



CBSG RSG SAZARC Conference and Gir Tour Appreciation letters

Dear Sally and ZOO Colleagues:

My warm greetings to you and to all colleagues of ZOO. Our journey from Dhaka to Ahmedabad and back to Dhaka was very comfortable, enjoyable and safe. Thank you again for arranging such a trip. The conference venue was really enjoyable and the organiser, Dr. Sahu was seen to be very much caring.

I must mention the topics of the entire conference, that is CBSG, RSG and SAZARC and the trip to GEER Foundation and Gir Forest. In the CBSG and RSG, the resource person selection was the right one; they are knowledgeable and presentation was all the more educative. Especially, I was amazed by the slide show of rodents presented by Mike Jordan. His knowledge on different species of rodents in the different parts of the world really amazed me. I hope in future, Dr. Mike and Dave will be again resource persons and hope we'll continue to have new dimensions of wildlife conservation and reintroduction.

The discussion in the SAZARC on ZOO legislation was an interesting one. The participation of all the zoo directors and curators enriched the participants regarding existing legislation in India and paved the way of enacting new legislation in the countries where it does not exist. The SAZARC conference was more fruitful because of the presence of policy level officers from the Ministry, who matter very much in implementing any move from the Zoo directors. Especially, in Bangladesh, it matters greatly. The officers from the ministry became committed to work on the zoo legislation in Bangladesh which is waiting for finalization.

The key event of the SAZARC conference was our meeting with chief minister of Gujarat, Mr. Narendra Modi. His personality and interest in wildlife conservation encouraged the participants a lot. His passion to hear about the activities of ZOO and SAZARC really amazed me. His concern about the welfare of the zoo visitors also opened our eyes to zoo education and captive wildlife conservation strategy.

The organisers deserve the credit of arranging all the events with the high officials of wildlife conservation, that is the presence of C N Pandey and Pradeep Khanna was very much appreciative. Our trip to Gir Forest, the homeland of Asiatic lion was educative and enjoyable. The conservation of nature, both in respect of flora and fauna, was different from that in Bangladesh. The preservation of the habitat was all the more important for conservation of wildlife. We must appreciate the hospitality and the arrangement made by the forest officials. If possible, convey our regards and good wishes to them.

Last but not the least, I want to mention our visit to Sakkarbaug Zoo. Their managerial capability and the

arrangement of housing and habitat was really spectacular. Some of the arrangement of their semi-intensive housing can be replicated in our zoo also. Visit to their archeological structures also reminded the rich history of Junagadh.

Finally, I should say that the entire conference period was utilised on wildlife coservation and welfare. The arrangement of the conference was commendable, educational and enjoyable. I hope that we will find, if not better, but such a conference of SAZARC, CBSG and RSG in Sri Lanka in the coming days.

Thank you again for taking all the trouble in the conference especially the care and sympathy you've shown to me. It was really a pleasure. Regards,

**Abdur Razzaque, Retd. D.G.
National Advisor, Ministry of Fisheries and
Livestock, Dhaka, Bangladesh**



Dear Sally and Zoo Crew,

First of all, on behalf of both myself personally and also from my organization I would like to thank Sally R. Walker as well as Zoo Outreach Organization for raising financial support and necessary communications that I have been able to attend the CBSG/RSG and SAZARC conference for all the sessions. The SAZARC and CBSG conference was very informative and useful to know lot of new things. Besides this conference I was able to get the opportunities to exchange views and ideas with so many resource persons from South Asian countries and other parts of the world. I enjoyed all the sessions but the most cheerful one was lion mating at the time of visiting Gir Forest. It was just a cool dream with naked eye. The experience gathered especially after visiting Sakkarbaug Zoo will help me lot to improve all enclosures of Chittagong Zoo.

Finally I would also like to give a special thanks to Donors and Sponsors of the conference whose contribution gave me the opportunity to learn more about Wildlife Conservation.

Longlive Z.O.O and SAZARC. I am looking forward to hear from you. Best Wishes

**Dr. Md. Mongur Morshed Chowdhury, Veterinary
Officer, Chittagong Zoo, P.S- South Khulshi
District- Chittagong, Bangladesh**



Dear Sally,

I convey my thanks for inviting me and making me the part of the mission of CBSG, RSG and SAZARC. It is really important for me as I have gained a lot

through the entire exercise and lots of interaction with the participants.

(1) It was great to have some good discussion on **Gharial crisis** on 28.01.08 while making recommendations of working Group of CBSG meeting. I was part of this working Group. It was more meaningful for me as I recently (in December, 2007) visited Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary (now also declared Satkosia Tiger Reserve) which was earlier known as well acknowledged wild habitats for Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) but now, no record of Gharials can be traced. Muggers are available and can be seen easily. Gharials are in real crisis in India and other few South Asian countries. I am greatly benefited with the discussion on 28.01.08. At present, I am working on issues related to Gharial crisis. Will you please send me the presentation on Reintroduction by Pritpal Soorae which I need for some required reference.

(2) The interaction with **Mike Jordan** (Chester Zoo) was of great advantage to me as I could discuss some of the issues useful for ensuring species survival (mostly technical aspect). Presentations on various subjects by Mike was highly informative and relevant for us. I am really thankful to Mike.

(3) The discussion on "**Strategic Actions for operational zoo standards**" proved highly useful as it facilitated the development of concept on many crucial issues particularly for some countries of South Asia where such steps are yet to be taken and the strategies are required to be formulated / developed. In case of India also, the discussion was highly purposeful. The working group recommendations on the subject were made after lots of thought and as per present need.

(4) The issues of **Amphibian crisis** as discussed and taken up in SAZARC was quite motivating and this has equipped me to take up the issues at least locally. The presentation along with a short film on Amphibian crisis by **Dave Morgan** was great. Thanks to Dave for such a nice presentation. It may be a starting point for many to go ahead with the task of saving amphibians with passion. I am really enriched for handling these tasks especially awareness/education and contribution in in-situ conservation.

(5) The another area of significance was discussion on **Global warming and its impact** as discussed in SAZARC. This subject among many others is of much interest to me and I am chasing current information on the subject. I was benefited with the discussion.

I hope, we have lots of things to do this year as per agenda of each one of us, framed in our mind during the interaction in the meeting / conference of CBSG / RSG and SAZARC. Best wishes,

**S. K Sinha, I.F.S., Govt.Qtrs.No.10, Type 5RF,
Unit-3, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Bhubaneswar -
751001 (Orissa).**



Dear Sally,

When I saw your invitation to attend 8th annual SAZARC conference I was very happy because it is like a family get together. With the beginning of our regional association, it opens doors for education, mutual cooperation, exposure to the outer world as well as close friendships among the zoo community of our region.

With the time being a friendly environment generated in the regional meetings and in addition to the fruitful sessions, discussions and workshops we could have lot of fun. The knowledge offered by the experts during the sessions was very valuable; in the long term practically we could use that knowledge in the development of various sections of the Zoo.

The 8th SAZARC conference was held in India and it was my dream to visit India one day to see the great country which has diverse cultural and religious differences under one flag. As I had seen in Hindi movies, I could see big bare lands, highly crowded streets and big and small markets beside the roads when we first get on to the Indian made cars at the Gujarat domestic airport, with our friends, Bharath & Bharath of Ahmadabad Zoo. After a tour of one hour or two we could reach the hotel, Green Wood Resort and at the resort we met Ms. Sally Walker with her team who made impossible things possible by forming SAZARC association from the countries of highest political and terrorist problems. Ms. Sally gave us warm welcome and from everywhere I heard my name calling. I was so happy to meet my friends after a long gap.

From the next day morning sessions started and the main theme, Zoo Legislation was continued with present situation of all countries, Legislation of Indian Zoo Authority. Thanks to all of you. Best wishes,

**Dammika Malasinghe
Deputy Director, National Zoological Gardens,
Dehiwala, Sri Lanka**



Dear Sally

It is with much appreciation that I write to you on my return from SAZARC conference. This year's SAZARC was a wonderful success with regard to subject content and organization. The subject content was relevant to all zoo staff and administrators who participated from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and I would like to highlight those that were of particular interest to me.

RSG /CBSG
- Pritpal Soorae - where emphasis was on principle aims of reintroduction to establish a viable free ranging population in the wild.

- Mike Jordon - Various thoughts and consideration that should be given when releasing animals - IUCN fundamentals - when to reintroduce, restock/ supplement and its introduction.
Zoo standards - the importance to carry out a best practice to protect the industry.

SAZARC

Zoo legislation - which was the theme of the SAZARC meeting. Some countries do not have zoo legislation/ act. In Sri Lanka the present act is outdated. At the working group discussion, it was decided to amend and revise and also how the SAZARC can help.

B. A Daniel and Sanjay Molur - Raising awareness of Climate change challenges and Amphibian crisis. Emphasis was made on that very many people do not know that the Amphibians are declining in number and the 5 steps to conserve them.

Bird Flu (Avian influenza), which is a prevailing problem all over the world and its public health significance.

The visit to the 'Gir National Park and Sanctuary' was a unique experience as this is the only and the last home for "the Asian Lions". It is the only one of its kind catering to conservation of this threatened species.

I like to thank the GEER foundation for all the facilities provided. The general organization of the conference was of high standard and the same could be said with regard to accommodation and other facilities. I take this opportunity to thank all sponsors and all others who were associated with the conference.

As this was my last attendance at the SAZARC I would like to thank you and your staff personally for all you have done to make my stay at every occasion very comfortable. Thanking you once again, Yours sincerely

**Dr. Jayanthi Alahakoon, Veterinary Surgeon
National Zoological Gardens, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka**



Dear Sally,

Thank you so much for organizing SAZARC conference and CBSG & RSG meetings in Gujarat. It was excellent!

Exposure I got from participating at this conference will be highly beneficial for my career as a Zoo Vet. Meeting veterinarians who work with captive and free living wild animals was an excellent opportunity to share our views and experience. This was very important for us as there is only one zoo in Sri Lanka and very few vets working with wild animals. Discussions with Zoo directors and other policy makers from different countries was a new experience for me to understand the issues and difficulties faced by Zoos in South Asian region.

Zoo legislation was a very good theme. As we are in the process of revising our Zoo Act we gained a lot during discussions and working groups which will assist us in constituting the new Zoo Act for Sri Lanka.

Mike, Dave, Brij and Micky did a great job. I'm sure that all the participants learnt a lot on reintroduction of endangered wild animals (esp how to plan a proper reintroduction program) and on zoo legislation. Thanks for selecting such a team of resource persons.

My very special thanks for organizing the post-conference tour to Gir. Seeing wild Asiatic Lions was like a dream come true for me. Discussions with forest officers in Gir also improved my knowledge on *in-situ* conservation and management of an endangered species.

Thank you and your team (Daniel, Sanjay, Manju, Marimuthu, Latha, Ravi, Kumar and others) again, who worked so hard to organize this conference. Well Done!

We will try our best to make the next SAZARC conference in Sri Lanka a success. Best Wishes,

**Ganga, Dr. C. G. Wijesinghe,
Veterinary Surgeon, Department of National
Zoological Gardens, Sri Lanka**



Dear Sally

It was a pleasure hosting CBSG RSG meeting and facilitating the visit to Gir. You are welcome. I am forwarding your letter of 8 Feb 2008 to Mr. C.N. Pandey, Director, GEER Foundation, Gandhinagar and Mr. B.J. Pathak, Conservator of Forests, Wildlife,

Junagadh, for information and if anything remains to be attended as also convey your wishes.

I met Mr. Mike and Dave on Wednesday the 6th Feb 2008. I am encouraged by their observations. I believe what I stated in the meeting at different point of time got confirmed for field visits. This will also help undue misgivings about conservation efforts and management of Gir and Sakkarbaug Zoo around the world. We are committed to persevere for the conservation with an open mind for receiving inputs.

With regards, Yours Sincerely,

**Pradeep Khanna, IFS
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Wildlife &
Chief Wildlife Warden, Gujarat State**



Respected Madam

It was a great opportunity for me to be within the CBSG, RSG & SAZARC conference at Ahmedabad. I

personally learned a lot from the above conference by way of what presented by the resource persons. Moreover, one to one interaction with the other participants enriched me. During the working group meetings also lots of ideas enlightened me through our group discussions. It requires special mention that your inspiration and hard work made everything successful and will show ways for the days to come. I have gathered new ideas on the activities to be selected for my zoo in future considering the global scenario. I shall try my level best to implement those better ideas I learned. The ZOO and WILD team worked exceptionally hard and made everything possible. Hope to be part of the gathering in future too. Yours faithfully

Ajit Kumar Bhowmik
Director, Sepahijala Zoo, Tripura



Dear Sally,

Accept my apologies for the delay in responding. I was little too busy catching up on work after 12 days absence at the SAZARC events in India!

My Hon. Minister and the Secretary are now convinced about setting up a Lion Safari in the Southern Sri Lanka. My descriptions of the field visit you took us to Gir played no little part so you can consider that an output of the conference. We have already requested for the land and I think we will be getting a reasonably large extent of land to set-up the Lion Safari since the proposal was highly taken up by H.E. the President who wants it be established in his area as that is one of the two semi arid areas in Sri Lanka.

Also the Pinnawala Zoo which had been in the cold-storage for a long time has again come to the discussion table. The meetings and the field visits you organized really helped the Sri Lankan delegation, especially me in working in the Policy and Development aspects of Zoos and other ex-situ conservation centers. I am thankful to you and your staff for the hard work and dedication rendered during our stay with you all.

Regarding the future, I have already indicated to my Secretary and the Hon. Minister about holding the next SAZARC meeting in Sri Lanka and got their clearance. Also I casually mentioned it to the Hon. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources when I met him at a personal occasion. He too agreed to provide some assistance. I think the green light from both ministries will make our work easy. Also please convey my best regards to Sanjay, Manju, Latha, Samuel, Marimuthu and all your staff who were extremely helpful and friendly.

H.M.B.C. Herath, Additional Secretary
Ministry of Sports & Public Recreation
Reid Avenue, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka.



Dear ZOO:

The theme of the SAZARC conference this year Zoo Legislation for Conservation Welfare of Wildlife was very relevant in the context of Central Zoo Kathmandu. The Central Zoo is managed by National Trust for Nature Conservation since 1995 without legislative act, regulation and guideline. So it was an excellent Forum to learn and share about the legal aspect of zoo management in regional level. All the lectures delivered on zoo policy, legislation and rules, and country's presentation on conference theme were quite useful as well as helpful to assess the situation of zoo in individual country.

Prior to SAZARC conference, opportunity was provided to attend a two-days CBSG/ RSG meeting, focused on translocation of large mammals and reintroduction guidelines. This meeting was also a very good opportunity to understand the importance of the regional networking and the cooperation.

Atlast, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Sally Walker, Founder Director of Zoo Outreach Organization, who made my participation possible in 8th SAZARC conference. Thanks are also due to the team crew of Zoo Outreach Organization. Similarly I would also like to acknowledge the sponsors as without their support I could not have been able to participate in such important conference.

Sarita Jnawali, Zoo Manager, Central Zoo, NTNC, Kathmandu, Nepal



Dear Sally Walker,

Greetings to you. I write this to thank you for taking me to the CBSG RSG and 8th SAZARC annual conference held at Ahmedabad. As you know I attended the first SAZARC meeting in 2000 held at Nepal that gave me a good opportunity to meet Dr. Ulie Seal. Since then I have been attending almost all SAZARC conferences organised within the South Asian region. The 8th SAZARC meeting gave a chance to meet many of the participants who attended the Nepal workshop. This conference helped me to feel the growing trend among the South Asian zoo community and the strong bonds that have been built up within the community during these years. Also the theme for SAZARC conference helps a lot to improve the standards of the zoo. This year's theme on zoo legislation is very much needed and the discussion went on very positively. Discussion on recent conservation issues on Climate change and amphibian crisis were of great interest. The SAZARC conference help to increase the confidence level among the zoo community in South Asia.

I take this opportunity to thank you once again for inviting me for this conference. with regards

BA Daniel, Entomologist, ZOO