



**Date – 15 July 2022**

## **Red panda protection**



- Recently the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park has started an ambitious program to release 20 red pandas into the wild in about five years.
- Singilla National Park, the most protected area in West Bengal, will soon get new residents.

### **Red Panda:**

- The giant panda and red panda are the only two different panda species in the world.
- It is also the state animal of Sikkim.
- Red pandas are shy, solitary and tree-dwelling animals and are considered an indicator species for ecological change.
- **Both (sub) species found in India:**
  - Himalayan Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*).
  - Chinese Red Panda (*Ailurus staneii*)
  - Siang River in Arunachal Pradesh divides two phylogenetic species.

- It is found in the northern mountains of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar and in the forests of southern China.
- Singilla and Neora Valley National Parks in West Bengal are the two protected areas where red pandas are found, even in these protected areas the panda population has declined.

### **Conservation status:**

#### **Red Panda:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix 1
- Wildlife Protection Act 1972: Schedule 1

#### **Giant Panda:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **CITES:** Appendix 1

#### **Red Panda Project:**

- Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park has launched an ambitious program to release 20 of these mammals into the wild in about five years.
- Padmaja Naidu Park Darjeeling is one of the highest altitude zoos in the country and has been very successful in breeding these mammals.
- These pandas will be released in Singilla National Park, the highest protected area of West Bengal.
- Singilla National Park is located on the Singalila Ridge in Darjeeling district.
- It is the highest altitude park in the state of West Bengal.
- It was initially a wildlife sanctuary and was made a national park in the year 1992.

#### **Other National Parks of West Bengal are:**

- Jalda Para National Park
- Neora Valley National Park
- Sunderbans National Park
- Gorumara National Park
- Buxa National Park and Tiger Reserve

## **India's Efforts for Conservation of Red Panda:**

### **Securing Red Panda Habitat:**

- WWF-India works with local communities to reduce their dependence on fuel wood by introducing them to innovative technologies to meet their energy demands.
- More than 200 persons have been trained in making bio-briquettes in Sikkim.

### **Local Support:**

- Local communities are involved in alternative livelihood activities that benefit them, as well as supporting conservation initiatives.
- Community based tourism in Arunachal Pradesh enables local people to earn additional income from tourists visiting red pandas.

### **Mitigating the threat to the red panda population:**

- To work with local communities to reduce forest dependence and involve them in conservation measures, as well as to address the threat of habitat degradation and fragmentation.
- WWF-India has also collaborated with Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) and initiated a program to sterilize them to control the growing population of wild dogs around important wildlife areas.

**Swadeep Kumar**

## **Dragon fruit**



- Recently the center has decided to promote the development of dragon fruit, recognizing it as a “special fruit” considering its health benefits.
- In addition, the Center believes that due to the nutritional benefits of the fruit and the global demand, its cultivation can be increased in India.

### **Dragon Fruit:**

- Dragon fruit grows on the Hilocereus cactus, also known as the Honolulu Queen.
- This fruit is native to southern Mexico and Central America. Even today it is grown all over the world.
- At present, Mizoram is at the fore in the states cultivating this fruit.
- It is known by many names, including papaya, pitaya and strawberry, pear.
- Of the two most common types, it is bright red in color with a green plumage that resembles a dragon.
- It is known by many names, including papaya, pitaya and strawberry, pear.
- Of the two most common types, it is bright red in color with a green plumage that resembles a dragon.

### **Largest producer:**

- The world’s largest producer and exporter of dragon fruit is Vietnam, where the plant was introduced by the French in the 19th century.
- The Vietnamese call it thanh long, which translates to “dragon’s eye”, which is believed to be the origin of its common English name.
- Apart from Vietnam, this exotic fruit is also grown in USA, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, China, Australia, Israel and Sri Lanka.

### **Features:**

- Its flowers are bisexual in nature (male and female organs in the same flower) and open at night.
- Plant gives yield for more than 20 years, it is value added with high nutraceutical properties (having medicinal effect) and is beneficial for processing industries.
- It is a rich source of vitamins and minerals.

### **Climatic Conditions:**

- According to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, this plant does not require much water and can be grown on dry land.
- The cost of cultivation is high initially but the plant does not require productive land; its maximum production can be done in unproductive, less fertile areas.

### **Steps taken by State Governments:**

- The Gujarat government recently named the dragon fruit as Kamalam (lotus) and announced incentives for the farmers who cultivate it.
- The Haryana government also provides grants to those farmers who are willing to grow this exotic fruit variety.
- Government of Maharashtra has taken an initiative to promote dragon fruit cultivation in different regions of the state by providing good quality planting material and subsidy for its cultivation through Integrated Horticulture Development Mission (MIDH).

**Swadeep Kumar**

## **The draft of the national policy for persons with disabilities (“Policy”): Critical evaluation**

**Context:** recently Government of India drafted the national policy for persons with disabilities (“Policy”) for uplifting the condition of disabled persons. The government invited the suggestion for this policy.

### **Introduction:**

The establishment of equality among all persons is the key objective of any democratic and welfare country. Therefore, The Department of Empowerment of Person with Disabilities (DoEPwD) Government of India also released a policy for disabled persons so that they could be strengthened. But this policy is just drafted and put for the comments and suggestions of the public. This is a good practice of the democracy. This new policy, infact replaces the old policy of 2006 for the disabled persons. Here it should be analysed regarding the new provisions of the



policies and what were the flaws of the old policies so those old policies had to be substituted ‘

### **Need for the new policy**

- Multiple factors are responsible for this policy like the agreement of the India with United Nations where India signed on United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- In the last several years, the number of the disable person has also increased therefore e enactment of new disability legislation (Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016) new policy was required.
- India is also a party of the Incheon Strategy which was made for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 (“Incheon commitment” Incheon is a south Korean city where this convention was convened )
- The 10 goals were identified by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) for any Asia-Pacific country to ensure the empowerment of disabled persons up to 2030 with the Sustainable Development
- The commitment of the government to the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities

### **The Draft of the Policy**

This draft of the policy highlighted the inclusion of disabled persons in every field of social and educational development but by providing them the political inclusiveness other efforts would not be suffice

Article 29 of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities instructs the state should ensure the maximum and even full participation of the disabled person in the election procedure directly and indirectly. All the facilities which are required for participation in the election procedure in India must be provided to disabled persons. We have to check whether, in these new policies some efforts are done for political inclusiveness of the disabled persons or not

In the Indian democratic system, the inclusion of the disabled person is nominal. There are many even election booths where the minimum required facilities for disabled persons are available so that the disabled person could encourage the cast their votes

We should also ensure the representation of physically disabled persons in the political system, we should make laws in this regard also. The first visually disabled Member of Parliament in independent India, Sadhan Gupta, hardly finds mention in our political or disability discourse. However, some states have taken the initiative for increasing the political participation of disabled persons in local political units

### **Conclusion**

Hence it may be concluded that any policy would be really affectable related to disabled person when the political representation of disabled persons would be ensured at the maximum level. Once these people are politically empowered, automatically their community would be empowered. Without giving the proper representation of the disabled persons their welfare and inclusive development of society are not possible.

**Newadmin**

