



IndiaWilds®

Newsletter

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Hero Worship & Conservation :

India is a country with a billion plus population. However, virtually every other day we find the news of one political party or the other trying to use its supporters to create strikes, roadblocks, protest marches which at times escalates into violence. The supporters tend to be emotional and often believe in their leaders. A large number of them toil in the fields espousing the cause of their leaders and some are increasingly taking to the online world to voice their support and vent their ire.

Due to India's massive population, the number of followers is also huge. Not many countries in the world do have such massive political workers, supporters and ideological followers. If a country has to progress then it has to recognise and tap the potential of its people. So the question before us today is how do we channelise the energy level of the supporters to create a better India.

In this era of increased climate change, when the common man is being hit hard, it is imperative that we try and create some climate change mitigation plans. Massive re-greening of our degraded lands, waste lands and open spaces is the need of the hour to help in capturing the increased levels of CO₂ in the air. In this regard, there have been sporadic efforts at tree plantation by various Governments. From time to time even the Central Government has talked about tree plantations to create a Green India. However, nothing much has come out of those Government schemes, as they have been too little when compared to India's needs. So what can be done?

The solution perhaps will become evident if one analyses the potential of some populist moves.

Recently, in a unique move the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J Jayalalithaa has announced a tree plantation drive to plant 68 lakh saplings to commemorate her 68th birthday. This program is budgeted to cost the exchequer 61.88 crores of rupees.



Infact, what has gone unnoticed earlier is that the Tamil Nadu Government under AIADMK party apparently has done a similar move in previous years as well. The Tamil Nadu Government Press release states that 64 lakh saplings were planted in the year 2012 to mark Jayalalithaa's 64th birthday and one lakh more with each advancing year.

These saplings are to be planted in this calendar year before December by the forest department. It is said that the saplings would be planted in forests, schools, colleges, offices, in parks and roadside.



மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர் ஸ்ரீமதி ஜெயலலிதா அவர்களின் 68-வது பிறந்தநாளைப் பொருட்டி, மாபெரும் மரம் நட்டுத் திட்டத்தின் கீழ், தமிழகம் முழுவதும் 68 லட்சம் மரக்கன்றுகள் நட்டுத் திட்டத்தினை துவக்கி வைக்கும் அடையாளமாக இன்று (14.2.2016) சென்னை, வேல்மேசியில் அமைந்துள்ள சென்னை பெருநகர காவல்துறை ஆணையர் அலுவலக வளாகத்தில் மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர் அவர்கள் ஆய்மரக்கன்றுகளை நட்டுத் திட்டத்தினை துவக்கி வைத்தார்கள்.

On paper it is a good move because when the trees grow big they help in a big way in carbon sequestration. Trees also help in increased rainfall as they release moisture to the air. Scientists have also found out that the trees reduce the ambient temperature of the place by providing shade as well as transpiration. The trees also help in reducing the urban heat-island effect. Trees also serve as effective barriers and help in stopping the dust storms and reducing atmospheric pollution.

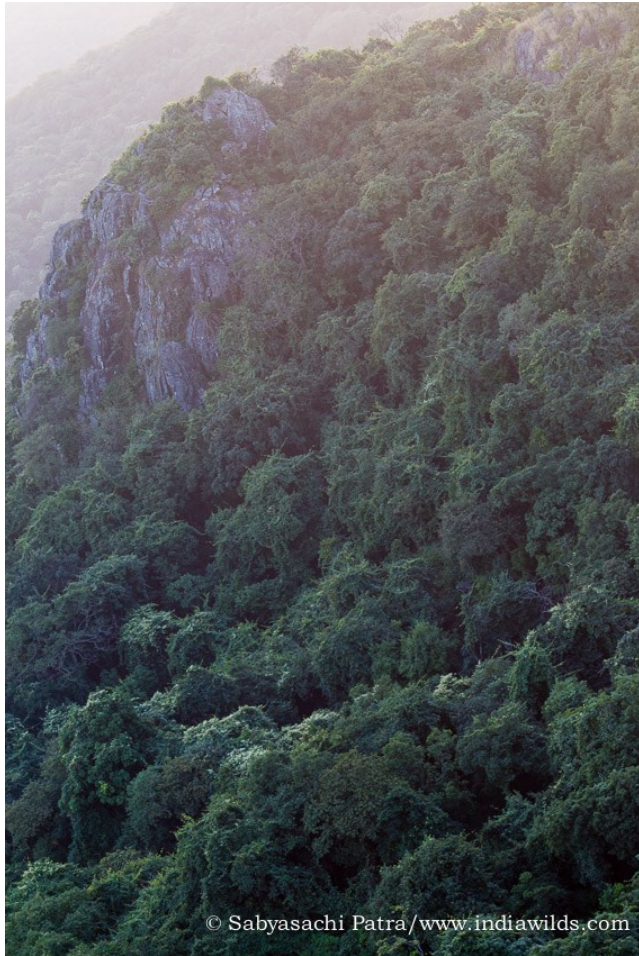
However, like every thing in life, the devil lies in the details. Only planting saplings will not be of any good if they are not nurtured.

If the Government is continuing planting such saplings for the last four years then atleast the Government offices and schools should have got all their areas covered. No one keeps a track of the saplings to know if all of them survived. Neither the Government has released figures of their survival rates. Nevertheless this is a good move and it can be improved and adopted throughout India.

There are enough fallow lands under revenue department and degraded forest lands which were at one point of time covered with forests. Those areas can be taken up in priority basis for plantation of saplings. However one thing needs to be taken care off. In no case exotic

species should be planted. Saplings of only native species should be taken up for plantation.

The forest department should have a map of areas where it is planting trees with their coordinates so that citizens can also be involved in maintaining and nurturing at least some of those to adult stage ie to hard growth trees.



Just like PPP (Public-Private-Partnership) model, the Government can also earmark areas and ask the public to join in the celebrations. So plantations can be done at one go and it won't just be the task of a mostly under-staffed and unmotivated forest department.

Tamil Nadu and in most of the Southern Cities there is a culture of hero worship. The followers of politicians and film heroes go to great lengths to pay their respects and prove their loyalty to their leaders. When Jayalalithaa was sent to prison due to a disproportionate assets case, some of her party followers even committed suicide. Others create huge hoardings and install it in the roadsides. Such fanatic following can always be diverted to a good cause like planting trees.

Infact the Government can also enlist the support of the people for tree plantation. There are many people who want to get involved but can't undertake an initiative of their own. So they can always join such Government schemes.

The Government can also provide people jobs by engaging them in tree plantation. This tree-plantation effort needs to be done along with removing noxious invasive weeds else the survival of the saplings would be doubtful. An analysis of the job creation potential of lantana weed removal found 149.84 lakh man months to cover 130000 sq. kilometer of infestations throughout India. (Removing Latana - <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-7-issue-vii/>)

When the Government does 68 lakh tree plantations, then to supplement the Government's efforts each of the party supporters and nature and environment lovers can take targets of planting 10 trees and the total can be impressive.

The supporters of the party can always plant trees in their nearby localities if word is spread that she desires party workers to start working towards a Green Tamil Nadu.

When one party adopts such a noble cause, then other parties too would be compelled to take up tree plantation work. In a few years when the trees grow up the benefits of tree-plantation can become apparent and the culture of tree plantation will become deep-rooted.

Film stars can be roped in to support the tree plantation movement. It would become effective when they take up this cause and exhort their fans to take it up.

Tree plantation can also be linked with certain milestones. For example when a National political party recently claimed that it became the first political party to have 10 crore members in India, the claim was quickly forgotten. However, if the party would have announced that to mark this 10 crore membership, it is undertaking an all India tree plantation drive of 10 crore saplings, then that could have resulted in activity and remained in the memory of people for a long time to come.

People also tend to create memorials of leaders. Instead of erecting statues and creating lawns around them, if a patch of forest is created in the name of such leader, then it can continue to be an asset for our society and mother earth.

A word of caution:

Often people don't understand the importance of grasslands. So they dig up traditional grasslands and plant trees. Grasslands is an equally valuable ecosystem and tree plantations shouldn't be done in traditional grasslands. In fact tree plantations can be carried out in the wastelands and even in places where slag and flyash of industries are dumped.

Power plants generate mountains of flyash and planting trees can lead to greening of those barren areas as well as containing the dust from flying and causing more pollution.

One often finds stone crushing where construction and road building is taking place. Once the construction is over the area remains destroyed. All such places can be identified and trees planted to re-green those areas.

I am sure other states of India can learn from this and further improve and implement tree plantations to commemorate the birth and death anniversary of leaders as well as other important events.

Panna Drowning: Fears of a Volunteer:

By Durga Prasad Srivastava

The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of Panna is the soaring vultures. Panna is one of the best places to watch these rare and magnificent birds as they soar freely, high in the skies. Panna is also famous for its tiger reserve and the successful tiger reintroduction program. Many rare and endangered species of wildlife are found in the Vindhya hills and grasslands of the Panna area.



Volunteer Experience

So in 2013 when I got an opportunity to work as a volunteer in the Caracal Conservation Project initiated by Shekhar Kolipaka, a biologist studying carnivores outside the protected area landscape of Panna, my joy knew no bounds. The caracal project was initiated to safeguard a variety of endangered carnivores including the wolf and the caracal from going extinct outside PA's.

Volunteers are engaged to collect data on wildlife and local communities. Daily work during the project period involved installing and monitoring Camera traps, setting up, walking and monitoring spoor Stations. Spoor stations are patches of forest trails cleaned and set up to register footprints of animals that move on the trails. Each day we used to walk the trails, identify the tracks to the animals and record the findings.

The volunteers were also involved in the Goat Walks. It entails walking with a goat herder throughout the day in the forest and noting down what the goats did in time and space. We also made notes and recorded the GPS locations of the habitat features and areas that we travelled.

The job of a volunteer is not just to enjoy the sights and sounds of the jungle. If you are not careful, then you can easily land up in trouble as I discovered at my cost. One day I was given the role of recording forest birds while walking with a goat herder. Other fellow volunteers had their own tasks. Goats walk fast without stopping and eat as they move. Occupied in

identifying forest birds I had slowed down and the goat herders and the other volunteers had walked away without realising that I had fallen behind. Visibility in the thick teak forests can be low and most of us city bred folks can easily lose our bearings in the jungle. My shouts remained unanswered. After a long time blindly following a pugdunde without knowing where it was leading to, I came across some people. They helped me and directed me to our starting point, Jinnah Camp. Luckily all ended well.

I witnessed, experienced and learnt many new things about wildlife and humans. A week of volunteering got me hooked to this project, people, wildlife and the landscape of Panna.

I requested and was given an opportunity to carry out my dissertation work in the project between January and April 2014 and use the data that I independently collected data on livestock herding and coral fencing strategies used by the local community. The data I collected will be used along with more information from other investigations to answer a broader question on, "How to decrease negative interactions between humans and large carnivores that live and use the same forest?"

During the period, I recorded 17 mammals species including some rare small carnivores like Asiatic wildcat (*Felis sylvestris ornata*), Wolves (*Canis lupus pallipes*), Jungle cats (*Felis chaus*), Rusty Spotted Cats (*Prionailurus rubiginosus*), 3 species of mongoose, 2 species of civets, 12 species of reptiles, 4 frog species, 4 damselfly species, 12 dragonflies, 25 butterflies and more than 140 bird species, all from multi-use, human dominated forests. From the collected data there were some interesting learnings about local communities and their role in multi-use forests"



(c) MP Caracal Conservation Project

The findings reveal the impact of several interconnected social factors that are instrumental in influencing the tolerance and behaviour of local people towards forest and wildlife. For instance nearly 2750 dead cattle carcasses are discarded by villagers near village-forest fringes every year. Over 45000 cattle, both feral and those that are allowed to roam free, graze in the buffer zone areas. Both of these carcasses and cattle are easily available throughout the year in the buffer zones.

We report that the above mentioned livestock practices are grounded in local culture, influenced by age old practices and

villagers see their existing practices as practical ways to deal with their cattle management issues. People see certain practical and intrinsic benefits in their existing practices and perceive such benefits as important for their survival. Because of the value people attribute to the benefits they derive from their practices they are willing to tolerate carnivores in spite of experiencing losses.

The villagers actively transfer their cultural beliefs and practices to their children and such transfer of cultural beliefs and



(c) MP Caracal Conservation Project

practices is recorded at a larger landscape around Panna Tiger Reserve. Thus the recorded practices are sustainable at least in the medium term of 10-20 years. Since the observed tolerance is majorly a result of social factors (religion, beliefs, intrinsic benefits, high knowledge and familiarity on local wildlife, well versed-age old livestock management practices) and their interrelated nature, this means the above mentioned factors are providing the necessary characteristics within people to coexist with large carnivores.

The experience I got in the months while working on the caracal project helped me to successfully complete my dissertation work and graduate. On a personal level it was my great fortune to be allowed to work on the caracal project. As a result of my experience, learning and ability to apply what I learnt, I am employed by renowned organisations on their projects.

Ken-Betwa Link to Drown Panna

But today when I look back at my stint in Panna Landscape, I feel a bit of sadness because the landscape is going to change forever. The Ken-Betwa Link project is going to drown a significant portion of Panna.

The Ken River, one of perennial rivers of Madhya Pradesh, is truly the lifeline of the Reserve. It meanders around 55 km through the reserve from south to north, creating a spectacular scenery and is home of Gharial and Mugger, and other aquatic fauna. Ken is one of the least polluted rivers and a tributary of Yamuna. Panna Tiger Reserve forms part of the catchments of the Ken River. The river, though it decreases a lot in summer is never completely dry. The springs along the escarpments are perennial and are fed by aquifers draining into crevices along the escarpments. The monsoon rains and any other precipitation are the only sources of water for a large part of the park. There are also a handful of streams that retain water from the monsoon flow till early summer.

During NDA government the ambitious plan to link India's major rivers aimed at transferring water from surplus areas to deficit area took shape. The project established a new speed of life after the BJP led NDA came into power in May 2014. The Ken-Betwa project, aims to transfer 591 million cubic metre of surplus water in Ken basin through 231.45 Km canal to

Betwa river, claims to provide assured irrigation to 127,000 hectares of agricultural land in the Raisen and Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh, along with added benefit to some 47,000 hectares area in the drought prone districts of Hamirpur and Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattarpur and Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh.

The proposed dam at Dudhan near Panna on the river Ken, from which water is proposed to be diverted to Betwa river basin, will require submergence of a total of over 9000 hectares of land of which 4700 hectares is part of Panna Tiger Reserve.

Flawed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):

The Environmental Impact Assessment which was submitted for getting clearance for the project had many flaws even though the project got green signal. First and foremost the basic water balance studies which are essential for the establishing the viability of the project, has not been carried out in EIA. It failed to see the catchment of river Ken and the frequency of drought in Ken Basin. It also ignored the downstream ecological flow of river, which will have an impact on the Ken Gariyal Sanctuary and Raneh Fall. As Ken is tributary of Yamuna and thus the Ganga River, reducing water and sediments that flows to Ganga could have deleterious effects well beyond Ken's project area. The river also creates a flush effect downstream during monsoon helping decrease the risk of epidemics in villages along the river which are directly dependent on the river.



National Water Development Authority states only submergence of 41.4 sq km of core forest Panna, but in reality it is over 100 sq Km. It's already noted that Panna's small size is a factor for the long term survival of tigers, to reduce the Park size by 30% would have harmful effect on revived tiger population. The forest are important breeding and dispersal grounds and records from forest department shows that 50% of breeding tigresses are presently residing inside scheduled submergence area. There are no contiguous areas of tiger habitat that can compensate for this loss.

The scheduled submergence area under Daudhan reservoir is also a rich habitat for endangered and rare vulture species. So

one project will strike a swift and deadly blow to two iconic and very important species.

There are arguments that there will be no operational activity proposed in the park area except the submergence but yet the dam is entirely within the National Park and the proposal envisages a population of 6000 or so working for perhaps 12 years to create the headworks and related work- all of whom will be in or on the periphery of the Tiger Reserve causing massive disturbance.



The flawed EIA, which assumed that the Ken river had excess water to share and ignored that it gets dry during summer, will not only lead to sureshot death of the Ken Gharial Sanctuary and Raneh Falls and the devastation of Panna but also will prove to be not viable due to unavailability of water in summer.

Joining of two rivers is not just joining of two lines in a map, it is joining of two living ecosystems (Read more - <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-6-issue-iv/>) Without considering the viability of the project, implementation of project could be disastrous to not only core forest, Tigers and Vultures of Panna Tiger Reserve, but also for the downstream areas. It is entirely our decision to choose the development but at what cost and how viable it will be?????

Publishers Note:

The Panna landscape has got a temporary reprieve as MoEF has asked the Ken-Betwa link project to first seek wildlife clearance before environment clearance. We need to use this breathing space to write to the MoEF against this disastrous project.

You may raise your voice to protect this beautiful habitat by writing emails to the following officials:

Shri.Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,

South Block, Raisina Hill, New Delhi – 110011

http://www.pmindia.nic.in/interact_with_pm.php#

Email: pmosb@pmo.nic.in

Tel: +91-11-23012312

Fax: +91-11-23016857

Shri.Prakash Javadekar

Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge)

Ministry of Environment and Forests

Room No. 560, Shastri Bhawan,

New Delhi – 110001

Email: pjavadekar@gmail.com

Tel: +91-11-23384498

Fax: +91-11-23384286(Fax)

Shri Ashok Lavasa, IAS

Secretary

Ministry of Environment and Forests

Room No. 1, Paryavaran Bhawan,

CGO Complex,

Lodhi Road,

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(The author works as Nature Education Officer, Yamuna Biodiversity Park, Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CEMDE), University of Delhi, Delhi)

Conservation News

Sabarimala: No plastics

Sabarimala in Kerala gets huge number of pilgrims who go there to pay their obeisance to Lord Ayyappa. The surrounding forests were facing a heavy burden due to the plastic waste being dumped by tourists. Now the Hon'ble Kerala High Court has stepped in to give Sabarimala temple and surrounding forests a respite from plastic waste by banning the sale of plastics. Henceforth no plastic bottles including water bottles can be sold in any place along the route in Sabarimala.



Undigested polythene in Elephant dung

The Hon'ble High Court bench comprising Justice Thottathil B Radhakrishnan and Justice Anu Sivaraman ordered "There can be no sale of any material including water in pet bottles or other types of plastic bottles in any place connected with Sabarimala, including Sabarimala sannidhanam, Pampa, Nilakkal etc.". Last year the High court had already ordered that the sacred bundle or "irumudikketu" carried by pilgrims shouldn't contain plastic packing materials. So it was widely expected that they would ban the sale of plastic bottles in the area.

There were even occasions when elephants were found to have died by consuming the food along with its polythene foils and polythene bags with flowers etc. The pilgrim season starts around the middle of November each year and continues for couple of months. A total of 3 crore pilgrims were estimated to have visited last year with the number becoming higher this year.

The huge number of tourists also bring another problem of human excreta which has got deleterious effect on wildlife as well as cause water pollution. For more details check:

<http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-6-issue-ii/>

Wish the Hon'ble High Court can also order installation of bio-toilets on the route as the Government today is loathe to take it up without and pushing from the judiciary.

Conservation News

35 Feet Bryde's whale washes ashore on Juhu beach Mumbai

Fri, 29 Jan 2016

The recent incident of beaching of dead dolphins and whales continues as a Bryde's Whale, washes ashore on to the Juhu beach in Mumbai yesterday night around 9pm. According to forest officials, the whale measured around 35 - 40 feet, approximately weighing around three to four tonnes.



Assistant Conservator of Forest (Mangroves Protection Cell) Makrand Ghodke said "From initial examination, the whale seems to have died a day or two back. It bloated and was then carried in by the tide to the beach. internal decomposition of the organs has already started, and the outer skin of the whale, around the tail and stomach had started to peel off. We will deflate the carcass on the beach itself, otherwise it could explode" .

Ghodke added that this was the second biggest whale to have beached on the western coastline following the washing ashore of the Giant Blue Whale at Alibaug, last year.

The carcass has no evident signs of injuries. The team extracted tissue samples for forensic analysis at a lab in Kalina.

There are four veterinarians who will perform the autopsy at the spot on Juhu beach, and then move the carcass to the forest department's conservatory in Airoli.

Officials plan to preserve the skeletal structure of this whale at the information centre in Airoli of Navi Mumbai.

Conservation News

Elephant Dies Trying To Free Her Calf From Illegal Electric Fence In Vellore

4th Feb,2016

A 10-year-old elephant died trying to save her calf which was caught in an electric fence in Tamil Nadu's Vellore district this morning. Both mother and child were electrocuted.

The Assistant Conservator of Forests, Mohammad Raffi in Vellore said, "High voltage electricity on an illegal electric fence put up by a private farm is responsible for this. This technically comes under the Krishnagiri Forest Division. We have informed our colleagues there. They will investigate."

No arrests have been made yet. Investigators are looking for the man who had taken the land on lease.

A few days ago, a herd of three elephants including the two that were found dead today was seen roaming in the area and local people had complained of crop damage.

While solar electric fences with very low power supply to emit just pulses that keep animals away, officials say the fence that killed the elephants this morning was connected to high voltage power.

Sampath, President of the Velakkal Natham Panchayat, said, "(The) authorities should ensure this does not repeat."

Elephant deaths due to illegal electric fences are treated on par with poaching. Officials say it appeared the calf got stuck in the live fence first. The mother tried to lift it and got electrocuted.

In January 2012, the Madras High Court had directed the state environment and forests department to remove illegally erected solar and electric fences in the elephant corridors. An appeal against the order was dismissed by the Supreme Court. But, farmers continue to put up illegal fencing.

In Tamil Nadu electric fences kill more elephants than poachers. The elephant is a protected animal under wildlife laws and included in other species like the tiger and lion in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act.

Solar fencing can never be the solution to resolve man-elephant conflict. By fencing you are simply isolating one area and removing it from its migratory corridor. The real issue is the fragmentation of the elephant corridor. They have been using this route and will continue to use it unless you are unethically forcefully capturing the elephants and removing them as Karnataka did.

Cultivating crops like bananas and other high calorific value crops will only lead to elephants feeding on those to supplement their diet. Corridors of elephants have to be marked and the Government has to procure those for ensuring that the elephants can continue using their age old routes. Till that time, the forest department has to be proactive in providing compensation to people and keeping a strict vigil with sufficient ground level intelligence.

Conservation News

Climate Change Steering Committee approves projects over 100 crores

The National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCCC) has had its ninth steering committee meeting under the chairmanship of MoEF&CC Secretary, Shri Ashok Lavasa.

In this meeting, the committee reviewed projects under approved the National Adaptation Fund on Climate Change (NAFCC). The Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) on climate change adaptations submitted by the Governments of Telangana, Mizoram, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh for funding were approved for implementation. The total cost of these projects would be approximately Rs. 108 crore.

The Government of Telangana's project is aimed at enhancing the climate resilient agriculture for improving livelihoods. This project to be completed over four years is titled "Resilient Agricultural Households through Adaptation to Climate Change in Mahbubnagar district, Telangana" and will cost of Rs. 25 crores. An estimated 2000 farming households in Mahbubnagar district of Telangana are likely to benefit from this project. Among the farming beneficiaries roughly 30% to 50% are .

The Government of Mizoram's project aims to enhance the resilience of agriculture covering crops, livestock and fisheries through development and application of improved production and risk management technologies. This project is known as "Sustainable agriculture development through expansion, enhancement and modelling in the state of Mizoram" and will cost Rs. 10.95 crores over a period of three years.

The Jammu and Kashmir Government's project is titled "Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture in Rainfed Farming (Kandi) Areas of Jammu & Kashmir" and is planned to be executed over a period of four years. The total plan outlay is for Rs. 23.86 crores. This project is planned to reduce the agricultural vulnerability of farmers in water stressed rain shadow zones. It aims to promote appropriate cropping system, rainwater harvesting and recycling, appropriate irrigation and water saving facilities, integrated farming system building soil resilience combined with integrated nutrition management with special focus on micro-nutrients and institutional interventions. Approximately 2500 farming families, especially those small and marginal farmers, are expected to benefit from this project.

Meghalaya Govt.'s project titled "Spring-shed development works for rejuvenation of springs for climate resilient development in the water stressed areas of Meghalaya" was approved at a total cost Rs. 23.98 crore and it will be carried out over four years. This project seeks to maintain and improve the integrity of the natural water bodies. The project interventions will help in reducing the surface runoff of rainwater in the spring-shed areas, promote deeper water percolation, and rejuvenate the water table. The project is expected to benefit approximately 16,494 households.

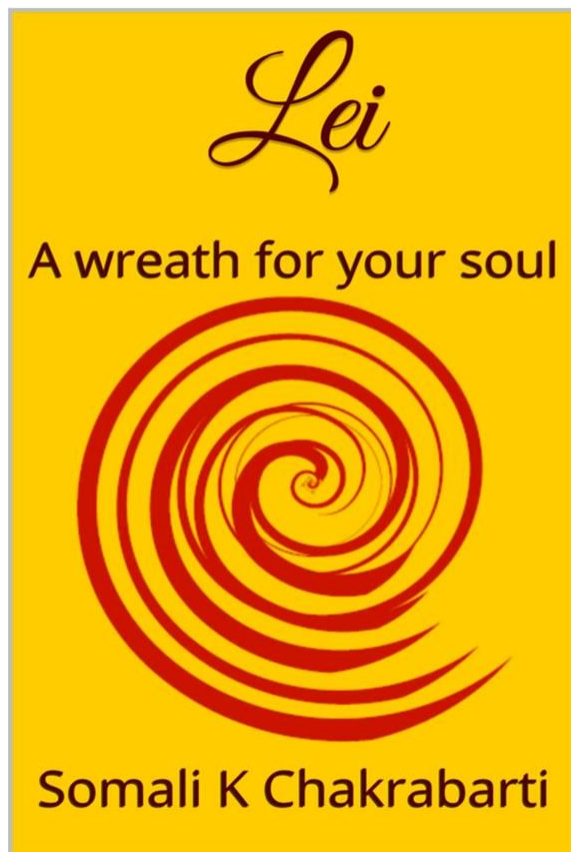
The Project from Chhattisgarh aims to promote water conservation and demand side management as a major adaptation strategy, while improving local livelihood. This 'Climate Adaptation in Wetlands along the Mahanadi River Catchment Area in Chhattisgarh' project will run for four years and will cost a total of Rs. 24.95 crores. About 1,500 farmers would be switched from commercial farming to climate smart agriculture practices. About 7000 families are expected benefit from

Book Review

Lei – A wreath for your soul

By Somali K Chakrabarti

A few months back I came across this book titled “Lei” and got a free kindle version via amazon.in. Since I was told that the book “Lei” is a collection of short poems on nature and life, I thought of checking it.



According to the author Somali Chakrabarti, her book “Lei” is “Inspired by Nature, reflecting on life, ‘Lei’ is a series of short/micro poems. Each poem is like a fragrant flower, is meant to celebrate life, generate positivism, soothe, nourish and rejuvenate the soul”.

Each short poem is accompanied by an image. The author appears to have curated images from the internet that has an impact on her and has penned down the micro-poems. Some of these short poems are very nice and have the potential to inspire others.

In an image of a bee approaching a flower the author writes:

“Buzzing wings over

Bright blossoms of red

Book Review

Clover

Flies the pollinator

In meadows seeking nectar

Buff tailed Bumble Bee!"

At a time when bees are increasingly getting wiped out by the pesticide residues, it is time to focus our attention on these minute creatures. Without bees the impact on pollination would be huge. If there is no pollination then there can be no crops and no food. Farmers in China are already facing massive challenges and are manually undertaking pollination.

On the left side of the page was another short poem under the title friendship:

"Innocent eyes

Marvel at the beauty of

Burgeoning friendship"

Infact I had first read these lines along with the image of the bee and felt that is also apt. The relation between a flower and a bee can also be termed as a friendship. The bee takes the nectar as well as the pollen from the flower and helps in fertilisation. Propagation of one's lineage is one of the main focus of the animal world (including humans). So it can also be said that the bee is being offered the nectar as a gesture for helping in pollination ie. helping the future generations of the flower. Show this to kids and they should be more creative in finding out meanings than we adults are capable of.

In an image of a captive elephant being caressed by a lady, she writes

"A soft tender touch

To soothe the sore sting of

Human greed for tusk"

And to bolster the seriousness of the issue, the fact of nearly 100 elephants being killed for their tusk every 24 hours is mentioned in the footnote.

When will this greed end? Unless each one of us point it out again and again through films, images, articles, poems and any other medium available to us, we can't bring change.

There was a time when we used to hear the words of the poets in various poetry recitation sessions. Today with the advent

Book Review -

of technology, one can juxtapose such images with poems and create even more powerful communication. So I am very excited at the potential of such poems for conservation of nature and wildlife. This is the first book by Somali. I feel there is more to come in future.

The book “Lei – A wreath for your soul” is available on kindle. It is priced at **Rs. 133/-**

IndiaWilds App for Android Mobile

In India most of the internet penetration is happening through mobile phones. And the existing users who have access to desktops and laptops are becoming much more mobile then they used to be a few years ago. So to raise awareness and reach out to more people we need to adapt ourselves and make IndiaWilds easily accessed through a mobile phone using android OS.

Today, I am pleased to announce that we have created a mobile phone app so that people can access IndiaWilds anytime, anywhere without being tied to a computer. No need to type. One can access at the click of a button.

We have developed this app through Business Compass LLC a company based in Randolph, New Jersey, United States so that we create a good app.

Awareness is the first step before a person can become a champion of wildlife. I hope this will help us in reaching out to more people to raise awareness and make a real impact on the conservation landscape. If you have an android device then please download the app from this link:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.businesscompassllc.indiawilds>

Equipment Discussions -

Canon 1DX Mark II Announced

Canon has finally announced the 1DX Mark II on 1st Feb 2016.

PRODUCT FEATURES

Dual DIGIC 6+ Image Processors

- ◆ 20.2 Megapixel Full-Frame CMOS Sensor
- ◆ Up to 14 fps, Up to 16 fps in Live View Mode
- ◆ ISO Range of 100–51200; Expansion to 409600
- ◆ 4K Video can be recorded at up to 60 fps
- ◆ 1080p HD capture up to 120 fps
- ◆ Dual Pixel CMOS AF
- ◆ Built-in GPS

Price: \$5999



Equipment Discussions -

ISO Touches 409600 (1DX was limited to 204800)

EOS-1D X Mark II can shoot at expanded sensitivities down to ISO 50 (L) and up to 102400 (H1), 204800 (H2) and even 409600 (H3)!

Dual DIGIC 6+ Image Processors

The Canon 1DX was using Dual DIGIC 5+ image processor on the other hand the newly EOS-1D X Mark II camera uses Dual DIGIC 6+ Image Processors, the new image processor

Although the AF module remains same but the EOS-1D X Mark II's AF algorithm has also been improved: it's equipped with AI Servo AF III+, which remembers the AF path and helps refine precision. Whether choosing individual AF points manually, using the Large Zone AF area or any of the camera's automatic AF selection modes, the EOS-1D X Mark II is designed to exceed users' expectations for high-precision AF.

Fast continuous shooting speed and introduction of C2.0 card slot

Canon 1DX Mark II was limited to 12 fps RAW+JPEG Shooting, 14 fps in JPEG, in the other hand the new Canon 1DX Mark II camera can record up to 170 full-size RAW files, and JPEGs up to full card capacity at 16 fps.

4K/60p and Full HD/120p video can also be recorded with virtually no restriction, and with exFAT format support, movie files of larger than 4GB can be recorded without the need to merge files. Performance with CF cards through the camera's CF card slot is impressive as well: the EOS-1D X Mark II can capture up to 73 full-size RAW files and JPEGs up to full card capacity when recording to CF UDMA7 media.

Improved RGB Metering Sensor (1DX 100K vs 1DX Mk II 360K)

The newly announced 1DX Mk II camera now features 360K RGB+IR metering sensor combined with Dual Digic 6+ processor that greatly contribute to the camera's impressive AF performance for both stills and video.

The Canon 1DX Mark II can record 4K videos @ 60fps (1DX was limited to Full HD Video only)

The canon 1DX Mk II can record 4K (Motion JPEG)video at up to 60 fps, recording smoothly to CFast™ cards. It's the first EOS camera able to record Full HD video at 120 fps. Users can select ISO upto 12800 for 4K video and 25600 ISO while recording Full HD video.

Introduction of Touch and Shoot Capability in 1DX series

The Canon EOS-1D X Mark II camera's comes with a 3.2-inch touch panel TFT LCD monitor has approximately 1.62 million dots Its new touchscreen function allows AF point switching and image magnification during Live View shooting and movie shooting, providing convenient operation.

New in-camera Digital Lens Optimizer technology

The EOS-1D X Mark II not only corrects peripheral brightness and chromatic aberration, but also features distortion correction plus diffraction correction, which has been included for the first time in an EOS camera. Distortion correction helps resolve barrel and pincushion distortions, while diffraction correction virtually eliminates the blurring effects from diffraction that can be created when capturing an image at a small aperture. The camera's Dual DIGIC 6+ Image Processors help ensure these corrections can be made with virtually no effect on operational speed.

Price: \$5999 US dollars

Preorder from B&H: <http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product...990/KBID/13252>

Equipment Discussions -

Panasonic launches VariCam LT 4K Compact Camcorder

Panasonic has unveiled the VariCam LT, representing the next generation of 4K cinema cameras. The VariCam LT camcorder inherits the same super 35mm sensor and superb imaging capabilities that distinguish the award-winning VariCam 35, but with significant reductions in size, weight and price.



Dynamic Range: The VariCam LT inherits the DNA of the VariCam albeit in a more compact form and has 14+ stops of dynamic range with V-Log.

Dual Native ISOs: VariCam LT also has the dual native ISOs of 800/5000.

Formats: The VariCam LT delivers superb image handling in multiple formats ranging from 4K, UHD, 2K and HD, and like the VariCam 35, is fully capable of High Dynamic Range (HDR) field capture. The new 4K camcorder offers Apple ProRes 4444 (up to 30p) and ProRes 422 HQ (up to 60p) support for HD recording, as well as Panasonic's AVC-ULTRA family of advanced video codecs.

New codecs introduced in the VariCam LT include AVC-Intra LT and AVC-Intra 2K-LT, both designed to offer capture rates up to 240fps in imager crop mode, ideal for sports and other fast motion footage.

Colour Management: The VariCam LT inherits the same cinematic VariCam image quality and color science. Powerful color management capabilities combined with VariCam's extended color gamut and support for the Academy Color Encoding System (ACES) workflow allow for full fidelity mastering of original source material. The VariCam LT offers in-camera color grading, with the ability to record an ungraded 4K master along with all on-set grading metadata. A

Equipment Discussions -

new color processing feature is 'V-LOOK,' which acts as a blend of V-Log and video, and allows filmic documentary acquisition without the same need for intense color grading.

The VariCam LT differs from the VariCam 35 in being a one-piece, short-bodied camcorder vs. a two-piece camera head plus recorder. While the VariCam LT does not feature parallel sub-recording, it does have an SD slot for high-resolution proxy recording. Proxy files can be wirelessly uploaded via FTP, which facilitates wireless color grading. Variable frame rates are available with LongG6 recording.

Media: There is one expressP2 card for all formats including high frame rate and HD/2K/UHD and 4K recording (the 256Gbyte expressP2 card can record up to 90 minutes of 4K/4:2:2/23.98p content). However, the cost of Express P2 cards are far higher than CFast 2.0 cards.

RAW: RAW output from SDI is planned to be supported by a firmware upgrade in early summer 2016. Convergent Design has announced that its Odyssey 7Q+ recorders will be able to record the RAW output from the Panasonic VariCam LT.

EF Mount: The VariCam LT features an EF mount (vs. the VariCam 35's PL mount), suitable for the wide array of lenses available for smaller cameras.* The EF mount can be switched out to a robust standard PL mount, expanding the range of compatible lenses that can be used. The control panel can be separated from the camera body to facilitate real-time control and easy menu access. The camcorder has a production-tough magnesium body to assure durability and reliability in challenging shooting locations.

Other features new to the VariCam LT are power hot swap, IR shooting (further enhancing the camcorder's extreme low-light capture at ISO 5000), 23.98 PsF output, and image presets as scene files.

Built-in ND Filter: Among the camcorder's top-level production assets are ND filters (CLEAR, 0.6, 1.2, 1.8), an optional OLED electronic viewfinder (EVF) with optical zoom functionality, 24-bit LPCM audio for in-camera audio master recording, Focus Assist, anamorphic lens de-squeeze, special REC functions (PreRec, interval, one-shot), IP control via Panasonic's AK-HRP200 camera remote controller, and built-in GPS.

Professional interfaces include: 3G-HD-SDI x 3 (SDI-OUT X 2 and VF), LAN, genlock in, timecode in/out, USB2.0 Host and USB2.0 Device (mini B), and three XLR inputs (one 5-pin, two 3-pin) to record four channels of 24-bit, 48KHz audio.

Weight: Weighing just under six pounds and having superior capability to similar sized cameras, the VariCam LT will be the ideal camera for handheld, SteadiCam, jib, crane, drone, gimbal and overall cinema verité work. The VariCam LT is likewise tailor-made for owner/operators, independent filmmakers, documentary makers and corporate production creators.

Availability: The VariCam LT will be available at the end of March 2016.

Cost: The suggested list price is \$18,000 (body only) and suggested list price \$24,000 for body and AU-VCVF10G viewfinder. The street price would be a bit lower.

Competition: At this price the Varicam LT is in the range of F5, C300 Mark II cameras and would give a tough competition to these cameras.

Equipment Discussions -

Canon launches EOS 80D DSLR with power zoom adapter and microphone



Salient Features of Canon EOS 80D:

- ◆ Sensor: 24.2 Megapixel CMOS sensor, APS-C sized
- ◆ AF: New 45 point AF (70D had 19 point autofocus)
- ◆ Dual Pixel AF for video and live view stills shooting
- ◆ Intelligent Viewfinder with approximately 100% viewfinder coverage
- ◆ DIGIC 6 image processor for enhanced image quality
- ◆ Built-in Wi-Fi®2 and NFC™2 capability for easy transfer of images and movies to compatible mobile devices
- ◆ 1080/60p Full HD video to capture brilliant results in MP4 format for easy movie sharing on select social networking sites and in either ALL-I or IPB compression modes with optional embedded time code.
- ◆ Vari-angle Touch Screen 3.0-inch Clear View LCD II monitor enables flexible positioning and clear viewing even outdoors
- ◆ ISO: 100 to 16000 for stills and 100 to 12800 for video, both expandable to 25600
- ◆ Low light AF improved upto EV-3
- ◆ AI (Artificial Intelligence) Servo AF II autofocus system uses color tracking with a 7,560-pixel RGB+IR metering sensor. This automatically detects skin tone and colors to enhance tracking sensitivity, even with moving subjects with erratic motion

- ◆ In Video: HDR movie and Time-Lapse movie modes and Movie creative filters like fantasy, old movie, memory, dramatic monochrome and miniature.
- ◆ Movie Servo AF custom settings allow users to speed up or slow down focusing speeds. F
- ◆ Built-in headphone jack, a built-in stereo microphone with manual audio level adjustment, and an additional stereo microphone jack.
- ◆ **Availability: March 2016**
- ◆ **Cost: 1199 USD**

Buy: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1225875-REG/canon_1263c004_eos_80d_dslr_camera.html/BI/19990/KBID/13252

Canon EF-S18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM Lens:

Canon has also announced a new kit lens EF-S 18-135 f/3.5-5.6 IS USM lens.

Salient Features:

- ◆ New premium exterior design with a smooth satin finish.
- ◆ This the first Canon lens equipped with Nano USM, a new type of focusing motor that combines the benefits of a ring USM (ultrasonic motor) for high-speed AF during still photo shooting and lead-screw type STM (stepping motor) for smooth and quiet movie AF
- ◆ Improved AF speeds up to 4.3x (Tele) and 2.5x (Wide) faster than the previous model.
- ◆ Four stops of optical image stabilization. Dynamic IS helps while shooting video.
- ◆ A new lens hood, the EW-73D, is included with the new lens.
- ◆ **Cost: \$599 USD.**
- ◆ **Cost with EOS 80D DSLR and EF-S 18-135 lens: 1799 USD**

Power Zoom Adapter PZ-E1

Canon has launched a new power zoom adapter PZ-E1 to make shooting videos easy.

- ◆ Can be used with DSLRs and Cinema EOS cameras.
- ◆ Specifically constructed to be compatible with the design of the new Canon EF-S18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM Lens
- ◆ The Canon Power Zoom Adapter PZ-E1 is the world's first detachable zoom adapter that provides silent and smooth zoom and can adjusted incrementally to 10 different levels of zoom speed.
- ◆ The PZ-E1 can be controlled remotely using the Canon Camera Connect app.
- ◆ **Cost: \$149 USD**
- ◆ Buy from B&H: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1225878-REG/canon_1276c002_ef_s_18_135mm_f_3_5_5_6_is.html/BI/19990/KBID/13252

Stereo Microphone DM-E1

Canon has also introduced the Canon Directional Stereo Microphone DM-E1.

- ◆ The microphone can be rotated up and down from 90 to 120 degrees so that when you point your camera up or down

Equipment Discussions -

the angle of the microphone can be independently adjusted to line up towards the source of sound.

- ♦ The DM-E1's durable shock mount construction is designed to reduce camera operation noise and lens drive sounds and is built to be tough to withstand various shooting scenarios.
- ♦ Frequency response range is from 50Hz to 16kHz.
- ♦ The DM-E1 comes with a wind screen to help limit peripheral sound from wind and other outside factors, allowing shooters to utilize the microphone in a broad amount of shooting situations.
- ♦ Featuring a built-in power supply from a single "button-type" lithium cell battery, the DM-E1 also has a power indicator lamp allowing users to easily check its battery level.
- ♦ **Cost: \$249 USD**

Buy from B&H: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/DM_E1/Ntt/DM-E1/N/o/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFF/d10-v1-t12

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: M.Krishnan: 'India's National Bird'

The Sunday Statesman: 31-January-2016 (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)

" NOTHING official and irrevocable has been decided yet about the choice of a bird emblem for the nation, but there seems to be no reason to doubt that the peacock, the bird tentatively selected, will be the final choice. No other Indian bird has better claims to the honour, as already pointed out in this column long ago. This note on the National bird is, therefore, not too premature but this is highly miscellaneous sort of note: I am writing of the peacock not only as a Jungle Fowl but also of its traditional cultural associations in India, particularly in South India where it is held specially sacred.



Peacock

Courtesy : Rajan Kanagasabai

Peafowl are not limited exclusively to India. The Indian species, *Pavo cristatus*, is also to be found in Ceylon and in Pakistan (though Pakistan is, for all purposes of natural history, a purely artificial territorial division): in Burma there is a different species with a pointed crest.

According to classical Tamil, Peafowl belongs to hill jungles. They are essentially birds of the sparse deciduous forests that clothe our lesser hills, though in places (as in the Deccan) they are to be found

in the flat scrub as well. They are thirsty birds need to drink everyday, so are never found far from a stream or pool.

Like many other game birds, peafowl are polygamous and are usually to be found in parties consisting of a grown cock and a few hens. At times, these parties may associate in a drove and at times (especially during the cold weather) separate small parties of cocks and hens may be seen: I have even seen single cocks in the jungles. The sexes are different to distinguish during infancy. At one month of age, both male and female chicks have crests and behave very similarly, nor there is any marked difference in size between them. At one year, the superior size and much more iridescent neck of the cock begin to assert themselves, and the train (this is not the tail but consists of the elongated coverts above the tail) begins to develop; the train is not fully developed till it is two or three years old.

The spectacular courtship display where the iridescent "eyes" of the ocellated fanned-out are exhibited most tellingly has never failed to impress man - though often enough the hens, for whose benefit the performance is presumably staged, re-

main totally indifferent to it! From time to time the displaying peacock vibrates its low-held wings, and shivers the great erected train-fan so that the vivid glinting greens and blues of the "eye" dissolve in a shimmering haze of brilliant colour, a dazzling effect that no art can improve upon.



Peacock courtship display

Courtesy : Jitendra Katre

In countryside traditions, the peacock does not dance only in courtship -- when the bird's heart is gladdened by the first showers after parching summer it dances in joy and welcome. Naturalists may pooh-pooch this pretty fancy, but I have seen captive peacocks indulging in a full-dress display when no hen was around and the only inspiration seemed to be the freshness and coolth of the early rains or of a cloudy monsoon day.

Incidentally, Lorenz and other observers that the display may be inspired by an object on which the bird's affections have been fixed -- and the object may be a tortoise or even something inanimate! The grown hens do not, so far as I know, indulge in the display but sub-adult hens may. Naturally lacking the essential train, such juvenile displays (whether by male or female sub-adults) are unostentatious.

Peafowl are long-lived. I am unable to cite offhand any reliable record of their longevity, but captive birds have lived in good health for years: probably their "expectancy", as the life insurance people put it, is around 20 years. But infant mortality is high and is compensated in nature by free breeding.

Unfortunately, no thorough study has been made of the natural mixed diet of these birds. Grain of every kind (including bamboo "seed"), flowers and leaf buds and tender green shoots of plants, small reptiles (lizards and snakes) and many insects are included in their natural diet. Once I witnessed from behind the cover of rocks, a bevy of peafowl feeding, rather inefficiently, on swarming winged termites issuing from the earth in a gauzy, impetuous mist. What impressed me then was

the wild and improbable beauty of what I saw. What captive peafowl eat is no indication of their natural diet -- I have seen a captive hen eating with obvious gusto both sliced carrots and fried groundnut, neither of which is part of the wild bird's fare. A captive peacock may be belligerent, and will not hesitate to attack men. The peck can dent one's flesh and the bird also flies up at one and then strikes out with its spur, inflicting deep gash. I have not been attacked by a peacock myself, but seen others being routed by the bird. In a wild state, peafowl are surprisingly shy of men -- they are positively terrified by the men, as, no doubt, they have good cause to be. True that the tradition-bound Hindus will not harm peafowl, or suffer them to be harmed, but it is no less true that in India peacock pie is by no means a dish known by emperors. Even the eggs laid in a clutch in a scrape on the ground under cover of some bush are highly prized.

The keen sight of peafowl has been commented upon by every observer of the wild bird. Their sight is so good that even total immobility, which usually serve to prevent an inconspicuously clad man from being betrayed to the eyes of most wild animals, does not help. The hearing of these birds is also acute. As GM Henry rightly points out, the true alarm call is not the loud, trumpet like, repeated "pee-han", so frequently heard at dusk in the jungles, but an "extraordinary, loud hollow grunt preceded by a squawk".

Peafowl, like many other game birds, trust their legs in preference to their wings mainly to cross streams, to get up to their treetop roosts at nightfall and to get back to the ground in the morning and to get past impenetrable barriers -- but they can fly swiftly and get quickly airborne if they wish to do so, and at times they take to their wings to escape. The trains of the cocks are held clear of the ground when slinking through bush and undershrub and the lie of the feathers and barbs being away from the line of movement, the train does not easily get entangled in twigs and thorns.

In South India where Subramanya has sway, the peacock is held sacred as the God's vahana. The bird is usually depicted in representations of the God with the serpent in its beak and below its feet. Peacocks by themselves (unaccompanied by the God) are freely carved in the old stone of classical Indian art and small figurines depicting the bird cast in brass or bronze used to be common. The figurines are remarkable for their formalised simplification of all detail. Highly decorative "Oriental" peacocks showing each eye on the outspread train in clear detail in brilliant enamel do not belong to our classical art -- they might be recent imitations manufactured by some enterprising silversmith or they might even be made in Manchester! Peacock plumes, of course, have always decorated the fans and other ragalia of Gods and princes in our country.

Although so shy when wild, peafowl can be introduced into any really large garden where there is ample bush cover and tree growth and quickly settle down to a semi-domesticated life. They may then safely be given their liberty and can even be trained (if desired) to come in regularly at some hour to be fed. Nothing adds so much to the looks of an Indian place or mansion like feral peafowl in the grounds. I realise that some effort and pertinacity may be called for in introducing peafowl into some places, but still suggest that they should be introduced into such of our public parks, government houses and similar premises as can provide them with sufficient lebensraum."

-M.Krishnan

This was published on 8 October 1961 in The Sunday Statesman

Wildlife Photography -

Gaur by Rajan Kanagasabai



Tiger in Darkness by Debasis Bose



Wildlife Photography -

Tiger in Ranathambore by Nishith Kumar



Mongoose with Toad by Shyamala Kumar



Wildlife Photography -

Comb duck by Sabyasachi Patra



Great Indian Bustard by Subhash Shrivastava



Wildlife Photography -

Hornbills by Samrat Sarkar



Red Breasted Flycatcher by Mangru Minz



Wildlife Photography -

Scenery by Bizoy Mahmud



Mating Olive Ridley turtles by Bibhav Behera



Wildlife Photography -

Green Grasshopper by Mashiur Rahman



Female *Telamonia dimidiata* by Prajwal Ullal



Wildlife Photography -

Deer Mother and Child by Sabyasachi Patra



I look forward to your inputs and support in preserving the last tracts of wilderness and wildlife left in our beautiful country. For other interesting articles and images check - <http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/>

To post in the IndiaWilds forums, you can register free of cost using your Full Name as user id at - <http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/register.php>

If you are already a member of IndiaWilds and have forgotten your user id and/or password you can mail administrator@indiawilds.com

Regards,

Sabyasachi Patra

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