

NATIONAL FOREST MARTYRS DAY

September 2023 Edition

FEATURE ARTICLE

Amrita Devi Bishnoi and the Khejri
The Ents of Our Earth

JUNGLE GRAPHIC

Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan

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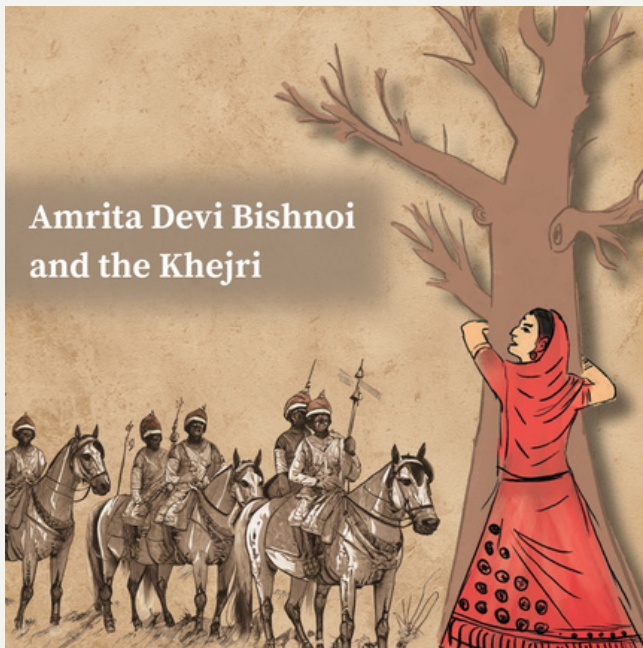
**Interaction with S V Ramarao, Executive
Director, Mangrove Foundation**



FORESTS of LIFE

September 2023, Newsletter

National Forest Martyrs Day is commemorated on **September 11** each year to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives to protect forests and wildlife. The day is aimed at creating awareness about protecting forests and the environment at large.



Amrita Devi Bishnoi and the Khejri

Today, most people know the Bishnoi as the community who successfully filed a case against the actor Salman Khan for hunting blackbucks (which are protected animals). However, there is more to their environmental actions than this one case.

The Bishnoi community get their name from the 29 (bees-nau) rules that their spiritual leader...

[Read more >>](#)



The Ents of Our Earth

"I am not altogether on anybody's side, because nobody is altogether on my side,...nobody cares for the woods as I care for them....." (Treebeard, Lord of the Rings)

Forests have historically been martyrs to human ambition. Especially cities, where human civilization flourished. In the Indian epic, Mahabharatha, the Pandavas burnt down Khandava Vana to establish the city of Indraprastha. New Delhi is said to stand where once Indraprastha flourished. The destruction of Khandava Vana may have been a mythical tale, but...

[Read more >>](#)

**Inspiring people involved in the conservation of forest,
wildlife and environment**



Amrita Devi Bishnoi (Died - 1730 AD)

Location: Khejrali village near Jodhpur in Rajasthan

What: Sacrificed their life by hugging the Khejri tree from being cut down along with 363 other villages. Faced with remorse, the king ordered his soldiers to stop killing people. He proclaimed that no trees will be cut down and not a single animal will be killed in the areas surrounded by the people of Bishnoi Community.

Impact: The Chipko Movement in the 20th century was inspired by Amrita devi Bishnoi. Also the Indian government created the "Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award" and the Rajasthan government created the "Amrita Devi Bishnoi Smrithi Paryavaran Award".



Sundarlal Bahuguna (Died - 2021)

Location: Maroda village near Tehri, Uttarakhand

What: One of the key leaders of the Chipko movement in the 1970s. The movement was a call for the preservation of forests in the Himalayas and later led the anti-Tehri dam movement from the 1970s to 2004.

Impact: In 1983, Pandurang Hegde, an environmental activist from Karnataka, derived inspiration from this and started the Appiko (Kannada for Chipko, "to hug") movement to protest against the felling of trees, monoculture, and deforestation in the Western Ghats.



Jadav Payeng

Location: River island named Majuli, Brahmaputra River, Assam

What: Renowned as the Forestman of India, he is noted for his efforts in reforestation. He planted trees all over an area of 1360 acres over 20 years around the Brahmaputra river.

Impact: The forest, called Molai forest after him, was transformed from a barren sandbar into a lush forest ecosystem spanning several hectares, rich in biodiversity.



Gaura Devi (Died - 1991)

Location: Lata village, Chamoli district, Uttarakhand

What: A grassroots activist and a rural women community leader who played a significant part in the Chipko movement in 1974. Worked for the prevention of logging by hugging trees with the help of other 26 villagers and saved the forest in Uttarakhand.

Impact: Saved almost 2500 trees from being axed through her actions using the help of some villagers and laid the seeds for the Chipko movement.



Amit Jethwa (Died - 2010)

Location: Gir Forest area near Junagadh, Gujarat

What: Indian environmentalist and social worker who fought against the encroachment of forests and poaching.

Impact: Inspired several activists and environmentalists to fight against illegal activities.

References

<https://byjus.com/question-answer/amrita-devi-bishnoi-sacrificed-her-life-for-the-protection-of-1/> : <https://currentaffairs.adda247.com/national-forest-martyrs-day-2022-observed-on-11th-september/> : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amit_Jethwa : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundarlal_Bahuguna : <https://www.humansofuttarakhand.com/environmentalist-sunderlal-bahuguna/#:~:text=Sunderlal%20Bahuguna%20started%20the%20Tehri,the%20banks%20of%20river%20Bhagirathi> : <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-forest-man-jadav-molai-payeng-mexico-forests-1812918-2021-06-09> : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jadav_Payeng

Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan

Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan
An area of over 1400 square kilometres



About The Park

- Named after the historic Ranthambore Fort, which lies within the park
- The park runs to the north by the Banas River and south by the Chambal River
- Known for its beautiful landscapes, which include rugged hills, dense forests, and sparkling lakes
- India's second largest banyan trees with large leathery leaves are found here



MAMMAL SPECIES

Harbours more than 40 species of mammals,

- Bengal Tiger,
- Indian Muntjac,
- Striped Hyenas,
- Sloth Bears,
- Nilgai, etc



REPTILE SPECIES

More than 40 species of reptiles are found here

- Desert Monitor Lizards
- Cobras
- Mugger Crocodile
- Indian Pythons
- Rat Snakes
- Indian Chameleon



BIRD SPECIES

Home to 320 species of birds like

- Asian Palm Swift
- Indian Gray Hornbills
- Gulls
- Common Kingfishers, etc



FLORA SPECIES

More than 300 flora species are found here

- Babul
- Khajur
- Kadam
- Khair, etc



BEST TIME TO VISIT

The winter season between October and March is considered the best time to visit Ranthambore National Park due to the pleasant weather condition.

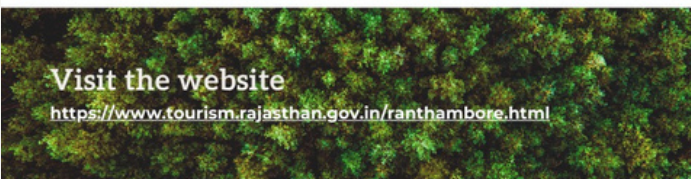


NEAREST AIRPORT

The nearest airport to reach Ranthambore National Park is Sanganer Airport in Jaipur. The distance between Jaipur and Ranthambore is about 180 km.

Visit the website

<https://www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in/ranthambore.html>



[View here >>](#)

Jungle Artworks

September, 2023

We invite you to showcase your artistic talent on Interconnectedness of forests and the people who protect them. Artwork that has the power to convey emotion and inspire action, making it a powerful medium for paying a respectful tribute to those who have sacrificed for our forests.

Thank you for the overwhelming response for the previous editions. We will be showcasing a selected set of images from each institution. Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

[Submit here >>](#)

VIDEO



In this exclusive interaction for #ForestsofLife, SV Ramarao, an Indian Forest Services officer, talks about how mangroves protect the ecosystem around them and what efforts are taken for mangrove conservation.

[View here >>](#)



What is the Forest Rights Act?

Decades of struggle demanding legitimacy for millions of adivasis resulted in a landmark law being passed in the country. **The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**, also known as the Forest Rights Act was enacted by the Parliament of India in December 2006 and it **effectively came into force from January 2008**. The Act acknowledges that forest-dwelling communities have been integral to the survival and sustainability of forest ecosystems and have suffered historical injustice due to their rights over forest lands and resources not being recognised. **It lays down the framework for the recognition of rights for these communities**, to land and forest resources which they have traditionally occupied and used, both individually as families, as well as collectively as hamlets, villages or clans.

Who is eligible to claim rights under the FRA?

It is estimated that 150 million people in India depend on forests. The Act recognised the rights of both forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes (STs) as well as Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs). **The Scheduled Tribes eligible are those who were living in or depending on forests for their livelihood as of December 2005.** The Other Traditional Forest Dwellers eligible are people who have for at least three generations lived in or primarily depended on forests for their livelihood.



The Forest Rights Act

Content: Asavari Raj Sharma

How are rights recognised?

The **Gram Sabha** at the village or hamlet level is the authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community forest rights. **It appoints a Forest Rights Committee (FRC), of 10-15 members, which has a third of members being women.** The FRC receives claims, verifies them, maps their area and submits these claims to the **Sub-Divisional Level Committee along with a Gram Sabha** resolution of approval. The Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) examines the resolutions, prepares the record of forest rights and forwards them to the **District Level Committee** for a final decision. The District Level Committee (DLC) finally approves the record of forest rights.

What are the types of rights that are recognised?



The rights recognised are of two types - Individual Forest Rights for families and Community Forest Rights for hamlets, villages or clans of forest-dwelling communities. They include (amongst others) -

Individual Forest Rights (IFR) of households to hold and live in forest land under individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation.

Community Forest Rights (CFR) of villages over forest areas or resources, including ownership, access to collect, use and sell traditional collected non-timber forest produce; fish and other products of water bodies; grazing and traditional seasonal access for nomadic or pastoralist communities.

Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) of villages to protect, regenerate, conserve and manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally using. **Habitat Rights (HR)** of clans of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups over their habitat and habitations, which may extend beyond administrative boundaries.

Development Rights (DR) of villages to establish basic infrastructure and facilities for its inhabitants like schools, anganwadi, electric lines, water bodies, etc.

Conversion of Forest Villages which were under the administration of the Forest Department into Revenue villages, where all the development and welfare schemes of the state and central government and district administrations can reach.

What is the extent and type of land that can be recognised?

FRA is not a land distribution scheme! Only the actual land that was being occupied or used, and the forest resources that were traditionally accessed as of December 2005 are formally recognised under this Act. **The cap on Individual Forest Rights area for one claimant is 4 hectares, and that for diversion of land for Development Rights of one village is 1 hectare. There is no ceiling for Community Forest Rights, Habitat Rights, Community Forest Resource Rights.** The customary boundaries accessed by the communities are recognised. The Act recognises forest land and resource rights on all forest areas including unclassified forests, un-demarcated forests, existing or deemed forests, protected forests, reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and tiger reserves.

What has been the impact of the Forest Rights Act?

FRA ensures security to forest-dwelling communities through formal land titles. In the 15 years since it came into effect **approximately 22 lakhs individual and 1.09 lakh community rights titles have been received by claimants across the country, covering an area of 1.8 Crore Acres.** *As of April 2023 Significantly, the FRA stipulates titles include the name of both spouses, ensuring women's land ownership.

Mendha Lekha is a small Adivasi village in **Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra**, which was the first to receive community rights in the country in 2012 over an area of 1800 hectares. Taking over the bamboo sale from the Forest Department, the Gram Sabha earned INR 1 Cr+ in the first year of sale.

In the nearby **district of Chandrapur**, another Adivasi village called Pachgaon is managing its Community Forest of 1006 hectares, which includes an area they have designated for biodiversity conservation. **Though their primary income is from bamboo sale, the Gram Sabha is working to diversify the tree species through plantation activities.** This demonstrates the opportunity to move from a model of conservation that excludes local communities and focuses on big mammals, to a more inclusive and holistic approach.

With the recognition of Community Forest Resource Rights, Gram Sabhas went from **providing wage labour in the trade of high value Non-Timber Forest Produce** (like bamboo and bidi leaves) to owners who controlled prices, determined buyers, managed the collection and transport process, etc.

Additionally, **communities can now rightfully access the forest resources like firewood, grazing lands and routes, water bodies, etc on which their livelihoods are dependent.** Pastoralist communities in Himachal Pradesh have achieved a significant milestone by securing access rights to their pasture lands and routes which lie in the administrative boundaries of other Gram Sabhas.



Quiz Corner

**FORESTS
of LIFE**



Which important piece of Indian legislation recognizes the rights of communities who live in forests to their ancestral lands and resources?

- a) Wildlife Protection Act
- b) Environmental Protection Act
- c) Forest Conservation Act
- d) Forest Rights Act (2006)



Which Indian state was the birthplace of the influential environmental movement known as the Chipko Movement?

- a) Himachal Pradesh
- b) Rajasthan
- c) Uttarakhand
- d) Kerala



_____ is home to the Dongria Kondh community, known for their successful resistance against mining projects in the Niyamgiri hills?

- a) Jharkhand
- b) Chhattisgarh
- c) Odisha
- d) Manipur



_____ is Sunderlal Bahuguna's environmental movement aimed to protect the Himalayan ecology and preserve rivers.

- a) Jhola Andolan
- b) Silent Valley Movement
- c) Appiko Movement
- d) Anti-Tehri Dam Andolan



The Bishnoi community, known for their deep-rooted conservation ethos, famously sacrificed their lives to protect which type of Indian wildlife?

- a) Tigers
- b) Elephants
- c) Blackbucks
- d) Rhinoceroses



Who founded the Tarun Bharat Sangh, an organization for water conservation, while protecting Khejri trees in Rajasthan's Marwar region?

- a) Rajendra Singh
- b) Chandi Prasad Bhatt
- c) Aruna Roy
- d) Anna Hazare



[View Answers >>](#)

Glimpses from Forests and Us - An Interschool Competition



A lively day filled with young minds eager to explore the wonders of nature - that's exactly how August 19th was, during the "Forests and Us" interschool competition, an event leading to the Forests of Life festival, held at Azim Premji University, Bangalore.

We had students from grades 5 to 10, representing six schools located close to the university campus. The Community Engagement Initiative and District Initiative teams helped reaching out to these schools, among which three were government institutions - Attibele Boys School, Sarjapur Girls School, and Adigarkalhalli Urdu School - and three private schools - Indus International Community School, St. Philomena's English School, and Sardar Vallabhai Patel School. With over 200 students in attendance, our campus buzzed with excitement from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM.

The day was filled with various activities tailored for different age groups. For the masterminds in grades 8 to 10, we hosted Quiz and Essay writing competitions. Gururaja Budhya, the quiz master captivated the teams and the audience through three exciting rounds of quizzing, that featured a buzzer round and an audio-visual challenge too.

Meanwhile, our artistic geniuses in grades 5 to 7 showcased their talents in a drawing and colouring competition. They also had a blast participating in a book reading activity led by the engaging Mala Kumar, who spun tales and built in creative activities along with it.

Of course, no competition is complete without prizes! All participating children received certificates, and the front runner in each category received fabulous books and eye-catching posters. We made sure our young champions were fuelled up, providing them with a hearty breakfast upon arrival and a scrumptious lunch before they left the campus.

In the end, it was a memorable Saturday filled with fun, creativity, and learning, not just for the kids but for everyone present.

Invitation for Schools, Colleges, and Organisations

We extend a warm invitation to join us in this celebration of shared storytelling.

Forests of Life, a climate festival celebrating the beauty of nature, is the second instalment in our annual series, following the successful Rivers of Life festival in 2022. This festival pays tribute to our forests, the ancient repositories of wisdom upon which we rely, as well as the diverse species that coexist with us on this planet.

Like any journey, Forests of Life is a yatra, to which we cordially invite all schools, colleges, and organisations working with children and youth to participate in this festival of shared storytelling. **From Grade 5 students to young undergraduates, all are welcome to join us on this journey, guided by the perspectives of young interns, researchers, and practitioners.**

Each story unravels facets of the forest, and we have stories that focus on sustaining forest dependent livelihoods, human-animal conflict challenges, deep connection of indigenous communities with nature, value chains to enhance livelihoods, successful wildlife relocations and draws inspiration from the stories of individuals and communities dedicated to conserving our last remaining wild lands.

Our goal is to embark on this journey together with you and all those who share our enthusiasm for the forest. We warmly invite you to the world of forests!

For children, there will be numerous enriching opportunities for learning, including-

- Expansive panels featuring images, maps and information on biodiversity, forest communities, cultural and spiritual significance, diverse uses, and much more
- Videos and films with engaging discussions
- Experience sharing by young Forests of Life interns
- Dedicated areas to engage in interactive learning activities
- Immersive experience - in the sounds, scents, sights, and textures of the forest
- Talks and discussions by forest communities and experts
- Folk art by forest communities

Forests of Life festival is **open for general public** as well.

Stay tuned to receive the registration links for this.

Registration and exhibit viewing are **absolutely free** for all our visitors!



November 2 -14th, 2023



**Azim Premji University,
Bengaluru**



**Scan The QR Code
To Register**



Showcasing the Jungle Activity artworks submitted by the students across the country. Please check, the 'Jungle Gallery' in our website to find more drawings on other themes.

Delhi Public School, Patna



Vihaan Binay_6th



Swayam Singh_4th



SM Auroshika_10th



Satyam Divya_6th



Sidra Sohail_11th



Ritik Raj_9th



Nandini_8th



Naman Ambasht_7th



Mannat Singh_7th



Keanna Singh_7th



Ira Goyal_8th



Jitika Singh_9th



Harsh Kumar Singh_9th



Ayan Singh_6th



Anushka Sinha_6th



Aishaani Bharga_9th



Adya Singh_7th



Adwitya_6th



Aditya Gupta_7th



Aahana Singh_6th



Aakriti Verma_8th



Tia Rana_9th

Student-led community, West Bengal



Nandini Chik Baraik_Group work

Delhi Public School East, Karnataka



Siddarth Sudhindra Jayashree_2nd

Azim Premji University, Bangalore



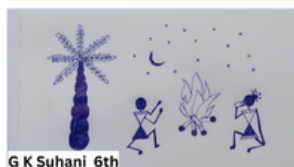
Maitri priyadarsini_MA EDU

New Age Public School, Delhi



Shivam Sharma_7th

J. Jeya Matriculation, Tamil Nadu

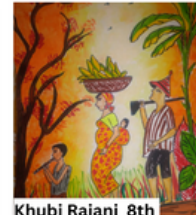


G K Suhani_6th

Delhi Public School, Pune



Aditya Rathod_6th



Khubi Rajani_8th



Evelyn Alex_6th

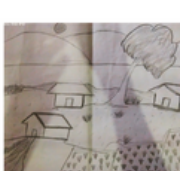
Mahila Sikshan Kendra, Kerala



Majishna E_11th



Reshma N_10th

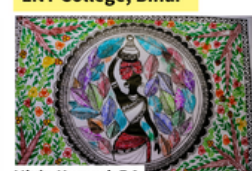


Geethika Gireesh_11th



Sajila Babu_1th

LNT College, Bihar



Ujala Kumari_BA

Parijat Academy, Assam



Tapan Rangpi_6th



Diganta Teron_9th



Bikash Rongpi_5th



Akash Tumung_8th



Arun Teron_7th



Ropon Tumung_4th



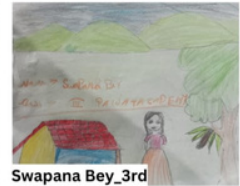
Karabi



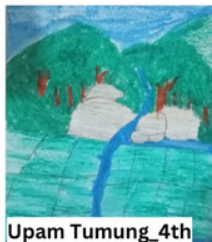
Tapon Tumung_2nd



Papalu Tumung_4th



Swapana Bey_3rd



Upam Tumung_4th



Sunali Rongchon_3rd



Janmoni Ronghang_6th



Pramita Phangcho



Rita Phangchu_7th



Manju Ronghang_5th



Rimpi Bey_5th



Pinky_2nd

[View here >>](#)

For any queries, please write to forestsoflife@apu.edu.in and click below to get regular updates about the festival!

[Click here to view our previous editions >>](#)

To receive a regular newsletter or notification about upcoming events, please signup in the form in the link!

[Click here >>](#)