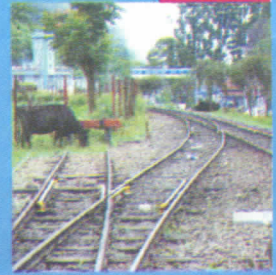


Exclusive  
travel section inside

**Potato:** Farming this unassuming tuber was a tradition, until recently. A review on p 10, 11

**Alcoholism:** upto 20% of alcohol drinkers become alcoholics. A perspective from a social worker, p 4

Rs. 12/-



Next issue: Heritage abused  
The small paper with a big view



# The Local

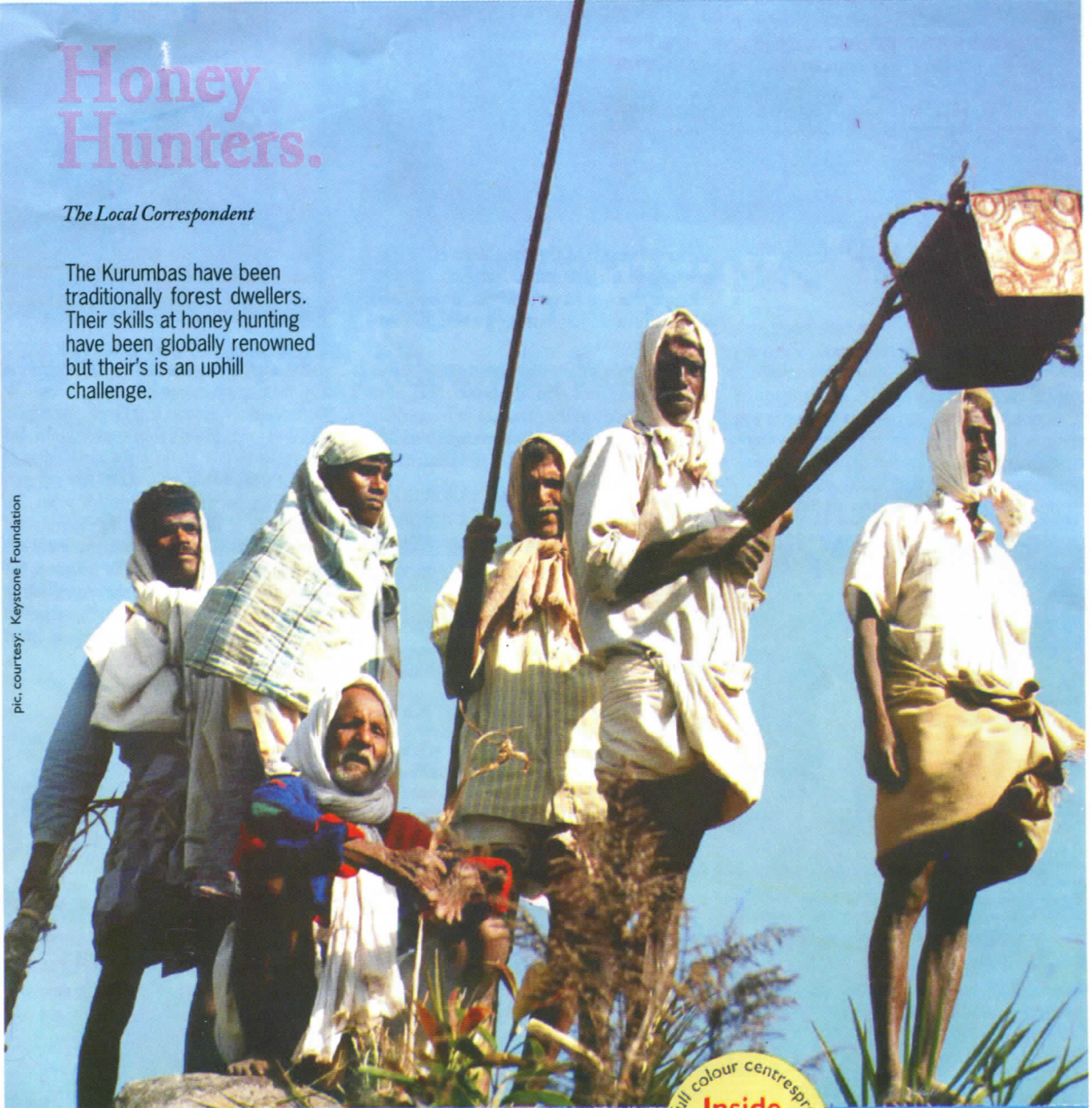
A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NILGIRIS

## Honey Hunters.

*The Local Correspondent*

The Kurumbas have been traditionally forest dwellers. Their skills at honey hunting have been globally renowned but their's is an uphill challenge.

pic. courtesy: Keystone Foundation



World Indigenous People's Day is observed on Aug 9, every year.

In full colour centrespread  
**Inside**  
Honey hunting

## travel

## 5 must-visit tourist spots in Ooty.

In about half a day's time, with a small car or taxi handy, one can get to the essence of Ooty's tourism identity. (The 6th one, is the proverbial icing-on-the-cake).

### ▣ Pykara Lake:

21 kms from Ooty, on the Ooty-Mysore Road, is the Pykara lake. It is considered sacred by indigenous tribes. Great for boating. Thank God for digital cameras.

### ▣ Ooty Lake:

The glittering jewel of Ooty, the lake is a treat to behold from afar! Total extent: 65 acres. Officially opened to boating since 1973.

### ▣ Botanical Gardens:

In the heart of Ooty town, this 55 acre expanse is the 'lungs of the town' and its resident population. Its layout was completed in 1867. 2000 varieties of flowers, is fascinating and overwhelming.

### ▣ Tea museum & Tea factory:

Enroute Doddabetta, the tea manufacturing experience here, is total - from leaf to cup, as they say. The museum is a history buff's delight!

### ▣ Doddabetta Peak:

Standing at 2623 msl (metres above sea level) Doddabetta is 10 kms from Ooty. The name means 'big mountain' in the local language. Surrounded by dense shola (forests) the peak offers a truly far-sighting experience.

### ▣ The Bee Museum & Green Shop

At hill bunk on the Mysore Rd, your understanding of local traditions, one of which is honey hunting, is complete with the visit to the Bee Museum. Honey lovers, celebrate. The range of fresh forest produce available here, will stun you.



## Follow your heart.

*The Local Correspondent*

Pushpinder Khajuria becomes a volunteer at the Bee Museum. Just like that. A decision at the drop-of-a-hat! But yet, it's a conscious decision.

'I can't explain why I decided that I must volunteer at the museum but I simply knew that I must do what I can now, to be of help.'

Pushpinder can pass off as a tourist at first sight - a visitor at the very same Bee museum that she and her husband (then a student officer at the DSSC, Wellington) had visited early last year. Her enthusiasm is equally remarkable - like the one that a visitor feels for the very first time, when experiencing a new thing!

'I think the culture and traditions of the local communities is fascinating. I am also happy that while the communities have preserved their cultural ties, they have also embraced development. Gomathi, who works with me here, a member of the local Kota tribe, is today an MA in linguistics!'

Capt Pushpinder Khajuria was formerly a military nurse. Due to her husband's various posting (a Lt Col in the Indian army) she decided to retire from active duty to be with him. 'My husband is a very understanding person, like a friend'. That fact, *The Local* correspondent can vouch for - the gentleman, it seems, stepped into Keystone Foundation in Kotagiri, shortly before they had to leave Wellington for their next posting, and left their car keys on the table much to the surprise of everyone there, saying, 'my wife will be back after a month. She is going to volunteer at the museum and will need the car to move about.' The interesting part-Keystone didn't know about this!

But that is Pushpinder - 'pushy' as the Keystone folk affectionately call her. She had her way. 'Life is uncertain. Suddenly, you get a nagging feeling that something must be done and then it happens - you follow your heart.'

The resolute lady knows what uncertainty is about. Her younger brother died tragically, of brain haemorrhage.

Nothing is permanent. Nothing will last forever. We know, nevertheless, that her work at the museum will.

### Train timings:

#### Mettupalayam-Ooty:

Dep: 7:10 am  
Arr: Ooty-1200 noon.

#### Ooty -Mettupalayam:

Dep: 3:00 pm.

#### Local trains:

Ooty to Coonoor-9:15 am,  
12:15 pm, 3:00 pm, 6: pm.

Coonoor to Ooty-7:45 am,  
10:30 pm, 1:30 pm, 4:30 pm.

## DISTRICT POLICE HELP-LINES

call 108 in any emergency

**Police:** Ooty - (0423) 100,  
Coonoor - (0423) 2221836,  
Kotagiri - (04266) 271100,  
Gudalur (04262) 261246.

Please add the area code if dialling from a mobile phone or from outside the circle



The Postal services in the Nilgiris is over 180 yrs old. Employing over 120 postmen and women, some of the department's post offices in the district, are virtual heritage sites.

### The Local quiz.

1. When was the Head Post Office, Ooty, opened?
2. When did the district get its first adhesive stamp? What was the cost of stamp for postage from Ooty to Madras?
3. What is the hobby of stamp collecting called?
4. Which country has the largest postal network?
5. How many post offices are there in the Nilgiris?
6. What extent of area does the Postal service in the Nilgiris, cover?
7. Which was the first stamp, based on the Nilgiris. In which year?

answers on p 13