



Learning To Lead With Humility: World Ego Awareness Day

Observed on May 11, World Ego Awareness Day encourages people to reflect on how ego shapes behaviour, relationships and decision-making. The day highlights the importance of balancing confidence with humility, reminding individuals that unchecked ego can lead to conflicts, stress and poor communication. Psychologists often emphasise self-awareness, empathy and active listening as tools to keep ego in check. In workplaces and personal life alike, learning to acknowledge mistakes and value others' perspectives can strengthen connections and improve well-being. World Ego Awareness Day serves as a reminder that true growth comes not from proving we are always right, but from staying open to learning and change.

#CONSERVATION

The Night Parrot Returns

The night parrot has made a surprising comeback, raising questions about the resilience of species on the brink of extinction



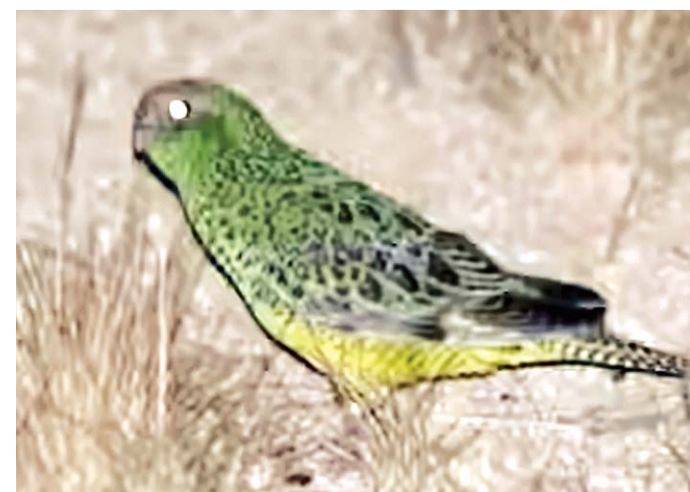
The night parrot is one of Australia's most enigmatic and elusive bird species. Known for its ghostly nocturnal habits and long period of presumed extinction, the story of the night parrot's return is nothing short of remarkable. For decades, the bird was considered lost to science, a victim of habitat destruction, hunting, and the encroachment of modern development. However, in recent years, the night parrot has made a surprising comeback, offering hope to conservationists and raising questions about the resilience of species on the brink of extinction.

A Forgotten Bird
The night parrot was once widely distributed across the interior of Australia. It was a nocturnal species, primarily active at night and living in the vast, arid landscapes of the country's deserts. The bird's elusive nature, coupled with its preference for remote, rugged environments, made it difficult to study, and over time, it disappeared from the public eye.

The last confirmed sighting of a night parrot in the wild was in the 1910s, and by the mid-20th century, many believed the bird had been driven to extinction. Researchers and birdwatchers alike began to search for any trace of the species, but despite numerous expeditions into remote parts of Australia's interior, no conclusive evidence of the bird's existence emerged.

The Return
In 1990, the first hint of the night parrot's possible survival came when a single bird was reportedly sighted in western Queensland. However, it wasn't until 2013 that the parrot's return to the world of scientific knowledge was confirmed. In that year, a team of researchers from the Australian National Wildlife Collection reported the discovery of a night parrot in the remote northern part of South Australia's arid desert region.

The discovery of the night parrot's return sent shockwaves through the global conservation community. It was a moment of triumph, showing that even the most elusive



Bateshwar shrines' towers ruins.

● Bulbul Joshi

Karimamannu Kuzhiyil Muhammed (born 1 July 1952) is an archaeologist who served as the Regional Director (North) of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). He is credited for the discovery of Ibadat Khana, a town in Uttar Pradesh.

As well as various prominent Buddhist Stupas and Monuments. During his career, he undertook the restoration of the Bateshwar Complex, successfully convincing naxal insurgents and dacoits to cooperate, as well as facilitate restoration of the Dantewada and Bhojeshwar temples.

But K.K. Muhammed is not just an archaeologist, he is a man who redefined the very meaning of preserving history. Known as the "Man of Monuments," this former Regional Director (North) of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) dedicated his life to unearthing and preserving India's rich cultural heritage. What sets him apart from other archaeologists is his unique approach, Muhammed didn't merely study history; he negotiated with it, often navigating through some of India's most perilous terrains and volatile political environments to protect our civilization's soul.



Bateshwar temple towers facade.

Muhammed's career spans several decades and countless archaeological sites, some of which were in locations so dangerous that would even think of attempting to restore them. His work is a testament to the fact that history isn't just preserved in the past, but often fought for in the present.

Legendary Work in Bateshwar: Mission Impossible

One of Muhammed's most celebrat-



Bateshwar temples' ruins.

ed contributions was in Bateshwar, a town in Uttar Pradesh. Here, he undertook one of the most daunting restoration projects in Indian history. Bateshwar was home to a cluster of ancient temples, many of which had been vandalized and destroyed over the centuries. At the time, the site was in a state of neglect and decay, but K.K. Muhammed's perseverance turned it into a shining example of archaeological success.

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The Archaeologist Who Negotiated with History

The restoration of these temples, however, wasn't an easy task. Bateshwar, located near the Chambal Valley, was infamous for being a haven for dacoits (bandits). But the dacoits' hostile environment did not deter Muhammed. His strategy was clear: preservation and negotiation. Muhammed, with his unyielding determination, successfully negotiated with local communities and even the dacoits, ensuring that these treasures of history were saved from further destruction.

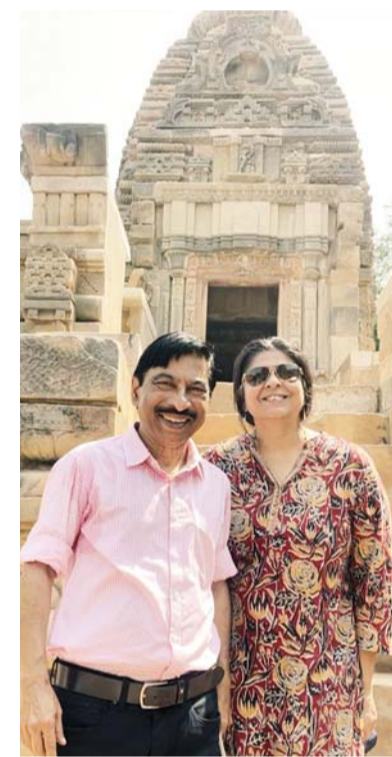


Saarc Award, KK Muhammed.



Bateshwar shrines' towers.

#K.K. MUHAMMED



Bateshwar, KKM Sir.

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Beyond the Chambal Valley: Negotiating with Naxals

But Muhammed's achievements didn't stop there. He worked in some of the most dangerous regions of India, areas marked by insurgency, where conventional archaeological methods and approaches were often impossible.

Before his time in Bateshwar, Muhammed had ventured deep into Chhattisgarh, one of the epicenters of Naxal insurgency in India. Specifically, he traveled to Dantewada, a hotbed of conflict and violence, to restore the ancient Barsoor and Samulur temples. Engaging with Naxal insurgents, Muhammed demonstrated that heritage could be a powerful bridge even in the most turbulent zones. By negotiating with Naxals, he was able to convince



Bateshwar temple facade.

them of the value of preserving their cultural history, allowing him to successfully restore these ancient temples in the heart of one of India's most hostile regions.

The Ayodhya Evidence: A Controversial Discovery

In 1976, Muhammed became a crucial member of the excavation team at the controversial Babri Masjid-Ram Jannabhooni site in Ayodhya. While the excavation team was uncovering the layers of history beneath the mosque, Muhammed made an important discovery: pillars with Hindu symbolism, specifically Ashtamangala signs, which were identified as being integral to Hindu temple architecture.

For decades, Muhammed stood firm on his findings, despite the political storm that engulfed the site in the years to come. His statement that Hindu symbolism was found at the site was met with considerable skepticism by many, but K.K. Muhammed's resolve remained unshaken. His discovery added significant evidence to the long-running debate and has been referenced in archaeological discussions ever since.

The Discovery of Ibadat Khana: A Monument of Religious Unity

Muhammed's ability to uncover history in its multifaceted dimensions is further demonstrated in his discovery of the Ibadat Khana (House of Worship) at Fatehpur Sikri. This was the place where Emperor Akbar, the Mughal emperor, known for his policy of religious tolerance, initiated interfaith dialogues and laid the foundations for his Din-e-Ilahi, a syncretic religion that sought to unite people of various faiths.

The Ibadat Khana is significant not just as a historical site but as a symbol of Akbar's attempts to bridge the gap between different religious communities during a time of significant political and social tension. Muhammed's unearthing of this monument added another layer to our understanding of the Mughal emperor's vision for religious unity and dialogue.

Buddhist Resurrections: Reviving Ashoka's Legacy

One of the key highlights of Muhammed's career has been his



Bateshwar KKM Sir.

contributions to the revival of India's Buddhist heritage. He is credited with excavating the Kesaria Stupa, an ancient Buddhist monument built by Emperor Ashoka during the 3rd century BCE. This monumental stupa had long been buried under layers of earth and history, but through Muhammed's painstaking efforts, it was brought back to life. Additionally, he contributed to excavations at significant Buddhist sites in Rajgir and Vaishali, both of which are critical to understanding the deep roots of Buddhism in India. His work shed light on the profound Buddhist history of the Indian subcontinent, bringing the legacy of Ashoka and Buddhism back into the spotlight.

The Replica Museum: Making Art Accessible to All

K.K. Muhammed's contributions were not limited to excavations and restorations alone; he also understood the importance of making history accessible to the public. To this end, he conceived the Replica Museum in Delhi, which houses life-sized copies of India's greatest stone sculptures and artifacts. This museum serves a dual purpose: it makes the treasures of India's her-



Bateshwar dacoit.

itage accessible to a wider audience and allows people to "touch" history, an experience that is otherwise impossible in most archaeological sites. For this, Muhammed also successfully conceived and executed the idea of building Replica Museum, Delhi, which showcases replicas of Indian statues and stone-carved sculptures.

By making these replicas, Muhammed gave people a chance to engage with art and history in a tangible way, bridging the gap between the past and present for a diverse public.



Bateshwar gun pose.

Restoration Method: Using Gravity, Not Bricks and Mortar

A hallmark of Muhammed's restoration approach is his use of gravity as the primary method of preservation. Unlike conventional restoration methods that often rely on bricks and mortar, which can sometimes distort or damage the original structure, Muhammed advocated for a more natural and respectful method of restoration. By carefully realigning stones and

structures using the forces of gravity and employing minimal intervention, Muhammed ensured that the authenticity of the monuments was preserved. This approach allowed the structures to remain true to their original design while ensuring their stability for future generations. It was a philosophy of restoration that not only respected the material integrity of the monument but also the cultural significance it held.

Recognition and Legacy

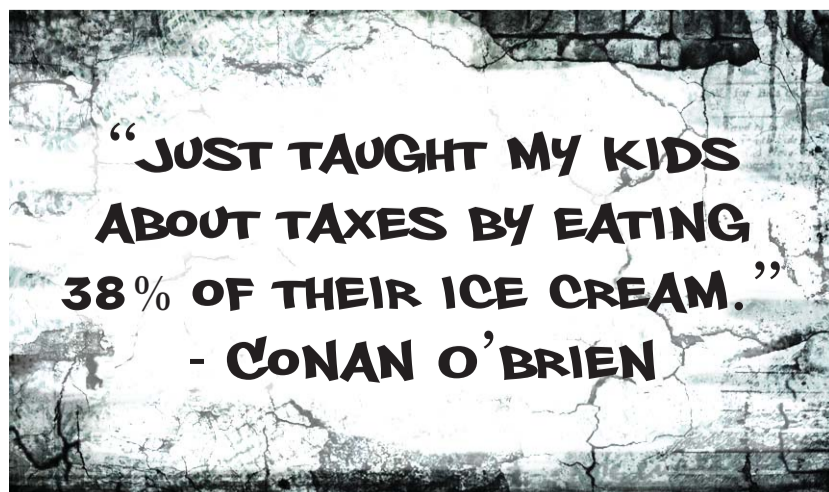
In 2019, K.K. Muhammed was awarded the Padma Shri in recognition of his unparalleled contributions to the field of archaeology and heritage preservation. His career, which reads like a series of "mission impossibles," is a testament to his courage, scientific integrity, and unyielding dedication to preserving India's cultural legacy. As he often says, "Stones speak to us; we just have to listen." K.K. Muhammed's life's work has not only been about listening to the stones but also about negotiating with history itself, making him a true pioneer in the field of archaeology. His legacy lives on in the temples, stupas, and artifacts he restored, and in the many lives he touched through his remarkable journey.

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Bateshwar Hanuman.

THE WALL

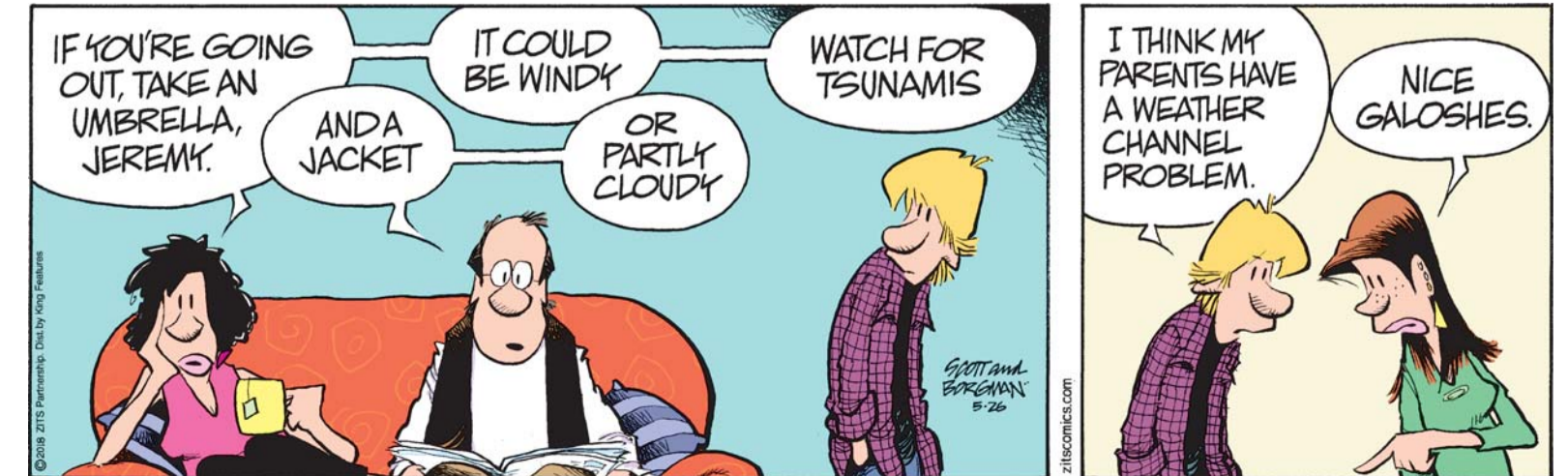


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman