

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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Ministry institutes award for wildlife protection
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Elephant experts meet in Thailand
New Director General for the IUCN
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WHATS AVAILABLE?

- ◆ Project Tiger: Status Report
- ◆ A Quarter Century of Sea Turtle Conservation
in Orissa
- ◆ Chilka Newsletter
- ◆ Environment Newsletter
- ◆ Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural
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- ◆ CM News
- ◆ WCPA South Asia Newsletter
- ◆ Indian Journal of Environmental Law

UPCOMING

Certificate Course in Environmental Education -
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International Training Course on Wetland
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PA UPDATE MATTERS CORRESPONDENCE

EDITORIAL

Mayhem in Corbett!

We have all been aware that poaching is rampant in our forests, and that wild animals are regularly killed for their tusks, their fur, their bones, and their claws. That this happens in large numbers is clear from the regular seizures of large quantities of animal parts. Its happening all the time, all over the country, and except for a few who are actively fighting it or are acutely aware of the ground realities, its not even an issue.

The killing of five elephants by poachers in just two months in Corbett has, however, succeeded to an extent, in turning the spotlight on this problem of great magnitude (see 'Five elephants poached in Corbett', below). Everyone admits that Corbett is one of the finest parks in the country, the jewel in the crown so to say. There is constant media attention, thousands of visitors through the year and yet the elephants were butchered with impunity! Nothing could be done to stop the poachers and only now, a full six months after the first animal was killed, there are reports that some significant arrests have been made. If this is the situation in Corbett, one can only imagine what is happening in other parts of the country.

A look at the stories in this Update gives one a glimpse of the tip of the iceberg that is wildlife poaching in the country. Serious attention has to be paid to tackle this and the classic, arm the forest guards, send in the army, kind of approach has to be complemented with a serious rethinking of what conservation means in this country and how we can be successful in saving what's left of our wildlands and wildlife. Who has stakes in conservation and who is being made to pay the price for it? These and similar questions will have to be answered.

If the elephant, the rhino and the tiger are worth more dead than alive, then incidents like what happened in Corbett will continue to happen. If a forest is worth more as plywood than when standing, then forests will be cut, just like is presently happening all over the country. The political will for conservation is not there, but can we do more than just repeating this every time we face a crisis? How much are we, ourselves, willing to take the responsibility for the elephants in Corbett?

Lets face it, we are the very consumers of the resources that we seek to protect in our protected area network. The villager or the tribal living in or around forests like Corbett has no use whatsoever for the ivory from that poached elephant. It will eventually come to the house of an urban elite in a neighbourhood like my very own. I can even escape that responsibility, because I will

never buy ivory. But then, ivory is not the only product that we get from our protected areas and other crucial wildlife habitats. There is plywood from the cut forests, there is electricity from the damned rivers, there is iron ore and steel from forests like Kudremukh....and each one of these eventually finds a place in my own house!

Are we, urban elite conservationists, willing to point some questioning fingers at ourselves? That might be a good starting point!

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Tigress killed, poachers held in Nagarjunsagar Srisailam TR

A three-and-a-half-year-old tigress was killed in the Nallamala forest of the Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) in Kurnool district in the first week of February. She was suspected to have been caught in a noose laid by poachers either for deer or wild boar. The poachers had chopped off three legs (two hind legs and the left fore leg) and had taken out two of the five nails from the right fore leg. The neck portion of the big cat was badly damaged as the noose, made of strong cables used in motor bikes, got tightened. The skin was intact with the animal killers making no attempt to peel it off.

The park authorities clarified that the killers were not professional poachers, but small-time poachers who hunted deer, rabbits, wild boars and other animals for meat. Hunting of smaller animals for meat is rampant in the cluster of villages here that includes Venakatapuram, Sidhapuram, S.N. Tanda and Nagalutigudem villages. Meat of spotted Deer and sambhar is reportedly available at Rs. 30 a kg while the meat of wild boar is available at Rs. 20 for a kg. Incidents of poaching of tigers had not been reported so far. However some time back a leopard had been killed in this area in a similar way.

Quick joint action by forest and police officials led to the arrest of seven who confessed to the trapping of the animal. Additional PCCF, Mr. T. Ramakrishna, had rushed to Kurnool district to coordinate operations with the Superintendent of Police following directions by the Chief Minister of the state. The Collector, Kurnool, has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident.

The wildlife authorities have said that the increase in poaching in the area is due to the encroachment of forests by villagers who thereby come into direct conflict with wildlife. An estimated 55% of the NSTR, the Gundla Brahmeshwaram Sanctuary in Cuddapah and Sri Venkateshwara National Park in Tirupati has already been

encroached upon. Additionally, there is reported to be large scale encroachment in forest lands in Adilabad, Khammam, Visakhapatnam, Nizamabad and Warangal districts of the state.

A senior official from the forest department said it was for the state government to stop the encroachments and that there was little that the forest department could do due to lack of manpower.

Source: 'Tigress killed by poachers', *The Hindu*, 08/02/2001.

'Seven held; magisterial probe ordered', *The Hindu*, 09/02/2001.

K Veerabhadra Rao. 'Poachers kill and declaw tigress in Kurnool district' *The Times of India*, 10/02/2001.

Contact: **Director, NSTR**, Srisailem, District Kurnool Srisailem 518 102, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 08512-2089/2140. Fax: 08524-86071

Central aid for Papikonda; ecodevelopment for other PAs in state

The Central Government has reportedly agreed to provide financial assistance for the development of the Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuary and for ecodevelopment around protected areas, provided the State Government submits proposals for the same.

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has expressed its willingness to sanction funds under the centrally sponsored schemes for protected areas following a presentation by Mr. P Pulla Rao a resident of West Godavari on problems faced by forest dependant Medara communities in the area.

One of the schemes being considered is the 100 % Centrally –sponsored scheme, 'Association of Scheduled Tribes and Rural poor in Regeneration of Degraded Forests on Usufruct Sharing Basis'.

More details are however not available.

Source: 'Aid for developing sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 08/05/2001.

Threats to Kasu Brahmanand Reddy NP

An estimated 12.14 hectares of dense vegetation has been cleared from the Kasu Brahmanand Reddy (KBR) National Park in the heart of Hyderabad City. This is being done, purportedly, to widen roads. Hundreds of neem, tamarind and mango trees have been felled. Huge amounts of money are also being spent on the construction of a path for morning walkers, to create ponds and gardens to 'beautify' the park.

Some time back there was also reports that exotic flora was being introduced in the 158 hectares

park at the behest of the Chief Minister, Chandra Babu Naidu (see *PA Update* 26).

Source: C Ramachandraiah. 'Trampling over a national park', Letter to *Down to Earth*, 15/03/2001.

Contact: **C Ramachandraiah**,
rchandra@hd2.dot.net.in

PCCF (WL), Govt. of Andhra Pradesh,
Aranya Bhavan, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Project for biodiversity management in Namdapha

The MacArthur Foundation funded multidisciplinary multi – institutional research project on 'People Centred Biodiversity Management in Namdapha National Park' was revised last year, with the new emphasis on natural resource management centred on jhum (shifting cultivation). The West Kameng Area has also now been included in the project.

A planning meeting for the project was held at the State Forestry Institute in October 2000. The other partners in the project are the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology, GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development, Almora, and the Dept. of Geography, Arunachal University.

Source: 'Arunachal Project', *UNESCO Newsletter*, December 2000.

Contact: **Field Director**, Namdapha Tiger Reserve Miao 792 122, Arunachal Pradesh. Tel: 03807-22249/22253.

ASSAM

Retrenchment of staff from Kaziranga resented

Early Birds, an organization for nature care in the north-eastern region of the country, has resented the recent move of the state government to retrench nearly 160 wildlife department casual staff from the Kaziranga National Park. The organisation has said that this would create a huge vacuum in guarding the vulnerable areas and has further demanded that the government regularise those retrenched people who have been working as casual workers in the division for up to 15 years.

Source: 'Retrenchment of wildlife staff resented', *The Assam Tribune*, 09/04/ 2001.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga National Park, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam.
Moley Baruah, Early Birds, 26, Surujmukhi, PO Silpukhri, Guwahati –

781003, Assam. Fax: 0361 – 550158.
Email: baruahm@iocl.co.in

Fishing banned inside Kaziranga

Fishing inside the Kaziranga National Park was recently banned. A prohibitory order to this effect was issued by the authorities and the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) in charge of the park, warned that stern action would be taken against the violation of the order. More information about this is presently not available.

Source: Nava Thakuria. Email dated 10/01/2001.
Contact: **Nava Thakuria**.
Email: navathakuria@indiainvest.com

Mimosa weed creating problems for Kaziranga

The spread of the 'mimosa' weed over 120 hectares of the Kaziranga National Park is posing a threat to the grasslands here, particularly in the Bagori and Kaziranga ranges. It is not eaten by herbivores like the rhino and the deer and is said to be spreading rapidly. The park officials are of the opinion that the weed spread to the park from the neighbouring tea estates, which used to grow the plant for 'soil stabilisation'. All but one of the tea estates around Kaziranga have put an end to their practice of growing Mimosa in response to the request made by Kaziranga Park authorities.

Meanwhile efforts are being made to remove the weed from the park by the conventional method of ploughing. The park authorities had asked for some money from the Central Government for the 'deweeding operation'. Although the money has been sanctioned it was yet to be handed over.

The park authorities have also approached the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), an international NGO for help to procure a tractor to expedite the ploughing of Mimosa.

Source: Bijay Sankar Bora. 'Mimosa weed posing threat to Kaziranga Park, *The Assam Tribune*, 11/04/200.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, see above.

Rhinos to be relocated to Burachapori WLS

The Assam Forest Department (FD) is planning to shift some rhinos from the Kaziranga National Park and the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) to the Burachapori WLS which is spread over an area of 44 sq. kms in the Sonitpur district. The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the Tezpur division has said that the inaccessibility and fewer incidences of poaching reported here would make the sanctuary a good place for the relocation of the rhino.

Recently, in February 2001, a five member veterinary team visited the villages of Dhania, Sisuari, and Jhauni which are located in the periphery of the sanctuary to vaccinate cattle here against the diseases, Haemmohaegis Septicemia (HS) and Black Quarter (BQ). The program was conducted under the aegis of Early Birds, a NGO that works in the region. Two more such veterinary camp were also held here in March and April, 2001 respectively. Financial support for these camps was provided by the Western Assam Wildlife Division.

Source: 'Increase in rhino population at Kaziranga, Pobitora', *The Assam Tribune*, 04/02/2001.
Moloy Baruah. Letter dated 05/03/2001
Contact: **Moloy Baruah**, Early Birds, see above

Tiger population down in Manas

The recent tiger census carried out in the Manas Tiger Reserve (MTR) has revealed that the population of the tiger here now is less than 70, down from 92 in 1988 and 81 in 1993. These figures are, however, still to be declared officially

The census also indicated that the population of the Indian wild dog and the Pigmy hog had increased considerably while that of the hog deer had gone down drastically. The tiger census was conducted through the 'pug-marks' method with the help of 250 Forest Department (FD) staff, 50 members from the NGO Manas Bandhu Group, and 18 elephants.

Source: 'Tiger population in Manas declining', *The Assam Tribune*, 1/04/2001.
Contact: **Director**, Manas National Park, PO Barpeta Road, Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666-61413. Fax: 60253.

4 NDFB ultras killed in Manas

Four NDFB ultras were killed inside the Manas National Park in an encounter with the army in December 2000.

Defence sources in Bongaigaon had received information that a group of heavily armed militants were to take the route through the national park coming down from their camp inside neighbouring Bhutan. Accordingly, an ambush was laid inside the forest under the Bijni police station area. The army also recovered two .303 rifles, two muzzle loading guns, one Chinese made grenade, large quantity of ammunition, IED materials, safety fuse etc. and some incriminating documents including a list of government contractors working in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts.

Source: '4 NDFB ultras killed' *The Assam Tribune*, 22/12/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Manas NP, see above

New group, Green Manas formed around Manas

A new group dedicated to working towards the conservation of Manas National Park was formed in April 2001. Called 'Green Manas', it is comprised of several active members of the already existing Manas Bandhu Dals (see *PA Update 29*) and intends to undertake long term work for the revival and conservation of the park.

In a letter issued recently the group has said that the situation in Manas has changed considerably and for the better. However the media continues to focus on Manas as a 'haven for militants', creating a fear psychosis both outside and within Assam. While the park is still under severe pressure from poachers and timber fellers, the projection of it being threatened by militants is incorrect. In fact in recent years the local militant groups, though physically present in the area, are voicing their support for conservation. The letter further adds that though the park has a long way to go before it recovers, people can definitely start visiting it and they have extended an open invitation to people from all over the country.

They have also appealed to conservation groups to help and support them to build up their group and their capacities to ensure the protection of the park.

Contact: **Dhaneswar Swargiary**, President, Green Manas, Barengabari (Batabari), P.O. Barengabari, District Barpeta-781315 Assam.

Large scale encroachments in Sonai - Rupai

Large scale encroachments are reportedly taking place in the 220 sq. kms Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary in the Sonitpur district of Assam. In an apparent bid to increase the Bodo population in this area on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, large numbers of the community are moving here from the Kokrajhar and Darrang districts of the state.

The areas worst affected include the forests in the Batasipur, Balipara, Belsiri and Chariduar Reserve Forest (RF) areas. The situation is also reported to be volatile as the encroachers are allegedly being helped by the Bodo militants and their leaders.

43 tigers were counted last year in Sonai-Rupai which is also the home for two species of highly endangered birds, the White Winged Wood Duck and the Bengal Florican.

The wildlife officials here have also submitted to the Central government, a project proposal with an estimated budget of Rs. One crore for the development of infrastructure, camps and

other facilities. This is in addition to an amount of US \$ 35,000 that has been sanctioned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the sanctuary.

Source: 'Sonai-Rupai sanctuary in grip of encroachers' *The Assam Tribune*, 02/02/2001.

Involve traditional fishermen for protection of Deepor Beel: Expert

Prof P C Bhattacharjee of the Zoology Department of Gauhati University (GU) has called for the involvement of the local fishermen in the conservation and management of the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, situated near Guwahati. He has suggested that the wetland should be developed as a biosphere reserve area with the greater participation and involvement of the people, living around the beel, for better management, maintenance and protection of the unique biodiversity of the area.

Deepor Beel is the first Ramsar site in the state and plays host to a large number of resident and migratory waterfowl. Recently there was a move for the denotification of this protected area, but it has been presently stalled (see *PA Update 26* and 25).

Source: Ajit Patowary. 'Local people firm on protecting Deepor Beel' *The Assam Tribune*, 05/02/2001.

Contact: **Prof PC Bhattacharjee**, Dept. of Zoology, Gauhati University, Guwahati – 781014, Assam. Tel: 0361-636768. Fax: 570133. Email: bhattapc@sancharnet.in

Rs 28.5 lakh grant for Dibru Saikhowa misappropriated

Nature's Beckon, a NGO working in the North Eastern regions of India has alleged that the Tinsukia Wildlife Division has misappropriated a sum of Rs. 28.5 lakhs that had been granted for work in the Dibru Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve. The money that came under the Man and Biosphere (MAB) program was meant for the welfare of the forest villages of Laika and Dodhia here, which together cover an area of 1.138 hectares and have a population of about 4000. The money was to be used for the 'upliftment' of the socio-economic status of the forest villagers and their 'capacity building' for the protection of the forest and its biodiversity. Instead, the Tinsukia Wildlife Division's staff took advantage of the gullibility of the villagers, obtained their signatures and then showed that the requisite programs had been undertaken and the money spent.

The Assam gazette notification no. J-22016/17/94- BR dated July 28 1997 had specifically mentioned that the Biosphere Reserve fund would be

spent for the development of Laika and Dodhia through a committee constituted with representatives from these two forest villages. Neither was this committee constituted, nor the money spent for the purpose it was meant for. Nature's Beckon has demanded a thorough, impartial and official probe into the entire matter.

(Ed's note: The Assam Tribune news report had stated that the money that had been appropriated had come from UNESCO's MAB program. However the MAB program of UNESCO has clarified that UNESCO has never provided funds for Dibru Saikhowa NP and the money in question was that of the Government of India)

Source: 'Misuse of wildlife conservation fund', *The Northeast Daily*, 10/04/2001.

Ron Duarah. 'Rs 28.5 lakh grant for Dibru Saikhowa misappropriated', *The Assam Tribune*, 17/04/2001.

Contact: **Soumyadeep Dutta**, Natures' Beckon, Datta Bari, Ward No.1, Dhubri – 783301, Assam. Tel: 03662-31067. Fax: 30076.
Sudha Mehndiratta, UNESCO House, 8 Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi - 110 057. Tel: 011-614 0038/614 0039/614 6308. Fax: 011-614 3351/614 2714 Email: s.mehn@unesco.org
Dr. R. K. Rai, Member Secretary, Indian National MAB Committee & Jt. Director (CS), MoEF, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110 003. Tel: 011-4364592. Fax: 011-4362551. E-mail: ramakrai@yahoo.com

50 rhino poachers surrender in Orang

50 rhino poachers operating in the Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National Park recently surrendered in front of the forest officials of Darrang district, police staff of Silbari police station and members of Aranya Surakhya Samiti, Orang, at Orang recently.

A greater Silbari 'Aranya Aru Banyapran' Surakhya Samiti' was also formed on the occasion.

Source: '50 rhino poachers surrender in Udalgiri' *The Assam Tribune*, 08/03/2001

Large scale killing of wildlife in Nameri, Bhalukpong

Nature's Banya Pran, a NGO in the Sonitpur district of Assam has alleged that there was large scale killing of waterfowl and other animals like deer, monkey and wild boar in the Bhalukpong Wildlife Sanctuary and Nameri National Park near the Assam – Arunachal border in the month of January. The killings coincided with the festival of Bhogali Bihu.

The NGO has alleged that the forest staff is also involved in the killing. Meanwhile some Arunachalis in Bhalukpong have reportedly claimed

that taking of venison was a religious rite and mere enactment of the Wild Life Act without considering the social sentiments of the Arunachalis would not stop them.

Source: 'Concern over killing of avifauna', *The Assam Tribune*, 16/01/2001.

Contact: **Director**, Nameri NP, Dolabari Tezpur 784001, Assam.

Eco-club formed in school near Laokhowa

An eco-club has been formed at the Laokhowa High School in the vicinity of the Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary. It has been started with the help of Early Birds, a NGO, under the Central Ministry of Environment and Forest's (MOEF) National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) program. A committee of 20 students with the Headmaster of the school as caretaker, has been formed. The club will work among the public for general awareness and particularly towards saving the Laokhowa WLS from further degradation.

Source: Moloy Baruah. Letter dated 05/03/2001.
Contact: **Moloy Baruah**, Early Birds, see above.

Chief Wildlife Warden – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam.

CHATTISGARH

Illegal diamond mining in Udanti

The Union Government has ordered an inquiry into reports of illegal diamond mining in the Deobhog area including the Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary in Chattisgarh. The mining was being conducted by a joint-venture floated by the Madhya Pradesh Government with the B Vijay Kumar Chattisgarh Exploration Company (BVCE). Film financier Bharat Shah, who has been arrested for his alleged links with the underworld, is the chairman of BVCE.

The BVCE has, reportedly, been allowed to only conduct an 'aerial survey' in the Deobhog diamond mines. This was confirmed by the Union Minister of Mines, Sunderlal Patwa in a statement made to the Indian parliament in November 2000. However the Minister of State for Mining, Ram Pukar Singh, has said that BVCE has been given permission to take 10,000 kgs of soil sample by digging not more than 30 centimeters deep in the mining site.

The company has reportedly not only been digging trenches but has sent a sample of diamond soil to South Africa and Australia without taking the required permissions. Jeep loads of diamond soil are said to have been collected from inside the Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary as well. The soil is then examined

and sent to Raipur. The BVCE has even completed building its own Kimberlite sample processing laboratory near Mainpur.

Source: Ambrish Kumar. 'Diamond mining in Chattisgarh kicks up more dust', *Indian Express*, 10/01/2001.

List of PAs in Chattisgarh

Following are the PAs in the new state of Chattisgarh:

Wildlife Sanctuaries: Achankmar, Bilaspur district; Badakhhol, Raigarh district; Barnawapara, Raipur district; Bhairamgarh, Bastar district; Gomarda, Raigarh district, Pamed, Bastar district; Samarsot, Sarguja district, Sitanadi, Raipur district; Tamor Pingla, Sarguja district; and Udanti, Raipur district.

National Parks: Indravati, Bastar district; Kangerghati, Bastar district; and Sanjay, Sarguja / Korla district.

GOA

Populated areas to be excluded from Netrawali and Madei

The Chief Minister (CM) of Goa, Mr Manohar Parrikar, has accepted the proposal of an eight-member committee for the exclusion of thickly populated villages from the Netrawali and Madei Wildlife Sanctuaries. The committee headed by the former Director of Agriculture, Dr. Hemant Karapurkar had been constituted by the state government on September 4, 2000 and it submitted its report on March 30, earlier this year. Whereas the area to be excluded from Madei is not very clear, 88.98 sq kms from the 218.09 sq. kms Netrawali Wildlife Sanctuary will be excluded. The Committee observed that traditional people had been living in the forest designated as sanctuaries for generations and carrying out their agricultural, horticultural and other operations. In the absence of any documents, however, they were unable to prove their ownership and are therefore now getting labelled as encroachers. It has further suggested that the necessary documents can be issued to the authentic residents of these villages to avoid further legal problems and then not to allow the expansion of their 'areas of operation'. In the case of a couple of houses which would have to be relocated, the committee has suggested that they be rehabilitated instead of just giving them financial compensation.

The report also observed that there are about 40 mining leases within these protected areas. Of these only 11 are active. The committee recommended that only 'active mines' may be

permitted to carry on their operation strictly within the area assigned to them without any future expansions. Other mining leases (not working) can be included within the proposed sanctuary areas. It is not known whether the CM has accepted these other recommendations as well.

A joint letter opposing this move of the state government was sent to the Chief Minister by the Conservation and Livelihoods Network.

Following is the text of the reply of the CM, Mr. Manohar Parrikar, "...At the very outset, I would like to set the record straight on the issue. The Government of Goa under Section 18 of the Wild Life Protection Act has only declared its intention of notifying certain areas as Wildlife Sanctuaries. The position on the ground is quite different in so much as that there are sizeable habitations within the areas proposed to be notified. In addition, the wildlife population numerically in these areas is not significant as compared to the human population which are also largely dependant historically for survival on agricultural cultivation within these areas. Though sentiments expressed in your letter are well appreciated, going ahead with the notification would infringe on the basic rights of the people of the area which, as would agree, no responsive Government would like to infringe upon....."

Source: 'Panel for exclusion of thickly populated areas in sanctuaries', *The Navhind Times*, 11/04/2001.

'Populated areas to be excluded from wildlife sanctuaries', *The Navhind Times*, 24/04/2001.

Manohar Parrikar, CM of Goa in letter to Conservation and Livelihoods Network, 07/06/2001.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Wildlife Wing
Junta House, Panaji 403001, Goa.

GUJARAT

Oil projects in Gulf of Kutch to be revived?

In an attempt to throw open the Gulf of Kutch to more operators for proposed refineries and oil projects, the Central and Gujarat State Governments have agreed to take the opinion of the Attorney General (AG) on granting environmental clearance to these projects along the Marine National Park here.

A high level meeting was held in New Delhi to discuss the matter in the month of May. Participants included Mr. PK Laheri, Principal Secretary to the Gujarat Chief Minister, PV Jayakrishnan, Environment Secretary, Shivraj Singh, Joint Secretary, Petroleum Ministry, JS Hajuria, Managing Director Bharat Oman Refinery Limited (BORL) and KS Sugathan, State Environment Secretary. The main aim of the meeting is reported to

be to find ways of getting around the recent SC order, which sought to ban fresh developmental activities along the Gulf of Kutch. The apex court had ruled that such activities would disturb the fragile ecology of the park.

According to a senior level official who participated in the meeting, 'If the AG's opinion is favourable, the state will be allowed to re-examine the issue of permitting BORL and Essar to install oil terminals near Vadinar, as also reconsidering the issue of allowing a private port at Positra.' (Also see PA Updates 29, 27, 26, 25, 24, 23, and 21).

Source: 'Gujarat seeks AG's view on oil projects along marine park', *The Times of India*, 23/05/2001.

Contact: **PV Jayakrishnan** Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003.

Animals in Gir had inkling of the quake

Forest officials and others in and around Gir National Park have reported that there were many unusual movements and changes in the behaviour of animals, including the lion just prior to the earthquake that recently devastated parts of Gujarat. This unusual behaviour and movement started on the night of January 25 and continued till the morning of January 26.

The stillness of the Gir forests, was breached with loud roars and shrieks of wild animals. According to Mahesh Singh, Deputy Conservator of Forests, lions, leopards, and deer in the jungle started crying loudly and running helter-skelter. Lions were seen running with their tails up and erect and the Sakarbaugh Zoo authorities on the outskirts of Junagadh said that the crocodiles had also shown abnormal behaviour and were turning and tossing in the water.

Source: Sudhir Vyas. 'Animals in Gir had inkling of the quake', *The Times of India*, 19/02/2001.

Contact: **Mahesh Singh**, DCF, Sasan, Junagadh – 363125, Gujarat.

Lion census in Gir

The once-in-five-years census of lions in the Gir National Park was to be held in the middle of the month of May. The count had to be suspended last year following heavy unseasonal rains just before the census operations began (see *PA Update* 26). The decision to use buffalo calves as live bait also had to be scrapped following protests from various quarters and a public interest litigation in the Gujarat High Court (see *PA Update* 25).

Live bait will not be used this year as well, and forest officials have expressed concerns that the count will not be as accurate as before. The authorities will now use what is called the 'beat system', under which the local officials keep track of the lions in areas assigned to them. The help of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has been sought for the purpose.

The last lion count held in 1995 had put the population of the lions in Gujarat at 304 and the present population of the animals is estimated to be between 315 and 320. The latest details of the census and the figures obtained are not yet available.

Source: Pradeep Mallik, Count lions by 'beating' not 'baiting' in Gujarat', *India Abroad News Service*, 23/04/2001.

'Beat' to replace bait in lion census', *The Times of India*, 24/04/2001.

Contact: **DCF Sasan** see above.

International Women's day around Gir

The Aga Khan Rural Support Program – India (AKRSP- I), celebrated International Women' Day 2001 with a program for women and women's group in and around Gir National Park. About 180 women from 8 villages attended.

Stalls with themes like Women and Forests, Herbal Medicine, People and Forests and Dependancy on Forests were put up. There were cultural programs as well in which the women's role in forest protection movements like 'Chipko' and 'Appiko' were highlighted.

Source: Dhaneshwar Pandya. Letter to Kalpavriksh dated 03/04/2001.

Contact: **Dhaneshwar Pandya**, AKRSP (I), Campus Building, Sherbag, Gadu, Khera Road, TA – Maliya – Hutina, Dist. Junagadh, Gujarat, Tel: 02870 – 85118 / 85119

Meet on wetlands held

The Gujarat Vigyan Parishad Environment Education Centre at Kotak Science College in Rajkot organised a one day program on February 2, to mark Wetland Day, 2001. The objective of the program was to stress the importance of wetlands and the need to set up a centre for wetland studies in the Saurashtra-Kutch region. The slogan for the program was 'Wetland World, A World To Discover' and people were encouraged to launch a state and nation-wide campaign to highlight the importance and use of wetlands.

Seven of the protected areas in the state of Gujarat are wetland-based. These including the Great Rann of Kutch, the Little Rann of Kutch, Nalsarovar, Thol Lake, Khijadia Lake, Porbandar Lake and the Marine National Park. They cover about 1,35,502 sq

kms, which is about 77.2 per cent of the total protected area in the state.

Source: 'Meet on wetlands held', *Indian Express*, 03/02/2001.

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

HARYANA

Khaparhwas lake dries up

The Khaparhwas lake bird sanctuary spread over an area of 200 acres in the Jhajjar district of Haryana has gone completely dry.

This has been the situation for the last five years as the main lifeline of the lake, the 'escape water channel' that brings surplus water of the Bhalaut Sub Branch Feeder Canal to the lake has been blocked by some villagers and much needed water diverted for irrigation purpose. The problem has been compounded by the fact that Haryana has got scanty rains for the last two years. State authorities have not made any efforts to restore the water supply to the lake. Worse, eucalyptus has been planted all over the dry lake further degrading the bird habitat.

Source: Suresh Sharma. Email dated 19/02/2001.

Contact: **Suresh Sharma**, Gokul Nagar, Rohtak Road Sonipat 131001, Haryana. Tel: 01264-45228 / 3012264. Email: suresh_haryana@vsnl.net.
CWLW, Govt. of Haryana C-18, Van Bhawan, Sector 6, Panchkula 134109, Haryana. Tel: 0172-561224

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Bandli to be denotified for cement plant

The Himachal Pradesh Government has once again initiated a move to set up a cement plant in the Sundernagar subdivision of the state ignoring strong protests of local residents. This is the second time that this proposal has come up. Earlier, in 1992, the proposal of setting the plant at Nalani Maloh here was rejected by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) as the proposed mining site was within a distance of 500 metres from the Bandli Wildlife Sanctuary

Now the state government has proposed to denotify half the area of the 31.76 sq. kms sanctuary, to facilitate the coming up of the project. It has also been decided to cut by half, the area of the Nature Awareness Centre (NAC), Trambri, which is spread over 205 hectares and is surrounded

from two sides by Sundernagar town. The NAC was created by Mr Rup Singh, Forest Minister, who represented the Sundernagar Assembly segment in 1991. He is now himself recommending the denotification of the sanctuary and the cutting of the area of the NAC. The case is now, reportedly, before the Indian Board Wildlife, New Delhi, the Chairman of which, is the Prime Minister himself.

The residents of this and adjoining subdivisions in Mandi district have been opposing the cement plant proposal since 1992 and have now formed environmental protection groups at various places for this purpose. Even in Maloh village where Harish Chander and Co. has decided to install the cement plant, the newly elected panchayat, at its first meeting, has passed the first resolution opposing the project.

It has been pointed out that a large number of people in Mandi are likely to be adversely affected by the plant. There is the fear that water channels will dry up, water mills will be rendered useless and cropping patterns and yields from fields would be affected. The Hotel and Guest House Association, (HGHA) Mandi, has expressed concern of the impact on the tourism potential of the area. Already, they have pointed out, the uncontrolled truck traffic caused by the cement plants in the state has affected their business.

The residents of the area have sent a representation to the Prime Minister requesting him not to clear the proposal in the interest of this hill state.

The latest status of the project is not yet known. A joint protest letter by the Conservation and Livelihoods Network has been sent to the Chief Minister of the state in the matter.

Source: Mahesh Chander Sharma Cement plant initiated despite opposition, *The Tribune*, 25/02/2001.

Water scarcity affects birds at Pong Dam

Severe water scarcity and fall in water levels in the reservoir earlier this year resulted in a large number of migratory birds leaving the Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary much before the warm season set in. The phenomenon was noticed from mid January itself and by mid February, the bird count here had already reduced to half the number of their arrivals.

Source: 'Drought forces birds to leave Pong sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 15/02/2001. Ashwani Sharma. 'Frequent fliers exit the Pond dam transit lounge', *Indian Express*, 04/03/2001.

Contact: **State Council for Science, Technology and Environment**, 34 SDA Complex, Kasumpti, Shimla-171009,

Chief Wildlife Warden – HP,
Mistchamber, Khalini, Shimla – 171002,
Himachal Pradesh. Tel: 0177-201660 /
223030.

JHARKHAND

Elephant poached in Palamau

The carcass of elephant, allegedly, poached inside in the Palamau Tiger REServe was found on April 6. Acting of a tip off the forest department (FD) exhumed the carcass of the animal from four separate spots on the bed of a dry rivulet in the reserve forest area near Lamurkhard village. The tusks of the elephant were missing.

Source: Manoj Prasad / Agencies. 'Poachers strike in Palamau', *Indian Express*, 09/04/2001.

KARNATAKA

Kaniyanpura elephant corridor to be protected

The Kaniyanpura elephant corridor connects the high elephant density Nagarhole NP – Bandipur NP – Wayanad WLS – Mudumalai WLS complex in the Western Ghats with areas in the Eastern Ghats like the Sathyamangalam and Kollegal Forests and the BRT and Cauvery WLSs.

It is only a 50 m wide forest passage north of the deep Moyar Gorge. South of the gorge, in Tamil Nadu, there is habitat contiguity but this is threatened by the Pykara Hydro Electric Project. However north of the Gorge in Karnataka there is a stretch of uncultivated revenue land and 10-15 owners of the private lands who have expressed a willingness to sell their lands to the government.

Earlier, a proposal by the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD), in technical collaboration with the Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre (AERCC) was accepted and funds had been released during 2000 for acquiring the revenue lands, purchasing private lands and digging an elephant proof trench along the northern boundary of the augmented corridor.

The process of acquisition and augmentation of the corridor by the KFD is reported to be in progress.

Source: 'Elephant corridor augmentation in Bandipur NP, Karnataka, *Tigerlink*, March 2001.

Contact: **AERCC**, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore-560012, Karnataka. Email: aercc@ces.iisc.ernet.in

Anti-poaching training for Bandipur staff

As part of its Van Rakshak (VR) project, the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) organised an anti-poaching training program on wildlife crimes and enforcement techniques for forest staff of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve (BTR) from January 26–30, 2001. Composite anti poaching kits were also provided to 270 field staff in the program.

The training module had two components. The first dealt with the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) and the powers given to forest guards. The second dealt with techniques of criminal investigation and building information networks to prevent crime.

Source: 'Van Rakshak' training program for BTR', *Tigerlink*, March 2001.

Contact: **MKS Pasha**, WTI, PO Box. 3150, New Delhi-110003. Fax: 011-6326027. Email: pasha@wildlifetrustofindia.org

Forest restoration around Bandipur; tiger conservation workshop held

The Himagiri Conservation Society (HCS) has launched a new project to 'Restore Forest Lands' around the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. 20 hectares of deforested land are to be taken up for afforestation.

HCS along with Project Tiger authorities also conducted a one day workshop on tiger conservation on January 17, 2001 which was attended by students and college teachers. On January 27, a free health camp was organised for tribals living around the TR and approximately 250 individuals were treated on the occasion.

Source: 'NGOs attempt at restoring forests' *Tigerlink*, March 2001

Contact: **R Mallesha**, HCS, D III, No. 525, Behind Old AEO Office, Gundlupet-571111, Dist. Chamrajnagar, Karnataka.

New model for wildlife census in Bandipur

The Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre (AERCC), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, has embarked on a project to evolve a new model for wildlife census in the Bandipur National Park. The census results are expected to be more reliable and scientific than the conventional 'block counting' of animals undertaken here in the past. The new model is also better than the 'one time' enumeration of animals through the line method undertaken during a season.

The new model provides for undertaking prey density estimation thrice a year to arrive at a more reliable figure. It also includes identification of different types of vegetation in the park, which is

done with the help of satellite imagery and Global Positioning System (GPS).

Source: R Krishna Kumar. 'Project to evolve model for wildlife census', *The Hindu*, 09/04/2001.
Contact: AERCC, see above

Petroleum pipeline disturbs elephant corridor between Bhadra and Pushpagiri

Sixteen elephants, including two tuskers and three calves were found marooned in the Neriya forest range in the Western Ghats, unable to find their way to their natural migratory route to the Pushpagiri Sanctuary. The incident happened in February earlier this year and is supposed to be the first occurrence of its kind in the area. According to the Malekudiya tribal community that lives here, this has happened because of the deforestation caused in various patches here by the HPCL Mangalore-Bangalore Petroleum Pipeline (MBPP). The pipeline has affected the traditional elephant corridor between the Bhadra and Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Prior to the laying of the pipeline, a team from the Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre (AERCC), of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore had prepared a report that indicated that human – elephant confrontation, which was unheard of here, would become frequent if the pipeline became a reality. It is estimated that thousands of trees would have to be cut for the pipeline and earlier, in January, when the tree cutting had begun there were large scale protests by local people and their organisations like the Anti HPCL Pipeline Committee, Dakshina Kannada Parisarasakta Okkoota, Nagarika Seva Trust and the Mahila Vedike. The local villagers have also pointed out that permissions for the work were not taken from the Gram Panchayats in the region and a writ petition had also been filed protesting against the violation of the panchayat powers.

The 364 kms. long Mangalore-Bangalore pipeline (MBPL) project is being executed by Petronet MHB Limited (PML) at a cost of Rs.667 crores for evacuation of Petroleum products from the plant near Mangalore. It is expected to be completed by December 2001. The pipeline would traverse through Dakshina Kannada, Chikmagalur, Hassan, Mandya, Tumkur, Bangalore rural and Urban districts affecting more than 240 villages here. It would carry 8.5 million tonnes of petroleum products from MRPL by 2013-14. PML has said that it was taking up extensive compensatory afforestation, where 10 trees would be planted for every tree cut in the process of laying the pipeline. Rs. 2 crores had already been paid to the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) for the purpose and additional funds would be released when required, matching the progress of the pipeline. Environmental activists

have likened this payment as a sell out on part of the Karnataka Forest Department.

Source: 'DK greens plan protest against laying of HPCL pipeline', *Deccan Herald*, 12/01/2001.
'Farmers oppose Petronet's pipeline scheme in Karnataka', *Business Line*, 17/01/2001.
'Mangalore-Bangalore Pipeline Project to be completed by year end', *The Hindu*, 17/02/2001.
M.Raghuram. 'Tuskers lose their way in Neriya Forests', *The Hindu*, 25/02/2001.
Contact: AERCC, see above.

Ameen Ahmed, Ghouse Buildings, Horpet Main Road, Tumkur 572101 Karnataka. Tel: 0816-271643. Email: ameen@vsnl.com

Rs. 2 crores to tackle elephant menace in Nagarhole

The Karnataka State Government has sanctioned Rs. two crores to dig elephant proof trenches adjoining the Nagarhole National Park to prevent wild elephants from straying into agricultural lands. The Minister of State for Finance, M Sivanna said that although the forest department (FD) had sent a proposal for Rs. four crores, the government had agreed to release only half the amount. The minister was speaking at a function in January, earlier this year, at Chikkodanahalli in the HD Kote taluk, organised to launch the eco-development projects in villages adjoining the national park.

There is also a proposal to erect a solar fencing along the boundary of the park to deal with this problem.

Source: 'Govt. Sanctions Rs. 2 cr. to tackle elephant menace', *The Hindu*, 29/01/2001.

Rapid EIA says no to mining in Kudremukh; KIOCL expands operations to Andhra Pradesh

A Rapid Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) done by a team of ecologists and engineers from various institutions including the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) and, Department of Civil Engineering (DCE) of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has said that no mining should be allowed in Gangdikal and Nellibeedu areas of the Kudremukh National Park. The study, commissioned at the instance of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, to look into the impact on flora and fauna of the Kudremukh National Park, has said that mining would cause immense damage to the biodiversity and water resources in the area. The opening up of Gangdikal would have a permanent effect on the Kudremukh plateau between the northern and southern portions of the park, besides making an

impact on the Tunga river system. The report further states that this would also make it totally incompatible with the existence of a National Park in this biodiversity rich region and that mining at Nellibeedu would directly open up 321 hectares of grasslands and the unique shola forests.

While Forest Department officials refused to comment, environmentalists hailed the report. Submitted in February 2001 to the ministry, the report is expected to form the basis for it to decide whether the 30-year lease of the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL), which expired in July 1999, should be renewed. It will also decide whether fresh areas such as Gangdikal and Nellibeedu, inside the Kudremukh National Park should be given for mining. KIOCL has been pressing for renewal of the mining lease for another 20 years. The proposed area is about three times the area mined presently.

Earlier in the first week of April, Chandre Gowda, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, came out strongly in favour of continued mining by KIOCL. Speaking at the silver jubilee celebrations of the company, he criticised those who were opposing the mining here as people who had no idea of the conditions prevailing in the area. He questioned the intentions of those who had filed PILs against the mining and said there was no substance in the charges that the mining operations were polluting the Bhadra river. (Also see *PA Updates* 29, 27, 26, 25, 23, 22, 21, 20, 18, and 14)

Meanwhile KIOCL is to set up a Rs. 300 crore iron ore production centre at Ongole in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. This is an outcome of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the company and the AP State Government at the Partnership Summit held in Hyderabad, in January, earlier this year. The foundation stone for the plant was recently laid by Mr. BK Tripathy, Union Minister of State for Steel, in a function where the chief guest was the Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu.

The company has also signed an MoU with the Union Ministry of Steel for the year 2001 – 2002, for the production of 5.7 million tonnes of iron ore concentrate and 3.85 million tonnes of pellets.

The Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry has also presented KIOCL with the best exporter of iron ore award for the year 1999-2000.

Source: Sunil Kumar M. 'Eco report dampens KIOCL prospects', *Deccan Herald*, 21/04/2001.

'Chandre Gowda comes to KIOCL's defence', *The Hindu*, 06/04/2001.

'Rs. 300-cr. KIOCL project in AP' *The Hindu*, 12/04/2001.

M Raghuram. 'KIOCL set to break new ground', *The Hindu*, 13/04/2001.

'KIOCL signs MoU with Centre', *The Hindu*, 23/04/2001.

'KIOCL gets export award', *The Hindu*, 13/05/2001.

Contact: **R Sukumar**, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore- 560012, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3343382. Fax: 3315428. Email: 'rsuku@ces.iisc.ernet.in

S Murari, Chairman, KIOCL, 2nd Block, Koramangala, Sarjapur Road, Bangalore-560034, Karnataka. Tel: 080-5531322 Fax: 5521584.

Rally to protest against mining in Kudremukh and eviction of tribals from the park

Earlier in December 2000, a ten day 'Save Tunga and Bhadra Rivers' jatha was undertaken by the Bhadra Ulisi Horata Okkoota to protest against the pollution and destruction of these two rivers. The rally which passed through the districts of Chikmagalur, Shimoga, Davangere, Bellary, Koppal and Raichur received a very positive response. One of main focus points of the rally was the continued mining in the forests of the western ghats and Kudremukh National Park, in particular by KIOCL. At its conclusion in Shimoga, the rally urged the government to immediately prevent mining operations by KIOCL near the sources of the two rivers. Other resolutions passed, included the call to stop all industrial activities in Gangarikallu and Neelibeedu in the region; winding up of the KIOCL operations after providing alternative jobs to the workers; to drop the move to notify the Kudermukh NP as it would involve evicting the tribal people living in the forest area. There was also a demand to initiate legal action against VISL and Mysore Paper Mills in Bhadravati for polluting the River Bhadra and against Harihar Polyfibres for polluting the River Tungabhadra.

Source: "Save Tunga, Bhadra' jatha launched", *The Hindu*, 26/12/2000.

Pramod Mellegatti. "Save Tunga Bhadra' rally evokes positive response", *The Hindu*, 31/12/2000.

'Environment threatened by political motives', *The Hindu*, 03/01/2001.

'Call to prevent mining near Tunga, Bhadra sources', *The Hindu*, 05/01/2001.

SC accepts plea against mining in Kudremukh

The Supreme Court has issued notices to the Union and Karnataka State governments and the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd. (KIOCL) and directed the Union Government to file an affidavit giving reasons for permitting mining activity in the Kudremukh National Park (KNP). The notices were

issued on May 10 in response to an interlocutory application (IA) filed by the NGO, Wildlife First! in the Public Interest Litigation (PIL), TN Godavarman Thirumalpad Vs the Union of India, concerning the denudation and destruction of forests in the country.

The IA has contended that as the reserve forest here was declared a national park in 1987, mining activity by KIOCL should not have continued in the wake of another interim order issued on Feb. 14, 2000 which prohibits removal of dead, dying or diseased trees and grasses from national parks and sanctuaries. It has also challenged the two annual 'temporary working permissions' in 1999 and 2000 granted by the MoEF.

Source: 'KIOCL: SC accepts plea against mining', *The Hindu*, 25/05/2001.

Contact: **Wildlife First!** 249, 4th Main Road, Chamarajapeth, Bangalore-560018, Karnataka. Email: pbsolus@blr.vsnl.net.in
LAW-E, 409, Lawyers Chambers, Supreme Court, Bhagwan Das Road, New Delhi – 110001. Tel: 011-3070029. Email: lawe@bol.net.in

Rare species of frog found in Kudremukh

A new species of frog, endemic to the Western Ghats has been discovered in the forests of the Kudremukh National Park by scientists in the department of post-graduate studies and research in Environmental Science, Kuvempu University, Karnataka.

The frog that belongs to the genus 'nyctibatrachus' (night frog) has been named *nyctibatrachus hussaini* after the well naturalist from Dakshin Kannada, SA Hussain.

Source: Stanley G Pinto. 'Rare species of frog found in Kudremukh', *The Times of India*, 24/05/2001.

Contact: **Dr. S.V. Krishnamurthy**, Reader, Dept. of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Environmental Sciences, Kuvempu University, Jnana Shayadri, Shankarghatta-577451, Karnataka. E-mail: root@shikuv.kar.nic.in; svkrishnamurthy@usa.net

Mining near Bannerghatta: FD seeks action against Mines and Geology Dept.

The Karnataka Forest Department (FD) has sought action against the Mines and Geology (M&G) department officials for giving a mining license in the safe zone of the Bannerghatta forests. The mines department has given the licence to one Lakshminarayana, Survey No.23, in Tammanayakanahalli village of Anekal Taluk for mining of black granite for a period of 10 years.

Forest officials have said that this area falls within 500 mtrs from the periphery of the forest as well as the national park, is a safe zone and hence non-forest activity is prohibited.

Further details are however not available.

(*Ed's note: It is also not clear what is the meaning of following in the context of the above story: a) What is the safe zone of the forests, b) Whether the objection raised by the FD are in relation only to the protected area c) What is meant by the periphery of the forest and d) under what provisions of what law is the FD seeking action?*)

Source: 'Mining near park: Action sought against dept', *The Times of India*, 30/03/2001.

Contact: **Leo Saldanha** Environment Support Group S-3, Rajashree Apartments, 18/57, 1st Main, S. R. K. Gardens, Jayanagar, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore 560041, Karnataka. Telefax: 080-6341977. Fax: 080-6723926 (PP) Email: esg@bgl.vsnl.net.in

Irupu Falls power project to affect Brahmagiri WLS

The establishment of a mini hydel power project by a private company at the Irpu Falls across the Lakshmanateertha river (a tributary of the Cauvery) inside the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary has become a source of concern and conflict.

Environmental groups like Wildlife First! which are opposing the project are arguing that if the proposed dam which is 300 feet long and 12 feet high, is constructed, it will destroy tree cover and adversely affect populations of rare animals found here, like the clawless otter and the Nilgiri langur. They have also argued that the construction of the dam would be a violation of a Supreme Court order which prohibits 'non-forest' activities in reserve forests and wildlife areas. Additionally, it would reduce water flow to the ancient Sri Rameshwara Temple, which is half a Km downstream of the proposed dam site and deprive pilgrims the opportunity to take a holy dip here.

The local Irpu Sri Rameshwara Temple Committee is however reported to have expressed support for the dam as it would benefit the local people in the area and the temple itself. They have argued that the dam would only be 300 feet in length and would not hamper religious activities.

Source: K Jeevan Chinnappa. 'Controversy over Irpu Falls power project', *The Hindu*, 01/02/2001.

Contact: **Wildlife First!**, see above.

Chief Wildlife Warden - Karnataka, 2nd Floor, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore – 560003, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3341993.

KERALA

Move to keep shrine at Sabrimala open for whole year; adverse impact on Periyar feared

There is a move by the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) to keep the shrine at Sabrimala inside Periyar Tiger Reserve (TR) open for pilgrims for the whole year. This was the main issue at the 'Devaprashnam' that was organised by the TDB on April 15, 2001 at Sabrimala. At present the shrine is kept open for darshan for 133 days in the year. However the influx of pilgrims has reportedly grown to unmanageable levels which has forced this new development.

In another development the TDB is also reported to be considering the construction of a serpentine 'nadapanthal' (roofed footpath) along the entire 4 km stretch from Pampa to the Sannidhanam. A leading liquor manufacturing company is understood to have volunteered to support this construction.

Many have however criticised these new developments saying that it is a sell out to the market and commercial forces. Serious concerns have also been expressed on the adverse impacts on the tiger reserve. The roofed path for instance would certainly become a major impediment in the movement of large animals particularly the elephant. It is already well known that every year, the forests and wildlife, including elephants are badly affected during the pilgrimage season (see *PA Updates* 27, 24, 23 & 21).

Source: P Venugopal. 'Dichotomy in Govt's forest policy', *The Hindu*, 10/03/2001.

'Sabarimala: market forces threatening tradition, ecology?' *The Hindu*, 14/04/2001.

Contact: **Director**, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhavan, Forest Complex, SH Mount, PO Kottayam – 686006, Kerala. Tel: 0481-505940.

Mullaperiyar dam height increase to affect Periyar

The Kerala government has turned down the request of Tamil Nadu to increase the height of the Mullaperiyar dam to its permissible height. The Kerala Forest Department (FD) has impleaded in the case currently being tried in the Supreme Court that the increase in the level of the reservoir would damage the Periyar TR by submerging important wildlife habitat.

Various NGOs here, too have opposed any move to increase the height of the dam.

Source: P Venugopal. 'Dichotomy in Govt.'s forest policy', *The Hindu*, 10/03/2001.

Contact: **Director**, Periyar TR, see above.

Chief Wildlife Warden – Kerala,
Vazhudacaud, Trivandrum – 695014,
Kerala. Tel: 0471-322217 / 204896. Fax:
325804.

MADHYA PRADESH

MP to set up Wildlife Advisory Committees in national parks

The MP State Government has announced that Wildlife Advisory Committees are to be constituted in the national parks in the state. A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society held under the chairmanship of Forest Minister, Harvansh Singh in April 2001.

Local distinguished citizens and environment lovers too would be included in these committees. It was also decided that the members of the Tiger Foundation Society would be allowed to visit any national park free of cost once a year. It is however not clear as to what role there would be for local communities and how they would be made equal partners in these committees.

Source: N Shiva Kumar. Email to nathistory-india@lists. Princeton.edu dated 20/04/2001.

Contact: **Harvansh Singh**, Forest Minister, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Alok Awasthi, Joint Director, Madhya Pradesh Information Centre. Email: alokawasthi@vsnl.com

Gautam Bandopadhyay, Ekta Parishad, O3 Anupam Nagar, Shankar Nagar, Raipur-492007, Chattisgarh. Tel: 0771-421926, 07721 – 4498. Email: gautamb@bom6.vsnl.net.in

CWLW, MP, Van Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar Bhopal 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0755-557371/ 550391. Fax: 011- 761102.

National conference on PAs held

Ekta Parishad (EP) and the National Forum for Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) held a three day national conference on protected areas from March 23 – 25, 2001 in Katni. Various issues related to protected areas, peoples rights over the forests and access to resources were discussed in the meeting. Details of the meeting and the resolutions passed can be obtained from the organisers.

Contact: **Gautam Bandopadhyay**, Ekta Parishad, (see above)

Ashok Chaudhary / Devjit Nandi, NFFPFW, B 137, 1st Floor, Dayanand

Colony, Lajpat Nagar IV, New Delhi
110024.

Chief Minister for simplification of Forest laws

The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Digvijay Singh has emphasised the need to bring about necessary amendments in the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) and the Mining regulation Act to pave the way for 'smooth and gainful' exploitation of mineral wealth.

Speaking at a seminar on 'Ocean and Land Survey, mineral exploitation and environment organised by the Geological Survey of India in May in Bhopal, he said that the forest and mining laws were too complex and caused unnecessary delay when it came to steering the process for the exploitation of mineral resources. He emphasized the link between the FCA and mining activity by pointing out that the concentration of most of the mineral wealth was in the forest areas. He is also reported to have said that, "Just like the environment, mining is also equally important".

Also significant in the context is the fact that the CM had also earlier (in April 2001) promised a review of the FCA in light of the killings of adivasis in some villages of Bagli village in Dewas. He is reported to have expressed the view that the circumstances under which adivasi villages have been compelled to fell trees in the protected forests has persuaded the State government that there is a need to find new ways to combine conservation concerns with the demands of livelihood.

Source: 'Forest laws need simplification', *The Hindu*, 18/05/2001.
'Digvijay for review of 1980 Forest Act', *The Hindu*, 24/04/2001.

MAHARASHTRA

Wildlife, Forest Protection wings suffer as World Bank withdraws aid

378 posts in the wildlife wing of the State Forest Department (FD) have been abolished as part of a restructuring plan of the Maharashtra government. The move has come following the completion of the World Bank (WB) funded, Maharashtra Forestry Project (MFP) earlier this year. In 1992, the WB had provided Rs. 413 crores to the state and this was used to initiate the MFP. The MFP was scheduled to end in April 2000, but was given an extension till October 2000, followed by monthly extensions for a few more months. With the funds now over, the first decision has been to abolish these posts in the wildlife wing.

Another consequence of the termination of the MFP has been the decision of the state

government to also wind up its forest protection wings in four circles in the state.

(Eds' note: These developments clearly point to the serious pitfalls and unsustainability of initiatives that are based on external aid. Essential posts in the wildlife wing that have been abolished should have been created through more sustainable and regular budgetary provisions. Even now attempts should be made to continue with the posts and resources should be located.)

Source: Vaishali Kirpekar. 'Now who will protect our forests?' *Pune Times of India*, 06/03/2001.

Sanjeev Unhale. 'Forest department loses yet another wing as WB stops aid', *The Times of India*, 27/03/2001.
'378 posts threatened', *Tigerlink*, March 2001.

Contact: **Shree Bhagwan**, Office of Conservator of Forests, Near Govt. Printing Press, Civil Lines, Nagpur. Tel: 0712-528953. Fax: 552518. Email: cfwl@nagpur.dot.net.in; cf@wildlife-vidarbha.org

State okays killing of wild boar, neelgai for crop damage

Following a meeting of the State Wildlife Advisory Board (SWAB) in February, earlier this year, the State Forest Minister announced that the killing of neelgai and wild boar that are suspected of damaging crops, will be allowed henceforth. This has been a demand of a lot of communities living around protected areas and the organisations and NGOs who work with these communities. Organisations like the Ekjoot Sanghatana which works with tribal communities around the Bhimashankar WLS have welcomed the order. Wildlife conservationists and forest officials, have however, severely criticised this decision of the government. It also came as a surprise to many, because in the earlier meeting of the SWAB, a decision had been taken that the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) would be commissioned to study the problem of crop damage in detail and come up with an ecologically sound solution for the problem.

The State Forest Secretary has defended the decision saying that they were merely following section 11 (b) of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) which says that the 'Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the state, if satisfied that any particular animal under Schedule II, III or IV has become damaging to human life and property (including standing crop on any land), may permit the animal to be killed. Forest officers have however, pointed out that in the past, Section 11 was used only in the case of an extreme eventuality, as in the case of man-eating carnivores.

There continues to be a lot of debate and discussion related to this decision of the state. (for details contact **Kalpavriksh** at the editorial address)

Source: Perna Bindra. 'State okays killing of 'protected' nilgai, wild boar', *Indian Express*, 23/02/2001.
State minister's license-to-kill worries wildlife enthusiasts', *Indian Express*, 25/02/2001.
'Adivasi ani Vanvyavasthapan', note by the Ekjoot Sanghatana, 02/03/2001.

Contact: **Sarupsinh Naik**, State Forest Minister, Mumbai.

Bittu Sahgal, Sanctuary Magazine, 602 Maker Chambers V, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-2830061/2830081. Fax: 2874380. Email: sanctuary@vsnl.com

Kusum Karnik, Ekjoot Sanghatana, Manchar – 410503, Dist. Pune, Maharashtra. Tel: 02133-24107

Mahabaleshwar area declared as Eco Sensitive

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has recently declared the entire Mahabaleshwar plateau as an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ). The MoEF notification dated January 17, 2001, has been issued under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) – 1986.

A master plan is to be drawn up for the zone, which will clearly demarcate all existing forests, green areas, horticultural areas like strawberry farms, raspberry farms, orchards, tribal areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. Change of land – use from green areas will not be permitted under the master plan. Pending the approval of the master plan by the MoEF, local authorities will not be allowed to make any reduction in the forest/green/agricultural zone or to increase the existing permissible floor area ratio, the number of storeys and ground coverage. The notification also makes clear that mining and quarrying will henceforth be banned and that only those industries can come up in the eco-sensitive zone which are 'non-polluting, non-hazardous service industries and floriculture, horticulture or agro-based industries.

Source: Gunvanthi Balaran. 'Maha sensitive: New high for hill stations', *The Times of India*, 26/01/2001.

Contact: **Shyam Chainani**, Bombay Environmental Action Group (BEAG), 4, Kurla Industrial Estate, LBS Marg, Mumbai – 400086, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 – 5798638. Fax: 5771459. Email: shyam.beag@softhome.net

State forest staff to get firearms

Forest officers and guards in Maharashtra will be provided with firearms. This decision was taken following a recent public interest litigation in the Bombay High Court after which a high powered committee was set up to suggest measures for revamping the forest protection system.

Orders have been placed for guns and pistols of various types, which will be provided to guards and range officers. The first consignment of the arms was to be delivered by the end of January earlier this year. As per a special arrangement, the state police would impart arms training to the forest staff at the Nashik Police Academy and the Regional Police Training School in Nagpur. 140 forest guards and 40 range officers had been shortlisted for the first batch of training.

Source: Ramu Bhagwat. 'State forest staff will be given firearms', *The Times of India*, 19/01/2001.

Wildlife census in state

The first phase of the wildlife census in Maharashtra took place in the month of April and was to be followed by the second round in May. The herbivore count was made on April 7 followed by the carnivore count from April 17 – 13.

In Melghat TR, 14 tigers and 20 leopards were reportedly counted in the first phase. Results for the 2nd phase in May are not yet known. All the information from both the counts will be brought out in a collated form in November, later this year.

Source: Aishwarya Mavinkurve. 'Census goes wild: headcount begins', *Indian Express*, 12/04/2001.
'14 tigers, 20 leopards seen at Melghat Tiger Reserve', *Indian Express*, 15/04/2001.

PAs to charge vehicle entry tax

The Maharashtra government has decided that visitors to national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in Maharashtra will now have to pay vehicle entry tax for their vehicles. Individuals in the vehicles will also have to pay an entry tax while those individuals who come walking or in bullock carts will be exempt.

The entry tax to be charged is Rs. 5 for two wheelers, Rs. 20 for medium vehicles like cars and jeeps and Rs. 50 for heavy vehicles like buses, tractors etc. This rule will be applicable to all PAs in the state with the exception of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) in Mumbai. What special provisions have been made for SGNP is not known.

Source: 'Sanctuaries and parks to charge vehicle entry taxes', *Indian Express*, 21/02/2001.

Workshop on 'NGO Networking for Wildlife Conservation' in Vidarbha.

Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (NCSA) and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Mumbai jointly organised a workshop on 'NGO Networking for Wildlife Conservation' in Pench Tiger Reserve from December 22 to 24, 2000. The meeting was attended by about 30 people from various sectors including groups working for wildlife conservation, human rights, forest officials, teachers and Honorary Wildlife Wardens.

The protected areas in Vidarbha that were discussed at the meeting included Bor WLS (Wardha), Melghat Tiger Reserve (Amravati), Tadoba Tiger Reserve (Chandrapur), Chaprala WLS (Gadchiroli), Nagzira WLS (Gondia), Navegaon National Park (Gondia), Katepurna WLS (Akola), Narnala WLS (Amravati), and the Pench Tiger Reserve (Nagpur). Various recommendations and suggestions were made to resolve the outstanding issues. There were also recommendations for extension of the Tadoba Andhari TR, and Nagzira WLS, and for the creation of new protected areas at Mansinghdeo (adjacent to the Pench TR), the Pohara Malkhed Reserve Forest near Amravati, the Irai reservoir in Chandrapur district and the Mahendri Reserve Forest where the highly endangered 'Forest Spotted Owllet' was rediscovered in 1997. Details of all the discussions and recommendations can be obtained from the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (see below).

Source: Kishore Rithe. Email to Kalpavriksh. 15/02/2001.

Contact: **Kishore Rithe**, NCSA, "Pratishtha", Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Near Sainagar, Amravati - 444605. Maharashtra. Tel: 0721-672359 (R), 9823023928. Email: ncsa@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Workshop on 'Wildlife Trade' in Vidarbha

Along with the workshop on 'NGO Networking for Wildlife Conservation' in Vidarbha (see above), the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (NCSA) and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Mumbai, also jointly organised another workshop on 'Wildlife Trade' at Totladoh in Pench Tiger Reserve from December 24 to 26, 2000. The main participants included wildlife staff, Honorary Wildlife Wardens, and some wildlife activists from NGOs.

The main objectives of the workshop were to a) expose participants to the wildlife trade activities in their field of working, and the quantum of wildlife trade in India, b) introduce them to

various aspects like law enforcement, technical investigation and raids and c) to introduce the wildlife staff to wildlife activists and create a formal Govt.-NGO -activists network for effective anti wildlife trade operations. The first training of this kind had been organised by NCSA in Tadoba TR in February 1998. The set of detailed recommendations can be obtained from NCSA.

Source: Kishore Rithe. Email to Kalpavriksh, 15/02/2001.

Contact: **Kishore Rithe**, NCSA, see above.

Workshop on Wildlife Conservation in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli

The Green Pigeon Nature Society (GPNS), Chandrapur recently organised a workshop on 'NGO Networking for Wildlife Conservation and Management' for the Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts in Maharashtra. It was organised on March 3-4, 2001 in the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve.

Around 40 participants from various sectors including researchers, forest officials, teachers, and NGOs participated. Various issues discussed included the need for active networking among NGOs in the region, increase in poaching and illicit felling in the forests here, issues related to crop damage by wildlife and damage compensation, the extension of existing protected areas and also the creation of new ones.

Source: Atul Dhamankar. Letter sent to Kalpavriksh, Undated.

Contact: **Atul Dhamankar**. GPNS, Nr. Patel High School, Shivaji Square, Chandrapur-442402, Maharashtra. Tel: 07172 - 57988.

Water holes poisoned in Melghat

There have been reports of a number of cases of poisoning of water holes in the Melghat Tiger Reserve and the related deaths of many wild animals like jungle fowl, peafowl, and civet cats. The latest incident was reported in February this year, when Jamun Nallah in the Chaurakund Range in the park was poisoned. According to forest officials, incidents of locals poisoning water holes to kill peafowl and deer for their meat have become a serious problem in Melghat.

This latest incident has come after a brief lull. Earlier in December 2000, four local people had been caught red - handed by forest officials while poisoning a water hole on the Khapra river in the sanctuary. A bottle containing 500 ml of Endosulphan, a highly toxic pesticide had also been recovered from them.

Source: Perna Bindra. 'Poisoned water hole kills peacocks, civet', *Indian Express*, 24/02/2001.

Contact: **Kishore Rithe**, NCSA, (see above)

Indian People's Tribunal Hearings in Sanjay Gandhi NP

Justices R Sachar H Suresh, and SM Daud, recently heard the dispositions related to the ongoing slum demolition in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Mumbai that have been carried out here following an order of the Bombay High Court. They have severely criticised the demolition operations, saying that the entire process has seriously violated the human rights of the residents here. For more details also see *PA Updates* 29, 27, 26, 25, 23 and 22).

Source: Jyoti Puwani. '60,000 homeless', *Mid Day*, 29/04/2001.

Contact: **DFO**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, Borivali (E), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra.

Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti, Sankalp Bldg. 5th Floor, Plot 1040, Off Sayani Rd. Prabhadevi, Mumbai – 400025, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 – 4227690.

Debi Goenka, BEAG, (see above) Email: debi.beag@softhome.net

IPT, C/o India Centre for Human Rights and Law, CVID Jain High School, 84, Samuel Street, Dongri, Mumbai-400009. Tel: 022-3790699. Email: huright@vsnl.com. Website: www.altindia.org

Nursery for endangered, wild herbs in Sanjay Gandhi NP

The State Government has decided to set up a nursery for endangered species of wild herbs in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP). More than 200 hectares of 'dense' forest at Nagla, inside the park, have been earmarked for this nursery.

The move has come shortly after the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) issued an order freeing 233 species of medicinal herbs for exports. Traders can now freely ship rare plants without the legal procurement certificate (LPC). It is feared that this new development is going to severely affect many rare and valuable species of medicinal plants in the wild.

Source: 'Sanjay Gandhi National Park to have nursery for endangered, wild herbs', *Indian Express*, 02/05/2001.

Contact: **DFO**, SGNP, see above

Lion Safari in Sagareshwar

Union Minister, Maneka Gandhi has reportedly sanctioned Rs. 3 crore for establishing a lion safari in the Sagareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary.

The decision is related to the recent deaths of 10 lions in Pratapsinh Park, the zoo in the city of Sangli and the fact that Environment ministry officials are convinced that the 27 lions still present in the zoo need to be released into more natural surroundings.

Source: 'Rs. 3 crore for lion safari', *The Times of India*, 13/02/2001.

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

MANIPUR

NHPC pulls out of Loktak Downstream Power Project

The National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) is reported to have unilaterally pulled out of the Rs. 573 crore Loktak Downstream Power Project at Taosang Khunnou in Tamenglong district.

Govindas Konthoujam, Power Minister in the Manipur Government, said in the first week of February that the government and NHPC had no alternative but to abandon the project as some disgruntled politicians had instigated the Kabui tribals to demand a huge compensation.

While the state was offering Rs. 3 crore, the tribals were reportedly asking for Rs. 63 crore as compensation. Some of the villagers had also gone to court in the matter.

(Ed.'s note: It is not very clear if the proposed project is to affect the Keibul Lamjao National Park. Any further information related to this will be most welcome)

Source: 'NHPC to pull out of Manipur project', *The Hindu*, 20/02/2001.

Contact: **CWLW**, Govt. of Manipur, Sanjenthong, Imphal – 795001, Manipur. Tel: 03852-220854 / 285358.

MIZORAM

Mizoram, Tripura to create inter-state biosphere reserves

The Governments of Mizoram and Tripura have decided to create biosphere reserves in 2,000 acres each on either side of the inter-state border. This was

decided in a meeting here between the Mizoram Environment and Forest Minister, Rualchhina and his Tripura counterpart Narayan Rupini, in June 2000. The two ministers decided to jointly approach the North Eastern Council (NEC) for funds to implement the project and said that the reserve would go a long way in the preservation of flora and fauna along the border areas and would be useful for eco-tourism here.

Joint verification was to be conducted on both the sides of the border areas, between Kahmun and Tuipuibari in Mizoram and Phuldungsei area in Tripura. The two ministers also exchanged views on how to formulate better ways of protection of forest resources and wildlife on the border areas by ending smuggling of forest produce to Bangladesh. The latest on the proposal for this biosphere reserve is not known.

Source: 'Mizoram, Tripura to create biosphere reserves', *The Assam Tribune*, 01/07/2001.

Contact: **CWLW**, Mizoram, Aizwal-796001, Mizoram
CWLW, Government of Tripura, Aranya Bhavan, Nehru Complex, Agartala-799001, Tripura.

ORISSA

Large scale turtle mortality off Orissa coast

More than 7000 dead turtles were washed ashore on the coasts of Orissa in January earlier this year. Most of them were reported to have been caught in the fishing nets of trawlers and drowned. Continued fishing by trawlers in the prohibited zone (10 kms from the coast into the sea) and non use of the mandatory Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) have been cited as the main reasons for the deaths (also see *PA Update* 25).

The following months of February and March, however saw a record 9,00,000 turtles nesting here (see following story).

Source: Rajaram Satapathy. 'Orissa coast a graveyard for Olive Ridleys', *The Times of India*, 25/01/2001.

Prafulla Das. 'Orissa coast awash with dead Olive Ridley turtles', *The Hindu*, 27/01/2001.

Record nesting of turtles off Orissa coast

A record 9,00,000 Olive Ridley Sea turtles are reported to have nested along the Orissa coast in a two month period starting in February 2001. Of these, 7,50,000 were counted on the Gahirmatha beach and another 1,50,000 on the Rushikulya river beach.

Later, around the end of the month of March there were reports of the first emergence of the turtle hatchlings from Nasi -2 island in Gahirmatha.

Source: Biswajit Mohanty. 'Sea turtle arribada begins at Gahirmatha', Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, 06/02/2001

'Olive Ridleys throng in record numbers for annual nesting', *The Hindu*, 15/02/2001.

Biswajit Mohanty. 'Turtle arribada at Rushikulya river mouth, Orissa', Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, 27/02/2001.

Jatindra Dash. 'Record nesting of endangered turtles on Orissa's beaches', *India Abroad News Service*, 13/03/2001.

Anup Nayak. 'Nesting at Agarnasi', Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, 23/03/2001.

Anup Nayak. 'Olive Ridley hatchlings emerge in Nasi-2 island' Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, 31/03/2001.

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

Satellite telemetry to track Olive Ridley turtles

As part of a joint United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – Government of India (GOI) sea turtle conservation project, three Olive Ridley Turtles were fitted with transmitters for the tracking of their movements with the help of satellite telemetry.

The transmitters were fitted by renowned turtle expert JG Frazier at the mouth of the Devi river in Puri district in the month of April. Transmission of the signals from the signals is reported to have begun almost immediately.

Source: Jaideep Shenoy. 'Using satellites to learn about turtles', *The Hindu*, 17/05/2001.

Jatinder Dash. 'Olive Ridley turtles can now be tracked by satellite telemetry', *India Abroad News Service*, 17/05/2001.

Contact: **BC Choudhary**, Wildlife Institute of India, PO Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun - 248001, Uttaranchal. Email: bcc@wii.gov.in; undpturtle@wii.gov.in

Workshop held on PA issues in Orissa

A three day workshop on issues related to protected areas in Orissa was held in Kuchejhar, Kalahandi, from November 13 to 15, 2000. The meeting was jointly organised by Ekta Parishad, Orissa and Pahadi Sangram Manch, Kotagarh. The protected areas that were discussed included the Kotagarh WLS,

Sunabeda WLS, Satkosia WLS, Lakhari WLS, Karalpat WLS and the Bhitarkanika NP. The issues that were dealt with at the workshop included those related to the diminishing forest livelihoods of the people; violation of human rights, inter and intra village conflicts and the lack of self reliance of the people.

An 'Abhayaranya Birodhi Sangram Manch, Orissa' was also formed during the workshop.

Source: 'Report of a three days workshop on sanctuary issues of Orissa for area leaders', Note sent to Kalpavriksh, Undated.

NGO rues delay in declaring Satkosia a tiger reserve

Wild Orissa (WO), a NGO which has been advocating that the Satkosia WLS be declared a tiger reserve has rued the fact that there has been a delay in this. WO has said that the sanctuary is in the grip of the timber mafia which is aided and abetted by corrupt politicians and law enforcement agencies (also see *PA Updates* 26, 25, 24 & 23). The proposal for the tiger reserve is said to be pending with the state government.

Source: Monalisa Bhujbal. Email to Kalpavriksh. 07/04/2001.

Contact: **Monalisa Bhujbal**, WO, 5R-1, OUAT Colony, Gopalbandhu chowk, Bhubaneswar-751001, Orissa. Email: wildorissa@hotmail.com

Ammonia leak near Bhitarkanika, Gahirmatha

A leakage of ammonia gas on November 1, 2000 from the Oswal Fertiliser Factory at Paradip, some 15 kms from the Gahirmatha National Park and the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary has affected the mangrove vegetation along the Mahanadi coast. It is feared that the flora and fauna in the two protected areas will also be adversely affected. Even the proposed plantation under the coastal shelter belt plantation scheme is likely to be jeopardised. Thousands of people from more than 42 villages of Rajnagar and Kharnasi Panchayats have been affected by the leakage. The Inspector of factories and boilers in the state said that the leakage occurred from the storage tank due to poor workmanship or faulty installation.

There was an earlier gas leakage from the factory in January 2000 too, but the factory authorities maintain that they had taken all precautionary measures and everything was under control. Significantly, a cross section of people working in the NGO sector as well as political party activists have been demanding that the factory should

remain closed till an expert committee examines the safety measures and gives it a clearance.

Source: 'Ammonia leak threatens mangroves', *Statesman*, 07/11/2000.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above
DFO Bhitarkanika NP, Forest Dept, AT/Po Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapara – 745225, Orissa. Tel: 06729 – 72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775

Canals from Samal barrage threaten Bhitarkanika

Orissa's wildlife activists have expressed concern over the possibility of severe ecological damage to the Bhitarkanika National Park with the commissioning of the irrigation canals originating from the Samal barrage. Bhitarkanika is situated in the estuarine region of Brahmani-Baitarani and is intersected by a network of tidal rivers, creeks and creeklets, with the Bay of Bengal on the east. With the commissioning of canals originating from the barrage under the Rengali dam project, the water flow in Brahmani river will be considerably reduced with diversion for irrigation. The stretch of Brahmani river flowing through the coastal plains of Cuttack and Kendrapara districts would be deprived of its normal flow of fresh water and salinity levels are likely to be affected.

Source: 'Threat to mangrove forest', *Statesman*, 01/01/2001.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above

Orissa legislators allegedly feast on venison in Bhitarkanika

Manoj Satapathy, President of the Manava Seva Pratisthan, which works in the Kendrapara district of Orissa, has alleged that atleast a dozen Orissa legislators feasted on venison on the night of January 7, 2001 in the Dangmal forests of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary.

The legislators, members of the State Assembly Committee on Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes reportedly asked the forest officials to arrange for venison, following which, forest guards killed two spotted deer. The meat was cooked and served to the legislators at the Dangmal guest house inside the protected area.

The legislators have strongly refuted the allegation and have said that the complaint filed with the police is false. The Kendrapara district administration too has said that the allegations were baseless. The Orissa Assembly Secretariat has initiated steps to ascertain the veracity of the allegations and has asked the Kendrapara

administration to submit a report. The findings of the report and the latest in the matter are not yet known.

Subsequent reports, though not linked to the above episode of the alleged hunting of deer, have pointed out that deer poaching is rampant in the forests of Bhitarkanika and can that deer meat can be bought at as low a price as Rs. 40 a kg.

Source: Jatindra Dash. 'Orissa legislators feast on venison in wildlife sanctuary', *India Abroad News Service*, 10/01/2001.
Report sought on deer dinner', *Statesman*, 15/01/2001.
'Poaching threatens deer population'
Statesman, 26/03/2001.

Water scarcity hits wildlife

The continuing drought and water scarcity situation in Orissa is reported to be badly affecting the wildlife in the state as well. There have been reports that animals like deer, sambhar, barking deer and elephants from the Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary were entering villages in search of water.

Similar reports have also been received from the forests of Keonjhar, Koraput, Nawrangpur, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Rairakhol, Daspalla, Kandhamal, Khariar and Ghumsar. Elephants, particularly, have been badly affected as they need large quantities of water, which is now not available. It has also been feared that the situation could lead to an escalation in animal – human conflicts as animals come to villages outside the forests in search of water. A rise in poaching incidents has also not been ruled out.

With the advance of the dry season, and increase in water scarcity the situation is only likely to deteriorate. More recent reports on the latest developments on this front are not yet available.

Source: Prafulla Das. 'Water scarcity hits Orissa wildlife', *The Hindu*, 11/03/2001.

2 new sanctuaries for Chilka; committee for removal of encroachments, prawn gheries

The Orissa State government has planned to declare two new sanctuaries covering the Chilka Lake. One sanctuary is proposed over an area of 171 sq. kms at Magarmukh in Puri district and the other over an area of 39 sq. kms at Palur in the Ganjam district. This was recently announced by the State Forest and Environment Minister, Mr. AP Singh.

The minister also said that a task force comprising the district magistrates of Puri, Khurda and Ganjam had been constituted to evict illegal encroachments and demolish illegal prawn gheries in the lake. Eviction and demolition drives had been going on and an area of 31,600 acres had already

been cleared in the Puri district. Similar steps are now to be taken in the districts of Khurda and Ganjam.

Source: 'Orissa plans to set up wildlife sanctuaries', *Statesman*, 06/04/2001
Contact: **DFO (WL)**, Chilka, 1865/66 Nuasahi Nayapalli (near Sub PO), Bhubaneswar – 751012. Orissa. Email: bravo_123@satyam.net.in
AK Patnaik, CDA, BJ-45, BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Fax: 0674 – 434485. Email: ajitpatnaik@hotmail.com Website: www.chilika.com

Opening of new mouth at Chilka showing results

Desilting of the outer channel of the Chilka lake and opening of a new mouth (in September 2000) to connect it to the sea (see *PA Update* 26) have started to show positive results. According to preliminary assessments made in November last year, exchange of water between the sea and the lake had considerably increased the salinity level in the lake and was having positive impacts on its productivity.

According to the executive officer of the Chilika Development Authority (CDA), Mr. AK Patnaik, it was only after the above mentioned interventions in Chilka, that *Penaeus indicus*, a species of prawn found here, which was thought to be extinct, reappeared, contributing towards increases in the landings of prawn here. It is also hoped that fisheries here would improve. The annual catch which was 7000 MT around 14 years ago, has today fallen to only around 1600 MT.

The 11th Finance Commission has recommended that another Rs. 30 crores be released from the special problem grant for restoration activities in Chilka. Earlier, the 10th Finance Commission had recommended an amount of Rs. 27 crores for the lake's eco-restoration.

Source: Prafulla Das. 'New lease of life for Chilka lake', *The Hindu*, 20/11/2000.
Biswajit Mohanty, see above
DFO (WL), Chilka, see above
AK Patnaik, see above

New legislation for Chilka

A special legislation is to soon come into force to make the Chilka Lake free from encroachments and the illegal prawn gheries. The need for this was stressed by the Chief Minister of the State, Mr. Navin Patnaik at a recent meeting of the governing body meeting of the Chilka Development Authority (CDA). Though the legislation had already been formulated during the previous government, it has not been implemented in the past two years.

The legislation has been formulated by the Revenue department and a task force to be constituted for the purpose would have its headquarters and Satpada (also see *PA Update 27*).

Source: 'Environment act', *Asian Age*, 02/05/2001

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

PUNJAB

Confiscated firearms for wildlife guards in Punjab

Wildlife staff in protected areas in Punjab will be given firearms to counter the menace of poaching in the state. Weapons confiscated by the state police under judicial orders, would be provided to the Wildlife Department at a fixed price for allocation to the guards and reportedly, such weapons have already been identified, priced and listed for allocation.

The step has been taken at the instance of the Union Government, which has been directed by the Supreme Court to take adequate steps to provide firearms to guards and other staff members concerned to counter poachers. The Union Government has also reportedly provided money to the state government authorities for buying firearms and it is to be released by the state Finance Department.

Earlier, in December 2000, a decision had already been taken to provide six weapons to staff in Harike. The need for this move was further highlighted by a recent incident in Harike, when some poachers fired at and injured a wildlife guard and labourers accompanying him on the night of March 6, 2001.

Source: Sarbjit Dhaliwal. 'Confiscated firearms for wildlife guards', *The Tribune*, 13/03/2001. 'Wildlife staff to get weapons', *The Tribune*, 06/12/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Forest Department, Government of Punjab, S.C.D.2463-64, Sector B-C, Chandigarh.

Army helps restore Harike

'Project Sahyog' of the Indian Army has played a very crucial and efficient role in attempts to restore the Harike Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. More than 10 sq. kms of the surface area of 41 sq. kms of the lake had been covered with water hyacinth and all efforts over the last two decades to tackle this problem had failed (see *PA Update 26*)

The 7th Infantry Division of the Army cleared the majority of the hyacinth spread in the matter of two and a half months, late last year. While the manual workers of the Punjab Wildlife and Forests Department removed the hyacinth along the Dhussi bandh, the Army deployed about 150 of its officers, jawans, and labourers along with trucks, twin motorised vehicles, boats assault universal type (BAUTs), rakers and cutters in the backwaters of the wetland. Helicopter sorties undertook complete videographing of the wetland. Further, weekly satellite imagery, an accurate survey using the Global Positioning System (GPS), the Position Azimuth Determining System (PADS), and a study of about 4000 of the 40,000 websites on hyacinth paved the way for the action plan. Men from the 3 Mahar Regiment, 99 Field Regiment, 118 Engineers and the 607 EME removed more than 1.5 lakh tonnes of hyacinth at a total cost of Rs17 lakhs. This resulted in the creation of large water spaces and of four parallel running water channels.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is reported to be setting up a field station here and navy surveyors of the INS Sutluj are likely to be deployed. The Punjab Government has slotted Rs. 50 lakhs for developing ecotourism, complete with watchtowers, log huts and hotels here. The State Government has also proposed to release one lakh weevils for the biological control of the water hyacinth.

Additionally, the army has imparted training to 25 officials of the Punjab Forest and Wildlife department to carry on the work. The army has said that they would work with the civil authorities till the end of this year but not too actively. They have also made a set of recommendations to the Punjab government. These include the notification and establishment of a state wetland authority to supervise and coordinate all aspects of Harike Wetland management; creation of an ecological task force for long-term management of Harike; early release of funds for the procurement of boats, outboard motors and conveyer belts; steps for pollution control; and development of ecotourism here.

Source: Vikramjit Singh. 'Harike story-Hyacinth on the way out, birds on the way in', *Indian Express*, 12/10/2000. Reeta Sharma. 'Commendable deeds by the Army that redeem faith' *The Tribune*, 26/03/2001. Reeta Sharma, *The Tribune*, 31/03/2001

Ex- Servicemen force for Harike

The Centre has agreed to sponsor a pilot project for the setting up of a special ecological task force of ex-servicemen to cleanse and manage the Harike Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. The Territorial Army is also to be

involved in the process. The package was approved during a recent meeting between Punjab Chief Minister, Prakash Singh Badal and Central leaders.

Source: Aasha Khosa. 'Ex servicemen to Harike's rescue', *Indian Express*, 20/04/2001.

Conflict between farmers, wildlife dept at Harike

Farmers who have been tilling land around Harike since the 1980's are opposing the move of the Forest Department (FD) to declare them as encroachers. It is the contention of the farmers, that earlier, at the height of terrorism in the state, the government had actually encouraged them to bring the marshy land here under cultivation, to check the movement of terrorists. The area that was frequently used by the extremists because of its strategic topography was brought under cultivation with the help of security forces in the late 80s.

The farmers say that now they are being prevented from entering the area and from farming without considering their grievances and have demanded that alternatives should be provided.

The FD too admits that the farmers had been encouraged to cultivate the land in the past, but points out that they were never the owners. They further add that sufficient time had been given to the people to plead their cases before the demarcation of the boundary of the sanctuary, but at that time none of the farmers agitating now had approached them. In the present situation about 1000 acres of the sanctuary is under encroachment of 325 tillers.

According to another report there are about 600 landless tillers who plough the area within the sanctuary and have demanded allotment of sanctuary or pond area at concessional rates. Some of these people are in fact those who were adversely affected when the barrage was constructed across the Sutlej which led to the creation of the Harike lake.

Source: 'Farmers, wildlife staff lock horns', *The Tribune*, 08/11/2000.
'Sanctuary tillers' fate hangs in balance', *The Tribune*, 15/12/2000.

Illicit liquor production in Harike

The Harike Lake is reported to be have become a den for the production of illicit liquor. Secluded islands in the region are used for this purpose and the area of the sanctuary is also frequently trespassed by those ferrying material by boats to these islands. The activities are carried out by influential people in the area who have also threatened forest staff to leave them alone. Hardened criminals with terrorist backgrounds are also reported to be involved.

Source: *The Tribune*, 12/10/2000.

Proposed Wetland Conservation Authority of Punjab

The Punjab State Government has proposed the creation of a Wetland Conservation Authority of Punjab, (WETCAP) and an integrated conservation and management action plan has been prepared for Harike, Kanjli and Ropar wetlands for Rs 250 lakhs, Rs 34 lakhs and Rs 40 lakhs, respectively. The State is reported to have approached the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) to notify WETCAP, under the Environment (Protection) Act and a response is awaited.

Source: Reeta Sharma. *The Tribune*, 31/03/2001

RAJASTHAN

Police, FD collaboration for wildlife protection

The Police and Forest Departments in Rajasthan have initiated a number of steps to work together towards wildlife protection in the state. In April 2000, the State Police Department (PD) created a Wildlife Crime Cell (WCC) under the supervision of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) – Crime Branch to monitor offences relating to wildlife and forest produce. Similarly, a WCC was also created in the Forest Department (FD) under the charge of the Working Plan Officer (Wildlife), Jaipur (see *PA Update 27*).

In July 2000, a State Level Co-ordination Committee was created to look at issues relating to illegal trade in wildlife. The committee is chaired by the State Forest Secretary and has as members, Secretary, Mines Department; IG Police, Crime Branch (CID); IG, Border Security Force, Jodhpur; Commissioner, Customs & Central Excise, Jaipur, Divisional Railway Manager, Jaipur; Commissioner, State Excise Department, Jaipur, and Security Officer, Sanganer Airport, Jaipur. The Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan, is the member secretary of the committee.

The Forestry Training Institute (FTI), Jaipur too has organised a series of training programs on 'Law Enforcement and Legal Procedure in Wildlife Conservation'. The first joint training program of police and forest officers on this issue was organised from Feb 5 – 9, 2001 at the Rajasthan Police Academy in Jaipur. There were 44 participants, 20 of whom were forest officers and the rest from the police department. The program consisted of 16 sessions including two sessions on case studies and group discussion.

Source: PR Siyag. Letter to Kalpavriksh, 13/03/2001.
Contact: **PR Siyag**, Director FTI, JLN Marg, Jaipur – 302015, Rajasthan. Tel: 0141-510034. Fax: 380496. Email: ftijpr@sancharnet.in

TAMIL NADU

More UNDP, GEF support for Gulf of Mannar Marine Reserve

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), along with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), will be providing fresh financial assistance worth over Rs 34 crore to help conserve the bio-diversity of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. The announcement was made by UNDP administrator, Mark Malloch who was on a recent four day visit to India.

The Tamil Nadu government has already created a 'first of its kind' independent statutory Trust Fund to ensure effective inter-sectoral cooperation in the sustainable conservation and utilisation of the resources of this protected area. The trust is expected to be able to effectively coordinate existing funds and expenditure from various other programs or agencies/ departments and provide ample scope for resource mobilisation from sources such as donations from the public, donor agencies, and the private sector.

The project entails the integration of conservation, sustainable coastal zone management, and livelihood development, through an innovative institutional and financial mechanism. The focus of the project is empowerment of local communities, particularly women, to manage the coastal ecosystem and wildlife resources.

Source: 'UNDP to help conserve Mannar bio-reserve', *The Times of India*, 27/02/2001. 'Conservation and Sustainable-use of the 'Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve's Coastal Biodiversity' Project Document of UNDP- GEF.

Contact: **Sudarshan R.**, UNDP, 55 Lodi Estate, New Delhi – 110003. Tel: 011-4628877. Email: sudarshan.rodriguez@undp.org; sudarshanr@hotmail.com

Current Science special section on KMTR

The scientific journal, 'Current Science' has produced a special section on the biological diversity of Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR); (Volume 80 Number 3 dated 10th February 2001). The 12 articles cover a diverse set of research including those on forest structure and composition, dispersal modes of tree species, butterflies, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, human-use of these forests and wildlife management.

Contact: **Editor**, *Current Science*, PB 8001, CV Raman Avenue, Bangalore-560080, Karnataka. Tel: 080-334256. Fax: 3346094. Email: currsci@ias.ernet.in

Poachers arrested in Indira Gandhi (Annamalai) WLS

The Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park (IGWSNP) officials caught eight poachers red handed and seized from them a female sambhar deer skin and meat, besides a country-made muzzle load weapon at Saralapathy forest area of the sanctuary in April earlier this year. A case had been registered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Source: '8 poachers arrested', *The Pioneer*, 10/04/2001.

Contact: **Udayan**, Wildlife Warden, Indira Gandhi WLS, 178, Meenakari Road, Pollachi-642001, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04259-25356/24015. Email: udayan@md4.vsnl.net.in

Nilgiri included in World Network of Biosphere Reserves

The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve has been named as one of the 21 new biosphere reserves to be included as part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves under the Man and Biosphere Program (MAB) of UNESCO. The selection was made by the International Coordinating Council of the UNESCO MAB program. The network now comprises 391 reserved in 94 countries around the world.

Nilgiri was the first reserve recommended by India for inclusion in the MAB program.

Source: 'Nilgiri: a new biosphere reserve', *UNESCO Newsletter*, December 2000.

Contact: **Sudha Mehndiratta**, UNESCO, see above.

Plea to bring Mudumalai under Project Tiger

The Nilgiris Wildlife and Environment Association (NWLEA) has said that it will bring up with the concerned authorities the matter of including the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and adjoining areas under 'Project Tiger'. According to the NWLEA the area has a good tiger population and protection provided under Project Tiger will ensure better management.

According to the tiger census in June 2000, there are 21 tigers in the Mudumalai WLS and another 10 in the three adjoining ranges of Nilgiris North Forest Division.

Source: 'Mudumalai WLS and around', *Tigerlink*, March 2001.

Contact: **NWLEA**, C/o DFO (North Divn.), Mount Stewart Hill, Udthagamandalam-643001, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.

UTTARANCHAL

Magisterial powers for forest officials in state

The Uttaranchal Forest Department (FD) officials have welcomed the government's move to grant magisterial powers to forest officials. They have also sought a revamping of the forest beat system to protect the forests from the 'timber mafia-corrupt officials nexus'. It has been suggested that the area of the forest beats should be reduced to three or four square kms and that the nearly 500 posts of forest guards that have lying vacant for several years should be immediately filled up.

Source: 'Magisterial powers for forest officials hailed', *The Hindu*, 28/2/2000.

Concern over harrowing of grassland in Corbett

The Corbett Foundation and other conservationists have expressed concern over the recently started practice of the forest department of harrowing the grassland area of the Dhikala chaur in Corbett Tiger Reserve. This is being done, allegedly, to improve tiger sightings in this tourist zone.

It is being felt that harrowing, compared to burning which is a regular feature adopted for maintaining the grassland, will lead to larger changes in the habitat and trigger off long term undesirable effects. It is also feared that this new practice would adversely impact the hog deer, for which, Corbett is now the last strong hold in the region.

Source: 'Grassland crisis in Corbett', *Tigerlink*, March 2001.

Contact: **Corbett Foundation**, Dhikuli Village, (Via) Ramnagar, Nainital District-244715, Uttaranchal.

SC stays road through Corbett

The Supreme Court has issued an interim order directing the Uttaranchal government to stay the construction of the road from Kotdwar to Ramgarh on a plea that the road might pass through the Corbett TR. The Secretary, Environment Ministry has also been asked to file an affidavit in the matter. The order also made it clear that the stay would not come in the way of the state government if it did not pass through the tiger reserve. The order was passed during the hearing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Navin Raheja seeking a direction from the apex court for steps to preserve tigers in the zoos and in the wild.

Source: 'SC stay on road through Corbett tiger reserve', *The Hindu*, 10/04/2001.

'SC bars building of highway through Corbett tiger reserve', *The Times of India*, 11/04/2001.

Contact: **LAW-E**, see above

Five elephants poached in Corbett

In one of most serious cases of elephant poaching in the country at least five elephants were killed in the Corbett National Park between December 2000 and February 2001. The first two were killed in December followed by three more in quick succession in February. Various attempts of the authorities to catch the poachers included shutting down the park for a few days to ensure smooth combing operations; joint action by staff of the Forest Department, the police and the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC); use of a helicopter; the involvement of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and also the announcement of an award of Rs. one lakh for any information about the poachers. Though some initial arrests were made in the district of Bijnore in the neighbouring state of Uttar Pradesh, there has not been any substantial success. Initially, it was suspected that poaching gangs from Southern India were involved, but following the discovery of some Assamese newspapers and left over fish and looking at the way in the which the elephants were killed it is believed that the killings had an influence from North Bengal or the North East.

(However, just as we go to press there are reports that the poachers involved in the Corbett killings have been apprehended. Full and independantly verified details are still awaited.)

Source: 'Tusker killings in national park trigger alarm' *Statesman*, 2/1/2001.
Nirmal Ghosh. 'Elephant poaching alert. Corbett National Park crisis: Elephant killings raise serious issues.' Mail to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 04/01/2001.

Ajay Suri. 'Fifth elephant dead, PAC deployed: Corbett shame', *Indian Express*, 10/02/2001.

Elephant poaching in Corbett: probe indicts park officials, influential visitors', *The Pioneer*, 27/02/2001.

Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar -244715, Nainital, Uttaranchal. Tel: 05947 - 85489. Fax: 85376.

Brijendra Singh, 28, Sundarnagar, New Delhi - 110003.

Wildlife Trust of India, see above.

UTTAR PRADESH

Poaching in Suhelwa

A tiger and atleast a dozen other wild animals were killed by poachers in the Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary in March, earlier this year. The tiger was trapped in a net made of rope that had been put up near village Fulhiya under the Suhelwa Eastern Forest Division. More details are not available.

Source: 'Tiger's killing sparks panic in UP forest dept.', *The Times of India*, 17/03/2001
Contact: **CWLW-UP**, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow – 226001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0522-283864. Fax: 283868.

WEST BENGAL

Sahara India resort on remote Sundarbans island.

Sahara India has proposed to build a tourist resort on the remote L Plot Island in the Sundarbans. It is not clear, however, where this is located with respect to the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve. Sahara has proposed to start work on the resort in 2002, but a major hurdle is reported to be the security in the area. This and neighbouring islands like Dalhousie, Bhangduni and Newmoore are frequented by notorious pirates and there have been an increasing number of cases of abduction, murder and poaching reported from here.

The police has said that they presently do not have enough resources to provide proper security and have asked Sahara to pay Rs. 10 crores for setting up more police pickets, 15 flood-light towers, and for procuring other equipment like life saving jackets, arms, speed boats and high tech wireless sets. Sahara authorities have, however, refused to meet the security expenses and have said that it is the duty of the district police to provide security

The West Bengal Tourism Minister, Manab Mukherjee, has meanwhile said he is waiting for the blueprint of the project.

Source: Sujit Nath. 'Rs. 10-cr for tourists' security at Sundarbans', *Asian Age*, 20/03/2001.

ADB project for the Sundarbans

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has proposed to allocate an initial grant of around US\$ 450,000 to support conservation / poverty reduction strategies in the Indian Sundarbans. It is proposed to 1) identify investment needs and opportunities for securing improved livelihoods and conservation in the Indian Sundarbans and to (i) undertake an institutional study and identify coordination structures and mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of on-going conservation and development initiatives in the

Indian Sundarbans; (ii) formulate a conservation strategy using a landscape approach, and prepare proposal for a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-eligible Project for the Sundarbans; (iii) develop poverty reduction strategies in support of sustainable rural livelihoods and natural resource use for the 19 administrative blocks of the Sundarbans; and (iv) identify investment needs and opportunities.

Source:

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/ADBBO/default.asp>

Contact: **Director**, Sundarbans TR, PO Canning Town, Dist. 24 Parganas – 743329, West Bengal. Tel: 03218 – 55280 / 721683.

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

Websites having wildlife related laws

The following websites have wildlife related laws:
www.mahalibrary.com
www.ceeraindia.com
www.ariandadventure.com/wild/wlpa72/index.htm

The Conservation and Livelihoods Network (CLN) also has its own website now. The address is http://cln_india.tripod.com/

5th Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

The 5th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights was held on April 8-10, 2001 in the Makaibari Tea Estate, Kurseong, and the Shilpanchal Bhawan, Siliguri, in northern West Bengal. The Consultation was jointly organised by the Ashoka Trust for Research and Ecology and Environment – Eastern Himalayan Program (ATREE - EHP), North Eastern Society for the Protection of Nature and Wildlife (NESPON), and Kalpavriksh. About 80 participants from various fields and sectors, from within government and civil society, and from various parts of India, participated and as in the case of previous Consultations, there was a consensus that both the rights of wildlife and the livelihood rights of communities dependent on natural habitats, needed to be protected.

For more details contact **Pankaj Sekhsaria** at the editorial address. Also see the new CLN website at http://cln_india.tripod.com/

Proposals invited for UNDP-GEF Small grants

The small grants program, co-founded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the country Co-operation Framework-India (CCF-1) has invited proposals for its small grants program (SGP). The program is administered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and is being implemented in India by the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) as the National Host Institute (NHI).

The SGP provides grants to organisations for activities that address local problems related to Land Management, Water Management and Biodiversity Conservation. Proposals in areas of climate change and international waters have also been invited. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), People's organisations, Universities, Schools and Local co-operative societies can submit proposals under the SGP.

Contact: **Ulhas Gore**, Project Officer, SGP, CEE
Central, 18 Green Park Soc., Aundh, Pune-411007. Tel: 020-7290223. Fax: 7290875.
Email: cee.central@vsnl.com

Forest Development agency mooted

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has mooted the setting up the Forest Development Agency (FDA) in each state along the lines of DRDA (District Rural Development Authority). Funds from the Centre for forests and wildlife conservation, and afforestation programs will be routed through the agency instead of the State Governments.

The most immediate impact will be that Central funds meant for conservation will reach the field level directly, and much faster. Currently funds from various Centre-sponsored projects have to go through the Reserve Bank of India, State Government, State Finance Department, State Forests Department, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and finally the Chief Wildlife Warden. This process delays decisions and funding for forests and wildlife protection. The idea behind the Forest Development Agency is to cut through red-tape, and probably curb corruption. The agency will also ensure better co-ordination between the Centre, States and the protected areas.

The agency will be headed by either the District Forest Officer (DFO) or Conservator of Forests (CF) at the district level. In some cases even the collector might be roped in. These officers will also act as treasury officers. The Union Environment Minister has asked the State Forest Ministers to pursue the proposal.

There may not be enough outlay for implementing the plan during the current Five Year Plan, but Environment Ministry official says the next Plan is expected to allocate substantial funds for the FDAs.

Source: Yoga Rangatia. 'Forest Development Agency mooted', *The Pioneer*, 17/04/2001.
'An agency for forests', *Down to Earth*, 15/05/2001.

Contact: **Union Minister for Environment and Forests**, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi-110003

CBI to investigate wildlife offences

The Union Minister for Environment and Forests told parliament during its winter session in November, last year that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), has been empowered to inquire into wildlife offenses. The Central government issued a notification on January 23, earlier this year, granting the CBI full powers to deal with wildlife related smuggling and other offences.

In its first success since the January 23 notification, the CBI along with the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), busted two wildlife poaching gangs and arrested six people in Nagpur on March 21, 2001. Seized items included five tiger skeletons, one tiger skin, four leopard skins, tigers' claws & teeth and antlers.

Source: 'CBI to investigate wildlife offenses', *India Abroad News Service*, 28/11/2000.
Belinda Wright. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, 26/03/2001.

Contact: **Belinda Wright**, WPSI, E-71 Greater Kailash Part-I, New Delhi 1100048, India.
Tel: 011-621.3864 / 629.2492. Fax: 011-646.4918, Email: wpsi@vsnl.com; blue@vsnl.com

Wildlife crime intelligence cell in MoEF

The Union Ministry for Environment and Forests (MoEF) is reported to be giving shape to plans for a compact, officer oriented wildlife crime intelligence cell within the Ministry. An unit of 8 to 10 members is to be set up which would coordinate with state forest departments, international organisations and NGOs and which will act on its own or pass on information, for action, to different agencies like state forest departments or the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), depending on the type of the case.

The officials involved are trying to avoid the creation of additional posts. They want to begin by diverting some posts and make the cell operational in

a couple of months. The scheme, however, is yet to go to the Finance Ministry.

Meanwhile, the CBI has also asked for at least two forest service officers on deputation to help augment its own meagre resources in the field. The CBI is now the nodal agency for collection of information, like on every important case of seizure, and for passing it on to international intelligence agencies like Interpol. Many state governments have already started sending their information to CBI. (Also see *PA Updates* 27 & 26).

Source: Chandrika Mago. 'Govt. plans crime cell to keep eye on wildlife', *The Times of India*, 03/05/2001.

Contact: **SC Sharma**, Addl. IGF, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi – 110003. Tel: 011- 4362285.

The Coimbatore Charter On Environment And Forests

The Coimbatore Charter on Environment and Forests is the outcome of a national conference on environment and forests held on 29-30 January, 2001 in Coimbatore. It was attended by the State Environment and Forest Ministers, Secretaries to the State Governments, Principal Chief Conservators of Forests, Chairpersons of the Central and State Pollution Control Boards/Committees and senior officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. Members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forests also attended the conference which was presided over by the Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr. T.R. Baalu and inaugurated by Justice Ranganath Misra, Member of Parliament (formerly Chief Justice of India).

Topics covered in the Charter include Forest Protection and Afforestation, Joint Forest Management (JFM), Forest Fire Control Measures, Issues related to Drought Prone Areas, Strengthening of Infrastructure, Wildlife Conservation, Functioning of Pollution Control Boards and Effective Implementation of, Environmental Laws, Solid Waste Management, Environmental Education and Awareness, River Cleaning Program, and International Issues.

Source: Bittu Sahgal. Email to nathistory-india@lists.Princeton.EDU. 01/03/2001. (For getting a full electronic text of the Charter write to **Ashish Fernandes** at cree@bom2.vsnl.net.in)

Ministry institutes award for wildlife protection

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has instituted a national award for wildlife protection. Carrying a cash prize of Rs. one lakh, besides the customary citation, it will be known as the Amrita Devi Wildlife Protection Award. It will be presented annually for significant contribution in the field of wildlife protection, by showing exemplary courage and valour or doing some exemplary work to promote protection of wildlife in the country.

The idea is to motivate and reward the rural communities involved in wildlife protection and both, individuals and institutions (like the village gram sabha) would be eligible for the award. Any citizen of India can make a recommendation for the award, which should be accompanied with details including the name and address of the nominee, area of work, significant contribution in the field of wildlife protection and the comments and recommendations of the concerned State's Chief Wildlife Warden.

The last date for receipt of nominations for the award has been stipulated as May 30 of the preceding year.

Source: Ministry institutes award for wildlife protection *The Hindu*, 03/03/2001.

Contact: **Director**, Wildlife Preservation, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003.

Kachhapa Website

A website related having news and information related to turtles has been created.

The address is <http://kachhapa.org>

SOUTH ASIA

WCPA South Asia Workshop held

The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) South Asia Workshop was held from Feb 27-Mar 2, 2001 in Kathmandu. WCPA- South Asia organised a regional workshop (February 27 to March 2, 2001) in Kathmandu, Nepal. It brought together scientists, government officials and NGO representatives who have been active in the field of conservation and PA management. The purpose of the workshop was to review the regional action plan drafted by WCPA South Asia in light of the needs of the PAs as well as the growing threats to PAs in the region.

Issues that were discussed included landscape planning, collaborative management, threats due to developmental projects, institutional structures for participatory PA management and

greater dialogue between countries to manage transboundary wildlife habitats.

Contact: **Rabi Bista / Rekha Kharel**, WCPA South Asia, C/o Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Singhdurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977-1-220067/260702. Fax: 223868. Email: rbbist@hotmail.com; wcpa_sasia@mos.com.np

South and Central Asia meeting on Biosphere Reserves

A Regional Meeting of Coordinators of National MAB Committees and Biosphere Reserves in South Asia and Central Asia was organised by UNESCO-New Delhi in association with the Indian National Committee of MAB and the MoEF, GOI from February 22-25, 2001 in Dehradun. The meeting was hosted by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and was attended by MAB representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The aim of the meeting was to review, analyse and evaluate the MAB linked scenario in South and Central Asia and great interest was expressed in beginning the process for setting up a 'South and Central Asian MAB Network'.

Source: 'Biosphere Reserves Meeting', *UNESCO Newsletter*, March 2001.

Hotel to be built at Mt. Everest Base Camp

Planning permission has been, reportedly, granted for the construction of a hotel in Rongbuk valley in the northern base camp on the Tibetan side of Mount Everest. It is to be built by a New Zealand born climber, Russel Brice and will cost 2.3 million British Pounds.

The 52 bed hotel is to be built at a height of 17,000 feet above sea level and is considered to be the world's highest hotel. It will cover 22,000 sq. ft. of the base camp, will be run with the help of solar power and the waste generated will be recycled into energy using high pressure tanks.

However the scheme has appalled mountaineers and environmentalists who fear this will make the area around Everest a virtual theme park. Adverse impacts on the fragile ecology of the area are also feared.

Source: 'Mt. Everest to have world's highest hotel', *Indian Express*, 08/01/2001.

NEPAL

Govt asked to preserve wildlife corridor in Bardia NP

The People's Campaign for the Protection of Bardia National Park has demanded that the government

revise its previous decision to settle people in the Kothiyaghat area of Dhodhari VDC as it would have an adverse impact on the movement of wildlife. Located on the banks of the Karnali river, Kothiyaghat is the major corridor for wildlife movement from the Bardia National Park to the adjacent Katarniaghat WLS in India. The government is reported to have already decided to hand over the corridor area to the Rural Housing and Development Company.

The government's recent decision to double the area of the park, announced during the 39th International WWF Conference held in Kathmandu at the end of last year, was also welcomed.

Source: 'Govt. asked to preserve wildlife corridors', *Kathmandu Post*, 12/01/2001.

Kanchenjunga Conservation Area to be increased

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – Nepal has said that the area of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) is to be expanded and the local people have agreed to the proposal.

The KCA, which presently covers an area of 1,650 sq kms, will now protect the whole belt of north eastern Nepal for flora and fauna.

Source: 'Conservation Efforts' *Down to Earth*, 30/04/2001.

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

PAKISTAN

Three wetlands from arid zone for GEF project

An Arid Regions Wetlands Inception workshop held in January 2001, selected three wetlands from the arid region of Pakistan as part of a process to finalize names for the Protection and Management of Pakistan Wetlands Project. The workshop was attended by environmentalists, geographical information system analysts and members of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The Arid zone in Pakistan is spread in three provinces - Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. The wetlands that have been selected are the Central Indus Wetland, Haleji Lake and Lal Sohanra Park and West Cholistan Wetland Complex.

The three wetlands selected were among the 12 that were considered at a National Inception Workshop, held in February, for the final selection of water bodies for a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, that will develop four globally important water bodies in the country as model

wetlands. The project is to be launched in September 2001 and completed in five years

The country had been divided into four regions -- coastal, arid, semi arid and mountainous, and alpine. Three wetlands would be considered from each region.

Source: Asad Ali. 'Three wetlands from arid zone selected', *Dawn*, 12/01/2001.

Law amended to allow oil pipeline through Kirthar

The Governor of the Sindh province of Pakistan, Mohammadmian Soomro promulgated the Sindh Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Ordinance 2001, empowering the government to authorise the laying of an underground pipeline in the area falling in the Kirthar National Park. This was done in January, this year, and it came into force with immediate effect.

The new ordinance amends the Sindh Wildlife Protection Ordinance, 1972. It envisages that the government may authorize the laying of an underground pipeline, using construction techniques other than blasting which do not permanently disturb the wildlife or environment, on such terms and conditions, including the betterment, conservation and preservation of the wildlife sanctuary and national park, as may be specified. The ordinance shall come into force with immediate effect.

Later, in February, in a workshop held in Karachi, the report of a year-long baseline study of the park was also released which reported that there are over 13,000 Sindh Ibex, 10,000 urials and 1,200 deer in the national park. This US \$ 700,000 study was sponsored by the Premier – Shell Oil Company which has been granted the Dumbur block, comprising over 90 per cent of the park for oil and gas exploration. It has been suggested that this study could be used to prepare a comprehensive management plan for the park.

The study covers geomorphology, archaeology, ground water hydrology, farming systems, anthropology, etc for the entire area of the park. Besides extensive field trips for data collection, the Melbourne University team, which conducted the study, also used a helicopter for the animal census.

At the concluding session of the workshop, the Federal Law Minister, Barrister Shahida Jameel, is reported to have said that the decision regarding Kirthar National Park will be taken keeping all the stake-holders in view and that the baseline study would help the government take an informed decision in the matter. She said the people living in the park and the wildlife there were the major stakeholders and a balance would have to be maintained between the development needs of the people and conservation of wildlife, at the time of decision making

The issue of oil exploration in Kirthar has been a very controversial one and there has been strong opposition by NGOs to the plan of the government to allow the Premier Shell Company to work here (Also see *PA Update 25* and 22).

Source: 'Law amended to allow oil pipeline through KNP' *The Dawn*, 21/01/2001.
'KARACHI: Melbourne study on Kirthar discussed', *The Dawn*, 15/02/2001.
Bhagwandas 'Interests of stakeholders in KNP to be protected' *The Dawn*, 16/02/2001

SRI LANKA

Workshop on Biosphere Reserves held

A National Workshop on Biosphere Reserves was organised by the National Science Foundation in Sri Lanka in Colombo in November 2000, following the recommendations of the newly reconstituted National Man and Biosphere (MAB) committee.

One of the first steps that have been undertaken is the drawing up of a map indicating all protected areas in Sri Lanka. The National MAB Committee in Sri Lanka has submitted to the UNESCO, nomination forms for Knuckles Biosphere Reserve and Kanneliya-Dediyagale-Nakiyadeniya Biosphere Reserve, for inclusion in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

UNESCO is already providing various kinds of support to the following BRs in Sri Lanka: Olliayagankelle, Dolukanda, Wadasitikanda, Pattipola and Heycock.

Source: 'Biosphere Reserves in Sri Lanka', *UNESCO Newsletter*, March 2001.

INTERNATIONAL

WWF Tiger Emergency Fund

The WWF Tiger Emergency Fund (TEF) is a funding mechanism, designed and managed for the rapid disbursement of small grants to address urgent threats to tiger populations in the wild. It is a joint initiative of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The TEF receives its funds from private sources and from WWF National Organisations.

Applications for TEF support can be submitted by post, fax or email.

Source: 'WWF Tiger Emergency Fund', *Tigerlink*, March 2001.

Contact: **Nelda Geninazzi**, WWF International, Avenue du Mont Blanc, 1196 GLAND,

Switzerland. Tel: +41-22-3649503. Fax:
+41-22-3645829. Email:
ngeninazzi@wwfint.org

Network to help PA Managers cope with global changes

Leading conservation organizations have formed an international network to help the world's protected area (PA) managers to anticipate and cope with global changes brought about by climate change, poverty and population growth. This was announced recently by Dr. Kenton R. Miller, chairman of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

There are an estimated 44,000 parks and protected areas, covering about 10 percent of the world's land surface. About 42 percent of these parks and protected areas are found in developing countries. Already, sea-level rise, severe weather changes, expanded farmlands, poverty, and increased regional conflicts are affecting many of these parks.

The network, called Protected Areas Learning Network (PALN), is a project of WRI, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Conservation International, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The governments of the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have already contributed funds and a grant from the UN Global Environment Facility is being finalized. The network is expected to cost \$5 million over four years.

The network, which will be web-based, will help park managers and scientists to access the latest information on such issues as how best to deal with the destruction of mangroves as sea levels rise, or how to buffer park boundaries against intensive farming, or how the South African government is dealing with invasive plants that are drying up the country's aquifers.

Contact: **Kenton Miller**. Email: kenton@wri.org
Adlai Amor. Email: aamor@wri.org.
Website: <http://www.wri.org/media>

Elephant experts meet in Thailand

Elephant experts from various South and South East Asian countries met recently in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss ways to save the animal, focusing mainly on the threat from illegal trafficking of calves. The meeting was organised by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and had participants from Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia. Other participants and potential donors for projects, from Japan and the United States, also participated.

Thailand is reported to be emerging as a regional hub for smuggling, driven by a rising

demand for elephants in tourism and begging. Baby elephants are smuggled here from neighbouring Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

There are believed to be 37,000 wild elephants left in South and Southeast Asia and an estimated 15,000-16,000 domesticated ones. The number of domesticated elephants has dropped sharply in recent decades, with increased mechanization of logging operations. However in some countries like Myanmar, where logging still continues, baby elephants are of little use, as the job is mainly for grown ups. This becomes a perfect reason to sell them to Thai smugglers. Calves fetch about US \$1,900 to \$4,500 depending on their health.

Often calves are snatched from the wild. This often involves killing of the mother and injury to the other members of the herd. The calves are then trained to perform circus tricks at resorts, and are sometimes sold and used for begging on city streets in Thailand. An estimated 50 calves were delivered to tourist resorts in Thailand last year and according to the Elephant Foundation of Thailand, in the past four or five years, more than 300 calves have died at Thai elephant hospitals.

As one way of fighting the abuse, the conference has advocated a standardized system of registration for domesticated elephants by implanting microchips in them. It is hoped that registration will enable good law enforcement, veterinary care, population research, economic studies and also help to stop the trade.

Source: Uamdao Noikorn,
<http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/20010205/s,05/02/2001>.

New Director General for the IUCN

The World Conservation Union (IUCN), one of the largest conservation organisations in the world, has announced the appointment of 39 year old Achim Steiner as its new Director General. He was till recently the Secretary General of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) He takes over from Dr Maritta Koch-Weser who left IUCN at the end of December last year.

The IUCN was founded in 1948 and brings together 79 states, 112 government agencies, 735 NGOs, 35 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a world-wide partnership aimed at influencing, encouraging and assisting societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Source: Darryl D'Monte. Email: to india-
ej@goacom.com dated 02/03/200.

1st meeting of CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force

The first meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Tiger Enforcement Task Force (TETF) was held in New Delhi from April 2-4, 2001. It was attended by experts from Cambodia, China, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Canada and Netherlands.

Earlier, in November 2000, the British Government announced that the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would contribute 40,000 Pounds (around Rs. 2.7 million) to help launch the TETF under CITES. The setting up of the TETF was an important recommendation made at the CITES conference in April 2000.

Source: 'Tiger Talk', *Down to Earth*, 30/04/2001.
'Funds for Tiger Enforcement Task Force'
Tigerlink, March 2001.

Contact: **Press and Public Affairs Dept.**, British High Commission, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021. Tel: 011-6872161. Fax: 6870065. Email: Lira.Suri@NewDelhi.mail.fco.gov.uk; Nayantara.Handa@NewDELhi.mail.fco.gov.uk Website: www.ukindia.com

WHAT'S AVAILABLE ?

- ◆ Jain, Pushp (Ed.). *Project Tiger: Status Report*, MoEF, GOI, New Delhi, 2001.

This is a useful compilation of information on Tiger Reserves in the country. However latest information is available only for 1998 – 1999 and details of some of the newer tiger reserves like Bori Satpura in MP and Pakhui – Nameri in Arunachal Pradesh – Assam have not been included.

Contact: **Central Zoo Authority**, MoEF, Annexe No.5, Bikaner House, Shah Jahan Road, New Delhi-110001

- ◆ Patnaik, SK., Kar, SC., & Kar, SK. *A Quarter Century of Sea Turtle Conservation in Orissa*, Wildlife Wing, FD, Govt. of Orissa, 2001.

This 34 page booklet has a lot of information related to turtle conservation in Orissa, including the history of their exploitation, threats to the turtles and their habitats, measures taken by both, the Govt. of India and Govt. of Orissa for turtle protection and existing Acts and rules for the same.

Contact: **Wildlife Wing**, FD, Govt. of Orissa, 7, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-513134. Fax: 512502. Email: cwlwob@hotmail.com

- Chilka Newsletter

Jointly published by the Chilka Development Authority (CDA) and Wetlands International – South Asia, this is a useful and information packed newsletter on all matters related to the lake.

Contact: **CDA**, BJ-45, BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751014, Orissa. Tel: 0674-434485. Email: ajitpatnaik@hotmail.com
Wetlands International-South Asia, A127, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024. Fax: 011-4691557/4629906. Email: wisaind@del2.vsnl.net.in

- ◆ Environment Newsletter

This is a very informative quarterly on environmental activism in the East and North Eastern India. It is published from Kolkata and is one year old now.

Contact: **DISHA**, 20/4, Sil Lane, Kolkata-700015, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3283989. Email: fordisha@cal2.vsnl.net.in

- ◆ Chatterjee, S., Soumen, D., Rana, RS., Sastry, ARK. *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Bioresources: A Case Study on Apatanis in Arunachal Pradesh*, WWF – India, 2000.

Contact: **WWF-I**, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi-110003.

- ◆ CM News

This is a newsletter of the Collaborative Management Working Group of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). It has information from around the world on community involvement in conservation and other related issues.

Contact: **Erika Spanger-Siegfried**, Email: esiegfreid@tellus.org and **Rachael Dobson**, Email: rdobson@tellus.org

- ◆ WCPA South Asia Newsletter

This is a new newsletter on South Asia of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). The main aim of the newsletter is to keep in touch with all the members, know the work of PA managers and learn more about the current status of PAs in the region.

The editors have also requested for regular inputs in the form of information and articles for the newsletter.

Contact: **Rabi Bista / Rekha Kharel**, WCPA South Asia, C/o Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Singhdurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977-1-220067/260702. Fax: 223868. Email: rbbist@hotmail.com; wcpa_sasia@mos.com.np

◆ Indian Journal of Environmental Law

Published by the National School of Law (NSL), Centre for Environmental Law Education Research and Advocacy (CEERA), the dominant mission of this journal which is now only two issues old is to 'mine and flesh out the Indianness in the Indian Environmental Legal regime while providing a platform and forum for building and blossoming of the scholarship on Indian Environmental Jurisprudence. The latest issue of the journal has articles on issues related to bio-piracy, tiger conservation in India and the African elephant among others. It also has case reviews and book reviews.

Contact: **Editor**, Indian Journal of Environmental Law, NLS of India University, Post Bag 7201, Nagarbhavi, Bangalore-560072, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3219231/3213160. Fax: 3219231

UPCOMING

Certificate Course in Environmental Education - 2001

The Center for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, India has announced its sixth international Certificate Course in Environmental Education (CCEE) to be held in Ahmedabad from September 11 to December 7, 2001. The course content is dealt with in five modules: Basics of Ecology and Global/Regional Environmental Issues; Education for Sustainable Development; Environmental Education and Communication; Methods and Strategies; Resources for EE and Project Management and Capacity Building.

Contact: **SASEANEE Secretariat**, Centre for Environment Education, Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad - 380054, India. Tel: 91- 79 - 6858002 to 9. Fax: 6858010. Email: ceeindia@vsnl.com Website: www.cceinida.org; www.saseanee.org

International Training Course on Wetland Management and Conservation

The Scientific and Cultural Society of Pakistan (SCSP) is organizing the 3rd International Training Course on Wetland Management and Conservation in Karachi from June 4 -14, 2001. The objectives of the workshop include providing of practical training about management, planning and conservation of wetlands, upgrading the knowledge and capacities of previously trained staff and establishment of international scientific and cultural cooperation.

Contact: **Director Training Program**, SCSP Head Office: B-7 Sheet No. 25 Model Colony Karachi-75100, Pakistan. Fax: (92-21) 409-336 E-mail: zaheerk2k@yahoo.com

International Conference on Tropical Ecosystems: Structure, Diversity and Human Welfare

The Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore is organising an International Conference on Tropical Ecosystems: Structure, Diversity and Human Welfare in Bangalore from July 15 – 18, 2001. The Conference is being co-hosted by leading national scientific institutions and organizations including the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, IUSSI-Indian Chapter, Bangalore and the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore. It is scheduled to coincide with the annual meeting of Association for Tropical Biology (ATB), and is being co-sponsored by the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS).

The conference will address three major theme areas: a) Global change and tropical forest ecosystems, b) Tropical forests: structure, diversity and function, and c) Biodiversity hot spots.

For participation and other details contact the Secretariat at the address below.

Contact: **Secretariat ATB2001**, C/o ATREE, No 659 5th A Main, Hebbal, Bangalore - 560024, India. Tel: 080-5441160 Email: atb2001@vsnl.com Web Site: www.atree.org, www.atb2001.org

International Theriological Congress Committee

The Eighth International Congress Committee (ITC8) is to be held from August 12-17, 2001 in South Africa.

A symposium 'People and Predators – Conserving Problem Mammals' is also scheduled to take place at the ITC8. It will focus on coexistence between people and predators and is intended to provide a spring board for a book on the issue.

There will be several other sessions as well, including a workshop on lion conservation and a meeting of the IUCN/ SSC Canid Specialist Group.

Contact: **Dr. Rosie Woodroffe**, Ecology and Epidemiology Group, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry CV47AL, UK. Tel: +44-24-76-524619. Email: r.b.woodroffe@warwick.ac.uk Website: www.eventdynamics.co.za/itc

CORRESPONDENCE

◆ KR Sethna

This has reference to the news item 'KIOCL gets ISO 14001, permission to cut 500 trees inside Kudremukh' (*PA Update* 29, Feb. 2001). The ISO 14001 certification for its Environmental Management System being conferred by Des Norske Veritas as per the accreditation by RvA Netherlands reflects very poorly on the reputation and credibility of the organisation. No proper assessment seems to have been made and the whole thing has been well manipulated by KIOCL by giving false information. As is well known, KIOCL are the biggest polluters and destroyers of the environment. I have already written to the organisation regarding this and told them how badly it reflects on their reputation and credibility.

As regards the cutting of 500 trees, the Deputy Conservator of Forests and the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State had refused permission to KIOCL for the same. However they approached the Centre and the Central Government told the Karnataka Forest Department to grant the permission.

It is a very sad state of affairs that we have no conservation or environment minded politicians at the Centre or in the States.

Contact: **KR Sethna**, Yellikodigi Estate, Aldur, PO 577111, Dist. Chikmagalur, Karnataka.

PA UPDATE MATTERS

Support for the *PA Update*

The Anand based Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) has provided funding support for the production and publication of the *Protected Area Update* for coming year.

In the meanwhile we request readers to send in donations and/or become life subscribers for the Update as that will help us raise valuable resources and ensure our long term financial viability. We are also happy to announce that all life subscribers will be sent a free copy each of the latest publication of Kalpavriksh, 'Protected Areas of India- A profile'.

Contact: **Pankaj Sekhsaria** at the editorial address

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Contact: **Pankaj Sekhsaria**, at the editorial address below

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. We acknowledge the support of **the South Asian Conservation Foundation** and the **Foundation for Ecological Security** in the compiling and production of

PA Update 30 & 31

PA Update 30 & 31 was prepared and edited by Pankaj Sekhsaria with help from Devaki Agarwal and Neeraj Vaghlikar.

Several news items were accessed from Centre for Science and Environment's *Green File*, but have been credited to their original sources.

The *PA Update* can also be accessed on the following websites:

<http://www.indianjungles.com>;

<http://home.att.net/~spiderhunters/attachments.htm>;

www.cee.envirodebate.org

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

KALPAVRIKSH

Apartment 5, Shri Dutta Krupa, 908 Deccan Gymkhana, Pune 411004, Maharashtra, India.

Tel/Fax: 020 - 5654239 Email: kvriksh@vsnl.com

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From
KALPAVRIKSH
Apt. 5, Shri Dutta Krupa,
908 Deccan Gymkhana,
Pune - 411004

