



# IndiaWilds Newsletter

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## No EIA done for 2063 Crore Project:

Gujarat Government under the leadership of Mr Narendra Modi had announced constructing a 182 meter high statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Sadhu-bet island which is in between the ecologically fragile Satpuda and Vidyachal ranges on the Narmada riverbed, in the proposed reservoir of Garudeshwar weir, about 3.5kms from the Sardar Sarovar dam. Mr. Modi had laid the foundation stone for this Rs. 2063 crore project last year without even an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This proposed statue named the “Statue of Unity” is being touted as the world’s tallest statue with a height twice that of the height of Statue of Liberty in US.

Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL), a Gujarat state owned enterprise is in charge of the implementation of the Project. According to the statue of unity website, the access to the proposed statue is by a 3.5km boat ride. Near the statue a 500 feet tall observation deck which can accommodate 200 people would be constructed. There would also be a large underwater aquarium constructed to keep visitors happy. A large modern canopied public plaza, overlooking the river and the Statue, will be constructed which will have scrumptious food stalls, ornate gift shops, retail kiosks and other visitor amenities. There are also plans to connect the project site by infrastructure such as expressways, improved rail system and helipads.

This massive project just got a budgetary allocation of 200 crores from the Union Government headed by Mr. Modi. Unfortunately, for such a massive project coming up on a river-bed, no Environment Impact Assessment is done. Such projects are legally required to conduct EIA with environment and social impact assessment. There has been no public consultation as well. This is clearly a violation of Environment Protection Act 1986 as well as EIA notification of 2006.

The Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL) in response to a recent RTI petition has reportedly said that “Environment clearance is not required and hence environmental and social impact assessment of the State of Unity project and its contribution to the cumulative impact of all the projects and activities in the area is not carried out”. SSNNL feels that since the project area is less than 20,000 square meters no EIA is required.



According to the amended notification dated 14.09.2006 all large construction projects greater than 20,000 sq. meters built up area require environment clearance. Though SSNL says that project is less than 20,000 square meters, the act says that the built up area is for covered construction and in case of facilities open to the sky it is the activity area. Clearly much of this project is in the open area. The statue is in the open. People would be visiting this place by boats and would be boating all around the statue. So the entire sadhu-bet island would be the activity area. So SSNL's defense that this project doesn't require environment impact assessment is a blatant violation of the rule.



### Location of the statue

A cursory look at the “Manual on norms and standards for environment clearance of large construction projects” by MoEF and one will get a fair idea about how EIA needs for this project as it says “large projects tend to have associated and consequential impacts. Innovative approaches should be adopted to conserve resources, in particular, energy and water. Backward linkages of the proposed project, such as the source and manner of procurement of materials and forward linkages, such as kind and manner of disposal of debris, should be duly considered along with the proposed project”.

SSNNL is delinking the Expressway, rail link and helipads from the project for the purpose of environment impact assessment. They are designing the place to be a major tourist hub with sound and light shows, convention centres, under water aquarium etc. Not much of these details are made public, perhaps by design. Clearly the SSNNL is trying to hoodwink the public. It would be grave injustice if SSNNL is allowed to continue with this project without conducting a proper and transparent EIA.

Can an ecologically fragile area handle such massive land use changes and the influx of so many tourists?

In another move the new Modi Government at the centre has reconstituted the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) and has inducted only three members and that too two being from

Gujarat. Out of the three members one is GEER (Gujarat Ecological Education and Research) which is run by the Gujarat Government and the other member with Gujarat connection is Mr. H. S. Singh who is a retired officer from Gujarat Cadre. Mr. Raman Sukumar is the third member. According to the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act 2002 the NBWL should have 5 persons representing NGOs and ten individuals of repute from conservationists, ecologists should be nominated to the board by the centre. Unfortunately, the Government has chosen to seriously curtail the number of members by defying the law of the land. This doesn't portend well for the various projects that come before the board.

In the unlikely event that projects like the Sardar Patel statue which is promoted by the Gujarat Government reaches the NBWL, then does anyone expect Gujarat Government run GEER to be impartial and oppose the move? Will GEER go against the Gujarat Government's opposition to the lion relocation project?

If the Sardar Patel statue project goes ahead, then this will become a precedent to make many more such projects in future where the various components are delinked and EIA norms will be thrown to the winds. I guess we can now have helipads in most of the popular National Parks as taking cue from this project no EIA will be conducted. In this era of competitive populism, no one can fault if tomorrow say Miss Jayalalithaa, the CM of Tamil Nadu decides to create a 200 meter statue of Anna in one of the ecologically fragile areas or the statue to commemorate all the tamils dead in Srilanka. Miss Mamata Banerjee too can set up a statue to proudly proclaim Bengali pride in say Sundarbans. Is there any end to this madness?

Clearly the Gujarat Government doesn't care much about protecting our ecologically fragile places. Under Mr. Modi's leadership the Gujarat Government had started this project. Now that Mr. Modi has become the Prime Minister, will he listen to our pleas against this blatant environmental vandalism? Should we continue to sacrifice our environment in the altar of market economics?

We have just completed the first anniversary of the massive devastation in the Himalayas in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Tens of thousands of people had lost their lives and even today the locals there are struggling to come to grips with their lives. In such situation, it would have been imperative that all our efforts would have gone in helping them come up rather than leave them to lead a life in penury. No amount of celebrating the life of our freedom fighters and erecting monuments can unify the country when the present generation is suffering. Can a body be healthy if one part is wounded? When will we get our priorities right? When our brothers and sisters in the hills are suffering, do we splurge on statues?

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel during his younger days used to work in the fields and had paid for his travel to England for studies through his own hardwork. If he were alive, he would have been ashamed by this naked display of wealth.

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## **Conservation News**

### **Union Budget from Environment & Wildlife Perspective**

I am sharing the schemes and announcements made in the Union Budget 2014 which can impact environment and wildlife, either positively and negatively. The following are the major ones.

**Watershed development:** An Initial outlay of 2142 crores under the name “Neeranchal” for watershed development. It is a welcome move. However, we need to see the details of how this money is going to be spent or on which components this money is going to be spent.

**Safe drinking water through community water purification plants:** 3600 crore in 3 years. : “many of our drinking water sources have excessive impurities like fluoride, arsenic and man-made contaminations due to untreated sewage, industrial effluents and leaching of pesticides and fertilisers. It is proposed to earmark 3,600 crore for National Rural Drinking water programme for providing safe drinking water in approximately 20,000 habitations affected with arsenic, fluoride, heavy/toxic elements, pesticides/fertilisers through community water purification plants in next 3 years.

This is a welcome move. However, it is very important to treat the disease and not just the symptoms. Force the Industries to set up affluent treatment plants which are functioning. Ensure that the corrupt officials of Pollution control boards don't give their consent or certificate to the polluting industries. Ensure that farmers shift from synthetic pesticides and fertilisers to organic farming.

**Every farmer with a soil health card in a mission mode.** 100 crores allocation

**Mobile soil testing across the country –** allocation of 56 crores. Growing concerns of imbalance in the utilization of fertilisers resulting in deterioration of soil. Good move. However, please don't stop only at mobile testing centres. Inform people that based on their soil and climatic conditions which all crops are better so that no water guzzling crops are grown in arid and water deficit areas. <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-4-issue-vi/>

**North-East Organic food fund:** 100 crores allocation.

**National adaptation fund for climate change** with 100 crores. We have to wait for the fine print. For a country like India we definitely need to be prepared for climate change and create our low cost technologies and solutions.

**50 crores for “blue revolution” for inland fisheries:** I hope they don't promote exotic fish species which destroy the native fishes.

**4200 crores for Jal Marg Vikas in river Ganga** (National waterways – I) to be developed between Allahabad and Haldia to cover a distance of 1620 crores for navigation of atleast 1500 tonne vessels. Project will be over a period of 6 years. This is a grand announcement. However does Ganga have that much water throughout the year for navigation? Unfortunately this would mean creation of a series of barrages to maintain water level. This would come as a death knell for our aquatic species as they now cannot migrate from one place to other. For example the creation of the barrage in Haridwar came as a big blow for Mahseer as the habitat is fragmented.

#### **Solar Energy:**

**Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Laddakh** with an outlay of 500 crores: Harnessing solar power is a welcome move as it is clean energy. Given India's natural advantage the Government should have given more outlay here as well as tax breaks for this sector.

**Set up one lakh Solar power driven agricultural pump sets and water pumping stations** with outlay of 400 crores. Good

move as the State Electricity boards spend lot of money in transmitting power and get nothing in return. Atleast the losses should go down.

1MW solar parks on bank of canals with plan outlay of 100 crores. Green energy corridor project for evacuation of renewable energy across the country. Hopefully these solar parks won't have negative environmental issues.

100 crores for River Linking Project: Disastrous. Though this outlay of 100 crores is for studies, this is disastrous. It would have been better to divert this amount to watershed development. For more read: <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-6-issue-iv/>

**Integrated Ganga Conservation Project – 2037 crores.** Unfortunately Ganga is dying due to our apathy. Industries are still polluting the river. Unrestrained domestic sewage is a massive challenge as there is virtually continuous human habitations on its bank and the river needs uninterrupted stretch for self-cleansing.

100 crore Ghat development fund to be used to develop ghats in Kedarnath, Haridwar, Kanpur, Varanasi, Allahabad, Patna and Delhi in the current financial year. The question is Why Kedarnath? Why create more concrete structures in environmentally fragile places? Varanasi being the constituency of the PM, I guess this provision is to generalise the beautification and not just limit to Varanasi.

**National Centre for Himalayan Studies in Uttarakhand – 100 crores:** Welcome move. However, this is certainly not enough to save the Himalaya. For more: <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-5-issue-vi/>

**Total Sanitation:** Cover every household by 2019. This is a welcome move. For impact of human excreta and defecation in the open on environment check this link: <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-6-issue-ii/>

**Sardar Patel Statue: 200 crore provision.** I would love to know who has done the Environmental impact of this project or whether an EIA will be done at all. So this is more important than saving the Himalaya as the provision for Himalayan studies is half of this. Since this was in their poll plan, they have pushed for it. However, in a country where people are dying of hunger, committing suicide when the monsoon fails, is it not a sin to spend 200 crores for a statue?

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## **The Nagoya Protocol receives 50th instrument of ratification and will come into force on October 12, 2014.**

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

The Nagoya Protocol on ABS was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan and comes into force 90 days after the 50th instrument of ratification. With the 50th instrument of ratification achieved on 14th July, the Nagoya Protocol will now come into force on 12th of October, 2014.

Shri Prakash Javadekar made a suo moto statement in the Parliament that India with its Presidency of the Conference of Parties played a pivotal role to get the requisite number of ratifications. The Minister congratulated his counterparts for making this happen. The Minister further mentioned that a new era has now ushered in for implementation of CBD that would contribute to achieving sustainable development and a glorious future for all living beings inhabiting our mother Earth.

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He said that the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol by 51 Parties to the CBD is a major step towards achieving the first of the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets (Target 16 that by 2015, the Nagoya Protocol is in force and operational), and achieving it more than a year before its target date is unprecedented. The minister said that this showcases India's leadership on biodiversity in the global arena.

The Nagoya Protocol will create greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources by:

Establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources.

Helping to ensure benefit-sharing when genetic resources leave the contracting party providing the genetic resources  
By helping to ensure benefit-sharing, the Nagoya Protocol creates incentives to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources, and therefore enhances the contribution of biodiversity to development and human well-being.

The Minister said that India has been a victim of misappropriation or biopiracy of our genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, which have been patented in other countries and gave the examples of Neem and Haldi. It is expected that the Nagoya Protocol on ABS will supplement our domestic legislation namely the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

<http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/showthread.php?14626-Nagoya-Protocol-on-ABS-to-come-into-force-on-12th-Oct-2014>

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## **Bor Becomes 47th Tiger Reserve**

Bor Wildlife Sanctuary has been approved as a Tiger Reserve. A proposal from the Maharashtra Government was approved by the MoEF to notify the Bor Sanctuary, New Bor Sanctuary and the New Bor Extended wildlife sanctuary as a core/critical tiger habitat of a tiger reserve with an area of 13812.14 hectares or 128.1214 sq.km.

Bor which was notified as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1970, gets its status upgraded after 44 years and has become the 6th Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra and 47th in the country.

Rich in biodiversity with a wide variety of flora and fauna, including tiger, co-predators, prey animals and birds. The habitat is scenic and is on the boundary of Nagpur and Wardha districts, amidst the Satpura-Maikal landscape, forming catchment of the river Bor. The sanctuary is also an important corridor between Tadoba-Andhari and Pench Tiger Reserves of the State.

It is a good move to upgrade the status of this lovely place to that of a Tiger Reserve as it becomes entitled to receive additional funding and technical support for preservation of the habitat. However, it is very important to appoint the right field directors and other personnel including rangers, foresters, forest guards and watchers. Unless the field staff depend on the old school philosophy of rigorous foot patrolling to protect the habitat and wildlife, get local intelligence about poaching and wood cutting and catch and prosecute the offenders, it is like a leaking bucket being given a new paint. No amount of change in nomenclature is going to save our wilderness areas and the magnificent wildlife unless there are committed individuals to save them backed by will power of politicians and authorities.

<http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/showthread.php?14577-Bor-becomes-47th-Tiger-Reserve>

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## Two more elephants mowed down in Jalpaiguri

Two elephants were reported to have become the latest victims of the killing machines that Indian Railways have become. These two elephants were hit by a speeding train at a level crossing in Alipurduar in the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal when the elephants were crossing the track near the Madha tea garden.

The train was going from New Delhi to Guwahati.

There have been many instances of elephants dying a painful death when speeding trains hit them and drag them for some distance. After every elephant death, the railways talk of adhering to the speed limits. However, nothing happens. The current crop of political leaders turn a deaf ear to the plight of the elephants. With the change in the Government at the centre, lets hope that something good happens.

This is not happening for the first time in West Bengal as earlier this year several elephants were wiped out by a speeding train passing through Champabari Wildlife Sanctuary. For details please check the IndiaWilds Newsletter Vol. 5 Issue XI (<http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-5-issue-xi/> )

Elephants need your support. Please raise your voice and write to the following authorities:

### **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#](http://www.pmindia.nic.in/interact_with_pm.php#)

Tel: +91-11-23012312

Fax: +91-11-23016857

### **Kumari Mamata Banerjee**

Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal

Writer's Building, Kolkata

Email: [cm@wb.gov.in](mailto:cm@wb.gov.in)

Tel: +91-33-22145555, +91-33-22145588

Fax: +91-33-22145480

### **Shri D V Sadanada Gowda**

Hon'ble Minister for Railways

Rail Bhawan, Rafi Marg,

New Delhi – 110001

Tel: +91-11-23386645

Fax: +91-11-23387333

### **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](mailto:pjavadekar@gmail.com)

Tel: +91-11-23384498

Fax: +91-11-23384286 (Fax)

<http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/showthread.php?14571-Killer-Trains-Two-more-elephants-mowed-down-in-Jalpaiguri>

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## Man who protected Elephants from killer trains killed by a train

Kalia Boro, a casual worker of Guwahati wildlife division who used to stand by the railway tracks with a torch in hand to help elephants cross the track near Deepor Beel sanctuary was himself hit by a speeding train and died on 21st July. He was trying to ensure that a 20 member elephant herd could safely cross the railway tracks at Chakardo Mikirpara and enter the wetland when he himself got killed.

The traditional elephant corridors have been fragmented due to roads, railway tracks, canals and human settlements increasing the level of conflicts. In this place, the elephants from Rani and Garbhanga reserve forests need to cross a busy road followed by the Kamakhya-Jogighopa railway track in order to enter the deepor bheel.

Unless systemic deficiencies that fragment elephant corridors are addressed, lone battles of unsung heroes like Kalia Boro will go in vain.

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## Villagers Perform last rights of Elephants

Another heart touching story is playing out in Purulia district of West Bengal in the banks of the Subarnarekha river. In an era, when trains are mercilessly mowing down elephants and the insensitive Government turns a blind eye, when there is continual conflict between elephants raiding crops and villagers hurling crackers and even improvised bombs, the report of two villagers Panchanan Kuiri and Naresh Pramanik conducting Shraddha or last rites of two elephants who died due to lightning has touched many a hearts.

Elephants used to be revered as the vehicle of Goddess Laxmi. Elephants do have a special place in the hearts of Hindus as Lord Ganesha has the head of an elephant. Fired upon by Maoists in the forests, illegal mining destroying their habitat, elephants have no where to go but to raid crops. When the elephant is perhaps fighting its last battle for survival, these kinds of stories of people mourning the death will help in empathising as well as reconnecting with our cultural heritage.

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## MoEF launches website for Forest Clearance:

As per the previously articulated decision, MoEF launched a web portal for forest clearance today. The web portal [www.forestclearance.nic.in](http://www.forestclearance.nic.in) for online submission and monitoring of forest clearance proposals will help enable real time monitoring of the Forest Clearance proposals and will ensure that time-lines stipulated for processing of these proposals by various authorities in the Centre and State Governments are adhered to. The Minister for MoEF said that this will bring in more transparency, efficiency and accountability in the grant of regulatory clearances.

It is said that valuable time will not be lost in seeking additional information from the States and project proponents, once a proposal seeking Forest Clearance has been accepted by concerned authority in the State Government. However, it is not clear if MoEF officials at the center are prevented from seeking any inputs from the State Government and hence clearing everything that has been passed on to them.

To facilitate smooth transition, for the initial one month, the project proponents will have option to file forest clearance applications in both online mode through this portal or in the offline mode as is being done by them till today. From 15th August 2014 onwards, all new forest clearance proposals will be accepted only through online mode through this portal.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has initiated several other measures to make the process for grant of Forest Clearance more transparent and objective manner. To facilitate informed decisions on forest clearance proposals, the Ministry through the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun is developing a GIS based decision support system, consisting of GIS layers on forest cover, forest types, biological richness, integrity of forest landscapes, geo-referenced boundaries of the Protected Areas, Eco-sensitive Zone of Protected Areas, notified tiger corridors, other important migratory corridors, habitat of rare and endangered flora and fauna etc.

We feel that it is important to take decisions fast and not keep it pending as the delays cause time and cost over runs for industrial projects and portrays MoEF in bad light. However, MoEF cannot simply become a clearing house of approving



any and every project that needs forest clearance. Over a period of time we would come to know if this process is robust enough to stop projects that doesn't warrant forest clearance.

<http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/showthread.php?14618-MoEF-launches-web-portal-for-online-forest-clearance>

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## **Toxic Vegetables: Farming to be banned on Yamuna banks?**

A 2012 TERI study had shown that vegetables grown in the flood plains of Yamuna river near delhi shows higher levels of heavy metal contamination than those from rural agricultural fields. This serves as the entry point of toxic metals into our food chain. Significantly higher levels of Mercury, lead and chromium were found in the urine and blood samples of people living close by. 23% children had lead in the blood above the limits. It is now reported that the Delhi Government is mulling over ban on farming in the flood plains of Yamuna near delhi.

This is perhaps the first time that a Government in India is thinking about whether to allow agriculture in certain areas or not. Though farmers are unaware of the health effects of such toxic produce and are fighting hard to eke out a living, it would be helpful if the Government can move in to resettle the farmers in other areas conducive for agriculture. Afterall it is not easy for people to learn new skills and become successful.

The Government of India along with various State Governments should create an agriculture master plan keeping in mind the requirements of major consuming areas like metros so that farmers will find it remunerative to continue with their farming activities instead of selling off their land to real estate developers. This will result in maintaining a balance and avoiding wastage of crops, providing decent profits to the farmers as well as sufficient supplies to the house holds in the metros thereby avoiding seasonal price spikes due to shortage.

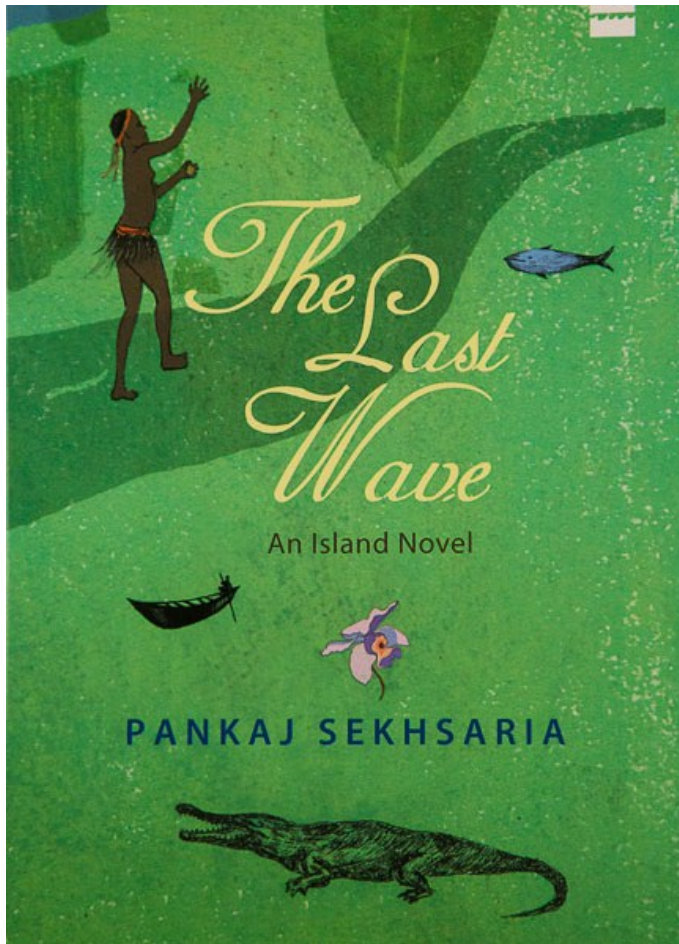
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## Book Review

### The Last Wave

by Pankaj Sekhsaria

Harish, the protagonist in this novel, while trying to pick up the threads from a broken marriage and learn to give a new meaning to life reaches Andamans with the help of a friend. In the Islands while passing away time on the pretext of doing an assignment, he comes face to face with the original inhabitants of the Islands – the Jarawas. Through the eyes of the protagonist Harish, the readers of Pankaj Sekhsaria's novel "The Last Wave" learn about the history of this Islands, its original inhabitants, the many waves of British, Japanese, and Burmese and India settlers who have tried to run over and change the character of the islands and the litany of issues that are open and festering even today.



Pankaj sums up the core issue, which triggered many a problem afflicting the islands today through his protagonist's words in the novel "A large group of migrants from mainland India had been allotted the forestland beside these creeks for their houses and for agriculture. Slowly, this wave of humans and their settlements had penetrated deeper and deeper, trashing the forests as David often said, and destroying prime croc habitat. Conflict was inevitable and the eventual loser evident..."

The author uses the word "wave" to justify how unequal the battle the Jarawas and their habitat faces against the sea of settlers.

The Ocean's waves continue their relentless assault on the shoreline, day in and day out, on a never-ending war, as if that is its life's purpose. Unlike the vast shoreline the Jarawas are too less and small to sustain this war forever.

"The Last Wave" sums up this hopeless battle that the Jarawas have fought and lost. The giant waves of the Tsunami of 2004 December literally ravages the life of the protagonist drowning him back into sadness, into a life devoid of its meaning. Rescued and in hospital bed, he sees the Jarawas hospitalised. The Jarawas who have excellent knowledge and used to handle their own health are now forced to take medi-

cation as they have no answer to the modern diseases. A once self-sufficient tribe is now reduced to begging and pleading for help in broken hindi, an alien language. The protagonist while recovering in the hospital is grappling with his personal loss, and comes face to face with realisation that perhaps the Jarawas too have been inundated by a different giant wave and lost the battle. This juxtaposition of the individual loss of the protagonist with the plight of a vanquished race makes for a compelling ending.

Pankaj in his novel brings out the prevailing sentiments among the settlers in the Islands "they can't understand why they should be denied legitimate access to precious resources because of a few naked jungles".

Too often conflict starts because we believe that there is only one right way and that is the path we are following. Out of this belief, people often sympathize and pit others who follow a different path. Pankaj has brought this nicely in his novel,

when one of the settler says “..if we are allowed to continue here, we’ll even become good friends – we can even make these jungles humans. We’ll civilize them. This is what the government also wants now, isn’t it?” The author tells us that the protagonist Harish felt a deep sense of wonder at the life of the Jarawa. ‘It must be extremely tough,’ he thought to himself,’ and yet it seems so simple – just the elements and the people.’ Perhaps the author is conscious of the fact that only if the public appreciates this perspective they will start respecting the Jarawas instead of having pity.

Through his protagonist Harish he hits back “What friendship David?” he said, “You drop gifts and they pick them up. It’s like throwing grain and then waiting to snare the birds. The Jarawas got snared, David. They lost their freedom. Forever.”

He also reminds us that just because certain wrongs and illegal practices are continuing to happen, with or without the tacit support of the Islands Administration, that doesn’t make it right or lend sanctity to it.

“Harish tried to argue, ‘that it’s happening doesn’t mean it’s right, is it? And what is illegal, whether it is timber extraction or hunting in these forests, should be stopped immediately.” The novel also highlights the impact of Andaman Trunk Road, the voyeuristic crave of foreign media to click photos of Jarawa women, the exploitation of Jarawas, poaching by foreigners as well as locals, timber logging by forest department and many other issues.

The author has successfully managed to sew together real life stories to his tale and the combination of facts and fiction on an ecological backdrop forms a rich tapestry which will enrich the knowledge of the readers while keeping them enthralled with its lucidity. Whatever he couldn’t achieve through his many articles, letters, legal cases and activism may finally be achieved by making a new group of people aware about the injustice to the Jarawas and may help in changing the tide in favour of Jarawas. After all, as Alexander Pope had said “hope springs eternal in the human breast”.

Published by Harper Collins, “The Last Wave” has 290 pages and is priced at Rs. 350/- and is available in amazon at Rs. 226/- which is a real steal. Highly Recommended.

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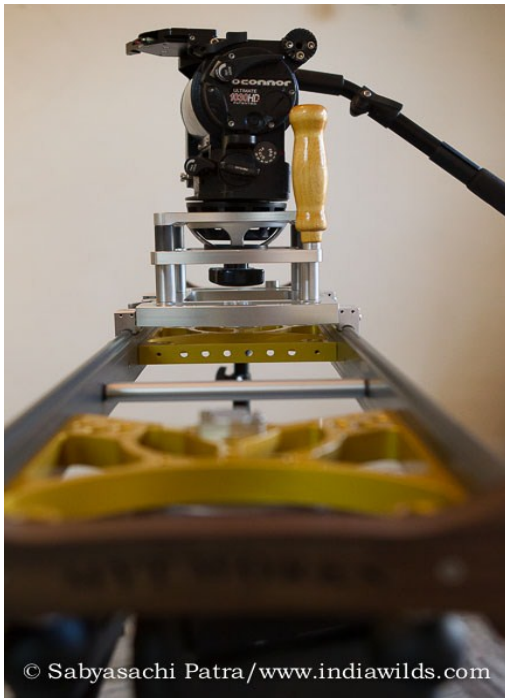
## Equipment Discussions -

### MYT 3-in-1 Slider dolly Review

I have been using the MYT 3-in-1 medium Glide slider dolly since last year end and feel I should share my thoughts.



MYT works is a New York, US based company known for its innovative and high quality products. Its catchy tagline “Born out of Frustration” written boldly across its products and the case gets many curious onlookers asking about it. I got the delivery of my slider towards end of October 2013. Since the package was about 4’4” long and weighing more than 40 pounds, I was scratching my head as the cost of shipping to India was huge. In came IndiaWilds member and friend Sreejith who personally hand carried it from US.



**MYT 3-in-1 slider with OConnor fluid head and wooden hand grip**

#### **Aesthetics of the MYT slider:**

First thing that one notices is the aesthetics and the craftsmanship. MYT scores highly on the aesthetics. The two ends of the slider are made of wood, dipped with oil and sport the MYT logo. It looks rich and appeals to the innate aesthetic sense of filmmakers. According to MYT they choose wood so that it is not only unique and comfortable but also because wood won't burn your hands in summer or freeze them in winter. They suggest not to use any petroleum product to clean as that would dry the wood. The aluminium as well as Gold anodized aluminium used in the slider makes it aesthetically pleasing.

#### **3-in-1 Design of the slider:**

This slider belongs to the Glide Line of MYT's sliders and has a unique design and is highly configurable. It has a carriage built to take a high hat. This carriage has got nice bearings that slide smoothly on the rails. MYT calls it the sleeve wheel technology. The bearings are patent pending. Ac-



cording to MYT there is a plastic wheel that spins inside and places constant pressure on the glide track so that one gets smooth footage. There are many mounting points in the carriage. I use a wooden handle which is again aesthetically designed. This handle fits on the high hat and helps in smoothly moving it from side to side.

The high hat has four feet instead of the traditional three feet. The four feet of this high hat can be removed and longer ones upto 12 inches can be inserted. One can independently use this high hat by mounting a fluid head and camera like a traditional high hat. The high hat sits on the carriage of the Glide slider and can be easily locked or removed by a latch.



You can place the high hat on the skater dolly and use it on a table-top or on the floor like a traditional dolly. When you need that low angle and you are shooting in a location with smooth floors, this skater dolly will help you get some nice footage.

- This slider has rails at the top as well as bottom. So one can also shoot with the camera in the underslug mode. Since I didn't plan to use the underslung mode, so I didn't get those required accessories.

To prevent the rails from getting dented, there is a protective rubber sleeve covering which keeps the rails protected when not in use. I find it to be a good and easy to place.

MYT offers sliders with lengths from 3 feet to 12 feet with the longer ones being used in TV studios. Keeping in mind my mobility as I shoot most of the times outdoors either for wildlife, documentaries, corporates and independent feature films, I have opted for the 4 feet glide length. This makes the slider a little longer than 4 feet and the carrying case is large enough to not fit in most of the smaller cars.

**MYT Skater dolly on table top with OConnor fluid head and C300 camera**

### Specs of my MYT 3-in-1 Slider:

I have picked up the medium version of the MYT Glide line with 4 foot travel length and this one has a maximum weight capability of 80 pounds. The rail span ie. distance between the two rails is 7" which gives lot of stability while using higher payloads. So I can use any camera package on this starting from the DSLRs to my C300 as well as heavier cameras like RED Epics etc.

I have chosen the 100mm high hat for the slider so that I can place my OConnor 1030 HDs fluid head on it and smoothly pan and/or tilt as I slide it. And if I just need a panning shot from left to right or right to left without moving the fluid head much, then I can even use a 100mm half bowl and then place a small Manfrotto head and mount my C300 on it.

This slider needs to be mounted at the bottom from both the sides. One can use either two tripods or one tripod and an-

other light stand. However I prefer to use my Sachtler tripod and another gitzo photo tripod. You can even place the slider on the ground with the smaller feet or on some firm support like boxes. MYT has designed some baby feet which can rest on table tops. Again those look lovely.

With such aesthetically designed and flexible systems independent filmmakers can pull off nice moves in style.

### **Carrying Case:**

I bought the MYT soft-hard carrying case so that the slider can be checked in while flying. It comes with a soft top and hard sides and has wheels on one side so that you can pull it along on even ground. There are handles on both sides so that two people can hold from both sides and carry it. One can also hold it from top and carry it. At 465 USD the case is actually a bit costly. This handmade case has been manufactured by Tenba for MYT. So MYT is not ripping us with a no-name brand accessory. In film sets after a long day, one can make handling mistakes. So better to buy this and have peace of mind. It is also invaluable while travelling.

### **Cost of the MYT 3-in-1 slider:**

The MYT 3-in-1 Glide slider medium with 100mm high hat is 2295 USD excluding accessories. The cost of accessories quickly add up to a neat pile. So one needs to be careful in figuring out the accessories for your intended applications and order, else it quickly strains the budget. Of course one can order some of the accessories later. Along with the cost of shipping and customs, the cost goes up quickly.

While shooting for a recent feature film, I was asked whether the same functionalities can't be achieved by using a cheaper Indian or Chinese slider. The answer is if you have a critical eye and demanding requirements, then you can't settle for less.

This slider is not meant for backpacking. So for hard treks when I don't have assistants and porters, this slider is kept behind.

This slider can be used in one man operations if you don't have a tonne of other equipment to carry. Else hire a porter. It takes a fair bit of time to unpack and set it up. For DSLR shooters, this is not a run-n-gun slider. If you are running for life or stealing shots, then this is not the equipment for you. Filmmaking is a deliberate process and one needs to make slow and measured moves. This slider gives a lot of flexibility and options. So I am pretty happy with it.

**Cons:** While flying the airlines charge excess baggage as well as charges for extra long items.

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## Natural History -

### **COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: M.Krishnan: THE 'WATER DOG'**

**The Sunday Statesman: 06-July-2014 (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)**

"Someone told me recently that he had read in some magazine (you know how vague people are about these things) that the Otter's original home was in Bengal, somewhere in the Sundarbans. That man came from Calcutta and I, who am frequently and powerfully moved by parochial feelings, know how polite and tactful it is to let some remarks pass. Nevertheless, I felt constrained to contradict him, for Otters are of worldwide distribution. In fact, barring Australia and a few other geographically insular places, there are otters in every country, different specifically and even generically it is true, but all unmistakably otters. Nor is their distribution limited to land. There is an authentic sea otter.



**Otter**

**Image courtesy – Rajan Kanagasabai**

And wherever there are otters, men have felt fascinated by their grace in water and gameness on land, and their obvious enjoyment of what man lacking it so often and in envy, terms "animal spirits". Most men can feel, in a rather undefined and intellectual sort of way, the charm of wild creatures, but when you see an otter the feeling becomes quite tangible and personal.

Otters are not specially good-looking, as animals go, if you can bring yourself to look at them analytically and forget their vivid entities. The round bullet-head, the fierce, bristling whiskers, the sausage-shaped body, the thick, Labrador-tail, and the short stout limbs ending in broadly-webbed feet - none of these features in itself suggests grace or charm. But put them together and you have the otter, whose vivacity on land and swift, smooth grace in water is beyond question.

Otter lives mainly on fish and like other fish-eaters, has a prodigious appetite. It is by diving and swimming under water faster than its prey that it lives, so that its sheer speed is not, perhaps, remarkable - but the flow and easy grace and dexterity of its passage through water is captivatingly remarkable. One could say, without exaggerating simile or sentiment, that an

otter swimming is the poetry of underwater movement - except that at times, when it twirls and twists and literally effervesces in water, mere metrical elan can provide no comparison.

Many animals play when they are young, but by the time they are adult the preoccupations of life and survival seem to sober them up. By the time a puppy is a dog or a kitten is a cat, it has lost much of its gawky or skittish exuberance. However, quite a few animals - many more than armchair naturalists realises - do find the time not only "to stand and stare", but also to play. But few of them are so devoted to fun for its own sake when adult as the otter.

It has been said that the otter's mode of play, tobogganing down smooth banks into water only to run up again for a fresh slide down, is strange for an animal so well adapted to aquatic gymnastics. Not at all. No doubt the otter does enjoy sliding down banks, but it is given to play in water as well. Like other aquatic animals, it likes to sustain something flat and bright on its nose and go twisting and tumbling through the water. I remember "borrowing" a new four-anna bit from a friend to throw to an otter in a zoo, so that it might be provoked into play by the coin's shine. My friend, who was somewhat utilitarian, was quite taken aback to see what I did with the coin, but in a minute he had forgotten all about the money worth of that disc of twinkling nickel that went bobbing up and down, weaving in and out, twirling round and round through the water, balanced on the otter's nose. I expect the keepers get such coins in the zoos, in the end - they are never slow to suggest the game to the visitor.

In our country, we have no less than three different kinds of otter - the Common, the Smooth Indian and the Clawless. They are all creatures of rapid streams and rivers and are said to have a rather peculiar distribution, being found in Kashmir, the Himalayas, Assam and Bengal, and then only South India (a rather vague specification, the last) - the Smooth Indian being also found in Sind.

Otter belongs to the Weasel tribe, but in practically every Indian language they are called "water dogs". That is a perfectly sound name, though, and logically justified, not because the otter is any sort of dog (except when it is a "dog-otter") but since it is the rule that when the first part of a compound name is adjectival, that name connotes a thing different from what the noun part of it means: "French-leave" and "German-silver" explain what I mean. The hippo, which is no sort of a horse, is the "river-horse", the muntjac (a deer!) is the "jungle-sheep", and the gaur is the "Indian Bison". No wonder, then, that the otter is the water-dog."

-M. Krishnan

This was first published on 17 March 1957 in The Sunday Statesman

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## **Conservation Imagery -**

### **Killer Roads by Sabyasachi Patra**

This road kill image is from Uttarakhand. This is a video grab from my C300 camera.

Me and Mrudul were driving towards Rudraprayag and found this on the road. These roads are narrow and still people drive fast. By the time we reached the spot, the blood had dried up and most likely this incident had happened early in the morning. What was its crime? It was coming from the right side from the river. Did it know that it would get killed by most likely a pilgrim vehicle? The vehicle would not have stopped thinking that Ohh it looks like a Cat.



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## **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>

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## Wildlife Photography -

### Indian Pika by Murugan Anantharaman



### Indian Fox in its den by Subhash Shrivastava





## Wildlife Photography -

### Maya with cubs by Atul Dhamankar



### Grey Heron Landing by Paramvir Singh





## Wildlife Photography -

### Malabar Trogon Male by Shyamala Kumar



### An Evening by Jitendra Katre



## Wildlife Photography -

### Pre Monsoon View by Bibhav Behera



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/>

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If you are already a member of IndiaWilds and have forgotten your user id and/or password you can mail to [administrator@indiawilds.com](mailto:administrator@indiawilds.com)

Regards,

**Sabyasachi Patra**

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