

Vol 48 No 4
Winter 2025

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty - India
An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights

Bird strikes



In this Issue:
"Be Kind to Animals"
The 30-Day Challenge
Shankar's Life and Death in a Zoo



Beauty Without Cruelty - India

4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040

☎ +91 74101 26541

✉ admin@bwcindia.org 🌐 bwcindia.org

Winter 2025

From my Desk...

“Be Kind to Animals”

Upon knowing that the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) had mandated the slogan “Be Kind to Animals” to be displayed on all state transport buses April 2025 onwards, BWC wrote to the Union Minister giving suggestions to effectively make drivers cautious and save animals from injury and death, mentioning that BWC had also written to the Ministry in 2018 and 2019, and approached the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation regarding monkeys getting killed when crossing NH-4 and said it could be easily avoided by fixing road signs advising vehicles to slow down and if people did not feed them – in their enthusiasm to eat they did not notice speeding vehicles as a result of which they got hit.

Following are the suggestions that BWC sent to the MoRTH in July 2025 with a request to seriously consider implementing them to ensure road safety for wild and domestic animals all over India:

Contents

- IFC From my Desk...
- 2 Interesting News
- 6 Doomed to Death in Captivity
- 8 Routine Bird Strikes
- 10 India's Beef Paradox
- 14 A Gift for your Body and Mind

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

करुणा-मित्र

Beauty Without Cruelty

is grateful to

Siddho Mal Charitable Trust

for generously donating ₹1,50,000/-

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

Shree Mudra
181 Shukrawar Peth,
Pune 411 002

Front cover:

Lesser Flamingo
near Navi Mumbai

© Krish Chandran

📷 krish6102

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND ©

is the copyright of

Beauty Without Cruelty - India

Unauthorised reproduction
in any manner,
without written permission
from the publisher,
is prohibited.

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



A public transport bus with the slogan "Be Kind to Animals". Photo courtesy: themooknayak.com

- There should be a 24/7 speed limit of 30 kmph on all vehicles passing through or on roads adjoining forest areas. Rumble strips (like speed bumps at toll-nakas) can be fixed at every 100 metres to ensure speed is not increased.
 - Highways running through all forest areas should be closed to traffic for at least an hour around sunset and another hour around sunrise. This is when animals move the most and are very likely to suddenly cross the road.
 - Sensors can be fixed so that caution lights get automatically turned on whenever an animal is crossing the highway.
 - Roads can be marked with fluorescent paint where wild animals are known to cross.
 - Signboards displaying silhouettes of animals that are known to cross can be fixed on the roadside well in advance, warning drivers and giving them sufficient time to completely slow down.
 - Fencing along stretches of the road where animals are likely to cross can be constructed.
 - Flyovers, underground, and/or overhead passes for vehicles and/or wildlife should be constructed where possible in forest areas. In case of monkeys, overhead arches with natural vegetation can be built so that the chance of them crossing the road is lessened
 - An awareness campaign covering the following facts can be launched immediately
 - a. Animals get dazzled by headlights and can get easily run over.
 - b. It is better to brake and stop than swerve and go ahead. But if that is not possible, never to drive on the side of the road in front of an animal that is crossing the road, but to pass behind it.
 - c. Be extra cautious especially before and after sunrise and sunset, and slow down considerably in thickly forested areas and more so on blind bends.
 - d. Never stop and feed any wild animal or bird.
- Last, but not least, in case of any animal being injured or killed, the driver of the vehicle should be held fully responsible and be appropriately dealt with as per law. Camera or other systems should be in place, to locate those who hit and run. And, just like contact details for attending to human accident victims are displayed on highway sign boards, state forest department emergency numbers should be also prominently displayed so that people can call them to give first aid to those animals that have been injured in road accidents.

Interesting News

Saving Rivers and their Inhabitants

There were 10,000 gharials in the 1940s but less than 700 in 2025. Fifty years of conservation efforts focused on a 'head-start' approach did not work and gharials still face extinction.

788 captive-reared gharials were released into the Ganga at the Barahsingha Sanctuary between 2009 and 2019. The majority did not survive long enough to breed and those that did faced shrinking habitats, deadly fishing nets and disappearing sandbanks due to extensive riverbed cultivation.

Gharial conservation is definitely based on saving our rivers. The wild population of the 30 gharials that were bred at Patna zoo and released into the Gandak River in 2014-15 is stable only because the river is relatively undisturbed by human activities.

The National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) Asia's first facility dedicated to research on river dolphins that was inaugurated on the banks of the Ganga in Patna in 2024 should be fully functional by end-2025. It will not only study dolphin behaviour and habitat but that of gharials, otters and macro-invertebrates and focus on river hydrology which directly affects dolphin habitats.



Ghariyals being released in the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh
Photo courtesy: Munish Kumar, indiatimes.com

Bio-Fencing

In 2025, solar-powered lighting was introduced in elephant corridors to improve safety. Villages located in Jharkhand near the Palamu Tiger Reserve were protected with bio-fencing to prevent man-elephant conflict. A biological fence consists of different layers of plant species grown to keep wildlife from human populated areas. The 3-tier plants for elephants are sisal first which forms a thorny barrier, the second layer is of lemon grass which emits volatile oils that repel elephants and the third layer is of thorny branches of pungent citrus/lemon.

Irony and Ecstasy

The Central Zoo Authority of India's report "Planned Breeding Programs in India zoos: Assessment and Strategic Actions (2024)" refers to the misidentification of the Alpine musk deer – an endangered species found in the central to eastern Himalayas – for its conservation breeding programme being run at 2 locations, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Instead of the Alpine musk deer, the zoos seemingly initiated a conservation breeding programme of the Himalayan musk deer. However, the breeding programmes for the Himalayan musk deer have all failed.

Fertilisers from Slaughterhouses

Objections were raised by BWC to the Government of India's Notification entitled Fertilizer (Inorganic, Organic or Mixed) (Control) Seventh Amendment Order, 2025, dated 13 August 2025 Specifications of Bio-stimulants, by writing to the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, stating that the use of animal waste from slaughterhouses and leather industries to be utilised in fertilizers that grow crops such as tomatoes and potatoes was morally unacceptable to those who do not eat meat on religious or ethical grounds. We therefore requested the amendment allowing the use of animal (and fish) derived amino acids in bio-stimulants be seriously reconsidered and withdrawn.

Illegal Abattoirs

In 2025, the Maharashtra state government planned to make the punishment, a 5-year jail term and a fine of ₹10,000/- under the Maharashtra Animal Preservation Act, 2015 for slaughter of cows, calves, bulls and bullocks, more stringent for repeat offenders and started a drive against illegal abattoirs.



Cattle for slaughter. Photo courtesy: opindia.com

Man's Best Friends – not Foes

A dog is man's best friend but what is meted out to the majority of (stray) dogs by man is, to say the least, disgraceful. No wonder then that when the Supreme Court ruled in August 2025 that Delhi's street dogs should be picked up and kept in shelters, there were massive rallies and objections raised throughout India. Ironically, one of the 2 judges who had ruled thus was a Parsi although the earlier (albeit almost 200 years ago) 1832 Bombay Dog Riots when the British tried to cull stray dogs had been successfully led by the Parsi community.

Within a few days the matter was brought before a 3-judge bench of the SC. It was emphasized that there were not enough shelters to shift stray dogs to and that no one had died due to rabies in Delhi during the last 5 years.

The revised judgement was compassionate and not harsh with exception to "aggressive" dogs. The order was extended to the whole of India and Municipalities were to strictly adhere to the

ABC (Animal Birth Control) rules and numerous small feeding locations were to be identified since it was impractical for many dogs to be herded in one place and fed together because by nature dogs were territorial animals. They were to be sterilised and returned to their own localities where feeding them should be carried out without obstruction because keeping them hungry was neither good for public safety (causing aggressiveness), nor in consonance with the spirit of compassion under ABC rules.

Flying high

Bird-hits apart, choppers are bad for the ecosystem especially in areas such as the Garhwal, Himalayas where they are used for the Char Dham Yatra. Choppers fly far too low making it dangerous although in 2015 the National Green Tribunal ruled that those that fly to Kedarnath must maintain a minimum altitude of 600 m (about 2,000 ft) and ensure that noise levels don't exceed 50 decibels. Enforcement is inconsistent so violations persist.

Pomato and Brimato

By 2025, both Pomato and Brimato were being grown in India. Developed by the Institute of Vegetable Research, Varanasi, by grafting potatoes with tomatoes, and brinjals with tomatoes – the same plants then produce two vegetables. They are created by GE (Genetic Engineering) which fuses two plants through recombinant DNA technology without altering their genetic makeup and are not GMO (Genetically Modified Organism). About 25,000 brimato saplings (more popular than pomato) have been sold to farmers in Sonbhadra, Deoria and Azamgarh of Uttar Pradesh.



Brimato plants.

Photo courtesy: indiatimes.com

Why worry?

It is becoming quite noticeable that the dairy industry is worried about their falling sales and are therefore trying to innovate and come out with new products to counter the rising sales and growing popularity (cheaper and better) of non-dairy products or milk analogues as they are termed. The Food & Drug Administration seemed to be in their favour when in August 2025 they declared that clear labelling for Paneer substitutes was mandatory. If Tofu etc give rise to health concerns, so do Paneer and other milk products.

Captive Elephant = Cruelty

In 2025 at the Abhayaranyam camp in the Madumalai Tiger Reserve a captive elephant was hit on her hind leg with a sickle by a drunk *kavadi* (assistant to a mahout) resulting in a deep wound. BWC wrote to the Tamil Nadu's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and the Field Director of the Reserve not only to take appropriate legal action against the person but also pointed out that such incidents clearly indicate why elephants should not be kept in captivity or camps and exploited under the guise of conservation for so-called eco-tourism. They are wild animals and should be left alone in forests without humans trying to tame and train them for work or any other reason.

Lebanon's Hayek Hospital serves Vegan Food

The Hayek Hospital situated in a suburb of Beirut, Lebanon has been completely vegan since 2021. They did it as a "moral responsibility" so that their patients do not wake up from surgery to be greeted with meat, eggs or dairy "the very foods that may have contributed to their health problems in the first place". The hospital attributes its groundbreaking decision to WHO classifying meat consumption as carcinogenic and declared "serving meat in a hospital is like serving cigarettes in a hospital".

Meanwhile some hospitals abroad have begun offering plant-based options. Significantly, both New York and California have enacted laws requiring hospitals to offer a plant-based option with every meal because the American Medical Association and the American College of Cardiology issued recommendations for them to provide healthful plant-based meats to promote better health in patients, staff and visitors.

Pigeons

In July 2025 the Bombay High Court directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation to lodge FIRs against persons "illegally" and in "defiant" manner feeding pigeons at Dadar (West) and other *Kabootarkhanas* despite a policy prohibiting the same and HC refusing interim relief for feeding in its earlier orders. This resulted in requests (political as well) to the Commissioner BMC to "find a balanced, humane solution" with alternative arrangements being made to feed pigeons in open spaces (regulated feeding zones) such as Bandra Kurla Complex, Race Course, Aarey Colony and Sanjay Gandhi National Park. The Maharashtra CM issued a statement saying "Saving the lives of pigeons, protecting the environment and securing citizens' health – all three are important. Until an alternative system is in place, the BMC should continue a regulated and controlled supply of food to the pigeons." He also said that any decisions concerning pigeon-feeding zones must be accompanied by alternative and compassionate solutions to prevent the starvation of birds.



The BMC has permanently shut the popular Kabutar Khana in Dadar by covering it, citing health and hygiene reasons. Photo courtesy: Akash Patil, indianexpress.com

Smuggling Wildlife into India



Twenty exotic animals, including pythons, parrots and rabbits, smuggled from Bangkok to Pune.

Photo courtesy: freepressjournal.in

In July 2025 the baggage of 2 passengers who landed at Pune on a flight from Bangkok contained 14 green tree pythons (1 had died), 4 double eyed fig parrots and 2 Sumatran striped rabbits. Both persons were from Gujarat, one a delivery boy and the other a worker in a construction company. Interestingly, 2 advocates represented them to obtain bail.

An article in Mid-Day was titled “Mumbai airport turns hotspot for exotic animal smuggling” and went on to say that as of August 2025 “over 375 exotic animals seized at Mumbai airport in 7 months – most were reptiles, many poached from the wild, macaque found with bullet in skull”. Yet again a Bangkok flyer was arrested for smuggling 67 exotic animals belonging to 14 different species (some had died enroute) into Mumbai in September 2025. They included merkits, hyraxes, sugar gliders, leopard tortoises, bearded dragons, monitor lizards and bird species. BWC hopes they were sent back.

Depending on the species seized, the animals may be repatriated to their country of origin if they are not native to India. Seized animals may also be sent to rehabilitation centres. Meanwhile smugglers face legal consequences like imprisonment or hefty fines. BWC wonders how come so many Indians, on their return from Bangkok are smuggling in wildlife... the demand here must certainly be lucrative enough to take the risk of getting caught, labelled a criminal and punished.

Deer Deaths continue

Over the years scores of deer suddenly dropped dead in zoos such as Kanpur, Bilaspur, Delhi. 16 deer mysteriously died at Katraj Zoo in July 2025. BWC therefore requested that Pune Municipal Commissioner to make sure that the carcasses were not auctioned, but destroyed by incineration – not even burial – to ensure that their skins and antlers are not illegally traded. Suspecting poaching of wildlife body parts, the Central Zoo Authority of India had way back in 1996 directed all Zoos never to auction, but to destroy carcasses, particularly those of deer.

Soon, the Sangharsh Sena demanded an inquiry against two veterinarians, alleging illegal trading of animal parts. But the PMC’s Additional Commissioner said “the antlers of the deceased cheetals were destroyed transparently in the presence of forest officials”. However, BWC wonders why the entire carcasses weren’t destroyed.

Live Snake Worship opposed

In July 2025 immediately on getting to know that politicians were trying to get live snake worship restarted, BWC wrote to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Minister of Forests, state government of Maharashtra, explaining that it was not only illegal, but cruel. Unfortunately, political pressure prevailed, and almost 100 cobras were subjected to torture in Battis Shirala after 23 years. The Supreme Court order of 2014 was shamefully worked around by the government granting permission for “educational purposes”.

King Cobra Sanctuary

In contrast, also in July 2025, with the involvement of local tribal communities, near Balabu village in Alluri Sitarama Raju district, Paderu forest division of the Eastern Ghats, within the proposed 2,400 hectare King Cobra Sanctuary of North Andhra Pradesh, 30 hatchlings were released.

Doomed to Death in Captivity

Many zoos across the world have taken the decision to rehabilitate their captive elephants to sanctuaries where they enjoy a better quality of life says Shubhobroto Ghosh

African Elephant Shankar's death in Delhi Zoo

I first saw Shankar, the African Elephant in 2000 in Delhi Zoo when he was in the company of his companion, Vambai. It was a novel experience for me to watch African Elephants in India. Very few zoos have kept African Elephants in India, Guwahati Zoo in Assam had two African Elephants in the eighties and early nineties, Mysore Zoo had three African Elephants and now has only one male, Rambo, Reliance Greens Zoo in Jamnagar has several African Elephants and Delhi Zoo had Shankar and Vambai. Both Shankar and Vambai were gifts from the government of Zimbabwe to the former President of India, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma in 1998, after whom Shankar was named. I observed him alone after the death of his mate Vambai in 2001. I was always saddened by his solitary state given that African Elephants are social and gregarious animals, and share many emotions exhibited by humans, like pleasure, pain, anger, bonding with relatives and emotions on death.

A lonely plight

I wrote about his plight in the Indian Zoo Inquiry in 2004 and was also part of the endeavour that tried to send him back to Africa led by the Aspinall Foundation in England and supported by World Animal Protection in India. This would have been among the first genuine attempts to rehabilitate a captive zoo African Elephant to the wild, in consonance with the effort of the Aspinall Foundation to release their entire herd



African Elephant Shankar, Delhi Zoo, March 2024.

Photo courtesy: Shubhobroto Ghosh

of captive African Elephants from Howletts Zoo in Kent in England to Kenya. Sadly, this endeavour did not come to fruition as the court case to free him from the clutches of Delhi Zoo failed. Shankar, the African Elephant displayed very severe signs of stereotypic behaviour in captivity in Delhi Zoo, combined with aggression and a whole host of maladies associated with his lonely status in captivity.

Numerous studies across the world show that elephants fare poorly in captivity and that the trade in live African Elephants is particularly insidious. Zimbabwe, the origin country from where Shankar was obtained, has been notorious for culling elephants and sending elephant calves for foreign zoos. It is entirely possible that Shankar was the outcome of a culling operation whereby his entire family had been slaughtered for ostensible population management purposes. I saw Shankar being beaten brutally by his keepers on several occasions and observed him with both his front feet chained and hobbling.

I gave multiple suggestions to integrate Shankar in Delhi Zoo and Rambo in Mysore Zoo in one place, preferably Mysore Zoo, because Mysore Zoo has a larger enclosure but these propositions were rejected on the grounds that two male elephants cannot be kept together. This is a false premise, because although there are compatibility issues in housing multiple male elephants together, it is not an insurmountable obstacle. Shankar and Rambo could have been kept together with a gradual introduction and a separation with a fence whereby they could remain out of harm's way from each other but could still interact and have tactile contact. But most zoos still treat their animals like stamps that are valuable to their own collections and thus they do not want to part with them for fear of losing their precious commodities (most zoos still treat animals as commodities, instead of sentient living beings) and neither Delhi Zoo nor Mysore Zoo were amenable to this course of action.

African Elephants are generally more difficult to keep in captivity because they are harder to train than Asian Elephants and are less amenable to human dominance and instructions in a confined captive environment. For Shankar, it must have been a huge blow to have lost his wild family in the first place and this loss must have been compounded by the loss of his mate Vambai in Delhi Zoo in 2001. Several experts have observed the devastating impact on young African Elephant calves that have been spared their lives from culling operations in countries like South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe and have subsequently have been sent to live in various zoos and circuses in foreign countries. A sustained campaign to put an end to this atrocity has yielded some positive results with the sourcing of wild African Elephants like Shankar coming under closer scrutiny from international bodies like CITES (Convention On International Trade in Endangered Species) and even zoo associations.

Reluctance to send Shankar to a Sanctuary

Delhi Zoo resisted all attempts to rehabilitate Shankar back to his country/continent of origin, making all kinds of lame excuses why he could not be moved out. The real reason was that Shankar was a diplomatic gift from the government of Zimbabwe to the government of India and thus any relocation was considered undesirable. Many zoos across the world have taken the decision to rehabilitate their captive elephants to sanctuaries where they enjoy a better quality of life. I was witness to one such endeavour when in 2013 three African Elephants, Toka, Thika and Iringa, were shifted from Toronto Zoo in Canada to the PAWS (Performing Animal Welfare Sanctuary) in California in USA. Unfortunately, Delhi Zoo was always intransigent to this kind of initiative and Shankar did not move out one inch from his confines in Delhi Zoo and ultimately died there.

Wildlife belongs in the Wild

Repeated requests to integrate him with other captive African Elephants failed, and Shankar ultimately died a pathetic death, a broken shadow of what would have been his natural wild self. Shankar's death on 17 September, 2025 reminds us of our duties to captive elephants everywhere, starting from the captive elephants offering joy rides at Amer Fort in Jaipur in Rajasthan to temple elephants in Kerala and captive elephants in zoos everywhere, and this concern extends to both African Elephants and Asian Elephants. I hope the example of Shankar the African Elephant in Delhi Zoo will encourage the government to recognize that elephants are not suitable for a captive existence and they belong as wild animals to the wild. Wildlife belongs in the wild.



Shubhobroto Ghosh is Wildlife Campaign Manager, World Animal Protection, author of the Indian Zoo Inquiry and the book, 'Dreaming in Calcutta and Channel Islands.' He is a Life Member of BWC-India.

Routine Bird Strikes

India's skies are under siege by negligence and defiance of law says Kamlesh Shah

India's skies are among the busiest in the world. With over 15 crore domestic passengers recorded in 2023, our country has emerged as the third-largest aviation market, trailing only the United States and China. Yet behind this success story lies an unspoken, worsening crisis — the routine bird strikes that threaten aircraft safety, passenger lives, and public property.

These are not accidental occurrences of nature. They are man-made tragedies in the making — born of regulatory negligence, illegal slaughterhouses, and unchecked meat and fish markets operating perilously close to our airports in clear violation of aviation laws and court orders.

A Preventable Peril in the Skies

A “bird strike” refers to a collision between a bird and an aircraft — most commonly during take-off or landing, when aircraft are closest to ground and most vulnerable. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has documented that such collisions can cause catastrophic damage — from cracked windshields and nose cones to complete engine failure when birds are ingested into jet turbines.

Globally, bird strikes have claimed over 490 lives since 1988, as recorded by the Bird Strike Committee Europe. The aviation industry loses an estimated USD 1.3 billion every year in aircraft repairs, delays, diversions, and cancellations due to wildlife strikes.

The danger is not theoretical. India itself witnessed a shocking incident on May 21, 2024, when 39 flamingos were killed after colliding with an Emirates aircraft approaching



A flock of birds and an IndiGo aircraft in close proximity.

Photo courtesy: indiatimes.com

Mumbai airport — a tragic symbol of our failure to control bird attractants near critical air corridors.

The Law is Unequivocal — and Repeatedly Ignored

India's legal framework could not be clearer. Under Section 10(1A) of the Aircraft Act, 1934, and Rule 91 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, there is a total prohibition on slaughtering animals, depositing garbage, or engaging in any activity likely to attract birds within a 10-kilometre radius of any aerodrome. Violations are punishable with imprisonment up to three years, or a fine up to ₹10 lakh, or both.

Further, Development Control Regulations (DCR 31 and 2034) of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) explicitly ban slaughterhouses, abattoirs, and butcher shops within 10 km of an airport.

In PIL No. 43 of 2010 (Datta Mane vs Union of India), the Bombay High Court, through its order dated 27 February 2015, directed

the State Government and the MCGM to frame a comprehensive policy to regulate slaughterhouses and meat shops near aerodromes to prevent bird hits. Yet, a decade later, no such policy has been effectively implemented.

Open Violations and Contempt of Court

Despite the Court's directions and the statutory prohibitions, MCGM has issued hundreds of licenses to meat and fish vendors within the prohibited 10 km zone. During Bakri Eid in 2024 and 2025, the Corporation even authorized goat slaughtering in locations as close as 2.5 km from airport runways — an act of reckless defiance that undermines both aviation safety and judicial authority.

Representations submitted to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and MCGM by Kamlesh Shah, a member of the Animal Welfare Board of India, on 13 June 2025, explicitly warned of “extreme bird-hit risk to aircraft operations at Mumbai airports due to gross violations of Aircraft Rules.” The letter cited rampant slaughtering and waste dumping near aerodromes and called for immediate enforcement of Rule 91. Yet, authorities chose silence.

The DGCA, entrusted as the principal regulator to ensure aviation safety, has failed to enforce its own Aerodrome Advisory Circulars (AD AC 06 of 2017 and AD AC 01 of 2022) mandating wildlife hazard management and strict inspections of airport surroundings.

This coordinated inaction by DGCA, MCGM, and the Police amounts to an unpardonable dereliction of duty and borders on contempt of court. The law is not optional — it is binding.

Data Paints a Grim Picture

Data presented in the Rajya Sabha (Unstarred Question No. 1619, answered by Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd.) on 18 December 2023) shows the horrifying scale of the crisis between 2018 and October 2023:

- New Delhi (IGI): 710 bird strike incidents
- Mumbai (CSMIA): 352 incidents
- Ahmedabad: 319 incidents

In Mumbai alone, bird strikes rose from 57 in 2018 to 90 in 2022, among the highest nationwide. The trend indicates an unchecked surge in wildlife strikes even as aviation traffic multiplies.

Global Alarms: Recent Crashes Reinforce the Risk

While India continues to ignore early warnings, the world has witnessed multiple deadly crashes where bird strikes are under investigation or suspected.

- South Korea Plane Crash (Dec 29, 2024): A Boeing 737-800 aircraft veered off the runway during landing at Muan International Airport, hit a wall, and burst into flames — killing all passengers except two crew members. Preliminary investigation revealed birds on or near the runway moments before the aircraft's distress call.
- Azerbaijan Airlines Crash in Kazakhstan (Dec 25, 2024): An Embraer 190 aircraft crashed during an emergency landing near Aktau, killing 38 of 67 occupants. Though final causation remains under review, the crash underscores how fragile flight safety becomes in adverse or poorly managed environments.

These global tragedies reiterate what India refuses to learn — when aviation safety margins are compromised on the ground, the consequences in the air are often fatal.

The Mumbai Case: A Tragedy Waiting to Happen

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (T1 and T2) handles nearly 1,000 flights daily, in addition to Juhu's private and defense operations. The proliferation of non-vegetarian markets, illegal slaughterhouses, and open garbage dumping around these airports directly contravenes aviation law and municipal regulations.

The Akhil Bharat Krishi Go Seva Sangh, a public trust established by Mahatma Gandhi and led by Vinoba Bhave and Jamnalal Bajaj, filed a Public Interest Litigation (CRPIL/13438/2025) in the Bombay High Court seeking enforcement of these laws. The petition highlighted hundreds of violations within the 10 km safety radius. Yet, the High Court dismissed the PIL in July 2025, stating that similar issues were pending in other cases.

But the dismissal does not erase the underlying violations — it only exposes the deep failure of authorities who, despite clear orders and repeated warnings, continue to risk the lives of millions of passengers.

Regulatory Paralysis and Shared Blame

- DGCA: Failed to ensure enforcement of wildlife hazard circulars, inspections, and aerodrome environment management.
- MCGM: Issued and renewed licenses to meat and fish shops in restricted zones, violating its own Development Control Regulations.

- Police: Neglected to act on cognizable offences under the Aircraft Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Each agency waits for another to act. Together, their inaction has normalized illegality and eroded aviation safety.

Lives in Jeopardy: A Call to Action

Every flight that takes off or lands in India today does so under the shadow of preventable risk. The failure of DGCA, MCGM, and Police to enforce fundamental laws designed to protect human life is unpardonable and unconstitutional. It is an insult to the very purpose of governance.

The way forward demands:

1. Immediate enforcement of Rule 91 — zero tolerance for slaughtering or waste dumping within 10 km of airports.
2. Cancellation of illegal licenses and relocation of high-risk markets.
3. Regular joint inspections by DGCA, MCGM, and Police, with accountability for lapses.
4. Nationwide awareness and enforcement drives across all airports.
5. Conclusion: Prevent the Preventable

Bird strikes are not random acts of fate — they are predictable, preventable, and prosecutable. The law is clear, the courts have spoken, and the evidence is overwhelming. What remains unseen is political and administrative will.

If the authorities continue their indifference, India's next aviation disaster will not be an accident — it will be an act of official negligence. It is time to restore accountability, uphold the law, and protect the skies above and the lives within.



Kamlesh Shah is Trustee of Akhil Bharat Krishi Go Seva Sangh and Head of the Research Team at Shree Vardhman Parivar. He is also a BWC-India life member.

India's Beef Paradox

While cow and calf meat exports are prohibited, the water buffalo meat, also known as Cara meat, is legal. India has the distinction of being the world's biggest exporter of buffalo meat says Nitin Mehta

Bharatiya or Indian civilisation is the oldest living civilisation. Over the course of history, numerous civilisations came and triumphed for some time and then disappeared without a trace. The Bharatiya or Hindu civilisation, in spite of its antiquity and centuries of oppression, is as radiant and as dynamic as a young horse which is powerful, energetic, strong and has an unyielding spirit. It has deep roots with an unmatched heritage of learning, culture, languages, food, history, science, spirituality, arts, architecture, mathematics, philosophy, doctrines of war and peace and much more. More than all this, Hindu civilisation has the concept of Ahimsa and Compassion. Compassion towards all living beings. Animals share this planet with us. A practising Hindu will not harm even an ant. This position is unique to the Dharmic faiths, namely Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism.

Killing of animals for food or for fun is an anathema to practising Hindus. Civilisations survive on sacred principles. However, in a world where trade agreements are important, protecting sacred values is almost impossible.

Cow Meat vs Buffalo Meat

This is the dilemma the Hindu majority India is facing. The cow is a sacred animal for Hindus. However, India has become a big exporter of beef. While cow and calf meat exports are prohibited, the water buffalo meat, also known as Cara meat, is legal. India has the distinction of being the world's biggest exporter of buffalo meat.

The biggest producer of buffalo meat in India is the company called 'Al-Kabeer', owned by Satish and Atul Sabharwal. It has invested ₹230 crore on plant and machinery to have the most efficient way of killing the buffaloes and poultry. It is based in Andhra Pradesh, near Hyderabad, covering acres of land. The state of Andhra Pradesh is a leading contributor of cattle to Al-Kabeer, followed by Karnataka and Telangana.

At least 80 lakh to 1 crore heads of cattle are slaughtered every year to generate 9.5 lakh metric tonnes of beef. The Hindu holy site of Tirupati Balaji is also in Andhra Pradesh. The Sri Venkateswara Temple at Tirupati is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

43% of buffalo meat is produced in Chief Minister Yogiji's Uttar Pradesh. There are at least four major meat companies whose owners are Hindu. Apart from Al-Kabeer owned by the Sabharwal brothers, Arabian Export is owned by Sunil Kapoor, MKR Frozen Food is owned by Madan Abbot. Though it has been claimed that there are even Jain owners of slaughterhouses, I could not find any. However, many Jains outside India own grocery shops and franchises selling meat, fish and eggs.

To their great credit, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance food stores in India have stopped selling any meat products. No Hindu should ever do business involving meat, fish or eggs. The negative karma hits hard in this very lifetime.

Buffalo meat is marketed in different forms. Buffaloes are de-boned, that is, the bones are removed, and deglanded, meaning the glands are removed from the carcass. A concept called 'Nose to Tail' means that every part of the animal is eaten. The animal's liver, heart, kidneys, tongue, pancreas and even the genitalia are consumed.

The frozen Halal buffalo meat has an array of cuts like the shank (meaning meat from below the knee), Thick flank (cut on upper portion of hind leg), striplon (meat from lower back of animal along the spine from ribs to rump), brisket (from the breast or lower chest of the cow), knuckle (top side of the leg). Animal casings are the edible outer layers of sausage made from the intestines of animals like pigs, sheep and cattle. The faeces of these animals are in the intestines.

Apart from buffalo meat, India exports poultry and live goats and sheep. According to the 2023–24 statistics, India exported poultry worth ₹1,200 crore and more than 7,000 metric tonnes of live exports of goats and sheep. The meat is exported to UAE, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia and many other countries, including China.

Between October 2023 to September 2024, 31,275 shipments of frozen buffalo meat were exported to China. A meat company called Fair Export, which is part of a Lulu conglomerate, has a presence in Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East.



A mother cow with calf. Photo courtesy: S B Stock | dreamstime.com

India's rise as a major player in meat exports is known as the Pink Revolution. It is a term coined by Durgesh Patel, who is also known as the father of the Pink Revolution in India. Started in 2014, Pink Revolution aims to modernise and optimise meat production. Durgesh Patel is obviously Hindu and Gujarati. The blood of slaughtered buffaloes and poultry mostly ends up in the ground and rivers. The pollution renders the ground infertile and the rivers dead. The faeces and discarded animal parts further pollute the waterways. Small flecks of faeces can spread to meat in the slaughter process as hides and intestines are removed.

Meanwhile, PM Modi has chaired a high-powered meeting to improve the fishing industry. Nicknamed the Blue Revolution, ₹3,000 crore has been allocated to focus on increasing fish production. Another scheme called PM-MISSY has been allocated ₹6,000 crore to support fishing enterprises between the years 2023 and 2027.



A mother water buffalo with calf. Photo: Mykola Kalytchuk | dreamstime.com

As the world fish stock is running out, fish farms have started. Fish swim in their own faeces and cause great pollution.

Violence against defenceless animals rebounds on human society and it snatches away something humans crave for, which is peace, happiness and tranquillity. As India marches ahead in pursuit of material happiness, the violence towards animals will not give the country peace and happiness which should come with it.

The violence perpetrated on animals becomes like an unmovable cloud of despair, anxiety and uneasiness. It creates a nightmare situation of dystopia and negativity amongst human beings. This is especially true for India which has always lived by the principles of Ahimsa. In fact, Ahimsa is the secret to the immortality of Hindu civilisation.

This is an issue which spiritual leaders must speak out about. Their silence on the issue of condemning meat consumption and meat exports is putting the Sanatan Dharma into real danger. Hindu gurus hardly ever condemn meat eating openly and boldly.

Every Hindu child must be brought up on a plant-based diet. No Hindu home should have meat, fish and eggs. This is the bare minimum, but to cut out the immense cruelty involved in the milk industry, one should take that extra step and go vegan. I cannot emphasise enough the urgency of this matter.

I call upon the following gurus and spiritual organisations to speak up about meat eating and slaughterhouses at every event and at every lecture to protect our heritage:

Swami Avdheshanand Giri (Acharya of Juna Akhara), Ganapathi Sachchidananda, Sri Sri Mata Amritananda (Ammā), Swami Ramdev, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Sadhguru Jaggi Maharaj, Mohanji (Mohanji Foundation), Sant Trilochan Darshan Das Ji (Sachkhand Nanak Dham), Baba Gurinder Singh (Radha Saomi), Namra Muni, Dalai Lama, Swami Chidanandji (Parmarth Niketan Ashram), Supreme Master Ching Hai, Lokesh Muni, Satguru Uday Singh (Namdhari Sangat), Acharyashree Ratnasundarsurishvarji, Acharyashree Hemchandrasurishvarji, Radhanath Swami (ISKCON).

Organisations: BAPS, ISKCON, RSS, Arya Samaj, Chinmaya Mission, Brahma Kumaris, all the Kathakars and all the four Shankaracharya.

Courtesy: easterneye.biz/india-beef-paradox-hindu-values



Nitin Mehta is a writer and commentator on Indian culture and philosophy. He has contributed extensively to discussions on Hinduism, spirituality, and the role of Gurus in modern society. You can find more of his work at nitinmehta.co.uk

A Gift to your Body and Mind

The 30-Day Meat & Dairy-Free Challenge explained by Dr Danesh Chinoy

Change rarely happens because someone shouted, “Eat your vegetables!” at us across the dining table. It usually begins with curiosity — sometimes even a dare. What would happen if, just for 30 days, you removed meat and dairy from your plate? Would you shrivel up from lack of protein? Would your taste buds stage a protest march? Or — here’s the secret most people don’t expect — would you feel lighter, sharper, and more alive than you have in years?

That’s the heart of the 30-Day Meat & Dairy-Free Challenge. It isn’t a lifetime vow or a permanent banishment of cheese and chicken curry. It’s simply a month-long experiment, a gentle reset button for your body and mind. Think of it as spring cleaning for your insides: dusting away inflammation, unclogging arteries, and giving your gut a reason to actually thank you for once.

Why 30 Days Works Like Magic

Thirty days is the sweet spot. Too short to feel overwhelming, but long enough to give your body a real taste of what plant-based living feels like. Science backs this up — new habits take about three to four weeks to stick. In one month, your taste buds adapt, your gut microbiome begins to flourish, and your energy levels often stabilize in ways you didn’t think possible.

Participants in our challenge often report the same surprises:

They don’t need a 4 p.m. caffeine IV drip anymore.

They can eat a big bowl of rajma or chana without feeling like they need to lie down immediately.

They wake up fresher, their skin looks better, and their digestion — let’s just say, it moves along like the Mumbai local on a good day: on time, efficient, no delays. In short, in 30 days, your body begins to show you what it’s been capable of all along, once you stop clogging it with excess meat and dairy.

The Science, Without the Jargon

What actually happens in your body during this challenge?

First, *your cholesterol levels start dropping.* Meat and dairy are the primary sources of saturated fats and dietary cholesterol, which stiffen arteries and raise blood pressure. Plants, on the other hand, don’t contain cholesterol at all. Instead, they bring in soluble fiber — tiny natural scrubbers that sweep out cholesterol like a diligent house-help with a broom.

Second, *your inflammation calms down.* Chronic inflammation is behind everything from joint pain to fatigue to heart disease. Red meat and dairy proteins often trigger inflammatory pathways. A steady supply of fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes does the opposite: it cools the fire.

Third, *your gut microbiome* throws a party. You feed it fiber from beans, grains, and greens, and in return, your microbes create short-chain fatty acids that improve immunity, regulate hormones, and even boost mood. People often say they feel mentally clearer within weeks — and that’s not magic; that’s microbiology.

And finally, *your blood sugar stabilizes.* Without the spikes from processed meats or cheese-laden foods, your body runs smoother, more like an electric car than a sputtering diesel truck.

The Mental Shift

But the benefits aren't just physical. Each time you choose a plant-based meal, you prove to yourself that change is possible. By week two, you realize food cravings are not permanent chains — they're just habits waiting to be rewritten. By week three, you've got your go-to meals and snacks sorted, and you start to feel — dare I say it — proud. And by week four, you've tasted enough variety to know that life without meat and dairy isn't bland at all.

Psychologists call this self-efficacy — the confidence that you can make change happen. And once you've built it into your diet, you'll notice it spills into other areas of life. Suddenly, you're not just eating more beans — you're standing taller, feeling calmer, and maybe even saying no to things that don't serve you.

Yes, There Will Be Challenges

Now, let's not sugar-coat it (because we both know sugar's another discussion). The first week can be rocky. You may miss your morning chai with milk, or wonder if your dal tastes the same without ghee. At social gatherings, that cheesy pizza may wink at you from the table.

Here's the secret: it's okay. Cravings pass. Habits adapt. Alternatives exist. Plant-based milks froth beautifully in tea or coffee. Cashew and almond butters add richness to curries. Nutritional yeast (the not-so-cheesy name for a cheesy-tasting powder) can make pasta sing. And if you're really struggling, remind yourself — it's only 30 days. You're not signing a contract with tofu for life.

And if you do slip up one day? Don't panic. This challenge is about progress, not perfection. Think of it like cricket — one dropped catch by Abhishek Sharma in the India-Pak Asia

Cup match can be made up by his batting to take home the man of the match award. You just reset and carry on.

The Joy of Community

The best part of this challenge isn't even the food — it's the people. Through our WhatsApp-based program, participants get daily tips, recipes, motivation, and most importantly, support. Sharing struggles and victories with others on the same path creates a sense of accountability and encouragement. Someone posts a picture of their first dairy-free dessert, another shares how their energy levels shot up, and suddenly, you're not alone. It's like having a cheerleading squad in your pocket — except instead of pom-poms, they're waving dal, oats, and tofu stir-fries.

What Happens After 30 Days?

Here's the best part: at the end of the month, the choice is yours. Maybe you feel so fantastic you decide to continue. Maybe you adapt a flexible, mostly plant-based approach. Maybe you simply carry forward one or two habits that stuck with you. There's no pressure, no guilt. The goal is awareness and empowerment. Once you've experienced 30 days without meat and dairy, you'll never look at your plate the same way again.

An Invitation

So, are you ready? Ready to feel your energy rise, your digestion smile, and your mind sharpen? Ready to discover that life without meat and dairy isn't a punishment but an adventure? Thirty days is all it takes to find out.

Start on your own today — stock your kitchen with whole grains, legumes, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Try new recipes, experiment with flavors, and give your body the gift of plants. And if you'd like support along the way, know that help is just a message away. Together

with a team of doctors, I guide participants through this challenge, offering tips, encouragement, and community through WhatsApp. You don't have to walk this road alone — we're here to cheer you on.

The 30-Day Meat & Dairy-Free Challenge isn't just about food. It's about health, confidence, and discovery. It's about proving to yourself that change is possible and realizing that sometimes, the bravest thing you can do is swap the butter chicken for a bowl of daal makhani prepared in cashew butter. Thirty days. That's it. A month from now, you could be lighter, brighter, and healthier — or still wondering "what if." The choice is on your plate. Why not give it a try?



Dr Danesh Chinoy is a Sports Physiotherapist, Psychologist, and unapologetic plant-lover.

He believes muscles, minds, and meals all thrive when powered by nature –

no shortcuts, no gimmicks, just the honest crunch of a carrot and the comfort of a good laugh.

He is also a life member of BWC-India. You can contact him on daneshchinoy@gmail.com

Quick Wins for a Vegan Mindset

1. Morning Green Boost

Start your day with a smoothie:

1 frozen banana

A handful of spinach or
any other greens

1 tablespoon chia or flax seeds

½ cup plant milk or plain simple water

Blend, sip, and imagine your gut
microbes throwing a tiny celebration.

2. Protein Without Panic

Swap one meat-based meal a day with:

Lentils, chickpeas, or beans

Tofu or tempeh stir-fry

Nut or seed butter on toast

Your muscles, joints, and energy
levels will thank you.

3. Fiber is Your Friend

Add colorful fruits, vegetables, and
whole grains to your meals. Fiber
feeds your gut microbiome, keeps
digestion smooth, and even improves
mood. Bonus: it fills you up, guilt-free.

4. Brain Food Snacks

Keep walnuts, pumpkin seeds, and
berries handy. They help memory,
focus, and emotional balance.
Perfect for those mid-afternoon
slumps at work or home.

5. Hydrate, Move, Sleep

Plants do their best work when
the body is supported:

Drink enough water

Take short walks or stretch daily

Prioritize 7–8 hours of sleep

6. Play with Flavors

Experiment with herbs, spices, and
cooking methods. Roasted veggies,
spiced lentils, creamy avocado, smoky
tempeh — the more fun you have,
the more sustainable the habit.

7. Mindful Bites

Take a moment before meals. Notice
color, texture, and aroma. Eat slowly.
Appreciate the nourishment and
the ripple effect your choices have
on your body, mind, and planet.

Weep for Sheep



**Sheep are intelligent beings and can recognize upto 50 other sheep and humans.
Sheep show emotions such as fear, anger, dispair, boredom, disgust and happiness.**



Unfortunately they are treated as utilities and reared for milk, wool and meat.



**Wool is not a by-product of mutton.
Sheared regularly causing painful mutilations,
sheep are slaughtered long before their natural life spans are over.**

Turn a New Leaf!



Go Vegan!



Beauty Without Cruelty - India

4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040

☎ +91 74101 26541

✉ admin@bwcindia.org

🌐 bwcindia.org



For Private Circulation only. Reg. No. 35650/77