

Kanpur Zoological Park celebrates 25 years muntari - 2005

The Kanpur Zoological Park celebrated 25 years anniversary in April 1999 with a gala collection of events.

The Kanpur Zoo, also known as the Allen Forest Zoo, is one of the most beautiful in India due to the lush forest in which it sits. The story goes that Mr. Robert Allen donated the land as a park but this was not developed and it deteriorated a haven for miscreants and other bad elements and activities. There was a plan for the city to develop it as a commercial area but before they could do so, the forest department rescued it and planned a zoo. The Allen Forest Zoo covers about 250 acres of beautifully rejuvenated forest. Earlier there was a lake right at the entrance and many beautiful, naturalistic enclosures. In the last few years the zoo has added several dramatic features such as a nocturnal house, an aquarium, an interpretation centre and conference room. Many old enclosures and lines of cages are being torn down and new ones with a more naturalistic design having been under construction. The old small mammal cages have been demolished. The primate cages are doomed for new open moated enclosures are coming up. The zoo still shows a linkage with the National Zoological Park. Sri N. D. Bachketi was one of the designers of the Kanpur Zoo and he had worked as Director for many years at NZP.

The zoo has had good success in breeding rhinoceros and sangai in the past as well as other animals. The Kanpur zoo has been blessed with good veterinary doctors who were able to spend several years at the zoo building up their expertise, Dr. H. K. Gairola and Dr. D. N. Sabharwal, both of whom were present at the function. The zoo has always had outstanding directors as well, starting with Sri R. S. Bhadauria who developed the zoo, followed by Sri S. C. Sharma, Sri G. C. Mishra, Sri Mohammed Ahsan, G. P. Sharma, Sri Dutta and Ms Mamta Sharma. All but one of the Directors were present on the occasion of the golden jubilee.

Earlier this year the zoo conducted a workshop to develop outreach activities in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The



Two Directors of Kanpur Zoo -- R.S. Bhadauria and Mohammad Ahsan observe the successful breeding groups of rhinos along with veterinarian Dr. Gairola in about 1986. Photo by S. Walker

workshop was entitled Development of Zoo Outreach Strategy for Uttar Pradesh. It was held on 17 March and inaugurated by the Forest Minister of U. P. with all important dignitaries in attendance, including CCF, Wildlife, UP Principal Secretary, Forests, UP, and PCCF, UP. After the inaugural session there were theme presentations by Dr. Ram Boojh, Dr. R. L. Singha and Ms. Mamta Sharma. Following the theme presentations there were working group deliberations after which the recommendations were consolidated and presented to the entire group. The format was the workshop was to brainstorm how the zoo could reach out to more people in the community to deliver the message of conservation.

The second event was a Conference on the National Zoo Policy 1998. This prestigious conference was the suggestion of Minister for Environment and Forests, Sri Suresh Prabhu who wished that a workshop be organised to highlight the confirmation of the strategy by the Cabinet. Invitees to the conference included Zoo Directors both retired and serving, forest officers, scientists, and NGO's. This took place on 4th - 6th April 1999.

The third event was the annual meeting of the Indian Zoo Directors' Association (IZDA) which was held on 5th April

evening in the palatial conference hall which is on the first floor of the Kanpur Zoo interpretation centre.

The fourth and final event was a special Silver Jubilee celebration held at the Kanpur Zoo on the 6th of April in the evening under some of the lovely forest trees of the Zoo.

On Tuesday, the Kanpur Zoo hosted an ornamental function to celebrate their 25th year. Two new enclosures were inaugurated. Awards were given to zookeepers for outstanding service. Attractive rhinoceros souvenirs of the jubilee were given to each participant.

The zoo has brought out more than half a dozen attractive educational booklets, pamphlets and handouts in Hindi which give visitors a deeper perspective of the animals they have come to view.

In a forthcoming issue we will feature a comprehensive Report on Kanpur Zoo and the Golden Jubilee celebration. Material which was written in Hindi on the history of Kanpur Zoo will be translated for relating the story of Kanpur Zoo.

For the present we wish the Kanpur Zoological Park a very happy anniversary and encourage them to keep up the momentum of the celebration all the year round.