Women We Love

PREITY ZINTA
AISHWARYA RAI
LAKSHMI MENON
TABU
MADHURI DIXIT
SRIDEVI
REKHA
MADHUBALA
SHOBHAA DE

STYLE
50 Laws of Fashion

PHOTOFEATURE
The Western Ghats

FOOD
Eating Singapore
The Cheese Primer

4TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL • DOUBLE ISSUE
WWW.MANSWORLDINDIA.COM

Man’s World
THE SPIRIT OF THE MILLENNIUM MAN

MARCH ’04
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAN LOGWOOD

Contents

Man’s World

42 WESTERN GHATS
Ian Lockwood makes an impassioned plea for the protection of the Sahyadris

50 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
What to wear when you want the job

54 50 LAWS OF FASHION
Learn the rules and then break them

57 SPORTING LUXURY
Now grooming products for new-age mercenaries

62 GROOMING
Price saving measures

58 STYLE GURU

64 VANITIES

94 DR KNOW

96 SAY CHEESE
Karen Anand says it’s time for wine and cheese

100 SAVOURING SINGAPORE
Karen Anand’s favourite restaurants in the island city

Cover
PREITY ZINTA photographed by DAROO RATHNANI
I LOOK UP TO THE HILLS FROM WHENCE COMETH MY HELP

IAN LOCKWOOD has spent a lifetime photographing the Western Ghats or the Sahyadris. He makes an impassioned plea for their protection for they may hold the key to our survival in their rich biodiversity.

A ST OF MUMBAI and a lifetime away from the city is a natural treasure that was once visible on a clear day from Colaba. The 1,640 km of mountain ranges that stretch from the Tapti River to the tip of the Indian peninsula at Kanyakumari are a near continuous wall separating the wet Konkan and Malabar Coasts from the drier regions of peninsular India.

You'd think we'd want to protect these mountains and the forests on them. You'd think we'd want to hear the birds sing and we'd want the flowers to bloom. You'd think that would be enough for us to protect them. It isn't. The Sahyadris are under threat and no one is doing anything about it.

We should get our thing clear.

They aren't just mountains. They may be the key to our survival.

They are blessed with one of the highest rates of endemism (the occurrence of species not to be found anywhere else) in all of India.

The Nilgiri tahr is found nowhere else in the world, nor is the lion-tailed macaque. Scientists working at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and other notable organizations have been cataloging endemics in the Western Ghats for several years. These experts estimate that there are 64 amphibian species, 16 bird species, seven mammals and an estimated 1,800 flowering plants that are found exclusively in the Western Ghats.

There are numerous lesser endemic life forms and it is possible that some of these have yet to be discovered.

For such a relatively small area, this is an impressive list.

The Ghats are now recognized as a 'global biodiversity hotspot,' a mixed compliment. The term implies that the area is one of the Earth's biologically richest places and that it is under threat from human activity. The meaningful truth is that almost every hotspot has already lost at least 70% of its original natural vegetation. Aside from the utter criminality of destroying what is not ours to destroy, biodiversity reserves hold the keys to our future survival.

Biodiversity plays a key role in our daily existence in that all of our food is originally derived from wild plants and many of our medicines originated in the wild. In times of disaster, when species that we depend on are hit by some unexpected calamity, it will be our islands of biodiversity that may provide for our future survival.

That's not all the Sahyadris do.

Every summer, as the earth tilts its axis, ocean currents pull the nourishing monsoon clouds of the South West Monsoon up the Malabar and Konkan Coasts. The Western Ghats, in fact, prevent the monsoon clouds from reaching the interiors of the peninsula. Their cool heights force most of this rain to fall on the western coast and mountains and by the time the clouds

FACING PAGE: Gulabed Tree, Gulabat Mundarthural Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu. This picture illustrates the dramatic scenery and the vegetation of the southernmost Western Ghats. These weathered granite mountains are some of the first to rise from the plains near the tip of the Indian peninsula at Kanyakumari.
PHOTO ESSAY

Bathing at Lower Falls, Courtallam, Tamil Nadu. In June when the South West monsoon rolls up the western coast, bathers and pilgrims flock to the South Indian "spa" of Courtallam. The streams originate in the thickly forested hills that lie south of the Western Ghats. Those same hills also host some of the highest levels of diversity in the entire Western Ghats. Their protection ensures ample water for farmers and pilgrims while providing a home for imperilled biodi-

versity. Waterfalls like this symbolise the close relationship between natural forests and the life-giving water of these streams

reach the same percentage they have lost in previous eras. However, forests on the slopes of the Western Ghats, acting much like a giant sponge, absorb the excess. During the ensuing drier season, these natural forests release the water to the thirsty plains. Eastward flowing rivers like the Kaveri, Godavari and Krishna are three of the larger rivers fed by the Western Ghats. When natural vegetation, in the form of forests and grasslands, have been destroyed and replaced by plantations and other human interventions, the mountains give less to the plains.

For much of our history, the ghats were safe because they were inaccessible. The Munnaris famously used the natural formations to build impregnable forts that helped them resist colonising armies. The higher altitude areas of the southern Sahyadris were disconnected from the turbulent drama of history that were played out on the plains of southern India. The indigenous communities of people had little long term impact on the habitat. Many of these people, like the Kattis of the Agastymalai Hills, still live in these habitations, but their ways of life are an endangered as their mountain habitat. Then came the British who cleared large areas of virgin tropical forest for tea, coffee, and spice gardens. Independence didn't change much. We've continued clear farming, continued planting in dubious hydroelectric schemes and planting exotic or non-native species that disrupt the water supply. In some parts of the Sahyadris, the situation is so bad that visitors often mistake eucalyptus, pine, and wattle trees for locals when they are dangerous invaders that restrict the flow of streams in the dry season.

It took the hard fought Silent Valley campaign in Kerala to awaken people to the negative impacts of uncontrolled dam building projects.

Today hill stations continue to be lost to expanding hill station developments and the greed for minerals. Hill stations are becoming the antithesis of the quiet experiential experiences that they were designed to be. Towns like Ooty, Kodachadri, and Mahadevarh had been to places of peace and rejuvenation. They are now miniature cities, overwhelmed by the new middle class with no space to walk in the lawns of plastic. In the Nilgiris Hills, one of the few Western Ghats ranges to be developed as a hill station, films shoot whenever a pleasing piece of scenery offers itself. They frequently leave a trail of trash and disturbance in sites that they have filmed. Making matters worse, visitors often seek to trample their way onto pristine locations. Meanwhile, mining industrial protected areas is an ongoing challenge to the Western Ghats. Imagine the difficulty of protecting habitats that are officially designated when notified areas are under pressure for their iron, granite and other natural resources tucked under tree cover. The proposed river linking project could spell disaster in several sensitive areas and environmentalists are concerned about its potential impact on this irreplaceable natural treasure of India.

Much has been done to protect the Western Ghats and the legacy of previous generations has ensured the survival of well-known sanctuaries such as Periyar, Nagarhole, and Silent Valley. Courageous individuals, both in and out of the government, have dedicated their lives to protecting this unique part of India. Despite this, experts estimate that only 3.8 percent of the area is protected. This is about somewhere else. It's not about someone else. It's about you. Your children. Your future.
Dolphin's Nose Backside, Palni Hills, Tamil Nadu. Rhododendron trees and remnant grasslands on the southern escarpment of the Palni Hills.

Shola forests are evergreen tropical forests unique to the high altitude regions of the southern Western Ghats. Stunted by fierce winds, sholas contain a wealth of plant and animal species. Together with native grasslands, this ecosystem plays a key role in absorbing monsoon rains and supplying the Bisley plains with a perennial source of water.

Clearing, Hillyside near Kukkad Shola, Palni Hills, Tamil Nadu. Farmers burn off crop residues in preparation for planting near Kukkad Shola. This reserve forest is one of the finest sholas in a hill range now dominated by exotic eucalyptus, wattle and pine trees. There is increasing pressure on its borders as farmers and developers expand their activities.
A view of Chandori Peak from Matheran, Maharashtra. Typical Sahyadri mountain formations to the north-west of the popular hill-station of Matheran.

Rajmachi Fort Under a January Sky, Lonavla area, Maharashtra. Clouds linger over Rajmachi fort in the Lonavla area of the Sahyadris. This fort historically guarded the Bhor ghat, an important trading route for hundreds of years.