

The Editor
The Hindu Daily Newspaper
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
India

17th November 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: We condemn the cartoon that appeared in The Hindu Daily on 12-11-2016:

The Hindu Daily Newspaper, edition dated 12-11-2016, carried a cartoon that portrayed the plight of people in India following the ban on Rs 500 and Rs 1000 denomination of currencies. The cartoon depicted a vulture representing black money evils, the Indian Prime Minister as *Dronacharya* and the Finance Minister as *Arjun*. (In the epic fable, the Mahabharata, *Dronacharya* and *Arjun* shared a special bond as teacher and pupil).



We place on record our condemnation for tarnishing the image of the vulture, a critically endangered species that is on the brink of extinction.

Across the world there have been desperate efforts on the part of governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and researchers to rescue vulture populations from the brink of extinction. Vultures play a very important role in ecosystems and biodiversity conservation by scavenging on dead animals thereby protecting humans from potentially lethal zoonotic diseases.

Cartoons/messages that portray vultures and other wild animals negatively erode public support for their conservation and thus seriously undermine the efforts towards biodiversity conservation.

It is very unfortunate that such a cartoon appeared on the birthday of India's great ornithologist, Dr. Salim Ali.

In *Ramayana* [the ancient Indian epic poem – Ed.] *Jatayu* (the Vulture) is represented as a well-wisher of Sita. *Jatayu* tries to rescue *Sita* from the clutches of *Ravana* after he kidnaps her and is taking her to Lanka, but *Jatayu* is mortally wounded while trying to save her.

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