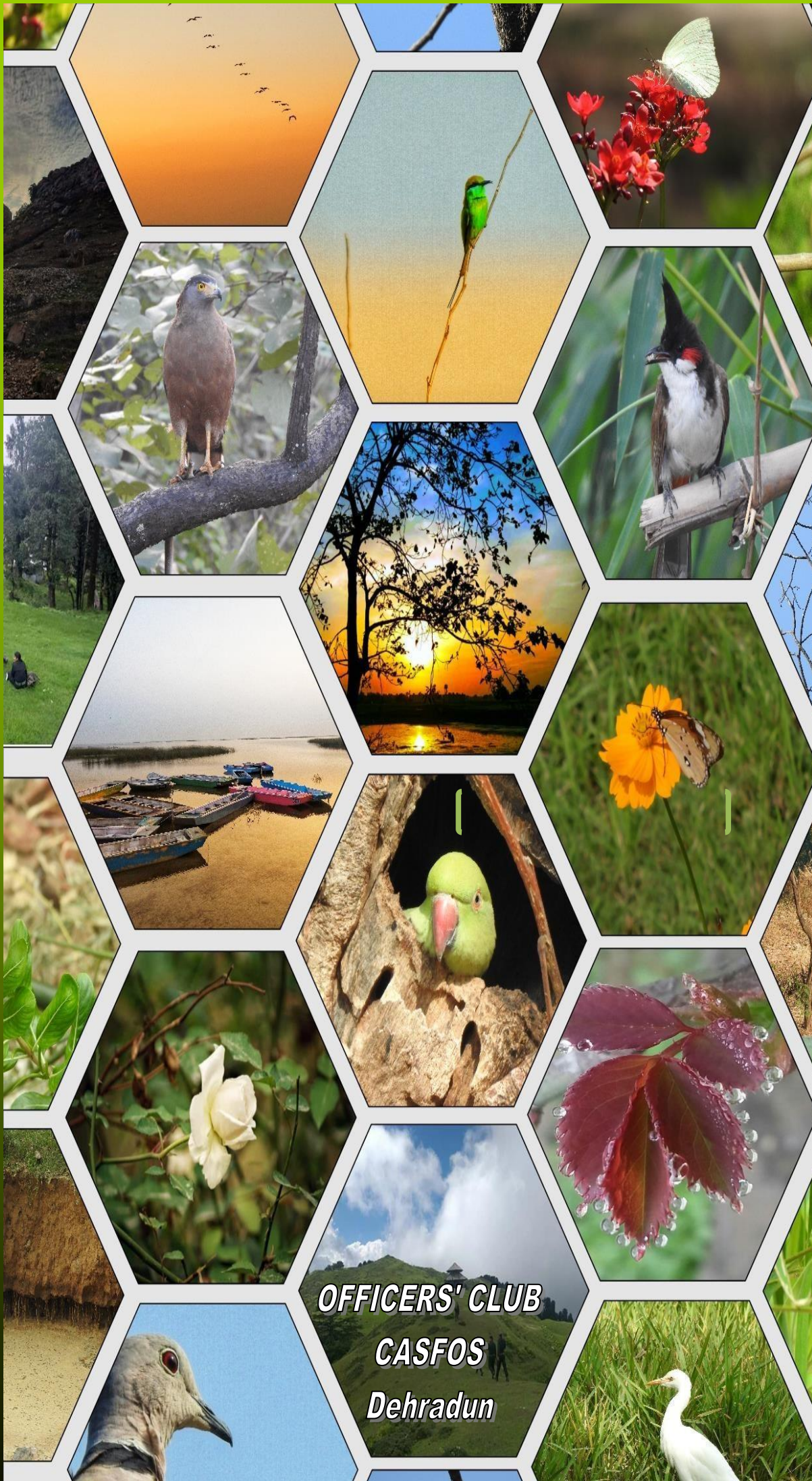




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PRAKRITI

Quest for nature



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FLORA OF THE WEEK

Adansonia digitata (*PARIJAAT*)

Parijaat is a sacred baobab tree in a village of Kintoor, near Barabanki, as well as in Sultanpur and Hameerpur, U.P. India, about which there are several legends. It is a protected tree situated in Barabanki district of UP, By the order of District magistrate, due to its religious and ancient importance.

This tree is known as baobab in modern science, which is originated in Sub Sahara Africa, Medagaskar, introduced in different parts of Asia and hence its presence in fertile land of India, Makes it rare. Also the age of the tree is still not determined, which makes it quite possible that the tree may have been planted by someone who used to travel between India and Africa. The tree needs international attention of scientist to find out more about it.

Kingdom	Plantae
Sub-kingdom	Tracheophytes
Division	Angiosperms
Clade	Eudicots
Order	Malvales
Family	Malvaceae
Genus	<i>Adansonia</i>
Species	<i>digitata</i>

Conservation status & threat

Parijaat is listed as Least concern according to the IUCN Red List Criteria (The IUCN Red list of Threatened species 2016). In India it is found very rare and in limited number.

Medicinal qualities

(Suganth et al, 2014; Jitin et al, 2015)
Anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, anti-oxidant, Antidote for poison, anti-bacterial, anti-viral properties. It is also used for treatment of bronchial asthma, dermatitis, diarrhea and dysentery.

Traditional remedies

Parijaat is a traditional food plant in its native origin places. Its fruit has been suggested to have the potential to improve nutrition, boost food security. Its leaves and pulp is also used in making of juice and food supplement.

Ancient Facts

According to *Harivansh puraan* the Parijaat tree is a Kalpavriksha, or Wish bearing tree, which apart from this tree only found in heaven.

There are no. of legends about this tree. Historically, though these acceptance, legends may have some bearing or not, but it is true that this tree is from a very ancient background.



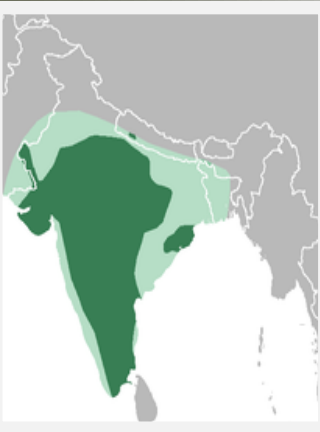
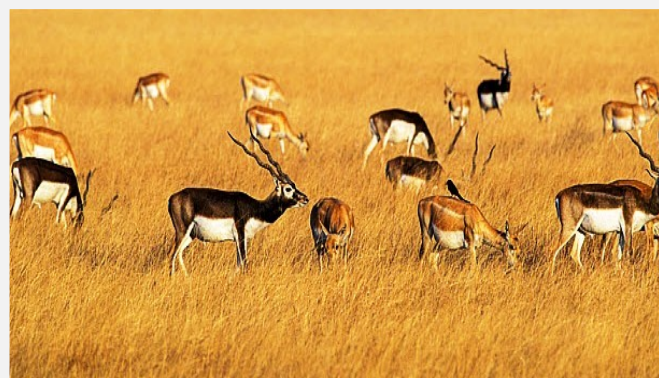
Propagation and survival: Germination of seed and survival of its seedling is very difficult but clonal propagation by air layering is compatibly much effective. SFRI, UP get success by this method and successfully propagate its plantlets to conserve this rare & valuable plant.



FAUNA OF THE WEEK

Antilope cervicapra (Blackbuck)

The **blackbuck** (*Antilope cervicapra*), also known as the **Indian antelope**, is found in Indian subcontinent. The blackbuck is the sole extant member of the genus *Antilope*. The species was described and given its binomial name by Swedish zoologist Carl Linnaeus in 1758.



Female & Male

Diet

Blackbucks are herbivores, so it graze on low grasses, occasionally do browsing as well. Their favourite sedges, fall witchgrass, mesquite, *Dichanthium annulatum* and live oak. Blackbuck had lower food consumption in summer because digestion of nutrients, especially crude proteins, was poor in summer. *Prosopis* taken as food if grasses are scarce. They required water daily.

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
class	Mammalia
order	Artiodactyla
Family	Bovidae
Subfamily	Antilopinae
Genus	<i>Antilope</i>
Species	<i>ervicapra</i>

Ecology and Behavior

The blackbuck is a diurnal antelope (active mainly during the day), though activity slows down at noon as days grow hotter toward summer. Blackbuck is the fastest animal which can run at as high as 80 kilometers per hour (50 mph). Males communicate by Grunts and females when her hiss are alarmed. Males are polygamous and mates with numerous females but not vice versa. Males are excited throughout the year but reproductive are peak in March-April and august-October. Males defend 1.5 to 15 ha area and marks their territories with dung maddens and sticky black preorbital on secretions deposited on grass blades and bushes. They generally travels in herd of 10 to 30 which sometimes increases to 50.

Morphology

Blackbuck stand 74 to 84 cm (29 to 33 in) high at the shoulder. Males weigh 20–57 kg (44–126 lb), an average of 38 kilograms (84 lb). Females are lighter, weighing 20–33 kg (44–73 lb) or 27 kg (60 lb) on average. The long, ringed horns, 35–75 cm (14–30 in) long, with darker coats are generally present only on males. Their faces and chests are black, with white rings around their eyes. The rest of their bodies are brown, and their undersides are white. Females have no horns, and are a lighter caramel-colored brown. Males are heavier than females, but both genders stand 29 – 33 in. tall at the shoulder.

Conservation

In India, hunting of blackbuck is prohibited under Schedule of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. In Gujarat: Velavadar Wildlife Sanctuary, Gir National Park; in Bihar: Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary; in Maharashtra: Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary; in Madhya Pradesh: Kanha National Park in Rajasthan: Tal Chhapar Sanctuary, National Chambal Sanctuary, Ranthambhore National Park n Karnataka: Ranibennur Blackbuck Sanctuary; in Tamil Nadu: Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary, Vallanadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Guindy National Park are the protected area where blackbuck inhabits.

BIRD OF THE WEEK

Pycnonotus cafer

Red-Vented Bulbul

The **Red-vented Bulbul** is one of the most common birds in India. It has adapted the urban culture very well. It is found singly, in pairs or sometimes in groups in the dry scrub, open forest, plains and cultivated lands. Often seen on high trees or perched on wires in urban and rural areas.



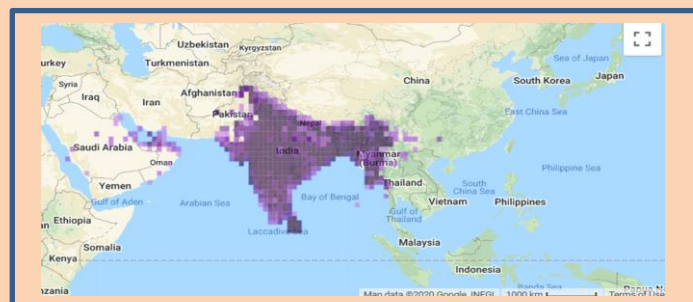
Taxonomic Tree

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Aves
Order	Passeriformes
Family	Pycnonotidae
Genus	Pycnonotus
Species	<i>P. cafer</i>

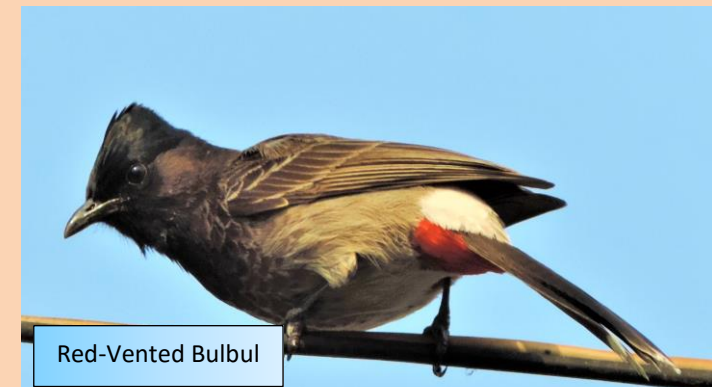
WPA, 1972: Schedule IV **IUCN Status:** Least concern

Nesting: Nests are small flat cups, at a height of around 2-3 m, made of small twigs. Breed from June to September, two or three eggs is a typical clutch.

Diet: Fruit, flower buds, nectar and insects.



Distribution Map/ Range Map



Red-Vented Bulbul

Morphology:

A dark, sleek, medium-sized bird with a black crest, white rump & red color under the tail. The upper wings and mantle are mid-brown with pale margins when in fresh plumage, creating a scaly appearance. The rump is white, and the tail is long and blackish with prominent white tip. The bill, eyes and legs are dark. The sexes are alike, although males are slightly larger.

Interesting fact about Bulbul:

1. Once the chick swallowed food, the chick immediately produces a faecal sac which the parent can consume and digest. This ingenious behaviour ensures that the nest will always stay clean.
2. The word bulbul derives from Hindi (बुलबुल) or Persian or Arabic (بلبل), meaning nightingale, but in English, bulbul refers to passerine birds of a different family.