

## From Finding History To Making History

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is planning to establish gift shops in its monuments creating an opportunity for the Cultural and Creative Industries to work closely with the monuments. ASI intends to leverage souvenirs for generating interest and promotion of heritage monuments. In order to enhance interest and recognition of Indian cultural crafts and heritage leading to their conservation, development and sustaining livelihood of the associated artisans and their communities the ASI has released an Expression of Interest on [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) and [www.asi.nic.in](http://www.asi.nic.in). An entire list of 84 monuments is available on the EOI.

For the past two years the ASI has been deliberating the policy for running high quality souvenir shops at monuments of national importance. The souvenir shops intend to provide a visitor experience that the people of India can engage with in order to connect with their heritage. Souvenir varieties will range from replicas of highlighted features of the site, such as architectural fragments, important sculptures, inclusion of One District One Product (ODOP) and artifacts of antiquarian value. Besides replicas, this souvenir shop can serve as a playground for creative ideas where craftspeople, artisans, corporate conglomerates, boutique manufacturers and startups can participate in manufacturing items that speak directly to the culture of India.

## Saving Our Extinguishing Wildlife

We deserve no right to live over this globe, if we don't bear sympathy in mind for a variety of animal life that surrounds us, and definitely God will be unhappy at our activities of merciless and wanton destruction of this wildlife which He himself loved and sympathized with. With this may be added what Mr. Nehru once remarked. "I wonder sometime what these animals and birds think of man and how would they describe him if they have the capacity to do so. I rather doubt if their description would be very complimentary to man. In spite of our rich culture and civilization man continues to be not only wild but more dangerous than any of the so called animals.

History amply shows that our religion, custom and traditions were intimately associated with variety of form of animal life. But with the passage of time and other conditions, things went on changing from bad to worse. With the advent of the world wars, new type of guns were manufactured and the hunters took their use otherwise. The early British officers were too much interested in hunting and they caused great havoc. Add to it the merciless treatment extended by princes of India, who in their interest killed a large number of lions, tigers and leopards. Then came the "Grow more food campaign", which resulted in the indiscriminate felling of forest tree for agriculture. The Government itself was little aware and less interested in preserving wildlife and instead, issued the licenses extensively. As a result of this merciless destruction, the number went on reducing and at present the species are classified as rare, threatened and extinct. Rare being those which were in abundant in number but due to destructive means have been reduced to few, threatened are those which are continuously subject to threat while extinct being those which were abundant once but have now reduced at zero.

Breeding of endangered species in captivity is a recently introduced method by which the species can be multiplied under proper care and supervision. In the mid of 1976, world conference on breeding of endangered species in captivity took place. One hundred and seventy delegates from all over the world participated in the conference held at Zoo in London for three days. After discussion it was concluded that though captive-breeding suffers from large amount of failures, when a species is shifted from its natural habitat, yet success has been found in varying degrees. So, certain species which are more threatened with extinction, can be bred in captivity under proper care and supervision and can therefore, be multiplied successfully. And of new origin, the nature lovers don't agree with breeding in captivity taking the plea that these domesticate the wildlife and result into their natural instinct.

The paramount need of the hour lies in the systematic ecological studies, population surveys, mortality and breeding data, predator prey relationship in order to ascertain their real condition and circumstances. The improvement of game habitat is one of the most important measure if we are to succeed in handling of the problem of dynamic manipulation. Again, appointment of various committees and commission to review the progress made and at the same time give broad out lined step to be undertaken for the protection of wildlife of all strata. In the third place natural extinct, which is also named as "biological eclipse" is also responsible for the wildlife extinction. But it is law of nature which applies everywhere extension-threshold is allied to renewability, named the power of species to establish itself from near zero-abundance. When the extinction threshold is reduced to lower degrees then gradual decline in the wild animals takes place and this had been the predominant cause of extinction of wildlife. There are many more to be named which were in one way the order responsible for its extinction of wildlife i.e. use of pesticides in the agricultural lands and many more of its ilk. As a result of the factors enumerated above, many species became extinct and many more are subject to threat. Too much has been talked about saving the Asiatic lion (Panthera despicia). This Sher bahar which inhabit open tracts was abundant in our country, but it is said that today its number is reduced and confined to "Gir Forest" in Gujarat. However, the wildlife department is fully on the job to enhance their existing strength.

During the past few decades in the Gir Forest the sanctuary area has shrunk from 5180 kms. to 1295 kms. where has all the land gone? It has been devoured by men, his houses, factories and plantation, with the poor lion pushed to corner feeding (providing) for itself. The cheetah (Actionanysjubatus) or the hunting leopard has disappeared from our country which was once plenty in the Deccan, its principal food was the blackbuck, chinkara, and four-horned antelope, which was subjected to destruction with the result that it itself disappeared. The great Indian rhinoceros (R. Unicornis) which once existed throughout the Indo gangetic plain, almost up to Peshwar; today it is confined to a small areas like Assam, Bengal, same is the case with other animals viz, the Kashmir stag (Cerosunglu), the Indian wild ass the thamin deer (panoki-aedfieldi), the muskdeer (Moschusmoschifemus), the pigmy hog (pomculaSylonia), the snowleopard (Unices Uncies), the clouded leopard ( Neafelisnebulosa) the great India Bustard (Chariotiesingriops), the white winged duck ( Asacomisscutulatus) the pink headed duck (Rhodonessacaryophyllacea), etc. These species were at time abundant but today they are threatened with extinction. How threatened species can be safeguarded? There on cut and try formula to safeguard these species. Of the various steps which can be undertaken, first is the control of such activities which have lead and still leading to the extinction of the species and these include as mentioned earlier; habitat change, poaching, killing, hunting, use of pesticide and industrialization, etc. Then other steps can be undertaken and of these first comes the declaring of as many areas under wildlife sanctuaries, National parks, in safeguarding species are necessary, in parallel with upcoming of 'Days-weeks' for the last half a century, wildlife week is most reverentially celebrate from Oct 2to 8 every year to make humankind's awakening. And conclusively, it is added over here that "convinced of the fundamental importance of conserving the natural environment, upon which rests the foundation of human civilization, let us solemnly pledge that we will spare no efforts to preserve our vanishing wildlife and our dwindling forest area?"

The author is Former Dy. Conservator of forest, J&K

# M S Swaminathan-A visionary who revolutionised agricultural science



■ NARENDRA MODI

A few days ago we lost Professor M.S. Swaminathan. Our nation lost a visionary who revolutionised agricultural science, a stalwart whose contribution to India will always be etched in golden letters. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan loved India and wanted our nation, and our farmers in particular, to lead a life of prosperity. Academically brilliant, he could have chosen any career but he was so impacted by the Bengal famine of 1943 that he was clear that if there is one thing he would do, it would be to study agriculture.

At a relatively young age, he came in contact with Dr. Norman Borlaug and followed his work in great detail. In the 1950's, he was offered a faculty position in the US but he rejected it because he wanted to work in India and for India.

I want you all to think about the challenging circumstances in which he stood as a colossus, guiding our nation towards the path of self-sufficiency and self-confidence. In the first two decades since Independence, we were dealing with immense challenges and one of them was food shortages. In the early 1960s, India was grappling with the ominous shadows of famine and it is then that Prof. Swaminathan's unyielding commitment and foresight ushered a new era of agricultural prosperity. His pioneering work in agriculture and specific sectors like wheat breeding led to a significant increase in wheat production, thus turning India from a food-deficient country into a self-sufficient nation. This tremendous achievement earned him the well deserved title of, "Father of the Indian Green Revolution."

The Green Revolution offered a glimpse of India's "Can Do Spirit" - that if we have a billion challenges, we also have a billion minds with the flame of innovation to overcome those challenges. Five decades after the Green Revolution began, Indian agriculture has become far more modern and progressive. But, the very foundations laid by Prof. Swaminathan can never be forgotten.

Over the years, he undertook pioneering research in combatting parasites affecting potato crops. His research also enabled potato crops to withstand cold weather. Today, the world is talking about Millets or Shree Anna as super foods but Prof. Swaminathan had encouraged discourse around millets since the 1990's.

My personal interactions with Prof. Swaminathan



were extensive. They began after I took over as Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001. During those days, Gujarat was not known for its agricultural prowess. Successive droughts and a super cyclone and an Earthquake had impacted the growth trajectory of the state. Among the many initiatives we launched, was the Soil Health Card, which enabled us to understand the soil better and address problems if they arose. It was in the context of this scheme that I met Prof. Swaminathan. He appreciated the scheme and also shared his valuable inputs for the same. His endorsement was enough to convince those who were sceptical about the scheme which would eventually set the stage for Gujarat's agricultural success.

Our interactions continued during my Chief Ministerial tenure and also when I took over as Prime Minister. I met him at the International Agro-Biodiversity Congress in 2016 and the next year in 2017, I launched a two-part book series written by him.

The Kural describes farmers as the pin that holds the world together because it is the farmers who sustain everyone. Prof. Swaminathan understood this principle very well. A lot of people call him a "Krishi Vaigyanik" -

an Agricultural Scientist. But, I have always believed that he was even more. He was a true "Kisan Vaigyanik" - a Farmers' Scientist. In his heart there was a farmer. The success of his works is not restricted to their academic excellence; it lies in the impact they have had outside the laboratories, in the farms and the fields. His work narrowed the gap between scientific knowledge and its practical application. He consistently advocated for sustainable agriculture, emphasising the delicate balance between human advancement and ecological sustainability. Here, I must also note Prof. Swaminathan's special emphasis on improving the lives of the small farmers and ensuring they also enjoy the fruits of innovation. He was particularly passionate about improving the lives of women farmers.

There is another aspect about Prof. M.S. Swaminathan which is remarkable - he stands tall as a paragon of innovation and mentorship. When he won the World Food Prize in 1987, the first recipient of this prestigious honour, he used the prize money to establish a not-for-profit research foundation. Till date, it undertakes extensive work across various sectors. He has nurtured countless minds, instilling in them a passion for learning and innovation. In a rapidly changing world, his life reminds us of the enduring power of knowledge, mentorship, and innovation. He was an institution builder as well, having to his credit many centres where vibrant research takes place. One of his stints was as Director, International Rice Research Institute, Manila. The South Asia Regional Centre of International Rice Research Institute was opened in Varanasi in 2018.

I will again cite The Kural to pay tributes to Dr. Swaminathan. It is written there, "If those who have planned have firmness, they will attain what they have desired the way they have desired." Here was a stalwart who decided early on in his life that he wants to strengthen agriculture and serve farmers. And, he did it exceptionally innovatively and passionately. Dr. Swaminathan's contributions continue to inspire and guide us as we navigate the path of agricultural innovation and sustainability. We must also keep reaffirming our commitment to the principles he held dear, championing the cause of farmers and ensuring the fruits of scientific innovation reach the roots of our agricultural expanse, fostering growth, sustainability, and prosperity for generations to come.

(The author is Prime Minister of India)

# Sanasar-Serene and Scenic the wonder of beauty

■ GL KHAJURIA

Amidst lush green forest of deodar and other pines around 125 kms from Jammu and 19 kms from Patnitop is located Sanasar a wonder of wonders. This picturesque spot is akin to Gulmarg of Kashmir for its enchanting beauty, grandeur and glory where tourists in thousands throng in during peak summer spells for having a sigh of relief away from soaring temperature as well as to enjoy the dazzling natural beauty of this resort. Though the road lifeline from Patnitop to Sanasar is rugged and rough and is having serpentine twists and turns, yet the tourist inflow is ever-increasing year after year. The road link calls for improvement for the convenience of tourists influx. Even during winter, the tourists influx is undoubtedly unbridled and the visitors throng in heavy numbers to enjoy and cherish snowfall, when Kud, Patnitop, Batote and the areas in and around the vicinity is heavily snow-capped so much so that the National Highway often repeatedly gets blocked.

'Sanasar' is situated around 9500 feet from sea level and is termed as mini-Gulmarg of Kashmir. The picturesque spot is lapped all round with mystique of mystiques, bountiful engrossing lush greenery of pines, herbs, shrubs and abundant medicinal plants ranging from micro to macro flora coupled with the rich heritage of other flora and fauna. The natural springs yielding nectarious water are founheads at multihued places. Apart from scenic beauty, the place is a sanctum sanctorum from time immemorial as the land of 'Nag Rajas' in and around the vicinity of Sanasar itself and 'Nag Raja' of Kasal is of immense 'Shakti' where the visitors as well go for paying obeisance and obtain divine blessing. It is believed with oozing confidence that wishes made before 'Nag Raja' are fulfilled, though the photography of the temple and that of inside is strictly prohibited. These are miracles of 'Divine Shakties' in the modern age of most advanced Science and Technology (the writer has had his own experience, though not narrate able). At the peak of Patnitop enroute Batote, there is another 'Devsthan' (Shank Paul Shakti Devta) temple and is having equalising 'Shakti'.

Much water has flowed down Chenab; but ironically this picturesque spot has

been least bothered for its developments. A short stretch of 19 kms that links Sanasar with Patnitop is in a very dilapidated condition. You cannot call it a pacca or a kaccha road. The locals are deprived of the basic amenities, particularly when it is a heavy snowfall when the road remains cut off for days together and the electric supply creates the same sort of situation. This ever green cushioned spot is really a piece of heaven, the more you praise the less it is!! Sanasar meadow is a green carpet like ground and cushioned by silky soft grasses that glorify the resort. Add to it the small brilliant, refreshing fragrant flowers which add to the beauty of the spot. To lay to rest on this green meadow carpet is too comfortable and enchanting then that of confining oneself in the adjoining rooms constructed by various departments.

'Sanasar, over the years was a marvelous lake like that of 'Sruinsar' and 'Mansar' of Jammu district but ironically now stands dried almost due more to the seepage for the last around 60 years or so. However, as per estimates the lake had encompassed around 2500 kanals with its outer periphery circumference rounding some 6 kms or so. The area was and is subjected to encroachment but the forest Department associated with revenue Department and law enforcing agencies are on the high and active surveillance to thwart any attempt to have an evil eye over the picturesque spot. In the version of L.P Rai (the then Addl. Dy commissioner, Ramban) thatas far as in the year 1992, he chanced upon to interact with the then, Director, Geology and Mining Department along with GREF agencies to survey the area and evolve strategy workable to restore to its pristine grandeur and glory and to analyze the root cause of its shrinkage and de-silting and in their ultimate analysis opined that the subtle cause being underground water flow down below Nashri Nallah, barely 8 kmsonfoot through the forest linking NH-1A. Further it was established that there are as many as nine springs underneath this Sanasar lake and at the same time, it was apprehended that lifting of silt to the extent of 20-25 feet may cause holocaustic consequences to the local inhabitants together with their cultivated lands as well. The

specialist further emphasized that the government should approach to the expert deptt. with enough expertise for the construction of a wall arounding 20 feet in the length and 8 feet in width and only then the silt of the lake can be lifted to bring back this heritage to its pristine beauty and grandeur. The survey together with workable strategy remained as a hanging fire till date.

There is an astonishing legend that it that the farmers of the locality were once ploughing the field in the vicinity of Sanasar lake and they took a break for the lunch leaving the oxen aside. In the meanwhile, a Sadhu appeared on the scene and he advised the farmers to unyolk the oxen so that they may also graze and take rest. Instead, they aguishly said, "Who are you to advise us for unyoking oxen? Within moments, the Sadhu eluded and it is said that a calamitous storm with whirlwind engulfed the sky coupled with whimper cloudburst which struck the area and everything swept away along with the farmers and oxen so yoked.

People of the locality and those of far away places come to this temple for paying obeisance and obtain blessings from "Chouneer Nag Devta" - a miracle of miracles. Manzoor Ahmed Forest Guard posted at Sanasar forest has had a holy Darshan-of 'Nag Devta' while being on its routine movement in the forest- A nine feet long "Nag" with hairy skin.

The sacred temple of Nag-Devta of Sanasar is visited twice in a year in the form of Yatra and of which one is vegetarian and is celebrated with the offerings of sweet rice, whereas the other is non-vegetarian which is celebrated by the sacrificial of goat and is offered to the 'Nag Devta'. Two Bhandaras are also held every year. Though many may not believe, but truthfulness and sanctity exists on the hilly areas of Sub-Himalayan regions like Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Dudu, Basantgarh, Kud, Patnitop, Billawar, Bani, Basohli and many of its pious areas adjoining the state of Himachal Pradesh. During Governor rule in 1990 , a nine point gulf course plan was earmarked for Sanasar which too remained in the offing and till date there is no let up.

SOME SUGGESTIONS:  
\*Improvement of road: A short stretch of 19 kms linking the road with Patnitop

warrants improvement. This is pertinent in view of the present scenario as the soil texture is good and metaling coupled with black topping of this rough road is the need inviting government attention and allied agencies coupled with maintenance of side drains for disciplined outflow of water during inclimical weather conditions and even otherwise also this is the major bottleneck and once a healthy lifeline is established, this shall boost and ameliorate tourist influx.

\*Beautification of The Road Link (Patnitop-Sanasar) Plantation of ornamental trees, shrubs alongside road linkon the either side at equidistance shall expurgate the beauty of spot.

\*De-silting of the lake area: This is necessary and demanding too, to restore back the lake area to its pristine grandeur and glory. This is no longer a single agency show but many departments al Geological and survey forest , soil conservation and other allied agencies connected with the restoration and reclamation need to be associated with to chalk out workable strategy for the formation of lake which will not only enhance the beauty spot for the preservation of the spot which is of a National Heritage.

\*Development of meadows and golf course: The half way left over idea warrants proper shaping now onwards for years to come and heretoomany agencies shall to be associated with to chalk out workable strategies so as to attract the golf enthusiasts not only from the state but from India and abroad.

\*Accommodation: The tourism, the forest and allied departments have magnificently raised hutments to accommodate visitors, which do not demand its further exaggeration, else it would disfigure the beauty of spot. However, 'view points' on isolated spots shall further add beauty and grandeur to the area which are warranted to be constructor for the children to have an overview picture of the spot and its surroundings so may feel fascinating.

\*Mini-Creation Park: A mini recreation park shall provide enchanting spell to the children and little kids who live in their own world. It shall as well feast and boost their excitements and merry making.

(The author is Former Dy. Conservator of forest, J&K).

## YOUR COLUMN

### Increase the concentration to some extent

Dear editor,

Parent's common complaint about their wards is their lack of concentration. While studying, they are often distracted by several things which results in making learning a huge task for them. There could be several reasons for this: restlessness, playfulness, dreamy nature, lack of understanding or interest in studies or some stress.

We suggest a fewer simple tips which will help increase your child's concentration to some extent.

Taking down notes during classes is a habit that should be inculcated in children. Making a note of something important being taught by the teacher helps the child to reinforce what has been taught. While revising the lesson, these notes will help to improve his concentration as he has to pay complete attention to what the teacher is saying and later concentrate on trying to recall what his notes say.

Multitasking is not everyone's cup of tea. Especially in

children, this can be quite a task. Ensuring that the child concentrates on one single task at hand can improve his level of concentration to a large extent.

Research has proven that when you study a topic before going to bed, the information is shifted to the long term memory. This proves that enough rest is of vital importance to concentration and good memory. If there is an overload of information without proper sleep, it will be a futile exercise in learning.

It has been observed that children tend to concentrate better when they are given breaks between two study sessions. These breaks help them to re-vitalize their interest and start again with renewed energy. This makes shifting to another subject or topic easier. They could utilise this break to play, read, listen to music or do any leisurely activity.

It's not just the child's habits that should be blamed for their lack of concentration. Many times, there are some other factors like the people and environment around him that needs to be improved. Besides school, at home too, one needs to ensure that his concentration is optimum. Look around for habits that could be instrumental in distracting him, like listening to music or TV on high

volume. A family member or neighbours' loud behaviour could also be playing the spoilt sport. Similarly check whether your habit of supervising over every aspect of your child's studying is affecting his concentration levels?

Also ensure that he sits to study in a well-lit room with good ventilation with least possible noises in the background. These small yet important things could go a long way in helping him regain his concentration level.

Besides his habits, there could be psychological issues that your child could be facing that could be impairing his concentration level. For example constant fights between parents, bullying at school or home, competition with peers or some sort of phobia are just a few instances that keeps a child distracted. It is important to identify the problem and rectify it as soon as possible.

These days, children have several electronic gadgets to indulge in. Be it television shows, virtual games, social media etc. and other tempting gadgets which are a concentration buster for sure. Wean them off these unnecessary distractions to encourage your child's concentration levels.

Vijay Garg