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LAND

The Island Leisure

Inside

Film heaven



With around 100 movies from across the globe showing at the World Film Festival of Bangkok, choosing the ones to see can be a bit daunting. For a primer on the eclectic selection, we asked festival programmer Pathompong Manakitsomboon to give us a list of 10 titles he doesn't want to miss. Here it is, in inverse order of preference.

European Film Festival Sri Lanka 2009



The European Film Festival in Sri Lanka started on November 07 and will end on November 15. The selected films from the European member countries will be screened each day at 5.00pm and 7.00pm at the British Council, Goethe-Institut and Alliance Francaise. A selection of short films directed by young Sri Lankan film makers will be presented before the screening of each feature film.



Colony Collapse Disorder: Another man-made death-trap

In one of my favourite books, "So Long and Thanks for all the Fish" by Douglas Adams, the first sign of the end of the world is that the dolphins disappear. In reality it is when the bees leave. And that they are doing. Over the last 3 years, 70% of the bees have disappeared from their manmade hives. No bodies have been found, no reasons have been found by scientists for this extraordinary disappearance called Colony Collapse Disorder. Let me tell you the reason why I think the bees simply called it quits and went to the great Beeworld in the Sky.

Honey is what bees vomit out. This bee vomit has been given many mythical properties of health. Unfortunately these attributes have caused the suffering and death of millions of bees.

Bees are victims of the same cruel treatment given to animals in the animal food industry. They are pushed into boxes, given invasive examinations, handled crudely, given artificial food, drugs and pesticides, manipulated genetically, grown through artificial insemination, transported by air, rail and road and then killed.

When beekeepers handle combs many bees are crushed and killed. Hives have smoke puffed into them to make bees dizzy and easier to handle. Special devices are attached to hives to collect bee products from bees as they enter their hives. Bees are separated from their hives by being shaken vigorously or thrown out with powerful streams of air. They may have their legs and wings clipped off. Queen bees have their wings clipped to prevent them from flying off.

When it is not profitable to keep bees through the winter they are killed. One way is by dousing the hive with petroleum, then burning it. Other times they are simply left to starve to death, after the honey is taken. Hives are burned when there is a disease outbreak. Some bees are killed because they eat honey but do not do enough work.

Like cows and chickens, bees are used as biomachines to make a product for human consumption. Like all forms of slavery in the modern world, they are seen only for their use-value, or how they serve to benefit their "owner." They can only gather a tiny amount of pollen in each trip, 75,000 miles of travel to gather enough pollen to produce just one pound of honey. They do all of this work to create food for their own consumption alone; not for that of human beings. If bees were human, this abusive treatment would be considered, by all, to be slavery. A bee is a living, breath-

ing creature. The act of taking away food produced for themselves is robbery with armed force because the bees do not give honey - in fact they defend it being taken away. In order for bees to survive when the honey is stolen, a white sugar syrup is given to them. This substitute is not nutritionally adequate for the bee and chronic malnutrition leaves them exposed to disease. Because of this, antibiotics like Tetracycline, Terramycin and Sodium Sulfathiosole are mixed with the sugar substitute. The hives are sprayed with synthetic pesticides to kill bacteria which might harm the weakened bees.

Queen bees are artificially inseminated with sperm obtained from decapitated bees. The Queens are slaughtered every two years as their egg producing abilities decline

due to the bad diet. The successor queen is selected by a human instead of the reigning queen and is artificially inseminated. Queens come from commercial queen suppliers. The queens with a few nursing bees are kept in cages and taken around the country. Travel can be

rough on the queens; they can be over heated, chilled, left out in the sun for hours, banged around in baggage compartments. Hives which are families of bees from the same mother are routinely split in half according to what the keeper wants, not the queen.

The food industry has used these artificially managed honeybees to pollinate crops because wild bees and other insects (who would naturally pollinate crops) have been destroyed by housing developments, industrial pollution, pesticide poisoning, intensive farming practices, destruction of hedgerows, etc. The use of honeybees for pollination is now big business. Commercial beekeepers move hives to get pollination fees. Bees are bought and sold worldwide resulting in the bees (and their hives) being transported hundreds or thousands of miles.

Transportation means bees may suffer stress, suffocation, overheating or cold. Many die in their packaged coffins. Bees are transported to strange countries and cause problems in those natural environments. They are subsequently treated as feral and nests are destroyed by pouring petrol in hives or killed by spraying with liquid soap. On top of all this, their honey is taken away.

The honey industry is for nothing. Like the meat trade, it is simply producing a product that gives you nothing and causes so much suffering and environmental stress. Honey is no health food. It is simply another sweetener. It is not a significant source of any nutrient except calories. Although it contains trace amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals, they are so dilute that honey essentially lacks any nutritional value except for its calorie content. It is 98% sugar and therefore can be easily substituted. In fact a nutritional comparison shows that demerara sugar is higher in minerals, such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, iron, copper and chlorine. All the insecticides, fungicides, and pollutants in the nectar the bees collect are concentrated in the honey. Beekeepers often use toxic chemicals in commercially kept hives to kill mites. Although honey does not spoil, it is often contaminated with bacteria, molds, and fungi. So many people are allergic to it without knowing.

Bee pollen is another advertising scam that has bled many pockets. I will go into that another time. For now, stop taking part in the useless cruelty that is honey.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in



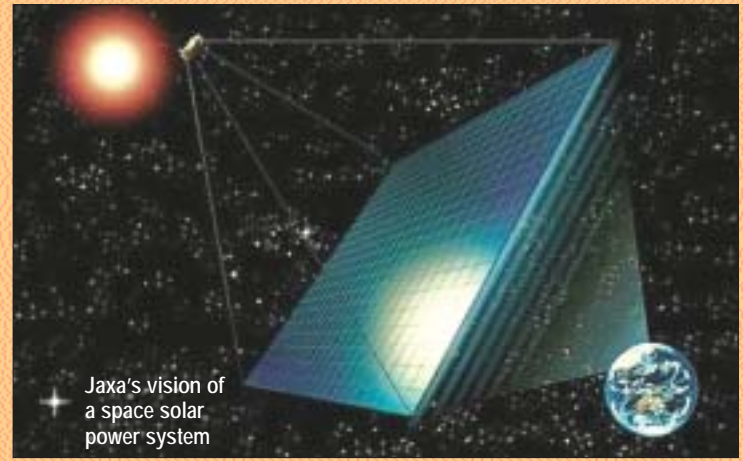
Japan's space agency is planning to construct a solar power station in space and use it to beam energy down to Earth using lasers.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (Jaxa) hopes that the ambitious plans will help ease the country's energy problems as well as providing a solution for global warming.

A select group of companies and researchers have been given the task of designing and building the Space Solar Power System (SSPS).

The plan is to create a miles-wide array of photovoltaic panels, like the solar panels used

Japan plans giant solar power station in space



Jaxa's vision of a space solar power system

on Earth, and place it in a geostationary orbit.

Solar rays are at least five times as powerful in space as they are at ground level, allowing the huge panels to gather vast quantities of energy.

A report by researchers at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries said: "Since solar power is a clean and inexhaustible energy source, we believe that this system will be able to help solve the problems of energy shortage and global warming.

"The sun's rays abound in space."

Once collected, the solar energy would be beamed down to a substation on Earth, using laser beams or microwaves.

Jaxa says that the system would be safe, although they admit that it might be hard to reassure the public over the image of huge laser beams blasting down from the sky.

The receiver dishes for the substations would probably be harboured at sea or in the middle of reservoirs to keep them away from dangerous places.

Tatsuhito Fujita, one of the Jaxa researchers, said that in the next few years "a satellite designed to test the transmission

by microwave should be put into low orbit with a Japanese rocket."

A test version of the orbital solar panels is expected to be launched in 2020. The final version should be in space in 2030, and will create about one gigawatt of energy - the equivalent of a mid-sized nuclear power plant.

If it all goes to plan, the electricity produced will be six times cheaper than current energy costs in Japan.