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Monsoon Diaries - Newsletter, September, and October 2021

Rains and gloomy weather greeted us almost everyday the last couple of months here in our small hill station at Last Forest, but inside our hive, business continued at a testing pace! We had our first taste of a large orders both through our website as we had listed on CRED, our first order to the UK. Products were shelved in new outlets all over the country, visits to dealers and suppliers continued after an extremely long hiatus. Overall, the monsoon months were two of the busiest we have had over the years!

CRED listing

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Small social enterprises like us, have a lot of challenges stacked against us almost every day, especially with a small team and limited resources to get through, keeping sustainability in mind. The pandemic was such an example where the grit of the team was tested at every level as we got through the lockdown. Survival was the primary aim, and when that was assured through the turbulent months, building back, and going one step better was next in the itinerary. Continuous efforts to push into markets both domestic and international paid off in the last couple of months with

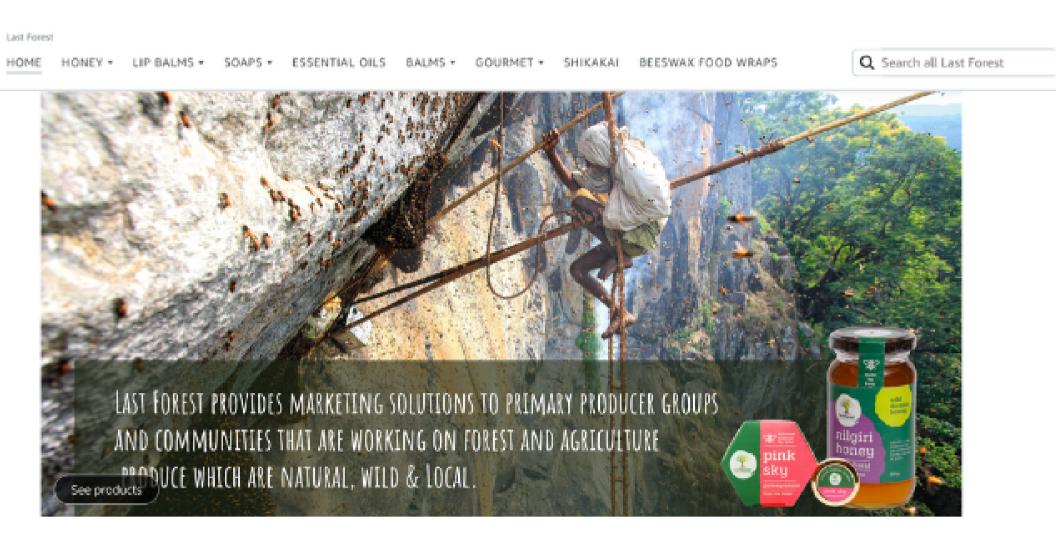
our first order leaving for the UK, and in a monumental episode like never – CRED has onboarded us and listed our products on the CRED app. On the 25th of September, we got live on the platform and we woke up to orders storming our devices. Although

on hold. Orders were being organized, responsibilities were split and most importantly – the snacks for the end of the day were being ordered! The packing, organizing, booking, and shipping of these orders commenced and continued for almost two

being a weekend, which are our days off – the whole team gathered at office, leaving most of our weekend plans

weeks, with work going on well into the night as we looked to fulfil all the orders we received. We now have shipped all the orders to various parts of the country! It wasn't all smooth sailing as there were frustrations of delay and breakages during transit which we have taken on in resolving with the customers.

Amazon Store Front



It is always a great feeling when something we have been pursuing for a long time comes to fruition! Setting up our Amazon brand store was one of these dreams that got completed now. Through this brand store, we look forward to going a step further on Amazon and reach all the corners of the country with our products. The store design took a while since Amazon has a set of rules and regulations that had to be adhered to. It is now live and has us excited for our space on Amazon.in. You can check out the brand-new store here.

Conferences and Podcasts



During the monsoon, some members of our team were part of virtual conferences, training sessions and hosted podcasts. Mathew had hosted a virtual session on bees, the collection of honey in The Nilgiris and the journey of Last Forest over the years in finding markets for the honey. This was hosted by the Asian Pollinators Initiative Alliance (APIA) where this topic was discussed over an interactive session. Mathew and Teny were part of the ALGOA summit where there were different groups of active participants who were involved in talks and interactive sessions where the situation and plans of the group going forward were discussed. In the sessions, Teny took the lead on the topic of communication in one of the sessions in the groups. ALGOA is a coming together of local governments committed to organic agriculture. A special mention to Mathew who was elected as the President of the Asian Organic movement (IFOAM Asia) at

the general assembly. The movement looks to engage in advocacy work and engaging with young people going forward in the organic world. Nandan and Madhu kick started a training session on Strengthening Communities Resilience by Supporting Conservation Community Enterprises Learning organized by WWF. This will be done through the course of two months with sessions every Thursday running into the first weeks of December. **Collaborations**



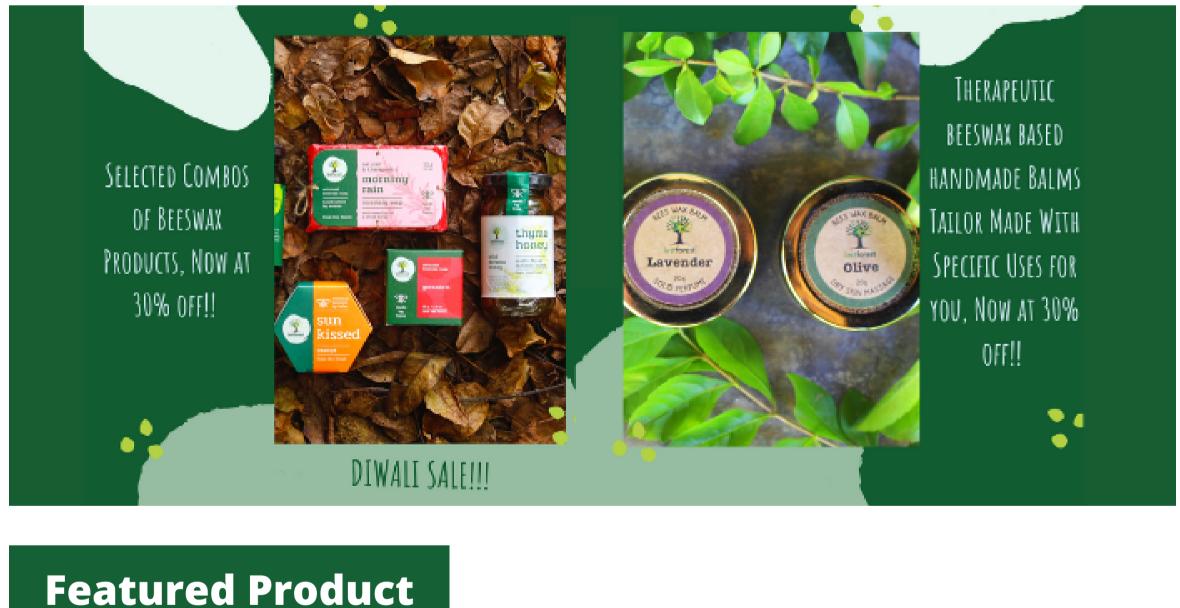
Black Baza coffee and Champaca books to put together a curated box of goodies featuring must read books from Champaca, all your coffee essentials from Black Baza coffee and beeswax lip balms and soaps from Last Forest. It is the perfect little curated box for any occasion! Get your box here! Our efforts with Mountain Partnership (a FAO initiative) are going strong as we got together to discuss in

developing developing a new portal that will include updated official documents (conditions / functions /

There were some super exciting collaborations in the course of the couple of months. We have teamed up with

responsibilities) and an effort to develop an MP products label. The MP products label is a narrative label which tells the story of each product, enabling consumers to make informed purchases by learning about products' origins and cultivation, processing and preservation methods, nutritional value and role in local cultures. **Honey Subscription**















can stock our products. Immanuel had visited Pondicherry, Madurai where he visited Yaadhum and Yellow Bags. The former is a group working with local farmers in Madurai who produce millets, personal care products and handicrafts. Yellow bags are a group dealing with upcycling of material to make bags. We will be collaborating with them in the coming days. Do keep a look out on our

website and stores! Special visits were made to Salem, where Antony, our top dealer since the beginning of Last Forest and was given a memento as a token of our appreciation for being a support system over the years. Kriti, who is our distributor in Pondicherry has been with us since inception as well and has been a rock, supporting us through thick and thin. Murali, proprietor of Modern stores in Ooty and Coonoor has also been a long-time dealer who runs the show in The Nilgiris. Special heartfelt mementos were given to them to celebrate the long running relationship as we look forward to









many more years of their support!

