

Appendix 3: Press clippings

(A). Letter to the Editor

The Sentinel, 11th May 1989

'SOS Manas'

This has a reference to my article "SOS Manas!" (*The Sunday Sentinel*, May 7). The article was written in the first week of April, so a lot of change was there in the month-long period. The animals reportedly killed so far are : rhino – four; wild elephant – seven; tiger – four; deer and others – many. Recently, both the Governments of India and Assam expressed grave concern at the prevailing situation in Manas. However, there is little time to think about it. The army or paramilitary forces should be deployed right now for a stint (till the normalcy returns).

Moreover, due to printer's devil, a few errors had inadvertently crept into my article. The true position is : the core area is 391 km². Kochugaon and Haltugaon Divisions form part of the buffer zone only. "Army" and not "arms" assistance has helped conservation in Dachigam, Ladakh, Nepal and China. The area of Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary is seventy square km and not seventy seven km.

Anwaruddin Choudhury, Islampur Road, Guwahati – 7

(B). News clipping

The Telegraph, Friday 4th August 1989.

Worldwide concern over Manas

From Wasbir Hussain

Guwahati, Aug. 3: Conservation circles internationally are concerned about the situation at the scenic Manas tiger reserve where poachers have colluded with militants to fell trees and shoot wildlife.

Organisations like International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are worried about the future of Manas.

In a recent letter to Mr. Anwaruddin Choudhury, a Guwahati based wildlife writer, an IUCN official, Mr. Jim Thorsell, said, "This is a very disturbing development and we

will be bringing this (the situation at Manas) to the attention of the World Heritage Bureau when it meets in Paris.”

In a separate letter to Mr. Choudhury, the Eastern India representative of the WWF, Mrs. A. Wright, said the Fund’s headquarter in Switzerland had been informed of the situation at the tiger reserve “to wake up those in authority to take some more action to save the Manas.”

Manas is one of the few wildlife spots in the country to have been included in the World Heritage list. Established in 1928 as a wildlife sanctuary, this 2,837 sq km forest was declared a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1973. Nearly half of the 41 endangered Indian wildlife species listed in Schedule one of the Wild Life (Protection) Act are found at Manas.

Among the Project Tiger areas, Manas has the largest number of the predator next to the Sunderbans. A census carried out in 1984 recorded 123 tigers in the reserve. Manas perhaps can also boast of the largest single concentration of elephants in the country. Writing in the *Tiger Paper*, Mr Choudhury said, “more than a 1,000 elephants move freely between Indian and Bhutan Manas reserves”.

The Union Environment and Forests Ministry is equally concerned about the disturbing situation at Manas in the wake of reports that about 120 sq km of the reserve are under the virtual control of the militants-poachers combine.

A sum of Rs. 30 lakh has been sanctioned by the ministry, for the purchase of weapons, vehicles and motor boats. A helicopter is to be soon made available to the Assam wildlife authorities for aerial patrolling of the reserve.

The Assam government is understood to have sought at least three sections of paramilitary forces for exclusive deployment at the Manas Sanctuary, which has also been declared a biosphere reserve, and at the Kaziranga national park. Official sources, however, said the Centre was yet to make available the additional forces sought for the protection of wildlife.