubs - 43) were counted during the operation that was based on the pugmark counting technique.

Simlipal Tiger Reserve has the maximum number of 101 tigers. 127 leopards were also counted

here. One leopard and one tiger were also spotted in the adjoining Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: 'Big cats population on the rise in Orissa', *Indian Express*, 25/05/04.

Contact: Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden – Orissa**, Plot No. 8, Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-513134 / 515840. Fax: 512502

TAMIL NADU

Wildlife census in Coimbatore circle in May

A wildlife census in the Coimbatore Circle of the Western Ghats was held in the month of May. It was to be carried out in two districts and three protected areas that come under the circle. These include the Coimbatore Territorial Division and the Nilgiris comprising the Nilgiris North, South and Gudalur Divisions. The protected areas to be covered included the Indira Gandhi (Annaimalai) WLS, Mudumulai WLS and the Mukurthi National Park.

250 volunteers besides 150 forest personnel and tribals took part in the census. An area of about 230 sq km was taken for the census as a sample out of the total area of 695 sq km. Of this, 120 sq km was taken as a random sample block and was divided into 44 blocks for deploying volunteers.

The main objective of the exercise was to help the forest managers and wildlife protectors plan strategies like habitat development and corridor protection schemes. It was also reported that there was no concentration of animals along the waterholes because of the early rains. Rains in Kerala had also resulted in large-scale migration of larger migratory mammals like elephants, leading to a smaller count in animal populations as compared to the earlier census in this region.

The compilation of statistics of the census was as follows: Elephants 117, Leopards 7, Gaur 229, Sloth Bear 14, Wild Boar 139, Wild Dog 62, Bonnet Macaque 326, Nilgiri Langur 42, Common Langur 187, Civet Cat 4, Sambar 118, Barking Deer 21, Spotted Deer 790, Black Napped Hare 14, Mongoose 4, Indian Pangolin 7, and Malabar Giant Squirrel 97.

Source: VS Palaniappan. 'Census of Western Ghats wildlife in May', *The Hindu*, 16/04/04. 'Wildlife census to help in forest management', *The Hindu*, 22/05/04.

Water crisis in Guindy National Park

Continued dry conditions had caused a serious water crisis in the Guindy National Park. Three tanks in the park - Kanthangollai, Duck Pond and Bogi Pond had completely dried up and a fourth one, Appalangulam, had dried up partially.

The Forest Department was forced to rely on borewells to deal with the situation: the three existing one and two more that the FD has recently dug with the help of experts from the Anna University.

Source: 'Guindy National Park hopes to tide over water crisis', *The New Indian Express*, 21/04/04.

UTTAR PRADESH

Tourism plan in Dudhwa NP fails to take off

The joint initiative of the Forest and Tourism Departments in collaboration with the Railways to promote tourism in the Dudhwa National Park has failed to take off.

As part of the initiative, the Forest Department had handed over 10 Tharu huts to the Tourism Department for the use of the tourists. These special huts were replicas of the traditional huts made by the Tharu tribe here. A 'train to Dudhwa' with additional bogies attached to the Nainital Express had also been started to avoid the laborious and bumpy ride on pothole-ridden roads.

In spite of this, tourist arrivals here fell from 84 in December when the project was launched to just seven in the month of March. The total revenue earned from December 2003 to May 2004 was Rs. 38,650 and the FD claimed that they were earning more before the launch of the venture. The reasons for this failure are said to be lack of publicity and the doubling of the rent of the renovated Tharu hut from Rs. 300 to Rs. 600.

(Also see *PA Update* 34)

Source: 'Tourists do not bite Dudhwa hut bait' *Times News Network*, 07/05/04.

UTTARANCHAL

Forest staff exempted from election duty

2000 - odd forest guards of the Uttaranchal Forest Department (FD) were exempted from reporting for

election duty in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. The request for this exemption was made to the Election Commission by the FD to be able to successfully deal with the rising cases of forest fires and poaching of wild animals.

It has been reported that in the run up to the elections forest fires had already ravaged an area of 1,800 hectares, even though it was just the beginning of the summer months. As many as 439 incidents of forest fires were reported till about the middle of the month of April. The Election Commission agreed to the request keeping in mind the sensitive nature of the issue.

Source: 'Wildlife protection is Uttaranchal gov't's main worry', *Deccan Herald*, 14/04/04.

WEST BENGAL

Deaths continue on killer railway track in North Bengal; WWF alleges that Railways are flouting High Court guidelines

The conversion of the metre gauge railway track to broad gauge in the North Bengal region was completed in November 2003. Subsequent to this there have been at least two reports of elephant accidents, including one, in which the animal finally died (see *PA Update* 47).

The rail track passes through a number of protected areas in this region. The conversion to broad gauge was strongly opposed by a number of wildlife and conservation groups because of the fear that it would lead to a larger number of accidents involving elephants. The WWF - India Calcutta Chapter, had filed a petition in the Calcutta High Court (also see *PA Updates* 43, 39, 36, 34, 32 & 29) opposing the conversion. In response the High Court had appointed an advisory committee and guidelines were laid out to reduce the impact of the gauge conversion on wildlife.

WWF has alleged that the railways are flouting these guidelines and that they have collected video footage of the evidence of this. The evidence was collected during a tour conducted by officials of the WWF on the tracks between Sukna and Gulma stations. Forest officials of the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary had helped organise this tour.

The team found that the trenches dug along the tracks for gauge conversion had not been filled up, making them death traps for unsuspecting animals. The space left on either side of the track was

not sufficient for large animals to walk on. There was also only one board cautioning train drivers before entering elephant territory and that too was said to be worn out.

Source: Kuheli Chakravorty. 'Evidence on camera to save jumbos', *The Telegraph*, 19/04/04.
Contact: **DFO, Wildlife (II)**, Aranya Bhawan (Near Court), Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Tel: 03561-24907(O) / 30383 (R).
E-mail: wild2@dte.vsnl.net.in
WWF- I, West Bengal State Office, 5th Floor, Tata Centre, 43, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta 700071, West Bengal. Tel: 033 – 2889530. Fax: 2883761.
Animesh Bose, HNAF, Nivedita Market, Hospital Road, Siliguri – 734401, West Bengal. Tel: 0353 – 430856. Fax: 537609

Self help groups being set up in Sunderbans

Thirty self help groups, each comprising six to 10 members have been formed in the fringe villages of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve. Revolving funds are to be provided to these groups for activities like pulse cultivation, paddy husking, pisci-culture, and duck & poultry farming. It is being hoped that these initiatives will help in preventing depredation of the forest resources and poaching of wildlife, particularly deer and wild boar.

Each of the groups will be allocated between Rs. 12,000 and Rs. 40,000 to initiate the activities and an amount of Rs. 2.37 lakh has already been disbursed for the same.

25 ecodevelopment committees have also been set up in the region, covering about 25% of the total Sunderbans population for the implementation of 23 micro plans that envisage community development and wildlife preservation. Nearly Rs. 50 lakh were allotted during the last financial year for community development, an important feature of which has been extending the solar energy network system in the region.

Source: 'Self-help group set up in the Sunderbans', *The Hindu*, 05/03/04.

Contact: **Director**, Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve, Bikash Bhavan, 3rd Floor, North Block, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3211750. Fax: 3211529 Email: atanu_raha@hotmail.com

International recognition for Jharkhali Mangrove Ecological Garden in Sunderbans

The Jharkhali Mangrove Ecological Garden located at Basanti in the Sunderbans has been ranked one of the 11 Indian Botanical Gardens of unique importance by the London based Botanical Garden Conservation International. The garden will now be brought under the Botanical Garden Network and a small grant of Rs. 2.75 lakh is being made available for upgradation, maintenance and addition of mangrove medicinal plants in the garden. Provisions are also being made for proper displays of the local and scientific names of the plants along with information of the various uses these are put to.

The garden is spread over 10 hectares on the northern bank of the River Chotto Herabhangha and houses 53 of 95 species of mangroves found in India; twenty of which are considered endangered. Local fishermen are said to have rendered great help by bringing in and planting uncommon mangrove species in the garden.

Though the garden has been fenced by barbed wire it regularly plays host to a large number of wild animals, including deer, fishing cats, king cobras, nesting crocodiles and the tiger.

The Jharkhali Mangrove garden is already on the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporations (WBTDC) tour itinerary to the Sunderbans and is also one of five spots earmarked by the Sahara group for their mega-tourism project in the region.

Source: 'International honour for eco-park', *The Statesman*, 03/03/04.

CWLW, Government of West Bengal, Vikas Bhawan, North Block, Salt Lake, Calcutta 700 091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3346900/3583208. Fax: 3345946. Email: wildlife@cal.vsnl.net.in

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

Wildlife conservationists awarded

The Tiger Gold 2004 award constituted by the Conway Foundation was awarded to the Karnataka based DV Girish of Wildlife First for his work in the forests of the Bhadra Tiger Reserve.

The Carl Zeiss Roll of Honor was also recently awarded to Niren Jain of Kudremukh Wildlife Foundation for his committed science based conservation efforts at ensuring long term protection of Kudremukh National Park; to Aparajita Datta of the Nature Conservation Foundation for her efforts at conservation of the Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh and to Harshwardhan & Poonam Dhanwatey for their commitment to protect wildlife in Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in association with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

The Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation Award 2004 went to senior wildlife biologist Dr AJT John Singh of the Wildlife Institute of India for a lifetime's service to India's wildlife.

Source: 'State conservationists awarded', *Times News Network*, 06/04/04.

New 'Newsletter for Ornithologists'

The Newsletter for Ornithologists is a new bi-monthly publication being brought out by Zafar Futehally (Editor Emeritus), Aasheesh Pittie (Editor) and Dr V. Santharam (Associate Editor).

The aim of the Newsletter is to encourage amateur birdwatchers (ornithologists) by providing a platform to them for publishing their notes and observations on primarily, birds of the Indian region (India and its neighbouring countries). The editors have asked for articles, papers, annotated checklists, trip reports, notes on the behaviour and biology of one or more species, book reviews, audio-recording reviews, letters, notes of common birds, announcements and notices of events, and news from the birding world.

Contact: **Aasheesh Pittie**, Newsletter for Ornithologists, 8-2-545 Road No. 7, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500034, Andhra Pradesh.
Email: aasheesh@vsnl.in

SOUTH ASIA

14,000 sq km conservation area along the Indo-Myanmar border

The Myanmar Government has proposed the tripling in area of its Hukawng Valley Wildlife Sanctuary to around 12,500 sq. kms. The boundary of the

expanded park will then run along the Indo-Myanmar international border south of the Namdapha National Park and along the Patkai range in south eastern Arunachal Pradesh. The combined protected / conservation area from both sides will be around 14,000 sq km.

The Hukawng Valley in Myanmar is home to several species of flora and fauna including the tiger, elephant, gaur, dhole, clouded leopard, various primates, birds and also the recently discovered leaf deer. Once the Hukawng Valley park is enlarged it will become the world's largest tiger reserve.

Source: Nalin M. Email dated 28/03/04.

Contact: **Nalin M.** Email: nalinm@aol.com

Joint Indo-Bangla tiger census in Sunderbans

The first joint Indo-Bangla Tiger Census was recently conducted in the Sunderbans. While the counting in the Indian part was done from January 14 to 20 (see *PA Update* 47) the census in Bangladesh was conducted from February 26 and March 3. The counting was done in co-operation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

32 teams, each of 10-12 persons drawn from the Forest Department, Bangladesh National Cadet Core (BNCC) and NGOs were created for the purpose of the census.

The counting operation that was based on the pugmark method was inaugurated by the Bangladeshi Forest Minister, Mr. Shahjahan Siraj at the Champai Range in the presence of Members of Parliament, a six member Indian delegation, journalists, forest officials and local leaders.

The function was presided over by Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. M Anwarul Islam.

Source: 'Census of Royal Bengal Tigers starts', *Bangladesh Observer*, 01/03/04.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh to offer insurance to honey collectors, wood cutters in Sunderbans

The Bangladeshi government is reported to have offered life insurance to workers who risk being mauled to death by tigers in the mangrove forests of the Sunderbans. Honey collectors and woodcutters are regularly killed in the world's largest mangrove

forest, which is spread over an estimated 6,000 sq. kms. in Bangladesh.

Insurance would cost each worker 100 taka (about Rs.10) per year. In the event of accidental death of any kind in the Sunderbans, the deceased person's family would receive 25 000 taka.

Source: B'Desh to Offer Insurance to Sunderbans Workers, *AFP*, 29/04/04.

MYANMAR

Concern over declining wild elephant numbers in Myanmar

Myanmar officials have expressed concerns over the falling numbers of wild elephants due to continued illegal logging and hunting in the forests here. This has been happening inspite of the fact that poaching is punishable with heavy fines and a prison term of up to seven years. Continued killing of elephants is also said to have upset the ratio of males to females in the herds, leading to declines in the birth rate. Additionally, land-clearing to sustain an increasing human population has also taken its toll on the elephant population.

It has however, also been reported that in the last several months the ruling military junta had allowed state and private logging companies to catch wild elephants in two areas near the capital, Yangon, on the grounds that they were coming into conflict with people in populated areas.

The state logging firm in Myanmar uses about 4,000 elephants for its timber extraction operations, while the private logging sector uses about 3,000 animals. Elephants have long been used for logging in Myanmar where the terrain is often considered too rugged for vehicles. The practice has drawn flak from groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which has warned that taking elephants from the wild to work in the timber industry can seriously affect breeding stocks. Crude capture methods are also reported to result in a high mortality rate among working elephants.

Myanmar has about 5000 elephants in the wild, making it the home to the second largest wild elephant population in Asia after India. The Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division has plans to declare four elephant reserves within the next three years in an attempt towards protecting the wild populations. Presently Myanmar has only one such elephant reserve.

Source: 'Myanmar concerned over declining wild elephant numbers', *AFP*, 24/05/04.

NEPAL

Proposal for rhododendron sanctuary in Daman

There is a proposal to declare Daman, located 75 kms south of Kathmandu, as a rhododendron sanctuary. Located at an altitude of 2000 m, the place is an ideal habitat for rhododendron. Additionally, there is an ongoing initiative of the people of the Daman-Simbhanjyang area for the conservation of orchids and rhododendron here. They have formed a committee to preserve these plants and flowers.

Members of the public are fined up to two thousands rupees if they are found cutting the flowers. Locals are subject to a fine of Rs 1000 for a first offense, and Rs 1500 and Rs 2000, if they violate this rule for the second and third time respectively.

Source: Pratap Bista. 'Daman could be rhododendron sanctuary', *The Kathmandu Post*, 27/04/04.

Growing Yak population in Langtang National Park affects Red Panda

The increased population and movement of yak in the Cholanpati area near Gosainkund in the Langtang National Park (LNP) is reported to be seriously threatening the endangered Red Panda that is found in the region. The 600 yak which are kept in 32 sheds here, the yak herders, as well as their yak herding dogs are negatively impacting the red panda, including cases where adults have abandoned their young ones under stress and fear.

There has been a serious debate between the officials of the national park and the local yak herders in this matter. The latter admit that the red panda population is declining due to their activities but they also say that they have no other option. It is their only source of income and yields upto Rs. 8000 per month per family. They have also argued that yak-herding is their natural right, that they have been in this area for many generations and the issue has been raised only after the declaration of the national park in 1975.

While there is an opinion among the authorities, that the yak sheds should be removed from the area, there are officers, including the present Chief Conservation Officer, who believe that the owners could be gradually persuaded to move into

other professions in the interest of the conservation of the pandas. One of the options being suggested it to develop the area as a tourist destination by constructing nature trails around the Panda-populated areas. The District Development Committee (DDC) here too is reported to be working with the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviate Program (TRPAP) to develop tourism in the village.

The locals too have formed an ad-hoc committee to explore a solution to the conflict. They have suggested dividing the panda-populated areas into two, a complete ban area and a less sensitive area which will be open for yak herding. The ad-hoc committee was also planning to provide awareness training to the yak-herders about panda conservation.

Source: Yuvraj Acharya. 'Growing Yak movement puts red panda in peril', *The Kathmandu Post*, 13/04/04.

Proposal to merge Royal Chitwan National Park and Parsa Wildlife Reserve

The Nepalese Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) has proposed to merge the Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP) and the Parsa Wildlife Reserve (PWR) to form the Greater Royal Chitwan National Park. The plan has been drafted realizing the necessity of extending RCNP to accommodate the growing number of big mammal species, especially the Asian rhino.

RCNP, with an area of 932-sa km in central Nepal, is home to a number of endangered species of fauna including the one-horned rhino, gaur, tiger, wild elephant and the four-horned antelope. The PWR, covering an area of 499-sq km, is the country's largest wildlife reserve in south central Terai, and also harbors a number of endangered species of birds and animals. PWR, which lies to the south of RCNP, is contiguous with the latter.

The proposed buffer zone of PWR will cover 216 sq. kms of forest area between Bhedaha Khola and Pasaha Khola, 40 sq. kms forest area of the Beeshazari Tal (a Ramsar Site) and 39 sq km forest of Bandarjhula area. The proposed GRCNP will cover 1726 square kilometer.

With the merger, some places that are rich in flora and fauna and not covered by RCNP and PWR like Halkhoriya and Beeshazari Tal will come under the protected area system

Source: Kiran Chapagain & Yuvraj Acharya 'RCNP, PWR merger to have positive impact on conservation', *The Kathmandu Post*, 01/05/04.

Poaching flourishes in Nepal

An estimated 100 poachers were arrested in Nepal in the year 2003. In spite of this, the menace of poaching remains rampant across the forests of Nepal, hindering efforts of wildlife conservation and threatening endangered species like the rhino, tiger, leopard and the musk deer. At least 28 rhinos died last year, 14 of whom were killed by poachers for getting the horn. In 2002, 37 rhinos were reportedly killed in Nepal (also see *PA Updates* 47, 45, 43, 41 & 40). Five tigers too have been killed by poachers in the past two years.

In the first three months of 2004 alone, seven rhinos were found dead. Three of the carcasses did not have horns indicating that the poachers had been active and successful. An anti-poaching unit also discovered two male tiger carcasses in a wildlife reserve.

Recently, customs officials also recovered a large haul of tiger bones and rhino horns from Humla, 400 miles northwest of the capital Kathmandu. In the month of March earlier this year, the government anti-poaching unit also arrested a Tibetan woman on charges of selling rhino horns.

The Nepalese Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), had launched a strong anti-poaching campaign following the high rates of poaching that were reported across the country in 2002. This included mobilizing local communities living near sanctuaries and also the creation of anti-poaching units in Nepal's most vulnerable national parks, with the help of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature Conservation's Nepal Program, King Mahendra Trust of Nature Conservation and International Trust for Nature Conservation. The teams have been equipped with vehicles, boats and domesticated elephants in addition to providing financial incentives to informants whose tip offs helped in tracking down poachers."

In an indication that the animal products have a market in neighboring India or at least transit through the country, an anti-poaching unit also arrested two people in possession of tiger bones in March from the Parsa Wildlife Reserve, 150 miles

south of the capital and bordering the Indian state of Bihar.

Source: Keshab Poudel. 'Poaching flourishes in Nepal despite strict curbs, *One World*, 14/04/04.

Contact: **Director**, Dept. of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 860, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: +977-1-227675. Fax: 250850

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

▪ Resisting the sell out of Sunderban

This is a report of an Investigation visit to the Sunderban Biosphere Reserve to look at the proposed tourism project of the Sahara India Pariwar.

Conducted jointly by PUBLIC, Kolkata, EQUATIONS, Bangalore and the Bombay Environmental Action Group (BEAG), Mumbai, the report goes into great detail of the project and the range of violations and problems with the proposal.

Copies of the report version are available from EQUATIONS.

Contact: **Syed Liyakhat**, EQUATIONS, 23/25, 8th Cross, Vignan Nagar, New Thippasandra Post, Bangalore - 560 075, Karnataka. Tel: 080 - 25244988 / 25344149. Fax: 25244988 / 25344149.
Email: liyakhat@equitabletourism.org
Website: www.equitabletourism.org

▪ Marine Mammals of India

Authored by Dr. Kumaran Sathasivan, the book is meant for a wide range of readers including children, wildlife enthusiasts and serious students.

Few are aware of the fact that the seas around India are home to nearly a fourth of the world's 120 or so marine mammal species. This is precisely the gap in information and awareness that this book proposes to fill.

A significant part of the book is devoted to the more than 30 species accounts. The book includes colour illustrations and character matrices meant for easy identification and also has an extensive bibliography making it a valuable research aid.

Contact: **Dr. Kumaran Sathasivam**, 29 Jadamuni Koil Street, Madurai -625001. Tamil Nadu. Tel: 044-24464139. Email: k_sathasivam@yahoo.co.in; k_sathasivam@hotmail.com

New Publication from Kalpavriksh! **PARTICIPATORY CONSERVATION** **Paradigm Shifts in International Policy**

This book is a compilation of outputs from global events related to participatory conservation; particularly the Vth World Park's Congress held in Durban, South Africa in September 2003 and the 7th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in February 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The booklet contains key outputs from these events that deal with a new and significant shift internationally towards acceptance of the principle, possibilities and practices that recognise the value that local, indigenous and mobile communities bring to the process of conserving biodiversity, and of the need of a range of conservation types from strict protection to multiple sustainable use. The booklet contains The Durban Accord and relevant Recommendations from the World Parks Congress and The Protected Areas Program of Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The book is published jointly by IUCN, Gland, Switzerland; Cambridge, UK and Kalpavriksh, Pune, India. No. of Pages: 120
Price: Rs. 50; US\$ 5.

Contact: **Swati**, Kalpavriksh at the editorial address.
Email: kvbooks@vsnl.net
(Please add Rs. 25 for outstation cheques and another Rs. 20 for postage and handling)

UPCOMING

4th Asian Raptor Symposium: First Announcement

The 4th Asian Raptor Symposium with the theme 'Towards Conservation of Asian Raptors through Science and Action' will be held in Taiping, Malaysia in October 2005. It is being organised by The Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network

(ARRCN). The previous symposia in this series had been held in Shiga, Japan in 1998; Bandung, Indonesia in 2000 and Kenting, Taiwan in 2003.

The deadline for the submission of extracts is March 31, 2005, while that for the full papers is June 30, 2005.

Contact: **ARRCN** – Information Centre, c/o 208
Jalan H-8, Taman Melawati, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Email: mikechn@pc.jaring.my

OPPURTUNITIES

Openings with the Wildlife Trust of India

The Wildlife Trust of India has advertised a number of openings. The details are as follows:

a) Field Officer, Wayanad

Program: Wild Lands

Job location: Kerala

Essential qualifications required: M Sc in Wildlife Biology/ Zoology

Responsibilities: The principal responsibility of the Field Officer will be to supervise the mitigation measures proposed to be implemented in the sanctuaries in Kerala and monitor the area for the impact of the activities. The officer will also monitor the corridor in Karnataka for collecting information on the use of the corridor by wildlife and interact with the Forest Officers of Wayanad and villagers in Tirunelli-Kudrakote corridor facilitating the acquisition of the land for corridor widening.

b) Asst. Field Officer, Kaziranga

Programme: Wild Species

Job location: Kaziranga National Park and adjacent areas and Orang Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam

Essential qual: MSc. in Wildlife Biology / Botany / Environmental Science

Responsibilities: The principle responsibility of the incumbent is to facilitate the eradication of Mimosa from Kaziranga and monitor the process by assessing the success of the programme. The officer will also supervise and monitor the control of Eichornea and desilting of beels in Orang Wildlife Sanctuary

c) Assistant Campaigns Officer

Programme: Wild Campaigns

Job location: New Delhi (may involve some travel)

Essential qual: Graduate in any discipline, preferably with one or two years experience in Advertising or PR.

Responsibilities: Assist Campaigns Manager in implementing activities related to WTI's conservation campaigns.

d) Communications Officer

Programme: Communications

Job location: New Delhi

Essential qual: Graduate with a degree in Mass Comm., Journalism, preferably with one or two years experience in writing web content; clear understanding of and interest in conservation/wildlife issues; computer savvy.

Responsibilities: Writing for the website, updating content, editing and proofing in-house publications.

e) Project Manager (Black Bear Rehabilitation Project)

Program: Wild Rescue

Job location: Seijosa, Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

Essential qualifications required: Master's degree in life sciences with minimum five years of field experience in conservation. Ph.D. preferable

Responsibilities: Entire management of a bear rehabilitation project, involving rescue, rehabilitation, release & monitoring.

f) Asst. Veterinary Officer for Mobile Vet Service

Program: Wild Rescue

Job location: Kalagarh, Uttaranchal, although transferable throughout India.

Essential qualifications required: BVSc degree with at least one year's experience in wildlife. Masters degree in wildlife or veterinary sciences desirable.

Responsibilities: Provide wildlife health care, emergency veterinary care and rehabilitate rescued animals.

Application Procedure: Apply electronically with Covering letter, Resume and names of three professional references.

Email to: info@wti.org.in (*No attachments*)

Applications can also be sent to

Director, Administration, Wildlife Trust of India, C – 644, New Friends colony, New Delhi – 110 065

Conservation Education Centre at Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is setting up a Conservation Education Centre (CEC) at the Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Delhi (near Tughlakabad) in collaboration with Government of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi to create awareness about nature conservation among children and adults. The project team will be based at Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Delhi

The following professions are needed for the CEC:

1. Project coordinator (1 post)

Qualification: Post-graduate in Biological Sciences, Environmental Science, Social Studies. A degree/diploma in management is desirable. Should have minimum five-year experience in conservation education and project management. Fluency in English and Hindi is essential.

2. Educational Assistant (2 Posts)

Qualification: Post-graduate/graduate in Biological Sciences, Environmental Science, Social Studies. Degree/Diploma in education is desirable. Should have one-year experience in conservation education. Good communication skill and fluency in English and Hindi is essential.

3. Office Assistant-cum-programme help (1 Post)

Qualification: Graduate. Should have one-year experience in maintaining accounts and office administration. Computer literate and fluency in English and Hindi is essential. Required to help education staff during the educational activities.

The initial contract for the posts will be one year and is renewable up to three years based on satisfactory performance.

Applications should be sent with detailed bio data, two references and expected salary by post only (No email or fax applications will be accepted) Please mention 'Application for Conservation Education Project at Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Delhi' on envelop.

Contact: **Director**, BNHS, Hornbill House, Dr. Salim Ali Chowk, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Opp Lion Gate Mumbai - 400 023.

Programme Manager: Asian Conservation Awareness Programme (ACAP India)

WildAid and the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) are looking for a Programme Manager on their multimedia public awareness campaign - the Asian Conservation Awareness Programme (ACAP) India. ACAP aims to raise awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation and healthy eco-systems, whilst its' goal is to create a new generation of wildlife enthusiasts at the same time as reducing consumer demand for wildlife products.

The applicant will be based in New Delhi

Contact: ACAP India, WPSI, M-52 Greater Kailash - Part I, New Delhi 110048. Email: acapindia@wildaid.org. Website: www.acapworldwide.com & www.wpsi-india.org

READERS RESPOND...

KR Sethna...

With reference to 'Iron Spikes to keep in Chandka's Wild Elephants' (Orissa, *PA Update* 47 & 48), it is shocking to read that the Forest Department has planted iron spikes in a move to prevent wild elephants from straying from Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary. Besides this being cruel and thoughtless, one cannot imagine the damage this would cause to the poor elephants and other wildlife. It is disgraceful that a FD, which is meant to look after and protect wildlife could take such thoughtless action. If proper trenches are dug they would certainly stop elephants from coming out. If the trenches which were dug failed to keep the elephants out, then the trenches could not have been dug properly.

I do feel action should be taken against the FD responsible for having planted iron spikes

Contact: **KR Sethna**, Yellikodigi Estate, Aldur, PO - 577111, Chikmagalur Dist. Karnataka. Tel: 08262 - 250058.

FOREST CASE UPDATE - I

- a) What is the Godavarman Case?
- b) The Central Empowered Committee
- c) Some Important Intervention Applications (IAs) in the Godavarman Case
- d) The Lower Subsansiri Case

What is the Godavarman Case?

The T. N Godavarman Thirumulkpad Vs Union of India W.P. 202 of 1995

Since 1996, forest governance in India has undergone a sea change in view of pioneering role of the Supreme Court on the issue of forest conservation. The limited implementation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in view of the restricted definition of “forest” resulted in vast areas across the country being left out of its purview. On 12-12-1996, the Supreme Court in the case of T. N Godavarman Thirumulkpad Vs Union of India and Environmental Awareness Forum, Jammu and Kashmir vs State of Jammu and Kashmir, reinterpreted the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to include within its scope not only “forests” as mentioned in government record but all areas that are forests in the dictionary meaning of the term irrespective of the nature of ownership and classification thereof. The case came to be popularly known as the Godavarman case.

The first order was of tremendous consequence throughout the country. As an immediate measure, the Supreme Court stayed all non-forest activities being undertaken without the prior approval of the Central government. Further, each state was required to form an expert committee to identify areas that are forests.

Since 1996, the case has had made a long journey. Over hundreds of orders have been passed, innumerable intervention applications (IAs) filed and large number of clarifications as well as modifications of orders made.

Fundamental changes have been made on aspects such as compensatory afforestation, forest administration and working plans. New authorities, committees and agencies have been set up such as the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), the Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Agency among others.

Although, essentially concerning forest conservation, the case has immense social implications as well. It has and continues to deal with issues such as encroachment, access to Non Timber Forest

Produce and even developmental projects that have immense social and human rights aspect. Understanding the developments in the case is no easy task.

This initiative intends to concentrate itself mostly to the happenings in the Godavarman cases with the belief that an adequately informed society can contribute greatly to the effective implementation of the orders of the Court and at the same time bring to the notice of the Court and shortcomings which requires modification and clarifications.

Central Empowered Committee (CEC)

The CEC was constituted on September 17, 2002 through a Gazette Notification issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The CEC has been constituted as an Authority under the provision of Sub section (3) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 in pursuance of the order of the Supreme Court dated 9-5-2002 and 9-9-2002 in W.P. 202/95 and 171/96 for a period of five years. The CEC’s broad task is to monitor and ensure the compliance of the orders of the Supreme Court concerning the subject matter of forests and wildlife and other issues arising out of the said order. The CEC comprises of 5 members representing government and NGOs. The following are the members of the CEC:

- P.V. Jaykrishnan (Chairperson), Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests
- N.K. Joshi (Member), Director General Forests, Ministry of Environment and Forests, GOI
- Valmik Thapar (Member), Ranthambhore Foundation
- Mahendra Vyas (Member), Advocate, Supreme Court of India
- M.K.Jiwrajka (Member Secretary), Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Some Important Intervention Applications (IAs)

(In each issue some important Intervention Applications and their present status will be highlighted)

IA Number and Title	Issue Concerned	Present Status
I.A No. 566 of 2000: Compensatory Afforestation and Net Present Value of Land Diverted	Regarding utilization of funds received for compensatory afforestation and Net Present Value (NPV) of land diverted	On 17-9-2003, the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued guidelines for the collection of NPV. In short it states that NPV shall be charged in all cases that have been granted in-principle approval after 30-10-2002. It shall be charged before Stage II approval and that the States should transfer the funds to the Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Agency as and when created.
I.A No. 276	Encroachment by 148 persons of 611.20 acres of Thatkola reserved Forest in Chikmagalur Division, Karnataka in the ecologically rich and fragile areas of the Western Ghats.	Following the recommendations of the CEC, the Supreme Court on 30-10-2002 accepted the report of the Court Commissioner R.M.N. Sahai and report of the Survey of India. The Court directed that the encroachers who voluntarily vacated the land handed it over to the Chief Conservator of Forests on or before January 31, 2003 need not pay compensation for the damages. However if they continued to occupy the land after the above date, a compensation of Rs. 5 lakh per month per hectare will need to be paid to the government.
I.A	Saw mills, veneer and plywood factories	The Court in its order dated 30-10-2002 directed that no state government or Union territory will permit the opening of any saw mill, veneer or plywood industry without the prior permission of the CEC.
I.A No. 223	Non Forestry use of reserved Forest of Jambudwip Island, Sundarbans in Violation of the Order of the Supreme Court dated 12-12-1996	An IA has been filed before the Supreme Court by the National Fish Workers Forum against the directions given by the CEC. The Supreme Court passed an interim order prohibiting movement of mechanized trawlers around Jambudwip Island.
I.A No. 497	Permission sought by State of Meghalaya for felling of trees from plantation raised by the District Councils.	CEC recommended that the order dated 12-5-2002 stated that with respect of felling of trees from non forest areas, including plantation on non forest areas, detailed guidelines shall be framed by the state government which would come into force after concurrence from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Since the guidelines are under preparation no felling at present should be allowed. The recommendation of the CEC was accepted by the Supreme Court by order dated 6-5-2003 and the I.A's dismissed.

The Lower Subansiri Case

An Intervention Application was filed by Dr L.M Nath, a former member of the Indian Board for Wildlife (IBWL) against the environmental clearance granted to the Lower Subansiri Project (in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh) by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). The area comprises of 42 ha of forest land in the Tale Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. The total area to be impacted is 3,739.9 ha which also includes notified reserved forests in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

According to the applicant, these pristine, rich and dense forests are classified as tropical moist evergreen forest and are among the finest in the country. It was contended that by virtue of the Supreme Court order dated 14-2-2000 in I.A No.548, all state governments were restrained from ordering the removal of dead, diseased, dying or wild fallen tree, drift wood and grasses etc from any National Park or game sanctuary. According to the applicant, the MoEF should not have granted the in-principle Stage I clearance and environmental clearance as it involves destruction of wildlife and its habitat of the Tale Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. This can only be permitted in cases where it is beneficial to the habitat as per provisions of Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and with the specific approval of the Supreme Court.

The application mentions of the serious difference of opinion that had arisen among the members of the IBWL when the Lower Subansiri project was discussed. Two members viz Bittu Sahgal and the then Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife) gave their report raising serious objections against the project. Further the surveys conducted by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) were found to be of extremely poor quality. The application mentions that the Additional DG of Forests (Wildlife) was of the view that the survey reports of the BSI and ZSI reports were not acceptable to him because these organisations had merely spent five days in the field and produced a report of no significance.

Besides the above, the application raised other serious concerns related to the poor survey of the area by Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS). The application mentions that over 40% of the catchment area falls outside India, in Tibet, and this had not been taken into account while planning the project. Further, the mandatory public hearing for the hydroelectric project held on 4-9-2001 was not preceded by a proper announcement of the date and

venue and it was conducted in English and Hindi, which are not the local languages of the area. As such the objective of the hearing remained unfulfilled.

The matter was subsequently heard on many occasions and finally disposed off on 19-4-2004. The Court in its order stated:

“Parties are agreed that the project proposed by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd. may be permitted by the MoEF subject to fulfilling the following conditions: -

- (i) The legal status of the sanctuary land i.e. 42 ha will remain unchanged and will continue to be a part of the sanctuary.
- (ii) The Reserve Forest area that forms part of the catchment of the Lower Subansiri including the reservoir should be declared as a national park/sanctuary. NHPC will provide funds for the survey and demarcation of the same.
- (iii) The extent of area to be declared as national park/sanctuary will be decided by the State Government in consultation with the MoEF and associating reputed forestry and wildlife Experts.
- (iv) The national park/sanctuary will be under the control of the Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, to be managed by an officer of the rank of the Deputy Conservator of Forests and above.
- (v) The NHPC will provide funds for the relocation and resettlement of the people, if any, residing inside the proposed National Park/ Sanctuary at (ii) above, at sites outside the protected area on land earmarked for the purpose by the State Government in advance.
- (vi) NHPC will make adequate arrangements for supply of fuel to the staff and workers engaged in the construction. Under no circumstances, fuel wood will be removed from the sanctuary or forest area.
- (vii) There would be no construction of dam upstream of the Subansiri River in future.
- (viii) The State Government will provide dedicated field staff for the management and protection of the national park/ sanctuary, which will include adequate number of ACFs, RFOs, Foresters, Guards, and Watchmen etc. Requisite infrastructure, communication equipments and other facilities will be provided to the staff and the officials. The entire cost i.e. recurring and non-

recurring expenditure will be borne by NHPC for a period of ten years. The State Government will prepare and approve the Management Plan for the national park/ sanctuary for a period of ten years and submit to the NHPC for funding support.

(ix) The NHPC will also ensure that there is no siltation down the Subansri River during the construction phase. The spillage and diversion channels will be maintained as fish ladder.

(x) Under no circumstances, the excavated material will be dumped either in the river or any other part of the National Park/ Sanctuary or the surrounding forests. NHPC will also provide complete funds for reforestation of the degraded sites with indigenous species within the National Park/ Sanctuary and ensure that there is no siltation down the Subansri River during construction phase."

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Protected Area (PA) Update is produced every two months as a follow-up to the workshop on Exploring the Possibilities of Joint Protected Area Management (JPAM), organised at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi, in September 1994.

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The *PA Update* can be accessed on the following websites as well

www.indianjungles.com & www.sanctuaryasia.com/resources/paupdate

Ideas, comments, news and information may please be sent to the editorial address:

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