



CM's assurance fulfilled

Land leased to BNHS for their Conservation Education Centre (CEC) in Goregaon renewed for 30 years

Mumbai: 4th June: An assurance given by the Honourable Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri. Devendra Fadnavis to BNHS has now been fulfilled. The Government of Maharashtra has last week renewed the lease granted to BNHS in 1984 for its CEC in Goregaon. The Hon'ble CM during the course of a visit to the historic offices of BNHS at Hornbill House in early March, accompanied by several senior officials of the Government of Maharashtra, had assured BNHS that the lease of these lands would be renewed in recognition of the excellent conservation efforts undertaken by BNHS over the years. BNHS's Conservation Education Centres, numbering three in all, focus on the conservation of biodiversity and spreading environmental awareness amongst the public and particularly young children. During his visit to BNHS, the Hon'ble CM praised the pioneering contribution made by BNHS for the past 135 years in the field of nature conservation, research and education.

A letter conveying the good news was received last week from the office of Collector of Mumbai Suburban District confirming the renewal of the lease from June 2014 to June 2044. "The timing could not be better as it coincides with the 2018 World Environment Day on 5th June" said the BNHS President, Mr Homi Khusrookhan. BNHS can now continue its environmental education activities at the Centre, uninterrupted. The Forest Department and the concerned officials of the State Government have always been supportive of the activities conducted at the BNHS CEC. Dr Deepak Apte, Director, BNHS said, "We are most thankful to the Government of Maharashtra for renewal of this lease and particularly to the Hon'ble Chief Minister for the personal interest taken and the expeditious decision taken on renewing the lease".

BNHS has established three Conservation Education Centres (CECs) till date. The first was in Mumbai, followed by one in Delhi and last in Nagpur, each working towards creating awareness and imparting environment education to citizens of all age groups. The CECs manage and conduct various activities, seminars, lectures, field trips, nature trails and certificate courses for nature enthusiasts in these three cities and beyond. Shri. Fadnavis had appreciated the efforts and educational outreach by CEC in Goregaon which is housed near the Film City. The land lease which had expired has now been renewed with the positive support of the Hon'ble CM and the State Government.

During the past 30 years, the CEC in Goregaon has had about half a million visitors including students, teachers, citizens, corporate employees and members. BNHS CEC in Goregaon has newly developed and maintains a butterfly garden to educate visitors about the winged jewels in our region. It also conducts activities like 'Walk in the Woods', nature photography workshops, teachers training workshops, kids' activities like nature walks, film and slide shows, competitions such as painting, quiz, nature games etc. Innovative campaigns like 'Adopt a Tree', 'Adopt a Rare Bird' have been appreciated by nature lovers in the city. Physical boundaries have been broken by CEC through online courses, to impart environment education to interested students all over the country. The old classic courses, 'Basic Course in Ornithology' and 'Leadership Course in Biodiversity Conservation' have been sought after by nature lovers of all age groups. A new course on butterflies 'Certificate Course in Butterfly Studies' started last year has also caught attention of many. In its quest to continue imparting nature education and spreading awareness, CEC will shortly begin a new course on Marine Life for all those who are curious about the marvels of the world underwater.