

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Ambassador Jan Sadek on Ebo
and we have just donated about 8,000,000 e

EDITORIAL

Protect biodiversity

Today, the world commemorates the International Day for Biodiversity. This year, the theme is "Acting locally for global impact." According to the United Nations, "biodiversity resources are the pillars upon which we build civilisations.

Fish provide 20 percent of animal protein to about 3 billion people. Over 80 percent of the human diet is provided by plants.

As many as 80 percent of people living in rural areas in developing countries rely on traditional plant-based medicines for basic healthcare.

Biodiversity loss or erosion of any kind should therefore concern us all. On this day, we must stop and reflect deeply on how we are protecting our ecosystems/biodiversity or how our life choices are aiding degradation and eventually, loss.

The issue:

Biodiversity.

Our view:

Encroachers in wetlands, forest reserves, and the like must be evicted without fear or favour.

Financial and administrative support should be accorded to programmes that protect biodiversity.

Biodiversity loss is fought one day at a time by how we choose to live our lives, either in acknowledgement of the gift that our biodiversity is or in total disregard of its importance and value.

Unfortunately, it is not us but the future generations that will pay for our recklessness and abuse of nature.

It is therefore easy to throw all caution to the wind. But this shouldn't be.

It is prudent to take stock of all the harm that has been occasioned on biodiversity and then take steps to undo the harm done.

The United Nations also highlights that three-quarters of the land-based environment and about 66 percent of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions and that one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction.

These grim statistics are a result of different human activities that slowly but steadily degrade and erode nature.

Human activities such as air pollution, littering, encroaching on wetlands, poaching, cutting down trees for firewood, dumping waste in water bodies, con-

tinued use and wrong disposal of *kaveera*, the list is endless.

To turn the tide, we can start with the basics. The powers that be must be seen to implement laws governing environmental abuse and degradation.

There shouldn't be selective application of the law. We should revisit and change our garbage disposal practises. All stakeholders must participate and support the restoration of degraded wetlands and forests.

Encroachers in wetlands, forest reserves, and the like must be evicted without fear or favour. Financial and administrative support should be accorded to programmes that protect biodiversity.

Biodiversity loss is fought one day at a time by how we choose to live our lives, either in acknowledgement of the gift that our biodiversity is or in total disregard of its importance and value.

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