



The festive season is truly amazing. It reminds us of our tradition, social cohesiveness, and responsibility as well as our commitment to maintaining this versatile connection with the earth's biodiversity. Interestingly this is also the time when pollution reaches its peak, social inequality becomes more prominent and our ignorance and arrogance are beyond any limit. It seems to be routine work for public institutions to tell us about environmental degradation and express their concern, the same for administrative and social leaders to make some declaration to secure their position, and the same for us who want to do everything at its fullest however detrimental it is. We are leading nowhere. But there are countless small stories like an oasis in a desert where people alone or in small groups are trying to go against the wind to make our life better and we hope that more will join to make the journey merrier.

This post-festive winter issue starts with a beautiful article on cicadas. Their chirping sound on summer nights is part of the grown-up years for many of us, but how many of us know that there are Periodical Cicadas, emerge in a group after a certain period? Do you know we have "World Cup cicadas" in our kitty? Our first article tells us about these charming cicadas from north-east India, with in-depth details on their life and societal acceptance. Hope this avid member of local soundscape will raise your interest in the north-east's insect diversity. From Cicadas let's fly towards urban trees. The second article dwells on the old trees of Kolkata Maidan. Kolkata, the colonial city with its cultural milieu and business legacy is one of the prominent metropolises in eastern India and like any other megacity is facing the problem of environmental degradation. Maidan, the open green space inside the city is a centre of attraction for multiple reasons, the soothing greenery is one of them. How the old trees of Maidan survive in the area is the subject of our second article. The tour around the area depicts trees as resting places for animal grazers, as a subject of nature photography, a place for leisure strolls, a place for business and worship even secluded from general public reach. It also informs us how miscellaneous management practices exist in the area resulting in trees at different stages of decline. Hope enthusiastic city readers will be more attentive and caring towards their green old neighbour.

The wild food section serves fascinating items from *Ylang Ylang* vine, *Caper*, *Nagchampa*, and *Bot* plants with different levels of acceptance among the people. The prepared foods include beverages like tea, boiled spicy vegetables, roasted starch-laden young stems, and ripened fruit as emergency help. A good number of communities are involved in these food practices although documentation on the same is not equally available.

Our snippets narrate the power of the eye, the hanging garden on the rocky cliff, and awesome snake soup. Hope you enjoy these short stories and share your ones with us.

Wish you all a very happy new year.

Happy reading

Rajarsi Ray