## **TAURUS & TAURIAN**



## India's First Luxury Overland Truck



# Taurus is 5 Star for those who are passionate for outdoors, not for those who seek 5 Star comforts.

The best logistical support that one needs for outdoor travel and outdoor photography! The most innovative way to travel the magnificent parts of India & explore its cultural treasures with your cameras.

# Savour the Flavour of New Experience

#### **A New Experience!**

Imagine enjoying a different kind of holidays, one of a kind. Offers locales which are away from the crowd and pollution, in the lap of Mother Nature. We ensure you get "quality time" together as family, friends and couples for romance in wilderness. Connecting Moments of your Life

#### **Quality Time**

TAURUS IS A SPECIAL TRANSPORT ... to deliver YOU to the invisible cosmic world within you ... Offers romantic travel to the bewitching sight of Himalayas, sand dunes, secluded beaches where you hear sounds to sooth your soul, colours and taste of vibrant cultures ... connecting you to the hypnotizing moments that ordinary travellers and photographers don't get to experience.

## Complete Mobile Camping Concept!

#### - It's the Game Changer

Conceptualised and steered by experts, hard-core outdoor travellers (they have logged 165,000 kms in their self-made caravans in India, unparalleled fete for an Indian), photographers and wildlife experts (those who have globe trotted in pursuit of new species).

## 1st Time Ever in India – Indigenous

#### experience ECSTASY to the hilt

Our programs are special and unique in every aspect, full of excitement and satisfaction, with unlimited FLEXIBILITY & FREEDOM'

## Supporting Nature & Social Commitments

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#### Life with responsibilities is meaningful

Part of the proceeds go to support Mission: Nature Conservation Through Tourism & Photography. You not only get a wonderfully unique experience where you taste pure rejuvenation in real, but you become Green Ambassadors and champions for the cause, without any extra cost added to the tariff of your expeditions.

**1.Eco-friendly Tourism with least impact on environment 2.Sustainable Tourism with benefits to local communities** 

www.greendotexpeditions.com



## **Capt Suresh Sharma**

## Founder of Green Dot Expeditions

## Designer, Fabricator, Caretaker, Photographer, Driver and Cook of **Taurus**

With outdoor experience of 35 years, 6 years of active service with the Indian Army, 18 months of battlefield, odometer 165,000 kms over 19 years of passionate caravaning - an unparalleled feat for any Indian in India, travel photography published in international publications, contributed to the creation of two wildlife documentaries for the National Geographic Society, USA, two prestigious coffee table books ("The Indian Army - An Illustrative Overview" and "LEGACY OF A LEGEND" MiG-21 in The Indian Airforce - Illustrated Testimony of a Reticent Air Warrior), 29 years of quality tourism ops, champion of the "cause of the green", self-funded SAVING INNOCENT SNAKE & IGNORANT PEOPLE for 22 years. Our Team Leader Capt Suresh Sharma has wide variety of experiences from various fields, now he is a sought after consultant for experiential tourism, caravans, camping, how to earn freedom from 9 to 5 job - convert your passion into your profession, photography, travel, etc.

**Dr.Rajbir Kaur**, a qualified homeopathic doctor, is a soulmate who juggles motherhood with the life of adventure as a team member. Their lives have been enriched by their shared experiences and has supported each other through their common passion, from handling snakes for the photo-sessions with Captain.

Suresh and his wife Rajbir have designed and custom built two caravans (RVs) themselves and has clocked more than 165,000 km with family and friends in their home on wheels for almost 19 years, which they fondly named 'Kingcobra' and 'Taurus'. The couple has now founded the `GREEN DOT EXPEDITIONS' and introduced a new concept of overlanding in India, built India's first luxury overland truck named TAURUS ("Mobile Camping" an RV - recreational vehicle) to take serious photographers and adventurers to exotic locales to explore local culture what others don't get to see, freeze and frame their live experiences, offering vanlife, campervan holidays. They presently live in Chandigarh with their two children.

Capt Suresh Sharma is fondly addressed by friends as 'CAPTAIN', is the one who has given shape to his dreams and has lived with them - accrued the traits of a true leader. Has lived like a free bird who could not be caged by the worldly compulsions. Meandering around like a snake, knowing no boundaries, Suresh makes anyone envious with his life style and the life he has lived. Spirit of the outdoors and adventure got him to the army, but again hung his boots to explore `Life' unconditionally.

A man with courage to live life on his terms, which most people find difficult in India. Suresh has dedicated his life to the pursuit of photography as a passion, which he is exploiting as his tool to disseminate awareness about nature conservation and snakes.









## Nature Conservation Education Program



Dr Rajbir Kaur Sharma, wife of Capt Suresh Sharma, son enjoying with snake

























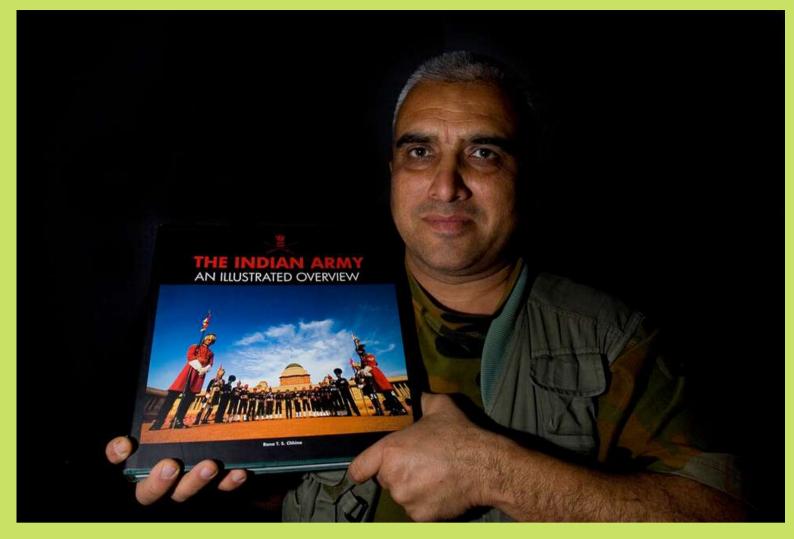




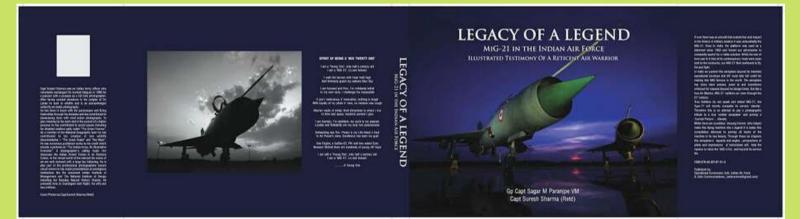




## Photographer of the two prestigious coffee table books



#### **Coffee Table Book - Indian Army**



Coffee Table book - MiG 21

Press has appreciated the work of

### Capt Suresh Sharma with front page features to numerous pages

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# Romancing The

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shows how one should react when a make crosses one's path and what exactly needs to be done when snake bites you." Sharma explains. The film, which grabs the attention of stu-dents as well as residents of the villages neighbouring Chandi-garh, tell them in plain lan-guage: "Snakes bie in self-de-fence and bite only on the exkraits without my hook and I was quite scared. And even when left that krait, without re-moving the fangs, — I was say-ing my last prayers in my mind. But this was a commitment and I am not going to back out of it." That' a soldier for you. In just seven months, Sharma has caught around 30 snakes, ten of which are kraits.

In the Army, he was taught to vanquish fear. Today, having taken premature retirement, he's busy ridding people of their irrational fear of snakes. RATHI A. MENON meets Suresh Sharma, Chandigarh's snakeman

tremes of your links. They pose a threat to your life because of your negligence." Creepie-crawlets are an es-sential part of Sharma's life." I teave snakes around me," he did not move and told the peo-ple that if was not our eners that tell you about the did not move and told the peo-le that if was not our eners that tell you about the endagered musk deer and tur-then, as well as cards and en-them even with guns?" Ilse denies that be's acting macho or simply schwing 0f." There were that tell you about the schwing off. "There were that tell you about the schwing off." There were the occasions when I had to catch

"They are the most dreaded of all reptiles and nobody knows how to handle them. The scare is mainly because there's no authentic information on snakes."

SURESH SHARMA, Chandigarh's snakeman



CHARMED LIFE: Sharma with volunteer Rajbir Kaur (above); and educating schoolchildren about snakes

and educating schoolchildren a sponsibility towards our planet? The biggest hurdle is people's attrude. 'So he has raised enough money and has a few programmes chalked out with the help of the city's good samaritans. He's even been given a portion of a farm by a re-tired bureaucrat for his educa-tion programmes. The san't going to restrict has two ambitious project in mind, the rehabilitation of make charrers and the train-ing of tribal youth in the Kanha and Bandhargarh national parka: "You have to win the enake-charrers over and make them realise you with them well, 'be says. It's his frequent visits to the colonies of snake-

about snakes thermeer near Chandigath that friend, not an adversary. With the hep of two-three volunteers from the colory," he says. Thu tyo the state of the state the state of the state of the state state of the state of the state of the more well-behaved that most well more well behaved that most wel





• ఫాటోగ్రాఫర్ అద్భురాలు వృష్టిస్తున్న

• నేడు విశాలలో మాజీ సైనికోద్యోగి తీసిన ఛాయా దిత్రాల ప్రదర్శన

సులేష్ శర్మ

## ప్రతి క్లిక్లలోనూ కిక్ 🚟

ఆయనా వాత సైనికార్యాగి వరి

రాయా పాల బ్రాకార్గా 20 గ్రామాలో గవి పెట్టకు ప్రశ్నిర్తు గురెడిల్లే పైక్ల పరిగ్రాంగా ప్రవృద్ధి పాల్ గ్రాఫ్ కాలగర్భంలో కరిపిలీయే రెండకు సజీవంగా నిరిపిలా ఎన్నో ఎంబనైన రూపాలను ఎప్పటికీ నిరిపి ఉందే రాయారిగ్రాల్స్ యొన తన కమీపాలో బంధిలంగాకు పర్మావరం పరివ్యంపై అదే గాహన కర్పుచేదా చిగ్రాలు పేన్నూ బ్యాపిగిపించారు. ప్రచం పాట్ గ్రాఫ్ దాన్ శ్వరం నదంద్రంగా ప్రముఖ పాట్ గ్రాఫర్ పురేష్ పరిపు కరువం

రావ (లా దూర్యందా సందర్భమా) బ్రామం భావ (రాదా చిందిన మందు ముందివున్నా, ఎదారి జమకరో బాదుకుసోతున్నా చరి వజీకిప్పన్నా, సిష జంతువులు వేటావిందుకు తరుకుత్నా ఆ కెమేదా మాత్రం కైక్ మంటుంది అందర్దెంన, విలీవృమైన, ఆకట్ల కునే ప్రాణోలు తన కెమేదాలో బండిందదానికి ప్రమైనా ఇప్రంగా





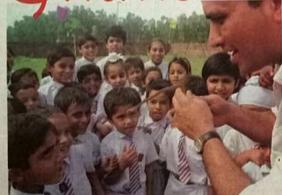
ప్రయర్శిపునే ఉంటారు సురేష్ శర్మి రండీపురేస్ రెందిన సురేష్ శర్మ బండియ్ ఆర్ట్రలో పనిరేశారు. 1984 నుంచి 1980 వరిపా ఆర్మీలో వసిరేశారు. ఆ తర్వాత తనకిష్టమైన పాట్ గ్రోఫీ ఆనక్తి పెందుకున్నారు. ముఖ్యంగా సురేష్ శర్మకు బ్రావరింగింగ్ పాటు పోల్ గ్రోఫీ మక్కువ పెరువ పిద్దితనం నుంచి బండ్లో ఉండి కెమీ రాజిలో గ్రామాగాత్యక్రమ పొలికోలు రీసిందుకు ప్రయత్నించేవారు ప్రమంగా ఆరో హాదీగా మారిపోయింది. ఆర్మీ నుంచి రెల్లిర్ అయాండ్. పూరిప్రోపు పొలిపోయింది. ఆర్మీ నుంచి రెల్లిర్ అయ్యాడ్. పూరిప్రోపు పొలిపోయింది. ఆర్మీ నుంచి రెల్లిర్ ఆరత్ సౌందర్యాన్ని బంధిస్పోరు దేశంలోని సంస్కృతి, నుంపడాయం, వారసత్య నంపదపై

భాంత గాందల్యాన్ని బరిత్సారు లేశంలోని సంస్కృతి, సంపరాయం, వారినత్వ సంపదమై (పేమ ఉన్న సదేష్ శర్మ) తన పాటిగ్రోషికి వాటినే సద్దిక్షులుగా ఎందిక చేసుకున్నారు. ప్రకృతి రమజీయతను సాంతం చేసుకున్న మన లేగంలో ప్రతి జలువరా అందంగా కనిపిన్నందని ఆయన మం రాంకం ద్రంత జిల్లా కందరూ సుద్యాంచి కందుం రావన: అందకి కెమేగా కంటి కూసింది పర ప్రజాన్ని ఎంతో అందంగా బంధించేందుకు ప్రయర్శిస్తారు. కంప్లీ వరహ జమ్ము, రాజస్తాన్, రిల్లీ, పంజాల్, ఉళ్తరప్రదేశ్, అదుజాదర్భవదేశ్, పర్చిమ బంగా, గుజరాత్, జరా జనిక ర్యాప్తాల్లో తిరుగుతా పైర్టీలైఫ్, వేదర్ పాటాలు తీమ్రంటారు.

#### కింగ్ కోట్రా వాహనంలో

20గ్ కోట్లా వాహనంలో... సాములం, నాటి తమవునా, సామూలబు వల్ల సన్సీ అగళ్లా రు, పామునిందుకు గాటిస్తాయనే అంగాలపై పూర్లో అమారావ ప్రంతించుకు మనేపట్టి స్పీ పెడ్ పొత్తిక్తు పదుళో డ్రిత్వ యాత్రలు రేవ్సవార్లు, పెరుకు రాగ్సమ్యంతో వెంటు వైల్లీ పై పెళ్ళ పావులు గిర్వపావ్సవ్వారు. వేరస్ కన్లక్సేషన్ ఎదుళ్లికున్న బార్లత పెనులా త్రార్ పొడి దాగసామ్యంతో వెంటు వైల్లీ పై పెళ్ళ ప్రాతక్షులు గిర్వపావ్సవ్వారు. వేరస్ కన్లక్సేషన్ ఎదుళ్లికున్న బార్లత పెనిపోత్తాలు విరుద పొలిగా పార్లా ఫడిల్లో ప్రేక్ పెళ్ళ పెనిపోత్తంతో అను పేవిన పొలిగా పార్లం పోర్లితున్న మరిత్త పెనిపోత్తంతో ప్రాత్ ప్రంత్ రెంటులో మాటిస్ కు పెనిపోత్తంతో ప్రతికి కుడుదుప్తూర్లను ఉందిదున్ అర్పికు బార్లత పెనిపోవులు పెనిపులు అయికున్నాడు. పదివర పొల్లో స్పోమన వర్యకావుకు పెనిపుడులో పార్లాటు చేసిన పొల్లో స్పోమన పోర్పట్టున్న పొరిక్ పొనిపుడి పెర్చాటు చేసిన పొల్లో స్పోమన పోరువేత్త పొరిక్ పోరు భాయ పిద్దాటు చేసిన పొల్లో స్పోమన పోర్పట్టున్న పొరికు పొండులు పెర్చాటు చేసిన పోల్లో స్పోమన పోరువేశ్ర పొరిక్కంతను భాయ పిద్దాటు చేసిన పోల్లో స్పోమన పోరువేశ్ర పొరికు పెరుకు పొంటాలు పురిస్తుందిని పొరికు పొరికున పోరువేశ్ర పొరికు పెరుకు పొంలు పొరికి పొరుకు పోరు పోరు సిరుకు పోరువే పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పొరికు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పొరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పొరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పొరుకు పోరుకు పోరు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరు పోరు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు పోరుకు





समाज सेवा भी है

ग मौत से डर जरूर रखते हैं पर वे अपनी जिंदगी को प्यार नहीं करते। ऐसा कहना है सांप पकड़ने में समाज सेवक के रूप में कार्यरत कैप्टन सुरेश शर्मा का। कैप्टन शर्मा बताते हैं कि जब लोगों के घर निकले सांप को पकड़ने के लिए पूछते हैं हम जाते हैं और उनसे टॉर्च के लिए पूछने पर 20 घरों में से एक सही टॉर्च मिलती है। बेशक हम अपने पास प्रत्येक इक्विपमेंट लेकर जाते हैं पर लोगों में यह जागृति भी लाना चाहते हैं कि 100 रु. की टॉर्च से ज्यादा आपकी जिंदगी कीमती है।

अपने पिता से विरसे में मिला वाइल्ड लाइफ के लिए प्यार और दोस्त से प्रभावित हो सांप पकड़ने की कला सीखने वाले कैप्टन सुरेश का मानना है कि सांप ज्यादातर निहायत ही डोसाइल होते हैं जब तक उन्हें छेड़ा ना जाए वे काटते नहीं हैं। आमीं में 93 फील्ड रेजीमेंट (तोपखाना) में छह साल कार्य करने के दौरान दूर-दराज के जंगलों में जाना तो हुआ पर वाइल्ड लाइफ एन्जॉय नहीं कर सके। चार महीने की छुट्टी लेकर कैप्टन अपने फ्रेंड डॉ. इंद्रनील दास (चेयरमैन ऑफ आईयूसीएन) के पास गए। डेढ़ वर्ष तंक 'द गुड स्नेक्स' फिल्म जो कि कोबरा के जीवन पर

आधारित थी, पर कैप्टन शर्मा ने अपने फ्रेंड के साथ काम किया। इस दौरान उनके पास 45 कोबरा थे और इसी दौरान इन 45 से उनके 265 बच्चे हुए। रोजाना सांपों से कैप्टन शर्मा का वास्ता पड़ता रहा और वे जरूरी रोचक जानकारियां हासिल करते रहे, और यहीं से कैप्टन सुरेश शर्मा ने धीरे-धीरे सांप पकड़ने की टेक्नीक सीखी। वहां पर वाइल्ड लाइफ को बहुत करीब से देखा और सांपों से विशेष प्रेम के कारण उन्हें पकड़ने की टैक्नीक सीखी। इस कला को सीखने का मुख्य कारण सांपों को इंसानों द्वारा मारे जाने से बचाना है। बाईल्ड लाइफ की नजदीकी पाने के लिए उन्होंने छह वर्ष की नौकरी कर आर्मी से रिजाइन कर दिया। 1995 से चंडीगढ़ में सांप पकड़ने की समाज सेवा में जुटे हैं और अब तक 245 सांप लोगों के घरों से सांप पकड़ चुके हैं। कोबरा से 15 गुना ज्यादा जहरीला कामन करेट नामक

सांप डेडली स्नेक है। जिनकी संख्या चंडीगढ़ में अधिक पाई गई है।

गवर्नमेंट से किसी भी प्रकार की हैल्प न मिलने पर भी कैप्टन सुरेश सुखना झील पर एक शॉप चला रहे हैं, जिसमें डेकोरेशन पीसेज, टॉयज, टी-शर्ट्स की सेल करते हैं, परंतु इससे उन्हें अधिक मुनाफा नहीं है। समाज सेवा के लिए कैरा वैन में सांप पकडने के औजारों से लेकर रहने-खाने का सामान रखकर मोबाइल स्नेक सैल चला रहे हैं।

SNAKE CELL Praise of Snakes

STRANDER PROPERTY OF

कोटो:

इत्तफाक से कैप्टन शर्मा का विवाह भी ऐसी लड़की राजबीर कौर से हुआ जो स्नेक लवर होने के साथ होम्योपैथ डॉक्टर भी हैं। शर्मा दंपती समर्पित हो स्नेक सेल

SUSHIL PATHANN

के लिए कार्य कर रहे हैं। डॉ. राजबीर कौर शर्मा बताती हैं कि शॉप से हुई इन्कम सारी समाज सेवा में लग जाती है। वाइल्ड लाइफ पर तीन डॉक्यूमेंटरी फिल्म बनाने में अपना योगदान दे चुके कैप्टन सुरेश अब सांपों पर एक किताब लिख रहे हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि विश्वभर में सांप की 2700 किस्में, भारत में 260 और चंडीगढ़ में 20 से 25 के बीच किस्में पाई गई हैं। इको टूरिज्म को ध्यान में रखते हुए स्नेक सैल के लिए कैप्टन सुरेश शर्मा गवर्नमेंट से जमीन दिए जाने की मांग कर रहे हैं। भविष्य में स्नेक सैल टूरिस्ट के लिए आकर्षण का मुख्य केंद्र बन सकता है। स्नेक बाइट पर इन्फॉर्मेटिव बुक्स सुखना झील पर शॉप नं. 5 पर उपलब्ध हैं। 😑 मीरा बाली

SUNDAY 24-30 NOVEMBER 2013

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t promises to be a wildlife photog-raphy tour like no other. A sand-coloured exterior painted with leaves camouflages the hi-tech caravan in-the-making that would take eight participants on expeditions across Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and parts of coastal India. of coastal India.

Hobbies

This custom-made caravan will have a seating capacity of 15. It will also have bunker beds, a kitchen and toilet and be fully air-conditioned. It will also have rooftop tents and a new concept of tray tents. A large LED monitor would dis-play slide shows and help in communi-cation in field locations. The vehicle will

teris. A large LED monitor would dis-play slide shows and help in communi-cation in field locations. The vehicle will also carry Elinchrom strobes and acces-sories to set up an outdoor studio. Ve-hicles similar to this one are used by tour companies in the West and in Africa. And Captain (retd) Suresh Sharma, 5, fondly addressed as Captain by friends, is the one-man army behind it all. He conceived the Green Dot Ex-press to take travellers to exotic locales, where they can network with other wildlife and photography enthusiasts. "We replicate the Army's fighting col-um, getting all the support required to perform right there on location, in the middle of action. We are committed to organising infrastructure of quality, which will save energy, time, effort and money of photographers who wish to explore life and culture of India through the inclana Peace Keeping Force (IPKP), Sharma decided to hang his boots and pursue his passions -snake conservation, uraveling and photography. Dressed in a dungaree, Sharma super-vises work as his caravan is being built at a fabrication workshop in Manimajra Motor Market building, He recalls how it all started. His love of outdoors and ad-venture made him joint he Army. "Dur-ing IPKF operations in Sri Lanka, in met.



## जगल को सेर करते-करते वह जंगली जानवरों और पर्यावरण का रखवाला बन गया

गांव-गांव अदर रहार- राष्ट्र पुम कर नागां को ता के संदेशका के सिंग्य जागालक कारने क मा के संदेशका के साम में प्रत्य जीवों के सामन्त्र का नवा कहींचा दूर का रहे हैं। उनतीर अस्टान का नवा कहींचा दूर का रहे हैं। उनतीर अस्टान है पा कबंधों की कारी है कि आत के प्रदुषित लिए बिनजी सरकार्य की कसार है कर सा के पूर्वक भी गांवार और किल्स प्रवार वीगदान कर क

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# Bonding with the snakes

#### **Vivek Gupta** Panchkula

HE IS still one of the best people in India for designing and fabrication of natural history sets and also designing cine support equipment and contraptions for wildlife filming. Such is his knowledge about snakes that he can earn lakhs from wildlife film projects by filming these most sought-after limbless reptiles in the world. He indeed worked this for National Geography, USA for two years in early 90s.

But here is this man who have already said goodbye to everything to keep his environmental crusade alive for bigger cause of the society.

Meet Panchkula based Captain Suresh Sharma, an exarmy officer and a keen pho-

tographer and traveller, who had left all his commercial ventures a way back and has passionately been committing himself to nature conservation and snake welfare for last many years. Quite frightened for all the 'Ophidiphobiacs' but snakes are his best buddies just like fish to the water or siblings to their mother.

Such is his bonding with this animal that for the last 15 years, he has been devoting his every bit to demystifying the myths and misconceptions about snakes and snake bites and also about the role of snakes in maintaining ecological balance.

He is educating people about the prevention of snakebite, emergencies arising out of it and also the management of snakebite victim through lectures and programmes in school, colleges and sometime roadside shows in various places in India.

He has delivered lectures in colleges like IIM, Ahmadabad, IITs, Punjab engineering colleges, various foreign embassies and numerous numbers of schools in the region.

People of Chandigarh tricity may easily recall his Snake cell, a one man mobile snake

van that he started in 1998 to rescue snakes from houses, offices, facto-Contd on page 3 ries.

Captain Suresh Sharma left many ventures to serve the wildlife, especially snakes.

## **Hiss story**

Snakes are much misunderstood creatures, says Thakur Paramjit

URING the monsoon ison, snakes venture out of their water-filled burrows in search of food. However, no in scatter of tool, riorever, no sooner do people see a snake crawling than they press the panic button. Snakes are among the most misanderstood crea-tures. Their usefulness has taken a backseat due to the lack of

a backsear due to the lack of knowledge about them. Contrary to the common belief, a snake neither attacks nor chases a person in normal circumstances. Hindi films and TV programmes have been pro-moting superstitions that snakes take revenge and King cobra has diamond in its hood. Snake Cell, an endeavour of Capt Suresh Sharma and his

#### NATURE

wife Rajbir Kaur, has been rendering voluntary service by spreading the knowledge about snakes and snakebite in the region for the past eight years. They also provide free service to catch a snake in case it sneaks into a house in and streaks find a field of the fie

We will soon publish educational literature on snakes", says Capt Suresh Sharma. Descendants of lizards, snakes

do not have limbs or eyelids. They locate their prey with their eyes in addition to applying chemical cues collected by their bifd tongues. Pit viper is capable of spotting its prey in com-plete darkness by using pits located near its nostrils. The lifespan of a snake depends on various factors, including the

their life span in the wild is not known, in captivity, king snakes and rat snakes usually live from 12 to 15 years. The age of sexual maturity (usually two to four years) depends on the food available. All snakes can swim and majority of them can climb rough surfaces. The venom of a snake is

deadly and can cause death when mixed with blood of man or other prey. The spitting cobras (not found in India) can spit their venom up to six feet. But the poison is effective only in case it falls into one's only in case it fails into one's eyes or on a wound and goes into blood stream. A snake has no hearing power. They can feel vibrations through their belly scales. A snakecharmer's bin cannot intoxi-cate a cobra. The spreading of its hood and hissing is aimed at giving a warning to stay away and not to disturb it. Out of 255 species of snakes found in our country, around 55 are poisonous. However, only four of them — Spectacled Cobra, Common Krait, Rus-

TEAN

sell's Viper and Saw-Scaled Viper — pose a threat to human life. These are found in agricul-tural fields and village houses since rats form their staple diet Only three species of poisonous snakes are found near Chandi-garh — Russell's Viper, Cobra,

and Common Krait. "Just as every mosquito bite does not cause malaria, similarly every venomous snakebite does not cause death. Do not panic or waste time to kill the snake. If you know about snake bite first aid, give it to the victim. Then take him to the nearest hospital, where anti-venom serum can be injected, if need be," says Sharma.

"If all the snakes disappear from the earth tomorrow, we would be overrun by rats and mice. Our crops would be dev-astated and massive food short-ages would follow. The safest way to avoid snakebite is to remain at a respectable distance and not provoke the snake" says Suresh Sharma. For infor-mation on snakes, one can log on to www.snakecell.org.

## GREEN WITH ENVI. uns n Roses, well, Captain

"I am working to educate

ople about our surroundings.

I chose photography as a

medium because it immediate-

ly catches the attention of

people, and forces them to think

IN FOCUS | CAPT. SURESH SHARMA

Suresh Sharma is one I man who has seen both ends of the coreer spectrum and has loved both. Once a hardcore army man, Sharma is now a wildlife photographer, who can click various kinds of flora and fauna with equal ease. Sharma, in his 40s now, is one

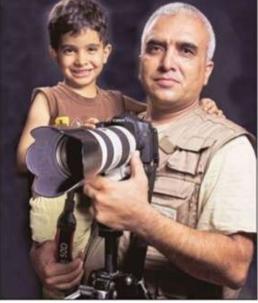
of the leading lensman on ecological conversation in the region. A passionate photogra-pher, his shots on snakes and cactii have by far brought him the maximum recognition.

Sharma was the official photographer assigned by the Indian Army for their coffee table book released by the Ministry of Defence in September 2007.

"I consider myself to be amongst those few extremely lucky ones, who got introduced to the wonders of nature," says Sharma. Apart from photography, he has also been a ed with various wildlife film projects, including two for National Geographic the Society, USA.

For Sharma, photography is a mission, a medium to spread awareness about natural conservation.





about the subject," says Sharma.

He loves to click cactii and snakes because he feels that people are afraid of them. He wants people to understand that nature means no harm, and doesn't hurt humans without provocation, "I don't want people to love snakes but idea behind my efforts is to make them understand about their life and demystify their wrong perception," adds he. Captain Sharma is also

expert in designing and fabrication of natural history sets for shooting wildlife films, under controlled conditions.

He is also one of the founders of Green Dot Expeditions that organises special tours and photo safaris for tourists and nature lovers in the area.

## All for love of animals

CHANDIGARH, June 2: More than two decades ago, his village was acquired by the UT Administration for the development of Concrete jungles' in Chandigarh and the houses and farms there were buildozed. Now, Capt Suresh Sharma has come back to his native place to spread the message of wildlife conservation and promote the love for animals. "Before we inculcate the love for ani-

before we include the love for an-mals, we have to remove fear towards them. I want to convince people and motivate them as to how every individual can con-tribute to conserving nature and saving the animals," says the 36-year-old who left the Army for his lifetime passion, the love of an-imals. imals

imals. Capt Suresh was a resident of Kanthala vil-lage, which was located adjacent to the CII building in Sector 31. He remembers how his fa-ther used to bring home injured animals and treat them. "That is where I got interested in wildlife and it became a vital part of me," he says.

says. Capt Sharma who had gone to Sri Lanka as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, used to nurse sick animals and

aware of how they can contribute in saving nature." he says. On World Environment Day on June 5, he is organising a quiz and clay-modelling competition at Hotel Maya Palace in Sector 35 on wildlife theme. The diehard wildlife enthusiast does not believe that conservation education can be imposed on people. "The message has to be so interesting that people want to listen to you and are educated in the process," he as-serts. But this is not easy, so Capt Sharma is working on a variety of projects. Presently based at Ambala, he has started his work-shouvenirs,' a self-financing venture, to gen-erate funds to educate people on ecological conservation.

#### Snake cell

conservation.

Capt Sharma intends to start a snake cell' in the City. The cell, he says, will be provided with a tele-phone. "Anybody who spots a snake can ring us up and we will immedi-ately come and pick it up. The majori-ty of the snakes are not poisonous and are killed unnecessarily. We are shar-ing the planet with them and the oth-er animals. They have an equal right to live too," he says. He has already started such a cell in Ambala.

The souvenirs, all designed by him, include an exclusive range of attractive

range of attractive paper-weights, door-knockers, bot-tle-openers, letter-boxes, jewellery, T-shirts and en-velops, all on the theme of wild-life. This is not all. Capt Suresh has held dis-cussions with senior cussions with senior officials of Punjab, Haryana and UT to



nurse sick animals and purchase tools for his workshop in his free time. "I loved the Army, but I could not have done all that I wanted to do for the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the cause of animals with a regular to the formation of the cause of animals with a regular to the cause of animals with a regular job, points out.

After leaving the Army in 1990, Capt Sharma worked at the Madras Crocodile Sharma worked at the Madras Crocodile Bank on an international project funded by a US organisation, Later, he also worked on the production of the documentary on co-bras, The Good Snake, produced by The National Geographic Society, USA. "T have also been engaged in informal research in the national parks and the wildlife sanctuaries, trying to make out where have we failed in making people

A MILE AND A REAL PROPERTY.

"These programmes can include quiz, painting and clay-modelling competitions, antakshri, street plays on wildlife But in or-der to fund these activities, we will need outlets at these places where wildlife sou-

outlets at these places where wildlife sou-venirs can be put up for sale," he says. Capt Suresh also plans to design a mo-bile vehicle for conservation education "to go all over the country and spread awareness among students and other groups free of cost." He has already organ-ised various such activities in institutes like IIM, Ahemdabad, and several medical collectes colleges. +CN

ชอลิกดีย ชิออฮ ఓ విణాంత పదాతిదలే මදින හිතිම පරසාව పరిరక్షించడమే లక్ష్మంగా పలు అవగాహన సదస్సులు నిర్వహిష్యా సాగిపోతున్నారు. ಮುಖ್ಯಂಗಾ ವಾಮುಲ ಶಧಕು ವ್ಯ**ಕಿ**ರೆಕಂಗಾ ಭ್ರಜವ್ರಿ ವೆತಸ್ಯವರುಸ್ತುನ್ನಾರು. తన లక్ష్యాల సాధన కోసం దేశవ్యాప్తంగా తిరుగుతూ භාජනාපර වනාක කිර්පාවයි వచ్చారు. ఈ సందర్భంగా అయన 'ఈనాడు'తో ముచ్చటించారు. di.

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లంగగరం పెందు అరిగిక ద్యా పొంద సంప ప్రస్తుని కారించా 24 చరపంటగా ఎద్ చెందాంచే అర్హిలి ఉద్యాగు కారమంలో పార్త ఇర్హులి ఉద్యాగు కారమంలో పార్త ఇర్హులి ఉద్యాగు అనవంలో పార్త ఇర్హులి ఉద్యాగు కింది పార్తి కి. అనికా అభిక పనిపి తర్వాత ఆర్ధుల పం క్లటి వ్యయం భవించి బయటకు పర్చిశాలు ప్రధిల పం కృతి ఉద్యాగా గ్రమమాలని గ్ర బయటకు పర్చిశ్రిలు పరించ పోషిపోరించింది. ఎల కాల పోపులకర్తి బయ dridio Docis Willia

రంగ కాట్లా విలు రాయించి.. ఇద్ద అమారార రాష్ట్రామాలు వెల్లికారి ఈ రాషారాష్ట్రా రమారి వాది మగ గ్రాహా పరిశ్ పేష పెట్టరు. ప్రధికిని పెపూరులా మార్కర్లు ప్రధికి వదురాగాప్రి తగ్గించి రాషారా పరిశ్రీ అని పెంద పర్తికంగా పూరుకాయా వివరస్స్ పోల్ ప్రవర్శకలు కాలా గర్యికాంచేవారు.

విరుశ్వ పోరోభవర్గులు కూడ వర్సరించేవారి. తర్వర మంద రద్దికారిమీ... నక ప్రసా అంగ్రహది అరుగా 2001లో వర్షిక ప్రధి బారక యాట్ర చేస్తుని కు సరీపడి రాజీవిక కోర్త అవరిలు విక్ల ముందిలు కు సరీపడి రాజీవిక కోర్త అవరిలు విక్ల ముందిలు మంది రాజీవిక కోర్త అవరిలు చిర్తించారు... మా బార్లి ఆపారిత కార్యాపోటు పరిస్తోంచారు... దా. రాజ ర్వాలికి మీటి కారుకుం.... దేశవ్యాపరా తుగుతు వాహించలోనే పరిజాత వరిస్తారా మంది ముందా వ్యవసోవిరువకు విజా అమాతవ మందుకున్నాడు. మొక్కర కోరు కారుకారి మందుకున్నాడు. మొక్కర కోరు కారుకు తురుకున్న మందుకున్నాడు. మొక్కర కోరు కారుకు తురుకులో స్పై తిర్మిచిత్తం... ఉపపైవర్తులు కూడి ఇల్లు తురుకి కరిసి మూడు అముదిలాదు పోరా పోరిపించారు.



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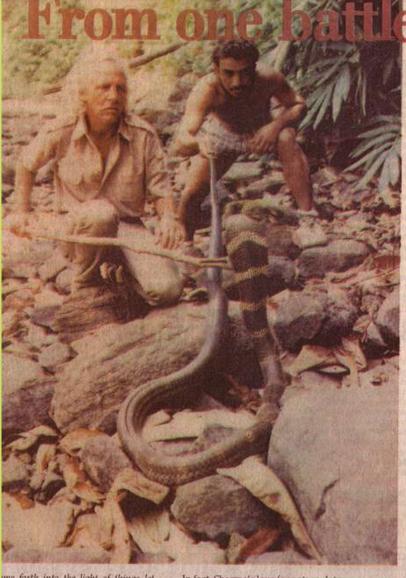
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టారస్ జాహనంలో తీర్పదద్దన లోపరి భాగం

1 Stage 54 అవగాపాన వదన్నులు నిర జి తిరగణానికి వీలుగా ఒక నేలల చెందిన రిర్గాహనికి మీటా ఒక అమాజిన పాహ సాస్ట్రి చూపొందించుకున్నాడు. అందిలో బ్రాహలు వివి ప్రాటాలు దేమక్కి అమాఫన జిగ్గిస్తా నా పాడిందల్ మూడారిచేశాల ప్రేక్టికి మేలుకు గ్రార్ జ్యారించి, దిస్తాబుల్ సామ్యాని వియోగించకూడు. పొలో ఎగ్రీని డిషన్స్ పేరు పొలోగావర్లతో యాతలు వర్సరావ్యంతా – కెస్టిన్ మరక్ పిగ్రాంత ఆర్మ ఆపార





me forth into the light of things let e be your teacher

William Wordsworth

AR generates either heroism or heart burn. Yet strangely enough,

In fact, Sharma's love for nature dates back to his childhood days, when morn-ing walks along with his father figured as a daily must on his schedule. Srilankan tenure, an encounter with the director of Madras Crocodile Park lead to director into snorkelling and the fasan initiation into snorkelling and the fas cination grew into an obsession. The

to anoth

The Good Snake commissioned by the National Geographic Society, he went on to fabricate the natural history sets to stimulate natural habitat indoors. That was done for wildlife photography under controlled conditions.

Incidentally, during the making of Silent Valley and Indian Rain Forest, Sharma and other members of the team had caught a 12-feet long king cobra — the deadliest of all snake species. However, Sharma insists that snakes are the most misunderstood crea tures for they never attack unless provoked. To drive home the point, he plans to make a video film and organ-ise a snake cell during the nature" is engrossed in printing T-shirts with logos devoted to wildlife. Besides this, he is bringing out a host of daily use products shaped like animals. The ratio-nale is simple. "You can't force environ-mental education on people. The best way to involve them is by surrounding them with objects/messages which constantly with objects/messages which constantly remind them of nature". So you have a door knocker shaped like a turtle. Scribbled along are a couple of lesser known facts about the slow-paced creature

ture. Though the response to his range of products, which include paper weight, envelopes and even jewellery, has been fairly warm, yet he rues, "Government-run bodies and institutes have given me a cold shoulder." While his proposal to set up a souvenir shop at Chhatbir Zoological Park is being considered, his rather unique idea of organising a weekly envi-

Even when on a mission to fight the deadly guerrillas, Captan Suresh Sharma could not shake away the lure of nature. NONIKA SINGH meets a man who left the cause for another one — dearer to his heart

ensuing rainy season. Besides this, he will inform the masses regarding different kinds of anti-venom injections avail-able in the market. He is not too happy with the phrase "law of jungle", for in a jungle, all animals live in perfect har-mony and do not harm out of

greed or lust. When researching for the film Rat Wars, another one for National Geographic, he discovered myriad aspects of a rat's life. In a country where, traditionally, rats connote Lord Ganesha's vehicle, the rodent is revered by some, abhorred by others ...

and eaten by a particular tribal commu-

nity. Sharma rate the country as wildlife. And d Indian forests,

ronmental quiz hasn't elicited much enthusiasm. He avers, "Tourist destina-tions like Pinjore are the ideal locale to begin environmental education which can couple learning with fun. But the authorities concerned would rather rent

authorities concerned would rather rent out outlets to vendors, who only add to the litter and pollute the environment." Not that such apathy deters him. At a personal level, he reuses envelopes, plastic bags for "the answer to environmental degradation is not recy-cling but generating less trash." Also, he never misses an opportunity to help a cause. Like during his trip to Kanha National Park, when one of the foreign visitors refused to lend a pair of binocu-lars to an expert guide with the refrain "I will catch an infection", our young cru-sader was truly period.

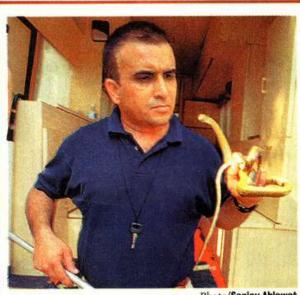
सांप काटने के इलाज की जानकारी दी

चंडीगढ़, 19 अगस्त ( भाससे)। 'इंडियन हॉक्स' समाज सेवी संस्था ने रविवार को मलोया कॉलोनी में सांप काटने के तुरंत बाद के इलाज की जानकारी देने के लिए एक शिविर का



मलोया कॉलोनी में पहली बार लगाया गया इस इलाज का शिविर।

आयोजन किया गया। सर्प दंश से लोगों के दिमाग में बैठे डर को दूर करने और उनमें जागरूकता लाने के लिए यह शिविर का पहली बार लगाया गया था। इस शिविर में 'स्नेक सैल' चंडीगढ़ के इंचार्ज एवं विशेषज्ञ कैप्टन 'सुरेश शर्मा' मौजूद थे। शिविर का उद्घाटन मलोया सेंटर के प्रौढ़ शिक्षा केन्द्र की नोडल प्रेरक 'रूपम गुलाटी' ने किया। संस्था के निर्देशक एवं संगठनकर्ता वरिन्द्र बांगा ने बताया कि भविष्य में भी ग्रामीण इलाकों में ऐसे शिविर लगाए जाएंगे।



Photo/Sanjay Ahlawat

## GAPTAIN SURESH SHARMA Hiss... first love

C nakes usually make people's skin crawl. But Pretired Captain Suresh Sharma loves them. Guns weren't his calling, so he left the army to start a 'snake cell' in Chandigarh. Suresh catches snakes from people's houses and leaves them in the jungle free of cost.

A photographer, he has made a few documentaries on reptiles. Suresh, who moves around in his Tempo Traveller-turned-home called King Cobra, was in the capital recently to educate school kids about snakes.

#### The Tribune, July 25, 1998

## Saturday Plus

## one-man mobile snake cell

#### By Nonika Singh

C OME monsoon and romance is in the air. But it's also the time when serpents make their presence felt. As rain fills their 'guest house' snakes live in rat holes or ter-mite mounds — they shift out to inhabit mother earth. As per Hindu mythology, snakes are a revered species, still the fear

nightmare could well translate into reality. But don't panicl So advises Captain Suresh Sharma, a man devoted to the cause of envi-ronment and who lives by the adage, "The wild life of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust and must account for it to those who come after us". Sharma's advice is not mere mouthing of advice is not mere mouthing of oft-repeated platitude. A one-man mobile snake cell, he

promises to be right there to tackle the monster head-on, provided you can page him in

snakes in unimag-inable places like kitchen, bed-room... He says that once a snake enters the house,

## Chandigarh Heartbeat

that these slimy creatures evoke in human mortals is unparalleled. Though the lush green vegetation is their natur-al habitat and Chandigarh is al habitat and Chandigarh is not really a snake-infested region, these limbless reptiles could well slither on to con-crete areas, in the middle of your living room. A closed encounter with the wily ser-pent? Your worst waking



and more signifi-cantly cutting a: Tackling the monster head on cantly

hedges and bushes to a man-ageable size. Snakes are divided into some

Snakes are divided into some 2700 species. Their sizes range from the pencil-long African thread snake to the 6-metre-long pythone and anaconda. In India, cobra, Russel's viper, kraits and sawscale viper are the dreaded species. Shockingly in Chandigarh, out of the 10 snakes (later released into Shivalik Hills) four were kraits, one of the deadliest snakes in Asia. The commonly found species in Chandigarh are Russel's viper, cobra, krait, Gunther's racer ratsnake, striped keelback and checkered keelback.

However, no estimates are available about the snake pop-ulation. Sharma recalls, "Before ulation. Sharma recails, "Before starting the snake cell, my friends jeeringly told me there were no snakes in Chandigarh. And even I am astonished by the number of calls (35). I have received. I guess earlier there was no centralised body where information on snakes could seen in."

In all likelihood, people depended upon snakes could depended upon snake charm-ers who for centuries have only fuelled the myths and added on to the mystique of these creatures with lethal fangs. Snakes do not have the sense of hearing but pick up vibra-tions. This is a well-known sci-entific fact. Yet how many of us know that snake's vision is two-dimensional and mono-chromatic. In a layman's lan-guage it implies that a snake can't discern between a flat board surface and a human being. It identifies its prey/enemy by their moveboard surface and a human being. It identifies its prey/enemy by their move-ment (hence the snake's much hyped rhythmic dance to the constantly moving flute). The best defence against a snake attack would be to 'freeze dead in your tracks'. But even if you flee the scene, a snake can't chase you like a dog for it has little idea of the distance sepa-rating you and his fangs because of its limited two-dimensional vision. Eightyfive dimensional vision. Eightyfive per cent of the snakes found are

non-poisonous, yet they kill more than 20,000 people a year. Sharma informs, 'No snake wears a crown. Though cobra raises its hood, krait is bluish-black in colour. Russel's viper hisses like a pressure cooker,

hisses like a pressure cooker the common man can't differ

remain on paper. Sharma rues, "So many of us are oblivious to the fact that anti-venom serum is available in the market." In the future he plans to organise street shows to educate the masses. Indeed, what was it that

important link in the ecological chain of balance. Every snake chain of balance. Every snake eats two to three rats in three months or so. As each rat devours roughly 14 kg of food grain every year, the signifi-cance and direct bearing of snakes on human life cannot be



Helping children quell the fear of snakes

prompted him to turn into a prompted him to turn into a wanderer, picking up snakes from people's homes, especial-ly when there are no financial incentives involved? He reveals, "My ultimate aim is to bring about environmental awareness. I know that human beings are selfish. If I stand on a pulpit and start a discourse, no one would listen to me. However, if I reach out to peo-ple in their hour of need, they will realise I am not a hoax. They will sit up and pay atten-

Whether, he succeeds in his mission — a war against quelling ophidiphobia (fear of snakes) — and makes people realise the beauty of these 'works of art', the future will tell us. But people can be reminded that snake is an

undermined. So our revulsion and fear notwithstanding, we just can't do without snakes.

#### First aid steps:

1. Tie a cloth tourniquet or Tie a cloth tourniquet or band (but not a thin rope or rubber) above the bite, but not too tightly. If bite is on the hand, tie it on the upper arm. If on the foot/leg, tie it on the thigh.
Wound should be gently cleaned with antiseptic or sim-ply with water and soap. Avoid potassium permanganate.
Do not make incisions or cuts around the wound. Let a skilled doctor handle it.

skilled doctor handle it.

4. Last but not the least -- antivenom serum is the only cure. 5. Rush to a hospital. 6. In the event of sighting a snake, call pager 9612-6401.

## entiate between a poisonous and a non-venomous snake, unless he is exposed to the species through live demon-stration and orientation pro-

grammes. Herein the man who said Herein the man who said goodbye to uniform to begin his environmental crusade is dismayed with the government response, its lackadaisical approach and its indifference towards some of his commer-cially viable projects. Unlike other NGOs, he believes in self-financing and came out with an innovative venture, Ecosense Souvenirs. Nevertheless, he is handicapped by the paucity of funds. So many of the snake cell's proposed objectives — first aid cell, distribution of lit-erature, interpretation centre. erature, interpretation centre, workshop for doctors etc.

They will sit up and pay atten-Whether, he succeeds in his

Capt Suresh Sharma, a wildlife photographer & team leader, Snake Cell, feels that the reptiles are 'beautiful' creatures

His(s) way!

#### Jasmine Singh

lease do justice to the snakes," Capt Suresh Sharma, a wildlife photographer, team leader, Snake Cell, opens the conversation with this sentence. Its been a long association with the reptiles, but the man can never get enough of them - whether it is about explaining their lifestyle to the common man, clicking their pictures in the wild, making people comfortable with the reptiles so that they can at least showcase their bravado by posing with them; 'this snake charmer' is ready to bust any myth that can create misunderstanding between man and the reptile, which could spoil the equilibrium.

But foremost, don't scare yourself to the grave when you see this reptile. And why? Dar Key Aggey Jeet hail Just trying to scare your scarel This is precisely what Capt Sharma and his wife Jasbir Kaur do. By the way, Capt Sharma gifted a Common Krait to his wife before marriage

"As a kid, I would accompany my father to the morning walk and bring back injured animals and birds. Later in life, I was sent to Sri Lanka as part of Indian Peace Keeping Force for almost 18 months where I developed a liking for snakes, as we were virtually trouping smaller orientation to attack us," he offers a short and safe advice.

A wildlife photographer as well, Capt Sharma tries to gather whatever little funds they can by printing t-shirts and through Green Frames. "Why are we fooling ourselves talking nineteen to dozen on conservation when the answer lies in self-sustainability? I am not against chopping wood or using paper, but we must make people sustainable consumers," he says.

And this man, who has crossed the bridge and been up, close and personal with life on the other side, can format the beautiful pattern of snakes. He smiles, "Twenty-five years ago I would also jump out of the window on seeing a snake. Now that I have seen them, lived with them, taken care of them, I can say they are beautiful creatures." He carefully chooses his words to ward off fear of snakes. "I try and talk to people who are scared of them, psychologically pulling them out of their fear trap," he candidly shares.

The Snake Cell is a self-funded nature conservation project for the tricity, commissioned on the World Environment Day in 1998, at Chandigarh. It aims to disseminate vital information on the subject - snakes and snakebites and the role of snakes in maintaining ecological balance. The educational programmes of the Snake Cell nave ne myths, fear and hatred for them. Educating people on how to prevent snakebites, emergencies arising from snakebites and first-aid, which is vital for treatment, is something that the Snake Cell site offers. People seek help to remove snakes from their premises. So far, they have caught as many as 2,000 snakes from houses; often the Common Krait (the deadliest Indian snake), which is 15 times more poisonous than a cobra. "In this season we get almost 15 calls a day. Earlier, I used to get calls in the middle of the night with callers trying to fool me, however, now they know it is a serious thing we are dealing with. But, beautiful," he smiles.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | સુરત, તા. ૧૯ પણ જ્યારે જ્યારે શ્રીલંકાના                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | સવેશ કિસ્મર્ગશાહરૂબ ચારું જંગલોમાં જ ચાનું ચતુ ત્યારે<br>બનાચાઈ છે. તેવી કોઈ કેરવેન પોનાનો પશુપ્રેમ દબાવી નઢોના<br>શહેરમાં તમને આજ કાલમાં જોવા શક્તા. તેમના હેલમેટમાં દેડકા           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | શક્તમાં તમત આપપ પ્રાથમાં જાયાં શક્તાં. તમતાં હલમદમાં દડશ<br>મળી જાયતો એતા ચાલકને પરાં અને કાચબા સંદેતા! તેઓ કેમેરો<br>ખ્યાનથી જો જો કેપ્ટન સુરેશ શર્મા લઈને કોટો પાડવા મોડેતા. કેપ્ટન |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | વામના એ શખ્સને મળ્યા બાદ કહે છે કે આ બે વન્તુઓ નાથે.<br>તમને લાગદે કે તેઓ સ્વદેશના શક્ય ન હતી અને અટલ જ મે                                                                            |
| -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | સાચા હિરો છે. શાહરૂબ તો માત્ર કોજ છોડી દીધી કારણ કે હું પણ<br>પડદા પર એક ગામડામાં જઈને એક સ્વતંત્ર પક્ષે છું. હું ક્યાં જઇશ                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | જા ગૃતિ લાવવાનું કામ કરે છે પણ કે જિંદગોમાં શું કરીશ એ વિશે મેં<br>આ દીવલ હિરો, શહેર, અને બહુ ખાસ વિચાર્યુનથી પણ હું                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ગામડાઓમાં ૧૪૦ ને પશેવરલા જાણો છું કેમારી દિશા ચોક્કન ઈં<br>અંગે લોકોને ઢઢેલ્થીને જાગાડે છે. અને તું પર્વાવરણ અને                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | મુંથયશુપરીઓ<br>ચંદીગઢના વનની ∎ુતબીબ પત્ની અને પોણા માટે કામ કરું<br>એવા કેપ્ટન છુ                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | અવા કેપ્ટન<br>મુદ્દેશ શર્મા બે વર્ષની પુત્રીને લઇને છુ વર્ષ<br>છેલ્લા છ વર્ષથી ભારતના ગામડાઓ અને પહેલા કેપ્ટને                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | પોતાની કેરવેને શહેરોમાં ભ્રમણ કરીને કરેલીશરૂઆત<br>લઈને આખા આ માણસ પંચાવરણ- હવે મહેક છે.                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ભારતમાં કરી પશુપક્ષીઓના સંરક્ષણની અનડોટીવો.<br>રહ્યા છે. આ પશુપક્ષીઓના સંરક્ષણની સહારા.                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | રસાય છે. જેમ<br>કરવેનમાં તેમનાં અનેશમી જુંબેશ ચલાવે ને કે કે તે હ<br>જી, વ, નું છે ડુછ વધથી કેરવેના જુઓ ગાણી                                                                          |
| 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | જરૂરિયાતની લઈને કરતા શર્માએ રેનવ, ટાઈમાં<br>તમામ રાતુમાં કેરવેતન જયોતાનું ઘર એક ઇનિયા,                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | છે. જેવી કે છેલ્લ<br>એડ, કીચન, બનાવી દીધુ છે. જેમાં સંક્રમ પ્રેમ્<br>બાથરૂમ, કીસ, ડબલ બેડ, કીચન, તે મંતળી                                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | આ વધુમ, કોઝ,<br>લાવણોરી, વોટર બાાથરૂમ, કીઝ, ગ વિવિધિની<br>ટેન્ક, કચલ, માટે લાવણોરી, લેપટાપ, નૉંચ લે છે.                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | કમાટ, વાલ વોટર ટેન્ક, કપડા માટે પોટર વાસ્ય                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ખાસવર ટાયલલ કબાટ, વોશ બેઝીન, પોતાનો માળો.<br>બહુજ છે. કેસ્ટન કબાટ, વોશ બેઝીન, પોતાનો માળો.<br>સરેશ આ ઘર ટોયલેટ બધુજ છે. બનાવે એ દરચ                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | જેવી ચાન લઇને ————————————————————————કેમેરામાં<br>છે લગા છ વર્ષથી ભારત સમગ્ર કરી કંડારવું ખૂબ મુશ્કેલ હતું. છ                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | રહ્યા છે. તેઓ પોતાની પતી ગેં. સેકન્ડના એ શોટ માટે કેપ્ટન<br>રાજપીર અને પોજા બે વર્ષની પુત્રી પ્રમાંએ સાત દિવસ એકીટલે                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ગુમમનીને સાથે લઈને કરે છે. વિતાવ્યા હતાં. પશુઓને આ હદે<br>આગાવિક પ્રશ્ન થોય કે કેપ્ટન પ્રેમ કરતા કેપ્ટન શર્મા કહે છે કે                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | સૂરેશ પ્રામાં કરે છે શું? કેપ્ટન માલસમાં નથી હોતી એટલી બુદ્ધિ<br>સુરક્ષને અમે મળ્યા. આ માલસ પશુ-પક્ષીઓમાં હોય છે. દિશા<br>છેલ્લા છ વર્ષથી દેશના લોકોને શોધવા માટે આપલને સાધનોની       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | છાલ્યા છે વચ્ચા દશના લાકાન શાપવા માટ ભાપલાન તાપલાન<br>માત્ર એક વાત સમજાવવા માટે જીએસએમની જરૂર પડે છે. પક્ષ<br>રખડ્યા કરે છે - 'પર્વાવરસનું પક્ષીઓને આવી કોઈ જરૂર પડતી                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | શતન કરો' કોયમાંથી આ કામ નથી, તેઓ કહે છે કે આપવી<br>કેન્ટન કેવી રીતે ચઢી ગવા તે તેઓ જંગલ રાજને ભાંડીએ છીએ પછ                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ચચકાર સમય જણાવે છે. કેપ્ટન હારીક્ત તો એ છે કે જંગલ રાજ<br>કહે છે કે તેમના એ પ્રેમ છે એક જ સારું છે. અરેલા પેટે વાઘ                                                                    |
| 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | પર્યાલરણા અને બીજુ ફોજ. ક્યારેય પોતાની પાસેથી પસારે<br>કારકોદીની શાઉઆત તેમણે ફોજમાં થતા હરણ પર તરાય નથી મારતો.                                                                        |

through the forests," says Capt Sharma, who wants us to focus on the snakes and why people cannot bear the sight of this reptile.

The Snake Cell came into being and Suresh Sharma had a greater task at hand - imparting education on snakes. Absence of information can lead to a number of problems and there were far too many in this case. "Sans the age barrier, the first reaction on seeing a snake is panic," Capt Sharma shares in a light manner that people call up fire brigade or the police when they see a snake! "I am not trying to teach people to become snake handlers, but to handle the situation maturely."

To begin with, "Snakes are not interested in us. They don't see us as their food. They cannot run or pounce on you. They have a far

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# FEAR NO FACTOR

#### **Disney Brar Talwar**

nakes are a species that never fails to evoke fear in people's minds. But one man who has weathered all hardships to stand up for snakes is Captain Suresh Sharma (retd) who, in 1988, gave up his job in Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka and began making films on snakes for the National Geographic.

Ten years later, he opened Snake Cell in Chandigarh, to disseminate info on snakes and ways to deal with snakebites. His utilitarian website, www.snakecell.com, has now completed seven years. "I felt the need to dispel

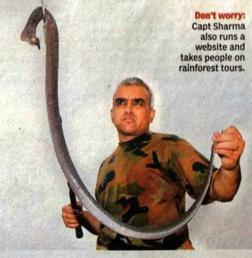
myths, fear and hatred that people harbour towards snakes who play an important role in main-taining the ecological balance," says Capt Sharma.

The site has comprehensive info on different type of snakes and has links to snake photogra-phy, besides details of the tours he takes to the rainforests. The site also has products for sale, prepared by Sharma and his wife Rajbir to garner funds.

"We help people by removing snakes from their houses and offices. So far, we have caught about 950 snakes from residences including the deadly Common Krait.

He has attended emergency calls from up to 1250 houses till date, particular between April

He saves people from snakes, yet Capt Suresh Sharma is struggling to sustain his Snake Cell



and September. "We provide help 24 hours," he says.

But the lack of financial support is demoralising, he says. "My wife and I have been run-ning the Snake Cell with our own funds. We arrange Wild Hiss Eco Tours and also design hiss eco rours and also design books, wildlife paintings, photo-graphs, camping gears, first-aid kits, tees and silver jewellery to gather funds."

They have even faced boycott by neighbours. "They wanted to leave the colony because I was a snake catcher!" "They wanted us

was a snake catcher!" But despite all hardships, Capt Sharma stays determined. He is now gearing up for the next monsoon when his phone will ring incessantly. Capt Sharma's number is 0172-2556013.

disneytalwar@rediffmail.com



Making destinations on the way

Capt Suresh Sharma introduced the concept of caravan travel in India as part of his efforts to spread the message of nature conservation through tourism and photography

#### NIVEDITA GANGULY

in the bolian A

en Dot Expedition que venture in In d photography - th ecial tours and pho-

the Captain

d find a



Spectacular sight The ove truck Taurus seen against i Milky Way at Ladakh; Capt Suresh Sharma (bottom)

Suresh sharma (pottorny -hind Taurus, to offer photograph-ers the road trip of a lifetime, driving them into some spectacu-lar locations of the country like Ladakh and Kajasthan. Taurus can accommodate eight travellers and its typical trips that last for about 10 to 15 days or even more-dong with a well-equipped kit-chen, a capacity to carry 700 litres of water, individual lockers and plenty of charging stations for travellers and photographers to charge their batteries, the unit has 'on the move' outdoor camp-ing roof-top-tents and four alto-gether new types of tray tents with foam mattresse, for single and double that are unique to double that are unique to plarus. There are separate dome-tents for those who seek total pri-vacy on such tours and comfort seating. While the Capitain of Taurus

able camping chairs for outdoor searing. While the Captain of Taurus manages practically everything single-handedly, he has a dedic-ated driver for the trips who also assists him to cook some of the best Indian dishes you have ever tasted. But he doesn't sity away from going behind the wheels. "I want to be self-sufficient just like solo from Chandigarh to Leh through the fearsome Zoji La an experience that made me respect nature and humankind more," he says.

For Capt Sharma eans much more that much more than j id truck that takes



## Let children explore nature: lensman

Then they will understand the issue of climate change, he tells parents

#### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

VISAKHAPATNAM "If you do your work honestly and earnestly, you will enjoy every bit of it," said Capt. Suresh Sharma, wildlife and nature photographer who bid adieu to the Indian Army to follow his passion in photography and nature conservation.

He was speaking at a programme organised by Vishakha Camera Club in association with Rotary Club, Visakhapatnam, at Hawa Mahal on the eve of World Pho-



Photographer Suresh Sharma speaking on his experiences on the eve of World Photography Day, in Visakhapatnam on Friday. • K.R. DEEPAK

tography Day here on Friday.

"Today, people are so enamoured by gadgets and social media that they have very less time to spend outdoors.

As responsible parents,

we must let our children explore outdoors and only then they will understand the issue of climate change. how to make the world a better place and conserve

nature," he said.

Giving a presentation of his photography works, he stressed on the critical role photography plays in nature conservation.

Earlier, VCC secretary Suresh Gorantla, club founder president B.K. Agarwal and art connoisseur Mayank Kumari Deo welcomed the gathering.

Bombary Natural Distory Society

PRESIDENT B. G. DESHMUKH I. A. S. (Retd.)

Ref.No. 2346/2005

Capt. Suresh Sharma 233. Block - I. GH-2 Shikar Apartments Sector - 5, MDC Panchkula - 134109 Harvana

20th June, 2005

Dear Suresh,

It was wonderful to meet you in Ambala and to listen your excellent talk on the snakes and snakebites. I must say, it was the best talk on this subject which I have heard. Actually, it was one of the best natural history talks of my life. You had presented the subject very beautifully, with the right mixture of natural history, science and your own experience. I request you that whenever you are in Mumbai or Delhi, please let me know so we can arrange your talk to our members.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

M. I lala

Asad R. Rahmani Director

Hornbill House, Dr. Sálim Ali Chowk, (Opp. Lion Gate), Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai - 400 023. Tel.: 2282 1811 • Fax: (91 - 22) 2283 7615 • Gram: HORNBILL E-mail - Office : bnhs@bom4.vsnl.net.in • Director : bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in Website : www.bnhs.org



Tiny-tots seem to enjoy the feel of a snake during a programme on snakes at Sector 23 Bal Bhavan in Chandigrah on Friday. — A Tribune photo by Pankaj Sharma

#### Children's date with snakes

Tribune News Service CHANDGARH, June 5 — Edu-cational programmes, talks, shows and plays marked the "World Environ-ent Day", which was celebrated in different parts of the city with usual enthusiasm. An environmental training programme for teachers of various schools was organised jointly by the Department of Environment. UT Ad-ministration, and the Environmental Monitoring Instruments Division of the Central Scientific Instruments Organisation at the CSIO complex in Sector 30.

Organisation at the Corto of the organisation, The Director of the organisation, Dr R.P. Bajpai, said the conservation of environment was the main issue which was confronting the world to-

day. Mr H.S. Sohal, Director, Mr. H.S. Sohal, Director, Envionment, gave a detailed account of vehicular pollution in the country, especially at Chandigarh. The train-ing was attended by 20 teachers selected from various schools. The day was celebrated by the Department of Adult Continuing Edu-cation and the Department of NSS of the Panjab University at the Sector 25 Labour Colow.

Dr C.L. Narang, Director of the

I's date with department, said too much of varbanisation and industrialisation useration. Speaking at a function organised with the state function organised with the state function organised with an ability to generate conscious-uses regarding healthy environment with an ability to generate conscious-uses regarding healthy environment. To Chromemorate the day, a play, with a ability to generate conscious-uses regarding healthy environment. To the state function organised with an ability to generate conscious-uses regarding healthy environment. To the state function of the state with an ability to generate conscious-ter of the state of the state of the forene function of the state with on different parts of the city. Newever, the environment day was for schoolchildren had a date with stakes organised by "Ecosment of schoolchildren had a date with programme was a quiz on stakes and programme was a quiz on stakes and organisation. The highlight of the organisation team leader Capt Suresh

arma. A documentary of snake bites was

also screened. Children could be seen feeling the thrill of touching different species of snakes brought for them by Captain Sharma, who also answered a number of queries. Addressing the gathering, the UT Chief Wildlife Warden, Mr H.S. Sohal, said there was an urgent need to protect snakes, which by and large were harmless unless disturbed by the human beings. Take tiggers, none of the snakes were aggressive, except when disturbed, 'be said. He pointed that mostly victims of snakebite died of fear and not by the poison as there were only four groups of venomous snakes in our country, he added. In another function organised by

In another function organised by the Environment Society of Iodia at Khodda Ali Sher village, near here, desilting operation of the village pond was launched. Dr K.K. Gag, Joint Director, Ministry of Forest, inauge-rated the operation. The society presi-dent, Mr S.K. Sharma, said the village ponds were very helpful in cobalance as they resulted in lowering of tem-perature in the vicinity.

A seminar in connection with the environment day was organised by the Environment Society of Haryana at Majri Chowk at Panchkula.

# **Snake charmer with a difference**



Capt. Suresh Sharma has committed himself to the cause of nature conservation and snake welfare



#### By Vivek Gupta

He is still the best known professional in India for designing and fabrication of natural history sets and also designing tory sets and also designing cine support equipment and contraptions for wildlife film-ing. Such is his knowledge about snakes that he can earn lakhs from wildlife film projects by filming the thrilling limbless reptiles of the world. He worked this for the National Geographic, USA for two years in the early 90s, But here and today, the man has bid farewell to all else to keep his environ-mental crusade alive for bigger cause of the society. Meet Panchkula based Captain Suresh Sharma, an ex-army of-ficer and a keen photographer and traveller, who has commit-ted himself to the cause of nature conservation and snake welfare since many years now. Snakes are Captain Shar-ma's best buddies. Such is his

bonding with this animal that for the last 15 years, he has de-voted himself to creating awareness about the myths and misconceptions about snakes and snake bites, and also about the role of snakes in maintaining the ecological balance. He has been indefatiga-bly educating people in schools, colleges and sometime roadside shows in various cities across India. He has de-livered lectures in colleges like 11Ms, 11Ts, Punjab Engineering colleges, various foreign em-bassies and numerous schools in the region.

People of the tri city are fa-miliar with his Snake cell, a one man mobile snake van that he started in 1996 to rescue snakes from houses, offices, factories. This fearless man has single-handedly caught about 2000 snakes from the tri city including Cobra, Russel Viper and Common Krait (the deadliest Indian snake).

"Snakes are the most misunderstood animals in the world. I am trying to dispel the myths, fear and hatred," says Captain Sharma. How many people know that snakes do not have

sense of hearing, it's vision is two-dimensional and monochromatic and it identifies its prey/enemy through his movement? Despite this fact, about 40000 people die every year due to snake bit in India. It is because people panic and go into a frenzy that gives enough vibration to snakes to identify their position. He informs that the best de-fence against a snake attack is to freeze and act dead. "But even if you flee, a snake can't chase you," he adds. His web site www.snakecell.org has everything one needs to know about snakes and snakebites.

Positive minded as he is, Captain Sharma never frets over lack of financial help from the government for nature eduthe government for native end-cation; rather he is raising funds on his own to continue his welfare and education pro-grammes. He and Dr Indranell Das, a lending scientist special-ining is biodirective being izing in biodiversity, have pooled together their expertise to establish Wildhiss Ecotours, an NGO that organizes wildlife tours for people. Whatever money they raise, they use it



Daredevil Capt, Suresh Sharma

for Nature Conservation educa tion. They take people to vari-ous wild life centuries in India. forest areas and educate them about overall environmental issues

"Notwithstanding all the fear show instanting an ine lear and revulsion attached to them, snakes are an important link in the ecological chain," says he, adding, "If that chain breaks off, the important eco-logical system will shatter."

A fine photographer, Sharma is an expert on snake photogra-phy. He is working on a book titled 'Snake Bite and Common Man' to forward his cause. He firmly believes that every individual's contribution is very vital for conservation efforts.



## An eye opener for NGOs engaged in voluntary work

NEW DELHI, July 17 (UNI): A young of-ficer, who left a promising: career in the Army, has alunched a self-financing ven-ture to generate funds to educate people on ecological conservation. At a time when "obtaining foreign funds" and "accepting.donations" seems to be the objective of a majority of non-Governmental organizations, Captain Suresh Sharma's effort is an eye opener for those engaged in voluntary work. The die-hard wildlife enthusiast, who was a member of the Indian Peace Keep-ing Force (IPKF) that went to Sri Lanka, is not at all influenced by the "changing face" of NGOs where numerous perks and other facilifies are the order of the day. Keeping in mind the difficulties of

getting support for wildlife projects, Capt. Sharma, along with his friends started a workshop at Ambala in Haryana under the name Ecosense Souvenirs. The souve-nirs, all of them designed by him. include a wide range of attractive paper-weights, door knockers, bottle-openers, letter boxes, jewellery, T-shirts and envelopes are to be sold through nature clubs, asso-clations, NGOs and nature shops through-out the country. "The entire money generated through this project would be utilized for educat-ing the people on ecological conservation and to conduct scientific research," he said, during his recent visit to the capital to explore the possibility of setting up of similar units all over the country.

Capt. Sharna said that during the last two derades muchiahad been said about the need to create awareness among the masses about the importance of animals and plants. Yet, the consequences of envi-ronmential imbalances are unfortunately not as widely disseminated as desired, partly due to lakk of dedicated environ-mential education, support for teaching, training and research besides a dearth of personnel to conduct these exercises. The widdlife enthusiast said conserva-tion and education should not be imposed on people. The message has to be inter-esting that people want to listen to you and are educated in the process," he added.

and are educated in added. added. "It is high time that we understand the

Simportance of environment and we have to protect it at all cost. We are heading to-wards environmental disaster. If environ-mental awareness is not created among the masses, the very existence of human-ity is in danger," warned Capt. Sharma, who left the Army in 1990. Asked why he quit the job, he said, "I loved the Army, bit with a regular job, I could not have done all that I wanted to do for the cause of animals." After leaving the Army, Capt Sturma worked at the Madras Creccodie Bank on an international project funded by a US organization. "I have also been engaged in informal research in the pational parks and the wildlife sanctuaries, trying to make out where have we failed in mak-

Shoot at sight

ing people aware of how they can con-tribute in saving nature," he said.

Capt: Sharma said activities sup-ported by Ecosense Souvenirs included lectures in schools, colleges and public places, production and distribution of lit-rature and other aids to disseminate con-servation education amongs people, es-pecially children through books, video-tilms, stickers and posters.

He said that he was willing to organ-ize awareness programmes free of cost for any schools or colleges all over the coun-try. They would also organize environ-ment-oriented competitions among chil-dren such as paining, quiz and essay writ-ing.



SECOND INNINGS - LENSMAN

Vijet, Gisseb Suite sh with sen Chinag. (Se bw left to right) Noving to ek at dusk, Suryakira a mainterance at sunset and An artiklery gun



#### PRACHI RATURI MISRA

orn to a teacher father and homemaker mother in Kanthala, Chandigarh in 1960, young Suresh still remembers his childhood walks to the nearby jungle potch on morning walks

His love of nature, photography and travel, gravitated him towards Indian army where he received a short service commission and rose to become a Captain. And, had a rewarding stint of six years which took him to various corners of India and abroad. As a young officer he served in the 93 Field Regiment and had a memorable year with 111 Rocket Regiment. He was a marksman and won Div Championships for three consecutive years. He was a hockey player and an ace mountaineer and was also selected as liaison officer for foreign mountaineering expeditions.

But the most challenging yet most rewarding opportunity with army was his being a member of IPKF in Sri Lauka for



a year and a half where he was also injured. "IPKF changed my life," he says.

In 1988, he came in contact with Satish Bhaskar ar Chennai, well known for his work about marine life, especially the sea turtles. This was the turning point in Captain's life. Satish introduced Suresh to Dr Indraneil Das at Madras Croc Bank, Mammallaparam. He applied for leave without pay' from the army and went to work for three months on a film called 'Love at first sight'.

With his love for nature in full bloom, he bid the Indian Army adien but only in letter. Because he remained, a zealous soldier in spirit. Like he puts it ' owe a lot to the Indian Army. I have learnt a lot it and now apply it with a bit of modification in my civil life and 1 get results in life to be happy."

After some initial hitches, he could see his path clearly. He began focusing on 'Conservation through education' and started 'Snake Cell'. With his wife, another snake enthusiast, he took the venture to a different level.



Alongside, he has been constantly been fuelling his passion for filming and photography, his creative skills, making him a favourite with some experts. He has been associated with wildlife film projects including two for the National Geographic Society, USA. With his assiduously built knowledge bank, he is considered an expert by the experts. He was appointed as Assistant Director of a World Bank project involving breeding of the green frog in captivity.

Multi talented, he has also shot pictures for a coffee table book on The Indian Army, been a special invitee for exclusive photo-session with Prince Charles during his visit to Punjab, travelled to Egypt to do a project for Egyptian tourism and has been highly applauded by International community on Flickr where he has had more than 2.40,000 hits on his photo-stream.

"Camera", he says, "has made me humble, taught me how to look at my own country, people and culture."



# From action on battlefront to saving nature, this Army captain has come a long way on a caravan

#### Sulogna.Mehta @timesgroup.com

akhapatnam: It is seldom t you come across a photogher who tours the exotic, explored parts of the countin a caravan of his own and eads the message of nature iservation by promoting toum and photography. But **ptain Suresh Sharma** from andigarh is an exception.

Having served in the Indian my way back in the 1980s, ptain Sharma left the Army d devoted himself to pursing passion for photography. rrently, the renowned phographer is in Port City to addse enthusiasts on the eve of orld Photography Day (Aust 19).

The specialty about Captain arma is that he takes photogohers in a caravan called urus Truck' for camping d expedition to exotic locales



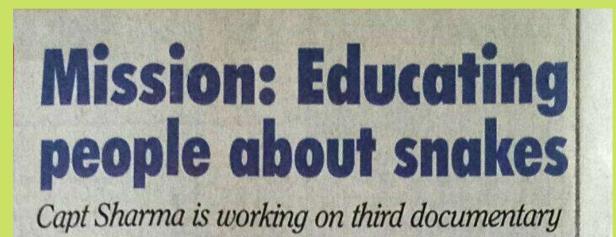
like Ladakh and Thar desert to promote the art of photography as well as nature conservation. This specialist in snake photography also promotes the cause of snake conservation and their importance to the environment.

Earlier, he and wife Rajbir Kaur designed another caravan 'King Cobra' as their home on wheels. For the last 14 years, he has clocked more than 1.3 lakh km in King Cobra. To raise funds for his conservation efforts, he has now conceived the 'green dot' expeditions.

caravan parked at an exotic location in Rajasthan

"Photography, especially on wildlife, has changed my perception about culture, life, people and made me a better human being. During my days in the Army as part of the National Geographic wildlife filming team, I got a chance to work on two wildlife documentaries on the Indian cobra and rats, which took me towards wildlif photography," says Captain St resh, who has many works pullished to his credit, includin two coffee-table books 'The Ind an Army, An Illustrative Over view' and 'Legacy of a Legend MiG 21 in the Indian Air Force'

"Through my photograph I want to highlight the beauty of nature, especially despised an dreaded animals like snake and also promote conservatio of environment," he said, a ding that cactus, snakes and so diers are his favourite subject of photography. Asked as t why has he taken to a caravar Captain Suresh says, "Inside caravan, you have full control of what you eat and where yo sleep. Photographers and tra vellers can also get a feel of na ture outdoors and spend tim bonding with family, friend under a star-studded sky in th lap of nature, away from neo lights of crowded cities.'



#### GURNEET BHULLAR

THERE is, perhaps, not a single soul in the City who hasn't heard of 'snakeman' Capt Suresh Sharma. The sight of these reptiles might give you jitters, but Capt Sharma enjoys their company all day-long, not only to earn his bread and butter but also thanks to his passion for animals. The one-time Armyman, who has worked on two documentaries for National Geographic channel, is now working fulltime on a project titled, "Natural Education through Conservation", through which he wants to educate people about snakes, snakebites and remedies!

For the man who quit Army to devote himself fully to the protection and conservation of the forever-deteriorating environment, it all started in 1989. "I was serving with the Army then. I took four months' leave to work

PAWAN SINGH

NOT SCARED: Capt Suresh Sharma with a snake



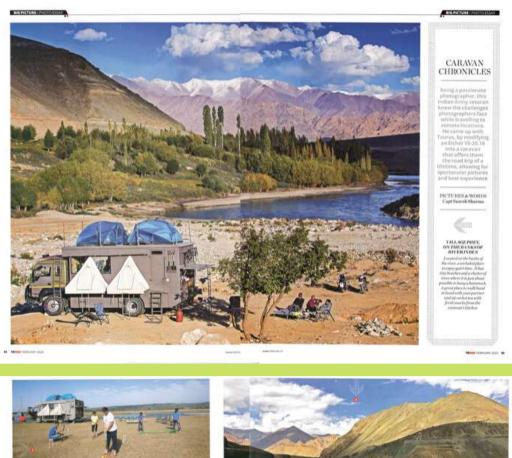
on the project titled, "Silent Valley and Indian Rain Forests," which bagged four international awards and three national awards. Later, I worked on two documentaries for National Geographic, USA, where I recreated natural habitats under controlled conditions, which is not possible in the wild otherwise." The first one was on the Indian Cobra while the second was on rats, and how they are worshipped in the country.

Through his present project, he wants to educate people about snakes. "Killing snakes will disturb the ecological balance. Environment conservation should not be imposed on people, rather they should understand it themselves." His three-member team, which includes his wife, himself and a helper, is working painstakingly in the completion of the project. "I think we should be through in a year's time. And no, it's not for money that I am making the documentary but personal satisfaction is what I am striving for."

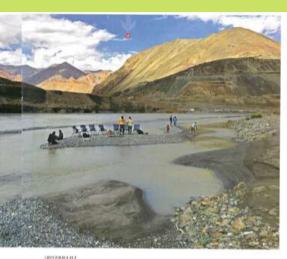
His mobile snake cell with a 24-hr service is pitching in to educate people. "Whenever I catch a snake on a call from City residents, I lecture them on the spot so as to remove false notions prevailing among people that all snakes are venomous."

Incidentally, Capt Suresh Sharma has also conducted lectures at IIM, Ahmedabad, NID, Ahmedabad and at the Canadian embassy on umpteen environment conservation issues like polythene menace, its disposal, reuse, fuel and electricity conservation. He strictly advocates non-use of polythene bags. "No shopkeeper in the City gives me a polythene bag when I visit the shop."

## Photo Essay of 10 pages by **THE MAN** - lifestyle magazine

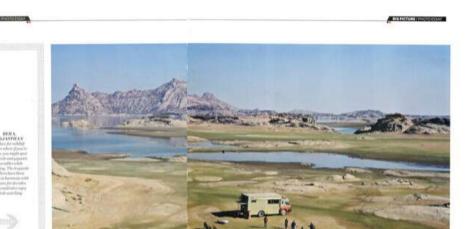






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## 6 pages and center spread by **OVERDRIVE** magazine





FEATURE TAURUS OVERLAND TRUCK







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At this point, I was really keen to take a loc complete in just as days. About two years look at the Capatia's exoation but I had to haze later. Taurus was fully a reality. Let be a later for the la



DEC 2015 OVERDRIVE 133





A simple foldable metal contraption that can be harmered into the earth holds a pipe. The on-board chemical toilet is reserved for lady travellers or inclement weather

134 OVERDUIVE DEC 2015

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height you have to use a ladder to get in. Inside, thingslike drawer hundles are replaced with soft op nike wet is a construction of the construction of the construction that is a soft of the construction o

ladies hygiene products in case the need ever arises! The lar goes on, there are 12 golf-sized umbredlas on board which could be blodd upin d edispitated place even when fully we even dedicated set of phosographer's lights should see the trust that hang of the side of the trust while terms for another four are use then they can all climb up on to the root of an evening cap of its or to witch the stars of three temperature ratings. Whether its a

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# SURE-SHOT EXCITING

Fasten your seat belts, for a new idea is about to drive you crazy; overlanding photo tour comes to India



#### Swati Goel Sharma swati.sharma@hindustantimes.com

hanks to the big idea of a former army officer, India might gear up to travel the new way.

In overland truck expeditions, Captain Suresh Sharma of Chandigarh brings a new concept to the domestic market from Africa. He offers to let you take on rugged terrain aboard a vehicle turned into self-contained movable world, with passenger seats; kitchen with enough foods and water; space for camping and leisure equipment; luggage lockers; and washroom all attached.

Sharma quit as short service commission officer in the army only to get into shooting with a camera and travelling his passions. "The tour will give the travellers a thrill that only going into the wild can offer," he says. "Where else do you see a

"Where else do you see a wild elephant sloshing its way across the waterway." Besides the simple joys of travel, passengers explore unfamiliar cultures and the excitement of capturing rare photographs. "It is an overland photo tour, where my role is of a mentor and guide," says captain Sharma, whose photographs were included in the coffee table book "The Indian Army: An Illustrated Overview", which the defence minister had released in September 2007.

Many of his photographs have also made it to reputed newspapers, magazines, textbooks and websites. His next coffee table book is about fighter aircraft MiG-21. In his overland adventure venture Green Dot Expeditions, the support of his wife, homoeopathic doctor Rajbir Kaur, has made the journey smoother.

In the past three years, the couple has detailed every aspect of the expedition and engineered equipment to need. Pushback seats, thick mattresses under the onboard roof-top prefabricated tent canopies, an LED monitor, and a library are a few of the overlander's many features.

#### Quick overview

**Concept:** A journey to the wild, picturesque wonders, with all the help to record it on camera

Promoter: Captain Suresh Sharma (retired), ex-army, from Chandigarh

Vehicle: Overlander, a truck made for rugged terrain, modified to become a self-contained movable world, with passenger seats; kitchen with food and water; space for camping and leisure equipment; luggage lockers; washroom and a complete photo studio on board.

Sharma, who has logged more than 1-lakh kilometres in the country in his self-designed caravan (he maintains a logbook). Of late, he delivered a talk in New Delhi on "caravan tourism: India by road", which the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry had organised.

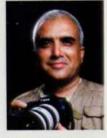
His first overland

"The on-board outdoor studio equipment comes handy to capture unannounced delights such as a camel trader cooking food with family over sand dunes," says captain

expedition takes off next month, to Kullu, Teerthan Valley and Manali, for 10 days. In winter, the destinations are warmer Rajasthan and coastal India.

#### LOOK WHO'S SHOOTING

#### Capt Suresh Sharma



"The joy of traveling and photographing in places whose existence most people do not know about is beyond compare."

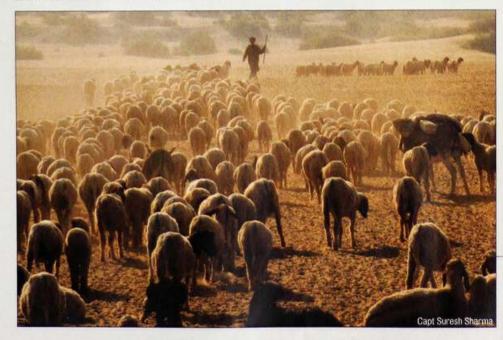
## **Photographing Unexplored Corners of the Country**

Capt Suresh Sharma at 52 years of age is an avid traveler and an experienced wildlife photographer who has traveled to diverse corners of the country. He served as a Captain in the Indian Air Force till the year 1990 before he decided to hang his boots and switch to photography.

His first experiment with photography goes back to his college days when film was still a costly affair. It was his stint with the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka that he went behind the camera again. Today, he is known for his expertise in recreating the natural environments of snakes so as to photograph them with artificial light. This stems from his love for snakes as well as an effort to conserve their natural habitat. Naturally, his love for wildlife has resulted in several wildlife conservation programs across the country.

Suresh says, "In a bid to travel to the most remote regions of the country, I have a custom built caravan for photography. Equipped with everything a photographer might need, this vehicle is the perfect tool to experience the joy of the countryside with all the facilities of a modern world." He also conducts photography tours and workshops that provides photographers, amateurs and professionals alike, the opportunity to learn and experience travel photography like never before. *To know more, visit www.greendotexpeditions.com* 

-Written by Ketan Kundargi

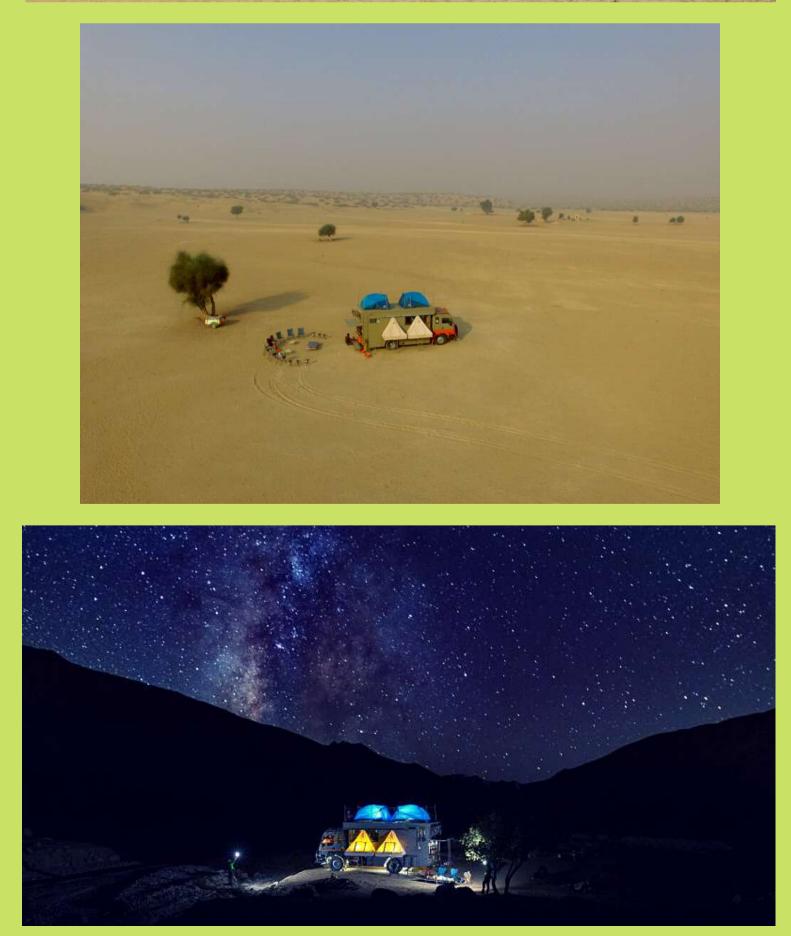


The pristine sand dunes in the deserts of Rajasthan are one of Suresh's favourite destination to shoot at.

## Mesmerizing Locations are the result of hard work by **Capt Suresh Sharma**







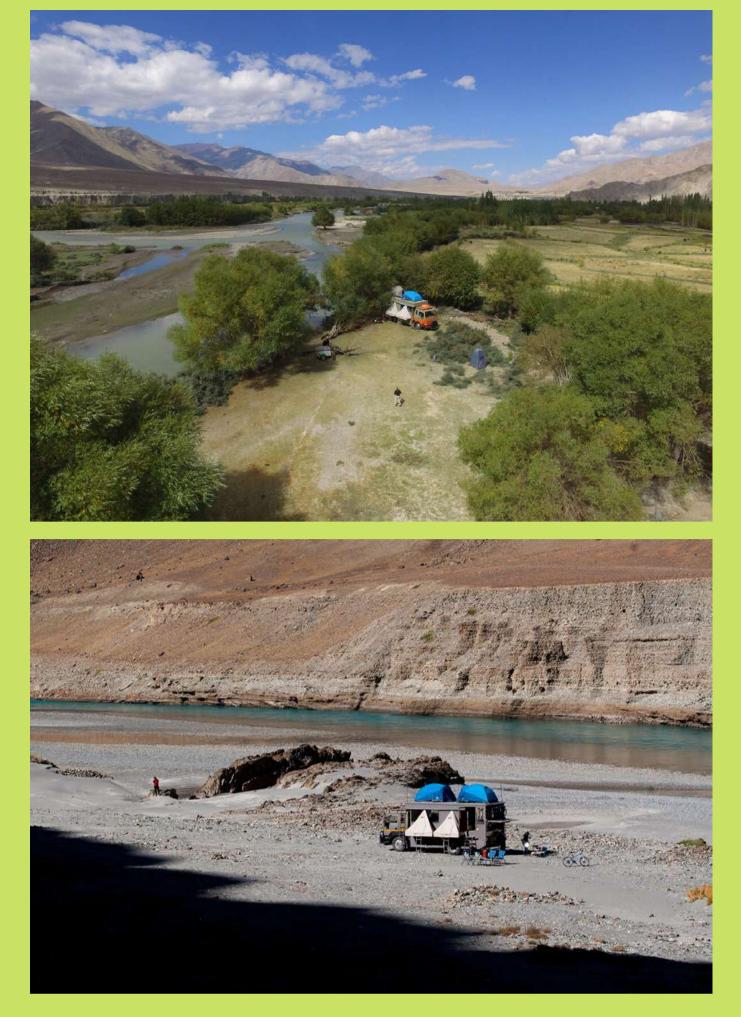
































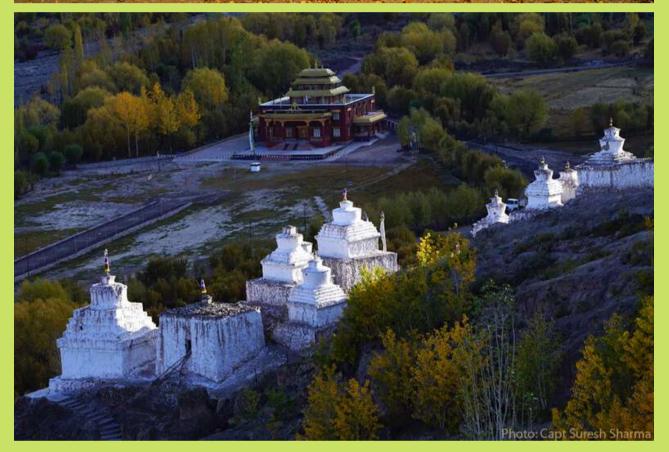


























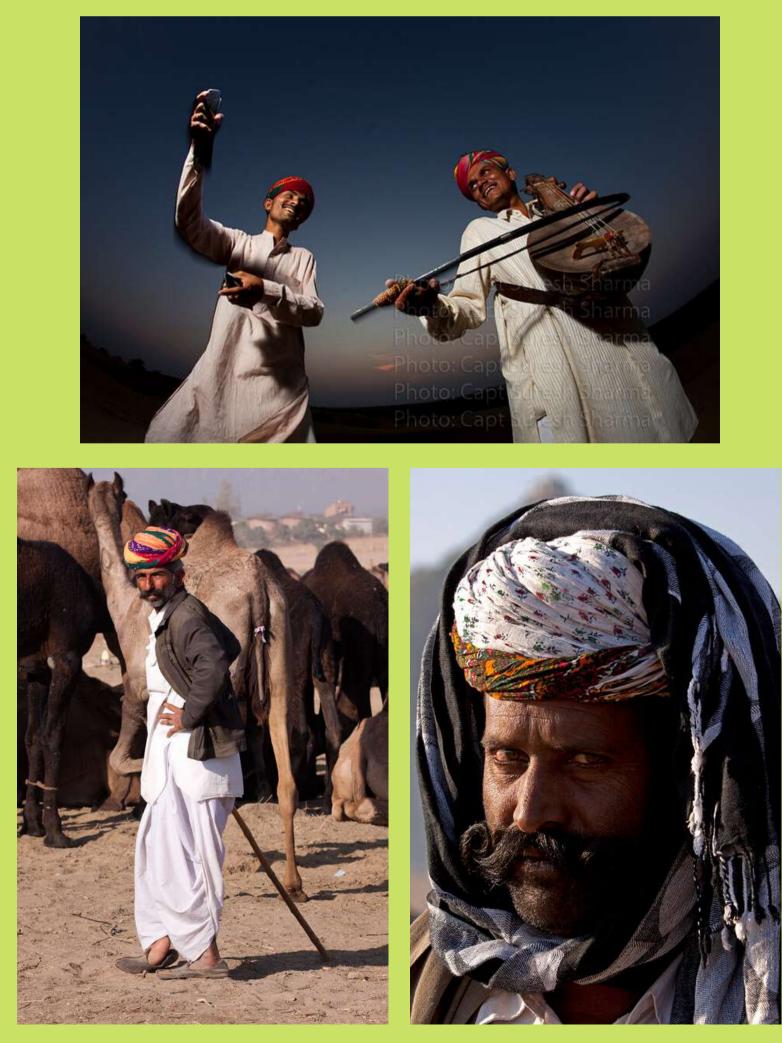


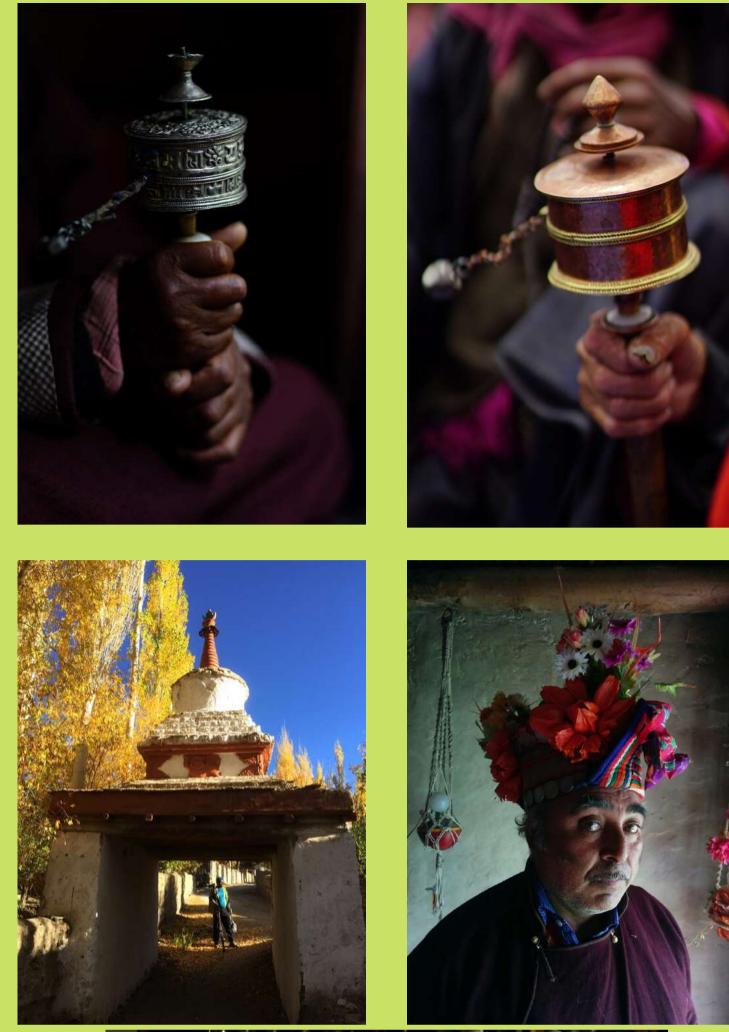




















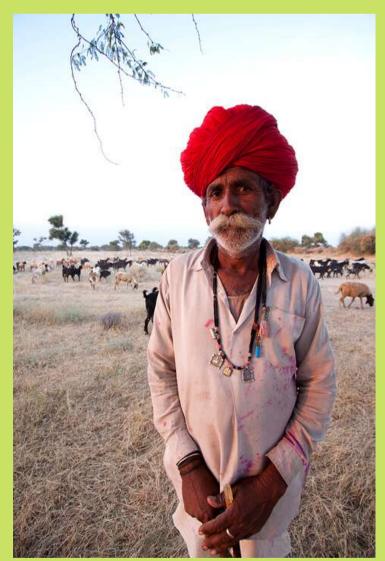




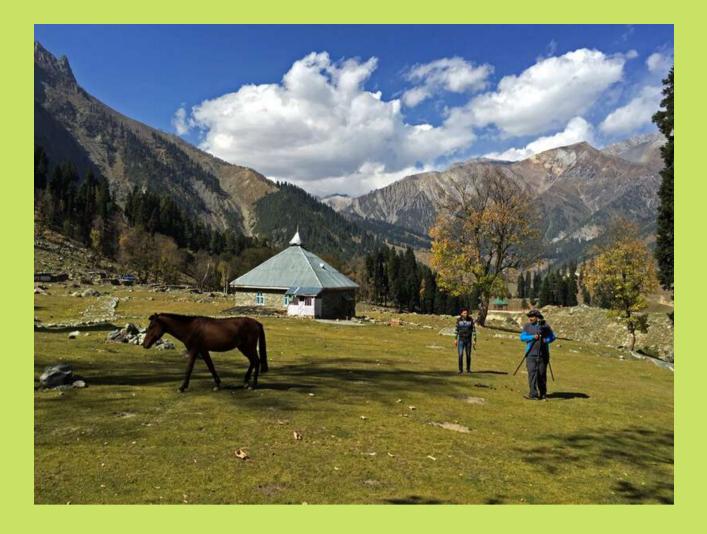
























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