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VANA PREMI

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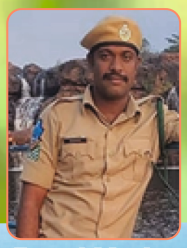
Forest Martyrs' Day 11th September
Forest Martyrs' Memorial at FRI Dehra Dun
Photo:Internet



Forest Martyr
Late Sri.B.Naveen FBO





7th September
Photo: UNEP

Amazon Raiforest Day, 5th Sept
Photo: National Geographic



World Rhino Day22nd September
Photo:WWF

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS, TELANGANA & ANDHRA PRADESH
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- The TGFDC has undertaken the ambitious task of developing Eco-Tourism activities within the State. Existing attractions open to the public include the Botanical Garden, Vruksha Parichaya Kshetram, Virtual Wildlife Safari and Pala Pitta Cycling Park in Kondapur, the Mahavir Nischalvan Eco-Tourism Centre in Vanasthalipuram, Aranya at the Shameerpet Deer Park, and Mrugavani at the Chilkur National Park. These initiatives are proving to be highly appealing, resulting in a growing influx of visitors.
- The TGFDC has also developed urban parks at Lalgadi Malakpet (Vanadrushyam), Thumkunta (Veduru Vanam), Gowdelli (Chandanavanam), and within the Chilkur Reserve Forest (Forestrek Park).
- The TGFDC has introduced new commercial species within the Regional Ring Road region, including Seethaphal, Sandalwood, Red Sandalwood, Rosewood, Teak, and *Casuarina Junghuhniana*, among others.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives 2021–2025: Empowering lives through the distribution of three-wheeler scooters to the differently-abled, support to schools with sports kits and furniture, and establishment of modern pre-fab health sub-centers — driving inclusive growth with care, commitment, and compassion.
- Eco-Tourism projects have been launched at various locations under the brand name of "Deccan Woods & Trails".

Smt. Sunita M. Bhagwat, IFS
Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Vice Chairman & Managing Director (FAC)
Telangana Forest Development Corporation Ltd.,
(A Government of Telangana Undertaking)

VANAPREMI

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An English monthly on forestry, wildlife, environmental issues, and topics of general interest that blends in-depth knowledge with engaging content for all age groups.

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Please consult the Associate Editor.

CONTENTS

1. Editorial 4
   Dr. Kota Tirupataiah
2. The Range Forest Officer....5
   Dr. Padam Parkash Bhojvaid, IFS (Retd)
3. Global warming is not uniform across...regions.....7
   Sri.B.K.Singh, IFS (Retd)
4. Birthday Greetings....9
5. My Eco-development Mission in the Nallamalais, ...10
   Dr.K.Thulsi Rao
6. General body notice....11
7. Silent Signals, Hidden Failures: The Next Frontier in Conservation Biology....12
   Sri. R. Hemanth Kumar, IFS (Retd)
8. Pioneers of Forestry in Mysore Forest Department .16
   Dr.Uday Veer Singh, IFS (Retd)
9. Policy_Brief_My_Wild_View 21
   Sri. B.Vijaya Kumar, IFS
10. *Forest Management in India..... .....* 24
    Dr.Akula Kishan, IFS (Retd)
11. Tree based farming system 28
    Dr. D. Nalini Mohan, IFS (Retd)
12. A Guinness World Record Planting in Bengaluru.. 35
    Sri. B.MT. Rajeev, IFS (Retd)
13. Tiger Estimation and NZP Improvement 42
    Sri C. Ramakrishna Reddy, DFO Retd.
14. The region Mughals saw as separate country.....44
    Dr. R.R. Desai, IFS (Retd)
15. Birding Adventure....46
    Sri.Bhola Datt Suyal,IFS (Retd)
16. The Conocarp Verdict 47
    Dr.H.S.Gupta,IFS (Retd)
17. PRESS NOTE on 'World Lion Day' & 'World Elephant Day' NZP, Hyderabad....49
18. The sacrifice of life at the altar of forests 51
    Sri.V.V.Hariprasad, Dy.CF (Retd)
19. Green Quiz....54
    Dr.K.Tirupataiah, IFS (Retd)
20. Legal Notes 55
    Sri.K.Buchiram Reddy, IFS (Retd)
21. Obituary, Sri B. Naveen, (FBO) 56
22. Obituary, Sri K.Chandra Shekar Pillai, DFO (Retd) .57

Total Pages 60



From the Editor's Desk...

Dear Readers of Vanapremi!

Solemn Greetings and Green Salute on Forest Martyrs' Day

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) declared September 11th as National Forest Martyrs' day in 2013. It is the day to remember the 'Khejarli massacre of 1730' in which Amrita Devi Bishnoi and 363 villagers sacrificed their lives to protect Khejri trees from being felled on the orders of the Maharaja of Jodhpur. That 'green-Heroism' continues to this day.

Forest Martyr late Sri.Banoth Naveen, Forest Beat Officer from Bhadradri-Kottagudem district, of Telangana joins this list of 'green-warriors'. Naveen, while chasing alleged poachers came in to contact with a live electric wire that the latter laid and got electrocuted. In spite of being struck by power, he had the presence of mind to warn his colleagues not to follow his path. He was a real hero and a great leader. Vanapremi salutes this brave son of Telangana. The Association has forwarded a proposal prepared by one of our members to the government for considering awarding medals (service/posthumous) to foresters on par with Police. Hope the proposal gets accepted.

We call those who make the ultimate sacrifice in the line of saving environment, forest & wildlife, as Martyrs. How about those who make almost unbelievable efforts under unbelievable circumstances? A 'nonagenarian' takes pains to write, with pen, draft articles for VP, sends them to a typist in meeseva, gets them typed and mailed to VP. A 'septuagenarian' who just underwent a bypass surgery, takes utmost pains to send an article on whatsapp from hospital bed and … a 'nonagenarian mother' takes pains to call on phone to express her excitement on reading vanapremi and 'Green Quiz".In my opinion, they are also 'Green-warriors' in true sense.

The more we, the humans, neglect the environment; probably more days would be made to observe what is lost/being lost. September starts with 'World Beach Day' followed by International Rainforests Day (5th), International Day of Clean Air and Blue Skies (7th), International Day of Preservation of Ozone layer (16th), World Clean-up Day(20th), Zero Emission Day (21st), World Car-Free Day (22nd), World Rhino Day (22nd), World Environment Health Day (26th) and the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (29th). Let us pledge to take small actions at our level to mitigate the damage to environment & wildlife.

Articles in this issue cover a wide range of topics like: Sacrifice at the altar of Forestry,Tribute to Rangers, Trees appeal, Forest Management, Pioneers of Forestry, A regions Mughals thought as another country, Guinness World Record planting on a day (a critique), Global warming, Wildlife policy and Biology, Tiger estimation, the Conocarpus verdict, Birding adventure and Eco-development mission. I am not giving details of the articles for not revealing the core content before you actually read.

Happy Reading……..

Dr.K.Tirupataiah,IFS (Retd), Editor



The Range Forest Officer: The Quiet Custodian of India's Green Legacy

A World Rangers Day Tribute

Dr. Padam Parkash Bhojvaid

Scientific forest management originated in Europe and was introduced to India during the colonial period. After Independence India expanded this legacy into a national commitment to biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, wildlife protection, and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). At the heart of this enduring journey stands the Range Forest Officer (RFO)—the essential link between policy formulation and field implementation.

Every institution has its visible leaders and its silent pillars. In Indian forestry, while the Indian Forest Service provides strategic leadership, it is the Range Forest Officer who has remained the backbone of field operations for generations.

For me, this is not merely an institutional observation—it is a lived experience.

When I joined the Indian Forest Service in 1983, I arrived with academic knowledge and youthful enthusiasm. However, forests speak a language that cannot be learned in classrooms. They communicate through seasons, soils, wildlife, and people. It was the Range Forest Officer who first enabled me to understand that language.

He introduced me to the forest as a living, dynamic ecosystem rather than a mere collection of trees. He knew every compartment, stream, plantation, village interface, and wildlife corridor. His classroom was the forest itself, and his teachings were drawn from years of practical experience. The foundation of my understanding as a forester was shaped significantly by these exceptional field officers.

As I progressed from Divisional Forest Officer to Conservator of Forests and later to senior leadership positions, my respect for the RFO only deepened. Policies conceived in offices acquire true meaning only when translated into effective field action by the Range Forest Officer. Plantation programmes, wildlife conservation, soil and water conservation, community engagement, and forest protection all depend on their competence, commitment, and credibility.

Their role reminds me of the timeless partnership between Arjuna and Hanuman. While leadership defines the mission, it is the strength, wisdom, and unwavering support of Hanuman that enables its successful execution. Similarly, every meaningful forestry initiative is sustained by dedicated Range Forest Officers who quietly transform vision into reality.

During my service from 1983 to 2017, I had the privilege of witnessing a remarkable evolution within this cadre. The earlier generation possessed exceptional fieldcraft and practical wisdom, honed through years of working under demanding forest conditions. From the mid-1990s onwards, a new generation emerged—highly qualified, many holding postgraduate and doctoral degrees, proficient in English, technologically adept, and well-versed in modern tools such as GIS, remote sensing, and digital communication systems.

They have successfully combined scientific knowledge with the enduring values of discipline,

courage, and dedication inherited from their predecessors. Their capabilities give me confidence that India's forests are in capable and committed hands.

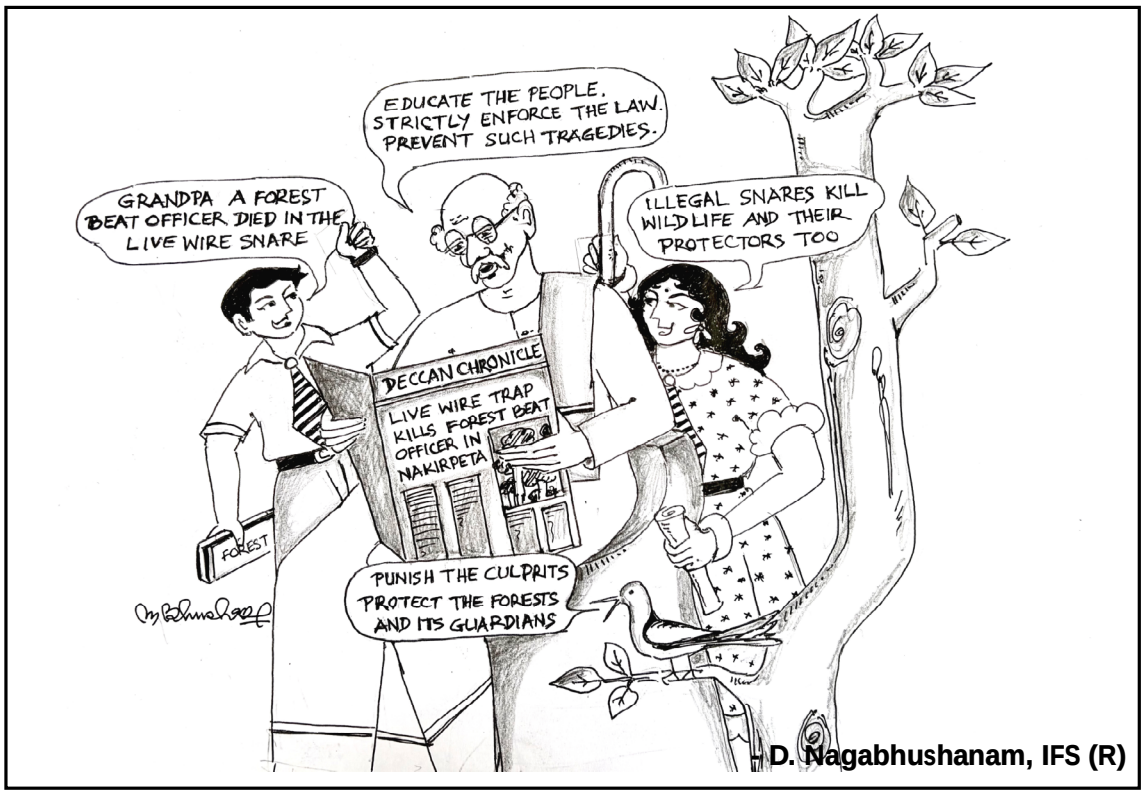
The future of forestry will not be shaped solely in policy documents, but in the thousands of forest ranges where climate change is addressed, degraded landscapes are restored, wildlife habitats are protected, and Sustainable Forest Management is implemented daily. The success of these efforts will depend significantly on the professional excellence, integrity, and field leadership of the Range Forest Officer.

On this World Rangers Day, I pay tribute to generations of Range Forest Officers who have walked remote forest paths, confronted forest fires, floods, poaching, encroachments, and innumerable challenges with quiet courage and steadfast dedication. Their names may rarely appear in public discourse, but their contributions are deeply embedded in the health and resilience of India's forests.

To the pioneers who built this institution, to those serving today, and to the young officers who will carry it forward, I extend my deepest respect and sincere gratitude.

India's forests stand stronger because you have stood steadfast in their service. You are not merely the guardians of our forests—you are the custodians of India's ecological future.

Author is a Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Haryana and Former Director, Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. Mobile no-70879 56657.



D. Nagabhushanam, IFS (R)



PACE OF GLOBAL WARMING DIFFERS ACROSS CONTINENTS

B.K.Singh

Last few months, we have seen how European continent has warmed disproportionately. There was hue and cry all over. There has been unprecedented human death across countries from UK to France to Spain due to heat waves and wildfire. There have been several examples of European youths jumping in water bodies to beat the heat and quite a few did not know swimming and drowned in water. Half a million hectare of forest fires across European countries have been in blaze. Nearly one quarter of the fire incidents remained uncontrollable and the forests continued burning for more than a week. Enough greenhouse gases were emitted to the atmosphere – a fuel for future warming.

The high temperature damaged the surface of the road and even caused slide bend in the rail lines, thereby causing disruptions in rail and road transportation. European houses are not designed for warm conditions and are also not provided with the air-conditioning, only 25% houses in France are air-conditioned. As against this, 100% houses in US between the same latitudes as France is situated, are air-conditioned. There was a war of words between the two Presidents with regard to power consumption. US's power consumption to beat the heat is higher than that of France, thus it's contribution to warming is much more and it sends a higher concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This year's event will make European countries to change the infrastructure, re-design the houses, add air-conditioning, change the materials used for black topping of roads etc.

The precipitation in the catchments of the rivers remained low and drought prevailed across the European continent, hampering the power production, shipping and human health. It had severe economic consequences, too. As the rivers run low and the shipping is scaled down, it added to the cost of transportation. Nuclear power production also took a hit, as the cooling of the reactor is a challengeowing to the depleted water flow in the rivers, especially in the Danube.

The studies have suggested that Europe is warming at twice the pace of the average rise in global temperature. India's Himalayan region is also warming at twice the pace, as compared to the other part of the country, but the most alarming is the warming of the Arctic region, which is happening at a pace, which is four times higher than the average global rise in temperature. In the scientific parlance, it is known as 'Arctic amplification'.

The loss of sea ice has exposed the dark ocean water, which is good absorber of solar radiation. The heat retained in the process shifts the Ocean currents and warmer water from Atlantic and Pacific flows into Arctic. Heat trapped in the Artic remains on the top surface of the ground and does not go high in the atmosphere on account of weaker vertical circulation near poles as compared to the tropics. Further warmer Arctic atmosphere holds more water vapor – a greenhouse gas with potential to trap more heat. Also, the warming Arctic thaws permafrost, which creates greenhouse gases like methane and carbon dioxide.

Melting of ice in Arctic has opened several shipping lanes and boom of ships take routes that were not traversable earlier. The black carbon or the soot spewing from ships makes the ice melt

even faster. Ice sheets have ability to reflect 80% of solar radiation, whereas the glaciers, snow and ice covered by soot can reflect only 50%, leading to net absorption of solar energy and accelerated warming of the region. Advisor for clean Arctic Alliance Sian Prior says, "We need to regulate emissions and black carbon, in particular. Both are causing warming in Arctic." International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the past proposed in 2024 that ships travelling north of 600 North latitudes should use polar fuel, which emit less carbon and are lighter, but the same has not been largely complied. Few months back France, Germany, Solomon Islands and Denmark proposed stricter regulation.

Northern Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which is a pristine and bio-diverse expanse, had remained untouched so far. It provides habitat for nearly 200 faunal species and is a traditional homeland for Inupiat and Gwich people. US President has recently struck down conservation efforts on the ground of energy independence and national security and has opened 1.5 million acres of the Refuge for oil and gas drilling, mineral extraction and related infrastructures. More than 300 km long roads, blocked by the previous administration have now been ordered to be constructed to access the area and to facilitate operations. Administration has ignored the impacts of the climate change and slashed funding for climate research in Arctic. The managing attorney of Earthjustice (a non-profit organization) Erik Grafe said that administration has ignored the indigenous communities and added, "This unique landscape is too special to be sacrificed to oil industry for profit. Tripling down on oil development in Arctic takes us in exactly the wrong direction in our existential fight to curb climate change and protect these critically important public lands." Annual assessment of US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that the surface air temperature between October 2024 and September 2025 has hit the highest since records began in 1900. Report also found that toxic minerals have flooded rivers across north Alaska and also last winter sea ice reached its lowest annual maximum extent in 47 years.

A team led by geophysicist Lauren Lewright at Columbia University estimated the change in Sea level around Greenland. The research was published in Nature Communications. Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere trap heat and cause sea level rise. Ocean absorbs the heat and thermal expansion of water takes place. However, the case of Greenland is opposite. 80% of it is covered by a mile-thick layer of glacial ice and the island had sunk due to ice-weight. The ice is being lost at the rate of 200 billion tons per year and as the weight lifts, the land below rises. The sea level around Greenland thus falls. The study estimated that the autonomous territory is set to gain .9 meters of exposed land by the turn of the century. It has also estimated that if Greenland loses all its ice, it will rise by 2.5 meters out of ocean. Lewright says, "as the ice-sheet loses mass, its gravitational pull on the sea surface decreases. That translates into sea level fall." A reduced sea level will impact the economy and food security especially for the coastal population.

Peatlands occupy 3% of earth's area and store 600 billion tons of carbon, more than all the planet's forests combined. Angela Gallego-Sala, a bio-geo-chemist, University of Exeter and co-author of a research paper published recently said, "we are already in extreme dry years, the peatlands are going up in the fire." Explaining the phenomenon known as Arctic greening, the study says that as the far north warms, it loses ice on land and sea, exposes darker earth and water to absorb more sun's energy and drives more warming. It in turn

encourages the northward expansion of plant species taking advantage of warmer temperature and increased rainfall. The lead author of the study paper Paleo-ecologist Josie Handley says, "Things are getting greener, but they are also getting wetter." The study further says that frozen soil called permafrost is thawing and unlocking still more ancient carbon long locked in ice. As Arctic and Boreal regions are warming extreme heat driving massive wildfires through shrubs and trees are also burning the dried peat releasing carbon all the while. Though expanding peatlands sequester carbon in the earth, but as it dries out and catch fire, the carbon return to the atmosphere.

Like heatwaves in European continent, Arctic amplification is not causing any uproar in public. Scientists are sending enough signals for world leaders to mend their ways and let geopolitics and trade not destroy the planet.

The author is a former PCCF & Head of Forest Force, Karnataka and presently teaches Economics in the Karnataka Forest Academy. M-9449863501

Birthday Greetings

We wish the following born on the dates mentioned

"A VERY HAPPY BIRTH DAY"

S.No.	Name of the Member	D.O.B.
1.	A.H. Qureshi	07-09-1941
2.	A. Raja Reddy	13-09-1926
3.	Narpat Singh	15-09-1952
4.	B. Srinivas	20-09-1962
5.	G. Sagar	23-09-1952
6.	V.V. Hari Prasad	25-09-1953
7.	K. Someswara Rao	26-09-1948
8.	P. S. Rao	28-09-1955
9.	S.N. Jadhav	01-10-1955
10.	A.A. Rama Rao Choudhary	03-10-1952
11.	K. Purushotham	05-10-1962

S.No.	Name of the Serving Officers	D.O.B.
1.	Smt. Priyanka Varghese	08-09-1978
2.	A.Sreenivasulu	11-09-1967
3.	M.Samuel	12-09-1978
4.	N. Rama Chandra Rao	18-09-1984
5.	Laxman Ranjeet Nayak	25-09-1990
6.	S. Satyanarayana	04-10-1967
7.	Dr. Rajendra Prasad Khajuria	05-10-1968

- SECRETARY

Any Omissions and Commissions in the Names / Dates may kindly be informed to the Editor over WhatsApp or Email.



My Eco-development Mission in the Nallamalais, 1994

(The Mission That Was More Than a Forest Assignment)

Dr.K.ThulsiRao

In 1994, I was deputed to the Nagarjunasagar–Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) on a special mission that, on paper, appeared to be an assignment in eco-development. In reality, it was something much larger.

It was a mission to save a landscape, a tiger reserve, and perhaps the very idea of conservation in the Nallamalais.

The Nallamalai forests of the Eastern Ghats were passing through an exceptionally difficult period. Naxal activity was at its peak. Large tracts of forest were effectively beyond the normal reach of administration. Smugglers and poachers exploited the insecurity. Forest resources were being extracted illegally, wildlife was being hunted, and the authority of the Forest Department was increasingly challenged.

The conflict was no longer simply between people and wildlife.It had become a conflict between poverty and conservation, insurgency and governance, livelihood and law, local needs and ecological security.

And, at the centre of this complex conflict stood the tiger.

A Forest Under Siege

The Nallamalais were not merely a collection of trees. They constituted one of the great ecological landscapes of peninsular India—an extensive forest system providing habitat for tigers, leopards, ungulates, sloth bears, wild dogs and innumerable other forms of life.

But the ecological system was under multiple pressures simultaneously.

Forest destruction reduced habitat quality.

Poaching reduced wildlife populations.

Smuggling weakened the forest economy.

Human deprivation increased dependence on forest resources.

And violence weakened the institutional capacity to protect the forest.

The greatest danger was that these problems reinforced one another.

When wildlife declined, the ecological credibility of the Tiger Reserve was questioned. When habitat deteriorated, tiger numbers fell. When the tiger population declined, arguments emerged that the area no longer justified the status of a Tiger Reserve.

Thus, the conservation crisis was beginning to acquire an administrative consequence.

The question was no longer merely:

“How do we protect the tiger?”

The larger question was:

“Can this landscape continue to remain a Tiger Reserve at all?”

The Death of a Forest Ranger

The atmosphere was made painfully real by the killing of Forest Ranger Ramayya.

Ramayya had reportedly stood almost alone against the activities of smugglers operating in his jurisdiction. He was doing what a forest officer is expected to do—protecting the forest and enforcing the law.

But in those circumstances, protecting the forest

could become a life-threatening responsibility.He was killed by Naxals at point-blank range while he was in his office at Bairluty in Atmakur Division.

His death symbolised the extraordinary risks being faced by frontline forest personnel.

For me, the incident represented something deeper.

A forest ranger was not merely an employee of the Forest Department. He was the last institutional leadership presence between the forest and its destruction.When that person was eliminated, the damage was not restricted to one human life. It sent a message through the entire system: the state is vulnerable here; the forest is vulnerable here; those who protect it are vulnerable here.

That is why conservation in the Nallamalais could never be approached as a conventional wildlife-management exercise.

The Threat of De-notification

Meanwhile, the declining tiger population and continuing habitat degradation were creating serious doubts about the future of NSTR. The Ministry of Environment and Forests was considering whether the Tiger Reserve designation could be retained.There was even a real possibility, as I understood the situation at the timethat the reserve might lose its Tiger Reserve status.

The issue had reached a level where the highest constitutional and administrative authorities in the State were involved. In the Scheduled Area context, the Governor's constitutional role added to the complexity. (to be continued...)

Author is a forest scientist, presently Director and Consultant at Forestry, Biodiversity, Environment & Climate Change , Kundhi Global Biodiversity Solutions, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, M-85007 82528

General body notice

The next General Body Meeting of the Association of Retired Forest Officers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh would be held in the 6th of September from 10.30 am.

Venue: 6th floor meeting hall of Aranya bhavan, Hyderabad. Agenda items and other details would be shared separately in the WhatsApp group of the association.

V.V.Hariprasad
Secretary



Silent Signals, Hidden Failures: The Next Frontier in Conservation Biology

R. Hemanth Kumar

One of my friends from Chandigarh, India, remarked, “It makes me think about the long-term implications. If quantifying energy trade-offs in sexual selection becomes even more refined, what do you think the biggest unforeseen challenge will be for conservation efforts in 2030, particularly concerning species with subtle yet critical signalling?”

My response to his thoughtful question is:

Not by 2030, perhaps by 2035, the most unforeseen conservation challenge will likely be “silent reproductive failure.” This refers to situations where populations appear stable in size but experience hidden declines in reproductive success due to disruptions in subtle sexual signalling systems. Species that depend on acoustic, chemical, or visual cues are especially vulnerable. Environmental stressors, such as climate-driven energetic constraints, sensory pollution (noise, light, chemical interference), and phenological mismatches, can compromise the integrity of these signals.



Photo Credit: freepik.com

Because traditional conservation metrics focus on population counts, survival rates, and habitat extent, they may fail to detect these subtle impairments. As a result, reproductive dysfunction could remain invisible until it triggers irreversible declines. Addressing this challenge will require conservation strategies that go beyond numbers, integrating behavioral and energetic metrics, managing sensory environments, and safeguarding the communicative integrity of mating systems.

Now, my explanation in detail is as follows:

The refinement of quantifying energy trade-offs in sexual selection represents a significant advancement in conservation biology. As researchers increasingly understand how animals allocate limited energy between survival, reproduction, and signalling, new challenges are likely to emerge, especially for species that rely on subtle yet critical sexual signals such as acoustic, chemical, or visual cues. By 2035-2040, the most unforeseen conservation challenge will likely be the **cryptic erosion of reproductive success despite apparently stable populations.**

1. Understanding Energy Trade-offs in Sexual Selection

The concept of energy trade-offs is rooted in **life-history theory**, particularly the **allocation principle, which posits that organisms allocatefinite energy among growth, maintenance, and reproduction. Sexual selection intensifies this trade-off, as individuals invest energy in traits such as:**

- **Acoustic signals** (e.g., bird songs, frog calls)
- **Chemical communication** (e.g., pheromone s in insects and mammals)

- **Visual displays** (e.g., colouration, ornamenta tion, lekking behaviour)
- **Territorial defence and mate searching**

These traits are often energetically expensive and highly sensitive to environmental stress -ors. As quantification methods, such as **bio-logging, accelerometry, hormonal assays, and metabolic measurements,** become more precise, conservationists will gain deeper insights into how environmental changes influence reproductive investment.

2. The Biggest Unforeseen Challenge: "Silent Reproductive Failure"

A. Concept Overview

The most significant unforeseen challenge for conservation efforts by 2030 is likely to be **"silent reproductive failure."** This refers to situations where populations appear demographically stable but experience **declining reproductive success** due to disruptions in energy allocation to sexual signalling.

B. Why It Is Unforeseen

Traditional conservation metrics, population size, survival rates, and habitat extent, may not detect subtle impairments in mating systems. Species with delicate signalling mechanisms may fail to reproduce effectively even when habitats seem intact.

C. Mechanisms Leading to Silent Failure

1. Energetic Constraints from Environmental Change: Climate change alters food availability, forcing individuals to prioritize survival over reproduction. Example: Reduced prey availability may limit male carnivores' ability to maintain territories, or the unavailability of food may limit ungulates' ability to engage in mating displays.

2. Sensory PollutionAcoustic pollution: (traffic, industry) interferes with mating calls. Light pollution disrupts visual signals and circadian rhythms. Chemical pollution masks or alters pheromonal communication.

3. Phenological Mismatches: Climate-induced shifts in breeding seasons may desynchronize mating signals and female receptivity.

4. Condition-Dependent Signalling: Many sexual signals are honest indicators of fitness. Environmental stress reduces signal quality, thereby decreasing mate attraction and genetic diversity.

5. Allee Effects: In small populations, reduced signalling efficiency can further decrease mating success, accelerating population decline.

3. Species with Subtle yet Critical Signalling

A. Acoustic Signalling

- **Amphibians:** Frog choruses are highly sensitive to temperature and noise.
- **Birds:** Song complexity often determines mating success; habitat degradation can reduce song transmission.

B. Chemical Signalling

- **Insects**: Pheromone communication can be disrupted by pesticides and air pollutants.
- **Mammals**: Scent marking in carnivores such as tigers and wolves is energetically costly yet essential for mate location.

C. Visual Signalling

- **Lek-breeding species**, such as the Great Indian Bustard, rely on elaborate displays that require significant energy.
- **Bioluminescent organisms** (e.g., fireflies) are affected by artificial lighting.

4. Implications for Conservation by 2035-40

A. Hidden Population Declines

Populations may appear numerically stable but

suffer **reduced effective population sizes (Ne)** due to fewer successful breeders.

B. Genetic Consequences

- Reduced mate choice can lead to **inbreeding.**
- Loss of sexually selected traits may diminish **adaptive potential**.

C. Misguided Management Decisions

Conservation programs relying solely on abundance metrics may overlook reproductive dysfunction, leading to delayed interventions.

D. Challenges in Captive Breeding and Reintroductions

Captive environments may fail to replicate the energetic and sensory contexts necessary for natural signaling, resulting in poor breeding success after release.

5. Illustrative Examples (Here, I am giving a very few examples)

A. Great Indian Bustard (Ardeotisnigriceps)

- Lekking males require high energy for display.
- Habitat fragmentation and disturbance reduce display opportunities and female visitation.

B. Tigers (Panthera tigris)

- Scent marking and vocalizations are essential for mate attraction.
- Energetic stress due to prey depletion can reduce reproductive encounters.

C. Amphibians

- Noise and chemical pollution interfere with mating calls and pheromonal cues, leading to reduced fertilisation success.

D. Fireflies

- Light pollution reduces the effectiveness of bioluminescent courtship signals, leading to local population declines.

6. Emerging Tools for Quantifying Energy Trade-offs

By 2035, conservationists are expected to rely on:

- **Bio-logging and accelerometers** to estimate energy expenditure.
- **Doubly labelled water techniques** for metabolic rates.
- **Hormonal profiling** (e.g., glucocorticoids, testosterone).
- **Ecoacoustic monitoring** for assessing signal quality.
- **Remote sensing and AI-based behavioral analytics.**

While these tools enhance understanding, they also reveal complexities that challenge traditional conservation frameworks.

7. Strategic Conservation Responses (What can be done…. No, No, No, what must be done?)

A. Integrating Behavioural Metrics

- Include **reproductive success** and signal quality in monitoring programs.

B. Managing Sensory Environments

- Establish **"sensory refugia"** by controlling noise and light pollution.
- Implement pesticide regulations to protect chemical communication.

C. Habitat and Resource Management

- Ensure adequate nutrition to support energetically costly reproductive behaviors.

D. Adaptive Management and Policy Integration

- Incorporate behavioral ecology into **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).**
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration among ecologists, physiologists, and conservation

planners.

E. Enhancing Captive Breeding Programs

• Simulate natural sensory and energetic conditions to maintain signalling behaviours.

8. Theoretical and Conceptual Significance

The anticipated challenge aligns with several ecological and evolutionary theories:

• **Handicap Principle (Amotz Zahavi):** Sexual signals are costly and reflect individual quality.

• **Life-History Theory:** Energy allocation affects reproductive strategies.

• **Allee Effects**: Reduced population density lowers mating success.

• **Sensory Ecology:** Environmental changes influence signal transmission and perception.

9. Conclusion

By 2035, the most significant unforeseen challenge arising from refined quantification of energy trade-offs in sexual selection will be "silent reproductive failure", a hidden decline in reproductive success driven by disruptions to subtle yet essential signalingmechanisms. This phenomenon threa -tens to undermine conservation efforts by masking population vulnerability behind seemingly stable numbers.

To address this challenge, conservation strategies must evolve from a numbers-focused approach to a process-oriented framework that incorporates behavioral, physiological, and sensory dimensions of wildlife ecology. Protecting not only species and habitats but also the energetic and communicative integrity of mating systems will be crucial for ensuring long-term biodiversity persistence.

Key Takeaways

• **Biggest unforeseen challenge:** Silent reproductive failure.

• **Primary drivers:** Energetic stress, sensory pollution, and phenological mismatches.

• **Most vulnerable species:** Those relying on subtle acoustic, chemical, or visual signals.

• **Conservation shift needed:** From population counts to reproductive and behavioral metrics.

• **Strategic response:** Integrating behavioral ecology and sensory conservation into management.

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The Library on the Street

It is said that Cairo writes, Beirut prints and Baghdad reads". Named after writer Abdul Tayyab Al Mutanabbi, the street has books left on it overnight. Nobody takes them away. It is said "A reader does not do theft and a thief does not read". The street is one Kilometer long. Mohummad Ghani Hiqmat made statue of Thayyab stands facing the Tigris River.

The Pioneers of Forestry in Mysore Forest Department under the British Administration of Mysore

Dr.Uday Veer Singh

1.The Mysore Forest Department was officially established on January 11, 1864, under the British administration during the period when the British had taken over the direct administration of Mysore due to the alleged mis-governance by the Maharaja. The first Conservator of Forests of the old Mysore State under British administration was Major Hunter, an army officer.

The history of early colonial administration can sometimes be quite elusive, and Major Hunter is one of those figures who remained deeply obscure outside of official administrative records. While he holds a definitive place in history as the very first Conservator of Forests for the Mysore State Forest Department, the personal details of his life, such as his exact birthplace, parents, schooling, and deathwere not meticulously crossreferenced or published in standard biographical dictionaries.

Major Hunter led a small initial team of just five Assistant Conservators/Sub-Assistant Conservators. His immediate pioneering assistants included: Lt. G. J. Van Somerson who later succeeded Major Hunter as Conservator and held the post until 1879; Lt. E. W. C. H. Miller;Mr. C. A. Dobbs; Mr F.B. Dickson; Mr.MadhavaRao (Sub-Assistant Conservator).This laid the early operational foundation for what is known today as the Karnataka Forest Department.

When Major Hunter was appointed as the first Conservator of Forests of Mysore, he was handed a monumental challenge. Up until that point, the forests of the old Mysore State had been heavily exploited without a plan. Unregulated felling for railway sleepers, construction, and the British Royal Navy had left the valuable timber tracts severely depleted. Major Hunter's primary contribution wasn't just managing trees; it was establishing the very framework of scientific and organized forestry in southern India. Because his tenure was right at the dawn of the department, his major contributions laid the bedrock for all future conservation efforts in the region and mainly clubbed as:

(i). Stopping the wild west of unregulated felling before 1864, the "kumri" (shifting cultivation) and private contractor system meant people could enter state forests and harvest premium woods almost at will. Major Hunter immediately implemented strict controls to assert state ownership over the forests, putting an end to unregulated private extraction and mapping out initial boundaries to declare specific tracts as government-controlled territory.

(ii). Organizing the first systematized administrative structure: With a tiny team of just five officers, including his trusted assistants Lt. G. J. Van Somerson and Mr.MadhavaRao, Major Hunter divided the dense forest regions of Mysore into structured administrative zones. This allowed for better monitoring, revenue collection, and policing against smuggling.

(iii). Early scientific focus on highly valued timber-Major Hunter focused heavily on preserving and systematically harvesting economically critical species. He initiated the early documentation and regulation of teak Tectonagrandis, heavily prized for shipbuilding and infrastructure. Sandalwood (Santalum album), reasserting the state's royal monopoly over its extraction to stop illegal

smuggling, Wild bamboo and hardwoods were addressed establishing guidelines so that these resources weren't permanently wiped out by the expanding railway network.

(iv). Transitioning from exploitation to regeneration- Under his watch, the department began shifting its mentality from purely mining the forest for cash to understanding working plans, the concept that must give the forest time to heal and regenerate. He laid down the groundwork that allowed his successor, Lt. Van Somerson, to introduce extensive plantations and official working plans later in the 1870s.

Major Hunter's greatest legacy was institutional. He successfully transitioned the state's forests from an unmonitored free-for-all into adisciplined, revenue generating, and conservation minded branch of government. Every reserve forest and wildlife sanctuary in modern Karnataka can trace its organizational roots back to the steps he took in 1864. When the Mysore Forest Department was officially created on January 11, 1864, under its first Conservator, Major Hunter, the administrative framework was centralized rather than broken down into the highly structured territorial divisions seen today.

As one of the original five officers of the newly minted department, Lieutenant E.W.C.H. Miller was appointed as an Assistant Conservator of Forests with his State wide jurisdiction and scope of responsibility along with his fellow Assistant Conservators (Lt. G.J. Van Someren and Mr. C.A. Dobbs). Lt. Miller's jurisdiction was broadly spanned to the borders of the erstwhile Mysore State which at that time principally encompassed the eight traditional districts- Bangalore, Kolar, Tumkur, Mysore, Hassan, Kadur, Shimoga, and Chitradurga.

Focus on rich timber belts: Because the primary objective of the 1864 establishment was to stop the rapid and erratic depletion of high value timber resources, Miller's operational jurisdiction heavily focused on surveying, demarcating, and policing the dense forest tracts of the state, particularly the heavy wood and sandalwood bearing zones. At the time of his appointment, forest matters were loosely overseen by local district Revenue officials who treated woodlands purely as short-term income generators. Lt. Miller and his peers held the specialized jurisdiction to intercept private contractors, curb illegal felling, and lay the legal boundaries for what would eventually become formally protected Reserved Forests. In short, rather than holding an exclusive regional division, Lt. Miller operated with a state-wide administrative jurisdiction under Major Hunter, working collectively to establish the foundational grid of scientific forestry across Mysore State.

3. Colonel Godlieb James Van Someren (1842–1915) was a pivotal figure in the history of scientific forestry in India. While he began his administrative forestry journey as an Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) in the newly created Mysore Forest Department, he eventually rose to become the Conservator of Forests for Mysore State and later took on significant forestry charges elsewhere in British India.

He was born on July 3, 1842, in Madras, India, to a colonial family, the son of GodliebMaximillianVan Someren. Like many early foresters of the era, he did not start out as a trained botanist but as a military officer. He was commissioned into Her Majesty's Indian Forces as an Ensign of Infantry at Fort St. George (Madras) on September 7, 1859, eventually attaining the rank of Lieutenant before joining civil administration.When the British administration realized that Mysore's rich timber tracts were facing severe depletion due to railway expansion, they established the Mysore Forest

Department on January 11, 1864 and created a post of Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) in 1864 and Lt. Van Someren was posted

Lt. Van Someren was selected as part of the original five foundational member team. Working under the first Conservator, Major Hunter, Van Someren's role as ACF involved toight for autonomy by wrestling physical and administrative control of woodlands away from the local district revenue authorities, who prioritized immediate extraction profits over sustainability. He was also assigned the work of mapping and demarcation. Patrolling and sketching out the state's most valuable tree populations, particularly white Sandalwood (Santalum album), Teak, and Rosewood, laying down the initial boundaries for state-controlled reserves etc.

Following Major Hunter's tenure, Van Someren was promoted to Conservator of Forests of Mysore State, a post he managed with distinction into the late 1870s by which time he had earned the rank of Captain. One of his most notable career milestones occurred in October 1875, when he was selected by the Chief Commissioner of Mysore and Coorg to attend the historic Simla Forest Conference. The conference was chaired by Dietrich Brandis, the iconic 'Father of Tropical Forestry' and the first Inspector General of Forests in British India. Van Someren presented a highly praised, specialized paper titled- 'Note on some of the Forest Lands in the MaidanTaluks of Mysore.' The Core Argument was: While most foresters focused heavily on the wet, timber-dense Malandabelts-the Western Ghats, Van Someren championed the systematic management and protection of the Maidan ,the dry, open plains of central and eastern Karnataka. He argued that these arid tracts were critical for local fuel security, soil preservation, and cattle grazing, setting an early precedent for what we now understand as social and dry-land forestry.

Following a massive administrative shakeup in 1879 where the Mysore Conservator post was temporarily abolished to save money, Van Someren's expertise was utilized elsewhere by the Empire. He was later posted as the Conservator of Forests for Berar (Central Provinces). But he continued climbing the military ranks alongside his civil duties, eventually retiring with the rank of Colonel in the Madras Native Infantry. He lived out his later retirement years in England and passed away on January 13, 1915, at the age of 72 in London. His early administrative legwork between 1864 and 1879 preserved critical forest boundaries that allowed the subsequent generation of indigenous Indian foresters to implement worldclass scientific forestry in Karnataka.

4.Mr. C. A. Dobbs stands alongside Lt. G. J. Van Someren and Lt. E. W. C. H. Miller as one of the three original Assistant Conservators of Forests appointed. Operating under the state's very first Conservator, Major Hunter, Dobbs played a foundational, structural role during the infancy of state-managed forestry in Southern India.Context of His AppointmentUnlike his direct colleagues, Lt. van Someren and Lt. Miller, who were active military officers commissioned into the British Army/Madras Native Infantry, Mr. Dobbs was appointed from the civil cadre. This mix of military and civil personnel was a deliberate strategy by the British administration to balance hard structural enforcement (military) with civil administrative oversight in a newly formed, experimental department.

In 1864, the department did not possess the highly defined territorial circles, divisions, or ranges that characterize modern forestry. Instead, Mr. Dobbs and his fellow ACFs shared a broad, state-wide jurisdiction under Major Hunter, tasked with rolling out uniform conservation policies across the eight traditional districts of the erstwhile Mysore State.

His primary administrative directives included intercepting the Revenue Framework.Before 1864, local Revenue officials and Amildars (taluk heads) controlled the woodlands, auctioning off tracts to private contractors for quick financial returns. Dobbs was heavily involved in executing the administrative shift that stripped these local officials of their unchecked forestry powers, transferring timber regulations directly to the newly formed technical department.

The creation of the department was triggered by a supply crisis,the British railways were rapidly expanding across Southern India and voraciously consuming wood for sleepers and fuel. Mr. Dobbs was deployed to inspect high-yield forest belts to enforce state control over valuable species like Teak, Rosewood, and Wild Sandalwood (Santalum album) and to curtail unregulated lumbering.Alongside his peers, Dobbs spent his tenure physically patrolling rugged, malaria-prone terrains particularly the dense Malnad tracts and dry Maidan plains to identify, map, and document dense forest blocks for mapping early forest grids. These initial boundary surveys laid the groundwork for what would legally become the state's first formally declared Reserved Forests in the subsequent decades.Though historical records provide fewer personal biographical details for Mr. Dobbs compared to his military counterpart Van Someren, who later became Conservator, his contribution as part of this lean, five-man foundational team was vital. Together, they institutionalized the concept of stateprotected ecology in Karnataka, turning a chaotic timber-grabbing freeforall into a disciplined, scientific administrative body.

5.Mr.MadhavaRao holds an exceptionally unique and historic position in the forestry history of Karnataka. As the Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, he was the only Indian officer appointed to the elite five-man foundational team that established the Mysore Forest Department on January 11, 1864. While his colleagues,Major Hunter (Conservator), Lt. G.J. Van Someren, Lt. E.W.C.H. Miller, and Mr. C.A. Dobbs (Assistant Conservators)were British military and civil officials, Mr.MadhavaRao represented the crucial local administrative link in the newly formed department. In the colonial administrative hierarchy of 1864, the rank of Sub-Assistant Conservator was specifically designed to bridge the gap between highlevel British policymakers and the complex realities on the ground.

While the British officers handled broad legislative drafting and statelevel diplomacy, Mr.MadhavaRao was heavily relied upon for his ground-level execution, regional knowledge, and direct management of the local staff like Rangers, Foresters, and Watchers.The primary reason the department was created was to stop the chaotic and reckless cutting of highvalue trees by private contractors and local revenue officials. Mr.MadhavaRao was on the frontline of this transition, executing orders to seize illegally felled timber and enforcing the state's strict monopoly over white Sandalwood (Santalum album).He was also looking after for managing the vast, malaria-prone, and dense terrains of the Malnad (Western Ghats) and the expansive dry plains of the Maidan required intense physical navigation. Alongside his colleagues, MadhavaRao was responsible for physically patrolling these remote areas to identify dense timber blocks, evaluate the health of teak and rosewood stocks, and sketch out the initial geographical boundaries that would later become legally protected Reserved Forests.

Because forestry control was being forcefully stripped away from the traditional regional Revenue heads (Amildars), there was significant administrative friction. MadhavaRao's position

allowed him to navigate the local bureaucracy of the eight traditional districts of Mysore State, smoothing the transition of power from revenue-driven extraction to long-term, organized conservation.Mr.MadhavaRao's appointment in 1864 marks the very beginning of indigenous institutional forestry in Karnataka. Long before formal forestry colleges were established in India, he proved that local officers possessed the exact technical capability and administrative stamina required to protect the subcontinent's ecology. His early pioneering work paved a direct path for future legendary Indian foresters, such as M. Muthanna who eventually became the first Indian Head of the Department in 1901, ensuring that the management of Karnataka's forests would eventually return fully to Indian hands.

6. The Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) to take charge on January 11, 1864 to June 2 1880 of the forests in Coorg (Kodagu) Province was Mr. F. B. Diction. He handed over charge to Muthana the Sub Assistant Conservator. The Karnataka Forest Department was established in Coorg (then part of the Madras Presidency/Mysore State) as the forest conservancy department in 1865. During this initial period (1865-1876) Coorg was managed strictly as a Forest Range headed by an Assistant Conservator of Forest based in Mysore. Mr F. B. Diction served in this capacity until handing over charge of the ACF's office to Sub Assistant Conservator M. Muthana.

The forests of present Karnataka State were administered by three more Provinces. The Mangalore, Bellary districts ((Cleghorn was Conservator) were administered by Madras Presidency, the North Canara and Belgaum (Gibson was Conservator) was administered by Bombay Presidency and the Gulbarga, Bidar, Raichur, Bijapur(M.R.J Ballantine 1887 was Conservator) was with Hyderabad Nizam/ Presidency.

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Painting of Poetry

"My pictures are my versification in lines. If, by chance, they are entitled to claim recognition it must be primarily for some rhythmic significance of form which is ultimate and not for any interpretation of an idea or representation of facts".

- Rabindranath Tagore, on exhibition of paintings in Europe to raise funds for Visva Bharathi.



Policy Brief – My Wild View
From Rescue to Resilience: Sustaining India's Big Cat Leadership

B. Vijaya Kumar

1. Context: India's Conservation Arc

India's big cat conservation has evolved in 3 phases:

- **Phase 1 – Crisis Rescue (1970s-2000s):** Project Tiger and the Wildlife Protection Act halted the freefall of tigers from ~1,800 to ~1,400 by 2006. Focus was anti-poaching and protected area expansion.
- **Phase 2 – Recovery & Diplomacy (2006-2022):** Science-led monitoring, landscape approach, and community engagement drove tiger numbers to 3,682. Launch of IBCA in 2023 positioned India as global convener.
- **Phase 3 – Test of Sustainability (2023-2035):** Numeric recovery is no longer enough. The challenge now is maintaining viable, connected, healthy predator populations within landscapes shared with 1.4 billion people. Success will be ecological, not just statistical.

With special reference to NSTR: As India's largest tiger reserve at ~5,443 sq km spanning Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, NSTR embodies this third phase. Tiger numbers here have risen from 47 in 2018 to 76 in 2024, excluding 11 cubs. The reserve's scale offers potential for a self-sustaining tiger meta-population, but also exposes challenges of prey depletion, human presence, and corridor linkage.

2. Current Success vs Hidden Stressors

- **Tigers:** Recovered to 3,682 in 2022, a 24% increase since 2018. Yet prey density in 30% of reserves is below 5 ungulates per sq km, far short of 20-25 needed for breeding tigers without conflict.

NSTR: The 2024 annual report reports 76 tigers, a 61.7% increase since 2018, with density at 1.73 tigers per 100 sq km. However, camera trap and line transect data show patchy prey distribution. Eastern and northern ranges of NSTR suffer from low chital and sambar densities due to livestock grazing and biomass removal, forcing tigers toward peripheral villages.

- **Lions:** Gir remains stable at 674, but as a single population with inbreeding risk.
- **Leopards:** Expanding beyond PAs, but HWC driven by prey crash and habitat loss.
- **Snow Leopards:** ~718, facing isolated high-altitude populations and climate shifts.

Key stressors:

- **Prey depletion:** Overgrazing, grassland loss, and poaching of chital, sambar, gaur reduce predator carrying capacity. In NSTR, removal of grasslands for agriculture and heavy livestock presence inside the reserve directly depress prey.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Linear infrastructure on corridors like Kanha-Pench, Corbett-Rajaji, and Nilgiri blocks gene flow.
- **NSTR:** The corridor link between NSTR and Amrabad TR via the Krishna river stretch is vulnerable to irrigation projects and road traffic, threatening dispersal of sub-adult tigers. Recent data shows 3 male tigers migrated from Atmakur and 1 female from Markapuram to Amrabad, indicating corridor use but also pressure.
- **Genetic isolation:** Gir lions show low heterozygosity; Ranthambore tigers are bottlenecked.

○ **NSTR:** NSTR tigers are genetically linked to the larger Eastern Ghats population, but isolation from the Nallamala hills to the north risks inbreeding if corridors are not secured.

○ **Disease risk:** Small, dense populations vulnerable to canine distemper, feline panleukopenia, and zoonotic spillover.

○ **NSTR:** High density of free-ranging dogs in fringe villages and at checkposts increases risk of disease spillover to wild carnivores.

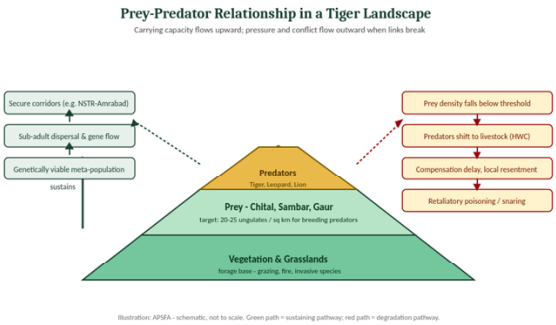

Figure 1: Prey–predator relationship in a tiger landscape — the sustaining pathway (left/green) and the degradation pathway triggered by prey decline (right/red).

3. The Emerging Crisis: Prey Decline → HWC → Tolerance Erosion

When ungulate biomass drops, leopards and tigers switch to livestock. Cattle depredation accounts for >60% of HWC cases in many reserves.

○ **Economic impact:** Loss of one milch animal = Rs 50,000-80,000, or 2-3 months income for marginal farmers.

○ **Social impact:** Compensation delays >90 days, low carcass valuation, and lack of support for human injuries breed resentment. In NSTR's fringe mandals, social media narratives have amplified conflicts around livestock kills, eroding local support for the reserve. The 2024 report flags habitat fragmentation, HWC, and climate change as key challenges needing sustained measures.

○ **Ecological impact:** Retaliatory poisoning and snaring kill prime breeding adults and litters, undoing population growth. Translocation without prey/habitat assessment just moves the problem.

4. Redefining "Success": Pragmatic, Holistic, Genetic, Health-Smart Framework

Pragmatic

Base predator targets on landscape carrying capacity, prey availability, and human tolerance, not historical numbers.

NSTR application: Prioritize prey recovery in degraded blocks of NSTR before any augmentation. Use science-led translocation only where prey >10 ungulates per sq km, habitat is secure, and communities consent. Manage NSTR as a source population for the Eastern Ghats landscape, ensuring sub-adult dispersal has safe passage via the NSTR-Amrabad corridor.

Holistic

Integrate prey recovery into Tiger Conservation Plans through grassland restoration, invasive species removal, regulated grazing, and anti-poaching for ungulates.

NSTR application: Scale Predator-Proof Corrals in NSTR's HWC hotspots in Guntur, Prakasam, and Nandyal districts. Route 30% of tourism revenue from Srisailam and GundlaBrahmeswaram to Van SurakshaSamitis and livestock owners to create direct stake in tiger survival.

Genetically Sustainable

Prioritize corridor restoration under Green India Mission and IBCA. Treat corridors as "conservation infrastructure" eligible for CAMPA funding.

NSTR application: Notify and protect the NSTR-Amrabad and NSTR-Papikonda connectivity corridors under ECA. Use genetic sampling at WII

to monitor gene flow between NSTR and adjacent landscapes.

Health-Smart

Institute active predator health surveillance: routine screening, non-invasive scat sampling, post-mortem audits. Control domestic dog populations in buffer zones.

NSTR application: Implement dog vaccination and sterilization drives in all 110+ fringe villages of NSTR. Establish a disease early warning system integrating NSTR field staff with AP animal husbandry and public health departments.

5. Immediate Policy Actions

- **1. Prey First:** Mandate annual line-transect prey monitoring in all Tiger Reserves. Link 20% of habitat budgets to prey density targets. For NSTR: Restore 200 sq km of grassland in core and buffer over 3 years.
- **2. Conflict Proofing:** Universalize Predator-Proof Corrals in HWC hotspots. Cap compensation at 30 days via DBT. Provide ex-gratia for human injury/death within 7 days. For NSTR: Pilot rapid compensation in Nandyal and Palnadu districts.
- **3. Landscape Governance:** Use IBCA to broker cross-state corridor agreements. Map and notify all 32 tiger corridors under ECA. For NSTR: Secure AP-Telangana coordination for the Krishna river corridor.
- **4. Genetic + Health Management:** Launch National Big Cat Genetic and Health Database at WII. For NSTR: Begin annual scat collection and genetic profiling of NSTR tigers.
- **5. Community Covenant:** Shift messaging from "protect at all cost" to "share landscape, share benefits". Involve livestock owners in prey monitoring, compensation verification, and tourism revenue committees. For NSTR: Institutionalize VSS participation in NSTR's Tiger Conservation Plan revision.

6. Conclusion

By 2030, India's conservation legacy will not be measured by tiger numbers alone, but by three metrics: prey densities >15 ungulates per sq km in cores, HWC cases declining due to mitigation not predator removal, and gene flow restored across corridors with disease risks managed.

With NSTR as a test case: If India can restore prey, secure corridors, and build community trust in NSTR's vast, complex landscape where tigers have already rebounded from 47 to 76 in 6 years, it proves the model is scalable. If India leads this shift, IBCA becomes more than diplomacy – it becomes the global blueprint for megadiverse nations balancing development with living predators. That is pragmatic conservation. That is civilizational stewardship.

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Solar Power

The use of Solar energy has not been opened up because the oil industry does not own the Sun

-Ralph Nader



FOREST MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: NEED FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

Dr Akula Kishan

Introduction

Forests are no longer merely sources of timber and other forest produce. They are complex ecological systems that regulate climate, conserve biodiversity, protect watersheds, recharge groundwater, prevent soil erosion and support the livelihoods of millions of people.

During the last several decades, forest management in India has largely concentrated on forest protection, plantation programmes, timber production, regulation of forest offences and implementation of departmental working plans. These functions remain important, but the ecological and social challenges facing forests today require a fundamental change in the way forests are managed.

The central question should therefore change from *"How many hectares of forest have been protected or planted?" to "Are our forests becoming healthier, more biodiverse, climate-resilient and capable of providing ecosystem services to society?"*

This calls for a transition from **tree-centric forestry to ecosystem-centric forest management.**

1. From Forest Protection to Ecosystem Management

Traditional forestry has understandably given considerable importance to preventing encroachment, illicit felling, fire, grazing and other threats. Protection will continue to be an essential responsibility of the Forest Department.However, protection alone does not guarantee ecological health.

A forest may have substantial tree cover and yet suffer from:

- declining biodiversity;
- invasive species;
- poor natural regeneration;
- fragmentation;
- soil degradation;
- altered hydrology;
- excessive fire frequency; and
- declining wildlife habitat quality.

Forest management must therefore assess the **quality and ecological functionality of forests,** rather than relying primarily on the extent of tree cover.

2. Natural Forest Restoration Should Receive Priority

Plantation programmes have an important role in meeting specific objectives, particularly outside natural forest areas. However, planting trees should not automatically be equated with restoring a forest.

Natural forests contain complex relationships between trees, shrubs, herbs, climbers, fungi, microorganisms, insects, birds and mammals. A plantation consisting of a limited number of species cannot reproduce all these ecological functions.

Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on:

- assisted natural regeneration;
- restoration of degraded natural forests;
- removal or control of invasive species;
- restoration of natural water regimes; and
- protection of regeneration areas.

The objective should be restoration of forest ecosystems rather than achievement of plantation

targets.

3. Forest Management Must Become Landscape-Based

Forest boundaries are administrative boundaries, whereas ecological processes are not.

Wild animals move across forest divisions and protected-area boundaries. Rivers pass through forests, agricultural lands and settlements. Wildlife corridors connect fragmented habitats. Fires and invasive species spread across administrative jurisdictions.

Forest management therefore needs to move from an isolated compartment/division approach towards landscape-level management.

Forest landscapes should be planned by considering:

- wildlife corridors;
- watersheds and river systems;
- protected areas;
- reserve forests;
- community forests;
- agricultural landscapes;
- wetlands;
- coastal ecosystems; and
- urban and semi-urban areas.

Such an approach will also improve coordination between the Forest Department, Revenue Department, Panchayats, local communities and other agencies.

4. Climate Change Requires a New Forestry Strategy

Climate change is already influencing forests through changes in temperature, rainfall patterns, drought, extreme weather, forest fires, pest outbreaks and species distribution.

Future Working Plans should therefore include:

- climate vulnerability assessments;
- identification of climate-resilient species;
- fire-risk mapping;
- drought management;
- invasive-species monitoring;
- restoration of degraded watersheds; and
- long-term biodiversity monitoring.

Forest management must become adaptive, allowing prescriptions to change when scientific evidence and field conditions change.

5. Technology Should Strengthen, Not Replace, Field Forestry

Modern technology offers unprecedented opportunities for forest management.

GIS, satellite imagery, drones, camera traps, acoustic monitoring, GPS, mobile applications and artificial intelligence can assist in:

- forest-cover monitoring;
- fire detection;
- wildlife monitoring;
- encroachment detection;
- invasive-species mapping;
- regeneration assessment;
- carbon-stock estimation; and
- monitoring of forest restoration.

However, technology should complement—not replace—the forest officer and frontline forest staff.

6. Forest Management Needs Differentiated Objectives

All forests should not be managed according to one uniform prescription.

Different landscapes require different management priorities.

(a) Production and Social Forestry

The focus should be on sustainable production, agroforestry, farm forestry, biomass and meeting legitimate demands for forest products without compromising natural forests.

(b) Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation

The emphasis should be on habitat quality, wildlife corridors, ecological connectivity, species recovery and reduction of human-wildlife conflict.

(c) Watershed and Ecological Forests

The priority should be soil conservation, water retention, groundwater recharge and restoration of degraded catchments.

(d)Urban and Semi Urban Forestry

Urban forestry should be treated as an important ecological service, providing shade, temperature regulation, air-quality benefits, recreation and biodiversity habitat.

(e) Coastal Forests and Mangroves

These ecosystems require special attention because of their importance in coastal protection, fisheries, biodiversity and climate resilience.

(f) Reform of the Working Plan System

The Working Plan is one of the most important instruments of scientific forest management in India. However, it should evolve from a largely fixed or rigid prescription-oriented document into a dynamic and adaptive management framework.

The success of a Working Plan should ultimately be judged by measurable improvement in forest condition, rather than merely by completion of prescribed activities.

(g) Restructuring Forest Administration

The increasing diversity of forestry responsibilities also raises the question of administrative specialization, such as

i. Forest and Ecosystem Management - for forest restoration, silviculture, watershed management, ecological restoration and landscape planning.

ii. Wildlife and Biodiversity- for protected areas, wildlife conservation, ecological corridors, species recovery and biodiversity management.

iii. Social and Urban Forestry - for agroforestry, farm forestry, community forestry, urban forestry, extension and sustainable livelihood programmes.

iv. IT and AI specialization to reduce manual work as well as to design future management methods

v. Data base for forest records, plantation records as well as treatment methods adopted over the years and result thereof.

vi. Legal knowledge – in implementation of laws and dealing with Court cases etc.

Such specialization need not weaken the unity of the Forest Department. On the contrary, it could permit greater professional specialization while retaining integrated planning.

7. Measuring What Really Matters

One of the most important reforms is to change the indicators used to evaluate forest management. Traditional indicators include:

- hectares planted;
- plantations completed;
- offences detected;
- area protected; and
- expenditure incurred.

These are necessary administrative indicators, but they do not adequately measure ecological success.

Future indicators should include:

- natural regeneration;
- native species diversity;
- wildlife abundance and distribution;
- habitat connectivity;

- invasive-species reduction;
- forest-fire frequency and severity;
- soil and water conservation;
- ecosystem restoration;

8. The Special Role of Forest Officers

Technology, institutions and policies cannot substitute for competent forestry professionals.

The forest officer of the future must be simultaneously:

- a field forester;
- an ecologist;
- a landscape manager;
- a conservation professional;
- a community facilitator;
- a data-informed decision-maker; and
- an administrator.

Training therefore needs to expand beyond traditional silviculture and forest protection to include climate science, biodiversity, GIS, remote sensing, social sciences, environmental economics, conflict management and ecosystem restoration. The specialization should percolate down to the field officer up to the Guard level.

Conclusion

Indian forestry has reached a stage where incremental changes may not be sufficient. Climate change, biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, increasing human pressures and changing social expectations require a new approach.

The future of forestry should not be measured simply by the number of trees planted or the number of hectares brought under protection.

The real measure should be whether forests are becoming ecologically healthier, more resilient, more biodiverse and more valuable to present and future generations.

The Forest Department must therefore evolve from being primarily a forest protection and regulatory institution into a professional ecosystem-management institution.

The author is a retired IFS officer/CF, Telangana cadre. He authored many books on Forest Act and Allied Acts, the Forest Code and drafted various amendments. He is a practicing advocate in APTG High Courts. M-70930 06261.

The more people rationalize cheating, the more it becomes a culture of dishonesty. And, that can become a vicious, downward cycle

- Stephen R. Covey

Art is the only way to run away without leaving Home

- Twyla Tharp

Happiness is Good Health and Bad Memory

-Ingrid Bergman



From Agroforestry to "Tree-Based Farming": Redefining Livelihoods, Regulatory Confidence, and Agrarian Economics in India

Dr. D. Nalini Mohan

The Ideological and Policy Shift

Agriculture in India is undergoing a profound conceptual pivot away from traditional, single-crop systems. Spearheaded by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the Government of India (GOI) Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has initiated a strategic rebranding of **"agroforestry"** into "Tree-Based Farming". This shift is not merely a linguistic change; it represents a conceptual bridge between environmental sustainability and rural financial stability.

The intent behind this move reflects a balance between forest and environmental laws meant for protecting and promoting the green cover and hard agrarian realities of hardships faced by the farmers growing tree crops. GoI's move gives boost to the farming community to actively involve in environmental conservation while securing **"safe returns."** By replacing the word "forestry" with "farming," the policy reframes the cultivation of trees not as a regulated wood-growing exercise, but as a standard, commercial agricultural practice that belongs fully to the farmer.

Salient Features of India's Existing Agroforestry Policy

To understand the necessity of this rebranding, it is essential to look at the foundational framework of the **National Agroforestry Policy (NAP) of 2014**. India made history by becoming the first country in the world to adopt a comprehensive, standalone policy for agroforestry.

- **Strategic Integration:** The policy aimed to significantly expand India's tree cover to meet environmental goals while simultaneously bridging the massive demand-supply gap for timber, fuelwood, and fodder.
- **Institutional Coordination:** The NAP established a dedicated institutional mechanism to bring together scattered programs under different ministries, specifically aligning the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Simplifying Norms:** A core pillar of the 2014 policy was the push to streamline rules regarding the felling and transit of farm-grown trees, urging state governments to liberalize regulations for popular agroforestry species.
- **Economic Incentives:** The policy sought to secure smallholders by providing access to high-quality planting material, institutional credit, and insurance, aiming to turn tree-planting into a reliable source of secondary income.

The Regulatory Landscape: Perception vs. Protection

The intersection of agriculture and forestry has long been managed under complex regulatory frameworks. Historically, the Forest Department has maintained strict rules regarding tree cutting and transportation. These rules are vital to protecting public forest lands, preventing illegal logging, and promoting overall ecological health.

However, the social forestry sector and private farmers have often perceived these protection rules as bureaucratic hurdles. For an ordinary farmer, navigating the paperwork required to cut a tree in his farm land or transport timber to a market created hesitation. Land ownership certificate

Contd.. on page No.33

TSFA Pictures : World Tiger Day

















Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad
World Lion & World Elephant Day









Forest Martyr Late Sri.Banoth Naveen FBO, his family and DFO BKTDM consoling the grieving family







AP Forest Academy Pictures



First Government Institution in AP to take Oath on"DRUG FREE COMPAIGN"



Seminar on "Tiger, Forest & Man" on International Tiger Day



Sport event inauguration by Cinema Actor and wildlife lover Mr Suhas



Harita Yoga



Sport event inauguration by Cinema Actor and wildlife lover Mr Suhas



Parade: VC, YSR Horticultural University Chief Guest



Swarna Andhra – Swachh Andhra (SASA) by Trainees



Exposure on "Physiotherapy Techniques to Trainees by staff of NIMS Physiotherapy Institute

పర్యావరణహితం

సింగరేణి అభిమతం



డోర్లి ఓసీ డంపుపై పెరిగిన ప్లాంటేషన్



బ్లాక్ ప్లాంటేషన్



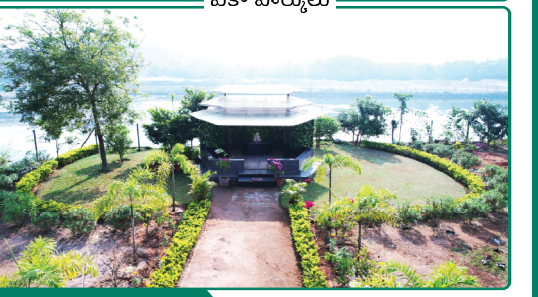
సింగరేణి ఆధ్వర్యంలో నిర్మించిన చెరువులు



అవెన్యూ ప్లాంటేషన్



ఎకో పార్కులు



SCCL

సింగరేణి

కాలరీస్ కంపెనీ లిమిటెడ్

(ప్రభుత్వ రంగ సంస్థ)

Continuation from page No. 28

issued by local revenue officials were required to be submitted as a proof to get permission and transit permit.

Over the last two decades, Forest Departments across India have actively worked to bridge this gap through extensive de-regulation. Significant reforms have been enacted to simplify the process for farmers under “ease of doing business” guidelines:

- **Exemptions for Agroforestry Species:** Many states have completely exempted popular farm-grown species (such as Eucalyptus, Poplar, and Subabul) from felling and transit permits. Valuable timber tree species like Teak, Sal, Deodar etc.are present in forest areas and grown under farm forestry also. Forest officials opine that the protection of forest produce requires certain level of restrictions on farm grown produce also.

- **The Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Model:** These two states have been frontrunners in these reforms. They implemented decentralized, industry-linked systems where farmers can grow, harvest, and transport wood directly to paper mills and plywood industries with minimal regulatory intervention.However, rare and endemic species like Red Sanders continue to be under regulatory regime of the forest departments due to their extremely high vale.

- **National Transit Pass System (NTPS):** To further smoothen the process, the central government introduced pan-India online transit portals, replacing physical checkpoints with digital passes to ensure seamless inter-state movement of farm timber.

The Landmark Bamboo Liberalization

Perhaps the most significant and concrete de-regulatory milestone achieved by the Government of India was the historic amendment to the Indian Forest Act, 1927. Taxonomically classified as a grass, bamboo had been legally categorized as a "tree" under the colonial-era act, which meant that cutting or transporting it attracted heavy penalties.

By amending the Act to **exempt and remove bamboo grown on non-forest lands from the definition of a tree**, the GOI effectively eased out bamboofrom the rigid permit system. Today, farmers and tribals can plant, grow, cut, and transport bamboo across state borders with ease. This amendmentunlocked massive industrial opportunities for agarbathi, paper, and construction manufacturing, proving that clearing regulatory bottlenecks directly revitalizes the rural economy.

However, the forest departments all over the country have some genuine reservations in the “liberalization policy” as the bamboo species are present in forest areas widely. There needs to be more clarity on the treatment of forest origin and farm grown bamboo to safeguard forest produce.

Deciphering the Rename: Building Farmer Confidence

Despite these widespread regulatory relaxations, a significant psychological barrier remains at the grassroots level. The term "Agroforestry" carries the word "Forestry," which subconsciously links the practice to forest boundaries, official inspections, and legalities. Many smallholders still have a lingering anxiety that growing commercial trees might invite regulatory blocks on the tree crops raised on their private land.

The move to rename the practice to **"Tree-Based Farming"** is a deliberate psychological strategy to eliminate this hesitation. It is associated with regular agriculture and gives comfort to the small farmers to grow tree crops by explicitly using the word "Farming."The Ministry of Agriculture treats trees as regular agricultural crops, akin

to wheat, paddy, or sugarcane. This rebranding builds instant confidence among farmers, assuring them that the trees they grow fall under their own agricultural domain, thereby removing the invisible psychological bottleneck and encouraging wider adoption.

Livelihoods, Economic Sustainability, and Financial Incentives

At its core, Tree-Based Farming is a mechanism to secure the economic sustainability of India's rain-fed agrarian communities, which make up the vast majority of the farming workforce.

- **Income Diversification and Economic Security:** Relying entirely on seasonal crops exposes smallholders to severe weather anomalies and price crashes. Trees act as a living bank account, offering a steady, high-value payout when harvested after a few years.

- **Integrated Agriculture Systems:** Tree-based systems work hand-in-hand with allied rural sectors. The farmers used to believe that trees in agroforestry cause shadows which may impact the agri-productivity and avoid tree farming. Awareness increased on the “insurance cover” the that trees provide to get returns even if the main agricultural crops fail and leaf litterenriches the soil, creating a healthier microclimate. This understanding is helping the farmers seamlessly blend crop production with dairy farming, beekeeping, and local fisheries as well.

Financial Incentives and Support: Under the rebranded banner, the Ministry aims to strengthen financial pathways for farmers. This includes integrating tree-planting with central rural schemes, providing direct subsidies for high-yielding clones, and ensuring institutional credit so that smallholders do not have to rely on informal middlemen for upfront plantation costs.

Tree Based Farming And Green Cover:

We understand very well that there is scarcity of suitable lands for raising tree crops and agroforestry is a viable solution for increasing the green cover in the country. Now the renaming it as Tree based farming is likely to increase the green cover in the country and the produce from the farmers lands will reduce the burden on the forests and there is scope for increasing the forest regeneration and density in the forest fringe areas which were subjected to a lot of exploitation by the local communities to meet their small timber, grazing their cattle and fodder needs etc. Therefore tree based farming if used by the farmers effectively as per the new provisions the government intends to extend to the tree crops raised by the small and marginal farmers. This policy shift is likely to have positive impact in increasing the green coven in the country.

Smoothening the Path Forward

The transition from Agroforestry to Tree-Based Farming marks a mature evolution in India’s agricultural policy. It honours the protective role of forestry laws while actively honouring the economic needs of the farmer. Following successful structural blueprints like the liberation of bamboo, this change replaces strict regulatory regimen to freedom to grow and trade in produce of tree crops without restrictions. This move successfully transforms tree planting from an abstract ecological obligation into a secure, profitable livelihood strategy—ensuring that as India’s green cover expands, the financial security of its farmers grows along with it. Inter-ministerial coordination between MoEF & CC and Agriculture is essential to making it a successful policy initiative.

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Guinness World Record of Planting 15 lakh Saplings

(In Bengaluru by BDA with Miyawaki Model on 27th June, 2026)

B M T Rajeev

The Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) of the Karnataka Government organized an event of mega planting of 1.50 million saplings –trees in the silicon City- Bengaluru within the new layouts formed by it in the blocks set aside for parks at Nada PrabhuKempeGowda layout, DrShivaramKarantha Layout and Banashankari VI stage over 243 acres (98.34 hectares) in 279 blocks;with an aim to create green trees parks to sink Co2, to produce O2&to check the rising temperature of the city and also to recharge the underground water table with the afforestation model of Miyawaki of Japan on 27th June, 2026 to coincide with the Celebration of 517th birth anniversary of the Nada PrabhuKempeGowda-the Visionary Founder of Bengaluru.

The program was well planned to be implemented with the Shramadhan by over 70,000 peoples' (volunteers booked online) participation from govt. organizations, educational institutions, private organizations, NGOs and public on the D' day.

The project is coordinated by the Forest wing of the BDA who veiled the responsibilities of



outsourcing the varieties of saplings of locally proven species of trees of timber, fruiting, flowering, shade bearing and medicinal values etc with technical knowhow and supervision of the entire project implementation with the support from the engineers of the BDA and huge field staff drawn from the Forest Department on the D-day for supervision. The project is headed by the commissioner of BDA.

It was implemented on 27th June, 2026 with inauguration by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka. The job was accomplished by Shramadhan (*voluntary contribution of physical labour for digging pits, distribution and planting of saplings*) of public & NGOs participation within 12 hours work from morning 7 am to evening 7.00 pm. The Guinness World Record for planting 15 lakh saplings was granted to the authorities and it is one of the achievements as per the claim of the GoK in the press.

Pic: Opening pit& planting the seedlings by volunteers

The budget cost of the project is said to be Rs 90 crore out of which Rs 20 crore is by the BDA and rest Rs 70 crore is of the CSR from various companies which will go to 11 contractor-NGOS directly for maintenance with watering, casualty replacements, mulching, fencing, geo-tagging each trees and protection for 3 years (exact figure of fund from CSR to 11 NGOs not confirmed).

But, **the rain God** had a different plan for this project… there was no rain earlier to 27th June and the site was dry except in some low lying areas; and after plantingno rains till 18th July when it rained, again dry spell continued due to El-Nino even though it is a monsoon season…… The public, press and the TV news channels are sceptical over the condition of saplings planted,

projecting about 20-25% or more saplings are said to have been wilted/died due to hot sun in spite watering by the contractors- NGOs after planting.

The BDA and NGOs are in full swing to see the project succeed, for which about 50 water tankers are in swing to draw water from nearby sources, bore wells are sunk near water sources, sprinklers are installed to flood water to saplings planted to ensure their survival and growth…and they are sure of making the project success since the sites are in the city and facilities are available to outsource.

The above situation forces the **Author to analyze** the project, a Guinness World Record holder of 15 lakh Saplings planted in 12 hours, from the angle of planning, itstechnical execution and logistical success to create awareness about the GWR of planting in Miyawaki model, time of execution by spending huge public money where the result is the subject matter for debate and accountability.

Let us analyze GWR for tree planting, the technique-Miyawaki & the BDA's process of execution in the field (With conscious observation right from news appeared in March, 2026 about this project…with inputs of suggestions by the Author.)

1. Guinness Book of World Records:

Guinness Book of World Records (now officially known as Guinness World Records -GWR) is a British reference book published annually that lists and verifies thousands of world records.

i. Key Details:

- **Content:** It covers **human achievements** (e.g., fastest, tallest, heaviest, most, longest) as well as extremes of the **natural world. Science & technology** etc. Records must be **measurable, breakable, standardizable, verifiable**, in sports, works, and based on **one clear variable.**
- **Origins:** The idea came from Sir Hugh Beaver of Guinness Breweries in 1951 after a pub-style argument about the fastest game bird in Europe. The first edition was published on August 27, 1955, by twin brothers Norris and Ross McWhirter.
- **Purpose:** Originally created to settle arguments in pubs, it has become the global authority on record-breaking achievements, inspiring people worldwide.
- **Current Status:** It's a major brand with offices around the world. Millions of copies are sold annually in many languages, making it one of the best-selling copyrighted books ever.

ii. Tree planting is one of the item come the under GWR

For GWR of tree planting there are certain principles prescribed to be adopted to claim it. They are…

Efficient tree planting depends on ones goal: planting a few trees in a backyard, large-scale reforestation, or high-volume efforts like Guinness World Record attempts (e.g., Antoine Moses planting over 23,000 trees in 24 hours); planting millions or crore of saplings in a day or hours etc for which the basic requirements are…

iii. Preparations (Most Important for Efficiency)

- **Choose the right trees:** Select tree species suitable to the site (soil type, climate, sunlight, water availability)/native species for better survival.
- **Site preparation:** Clear weeds/grass in advance. Test soil and amend if needed.
- **Seedlings:** Planting materials-naked seedlings/bagged seedlings or saplings

iv. Efficiency Tips for Planting Many Trees

- **Team organization-** Have support for seedling distribution, quality checks, and counting (essential for records). No performance-enhancing

aids beyond standard support; focus on human effort.

- **Spacing/espacement-** Follow guidelines (e.g., 2m-3m apart for many reforestation projects).
- **Ergonomics/season-** Stay hydrated, use proper posture, rotate tasks, and plant during cooler parts of the day.
- **Batch processing –** Supply of seedlings systematically across the site.
- **Technology -** Use apps or GPS for mapping in large projects; track survival rates over time.

v. Long-Term Success Factors

- **Water** regularly in the first 1–2 years.
- **Protect** from animals (fencing/tree guards).
- Monitor for pests/**disease.**
- **Survival** rates improve dramatically with good technique — poor planting is a common reason for failure.

2. Miyawaki Tree Planting:

Miyawaki is a dense, rapid reforestation approach developed by Japanese botanist and ecologist **Dr. Akira Miyawaki** in the 1970s.

a).Core Idea: It mimics natural forest succession by planting a diverse mix of **native tree, shrub, and ground-cover species** very closely together on degraded land. This creates a dense, multi-layered "pocket forest" that grows much faster than traditional plantations and becomes self-sustaining in a short time.

b).Key Principles

- **Native species only:** Uses "Potential natural vegetation" (PNV)- plants that would naturally grow in the area without human intervention. This ensures high adaptation and biodiversity.
- **High density:** Plants 3–5 saplings per square meter using different species to form different layers (canopy trees, sub-trees, shrubs, herbs)- mixed randomly rather than in rows.
- **Soil preparation:** The digging the ground 1.0 m deep or aerated and enriched with organic matter (compost, mulch) to create ideal conditions for roots
- **No maintenance after the initial period:** Watering and weeding for the first 2–3 years, then left to grow naturally.
- This method is popular worldwide for **urban greening,** biodiversity restoration, and climate action. It's especially effective for small to medium plots but requires proper site assessment and native plant knowledge for success.

3. BDA's Execution of Planting 15 lakh saplings for GWR;

The BDA planned for implementation of this project on a single day by involving public participation with the following arrangements:

a).It Identified **the area**-243 acres (9,72,000 m2) suitable for planting and mapped in over 279 blocks over 3 locations, selected the species of trees & plants suitable for the locality with proven adaptability with no to exotics.



b).It selected the model of afforestation-**Miyawaki** method for dense planting of 15 lakh saplings which works out to 6,170 saplings per acre or 6,154 saplings per acre@ 1 sapling per 0.65 m2 (or

2 plants per 1.30 m2) to have dense tree park. Means 15,385 saplings per hectare

c).It procured well grown quality **saplings 16 lakh** plus from out sourcing and stocked before D-day of planting-selected tree species, some herbs & shrubs-medicinal plants. (One lakh extra for handling wastage)

d). But, it did not do ground preparation- **digging of the ground up to 1.00 deep** with mulching as designed for the Miyawaki model to plant @ 1mx0.66 m espacement.

Pic: Saplings on the ground before pitting for planting…

Orit didn't go for **deep ploughing** of the area at least to a depth of 0.50 m to plant @ 1mx0.66 m espacement which would not have cost high.

Or it didn't go for **deep furrow contour ploughing** of 50 cm depth with mini dozer at 1.0 m apart along contour to form 4 m T&M with septa of 25 cm to scoop and plant saplings along the furrow at every 0.65 m to accommodate 6,154 plants per acrewhich would not have cost much.

Or it did not dig pits of (0.45m)3 pits @ 6,154 per acre @ the espacement of 1.00mx 0.65m to plant saplings after half refilling- practically 6,154 pits per acre cannot dug on the ground- but a maximum of only 4,000 pits per acre @ 1 pit per m2 can be dug; it means standard sized pits can't be used in Miyawaki when space per plant is less than 1.00 m2

Or it didn't go for digging of **Continuous Contour Trench&Mound of 4 m x 0.50 m x 0.50m**=1.00m3 @ 1.90 m espacement with septa of 20 cm between trenches @ 500 trenches per acre to plant saplings in the trenches & on mounds which works out to 12 saplings per T&M to plant @ 6 per trench &@7 plants onits mound over the area of 2x4=8 m2 making 6,154 plants per acre. (This would have provided space for working about 1 m between 2s rows ofplants onT&M as breathing space & for roots to spread with an earth work of 243 acre x500 TMsx 1.00 m3= 1,21,500 m3 @ Rs 350 per m3 it would have been worked out toRs 4.25 crore or less cost)

But, the BDA did planting *of bagged sapling with spot digging of pits of 40- 45 cm deep to accommodate bagged earth of the plants to the hard ground (Practically pits of 30-35cms only can be dug with spade without use of crow bar)…a most unscientific mode of planting as if planting in a prepared site of the Miyawaki-model said to be @ 1.0mx 0.65 m to accommodate 6,154 plants per acre or 15,385 plants per ha was said to be done (How this stock of planting was counted and accounted is a secret without alignment and marking) and it didn't plant to suit GWR at given space of planting vide Analysis 1(iv)-spacing.*



Pic: Planting of saplings by the volunteers with digging of pits in a block on 27th June,

To be successful: The mass planting of 1.50 million saplings would have been arranged after preparation of the site as explained in the Para 3(d) of the analysis in advance & leaving it for weathering; and after good showers when the site-field is completely wet for planting by the public volunteers with opening pits at an espacement of 1.0mx0.65 m or half refilling & formation of T&M along furrow or the CCT&M. or to do planting during dry spell- it should have arranged for

watering on the D-day for planting (Pour one pot of water to the pit & then plant a seedling)…. which the public would have loved to do and rejoiced with taking photographs and the project would have been a grand success to give green park environment to sink Co2 and an O2 breathing park to the Bengaluru to beat the global warming with underground water recharging.

Observations:

a). The **land** used for tree planting is prime land with favourable edaphic, climatic and anthropogenic conditions.

b). The **public money** involved is said to be very heavy which works out to Rs 90 million for 1.50 million saplings which works out to Rs 600 per sapling which includes maintenance for 3 years without preparing the site for planting.

c). **Site preparation** with alignments and pits or trenches or furrow or ploughing was a must for afforestation as a foundation for trees planting since deeper the soil prepared, better the tree growth and moisture conservation…. but not done…At least, are the saplings planted counted on the ground before claiming the GWR-on what method? There was no marking with count of the spot for planting-just GWR based on saplings procurement will not suffice the saplings planted on the ground.

d). **Public opinions were** sceptic with criticism about the faulty and hasty execution of a very useful program without proper planning based on proven standard of silvicultural practices with site preparation as prescribed for Miyawaki model; and for having done when soil was dry on the D-day even without watering to the pits dug before planting…causing waste of saplings, about 20-25% of the


Saplings wither days after world-record plantation drive

BEFORE

AFTER

Pic: Clip of newspaper criticizing the mode of planting saplings.

saplings planted are said to be wilting/dying without rains in spite of watering from the next day in many blocks have attracted criticism & blame/outcry for the operation and the GWR for tree planting.

The mass media are very critical about the project with news, editorial,public views on video clips etc.

e).BDA's Efforts: The BDA is taking all efforts to see that all plants are survived by watering to douse the wrath of the public with additional costs;but it will not achieve better growth, ecological and economical benefits compared to the scientific execution with proper site preparation & planting after rains or planting with watering….



Pic: Watering the saplings planted by deploying tankers

f). The BDA's stand in not preparing the ground is, the GWR authorities did not allow it to take up ground preparation in advance and forced it to do it with human resources on the D-day to be eligible for the GWR as per their guidelines.

g). Sacrifice: The BDA has sacrificed the technical SOP of forestry science and the prescriptions of the Miyawaki model- i.e. advance ground preparation for the sake of GWR. The BDA should have convinced GWR to permit the principles of the afforestation model adopted.

h). BDA's Aims:*BDA's plan & execution of 1.5 million trees planting in Bengaluru for GWR was with good intensions. The BDA's will & commitment in arranging watering, mulching, fencing and protection of trees planted in war footing after experiencing dry spell right from the day of planting is commendable & worth to practicing in case of dire situations like in this case. The project is showing all signs of success and it may bring a good name to the BDA-but the cost of efforts after planting are heavy which cannot be borne by the public exchequer. Credit also should go to the place, site-like back yard, soils-like garden setup,& resources-which are at their disposal except the weather in Bengaluru city from CSR.*

i) My suggestion to BDA for maintenance: *To create trenches of 2mx0.40mx0.40m=0.32m3 along contour between row of plants and leave them open, so that these trenches will provide mulch of excavated earth to plants at the downstream side;and they will intercept the run-off during rains with leaf litter/soil for years and improve the soil & moisture content of the site and make the trees to develop well in addition to improving under-ground water table and the soil fertility.*

Pic: Planted saplings are glowing due to watering with sprinklers &dry grass mulching in the continuous dry spell after planting as on 20th day i.eas on 17th July, 2026.



j)**The news from the BDA's with introspection** after a month (30th July): Says that 90% of the saplings planted are surviving & started to sprout with the efforts of its/NGOs hired by companies under CSR for watering even with sprinklers installation, mulching and protection with fence; all plants will be geo-tagged to monitor their survival. The BDA has spent around Rs 17.00 lakh for saplings, transportation,and supply of implements and catering to about 70-80 thousand volunteers who attended the mass plantingprogram so far.... The **GWR** for tree planting given is provisional and it will be confirmed only after field verification of the mega planting of trees'success by the authority.

k). The Bengaluru city received good rains on 5th& 6th of August, 2026 and rain may continue for some time…. and it has given a big relief to the BDA to take up casualty replacements and other follow up operations to make the project of 1.5 million trees planting in a day a success.

Appeal to the Authorities:

a) The authority concerned of the **Guinness World Records** appears to be quick short in recognition for mass tree planting without verifying the ground reality about the sites conditions, before execution, after execution, and the sapling planted & the methodology adopted as per their prescriptions and the **forestry science of the region** to grant GWR. Then further check of the survival after 1st year, 2nd year and 3 year to ensure success is for both parties..**The GWR should prescribe ground preparation in advance as per forestry science or Miyawaki model suitable for the region's agro-climatic conditions to make mass tree planting a success, if not, it should keep away from mass tree planting in India with public funds or** it should limit GWR for individual feats; as it is learnt from the BDA that advance pitting/T& Ms/ ploughing was not permitted by the GWR.

b) This **GWR has been in news since 2016 in India** claimed by the states of Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, very recently Uttar Pradesh hoisted flag of 50 million trees planting over many locations in the state in a day (Video clip show very young seedlings being planting

along road by scooping soil in the midst of thick grass for the record-will they survive?) and now Karnataka for 1.50 million saplings. c) **The GoI and the State governments should ban the mafia of the GWR** for mass tree planting by the govt. agencies spending huge public money as it concerns nature-trees, which has to be done scientifically to make success, since the GWR's prescriptions for tree planting do not suit the agro-climatic conditions of India. *India has mastered* **in tree planting initiated in 1952 by the visionary Minister for Agriculture K M Munshijiwith the launch of "Vanamahotsava" an annual festival for popularising tree planting....***and then tree plantings in blocks under successive 5 years plans and later on with states efforts & external aided projects continued and now with CAMPA funds-but still failed to have full success of trees planted in spite of using scientific models of SOP. Then,* ***how can we hoist the flag ofGWR- mass trees planted without digging pits or trenches or deep furrows, or deep ploughing the site but just by opening pits and planting millions of trees in a day as per the dictation of it with doubts on its success ? It is a publicity stunt and waste of public money and it should not be encouraged but banned in India-unless it changes its prescriptions to allow site preparation in advance with pits or T&Ms or Ploughing in India.***

The **inventory of the mass trees planted for GWR** so far in India in the 5th year of such operation will reveal the truth for review of the permission to GWR.

Author's Conscientious Opinion on GWR:

No **Forester** can aspire for GWR for mass tree planting as his popularity/powers are limited because of his **no for most of the public demands** as his aim/ conscience/ resources/ powers are to protect & conserve forests, wildlife and forest lands/ ecosystems. **The GWR for mass tree planting can only be aspired, planned and executed by the administrators & the govt.; which is a positive step for popularization & development of forestry but such aspirations have to be carefully planned &scientifically implemented as per the SOPof the forestry science/Miyawaki in the best interest of theforests,nature&climate and their resilience.**

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Problem with Abundance

There came in to the World, an unlimited abundance of everything people need. But people need everything except unlimited abundance

-Karel Capek.



Tiger Estimation Reveals Rich Wildlife in Telangana State and Hyderabad Zoo Improvement on the Lines of Singapore Zoo

C. Ramakrishna Reddy

(1-0) Adilabad District:

The rich biodiversity of the erstwhile Adilabad District has been vividly reflected in the recently concluded National Tiger Estimation – 2026, due to the clearinstructions, timely directions and continuousguidance from Dr. C. Suvarna, IFS, the then Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, Telangana State, to the field officersfantastic results were obtained.Assessment covered Biodiversity and potential eco-tourism zones, recording of frequent movement of leopards, sloth bears and other wildlife across several forest ranges. Forest officials opined that the estimation, conducted for the first time in territorial forest ranges, revealed encouraging signs of ecological health, including sightings and pug marks of striped hyenas, besides extensive animal activity, in a clear revelation of increased and rich wild life in Telangana State.

(1-1) Sightings of Wildlife :

A striped hyena was directly sighted in the Mavala forests of Adilabad District, while pug marks of another hyena were found in the Tallapet Forest Range of Mancherial District. High movement of sloth bears and leopards was also reported in the Bheempur, Tamsi and Adilabad Forest areas. Adilabad Forest Range Officer Sri Gulab Singh said scats of leopards and sloth bears were found at intervals of nearly 500 metres in several locations, indicating healthy predator population. He said volunteers and forest staff observed animal movement in Ajar-Vaji ofBoathMandal and Harikal Forests in BazarhatnoorMandal as well.

(1-2) Rare Mouse Deer Caught on Camera:

For the first time, the Mouse Deer, an endangered animal a diminutive animal was photographed in the wild in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, raising hopes of the existence of a wild population of the species that is rarely seen during February 2026. This clearly indicates sparking hopes of a surviving natural population in Telangana forests.

(1-2A) Rare Bird Black Bellled Tern Sighted in Wild in Kawal Tiger Sanctuary – Jannaram Division, Mancherial District, Telangana :

On 23-2-2026 a rare bird was sighted in the wild in Kawal Reserve (Tiger Zone) by wildlife examiner. Features of the head and abdomen are black in colour, rest of the area of the bird is white in colour. The name of the bird is Black Bellied Tern. It was sighted at Kistapur Tank in Jannaram Forest Division, Mancherial District in Telangana. The bird was sighted by Sri Venkatesh, North Telangana Coordinator and Wildlife Examiner. The scientific name of the bird is Steraacutikada. The bird occurs in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar countries. Generally the bird's habitat is river basin and tanks. The bird lays eggs in sandy mounds areas from January to June. The bird naturally incubates sitting on the eggs when chicks will appear termed Natural Incubation. The bird will not build nests for living. The bird is almost extinct (nearing extinction) as per the opinion of International Conservation of Nature — slowly in the process of extinction.

(1-3) A Single Mouse Deer:

A single Mouse Deer, also known as Chevrotain in some parts of the world, was photographed by a trap camera in the Lingala Range of the Tadvai

Division of the Eturunagaram Sanctuary earlier during February 2026, raising hopes of existence of a wild population of the species that is rarely seen.

(1-4) Opinion of the District Forest Officer:

Sri Rahul, the District Forest Officer, opined: "Finding this species in wild is a matter of joy as it is considered very rare and the species is very sensitive to habitat disturbance. We will now look at steps that we can take to see if we can do an estimation of its population, and closer look at the habitat and any additional protection measures that may be required for its number to grow."

(1-5)Mouse Deer in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act:

Considered Endangered in Indiaand Listed in the Schedule one (1) of the Wild Life Protection Act, the Mouse Deer (Moschiola India) is accorded the same protection level as that of the tiger, which finds a place in this same schedule as that of the tiger.

(1-6) Presence in Amrabad Tiger Reserve:

Several Mouse Deer are present in Amrabad Tiger Reserve in the Telangana State, but this population is derived from the offspring of the species' recovery programme with a breeding centre in Hyderabad's Nehru Zoological Park from where several groups of Mouse Deer were taken and released in the Tiger Reserve, Amrabad.

(1-7):

Many wildlife species are increasingly sighted, inclusive of tiger, noticed by Dr.C.Suvarna PCCF (HFF) Telangana during her field visit to Amrabad Tiger Sanctuary and surrounding Nallamala Forests in Telangana State.

(2-0) Hyderabad Nehru Zoological Park to Undergo Singapore Style Transformation:

(2-1) Major Revamp of Zoo:

A major revamp is being planned for Nehru Zoological Park at Hyderabad. A major modern transformation along the lines of Singapore Zoo is likely to be effected to increase footfall and transformation of Zoo (NZP) as a prominent tourist designation. NZP has attained tremendous popularity in India with several modern facilities, but there is still room for significant improvement.

(2-2) Visiting Tourists:

The Zoo records indicate the visitors to the Zoo on an average of 20 lakhs annually. Mostly they are only locals. Zoo authorities' intention is to attract foreign visitors in large numbers, thus making it an international destination for visiting tourists. Both foreign and local in order to achieve this footfall, there is imperative need to improve the Zoo to international standards to attract tourists in large numbers.

(2-3) Singapore Zoo's Collaboration:

The Singapore Zoo,one of the most visited zoos globally, has long standing collaboration with NZP over the years.The two institutions have collaborated on animal exchanges, breeding programme and facility improvements. Upcoming projects at NZP, such as the Night Safari, a Bioluminescent Park, and an Aquarium are all being developed under the able and requisite guidance of Singapore Zoo experts.

(2-4) Master Plan for Revamp of Zoo:

A team from Hyderabad is scheduled to visit Singapore Zoo in mid-October 2026 to study the design and operational model. Master plan will be prepared with the aim to replicate several of Singapore Zoo features in Hyderabad, including enclosure designs and overall layout.

(2-5) Materials Usage — Require Change to Alternatives:

The Singapore Zoo uses stainless steel for all

Contd.. on page No.45



The region Mughals saw as separate country:

Taking a captivated reader through the history of the Deccan !

"The Deccan has always drawn people with an inexplicable pull-a sense of belonging that runs deeper have than elsewhere"

Dr B Raghotham Rao Desai

Preliminary:

Deccan had been known for its prosperity and was synonymous with wealth and luxury, **there was something about the region that made people come here --- a sense of belonging:** the region remaining relatively isolated from the Aryans (a debate within itself), having never been considered a part of India by Northerns (despite which **it continued to be a region of humbleness: the defining culture of the Deccan**)! Telangana represents the cultural core of the Deccan ---- **many people having come and settled there and becoming an integral part of its fabric**, calling the newcomers as 'outsiders' till they fully become part of the culture.

Dakhni ---- the language born from the interaction of Dehalvi, Telugu, Marathi and Kannada is the most important aspect of the Deccan: a language that had come into being for everyone to understand, a mixture of sorts (the language of the masses that had suddenly been given 'Literary Status') ---- **the languages being unique (because it is same both written as also spoken by people) unlike Latin**: which is formal and more elitist, where written & spoken languages are so different, **Poetry in the language** ---- the script adopted being Persian ---- **is rich with the Flora, Fauna, and animals that exists in the region**, also embellished had in the architecture that can especially become across in and around Hyderabad, Bidar, Gulbarga, Bijapur and Ahmednagar.

How the events took shape:

A vast plateau in South Central India [between the Vindhya Range and Cauvery River (and slightly down) is called Deccan] which has a rich history as a battleground and cultural melting pot, governed by major dynasties (like the Satavahanas, followed by five independent Deccan Sultanates between 1490 & 1688 AD, before falling to the Mughals) and later the British.

The identity was also different in women dressing at the time ---- in the north, Muslim women could be differentiated from women of other faiths by what they were, but women from the Deccan always wore sarees. **Hyderabad is a city of intrigue and very welcoming** ---- a place where one sympathises **with the perpetrator and not feel too bad for the victims: the street-smart way the people there happen to be!** The Dakhnis have had syncretic culture where religion was culture-driven and that's what actually found especially in Hyderabad (an amalgamation a cultures) ---- not getting into such contrasts as Shias and Sunnis: almost every *Ashoorkhanas and Imambaras* (the places of worship for Shias) in the city are 'headed' by Sunnis.

Summary:

The **Deccan region has historically acted as a powerful magnet**, attracting people, wealth and diverse cultures far centuries ---- its unique position as a bridge, combined with its rich resources, and at times turbulent, cosmopolitan nature, has made it a central hub of political, artistic and commercial

activity. On its own identity Hyderabad did not mint coins in its own name or rulers until 1858 under the rule of Afzal- ud-Daulah (the fifth Nizam), a year after the last Mughal emperor (Bahadur Shah Zafar) was dethroned. **Key reasons for the attraction** to the deccan appear to **be (a) wealth and property, (b) Cosmopolitanism and Culture, (c) Strategic Location, (d) Artistic and Intellectual Hub, and (e) A 'Separate Identity ---- the region being often perceived as distinct from North India**, maintaining its own political and cultural (or, as some scholars noted, 'syncretic') character: the region's allure having persisted through various shifts in power (from the Satavahanas and Chalukyas to the Bahmani Sultanate, the Vijaya nagara Empire, and the Asaf Jahs of Hyderabad).

Trivia:

Telugu belongs to the family of Dravidian languages Land is also the second biggest languages in India next only to Hindi, the official languages of Telangana (of which Hyderabad is the capital) and Andra Pradesh ---- most basic words being the same as these in old Norse (other Western European & Celtic languages) around 500 words in these languages happen to be similar (the sound 'r' being frequently dropped) **Dravidian words are from more heterogeneous sources,** but all from the 'Indo-European' languages family (most important thing to say being that the concept of Indo-European languages was created by the Europeans) ---- **the idea was known to Aurobindo** (who mentioned it briefly in one of his works).

It was an Italian prosperous traveller (Niccolo de Conti of Venice) who visited South India (circa 1420) found on his visit to **Vijaya nagara (ruled by the polyglot Emperor Krishnadevaraya, whose mother tongue was Telugu and he preferred to transact in Telugu only, being himself a great poet**) how much similarity is there in Telugu and Italian ---- every word ending in vowels ---- and described it as Italian of the East.

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Continuation from page No. 43

animal enclosures, which is not only more durable and less corrosive, but also has smoother finish, reducing the risk of animal injuries. Currently NZP has only standard steel for animal enclosures which requires upgrading to stainless steel as an alternative as the most priority. The Zoo will be improved with latest technology on the line of Singapore Zoo during the team's visit to Singapore.

(2-6) Revamp the Zoo Totally:

Officials also revealed plans to introduce tour operators and redesign the Zoo's layout to enhance the visitors' experience. Currently the present layout includes multiple walking paths between enclosures leading to utter confusion, making visitors tiring. R*edesigning of layoutswould make them more compact and interactive for visitingtourists. NZP Director Dr.Sunil S Hiremanth will lead a team of officers to study Singapore Zoo on whose guidance master plan for revamp of NZP on Singapore Zoo standards* will be prepared and implemented.

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Birding Adventure

B.D.Suyal

Something resembling white wood lying beneath a rocky cliff caught my attention while I was negotiating a small nalah on the outskirts of Nainital some 500 metres away from Tallitaal on 30th June 2026. I took a closer look but nothing was clearly visible. I ignored & moved ahead on my evening birding trip. After few steps, I glanced back to satisfy my anxiety, just then found some movement.

I turned back, took out my camera and focused on the object just to see what it is. Two whitish legs jutting out of a brownish body could be figured out. Head was not visible as a green branch in front was obstructing my view. The head & snout were almost black. As it flipped ears I could make out it had eyes focused on me. It was sitting still showing no anxiety.

I could make out that I was quite close to resting site of Himalayan Serow. I wanted a nice shot;I tried but realised that the eyes were not in focus, a twig in the front was spoiling the pic. The target was 18- 20 metre away and about 5 metre lower than my eye level. I thought if, somehow I could crawl down 5m from my current position, I might get an eye level shot but the steep slope down below was intimidating. The day was cloudy, mist/ fog was rising from downstream, forest floor was wet, foliage had raindrops trapped in the leaves. The stretch downside was almost vertical with loose bouldary soil covered with Ageratum herb (kalabansa). There was nothing to hold on for support. Rains during the day made the floor slippery which added salt to injury. A huge Acer tree (putali) was standing at about 4m down. There was no path or trace worth the name. Sliding down silently & gradually along the slope anchoring hips on the ground was the only option. Slide had to be front faced for the safety of camera lens strapped around my neck.

I was aware of the fact that any awkward movement or noise may drive the animal away. For a moment, I thought of abandoning the plan & wait for another day but my anxiety didn't permit that. So I took up the challenge & dragged myself 5m down scratching the ground with legs & holding on to whatever my left hand could lay on. As soon as I landed 5 metres below, the Serow became suspicious and stood up and started moving away.

Now it was at eyelevel some 15 feet away from the target across the stream but it was moving. I immediately loosened the camera strap, hurriedly started shooting at f6.5, 600mm with iso 800. Glancing at me for few seconds, Serow slowly walked away and disappeared into bushes. Later on I realised that I had forgotten to put on specs while shooting. I was hugely disappointed at such a blunder & expected blurry shots. Entire exercise might have turned futile.

I gathered myself and somehow crawled upwards to reach a safe place. Just then 3 youngsters, who were on their way to Kelakhan, spotted me with surprise. One of them commented "बूबूसठियागयाहै". Without waiting for my response, they moved ahead. I,too smiled at their comment & my own misadventure. Soon it started

Contd.. on page No.48



The Conocarp Verdict

Dr.H.S.Gupta

 # On Trial: A Tree

Picture a tree that shouldn't exist where you find it — thriving in cracked, sun-baked soil that killed everything planted before it, needing no one to water it, growing tall and geometric enough to look almost machine-made. For years, Indian cities loved it for exactly that reason. Then, almost overnight, it became the villain of the urban tree world: banned in some states, hauled into court in Bengaluru, blamed for everything from asthma to burst sewer pipes.

Its name is Conocarpus. And its story is really a story about us — about how quickly we're willing to convict a species without much of a trial.

The tree nobody meant to fall in love with

Nobody planned the Conocarpus takeover. In Ahmedabad, an ecologist first spotted it in 2016, looking oddly out of place against the dry Gujarat landscape. Within a few years it was everywhere — boundary walls, roadsides, new city extensions —quietly replacing native trees like jhar and siris. In Telangana, it rode in on the back of a genuinely well-intentioned mission: the Haritha Haram afforestation drive, a people's movement to green a thirsty state. Villagers and municipalities discovered a tree that would simply survive — no fussing, no watering schedule, no dead saplings to explain to a Probing committee — and word spread the way good gossip does, one panchayat to the next.

That's not a sinister origin story. That's a low-budget, high-hope country falling for the one plant that asked nothing of it in return.

So why is it suddenly Public Enemy Number One?

Three accusations, mainly: it triggers allergies, it wrecks pipes, and it kills everything around it.

Here's the thing — pull on any one of those threads and it frays fast. The allergy scare traces back to a study done on patients who'd already walked into an allergy clinic complaining of symptoms — not exactly a random sample of the public — and a second study on the same tree found the opposite result: low allergy risk. A scientist who spent his career studying pollen allergies in India says there's simply no local evidence the tree is a problem here at all.

The cracked-pipe complaint is real, but so is the reason: nobody's watering these trees or pruning them, so their roots go hunting for moisture and find it in the nearest leaky joint. That's not a Conocarpus specialty — peepal and many more trees do the exact same thing to the exact same pipes, and nobody's drafting a peepal ban.

And the "nothing grows under it" complaint? True — its fallen leaves are rich in tannins that suppress other plants nearby. That's a real trait. But it's also a trait you'd want to know *before* you plant it next to a flowerbed, not a reason to uproot it from a barren highway median where nothing was growing anyway.

Even India's own alien-species tracker won't call it invasive, as they don’t have right evidences. The most damning thing anyone studying it will say is that it should be treated as an "emerging invader" — science-speak for "we genuinely don't know yet, so let's be careful." Somewhere between that

careful hedge and few state governments issuing bans, caution turned into a verdict.

Devil,s Advocate

We're punishing the tree for our own bad choice of its placing

Here's an uncomfortable question worth sitting with: if a species only causes harm when we neglect it, whose fault is that, really?

A tree with murderous roots near a sewage line and a tree with the same roots holding together a barren, unwatered median are not the same problem. They're not even the same *species*, functionally — context is doing all the work. Ban the tree everywhere and you've solved nothing about the sewage line, while losing the one thing that was surviving even on the median.

What would actually work

No, outright condemnation. Not a ban. A decision- after full considerations to all the aspects.

Keep it off the streets near water and sewage lines. Keep it out of parks and forest patches where biodiversity — birds, insects, pollinators — actually matters, because Conocarpus may not offer wildlife not much. But let it keep doing the one job it's genuinely good at: holding down dust and heat on the barren, forgotten, unwatered strips of land that nothing else will touch.

That's not a radical idea.

It's how India already handles other trees with trade-offs — eucalyptus and its thirst for groundwater, peepal and its wandering roots — through smart placement and a working knowledge of *where*, not a blanket rule of *never*.

Guilty of being convenient, not of being dangerous

Some species really do deserve to be banned — Lantana camara and Parthenium earned their reputations the hard way, through years of documented damage, not a headline cycle. Conocarpus hasn't had that trial yet. What it's had is a viral pollen study from another country, some cracked pipes we could have prevented with a hose and some pruning shears, and a court case built on discomfort more than data.

Before we finish writing this tree's obituary, maybe we owe it — and ourselves — the actual research- as professional Forester- in diverse roles as Forest Manager, Wildlife Manager, Biodiversity expert, Plantation Manager, Timber producer of country, Climate Change Expert and many more things-in shape of products and services- which 140 plus crores of citizen of India expects. Because the next time we reach for a ban instead of a plan, it won't be the tree that's failed the test. It'll be us.

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Continuation from page No. 46

drizzling, I wrapped camera in polythene, loaded it on backpack and walked back to Mallitaal with mixed feelings.

On browsing the pictures, I was fairly satisfied. That's how today's birding expedition ended with lucky coincidence of Serow sighting; though every birding day is full of new surprises & challenges.

(Photo of Serow back cover)

Author is a retired PCCF from Himachal Pradesh cadre and a renowned wildlife photographer. M-94161 59010.

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad

PRESS NOTE on 'World Lion Day'

09.08.2026

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad

Globally, World Lion Day is celebrated on 10th August every year to highlight the importance of one of the World's most majestic big Cat. This day is mainly emphasized on Protection of both the Asiatic Lions and as well as African Lions.

Today, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad celebrated World Lions Day, to mark this day as more eventful, animal keepers talk shows has been conducted. The animal Keeper (animal Care taker) gave a brief lecture on the daily activities they conduct, the behaviour of the animals, daily feeding schedule, vaccination schedule and breeding programmes.

Speaking on the occasion, Sri.J.Muralidhar, Deputy Curator, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad said that Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad is in forefront in conducting Wildlife Education and outreach programmes on every Eco-Day. Today on the eve of World Lion day celebration, he thanked all the participants for actively participating in the programme and making this event as a successful educative programme.

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad is housing both the Asiatic Lions and the African Lions in their respective enclosures. The concept of Safari in the Zoo was started in Nehru Zoological Park way back in the year 1974, when the first Lion safari park was started, the total area of the safari is 45 acres, daily morning a pride of Lions are released into the safari which is a thrilling experience to the visitors where the animal are free and the human beings are closed (termed as Zoo in reverse).

Press-Note on 'World Elephant Day'

12.08.2026

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad

World Elephant Day was celebrated today at Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, to honour its Asian Elephants housed in the Zoo, namely Vanaja , Asha , Sita and Vijay (3 females & 1 male) . All of these Elephants were taken out from their enclosure and made them to walk all along the Zoo (Approx. 5Kms). Elephants are biggest and the heaviest mammals on the earth for these Jumbo's special jumbo feast has been served in the form of cake of approximately 5 Kgs for each Elephant, which includes different kind of fruits, vegetables and cooked rice (Banana, Apples, Pine Apples, Oranges, Water Melon, sugarcane, coconuts , cucumbers, carrots, etc) .

On this occasion Sri. J. Muralidhar, Deputy Curator, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad said that Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad is proud to celebrate the World Elephant Day today and as a part of promoting Wildlife Education events are conducted to encourage and spread more awareness among the citizens. To mark this day as an eventful, all the Elephants were taken out from their enclosures for a 5Km walk inside the Zoo, they ate the tree branches of their choice which are reachable on their walking way. With the help of animal keepers, feed store and the Zoo kitchen staff, 4 Nos. Of jumbo cakes has been prepared especially made up of cooked rice, ragishaw, fruits and vegetables and served to all the 4 Elephants.

Visitors were allowed closer to the animals to view the Elephants from close quarters. Elephant's facts and their importance in the ecosystem were briefed to the visitors by the animal keeper

and ZEO. Several visitors and the participants expressed their satisfaction and appreciated the Zoo management for putting down their efforts in conducting such events which are more attractive, educative and created more awareness on the particular animal.

The following officers and staff were also present on the occasion:-

1) Smt. NaziaThabassum, Asst. Curator-1, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

2) Sri B.Laxman, Asst. Curator-2, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

3) Dr. P. Srinivas Reddy, Assistant Director (Vet), Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

4) Sri Karunakar, Dy. Range Officer, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

5) SmtHema, Dy. Range Officer, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

6) Sri VenkatRao, Forest Section Officer, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

7) SmtManjula, Forest Section Officer (Feed Store incharge), Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

8) Sri H. M.Hanifulla, PRO, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

9) Sri Ch. Deepak Tharun, ZEO, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

Sri G. Nagireddy, Park Supervisor, Sri E. Ganesh, Lion Keeper, Sri Bhushanam, Head Animal Keeper and Raju, Venkat, Naveen, Syed, Sunil, Mubarak, Mustaque Animal Keepers, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

Sd/- Dy. Curator,

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad

Photos on Page No: 30

Even victors find no joy in aftermath of war

Spiritual traditions have long viewed humanity as participants in a shared field of consciousness. When violence erupts on a massive scale, that collective field is disturbed. Ancient Indian thought described this disruption as adharm, a disturbance in the moral and cosmic balance of existence. Violent acts affect not only societies and nations but also the subtle psychological fabric of civilisation.

Modern psychology now describes this as collective trauma. Societies often carry emotional scars for generations. Fear, instability, hatred, and moral confusion continue long after the battlefield falls silent. Trauma spreads outward like ripples in water, shaping cultures and future conflicts, leaving behind psychological debris for centuries to clear it.

Mahabharat remains one of humanity's deepest reflections on the spiritual consequences of war. The battle of Kurukshetra was not merely a political struggle but a catastrophic confrontation between dharm and adharm. Millions perished, families disappeared, and the social order collapsed. Yet even the victors found no joy ……

JwalantSwaroop (The Speaking Tree, Times of India, June 3, 2026).



The sacrifice of life at the altar of forests

V V Hariprasad

In India, **all non-selective mechanical traps, snares, and improvised explosive devices used for hunting or capturing wild animals are illegal** under the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. These devices are prohibited because they are indiscriminate, capturing or killing non-target wildlife—including endangered species—and causing severe, prolonged suffering.

Types of Illegal Traps Used in India

➢ **Wire Snares:** Made from steel clutch cables or Bowden cables. They loop tightly around an animal's neck or limb as it moves, leading to slow strangulation or starvation.

➢ **Jaw Traps (Leg-hold Clamps):** Heavy iron mechanisms concealed along forest trails. When stepped on, the metal jaws snap tightly shut, crushing limbs and locking the animal in place.

➢ **Food-Laced Explosives (Crude Bombs):** Commonly referred to as "hakkapataas" or bait-bombs. Small explosives are wrapped inside food or fruits (like pumpkins). They detonate when bitten, causing catastrophic injuries.

➢ **Live-Wire and Electrified Fences:** High-voltage domestic or agricultural lines illegally connected directly to solar fences or perimeter boundaries. They electrocute passing animals instantly.

➢ **Glue Traps:** Cardboard or plastic sheets covered with strong adhesive. Banned across 32 states and Union Territoriesfollowing campaigns by PETA India, they indiscriminately trap small wildlife like birds, squirrels, reptiles, and frogs.

➢ **Stench Traps:** Large plastic containers filled with decomposing poultry or animal waste buried in pits. Animals like wild boars enter the container to reach the bait and become permanently trapped inside.

➢ **Poisoned Carcasses / Water:** Spraying or mixing lethal toxins into water holes or livestock carcasses to retaliate against or poach apex predators like leopards and tigers

In 2025, retaliatory poisoning, traps, and escalating human-wildlife conflicts resulted in widespread illegal and authorized wildlife deaths across India.

Major Poisoning and Poaching Incidents

❖ **Karnataka Tigress and Cubs (June 2025):** An adult tigress and her four cubs were found dead in the MalaiMahadeshwara (MM) Hills Wildlife Sanctuary after eating a cow carcass laced with pesticide by a local farmer angry over livestock loss. Three suspects were arrested.

❖ **Nationwide Crime Tracking:** Data from theWildlife Trust of India documented at least 202 wildlife crime incidents between April and December 2025, which included multiple cases of tigers poisoned inside protected reserves and illegal hunting of native species.

❖ **Retaliatory Tactics:** Across various forest fringes, villagers frequently used poisoned bait and crude traps to target leopards, tigers, and elephants moving into human habitations.

State-Level Conflict and Culling Actions:Kerala Wild Boar Culling: Driven by intense crop raiding and safety concerns, Kerala authorized local

bodies to cull wild boars, resulting in the killing of 4,734 wild boars by July 2025.

❖ **New Legal Provisions:** The Kerala government approved a draft amendment empowering local wildlife wardens to order the immediate killing of wild animals that attack humans in residential areas, aiming to bypass slow central protocols.

The spate of tiger deaths owing to poisoning reported from M.M. Hills Wildlife Sanctuary Karnataka during the year 2025 , elephant deaths from electrocution and other unnatural causes, and frequent crop raiding by animals underscore the severity of human-animal conflict in villages abutting forest boundaries, in South Karnataka region. **Poisoned tigers and electrocuted elephants,is a grim reminder of human-animal conflict in south Karnataka**

The death of FBO in Telangan :

Sri B. Naveen, Forest Beat Officer (FBO), CheruvuSingaram West Beat, tragically lost his life on 12.08.2026 while performing official forest protection duties in Bhadradri Kothagudem District.The forest beat officer (FBO) was electrocuted to death after reportedly coming into contact with a live electric trap set by hunters to catch wild animals near CheruvuSingaram village in Burgampadumandal of BhadradriKothagudem district on Wednesday.

Legal Consequences and Enforcement :The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972: Setting any of these traps constitutes "hunting" under Section 2(16). Violators face rigorous imprisonment ranging from three to seven years, alongside heavy monetary fines.

❖ **The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960:** Section 11 categorizes the immense suffering caused by these indiscriminate devices as a punishable offense.

❖ **State Proactive Measures:** State forest departments regularly conduct anti-poaching operations. For example, the Telangana Forest Department runs a dedicated **"Catch the Trap"** drive to search suspect properties and clear snares from agricultural zones adjacent to forests.

Action initiated by the department:

District Forest Officer SiddharthVikram Singh reportedly said that poachers continued to use live electric wires despite precautions taken by the department. A complaint was lodged with Burgampadu police, who registered a case against three persons and launched an investigation.A criminal case has been registered by Burgampahad Police Station as FIR No. 254/2026, including Section 105 of the BharatiyaNyayaSanhita, 2023, and investigation is in progress.

The Forest Department is coordinating with the Police and other concerned authorities for a thorough investigation, identification/apprehension of all persons involved, preservation of evidence and effective prosecution of the offenders.The Department has reportedly requested that the matter be dealt with the seriousness warranted by the death of a frontline Government employee while performing official duty.

The District forest officer KOthagudem emphasized that the incident underlines the urgent requirement for:

1. Stronger action against poaching and illegal electric snares, including coordinated Forest–Police–Electricity Department enforcement.

2. Better safety equipment for frontline forest staff, including voltage detectors, insulated protective equipment, communication systems and suitable patrol mobility.

3. Enhanced intelligence and community participation for early detection of illegal hunting activity.

4. Public awareness campaigns in forest-fringe villages regarding the lethal consequences of illegal live-wire hunting.

5. Support and solidarity with the family of FBO Naveen, who made the ultimate sacrifice in the discharge of his duties

CONCLUSION:

To prevent accidental deaths of forest officers on duty, the forest department must implement strict safety protocols, provide advanced protective gear, and deploy real-time monitoring technology.

Equipment and Personal Protection

- **Body armour:** Issue bulletproof vests for anti-poaching patrols.
- **Defensive weapons:** Provide modern firearms and non-lethal deterrents.
- **First aid:** Equip every officer with trauma kits.
- Anti-venom: Stock treatments for snakebites at base camps.
- **Safety gear:** Mandate helmets and high-visibility clothing during operations.

Technology and Communication

- **GPS trackers:** Monitor officer locations in real time.
- **Satellite phones:** Ensure communication in dead zones without cellular signals.
- **Panic buttons:** Deploy wearable SOS devices for instant backup alerts.
- **Drone surveillance:** Scan dangerous terrain before ground teams enter.
- **Smart mapping:** Mark known wildlife corridors and hazard zones.

Tactical Operations and Training

- **Mandatory buddy system:** Ban solo patrols in high-risk zones.
- **Wildlife handling:** Train staff on animal behaviour and aversion tactics.
- **Combat training:** Provide regular self-defence and tactical firearm refreshers.
- **Terrain navigation:** Conduct survival training for extreme weather and landscapes.
- **Evacuation drills:** Practice rapid medical airlifts for injured staff.

Infrastructure and Support

- **Safe camps:** Build fortified, animal-proof field stations.
- **Vehicle upgrades:** Provide reinforced, all-terrain vehicles for rugged areas.
- **Intelligence networks:** Gather local informant data on poacher movements.
- **Health checks:** Conduct regular physical and mental fitness assessments.
- **Insurance policies:** Guarantee high-value compensation and medical coverage.

Appeal to NGOs and Civil-Society Organisations: *In the context of this unfortunate incident the District Forest officer kothagudem reportedly made an appeal to Conservation organisations, wildlife NGOs and other civil-society institutions to extend their cooperation to the Forest Department in strengthening anti-poaching awareness, community sensitisation, frontline staff safety and support to the bereaved family, within the framework of applicable Government*

Contd.. on page No.54



Green Quiz – September 2026

Quiz Master : Dr. K. Tirupataiah

1. It's a large water bird, first seen in Australia and shares its name with the 2010 film starring Natalie Portman. Name the Bird.
2. Which wild animal served as the unofficial symbol of USSR/Russia for over 300 years and now serves as the logo of the United Russia party?
3. Who, representing the 'nest guardians', worked on protecting the 'flame-billed' Indian Skimmer, an endangered species in Chambal region and won the 'Green Oscar' (Whitley Award)?
4. What is the name of the Mats (used in Kashmir) woven from wetland Reed and dried paddy straw that keeps floor warm in winter and cool in summer?
5. Tea plants thrive on acidic soils and can accumulate relatively high levels of which element? Tea drinkers ingest it and it is mostly excreted by the body.
6. Which tree's flowers have a 'linga' shape at the centre? It spreads fragrance at night.
7. Name the village in Kashmir where every May month people from around 45 villages clean up the local spring that supplies drinking and irrigation water to these villages.
8. In which Tiger Reserve would India's first AI centre to study Human-Elephant conflict be coming up?
9. Who is the Author of the Book ' The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of The Human Animal?.
10. What is the name of the documentary on the female King Cobra detailing its behavior that will feature in sept 2026 at Green screen film festival in Germany?

For School Students

1. Sir David Attenborough was not allowed before the camera as 'his teeth were too big'. Which BBC serial gave him a break when the actual presenter fell ill?
2. How many eggs does a female Puffin lay in a season?
3. Rain deer are mostly found in the arctic region that is covered with deep snow in winters. What do Rain Deerseat that is buried below the snow?
4. Gibbons mostly live on tree canopy. In which NE State is an artificial connecting canopy is built over railway line that cut the original canopy while laying the line?
5. Sighting of this bird is an indication that rains are on the way. Which bird?

Answers on page no : 58

Continuation from page No. 53

rules. Healso added that the Department would particularly welcome collaboration in awareness programmes against electric snares, capacity building and safety initiatives for frontline personnel, community outreach in vulnerable forest-fringe areas and appropriate humanitarian support to the family.

(The author, a retired Deputy conservator of forests who is a practicing Advocate has conveyed his thanks to the CCF Sri BheemaNaiK IFS and the District Forest officer Kothagudem Sri.SiddharthVikram Singh IFS for extending their cooperation in penning this article for the magazine))



LEGAL NOTES

Baqtawar Begum and 11 OrsVs. Govt. of A.P and 9 Ors

(Desperate attempt to grab land of Acs 102 from Sahebnagar)

K. Buchiram Reddy

The petitioners in W.P.No 19942 of 2005 expressed grievance for notreleasing land of the petitioners of an extent of Acs. 100 in Sy.No.201,Sahebnagarkalan village of Hayatnagagrmandal of RangaReddy district. This claim is made by virtue of a decree in C.S, No.13 of 1958 of High Court, dated:05.03.1959.

SalarJung III died intestate on 02.03.1949. There were a number of disputes about the partition of the properties. There was a suit for partition between Syed Hasanand Syed KazimHussainand 115 others. All properties were taken over by the Receiver-cum-Commissioner. By a preliminary decree on 20.05.1959, Maktas were taken over by the JagirAdministrator. Self- acquired properties were however released.

The land in Sy.No 201 of Sahebnagar village with an extent of Acs.102 is a part of Gurramguda Forest Block which was proposed to be declaredas a reserved forest and a notification to that effect, under sec.4 of the Forest Act, was published in the Government Gazette, dated: 18.06.1971. Followed by the Sec. 4 Notification, the Forest Settlement Officer issued a proclamation under Sec. 6 of the Forest Act which was published in the Government Gazette, dated: 23.11.1981. The details of the lands that comprise the Gurramguda Forest Block according to the petitioners are as follows:

Village	Sy.No.	Area
TurkaYamjal	93Acs.	279.02
Sahebnagar	201	" 102.00
Nadargul	140	"30.00

The intrinsic examination of document relied upon by the claimants does not exhibit that the Subject Matter is a self-acquired property of Salarjung III. The judgment in O.S No. 156 of 1980, by any measure of interpretation, cannot be extended to affect the process initiated in 1949, continued till 12.10.2004. The claim of an alleged assignee of Salarjung III was found to be untenable on the ground that the jagirdar, except for having a life interest, does not have the right of alienation or assignment. The possession of Government was held adverse to the assignee claimants, and acquisition of title by adverse possession by the Government was upheld.

The proceedings under the Telangana Forest Act cannot go thus far to unsettle the proceedings under the various laws. The District Court and High Court fell into error of law in affirming the view taken by the F.S.O through the order dated 15.10.2014. The impugned judgments are held unsustainable. The order of F.S.O dated 15.10.2014 as confirmed by the Principal District Judge and the High Courtis set aside.

In view of the authoritative judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court inCivil Appeal No. 9996 of 2025 *(The State of Telangana Vs. MirJafar Ali Khan)*,held the writ petition is devoid of merits and failed. The matter was heard by the DB of the HC of Telangana with Hon'ble Chief Justice ShriAparesh Kumar Singh and the Hon'ble Justice Shri N.V. Shravan Kumar. None appeared for the Petitioners,whileShriMohd. Imran Khan, Ld. Additional Advocate General appeared for the State.The writ petition is dismissed on 13.03.2026.

Source: Internet K.B.R

The author is Dy.C.F (Rtd). He is on Phone 966 609 7788; and E-mail ID ; keesrabuchiram@gmail.com

OBITUARY



Sri B. Naveen, Forest Beat Officer (FBO) was born on 12-07-1989 in Giddevarigudem (V), Singareni (M) of Khammam district to Sri. Banoth Devula and Smt. Banoth Bulli. He is the younger of the two siblings with Sri. Banoth Lenin Kumar as the elder one.He comes from a purely farming family and is the first and only one in his family to serve in government.

Naveen completed his B.Tech (ECE) from Guru Nanak Institute of Technology (GNIT), Ibrahimpatnam. He was married to Smt.Jarpala Pramila Devi, who studied M.Tech (EPS) from Darpalli Anantharamulu College of Engineering & Technology (DARCE&T), Khammam. Naveen leaves behind his wife and two young children: Chi.Adya Kalyani (4 years) and Chi.Gnandev (2 years).

Naveen was selected and recruited to the post of Forest Beat Officer through notification no 48/2017 of the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC). He was allotted to the Khammam Unit of Appointment (UoA). He underwent the Induction/Foundation Training at the Telangana State Forest Academy (TSFA) in 2019.After successful completion of training, he was posted as FBO to Pakalagudem Beat of Duradapadu section, Dammapeta Range in Palvoncha forest division (vide FDO Khammam S.O.No 52/2019, Dated:15-10-2019. Naveen joined as FBO Pakalagudem on 16-10-2019. While learning the intricacies of the duties of FBO in his first posting, Naveen worked extremely hard to retrieve an area of 50 Ha in Compartment no 248 in Duradapadu reserve forest, from encroachments.

Naveen was transferred, during general transfers, and posted as FBO Cheruvu Singaram (West Beat), in Palvoncha range of Palvoncha division and he joined duty at the new beat on 01-06-2026, just a couple of months back. Banoth Naveen (35), was a sincere, committed and dedicated forest officer. He showed high degree of integrity as well as Leadership qualities. Forest Range Officer, Sri. K Suresh reportedly said that locals had alerted Naveen about persons setting up live electric wires in the forest area. Naveen wanted to catch the culprits red-handed.Naveen and four other forest staff members went to the spot and noticed three persons hiding in nearby bushes. While chasing them, Naveen came into contact with the live electric wires and collapsed with electric shock.. Even after suffering burns from the electric shock, Naveen showed presence of mind and warned his colleagues, who were following, about the live trap and urged them to stay away.

His colleagues immediately shifted him to the Bhadrachalam Government Area Hospital in an ambulance. However, he succumbed to his injuries on 12th August 2026.

The incident highlights the risks posed by live electric traps set by poachers and highlights the extremely serious risks faced by frontline Forest Department personnel who work in remote forest areas to prevent poaching, illegal hunting, forest offences and destruction of wildlife habitat. FBO Naveen lost his life while serving the Government and protecting the State's forests and wildlife. The Forest Department stood firmly with his bereaved family. The association of retired forest officers of TG&AP request the concerned authority for speedy action to consider appropriate compassionate appointment to his highly qualified wife and timely financial support.

May the noble Soul of Late Sri.B.Naveen Rest in Peace! Om Santhi!

(Compiled by the Editor with inputs from the DFO BKTDM, FDO Paloncha and the Secretary of the Association)

OBITUARY

Saying goodbye to a dear fellow worker



It was with great sadness, I received the news on 22/08 /2026, of the demise of Sri K . C h a n d r a shekar Pillai rtd DFO APFD at Tirupathi. Sri K Chandra sekhar Pillai a retired Divisional Forest officer and resident of Tirupati, passed away due to cardiac arrestand reached the abode of heaven on 22-08-26 in Tirupati . He was reportedly admitted into the hospital in Tirupati in the forenoon of the same day and on the suggestion of the doctor he was admitted into SVIMS hospital .He passed away by around 1-30 PM. He was born on 06-12-1952 in Chittoor district of AP. He was the 7th child of his parents Sri Mahadevpillai and Smt. Padmvati. His father also worked in the Forest Department on the executive side.

Mr Pillai belonged to the Forest Range Officer batch 1974-76, trained at Coimbatore. He was promoted as Asst. Conservator of Forests in 90-91. He did his M.Sc in anthropology from SV UiversityTirupati, M.A in English and Bachelor of general law. He had one son and two daughters. His wife and only son passed away during 2010. Both his daughters are well settled and both of them are engineering graduates.One is a resident of Bengaluru and the other is a citizen of Canada. Sri Pillai was a great singer and stage artiste. He was adept at mono-acting of the roles chosen from the dramas written by William Shakespeare. He was a brown belt holder of Karate too.After the demise of his son and wife he began to go on international tours covering more than 70 countries. In later years became a philanthropist and donated most of his belongings, including a house to charities/Ashrams.

I first met MrPillai at Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad along withtrainees from Yellandu Forest School,on a study tour, in the year 1987. When I was posted as CF WLM,Tirupathi in the year 1993, MrK.C. Pillai was the DFO Anti-poaching WL TRP. There were no official quarters for the CF and he helped me in finding a good rented accommodation. It was while working in the field, that I came to know MrPillai very closely.

He was an excellent field worker with indefatigable stamina to walk for miles without getting tired. He was a strict disciplinarian and took pains to train youngsters in their first posting. He loved forests and along with him, I spent many a happy day's walking and exploring the forest habitats of Seshachalam hills, Lankamala hills, Kaundaniya forests, Chittoor forests etc.We camped together at Tummalabailu, Pencha, Talakona, Horsely Hills, Mamandur, Balapalli, Panapakamand visited scenic interior spots Kandimadugu, Mogalipenta, Gunampenta,Kailaskona, Nitya puja, Jyothi, Safi bavvi, Narayanavanam etc.

I remember telling him that star tortoise is found in abundance in Kuppam/Palmaner ranges of Chittoor division and that we should visit the area sometime. Immediately he arranged the field visit after the onset of north east rains to Sudum and Somala areas (Chittoor) with a local Yenadi (tribal as guide). We found a number of adult star

tortoises and their young hatchling in the rugged terrain and also the empty shells of star tortoises consumed by the Yenadi tribe.

Once, I posed the problem of road kills taking place in Bakaropeta road section and to verify the field situation, we trekked from Panapakkam through Mungilpetu RF to Bakaropeta RF and found an excellent forest corridor linking Seshachalm forests with South Chittor forests.

While working at Tirupathi, we faced the problem of two male elephants straying far away from the original herd from Palmaner and endangering the safety of pilgrims visiting Tirumala temple by foot. We had to tranquilize both the elephants and Mr.Pillai played a stellar role in tracking the animals and reporting their real time location, thereby helping in their capture.

He took active part in departmental sports, games and extra-curricular activities. His enactment of Shakespeare soliloquy, verbatim, on stage, left me deeply impressed.

Finally, we worked together for a couple of years at Nehru Zoological Park after the death of tigress Saki in the year 2000. It was an experience of perfect cohesion between both of us in administrating the zoo.

I relive and replay in my mind the happy times I spent with MrPillai and thank God for that.

Sri. Pillai came all the way from Tirupati and attended the GBM on 28th June. He was hale and healthy and his usual happy self.

May his soul rest in peace!May God give courage to the members of the bereaved family to withstand this unbearable loss

Contributed by

Sri.A.V.Joseph, PCCF (HoFF) retd&

Sri.V.V.Hariprasad, Dy.CF retd

Anger & Worry

Anger and Worry are the most unprofitable conditions known to man. They are like thieves that steal precious time and energy from life. Anger is a highway robber and worry is a sneak thief.

-Horace Fletcher

Answers: 1.Black Swan, 2.Brown Bear, 3.ParveenShaikh,4. Waguv,5.Aluminium, 6.Cannonball Tree (Couroupitaguianensis),7.Panzath village in Anantanag district,8.Palamu Tiger Reserve, 9.Desmond Morris in 1967, 10.Divine Mother

For School Students: 1.Zoo Quest, 2. Only one Egg, 3. Lichens,4. Assam's Hollangapar Gibbon sanctuary, 5. Pied Crested Cuckoo or Monsoon Bird

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Himalayan Serow
(Capricornis thar)

Photo Credit : Sri. B.D.Suyal, IFS (Retd.)

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