

BANGALORE

Jane Goodall: a chum of the chimps

By Bhumika K.
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: She sets off in poetic frenzy, her eyes alight with a fire as she talks of Fifi, Cindy, Flo and David Greybeard — chimpanzees at Tanzania's Gombe National Park who's lives she's been intimately involved in for over 40 years. As she describes how a chimpanzee's hair stands on end with excitement, you can feel her passion and see

SCIENCE & SPIRITUALITY

Primatologist Dr Jane Goodall, whose understanding of chimpanzees, their gestures, use of tools, their culture and what is 'innately chimp' has brought the human world fascinatingly closer to them, spoke to 'The Times of India' in Bangalore, on the sidelines of 'Science and Beyond' — a symposium bridging science and spirituality.

People are more convinced of chimps' cognitive abilities after her studies, now continuing at the Jane Goodall Institute. "We have just got new techniques to work out who fathers of



Primatologist Dr Jane Goodall with the centre of her life's research of over 40 years, a chimpanzee, at the Gombe National Park in Tanzania.

young chimps are, from DNA profiling done from faeces so we don't have to be invasive. We can see if there is bond between father and child."

She even believes that chimps can show precursors of religious behaviour. "When chimps see an amazing 80-foot waterfall, their hair stands on end in excitement. They do a kind of dance, making deep 'whooh whooh' sounds. They may then sit on a rock in the stream, watching water going past them."

"You feel if chimpanzees had the power of spoken language, they could talk about this feeling of awe and won-

der, which we feel when we are confronted with these elemental processes, and might turn into animistic religion where people worship elements of nature. They communicate wonderfully and share emotion, but can't take it any further without words," Goodall explains in rapture.

Dr Jane is also passionate about animal rights activism and conservation. She has voiced her protest against animal testing.

"Even chimps who are like us humans, are that much different. Chimps can be infected with HIV but don't get the symptoms of AIDS." Much medical research is done on mice and rats, so unlike us, she feels. They could lead to misleading and useless results, or produce results damaging in humans too. She suggests alternatives like tissue and stem culture and computer simulation.

Chimpanzee population in the wild is only a fragmented 2,00,000 because equatorial forest belts have shrunk to mere patches, says Dr Jane.

In-breeding, and bushmeat trade with sophisticated weapons threaten their existence. There are another 3,000 chimps in captivity in zoos, circuses and medical research labs.

'Religion is an attempt to know universe'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Science is an attempt to understand the science and structure of the universe, religion is an attempt to understand the meaning and purpose of the universe and there is a relationship between this purpose and structure.

Prof. Charles Downes, Nobel laureate and Professor of University of California, Berkeley in the USA, was talking of the parallelism and ultimate convergence of science and religion as part of his lecture during the ongoing international symposium, "Science and Beyond," conducted as part of science and spiritual quest-2, by the National Institute of Advanced Studies and John Templeton Foundation, USA on Friday.