

VANA PREMI

Nau Say Navay Sall Tak Ke Bachon Ka Sathi

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*Vana Premi wishes very happy, prosperous and healthy Ugadi,
Sri Ram navami, Ambedkar Jayanti and Mahaveer Jayanti*



**Great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*)
One of the heaviest of the flying birds**



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EDITORIAL

**Saaray Jahan Say Achcha Hindustan Hamara -
Ham Bulbulen Hain Iski Ye Gulistan Hamara.**

**Better than the entire world, is our Hindustan,
We are its nightingales, and it (is) our garden abode**

By the grace of God and good wishes from all I have returned to Hyderabad after visiting Australia and resumed the editorial work of Vana Premi. Though Australia is a country which is most livable as per the survey conducted by Organization 'For Economic Co-operation and Development' (also published in February issue of V.P) yet I feel that the above Urdu couplet and the complete poem by Iqbal which was published in the weekly journal *Ittehad* on 16th August 1904 still holds good (published 112 years ago). Mahatma Gandhi is said to have sung it over a hundred times when he was imprisoned at Yerawada Jail in Pune in the 1930s. Rakesh Sharma a former Indian Air Force pilot who travelled in the space, on April 3, 1984, the first Indian to travel in the space was asked by the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi how India looked from the space and he replied, **Saaray Jahan Say Achcha**, (better than the whole world). All this proves that **Saray Jahan Say Achcha Hindustan Hamara**.

Coming back to the subject I profusely thank Sri J.V. Sharma who willingly took up the responsibility of editorial work during my absence. I thank our Association which made alternate arrangements for publication of Vana

Premi on my request. I also thank all the writers who fully cooperated with the in charge editor. Last but not the least I thank all the members of the Association who reposed confidence and extended the tenure of the office bearers of the Association including the editor of Vana Premi for further two years.

World Salt Awareness Week: - World Salt Awareness Week 2016 was observed from Monday 29th February to Sunday 6th March. This is observed throughout the globe every year. This is also known as World Action on Salt and Health (WASH). Each year World Salt Awareness Week focuses on a particular topic and this year the focus of the campaign was on highlighting the importance of giving children a low salt diet early in life. This important week serves to highlight the importance of reducing salt intake in all populations throughout the world. This is celebrated since last 10 years, since it was first set out to reduce salt in people's diets worldwide and improve public health.

What is salt? Salt is a colorless crystalline compound occurring naturally in seawater, and halite (rock salt); it is also known as Sodium chloride and an ionic compound found in various foods and medical treatments. This

sodium chloride is more commonly referred to as "salt" or "table salt," sodium chloride is used as a seasoning in many foods. Medically, sodium chloride solutions are used in catheter flush injections or intravenous infusions, and for cleaning objects such as contact lenses in the form of saline. Sodium chloride inhalation can remove certain bacteria in body secretions. It is commonly used as a condiment and food preservative. Salt is important in many ways. It is an essential part of the diet of both humans and animals and is a part of most fluids of living organisms, such as blood, sweat, and tears. It aids digestion by providing chlorine for hydrochloric acid, a small but essential part of human digestive fluid. In forests natural salt licks are found in the soil which is essential for the health of wild animals. In places where natural salt licks are absent artificial salt licks are provided for wildlife.

Salt is widely used as a seasoning for food and is used in curing meats and preserving fish and other foods. Iodized table salt usually contains small amounts of potassium iodide, sodium carbonate, and sodium thiosulfate. As a chemical, salt is used in making glass, pottery, textile dyes, and soap. The major use of salt is as a raw material for the production of chlorine, sodium metal, and sodium hydroxide; it is also used in large amounts in the Solvay process for making sodium carbonate. Historically, salt has been used as money; for thousands of years salt has been one of the most valuable, useful and desired

things. At one time Roman soldiers were paid part of their salaries in salt. A high tax on salt was a contributing cause of the French Revolution. Even in Indian independence struggle Salt March, also known as the Dandi March or the Salt Satyagraha, was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience by the father of nation Gandhiji to produce salt from seawater, as was the practice of people until British officials deemed such production illegal and repeatedly used force to stop it. The 24-day march began on 12 March 1930 and started from Sabarmati ashram Ahmedabad as a direct action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly. It gained worldwide attention which gave impetus to the Indian independence movement and started the nationwide Civil Disobedience Movement.

Many of us know that eating too much salt is bad for our health and are actively looking to reduce the amount we eat. This is in comparison to a few years ago, when the dangers of salt on health were widely unknown to the general public. Thanks to efforts by the food industry, governments and health organizations like WASH; salt is well and truly on the health agenda across many countries worldwide. There is also increasing evidence of a link between high salt intake and stomach cancer, osteoporosis, obesity, kidney stones, kidney disease, dementia and water retention. Salt can also exacerbate the symptoms of asthma, and

diabetes. Many foods still have lots of hidden salt in them, even foods that don't necessarily taste salty. We all have a responsibility to read the labels and choose foods with less and permitted quantities of salt. Extra salt make our body retain water, which can makes our face puffy, it also increases swelling in our fingers and feet. Large numbers of packaged food products available in Indian stores fail to display nutritional data relating to the amount of sodium present thus preventing consumers from making informed reveals a survey conducted by The George Institute for Global Health India. Effervescent pain killers can contain up to 1 gram of salt per tablet, which most of us do not know and we have to avoid it.

During World Salt Awareness Week more action from everyone is requested; governments, the food industry, catering sectors, health professionals and the general public. We can all finally do our bit to Eat Less Salt to remain healthy. There are many foods that are high in salt. We have to avoid all such foods and choose foods which are low in salt for our consumption.

We all definitely need a little bit of Sodium because it helps keep our body fluids at the right concentration and is needed for our muscles and nerves activity, but majority of us eat much more salt than we need. Eating too much of salt over time is linked with high blood pressure, which can lead to serious problems such as heart diseases and stroke. We should not eat more than 4 grams of salt per day per adult person, but most of us tend to eat much more than that. As salt is often a hidden ingredient in many foods, it can sometimes be difficult to work out how much salt we are eating, but such foods can contribute a lot of salt to our diet without us knowing it. All senior citizens, people suffering from heart ailments, hypertension, diabetes, and people suffering from kidney diseases at various stages should take only 2 grams of salt per day per adult to remain healthy.

Vana Premi wishes that all of us live healthy and long lives by reducing intake of salt and enjoy life to the maximum as we are born in to this world only once. **QMK**

APPEAL

Summer of 2016 is going to be very severe. Temperature has already touched 42°C in some States. Water table has gone down. Rivers have dried up. Birds and wild animals are facing acute shortage of water. Vana Premi appeals all the readers, writers and general public to make arrangements to provide drinking water for birds and animals, including wild animals where ever possible.

- Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

May be I am late to catch Feb 16 issue of VanaPremi. Issues of Dec.15 and Jan 16 gave plenty of thought-provoking as well as entertaining material, which kept me busy reading. I have few comments to make.

At the outset I must record my appreciation to you, KBR and QM Khan, for your untiring dedication to the VanaPremi. You are all above eighty and still so active, mentally. You have good command on English language and your editorials are worth a read. Keep it up.

"Musings on Indian Forestry" (in two parts) was well researched and documented by author with no holds barred. What he says is correct. I was also one of the officers participating in the "development of Indian Forests" mission. Unfortunately, many wonderful ideas were not properly implemented and died their untimely death. Second problem was inconsistency. No Scheme continued over successive Five Year Plans. As they say in Sanskrit, we were "A Aranmbh Shura, viramantimadhyaat" types. Thirdly, initiative was taken away by bosses and NGOs, both non foresters. Foresters would have done better if were left alone to do their job. Overall politics made a mess of the forestry management.

It is suggested that along with name, Cadre and Last post held, and if possible e-mail ID and cell phone address of the authors of VanaPremi, may be given along with the published article.

Use of Bio-aesthetics in wild life management (M. Mohan Ram) and Undiyal Veerappan (B. Bhagvanth Reddy - a Banker) were good and fresh inputs. Bridge on River Musi took me back to my childhood years, in Davare School and Vivek Vardhini School, (1943-46) I can visualize huge construction of the bridge burying the older landmarks and memories thereof. Same is the story everywhere. Now we expect "Smart City" wave to take over the development in Pune and in another 19 cities.

I was never a pessimist. But now, I have lost all hope for Forestry in India. Recent Judgment of the Honorable SC in case of NH 7, passing through Pench National Park, (Times of India-21-01-2016, "Tigers are important but not at cost of Humans) is an indicator of future scenario.

Thanks and regards.

Dr. A.R. Maslekar (0422420548)

Dear Sir,

While welcoming you with warmth back to motherland & your headquarters, from a long sojourn in Australia (spending time with your son and his family @ Sydney & its surrounds), I thank you for the above letter which was followed by a telephonic conversation, amply demonstrating your

great concern for VP which happens to be a wonderful Editorial-venture of yours and with which you continued to have contact even from the distant continent of Australia Down Under, so ably assisting compilation which was acknowledged by Sri. J. V. Sharma IFS (R), who was handling the affairs of the Journal, admirably in his own inimitable manner. Responding to the contents I enclose herewith an article on Shakespeare, commemorating his 400th death anniversary during the month of April 2016, which happens to be a sequel to what appeared in your journal of May 2014: 'How much is Bard-of-Avon relevant in present-day-times?' Additionally one more article on a lighter topic is also being appended, which you may consider for a subsequent issue of the Journal, along-with a one-page article on 'Droughts: Causes & Effects' which was sent during the period of your leave from India.

With warm regards,
Dr. Raghotham Rao Desai

Dear Mr. Qamar Mohd. Khan,

Now that you have come back to Hyderabad, we believe you have resumed your charge as Editor of Vana Premi, the only organ of communication for forest officers in India.

I read an editorial published in Vana Premi - March 2016 issue written by respected Mr. J.V. Sharma, our beloved octogenarian retired senior forest officer (age 84) and a crusader of forests thorough out his life. He has been awaking all foresters and citizens of India continuously for last ten years and is fighting against the legislation named "The scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act" passed by parliament of India in 2006. The Act is harmful to the health of India in particular and for the entire environment of world in general. We have to muster support for Mr. Sharma in the fight.

Mr. Sharma mentioned in that editorial (para 3) that, "even the fraternity is not able to get its act together even when the challenge is gigantic". Though retired foresters are past students of forest collages run by Government of India they have no unity to fight for the genuine causes of forest. They were selected, educated and paid salary, given promotions, until retirement in due course and they are settled in all over India. Many of them do not bother to visit and look at the pathetic condition of forest they had served for so many years. Our national wealth ie, forest is vital for our life cycle and entire eco-system. But, many retired forest officers appear more busy about their status, pension and related benefits. They have forgotten their commitment to protect, conserve and develop forest.

They do not wish or they have forgotten to educate public, Journalists, leaders of various parties about the importance of forest. Our trees can't speak. The forests are away from civilization and the retired forest officers knowingly maintain silence about its reducing size. They must speak truth and raise their voice through various media and start a movement from one end of India to other. Our serving fraternity may not open their mouth but they can support the movement if any started, to preserve our environment incitu.

Since 2006 till today we are pinned in square one about the Forest Rights Act. Supreme Court has clubbed all cases against that Act of 2006 but, it has not taken up our case for hearing. The forest, our national wealth is being systematically liquidated by Ministry of Tribal Welfare, and nobody raises voice against it by mustering support of public representatives intellectuals, opinion leaders, and environmentalists and opposition leaders. All think it is not our job to convince Government of India. and it is the job of Supreme Court of India. This is the chilling silence for our nation. We are facing nature's vagaries. The Climate change is because of loss of tree cover. We refuse to debate about the deminishing ground water levels, vanishing fodder resources and precious wild life habitats. Mr. Sharma suggested that we foresters must have a national body to represent our case and to make them here what we say.

The forum must work like other forums of architects, journalist, doctors, engineers, CA's, senior artist forums etc. Foresters' professional organization must be strong, purposeful relevant and credible. All foresters must join for the cause so that government should feel it necessary to consult forester fraternity before implementing any related law. Here I would like to place certain facts for the information of the readers. In year 1965 Mr. Chitranshi and Mr. Rajendra Mishra (MP) had called a meeting of foresters from various states to form a central forest body to solve problems. I attended it. In that meeting I was elected as vice president of that body viz. "All India Forest Officers Federation". Mr. Joseph K. Kurian (Kerala), and Mr. S.S Joshy (Karnataka) were also office bearer of it. But I could not continue in it due to my personal problems. It was a lost opportunity.

I voluntarily retired from forest department early in 1985 and started working in industrial sector in Nasik again. Chlorophyll in my blood did not allow me to rest and in 1999-2000 I hosted first annual meet of S.F.R.C Alumni at Nasik. It was supported by my friends like Mr. S.S Joshy, A.L.I Sheikh, Javed Hussain Khan, B B Kulkarni and others. We are regularly exchanging our views and place our demands before government. I am 78 years young today and I request my forester's fraternity friends of India to unite and form a central body as suggested by Mr. J V Sharma as early as possible to repay the debt we owe to forest and environment.

-S.B. Deshpande

Nasik, 15.03.16

Email: sureshdeshpande07@gmail.com

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

The great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) is a tall, long legged and heaviest of flying birds. The underparts and neck are white, there is a black crown on the forehead and the upperbody is brown. The wings are marked with black, brown and grey. The sexes are similar in appearance although males have a larger black crown, long hind crown feathers and a black band across the breast.

Great Indian bustard biology: In the 19th century, flocks of more than 20 birds were a common site on Indian grasslands but today groups are unlikely to number more than three individuals. Little is known about the breeding ecology of the great Indian bustard. Although it is possible for breeding to take place year-round, it seems to be mainly dictated by the monsoon (5). Nests are situated in the open ground and males take no part in incubation or care of the developing young; only a single egg is laid. The fledglings tend to remain with their mother until the following breeding season.

Great Indian bustards are opportunists, feeding on a wide range of items depending on their seasonal availability. Invertebrates such as grasshoppers and beetles are the preferred diet but in leaner times these are substituted with seeds such as Bengal gram, and groundnut.

Great Indian bustard range: Previously widespread and common across the Indian subcontinent, the great Indian bustard has today all but disappeared from Pakistan and populations in India are severely reduced.

Great Indian bustard habitat: The great Indian

bustard is found in dry grasslands and scrub where there are scattered bushes and some cultivation.

Great Indian bustard status: The great Indian bustard is classified as Critically Endangered (CR) on the IUCN Red List, and listed on Appendix I of CITES.

Great Indian bustard threats: The great Indian bustard has become extinct in almost 90 percent of its former range, principally as a result of loss of habitat and poaching. The conversion of the land for agriculture and widespread hunting, which became more prevalent with the onset of vehicle transport, have both contributed to the precipitous decline in this species.

Great Indian bustard conservation: The great Indian bustard is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 in India and international trade is prohibited by its listing on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). A number of sanctuaries have been set up with the aim of preserving this species; however, this may not be the most effective means of conservation, as population numbers have continued to decline. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is urging the Indian Government to adopt a 'Project Bustard' scheme along the same lines of 'Project Tiger. Such a high-profile project would be invaluable for raising awareness about the plight of India's 4 bustard species, and would be an important method of preserving the arid grassland habitat that is currently poorly protected in this country.

REMEMBERING MENTORS-GOOD AND BAD

By
M. Kamal Naidu

On joining forestry at Forest Academy, my mother insisted I go to Tirupathi for Lord's blessing with commencement of my first semester vacation, directly from Dehra Dun. So I went to Tirupathi along with my colleague Munnuswamy and was introduced to one Shri P. Ranga Rao, Research Range Officer, stationed at Tirupathi, a very honest Devout decent person, well respected in department as I latter understood, and also among the Tirupathi *Devasthanam* staff, so I had a very quick, personalized and intimate *darshan*, with blessings by high priests of the temple, followed by valuable advices on do's and don'ts once in service, failing which I could have strayed in my path in the long run. Armed with his rich wisdom I embarked on my early steps in the department. His most important advice was to keep away from temptations of field staff and contractors. This advice had me in good stead, but on occasions drew antagonism from the immediate lower staff. However on review his advices were very valuable for my successful respectable and dignified service career.

On return from training to department, I was posted as attached to DFO Cuddapah, Sri Sitarama Rao, a simple nice person addicted to chewing pan and smoking, but very serious about his work, a work alcoholic. He entrusted me to Chandrapal, RO Balappally, and his best RO as he said. He desired I frequent his range

and learn Range Management under his care and tutelage. Chandrapal, R.O. was a tough stickler for work. He used to insist I have a real heavy breakfast, and start on my field work, for I could be late, or even miss my lunch. As tutored by him I feasted at mornings, and followed him on field work on my cycle. On one occasion after visiting the 'K.V. Bhavi series fuel coupe' for marking of trees for retention, while returning back came towing the punctured cycle, I missed my lunch, having a cup of tea made specially at RO's request in a village enroute. I soon got into stride in field work under his able and attentive care and strict guidance. One day he suggested that I camp at 'Ballapaly FRH' in interior forest instead of the luxury of 'Kodur FRH'. He would visit me the following three days at Ballapally, coming on his motor cycle and take me for field work locally around Ballapally on my cycle. He taught me the art of field survey for establishing plantations, and their early preparatory works, and taught me as to what I need to check for successful work done, to raise successful plantations. These practical instructions were different from all the theory learnt for raising plantations while at Forest Academy.

Later I was shifted by DFO for attachment to a young Vijay Rangam RO Chitwel, a leisure seeking son of a retired DSP, who had extensive red-sanders planting target. He was a youngster and not as seasoned like Chandrapal, and more

relaxed and easy going, giving me signals that I need not be worried of too tough a field life in Forest dept. However we cycled daily to planting site carrying packed lunch, and returned at evenings for rest in the dilapidated FRH at Chitwel with his transistor to keep me humored and updated on news around the world during the hot summer of May 1964. Soon the pre-planting works were completed and the DFO came and inspected, and was satisfied with work done. This Red-sander plantation raised with onset of monsoons with my inputs, was never seen by me all through the years, while I grew in stature and experience as a forest officer, so I made it a point to see it on assuming charge as PCCF in 1995, and felt so very happy at the successful redsanders fertilized with my sweat and toil. It was a happy occasion to visit this plantation, and tell the staff all about my involvement in its raising. The trees stood like stately trees, all in regimented rows, devoid of other miscellaneous growth having been removed regularly, barring the select fruit trees then left as standards.

After training in Cuddapah and Vontimitta I was posted as DFO Atmakur, which I visited in early March 2016 to visit my old loyal FG Gopal, who kept contact with me all these years, and attends on my every visit to Srisailam even now, to ensure I get a good *darshan* of Lord. He had been more loyal all these years than what Hanuman was to Lord Rama. I visited Atmakur to see his house at Atmakur and have a cup of tea and homemade snacks. His granddaughter is now studying medicine at Tirupath. It was this visit to Atmakur which inspired me to write my association with my past mentors. Here at

Atmakur my best and greatest guru was Dev Sikamani, the head clerk, who was soft spoken but a very strict disciplinarian, feared by all staff, including me. I owe him the art of being a good DFO by giving me a note book, as to what I need to check in ranges, and write my tour dairy daily with. Everytime I went to field camps, he would have a list of replies I should have to procure from the ranges of pending files of division and monthly returns, consequently my division got remarks from CF office "but for DFO Atmakur, all others delayed their returns to circle office" with strictures. As a consequence of my HC, and the good remarks, I became the blue-eyed boy of the circle, with CF Munawar Hussain, who wept uncontrollably by my bedside as CF Khammam, after I was shot as DFO in his Khammam circle at Poloncha. He loved me further till his retirement as CCF, when he promoted me as CF out of turn in 1981, as befitting reward. On his retirement I lost a God-father and a saintly adviser.

Besides Dev Sikamani in office, I had RO Pulliah, who rose up from a Forester, a dedicated worker and meticulous to the core. He took upon himself to guide me in my field work, and enabled to establish successful teak plantations in Pechuru and Bairlutu, which were highly appreciated by CF. Pulliah was suitably honored by naming a plantation in Kurnool Circle as 'Puliah Plantation' after his retirement.

My most important guru was Munawar Hussain himself. Once when I dismissed a FG for large scale destruction in his beat, in my youthful egoistic power, he came to Bairlutu with the appeal petition of the FG as being too harsh.

He called for the FG and enquired how old was he, what was his service length, his family disposition, his future plan and future possibility. After enquiring he over-ruled my decision, stating I should consider all these factors to decide a major punishment, having a humane consideration in administration, thereupon gave me a long sermon on being humane and not drastic as I was. He said the FG if too old and has a family, my dismissing him would lead to his family to starve for he may not get employment, no pension, etc. This lecture was indeed a very valuable advice in my career to start with on a balance note.

Leaving Atmakur I came to Nizamabad. Here I came across a group of highly intellectual RO's in Sharma, Buchiram Reddy and their respected leader and Guru ManikPrabhu with his ever-flowing philosopher wisdom, as my stabilizer, but for which I could have become egotist as a young successful DFO. He gave me a valuable advice of thanking the RO and his staff at end of camp, rather than ask for a bill and pay a truncated amount to show my honesty, He used to have a great sense of humor, and made all tense moments light. He was a meticulous and a good organizer.

Leaving Nizamabad I came across some bad elements in Karimnagar. I did not last long here, because the politician contractor, who happened to be the CM's close friend did not relish being fined for his criminal irregularities, as encouraged by his '*chelas*'. Here there was one white sheep in ACF Pratap Reddy, an old timer RO, who had beheld my reputation by speaking about my positive aspects with the contractor, and prevented him from doing greater damage than transferring me out prematurely. I left the

division without a farewell by field staff as usual feature, but only by office staff to land at Poloncha, to make history before the cute sweet natured, soft spoken youthful ever smiling Qureshi, a great contrast to previous division. With this I bid good-bye to field postings in the department, carrying all my experiences to share and teach at Dehra Dun from 1973-76. During IGNFA posting I was deputed to NFRC and latter at CFRC in Chanda as Vice-Princippal. This association enabled me to share my observation on good and bad rangers, and I hope I contributed to the Rangers to be good wherever they worked. Even now I keep in touch with Dwevedi of MP of 1975 batch.

On return I was posted to Zoo, where I encountered a brilliant youngster RO, extremely good character in Dinkar Prakash, a product of truncated training at Yellandu in 1975-76. He was my guru who made me what I became in Zoo Management. I asked Dinkar as to how I should go about. He very soundly advised me, " Sir, I just completed my training and was posted six days before you were posted, but I suggest you come daily at attendance time, and follow a keeper to his animal cage, and see all that he does and learn from him by questioning. I did exactly what he suggested, and kept notes of what I learnt, which in course of years at Hyderabad and Delhi Zoos became the contents of my book '*Handbook for Indian Zoo Directors*'.

The morals of my observation are that good remained good always, and are remembered for their good deeds and advices. The bad have always been a disgrace for the renowned forest department.

GAURAIYYA- THE HOUSE SPARROW (*PASSER DOMESTICUS*)

By
R.S.BHADAURIA

Gauraiyya, a small sized bird (12 to 16 cms.), is the most common sight in human settlements. It has two races in India- the Kashmiri and the North- Western. The later race is most common and found all over the country, Nepal, Bangladesh, Shri Lanka and Myanmar. Although in other races, this sparrow is found almost across the world.

Its breeding season spreads all over the year, varying in localities depending upon climate. In north India and particularly in U.P. its breeding season is April- June, when female lays 3 to 5 eggs, in a well-structured nest, comprising thin twigs, straw and other rubbish material, arranged in cup shape either in a hole in the wall or some other niche in wooden ceiling or thatched cover, well above the ground, ensuring safety from possible predators. Eggs hatch in about 3-4 weeks and the chicks need to be fed by the mother until they are able to fly and fend for themselves.

The Indian race of the bird, derives its sweet name from its association with households, where it is born & brought up and spends whole life time. But the house it likes to inhabit is not the one made of bricks and concrete, instead the

typical rural dwelling of mud walls, topped with earthen ceilings, having thatched portions too. Such dwellings provide enough perches, niches and holes for safe night shelter and nesting, beyond the reach of various predators, which prey on birds as well as eggs. Gauraiyya, unlike many other small birds, somehow does neither nest on tall trees, nor on tall grasses. Undoubtedly safety is the prime concern of every egg layer for selecting the nesting site, but perhaps Gauraiyya eggs are sensitive to open sky and direct sunlight and therefore this bird avoids open spaces for nesting and successful hatching. Thus human dwellings always suited very well for their reproduction and these birds became household companions of humans, earning the nickname "**house sparrow**".

Another reason for Gauraiyya to co-habit with humans has been its feeding habit. Though it is omnivorous and feeds on grains, insects, fruit buds and flower nectar etc. but primarily it forages by hopping and pecking on scattered food grains, which incidentally abound in rural households where various types of cereals and pulses are dried in open spaces and processed

daily to prepare them for consumption. This ecosystem provides ample opportunity to these birds to feed on scattered grains in the house premises and they prefer to hop around, in and out of houses, whole day.

But over the years, the scenario in rural India has changed in as much as the brick and concrete houses have replaced thatched and *kaccha* dwellings, doing away with necessary niches for nests and forcing the Gauraiyya out of the rural houses. Besides this, the change in living style of rural folk, has also done away with the processing of food grains at home, instead it is now processed in flour mills, rice mills or *daal* mills etc. This changed habit of rural folk has denied the house sparrow, the facility of feeding in households, forcing the birds to abandon the houses where it lived and thrived since ages.

Thus in nutshell it can be concluded that habitat of Gauraiyya has undergone drastic change, resulting in decline in population of this household bird. However the bird is trying to adapt with the changed circumstances by nesting in wherever safe niches are available in and around human habitations, but threat to its existence is looming large.

Besides the habitat loss, the danger posed by pesticides and insecticides used for crop protection, cannot be underestimated. The bird still feeds on grains, grown and protected by hazardous chemical sprays which definitely affect its reproduction. The combined effects of

all these adverse factors are posing threat to its survival

Required Protection Measures: Urbanization and changes in rural housing cannot be stopped but never- the- less, this little cute bird needs to be protected. This can be done by massive awareness programme, launched to enlist everybody's support, particularly school children for making artificial nests, and hanging them at safer places in the house, providing water and grains to feed the birds. In due course the birds start recognizing the nesting facility and start living and breeding therein. To achieve this objective, every year March 20, is celebrated as **World Sparrow Day** to bring home the message of importance to protect this bird.

This year U.P. Forest dept. organized massive campaign for the preservation and protection of this bird and has managed to administer oath to 11.6 million school children on March 14, and also achieved targeted distribution of about one lac, wooden nests to bird lovers across the state, until World Sparrow Day. These steps will go a long way to spread message of awareness in order to achieve the objective of conservation of this threatened natural heritage.

Editor's Note: The 80th General Body meeting of Retired Forest Officers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh which was conducted on 20-3-2016 coincided with the World Sparrow Day)

CHINA, THE MOST PROBLEMATIC OF NEIGHBOURS

By
J. V. Sharma

Relations between individual countries or their stance on issues outside their territories are guided not so much by principles or merits but by considerations of advantage. Though there is United Nations as watchdog to ensure that no excesses are committed by member nations, interventions even when made, are not always honest and purposeful. A number of factors come into play to inhibit the fair play not excluding risks of inviting the wrath of the countries against which it is spoken. The disputes are not always bilateral. They can be multilateral with geographical, regional, religious, strategic, economic, commercial, political and ideological and a host of other factors. The number of parties involved also varies depending upon the nature of dispute.

There was no mechanism to oversee the international events before the First World War. It was a free for all, the strongest running away with the cake. League of Nations came into existence after the war to arrest arbitrary behavior of countries in international matters, particularly on aggressions against other countries. Because of its inherent weaknesses, it failed to prevent the 2nd World War. After the Second World War, there have been significant changes in the geopolitical climate of the globe. It had become Bi-polar in nature, the communist countries coming together under the leadership of USSR on one side and most of the other countries accepting the domination of USA on the other. India, after winning its freedom, was perhaps the first country to take an independent stand to speak and act on merits of the world issues, not overawed by the displeasure it earned from the affected countries. It was Nehru's doctrine to adhere to the bedrock of neutrality and transparent idealism. He pursued this policy for the whole of his tenure and influenced many important world leaders to accept neutrality as fundamental principle. In course of time the non-alignment became a force to reckon with, many nations joining the Group.

Communist China was nowhere in the picture when Nehru started breathing fresh air into international forums which otherwise were acting like inanimate bodies accepting dictates from the respective power blocs. Nationalist China was holding the "China Seat" in the UN and its Security Council as one of the permanent members. Nehru was quick to notice the paradox of the entire mainland China under Communist Rule being unrepresented in the world body while Nationalist China which lost the civil war decisively to Communists and fled to Formosa (Taiwan) as something

like a government in exile, parading as lawful China. For years, India fought China's battle in the international forums. This happened despite our Communist friends in India criticizing Nehru dubbing him as "Indian Chiang Kai Shaik", the *bête noir* of Chinese Communists. India walked not the extra mile but the whole distance to recognize Tibet as part of China for the sake of good neighborly relations and friendship. In fact India was the first non-communist country to recognize the Peking regime. It may not be incorrect to say that it was largely India which provided the all-important access and space to then Communist regime in the international arena. Case in point is Bandung Conference.

But Nehru had the mortification to rue for his policies of rectitude while he was still alive. What he did not know is transparent behavior is no substitute to purposeful diplomacy. Obviously, he was not a good chess player. While veiled offence was unthinkable in his case, he did not even know that he has to guard his flanks and make the defense impregnable. His Chinese policy was his biggest failure. All his good intentions and unsolicited support extended were not reciprocated. China occupied vast extents in the north-west (Aksai Chin) and when asked, laid claims over entire NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) and disputed the northern boundary as a whole –the territories hitherto under the administrative control of India. The least of courtesies that China could have extended to India was to keep it informed of its claims and movements as is expected from a friend. But it did not happen. It led to a war in which the erstwhile friend China mercilessly crushed India. Nehru did not live long after the ignominious defeat. Some say he could not bear the trauma of witnessing the collapse of his carefully crafted policy of international order based on principles. China conclusively proved him naïve in the art of international politics. *PanchSheel* and *Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai* went into cold storage without even an honorable farewell.

It is pertinent to mention that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister (and Home Minister) in Mr. Nehru's Cabinet addressed a lengthy letter shortly before his death (much earlier to events on border) to his Prime Minister (if I remember correctly it was from Mussoree) cautioning him to be wary of the evil designs of Communist China. He was perhaps the first high level Indian leader to read China correctly. Those were the days when Nehru and Chou En Lai were parading as twins. How could Patel see what Nehru failed to see? An answer to this question may perhaps provide a clue for solution of the problems that plague India-China relations. As a matter of fact, China and India have no other serious problem of contention. Even the boundary issue could have been resolved amicably through dialogue, given the friendly postures and warmth between them. Clandestine intrusion after lulling the friend into complacency can otherwise be called treachery.

Dispute over boundary continues to fester. Confrontations on the boundary occur now and then at the time and place chosen by China. China is no longer the China it was in 1950s or even 60s. Though technically called 'developing' it is a nuclear power with robust economy and good industrial production base and a lucrative market as well. It has well equipped defense forces and matching weaponry. It has the largest population in the world. In comparison, India appears still far away from China on combat preparedness. More importantly, China is fully conscious of its strength, reach and clout. It goes about its business with India with a smile on face even as it continues to pinch its bottom.

Barring few purple patches in Indian history when the entire subcontinent was largely under single rule, it remained mostly fragmented as kingdoms of various rulers. It was the British who extended their suzerainty over the entire subcontinent. The whole of India emerged as single nation during British Rule. India has an excellent track record as a peace loving country. It does not nurture expansionist designs. It is a secular democracy of largest diversity on the globe. Yet, ironically, its relations with neighbors in the region vary from lukewarm friendship to open hostility. The nature of relations continues to change depending upon the governments in power in those countries. For example, our immediate southern neighbor Sri Lanka does not hesitate to court with our bitter rivals to extract concessions from India –a sort of diplomatic blackmail. President Jayawardane of Sri Lanka lured Rajiv Gandhi into the vortex of LTTE turmoil indicating Pakistan as his other option, with disastrous consequences. Recently, President Rajapakshe kept India at bay showing extra warmth towards China. Similarly, Bangladesh shuts its door on the face of India according to its convenience depending upon who wields power Dhaka. Closest neighbor Nepal is always suspicious of India's influence in its internal matters and does not take kindly to even the help extended by India at the time of grave natural calamity of recent earthquake. Similarly equations changed with exit of Gayoom in Maldives while relations with Bhutan remain on even keel. Myanmar (Burma) and India who share the border behave as total strangers in a get-together. While it was one war with China, India had to fight four wars with Pakistan, its immediate neighbor in North-West. That should explain the nature of relations between the countries. The level of 'warmth' had graduated into 'high voltage' syndrome of perpetual hostility. There is a joke in circulation among diplomatic circles that whenever Pakistan does not have a pressing domestic issue to address, it wages a war against India. But it is an extremely lucky nation. Even if the Government in Pakistan do not perform and despite its persistently, sinking economy, it is kept afloat by massive external aid, till recently by US and now by China overtly and the US covertly. Courting two powerful nations successfully at the same time is not easy. With China it is strategic

solely to contain India and with US it is ransom for not spilling beans of the past sins. So, the entire North and North-West boundary of India is sensitive.

All the three, China, India and Pakistan, are nuclear nations with varying capabilities of arsenal and fighting forces. Arguably, China is the strongest and the others in that order. The situation apparently is; it is India Vs China & Pakistan. So thinks at least Pakistan. Whatever be the hopes of Pakistan or assurances by China, armed conflict with China is highly improbable, given its unimaginable consequences. Some experts go to the extent of saying that China does not mind loss of human life and considers that it has substantial expendable population. Saving grace however is its uncanny trait of making the best out of spoils. Shrewd diplomacy is its forte. Other reasons apart, China does not have any compelling reason to force a combat. It is all calm on the boundary albeit the dispute. It is simply unthinkable that China is prepared to spill blood for Pakistan sake! The worst we can imagine is; China can be a serious spectator while India and Pakistan slug it out with liberal supply of military aid to the latter. But chances are extremely remote because that will tarnish its image and standing on the larger international canvas.

It does not mean that China does not have any problems. Like India, it has its own share of concerns. It has a long western border with Russia. Conflict was resolved between the parties with mutual adjustment because it was harmful to both to keep it boiling. It is a running feud with Japan in the east over territorial claims on some islands. Japan, with its strong economic strength is in no mood to relent. It is significant to note that it has very recently modified its avowed policy of not engaging fighting forces. China cannot afford to be oblivious to this development. It has disputes with Philippines in the south-east over maritime territorial rights. Taiwan, scion of its own blood, continues to defy the Mainland. Myanmar appeared to have caved in but other nations in the south like Vietnam have serious differences with China over maritime rights and control over oil exploration, mining etc.

China looks at Pakistan as a privileged friend because the latter had graciously gifted a part of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) to China, to bolster its claims as its territory in line with its claims over India's northern boundary. Pakistan did not have any qualms to part with the territory as it never formed a part of its legitimate jurisdiction. In other words, it amounts to sharing of the spoils. China needed to be extra-courteous and over-obliging to Pakistan as it has larger designs of gaining access Arabian Sea with port facilities at Gwadar in Pakistan. It is of great strategic value for China in that it can successfully spoil India's party and pose constant threat to India's western flank. This development will ensure its easy presence in West Asia and Gulf region with telling effect on geopolitical equations.

Not only this; Pakistan and China inked pacts recently (April 2015) which pave the way for a massive Chinese investment in infrastructure development programme in Pakistan called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. They signed 51 pacts worth \$28 billion out of total proposed \$46 billion investment. China undertakes to build \$10 billion worth nuclear power plants near Karachi to add 1,100 MW to Pakistan's electric grid. Work has already commenced on the project. Another \$36 billion has been earmarked for coal-based power plants and solar parks. The economic corridor project aims to add 17,000 MW of electricity generation to meet country's energy needs. China thus emerges as the biggest investor in energy and infrastructure projects in Pakistan.

It is not difficult to see reasons for the Chinese largesse. With these projects on ground, China gains crucial access and justified presence right through Pakistan territory connecting its own north-western Chinese Province of Xinjiang with ports at Karachi and Gwadar. It is an arrangement which is like one-way traffic. Costs for reversal are prohibitive and could even be suicidal. China's economic stranglehold and strategic grip over the country will be total.

China watchers say that it has another pressing reason to take interest in Pakistan, though it is not touted as one. South-Western areas of China have significant minority Muslim population and the area has the potential to develop into its Achilles Heel, in times to come, what with the growing global pan-Islamic radicalism. Pakistan has been the fertile ground raising these forces for decades. Concept has been very effectively used in Afghanistan to fight Russia deriving all logistic support from US. Al-Qaeda, Taliban are examples besides the proxy war against India. Pakistan is being increasingly seen as guardian of Islam on the globe extending moral and theological support. China is aware that it is not that easy to rein in these forces as they could subjugate the docile Tibetans. China has thus all the reason to bestow gracious attention to Pakistan firstly to convince the Muslim community that it is not *per se* opposed to them and secondly to neutralize Pakistani establishment from encouraging the religious extremism in China and thirdly to have its finger on the fuse to effectively immobilize Pakistan in case it fails to deliver. Evidently, China must have learnt lessons from US experience and wants to be more pragmatic.

Pakistan too cannot be in comfortable position for long on this issue. It created the Frankenstein in Taliban and is now paying a heavy price in Pashtun & Tribal areas of north-west. On the other side it encourages Afghan Taliban to confront legitimate government there. Dichotomy is too apparent to ignore. Riding two horses is a dangerous game; a small disconnect in coordination can ruin the plot and religious extremism is not a sport played according to rules. China is a tough customer with known intolerance to treachery. Consequences are unpredictable but they will not be pleasant for sure.

In contrast to the above scenario, there are other facts which are equally convincing and compelling to give a different impression. There is a Group called 'BRICS' an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. All these countries are frontline developing countries and are important by their own right. Geographically and demographically they wield lot of clout. In fact they, put together, look more formidable than the advanced developed countries. They have common platform and work in tandem. They also know that their strength lies in working together and cannot afford to fight among themselves, their individual interests and agendas notwithstanding. By itself, it is a built-in deterrent against armed confrontation among them.

Only a few weeks ago, BRICS opened the world's newest multilateral development bank in the name of New Development Bank (NDB) at Shanghai with US \$ 100 Billion as initial capital to fund infrastructure and sustainable development projects both in their own countries as well as elsewhere. Though the Bank is not a competitor to World Bank or International Monetary Fund (IMF), it is obvious that these nations aim at evolving their own policy on funding and freedom in fund management. It is a funding mechanism parallel to existing financial agencies reducing their monopoly in the field.

These initiatives do not mean that all the five countries have the same perceptions and objectives. They have only found a common ground to promote developmental activities and significantly their bilateral or multilateral disputes stand relegated to background. India-China boundary issue was not an impediment nor did it figure as crucial issue. Pragmatism prevailed over dogma and sentiment. China has a different perception of the world while Pakistan is incapable of seeing anything except its hostility with India, paying heavy price in bargain. One can also conclude that China cannot be an all-weather friend of Pakistan and if Pakistan banks upon active support from China in the event of armed confrontation with India, it is perhaps asking for great disappointment. China is a known high-stake player. It is fully aware that heavens will not fall if the boundary dispute is kept in limbo for a decade or even more. It knows it can tackle the issue leisurely at its own convenience. The name Chinese Dragon aptly suits. It is highly ambitious and very conscious of cost-benefit account. It has no time for sentiments and is known to deal with its problems in professional way. This attitude made it possible to travel a very long distance from the moorings of old hardcore communism to market-savvy corporate culture. Production, Costs, Markets, Profits are the oft spoken language than Mao and Marx. China does the maximum business with its one-time enemy US and the latter has its largest investments in China. There is no limit for its hunger to reach new frontiers and its desire to dominate is insatiable. It has several mega plans up its sleeve

like Silk Roads, Silk Routes, Maritime supremacy etc. It is building islands out of shallow coral reefs to use them as military bases in South China Sea. It respects little of the age-old definitions of territorial waters and much less the limits of international waters. Its claims can as well encroach the territorial waters of other nations in the region where it has interest. It considers that the entire eastern hemisphere and more particularly the South and East Asia region is its fiefdom. These are unmistakable symptoms of hegemony and expansionism, a newer threat the world is likely to face in future. Its domination in trade and commerce is complete and no less than 100 countries on the Globe are its customers. It does anything only if it is beneficial to China and is pragmatic enough not to fight others' wars. In short, it has obsession for power. World leadership is its objective.

According to recent reports, China had come to an understanding with Russia to extend their presence and power in Pacific region where the US rules now. There are also reports that Russia which had been very close to India for decades and spurned offers of closer relationship from Pakistan, time and again, has entered into an agreement with Pakistan to sell four MI 35 attack helicopters. It is a reversal of cold war-era trend and the Afghan War of 1980s when the two countries were pitched on opposite sides. More defense deals are expected to be concluded in near future. It is difficult to digest the Russian deal with Pakistan, given its continued friendship with India and more significantly, knowing the defense equipment supplied will be used against India. It is thus clear there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies. It is the convenience that determines the relationship. The same logic prompts us to conclude that China will not be tied down with Pakistan forever under all circumstances.

With the 'Key' to prosperity firmly tucked in its pockets, China is in no hurry to settle the unresolved boundary disputes. In a way it can use it as a lever to its advantage. It therefore hopes to win battles without firing a bullet. It is for this reason that it is highly improbable of China using force for resolution of disputes. But India cannot remain a silent spectator to these developments. It cannot also wait till China chokes its trade and movement. It needs to be firm without being aggressive. Position till now is that China acts first and India reacts, that too on low key. Time has come to make it clear that 'it is our right to pay back'. If necessary we may have to say that Tibet is a live issue. India must also tell in unequivocal terms that India as a sovereign nation is free to deal with countries in East and South China Sea region. If China can sneak behind India's backyard, the latter should be ready to reciprocate the gesture.

But Pakistan will be itching for confrontation to materialize. Its strategy is to shoot from the shoulders of China. Whether China would acquiesce to such mercenary role is highly doubtful. There have been nuanced statements from responsible Pakistani authorities that it will not hesitate to deploy

nuclear weapons if it becomes necessary in the interests of the Nation. But it is an empty rhetoric. President Truman is still not forgiven for using atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 70 years ago. World community is loathing the prospects of nuclear war. It is certain that the first user country will face the ire of the entire world and will be reduced to rubble in return. Nuclear weapons are status symbols, to be only possessed and not to be used. They are like plastic eggs which can neither be hatched nor eaten.

India, instead of bothering too much about what China and Pakistan do, will be better served by bringing qualitative change in the mindset of international community to ensure dignified living for all member nations. A beginning can be made by:

1. Prevailing upon nuclear nations to meet and declare ban on the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. They should all be brought under UN regime.
2. UN and its Security Council will be duty bound to declare the first user as enemy of humanity and embark upon punitive action automatically.
3. No further deliberations and veto. Reaction should come quick within 24 hours.
4. Massive international aid of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the victim nation should be guaranteed.
5. UN and its Bodies should be reorganized to make them more representative and responsible with accountability.
6. Efforts must be made to convince the Member Nations that there is need to dispense with subjective evaluation of issues in world body and reform it to inject objectivity in thought and action. What is fair and justice should be the objective rather than the convenience of the power players.
7. Eminent Jurists of international repute known for their impartial approach should be vested with final say in any matter rather than the Permanent Members of the Security Council and other Members. It can be the existing International Court of Justice with amended mandate providing for speedy decisions.
8. Strive for international order where all the nations have equal rights, privileges and responsibilities.

Above all, China is frugal in speech. Added to that, it is also unpredictable. The outcome can either be a surprise or a shock. Better to be prepared for both. There is a feeble hunch in some remote corner of mind; what if China dumps Pakistan in favor of India after its present agenda is completed. It should know better that India is the last to gang up against any country, much less China.

GREEN SONG OF FOREST

By
Dasari Nagabhushanam

Pleasant morning breeze is soothing sweating body
Melodious forest koel song is vibrating in my heart
Eye lids are swimming in musky feathery snow
Skidding from the curvature of colorful rainbow
Whirl blazes cremating rusted ideas of an idle man
Engulfed deer crushed in the spiral twists of python
Running black buck is tired from the chasing leopard

Once again

A new green song is germinating
From the lips of my Forest mother land
O Axe man, Stop !Stop !!
Sharpening the edge of your implements
All chlorophyll blades are shivering
Small yellow flower climbers are shrinking
Newly born baby birds are bothering
Dancing peacock wings became still life paintings
O Friend, become philanthropic, extend your fists for
Curtailling the flames of indiscriminate denudation
Hoist the flags of en masse afforestation

SRI R.D. REDDY BEREAVED

Srimathi R. Uma Devi wife of Sri R.D. Reddy left for her heavenly abode on 08.03.2016. She was ailing for some time. She was 76. Last rites were performed on 10.03,2016 at MahaPrasthanam crematorium and Memorial (Peda Karma) was solemnly held on 19.03.2016 at JRC Convention Centre when family members and others paid rich tributes to the departed soul. Smt. Uma was a good singer and an ardent lover of music. She is survived by her husband, three daughters, sons-in-law, and two grandsons to mourn the loss.Vana Premi conveyssympathy and sorrow to the bereaved family and Prays for her noble soul to rest in peace.

-Editor

THE SAGA OF RIVER MUSI

By
M. Padmanabha Reddy

River Musi originates in Ananthagiri hills near Vikarabad, travels about 90 Km. before touching Hyderabad near Rajendranagar. It bifurcate Hyderabad into South and North city (old city and new city). Then it travels 28 Km. within the city and flows about 150 Km. before joining river Krishna at Wazeerabad, Nalgonda district. After heavy floods in Musi River in 1908, Osman Sagar reservoir on Musi and Himayatsagar reservoir on Easa were constructed in 1920 and 1927 respectively. The Protected water supply scheme for Hyderabad locally called 'Gandipet' water was commissioned in the year 1923.

With increase in population and expansion of the city, water supply was increased to meet the demand. At present water board is receiving water from various sources like Manjira, Singur, Krishna and Godavari

The sewerage system for Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities was constructed at Amberpet in the year 1931 with 12 Million Gallons per Day (M.G.D.) capacity to serve a population of about 5 lakhs. In the year 1985 remodeling of sewerage system was taken up by MCH and five major sewage lines were added to the system

The existing sewerage system is over loaded

due to increase in population and growth of the city, with the result excess flows were diverted into natural *nalas* which joins river Musi on either side; this resulted in heavy pollution of the river. In the year 2001 a project for "Abatement of pollution of river Musi" was prepared and submitted to National River Conservation Directorate (N.R.C.D.) Government of India with an estimated cost of Rs.344 crores and to be shared by central and state government at the ratio of 70:30. The state government vides G.O. 561 accorded administrative sanction in November 2001. The project was expected to be completed by 2007. Unfortunately the works taken up were substandard and defective leading to sewage directly entering into the river. Added to it, the 5 Sewerage Treatment Plants (S.T.P) constructed was not able to take the load, they never worked to full capacity. These all resulted in failure of the scheme.

R.T.I. query revealed that as against the sanctioned amount of Rs.344 crores an amount of Rs.405 crores were spent in the first phase without much result. With the failure of first phase, Government of Indian in the year 2009 directed the state government to prepare a

holistic and implementable project involving water Board, GHMC PCB, Horticulture and forests etc., and send it to Government of India for consideration. While water board was engaged in preparation of plan for 2nd phase, GHMC took up constructions of a Rubber Dam on the river near High court with an estimated cost of about 50 crores. The technology which is prevalent in Europe was adopted without proper study about its suitability for Musi River. The rubber dam constructed with big fan fare did not yield the desired result and became a source for mosquito breeding. It was subsequently dismantled thus wasting about 50 crores.

After working for about 7 years and spending 450 crores the Phase I of Abatement of pollution of River Musi did not give desired results due to various reasons. Chief among them, being inadequate sewerage network within city limits. Sewage flows were directly discharged into storm water drains which ultimately joins river Musi. Hence the water quality of river Musi deteriorated due to continuous discharge of raw sewage. Further there are 12 industrial development areas within 30 Km. of Hyderabad which include Synthetic organic chemicals (bulk drugs and intermediates) electroplating, oil mills, lead extraction /battery units, leather, distilleries, textile, dairy and soap industries. The Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPS) constructed near these industries are not able to treat the

industrial effluents adequately and are discharging its effluents into nearby waterways joining Musi. It is a clear failure of Pollution Control Board (PCB) in not preventing these effluents joining Musi. Added to it, there are about 6000 people living on the river bed of Musi, and open defecation is common sight. Any Musi development project has to first address this problem. The encroachers have to be rehabilitated elsewhere and river is made free from encroachments.

It is reported that during the floods in 1908 many people washed away in floods, but a single Tamarind tree proudly standing on the river bed in front of Osmania hospital saved many people and surviving to tell the story of what happened during the floods. Two Kms. down the line there used to be a cluster of Tamarind trees locally called "Imlibun". Few decades back a major bus stand was constructed where the toilet water of commuters is freely let out into the river. The government encroached upon the Musi-river, cut the trees and finally letting out flushed out toilet water without treatment into the river. In many places the ground water near the Musi is sticky and dull grey to black in color. Polythene packets and animal carcasses lie in the water pools in the river bed. In the recently released report of Central Pollution Control Board (C.P.C.B.), Musi is one of the most polluted rivers in the country. During the survey, water

samples were collected and tested for Biological Oxygen Demand (B.O.D.). The B.O.D. is a measure of the quantity of oxygen used by microorganisms to decompose organic matter present in the water body. The B.O.D. levels more than 3mg/liter, means it does not meet the designed water quality criteria. Water bodies having B.O.D. more than 6 mg/liter are considered polluted. The B.O.D. level in Musi near at Nagole is 34mg/liter. The higher B.O.D. levels have direct impact on flora and fauna of the river and the underground water surrounding it.

Musi Phase II project was prepared in the year 2011 with an estimated cost of Rs. 750 crores. It aims to construct 610 MGD capacity S.T.P.s, laying conveying mains to a length of 75 Km., construction of 8 interception and diversion (I.D) works. After preparation of the Phase II plan there was considerable delay in submission to Government of India. When it finally reached, the Government of India informed that it will not be possible to consider the project under N.R.C.P. due to paucity of funds. Since then no action is being taken to clean the Musi. The polluted water flowing in the river Musi is used for raising vegetables etc. On the out- skirts, these vegetables having lot of chemicals are being sold in Hyderabad.

Government of India specifically wanted a scheme integrating connected departments like

GHMC, water board, HMDA, Horticulture, forests, PCB etc., so that an integrated, holistic workable and implementable plan emerges. Unfortunately lack of co-ordination among government departments has hampered in bringout a holistic and implementable scheme.

We have many successful projects like Sabarmati river front in Ahmedabad and Gomati river front project in Lucknow. For Sabarmati project Gujarat government have constituted a special purpose vehicle called Sabarmati river front development corporation ltd. The S.P.V. model was being used to avoid delays, easy in raising resources and to give implementation efforts a definitive thrust and focus. Rehabilitation of slum dweller, *Dhobighats*, Event area, urban forestry, flower gardens, and water recreations are the main components of Sabarmati project.

Citizens of Hyderabad feel that a Sabarmati river front like corporation should be constituted for development of Musi. The objective should be socializing a river and inclusive development. Mere constructing I.D. works and S.T.P.s will not serve the purpose. Advantage of a river in the middle of Hyderabad should be taken and developed into a tourist spot of excellence. Without cleaning Musi, Hyderabad will not qualify to be called as clean and beautiful city.

QUOTING SHAKESPEARE

By

Dr. B Raghotham Rao Desai

Perhaps readers still remember the contents of my article "How much is Bard-of-Avon relevant in present – day – times?" as also my letter to the Editor paying a tribute to William Shakespeare, which appeared in Vana Premi of May, 2014, as 23rd of April happened to be the date of his birth and demise, 52 years apart. And now two years thence, April, 2016 happens to be 400th death anniversary of the Bard and I would like to remember his philanthropic deeds for which he is so well known.

As already mentioned, he generously donated more than 1700 common words to English language, even changing nouns into verbs, verbs into adjectives or adding prefixes & suffixes to existing words or just inventing whole new original words. His generosity did not stop with just words — hundreds of today's clichés were born in the mind of Shakespeare and came to life on the pages of his plays. A few of these are quoted in the following lines:

If you have not understood my argument and declare vexedly "*It's Greek to me*", you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you claim to be *more sinned against than sinning*, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you act *more in sorrow than in anger*, or if your wish is *father to the thought* or if your neglected property has *vanished into thin air*, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you had ever refused to *budge an inch* or thought you are *neither here nor there*, or suffered from *green-eyed jealousy*, or if you have played

fast and loose or if you have been *tongue-tied*, *hoodwinked*, *a tower of strength*, or *in a pickle*, or if you have *knitted your brows* - *made a virtue of necessity*, or insisted on *fair play* or *slept not one wink* or *stood on ceremony* or *danced attendance on your lord and master* or *laughed yourself into stitches*, or had *short shrift* or *cold comfort* or *too much of a good thing* or if you *have seen better days* or *lived in a fool's paradise* — why, be that as it may, the more fool you, for it is a foregone conclusion that you are as good luck would have it, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you think *it is early days* and *clear out bag and baggage* or if you think *it is high time* and that *that is the long and short of it* or if you believe that the *game is up* and that *truth will be out* or, if it *involves your own flesh and blood* or if you *lie low till the crack of doom* because you *suspect foul play* or if you have *teeth set on edge* at one *fell swoop* – *without rhyme or reason*, then to *give the devil his due* if the *truth were known* for surely you have a *tongue in your head*, you are quoting Shakespeare.

Even if you bid me *good riddance* and send me *packing* or if you wish I was *dead as a doornail* or if you think I am an *eyesore* – a *laughing stock* – *the devil incarnate* – a *stony-hearted villain* – *bloody-minded*, or a *blinking idiot*, then by *Jove* – *O Lord* – *tut, tut!* – *For goodness' sake* – *what the dickens!* – *but me no buts* – *it's all one to me*, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you had ever been *aroused* or had *accused* someone or had been *influenced* by cheap

advertising or expensive addiction or had been a witness to an *assassination*, or beseeching *spotless reputation, salad days* or planning to have your speech on the ground that *brevity is the soul of wit* and had *turned full circle*, you are quoting Shakespeare.

Please note that these are just a few of the 'A' words coined by Shakespeare quoted in the preceding para. And imagine what emotions he could stir up with the rest of the alphabets:

Bedroom, Blushing, Courtship, Dishearten, Drugged, Excitement, Fashionable, Generous, Gossip, Invulnerable, Laughable, Majestic, Obscene, Premeditated, Rant, Swagger, Torture, Tranquil, Undress!

And being mindful that these witty words and pretty phrases he invented are not wasted, he managed to write 38 plays, 154 sonnets and a few other assorted verses!

MOTHER EARTH IN ICU

BY

K.Mohan

(On the Occasion of the Earth Day - April 22nd)

Alas! our Mother Earth is in ICU!

Amen! our Mother Earth is on Death Bed!!

Hay Ram!! our Mother Earth is Bed ridden!

Insah Allah!! our Mother Earth is making Death Cry!

Irrespective of Religion and Region

We have only one Horne i.e. only one Earth!

Let us stop the over utilisation of Reasources

Let us stop the over indulging of boitic interefearnce

Let us not be greedy provide for the people of needy

Forest destroyed, all the resources depleted already

Donot waste resources go for optimum utilisation

Let us rebuild Resources and take up Afforeslation

Earth surnmits,Cop seminnars will not bring change

as we are trying to change others, telling to all others

Unless implemented by us, philosophies one in vain

Start with ourselves keep our Earth Healthy & Green

Make the Earth Green with aesthetic beauty zone!

Make the Earth Happy Home to people of all Religions

Make the Earth Peace home for future Generations

Make the "Globe Warm" with love and affection

NATURAL RESOURCES OF INDIA AND THE NEED FOR THEIR CONSERVATION

By
A. Sudhakar

1. What are natural resources? Nature has blessed us with a wide variety of resources. These resources are very vital for the existence of living being especially the human being. They are source of materials which meet our requirements of food, shelter, energy etc.

The abiotic or physical natural resources covers land, soil, water, energy and mineral resources whereas forests, plants and wildlife resources are included under the category of biotic resources.

Land and Soil are necessary for food production and existence of various life forms. They also support vegetation and play an important role in biogeochemical cycles.

Energy forms the basis of all economic, industrial and domestic activities. Similarly, minerals are important for the economy of any nation and they have diverse uses.

Both human population and its needs are increasing day-by-day. We require more and more resources to meet the growing human requirements. But, the reality is that the natural resources are being consumed and degrading very rapidly. Ultimately, they would exhaust one day. Thus, we should use them judiciously and

conserve them for future generations.

Another common categorization of natural resources is into renewable and non-renewable resources, or alternatively as flow or stock resources. Solar energy, and water are examples of flow resources, which are permanently available (at least on the human time scale) in a continuous supply. On the other hand, the stock resources are those whose quantities are fixed and they keep decreasing with their human use. The examples of stock resources are, fossil fuel deposits, mineral deposits etc. The former are not affected by human use while the latter group of resources can be modified very easily in the course of their human use. Renewable resources are those natural resources that can be replaced by nature over a period of time. Trees, wildlife and soil are renewable resources. Air, water and sunlight are also renewable resources on which all life depends. However, their excessive use or reckless exploitation can destroy and permanently wipe them out irreversibly e.g. excessive hunting of wildlife species can lead to their extinction.

Non-renewable resources are those natural resources that are available only in limited

amounts and are not easily replaced by nature. There is another category of natural resources which are – aesthetic resources. Examples of such resources are solitude, the scenic beauty and peaceful surrounding.

2. India at a glance; India is the second most populous country in the world and ranks second only to China. In 2004, it had a population of 1,065,070, yielding an average population density of 358 persons per sq. km (928 per sq.km). An estimated 72 percent of India's inhabitants live in rural areas.

3. Land and Soil; The main components of soil are, mineral matter, organic matter, water, air and living organisms.

3.1 Different types of soils of India; alluvial soils cover about 78 mha. These soils are considered very good for the production of wheat, rice other cereals. The black cotton soils cover about 51.8 m ha and are found in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. These are also considered good for cultivation of cotton, cereals, and pulses oil seeds, citrus fruits, vegetables, etc. In addition, Red soils have been estimated to occur in 51.8 and are primarily found in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. These are most suited for rice, ragi (millet), tobacco and vegetable cultivation. Laterite and lateritic soils occur in 12.6 mha. Laterite soils

are common in the low hills of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Assam. These are not considered good for agriculture. The desert soils cover an area of about 37 m ha and are not suitable for agriculture.

The geographical area of India, i.e., 329 m ha is only 2.4% of the world's total area on which 16.7% of the world's population and about 18% of the world's livestock population lives. Out of this, roughly 264 m ha of land is available for agriculture, forestry and related purposes. Soil – the upper most layer of land is another vital resource for the production of food materials, fodder, and growth of plants, vegetation and micro-organisms.

The formation of soil is a very slow process and soil has various layers or horizons. Soils can be of various types each type of the soil has its own unique characteristics.

Various factors such as extensive agricultural activities, clearing of forests, over grazing etc. have led to the degradation of soil. Soil erosion is also caused by some natural processes as well as human activities. However, if proper measures of soils conservation are taken, we can maintain soil fertility and use it as a meaningful resource.

4. Water; Water is the most essential component for survival of life. It is distributed on earth in various bodies and forms. Oceans contain 97.2% of total water whereas ice caps

and glaciers have 2.15%. Together, these two resources account for more than 99% of total water on the Earth but these resources are generally not of much use to human beings. The share of ground water is 0.31% whereas rivers and streams have 0.0001% of total water.

The world's fixed supply of water in all forms (vapor, liquid, and solid) is enormous. If we could distribute it equally, every person on earth would have 74 billion gallons of water. However, about 97% of the earth's water is found in the oceans and is too salty for drinking, growing crops, and most industrial uses except cooling.

However, all but 0.003% of this supply is highly polluted, lies too far under the earth's surface to be extracted at an affordable cost, or is locked up in glaciers, polar ice caps, atmosphere, and soil. If the world's water supply were only 100 liters, our usable supply of fresh water would be only about one-half teaspoon (0.003 liter).

Water is very essential resource for the existence of life on this planet. Water is present in abundant quantity on earth. Various surface and ground water resources are available. The use of water is ever increasing for agricultural, industrial and domestic purposes. The growing population and developmental activities need more and more water. Although so much water is available on earth, the amount of utilizable water is not matching its demands. There is water shortage in many countries. There are disputes even with a country amongst different states for water sharing.

The quantity as well as the quality of water is a matter of serious concern today. Water pollution is spoiling the water quality and various resources of water are getting polluted today at a very fast rate due to discharge of industrial and agricultural wastes. We all have a responsibility in conserving this precious gift of nature.

4.1 National water resources.

Sl. No.	Water resources	Quantity (Cu.km.)
1	Annual precipitation Volume (including snowfall)	4000
2	Average Annual potential flow in Rivers	1869
3	Per Capita water Availability (1997)	1967
4	Estimated Utilizable Water Resources i) Surface Water Resources 69 Cu.km. ii) Ground Water Resources 432 Cu.km.	1122

4.2 Major Rivers of India; The rivers of India can be divided into three groups: the great Himalayan Rivers of the north, the westward-flowing rivers of central India, and the eastward-flowing rivers of

the Deccan Plateau and the rest of peninsular India.

Only small portions of India's rivers are navigable because of silting and the wide seasonal variation in water flow. The waters of all these rivers are used to irrigate crops, but the amount stored for purpose of irrigation and power generation varies enormously from river to river.

Twelve rivers of India are classified as major rivers whose total catchment area is 252.8 million hectare (m ha). Of the major rivers, the Ganga – Brahmaputra Meghana system is the biggest with catchment area of about 110 m ha, which is more than 43 percent of the catchment area, of all the major rivers in the country. The other major rivers with catchment area more than 10m ha are Indus (32.1 m ha). Godavari (31.3 m ha), Krishna, (25.9 m ha) and Mahanadi (14.2 m ha). The catchment area of medium rivers is about 25 m ha. Subernarekha with 1.9 m ha catchment area is the largest river among the medium rivers in the country.

4.3 Origins, Lengths and Catchment areas of major South Indian Rivers.

Sl. No.	Name of the River	Origin	Length (km)	Catchment Area (Sq.km)
1	Godavari	Nasik (Maharashtra)	1465	312812
2	Krishna	Mahabaleshwar (Maharashtra)	1401	258948
3	Cauvery	Coorg (Karnataka)	800	81155

5. Energy Resources: There is a direct relationship between population growth, economic standards and energy consumptions. The per capita energy consumption and GNP of a country are indicators of living standards of its people.

The energy demands in India also risen from 4.16 quadrillion Btu (quads) in 1980 to 12.8 quads in 2001. The energy consumption is still below that of Germany (14.35 quads), Japan (21.92 quads), China (39.67 quads), and the United States (97.05 quads).

The consumption by India, with 16.6% of world's population is only 3.4% of world's energy consumption, whereas it is 24.5% for the United States with 4.6% of world's population.

This increasing demand of energy is being met by a large variety of sources such as coal (68.9%), petroleum (34.4%), natural gas (6.5%), nuclear (1.7%) and other renewable resources.

5.1 Fossil fuels: The fossil fuel energy sources come under the category of non-renewable energy resources as it took millions of years for their formation. They are also known as fossil fuels. Fossils are the remains of ancient plant and animal life found on earth, rock, and clay. Fossil fuels are mined for use of an energy source. Fossil fuel energy is stored energy, which is given off when the fuel is burned. Most of the fossil fuel energy is released in the form of heat.

5.2 Types of Fossil fuels; i) Oil – Oil is fossil fuel that is found under the ground and sea in a liquid form. It is collected by drilling a deep well into the ground and then pumping it out. Oil is transported by pipe lines or oil tankers to different places where it will be stored or burned. Oil can be converted into gasoline. Both oil and gasoline are burned in automobiles and in aero planes.

ii) Natural gas – Natural gas is also a fossil fuel. It is a mixture of gases found under the ground. Natural gas is collected and transported almost the same way oil is. Natural gas is burnt in homes. It is now being used in cars and buses for transportation.

iii) Coal – Coal is another fossil fuel that is found under the ground in solid form. Coal is mined and transported by trucks or trains. It is taken to a place where it will be stored or burned. Two important physical natural resources are energy and mineral resources. Both of these are very important from the industrial and economic aspects. The energy can be obtained from various resources. Some of these are renewable resources while the others are non-renewable. The non-renewable resources which were described in this unit were coal, oil and natural gas. These are collectively known as fossil fuels. Since it took thousands of years to form these resources in nature, they are not very easily replaceable. They are being consumed at a very fast rate. Hence, their depletion is a serious

concern today. Thus, these resources need to be conserved. Also there is an urgent need to switch over to renewable sources of energy which include solar energy, biomass, hydro power, wind energy, tidal energy etc. These resources have a great potential to meet the energy requirements. But their full potential is yet to be harnessed.

There are various options and the potential of many of them is being harnessed. These include solar energy, wind energy, hydro energy, tidal energy, geothermal energy and energy from biomass.

6. Minerals; Minerals are basic raw materials for many industries. They have diverse uses. The metallic minerals include iron-ore, copper-ore, chromite, zinc concentrates, gold, manganese ore, bauxite and lead. The major non-metallic minerals are limestone, magnesite, dolomite, barites, kaolin, gypsum, apatite & phosphorite and fluorite etc.

India is endowed with significant mineral resources. India produces 89 minerals out of which 4 are fuel minerals out of which 4 are fuel minerals, 11 metallic, and 52 non-metallic and 22 minor minerals. Together, these minerals constitute one-fourth of the world's known mineral resources. India is the world's largest producer of mica. The main mica producing states are Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. India ranks third among the chromite producers of the world. The chromite deposits occur

in Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Karnataka. Besides, India ranks third in production of coal and lignite and barites, fourth in iron ore, sixth in bauxite and manganese, ore, tenth in aluminum and eleventh in crude steel in the world.

Gypsum deposits are found in Tamilnadu and Rajasthan while bauxite occurs in Western Bihar. Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. What do cars, spoons, glasses, dishes, beverage cans, coins, electrical wiring, bricks, and side-walks have in common? Few of us make stop to think that these products and many other we use every day, are derived from mineral resources. Minerals are non-renewable raw materials extracted from the earth's crust – the upper layer of the lithosphere. Any naturally occurring inorganic substance found in the earth's crust as a crystalline solid is called a mineral. Examples of mineral include salt – used to season food, clay – used to make dishes and bricks, silicates – used to make glass and sand, gravel, limestone and gypsum which are used to make concrete. All the minerals cited above are non-metallic in nature. Other important class of minerals is that of metallic minerals from which metals such as iron, aluminum, copper and gold are obtained. An ore is a mineral deposit containing enough of a metallic element to permit it to be extracted and sold. The higher the concentration of metal in the ore, the higher is its grade.

These minerals are part of our non-renewable heritage, produced by geologic events over millions of years. Without them the technological civilization it would not have been possible.

Unlike biological resources, the mineral resources cannot be managed to produce a sustained yield. Their supply is limited. We can recycle, reuse and conserve some minerals to make them last longer. But after the high-grade ores and easy-to-get deposits have been tapped, the supply of these minerals will be eventually depleted.

.6.1 Making Mineral Resources available

- A large amount of energy are needed to mine and process minerals, are involved in making a mineral resource available for use.
- A deposit containing enough of the desired mineral to make extraction profitable must be found.
- Some form of mining is used to extract the mineral from a deposit.
- The mineral is processed to remove impurities.
- In some cases (especially metallic ores), the purified mineral is converted to a different chemical form by smelting or other chemical processes. For example, aluminum is found in the earth's crust in ore form, as aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3). After the ore is purified and melted, electrical

current is passed through the molten oxide to convert it to aluminum metal (Al) and oxygen gas (O₂).

In India, The Department of Mines is responsible for the survey and exploration of minerals (other than natural gas and petroleum), for mining and metallurgy and non-ferrous metals such as aluminum, copper, lead, zinc, nickel etc. Its subordinate agencies are Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM). GSI is involved in the assessment of geological and regional mineral resources and covers about 94% of the country's area for geological mapping. IBM is responsible for compiling exploration data, mineral maps and other information related to mineral resources.

About 85% of the mineral production is taken care by the public sector enterprises such as National Mineral Development Corporation, Kudremukhi Iron Ore Company, Steel Authority of India, National Aluminum Company and Hindustan Copper Ltd. The rock phosphates are mined by the Rajasthan State Mines and Minerals Ltd., whereas the barites are mined mainly by Andhra Pradesh Mining Development Corporation. Minerals form the backbone of various industries. They can be classified as metallic or non-metallic. They are obtained from various types of rocks. India has a large variety of mineral resources.

7. Forests; Forests are areas of dominant

vegetation. They are also habitats for a large variety of species and wildlife. Many of the diverse life forms are located in dense forests. They are very important resources.

Forests also help in the formation of soil. They are helpful in checking soil erosion. They prevent floods and increase underground water supply. They influence climate by way of increasing humidity of air and providing resistance to winds. They are also useful in reducing the harmful impacts of global warming by acting as a major sink for carbon dioxide which is a greenhouse gas. Forests also play an important role in biogeochemical cycles, i.e., carbon cycle, nitrogen cycle and oxygen cycle.

Forests are very vital resources of the country. They are of diverse types and are treasurers of a large variety of products. They are an important economic resource. They are the resource for wood which is an important building material as well as fuel for many people across different parts of the globe. They also provide fodder, fruits, fiber, medicines, oils, nuts, resins, rubber and raw materials for a variety of things. They are also source of various products such as timber, fuel wood etc. Forests are also habitats for a large variety of species and wildlife.

Approximately 27% of the earth is covered with forests. The forest resources differ from country to country. They cover 61% of Indonesia, 58% of

Brazil and less than 14% of China. In India, forests cover about 20% of the land.

The total forest cover of India is 6, 75,538 square kilometers i.e. 20.55% of the geographical area of the country. Of the 16 forest types in India, the tropical deciduous form the major type of India with 38.2% of the total forest area. Other predominant forest type is the moist deciduous covering 30.3% of the total forest area of the country.

7.1 Wet lands; India has a wealth of wetland ecosystems directly or indirectly linked with River systems like the Ganga,, Brahmaputra, Narmada, etc. The wetlands exhibit great ecological diversity and are of great economic, aesthetic and scientific importance.

7.2 Plant Resources; India is home to abundant plant and animal life and has a wide range of species throughout the country. Broadly classified, there are seven major regions for plant and animal life in India: Arid Indus plain, the Gangetic Plain, the Himalayas, Assam Valley, the Malabar Coast, the Peninsular Plateau and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India has an estimated 45,000 species of plants, 33% of which are native. There are 15000 flowering plant species, 6 percent of the world's total. About 3,000 to 4000 of the total number of plant species are believed to be in danger of extinction.

7.3 Wild life Resources; India is inhabited by a wide variety of animal life, including almost 5,000

species of large animals. Several species of the cat family—including the tiger, panther, Asiatic lion, Asiatic cheetah, snow leopard, jungle cat, and clouded leopard in some parts of India .Most of these species are under the threat of extinction. Elephants roam from lower slopes of the central and eastern foothills of the Himalayas and remote forests of the southern Deccan Plateau. Other large quadruped's native to India includes rhinoceros, black bear, wolf, jackal, dhole, wild buffalo, wild hog, antelope, deer etc. Venomous reptiles, including cobra, python, crocodiles etc. are numerous in India. Large varieties of fish, including many edible ones are available in abundance.

8. Over exploitation of natural resources;

Their over exploitation has in fact led to their degradation and depletion. Various natural resources such as land, soil, water, air etc., are degrading very fast. Various factors leading to the degradation of these resources have been addressed in detail by all concerned. The need for conservation of these resources has to be highlighted. There are various aspects of natural resources management viz. ecological, economic and ethnological. These have to be addressed by policymakers focusing on other key issues involving the concerned stakeholders. (The author, post retirement from service, has acquired a PG Diploma in Environment and Sustainable Management from GITAM University, Visakhapatnam)

WE BOUGHT A SANCTUARY

A couple has transformed 300 acres of denuded farmland in Karnataka into what is probably India's first private wildlife sanctuary. Pamela Malhotra walks through the forest, pointing out a spot where she and her husband saw a herd of 10 elephants a few days ago. She also shows off a giant tree nearby. "That tree is about 700 years old and draws different types of birds," she says, running her hand along the massive trunk. Pamela and her husband Anil K Malhotra have spent the last 25 years buying denuded and abandoned agricultural land in Karnataka's Kodagu district and reforesting it, to return the land to a bio-diverse rainforest for elephants, tigers, leopards, deer, snakes, birds and hundreds of other creatures. The couple owns 300 acres of land in Brahmagiri, a mountain range in the Western Ghats, which houses the Malhotras' Save Animals Initiative (SAI) Sanctuary. It's probably the only private wildlife sanctuary in the country with more than 300 kinds of birds as well as many rare and threatened animal species. But this was not the scene in 1991 when Anil, 75, and Pamela, 64, who run the SAI Sanctuary Trust, came to this part of the country. "When I came here with a friend who suggested I buy this land, it was a wasteland of 55 acres. The owner wanted to sell because he couldn't grow coffee or anything else here," says Anil, an alumnus of Doon

School, who worked in the real estate and restaurant business in the US before moving to India. "For me and Pamela, this was what we were looking for all our life." They had almost given up the search for land after hitting the land ceiling hurdle in north India. The couple, who met and married in New Jersey, US, in the 1960s, had a love for nature from their childhood. When they went on their honeymoon to Hawaii, they fell in love with its beauty and decided to settle there. "That is where we learnt the value of forests and realized that despite threats of global warming no serious efforts were being made to save forests for the future," says Anil.

When the Malhotras came to India for the funeral of Anil's father in 1986, the pollution in Haridwar horrified them. "There was so much deforestation, the timber lobby was in charge, and the river was polluted. And no one seemed to care. That was when we decided to do something to reclaim the forests in India," says Anil, sitting below a dense canopy in front of their house facing the Brahmagiri hills. When they realized they would not find land in north India, the search turned southwards. Malhotra's friend had told him that if he was looking for returns, this land in Brahmagiri wouldn't provide any. "We were not looking for

money. Early on, we realized that shortage of fresh water will be a concern for India and the rest of the world. Acquisition, protection and reclamation of forested lands and wildlife habitat, where vital water sources have their origin, is the only way to save ourselves," explains Anil.

They sold property they owned in Hawaii, bought the first 55 acres at the foothills of the Brahmagiri range and began afforestation work. Soon, they realized there was no use nurturing a forest on one side of the stream when landholders on the other side were using pesticides for cultivation. "We started buying lands across the stream whenever they came up for sale. Many of the farmers considered their holdings 'wasteland' as very little grew on it and were happy to get money," says Malhotra.

But there were legal complications as many land documents were not in order and many farmers had debts to be settled. "Once we bought the land, we allowed the forest to regenerate. We planted native species where necessary and allowed nature to take care of the rest," says Anil. Today, SAI Sanctuary covers approximately 300 acres, and draws naturalists and scientists doing research on the different animal species as well

as hundreds of indigenous trees and plants, which have medicinal value as well. Hunting and poaching was a challenge and often locals did not understand what "this couple from the US" was doing, so it was slow going and required a lot of talking to create awareness. "A priest of a temple located on a nearby hillock was killed by a tiger and villagers were afraid. We helped them rebuild the temple at a safer location, but our condition was that they'd give up hunting and poaching," says Pamela. "When they asked us why, we asked them why they worshipped Hanuman and Ganesha but killed animals. It worked," she says.

They worked with the forest department to set up camera traps and keep poachers away. "There are times I have fought poachers with logs," says Pamela. The couple gets help from other trustees to keep the sanctuary going. They also try convincing large companies to buy land and let it flourish as part of their corporate social responsibility plans. "Corporates should extend their CSR activities towards this sector," says Pamela. "Without water, what business will you do?" (Collected and contributed by Sri A. Kishan)

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.

NEWS AND NOTES

Pune: New snake species discovered in

Western Ghats: -A team of researchers from UK and India has announced the discovery of a new snake in the Western Ghats recently. The new snake has been named as Khaire's Black Shield tail after Neelimkumar Khaire, the founder of Katraj Snake Park in Pune and the Indian Herpetological Society.

The team included researchers from the Natural History Museum (NHM), London, UK; National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, India, the Indian Herpetological Society (IHS), Pune, India and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). First author Dr. David Gower and Dr. Mark Wilkinson from NHM Ashok Captain of IHS/BNHS and VaradGiri a post-doctoral fellow of NCBS constituted the team.

Giri said this would be the first such discovery after a span of 144 years. "This snake belongs to a family of Uropeltidae. It is a burrower and lives underground," he said. (Source: The Indian Express, with thanks) *(Pls see last cover page for photo)*

Shaktiman is a rare horse, and there is more than one reason for it:

-Shaktiman is a horse that no one in India had heard of until Monday (14-03-2016) — when she was brutally assaulted with sticks. For some 24 hours before veterinary doctors were able to confirm on Tuesday that Shaktiman might ultimately recover — and possibly even run again, there was genuine fear that the 14-year-old Kathiawari mare employed by the Uttarakhand mounted police might lose one of her legs — or even end up adding to the worrisome statistics of India's declining horse population.

Falling numbers: The gorgeous, snowy white mare, part of the police's mounted unit, is one of 6.25 lakh horses and ponies in the country, as per the Livestock Census carried out in 2012. That is 24% lower than their numbers from 20 years ago — there were 8.17 lakh horses and ponies in India in 1992. Horses make up only 0.12% of the total 51 crore heads of livestock in the country.

Interestingly, only 7% of horses and ponies in the country are used for the purpose of sports. The rest are used for transportation, and in some cases, as draught animals. A tiny number — less than 1,000 horses — are employed in the mounted police units of 16 states of the country.

Why is the population of horses declining so rapidly?

Experts say that the decline in numbers is largely because the reliance on horses for transportation is declining rapidly. "The rural areas where the bulk of these horses were, has seen a shift towards mechanical forms of transport. It does not make economic sense to buy a horse for transport these days. This has led to the reduction in the number of horses in the country," Lt Col (Dr.) J C Khanna, Secretary of The Bombay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said.

Of the horses and ponies in India, 3.50 lakh are male and 2.75 lakh female. Rural India accounts for 5.63 lakh horses, while urban areas have only 62,000. The two states of Uttar Pradesh (24.31%) and Jammu and Kashmir (23.13%) together, account for nearly half of India's total horse population.

Shaktiman's fractured limb replaced with a prosthetic leg: After being allegedly attacked by the BJP MLA Ganesh Joshi, Shaktimaan, the horse was fixed with a prosthetic leg. His damaged limb was surgically removed by a group of 10 surgeons.

More cars banned in Mexico City after pollution alert: -More cars were ordered off Mexico City's streets on Wednesday 16th March after a surge in pollution prompted authorities to issue the first air quality alert in 14 years.

President Enrique Pena Nieto convened a meeting of an anti-pollution commission after the city's government declared an "environmental contingency" on Monday due to high levels of ozone.

"The goal (of the meeting) is for them to find stricter measures to improve air quality and protect the health of more than 20 million Mexicans," Pena Nieto wrote on Twitter.

After older vehicles were kept off the streets on Monday and Tuesday, the Environmental Commission of the megalopolis decided to expand the ban on Wednesday to include all cars with license plates that have red stickers and end in the numbers three and four.

The commission, which was formed in 2013 to coordinate anti-pollution policies between the federal government, the capital and several surrounding states, said the ban was needed because vehicles produce 87 percent of nitrogen oxide and 32 percent of volatile organic compounds, both of which are ozone precursors. The panel also agreed on a plan to improve the verification of vehicle emissions.

The extraordinary measures were imposed following an increase in ozone concentration, which can cause respiratory and heart ailments. Officials urged people in the metropolitan area of 21 million people to avoid outdoor sports while kids and seniors were advised to stay indoors, in a city where a honking mess of more than 5.5 million vehicles chug along every day. Federal authorities ordered factories in the greater Mexico City area to slash their emissions by 40 percent.

- Too many cars - The last time the air quality emergency was issued was in September 2002. The latest alert took residents by surprise as thick smog descended on the city just two days after the skies were unusually clear thanks to high winds that blew away hundreds of trees. The alarm rang after ozone concentration surpassed the 190-point limit, surging to 194. "There's no wind and this situation has not allowed the dispersion of pollutants," Tanya Muller, the city's environment secretary, told Radio Formula.

Muller lamented a Supreme Court decision that imposed changes last year to the city's "No Driving Today" program, which limits the number of days that older cars can be on the street. The city must now take into account the levels of pollutants to impose restrictions on cars older than 2007. The change, Muller said, has added 1.2 million more cars to the streets. "We need to restrict vehicular traffic," Muller said.

- Former world pollution champion - The pollution alert marks a reversal of years of

progress made by the city to improve air quality after the United Nations declared the Mexican capital the world's most polluted city in the 1990s.

During that decade, ozone levels reached 398 points. The environmental contingency was declared 12 times in 1993 alone, according to the environmental commission.

Headed by left-wing mayors since 1997, the capital has launched various programs to reduce harmful emissions by modernizing the public transport system and encouraging the use of bicycles.

But Hector Riveros, a physics expert at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, said there are still hundreds of small buses known as "microbuses" and taxis that have pollution levels that are four to five times worse than cars.

The solution, he said, is to eliminate sulfur from gasoline, provide cleaner taxis and microbuses, and make speed rules more flexible so that "engines work more with maximum efficiency."

Foresters who made a difference: -In an effort to inspire the present and future generations of foresters, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department has brought out a book – 'Hall of Fame', illuminating the life and work of 25 illustrious foresters of the past.

The book begins with Dr. Cleghorn, considered the father of scientific forestry in the country, right down to 'Elephant Doctor' V. Krishnamurthy and naturalist par excellence M. Krishnan.

Through these personalities, the book traces the forests' history over a 160-year period. If you travel to the Tamil Nadu Forest Academy in

Coimbatore, you may have to take the Cowley Brown Road, named after its founder principal. Its first Indian principal C.R. Ranganathan also finds a mention in the book for his outstanding working plans in Madras province. His theory of dual climax about montane sholas and grasslands is a pioneering one.

If you have been to the grave of Hugo Wood at Mt. Stuart at Anamalais surrounded by teak, you might have seen the inscription 'SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS CIRCUMSPICE' meaning "If you want to see me, look around". He had successfully carried out artificial regeneration method of teak.

The present-day foresters still refer to V.S. Krishnaswamy's book, 'Thoughts on Indian Forestry' and T. Jayadev happens to be the forest chief with 17 years' standing in the history of the forest department.

There are vignettes too. K. Andiappan, as an assistant conservator of forests, was responsible for the Javadis road scheme at Tiruppattur before independence. K Venkatakrishnan was the 'Architect of Rubber Plantations'.

T. Achaya the 'Planter' finds a place for his invaluable contributions to the development of tea plantations, particularly the TANTEA, and, Mohammed Ansar Badsha for his dedication to the formation and development of wildlife sanctuaries.

Then there are others who were not part of the department. 'Elephant Doctor' Krishnamurthy, a veterinarian, had treated more than 3,000 elephants in his career, captured 160 wild elephants and treated them, oversaw the birth

of 99 calves in captivity. He was the one to perform the first post-mortem on an elephant. M. Krishnan is known for his magical writing, delightful prose and original thinking and one who had great respect for natural history. What is not known is that he had conducted surveys for 14 States and their forest departments across the country in amazing detail and depth.

One cannot miss out on Richard Radcliff, the man who stood like a Banyan tree - protecting and nurturing the Nilgiri Wildlife Association for over 30 years or E.R.C Davidar, who fell in love with Ooty as a child and went on to do a pioneering work on the elephant corridors of the Nilgiris and Anaimalais "to preserve them in perpetuity". "This is only the beginning and more such compilation will be brought out in future," says a forest official involved in the project. (Collected and contributed by Sri A Kishan with thanks)

(Pls see last cover page for photo)

Former dacoits — who once ruled Chambal — gather in Jaipur to protect vanishing forests:

— Former dacoits — who once ruled Chambal — gather in Jaipur to protect vanishing forests. More. They once ruled the Chambal ravines in all their bandit glory, but now they fear the land they dearly love is slowly dying. They are concerned over the reduced jungle cover, amid reports of the government wanting to flatten the ravines to turn them into farmlands. On the eve of International Day of Forests on Sunday, erstwhile bandits who ruled Chambal — Seema Parihar, Balwant Singh Tomar, Renu Yadav, Pancham Singh, Munna Singh Mirdha, even a Gabbar Singh, and over a dozen lesser known dacoits — gathered in Jaipur to reminisce, and to tell the government that they wish to protect

their land, as, they all said, people back home still respect their word.

"When we were *farar* (wanted), not a single leaf used to move without our permission," said former dacoit Balwant Singh Tomar, nephew of the more famous Paan Singh Tomar. "Nobody tried to encroach on the land or cut trees. But today, there is no forest. Chambal is our mother. If government wants, it can allot regions to each of us to protect. We promise, not a leaf will be removed, like it used to be before," Tomar said, before limping back to his chair with the help of a stick.

Dacoit-turned-sanyasi Pancham Singh recounted how he had burnt one of his men alive for "misbehaving" with a woman, to imply a sense of morality among dacoits, something he said lacks today which is affecting Chambal. "I have witnessed daku-satta, raj-satta and now dharm-satta (dacoit-rule, government-rule and now religion-based rule). Dacoits were united, and being united means you can move mountains and end corruption. Dacoits weren't corrupt like people today are," he said. Singh, meanwhile, is said to be responsible for over a 100 killings, but that was long ago."

"I had surrendered in 1972 with 550 men and even today, around 200 are alive. If government wants, we can stop the cutting down of trees. I cannot take responsibility of the entire nation. The government should just demarcate the boundary and permit us," he said, before cutting into a reflection: "We used to rule 25 districts, we decided MLAs in three days, and sarpanch in two days."

Former dacoit Renu Yadav, who was freed in 2012 after spending "7 years, 3 months and 15

days in prison”, urged all to plant trees and extended her support to the campaign. State general secretary of GauRaksha Dal, Yadav had last been in news around 2014 Lok Sabha for her proximity to Samajwadi Party leaders. At 28, she was the youngest former dacoit present Sunday, while most others are of ripe old age.”

“It is possible that even farmers do not know about forests, as much as we, the former dacoits, know about them. Because in our lives as dacoits, we had the shade of trees only. We didn’t have a proper roof over us then. Be it summers or winters, it was our house,” said former bandit SeemaParihar. “Forests used to be so green and dense, our heart never wanted to leave, and we were surrounded by animals and plants. But Chambal forests are not even two per cent of what they were a few decades ago,” she said. “The government makes huge promises. But has their huge apparatus prevented cutting down trees in Chambal? I would request them to give us responsibilities and we promise to show results in six months,” she said.

“Please forgive my sins,” declared a real former dacoit, Gabbar Singh - who shares name with the fictional character from *Sholay* - with folded hands. “It was said I cut arms of people or made women dance, I have never done such a thing,” he said sincerely. “Under the watch of certain politicians, trees are being cut rampantly and illegal (sand) mining is being carried out. This has to stop.”

The former dacoits were brought together by Vishnu Lamba, who runs an organisation Shree KalptaruSansthan. Lamba said that the Sunday

event had been nearly a year in the making.

Jaipur MP RamcharanBohra, also present on the occasion, said that he will communicate their wishes to the Chief Minister as well as the Prime Minister. “The emotions of the former dacoits should be respected and I believe each of them should be allotted some responsibility towards conservation of forests,” he said.

Rajasthan’s Principal Chief Conservator of Forests S S Chaudhary said that the state will formally hold discussions with the former dacoits but said any real result requires the involvement of Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, as Chambal region falls in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.”

Forest Act amendment : Long awaited Bill to amend the Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967 to provide deterrent punishment for illicit felling and smuggling of red sanders, sandalwood or any schedule tree and making all forest offences cognizable, has been introduced in Andhra Pradesh Assembly on 21st March 2016 (Page 5 – *The Hindu* – Dated 22.03.2016 – Hyderabad Edition). While the true shape, content and its effectiveness can only be commented after its adoption by Legislature, indications, as they appear now, are that punishments for forest offences in AP State are going to be harsh in future.

Salient features of the amendments reported in the Press are:

1. According to present procedure, the onus to prove the accused guilty is on the prosecution in forest offences involving red sanders, sandalwood and schedule tree. The

amendment seeks to shift the burden of proof on to the accused that he is not guilty.

2. All forest offences are going to be made cognizable and non-bailable.

3. Every case of violation relating to red sanders wood or sandalwood or any other schedule tree shall, on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend up to 10 years and fine which may extend to Rs. 10 lakh provided that in case of the first offence the term of imprisonment shall not be less than five years and the amount of fine shall not be less than Rs. 3 lakh and in the case of second and subsequent offences the term of imprisonment shall not be less than 7 years and amount of fine shall not be less than Rs. 5 lakh.

4. Punishments in case of other forest offences range from three months to five years with the fine varying from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 30,000.

5. Procedure to for feit property acquired through illegal trade of red sanders, sandalwood and schedule tree is prescribed and competent authority not below the rank of Chief Conservator of Forests nominated by the Government will deal with this procedure.

It is a known fact that forests are under severe pressure since several years resulting in loss of valuable tree growth as well as vast chunks of forest land too. It is apparent that large scale organised smuggling of red sanders wood and violence associated with it had prompted the amendments now under the consideration of the legislature. It is highly doubtful if the proposed legislation will be an effective solution to all our

protection problems. It may not be prudent to place too much reliance on the efficacy of the amended law in as much as we had seen that harsher measures like police patrolling and using of fire arms did not deter the organized smugglers. An impression gains ground that the measures devised, be it harsh punishments or harsher use of fire arms, can at best be only knee-jerk reactions of instant relief and cannot qualify for permanent solutions. They may lull the protective staff into a false sense of security.

Experienced foresters vouch that the existing law was not that inadequate as to encourage forest offences. What exactly required is the commitment on the part of implementing agency and the right environment to make it possible. Closer examination of the problem will reveal that it is the lack of political will that makes the job of a forester more difficult. Added to this, there is too much of interference by the Government even in the professional domain of the forestry and forest administration. We cannot conceive any worse example than the 'encroachments of forest lands' and covert encouragement extended by governments. Needless to say, the Forest Rights Act was the last nail on the coffin of forests. It has robbed the forests of its very soul not to speak of other irreparable damage inflicted.

It is therefore not advisable to look at various problems of forests separately in isolation and it is high time the issue is addressed in a holistic manner. (Compiled and contributed by Sri. J.V. Sharma)

SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT

IN ITS ORDERS DATED 05.10.2015, APEX COURT REPLACED CEC WITH STATE LEVEL COMMITTEES FOR LICENSES ETC. OF WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES. THE FOLLOWING IS THE EXTRACT OF RELEVANT PORTION OF ORDERS:

DATE: 05/10/2015. THESE APPLICATIONS WERE CALLED ON FOR HEARING TODAY.

CORAM:

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN MISHRA
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following ORDER

On our request, Shri Harish Salve, the learned *amicus curiae* has given us a brief note on the matters pending before the Green Bench in different categories. He has also made certain suggestions for early disposal of those matters. He has exchanged the aforesaid note with Shri Ranjit Kumar, the learned Solicitor General of India, who represents the Union of India, Shri K.K. Venugopal, learned senior counsel, who appears for some of the parties. The learned *amicus* has classified the matters pending before the Green Bench under different heads such as : i) matters relating to wood based industries, ii) matters relating to National Parks/Wildlife sanctuaries, iii) matters relating to exemptions from the payment of the NPV etc.etc. We intend to take up the First Category, viz. Matters relating to Wood based industries.

CATEGORY I – MATTERS RELATING TO WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES:

We have heard Shri Harish Salve, learned *amicus curiae*, Shri Ranjit Kumar, learned Solicitor

General of India, Shri K.K. Venugopal, learned senior counsel and other learned senior counsel/counselors. Accordingly, we pass the following orders:

(i) The State Level Committees for Wood-Based Industries ("SLCs") are, subject to the compliance of the prescribed guidelines and procedure, authorized to take decisions regarding the grant of license/permission to the wood-based industries;

(ii) (ii) In each State/UT for which the SLC has so far not been constituted, the SLC under the Chairmanship of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests with a representative of the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change ("MoEFCC") and an officer of the State Forest Department/Industries Department not below the rank of the Chief Conservator of Forests/ equivalent rank will immediately be constituted;

(iii) The MoEF is authorized to issue appropriate guidelines in conformation with the orders and directions issued by this Court and also the existing guidelines to the SLCs

relating to assessment of timber availability for wood-based industries and grant of license/permission to the wood-based industries including addition of new machineries and also utilization of amounts recovered from the wood-based industries and connected matters;

(iv) Any person aggrieved by the decision taken by the SLC may file an appeal before the MoEFCC seeking appropriate relief within 60 days' time. If, for any reason, any person is aggrieved by the orders so passed in the appeal, he may prefer an appropriate petition/application/appeal before the appropriate forum/Court for grant of appropriate relief(s).

We also permit the MoEFCC to condone the delay, if any, in filing an appeal, if sufficient cause is made out by the applicant(s)/appellant(s).

The amounts lying with the respective State Forest Departments (recovered from wood based industries) will be utilized for the purpose of afforestation only.

The respective State Forest Departments will intimate the amount(s) spent by them for afforestation purpose to MoEFCC at the earliest.

With the aforesaid observations and directions, we dispose of the Interlocutory Applications/matters specified in Annexure-I to the note supplied by Shri Harish Salve, learned *amicus curiae*.

II. MATTERS RELATING TO NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES:

Now we come to matters relating to National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

At the time of hearing on the aforesaid subject, certain suggestions are made by the learned *amicus curiae* and other senior counsels. By incorporating them, we pass the following

order(s):

All matters for grant of permissions for implementation of projects in areas falling in National parks/sanctuaries, including rationalization of boundaries etc. will be considered by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife ("NBWL") on its own merits and in conformity with the orders and directions passed by this Court from time to time, i.e. on 14.02.2000, 16.12.2002, 13.11.2000, 9.5.2002, 25.11.2005 and 14.09.2007 and other subsequent clarificatory orders/judgment(s) passed by this Court including the Goa Foundation Judgment, i.e. Goa Foundation Vs. Union of India & Ors., reported in (2014) 6 SCC 590.

We request the NBWL to furnish a copy of the orders passed by it within 30 days' time to the C.E.C. The C.E.C. is at liberty, if, for any reason, they are aggrieved by the decision of the Standing Committee of NBWL to approach this Court by filing an appropriate petition/application. In all those matters where there is already decision of the Standing Committee of the NBWL shall abide the parties with all the conditions imposed therein. If any party is aggrieved by the decision of the Standing Committee of the NBWL, they are at liberty to approach an appropriate forum for appropriate relief(s). De-link I.A. Nos. 2202-2203/2008, 2915-2917/2010, 2929-2931 in 2202-2203/2008, 3308-3310/2011 in 2202-2203, 3422/2012 in 2929-2931 in W.P.(C) No. 202/1995 and list separately. With the aforesaid observations and directions, we dispose of the Interlocutory Applications/matters specified in Annexure-II to the note supplied by Shri Harish Salve, learned *amicus curiae*. (Compiled and

LEGAL NOTES

Nature Lovers Movement Vs.State of Kerala and Ors.

This is an important judgment of Supreme Court of India to decide – (1). Whether Sec. 2 of the Forest Conservation Act is prospective in operation; and (2) Whether Government of Kerala could without obtaining prior approval of the Central Government grant Pattas/lease hold rights to the encroachers of forest land.

At the outset, the Supreme Court expressed the following opinion on the need for forest conservation:

“The Indian Society has, for many centuries, been aware and conscious of the necessity of protecting environment and ecology. Sages and Saints of India lived in forests. Their preaching contained in Vedas, Smritis, etc. are ample evidence of the society’s respect for plants, trees earth, sky, air, water and every form of life. The main motto of social life is to live in harmony with nature. It was regarded as a sacred duty of every one to protect them. In those days people worshipped trees, rivers, and sea which were treated as belonging to all living creatures. The children were educated by elders of the society about the necessity of keeping the environment clean and protect earth, rivers, sea, forests, trees, flora and fauna and every species of life.”

With a view to make provision for better protection and management of forests, Rulers of Travancore and Cochin made Regulations which laid down procedure for constituting reserved forests. Despite passing the Regulations, reserved forest lands were

encroached for cultivation. The Government with a view to rehabilitate landless persons leased lands for growing food crops. After formation of new State of Kerala, the Government wanted to regularize encroachments that came into existence prior to 1957. The Kerala State enacted the Kerala Forest Act in 1961. The Government decided later to regularize pre-1960 encroachments and the last decision of the Government was to regularize those encroachments which came into existence on or before 1.1.1977. Before the decision could be implemented, the Parliament passed The Forest Conservation Act in 1980. In view of the *non obstante* clause in Sec. 2, the State Government could not pass any order for regularizing unauthorized occupations/encroachments of forest land.

In 1986, Kerala Government apprised the Government of India of the situation and the policy decision of the State Government. The Chief Conservator of Forests recommended the proposal on condition that equal extent of revenue land would be made available for compensatory afforestation. The Central Government gave approval with certain conditions. The Central Government stated that after fulfillment of the conditions by the State Government and after receipt of compliance report, the Central Government would give formal and final approval. The proposal of Kerala Government was for diversion of forest land of

an extent of about 28,500 hectares in about 5 districts. The Kerala Government took necessary steps to assign the unauthorized occupied lands to the encroachers. An extent of 10,000 ha was under encroachment in other districts; but, since the encroachments did not meet criteria laid down by the Government, the decision for those encroachments was postponed.

The appellant, a society formed for protection of environment and ecology in the State of Kerala, challenged the decision of the Government to regularize unauthorized occupation/encroachments by filing W.P. under Art. 226 of the Constitution. It prayed that the Kerala Government is not competent to divert forest land for non-forest purpose without prior approval of the Central Government. It was claimed that the regularization of encroachments will adversely affect the environment and wildlife and ultimately the population of the State.

The State Government opposed the writ Petition and made averment that they are willing to raise compensatory afforestation in degraded forest area over an extent of 57,180 hectares and sufficient budget provision is made to implement the scheme. The Central Government also filed an affidavit giving details of approval and the conditions stipulated therein.

The Full Bench of the High Court after discussion on the locus standi of the petitioner inter alia held as follows:

1. The Petitioner has the locus to invoke jurisdiction of the High Court under Art. 226 of

the Constitution and make prayer for quashing the decision of the State Government to regulate unauthorized occupation/encroachment on forest lands.

2. The Forest Conservation Act is prospective in operation and the provisions contained therein are not applicable to the cases in which the forest land has already been used for non-forest purpose prior to 25.10.1980.

3. The scheme of granting pattas to pre-1.1.1977 encroachers and for compensatory afforestation are not violative of Constitution or legal provision.

4. The cut-off date of 1.1.1977 is not arbitrary.

5. The encroachers are liable to pay compensation for injury caused to the general public.

The matter was taken to Supreme Court in Civil Appeal No. 2110 of 2000 and the appeal was heard by a Full Bench comprising Hon'ble Justices B.N. Agrawal, G.S. Singhvi and Aftab Alam. Arguments were advanced by the learned counsel for appellant, learned Additional Solicitor General for the Government of India, learned counsel for State of Kerala and learned counsel for private respondents.

Their Lordships carefully made a study of the relevant provisions of the Kerala Forest Act, 1961 and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (As amended in 1988) and observed:

"Regularization of encroached land for cultivation and other purposes continues to be most pernicious practice endangering forest resources throughout the country.

Statistical information compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture during early 1980s revealed that nearly 7 lakh hectares of forest land was under encroachment in the country about a decade back. This is despite the fact that prior to 1980, a number of states had regularized such encroachments periodically and approximately 43 lakh hectares of forest land was diverted for various purposes between 1951 and 1980, more than half of it for agriculture. The decision of the state Government to regularize encroachments from time to time seems to have acted as strong inducement for further encroachments in forest areas and the problem remained as elusive as ever for want of effective and concerted drive against the evil practice."

Reference was made to the provisions of the National Forest Policy of 1988 and decisions made by the inter-ministerial committee etc. Reference was also made to the Government of India's guidelines in regulating pre-1980 encroachments and clarification given thereon. Commenting on the objects of the Forest Conservation Act, it was held that undoubtedly the object of the Forest Conservation Act, is conservation of forest and prevent depletion thereof. The state Governments are bound to seek prior approval of the Central Government for dereservation of reserved forest and diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose. The Court extensively cited case law on the subject and held that ratio of the several judgments is applicable to all forests

irrespective of ownership and classification thereof and no state Government after 25.10.1980 can pass an order for de-reservation and permit any forest land for non-forest purpose without prior approval of the Central Government.

The proposal of the Government of Kerala for regularization of pre-1977 encroachments over an area of about 10,000 hectares is favorably considered subject to compliance of all the requisite conditions.

In this background the grievance of the appellant is considered as premature. The Court however directed that whenever the Central Government takes a decision to assign 10,000 hectares of land prior approval of Central Government in terms of Sec. 2 of the Forest Conservation Act would be required.

The appeal is disposed of in the following terms:

1. The policy decision taken by the Government of Kerala to assign about 28,500 hectares of forest land to encroachers after seeking approval of the Central Government does not suffer from any legal infirmity and the High Court rightly declined to interfere with the said decision.

2. After the commencement of the Forest Conservation Act with effect from 25.10.1980 all the provisions contained therein are strictly enforceable.

3. Conclusion of High Court of Kerala in para 103 of the judgment is unsustainable. The appeal was disposed accordingly. (Source Internet) **K.B.R**



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New snake species discovered in Western Ghats



The grave of Hugo Woods on Mount Stuart at Top Slip in Anamalais

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