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Raven Newsletter #11

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"If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the interest, not the capital, of nature." - Ronald Wright

Story of Buxwaha Mining Project



In 2019, Aditya Birla Group's Essel Mining won the bid for the Bunder Diamond Mining Project. Spread across an area of 364 hectares of land in the Buxwaha forests, it has been estimated that the block will have 34 million carats of rough diamonds. If executed, it is expected to become one of the largest diamond mines in the Asian region, which would be a great factor in increasing our GDP. The company targets the execution of the project by 2022 but faces stiff resistance as over 2,15,875 trees are expected to be cut for the mining project to take place. It faces resistance by environmentalists and locals in the region over the loss of biodiversity and the strain of water resources in a water-thirsty area.

Anurag Kumar, District Forest Officer stated that the locals are not against the project and are extending their support since the mines would bring employment opportunities.

But different people have different perceptions of their own, as an activist said: The people's fight to protect forests and wildlife has just begun. Residents claim that despite continuous mining operations in this region, nothing has changed for them. The area is still riddled with starvation and poverty. Furthermore, mining activity in the area could exacerbate the region's water shortages and environmental degradation.

The block consists of 7000 villagers and over 17 tribes which are forest dwellers and directly depends on the forest products such as mahua, tendu leaves, chironji and amla for livelihood. The proposed mine would snatch away their income sources.

The project when executed will require an estimated 5.9 million cubic meters per day of water that will be fulfilled by making a dam diverting a seasonal nallah (canal) that can store up to 17 million cubic meters. But the government promises to plant more than 15 times the trees that are being cut during the mining process. Also, 42% of the mining output will go to the state government which will help in promoting the economic development of Madhya Pradesh.

A group of protesters started a symbolic 'Chipko movement' in Buxwaha on the occasion of World Environment Day on 5 June. However, most of the protests are online. Environment lovers have created social media pages to raise awareness on the issue.

'#SaveBuxwahaForest' was among the top ten trending topics on Twitter on 20 May.

Over 6000 trees to be cut for Hebbal-Nagawala Valley Project



6316 trees are to be axed down in Singanayakanahalli after the proposal of the Minor Irrigation Department. The Hebbal-Nagawala Valley Project is approved and the aim for the same is to fill up about 65 tanks in the regions of rural and urban areas of Bangaluru and Chickballapur. They are apparently being proposed to cut because they come in the way of development. The notification has been published and has invited objections via email or post within 10 days. The farmers of the region do have a positive approach to the project because that would mean pushing up of the water table level which will thereby help with better irrigation but the citizens and environmental activists question the logic behind the falling of such a huge number of trees because the consequences would consist of harming the different species of trees and a huge lock population of peacocks.

PM Modi announces 20% ethanol-blend gasoline by 2025

causing a loss of wildlife. So, in order to protect everything left in the natural environment, there is a need to use every available tool we have. Molecular ecology is one such tool. It combines molecular biology techniques with ecological data to make sense of natural processes such as the growth or decline of populations, formation of new species, extinctions and invasiveness. Molecular ecology relies on extracting DNA from animals using tissue samples. Using DNA barcoding, species can be identified even from processed samples such as dried meat and powdered bones or horns. When the genetic diversity of a population is higher it increases the chance of some individuals in that population to adapt to new environmental conditions. If the population of a species decline, breeding occurs in a small population among genetically related individuals, this may lead to inbreeding depression. But sometimes, this can backfire and cause outbreeding depression where inbreeding takes place among genetically distant individuals. So, it is pretty evident that molecular ecology is essential for successful wildlife conservation.

“Nowhere to go” - forest loss in mountains of Southeast Asia



Southeast Asia - home to most of the tropical diverse species is now under serious threats due to massive support of carbon. It has rich biodiversity especially various native species that is only found in the region. Between 2001 and 2019, Southeast Asia had lost 610,000 square km of forest, an area larger than Thailand. Of this loss, 31% occurred in mountainous regions, equivalent to 189,100 km of highland forest converted to cropland and plantation in less than two decades. Southeast Asia faces 2 major barriers for itself in the coming years: firstly, increase in natural calamities, Clearing forests in steep headwaters where rivers originate can increase the risk of catastrophic landslides and flooding in lower areas. Second, with the loss of biodiversity and loss of native species, the ecosystem loses its

habitat for species. As higher elevated forests are deforested for carbon extraction and agricultural purposes, it is important to know how elevated forest ecosystems control the temperature of the surroundings cutting up to 3-4 degrees °C which directly affect the people, fauna and flora.

The mountains of Southeast Asia are one of the most biologically rich regions of the planet and it's incredible how many species of mammals, birds, and amphibians are living only in the mountains and rely on forested ecosystems for their survival, the removal of any of those forests will most likely reduce their lifespan and could potentially cause local extinctions because species that live in mountains are often very isolated in specific regions.

Kinnaur Hydroelectric project



Kinnaur Hydroelectric project over the Satluj river has caused distress among the natives and have threatened their life, livelihood and ecology in the basin. The proposed 804 Mega-Watt Jangi Thopan Powari hydroelectricity project envisages the construction of a concrete gravity dam of ±88 metres high above the deepest foundation level across river Satluj, which involve construction over the forest of 270.43 ha. Natives are vehemently protesting against this project since April, which profoundly impact the region of Jangi, Akpa, Khadura, Thopan and Rarang villages.

Over 100 projects have been commissioned or under construction over the Satluj river, results in occluding of 90% of river water which is flowing through tunnels. And this disturbance has devoured agriculture (*almost two-thirds of the working population in Kinnaur is associated with agriculture*) and the livelihood of people settled at the bank of Satluj.

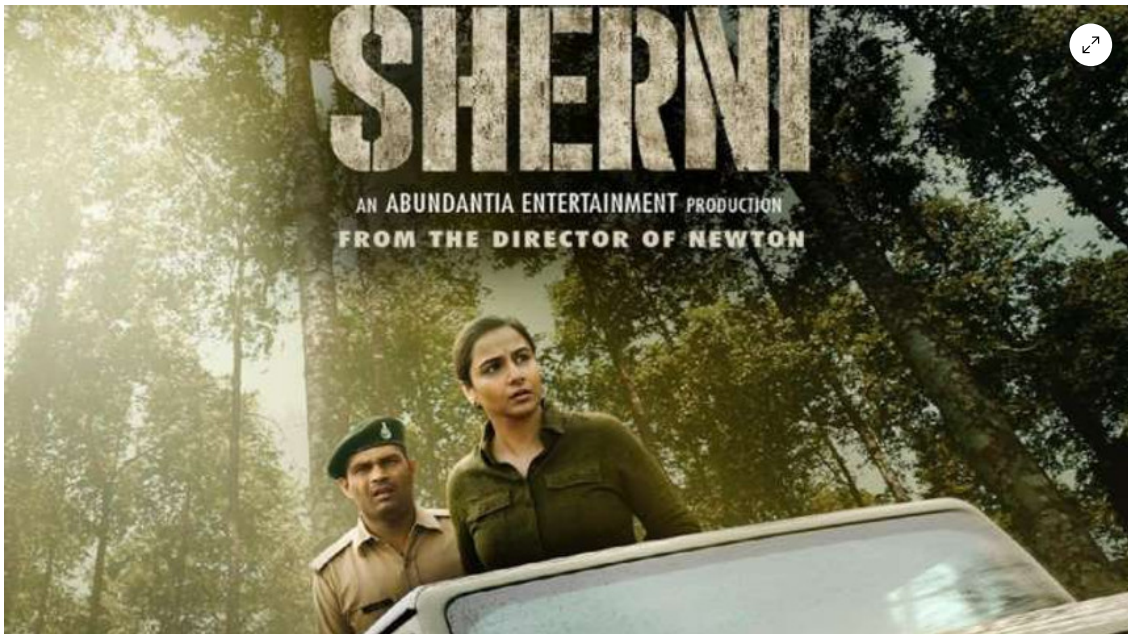
Beacon of Hope



A woman-led organization namely, Village Weaves based near Kaziranga Village, Assam regularly converts plastic waste into household utility items like mats, table covers etc.

What to Watch?

Sherni



Sherni is a 2021 film, starring Vidya Balan. The movie revolves around a tigress who is killing villagers. The movie perfectly depicts the fight between nature and man. Now, it's upon Vidya Vincent will she able to protect the tigress from the man? This movie is a perfect watch that

also promotes feminism.

[Sherni is available on Amazon prime video.](#)

Why soil is one of the most amazing things on Earth?



Soil is underappreciated. We are polluting soil without knowing the actual cost. But it's vital in so many ways. Here's the video by BBC that beautifully explains the importance of soil with beautiful and engaging animation. This 4 min video will give you the best teaching about soil.

[Watch Why soil is one of the most amazing things on Earth? here.](#)

What did you like about this fortnightly's The Raven? What did we miss? Let us know what you think:

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