

Women on top of the game as they head most TN Forest Dept posts

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Chennai:

The Head of the Department holding the post of secretary is IAS officer Supriya Sahu, who was instrumental in banning plastic in The Nilgiris. She is now calling the shots from Fort St George and recently appointed Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) Mita Banerjee as APCCF, (head) Vigilance and Protection of Forests, Wildlife Crime Bureau.



Figure 1APCCF Karunapriya at a recent forest department plantation programe

In Chennai, the Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP) in Vandalur will now be headed by Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Karunapriya, who had earlier served as Conservator of Forests - Chennai and city wildlife warden. She will now become the first woman Director to head the AAZP also known as Vandalur zoo, one of the largest zoos in south and east Asia. The zoo's Deputy dDirector post is also held by a young IFS officer R Kanchana.

Another senior IFS officer K Geethanjali is now the Conservator of Forests heading the Chennai circle and plays a crucial role in protecting the city's disappearing wetlands and biodiversity. The post of the Chennai District Forest Officer is also headed by by Priyadarshini. Forest aficionados and environmentalists here see the sweeping changes in the Forest Department as a welcome move as Sahu is among those few who are well aware of the forest topography and its issues. "Serving in the Forest Department requires a passion for wildlife and one should be an extraordinary trekker and

some of the women officers are really leading by example,” opined conservation scientist A Kumaraguru of Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Tiruchy. In the past few years, a lot of women IFS officers and rangers have joined the Department and this is a good sign, said KVRK, Thirunaranan, founder, The Nature Trust. “Chennai circle has got new women officers and the capital needs a lot of conservation activities like restoration of water bodies and marshland protection running across ECR and OMR highways,” he added.

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