

'Got goosebumps when I spotted tigers in the wild'

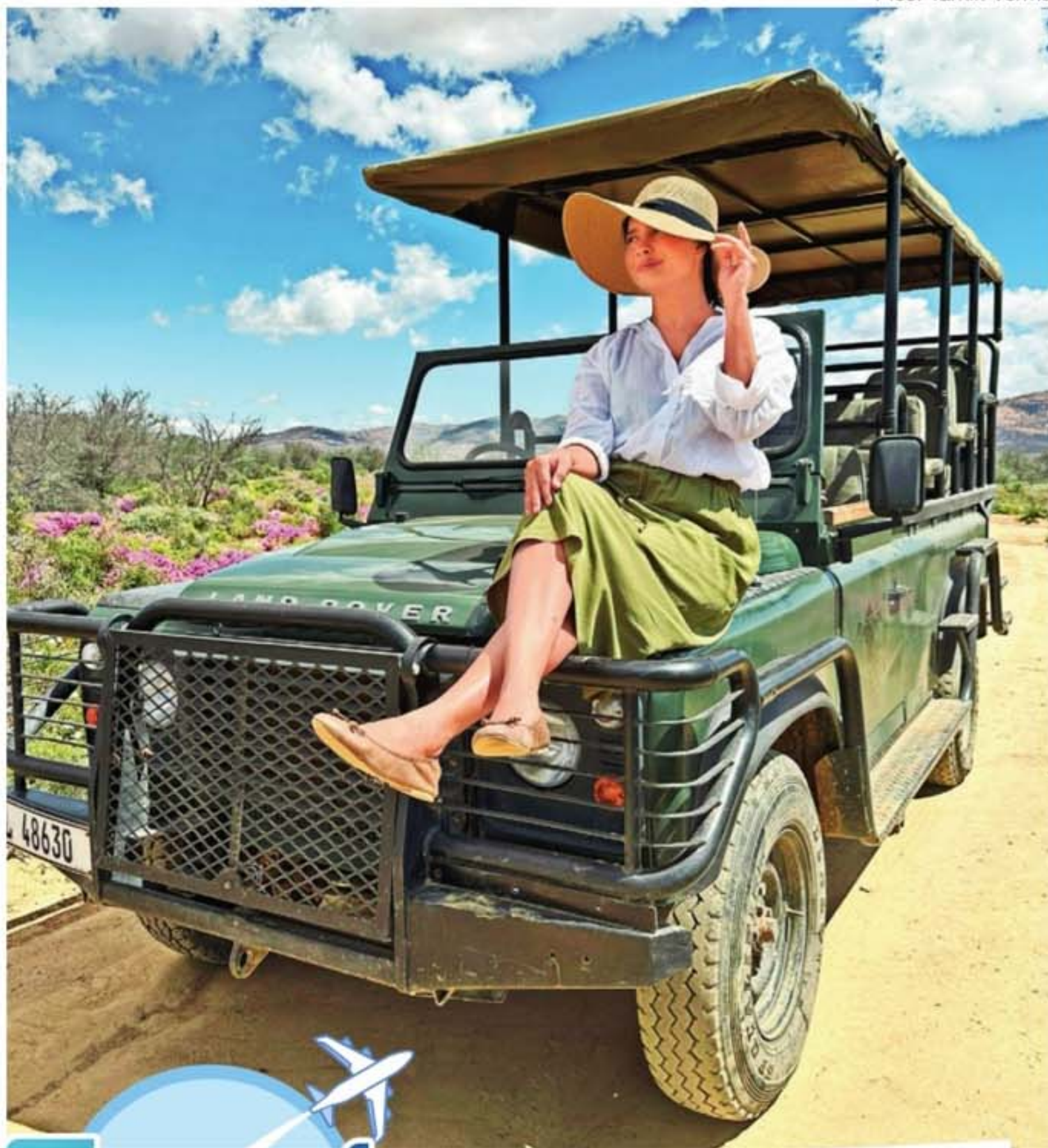
Pics: Tarkik Verma

Soumitra Das

Bhakti Kubavat, who recently "spotted tigers in the wild for the first time", says that she was "thrilled about the entire experience." The *Vitamin She* and *Lapet* actress, who visited the Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh with her family, shares, "I had visited the Ranthambore National Park earlier but did not spot any tigers there. This time, we got lucky and I got goosebumps when I spotted these majestic animals."

Bhakti adds, "It's like watching Taj Mahal for the first time. You may have seen so many photos, but when you actually see a tiger, the feeling can't be described in words. During summer, there is always a higher probability of spotting tigers, especially near the water bodies. We were lucky to spot R2, a huge male tiger. We also saw Laila (a tigress) with two of her cubs. Spotting four tigers at the same time is rare and we were very lucky. They were playing and swimming in the water, and it was an experience of a lifetime. It's a huge jungle and we had a great time during both the safaris (morning and evening)."

A safari is not just about experiencing wildlife. It's also about reconnecting with your own self and nature. Such family trips are very important to create memories



Travel
Diaries



We spotted wild boars and other animals during the safari. The way other animals alert each other when a tiger is around is so fascinating! The whole experience was beautiful

Bhakti also spotted other animals including elephants and wild boars during the safari



32 monkeys found dead in J'khand well

Ranchi/Daltonganj: Searing heat drove 32 monkeys to jump into a well in Palamu to slake their thirst. They drowned, report **Jaideep Deogharia & MF Ahmad**.

The mass simian deaths come after those of fruit bats in Garhwa, Daltonganj, Latehar and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand because of extreme heat. The monkeys were found floating in the well, used for irrigation in Soraath village.

The carcasses were retrieved manually and post-mortem examinations were conducted by veterinary doctors.

► **No foul play, P 8**

Docs find no foul play in deaths of monkeys

► **Continued from page 1**

Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR) range officer Umesh Kumar Dubey said, "The well is old and cemented. It is around 20 feet deep, with 7 to 8 feet of water. The monkeys, unaware of the danger, jumped in but could not climb out." Doctors from PTR and district animal husbandry unit found no foul play in the deaths; there was water in the lungs of the animals.

Talking to **TOI**, Palamu district animal husbandry officer Dr Prabhakar Sinha said, "I sent two of our vets, Dr Rajat Singh (touring veterinary officer) and Dr Santosh Rabaani (Panki block animal husbandry officer), to assist the PTR's vet, Dr Sunil, in conducting the autopsies of the monkeys."

Sinha further added that the monkeys' bodies were badly putrefied due to the heat and water, and a stench permeated the area. The dead monkeys were buried with a substantial amount of salt to accelerate decomposition.

The DFO (in-charge) of Medininagar, Kumar Ashish, emphasised that rising heat and lack of water were impacting wildlife adversely. "A similar incident of jackals, nilgai, and deer falling into manmade water bodies within the forest area was reported recently but they were rescued by forest teams," he said.

Experts believed that apart from fatigue or dehydration, the monkeys might have been exposed to some poisonous gas in the well, hampering their efforts to climb out.

32 wild monkeys drown while drinking from well in J'khand

**Jaideep Deogharia &
M F Ahmad | TNN**

Ranchi/Daltonganj: Searing heat drove 32 monkeys to jump into a well in Palamu to slake their thirst. They drowned. The mass simian deaths come after those of fruit bats in Garhwa, Daltonganj, Latehar and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand because of extreme heat.

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After 4-day therapy, mother elephant back on feet, walks 5km into reserve

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Coimbatore

DISTRICT forest officials released the mother elephant into the Maruthamalai foothills on Monday morning following the successful treatment provided to the animal in the last four days.

A forest department official said, “We did not expect the animal would move deep inside the forest immediately.”

The official added that initially, the jumbo had a high temperature. Based on that, injections were administered to reduce the temperature and more than 30 bottles of fluids containing vitamins and minerals were given on day one. On the second day, when the blood test results were out, it showed that the animal had a mild liver infection and subsequently the team provided liver tonic mixed



with rice balls and tablets laced with fruits. On day three, slings attached to her body were loosened and on Sunday, she managed to stand on her own.

Officials added that the tusk-er moved four to five kilometres inside the forest from the

place she was released by Monday evening and we hope that she will join her herd soon.

DFO N Jayaraj said, “The tusk-er is active and healthy. The calf along with the herd would soon approach the water trough set up by the forest department. More than 20 staff from Coimbatore and Madukkarai forest range along with members of various NGOs were involved in the rescue operation and are eagerly waiting for the mother to reunite with the herd after four days.”

Environment secretary, Supriya Sahu thanking the officials in a post on X stated, “The mother elephant gained enough strength and was released into the wild. We are monitoring the animal to keep an eye on her well-being. Gratitude and kudos to the entire team for their efforts.”

BUSHMEAT GANG BUSTED

After *TNIE* expose, 8 monitor lizards seized, 3 arrested

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA@Chennai

THE state forest department on Sunday seized 18 monitor lizards that were transported on a private bus from Thanjavur to Sikkarimedu village, which is notorious for selling bushmeat, in Krishnagiri district. This is the first time that officials have caught people red-handed transporting wildlife on a private bus, although it is well-known that the majority of the trade happens through this channel.

Three people were arrested in connection with the illegal transportation and have been remanded. The arrested are

identified as J Karthik of Pudukkottai and M Deva of Sikkarimedu and A Raja of Aiyur village in Krishnagiri.

The forest team is on the lookout for kingpin Nadesan, and Thangam Reddy, Arun Kumar and Sikkandar, all from

Sikkarimedu village, who are at large. Monitor Lizards, a schedule 1 species, is one of the most hunted

reptiles in India. The lizards are hunted for their meat and skin. The forest team said Karthik and Raja were bringing the lizards in a concealed box kept inside the luggage carrier of the bus. They were planning to handover the reptiles to



Two suspects caught by forest officials for allegedly carrying monitor lizards in Krishnagiri district on Sunday | EXPRESS

Deva, who is a close aide of Nadesan.

The crackdown came after an expose in which *TNIE* travelled

with State Board for Wildlife member Antony Rubin Clement to Sikkarimedu posing as customers and rescued a live

lizard. The reptile was later handed over to the Hosur DFO Karthikeyan and intelligence inputs were shared with him.

Hosur DFO K Karthikeyani told *TNIE* that the operation was carried out on Sunday morning. "This is the first time we were able to zero in on the private bus and catch the suspects red-handed. The bus driver was also booked. Details about the supplier are being probed and it will be informed to the divisions concerned for cooperation in arresting the accused. Notices have been issued to two bus owners in this case. We are also taking measures to create awareness among the bus operators at Hosur and Krishnagiri," she said. **P7**

Security tightened up in village

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1: Temporary checkpoints will be placed near the entrance of Sikkarimedu. Surveillance through CCTV cameras will be strengthened," she said. R Sharath Babu, Bangalore-based wildlife consultant, said it is not just monitor lizards that are being targeted. "It is good that the state forest department is trying to find out the source. All the while it was believed that reptiles were being caught around the village and sold, but animals are being brought from Pudukkottai and Tiruchy," he said. ENS

Ane Park pond in city that went dry comes back to life; it's now home to diverse birds

**Aasaavari Mohana
Gobburu
Poorvi S**
BENGALURU

A pond at Ane Park in Jayamahal Road is now home to Indian spot-billed ducks and other birds. It came back to life after a long dry spell when the city received rain after five months. The city has been recording moderate to heavy rainfall, which has brought down the temperature and filled ponds and lakes.

Earlier this month, a large number of fish died in the pond after the dissolved oxygen level dropped drastically. The oxygen level drops when the water level comes down in the water bodies. Eventually, the water nearly dried up in the pond. Now, after the city started to receive rainfall, the pond has returned to life, inviting birds and aquatic life.

The pond is now home to diverse species of birds, fish, and turtles. According to Prema Kakade from the Citizens Initiative Jayamahal Area (CIJMA), Indian spot-billed ducks, Kingfishers, Egrets, and Night Herons are spotted now. Ms.



Egret. PREMA KAKADE



White-beasted Kingfisher. PREMA KAKADE

Kakade said, "This pond was initially a quarry, so it does not have a source of supply apart from the rain. Although there is a rainwater harvesting system and sprinklers to nourish the surrounding biodiversity of the area, it has not been completely efficient in ful-

filling the needs of the pond."

Expressing joy after seeing the birds, she also cautioned visitors about the wrong practice of feeding the birds. "People are misinformed and less aware about feeding. The birds and wildlife should be left

alone, and they will feed themselves," she said.

She added that as the park comes under the horticulture department, the department is showing interest in maintaining the pond, while CIJMA is also looking after the well-being of the park and pond. "There is a lot of litter and plastic washed up on the waterbeds of the pond which needs immediate attention," said Radhika Swaminathan, another member of the association.

As snakes come slithering out in rain, BBMP receives 100 calls in a week

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Bengaluru: With the arrival of rain, Bengaluru has seen a significant increase in snake sightings, leading to widespread fear among residents.

DELAYED RESPONSE

The breeding season for snakes has led to a rise in numbers in various areas, especially on the outskirts.

The BBMP wildlife conservation team has reported a surge in calls. On Sunday alone, it received approximately 40 calls about snakes entering residential premises. Over the past week, there were about 100 calls, mostly from Yelahanka and Bommanahalli zones.

But residents have expressed frustration over the slow



File photo

This is the breeding season for snakes

response from BBMP. "A snake appeared inside our house around 4pm, and we immediately called the BBMP wildlife rescue team. They arrived only at 7pm," said Sachin K, a resident of Jnana Bharathi ward. "We were all very afraid the snake might slither away," he added.

Anita Murali, a resident

“ I noticed a snake slithering from a neighbour's compound into mine. I immediately dialled the BBMP helpline, but they didn't respond. Fortunately, the snake went away...

Anita Murali |
UTTARAHALLI RESIDENT

of Uttarahalli, encountered a snake for the first time in 25 years. "Around 6pm, when I went to the utility room to put away some vessels, I noticed a snake slithering from the neighbour's compound into mine. I immediately dialled the BBMP helpline, but they did not respond. Fortunately, the snake went away

on its own," she recounted.

The wildlife rescue team consists of just seven members to respond to calls from across the city. "We're trying to attend to as many calls as possible," said Prasanna Kumar, a member of the team. "Despite the challenges, we are rescuing snakes from all reported locations. They're mostly cobras, Russell's vipers, and water snakes. With the breeding season in full swing, baby snakes are commonly found in open spaces and bushy areas. They tend to come out with light rains and increased humidity," he said.

BLG Swamy, deputy conservator of forests, BBMP, said: "People shouldn't hit or kill the snake or try to handle it on their own. In the event of a snakebite, it is crucial not to panic and to seek immediate medical attention."

Birds fall prey to heatwave as mercury hovers around 45°C in Gurugram

15-20 being admitted with heat stroke every day at birds' hospital

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURUGRAM, JUNE 3

With mercury hovering around 45°C in Gurugram for a week now, the rising temperature has started taking a toll on birds, who are reportedly facing heat strokes and dropping from trees.

However, various online portals like Ola, Uber and Porter have come to their rescue by offering to fetch and drop injured birds at veterinary hospitals in Gurugram.

The initiative, which is proving to be pivotal in saving many avian lives, has been an instant hit among Gurugram residents. Many locals have started booking online transport facilities through these applications after spotting ill birds.

According to the authorities of the birds' hospital at Sadar Bazar, an average of 15 to 20 birds, who have been hit by a heat stroke, are arriving at their facility every day.

The hospital authorities said a majority of these



A sick pigeon at a birds' hospital in Gurugram.

ONLINE APPS COME TO THE RESCUE

- Various online portals like Ola, Uber and Porter have come to the rescue of birds by offering to fetch and drop sick & injured birds at local veterinary hospitals.
- The initiative has been an instant hit among residents, many of whom have started booking online transport facilities through these applications after spotting ill birds.
- According to a local birds' hospital, a majority of the sick birds arriving at their facility are being dropped by online services.
- They say it has made it convenient for people to stop and help birds that they would ignore earlier.

birds were being reportedly dropped by online services, which have made it convenient for people to stop and help birds that they would ignore earlier to avoid the hassle of getting in crowded lanes of Sadar Bazar to reach the birds' hospital.

While many city residents and NGOs are setting up nests, putting water and feeding birds, the impact of

heatwave on them remains worrisome.

According to Dr Rajkumar, birds are not accustomed to such prolonged stretch of unprecedented heatwave. The birds are contracting heat stroke, diarrhoea, paralysis, chicken pox and coryza, he added.

He said, "This is the only bird hospital in Gurugram and the influx of avian

patients is quite high, owing to the scorching heat this summer. As the temperature increases, it becomes very difficult for birds to fly long distances during this season."

"Due to this, they also face a lot of difficulty in getting food. Peacock, rooster, sparrow, pigeon, partridge, duck and heron are usually among the worst affected. This year, however, even birds like eagles and hawks are having a tough time," said Dr Rajkumar.

The hospital has issued an advisory for residents to keep food and water for birds. "Make sure that the vessel in which you keep water for birds is made of clay so that the water does not turn too hot. Otherwise if a bird drinks hot water, it can fall prey to many other diseases," read the advisory.

Apart from this, the hospital has also appealed to the public that if they can't bring a bird to the hospital, they should take help from various online services like Ola, Uber and Porter apps.

Exotic species turtles rescued at Colva beach

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO

Goa State Forest Dept staff has rescued three semi-aquatic terrestrial turtle species from Colva beach on June 2.

Unlike the Olive Ridley turtles that had visited the Colva beach over two months ago, two of the turtles were Red Eared Sliders, a non-native exotic species, that has unfortunately increased in India due to un-

regulated pet trade.

Forest Officer, Marine range, Rajesh Naik said the semi-aquatic terrestrial turtles are harmful for local habitats and native wildlife and should not be released. "It appears they may have escaped from captivity or been abandoned hence found on the beach, which is not their habitat," he said, even as the Forest dept had appealed to the public to avoid the purchase of these

exotic species and to not release them in any natural habitat in Goa.

The other species rescued was the Indian Flap shell Turtle, a semi - aquatic terrestrial turtle which is different from the other two and native to Goa. "They live near ponds and streams. It is not allowed under the Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972 to keep Flap-shell turtles as pets. Due to increasing habitat loss, they

may be displaced and being reported from the beach or illegally kept captive and escaped or was abandoned," Naik said.

Thanks to the quick response of the Drishti Marine lifeguards who provide First Responder support to report marine wildlife strandings in Goa to the Forest Dept, Naik said these land turtles were saved from drowning in the sea as they are not adapted to the marine habitat.

Experts to help reduce man-elephant conflicts in TN

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FILEPHOTO

Chennai: The state wildlife department has roped in experts as part of a multi-pronged approach to find ways to reduce the loss of human lives due to human-elephant conflict. Experts from Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc), who are part of the initiative along with volunteers from Chennai-based biodiversity organisation Care Earth Trust, will also help the department profile problematic elephants.

A senior wildlife official said the department had identified 95 locations in different villages where the conflict between humans and elephants is common.

The approach includes tracking movement of elephants, profiling them and forming a community group to alert others about their presence.

A district forest official said a team was going on night patrol to collect data on the movement of elephants. Movement is recorded when they exit wooded areas and enter non-forest locations. The team will also drive elephants back into the forest



TO REDUCE THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIVES: The approach includes tracking movement of elephants, profiling them and forming a community group to alert others about their presence

and will also note the animals' exit points. The information will be sent to a centralized monitoring centre where it will be uploaded on a portal 'Yaana.com'. When the information is uploaded to the portal, it will generate an automated message in Tamil, which will be sent to a group called 'Thadam Kuzhu'. This is shared among the village community. This is to warn people not to step out of homes after dark.

Another official pointed out that most human deaths are due to elephant attacks, as the movement of the animal is not known to the vil-

lagers. Lack of toilets is also a reason because people get attacked when they come out to defecate at night. Already, an early warning system has helped reduce the loss of human lives due to elephant attacks in Hosur forest division, the official said.

A stakeholder tolerance level survey is being conducted and the department is also taking up a study on conflict situations and solutions. The initiative is funded by the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation, Greening Project, and Climate Change Response, he added.

Forest officials arrest owner of private Dadar zoo for lack of permit

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Mumbai: After the forest department took into custody six animals including some exotic species from a private zoo in Dadar, operating without permission from the Central Zoo Authority, the department has now arrested the owner and manager following the lodging of a forest FIR.

A team of forest officials on May 30 had taken into custody one softshell turtle, two Argentine black and white tegus, one ball python, one African ball python and one common snapping turtle from the zoo. The Central Zoo Authority had earlier informed that the zoo was not recognized by CZA and an FIR was filed.

Sonal Valvi, assistant conservator of forests, Thane (LRP and wildlife) said: "A forest preliminary offence report has been filed under various sections including 9, 39, 44, 48, 48(A) 49 and 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The charges in the FIR relate to illegal capture, possession, trade and display of schedule animals. Zoo owner Yuvraj Moghe and manager Amaan Abdul Sattar Khan have been arrested and will be produced in court on Tuesday. The animals, which have been taken into custody, fall under Schedule I and Schedule IV (Appendix I, II). After an amendment, scheduled specimens under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora have now been made part of Schedule IV."

Green thumbs

Unless reversed, the deforestation in Delhi will lead to its desertification, says HC

Mahatma Gandhi rightly said that what we do to forests is but a reflection of what we are doing unto ourselves. And this apathy to our environment is now causing us untold miseries. The Delhi High Court has issued a dire warning, observing that if the current deforestation trends continue, the city could become a barren desert. This alarming forecast highlights the urgent need for sustainable environmental policies and practices. As urbanisation, construction and pollution intensify, the green cover in Delhi and other metropolitan areas is rapidly depleting, leading to severe ecological and climatic consequences. Delhi's deforestation crisis is fuelled by several factors, including rampant construction, illegal logging and urban expansion. The city's green spaces are shrinking, leading to increased pollution levels, a rise in temperatures and a reduction in natural groundwater recharge areas. The adverse effects are already evident in the city's deteriorating air quality, with smog and particulate matter reaching hazardous



levels during winter months. The reduction in tree cover also exacerbates the urban heat island effect, making Delhi increasingly uninhabitable during summer.

The High Court's stark warning underscores the broader implications of this environmental degradation. Trees play a crucial role in carbon sequestration, temperature regulation and maintaining biodiversity. Their removal disrupts these natural processes, leading to soil erosion, loss of habitat for wildlife and a decline in the overall quality of life. If the current trajectory continues, Delhi could face rising temperatures, severe water shortages, loss of biodiversity and a significant decline in public health due to worsening air quality.

Unfortunately, the general tendency is that the Government should do something about it, but the people themselves can bring about a substantial change. In stark contrast to Delhi's environmental challenges, the village of Piplantri in Rajasthan offers a beacon of hope and a model for sustainable development. Located near Udaipur, Piplantri has gained international acclaim for its unique initiative of planting 111 saplings every time a girl is born in the village. This practice, started by former village head Shyam Sundar Paliwal in the memory of his deceased daughter, has transformed the village's landscape and socio-economic fabric. Since its inception, Piplantri has planted over 350,000 trees, turning the once arid region lush green. This has had multiple benefits of improving air quality, increasing groundwater levels and fostering a sense of community ownership over local resources. The initiative also challenges the deeply rooted gender biases in rural India. The environmental benefits in Piplantri are manifold. The increased green cover has helped combat soil erosion, improved agricultural productivity and provided habitat for various species, thus enhancing biodiversity. Delhi's situation and Piplantri's success highlight the critical need for proactive environmental policies and community engagement. Urban areas like Delhi can draw several lessons from Piplantri's example.

In J'khand, after mass fruit bat deaths, 32 monkeys found dead in Palamu well

**Jaideep Deogharia &
M F Ahmad | TNN**

TOI

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UNAWARE OF DANGER

fied due to the heat and water, and a stench permeated the area. The dead monkeys were buried with a substantial amount of salt to accelerate decomposition.

The DFO (in-charge) of Medininagar, Kumar Ashish, emphasised that rising heat and lack of water were impacting wildlife adversely. "A similar incident of jackals, nilgai, and deer falling into manmade water bodies within the forest area was reported recently but they were rescued by forest teams," he said.

Dr Nandini Kumar, assistant professor of veterinary science and animal husbandry at Birsa Agriculture University, blamed such incidents on shrinking habitat and the impact of severe heat on animals. "Animals are worst affected in case of severe heatwaves when they do not have sufficient tree cover and water sources. In such situations, they stray into human habitats. In this case, the cause of death must be investigated properly and scientifically to protect other wildlife," she said.

Jumbos in danger with poachers eyeing ivory, meat

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has recorded quite a few confirmed cases of killing elephants for meat in Karbi Anglong

SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, June 3: With elephant meat being sold as a delicacy at Rs 400 a kg in the market, albeit surreptitiously, in the State, the future of these animals could be more perilous than is generally thought.

Conservationists believe that the



File photo: Carcass of a poisoned elephant in Karbi Anglong

seizure of nearly 28 kg ivory by the Customs (Preventive) authorities at Biswanath Chariali three days back is the proverbial tip of the iceberg vis-à-vis growing elephant poaching in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

A top official in the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) told *The Assam Tribune* that it had quite a few confirmed cases of elephant poaching for meat in Karbi Anglong district.

“Some local communities are into consuming elephant meat in the area, including the neighbouring Meghalaya. Elephant meat is also processed dry and circulated over a prolonged period. We have recorded several such confirmed cases of elephants being killed for meat in the district,” he said.

“There is a thriving market for elephant meat. Elephant meat is being sold at Rs 400 per kg at a few local markets in Karbi Anglong in a clandestine manner,” the official added.

The disturbing developments are acknowledged by wildlife activists as well. “What is happening has ominous portent for long-term well-being of the elephants. The animals are being targeted for both ivory and meat. The forests of Karbi Anglong are part of the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve and the forest department is duty-bound to secure a safe habitat for the pachyderms,” said Mubina Akhtar, general secretary of Kaziranaga Wildlife Society.

Advocating a balanced approach with thrust on both enforcement and community awareness, she said that

some tribal communities had traditionally been into elephant meat eating “which calls for sensitization and awareness building in today’s changing times”.

“Many such underprivileged communities are living in remote inter-state border areas with poor access to development. There is also a retaliation angle behind elephant killings due to crop raid by animals. We need a holistic approach to address such concerns and ensure a safe future for the elephants,” she said.

The past few years have seen a spurt in seizure of elephant tusks across a number of places in Assam, especially those bordering Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Bhutan.

» SEE PAGE 2

Jumbos in danger ...

(Contd from page 1)

The latest seizure at Biswanath Chariali, too, comes close on the heels of several seizures made in the State.

The Assam Tribune had earlier reported how a growing demand for elephant meat in Arunachal Pradesh was fueling a spurt in elephant poaching in Assam and Arunachal, especially in areas like Behali

reserve forest.

A forest official wishing anonymity said that the demand for elephant meat has, of late, been a major factor behind the killing of the pachyderms across places.

“Many elephants have been killed in the past three-four years in areas like Behali, Biswanath, Kamrup, Boko, Karbi Anglong, Manas Nation-

al Park, etc. This is corroborated by the substantial seizures made in recent years. The year 2022 was the worst in terms of seizures as over a dozen seizures were made,” he said.

The Special Task Force (STF) of Assam Police had recovered 15.2 kg of illegally smuggled elephant tusk during an anti-poaching operation near the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh

border in Dhemaji district on April 10. Earlier in February, the WCCB, in a joint operation with the local police, recovered elephant tusk weighing 3.731 kg and arrested a person from Tamulpur district.

Last year, several persons were arrested in Assam with elephant tusks and body parts of other animals, including tigers.

Matter of survival

Considering that human physiology won't be able to keep pace with rising temperatures beyond a certain threshold, urgent measures are needed to restrict global warming



STEVEN SHERWOOD

The headlines coming out of India as it grappled with an extreme heatwave the past few days have been alarming.

A weather station in Delhi recorded a temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius, which, if confirmed, would be a national record. Animals have died, students have fainted at schools and drinking water taps have dried up. A labourer reportedly died of heatstroke on Thursday.

It's not only India. Mexico is in the grip of a heatwave that has killed at least 48 people since March. The "heat dome" hovering over the central American nation is set to move to the United States in the coming days.

Heat is the silent killer that is responsible for more deaths than any other natural disaster. Several severe European heat waves in recent decades, including last summer, have claimed tens of thousands of excess deaths.

Death tolls in developing countries are not properly counted and probably much larger.

But worse is coming and we need to prepare for it.

The average surface temperature on Earth is now at its highest level since records began and probably before the last ice age.

Recent heat waves show clear fingerprints of global warming, more so than any other climate change impact such as flood or drought. And global warming will continue at least until we reach net zero.

There is a fundamental



It remains challenging to measure or predict extreme heat's overall cost to the community in terms of health, work and quality of life

limit to the body's coping ability: it is a fixed goalpost.

Research in 2010 demonstrated that a 'wet-bulb' temperature of 35 degrees Celsius or higher would make it impossible for humans to exhaust metabolic heat, due to our fixed core body temperature.

It proposed this was an effective survivability limit.

The wet-bulb temperature measures the ability to cool by evaporation; it equals normal temperature if relative humidity is 100 percent, and otherwise is lower. 35C is extreme — most places on Earth never experience wet bulbs above

30C.

But enough global warming could push heat waves in many areas past 35C. This upended the widely held assumption at the time that humans could adapt to any amount of increased heat, i.e., that the goalposts would move. This goalpost will not.

Wet-bulb temperature is used by meteorologists and climatologists to quantify heat stress. It is a combination of heat and humidity: a high wet bulb can occur in humid places at lower temperatures, as well as in dry places at extremely high temperatures.

New studies are beginning to chart out the road to 35C.

One study in the US last year found that young, healthy subjects exposed to very hot conditions started to enter hyperthermia (inability to regulate core body temperature) well below 35C wet bulb, closer to 32C or less.

This is an important reminder that 35C was a theoretical upper limit, not a practical one.

On the other hand they would undoubtedly have found a higher tolerance had they done the study in India or Brazil, because physiology

does adjust to heat over time (up to a point).

The UK has a long way to go before reaching 32C and could acclimatise for a while. Wet-bulb temperatures above 32C appear only very rarely today in coastal areas of the Middle East and for very short periods, but these will gradually spread as warming continues.

The heat will force us to change how we live, for example shifting outdoor summer-time activities to nighttime or just eliminating them.

Severe heat may already be putting people off traveling to Europe or other locations in the summer.

Researchers at the University of Sydney are developing a heat warning system, and conducting exposure studies similar to the US one. It looks like we'll soon have a clearer picture of the direct effects of severe heat on physiology.

It remains challenging to measure or predict extreme heat's overall cost to the community in terms of health, work and quality of life.

To do this, climate and health researchers need to develop models that factor in human behaviour and adaptation along with physiology, weather, and climate information. We also need to understand what will happen to nature, and seek ways to protect wildlife.

Above all we need to reach net zero carbon emissions as soon as we possibly can to arrest the continuing rise in heat.

DTE

Views expressed are personal

The average surface temperature on Earth is now at its highest level since records began and probably before the last ice age

New ant species discovered from Arunachal Pradesh

Sam Paul A.
ALAPPUZHA

Researchers have discovered a new ant species from the Eastern Himalayas. Belonging to the rare genus *Paraparatrechina*, the blue-coloured insect has been named *Paraparatrechina neela*.

The discovery was made by entomologists Priyadarshan Dharma Rajan and Sahanashree R. from Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in Bengaluru and Aswaj Punmath from the University of Florida recently. Their scientific description of the ant has been published in the peer-reviewed journal *ZooKeys*.

According to the researchers, the discovery, made during an expedition to Siang Valley in Arunachal Pradesh, marks the first addition to the *Paraparatrechina* genus from the Indian subcontinent, since the description of the sole previously known species *P. asea* 121 years ago. “While exploring a tree hole about 10 feet up in a steep cattle track in the remote Yingku village in Arunachal Pradesh, something sparked in the twilight. With the dim light available, two insects were sucked into an aspirator. To our surprise, we later found that they were ants,” the researchers said.

Small ant

Paraparatrechina neela has been described as a small ant with a total length of less than 2mm. Its body is predominantly metallic blue, except for the antennae, mandibles, and legs. The head is sub-



Paraparatrechina neela

triangular with large eyes and has a triangular mouthpart (mandible) featuring five teeth.

The researchers said that although the blue colouration was commonly observed in some insects like butterflies, beetles, bees, and wasps, it was relatively rare in ants. Out of the 16,724 known species and subspecies of ants worldwide, only a few exhibit at least partial blue colouration or iridescence, they noted.

More than a century after a scientific team that accompanied the ‘Abhor expedition’, a punitive military expedition against the local tribes, documented the natural history and geography of the Siang Valley, a team of researchers from the ATREE is in the process of resurveying and documenting the biodiversity of the region. The expedition was funded by the National Geographic Society through the wildlife-conservation expedition grant. Entomologists from ATREE have so far discovered a new subfamily, six new genera and more than 40 new insect species, belonging to parasitic wasps, ants and beetles from the region. Dr. Rajan said that despite being a biodiversity hotspot, Siang Valley was facing “unprecedented threats”.

Oscar-fame clinic to rescue centres, a scramble to save birds in record heat

Unable to cope with rising heat, dehydrated avians are falling out of the sky. But some Bird Samaritans are doing their bit

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Wildlife Rescue — a bird clinic founded by brothers Mohd Saud and Na-deem Shehzaad, who featured in the Oscar-nominated documentary 'All That Breathes' — has had a busy couple of months as the capital's record-breaking heat wave is affecting not just humans, but also birds.

Saud points to a heat-stressed baby cheel brought in by a neighbourhood kid. "You can tell how weak he is by looking at the eyes. The mouth, either too dry or with thick saliva, also tells us how dehydrated he is. I fed him water and then gave him a drip intravenously," he says, moving aside the

JC KHANNA, VETERINARY DOCTOR IN MUMBAI

It doesn't help that Mumbai is a concrete jungle and doesn't have enough trees. So, birds keep on flying and get heat exhaustion

feathers to reveal a translucent skin bulge reducing bit by bit as the drip got absorbed.

Co-founder Shehzaad says they have seen a 50% rise in birds coming into their clinic in Wazirabad during May and June over the last three years. "Usually, we treat 800 birds in two months but in the summer of 2022, this went up to 1,200 in the same time span. This year, we got 86 new cases in one day in May which was a record," he adds. They are currently caring for more than 250 birds, including a trio of ailing parakeets, a majestic Crested serpent eagle and a severely dehydrated baby kite.

In Mumbai, birds have been falling from the sky. Dr JC Khanna, former chairman of Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals, Mumbai's largest government-run animal hospice, says heat waves hit birds hard. "It doesn't help that Mumbai is a concrete jungle and they don't have trees they can access. So, they keep on flying, get exhausted and plummet to the



Piyal Bhattacharjee



HOT TOPIC: Children bring in a dehydrated bird to Delhi's Wildlife Rescue. (Right) A doctor associated with RAWW in Mumbai treats a sick bird

ground," he adds. The other problem is the scarcity of water spots where they can cool off.

Mumbai non-profit Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWW) has treated more than 200 birds for dehydration and heat-related ailments this summer. Founder Pawan Sharma says birds collapse in the heat and go into shock. "In most cases, we care for them for a few days and then they can fly back. But some unfortunate ones need surgery or do not make it."

Delhi's Wildlife Rescue mainly deals with birds of prey. "And this is baby season for black kites or cheels. They're at the age where they start leaving their nests out of curiosity and often fall to the ground," says Shehzaad. Saud adds that with new babies in tow, birds have more need for food and water as they also provide for the mate who looks after the babies. Young chicks also need more shaded areas but those living in urban areas keep clearing nests in building crevices.

Rescue operations are heavily dependent on Good Samaritans doing their bit. Ahmedabad-based non-profit Jivdaya Trust's head of operations Sumeet Gurbani says of the 1,600 birds treated between May 1-20, 70% were brought in because of the heat. So, growing awareness among regular folk who know enough to bring injured birds in is a huge help. "We got 200 birds in a year when we started out in

2007. But with awareness campaigns and our helpline number, more people make the effort to bring them in," he adds. Once brought in, the birds are kept in a cooled cage covered with a green net. They also have a fogging system to keep them cool.

Many are referred from bird hospitals. The forest department, Delhi Police and fire department also bring in the birds they find. While experts encourage people to put out water with a sprinkling of glucose, Shehzaad suggests putting out food too. Asif Khan, associate officer at the Bombay Natural History Society, says, "Leaving a bowl of clean water in the shade every two-three days is helpful in urban areas. Some try to treat the distressed birds themselves. But, unlike us, birds do not sweat. So, a layperson wouldn't know how to care for a heat-stroke bird." Khan feels they should call a vet or bird helpline instead.

Studies have shown the impact of heat on the avian world. An Australian study on the Jacky Winters bird species found that 29% disappeared and were presumed dead within 24 hours of temperatures hitting a record 49° in 2019. Heat also affects their reproductive abilities.

And it's not just about one species, Sharma warns. "One species impacts others. Birds control insect populations. It's going to impact the food chain and our delicate ecological balance."

Over 400 stray and pet dogs vaccinated in Itanagar

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, Jun 3: More than four hundred stray and pet dogs in various parts of Arunachal Pradesh capital have been vaccinated so far with 155 dogs having been vaccinated in the Rajiv Gandhi University campus alone, according to Papum Pare district animal husbandry and veterinary officer (DAH&VO) Dr Tako Ta-

ram. Dr. Taram informed that the ongoing vaccination drive was conducted at Ganga market, Vivek Vihar, Chandannagar, Police colony in Itanagar and in Naharlagun and NERIST campus last week.

The anti-rabies vaccination drive was jointly conducted by animal husbandry and veterinary department, Itanagar Municipal Corporation, Doimukh veterinary clin-

ic; Lekhi based NGO - Dog & Cat Rescue and veterinary interns of various veterinary colleges of the state.

RGU's chief medical officer Dr. Akin Tana Tara, Yupia senior veterinary officer Dr. T.R. Nabam, nodal officer for registration and control of pets Dr. Thomas Doka, Tarun Jomoh from Dog & Cat Rescue (NGO) were also present during the Satur-

day's vaccination drive.

Informing that vaccination drives will continue, Taram appealed to the pet dog owners to take care of their pets and get them vaccinated apart from maintaining a routine diet for their pets.

Dr. Taram said that in case of dog bite, the victims should immediately clean the wound with running water and approach the rabies clinic at TRI-

HMS in Naharlagun, BPGH in Pasighat and General hospital in Ziro.

"Few more rabies clinics would be opened by the health department in other parts of state and the people can avail the benefit," Dr. Taram said and added that if there is no rabies clinic in their respective areas, the victims can approach the government hospital and get immediate treatment.

Poaching goes up in Eastern Ghats in summer, officials blame it on tribal rituals

V. Kamalakara Rao
VISAKHAPATNAM

Poachers are said to be active again in the forests of Eastern Ghat in Chintapalli and Rampachodavaram divisions of Alluri Sitharama Raju district in Andhra Pradesh. The illegal activity is attributed to many reasons especially the customs of the tribal people living along the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) region.

ASR district has a forest cover of 10.47 lakh hectares, nearly 28% of the total forest cover of 37.13 lakh hectares in the State.

The ASR district has four forest divisions—Chintapalli (1,97,181 ha), Paderu (1,97,872 ha), Chintoor (4 lakh ha) and Rampachodavaram (2,63,869 ha).

High wildlife population in this huge tract of forest area bordering Odisha attracts poachers from tribal pockets.

Forest officials from Chintapalli and Rampachodavaram divisions discuss measures to prevent poaching in the forests

High demand for wild animals for traditional practices also plays a major role.

The tribal people perform rituals for their deities during the summer months.

They offer meat of wild animals such as spotted deer, wild boar and Indian bison to the deities.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Chintapalli Divisional Forest Officer Ch. Suryanarayana admitted that there were complaints of poaching from the forests in the district, particularly from two forest divisions during the summer months when

the tribal people were on a hunting spree for the rituals.

The Forest Department recently arrested 11 persons hailing from Odisha when they were found in possession of the meat of an Indian bison at a weekly shandy (market) at Gudem village in GK Veedhi mandal, he said.

The forest officials from Chintapalli and Rampachodavaram divisions discussed the steps being taken to prevent poaching in the forests on Monday.

“We have registered a case under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. The case is now in the court of law. We have formed teams with our counterparts in the Rampachodavaram forest division to keep an eye on the poachers. Not only hunting, buying and transporting meat of wild animals is also an offence,” said Mr. Suryanarayana.

Revellers give guards a slip, trespass easily into Belagavi's forests

Foresters detain 18 youths; partying near waterfalls rampant

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Belagavi forest officials have taken 18 youths who had trespassed into Bhimgad wildlife sanctuary and partied at Vajrapoha waterfalls into their custody on Monday. The youths had partied with loud music at the waterfalls on Sunday.

The waterfalls is inside the protected area and access to it is denied as one has to trek nearly nine km into a thick forest area.

Wildlife activists claim that the Sunday party was not a one-off incident as there have been several such incidents since January this year, when youths

gave the slip to forest officials, celebrated birthdays and lit campfires inside the forest.

Videos and pictures of these celebrations are being circulated widely on social media sites and WhatsApp groups.

The area is frequented by elephant herds and has a good population of sloth bears.

Such illegal entry into protected areas is not just a threat to human life, but also harms the forest (forest fire) and wildlife.

Last year, a youth lost his life after falling into the waterfall while trying to avoid being bitten by honey bees.

Locals question how such a large number of youths have been easily accessing the re-

stricted area in spite of the presence of anti-poaching camps and regular patrolling.

"Vajrapoha waterfalls is nestled deep inside the protected area. One cannot access it without the permission of the forest officials. If such a large number of people are celebrating near the falls without the knowledge of forest officials, it speaks volumes about how our forests are being guarded," said a local resident.

With monsoon round the corner, activists fear that more such adventure seekers would venture into forest areas to witness the seasonal waterfalls such as Maan, Sada, Chikale, Chigula and Chorla. While a majority of these waterfalls are in the reserve forest area, Vajrapoha is within the Bhimgad wildlife sanctuary.

Deputy Conservator of Forests S K Kallollikar conceded that trespassing to the Vajrapoha waterfalls is on the rise.

He said these youths might have slipped into the forest

while the guards and officials were patrolling on the other side. "Yes, there has been an increase in the number of people illegally visiting the waterfalls. On Sunday, we took 18 youths into our custody and investigations are on how they got access to the waterfalls," he said.

He said as a precautionary measure they would activate checkpoints within the protected areas to make sure that no more trespassing occurs.

Range forest officers of Kanakumbi and Bhimgad deny that youths gained entry into their jurisdiction.

"We have anti-poaching camps and guards patrolling the area. It is highly impossible for anyone to gain entry from the Bhimgad side as the trek route to the waterfalls is very dense and treacherous. The youths might have gained entry from the other side," said Bhimgad wildlife sanctuary RFO Mahesh Marennavar. He said they would increase vigil near the waterfalls henceforth.

Rewilding in tiger reserves helps near-extinct vultures soar again

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In Jan, when a bronze statue of 'Jatayu'—the mythical vulture who fought valiantly to save Sita from Ravana—was unveiled at the Ram Temple consecration in Ayodhya, twenty real-life Jatayus or vultures—in desperate need of their own heroic rescue—were soft-released into the lush Tadoba and Pench tiger reserves in Maharashtra. This move was part of a vulture reintroduction program by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and a significant step forward in helping these unsung heroes — who do the dirty work of cleaning up after death and keeping the environment healthy — make a comeback from the brink of extinction.

Over the next one year, 30 more vultures, out of 750 white-rumped, slender-billed, and long-billed vultures bred at various BNHS centres, will be rewilded in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. "BNHS undertook the strategy of reintroducing vultures in tiger habitats with a large prey base to restore vultures in their predestined role as nature's sanitation crew," says Praveen Pardeshi, president, BNHS. "We intend to do the same in sanctuaries like Melghat and Koyna in Maharashtra that don't have vultures as well as in other states."

Helping vultures reclaim their place in the ecosystem was crucial, according to Pardeshi, and the "next big challenge" following their 2003 discovery of 'Diclofe-

nac', a veterinary drug used to treat cattle that was causing mass kidney failure in vultures after they scavenged treated livestock.

This revelation explained the mystery behind the massive crash in vulture population in the '80s and '90s that had baffled scientists and prompted the International Union for Conservation of Nature to declare that the Indian vulture was "only one step away from total extinction." By 2007, 99% of vultures in India—once numbering 40 million—had disappeared, with serious consequences for the environment. Following the findings, the Indian government banned the drug's veterinary use in 2006.

Despite this, India's vultures continued to face



BIRDS OF PREY: Every year now sees new fledglings of Gyps Vultures

threats—rapid habitat loss and starvation due to diminished forage. "Almost no farmer leaves their dead cattle outside anymore but buries them because of which no food is

available for vultures, as it formerly was, in farmland areas," notes Pardeshi. He hopes that ample food in Tadoba and Pench National Parks will sustain the vultures, al-

lowing them to recycle the remains of prey hunted by tigers, leopards, and wild dogs and complete vital carbon and nitrogen cycles.

India's vulture conservation story — that began when BNHS joined forces with the Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, and Haryana forest departments about a decade ago to breed these vital but vulnerable scavengers that often get a bad rap for their ungainly look and scavenging habits—gained international attention at the first ever World Species Congress last month.

Hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the virtual 24-hour gathering brought together government

and environmental agencies to conservationists, wildlife groups and students to chart a "coordinated map of key actions" aimed at species recovery. It's taken years of work to artificially hatch new fledglings of the three most endangered vulture species every year, research the safety of veterinary drugs, and identify regions in need of protection. "But the fight to revive vulture populations in the wild has not yet been won," says Kishor Rithe, director of BNHS. "Sensitization of pharmacists and identifying vulture safe zones are some of the challenges before us," he adds, given pharmacy surveys in 2017–18 that revealed yet again that diclofenac was still easily available.

While BNHS teams are cur-

rently out in the field conducting pharmacy surveys, carcass sampling, educating cattle owners and sensitising villagers about vulture nesting colonies, they're also raising funds to create 'Vulture Safe Zones' in UP, MP, and Assam, within a 100 km radius of the release sites, to keep vultures safe beyond the tiger reserves.

"Also, the birds set to take off into the wild will be GPS or satellite tagged to track their movements. With support from the central and state governments, along with international funding agencies, India will definitely be able to revive its Jatayu population to earlier times, and large congregations of vultures will finally soar in the skies freely after nearly two decades," says an optimistic Rithe.

Small is beautiful for Gangetic dolphin

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Smaller rivers in the Ganga basin are playing a crucial role in preserving the habitat of the endangered Gangetic dolphin, India's revered national aquatic animal, a joint study by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Union Government's National Mission for Clean Ganga has said.

However, they noted that despite their importance, the conservation and management of these smaller rivers have not received adequate attention compared to larger rivers.

With a comprehensive two-

year-long survey covering 1,290 kilometers of the Ganga's tributaries and sub-tributaries, researchers have identified 620 kilometers of critical habitats requiring urgent conservation efforts and management strategies specifically tailored for these smaller water bodies to ensure the long-term survival of the Gangetic dolphin population.

The findings hold significance given that in recent years, the distribution range of the Gangetic dolphin in various rivers has dwindled, particularly in the upstream stretches. The aquatic mammals which are



now in the IUCN list of threatened species are now believed to be extirpated from the Son, Ken, Betwa, and Sind rivers, the middle and upper stretch of the Sharda river, and the upper stretch of the

Yamuna river.

"These findings not only shed light on the importance of these lesser-known rivers but also underscore their vital contribution to the ecological resilience and health of the

entire Ganga river system," said Syed Ainul Hussain, a scientist at Dehradun-based WII and co-author of the study.

He added that these lesser-known rivers harbor more than 15 per cent of the Gangetic dolphins and contribute to habitat diversity. "This underscores the importance of conserving these rivers to safeguard biodiversity," Hussain emphasised, pointing out gaps in ecological restoration efforts, particularly in the conservation of smaller rivers.

While larger rivers have often been the focus of

conservation efforts, the importance of smaller rivers has been largely neglected. During the two-year survey conducted boat-based visual encounter in ten rivers, covering Girwa (20 km), Kauriyala (15 km), Babai (75 km), Sharda (220 km), Rapti (500 km), Bagmati (60 km), Mahananda (230 km), Ken (40 km), Betwa (90 km), and Sind (40 km), researchers found that engagement with local communities is a crucial component of successful conservation endeavors, especially in areas where dolphin populations intersect with villages.

Continued on Page 2

Small is beautiful for...

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"By linking community concerns regarding flood erosion, embankments, and livelihood security to broader biodiversity conservation initiatives, a strategic framework can be established to garner support for river conservation efforts," said Neeraj Mahar, one of the researchers in their study "Conservation planning for Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) in smaller rivers of the Ganga River Basin, India".

The other authors of the study include Goura Chandra Das, Aftab Alam Usmani, Surya Prasad Sharma, Srijani Guha, SK Zeeshan Ali, Shivani Barthwal, Arkojyoti Sarkar, Ajay Rawat, G Gokulakrishnan, Javed Anwar, and Ruchi Badola from the Ganga Aqualife Conservation and Monitoring Centre, WII, and Sandeep Kumar Behera from National Mission for Clean Ganga, Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Despite the importance of smaller rivers in Gangetic dolphin conservation, numerous challenges such as human-induced stressors such as dam construction and pollution continue to threaten the health of these river ecosystems. "However, by adopting a basin-wide approach and prioritising interconnected riverine ecosystems, we can overcome these challenges and safeguard the future of Gangetic dolphins," said the researchers.

Targeted measures could reduce turtle mortality

A study shows distribution of sea turtle mortality hotspots along the Maharashtra coast

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EVEN as authorities are successful in rescuing stranded sea turtles in over 54 per cent of the instances, targeted mitigation measures may help to reduce turtle mortality along the Maharashtra coast, a study has recommended. A study mapping the distribution and magnitude of sea turtle mortality hotspots along the Maharashtra coast has been published in the open-access biological science journal Hamadryad. The study highlights the fact that both natural calamities and human-induced activities contribute to sea turtle deaths. By distinguishing between these causes, the research underscores the necessity for targeted mitigation measures.

Researchers Prachi Hatkar, Priyamvada Bagaria, Dinesh



The forest department release a turtle that was rescued after it got stranded

Vinherkar, Sagar Patel, and the late Dhaval Kansara identified critical hotspots and seasonal patterns, providing vital insights for conservation efforts. The Wildlife Protection Act's Schedule I gives sea turtles the highest level of

protection available in India. The research looked at data from 1982 to 2021 and found that 510 sea turtle strandings had been reported on the west coast of Maharashtra. Researchers were able to identify spatiotemporal patterns and

comprehend the mechanisms influencing turtle mortality as a result of this comprehensive data collection.

The study emphasises that deaths of sea turtles are caused by both natural disasters and human-caused activ-

ities. The research emphasises the need for focused mitigating actions by differentiating these sources. Sea turtle mortality can be considerably decreased by implementing temporal and spatial restrictions based on hotspots and peak stranding seasons that have been identified. The monsoon season (June to August) coincides with the peak stranding season, which is marked by increased fishing activity and choppy seas.

Olive Ridley turtles were the most frequently stranded species, with 360 instances, indicating a significant impact from incidental catch. Green sea turtles followed with 127 instances. Non-nesting species like Hawksbill (16 instances), Loggerhead (five instances), and Leatherback (three instances) were also noted, indicating their rarity along the Maharashtra coast.

A higher percentage of females among stranded turtles suggest many strandings occur during or after nesting periods. The successful release of 54.8 per cent of the turtles is a testament to the efforts of the Dahanu forest department staff, local NGOs, volunteers, and the local community.

The study identified several hotspots, with the highest number of stranding reports from Chikhale, Nivati, Chinchani, Juhu, Vengurla, and Dhakti, followed by Khavane, Bordi, and Dandi on the west coast of

Maharashtra. The research also drew attention to the significant threat to turtles from being unintentionally caught in various fishing nets, including Dol nets, hook and lines, gillnets, bag nets, Rampani nets, and ghost nets.

"Our study provides a comprehensive overview of sea turtle mortality along the Maharashtra coast, emphasizing the need for strategic conservation actions," said lead author Prachi Hatkar. "By identifying hotspots and understanding seasonal patterns, we can implement effective measures to protect these endangered species," she said.

'Our study provides a comprehensive overview of sea turtle mortality along the Maharashtra coast, emphasizing the need for strategic conservation actions'

Prachi Hatkar, researcher

Sea turtles play a crucial role in ocean ecosystems. They maintain the health of seagrass beds and coral reefs, facilitate nutrient cycling, and provide habitat for other marine life. As sea turtle populations decline, their ability to perform these roles diminishes, impacting the health of the oceans. Sea turtle populations is essential for sustaining healthy marine ecosystems.

This research marks a step forward in conserving sea turtles and highlights the urgent need to mitigate their threats. The successful release of 54.8 per cent of turtles is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Dahanu forest department staff, local NGO, volunteers, and the local community's support.

The jobs growing fastest in 2024

SONAL ARORA

Job creation in a country is influenced by multiple factors. The commitment to hiring and workforce expansion is driven by the overall economic expansion within the country, its regulatory and policy framework, and the technological progress within the country.

The International Monetary Fund has predicted a resilient growth of 7.8% for India for FY 2024-25, despite external economic and global geopolitical challenges. This portends well for the overall employment outlook within India. The sectoral outlook for various industries is also an important factor as different industries have independent business and growth cycle offering diverse opportunities for job seekers across industries.

India's employment landscape is experiencing a significant transformation across various sectors. While some sectors like information technology may be facing global headwinds, most other sectors are set for growth and are experiencing a robust demand for talent. The fastest growing jobs are in the fastest growing sectors.

The integration of digital technologies across various sectors has created a significant demand for skilled professionals in software development, data science, cybersecurity, cloud computing, network engineering, IT services, helpdesk, and support.

The government's focus on digital transactions is driving the emergence of the fintech sector, leading to a demand for professionals skilled in mobile and online banking technologies, customer experience design and cybersecurity. The traditional financial services sector in India is also undergoing significant expansion, driven by increasing demand for banking and insurance services and witnessing a transformation with technology integration.

Typical roles in demand within the traditional Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance sector include: sales and customer services, treasury management, loan officers, branch managers, probationary officers, financial analysts, risk management, actuarial sciences and underwriting, claim adjusters and product management.

Another sector experiencing significant growth is healthcare. Factors like increased median longevity and heightened healthcare awareness have increased the need for medical services and preventive care. Technological advancements, including telemedicine and health apps, have enhanced healthcare

accessibility. After the pandemic telemedicine and remote consultations have gained prominence.

Apart from doctors and nurses, other jobs being created in this industry include hospital administration, healthcare technicians, audiologists, pathology assistants, dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, mental health counselors, and home aides.

The resurgence of the Tourism sector following the pandemic is set to drive economic development and job creation providing employment prospects in hotel management, travel agencies, culinary arts, transportation, and related services. Furthermore, tourism-related services, such as souvenir shops and entertainment, are expanding employment opportunities in roles like guides, wildlife experts, and transportation providers.

The Indian Retail sector is undergoing a significant transformation with the increasing dominance of organised retail. As per a



recent survey, this sector is expected to reach Rs 150 trillion by 2030. In-store sales assistants, store managers, cashiers warehouse management, and merchandisers are some of the fastest-growing jobs in this sector.

In addition to offline retail, e-commerce and digital marketing have become pivotal, with positions such as SEO specialists, content creators, social media managers, and digital advertising experts actively contributing to businesses' online presence. This retail and e-commerce sector transformation is reshaping the job landscape in India, fostering diverse opportunities in logistics, warehousing, digital marketing, and related fields, thereby bolstering the Indian job market.

In the coming years, job growth in India will be fueled by a diverse range of industries. This diversification is beneficial as it promotes balanced and sustainable employment opportunities across various sectors, reducing over-reliance on any single industry.

(The author is the country manager at an HR firm)

Three semi-aquatic terrestrial turtle species rescued at Colva

Two Red-Eared Sliders and an Indian Flapshell Turtle freed; public urged to avoid purchasing these species and refrain from releasing them into any natural habitat

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Goa State Forest Department staff rescued three semi-aquatic terrestrial turtle species from Colva Beach on Monday.

Two of the turtles were Red-Eared Sliders, a non-native exotic species that has unfortunately increased in India due to unregulated pet trade. These turtles are harmful to local habitats and native wildlife, and should not be released into the wild.

It appears that the Red-Eared Sliders may have escaped from captivity or been abandoned, hence their presence on the beach, which is not their natural habitat.

The Forest Department appeals to the public to avoid purchasing these exotic species and to refrain from releasing them into any natural habitat in Goa.

The third species rescued was the Indian Flapshell Turtle, a semi-aquatic terrestrial turtle native to Goa. These turtles live near ponds and streams. Under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, it is illegal to keep Flapshell turtles as pets. Due to increas-

ing habitat loss, they may be displaced and found on beaches or illegally kept as pets and subsequently escaped or abandoned.

The lifeguards provide first responder support and report marine wildlife strandings in Goa to the Forest Department and these turtles were saved from drowning in the sea, as they are not adapted to the marine habitat, said the department in a statement issued.

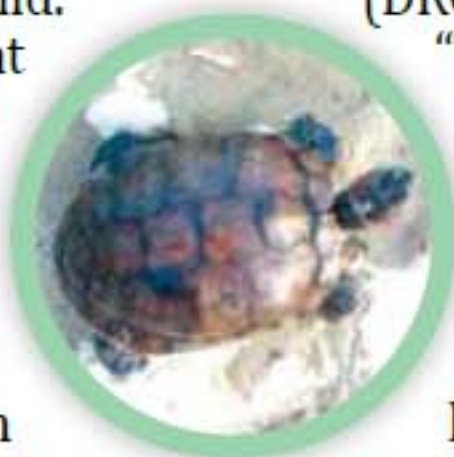
The Deputy Range Officer (DRO), Rajesh Naik, said,

“The non-native species will be kept in captivity, and the native species will be released into an appropriate habitat.

If you spot any wildlife on the beach that appears to be in distress or dead, please report it immediately to the nearest lifeguard tower or inform the Goa Forest Department.”

Sources suggest that these turtles were likely kept as pets in a house earlier and were subsequently dumped near the beach.

Earlier in the day, there was misinformation that the three turtles captured were Olive Ridley Turtles, which the Forest Department clarified immediately.



Two cages set up in ATR to catch tiger injured by snare

S SENTHIL KUMAR

@ Coimbatore

FOREST officials have set up two cages to capture and treat a five-year-old male adult tiger that was spotted roaming with injuries suspected to have been caused by a snare at the Tiruppur division of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR).

“If needed, the animal will be tranquilised for treatment as per the SOP of the National Tiger Conservation Authority,” a senior official said.

The injured tiger was spotted a few days ago on camera traps placed to keep track of wild animals in forest areas.

Sources said the injury could

have occurred a few weeks ago after the big cat got caught in a snare suspected to have been placed by poachers to kill spotted deer or wild boars for their meat. Tragically, the wire (foreign material) has also intruded into the lower back part of the tiger’s body affecting its mobility, sources said.



Forest officials have now installed over 40 additional camera traps to monitor the movement of the animal. About 65 staffers of three forest ranges of Amaravathy, Kozhumam, and Vandaravu have also been deployed to trace the big cat and the suspects who may have set up the snare on farm lands.

CONTINUED ON P7

‘Snare may not have injured big cat’

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A senior official of the ATR, however, said the injury may not be because of a snare.

“If the animal got injured in a snare, it would be in big trouble. We suspect that a steel fence, which was being used in nearby farm lands and which may not be as strong as a snare, could have pierced through the

tiger’s body and injured him. We have set up two cages in the forest range for capturing the tiger, and once the tiger lands in the cage, we will remove the snare,” the official said.

The official said the wound in the tiger’s body seems to be healing. “The tiger may be stationed along the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border. We suspect the incident could have happened

in Kerala. The tiger had visited Tiruppur division only last year and in May this year, and before that, the animal’s images were recorded only on the Kerala side,” said a senior official of ATR.

PCCF Project Tiger Rakesh Kumar Dograh confirmed that the animal is injured, and if needed, it will be tranquillised for its welfare.

Who will **SAVE** Pallikaranai Marsh?

Traveling along the Pallavaram-Thuraipakkam Radial Road, we encounter the lush green expanse of the Pallikaranai marshland, home to more exotic migratory birds and insects than Vedanthangal. This marshland supports a diverse ecosystem with 115 bird species, 10 mammals, 21 reptiles, 10 amphibians, 46 fish, 9 molluscs, 5 crustaceans, and 7 butterfly species. Notable inhabitants include Russell's viper (*Daboia siamensis*) and birds such as the glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), grey-headed lapwings (*Vanellus cinereus*), and pheasant-tailed jacana (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*).

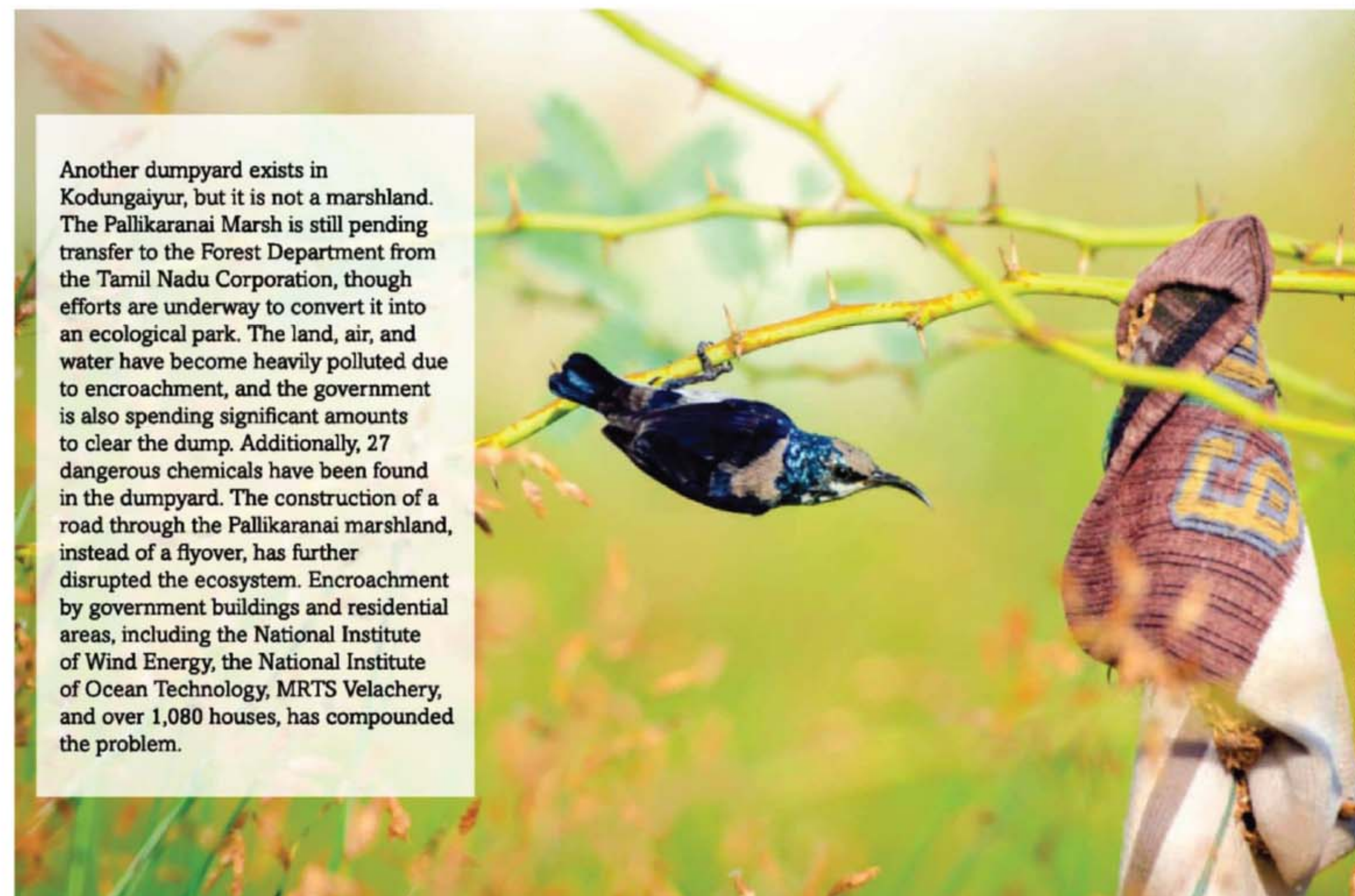
However, before the road ends, we witness mountains of piled-up waste, a man-made blight on this natural habitat. Environmentalists and ecologists assert that the Pallikaranai marshland is the liver of Chennai, capable of mitigating droughts and floods if properly maintained. Despite being recognized as a Ramsar site for over a year, the marsh is at risk of losing this designation if the government does not take immediate action. On this World Environment Day, let's know more about the Pallikaranai marshland and the severe pollution it faces.

BY VINITHA VENKATESHA

Photo: Kamaldeen AR



Photos: Philip Thomas



Marshland to Dumpyard Story

Environmental activist Haris Sulthan states, "In 1984, OILEX was the first organization to start dumping waste in the Pallikaranai Marsh, transforming it from a lush ecosystem into a dumping ground. The government has continued this practice, and Rs. 136 crore has been allocated for the marsh clean-up, with Rs. 21 crore already spent. So far, 48% of the waste, amounting to 14.55 lakh cubic feet, has been removed, and 16 hectares of land have been reclaimed. The clean-up is expected to be completed by September this year.

"The Pallikaranai marshland is nature's gift to Chennai city." He points out that the recent Cyclone Michaung, which affected Chennai and caused major rivers including the Cooum to flood, led to further waterlogging in low-lying areas. The primary reason for this water stagnation in Chennai is the poorly maintained dumps in the Pallikaranai marshland.

"The Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (ELCOT) and the Railways occupy 163.25 ha and 46.92 ha of the marshland according to State counsel which disrupts Buckingham Canal's water navigation during floods. Out of the total 1,206.59 ha of the Pallikaranai marshland, the Forest Department controls 749 ha. Notably, the newly built Thangavelu Engineering College is situated within the marshland. Concerns are raised that the encroached space might be sold and occupied by big corporates or used for commercial purposes."



Kodungaiyur Biomining Project spells danger!

In North Chennai, the Kodungaiyur dumpyard is set to undergo a biomining project at a cost of Rs 1,026 crore. The plan involves burning 2,100 tonnes of waste daily. The government has proposed an integrated waste management facility, including a waste-to-energy (WTE) plant, similar to those in several other Indian cities. This project is slated for the already heavily polluted North Chennai region.

Haris warns, "Using insulators in Kodungaiyur to produce electricity is dangerous and will inevitably lead to air pollution. The Climate Action Plan on the Chennai Corporation's website acknowledges these dangers. So, why is the government pursuing this project?"

"The plan is being justified by citing its implementation in Delhi. However, Delhi is extremely polluted, and residents wear masks daily. Will Chennai face the same fate as Delhi?"

The Pallikaranai marsh is at risk of becoming filled with black sewage water due to significant silt accumulation, a concern largely overlooked by the public and met with silence from Environmental Minister Siva Meyappan. This silence is concerning, given the parallels drawn from Israel's marshland fate when commercial interests take precedence. Failure to address this issue could lead to severe consequences, including disease outbreaks and ecological degradation. It's imperative that we act swiftly to protect this invaluable ecosystem.