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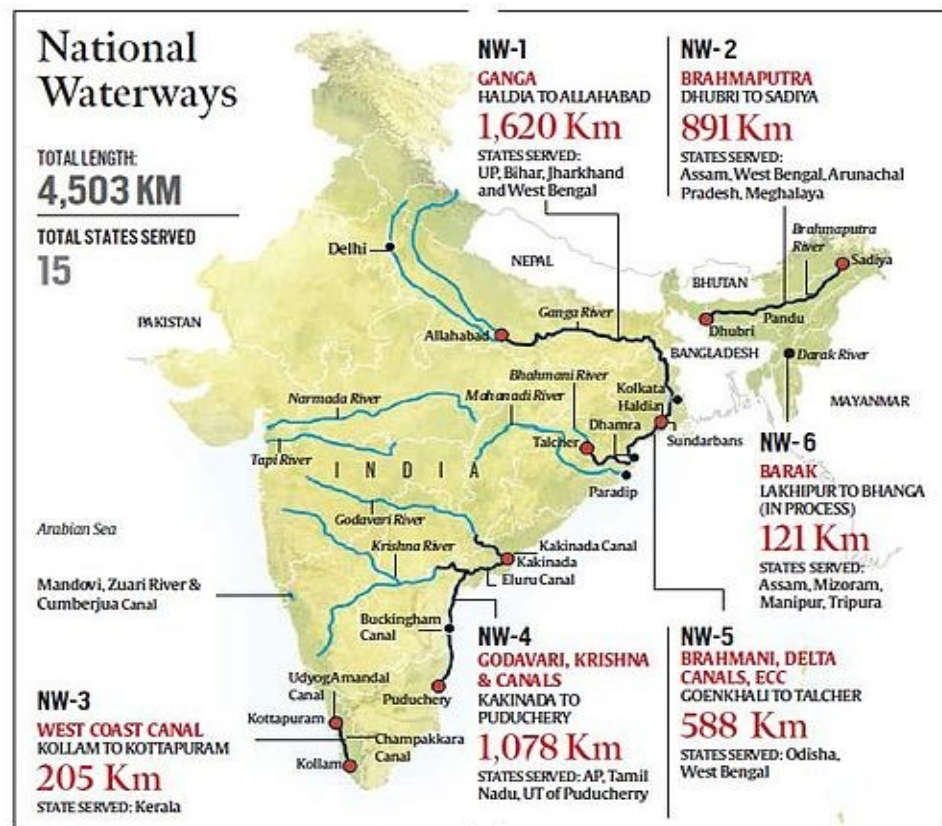
Cover Page Photograph:

Leopard hunting Deer
by Geetha Vasani

National Water Ways – Death Knell for Riparian Ecosystems:

When the then Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced the Golden Quadrilateral and the East-West, North-South road links, at an estimated investment of Rs. 54,000/- crores in 2001, he was ridiculed for dreaming the unimaginable. It was termed as “Mungeri lal ke hasene sapne” according to a famous TV serial. However, when the road building resulted in the greater integration of the economy, the Government immediately started looking for other grandiose schemes.

The subsequent UPA Government came up with the ecologically disastrous Sethusamudram Project which still is sub-judice. Now the Modi Government is again implementing another grandiose scheme termed as National Water Ways.



National waterways

Image Courtesy - Archana Venur

The BJP Government has got the National Waterways act passed and it has resulted in 111 rivers being declared as National waterways. The idea is to push traffic, primarily cargo, into the rivers. Unfortunately, there has been scarce discussion on this topic. Most of the states have virtually no idea about its impact. They have only got an assurance that the Central Government is not going to bypass them and their revenues will not be impacted. There is hardly any environmental assessment done before these declarations.



The minister, Mr. Gadkari, has in fact in a brazen Trump-like statement said that the National Waterways will be much more environment friendly than the roads. First, the manner in which our road projects are proceeding, with scant regards to wildlife and ecological impact, they are veritable killing fields. Now the Minister wants to make us believe that two wrongs make it right.

Any sane person in India understands that our rivers are really toxic. The waters of most of our major rivers like Ganga, Kaveri, Yamuna etc are not fit for human consumption as per the Pollution Control Board norms. The poor quality of water has even led to reduction in the biodiversity in the riverine ecosystem.

Environmentally destructive:

Our existing rivers don't always contain the adequate amount of water for navigation of large ships. To ensure navigation of large ships the rivers have to be dredged into shipping channels, barrages constructed to maintain level of water etc. Any dredging of channels will lead to heavy sediments and loss of oxygen for aquatic creatures. The riverine ecology will be thoroughly destroyed due to the heavy dredging.

Creation of shipping channels will also ensure that the flow of the river is messed up with and that will again destroy the river ecosystem. Maintaining a particular level of water throughout the year will ensure inundation of marshy lands and will lead to death of many species. Birds that frequent these marshy lands will be impacted due to loss of habitat. The dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*), gharials (fish eating crocs, *Gavialis gangeticus*), turtles, otters and



Gharial

Image Courtesy - Kaustuv Chatterjee

many species of fish, other aquatic creatures will have their habitat fragmented, find the sudden change in their environment too difficult to handle and will perish.

Channelising and constructing more barrages will lead to sections of the river cut off and migration of aquatic species up and downstream will be restrained. For example, it is well known fact that Mahseer fish can now no longer migrate upstream due to the series of dams in Ganga. Similarly dolphins will be restricted to few areas. The mortality of dolphins will increase because of reduced habitat, reduced prey, stress due to higher sounds from passing ships and injuries from propellers of ships. The dolphins have evolved to survive in the turbid waters and are partially blind. They depend on echolocation, the same principle of RADAR, to sense their prey. Higher levels of sound interferes in their ability to catch their prey. Since they are very sensitive to sound, the level of stress goes up and their mortality increases. Dolphin activist Ric O' Barry has said that in one incident a captive dolphin died in his arms because it purposefully stopped breathing due to the high stress caused by sound. When he released the dolphin it simply sank into water and died (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/whales/interviews/obarry2.html>). That was the reason Ric O' Barry, a dolphin trainer turned into a dolphin activist. The sounds of ships despite using mufflers to reduce the sound would be very stressful to the dolphins. Though Dolphins have been named as the National Aquatic Animal, not much has been done to save them and this National Water Ways project would swiftly push them towards extinction.



A pair of Irrawaddy dolphins

Image Courtesy - Mrudul Godbole

We have seen many iconic but brutal images of oil leaks and birds covered in oil. Recently an oil tanker had capsized in one of the rivers in Bangladesh Sundarbans. The oil flow had reached the Indian side as well. Though the Indian Government plans to use LNG instead of oil as fuel for the ships, the cargo to be carried in the ships also include vegetable oils as well as coal. This would cause a disaster when a ship capsizes. It is not a question of if, but when. The World Bank which is funding this project has in the past had turned a blind eye to ecologically destructive road projects and now showing its true colours

the World Bank doesn't give much importance to the environmental concerns for the Water Ways project as well.

Faulty Logic of Logistics Cost:

The Road Transport and Highways minister Mr. Gadkari had justified going for the National Water Ways by saying that the cost of logistics is high and hence transportation using river route should be expedited. Unfortunately, the reason for high cost of road transportation in India is not tackled.

A lot of congestion happens at the ports which increases the cost. 78% of total container cargo is handled by ports in the west coast out of which 70% of the total traffic is handled by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT). 60% of the traffic of the west coast moves to the northern hinterland, which leads to a heavy congestion along the routes. It is important to develop competing facilities. Also, our industries are located based on promise of tax holidays by various State Governments. At times these are far away from the freight corridors. With the implementation of GST, it would also be important to rethink on location of industries along our freight corridors which will save a lot on logistics costs. Our future smart cities should have been based on these concepts rather than trying to adapt the existing cities to smart cities.

There is also lot of congestion in the roads, especially in the inter-state border check posts, which leads to increased costs. At times there is indiscriminate "discretionary" detention of cargo in the inter-state check posts, primarily for corruption as these checkpoints are a major source of funds for officials as well as corrupt elected representatives. This undermines the utilisation of the truck fleet and increases the turnaround time and increases the overall cost. With India taking steps towards GST implementation in a pan-India basis, the octroi control check posts which cause significant delays are set to be abolished. When that happens, there will be free flow of traffic leading to faster delivery of goods and lower costs. The indiscriminate "discretionary" checks leads to unpredictable delivery timelines and this also leads to higher inventory costs. At present the inventory costs is 25% of the total logistics costs (*Status and Leverage of Logistic Parks in India*: Nirav Kothary, Jones Lang LaSalle). So most likely with the passage of GST both the transportation costs as well as logistics cost is going to decrease and road transport will become much efficient. Hence it is better to focus on road transport and exploit the entire potential of it, rather than engage in ecologically bad river transport.

There is also lot of traffic congestion in the existing toll booths. With the Government derelicting its duty of maintaining roads and privatising stretches of roads to be built-own-operated by third party for years together, there is heavy congestion on the roads. If the Government mandatorily introduces electronic payment system which is directly synced with mobile phones, then the process of payments and movement through the toll booths can be seamless without any delay. People are loathe to spend money to buy electronic devices just for the sake of toll booth payment. With increasing mobile app based payments, toll payments can be done through mobile apps and increase the speed of traffic flow through the toll booths.

The Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Mr. Gadkari has been quoted as saying that the road transport, which is polluting and causes 5 lakh accidents per annum killing 1.5 lakh people, has been allocated Rs 55,000 crore whereas the environment-friendly shipping got a mere Rs 800 crore allocation in the budget. If the Minister is so highly concerned about his department, then he could have looked at the root causes of the problems and removed those instead of starting a gran-

diose project which is going to destroy the environment.

Of course, Mr. Gadkari is not known to care for environment. He had earlier ensured that the National Highways Authority of India reduce the mitigation measures (length of overpass) for the NH7 highway passing through Kanha-Pench landscape. (Highway to Oblivion, IndiaWilds Newsletter Vol. 7 Issue III :

<http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-7-issue-iii/>)

National Water Ways: Water for People or Industry?

Water is a scarce resource in our country. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are fighting a bitter battle over Cauvery waters. Karnataka claims that they don't have enough water for drinking and Bangalore will run dry if they supply Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu for agriculture. So they had convened an emergency assembly session and decided to even defy the directive of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. This has created a constitutional crisis. Given such a huge challenge to satisfy the thirst and agricultural needs of 1.3 billion population, is it justifiable to create dams and barrages to ensure faster transportation for industries? The National Water Ways Project is going to exacerbate India's thirst for fresh water.

Under the present Modi Government, environment and forests is a lower priority and hence is under a Minister of State. It has been seen in the past that the junior minister heading MoEF&CC cannot stand up to the Senior Minister Mr. Gadkari's environmentally destructive projects. With the Government only focused on industry, the case for the National Aquatic Animal i.e. the dolphin and other species is sealed.

Predator & Prey: Leopard hunts deer:

By Sheshadri Vasan

Monsoons are the best time to drive through a forest for the soothing greenery. The dry earth after a long summer season comes back to life with the first drops of rain. As the rains continue the grasses sprout and new leaves grow fast engulfing the entire landscape. With new grass there is a frenzied activity among herbivores. However, this season is very challenging for sighting our charismatic predators as the dense undergrowth limits our visibility. We were on a drive in Kabini, Nagarhole National park, in the beginning of monsoon season, which not only proved wrong the popular belief that one cannot sight predators in monsoon, but also gave us one of the best moments that one could ever witness in the wild.

During the first few minutes of our drive, we sighted a very calm leopard sitting beside the track. It was an open place with just one odd tree in the middle and a junction where three safari tracks meet. The weather was cloudy and we felt lucky to have sighting of a leopard, relaxed in its natural surroundings. The leopard was very calmly looking all around and got up after sometime stretched himself and walked straight to get into the lantana bushes, behind him.



He gave us some amazing habitat shots with the green backdrop. While he disappeared into the bushes our hearts sank. Our jeep driver instantly told us that the leopard would hunt as he was watching a herd of spotted deer and was planning his game. Unsure of this, but with a big hope in our hearts we decided to wait and watch.

As we waited patiently for sometime, we noticed herds of spotted deer coming in from different directions very close to the place where the leopard had disappeared. As the spotted deer did not give out any alarm calls we were unsure if the leopard was still there in the bushes or had moved on. We then noticed the wind direction was in the opposite direction and the

deers were unable to catch the smell of the predator and hence kept grazing peacefully. Our hopes were still alive.

Serious intent - Eyeing the herd from behind a tree



He gave us some amazing habitat shots with the green backdrop.



And then suddenly we heard an alarm call from the herd of 50+ spotted deers that had assembled there and the herd panicked and began to run. At the same time in less than a second the leopard came out of the bushes in lightening speed and caught his prey.



Panicked deers fleeing the scene



The camouflage was so perfect that it took several seconds for some people in our jeep to realise the hunt that happened in front of our eyes. The leopard held firmly on to the throat of the fully grown female spotted deer while the family and friends of the prey alerted the entire forest with their strong alarm calls continuously. The calls still ring in my ears sounding like the bells from a holy place.



The leopard sat down holding the throat of the prey for few minutes till it was sure that the prey was dead and secure. We could witness the prey struggling to escape and finally giving up. Once the leopard was confident that its prey was dead, he started to drag it towards the bush.

As the prize for the day was quite heavy to drag, the leopard changed his position and tossed the prey to carry it into the bushes. Just before he disappeared into the bushes, he stopped and turned around for a few seconds to give us one last glimpse of his victorious catch for the day. Watching the eyes of the prey and predator together - 'one victorious and the other hunted' is definitely the best moment of our wild life experiences. The stronger of the two had survived and Darwin was right again.



Leopard dragging its kill into the bushes

In a jungle, fortune changes every moment. The leopard stood up at 7.46 am and started stalking within a minute. The leopard caught the deer at 8.05 am. At 8.07 am the leopard started dragging the deer away into the bush. Within a few minutes, the jungle was silent and the denizens returned to their daily chores. Prey and Predator, Life and Death, Hope and Fear, the cycle of life continues in the most primordial manner.

Publisher's note: This fine natural history documentation was done by an amateur photographer couple Mr. Sheshadri Vasan and Mrs. Geetha Vasan. This documentation reminds us of George Schaller's famous description of Serengeti, which is also apt here and hence reproduced below:

"...certain places are so unique in the pleasure and inspiration they afford that they must be preserved without compromise as repositories of beauty-as living museums. They must remain unmanaged, as original fragments of our past. Unaffected by human greed, their survival will be witness to man's moral obligation to society and to other species. And there must be a global commitment to maintain such cultural resources. As Edward Hoagland phrased it in another context, the Serengeti should be viewed as "the best and final future place to make a leisurely traverse or enjoy a camping trip that [is] not rooted in our century."

Conservation News

Panna all set to be drowned

The phase 1 of the Ken-Betwa project has been given go ahead by the National Board of Wild Life (NBWL) standing committee despite the impact on wildlife and the tiger reserve. The project is now expected to be swiftly cleared by the Forest Advisory Committee and the Environment Ministry. This project will now drown a substantial area of Panna Tiger Reserve. Though the official reports say about 4700 hectares will get drowned, researchers on the ground aver that roughly the entire 9000 hectares are within the Reserve. (Panna drowning, IndiaWilds Newsletter Vol. 8 Issue II:

<http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-8-issue-ii/>)

This NBWL clearance has come with the condition that three adjoining wildlife sanctuaries, namely Rani Durgavati, Rani-pur and Nauradehi to be integrated with the Panna Tiger Reserve. While on paper this will help in raising their protection status, this will not compensate for the inundation of large tracts of prime tiger land. There is a net loss in tiger habitat. There will reportedly be no new mining leases and power generation within the tiger reserve.

The Minister for Water Resources Uma Bharati had made this project a prestige issue and it was known that the MoEF&CC didn't have the powers to stand up to the water resources ministry led by a former Chief Minister and present Cabinet Minister.

BRICS Nations form joint working group for Environmental Cooperation

“Technology Transfer and Finance need to be Addressed to Achieve Goals”: Anil Madhav Dave

The Environment Ministers of BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) today agreed on a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) and announced setting up of a Joint Working Group to institutionalise mutual cooperation on environment-related issues. This was announced at the end of the BRICS Environment ministers meeting at Goa in India.

The choices made by the BRICS countries have a global significance as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, together account for 41.6% of global population, 29.31 % of total world's territory and about 22% of world's total GDP have rich biodiversity and natural capital.

The Ministerial Declaration of BRICS highlights key agreements, which were adopted with mutual consensus in the areas of - abatement and control of air and water pollution, efficient management of liquid and solid waste, climate change and conservation of biodiversity.

India's MoEF&CC minister Mr. Anil Madhav Dave briefed the media after the second BRICS Environment Ministers meet-

Conservation News

ing in Goa. This meeting was preceded by one-day of official level discussions between these countries.

Shri Dave said that technology transfer and finance are two issues that need to be addressed to achieve goals. He pointed out that BRICS has a major role to play and is a global idea. The Minister said that there was some agreement on areas such as air quality, water management and solid waste management in the meeting. The Environment Minister particularly emphasised that it is essential to preserve water bodies.

The Ministers of BRICS nations called upon the developed countries to honour their commitments relating to means of implementation and facilitate its operationalization, with a clear roadmap for the successful achievement of various global environmental agreements and Sustainable Development Goals.

The BRICS countries resolved to set up a platform for innovations, knowledge sharing and capacity building including a common website, network of technical institutions and undertake joint projects in areas of mutual interest.

The BRICS nations also reaffirmed their commitment to the Principles of Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992 including Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).



The Environment Ministers of BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)

Brazil was led by Ambassador Mr Fernando Coimbra, Head of the Office for International Affairs at the Ministry of Environment. Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Mr Sergey Donskoy led the Russian delegation, while the Chinese delegation was led by Mr Zhao Yingmin, Vice-Minister of Environment Protection and the South African delegation

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was led by Minister of Environmental Affairs, Ms. Edna Molewa, respectively.

Himachal Pradesh increases incentive by 66% to kill monkeys

Sept 21

The Government of Himachal Pradesh has increased the monetary incentive to kill monkeys by 66 per cent. In a chilling return of British era policies, the Himachal Pradesh Government has declared monkeys as Vermin and any person killing monkeys will be paid Rs. 500/- per monkey.

The Government had first announced the incentive earlier this month and now increased it at the behest of the hunting lobby. The incentive is supposed to cover the cost of ammunition and allied expenses incurred in hunting monkeys.

The Himachal Pradesh Government had earlier sought to declare Monkey as Vermin and the final approval was given by the BJP Government at the Centre. This approval was for a period of six months which ended on the 14th of September. The State Government has requested for a further one year increase in duration of this license to kill monkeys. Interestingly, the BJP Government is often in the news for persecuting people for cow slaughter. However, Hanuman the monkey God having universal following, the monkeys don't have any respite from slaughter.

This brings us to the dichotomy that India is today. unplanned and unrestrained urbanisation due to greed as well as need for housing an exploding human population, which by some estimates have touched 1.3 billion, the habitat for monkeys have shrunk. With most of our forests overrun by exotic weed infestations, the bio-diversity of our forests have reduced and monkeys don't find food throughout the year. They have taken to raiding crops and earning the ire of people. As usual, no body is bothered about solving the core problem and the killing spree continues.

Python near Gir dies after swallowing Nilgai and disturbance by people

A large python at Baliavad village on the outskirts of Gir was found to have swallowed a nilgai calf. The python was about 20 feet long.

Whenever a python swallows its prey, it lies motionless and its internal digestive juices take time to digest the prey. If the python is disturbed during this time, then it tries to regurgitate its prey. While regurgitating the prey the hoofs and horns of animals scratch and tear the python from the inside, killing it. If the python is not disturbed then it remains motionless and slowly digests the prey.

In this case, after getting information from the villagers, the forest department shifted the python. Shifting a heavy python with a much heavier prey would have injured it and it succumbed to its injuries.

Unfortunately, the awareness level of people in the villages is very low. Python is a protected species and any person either

alone or in a group, if found causing any distress to such a protected species ought to be punished. However, implementation of laws, especially wildlife laws are weak. So pythons continue to die in many places throughout India when they are found to have swallowed prey.

Mumbai BJP Leader apprehended in Wildlife Trafficking

A leader of the ruling party from Mumbai, Mayuresh Shirke was caught trafficking Star Tortoises. He was caught by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Board) trying to sell 24 star tortoises. The Star tortoises are often trafficked within as well as outside India.

He is said to advertise these tortoises in social media and then deliver in person. He was fined Rs. 25,000/- and released after giving an undertaking that he won't commit the crime again. Unfortunately, the forest department couldn't find any information about his supplier and accomplice and have assumed him to be a lone wolf.

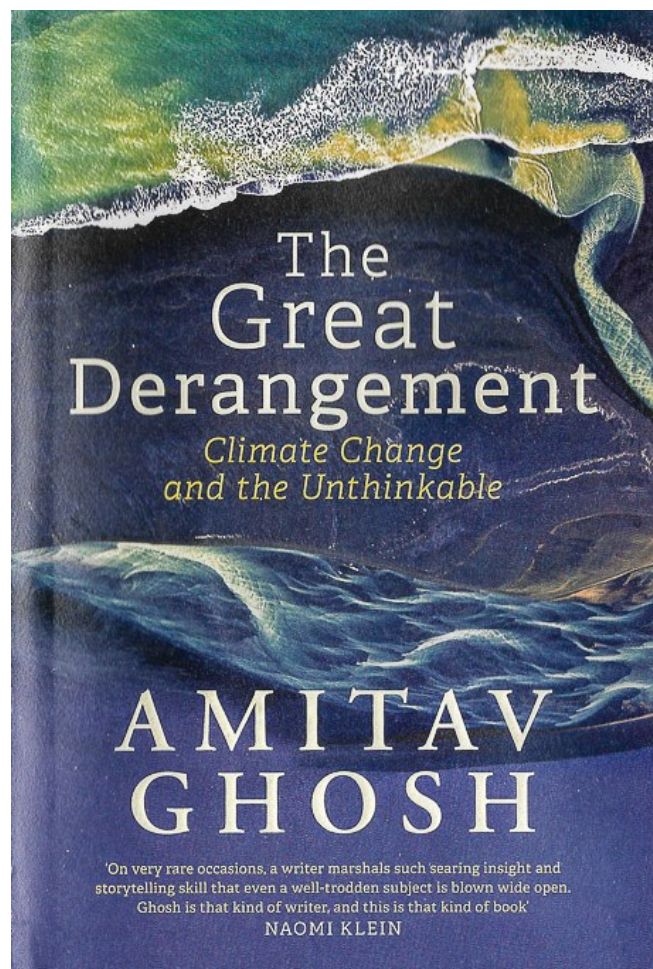
The Star tortoises are bought by people believing they will bring in good luck. This species have been at the receiving end of wildlife trade. They are packed into boxes and remain immobile for hours before they are delivered to their destinations. These wildlife trafficking can be stopped if people voluntarily provide information when they come across any such advertisement or find someone selling. Every small step can help save our wildlife if all of us pitch in.

Book Review -

The Great Derangement - Climate Change and the Unthinkable – By Amitav Ghosh

Amitav Ghosh needs no introduction. He is one of India's finest writers and is a Sahitya Akademi award winner. His book "The Hungry Tide" had just hit the stands when the tsunami caused unimaginable devastation and his subsequent series of articles on Tsunami had a profound impact on many of us.

We have been writing on issues of global warming and climate change. However, when such a famous author writes a book on Climate Change, it is an important event and the impact is far reaching. So it is indeed a shot in the arm for the climate change movement.



A literary figure like Amitav Ghosh writing on Climate Change surprises many people. Acknowledging it, he says "*climate change casts a much smaller shadow within the landscape of literary fiction than it does even in the public arena...*" he avers that the mere mention of climate change "*is often enough to relegate a novel or a short story to the genre of science fiction. It is as though in the literary imagination climate change were somehow akin to extraterrestrials or interplanetary travel... if the urgency of a subject were indeed a criterion of its seriousness, then, considering what climate change actually portends for the future of the earth, it should surely follow that this would be the principal preoccupation of writ-*

Book Review -

ers the world over- and this, I think, is very far from being the case". (page 150)

The author has done a thorough research and this book does a great job of explaining the various facets of climate change in a lucid, yet thorough manner so that even the most learned climate change activists will find it useful. The book is divided into three parts: Stories, History and Politics.

In Stories, the Author talks about the reason for writing the book by writing about his personal details, from his parents shifting from their ancestral village due to the river swallowing their village, and then recounts his experiences of a tornado and other stories.

He has termed his parents as the first ecological refugees who had to shift as the river swallowed their village.

Climate Change- Hand of Man

He eloquently writes about climate change as a man-made phenomena *"the events set in motion by global warming have a more intimate connection with humans than did the climatic phenomena of the past – this is because we have all contributed in some measure, great or small, to their making. They are the mysterious work of our own hands returning to haunt us in unthinkable shapes and forms"*. (page 43)

Modern day planning exacerbating Impact of Climate Change:

From seventeenth century onwards man started building cities on the seafronts. He says that *"through much of human history, people regarded the ocean with great wariness. Even when they made their living from the sea, through fishing or trade, they generally did not build large settlements on the water's edge: the great old port cities of Europe, like London, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Lisbon and Hamburg, are all protected from the open ocean by bays, estuaries, or deltaic river systems. The same is true of old Asian ports: Cochin, Surat, Tamluk, Dhaka, Mrauk-U, Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Malacca are all cases in point. It is as if, before the modern era, there had existed a general acceptance that provision had to be made for the unpredictable furies of the ocean – tsunamis, storm surges and the like"*. (page 49)

Highlighting the faulty role of modern day planners, who go scot free even though our cities come to a grinding halt in a climate change related disaster, the author writes *"a special place ought to be reserved in hell, I thought to myself, for planners who build with such reckless disregard for their surroundings"*. (page 48)

Visions of Climate change induced storm on Mumbai:

"Because of the density of its population and the importance of its institutions and industries, Mumbai represents an extraordinary, possibly unique, concentration of risk." He goes on to quote research from a paper by a Japanese research team which *"predicts a 46 per cent increase in tropical cyclone frequency in the Arabian Sea by the end of the next century, with a corresponding 31 per cent decrease in the Bay of Bengal....Another paper, by an American research team, con-*

cludes that cyclonic activity in the Arabian Sea is also likely to intensify because of the cloud of dust and pollution that now hangs over the Indian subcontinent and its surrounding waters: this too is contributing to changes in the region's wind patterns". (page 55)

"What might happen if a Category 4 or 5 storm, with 240 kmph or higher wind speeds, were to run directly into Mumbai?" "Many of Mumbai's tall buildings have large glass windows; few, if any, are reinforced. In a cyclone, these exposed expanses of glass will have to withstand not just hurricane-strength winds but also flying debris. Many of the dwellings in Mumbai's informal settlements have roofs made of metal sheets and corrugated iron; cyclone-force winds will turn these, and the thousands of billboards that encrust the city, into deadly projectiles, hurling them with great force at the glass-wrapped towers that soar above the city". (page 59)

"Of the world's megacities, Mumbai is one of the few that has a nuclear facility within its urban limits: the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay. To the north, at Tarapur, 94 kilometers from the city's periphery, lies another nuclear facility both these plants sit right upon the shoreline, as do many other nuclear installations around the world: these locations were chosen in order to give them easy access to water. With climate change many nuclear plants around the world are now threatened by rising seas. During massive storms there is a greatly increased chance of the loss of power at a nuclear power plant which significantly contributes to safety risks. Essential cooling systems could fail; safety systems could be damaged; contaminants could seep into the plant and radioactive water could leak out, as happened at the Fukushima Daiichi plant". (page 68-69)

Climate Change – Impact of Empire & Imperialism:

In the second part of his book titled History, Amitav Ghosh has also looked at climate change from the perspective of the empire and imperialism. He says the "discourse on global warming remains largely Eurocentric. This is why the case for Asia's centrality to the climate crisis does need to be laid out in some detail, even if it is at the cost of stating the obvious". (page 118)

"The West's largest contribution to the accumulation of greenhouse gases came about through the continuous expansion of the carbon footprint of what was about 30 per cent of the world's population at the beginning of the twentieth century. Asia's contribution, on the other hand, came about through a sudden but very small expansion in the footprint of a much larger number of people, perhaps as much as half of a greatly expanded global population, late in the twentieth century". The climate crisis would have come upon us sooner had Asia industrialised at the same time as the West. Imperialism played a huge role in delaying the growth of industrialisation in Asia, as a result of which the economies of Asia "launched upon a period of sustained economic expansion in the late 1980s. It is this acceleration that has dramatically shortened the time available to adapt to, or even recognize, the crisis for what it is." (page 123)

Amitav Ghosh has written in detail how the imperial forces restrained the economies of India, China, Burma etc. He explains the oil economy of Burma in the 1850s till 1885 when the British took over the oil fields of Yenangyaung which became the nucleus of Burmah-Shell corporation, the present day oil giant Shell. He explains the growth of shipbuilding in India and how the British Parliament passed the Registry Act to bar Indian ships and sailors from British ports.

Interestingly Amitav Ghosh also brings to the fore the moral angle against consumerism which restrained Asia's adoption of a high carbon lifestyle. He Quotes **Mahatma Gandhi** writing in 1928 *"God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. If an entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts"*. (page 150)

Amitav Ghosh infers that Gandhi's quote *"is striking because of the directness with which it goes to the heart of the matter: numbers. It is proof that Gandhi, like many others, understood intuitively what Asia's history would eventually demonstrate: that the universalist premise of industrial civilization was a hoax; that a consumerist mode of existence, if adopted by a sufficient number of people, would quickly become unsustainable and would lead, literally, to the devouring of the planet."* (page 150)

In my articles, I often talk about our culture and its underlying message of preserving our environment and wildlife. So it was interesting to find that Amitav Ghosh too shares similar views. In the third part of book titled Politics, he argues *"if religious groupings around the world can join hands with popular movements, they may well be able to provide the momentum that is needed for the world to move forward on drastically reducing emissions without sacrificing considerations of equity. That many climate activists are already proceeding in this direction is, to me, yet another sign of hope"*. (page 215)

Though I have extensively quoted the author, it is simply the tip of an iceberg. "The Great Derangement, Climate Change and the Unthinkable" by Amitav Ghosh is a seminal work.

This 275 pages long book comes in hard bound and is **Priced at Rs. 399/-** but is currently available in **Amazon at Rs. 231/- only**. I can't find a more appropriate gift item for many of friends and colleagues.

It is highly recommended as a must reading for all.

Equipment Discussions -

Canon Introduces High end C700 Cinema Camera

Canon has introduced a flagship model to its Cinema Camera series by announcing the EOS C700 in both EF and PL versions. This is primarily targeted to high end feature films, documentaries and TV serials.

The EOS 700 has a modular design and comes with a Super 35mm sensor. It is the first camera to feature a global shutter. So when you pan fast or if you are shooting high speed situations your shot will not distort.

C700 will have wide dynamic range of 15 stops and records internally to CFast 2.0 cards.



ProRes: Apart from XF-AVC codec, the C700 records to edit friendly Apple ProRes.

The C700 EF mount option will have the Dual Pixel AF. Unfortunately it won't have the touch screen like the one we have in the EOS 1DX Mark II.

One can change from EF to PL mounts as well as from standard CMOS to Global shutter in one of the Canon service centres at a cost.

Codex has brought out the Codex CDZ-36150 recorder which can integrate with the C700 seamlessly without cables. The C700 can record to the Codex recorders at 4.5K RAW at max 100 fps, 4K Raw at max 120 fps, 4K ProRes at 60 upto fps, 2K ProRes at a maximum of 240fps as well as XF-AVC at max 60fps.

Anamorphic: Canon has also included an anamorphic de-squeeze option in the C700 so one can shoot at 2.39:1 aspect

ratio preferred by many films.

Full HD high-frame-rate recording is possible at a maximum of 240 fps in a cropped mode.

Canon has also announced optional accessories for the C700 in form of a Full HD OLED viewfinder EVF-V70, Remote Operation Unit OU-700, Shoulder Support Unit SU-15, Shoulder Style Grip Unit SG-1 and B4 mount adapters MO-4E/MO-4P.

Price: EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL will be priced at \$35000 USD.

The EOS C700 GS PL will be priced at \$38000 USD.

Availability: December 2016 for EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL

If you want the Global Shutter one, then wait for Jan 2017.

Preorder Link in B&H: <http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Ca...DFF/d10-v1-t12>

I would have loved it more if the C700 had a full frame sensor i.e. 36x24mm with a windowed S-35 mode for the legacy cinema lenses. May be later Canon can give us some 6.5K in the full frame 36mmx24mm sensor and a windowed S-35 mode with 4.5K without any line skipping. It would work very well with the Canon prime lens line as well as all the still EF lenses. Along with the new generation sharp optics being launched, the full frame mode can be a great differentiator for Canon. It will further help in adoption of the EF format as well.

Press Release

Canon U.S.A., Inc. Introduces New Flagship EOS C700 Cinema Camera*

Ideal for Major 4K Cinema, Television, and On-Demand Streaming Productions

MELVILLE, N.Y., September 1, 2016 – Canon U.S.A., Inc., a leader in digital imaging solutions, announced today the next step in the evolution of the Cinema EOS family of professional cinematography products with the new EOS C700, EOS C700 PL and EOS C700 GS PL cinema cameras.

Featuring a completely new, customizable, modular design, the EOS C700 meets the demands of today's productions – from feature films to documentaries to episodic dramas. The EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL cameras feature a Super 35mm 4.5K sensor¹ with wide dynamic range, and can be ideal for productions requiring 4K UHD TV or 4K DCI cinema deliverables. The EOS C700 GS PL features a Super 35mm 4K sensor with a global shutter to enable the distortion-free capture of subjects moving at high speeds. In addition to supporting the earlier XF-AVC² recording format, the cameras also support Apple® ProRes.

Recognizing that customers today demand flexibility and the ability to respond to the changing needs of productions, the EOS C700 allows users to convert between EF mount and PL mounts, and between a standard CMOS image sensor and a global shutter CMOS image sensor at Canon service facilities³. The EF lens mount provides compatibility with Canon's diverse lineup of over 70 interchangeable EF lenses as well as enabling use of Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology. While the EOS C700 PL and EOS C700 GS PL allow use of industry-standard PL lenses and compatibility with Cooke /i metadata

communication technology.

For those wanting to shoot and deliver High Dynamic Range (HDR)⁴ content, the EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL are ideal – providing 15 stops of latitude⁵, Canon’s proprietary Log Gammas (Canon Log3, Canon Log2 and Canon Log) and renowned color science. Additionally, these cameras seamlessly integrate with Canon’s professional 4K displays (DP-V2420, DP-V2410 or DP-V1770) for on-set color management and review that conforms to SMPTE ST 2084⁶ standards of HDR display.

To complement these powerful new acquisition tools, Canon has turned to its trusted partner Codex to provide a fully-integrated (no cables) recording and workflow option. The combination of the EOS C700 camera with the optional Codex CDX-36150 recorder allows for high-speed 4.5K RAW recording at up to 100FPS, 4K RAW at up to 120FPS, 4K ProRes at up to 60FPS, 2K ProRes at up to 240FPS and XF-AVC at up to 60FPS.

Canon’s new EOS C700, EOS C700 PL and EOS C700 GS PL are the first Cinema EOS cameras to support anamorphic shooting by utilizing a “de-squeeze” function for monitoring⁷, making possible the creation of images with the 2.39:1 aspect ratio typical of cinema productions. Furthermore, enabling Full HD high-frame-rate recording at a maximum of 240 fps (crop⁸), the camera enables smooth playback, even when slowed down, for great emotional visual expression.

Along with the announcement of these cameras, Canon is also introducing optional accessories OLED 1920x1080 Electronic View Finder EVF-V70, Remote Operation Unit OU-700, Shoulder Support Unit SU-15, Shoulder Style Grip Unit SG-1 and B4 mount adapters MO-4E/MO-4P.

The EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL are currently expected to go on sale in December 2016, while the EOS C700 GS PL is currently expected to go on sale in January 2017.

The EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL will have a list of **\$35,000.00** each and the EOS C700 GS PL will have a list price of **\$38,000.00**.

1 4.5K RAW recording will be supported following a firmware update (currently scheduled to be released at the end of March 2017, see chart below).

2 Canon’s proprietary video format that efficiently compresses video data.

3 Conversions will incur a fee and will be handled by Canon service facilities.

4 High Dynamic Range refers to a technique that enhances the contrast between light and dark values (the dynamic range) of an image.

5 15 stops achievable in EOS C700 and EOS C700 PL models in Canon Log2 mode. EOS C700 GS PL achieves 14 stops.

6 The wide dynamic range imaging standard recommended by the Society of Motion Picture & Television Engineers.

7 A lens that enables shooting with landscape-orientation compression and makes possible a characteristic blur effect.

8 A shooting function that creates a pseudo-telephoto effect using a portion of the sensor area.

The following table shows C700 resolution, data rates, frame rates etc :

Format	Recording media/recorder	Resolution	Data spec	Bit depth	Max. Frame Rate	Available/Update
ProRes	CFast	4K / QFHD	ProRes 422 HQ	10 bit	~30 fps	Available
		2K / FHD	ProRes 422 HQ	10 bit	~60 fps	Available
			ProRes 4444	12 bit	~60 fps	Available
		Crop 2K / FHD	ProRes 422	10 bit	~180 fps	Available
	Codex recorder CDX-36150	4K / QFHD	ProRes 422 HQ	10 bit	~60 fps	March Update
		2K / FHD	ProRes 422 HQ	10 bit	~120 fps	March Update
			ProRes 4444 XQ	12 bit	~60 fps	March Update
			ProRes 4444	12 bit	~60 fps	March Update
		Crop 2K / FHD	ProRes 422 HQ	10 bit	~240 fps	March Update
RAW	Codex recorder CDX-36150	4.5K	RGB Bayer RAW	—	~100 fps	March Update
		4.2K (GS)		—	~100 fps	March Update
		4K		—	~120 fps	Available
		4.5K anamorphic		—	~120 fps	March Update
		Crop 2K		—	~240 fps	March Update
	Ext. RAW Recorder	4K	RGB Bayer RAW	—	~60 fps	Available
XF-AVC	CFast	4K / QFHD	YCC422 Intra	10 bit	~60 fps	Available
		2K / FHD	YCC422 Intra	10 bit	~120 fps	Available
			YCC422 LongGOP	10 bit	~60 fps	Available
						(Slow & Fast motion Not supported)
			RGB444 Intra	12 bit	~60 fps	Available
				10 bit	~60 fps	Available
		Crop 2K / FHD	YCC422 Intra	10 bit	~240 fps	Available
		FHD Interlace	YCC422 LongGOP	10 bit	60i / 50i	Available
						(Slow & Fast motion Not supported)
		Crop FHD Interlace	YCC422 LongGOP	10 bit	60i / 50i	Available
						(Slow & Fast motion Not supported)
XF-AVC (Proxy)	SD Card	2K / FHD	YCC420 LongGOP	8 bit	~60 fps	Available
						(Slow & Fast motion Not supported)

Equipment Discussions -

Canon announces EOS M5 Mirrorless camera and Kit lens

Canon has announced a new mirrorless camera called EOS M5. Canon had been ambivalent about the Mirrorless cameras. However, finally Canon seems to be waking up to the demand with a well rounded effort. It would have been awesome if Canon would have introduced 4K Video. Nevertheless following are the specifications:



Sensor: 24.2 MP CMOS

Sensor Size: APS-C (1.6 crop), 22.3 x 14.9mm

Processor: Digic 7

ISO: 100- 25600

Still shooting burst speed: 7 fps. It can shoot at 9fps with AF locked.

Autofocus: Dual Pixel AF

Video: 1080p at 50fps/60fps

Image Stabilisation: 5 axis image stabilisation

EVF: 2.3m dots electronic view finder

LCD: 3.2 inch tilting touch screen LCD

Built in WiFi, NFC

Recording modes: Still shots can be recorded either in jpeg or RAW mode. Videos are recorded in .MP4

Memory card: SD, SDXC, SDHC

Weight: 428 gms

Canon has also announced a kit lens of EF-M 15-45mm f3.5-6.3 IS STM Lens

The image stabilisation in this lens is rated at 3.5 stops

Price: Body costs \$979 US dollars. With 15-45 Kit lens the EOS M5 costs \$1099 US Dollars

Link: <https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/produ...990/KBID/I3252>

Equipment Discussions -

Panasonic announces development of GH5 Mirrorless Camera

Panasonic today announced that it has developed a new mirrorless camera which it calls DSLM (Digital Single Lens Mirrorless) camera LUMIX GH5.

The GH5 can record 4K video in 50p/60p in 10 bits and in 4:2:2 colour space.



Also, Panasonic says that it can extract 18 Megapixel still image from a burst mode and it calls it 6K Photo. The photo resolution is 6000x3000 pixels. No one calls still photograph resolution in terms of “K”. So this is extremely creative marketing from Panasonic. The GH5 camera would be available sometime in 2017.

The Panasonic GH4 produced sharp files and was popular for aerial photography and was a popular camera. However, it had poor high ISO ability. ISO 800 was barely usable. The colour science was also not great. So hopefully the GH5 will be better.

As they say, the proof of the pudding is in eating it. So we will wait for the GH5 to be launched and ask our readers to not just get swayed by marketing material. Nevertheless, producing the Panasonic’s press release.

PRESS RELEASE

September 19, 2016

Panasonic Develops the World's First*1

4K 60p/50p Video Recording Digital Single Lens

Mirrorless Camera LUMIX GH5 Featuring '6K PHOTO'*2

Panasonic today announced that it has developed a new Digital Single Lens Mirrorless (DSLM) Camera LUMIX GH5 that is

capable of recording smooth, high-precision 4K 60p/50p and faithful 4:2:2 10-bit 4K video*3 for the first time in the world*1.

It also features '6K PHOTO'*2 which extracts approx.18-megapixel still images from ultra high-quality video with approx. 9 times the pixel count of Full-HD. The new LUMIX GH5 is scheduled for commercialization and introduction to the global market in early 2017.

Panasonic has been committed to the development of innovative digital cameras under the theme "Create a new photo culture in the digital era." The world's first Digital Single Lens Mirrorless camera DMC-G1 was introduced in 2008*4 and the subsequent DMC-GH1 achieved the world's first Full HD video recording in 2009*5.

In 2014, Panasonic introduced the DMC-GH4, which realized 4K 30p/25p video recording for the first time in the industry*6. At the same time, Panasonic proposed a new and unique method of photography 'called 4K PHOTO' which allows users to capture fleeting photographic moments that even the eyes cannot catch in 4K resolution at 30 fps to save as high-quality photos.

As a result, the DMC-GH4 is highly acclaimed for its exceptional performance in both photography and videography by a wide range of professional users worldwide – not only photographers but also cinematographers in the film production field, as well as emerging photo/video-hybrid creators.

By advancing Panasonic technologies, such as digital signal processing and heat dissipation, and packing them into the compact, lightweight body of a Digital Single Lens Mirrorless camera, the LUMIX GH5 enables 4K 60p/50p and 4:2:2 10-bit 4K video recording*3, which has never before been achieved *1. With this unprecedented video recording performance, Panasonic aims to further capitalize on the strength that it has achieved in the film production industry.

In the LUMIX GH5, the conventional '4K PHOTO' function is dramatically advanced to form '6K PHOTO'*2 which lets the user cut a still image out of ultra high-quality 18-megapixel video with approx. 9 times the pixel count than Full-HD. Taking advantage of its high-speed, long-time burst shooting capability, spur-of-the-moment shots can be saved in beautiful photos with higher resolution that complies with larger-sized printing by substantially increasing the resolution from approx.8-megapixel (4K PHOTO) to approx.18-megapixel (6K PHOTO*2)

Furthermore, approx.8-megapixel 4K PHOTO can be captured at 60 fps.

The LUMIX GH5 goes on show at Photokina 2016, which will be held at Koelnmesse, Germany, through 20-25 September in 2016, together with the new LEICA DG VARIO-ELMARIT F2.8-4.0 Lens Series. Achieving both high optical performance and a compact size, the LEICA DG VARIO-ELMARIT F2.8-4.0 Lens Series includes a new 12-60mm standard zoom lens, 8-18mm wide zoom lens and 50-200mm telephoto zoom lens that will be showcased as a reference exhibit at the Panasonic booth

*1 For a Digital Single Lens Mirrorless camera, as of 19 September, 2016 (Panasonic survey).

*2 "6K PHOTO" is a high speed burst shooting function that cuts a still image out of a 4:3 or 3:2 video footage with 18-megapixel

(Approx.6000 x 3000 effective pixel count) that 6K image manages.

The name '6K PHOTO' is tentative.

*3 In 4K/30p, 25p, 24p, 23.98p video recording.

*4 For a Digital Interchangeable Lens System Camera, as of 12 September, 2008 (Panasonic survey).

*5 For a Digital Single Lens Mirrorless camera, as of 3 March, 2009 (Panasonic survey).

*6 For a Digital Single Lens Mirrorless camera, as of 7 February, 2014 (Panasonic survey).

•Leica is a registered trademark of Leica Microsystems IR GmbH.

•ELMARIT is a registered trademark of Leica Camera AG.

•Details of the product specifications, the date of release and the price are yet to be advised.

Equipment Discussions -

Go Pro Hero 5 Black

Go Pro has launched an update to the popular Hero 4 Black by launching the Hero 5 Black camera.

<http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/go-pro-hero-4-impressions/>

The Hero 5 Black can now be submerged to a depth of 33 feet without any housing. In the Hero 4 Black, housing was mandatory if you wanted to submerge it in water.



The Hero 4 Black lacked a touch screen. So I had paid 75 USD to buy a touch screen. The Hero 5 Black has a touch screen included so you can see your subject.

There is a built in voice control feature which allows you to start recording. So you don't need to take your hands off. So if you are riding, skiing, surfing etc where taking your hands off at times may not be a good option, the voice control feature will help. At times when I have strapped my Go Pro Hero 4 to a shaky bamboo, pressing the record button induces some vibration. In those times, the voice control feature will be of help.

I am not sure from how far the voice control mode will work.

My main grouse with the Hero 5 Black is that Go Pro hasn't changed the hardware. It didn't increase the data rate. 60Mb/s is low for a 4K video. This should have been increased in the Hero 5 Black. But it remains unchanged.

The Go Pro also retains the same fish eye lens in the Hero 5 Black. Many times I don't shoot in 4K with the Hero 4 Black due to the fish eye. I prefer to shoot in the 2.7K mode in Normal and then do the correction during post processing. Now, Go Pro has included a new mode in the 2.7K and 1080p called the Linear Mode. In this mode through software the camera corrects the barrel distortion. This again is more of a consumer centric approach and will help people who can't or prefer not to spend more time in post processing.

The Go Pro Hero 5 has a digital image stabilisation mode. So it will help in correcting the shake during handheld. Again, if Go Pro can do it with a tiny phone, then I can do better image stabilisation in post. So it is again tuned towards amateurs.

Go Pro Hero has built in GPS and the moment you start charging your camera, it can automatically start using the wi-fi to upload the shots into the Go Pro cloud, if you have subscribed to it at a fee of \$5 usd per month. Some people may go for it, but I am not sure as to why someone should go for it at such a cost.

In the Photo mode, Go Pro has included a new RAW photo mode with an extension of .GPR

So if you are into clicking still shots with the Go Pro, then the RAW mode can provide a bit more control over the shots.

There is a new WDR (Wide Dynamic Range) mode in the Go Pro 5 still photography settings. It is meant to capture more details if the scene has got both bright areas and dark shadows.

The Time lapse mode is the one which is often used in the Go Pros and the Go Pro 5 retains it.

The Go Pro app called CAPTURE can help sync your smart phone or tab with the Hero 5 and you can have live preview of the shots and videos as well as full control over wi-fi. Earlier I had issues with the Go Pro Hero 4 Black switching on the record button using the android phone. So hope the CAPTURE does a better job.

QUIK is another app to quickly edit or trim and share the shots and videos.

Audio:

Audio was always the pain point of the Go Pros. Till this update Go Pro had never cared to improve their audio. However, in the Hero 5, Go Pro claims that they have included three microphones. In normal wind speed, the Hero 5 will have stereo sound. A software will automatically sense if the wind speed is high and then find out which of the microphones is better and use that sound as mono.

Media:

It will record to microSD card slot with Class 10 or UHS-I rating.

Battery:

1220 mAh lion-ion rechargeable.

Price:

The Price of the Go Pro Hero 5 Black is now \$399.99 USD. Remember the Hero 4 Black was launched at 499 USD and I had spent \$75 USD for the LCD at the back. However, competition is now higher and along with lower sales of Hero Session, Go Pro didn't have any option to price the Hero 5 Black higher.

At this price, the Hero 5 Black should find many buyers.

B&H Link: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Go_Pro_Hero_5_Black/Ntt/Go%2BPro%2BHero%2B5%2BBlack/N/o/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFP/d10-v1-t12

Equipment Discussions -

Sony introduces the new 42.4 MP A9II DSLR camera

Sony has launched the A99II DSLR camera with 42.4 Megapixels UHD 4K video capabilities.



Sensor: Exmor R back illuminated CMOS

Megapixel: 42.4 MP (7952 x 5304)

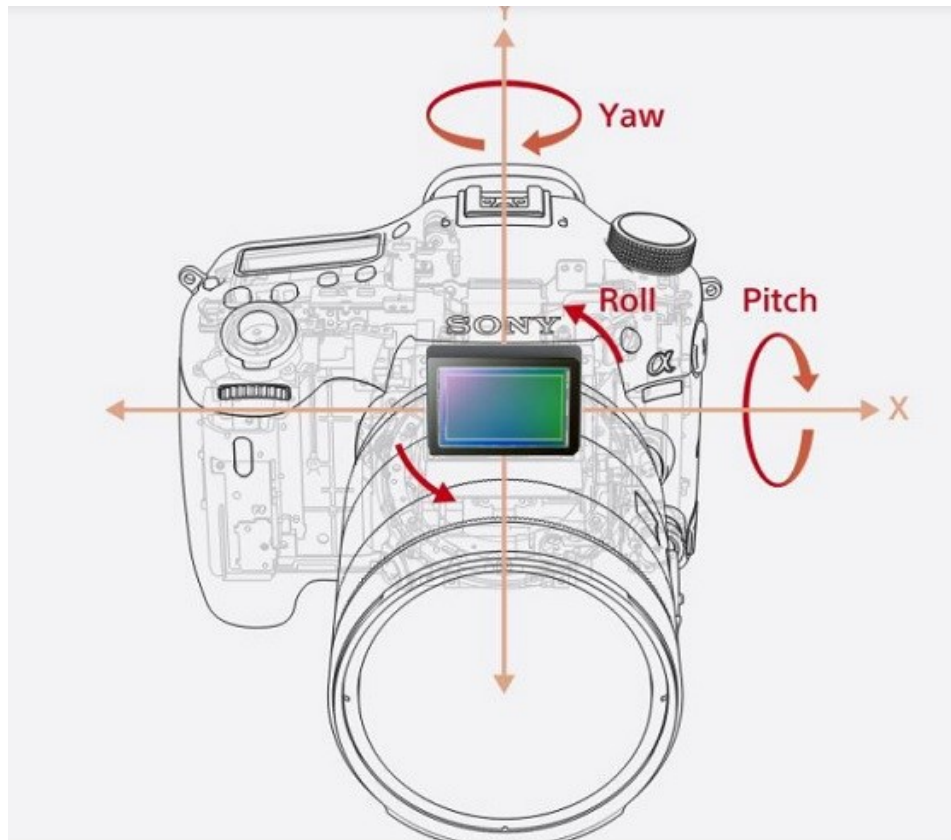
Processor: Bionz X image processor

ISO: From 100-25600 which is expandable to a maximum of ISO 102400

Stills Burst speed: 12 fps. This is indeed huge as the processor has to process 42.4 Megapixels at 12 frames per second.

AF: Hybrid phase detection AF with 79 point AF sensor and 399 point on chip focus system. The autofocus will also work in low lights at -4EV.

Image Stabilisation: 5 axis SteadyShot stabilisation system built-in with upto 4.5 stops. This will also work when third party lenses are used with adapters, including lenses with built-in image stabilisation.



EVF: 2.36m dots XGA OLED

LCD: 3 inch rear tiltable LCD with 1228.8k dots

Video: UHD ie 3840x 2160 at upto 30p. This can be done either using the full frame sensor or using S-35 section of the sensor and oversampling it.

The video is recorded in 4:2:0 colour space at 8 bits when recording internally and 4:2:2 externally through the HDMI.

While shooting in HD (1920x1080p) the Sony A99 II can shoot upto 120 frames per second (in NTSC) and 100p in PAL mode.

Like all DSLRs the Sony A99 II has a 3.5mm microphone jack and one can use an additional adapter Sony XLR-K2M to use XLR microphones.

Sony offers S-Gamut3.Cine and S-Log 3 profiles. The log profiles come in handy in capturing a wider dynamic range of 14 stops. Its competitor Canon never provides log profiles in DSLRs except for the 1DC which is a Cinema badged DSLR. Panasonic provides log at an additional cost. So the log profiles of Sony stands out.

Slow and quick motion from 1-120 frames per second setting is available.

This camera should come in handy for still photographers as well as videographers. Unfortunately, the data rate while shooting video is only 100Mb/s. Even a tiny Go Pro shoots with 60Mb/s. So this appears to be a form of limiting the video and protecting the Sony FS5 camera.

Nevertheless, it has the potential to become popular with amateur photographers and videographers.

The weight is **849 gms**. It costs **\$3199.95** US dollars.

B&H Link: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Sony_A99_II/Ntt/Sony%2BA99%2BII/N/o/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFP/d10-v1-t12

Equipment Discussions -

Wooden Camera

Wooden Camera has been taken over by Vitec Group.

Wooden Camera is an american manufacturer of camera support equipment. I use many of their camera base plates, dove tails, handles and fixtures with my cinema cameras. It started manufacturing for RED cameras and quickly moved to create an accessory line up for other cameras as well as for DSLRs for filming. Recently it had announced the Z box, a clip on matte box.



Vitec Group is a conglomerate which control some of the famous names in the world of Filming and Photography. It owns brands like OConnor, Sachtler, Manfrotto, Vinten, Gitzo, SmallHD, Teradek, Paralinx, Anton/Bauer, Litepanels, Offhollywood and a few other names.

Following is the short mail that I got in my inbox from Wooden Camera announcing the acquisition by Vitec.

"We are excited to announce that Wooden Camera is now part of The Vitec Group! Wooden Camera was founded in 2011 with our first product the A-Box, which converts the RED Epic's 3.5mm audio input to XLR. We have since grown organically and now have a product line that includes baseplates, matteboxes, power distribution, cages, and much more. Customers already turn to Wooden Camera when they need to mount a SmallHD monitor, Teradek transmitter, Anton Bauer battery and other items. Now as an official part of the Vitec Group we look forward to many new possibilities.

What's changing? In short, nothing will change with regards to our customer service, innovative new products, and speed of delivery. You will still be able to purchase online or through our great dealer network!

Equipment Discussions -

Go Pro Karma Drone

Go Pro has announced its much awaited quadcopter named “Karma”. This is a very unique design and is foldable. The rotors can be folded in as well as the feet. The overall size becomes small and can be packed within a small backpack. Check the video on the below link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=330&v=CjNjcrQZtd8



The new Go Pro 5 fits in into it using a gimbal and one can use a small controller with smart phone type touch screen controls. Go Pro seems to have learnt a thing or two from 3DR with whom they tied up to create the 3DR Solo quadcopter. So you find the same Cable cam, Orbit and Reveal controls.

Interestingly it allows through the Go Pro Passenger app, the use of another smartphone so that another person can view the live feed as well as control the camera. So the pilot can focus on the flying. This in my view is a bit better than the 3DR Solo.

There is an automatic take off and landing through a single button. It appears that the Karma drone can take off from any surface unlike the 3DR Solo which needs to have a firm surface to take off.

There is a return home mode when the battery runs low. It is to be seen how accurately it is able to retrace its steps. These quadcopters use GPS and depending upon the number of satellites, the accuracy increases. However, in the 3DR Solo I have found that even when there are signals from 13 satellites, the return home can result in the copter landing slightly away in a different spot.

Go Pro has designed the gimbal to fit with an additional handle and then it can serve as a handheld camera when you are not flying the drone. This would be a very useful tool in the hands of filmmakers.

The battery life is claimed to be 20 mins. The pricing is very good. The entire package of the Karma Drone along with the handle and Go Pro 5 Black is priced at only 1099 usd and without the **Go Pro 5 Black it is priced at 799 USD.**

B&H Link: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Karma_drone/Ntt/Karma%2Bdrone/N/0/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFF/d10-v1-t12

Equipment Discussions -

Canon Launches XC15 4K UHD Camcorder

Canon has launched an update to the XC10 camcorder and has named it XC15.

The XC15 retains its compact form factor and now has XLR inputs for audio by using a MA-499 XLR microphone adapter. This XLR adapter can also be used with the C300 Mark II body.

The Canon XC15 camcorder shoots UHD 4K video at upto 29.97 fps. For PAL country like India, we can use 25p.

The XC15 comes with an integrated f2.8-f5.6 /8.9-89mm lens which is equivalent to 27.3 to 273mm in 35mm.



The XC15 has a 1 inch CMOS sensor. So generally one can get a deep depth of field with this camera. The Digic DV5 processor is used in this camera.

The good thing is XC15 has got waveform monitor which one expects in standard video cameras.

There are separate focus and zoom rings and one can decide to go fully manual focus mode.

The XC15 has got both CFast and SD cards. 4K video is recorded to CFast cards in .MXF at up to 305 Mbps. The codec is H.264-based, IntraFrame, 4:2:2 colourspace and is in 8-bits.

The 1080p video is recorded to the SD cards at up to 50 Mbps in an H.264-based, Long-GOP, 4:2:2, 8-bit codec, also

in .MXF. Still images are written to SD cards. This helps in ensuring the CFast card solely for 4K video. Wish this option had been there in the EOS 1DXII as I often find my stills and 4K video mixed up in the card making filming a pain.

The ISO range is from 160 to 20,000.

Price: Canon has announced a list price of \$3000 USD however according to B&H the price is \$**2399** US dollars.

B&H: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Canon_XC15/Ntt/Canon%2BXC15/N/o/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFF/d10-v1-t12

PRESS RELEASE

Canon's New Lightweight, Compact XC15 4K UHD Video Camcorder Ideal for News and Video Production

XLR Microphone Input Provides Audio Support in Addition to High-Quality 4K UHD Video Capture

MELVILLE, N.Y., September 1, 2016 – Canon U.S.A., Inc., a leader in digital imaging solutions, announced today the XC15 4K Video Camcorder, a 4K UHD digital video camcorder for professional use that achieves high-image quality with a lightweight, compact body.

The new Canon XC15, which builds on the XC10 4K UHD digital video camcorder announced in April 2015, enables shooting with an external microphone through an XLR input and features the selection of visual-expression "Look" modes, including modes that allow it to match the look of other Canon professional cameras, making it ideal for use as a "B"-camera as well as for media and video-content productions.

The Canon XC15 ships with the MA-400 microphone adapter that, when attached, enables shooting with XLR-input microphones used in a wide range of media and content-creation applications. As a result, the camcorder supports the production of content that combines both high-image quality and high-sound quality with reduced noise. The MA-400 is also compatible with the EOS C300 Mark II camera.

Thanks to its high-sensitivity one-inch CMOS sensor and DIGIC DV 5 image processing platform with high calculation-processing power, the new XC15 is capable of capturing high-image quality and low-noise 4K UHD video. Additionally, the camcorder features a compact, lightweight body design, measuring approximately 5.0 x 4.1 x 4.8 inches (WxHxD) and weighs approximately 2.1 pounds while also sporting a 10x optical zoom lens¹, which facilitates shooting in confined spaces and environments that demand mobility.

The Canon XC15 4K UHD professional video camcorder is scheduled to be available in September 2016 for a list price of **\$3,000.00.*** For more information, please visit usa.canon.com

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: M.Krishnan: 'The Stripe-necked Mongoose'

The Sunday Statesman: 6-January-1963 (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)

THE STRIPE-NECKED MONGOOSE

"THE English word 'mongoose' comes from the Marathi "mangus", meaning mongoose or mungooser (whichever way you prefer to spell it), and in spite of Ogden Nash's "Portugoose" the plural is not "mongeese" but "mongooses". That is as far as etymology goes in getting to know the creature.

Legends so much farther, but curiously enough it is the recent ones that are responsible for much mongoose lore. The Kiplings, father and son, drew and wrote about the fascinating little hunter as only they could, but I am afraid I have little enthusiasm for the Mongoose-Cobra fights illustrated with vivid photographs that have appeared recently in our magazines -- even Ylla's pictures are obvious fakes; in these vivid pictures you see the mongoose flying through the air at the cobra which with open mouth and spread hood, is poised of the strike.



Striped-necked Mongoose

Image Courtesy - Shyamala Kumar

Now, everyone knows that it is not mongooses but Dutchmen that fly. That is how the photograph is contrived -- the snake-charmer throws the mongoose at the cobra and you take your picture while it is still in the air.

The hero of cobra-mongoose battles is the Common Mongoose, the kind that snake-charmers have and that is common in the scrub and around the human settlements. There are several other kinds in our country, some of them much larger. The largest of them all is the Stripe-necked Mongoose which is full twice the size of a big Common Mongoose and is essentially is a forest animal living along the Western Ghats and foothills. Recently I had quite a close and long look at it in a jungle. I was sitting in a cleft in a big rock, and screened by a small bush, wanting for a herd of Chital that never came, when this

Mongoose turned up. It was a big male, over a yard long and powerfully built, and dark chestnut-roan in colour -- it was not very much longer than a big Common Mongoose though it was longer in the body, but it was much heavier built. Subsequently I discovered from booklore that the adult male of this species weighs around seven pounds (twice as much as the Common Mongoose), but asked to guess its weight then, I would have put it at 12 pounds at least -- the luxuriant, bristly coat adds considerably to the impression of heaviness.

The longitudinal black stripe along the neck behind the ear was very conspicuous and unaware of my proximity it proceeded to overturn the stones at the foot of my rock and dig the sandy soil below, using its sturdy nose quite as much as its front paws for excavation. Very soon it found what it was looking for and crunched it up audibly with quick champs of its strong jaws -- a beetle grub, apparently, to judge by circumstantial evidence. The it lay down flat on its belly on the sandy ground, with its limb spread sideways, for a little relaxation, but it was not asleep -- it held its head raised and its alert little eyes were watchful.

After a while it got up, shook itself, and waddled away, the long bushy tail and the long muscular body lending even its waddle a fluent grace. I stayed put, hoping it would come back, moving my camera so as to cover the ground at the foot of the rock and, sure enough, it returned but not along its line of departure -- it came behind and above me, on the rock, took a good long look at me crouched in the cleft below, sniffed loudly and contemptuously, and waddled away!

Though seemingly slower in its movements than the Common Mongoose, and more muscle-bound, it is capable of equal speed and agility, as I have noticed on occasion. But I don't think it is an equally good climber of trees, being so heavy-built.

It is a great wanderer. Years ago one afternoon, I followed a Striped-necked Mongoose for almost an hour, in the open jungle around a plantation. At first it was acutely aware of my presence but after a furlong it apparently decided that I was a harmless vegetarian, not worth bothering about, and went about its affairs, ignoring me, stopping every now and again to investigate a bush or a heap of stones or to dig in loose earth -- but it kept moving restlessly, rarely stopping for even a minute in any one place.

Once it stopped for quite sometime, well over five minutes, at a bush, and ate something zestfully. I was too far away to see things clearly, and dared not move closer for fear it should take alarm, but when it left the bush I inspected it and found a creeper festooning the bush, a creeper with pendent fruits, encased in lampshade-like, inflated calyces. The mongoose had eaten the fruits of this creeper -- the "Cape Gooseberry" (*Phicalis peruivana*) -- as I could tell from the seeds on the earth below. In spite of its frequent stops, that mongoose took me over three miles in the hour I followed it before disappearing into heavy cover.

This mongoose goes in for a certain amount of vegetarian food as well, though it is a hunter basically, like all mongooses. I believe it is quite capable of killing prey larger than itself, such as mouse deer and no doubt it occasionally kills snakes as well.

When I was a boy there was a magnificent specimen of the Stripe-necked Mongoose in the Mysore Zoo, a gift from a British Army Officer who had left India. This mongoose would eat bananas and groundnut with evident relish, and was given to an impatient, loud snuffle if I delayed the offer of the banana in my hand too long -- this is the only sound I have heard from this species of mongoose. But I remember that even when I went empty-handed to its cage, it welcomed me and would come up to have its neck tickled."

- M. Krishnan

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Regards,

Sabyasachi Patra

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