

Vol 47 No 1 & 2

Spring-Summer 2024

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty - India

An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights



Animals Killed for Meat

In this Issue:

Advertising Ban on
Meat & Fish in the
Netherlands

Animal Consciousness

Mock Meat

Dog Fights

Greyhound Racing Tragedy





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Spring-Summer 2024

Contents

- I From my Desk...
- 3 Interesting News
- 7 Mocking Mock Meat
- 8 Animals Killed for Meat
- 10 Animal Consciousness
- 11 Veganism and Minimalism
- 12 Dog Fights
- 14 Racing to Death
- 15 Greyhound Racing Tragedy
- 16 Unhealthy and Unsafe
- IBC Vegan Recipe *Almonds and Pistachios*

Beauty Without Cruelty

is grateful to

Katoo Sidhwa

and

Dady C Dady

for their munificent bequests
enabling this combined
Spring and Summer issue of

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND and **करुणा-मित्र**

to be sponsored this year

Beauty Without Cruelty

is a way of life which causes
no creature of land, sea or air

terror, torture or death
Published and edited by

Diana Ratnagar
Chairperson, BWC - India

Designed by
Dinesh Dabholkar

Printed at
Saipress Prints LLP,

S No 37/1 Pisoli Gaon, Pune 411 060.

Cover: Mithun

Photo courtesy:

Sushil Kumudini Chikane/shutterstock.com

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This magazine is printed
on paper free of animal substances
and published every
spring (February),
summer (May),
monsoon (August)
and winter (November)

Kant Dabholkar

On 8 February 2024,
Kant Dabholkar suddenly
passed away aged 79.

From 1988 to 2000 BWC's
printing work was done at
Kant's Printing Press.

That's not all, he was a BWC
member for 36 years and
helped us till the very end
by checking the quality and
colours of all the final proofs
of our magazines, calendars
and other printed matter.

BWC has lost a true friend;
and Dinesh (our designer)
his father.

Om Shanti

Important Request

**Many BWC Life Members
joined decades ago.**

**If you are one of them,
would you please spare some
time to inform us your latest
e-mail id and mobile number –
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**admin@bwcindia.org or
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**BWC also requests all
Members to please take the
trouble to let us know their
change of address if shifting
residence. Many envelopes are
returned to us undelivered
with the post office comment
“left” thus making the
Member “untraceable” on
our membership roll.**

From my Desk...

Please let us know if you did not receive BWC's 2024 Golden Jubilee Calendar



In celebration of BWC-India completing 50 years, we printed a special wall calendar covering some of our achievements. They were posted in mid-December 2023. In addition to the franked postage, we paid handling charges, and 18% GST for the first time. However, there is no saying as to how many Members did not receive their copies – hundreds or even thousands. We complained but...

Mid-Day Meals

In January 2024 the Shree Mumbai Jain Sangha and the BJP's spiritual cell vehemently opposed the decision to serve eggs to school children in Mid-Day Meals in Maharashtra. BWC also sent an e-mail to the Project Management Unit of Poshan Abhiyaan (GOI) requesting them to send an Advisory to all States and UTs against serving eggs in the Mid-Day Meals.

Soon after the School Education Department of Maharashtra issued a circular to say that a red dot should be put on the identity cards of

those children whose parents had agreed to them being given eggs in the Mid-Day Meals, and a green dot on the identity cards of those children who had not been given permission i.e. were vegetarian.

In response, BWC wrote to the Maharashtra State Minister of School Education pointing out that eggs should not be served to ANY child since it would lead to unnecessary confusion and trouble. Veg children may by mistake be given eggs or can even be tempted to try them. We also drew his attention to the false claim that eggs were nutritious and stated how unhealthy they were in the long run. We suggested either a fruit like banana, pistachios or raisins be given to ALL students instead.

We reminded them that in August 2023 it had been decided to distribute raisins once a week as part of the Mid-Day Meal scheme. Moreover, there was a recent request from traders to the state government to purchase raisins again for distribution.

International Year of Camelids 2024

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2024 as the International Year of Camelids with the unfortunate aim of exploiting them for their meat, milk, fibre and means of transport.

BWC therefore wrote to the new CM of Rajasthan informing him that over the years we had saved a great number of camels from animal sacrifice/slaughter and exploitation by way of joy-rides, and that they had been sent back to Rajasthan. But if Rajasthan took good care of its camels, they would not be sold and smuggled out of the state by the camel mafia. After all, the desert is their homeland. It provides them with an adequate and ideal diet along with climatic conditions that they require to thrive and remain healthy.

We therefore suggested establishing vast sanctuaries with trees like *kumut*, *khejari*, *rohida*, *kair*, *jal* and *bordi* where camels can live without being exploited for their milk, meat, hide or for transport/entertainment.

Marching Orders given to Mules

In January 2024 BWC was happy to know that the Indian Army planned to deploy 500 drones, and in some areas helicopters, to replace mules. They would deliver medicines and essential items to remote Border Observation Posts.

About 8 years ago the Defence Ministry had assured BWC that instructions had been given for “immediate cessation of further destruction of old and worn out animals”.

Therefore, we again wrote to the President of India who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of India, the Prime Minister, the Defence Ministers and Chief of Army Staff, saying that we were happy to know that the Army was rapidly cutting down on the use of mules, but we were worried about their future. We requested that they continue not to euthanize or auction the mules, horses, yaks and dogs used by the Army but retire them with benefits just like humans. We enclosed an article entitled “Donkey Meat” from *Compassionate Friend* (Spring 2023) and said that we were sure they would not like the hardworking mules that had served the nation to land up being killed for the illegal

donkey/mule meat, blood and skin trades. Furthermore, we requested them to make arrangements for their rehabilitation in a special retirement shelter.

BWC was pleased to receive a reply from the Remount Veterinary Services to say that they appreciated our concerns and that the animals are kept at their Geriatric Care and Rehabilitation Centres.

Cock Fights



Rooster being administered a hormone-boosting drug.
Photo courtesy: deccanherald.com

In January 2024 a week before Sankranti, BWC sent a detailed letter to the CM and DG of Police, Andhra Pradesh, requesting that they take immediate action to stop cock fights in Andhra Pradesh. Since the Ranikhet disease had affected roosters in AP by weakening them, contrary to veterinary opinion, trial doses of Viagra had been administered to the cocks in the hope that when given again during the cock fight events, it would make them strong enough to fight.

In 2018 the Supreme Court upheld the 2016 Hyderabad High Court order that banned cock fights and betting and directed District Collectors to take action. Despite this, politicians endorse cock fights and they are held.



Over 3.3k ‘general service mules’ will be retired by the end of the decade. Photo courtesy: timesofindia.com



Diana Ratnagar
Chairperson

Interesting News

Exploitation of State Animals and Fish

The Mithun is the state animal of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, but is exploited, not protected like other state animals.

The Mithun is also the latest bovine (domesticated gaur), allowed to be bred and killed for its meat by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

The ICAR–National Research Centre on Mithun at Jharnapani, Nagaland, under Indian Council of Agricultural Research, has among the umpteen studies aimed at how best to exploit the species for commercial gain, undertaken one entitled “Study of growth performance and leather quality in mithun (*Bos frontalis*) and its comparison with local cattle (*Bos indicus*) fed on tree leaves based ration”. In fact, the mithun is referred to as the “sacrificial ox” of the North Eastern Region of India and is part of the traditions and rituals of the vast tribal population.

Concern for the Silver Pomfret (*Pampus argenteus*), Maharashtra’s recently declared official state fish, is there only because it is a cherished sea food. The fish will now be monitored and monetised under the guise of conservation and protection.

Cats and Cats

Small wild cats often become victims of retaliatory killing or attacks due to misidentification as more dangerous.

West Bengal’s state animal is the fishing cat but strangely it is not easily recognised by people probably because it is nocturnal. They are mistaken for big cat offspring and end up being killed.



Fishing cat. Photo courtesy: bigcatswildcats.com

In Ladakh people confuse the lynx with wolf and kill it claiming to protect themselves and their livestock.

It has also occurred that people in Maharashtra have mistaken rusty-spotted cats for domestic kittens, taken them home and then after a few days realised it is a wild cat and don’t want it. It is not possible to reunite the wild kitten with its mother after 48 hours and it takes almost a year to reintroduce them back into the wild.

In Gujarat too jungle cats have been mistaken as leopards. But retaliatory killings do not occur in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Mourning Monkey

In October 2023 at Amroha in Uttar Pradesh, a wild monkey attended the last rites of his farmer friend who used to share his lunch with it. He grieved along with the family and was inconsolable, so much so that he clung to the bier, and later refrained from eating anything.



Mourning monkey. Photo courtesy: sanook

Hybrid Pink Beef-rice



Pink beef-rice. *Photo courtesy: theguardian.com*

Researchers at the Yonsei University in South Korea created rice grains with beef and cow fat cells grown inside them. The stem cell production process began by culturing the muscle, fat and fish gelatine covered rice for 10 days, resulting in pale pink rice which they hoped would be a sustainable source of protein.

Lab-grown BUT Non-veg

It's no different here. In 2024 the Indian Council of Agricultural Research signed an agreement to develop cell based lab-grown meat of marine species, i.e. fish meat of king fish, pomfret and seer fish. For this the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) entered into a collaborative research agreement with Neat Meatt Biotech, a start-up working on cultivated meat. The CMFRI aimed to propel India in cultured marine fish meat or lab grown fish meat that is produced by isolating specific cells from the fish and growing them in the lab. Although animal component free media may be used in the lab, the fact remains that the base of such fish meat is fish cells and therefore non-vegetarian.

Ban on Advertising Meat, Fish & Fossil Products

In 2022 Haarlem, the Netherlands decided to ban starting 2024 meat advertisements in order to cut consumption due to climate crisis. It was the first province to vote for an advertising ban on meat, fish and fossil products. Two other municipalities Bloemendaal (North Holland) and Utrecht (4th largest municipality in the country) voted to also ban the advertising of meat and dairy products in public places.

Microplastics found in all Sea Salt samples

Microplastics have been found in sea salt samples across India by various research groups. The number found in 1 kg varied between 35 and 575 particles. They were polymers like polyethylene, polyester and polyvinyl chloride. People could be ingesting about 216 particles per year via sea salt.

Turtles

Some relief was welcomed in December 2023 when the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) declared it was pausing missile testing at Wheeler Island off Odisha coast during the mass nesting season (January to March) of Olive Ridley turtles thus protecting around 5 lakh turtles. Moreover the Army and Coast



Olive Ridley Turtle.

Photo courtesy: Bernard Gagnon/commons.wikimedia.com

Guard would patrol to ensure that trawlers and fishing boats do not venture close by. Meanwhile the Odisha government also banned fishing across the Rushikulya rookery in Ganjam district where around 6.6 lakh sea turtles also nest.

Shark Meat



Baby sharks removed from fished adult Milk Shark for food. Photo courtesy: Still from video on YouTube Channel Circus Thuppaki

A 2024 survey report of restaurants in 10 coastal states found that they were offering shark meat under the guise of local cuisine traditionally consumed by coastal communities but due to a steady rise in price had started to go in for ray meat. Shark meat, typically “baby shark” featured on restaurant menus mostly in the states of Goa, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra and the biggest demand was from foreign tourists. When questioned, most restaurants felt removing shark meat from their menus wouldn’t significantly affect their profits. They were hardly interested in the ecological implications of serving shark meat, but showed concern when told about high heavy metal levels existing in shark meat which could very well result in adverse reactions to those who ate it.

Shrinking Bird Populations

The State of India’s Birds 2023 report found that the population of around 60% birds has declined over 30 years, and around 40% have declined over the last 8 years. Birds

aid seed dispersal and pollination, and are predators and scavengers. They inhabit coasts, wetlands, tropical rainforests and high altitudes, but those in grasslands and semi-arid regions are the most vulnerable.

Invasive Alien Species

Invasive Alien Species have been a major factor in 60% and the sole reason in 16% of global animal and plant extinctions.

37,000 alien species (read exotic creatures and plants) were introduced in different parts of the world. Of these 3,500 were found to be harmful as they wreaked havoc on local animal and plant species affecting 6% plants, 22% invertebrates, 14% vertebrates, and 11% microbes.

Animal Sacrifice

In January 2024 in response to the Vishwa Prani Kalyana Mandal’s Dayanand Swamiji’s appeal to prevent animal sacrifice during the Yellamma Devi Jatra Mahotsav, the Belagavi DC issued an order prohibiting any kind of sacrifice during the fair at Kokatnur.

Last year also animal sacrifice had been prevented at Havanur’s Dyamavva Jatra in Havanur village in Haveri district of Karnataka. The VPKM holds rallies and convinces people to stop sacrificing animals like sheep, goats and buffaloes. Instead, in the presence of officials, devotees extracted a little blood from a buffalo calf and symbolically offered it to Goddess Dyamavva Devi (unacceptable to BWC).

The VPKM headed by seer Dayanand Swamiji has been spearheading awareness campaigns for decades to stop animal sacrifices – they estimate 1.5 crore animals are annually sacrificed in Karnataka despite the existence of the Animal Sacrifice Act of 1953 which has not been enforced.

Camel Meat



Over 5000 kg of camel meat seized at cold storage facility in Delhi. Photo courtesy: indiatoday.com

In December 2023 the Delhi Police seized a truck carrying approximately 5,000 kgs of meat and officials of the FSSAI collected samples including a tail of a camel for testing. Upon testing the report of the food analyst stated it was “camel meat (major content), buffalo and cow meat (in minor content)”.

Snake Venom

All over India diluted snake venom injections and dry cobra venom powder is increasingly and illegally sold for use at rave parties.

In August 2023 as many as 29 snakes were rescued and three persons involved in a snake venom trade were arrested in Odisha.



Snake venom being extracted. Photo courtesy: Ton Bangkeaw/shutterstock.com

At Noida in November 2023 five persons were arrested for supplying nine venomous snakes and venom for rave parties. Then, in March 2024 the main accused in snake venom supplies to make opioids in Uttar Pradesh was arrested, followed by two of his aides.

Porcupines

By 2023 lots of porcupines were found to be entering saffron fields in J&K and damaging the crops because their natural habitats were been reduced – they were migrating into fields from adjoining forest areas. The wild animals were then killed to save the saffron crops or hunted for their meat and quills.



A farmer examines the feathery shell of the damaged saffron corms and a quill that is left behind by the porcupines following a nocturnal attack on his field. Photo courtesy: Abrar Mattoo

“Body-on-chip”

In December 2023, in order to test new drugs without using animals, a 3D printer “body-on-chip” was invented by research scientists of the University of Edinburgh. It mimics how medicine flows and is distributed through five human organs (heart, lungs, kidney, liver and brain) of a patient’s body. In short, it reveals where the new drug goes in the body, how long it stays there and shows the body’s reaction to the drug without having to use an animal or even human.

Mocking Mock Meats

“Mock meat demand created by the market” says Pushpesh Pant

For millennia, Indians have sustained themselves on a plant-based diet, a legacy deeply rooted in our rich culinary heritage. In the northern regions of the subcontinent, *roti*, made from wheat, millets, or corn, serves as the staple grain, while in the southern regions, rice or millets take centre stage, providing nourishment. Our traditional cooking medium has always been plant-based, relying on cold-pressed oils derived from plants like mustard, sesame and coconut. Even our sweetening, souring, colouring, and flavouring agents are from the plant kingdom.

It is no exaggeration to say that, with the exception of a small minority, the Indian masses have historically adhered to a diet that was not only vegetarian but also largely vegan and organic. This explains why buzzwords such as “plant-based” and “vegan” have left many of us feeling confused.

While it is true that not every Indian was a vegetarian, and some did include meat, fish or poultry in their diets – especially those living in forests or along coastlines – the foundation of Indian cuisine has always been grains, legumes, lentils and seasonal vegetables such as squashes, eggplants and yams. These ingredients provide balanced meals that blend flavours with nutrients. The wisdom of Ayurveda has permeated Indian kitchens, ensuring that our diets are aligned with seasonal and regional appropriateness.

No one in India ever felt the need for mock meats or plant-based milks. The emerging trend of plant-based alternatives is driven by marketing tactics employed by food industry giants seeking to capture the vast Indian market. Nutritionists, often complicit in this agenda, contribute to the hype by



Some plant-based meats.

Photo courtesy: dropsStock/shutterstock.com

rediscovering “super foods” primarily imported cereals and seeds. Advertisers relentlessly, bombard us with subliminal messages, stirring desires for aspirational foods, often highly processed junk that are a part of the modern lifestyle. Peer group pressure intensifies this vicious cycle.

One can almost pinpoint the moment when the shift began – the entry of the Golden Arches (McDonald’s) into India and the reintroduction of once-expelled fizzy colas. McDonald’s, KFC and Domino’s soon realised that meaty patties or toppings for forbidden meats would not propel sales on the subcontinent. This is what gave birth to the indirect strategy of conquering the market with mock meats and plant-based proteins.

In recent years, fortified foods and extruded vegetable snacks have launched an assault on Indian staples like *dalia*, *poha* and others. So far *idli-dosa*, *momo*, *litti chokha* and *chila* have struck back, mocking the mock meats, breakfast cereals and oats that flooded the market. We must however, remain vigilant. The fight to preserve our culinary heritage and dietary practices is far from over.



*Pushpesh Pant is an Academic,
Food Critic and Historian*

Animals Killed for Meat

Under the updated Food Safety and Standards Act and Regulations, animals that are allowed to be slaughtered and their flesh eaten are:

Chapter 2

FOOD PRODUCT STANDARDS

2.5. MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS

2.5.1. Definition:

(a) “animal” means an animal belonging to any of the species specified below:

- (i.) **Ovines** [Sheep]
- (ii.) **Caprines** [Goats]
- (iii.) **Suillines** [Pigs]
- (iv.) **Bovines** [Cattle including Buffaloes and Mithun (*Bos frontalis*)]
- (v.) **Domestic Rabbits** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

and includes

Poultry [Chicken, Duck, Turkey, Geese, Guinea Fowl, Japanese Quail and their Eggs]

and

Fish [Finfish: Sardine and other Clupeoids, Tuna and Bonito, Mackerel, Seer Fish, Pomfret. Crustacean: Shrimp/Prawn, Crab. Molluscs: Mussels, Squid, Clam, Cuttlefish, Octopus, Scallops. Fish Eggs: Sturgeon Caviar.]

A Note listed under regulation

2.5.2 includes:

- (b) Use of genetically modified techniques are prohibited for production of meat of animals or poultry birds.
- (c) Milk and meat producing animals except poultry, pig and fish shall not be fed with feed containing meat or bone meal including internal organs, blood meal

and tissues of bovine or porcine origin materials except milk and milk products.

- (1) Live Bivalve Molluscs [clams, mussels, scallops and oysters]
- (a) Live bivalve molluscs are products that are alive immediately prior to consumption. Presentation includes the shell.
- (b) Live bivalve molluscs are harvested alive from the harvesting area either approved for direct human consumption or classified to permit harvesting for an approved method of purification, e.g. relaying or depuration, prior to human consumption. Both relaying and depuration must be subject to appropriate controls implemented by the official agency having jurisdiction.
- (c) Live bivalve molluscs shall possess organoleptic characteristics associated with freshness, as well as an adequate response to percussion (i.e. shellfish will close by themselves when tapped) and freedom from extraneous matter, as determined by specialists familiar with the species concerned.
- (f) Bivalve shall be alive when sold.

Did you know Bivalves like clams, mussels, scallops and oysters are cooked alive?

The torture commences with live capture and purchase. Then being stored in the fridge in an open bowl without water for up to 24 hours. Before cooking they are again checked if still alive by tapping on them and only if so are immediately cooked by sautéing, boiling, baking or grilling. If their valves do not open during cooking, it means they died earlier and can prove deadly if eaten.

Illegal Slaughter

Cats: *Narikoravas*, a nomadic community illegally catch cats, kill them and sell their meat to roadside food vendors in Tamil Nadu who sell it as mutton in *biryani*.

Camels: It is unfortunate that camels are slaughtered and their meat consumed under the guise of religious sacrifice on *Bakri Eid*. The Madras High Court had in 2016 forbidden slaughtering/sacrificing of camels; then in 2022 the HC ordered no trafficking of camels in the state. Although their slaughter has lessened considerably, it still occurs clandestinely in some places in India.

Dogs: In 2020 BWC had again approached the Nagaland state government to ensure that the rearing of dogs and cats for meat and their consumption stops. Within a month of our representation the state cabinet decided "to ban commercial import and trading of dogs and dog markets and also the sale of dog meat, both cooked and uncooked". Mizoram had also dropped dogs from the list of animals allowed for slaughter. Unfortunately, a few months later the Gauhati High Court stayed Nagaland's ban on dog meat.

Donkeys: India has banned the slaughter of donkeys under Section 429 of the Indian Penal Code which attracts 5 years imprisonment, a fine, or both. Only 1,20,000 were left in India as per the 20th Livestock Census released in 2019. Donkey skins are smuggled out to China from which medicinal gelatine called *Ejiao* is made. In October 2022 as much as 400 kgs of donkey meat was seized in Hyderabad and 7 persons were arrested. In Prakasam, Bapatia, Krishna, West Godavari and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh people are known to consume donkey meat imagining it to be an aphrodisiac and that it can heal particular ailments. The state's donkey population declined 53% in 7 years from 10,164 in 2012 to

4,678 in 2019 and illegal slaughter is the cause. So much so, by 2022 donkeys were brought from Rajasthan to meet the demand. In 2024 some were seized in Maharashtra headed for Telangana to be slaughtered during the Medaram Jatara.

Hare and Common Quail: Note the irony that while Rabbits and Japanese Quails are bred-raised-killed to be eaten, Hare and Common Quail are protected wildlife making it illegal to hunt and kill them, yet their meat is available and is consumed in some parts of India.

Pigeons and Crows: The infamous *Kaka Biryani* made from Crow meat is sold in Tamil Nadu. Similarly Pigeon meat is illegally available and passed off as chicken not only in Tamil Nadu. For example, in November 2022 several persons of a housing society in Sion, Mumbai, were booked on the basis of a complaint that one of the residents was raising, and killing pigeons to supply their carcasses to a hotel and beer bar.

Form IV (See Rule 8)

Statement about ownership of the newspaper entitled *Compassionate Friend* as required to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February.

Place of Publication: Beauty Without Cruelty (India),
4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040.

Periodicity of Publication: Quarterly.

Printer's Name: Viral Shah Nationality: Indian.
Address: Saipress Prints LLP,
S No 37/1 Pisoli Gaon, Pune 411 060.

Publisher's Name: Diana Ratnagar,
Chairperson, Beauty Without Cruelty (India)
Nationality: Indian.
Address: 4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040.

Editor's Name: Diana Ratnagar. Nationality: Indian.
Address: 4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040.

Names & Addresses of individuals who own
the newspaper and partners or shareholders
holding more than 1% of the total capital:
Chairperson, Beauty Without Cruelty (India),
4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040.

I, Diana Ratnagar, hereby declare that the particulars given
above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: 1st March 2024

Sd/- Diana Ratnagar
Signature of Publisher

Animal Consciousness



The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness concluded that “non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviours. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.”

The related cartoon about animal consciousness, drawn by the Polish-born, British cartoonist Andrzej Krauze, was published in the NewScientist article “Animals are conscious and should be treated as such” edited by Marc Bekoff.

Veganism and Minimalism

Every single thing we consume costs the earth precious resources like energy, air and water says Ritambhari M.

About 6 years ago, I asked myself the questions, "What does being a vegan imply?" and "How much do my needs cost the earth?" Both questions led me to very similar answers for, indeed, these were not two unrelated questions but the same question in different words.

Between 1993 and 2012 as I gradually became a vegan, I found I was not satisfied with all the steps I had taken to reduce the suffering of animals. I wanted to lead a life that caused minimal harm – considering causing some harm is inevitable – to all life forms. Why I say "causing some harm is inevitable" is because even as we breathe, thousands of bacteria and viruses are killed. That is how God-Truth-Life designed the manifest universe, but most harm is unnecessary. Closely linked to causing harm to other life forms is karma, for when one causes harm to other life forms one naturally creates karma for oneself.

About 7 years ago I began to understand that every single thing we consume costs the earth precious resources like energy, air and water. Since all of earth's resources are shared equally by all life forms, the more I consume, the more I take away from natural resources and the less other life forms get to share in Mother Earth's bounty.

This understanding led me to minimalism. I began to consciously consume. Every time I want to buy something, I ask myself is it necessary or is it just something that has caught my fancy. More often than not, most things I think I need are just things that have caught my fancy...for the moment. This does not mean I do not buy anything. I do, but only when I cannot do without it.

As a result of all the lifestyle related choices, most of my spend is on food, clothes and shelter, that too nothing fancy, nor too much. Veganism is not only about respecting animals, it's also about giving them an equal share in Mother Nature's bounty.

If this article woke your curiosity, try finding out how many gallons of water are used to make just one automobile, one piece of gold jewellery, one mobile phone, one packet of detergent, one plastic bag, one washing machine, one dress, one book. Try finding out how much of the air was polluted manufacturing any one of the things you consume. The answers will shock you. That is what your lifestyle costs all life forms and the earth.

It's time to wake up to our suffering footprint and to reduce it.

All vegans are not minimalists and all minimalists are not vegans. For me, there's not the one without the other.

You might ask the question, "If we give up rampant consumerism, how will we enjoy life?", but you know, really, living wasn't meant to be about "things" at all. Isn't it a fact that despite all the things that surround us and all the social networking options available to us, the quality of our lives has become so poor as to cause a rise in mental health issues and their correlates physico-emotional diseases?

And that is where I have found being a vegan minimalist or a minimalist vegan helps. The less suffering we cause to all life forms and the earth, the less we suffer. The less we suffer, the more we enjoy, the more we live.



Ritambhari M. is a life member of BWC-India who writes to create awareness about ethical, social and environmental issues.

Dog Fights

This so-called sport is the forerunner to committing brutality towards fellow men says Khurshid Bhathena

Readers may recall my article entitled *Bully Kutta* printed in the spring 2013 issue.

Since then dog fights involving betting that had begun in Punjab and Haryana, spread to Delhi. By 2015 they became a popular pastime of the rich and powerful who were the only ones granted access to the secret venues since both animal fights and betting are illegal.

It became a status symbol in Punjab to own a ferocious *Bully Kutta* and train him to not only illegally fight another dog, but to hunt. The dogs are made to chase wild animals such as wild boar and hare, attack and kill them. And since these dogs can easily follow the scent of a wild animal they are taken on illegal hunting trips by their gun-toting owners.

Appalling Suffering

Suffering is an integral part of the fights – dogs suffer both physically and emotionally, whereas humans suffer due to the bets they place and lose. BWC had therefore requested the Police to quickly crack down on them before they get uncontrollable.

Following different breeds of dogs being brought illegally into the country, in April 2013 the Government of India changed its policy regarding import: only those persons who had stayed abroad continuously for two years could bring in two pets as baggage. This was expected to curb *Bully Kuttas* from being brought into the country, but it did not happen. So much so that in 2017 the



Severely injured bully kutta.
Photo courtesy: petsworld.com

newspapers reported that sedated dogs, particularly from Eastern Europe and Russia, smuggled in suitcases were being detected by Customs.

In 2015 a lot got revealed on social media like prize money and prestige being the main reasons why

people patronised dog fights. (American pit bull terriers cost at least ₹ 2 lakh each whereas the prize money is anywhere between ₹ 1 to 10 lakh.) A man from Jhajjar (Haryana) posted on Facebook pictures of his bloodied dog after a dog-fight, following which there was an outrage created by animal activists. Also, a breeder from Delhi admitted that a part of training such dogs involved making them pull SUV tyres for strength; and more shockingly that smaller dogs were used as bait to make them aggressive – within minutes the animals get severely injured.

In 2016 *Bully Kuttas*, Pakistani Mastiffs and Indian Alangu Mastiffs continued to be openly sold on internet marketplace sites such as olx.in. That they were from cities all over India proved that dog fights continued to be clandestinely held.

In June 2018 posters publicising dog fights were put up in Moga district's Nihal Singh Wala town of Punjab which led the police to register a rare FIR against the organisers. However, BWC is unaware of the outcome and feels there was no serious follow-up. It seems the mobile numbers given on the posters were switched off so the organisers could not be tracked down!

Investigations by animal activists in 2018 revealed that street dogs were increasingly being used to train fighter dogs such as American Pit Bulls and Staffordshire Terriers brought in from abroad. To make them aggressive killers, their tails were chopped off, they were tied with ropes, housed in covered cages, kept hungry and then fed raw meat, given hormone injections and drugs and some were made to run on a treadmill to keep fit. The Punjab and Haryana Police could have found the source of the videos that circulated on social media and taken action against the persons concerned. After all, dog fights and betting (usually heavy betting in lakhs of rupees) are both illegal.

Man us Man

Then in March 2023 following illegally held dog fights in Gurgaon, the death of a dog, and two persons being removed from the WhatsApp group, a physical fight broke out in which a gun was fired injuring two persons. BWC had written to the ACP (Crime) urging that appropriate action be taken by the Police to immediately stop illegal dog fights. It was high time the government came down heavily on the sadistic people who were responsible for spreading this so-called "sport". This sport is the forerunner to committing brutality towards fellow men.

Years back on 25 April, 2016 the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issued a notification imposing a ban on the import of dogs except for certain specific purposes, i.e. valid pet dog, dogs for R&D conducting research approved by CPCSEA (Committee for the Purpose of Controlling and Supervising Experiments on Animals connected to the Animal Welfare Board of

India), and for security of Defence and Police Forces; whereas the import of commercial dogs for breeding or any other commercial activities was not permitted. This Notification was set aside by the Madras High Court on 6 June 2023.

Hope at long last?

On 12 March 2024 the Chairman of the Animal Welfare Board of India sent an Advisory to the Chief Secretaries of all States & UTs not to issue any licences or permits for sale and breeding of ferocious dogs. This was as a result of a report by an Expert Committee with members from various stakeholder organisations and experts set up following an order by the Delhi High Court in response to a Writ Petition about ferocious dogs kept as pets that bite humans. The Committee under the chairmanship of the Animal Husbandry Commissioner recommended a ban on the import, breeding and sale of particular breeds of ferocious dogs and existing pets of these breeds would need to be sterilised. The breeds identified covered mixed and cross breeds of: Pitbull Terrier, Tosa Inu, American Staffordshire Terrier, Fila Brasileiro, Dogo Argentino, American Bulldog, Boerboel, Kangal, Central Asian/Caucasian/South Russian Shepherd Dog (Ovcharka), Tornjak, Sarplaninac, Japanese Tosa and Akita, Mastiffs (Boerbulls), Rottweiler, Terriers, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Wolf Dogs, Canario, Akbash Dog, Moscow Guard Dog, Cane Corso and every dog of the type commonly known as Ban Dog or Bandog (i.e. *bully kutta*).

BWC hoped that this would herald the beginning of the end of *Bully Kutta* fights, but there have been immediate setbacks: the Karnataka HC stayed the circular, the Calcutta HC ordered a partial stay and the Delhi HC sought the Centre's response.



Khurshid Bhathena is a Trustee and Honorary Secretary of BWC-India

Racing to Death

Growing awareness has caused a decline in spectators at greyhound events in North America, says Ashoke Dasgupta

About 175 half-starved greyhounds tore say 250 rabbits apart. Then, repeated representations by Beauty Without Cruelty to the Centre pointed out the illegality, to say nothing of immorality, of greyhound coursing events in Punjab, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960. This resulted in the Punjab Forest Department imposing a ban, in 1988, on the use of hares as live-lures for greyhound coursing and race training.

But there was a loophole – there was no mention of rabbits. BWC has tried, without success so far, to get the ban modified to include “all live animals” because live rabbits, guinea-pigs and cats are also used as live-lures.

“Coursing” is a competition between two greyhounds. A live bunny (hare or rabbit) is driven into a coursing field and the greyhounds are released to chase it. A judge awards each greyhound points according to how well it pursues the hapless creature. The bunny is often caught and killed gruesomely. It is terrified, even if not caught.

Now it's Racing

Although there is a difference between greyhound coursing and racing, the training for both involves hounds or dogs tearing small animals apart.

The behind-the-scenes savagery is mostly unknown to the public. However, a growing awareness has resulted in a decline in the number of spectators at greyhound events in North America. This may be a reason why foreigners, losing financially, are motivated to establish this ‘sport’ in countries like India, where it has become a status symbol to own a greyhound or two.

The greyhound blood-sport business includes breeders, owners, live-lure animal suppliers, trainers, handlers, veterinarians, track owners and

operators, gamblers and spectators. The aim is to make money, so animals become commodities. They are made to perform via barbarous, unethical ways.

Commercial dog racing is illegal in 42 of the United States, only two tracks remaining operational in West Virginia. Seven states have not yet declared it illegal, but their dog tracks have closed.

In Canada, one cannot legally bet on greyhound racing, but may still race dogs. However, one may find online Canadian betting websites, partly because greyhound racing is unlegislated in Canada.

The country with the most greyhound racing abuse is Australia, with 64 operational tracks.

The India Greyhound Racing website brazenly gives lots of information and caters to create and expand the illegal and brutal activities.

In Punjab, announcements for tournaments to be held (every second day) are made and their results uploaded. There is no authentic love for greyhounds involved. The focus is on exploiting them via breeding and racing.

Although there is no formal ban on greyhound racing in Punjab, the procedure for obtaining permission to organize these races is cumbersome, causing a ban of sorts.

Strangely enough, a registered Greyhound Racing Board exists. It claims greyhound races organised in rural Punjab help in bridging social gaps and differences (sic).

The Animal Welfare Board of India, together with the Government of Punjab, need to implement a long-overdue, effective ban on the fiendish greyhound-racing ‘sport.’



Ashoke Dasgupta is an award-winning journalist and former editor of Compassionate Friend

Greyhound Racing Tragedy

Justice for Blue Ranger

An anonymous open letter from Help Greyhound Abuse received by BWC asking for Justice for Blue Ranger which was forwarded for immediate action to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, Director General of Police and Director Animal Husbandry, Government of Punjab, the AWBI and others

I am writing to bring to your attention a deeply troubling incident that occurred during one of the recent events organised by the greyhound racing board Punjab. The races took place in Moga, Punjab on 28th February. The live telecast of the whole race is available on YouTube channel called "Fly High Racing". You can find every race that takes place in Punjab area on this YouTube channel. You'll be shocked to see the number of races that take place.

Regrettably, a greyhound named 'Blue Ranger', passed away due to an overdose of performance-enhancing drugs administered to him. This tragic event unfolded during a live broadcast of the race on YouTube. The dog was given a drug named 'white cocaine' to boost his performance. Due to which he died on the spot. He was the finalist and going to run the final race i.e. round 7 of the race. Which means he ran 6 times that day while being given the drug again and again; and died right before the final race.

The members and guests were quick in doing damage control. As soon as they realised what had happened, they made a similar looking dog run the final race so that they could cut the clip in which blue ranger died and just continue from where his look alike was running by his name.

I was lucky enough to get the recording of the original YouTube live from that day. The board is doing everything possible to get the video removed and to cover up the case.

Nobody has any remorse regarding this. The dogs are openly given drips, alcohol, injections



Screen capture from 28th February live telecast from video on YouTube channel: "Fly High Racing". Fast forward to Round 7.

etc while the races are going on. Most of the dogs end up breaking their paws, legs, having fractures and even develop cancer due to whatever's being given to them. Not a single dog race has any authorities checking whether the races are being conducted fairly and dope free. Every dog is given injections and drips a day before the races in the name of supplements but there is some or the other drug involved for sure.

As an organization dedicated to the welfare of animals, you must take immediate and decisive action to prevent such incidents from happening again. I'm attaching the video. I'd like to stay anonymous. This is all I know and being an animal lover, I felt the need to share this with you. This video can be of great help since no action was taken and no authorities were concerned about whatever happened. I look forward to your action on this critical issue.

Unhealthy and Unsafe

Harmful for our Brains

Healthline.com (that sets high standards of quality research) lists the 7 worst foods for our brains:

Sugary Drinks include soda, sports drinks, energy drinks and fruit juice. They increase the risk of dementia because they contain high fructose corn syrup.

Refined Carbohydrates include sugars and highly processed grains such as white flour (maida). They have a high glycemic index and glycemic load which can impair memory and intelligence, as well as increase the risk of dementia.

Foods high in Trans Fats which occur naturally in animal products like meat and dairy; as well as hydrogenated vegetable oils. Trans Fats are associated with impaired memory and the risk of Alzheimer's Disease.

Highly Processed Foods high in sugar, added fats and salt like chips, sweets, instant noodles, microwave popcorn, sauces and ready-to-eat packaged foods. They contribute to excess fat around the organs which is associated with a decline in brain tissue.

Aspartame an artificial sweetener used in many "sugar-free" products. Artificial sweeteners are linked to behavioural and cognitive problems.

Alcohol if consumed in excess can have serious effects on the brain. It can lead to memory loss, behavioural changes and sleep disruption.

Fish, high in Mercury, a heavy metal, contaminant and neurological poison is particularly harmful to developing foetuses and young children.

Beware of Mock Meat

One needs to beware of foods that look like meat.

It isn't even 100% vegetarian leave alone vegan.

According to a mercola.com (the most popular alternative-health website on the internet) analysis:

"Cultured meats are ultra-processed and therefore likely to cause health problems similar to those caused by other ultra-processed products, such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, Type-2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, cancer, mental health problems and increased all-cause mortality. The starting ingredients in the new fermented synthetic biology products are cheap sugars derived from genetically engineered (GE) corn and soy. GE crops are grown in environmentally destructive monocultures that use loads of herbicides, pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. As a result, they're loaded with chemical residues. In addition to a base of sugars, hundreds of other ingredients may be added to the ferment in order to produce the desired end product, such as a certain protein, colour, flavour or scent. The most-often used micro-organism in the fermentation process is gene-edited E.coli. While traditional fermentation processes, such as making beer, produce waste products that are edible by animals, compostable and pose no biohazard, the bio-waste from these synthetic biology ferments must first be deactivated, and then must be securely disposed of. It cannot go into a landfill. Making food that produces hazardous bio-waste is hardly a sustainable model. Lab-grown meats are also an environmental disaster in the making. Their impact is far more akin to that of the pharmaceutical industry than the food industry."

BOTH animal and cultured meats should be rejected for health and ethical reasons. We don't need any type of meat – real or artificial.

Cultured meats are produced by isolating specific cells via a biopsy from animals and fish and growing them in the lab. Such lab-grown meat (actually muscle tissue) is also labelled cell-based, vat-grown, test-tube, in-vitro, and misleadingly called clean, synthetic and slaughter-free too.

Vegan Recipe *Almonds and Pistachios*

Almonds are found inside the almond fruit. They are a good source of protein, fibre (if had with the skin) and calcium; and they have a high content of manganese, Vitamin E, magnesium, tryptophan, copper, Vitamin B-2 and phosphorus. They are also high in monosaturated fatty acids and may lower cholesterol levels and reduce risk of heart disease. Research published in *Metabolism: Clinical and Experimental* showed that almonds reduce blood cholesterol and lessen the rise in blood sugar levels when eaten with carbohydrate foods that have a high glycemic index such as white bread. A few *Mamra Badam* soaked in water overnight and chewed in the morning before consuming anything else, are said to give good health benefits including enhanced memory and good eye-sight. And, having 10-12 almonds could get rid of a migraine headache.



Pistachios are the lowest calorie nuts and have unique health benefits. A handful a day provides considerable levels of phenolic antioxidants, minerals, vitamins and protein. According to the US Dept of Agriculture Nutrient Database, they provide more than 30 different vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients; and 1 oz or 49 nuts have 6 grams of protein – the same as an egg. Also, their appetite suppressing oleic acid compound helps fight obesity. And, eating some before bedtime can help fall asleep since they contain melatonin.

Zarda Rice (Meethe Chawal) (serves 4)

Ingredients

- 1 cup basmati rice
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 cloves
- 1 black cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon saffron, soaked in a little water
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon green cardamom seed powder
- 1 teaspoon rose water
- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 3 tablespoons almonds, chopped
- 3 tablespoons pistachios, chopped

Preparation

Wash and soak the rice for 15-20 minutes. Heat oil on medium flame; then add cloves and black cardamom, sauté for a minute. Add soaked rice and saffron, mix and sauté for 1 minute. Add water. After the water starts to boil, cover pan and lower the heat. Cook for 7-8 minutes or till rice is half done. Mix in the sugar, cover and cook for 15 minutes. Lastly add rose water, cardamom powder, raisins and chopped nuts. Fluff up the rice and mix. Garnish with more chopped nuts before serving.

Do visit www.bwcindia.org/Web/Recipes/Recipesindex.html for an assortment of Beauty Without Cruelty's tested and tasted, healthy and delicious vegan recipes.

Dear Carnist,
I'm ME, not MEAT
so don't EAT me



Photo: Neil Emmerson



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