

## News & Views-2011

<p><b>Theft of forest wealth led to deaths</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>January 09, 2011</i></p>	<p>It was earlier stated that the three women killed in a tiger attack near Sunderkhal village had gone to the forest to collect firewood. However, according to information provided by local wildlife activists, all the three women who were killed in the forests of the Corbett National Park had entered the area to collect curry leaves and other plant items for commercial use. It is a common practice among villagers around the national park area to enter the forest area for collecting curry leaves, cinnamon leaves and other plant products used as spices. The leaves collected by the village women from the forests of the national park are dried and then sold in blatant violation of existing laws which mandate herbs cannot be harvested from forest areas without valid authorization. Curry leaves, which are the most common item collected, grow in bushes which are also used by tigers and other animals for shelter.</p>
<p><b>Govt. experiment working in Himachal forest department</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>January 14, 2011</i></p>	<p>The experiment of posting forest officers in the Government of India and the State Governments has been successful and has paid rich dividends. Chief Minister Prof Prem Kumar Dhumal has realised the potential of IFS officers and posed faith in their ability to run the show, especially where scientific background in addition to administrative acumen is an advantage. The reason for the feel-good factor further making its presence felt is that the morale of the foresters has been boosted with the arrival and joining of dynamic and positive Sudipto Roy, a senior IAS officer as their new Additional Chief Secretary, and has been given the charge of Forest and Wild Life Department. When Sudipto Roy was asked about his green forestry agenda, he said: "There is plenty to do in Forest and Wild Life Department and Himachal Pradesh is fortunate to have one of the finest forest officers in the country. I am studying and looking into the matter at micro level, and will act accordingly."</p>
<p><b>Tree line shift in Gangotri worries environmentalists</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>January 15, 2011</i></p>	<p>Vegetation shifting towards north in Uttarakhand's Gangotri glacier mainly due to 'global warming', seems to have come as major cause of concern for the environmentalists. Treeline which was discovered at 3,840 meter in 1976 in the glaciers, had now shifted towards north up to 4,230 meter, as per a survey. The fact is that while the tree line shifted only around 30 meter in 14 years between 1976 and 1990 in the Gangotri glaciers reaching up to 3,870 meter, it witnessed an expansion of about 10 meter in the next decade till 1999 reaching 3,880 meter. So whereas, there was a constant rise in shifting of glaciers till 1990, in the next few years till 2006-2007, there was a quantum jump in this process with treeline shifting up to 4,230 meter. Given increasing industrial as well as other commercial activities over the years as the atmospheric conditions have only deteriorated, the treeline may have only gone up. So keeping in view these concerns in mind, the Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC) has again started a study in this glaciers, said KS Rawat, a senior</p>

	<p>scientist at the USAC while talking to The Pioneer. The study is being conducted basically to understand the present conditions of the Gangotrai glaciers and how it has affected our ecological system over the years, the scientist further said. Vegetation shifting in these areas is possible only when the temperature goes up. So this is a clear indication how the atmospheric conditions have changed, Rawat added. Shifting of treeline is just an indication of how the atmospheric conditions have suffered due to increasing industrial activities and unscientific exploitation of the natural resources.</p>
<p><b>Environment ministry, industry forum to advice firms on green laws</b></p> <p>TIMES OF INDIA <i>January 25, 2011</i></p>	<p>The environment ministry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) will set up a facilitation centre to advice small and medium enterprises (SME) on environmental rules and regulation, environment minister Jairam Ramesh said Monday. "The environment ministry and FICCI will establish a compliance facilitation centre which will be a advisory service to the industries particularly for SME on compliance with the environmental rules, regulation, laws and standards," he said after a closed-door interaction with FICCI officials. He said the centers may have a 50-50 partnership mode, similar to the one FICCI had with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). He also said that next open house will focus exclusively on the environmental concerns of SMEs. Besides this, the other important discussions related to plastic waste management rules that the environment ministry is in the process of notifying, Ramesh said. He stated the plastic management rules had two objectives - firstly, minimising the environmental hazards caused by the large-scale disposal of plastic waste, and secondly, ensuring the labour-intensive sector is not strangled.</p>
<p><b>Rave species rescued by Malsi forest officer</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>February 02, 2011</i></p>	<p>A fortnight ago, a rock eagle owl went missing from the Malsi Deer Park and another rock eagle owl has been rescued by the forest department and provided shelter in the park. The Malsi forest range officer Rajkumar Taank headed a team, which rescued this owl, after receiving information from villagers about an owl being attacked by a murder of crows. It is pertinent to note here that the rock eagle owl has tufts of feathers akin to horns on its head and has red coloured eyes, which have made it one of the most wanted owl species for use in black magic rituals. Its capture and trade for this purpose is one of the reasons along with habitat destruction which has made the rock eagle owl rare in Dehradun, where it was once found in substantial numbers. A rock eagle owl rescued and sheltered in the Malsi deer park was reported missing on January 15. It is believed that some of the park staff might be involved in the disappearance of the owl which is feared to have ended up in the black market. More than a fortnight after this incident, the park officials were informed by villagers about an owl being attacked by a murder of crows. The bird which turned out to be a rock eagle owl was</p>

	rescued and has been kept in the Malsi deer park.
<p><b>Tarai villagers protest, call for implementation of Forest Act</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>February 03, 2011</i></p>	<p>People of over a dozen forest villages took out a major protest here on Wednesday against increasing number man-animal conflicts and demanded immediate implementation of Forest Act -2006 and revenue status to these villages. The agitators also demanded that the compensation which is granted to the victim of wild animal should increase from Rs. one lakh to Rs. 10 lakh. The fact is that due to non-revenue status, these villages are still deprived of basic facilities like drinking water, electricity connection, health services, education, to name a few. More importantly, tougher forest laws have only made their lives more vulnerable, alleged the villagers. This indifferent attitude towards these forest and non-revenue villages of the respective governments has only had an adverse impact on wildlife conservation efforts, alleged the villagers. Since these non-revenue villages or khattas are adjacent to forests, the Government was supposed to implement Forest Law—2006 to address the due concerns of the villagers. But nothing has moved, resulting in increasing number of man -animal conflicts over the years.</p>
<p><b>Acquisition limit for forest land increased</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>February 06, 2011</i></p>	<p>Uttarakhand Chief Secretary Subhash Kumar informed that in a recently held meeting in New Delhi headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, it was decided to increase the land acquisition limit for the forest land from one hectare to two hectare. According to him, the recently taken decision would be proved extremely beneficial to bring various beneficiary projects to the ground-level and would push the State further on the path of progress. He told that Prime Minister Singh has assured that every possible step would be taken for green bonus. It is noteworthy that the Chief Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank wrote a letter to Prime Minister demanding to implement green bonus scheme, so that conservation of forest could be done on the large scale. Nishank also asked to grant a sum of `5,000 crore to bear the losses that the State underwent in the last 10 years. The Chief Secretary also informed that Prime Minister Singh has also applauded the State Government's role for assisting residents who were hit by the natural calamities that rocked the entire Uttarakhand in the last year.</p>
<p><b>Weeds usurping forest, farm land</b></p> <p>THE TRIBUNE <i>February 09, 2011</i></p>	<p>Thwarting the march of the invasive alien species, which pose a major threat to the indigenous flora, will be the main focus of the state Forest Department during the International Year of Forests. Weeds like lantana, ageratum, parthenium (Congress grass) and eupatorium have over the years usurped several lakh hectares of forest land and their march is continuing unabated. In the lower and mid-hill areas, these species have invaded large tracts of agriculture land. They are now moving up into the sub-temperate zone. Piecemeal efforts in the past to tackle the weed problem have not yielded the desired results. Already some medicinal</p>

	<p>plants like viola (banafsha) have been weeded out from the pine forests and now that they are intruding into the flora-rich sub-temperate zone, the implications for the biodiversity will be serious. Further, the dominance of single species on the forest floor also increases the danger of wild fires which spread quickly due to thick undergrowth. More importantly, a large scale invasion of forests by poisonous weeds is taking a heavy toll on useful grasses and bushes which provided fodder for the cattle. Failure to contain the spread of these undesirable species will, in the long run, endanger the livelihood of the hill people, he explains. Since the United Nations has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, the department has decided to focus on the seemingly intractable weed problem. The objective is to put in place a long-term action plan to find a lasting solution to the problem. Teams of forest officials will conduct field surveys to estimate the area affected by weed and identify the severely hit area. Thereafter, an action plan based on biological intervention like introduction of more vigorous useful species to replace the weeds and check their march will be prepared. Fast-growing species like bamboo, bohemia and ritha will have a major role in proper management of weeds.</p>
<p><b>Lafarge mining site in Meghalaya lies in forest area: Govt.</b></p> <p>TIMES OF INDIA <i>February 13, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Centre today told the Supreme Court that French cement company Lafarge's mining site in Khasi hill of Meghalaya was a forest land and environment clearance was given in the belief that it lied in non-forest area. Attorney General Goolam E Vahanvati, who was appearing for the center, said that the environmental clearance given to Lafarge in August 9, 2001 was based on a report submitted by the East Khasi Hill Autonomous Council that there was no forest and plantation in the area. "The ministry of environment and forest granted environmental clearance to the project after detailed examination of the Environment Impact Assessment conducted by the local authorities only," he told the apex court. Vahanvati further submitted that East Khasi Hill Autonomous Council, which has the rights over the local forests, had given no objection certificate to Lafarge in August 1997. On this, a special forest bench headed by the Chief Justice SH Kapadia asked, "was the MOEF fully aware that the area was a non-forest area." The bench, which also comprised justices Aftab Alam and Swatanter Kumar, further asked, "does the EIA assessment report also says that there was no forest in that area?" Replying to it, Vahanvati said, "there was enough material for us to prove that there was no forest. This is the basis on which we proceed."</p>
<p><b>Govt. finds it hard to vacate encroached forest area</b></p>	<p>Nearly 65 per cent of the total geographical areas of Uttarakhand is covered with forest, but a big chunk nearly 10,000 hectare area is under encroachment. These areas were encroached many decades ago and residential settlements were established over it. Now, it is not as easy for the Government to remove these</p>

<p>THE PIONEER <i>March 02, 2011</i></p>	<p>settlements due to technical, procedural and budget related factors. Observers state that though such situations could be redressed effectively with the positive effort by the Government, but it is the political compulsions which delayed Government from taking any strict actions against the removal of these settlements. According to information provided by the Forest Department, as on 31 March 2010, a total of 9,676 hectare forest area is presently occupied by encroachments. Whereas about 8,300 hectare forest area in Kumaon division is under encroachment, about 1,300 hectare forest area is under encroachment in Garhwal division. Encroachment is highest in the western circle forest area of Uttarakhand, where 8,097 hectare has been encroached. The area under encroachment in various forest areas includes 620 hectare in Shivalik circle, 396 hectare in Garhwal, 162 and 59 hectares in northern and southern Kumaon respectively.</p>
<p><b>Help forest dwellers be aware of rights: Minister</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>March 03, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Uttarakhand Van Panchayat Sangharsh Morcha organised two-day deliberations on the Forest Rights Act in Uttarakhand, its conditions and possibilities. Addressing the gathering on the first day of deliberations, Kandari exhorted members of the forest dwelling communities to pursue their forest rights religiously while denying the allegation that the Government was not doing enough for them. He stressed that instead of considering the Government solely responsible, the members of forest dwelling communities should become more aware about their forest rights. Speaking on the occasion, the member of Central Forests Rights Act review committee Ashish Kothari informed that out of a total of 30 lakh claims received under the Forest Rights Act from across the nation, 10 lakh have even got titles. However the condition of nomadic tribes like Baddis and Gujjars has remained poor in general. The condition for them giving a proof of their permanent address of residence is not easy to follow because of the nomadic nature of these communities. Addressing the gathering, forest rights issues expert Madhu Sarin spoke on the importance of the Forest Rights Act in facilitating access to legal rights of forest dwelling communities. The efficiency in implementation of this act differs in the various States of India, she added.</p>
<p><b>19th Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Week ends</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>March 07, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Indian Bureau of Mines and Jaypee Himachal Cement Plant organised a programme to mark the concluding ceremony of the 19th Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Week. More than 40 mining enterprises were awarded for commendable environmental practices in different categories on the occasion. Addressing the gathering as the chief guest of the programme, the controller general of the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), CS Gundewar stressed that the conservation of environment was a major issue which affected all the socio-economical spheres of society including mining activity. He commended the performance of those who had been awarded for good environmental practices in mining enterprises while also</p>

	<p>commending the gathering for congregating in Dehradun to deliberate on important issues like protection of the environment along with mining. Speaking as the special guest, the regional mines controller and northern area in-charge of IBM, SP Goyal informed the gathering about the importance of environment conservation in general and in particular regarding mining activities.</p>
<p><b>Forest dept organises workshop on landscape restoration</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>March 09, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Forest Department organised a workshop for presentation of work done in sites across the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand as part of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration. According to the Dehradun Divisional Forest Officer, Meenakshi Joshi, 20 sites each in the three Indian States; Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Odisha have been selected under this global partnership. The first phase of this initiative comprises of documentation of the forest landscape restoration studies undertaken during the past 10 years along with analyses of factors responsible for either success or failure of the efforts undertaken for restoration. In Uttarakhand the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) is in partnership with the Forest Department for this initiative. Presentations were made on the studies undertaken in sites located in Dehradun, Uttarkashi, Haridwar, Badarinath, Alaknanda valley and Lansdowne in the Garhwal region during the meet held on Tuesday. A presentation of studies undertaken in the Kumaon region will be held on March 10 followed by a State level programme on March 13 to review work undertaken in the first phase of the global partnership effort. The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration is a proactive network that unites Governments, organisations, communities and individuals with a common goal. The partnership was initiated with the purpose of catalysing and reinforcing a network of diverse examples of restoration of forests and degraded lands that deliver benefits to local communities and to nurture and fulfill international commitments on forests.</p>
<p><b>More leopards outside 'protected' forest areas in Uttarakhand</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>March 17, 2011</i></p>	<p>According to forest department statistics, out of the total 2,335 leopards counted in the State in the 2008 census, only 593 were counted inside protected areas whereas 1,742 were counted outside protected areas. According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority member and former honorary wildlife warden of the Corbett National Park, Brijendra Singh, and the prey base of the leopard has been decimated in its natural habitat, especially in forests near villages. The resulting rise in conflict with humans is turning the leopard into a villain for the general public even though the feline is being forced to stray out of protected areas in order to survive due to anthropogenic factors. As leopards are more adaptable to different environments they are involved in a greater number of conflicts with humans as compared to tigers. Since 2001, 204 humans have been killed and 363 injured by leopards in the State. During this time period, a total of 566 leopard deaths were recorded and 90 leopards</p>

	<p>declared man-eaters. The forest department has established two transit rehabilitation centers for problem big cats with one each in Almora and Haridwar forest divisions which are not yet in use.</p>
<p><b>Govt. under fire over eco-tourism Commercial endeavors being allowed in forests: Cong</b></p> <p>THE TRIBUNE <i>April 01, 2011</i></p>	<p>The government came under fire in the Vidhan Sabha for allowing commercial endeavors in forests in the name of eco-tourism to benefit favoured private parties in blatant violation of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA). Pradesh Congress Committee chief Kaul Singh while raising a discussion on the functioning of the Forest Department said out of the total 10 as many as six sites had been allotted to one party from Nagpur at a pittance. It had raised structures in the demarcated forests and even obtained license for a bar, making a mockery of eco-tourism, the main purpose of which was to generate sources of income for the local community without causing any harm to the environment. The nodal officer for the FCA in the Union Ministry of Environment had written a letter to the state government to take action against the erring officer but so far nothing had been done in the matter. He alleged that its core functions like preparation of CAT (Catchment Area Treatment) plans were being outsourced and the government was also not paying attention to expand the shrinking green cover even though the state had minimum area under forests among hill states. He urged the government to take up the matter regarding payment of NPV (net present value) of the forest area diverted for construction of roads with the Centre. It should be included in the detailed project report so that state could get funds under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna. Replying to the debate, Chief Minister P.K. Dhumal said the government would ensure that no pucca structures were built under the eco-tourism projects and informed that work on one such structure had been stopped in Kangra.</p>
<p><b>Heritage status move for Himalayan National Park A shot in the arm for villagers</b></p> <p>THE TRIBUNE <i>April 09, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) pleading for the UNESCO's world heritage site for the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) has come as a shot in the arm for local villagers and NGOs who have launched a mass movement to protect the trout-rich Tirthan river and its tributaries. The protesters asserted that they would never allow any review of the hydel project on the Tirthan and its tributaries, the Plachan, the Jhibhi, the Ghiagi, the Hidag nullah, the Sheel and the Kalvari khud as being contemplated in the corridor of power under the influence of some vested political interest. The villagers and NGOs opposing projects on the Tirthan river hail the MoEF's decision to declare the GHNP as UNESCO's world heritage site. This will save the GHNP and the Tirthan from the onslaught of builders, project companies and other real estate sharks. The 20-km-long valley forms the ecozone of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) and it is being protected as the Tirthan Wild Life Sanctuary.</p>
<p><b>IGNOU online course on Himalayan</b></p>	<p>Indira Gandhi National Open University's School of Extension</p>

<p><b>eco-systems</b></p> <p><i>The Hindu , Monday, April 11, 2011</i></p>	<p>and Development Studies and Chair for Sustainable Development has launched an online leadership programme on Himalayan eco-systems for scientists and policy makers working in the areas of agriculture, rural development, environmental science and sustainable development. Member of Parliament Dr. Karan Singh who launched the programme earlier this week, he also cited the spiritual, ecological and environmental aspects of the Himalayas. Admission to this course will be available to students throughout the year in four academic cycles during February, May, August and November. The programme ranges from a minimum of one month to a maximum of six months duration. The objective of the programme is to sensitise and strengthen awareness regarding the Himalayan ecosystems in the context of sustainable development, The course content consists of an introduction to the mountain ecosystem, Himalayan livelihood systems and also addresses challenges to sustainable development.</p>
<p><b>Himalayan glaciers will not disappear</b></p> <p>THE HINDU <i>May 18, 2011</i></p>	<p>Scientists of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), who conducted one of the biggest studies on glaciers in the world, have played down the threat of the meltdown of Himalayan glaciers in the near future. As many as 2,190 glaciers in 14 basins and sub-basins were selected based on physiology and climatic zones, and monitored during the period between 1989 and 2005. The report is expected to be submitted shortly. "Himalayan glaciers are not going to disappear as has been made out to be. They are quite lengthy, very big and located in very high altitude. Glaciers are also well distributed in the Himalayas," Dr. Ajai, Group Director of Marine, Geo and Planetary Science Group at ISRO's Space Applications Centre (SAC) Ahmedabad, told The Hindu. He, however, said a small percentage of loss of area has been identified. Apart from that 700 glaciers were also assessed for mass balance, which included studies on quantum of snowfall, accumulation and melting. Field visits were undertaken to corroborate the satellite imageries. The study was undertaken by the ISRO's Space Applications Centre (SAC) Ahmedabad following a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Space and Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF). It assumes importance in the light of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) report, which was subsequently withdrawn, stated that Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035 causing anguish and anxiety among the people. Involving 14 organisations and about 50 scientists, the study has revealed that out of 2,190 glaciers, 75 per cent retreated over the 15-year period while 18 per cent advanced and rest showed no changes. "The total loss of glacial area in the study period was 3.5 per cent," he said, adding that the glacial melting not only depends on the temperature but also on its altitude and orientation. "Nowhere in the world has an effort been made to assess and monitor such a large number of glaciers. Even in Alps in Europe only a few glaciers are monitored," Dr.</p>

	<p>Ajai claimed. In all, there are 32,540 glaciers in the Himalayas covering an area of 77,310 sq. km of which 16,627 glaciers are in Indian territory, covering an area of 40,563 sq. km. Besides glaciers in the Indian part of Himalayas, the study covered glaciers in China, Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan falling in Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra basins. The second phase of study will consider 2,600 glaciers in the period between 2005 and 2010. "Data collection has started, and it will be analysed before submitting a report by the end of this year," Dr. Ajai said. Besides, glacial study would be taken up for the period between 2010 and 2013, he added.</p>
<p><b>Forest dept for conservation of traditional water sources</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>May 29, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Uttarakhand Forest Department has decided to take steps for conservation of small natural water springs supplied through traditional systems locally called naulas. The State Principal Chief Conservator of Forests has instructed department officials to facilitate measures for conservation of such traditional natural sources of water in at least 88 locations in the mountainous regions of the State. The quantity of water discharge has decreased due to different factors in most of these sources which are used by both humans and fauna. Water sources in the mountainous regions have been negatively affected by rapid and unplanned development, lifestyle changes and climatic changes caused by environmental deterioration. Women in mountainous regions are those worst-affected by this problem, considering this the department will also facilitate tree plantation in areas adjoining the 88 naulas and khals marked for conservation. Using Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) funds allocated for water conservation the department will not only facilitate the conservation of these sources but also take steps to increase the water discharge. The Divisional Forest Officers and Forest Conservators have been instructed to ensure that work on conservation of at least five such water sources is undertaken in 2011-12 in each forest division. Such work has cost about ₹ 50,000 per naula in Nainital. Sites marked for such water conservation work include 12 in Pauri District, eight in Chamoli, five in Rudraprayag, 11 in Tehri, seven in Uttarkashi, five in Dehradun, eight in Nainital, 10 in Almora, six in Champawat and eight each in Pithoragarh and Bageshwar.</p>
<p><b>Review meet at ICFRE ahead of forestry congress</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>June 27, 2011</i></p>	<p>Various important issues related to the Joint Forest Management programme in the country and the preparation of the Indian Forestry Congress to be held in November this year will be reviewed at the national meeting being organised at the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education headquarters in Dehradun on June 27 and 28. The Director General, Forests and Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, PJ Dilip Kumar will inaugurate the meet on Monday whereas the director of the Forest Research Institute, Sharad Singh Negi will welcome the Principal Chief Conservators of Forests from all Indian States and other participants to the meet. ICFRE director general VK</p>

	<p>Bahuguna and Additional Director General, Forests, Ministry of Environment and Forests AK Bansal will also address the participants on the first day of the meet. Considering the number of JFM committees established in the States, area of forests under JFM and number of families involved, the issues to be discussed will include progress in legalising JFM committees and institutional mechanism for establishment of JFM committees. The other areas of focus at the meeting will include the annual assessment of total benefits in the form of NTFPs, fodder and fuel wood, annual employment generation through JFM/forest activities, selection of one successful case study of JFM for presentation in the Indian Forestry Congress limitations in JFM programmes, preparations for the Indian Forestry Congress and presentation of Forest Sector Report, 2011 among others.</p>
<p><b>Forest dept probes involvement of NGOs in poaching</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>August 01, 2011</i></p>	<p>The State Forest Department is investigating the possibility of informants working for NGOs being involved in actually encouraging poaching of leopards and other wild animals. This line of action was taken following the involvement of a seasoned criminal in the seizure of leopard pelts including one from a recently poached feline and arrest of two persons from Mussoorie. Meanwhile, the Wildlife Trust of India vice chairman Ashok Kumar has stressed that if investigations prove that anyone working as an informant for the WTI is abetting poaching, then the service of the person will be terminated and the person will be handed over to the authorities to face legal action. It will be recalled that acting on a tip off from informants, the Mussoorie forest division staff had recently nabbed a total of three persons for their involvement in the poaching of two leopards and attempt to deal in the pelts of the two felines. According to official sources, one of the two leopard pelts was more than a year old while the other pelt seemed relatively fresh which has elicited focus on the possibility that this leopard could have been poached after the person who acted as informant encouraged the villager.</p>
<p><b>Greens want a ministry for Himalayas</b></p> <p>TIMES OF INDIA <i>September 10, 2011</i></p>	<p>An independent ministry must be set up for the Himalayan region which faces unique ecological threats, the fallouts of which will affect the entire country in the near future, a group of environmentalists and social activists said on Friday. Marking September 9 as Himalayan Day, the group said the region needed the immediate intervention of national leaders, policymakers and people. "The Himalayas are dying due to rampant commercial activities, a number of hydro-projects coming up on major rivers, forest degradation and threats posed by climate change. The Centre must set up a separate ministry for Himalayan regions to formulate a strategy to save the hills," said Anil Joshi of the Himalayan Unity Movement, an umbrella body of environmental and social organizations that organized the meet. P D Rai, MP from Sikkim, said there is a proposal to set up a working group for the Himalayan region in the Planning Commission. Minister</p>

	<p>of state for rural development Agatha Sangma and environmentalist Sundarlal Bahuguna also spoke on the occasion.</p>
<p><b>Himalayas may become a giant rubbish dump</b></p> <p>THE HINDU September 15, 2011</p>	<p>There's nothing like waking up to bright clear skies with spectacular views of the Lhotse and Amu Dablam ranges — and a rubbish dump. This heap of beer cans, mineral water bottles and other material was just a few minutes' walk outside the village of Tengboche. The dump is not on the regular trekking trails which are, aside from the stray Fanta and instant noodle wrapper, admirably clean. And most trekkers have no idea of their impact on the remote Everest landscape, said Alton Byers, who is leading our expedition as director of the Mountain Institute. But the dump exposes the risks of Nepal's strategy of lifting itself out of poverty by expanding its tourism industry. The government has declared 2011 Nepal tourism year, and has sought to double the number of visitors to 1 million. But can remote communities handle those numbers? Only a fraction of tourists to Nepal make it to the Everest region — about 31,000 last year. “Thirty years ago, there was no garbage. There was no plastic,” said Byers. Now, he said: “we see this in every village all the way up to Everest base camp.” Even the village of Namche Bazaar, the biggest in the region, does not have a waste treatment system. Trekking companies are supposed to carry their rubbish out with them — but most do not.</p>
<p><b>Link livelihoods with forest: Khanduri</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER September 16, 2011</p>	<p>Gen Khanduri said that forest wealth is a principal source of income in mountain areas and there is need for its scientific exploitation. It should be linked to the common man's employment needs so that it becomes a principal source of income. He directed the State PCCF that effective action should be initiated for speedy disposal of projects pending at the level of the Union Government. Gen Khanduri expressed serious concerns at the rising frequency of wildlife incursions into human habitation and said that effective steps should be taken to stop them. The forest department must undertake repair works on ponds which are drying up as well as canals so that wild animals do not encroach on human habitations. Public lavatories should be constructed in rural areas under MNREGS. He said that suitable provisions should be made for collection of waste wood lying unutilised in forest areas. Either this wood should be given to the villagers or it should be sold through the Forest Development Corporation. This will ensure that precious wood lying in the forest does not go waste. The process of constitution of the eco-tourism corporation should be accelerated, and by conducting employment oriented activities, the economic development of the village residents should be enhanced.</p>
<p><b>Mountaineers should pay Himalayas back: Everester First Himachal Everesters meet ends at Manali</b></p>	<p>A two-day first Himachal Everesters meet concluded at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS), Manali, today. Twentyfive Everesters from</p>

THE TRIBUNE  
*September 20, 2011*

different parts of Himachal Pradesh attended the meet. Expressing his views at the meet, Col Prem Chand (retd.), ex-Director, ABVIMAS, Manali, Everester and hero of Kanchanjunga, said now the time had come when mountaineers should pay back to the Himalayas. He said mountaineers, particularly Everesters, had not only brought glory to the country in general and Himachal Pradesh in particular by scaling Mount Everest, they had also received acclaims from adventure lovers across the country for their unique achievement. He further said it was a high time when mountaineers should perform a role to save the ecology and environment in the Himalayan region. He also stressed a need to go for the mountain climbing in a new technology and style through new routes. Capt (retd.) Randhir Salhuria, Director, ABVIMAS, was also present. Dicky Dolma, youngest woman Everester, thanked Col Prem Chand, Salhuria and all Everesters of the state gathered at the meet.

**Herbal mafia active in Great Himalayan National Park**

THE TRIBUNE  
*September 21, 2011*

Mafia have plundered herbal roots - patish, kadu, nihani, dhoop and now nag chatri and other medicinal plants. Once found in abundance in the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) and in its buffer zone, these herbal roots have been pushed to the brink of extinction because these are in high demand in herbal products and medicines. What is more dangerous and worrisome is that extractors have made inroads into the GHNP where the Wildlife Protection Act forbids any human activity and interference inside the park. The extractors dig up the roots and left behind a trail of uprooted soil that could trigger soil erosion and landslides in the park, sources said. Selling like hot cakes this time is nag chatri, a root herb, the status of which is yet to be known, found at the altitude ranging from 7,000 ft to 8,000 ft, both in the buffer zone and the core area of the GHNP. The demand of nag chatri rocketed from Rs. 250 per kg during the Banjar fair to Rs. 1,400 per kg during its peak in August-September. The roots have been extracted right in the core area in places that fall in Mashiar, Toong and Nuwanda panchayats in the Tirthan valley in the north-east zone of the park. The extractors, most of them locals, have spread in the Sainj and Jiwa wildlife ranges as well to extract nag chatri and other roots. Traders have lifted the nag chatri from across the region as its demand has picked up in China. Villagers have been camping in jungles extracting this herbal root as never before. Similarly, patish, a root, was used in medicines and sold at Rs. 1,000 per kg, kadu for Rs. 500 per kg and mushkbala (nihani) for Rs. 700 per kg. All these herbal roots were found at an altitude above 8,000 ft, and were over exploited in nature and face extinction, experts said. From the Sainj and Pin-Parbati river valley to the Tirthan wildlife sanctuary in the GHNP, villagers have been lured by herbal mafias to extract herbs and medicinal plants as much as they can every summer season as the Forest Department has failed to check over-extraction. The two main traders, a senior BJP Banjar leader and a local trader, have made big bucks in the herbal trade. But poor

	<p>villagers who rough out days and nights extracting the roots are earning a pittance. Though nobody knows the exact volume of the underground herbal trade, the experts suspect that it runs into several crores of rupees every year in the state, including Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur, Chamba, higher parts of Shimla and Kangra districts. But Conservator, Wildlife, and Director, GHNP, Ajay Srivastav said they had seized 1 kg of nag chatri root recently. No case of extraction in the park area had been brought to his notice. The areas in the buffer zone was open to villagers to collect herbs from time to time, he added.</p>
<p><b>Role of Himalayan ecology to be brought to light</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>September 24, 2011</i></p>	<p>The Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), the Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC) and the Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO) are jointly organising a two-day workshop on the subject of Himalayan glaciers and community responsibility. WIHG director, professor Anil K Gupta said that the Himalayas and rivers originating in these ranges directly sustain and affect the lives of about 40 percent of the population in India. Considering the importance of the Himalayas, the workshop is being organised in order to bring together scientists working on Himalayan glaciers, climate change and non governmental organisations to interact on the scientific and societal issues of the Himalayan mountain system and the local communities for facilitating sustainable regional development. The impacts of climate change in the mountains have socio economic implications which include change in water resources, hydropower generation and natural hazards like avalanches and the impact on glacier lakes that directly affect the livelihood of local communities. USAC director, MM Kimothi said that the workshop had been divided in to seven sessions on subjects including Indian climate and ecosystem responses, impact of climate change on glaciers, community responsibility and response, climate change in Himalayan ecosystem, water resources and community adaptation and responses. HESCO founder Anil Prakash Joshi said that the workshop was the first initiative of its type being undertaken to link science, community that takes into account both upstream and down stream areas affected by the Himalayan river system. "Glaciers are among the most important and in recent times, controversial components of the environment.</p>
<p><b>Protect environment, say experts</b></p> <p>THE TRIBUNE <i>September 26, 2011</i></p>	<p>Calling for collective efforts to protect natural resources and save the human race, Chief Justice of the high court Kurian Joseph today said fundamental duties were the foundation of human dignity and national character. Presiding over a colloquium on Article 51 (A) (g) of the Constitution, organized jointly by the Himachal Pradesh Legal Authority, SEWA, the Public Relations Society of India and the Language, Art and Cultural Department here, he stressed the need for protecting the forest cover, conserving water resources, reforesting waste land and steps for controlling pollution in cities, villages and industrial areas. He</p>

	<p>said awareness campaigns and planned strategy were required to achieve the objective. It was the seventh colloquium in a series. He said, “We must protect our natural resources and it is our duty to conserve the environment. Compassion for living things is an important part of our duty.” Preserving the depleting water sources, protecting the shrinking green cover and preventing air and water pollution were the key areas of concern. The danger signals were already visible in the irregular and erratic monsoon and increasing extreme weather events, which could not be ignored. A sustainable model of development would have to be evolved and at the same time stern measures would have to taken to arrest pollution and deforestation.</p>
<p><b>Land free of encroachment, but afforestation hangs fire</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>October 15, 2011</i></p>	<p>Officials of Municipal Corporation Dehradun have been undertaking periodic demolitions of encroachments in different parts of the city but even officials acknowledge that it is tough to ensure that the space freed from encroachment is not re-occupied by similar constructions. They state that it would have been easier to prevent encroachments from vacated land, had the Government approved the proposal for tree plantation on such land. According to officials, planting trees would be effective method of preventing encroachments in localities known for repeated illegal constructions. The proposal was submitted to the Government during the rainy season and had it been approved without delay, the authorities would have been able to plant the trees in this monsoon itself. On the condition of anonymity, official sources state that this proposal was ignored because of the influence of some politicians who are directly involved in facilitating encroachment as part of vote-bank politics.</p>
<p><b>Vulture population has risen dramatically: Forest Dept</b></p> <p>THE TRIBUNE <i>October 30, 2011</i></p>	<p>Upbeat over the success of its vulture propagation programme, the wildlife wing of the Forest Department has decided to increase the nesting sites in Kangra and the adjoining areas especially created for the winged creatures whose number has risen from a mere 18 to over 500 during the past six years. The wildlife wing in a special campaign spotted eggs in 158 of the 190 nests that have been identified so far in the pine forests in Kangra district. In March-April next year the department intends to undertake another campaign to ascertain as to how many fledglings actually survived. “The creation of 27 nesting sites in the pine forests in Kangra district has brought about encouraging results with the number of vultures increasing to over 500, including fledglings, from a mere 18 in 2004-05,” said AK Gulati, Principal Chief Conservator, Forest. To ensure the success of the programme, the department has also decided to involve the locals in a big way and sensitise them about the importance of vultures and contribute towards their growth. New sites are now being identified by the wildlife staff in the contiguous pine forests in Kangra itself so that the fledglings move to new territories and set up their nests in these areas. Attempts are being made everywhere to save nature’s scavengers from extinction through captive breeding programmes. Studies</p>

	<p>conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society attribute the decline of vultures to the overuse of anti-inflammatory veterinary drug diclofenac, loss of bird habitats, use of pesticides, competition for food among other scavengers and change in the livestock management.</p>
<p><b>Political commitment for forest conservation lacks ground: Swaminathan</b></p> <p>THE PIONEER <i>November 24, 2011</i></p>	<p>Noted agricultural scientist and Rajya Sabha MP MS Swaminathan lamented the fact that political commitment for forest conservation as shown by late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is lacking today. He stressed on the need for the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education to conduct focused research on coastal mangroves, hills and dry zones of the country. He said this while speaking at the inauguration of the first Indian Forest Congress organised by the ICFRE and ministry of Environment and Forests in New Delhi. The Minister of Environment and Forests, Jayanthi Natarajan, in her inaugural address called for more scientific analysis of the issues relating to forest management in the country, in the midst of increasing pressure on the forests and the threat of climate change. She stressed on the need for developing reliable data at the State level on forest biomass, increment, non-timber forest products and eco-tourism. There is need for strengthening the forest bureaucracy in order to improve the efficacy of efforts needed to tackle the various challenges in the sector, she added.</p>
<p><b>'Himalayan region faces grim future'</b></p> <p>TIMES OF INDIA <i>December 06, 2011</i></p>	<p>Remember the embarrassing controversy a few years ago about whether or not Himalayan glaciers are retreating due to global warming? Finally, the foundation for a thorough scientific study and monitoring has been laid, with the release of three key reports on the sidelines of the Durban climate change summit. Prepared by scientists working with the Kathmandu-based International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) the reports have for the first time identified over 54,000 glaciers spread over 64,000 square kilometers of the Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) region. The reports clearly say that not enough study has been done on the snow and ice systems of this vast ecologically fragile system. But it provides a snapshot of kind of changes that global warming is likely to cause in the coming decades. Within the HKH region lie the origins of 10 crucial river systems that provide life to an estimated 1.3 billion people. These rivers - Ganga, Brahmaputra, Indus, Amu Darya, Irrawaddy, Mekong, Salween, Tarim, Yangtze, and Yellow - flow through 10 nations. This makes it a global warming hotspot-changes in temperature can lead to rapid and devastating changes in river water flows that would affect millions. "Up until now, there has been complete uncertainty on the numbers and area of glaciers and the present status of their environmental conditions in the region. "Glaciers in the central and eastern Himalayas are shrinking, while changes in the western Himalayas and Karakoram are more uncertain," says the report 'Climate Change</p>

	<p>in Hindu-Kush Himalayas'. While increasing temperature will cause snow and glaciers to dry up causing less water in the rivers 40-50 years into the future, this would be swamped by the much higher increase in monsoon rains in central and eastern Himalayas. The ICIMOD reports indicate that much more research is needed to fully understand these dynamics.</p>
<p><b>World heritage site status soon for Great Himalayan National Park</b></p> <p>THE TRIBUNE <i>December 18, 2011</i></p>	<p>Evaluation of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) for being declared a UNESCO World Heritage site is likely to take place early next year as the nomination has already been accepted. This was stated by Chief Minister P.K. Dhumal while chairing the 5th Wildlife Board meeting held here yesterday. "The rationalisation process of the 33 wildlife sanctuaries and two national parks spread over an area of 7,161 km is underway to take the inhabited areas out of the purview of the sanctuaries," he said. He said the rationalisation process was nearing completion and would take 1.5 lakh population of 775 villages out of the sanctuary area, which had been a pressing demand of the villagers falling in the area. The Himalayan Snow Leopard Research Centre would soon be developed near Kibbar village of the Spiti valley at a cost of Rs. 5.15 crore to preserve the animal in its natural habitat and carry research and development programme. He said a migratory bird research centre would also be set up at the Pong Dam by including local youth in their preservation. He said a conservation and breeding programme of Monal would also be strengthened by developing a pheasantry near Manali and Rs. 2 crore would be spent in the first phase. Dhumal said a wildlife crime bureau would also be set up by working out modalities with the Centre. He underlined the need for setting up of an online wildlife information management system.</p>