



Government of India
Ministry of Environment and Forests
(Wildlife Division)

Paryavaran Bhawan
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road
New Delhi-110003

F.No.6-43/2007 WL (pt)(Vol.16)

Dated: 28th November, 2011

To
All Members,
Standing Committee of NBWL.

Sub: 24th Meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL.

Sir/Madam,

Kindly refer to this Ministry's letter of even no. dated 23rd November 2011 regarding 24th Meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife scheduled to be held on 13th December 2011 at 2:00 P.M in Room No. 403, Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi under the chairpersonship of Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests.

In this context, I am forwarding herewith a copy of the agenda notes for the meeting. You are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the meeting.

Yours faithfully,


(Prakriti Srivastava)

Deputy Inspector General (WL)
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Encl: As above

Distribution:

1. Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEF.
2. Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
3. Dr Asad Rahmani, Director, BNHS, Mumbai-23.
4. Shri Kishor Rithe, President, Satpuda Foundation, Amravati-444607.
5. Executive Director, Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore - 570 002.
6. Shri Brijendra Singh, 28, Sunder Nagar, New Delhi-110003.
7. Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh, 'Krishnasaar', No.5 Tiger Lane, W6 C Lane, Sainik Farms, New Delhi-110062.
8. Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda, "Suryodaya", 310 Gom Defence Colony, Vaishali Marg, Jaipur-302021.
9. Dr A.J.T. Johnsingh, 101 Magnolia, Esteem Gardenia, Sahakara Nagar, Bangalore-560092.
10. Ms. Prerna Bindra, Environment Journalist, 2/13, Iris, Jasmine Street, Vatika City, Sector 49, Gurgaon - 122003, Haryana.

Copy to:

1. PS to Hon'ble MOS (I/C) E&F.
2. PPS to DGF&SS/PPS to Addl. DGF(WL)
3. PS to IGF(WL)/PS to DIG(WL)

**STANDING COMMITTEE OF
NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE**

TWENTY FOURTH MEETING

13th DECEMBER 2011

AGENDA NOTES



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND
FORESTS**

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AGENDA NOTES FOR THE TWENTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILD LIFE

Dated: 13th December 2011

Venue: Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi

AGENDA ITEM NO.1

Confirmation of the minutes of the 23rd Meeting of Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife held on 14th October 2011.

The minutes of the 23rd Meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL, held on 14.10.2011 were circulated to the members on 03.11.2011. Comments have been received from Ms.Pruna Bindra, Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda and Shri Kishore Rithe on the said minutes. A matrix with respect to the approved minutes vis-a-vis the comments received has been prepared which is attached herewith as **ANNEXURE-I(Page to)**.

The following are the important comments suggested by Ms.Pruna Bindra and Shri Kishore Rithe:

“Ms. Prerna Bindra expressed her concern over the manner in which the proposals were being submitted for consideration of the Standing Committee of NBWL. The information provided in the fact sheet for the proposals was often incomplete, misleading and even false, instances of such agendas were provided in writing to the Chairperson & MEF Mrs Jayanthi Natarajan for her consideration.”

“Ms Prerna Bindra also cited the examples of misinformation like proposal of 1,750 MW Demwe Lower Hydro Electric Project in Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh where the closest distance from WLS is only 50 metres but the proposal mentions 8.5 km. The document also mentioned Forest Clearance granted whereas FAC has sought the opinion of NBWL as per letter dated March 2011. The NEAA has passed Interim Order directing MoEF to ask the Standing Committee-NBWL to examine downstream impact on river dolphins and on IBAs. This was not communicated to the Standing Committee. In another example, with regard to Kaimur WLS the letter from regional MoEF office stating violation of FCA was not placed before the Standing Committee-NBWL, as was the fact that the matter was before CEC. She said that some of the maps provided were incomplete and not legible. For example, Proposal for taking up recce survey and investigation in the Galathea National Park by BRO for construction of road from Shastri Nagar to Indira Point, Andaman & Nicobar Islands (6-67-2011-WL), Proposal to exploit 12,40,000 TPA high grade magnesite deposit at Chipprian Hills and setting up of 300 TPA dead burnt magnesia plant at Panthal near Trikuta Wildlife Sanctuary(6-93/2011-WL). In some cases, the projects themselves were not marked in the map

viz. Proposal for construction of Baglinga M.I. irrigation Project at Taluka Chikaldhara, Amravati (6-111/2010 WL-I).

It was further said that even the information on legal status of the project is absent, i.e., whether a proposal was 'sub-judice' or not were not indicated. Some of the projects were submitted to SC-NBWL without information whether they are cleared by the respective State Board of Wildlife. She cited the examples, viz., Proposal for diversion of 19.503 hectares of forest land from Rajaji National Park (File No 6-1/2003, WL-I), Proposal for construction of Baglinga M.I. irrigation Project at Taluka Chikaldhara, Amravati (6-111/2010 WL-I), Proposal for diversion of 26.86 hectares of forestland from Askot Musk Deer Wildlife Sanctuary, (6-88/2011, WL)."

"Ms Prerna Bindra added that Standing Committee was a statutory body and the decisions legally binding, it was crucial that the decision making process be an informed one."

"Mr. Kishor Rithe: Mr. Rithe explained that the SC has to function according to expectations of judicial institutions like Hon'ble Supreme Court, High Court and National Green Tribunal. As the projects (inside Protected Areas) put before the Standing Committee of the NBWL for consideration due to provisions of Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 as amended in 2006 and projects in 10 km periphery of Protected Areas as per the Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 14.02.2000 and 25.11.2005, we need to know the legal status of each project as per the provisions of Environment Protection Act, 1986, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and Forest Conservation Act, 1980. However, if the Standing Committee discusses the proposals without having the above mentioned information, and other relevant information, its decision can be easily challenged in the court of law. Out of 12 projects to be discussed in the meeting today, i.e., on October 14, 2011, in 10 projects the status whether the projects are sub-judice, is not known. So the Member Secretary of the Standing Committee should consider this aspect seriously and improve the submission of these proposals before Standing Committee.

Also, it was pointed out that Chief Wildlife Warden's opinion justifying recommendation (by SBWL) for rejection or clearance for the project is very important for assessing the impacts of the project on wildlife species and PAs by the Standing Committee (NBWL).

In most cases, descriptive remarks from CWLW are absent.

A letter written by members of the National Board for Wildlife to the Hon'ble Chairperson on these issues dated September 25, 2011 was submitted (this may kindly be minuted, the letter is annexed for your convenience). The Hon'ble Chairperson acknowledged receipt and said she would read in detail and give it due consideration.

Most members pointed out that there were several proposals that had been rejected several times by the Standing Committee but were still being placed for reconsideration before the Standing Committee. It was pointed out that in the 22nd Meeting, the then (minutes from the April 25th meeting) "Chairman desired that the proposals which had earlier been rejected by the Standing Committee/Court should not be included in the agenda, unless any additional information or new facts had been provided by the State Government in respect of the proposal."

Hon'ble Chairperson said that she was aware of the concerns of the non-official members and that she would give this serious consideration. She agreed with the members that the mandate of the committee was conservation of India's natural heritage. She said she would hold a separate meeting of the Standing Committee to consider and discuss the conservation matters and concerns of the non-official members held in first half of December 2011."

"Ms. Prerna Bindra pointed out that comments/objections raised in the meeting are not recorded meticulously and precisely. Also, since the proposals are rushed through leaving little time for discussion, due to inadequate time, it is requested that comments and objections raised during the meeting by all members, and those sent immediately thereafter should be officially recorded."

Under the agenda item no.2.[4(B)(12) regarding proposal for denotification from Radhanagari Sanctuary for Savarde minor irrigation project, Maharashtra, the following be added:

"Mr. Kishor Rithe strongly objected on the proposal and submitted that it would affect the Critical Wildlife Habitat process and resettlement work in the sanctuary as per the Government of Maharashtra's affidavit in the Hon'ble High court, Nagpur Bench. A cumulative impact study, of all major and minor irrigation projects in and around Radhanagri Wildlife Sanctuary, should be conducted first to know the total ecological impact of all such schemes on ecology of the region and biodiversity therein. Mr Rithe also wrote a letter to then Chairman dated 5th February 2011 expressing these concerns and requested to reject the project."

Under the agenda item no.4.1 (2) regarding diversion of 79.474 ha of forest land in Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary and Wild Ass Sanctuary for Construction of Gaduli to Hajipir-Odma-Khavda-Kunriya-Dholavira-Maovana-Gadakbet-Santalpur Road (S.H. Road) Gujarat.

"Ms. Prerna Bindra: The non-official members notably Ms Prerna Bindra, Dr Ranjitsinh and Dr Divyabhanusinh did not favour the construction of the proposed road. They said that the construction of road would have adverse impact on Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary and Wild Ass Sanctuary. They also stated that the road was in close proximity to the only wild ass habitat and also to the Flamingo City, the only known breeding site of Greater Flamingo in the country."

Under the agenda item no.5.15 regarding the maintenance and Repair of roads passing through National Parks/Sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh.

"Ms. Prerna Bindra: (I have attached a letter to Ms Prakriti Srivastava dated October 19 2011, which may please be minuted). Divyabhanusinh endorsed the letter on October 23, 2011. The contents of the letter are given below, and may be minuted. The minutes of the 22nd Meeting of the Standing Committee of the NBWL regarding a series of roads in various tiger reserves, national parks and sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh (from 5.2 to 5.4) are written thus:

The Government of Madhya Pradesh had forwarded 13 proposals pertaining to construction/repair of roads passing through various sanctuaries. Standing Committee while according 'in principle' approval for construction/upgradation of above mentioned 13 roads desired that Chief Wildlife Warden would submit details separately about (i) roads that are to be newly constructed, (ii) roads that are to be upgraded, (iii) roads that are to be repaired, and (iv) roads that are already tarred or otherwise. A final view on individual proposal would be taken on receipt of the information by the Chairman, Standing Committee in consultation with Members of the Committee."

However, the letter Vide No/DM/1918 dated 2/5/2011, from TR Sharma, APCCF (wildlife) states: "in principle approval was given for the upgradation of 12 roads passing through Protected Areas of Madhya Pradesh. It may kindly be recalled, and also pointed out in my mail--and previous letter---dated October 5, 2011 that in principle approval was not accorded. Information was sought on maps, the kind of work for which permission was required and it was decided that no gravel road in PAs to be converted to black top, though existing roads, can be repaired as long as they remain in the same form-with no widening, new construction or diversion. The rest-especially, of Construction / widening was to be deferred till information on the same came in, and a final view on individual proposals would be taken on receipt of the information."

The information provided by the state details that the work proposed is upgradation from WBM/Murram roads to concrete cements and tarred roads---which, it may be pointed out, is against a Supreme Court order."

Under the agenda item no.1 (1) regarding proposal involving erection of 2m x 2m structure within Tillanchang Sanctuary, Andaman and Nicobar Islands for temporary use of test firing of dummy missile from submarine by Indian Navy.

"Ms Prerna Bindra pointed out that this area is the only refuge of the endangered and endemic Nicobar Megapode which has declined dramatically in recent years. Tillanchang Island is of deep historical and cultural significance to the indigenous communities from Trinket and Kamorta Island. The use of armaments and the debris that will accumulate from the test firing will be detrimental to the persistence of wildlife and the continuance of customary practices of communities."

Under the agenda item no.4.1 (2) regarding proposal for taking up reconnaissance survey and investigation in the Galathea National Park by Border Roads Organization for construction of road from Shastri Nagar to Indira Point, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

"It was pointed out that the Galathea National Park also marks the beginning of the Tribal Protected Area of the Greater Nicobarese. The Galathea National Park is globally recognised as a key nesting site for the endangered Leatherback Sea turtle.

The earlier road used to pass along the former coastline, and was subject to continual erosion and landslips. The alignment of this road will need careful selection given the regeneration of this ravaged coastline post tsunami, and thus allowing stability rather than inducing erosion or such damage that can ensue from construction."

Under agenda item no.4.1 (3) regarding proposal for installation of coastal surveillance RADAR and power supply source in Narcondam Island Sanctuary, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

" Ms Prerna Bindra pointed out that the Narcondum Island is an extremely small island of about 6.28 sq. km. and is susceptible to environment disturbances. It is known for, and is the only habitat for population of Narcondum Hornbills that are endemic to the island. She stressed that the A&N Islands were ecologically fragile and home to rare and endemic species found nowhere else in the world and also home to unique cultures and practices for indigenous people. Therefore, the impacts of any proposed project/activity need to be very carefully assessed.

4.1 (5): Proposal for development of skywalk for promotion of wildlife tourism at Bhalleydhunga involving 2.10 ha of Maenam Wildlife Sanctuary in South Sikkim."

Ms Prerna Bindra said that the Red Panda, the State Animal of Sikkim is found in the area and this project would have an impact on the species, and other rare wildlife of this biodiversity hotspot. Though the area asked for diversion from the sanctuary has been reduced to some extent as compared to the proposal in the last meeting, the disturbance caused by such an activity will go far beyond the actual physical area of the project. Such a project opposes the ethos of a PA.

Also, it has been brought to the notice of this member that permission for allied activities has been sought-and granted under FCA in the Yang Yang Reserve forest which is adjacent to the sanctuary and is within the 10 km radius of the sanctuary. The details of this were requested, and the point also raised why this was not brought before the Standing Committee as it falls within 10 km of the sanctuary.

She said that this was a multimillion project and that wildlife needed protected, pristine habitat, and not money, which was seconded by most non-official members.

Under Agenda item no.4.1 (6) regarding proposal for repair of Rawatbhata-Jawahar Nagar Road (periphery road) with 20 MM PMC and seal coat under PMGSY (for 24 Km).

"Shri Kishore Rithe, Satpuda Foundation mentioned that he along with Dr T. R. Shankar Raman of Nature Conservation Foundation had carried out site inspection of PMGSY Roads in Madhya Pradesh and had found that most of the roads were for expansion of existing roads. Similar proposals for a lot of roads within PAs are coming up before the Standing Committee (NBWL) from some of the states. Chief Wildlife Wardens need to explain to the project proponents the legal provisions of Wild Life Protection Act and orders of Hon'ble Supreme

Court. They must give clear guidance on impact of roads on wildlife and protected habitats, and that wildlife do not need cement or concrete roads. The existing roads could be properly maintained."

Under agenda item no.4.1 (7) regarding proposal for covering of diversion channel from Kushalipura Nallah to Mansarovar Dam (length 2,010 m) from RD 210m to 2,220 m.

"Ms Prerna Bindra mentioned that this channel would sever, and finish the corridor between the Ranthambhore National Park and Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary as mentioned in the site inspection report of the NTCA Board Member, Shri P. K. Sen. The same site report also states that while five or six villages will benefit from the canal, three villages on the southern side of the road will be left without water as new canal will draw water from the mouth of Kosali Darra and will be taken to Mansarover Dam, and also as dumped material has totally choked the nallas. The report mentions that the beneficiary villagers told that it was not known to them whether the canal will draw enough water to fill up Mansarover Dam to irrigate agricultural fields of those villages.

She added that the Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary was of late seeing the signs of a breeding tigress after a long period but with the linkages broken, the tigers had a doubtful future. She said that there should be accountability for by-passing the NBWL in the matter, as mandated by law."

Under agenda item no.4.1 (9) regarding proposal for diversion of 0.204 ha of forest land from Gautala Atranghat Sanctuary, Maharashtra for laying water pipeline.

"Ms. Prerna Bindra opined that when proposals were being forwarded for consideration of Standing Committee of NBWL, alternatives explored and possible options should be indicated as was mandated."

Under agenda item no.4.2(1) regarding proposal for diversion of 477.03 ha of forest land in Kondapuram RF of Paloncha Division for Kondapuram underground coal mine by Singareni Collieries Company Limited.

"Ms Prerna Bindra pointed out that the website of Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary records the presence of tigers. Also, on 24th March 2009, a tiger skin case was reported from the nearby area of Kothagudem. The information received at the time indicated that the tiger was killed near Gangaram village of Warangal district. Give that the amount of land to be diverted was considerable at 477.03 hectares, it was necessary to first ascertain the corridor connectivity for tigers, and also to place the FAC findings before the Standing Committee of NBWL."

Under agenda item no.4.2(2) regarding proposal for construction of 1,750 MW Demwe Lower Hydro Electric Project in Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh located outside the boundaries of Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary.

“Ms Prerna Bindra said that the distance from the site was misrepresented in the proposal. Though mentioned at a projected aerial distance of 8.5 Km from the Kamlang Sanctuary, this is only the distance from the dam and not the distance from the closest component of the project—the reservoir, which is only 50 meters from the sanctuary (as mentioned in the Forest Clearance application by the state government). She said that unlike what the state said, the development of the state surely was not dependent on this project alone, and that there were about 147 hydropower projects coming up in Arunachal Pradesh of which 13 were in the Lohit river basin. “It was, therefore, essential that a cumulative impact assessment study was conducted.”

She also pointed out that the National Environmental Appellate Authority (NEAA) passed an interim order dated May 3, 2010 whereby it directed the MoEF to ask the NBWL Standing Committee to examine downstream impacts on river dolphins and Important Bird Areas, which was not mentioned in the proposal put before the committee.

She also pointed out that it is erroneously stated that Forest Clearance has been granted for the proposed project. The FAC has only sought the opinion of the NBWL Standing Committee as per the letter dated March 2011. This proposal received environmental clearance during the tenure of the then MEF Shri Jairam Ramesh, who wrote to the PM, and Ms Bindra quoted from the letter, “The 1750 MW Lohit Demwe hydel project on the Lohit River will have serious downstream impacts till Dibrugarh in Assam and should not be given forest clearance, although environment clearance has already been given for the project...”

Mr Kishor Rithe stressed that the matter was not limited to this one project, but given the huge number of projects, i.e., over ten in the Lohit Basin itself, and 147 hydro-electric projects in the state, a cumulative impact study was necessary. He said the downstream impacts must be considered. He further said that the Hon’ble chairperson should personally call a separate meeting to discuss the project given its serious repercussions.”

Under agenda item no.4.2(3) regarding proposal for mining 1240000 TPA high grade Magnesite deposit at Chipprian Hills and setting up of 30000 TPA Dead burnt Magnesia Plant at Panthal near Trikuta Sanctuary in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Ms. Prerna Bindra mentioned that in context of the Trikuta Sanctuary, this had come up for denotification in the last meeting of the SC-NBWL. In this context, as per the decision taken at the last meeting of the Standing Committee of NBWL, the denotification of Trikuta Sanctuary was to be permitted only after area exceeding or equaling the proposed denotified area is first notified as a Wildlife Sanctuary or National Park.”

The following are the important comments suggested by Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda:

Please insert the following after first para on page 2:

"The Hon'ble Chairperson requested every member to introduce her/himself. Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda introduced himself and said that our remit was protection of flora and fauna whereas, we had become a clearing house of development projects in protected areas. Other non official members expressed similar concerns."

The Hon'ble Chairperson assured that she would address these concerns.

Please redraft Agenda item 3 on page 6 as under:

"The Standing Committee was informed that the agenda items proposed by the non-official members would not be taken up at this meeting because of the paucity of time.

Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda stated that he wanted to bring to the Hon'ble Chairperson's attention certain things that had happened in the past and said that the concerns of the non-official members had not received the kind of attention that was required. A special meeting was to be held to address these, but the meeting had not taken place. We had for all practical purposes become a clearing house for development projects in protected areas. Surely, this was not the intent of the Wild Life Protection Act. Its intention is that we protect the flora and fauna whereas, the development proposals lead only to their destruction.

The Hon'ble Chairperson appreciated Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda's concerns and said that she would hold a meeting in the first half of December 2012 to take up the non-official members' agenda items."

AGENDA ITEM NO.2

2.1

AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED BY DR M.K. RANJITSINH

1. Framing of rules for the functioning of the Standing Committee of the NBWL.

In view of the fact that the NBWL itself meets very infrequently, it is its Standing Committee which is its main functioning body. At present, there are no regulations, directives or rules for its periodic meetings and functioning. It is essential that these be formulated. It is, therefore proposed that this recommendation be given approval in principle and a committee/group be appointed, which will frame the requisite procedures and rules, which will be submitted to the Standing Committee in its next meeting. This committee/group will also study the forms and procedures presently being used for proposals submitted to the Standing Committee, for taking up non-forestry and non-wildlife activities in protected areas and recommend amendments if required.

2. Mechanism to ensure implementation of conditions stipulated by the Standing Committee while approving proposals.

The main purport of the Standing Committee has been to approve proposals for undertaking non-wildlife activities in PAs and a very large number of proposals have been approved by it over the years. There is, however, no real monitoring mechanism to oversee and ensure the implementation of the conditions that the Standing Committee invariably imposes whilst clearing these proposals. These stipulations, therefore, mostly remain only on paper and are tantamount to transgressions of the clearances given by the Standing Committee. Only in very few cases such as in the Subarnarekha case do the project proponents come back with some compliance reports. But the MoEF itself has no real mechanism to monitor the implementation of the conditions. This aspect must also be covered in the rules and procedures that are proposed to be framed and must be considered by the committee/group that is being proposed in the previous item recommended.

Simultaneously, a mechanism must be installed to monitor regularly and enforce implementation of the stipulations. It is recommended that special unit, headed by a senior officer be appointed in each of the Regional Offices of the MoEF whose mandate will be to periodically monitor and report the compliance of the various stipulations laid down in all project clearances given by the Standing Committee in the past and in the future. This function cannot

be carried out by the existing Regional Offices, who are already over-burdened with work related to clearances under the Forest Conservation Act and other duties and in any case, what would be required are people on deputation from State Wildlife Wings.

3. Central funding to be restricted to Protected Areas directly under the Wildlife Wing and managed by trained officers

Wildlife Wings under the Forest Departments were set up in 1970s with the purpose of managing the Protected Areas (PAs) of the country by dedicated and trained personnel of long standing experience and expertise. There was also a move during that period to create a specialized sub-cadre of the Indian Forest Service for this purpose, as well as to, inter alia, control illegal trade and taxidermy in wildlife. This creation of a special cadre of managers within the IFS has not been allowed to happen. But to further worsen matters, the numbers of officers which were annually to be sent from the states to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) for training in wildlife management, have reduced, despite the fact that all charges of this training are now being borne by Government of India and not the concerned states. As a result, the seats earmarked for the states each year for such training are now being given to the SAARC countries. Indeed, there was a move afoot to close the nine-month training course for senior staff altogether, as it was not being utilized. Currently, in the said WII nine-month training course for officers, only two trainees out of 20 are from the states and the rest from SAARC countries and elsewhere. This is a totally unacceptable situation. To further compound matters, officers who have been trained in wildlife management at the WII are working on non-wildlife assignments in the states. Approximately, only about 3% of our PAs are being managed by trained officers and this has contributed significantly to the current mismanagement of our PAs.

Furthermore, guidance and advice was issued in the past from time to time from the MoEF, to place the PAs under the direct supervision of state wildlife wings. Earlier on this was done, albeit rather slowly, and a number of PAs, including in some cases the buffer areas of PAs, were placed directly under the respective wildlife wings. This process has not only stopped long ago but the reverse step of transferring back the financial and administrative control of PAs from the Wildlife Wings to the territorial forest divisions has been in progress. The result is that the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) has neither the responsibility of the PAs, but often neither the financial nor the direct administrative control of the PAs within his state. This administrative diarchy is disastrous.

The above mentioned situation has to be set right. The PAs have to be managed professionally and effectively. Past record has proved that requests from Government of India will not be heeded by the states unless the MoEF uses a very pertinent financial leverage. It is, therefore, proposed that the GOI support under the centrally sponsored schemes for financially assisting wildlife sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves and Biosphere Reserves, will be given to only those PAs which :

1. are totally under the control of the Wildlife Wing, with the drawal and disbursal powers with officers of the wildlife wing and the confidential reports (CRs) of all the staff of PAs written by CWLW/ Wildlife Wing officers, from the financial year 2009-2010 onwards.
2. have the ACF/DCF rank officers in charge of the PAs having been trained at the WII or an equivalent institution abroad, from the financial year 2010-2011 or onwards.
3. have all the range officers posted in the PAs having received the three month training course of WII, from the financial year 2011-2012 onwards.

The staggered datelines mentioned above are to enable the state governments to get the required numbers of officers and rangers trained by the WII, which could even conduct the three month training course for rangers at regional levels to facilitate the task.

Comments: *It is necessary that the Protected Areas are under the control of the Chief Wildlife Wardens. The need of trained staff is of utmost importance for effective wildlife conservation. The Ministry is of the opinion that, there is an urgent need for training of more Officers of States in Wildlife Conservation from reputed Institutes like the Wildlife Institute of India. However, at this stage, it would not be possible to stop the funding support to those States who have not posted staff trained in wildlife in the Protected Areas as the State Governments at present have limited number of Officers, trained in Wildlife Conservation.*

Protected Areas are generally far away from the district H.Q. It is very necessary to provide incentives to the officers and staff to serve in such areas. It is proposed to provide 30% of total salary as incentives for all officers/frontline staff posted in all the Protected Areas. It is also mentioned that a Committee of the Ministry, formed to look into the needs of the wildlife training to IFS Officers has also recommended financial incentives to the staff engaged in wildlife conservation in Protected Areas . It is also considered useful to increase the training hours with changed modules of wildlife conservation for IFS probationers at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun. The IGNFA has already modified the syllabus of

wildlife conservation along with increase in the period of modules for IFS probationers as suggested by the committee.

4. Declaration of Kolamarka Sanctuary

With the interbreeding of wild and domestic buffaloes throughout the range of the wild buffalo in South Asia, the only population that has not suffered this “genetic swamping” is the one in the Indravati National Park of Chhattisgarh. The other surviving herd is in Udanti in the same state, but with seven bulls and just one cow and that too in captivity, this particular relict herd has little hope for survival. The Indravati population is less than forty, but with the severe Maoist problem prevalent there which does not allow forest staff to even enter the PA, the only surviving group across the Indravati River in Maharashtra has possibility the only hope that can be held for the future survival of this magnificent animal.

A recent survey showed about eight animals in the Kolmarka Reserved Forest in the Gadchiroli District of Maharashtra. It has been proposed as a Sanctuary of approximately 100 sq kms for some years now. MoEF while accepting the recommendation of the Standing Committee, had agreed to the reduction of the Solapur Bustard Sanctuary in Maharashtra, with stipulation that the reciprocal notification of Kolamarka and of Mansinghdeo Sanctuaries had been proposed. Mansinghdeo has been notified, but not Kolamarka.

The most numerous domestic animal in the world is the water buffalo. Considering the genetic importance of wild counterparts of domestic plants and animals in biodiversity conservation, it can be stated that the most important wild animal in the world for the welfare of mankind, is the genetically pure wild buffalo. From that point of view, it is crucially important that the surviving herd in Kolamarka be preserved and this can only be achieved by declaring this area as a sanctuary. The Standing Committee may resolve to request MoEF to pursue with the State Govt. of Maharashtra to have Kolamarka declared as a sanctuary within this calendar year.

5. Implementation Protocol on Critical Wildlife Habitats to be approved by the Standing Committee

With the reluctance of State Governments to declare new sanctuaries, declaration of critical wildlife habitats is the only recourse to maintain linkages between PAs and to safeguard vital wildlife areas. The Implementation Protocol for critical wildlife habitats has been put on the website of MoEF and an expert committee for the purpose has been envisaged. In view of the circumstances mentioned above, the identification of critical wildlife habitats and their management is crucial for wildlife conservation. It is, therefore, essential that the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, which is a statutory body mandated to formulate policies and procedures for wildlife conservation, discusses and approves the Implementation Protocol for critical wildlife habitats.

2.2

AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED BY DR. BISWAJIT MOHANTY, MEMBER, NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE

1) Declaration of ESA:

Most states have yet to declare and notify the ecologically sensitive areas/ecologically fragile areas under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 within 10 kms of areas bordering PAs. A status report should be placed before the Standing Committee to assess the level of implementation by the State. Standing Committee may also propose steps which should be taken to get the States to declare the ESA zones forthwith before further loss of such habitats to development projects.

***Reason:** Most States are proposing development projects including polluting industries, mines, reservoirs adjacent to PAs. Without the legal protection being accorded to the surrounding zones, such projects cannot be rejected. Allowing these projects will imperil the wildlife living in the PAs and their habitat.*

2) Elephant electrocution deaths:

The Standing Committee should form a sub committee comprising of members from NBWL, Power Ministry, CEA to assess level of implementation of existing guidelines for protective measures/safety features to be installed in rural electrification distribution systems to protect elephants. The Standing Committee should also come up with measures to add to the existing guidelines framed by Central Electricity Authority to comply with the suggestions contained in the report submitted by the expert group set up by the MoEF to probe into causes of electrocution deaths of elephants in Orissa.

***Reasons:** Under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutkaran Yojana (RGGVY), the Ministry of Power, Govt. of India has provided massive funds to states to boost the rural power network to enable remote villages to get electricity. While such a programme is welcome to provide the rural residents with power, without adequate safeguards, this shall result in huge loss of wildlife, especially the highly endangered elephants. Already, Orissa has lost **90 elephants due to electrocution during the last 10 years** most of which could have been avoided if adequate safety guidelines had been adopted and followed.*

3) Protection of wildlife from CAMPA work practices:

The Standing Committee should set up a sub committee comprising of NBWL members, MoEF officers and WII Scientists to tour the country in major CAMPA beneficiary states of Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh,

Karnataka, Maharashtra to verify the harmful plantation practices or other civil works carried out inside reserve forests and PAs. This sub-committee can file reports with the MoEF about such activities that imperil wildlife and MoEF can issue appropriate directions to the States.

Reasons: Under the CAMPA programme, many harmful forestry practices are being carried out for plantations, clearing and burning of weeds, civil works including plush rest houses, barracks in the core areas of Tiger Reserves, PAs, etc. Such activities impact wildlife and its habitat. There is no monitoring by the MoEF about such activities in the forest areas. We have found that in Orissa, there is rampant burning of forest undergrowth to clear them for plantations. This destroys ground dwelling fauna including jungle fowl, hares, mongoose, snakes, turtles, etc. Similarly, cutting of creepers like baubinia, etc. which are useful fodder species for elephants is leading to increase in man elephant conflict.

2.3

AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED BY DR. A.J.T. JOHNSINGH

1. **Strengthening conservation in the southern Western Ghats**

The southern part of the Western Ghats (the forests stretching from the newly notified Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary to the southernmost Kanyakumari WLS) is an area of nearly 5000 sq.km and is extremely vital for large mammal (elephant, tiger, Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri langur and lion-tailed macaque), bio-diversity and water conservation. This tract includes forest divisions such as the Theni (part), Ranni, Konni, Achankoil, Tirunelveli, Thenmala and Trivandrum (part); wildlife sanctuaries such as Megamalai, Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Shendurney, Peppara, Neyyar and Kanyakumari and two tiger reserves, Periyar and Kalakad-Mundanthurai. The break in this vast tract of biodiversity-rich and scenic forested landscape is along the Ariankavu Pass which has been brought about by the Madurai- Quilon National Highway (NH-208), the century-old, heritage Shencottah-Punalur metre-gauge railway (which is being converted into a broad-gauge line) and human habitations on both the sides of the railway track and the highway.

The major tiger breeding habitat in this landscape is the Periyar TR (925 sq. km) and this note deals with strengthening conservation in the southern part of the Western Ghats landscape. This landscape has the potential to support 100 adult tigers provided the following recommendations are implemented and wild prey are protected which is likely to result in appreciable increases in numbers for both tigers and their prey.

2. **Acquisition of estates along the interstate border**

Periyar TR has a 90km border with Tamil Nadu where there are 23 cardamom estates and 18 passage routes into the Reserve. In the Reserve within Kerala also there are an additional nine estates. The laborers residing in these estates may have illegal guns and indulge in poaching using guns as well as snares. It is desirable to explore means to acquire these estates in due course of time. This will significantly reduce the amount of disturbance on Periyar TR.

3. Acquisition of key estates

There is an urgency to acquire key estates such as Downton (208 ha, between Ranni FD and Periyar TR), Kattlamalai (13 sq km, KMTR) and Bonaccord (5 sq km, Peppara WLS) which are in the heart of tiger land. With a boom in ecotourism such estates, particularly Downton and Bonaccord, can grow as a cancer in the heart of wildlife habitats and can be a cradle for activities that are inimical to conservation. Acquisition of Downton Estate would immensely strengthen the conservation value of Periyar TR and this needs the urgent attention of the Government.

4. Stay order on the construction of Thora-Kokkathodumuzhy road

An immediate stay order on the construction of the 20km all-weather tar road from Thora to Kokkathodumuzhy (Konni FD) is urgently needed till a final decision is taken by the Central Empowered Committee on the petition submitted by One Earth One Life, a local conservation NGO. Unfortunately without waiting for the final decision by the CEC work on this road has already been started. It is rumored that the major purpose of building this tar road is to make a resort on this stretch of road accessible to the public. It is unsure as to how this land was acquired to build this resort in the first place. In the long run, the construction of this road can convert the infrequently-used Achankoil-Thora-Kokkathodumuzhy-Konni-Pamba forest road into a State Highway, catering to the needs of the growing number of garbage-spewing pilgrims going to the Lord Ayyappa shrine. This will gradually pave way for the destruction of the stretch of intact forest that now exists between Periyar TR and Achankoil.

5. Establishment of a corridor across the Ariankavu Pass

Elephants in this landscape remain separated into two populations by a break along the Ariankavu Pass. The northern population is around 700 animals and the southern population c. 200. Although this separation happened over a hundred years ago, it is high time we establish a corridor to enable the two populations to merge. This corridor will be extremely beneficial for other large mammals including the tiger.

The three corridors that are in discussion across Ariankavu are the following:

- a) Achankoil – Harrison Malayalam Rubber Estates (e.g., Nagamala) – 13-arch rail bridge – Shendurny WLS, referred to as '**13-arch Corridor**'
- b) Achankoil – Priya Estate – Ambanad Tea Estate – Suvarnagiri Estate – Senagiri Estate – Murugapanchal – Bedford Estate – Shendurny WLS, referred to as '**Murugapanchal Corridor**'.

c) Kottavasal (Achankoil) – Puliyarai Beat of Kadayanallur Range – Kottavasal (Ariankavu) – Karkudi Beat of Courtalam Range – Shendurny WLS, referred to as '**Kottavasal Corridor**'.

Among the three, we observe that the establishment of Kottavasal Corridor will be much more sound ecologically and viable economically. We are aware that there are efforts to establish the Murugapanchal Corridor for elephants and the proposal regarding this suggests plans to relocate people from the Murugapanchal area and create a 100m wide corridor. The proponents of this proposal believe that once Murugapanchal area is freed of settlements, elephant populations, which are now ca.10 km apart, because of settlements such as Bedford Estate (in the south) and Priya, Suvarnagiri, Senagiri, Kuzhirkadu, Pandianpara and Kadamanpara (in the north), would start using this corridor. We should remember that in a fragmented elephant landscape only bull elephants roaming between the fragments can link the populations. One should be aware that there are not many bull elephants in the Ariankavu area to move from habitat to habitat across disturbed habitats. We may be able to help the wild elephants to use this corridor if all the above-mentioned habitations are resettled and if the human habitations are removed for a kilometer on both the sides of the Murugapanchal bridge.

In comparison, the Kottavasal Corridor, along the main ridge of the Western Ghats, seems to be much more promising for the movement of large mammals including the tiger and elephant. This aspect was explained to us by Mr. Radhakrishna Pillai (DFO, Achankoil FD, now retired) who had a clear understanding of the landscape. The slopes along the main Western Ghats ridgeline harbor most of the remnant forests across the gap, and thus wildlife habitats on either side of the corridor are much closer in the suggested Kottavasal Corridor (5 km) than in the Murugapanchal Corridor (10 km). There is also more forest cover within the Kottavasal Corridor. The fact that the Kottavasal Corridor appears to be more suitable for large mammal movement and that comparatively fewer households (approximately 60 in Kottavasal, compared to over 200 at Murugapanchal) would be affected by its creation suggests that resources and efforts to conserve connectivity in this landscape should first be directed at this corridor. Efforts should also be made to remove the encroachments from the Puliyarai (Kadayanallur Range) and Karkudi (Courtallam Range) beats (both in Tirunelveli FD) which will strengthen the proposed corridor immensely.

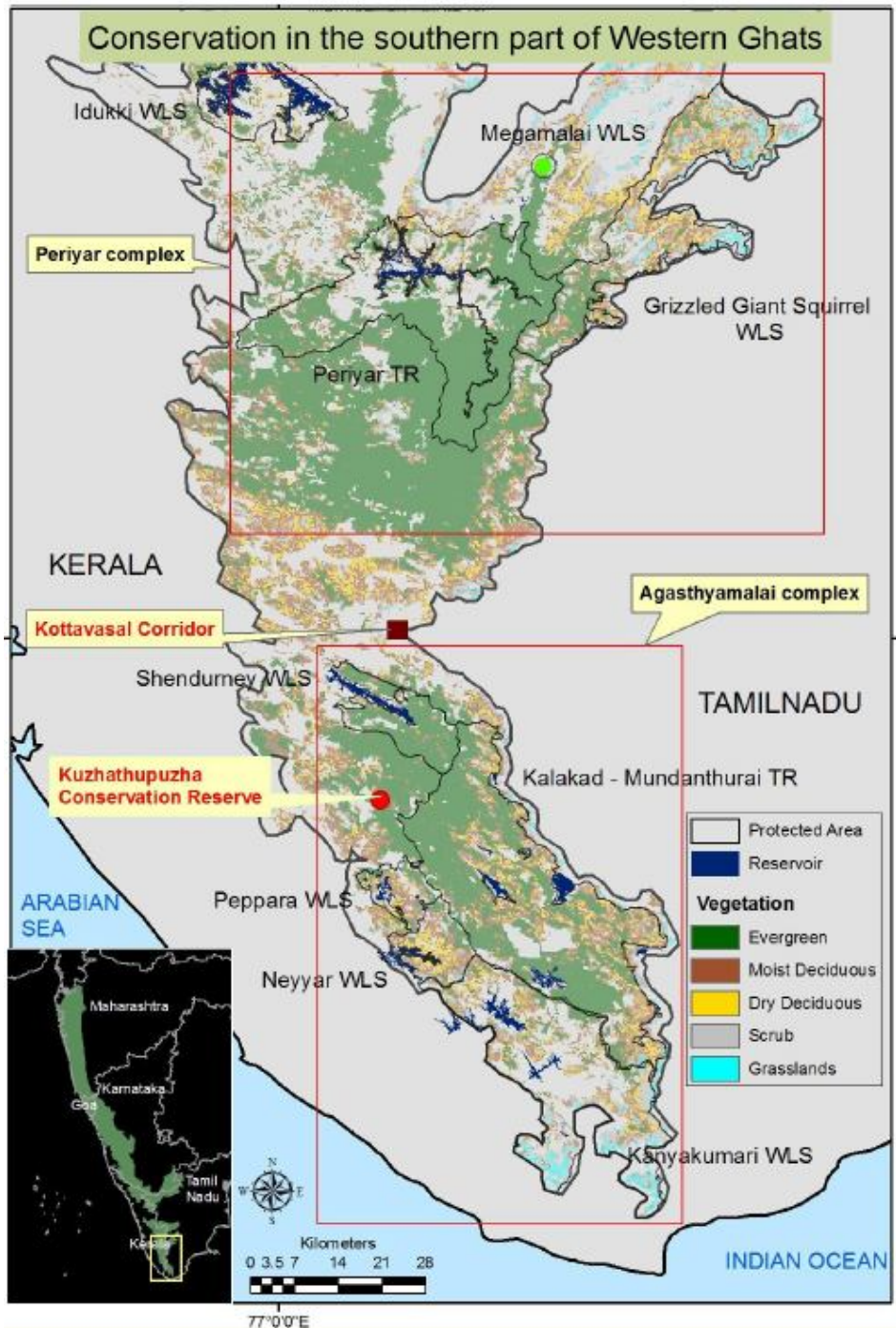
6. Establishment of c. 500 km² Kuzhathupuzha Conservation Reserve

There is enough data from India to show that rich habitats, that are undisturbed by people, are much more used by species such as elephants (particularly groups), gaur, sambar and tiger. Including Kuzhathupuzha and Palode Ranges (220 km² and 108 km² respectively) and Shendurney WLS (170 km²), we have an opportunity to establish a nearly 500 km² Conservation Reserve if people of this area, living far from facilities such as school and hospital, are willing to be

resettled. Our enquiries with a few residents of Rosamala Estate in Shendurney WLS, eight kilometers from Ariankavu with such facilities, indicate that sincere efforts to provide better healthcare, education and job opportunities would persuade them to consider such a resettlement. We feel that the Government should not hesitate to “sacrifice” several square kilometers of plantation forests near townships to establish a large tract of priceless wildlife habitat. Only creation of such a productive undisturbed habitat which should be connected by a functional corridor with the Periyar landscape (north of Ariankavu Pass), would enable the tiger to thrive in the forests south of Ariankavu Pass. Presently the mountainous Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, with a large tract of evergreen vegetation, south of the Pass can at the most support 10 adult tigers.

7. Strengthening anti-poaching measures

In April 2011 accompanied by Sanjayankumar, Deputy Director, Periyar TR and some of my colleagues (R. Raghunath, NCF and Professor E. Unnikrishnan, University College, Trivandrum) we walked from Theerthampara in Tirunelveli FD to Vazhayar in Kanayar Range (Achankoil FD) covering a distance of nearly 57 km. In the foothills of Tamil Nadu we saw several signs of sambar and gaur and while we traversed the forests in Kerala (c. 50km) 6-8 gaur signs (dung and tracks) were seen. Elephant dung was seen all along. We also saw a poachers' camp where we found the remains of at least two lion-tailed macaques that had been killed and eaten. Although Nilgiri langur calls were heard all along, we saw only one group of lion-tailed macaques. It appears that poaching could be a reason for the low abundance of ungulates in the tract we covered. Poaching in the entire landscape should be controlled to support adequate populations of sambar and gaur as prey base if we are to have 100 tigers in the Periyar-KMTR landscape. Control of poaching can be effective if there is greater co-ordination between Tamil Nadu and Kerala Forest Departments and assistance from the EDCs in the landscape to monitor the activities of the poachers and poaching groups.



8. Save Coimbatore's *kulams*

The city of Coimbatore has a unique system of tanks (locally called *kulams*) developed hundreds of years ago by the ancient Tamil kings for irrigation, flood control and possibly for recharging ground water. There are eight such wetlands located within the city and are replenished by the Noyyal river during the rainy season. These include Narasampathy, Krishnampathy, Selvampathy, Kumarasamy, Selvachinthamani, Big tank, Valankulam and Singanallur. In the past, there were numerous tanks in the surrounding areas but most got filled up. Coimbatore receives a moderate amount of rainfall (around 650 mm annually). A burgeoning population and expanding industries have impacted these tank landscapes primarily in the form of encroachment and dumping of municipal waste and construction debris. Over the decades, these tanks have given way to slums, housing units, bus depots, roads, railway tracks and electricity sub-stations. Even the river has been encroached and is used as a dumping site for municipal waste and construction debris. The area under cultivation around the tanks has declined as a result of the receding water table making agriculture using ground water more expensive. Babul (*Acacia nilotica*) trees planted in the tank bed under the Farm Forestry scheme of Tamil Nadu Forest Department, which provided roosting and resting sites to numerous species of birds, were felled and removed as part of cleaning of the tanks carried out six years ago. Encroachment by water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*), mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) and pink morning glory (*Ipomoea carnea*) has become a problem. Large quantities of municipal effluents including dyes and electroplating effluents are discharged into the lake making it prone to metal pollution on one hand and eutrophication on the other. In the southern, western and northern parts of the city, there has been reports of heavy metal pollution (including cadmium and mercury from the dyeing, electroplating and jewellery industries) which has affected biotic life in the tanks as well as the Noyyal. Physical encroachment by people is also a major issue along the banks of the wetlands and their supply channels. There has also been reports of hospital waste being dumped on the banks. Human waste make the water highly unhygienic with faecal *E. coli* and several other pathogens. Since drinking water for the city comes from Western Ghats (Siruvani, Pilloor reservoirs), civil society groups and government agencies of the city do not seem keen on conserving these wetlands.

9. Neglected and abused by the humans, preferred by the birds

While humans ignore the tanks, birds throng Coimbatore's tanks. A study by L. Joseph Reginald *et al.* (2006) has reported 116 species of birds from Singanallur tank alone. Globally near threatened species such as spot-billed pelicans, painted storks and oriental white ibis still flock to the tanks as winter visitors from July to January. Rare birds like the western marsh harrier, little crane, pallid harrier, gadwall, whitenecked stork, Eurasian spoonbill, marsh sandpiper and black-bellied tern were also reported in this study. A total of 5,777 spot-billed pelicans and 3,146

painted storks were counted in the tanks five years ago, proving that Coimbatore tanks were a preferred foraging site for these birds. However, currently, their numbers have dwindled to almost a fifth of what they were five years ago. With an aim of conserving the wetlands, the Coimbatore Corporation drafted a Rs.128 crore proposal under JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewable Mission) in 2010. It seems this proposal is not a plan to develop the wetlands for their ecological values; but it is an investment proposal to make money out of it: real estate, speed boats, etc. The plan needs to be revisited to improve upon the wetlands and their ecological services. This is of concern not only for environmentalists but also for all who appreciate Coimbatore city's ecology, climate and bird life.

The following suggestions have been made by local conservationists led by P.A. Azeez, Director, SACON and C. R. Jayaprakash, Nilgiri Wildlife and Environment Association

The tanks, which were handed over to the Coimbatore Corporation last year (2010), need to be given back to the Public Works Department. Sufficient funds must be allocated to set up effluent treatment plants at the inlets of each tank. Encroachment along the supply channels also need to be evicted. However, encroachers need to be provided with alternate residences not very far from the city limits.

- Local fishermen here belong to largely a single caste and could be enlisted to conserve the wetlands and birds. Awareness programmes need to be undertaken. The contracts given by the authorities for fishing rights need to be clearly spelt out. Stocking of *Tilapia*, an exotic invasive which outcompetes native species, could be avoided, since the fishermen source fingerlings largely from the fisheries department. If the industrial pollution is not controlled, fishes reared here could eventually become unsuitable for human consumption.
- Concrete structures in the form of bunds or roads around the tanks should not be promoted in the name of development. Tourism, involving motor boating, kayaking, which will disturb the birds, should not be promoted in the name of eco/adventure tourism. The Rs.128 crore proposal should be revisited to make it more ecologically sensitive with development plans for the wetlands.
- Watch dog committees should be formed for each tank represented by members of civil society groups, researchers, fishermen and local villagers since government agencies have so far miserably failed in their duty to protect the tanks.
- Conservation of the tanks can significantly enhance the much wanted and rapidly declining underground water availability in and around the growing city of Coimbatore. This was one of the major ecological functions of the tanks possibly conceived by the far-sighted Tamil kings in the past.

- There has been a plea from local conservationists that the Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests should visit Coimbatore to observe the status of the tanks in person to take appropriate conservation measures.

10. Taxonomical studies in India – need for a change in thinking

Taxonomical studies on the various forms of biota in India have been largely neglected since the independence period. This is particularly true in the cases of mammalian taxonomical studies.

Perhaps the last detailed and comprehensive taxonomical study done in India was the one done more than 100 years back by the BNHS, viz, the BNHS Mammal survey from 1907 to 1914. This has brought in considerable amount of useful data on the taxonomy of the Indian Mammals and which later resulted in the publication of the beautifully illustrated and well written book on Indian Mammals, viz. "Book of Indian Animals" by SH Prater in 1971.

However, after the BNHS Mammals survey in 1914, there has not been any concerted efforts to study the taxonomy of Indian mammals. Under these circumstances, particularly in the context that we have just celebrated the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, we should initiate a programme similar to that what was done about 100 years back. A national level drive on systematic collection and taxonomical studies on the Indian Mammals.

This has to be a centrally sponsored programme, which should involve networking of various institutions and individual scientists spread across the country. The whole exercise has to be coordinated by one reputed agency. In this context the recommendations of the National Consultation on 'Advancing the Science of Taxonomy in India for Biodiversity Conservation', held at Bangalore on 24 February 2010 would be worth considering (Bhaskaranand Priyadarsanan2010Advancing the science of taxonomy in India", *Current Science*. 99 : 157-58).

This suggestion has come from P.O. NAMEER Ph.D. Associate Professor (Wildlife) & Head, Centre for Wildlife Studies, College of Forestry, Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur.

11. Proposal for Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary: The details are at ANNEXURE-2

2.4

AGENDA ITEMS PROPOSED BY MS. PRERNA BINDRA

1. Implementation Protocol on Critical Wildlife Habitats to be approved by the National Board of Wildlife

The Implementation Protocol for Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs) was put up on the website of MoEF for comments and it is believed that a draft has been prepared. The identification and notification of Critical Wildlife Habitats is of vital relevance to the wildlife conservation and the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, which is a statutory body mandated to formulate policies and procedures for wildlife conservation, must discuss and approve the Implementation Protocol for critical wildlife habitats.

2. Working of the Standing Committee:

The functioning of the Standing Committee has generated much dissatisfaction and discomfort amongst the non-official members, who have brought up the issue repeatedly in various forums, including the former chair. It has also invited media criticism (Two examples: 'Betraying India's Wildlife,' *Governance Now*, October 1-16, 2011, 'Wildlife Board clears 40 crucial projects in two hours', *The Pioneer*, May 19, 2011)

In view of the above, it is suggested that there is a need to address the functioning of the Standing Committee.

Requests for clearances that are put before the Standing Committee concern our Protected Areas, the last refuge of many endangered—including endemic—species, and of our biodiversity. Many of the proposals require clearances that adversely impact these habitats and thereby further endanger wildlife. We show our PAs and the laws of the land scant respect, in the casual manner the proposals are dealt with. It is critical that members get the Agenda, with complete information, clear maps etc., which must be provided at least in the stipulated period as given in the notification. Each project proposal/plea for clearance must be presented to the Standing Committee with the Forest Clearance, Environmental Impact Analysis Reports, Environment Clearance and the copy of the detailed Project Reports as provided by the project proponents for the Standing Committee members. The opinion of the State Board of Wildlife should also be put before the committee (the approval of the Chairman of the State Board of Wildlife in the absence of the approval of the Board itself, does not suffice, as is often suggested in the meetings).

It may be suggested here that the proforma of the Forest Advisory Committee regarding information required from states to take the proposal on board is more detailed. This proforma has been shared with the NBWL so it may be put before the Board to be considered as a basis for adapting it for the Standing Committee.

We could also take a view as to whether we can have the procedures of the meeting recorded. Can we electronically record the procedures—so that these are clearly reflected in the minutes, leaving no room for ambiguity and doubt?

As per the notification, the committee's mandate calls for promotion and conservation of wildlife, advising state governments on conservation, effective control of wildlife trade, recommendations in setting up PAs, advise on and control of activities in PAs. In the last three meetings, since the constitution of the new NBWL in September 2010, the Standing Committee has devoted itself to clearing proposals and no agendas of the members have been heard or discussed. Serious issues have been raised by my colleagues on the functioning of the Standing Committee. My plea is that the committee, as well as the board, have a more proactive role in policy, and implementing policy in matters regarding wildlife conservation.

In fact the above note is part of a Joint Agenda put up by five members of the board in the 22nd meeting but was not taken up for discussion.

It is also suggested that the Standing Committee must consider all proposed projects/activities in Ecologically Sensitive Zones and also in areas of immense biodiversity significance, i.e., identified tiger/elephant/other animal corridors that may not necessarily be part of the PA system. All projects need to be considered from the wildlife point of view in these areas including in Eco-sensitive zones, irrespective of Environmental clearance.

To discuss these and other equally serious issues concerning the functioning of the Standing Committee, I second my senior colleague Dr MK Ranjitsinh's proposal that a committee/group be appointed, which will frame the requisite procedures and rules, to be submitted to the Standing Committee in its next meeting.

3. Dachigam National Park, is the only place in the world to have the hangul *Cervus elaphus hanglu*. Apart from the hangul deer—now sadly on the verge of extinction—there are Himalayan black bears, leopards, musk deer and, in the upper reaches, the very rare brown bear and even snow leopards. Dachigam, touted as 'the Pride of Kashmir' is crumbling today due to apathy, neglect and wilful destruction of habitat. There are encroachments and structures

within its tiny 141 sq km area, causing severe deterioration and degradation of habitat.

Some issues that require urgent attention:

- The presence of a sheep-breeding farm (occupying over 10 sq km within the park), with 3,000 to 5,000 sheep is a major threat to the hangul. The sheep are taken to Upper Dachigam in summer, thus disturbing the meadows required by the hangul. Also fodder is taken from lower Dachigam to feed them.
- A trout hatchery in the park was to be moved out. The pollution from this hatchery pollutes the Dal lake and also the Dagwan River, which is the drinking water source for Srinagar.
- There are enclosures for 'captive breeding' of leopards and bears *inside* the national park.
- Gujjars have built semi-permanent dwellings in Upper Dachigam all the way up to Marsar. There are reports that some of these are operating as small eateries/hotels.
- Felling of green kail *Pinus griffithi* trees is going on. Felling of broad leaved trees for charcoal sale in winter is reported.
- Encroachment in Dachigam from the gate up to Brain has contributed to sharp rise in man-animal conflict; Bears are stoned and barbed wire fences have been electrified to keep them away. Some bears have died.
- At Kanger, on the outskirts of Dachigam on the Sonmarg side, an enclosure has been made for hangul. To the best of my knowledge, the NBWL has not been informed—which is mandatory since the hangul is a Schedule I species.

These issues must be looked into. For example, it is believed that the enclosures inside the national park were extended. This must be verified, and whether relevant permissions were given. A realistic assessment of hangul numbers must be done at once. The claim is over 200 animals, but there is a fear that it is even lesser. Whatever it may be, the population is critically low, and on the verge of extinction. It may be pointed out that the Hangul is one of the species included in the Species Recovery Programme of the Scheme 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' and financial assistance to the tune of Rs 90 lakhs has been granted to the J&K government. But, the habitat has only deteriorated, and the plight of the hangul is worse than ever before.

4. This agenda seeks to draw the Standing Committee's attention to the non-compliance by the National Highways Authority of India to the FAC conditions for the construction of a four-lane expressway (NH-54E) through the Dhansiri Lungding Elephant Reserve which forms an important part of the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong elephant corridor.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is constructing a four-lane expressway through the Lumding Reserve Forest in Assam. The highway will cut through a crucial migratory corridor for elephants, gibbons and gaur and a critical tiger landscape.

The NHAI got permission to cut down over 100 hectares of forest for the expansion of NH-54E. The suggestions of WWF, with the preconditions that they would ensure that (a.) no labour camps were set up in the forest; that (b.) a special underpass was to be built so that elephants can cross with minimal disturbance and (c.) that no high-powered lights were to be used.

But, news channel *CNN-IBN* reports that none of the conditions are being met. The height of the underpass that has been made for the elephants is so low that it will be difficult for the animals to pass through.

Located in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape, these forests are part of one of the most fecund tiger habitats in the world. The 22,403-hectare Lumding reserve forest is an important wildlife habitat in Nagaon district and stretches through Lanka and Lumding ranges of Nagaon South forest division. It was notified as part of Dhansiri-Lumding Elephant Reserve in 2003.

The Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape is a vital site situated in the erstwhile Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot, now known as the Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspot. **It is home to about 2,500 elephants, 40 per cent of Assam's tigers and 90 per cent of India's one-horned rhinoceros population.**

It is suggested that:

- WWF India has suggested a series of mitigation measures to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) so that wildlife in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape, which bisects Lumding reserve forest is not drastically affected by the development of NH-54E. These suggestions of WWF must be complied with.
- It is understood that WWF-India had already worked with the engineers of NHAI and had come up with a report for mitigating the threats that the highway might pose. A copy of the report has been submitted to NHAI, Guwahati.

- WWF had recorded canopy contiguity over the road within the stretch from Lankajan to Lumding at 119 places indicating that hoolock gibbons and other arboreal mammals, at that time of survey, could cross the road at many places without fear of being run over by speeding vehicles. Hoolock gibbons are territorial and exclusively arboreal. Any widening would immediately remove the existing 119 sites where canopy continuity that were recorded.
- NHAI must build usable underpasses of adequate height so that elephants can pass through unhindered
- The NHAI diligently follow all the other conditions, including ensuring that no labour camps are established

2.5

AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED BY DR T.R. SHANKAR RAMAN

Dr T.R. Shankar Raman has requested for discussion on 'Minimizing disturbances to wildlife in Anamalai Tiger Reserve due to contour canal repair and creation of Wildlife crossings'. The agenda item is at **ANNEXURE-3 (Page to)**.

2.6

AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED BY SHRI KISHOR RITHE

Shri Kishor Rithe has proposed the following two agenda items for discussion by the Standing Committee of NBWL:

1. Denotification of GIB Sanctuary in Maharashtra
2. Implementation of FRA 2006 for declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitats.

The details of the above agenda items is at **ANNEXURE-4 (Page to)**.

2.7

KEY POINTS FOR DISCUSSION ON FUNCTIONING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE

Dr M.D. Madhusudan, Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore, had vide his letter dated 6th October 2011 requested the Addl. Director General of Forests (WL) and Member-Secretary, National Board for Wildlife for discussions on the functioning of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife.

The said letter of Dr. M.D. Madhusudan dated 6th October 2011 is at **ANNEXURE- 5 (page to)**.

The Standing Committee of NBWL may like to take a view.

2.8

DISCUSSION ON NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE AND ITS STANDING COMMITTEE

Thirteen members of the National Board for Wildlife, viz, Shri Biswajit Mohanty, Dr Asad Rahmani, Shri Kishor Rithe, Dr T.R. Shankar Raman, Dr Bibhab Talukdar, Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh, Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda, Shri Brijendra Singh, Shri Valmik Thapar, Ms. Perna Bindra, Shri Bittu Sehgal, Ms. Mitali Kakkar and Dr Uma Ramakrishnan, have requested the Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests for discussion on the National Board for Wildlife and its Standing Committee.

The said letter of 13 members of NBWL dated 25th September 2011 is at **ANNEXURE- 6 (page to)**.

The Standing Committee of NBWL may like to take a view.

Agenda Item No.3.1

Special Leave Petition (C)...CC 15958/2011 and 16898/2011 referred by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to the National Board for Wildlife

The Special Leave Petition (C)... CC 15958/2011 and 16898/2011 pertaining to Sigur Elephant Corridor, Tamil Nadu came up for hearing before the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 14th October 2011. Hon'ble Court had accordingly passed the following orders:

"Permission to file SLPs is granted.

Issue notice. Dasti, in addition, is permitted.

Petitioners are permitted to serve the notice on Standing counsel for the State of Tamil Nadu as well as on counsel appearing for MoEF as well.

State to file counter affidavit within four weeks.

There shall be stay on dispossession and demolition of the buildings of the petitioners till further orders.

It is open to the National Board for Wildlife to offer their comments on the report submitted by the Committee constituted by the High Court. MoEF to submit its report within three months....."

The State Government of Tamil Nadu vide Government order No.93 dated 21.09.2007 had identified some 583 acres of private lands for acquisition at a cost of Rs.19.63 crores in Segur Plateau elephant corridors, based on the joint report of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) titled "Right of Passage-Elephant Corridors of India". In April 2008, a Writ Petition No.23578 of 2010 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court of Madras seeking direction for removal of "Encroachment" in Elephant Corridors in the Nilgiri District for the free movement of elephants. It was prayed in the said Writ Petition that the State Government has no jurisdiction whatsoever to earmark elephant Corridors namely the "Singara-Bokkapuram Corridor". The Petitioner had mentioned that about 350 odd families of Scheduled Tribes and Traditional Forest Dwellers of the Irullar and Kurumbar tribes are residing in lands situated within the village of Bokkapuram which encompasses the "Tribal Settlements of Thoddalingi, Thekkal, Kurumbar Padi, Kurumbar Pallam and Koilpatti (Bokkapuram) situated within the village of Bokkapuram adding to an approximate head count of 1,750 people.

Subsequently, the State Government vide Government order no.125 dated 30.08.2010 notified that an area of 4,225 acres of private land instead of originally notified 583 acres, was needed to be acquired for the creation of the same elephant corridor ostensibly without any cogent reasons, and with no consultation either with WTI or MoEF.

Hon'ble High Court of Madras while hearing the case on 7.04.2011 had also considered the report of the Expert Committee (constituted as per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras) constituted under the Chairmanship of the Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Tamil Nadu with the Divisional Forest Officer, Nilgiris North Division, as its Member Secretary. The said Expert Committee had submitted their report to the Hon'ble High Court on 4th November 2009.

Hon'ble High Court in its order dated 7.04.2011 had also reflected that the District Forest Officer of Nilgiris North Division, had made a power point presentation before Hon'ble High Court of Madras during the course of arguments wherefrom it had been seen from that Nilgiris Eastern Ghats landscape is more than 10,000 sq.km. in forest area with good connectivity and nearly all the western forests are connected to the eastern ghats landscape by the crucial area of the Nilgiris North Division, that more than 8,000 elephants are found in this connected landscape within more than 260 tigers in the same space. The said order also mentions that it has been asserted that forests of Nagarhole are connected to the forests of the Bandipur in the East and on Western side to the forests of Brahmagiri, Bandipur in turn connects to the forests of Mudumalai which connects to Nilgiris North Division and to the forests South and the Eastern ghats. That landscape is the single largest population of the Asian Elephant in the world and also has the largest tiger area, which indicates the quality of the forests. The importance of the area led to the declaration of Nilgiris as the first designated Biosphere Reserve in India in 1986 since it is hotspot among the Western Ghats. It is also seen that even though there is more than 50% of area covered by forests, only a small fraction is available for the Tigers in this area.

In the said High Court order, it was also mentioned that the resort owners and other private land owners are directed to vacate and hand over vacant possession of the lands falling within the notified 'elephant corridor' to the District Collector, Nilgiris within three months from date of the order. Further, it has also been mentioned that with regard to the forest dwellers, whose interests are protected under the provisions of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, the State Government was directed to strictly adhere to and comply with the provisions of this Act. While dealing with the forest dwellers, which fall within the ambit of this Act and in case

any forest dwellers is evicted from and out of the identified elephant corridor, they be provided with the best alternate and suitable accommodation.

Subsequently, a Special Leave Petition against the above order of Hon'ble High Court of Madras dated 7.4.2011 was filed by petitioners of Tamil Nadu before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The main respondent in the SLPs is the State Government of Tamil Nadu while the Union of India (UIO) is one of the respondents. Hon'ble Supreme Court has vide its order dated 14.10.2011 directed that the NBWL may give its opinion on the report of the Expert Committee constituted as per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court within three months.

The important aspects highlighted in the report of the Expert Committee include:

- (1) A Writ petition No. 10098/08 was filed before Hon'ble High Court of Madras for removing encroachments in the Elephant Corridor.
- (2) Hon'ble High Court in its interim order dated 30.09.2008 had directed the District Collector, Nilgiris to remove all encroachments from revenue land which has been identified for development of Elephant corridor.
- (3) After hearing the response of the District Collector, Nilgiris, the PCCF (WL), Tamil Nadu and the Secretary to the Government, Forest Department, Tamil Nadu, Hon'ble High Court had directed to constitute an Expert Committee to be headed by the PCCF (WL).
- (4) The said Expert Committee visited the elephant corridor area on 28.10.2009 and 29.10.2009 and submitted its report to the Hon'ble High Court on 4th November 2009.
- (5) The said Expert Committee had concluded that:
 - (a) A boundary limiting the altitude which can be said to be normally usable and safe for elephants has been identified along the slopes of the Nilgiri plateau.
 - (b) Any human use beyond viable corridor level that can have adverse or stressful impact on elephants and their movement now or in future should also be included in the corridor or managed in a manner that is not disturbing wildlife or violating any laws.
 - (c) Criteria for determining the minimum width of the corridor had been suggested and accordingly, based on the said criteria, a minimum width of 1 km for each corridor is required for the movement and long term survival of elephants and other free ranging species of this landscape

- (d) 5 Corridors had been identified after detailed study of research reports, views expressed by tribal people, and other factors.
- (e) Short term and Long term strategies for conservation of corridors had been suggested.

- (6) Hon'ble High Court after considering the report of the Expert Committee, had sought certain additional information on the matter including the drawing of corridor boundary.
- (7) The additional report was also filed before Hon'ble High Court.
- (8) Hon'ble High Court had considered the report on 7th April 2011 and directed for removal of encroachments in the corridor.

A copy of the additional report submitted by the Committee constituted by the High Court is at **Annexure-7 (page to)**

In view of the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 14th October 2011, the Standing Committee of NBWL may like to consider the report of the Expert Committee and take appropriate decision in the matter.

3.2

PROPOSAL FOR DIVERSION OF FOREST LANDS OF PAs

1.	Gujarat	6-118/2011 WL	Diversion of 1.4459 ha of forest land from Balaram-Ambaji Sanctuary for construction of railway line passing through the sanctuary by Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd., Gujarat.
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(1)

1	Name of the Proposal	Diversion of 1.4459 ha of forest land from Balaram-Ambaji Sanctuary for construction of railway line by Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd.,
2	Name of the protected Area involved	Balaram-Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary
3	File No.	6-118/2011 WL
4	Name of the State	Gujarat
5	Whether proposal is sub-judice	Not indicated
6	Area of the protected area	542.08 Sq Km.
7	Area proposal for diversion/Denotification	1.4459 ha
8	Area so far diverted from the Protected Area(s)	The Dy. CF, Banaskantha in the proposal (Part-III) has indicated that out of the total area of 54,208 Ha, of the Balaram Ambaji Sanctuary, an area of 26.2022 Ha has already been diverted for various purposes
9	Name of the applicant agency	Indian Railways through the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd
10	Total number of tree to be felled	The proposal indicates that no clearing of vegetation is required.
11	Maps depicting the Sanctuary and the diversion proposal included or not	Yes
12	Recommendation of State Board for Wildlife	The State Board for Wildlife has recommended the proposal on 19 th July 2011.
13	Brief justification of the proposal as given by the applicant agency	The project envisages construction, maintenance, and operation of the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) by the Indian Railways so as to provide a modern, quicker, safer freight transportation system. The proposed DFC Palanpur Yard is at about 6 Kms away from the existing Palanpur Yard of the

	<p>Indian Railways. The Ministry of Railways (through the DFC Ltd.) intends to construct the proposed DFC tracks within the Railways limits adjoining the Balaram Ambaji Sanctuary. There is no land acquisition involved as the proposed tracks pass within the limits of land possessed by Railways.</p> <p>It has also been indicated in the proposal that alternative alignment for the route was also looked into. It was found that almost opposite to the Balaram Ambaji Sanctuary, there is another Sanctuary, viz, the Jessore Sanctuary and in between the both, the Banas River flows almost parallel to the track. The area between the two sanctuaries is also geographically obstructed due to dry valley, Malana Hills and Reserved Forests and the remaining land is highly fertile and is being used for cultivation throughout the year. As Railway alignment cannot be turned by more than 2.5 degree curve and 1 in 200 grade, so the new alignment will have to start at least 15 to 20 Kms prior to this point. In case of the new alignment, the requirement of land increases to 8-10 ha/km as against 0.5 to 1 Ha/Km in case of parallel alignment. In the meantime, local public had also opposed any possible survey and land acquisition through their green fields.</p> <p>The Dy. Conservator of Forests, Banaskantha Palanpur has mentioned that the construction of the DFC track adjacent to Balaram Ambaji Sanctuary is only one time activity and the project is not likely to create any more disturbances to the wildlife of this Protected Area as one Railway track is already operational in the area. It has also been mentioned that the possession of the proposed land is already with the user agency, prior to the declaration of the area as Sanctuary, further degradation of the habitat is not much except increase in vibration and noise pollution in the area. The above statement of the Dy. CF, Banaskantha has also been countersigned by the CCF, Gandhinagar Circle.</p>
14	<p>Rare and endangered species found in the area</p> <p>The proposal indicates the presence of Leopard, Bear, Striped Hyaena and Blue Bull.</p>
15	<p>Opinion of the Chief Wildlife Warden</p> <p>The Chief Wildlife Warden has mentioned that the proposal is for a public facility and specially an area already in use by the Railways and hence has recommended with the following conditions:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The construction of yard and the camp should be at least 3 kms away from the Sanctuary. 2. Providing proper underpasses for movement of wildlife at every one km. 3. Providing culvert/pipe at every one km between underpasses. Further 10

	<p>inch dia pipe shall be provided at every 200 mts distance to facilitate free movement of reptiles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Providing metal beam crash barrier on both side of the railway line, controlling the speed of the trains. 5. Afforestation along the railway line. 6. Impact assessment studies shall be carried out periodically in consultation with State Forest Department. 7. The civil structure shall be designed is such a manner that water flow to the Thol Lake is not obstructed. The same shall be ensured by providing culverts. 8. Enough signages shall be placed throughout. 9. Rs.5 lacs will be deposited annually with the State Forest Department for improving the niche and wildlife conservation. 10. The User Agency shall strictly ensure that no damage is caused to flora and fauna in the area during execution of the project. 11. The CWLW or any officer authorized or working under him may monitor the compliance of conditions and any non compliance, may lead to cancellation of this permission. 12. Approval under Forest Conservation Act 1980 will be obtained separately for the use of forest land. 13. Any other conditions that may be imposed by CWLW/Government will be strictly complied with.
16	<p>Comments of Ministry</p> <p>A copy of the above proposal received from the Government of Gujarat is attached with this Agenda for kind perusal.</p> <p>The Standing Committee may like to take a view on the proposal.</p>

3.3

PROPOSALS FOR TAKING UP ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE BUT WITHIN 10 KM FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE PROTECTED AREAS

S. NO.	STATE	FILE NO.	SUBJECT
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	6-79/2011 WL	Construction of 1,750 MW Demwe Lower HE project in Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh located outside the boundaries of Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh.
1.	Gujarat	6-106/2011 WL	Proposal for railway line passing near Thol Wildlife Sanctuary to be constructed by Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd., at a distance of 700 mts from the Protected Area in Gujarat.

(1)

1	Name of the Proposal	The proposal is for construction of 1750 MW Demwe Lower HE project in Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh located outside the boundaries of Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh.
2	Name of the protected Area involved	Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary
3	File No	6-79/2011 WL
4	Name of the state	Arunachal Pradesh
5	Whether proposal is sub-judice	No
6	Area of the protected area	783 Sq.km.
7	Area proposal for diversion/Denotification	No diversion of land from Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary. The project falls within 10 km radius from the boundary of Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary (8.5 kms aerial distance presently, but the reservoir after execution of project at ½ km aerial distance)
8	Name of the applicant agency	M/s Athena Demwe Power Ltd.
9	Total number of tree to be felled	The proposal indicates clearing of 43,000 trees in 1415.92 ha of forest land.
10	Maps depicting the Sanctuary and the diversion proposal included or not	Yes
11	Recommendation of State Board for Wildlife	The State Board for Wildlife has recommended the proposal on 27.5.2011.
12	Brief justification on the proposal as given by the applicant agency.	The 1,750 MW Demwe Lower Hydroelectric Project is being executed in joint sector with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The Ministry of Power has scheduled the project for commissioning in the 12 th Five Year Plan. The

	<p>project would contribute green energy of about 6322 million units (MU) per annum. After 40 years, the project will be handed over to the State Government. This is a run-of-the-river project with diurnal pondage and is at an advanced stage of development as all major statutory clearances are in place. The detailed project report (DPR) was concurred in by the Central Electricity Authority in November 2009. The proposal has obtained Environmental Clearance in February 2010. The proposal for diversion of 1,415.92 ha (surface 1408.3 ha +7.62 ha underground) of forest land for the project was recommended by the Forest Advisory Committee in May 2010 but the FC clearance is yet to be granted.</p> <p>The Full Reservoir Level (FRL) and Maximum Water Level (MWL) of the project have been kept at EL.424.8m to ensure no submergence in the Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary. The total land involved for the construction of the said project is about 1,589.97 ha, out of which 502.92 ha is River bed area, 174.05 ha is community agricultural land, 713.63 ha is community owned private land with Jhuming rights and 199.37 ha is Reserved Forest land. The proposed dam site around 8.5/0.5 kms aerial distance from the nearest boundary of Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary on the Lang River.</p>
13	<p>Rare and endangered species found in the area</p> <p>The proposal indicates that the Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary is home to the Hoolock gibbon, tiger, leopard, capped langur, red panda etc.</p>
14	<p>Opinion of the Chief Wildlife Warden</p> <p>The Chief Wildlife Warden has recommended the proposal with the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Various measures recommended by the Expert Appraisal Committee, MoEF as a part of Environmental clearance under Biodiversity Conservation and Wildlife Management Plan of the Project shall be implemented in consultation with State Forests & Wildlife management Department in line with guidelines of KWLS. ii. KWLS shall be kept outside the submergence area and all possible measures shall be adopted for compliance of the same. iii. Mitigation measures and management plans suggested in the Environmental Management Plan Report and approved by MoEF as a part of Environmental Clearance of the project should be adopted and implemented during construction period. iv. For effective implementation and monitoring of the Wildlife

	<p>Management Plan of the Project, a Conservation Cell comprising Chief Wildlife Warden, Officer in charge of the KWLS, DFOs of concerned Forest Division, Wildlife/Ecology Experts, Panchayat Representative of the area, Representative from Demwe Lower HEP etc may be constituted.</p> <p>v. Control blasting techniques shall be adopted at dam site for minimal disturbance during construction.</p> <p>vi. Appropriate awareness schemes/programmes with adequate budget shall be prepared to reduce the Jhum Cultivation practices in the local area.</p> <p>vii. As project falls in downhill area, every measure proposed in EMP for soil conservation shall be taken up.</p>
15	<p>Comments of Ministry:</p> <p>The proposal was discussed during the 23rd meeting of the Standing Committee of NBWL held on 14th October 2011.</p> <p>The Committee decided that a site inspection be conducted by Dr Asad Rahmani, Member, Standing Committee of NBWL and Shri Pratap Singh, Chief Conservator of Forests (WL), Arunachal Pradesh and a report be submitted to the Standing Committee for its consideration.</p> <p>The Site inspection report will be made available to all Members of the Standing Committee as soon as the same is received, and will also be placed before the Committee in its meeting on 13.12.2011. The Inspection Team of Dr Rahmani and Shri Singh will also make a presentation on the salient points of the report in the meeting.</p>

(2)

1	Name of the Proposal	Proposal for construction of the Dedicated Freight Corridor railway line passing near Thol Wildlife Sanctuary.
2	Name of the protected Area involved	Thol Wildlife Sanctuary
3	File No.	6-106/2011 WL
4	Name of the state	Gujarat
5	Whether proposal is sub-judice	Not mentioned
6	Area of the protected area	6.99 sq km.
7	Area proposal for diversion/Denotification	The proposed alignment is within 5 kms of the boundary of Thol Bird Sanctuary (Nearest distance from Sanctuary's boundary is 700 meters).
8	Name of the applicant agency	Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd.
9	Total number of tree to be felled	Not mentioned in the proposal
10	Maps depicting the Sanctuary and the diversion proposal included or not	Yes
11	Recommendation of State Board for Wildlife	The State Board for Wildlife has recommended the proposal on 19 th July 2011.
12	Brief justification on the proposal as given by the applicant agency	The project envisages construction, maintenance, and operation of the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) by the Indian Railways so as to provide a modern, quicker, safer freight transportation system. The proposed alignment is within 5 Kms of the boundary of Thol Wildlife Sanctuary and the nearest distance from the Sanctuary boundary is 700 meters.
13	Rare and endangered species found in the area	The proposal indicates the presence of common Langur, Jungle Cat, Jackal, Indian Flying Fox and Blue Bull etc. in and around the project area.

14	<p>Opinion of the Chief Wildlife Warden</p> <p>The Chief Wildlife Warden has recommended the proposal with the following conditions:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The construction of yard and the camp should be at least 3 kms away from the Sanctuary. 2. Providing of proper underpasses for movement of wildlife at every one km. 3. Providing culvert/pipe at every one km between underpasses. Further 10 inch dia pipe shall be provided at every 200 mts distance to facilitate free movement of reptiles. 4. Providing metal beam crash barrier on both side of the railway line, controlling the speed of the trains. 5. Afforestation along the railway line. 6. Impact assessment studies shall be carried out periodically in consultation with State Forest Department. 7. The civil structure shall be designed is such a manner that water flow to the Thol Lake is not obstructed. The same shall be ensured by providing culverts. 8. Enough signages shall be placed throughout. 9. Rs.5 lacs will be deposited annually with the State Forest Department for improving the niche and Wildlife Conservation.
15	<p>Comments of Ministry</p> <p>Details of alternatives explored and area of Thol Sanctuary diverted earlier not furnished with the proposal.</p> <p>A copy of the above proposal received from the Government of Gujarat is attached with this Agenda for kind perusal.</p> <p>The Standing Committee may like to take a view on the proposal.</p>

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

ANY OTHER ITEM WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR
