

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

(Formerly JPAM UPDATE: News on Action towards Joint Protected Area Management)

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APPEAL

CORRESPONDENCE

EDITORIAL

Putting together this issue of the *Update* has been a rather distressing affair, more so than on other occasions. A look at the contents clearly brings home to one the magnitude and diversity of the threats that wildlife habitats in India face. Their range is astounding.

In Orissa the timber mafia rules the roost, smuggling timber at will, setting fire to forests to cover their acts and attacking forest officials and police in broad daylight in the middle of a village bazaar (see Orissa, Timber mafia attacks DFO at Chandka). In Tamil Nadu, mining of coral over the last few decades has actually resulted in the physical shifting of the islands of the Marine National Park in the Gulf of Mannar. In Uttar Pradesh, in Rajaji speeding trains and poachers continue to kill endangered elephants and other animals and in Corbett, one of the finest tiger reserves in the country, the first nails in its coffin are beginning to be hammered. In the Sundarbans, in West Bengal and Bangladesh, on the one hand there are pious promises made to conserve this priceless natural heritage and on the other hand a nuclear power reactor, one of humankind's most destructive creations, is happily sanctioned for the region.

What however is the most shocking development is the complicity and even initiative

taken by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to destroy what is left of our wildlands. Imagine the Chairman of the Indian Board for Wildlife (IBWL), actually issuing a letter to the State Government of Karnataka saying that the mining lease in the Kudremukh National Park that has destroyed some of the most pristine forests in the Western Ghats be renewed and parts of the park be actually denotified so that mining can be continued in newer areas.

This, in a sense is not something unexpected from the present PM. Only recently he turned a blind eye to the denotification of some of the finest parts of the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh to make way for the Parbati Hydel Project. To add insult to injury he even laid the foundation stone of the project.

If this is what the Chairperson of the highest wildlife authority of the country is doing, we might well be better off without such an institution at all. At least then we cannot accuse ourselves of any hypocrisy.

On the brighter side, mining near the Panna TR (MP) has been stopped and a joint Government – NGO committee has been set up to ensure fair resettlement of Bori village from Melghat (see MP and Maharashtra news below). The Building Bridges: 4th National Consultation of Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights was successfully held in the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Wildlife Sanctuary in southern Karnataka. Participants from various sectors reiterated the need to integrate conservation and livelihood concerns, and intensity the struggle against destructive commercial developmental forces (see NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA).

The *Update* as you would realise is growing steadily. The last issue (*PA Update* 24) was the first one that came out in a printed form. It is our endeavour to make the *Update* as comprehensive and well presented as possible. Readers suggestions, comments, ideas and of course criticisms / critiques are always most welcome.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ASSAM

Joint management to protect Kakoijana

The initiative of an NGO, the Appropriate Technology Mission, Assam (ATMA), is helping protect the Kakoijana Reserve Forest with the help and involvement of the local people. The Kakoijana Forest covers an area of 17 sq. kms

which is located along the Indo – Bhutan border and is home to several rare and endangered species like the Golden langur, binturong, leopard, and Lesser adjutant stork.

Forest Protection Committees formed with local people are making efforts to check illegal felling and protect the fragmented groups of the highly endangered Golden langur. Plantation programmes have also been taken up with the involvement of local villagers, NGOs and the Forest Department. ATMA had also appealed for the Kakojana forest to be declared a wildlife sanctuary. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) has reportedly directed the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF)-Wildlife to take the necessary steps to declare Kakojana as a sanctuary. The matter is pending with the State Forest Department.

Source: 'Joint forest management brings hope for threatened species', *The Assam Tribune*, 05/03/2000.

'NGO fights to save forest in Assam', *Indian Express*, 20/03/2000.

'Kakojana seeks wildlife sanctuary status', *The Observer of Business and Politics*, 24/03/2000.

Contact: **ATMA**, Swaheed Path, Main Road, Bongaigaon – 783380, Assam. Tel: 03664 – 20879 / 22320. Fax: 20206.

Move to denotify Deepar Beel

There is a move for the denotification of the Deepar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, which is situated near Guwahati. This wetland, a Ramsar site, plays host to a large number of migratory and resident birds and is also one of the main feeding grounds of the highly endangered Greater Adjutant Stork. The area of the lake is also used by other endangered species like the tiger and the elephant.

Source: Dr. Rathin Barman on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 18/05/2000.

Contact: **Dr. Rathin Barman**,

rathinbarman@satyam.net.in

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

BIHAR

Funds crunch hits Mahuadarn

A severe funds crunch is affecting the Mahuadarn Wolf Sanctuary, which is spread over an area of 63 sq. kms in the Palamu district of Bihar. Funds for the management of the sanctuary as well as for the conservation of wolves have reportedly not been provided for over a decade now. It is also reported that the number of wolves is fast declining.

Excessive cattle grazing, incidents of forest fires, and crisis of water during summer in several parts of the sanctuary are also having adverse impacts. Further, there is large scale encroachment

by surrounding villages on the land of the sanctuary.

Source: 'Fund crunch hits upkeep of wolf sanctuary', *Hindustan Times*, 11/03/2000.

Mass hunt in Dalma

The annual mass hunting festival of tribals, 'Bishu Shikar' was held in the month of April in the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary. Over a half a dozen wild animals including barking deer, wild boar and peacocks were killed during the hunt. A similar mass hunt was also conducted in Dalma last year, and efforts by the forest department and some NGOs to wean away the tribals from this hunt have not proved to be too successful (see *Update 21*).

Source: Rana S Gautam. 'It's murder time again as tribals celebrate annual fest', *The Times of India*, 27/04/2000.

Contact: **Dalma Mukti Vahini**, Chakulia, PO Bhadudih, via Chandil, W.Singhbhum, Jharkhand – 832401, Bihar.

Chief Wildlife Warden – Bihar, PO Hinoo, Ranchi – 500327, Bihar.

GUJARAT

Contingency plan for oil spill in Gulf of Kutch

Alarmed by the recent oil spill off the Jamnagar coast (see *Updates 24, 23, 22 and 21*), the Gujarat government has proposed a response centre at a suitable location in the Gulf of Kutch and also prepare a contingency plan to avoid its recurrence.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of senior state and central government officials. Representatives of leading oil companies like Indian Oil Corporation, Reliance Petroleum Ltd., Essar, Bharat Oman Refinery Limited and the Gujarat Maritime Board also attended the meeting. The meeting discussed measures to prevent damage to mangroves and marine life in the Marine National Park. It also suggested the creation under the Environment Protection Act of an autonomous authority, with over-riding legal and administrative powers to co-ordinate action on all aspects of oil spills, including prevention and counter measures.

It was decided to have the contingency plan readied by April. The latest status of the proposed plan is however not known.

Source: 'Oil slick: Gujarat govt. for contingency plan', *Indian Express*, 02/02/2000.

'BORL project hangs fire as Vajpayee gets impatient; Response centre mooted', *The Times of India*, 01/02/2000.

Contact: **Harshad Kumari**, INTACH-Gujarat, Pratap Vilas Palace, Palace Road, Jamnagar- 361008, Gujarat. Tel: 0288-558746.

Modified route for BORL pipeline approved

A modified route – Vadinar 2A, for the Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd. (BORL) pipeline has been approved by the Gujarat Government. This route goes through the area where the Thapar group has already put up its jetty for the Ballarpur salt farm near Vadinar.

The earlier proposed route of the pipeline was through the Marine National Park. Fears had been expressed about its impact on the park and there were also reports that part of the park would be denotified for this purpose (see *Update 22*).

The State Forest Minister and the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) of the state, however refused to divulge details of the route of the pipeline and technical details of the project, when approached by the press.

Source: Vinod Mathew. 'Gujarat Govt. set to clear BORL project', *The Times of India*, 07/02/2000.
'Forest Minister justifies clearance to BORL', *The Times of India*, 08/02/2000.

Contact: **Harshad Kumari**, see above

Water tankers to Gir's aid

Water tankers have been put into service to battle the acute shortage of water being faced in the Gir National Park (also see *Update 22*). Heran, Meghad, Madhuvanti, Vokla, Khalkhal and several other rivers and springs in the park dried up and only a few of the dams had any water left. The park has six tankers at its disposal and another twelve were brought in from south and central Gujarat. The department also created an additional 60 'saucer' pits in addition to the already existing 250, into which the tankers will pour their water.

Source: Bharat Desai. 'Gir's pride has tankers to fight water crunch', *The Times of India*, 11/04/2000.

Lion census in Gir

Around 2000 personnel, including forest officials, NGOs and resource people were entrusted with the job of the census which was to be carried out in May. The last census in Gir was held in 1995 and the number of lions in and around Gir was counted as 304. Initially some 200 male buffaloes were to be procured by the state forest department to be used as bait to make the census operations easy. The male calves were procured from maldharis at Rs. 800 each. However, following a public interest litigation (PIL) in the high court and also opposition from Union Minister Maneka Gandhi and NGOs like the Viniyog Parivar Trust (VPT), the FD called off the plan to use the buffaloes as live bait.

The census is also expected to cover various prides of lions who have moved out of the park through forest corridors to Girnar near Junagadh, Sutrapada and Muldwarka on the sea coast and upto

Mithiala in Bhavnagar. The results of the census are still not available.

Source: Bharat Desai. '200 calves will pay with lives to help conduct lion census', *The Times of India*, 26/04/2000.

Manas Dasgupta. 'Gir lions cry for more water', *The Hindu*, 06/05/2000.

Girish Shah, on email to kvirksh@vsnl.com dated 13/05/2000.

'Lion will not be baited with buffaloes for census count', *The Times of India*, 17/05/2000.

Contact: **DCF (Wildlife)**, Sasan, Junagadh – 363125, Gujarat.

Girish Shah, (VPT), B-2/104, Vaibhav Apartment, Jambli Galli, Borivali(W), Mumbai – 400092, Maharashtra. Email: girishk@bom3.vsnl.net.in

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

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Birds in Gharana affected by arms firing

Winged visitors to the Gharana Wetland Reserve situated along the no-man's land on the RS Pura international border between India and Pakistan have been adversely affected by the border firing between the two countries.

The wetland is about 1 sq. km in area, though earlier it may have been bigger.

Source: Chander Sharma. 'Border firing scares away winged visitors', *Indian Express*, 17/04/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden – J&K**, T.R.C., Srinagar – 190001, J&K. Tel: 0191 – 544575, 0194 – 452469.

KARNATAKA

Illegal quarrying in Bannerghatta despite HC order

The Karnataka High Court, in early February, directed the Union and the State governments to take action against the illegal quarrying going on within the Bannerghatta National Park. The court also ordered that the local self-governments have no authority to issue licenses or leasehold rights to conduct quarrying under their limits and it is the Director of the Mines and Geology Department who is the competent authority to issue such licenses in the state. No action however seems to have been taken in the matter by the concerned authorities.

Recently in April, NGOs submitted a petition to the State Forest Minister highlighting the devastation caused inside the park due to the quarrying. Not only was the quarrying obstructing the free movement of elephants it was also forcing

them to come out of the park, resulting in human animal conflicts (see below 'Elephant deaths around Bannerghatta'). They also pointed out that though the Karnataka HC had banned quarrying and even the Supreme Court had issued directives against non-forestry activities, over 40 illegal quarries were operating in and around the park.

Source: 'HC asks Centre, State to restrain illegal quarrying in Bannerghatta', *Deccan Herald*, 11/02/2000.
'NGOs urge Govt. to stop plunder of forest wealth', *The Hindu*, 08/04/2000.

Elephant deaths around Bannerghatta

There have been reports of the unnatural deaths of at least 10 elephants around Bannerghatta National Park since April 1999. The elephants are killed by farmers living around the park, either by shooting them or by electrocution, when the elephants stray into their fields from the park.

Elephants cause a lot of damage to crops and in the absence of quick and satisfactory compensation, the affected villagers adopt these methods to safeguard themselves and their crops. Farmers are legally permitted to use low voltage power to give a mild shock to elephants. However they are now illegally connecting their fences to the overhead powerlines which poses a threat to both forest staff and wild animals.

There have been suggestions that the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) should launch special drives to prevent illegal tapping of power lines. Senior officials of the Corporation have however termed the suggestions as impractical.

Source: 'Three wild elephants killed around Bannerghatta park', *Deccan Herald*, 05/03/2000.
'Another elephant shot dead, burnt in Bannerghatta National Park', *The Hindu*, 18/04/2000.
'Two elephants electrocuted near Bangalore', *The Hindu*, 05/05/2000.
'Illegally electrified fences endanger elephants', *The Hindu*, 15/05/2000.

Timber smuggling from Nagarhole

In addition to reports of timber smuggling from the Kallala range of the Nagarhole National Park (see *Update* 24), there are reports of the continued plunder of the forest from other parts of the park as well. Another seven cases of tree felling in the Kallala range were lodged with the wildlife wing of the FD at Hunsur in early April. Timber felling has been reported from Kollihadi plantation area, Vaddara Modu plantation area, Tattikere plantation area in Veerahasannahalli, Mettiupe in Kalahalli region, in areas near Arekatti, Badrikatte, Bidurukatte and some places in the Veerana Hosahalli and Marhigodu ranges. Various local

organisations like the Kodagu Ekikarana Ranga (KER), Budakattu Krishikara Sangha (BKS) and Budakattu Hakku Sthapana Samiti (BHSS) have been at the forefront of bringing these irregularities to light and they have submitted a petition to the State Forest Minister asking for action to be taken.

The organisations are of the opinion that some FD officials were hand in glove with the smugglers. This view gains credence from the fact that the areas where the smuggling took place are close to the roads used by the FD for patrolling.

Source: 'NGOs urge Govt. to stop plunder of forest wealth', *The Hindu*, 08/04/2000.

Jeevan Chinnappa. 'Plunder of forest wealth continues', *The Hindu*, 09/04/2000.

Contact: **KM Chinnappa**, Wildlife First, 249, 4th Main, Chamarajpet. Bangalore – 560018

Mining and denotification threats to Kudremukh

Various environmental organisations have appealed to the government not to renew the license of the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd. for mining inside the Kudremukh National Park. It may be recalled that the initial 30 year lease of the KIOCL had expired in July 1999, but was extended for a period of one year against opposition from a number of environmental groups (see *Updates* 23, 22, 21, and 20). The Nature Conservation Guild and the Wild Cat.C have appealed to the Union government to stop mining here.

The Building Bridges: 4th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights, held in BRT Wildlife Sanctuary in April this year (see NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA) had also issued a press statement opposing the continued mining in Kudremukh.

A rally was organised at Kudremukh in Chikmagalur district on May 8 to express opposition to the continued mining. It was organised under the joint auspices of the Karnataka Vimochana Ranga, the Adivasi Girijana Hitarakshana Samithi, the Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha, the Tunga Moola Ulisi Horata Samiti and the Neelibeedu Samrakshana Samithi. The rally also demanded that the proposal for the declaration of the Kudremukh National Park be withdrawn as thousands of tribals would have to be evacuated from the forest area.

In another significant development, the Karnataka State Forest Department has expressed its opposition to the move of the government to denotify parts of the Kudremukh National Park for allowing the continuation of mining by KIOCL.

There has been tremendous pressure on the government to lease out some areas of the park

for mining and it had sought the opinion of the FD in the matter. It is said that the letters received from the State Government indicated its intention to denotify these areas and extend the mining lease for 10 years.

Earlier, in March this year, a letter had reportedly been sent from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to the Karnataka Government asking for the following

- a) Freeze all procedures of formalising / legalising the declaration of Kudremukh as a national park.
- b) Renew existing mining lease of KIOCL unconditionally and prepare denotification of all additional areas demanded by the company. This includes Gangrikal and Neelibeedu areas as well as the sanctum sanctorum of the park – the Bhagwati Forest Block, through which the KIOCL ore pipeline passes through to reach Mangalore harbour.

Similar letters have been sent by the Central Ministries of Mining, Industries, Shipping and Commerce. It is feared that if mining operations continue and expand on the suggested lines, then the current silt receiving dam on the Lakya river will be inadequate, resulting in KIOCL damming many other rivers here as well.

Last month KIOCL also restarted work on its old road and pipeline that pass through the Bhagwati Forest Block, in the heart of the national park. Work, including opening up of the road, widening it, relaying old pipelines, and laying new ones has been undertaken without informing or taking the permission of the FD.

Additionally an existing road to Sringeri through the crest of the western ghats and within the national park boundary has been declared as a part of the Mangalore – Sholapur National Highway (NH No.13). The road widening and re-asphalting of the NH has begun from the Mangalore end and has reached upto Karkala, at the foot of the Western Ghats. The stretch of the forest along the road is one of the finest examples of tropical wet-evergreen forests anywhere in the Western Ghats, and home to at least five troops of the endangered lion tailed macaques.

The Biodiversity Initiative Trust (BIT) has written to the Addl. Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary, Dept. of Forests and Ecology, expressing opposition to these activities that are causing damage to the ecology of the region. Readers are also requested to the concerned authorities including the PM's Office expressing their opposition to the denotification of the park and the extension of the mining lease to KIOCL.

Source: 'Don't renew mining contract of KIOCL', *The Hindu*, 16/04/2000.

'Environmentalists plan rally at Kudremukh', *The Hindu*, 04/05/2000. 'Forest Dept. opposes denotification move', *The Hindu*, 19/05/2000.

SA Hussain, on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 15/05/2000.

Contact: **SA Hussain**, Biodiversity Initiative Trust, 'Basera', Amar Alva Road, Monkey Stand, Mangalore – 575001, Karnataka. Email: sahbird@vsnl.com

Leo Saldanha ESG (R), S-3, Rajashree Apartments, 18/57, 1st Main Road, SRK Gardens, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore - 560041, Karnataka. Fax: 91-80-6723926 (PP). Email: esg@bgl.vsnl.net.in

Karnataka Vimochana Ranga (KVR), C/o Shree Electronics, Opp Anjaneyaswamy Temple, Bharathi Street, Shringeri- 577139, Karnataka.

KVR – Bangalore, C/o BG Krishnamurthy, No. 36, 2nd cross, Okalipura, 1st stage, Bangalore-560021, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3382778 (PP)

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

KERALA

Hydro-electric project threatens Nilgiris

The revival of the Pandiar Punnapuzha Hydro-electric project near the Kerala – Tamil Nadu border severely threatens the rich forests of the Nilgiris. This includes many protected areas like Mukurty National Park and Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and the Bandipur National Park in Karnataka. The project area lies at the crucial junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats and therefore poses a threat to all the four forest ranges of the Nilgiris.

When completed the project is expected to generate 442 MW of power. It involves the construction of four major dams, two diversion weirs, a 36.3 km long subterranean tunnel, penstock laying, two major power houses, numerous roads and housing quarters.

The project that had been cleared by the Planning Commission in 1968 had been stalled due to lack of agreement between the Kerala and Tamil Nadu state governments. Recently however, following a series of discussions between the chief ministers of the two states and regular visits by expert panels to the project site, the project appears to have been revived.

Forests in the Gudalur and, Nilgiri north divisions and the Avarahalla Reserve Forest of the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary will be submerged. Another 16 hectares of the Avarahalla Reserve Forest would be needed for the construction of roads, a dam and power house.

The Segur power house of the project is near the Bandipur National Park in Karnataka and is expected to adversely impact parts of the park.

The Asian Elephant Research Centre has also pointed out that the project would have adverse impacts on elephant life in the region. The 13 km long Punnapuzha reservoir, with an average width of 0.8 kms lies right across the migratory path of wild elephants here. This path lies between the Mukurty National Park, Gudal Division, and the Nilambur Forest Division of the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. The fear is that the project could result in segregating elephant populations and confining them to non – viable patches. The affected areas also support large populations of many endangered animal species like the tiger, sloth bear, four horned antelope, sambar, chital, hyena, civets and pangolin.

Source: **Yogi.** 'Hotspot as trouble spot', Indian Express, 17/04/2000.

Tahr census in Ervikulam

The latest wildlife census in the Ervikulam National Park has estimated the number of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr to be around 700. The census which was conducted by the Kerala Forest Department from April 17 –21 also attempted to make an estimate of the isolated populations of the tahr surviving in the nearby Silent Valley plateau and Gundumala.

In another report, inebriated tourists permanently damaged one eye of a wild tahr in Ervikulam when they pelted a herd with stones. They then also beat up a forest guard who objected to their behaviour and tried to take action.

Source: B Prathapan. ' Census reveals healthy Tahr population count', *The Hindu*, 29/04/2000.

Contact: **Dr. PS Easa**, Kerala Forest Research Institute, (KFRI), Peechi – 680653, Trissur, Kerala. Tel: 0487 – 782365 / 282884. Fax: 782249. Email: root@kfri.ernet.in

HC stays tree felling in forest adjoining Silent Valley

The Kerala High Court recently stayed the felling of protected trees in the 100 acre forest patch forming part of the Kakkivani Malavaram in Mannarkadu Forest Division. This forest adjoins the Silent Valley National Park and is an important corridor for elephants moving between the national park and the Mathikulam – Siruvani areas of the Western Ghats. The Kakkivani forests, which are in the core area of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve are the source of the Nellipuzha and the Thoothapuzha, the main tributaries of the Bharathapuzha.

The order was passed by the HC on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the Save Bharathapuzha Society.

Source: 'HC Stays felling of protected trees in Kakkivani Malavaram', *The New Indian Express*, 09/03/2000.

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

MADHYA PRADESH

MP ecotourism plan opposed

The proposals of the MP government for ecotourism promotion were opposed by experts at the State Wildlife Board meeting held recently at Singrampur near Jabalpur. The Chief Minister of MP, Mr Digvijay Singh had earlier proposed various schemes like allowing tourists to use vehicles fitted with search lights inside protected areas and permission for limited hunting (see *Update 23*).

There has however been a new diluted proposal to allow on 'an experimental basis' the opening of the Kanha National Park for about an hour every night. This matter will be taken up for consideration by the State Wildlife Board at its next meeting.

Source: 'M.P. plan to promote 'eco-tourism' opposed', *The Hindu*, 08/04/2000.

Proposal for new sanctuary scrapped

The proposal by a member of the Madhya Pradesh State Wildlife Board for the declaration of an area of 300 sq. kms of the Rampur – Bhadohi forests, in Betul district, as a wildlife sanctuary was rejected at a recent meeting of the Board that was held recently in Singrampur, near Jabalpur.

These forests adjoin the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary in the south and are considered important in light of the recent scheme of the government to bring Bori, Pachmari Wildlife Sanctuary and the Satpuda National Park under Project Tiger.

The proposal was however rejected on the plea that a large part of the proposed area was under commercial plantations and it would be economically disastrous if the area was notified as a sanctuary.

Source: 'M.P. plan to promote 'eco-tourism' opposed', *The Hindu*, 08/04/2000.

Amarkantak proposed as biosphere reserve

The Madhya Pradesh government has proposed to the Central government to declare Amarkantak (source of the Narmada, Johilla and Sone rivers) as a biosphere reserve. The proposed reserve would cover an area of 3835 sq. kms. Its core area would include the Achankmar Wildlife Sanctuary and protected forests spread over 480 sq. kms. It would also include large parts of Bilaspur and some portion of Mandla and Shahdol districts. This

would become the state's 2nd biosphere reserve. Pachmari was declared as the state's first biosphere reserve in April 1999 (see *Update* 21). Seven more biosphere reserves are also under consideration.

Biosphere reserves have no legal status under the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA) – 1972 or any other law in India. An expert group that is currently formulating a new National Wildlife Action Plan (see *Update* 19) has recommended that all biosphere reserves be given under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) – 1986.

Source: 'MP proposes Amarkantak as biosphere reserve', *The Times of India*, 22/04/2000.

Mining near Panna stopped

White stone slab mining activity on the periphery of the Panna National Park has been stopped following the cancellation of all the mining leases in the area by the Panna district administration. The cancellation is supposed to have come in the wake of serious objections against mining here raised by experts, NGOs, and particularly the London based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA).

Source: 'Curb on mining activity near Panna park', *The Hindu*, 05/03/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Panna National Park, Panna – 488001

MAHARASHTRA

Meeting on settlement of rights in PAs

The Yeshwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), Pune organised a workshop on the settlement of rights process in national parks and sanctuaries of Maharashtra, from May 29 – June 2, 2000. The Maharashtra government had earlier held two meetings in October 1999 to discuss the progress of the process. The current workshop brought together the Sub-Divisional Officers (Revenue), who on behalf of the Collector are inquiring into the rights of people within protected areas, and the concerned forest officials from all the protected areas of Maharashtra. The workshop enabled an interaction between the revenue and forest officials, to sort out their problems, in order to complete the process in a time-bound manner. The protected areas in the Pune, Nashik and Konkan divisions were discussed on May 29-30, and those from the Aurangabad, Amravati & Nagpur divisions were discussed on June 1-2. On May 31, a meeting of the wildlife officials was held to discuss issues related to wildlife management. The Chief Wildlife Warden and other senior officials of the Forest Department were present in the meeting. The workshop was also attended by some NGO representatives.

Contact: **Dr. Bharat Bhushan**, Associate Professor, (YASHADA), Rajbhavan Complex, Baner Road,

Pune – 411007. Tel: 020 – 5650784/ 5650064.

Email: bharatbhushan@yahoo.com

Neeraj Vaghlikar, at the editorial address

Focus on PAs for tourism development

The Maharashtra state government is in the process of launching a major tourism promotion drive in the state. The focus for this would be on developing beaches, **wildlife sanctuaries**, resorts, water sports, caves, ropeways and arts and crafts of villages. So far details about the plans for wildlife sanctuaries and national parks are not available.

Source: 'State to focus on water sports, wildlife sanctuaries', *Indian Express*, 24/04/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, (MTDC) Express Towers, 9th Floor Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400021. Tel: 022 – 2024482 / 4522 / 4584.

Rehekuri area to be extended

The Rehekuri Blackbuck sanctuary in the Ahmednagar district is to be extended from its present area of 217 hectares to 600 hectares. The Revenue Department has agreed to hand over land to the Forest Department for the purpose.

Source: 'Sanctuary to be extended', *Indian Express*, 18/04/2000.

Rehabilitation committee for Bori village in Melghat

A rehabilitation committee was set up by the Collector, Amravati, in February 2000, to oversee the satisfactory resettlement and rehabilitation of the Bori village from the Melghat Tiger Reserve. Earlier, in a meeting held in October 1999 (see *Update* 23) the Bori villagers had expressed a willingness for voluntary relocation provided the rehabilitation plan was to their satisfaction. The committee is chaired by DCF (Wildlife), Amravati (as nominated by the Field Director, Melghat Tiger Reserve) and its members are: Sub – Divisional Officer, Dharni; Kishor Rithe, Honorary Wildlife Warden; Purnima Upadhyay, KHOJ (NGO representative); and the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat. As per the terms of reference, the committee is supposed to communicate and discuss the rehabilitation proposal with the villagers and convey their expectations to the Collector. They will be involved in discussing the facilities to be provided at the rehabilitation site and the actual formulation of the plan in consultation with the villagers. They are expected, from time to time, to convey to the Collector, any shortcomings expressed by the people with respect to getting a satisfactory rehabilitation.

Source: Letter dated February 5, 2000, issued by Collector, Amravati

Contact: **OP Gupta**, Collector, Amravati, Maharashtra.
Ravi Wankhede, DCF (Wildlife), Paratwada, Dist. Amravati, Maharashtra.
Kishor Rithe, Pratishta, Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Near Sainagar, Amravati 444605, Maharashtra. Tel: 0721- 670308. Fax: 672359. Email: ncsa@bom3.vsnl.net.in
Purnima Upadhyay, KHOJ, C/o Sri PM Khandelwal, Near Govind Lodge, Gujar Bazar, Paratwada – 444805, Maharashtra, Tel: 07223 – 20425.

HC stay on nature park in Sanjay Gandhi NP

The Mumbai High Court has refused to lift its interim order staying the multi-crore nature park project near the Mulund side of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. The state government with the support of the MLA of the area had proposed to create a 50 acre 'Nisarg Vihar Kendra'. The World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF) – India had filed a petition in the HC opposing the project saying that the project was like an amusement park and violative of the Wild Life Protection Act (WLPA) – 1972 and the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) – 1980 (see *Updates* 22, 21 and 20). The HC had issued an interim order staying the project in December 1999.

When the case came up for hearing in early April, the state government pressed for final hearing and reiterated its stand that there was no need to obtain any permission from the centre or conduct any scientific study. The judges took strong objection to the state's alleged apathy and refused to give an early date for the final hearing, saying that the matter would come up in regular course.

Source: 'HC refuses to lift stay on nature park', *Indian Express*. 16/04/2000.

Contact: **DFO**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, Borivli (E), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra.
WWF – I, Maharashtra State Office, 204, National Insurance Building, 2nd Floor, DN Road, Mumbai – 400001, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 – 2048105. Email: wwfindia@bom5.vsnl.net.in

Demolitions in Sanjay Gandhi NP

Demolitions of the slums and encroachments in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park has been going on (see *Update* 24, 23, and 22). The demolitions were started in the 2nd fortnight of March following an order of the Mumbai HC to persuade those encroachers who were eligible to avail of the rehabilitation plan that was offered. Only 7000 of the 33,000 of the encroacher families had reportedly applied for the rehabilitation package of Rs. 7000 each.

There continues to be large-scale protest and opposition to the demolition drive which is being led by the Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti (NHSS). Former Prime Minister Mr. VP Singh too joined the protests. He visited the area in the last week of May and appealed to the Maharashtra government to

allow more time for the rehabilitation process. The Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR) too has condemned the demolition drive.

Environmentalists and the FD have however pointed out that the forests of the national park are vital for water security of the city of Mumbai. It has also been alleged that most of the encroachments in the park were at the behest of slumlords who had become very powerful in the last few years and had in fact misled and prevented a lot of the families from accepting the rehabilitation package.

Source: 'VP asks for more time to rehabilitate Borivli National Park slum-dwellers', *The Times of India*, 26/04/2000.

'The battlelines are drawn in Borivli', *The Times of India*, 30/04/2000.

'National Park demolition to continue: high court', *The Times of India*, 01/05/2000.

'Slum demolitions at Sanjay Gandhi park inhuman: report', *The Times of India*, 01/05/2000.

Michael Rodriguez. 'Demolitions go on amid tight security', *The Times of India*, 04/05/2000.

'Inhuman displacement of people condemned', *The Times of India*, 05/05/2000.

'Slum-dwellers move SC; appeal will be heard today', *The Times of India*, 08/05/2000.

Contact: **DFO**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, see above.

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

Debi Goenka, BEAG, 4, Kurla Industrial Estate, LBS Marg, Mumbai – 400086, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 – 5798638. Fax: 5771459 Email: debi.beag@softhome.net

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

MANIPUR

Project for Loktak Lake

The India Canada Environment Facility (ICEF) is sponsoring a project for the Loktak lake, the largest fresh water lake in the North East. The Keibul Lamjao Wildlife Sanctuary, home to the world's last wild population of the Manipur brow-antlered deer is a part of this wetland.

The ICEF which has sponsored 17 environmental projects costing Rs. 167 crores in India, has decided to give special attention to the Loktak Lake because of its unique biodiversity. Further details of the project are however not available.

Source: 'Project to save Loktak lake', *Statesman*, 14/04/2000.

Contact: ICFE, D-1/56, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi – 110057. Tel: 011 – 6144051 / 6074 / 6653. Fax: 6147827 / 6236 / 6078.
Chief Wildlife Warden – Manipur, Sanjenthong, Imphal – 795001, Manipur. Tel: 03852 – 220854 / 285385.

ORISSA

Threats to turtles at Gahirmatha

A record number of 7,00,000 turtles were reported to have nested off the Orissa coast earlier this year (see *Update* 24). However there have also been reports of large scale deaths of the turtles. Reports say that more than 18,000 dead turtles, among the highest ever reported, were counted on the beaches of Orissa during the 1999-2000 season.

One of the main reasons for this has been the rise in illegal fishing here following the super cyclone that hit Orissa and the subsequent involvement of the Forest Department in salvaging and reconstruction work due to which adequate sea patrolling could not be carried out.

Source: 'Illegal fishing damages Ridley sanctuary', *Statesman*, 25/02/2000.

Poornima Joshi. 'Turtle nesting to set new record', *The Hindustan Times*, 19/03/2000.

'Record Ridley nesting allays experts' fears', *Statesman*, 28/03/2000.

Rajaram Satapathy. 'Orissa awaits birth of Olive Ridleys in thousands', *The Times of India*, 29/03/2000.

'11,000 Ridleys found dead at Gahirmatha', *Statesman*, 04/04/2000.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, Wildlife Society of Orissa, Shantikunj, Link Road, Cuttack – 753012, Orissa. Tel: 0671 – 611513 / 610980. Fax: 610980. Email: biswajit@cal.vsnl.net.in

BPCL project may threaten turtle nesting sites

The proposed crude oil terminal of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Kantiagada in Ganjam district could be a potential threat to the mass nesting site of the Olive Ridley Turtles of the Orissa coast. The Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO) has pointed out that the environment impact assessment report by the Goa based National Institute of Oceanography has ignored the fact that the proposed project site falls within the breeding and nesting zone of the turtles on the mouth of the Rushikulya river.

The WSO has also pointed out that the turtles are extremely sensitive to light and the oil terminal is expected to be well-lit for an area spreading over a few sq. kms. Environmental impacts on the proposed Palur Wildlife Sanctuary has also been completely ignored.

Source: 'Ecologists protest BPCL project', *Statesman*, 03/01/2000.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above

Prawn gheries proliferate in Bhitarkanika

The Orissa High Court has ordered an administrative probe into the alleged proliferation of prawn gheries in the Bhitarkanika delta and Rajnagar, where India's largest concentration of mangroves, next to the Sundarbans, is located.

Acting on allegations that *gheries* were rebuilt after the cyclone, violating the CRZ rules, the court directed the Revenue Divisional Commissioner, Central Division, to submit a report by June 26.

In December 1999, the court acting on a petition filed by the Biswajit Mohanty of the Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO), had directed the state government to ensure that the gheries are not rebuilt.

Source: 'Orissa HC orders probe into prawn gheris', *Statesman*, 15/05/2000.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above

Timber mafia behind fires in Satkosia

Large-scale forest fires have affected Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary which encompasses forest areas near Cuttack, Nayagarh, Angul and Boudh districts and under the Athmalik, Deogarh and Rairakhol divisions. It has been alleged that fires are the handiwork of the timber mafia, which is very active in the region (see *Updates* 24 and 23).

The extent of the damage has prompted senior forest officials, including the Chief Conservator of Forests to visit these areas.

There is proof that the mafia hire people to create artificial conditions for 'salvage felling' by setting ablaze the restricted forest areas. Lack of funds, communication and fire-fighting equipment has adversely affected the capacity of the Forest Department to tackle situations like this. Forest divisions here are each given a measly amount of Rs. 50,000 annually to deal with fires.

Source: 'Timber mafia behind forest fires in Orissa', *Statesman*, 13/05/2000.

Displacement of villagers from Simlipal

The Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO) has expressed concern over the possible discontinuance of funds for the Simlipal Tiger Reserve due to the existence of villages in the core area of the reserve. The WSO has urged the Mayurbhanj district administration to take steps to move the villagers out.

According to the WSO this is not being done in spite of the fact that land for the resettlement of the displaced had been identified and the compensation amount has also been

deposited with the district administration. The villages that are scheduled to be relocated include Jenabil, Bakua, and Kabatghai.

Source: 'Shift villages out of Simlipal for Tiger Project funds', *Statesman*, 11/04/2000.

Contact: Biswajit Mohanty, see above

Director, Simlipal Tiger Reserve Field
Near Murgabadi Square, At / P.O Baripada
Dist : Mayurbhanj, Orissa.

PK Sen, Director Project Tiger, Annexe No. 5,
Bikaner House, Shah Jahan Road, New Delhi –
110001. Tel: 011 – 3389645. Email:
dirpt@envfor.delhi.nic.in

Timber mafia attacks DFO at Chandka

The DFO of the Nayagarh Forest Division Mr. Lingraj Otta was assaulted on the 2nd of April earlier this year by timber smugglers at Chandka village. Mr. Otta was chasing an illegal timber laden truck from his division on the Khandapada-Banki-Bhogipur-Chandka road along the Mahanadi river.

The police party which was accompanying the forest vehicle was also attacked by the timber smugglers in the Chandka bazaar. The day time attack is an illustration of the boldness with which the timber mafia is now operating in the region.

The Chandka Wildlife Division is the weakest forest division in the state since many illegal saw mills and timber depots are situated in this area. Being close to Bhubaneswar also assures the mafia of a ready market. Seizures and raids by adjacent forest divisions, mainly Puri, Nayagarh and Athgarh result in the timber mafia taking sanctuary in this region. Additionally there is a thriving illegal timber trade and logs regularly arrive in Chandka Forest Division from Satkosia, Boudh and Daspalla forests.

Source: Biswajit Mohanty. 'Armed assault on DFO in Orissa', email dated 05/04/2000.

Contact: Biswajit Mohanty, see above

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

RAJASTHAN

Resettlement plan for Sariska villages

The Forest Department has prepared a detailed rehabilitation plan for the 1,300 villagers in the 11 villages falling in the proposed Sariska National Park. The proposal envisages giving a two acre plot to every adult male along with construction cost of a house in the periphery of the reserve. The first phase of the rehabilitation involves relocation of four villages Kankwari, Kraksar, Umri and Baghani at an estimated cost of Rs. 4.29 crores.

Forest officials feel that the area, particularly around village Kankwari, has the

potential of becoming rich with wildlife, and relocation of the villagers will help.

The villagers too are reportedly willing to move out, provided a good rehabilitation package is assured.

Source: 'Sariska sitting on a powder keg', *The Hindu*, 24/04/2000.

Aradhana Kalia. 'Park officials to villagers: grass is greener outside the forest', *The Hindustan Times*, 28/04/2000.

'Kankwari : The Next Wildlife Destination', *Indian Express*, 12/05/2000.

Contact: **Tejbir Singh**, Director, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Sariska, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan. Tel: 0144 – 41333.

Rajendra Singh, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Bhikampura – Kishori, via Thanagazi, Alwar – 301002, Rajasthan. Tel: 01465 – 25043.

Vulture deaths in Ranthambhore

Following reports of deaths of vultures from various parts of the country, including the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur (see *Update* 20), there are now reports of vultures dying in the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve as well.

A team of scientists and experts, comprising Dr. Robert Risebrough of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Dr. Munir Virani, research biologist of The Peregrine Fund and Mr. Harsh Vardhan, formerly with WWF – Rajasthan came across eight dead or dying vultures during a visit to the park in the last week of February. Seven of these were within a small area in the Lohpur region of the park.

The experts have also submitted a memorandum to the Rajasthan State Government for permission to get the affected tissues tested in laboratories outside India.

Source: Sunny Sebastian. 'Vultures dropping dead in Rajasthan parks', *The Hindu*, 01/05/2000.

Contact: **Harsh Vardhan**, C/o WWF – I, Rajasthan, Emerald House, Subhash Marg, C Scheme, Jaipur – 302001, Rajasthan. Tel: 0141 – 372318 / 376044. Fax: 363167.

TAMIL NADU

Funds for Koonthankulam

The Tamil Nadu State Government has sanctioned Rs. 5 lakhs for ecocodevelopment work around the Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary.

The money that has come under a centrally sponsored scheme is to be used for sinking of bore wells, construction of overhead tanks and a shed for holding meetings of the village forest committee. Rs. 1,00,000 will be spent for improving avenues, planting multi-purpose fruit bearing trees and for the extension

activities to create awareness among the rural people on conservation.

The sanctuary consists of a buffer storage irrigation tank receiving water from the Tamiraparani canal system from the Manimuthar dam.

Source: 'Winged visitors arrive in bird sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 09/05/2000.

Mining, pollution threaten Gulf of Mannar

Four of the twenty islands along the stretch of the Gulf of Mannar National Park have been badly affected by mining of the stony corals that form the foundation of these islands. Additionally industrial pollution in the area was also taking its toll.

Experts from the Department of Geology and Research Centre, VO Chidambaram College have warned that the continued mining of coral around these islands could have disastrous consequences as these islands protected the low lands of Ramanathapuram and Tuticorin districts from cyclonic storms. The instability and the deterioration of the Tuticorin group of islands – Van, Koswari, Vilangushuli and Kariashuli have always been of concern to scientists.

As a result of such activities there has also been a gradual shifting of some of the islands here. The Van island, for example has migrated 1.72 kms in the northwest direction towards the main land since 1920. Mining has also threatened the integrity of the mangrove and seagrass systems here.

The indiscriminate use of coral reefs began here about five decades ago and even today the destruction of the reef amounts to 15,000 tonnes of boulders and 10,000 tonnes of coral debris annually.

Destructive fishing techniques such as fishing traps, bottom trawls and dynamite fishing, have caused irreparable damage. Added to this, several chemical industries in the hinterland like the petrochemical, thermal and heavy water plants discharge their toxic effluents into the Gulf and the construction of the breakwaters in the Tuticorin harbour area has changed the current flow patterns and sediment movement along the coast.

Source: C Dorairaj. 'Gulf of Mannar islands shifting?', *The Hindu*, 10/05/2000.

Plan to study Sethusamudram project in the Gulf of Mannar cleared

A detailed techno-economic feasibility study of the proposed Rs. 2000 crores Sethusamudram project in the Gulf of Mannar is to be soon initiated by the Union Surface Transport Ministry. Several environmental groups have opposed the proposed project on the grounds that it will adversely affect the environment of the region including the Marine National Park (see *Update 22*).

The proposal to conduct the feasibility study was recently cleared by a committee of the Public Investment Board (PIB) which was headed by Mr. CM Vasudev, Secretary (Expenditure) and had as members secretary level officials from the Department of Shipping, Environment and Forests and the Planning Commission.

The Department of Shipping is drawing the terms of reference following which a global tender will be floated for the study which is expected to cost Rs. 10 crores. The National Engineering Environment Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur has already carried out a study of initial environment examination (SIEE) of the project. Besides a pre-feasibility study undertaken by the Union Surface Transport Ministry had established that the project was economically viable and that it would generate a reasonable rate of return on investments.

The project involves the widening of the Pamban channel to facilitate the movement of coastal ships of the size of 3000 tonnes.

Meanwhile the Sri Lankan Government too has communicated its opposition to the project because of the perceived threats to the marine life here.

Source: P Manoj. 'PIB clears plan to study Sethusamudram project', *Business Line*, 19/02/2000.

Contact: Chief Wildlife Warden-TN, 6D, Panagal Building, Jeenis Road, Saidapet, Chennai – 600022, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 044 – 4321738.

UTTAR PRADESH

Large scale poaching in Rajaji

In addition to the deaths of a large number of elephants by trains (see below) there are also reports of large scale poaching of wild animals and massive illegal felling of trees inside the Rajaji National Park.

Earlier this year 11 persons were arrested for hunting five barking deer in Pathri and Shyampur forest ranges of the Garhwal forest division here. The concerned DFO released the accused after collecting a fine of Rs. 1,00,000 and seizing the body of one barking deer. Forest Department sources say that the four other slain deer were passed on to an influential person to hide the act.

Earlier on January 1, 2000, an IAS officer, along with a dozen colleagues, who was hunting in the Lansdowne forest division, was caught and subsequently released on the intervention of senior officers. Influential industrialists and film personalities too were reported to have set up a well stocked hunting camp in the Shyampur range during the

millennium festivities. Additionally, two youth wing leaders of the BJP are reported to be among many others engaged in illegal tree felling in the Pathri forest range.

The large scale illegal felling operations, according to local villagers are also affecting the elephants in the park. In the last few months there have been many reports of increased elephant activity around villages in the vicinity of the park. A number of persons have been killed and injured in attacks by elephants, who have also damaged fields and crops of the villagers.

Source: Harish Chandola. 'Poaching rampant in Rajaji National Park', *The Hindustan Times*, 12/05/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Rajaji National Park, Shivalik House, Dehradun- 248001, Uttar Pradesh. Website: www.rajajinationalpark.com

Another elephant killed in Rajaji

Another elephant, the 16th in the last 14 years was killed by a speeding train in the Rajaji National Park. On night of May 2, 2000 the Howrah bound Doon Express rammed into a lactating female elephant. The elephant was reportedly dragged for over 70 metres and its hind portion was totally smashed. The impact also resulted in the derailment of engine and three bogies of the train. The Forest Department has repeatedly requested the railway authorities to slow down the speed of the trains from 40 kms to 20 kms / hr., in the 18 km section of the route passing through Rajaji. This would mean an increase of only 30 minutes of running time for the three trains that leave Dehradun at night, the Janta Express, Doon Express and the Mussoorie Express. The railway authorities have however refused to consider this request or suggest some better or more creative solution.

There are also reports that there is a lot of political pressure on the railways to increase the number of trains running on this route. One of the additional trains being lobbied for is a daily 'reverse' Shatabdi. The railways saying that they cannot run these extra trains without laying an extra track. With Uttarakhand soon to become a reality, the political pressure is bound to increase.

The Divisional Railway Manager, in his official response to the situation has explained that the restriction of the speed limit to 20 Kms/hr is not practical, particularly on the upgrade as the trains can stall. Extra time taken due to the slowing down of the trains would also seriously curtail the number of trains that can be run between Haridwar and Dehradun, would lead to a reduction of line capacity and even cancellation of some trains, he further explains. The Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. R Baalu has however rejected the stand of the Chairman of the Railway Board, that the speed of the trains could not be reduced on the 18 kms

track passing through the park. He emphasised that destruction of wildlife was an important matter and the railways would have to find an amicable solution.

Various students, researchers and environmentalists have been writing to the concerned authorities, including the railways, requesting that a solution needs to be found quickly to avoid the tragic accidents and loss of lives of the elephants.

Source: RP Nailwal. 'Train service poses threat to wildlife', *The Times of India*, 05/05/2000. Nirmal Ghosh on email to PA Update Chandra Prakash Goyal on email dated 0/05/2000 to Tarumitra and forwarded to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu Atul Kumar. Email to Nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 23/05/2000. 'Minister rejects Rlys' stand on speed of trains', *The Times of India*, 27/05/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Rajaji National Park, see above **SC Sharma**, Addl. IGF, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110003. Tel: 011- 4362285. **PC Sharma**, Divisional Rly. Manager, N. Rlys, Moradabad, - 244001, UP. Tel: 0591 - 411519. Fax: 429885

Land mafia encroaching Hastinapur

The failure of the State Government to formally declare Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary has helped the land mafia in taking over large parts of the proposed sanctuary area. This problem is only a manifestation of the larger problem of the land mafia in this part of the state. A survey conducted recently by a team of forest officials revealed that of the total of 17.5 percent forest land in the plains of the state, more than eight percent had been encroached upon allegedly by the forest and land mafia.

Source: 'Dwindling forest cover in UP worries experts', *The Times of India*, 09/04/2000.

Garbage clean up in Corbett

In an attempt to ensure that visitors do not dirty the Corbett National Park, the park authorities have decided to provide baskets for all to use inside the park and return them when leaving. It is being hoped that this will help keep the park cleaner and discourage tourists from littering. Park employees have also been instructed to remove litter like plastic from the park's precincts.

Source: 'Litter - free park', *Down to Earth*, May 15, 2000.

Contact: **Director** Corbett National Park, Ramnagar - 244715. Dist. Nainital, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 05947 - 85489 Fax: 85376.

Road in forest bordering Corbett

The Uttar Pradesh government has recently allowed transfer of forest land adjoining Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) from the Forest Department to the Public Works Department (PWD). This land lies between Corbett and Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary. The reason is the construction of a metalled road from Kotdwar to Kalagarh and on through the forest via Jhirna to Laldhang, Dhela and Ramnagar.

The forest here is rich with elephant, tiger, leopard and other smaller animals and NGOs fear that this step will mean the death of the southern zone of the CTR. It will be recalled that a few years ago the entire village of Jhirna was relocated for the CTR. All the efforts and sacrifices made by villagers of Jhirna will be rendered meaningless, as will the wall built at a huge cost recently along the southern end of the park for its protection.

Source: Ajay Suri. 'It's all hush-hush – UP denotifies land next to Corbett', Indian Express, 22/05/2000.
Nirmal Ghosh. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 24/05/2000.
Vivek Tiwari. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 25/05/2000.
Letter from BNHS to the PM dated 23/05/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Corbett National Park, see above
Brijendra Singh, 28, Sundar Nagar, New Delhi – 110003.
Chief Wildlife Warden-UP, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow - 226001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0522-283864. Fax: 283868.

WEST BENGAL

Grant proposals for Sundarbans

The United Nations Development Programme is presently preparing a grant proposal for a biodiversity conservation and livelihoods project with 2 phases in the Sundarbans. The attempt over the long term will be to link up with initiatives on the Bangladesh side and follow an ecosystem / eco-regional approach. UNDP has requested for information on the NGOs working in the area, the nature of their work and also government and non-government funding agencies who are working here. A similar proposal is also reportedly being made by the WWF-I, and an effort is being made to coordinate the two.

Source: Himangshu Watts. 'India, Bangladesh launch project to save tigers', *Science Headlines from Yahoo*, 06/05/2000.

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

Nuclear power plant in the Sundarbans

The West Bengal and Central Governments have proposed to set up a nuclear power plant in the Sundarbans. The move has been severely opposed by environmental groups, intellectuals and certain political factions in the state.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Jyoti Basu has openly come out in support of the plant. Following his request to the PM in February to allow setting up of a nuclear power plant in the state, the Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC) had recently asked the state government to select a site. Five districts had initially been identified as potential sites – North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Purulia, Bankura and Darjeeling.

Source: Pradeep Dutta. Email dated 26/04/2000.

'N-plant issue raises heat in W. Bengal', *The Times of India*, 28/04/2000.

Nilanjan Dutta. Email dated 12/05/2000.

Contact: **Pradip Dutta / Nilanjan Dutta**, Safe Energy and Environment (SEE), 28 Nazrul Park, PO Aswininagar, Calcutta – 700059, West Bengal.
Email: pakai@cal2.vsnl.net.in;
ndutta@cal2.vsnl.net.in

NATIONAL NEWS

4th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

Building Bridges: 4th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights was held from April 15-17, 2000 in the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Wildlife Sanctuary. The meeting was jointly organised by the Vivekananda Girijana Kalyan Kendra (VGKK), the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and Kalpavrisht

The meeting was attended by wildlife scientists, NGO representatives and social activists from various parts of the country.

A press conference was also held in Bangalore at the conclusion of the Consultation. A press statement with a list of 9 major conclusions and recommendations was issued on the occasion.

The Consultation called for a greater thrust to the process of integrating the needs of wildlife conservation and those of the livelihood rights of the local communities who often depend on the same habitats for survival.

The highlights of the press statement issued by the Consultation were as follows:

- a) Integrity of wildlife habitats should be maintained, and fragmentation guarded against.

- b) Commercial / Industrial threats like mining, dams, roads, railways, aquaculture, tea and coffee plantations and encroachments by large scale farming interests were the greatest threats to PAs and local communities, and should be strongly opposed.
- c) Tourism in wildlife habitats should be environmentally and culturally sensitive. Pilgrimage activities that are beginning to cause considerable damage in places like Periyar in Kerala, Gir in Gujarat and Bhimashankar in Maharashtra, must be controlled with the help of religious leaders.
- d) The process of Settlement of Rights in protected areas continues to create widespread misunderstandings. The present way in which the process is being carried out will be harmful both to the interests of wildlife conservation and the livelihood rights of the local communities. Clear guidelines need to be issued to overcome this.
- e) The adverse impacts and lack of sustainability of several externally aided projects related to forestry and wildlife, are worrying. Domestic funding needs to be emphasised, and all projects must be ecologically and socially sustainable.
- f) Some existing laws and policies like the National Forest Policy 1980, the Gramdan Acts of various states, the new GOI circular extending JFM to good forest areas, and the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act 1996 should be used proactively to ensure participatory conservation. Other existing laws like the Wild Life (Protection) Act (WLPA) – 1972, should be amended suitably so as to allow for the participation of local communities in the management of the protected areas and ensure at the same time that destructive commercial forces are kept out.
- g) Attempts should be made for Joint Forest Management programmes to lay a greater stress on wildlife conservation.
- h) Community Conserved Areas (CCA) must be accorded recognition and considered as possible models of integration of wildlife conservation and people's livelihood rights.

The complete press statement is available from the Kalpavriksh office. A detailed statement and recommendations agreed upon at the Consultation is under preparation and will be available shortly.

Contact: Pankaj Sekhsaria, at the editorial address.

New trust for wildlife protection

A new organisation called the Jopasana Trust has been formed with the aim of protecting wildlife in the country and to work for the welfare of the forest department employees.

The trust has been floated Uddhav Thackeray, who created the corpus for the trust from funds raised through his photographic exhibition on wildlife in Mumbai.

The trust recently organised a free three day medical camp for the employees of the Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh. Anti-malarial and anti-typhoid medicines were also given to the Forest Department employees.

Source: 'Uddhav Thackeray floats trust to protect wildlife in the country', *The Times of India*, 08/05/2000.

Culling of neelgai through licensed hunting

Agricultural and wildlife experts have strongly advocated culling of neelgai through licensed hunting and seasonal killings. The suggestion is in the light of the rapid rise in recent years of the population of this species and the extensive damage they cause to crops.

According to experts of the Jodhpur based Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI), farmers in the arid regions of Rajasthan and Haryana are worst affected by this problem. Of late, reports of trapping the intruding animals with live wire fences in Haryana too, have been on the rise.

Meanwhile the MP Government has decided to legalise the hunting of neelgais in some parts of the state. The districts where this will be allowed are Datia, Bhind, Morena, Gwalior, Chattarpur and Tikamgarh.

Source: 'Culling of neelgais must through licensed hunting: Experts', *Indian Express*, 18/04/2000. 'MP to legalise Nilgai hunting', *Statesman*, 17/05/2000.

Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme, India

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), has launched the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) and the Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme in India. This has been done with funding from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

While RSPB is the Birdlife International partner in the United Kingdom, the BNHS is the Birdlife partner designate in India. Birdlife International is a global partnership of conservation organisations represented in over a hundred countries working for birdlife and nature conservation.

The mandate of the IBCN is to promote conservation of biodiversity by means of the development of a national network of individuals, organisations and the government.

The IBA is a worldwide project aimed at identifying and protecting a network of critical

sites for the conservation of the world's birds and will produce inventories of the same. The programme addresses research and conservation action at sites, encompassing habitat management, monitoring, education, advocacy and national and international integration.

The IBCN also produces a regular newsletter called MISTNET.

Contact: Dr. Farah Istiaq (for IBCN) Supriya

Jhunjhunwala / Zafar-ul-Islam (for IBA),
BNHS, Hornbill House, Shaheed Bhagat Singh
Marg, Mumbai – 400023. Tel: 022 – 2821811.
Fax: 2837615 / 2025481 / 82. Email:
bnhs@bom4.vsnl.net.in

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

Journalists oppose oil exploration in Sundarbans

At a seminar on 'Oil-gas exploration and the Sundarbans' organised by Rupantar, an environmental NGO, participating journalists expressed the view that Sundarbans should be kept out of oil and gas exploration activities. The concern was that any kind of accident or blow-out during the exploration would seriously damage the biodiversity and environment of the forest here. The decision of the government to allot block Nos. 5 and 7 to foreign oil companies was particularly opposed (see *Update* 22).

Source: 'Sundarbans be kept out of oil, gas exploration'
Bangladesh Observer, 14/02/2000.

NEPAL

Grievances against Rara National Park

People of Mugu district in Karkiwada, Shreenagar and Rara VDCs have expressed resentment against the Rara National Park.

Access to the forest for meeting their needs and for their cattle has now been denied, and they complain of misbehaviour and manhandling by the staff of the park.

A total of 130 households of Rara and Chhapru villages were removed from the vicinity of the Rara lake a few years ago.

Source: 'People living near Rara National Park suffering',
Kathmandu Post, 13/03/2000.

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

PAKISTAN

Plea to preserve Kirthar

Various NGOs in Pakistan have urged the government to preserve the ecology of protected areas like Kirthar National Park, rather than pursuing short-term economic gains. In a joint statement nine NGOs have deplored the oil and gas exploration license awarded by the federal government (see *Update* 22) to Premier Shell in Dumber Block, which comprises more than 90% of the Kirthar National Park. The NGOs who signed the statement include CREED, PILER, SCOPE, SDPI, Shehri, Shirkatgah, Sungi and WWF.

More recently, despite government assurances that no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be allowed in the park, a foreign company, Agra Earth and Environment, Canada has been authorised to conduct a pre-EIA here. A representative of the company has also made a visit to the park. Local environmental groups have cited this to be breach of confidence reached between them and the concerned ministry a few months ago. Environmental groups had been constantly assured by the Premier – Shell oil company as well as the government that they would be kept regularly informed and updated about the baseline study initiated at Dumber block, comprising more than 95% of the park since January 2000, and that no extra measure other than the study would be undertaken at the site.

Premier Shell is also reported to have failed in complying to the terms of reference (TOR), agreed upon by the Sindh Governor's Committee, for the proposed baseline study in the park. Under this TOR, the company was to seek formal permission of the Sindh Forestry and Wildlife Department, prior to acquiring the services of the Hawthorn Consulting Group, associated with Melbourne University, for the baseline study.

Source: 'Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for preservation of Khirthar's ecology', *Dawn*, 17/02/2000.

Rafia Haider. 'Environmentalists fear unethical exploitation of Kirthar National Park', *Green News*, 22/04/2000.

SRI LANKA

New Marine park proposed

A new marine park has been proposed in Sri Lanka covering the area between the Great Basses and Little Basses ridges, bordering the Yala National Park. This area is reported to have dense fish populations and is also rich in biodiversity. The

proposal to develop this area as a marine park has been put forth by a number of agencies. These include the Fisheries Training Centre, Tangalle, the Fisheries Community Development and Resources Management Project (FCDRMP) and the Hambantota Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (HICZMP). All the agencies and the other stake holders have identified the Ministry and of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (MFARD) as the focal point for the work related to the new proposed park.

The marine park area has also been identified as an important archeological site, navigational aid and as an area with considerable potential for ecotourism.

Source: Nadeera Seneviratne. 'Proposed Marine Sanctuary off Yala', *The Island*, 24/01/2000. GF 5 / 7Pg 26

Handapanagala elephants under threat

The Handapanagala area which is linked to the Udawalawe National Park and the Yala National Park by forest corridors is under threat as large scale pumping of water from adjoining areas is proposed for a golf course and hotel complex. This area has a large elephant population. Additionally the Handapanagala herd is unique since it has a larger percentage of tuskers and the elephants are bigger than in surrounding areas.

Earlier the Petwatte Sugarcane Plantations (PSP) had taken over a lot of the wild habitat of the elephants here. Now the PSP is planning to mine water from this area for its luxury tourism resort.

Attempts have been made in the past to drive this herd of elephants to the Yala National Park but the elephants have always returned because the habitat of Handapanagala is still very good. However a host of human activities around this area is destroying the corridors to the neighbouring forests and the elephants are getting hemmed in. This has also resulted in an escalation of human – animal conflict in the area.

Source: Chittaranjan de Silva. 'Handapanagala elephants in danger of losing their water', *The Island*, 08/03/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Dept. of Wildlife Conservation, 18 Gregory's Road, Colombo – 7. Tel: + 94 1 698086. Fax: 581540

INTERNATIONAL

Beyond the Trees Conference held in Bangkok

The 'Beyond the Trees' conference focussing on Design and Management of Forest Protected Areas was held in Bangkok, Thailand from May 1-8, 2000. The meeting was co-hosted by the WWF –

International and The Royal Government of Thailand.

A key point that emerged from the conference was the need to promote PAs beyond people interested in biodiversity. The role of local communities in assessing the effectiveness of a PA was re-emphasised. It was also pointed out that without the political will, no country could really go ahead with this kind of assessment. The recommendations from this conference will contribute to preparing the agenda for the World Parks Congress to be held in Durban in 2002.

Unfortunately, there were no presentations in this conference from South Asia and there was only a token representation from the region.

Contact: **Seema Bhat**, C-379, Defence Colony, New Delhi – 110024. Tel: 011 – 4620830. Email: seema1@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in

UPCOMING

Meet on protected areas of Uttarakhand

A three day meeting on June 6-8, 2000 is being organised in Mussourie to discuss issues related to protected areas in the region and the people's problems with relation to displacement and access to resources. The meeting is expected to be attended by local communities, social activists and regional experts. A booklet has been brought out for the occasion (see WHATs' AVAILABLE, below).

Contact: **Dr. Sunil Canthola**, Janadhar, 682, Indiranagar, New Forest, Dehradun – 248086, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0135 – 764393. Fax: 620334.

2nd Pan Asian Ornithological Congress

The Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka is organising the 2nd Pan Asian Ornithological Congress in Kandy, Sri Lanka from October 23 – 29, 2000. The Theme of the Congress is 'Bird Conservation – Visions for the 21st Century'.

Those wishing to attend the conference, present a research paper or poster, or organise a round table discussion, should contact the organisers.

Contact: **The Congress Secretariat**, CDC Conventions Pvt. Ltd., 87 / 4, Dudley Senanayake Mawatha, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka.

Meet on protected areas of Maharashtra

A Maharashtra level meeting on issues related to protected areas is being organised in the 1st week of September, 2000. The meeting will be held in Kaunad, Dist. Aurangabad.

Contact: **Kusum Karnik**, Shaswat Trust, Manchar, Dist. Pune – 410503, Maharashtra. Tel: 02133 – 24107/23608. Fax: 23690 (attn: Kusum Karnik)

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) South Asia Workshop

The WCPA South Asia, IUCN Nepal and the World Heritage Centre (WHC) are jointly organising a four day South Asia Workshop on the future of protected areas in the region. The workshop will be held from November 16 – 20, 2000 in the Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal. The objective of the workshop is to share experiences of PA management of South Asian countries in order to develop future strategies which will then be presented at the fifth Parks Congress that will be held in Durban, South Africa in 2002.

Contact: **Krishna Prasad Oli**, IUCN Nepal Country Office, PO Box 3923, Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal. Tel: + 977-1-528781 / 761. Fax: 536786.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Research opportunities in Gir and Dudhwa

One field biologist with MSc. In Zoology / Biosciences with interest in wildlife is needed to work on a project dealing with human-animal conflict in Gir Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat.

Two field biologists are needed for a US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) project on rhino / tiger conservation in and around Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh.

Contact: **Dr. SP Sinha**, Project Coordinator, Wildlife Institute of India, Chandrabani, Dehradun – 248001. Uttar Pradesh. Email: sinhasp@hotmail.com; sinhasp@yahoo.com

Job opportunity with the WPSI

The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) has an opening for a person to maintain their existing database on wildlife crime in India. The applicant is expected to be a graduate / post graduate in Life Sciences, preferably with Wildlife Science or Zoology as a main subject and should be computer literate as well.

Contact: **Reetu Singh**, WPSI, Thapar House, 124, Janpath, New Delhi – 110001. Tel: 011 – 6213864 / 6292492. Fax: 6464918. Email: wpsi@vsnl.com. Website: <http://www.nbs.it/tiger>

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

- Arjjumend, Hasrat. *Liberation Wild- Rescue the Nature from Forest Bureaucracy*. Peoples Resource Centre, Bhopal.

The booklet is divided into three parts. Part A reviews and evaluates wildlife conservation in terms of the existing protected areas. Part B explores the policy implications at the grassroots level in the form of a case study of the Ghatigaon Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, while Part C suggests several fundamental changes in the present conservation concept and ideology, so as to make conservation more successful.

Contact: **Hasrat Arjjumend**, Peoples Resource Centre, 203, Yagyesh Homes – II, B-381, Sarvadharm Colony, Kolar Road, Bhopal – 462 016, MP. Tel: 0755 – 549237. Fax: 570764. Email: prebpl@hotmail.com

- Ramakrishna, PS, et. al. (eds). *Mountain Biodiversity, Land Use Dynamics, and Traditional Knowledge*. Oxford and IBH Publishing Company, India.

This book is an outcome of a MacArthur funded and UNESCO sponsored 3 year research initiative. It has three case studies, Kodagu district in Karnataka, the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala and buffer zone area of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve in the Garhwal hills of Uttar Pradesh. This comparative study programme looked at the dynamics involved in natural resource management both in space and time, linking it up wherever appropriate with traditional ecological knowledge.

Contact: **Prof. PS Ramakrishnan**, School of Environmental Sciences, JNU, New Delhi – 110067. Tel: 011 – 6107676 extn. 2326. Fax: 6172438. Email: psrama@jnuniv.ernet.in

- North Eastern Society for the Preservation of Nature and Wildlife (NESPON), Siliguri, West Bengal. *Combating Deforestation: The Question of Rural Development in Forest Areas of North Bengal*.

This was the background paper presented by NESPON on the occasion of a discussion that was organised in March 2000, in Siliguri by NESPON and Rashtriya Ban Sramajibi Manch.

Contact: **NESPON**, C/o Sangharsha, Deshbandupura, Siliguri – 734404, West Bengal. Tel: 0353 – 422915. Fax: 521084.

- *Mountains & People*

This is newly started bi monthly newsletter that deals with issues related to the development of the mountain areas

Contact: **Shri Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram (SBMA) and Research Advocacy and Communication in Himalayan Areas (RACHNA)**, 12/26, Ashirwad Enclave, Dehradun – 248195, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0135 – 620683 / 763216. Email: rachnadd@nde.vsnl.net.in

- Thakur, Renu, Rawat, Pushpalata, and Naithani, Pratibha. *Uttarakhand ke sanrakshit kshetra – Saleeb par tanga bhavishya*, April 2000.

This booklet in Hindi deals with the protected areas in the Uttarakhand region of the Garhwal Himalayas, and the hardships that have been thrust upon the local populations because of displacement and restrictions of access to resources in these protected areas. The booklet has a brief history of the movement for protected areas and short write-ups on all the 18 PAs in Uttarakhand.

Contact: **Dr. Sunil Canthola**, see above (UPCOMING, Meeting on protected areas of Uttarakhand).

- Pandey, Sanjeeva. *A review of the livelihood related issues of GHNP*. May 2000.

This is short note prepared by Sanjeeva Pandey, Director of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP), in Himachal Pradesh. The note discusses livelihood issues in the context of microplan units, local communities and village level institutions and in the context of Alternate Income Generation Scheme. GHNP along with Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) in Tamil Nadu are the two parks in the country in which eco-development was implemented through the World Bank funded Forestry Research Education and Extension Project (FREEP).

Contact: **Sanjeeva Pandey**, Director, GHNP, Shamshi, Dist. Kullu – 175125, Himachal Pradesh. Tel: 01902 - 65320 Email: dirghnp@vsnl.com

APPEAL

Protected Area Update

Readers are requested to send us full names and addresses (including pin codes) of forest and wildlife officials and protected area managers to whom the *PA Update* can be sent. We are now trying to reach this publication to as wide a range of wildlife officials and all help will be most welcome.

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

CORRESPONDENCE

- S Faizi ...

‘Thanks for the April issue of the *Protected Area Update*. Compliments for the comment on Clinton’s visit to Ranthambhore. The Indian neorich won’t rest until they make the country a state of the USA. In the past few years we have travelled a long way backward. Isolated voices like your comment bring a little short-lived relief.’

Contact: **S Faizi**, 4D, Emerald Apt., POB 5409, Vikas Bhavan, PO Thirvananthapuram – 33, Kerala. Tel / Fax: 0471 – 320219. Email: sunvin@md2.vsnl.net.in

- Rom Whitaker ...

‘With reference to the debate on hunting and sustainable use of wildlife both by traditional communities and for sport and commercial reasons, it is predictable that the fundamentalists will fight tooth and claw to make sure these practices (so effective as conservation measures in many southern" and "northern" countries) will never see the light of day in India. Let us be very cautious that our emotions do not smother the opportunity for new and sometimes radical approaches to wildlife conservation. The facts are available for anyone interested enough to check out: sustainable use of wildlife can and does work more effectively to conserve wild species and their habitats than does pure protectionism. We are losing out wildlife and wildlands at a bewildering rate and we must sit up and listen respectfully and with open minds to any and all conservation options -especially those with proven track records. This is a state of emergency for India's wildlife and our personal feeding habits and deep love for animals notwithstanding, we must help find and support workable solutions - even those we may not personally agree with. Our egos are not in danger of extinction, our beloved wildlife and wildlands are!’

Contact: **Rom Whitaker**, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Mamallapuram, Post Bag 4, Pin – 603104, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04114 – 46332. Fax: 044 – 4910910 / 04114 – 42511

- Fariman Salahshour ...

‘I hope that those who will make a decision on limited hunting to promote wildlife conservation will have more sense than African countries and decline this abominable idea. Of course there is the argument that revenue generated could be used for wildlife conservation (which often is not the case), but why not join the tiger bone and rhino horn trade to generate revenue to protect those species? After all, TB and RH trade are highly lucrative and certainly would generate a lot of revenue!’

Nature deserves to be conserved and protected for its intrinsic value, not for financial or economic reasons. As unacceptable as poaching of endangered species is, I can see the motivation behind it - money. But what about hunting, which is killing for no other reason than to kill? Is that not more immoral than poaching? Is the life of an animal just for the taking? And if limited hunting were allowed (although it is unthinkable to me that the Indian people, who more than most other people in the world have such great respect for and so highly value other living creatures, would accept such a terrible proposition), which species will be up for grabs? Isn't it true that the rarer an animal is, the more highly it is prized as a trophy? So why not allow the killing of 20 tigers a year for 100,000 USD a head? That would generate 2,000,000 USD annually.

If the tiger is too endangered to be hunted, which animal in India isn't under some sort of pressure? Why don't we apply the idea of allowing the killing of some individuals to protect

the species to our own kind and start thinning out the human herd? After all, we are more numerous than tiger, rhino, elephant, and leopard combined.

Almost 500 years ago Leonardo Da Vinci said that the day will come when the killing of an animal is considered like the killing of a human. Evidently, mankind has quite a long way to go.'

Contact: **Fariman Salahshour**, Email: slhf01@npsco.com

▪ Anupam Mishra...

'The problem in Sabrimala (see Update 24, Kerala, Sabrimala pilgrimage impacts Periyar) is strange. Pilgrimage centres have often been in areas with thick forests. When people went there with the intentions of pilgrimage, even though the numbers used to be large there would be no damage. Now people are visiting these places as tourists and they want in these places all the facilities that they find in their cities and in hotels. In such a situation, neither will the forests survive nor will the pilgrimage.'

Contact: **Anupam Mishra**, Gandhi Peace Foundation, 221, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi - 110002.

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. This issue of the Update has been produced with funding from the South Asian Conservation Fund.

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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