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Vol .20

**JANUARY -2019**

No.1



**Dusky Eagle Owl (*Bubo coromandus*)**

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS TELANGANA & ANDHRA PRADESH  
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**VANA PREMI**

Vol : 20

January- 2019

No.1

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Date of Publication: 26-12-2018

Total pages 52

## EDITORIAL

**National Voters Day:** India is the largest democracy in the world. Recently elections were conducted to five State's legislative assemblies in our Country and in near future again elections will be conducted for *Lok Sabha* (Parliament) throughout the country. I thought this is the right time to write about National Voters' day which is observed on 25<sup>th</sup> of January every year in our country. This is also known in Hindi as *Rashtriya Mat-data Diwas*. The day is very significant in the roots of India because the future of our country lies in the leaders we select today. By choosing the right leader, we can pave way for good developments and build inroads for excellence and unmatched progress in every sphere of economic turnaround. This day is observed in our Country to encourage more voters to take part in the election process. It is a day to celebrate the right to vote and vibrant democracy of India. The day was first celebrated in 2011. This year it will be ninth National Voters' Day. The National Voters' Day is observed on 25<sup>th</sup> of January because the Election Commission of India was founded on 25 January 1950. The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering election processes in the country. It administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice President in India. The Indian Constitution has granted the right to vote to all Indian citizens who have registered themselves as voters and of sound mind above the age of 18

years, irrespective of an individual's caste, religion, social or economic status. No individual can be detained or prevented from voting, unless they fulfill the criteria for disqualification. Every voter is allowed one vote only. Voting from the same or two or more different places is considered as an offence. A voter can vote at the constituency where he has registered himself. Eligible voters have to register themselves in the constituency where they live, upon which they will be issued photo election identity cards. Individuals are not permitted to vote in the electoral process if they have not registered. If for any reason, a voter's name is removed from the electoral roll, the concerned official on the day of voting would not allow him to vote even if he has Voter ID card with him. Voters have been granted the right not to vote, which is recorded in the system. This right is also known as a NOTA (None of the above) vote the voter participates in the election but chooses not to vote for any of the candidates contesting the elections. This right is granted to all Indians. The theme for the 2017 years National Voters' Day was 'Empowering Young and Future Voters and the theme of the National Voters' Day 2018 was 'Accessible Elections'.

22 Nations around the world make voting mandatory for its citizens, often starting at the age of 18 years. Several of these countries are in Latin America. In Australia, failure to vote can result in a \$20 fine. Altogether, an estimated

744 million people live in nations with compulsory voting laws. Some of the first countries that introduced mandatory voting laws were Belgium in 1892, Argentina in 1914 and Australia in 1924. There are also examples of countries such as Venezuela and the Netherlands which at one time in their history practiced compulsory voting but have since abolished it. There are few more countries which practiced mandatory voting but given up later. Compulsory voting ensures that all citizens participate in democratic elections of their governing representatives. Mandatory voting leads to a higher voter turnout which results in a higher degree of political legitimacy.

In recent Telangana elections 2018 the overall voter turnout across the state was recorded at 73.20 percent. According to the Election Commission, among 31 districts, Yadadri Bhongir recorded the highest turnout of 90.95 percent. Adilabad in northern Telangana, which has a large population of tribal persons, recorded the polling of 75.6 percent. Hyderabad, which has the highest number of assembly constituencies from the state, recorded the lowest turnout among all 31 districts. Hyderabad city's literacy rate is 82.96% (male 85.96% and female 79.79%), higher than the national average of 74.04%. Average literacy rate of Adilabad district is 61.01 percent. Generally it is believed that higher the literacy percentage the higher is the voting percentage, but in this case it has proved wrong. The total polling percentage in all of Hyderabad's 15 seats was recorded below 50 percent. Among constituencies within Hyderabad, Yakutpura in

the old city area recorded the lowest at 33 percent turnout. The city saw a turnout of 53 percent in 2014 Elections. The day of voting was possibly one of the major reasons for a low turnout in Hyderabad. Polling was scheduled for December 7 which was a Friday. The day was declared as a holiday in the state for voting. People may have travelled to nearby destinations outside the city on the extended weekend. This shows how the citizens prioritize their election.

Very little participation from the youth in selecting the right leader will only cause enough damage to the democracy. For a fast paced development, matched with global benchmarks, the country needs strong leaders who can build a reliable future for the country. If we do not come forward and select the right leaders, we are letting our country come down in merits in areas of progress and development. Keith Ellison is an American politician and lawyer and is the Attorney General of Minnesota, has once said that not voting is not a protest, it is a total surrender. Very true when a person does not vote, his opinion is not counted. According to Stanford University political scientists Adam Bonica and Michael McFaul, there is a consensus among political scientists that "democracies perform better when more people vote.

Vana Premi wishes that all eligible voters, who have registered themselves, should vote in all the elections to select the best leaders for the progress and fastest development of our country. **QMK**

## DUSKY EAGLE OWL-*BUBO COROMANDUS*

**Description:** The facial disc is whitish with dark shaft-streaks of feathers and a distinct, narrow and darker rim. The irises of the eyes are bright yellow. The cere and bill are bluish-lead in colour with a pale yellowish-horn tip. The prominent ear-tufts are a darker greyish-brown colour. The upperparts are brownish-grey with blackish shaft-streaks and dark brown and whitish vermiculations. The scapulars have whitish outer webs, finely vermiculated brown, forming an indistinct scapular row. The under parts are very pale buffish-grey with prominent, dark shaft-streaks and brown cross-bars. The primary and secondary flight feathers are barred light and darker greyish-brown. The tail is pale brownish-grey with white tips, and has 4-5 broad, dark greyish-brown bars. The tarsi are feathered to or beyond the base of the toes. The sparsely bristled tips of the toes are plumbeous-grey in colour with paler soles. Claws are blackish-brown.

**Size:** Length 48-53cm. Wing length 380-435mm. Tail length 187-224mm. Weight (no current data available). Females are larger and heavier than males.

**Habits:** Although not completely nocturnal, the Dusky Eagle Owl usually spends the daytime in the seclusion of a shady bough or foliage, becoming active about an hour before sunset. They have been observed on the move and hunting in the day, especially cloudy days, but never during the brightest and hottest hours. They are usually found in pairs, and are very faithful to localities. These owls can be heard calling at all hours of the day, and are most vocal during the rainy and cold seasons.

**Voice:** The song is a phrase of resonant, accelerating, croaking notes: *kro kro kro-kro-krokrokoikoikokog*, with the ending notes given in a rapid staccato sequence, resembling a tremolo. This phrase lasts about 3 seconds. Male and female may be heard duetting during courtship.

**Hunting & Food:** Dusky Eagle Owls feed on small mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, fish, and large insects.

**Breeding:** Breeding season overall spans from November to April. In Northern India, it is principally December to January, and later in

the south. This owl uses abandoned stick nests of larger birds in the fork of a large tree, preferably standing in or near water. Normally two eggs are laid, sometimes only one. Eggs are white and roundish-oval in shape, averaging 59.3 x 48.2mm. They are laid several days apart, so chicks end up being very different in size. Usually, only the larger and stronger one survives. While both the male and female have been observed on the eggs, it is likely that the female does the incubation, and the male will briefly cover the eggs when the female leaves the nest for a short time. Incubation and fledging periods are unknown.

**Habitat:** Well-wooded and well-watered country, never in arid or desert regions. The Dusky Eagle Owl is also found in old mango plantations, and in other densely foliated trees in proximity of water and habitation, normally on the plains. Occurs up to 250 mts. above sea level.

**Distribution:** Indian subcontinent, Nepal and Bangladesh, Burma and Malaysia. Also in southeast China.

**Status:** Not uncommon in India and Bangladesh in suitable habitats. Very rare in eastern most parts of range.

(Source Internet)

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## LETTERS TO EDITOR

### Dear Editor

I have received the December issue. Very front cover page you have mentioned "*Panthers tigris* The King of the Forest". May I call your kind attention to the wording "The King of the Forest" Do you think it is the correct description. . If not, you issue a correction. In case you feel your wording is correct let me know so that I can tell you which carnivorous animal of the jungle is called so. This you can say the most beautiful carnivorous animal of the jungle —Forest.

Yours Sincerely

**Dr. C. N. Rao**

## YET ANOTHER BOUT OF ASSAULT ON FORESTS?

By  
**J. V. Sharma**

I happened to see the footage of Mr. Rahul Gandhi's speech telecast on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018. I was shocked as well as dismayed. He was addressing an election rally at Bhoopalpally of Telangana State. Hyderabad based Deccan Chronicle filed a report on the speech the next day according to which Mr. Gandhi said that while the UPA Government had introduced the Tribal Rights Act to protect the rights of the people, the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre and TRS Government in the State were ignoring it; "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has weakened the Act and KCR annihilated it in Telangana State." He promised that as soon as the Congress forms the government, the Tribal Rights Bill would be implemented in a full-fledged manner and water, forest and land –*Jal, Jungle* and *Jameen*- would be handed over to the *Adivasis*. He said "We will hand over the certificates to *podu* farmers" referring to land rights to tribal farmers.

We have no quarrel if Mr. Rahul Gandhi has any political scores to settle with his opponents. It is also not my case to go into veracity of allegations of omission and commission made against his political rivals. It is for them to join

issues with him. I am shocked because the facts stated by him relating to Forest Rights Act and its implementation are factually incorrect and brazenly twisted. I am dismayed because what he said will encourage more and more forest encroachments leading to lawlessness and chaos besides hurting environment leading to irreversible damage. And such statements coming from the president of one of the major national political parties of the country may create confusion and mislead the nation.

Following clarifications should throw more light on the issue to clear the air and provide the right perspective:

1. Mr. Rahul Gandhi referred to Tribal Rights Bill and no such Bill is pending consideration of the Parliament. From the context it can be concluded that he was referring to The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. It is also popularly known as Forest Rights Act.

2. It was enacted in 2006 when UPA-1 was in power. Ms. Sonia Gandhi was the UPA chairperson and Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister.

3. The story of this legislation is not only important but also interesting as well. It is a classic example of forced legislation materializing as a by-product of coalition politics. UPA-1 was short of numbers after 2004 elections and it had to depend upon leftist group led by CPM for its survival. Settlement of tribal issues was one of the items of common minimum programme. Neither the contours nor the content of tribal issues were spelt out in the programme. It was open ended.

4. No sooner the UPA-1 came into power, the leftist group started exerting pressure on the government to take up tribal issues. CPM was not part of the government and was extending its support to government from outside. It thus enjoyed the luxury of power without responsibility as it could ask the government to do anything it wanted without the shackles of collective responsibility.

5. The most important tribal issue was the land problem. There were several cases of forest land encroachments by tribals. National Forest Policy did not permit regularization of encroachments and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 stipulated that permission of Central Government is mandatory in all cases where forest land is sought to be diverted for non-forest purposes. Matter went before the Supreme Court and the

Apex Court too said that regularization of encroachments has to be done only in accordance with law & guidelines. To circumvent these legal and procedural obstacles, the government decided to bring in a new legislation. It is necessary to say that the forest land occupations were essentially illegal encroachments punishable under law.

6. It is pertinent to remember here that it was Ms. Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister who brought the Forest Conservation Act. It is also necessary to remember that it was she who included (1976) the 'Forests' in the Concurrent List of Schedule VII of the Constitution. Till then 'Forests' was a State subject. Colossal damage was caused to forests while in States' control. As much as 43 million hectares of forest land was diverted between 1950 and 1980 for various purposes like cultivation, industries, mining, etc. Evidently, this mammoth loss of forests prompted Ms. Indira Gandhi to bring in Forest Conservation Act 1980.

7. Not many people are aware that Ms. Indira Gandhi strongly believed that protection of environment is of paramount importance, particularly in a populous country like India and the forests being the most important of visible environmental assets should be protected and improved. She also wanted to strengthen the

Forest Act to make it effective enough to address the new challenges. In fact she wanted to bring in an altogether new Forest Act and draft legislation was circulated among States to elicit their responses. She was assassinated before she could implement her agenda. Her son, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded her as Prime Minister, commanding unprecedented huge majority in Parliament did not have the needed resolve to complete his mother's unfinished job. The draft Forest Act must be gathering dust in some obscure corner of the Record Room of Environment Ministry. These facts are detailed here to point out that of all Prime Ministers India had Ms. Indira Gandhi alone shines as a Star in the cause of forests and environment. Ironically, her political successor (of the same Congress Party) in office in later years, Dr. Manmohan Singh, with active cooperation from Ms. Sonia Gandhi, caused immense damage to forests in his decade long tenure.

8. To continue the history of Forest Rights Act, UPA-1 was not in a position to displease CPM. Only option was whether to comply with the dictates of CPM to continue in power which also means dumping the legacy as well as roadmap charted out by Ms. Indira Gandhi OR to walk out of power with dignity and self esteem. Surprisingly, Sonia Gandhi – Manmohan Singh

duo opted to move out of Indira Gandhi's legacy. I heard many Congressmen commenting in private that if Indira Gandhi was faced with such a situation, she would have walked out of South Block with her head held high.

9. The process of legislation was more amusing. Though it is the propriety of Government to ask any of its departments to prepare the draft Bill, it is customary that the task is normally entrusted to the Ministry controlling the resource on which legislation is being made. In the instant case, there are two stakeholders Viz. Ministry of Environment & Forests and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The former is the custodian of forests, the resource which is sought to be alienated in favor of the latter. Convention as well as propriety is to ask the MoEF to prepare the draft Bill. If the Government has any genuine difficulty with MoEF, there is the law Ministry whose professionalism in drafting legal documents cannot be doubted. Curiously, Manmohan Singh's Government did not opt for these two options and had the Bill drafted by MoTA. Reasons for departure from the convention are not made public. There was no transparency. MoTA, which represents the beneficiary group prepared the draft Bill and piloted it in Parliament. The element of conflict of interest on the part of MoTA was brazenly

ignored. On the other hand, the opinion or the concerns the MoEF, were neither heard nor reconciled. The legislation thus suffers from the stigma of bias.

10. The draft Bill so prepared was introduced in Parliament on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005 with the name and style of The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005. Salient features of the Bill, among others, were; a) The beneficiary category was Scheduled Tribes, b) The Government recognizes rights of tribals over forest land and vests ownership rights over such forest lands, as on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1980, c) Maximum land that could be alienated is 2 ½ hectares per nuclear family and d) Provisions of Forest Conservation Act will not be applicable to the land rights so recognised.

11. The Bill introduced in Parliament went before the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The leftists appeared to have prevailed over other members in the Committee because the Bill underwent several fundamental changes at JPC level. The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests) Bill metamorphosed into The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill. The Bill meant exclusively for STs is changed to include 'Other Traditional Forest Dwellers' and recommended to extend all benefits meant for STs to Other

Traditional Forest Dwellers also. Other notable major changes recommended are to extend the cut-off date from 25<sup>th</sup> October 1980 to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005 to include all forest encroachments that have taken place in further 25 years period after 1980 and to increase eligibility from 2 ½ hectares to 4 hectares per nuclear family. Other Traditional Forest Dwellers are defined as those living and depending on forests for three generations, each generation reckoned at 25 years. There is also an embargo on eviction of encroachers till the claims are disposed.

12. It is very much apparent that the draft Bill that came out of JPC is vastly different from the one introduced in Parliament. To throw further light on the crucial provisions, the cut-off date was fixed at 25.10.1980 in the original Bill because the Forest Conservation Act came into force on this date and no diversion of forest land was permissible for non-forest purpose without permission from the Central Government and the tribals' grievance was that they were deprived of ownership rights over the land in their possession as on that day. Even the Central Governments stand at the time of introduction of the Bill in Parliament in 2005 was that forest encroachments subsequent to FCA are not negotiable which was in tune with the policy

formulated by Ms. Indira Gandhi. Secondly, the issue was a tribal problem and the Statement of Objective and Reasons makes it abundantly clear that the legislation is meant to address the historical injustice meted out to them. JPC had clearly exceeded the brief to include Other Traditional Forest Dwellers and made them eligible to all benefits that will be available to STs. By any amount of reasoning, OTFDs cannot be STs. That their recognition is linked to their stay in forests for three generations means, by simple logic, the historical injustice criterion applicable to STs cannot be applied to OTFDs. Thirdly, the ceiling of 2 ½ hectares per nuclear family incorporated in the original Bill has been arbitrarily increased to 4 hectares. Even the ceiling in the original Bill was not supported by any reliable data. Statistics computed by Govt. Agencies show that the STs have the highest average land holding in India compared to SCs, BCs and Others.

13. The Bill so modified by the JPC was considered by the Cabinet. Those who were tuned to Ms. Indira Gandhi's thinking could not digest the changes made. A group of Ministers was asked to look into it. They too found it difficult to reconcile with the proposed amendments. The Leftists sensed that the Govt. had some reservations. Prolonged discussions among the

alliance partners did not lead to any solution. CPM organized a rally of tribals in Delhi and served an ultimatum. They made it clear that the Govt. either accept the Bill as recommended by JPC and get it passed by Parliament urgently OR not to count on their support to prop up the Govt. It was Hobson's choice for Prime Minister and UPA chairperson –whether to dump the legacy of Late Ms. Gandhi or to step down from power. As the Leftists were not prepared to relent, the lure of power got better of sentiment and rectitude.

14. Dr. Manmohan Singh's government got the Bill, (as recommended by JPC) cleared by Parliament. An atmosphere of 'holy cow' syndrome appeared to prevail in both the Houses of Parliament. Such an important Bill providing for granting ownership rights on illegal occupants of forest land was passed by voice vote in matter of hours without much of discussion. Honorable Lawmakers did not choose to go into fundamental questions whether it would be proper for the Parliament to reward the offender with the booty involved in the offence. No one raised the concerns of loss of forest, likely environmental hazards, safety & security of forests in the event of alienation of forest land on as is where is basis of encroachment, consequential management

problems etc. The very basic question whether the land can ever be a viable solution to eradicate poverty and backwardness among tribes, was not considered. The powers of Parliament in making laws is unquestionable but it is also necessary to ensure that the legislation is purposive, efficacious, fair, not arbitrary, not in conflict with other existing laws and is in accordance with the provisions of Constitution.

15. No time was lost in obtaining Presidential assent. According to Constitution, the Parliament comprises of the Rajya Sabha, the Lok Sabha and the President of India. As the last stage of legislation, the President, in case he has any suggestions to make, could ask the Parliament to consider those avenues. In this case, the President did not suggest any such reconsideration and promptly accorded assent to make it a law of the land. Crucial issues that merited the attention of the Lawmakers went unconsidered. The Act was notified.

16. Rules had to be made to facilitate implementation of the Act. A committee was appointed to formulate the draft rules under the chairmanship of a retired civil servant known for his bias towards STs and the poor. In hindsight, it would have been better if a non-partisan person or a jurist would have been more practical and even handed. The role of the custodian of forests

was reduced to almost nothing while all the powers in verification of claims were vested in committees presided by revenue authorities. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules, 2007 were notified and the Act was operationalised with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008. Evidences in support of claims prescribed in Rules and the participation of encroachers in committees in particular proved to be highly injurious to forests.

17. The UPA publicized the legislation as a game changer and panacea for all tribal problems. As the general elections were round the corner, no effort was spared give wide publicity and in its implementation. The Act is under implementation for almost eleven years now. Mr. Rahul Gandhi's comments in the opening Para need to be seen in the light of statistics of implementation for their accuracy. It was UPA's Government till May 2014 and it is NDA led by Mr. Modi thereafter. So also, it was Congress Government in composite State of Andhra Pradesh till May 2014. State was bifurcated and the separate State of Telangana came into existence. Congress lost both the States and Mr. K. Chandrasekhar Rao of Telangana Rashtra Samithi became Chief Minister in the new State.

18. The UPA government was in power for more than the first six years of implementation. Euphoria among population living in the vicinity of forests was very high and it was vigorously accentuated by the State machinery. There was flood of claims and the State Governments, irrespective of their political color, saw it as the most potent populist measure to gain electoral dividends. Governments bent over backwards to appear liberal in implementation. As the governments were in hurry to reap electoral benefits in the fast approaching elections, they saw to it that process of verification is completed expeditiously and certificates of title are issued. Thus the bulk of implementation process was over by 2009 but the trickle of fresh claims continued even thereafter. Following is the status of implementation up to change of guard in 2014 at Centre:

**a)** Of the 35 States and Union Territories in India, only 14 States had shown interest in implementing the Act. Significantly, States having majority of tribal population did not evince any interest. Surprisingly, North-Eastern States, with the exception of Assam and Tripura, preferred to stay aloof. All these States were Congress ruled States. This is indicative of conceptual error in the legislation. The Act was not implemented in Tamilnadu because of

restrictive order from Madras High Court.

**b)** In 6 ½ years of implementation in 14 States, during UPA period, in all 3733730 claims were received and 81.76% of them amounting to 3052747 claims were disposed off.

**c)** 52.97% of the claims filed numbering 1617031 were found to be bogus and rejected.

**d)** Title deeds in respect of 1435916 (38.46%) claims were issued alienating 5529728 acres of forest land. Forest area so lost constituted nearly 3% of the forest area of the affected States.

**e)** Andhra Pradesh acquired the dubious distinction of losing 9.24% of its forest area disposing 81.46% of claims received.

**f)** A Committee under Mr. N. C. Saxena appointed by Central Government (UPA) to go into implementation of the Act stated in clear terms that the process of implementation was hustled with General Elections 2009 in view. The observation, in other words, point out defects in implementation and is an indictment of the Government.

19. It is NDA Government under Mr. Modi at Centre from the middle of 2014. Simultaneously, there was change of guard in AP and Telangana. FRA continued to be under implementation even under new dispensation. Status of implementation updated till

30.04.2018 as accessed from government portal is detailed below:

a) In all, 41, 98,793 claims were received since implementation commenced in 2008 and they include 37, 33,730 claims received in UPA time. Claims received during NDA period are 4, 65,063. So the bulk of implementation took place during UPA regime.

b) The percentage of disposal over the claims received during UPA tenure was 81.76 as against 90.58 of overall period.

c) Forest land alienation which was 5529728 acres in respect of 1435916 claims during UPA period rose sharply to 144, 63,072 acres during NDA time.

d) 10 States are named as Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected. Governments in these States have been over solicitous towards claimants hoping to wean them away from the influence of Maoists. Up to April 2018, of the total 3205925 claims received in these states, 3074384 claims are disposed off which works out to 95.90%. Telangana is one of such States

e) Thus, the Forest rights Act has been, by far, the most damaging legislation ever made in respect of forests.

A person aspiring to be the Prime minister of a Country of India's size, population and diversity must possess the essential qualities of

knowledge, vision and wisdom in abundance. Nehru had them plenty acquiring through education and public interaction. He moved in the society of intellectuals. Indira Gandhi acquired it with her uncanny sense of grasp. They did not speak out which they did not know. They criticized the political rivals not for rhetoric to score brownie points and chose the political issues.

The legislation, its origins, its salient points, processing and maneuvering that happened are narrated above in some detail because facts stated by Mr. Rahul Gandhi at the election meeting in Bhoopalapally are at variance with actual facts and his election promise to distribute certificates to podu farmers if voted to power, is beset with irreparable and irreversible damage to forests. He was sending a message that all forest encroachments that had taken place even after 2005 will be regularized.

When the statement of Mr. Rahul Gandhi is tested in the light of clarifications supplied and facts stated in the above Paras, the following picture will emerge:

I. In all fairness, it must be said that it was the UPA-1 led by his Party which brought in the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act,

2006 (Forest Rights Act – FRA). As the above mentioned facts reveal, it was not enacted by UPA as an instrument of conviction but was forced down the gullet of Congress Party by the leftists as a ransom to allow UPA in power. It was an unethical bargain made by Congress Party much against the legacy and stated policy of the Party. Deed done not out of conviction but under duress or as a bargain for power, cannot go to the credit of the Congress Party. The merits and demerits of the legislation *per se* are not being discussed now because the constitutional validity and some other provisions of the Act are presently under the judicial scrutiny of the Supreme Court.

II. Mr. Gandhi alleged that “Prime Minister Narendra Modi has weakened the Act (Forest Rights Act) and KCR annihilated it in Telangana State” and that it is being ignored at Centre and the State by Mr. Modi and KCR. It can be seen from the information available that the figure of 5529728 acres ceded in respect of 1435916 claims during UPA period swelled to 144,63,072 acres for 3803120 claims disposed during NDA time. Allegations made are therefore baseless, not based on facts and untrue. Weakening of the Act, alleged by Mr. Gandhi is also incorrect in that neither the Central Government nor the State Government in Telangana changed a single word

in the Act, Rules or Guidelines and the legislation continues to be implemented.

III. It can be seen from the figures of implementation that the UPA the NDA, both, have been very unsympathetic and unfair to forests. It can even be said that they were hostile. Their mutual recrimination is like kettle calling the pot black. They are like Tweedledom and Tweedledee and there is nothing to choose between them as far as their disservice to forests is concerned.

IV. Nation is eternal. Governments come and go. Newer and newer generations will continue emerging. They are all our children, their children and their children and their children and so on with no end. Future generations have equal rights over the natural resources of the country as the present generations have. Supreme Court upheld the principle of ‘Inter generational Equity’ and clarified that these natural resources are the trust and the present generation is only a trustee to manage them with an obligation to pass it on to future generations. Unlimited consumption and reckless alienation resulting in depletion of the resources is neither permissible nor maintainable

V. By far the most dangerous to forest in particular and to environment in general is Mr.

Gandhi's assurance and promises that as soon as the Congress forms the government, the Tribal Rights Bill would be implemented in a full-fledged manner and water, forest and land –*Jal, Jungle and Jameen*- would be handed over to the *Adivasis*. He said "We will hand over the certificates to *podu* farmers" referring to land rights to tribal farmers. This is particularly ominous to forests because the Forest Rights has been implemented to the hilt for 11 years and it has already caused incalculable damage to forests. He sends out an unambiguous message to potential encroachers to carry on with their nefarious avocation and their illegal occupation of forest lands will be legalized. Needless to clarify that *podu* cultivation is illegal occupation of land for cultivation. With Congress Party doing well in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan in just concluded 2018 Assembly Elections, his statement is bound to open the floodgates of forest encroachments and the forests are in for another bout of assault.

VI. Right thinking people all over the globe are greatly concerned about the global warming & climate change and their adverse impact. Scientists estimate that the global temperature will rise by more than 6 degrees C by the end of century if the present trend of development and carbon emissions continues. Mitigating steps need to be taken urgently by the world

community to arrest the trend. Most commonly known sink for carbon emissions is forests. India is severely disadvantaged in this regard as it can hardly boast of mere 20% of its land area under tree cover. Even this forest area is mostly degraded and badly fragmented & honeycombed to yield the desired results. Even in the face of these challenges, the ruling class has no qualms to divert vast forest tracts for cultivation and development. Case in point is Mr. Rahul Gandhi's assurance to grant *pattas* for *podu* cultivation. If he is not aware of these environmental challenges, it is a case of knowledge deficit. Or, in the alternative, if he charted out the professed agenda knowing the calamitous consequences, it will be a premeditated crime against people of this generation and coming generations.

VII. An unhealthy trend is fast developing where the polity of the country in general has lost the sense of discrimination between Governance and populism. Their entire objective appears to be to win the next election either by hook or crook. It is like an open auction where the participants out-bid each other offering sops which can only sap the nation. In the instant case, forests are bound to suffer with Mr. Rahul Gandhi's manifesto.

# WHAT REPTILES GIVE BIRTH TO LIVE YOUNG?

Most reptiles reproduce by laying eggs, but did you know that a handful of reptiles actually give birth to live young? Want to learn more about which species don't lay eggs? Then this is the blog article for you! **Explanation of Terms**

In order to discuss laying eggs versus giving live birth, you'll need to know some terms that explain the three types of reptile births.

Most snakes and lizards are **oviparous**, which means that the animal lays eggs in order to reproduce. Once the eggs have been deposited, they need to be incubated or kept warm and safe until the hatchlings are ready to emerge.

When a reptile gives birth to a baby without the use of an egg, it is termed **viviparous**. This means that the animal nourishes its young internally through a placenta and yolk sac. This is the rarest reptile birthing method.

Boa constrictors and green anacondas are two examples of snakes that are viviparous.

Finally, if a reptile develops eggs inside its body but still gives birth to babies instead of laying the eggs, this is called being **ovoviviparous**. Essentially, the female keeps the remnants of the eggs inside her while the fully formed babies emerge, making it seem as though the babies

were true "live" births.

An example of an ovoviviparous reptile is the rattlesnake. If you were to x-ray a gravid female rattlesnake, you would be able to see both the skeletons of the babies and the outlines of the eggs.

## **Which Snakes Give Live Birth?**

As previously discussed, both ovoviviparous and viviparous reptiles birth fully formed, functional babies.

Most vipers and all rattlesnakes fall into this category. The Boidae family, which includes boa constrictors and other boa snakes, are viviparous and therefore don't produce eggs to insulate their babies at any time. The same is true of green anacondas.

A Dumeril's Boa (*Boa dumerili*), as a member of the boa family, this snake does not lay eggs to reproduce.

Most sea snakes also give birth to live young. Baby sea snakes are born directly into the ocean! The only exception to this is the genus *Laticauda*. The females of this sea snake species emerge from the ocean and lay eggs on land, making them oviparous.

It's interesting to note that all species of snakes

that give birth to live young offer no parenting to their babies. Viviparous and ovoviviparous infant snakes are on their own from the instant they are born. It's said this is why baby rattlesnakes are born with a full "venom tank" and are ready to bite from day one.

### **Which Lizards Give Live Birth?**

Interestingly enough, there is a species of lizard called the Viviparous Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) that is fully viviparous. This lizard is found in Europe and Asia and is the only species in the genus *Zootoca*.

Many species of skinks, including the very popular Blue Tongue Skink (*Tiliqua sp.*) give birth to live young. Blueys actually have a very complex placental mechanism that delivers oxygen to the developing fetus and carries carbon dioxide away. However, all reptiles, whether they are born live or hatch out of eggs are nourished through a yolk sac. This is still true of the blue tongue skink.

Baby blue tongue skinks (*Tiliqua sp.*) are born

fully formed and ready to take on the world.

Gravid Jackson's chameleons are ovoviviparous and all species of Jackson's give live birth. A female Jackson's chameleon will typically birth between twenty to thirty babies per brood, although the Mt. Meru Jackson's Chameleon, which is the smallest of the Jackson's chameleons, will typically have fewer than twenty babies at a time.

### **Conclusion – Reptiles and Live Birth**

Most lizards and snakes are oviparous and lay eggs to reproduce. However, there are both lizards and snakes that bear live young.

The reptiles that do in fact give live birth are pretty well-known amongst reptile hobbyists and enthusiasts. And although we might not have listed every individual species on our lists above, we did mention general groupings and families that are known to give live birth. So, if your reptile in question is not described above, then it's probably safe to assume that it reproduces by laying eggs. (Source Internet)

***“We will open the book. Its pages are blank.  
We are going to put words on them ourselves.  
The book is called Opportunity and its first  
chapter is New Year’s Day.”***

**(Edith Lovejoy Pierce)**

# HIGH TIME YOU NEED SOME NATURAL CARE!

By

**Dr. B. Raghotham Rao Desai**

**Preamble:** Isn't it past the time when something like **natural care** (by using a few of the known and very commonly available wondrous herbs) **should have been taken to build up the immunity** and protect from illness **and help you to keep the metabolism high?**

**Fact File:** For most of us, particularly those who are ageing, any season during a year — particularly winter — is loaded with potential health setbacks due to which we are compelled to stay vigilant and be aware of the health risks associated therewith. No need to emphasize that keeping oneself healthy is of utmost importance to safely overcome potential health risk that is so common during winter in particular when we have shorter days, colder weather, reduced light and holiday bingeing ( i.e., indulging in several activities, especially eating & drinking excessively) — giving us plentiful reasons to be tardy or even lazy! Even those who are highly health-conscious, are found to take a backseat. The excess food intake and lack of sufficient physical activity along with other

environmental factors result in obviously toxic building-up, eventually leading to several diseases (such as asthma, sinusitis, respiratory infections, common cold, aches & pains, arthritis, immunity-compromising-infections, weight-gain, sleep-issues, hypertension and even heart-attacks).

The wondrous plants & herbs, handily available:

**(a) Basil or Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum-Labiatae*)** provides relief from chest congestion by dilating the airways in the lungs. One of the easiest and most convenient ways of boosting immunity system is to have about one to two cups of Tulsi tea daily — the hot tea neutralizing the cold coming into the body and thus helping to regulate internal temperature. It is a copiously branching annual shrub (herb) having wedge-shaped (at basil) leaves, which are offered for worship and also used in medicine.

**(b) Turmeric (*Curcuma longa-Ginger family*)** is great for health which must be included in the diet — the magical herb working wonders in

improving immunity, thus keeping diseases at bay. It may even be added with hot milk and drunk every night.

It is from the rhizome of an Asian plant that turmeric is obtained and is so well-known for its anti-inflammatory properties. The bright yellow aromatic powder is used for flavouring and colouring in Asian cookery — formerly, even as a fabric dye.

**(c) Triphala, a combination of three herbs (amla or Indian gooseberry/Emblicmyrobolan, beheda or Bellericmyrobolan, herde or Chebulicmyrobolan: Emblicaofficinalis – Euphorbiaceae, Terminaliabellerica-Combretaceae, Terminaliachebula-ibid, respectively)** are the potent antioxidants which aid the digestive capability of the body when it is tending to go down. Also useful to cure piles, dropsy, diarrhoea, leprosy, chronic ulcers, wounds, dentifrice & ulceration of gums and headaches.

They are tropical trees of a characteristic pagoda shape, the fruits of which (known as Myrobolans) are also used in tanning, dyeing, making ink. The kernel is edible giving also an oil used for the hair, while it is the favorite food for monkeys, deer, sheep, goats and cattle.

**(d) Liquorice or licorice (Glycyrrhiza spp.,)** is

associated with curing respiratory issues since ancient times — one of the finest cures for colds, sore-throats and related problems.

A sweet, chewy, aromatic black substance made from the juice of the root of this leguminous

plant is used as a sweet also, while in medicine as stated above.

**(e) Ginger (Zingiberofficinale)** contains anti-inflammatory gingerols and shaogals that will help to relieve a sore-throat quickly, while also killing rhinoviruses which cause respiratory infections like 'a cold'.

From the rhizome of this SE Asian plant (resembling bamboo in appearance) ginger is taken, and a hot, fragrant spice is made from it.

**(f) Pepper (Piper nigrum-apetalae, monochlamydeae)** is added to the tonics for treating cold and cough. Pepper also provides relief from sinusitis and nasal congestion, while it has an expectorant property that helps to break-up the mucus and phlegm depositions in the respiratory tract.

It is a climbing vine with berries that are black or white peppercorns which are dried and ground to get a pungent, hot-tasting powder, used for flavoring food.

**(g) Lavang/Clove (Syzygium aromaticum/**

*Eugenia caryophyllus-myrtaceae*) is the dried flower-bud of a tropical tree, used extensively in our country as an aromatic spice. An aromatic analgesic-oil called 'Oil of cloves' is extracted from cloves and is used medicinally to relieve dental pain, and also to control excessive vomiting (by keeping a couple of cloves in the mouth).

Several species are cultivated in gardens (to obtain the said *cloves of commerce*), they being interesting plants because of the inflorescence which is a proliferous spike.

A tree-species with similar properties and products (*known as Dianthus caryophyllus*) is a native of Indonesia, from which a clove scented

pink known as 'clove pink' or 'clove gilly flower' is obtained, and **carnation** (i.e., a double-flowered cultivated variety of clove pink) & other **double pinks** are bred.

**(h)Elaichi/Cardamo (*Elettaria cardamomum-Ginger family*)** produces aromatic seeds used as a spice and to cure indigestion as also to control vomiting when it tends to be nasty (by keeping a few seeds in the mouth).

This SE Asian plant belongs to Ginger family which bears fruits at ground-level/just below ground-level through lateral root-hairs, the fruits collected by scratching the ground around.

*“Well, we have a whole new year ahead of us. And wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all be a little more gentle with each other, a little more loving, and have a little more empathy, and maybe, next year at this time we'd like each other a little more.”* (Judy Garland)

# SRI K. RAJASEKHARA REDDY

## A LEGEND IN AP FOREST DEPARTMENT

By  
**V.SANTHASEELA BABU**

I was shocked to hear about the sad demise of Sri. K. Rajasekhara Reddy, I.F.S; (Retd). During my 37 years of service in Forest Department in the capacities of both as Forest Range Officer and as Divisional Forest Officer, I had the rare and golden opportunities of working with some of the stalwarts and legends in the Department from whom I have acquired the knowledge of Forestry. One such officer was Sri. K.Rajasekhara Reddy. I was thinking of sharing the experiences I had with him in my life with the readers of '*Vana Premi*' magazine. At that juncture I received a phone call from Sri. C. Ramakrishna Reddy, D.F.O (Retd) who has settled at Piler in Chittoor District who requested me to write an article about Sri K. Rajasekhara Reddy for the information of the readers of '*Vana Premi*' since I had the opportunity of working with him for a long time. This has further strengthened my desire of sharing my experiences with him.

My association with Sri K. Rajasekhara Reddy dates back to the year 1972, in the beginning of my service, when he joined as the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Pre-Investment Survey

of Forest Resources, Tirupati where I was working as Forest Range Officer. The Pre-Investment Survey Party was established at Tirupati for surveying the Forest Resources in the Seshachalam Catchment area comprising of Chittoor, Cuddapah and Nellore Districts. Prior to this, the Party functioned from Giddalur and completed the field survey of Nallamala Catchment. The task of this party at Tirupati was to complete the field survey of Seshachalam Catchment as well as drafting of the Management Plan for Nallamala Catchment by processing the field data collected in that area by the previous parties.

In Mr. Rajasekhara Reddy we could find an officer who was caring for the welfare of his staff and providing them comfortable working conditions and at the same time an officer who was enforcing strict discipline and extracting maximum possible qualitative work turnout from them. We have been comfortably working under his able guidance and were able to cope up with his style of functioning.

While at headquarters he used to call me for

office work and was dictating the Draft Management Plan for Nallamala Catchment which I used to take down and get it typed with our office Typist. He was asking me to get it typed on papers with 1/3<sup>rd</sup> margin and double space in which he was making corrections and again getting it typed. Like this a draft dictated by him was taking its final shape only after two or three sets of corrections. I just wanted to mention this to show his dedication and sincerity in finalizing a task taken up by him. He was also dictating his Fortnightly Diaries to me for getting them typed. When he mentions about his field visits in the Diary, he used to describe the minute details of the area he has inspected along with the topography, detailed floristic composition present in that area and the works taken up and inspected by him.

At times he used to take me along with him to camps on his field visits. I used to stay in the Guest house adjoining to his suit. He used to bring a Kitchen Box with required vessels, cutlery and provisions personally to the camps. His Attender used to cook food for both of us. He was in the habit of getting ready late in the mornings. But he has instructed the Attender to serve breakfast as soon as I get ready in the morning without waiting for him. This was his noble gesture towards me. While on camps, he

used to dictate the contents of the Management Plan till late in the nights.

Like this I acquired a foundation in the knowledge of field Forestry and drafting skills from him in the beginning of my service for which I owe him a lot.

After completing a period of more than 3 years in Pre-Investment Survey of Forest Resources at Tirupati, I was repatriated back to Kurnool Circle and was posted to 'ONIPENTA' Range in Proddatur Division. While handing over those orders to me, he told me that recently some of his relatives from Cuddapah came to Tirupati and informed that Onipenta Range was in a bad condition and that recently an assault took place on the Range officer there. I became upset after hearing that and sought his advice as to what I should do. He just thought over for some time and told me that a new Flying Squad Party headed by a Range Officer is formed at Rapur (Nellore Dist.) exclusively to curb the menace of Redsanders smuggling as Rapur is a strategic point for Redsanders smuggling and that many senior Range Officers were being posted and none of them were joining there and as such that post was vacant. He advised me to submit my willingness letter to work there, if I am interested. He specifically asked me to mention in my letter about my



V. Santhaseela Babu, Sri. K. Rajasekhara Reddy & Sri. P.S. Sankara Reddy in Field work in Tirumala Forests



Convocation of 2<sup>nd</sup> batch Forest Section Officer training program- 2018

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ప్రజా సేవ మండలం



రైతు సేవ ప్రాధాన్యత

# రైతు సంక్షేమ మే ఈ ప్రభుత్వ లక్ష్యం

- ◆ ఇప్పటి వరకు ఇచ్చిన ఋణ ఉపశమనం రూ. 14,710 కోట్లు (3వ విడతతో కలిపి).
- ◆ లబ్ధి పొందిన పంట ఋణము ఖాతాల సంఖ్య 57.57 లక్షలు.
- ◆ ఉద్యాన పంటల ఋణ ఉపశమనం రూ. 384.47 కోట్లు.
- ◆ రూ. 4495 కోట్లతో, రూ. 50 వేల లోపు ఋణాలు నీసుకున్న 23.45 లక్షల రైతు ఖాతాలకు ఒకేసారి ఋణ ఉపశమనం
- ◆ ఋణ ఉపశమనంలో కొలు రైతులకు ప్రాధాన్యత ఇవ్వబడినది.
- ◆ మరణించిన రైతుల ఖాతాలకు కూడా రూ. 51.54 కోట్ల పూర్తి ఋణ ఉపశమనం కల్పించబడినది.
- ◆ ప్రవీరగ పల్లెలు ఇవ్వక అర్హత కోల్పోయిన రైతులకు అవకాశము కల్పించి ఇప్పటికీ కూడా పూర్తి సారధ్యకతతో ఋణ ఉపశమనంకు చేయూత.



రైతు సాధికార సంస్థ, ఆంధ్ర ప్రభుత్వం

దేశ చరిత్రలోనే 24 వేల కోట్ల రూపాయల రైతు ఋణ ఉపశమనం చేస్తున్న ఏకైక ప్రభుత్వం  
ఋణ ఉపశమన పథకము 3వ విడత రూ. 3600 కోట్లు విడుదల, రెండు సంవత్సరాలకు వార్షిక 10% వడ్డీతో





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- Sri N.Sridhar I.A.S., C&MD SCCL honoured with "Asia Pacific Enterprenuer Ship Award - 2018" and "Outstanding Leadership Award - 2018".



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experience of perambulation of Redsanders bearing areas in Cuddapah, Chittoor and Nellore Districts while working in Pre-Investment Survey of Forest Resources. Accordingly I submitted my willingness letter addressed to the Chief Conservator of Forests through him. He pursued the matter and after about a fortnight, I received orders from the Chief Conservator of Forests posting me as Forest Range Officer, Flying Squad Party, Rapur. I have joined as Range Officer, Flying Squad Party, Rapur. This was a turning point in my entire service as I booked plenty of Redsanders cases during my period in both Rapur and Tirupati Flying Squad Parties and my services were recognized by the Department. Further most of my services were utilized by the Department in majority of Flying Squads both as Range Officer and Divisional Forest Officer.

After some time of joining in Rapur Squad, Sri Rajasekhara Reddy called me and informed that he has been entrusted by the Chief Conservator of Forests with intelligence work regarding the Redsanders smuggling and that the Forest Range Officers of Flying Squad Parties stationed at Rapur and Rayachoty will work as per his directions secretly and we are not expected to divulge these facts to anybody. Since then information were being passed on to us through his Range Officer Sri. Ch. Syamasundaram and we were

organizing our raids accordingly.

The '*modus operandi*' was that Mr. Syamasundaram used to go to the villages noted for Redsanders and Sandalwood smuggling in the guise of a purchaser by taking the help of some erstwhile smugglers who stopped their activity. By risking his life, he used to have discussions with the smugglers regarding the purchase of wood from them. He used to give us information about these illicit storage and transport and we used to organize raids and book lot of cases involving Sandal Wood and Redsanders Wood. (This was dealt by me in my Article "SECRET SERVICE" published in '*Vana Premi*' June-2010 issue). The efforts of Sri Rajasekhara Reddy and Sri Ch. Syamasundaram from behind the curtain and my efforts on the stage have yielded good results in the Secret Service operation executed by Sri. Rajasekhara Reddy.

Subsequently also he was Working Plan Officer, Nandyal and I was Range Officer in Gundla Brhmeswaram Range of Nandyal Division and I was in touch with him and he used to come to my Range for inspections.

After sometime he was taken on deputation to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams as Deputy Conservator of Forests. He was the Author of the "Bio-Aesthetic Plan" for implementation in

TTD. When he was promoted as Conservator of Forests, the TTD has upgraded the post of Dy.C.F. to that of Conservator of Forests with a view to continue the utilization of his services. The greenery what we are seeing on Tirumala Hills, in and around Tirupati, the Temple Town, is because of the dedicated foundation laid by him in those days. This foundation laid by him and the superstructure built by his successors in that position in development of greenery have paved the way for TTD to bag the 'Indira Priyadarsini Vriksha Mitra Award' and a host of other awards connected with the development of greenery.

During 1986 while I was working as Sub-Divisional Forest Officer, in Nizamabad Division the Forest Minister, who hails from Nizamabad District, when he came on camp to Nizamabad, told me that the other day the Executive Officer, TTD came to him and requested him to provide the services of a DFO to TTD on deputation and submitted a list of officers whom they are willing to take on deputation and that my name was there in the list. He enquired me whether I am willing to go on deputation to TTD. Immediately I felt that Sri. Rajasekhara Reddy must have given my name to the Executive Officer and said I am willing to work in TTD. After some time my services were placed at the disposal of TTD and when I went to Tirupati and reported to duty

before Sri. Rajasekhara Reddy, he felt very happy and issued posting orders posting me as DFO at Tirumala. This was again a great opportunity given to me in my life to be in the service of Lord Venkateswara. I had the opportunity of coming in contact with the top brass of Forest Department. After my joining in TTD in a month's time Sri Rajasekhara Reddy was repatriated back to the Department as he had completed more than 5 years on deputation to a foreign organization and Sri. V. Janakiram Naidu, another efficient and dedicated Officer was posted in his place.

However I have been in touch with Sri K. Rajasekhara Reddy now and then and continued my relationship with him. I have retired from service in December 2005 and settled at Tirupati. Somewhere in 2006 while I was at Bangalore, I received a call from him saying that he has undertaken the task of preparation of a 'Biodiversity Enrichment Plan-A Spiritual Forestry Plan for TTD' and requested me to assist him in preparation of the same. He told me that the other officer involved in this assignment is Sri P.S. Sankara Reddy, IFS (Retd), Deputy Conservator of Forests (Retd). After returning from Bangalore I joined his Team as a Member and worked with him nearly for about an year. Even at that age of 72 years, he was trekking the hills at Tirumala and was undertaking long

marches in the forests for inspections in a dedicated manner. He used to transcribe the Plan, by summing up all his ideas, pages after pages and giving them to me for getting them computerized. I used to sit with the Computer Operator and get them typed and give them to Sri Rajasekhara Reddy who in turn was again correcting and adding fresh points for final computerization. I and Sri P.S. Sankara Reddy worked together and collected required field data and information from TTD offices and compiled the same. Likewise the "Biodiversity Enrichment Plan-A Spiritual Forestry Plan for TTD" was prepared in 4 Parts in 16 Volumes and was presented to the Executive Officer, TTD during October 2007.

Whenever I go to Hyderabad, now and then I have been meeting him. About a couple of months back also I spoke to him over phone and he affectionately spoke to me and enquired about my welfare.

Apart from this I have heard in the beginning of my service about his achievements which have set records in the history of Forest Department. The other day when Sri. C. Ramakrishna Reddy, DFO (Retd), was talking to me over phone, he recollected about the way Sri. Rajasekhara Reddy as DFO, Flying Squad Division, Tirupati during the years 1966-67, used to organize raids in the interior forest areas by mustering the help of

territorial Range Officers of concerned Ranges along with Sri. P.S. Sankara Reddy who was his Range Officer, and book goat browsing cases wherein a Compounding Fee of more than Rs. 10,000/- was being collected in one day. This is a very huge amount that was realized as C' fees in those days and which has set a record. These type of raids were organized by him many a time. He also mentioned that Sri. Rajasekhara Reddy was the officer who has set the classification standards for various qualities in Redsanders logs such as A-class, B-Class, C-Class and so on which are being followed even now. He was also the author of Plan for the Departmental Extraction of Redsanders wood in Rajampet Division during 1976-78 which was implemented by Sri. C. Ramakrishna Reddy. He was very much liked by the officers of those days like Sri. P.S. Rao, Sri T.V. Subba Rao, Sri A. Ramakrishna, Sri Munawar Hussain and others. He was being kept in Additional charges of important Divisions whenever they were falling suddenly vacant. However he always preferred to work on special duties only and was not inclined to work in any territorial divisions. I remember that when he was holding the additional charge of Nandyal Division during 1973-74 he had disposed off thousands of pending old offences by organizing a special drive.

While I was with him in Pre-Investment Survey of Forest Resources, during 1974 he took me and my colleague Sri. S. Md. Rahmathullah to Madras and we were there for about a week collecting the Export Particulars of Redsanders wood from Madras Port to Foreign Countries from Central Excise and Customs Department which he submitted to the Forest Department.

The following paragraphs written by him in the 'Preface' of Part-III of the "Biodiversity Enrichment Plan-A Spiritual Forestry Plan for TTD" submitted to TTD goes to show as to how he preferred to be a simple living gentleman.

"At the instance of TTD, on behalf of the Government Forest Department, I prepared a Bio esthetic Plan during 1975-1976 and presented it to the then Chairman and the Executive Officer, TTD. This was widely appreciated by the Chairman and the Executive Officer, as well as by all the senior officers in the Forest Department. The Forest Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, addressed the Government to grant an award to the Author of the Plan, which was later withdrawn, at the instance of the Author as he did not want any

reward. The Chairman, TTD had written a letter, highly appreciating the Plan and said that he would send the Plan to the Vice-Chancellor, S.V. University for awarding a Ph.D. Degree. But the Author declined the proposal by informing the Chairman that he had written the Plan with great devotion and not for any reward or degree." The greatest quality in him was his simple living, affectionate treatment towards the staff, sound knowledge in Forestry, drafting of his ideas in a systematic manner, and always a laughing face. He was a great stalwart in Forest Department and is one of the Legends the Department has ever produced for the betterment of Forestry. Whoever came in contact with him will never forget him. Losing him is a great loss to his family, all his friends, colleagues who worked with him and to the Forests and the Forest Department as a whole. I pray God to Rest His Noble Soul in Peace in His Eternal Abode.

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***"May the New Year bring you courage to break your resolutions early? My own plan is to swear off every kind of virtue, so that I triumph even when I fall!"***

***(Aleister Crowley, Moonchild)***

# FOREST RIGHTS ACT – NO END IN SIGHT

By  
**M. Padmanabha Reddy**

Preamble of Forest Rights Act (FRA) states “The forest rights on ancestral lands and their habitat were not adequately recognized in the consolidation of state forests during the colonial period as well as in independent India resulting in historical injustice to the forest dwelling S.T.s and other traditional forest dwellers. To recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land by S.T.s and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded have to be addressed, therefore Parliament of India enacted, “The schedule Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (recognition of forest rights) Act 2006”.

To operationalize the Act, rules were framed and procedure was laid down. Claims have to be filed before Grama Sabha and after verification the Grama Sabha recommends to sub-division level committee which inturn scrutinizes and recommends to District level Committee who approves the claims.

As per Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Government of India, the position of implementation of F.R.A in 20 major states as on 30-9-2018 is as follows.

1. Total claims received - 42,19,741
2. Claims agreed and titles distributed - 18,89,835
3. Extent of forest land for which little deeds distributed (Area in Ac.) - 1,78,48,733

## % of titles distributed over number of claims received in major 20 states.

Sl.No.	State	No. of claims received up to 30-9-2018	No. of Titles distributed up to 30-9-2018	No. of claims Rejected	% of Titles distributed over number of claims received
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1,81,511	97,491	74,478	53.71%
2.	Assam	1,55,011	58,802	0	37.93%
3.	Bihar	8,022	121	4,215	1.51%
4.	Chhattisgarh	8,87,665	4,16,359	4,62,403	46.90%

5.	Goa	10,136	25	47	0.25%
6.	Gujarat	1,90,056	87,215	64,769	45.89%
7.	Himachal Pradesh	2,241	136	0	6.07%
8.	Jharkhand	1,09,030	60,143	29,521	55.16%
9.	Karnataka	2,81,349	16,073	1,80,956	5.71%
10.	Kerala	37,535	24,599	7,889	65.54%
11.	Madhya Pradesh	6,17,935	2,51,634	3,61,427	40.72%
12.	Maharashtra	3,72,459	1,21,125	2,28,116	32.52%
13.	Odisha	6,26,127	4,28,851	1,46,566	68.49%
14.	Rajasthan	75,855	38,110	36,299	50.24%
15.	Tamilnadu	35,105	4,022	8,861	11.46%
16.	Telangana	1,86,679	94,360	83,757	50.55%
17.	Tripura	2,00,635	1,27,084	68,610	63.34%
18.	Uttar Pradesh	93,644	18,555	74,945	19.81%
19.	Uttarakhand	6,665	0	4,899	0.00%
20.	West Bengal	1,42,081	45,130	96,587	31.76%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42,19,741</b>	<b>18,89,835</b>	<b>19,34,345</b>	<b>44.79%</b>

From the above table it is clear that 44.79% of claims only accepted and balance rejected. Now taking advantage of elections the people are pressing for reconsideration of rejected claims if possible by amending rules.

In case of Telangana the position is as follows

1. Total claims received - 1,86,679
2. Claims agreed and titles distributed - 94,360
3. Extent of forest land for which title deeds distributed (Area in Ac) -7,54,339

Inspite of distributing such huge chunk of forest land (178 lakh Ac.) in the country as a whole, the land hunger has not subsided. People whose claims were rejected and some fresh encroachments after cutoff date of 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2005 are bringing pressure on state governments to consider their claims and provided titles.

In recently concluded Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana all the political parties stated that they will

regularize PODU cultivation in forest areas and provide title deeds. In Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in many districts that went to poll in November / December, regularizing encroachments is deciding the fate of candidates. Seeing the mood and demand from people the political parties are assuring the people that, if voted to power, they will provide title deeds to all the encroachments in forests (resolving forest land ownership disputes).

In the state of Telangana during election campaign the main parties are assuring the people especially in forested districts that they will regularize all Podu and Paramboke lands cultivation. As a matter of fact couple of months back the Hon'able minister for forests Government of Telangana during video conference with field level forest officials has directed them not to take action on encroachers in forest lands.

About 10 years back Guthi Koyas from Chattisghad and Madhya Pradesh entered into the forest areas of Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal, and cleared forest areas, erected huts and cultivating in the encroached forest lands. Attempts made by Forest department to evict them did not succeed. The matter went up to

High Court, the court in its interim order dated 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 directed the state government and Forest department not to demolish their huts and further directed to provide basic amenities to them.

The way the politicians are promising the people regarding title deeds to freshly encroached forest lands in various states, it appears more forest area will be distributed to the occupier (encroachers). The warning signals are loud and clear. To prevent regularization of fresh encroachments legal action may the thought off simultaneously large scale tree planting through Agro forestry to be initiated? When we can't increase or protect the existing forest land we can go for increasing the number of trees. Large scale tree planting outside R.F. may, to some extent, compensate for the loss of forests, - of course man made forests cannot be a substitute to natural forests. In this regard the programme of "Haritha Haram being implemented in the state of Telangana is a model to be emulated.

**References:** Government of India, Ministry of Tribal Welfare, News items in The Hindu on elections in M.P. and Chhattisgarh

*"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every New Year find you a better man."*

(Benjamin Franklin)

# BAMBOO IS A VALUABLE TOOL TO CONTROL CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Bamboo is a fast-growing grass plant that can provide valuable opportunities for the green development of developing countries.

Climate experts and policymakers came together to advocate for promoting bamboo at the UN Climate talks.

Bamboo is a fast-growing grass plant, as a solution to climate change, environmental degradation and poverty.

## **How bamboo is helpful for the climate**

In a study conducted by the Nature Conservancy and the International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR), experts said natural resources can deliver over 35 per cent of cost-effective carbon dioxide mitigation that is needed by 2030.

According to INBAR, the bamboo's potential to mitigate climate change is realised at a high level in China.

Bamboo can be used for making heavy-duty materials, such as pipes and scaffolding, as well as used in housing purposes, said experts, which included the UNFCCC director of policy and

programme.

Bamboo plants store more carbon as compared to certain species of trees and provide a year-round, climate-resilient form of income for millions of people around the world.

The policymakers and private sector representatives said bamboo is commonly grown in Africa, Asia and South America and can be an important ingredient for 'green' infrastructure drives.

Xie Zhenhua, China's Special Representative on Climate Change, said the bamboo plant can provide valuable opportunities for the green development of developing countries.

## **What is INBAR?**

INBAR is an independent intergovernmental organisation to develop and promote innovative solutions to poverty and environmental sustainability using bamboo and rattan.

The US-based Nature Conservancy is a charitable environmental organisation that aims at conserving the lands and waters on

which all life depends.

### **How has the bamboo helped in China's environmental and climatic changes?**

The bamboo plant is becoming a part of China's new Emissions Trading Scheme, the largest in the world, as a way for polluting companies to offset emissions.

With the bamboo sector valued at over USD 30 billion, China is the leader in bamboo innovations in the world.

Jorge Chediek, the director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, said it is inspiring how China uses bamboo as a carbon sink and to create a wide range of low-carbon products.

He said the bamboo's ability to store carbon means they have a "huge potential" for green emissions-intensive infrastructure projects.

India is focusing on increasing bamboo cultivation in the country and promoting growing bamboo.

To grow the bamboo sector, an area-based, regionally differentiated strategy has been prepared to increase the area under bamboo cultivation and marketing.

These bamboo-based products act as a sustainable, low-carbon alternative to timber, PVC, aluminium and concrete.

**(SOURCE INTERNET)**

*“What do you need in the New Year? You need a dream; your dream needs an action; and your action needs right thinking! Without right thinking, you can have only unrealized dreams!”*

**(Mehmet Murat ildan)**

*“As long as I am breathing, in my eyes, I am just beginning.”*

**(Criss Jami, Killosophy)**

# WHY DO PLANES HAVE TO FLY SO HIGH?

It would be reasonable to wager that the majority of air passengers have never questioned why the traditional cruising altitude is 35,000 feet.

The number has entered household lexicon as the catch-all height at which we all fly from A to B. But do all planes soar this high – and if so why? The higher the better

One of the central reasons behind aircraft altitude is that, as the air gets thinner with every foot climbed, planes can travel more easily and therefore move faster and burn less fuel, saving airlines (and in theory, you) money.

The “sweet spot” of flying is regarded as between 35,000 and 42,000 feet – too high and the oxygen becomes too sparse to fuel the engines, too low and the air resistance is greater. This optimum height is linked to the usual weight of a commercial jet – that is, heavier planes fly lower, and lighter higher.

“Each individual aircraft has an optimum altitude (for minimum cost or minimum fuel burn) which will be based on its individual weight,” explains Peter Terry, a commercial airline pilot of 30 years. “Concorde flew at much higher altitudes – up to 60,000 feet – where there were no other aircraft and so were able to cruise climb [that is keep

climbing].”

Doug Morris, a captain with Air Canada, explains that the general rule is the higher the better “because the thinner air imposes less drag”.

“There is a trade-off between fuel efficiency and power,” he said.

How’s the weather up there?

Flying thousands of feet above the ground also means aircraft avoid much of the bad weather people on the ground are subjected to. We are all familiar with the feeling when you see nothing but bluebird skies from your window seat, only to descend into your destination airport to dreary drizzle.

The troposphere – that is the atmospheric layer closest to the ground – is home to most of the world’s weather phenomenons. Usually measured up to 36,000 feet, this is where clouds are most likely, as well as heavy rains and high winds. Aircraft prefer life in the stratosphere, which means less turbulence.

## **Avoiding heavy traffic**

Flying so high also means that aircraft are able to avoid other airborne traffic, such as, light aircraft or helicopters, which fly lower, as well as insects and birds.

Light aircraft do not have pressurized cabins,

therefore stick below 10,000 feet. Much higher and the pilot is required to don an oxygen mask to stay conscious.

### **In the event of an emergency**

Should something bad happen to an aircraft at 35,000 feet, like losing power in its engines, the pilot has much longer to deal with the situation than if the aircraft was just at 10,000 feet. This may sound silly, but remember that planes can still land safely even if both engines fail – so having more time to get your ducks in a row before attempting such a maneuver could save lives.

### **How cold is it up there?**

The higher you get, the colder it gets, up until 40,000 feet. If the temperature at ground level was 20C, at 40,000 feet it would be -57C. At 35,000 feet the air temperature is about -54C.

### **Is there a minimum flying height?**

Has anyone seen comedian Eddie Izzard's Glorious, where he does a sketch about taking a flight in a very small aircraft with only a handful of passengers? He jokes that the pilot's announcement is thus: "Welcome to Flight... One, from here to there. We'll be flying at a height of ten feet, going up to 12 and a half feet if we see anything big."

Well, why not fly at the minimum height required to clear any obstacles? Because there are laws, that govern just that.

Known as the lowest safe altitude (LSALT), the

value has been applied by aviation bodies around the world, including the British Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the US Federal Aviation Administration.

Minimum altitude rules obviously do not apply for landing Credit: getty

"This applies much more to light aircraft than airliners, but it is illegal to fly below 1,000 feet when over a built-up area, or 500 feet over any person, vehicle or structure," said Richard Taylor of the CAA. "That is as much for environmental reasons such as noise as it is for safety."

Aircraft must not fly lower than 1,000 feet above the "highest fixed object" beneath them and pilots must make sure that they are high enough to clear the congested area below in the event of engine failure. Obviously, these don't apply to take-off and landing when aircraft are in controlled flight paths.

### **What about a maximum?**

There is no maximum altitude for flying, however, engines will struggle as the oxygen levels fall, and communication with the ground will become a greater challenge.

The record altitude for a jet plane is 123,520 feet, set by Alexandr Fedotov in 1997 flying a military Soviet MiG-25M.

Incidentally, the record for a paper airplane is 89,590 feet, which did not fly itself to that height but was released by a helium balloon.

## CONVOCATION OF 2<sup>ND</sup> BATCH FOREST SECTION OFFICER TRAINING PROGRAM- 2018

By  
**V. Anjaneyulu**

As per Telangana state gazette notification dated 31st December 2016 and Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (HoFF), Telangana, Hyderabad office R.C.No. 14446/2017/EE2, dated 27th August 2018, the second batch Forest Section Officers (promotee) 3 months orientation training program commenced from 24th September 2018 and the training program is going to be completed on 22nd December 2018. In this second batch orientation training program 34 numbers of Forest Section Officers have completed their training program successfully from Telangana state forest Academy on 22nd December 2018. This Program is Honoured By Sri M. Prudhvi Raju, IFS, PCCF (Prod.) as a chief guest, Sri. P. Raghuvier, IFS, PCCF(IT & P)/I/c Director TSFA, , Guest of honour Sri, Swargam Srinivas IFS, APCCF(P&Vig) and Retired Officers Sri. M. Padmanabha Reddy, IFS, Dr. G.Narsaiah, IFS have attended.

Out of 34 Forest Section Officers 2 are female and 32 are male were present. In which the youngest will be of 27 years and oldest will be of 56 years. On verification of their educational qualifications 4 postgraduates, 7 graduates, 7 intermediate and 16 nos 10th class officers were present. As per the G.O. Ms. No. 5, dated 27<sup>th</sup>

January, 2012 prescribed syllabus in forest management and allied areas of 15 subjects have been taught and mainly consisting of General Silviculture, Social Forestry and extension education, Geology and soil science, Forest law, Accounts and office procedure, Working plan, Forest engineering, Forest protection, Forest mensuration, Forest survey and drawing, NTFP management including bamboo, Wildlife management, Information technology, Forest research, and Plantation Forestry including nursery and ANR.

Apart from the training given in the above subjects, they have been introduced to the modern topics. Due to which the trainees are mainly gained Skill, Quality, Communication skills and self confidence.

**SEMINARS:** Each trainee has been exposed to various topics and accordingly presented seminar in their respective topic.

**RECONSIDERATION OF SYLLABUS:** Before going to start 3 months orientation training program a workshop has been conducted to know their field experience and accordingly given more importance to the topics not known to them in each subject.

**WEEKLY FEEDBACK:** By encouraging weekly feedback given by each trainee, to the extent possible brought changes in the training curriculum.

Apart from the above they have been exposed to the following topics to improve the skill.

- Personality development sessions, motivation towards the work, ethics in the department and organization skills etc.
- GPS survey and ARC VIEW and map preparation.
- Computer Training at VNR Vignan Jyothi Engineering. College on mapping.
- Compass survey and plotting.
- **Regular PT and games:** Special care has been taken to improve the physical fitness of trainees and they have been exposed to various activities to improve the skill like marathon race, yoga and games.
- Cultural Activities action plan exercise

During this orientation training program two study tours have been conducted one in North Telangana and second one in some parts of Andhra Pradesh state. All trainees have attended these tour programs from 20.10.2018 to 26.10.2018 and from 24.11.2018 to 1.12.2018 and visited various places in two states with a practical exposure to various subjects. As a part of study tours they have been exposed to natural forests and its importance and management, understanding various activities in management. Apart from the above, trainees have given exposure to how eco tourism development

activities in natural forests and wildlife protected areas were developed and implemented. Further given exposure to activities like raising of avenue plantations, urban forestry and raising of nurseries under the flagship program of Telangana State i.e., Telangana Ku Harithahaaram. During the study tours visited Kawal Tiger Reserve, Eturunagaram wildlife sanctuary, Gandharivanam in Mancherial, Amrabad Tiger Reserve, NSTR, Regeneration of Red sander areas and protecting strategies, BIOTRIM and Sandalwood plantation etc.

In the final examinations out of 34 trainees 15 trainees got Honours and 19 trainees got higher standard certificate. Smt. J. Padma FSO trainee scored 947 marks out of 1045 with 90.62% with first position and stood first position in 10 subjects. Further she stood best all rounder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> batch FSO (P) orientation training program. To prove their physical fitness conducted marathon race and Sri. V. Neelamaiah, FSO stood first position in the event.

During this training period in the academy all Forest Section Officer trainees have given knowledge in various subjects, technical exposure and physical fitness to perform their day to day regular duties. (The author is Deputy Director/ Course Director, Telangana State Forest Academy Hyderabad.)

(Pls. see Photograph on page no: 25)

*Birthday Greetings*  
*We wish the following born on the dates mentioned*  
*" A very Happy Birth Day "*

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of the member</b>	<b>D.O.B.</b>			
	Sarva Sri		7.	Dr.A.K.Jain	05-02-1959
			8.	I.Prakash	09-01-1977
1.	D.V.Rao	09-01-1931	9.	P.Ashok Rao	10-01-1961
2.	R.D.Reddy	14-01-1938	10.	V.Vajra Reddy	10-01-1967
3.	K.Mohan Reddy	16-01-1934	11.	V.Srihari Gopal	14-01-1966
4.	P.Bhaskar Reddy	21-01-1953	12.	R.Kondal Rao	15-01-1970
5.	R.G.Kalaghatgi	20-01-1957	13.	Ms.D.Samhita	21-01-1988
6.	Dr.Manoranjan Bhanja	22-01-1958	14.	M.Nagarjuna Reddy	30-01-1965
7.	H.K.Desai	23-01-1936	15.	B.Venkateswara Rao	31-01-1968
8.	V.P.Adinarayana	28-01-1940	16.	Y. Narasimha Rao	03-02-1962
9.	P.Gracious	24-01-1949	17.	K.Mohan Rao	04-02-1963
10.	Dr.C.N.Rao	26-01-1938	18.	S.Narender Reddy	05-02-1960
11.	T.Narayana Swamy	30-01-1933			
12.	P.Upender Reddy	05-02-1942			

**Secretary**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of Serving Officers</b>	<b>D.O.B.</b>
1.	M.Prutviraj	9-1-1960
2.	B.Sunder	20-1-1970
3.	S. Shantharam	20-01-1980
4.	Dr.K.Tirupathaiiah	23-01-1959
5.	Dr.P.Subbaragavaiah	25-01-1961
6.	Rameshkumar Suman	03-02-1966



## NEWS AND NOTES

### **Adult Male Rhino Found Dead in Assam's Kaziranga National Park, Poachers Escape with Horn:**

-The tourist group spotted the carcass at the Bhulukajan forest camp area under the Bagori range. The carcass of an adult male rhino with its horn removed was spotted by a tourist group at Kaziranga National Park (KNP) in upper Assam on Saturday, a senior forest department official said. The tourist group spotted the carcass at the Bhulukajan forest camp area under the Bagori range in KNP, he said. Following the recovery, the number of rhinos killed this year rose to six. According to Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of KNP, Rohoni Ballav Saikia, the visitors spotted the carcass of the pachyderm on the tourist route to Bagori range, while they were visiting the World Heritage Site in a jeep safari.

Gunshots were heard on Friday night but were thought to be sounds of firecrackers from a marriage nearby, Saikia said. Earlier on May 11, a bullet-riddled carcass of another adult male rhino with its horn missing was recovered from Chirakhwa anti-poaching camp area near the banks of the Brahmaputra river.

On March 3, a female adult rhino was killed outside the KNP area at Lohore Chapori in the state's Majuli district. Its horn was also taken away by poachers.

Another rhino was killed at Polokata Tapu near

Sitamari under the jurisdiction of Lahorijan forest camp on the midnight of February 11. The first case of rhino poaching happened at Daflang camp area of KNP's Bagori Range on January 14, but the poachers could not take away its horn.

### **Leopard carcass with paws cut off found in**

**Maharashtra forest:** - A postmortem report revealed that the body had two bullet wounds. The carcass of a leopard with its paws cut off was found yesterday in Gothangaon forest area in the Gondia district of Maharashtra. A postmortem report revealed that the body had two bullet wounds.

The perpetrators are yet to be identified.

It comes days after a Buddhist monk was killed by a leopard while he was meditating under a tree in Ramdegi forest in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district. The deceased had been meditating at the spot for the past month, an official said.

The highest number of leopard deaths this year were recorded in Uttarakhand with the number standing at 93 followed by Maharashtra with 90 deaths.

India is home to between 12,000 and 14,000 leopards, according to a study commissioned by the Wildlife Institute of India in 2016.

According to Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), around 460 leopard deaths have been recorded across the country this year. It is the

highest number from the last four years.

Last month, a tigress named Avni was shot dead in the Ralegaon forests of Yavatmal district in eastern Maharashtra. There was a lot of controversy and allegations of violation of norms during her killing.

As per the Supreme Court directives, the forest department and officials were required to first tranquilise and trap her, but during the operation, she allegedly attacked the stalking team which shot her.

Earlier in December, Minister of State for Environment Mahesh Sharma revealed to the Lok Sabha that nearly 50 tigers have died this year in India. While 13 tiger deaths were recorded in Madhya Pradesh, 10 tiger deaths were recorded in Karnataka till December 12, 2018.

**The Great Barrier Reef Has a Secret Weapon against Climate Change:**

- As climate change continues to take its toll on the planet, natural wonders like Australia's Great Barrier Reef face greater threats by the day. But it turns out that the world's biggest single structure made by living organisms might have a secret weapon.

A new Australian study highlights what could be an extremely helpful tool in the growing fight against climate change: a bed of seagrass spanning more than 31,000 square kilometers, making it roughly the size of Switzerland. The largest bed of seagrass in the world lies near Lizard Island, a granite island amidst the reef.

Seagrass has a remarkable ability to absorb carbon, the main cause of warming climate

around the globe. In general, seagrass meadows hold around 15 percent of the ocean's carbon. According to the study, the meadow can hold 27.4 million tons in total.

Seagrass grows in various depths: in shallow or mid-depth water like estuaries, coasts and reefs, or deep-water environments. Looking at 19 sites from each of the three depths, scientists hoped to determine if deepwater seagrass could hold as much carbon as its shallow or mid-depth companions.

Scientists had suspected that deep-water seagrass, known scientifically as *Halophila decipiens*, wouldn't hold as much carbon as its siblings. This made the results "somewhat surprising," according to the study. There was no significant difference between what the seagrass could absorb no matter its level. "This is a really good news story," Deakin University professor Peter Macreadie, a co-author of the story, speaking to Australian news source SBS:

"Whenever we find eco-systems that are drawing down lots of carbon, like the seagrass meadows, it is something to be really pleased about because what we're doing is we're finding eco-systems that have the ability to retire carbon from the carbon cycle, take it out of the atmospheric pool, take it out of the pool that is causing climate change, and retire it once again from the carbon cycle."

This seagrass is playing a vital role in absorbing carbon and slowing global warming. But, like the Amazon rainforest, the world's largest

seagrass bed is in danger. While seagrass is an amazing carbon sink, it's not immune to the dangers of climate change as well as standard issue pollution. Globally, seagrass beds are "one of the most rapidly declining ecosystems on Earth," according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

"In Australia, we know we're losing these ecosystems at one to three percent per year," Professor Macreadie says to SBS. "And that lost carbon sink capacity-and the carbon that gets released when you destroy them-we estimate that is the equivalent of having an extra 10 million cars on the roads in Australia."

**Scientists who revealed cause of 'great dying' mass extinction call for action to halt climate change** :- The scientists who revealed what caused the "greatest crisis in the history of life of Earth," have called for immediate action to halt the further warming of the planet through human caused climate change.

Oceanographers based in Seattle said the largest mass extinction in the planet's history - what has been termed the "great dying" - was caused by extreme global warming that saw ocean temperatures rise by as much as 10C around 252m years ago.

The scientists said this resulted in the seas losing as much as 80 per cent of their oxygen. As much as 95 per cent of marine species, and 70 per cent of life on the land, perished as a result.

In an interview with *The Independent* in their offices at the University of Washington, associate

professor Curtis Deutsch and co-author Justin Penn, said the reaction to their paper in *Science* had been a mixture of excitement and fear - excitement at the discovery and fear of the prescient dangers if people did not act.

"I think this work has identified the leading factor in what led to the largest crisis in the history of life on earth," said Mr Penn, a doctoral student, asked how he hoped policy makers would respond to the discovery.

"The hopeful message is that despite doing do, it also identifies the solution to that problem - which is the emission of CO2 into the atmosphere. So my hope is we decide to do something about it."

The scientists based their discovery about the Permian period on computer modelling and calculations that took months. They also made use of information provided by chemical changes in the fossils of eel-like creatures more than 250m years old to show the extent of temperature change.

It had previously been known the mass extinction was triggered after a succession of huge volcanic eruptions in what is now Siberia. While loss of life was linked to a surge in the release of greenhouse gases, it was not previously understood what made the oceans so inimical to life.

"This is the first time that we have made a mechanistic prediction about what caused the extinction that can be directly tested with the fossil record, which then allows us to make

predictions about the causes of extinction in the future," Mr Penn wrote of their discovery, pointing out that the situation they examined 250m years ago, with the presence of increased levels of greenhouse gases and warming oceans, was similar to today.

"Under a business-as-usual emissions scenarios, by 2100 warming in the upper ocean will have approached 20 percent of warming in the late Permian, and by the year 2300 it will reach between 35 and 50 per cent. This study highlights the potential for a mass extinction arising from a similar mechanism under anthropogenic climate change."

The scientists' discovery comes as a succession of experts raise warning sounds about the imminent threat presented by climate change, something Donald Trump has called a hoax.

Earlier this year, the UN's climate science body, the the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), said there was barely a dozen years to make massive changes to global energy infrastructure to limit global warming to moderate levels. "There is no documented historic precedent," the IPCC said.

A report by the US government issued last month said climate change is already having devastating effects, and could cost the economy 10 per cent of GDP by the end of the century. Mr. Trump, who withdrew the US from the Paris Accord in one of his first actions as president, said he did not believe the report's conclusions. Mr Deutsch said the similarities between today

and the period when the mass extinction took place were striking, but said society could decide how to act.

"The response to marine ecosystems to climate change can only be countered by slowing the warming," he said.

"There is no way we can really pull the heat out the ocean or put the oxygen back in...Once that genie is out of the bottle, that's it."

### **Three Endangered Asiatic Lions Die After Being Run Over by Train in Gujarat's Gir Forest:**

- Three lions died after they were hit by a goods train near the Gir forest in Gujarat's Amreli district, around 250 kms from Adhmedabad, an official said. The incident occurred near Borala village in Savarkundla taluka when a pride of six lions was walking along the railway track passing from the village, which is located near the Gir Forest. "A goods train, headed to Pipavav port from Botad, hit three of six lions of the pride during midnight, which led to the death of two lions and a lioness", Chief Conservator of Forests, Junagadh wildlife circle, D T Vasavada told PTI. He said an enquiry has been ordered by the Gujarat Forest department.

"We inquire if the train was moving at a high speed which could have led to this unfortunate incident. We will also probe whether the forest staff or the lion trackers were at fault in discharging their duties. Stringent action will be taken against the guilty," he added.

Including this incident the number of lions,

including cubs, having died in and around the Gir forest since September this year, has reached 35. While some of them have died of natural cause, many others fell prey to Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) and Protozoa infections and during territorial fights. Gir Forest National Park is the only abode of the endangered Asiatic lions.

**One of Tigress Avni's Cubs Captured; Sent For 'Rehabilitation'** : - One of the two cubs of Yavatmal tigress 'T1' alias 'Avni', who was shot dead last month, was captured on Saturday, 22 December, a senior Maharashtra forest officer said.

A joint team of officials from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh forest departments managed to tranquilize and capture the female cub in the Anji forest in Yavatmal district in east Maharashtra, in the afternoon.

"The one-year-old female cub was tranquilized and caught at compartment no 665 in the Anji forest in Ralegaon at around 4 pm," said Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Wildlife East, Nagpur, Sunil Limye.

The *Indian Express* reports that the other cub of the tigress was a few feet apart when the darting was done.

"The Madhya Pradesh special team, which was called for the operation, carried out the operation at around 3 pm on Saturday. She was tranquilized after being cornered with the help of four elephants. She was later revived and has been sent to Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) as per the

rehabilitation plan. The team will resume the operation to catch the other cub, the male, tomorrow." - Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) A K Mishra to *The Indian Express* A team of around 100 people, including six veterinary officers from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, have been tracking the cub since 2 November when T1, which was responsible for deaths of some people in the region, was shot dead by a sharp shooter who was part of a team of Forest officials.

"The cub will now be sent to Pench and will be kept in an enclosure which is almost like an open forest. The cub is physically fit. A committee will be formed to decide about its release in wild," Limye said.

**Indonesia hunts for survivors as volcano tsunami toll nears 400** : - LABUAN, Indonesia (Reuters) - Indonesian military and rescue teams fanned out across a stretch of coastline on Monday, hoping to find survivors of a tsunami triggered by a landslide from a volcano that killed at least 373 people.

Thick clouds of ash spewed from Anak Krakatau, a volcanic island where a crater collapse at high tide late on Saturday set off waves that smashed into coastal areas on both sides of the Sunda Strait between the islands of Sumatra and Java. Rescuers used heavy machinery and bare hands to dig bodies out of mud and wreckage along a 100 km (60 mile) stretch of Java's west coast. More than 1,400 people were injured, and about 12,000 residents had to move to higher

ground, with a high-tide warning extended to Wednesday.

The vast archipelago, which sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire”, has suffered its worst annual death toll from disasters in more than a decade.

Earthquakes flattened parts of the island of Lombok in July and August, and a double quake-and-tsunami killed more than 2,000 people on a remote part of Sulawesi island in September. “At least 373 people have died, while 128 people are currently missing,” Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, a spokesman for the disaster mitigation agency, said on Monday evening.

(For graphic on Indonesia tsunami disaster zone, click <https://tmsnrt.rs/2RdjsMd>)

Saturday’s tsunami destroyed more than 700 buildings, from small shops and houses to villas and hotels. It took just 24 minutes after the landslide for waves to hit land, and there was no early warning for those living on the coast.

**“EVERYTHING IS DESTROYED”** Vehicles were crushed by waves that lifted chunks of metal, felled trees, wooden beams and household items and deposited them on roads and rice fields. Nurjana, 20, ran uphill after the tsunami hit. Her beachside snack stall was washed away. “I opened the door straight away and saved myself.

I jumped over the wall,” she said. “Everything is destroyed.” Out in the strait, Anak Krakatau (Child of Krakatau) was still erupting on Sunday night, belching white smoke and ash into the sky.

The meteorology agency said that an area of about 64 hectares, or 90 soccer pitches, of the volcanic island had collapsed into the sea.

In 1883, the volcano then known as Krakatoa erupted in one of the biggest blasts in recorded history, killing more than 36,000 people in a series of tsunami, and lowering the global surface temperature by one degree Celsius with its ash. Anak Krakatau is the island that emerged from the area in 1927, and has been growing ever since.

The high waves isolated hundreds of people on Sebesi island, about 12 km from the volcano.

“We are completely paralyzed,” Syamsiar, a village secretary on the island, told Metro TV, calling for food and medicine.

President Joko Widodo, who is running for re-election in April, told disaster agencies to install early warning systems, but experts said that, unlike with tsunami caused by earthquakes, little could have been done to alert people that waves were coming.

***“For a change, don’t add new things in your life as a new year’s resolution. Instead, do more of what’s already working for you and stop doing things that are time-waste.”***

**(Salil Jha)**

## LEGAL NOTES

### **Dr. Aruna Basu Sarcar vs. State of Tamil Nadu & another AND State of Tami Nadu & another vs. Dr. Aruna Basu Sarcar & another**

Dr. Aruna Basu Sarcar, the first woman IFS officer of 1983 batch borne on Tamil Nadu cadre, suffered mental torment in the later years of her service driving her to seek justice from courts. The first of such event was reported in these columns (vide Vana Premi of November 2018). The other one reported hereunder is another instance where she had to put up a legal battle over a period of two years between 2014 and 2016 seeking remedy against irregular orders of the Government. She said in an interview with The Hindu that, "subordinate officials took me for granted. But I proved them wrong with my tough attitude." She feels that women can excel in any tough job. The Hindustan Times dated 26.04.2016 reported that Dr. Aruna Basu Sarcar is known for her crackdown on smuggling of sandalwood and red sanders. For the tough stand she had taken, she was transferred from the post of Addl. PCCF (Research) and posted a Dean in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Feeling for the unfair treatment meted out to her, Dr. Aruna filed O.A.No. 1306 /2015 in the

Central Administrative Tribunal, Chennai. The Tribunal while allowing the Application directed the State to give appropriate posting to the applicant and advised the applicant to join at the TNAU. Aggrieved by the order of the Tribunal she approached the Madras High Court and filed W.P. No. 6956 /2016. The Government also felt unhappy with the order of the Tribunal and filed W.P. No 11920 /2016. The matter was heard and disposed of by a common order by Division Bench comprising The Hon'ble Justice Hulumadi G. Ramesh and The Hon'ble Justice K. Ravichandra Baabu.

The prayer of the petitioner/applicant was to issue a writ of certiorified mandamus for grant of relief against the order of the Tribunal dated 06.01.2016 and quash the same as the last limb of prayer which was not granted by the Tribunal to treat the period of petitioner's leave after exhaustion of medical leave as compulsory wait until her posting as Adl.PCCF.

The prayer of the respondents/petitioners was to issue writ of mandamus and quash the order

of the Tribunal contending that the posting of the petitioner as Dean (Forestry) at the TNAU was in the capacity of Adl.PCCF.

It was argued on behalf of Dr. Aruna that the post of Dean (Forestry) at the TNAU is inferior to that of Adl.PCCF and therefore the Tribunal directed the Government to give her posting appropriate to her cadre. It was submitted earlier, that the post was held by Deputy Conservator of Forests, Conservator of Forests who were promoted as Adll. PCCF later. On the other hand, the state Government contended that the petitioner was given pay protection and instead of reporting to duty, the petitioner remained absent from duty on some or other ground including medical ground. It was submitted that the respondents committed no error in deputing the petitioner as Dean (Forestry). It was held by the High Court that the Tribunal has rightly passed the order impugned in the writ Petitions and stated further that the post of Dean (Forestry) is not equivalent

to Adll. PCCF

Insofar as pay protection is concerned, it would not satisfy in any way the higher post already held by the petitioner. It was held further that there is no illegality or discrepancy in the order of the Tribunal. The respondents were directed to extend pay protection along with appropriate posting in the cadre of the petitioner. If the petitioner had applied for leave it could be treated as earned leave if it is in her credit or else to treat the period without pay.

In the result writ petition filed by the State Government is dismissed. The writ petition filed by Dr. Aruna is allowed and the order of the Tribunal is confirmed. The respondents are directed to take earnest steps to extend the posting to the petition already given in the cadre of Adll. P. C.CF., within two months from the date of receipt of copy of the order. The order of the High Court was pronounced on 11.04.2016.

Source: Internet -K.B.R



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Date of Publication: 26-12-2018 Total pages 52 Date of Dispatch : 4th or 5th of every month