

# BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

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# BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

- Vision** - Creating a Biodiversity Knowledge Bank
- Mandate** - Advocating the principles of Naturenomics™
- Objectives** - Driving Conservation Entrepreneurship to securitize natural, social and cultural assets
- Focus**
- Bio-diversity Conservation– Wildlife/Plants/Habitats.
  - Developmental Alternatives – Water/Energy/Waste.
  - Balipara Foundation Awards – Advocating Naturenomics
  - Publications- Books/Articles/Case Studies/ Knowledge Bank

## EXPERIMENTS



Paddy



Biogas



Bee Keeping



Solar Lighting

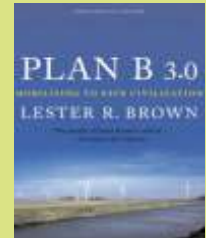


Fishery



Poultry

## PUBLICATIONS



## **Introduction**

### **Why The Balipara Foundation?**

The Balipara Tract and Frontier Foundation (BTFF) has been documenting, analysing and promoting the concept of Naturenomics for over a decade now. It seeks to bring the objective of economics in line with the imperatives of nature.

In recent years, the Balipara Foundation has been encouraged by the fact that the ideologies expressed by us decades ago have won acceptance among economists and corporates globally. The inaugural Balipara Foundation Awards was held at Guwahati on April 12, 2013.

The Balipara Foundation is a social and environmental organisation and is a respected voice for the rights and livelihoods of the people of Assam and the Eastern Himalaya. We believe that our cultures were all birthed from the influences of nature, and that the modern conservation movement has much to learn from the ordinary people of the Eastern Himalayan region. We would therefore, like to take the lead in supporting the green heroes of the Eastern Himalaya and Assam through the propagation of the Balipara Foundation Awards.

### **Why Balipara Foundation Awards?**

The world probably loses one plant or animal species every 10 minutes to human impact. A direct consequence of this undesirable trend is visible in the shape and form of climate change.

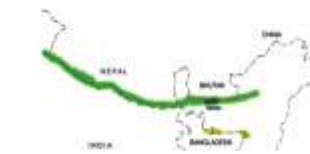
We strongly believe that people who have devoted their lives to the defence or custodianship of our natural treasures should be honoured.

By recognising such people and organisations, we hope to draw focus on their work. The awards will instill positivism, support, encouragement and hope in individuals and groups fighting against heavy odds.

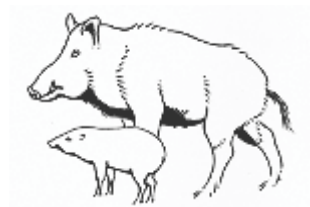
RANJIT BARTHAKUR  
(Trustee)

RADHIKA BARTHAKUR  
(Trustee)

## The Annual Balipara Foundation Award Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP)



Past and present distribution of pygmy hog.



The pygmy hog is about 10-15 times less bulky than a wild boar. The tail of even an adult pygmy hog is smaller than a baby wild boar (Illustration by William L. R. Oliver).

## Introduction

The pygmy hog is the smallest and rarest wild suid in the world. In the past, it was found in a narrow strip of tall and wet grassland plains in the area south of the Himalayan foothills, from Uttar Pradesh to Assam. Currently, it is restricted to a single viable population in the wild in the Manas Tiger Reserve and a tiny population that was reintroduced in the Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, both in north-western Assam, and is not found anywhere else in the world. The current world population is about 150 individuals or less.

## Status



Pygmy hog.



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in its Red List of Threatened Species, categorises the species as 'Critically Endangered'. It is also listed in Schedule-I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act.

## Distinctive Characters

- It measures about 65 cm. in length and 25 cm. in height and weighs 8-9 kg.
- Females are a slightly smaller.
- Newborn babies weigh only 150-200 gm.
- A vestigial tail (2.5 cm. in adults) and only three pairs of mammae distinguish it from the wild boar.
- They feed on roots, tubers, insects, rodents, and small reptiles.

## Taxonomy

Genetic studies on pygmy hogs are being carried out with the help of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad. A phylogenetic study using its mitochondrial DNA has revealed that the pygmy hog belongs to a unique mono-specific genus, *Porcula*, and is not closely related to the wild and domestic pig as was believed earlier. The species name *salvania* is after the sal forests where it was found.



Hogs require thick grasslands to hide and build their nests. Grasslands provide fodder for herbivorous animals and also, help protect forest lands from floods and create a reservoir.

Shortage of grasslands can lead to the collapse of the ecosystem.

Therefore, a healthy population of pygmy hogs indicates there is ample grassland and thus the entire biodiversity of the ecosystem is flourishing.

### **Threats**

- Human encroachment.
- Need for agricultural land.
- Burning of grasslands.
- Planting trees in grasslands.
- Cattle grazing.
- Flood control schemes.

### **Ongoing Conservation Programme**

Dr. Goutam Narayan is the Project Director of the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP).

The programme is sponsored by the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT). Famous naturalist and author Gerald Durrell encouraged a tea planter to breed them in captivity after they were accidentally discovered.

The conservation programme is currently conducted under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IUCN/SSC Wild Pigs Specialist Group, Peccaries and Hippo Specialist Group, DWCT, the Forest Department, Government of Assam, and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

The main aim of this collaborative programme is: conservation of pygmy hogs and other endangered species endemic to the tall grasslands of the region through field research, captive breeding and reintroduction after adequate restoration of the now degraded habitats. Locally, the programme is managed by EcoSystems-India, a biodiversity conservation trust.

### **Conservation Breeding**

In 1996, six wild hogs (two males, four females) were caught from the Manas National Park and transferred to a custom built research and breeding centre built at Basistha, Guwahati. Five more hogs were caught and released at the capture site after fitting three males and a female with radio harness for radio-telemetry studies.



Introduction PHCP Research & Breeding Centre, Guwahati, Assam.



Pygmy hog *Porcula salvania* - A captive female.



A 10-days-old pygmy hog baby.



Pygmy hog sow with newborn babies.



A female with her young at the PHCP Research & Breeding Centre, Guwahati, Assam.

## Increase in Captive Population

The six hogs settled down well in Basistha and three adult females, which were pregnant, produced healthy litters in 1996. All but one of the 13 young (seven males and six females) were reared.

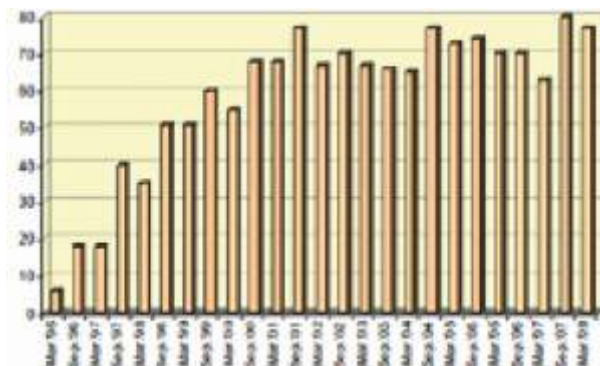
Seven more litters were born in 1997 and 24 young ones were reared. However, seven adult and sub-adult hogs died – six of them due to a mixed bacterial-fungal infection which was effectively controlled with local, and international help. Nonetheless, the hog population almost doubled in 1997 from 18 to 35.

In the 1998 breeding season, five captive sows farrowed at Basistha adding 22 more hogs to the population. In 1999, 11 young ones from five normal litters were reared despite several babies dying of piglet diarrhoea, and in 2000, 14 new hogs were reared taking the captive population to 65. This unanticipated and rapid increase in the captive population created accommodation problems, but extension enclosures and a quarantine facility have been constructed with funds provided by the Assam Valley Wildlife Society.

Later, increasingly rigorous curbs were imposed on the reproduction of these animals when the captive population rose to 77 in 2001, which constituted a 13-fold increase in the stock in six years. A population of around 70 hogs was maintained in captivity till 2007, and since 2008, a decision to release 12 hogs every year into the wild was made by breeding them in controlled numbers.

## Reintroduction

As the captive population of the pygmy hogs at Basistha comprised the entire global population of captive pygmy hogs, it was important to shift some hogs to a second site.





Pre-release area at Potasali, Nameri National Park, Sonitpur, Assam.



PHCP members conducting field work at Manas National Park, Assam.



Solar power fencing at Potasali, Nameri National Park, Sonitpur, Assam.



A released hog caught on camera meant for monitoring.

After extensive surveys to locate possible reintroduction sites, three sites in Assam – Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, Nameri and Orang National Parks, were shortlisted. Efforts were initiated in 2006-2007 to restore the grasslands in two of these Protected Areas through improved management and protection with help of the PA staff and authorities.

In Sonai Rupai, habitat protection and management helped recovery after decades of indiscriminate grass burning and grazing. It was decided to release the first batch of captive-bred hogs in the Gelgeli grasslands of Sonai Rupai and three social groups consisting of 16 (seven males, nine females) hogs that were prepared for surviving in the wild were released at Potasali in May 2008.

It was the first time that captive-bred pygmy hogs were released in such large numbers in the wild and all efforts were taken to monitor them using field signs (nests, foraging marks, footprints, droppings, etc.) and a video camera trap, as it is almost impossible to see them in the tall grass. One of the pregnant females had furrowed successfully in the wild and it was estimated that about 12 of the 16 released hogs managed to survive even a year after their release.

More hogs were released in Sonai Rupai in 2009 (nine hogs) and 2010 (10 hogs) and altogether 35 (18 males, 17 females) hogs were released in the sanctuary over three years, taking the total number to almost six times the number of hogs that were captured at the start of the project.

The released hogs are being monitored with encouraging results and young hoglets born in the sanctuary have been spotted several times.

## Future

- Goal: To promote recovery of the species and reduce further population decline.
- Objective: To reintroduce pygmy hogs at three locations and create two captive populations.



Hogs being released at Sonai Rupai forests near the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border.

## Helping Hand

- £24 buys a year's supply of Indian grasses which will be planted in the enclosures in the exteriors of Assam, that will make for a habitat for the pygmy hogs.
- £3,500 per month is needed to continue the breeding programme and help to source and establish a second breeding facility adjacent to grassland suitable for releasing captive bred hogs. It will also enable to continue grassland management research and community awareness campaigns, encouraging local people to use the grasses as a cash crop instead of burning it to clear land.
- £9,000 is needed to pay for a four-wheel drive vehicle to enable the team to gain access to the remote areas in which they are working.

## Award

Recently, the PHCP was honoured with the "ANNUAL BALIPARA AWARD", a nominated award, presented by the Balipara Foundation Board, for their contribution to the protection of wild nature that has gone beyond the call of duty and which has displayed demonstrable success in the arena of nature conservation.



The Annual Balipara Foundation Award to Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme was presented by renowned Assamese filmmaker Jahnu Barua (right) and being received by William L.R. Oliver (left).

**The Balipara  
Foundation  
Naturenomics Award**

**Arindam Dasgupta,  
Founder, TPMC**



Tamul Leaf Plates – Generating Rural Livelihoods Through Earthy Disposable Dinnerware

## Introduction

Tamul Plates Marketing Private Limited (TPMC) is a company jointly promoted by the areca nut leaf plate producers of Assam and Dhriiti – the mother NGO. Their main objective is: "To promote areca nut leaf plate manufacturing across the Northeast and thereby, generate employment for thousands of rural youth and farmers." The company has 29 shareholders including producers and employees. TPMC started its activities from Bodoland and now has spread across Assam and some parts of Meghalaya.



"11 inch" rice plate packaged.



"4 inch" bowl packaged.



"8 inch" square quarter plate packaged.

## About TPMC Enterprise

1. Main Activities:
  - Marketing of disposable plates and bowls manufactured from sheaths of areca nut trees.
  - Sale of machines to producers.
  - Facilitating technology and financial linkages for those interested in setting up a production unit.
  - Training and exposure support to machine buyers.
2. Subactivities:
  - Marketing of handloom and handicraft items using its marketing channels.
  - Introducing and promoting cultivation of black pepper for which areca nut trees are good hosts with an aim to take up black pepper trading in the future.
  - Trying to introduce solar lighting in the units to address the problem of electricity.

| No. | Channel  | % sales accounting for |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 1.  | Regular wholesalers  | 70%                    |
| 2.  | Direct orders through phone and and the Internet             | 10%                    |
| 3.  | Organised retail channel through Spencers and organic stores | 10%                    |
| 4.  | Others (Direct delivery to events, fast food joints, etc.)   | 10%                    |

3. Details on sales: There are four key sales channels  
There are 10 wholesalers:
  - Northeast: 4 (Guwahati, Tura, Dimapur and Shillong)
  - Delhi: 2
  - Patiala: 1
  - Patna: 1
  - Mumbai: 1
  - Kolkata: 1
4. Scale of Enterprise:  
Around 2,000 people are involved in the collection stage. The figure is inclusive of collectors, agents and households. At the production level, around 400-500 people are involved.
5. Scope of Expansion:  
The market reach is domestic as well as international. There is demand for Dhriti products from across Europe, USA, South-east Asia and the Middle East.
6. Broad HR Policy:  
TPMC largely recruits people from within the local community. For some jobs like sorting and grading, differently-abled people are preferred. The salary structure and the work place location have proven to be deterrents for a suitable senior role candidate.
7. Key Challenges:
  - Meeting our working capital needs
  - Sustainable Quarter Plate market with good rates
  - Increasing the production base
  - Tapping the youth from the elite sections in the big cities.

### **About the Product**

- Raw Materials: Areca nut sheaths, water, heat source (gas or electricity), sacks and plastics, of which the first one is the most critical one.
- Availability: Is available from January to June and end of March to mid August. During the season, on an average, 100-200 pieces of sheaths are collected per day by a collector.
- Alternate Uses: Economic value of areca nut leaves is almost negligible. However, it is used as fencing material and fuel source by a few poor families. Left on its own in the soil, it decomposes and is used to enhance soil fertility.
- Strength: Assam, Karnataka and Kerala are the major areca nut producing states and together they





Raw material collection.



Collected together.

contribute 89 per cent of the total plantation area in India. Assam alone has 70,542 ha. of areca nut plantation which is around 23 per cent of the total plantation area in India.

- Inventory Management: An inventory of dried areca nut sheaths needs to be maintained for September – January when the availability of fresh leaves is very low. On an average, 10 per cent of raw materials are lost due to spoilage. A high finished goods inventory is maintained for quarter plates and the stocks are carried over from one financial year to another. The cost of maintaining this inventory is Rs. 6,000–7,000.
- 2. Qualities of the Product: The unique qualities of these plates make them much better than the disposable plates available in the market.
- Biodegradable and Compostable: Areca sheaths completely decompose into the soil within a period of 50–60 days and hence can be used as organic compost in gardens and are green organic products which are much needed to protect the environment.
- Natural and Attractive: The colours of the sheaths are whitish and creamish with natural brown stripes with no artificial colours or any external material.



"11 inch" rice plate top view.



"5 inch" bowl top view.

- Hygienic and Chemical Free: Sheaths are washed properly with fresh water during the production process and are heated to temperatures above 900 centigrades ensuring that they are completely germ free without adding any chemicals.





Cleaning.



Washing.

Soaking.

- **Sturdy and Light:** It is very light and sturdy with well protruding edges making it easy to hold.



- **Liquid Holding Capacity:** It is 2-3 mm. thick, thus, is able to hold liquids for a sufficient amount of time without turning soggy. It can hold hot food too.



- **Microwave and Refrigerator Safe:** You can heat the food in the microwave and serve it directly in them. They can be used to store the remaining food in the refrigerator.
3. **Technical Feasibility:** Research and Development is a continuous process in TPMC and over the years they have tried to make the production process simple, effective, efficient and risk-free.

The critical parts in the production techniques are as follows:

- **Areca Nut Leaf Plate Machine:** Three Axis Screw Type Press is a heat press machine which is used to mould the sheaths into various shapes and sizes. The machine has been developed by Sandhya Engineering Concern

(SEC) of Howrah (Kolkata) in collaboration with TPMC. It is manufactured in SEC's workshop in Howrah and marketed by TPMC in the Northeast. The machine is operated manually.



Areca nut plates being manufactured in the manufacturing unit.



Production in old machines. Production in new machines.

“ **Status symbol and utility are considered to be the prime reasons for the popularity of the products.** ”

- Dryer: The biggest reason for low production amongst the producers was less collection of raw material due to the difficulties faced in drying the raw material.



Drying of raw material.



Areca nut drying in factory dryer.



Dryer.

- After a rigorous R & D process TPMC has developed a low cost, biomass-based, non-electrified dryer to dry 500 pieces in 4-5 hrs.
- Raw Material Stock Room: TPMC has also designed a simple low cost stock room which enables to store raw material for one year or more.

### Partnerships

This has been a key to the success of this enterprise.

- Institutions: For technology development, financial linkage, expansion.
- Banks: To finance areca nut leaf plate entrepreneurs.



Dried raw material stored in the factory.



Bundling of sheaths for storage.



Shrink wrapping in packaging unit.



Storage.



Final packaging in cartons.

- NGOs: Like Axum Agri, Bethany Society to help expand the activity across the region.
- State Governments: To support areca nut entrepreneurs through various schemes and services.

#### **Source of Investment**

- Raised 10 lakhs (INR) equity investments from 29 shareholders in 2010.
- Raised another 29 lakhs (INR) through unsecured loans from private investors in the last financial two years.
- Grants in the form of award money.

#### **Threats**

- Political instability in the region.
- Chinese corn starch products in the market

#### **Business Plan**

- Getting to a turnover up to 5 crores from the present turnover of 75 lakhs.
- Machinery sales would be the primary focus as that would also increase the production base (around 60-70 % of turnover).
- Getting into the export market (10-20 % of plate sales).
- Expand the market for quarter plates, both, through organised retail in big cities and more wholesale linkages in northern and eastern parts of India.
- Use the supply chain created to market other products from villages and also into villages.

#### **Achievements**

- Till now, we have managed to promote over a 100 areca nut leaf plates.
- Generated employment for more than 2,500 people through this initiative.
- Till now, more than 50 lakhs (INR) worth income has been generated for the farmers, and all this using a material that was until now considered as waste.
- Developed low cost and low risk production technologies.
- Created markets for the plates across India and have also started exporting the same.

#### **Personal Life**

At a very young age, Arindam dreamt of taking the fruits of development to every corner and to every citizen of India. Being born in a middle class family in Jamshedpur, he learnt not to follow the social trend without testing it, which later acted as a catalyst, to become a social entrepreneur.

He completed his schooling from Loyla School, Jamshedpur, and graduation from SRCC college, Delhi. He later joined IIRMA to acquire a post graduation degree in rural management. Inspired by Dr. Kurien's achievements, he believes that sustainable development can be brought about only by enterprises which have social and environmental goals built into its model.

At present he serves as the Board Member of Centre for Micro-Finance and Livelihood.

### **Future**

- Vision: To make areca nut leaf plate manufacturing a viable job opportunity providing direct and indirect employment to 50,000 rural youths.
- Plan: To reach a turnover of five crores (INR) by 2015-2016 by promoting 600 more village-based producers across the Northeast.

### **Awards**

- Changelooms Award & Fellowship (2006) – Awarded to promising young people who start their own social entrepreneurship programmes.
- Paragon Fellowship, Asia Pacific Future 100 – Best Young Social Entrepreneurs across the Asia Pacific.
- Arindam was honoured with the – "BALIPARA NATURENOMICS AWARD" by Balipara Foundation, during the function; The Balipara Foundation Award-2013.

This award was presented to him for being a green and young entrepreneur of India and for demonstrating the fact that it is possible to be successful without compromising on our ecological and environmental heritage.



The Balipara Naturenomics Award was presented to Arindam Dasgupta, MD, Tamul Plates Marketing Pvt. Ltd. by Ms. Nandini Dutta, Secretary, Crafts Council of India

## The Balipara Foundation Green Legal Award

### Gautam Uzir



### Introduction

Gautam Uzir is a practicing lawyer at the Guwahati High Court since 1984. He is a highly regarded and eminent lawyer in Assam. He is well-versed in several branches of the discipline of law.

He is renowned for his accomplishments regarding public interest litigations in the field of environment, forest and wildlife cases.

### Activities

- He has been assisting conservation agencies, both, government and non-government, with his legal inputs in the fields of forest, wildlife and environment crime.
- In support of various NGOs, he has conducted many legal orientation camps for forest staffs to build their capacity on methods of building up a strong court case.
- He is a regular guest lecturer at the Assam Forest School situated at Jalukbari (Assam) and Central Academy for State Forest Service, Burnihat, Assam.

### Career

He has many milestones in his career as a public interest lawyer, the landmarks among which are:



Legal orientation camp in Makum Forest School attended by local forest officials.



Gautam Uzir with Justice Ansari at another legal workshop in Guwahati.



- Checks on encroachment in forest areas of Assam.
- Revival of public sector undertakings in Assam.
- Litigation pertaining to manholes in public foot paths.
- He was able to secure justice for leprosy victims.
- He was able to bring order to the education system for the blind in Assam.



Poaching continues to take a toll on Kaziranga's rhinos.

As a green lawyer, he was able to secure directions from the Guwahati High Court against the Ledo Margherita open cast mining and set up an affluent treatment plant at Digboi.

Currently he is assisting the court in matters pertaining to encroachment in Kaziranga National Park and the rampant poaching of rhinos in and around the park.

He was vocal against the present railway track at Depor Beel. He could rightly predict that tract would degrade the smaller southern side of the beel and would cause great impact to the Rani-Garbhangra-Depor Beel elephant corridor.



Seminar on 'Conservation of Nature: Role of Lawyers'.

### **Recognition**

- Member of State Board for Wildlife, Assam.

### **Publication**

- Author of compilation publication entitled Assam Forest Manual, the first edition of which was published in 2009.

### **Personal Life**

He is simple in his living and very dedicated to his work. Following ethics are of a high priority to him. He loves nature, recognises the need to protect nature and believes that nature can save all of the life forms on the planet including humans.

### **Awards**

- He was honoured with "BALIPARA GREEN LEGAL AWARD" by the Balipara Foundation, for his interventions and missions to raise legal awareness, which helped forest officials build strong cases against wildlife crimes.



Gautam Uzir was presented the Balipara Green Legal Award by Assamese singer Debojit Saha.



**The Balipara  
Foundation Eastern  
Himalayan  
Conservation Award**

**Dr. Anwaruddin  
Choudhury**



**Introduction**

Dr. Anwaruddin acquired a passion towards wildlife from a young age. He studied science in school and college, but, later shifted to arts.

He completed graduation with honours in Geography, a subject that gives an added advantage in wildlife research such as the invaluable knowledge of mapping. He completed his M. A. in Geography but retained a great interest in biology and studied several books on the subject in due course.

He completed his Ph. D. on primates of Assam in 1990, and then went on to pursue D.Sc. in 2008 on mammals of Northeast India. In fact, he is only the 2nd person to earn a D.Sc. degree from the prestigious Guwahati University since its inception in 1948 (excluding the honorary recipients).



Field work in Brail Range, Assam in 1986.



Dr. Choudhury on elephant back in the rainforests of Choraipung, Upper Dihing, Tinsukia District, Assam.

**Procedure**

Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury is a government official, hence, many of his conservation and research works in remote areas are done while on official duty.

Whenever an opportunity presents itself, he observes mammals, birds and reptiles in their habitat. He records his observations in the form of notes, photographs, sketches/drawings and maintains notebooks. He even uses camera traps to photograph and document animals.

In all meetings, whether official or with army and police on law and order, Dr. Anwaruddin will initiate a talk on wildlife conservation, for a couple of minutes at the end of the meeting. He has managed to instill a deep interest and passion for wildlife in several people including wildlife conservation workers and officials during these meetings.



A make shift camp on the sand bars near Dibru-Saikhowa, National Park during field research in 1993 (Dr. Anwaruddin on the extreme right).



Field work in Mandla Phudung, W Kameng Arunachal Pradesh in the late 1990s.

Occasionally, there are specific projects on some species or some select areas, where it becomes mandatory for him to take leave for a few weeks/months and set out for expeditions.



Photographing a burnt turtle at Orang National Park, Assam.



On the slopes of remote Mount Saramati in Nagaland near the India-Myanmar border in 2003.

## Objectives

- Conduct long-term research.
- To help authorities identify potential areas for sanctuaries and national parks for long-term conservation.
- Conservation awareness through writing, meetings and other sources.

## Experiments

Choudhury's work in conservation has resulted in the protection of a large number of areas in Northeast India, more particularly in Assam. Due to his work, at least 12 wildlife sanctuaries have been established, including Bordoibam-Bilmukh, Bird Sanctuary-Pani-Dihing, Barail, Bherjan-Borajan-Podumoni, Dihing-Patkai, Hollongapar Gibbon, Nambor-Doigrung, Nambor, East Karbi Anglong, North Karbi Anglong, Amchang and Marat Longri, and Elephant Reserves-Chirang-Ripu, Sonitpur; Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong, Dhansiri-Lungding and Dihing-Patkai.



Inspecting an anti-poaching camp constructed under his supervision in Nongkhylllem Wildlife Sanctuary, Meghalaya, in 2006.



Working in a museum in 2008.

He was also instrumental in upgrading Dibru-Saikhowa into a national park and inclusion of Laokhowa and Burhachapori sanctuaries in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

He has also worked for the implementation of several conservation projects of the Rhino Foundation for Nature in Northeast India since its inception as its honorary chief executive.

### **Ornithology**

- He rediscovered a rare galliform species, Manipur Bush Quail in Assam, which was last recorded 75 years ago.
- He has made several new country records for India and Bhutan.
- He is the coordinator of Asian mid-winter waterfowl census for Assam. He was also the coordinator for Northeast India.
- He is also the state coordinator of the Indian Bird Conservation Network.

### **Mammal Research**

- The most significant achievements are the discovery and description of two flying squirrels, new to science in 2007 and 2009. These new flying squirrels have been named by him *Petaurista mechukaensis* (nigra) and *P. mishmiensis*.



Exploring the Memencho lake in Sikkim in 2008.

- He also discovered a new primate species but identified it as a subspecies of *Macaca thibetana*. This was later on described by other scientists as *Macaca munzala*.
- He also revealed for the first time that the stump-tailed and pig-tailed macaques are restricted by the Brahmaputra to the west of the range.
- His authoritative works on the wild water buffalo have been published recently as the first monograph on this endangered species.



Planning for census of wild water buffalo in Manas Tiger Reserve with the Field Director and the Deputy Field Director in 2008.



Placing a camera-trap in D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh, in 2012.

## Hurdles

Being a government official at posts like SDO (Civil), Additional District Magistrate, Project Director of Rural Development and Deputy Commissioner, time was inevitably a constraint.

Unlike other researchers, it was difficult to be on the field month after month at a stretch. Despite that, he has spent more time than anyone else, studying and researching in the Northeast region as this was his area of interest.

He had to tread very carefully as the threat of extremists and other anti-social elements was always looming large in various regions of Northeast India.

In the initial years, lack of funding was also a major problem.

## Current Status

His researches/studies/field works are still going on, as before. However, with long decades of experience and available data, he is in the process of writing comprehensive documents on mammals and birds of the region.

In his credentials, he already has penned down:

- 20 books.

- More than 650 articles and scientific papers.
- 35 technical reports.



Mizoram's Forest Minister R. Lalthangliana releasing Dr. Anwaruddin's book on the birds of Mizoram in 2008. Also seen (from left), are late S.N. Kalita (PCCF) and Prof. Anil Goswami.

Recently, he has completed his biggest achievement; 'A magnificent 'big' book with 432 pages – The Mammals of Northeast India. His last book was The Birds of Assam with 240 pages which was launched in the year 2000.

### **Cost and Funding**

Most of the funding is taken care of by internal sources. Small grants are received from different organisations from time to time.

### **People Involved**

Innumerable people were involved who supported Dr. Anwaruddin during his 'journey in the wilderness' spanning across the last three decades, including Forest Department officials and staff, villagers, NGO activists, and officials of various other departments.

It will be impossible to acknowledge all of them, but following are a few noteworthy ones:

Prof. Mohd. Taher, Prof. Anil Kr. Goswami, Mrs. Anne Wright, Late Hiteswar Saikia, Gegong Apang, Mukut Mithi, Late Nagen Sharma, Pradyut Bordoloi, Samar Singh, Ranjit Barthakur, Late J. C. Daniel, Asad R. Rahmani, Late Ashok Saikia, L. Rynjah, Late A. K. Sachan, B. B. Hagjer, M. C. Malakar, Prof. D. K. Sharma, Natwar Thakkar, S. S. Bist, Bob Riseborough Nirmal Bhagabati, Oriental Bird Club, Colin P. Groves, Jack Fooden, Prof. Wang Yingxiang, Late Rajen Islary, N. Pradhan, Subhendu Sekhar Saha, Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Bhuram Gogoi, Paniram Das, Nur Hussain, Late Monisingh, Fulmon Kurmi, Late Shirai Laskar, Aziruddin Laskar, Sarsing Rongphar, Bikul Goswami, Bir Bahadur Gurung, Firoz Ahmed, Kulojyoti Lahkar, Dorji Raptan, K. N. Thungon, R. K. Ranjan Singh, Sameer Khan,

Prof. Mohd. Taher, Prof. Anil Kr. Goswami, Mrs. Anne

Wright, Late Hiteswar Saikia, Gegong Apang, Mukut Mithi, Late Nagen Sharma, Pradyut Bordoloi, Samar Singh, Ranjit Barthakur, Late J. C. Daniel, Asad R. Rahmani, Late Ashok Saikia, L. Rynjah, Late A. K. Sachan, B. B. Hagjer, M. C. Malakar, Prof. D. K. Sharma, Natwar Thakkar, S. S. Bist, Bob Riseborough Nirmal Bhagabati, Oriental Bird Club, Colin P. Groves, Jack Fooden, Prof. Wang Yingxiang, Late Rajen Islary, N. Pradhan, Subhendu Sekhar Saha, Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Bhuram Gogoi, Paniram Das, Nur Hussain, Late Monisingh, Fulmon Kurmi, Late Shirai Laskar, Aziruddin Laskar, Sarsing Rongphar, Bikul Goswami, Bir Bahadur Gurung, Firoz Ahmed, Kulojyoti Lahkar, Dorji Raptan, K. N. Thungon, R. K. Ranjan Singh, Sameer Khan, Dr. John R. Lao and his wife, Thomas Kent, Tsile Sakhire, Khekiho Sohe, S. Hukiye, N. Kreditsu; Heerak Nandy, Kamal Banik, A. R. K. Shastri, S. S. Samant, Biswajit Roy Chowdhury, Havildar Keshab Das, Dilip Handique, Late Sakul Boro, Babul Debnath, Faizul Ali, Hakeem and Hashim Choudhury, Tiken Chhetri, Mamata Riba, Tape Moshing, K. Muivah (who later on became a Minister), M. Goswami, M. I. Bora, Akato Sema, T. Torechu, S.B. Singh, Sunil Kumar, T. Deb Roy, J. Datta, P. R. Marak, Lt. Col. Shakti Banerjee, S. K. Sen, R. C. Bhattacharjee, C. R. Bhobora, Late Narayan Sarmah, Dharanidhar Boro, L. K. Ramchiary, Bombeswar Gogoi, Joyram Hazarika, Late S. N. Kalita and R.P. Neog, Yogesh, S. K. Shome, T. Singh.

### **Recognitions**

- Anwaruddin Choudhury M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc., is an Indian naturalist, noted for his expertise on the fauna of Northeast India.
- He is an ornithologist, mammalogist, artist, civil servant, photographer and author.
- Recognised by many as an eminent naturalist and conservationist studying wildlife throughout Northeast India and adjacent areas.
- Honorary Chief Executive of the Rhino Foundation for Nature in Northeast India.
- Deputy Commissioner (District Magistrate), Lakhimpur district in Assam.
- Known as the "Birdman of Assam", the first to produce books on the birds of different northeastern states including Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram.
- Recognised as one of India's well known wildlife experts

and conservationists.

### Awards

- Gold Medal by Guwahati University.
- Medal by the North-East India Geographical Society.
- Forktail-Leica Award for Mrs. Hume's Pheasant study by the Oriental Bird Club.
- OBC-Wild Wings Conservation Award, U.K. for conservation activities in Nagaland.
- Various prizes for drawings.
- He was honoured with "BALIPARA EASTERN-HIMALAYAN CONSERVATION AWARD" by the Balipara Foundation, for his vast experience with the diverse fauna of entire Northeast India than almost any other individual today.



Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury was presented with the Balipara Eastern-Himalayan Award by Dr. Pratip Banerji, leading homeopath who is working on progressive cancer treatments around the world.



## The Balipara Foundation Green Guru Award

### Uttam Teron, Social Entrepreneur and Founder of Parijat Academy, School for the Less Privileged



## Introduction

Pamohi is located on the outskirts of Guwahati, the capital of Assam. The school is located in an area that is mostly inhabited by tribals, comprising about 10 tribal villages with approximately 7,000 people. There are five stone quarries located in that area and most of the people work as daily wage earners in the quarries. While the parents worked in the quarry, their children would wander around all day, some of them venturing dangerously close to the quarry.

Uttam Teron wanted these children to be in a safe environment, and that is how the idea of starting a school for them was born. And thus, was established the Parijat Academy.

In 2003, Uttam found that there was no school for the children of his village. He invested Rs. 800 he had earned as a private tutor in constructing a room with a tin roof and bamboo walls which became his school.



## Objective

To give education to village children who are school dropouts or who are not interested in going to school with the long-term vision to reduce child labour.

## Parijat Academy

Parijat Academy is an NGO for underprivileged children, registered under the Societies Registration Act. It laid its foundation stone in 2003 with four children in a small room with a tin roof and bamboo wall. At present, there are 521 children studying at Parijat from nursery to class 10 with 20 teachers.

The academy is a non-religious school providing free education. It covers 14 tribal villages – Pamohi, Maghuapara, Deosutal, Garchuk, Mainakhorong, Dhalbama, Nowagaon, Garoghuli, Garbhanga, Ahomgaon, Kotokipara, Chakardo, Pahamjila and Natun Garbhanga.

School time: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hostel: There are 15 children in the hostel room from remote tribal forest villages. The hostel is in a poor condition and needs 60 pieces of tin sheets and three big tarpaulins. The academy is looking for second hand or new tin sheets from donors.

School library: There is a school library comprising 700 books.

Health care: A regular checkup for children and their parents is conducted by a doctor and a nurse who visit the school.



School library: There is a school library comprising 700 books.  
Health care: A regular checkup for children and their parents is conducted by a doctor and a nurse who visit the school.

## Outreach Programme

Parijat Academy has a Children Learning Centre in Garbhanga (Assam–Meghalaya border) which was launched in 2008. The aim of the programme is to give education to children and women living in and around the forest. There are 25 children and three helper teachers at the centre, which covers four forest villages. More children are likely to join the school from far off villages. For this, a hostel that can accommodate 30 children needs to be constructed.

## Contribution

The school collects used books, clothes, toys, bicycles, computers, laptops, bedsheets, mattresses, quilts, blankets, furniture, exercise books for the school children and their parents.



## Extra Curricular Activities

- Nature trekking.
- Art and crafts.
- Computer.



- Afternoon programme.
- Organic farming.
- Youth programme.
- Women self-sustaining programme.
- Seminars.
- Workshops on folk dance.



## Costs & Funding

- To run the school: Rs 70,000 per month.
- Stationary for 521 children: Rs. 70,000 per annum.
- Hostel food for 15 children: Rs. 8,000 per month.
- Books for 521 children: Rs. 75,000 per annum.
- Hostel for outreach programme: Rs. 60,000 for tin sheets and for roof bamboo wall.



- Child sponsor: Rs 300 per month for one child (Rs. 3,600 per year for one child).

### **Personal Life**

Uttam Teron, a local unemployed youth from Pamohi whose father was a train driver and mother a homemaker, became a harbinger of change in his village.

He studied at the the prestigious Cotton College and Arya Vidyapeeth College in Guwahati and firmly believed that education is the birthright of every child.

### **Recognition**

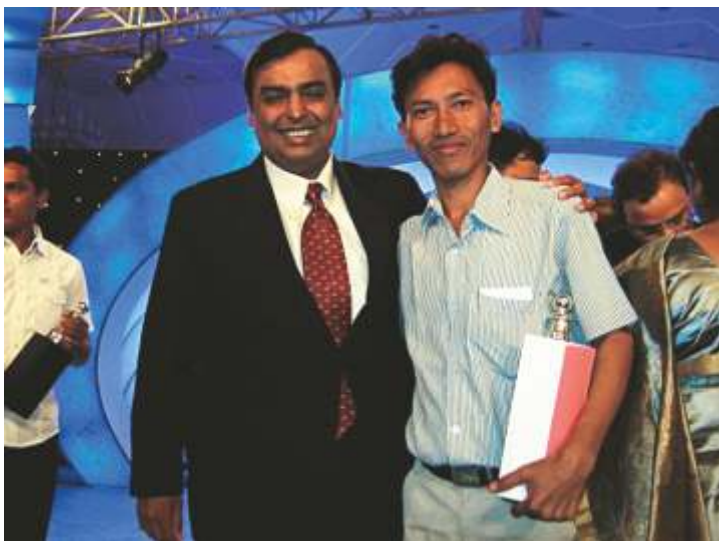
Teron was listed in India Today's 35 youth icons of India.

### **Impact in Society**

Parents of tribal children in 10-12 villages have become aware of the importance of children's education.

### **Awards**

- Recipients of CNN-IBN Reliance Real Heroes award.
- He was honoured with "BALIPARA GREEN GURU AWARD" by the Balipara Foundation, for being a green teacher and inspiring young people to respect and protect nature.



Uttam Teron receiving the Real Heroes Award at the CNN-IBN Reliance Heroes Award from Mr. Mukesh Ambani.



Mrs. Teron was presented the Balipara Green Guru Award by Sentila Yanger, Padmashri award winner and founder of Tribal Weave, which promotes Naga crafts and women development in rural areas.



## The Balipara Foundation Young Naturalist Award

### Munjali Tokbipi



Combining INDEGINEOUS  
KNOWLEDGE AND  
OCCUPANCY SURVEY: A  
study of elusive animals in  
Northeast India

## Background

Karbi Anglong is the largest district in Assam in Northeast India. It is divided into two parts – east and west.

East Karbi Anglong, occupying 7,000 sq. km, is connected in the north to the world famous Kaziranga National Park, where the critically endangered Indian rhino and tiger are found.



Karbi Anglong is home to several tribal communities, who lead a traditional lifestyle intricately linked to the forests. Karbi, from which the district gets its name, is the predominant tribal group in the district. The district is governed under Schedule VI of the Constitution of India, which gives local communities varying degrees of autonomy over natural resource use.



The region has been marked by a long history of civil unrest and armed conflict which has, in part, prevented its large-scale modernisation.

Tigers and other large mammals are thought to disperse into the Karbi hills from Kaziranga. However, due to lack of research on wildlife in the district, the status of tigers and other mammals is not known. A study was conducted to understand the status and distribution of tigers and prey in Karbi Anglong and the potential for long-term tiger conservation. Aaranyak, a society for biodiversity conservation, in collaboration with WWF India and Panthera, U.S., carried out this study in 2012-13.

## Objective

The main objectives of the study were:

- To understand the pattern of large mammal distribution in Karbi Anglong.
- Interaction between wildlife and tribal communities.
- Assess conservation potential.

## Methodology

An extensive occupancy survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire and array of pictures after training local Karbi and Dimasa youth.



## Hurdles

Karbi Anglong has a long history of civil unrest which makes it an unsafe place to conduct fieldwork, especially for those who are not locals. There were also periodic clashes between the outfits and the army which made surveying some areas difficult. There are quite a few different tribal groups in Karbi Anglong and inter-tribal conflict is another serious issue.

Karbi Anglong is governed under a special constitutional set up called 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which gives considerable power to local councils. Apart from the legal aspects of instituting a conservation plan, there is a general feeling among the local people that a 'tiger project' would mean loss of land and access to natural resources.

## Results

The project team was able to interview more than 1,200 informants in 285 grids of the study area and found that 70 per cent of the district is permeable to tiger movement, Ninty per cent of the study area is occupied by elephants, wild pigs and barking deer, while tigers, sambar and gaur have restricted distribution. Man-elephant conflict is becoming a major problem in the district.

## Current Status

The field exercise was completed within seven to eight months. Currently, data analysis and report writing has



been completed and the report has to be published. Plans are afoot to upgrade the project for the next phase with more intensive surveys and camera trapping.

### **Costs & Funding**

- Funded: Panthera, a U.S. based organisation.
- Cost: Almost five lakhs (INR).

### **People Involved**

The project was conducted in joint collaboration with

- Aaranyak, a society for biodiversity conservation in Northeast India and Panthera, a U.S. based organisation for conservation of wild cats.
- WWF-India, Forest Department of Karbi Anglong.

### **Awards**

- Recipient of "BALIPARA YOUNG NATURALIST AWARD" conferred by the Balipara Foundation, for dedicating her life for the protection of nature.



Munjali Tokbipi was presented the Balipara Young Naturalist Award by Naba Kr. Das, Chief Secretary, Assam.

## The Balipara Foundation Food for the Future Award

### Neelam Dutta, Founder, Lakshmi Agriculture & Multipurpose Project (LAMP)



## Introduction

Lakshmi Agriculture and Multipurpose Project (LAMP) is a project to increase the productivity, availability and affordability of agricultural products. LAMP has been promoting and practicing eco-friendly practices in all its activity areas.

LAMP believes in sustainability and environmentally acceptable agri-practices, and wishes to work with like-minded firms and individuals towards a greener and productive future.

In Assam, fish is harvested from the many rivers, ponds and lakes. In Pabhoi, the fisheries sector is considered as an important economic activity in the socio-economic context of the society.



Neelam during his field work.

## Aim

The main objective of the project is to promote sustainable agricultural practices. The first project was fisheries. At present, the project has expanded into the fields of scientific farming viz. paddy, dairy and poultry.

## Infrastructure

LAMP's infrastructure has been designed and planned to support all their agri-activities like an ecosystem. Fish rearing ponds, tanks, green house, dairy sheds, vermicompost tanks, nursery, training halls etc. have been integrated into the premises for seamless operation.

## Activities

Initially LAMP started with paddy and fish rearing. Recently, LAMP has diversified into dairy, nursery and bio-research at its picturesque farm at Pabhoi.

### ● Raw Materials:

Fish production has been LAMP's strength for decades. Currently, LAMP produces a wide variety of indigenous and foreign fishes. Some of their varieties are: Indian Carps - Labio, Rohita (Rohu), Catla, Mrigal; Chinese Carps - Common Carp, Silver Carp, Grass Carp.



Fish rearing.

- Floriculture:

The nursery houses a wide variety of all common flora indigenous to Assam as well as the six other sister states. In addition, experimentation happens round the year to grow foreign varieties in local conditions.

- Dairy:

LAMP's dairy has been steadily growing in capacity and productivity since its inception. The cattle comprise local productive species as well as engineered species in handsome proportions. The quality of the dairy produce is of very high standards owing to healthy living conditions and unadulterated diet of the cattle.



Farming.

- Farming:

LAMP is into strictly organic cultivation of vegetables, both common and exotic varieties. Common vegetables including broccoli and spinach are cultivated using organic manure.

- Vermicompost:

Chemical fertilisers have played a significant role in agriculture production. However, continued and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers affects soil health, leading to micronutrient depletion, soil degradation, and poor crop production and thereby lowering productivity. Vermiculture hatcheries and vermicompost offer immense scope for increasing productivity of different agricultural, horticultural and plantation crops.



Vermicompost

Vermicompost is a major component of LAMP's activities. It currently has several dedicated vermitanks and has been supplying vermicompost of superior quality to many districts and states for more than a decade.

- Agriculture:

Rice is the most important part of Assamese cuisine. In Pabhoi, special care is taken to grow different types of indigenous and other high-yielding varieties of rice. Both, Indica as well as Japonica varieties are grown in Pabhoi. Some of the most popular varieties of rice such as Joha, Kumol, Bora and Aijong saul are well cultivated around Pabhoi region.

- Consultancy:

LAMP provides knowledge and training consultancy to farmers and institutions alike. They also provide on-site consultancy to farms, fisheries, nurseries in productivity and practice issues. They have a dedicated lecture hall at their premises apart from other amenities for handling training camps and events.



A field survey instructor sharing information about agriculture.



Periodic training camps are organised to help the farmers.



Instructors give ample guidance to budding talents.

## Organic Farming

Organic farming is able to provide long-term benefits to the people and to the environment in the following ways:

- Conventional farmers can actually reduce production cost by over 25 per cent.
- Use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides is eliminated.
- It minimises soil erosion by up to 50 per cent.
- It increases crop yield up to five-fold within five years.
- Increases long term fertility of the soil.
- It controls pests and diseases without harming the environment.
- Ensures that water remains clean and safe.
- Leads to nutritious production.
- Consumes less water apart from conserving the environment.



LAMP is the pioneer of organic farming in the entire Northeast region.

## Hurdles

- Productivity in organic cultivation is less initially.
- Since LAMP is situated in a remote village around 280 km. from Guwahati, communication is a barrier.
- Non-availability of full-time electricity.
- No proper irrigation facilities.

## Awards

- Recipient of "BALIPARA FOOD FOR THE FUTURE AWARD" honoured by the Balipara Foundation, for his significant contribution to the promotion of organic food.



Neelam Dutta was presented the Balipara Food for the Future Award by Mr. Bhaskar Barua, Former Agricultural Secretary, Government of India. & Director Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd.



## The Balipara Foundation Ecological Restoration Award

### Jadav Payeng



The Man Who Grew His Own Forest

### Introduction

It is not easy these days to find an exceptional person. Someone who is genuine and compassionate enough to surrender his life for the environment. To leave all the magnificence of the world and transcend to a state where none of it really matters.

This is the story of one such exceptional man – Jadav 'Mulai' Payeng.



Jadav Payeng

### Career

Payeng began his plantation drive in 1979 as a 16-year-old by planting saplings on a sterile sandbar in Aruna Chapori near his birthplace of Jorhat.

Walking along the sandbars of the Brahmaputra River, Jadav observed that the floods had washed many snakes ashore onto the sandbars, but these slithering reptilians did not survive for long and died because of excessive heat and lack of tree cover. Jadav alerted forest officials, who refused to pay heed to his request of growing trees by saying that nothing would grow in the sandbars. They asked him to grow bamboo trees and even though it was a painstaking process, Jadav started doing so.

A year later, the social forestry division of the district of Golaghat initiated a new scheme of tree plantation at Aruna Chapori, which was nearly 5 km. away from Kokilamukh in Jorhat district.

Mulai engaged himself as a labourer in that project which was completed after five years. But, Payeng decided to stay back and continued his own effort to plant more and more trees in the area. He slowly and steadily converted the whole area into a large forest.

Payeng was so deeply engaged in planting and creating a new forest canopy in that barren sandbar area that nobody knew about him and his noble efforts for a long span of time. But in 2008, a herd of nearly 120 elephants destroyed the property of villagers in the adjacent area of Nimati and Kokilamukh

region. When Forest Department officials went in search of the herd to try and drive them back into the forest, they observed that the herd had sneaked into a huge forest in Aruna Chapori, which they had never seen. Since then the Forest Department began showing an interest in protecting the area.



Glimpses of Mulai Forest.

### **Forest Habitat**

The forest is now known in Assamese as Mulai Kathoni or Mulai forest and is home to around four Bengal tigers, three Indian rhinoceros, over 100 deer and rabbits besides apes and innumerable varieties of birds, including a large number of vultures. There are several thousand trees, including Valcol, Arjun Terminalia arjuna, Eejar Lagerstroemia speciosa, Goldmohur Delonix regia, Koroï Albizia procera, Moj Archidendron bigeminum and Himolu Bombax ceiba. Bamboo trees cover an area of over 300 hectares.



Glimpses of Mulai Forest.

A herd of around 100 elephants regularly visits the forest every year and generally stay for around six months. Ten calves have been born in this forest.

### **Contribution**

Greener Pastures, an eco-tourism outfit based in Northeast India, has started a fundraiser for Jadav Payeng which will enable him to grow more forests.

### **Personal Life**

Jadav Payeng belongs to a tribe called 'Mising' in Assam, India. He lives in a small hut made up of bamboo and wood along with his wife Binita and his three children. He has cattle and buffalo on his farm and sells their milk, which is his only source of income.

## Recognition

- JNU had conferred the title of 'Forest Man of India' on him.
- Jadav has been invited to a UN convention in Paris to address a gathering of environmentalists from all over the world.
- Famous British filmmaker Tom Robert went to his forest to shoot one of his films.
- Award winning documentary filmmaker Aarti Shrivastava is directing a feature length documentary film on Jadav's life.

## Future Plans

Mulai in a recent interview said that if the Forest Department promises to manage the forest in a better way, then he would go to other places of Assam to start a similar venture.

### Awards

- He was honoured during the Sangeetha Sabha Diamond Jubilee celebrations for his efforts in conservation by former President of India A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.
- Honoured at a public function arranged by the School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University on 22nd April, 2012, for his remarkable achievement.
- Very recently, he was honoured with the, "BALIPARA ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AWARD" by the Balipara Foundation for working on a landscape towards the objective of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Eastern Himalayas, through the rehabilitation of the ecosystem.



Jadav Payeng was presented the Balipara Ecological Restoration Award by Prabhat Dey, a nature architect and builder of a hotel modelled on Khasi architecture.

## Background

Concerns were growing rapidly for the Indian rhino, following a spate of poaching in the Kaziranga National Park, Assam.

First, it was raging floodwaters that submerged the 430 sq. km. park in Assam, which is home to the largest number of the world's remaining one-horned rhinos. Then, the poachers stepped in to attack as the rhinos fled to higher grounds.

Six rhinos were killed in a single week with two rhinos having their horns hacked off while they were still alive. Vets tried to save the wounded rhinos, however, their injuries proved to be fatal. A total of 17 rhinos had been killed by suspected poachers in Assam. This was in addition to the 14 rhinos that were killed along with 600 other animals due to the flood.



Rhinos with their horn hacked off.

Rising demand for rhino horns for traditional Chinese medicine has taken a huge toll on rhinos worldwide with severe poaching incidents in South Africa where hundreds of rhinos were killed. It was inevitable that Kaziranga experiences such a poaching spree.

In the wake of such a high rate of killing, which was previously experienced in 2008-2009 when approximately 35 rhinos were killed in Kaziranga, the public took to the streets in protest against the state government's failure to protect Kaziranga's rhinos.

## Action

Worried with the state of affairs, the government announced several initiatives that included initiation of an investigation by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and strengthening the forest protection force with high caliber arms. Many monetary rewards were also announced by the government.

During this time, alarmed by the number of poaching incidences in Karbi Anglong district adjoining the southern part of Kaziranga, where many rhinos took refuge during floods, the police department of Karbi Anglong prioritised their action against crimes towards rhinos.



Felicitation ceremony.

## Infrastructure

With support from various stakeholders such as conservation organisations as well as individuals, the police department started investigating the poaching incidences. Tireless efforts of the police officers with their wide network of informants worked day and night on leads that began flowing in and it was just a matter of time before the first success came in.

It all began with a single bit of information that came in on October 13, 2012, that a rhino had been killed and its horn was hacked off near Haldibari area. Karbi Anglong police began their investigation, which resulted in the arrest of seven persons in Roja Pahar area. The police were able to apprehend another seven persons in October 2012 including Lindok Rongpi, the main culprit, who admitted to having killed a rhino on October 3, 2012, with an AK-47 rifle and a .303 rifle.

Thereafter, it seemed like a floodgate got opened and a series of arrests were made in October and November 2012, wherein at least 47 persons were arrested in Karbi Anglong, Golaghat and Nagaon under different police stations.

It is important to mention here that several active and surrendered militants of different outfits were also arrested in connection with rhino poaching and many of the arrested poachers have since admitted to their direct or indirect involvement in the crime.

During these arrests, several arms and ammunition were also recovered as per the following table.

| No. | Type of Arms | No. of Arms | Magazine | Empty Cartridge | Live Amms |
|-----|--------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1.  | AK Series    | 01          | –        | 06              | 38        |
| 2.  | 303 Rifle    | 06          | –        | 01              | 27        |
| 3.  | SBML Gun     | 01          | 03       | –               | –         |
| 4.  | 762 SLR      | –           | –        | 07              | 01        |
| 5.  | '32 Pistol   | 01          | 01       | –               | 04        |



Recovery of arms and ammunition.

Apart from these arms and ammunition a spade/pick axe was also recovered which was used to hack off the rhino horn.

With these arrests, the Karbi Anglong police have managed to seriously dent a massive network of poachers, middlemen and buyers and it is hoped that further investigations will lead to many more such arrests.

The number of poaching cases have significantly come down since the arrests, which augurs well for the survival of the remaining rhino population in Kaziranga. The initiative of the Karbi Anglong police is commendable as it has been able to curb rhino poaching and has also busted an international organised crime network.

Again, it is important to note that they have been successful in such action despite the fact that these arrests have been done at a time when the entire state was recuperating from the ill-effects of flood and communal violence. All enforcement agencies were primarily engaged in relief work not to mention the continuous threat of militancy that needs police attention.



This significant achievement of the police department of Karbi Anglong is worthy of acknowledgement and it was proposed that a coveted award be presented to them so as to not only appreciate their contribution towards protection of the rhinos, but also to encourage them and other agencies to strengthen their support towards the natural heritage of India.

### **People Involved**

1. Karbi Anglong District Police:

- Shri M. P. Gupta, DIG
- Shri B. B. Chetry, SP
- Shri Bolin Deori, A. P. S., Addl. S.P. (HQ), Diphu
- Shri Naba Kr. Bora Inspector of Police, OC, Diphu P.S.
- S.I. Mwblik Brahma
- S.I. Manirul Islam
- ABC/433 Gratson Marak
- ABC/144 Lalming Lushai
- ABC/197 Samsul Alom Borbhuya
- UBC/425 Sarbeswar Borah

2. Assam Police Rangers:

- C/111 Himangshu Talukdar, 16 AP (IR) Bn.
- C/187 Rahul Alom, 4th APBn.

### **Awards**

- Department of Karbi Anglong Police was honoured with the, "BALIPARA NATURE CONSERVANCY AWARD", for protecting forests to restore biodiversity and protecting the wild species that spill over from the protected core to the less protected, but critical, buffer.



B. B. Chetry along with his team members being awarded the Balipara Nature Conservancy Award by N. K. Vasu, former Field Director of Kaziranga National Park.

## The Balipara Foundation Lifetime Service Award

### Anne Wright



## Background

Anne is a woman, who is quiet, determined and effective. This defender of our wilds has been a field worker, administrator, lobbyist and activist all rolled into one. The daughter of an I.C.S. officer, she spent her childhood in the wildernesses of Madhya Pradesh where she learned much from the legendary E. P. Gee, and helped set up the World Wildlife Fund in India in the late 1960s.

She was one of the most trusted advisors of the late Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who in 1970 appointed her as a member of her elite Tiger Task Force, when she worked closely with all-time greats such as Robin Bannerjee.



Anne Wright with a tiger cub.



Visiting anti-poaching camps in Kaziranga National Park in the monsoon floods of 1991.

She served on the Indian Board for Wildlife for 19 long years, helped organisations such as Aaranyak in their earliest stages of inception, and continues to chair the Rhino Foundation. From Great Indian Hornbills and pygmy hogs, Anne has worked tirelessly to protect them all.

She has unquestionably been one of the most influential conservation figures in the Eastern Himalaya area.

## Recognitions

| Central Government |        |  |
|--------------------|--------|--|
| 1.                 | Member | Indian Board for Wildlife (1972-1985 & 1989-1995)  |
| 2.                 | Member | Tiger Task Force (constituted in 1970 by Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to select the initial Project Tiger Reserves) |
| State Governments  |        |  |
| 1.                 | Member | West Bengal Wildlife Advisory Board  |
| 2.                 | Member | State Wildlife Board, Meghalaya  |
| 3.                 | Member | State Wildlife Board, Arunachal Pradesh  |
| 4.                 | Member | State Wildlife Board, Sikkim   |
| 5.                 | Member | State Wildlife Board, Andaman & Nicobar Islands  |

|                                   |                       |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 6.                                | Member                | State Wildlife Board, Orissa                       |
| 7.                                | Member                | State Wildlife Board, Bihar                        |
| <b>SSC/IUCN Specialist Groups</b> |                       |  |
| 1.                                | Member                | Cat Specialist Group                               |
| 2.                                | Member                | Rhino Specialist Group                             |
| <b>NGOs &amp; Others</b>          |                       |  |
| 1.                                | Founder Trustee       | Worldwide Fund for Nature – India (WWF)            |
| 2.                                | Chairman              | WWF-India, Eastern Region (1972-1995)              |
| 3.                                | Chairperson & Trustee | The Rhino Foundation for Nature in Northeast India |
| 4.                                | Board Member          | Wildlife Protection Society of India               |
| 5.                                | Governor              | Assam Valley Wildlife Society                      |
| 6.                                | Member                | Bengal Chamber of Commerce Environmental Council   |



Poaching camp funded by Rhino Foundation at Nonkylem WLS Meghalaya.



Project for the Brahmaputra River Dolphin in January 1993.

## Awards

- Recipient of "Order of the Golden Ark" from Prince Bernhard, The Netherlands.
- Honoured with the award "MBE" from Queen Elizabeth II, the United Kingdom.
- Recently, she was conferred with the award "BALIPARA FOUNDATION LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD", for devoting her whole life to the ecological welfare of the people of the Northeast.



Anne Wright receiving the Balipara Lifetime Service Award from Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister, Assam & Ranjit Barthakur, Founder Trustee, Balipara Foundation.

### **Delivering on its Commitment to Wildlife Conservation**

During the Inaugural Balipara Foundation Awards, 12th April 2013, Mr Ranjit Barthakur, Founder Trustee, had made an announcement on behalf of the Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) that it would make a contribution of 50 Lakh to support Wildlife Conservation Efforts in the Kaziranga National Park.

It gives us great pleasure in announcing that, over the past eight months, eight Patrolling Vehicles and one Speed Boat Engine were delivered to the authorities of the National Park for a total donation amounting to 68.66 Lakh.

The Balipara Foundation takes great pride in being able to live up to its commitment and extends sincere gratitude to WCT for its outstanding support towards conserving our Natural Heritage.

### **Balipara Foundation Scholarship Fund for Nature Conservation**

Under the patronage of Balipara Foundation, Founder Trustee Mr. Ranjit Barthakur had announced a Scholarship Fund of 5 Lakh during the inaugural Balipara Foundation Awards.

Balipara Foundation Scholarship Fund for Nature Conservation (BFS) is to provide financial support to individuals who wish to pursue short-term professional training or formal studies that will help them contribute more effectively to conservation efforts in the North East Frontier region and nurture scholars to become Conservation Leaders.

As a priority, the BFS support mid-career training for individuals working in the field of conservation or associated disciplines directly relevant to the delivery and promotion of conservation in the region.