

Shri Anil Madhav Dave, an environmentalist, a colleague and a dear friend that I will cherish forever



To say that I am deeply saddened by the demise of my good friend and colleague Shri Anil Dave will not really reflect the depth of my sentiment when I heard the shocking news.

I and Dave ji share a common association with the Sangh Parivar and started our public lives together as part of the JP movement more than 40 years back. We also struggled together for many common causes since then.

I was in-charge of Madhya Pradesh for about 10 years from 2004. During that time, I worked closely with Dave ji on multiple fronts. I cherish my memories of working with him through day and night for three assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh. I was also struck by the energy with which Dave ji worked on the Narmada river revival project. His knowledge of the subject and his passion for saving the river and ecology around it was impressive.

Dave ji was first and foremost an environmentalist. He had worked on the Narmada river rejuvenation and its ecology before he became a politician. He had also publicly stated that when he leaves politics, he will go back to working on the river and its ecology. That his dream will remain sadly unfulfilled is surely a loss for us and the environment

movement.



He has worked tirelessly to conserve and rejuvenate Narmada river because he believed in the cause – the centrality of the river for the civilisation along its banks. He did not just believe in giving speeches but campaigned tirelessly at the grassroots for its rejuvenation. When he was working with the communities along the river, he once covered more than 1,300 km in a raft on the Narmada! That is Dave ji for you!

His concern for the environment was deep and genuine. For years, he has been a fan of cycling. Even when he became a union minister, he frequently cycled to work. Not for the photo-op but he really believed in it and enjoyed it. That is Dave ji for you!

Dave ji was also an accomplished author having written several books on subjects including climate change: Beyond Copenhagen, Yes I Can So Can We, Creation to Cremation, rafting through a civilization: a travelogue, Shatabdi ke Paanch Kaale Panne, Sambhal Ke Rehna Apne Ghar Me Chhupe Hue Gaddaron Se, Mahanayak Chandrashekhar Azad, Roti Aur Kamal ki Kahani, Samagra Gram Vikas, Shivaji & Suraaj, etc.



As a minister too, I have seen Dave ji up close, immersed in his work around environment, forests and rivers, which was anyway his passion for decades before he became a minister. He not only brought his unflinching passion and energy, but also his expertise in this field. An unbeatable combination of knowledge and intention.

Hence, I am not surprised by what he has been able to achieve in a short period of time. Protecting the river, basins and ecology around it has become a significant focus area of the Narendra Modi government. The Hon'ble PM in fact launched just this Monday (15th May, 2017), the Narmada Seva Mission for the conservation of the crucial river in Madhya Pradesh along with Dave ji and the MP government. Dave ji has also been driving adoption of bio-toilets, sustainable lifestyle across the country, among many other things.

Even in his will, Dave ji is clear in what he stands for. He says that if anyone wants to do something in his memory, it should not be to build statues or memorials but should work in preserving rivers and planting and nurturing trees.

No doubt, we have lost a great Green warrior. But what we can do is to work even harder to realise his dreams. I am sure we will continue to draw inspiration from Dave ji in continuing our war on environmental degradation and destruction.

May his soul rest in peace.