

# ENVIRONMENTALIST

## 1] Jadhav Payeng



*Jadav "Molai" Payeng (born 1963) is an environmental activist[1] and forestry worker from Majuli,[2] popularly known as the Forest Man of India.[3][4] Over the course of several decades, he has planted and tended trees on a sandbar of the river Brahmaputra turning it into a forest reserve. The forest, called Molai forest after him,[5] is located near Kokilamukh of Jorhat, Assam, India and encompasses an area of about 1,360 acres / 550 hectares.[6][7] In 2015, he was honoured with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India.[8] He was born in the indigenous Mising tribe[9] of Assam.*

*In 1979, Payeng, then 16, encountered a large number of snakes that had died due to excessive heat after floods washed them onto the tree-less sandbar. That is when he planted around 20 bamboo seedlings on the sandbar.[7][10] He started working on the forest in 1979 when the social forestry division of Golaghat district launched a scheme of tree plantation on 200 hectares at Aruna Chapori*

*situated at a distance of 5 km from Kokilamukh in Jorhat district. Molai was one of the labourers who worked in that project which was completed after five years. He chose to stay back after the completion of the project even after other workers left. He not only looked after the plants, but continued to plant more trees on his own, in an effort to transform the area into a forest.*

*The forest, which came to be known as Molai forest, now houses Bengal tigers, Indian rhinoceros, and over 100 deer and rabbits. Molai forest is also home to monkeys and several varieties of birds, including a large number of vultures.[6] There are several thousand trees, including valcol, arjun (Terminalia arjuna), ejar (Lagerstroemia speciosa), goldmohur (Delonix regia), koroi (Albizia procera), moj (Archidendron bigeminum) and himolu.(Bombax ceiba). Bamboo covers an area of over 300 hectares.[11]*

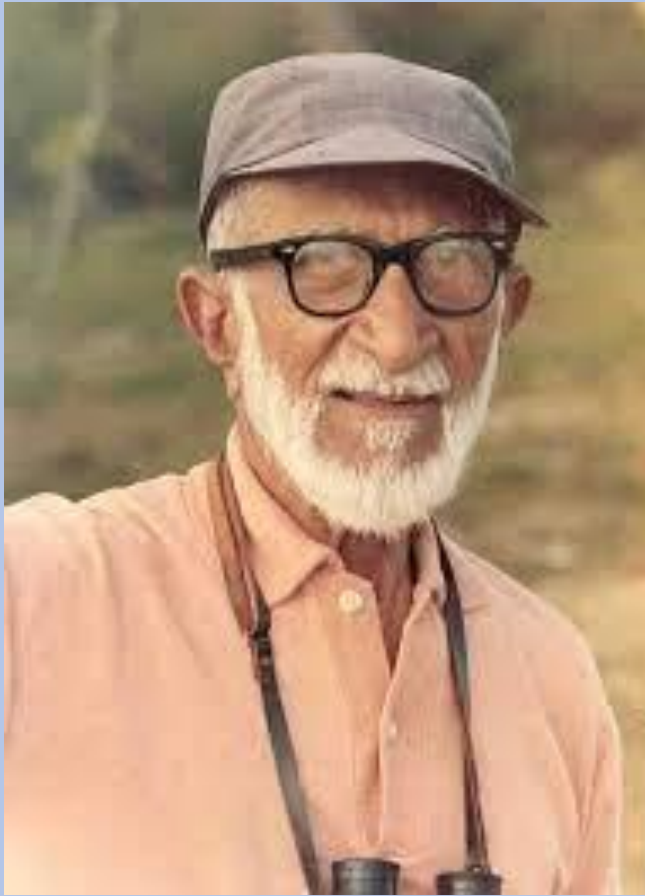
*Jadav Payeng belongs to the Mising tribe in Assam, India. He lives in a small hut in the forest. Binita, his wife, and his 3 children (two sons and a daughter) accompany him.[6] He has cattle and buffalo on his farm and sells the milk for his livelihood, which is his only source of income.[6] In an interview from 2012, he revealed that he has lost around 100 of his cows and buffaloes to the tigers in the forest, but blames the people who carry out large scale encroachment and destruction of forests as the root cause of the plight of wild animals.*

*Jadav Payeng was honoured at a public function arranged by the School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University[14] on 22 April 2012 for his achievement. He shared his experience of creating a forest in an interactive session, where Magsaysay Award winner Rajendra Singh and JNU vice-chancellor Sudhir Kumar Sopory were present. Sopory named Jadav Payeng as the "Forest Man of India".[7][15] In the month of October 2013, he was honoured at the Indian Institute of Forest Management during their annual event Coalescence. In 2015, he was honoured with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India. He received honorary doctorate degree from Assam Agricultural University and Kaziranga University for his contributions.*

*The 2013 film documentary Foresting life,[17][18] directed by the Indian documentary filmmaker Aarti Shrivastava, celebrates the life and work of Jadav Payeng in the Molai forest. These are also the focus of William Douglas McMaster's 2013 film documentary Forest Man.[19] With US\$8,327 pledged on*

*its Kickstarter campaign, the film was brought to completion and taken to a number of film festivals.[20] It was awarded the Best Documentary prize at the Emerging Filmmaker Showcase in the American Pavilion at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival*

## 2] SALIM ALI



*Salim Moizuddin Abdul Ali (12 November 1896 – 20 June 1987)[1] was an Indian ornithologist and naturalist. Sometimes referred to as the "Birdman of India", Salim Ali was the first Indian to conduct systematic bird surveys across India and wrote several bird books that popularized ornithology in India. He became a key figure behind the Bombay Natural History Society after 1947 and used his personal influence to garner government support for the organisation, create the Bharatpur bird sanctuary (Keoladeo National Park) and prevent the destruction of what is now the Silent Valley National Park.*

*Along with Sidney Dillon Ripley he wrote the landmark ten volume Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, a second edition of which was completed after his death. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1958 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1976, India's third and second highest civilian honours respectively.[2] Several species of birds, Salim Ali's fruit bat, a couple of bird sanctuaries and institutions have been named after him.*



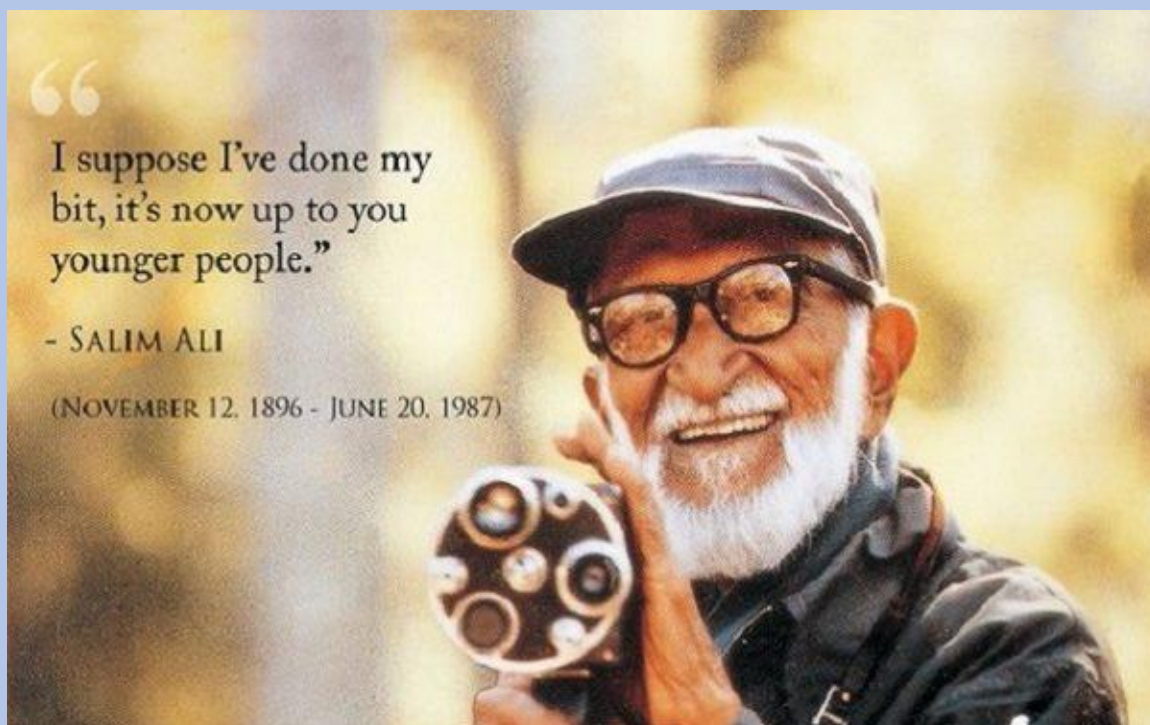
*He was one of the first scientists to introduce systematic surveys to study the distribution pattern of birds.*

*His research work is considered highly influential in the development of ornithology.*

*He was a well-known environmental crusader who often stood for protecting the wildlife.*

*Salim Ali played a pivotal role in establishment of Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary (Keoladeo National Park) and prevented the destruction of what is now the Silent Valley National Park*

*Along with Sidney Dillon Ripley, he wrote the landmark ten-volume Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, a second edition of which was completed after his death.*



*Dr. Sálím Ali wrote numerous journal articles, popular and academic books and field guides.*

*Among the several books authored by him the 'Book of Indian birds' still remains the bible for budding ornithologists.*

*He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1958 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1976, India's third and second highest civilian honours respectively.*

*Besides the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan, Ali received the Gold Medal of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1967. He was the first non-British citizen to receive the honour.*

*Dr.Sálim Ali received numerous awards including the J. Paul Getty International Award, the Golden Ark of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Golden Medal of the British Ornithology Union (A rarity for the non-British)*

### 3] SUMARIA ABDULALI



*Sumaira Abdulali is an environmental activist focusing on sand mining and noise pollution. She is the founder of NGO Awaaz Foundation. Sand mining, which has now become an issue of global concern was first reported by her to the authorities after she noticed sand being illegal mined from Kihim Beach in 2004, where she was physically attacked during a sand mining site inspection. Thereafter, she convened an NGO movement for protection of public-interest activists, 'Movement against Intimidation, Threat and Revenge against Activists' (MITRA) and filed the first public interest litigation against sand mining, resulting in policy change at State and national level. She helped bring sand mining to notice worldwide by participating in documentary films and awareness campaigns and contributing to print, radio and television news.*

*She participated in the first Roundtable of the GRID Geneva United Nations Environment Programme and gave her inputs to their first report, 'Sand and Sustainability: Finding new solutions for environmental governance of global sand resources.' Her work was featured throughout in the final report published in May*

2019.

*Her other focus campaign against noise pollution has become a citizens' movement and has forced policy change in India through court interventions, awareness and advocacy campaigns. In 2019, Mumbai was the only city in India where noise pollution significantly reduced during the entire festival season and where the Government of Maharashtra declared an anti-noise pollution year in 2018.*



*A High Court Order pursuant to her public interest litigation protects a wildlife corridor frequented by tigers, elephants and other wildlife. The 'Sawantwadi-Dodamarg Corridor' connects National Parks and is part of the Western Ghats, a UNESCO Bio Diversity hotspot.*

*Sumaira was co Chairman of the Bombay Natural History's Conservation sub Committee. She was Honorary Secretary of the BNHS and is currently a Governing Council member.*

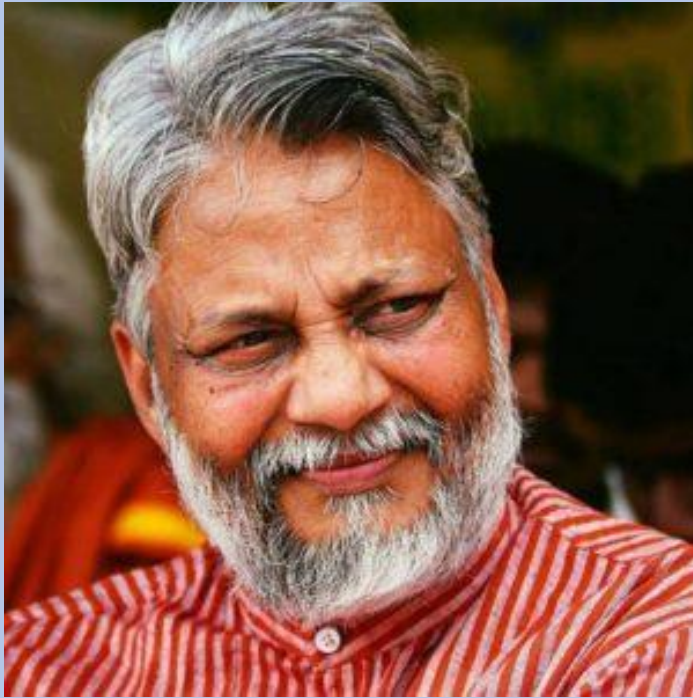
*Sumaira's work has been extensively reported by the press and media. She has participated in documentary films, television and radio nationally and internationally. Her columns have been published in Times of India, Mumbai Mirror, DNA, Outlook India Magazine and Dainik Bhaskar. She writes a monthly*



*column for Forbes India.*

*She has spoken and presented her work at numerous TEDx events, at Universities including Harvard University Boston, IITs, Anjuman-e Islam, Delhi University, Bombay University, BITS Pilani, Shoolini University and other youth and community organizations. She has been awarded the Mother Teresa Award for Social Justice, the Olive Crown Award and is an Ashoka Fellow.*

#### 4] RAJENDRA SINGH



*Rajendra Singh, is a winner of 2001 Ramon Magsaysay Award For Community leadership. He leads an organization, Tarun Bhagat Sangh, which is supported by the United Nations, USIAD, and the World bank. He was highly appreciated and recognized for the efforts he made for harvesting rain water water by building check dams in Rajasthan. It is because of this he is popularly known as the 'Jal Pusush' or the 'Water man of Rajasthan'*

*Since 1985, Tarun Bhagat Sangh, headed by Rajendra Singh have been working in the Alwar district of Rajasthan, focusing on the revival of Johads, streams and rivers in the area. They were of the opinion that without water in region no other significant development could take place. And with the successful implementation of the programme and with the total dedication of all the team members along with the cooperation of the villagers, today more than 4,500 working Johads dot Alwar and surrounding districts. (Johad is concave structure which collects and store water throughout the year. It is used for the drinking purpose by humans and cattle).*

*Rajendra Singh along with his other team members persuaded the villagers to rejuvenate their functioning style, which in turn changed the total life line of Rajasthan. He has plans to cover more of 45 villages in the next one year. He has*

*also decided to take up the project of river Luni, the only flowing water source in western parts of Rajasthan. The condition of the river is getting worst with the day by day increasing pollution from the numerous textile units Pali.*

*Organization of Rajendra Singh has overall 45 full time employees and 230 part time workers. He is a charismatic personality and the real hero of poor. He spends eight months of the year on road working day and night without seeing the face of his wife and son. Until 1984, he knew nothing about the water and its conservation methods. It were the villagers who showed me the value of water, and till date The work done by the Rajendra Singh is a inspiration for the million others in the nation.*

## 5] MEDHA PATKAR



*Medha Patkar mobilized massive marches and peaceful protests against the construction of India's Sardar Sarovar Dam, which displaced thousands of tribal peoples and submerged vast stretches of forests and farmland.*

Medha Patkar has been a central organizer and strategist for Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), a people's movement organized to stop the construction of a series of dams planned for India's largest westward flowing river, the Narmada. The World Bank-financed Sardar Sarovar Dam is the keystone of the Narmada Valley Development Project, one of the world's largest river development projects. Upon completion, Sardar Sarovar would submerge more than 37,000 hectares of forest and agricultural land. The dam and its associated canal system would also displace some 320,000 villagers, mostly from tribal communities, whose livelihoods depend on these natural resources.

In 1985, Patkar began mobilizing massive marches and rallies against the project and, though the protests were peaceful, was repeatedly beaten and arrested by the police. She almost died during a 22-day hunger strike in 1991. Undaunted, she undertook two more long protest fasts in 1993 and 1994. With each subsequent

summer monsoon season, when flooding threatens the villages near the dam site, Patkar has joined the tribal residents in resisting evacuation.



To date, as many as 35,000 people have been relocated by the project; however, they have not been adequately resettled and hundreds of families have returned to their home villages despite the constant threat of submergence. The activists are continually subjected to intimidation. In 1994 the NBA office was ransacked, and later Patkar was arrested for refusing to leave the village of Manibeli, which was to be flooded.

These actions led to an unprecedented independent review of the dam by the World Bank, which concluded, in 1991, that the project was ill-conceived. Unable to meet the Bank's environmental and resettlement guidelines, the Indian government canceled the final installment of the World Bank's \$450 million loan. In 1993, Patkar and the other activists forced the central government to conduct a review of all aspects of the project. Meanwhile, the sluice gates to the dam were



closed in 1993, in defiance of court orders, and water was impounded behind the dam.

In May 1994, NBA took the case to stop the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam to India's Supreme Court. In January 1995, the Court put a stay on further construction of the half-built dam and has tried to forge consensus between the central and state governments. While state governments continue to push for an increase in the height of the dam, displaced tribal residents carry on with mass protests. Patkar continued to defy the project and, in 1996, was again arrested.

The NBA has also been working to obtain just compensation for people affected by dams that have already been built on the Narmada. In 1997, the NBA helped tribal communities stop construction of the Upper Veda and Lower Goin dams. Another focus of the NBA's work has been the Maheshwar Dam. A number of huge rallies and dam site occupations forced a halt to major work on this project and led the state government to establish an independent task force to review the dam.

As an outgrowth of her work to stop dam construction, Patkar has helped establish a network of activists across the country—the National Alliance of People's Movements.