

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

No. 44

August 2003

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from around the world who are working on issues of protected areas and their management. This is the place and time when success and failures of the past will be discussed and importantly, new possibilities for the future suggested, debated and worked out.

Exciting changes are indeed taking place in the theory and practice of conservation across the world and one of the most unmistakable of these is the increasing recognition of the role of local communities in managing and sustaining wildlife habitats. We have been talking about this in India for a while now, while many other countries have moved substantially ahead in actual practice. It would be extremely instructive for people from various communities to learn from each other.

There are two broad trends within this. The first is the greater involvement of communities in officially protected areas, generally known as co-management (CM). This has been well-debated and well documented too. It is the second one that is relatively unrecognised: the phenomenon of community conserved areas (CCAs).

CCAs are those natural or mixed ecosystems containing significant biodiversity value, that are conserved by communities. There is a wide range of these, encompassing area where human influence is very substantial to those where there is none at all. Examples of CCAs from across the world vary immensely in size, kind, and governance type. For instance, there are vast areas under indigenous peoples' ownership or control. Several of these are now recognised Indigenous PAs, and common in South America, Canada, Australia and Africa. Large areas are also still under traditional, sustainable management systems, with increasingly conscious conservation-oriented decisions, particularly by mobile or nomadic pastoral peoples. Literally thousands of sites, small in size, but nevertheless of tremendous biodiversity significance, are conserved by communities as village forests, tanks, and pastures, with or without religious or spiritual sanction, across the world. Critical ecosystems and landscapes are being protected for their ecological and cultural features, by communities and groups in North America and Europe too. Island ecosystems and marine areas too are being traditionally managed or being actively brought under new conservation regimes managed by the resident communities.

These efforts need recognition and support and a major move towards this is being attempted at the Congress this time. The Theme group on Indigenous and Local Communities Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA), a joint group of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and

EDITORIAL

Community Conserved Areas: A Bold New Frontier for the World Parks Congress

The World Parks Congress (WPC) is at our doorsteps. To be held in Durban, South Africa from Sept 8 -17, it will be the largest gathering of people
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the Commission on Ecological, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP), hopes to showcase CCAs in a major way at the WPC. In particular, it hopes to get the Congress participants to accept CCAs as a legitimate category of conservation or protected areas, and to press for countries and international bodies to provide them recognition. TILCEPA also hopes to press for much greater support to co-management of official PAs. In all this, one of the key factors is going to be the presence of at least a couple of hundred community representatives at the congress.

Will the WPC make a significant difference to the way conservation is practiced around the world? Well, only time will tell.

(For more details see special section on the WPC)

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

700 sq. km. of forest in Chittoor and Cudapah districts to come under Project Elephant

The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (FD) has recently proposed the inclusion of 700 odd sq. km. of forests in the Chittoor and Cudapah districts under Project Elephant. The FD used GIS systems for the mapping and for submitting the proposal to the Central Government for the same.

The MoEF has reportedly accepted the proposal of the state government. This would mean that the state will be able to utilise the additional 40% of the funds earmarked under Project Elephant.

The FD now proposes to similarly map tiger reserve areas in the state as well.

Source: M Somasekhar. 'Help at hand to solve 'Elephantine problem', *The Hindu Business Line*, 13/07/03.

Contact: **Director**, Project Elephant, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003. Tel: 011-24360957.

Sand bars at mouth of Pulicat Lake affecting ecology

Sand bars that are getting created at the mouth of the Pulicat Lake are reported to be adversely affecting the ecology of the lake. The flow of seawater to the lake has reduced and the problem of siltation has also increased as the rivers and streams continue to deposit silt in the water body.

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Suggested solutions include the taking up of dredging work at the lake's mouth and initiation of water and soil conservation programmes in its catchment area.

Source: PV Krishna Rao. 'Pulicat lake gasping for breath', *The New Indian Express*, 16/06/03.

Proposal for seven star hotel in the Kasu Brahmanand Reddy NP

The Andhra Pradesh Government has reportedly agreed to approach the Central Government for the necessary clearances to set up a seven star hotel in the Kasu Brahmanand Reddy (KBR) National Park in Hyderabad. The main proponent of the project is Mukarram Jah and the Oberoi group has agreed to put Rs 650 crore into the venture. The cabinet state committee on infrastructure, which is headed by the State Finance Minister, Y Ramakrishnudu, has also planned to hold talks with opposition leaders to try to gain their approval for the project.

Additionally, the government is planning to approach the National Wildlife Board for its approval and the attorneys of the proponents are also likely to petition the Supreme Court seeking permission to use the land for this project, particularly in light of the recent judgments involving de-reservation of forest, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.

The project began to move after the government accepted a proposal by Mukarram Jah to barter the several pieces of land he owns within the park for an equivalent one-piece plot elsewhere. Plans are now underway to earmark one corner of the park by dereserving the land. The Oberois have also requested the government to provide them 10 acres of land adjacent to that being offered by the Nizam's heir. The project acquired momentum after a housing society, which had some land near the park, offered six acres to facilitate the project.

Source: 'Govt. sets eyes on seven star hotel', *Times News Network*, 22/07/03

ASSAM

New Honorary Wildlife Wardens appointed

New Honorary Wildlife Wardens have been appointed in Assam for a period of two years. A notification to this effect was recently passed by the Environment and Forest Department of the Government of Assam.

The new wardens are: Mr AK Padmapati (Tezpur), Mr Arup Goswami (Silonijan, Karbi Anglong), Dr Abheek Gupta (Central University, Silchar), Mr Bhargav Kumar Das (Kalaigaon, Darrang), Mr Bikul Goswami (Lakhimpur), Mr Firoz Ahmed (Guwahati), Mr Gautam Terrang (Diphu, Karbi Anglong), Dr Hilloljyoti Singha (Bongaigaon), Mr Karuna Dutta Choudhury (Bhabanipur, Barpeta), Mr Kulojyoti Lakhar (Guwahati), Mr Kumar Brahma (Bansbari, Barpeta), Mr R Islary (Kachugaon, Kokrajhar), Mr Mridupaban Phukan (Naharkatiya, Dibrugarh), Mr Prasanta Bordoloi (Nagaon), Mr Progress Medok (Bilmukh, Dhaknakhana), Mr Ramranjan Chakravarty (Silchar), Dr Rishi Das (Tinsukia), Ms Shamina Choudhury (Hailakandi) and Ms Shanta Sharma (Jorhat).

Source: 'New Wildlife wardens appointed', *The Sentinel*, 21/07/03.

Meet held to protect Kaziranga animals during floods

A meeting was held in the month of May to discuss steps needed to protect animals of the Kaziranga National Park during the floods. The meeting was held at Kohora and presided over by Mr. N Vasu, Director of the park. Those attending included government officials, *gaon burahs*, veterinary doctors, tea gardens officers and NGO representatives.

A number of measures were suggested to deal with the situation. These included awareness programmes in *namghars*, youth organisations and among local people about the importance to save the animals during the natural calamity. The need was also highlighted for the patrolling of National Highway 37 and the imposition of Section 144 along the Bokakhat - Burapahar stretch of the highway, to control speeding vehicles. These often collide with animals crossing the highway to escape the floods.

There was a further suggestion, that forest officials should be equipped with boats for the rescue of animals that might be marooned because of the rising waters. (For reports of what happened, please see following report)

Source: 'Meet to protect animals during floods', *The Sentinel*, 29/05/03.

Floods affect Kaziranga

Rising waters of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries in the first week of July inundated large parts of the

Assam including the Kaziranga National Park. 60 -70 % of the park had been submerged and animals were forced to take shelter on the high ground platforms that have been created in various parts of the park to deal with such a situation.

Animals such as the rhino and deer were also reported to be moving to higher grounds in the Karbi Anglong Hills on the southern side of the park. At least six animals, including a rhino, a buffalo calf, two hog deer and sambars were drowned in the park. Elephants and rhinos fleeing the park to higher ground in the Karbi Anglong hills are reported to have fallen victim to tribal poachers. There were other reports of speeding vehicles on the National Highway (NH) 37 that runs along the southern boundary of the park running over a few animals as they tried to cross to escape the rising waters.

In another incident, two elephants were electrocuted in the adjoining state of Meghalaya after the herd strayed away from a reserve forest in western Assam following the floods. The 70-80 strong herd was moving towards a forest in Meghalaya from Assam when two animals got trapped in an area where a high-tension electric cable had fallen on the ground, probably in the heavy storm.

The Director of the Kaziranga NP Mr. NK Vasu, while acknowledging the seriousness of the problem caused by floods, has also said that the floodwaters were important for the park as they nourished the grasslands with the silt and also benefitted fisheries.

Source: 'Over four lakh affected in Assam floods', *The Hindu*, 02/07/03.

'Rhinos, elephants perish in Assam floods', www.hindustantimes.com 09/07/03
Daulat Rahman. 'Floods a boon for Kaziranga park', *The Times of India*, 12/07/03.

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

Assam Forest Protection Force to be better equipped

Efforts are being made to better equip the Assam Forest Protection Force (AFPF) to increase its efficiency in dealing with issues related to reserve forests and protected areas. The AFPF with a strength of 770 personnel faces the challenges of dealing with poachers, extremists and wildlife smugglers. The force is presently deployed at 60 places through out

the state, of which 15 per cent are in wildlife areas and the rest in territorial ranges.

The scheme prepared by the state government envisages the modernisation of the AFPP, including the availability of sophisticated arms and equipment and also bringing in some operational changes. A proposal for Rs. 12 crore for the same was recently submitted by the state to the Central Government. Rs. five crore, for equipment, training facilities and refresher training courses have reportedly been agreed to. A proposal has also been submitted to the Centre, appealing for an additional battalion for the purpose of forest protection. This, too, is reported to have been approved.

Source: 'Forest force to be equipped to combat poachers, smugglers', *The Sentinel*, 21/05/03.

Illegal tree felling reported from Chakrashila WLS

Nature's Beckon, a NGO working on environmental issues in Assam has expressed serious concern over large-scale tree felling inside the Chakrashila WLS.

A team of the organisation that recently visited the sanctuary found a lot of evidence of the same, including those of hand sawing operations in 13 saw-pits. A complaint has been made to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of the state.

No action is reported to have been taken yet.

Source: 'Chakrashila sanctuary turning barren', *The Sentinel*, 08/06/03.

Contact: **Soumyadeep Dutta**, Natures' Beckon, Datta Bari, Ward No.1, Dhubri – 783301, Assam. Tel: 03662-31067. Fax: 30076.

Army says that militants are involved in wildlife trafficking in the north east

The army has said that separatist groups in the north-eastern region are directly dealing in illegal wildlife contraband. This is being used as a means of generating revenue that is then exchanged for buying arms and explosives from neighbouring countries. The animals said to be the primary targets include the rhino for its horn, elephants for ivory and tigers for bones and skin.

No specific group has been named by the army, but the one hinted at is the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN), particularly in the context of the Kaziranga National Park in Assam.

A statement issued by the army said that, "Nepal's open border with India and the lack of proper legislation and coordination between the concerned authorities continue to hinder the task of combating illegal trade in endangered species". Huge amounts of wildlife products are reported to be sent from India through Nepal to China, which is one of the biggest consumers of these products. The statement has also said that Assam has become the gateway for illegal wildlife trade in South Asia.

The Indian Army, apart from counter-insurgency operations in Assam, has now launched a crackdown on poaching syndicates in the state - deploying soldiers and activating its intelligence agencies along the Kaziranga National Park. The operation has been codenamed "Save Kaziranga".

Troops of a mountain division posted along Kaziranga, recently recovered three kilograms of tiger bones and two kg of elephant tusks, besides a gall bladder of a bear from the poachers. Troops, disguised as traders in animal organs, trapped the poachers near the Kaziranga National Park and recovered the booty which is worth about Rs two million in the international market.

Source: 'N-E militants involved in wildlife trafficking: Army', *The Navhind Times*, 24/05/03.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam.

BIHAR

New additions to Important Bird Areas list

Thirteen new additions are being made to the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) list in Bihar. These are the following: Kawar Lake Bird Sanctuary, Nagi & Nakti Sanctuaries, Valmiki National Park, Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary, Kusheshwarstan Pakshi Vihar, Gogabill Pakhsi Vihar, Saraiya Man Bird Sanctuary, Jagatpur Jheel, ECO park of Barauni, Mokama Tal Area, and wetlands in Kursela area besides some chauras located in the northern parts.

Source: Avijit Biswas. '13 sanctuaries to find place in global list', *The Hindustan Times*, 15/05/03.

Contact: **Dr. Asad Rahmani**, Director BNHS, Hornbill House, Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg, Mumbai 400 023 Maharashtra. Tel: 022-2821811. Fax: 2837615. Email: bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in

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Email: mncarvind@hotmail.com

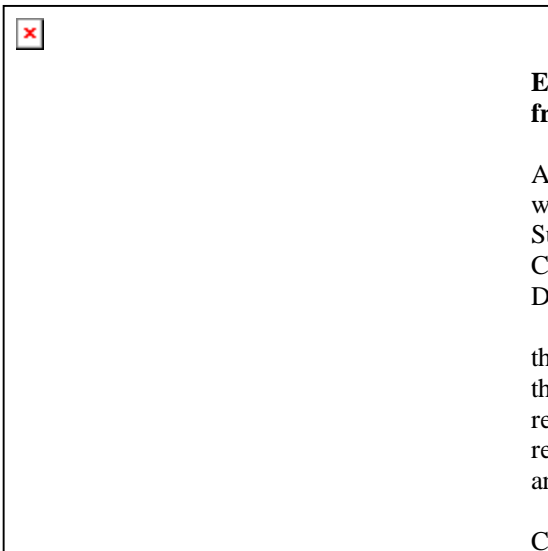
CHATTISGARH

Encroachment, tree felling for canal construction inside Bhoramdeo WLS

The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) recently filed an application before the Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) alleging that there was large scale encroachment and tree felling for the construction of a canal inside the Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary. Proof with first hand documentation and photographs were also presented. A large area is reported to have been cleared inside the sanctuary for the construction of a dam that would divert waters of the Sakri river to villages outside the sanctuary. The activities have reportedly been carried out by local villagers at the behest of local politicians.

The CEC has in response issued notices to all the respondents in the case, including the District Magistrate, Principal Secretary of Forests, Chattisgarh and the Chief Secretary of Chattisgarh, asking them to explain the violation of conservation laws and Supreme Court orders. The CEC has also asked the Chattisgarh government to explain why a water source was being directed away from a sanctuary, without the permission of the Forest Department as required by the Wild Life Protection Act.

Source:



'Encroachment in Bhoramdeo Sanctuary',
www.sanctuaryasia.com; 08/06/03.

Contact: **WPSI**, M-52, Greater Kailash Part I, New Delhi 110 048. Tel: 011- 26213864 / 26292492. Fax: 011- 26464918 Email: wpsi@vsnl.com. Website: www.wpsi-india.org

CHANDIGARH

Mobile phones for Chandigarh Forest Staff

Forest guards, foresters, deputy rangers, range officers and soil conservation officers in Chandigarh are all being sanctioned cell phones by the Forest Department. Senior officials have said that the nature of the field responsibilities of the field staff justified this step. It is hoped that duties will now be discharged in a synchronised manner and that overall efficiency of the department will increase.

It has been pointed that in the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, for example, this will help in dealing with illegal activities, and also that forest staff will be able to respond faster to requests from the citizens when wild animals from the sanctuary stray into their neighbourhoods.

The forest guards and foresters were until now using wireless sets, serviced by a private company. They were, however, left in the lurch recently when the company shut down operations without any intimation. Realising the pressing need to stay connected with the field staff, the forest department decided to go in for cell phones.

Source: Rahul Singh. 'Forest staff to flash mobile phones', *Times News Network*, 01/07/03

Effort being made to remove lantana, other weeds from Sukhna WLS

A campaign for the removal of lantana and other weeds from forest areas in Chandigarh, and the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, has been taken on by the Chandigarh Administration and the Forest Department.

Lantana, in particular has adversely affected the sanctuary and a three pronged strategy to control the weed growth is being used. It includes the removal of the cause of weed infestation, physical removal of lantana, encouraging natural regeneration and afforestation using non-weed indigenous species.

Of the 32.47 sq. km of forestland in Chandigarh, 13.70 hectares are reported to be infested with lantana and an area of 400 acres is

estimated to have been already cleared of the weed. Additionally, other land, like that along firelines, nature trails and roads has been found infested with the parthenium weed.

Source: 'Governor leads war on lantana weed', *The Tribune*, 06/06/03.

GUJARAT

Four lions found dead in Gir in March and April

Four lions were reported dead in Gir National Park in the months of March and April. Four persons, who were reported to have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the deaths of the animals too were subsequently released on bail

Little additional information is available about the situation and what is it that exactly happened.

Source: 'Four lions found dead in 50 days in Gujarat', *Indian Express*, 30/04/03.

Contact: **Bharat Pathak**, CF (Wildlife) Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 - 631678/ 630051. Fax: 631211

Mahuda breweries denuding forests of **Jambughoda WLS**

The traditional practice of *Mahuda* (*Madhuca indica*) liquor consumption by the tribal communities in the Panchmahal district of Gujarat is reported to be denuding the forests of the Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary. An estimated 20 tonnes of wood is felled and used per daily for the brewing operations.

While the practice of the brewing and consumption is part of the tribal traditions here, it is illegal as far as the law is concerned.

Various departments of the state government including those related to forests, prohibition, and the police have said that it is difficult to curb this age old practice of the tribal communities. The FD has also said that the sanctuary, itself, is not affected by the tree felling activities. There are 40 villages inside the sanctuary that have revenue lands marked, and the wood is taken from there.

There is no disagreement however that the fringes of the forests are being adversely impacted.

Source: Abhishek Kapoor. 'Gujarat's liquor needs gulp 20 tonnes of wood a day', *Indian Express*, 24/06/03

Chief Wildlife Warden - Gujarat, Block 14, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Old Sachivalaya,

Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-30007.
Fax: 21097

HARYANA

Project for the development of Bhindawas Sanctuary

The Haryana State Government has planned a big project for the development of the Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary. The Forest Department, the Wildlife Department and Haryana Tourism would work in tandem on the project, which includes a plan for the resurrection of the lake by ensuring adequate water supply; a facelift for the land near the lake and the renovation of the Haryana Urban Development Authority rest house here.

The lake is to be filled up to at least five feet with water from the Jawaharlal Nehru Canal that passes along the lake. Special mounts are also to be created to provide space for the birds. Tree plantation will be undertaken by the FD on 180 acres and another 100 acres would be used for the creation of an herbal garden. 50 acres of land is to be handed over to the Tourism Department for landscaping and for the construction of huts for tourists. The approach road from Jhajjar to Bhindawas is also being widened and carpeted by the Public Works Department at a cost of Rs. 6.5 crore.

Further, a two-km area around the boundary of the sanctuary has been notified as 'controlled area' in which no construction for commercial purposes will be allowed. A grant of Rs 33 lakh under the Gramin Rozgar Yojna (SGRY) is to be sanctioned for this project.

Source: Deepender. 'Bhindawas bird sanctuary to be developed', *The Tribune*, 24/05/03.

Software on birds in state

The Haryana Forest Department has recently come out with a special software in an attempt to create awareness about birds in the state. Called 'Our Feathered Friends', it has been specially developed by the Centre For Environment Education, Ahmedabad.

This interactive multi-media package gives vital information about different species of birds found in wetlands, grasslands and forests and also includes the calls of the birds. It can be used in English and Hindi and will be initially installed in the two bird sanctuaries in the state - Sultanpur National Park and the Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary.

The FD has said that once they get the copyright for the software, they will be distributing it to schools in the state.

Source: Ruchika M Khanna. 'Software to promote ornithology', *The Tribune*, 23/05/03.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Steps for dealing with the human-wildlife conflict

The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department (FD) has decided to undertake long and short term measures to deal with the human-wildlife conflict that is reported to have reached alarming proportions in the last few years. The main focus will be on controlling the rhesus macaque menace and protecting villagers and livestock populations from predators like leopards and bears.

One of the suggestions to deal with the problem of leopard attacks is to undertake a programme for the construction of latrines in every village household. Studies have indicated that the maximum number of people, particularly children, have been killed when they had to leave their houses to answer the call of nature. The latrine construction programme, it is hoped, will deal with this. An effort will also be made to educate the population about other ways to reduce conflict with leopards. In particular, every time a leopard makes an animal kill, villagers trace the carcass and destroy it. This results in more killings by the leopard. Villagers are to be advised to leave the carcass for the predator.

There is also a proposal to rationalise the boundaries of certain protected areas to ensure large contiguous stretches of protected forest areas for wildlife. An elaborate exercise is to be undertaken to exclude areas with too much human activity. It has also been proposed that the entire stretch linking the Great Himalayan National Park and Pin Valley National Park be declared a protected area, thereby making available an area of over 4000 sq. km that is free from human interference.

Source: Rakesh Lohumi. 'Protecting people from wild animals', *The Tribune*, 02/06/03.

Master plan for Pong Lake WLS

The Himachal Pradesh State Government is soon putting together a master plan for the Pong Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. A task force consisting of officers from the concerned departments has been set up to prepare an approach paper and a blue print for

the project. The nodal agency for this process will be the Forest Department. A new 'Pong Wetland Society' is to be created that will take on the responsibility of raising funds. Various NGOs, eminent persons and institutions would be made members of this society.

It has been proposed that the wetland be divided into four zones: tourist zone, protection and research zone, multiple-use area for the locals and private entrepreneur zone. The tourist zone would be confined to the swamp below the dam itself; the protection and research zone would spread over the entire wetland, swamps, sand bars, mud flats, and open water areas where the birds roost, rest and feed; the zone for the locals would consist of the peripheral villages of the wetland; and the fourth zone would be on the fringes of the sanctuary.

Modern facilities such as water theme parks, a natural history museum, water sports, angling competitions, adventure tourism, trekking trails, bird watching, wildlife sighting and heritage tourism would be developed in the fourth zone. It has further been proposed that the heritage sites of the wetland area such as the fort of Dada Siba, Masur temple and Bathu da Mandir would also be protected and developed as tourist spots. Neighbouring forests of Masur and Mastgarh too would be protected as part of this plan.

Source: Suresh Khatta. 'Master plan in the offing to develop Pong wetland', *Indian Express*, 21/05/03.

JHARKHAND

New additions to Important Bird Areas List

Four new additions have been made to the Important Bird Areas list in the state. These are the Palamu Tiger Reserve, Hazaribagh National Park, North Karanpura Valley and Udhuwa Lake.

Source: Avijit Biswas. '13 sanctuaries to find place in global list', *The Hindustan Times*, 15/05/03.

Contact: **Dr. Asad Rahmani**, see above
Arvind Mishra, see above

Train kills four elephants near Palamu TR

Four elephants were killed on the outskirts of the Palamu Tiger Reserve by a goods train on the Chipadohar-Hehegarha track. The incident happened on the night of July 18 and resulted in holding up of traffic on the route for more than eight hours. The

elephants killed included a tusker, a pregnant female and two cubs.

This is not the first time such deaths have occurred on this section. In an attempt to prevent more elephant deaths on the Chakradharpur - Manoharpur track, the Forest Department has conceived a Rs. 60 lakh plan, which envisages fencing a section of the track to prevent elephants from crossing here. The cost of the plan was to be equally borne by the FD and the Railways.

The project is yet to take off, though the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has, reportedly, already released its share from the Rs. 90 lakh given to the state government under Project Elephant.

Source: Manoj Prasad. '4 pachyderms run over by goods train', *The Indian Express*, 21/07/03.
Contact: **Director**, Project Elephant, see above.

KARNATAKA

Decision to scrap post of Director, Bandipur T R reversed

The Karnataka State Government had issued orders in early May, scrapping the post of Field Director, Bandipur Tiger Reserve. The decision was also taken that the tiger reserve would be governed by officers from the adjoining Chamarajnagar and Kodagu territorial circles, as an additional charge.

The decision was made as part of the state's administrative reforms in the wake of last year's decision by the Project Tiger Steering Committee to ask states to bear non-plan expenditure such as salaries. This policy of the central government, under the Xth plan, implies that the salary of the Field Director of Tiger Reserves will now have to be borne by the state government.

Project Tiger authorities said that the park would lose its Project Tiger status if the state government went ahead with its decision. Under Project Tiger guidelines, a tiger reserve has to be under the exclusive control of the Field Director and could not be relegated as an additional charge. The order of the state, if implemented, would have been the first instance in the country when a reserve had lost its Project Tiger status.

A large number of individuals and conservation groups opposed this decision of the state government suggesting that the financial loss for the park would be substantial if the state went ahead with the decision. Under Project Tiger alone, it was pointed out, the Karnataka government was given

over six crore rupees in the IXth Plan for the management of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. In response, the state government decided to reverse its earlier decision. Further, a new Deputy Field Director was also appointed to take over the management of the park.

Source: 'Bandipur may lose its Project Tiger status', www.sanctuaryasia.com, 09/05/03.
Bittu Sahgal. Email dated 09/06/03.

Butterfly park in Bannerghatta next year

The Butterfly Park (BP) proposed to be set up in the Bannerghatta National Park (see *PA Update* 40) on the outskirts of Bangalore is expected to be readied in about a year's time. The park is part of an ambitious project that includes a butterfly garden, research on butterflies as ecological indicators and a programme to sensitise the general public on the need to protect them.

The BP would have a butterfly dome that will house 25 species of butterflies and provide for their breeding and availability through out the year. There will also be a 'butterfly walk' that would house upto 50 species of butterflies.

The project is to be implemented in a phased manner over a period of five years, beginning with the trial phase next year. It's a joint effort of the Forest Department, the Zoo Authority of Karnataka, the Dept. of Biotechnology and the University of Agricultural Sciences. A major contribution to the estimated project cost of Rs. 3.81 crore, is being made by the Zoo Authority of Karnataka.

The educational activities under the project are to be co-ordinated by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), and would include education for visitors, training programmes for teachers, organisations and others to help them set up their own butterfly parks.

Source: 'Butterfly Park to be ready next year', *The Hindu*, 09/06/03.

Contact: **Dr. KN Ganeshiah**, ATREE, 659, 5th A Main Road, Hebbal, Bangalore 560024. Tel: 080-353 0069/ 3533942. Fax: 3530070.
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3345846. Email: pccfwl@vsnl.com

KERALA

Herbal Bio-valley proposed at Silent Valley

A proposal has been made for the creation of an Herbal Bio-Valley at the Silent Valley Biosphere Reserve. The State Minister for Agriculture, K. Gouri in her inaugural address at a seminar on 'Evolving Action Plan to Facilitate the Development and Utilisation of Medicinal Plants' said the bio-valley, modeled on the lines of the Silicon Valley for the computer industry, would provide the biological software essential for a dynamic medicinal plant industry. The seminar was organised jointly by the Asia Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) and Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA).

The commercial cultivation of medicinal plants for exports to meet the growing demand for herbal derivations was also discussed. The suggestions that were made included the need for policy and financial support and a management information system for managing herb-related issues in an international arena. The Director of the National Botanical Research Institute, P. Pushpangadhan, the Vice Chancellor of the National University of Juridical Sciences, N. R. Madhava Menon and the representative from the APCTT, K. Lekhmi Narayanan, were among those who spoke on the occasion.

Source: Herbal Bio-valley proposed at Silent Valley, www.sanctuaryasia.com, 19/07/03.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Silent Valley NP, Forest Department, Mannarghat PO, Dist - Palghat Kerala.

Committee suggests revamping of the Forest and Wildlife Department in state

The Estimates Committee of the Kerala State Assembly has called for a complete revamp of the Forest and Wildlife Department in the state. It has suggested a cut in the staff strength at the top level, creation of a crime stopper cell, use of computer aided cartography to gather information about forests and declaration of all rainforests in the state as biosphere reserves. It was pointed out that the department did not require a Principal Chief

Conservator of Forests, an Additional Chief Conservator and 11 Conservators, and that no other department had so many officials at the top.

The other major recommendations of the committee include the following: drafting of micro plans to save 'serpent' groves; a master plan to save 'kandal' forests, ban on grazing in grasslands and forests; natural afforestation to bridge fragmentation and denudation of forests resulting in disruption of the movement of wildlife; restructuring of forest ranges on scientific grounds; inclusion of 'forestry' as a subject of study in vocational higher secondary classes and grant of priority to such candidates in recruitment to the department; declaration of specific plants as national property under the Plant Varieties (Protection) Act and DNA sequencing and gene mapping of all plant varieties.

The report has also recommended that henceforth the no-objection-certificate (NOC) from the government should be obtained before title deeds on forest land are granted and that release of forest land for non-forestry purposes after the Forest Conservation Act 1980 should be subjected to close scrutiny. The committee has said that the proposed Sabari rail line should not be allowed to encroach upon the Sabarimala forest area and that new norms should be adopted for auctioning of forest wood to reduce the gap between confirmation of action and lifting of wood from 60 days to 30.

The Estimates Committee of the state is chaired by Mr. ET Mohammed Basheer and its members are Mr. KC Joseph, Mr. Abdul Rabb, Mr. KC Venugopal, Mr. PK Sreemathy, Mr. K Babu and Mr. MP Gangadharan.

Source: 'Call for total revamp of Forest Dept.', *The Hindu*, 05/06/03.

Periyar Tiger Reserve to be expanded

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests is said to have granted permission for the expansion of the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) by including the Ranni forest division under it. The areas of Pachhakkanam, Meenar, and Kullar in this division are areas supposed to be rich in biodiversity and need to be conserved.

Initially a 500 meter distance from the boundaries of the tiger reserve would be covered. A 10 year conservation plan has also been approved for the area. According to this, cutting of bamboo and felling of trees from the forests in these proposed areas will be prohibited, and eventually it will be declared a wildlife sanctuary. Further, projects would

be taken up to maintain the existing dams, in addition to creating facilities for making water available for wild animals. Efforts will also be made to deal with the problem of forest fires that affect the region.

Source: GK Nair. 'Kerala tiger reserve to be expanded', *The Hindu Business Line*, 28/03/03.

Forest land sought for development of Sabrimala in Periyar TR

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), is said that it will continue its efforts to secure 47 hectares of reserve forest land for the development of Sabrimala. A delegation led by the President of the board recently submitted a proposal to the MoEF for the same.

The demand for the forest land has been made for three projects viz. Widening of the trekking path to the *sannidhanam*, creation of a parking lot for vehicles at Pampa and creating a resting place for the pilgrims near Marakkootam.

The board's request to make Sabrimala a national pilgrim centre is also said to be under the active consideration of the Central Government.

Source: GK Nair. 'Kerala tiger reserve to be expanded', *The Hindu Business Line*, 28/03/03.

Chief Wildlife Warden – Kerala,
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MADHYA PRADESH

Opposition to include the Tawa reservoir and Denwa draw down agriculture lands in Satpura NP

Fifteen adivasi villages in the Sohagpur tehsil of Hoshangabad district have opposed the move of the Satpura National Park authorities to extend the boundaries of the park to include the draw down agriculture lands of the Tawa reservoir.

The Tawa dam is built at the confluence of the Tawa and Denwa rivers and borders the forests of the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary and the Satpura National Park. The borders of the protected areas are supposed to run through the middle of the Tawa reservoir and there has always been a confusion and disagreement about this. A large number of the people who are

dependant on this draw down agriculture (on the outer edge of the reservoir) and fishing on the Tawa reservoir are actually those who were displaced when the dam was built about thirty years ago.

The immediate provocation for the protests and the opposition is the reported decision of the park authorities to erect boundary pillars for the park in the lands where the draw down agriculture is being done. This also follows the claim by the park authorities that, infact, the entire reservoir is within the protected area boundary.

Those villages whose draw down agriculture and fishing could be threatened because of this recent move of the forest department includes Pasrapani, Pathai, Kharpavad, Khapa, Ratamati, Suakachar, Dhaba, Urdon, Ghoghri, Sarangpur, Tekapar, Kamti, Magariya, Sehra, Pattan and Kukra on the banks of the Denwa reservoir and Chicha, Naya Chicha, Athaees, Pipriyakalan, Chatua, Jijadoh, and Anzharia on the Tawa side.

The adivasi groups say that their fears are further accentuated by the incident of about a year and a half ago, when villagers from Kukra village were prevented from using the draw down lands for agriculture by the FD. An armed force and elephants had been used for the said operation.

It has also been pointed out that on the one hand irrigation department officials of the Tawa project have been moving from village to village collecting a toll for the draw down agriculture, and on the other hand the Forest Department is claiming that land to be theirs. The demand being made by the adivasi groups is that the boundaries of the protected areas should be restricted to the inner side of the reservoir only.

Source: '*Satpuda Rashtriya Udyan ki hadd mein Denwa doob ki kheti aur Tawa jalashay ko shamil karne ka adivasi puri takat se virodh karenge*', Statement issued by the Samajwadi Jan Parishad and Kisan Adivasi Sanghatan, 23/07/03.

'Satpuda Rashtriya Udyan ke vishay me gramvasiyon ke dave- appatiyan ka nirakaran kiye bagair munare banana gair kanooni hai', Statement issued by the Samajwadi Jan Parishad and Kisan Adivasi Sanghatan, 25/07/03.

Contact: Kisan Adivasi Sanghatan, Kesla, Dist. Hoshangabad - 461111, Madhya Pradesh.

CWLW, MP, Van Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar,
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MAHARASHTRA

500 teak trees allegedly felled in Nagzira WLS

National President of the Bharatiya Kisan Morcha and former Minister for Finance and Planning in the Government of Maharashtra, Mr. Mahadevrao Shivankar has charged Forest Department employees with illegally felling around 500 teak trees in the Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary. He has also demanded the resignation of the State Forest Minister, Surupsingh Naik.

Shivankar has pegged the value of the felled trees at Rs. 500 crore (some reports put the value of the timber at Rs. Five crore) and alleged that such felling could not have been possible without the involvement of the senior forest officials. He has also demanded the investigation should be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation and that POTA should be applied against the DFO, Ranger and Beat Guard reported to be responsible for the incident.

CCF (Wildlife) Mr. Jwala Prasad, when contacted, accepted that trees had been cut, but their number was 40-45, and not 500 as alleged. He said that one person had been suspended and also conceded that the felling could not have been possible without the involvement and assistance from forest personnel.

According to a news report, later in July, a RFO and a forest guard were suspended.

Source: '500 teak trees felled in Nagzira wildlife sanctuary', *Hindustan Times*, 25/06/03. 'Nagzira forest officer, guard suspended', *The Times of India*, 07/07/03.

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

MANIPUR

New State Board for Wildlife constituted

Manipur has recently reconstituted its State Board for Wildlife. There are 31 members on the board that is to be chaired by the Chief Minister of the state. The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests / Chief Wildlife Warden has been made the Member Secretary of the Board.

Source: Government Notification, 31/05/03.

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MIZORAM

Elephants poached in Ngengpui WLS; surrounding villagers to be punished.

The Mizoram Environment and Forest Department has decided to punish the villages surrounding the Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary for refusing to help in the probe to trace poachers who had recently killed two elephants inside the sanctuary.

The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Chhimtuipui Forest Division has been instructed to suspend all eco-development works in Mampui, Ngengpui, Rulkual, R Vanhne, Paithar, Saizawh and Bungtlang villages. All the Village Eco-Development Committees (VEDCs) too are to be abolished by the DFO. The Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary spread on an area of 110 square kms is situated near the Indo-Bangladesh border.

Source: 'Pachyderm poaching puts Mizo villagers on the dock', *The Assam Tribune*, 28/06/03.

Awards for wildlife preservation given away in Mizoram

Six people were recently awarded Phawngpui and Murlen awards for their contribution for preserving wildlife and forests in Mizoram at the 'Nungeha Humhalhtu Khawmpui', a state-level conference. The Phawngpui award, carrying a citation, certificate and Rs 10,000 in cash, was given to Laldinglana of Kawlkulb village, K Lianthanga of Sihphir village and Laldawla of Laite village. The Murlen award, carrying a citation, certificate and Rs 5,000 in cash was given to C Sangkhuma of Aizawl, Lalthuama of Chhippui village and PC Lawmsanga of Zuyangtui.

The six people were awarded because of their outstanding contribution in preservation of wildlife and forests by creating their own private sanctuaries and educating people of the importance of wildlife preservation.

Source: 'Award for wildlife preservation given away in Mizoram', *The Assam Tribune*, 16/06/03.

NAGALAND

New national park in Japhu Hills

A new national park is to be declared in the Japhu Hills in the capital of the state, Kohima. The assurances for this were recently given by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to the State Chief Minister. Further details are not known.

Source: *The Hindu*, 03/07/03.

ORISSA

Rs. 9.53 crore plan for PA development in state

The Orissa State Government has chalked out a Rs. 9.53 crore plan for the development of various wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in the state. A substantial amount of this money will be used to convert the Sunabeda and Satkosia sanctuaries to tiger reserves, if the centre gives its nod to the project. A number of NGOs in the state have, for a couple of years, been demanding that these two protected areas should be included under Project Tiger (see *PA Updates* 43, 41, 38 & 30).

Rs. 1.31 crore and Rs. 1.23 crore are to be used for the development of Satkosia and Sunabeda respectively. The proposed plan also seeks to address the problem of biotic pressure on the Bhitarkanika National Park, which has been facing increasing threats from poaching, timber smuggling and illegal prawn *gheries* (see *PA Updates* 43 & 41).

Source: Ashutosh Mishra. 'Orissa chalks out financial package for sanctuaries, national parks', *The Pioneer*, 17/05/03.

Shrimp culture, *gheries* continue to impact Chilika

Continued shrimp culture and *gheries* are continuing to threaten the ecology of the Chilika Lake. Monitoring carried out over here in the recent past has indicated that the lake is facing problems from siltation, obstruction of migratory routes of aquatic species and poaching of their young ones, particularly tiger prawns. The report has just been placed before a select committee on Chilika by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA).

The report has said that the use of dragnets by villagers in the mouth zone of the lagoon is obstructing the migration of economic species.

Presently, the Orissa Legislative Assembly is also awaiting the introduction of the Chilika Fishery Regulation Bill. Other reports have said that a decision has been taken to revive the eviction drive against the prawn *gheries* and that the Khurda and

Puri District administrations have constituted task forces for the purpose. The administration in Ganjam District has also been instructed to constitute such a task force.

Source: Siba Mohanty. 'Poaching leaves Chilika marine species in peril', *The New Indian Express*, 25/06/03.

Ashutosh Mishra. 'Forget strife, Chilika to be developed as a tourist spot', *The Pioneer*, 13/06/03.

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

Tourism promotion planned at Chilika

Even as the issue of the illegal prawn *gheries* in Chilika awaits resolution (see story above), detailed plans are being made for the promotion of tourism in the lake, and to develop it as a tourist spot.

This is to be part of an integrated plan for the overall development of the lake. The lake was the focus of a high level meeting held in June that was chaired by the Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Naveen Patnaik. It was decided to spend Rs. 17.95 crore during the current financial year for the desiltation of the lake's outer channel and deepening of the 17 km long Palur channel dug during the British rule. The Danish Government too is expected to chip in by providing Rs. 62.97 lakh for the project.

On the tourism front, a park is to be set up at Satpada, and a documentary is being made with an eye on the international tourist market.

Source: Ashutosh Mishra. 'Forget strife, Chilika to be developed as tourist spot', *The Pioneer*, 13/06/03.

I Cards proposed for legitimate settlers in and around Bhitarkanika

The Orissa Forest Department is said to be actively considering the introduction of 'identity cards' for legitimate settlers in an around Bhitarkanika National Park. A proposal to this effect is pending with the government.

As per suggestions given by the Rajnagar Mangrove Forest Division, all legal households existing in peripheral villages should be identified and identity cards, preferably issued by the protected area authorities, should be given to all legal residents of the area in order to easily detect infiltrators. The

move is an attempt to deal with the problem of continued infiltration of people from Bangladesh into the region and the adverse impact it is said to be having on the forests and the wildlife here (see *PA Update* 43). No decision has been taken in the matter yet.

It is alleged that about 43 new settlements have sprouted up illegally in the area in the recent past and the total human population in and around the park has now reached about a lakh.

Source: 'Move to identify infiltrators in Bhitarkanika', *The Statesman*, 28/07/03.

Illegal settlement near sanctuary, timber mafia threatens Debrigarh WLS

The NGO, Wild Orissa has reported that the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, which is spread over an area of 347 sq. km. in the Bargarh district of Orissa is facing threats from a number of sources. The timber and wildlife mafia, in particular have been exerting a lot of pressure from the Lakhanpur, Ambahana, and Dechua sides. Vandalism by tourists is another big problem. One group recently ended up burning a large patch of forest and grassland near the Chaurasimal Forest Rest House. There is also a shortage of staff in the wildlife division with one range officer managing both the Lakhanpur and Kamgaon ranges of the sanctuary.

Another development reported to be detrimental to area is the recent settlement of a fishing community that has come up on the banks of the Hirakud reservoir bordering the sanctuary. Earlier the huts of the fishermen had been built inside the sanctuary but were reportedly destroyed by the forest department. Now with the support of local political interests, the settlement, alleged to be illegal, has come up again, at a distance of about 5 kms from the Dudrukusum gate on the Chaurasimal route.

While it is not an encroachment on forest land it is being considered a major threat to the wildlife habitat. The presence of the human settlement apparently blocks the access of wild animals to the water of the reservoir. It has also been attracting traders and businessmen into the sanctuary area, particularly for lifting the fish catch, thereby adding to the disturbances.

The NGO has also stressed the need for posting adequate staff and for improving communications to step up the patrolling inside the park to deal with the activities of the mafia and the acts of vandalism.

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PUNJAB

Left bank of Kanjli lake to handed over to a private party for management

The left bank of the Kanjli Lake, one of three Ramsar sites in Punjab, is being handed over to a private party for its management. This part of the lake already has a park and a canteen here. The decision has been taken by the district administration in view of its stated inability to manage funds for maintenance of the lake, which has been adversely impacted by water hyacinth. The Army had tried hard to clear the lake of the wild growth about two years ago, but the effort proved to be short-lived

As a step towards privatisation of the place, the administration had received bids from a number of private entrepreneurs wanting to take control of the lake and develop it as a tourist spot on commercial lines. The effort is to be focussed on providing visitors with clean surroundings and good food. The manual pedal boats presently used here are also likely to be replaced with the high-tech ones for better boating.

Source: Kanjli Lake to go into private hands, *The Tribune*, 15/07/03.

Punjab Wildlife Department in disarray

The Punjab Wildlife Department is said to be in disarray, with a number of problems accumulating over the last few years. While earlier, there used to be a separate head of the Wildlife Department, presently it is in the charge of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. In the field, it is the Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) who are in charge. It has been alleged that no officer wants to stay in the department as no big money is involved. The forestry sector, on the other hand, is said to be extremely cash rich because of the ongoing Japan aided forest project worth Rs 400 crore.

Of the 12 wildlife inspectors and three wardens in the state, four inspectors are under suspension and two have taken premature retirement.

Another one retired recently and three others have been posted in duties that are not related to wildlife.

In the past, when the Wildlife Department was active, it provided a lot of valuable information about illegal felling. A number of cases of illegal felling, in fact, were unearthed based on the information provided by the wildlife officials, who often used to lay *nakas* at night to catch poachers. However, the flow of all such information has now come to an end. Similarly, earlier, about 200 cases of poaching or offences related to the violation of the Wild Life Protection Act used to be reported every year. This number too has drastically reduced now.

In more recent times a number of cases of poaching have been hanging fire. The most serious case is with regard to the killing of a sambhar in the Hoshiarpur district, where it has been alleged that the driver of the van was *challaned*, but the influential hunter was let off. At the last meeting of the Wildlife Board of the state, members had sought action against the officials concerned for letting off the hunter. There have also been a number of cases of killing wild boars by ensnaring them, one of which was also allegedly served at a wedding party in Hoshiarpur district. There is also the case of killing of 5 barking deer by using a search light in March.

Meanwhile, a proposal has been mooted to reorganise the Wildlife Department. Four new divisions with headquarters at Hoshiarpur, Ropar, Pathankot and Abohar are to be set up in addition to the existing Patiala and Harike divisions.

Source: Sarbjit Dhaliwal. 'Poaching cases hanging fire', *The Tribune*, 03/06/03.

Heavy metals reported in Harike waters

Recent research has revealed that there are high levels of heavy metals in the water of the Harike Lake. The main culprits are the industries in Ludhiana like the cycle and hosiery industry. The industries dump their wastes into the Buddha nala from where it enters the Sutlej and eventually into the Harike lake.

The heavy metals that have been found in the waters here include mercury, lead and cadmium. Fish from Harike is largely sold in Amritsar and it is feared that this could have adverse impacts on the health of the people here.

Source: Rachna Subir Sen. 'Metal particles in Harike water', *The Indian Express*, 02/06/03.

Water hyacinth continues to threaten Harike

The menace of water hyacinth continues to impact the Harike Lake. A couple of years ago the army had undertaken a big operation for clearing the weed that was choking the surface of the water body (see *PA Updates* 34 & 30).

A new field guide, 'Plants of Harike Wetland' which is based on studies conducted between April 2001 and 2002 has detailed the threats that water hyacinth continues to pose to the wetland. The guide has been compiled by Dr. Satnam Singh Ladhar, Principal Scientific Officer (Environment), Punjab State Council for Science and Technology and Ms. Arshinder Kaur.

It has also been reported that another weed, *kurelei* or *jala* has formed dense mats on the water surface and that it is also affecting the water body.

Source: Vishal Gulati. 'Hyacinth threat to flora, fauna', *The Tribune*, 03/06/03.

TAMIL NADU

Workshop held for the press on wildlife conservation and conflict.

The Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Mysore organised a one day 'Workshop for the press on wildlife conservation and conflict' on May 30 at Valparai in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary. The main aims of the workshop were to inform the press about the biological importance and conservation value of rainforests on the Valparai plateau; discuss human-wildlife conflict issues with particular reference to elephants; and inform journalists and media representatives about ecological issues to enable more comprehensive and insightful coverage of wildlife-related issues.

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UTTARANCHAL

Govt. invites private sector bids for eco-tourism project adjacent to Corbett NP

The Uttaranchal State Government has invited bids from the private sector for the development of an 'International Eco-Tourism Destination' on 325

hectares of land in the vicinity of Corbett National Park. The invitation was made via advertisements placed in national newspapers in the middle of the month of June 2003 and last date for interested parties to get in touch was July 31, 2003.

The ad in the papers says that, "The recently created state of Uttaranchal...with its plethora of exotic locations, offers unlimited investment opportunities in all areas of tourism viz. Pilgrimage, Cultural, Adventure, Wildlife, Eco-tourism and Leisure tourism." It further says that the project near Corbett, "...has the potential of being positioned as a 'tourism hub in the Kumaon Hills with exotic locations such as Nainital and Ranikhet in its hinterland. Details of the project which includes the indicative master plan can be accessed at website <http://gov.ua.nic.in/uttaranchaltourism>

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Orders for demolition of Kalagarh township stayed by Nainital HC

An order for the demolition of the Kalagarh township on the fringes of the Corbett National Park was stayed for three months by an order issued by the Nainital High Court in early June 2003.

The township had come up when the Ram Ganga Irrigation Project was initiated on the River Ram Ganga in 1956. A total of 864 hectares of land from the Jim Corbett National Park had been handed over to the Irrigation Department for the project. Over the years the township of employees of the project came up at Kalagarh.

Orders for the clearance of the settlement had been issued, but nothing was done because of the human dimension to the problem

Source: SMA Kazmi. 'Stay order on Kalagarh demolition', *Indian Express*, 11/06/03.

Parasitic plant threatens Valley of Flowers

A paper published recently in the journal *Current Science* has said that the floral wealth of the Valley of Flowers National Park is being threatened by the

proliferation of the parasitic plant 'dodder'. The plant, which coils around the stem of the host plants and thrives on the nutrition it drains from them, has been found on different species of medicinal and flowering plants across the valley.

An important medicinal plant, called Indira's Hand, which is critically endangered was found to be heavily infested by the parasite.

The study was done by a team of scientists from the GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development that was led by Soumai Kant Joshi and Sanjay Gairola.

Source: P Sunderarajan. 'Parasitic plant threatens Valley of Flowers', *The Hindu*, 22/06/03.

Pond construction inside Rajaji NP for 2004 Ardh Kumbh

The Uttaranchal Government has petitioned the Supreme Court for permission to construct a fresh water pond inside the Rajaji National Park for the *Ardh Kumbh* in Rishikesh in 2004. The state has said that it has identified 0.275 hectares of land 16 kms from Rishikesh. The land was needed for construction of the reservoir and laying water pipelines for length of 986 meters. The petition has said that it would construct another water body inside the national park for wild animals and also undertake afforestation of a similar area in lieu of the land being asked for.

In response, the court has issued a notice to the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Indian Board for Wildlife too has been asked for its opinion in the matter.

Source: 'SC notice to Centre on Uttaranchal plea', *The Hindu*, 24/06/03.

UTTAR PRADESH

Train kills three elephants in Dudhwa NP

Three elephants were killed when the speeding Gonda-Malani Passenger Train rammed into their herd in the Dudhwa National Park on June 1, 2003. The herd of 27 elephants had gathered near the tracks where a water body got created due to the digging by the railways for an embankment. The herd had strayed onto the railway track. The three elephants were killed on the spot, while another one was injured. Two tuskers were thrown down the embankment and a calf was dragged for some distance.

This is not an isolated incident in Dudhwa. There have been a number of reports in the past where elephants, many herbivores and even a tiger have been killed by speeding trains. (Also see *PA Update* 34 for plans of the UP Tourism Development Corporation for the development of a 'rail tourism package for Dudhwa')

The matter of this railway line had in the past been brought before concerned authorities, including the Indian Board for Wildlife. A plan to re-route the line had been drawn up, but the Rs. 25 crore that was needed at that point could not be made available. Another suggestion to deal with the problem is to terminate the trains at Pallia and for passengers to take a connection at Belraiyan for their onward journey to Gonda and other places.

Source: 'Train rams 3 elephants', *The Hindu*, 02/06/03.

KR Raghavendra Singh. 'Dudhwa National Park on wrong tracks', *Times News Network*, 18/06/03.

Contact: **CWLW-UP**, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow – 226001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0522-283864. Fax: 283868

WEST BENGAL

Wildlife census in the North Bengal hills

Results of the first ever wildlife census in the hill regions of North Bengal, undertaken last year, have recently been released. The exercise covered only the ungulates. Sightings of big and lesser cats, including the tiger, and the clouded leopard, were reported but their numbers were not counted

The census that was conducted between November 13-20, 2002 covered a swath of a 3,168 km long forest area. The method used was the 'Kings Census Method', where there is no head counting involved. Seven protected areas, including the Singalila National Park, Neora Valley National Park, and the Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary were covered, besides the Darjeeling Forest Division, Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council (Territorial) Forest Division, and part of Kurseong and Kalimpong Forest Division, were covered. The exercise was limited to 3000 m and above, and therefore the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary was not part of it.

The data was analysed by a team comprising the Director, Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological

Park, Darjeeling, and Conservator of Forests, Wildlife Circle (North).

Source: Niraj Lama. 'A wild step in the right direction', *The Statesman*, 17/06/03.

Contact: **Director**. Padmaja Naidu Zoo, Darjeeling.

East West Corridor of Golden Quadrilateral to adversely impact PAs in North Bengal

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) -West Bengal Regional Office and other NGOs have raised strong objections to the East-West Corridor of the PMs Golden Quadrilateral programme, particularly for that section runs through North Bengal. This six-lane highway which will run parallel to the National Highway 31 will cut through the Jaldapara, Mahananda and Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuaries, the Himalayan Foothills of Kalimpong region, the Gorumara NP and the Buxa Tiger Reserve. The Chief Conservator of Forests has said that an area of 2,000 hectares of prime forests will be lost. Not only will the habitats and migration routes of endangered species like tiger, leopard, elephant and the rhino be destroyed but they are also likely to fall victim to speeding vehicles. It is being suggested by the NGOs, that one of the reasons to chose this route is because it would be easier to acquire land and the compensation to be paid would be far less than for land which have human inhabitants on it.

Nearly a year ago, Mr Subrata Gupta, District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri, had written to the Chief Secretary of the state urging him to press for alternatives to the proposed route. He had suggested that not only would the proposed highway prove detrimental to the ecological balance but would soon run into problems. Some aspects highlighted in the letter included the following: the proposed route was longer and therefore more expensive; it would pass through sparsely populated areas, thus not benefiting the urban centres and would therefore also be susceptible to militant attacks; it was passing over rivers with very high gradients and serious problems of erosion and siltation (rivers like Leesh, Ghish, Chel, Mal, Neora, Diana, Jaldhaka, and Murti have a history of recurrent and devastating flash floods); it would also pass through the hills of Kalimpong which are susceptible to landslides; it would encroach on tea estates thereby reducing production; and that being hilly and forest terrain few investors would feel comfortable setting up industries.

Alternative routes were also suggested. These included the following: Islampur-Ghoshpukur- Goaltulimore- Fulbari bypass of SH

12A- Maynaguri- Dhupguri- Falakata- Pundibari (on realigned NH project under construction) - Coochbehar- Baxirhat, or Islampur- Ghoshpukur- Goaltulimore- Fulbari bypass of SH 12A- Maynaguri- Dhupguri- Birpara- Hasimara- Damanpur- Sankosh

The advantages of these routes, it was suggested would be that they are shorter; would largely avoid the forests; pass through more densely populated areas thus increasing the scope of industrial development and also benefiting major population centres of Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Moynaguri, and Dhupguri; that the rivers towards the south are gentler and the land more stable so the cost of maintenance will be lesser and the suggested alignment being closer to the Bangladesh border at Changrabandha near Maynaguri, is likely to facilitate bilateral trade.

These proposals forwarded to the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, were rejected on the ground that 'the existing alignment along NH-31, where sufficient land is already available and villages and towns are normally bypassed, outweighs the marginal advantages'.

In a more recent development, the Minister of State (independent charge) Maj.-Gen. (Retd) BC Khanduri has clarified that "The alignment of the East-West corridor has been frozen and the work has already been taken up by the NHAI through consultants... There appears to be no scope for further review.

This East West Corridor is to run parallel to the Railway line here that is presently being converted from meter gauge to broad gauge. A number of animal deaths have been reported by speeding trains on this route and the gauge broadening work along with the construction of the road will severely compound this already serious problem. (Also see *PA Updates* 43, 39, 36, 34, 32 & 29).

However the state forest minister is reported to have said that the state government clearance that will be required for the project will not be granted. The project has also been challenged in a public interest litigation filed by the Jalpaiguri Sangrami Mancha and Legal Aid Services West Bengal in the Calcutta High Court.

Source: Sebanti Sarkar. 'Desperate bid to stall PM's dream' *The Statesman*, 27/06/03.

'Forest dept against East-West Corridor', *The Statesman*, 13/07/03.

'PIL against East-West corridor construction', *Times News Network*, 19/07/03.

Contact: **WWF- I**, West Bengal State Office, 5th Floor, Tata Centre, 43, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta 700071, West Bengal. Tel: 033 – 2889530. Fax: 2883761
CF (Wildlife), North Bengal, West Bengal Forest Dept., Aranya Bhawan (Near Court), Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Tel: 03561– 25627(O) 25596 (R)

IIT, FD to conduct certificate course in eco-tourism and wildlife management

The West Bengal Forest Department (FD), in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, has initiated a certificate course on eco-tourism and wildlife management. It was supposed to have started in the last week of May and is the first course of its kind in the country to be run by an IIT. Those expected to take the course include people from various eco-tourism industries, NGOs and state government officials and professionals.

The main purpose of the course is to create a band of young professionals who would take up eco-tourism business as entrepreneurs and NGOs working in this field. Along with IIT professors, experts on wildlife and forest management and eco-tourism will take the classes, the material for which has been prepared by experts in the IIT. The course fee that has been fixed is Rs 5000 for an individual and Rs 10,000 for sponsored candidates.

The State Forest Minister has said that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) fund for conservation of bio-diversity in the Sunderbans (the portion in India) would be able to support such education programmes on eco-tourism. The state government is also said to be considering a proposal for the creation up an institute for forest wildlife and eco-tourism management, but no details of this are yet available.

Source: 'IITs, foresters join hands to promote eco-tourism', *The Statesman*, 20/05/03.

Tourism project in Sunderbans to involve locals

A new tourism project is coming up in the buffer zone of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, which will involve local people in its operation. The project is coming up near the Bidya river in the Gosaba block opposite the Sajnekhali forests of the Sunderbans. It is being set up by villagers of Bali who have come

together under the umbrella of an entity called the Bali Nature & Wildlife Conservation Society.

The group is made up of locals who were earlier involved in poaching wild animals here, essentially as a means of livelihood and survival. Education programmes run by organisations like the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - India and the Gandhi Society, a local NGO along with counselling by a former Field Director of the reserve has helped convince these local people to be part of the project.

The project is being implemented by Help Tourism (HT) - an organisation which promotes 'eco-tourism' projects in the North East and North Bengal. HT, whose clients include organisations like Deutsche Bank, Discovery Channel, Cox & Kings and other corporates will be taking on the responsibility for the marketing of the venture. WWF's West Bengal State office is acting as the adviser to the State Forest Department for the project and is responsible for the overall supervision, aside from the landscaping of the area.

Source: Indrani Dutta. 'A tourism project to be run by locals', *The Hindu Business Line*, 13/07/03.

Contact: **WWF- I**, West Bengal State Office,

Sundarbans tigers to be radio-collared for research

Project Tiger has recently given its nod to a Rs. 25 lakh project for the radio-collaring of tigers in the Sundarbans to study tiger behaviour.

Animals that stray into human habitations will be tranquilised and fitted with radio collars that will use the Global Positioning System (GPS) to track their movements. Eight - ten tigers are to be radio collared and tracked for about a year in the first phase of the project.

Source: 'Centre okays radio-collaring of Sundarbans tigers', *The Hindu*, 17/07/03.

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

Sundari tree threatened in the Sundarbans

The *sundari* tree, from which the Sundarbans gets its name, is getting increasingly threatened, particularly in its Indian part of the delta. The tree needs both saline and sweet water for its survival. However, the

areas where the tree grows is submerged in most parts by sea water for 24 hours a day.

The Sundarbans delta is supposed to be still in its formative stage. In the 16th century, its surface is said to have tilted slightly to the right because of tectonic forces and this is supposed to have diverted the flow of major rivers towards the Bangladesh part. Additionally the coming up of the barrage and dams in the past few years has further restricted the flow of fresh water to the delta. The State FD, in a desperate attempt to save the trees has now planned to dig ponds and deep tubewells to increase the flow of sweet water needed. Funds from the Asian Development Bank are to be used for the purpose.

Source: Imran Ahmed Siddiqui. 'Attempt to salvage green pride in Sunderbans', *The Statesman*, 24/07/03.

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

New 'Tiger Habitat and Population Evaluation System' to be used

Project Tiger authorities have decided to introduce a new technology to develop a 'Tiger Habitat and Population Evaluation System' to indicate the trend of tiger population in the country. The new initiative coincides with the completion of three decades of Project Tiger.

The new system will give an idea of how tiger populations are spaced, the areas and the reasons behind the decrease or increase of tiger numbers. It will devise safe and specific monitoring and estimating systems for obtaining reliable data from the field. Besides storing data, the system will also help disseminate the census, habitat evaluation and monitoring techniques to field personnel through regional training workshops and manuals.

The methodology to be adopted involves three layers of activities: mapping; data acquisition and Geographical Information System (GIS) modelling. The new system would not only serve as a monitoring tool for tigers but would also serve to monitor forests, their extent and threats faced. (Also see *PA Update* 43).

Source: 'Ascertaining the trend of tiger population',
The Hindu, 29/05/03.

Contact: **Rajesh Gopal**, Director, Project Tiger.
E-mail: dirpt@envfor.delhi.nic.in

Ivory trade flourishing in the country

A new report by TRAFFIC India has revealed that domestic ivory trade in the country is widespread, indicating that the ban on its trading has merely driven it underground.

The main sources of raw ivory in the country are said to be poaching, domesticated elephants, smuggled African ivory and pre-existing stock. The states figuring on the suppliers list include Assam, Orissa, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. The survey found that the most active markets for worked ivory were Murshidabad, Udaipur, Jaipur, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram. Other areas of active ivory trading were outside main towns such as Varanasi, Bangalore and Mysore. Cities such as Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai are the main retail centres. Significantly, Nepal, stood out as the international destination for Indian ivory carvings, which continue to be exported to 40 countries.

Examining the trade over two years, 2000 and 2001, the survey found that foreigners as well as Indians purchase ivory artefacts and that a close link existed between demand among Indians and the use of the artefacts in traditional ceremonies.

Source: 'Ivory trade boom defies ban in country: report', *The Times of India*, 27/06/03.

Half of country's forest area is fire-prone: report

A report 'Forest Fires in India', published by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-India has suggested that 50 per cent of the forest area in the country is fire-prone - ranging from 33 per cent in some states to 90 per cent in others. About six per cent is said to be prone to major fires. The report has estimated that the annual financial losses incurred because of the fires is around Rs. 4,400 million.

The report has also pointed out the various reasons for fires, which include the intentional actions of communities for jhumming, collection of *mahua* flowers, and for traditional purposes; and the non intentional ones like the fires caused due to burning of crop remains in fields, creation of fire lines in the forests by the Forest Department,

campfires by tourists and carelessly thrown cigarette and bidi butts.

Source: 'Half of forest area fire-prone: report', *The Hindu*, 16/07/03.

Contact: **WWF - I**, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110003. Tel: 011-24616532/24693744

UNDP commits Rs. 11.5 cr for endogenous tourism

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has committed over Rs. 11.5 crore (US \$ 2.5 million) for a new initiative that seeks to promote local culture for creating livelihood opportunities as well as projecting these local attractions for domestic and international tourists.

An agreement to promote 'Endogenous tourism: Culture and craft-based eco-tourism for sustainable livelihoods and integrated rural development' was recently signed between the Union Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the UNDP.

The project will be piloted at sites in various regions, including the Valley of Flowers in Uttaranchal. An incentive fund and a register of innovations will also be created to document ideas that worked.

Source: 'UNDP commits Rs. 11.5 cr for endogenous tourism', *The Hindu Business Line*, 17/07/03.

Contact: **UNDP**, 55, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110003.

National Environment Awards for 1998 and 1999

The National Environment Awards for 1998 and 1999 were given recently. The award in the individual category for 1998 was given posthumously to Jagdish Godbole for his work in the Western Ghats, while that in the organisation category was given to the Barefoot College of Social Work Research Centre. The 1999 award went to the Mumbai based Ryan Foundation.

The reason for the delay is the fact that the selection committee is so high-powered that they do not have time to meet. The seven member selection committee is constituted by the Prime Minister and comprises of the Vice President as the Chairperson; Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Minister, Ministry Environment and Forests (MoEF) as members and Secretary MoEF as Secretary. In addition there are three experts who shortlist the nominations.

The awards for 2000 and 2001 have also been delayed because the Vice President has said that the nominations require greater scrutiny.

Source: Sonu Jain. 'High Profile awards make winner wait for nearly five years', *The Indian Express*, 07/06/03.

SOUTH ASIA

Proposal for a 'Kanchanjanga Region International Eco-Tourism Park'

The Association for Conservation and Tourism (ACT) has proposed the creation of a 'Kanchanjanga Region International Eco-Tourism Park' comprising the Himalayas in North Bengal, along with the Terai, the Doon and the foothills. It has been pointed out that this area has the right ingredients to be declared such a park as India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet share the same mountains.

The region in India has a number of protected areas including the Buxa Tiger Reserve, the Neora Valley National Park situated at the trijunction of the India-Tibet-Bhutan borders near Kalimpong, the Singalila National Park near Darjeeling along the Nepal border and the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary near Siliguri also along the Nepal border.

While these parts on the Indian side are being protected, it has been pointed out, the degradation in the areas across the border needs to be stopped in the larger interests of the mountain range and the environment. Under these circumstances, ACT has said that a coordinated effort by all these countries is necessary to save the entire region.

Source: Sudipta Chanda. 'Greens moot eco-park on environment day', *The Statesman*, 05/06/03.

'Biodiversity corridors' proposed to connect PAs in the Khangchendzonga landscape

The Kathmandu based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), has proposed the establishment of 'bio-diversity corridors' between protected areas in the southern half of the Khangchendzonga landscape covering parts of India, Nepal and Bhutan.

A two day workshop to assess the feasibility of such 'corridors' was held in Darjeeling in the first week of July. Two more similar workshops have also been planned and will be held in Nepal and Bhutan.

One of the aims of the Darjeeling workshop was to try and verify whether there can be corridors connecting Singalila National Park with Senchel Wildlife Sanctuary, Senchel with Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary and Mahananda with Neora Valley National Park.

'Transboundary issues' to establish corridors with other protected areas sharing a contiguous terrain in Bhutan and Nepal were also to be discussed. It has also been pointed out that in Nepal, the Khangchendzonga Conservation Area (KCA) exists in the northern region, but there are no provisions in the areas bordering the Singalila National Park in India. Some parts of western Bhutan fall in the wider Khangchendzonga landscape and have been brought under the Toorsa Strict Nature Reserve, which can be connected to the Jigme Dorji National Park in Bhutan.

Source: 'Plan to interlink national parks in hills', *The Statesman*, 08/07/03.

Contact: **ICIMOD**, 4/80 Jawalakhel, GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977 1 5525313 Fax: 5524509, 5536747

UNESCO, UN Foundation project for Sundarbans

India and Bangladesh are to work together on a tiger-related biodiversity project in the Sundarbans. The UNESCO and the UN Foundation will pay \$ 125,000 for the preparation of this project, a feasibility report for which was to be have been prepared by April.

The project will study tiger breeding behaviour, feeding habits and will also attempt to find out why some of them become man-eaters.

Source: 'India, Bangladesh to begin joint tiger census', *The Navhind Times*, 29/07/03.

India, Bangladesh to undertake joint tiger census in the Sundarbans

A joint Indo-Bangladesh exercise to determine tiger numbers is to be undertaken shortly in the forests of the Sundarbans that straddle the boundaries of both these countries. The tiger count in the Indian part that stretches across nearly 4,200-sq km stood at 271 last year. The count on the Bangladesh side is uncertain because regular counts are not carried out there.

An initial round of discussion for the purpose has already been held between Indian and Bangladeshi forest officials. It is, however, not known when this census will be conducted.

Source: 'India, Bangladesh to begin joint tiger census', *The Navhind Times*, 29/07/03.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

- *Undermined: Destruction of Tiger Habitat in India*

This is the latest report published by the London based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) on the problems faced by India's tigers from mining. The report focuses in particular on the Jamwa Ramgarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan.

Contact: EIA Ltd. 62-63 Upper Street, London, UK.
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WORLD PARKS CONGRESS

IUCN PA CATEGORIES

IUCN PA Category and Description	CCA type / example
<p>Ia <u>Strict Nature Reserve</u>: Protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection.</p> <p>Ib <u>Wilderness Area</u>: Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection.</p>	<p>Sacred/forbidden groves, lakes, springs, mountains, islands, etc. with no-use rules except for very particular occasions, such as a once-a-year ceremony (several of these would also serve a significant scientific or wilderness function; however, the IUCN definition may need to be expanded to include cultural and/or religious aims, as these may be the main reasons for the communities to protect the area).</p> <p>Sacred/ forbidden areas (as above) with minimal and strictly regulated use (including, perhaps, once a year collective hunting or fishing which is strictly regulated by the community).</p>
<p>II <u>National Park</u>: Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation.</p>	<p>Watershed forests above villages, community declared wildlife sanctuaries (at times for ecotourism use).</p>
<p>III <u>Natural Monument</u>: Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features.</p>	<p>Natural monuments (caves, waterfalls, cliffs, rocks) that are protected by communities for religious, cultural, or other reasons.</p>
<p>IV <u>Habitat/Species Management Area</u>: Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention.</p>	<p>Heronries and other village tanks, turtle nesting sites, community managed wildlife corridors and riparian vegetation areas.</p>
<p>V <u>Protected Landscape/Seascape</u>: Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation.</p>	<p>Traditional grounds of pastoral communities/ mobile peoples, including rangelands, water points and forest patches strongly inter-dependent for herd, ecosystem and cultural survival; sacred and cultural landscapes and seascapes, collectively managed river basins (such natural & cultural ecosystems have multiple land/water uses integrated into each other, and given a context by the overall sacred/ cultural/ productive nature of the ecosystem: they would include areas with high agricultural biodiversity).</p>
<p>VI <u>Managed Resource</u>: PA Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.</p>	<p>Resource reserves (forests, grasslands, waterways, coastal and marine stretches) under restricted use and communal rules that assure sustainable harvesting through time.</p>

CCAs in SOUTH EAST ASIA

There are various examples of CCAs from around the world that fit into the above mentioned categories of PAs designated by the IUCN. Here are some examples from countries in South East Asia

Category Site	Key features
Ia Coron Island, Palawan, Philippines	Various areas on this 8,000+ ha limestone-complex island and surrounding waters are sacred/forbidden for cultural and spiritual reasons as per the customs of the local Tagbanwa people. The island has 11 lakes; only one is open to the public through an eco-tourism project while the other 10 are forbidden places, and still very pristine. Some of the beaches are also sacred as they are the burial grounds of the community and some marine areas are forbidden as they are thought of being the shelter of the giant octopus. (The whole island could come under Category V as well)
Ib Zaragosa Island, Cebu, Philippines Blongko, Talise and Tumbak, North Sulawesi, Indonesia	Community-based marine sanctuary (CBMS) covering 10 ha where no activity is allowed in order to rehabilitate the coral reef and related fisheries. (There are more than 500 CBMS in the Philippines although only about 15% of them are effectively managed). After a cross-visit to the Philippines, villagers set up a CBMS covering 12 ha in Blongko (mangroves and coral), 22 ha in Talise (mangrove, seagrass and coral reef) and 9 ha in Tumbak (seagrass and coral reef). Main objective is reef and fisheries rehabilitation and integrated coastal resource management.
II Tinangol, Sabah, Malaysia	The People's Organisation of Tinangol has been protecting the watershed forest above their village from being converted to <i>Acacia mangium</i> plantation and are planning of negotiating with the Forest Department for the hill forest to be declared as a community forest and wildlife reserve or as a co-managed forest reserve.
V Palian river basin, Trang Province, Thailand Thateng Districts, Sekong Province Laos	The Yadfon Association has been working with 40 villages of fishers and farmers to protect and rehabilitate wetland ecosystems along the Palian river basin in Southern Thailand. This includes upstream rainforests, sago palm forests, nipa palm forests, mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs. Work started in mid-1980's in coastal communities, which have set up various community-based mangrove forests and regulated fishing activities in the coastal waters, and expanded to the river interior in the late 1990's. Villagers and ecosystems are both benefiting. The four villages of Dongxa, Thongvai, Thongkong and Thongnhao on the Boloven Plateau have been studied in 1999 and then supported by Oxfam Community Aid Abroad. The villages exhibit an interesting mosaic of agro-forestry activities and landscapes based on traditional land-use systems, including swidden and sedentary upland agriculture and NTFP gathering. A community plant genetic conservation garden has been set up in the district to collect, plant and expand the annual crops that are gradually being lost.
VI Pred Nai, Thailand	Mangroves were very abundant around Pred Nai, near the Cambodian border, but were decimated by logging and conversion to shrimp ponds in the 1970's and 80's. Local villagers started to replant mangroves and strictly control the harvesting of coastal waters in 1987. By 2000, crustaceans, fish, birds had returned or significantly increased. People here have now set up a People's Mangrove Network involving several villages.

Contact: **Manisha Sheth Guthman** and **Ashish Kothari**, at the editorial address.
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Contact: **Pankaj Sekhsaria** at the editorial address

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 **Foundation for Ecological Security** in the compiling and production of *PA Update 44*

The issue has been compiled and edited by Pankaj Sekhsaria.

Several news items were accessed from the Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) Green Files, but have been credited to their original sources.

The *PA Update* can be accessed on the following websites as well
www.indianjungles.com & www.sanctuaryasia.com/resources/paupdate

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