At the outset, Hon’ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests welcomed all the Members of the Standing Committee for National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). Since the committee was meeting within two months, Chairman observed that convening a meeting at shorter interval would facilitate more focused discussion on technical issues as well the processing of diversion proposals etc. It was followed by discussion on agenda items.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1

Confirmation of the minutes of the 15th meeting of Standing Committee of National Board for Wild Life held on 17th July 2009.

Member Secretary informed that after circulation of the minutes of the last meeting, Ministry had received communications from Shri Pradeep Khanna, PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), Government of Gujarat and Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Member, requesting to incorporate detailed points raised by them in the last meeting i.e. argument against lion translocation in Kuno Palpur and availing CAMPA money for wildlife conservation etc. Member Secretary informed that appropriate response to them has already been communicated. However, their views have also been taken on record. Thereafter, the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

The Action Taken Report on the decisions of the Standing Committee of NBWL taken in its 15th meeting held on 17.07.2009 are as given below:
2(6.00): Rationalization of boundaries of Protected Areas- Proposals of Himachal Pradesh.

Member Secretary briefed the Committee that after discussions in the last meeting, the comments of the State Government of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) were sought on the recommendations of Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh Committee regarding Rationalization of Boundaries of Protected Areas in H.P. The State Government of H.P. had conveyed their acceptance to the recommendations. It was also confirmed by Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of H.P. who was present in the meeting. It was also informed that as a result of this rationalization, an additional area of about 1048.7 sq. Kms is proposed to be added in the Protected Area network.

Under this background, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal for rationalization of boundaries of Protected Areas in H.P. as per the recommendations of Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh Committee.

2[6(ii)] Diversion of 21 ha of forest land from Desert National Park for construction of road Khabdala to Bachiya.

Member Secretary informed that Dr. Asad Rahmani, Director, BNHS who was to inspect the area had informed that construction of this proposed road would not in any way have the impact on biodiversity of the Desert National Park and, therefore, recommended the proposal.

After discussion, Committee unanimously approved the proposal subject to the compliance of the conditions as proposed by CWLW in his recommendation.
Deletion of Plant Species from the Schedule of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Member Secretary informed that till date comments from 17 CWLWs have been received and the comments from the remaining CWLWs are still awaited. Chairman observed that a last chance may be given to the remaining CWLWs to give their suggestions and a decision should be taken in the next meeting of the Standing Committee of NBWL.

Permission to carry out study for Environmental Impact Assessment and risk assessment for establishment of Port at Poshitra Distt. Jamnagar.

Member Secretary apprised the Committee that as decided in the last meeting, exchange of documents between the inspecting team of the Standing Committee (Dr. Asad Rahmani and Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh) and Project Proponents has been completed through CWLW of Gujarat. However, project proponents have sought time upto 31st October, 2009 to go through the documents in details before the next round of discussion in the matter.

The Committee unanimously approved the request of the project proponents of Poshitra Port. Member Secretary also informed that the first report of the Committee constituted by the Ministry to study the impact of the proposed ports on the Indian Coast Line would also be available by the end of October, 2009. Therefore, in the next round of discussion, findings of this report could also be discussed.

Agenda items by Dr. Asad Rahmani:

(a) Nowapada Swamps

Member Secretary informed that as decided during the last meeting, a letter was sent to the State Government. However, the State Government has informed that their recommendation was based on the recommendation of a team of experts headed by Dr. K. Seshagiri Rao,
Associate Professor of Life Sciences, University of Hyderabad. Further the Forest Department also expressed the similar views and NOC was given by them for setting up the proposed power plant as there are no National Park/Sanctuary/Tiger Reserve etc. within 10 kms radius of the project site. CWLW of Andhra Pradesh reiterated that Nowpada Swamps were not part of Protected Area Network and the same information was communicated by him to the State Government. Considering the fact that Nowapada Swamps were important birds area in India, Committee unanimously decided that a site inspection should be carried out by Dr. Asad Rahmani and a representative of Wildlife Institute of India (Dr. Asha Rajvanshi) and submit a report to the Committee before its next meeting clearly elaborating the details of ecological significance as well as of birds visiting this area, both migratory and resident along with any other specific features of the area important for conservation.

(b) Lankamalleswara Sanctuary

Member Secretary informed the Committee that regarding Lankamalleswara Sanctuary, the report of CWLW, Andhra Pradesh was still awaited. CWLW, Andhra Pradesh was requested to submit the report at the earliest before the next meeting of the Committee.

(c) Kolleru Lake Sanctuary

Member Secretary informed that in this case also report of the CWLW from Andhra Pradesh was awaited. Chairman observed that State Governments were trying to use CAMPA money for acquisition of land/payment of compensation for land in and around Protected Areas. He desired that Director General of Forests and Special Secretary (DGF&SS) should write a letter to all States clarifying that CAMPA funds could not be used for acquisition of land. It was also decided to defer this issue for discussion in the next meeting.

(d) Balpakram Complex

It was informed by the Member Secretary that regarding Balpakram Complex, a report has been received from the CWLW of Meghalaya which has been circulated to all the
Members. CWLW, Meghalaya informed that State Government has taken appropriate action ensuring that no violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act or destruction of forest takes place in the area which is also kept under watch. However, after discussions, it was decided that Chief Conservator of Forests, North East Region, Shillong may be requested to inspect the area with Dr. Asad Rahmani, Director, BNHS and submit a status report at the earliest.

2[5.2(1)] Diversion of 1016 ha of forestland from Sri Penusila Narasimha Wildlife Sanctuary for Somasila Dam, Andhra Pradesh.

Member Secretary informed that site inspection has been carried out by Dr. Asad Rahmani with CWLW, Andhra Pradesh. Dr. Rahmani has recommended the proposal subject to the following conditions.

(i) In order to compensate the loss of 1016 ha of forest land from Sri Penusila Narasimha and Sri Lanka Malleswara Wildlife Sanctuaries and the Reserve forests for the Somasila Dam, equal amount of land should be added to these sanctuaries, particularly the scrub land that is suitable for Critically Endangered Jerdon’s Courser.

(ii) This land should be adjoining to these sanctuaries and taken up from the ‘Land Bank’ which the District Magistrate is maintaining as compensation to various development projects.

(iii) The land to be added should be identified by BNHS and State Forest Department under the supervision of the CWLW with Revenue Officer or his/her representatives.

(iv) The land should be handed over to the Forest/Wildlife Department before work on the impoundment starts.

However, CWLW, Andhra Pradesh took objection for condition No.(i) i.e. equal amount of land should be added to the sanctuaries, particularly the scrub land that is suitable for
Critically Endangered Jerdon’s Courser. Committee unanimously decided to defer the decision in this matter till the next meeting.

2[5.2(4)] Proposal for 2D seismic survey for an area of (158 sq. km), from Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary, Gujarat.

2[5.2(5) to 5.2(14)] Diversion of Forestland for construction of roads from Jessore Wildlife Sanctuary and Balram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary.

Member Secretary informed that in these cases site inspection was to be carried out by Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda along with representative of WII. However, site inspection was yet to be completed. Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda ensured that the site inspection would be completed latest by the end of October, 2009 and the report would be submitted for consideration of the Committee.

2[5.2(20)] Diversion of 0.3 ha of Forestland from National Chambal Ghariyal Sanctuary Rajasthan, for Dholpur lift irrigation project

Member Secretary briefed that this proposal was deferred in the last meeting. Dr. Asad Rahmani and Dr. Ranjitsinh opined that Chambal river was one of the cleanest rivers in the country with great aquatic biodiversity including dolphins, Gharials, Tortoise etc. All these species require flowing water of different depths. Since the river Chambal passes through three States namely; M.P., Rajasthan and U.P., pressure on Chambal water is going to be increased in the near future. Therefore, Standing Committee has to be very careful while recommending any such proposal which in turn may lead submission of large number of proposals from these three States causing irreparable damage to the aquatic fauna and Chambal habitat.
After discussions, it was decided that WII may carry out one more study about availability of water in Chambal vis-a-vis minimum water flow required for aquatic fauna in the Chambal before a final view is taken by the Ministry. WII should submit its report within two months i.e. before the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

AGENDA ITEM NO.3

TECHNICAL DISCUSSION ON THE ISSUE TRANSLOCATION OF ASIATIC LION FROM GIR TO KUNO PALPUR

It was followed by discussion on Agenda Item No.4

Member Secretary apprised the Committee that during the last meeting it was decided to have detailed technical discussion on the issue of translocation of lions to Madhya Pradesh (M.P.) in Kuno Palpur Sanctuary. Chairman observed that the issue is not mere translocation of lions from Gujarat to M.P. but also the long term viability of survival of the translocated lions. He also pointed out that in past lions have been translocated in M.P. as well as in U.P. unsuccessfully. Further, at present tiger conservation in M.P. also requires focussed efforts on the part of the State Government. Under these circumstances any decision for translocation of lions needs to be taken very carefully after judicious consultations.

Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda informed that in the previous instances of lion’s translocation in both the cases, lions were hunted because they became cattle lifters and caused acute lion-man conflict in the introduced areas as the introduced areas were small and devoid of adequate prey based. However, this is not the present case. At present hunting is legally banned and proposed introduction area is not only having enough prey base but also devoid of human population. CWLW, M.P. also informed that Kuno Palpur Sanctuary could accommodate even 60 lions as there was about 900 sq. Km of buffer area around the Sanctuary. There was enough prey base as per the survey of the State Forest Department. The additional Chief Secretary, Govt of M.P. submitted that the issue was not between the two States but was survival of lions and it needs to be provided an alternative home outside
the Gujarat State. More than Rs.34.00 crores have already been spent on the project. In case wild lions are not available, zoo bred lions could be introduced in the identified area following soft release as has been proposed in past. Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh was of the opinion that introduction of zoo bred or captive bred lions in the wild were not correct approach. The only solution was to introduce wild population of lions. Dr. Asad Rahmani also supported these views of Dr Ranjitsinh.

While elaborating the issue of introduction of captive bred lions, Director, WII informed that introduction of such animals in wild is a long drawn process involving 6-12 years. Only filial-2 or filial-3 of the captive bred population could be introduced in wild through soft release and it would require strict monitoring with scientific inputs at all levels supported with strong political, administrative and financial commitments. Member Secretary pointed out that Hon’ble Supreme Court has referred this issue to the Standing Committee with particular reference to additional affidavit filed by Gujarat State Government. Chairman desired that Ministry could prepare a draft response in the matter and get it circulated amongst the members of the Standing Committee and after incorporating their views, a decision on the response to be filed before the Hon’ble Court would be taken. It was also desired that this draft should be circulated within one month among all the members. Chairman also observed that ministry may restart the earlier approved programme of soft release of captive bred lions in Kunopalpur.

AGENDA ITEM NO.4
Fresh Proposals for diversion from National Parks and Sanctuaries.

4.2(1) Diversion of 144.50 ha of forestland in Kangudi R Chittor Divison for formation of Reservoir across Palar river near Ganeshpuram-Kangundi(V) in Kuppam (M), Andhra Pradesh for irrigation and drinking water purposes.

While briefing the members, Member Secretary informed that the present proposal involves submergence of forest land to the extent of 144.50 ha. However, it does not form
part of any Protected Area. But, part of Royala Elephant Reserve is involved. Further, Palar River on which reservoir is going to be constructed passes through Koundiya Wildlife Sanctuary and as per the provisions of Section 29 of the Wildlife(P) Act, water flow in a Protected Area cannot be diverted, stopped or enhanced without approval of appropriate authority. As per the directions of Hon’ble Supreme Court also, all proposals under Section 29 have to be submitted by the State Government for consideration of Standing Committee of NBWL. Hence the proposal was for the consideration of the committee. Since the area proposed to be diverted is very high in this case, Committee unanimously decided to carry out an inspection by Dr. Bibhab Talukdar and a representative of WII before a final view is taken by the Committee.

4.2(2) Clearance for expansion of Cement Plant from 0.297 MTPA to 1.26 MTPA and Lime Stone Mining to produce Lime Stone from 0.45 MTPA to 1.8 MTPA in an area of 312.36 ha

The Committee observed that there was a huge increase in the capacity of the existing cement plant which was located within 10 kms of Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary. The expansion plant includes not only increased capacity of cement production but also additional mining of lime stone. Though environmental clearance has been given to the proposal, Committee decided that the proposal should be discussed after re-consulting IA Division of the Ministry and a view may be taken in the next meeting of the Committee.

4.2(3) Proposal for laying of 500 KV D/C Transmission line from Mundra to Mahenragarh & 400 KV D/C Transmission line from Mundra to Dehgam passing through Wild Ass Sanctuary, Dhrangadhra, Gujarat.

Member Secretary informed that the proposal involves 89.7364 ha for laying transmission lines in Wild Ass Sanctuary. CWLW has recommended the proposal subject to certain conditions. Observing the fact that the proposal involves no tree felling and project proponents were agreeable to the conditions proposed by CWLW/State Government, Committee unanimously recommended the proposal subject to compliance of conditions
stipulated by CWLW/State Government and erection of bird reflectors at vintage points in consultation with BNHS and the CWLW.

4.2(4) **Diversion of 7.2871 ha of forestland for construction of Ropeway from Bhavnath Taleti to Ambaji Temple in Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary by Usha Breco Ltd, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.**

While apprising the Committee, Member Secretary informed that the proposal was for construction of ropeway in Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary which has been recommended by the CWLW, Gujarat. During discussion, Dr. Asad Rahmani informed that EIA report submitted by the project proponents in the instant case was not factually correct with particular reference to faunal diversity of the area. Committee also observed that environmental clearance has not yet been given for this project. Chairman observed that there were representations against the negative impact of this project on vulture nesting sites in that area. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct a site inspection. Chairman volunteered himself to visit the area in October and to discuss the matter at site with Dr. Nita Shah. He also requested Dr. Asad Rahmani and Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda to accompany him during the visit and a view in the matter could be taken in the next meeting thereafter.

4.2(5) **Proposals for drawing water from Majthal Wildlife Sanctuary and laying of pipeline for carrying this water for the expansion of Cement Plant by M/s Ambuja Cement Pvt. Ltd.**

Member Secretary informed that this proposal was earlier recommended by the Ministry in its meeting held on 19th February, 2008 considering that it would provide drinking water to public and area required for diversion was very small. However, this proposal has been referred back by Central Empowered Committee observing that the diversion of water from the Sanctuary is normally not allowed in view of the provisions of Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for the commercial purpose.
During discussion, Members observed that extraction of water from the Sanctuary for commercial purpose should not be permitted as envisaged in Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act. The cement plant was established in 1995, but there is no information on record to show how much water had been provided to public in past by the project proponents. CWLW, H.P. informed that in the revised proposal, the project proponents have offered to provide 75% of total water withdrawn for public distribution and the remaining 25% for their plant. However, the committee observed that the responsibility of providing drinking water is that of State Government and its agencies. It cannot be left to private/corporate agency who in the garb of achieving their interest and goals tries to justify increased intake of water from the Sanctuary in the name of local population. After hearing both the Committee members and the project proponents, Chairman observed that the Committee cannot reinterpret the provisions of Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act in favour of any commercial use. He also desired that CWLW should provide a technical note to the Standing Committee on the observations of CEC along with additional information on quantity of water provided by the project proponents to the public in past, institutional mechanism ensuring distribution of water to public, availability of water at the source etc.

4.2(6) Proposal for construction of border roads by ITBP passing through Chitkul-Rakchham Wildlife Sanctuary

While briefing the members, Member Secretary informed that this proposal was considered in a special meeting convened on 4th May, 2009. Since the proposal was not recommended by the State Board for Wildlife, the proposal was not recommended. However, the present proposal has been recommended by the Chief Minister in his capacity of the Chairman, State Board for Wildlife. CWLW, H.P. informed that State Board for Wildlife has already been constituted and necessary action for approving this project would be taken shortly by the State Government. It was also clarified by the project proponents that the road width would be maintained 7 mts and the right of the way would be kept as 18 mts which is required in hilly region to meet the exigencies due to the vagaries of weather.
Considering that the issue pertains to the defence of the country and the urgency in the matter, Committee unanimously recommended the proposal subject to the compliance of conditions envisaged by CWLW and clearance from the State Board of Wildlife.

4.2(7) Diversion of 36 ha of forestland for construction of Chumsule-Demchok Road in Ladakh region.

While discussing this proposal, the Committee observed that the area proposed for diversion in the proposal is only 36 ha whereas the project proponents were seeking 124 ha of forest land for construction of this road. State CWLW also informed that no revised proposal for using additional forest land has been received by his office from the project proponents. Considering this fact, Committee unanimously decided that the project proponents should submit revised proposal to the State Government indicating correct extent of area required by them for construction of road. Thereafter, it would be considered in the next meeting of the Committee. It was also decided that Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh would also carry out an inspection of the area and would submit his report before the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

4.2(8) Permission for Survey and investigation in area falling within Periyar Tiger Reserve for construction of New Mullaperiyar dam.

Member Secretary apprised the Members that the proposal was only for survey and investigation involving an area of 2.5 ha against the area of 925 sq. Kms area of Periyar tiger Reserve. CWLW of Kerala has recommended the proposal subject to number of conditions. After detailed discussions and considering the fact that the old dam was 113 years old, weak and could cause serious disaster in future, Committee unanimously recommended the proposal only for survey and investigation subject to compliance of conditions envisaged by CWLW and without in any way affecting any other legal and administrative clearances required.
4.2(9) Proposal for construction of Funicular Trolley system and approach road at Malanggad, Ambernath.

At the outset, it was observed by the Committee that the proposed construction site of Funicular Trolley was under Matheran Eco Sensitive Zone. As per the Matheran Eco Sensitive Zone Notification, Matheran Eco Sensitive Zone Committee is in place. However, this proposal has not been shown to the Matheran Eco Sensitive Zone Committee. It is necessary that before the Standing Committee considers this proposal, recommendation of Matheran Eco Sensitive Zone Committee should also be obtained by the project proponents. With this observation, Committee unanimously directed the project proponents to do the needful and resubmit the proposal for consideration of the Standing committee after obtaining the recommendation of the Matheran Eco Sensitive Zone Committee.

4.2(10) Construction of 400 KV S/C Kankroli-Jodhpur transmission line with DC towers in the Kumbhalgarh Sanctuary portion

Member Secretary informed that this proposal was already approved in the last meeting of the Standing Committee. However, the number of trees to be felled was not indicated during the last meeting. Now the project proponents have informed that there would be felling of about 92 trees in the Sanctuary over the Sanctuary land proposed for diversion. In lieu of that compensatory afforestation etc would be carried out by the State agency as per the existing norms. Considering these facts, Committee approved the proposal. However, the Committee observed that project proponents as well as the state forest department should clearly indicate such details in the relevant columns of the prescribed proforma without fail in future.

4.2(11) Diversion of 11.76 ha of Forestland for Naga Nilapani Road from 0.00Km to 9.800 Km passing through Gangotri National Park.

4.2(12) Diversion of 13.98 ha of Forestland for Naga-Sonam road from 0.00Km to 11.650 Km passing through Gangotri National Park.
4.2(13) Diversion of 38.052 ha of Forestland for Bharionghati-Nelong Naga Road from 0.00Km to 31.710 passing through Gangotri National Park.

Member Secretary informed that these three proposals were for construction of border roads in Gangotri National Park involving an area of diversion as 11.76 ha, 13.98 ha and 38.052 ha respectively. These proposals have already been cleared by the Hon’ble Supreme Court and put up before the Standing Committee of NBWL as per the statutory provisions under the Wildlife(P) Act. These roads are very important strategically for defence of the country.

After detailed discussions, Committee unanimously recommended these proposals subject to the safeguards to be recommended by Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh in consultation with Border Road Organisation. Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh would carry out a visit to these sites and would give his recommendation to the project proponents. The State Chief Wildlife Warden should also expedite consent of State Board for Wildlife in the meantime.

**AGENDA ITEM NO.5**

Any other item with the permission of the Chair

1. After permission of the Chairman, Member Secretary informed that Dr. Talukdar has requested to discuss the issue related to Rhino poaching in the Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Assam. CCF (WL), Assam briefed about various actions taken by the State Government for Rhino conservation and also to control Rhino poaching. Dr. Talukdar observed that situation was alarming in this area and irrespective of best of efforts by the State Government, problems remain on the ground. After discussions, the Committee unanimously decided that a team consisting of Dr. Talukdar and a representative of WII would visit the affected area with State CWLW and prepare an action plan for further necessary action. The report should be submitted within two months.
2. With the permission of Chair, Dr. Asad Rahmani introduced the issue of illegal occupation in the Kokrajhar and Chirang Reserve Forest of Assam. He informed that these were the prime forests and there were also important corridors for wildlife. These were earlier occupied by outsiders. When these illegal encroachments were not evicted, the local community i.e. Bodo Tribes also encroached upon these lands and presently taking shelter under the provisions of Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. CCF, Assam informed that this was not part of any protected area network in the State but the problem was acute as detailed by Dr. Rahmani. After discussion, the Chairman requested Dr. Rahmani to provide more details enabling him to take up the matter with State Government and Bodo Council for necessary action.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.
### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING THE MEETING OF THE 16TH MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE OF NBWL HELD ON 16th SEPTEMBER 2009

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Shri Jairam Ramesh</td>
<td>Hon’ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment &amp; Forests, Chairman</td>
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<td>Shri P.J. Dilip Kumar</td>
<td>Director General of Forests &amp; Special Secretary, MOEF, Member</td>
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<td>Shri M.B. Lal</td>
<td>Addl. Director General of Forests (WL), Member-Secretary</td>
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<td>Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh</td>
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<td>Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda</td>
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<td>Shri Sada Kant</td>
<td>Joint Secretary (BM), Ministry of Home Affairs, Invitee</td>
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<td>Shri Prashant Mehta</td>
<td>Addl. Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, Invitee</td>
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<td>Dr. S.N. Nanda</td>
<td>Principal Secretary (Forests &amp; Envt.) Govt. of Gujarat, Invitee</td>
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<td>Shri V.K. Tandon, PCCF &amp; CWLW, Himachal Pradesh</td>
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<td>Dr. Anmol Kumar, DIG(WL), MOEF</td>
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<td>Shri Sanjeeva Pandey, CCF (PAs &amp; Faunal diversity), Govt. of Himachal Pradesh</td>
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<td>Shri S.S. Harta, DIG (O/S), ITBP, New Delhi</td>
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<td>Lt. Col A. Hooda, DGMO, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi</td>
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<td>Brig. J.K. Narang, CE(P), Shivalik, BRO</td>
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