

# Passion for forests

By B Aravind Kumar

**T**HIS is a different form of yoga. He takes with him a projector and slides even if he goes to work as a conductor. He leaves them at a nearby shop. On finishing duty, he visits schools and screens the slides on nature and wildlife for children.

For Yoganathan, speaking to children the secrets of natural life is spiritualism. His passion for forests started when he started venturing into the woods in Kothagiri while in high school.

Poetry inspired him first. Then he took to street plays to let his fellow beings take to nature. And then, 15 years ago, a swamiji helped him buy a hand-used projector in a local market in Tiruchy.

From then onwards, he has been trooping from one school to another to talk about nature and wildlife. Michael Danino and Jayachandran helped him get photo slides from nature photographers.

Over the years, the friendship grew into a big circle covering environmentalists in Bombay Naturalist Society to leading Tamil writers and poets.

"I wanted to protect the Nilgiris from timber mafia. Once I mobilised youth and squatted on road in the night to block two trucks carrying timber," reveals Yoga vividly. As threats started coming, he decided the best way of conservation was to enlighten the young.

"Earlier, I used to knock at the doors. Now, educational institutions want me to visit their campus," he says. His slideshows, usually begin with a talk on grass and trees and of the life forms, including humans and natural forces, like water and wind, in a rare blend.

His slideshow at Don Bosco Anbu Illam last week thrilled the children. "Slides on wildlife, of different animals and birds, unseen before, bring joy to children," he remarks.

Yoganathan intends to walk with the projector all through his life.

## Facts to remember

**Spider:** A male and female spider will have sex for seven days. On the seventh day, the female eats her husband.

**Crocodile:** A crocodile's teeth will fall and grow even if it is going to die in a week.

**Deer:** The horns of a deer will grow again even if broken, but in the next mating season.

**Elephants:** They tread only on their corridor. They don't sweat in the body, but in the nail. A cow elephant takes 23 months to deliver a baby, watched by an elderly elephant. They have got better memory power than humans. They take two types of bath, in water and in sand, to protect themselves from mosquitoes.

