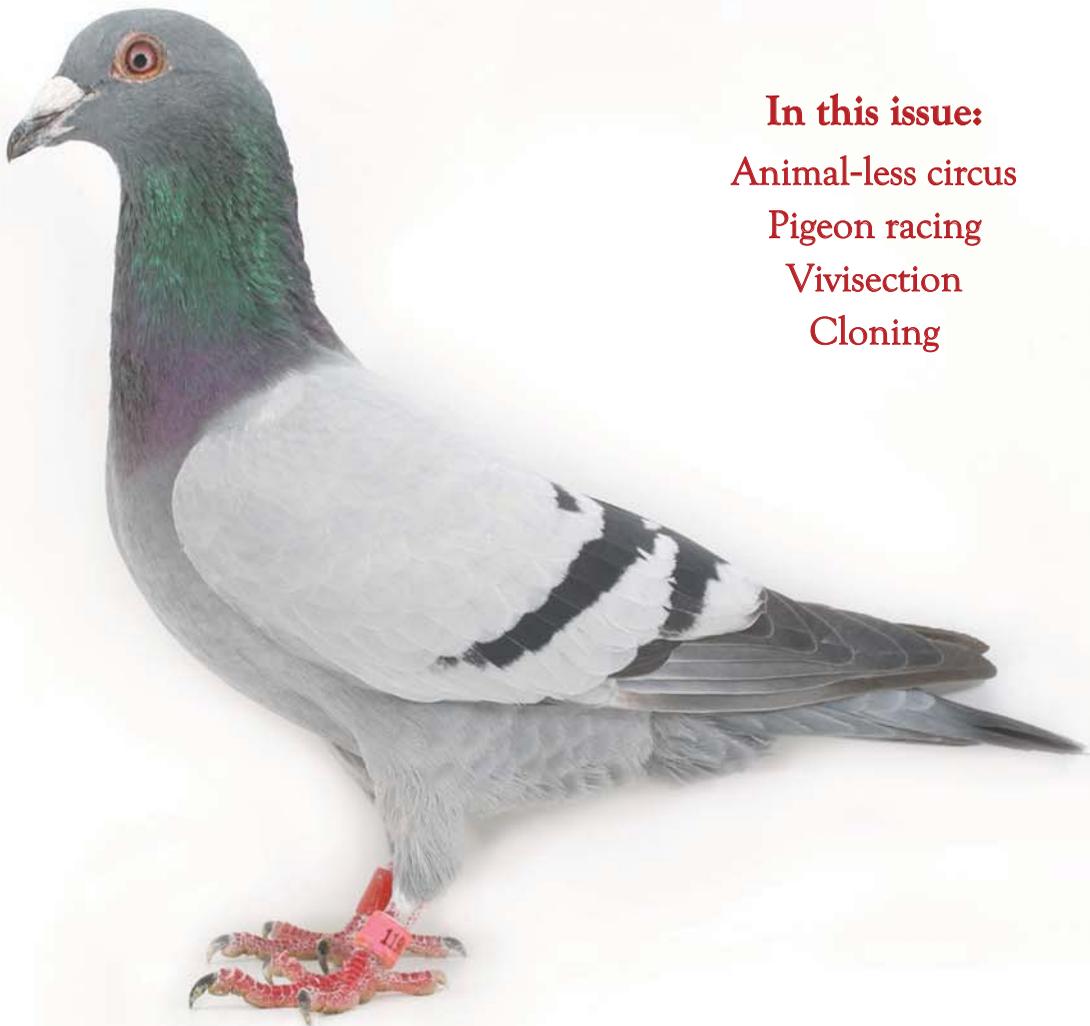


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COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

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



In this issue:
Animal-less circus
Pigeon racing
Vivisection
Cloning

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Pigeon. Photo courtesy: Perth Amboy Racing Pigeon Club.

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Editorial

Dissection of vivisection

Readers will be happy to know that the Ministry of Environment & Forests has issued guidelines banning the use of live animals in dissection and other experiments, in educational institutions.

British veterinarians and physicians seem reasonably competent, though the UK has not allowed the use of animals to teach surgery skills to students for over a century.

BWC efforts

BWC has been opposing vivisection over the decades. It has been trying to get the government to ban finished products (cosmetics, detergents, foods, etc.) being tested on animals, ever since it raised its shutters.

In 1977, the Rt. Hon Muriel, Lady Dowding, founder of Beauty Without Cruelty, met our then Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai in New Delhi, requesting him to ban the export of monkeys, as they were subjected to intense cruelty in American and other foreign research laboratories.

In 1982, BWC investigated and exposed the gruesome cruelty involved in the production of rabies vaccines by using the brains of living sheep, and pressed the government to ban this obsolete practice, following which it was phased out in favour of

other methods including tissue culture, a decade later.

BWC was one of the first organizations which, during the 1980s, took up the issue of dissection in educational institutions. In response to a petition supported by BWC and other organizations, a May 1997 Delhi High Court judgment ruled that school students have the right to choose whether or not to dissect living creatures.

In 1998, BWC-India and the Blue Cross of India donated "Compu-Programme" sets to 170 State Government-run schools and 17 Municipal Corporation schools in Tamil Nadu.

Unjustified suffering

Animal suffering cannot be justified by human convenience, pleasure or amusement, or because it is the outcome of some "tradition" or the other.

However, the use of animals in experiments, education or testing, called vivisection, has always claimed to place human interests over animals' interests, but may not further human interests at all. Trillions of animals, and various currencies, have been used for decades to find cures for cystic fibrosis, AIDS, infectious diseases, Alzheimer's Disease, hypertension, diabetes and cancer — but these cures continue to elude us.

The media report scientific discoveries involving animals, with caveats about whether the results will ever be applicable to humans. There will always

be problems extrapolating animal experiments' results to humans, because of biological differences between humans and other animals. The extrapolation problem is compounded by the results of animal toxicity tests, which vary dramatically depending on the method used, and prove animal testing to be inherently unreliable.

The research community professes to observe the three R's: reduction, or the use of fewer animals; refinement, or the alteration of procedures to minimize suffering, discomfort, pain or distress; and replacement, or the use of research models like computer modeling, which don't involve animals. Yet in practice, the use of animals is as callous and exploitative as in factory farming.

Unnecessary studies

A considerable amount of animal use is for trivial research and many of the procedures performed cause pain and distress, ignored by vivisectionists because the animals are regarded as mere commodities.

A rodent bioassay may cost millions over years, while a cell culture test may cost thousands and be completed in a day.

So why did it need the Ministry of Environment & Forests to issue these guidelines on the use of live animals in dissection and other experiments, that too only in educational institutions?

One reason may be that the cost and time involved, the inherent

unreliability and variability of tests, and the difficulty of data extrapolation from animals to humans, allow industry to market products of untested safety, or products whose test results are inconclusive or inconsistent.

Big business

Millions of animals are used every year to develop and test consumer and pharmaceutical products, as well as surgical procedures and devices. Most of them are bred and marketed by large corporations worldwide. Charles River, a US company, advertises its own patent-protected strains of animals, offering genetically altered animals to meet researchers' desires. In addition to the sales revenues generated by supplying these animals, capital is gained by firms making the cages and supplies needed to house these animals, so animal research is big business, offering careers to many around the world.

A lot of the new hi-tech activities such as transgenic engineering and cloning, are used to facilitate meat or milk production, unnecessary — but profitable — uses of animals.

In other words big business, helped by confused government testing requirements, make guinea pigs of consumer as well as animal while presenting itself as searching for cures for diseases or improving the quality of human life in other ways.

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Pigeon racing

By Khurshid Bhathena

Pigeon racing is a so-called “sport” or “hobby” in which about 1,200 specially-bred pigeons (similar to the ones commonly seen, but with better navigational skills) perform nationally between November and March every year.

These are the carrier, or homing, pigeons used for delivering messages during World War II. The Calcutta Racing Pigeons’ Club is the oldest in India, with descendants of the birds left behind by the British whereas, in Chennai, the descendants of a pair of pigeons brought in by an American in the 1980s are mostly to be found in the clubs. As the Government of India does not permit the importation of these birds, some individuals, and organisations such as the Central Madras Homer Club, who breed and train pigeons, import eggs of particular bloodlines and hatch them — cunningly bypassing the law.

The birds are trained when three months old, with trial runs beginning from distances of 2 kilometres, going up to 70 kilometres. This develops their stamina and homing instincts, and those who survive these short distances learn to deal with hazards like predators — mainly hawks.

Trainers do not publicise how many pigeons are lost

during training, never to return — but their numbers are estimated at 60 percent. Their fate en route is anyone’s guess given the weather conditions, lack of food, water, transmission-wire shocks, and dangers in the forms of bigger birds and humans.

Culling part of training

Inferior pigeons are deliberately released far from home. This is called “basket culling.” Some keepers simply wring the necks of unwanted birds, admitting it to be a necessary evil to maintain the calibre of the racing pigeons.

Homers are a breed of pigeons made to race while 8 months to 5 years of age. Training is called “tossing,” which involves releasing the birds somewhere and noting the time they take to return home — if they return home.

The pigeons are released for races with coded chits tied to a leg. The first person to inform the code to the organiser is deemed the owner of the winning pigeon. Knowing fully well that they are likely to go hungry, the pigeons are fed peanuts, almonds and millet before they race. Racing pigeons are fed only once a day, whereas those used for breeding are fed thrice, and given multivitamin tablets as well. Their diet consists of some combination of upto

ten foodgrains, including maize, corn, millet, safflower and grams.

The pigeons participate in races over longer distances, for which they are taken to starting points by train, and released to fly home. For example, the distance from Gwalior to Chennai is about 1,165 kilometres; experienced pigeons cover it in less than 68 hours. However, some pigeons have lost their way and returned “home” after as much as a year. Imagine their trauma... it is cruel to put pigeons through such stress and strain.

Pigeon clubs

A group of ten formed the “Hyderabad Homer Pigeon Club” and began racing in January 2012. They claim that pigeon racing is a “*nawabi shauk*” and, though uncommon, occurs under the auspices of seven Chennai clubs, five in Kolkata, and another five in Karnataka, Bengaluru most prominent among the last-mentioned. BWC has also heard of a “Kancheepuram Homer Pigeon Association” conducting competitions.

It is not true that the “sport” is kind or that it’s a “hobby” because the birds are bred in tiny cages in dirty lofts, only to be taken out for training and racing. Families put up with unhygienic pigeon droppings and the disturbance of

constant cooing for financial gain. They also dodge the ban on importing racing pigeons by importing only their eggs, to hatch here. Winning pigeons bring in profits. A good racing pigeon sells for as much as \$140,000 (about ₹70 lakhs) in the USA.

No exit

Club members have admitted to journalists that the “prevention of diseases is the only escape” for the pigeons. Paratyphoid, canker, coccidiosis, e-coli, ornithosis, sour crop, diarrhoea and Newcastle Disease (*Ranikhet*) are common, contagious and dangerous. If the birds get sick, they are discarded immediately. Abandonment and culling (a euphemism for killing) go hand-in-hand with raising racing pigeons.

Anything that has been going on a long time acquires the distinction of being traditional, and a part of our rich cultural heritage. Even prostitution may be traditional in that sense. One such intriguing “tradition” is the pigeon race that has been taking place at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, since

the 13th century. About 50 people gather with pigeons which have been trained for the competition. The race begins early in the morning, says a YouTube news broadcast at www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4biYXoyMck, when the pigeons are required to fly non-stop for five hours and dive at least five times in the course of



Bred for sale. Photo courtesy: YouTube ad for pigeons placed by "racing pigeon homer thanjavur (abu) pandaravadai 1.mp4".

their flights. The pigeon which performs all the required feats is declared the winner, though it is not clear how the diving or non-stop flying are monitored.

A week-long annual competition for pigeons, commonly called *kabootarbaazi* or *kukul*, was revived in 2004 with the setting up of the Agra-Firozabad *Kabootarbaazi* Association. The Emperor Jehangir is said

to have been a *Kukul* fan. The December 2011 event at Kuberpur (Agra) drew around 30,000 spectators.

Valuable birds

Khalifas, *ustads*, or pigeon-fanciers release their groups of birds, some worth ₹2.5 lakhs, on mounds between mustard fields. They claim

our feathered friends are “well fed on rich protein diets” — unnatural for birds — that include *ghee* along with dry fruits, millet and corn. The ones that have learnt to recognise voice commands, whistles, gestures, flags and colours return to them. Yet many land up in rival teams instead. In the end, the *khalifa* who has the highest number of

pigeons return to him wins the competition. The team that covers the longest distance is also felicitated.

BWC feels the pigeons are lucky that, in India, there aren't enough takers for this “sport,” although more people seem interested than some years ago.



Khurshid Bhathena is a BWC trustee, and its honorary secretary.

Destruction ensures non-display

By Ashoke Dasgupta

It is good news whenever Kenya burns confiscated ivory. That country does not tolerate elephant poaching, and its government is determined to end it.

It has been internationally agreed that the only way to put an end to the illegal trade in wildlife products is to reduce demand. This means that, not only should damaged stock be destroyed by governments, but also usable stock of all confiscated items.

In 1990, Beauty Without Cruelty persuaded the Ministry of Environment & Forests to request all State Wildlife Departments to destroy seized items because, if such items were to find their way back into circulation, the purpose of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 would be defeated.

Then, to bring down the demand for animal products and not put seized wildlife items back into circulation, Beauty Without Cruelty organized a bonfire in 1991 in collaboration with the Chief Wildlife Warden, Delhi, and the Government of India, for the first time. Goods worth ₹70 lakhs were destroyed. Initially, many felt burning products of animal origin was not environmentally

friendly but, on fuller consideration, agreed that it would discourage the use of wildlife items.

An alternate measure, like creating a fund for animals out of the proceeds arising from the articles' sales, was considered and rejected because it would be self-defeating — the prohibited items would be brought back into the market, keeping demand alive. Also, under cover of re-sale for animals' benefit, poaching-cum-illegal



BWC's 1991 bonfire of wildlife items. *File photo.*

production of similar items, such as trophies of wildlife on the prohibited list, could occur.

Assam is difficult

On 4 November 1994, the Government of India directed all state governments to liquidate seized wildlife items by burning them if no court case was pending.

The Act says that “where any meat, uncured trophy, specified plant or part or derivative thereof is seized, under the provisions of this

section, the assistant director of wildlife preservation or any other officer of a gazetted rank authorised by him on his behalf or the chief wildlife warden or the authorised officer may arrange for the disposal of the same in such a manner as may be prescribed.”

A decade later, in 2003, the Assam Government was still wondering whether or not to implement the Government of India's order directing it to burn all confiscated wildlife items, including the largest ivory stockpile in the country consisting of 1,126 pieces weighing 5,577 kgs.

In March 2010, Assam publicly burnt 1,500 rhino horns held in the state's treasury since 1978, most of which had been seized from poachers from the Kaziranga National Park, smugglers,

or collected from rhinos who had died naturally. This disseminated a strong message that poaching and the illegal trade would no longer be overlooked by the authorities.

The incineration met, however, with resistance from the Karbi Anglong District Autonomous Council, which demanded that the rhino horns be kept in museums for preservation, as a result of which the horns lying in the Diphu Treasury since 1997 were not burnt.

In December 2007, the largest single agglomeration of wildlife skins in the world, consisting of eight truckloads of 125,000 wildlife furs, skins, and skin items (pelts, garments, etc.) valued at USD 2,500,000 were burnt in Jammu & Kashmir. Compensation was paid those furriers who surrendered their stocks voluntarily.

In 2006, in response to an appeal from the Dalai Lama, around 3,000 Tibetans signed a pledge not to wear, buy or sell wildlife products. This was followed by the burning of skins in Tibet and Dharamshala.

Destruction of corpses

Along the same lines, in 1995, BWC convinced the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) that animal carcasses should be disposed of, and not auctioned to be put back into circulation. Accordingly, the CZA issued a directive to all Indian zoos that carcasses should be disposed of by burial or ignition, and that none of them should be skinned or made into trophies, as that would encourage the wildlife trade.

In April 2012, BWC was shocked to learn that the government of Karnataka was distributing seized ivory tusks to officers' messes and educational institutions, for display. We requested the Ministry of Environment & Forests to stop such illegal displays. It was pointed out that it went against the

very purpose of the Wildlife Act, and that confiscated wildlife items had, in the past, been destroyed or burnt; in fact, the Government of India should insist that all states implement destruction promptly, and not display any wildlife trophies anywhere, including in museums, clubs, messes, and educational institutions. It is a ridiculous notion that such displays could promote education.

If display (instead of destruction) was allowed, we would begin seeing not only ivory tusks, but also tiger skins, bear heads, and many other wildlife trophies at various institutions, following which the ministry might as well be closed down, because it would become next to impossible to protect our wildlife since the idea of protecting wildlife is precisely that they should not be killed and turned into trophies for display.

What is to be done with animal products?

The above covers wildlife. What about other products derived from animal carcasses? Shouldn't they too be destroyed regardless of their artistic, or antique, value? Individuals may possess, but no longer want to use, certain items of animal origin. Neither may they like to give or sell them to others.

People need to decide what to do themselves; however, Beauty Without Cruelty urges them to destroy animal

products, or at least ensure they are put away and not displayed or kept in circulation.

Sometimes, the intangible aspect of an action conveys a meaning more powerful than any material losses and gains. For example, prior to independence, India's *Swadeshi* movement included public bonfires of foreign-made textiles and other items, which stimulated the demand for *khadi*. *Swadeshi* continues to be a source of inspiration decades later. That movement had the blessings of no less a personality than Mahatma Gandhi, though it may have been argued that, instead of being burnt, the clothing could have been distributed among the needy.

Wildlife hides and products have always symbolized machismo among western elites. The UK's king George V killed 21 tigers, 8 rhinos and a bear during a ten-day hunt in Nepal 1911. In the USA, Theodore Roosevelt captured the masculine imagination as a hunter — because he was a sickly child who had morphed into a strapping “outdoorsman.”

There has been a tendency on the part of the Indian elite to ape its western counterparts, though Indian traditions are different. We should constantly re-evaluate what is worth espousing from Judeo-Christian traditions.



Ashoke Dasgupta is the editor of *Compassionate Friend*.

Fact, not fancy Unnatural, unethical, immoral

By Nirmal Nishchit

Researchers developed methods of selective reproduction, without any need for sex, to breed cows which would produce larger quantities of milk.

Treated as commodities for commercial gain, and with the aim of deriving the maximum possible milk or meat from them, cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and poultry are selectively bred by subjection to unnatural procedures like those described below.

Artificial insemination

Artificial Insemination (AI) is the forced collection of male semen for introduction to a female vagina or oviduct to make her pregnant.

Despite the prevalence of cow-worship, AI is the norm

for breeding dairy cattle — encouraged, ironically, by the government and practised, unfortunately, in *pinjrapoles* and *goshalas*.

Dairies keep no bulls, simply buying select semen. Hormone treatment induces ovulation and increases milk production in cows, but unwanted male calves are discarded.

A year back, when milk prices were rising, after almost doubling in two years, and demand was growing 7-8 percent annually, the government announced a “national dairy plan to increase per cow milk production through artificial insemination,” which would cost ₹8,000 crores. The plan was to promote semen research and development to breed high-volume milk-producing cattle and improve fodder production to meet the needs of the new cow. Implementation, they said, would begin from financial year 2012,

with World Bank help for the 15-year project.

Meanwhile, AI continues to flourish, with state targets for additional centres aiming at increasing the population of crossbred cattle. Such special initiatives are implemented under the *Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana* with crores of Rupees sanctioned for them, so that milk production goes up substantially.

In vitro fertilisation and ovum pick-up

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) and ovum pick-up (OPU) technologies are processes by which an egg is fertilised by sperm outside the body, i.e. *in vitro* or "within glass."

In OPU, cells are collected from the ovaries of a living animal using an ultrasound-guided needle. Fertilised and incubated for a week, the embryo, called blastocyst, is transferred to a surrogate female.

Embryo transfer technology

Embryo Transfer Technology (ETT) is assisted reproduction involving flushing (removal) of embryos from a hormone-treated donor female to place them in female surrogates whose reproductive cycles are at the same stage as the donor's.

The removal of embryos from highly productive females to produce more heifers and/or



Artificial insemination being conducted on a buffalo for the meat industry. The desired strain of beef cattle is produced through the use of semen from bulls of high genetic "merit." *Photo courtesy: HAIL Company.*



India's first OPU-IVF calf, called Holi, produced at the National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal, in March 2012. *Photo courtesy: Indian Council of Agricultural Research.*



Mohan, a Mithun (domesticated *gaur* or Indian bison) calf produced via ETT, at the National Research Centre on Mithun, Nagaland, in May 2012. *Photo courtesy: Indian Council of Agricultural Research.*



Noori, a cloned Pashmina goat produced at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology, Alastang, near Srinagar, J & K, in March 2012. *Photo courtesy: Dar Yasin / AP.*



Cloned calves like these continue to be produced every week at a transgenic cow farm in Beijing. *Photo courtesy: China National News.*

bull calves per female per year makes for faster production.

Evaluations have enabled ETT to be enhanced by estrous synchronisation, including super-ovulation, which involves increasing normal ovulation through hormone treatment.

Cloning

Cloning is another word for duplicating. The world's most famous clone was Dolly, a lamb developed by British scientists at the Roslin Institute in 1996. After 277 failed attempts, she was

developed from a single cell taken from a mammary gland.

Fast multiplication of highly productive animals is commercially desirable to increase milk and meat production, so cloning experiments continue in most countries.

The camel, carp, cat, cow, bull, deer, dog, ferret, frog (tadpole), fruit fly, gaur, goat, horse, mouse, mule, pig, Pyrenean Ibex, rabbit, rat, Rhesus Monkey, sheep, water-buffalo and wolf have been subjected to cloning techniques.

Bizarre

Chinese scientists have produced genetically modified cows whose milk is 80 percent the same as human milk. This was done by introducing human genetic coding into the DNA of Holstein dairy cow embryos, then transferring the embryos into cow surrogates. By 2011, 300 cloned cattle were at an experimental farm in Beijing started in 2003. An affordable form of the milk is expected to be marketed by 2014 after completion of clinical safety trials on humans.

Ignoble research

Why such cruel and unjustified exploitation?

- To produce more offspring in shorter periods
- To rapidly multiply desired genotypes
- To speed up selection intensity
- To shorten intervals between generations
- To transfer and introduce superior germplasm rapidly
- To produce twins and triplets
- To produce offspring of a desired sex
- To control diseases better
- To create copies of profitable animals
- To facilitate the export and import of superior germplasms

Exploitation is the basis, cruelty is the mode, and greed the motivator.

Educational torture and murders end

By Dr. D. C. Jain

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued guidelines banning the use of live animals in dissection and other experiments in educational and research institutions. However, scientists doing molecular research have been exempted from this ban.

Dissecting live animals has been an integral part of education and research in medical colleges, hospitals and universities the world over. While it may be true that human anatomy cannot be taught without dissection, it is unnecessary to kill live animals for the sake of education.

By popular demand

There have been protests all over the world, aiming to stop cruel experiments like the “pithing of frogs’ spinal cords for muscle leg preparation,” which was compulsory in medical students’ physiology classes. It was extremely cruel, no matter how edifying, to push a sharp, thick needle into a struggling frog’s spinal cord to destroy it.

Recently, the University Grants Commission’s attention was drawn to the unnecessary

experiments conducted on animals in the name of education and research. It is estimated that approximately 20 million animals were killed in laboratory tests, annually.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 was ineffective in controlling organized, large-scale medical cruelty, which continued despite the availability of alternate methods like computer simulation, mannequin



Pithing paralyzes the frog. *Photo courtesy: Dr. Vishal Bhat.*

models, CDs and so on. These alternatives provide adequate anatomical knowledge of animals.

Guidelines

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued guidelines to the University Grants Commission, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Pharmacy Council of India, and the Medical Council of India. The guidelines are intended

to discontinue dissection and experiments on live animals in all universities, colleges, research institutions, hospitals and laboratories, directing them to use alternate methods, as mentioned above.

The guidelines have been authorized by the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals, constituted under Section 15 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960. They mention five years’ imprisonment as well as financial penalties.

Attention has been drawn to domestic violence, and effective laws exist to reduce it. Senior citizens, children and women are at constant risk of being killed or robbed.

Killing animals develops an indifference towards killing humans, and is consequently considered indicative of martial ability among the upper classes.

At any rate, a belated start has been made on this branch of cruelty to animals. Only one drug of every ten successfully tested on laboratory animals ends up working on people. One reason, of course, is that monkeys, mice and frogs are not humans.



BWC member D. C. Jain, MBBS, MD, DM, is adviser to the Animal Welfare Society of India.

Look Ma – Rambo Circus without animals!

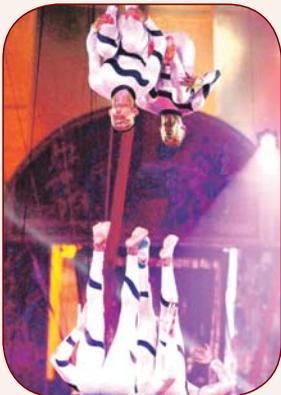
By Kamala Ramchandani-
Naharwar

Tiger, tiger, burning bright,
In the darkness of the night,
Roam the jungles proud and free,
Living your life naturally.

(With apologies to William Blake)

There's a new kind of circus in town – the humane kind. The four hugely-successful full-house shows of the Rambo Circus at Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai, on 3 June 2012 proved that a circus doesn't need animal acts to be successful. What we saw that Sunday blew our minds, because there wasn't a single animal in the show, but every child was screaming at the fun and games onstage.

Given the Prithvi Theatre's small space, the acts were limited to those on the ground (i.e. no trapezes or tightrope walkers), and of course there

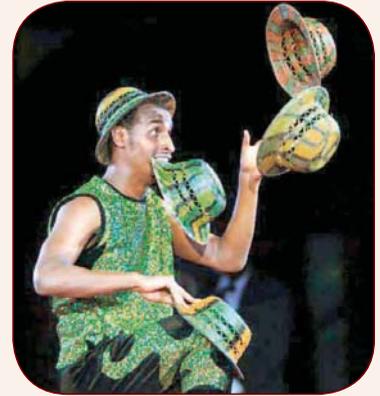


In the Icarian act, performers juggle acrobats with their feet.

were no animals, but that didn't seem to matter to the packed audiences, who were laughing, applauding and cheering throughout.

The acts, performed by African and Indian artistes, included contortionists, jugglers, balancing acts, water-swallowers, human pyramids and, of course, the clowns, who were wildly popular with the kids. In fact, the highlight of the show was when the kids were invited to be part of one of the clowns' acts. A stream of enthusiastic children poured onstage until eventually, every child in the theatre was under the spotlights' glare, thrilled to be part of the circus. They helped with magic tricks, formed part of the comedy routine, skipped rope, and revelled in the electric, fun-filled atmosphere. They had so much fun they didn't want to return to the audience! The absence of wild animals, in a sense, freed the kids to enjoy themselves onstage too; after all, you can't skip rope with an elephant or juggle with a lion!

Circuses everywhere are facing declining profits, and must think of ways to reinvent themselves if they want to survive. Perhaps "The Circus as Theatre" is the answer. Mr. Sujit Dilip, second-generation owner of the Rambo Circus, says the Prithvi show, the first of its kind in India, is an experiment –



Hat trick! Photos courtesy:
<http://www.mid-day.com>.

and judging by the enthusiastic response from adults and children alike, it's an experiment that has worked. Dilip appreciated the support of Sanjana Kapoor in making the event a reality, since astronomical theatre rents like ₹4½ lakhs for six hours are beyond the reach of circuses like Rambo. He urged the government to encourage such initiatives by providing theatre spaces to circuses at inexpensive rates. If that happens, he will be able to stage more shows without animals at these venues.

BWC agreed, and wrote Dilip commending his circus. If more such events are staged, animals will be saved from exploitation and cruelty, circuses will make money in a humane manner, and kids will have fun.

A win-win situation all round.



Kamala Ramchandani-Naharwar is an author, playwright, journalist and BWC member.

Around the world

Accor hotels drinking too much

Accor, the world's largest hotelier, is looking at cutting its huge water footprint, partly by trying to have its corporate customers eat more vegetarian meals at business conventions.

The global hotel group, which owns famous brands including Etap, Novotel and Sofitel, identified meat and buffets as two of the main sources of its water consumption, and has said that it will target business clients in order to help deal with the problem. Food and beverages are the main causes of Accor's water consumption at over 4,000 sites.

Food and drink account for at least 86 percent of the 540,000,000 cubic metres of water the group "drinks" every year. In April, Accor unveiled its Planet 21 sustainability plan, which had it pledging to reduce water consumption no less than 15 per cent by 2015.

Sophie Flak, sustainable development manager at Accor, said the group has set up a team to work alongside its chefs and managers of food and beverage departments.

Canadian obstinacy on polar bears

The booming international trade in endangered species' parts is worsening polar bears' prospects, bleak enough already due to climate change, risky offshore drilling and toxic contamination. The price for polar bear fur reached a record high this year, even as the bears' numbers shrank along with their sea-ice habitat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering pushing



Us Canadian bears aren't endangered. *Photo courtesy: Center for Biological Diversity.*

for additional protections under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. At the last CITES negotiations, the Service led the charge to ban all commercial trade in polar bear parts, but Canada blocked the move. The agency is now "undecided" on its position for the upcoming round.

The United States granted the polar bear Endangered Species Act protection in 2008, but Canada refused to extend similar protection to its bears last year and remains the world leader in

polar bear sport-hunting and commercial trade. The Center for Biological Diversity is pressing Canada to stop its egregious overharvest.

Whale meat finds few takers

Three-quarters of Japanese whale meat has remained unsold at auctions.

The Tokyo-based Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) organised 13 rounds of public auctions since October to boost consumption of whale meat, but 909 of the 1,212 tonnes offered have not been sold, according to a report by the Dolphin and Whale Action Network.

The ICR said, the bids submitted by wholesalers and food manufacturers were often lower than the lowest price it had set, or that no bids were submitted at all.

Japan's much-criticized whaling is a money-losing operation because most Japanese don't eat whale meat.

Whaling, subject to a 1986 international moratorium, is opposed by many countries including New Zealand, where activists have run a long campaign to stop whaling altogether. Japan officially halted commercial whaling in 1987, but has used a loophole in the moratorium to continue it under the pretence of "scientific research." S. Korea is following suit.

Innovative research

Researchers at Harvard's Wyss Institute have created an organ on a chip: a device the size of a thumb, containing living cells that mimics the behavior of a human organ.

They have created a lung on a chip, as well as an intestine, a kidney, and bone marrow. A heart is in the works. Devices like these could radically change the drug testing process — expensive, inefficient, and lethal for many animals — and shed light on how diseases develop.

The chips are transparent plastic rectangles with tiny channels running through them, connected to tubes and wires.

Their creation was enabled by advances in the semiconductor industry that allowed for precision manufacturing at cellular scales.

The Institute is already working with a few pharmaceutical companies to design drug tests that use the organs on chips. The chips will also allow researchers to observe the mechanism of both diseases and drugs.

When enough organs have been developed on chips, an entire human body may be created on them. A pharmaceutical company could test a drug on the whole body, or on a particular subset of organs, by plugging them together.

FYI

Chocolate

Cocoa, from which chocolate is created, is said to have originated in the Amazon at least 4,000 years ago.

The Aztecs were the first to consume chocolate. It has been called the “food of the gods.”

Cocoa trees produce pods, which are the fruit chocolate is derived from.



The food of the gods. *Photo courtesy: Google images.*

Chocolate beans/nibs are heated — roasting the beans is important to eliminate pathogens. High temperatures result in the separation of cocoa butter. Also called theobroma oil, cocoa butter is a pale-yellow, pure, edible vegetable fat.

Dark chocolate is healthy. Few know it is vegan: chocolate liquor solidified with cocoa butter without any sugar added.

It contains polyphenolic compounds called flavonoids known for health benefits like antioxidant activity, preventing the oxidation of

bad LDL cholesterol, anti-cancer effects, lowered blood pressure, and inhibition of platelet activity and inflammation. Apart from having stress-busting effects, chocolate improves immunity. It also provides magnesium, good for the bones, and helps control food cravings.

Chocolate elevates a person's mood because it contains caffeine. Dark chocolate has helped people stop smoking.

Cocoa powder and dark chocolate are much the same. Cocoa beans are powdered, and the heat generated melts the cocoa butter. The resulting suspension, a chocolate liquor, is dried to make cocoa powder.

Chocolate liquor, used in drinks and chocolate-flavoured products like candy, is a sweet syrup comprising chocolate and sugar, without alcohol. It can be processed in different ways with or without cocoa butter, sugar and milk. The combination resulting in milk chocolate is harmful, in comparison with cocoa butter. The latter is a natural vegetable fat which does not increase cholesterol.

Chocolate turns non-vegetarian when animal fats, gelatine, egg whites, shellac, colours, additives of animal origin, and whey (produced using animal rennet) are used as ingredients. Labels should therefore be checked for these substances.

Vegan recipes

Corn

Corn or maize is healthy and wholesome as long as it has not been genetically altered. The roadside roasted *makka* is almost synonymous with the monsoon. The World's Healthiest Foods lists corn as a good source of fibre, manganese, Vitamins C, B5 and B3, and says that antioxidant, digestive, and blood sugar benefits are derived from this grain. Its website states that steaming corn is the healthiest way to prepare it, and the addition of lime helps the absorption of B3.

Elote or steamed Mexican corn-on-the-cob



Ingredients:

4 ears fresh corn-on-the-cob with husks and corn-silk removed
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
4 teaspoons lime juice
2 teaspoons red chilli powder
Salt, black pepper and cumin powder to taste

Preparation:

Fill the bottom of the steamer with 2 inches water.
Do not salt the water.
Place corn-on-cobs in steamer basket. Bring to a rapid boil for 5 minutes.
While corn is steaming, mix olive oil, lime juice, salt, pepper, chilli and cumin powders together.
Remove corn from steamer, brush with oil mixture.
Serve immediately.

Corn chowder

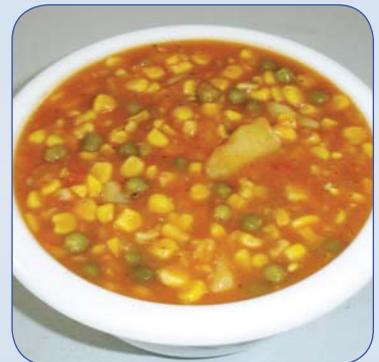
(Serves four)

Ingredients:

2-3 tablespoons oil
3 big onions, sliced in rings
5 cloves garlic paste
3 cups sweet corn kernels, boiled
1 cup tomato purée
3 potatoes, cubed
1 cup green peas, shelled
3 cups water
1 tablespoon corn flour, mixed in a little water
Yellow mustard, pepper and salt to taste

Preparation:

Heat oil and sauté onion and garlic paste.
Add corn, tomato purée, potatoes, green peas, salt and 3 cups water, and cook till done.
To thicken, add corn flour mixture.
Add mustard, pepper and salt to taste.
Serve hot.



Go to www.bwcindia.org/Webforms/Recipes/VeganFood.html for an assortment of Beauty Without Cruelty's tested and tasted, healthy and delicious vegan recipes.

BWC news & views

Cruelty to be censored

Beauty Without Cruelty has approached Government bodies and film-makers about scenes involving animal cruelty for years. It has even expressed concern about films shot abroad, but telecast here. BWC was therefore gratified that, at long last, the Central Board of Film Certification decided to tighten rules and plug loopholes concerning this issue. The Broadcasting Content Complaints Council has also issued an Advisory on Depiction of Animals/Wildlife in Television Programmes to TV channels. See www.ibfindia.com/pdf/1343107012.pdf

Cows and calves

Although the import of calf/animal rennet is not allowed, cheese made with calf rennet is openly being imported and sold. Labelled "animal rennet," the chances of it being calf rennet are almost 100 percent.

Leather, hides and skins resulting from cow slaughter are being imported as part of finished goods or for assembly here, e.g. handbags, footwear, as well as upholstery for vehicles and furniture. People are unknowingly purchasing and using them. Such use is contrary to the beliefs of those who consider cows holy.

Unless the words cow, calf, ox or bull are a part of the names of the leathers and they are

appropriately labelled, people may not realise the leather is from the cow family. Some names that mislead are bovine hides, parchment, vellum, rainforest leather, nubuck, Clemence leather, Togo leather, Italian leather and "slink" leather. Slink leather is leather derived from unborn calves, for which pregnant cows are killed.

In view of the above, BWC has requested the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade to ban the imports of cheese containing calf/animal rennet, and leather derived from the cow family.



Joy sought for camels as well. Photo courtesy: www.righttruth.typepad.com.

Camels

Once again, Beauty Without Cruelty has been trying to get joy-rides on camels and camel slaughter stopped, particularly in Maharashtra.

BWC wrote to the Chief Ministers of Rajasthan and Gujarat again, requesting that they ban camel exports from their states. The CM of UP was also approached since camels from Rajasthan enter UP, not only to pass through, but also to be slaughtered there.

Readers write

Bouquets...

Just got the latest *Hinsa* vs. *Ahinsa* CD in the mail. Very informative and well presented. I want to congratulate the BWC team for their tireless and dedicated work. Glad to see that we are going digital. Will share it with my friends and family.

Yakir Jetha
Mumbai

I received and watched the CD containing 85 images/posters recently, and thank the BWC team for creating this impactful content. My good wishes to the team. I hope BWC may have no objections if we print slides of this as a PowerPoint presentation to use for promoting veganism or creating an awareness of the cruelties inflicted on animals..

Parag Chaurasia
Bengaluru

...and a brickbat

I received your *Hinsa* vs. *Ahinsa* CD, but was surprised to find no sound on it when I tried to play it on my CD player. I am enclosing this dumb CD for you to inspect and replace.

S.J.L.
Mumbai

The CD contains pages like those printed in a book and, therefore, no audio input. Prepared professionally, this quality CD isn't meant to be played on a CD player, but read on a computer. We are sure you'll find the contents interesting if you view it on a computer. Please get help if not comfortable with computers. — Ed.

Freedom NOT Captivity



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