

coast and return to breed and nest only when they become adults after 7-15 years. Hatchlings at Rushikulya are prone to disorientation due to the artificial illumination from the nearby townships of Humma, Ganja and from the nearby National Highway No. 5. Thousands die every year due to such disorientation, which causes them to move towards the landward side instead of the sea.

Vacancy with Samrakshan

Samrakshan, an NGO working to reconcile livelihood needs of forest-dependent communities with the conservation of Protected Areas is looking for an individual who is willing to live and work in Madhya Pradesh, under difficult conditions. The job requires assessing threats to wildlife from the livelihood needs of locals and devising alternative environmentally-friendly sources of livelihood in collaboration with the people. Interested people should contact Arpan Sharma <arpan@samrakshan.org>, E-314, Anand Lok Apartments, Mayur Vihar Phase I, New Delhi 110 091. Tel.: (011) 2279 5088.

Rough justice

Two poachers caught with meat (see picture) of the endangered sangai or Manipuri brow-antlered deer were shot in the legs by members of the underground Revolutionary People's Front (RPF). The *Poknapham Daily* reports that the RPF has warned other would-be poachers that those preying on the sangai, a symbol of Manipur's pride and rich history, would be punished more



POKNAPHAM/DAILY

severely in future. The poachers had been nabbed by volunteers of the Environmental Social Reformation and Sangai Protection Forum on January 19, with the meat in their possession. The latest census revealed that only 162 of the deer are left in the Loktak wetland, their only remaining home, which is under threat from a variety of factors including the Ithai dam.

Profits before ethics?

Multinational giant Pepsi Foods Limited has come in for severe criticism, from veteran scientist M.S. Swaminathan among others, for introducing an exotic species of marine algae at Rameshwaram, next to the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and Biosphere Reserve. The alga in question is the unique red *Euchema cottonii* alga, the best source of carrageenan, a tasteless gelatin-like pure vegetarian substance. Carrageenan is added to almost all the mocha and other coffees and in upmarket beverages and mocktails, as well as

desserts and sells for over Rs. 100,000 a tonne. At present, India imports most of its carrageenan. But scientists from the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and other bodies are concerned that introducing an alien species in the sensitive sea grass and coral reef ecosystem of the Gulf of Mannar could have serious and untold consequences.

New deer in Arunachal

Two new entries have been added to the list of large mammals found in India. The Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) announced the discoveries of the leaf deer *Muntiacus putaoensis* and the black barking deer *M. crinifrons* from Arunachal Pradesh. The discoveries were made by a joint NCF-WCS expedition. Direct sightings of either species could not be obtained, but their presence was confirmed through local knowledge, body parts, morphometric measurements and analyses of the skulls. The

leaf deer was first reported in the Jairampur Forest Division by Aparajita Dutta and its presence was subsequently confirmed in the Namdapha Tiger Reserve. The black barking deer was also reported in the vicinity of the Namdapha Tiger Reserve.

Assam-Meghalaya felling

Illegal felling of trees in vast forested tracts along the Assam-Meghalaya border is carrying on unchecked, according to press reports. The area has been left virtually unprotected over the last decade, since the gunning down of four border personnel by smugglers from Meghalaya. An ill-equipped, under-funded and understaffed forest department is unable to protect the forests. The Meghalaya side of the border has a good road network, which enables the smugglers to enter and exit the forest with their booty.

Male rhino for Dudhwa

Efforts to boost Dudhwa's rhino population are running into a genetic hurdle. Six of the eight males in Dudhwa are from the same genetic order. Dudhwa presently holds 19 rhinos, after a reintroduction programme was launched in 1984, with two males and one female from Kaziranga. The Chief Wildlife Warden, R.L. Singh has said that there is a desperate need for at least two more male rhinos in Dudhwa, but the central government has not responded to its appeals thus far. 🐘

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