

#AWARENESS

World Soil Day

The Earth's foundation for life, where plants, animals and humans, thrive. Without it, we wouldn't have food, clean air or water.



On the annual celebration people will be forgiven for not participating in (or even knowing about) is World Soil Day. Yes, soil, as in that sticky brown stuff that gets walked all over into prized cream carpets! Sadly, it is the ignorance about the importance of soil and the degree to which people take advantage of all that it offers, that have led to a drastic reduction in its quality all over the world.

These are precisely the problems 'World Soil Day' aims to battle as few things could be more important to humans, the inhabitants of Planet Earth, who could never hope to survive without the land.

Soil is, without a doubt, one of the most significant parts of the ecosystem. Contributing to people's food, water and energy and playing an important part in reducing the impact of climate change, soil is a vital part of life.

For all of these reasons, it's high time that 'World Soil Day' becomes known to more people than just scientists, concerned about the welfare of our planet. So it's time to get ready to learn about and celebrate this important day!

History of World Soil Day
In 2002, the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) made a resolution proposing that the 5th of December be World Soil Day. The idea for the day was to make it possible to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human well-being.

Later, 2015 was also declared to be the International Year of Soils, in hopes of raising as much awareness as possible about the enormous role that soil plays in food security and therefore, the very lifeline of humans. Unsurprisingly, so far, it has mostly been the global community of 60,000 or so soil scientists who have been the ones, celebrating this day the most.

The chances of rather ordinary people exchanging



Happy Soil Day' cards in the near future, remain minimal. But that doesn't mean that people can't learn to appreciate the important role soil plays in human lives.

How to Celebrate World Soil Day

As it turns out, there are a number of things that average, regular people can do that can greatly help the soil they live off, to remain in good condition. It's easy to get started with observing World Soil Day beginning with these ideas. Or for those who are super creative, they can come up with their own!

Get Educated About Soil

The best way to celebrate this day is to do exactly what scientists, the world over, so badly needs: to get educated. An enormous amount of damage is done to the planet every year, not due to ill will but due to ignorance. This is because many average people simply do not know enough about the earth to know when they are causing damage to it, sometimes, damage that cannot be repaired.

Participate in Soil-Friendly Activities

One of the first fun ideas, average people can participate in, is to plant a rain garden. Another important soil-friendly activity is composting.

To cut the story short, there was a small built girl of not more than fifteen. The body had plenty of bruises and the local doctor told us that she had been physically abused and sexually violated several times. She was also three months pregnant. She remembered the Army atmosphere and the surrounding of where she was, during the past few months. She was cared for, in the missionary and picked up her health. I too was among the members of the people inside the building who watched her grow and transform from the discarded one into a pretty woman. At times, I thought that I could be falling in love with her but very soon, we had to shift her out of the country.



Maj. Chandrakant Singh Vrc (Retd)
Military Historian

"aka, ami Shatyajeet", said the voice on the other side. I dropped the book that I was reading on the chair nearby, changed the instrument to the other hand and held the cell phone properly. The voice was clear and loud but there was static disturbance as if there was a thunderstorm nearby. "Please go ahead, I am listening," I replied.

Shatyajeet was speaking from Mymensingh and I was instrumental in sending him there.

"Doctor has declared that she wouldn't last many more days, she is keen to meet you, Tumi Ashbo?" I didn't reply him but I was far away in the time clock that suddenly wound back by several years.

I was not a day more than twenty, when I was sent with two *Lungis* and a few *takas* into the territory. I was to report to the pastor of the orphanage, located close to a Church in Dacca. I was put on a boat from Haldibari in Jalpaiguri. The boat had to play hide and seek with the enemy defence forces. In my shirt pocket was a bill dated March, 1971 of a *lungi* from a shop in Mymensingh. That we didn't get past a sleepy town on the bank of Brahmaputra, barely a few miles north from Mn, and we took refuge in a small church out there, was the thing that remained in my mind, in spite of more serious and several severe incidents, in the months that followed till I was picked up by a helicopter near Sylhet after the 'Surrender' instrument was signed in December, 1971.

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BEHIND ENEMY LINES



PART:2



Krishnamurti peeping over Gen Jacobs shoulder to see the surrender document.



Sheikh Hash releasing the book Liberation 1971 which carries the true account of Brig Ghosh code name Peter.

The story

I was born in a refugee camp that was set up in Kamalpur, near Agartala in August 1947. My parents and another three survived the cross over into India and the severe Cholera epidemic and moved on to Silchar town, up north east of the camp. My father soon passed away and we were under the patronage of a Missionary. At the age of sixteen, I joined the Academy in the far off Pune and was commissioned into an Infantry arm. My Bengali, that was passed on to me by my mother, still remained that of my native village south of Sylhet which was the reason I was inducted into the enemy territory.

History has told us all why and how it was necessary to fight with our neighbor on the refugee issue but the lady PM had taken a daring step. Not many even consider it as a bad tactic in the regional geopolitics. Apart from bits and pieces of what I did, in that period between March and December, 71 that I want to remember, I am not privileged to tell you all but something very personal and private, took place during the monsoon 1971. I am barely five feet and three inches and my physique, though

strong, appeared frail. I could very well get mixed up with the locals, clad in a *lungi*. So, one evening, with the fish I had picked up from the local market, I was returning to the Parish building, when I noticed a small gunny parcel on the roadside. The Parish building was isolated and away from the town. The dogs had not picked up the scent but the parcel moved a bit sideways. I was curious and I immediately sent for the priest and additional help.

To cut the story short, there was a small built girl of not more than fifteen. The body had plenty of bruises and the local doctor told us that she had been physically abused and sexually violated several times. She was also three months pregnant. She remembered the Army atmosphere and the surrounding of where she was, during the past few months. She was cared for, in the missionary and picked up her health. I too was among the members of the people inside the building who watched her grow and transform from the discarded one into a pretty woman. At times, I thought that I could be falling in love with her but very soon, we had



to shift her out of the country. She was kept as a concubine of the local Army Commander in the Garrison. When he was to shift to another place, he wanted to take her along but the next one after him, did not permit. He was forced to leave her behind but when the replacement found her with a child in the womb, he chose to mistreat and violate her. How she landed up as a garbage, she did not remember but in small dialogues, she had told us the above. A few days later, I had to go personally and attend to a task in Dacca and so, I had travelled with the diocese party that had come from the Capital city. The distance wasn't much between Dacca and Mymensing, the rains made the travel so difficult that I reached Mymensing two days later than planned.

There was a flurry of activity when I reached back. The pastor was briefing a fisherman couple to smuggle across, to a village near Haldibari, from where I was brought in. The river was in spate and the boating was difficult but Chaitali, yes, that was her name as per her, was taken across the river to the east bank and was smuggled into Meghalaya. The local Garrison Commander was looking for her. It



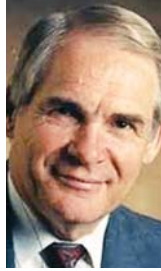
International Ninja Day

spionage, assassination, infiltration, guerrilla warfare and sabotage: these are some of the skills that are inherent in being a ninja. Clad in their signature black garb from head to toe, ninjas appear from the depths of the night like a hawk on stolen wings, striking their prey and disappearing again without leaving a trace. Ninjas are rumored to be the masters of Kujiki, an eastern magical practice that made them capable of combining their natural ability to move like ghosts with supernatural powers. International Ninja Day is dedicated to remembering and honouring these ancient warriors of China and Japan.



Krishnamurti's story

"The story is a dramatized account of two real-life incidents during the war. The first is the true account of Brig PK Ghosh, which was published earlier. This story is written by Wing Co m i n a d e r Krishna m u r t i who was a young helicopter pilot, then, Krauts, as he is called by his friends, was not only involved in the now famous



Donn Ketchum, the rapist American missionary.

heliborne operations during the war which turned the tide in our favour, but after the war was flying regular missions, in support of my battalion which was based in the Chittagong Hill Tracts from 14 March 1972 to July 1972. His story is partly based on the factual experience of my friend and coursemate, Brig PK Ghosh Vrc, who during his sojourn behind enemy lines was known by his code name 'Peter', which was the code name in life of Capt PK Ghosh who had been infiltrated into East Pakistan and partly on what I saw and heard some months after the war when I was posted with my Battalion, at Malum Ghat near Cox Bazaar, where a large number of Murang and Chakma girls, who had been sexually abused by the Pakistan Army, had taken refuge at the Mission Hospital.

Sadly, here instead of refuge and shelter, they were again molested by no one less than the head of the Mission Hospital Dr. Donn Ketchum. After the war, we rescued these girls, some of who had no families to return to, were sent by GOC Maj Gen Gonzales to Shillong and given shelter by the nuns in the local convent. Kechum, having no tribal girls to satisfy his lust, now turned his attention to the children of the other American Missionary Children, some of whom were still in their pre-teens. Some of these children complained but their complaints were ignored by the Mission elders in the US. Much later, when these children had grown up, they filed criminal cases against Ketchum which were investigated and Ketchum was put on trial. He was awarded twenty-years imprisonment for abuse of Missionary Children but no mention was made of the local tribal children of Bangladesh.

Major Chandrakant Singh's Story of Chaitali (true Story)

Location: Malumghat Christian Mission hospital.
Name of the girl: Maushumi. She was a tribal girl from Murang tribe from Rangamati. She had been sent to study to a school in Cox Bazaar, where she was staying with a relative. At the end of march, 1971, after Major Zia Ur Rahman went on Chittagong radio station and declared the revolt of the Bengali officers and men in Pakistan army, the Pakistan army retaliated and went on a shooting and killing spree, in which a lot of women and young girls were abducted and raped. As she was a young and beautiful girl, her relatives sent her to Malumghat, where another relative was working at the Christian Mission Hospital, run by American Christian Missionaries because they felt living in a American administered area would keep her safe.

Here, by the end of April, she moved to the American hospital, where she was housed in the servant quarters with similarly placed girls. They were comfortable and well fed and were required to attend English language classes, run by the wives of missionaries. In their spare time, they helped the nurses in cleaning the wards and similar tasks. She was very happy here and felt safe. Plus, she was able, to communicate with her parents, sometimes, by telephone via Rangamati.

One day after she finished work in the ward, she met Dr. Donn Ketchum. He was a Missionary doctor and was the head of the hospital and had been there at Malumghat for several years. He was a well-known person in the area. He spoke to her and inquired about her well-being. He told her that he had heard good reports about her

Peter's story

The story of Peter and Chaitali is one such story from 1971, who was repeatedly abused and raped, first by the Pakistan army and then by the Missionaries at the Christian Mission hospital at Malumghat. The head of the mission has a medical missionary called Dr. Donn Ketchum. Her story and the story of Brig Ghosh were picked up by Air Commodore, Sundaram Krishnamurti and made into dramatic fictional story which even though, only partly brings out the tragedy and pathos of the victims of the atrocity, inflicted on them.



Wing Commodore Krishnamurti with the author and Generals Mehta and Chauhan at the launch of authors' book, Meghna.



Brig Ghosh, the real Peter with Chandrakant.



Victim of Pakistani Army at a counseling center after the war.

work. He then told her that he would like her to work in the main office. She should join from the next day. She enjoyed the work and the office, all that was involved was cleaning the furniture and running errands for staff. After working for 15 days or so, Dr. Donn Ketchum called her and gave her a bunch of papers and files and told her to deliver it to his room. He also said that he won't be in the room and would come in the room at 8 pm.

Here, she was raped for the first time. She was raped for next 6 months till the liberation of Bangladesh. She was used and abused repeatedly by the Pakistan Army and when she had taken refuge at the Mission

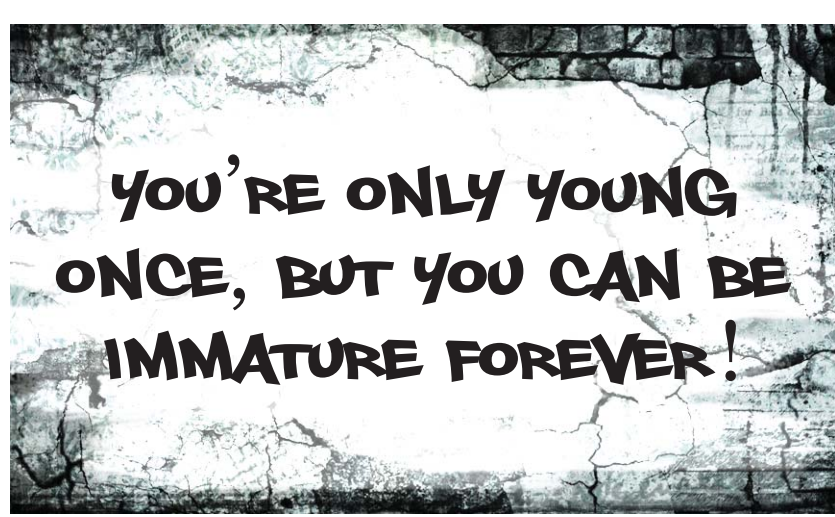
Hospital, her ordeal did not end for she was again raped by men, who were supposedly men of God. This seems to have become a habit by some men who claim to be representatives of God. The story of Peter and Chaitali is only one such story from the 1971 war. She was repeatedly abused and raped, first by the Pakistan army and then by the American missionaries at the Christian Mission hospital at Malumghat. The head of the Mission Hospital was a medical Missionary called Dr. Donn Ketchum. Her story and the story of Brig. Ghosh were picked up by Air Commodore Krishnamurti and made into that account. **Concluded** rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



The Mission Hospital of which Ketchum was the head.



THE WALL

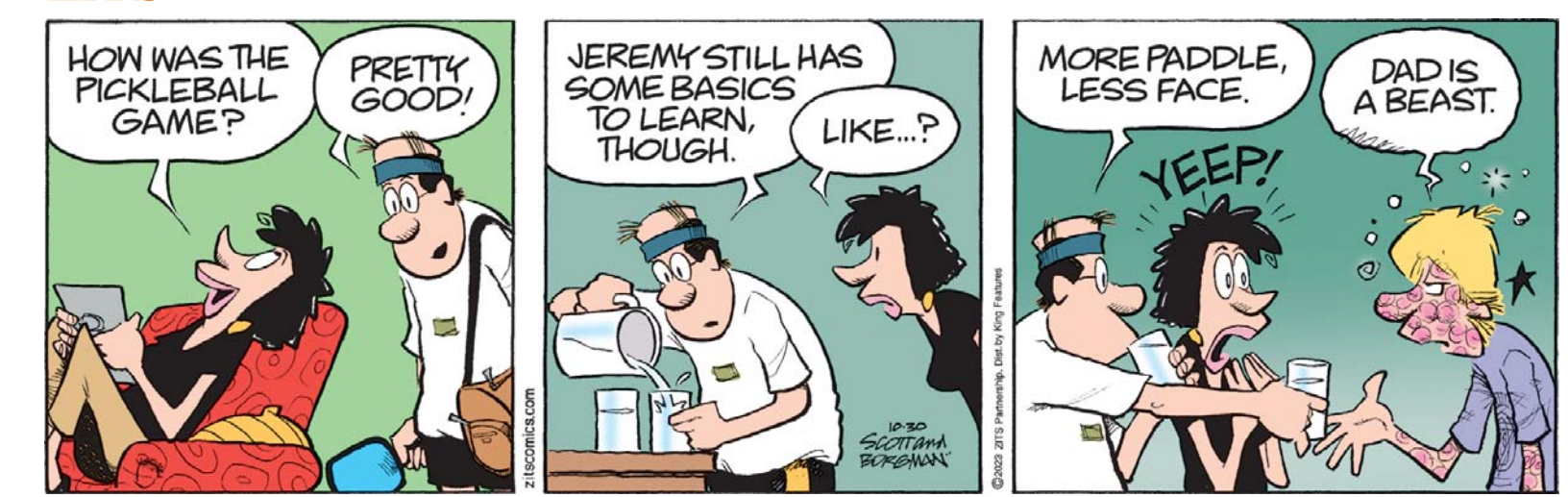


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman