

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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Protected Area Update

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EDITORIAL

A summer of discontent

The fulcrum of the acrimonious debates and discussions on wildlife conservation in India has been the issue of relocation of people from within protected areas. For all practical purposes it has been and continues to be offered as the single most effective and promising solution to the crisis faced by wildlife and wilderness in India. The political, economic and social landscape of the country may be changing at an unbelievable pace but this demand for relocation stands on like a steadfast rock. It might well be argued, as it often is, that these rapid irreversible and unstoppable changes in fact demand that the people living in forest areas and in wildlife habitats be moved out quickly – only then can the people, the natural habitats and the wildlife have any future.

It is an argument that is persuasive, and as is seen in the stories of this issue of the *PA Update*, one that has considerable staying power. The push is coming from the very top and the demand for relocation has been clearly primed up over the last few months. When the Prime Minister himself says that relocation of people from PAs should be a priority, the message and trajectory is as clear as it can be.

Relocation is a complex and controversial project with implications that are political, economic, social and cultural. If it has to be successful these dimensions have to be considered sensitively and in detail. It is a process that needs time and thoughtful engagement, something that the Rs. 10 lakh per family compensation package is not equipped to provide. It has been conceived as the easy way out of a situation that cannot and will not be easy.

Communities might want to move and in that case they should be helped in all possible ways. A comprehensive rehabilitation package based on the Rs. 10 lakh scheme might work well but why has there been no thought given to dealing with other situations? What if people don't want to move? What if they don't want the compensation being doled out to them? How can they not have the option? How can there be only one plan for millions of people scattered across

drastically different contexts? What is the Plan B or C to ensure conservation without violating the rights and livelihood security of our fellow citizens?

Reports you will read below provide an excellent example of the complexities. One report says that the relocation of a village from the Simlipal Tiger Reserve was a success; another says it's an absolute disaster! In Sariska it has been pointed out that villages are being moved out and simultaneously huge investments are being made to get ramp up infrastructure to get tourists in. In Maharashtra serious concerns have been expressed over creating buffer zones around tiger reserves as the process laid out in laws and policies is being openly violated. In West Bengal it is being alleged that the administration is harassing activists, locals and tribals who are seeking the implementation of tribal rights in forests as per the law of the land.

To claim that anyone has the right answers would be presumptuous but the image that we see of ourselves in the mirror is not necessarily a pleasant one. It augurs well neither for the people who are being relocated, nor for the wildlife in whose name they are being moved!

And that too is only part of the story. There are huge pressures on forests, on natural resources, on wildlife and on communities from a range of forces that include developmental projects, the processes of globalization and in recent times, also from an internal security threat perception. Together they have created huge discontent in the forest areas across the country this summer and we would be ignoring it at our own peril!

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

MoEF panel to study proposal for reduction of Kolleru WLS

The Union Ministry for Environment and Forests (MoEF) has set up a seven member panel to study a proposal to reduce the size of

the Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary. The panel would have a scientific survey done to decide on the contour levels of the lake. It will also study the issue of the livelihoods of the local fishermen and farming communities and the conservation and protection of the wetland.

The decision to set up the committee was in response to opposition from conservationists and environmental groups to a resolution passed by the state assembly to reduce the size of the sanctuary (see *PA Updates* Vol XV, No. 2; Vol XIV, No. 5; Vol XII, No. 4 and Nos. 55 & 49)

The panel will be headed by Dr. PA Aziz of the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Nature (SACON). Other members include Mr K Kameshwar Rao, Andhra University; BC Choudhary, Wildlife Institute of India; Sanjay Upadhyay, Enviro Legal Defence Firm and Ashok Kumar, an independent expert.

Source: 'Kolleru: panel to study sanctuary area', *The Hindu*, 07/05/10

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, I/c Kolleru WLS, Eluru, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 08812-232356
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Tunnel under construction in Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem TR collapses

A tunnel under construction in the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve is reported to have recently collapsed as the Tunnel Boring Machine encountered slush. A heavy discharge of water was reported and it is feared that this could deplete the ground water in the area.

The development was brought to the notice of the National Tiger Conservation Authority by a concerned citizen of Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh. Further details or the latest developments in the matter are not known.

(Also see *PA Update* Vol XIV, No. 5)

Source: Letter to the NTCA by Ramana Kumar Kandula dated 20/03/10.

Contact: **Ramana Kumar Kandula**, D.No.10-3-142, Panja Street, M G Road, Bapatla – 522101, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 09949070170. Email: ramana_kandula@yahoo.com

Memorial for YSR Reddy proposed inside the Gundla Brahmeswara WLS

The Andhra Pradesh government has proposed to build a memorial for former Chief Minister, the late YS Rajsekhar Reddy at the site of the accident that killed him in the Nallamalla forests. It is located inside the Gundla Brahmeswara Wildlife Sanctuary, which is a part of the Nagarjunsagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve.

Permission will have to be sought for the memorial from the Central government as no such construction activity is permitted inside protected areas.

NGOs, like the Forum for Better Hyderabad, have pointed out that the proposed memorial will go against the idea of a tiger reserve as it had been proposed by the former Chief Minister himself. There is also concern that the construction activity of the proposed memorial, together with approach roads, paths, infrastructure, vehicular traffic and large number of pilgrims will disturb the forests and wildlife here.

Source: Suresh Dharur, 'Green activists voice concern over YSR memorial', *The Tribune*, 25/04/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Nagarjunsagar - Srisailem Tiger Reserve, Srisailem Dam (East) – 512103, Andhra Pradesh, Tel: 08524-286089 / 286140(R). Fax: 08524-286071
CWLW, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Aranya Bhavan, Saifabad, Hyderabad - 500004, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 040-23230561 / 23232668. Fax: 337889

ASSAM

FD to compensate 300 families affected by elephant depredation in Jorhat district

The Assam Forest Department (FD) is providing compensation to nearly 300 families in the Jorhat district that have been impacted by elephant depredation. An amount of nearly Rs. 14 lakhs was distributed among 282 families recently and another 26 families are to be compensated shortly.

According to the FD the most affected areas of the Jorhat district include Dhekiakhowa, Balisapori, Melleng Lohkorgaon, Rongdoi, 8 No. Spur, Laliti, Bahphola, Upper Deuri, Nam Deuri, Neul Gaon, Melleng Jotokia, Katonibari, Velguri, and a number of chaporis namely Kartik Chapori, Bebijan, Dorbar Chapori, Kumolia Chapori and Mithai Chapori. In addition to that wild elephants have affected a big area of Mariani comprising more than three tea gardens.

Conflict had taken a serious turn in Kartik Chapori where hundreds of families were affected and more than three persons were killed in attacks by elephants.

Source: 'Elephant depredation affects 300 families', *The Sentinel*, 29/04/10

Majuli Island to be declared eco-sensitive zone

Majuli Island located in the channel of the River Brahmaputra and considered to be the biggest riverine island in the world is to be soon declared an eco-sensitive zone. An announcement to this effect was made recently by the Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh. The island is recognised as an unique natural and cultural heritage and there have been demands in the past to declare it a World Heritage site.

The minister said that he had already asked the Assam Government to put up a proposal for schemes to protect the island from erosion and other ecological problems. The Bombay Natural History Society is also to be asked to do a comprehensive study for protecting the birds, fish and river dolphins found in the island and its surroundings.

Source: 'Jairam promises to declare Majuli eco-sensitive zone', *The Indian Express*, 07/04/10

Assam plans Kaziranga-Manas tourism circuit

The Assam government has proposed the creation of a consolidated tourist circuit comprising Kaziranga National Park and Manas Tiger Reserve at a cost of Rs 50 crore. The Centre has reportedly agreed to the proposal.

Tourists in this new circuit would be provided with food, lodging and easy transportation facilities. At present tourists find it

difficult to include the Kaziranga forest and the Manas tiger reserve in their itinerary as the distance between the two is 350 kms.

Source: 'Assam plans to create Kaziranga-Manas tourist circuit', 23/03/10, PTI & www.wildlifewatch.in

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam. Tel: 03776-268095(O), 268086®

FD elephant injures tourists in Kaziranga; visitors did not heed mahout's instructions



A Forest Department (FD) elephant attacked a vehicle and seriously injured four people including three tourists in the Kaziranga National Park in the month of March.

The three tourists, a couple and a child hailing from Kolkata, had entered the Kohora range of the Park for the evening jeep safari when they spotted the elephant coming with fodder on its back. One of them began taking photographs of the elephant and did not heed the mahout's instruction not to do so.

The elephant, named Rudra, attacked the vehicle, which hit a tree and overturned, seriously injuring the tourists and the driver and severely damaging the vehicle.

Source: 'Elephant injures tourists in Kaziranga', 16/03/10, www.wildlifewatch.in

Kaziranga NP gets record number of tourists

The Kaziranga National Park was visited by a record 1,12,844 tourists in 2009-10. This included nearly 6000 foreign visitors. Tourism revenue collected during the year was almost Rs. 122 lakhs.

The park had recorded 73,716 tourists in 2006-07, 59,746 tourists in 2007-08 and 1,06,051 tourists in 2008-09.

Source: 'Tourist record at KNP this year', *The Sentinel*, 01/05/10

Chief Wildlife Warden – Assam,
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GOA

Entry fees may change for PAs in Goa

The Goa State Wildlife Board has proposed a rationalization of the entry fee to the various protected areas in the state. Entry to the Chorao Bird Sanctuary presently is Rs 50, to Mollem NP is Rs. 20, while that to Bondla and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuaries is Rs 5 each. The board has proposed a uniform fee of Rs. 20 per person for entry now. The entry for cars would be charged at Rs 75 as against the existing fee of Rs 50 for Bondla and Cotigao and Rs 125 for Mollem.

According to the forest department records (FD), nearly 1.25 lakhs tourists visit these PAs every year and the FD on an average earns an annual revenue of Rs 50 to 60 lakhs as entry fees.

Source: 'Visit to wildlife sanctuaries to get costly if proposal goes through', <http://oheraldo.in> 05/04/10

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Wildlife Wing,
Junta House, Panaji 403001, Goa. Tel:
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224747

GUJARAT

Fires in forests of North Gujarat

A series of fires were reported in the first half of April from the forests of North Gujarat. Fires were reported from Danta in Banaskantha, the Polo forests in Sabarkantha and in forests near the Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary also near Banaskantha. It was found in the latter case that the fire had started in the Timdiwala area of the hills in neighbouring Rajasthan and then spread across the border into Gujarat.

While some foresters were of the opinion that mischief mongers and arson was behind these fires, others suggested that it could be the tribal tradition of setting on fire a hillock which signifies purification and rejuvenation of the

region. It has also been suggested that the fires could have spread after the tribals set them up for mahua or honey collection.

The setting of the fires by friction due to rubbing of dried branches in the extremely hot and dry weather was also not ruled out.

Source: Pramod Pawar. 'What started fires in forests of North Gujarat?', *The Times of India*, 12/04/10

SC permits oil pipeline, electricity line through Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary

The Supreme Court (SC) has given the green signal to Indian Oil Company (IOC) and Adani Power to lay oil pipelines and electricity lines respectively through the Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary. The IOC had sought the court's permission to use about 21 hectares for laying underground oil pipelines. The Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) had said the IOC plea could be considered if certain conditions were complied with.

Approval under the Forest Conservation Act would have to be taken and the company would have to deposit 5% of the project cost of the portion falling within the sanctuary. IOC also agreed to pay the net project value (NPV) as per the rates applicable for the use of the forest land falling within the sanctuary and agreed to comply with all the conditions laid down by the Chief Wildlife Warden of Gujarat, the State Advisory Board for Wild Life and the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife.

In another order, the court allowed Adani Power Limited to use 89.7364 hectares of land in the sanctuary for construction of the Mundra-Mahendragarh 500 KV and the Mundra-Dehgam 400 KV double-circuit transmission lines. The Adani group will also comply with all the conditions that were stipulated for IOC and it will deposit 5 % of the project cost (Rs. 17.6 crore) for the portion of the transmission lines passing through the sanctuary.

The diversion proposals had been approved in July 2009 by the State Board for Wildlife (see *PA Update* Vol XV, No. 4)

Source: SC: IOC, Adani pipelines can pass through Guj sanctuary', *DNA*, 16/04/10

Contact: **Asst. Conservator of Forests /Sanctuary Superintendent**, Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary, Dhrangadhra, Dist. Surendranagar – 363310, Gujarat. Tel/Fax: 02754-23716

116 lions died in Gir since 2007

As many as 116 lions have died in the last three years in the Gir forests in Gujarat. The information was given by the State Minister for Forests and Environment, Mr Mangubhai Patel, in a written reply to a question raised by Congress leader Arjun Modhvadia in the state assembly.

Of the 116 deaths, 108 were due to natural causes like old age and diseases, one died after falling into an open well, while seven were killed by poachers. 40 lions were reported to have died in 2007, while the number for 2008 and 2009 was 42 and 30 respectively. Four big cats had died in the first two months of 2010.

As per the last census in 2005 there were 291 lions in the Gir forest and 123 cubs were born in that year.

Source: '116 lions died in Gir forest in last three years: Gujarat govt,' *The Times of India*, 26/03/10

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)** Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 - 631678/630051. Fax: 631211. Email: cfwildlife_ad1@sancharnet.in

Rs. 48 crores for lion conservation

The Central Government has sanctioned Rs. 48 crores for lion conservation for 2010-11 under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH) scheme. This is much lower than the Rs. 236 crores the state had asked under its proposed scheme of 'Consolidated Long Term Conservation of Asiatic Lion in Greater Gir region'. 10% of the share in that budget was to have been that of the state government.

The presently sanctioned amount, however, is much higher than the Rs. 32 lakhs and Rs. 92 lakhs the state had received for the periods 2008-09 and 2009-10 respectively.

The fund will be used for a range of activities that includes modernizing lion

conservation and management, dealing with issues of the Maldharis, and acquiring speed-guns to control speeding vehicles through the sanctuary.

Source: '48 crores grant from central Govt. for Lion conservation', *Gujarat Samachar*, 26/03/10.

Siddi tribesmen to become guides at Gir

The men folk of the Siddi tribe that was brought here from Africa as slaves by the Portuguese, are being trained to become guides at the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary.

This is a part of the project initiated by the state tribal development department to improve livelihood, housing, access to safe drinking water and electricity, increase literacy, health facilities and roads to the five major Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) of Gujarat, namely Kolgha, Kathodi, Kotwalia, Padhar and Siddi.

Source: Premal Balan, 'African primitive tribe Siddi, will be eco-guide at Gir', *PTI*, 05/04/10

Road through Velavadar NP to be closed

The Centre has announced the closing down of the road that cuts through the Velavadar National Park (VNP). The road connects Velavadar village to Kalatala village and also links the Dholera-Bhavnagar highway.

The Central government has given a grant of Rs 6.12 crore from the Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) for the construction of alternative roads. Two new roads totaling 14 kms will now be constructed to connect the Dholera-Bhavnagar main road from Velavadar and Kalatala sides respectively.

Source: Vijaysinh Parmar, 'Road passing through blackbuck park to be blocked', *The Times of India*, 09/04/10

Contact: **ACF**, Black-Buck National Park, Velavadar, F/10 Bahumali Bhawan, Bhavnagar – 360001, Gujarat. Tel: 0288-2552077. Fax: 0288-2555336

CWLW - Gujarat, Block 14, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Old Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar-382010, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-230007. Fax: 221097.

JHARKHAND

Corpus fund to curb human-elephant conflict in Dalma WLS

The Jharkhand Forest Department (FD) recently created a corpus for the development of villages in Dalma forest range where the human-elephant conflict is severe. Rs 30 crores are to be deposited in a bank and the interest that will be accrued would be spent on the development of villages and training of the local youth for dealing with conflict situations.

If the experiment succeeds, the corpus amount will expand gradually and the schemes will be extended to other parts of the state.

It is not clear, however, where the money is coming from and what will be the detailed mechanism for its use.

Source: 'Funds to curb tusker menace in Dalma' *The Telegraph*, 23/04/10

Awareness campaign helps reduce poaching/ ritual hunting in PAs

The State Forest Department's Harit Chetna Abhiyan (greening young minds) and deployment of flying squads is claimed to have helped check poaching and ritual hunting in PAs in the state. The campaign was launched in 2008-2009 for community mobilisation and to protect wild animals in the two wildlife sanctuaries — Dalma and Palkot. A series of street plays and one-to-one interactions, numbering nearly 700, were carried out in both the sanctuaries.

A decline in hunting has been claimed as a result of this effort. The number of people participating in the ritual hunting (vishu-shikar) held in April-May in the two sanctuaries is said to have come down from nearly 20,000 in 2006 to only 250 a year ago.

Special protection measures have also been put in place in the Palamau Tiger Reserve. About 200 flying and patrolling squads, each comprising eight to nine persons have been deputed here. A decline in poaching has been

reported in Palamau as well. According to official figures one elephant and one gaur was killed in 1997 and one elephant each was killed in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001. No tiger, leopard or gaur killings were reported in the period 2002-08.

Source: Arti Sahuliyar. 'Awareness helps stop poaching- Wildlife sanctuaries become safer in tribal heartland', *The Telegraph*, 26/04/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Palamau Tiger Reserve, P.O. Daltonganj, Dist. Palamau - 822 101, Jharkhand. Tel: 06562-22650(O), 22684(R). Fax: 06562-22427, 22650

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PCCF, Jharkhand, At- Doranda, P.O. Doranda, Ranchi. Tel: 0651-2500455(O), 2500413(R) Fax: 0651-500413

KARNATAKA

Project for upgradation of 10kms road stretch inside Nagarhole NP dropped

The Public Works Department (PWD) has dropped its project to upgrade a 10 km-stretch between Dammanakatte and Udburu of State Highway 17 D (Mysore -Mananthavadi road inside the Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) National Park) as part of the Karnataka State Highway Improvement Project (Kship-I). The decision was taken following directions of the Project Monitoring Committee (PMC) constituted by the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court.

The main reason for the decision is that the area the road runs through is rich in wildlife and many animals were getting killed due to heavy traffic. The development of an alternate route would be taken up under a different project.

The PMC had recommended an alternative stretch passing through Dammanakatte, Hosaholalu, K R Pura, Magge, Malali, N Belthur, Kharapura, Gundattur and Udburu villages outside the national park. This stretch is three km longer

than the original alignment. The PMC had wanted the PWD to take up development of this road under the Kship-I but the PWD has refused to comply, citing delay in the project completion.

The controversy surrounding this stretch has resulted in a delay in the completion of the entire Kship-I project. The Rs 2,390-crore project aimed at developing 2,395 km of road was supposed to have been completed in 2006. The World Bank-funded project was taken up in 2001. Recently, the Cabinet gave its nod for extending the completion time till July 2010.

(also see *PA Update* Vol XVI, No. 1)

Source: PM Raghunandan. 'Govt scraps Nagarhole road plan', www.deccanherald.com, 19/04/10

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, Nagarhole NP, Wildlife Division, Hunsur, Dist. Mysore, Karnataka. Tel: 08222-252041(O), 252070(R)

Illegal tourism inside Bandipur NP

Private tour operators are reportedly entering Bandipur National Park illegally from the Kerala side. The tourist vehicles come from Kalavalli, Anakundu and Sasimala side of Kerala and enter the Gundre and Begur forests inside Bandipur. Their passage is assisted by a bridge across the Kapila, which connects Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Though the Bandipur NP is 990 sq km, tourism activity is restricted to an area of 32 sq km around the main reception centre that is located on the national highway connecting Gundlupet in Karnataka to Ooty in Tamil Nadu. Tourists from both Karnataka and Kerala have to approach the tourism zone only through Gundlupet while those from Tamil Nadu come from Mudumalai via the Ooty-Gundlupet road.

According to forest officials, these illegal entries are not only depriving the state of revenue but also can prove fatal to tourists as they often alight from the vehicles in front of herds of elephants.

Source: R. Krishna Kumar, 'Illegal tourism puts lives at risk', *The Hindu*, 29/04/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Bandipur Project Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhawan, Ashokapuram, Mysore – 570008, Karnataka. Tel: 0821-2480901(O), 2484980 (R).

Ban on night traffic through Bandipur beneficial: study



A study conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Foundation (WCF) has revealed that at least three large animals of the size of a deer or larger are killed per month in Bandipur in road accidents. According to the study, a total of 91 mammals, 75 birds and 56 snakes were killed between 2004 and 2007.

The ten day survey illustrated that there were around 1400 encounters with an average-kill of one animal per kilometer on the NH-67 A (a stretch of 12.5 kilometers) which extends from Gundlupet to Gudalur and NH 212 (a stretch of 17.5 kilometers) which connects Kollegal to Calicut and pass through Bandipur National Park.

The study has also shown that the night ban on traffic would be beneficial as 65 per cent of wildlife road kills were recorded during night.

The issue of banning of night traffic in Bandipur has become a hugely contested and controversial issue in recent months. While conservationists are demanding that the ban be implemented immediately, a range of other interests have been vehemently opposed to it. (Also see *PA Updates* Vol. XVI, No. 2; Vol XV, Nos. 5 & 4, and Vol XIV, No. 6)

Source: 'Night ban in Bandipur essential: WCF', www.expressbuzz.com 19/03/10,

MADHYA PRADESH

20 animals killed on NH 75 in Panna TR

20 wild animals were killed on National Highway (NH) 75 in the Panna Tiger Reserve in the two month period– from January 9 to March 10, 2010. This included two nilgai, four sambar, a boar, two hyenas, six jackals, a

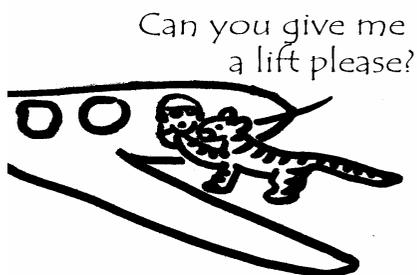
hare, a fox, two langurs and a chital. The maximum fatalities were reported in the Mandla area.

A 16 kms stretch of NH 75 connecting the Tourist Village Mandla passes through the forests of the reserve.

Source: 'Speeding vehicles claims life of 20 animals of Panna Tiger Reserve',
<http://centralchronicle.com> 27/03/10.

Contact: **Field Director**, Panna National Park, Panna – 488001, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07732-252135. Fax: 07732-252120

Airstrip under construction near Pench TR



A 2 kms long airstrip, mainly for tourism promotion, is being constructed close to the Pench Tiger Reserve. It is coming up near Suktar village in Seoni district close to National Highway 7 and will be about 12 kms from the Karmazari gate of the reserve. The Public Works Department (PWD) is constructing the strip at a cost of Rs. 4.56 crores that is located on private land outside the reserve. No environment impact assessment of the project has reportedly been done.

The main aim of the airstrip is to facilitate the promotion of tourism. VIPs are also expected to use it extensively. As estimated one lakh visitors, including 10,000 foreigners visit the tiger reserves of the region every year in the season that lasts from October to June.

The strip had earlier been proposed near the Kanha Tiger Reserve but the proposal was dropped fearing opposition to the idea.

Source: 'Is Pench flying into trouble?' *The Times of India*, 31/03/10.

Contact: **Field Director**, Pench Tiger Reserve, P.O. Barapathar, Dist. Seoni - 480 661. Tel: 07692-250794/250594. Fax: 250794/221180. Email: root@trpench.ren.nic.in

MAHARASHTRA

Concern over process of declaration of buffer zones around critical tiger habitats

The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act 2006 mandates the declaration of buffer areas around core or critical tiger habitats of Tiger Reserves. It specifies that in these areas, meant for dispersal of tigers, the objective should be co-existence with local villagers. Accordingly, a number of state governments have initiated processes of delineating and constituting buffer areas, and undertaking consultations with local communities on various relevant issues.

The Maharashtra government has formed a committee of government and non-government persons to assist it in this process. The members include VB Sawarkar, former Director, Wildlife Institute of India; Harshwardhan Dhanwatey; Kishore Rithe, Satpuda Foundation; Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh Environment Action Group and senior members of the state Forest Department.

The process for the declaration of the buffer zone (BZ) is going on in the case of the Tadoba, Pench and Melghat Tiger Reserves. One of the members, Ashish Kothari, has however expressed serious problems in the process being followed. In a recent communication addressed to the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the other members of the committee he has raised the following issues:

- that consultations have been carried out in the proposed BZs without informing the members of the committee!
- full details of the consultations including number of villagers attending, information presented to them and their responses was not available
- no information on the status of the Forest Rights Act in these villages in the BZ

Similar specific concerns raised earlier with regard to the Tadoba buffer area committee were not acted upon, prompting Mr. Kothari to resign from the committee.

Source: Email communication from Ashish Kothari

Contact: **Ashish Kothari**, Kalpavriksh editorial address. Email: ashishkothari@vsnl.com
Field Director, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Project, Mul Road, In front of Sanchiti Chamber, Chandrapur – 442401, Maharashtra. Tel: 07172-51414(O), 56382(R)

Proposal for six new PAs in state

Six new protected areas have been proposed in Maharashtra in lieu of the reduction of the area of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) Sanctuary from about 8500 sq. kms to 1223 sq. kms. The decision to reduce the area of the GIB Sanctuary was taken recently by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) (see *PA Updates* Vol XVI, No. 2; Vol XV, No. 6; Vol XIV, No. 4; Vol XII, No. 3; Vol XI, No. 5 and No. 29).

The Central Committee on Reconciliation of Boundaries of Protected Areas had recommended that the area of the GIB Sanctuary could be reduced subject to the condition that other suitable areas in the state would be considered for inclusion in the protected area network. These include Mansinghdeo (182.29 sq. kms), Nagpur district; Rajmachi (122.96 sq. kms), Thane, Pune and Alibag districts; Sudhagarh Tamni (220.18 sq. kms) in the Western Ghats; Tipagarh (52.4 sq. kms), Gadchiroli district; Kopela (90.93 sq. kms), Gadchiroli district and Isapur (121.55 sq. kms), Yawatmal district.

Source: 'Maharashtra to loose PA cover by half in Golden Jubilee year' Press Release by the Satpuda Foundation, 30/04/10

Frequent forest fires in SGNP

More than 25 instances of forest fire have been reported from various areas of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) since January this year. Areas where fires have been reported include Chena



Village, Yeoor, Manpada, Warlipada, Kajupada, Kavesar, Ghodbunder, Nagla Block, Tata Power in Borivli (East) and Malad (East).

The forest department has deployed a team of 122 guards along with 200 labourers to control the fires. Citizens were also asked to report fires in the park to the forest control room at the number 28866449.

It has been pointed out that the main cause of the fires could be encroachers, slum-dwellers, those living on the periphery of the park or tourists who are not careful when they throw cigarette butts or match-sticks

Source: Simit Bhagat, 'Frequent forest fires scorch national park', <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com> 28/03/10.

Lioness in SGNP safari kills guard; report suggests better security measures

A lioness in the lion safari at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) killed a guard in an incident in the middle of April, following which a male lion in the safari managed to escape. There was no clarity if the animal that had escaped was captured and if so when.

The lion safari spans 21 acres and has two safety gates at the entry. Only two guards are posted there, one at the ticketing office and one for the twin gates. An employee at the park is reported to have said that ideally, the safety gates at the lion and tiger safari should have at least two guards, one manning the inside gate and the other the outside gate.

A report prepared subsequently by the Asst. Conservator of Forests has highlighted the need for strengthening and upgrading the security mechanism. The report is yet to be finalized, following which the Wildlife Dept. may take corrective action.

Source: Nitya Kaushik, 'Lioness killing guard: SGNP report stresses gate switch', www.expressindia.com, 29/04/10

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, SGNP, Borivili (East), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-28860362, 28860389(O), 8862780(R) Email: sgnpmumbai@gmail.com

MEGHALAYA

Opposition to uranium mining in Balpakram NP; Govt. puts project on hold

The standing committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) has decided to send a site inspection team to the Balpakram National Park to ascertain people's views on the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) proposal to conduct its exploratory mission for uranium in the park.

The DAE has asked the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to de-notify an area of eight sq km on the Rongcheng plateau for the exploration of uranium ore. Surveys in recent years have identified the area as a good source of uranium and the DAE wants to start the exploration exercise to confirm the deposits to meet the country's nuclear energy requirement which is targeted to be 20,000 MW by 2020.

The Balpakram NP is home to a number of rare species of plants and animals and is considered sacred by both, Hindus and the indigenous Garo community.

There has been considerable opposition to the exploration on grounds of the impact it will have on the wildlife and the ecology. Prominent among those who are opposed to the project are the Garo Hills Anti-Mining Forum (GHAMF), the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and the Garo Students' Union (GSU). The GSU has also written to the state Chief Minister asking him to oppose the denotification proposal.

The state Chief Wildlife Warden Mr. Sunil Kumar has meanwhile said that the proposed exploration will have no biotic interference in the park. His argument is that the drilling exercise is of a temporary nature that will be carried out only in the daytime.

According to the latest reports the state government has decided to keep in abeyance the proposed exploratory mining. The decision was taken in the last week of April following a meeting with the GSU.

Source: 'Opposition to Uranium Mining from Balpakram Mounts', <http://in.news.yahoo.com/> 14/04/2010
'NBWL to carry site inspection of Balpakram' *Shillong Times* 16/04/10
'GNLA opposed Uranium mining', *Meghalaya Times*, 19/04/10

'Uranium mining at Balpakram kept in abeyance', *The Assam Tribune*, 01/05/10

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Balpakram National Park, Wildlife Division, Baghmara, Dist. South Garo Hills, Meghalaya, Tel/Fax: 03639-22220
Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Meghalaya, Lower Laichumiere, Risa Colony, Shillong - 793 001.

ORISSA

FSI records 960 incidents of forest fires in Orissa in the month of April; PAs also affected

The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has recorded at least 960 incidents of forest fires in Orissa in the month of April. In 2008 only a few incidents were recorded, while 2009 was also a moderate season.

The fires, evidence of which was captured by satellites, have been reported from different parts of the State. These include the Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Phulbani and Koraput districts. In April the Phulbani district reported 293 incidents of fire while Koraput and Kalahandi reported 210 and 174 incidents respectively. The data is being collected by the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer Satellite, known as MODIS, which views the earth's surface once in two days and sends images to the FSI's Dehradun Centre.

The intense and unrelenting heat conditions and the people engaged in collection of minor forest produce have been attributed as the causes of fire. An estimated 1.8 lakh hectares also comes under shifting cultivation in 119 blocks of 10 districts of the state. It has been further reported that the forest officials set the forests on fire deliberately so as to make way for plantation and regeneration activities

Incidence of fire in Mayurbhanj, home to Simlipal Tiger Reserve, has evoked concern since it is a major habitat for tigers, elephants and a wide range of wildlife. There have also been reports of fire in the Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Forest Department is said to have put in place about 30 fire fighting squads at vulnerable areas. More support, however, is needed in terms of equipment and personnel to be able to deal with the situation effectively.

Source: Siba Mohanty, 'Forest after forest, the fire rages on', www.expressbuzz.com, 29/04/10

Village relocation from Simlipal TR; differing points of view

Tribals from the Jenabil valley in Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR) recently became the first set of people to be moved out from the reserve. 61 families who vacated their forest home received a part of the Rs. 10 lakhs that they are entitled to get from the National Tiger Conservation Authority. The villagers were reported as having said that the government has promised them Rs. One lakh to build a house and the remaining Rs. Nine lakhs in the form of fixed deposits.

This is the first of the four villages in the core area of the reserve that is to be moved and some reports have suggested that this successful relocation will now lead the others to also consider making a move.

Other reports, however, point out that the relocation has been very bad with tribals who have been living in the heart of the forest now 'dumped' in tin hutments in the blistering summer heat of 45 degrees. A 40 year old tribal man was also reported to have died from heatstroke after searching for firewood 15 kms away. The villagers have reportedly been pleading with the authorities to let them go back. Meanwhile, a fire broke out in the tiger reserve which consumed the old village and a large chunk of the surrounding forest.

Source: 'Away from the forest home; successful relocation from Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Orissa', www.ndtv.com, 01/05/10
Email from Madhu Sarin

Contact: **Director**, Simlipal Tiger Reserve, P.O. Baripada, Dist. Mayurbhanj – 757002, Orissa. Tel: 06792-252593(O), 252773(R) Fax: 256705
Madhu Sarin. Email: msarin@sify.com

Oil spill threatens turtles off the Orissa coast



Leaking oil from a coking coal-carrying ship of the Essar Shipping Corporation has threatened the Olive Ridley turtles and their eggs along the Rushikulya coast of Orissa. The ship that had arrived from Indonesia hit a barge at Gopalpur port in the 2nd week of April. More than eight tonnes of furnace oil is said to have leaked from the ship called MV Malavika. The ship had anchored nearly 2 km away from the port at Gopalpur as the port was too small to accommodate the ship. A barge that was sent to off load the coal, went out of control due to rough sea conditions and hit the ship.

A huge slick was seen washed up on the Rushikulya river mouth within a few hours. Oil was also found floating near the beach and some of it had washed ashore on the sands on the nesting grounds at Gokharkuda and Kantigada beaches where more than 1,00,000 turtles had nested in March. In addition to the potential impacts on the turtles and the beaches here, fear was expressed that the oil spill could be a threat to Chilika lake as well, as the oil could potentially enter the lake through the Palur canal from Rushikulya river.

Fishermen who had gone fishing were the first to report the spill when the oil clogged their nets and they had to return without fishing. Fishermen of several villages including Sanaarjipalli, Badaarjipalli, Gokharakuda, Nuagaon, Katuru, Purunabandh, Kantiagada, Podempeta and Prayagi pointed out that the oil spill has hampered their catch. They alleged that the foul smell had driven the fish into deep sea. Salt farmers in the area also claimed that saltwater mixed with oil had halted their salt extraction operations.

Gopalpur port officials said the situation was brought under control with the

help of Coast Guard personnel. The entire fuel oil from the ship was reportedly transferred to a tanker within an hour and two Coast Guard helicopters were also deployed to deal with the situation.

In September last year, a similar oil spill had happened near Paradip port after an iron-ore laden ship from Mongolia capsized off the coast.

Source: Debabrata Mohanty. 'Oil spill threatens turtles in Orissa', *Indian Express*, 15/04/10.

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

CWLW– Orissa, Plot No. 8, Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-2512502 / 2513134 / 2515840. Fax: 512502

RAJASTHAN

Concern over relocation of people from the Sariska Tiger Reserve

The Alwar based NGO, KRPAVIS has expressed concern over the ongoing relocation of villages from within the Sariska Tiger Reserve. In a note circulated recently it has pointed out that the relocation is being carried out in violation of the Wildlife Protection Amendment Act (WLPA) 2006 and also the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act - (STOFDFRA) - 2006

It has noted that the quality of relocation has been mixed in the case of three villages that have been moved recently. The relocated families are facing multiple problems. These include the lack of a secure title to the lands given to them and the lack of basic facilities. Many of them have reportedly threatened to go back to their original villages unless these issues are sorted out. The NGO has demanded that these issues need to be resolved before any further relocation is carried out.

28 villages inside the park with about 1000 families, a population of nearly 12,000 and 35,000 heads of cattle are to be relocated. Of these 28 villages, 11 (Bhagani, Umari-Deori, Kankwari, Kiraska, Sukola, Dabli, Haripura, Leelunda, Naya Kundalka, Raikamala, Rotkyala) are proposed for or are reported to be undergoing relocation in the first phase while (Bhagani, Umari and Kankwari) have already been fully or

partially relocated. 39 families were shifted as recently at March 2010.

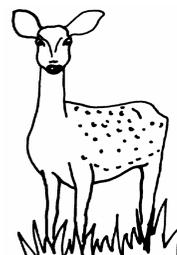
125 households from Bhagani and Kankwari are being relocated on forest department (FD) land in Barod Rundh (about 100 kms away) near Behror in Alwar district. While Bhagani has been completely relocated here, 106 families of the 170 from Kankwari have also moved. 21 of the 80 families from the village of Umari have also moved to 'Maujpur Rundh', about 50 km. away.

Field surveys by the organization have revealed that the process under the FRA had not even been initiated and neither have there been any consultations with regard to the declaration of the area as Critical Tiger Habitat (under the Wild Life Act 2006).

It has also been pointed out that renovation work is going on at Kankwari fort, reportedly to attract tourists to the area. Rs. 90 lakhs is to be spent on the first phase of the renovation work that started a year and a half ago. The village of Bhagani and Kankwari that have been moved were located in the vicinity of the fort and the NGO has pointed out that this development is rather ironic – villagers are being moved out on the one hand and on the other efforts are being made to attract others from the outside.

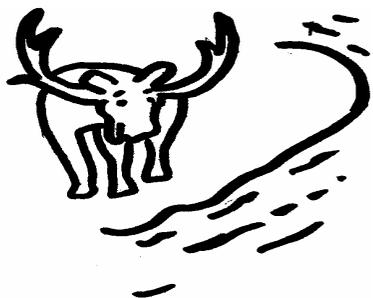
Source: Aman Singh, KRPAVIS. A note on ongoing displacement from Sariska Tiger Reserve, April 2010.

Contact: **Aman Singh**, Krishi Avam Parishitiki Vikas Sansthan (KRPAVIS), KRPAVIS Bani (at North boundary of Sariska), Village at Bakhtpura, P.O. Siliserh Lake, Alwar – 301001. Tel: 0144 - 2344863, 2702451 Email: krapavis_oran@rediffmail.com
Director, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Sariska, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan.



UTTAR PRADESH

Swamp deer habitat in Dudhwa TR threatened due to changing course of River Sharda



Jhadi Taal, a critical refuge of the swamp deer, is under threat of submergence due to the changing course of River Sharda. The river that was about 4.8 kms from the habitat of the deer six decades ago is said to have now moved to less than a kilometer away.

Spread over about 200 sq km, Jhadi Taal is a marshy grassland on the banks of the river and is surrounded by sal forests of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. It is home to an estimated 1500 deer and a study by the Wildlife Institute of India has suggested that this shifting of the river course presents a serious threat to the animals.

High run-off and siltation rates have been observed in the river during the last 40 years. This has occurred, primarily, due to massive conversion of forest to agricultural land for resettlement of people in Nepal in the upper reaches during the 1960s and 1970s and river engineering works. These changes in land use, have in turn, caused frequent and sudden changes in the river course and resulted in the river channel coming closer to the habitat of the deer.

Source: 'River threatens Swamp deers' habitat in UP', *Deccan Herald*, 24/03/10

Contact: **Director**, Dudhwa National Park, Dist. Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 05872-252106. Fax: 05872-252106

UTTARAKHAND

FD increases budget to compensate losses in man-animal conflicts

The Uttarakhand Forest Department has increased the budgetary allocation from Rs. 1.5 crores to Rs.

three crores for providing compensation to those who suffer wildlife depredation. The funds are allocated to provide immediate financial help to compensate loss of cattle, crop or human life caused by wildlife. The FD has said that all efforts will be made to pay the compensation within 15 days in cases of human and cattle deaths.

There has been an increase in incidents of human-wildlife conflict in the state and the increase of compensation is aimed at reducing it. Farmers across the state have started placing wire snares and electric wire fencing to save their crops from wild boars, blue bulls and elephants. In recent past many leopards too have been trapped in these.

Source: 'Man-animal conflict: Relief fund increased', PNS, www.dailypioneer.com

MoEF concerned over growing number of resorts around Corbett TR



The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has reportedly expressed concern over the growing number of tourist resorts around the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Minister, Mr. Jairam Ramesh too has expressed his concern regarding the influence of the land mafia near the reserve, something he believes could be an important reason for tiger deaths and rise in cases of man-animal conflict. In 1991 there were only six such resorts around the reserve, but at present there are 74 (also see *PA Update* Vol XVI, No. 1).

The Minister is also reported to have written a letter to the Uttarakhand Chief Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal asking him not to permit any more resorts around Corbett. He has also asked the state government to notify the buffer area of the reserve so that people living in them can be compensated if their cattle are killed or crops destroyed by wild animals.

Source: 'No more resorts near Corbett: Jairam Ramesh' 23/03/10, www.wildlifewatch.in
Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve,
Ramnagar –244715, Nainital, Uttaranchal.
Tel: 05947 – 285489. Fax: 285376

WEST BENGAL

FD, SSB and WWF collaborate to check smuggling from the Singalila NP

The Forest Department, the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) India are collaborating to check smuggling, mainly of medicinal plants, from the Singalila National Park. The park that is located on the border with Nepal is said to be a storehouse of rare medicinal plants that have great demand in the national and international markets.

Smuggling of these plants that was prominent till a few years ago is now said to be considerably under control. Part of the reason is the presence of eight camps of the SSB inside the park, which are working in collaboration with the Forest Department (FD).

In a move to strengthen the protection and educate the border guards, the FD recently invited the WWF to conduct training camps for them. Senior WWF staff subsequently visited 12 SSB camps in and around the park and has briefed the guards on conservation of flora and fauna.

Source: Avijit Sinha. 'SSB protectors for Singalila forest species - WWF trains border guards to conserve park & keep away smugglers', *The Telegraph*, 01/05/10.

Contact: **DFO**, I/c Singalila NP, Bengal Natural History Museum, (near Old Secretariat Building), P.O. & Dist. Darjeeling – 734101. West Bengal. Tel: 0354-54308(O), 56524(R). Email: dfowl1@dte.vsnl.net.in

FD halts the construction of metalled road inside Buxa TR

The forest department (FD) has decided to halt the construction of a metalled road on a 3km-stretch inside the Buxa Tiger Reserve. The Public Work Department's (PWD) Alipurduar construction division had, in November 2009, invited tenders for construction of the road on the 5 km-stretch. The tenders were invited without obtaining a no-

objection certificate (NOC) from the FD. The Field director of the Buxa TR had then written to the PWD asking for the survey report on the viability of the road project and the forest clearance. Since then the construction of this road has been a controversial issue.

The District Magistrate of Jalpaiguri, the Sub-Divisional Officer of Alipurduar, and the State Tourism and Forest Minister have on different occasions indicated that the metalled road could not be built on 3 km stretch. The forest minister had suggested the widening and improvement of the existing non-metalled road till the Buxa fort, and granting of an NOC for the construction of a metalled road for only two of the originally proposed five kilometers.

The plan now is to improve the existing non-metalled road. Sheds would also be built after every 500-meters on the route for tourists' convenience. The FD has received Rs 60 lakh from the North Bengal Development Council for the project.

Source: 'Tiger reserve rules out metalled road', *The Telegraph*, 27/04/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Buxa Tiger Reserve, P.O. Alipurduar, Dist. Jalpaiguri - 736 122. West Bengal. Tel: 03564-256333 /255979. Fax: 255577. Email: buxatiger@dte.vsnl.net.in

Police harassment alleged against FRA activists in forests adjoining Jaldapara

The National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) has alleged that the West Bengal Police is harassing its activists who are fighting for the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (STOTDFRA) – 2006 in the forests adjacent to the Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary (see *PA Update* Vol XVI, No .2).

The matter is related to the Chilapata forests adjoining the sanctuary in the Alipurduar sub-division of Jalpaiguri district. Forest villagers belonging to the indigenous Rava community and other adivasi groups, under the banner of NFFPFW North Bengal Regional Committee, have succeeded in

establishing a great degree of community control over the area's forests by using the FRA and through consistent and systematic mass initiatives.

It has been alleged that the police has targeted co-convener of NFFPFW North Bengal Regional Committee and 1st year college student, Sundar Singh Rava of Kurmai forest village. A case was slapped on him and his father in the month of April. Sundar recently got bail in a 2008 case pending against him in the Alipurduar SDJM's court related to work towards implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in the region.

The NFFPFW has sent out an appeal for support and solidarity in their efforts to oppose harassment by the police and to ensure people's control over forests. A rally was organized on the 1st of May where thousands of forest dwellers reportedly demonstrated in front of the Alipurduar Police Station. This was followed by a series of demonstrations on May 4, where hundreds of forest dwellers demonstrated simultaneously in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Malbazaar Alipurduar and Siliguri asking for harassment of members of the NFFPFW to stop and also for the implementation of the Act.

Source: 'Protest Harassment and Persecution of NFFPFW Members in North Bengal by Police' Appeal sent by the NFFPFW on 28/04/10

'Adivasis and Forest Dwellers demonstrate throughout North Bengal Seeking Justice', Press Release by NFFPFW, 04/05/10

Contact: **Soumitro Ghosh**, NFFPFW, B-137 Dayanand Colony, 1st Floor, Lajpat Nagar IV, New Delhi – 110024. Email:

soumitrag@gmail.com;

DFO, Jaldapara WLS, Cooch Behar Division, P.O. & Dist. Cooch Behar, West Bengal. Tel: 03582-227185. Fax: 227185. Email: dfocob@dte.vsnl.net.in

CF (Wildlife), North Bengal, West Bengal Forest Dept. Aranya Bhawan Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Tel: 03561– 25627(O)

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

No ban on tourism in Tiger Reserves

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) recently issued a statement that there was no proposal to ban tourism in tiger reserves in the country. The statement was made in response to some media reports that had suggested that the MoEF was indeed considering such a ban.

The MoEF statement says that it is working on detailed guidelines for promoting eco tourism, i.e. tourism that is ecologically sustainable and is in line with the carrying capacity of the particular reserve. It further states that the ministry believes tourism is essential and that the revenues from tourism must flow back directly into the management of each of the tiger reserves so that local communities can benefit.

Source: 'No ban on tourism in tiger reserves' <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=61436>,

Wildlife and forests to split from environment ministry

Prime Minister (PM) Manmohan Singh has given a nod for the splitting of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and for the creation of a separate department dedicated to wildlife and forests. The decision was taken a meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) in May. The meeting was chaired by the PM.

This was the first meeting of the board in over three years. The PM expressed concern on tiger mortalities and on mining in and highways through protected areas. He also said that relocation of local communities from tiger reserves should be expedited.

It is hoped that more officials and officials of good caliber will be now dedicated to wildlife and forest protection. Funding for wildlife issues is also expected to increase.

Source: Wildlife, Forests split from Dept of Environment, 21/03/10, www.wildlifewatch.in

13th Finance Commission's grants Rs.5000 crores to states for conservation of forests

The Central Government has accepted the recommendation of the 13th Finance Commission to grant Rs. 5000 crores to states for the conservation of forests.

The formula for deciding the state-wise allocation of the grant takes into consideration three factors viz. the share of the total forest area in the country falling in a particular state, whether or not the share of forested area of the state is greater than the national average and the quality of the forest in each state, as measured by density.

The State-wise funds earmarked during the current financial year (2010-2011) are as follows:

| Sl. No. | Name of State/UT | Amount (Rs. in Crores) |
|---------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh | 33.58 |
| 2 | Arunachal Pradesh | 90.98 |
| 3 | Assam | 23.08 |
| 4 | Bihar | 4.80 |
| 5 | Chhattisgarh | 51.39 |
| 6 | Goa | 4.61 |
| 7 | Gujarat | 10.24 |
| 8 | Haryana | 1.10 |
| 9 | Himachal Pradesh | 12.58 |
| 10 | Jammu & Kashmir | 16.63 |
| 11 | Jharkhand | 18.93 |
| 12 | Karnataka | 27.63 |
| 13 | Kerala | 16.94 |
| 14 | Madhya Pradesh | 61.29 |
| 15 | Maharashtra | 38.70 |
| 16 | Manipur | 18.79 |
| 17 | Meghalaya | 21.01 |
| 18 | Mizoram | 21.40 |
| 19 | Nagaland | 17.32 |
| 20 | Orissa | 41.37 |
| 21 | Punjab | 1.15 |
| 22 | Rajasthan | 11.04 |
| 23 | Sikkim | 5.07 |
| 24 | Tamil Nadu | 17.81 |
| 25 | Tripura | 11.94 |
| 26 | Uttar Pradesh | 10.06 |
| 27 | Uttarakhand | 25.68 |
| 28 | West Bengal | 9.88 |
| | Total | 625.00 |

The information was given by the Minister of State for Environment and Forests Mr Jairam Ramesh in a written reply to a question asked in the Lok Sabha recently.

(Ed: *It is however not clear how the money is to be used and whether the states will be allowed to decide how to spend it*)

Funds for relocation for villages from PAs for 2008-09 and 2009-10

2008-09 (Rs. in Lakhs)

| Name of the State | Protected Area | Amount proposed by state for relocation | Amount released |
|-------------------|----------------|---|-----------------|
| Rajasthan | Sariska | 1912.00 | 1979.50 |
| | Ranthambhore | 500.00 | 464.00 |
| Madhya Pradesh | Kanha | 1390.00 | 1390.00 |
| | Satpura | 1024.00 | 1024.00 |
| | Panna | 1811.00 | 1824.00 |
| | Bandhavgarh | 2890.00 | 1580.00 |
| Assam | Manas | 1000.00 | 646.09 |
| Orissa | Simlipal | 350.00 | 350.00 |
| Tamil Nadu | Mudumalai | 100.00 | 100.00 |

(2009-10) (Rs. in Lakhs)

| Name of the state | Protected Areas | Amount proposed by state for relocation | Amount released |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| Chhattisgarh | Achanakmar | 1000.00 | 1000.00 |
| | Barnawapara | 3933.73 | 540.00 |
| Madhya Pradesh | Kanha | 140.00 | 3.12 |
| | Satpura | 1150.00 | 1035.00 |
| Mizoram | Dampa | 2043.00 | 2043.00 |
| Rajasthan | Ranthambhore | 13000.00 | 10400.00 |

Source: Press Release, PIB, Govt. of India

Fund allocation for wildlife protection outside PAs

| States/ UTs | Number of Proposals received | | Amount Released (Rs. in lakhs) | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| | 2008- 09 | 2009- 10 | 2008- 09 | 2009- 10* |
| Kerala | 10 | - | 307.22 | - |
| Karna- taka | 3 | - | 80.00 | - |
| Laksa- dweep | - | 5 | - | - |
| Madhya Pradesh | 2 | 4 | 37.00 | - |
| Maha- rashtra | - | 10 | - | - |
| Manipur | - | 1 | - | - |
| Mizoram | 3 | 3 | 57.94 | - |
| Orissa | 3 | 1 | 76.95 | - |
| Punjab | 2 | 1 | 5.00 | - |
| Tamil Nadu | 1 | 3 | 325.00 | - |

Financial assistance during 2009-10 for protection of wildlife outside protected areas could not be released due to non-submission of required documents by the State/ Union Territory Governments.

No proposals have been received by the MoEF so far in the current financial year.

Source: Assistance for Protection of Wild Animals beyond the Protected Area, PIB Press Release, <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?reid=61441>, 05/05/10

Survey of India to map the 7,500-km-long Indian coastline

I think we need
a longer ruler
for this...



A comprehensive hazard-mapping exercise of the 7,500 km long coastline of India is to be undertaken by the Survey of India. The mapping

will be done over a period of five years and is part of a Rs. 1,156-crore Integrated Coastal Zone Management project approved by the Union Cabinet's Committee of Economic Affairs. The World Bank will provide assistance by way of a soft loan of Rs. 897 crore. The project will include identification of environmentally fragile areas such as mangroves, brackish-water wetlands and coral reefs. These will be classified as 'critically vulnerable coastal areas'.

In the first phase, the focus will be on coastal zone management activities in Gujarat, Orissa and West Bengal. In regard to the Sunderbans, India and Bangladesh will form a joint action plan to preserve the eco-system spread out between their borders.

A National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Zone Management is also being set up at Anna University in Chennai at a cost of Rs. 166 crore. This will be the main centre for extension work for coastal zone management and will focus on economic activities in the coastal zone.

The survey will help protect coastal communities and infrastructure. In extreme cases, it has been suggested, the communities may be relocated from hazardous areas. The overall aim of the project is capacity-building of communities living near the coast, mapping and demarcation of hazard lines, wetland conservation activities, pollution control and anti-sea erosion measures.

Source: Priscilla Jebaraj, 'Now, an extraordinary survey of India', *The Hindu*, 26/03/10

MoEF proposes ban on trade in peacock feathers

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), in response to numerous requests from various stakeholders, is proposing to ban the trade of peacock feathers. It has been brought to the Ministry's attention that the demand for the feathers outstrips the supply leading to the rampant poaching and killing of the birds.

To this end the Ministry proposes to amend Sections 43(3)(a) and 44 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 to prevent the

illegal trapping and killing of the national bird for their tail feathers.

Currently, the Act prohibits the killing of peacocks as well as export of tail feathers or articles made from them. It, however, allows domestic trade in feathers or articles under the assumption that these are naturally shed. Following the amendment, section 43(3)(a) and section 44 will no longer exempt those possessing a certificate of ownership for peacocks from transferring or selling the tail feather and articles or trophies made from them.

The Ministry has invited comments on the proposed amendment.

Source: 'Proposed ban in trade in peacock feathers', www.envfor.nic.in, 10/05/10

SOUTH ASIA

NEPAL

Human Rights Commission indicts army for killing three unarmed people in Bardia NP

The Nepalese Human Rights Commission has indicted the Nepal Army for the killing of three unarmed people (two women and a child) in the Bardia National Park on March 10, 2010. The report by the commission points out that those killed were part of a group that had gone to Banspani in the national park for the collection of the bark of kaulo trees. There was no evidence to suggest that they were armed poachers.

The same day a team of 19 security personnel including 15 Nepal Army personnel of the Jwala Dal Battalion, Thakurdwara and four personnel of the national park also arrived at the site from the southwest and fired upon the group. Site inspection, eyewitness accounts, the condition of victims' bodies and autopsy reports showed no evidence that the people who were killed, arrested or escaped from the site fired gunshots. Post-mortem reports, photos related to the incident and the victims' bodies revealed, in fact, that had been shot from behind.

The commission report notes that since the incident site is surrounded by hills on three sides, the army patrol could have easily taken the

victims under their control. They, however, chose to open fire without following the rules of engagement. It was also pointed out that the site should have been left untouched until the police examined it and gathered evidence but the army had arranged the dead bodies before the police arrived. This was tantamount to destruction of evidence.

The commission concluded that the security personnel had used excessive force and violated the provisions of Clauses 23 and 24 of the National Park and Wildlife Protection Act; were in violation of the right to life enshrined in Article 12 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, and the right to life and individual liberty enshrined in Clause 12 of Citizens' Rights Act.

In the incident the army also violated the right to life enshrined in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and Article 6 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966. Similarly, it has breached Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

The report of the commission also made a set of recommendations:

- 1) Identify those involved in the incident and file criminal cases against them in a regular court, including against Nepal Army Lt. Subodh Kunwar of Jwala Dal Battalion, Thakurdwara, who ordered the firing
- 2) Provide Rs 300,000 compensation to each victim's next of kin in accordance with National Human Rights Commission (Complaint, Action and Determination of Compensation) Rules, 2057 B.S. (2001)
- 3) The state should provide free education to the victims' children.
- 4) The government should coordinate with concerned agencies and implement programmes to improve the economic and social condition of people, particularly Dalits, in this region.
- 5) To prevent such incidents in the future, train the personnel of all national parks in protecting human rights.

Source: Summary of the report of the Nepal Human Right Commission: Email dated 04/04/10 by Naya Sharma Paudel.

Contact: **Naya Sharma Paudel.**

Email: nsp@forestaction.wlink.com.np

OPPORTUNITIES

Project assistant and Project trainee for Forest Ecology Program at Mudumalai TR

The Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore is looking for a Project Assistant and a Project Trainee for its long-term Forest Ecology Program at Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

The positions are based at Masinagudi, Nilgiris district in Tamilnadu. Candidates should be Indian nationals. Details are as follows:

1. Project Assistant Position for Forest Ecology Research

Qualifications: Masters degree in botany, forestry, environmental sciences or agricultural sciences. Basic computer and analytical skills will help.

2. Project Trainee Position for Forest Ecology Research

Qualifications: Bachelors degree in botany, forestry, environmental sciences or agricultural sciences.

Interested candidates may write to nirmala@ces.iisc.ernet.in with a CV and dates of availability.

Program Managers for SeasonWatch, a Citizen Science Project

The National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) and Wipro are looking for Program Managers for their new Citizen Science project, SeasonWatch.

SeasonWatch is a citizen and student volunteer network that monitors tree phenology (tree lifecycle events like flowering and fruiting) across India. Observations collected by this network will help:

- Understand the effects of climate change on plant ecology using a scientific approach
- Increase citizen and student sensitivity towards ecology and nature through active participation and
- Provide a constructive body of knowledge on plant ecology for all participants to explore, use for testing ideas and answer questions that interest them.

Contact: Uttara Mendiratta.

Email: uttara.mendiratta@gmail.com;
applying.thought@wipro.com

WWF-India's Small Grants Program for Conservation Research & Action

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) India has announced a one-time grant for individuals of up to Rs. 200,000 for carrying out conservation research or undertaking a conservation project.

The Small Grants Program (SGP) will provide grants to individuals for activities and/or research that address issues and offer solutions or insights towards:

- Species and habitat related problems and concerns – with a focus on immediate threats and issues (e.g. vulture conservation) .
- Enabling communities and other stakeholders to address local environmental concerns.
- Improving local livelihoods through conservation and natural resources management or promoting livelihoods that reduce impacts on biodiversity.
- Aspects of trade involving wildlife species.
- Increasing understanding on the status of lesser known or lesser studied species of wildlife.
- Innovative approaches to awareness raising regarding environmental concerns.
- Demonstrating individual or collective action towards conservation outcomes.

For more details and to download the form to submit project proposal, see http://wwfindia.org/about_wwf/small_grants_program

Contact: **Anil Cherukupalli**, WWF-India. Tel: 011-41504783.

Email: anil.cherukupalli@wwf.panda.org

Volunteer opportunities at ZOO

Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO) is looking for interns and volunteers for 3-6 months up to a year for the following ongoing projects:

1. GIS mapping
2. Freshwater ecosystem assessments in Eastern Himalaya and Western Ghats
3. National red listing

4. Communications, editorial assistance, administration of Journal of Threatened Taxa
5. Asian Lepidoptera Conservation Symposium activities
6. Various aspects of SSC IUCN specialist group functions in South Asia.

Contact: **Sanjay Molur**, ZOO, 9A Lal Bahadur Colony, Peelamedu, Coimbatore - 641004, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0422 – 2561087/2568906. Email: herpinvert@gmail.com

UPCOMING

3rd Asian Lepidoptera Conservation Symposium

The 3rd Asian Lepidoptera Conservation Symposium and Training programme is being held from 25 to 29 October 2010 at Bharathiar University Campus in Coimbatore. The symposium is being organized by IUCN SSC South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group (SAsISG), Bharathiar University (BU), Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO) and Wildlife Information Liaison Development (WILD) in collaboration with Invertebrate conservation

groups, research organisations, universities and institutes as well as non-government organisations that work on conservation biology across Asia.

The theme of the symposium is ‘Local community conservation meeting Asian Lepidoptera conservation needs’, using Lepidoptera as an iconic group for each community. The key areas of the symposium and training workshop would be to:

- investigate the use of iconic / endemic flagship Lepidoptera species to promote habitat conservation through community involvement
- assess priority areas / communities for Lepidoptera conservation initiatives at the local level that has global conservation impact
- provide tools for species status assessment
- train in moth and butterfly identification skills and
- explore aspects of moth and butterfly conservation ecology and management and needs

Contact: **Sanjay Molur**.
Email: herpinvert@gmail.com

Seeking Support for the PA Update

This issue of the *PA Update* is the first one of the new funding cycle and we are looking (as we do every year) for support to continue publishing the newsletter. While we do have the commitment of our old (and also some new) funders, we still need to raise substantial resources.

This is an appeal, therefore, to readers to extend whatever support you can or would like to, like you have done in the past. There are various ways in which you can support the *PA Update* - donations, individual subscriptions, gift subscriptions and bulk subscriptions for organisations that want to help reach out the *PA Update* to others as well.

If you want more information of how to contribute or have some questions or suggestions, please do write to me at psekhsaria@gmail.com

Please do consider contributing and all help, big or small, is most welcome.

IN THE SUPREME COURT
PA related matters in the Supreme Court (SC) and the Central Empowered Committee
in March & April 2010

- Regarding the felling of 6000 trees in NOIDA in the vicinity of the Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh
- Seeking an in order to protect pastoral communities and local breeds of cattle that are threatened by new restrictions on traditional livelihood rights including inside protected areas
- Regarding permission to the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd to use land inside the Dhrangdhara Wild Ass Sanctuary, Gujarat
- Regarding use of land by Adani Power Power Ltd for construction of transmission lines in Dhrangdhara Wild Ass Sanctuary, Gujarat
- Regarding permission to Power Grid Corporation to use land within Dhrangdhara Wild Ass Sanctuary, Gujarat
- Regarding permission to Power Grid Corporation to use land within Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa
- Regarding the removal of dead and dry bamboo clumps from Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Orissa

'In the Supreme Court' is based on the Forest Case Update, which is a web-based initiative to provide information and updates on developments related to forests and wildlife in the Supreme Court of India.
Contact: **Ritwick Dutta & Kanchi Kohli**, Forest Case Update Editors, E-180, Greater Kailash 2, New Delhi-110048. Email: forestcase@yahoo.com Web: www.forestcaseindia.org
Member Secretary, Central Empowered Committee, II Floor, Chanakya Bhawan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021 Tel: 011-26884921 /23 /26, Fax: 24101925

New Publication from Kalpavriksh

The Jarawa Tribal Reserve Dossier:

Cultural and Biological Diversities in the Andaman Islands

Edited by

Pankaj Sekhsaria and Vishvajit Pandya

Prepared by

Kalpavriksh under the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) Program of UNESCO

No of Pages: 212; 12 colour plates; 11 colour maps

The dossier is made of up 10 original or previously published papers and a comprehensive set of annexures that includes the entire text of the Andaman and Nicobar Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Regulation (ANPATR) – 1956; the policy on the Jarawa tribe as approved by the Kolkata High Court; rules of the Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) and a compilation of conflict incidents involving the Jarawas.

The document also has 11 colour maps, that provide detailed and comprehensive insight into the changes in the Jarawa Reserve boundary, vegetation, vegetation density; land cover classification and the location of Jarawa camps within the forests of the Jarawa Reserve.

For procuring copies contact **Pankaj Sekhsaria**, editorial address, Email: psekhsaria@gmail.com

A PDF version of the dossier can be downloaded from the following link:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001876/187690E.pdf>

PERSPECTIVE

BARE FOOT ECOLOGISTS

Experiences from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

Anita Varghese

One of the biggest opportunities and challenges in conservation linked field studies lies in the use of local and indigenous knowledge for ensuring benefits to the people while meeting the goals of conservation. Keystone Foundation's effort at doing precisely this has resulted in the formation of a brigade of 'barefoot ecologists' who work closely with its team of academically trained ecologists.

The barefoot ecologists were involved in ecological field studies on 'non timber forest produce' (NTFP) that involved the creation, location and measurement of plots and transects. When the results were unpacked along with them stimulating discussions resulted: 'did low seedling numbers during a transect mean all the fruits were removed during harvest with no seed left over for the next generation; was it firewood collection that was responsible; *Lantana* maybe good to make furniture but is it choking all the other saplings?' These discussions have flowed into villages and amongst NTFP harvester groups.

In 2008, 22 volunteers from villages located within reserve forest areas and along borders of PAs like the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary were trained in ecological field methods. The barefoot ecologists walked the forests of their ancestral domains along pre-marked routes at regular intervals. The purpose of these 'walk abouts' was to record qualitative and quantitative observations on habitat quality (presence or absence of fire, weedy plants, status of canopy, soil type etc), wildlife sightings (including birds, insects, honey bees etc), plant presence (to include useful and lesser known ones). Each team of two was

encouraged to take two more people from the village on the 'walk abouts' ensuring that diversity of knowledge within the village was captured. Nearly 200 kms were covered every month as part of this initiative that lasted a year.

The barefoot ecologist's willingness to come forward to scout the forests stems from their familiarity of the area and an eagerness to try out something new. They spoke, at the end of the project, of greater knowledge transfer, awareness on the need to conserve and the need to generate interest among youth and children. In one particular case, for instance, a team from a village just outside the tiger reserve met up with resort owners in the area and encouraged them to use less firewood and grow native tree species.

It is extremely important that these barefoot ecologists be nurtured. Their stake in the region is high because it is intricately linked with their identity and their livelihoods. They can be committed partners in our conservation efforts, be it to monitor forests, revive native species or deal with the problem of poaching and illegal removal of resources from the forests.

Anita Varghese is Program Coordinator-
Conservation, Keystone Foundation, Kotagiri.
Contact: anita@keystone-foundation.org

PERSPECTIVE is a new column that will feature invited opinion, comment and critique every issue.

From

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