

VANA PREMI

Nau Say Navay Sall Tak Ke Bachon Ka Sathi

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1. Editorial	J.V. Sharma	4
2. letters to the Editor ..		6
3. Musings on Indian Forestry II	Surya B. Singh	7
4. Before Elephants In Nagarhole	Surendra Pandey	14
5. New Green Year.....	Konda Mohan	17
6. The Cave-Men of Kerala Forest	V.S.Somasundaram	18
7. Bridge on River Musi ...	J.V. Sharma	21
8. Eastern Europe : A Travelogue ... Dr. B. Raghotham Rao Desai		24
9. Celebrations of Republic Day of India	Qamar Mohammad Khan	27
10. A day in Addis Ababa	Dr. Madhavi Reddy	30
11. Brownsville Eye Doctor Travels Globe Restoring Vision	Christina R. Garza	31
12. Usage of Bio-Acoustics in Reducing Man-Animal Conflict	M. Ram Mohan	32
13. 8 Interesting Facts about the Indian Rupee		33
14. XVI S.F.R.C. Alumni Meet-2015 Raipur, Chhattisgarh....	V. Santhaseela Babu	36
15. Birthday Greetings.....	Secretary	38
16. Association Corner.....	Secretary	39
17. Meesala Balaram (Undyal Veerappan)	B. Bhagavanth Reddy	41
18. Legal Notes.	K.B.R.	44

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EDITORIAL

I wish a very Happy and Prosperous New Year 2016 to all *Vana Premi* readers.

Our esteemed Editor, Mr. Qamar Mohd. Khan who has been guiding *Vana Premi* with admirable efficiency is on a personal visit to Australia. His association with the journal, first as Associate Editor since 2005 and then as its Editor from June 2009, has totally identified him with *Vana Premi* to the extent that it is difficult to see them separately. The journal took long strides and made its presence felt significantly in forest and environmental circles of the country for its get up and content. He will be away only for three months and it is a hard-earned holiday which he richly deserves. We wish him a pleasant trip requesting at the same time to be back in Hyderabad soon to continue his tryst with *Vana Premi*.

Despite age-related constraints, I happen to hold fort as Editor, purely as a stop-gap arrangement, in deference to the decision taken by the Association. I appeal to all well wishers of *Vana Premi*, members of the fraternity, environmentalists etc to extend their unstinted cooperation by contributing articles to the journal by 18th of every month.

Coming to the substantive part of editorial, we are in New Year 2016. At the turn of the century fifteen years ago, we dreamt that India would be rid of its historical curses of illiteracy, hunger, poverty and ailments in the first decade of the new century and embark upon growth trajectory to join the select group of developed nations by 2015. We believed that with quality education and awareness, our scientific temper would improve and we would consciously ensure the culture of good environment to take roots. After a decade and a half in the present century, we see our dreams evaporating gradually but surely. What is distressing is a noticeable trend in governance to sacrifice environment for development. The Governments at Centre and States appear to believe that 'a good environment' is a non-issue so long as there are encouraging results in the economic field. In short, they feel that all that matters is GDP.

For a developing country at the threshold of entering the select band of developed nations, a thrust on development is unavoidable. But it needs to be remembered that while the development and strong economic growth are surely good indicators of people's welfare, their health and well-being are even more important. This is the reason why we have to prioritise environment over other sectors, next only to defence. Forests, the major environmental asset, has suffered irrecoverable damage, particularly during the past 12 years. Future appears even bleaker what with the no-holds barred industrial policy practised by the Central Government. It is time the environmentalists look into this aspect and make the common man aware of the perils ahead.

Climate Change:-

On the international scene, an Agreement is thrashed out at Conference of Parties (COP 21) held at Paris. It is about the Climate Change which is relatively a new concept which stood neglected for a long time even while alarm bells were ringing for quite some time. Because of its complexity

and absence of readily available data and information, not many people, particularly who matter, did not pay requisite attention for a long time. Public awareness in this regard is still scanty. Comprehensive reading material is rare in the media excepting information in bits and pieces. Some have, however, been valiantly trying to take the issue to the common man but regrettably, it had not even reached the informed citizen in its full import.

Unlike the previous segments of the Conference in the recent past which failed to produce any workable document, an agreement has at last been worked out and unveiled on the last day, Saturday, the 12th December 2015. Two weeks of intense discussions and negotiations have finally given shape to a roadmap which may mean very crucial to Planet Earth. Deliberations have essentially been of hard bargaining with the objective of reconciling the otherwise conflicting interests of individual nations.

There were 196 Parties at the Conference which means almost the equal number of minds, thoughts and positions. Unlike the geo-political or strategic issues which come with certain amount of immediate concern, Climate Change, more often than not, is still considered as an issue which can be dealt at leisure. Adverse effects of long gestation period hold no threats for those who are seized with present day 'balance sheet'. Though an agreement is arrived at, it cannot be said that it will address the core issues effectively. Tortuous deliberations of two weeks gave an impression that those who reaped huge benefits by polluting the earth are not prepared to take responsibility for mitigative action. On the other side there are some countries who try to gain as much as possible in the form of funds, transfer of technology etc. even while their own record at home is dismal. Informed people did not hesitate to say that COP21 became a play ground for business interests of developed countries.

Paris Agreement absolved the US, inarguably the worst polluter, of its liability for causing climate change and it goes against the spirit of summits held at Rio de Janeiro, Copenhagen and Kyoto which said that polluter must pay. India made noises but experts say that much of the discussion was on business interests than environmental concerns. The developed countries literally forced other countries to accept their terms. There were no meaningful deliberations on water, soil, greenery and the environment at large and instead, most of the discussions centred round sale and purchase of technology and how this could be gone through.

India is to equally blame for the situation. It appeared to canvass for its right to produce electricity through coal which is considered damaging by the world. Large scale auctions of coal fields, liberalising environmental norms & procedures and diverting large extents of forest lands for mining and industrial use, cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be deemed as mitigative action against climate change.

While the details need a full-fledged article, the Agreement aims to contain the global warming to 2 degrees C by the end of century, hoping against hope to achieve 1.5 degree C. The experts however strongly argue that it will definitely go beyond 3 degrees C.

-JV Sharma

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,
VANA PREMI

The article in Nov' 15 issue of Vana Premi, "Establish a bond of integrity" reminded me of the day when one of our Whats App member of Sr. State Forest Officers' group posted an old video in which Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam was addressing the European Union on its 50th anniversary as chief guest. He finished his speech with the same lines "Where there is — Peace in the world". There was a loud sound of applause in the house. Clapping continued for quite a long time. Then stood the Chairman of the European Union- hugged Dr. Kalam tightly and said that this house had never ever heard such a touching speech in the history of the union. Watching this tears rolled down from my ears. My heart was throbbing. In the evening there was another message on Whats App of sudden demise of Dr. Kalam. That was the day when for the second time tears rolled down from my eyes. Firstly, for his message delivered in the lecture and secondly, for his sudden demise. I will not forget that day.

P. G. Borgaonkar.

Sir,

This letter is in response to editorial of December. I am sending herewith my suggestions as to how we as a group of retired but not tired persons can contribute to the welfare and well being of these less fortunate people of the society.

We are having about 150 members of our Association and another 50 can be easily persuaded to join the Association. Even if we take 66% of the existing 150 members who will be interested to help the disabled persons we can start it. We have to form 8 groups of 12 persons each, and each member has to contribute only 2000 rupees per year. We should invite applications who need help and after selecting 8 disabled persons we have to pay Rs 2000/- to each disabled person every month for his food or medicines or for the education of his or her children for next 10 to 12 years. Due to any reasons if the member wants to discontinue we should select another member who will be joining after retirement. Little drops of water make ocean so let us start it.

Sincerely yours

Q.M. Khan

MUSINGS ON INDIAN FORESTRY II

By
Surya B. Singh

16. Poplar Plantations on Private Land: By mid 70s the forestry sector started changing. In a way the beginning had been made with Wildlife Protection Act 1972 itself. Thereafter the National Commission on Agriculture gave wide ranging recommendations for the sector. The Social Forestry Programme was launched on a large scale as a result. This programme though covered large areas but could not yield the desired result. There are many reasons for this. But the basic reason is that we Indians are totally individualistic. Our concern for the society or for common cause is minimal. This observation is true for most of the areas of the country barring perhaps pockets of Gujarat and can be seen in any field. On the contrary if a programme aims individuals' good there are reasonable chances of its success. In our context the result of Social Forestry Programme and the programme of Poplar Plantation launched by a certain industry to meet their requirement for veneer wood are two contrasting examples. The latter programme has caught the imagination of the people and in Tarai belt of U.P. and adjoining areas almost in every village, you find farmers raising poplar nurseries and selling the planting material claiming fancy hybrid origin for their planting stock. On the other hand Social Forestry Plantations raised on village common lands have not been that successful and have ended up supplying fuel for MDM programme.

17. Constitutional Amendment: Forest & Wildlife in the Concurrent List: But the real watershed in this regard was the constitutional

amendment bringing the subjects of forest and wildlife which were till then in 'the state list' of the Constitution, to 'the concurrent list'. Earlier the Central Government, even with late Mrs. Indira Gandhi in full command and with single party rule almost all over the country and at the Centre, had to cross quite a few hurdles before it could get the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, passed by the Parliament. The Constitutional Amendment enabled the Central Government to make laws on forestry and wildlife directly without seeking concurrence of half of the state legislature. Thus was enacted the famous Forest Conservation Act 1980 which otherwise perhaps the states might not have agreed to as it has taken away the powers of the states to order deforestation of RF_s and even of Sanctuaries which earlier they used to do with impunity.

18. A Double Edged Weapon: But 42nd constitutional amendment transferring the subjects of forest and wildlife from the state list to the concurrent one, in retrospect, has proved to be a double edged weapon. In fact it appears to have been more harmful than beneficial for the cause of forest conservation. Without such constitutional amendment the Forests Rights Act (FRA) could not have been passed and its most vocal proponents i.e. the Communist could have passed this Act at the most in only two or three States ruled by them. The FRA thus passed gives right over forest land not only to the traditional tribal inhabitants but also to other encroachers. Though at present a

cutoff date of 31st December 2005 has been prescribed but once the encroachers up to the prescribed date have been legalised, there is no guarantee that subsequent encroachers will not be similarly treated. This Act appears to have sounded the death knell of RF in the country.

II. THE TRAINING

19. Training At the Academy: Executives V/ Strategic Thinkers & Leaders: Now let us turn our gaze to the training aspect which has been deliberately kept as the last point to be taken up for our discussion of the past. Logically speaking, this should have been the first topic to be taken up. It was not done in that order because whatever deficiencies have been noticed in the foregoing discussion on the forest management of the past, corrective or remedial steps for the same may now be suggested here. One point which might have been noticed here that many of the deficiencies pointed out could have been remedied or rectified if the foresters of the time had done a little out of the box thinking. This, put in business management parlance could be stated, that the foresters behaved just as mere executives and not as business leaders or strategic thinkers as well at least at certain levels of the hierarchy. This aspect of our perceived deficiency is frequently brought out elsewhere as well while discussing the role of foresters on environmental issues. This, as per the critics, is because of our perceived lack of articulation. It is alleged that foresters seldom write or express their views on matters where they are or should be the acknowledged leaders. In this respect they at times behave like dumb denizens of forests which they are supposed to be protecting and caring for. Perhaps a part of the characteristics of the wards gets rubbed on

the guardians as well! It is also pointed out that whatever innovations or new ideas have come to this sector have mostly been contributed by the non-foresters. While all this criticism levelled at us may not be wholly justified, it cannot be denied that there is a grain of truth in it. Earlier we used to have recruits to the forestry services of varying academic attainments as the standard and the source of recruitment was of varied types differing from state to state even though the basic minimum qualification for entry was the same. Therefore earlier a part of the reason could have been apportioned at the source, but the same excuse cannot be advanced now. With the cream of the science graduates of the country joining the service, the justification earlier advanced may not be true now, yet we do not see any appreciable improvement. The IGNTA may perhaps deliberate the issue and then take some remedial steps which may include either suitably devising the course content or may be like Army, introducing a separate advanced course for very senior officers say at the level of the Chief Conservators on policy research, planning, the art of communication, new developments in the frontier areas of forestry and developmental issues etc.

20. International Scene: During last few decades a number of international conferences on Forestry and Environment were held. The one held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 under the aegis of the United Nations General Assembly enunciated the Forestry Principles. This was followed by similar such conferences held elsewhere. In these fora, it is the other I.F.S. (i.e. the Foreign Service) people who have been leading the show from our country rather than

leaders from our own service. In the advanced course proposed as above, the Academy may include this emerging subject as well.

21. The Course Content: The second point on training which we need to consider and continuously evaluate is about the relevance of the course content. Apart from main subjects of Forest Management, Silvicultural Systems and the Silviculture of Indian Species, we were taught a plethora of subjects in the then IFC. All the latter group of subjects like first aid to entomology, survey to systematic botany etc may be called as tools for the Forest Management. These tools were, are, and should remain all very relevant and useful. But the question is how far the main subjects of Forest Management and Silvicultural Systems as taught to us with utopian concept of 'normal forest' as its corner stone and the idea of sustained yield as its guiding principle, has been useful to us in managing the forests in our state. The concept of 'Normal Forest' was evolved from the point of ease of exploitation and envisages a series of even aged stands of a selected species. Barring coniferous forest of Himalayan region and probably the forests of Sal and Teak elsewhere there are few areas where it can be applied without causing enormous damage to biodiversity. The most of the important silvicultural systems based on canopy manipulation or phonological management (Pepper Pot Opening included!) as was taught to us here could hardly be practised in these areas. In all such forests, the only system you can apply is either selection system or the improvement felling. This question acquires added importance as the bulk of the forests in India are mixed ones with numerous species of

various age classes present on the same area. Here even sampling was (or is still?) done lumping together several species as one, not because they had similar growth characteristic but because they fetched similar market price! Even ignoring the rain forest of the North East and the western ghats, we hardly have pure single species forest where the concept of 'the Normal Forest' and related silvicultural system may be successfully applied. The Academy may consider doing some evaluation of course content in this regard and then suitably modifying it if required.

22. The Environmental Laws: The third point concerning training which may be considered here is concerning the environmental laws, rules and regulations. You are fully aware that till 1960s, the foresters were mainly concerned with implementation of Indian Forest Act or its variants in certain states. But beginning with Wildlife Protection Act 1972, now we have a plethora of enactments like The Water Prevention And Control of Pollution Act 1974, The Forest Conservation Act 1980, The Air Prevention And Control of Pollution Act 1981, The Environment Protection Act 1986, The Biological Diversity Act 2002, Tribal Forest Rights Act 2006 [The Scheduled Tribes And Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights) Act 2006] etc and the subordinate legislations made under these Acts and connected legislations which all directly or indirectly impinge on our chosen domain of work. It is felt that we should be aware about the latest development in this field which should enable and equip our young officers with wherewithal to shoulder the responsibility in the field of environment when called upon.

Here it may not be inappropriate to point out that there is no other organised service in the country for the developing field of environmental conservation apart from the Forest Service. But surprisingly the foresters appear to take little interest in this emerging field. The resultant vacuum is naturally being filled up by generalist services and NGOs etc. The Academy may consider revising its syllabus in this regard.

23. Research: Allotment Of A Species Wild flora/fauna For Study Through Out The Service Career: The last point which I want to bring out is about the forestry research which requires a long term commitment. Those who have a fixed time span of say three to five years for the purpose would naturally not like to take up a job requiring continuous study for twenty to thirty or more years. Since academically our probationers are generally better than those who make research as their career and have thirty to thirty five years or more of time span for completing study undertaken by them, I am of the firm view that if utilised properly they can provide us with answers to our long felt necessity of learning about at least the mega species of flora and fauna. This can be done by allotting one species for detailed study to each probationer at the time of his passing out of the Academy. The species allotted should be as per choice of the probationer and should be one which is found in the state of his allotment. The mechanism for providing the facilities for the study, monitoring the progress made, the evaluation of the performance and recording of the same in the ACR of the officer concerned may be devised. The study should not hinder the normal performance of duty by the officer. If such

a scheme is adopted not only would we get top class research done at a very nominal cost but would also be utilising brilliant pool of human resource which otherwise gets wasted in file – pushing only. The Academy and the Government of India may deliberate this suggestion.

III. THE PRESENT.

24. The Present Scenario: The By-pass Mechanism: - Now let us visualise the fate of forests, forestry and the foresters in our country in the coming days say fifty years hence and thereafter. Naturally the picture of the future would have to evolve from the present realities. At present we are passing through probably the most difficult phase since independence. As we have seen earlier there was little public scrutiny of the sector during first thirty years after independence and the foresters were virtually monarchs of all that they surveyed. But from 70_s gradually things started changing. Public leaders started taking notice of the sector. On the other hand with industrial development, pollution started becoming noticeable. And to control it, a number of laws were enacted and then prior approvals, impact assessment etc were enforced for setting up of industries. Alongside the requirement of minerals to feed expanding industries started increasing and since most of it was found in forested areas, the interface and then faceoff between environmental administration and the industrialists also increased. A stage has come now that environmental administration is being blamed for the slowdown of the Indian Economy. It is often said that Green is becoming the new red tape. Even our prime Minister (of UPA era) was quoted as saying that

environmental clearances have become the new license permit Raj. The Industrialists and the top echelons of the Government think environment as some sort of nuisance in the path of development. The Government have therefore now devised a by-pass mechanism in the form of a Cabinet Committee On Investment to short circuit its own Environment Ministry. We thus have presently a very powerful and vocal group of policy makers perhaps led by the PMO itself who want development and growth at any cost whether it was accompanied without or even with destruction of environment. They think that the growth and poverty alleviation programmes will automatically take care of the environmental concerns or else that we would be able to ameliorate the environment after we have grown sufficiently rich. This is most fallacious argument and wrongly supposes that every process is reversible. It also does not take care of the sufferings of the present lot. The resulting cost of damaged environment is being inflicted on all. There are reports that outdoor air pollution has become fifth largest killer in India. Cancer though a non-contagious disease, is seen spreading like epidemic in certain areas like Malwa region of Punjab. There are several other cases of disaster like poisoning of the underground water etc. These are only a few of the symptoms of the larger tragedy of daunting public goods problems.

25. The GDP Growth Proponents Vs The Environmentalist: Thus we find two very powerful forces at work in tandem with each other destroying the forests and environment- first the authorised ones produced by the GDP growth proponents, crony capitalism, the FRA and similar others. The second which is more

insidious is led by timber mafia, encroachers and similar other thieves. But the result from either is disastrous and when working in tandem it is of catastrophic proportion for the environment. To counter these forces we have the organised forestry services and the NGOs including the enlightened but unorganised citizenry working for the protection of environment. Both these are much weaker forces compared to their opponents- the former because of their inherent weaknesses and the latter because of their resource funding and organisational problems. One of the weaknesses of the forestry services is that they are part of the same Government and therefore there are limits or a *lakshhman rekha* within which they have to work. The Second which is far more important reason for their feeble resistance to the destruction of forests by unauthorised forces can be attributed to their low morale, deteriorating working conditions, lack of motivation and the prevailing value system of the society. Earlier a forest guard posted to a remote locality totally cut off from outside world would gladly stay at the place of his posting and shoulder his responsibility enthusiastically and would not have any complaint against his posting in the interior area. Now it would be a rare case indeed if you could get such a person who stays at his headquarter. This is because of aspirational revolution, end of belief in the Karmic theory and political networking of the staff. But in spite of technological improvements and better mobility, I do not see any substitute for physical presence of the lower protection staff at least up to the level of a Range Officer in their jurisdiction. The NGO and the media are all

urban centric and only pick up the few cases which have potential for sensationalisation and they do not have any appetite to travel to remote and in-accessible areas. Thus cases of destruction of environment only occasionally get highlighted and the miscreants are able to carry out their nefarious activities with impunity.

IV.THE FUTURE: SOME POSTULATES.

26. A Glimmer of Hope: A conjecture: The foregoing discussion of the present may suggest that perhaps we are waging a losing battle. As things stand now we may end up with retaining only a few forested protected areas. Most of the R.F_s may perhaps remain only in name. As opposed to a very bleak future visualised heretofore, there is a positive side to this story as well. So long the environmental lobby has been able to arouse concerns of a miniscule gentry of *India*. The common man (aam admi) of *Bharat* has by and large kept itself aloof of the environmental discourse. But with adverse effect of environmental pollution becoming more acute even to be realised by him, time may not be that far off when he starts taking active interest in talking against pollution and demanding not only stopping of pollution and polluting industries but also about activities for ameliorating his environment. If and when that stage comes, we may reach a standoff between the GDP growth proponents and the environmentalists. At that stage growth would take place but that would be without destruction and not with, as is happening now. Then the development would definitely take place but that would be compatible with the idea of sustaining the planet.

27. Save Environment: An Economic Activity: While the hope of the standoff between the two

opposing forces discussed in the foregoing paragraphs may take time of say 40-50 years or so to materialise, by that time a lot of irreversible damage would have been caused to the environment. In that time span as pointed out earlier most of our R.F_s would have been finished and probably only a few National Parks and Sanctuaries might be left unscathed. But a more positive development may come to our rescue in much shorter time span and this is the percolating down of the effects of trading in carbon credit. If and when such trading gets quantified in terms canopy cover per unit area per month or better still per day basis, or such other parameters, a farmer may be induced to grow tree crops and maintain the same with dense canopy cover for which he gets credit in monetary terms for the period he maintains such a cover with freedom to harvest his crop whenever he likes. Naturally then he stops getting benefit of carbon credits for it. If and when such an arrangement for canopy cropping is made, raising and maintaining of tree crop may become more lucrative than growing other cash crops. The Corporates then may have to provide for absorbents for their emission of GHG_s. This either they themselves have to do by being forced to raise plantations which absorb Co₂ and such other gases equivalent to what their factories are spewing out in the atmosphere or else they would have to purchase carbon credits from tree farmers who have that much of *surplus* absorbents (Tree crop) at their disposal. When taken to its logical end, the scenario may even envisage environmental audit of not only the polluting industries but the individual and families as well. The whole process of trading may have to

be vetted by the DFO who may then be called the DEO (the District Environment Officer) of the district where the absorbents are located. Hope such development takes place sooner than later. The Foresters of future may have then to offer tree species which give out more oxygen for a given d.b.h. or per unit area of their canopy or are able to absorb more GHG per unit area etc. They may have then to prepare volume tables of species not for their timber yield but for the net volume of GHG absorbed and the O₂ released by them in the atmosphere. Since these functions of the species are correlated to the diurnal length of sunlight and ambient temperature such a volume table may have variables of canopy class (as opposed to d.b.h. class), the latitude and longitude apart from the month of the year.

28. Future Role of FSI and Forestry Research Organisations:

For such a development to materialise the DEO of each district may be required to maintain record of each holding in his district which shows number trees with canopy classes of species standing in each individual plot of land. This is equivalent to maintenance of half yearly khasra (land record showing the crop raised in each plot of land – presently held by Lekhpal/Patwari/Mondal or the revenue official of the village). Since the village revenue map is on 1:4000 (16" = 1 mile) scale, the FSI by that time might bring up their mapping skills to that level from the present 1:50,000 scale. Simultaneously the cycle of their reporting (The State Of Forests Reports) which is now biennial may have to come down to half yearly publication if not even more frequent. The concerned organisations should start gearing up to attain this objective.

29. Population Stabilisation: Other Postulates:-

Population explosion has been the major cause of destruction of our forests. The population has more than doubled than what it was when we became independent. However the demographic studies indicate that the rate of growth of population has started tapering down and there are indications that it is likely to stabilise by about middle of the present century. This factor together with increasing urbanisation may result in fewer people depending upon firewood and other forest products for their use. The supply-side constraints may result in prohibitive prices for wood products thus forcing people to opt out for alternatives. The increasing use of cooking gas even in rural and semi urban areas together with comparative high costs of timber and firewood is likely to dampen the demand for non-industrial uses of the forest products. If and when that happens, the demand for forest produce for non-industrial uses is also likely to stabilise a few decades thereafter and then taper down.

29. Under such conditions the productivity of our forests measured in monetary terms may be found to be far higher than that of the forests of Euro Zones. At that stage perhaps there may not be any cause of friction left between the two opposing forces. The ICFRE, IGNTFA and other institutes on forestry management and research may like to deliberate on these ideas and prepare foresters to cope up with emerging challenges. It is then that we would realise the true meaning of *Vanaspatayah shaantih*.

(Note : "Musings on Indian Forestry (part -I) by the author was published in December 2015 issue of Vana Premi)

BEFORE ELEPHANTS IN NAGARHOLE

By
Surendra Pandey

It is a cosmic conspiracy, idiots in human bodies have invaded the earth, wherever they came from, they are here, they are the only ones who don't know it. This knowledge had descended upon me recently (16.09.2015), when I was in Kabini Jungle Lodges for one week compulsory training for IFS Officers, sitting nonchalantly in our Safari Jeep, temporarily stopped, for about 2 minutes before a herd of Elephants. I know Elephant is a matriarchal society, younger one grow up with siblings. Near to me there was one sub-adult with mother & most probably one maternal aunt. The gimlet eyes of the mother Elephant were sufficient to bore holes through a saint's patience and that is why I was continuously averting my gaze to her. They were padding their feet, bunching, investigative smelling, churning up the earth, giving ascending series of rumbles and slow trumpeting, waving their trunk and subtle anglings of the head, body, feet and tail probably communicating infra-sonically with other members. It was evident that Elephant is having something which enchant the onlooker. However, within a minute a centrifugal force was developing inside me, giving a feeling, if we do not escape from the place, we would fly into millions of atoms and we hastened our move. They were making clear statements for us to leave the area. I started playing back a film inside me which was encrypted on my brain, since my

confrontation with one mother Elephant in Jim Corbett during 2010. I had never really understood my unease around Elephants in wild, though I am perfectly at ease near a Tiger. During that encounter we have hurriedly escaped by hardly 20 to 30 seconds from being hit by the charged and chasing Mother Elephant with full force, trunk drawn up, trumpeting loudly from the left of our side while about 16 Bull & Mother Elephants were on the right side of our vehicle with their calves encircled. The promptness of the driver to make the turnaround has saved us.

I somehow felt, that, wild animals sometimes attacks someone not only so as to harm or to overpower him but perhaps only to learn how strong he is. That day I came to know the difference between speed and hurry, the first being pre-planned and strategic whereas the other one without these. Still I am in search of satisfactory answer to my question, what a herd or for that matter one mother Elephant will do to someone if he is unwelcomed guest to their surroundings particularly if they are with calf. Some wildlife guides have informed to remain still and does not move but question remains whether one can remain so. I recollected my readings somewhere, that when an Elephant dies, its family members get engaged in mourning and burial rituals, conducting vigils over body, carefully covering it with earth and

brush, revisiting the bones for years afterwards, caressing the bones with their trunks the way living animals do in greeting.

At the place, other side of these Elephants were Elephant proof concrete pillars spiked with Iron nails fixed at regular intervals, one of the techniques being tried to not to allow these animals to enter into the habitation of people. But, why these animals go out? Are we really concerned. We are only treating the symptoms and not the disease. Probably these structures may prove to be like "Maginot line" and Elephants will make another way to go out. R.Waldo Emerson, sometime during 19th century stated "nature has made her mind that what cannot defend itself shall not be defended" and probably wild animals cannot defend themselves from our greed and expansionism. I am getting convinced that human nature has not materially altered in last 4000 years and our demand of natural resources is going on increasing. It is becoming apparent that every large land based wild animal is ultimately fighting a losing battle with humankind.

We were in Nagarhole National Park. I do not exactly know, why we human go into forests, when we are not inclined to accept any wild animal entering into our areas, wildlife experts may be having different hypothesis and theories but I am not an expert and I know it.

I suppose, most of us enter into these Forests to have glimpses of mesmerising beauty of nature, whispering sound of silence, presumed happiness, free & pollution unloaded Oxygen, richness of fauna & flora, to give much greater

relief to over fraught minds no doubt all these momentarily. I personally, whenever visit to any protected area, feel it as proverbial "barefoot pilgrimage to Rome in penitential robes" and think if we can protect wilderness. No doubt some of us do this with dubious objectives.

Fortunately today after stoppage of rain, there were two well-formed Rainbows with all the colours distinct on the horizon covering Vayanad of Kerala and Nagarhole. To me if after good rains if the outgoing water from the forest is not, then it is a well-protected and well stocked forest. These forests are sensitive ecosystem, it has bio-diversity, resilience, wildlife habitat, insects, pests and overall aesthetic appeal. I felt transformed for few moments and soon forget other worlds existing. Is it not intentional unawareness? We do not give much importance to conservation of nature in our daily life forget about lip service. Every animal and every plant species is having its own niche and survive if it is allowed. There are Bacteria, Viruses and Fungi to eat away and dissolve the mightiest creature to dust, giving opportunities to the creator to create something better. Probably after creation of the Homo sapiens (erectus) there is some lull, as no better species is in process, probably we ourselves are going to become super species, for which very little evidence exists.

There are evidences which indicate that Mother Nature does not like over specialization, as it limits evolution and weakens the animal. Are we not part of a Standard deviation, and are here only as a chance? I believe, some studies have

found that many vertebrate species would need to evolve 10,000 X faster than they have in the past to adapt to the climate change predicted in the next 100 years.

Even in these forests, Lantana has aggressively colonised followed with Eupatorium, indicating the disturbances in the eco-system. It is very difficult to pass through these thickets, may be providing good shelter to some and threat to some rare and endangered animals. It is said, each mature plant can produce about 12000 seeds per year which are rapidly dispersed beside vegetative dispersal. Some places its half-hearted removal has been tried only to give way to other weeds. Back in State, this exercise was started but left in-between on allegations, this requires continuous removal if considered worth. I am not aware whether any risk analysis to other plants and animals was carried out due to this invasion of species in our State back home and whether its need has been appreciated, and also if not then why?

However, in that two minutes before the Elephants, question asked by someone about time taken by Lord Krishna to deliver "sermons of SrimadBhagvat Gita to Arjuna" in the midst of the war zone with lines drawn, flashed in my memory. Some intelligent people have answered, it was the psychic transfer of knowledge / information between two super computers and it was within fraction of seconds/ Nano-seconds.

My brain has passed through the same transfer process and all the articles read about Elephants have appeared before its screen in jumbled way.

Al-Jazeera a magazine in its July 2015 publication reported, streets of Athens as seen through the eyes of the homeless as "homelessness is a hellhole". Does not the same apply to these mega creature of the nature, once their habitation is fragmented and their society is isolated, they become cornered pawns in an insidious game. Every mature Elephant is a reservoir of experience & transferable wisdom and any disruption in their migratory pattern, hierarchy effect discipline within the herds & even their breeding habits. A separation of calf from the mother was found to be a kind of living dead experience. Some authors have recorded, today Elephant populations are suffering from a form of chronic stress, a kind of species wise trauma.

In a fragmented habitat, the calf in most of the cases become rough element after getting separated from parents, similar to what happened in the cases of Idi-Amin, Muammar Gaddafi and Joseph Stalin, they were declared dictator, one of reasons given is they all have lost their father early in their childhood. The social trauma experienced early in life may have very significant effect of physiological development and adult behaviour pattern both in human and such animals. Researchers have report abnormal hyper-aggressive behaviour among the orphaned male elephant that resulted in rape and killing of Rhinoceros over a period of 10 years, non-recognition of calls from other herds, in orphaned younger mothers left their new born, I started thinking whether our Elephants kept in the Zoo are not suffering

from inappropriateness of keeping, the indelible etching. It is not a vehicle which can be driven by any driver, keeping an Elephant is a task to have faith towards sense of safety developed between the Mahout and the animal.

As I was away from the herd within two minutes, I was continuously trying to find answers, where these Elephants should go if we continue to

shrink & fragment their habitat, why our relations with the wildlife in general is turning bellicose, whether we can learn to live with them and whether we would mind a future without them. The best possible solution seems to me is, we should reduce ourselves overpopulating the earth, reduce our greed & needs and consume less and less.

NEW GREEN YEAR

By
Konda Mohan

Welcome the New Year !
With a plant and a flower !!
Farewell to the old year !
With gratitude and fervour !!

Forests are shrinking
Icecaps are melting
Globe is burning
Where are we going ?

Woods are the resources of aesthetic pleasure
Forest is the Mother Nature, protect us forever
Trees are useful from cradle to coffin
Keep the globe safe by adopting "Go Green" !!

Think Green, Eat Green, Drink Green and sleep Green
Always act to make our globe green
Tree is the alternate to make the Earth Green
"Planting" is the only thing go for it in millions!!

Plant on your Birthday
Gift a plant for every auspicious day!
Follow "3 R" principle: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
Let us vow for a green New Year 2016 !!

THE CAVE-MEN OF KERALA FOREST

By
V.S. Somasundaram

An aborigine Hill Tribe lived in the Post Climax Evergreen Forests of Nilambur Forest Division in Old Amarambalam (new name of the Range is Karulai) Forest Range. Since those tribes would not come out from their abode, nobody knew such human beings existed, until an article appeared in the Malayalam Daily in 1974.

Glancing through the report, I was interested very much to see those human beings. Fortunately I got the posting as the Range Officer in Karulai Range during 1975. I learnt that those tribes come-out during the dry season to hand over the produce collected by them to the Collecting Agent one Athoyi Mappila. A temporary Shed was constructed by the MFP contractor not far away from the Ever Green Forest, where those tribes lived. So the only possibility left me to see those tribes when they visit Athoyi Mappila's Shed. He was working as an agent of the MFP Contractor for the past several years and the tribes had free access to him. Those tribes are known as Chola Naikkans. Chola means shade. The trees here grow upto the height of 200 feet. The canopy of those trees give complete shade and the Forest was always in dark. The Naikkans were known by the name 'Chola Naikkans' because they were living in this shaded forests.

With much difficulty, I was able to gain the

confidence of some of those Chola Naikkans. By seeing their faces I felt that they were happy to meet me. I wanted to go to their Caves. But they did not agree at first. Gradually I won the confidence of one of the Chola Naikkans whose name was Panapuzha Kunkan . He never talked to me but simply smiled at my enquiries. One day he agreed to take me to his cave. The terrain of the Forest floor was very difficult to move, No foot path or any mark was left to reach the cave. Kunkan was walking briskly in the difficult terrain and he had to wait for me to catch up with him. At a particular point he suddenly slid down. As far as I knew it was not safe to go back to where we started our trekking point. So I had no other choice but to follow the Cholanaikkan. On that journey I fell down on few occasions, but Chola Naikkan would not give any helping hand. He simply laughed as if he was seeing some Thamasha .

After walking for about a kilometer distance we reached the cave. The cave was under a big flat rock projecting towards the river known as Manhakallen Puzha, flowing in Western direction to join the river Karimpuzha at Nedungayam in the plains of Karulai Forests. The cave was big enough to accommodate some members underneath. It protects the inmates from sun and rains. The rock was situated on the

bank of the river with an opening in the front side of the rock. Crystal clear water was flowing adjacent to cave.

When I entered the cave I was in search of some mat or bamboo thatty . But it was not there. The entire spacious area under the rock, was filled with fine river sand. They used an Owen to cook the Rice and Tubers in a corner of the cave, They even bury the dead body in the cave and used to sleep or rest in the same cave. On entering the cave I saw a hump in front of the cave. On enquiry I was told that one of the relatives was buried there. They did not have any tool to dig the trench. They simply sharpened one end of tilt bamboo and used it as a crowbar. They used large size bamboo as bottle to store honey they collected from the Forest.

They did not know the market price for purchasing Rice and they did not even know the value of the money. They treated the rupee' coins as another kind of stone and they were least worried in those matters. They accepted what Athoyi Mappila gave them in exchange for the MFP items brought.

Chola Naikkans brought the MFP(Minor Forest Produce) items and were getting Rice, Match boxes and tobacco in bartar from Athoyi Mappila. During Rainy seasons they move in deep Forest in search of Tubers. They extracted big Tubers locally known as VENNY by digging one to one and half meter depth with sharpened bamboo. Hunting was not practiced among

them, but rarely they capture a Lion Tailed monkey.

My frequent contact with them made them confident that I was not their enemy. One day I found that a youngster by name Beeran was scratching at his private part. When I asked, he told me that his wife also had the same problem. So I decided to have a Medical camp near their abode. I contacted the Doctors of Govt. Hospital Nilambur and requested them to conduct a medical camp to which they agreed readily. "My subordinates fully co-operated with me in constructing a temporary pandal , table, cots and chairs for Doctors to examine the needy Chola Naikkans. At first Naikkans refused to go to the Doctors. I persuaded them to go to the Doctor for the checkup. Due to the severity of itching Beeran allowed the checkup by the Doctors. The Doctors told me that he and his wife should be admitted in the Nilambur Hospital for treatment. It was not an easy job to convince them. I deputed two willing Forest Guards to take them to the Hospital and guard against the Naikkans running away from the Hospital.

After reaching in the Hospital, the Doctors gave sedation to the couple. Since the Naikkans had not taken any medicines, Allopathy or Ayurvedic in their lifetime, the Antibiotic proved effective. For one full day they were under sedation. The next day evening they compelled the Guard to allow them go to their abode. So the Guard brought them to my

Quarters. They reached the Quarters late in night, I persuaded them to spend the night in my Quarters and gave them accommodation on the varanda of my quarters. My wife gave them a mat and a bedsheet for sleeping. But they did not use anything given to them and slept on the floor itself.

In the early morning before sunrise I woke up to see whether they were still there, but they had left already. After a few days I again saw those Naikkans in the forest. I enquired about their illness and was told by Beeran that they were very happy because itching no longer troubled them.

The blood relationship was quite unknown to them. They did not know who was their father and mother. I suspected the practice of birth control by them. The female members were less in numbers and they protected their spouses keenly, The females were not allowed to move or talk to male members other than their husbands.

They lived and moved in the forest like wild animals. The wild animals stoop and drink water at the water sources. Likewise the Chola Naikkans too stooped in the river and drag the water into the mouth directly. They never took water in hands for drink. Though the crystal clear water was flowing in the river, they never took bath. If anyone fell in the river, they dried their body in sunshine.

One day happened to see a young Naikkan, with his forehead in thick black colour. I went near

him and on close observation I found it to be the Lice covering his forehead. He was unconcerned about it. The Chola Naikkans were always half naked, covering their private part with a dirty mud colored piece of cloth.

The media reports attracted many journalists and other people. Many came to study these aborigines, but most of them could not even sight them. Some foreigners with permission of Central and State Governments came to study them. Even State Ministers had arranged a function near their abode. The Forest staff were asked to bring the Naikkans to attend function. Though they agreed to attend the function, none of them turned up. On the next day I could meet some of the Chola Naikkan, I was told that they were afraid of the loudspeaker sound which they heard first time. They also told me that they watched every thing hiding themselves behind the rocks near the function site.

They did not believe in any God or prayers. They had no religion, nor were any leaders among them. They wandered in the Forest without any fear of attack by the wild animals, but were afraid of common people. They did not fear wild elephants, but feared the domestic elephants let loose to graze by the Contractors working in the Forests. They never brushed or cleaned their teeth. But their teeth were very strong. Even though they did not talk to the outsiders, they were always seen with a smiling face.

BRIDGE ON RIVER MUSI

By
J. V. Sharma

The Chief Minister, Shri K. Chandrasekhara Rao unveiled his plans to construct a 42-km bridge all along Musi River in the river-bed from Gandipet to Warangal-Vijayawada link road. The proposed bridge road passes through Hyderabad City, roughly from west to east, connecting important places like, High Court, Osmania General Hospital, Mahatma Gandhi Bus Terminal, Amberpet and several extended parts of the City. Important highways Hyderabad-Warangal and Hyderabad-Vijayawada (also to Nalgonda & Khammam), running almost parallel to River on either side in close proximity, are choked to the full posing serious traffic problems. The need of another road, a wider road at that, needs no emphasis. It is said that the bridge will have as many as 40 intersections to provide North- South connectivity to the hinterland within the city.

Even by a layman's understanding, it is a mega-project requiring enormous quantities of construction materials not to speak of space and finances. Keeping the larger interests of hassle-free civic life in view, Government appears prepared to bite the bullet. Understandably, the space constraint is to be got over using the river bed for the purpose.

Musi has a history of its own. Our elders (I am 83) used to say that it was a live river and there was always water in the river. It has the history of floods and a tree which saved hundreds of lives, remains still near OGH as a monument. There is a Medium Irrigation Project over the river down stream near Suryapet and the river joins Krishna River near Vadapalli (Wazirabad) in Nalgonda District. River, now presents a pathetic picture which is not even a shadow of its past glory. Even now we see floods in Musi now & then, not only when excess water is released from Osmansagar (Gandipet Lake), but also when there are heavy showers in the City and over-flooded roads empty their woes into the river. Over the years, it has turned into garbage dump yard and a cesspool of sewage and industrial effluents. The river bed can be seen with dubious existence of perennial water which is toxic and unusable. Encroachments galore and successive Governments have only contributed to the abuse of the River and the River-front.

State Government floated grandiose plans in the past to transform the River into a dream park and a destination for recreation. These projects ended in wasting funds than change the fate of Musi. The fortunes of the River are at its Nadir. Moot point is whether the Bridge Road Project now

contemplated by the CM can make any difference? If it can make the difference, will it be for better?

Mr. Saibhaskar Reddy, a well-known Geo-Ecologist and an expert in Urban Planning (known to me) came out with some genuine concerns in the matter (Bridge along Musi a threat: Activists - p-2, DC-19.10.2015) what with the present trend of licentious approach towards public property. Objections aired by Mr. Reddy and other activists are:

1. There would be fewer issues if it was a bridge crossing the river but this is a 42-km road running on the river-bed. It will cause shrinkage of the river bed and the planned junctions will occupy more space. Once the road is constructed, it would attract commercial users.
2. There are occupations all along the river and this problem is not addressed.
3. The bridge would lead to inundation. The history of the river will be lost.
4. It is a six-lane road involving lot of construction. The concrete will cover the river.
5. If the river bed is turned into concrete base while laying the road, it could cause inundation during rains. It is the only outlet for City's water.
6. Some experts cited the example of a similar project in Seoul, South Korea where the 8.4 km. Cheonggyecheon stream flowing from west to east through the City to empty into Han River was covered with concrete for roads and an elevated highway of 5.6 km. long and 16 metre wide was completed in 1976. In course of time, both sides of the stream came to be occupied by shanties to be an eyesore with attendant problems. In 2003, the expressway was dismantled and an enormous quantity of water had to be released into stream to revive it. It has now turned into a modern public recreation space.

The concerns aired and the example given, are incontrovertible with proven scientific explanation. If a 5.6 km long Highway over 8.4 km. long stream could prove to be hazardous, the adverse effects of a 42 Km. long expressway can only be disastrous given our well-known deficiency in complying with regulations. The proposed bridge over Musi will be a massive structure defying our imagination now. It will be a six-lane road, possibly with a minimum width of 120 feet. It will pose several unforeseen problems of security, crime, health, law & order etc not to speak of the safety and interests of people down stream.

Musi in the present form is not a healthy river. It is a dying river if not dead. Whatever life remains will be stifled by the bridge when it materialises. Its catchment area is already badly interfered

with a big question mark on the survival of Osmansagar. These apart, as already said the river course within the city is subjected to all kinds of assaults. Possibly, the river had seen some good times during the princely rule. A masonry parapet was constructed on both sides of the course which can be seen even now though with encroachments here and there. A monumental effort was made to secure the river which is squandered subsequently. Some say it was constructed to tame the river to flow within the course in the aftermath of Musi floods. Some others say it was constructed as part of beautification plan when Sir Mirza Ismail was the Nizam's Prime Minister. Whatever be the truth, it is a landmark initiative which the present Government should capitalize for evicting encroachers.

But the present problem of traffic has to be addressed in any case. There are no alternative routes to offload the traffic. I have a suggestion which will be a compromise of the Government Plans as well as environmental concerns which is detailed below in brief:

- a) The bridge road project with 120 feet width to remain on board.
- b) River banks on both the sides of Musi River are badly encroached often right into the river. There are stipulations that river banks are State property and no construction can come up over these areas. The limits of the River and its banks on either side should be identified, surveyed and demarcated on the ground. Old maps particularly, the Sar Naksha will be helpful.
- c) A special law should be enacted in public interest to treat the identified areas as *ipso facto* encroachments and provide for their removals by various means depending upon the merits. The law should be beyond the considerations of religion, race, sect etc and the operation of other laws.
- d) Proposed road should not be along the river bed in the middle but taken along the either bank according to convenience leaving the remaining river course undisturbed.
- e) River-bed and its banks remaining untapped for bridge road will be firmly secured with a riverfront.
- f) Under no circumstances the development should be in the Public-Private Partnership mode. The poison of commercial interests has no limits for its damage potential. Once vested interests take roots, it will be difficult to eradicate the evil.

EASTERN EUROPE: A TRAVELOGUE

By

Dr. B. Raghatham Rao Desai

Having had an opportunity, as part of a cultural delegation, to visit recently (Aug.-Sept. '15) a few culturally rich countries of Eastern Europe (via Abu Zabi or Abu Dhabhi, Capital of UAE—— home to various multi-ethnic communities, its culture being an amalgam of a number of world cultures, despite Islam being most widely followed religion), I have the travelogue compiled from a “tourist’s point of view” (while I propose to deal with Climate Change in a separate article —— which subject I had an occasion to study from “business point of view”).

1. Czech republic:

Prague (or Praha, on the banks of the Vltava which is the main tributary to the Elba, flowing into the North Sea) is the capital of Czech Republic which has two main regions of Bohemia and Moravia – former being twice as large as the latter. The ethnic composition is 94% Czech (Moravians and Bohemian Czechs) and the rest are Slovak, Polish, German, Romany (Gypsy), Ukrainian and Jews.

Czech language is an Indo-European one, intelligible with Slovak.

Prague has a renowned and active musical life —— Prague Symphony and the Czech Philharmonic having reputations abroad. Perhaps the most notable monuments are the

Church of St. George, St. Vitus’s Cathedral, Tyn Church (in the “Old Town Square”), Powder Tower (in the busy shopping area), Bethlehem Chapel, and the Old-new Synagogue, in addition to St. Nicholas Church, the National Museum and the National Theatre —— the main Neoclassical buildings. Outstanding architects created magnificent palaces and gardens, and churches in the Prague-version of the Barque-style sprang up throughout the city.

In 1989 Prague’s Wenceslas Square became the cradle of a movement that swiftly ended four decades of communist rule and when Czechoslovakia itself was dissolved by a referendum into its constituent republics (of Czech & Slovak) in 1993, Prague maintained its prominent international status as capital of Czech Republic, undergoing a cultural, economic and political transformation throughout the 1990s. It is now designated as European City of Culture.

2. Hungary

Cited as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, Budapest (on the banks of the Danube) is the capital of Hungary, also described as primate city of its country and one of the largest cities in the European Union. It is also the

country's principal political, cultural, commercial, industrial and transportation centre.

Its extensive World Heritage Site includes the banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter, Andrassy Avenue, Heroe's Square and the Millennium Underground Railway, the second-oldest metro line in the world. It has some 80 geothermal springs, the world's largest thermal water cave system, second largest synagogue, and third largest Parliament building. Budapest is the only capital city in the world which has thermal springs, producing about 70 million litres of thermal water a day, with temperature ranging upto 58 degrees Celsius, some of these waters have medicinal effects due to their medically valuable mineral contents.

Considered as a financial hub in Central Europe, it is ranked as "the world's second best city" and the most liveable Central or Eastern European city — also famous as "Europe's 7th most idyllic place to live"!

Budapest, strategically placed at the centre of the Carpathian Basin, lies on an ancient route linking the hills of Transdenubia with the Great Plain. By road it is 275 mi (or 443 Kms) S_E of Prague and 134 mi (or 216 Kms) S_E of Wien (or Vienna). All major European Roads and European Railway lines lead to it. The Danube enters the city from the North, 755' (or 230 M.) wide at its narrowest point — always fordable. The city

has marked topographical contrasts — Buda is built on the higher river terraces and hills of the western side, while the considerably larger Pest spreads out on a flat and featureless sand plain on the river's opposite bank. The Danube was and is still an important water way and this region in the centre of the Carpathian Basin lies at the cross-road of trade-routes.

3. Austria:

Vienna (or Wien, on the banks of the Danube), the capital city of Austria, has long been an important center of musical innovations. Composers of 18th and 19th centuries were drawn to the city by the patronage of Habsburgs, and made it the European capital of classical music. Mozart, Beethoven, Joseph Haydn and Strauss Jr., among others, were associated with the city. Vienna's status began its rise as a cultural centre in the early 16th century and was focused around instruments including the lute. The city became especially important place for musical innovations during 18th century, when the classical-music era dominated European music and the above four composers arose, making lasting innovations — "balance between melody and form", "symphonic patterns", and "development of the string quartet & sonata". Since 1939, the famous Vienna New Year's Concert (of the Vienna Philharmonic) is broadcast from its Golden Hall to an audience of one billion in 44 countries —

— the members of Philharmonic, regularly considered one of the finest orchestras in the world, are chosen from the orchestra of the Vienna State Opera, which employs over 1000 people and the annual operating budget was 100 million Euros in 2008.

Complementing its status as a land of artists, Austria has always been a country of great poets, writers and novelists. Austria is also famous for its castles, palaces and buildings among other architectural works, and is rich in Roman Catholic tradition. One of the world's tallest cathedrals (446' or 136 M. tall, 351' or 107 M. long and 111.5' or 34M wide) Stephansdom is the seat of the Archbishop of Vienna. Two of the most famous Austrian palaces are the Belvedere and Schonbrunn, added to the UN's World Cultural Heritage List, along-with Austrian Southern Railway (the first European mountain railway built with a standard-guage track in 1848-1854 and still fully functional).

Austria is a small, predominantly mountainous landlocked country in Central Europe. Alps literally overshadow other landform regions — just about a third of the country's lands being moderately hilly or flat. The granite massif of the Bohemian Forest, a low mountain range with bare and windswept plateaus and a harsh climate, is located north of Danube Valley.

4. Slovakia:

Bratislava is the Capital of Slovakia, surrounded by vineyards on the slopes of the Little Carpathian Mountains. Old city and the castle are eye-catching. As and when we are invited to a Slovak's house, almost a dozen formalities are to be formally observed, a few of them being:

Remove shoes at the door, be punctual, dress well, observe continental table manners, wait till host says "do brouchut" before starting to eat, allow the napkin folded next to the plate and not unfold it and put on lap, etc.,]

The main Slovak waterway is the Danube, some 175 Kms long in its territory, main ports being located in Bratislava and Komarno. Cultivated fields occupy about a third of the country's area. Significant feature of this country is that 41 % of its area is covered with forests, while an equal area is arable land and pastures. Western regions happen to be more developed, main sectors manufacturing electrochemical, steel, textile and car plants are underway.

Slovakia has a large number of natural curative springs as well as extensive deposits of healing peat and mud of high quality — several of the better-known spas are visited every year by people from many countries.

CELEBRATIONS OF REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

By
Qamar Mohammad Khan

Every year India's Republic Day is celebrated, this starts from 26th January and concludes on 29th of January. Republic Day is the date on which the Constitution of India came into force replacing the Government of India Act of 1935 as the governing document of India. The Government of India Act 1935 was originally passed in August 1935, and is said to have been the longest British Act of Indian Parliament ever enacted by that time.

The Constitution was adopted by the India Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949, and came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system, completing the country's transition toward becoming an independent republic. 26th January was selected for this purpose because it was this day in 1930 when the Declaration of Indian Independence *Purna Swaraj* was proclaimed by the Indian National Congress.

We achieved independence from British rule on 15th August after nonviolent movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. The country, though, did not yet have a permanent constitution; instead its laws were based on the modified colonial

Government of India Act 1935. After achieving independence, on 29th August 1947, the Drafting Committee was appointed to draft a permanent constitution, with Dr B R Ambedkar as chairman and six others as members along with a constitutional adviser Sir BenegalNarsing Rau. The committee's other members were: K. M. Munshi, AlladiKrishnaswamylyer, N. Gopaldaswami Ayengar, B. L. Mitter, Md. Saadullah, and D. P. Khaitan. Later B. L. Mitter resigned from the committee and he was replaced by Madhav Rao of Vadodra, D P Khaitan passed away and was replaced by T. T.Krishnamachari.

While India's Independence Day celebrates its freedom from British Rule, the Republic Day celebrates of coming into force of its constitution. A draft constitution was prepared by the committee and submitted to the Assembly on 4 November 1947. The Assembly met, in sessions, for 166 days, spread over a period of 2 years, 11 months and 18 days before adopting the Constitution. After many deliberations and some modifications, the 308 members of the Assembly signed two hand-written copies of the document, one

each in Hindi and English on 24 January 1950. Two days later, it came into effect throughout the nation.

Main Republic Day celebration is held in the capital, New Delhi, at the Rajpath. It is the main attraction of India's Republic Day Celebrations, which extends for 3 days. To mark the importance of the occasion, every year a grand parade is held in the capital, New Delhi, from the *Raisinahill Rashtrapati Bhavan*, the President's residence, along the *Rajpath*, past India Gate. In 2014, on the occasion of the 65th Republic Day, the Government of Maharashtra held its first parade on the lines of the Delhi Republic Day parade along the entire stretch of Marine Drive in Mumbai.

Prior to commencement of parade, the Prime Minister lays a floral wreath at the *Amar Jawan Jyoti*, a memorial to martyred soldiers at the India Gate at one end of Rajpath, which is followed by two minutes silence in the memory of them. It is a solemn reminder of the sacrifice of the martyrs who died for the country in the freedom movement and the succeeding wars for the defence of sovereignty of their country. Thereafter the Prime Minister reaches the main dais at Rajpath to join other dignitaries, subsequently the President arrives along with the chief guest of the occasion. Since 1950, India

has been hosting head of state or government of another country as the state guest of honour for Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. During 2013 celebrations King of Bhutan, 2014 Prime Minister of Japan, and 2015 Barak Obama president of U.S were the State Guests for Republic day celebrations. Government of India has invited President of France to attend Republic Day celebrations of 2016. France and Bhutan have the distinction of being the guest of honour for the maximum four number of times followed by three visits each from Mauritius and USSR/Russia

First, the president unfurls the National flag, as the National Anthem is played, and a 21-gun salute is given as the President's Body Guard renders the National Salute. The President's Body Guard is an elite household cavalry regiment of the Indian Army. It is senior-most in the order of precedence of the units of the Indian Army. The primary role of the President's Body Guard is to escort and protect the President of India which is why the regiment is based in the *Rashtrapati Bhawan* New Delhi. The regiment is the successor of the Governor General's Bodyguard of the British Raj. President's Body Guard as seen is an integral part of all State functions be it the Republic Day Parade, Beating Retreat, the State Opening of

Parliament, visits by the Heads of State, Ceremonial Changing of the Guard, investitures, presentation of letters of credence, swearing-in of Government Ministers, state banquets, or receptions by the President of India.

Next, awards like the Ashok Chakra and Kirti Chakra are given away by the President, before the regiments of Armed Forces start their march past. The President comes forward to award the medals of bravery to the people from the armed forces for their exceptional courage in the field and also the civilians, who have distinguished themselves by their different acts of valour in different situations. Children who receive the National Bravery Award ride past the spectators on colourfully decorated elephants or vehicles. Indian Army in addition to the Navy, and Air Force with their bands march past in all their finery and official decorations. The President of India who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces, takes the salute. Twelve contingents of various para-military forces of India and other civil forces also take part in this

parade. One of the unique sights of the parade is the camel mounted Border Security Force contingent, which is the only camel mounted military force in the world. The parade traditionally ends with dare devil motor cycle riding by motorcycle units of the Armed Forces and a flypast by the Indian Air Force jets and helicopters carrying the national flag and the flags of the three services.

The Beating Retreat ceremony officially denotes the end of Republic Day festivities. It is conducted on the evening of 29 January. It is performed by the bands of the three wings of the military, the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force. The Chief Guest of the function is the President of India who arrives escorted by the President's Body Guards. When the President arrives, the PBG commander asks the unit to give the National Salute, which is followed by the playing of the Indian National Anthem, *Jana Gana Mana*, by the Army and the function comes to an end.

Learning gives Creativity, Creativity leads to Thinking, Thinking provides Knowledge, Knowledge makes you great

Dream is not that you see while you sleep, dream is something that does not let you sleep

A day in Addis Ababa

A new flower blossomed in my garden,
Faded in twenty four hours,
Left its fragrance to last a life time.

The bird song and the splashing of children,
The caress of the afternoon Sun,
And the sweet languid rest after a week's work,
Reminded me to live in the moment.

A deep look into your eyes,
A lovely smile with all my heart,
My precious life,
You are mine.....
Or am I yours.....
Forever!



The world and I

When I water you, my thirst is quenched,
When I feed you, I am full,
When I shelter you, I am safe,
When I teach you, I learn,
When I help you see, my eyes open,
When I hug you, I am comforted,
When I kiss you, I am treasured,
When I love you, I am loved.
When I share what I have, my life has a purpose.

Dr. Madhavi Reddy

BROWNSVILLE EYE DOCTOR TRAVELS GLOBE RESTORING VISION

By
Christina R. Garza

Once a year, Brownsville ophthalmologist Dr. Madhavi Reddy forgoes the ease and convenience of working at the SouthTexas Eye Centre with its modern Technology and plumbing. She travels to third world countries to restore the sight of people who would otherwise remain blind.

For the past 11 years Reddy has traveled the globe with Surgical Eye Expeditions International (SEE International) to restore sight to thousands who otherwise would never see.

Last month Reddy spent a few days in Ethiopia in the village of Dembi Dolo, where she and another doctor performed more than 200 eye surgeries in a matter of days. Eye surgeries that take minutes in the United States are done in makeshift operating rooms overseas thanks to the determination of volunteer doctors like Reddy.

Reddy first began working as a resident doctor in her native India. As a university student in the

city of Hyderabad, she completed several medical missions, which included eye camps to bring eye care to disadvantaged people in areas of India.

Reddy said her volunteer work wouldn't be possible without the support of her husband Dr. Sundeep Reddy and her medical partners Dr. Eric Barron and Dr. David Hyde.

"We are so fortunate here, we have unbelievable resources, opportunities to grow I feel so blessed and I am aware that the rest of the world doesn't have those things. Volunteering my time is the least I can do," Reddy said.

Reddy pays out of pocket for the expenses related to the trip and receives donations from pharmaceutical companies for the products used.

The costs of the trip are overshadowed by the countless lives Reddy touches.

Dr. Madhavi Reddy of Brownsville Tx USA ,is the older daughter of celebrated and accomplished parents Mrs. Lakshmi and Mr. K. Mohan Reddy, a member of the Forest Fraternity at Hyderabad. This article was first published in The Brownsville Herald.

USAGE OF BIO-ACOUSTICS IN REDUCING MAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

By

M. Ram Mohan

The Government of Telangana has ordered to shoot the crop damaging wildlife, the Wild pigs, to help the farmers in saving the standing crops. The crops have been under constant attack by the wild animals from the surrounding forests. The Govt. has also enhanced the compensation last year to the farmers basing upon the damage caused. It is widely perceived that the damage is not compensated suitably. It is also a fact that the farmers undergo enormous hardships in saving crops from wild animals.

The shooting of animals may reduce the population of the species concerned. The statistics are not available regarding population status to know whether they are over-populated. The factors driving the wild animals to venture out of the forests are to be studied and the factors include loss of habitat due to encroachments, fragmentation, changed crop pattern, etc.

The animals are venturing into the fields for the sake of food and becoming, sometimes, prey. Unnatural death of the wildlife found in the fields is considered to be wildlife offence and cases are to be registered against the farmers for which they vociferously defend their act saying that the crop is damaged by the wild animals, which often snowballs into a Man-Animal conflict, a divide between Forest Department and the people.

In this backdrop in order to mitigating the Man-Animal conflict, some alternative methods are devised. One such method is, usage of Bio-Acoustics. Designed by Dr. Vasudeva Rao and his

researcher team of Prof. Jayashankar Agriculture University, Hyderabad, the Bio-Acoustics Machine consists of a battery, speaker, program and a solar panel. Calls of the predators such as the Tiger, Leopard and the alarm and distress calls of other animals are recorded in natural environment and played during night time in the fields prone for damage by the wild animals. Sounds emanating from the machine wean away the animals.

In order to mitigate the Man-Animal conflict in Bejjur Forest Range of Kaghaznagar Division, a machine was installed in maize and cotton fields of the farmers on pilot basis in August 2015. The machine was found to be effective in weaning away the wild pigs covering about 30 acres of crop area during its installation period. The farmers are motivated to purchase the Bio-Acoustics machine sharing the amount as per their individual land holdings.

The question lurks one's mind that the animals may get accustomed to the sounds in due course. But, it is said that the machine is to be used for a few weeks (2-3) period when the crop is in palatable condition, latex stage in maize, etc, after which the machine is removed and will be used during the next crop only. Hence, chances for habituation to sounds are remote. Since the Bio-Acoustics Method is tried and proved effective in saving the wild life and the crops, this may be opted for as an alternative method in addressing the Man-Animal conflict.

8 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE INDIAN RUPEE

Money plays an important role in each one's life. Earning, spending and saving patterns determine how one can manage wealth. The Indian rupee has been in the market for ages now. But, how much do you know about the currency?

Here is a list of some interesting facts about the Indian currency, according to the Reserve Bank of India:

1. A symbol of Independence: At the outset it was felt that the King's portrait be replaced by a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi. Designs were prepared to that effect. In the final analysis, the consensus moved to the choice of the Lion Capital at Sarnath in lieu of the Gandhi Portrait.

2. Size of notes: The lean period of the early sixties led to considerations of economy and the sizes of notes were reduced in 1967. In 1969, a commemorative design series in honour of the birth centenary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi was issued depicting a seated Gandhi with the Sevagram Ashram as the backdrop.

3. Cost-benefit: The Cost-benefit considerations prompted the Bank to introduce Rs. 20 denomination notes in 1972 and Rs. 50 in 1975. Government of India continued to issue currency notes till the Reserve Bank of India was established on 1st April 1935. When the one-rupee note was reintroduced as a war time measure in August 1940, it was issued by Government of India with the status of a coin.

The government of India continued to issue Rupee one notes till 1994.

4. A new set of Notes: The 1980s saw a completely new set of notes issued. The motifs on these notes marked a departure from the earlier motifs. The motifs appearing on Indian currency notes reflect the changing socio-cultural ethos and the world-view of the times: buccaneering mercantilism, colonial consolidation, domineering imperialism etc. It emphasises on symbols of Science & Technology (Aryabhatta on the Rs 2 note), Progress (the Oil Rig on Re 1 and Farm Mechanisation on Rs 5) and a change in orientation to Indian Art forms on the Rs 20 and the Rs 10 notes. (Konark Wheel, Peacock).

5. Design: The responsibility for coinage vests with the Government of India in terms of the Coinage Act, 1906 as amended from time to time. The designing and minting of coins in various denominations is also the responsibility of the Government of India. Coins are minted at the four India Government Mints at Mumbai, Alipore(Kolkata), Saifabad(Hyderabad), Cherlapally (Hyderabad) and Noida(UP).

6. Dominance of Hindi: In 1953, Hindi was displayed prominently on the new notes. The debate regarding the Hindi plural of Rupaya was settled in favour of Rupiye. High denomination notes like Rs 1,000, Rs. 5,000, and

Rs. 10,000 were reintroduced in 1954.

7. Currency management: The Rupee 500 note was introduced in October 1987 with the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi. The water mark continued to be the Lion Capital, Ashoka Pillar. Management of Currency had to cope with the rising demands of a growing economy, together with a fall in purchasing power.

8. New techniques: With the advancement of reprographic techniques, traditional security features were deemed inadequate. It was necessary to introduce new features and a new 'Mahatma Gandhi Series' was introduced in 1996.

Japan steps in, bullet train on track

India's ambitious plan to have world-class super-speed trains plying between its major cities have moved a "step" closer to fruition, with Japan agreeing to fund the proposed R1-lakh-crore Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project by up to 81%. With the low-cost Japanese STEP (Special Terms of Economic Partnership) loan being available, the government's job will be limited to acquiring the required land for the 505-km linear stretch between the two highly industrialised cities and bearing the cost of the tax concessions.

The deal on the bullet train project, which would reduce the travel time between the two cities to two hours from over seven by existing express trains, would be inked during Japanese Prime

Minister Shinzo Abe's three-day visit to India starting Friday, official sources confirmed.

The loan from Japan's government-owned Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the sources said, would carry a nominal interest of 0.1% with the relevant conditions likely to be far more lenient than what was initially for JICA assistance to the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) project.

The prime contractor implementing the bullet train projects could be a joint venture between Japanese and Indian firms (in the case of DMIC, JICA had initially said the prime contractor must be a Japanese firm, and this was later relaxed with Indian firms also allowed to be the main contractors for some of the DMIC projects). As in the case of JICA's overseas development assistance to DMIC, the funding of the bullet train project will also be subject to the condition that a portion of the goods and services should be procured from Japanese firms, although the exact quantum of the reservation could not be immediately ascertained. In such projects, the maximum procurement from abroad usually doesn't cross 20%, an official said.

The 40-year JICA soft loan could be extended by another 10 years. An Indian Railways and JICA feasibility study had estimated the project cost to be Rs 98,000 crore and said the project could take six years to complete.

“As the travel time is reduced to two hours, the economic integration between the cities becomes stronger and also spreads out urbanisation,” said Manish Agarwal, partner and leader, infrastructure, PwC India, who was part of the team that prepared the feasibility report. “In such an infrastructure project capital cannot be serviced out of fare-box revenue, hence long-term, low-interest rate is critical. The project would also contribute to economic growth and thereby to tax revenue,” he added.

The deal would mark the first big infrastructure investment push by Japan after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Abe, known to have a good bonding, elevated the relationship between the two countries to ‘Special Strategic and Global Partnership’ at their last summit meeting held in Tokyo in August 2014.

The success of this project would decide whether Japanese Shinkansen technology would be repeated elsewhere in the country as India has plans for similar tracks to reduce travel time between major cities. The cost of travelling by bullet train between Mumbai and Ahmedabad would be slightly less than travel by air, giving an alternative to frequent fliers who spend a lot of time travelling to airports two hours in advance to catch a flight.

A deal with India could be the second successful case of Japan exporting its Shinkansen bullet train technology to a foreign market, following a

deal with Taiwan in 2007.

India’s massive rail network runs 12,000 trains a day, carrying 230 lakh people and connecting about 8,000 stations.

However, it has suffered decades of neglect at a time of rapid economic growth during which car ownership has surged and low-cost airlines have mushroomed. In 2014, the Modi government opened up several areas of the railways to foreign investment up to 100% in a bid to attract technology to modernise the national carrier, expand networks and increase access to capital to win back freight traffic from roads.

A passenger train in India can achieve a maximum speed of 160 km per hour, half of the speed of a Japanese Shinkansen.

Besides the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed corridor, India has also awarded to various consortia for feasibility study for three other such corridors as part of the railways’ plan to build such infrastructure, connecting the ‘Golden Quadrilateral’ spanning over 10,000 km that will connect Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata.

India is the biggest recipient of JICA funding with commitments totalling Rs 1.26 lakh crore between FY04 and FY15. It is the main funding agency for a host of big-ticket infrastructure projects in the country including the successful Delhi Metro project and industrial corridors under development.

XVI S.F.R.C. ALUMNI MEET-2015 RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH BY V. SANTHASEELA BABU

The XVI SFRC Alumni Meet of 2015 was conducted under the hospitality of the Alumni of Chattisgarh State from 15th November 2015 to 18th November, 2015 at Raipur. The Organizing Committee had Mr. R.N. Deshmukh as Patron, Mr. C.M. Shakeel and Mr. S.P. Kaushal as Advisors, Mr. D.P. Deshmukh as Chairman, Mr. R.S. Vishwakarma as Vice-Chairman, Mr. R.K. Sood as Secretary General, Mr. M.S. Thakur and N.P. Biskia as Addl. Secretaries.

15th November 2015: All the participants arrived at Raipur and were accommodated in Hotel Sheetal, Hotel Grand International, Hotel Landmark and Hotel Mahendra. The venue for the meet was fixed at Hotel Florence and all have assembled in the Conference Hall by evening and Registration of participants took place.

At the Inaugural function Mr. R.K. Sood, Secretary General invited the dignitaries to the Dias and the function was attended by Mr. P.C. Arvind Boez, I.F.S; Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Chattisgarh as chief guest. The meet was inaugurated by lighting the Lamp on the stage. Mrs. Arvind Boez, Mr. D.P. Deshmukh, Mr. S.S. Joshi, Mr. R.D. Reddy, Mr. T. Narayan Swamy, Mr. Suresh Deshpande, Mr. Borgoankar, Mr. Periya Swamy, Mr. George Varghese, Mr. V. Sambasivan, Mr. R.S. Goswamy were on the Dias.

Mr. Arvind Boez, I.F.S; Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Chattisgarh lauded the very idea of this type of meetings and opined that it may not be confined to the Alumni of Southern Forest Rangers College alone and may be extended to all the other Rangers Colleges in India, so that the scope of participation would be extended

to more members of the Forestry fraternity. He also mooted the idea of organizing such meetings for the Alumni of Indian Forest College also. All the speakers at the meet expressed their happiness for the reunion of the Alumni and paid rich tributes to the *Alma matter* which paved way for successful conduct of their lives. Mr. D.S. Periyasami of 1949-51 Batch, Mr. S.S. Joshi, addressed the gathering and expressed their feelings. The meeting was followed by a Music Programme.

After having our dinner all of us returned to our respective places of stay and retired for the day.

16th November 2015:

Today, after breakfast, we proceeded from Raipur to Sirpur by buses. Sirpur or Shripura as it was known in ancient times, is a small village located on the right bank of River Mahanadi, 83 kms to the north-east of Raipur. It was the capital of Dakshin Koshala under the Sarabhapuriyas and Panduvanshis. The Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang visited Sirpur in 635 A.D. Sirpur has archaeological remains associated with Shaiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist and Jain faiths. Excavations at Sirpur have yielded extensive ruins of ancient structures scattered over a vast area. Among the numerous temples and Buddhist monasteries (Viharas), the most notable are the Lakshman temple, Gandheswara temple, Anandaprabhu Kasturi vihara and Swastika vihara.

We visited the Lakshman temple. The Lakshman temple belonging to the mature phase of Gupta architecture can be assigned to the 7th century. The temple is located in a well tended garden and is one of the finest brick

temples of India. As indicated by the epigraphical data noticed during the clearance of debris from the mandapa (now preserved in Raipur museum), it was the widow of Somavanshi king Harsha Gupta Vasata who originally dedicated the temple to Lord Vishnu during the reign of their son Mahasiva Gupta Balarjuna.

After visiting the Lakshman temple, we had our lunch enroute to Raipur and returned to Raipur. In the evening all of us met in Hotel Mahendra. Before the dinner some of the gentlemen got busy with the 'Happy Hours' and games were conducted. Tambola game was conducted by me, Mrs. R.K. Sood and others. My wife Mrs. V. Bhagya Lakshmi and my batch mate Mr. P.C. Pachori have conducted a game for ladies which involved preparing squares with clips.

The following were the Prize winners:

1. Mrs. Pushpa Vani1st Prize.
2. Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi2nd Prize
3. Mrs. Damayanthi3rd Prize.

I along with Mr. Vara Prasad and Mr. Muni Sivanna have conducted a game for the gentlemen involving formation of words with Alphabets provided to them.

In this game the following were the Prize winners:

1. Mr. R.K. Mishara.....1st Prize
2. Mr. B.V. Kulkarni2nd Prize
3. Mr. R.K. Dixit3rd Prize.

Another game was also conducted for the gentlemen involving fixing of Straws on the head in their hair.

In this game the following were the Prize winners:

1. Mr. Umakant Parashar1st Prize
2. Mr. Sahu2nd Prize
3. Mr. Khotele3rd Prize.

17th November-2015:

This day we were taken to visit Gangrel Dam near Dhamtari. This Dam is constructed across the River Mahanadi. This is also called Ravishankar Dam and this irrigates about 57,000 Ha. of land and this is the main source of water for the Bhilai Steel Plant.

Then we proceeded to a Resort where lunch was arranged. After having the lunch and resting for a while we visited a Herbal Garden located nearby and studied the various Medicinal Plants raised in the garden. Tea and Snacks were arranged there and after having our Tea we started our return journey to Raipur. After reaching Raipur we refreshed ourselves in our hotels and proceeded to Hotel Florence and attended the Valedictory function. A spectacular show of "Sua Dance" programme was witnessed by us which was performed in traditional costumes of Chattisgarh depicting the life style of Tribal people wherein various stages of their life like Birth, Youth, Marriage etc; were performed by the dancers. This was a show of full one hour.

In the Valedictory function, Mr. T. Narayan Swamy, announced the readiness of Telangana State Alumni for hosting the XVII SFRC Alumni Meet at Hyderabad which was received by the audience with a big applause.

The prizes for the winners of the events conducted by us were sponsored by me and my wife Mrs. Bhagya Lakshmi and we got them distributed to the winners through Mr. T. Narayan Swamy I.F.S (Retd).

After the conclusion of valedictory function we had our dinner and all the participants dispersed from Hotel Florence with heavy hearts bidding goodbye to each other to their places of stay hoping to meet at Hyderabad next year. We returned to Vizianagaram the next day.

We wish the following born on the dates mentioned
“ A very Happy Birth Day ”

S.No.	Name of the member	D.O.B.			
	Sarva Sri		12.	I.Prakash	09-01-1977
1.	D.V.Rao	09-01-1931	13.	P.Ashok Rao	10-01-1961
2.	K.Koteswar Rao	10-01-1933	14.	C. Vajra Reddy	10-01-1967
3.	R.D.Reddy	14-01-1938	15.	V.Srihari Gopal	14-01-1966
4.	K.Mohan Reddy	16-01-1934	16.	R.Kondal Rao	15-01-01970
5.	P.Bhaskar Reddy	21-01-1953	17.	Ms.D.Samhita	21-01-01988
6.	H.K.Desai	23-01-1936	18.	K.Mahaboob Basha	25-01-1986
7.	V.P.Adinarayana	23-01-1940	19.	M.Nagarjuna Reddy	30-01-1965
8.	P.Gracious	24-01-1949	20.	B.Venkateswara Rao	31-01-1968
9.	Dr.C.N.Rao	26-01-1938	21.	K.Mohan Rao	04-02-1963
10.	T.Narayana Swamy	30-01-1933	22.	S.Narender Reddy	05-02-1960
11.	P.Upender Reddy	05-02-1942			

Secretary

S.No.	Name of Serving Officers	D.O.B.
	Sarva Sri	
1.	M.Prutviraj	09-01-1960
2.	M.Sudhakar	10-01-1957
3.	R.G.Kalaghatgi	20-01-1957
4.	B.Sunder	20-01-1970
5.	Dr.Manoranjan Bhanja	22-01-1958
6.	Dr.K.Tirupathaiiah	23-01-1959
7.	Dr.P.Subbaragavaiah	25-01-1961
8.	Rameshkumar Suman	03-02-1966
9.	A.K.Jain	05-02-1959
10.	G. Ramalingam	05-01-1966
11.	P.Samuel	07-01-1964



Association Corner:

MINUTES OF THE 78TH GENERAL BODY MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS OF TELANGANA AND ANDHRA PRADESH HELD ON 06-12-2015 IN ARANYA BHAVAN, HYDERABAD.

Sri S.K. Dass, presided over the meeting.

Shraddanjali: The members and ladies paid homage to the following members who passed away recently.

1. Late Dr. K. Keshav Reddy I.F.S (Retd.)
2. Late Sri. K. Rama Krishna Reddy DFO (Retd.)

Sri. K. Buchirami Reddy spoke about the above persons and the services rendered by them to the department. All those present stood and observed silence for two minutes.

Sri. B.M. Swami Dass Secretary welcomed the members and the ladies to the meeting. The Secretary explained to the members about the action taken report on the decisions taken in the last General Body meeting. The enhancement of life time membership subscription to the new members joining the association from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 5000 is implemented. The increased rates of Vana Premi were also implemented. The decisions taken in 89th the Executive Committee meeting have been explained to the members in the General Body Meeting.

Following decisions were unanimously approved by the members in the General Body Meeting.

1. Sri. J.V. Sharma, Member Vana Premi Editorial Board to perform the functions of the Editor and to publish Vana Premi Journal during the absence of Sri. Qamar Mohd. Khan, Editor Vana Premi.
2. To purchase a computer and printer from the funds of the association for using in the association office.

Sri S.D. Mukherji spoke about the activities of committee on Forest Development of the association. He explained about the discussions held in the meetings conducted in Arnya Bhavan. In the first meeting held with officers of the department in which Dr. Manoranjan Bhanja Explained about the issues in Haritha Haram programme, the massive targets allocations of huge funds, raising of nurseries and greenery programme. He also explained about the protection of Reserve Forest by digging trench along the boundary of the Reserve Forest. During the interaction with members Sri.

R.D.Reddy volunteered to render his services to the committee. Sri.T.Krishna Murthy senior member appreciated the support of the state Government in development of Forest and greenery programme.

Sri. Narayana Swamy vice president spoke about the Seventh Pay Commission recommendation. He explained in detail about the pensioner's benefits and calculation of revised pension to the members. Members requested to publish a detail note in Vana Premi Journal. Felicitations to the members on completion of 75 years.

1. Sri S.D. Mukerji & 2. Sri. Murali Krishna Rao

The members were felicitated by the president Sri. S.K. Das with a shawl and a flower bouquet. The felicitated members spoke of their experiences in the department and conveyed thanks to the members of the Association for the recognition.

There is an interesting discussion on the state of Forest and the initiatives required for its improvement. Mr. R.D. Reddy, Mr. S.D.Mukharji and some other members expressed their views. It was decided that members interested should pursue the matter in the committee of Retired Forest Officers for Forest Development of which Mr. M. Padmanabha Reddy is the Convenor. Mr. J.V. Sharma is requested to prepare a note on the deliberations.

Elections of the office bearers of the Association for the years 2016 & 2017:-

As the term of present office bearers is coming to end, Sri. T. Krishna Murthy the senior most member of the association present was requested to conduct the elections of the Association. Sri. T. Krishna Murthy election officer requested members for nominations to the posts of the office bearers of the Association. As all the members unanimously requested the present office bearers of the association to continue for another term of two years, the presiding officer of elections declared that the existing office bearers of the Association as elected to continue for another term of two years during 2016 and 2017.

Vote of Thanks: - Sri. A.V. Govindarajulu, Jt. Secretary cum Treasurer proposed vote of thanks to ladies and members who attended the meeting. Special Thanks were extended to Sri. Omkar Singh and Sri. Shekar Reddy for hosting the lunch to all the members. He also thanked all the persons who assisted successful conduct of the meeting.

Secretary

MEESALA BALARAM (UNDYAL VEERAPPAN)

By

B. Bhagavanth Reddy

I was born in a small agricultural family in Devarkadra village of Mahabubnagar district in 1953. My father was the founder of a cattle market in Devarkadra during the Nizam period. Thus, I was attracted towards rural areas and the animals from my childhood itself.

Undyal was a small, sleepy and backward village, located at 35 Kms, away from my native place. The Central Bank of India has opened a branch here in 1981. I was transferred to Undyal village as Branch Manager in 1987. The village was famous for two things – poverty and Black Bucks (Krishna Jinka). I would like to share with you some uncommon, unique and enchanting experiences with Balaram and Black Bucks, based on my personal, actual incidents amidst natural surroundings.

In fact, when I joined the Bank in 1979 leaving a lecturer (Botany) post I did not foresee that there would be so much thrill in store for me at Undyal. On the first day of my joining the branch itself, I have seen in a big herd of Black Bucks crossing the road. It is really a feast for the eyes to see these animals running jumping. My interest in this animal grew with field visits to various villages which brought accidental encounters with these animals very frequently.

Black Buck is the india's only antelope. An inhabitant of open grasslands, its erstwhile wide range has shrunk today, taking the status of this beautiful animal to an endangered level. Field biologists have estimated presence of around 300 Black Bucks here. In the absence of natural

predators like tigers, leopards, wild dogs, wolves etc., man is the only major threat to these animals here which are fast heading towards extinction.

Meesala Balaram (Boya Balaram) of Undyal village was a known hunter of Black Bucks in this area. He looked like Veerappan in appearance. Tall and sturdy, he had keen hearing ability and sharp vision. Mother Nature has sculpted him as a perfect hunter. His knowledge about biodiversity of the area and behavior of wild animals was fairly well.

One day he offered Black Buck meat to me. I refused gently and advised him to desist from hunting. He continued the killings. I called him to the Bank, offered tea and counselled him not to kill these beautiful, innocent animals as the same is sin and difficult to come out of criminal cases if booked by the forest officials.

Despite having 10 acres of agricultural land, he was penniless, a vagabond and received no respect from the fellow villagers. His world was entirely different.

On receiving information that a group from Hyderabad had camped in Balaram's fields, 3 Kms away from the village, I went to his fields with other villagers. The group ran away in their jeep leaving behind a carcass of a big male Black Buck in the fields. It disturbed me a lot. On repeated persuasions Balaram promised to leave this profession of hunting if alternate livelihood is shown to him.

I inspected his fields to rehabilitate him in agricultural profession. The entire process was within my lending powers. His old, dry open well was deepened and renovated. Sufficient water was struck. New pump set was installed. Pipe lines were laid. Crop loan was given, all under my personal supervision. Thus a hunter was transformed into a farmer by the Bank. He has changed the cropping pattern from rain fed crops like jowar, castor to paddy, groundnuts, cotton etc., and started reaping the gains. People respected him and he became member of Gram Panchayath.

Balaram used to say that he came out of poverty only due to bank's financial help, Debt. Waiver scheme of Govt. and closure of all his loans by internal write off of the bank which was in my hands.

Balaram was a hunter from an early age. He never went to the school. Most of the birds, snakes and other wild animals take their own protective measures for self defense through mimicry and camouflage. Balaram was having unusual intelligence in grasping the language of the Nature and possessed exceptional skills to locate the wild life.

Balaram took me to Mudumal and other areas several times to show herds of Black Bucks. I was fond of making night halts in a hut under a big tamarind tree on the bank of Balaram's renovated well. It was a thrilling experience for me to swim in this well during the full moon days. Our friendship was hard to believe and difficult to understand. He was good at cooking too and used to prepare fresh food for us in his farm it self.

After my transfer back from Undyal to Hyderabad in 1992, I could neither adjust nor withstand the pressures of the concrete jungle. I felt restless and started visiting this area every now and then. I purchased an 8 acre land near Undyal and established a Nature Club with a small farm house, nursery with the help of social forestry dept. and an excellent personal library on wild life and the nature.

Looking at my inborn love for Nature our Bank management has posted me as branch manager at undyal 3 times in all covering a period of 10 years. It is a rare gesture in banking circles. I did not opt for any further promotions. After my retirement from bank service in 2013 I moved all these activities to my own house at Devarkadra.

Black Buck populations is spread in many villages of C.C Kunta, Atmakur, Narva, Makthal and Maganoor Mandals along the river Krishna banks and a little interior. Mudumal area near here is declared as Protected Area by the forest dept. But the protective measures are meagre due to lack of sufficient field staff. Black Bucks are hunted and butchered in an uncontrolled manner mostly by urban rich primarily for pleasure and entertainment and also for meat, skin and horns. There are many escape routes in these grasslands which are situated near Karnataka border.

Baby Black Bucks were orphaned after their mothers were killed by merciless hunters. On many occasions, Balaram handed over to me such young babies which were nursed at my farm house at Undyal or even by my family members at my house at Devarakdra for some

time. Later, they were handed over to the Pillalamarri Deer Park at Mahabubnagar with the help of forest officials for their further safe growth in a protected environment.

I have constructed a water tank in the fields of Balaram for which water was supplied from Balaram's well to meet the water needs of Black Bucks in the summer. It acted as a water hole to the other wild life too.

Balaram and I erected a big sign board on Raichur road near Marikal with financial assistance from the forest dept. warning criminal cases against poachers of Black Bucks.

I have reported this success story of Central Bank of India to the forest dept. WWF – India etc., the story was published in many newspapers including the Hindu, Central Bank's magazine, NABARD'S magazine, WWF – India souvenir etc., interestingly, Central Bank of India has issued a special circular to all its branches in Telangana Region to emulate the efforts of Undyal Branch in Nature conservation citing Balaram story as an example. Hyderabad Doordarshan has produced a short documentary after visiting this area for two days. NABARD has declared a special prize to Undyal branch. Central Bank of India has selected Undyal for All India Best Branch Award. Forest dept. has rewarded me with a cash prize of rupees 2500/

Above all, The Association of Retired Forest Officers has felicitated me at Hyderabad in function during their AGM. I became a Life Member of Vanapremi and contributed many articles on wild life and the nature. I gave guest lectures at Forest Academy, Dulapally on Black

Bucks and Biodiversity.

One day morning I was in a meeting of Self Help Groups at Undyal Lambadi thanda in 2012. Balaram was present as usual. But he disappeared suddenly from the scene after receiving a phone call. I suspected some calamity. I came to know later that two jeep loads of officials from forest dept. have raided Balaram's house at Undyal, recovered flesh of Black Buck from a fridge and trying to arrest Balaram and his younger brother.

Fearing arrest and legal complications both the brothers absconded to unknown places in Karnataka. Balaram lost touch with me. They came to the village after receiving anticipatory bail from the High Court after many months. But the harm has already occurred in a big way. Balaram was a chronic diabetic patient and was on Insulin. Due to non availability of proper food and medicines all his internal organs were damaged to a large extent. The damage was irreversible. Despite medical treatment at Kurnool and Hyderabad he could not survive for a long period and he died in a very pitiable condition. Our relationship of 25 years came to a sad end leaving behind sweet memories. Man proposes. God disposes.

The happiest moments in my life were those at Undyal grass lands chasing Black Buck herds in a jeep driven by Balaram, with a camera in my hand. There is a need to establish a Black Buck sanctuary near Jurala Dam by the forest dept. where plenty of govt. land is available and Tourism projects are likely to come here shortly.

LEGAL NOTES

N.R. Narayana Murthy Vs. Kannada Rakshana Vakeelara

This is a leading case on National Anthem, as to how and when it should be sung by mouth or its musical version can be played with legal implication on private complaints in courts.

Sri Narayana Murthy, Chairman and Founder President of Infosys, invited President of India Sri Abdul Kalam on 6.04.2007, to visit the world's largest and sophisticated Corporated Education Facility at Mysore and deliver talk to youngsters at his amphi- theatre on 08.04.2007 during his tour to Mysore. On the occasion Narayana Murthy arranged a five member team to sing the National Anthem. Later on, he changed his mind and played musical version of the National Anthem on 08.04.2007 at 3.30 p.m. in the Infosys campus at Mysore. He explained to the Press that the reason for changing from singing by mouth to playing musical version because of the presence of the foreigners who may feel uncomfortable. This statement to the press is alleged to be disrespect to the National Anthem and therefore it is assumed to constitute an offence under Sec. 3 of the Prevention of Insult to National Honour Act, 1971. A Forum called Karnataka Rakshana Vakeelara Vedike filed a private complaint on 03.05.2007 under Sec. 200 Cr.P.C. against Narayana Murthy before the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at Bangalore in C.C.No. 12359 of 2007.

Narayana Murthy, accused of offence, approached Karnataka High Court with a petition under Sec. 482 of Cr.P.C. and prayed the court to

quash the proceedings before the criminal court initiated by the Forum. The quash petition was heard by the Hon'ble Justice K. Bhakthavatsala. The argument supported by case law, on behalf of the petitioner Narayana Murthy, is summarized below.

1. The Magistrate at Bangalore has no jurisdiction to take cognizance of the alleged offence that is said to have been committed at Mysore.
2. Sec. 2 of the National Honour Act, 1971 does not deal with insult to National Anthem and therefore according to Sec. 3 of the said Act addressing insult to National Anthem is not correct.
3. The petitioner has not prevented anyone from singing the National Anthem.
4. There is no provision of law which obliges to sing the National Anthem.
5. Inherent powers under Sec. 482 of Cr.P.C. could be exercised either to prevent the abuse of the process of any court or otherwise to secure the ends of justice.
6. The allegations in the complaint, even if they are taken at their face value and accepted in their entirety, do not constitute the offence alleged.
7. Criminal complaint must disclose the facts which constitute the offence alleged.
8. Document of sterling and unimpeachable character can be relied upon by the High Court while exercising its inherent powers under Sec.

482 Cr.P.C. and under Article 226 of the Constitution.

9. The petitioner's apology stating that "if the media statement has hurt anybody's sentiments, I deeply apologize" cannot be taken that the petitioner was guilty for the offence under Sec. 3 of the National Honour Act.

The summary of the arguments advanced on behalf of the Respondent (Complainant) is as follows:

1. Under Sec. 202 Cr.P.C. if a complaint is presented to a Magistrate and if he had no jurisdiction to entertain the petition, he may send it to the competent court.
2. As per the direction of the Deputy Commissioner, Mysore district communicated to the petitioner, National Anthem was to be sung loudly in the beginning and at the end of the function.
3. Press statement of the petitioner, that to avoid delicacy or uncomfotableness to the Foreign dignitaries who were present on the dais, he did not allow the persons nominated to sing and instead he played the instrumental version of National Anthem, tantamount to disrespect to the National Anthem.
4. According to the established practice, whenever the President of India participates in any function, at the beginning and at the end of the function Indian National Anthem will be sung.
5. It is the duty of the petitioner under Article 51 A of the Constitution of India to abide by the Constitution and respect the National Anthem.
6. Since the press report which constitutes an

offence under Sec. 3 of the National Honour Act was published in the newspapers at Bangalore, the Magistrate at Bangalore is competent to take cognizance of the offence.

The point for determination by the court was Whether playing musical version of the National Anthem instead of singing National Anthem by mouth or the press statement is an offence under Sec. 3 of the Prevention of Insult to National Honour Act, 1971 ?

His Lordship dealt with the relevant provisions of the Constitution and other relevant laws before coming to conclusion of the matter as stated below.

The Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976 incorporated Art. 51 A and Art. 51 A (a) says that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideal and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem. **National Flag, National Anthem and the Constitution of India are the symbols of sovereignty and the integrity of the Nation. Public acts of insult to these symbols must be prevented.** Sec. 2 of the National Honour Act deals with insult to Indian National Flag and Constitution of India. Sec. 3 of the National Honour Act says that whoever intentionally prevents the singing of the National Anthem or causes disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or fine, or with both. Sec. 3A of the Act provides double the punishment for aggravated offence.

National Honour Act does not define National Anthem, when and how it should be sung. Therefore, the orders relating to National Anthem have been made which are as follows:

Order I: describes what is National Anthem and full version playing approximately for 52 seconds and short version for 20 seconds.

Order II: Gives a list of occasions National Anthem shall be played.

Order III: Deals regarding mass singing of the Anthem on the occasions as mentioned.

Order III (i) & (ii): On the arrival of the President at any government or public function (but excluding formal State function and mass functions) and also immediately before his departure from such functions, the full version of the Anthem shall be played accompanied by mass singing.

Order IV: says when Foreign Anthem should be played.

Order V; says whenever the Anthem is sung or played, the audience shall stand to attention. However, when in the course of newsreel or documentary the Anthem is played as part of the film, it is not expected of the audience as standing is bound to interrupt the exhibition of the film and it would create disorder and confusion rather than add to the dignity of the Anthem.

On the conjoint reading of the National Honour Act and the Orders relating to the Indian National Anthem and particularly the words viz., "sung or

played" used in Order V makes it clear that playing recorded version of the National Anthem is not prohibited. Further, it was held that the contention of the Respondent that the petitioner's press statement amounts to insult to the National Anthem is without any basis and the same is rejected summarily.

On the personal status of the petitioner, His Lordship held that he is a law abiding citizen and recipient of numerous awards and honours. Playing musical version of the National Anthem is held to be neither prohibited nor constitutes an offence.

According to Sec. 177 Cr.P.C., the II Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bangalore has no territorial jurisdiction to try the case. The Magistrate should have returned the complaint for presentation to the proper court, if he has no jurisdiction to take cognizance. The Magistrate in the instant case had not applied his mind to decide whether or not he has jurisdiction. On this ground alone the criminal case could be quashed. It was held that by playing musical version of the National Anthem, the petitioner has not committed any offence under Sec. 3 of the National Honour Act. In the circumstances the petition was allowed, the proceeding before the II Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at Bangalore is quashed. The judgment and order to this effect was passed on 14. 08.2007.

(A.I.R. 2007 Karnataka 174)

K.B.R



Panther or Leopard (*Pantherapardus*)



Cheetah (*Acinonyxjubatus*) is extinct from our country

Readers are requested to note the differences between two animals.



Ophthalmologist Madahavi Reddy in her office at the South Texas Eye Centre in Brownsville

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