

News

Humans may be the devil if animals were religious: Kerala hosts the start of the NALSA-KeLSA conference on human-wildlife conflict.



The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Kerala State Legal Services Authority (KeLSA) are hosting a two-day conference with the goal of discussing the nation's increasing problems with human-wildlife conflict.

On Saturday, a two-day legal conference began in Kerala with the goal of tackling the nation's escalating problems with wildlife-human conflict.

Judges from the Supreme Court and High Court attended the conference, which was organized by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Kerala State Legal Services Authority (KeLSA). It was inaugurated in the state capital, Thiruvananthapuram.

Justice **MM Sundresh** of the Supreme Court stated during the event that the conflict is a result of human beings' quest for unrestricted progress.

He framed the problem with a WhatsApp message he got, saying,

"If animals could have a religion, man would be devil."

Justice **BV Nagarathna** of the Supreme Court used an instance from Mangalore that was published a few years ago to show the situational awareness of animals.

"In a farmhouse close to Mangalore, a leopard and a dog wandered into the toilet. The owner didn't know this, so he shut the toilet and went to bed as usual. He was shocked to see the leopard and dog emerge when the lavatory door was unlocked in the morning. What does this mean? This instance demonstrates how animals, which are situation-aware and emotionally complex beings in many aspects, also behave according to circumstance. Justice **Nagarathna** clarified that the leopard refrained from devouring the dog since it was aware that both were eventually in captivity.

Although sharing space with all beings is emphasized in Indian tradition, she continued, the attitude is increasingly shifting toward a more human-centric perspective.

"It appears from recent trends that the trajectory is towards human-centric approach and there is a disregard of a fundamental duty enshrined under 51(A)(G)," she stated.

Man would be the devil if animals had religion.

Judge Vikram Nath, who recently took over as head of a three-judge panel investigating the Delhi stray dog problem, claimed that the case's procedures have made him well-known even abroad. He recognized the delicate and contentious nature of the matter in a lighthearted manner.

"I have long been well-known in the legal community for the meager work I perform, but I am grateful to the stray dogs for introducing me to the entire civil society, both domestically and

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internationally. And for giving me that matter, I am grateful to my CJI. We were at the 'Law Asia Plio Summit' recently. There were the attorneys' association presidents. They then began to inquire about the issue of stray dogs. That people outside of India are also familiar with me made me extremely happy. I am therefore appreciative to them for recognizing me. Also, I've been getting signals that dogs are sending me blessings and well wishes in addition to dog lovers. He added, "I have their well wishes in addition to human blessings and well wishes.

See also Stray Dogs: Supreme Court to establish national policy; orders NGOs and dog owners to provide ₹2 lakh and ₹25,000

Three aspects of the problem—conflict avoidance, conflict management, and conflict resolution—must be taken into account in the conference and future strategy for human-wildlife conflict, said Attorney General for India R Venkataramani.

"No one common regulatory framework for all of them may work," he stated.

Speaking at the event were Kerala High Court Justice A **Muhammed Mustaque**, Kerala Law Minister P Rajeev, and Chief **Justice Nitin Jamdar**.

According to them, Kerala places a lot of attention on the subject.

Human-animal conflicts have been on the rise in Kerala, a tiny, biodiverse state with a dense population. There have been several reports of wild boars and elephants clashing with people who live close to forest regions, frequently resulting in the death of both people and animals as well as damage to crops.

Chief **Justice Jamdar** noted that the most vulnerable segments of society are frequently the ones impacted in the State.

"The members of vulnerable communities and tribal groups are the ones who are most affected by this war. Additionally, they are entitled to the Legal Services Authority Act's protections," he stated.