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June - July 2015

## ECOTRAIL

## FOCUS ON THE GREAT OUTDOORS

## Why Outdoor Education?

Education is opening our minds to immense possibilities. Education is also aligning ourselves completely with our home Earth. When the biology teacher discussed *Mimosa pudica* it set me thinking, when I saw it on a nature trail, touched the leaf and saw its response to my touch I realised the meaning of Dr. Jagdish Chandra Bose's statement that plants are like humans and have feelings. The chemistry I learnt seeing the Sulphur springs in Tungareashwar and the Dead sea during my training in Israel is unforgettable.



If school's teaching through books and computers is the foundation, practical outdoor experiences are the brick and mortar which reinforces learning in class rooms, which make learning fun and most importantly stokes curiosity. All systems of education followed in India direct schools to impart a balanced education combining classroom teachings with experiential

learning. The scouts and guides movement in state board schools or NCC, NSS or CAS, Group 4, for International Baccalaureate schools, Global Perspective camps for the IGCSE medium, 20 mark project based learning in CBSE or ICSE are just some examples. It's a different story that we have made a mockery of most outbound education programmes in India. In the process, the learning factor is losing out on a very significant tool to teach, and our society and the world are the losers. We are cheating on teaching and the process of learning. If we give some serious thought to the process of learning, plan ahead and partner the best the overall experience can be worth the effort and more.

What is it, that the outdoors is given so much significance in the West?

Be it at home on weekends, in the schools, work place or all leading MBA schools across the world, be it Wharton, Brown University, Stanford or NUS in Singapore, all teach one key ingredient we are missing: How to live and be a good human.

"That which ought and can best be taught inside the classroom should there be taught, and that which can best be learned through experience dealing directly with native materials and real life situations outside the school should there be learned," said Julian Smith a famous outdoor educator.

David Polis pens these moving lines *"Must we always teach our children with books and computers? Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on earth. They will then begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education."*

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## News and Views

Dear Reader,

Once again it's a pleasure to usher in the new issue of ECOTRAIL. The big news is that, this edition is being brought to you with all prior clearances from the Government. We are now a verified Media house and the ECOTRAIL gets the status of a magazine with title code: MAHENG 13907 from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi.

This issue covers an interesting array of articles, ranging from, a camping article from a young Boy Scout in a school in USA who read about us at the US Consulate, an inspiring interview of the dynamic Mrs. Geetha Srinivasan, a fun filled family trek in the woods, to the status of the rare Siroi Lily of Manipur.

Trailblazers, always in the forefront of imparting knowledge through its varied outdoor camps, deputed Ms. Meena Nair, one of our intrepid educators to Gothenburg in Sweden to attend the 8th World Environment Education Congress for enhancing our existing expertise and bring in new concepts into our outdoor programs.

Trailblazers Foundation organized their fourth Blood Donation drive and an interesting career planning program for rural youth. Read on there is lots more!

**Ranjan Biswas**

Editor

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# On the Brink....

Shirui lily or Siroi lily (*Lilium Mackliniae*) is known worldwide for its rare and exquisite beauty. It is found in the upper reaches of Siroi hill ranges in the Ukhrul district of Manipur, at an elevation of 1730m-2590m above mean sea level. It is the State flower of Manipur since 1989 but has unfortunately become a rare and endangered species in India. A postal stamp was issued by the Indian Postal Department to commemorate this flower.

The Siroi lily is surely one of the loveliest of all lilies. As many as eleven of its white bell shaped pink flowers, delicately flushed with pink at the base, may appear on a single stem. The plant is about a foot tall. The leaves are longish and narrow like most lilies. This endemic lily blooms in May-June, and is a local tourist attraction.



Image Credit: e-pao.net, Deepak Oinam

In 1946, Dr. Frank Ward, a botanist and his wife Jean Macklin, came to Manipur hills to collect botanical specimens on behalf of the New York Botanical Society. They set up base at Ukhrul and made the exciting discovery of the Siroi lily. The lily gets its name from Macklin, the wife of Dr. Frank Ward. The habitat of the Siroi lily is threatened with intensive tourist activities which are especially organised during the blossoming period. The dumping of waste, plastic, plucking of flowers and uprooting has threatened the sustenance of the species. The species is also endangered by the invasion of Machun which is kind of miniature bamboo species growing profusely in Siroi's habitat. The current efforts for conservation have clearly helped. They are a beginning, more is needed to manage the tourism that is expected in the years ahead.

## STRIDES IN SCIENCE



### 3D Printed House Assembled in 3 Hours

A 3D-printed house showed up in Xi'an, capital city of Shaanxi province in the morning of July 17. The house was "built" in only three hours, and could be lived in as long as furniture was in place. Several workers and a crane put the independent modules of the dining room, the bedroom, the kitchen and the toilettes together.

In only three hours, the cottage was ready for moving in. "We've only assembled the house here, because 90% of the building had already been completed at the factory," said An Yongliang, developing engineer of ZhuoDa Group that designed and produced the house. "It takes about half a year to build a traditional villa, but to build a 3D house like this you only need about

ten days from producing the modules to installing them to make a house", An said.

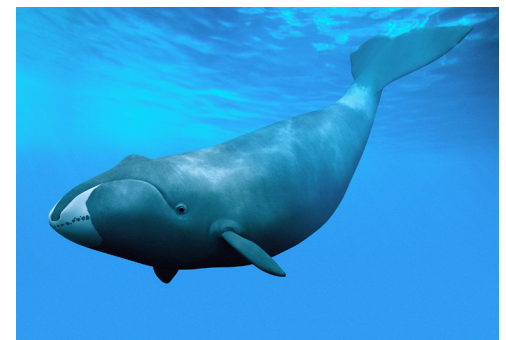
The house has six modules, with each weighing over 100 kg. The costs of materials vary from 2,500 to 3,500 yuan per square meter. "In spite of the time-saving building procedures, the house is strong enough to stand against magnitude-9 earthquakes, as each module bears weight independently. And the steel-framed structure could be filled with heat-insulating materials, which guarantees the warmth of the house during cold weathers," An added. Also the 3D-printed house is expected to come into the market in the near future and customers would be offered individually tailored and priced configurations.

### Underwater Music

Hundreds of music-loving snorkelers and divers, joined by distance swimmer Diana Nyad, ducked beneath the waves as a radio station broadcast a concert underwater at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The festival featured music specially programmed for aquatic listening. Some snorkelers pretended to jam underwater on mock guitars or play other fake instruments such as a whimsical fish flute. Others wore costumes depicting mermaids and seahorses. Accompanying the tunes were coral reef conservation messages and tips on environmentally friendly diving practices.



### Genes for Long Life



The bowhead whales are 60 feet long, weigh up to 60 tons and have no teeth. They live for up to 200 years. Geneticists have finally mapped the genome of these whales and have discovered the genes that are responsible for this incredibly long lifespan.

These genes are related to cancer resistance and DNA repair. This discovery will help scientist find ways to improve human resistance to cancer and increase lifespans.







## Trailblazers at World Environment Education Congress in Sweden

Trailblazers deputed Ms. Meena Nair, Assistant Manager, Operations, to attend the 8th World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC), an international congress addressing education for environment and sustainable development conducted in Gothenburg, Sweden from 29th of June and 2nd of July 2015. The conference hosted by the Centre for Environment and Sustainability together with the WEEC Permanent Secretariat was directed towards everyone working on environmental and sustainability education in different contexts. Mr. Mario Salomone, General Secretary of the WEEC network in the opening ceremony rightly said that the congress attended by over 800 delegates' from 75 countries was an intersection of institutions where delegates from civil society, scientific researchers, private sector and NGOs contributed to enhance dialogue and collaboration.

The real value of a conference is in the people you meet. WEEC 2015 was the meeting point for everyone working with education for environment and sustainable development or who have an interest in the field.

For Meena it was an opportunity to learn more about the latest in environmental and sustainability education, to discuss with people from all over the world, to share her own work at Trailblazers and to learn from others.

Says Meena, "The relationship with nature can be shown through the dance. That's what opening session of WEEC 2015 taught me. The event moderated by Katarina Gärdfeldt, Director of the Centre for Environment and Sustainability at University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg was not only entertaining but very informative as well. It was very encouraging to hear Ms. Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson, Professor and coordinator for early childhood education at University of Gothenburg, stressing on the

need of environmental education and that it should be available to everyone across gender and ages.


'Education on the Boat: Hope for Tomorrow' by Km Taj-Biul Hasan was an inspirational story of transforming crises into solution. It was great to hear Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO as she shared through her video message the importance of green economies and the green society. Achim Steine, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in his video message commented that the problem is that we learn a lot, but we don't act. He stressed that we need to do something for sustainable living.

The Workshop titled 'How to efficiently enable teachers to provide high quality Environmental Education presented by Elize Van Berkel was an eye opener for Meena. She says, "I realised that lack of motivated environment teachers is a concern not only in our country but a global apprehension faced by most education institutions. It also highlighted that environment as subject is not included in most curricula. Here I got an opportunity to share with the delegates on how we at Trailblazers incorporate environment awareness through outdoor learning programmes and how through Trailblazers Environment Teacher Training programme we transform teachers and equip them to effectively teach environment in a fun and interesting way. I found the round table by Joleen Koh, WWF, Malaysia on integrating subject of environment into other subjects as a solution. This reminded me of Arjen Wals WEEC 2015 co-chair and Professor at Wageningen University and University of Goteborg speech where he said, different approaches and solutions can be mixed.

Some came with issues whereas some presented solutions. Many shared success stories and case studies; it was an ocean of



knowledge where all were happily drowning in. To me the most encouraging part was to see the congress flooded by young PhD students from across the globe working on different aspects of environment education and sustainability. It gave me the hope that the goal of achieving sustainable environment is possible for sure! I gained a lot of new ideas and information that I can now implement in our camps and environment education modules".

Gothenburg was at its most beautiful, in the summer sun. From the art museum to the botanical garden, the fort and the southern archipelago, Gothenburg is full of things to see and do. Strolling through the city that celebrates the wonders of the land and the sea was a unique experience. 





## Story of an intrepid Environmentalist

*Geetha Srinivasan the dynamic nature conservationist, the avid trekker and wild life photographer, former Chairperson of WWF India- Maharashtra & Goa, VP Nilgiris Wild Life & Environment Association and Convener of INTACH ( Nilgiris Chapter) in conversation with Mala Biswas, Associate Editor of Ecotrail.* Geetha is the wife of Dr. M.R. Srinivasan, Nuclear Scientist who was awarded the Padma Vibhushan recently. The Srinivasans have settled in the Nilgiris in their 150 year old ancestral home. She is President of The Nilgiri Library which she is currently restoring. The Srinivasans have two children Raghuvir and Sharada and 3 grandchildren.

*What inspired you to become so involved with nature education and conservation ?*

I am one of those lucky people to have been exposed to Nature at a very early age. We used to spend our summers at Ooty at my grandfathers sprawling bungalow and often go trekking to Doddabetta. I still remember the awe and wonder when I saw a giant toad stool on the forest floor and the enchanting dappled sunshine which filtered through the trees. The Nilgiri Wildlife Biosphere was rich in wildlife. I vividly remember seeing a sambhar jumping across the bonnet of our car and for a heart stopping moment he was suspended in mid air! Recently I attended the 150th year of the Bishop Cotton Girls High School in Bangalore where I studied. I used to cycle to school through the verdant cantonment areas. As centre forward for the hockey team many a time I used to carry a hockey stick as I cycled, admiring the beauty of nature.

The seven years that I spent at the Madras Atomic Power Project at Kalpakkam also to a large extent shaped my environmental sensitivity. At that time all around were vistas of emerald green paddy rippling in the breeze. One of the Life changing experiences that I have witnessed is the "Kheddah" in the former princely Mysore State. As guests of the Maharajah we sat in a privileged position. It was before the Kabini Dam was built and many tame elephants were used to herd the wild ones across the river. I witnessed the last Kheddah. All these experiences have made me hands on environmentalist.

*What do you see as the High points when you were the Chairperson of WWF-India and later as the Vice President of the of Nilgiris Wildlife & Environment Association?*

Looking back, one of the high points of my Chairpersonship of WWF India was meeting my good friends Mala, Ranjan, Dr. Punetha and Svetlana! Along with these four

musketees, I was able to achieve quite a lot in my three years tenure.

One of the highlights was filming of "Man, the endangered species" along with Benoy Behl. I still remember the golden sunrise at Radhanagari Black Buck sanctuary! Another memorable event was the exhibition at Jahangir Art gallery to raise funds for WWF India where eminent artists contributed their paintings. We also successfully planted more than five hundred trees in Tarapore which have grown very well!

The encounter with Prince Philip, whom I met at the opening of the new building of WWF-India in Delhi, was charming. Little did I realize that years later, I would meet him again in the Nilgiris. After we had settled down in our ancestral home in Ooty I got a frantic phone call from Mr. Soli Godrej, President WWF India. He wanted my husband and me to spend the day with Prince Philip at Bandipur. A meeting was held along with forest officials from Karnataka, and we spent a pleasant day. That evening there was a banquet at Lalith Mahal Palace. Prince Philip being a ladies' man sat with all of us. As the women got up to have their second helpings, Prince Philip who is known for his acerbic wit said, "I am sure you ladies must be watching your figures!! All of us plopped back into our seats!

The Nilgiri Wild Life and Environment Association of which I was Vice President for more than fifteen years is one of the oldest associations in India founded by the Duke of Buckingham. The milestone here was the Plastic pollution Awareness campaign which won us the Rajiv Gandhi conservation award along with a citation and Rs. One lakh in prize money. Another achievement was the Guinness award for tree planting, where 300 volunteers participated in planting indigenous trees.

Recently I was invited to meet the standing committee of Parliamentarians on Science and Technology and Environment where I enlightened them about the evils of Parthenium and lantana which are choking the Mudumalai tiger reserve and requested funds for tackling these issues.

*How will outdoor camps impact the students in their understanding of our environment?*

Nature is the ultimate Guru, and no student can be complete unless he participates in outdoor camps. I still remember sleeping in a tent at the Mt. Kailas Base Camp before starting on the "Parikrama" the next day. I peeped out and there in the clear altitude of the trans Himalayas was the most beautiful Milky Way that one could see. The galaxy



was like the translucent veil of a beautiful woman and the stars were the sparkling diamonds. Similarly, I still remember walking back from Amaranth yatra along with my daughter Sharada. It was a full moon night and to see the snow capped Himalayas in the moon light was truly awesome! Outdoor camps for students are character building as well as build confidence and self esteem. I remember walking many years ago in Masai Mara in Kenya with only a Masai warrior carrying a spear. It was truly exciting. Outdoor camps are where the learning process starts. With responsible teachers, proper safety equipments and precautions a visit to an outdoor camp can forever change a child and how he perceives life. Outdoor camps are particularly important for all our students in urban sprawls. They should be made compulsory as they build character, integrity, self reliance, and a certain philosophy of life.

*How can schools take up the serious environment challenges and prepare the gen next ?*

Schools are the best place to take up environmental challenges and prepare our future citizens to be conversation oriented. In all schools, environmental education should be compulsory subject, along with hands on projects and outdoor enrichments where students get dirt under their finger nails. One good example is a junior school in Ooty where children are encouraged to keep the road and approach clean, especially prevent plastic pollution. The Government has taken up the Ganga action plan in right earnest. Schools can also be stake holders in the purification of scared Ganga by informative communication on the progress of the project and its significance. While polluting in very easy, nature takes a long time to regenerate. After all cleaning up the Thames took more than 50 years

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## Fort Trail



Students from a prominent ICSE school in Mumbai trekked to one of the most beautiful forts in Maharashtra - Lohgad which is situated near Lonavala. Trailblazers team shared the strategic importance and history of the fort with students and teachers. They were surprised to know that the fort was ruled by so many dynasties like Marathi, Mughals, Satavahanas, Chalukyas and Nizams. They were in awe of the forts architecture which they experienced in rains, fog and mist..



## Forest Trail



Apart from Gateway of India, Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Crawford Market, Dhobi Ghats and other prominent places, Sanjay Gandhi National park was also in the itinerary of Swiss family's Mumbai visit plan. Trailblazers led the family with three children on a beautiful nature trail in the National Park. The team shared with the family the history of the park and its importance to Mumbaikars. It was surprising for the group to know that the National Park in the middle of Metropolis also houses Leopards.

The quiet and peaceful trail in the National park made a good long walk for the family. The muddy unpaved trail lined with bamboo groves, scrub and tall forests and termite mounds was welcoming for the group. The trail began with spotting of birds, identifying their calls, identifying trees and their special features and spotting different kinds of rare and beautiful butterflies. Crabs, tadpoles, frogs, termite hills and spiders all were awaiting the inquisitive family. The challenge of identifying butterflies

with the help of sheet was taken up by the children with great interest. Swinging on the Lianas, holding crab and frog in their hands were all first time experience for the foreign visitors. The stream where the trail ended also offered amazing opportunities to encounter myriad life forms and a matchless visit experience. The family thanked Trailblazers as they returned from the park and expressed it as one of their unique visit experiences.



....Continued from page 4


Last year through Rotary I held a Nirbhaya Seminar. We trained 250 teachers on how to look after the girl child in school and gave them certificates. Similarly teachers have to be trained, from all disciplines on teaching Gen next to face the future environmental challenges.

*Your husband Dr. M.R. Srinivasan, was the Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) of India. Did you both come into conflict on conservation issues?*

Over the years there has been no major conflict of interest between my husband and myself. In an over populated country like ours where change brings about larger issues, I am also convinced that clean nuclear

energy maybe the viable option. Besides after living in the Nilgiris Dr. M.R. Srinivasan has also become more environmentally conscious and conservation oriented.

Therefore it was quite alarming when the AEC of which he is also a member passed the India-Based Neutrino Observatory to be situated at Singara where the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board also has a Hydro-Electric power plant. The project was to be located in the buffer zone of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The project was aimed to build a world class laboratory to study neutrinos and fundamental issues in particle physics. To see that other particles are filtered out INO planned to drill a 2.38 km. into the Singara Hill to house the 100 kiloton Iron Detector. Having an estimated construction period

of 5 years, it would involve transporting huge amounts of machinery through the forest roads. At that point of time I was Vice President of the NWEA. The Collector was the Ex.officio President. We formed the NBR alliance, had a meeting at the Collectorate and brought forth the issues of damage to the fragile ecosystem of the Bio-Sphere Reserve. Fortunately good sense prevailed in the AEC board, where Dr. Srinivasan spoke about environmental damage due to the project, and it was shifted to another site at Theni near Madurai. 

For the full version of this Interview please visit [www.trailblazersindia.com](http://www.trailblazersindia.com) Watchout for Geetha Srinivasan's lucid story of her Kailas Mansarovar Trek in our next issue.





## Trailblazers Training Module for Teachers

*Anyone who stops learning is old, whether 20 or 80, anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.” – Henry Ford*

An international school was keenly interested in upgrading the skills of their teachers by making them undergo a specialized training program with Trailblazers. The school sought to incorporate certain aspects in the Trailblazers Teacher Training module which would enhance the overall personality of the teachers as well as bond them as a team.

Trailblazers designed an exclusive training module called ‘LEAD’ for the school, keeping in mind the fun element as well the school’s

requirement and based on Confucius famous words - “What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand.”

The workshop motivated the group of 100 teachers, through a range of sessions and interesting activities which enthused them to make the effort to be updated in their subject and be a brand ambassador of their school. Teachers being the very foundation of any society, it is imperative that they get the right training, exposure to new technology and innovative learning.

This is very crucial as the new age teachers are addressing the Gen X who are exposed to a multitude of learning opportunities. As the workshop concluded, the teachers were truly inspired to take on new challenges.

## Guiding Rural Youth



Career planning plays a significant role in a student’s life. Rural youth however do not have the wherewithal to get such guidance. To bridge this gap, Trailblazers Foundation visited Mahuli village to discuss with the sarpanch and villagers where it was clear that they wanted to give a bright future for their children. It was touching to hear a lady say “I did not have this guidance earlier and don’t want my son to suffer similarly. If you guide him he will become a big man.” Trailblazers Foundation immediately planned and conducted a very successful career guidance workshop for the students of secondary and high school students on 2nd June 2015 just a few days before the declaration of SSC results.

Students from nearby villages also flocked to attend this workshop. Not only students but also the teachers from the schools attended it! A teacher admitted that even he was not aware of so many opportunities!

## Blood Donation Drive



India needs 12 million units of blood annually but collects only 9 million units, which means deficit of a whopping 3 million units! In a small but committed step towards filling this gap, Trailblazers Foundation organized a Blood Donation camp in Thane on 28th June 2015 in partnership with Indian Red Cross Society, Mumbai and Trailblazers Adventure Travel Pvt. Ltd. Many rolled up their sleeves to volunteer for this noble cause with great enthusiasm. 26 units of precious blood were collected during this drive including two units of the rare O negative group. Fortunately it so happened that these two units of O negative blood became a lifesaver for one of the patients who was to undergo a major surgery.

Every year, on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day declared by World Health Organization. The event serves to thank voluntary unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and



to raise awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure quality, safety and availability of blood and blood products for patients in need. Transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. It can help patients suffering from life-threatening conditions live longer and with higher quality of life, and supports complex medical and surgical procedures. It also has an essential, life-saving role in maternal and child care and during man-made and natural disasters. Today, in just 62 countries, national blood supplies are based on close to 100% voluntary unpaid blood donations, with 40 countries still dependent on family donors and even paid donors.

Each time you donate blood, you might save up to three lives, and not just one. Trailblazers Foundation appeals to all the readers to freely donate blood whenever and wherever possible as every drop counts.



International Tiger Day was celebrated on 29th July with an interesting talk by Pankaj Jadhav of Trailblazers on Tigers in two schools of Mumbai. Both Primary and Secondary students were enthralled by the talk. They made beautiful Thank you cards.



# Outdoor Education Scouts Camp

...Continued from Page 1

Outdoor education builds strong bonds. It uses at least 4 sensory perception simultaneously making learning more meaningful and impacting. It arouses curiosity, observation skills & enquiry. It physically challenges you, it teaches you patience (waiting for a tiger on a machaan), teaches sharing and builds team spirit. It does not judge the person, it teaches you humility, it helps you plan, and can make you a leader if you choose to.



Your visits depending on the plan will encompass all the formal curriculum. I agree that most partner institution's may not have organisations like the Trailblazers, that is doing path breaking work in this field and it's a pleasure to see their Research & development team creating modules of learning in varied subjects all across India and the world using the outdoors as a tool. Their Geology trail or the Economics module and even their language immersion or Ski camps in Switzerland or the Himalayan adventure or wildlife camps are all true examples of Outdoor learning. The CAS, Group 4, Global perspective camps held by combining immense safety with learned faculty is indeed to be experienced.

Cheryl Strayed in her book explains the wilderness experience beautifully. "It had nothing to do with gear or footwear or the backpacking fads or philosophies of any particular era or even with getting from point A to point B. It had to do with how it felt to be in the wild. With what it was like to walk for miles with no reason other than to witness the accumulation of trees and meadows, mountains and deserts, streams and rocks, rivers and grasses, sunrises and sunsets. The experience was powerful and fundamental. It seemed to me that it had always felt like this to be a human in the wild, and as long as the wild existed it would always feel this way."

So get your girls & boys out, plan well. Earth is the crucible of learning.



- Editor

My outdoor experience as a camper was both exciting and fun filled! The days leading up to the trip, we got things we needed, like water, snacks, sleeping bags, first aid kits, a whistle, flashlight, bug repellent and other stuff. We loaded that into the car and then off we went to the camping ground. That was the exciting part! When we got to campsite, we unpacked our things and set up our tent. That was hard to do in the hot sun! When we were all unpacked, I went off to play games with my cub scout den. Soon it was time to leave on our three mile hike. It was originally supposed to be around the pond but that route was blocked. So we went through the woods instead. I felt lost wandering around in the forest but my scout den was there too. We stopped at a lake where we saw shrimp. That was pretty cool! We walked up a hill and more woods. It

was a great feeling to be outdoors and close to nature but I was relieved when we headed back to our campsite! We played hide and seek in the dark. That was the scary part, to stay hidden and listen to all the night noises. What if I was not found? Well, I had my whistle and I would have to blow it so I could be found! Finally I was found and we could get to the best part of camping – roasting marshmallows! Even with layers of clothes and the camp-fire, it was so cold! When we got to bed it was hard to sleep even though I was so tired. The next day was pack-up and we put everything back in the car. We had breakfast and cleaned up after ourselves. The Boy Scouts have a rule: "Always leave the campground cleaner than you found it."

**By Raj Vishnu, 4th Grader, George R. Hanaford Elementary School, RI, USA**

*Age Ten: Webelos, Pack 3, East Greenwich, Rhode Island, USA*





# International School Aamby Graduation Day



From L to R: Ms. Snehal Joshi, Principal of International School Aamby, Mr. Ranjan Biswas, Trustee, Trailblazers Foundation & M.D. Trailblazers Adventure Travel Pvt. Ltd. congratulating students on Graduation Day.

On 24th May, 2015, Mr. Ranjan Biswas Trustee, Trailblazers Foundation & M.D. Trailblazers - The Outdoor School, was invited as a Chief Guest and delivered the keynote address to the IB diploma students, on the occasion of their Graduating ceremony. Proud parents and the proud faculty who were finally seeing their work on display were all present resplendent in their beautiful attire and so were the student's.

The sprawling and beautiful campus of the International School Aamby was ready to host the big day and the students put up a glorious performance. It also was an endearing and fulfilling moment for their new Principal Ms. Snehal Joshi as this was the first batch of students graduating under her leadership. She gave a remarkable speech describing each graduate by name, skills and talent. Indeed she made every graduate proud by her incisive knowledge of every student. Many had already got scholarships to the Ivy schools in the USA and UK and the Principal was indeed delighted.

Mr Ranjan Biswas spoke about "endless possibilities" and what it means to be a global child in this fast changing world. He urged the graduates to be grounded, focused and a dreamer. He urged the students to GIVE, and shared with the graduates his own personal experiences. He shared about his concerns for the environment and got the students involved by asking them of their dream and desires. Almost everyone was in tears listening raptly when each graduate was welcomed by Mr Ranjan Biswas to share what they wished to do in this world. There were students from India, Korea, S.E. Asia and Middle East. It was the amalgamation of the world that evening and all the graduates spoke of was their dream for their parents, for the unfortunate people in this world, the country from where they originate and world Peace. They all said how they would try and make a difference. They threw the caps in the air and jumped up simultaneously with the thought the sky is the limit and there really are endless possibilities, endless dreams..... we wish they all come true.



## Green Man of Assam

Jadav Payeng, single-handedly helped grow an almost 1,360 acre forest in Majuli – one of the largest river islands in the world – over a period of 30 years. For this distinguished service, he was honoured with Padma Shri by Government of India.



## Plastic choking Gir

Forest Department in June launched the first-ever drive to clean the Gir sanctuary of plastic. An estimated 10 tonnes of plastic is inside the sanctuary, mainly on the roads passing through it. On the first day itself, about 580 kg plastic waste was collected.



## UNEP awards Trailblazers

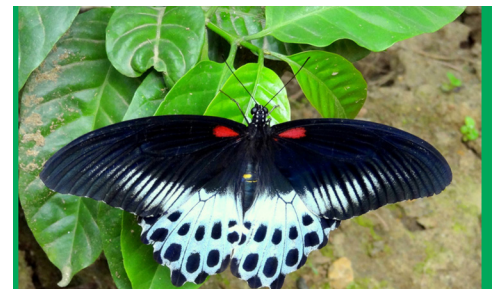


**WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015**

You have succeeded in making WED 2015 the biggest celebration yet, by choosing a more sustainable lifestyle. Every action counts. Your contribution will go a long way to both influencing the seven billion others on this planet and creating an exponential positive impact to restore the Earth's natural regenerative capacity. Welcome to the WED community.



*World Environment Day*



The Blue Mormon butterfly has been declared as the State butterfly of Maharashtra

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