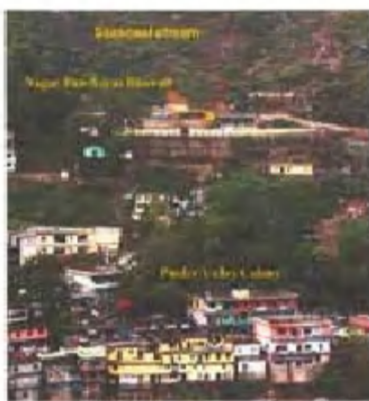


In this issue

Landslides at Karnaprayag

Uniyal (**page 1031**) reports that some localities of the Himalayan township of Karnaprayag in Chamoli district of Uttaranchal are showing signs of landsliding that have the potential of turning into devastating landslides similar to those triggered in the Uttarakashi town of Uttaranchal in 2003 that caused widespread damage to a large part of the town.



He also explains cumulative effects of natural processes and anthropogenic activities as the causative factors for the potential landslides in Karnaprayag township. Factors accelerating the sliding activity include heavy monsoonal precipitation, excessive seepage of water through unconsolidated debris material and toe erosion by river/stream along with the ill effects of human interventions, viz. unplanned cutting of slope, blocking and/or narrowing of surface drainage or the courses of seasonal streams for construction activity and absence of proper sewage system and also the blocked scuppers in the township.

The author also elaborates the management strategy for preventing the disaster in Karnaprayag town by emphasizing the need for an emergency

plan for the evacuation of the population of landslide hazard-prone localities of the township during rainy season. Engineering measures, viz. terracing of unstable slope, retaining walls with drain holes, channelization of water, toe protection measures and other measures like cleaning of scuppers and strict land use policy have also been recommended.

Brown lacewing on sugarcane woolly aphid

The sugarcane woolly aphid (SWA) *Ceratovacuna lanigera* Zehntner which appeared in an epidemic form during 2002 in northern Karnataka continued to threaten the sugar economy of the state and peninsular India. Lingappa *et al.* (**page 1056**), looking to the pest severity options of interventions and their economic and adoption feasibility, feel that, biological methods appear to be the safest and most sustainable approach. Among the predators recorded on SWA, pyralid caterpillar, syrphids and brown lacewing had shown greater promise. Brown lacewing, *Micromus igorotus* Banks has been identified as potential predator of the woolly aphid for the first time. The predator has the shortest life cycle, higher reproductive rate, is gregarious and has no cannibalistic nature of larvae, both on larval and adult stages. This offers hopes in the exploitation of this bio-control agent for containing the SWA without any threat to sugarcane ecosystem.

Live corals along Saurashtra coast

Raghunathan *et al.* (**page 1131**) report the occurrence of live corals along the Saurashtra coast, Gujarat. Five

species of corals were recorded from four different places along the coast. The different physico-chemical parameters of sea water have been analysed from the study area. The study suggests that coral reefs may exist along the sub-tidal region of Saurashtra coast.



Hypertension and salt workers

More than 20,000 workers are engaged in production of salt, an important industry in desert part of Rajasthan. Salt workers working in the brine pans are continuously exposed to highly concentrated brine filled in broad pans in the land. They sustain minor occupational injuries on their feet and hands which result in formation of ulcers. A study was undertaken to find out if prevalence of hypertension and blood pressure of brine workers was affected by the presence of ulcers on their limbs. Haldiya *et al.* (**page 1139**) report higher prevalence of hypertension (15.6%) in workers having ulcer/s compared to 4.3% in those without ulcers. There is likelihood of absorption of salt through these ulcers which in turn might be affecting their blood pressure.