

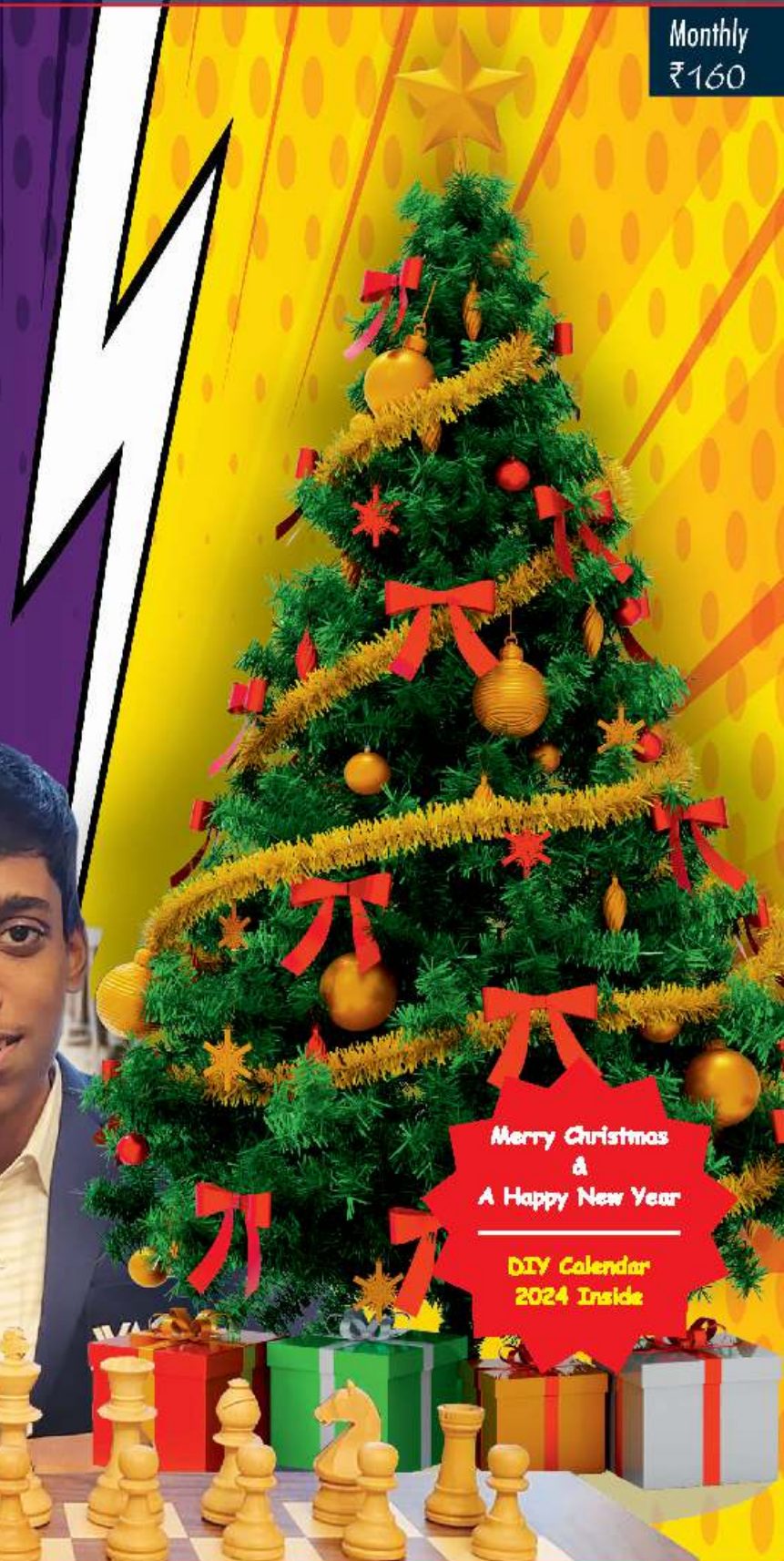
SCHOOL LIVE

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Siblings Rule The Chess World

R. Vaishali & R. Praggnanandhaa



Merry Christmas
&
A Happy New Year

DIY Calendar
2024 Inside



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ed-note inside



As 2023 draws to a close, we have a lot to thank the year for. While the previous year was wrought with apprehensions after two consecutive covid-years, 2023 provided the much needed relief. Normalcy returned in most places, and so did the harrowing traffic woes and pollution crisis in Delhi NCR. But then frenetic activity also shows all is well and working generally, and schools too are back in full throttle.

Chess continues to bring great laurels to the country. The brother-sister duo of R. Praggnanandhaa and R. Vaishali are the first siblings in our country to win the grandmaster norm in chess, and to qualify for the Candidates Tournament for the world crown in their respective segments. No mean feat this, as the cerebral sport, is as rigorous and challenging as javelin is to a certain Neeraj Chopra, without singing whose praise no celebration of sports will be complete.

The return of bollywood movies too have been a treat in the last few months, for movie lovers.

The meteorological department has added to the warmth, announcing that winter will not be very harsh this season, and it is likely to be relatively warmer in December-January.

As we close the year on this happy note, School LIVE wishes all its readers a befitting conclusion to 2023; and a glorious, happy beginning to a new year.

Hariharan Balagopal

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SCHOOL LIVE - THE ONLY COMPLETE EDUTAINMENT MONTHLY FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS



**Mr. Akhilesh Chandra Chaturvedi, Principal
Delhi Public School, Maruti Kunj**

definitely highlights one point: how easily can security be breached even at that level! We live in times where the need to be careful about security and safety can never be understated, and nothing is to be taken for granted.

One of the greatest take-aways from the year 2023 is that the year saw the implementation of the New Education Policy, albeit in varied degrees.

Notwithstanding the debates surrounding it, if adhered to in letter and spirit, it can only augur well for the student-community going forward. School LIVE continues to present various perspectives on NEP, and this issue also objectively presents some of its strengths.

2023 has been a year of hope; one of bouncing back. Rains and the Summer were kinder for most part, most festivals were celebrated with renewed gaiety and fervour. Celebrations saw greater heights as India conquered the moon. Winter has also not assumed an oppressive stance so far.

On the flipside, the peril brought on by Cyclone Michaung in Chennai and coastal Andhra Pradesh, is a dampener. Also, the disturbing intrusion in Parliament by trouble-makers without any convincing logic that borders on the silly,

Back to the brighter avenues, Neeraj Chopra continues to enthrall with his Javelin, cricket continues to entertain like no other, and Indian chess grandmasters hog the limelight event after event.

Winter brings a lot of cheer for most, particularly around the turn of the calendar. It also brings several cold-related health issues, which can be tackled easily with a bit of awareness. School Live presents an interesting piece on Ayurveda remedies to combat winter woes, and as it comes from a renowned Ayurveda expert, it will be wise to lend an ear.

School Live is known to steer clear of mundane topics to present knowledge-based, entertaining content. The December issue also meets the expectations admirably. The magazine is a cheerful companion in the warm confines and comfort of your homes, particularly when you choose a relaxing read!

Akhilesh Chaturvedi

Changing Focus of Education

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims at improving the quality of education at all levels to enable students to face the challenges of the 21st century.

THE academic year 2023–24 will mark a watershed moment in Indian education with the implementation of the NEP. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is an upgrade of the 1986 policy that was first modified in 1992. The social milieu has seen dramatic changes since that time. Today's youngsters face a different set of challenges than earlier generations.

The NEP promises to bring about wide-ranging changes — from how teachers teach to how the students grasp what is taught to them and how academic institutions imparting primary and higher education will function.

The policy is based on five principles — access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability.

It stresses on the development of foundational, problem-solving and critical thinking skills amongst students. At the same time, the NEP also wants the young to work on their 'soft skills' such as empathy, emotional and social quotient and awareness of culture.

There is also equal if not more focus on the universalisation of pre-primary education and achievement of foundational literacy/numeracy in primary schools by 2025. The policy proposes to bring together more schools to form a complex, thus making them easier to administer.

The Highlights of the NEP:

- ◆ Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit (MEME) option
- ◆ 5+3+3+4 structure
- ◆ Use of the mother tongue
- ◆ Common entrance exams for Universities
- ◆ Multi-disciplinary learning

As per the NEP, the prevalent 10+2 school curriculum format would be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 structure. The first five years indicate the formative years which a child will spend in preschool and primary school. The next three years will be preparation phase which is followed by middle school. The last four years will be secondary education.

The new policy supports the inclusion of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The government hopes that this would encourage parents to participate more actively in their child's learning. However, this does not mean that any language will be imposed on those who don't use it as their mother tongue.

With the introduction of Central University Entrance Test (CUET) for undergraduate and post-graduate courses, the students will be saved the hardship of appearing for multiple tests. The students can also take advantage of inter-disciplinary education. They can choose varied courses — mathematics,

technology, science, languages, liberal arts, humanities, social sciences and so on.

However, questions have been raised about how these objectives, especially MEME, will be implemented. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, in their report titled 'Implementation of the National Education Policy, 2020 in Higher Education', has asked the Union government to engage with all the stakeholders for the smooth implementation of the policy.

The report pointed out that the institutes of higher education would find it tough to predict how many students would join a course mid-way, or how many would drop out. The panel also drew attention to the geographical disparities in the distribution of academic institutions.

It has asked the government to formulate comprehensive guidelines besides a well-defined framework for MEME options, including specific eligibility criteria and credit transfer mechanisms.

The policy has also faced a roadblock from the Opposition-ruled states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, who are yet to implement it. Education is a subject under the Concurrent list (there are three lists — Union, State and Concurrent). The Constitution allows the states to choose whether or not to adopt the policies or curriculum designed by the Union government, either fully or partially. Both Parliament and the state assemblies have the power to legislate over items in the Concurrent list, which includes education. The states also have the right to design their own curriculum and print their own textbooks.

— Ambika Shailgram





Merry Christmas

On the 25th of December the bells in churches across the world toll for humanity. Every resounding peal that emanates from these hollow, cup shaped metal bodies, epitomises the values of love, kindness and compassion.

Christmas, celebrated across the length and breadth of the world to mark the occasion of the birth of Jesus Christ on this day, is a festival of all that is good and beautiful. A day of redemption, of making amends for the mistakes one may have committed. A day of hope, of joy and a time of reaffirmation of the belief in the goodness of man.

Christmas, is not only a day to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ but also an occasion to remember the life of the son of God as the Christians believe him to be and who is said to have sacrificed his life for the well-being of mankind.

A religious holiday and a cultural phenomenon, Christmas is one festival that is generally celebrated by all and sundry, irrespective of the religion or background they come from.

It is a day of exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, getting together with family and friends, going to church and then of course waiting for Santa Claus to come.

While on Santa Claus, it is widely perceived that the origin of the legendary figure can be traced back to a monk named St. Nicholas who was born around A.D. 280. It was in the 1800s that Clement Clarke Moore wrote a poem on St. Nicholas,

reportedly a kind and philanthropic person, depicting him as a jolly man who flies from home to home delivering toys on a sleigh driven by reindeer. Then it was the political cartoonist Thomas Nast who in 1881 immortalised the image of Santa Claus as a jolly, old man in red, with a white beard and a sack of toys flung over his shoulder.

And children go to sleep the night before Christmas asking Santa to bring them a toy of their choice and Lo and behold! the ecstatic kids find a toy beneath their pillows when they wake up! Though it is suspected that the loving parents may just have had a role to play in this.

Another factor, among many others that comes to mind and is difficult to put into words, is the aura, the ambience that this festival brings to all people, irrespective of the denomination they belong to. It is the French phrase 'joie de vivre', pronounced as 'zwah da veever', meaning 'exuberant enjoyment of life' that catches the true spirit of this celebration as nothing else can.

Christmas is a day of ecstatic joy and brings with it the excitement and hope of a great new year, and is celebrated with gay abandon.

The only way it is meant to be. ■

Christmas and the New Year is that time of the calendar which brings along with it an irrepressible feeling of joy and an absolute and mystifying sense of optimism, irrespective of the experiences of the past, that defines this period. And the flavour of the season, is gifts. The giving and receiving of presents, among friends, family and sundry relatives who crawl out of the wood work on the occasion.



And it is in these times the idiom 'Don't look a gift a horse in the mouth', on the face of it an incomprehensible one, can be an interesting subject to ponder upon.

This idiom goes way back in time and its origin unfortunately is not very clear. Suffice it to say that the usage of the term has been in vogue in the English language since the 1500's.

'Don't look a gift a horse in the mouth' is an expression that can be roughly read as 'don't find fault with something that has been received as a gift or a favour' as it would be crude in the first place, and border on the uncivilized in the second.'

There is this anecdote about a gifted little child, just about knee high to a grasshopper and nothing more than three and a half years old, give or take a month or two. And then there was this pompous, old but not so old aunt, weighed down as much by the impartial consumption of anything coming close to edible on the dining table, as much as by the opinions she carried on everything under the sun. And mind you, took great care to

see that she made no secret of it. On a particular occasion, events so conspired wherein this garrulous or talkative, old but not so old lady, made a big show of presenting our very own little man with a gift of relatively big proportions which he bravely held on to without losing his balance, even being able to pant a breathless 'thank you!'.

Things would have been fine if it had been left at this.

But then our old but not so old lady, who also thought she knew a bit or two about psychology, insisted that the young man open up the slightly out-sized package, looking around grandly and saying that emotions should never be suppressed. Well, Sigmund Freud, take a back seat!

Losing no time, the little kid set about unwrapping the gift, excitement writ large upon his face. The tonnes of glittering paper and the miles of cello tape having been got through, he opened up the big package, ofcourse not without a bit of help from a little cousin of his. The gift lay bared open and...

The little man, being brought up by his parents to be an officer and a gentleman, did admirably well to hold himself in, given the glistening tears waiting to fall and the array of emotions that flitted across his face, but then just could not stop the words from escaping his mouth, 'disappointing!' And off he walked, his shoulders squared and his nose up in the air.

The boy's father frowned and the mother rolled her eyes. The old but not so old lady laughed loudly, but would have really liked to tweak the little 'scoundrel's' ears and add a knock on his head with her knuckles, for good measure!

And if truth be told, this is not confined to children alone but also happens to adults too, who by dint of being a lot older and therefore that bit more 'mature', learn to take things in their stride and carry on.

Notwithstanding the slightly satirical take, a gift is a gift is a gift. And nothing more than that. What is more important is not the gift perse, but the thought behind the gesture. The love that it is presented with. What is equally important ofcourse, is the need to be civil and not hurt the feelings of others, especially those who have gone to the trouble of presenting one.

DON'T LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH

SCHOOL LIVE Knowledge Hub!



1. How many times have Australia been crowned champions of the ICC World Cup?

- a. Six
- b. Four
- c. Five
- d. Two

2. Site the incident that led to the beginning of the first of the World War's.

- a. Rivalry between Germany and England
- b. Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand
- c. Misinformation by Nazi propaganda machine
- d. Invasion of Poland

3. If Table : wood then Salt : what ?

- a. Sodium chloride
- b. Hydrochloride
- c. Aclde Salt
- d. Potassium Alum

4. Who is the author of the classic 19th century novel 'Treasure Island'?

- a. Max Brand
- b. Arundhati Roy
- c. Robert Louis Stevenson
- d. Charles Dickens

5. Who was elected the first Secretary General of the United Nations?

- a. Dag Hammarskjöld
- b. U Thant
- c. Kofi Annan
- d. Trygve Lie (Traig-we-ly)

6. Who is considered the architect of the Milk Revolution in India?

- a. Verghese Kurian
- b. Subramaniam Swamy
- c. Charan Singh
- d. Lal Bahadur Shastri

7. Which player in cricket history was controversially timed-out for the first time?

- a. Sachin Tendulkar
- b. Angelo Mathews
- c. Dillip Vengsarkar
- d. Ben Stokes

8. Which country was it that first invented the lethal gun powder?

- a. Korea
- b. Japan
- c. China
- d. France

9. In which year did the famous Dandi Salt March that brought the British Empire to its knees, take place ?

- a. 1930
- b. 1942
- c. 1928
- d. 1931

10. Which country will play host to the XXX111 Summer Olympic Games?

- a. France
- b. China
- c. United States
- d. England

11. Chat GPT, seen as a revolution in itself, is basically...

- a. Site for chatting
- b. Accounts software
- c. A Robot
- d. An Artificial Intelligence tool

12. The name America is named after...

- a. Amigo Fernandez
- b. Amerigo Louie
- c. Amerigo Vespucci
- d. Great Red Indian Chief

Answers : 1. Six, 2. Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, 3. Sodium chloride, 4. Robert Louis Stevenson, 5. Trygve Lie, 6. Verghese Kurian, 7. Angelo Mathews, 8. China, 9. 1930, 10. France, 11. An Artificial Intelligence tool, 12. Amerigo Vespucci

THE TIMES OF

As time winds its way, unrelenting, moving to the beats of a drummer entirely its own and the curtains begin to fall on the year of 2023 calling it to a close, it would only be in the fitness of things to recall some of the events or happenings that may have moved and shaken the world in general and India in particular.

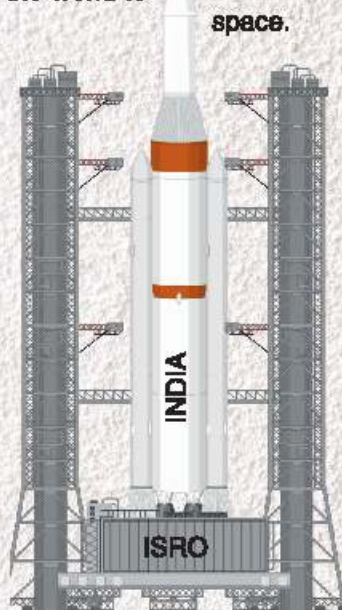
And again some that may just have forced the world to pause and ponder.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge in the year of 2023. Waters that were quiet at times and at others, turbulent. Still other instances when the seemingly placid waters were marked by strong undercurrents.

2023 was the year when the moon became the new frontier and India threw its hat in the ring. Announcing its arrival in no uncertain terms with the successful landing of Chandrayaan – 3 on the South Pole of the moon, a first by any country, on the 23rd of August, and the conduct of various experiments along with deploying a lunar rover, Pragyaan, India has made its presence felt in space. The objective of this mission was to learn more about the moon. With this, India joined the elite club containing just the United States of America, Russia and China, countries that have had the distinction of landing on the moon. The Earth's closest heavenly body and natural satellite, the moon, is an area of great interest to the world because of the likelihood of the availability of minerals on it and the possibility of the discovery of water, a commodity that is already becoming

scarce on this planet.

Other than a joint flight with Japan, India plans to send a manned space craft to the moon in the near future. ISRO is the major player in the space industry in India, but the fact that today there are nearly 140 registered space start-up's in the country, tells the story. India has, without an iota of doubt, come of age in the realm of space.



This year also saw the passing of the momentous women's reservation bill by a special session of the Indian parliament. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam or the Women's reservation bill, seeks to reserve 33 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha and the state legislatures for women. A segment of the population that makes up for nearly fifty percent of the population, women, have a woeful representation of approximately fifteen percent in the Lok Sabha and eight percent in the state legislatures and to say that it is a bit of an anomaly in a democracy would be an

understatement, to say the least. This bill is, among other things, a much required boost for women empowerment.

The Russia – Ukraine war, that can trace its origin way back to 2014, continues to dog the geo-political stage as the war drags itself to the end of the second year of a crippling conflict, that at this point in time seems to be going nowhere. A war that has seen the world being divided into camps, for and against, and the United

2023

YEAR BYGONE

Nations unfortunately confined to the role of that of a helpless bystander. With prices of grains and fuel going up, affecting the economies of the world, especially that of the poor, developing countries. Russia has been accused of war crimes right from the beginning of war as there have been reports of deliberate attacks upon civilian population. This conflict has, over time tied itself into knots, that the International community is now finding difficult to untangle.

On the Infrastructure front, renewable energy is one segment that has taken off and reached soaring heights that has made the country hopeful of leaving behind for the children a clean source of energy that will, among other things, provide them with air that is clean to breathe. India has the 4th largest installed capacity of renewable energy in the world. The country has achieved its national determined contribution (NDC) target of forty percent of electricity capacity installation before the end of the planned schedule. The period 2014 – 2023 saw a solar capacity of 64.3GW being added, a twenty three fold increase from 2014. Equally encouraging is the data that says that foreign direct investment (FDI) in renewable energy saw an increase of nearly 3.7 times, putting the country at a leading position in renewable energy development.

On the economy side, India finds itself to be the fifth largest economy in the world with a GDP of 3.72 trillion but the economic pundits are of the opinion that the country has quite a bit of catching up to do before it reaches the third spot in GDP rankings. As India continues to remain the bright spot in the global economy with the highest GDP growth rate in the world.

The tenth month of the year saw the horrendous attack by the organization Hamas from the Gaza strip, on Israeli

territory, killing more than a thousand people, mostly civilians – women and children. This led to a massive retaliation by the Israelis against Hamas and Palestinians on the Gaza strip, some political commentators seeing this as disproportionate and a bit overboard. The Israelis have been merciless, making short work of the Palestinians but ignoring Geneva Convention protocols, begging the question as to what it is that differentiates Israel from the Hamas terrorists. This again has seen the

world taking sides leading to friction in international relations and the United Nations left to make supremely ineffectual statements calling for peace.

What may have been a bit disappointing, especially for the liberals and the LGBTQ+ community in 2023, was the Supreme Court's refusal to legalise same sex marriage, saying that making of laws fell under the exclusive domain of parliament and that the judges could only interpret them. The court then went on to accept the government's proposal to set up a committee to consider giving queer couples the rights and privileges that are available to heterosexual couples. It had been the contention of the petitioners that their not being allowed to legally marry was a violation of their constitutional rights and made them second class citizens. They had pinned their hopes on the Supreme Court to deliver them from their predicament, but it was not meant to be. They now bank their hopes on a review petition that has been filed in the Supreme Court of India. And pray that the winds of justice blow their way this time.

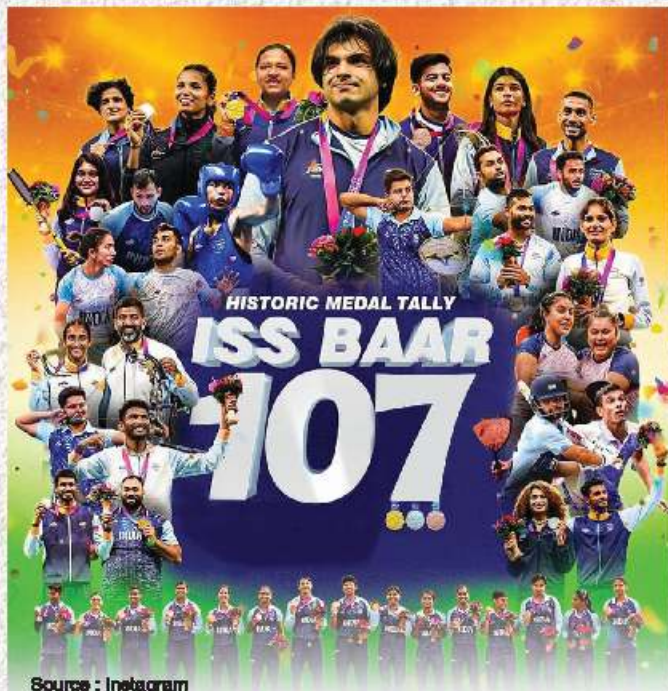
Then the event that may seem to some to be a wee bit pompous and that bit more anachronistic or out dated was the crowning of King Charles as the king of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms in May. The coronation of King Charles 111, the fortieth in the line, saw both celebrations as well as protests. The protests were by certain groups who are against monarchy and have called for 'reparatory justice'. Meaning rectifying and



correcting injustices that have become a part of the system and were perpetrated and established by past injustices and crimes against humanity by the royal lineage. Long live the king ?

India in 2023 finds itself a Chess superpower with the top ten active Indian Chess players having an average rating of 2701, the second highest in the world, behind the United States. With the growing number of International Grandmasters, the country has emerged as a Chess powerhouse. Praised by Viswanathan Anand as the golden generation in Indian Chess, Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh, Vidit Santosh Gujrathi, Arjun Erigaisi and Vaishali Rameshbabu lead the pack of breath-taking talent that is more than ready to take over the Chess world.

India's very impressive haul of 107 medals, a record at that, at the Huangzhou Asian games of 2023 was a performance that warmed the hearts of sports



enthusiasts. It is definitely a moment to be proud of and does augur well for the country's sports.

However the icing on the cake was the 13th edition of the ICC men's Cricket World Cup held in India between October and November of 2023. A virtual festival in the land of festivals. It started on the 5th of October and concluded on the 19th of November. It took place in ten different stadiums in ten cities across the country, with the



finals being held at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. A tournament that saw India reach the finals but the cup slip away into Australian hands as the latter dished out a clinical display to outplay India in all departments of the game. One that saw records tumble and new ones set up. Virat Kohli becoming the leading run getter and Mohammad Shami heading the table on the bowling side. Where India did everything right, but win the cup.

The joys, the tears and the disappointments notwithstanding, as the year 2023 draws to a close and as one gets ready to welcome the New Year, it is only natural that maybe a sense of relief that one generally has at the end of a rather long, eventful journey is accompanied by a surge of hope that one is flooded with.

And if the past that belongs to the year of 2023 is a portent or an indication as to what lies ahead in the year 2024, we should positively be on a roller coaster ride of sorts. It does not really need the services of the much maligned calling of an astrologer and a look at the stars or the reading of tea leaves or even gazing at the crystal ball to predict the likely happenings of 2024.

The year 2024 is going to be just great !

MIND TICKLE

Learning Through Puzzles

A Quick Think

1. People who live in France are called French. People who live in Russia are called Russians. People who live in China are called Chinese. What are people who live on Mars called?
2. Sonam pushes her car to a hotel and immediately goes bankrupt. How come?



3. What goes up and down the stairs without moving?
4. The chemical elements of carbon, holmium, cobalt, lanthanum and tellurium together make up one of our most favourite things. What is it?
5. Johnny says he was seven on his last birthday and will be nine on his next. How is that possible?

B Letter Exchange

Each letter from A to H represents a number from 1 to 9. No number is used twice. If $C=3$, find the value of H.



$$\begin{aligned} A - C &= D \\ G \times E &= F \\ B + G &= H \\ D/C &= E \end{aligned}$$

C Fruity Problem

Soman is worried. He is shown three sealed boxes labelled 'Apples', 'Mangoes' and 'Apples and Mangoes'. The boxes are labelled wrongly and he has to label them correctly. The catch is he is allowed to open only one of the boxes to check the contents. Can you help him?



Crossword



Across:

1. Bribe (8)
5. Apartment (4)
8. Sang in Swiss mountain-dweller style (8)
9. Christian ____: fashion icon (4)
10. Narendra ____: Indian PM (4)
11. Kinship group (4)
13. Identical copy (5)
15. Titan (5)
19. Lay with stone (4)
20. Lot of bother (4)
22. Damp and stringy, as of hair (4)
23. Caught unprepared (3, 5)
24. Warty amphibian (4)
25. US 'bluegrass' state (8)

Down:

1. Pass connecting Pakistan & Afghanistan (6)
2. Surrender territory (4)
3. Luggage porter in hotel (7)
4. Joking (7)
6. Superman's girlfriend (4, 4)
7. Capital of Albania (6)
12. Ljubljana is its capital (8)
14. Fairly-tangled curl of hair (7)
16. Intuitive understanding (7)
17. Very small computer application (6)
18. Emergency radio signal (6)
21. Softest known mineral (4)

Answers:
Across: 1. Kickback 5. Flat 8. Yodelled 9. Dior 10. Modi 11. Clan 13. Clone 15. Giant 19. Fave 20. Fuss 22. Lank 23. Off guard 24. Toad 25. Kentucky
Down: 1. Khyber 2. Cede 3. Bellman 4. Kidding 6. Lois Lane 7. Tirana 12. Slovenia 14. Efflock 16. Insight 17. Applet 18. Mayday 21. Talc

- Answers:
A. 1. There are no people on Mars
2. Sonam is playing the board game, Monopoly. The car is her counter, which lands on a square where her opponent has a hotel
3. A carpet
4. Chocolate - the chemical symbols of the elements carbon (C), holmium (Ho), cobalt (Co), lanthanum (La) and tellurium (Te) together make 'C Ho Co La Te';
5. It is his eighth birthday today.
B. H = 5, A = 9, B = 1, C = 3, D = 6, E = 2, F = 8, G = 4
C. Soman should open the box labelled 'Apples & Mangoes' and take out a fruit. If it's a mango, he should relabel the box as 'Mangoes' and then interchange the labels on the other two boxes.

A MISTAKE IS ONLY A STEPPING STONE TO SUCCESS

It can be no one's case that a mistake or the making of one is salutary and calls for a celebration or for what might amount to a misplaced, enthusiastic applause. But it is sought to be reasoned in this article that an error committed is a lesson learned. And it is after all only human to err. That a lapse, if one might call it that, should be just that. Nothing more. Nothing less. And reading anything more into it can be a futile or useless exercise.

The essence of this article is the idea that making mistakes is perfectly alright. It is only when one makes mistakes that one learns, and that one should have the courage to make them.

That it's absolutely fine to make them.

Good students, great leaders and great nations have so learned and benefitted from this line of thought.

He or she is a good student, who is not afraid of taking the plunge, testing uncharted waters, running up bloomers, falling down, getting dirty and then getting up again to find answers to questions that would have otherwise escaped him or her. Some call it the spirit of enquiry but it truly is the simple desire to find the truth, driven by the courage to make mistakes in the process.

For there is no other way one can learn. Other than by making mistakes and having the guts to do so in the first place.

Did not an Edison fall a thousand times, making a thousand mistakes, before he invented the electric bulb?

Did not a contaminant in an experiment, a mistake by the way, lead to the discovery of penicillin by Dr. Alexander Fleming?

Did not the Mahatma in his aversion to everything British even go to the extent of thinking of prohibiting the use of the English language in an independent India? And did not the same Mahatma, who on Rabindranath Tagore's advice to the contrary, change his mind and accept English as the Lingua Franca, thereby correcting what may have been a colossal blunder? Now look at the good

it has done to India!

Did America not learn about economics during and after the great depression to become the leading economic powerhouse of the world?

These are examples, and only a handful of them, that go towards bolstering or supporting the idea that it is a given and in the natural scheme of things to make mistakes, that it is plain commonsensical to do so and then to learn from them.

By no stretch of imagination is this an attempt to condone or encourage imbecility or for that matter addled thinking, but is an ardent appeal to young minds to shed inhibitions, find the courage to ask questions, make mistakes and to then profit from them.

In other words, a student must be brave enough to make mistakes, big enough to admit to them, strong enough to correct them and intelligent enough to benefit from them.

MAKING MISTAKES

AND LEARNING

FROM THEM

MAKES YOU STRONGER

PRE-BOARD EXAMINATIONS- A PRELUDE TO SUCCESS



"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today and determination is the fuel that propels us on this journey."

In the realm of academic pursuits, the Pre-board Examination stands as a pivotal milestone, a crucial checkpoint that students must navigate on their journey towards excellence. As we delve into the significance of this rigorous assessment, it becomes evident that these valuations are more than just a conventional inspection; it is a crucible that refines and moulds students, preparing them for the challenges that lie beyond the classroom.

These examinations serve as a litmus test for students, gauging their comprehension, analytical skills and overall preparedness for the impending boards. This precursor to the final showdown provides a unique opportunity for students to self-reflect, identify their strengths and acknowledge areas that demand fortification. The results, while indicative of academic proficiency, extend beyond mere grades, acting as a compass, guiding students toward academic self-discovery.

This simulated academic stage provides students with an opportunity to acclimatize themselves to the examination environment, fine-tune their strategies and confront their academic prowess under simulated pressure. Students, through these assessments, refine their exam-taking

skills, familiarising themselves with the structure, time constraints and the art of articulating their knowledge effectively. This simulated experience not only instills confidence but also equips students with a strategic approach to tackling challenges.

Beyond the realm of individual growth, these assessments play a crucial role in shaping the collective academic culture. It serves as a crucible for healthy competition, igniting a spirit of diligence and determination among students. The shared experience of preparing for and facing the Pre-board fosters a sense of camaraderie among classmates, transforming the journey of education into a collaborative pursuit.

Further, the results serve as a valuable feedback mechanism for educators. Teachers, armed with insights gleaned from student performance, tailor their teaching methodologies to address specific areas of concern. This cyclical process of evaluation and adaptation ensures that the academic ecosystem remains dynamic, responding to the ever-evolving needs of students.

In the grand tapestry of academic life, these assessments weave threads of discipline and resilience into the fabric



head-on. Winston Churchill had aptly said that success was not final and failure was not fatal and that it was the courage to continue that counted. These assessments become a canvas where students paint their narratives of triumph over adversity, building a foundation for future successes.

As we reflect on the role of these analyses, it becomes clear that its significance

of a student's character. The challenges presented in this examination demand a commitment to consistent, disciplined study habits — an invaluable trait that transcends the confines of academia. The fortitude developed during the preparation for this precursor becomes an enduring asset, a beacon guiding students through the turbulent waters of academic pursuits.

Furthermore, these examinations cultivate a spirit of discipline and time management among students. As they navigate through the demanding syllabus, students are obligated to strike a delicate balance between various subjects, allocating time judiciously. This experience not only prepares them for the rigours of the finals but also equips them with life skills that extend beyond the confines of the classroom. The ability to manage time effectively, a skill honed through the disciplined preparation, is an invaluable asset that students carry into their future endeavours.

In the broader context of academic resilience, these investigations serve as a crucible where students forge their mettle and develop the tenacity to face challenges

extends beyond the immediate academic context. It is a rite of passage that prepares students for the rigours of life, imparting skills that are indispensable in the pursuit of success. This scrutiny, with its challenges and triumphs, instills in students the courage to persevere, the resilience to weather storms and the tenacity to emerge victorious.

To wrap up, the Pre-board examinations stand as a beacon of academic enlightenment, illuminating the path to excellence for students. Beyond the conventional assessment of knowledge, they encapsulate the spirit of preparation, resilience, and discipline, transforming students into well-rounded individuals ready to conquer the challenges that lie ahead. As we navigate through the educational landscape, let us recognize the profound significance of these assessments as a prelude that resonates with the melody of success.



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English Educator
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The Science Of Winter Care



Ayurveda, helps you to understand your own constitution or Prakriti, which comprises of three energies or doshas - Vata the energy for movement, Pitta the energy for digestion, and Kapha the energy for stability. These energies are created from a combination of 5 elements-Panchabhutas like Earth, Fire, Water, Air, and Ether. These elements are contained in different sets of quantities and composition in both our body and mind.

The weather is cold in winter and chilly, with a lot of moisture. Kapha dosha is predominant in winter so generally it is believed to be a Kapha season. When the Kapha dosha is balanced, it provides strength and stability to the body & mind. However in some cases, winter also has a cold and dry spell which increases Vata dosha. So Vata dosha also has to be kept in balance.

Here are some simple health tips for winter to keep one going through the season:

- **Should Rest** - Winter is characterized by long nights and smaller days so you should give your body and mind ample amount of rest. Going to bed early and rising early can help you to create the perfect balance.
- **Reduce stress** - Winter helps you slow down which helps you to reduce stress to a great extent. Having a planned and organized routine for your daily activities can help you avoid clutter and confusion and reduce anxiety.
- **Exercise** - Since the winter season induces lethargy, you need to provide stimulation to your body. Exercise is a great way to achieve this. Depending on your energy levels and the time of the day, you can choose your exercise regimes.
- **Practice yoga** - Yoga is a great way to calm your mind and stay healthy. There are different movements that help produce heat in the body for the cold season and are ideal for balancing Vata and Kapha.
- **Choose hot, warm beverages and cooked food** - In winter, it's best to avoid chilled beverages and cold food since it may have an adverse effect on the immune system. Opting for cooked food and warm beverages can help balance the Vata and Kapha perfectly for the season.
- **Choose sweet, sour and salty foods** - In Ayurveda, there are various tastes that match the rhythms of each season. In winter, it's best to choose sweet, sour, and salty foods instead of bitter, astringent, and pungent tastes.
- **Use Ayurvedic herbal medicines** - If you discover symptoms such as cold, cough, and fever, you can go for Ayurvedic medicines for increasing body heat that will create a healthy balance in the season.
- **Foods that are natural Ayurvedic immunity boosters**. Like food that is fresh, organic, easily digestible, and wholesome. Some of the best foods to eat in winter are fresh milk, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and ghee (clarified butter).
- **Intake of foods that are easily digestible** are ideal for increasing your immunity in winters. It's also important to avoid processed food, foods produced with chemicals and preservatives, or even those which are canned, frozen, and packaged. This is because they disrupt the functioning of the digestive system and the immune system.
- **Any cold or raw food items must be avoided** in this season. Cold juices, smoothies, coffee and raw foods can make your

body stagnant. Instead, drink warm soup, herbal tea and spiced turmeric milk.

More tips for winter care

- Avoid exposure to the winter winds or cool breeze.
- Stay warm and moist with hot and cooked, soupy foods like Moong dal khichri
- Increase intake of heavy foods like healthy oils, such as ghee, sesame oil, nuts, etc.
- Should do regular oil massages before bath to keep the skin moist with Almond oil, sesame oil, coconut oil, almond oil, Shatavari oil, Dhanwantharam Thallam, etc.
- Avoid or reduce intake of stimulants such as alcohol, caffeine-containing beverages and staying awake late into the night.
- Do Yoga or deep breathing exercises regularly everyday.
- Regularly do outdoor exercise, if possible, in Sunlight everyday.
- Use vata-balancing spices like ginger, cinnamon, cloves & fenugreek to flavour tea and foods.
- In winter weather is cold and dry, thus

warming winter meal. Jaggery is the perfect, healthy & natural replacement for sugar in our daily diet. More importantly it has a very positive effect on our digestive system.

Ideal Drinks in winter

- Kahwa Tea / Kashmiri Tea. Kashmiri Kahwa. Hail the Kahwa!
- Masala chai. All Indians are acquainted with the 'nighties' masala chai!
- Nun / Noon Chai. Another beverage exclusive to the Kashmiri cuisine is the Noon chai.
- Hot Chocolate
- Badam Milk
- Kanji
- Muffed Wine
- Hot Toddy
- Warm Water

Intake of foods that are easily digestible are ideal for increasing your immunity in winters. It's also important to avoid processed food, foods produced with chemicals and preservatives, or even those which are canned, frozen, and packaged. This is because they disrupt the functioning of the digestive system and the immune system. Home-cooked foods are some of the best winter season foods, provided they aren't deep fried and are cooked with light oils such as ghee or olive oil. You should also avoid cold food and chilled beverages

and instead eat warm food at room temperature. This will help keep your digestive fire burning and keep your body warm.

Some of the other winter healthy foods are heat-producing vegetables such as radish, onions, carrots, and spinach and hot spices such as garlic, ginger, black pepper, and chilli pepper.

You can add a range of cooked grains such as oatmeal, barley, tapioca, and corn meal to your diet in winter. Legumes are a good option



hot, nourishing cooked foods and warm drinks such as soups, stews, hot milk with honey and turmeric, along with warm environment (a cozy fire, layered clothing), and other interventions that are warm, along with sesame oil massages, etc, are recommended.

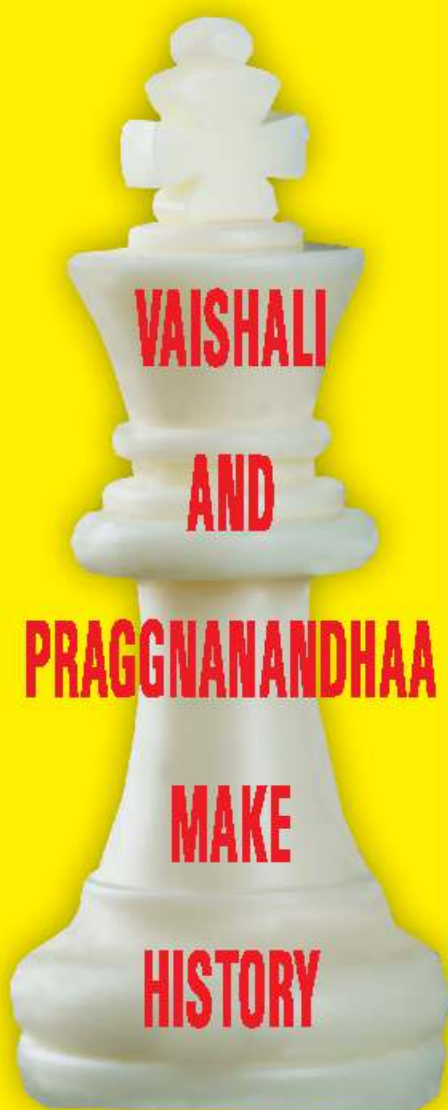
Foods having Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent) as major tastes are to be avoided. Laghu (light) and Shita (cold) foods are not advised in winter. In this season, you can take meats and soups added with salt, sour and sweet. A dish added with meat soup along with ghee is a good regimen to be followed. Add some spices like cinnamon, ginger and turmeric for a wonderfully

since they are good for Kapha and should be consumed with ghee so as to reduce the effects of Vata.

Eggs and meats such as chicken, venison, and turkey are also good food to eat in winter.

Although it's best to avoid dairy in winter, a glass of hot milk with turmeric and nutmeg can induce good sleep. It will also help to stick to water or juice-based fasting for a refreshing winter Ayurvedic cleanse, especially if you suffer from Kapha imbalances such as cough and cold.

Ayurveda has its roots in nature and there can be no better way to combat the chill of winter.



The last issue of the School LIVE magazine, had tracked R. Vaishali's progress towards the Grandmaster title.

A feat accomplished as anticipated, Vaishali also becomes only the third woman from India to claim the Grandmaster title.

POSITIONAL ADVANTAGE

Twenty two year Rameshbabu Vaishali is the elder of two children to Chennai based Rameshbabu, a Bank manager and his homemaker wife Nagalakshmi. When initiating his two children into Chess, little did Rameshbabu imagine that a day would come when both his children will vie for the World Crown in their respective categories, in the same year. The love for the game and passion has catapulted the family to global fame.

THE SIBLING GRANDMASTERS



The younger sibling, a prodigy and a grandmaster at the age of 12, R. Praggnanandhaa was the second youngest at the time to claim the Grandmaster title. In 2023 he became a contender for the world title, and qualified for the Candidates tournament to be held in Canada in 2024. Laurels for the family continued, as his elder sister followed suit, and Vaishali too entered the Candidates tournament soon after, to vie for the Women's World crown. In the history of

chess, Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali are the first-ever brother-sister duo to make the Candidates. Vaishali won the FIDE Women's Grand Swiss 2023 held in the Isle of Man without losing a single game and scoring 8.5/11, thereby qualifying to compete in the Women's Candidates Tournament.

Recently In December, at the IV El Llobregat Open Tournament 2023 in Spain, Vaishali crossed the 2500 Elo rating threshold, earning her Grandmaster title to make her the third

woman and 84th grandmaster in India. With this, Vaishali and her younger brother Praggnanandhaa become the world's first sister-brother grandmaster duo. Vaishali had achieved the title of WGM, Women's Grand Master five years earlier and with the success at Spain, she has also earned title of Grand Master, level with men on equal footing.

On his sister's success, an elated Praggnanandhaa said, "Happy to see that she's finally getting where she belongs." "I felt that she has GM strength for a long time already. Happy to see that she's finally getting where she belongs."



*Gopakumar Sudhakaran
International Arbiter, FIDE Lecturer,
Councillor FIDE Fair Play Commission and
Rating Officer of All India Chess Federation*

“Proud and historic moment for Indian Chess as Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali become the first ever brother-sister duo in the history of chess to become Grandmasters.”

Gopakumar Sudhakaran

Having two world champions in the making at home in the same sport, particularly Chess, is a superlative positional advantage. Chess is sport that demands detailed analyses of games on record played before by great players of the game. An ever evolving game, it is said that no two official games have ever been exactly the same, though chess is played in over hundred and eighty countries, and for many centuries. Patience, perseverance, concentration and endless training and a good memory help the cause. Two is most ideal company in Chess, and when two grandmasters who have been sharing the same space since childhood come together to train and practice, history waits to be written, time and again.

“The Success story of young Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali is an inspiration for all ; particularly school students.”

Hartheran Belagopal

Former University Player and International Tournaments



**Hartheran Belagopal With Chairman - FIDE
Advisory Board, Mr. Bharat Singh Chauhan**



Source : AICF & Instagram



Source : AICF & Instagram

NEWS

THUS SPAKE THE HEADLINES

Social media can have a deleterious effect on society and countries: Chief Justice

The Chief Justice of India opined that social media that is run by unaccountable entities can be a serious challenge to the traditional ways of understanding free speech in a democracy.

South Gaza sees Israeli troops and tanks rolling in

Palestinians were ordered to move out of certain parts of South Gaza by the Israeli forces, as their troops and tanks hit the ground against Hamas militants.

J&K reservation and re-organization bills passed by Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha passed the J&K reservation and re-organization bill that seeks to change the nomenclature of a section eligible for quotas in jobs and education while the other seeks to nominate two members of the Kashmiri migrant community and one representing those displaced from POK.

Prisoner swap in the Middle East

Hamas released 24 hostages during the first day of the war's first truce and the Israelis released 39 Palestinian women and children.

India spin Australia out of the series

India's Axar Patel along with Bishnoi and Chahar with 6 wickets between them took an unassailable 3-1 lead over Australia in the 4th T20 International at Raipur.

Rohit good enough for another World Cup

Muttiah Muralitharan, the legendary Sri Lankan bowler is of the view that Rohit Sharma can play another World Cup and is in great form and that he will just have to work harder on physical fitness.

Shubman Gill in the fast lane

After a host of achievements by Shubman Gill, Gujarat Titans named the 24-year-old as captain for the new IPL season.

India hopes for a better showing against England

When the Indian Women's Cricket team under Amol Mazumdar as coach, square off against the English side, they will hope to begin well at the Wankhede stadium in the first T20 International that begins on Wednesday.

A near repeat on 01' anniversary

In a sensational breach of security on the 22nd anniversary of the 2001 attack on parliament, two men jumped down from the visitors gallery and opened coloured smoke canisters engulfing the house in thick yellow fumes.

India to bid for 2029 World Athletics Championships

AFI senior vice president, Anju Bobby George told reporters that India is interested in bidding for the 2029 World Athletics Championships.

Abhinav Bindra to mentor shooting team for 2024 Olympics

The NRAI has asked Olympic gold medalist, Abhinav Bindra to mentor the air pistol and rifle teams for the Paris games.

COP28 seeks to end fossil fuel use

COP28 In Dubai, has put up an ambitious draft note of tripling renewable energy to 11,000 GW by 2030 and to phase out fossil fuels.

COP28 for 'Just' phase-out of fossil fuels

A new draft of the Global Stocktake gave options on the way forward on key issues of mitigation, fossil fuels, equity and historical responsibility.

COP28 calls for transition from fossil fuels in an equitable manner

In a first of sorts, nearly 200 countries including India called for moving away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner.

Will continue to use coal : India

India has categorically committed itself to increasing clean energy capacity, but has maintained that coal will continue to be its mainstay for its electricity needs and development goals.

Cyclone Michaung leaves devastation in its wake

Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha slowly crawled to a state of normalcy as Michaung left behind several parts of these states inundated and the livelihood of thousands of people lost.

Massive floods hit Chennai again

Cyclone Michaung dumped 400 to 500 mm of rain since Sunday morning flooding homes, destroying cars and bikes in a stark reminder of the 2015 floods.

Cyclone Michaung kills 17 on its landing in Chennai

The cyclone brought extensive rain and submerged most of Chennai damaging infrastructure and leaving at least 17 people dead.

Finally rescued!

After 17 days of having been trapped in an under construction tunnel, 41 workers were brought out to safety by a team of workers, making the impossible possible.

Delhi's pollution crisis continues

Delhi's pollution went into the severe zone evidenced by watering eyes, itching throats and nausea.

Tunnel rescue to focus on two methods

Rescuers initiated the process of manual drilling and vertical drilling from the top of the mountain to rescue the 41 miners trapped under the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel late on Monday evening.

Hindi heartland gives BJP the thumbs Up

The recently concluded assembly elections saw the BJP romping home in all three states of the Hindi heartland of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

Good Shepherd International School, Ooty, Set To Host IB Manthan 2024

A fusion of innovative concepts, enhanced by the comprehensive wisdom accumulated from collective experiences, tailored for educators globally.



On January 11th and 12th, 2024, Good Shepherd International School in Ooty is set to foster educational creativity and innovation. With its longstanding legacy and progressive development, the school is on the cusp of achieving a new milestone in education. Collaborating with the IBO, GSIS warmly welcomes educators from across the country and beyond to participate in a collective brainstorming session aimed at shaping the future of education. This gathering not only offers a wealth of career opportunities for teachers but also focuses on their emotional health.

Why GSIS IB Manthan 2024?

"Manthan," a term with Sanskrit roots, means "Churning." It symbolizes the act of delving deep into thought or thorough analysis to arrive at meaningful conclusions or insights. This is precisely the experience this educational

summit aims to offer. Adding to its uniqueness is the serene setting in a location celebrated as the queen of hills.

The conference will feature a diverse range of influential and thought-provoking keynote speakers and workshop leaders. They will set the tone for the event and provide fresh perspectives on the central theme, "The Future of Education: How Should It Evolve?"

We expect a gathering of 150-200 participants, including heads and educators from schools, in India and around, including some specially invited guests. Our goal is to bring together educators, thought leaders, and experts from various educational fields to share ideas and perspectives on the future trajectory of education.

The outstanding roster of keynote speakers and event facilitators for this academic convocation is listed below:



Keynote Speaker 1 : Mr. Arun Kapur - A distinguished educator with over 40 years in both public and private sectors of education. Recognized for his curriculum on the Five Areas of Development, it has been hailed as one of the top 100 global educational innovations since 2017. In 2019, he was honored with the Druk Thuksey Award by the Bhutanese monarch for his educational contributions. He will offer his valuable insights on the evolution of education.

Keynote Speaker 2 : Ms. Lakshmi Kumar - Known for her proficiency in establishing quality educational institutions, leading teams, developing educational methodologies, and implementing best practices in both school and higher education. She will discuss the mental health aspects of educators.

Workshop Facilitator 1 : Ms. Seetha Murthy - An IB Educator and the Inaugural President of the Association for Heads of IB World Schools in India, she integrates both national and international educational objectives in her work. Her workshop will center on enhancing inquiry-based learning in classrooms.

Workshop Facilitator 2: Ms. Srilakshmi Reddy - A forward-thinking educator and researcher committed to innovating learning and teaching methods. She will conduct a workshop focused on project-based learning in schools.

Keynote Speaker 3 : Dr. Swati Popat Vats - Founder President of Early Childhood Association India and Association for Primary Education and Research, consultant for Cambridge International Early Years program, and series editor for their publications. She will share her insights on educational development during the early years.



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Bachillerato Internacional

Workshop Facilitator 3 : Ms. Ritupama Ghosh - A renowned global storyteller and TEDx speaker, co-creator of the e-Learning module for CBSE on 'Storytelling as Pedagogy', will conduct a workshop on using storytelling as an educational tool.

Workshop Facilitator 4 : Mr. Jacob Thomas - The President of Good Shepherd International School, with extensive expertise in technology and management. He plans to leverage the rising importance of technology in education and life, focusing on its transformative potential. His workshop will explore the integration of Artificial Intelligence in classroom settings. Join us at our upcoming GSIS IB Manthan 2024, where we'll dive into the latest trends and practices that are shaping the future of learning.

Here's what you can expect:

- **Best Practices to be Discussed** : Learn from the experts as they share their insights on effective teaching methodologies, classroom management techniques, and student engagement strategies. Elevate your educational practice with proven methods that yield results.

- **New Technologies to be Discussed** : Discover cutting-edge technologies that are transforming the educational experience. From virtual reality to AI-powered tools, get hands-on experience with the innovations that are making learning more interactive and accessible.

- **Resource Sharing** : Gain access to a wealth of resources, including lesson plans, multimedia materials, and research papers. Collaborate with peers to expand your toolkit and bring fresh ideas to your educational setting.

- **Network Building** : Connect with like-minded professionals who are passionate about education. Build lasting relationships that will support your career growth and open doors to new opportunities.

- **Collaborative Problem Solving** : Engage in dynamic workshops where you'll tackle real-world educational challenges alongside your peers. Develop practical solutions through teamwork and creative thinking.

Registrations: <https://geis.ac.in/ib-manthan-2024/>

LAND OF FIRE AND ICE

Iceland, which was shaken by thousands of small earthquakes in November, is an island country of sharp contrasts. Glaciers tower near or on top of active volcanoes. Boiling hot springs and steaming geysers are interspersed with waterfalls, fjords and lakes.

The Arrival of the Vikings

Though Iceland was known to the ancient Greeks as Thule, it was not inhabited till the 9th century CE unlike the rest of Western Europe. The first settlers were Viking explorers or Norsemen who came from Britain and Norway. They were either men who had a conflict with the Norwegian king Harald, or those looking for new lands to farm.

The first Norse chieftain was Ingolfur Arnarsson and he built his homestead near the present capital Reykjavik.

Other chieftains followed him and soon everyone prospered. Iceland was finally on the world map!

Heroic Tales

Did you know that the word 'saga', which means 'a long story of heroic achievement', is derived from Icelandic? The Icelandic Sagas are an important part of the nation's literary tradition. The 40 sagas were written by unknown authors in the 13th and 14th centuries. They describe the life of Icelanders in the Viking age, immediately before and after the year 1000. The legends, poems and epics present a detailed historical account of that period, including the coming of Christianity and Leif Eriksson's expeditions to North America and his discovery of Greenland.

World's Oldest Parliament

Iceland has the world's oldest existing parliament called Althing. It was founded in 930 CE in Thingvellir around 45 km east of Reykjavik. The remains can still be seen in Thingvellir National Park, now a UNESCO heritage site.

The present parliament house, called the Althingshús, was built in 1881 in Reykjavik.



Extreme Landscapes

Geologically, Iceland is a young country. It was formed about 25 million years ago when an island rose up from a fissure in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, a seismic zone prone to frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Iceland's origin has endowed it with extreme landscapes. Around 11 per cent of the country is covered by glaciers and 30 per cent experiences some kind of volcanic activity. The terrain is dotted with deep fjords, lakes, waterfalls, beaches of black sand (actually volcanic ash), geysers, hot springs and lava fields.



Icelandic Horses

The first settlers brought a breed of small horse with them. Standing about 130–140 cm tall and weighing around 350 kilos, the horses are of varied colours and coat patterns. Icelandic has over a hundred names for these colours and patterns!



Powered by Nature

More than 90 per cent of Iceland is heated by geothermal energy, sourced from the hot springs and the hydroelectricity generated by waterfalls. Since there are hundreds of these springs, Icelanders love public bathing.

Whale Watching

The waters off Iceland play host to over 20 species of whales during the summer months. These include the orca, minke, humpback and the blue whale. Husavik in the north is the best whale-watching venue in the world.



Heavenly Light

The Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights can be seen on clear winter nights in Iceland's Arctic north. Beautiful green streaks of lights spread out across the sky, a phenomenon that occurs because of the interplay of solar wind and the Earth's magnetic field near the Poles.

Magma Wonder

Iceland is also one of the few places in the world where you can enter a magma chamber of a dormant volcano that erupted 4000 years ago. The space inside the Thrihnúkagigur crater is as big as three basketball courts.

Sons and Daughters

People are listed by their first name in the telephone directory. Icelanders use the old Viking style of surnames — 'the son of' or 'daughter of'. For example, Harald Magnusson's son will be Petur Haraldsson, and his daughter will be Inga Haraldsdóttir!

Fauna Fact

The Arctic fox is the only native mammal. Reindeer live in the wild in east Iceland.

Ring Road

It is a 1332 km-long road that runs around the island and connects most of the inhabited parts of the country. Popular tourist attractions are on or near it.

Bird Cliff

The cliffs at Látrabjarg, the westernmost part of Europe, are the world's biggest breeding ground for birds. They teem with millions of puffins, northern gannets, gullmots and razorbills.



Gushing Geysers

One of the greatest concentrations of geysers in the world is found here. The word comes from the famed Geysir at Haukadalur in the northwest. In Icelandic it means 'to gush'.



A Different Ball Game

Handball is the national sport. Soccer comes a close second in popularity.



Elves Ahead!

A majority of Icelanders believe in the existence of elves. Roads are rerouted and building plans are redesigned or abandoned to avoid disturbing elves.

Did You Know?

- Europe's largest glacier is Vatnajökull in Iceland's northeast. It has seething volcanoes beneath it. It contains so much water that Iceland's biggest river, Ölfusá, would need 200 years to carry it to sea.
- Dettifoss, which has its source in a river that originates from the Vatnajökull glacier, is the largest waterfall in Europe.
- Iceland has perpetual daylight in summer and long hours of darkness in winter. On summer nights, people flock to theatres, cafes, go for long walks, swim, and play midnight golf.
- Iceland is the most sparsely populated country in Europe with less than three persons per square kilometre. Most people live in the southwest, in and around Reykjavik.

Weird!

- Knitting is a hobby enjoyed by both men and women!
- Icelandic cuisine might make you go 'Yuck!' Boiled and cured ram's testicles, hákarl or putrefying shark's meat, sheep's loins cured in lactic acid, and skinned sheep's head are popular dishes!
- Iceland does not have a railway.

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE!

Fun with Puns

What kind of workers do you need to maintain a cemetery?

A skeleton crew!

A skeleton crew means a small permanent force of workmen kept ready to move in if needed. Cemeteries have lots of skeletons.



Why is a robot fearless?

It has nerves of steel!

To have nerves of steel is to be calm and fearless even in a dangerous situation. A robot has metal body parts.



Why are florists untrustworthy?

They may lead you up the garden path!

If someone leads you up the garden path, it means he or she is trying to lead you astray or entice you into wrongdoing. A florist's business has everything to do with gardens!

A Lot of Bull!

All these words contain the word 'bull'. What are they? Take the help of the clues!

bull _____ (demolition machine)

bull _____ (kind of canine)

bull _____ (notice)

__ bull _____ (cheerful)

bull _ (torment)



Answer: bulldozer, bulldog, bullfight, bullheaded, bullseye, bull

Gruesome Rhymes

Most people have heard of limericks but not many have heard of grues. Grues are short, sadistic verses, like this one: Willie poisoned Father's tea; Father died in agony. Mother looked extremely vexed; "Really, Will," she said, "What next?"

Most writers of grues prefer to remain anonymous, which is understandable. Henry Graham who wrote a whole book of grues, titling it "Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes", used the pen name Col. D. Streamer. They say the name for these verses was suggested by the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson. In Gaelic, which is the native tongue of Scotland, grue means "a fit of shivering".

Here is one of the more innocuous ones, *The Stern Parent*:

Father heard his Children scream,
So he threw them in the stream,
Saying, as he drowned the third,
"Children should be seen, not heard!"



What's the Difference?

Historic and Historical

A historical event is one which really happened, which is not a myth or fiction.

A historic event is one which is so important that people will remember it for a long time to come.

1. There is an exhibition on the *historical* importance of World War I.
2. Everyone watched the *historic* landing of the first men on the moon.



Stroop Effect

THE Stroop Effect is named after John Ridley Stroop, an American psychologist who first reported the phenomenon in the 1930s. Stroop conducted an experiment wherein he gave participants a list of colour names written in different inks. For example, the word GREEN was written in red ink. Participants had to name the colour in which the word was written. They found the task difficult. However, when asked to just read the words, they took less time.

You can try it too.



BLUE	GREEN	YELLOW
PINK	RED	ORANGE
GREY	BLACK	PURPLE
TAN	WHITE	BROWN

Pretend you are a participant and name the colour in which the following words are written.

GREEN, BLUE, RED, YELLOW, BLACK

The correct responses would be: Red, Black, Green, Blue and Purple.

Did you have to stop yourself from reading the word and direct your attention to the ink colour in order to name it? If so, you have just experienced the Stroop Effect which basically refers to the human tendency to read words faster than colours.

Some researchers feel that reading is an automatic process whereas colour naming is not and that is why people take longer to name the colour in which words are written.

Persuasive Skills

HOW to get others to comply with your requests?

Here are a few techniques that research has found to be very effective:

The Foot In the Door Technique: First make a small request, and when the person grants it, go for a bigger request, making it hard for the person to refuse. E.g. a salesman giving a free sample of a shampoo to the customer and then trying to sell a range of other cosmetics.

The Door in the Face technique: First make a huge request which the person will refuse to grant, and then present a more feasible option which the person might accept. E.g. asking your father for a plasma TV, and when he refuses, requesting for a small TV for your own room.

Ingratiation technique: Try to get others to like you, so that they are more likely to give you what you want.

Playing hard-to-get technique: Try to gain compliance by suggesting that a person/object is scarce and in great demand. E.g. Telling your interviewer that you have a few other good job offers lined up.

Putting others in a good mood: A tactic that we all commonly use in everyday life (don't we all do special favours for our mothers before we ask her for something?) It has been found that people are more likely to comply with requests when they are in a happy mood than when they are not.



The Making of a Comic Strip



A COMIC STRIP is generally made up of three or more panels or frames. It has pictures in sequence and text.

The text in each panel is written in balloons or at the top or bottom of the panel in what are known as commentary boxes.

The comic strip begins with the writing of the script.

The scriptwriter may give the visual for each panel. The script then goes to the illustrator. The illustrator draws the pictures.

If the script is long or the subject is difficult, the artist and the writer might discuss the script before the illustrator gets down to work.

After the illustrator has finished drawing the pictures the scriptwriter or an editor will see if the text and pictures match and if they don't, make the necessary changes in the script or get the artist to change the illustration.

The text is then fitted in the balloons or in the commentary boxes and the illustrations are coloured.

heee hee
comic history

The first ever comic strip made its debut in an American newspaper in the 1890s.

The hero of 'Hogan's Alley' was a bald street urchin in a yellow nightshirt called the Yellow Kid!



The first comic books were collections of newspaper comic strips until DC Comics introduced the world to comic books (with completely brand new material) in 1935.

When Superman with his X-ray vision and superhuman strength swept the world in 1938, the comic book industry entered a whole new dimension! A year later DC's Batman followed as did Wonder Woman, The Flash and Green Lantern.

During World War II, the craze for superheroes hit an all time high!



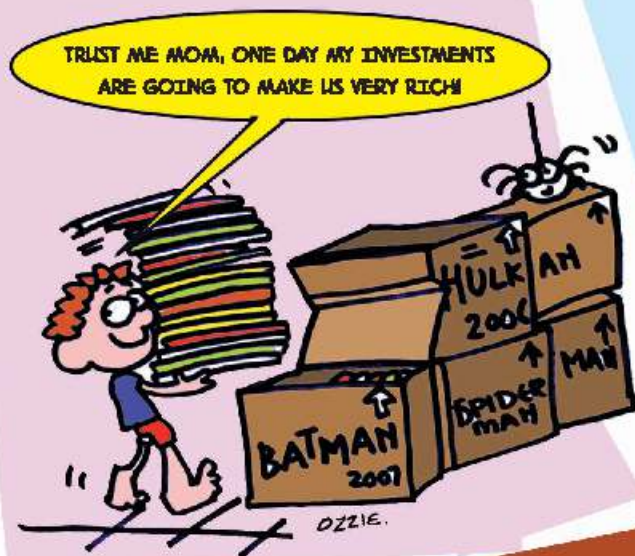
In the 1960s Marvel Comics created Peter Parker (Spider-Man) and Bruce Banner (Hulk). Marvel's superheroes had special powers but as humans they had problems just like everyone else!

Dr. Bruce Banner (or the Hulk) had a nasty temper and Peter (Spider-Man) had a nasty boss!

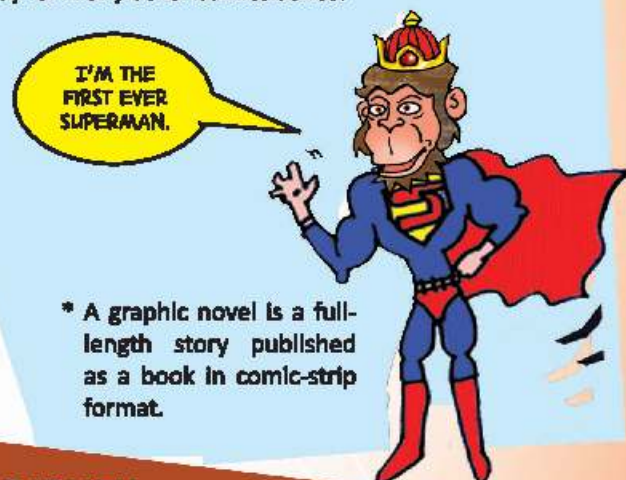


Comic books were considered childish until the 1980s when people began collecting them. Today some first edition comic books sell for thousands of dollars!

In 1992, the graphic novel* 'Maus' won an award reserved for serious literature called the Pulitzer Prize!



Comics became popular in India in the 1960s with the launching of Indrajit Comics' adventures of 'Phantom the Ghost who Walks' and 'Mandrake the Magician'. Later in the 1970s *Amar Chitra Katha* popularised mythology, culture, science and Indian history through comics, paving the way for many other comics series.



* A graphic novel is a full-length story published as a book in comic-strip format.

INDIA'S WALT DISNEY

Pran Kumar Sharma was born on 15 August, 1938, in Kasur, a small border town in Pakistan. He was a child when his family fled to India in 1947 and settled down in Firozpur in Punjab.

To escape the harsh memories of the violence of Partition, Pran sought refuge in the magic world of cartoons. While still in college, he drew political cartoons for the newspaper *Dainik Millat*. He got his first big break when his cartoons were published in *Shankar's Weekly*, a popular magazine.

In those days, newspapers carried only Western comics like *Phantom* and *Mandrake* as no one was making Indian comics. Pran decided to change that and established the Pran Features Syndicate to create comics strips.

Pran's most popular comics strip was *Chacha Chaudhary*. Originally produced in *Lotpot* magazine, the series is about an indomitable old man with a characteristic moustache and turban. The short, sprightly man solves various issues with his incisive wit and the help of his associates like the giant Sabu and pet dog Rocket.



Pran was commended in the list of 'People of the Year 1995' by *Limca Book of Records* for popularizing comics in India. Two episodes of *Chacha Chaudhary* were acquired by the International Museum of Cartoon Art, USA, and Pran was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001 from the Indian Institute of Cartoonists.

Though Pran passed away on 5 August, 2014, he will be remembered for generations to come as the 'father of Indian comics'.

Escape From Oryzya – A Captain Shiva Adventure

Story: Luis Fernandes
Artwork: Abhijeet Kini

STORY SO FAR: CAPTAIN SHIVA DISCOVERS THAT MAYA, LEADER OF THE ASURAS, HAS JOINED HANDS WITH THE ADOR, RULER OF ORYZYA...



THE SCARNS ARE HUGE PITS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY. NO ONE CONDEMNED TO THE SCARNS HAS EVER RETURNED ALIVE.

I'M GETTING TIRED OF THESE TRIPS TO THE SCARNS!

ME TOO!



BUT I'VE HEARD THE ADOR'S COMING TO THE SCARNS PERSONALLY TO WATCH THESE TWO DIE.

TWO?
I WONDER WHO THE OTHER ONE IS!



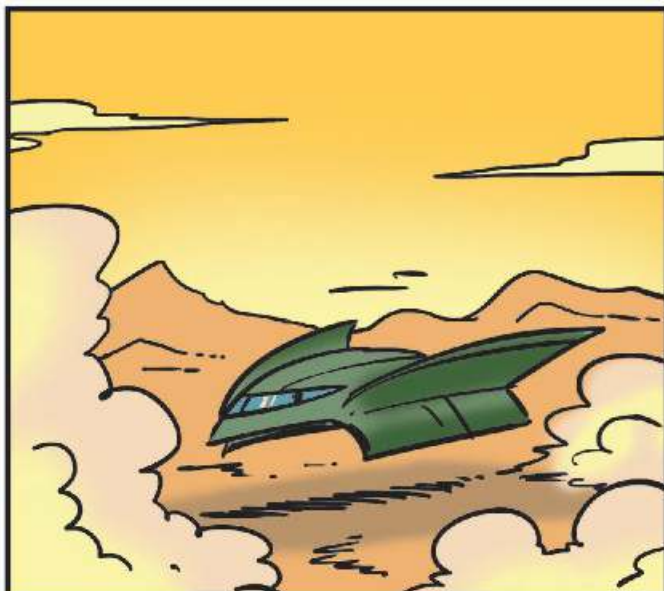
THE BRUTE ENJOYS BLOODSHED. I WISH HE WOULD FIND SOME OTHER DIVERSION.

HIS ONLY OTHER DIVERSIONS ARE FOOD AND WAR!



INTERESTING!

THAT'S TRUE. NOW HE'S ALLYING WITH THE ASURANS FOR AN INVASION OF EARTH!



TO BE CONTINUED...

Thiruvananthapuram

The City of Palaces

The Secretariat

The last king of Travancore, His Highness Chithira Thirunal was crowned in a glittering ceremony here. An edifice of Roman architecture, it is now the government headquarters.



Napier Museum

Napier Museum

It was built in 1880 by an English architect in honour of Lord Napier, Governor of Madras. It has a rich collection of archaeological and historical artefacts — bronze idols, antique jewellery and sculptures among others. The museum has a 400-year-old clock and a cot of herbal wood made for the king. Around the museum are beautiful meadows and breathtaking landscapes.

Situated within the museum premises, the Sree Chithra Art Gallery has a vast treasure of Indian and South Asian paintings. Notable among them are the masterpieces of Raja Ravi Varma.

Kovalam Beach

Kovalam village, which has an endless sight of coconut trees, has three crescent beaches where tourists throng. The lighthouse beach is the most popular one. It has an ethereal charm with light falling from the lighthouse located on a rocky promontory.



Chacha Nehru Children's Museum

It has an impressive collection of 2000 dolls, masks and stamps and is a favourite with children.



Padmanabhaswamy Temple

The eighth century temple, maintained by the erstwhile Travancore royal family, is one of 108 Divya Desams (Holy Abodes of Vishnu). It is a beautiful blend of the Kerala and Dravidian styles of temple architecture. In 2011 huge treasures were unearthed from the temple vaults which had not been opened for nearly 140 years. They included 18th century Napoleonic era coins, a golden idol of Padmanabhaswamy studded with over 1000 precious stones and thousands of ornaments.

Zoological Park

One of the oldest zoos in the country, it is a virtual jungle in the heart of the city. Massive trees and wild bushes shelter a wide variety of animals including the lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri langur, Royal Bengal tiger and Asian elephant as well as birds and snakes.

The Observatory

It owes its origin to Swati Tirunal, Maharaja of Travancore who had a keen interest in astronomy. Sixty metres above the sea, it is located at the highest point in the city. Besides facilities for sky watching, it offers a panoramic view of the sprawling city.



Thiruvananthapuram
Central Railway Station

Central Railway Station

The largest and busiest station in Kerala is a 'green' station as it uses solar energy.



Kanakakunnu Palace

It showcases the rich mastery of Indian craftsmen and architects. It is now a cultural venue and programmes are held in the open-air auditorium.



Kerala Legislature Complex

The glorious structure with a dome tower, carved galleries and exquisite wooden panels and ceiling is now equipped with modern sound technology.

Priyadarshini Planetarium

It transports viewers into the world of space with its brilliant shows and narration. Its advanced field projector can simulate a starry night sky 12,500 years ago as also 12,500 years into the future.

Botanic Garden

The Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute houses the largest number of plant species in Asia.

VJT Hall

Built to commemorate the golden jubilee of the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1896, it has witnessed many historical events.



Kowdiar Palace

Kowdiar Palace

The huge architectural wonder is the main residence of the Travancore Royal Family. Built in 1915 by Sree Moolam Thirunal, it has over 150 rooms.



Spoofing the Nobel

The 33rd annual Ig Nobel Awards webcast on September 14 honoured silly, yet thought-provoking science. For instance, the medicine Ig Nobel for 2023 was awarded to eight researchers for using cadavers to explore whether there is an equal number of hairs in each of a person's two nostrils.

The Beginnings

Annals of Improbable Research is a science humour magazine edited by Marc Abrahams. In 1991, Abrahams launched the Ig Nobel Awards, a spoof of the venerable Nobel Prizes. The Ig Nobels are given in ten categories and recognise scientists who undertake research into bizarre subjects.

The awards are given to discoveries and inventions that 'make you laugh and then make you think'. The official mascot of the Prizes is 'The Stinker', Auguste Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker* fallen backwards off his pedestal!

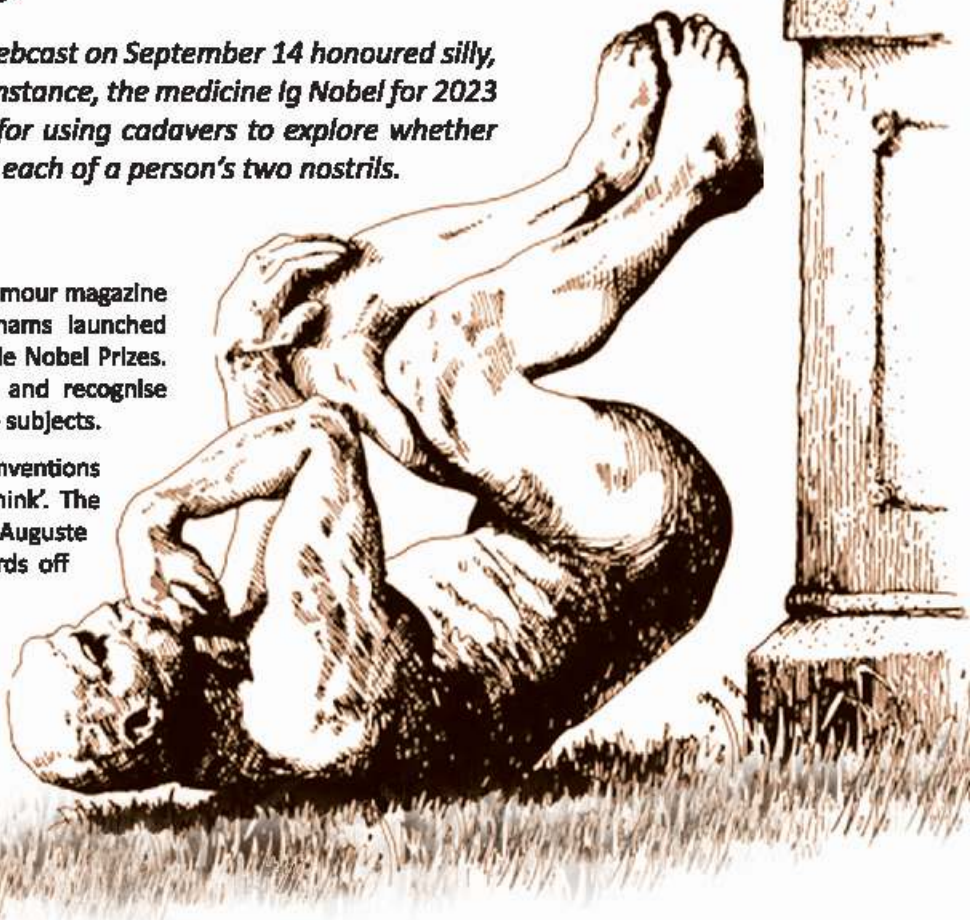
All the prizes are handed out by genuine Nobel laureates. There are even people who have won both Nobel prizes! Physicist Andre Gelm won an Ig Nobel in 2000 and a Nobel in 2010.

The ceremony is held at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre, and it is followed by a series of public lectures by the winners at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

During the acceptance speeches, Miss Sweetie Poo, a little girl, repeatedly cries out, "Please stop: I'm bored!" in a high-pitched voice if speakers go on for too long. The awards

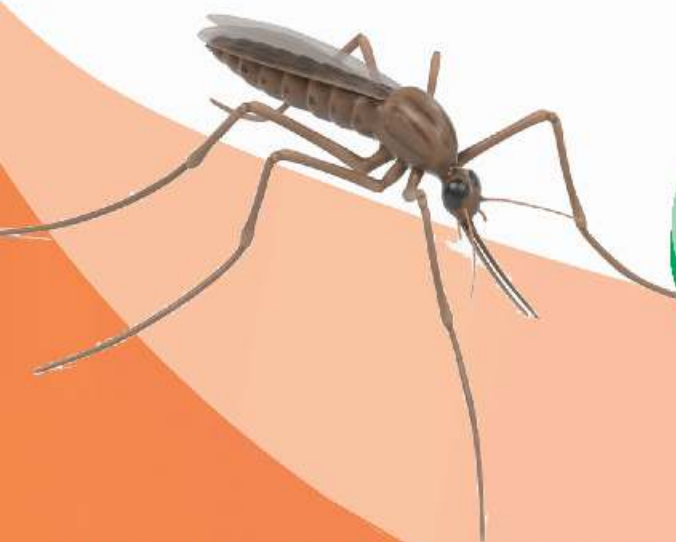
ceremony traditionally closes with the words: 'If you didn't win a prize — and especially if you did — better luck next year!'

Throwing paper planes onto the stage is also a long-standing tradition at the Ig Nobel Awards.



Did You Know?

It isn't always that the research awarded an Ig Nobel is absurd or pointless. For instance, in 2006, a study showing that a species of malaria mosquito (*Anopheles gambiae*) is attracted equally to the smell of Limburger cheese and the smell of human feet, earned the Ig Nobel Prize for Biology. When traps baited with this cheese were actually used in some parts of Africa they were found to be quite effective!



Purely White

WHITE HOUSE



The official residence and work place of the US President. It has 132 rooms. During the Anglo-American War in 1812, British soldiers captured the city of Washington and set fire to the President's official home. The mansion rebuilt after the war was painted white to hide the smoke stains and it became known as the White House.

WHITE COLLAR

People who work in an office or in a professional environment are said to be white collar employees.

WHITE DWARF

A white dwarf is a remnant of a star that has died out.

It typically has the mass of the Sun compressed in the radius of the Earth.



Though it is a dying star, a white dwarf is still extremely hot (50,000°C). It just does not have enough energy to radiate light like a normal star. Its density is about one million times that of water and 200,000 times that of the Earth! The more massive the white star, the smaller is its size!

WHITE ELEPHANT

A costly possession that offers little benefit. In ancient Siam or Thailand, a white elephant was considered sacred and couldn't be put to work. Kings would gift white elephants to out-of-favour ministers. The ministers would be financially ruined trying to look after a gift they could not return!



WHITE ADMIRAL

It is a stunning butterfly species found in forests in the British Isles. It has a distinctive flight pattern and is a smooth glider. It has black uppersides with prominent white bars and colourful undersides.



WHITE CANE

In 1945 Dr. William Richard Hoover, an eye specialist in Baltimore, USA, devised a long hollow aluminium cane for use by the blind. This developed into the 'White Cane' now used all over the world by blind people. It enables them to avoid obstacles while walking on the street and while moving around in unfamiliar surroundings.



WHITE ANT

Termites are commonly called white ants. They live in colonies. They are skilled engineers. Termite mounds are considered the largest animal constructions in relation to the size of the constructor. While an adult termite is less than 2 cm long, their mounds may rise as high as nine metres.



WHITE PAPER

A white paper is produced by the government or a business firm for marketing purposes. It refers to a well-researched report or a guide that helps the reader understand an issue and form an opinion. Originally it was a British government report or policy statement on an important subject.

WHITE MOUNTAINS

They are part of the Appalachian Mountain system in North America which is spread over 2590 km. Its most famous peak is Mt. Washington.



- White Sea is a land-locked extension of the Arctic Ocean cutting into the shores of Russia.
- White gold is an alloy of gold and a white metal, like nickel or manganese.
- White flag is an international sign of surrender or truce.



A Glimpse of Folk Art

Art begins at home.

The most common specimen of art in our household is the decoration adomed on walls and floors, in different parts of the country having different names, like; Kolam, Rangoli, Mandana, Sanjha, Thangka and Kohbar etc.

In Maharashtra and Tamilnadu, drawing a fresh Rangoli or Kolam every day is considered auspicious. These are made with basic white powder, liquid or chalk and mostly have geometric and floral patterns.

Mandana and Kolam are very traditional in design and only white and Indian red (lime stone and red earth) shades are used to make Mandanas. Some designs of Mandanas are used on some particular occasions only, like Diwali, bhal-dool, etc. In Haryana and some other parts similar forms are made on walls on special occasions and are called Sanjhi.

In Buddhist tradition also there is great importance for ceremonial paintings. In Buddhist prayer rituals, especially in

tantric sects, paintings are very important. They are called Thangka and traditionally they were, and even today, made with Yak butter and mineral colours. But now the Thangkas have become a collectors' item, like all other traditional painting styles and hence the artists have started using commercially produced stuff like poster colours and acrylics. You find Tantric mandalas as well as deities, nature and life in Thangkas.

Similar to Mandana or Rangoli, which is made on the floors, we also have elaborate traditions of wall painting in most Indian cultures. These are basically of two types, first which depicts everyday activities of the people, like Varli paintings, and second which are used on special occasions like weddings or festivals. Animals, Sun, Moon, Stars, people and their tools and instruments form the visual. Vedic symbols like Swastic etc. are not there in tribal art but are found elsewhere. In Varali and other such traditions we find depictions of activities like hunting, farming, dancing, harvesting etc., and are painted on with Mandana like colour schemes on the walls plastered with cow-dung and clay.

In the wall paintings made on special occasions we can see a riot of elements like floral forms, gods and goddesses, doormen, animals like elephants & horses, birds like peacocks and parrots as well as scenes from bridal processions. In Bihar there is a beautiful form of such art, called Kohbar where the bridal chamber (honey moon suite) is painted with the images of celebrated couples from Hindu mythology, like Ram-Sita, Shiv-Parvati, Radha-Krishna etc. The belief is that with their presence and blessings the wedded life of the couple will be happy and successful.

And the ladies would ofcourse be aware of the forms they paint on walls on occasions like Shtala Saptami, Nag Panchami etc, which are also a type of folk art form, but the material used here is different. Things like kumkum, kajal etc. are used to draw the divine forms on the walls. Many of us might have lost this due to living in high-rises and tiled walls, but must have seen them during child hood.

One different version of the same is called as Tantrik or Ritualistic Art. Complex Mandala and Yantras painted or drawn during various ceremonies and sessions to invoke divine or celestial powers are some such examples. These are extensively used in all major religions and have become very popular as an art form as well among the artists. A wide variety of material is used for ritualistic art and many of them are also made to last long.

There are more such folk art forms, which were created for rituals but now have become popular among the connoisseurs. Phad, Kanwar, Pichhwal, etc. from Rajasthan, Patchitra from Orissa, Kallighat paintings from West Bengal are some such examples.



Chandrashekhar Ojha has been a corporate professional with direct interactions with schools and students for over thirty years and has been an abiding benefactor to the field of education.

Wonderful World of Art



Teaching has always been considered a rewarding profession. But then the experience of teaching students to draw and paint for the last two decades has been a transformative experience of sorts. One that has been filled with unbridled joy and a journey of discovery. Both of the self and the inner world of children.

In a world filled with words and technologies, art becomes a language of its own. It allows one to communicate one's thoughts, feelings and ideas which even eloquent words may well fail miserably to do so.

Drawing or painting any artwork is not a destination but a happy journey. Every stroke becomes a lesson, a story. Do not fear, there is no right or wrong in art. It is about exploring, experimenting and enjoying the whole process.

Initially start off with a pencil and a small piece of paper or else keep a small sketch book and create daily sketches. Express oneself in that. It truly can be an incredibly rewarding practice. There is no need to worry about perfection. Daily practice will change perspectives and one would be amazed at the change that can be wrought in the individual.

One will find many ways to shape one's artwork and that will shape and sharpen one's observation skills and it will awaken the senses that will find hidden beauty in everything.

It would certainly help to try and see the artwork of well-known artists, frequently visit art galleries and observe carefully. Try and use various mediums such as pen, pencil, charcoal and paints. It would be ideal to keep one corner at home for drawing and do participate in art competitions. As it is difficult to say as to when or what might just trigger the artist in anyone.



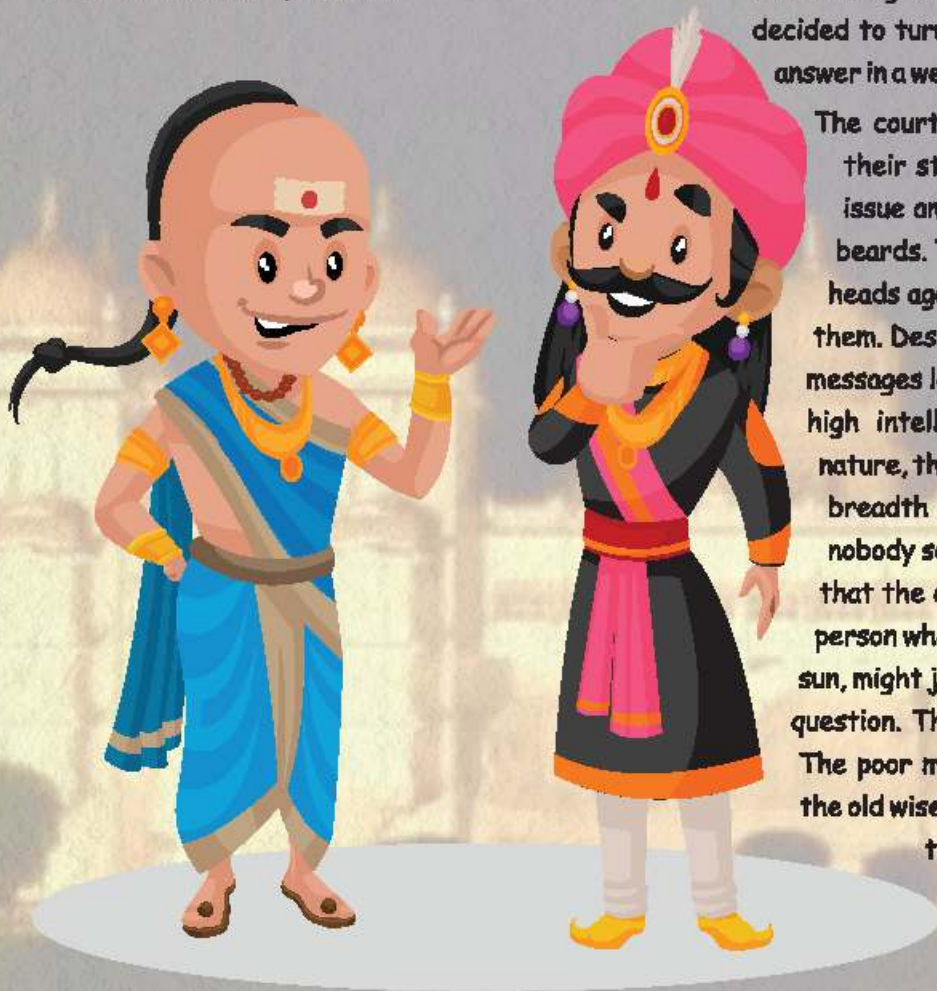
Development of the artistic skill not only improves observation, imagination and visualisation but also boosts self-confidence and even serves as a form of meditation and much more. ■



Mrs. Varsha Chaugule
Artist, Teacher and Connoisseur

NOTHING TO CROW ABOUT!

Krishnadevaraya was none too pleased with what had happened in the court. And this had put him in a bad mood. The upset king strode up and down the palace garden deep in thought. He was suddenly startled by the sound of wings and a loud caw and then a splash of white fell on his black robe. That was the limit! The king lost his cool. He asked his courtiers to assemble immediately in court.



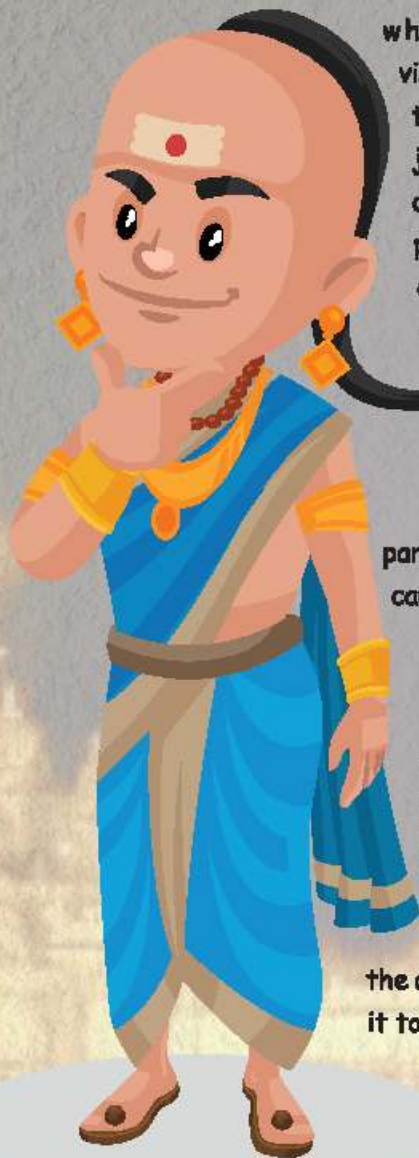
He told them that they had been complaining that he favoured Tenali Rama and only asked him questions and he said that he then had a question for them. The king paused dramatically for a moment and then asked them the million dollar question.

How many crows were there in the city?

There was stunned silence. Then the oh's and the aah's. The grunts and the groans. The frowns and the sighs. Seeing this, Krishnadevaraya was surprised and said that he never knew thinking was so hard and wondered loudly, and some would say hopefully, if some of them were going to fall sick or get a heart attack? Unfortunately for the king, his day's bad run continued and nothing of that sort happened. Krishnadevaraya decided to turn on the screws. He said he wanted an answer in a week's time. Or else...!

The courtiers went away grumbling and cursing their stars. They got together to discuss the issue amongst themselves. They stroked their beards. They tore their hair. They banged their heads against the wall. The answer still escaped them. Desperate, they sent SOS' (save our souls) messages left, right and centre. And being men of high intelligence and therefore thoughtful by nature, they sent messages across the length and breadth of the country to good effect. Alas, nobody seemed to have an answer. They thought that the old wise man in the far off mountain, a person who had a solution to everything under the sun, might just have an answer to this very complex question. They then did send a messenger to him. The poor messenger trudged up the mountain, as the old wise man had so commanded that any visitor

to his abode will have to come on foot and not use any other form of transport. The man went all the way to the top and put the question to the sage. The sage it is said went into a sort of trance for some time and then came out of it. He then scribbled something on a small piece of parchment and gave it to the messenger, asking him to give it to the courtiers who had sent him. The way down was easier, that is if one opted to take it. The old wise man had built a ropeway for the convenience of his visitors



which would get a visitor to the foot of the mountain in a jiffy. Ofcourse, if one landed in one piece or half a dozen depended only on one's kismet.

The messenger who thought that discretion was the better part of valour, meaning caution is better than rash courage, ventured to go back on foot down the punishing hill. On reaching the city, he immediately set off to hand over the message from the old wise man. He gave it to the wisest courtier, who then opened the message with trembling fingers. He first went pale, then red and

then fell down with a choked cry. The others gathered around him. One of them picked up the message and read it loud, 'Ask Tenali Rama, he will have the answer.' There was pin-drop silence for a moment. Then they all sat down and went through the oh's and the aah's, the grunts and the groans and the frowns and the sighs. This was par for the course or normal or expected, when they had to think or had a problem on their hands. Which, if truth be told, was one and the same for them. Thinking and problem, that is. They then woke their colleague up with a gentle kick in the back.

They discussed and then discussed again. The last thing they wanted was Tenali Rama on the scene as he was the root cause of their misery, but they had no choice now and decided to meet the king and accept their failure.

They met Krishnadevaraya in the garden and pleaded their inability to find an answer to the question and to pardon their failure. The king, who is reputed to have never made the same mistake twice, and now had developed a healthy respect for crows had a big umbrella over his head carried by a servant, looked contemptuously at them and asked that Tenali Rama be called for. When Tenali Rama arrived, the King put the same question to him. As to the number of crows in the city. Tenali Rama thought for some time and said there were 55,485 crows in the city.

Krishnadevaraya, a bit surprised, asked if there were more crows ? Tenali Rama replied that they would most probably be crows who had come to visit their relatives or friends. And what if they were less than Tenali Rama's count, asked the king. That could only be because the crows here had gone out to visit their friends and relatives, said Tenali Rama.



Krishnadevaraya laughed and turned to the other courtiers and said, " Now, you know why I ask Tenali Rama the questions!"

As if in agreement there was a loud caw from the old cypress tree.

Or was it a banyan tree ? Time does have a habit of muddling history.

Oh, Deer!

THE animal that is instantly recognizable as Santa's sleigh puller has two names! In North America, wild reindeer are called caribou. In Europe, where it is domesticated (it is the only domesticated deer in the world), it is known as reindeer.

Reindeer are found in the Arctic regions, including Canada, Alaska, Greenland, northern Europe and northern Asia.

Beautiful branching antlers are a reindeer's distinctive hallmark. They are the only deer species in which the females also grow antlers. A male's antlers can measure over 1.3 m long and a female's, around half a metre. Unlike a cow's horns, antlers fall off and grow back, and each year they become larger! Males shed their antlers in November and don't grow them back till spring. Females, on the other hand, shed their antlers only in summer after their calves are born. So,

according to scientists, the reindeer pulling Santa Claus' sleigh are not male but female!

The discarded antlers are rich in calcium and other minerals. Many animals, including the deer themselves, chew them up.

When the new antlers are growing, the deer are said to be 'in velvet' because the antlers are protected by soft skin, fur and blood vessels. When the antlers are full-grown, the velvet peels away and hangs in tatters like festoons of moss. The deer rub them off against rocks or trees.

Antlers weigh 15 kilos and may seem a hindrance, but they are useful in butting predators and other male reindeer during the rut or breeding season. Males have head-banging contests, sometimes to the death, when wooing the females. The winner's prize is a harem of 5–15 females. The rut is a stressful time and males may lose over 25 per cent of their weight.



Females dig the snow up with their antlers to find scarce food in winter. (Males use their hooves since they lack antlers at this time.) The deer eat mosses, herbs, ferns, grasses, as well as the leaves of shrubs and trees such as willow and birch. In winter, they subsist on lichen (also called 'reindeer moss') and fungi that grow just under the snow.

A reindeer's coat is special because a layer of hollow hairs provides superb insulation against the freezing cold. It also acts as a float in water. Yes, reindeer are good swimmers!

Reindeer herders in Europe and northern Asia have domesticated the animal for centuries. They are the Sami in Lapland, the Ewenki in China and the Komi in Siberia. The deer pull sledges and supply the herders with meat, milk and hides.



Fact File

- ◆ Reindeer have the widest feet of all deer. Long, sharp dewclaws behind the hooves give traction on ice. In winter, hair grows between the toes, making the feet as effective as snowshoes.
- ◆ Reindeer calves are not spotted like other deer young. They can run within two hours of being born.
- ◆ Reindeer milk has 20 per cent fat, one of the richest in the animal kingdom.
- ◆ The reindeer make the longest migration among all the land mammals, travelling up to 5,000 km in a year. Reindeer congregate in huge herds. The Porcupine caribou herd of North America numbers 1,25,000!
- ◆ A recent study found that the reindeer population has reduced by nearly 60 per cent in the last 30 years due to climate change and habitat destruction.

Santa's Favourite

Rudolph, a reindeer, was the hero of an endearing Christmas tale penned by Robert L May in 1939 for an American retail company, Montgomery Ward. The story goes that young Rudolph is the butt of jokes because of his unusual glowing red nose. His fortunes change one snowy Christmas Eve when Santa Claus appoints him to lead his sleigh. May's brother-in-law, songwriter Johnny Marks adapted the story into a song. Today *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* is a favourite with carol singers.



To Build a Fire

Jack London (1876–1916) is most famous for his novels The Call of the Wild and White Fang. The recurring theme in London's fiction is man's struggle for survival against the elements. He was the highest paid writer of his time in the US.

THE man paused for breath. It was nine o'clock in the morning, but there was not a hint of sunlight. Though the sky was clear and cloudless, the day was gloomy with a grey pall hanging over it. The man hadn't seen the sun in many days. He was in the northern end of the American continent which was in the depths of winter. It was terribly, terribly cold. The Yukon River, the scene of the Klondike gold rush, was frozen to a depth of three feet and covered with as many feet of snow. The landscape stretched for miles in every direction, an unbroken white relieved only by the main Yukon trail that ran like a dark line across it, twisting around the islands of spruce trees. The man dealt in lumber and he had come to see if he could work the spruce trees in spring.

The man was new to the land and this was his first winter. He was a man of limited imagination, so the biting cold, the lack of sunlight, the bleak landscape and the strangeness of it all had no effect on him. But he was quick and intelligent when it came to survival in the wild. He knew that the temperature was 50 degrees below freezing and that to avoid frostbite he must cover himself up warmly. He was prepared. He was wearing mittens, ear flaps, moccasins and thick socks.

Before resuming the trail, he spat out a stream of tobacco juice. There was a loud, sharp sound that surprised him. The spittle had frozen in the air and then fallen to the ground. He was making for the left fork of Henderson Creek that led to the site of an old mine, where his cronies had set up camp. He thought of the blazing fire and hot supper that would be waiting for him. He ran his hand over the bundle under his jacket. It was his lunch, wrapped up in a handkerchief and stowed away under his shirt to keep it warm. Rashers of bacon sandwiched between biscuits. He smiled at the thought of eating them.

The big dog that trotted at his heels was a husky, a cross between a wolf and a dog. It was more wolf than dog with a grey coat and a wolf's temperament. It felt instinctively that it was not a good time to be outside. It judged the cold better than the man. In fact, it was not fifty or sixty or even seventy below zero. It was 75 degrees below!

The man strode on at a quick pace, the dog slinking reluctantly at his heels. He stopped at Henderson Creek, which was ten miles from the fork. He was sure he would reach camp at six in

the evening. He decided he would eat lunch at the fork where he calculated he would be at half past noon. He began following the faint sled trail that ran on the creek bed. He was extra careful where he placed his feet. Though the creek was frozen right through, springs bubbled up in the surrounding hills and ran invisibly beneath the snow but above the ice. These never froze even in the harshest of winters. There could be several layers of snow alternating with water and ice. Getting one's feet wet was like a death sentence in this cold. He would have to delay his journey to build a fire and dry out his shoes and socks.

At half past noon, the man made it to the fork at Henderson Creek. Pleased, he sat down on a log to eat his lunch. He found that his fingers had become so numb that he couldn't hold the biscuit. His frozen tobacco beard also came in the way. A bit frightened now, he stood up and stamped his feet. He beat his hand against his chest to bring the circulation back. He remembered how he had laughed at an old-timer who had advised him never to venture out into a cold snap alone.

He built a roaring fire and thawed the ice from his face. He warmed his hands and then ate his lunch. The dog settled itself as close to the fire as it dared. It was happy to be free of the cold at last. Its happiness did not last long because the man got up and pulled on his mittens. It had no choice but to follow with dragging feet.

The man had but gone four miles when what he had been deeply afraid of — falling into a hidden spring under the snow — happened. He got out but he was wet to his knees. The man cursed loudly and angrily. Now he would have to build a fire to dry his shoes and socks. It would delay him by an hour. He set about gathering dry grass and twigs. He made a good-sized heap and set it alight with a piece of birch bark he kindled with a sulphur match. The fire caught and began blazing merrily. Well, those old-timers could be quite wrong at times, he thought. Here he was alone in the cold that was well below 50 degrees and he was surviving!

The man bent and began removing his moccasins. They were as hard as iron and the laces were like hoops of steel. He finally got out his knife but as he tried to cut the laces off, disaster struck. He had erred in building the fire under the trees. Every twig he had pulled off had disturbed the snow that lay thick on the top

branches. Now with the heat, the snow melted and toppled off onto the fire, dousing it. For a minute, the man was struck mute with shock. Then, cursing even more loudly, he began to gather firewood once more. This time, he was careful to build it in the open. However, by now the sensation had left his feet. He had had to remove the mittens to pick up the twigs and his fingers had quickly gone numb. When he tried to strike a match, he could not grasp it firmly. His fingers were completely without feeling. His hands hung heavy and useless like lumps of metal.

Somehow he knelt and picked up the matches with the heels of his frozen hands and struck one against his shoe. The fumes rising from it choked him and he dropped it in the snow. Then he struck all seventy matches together! They flamed brightly spewing out thick sulphurous fumes. He held it to the twigs, turning his face away to avoid inhaling the smoke. He felt a burning sensation. His hand was on fire! He dropped all the matches. Luckily, a few twigs had ignited. He nurtured the flames, knowing that this was his last chance. He clutched at the pieces of dry moss with the heels of his hands and arranged them carefully around the fire. All at once, a fit of shivering seized him. The pieces of moss scattered and each fell on a flame, putting it out.

The man stared blankly at the failed fire. The dog which had been eyeing his activities with eager eyes sensed that it could now not depend on this builder of fire. The man looked at it with envy, at its natural coat of fur and its bushy tail curled around its feet to keep them warm. There arose in his mind the vague recollection of the story of a man who had killed a deer

and crawled into its carcass to save his life. He crawled on all fours towards the dog, calling out to it. It backed away, wary of the man's strange behaviour and his wheedling voice, so lacking in authority. He made a lunge for it and encircled it in his arms. It snarled and struggled to get away. He found that he could not draw the knife to cut its throat. He let it go and it bounded away to a distance and then sat and watched him.

He got up, though now it felt as if his feet were very far away and not planted firmly on land. It was as if he was floating. He began running along the creek bed, aimlessly, his head full of the idea that if he ran enough, he would reach the safety of his friends and a warm fire. No matter if he lost his feet and hands to frostbite; he would at least be alive! The dog ran after him, though at a safe distance. Soon, he was out of breath and had to stop. He noticed warmth spreading outwards from his chest, though there was no tingle of blood flowing in his fingers or toes.

He lay down on the snow. Oh, how comfortable the snow was, like a warm fluffy bed, enticing him to sleep. Now it was just a matter of time. He would wake up and find that he was with his cronies, all of them laughing before a crackling fire, eating some warm supper.

The dog sat beside the man waiting for him to get up and do something. Then it caught the scent of death. Giving him a last snuffle, it turned and ran quickly along the faint sled trail leading to the camp. It knew that there, it would certainly find other builders of the life-giving fire.

—A story by Jack London, retold



HALL OF FAME

Alfred Nobel

THE Nobels were manufacturers of liquid nitroglycerine, a powerful explosive used in mining and construction work.

Liquid nitroglycerine had one major drawback. It exploded easily and was dangerous to handle.

One of the sons, Alfred Nobel, was determined to make nitroglycerine safer.

One day, as he was lifting a bottle of nitroglycerine, he spilled some of it on the packing material which was made of a fine powder called kieselguhr. Instead of exploding, it formed a paste with the powder. Nobel discovered that the mixture was still explosive but very much safer to handle.

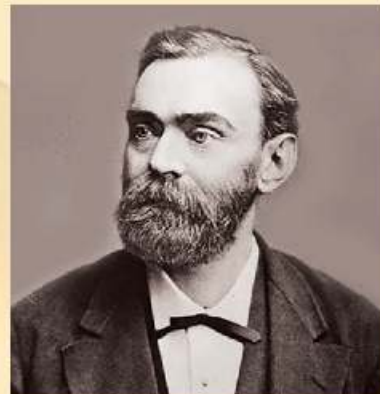
He called the mixture 'dynamite' and it made a fortune for him. Dynamite became a powerful tool in the hands of miners and road engineers but it also began to be used in war.

People began to look at Nobel in horror. They called him a 'pedlar of death'.

Sad and embittered, Nobel became a loner. He never married and did not have any close friends.

On his death, it was found that he had left the bulk of his enormous fortune for annual prizes in the fields of physics, chemistry, medicine, physiology, literature and peace.

These are the famous Nobel Prizes — the legacy of a great but tortured soul.



Versatile Genius

Alfred Nobel did not confine his work to the field of explosives.

He also worked in various branches of science like optics, biology and physiology. By the time of his death in 1896, he had taken out more than 355 patents.

Mahatma, the Missing Laureate

THE Nobel Prize committee has admitted that not awarding the Mahatma with the Peace Prize was the biggest mistake in its 122-year history. Though initially the committee was not in favour of awarding him the Prize, in 1948 it was inclined to honouring Gandhi. But he passed away and the idea was dropped.



Mahatma Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times — in 1937, 1938, 1939, 1947 and just a few days before his assassination in 1948. The only person to be posthumously awarded the prize was Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961.

Till 1960 the Peace Prize went exclusively to Europeans and Americans.



The Nobel Prize, which has run into many controversies, had a troubled start. The family members of Alfred Nobel contested his will which dictated that his fortune be used to institute the Nobel Prizes. But his wish prevailed and the first awards were given in 1901, on the fifth anniversary of his death.

'Gandhi could do without the Nobel Peace Prize. Whether the Nobel Committee can do without Gandhi, however, is the question.'

—Geir Lundestad, Secretary, Nobel Committee

What is chicory?

CHICORY is widely used as a substitute for coffee or as a coffee additive as it balances its flavour and reduces its acidity. It is actually a perennial plant with purple-blue flowers. Its leaves are popular as salad greens and its long thick tap root is dried, cut and brewed for use in coffee or as a beverage by itself. It adds aroma to the coffee blend and makes it thicker. It is caffeine-free and said to have health benefits. It cleanses the blood and kills bacteria in the liver and digestive tract. It has been in use from the Middle Ages when Egyptians, Romans and Greeks used it as a herbal drink. However, the tasty modern brew was developed by the French who found it was a good substitute for coffee which was scarce at the time.



What is a dead letter?



TO the postal services, a dead letter is mail which cannot be delivered to the addressee or recipient or sent back. This happens when the letter or package carries an incomplete or illegible address or the recipient refuses to accept it. When the post office cannot deliver it, it tries to return it to the sender. If the sender has not provided an address or refuses to accept it, then the letter or package lands up in the 'dead letter office' or DLO, informally called the 'mail morgue'.

Thousands of pieces of such mail find their way into the DLO. The mail is then opened and if no clue is found, the letter is destroyed. If it is a package which contains goods, these are auctioned.

In India, post offices keep all articles for a year. Then the letters are shredded and trashed. The goods recovered from parcels are auctioned through approved auctioneers after taking permission. The post offices earn between Rs.3-5 lakh a year through such auctions!

While clothing, books, watches and rings are common 'dead' items, boxes of home-made laddoos or other sweets are also frequently unclaimed, as also jewellery, electronic gadgets, leather goods, expensive mobile handsets, musical instruments, carpets and even bronze idols.



Bubble Fun

Everyone loves blowing bubbles but there's a lot of science hidden in those airy, filmy spheres!

Let's make some bubble frames!

You will need:

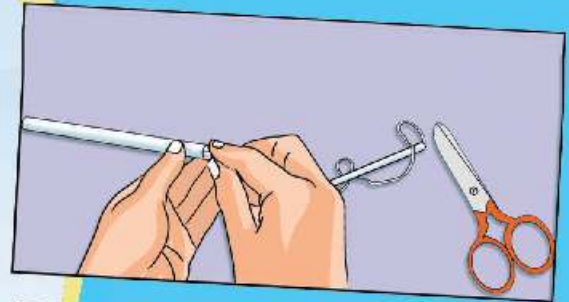
Bubble mix (dishwashing liquid mixed with water and glycerine in the proportion 2:6:4 parts of each), straws and strings of different thicknesses.

How to go about it:

1. Cut the straw into two equal halves. Snip around half a metre of string and run it through the two straws.
2. Knot the string with a big knot and pull it inside one of the straws so that the string stays taut.
3. Now you have a rectangular frame! Dip the frame in the bubble mix and lift it out carefully. A soap film window is stretched across the rectangle.
4. Experiment with thicker or thinner string if you don't get it right the first time.
5. Hold the frame up and twist it around to get interesting shapes. Experiment with different frame sizes.

Blow by Blow

Bubbles are held in shape because of surface tension. Water molecules on their own tend to stick too closely together. Add soap and voila! The surface tension decreases just enough to blow a good bubble!



How a Pig Learned to Herd Sheep

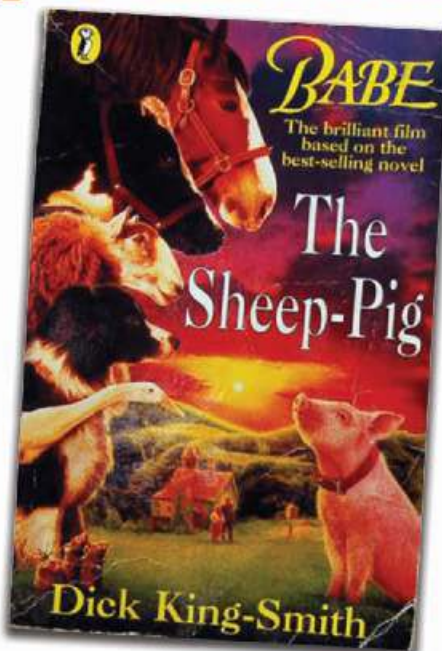
Title: The Sheep-Pig

Author: Dick King-Smith

DO you remember the movie *Babe*? It is the story of a pig that becomes better than a sheepdog at herding sheep! The film, which was a huge box-office success when it was released in 1995, was based on a book titled *The Sheep-Pig*, by British children's writer Dick King-Smith. The book won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize in 1983.

Farmer Hogget wins a piglet at a country fair after guessing its weight correctly. The piglet, which had squealed and squirmed when others picked it up, goes quiet when Hogget lifts him. He stares at him with bright intelligent eyes striking a chord deep in Hogget's heart. He takes it home. His wife is pleased because she can fatten it up in time for Christmas.

At the farm, the piglet (whom Hogget just calls 'Pig') is adopted by the sheepdog, a collie named Fly, who has four pups. She feels sorry for the little runt who tells her that he misses his mother. She used to call him (and his brothers and sisters) 'Babe'. Though the pups make fun of Babe, because they think pigs are stupid, Fly comes to love the pig. He follows her around faithfully, much to Farmer Hogget's amusement. She teaches him



to herd the ducks and Hogget is amazed when he sees Babe separating the brown ducks from the white.

The sheep are another matter altogether. Though Fly insists that the sheep were foolish and needed to be dealt with in a bossy way, Babe feels that politeness would work better. He makes friends with an elderly ewe he calls 'Ma'. Ma tells him that dogs descended from wolves and

that they were sworn enemies of sheep. She thinks Babe has very good manners compared to the sheepdogs which were always nagging and nipping and barking at the sheep. One day when Fly and Farmer Hogget are away, Babe trots up the hill where the sheep are grazing to make their acquaintance.

At the same time, sheep rustlers (thieves) arrive to steal Hogget's sheep. It is Babe who rescues the sheep and drives them to safety! He is able to do it with the help of Ma who convinces them that Babe is different from Fly. The sheep are all too eager to follow him.

When Hogget realises that Babe is a master at herding sheep, he enters him for the sheepdog trials. Babe requires little training and Fly, far from being jealous, encourages him like a proud mother.

Then one day, Farmer Hogget finds Babe standing over a dead Ma, his snout drenched in her blood. He is stunned. Could sweet, gentle Babe be a killer?

Funny, heart-warming and entertaining, *The Sheep-Pig* has a valuable lesson hidden away: a lot more can be achieved by being polite and soft-spoken than by being rude and bossy!

SILVER SCREEN

The Christmas Killjoy

THE Grinch is a furry green, grouchy character who lives a solitary life in a cave on Mt. Crumpet, north of Whoville village. His only companion is his trusted pooch, Max. They go down to Whoville only when they run out of food and they want to do mischief. Every Christmas, the Grinch's solitude is shattered by the noisy celebrations of the Whos (residents of Whoville). When the Whos declare that they are going to make Christmas celebrations three times bigger that year, he decides to spoil their plans in order to get some quiet. He plots to steal the Whos' gifts, food and decorations by posing as Santa Claus.

In the meantime, in Whoville, a young girl called Cindy-Lou Who plans to trap Santa while he is making his rounds to ask him to help her overworked single mother. Unlike other Whos, Cindy-Lou doesn't want any gift from Santa for herself — she

only wants to see her mother happy. Will her generous holiday spirit succeed in changing the Grinch's heart?

A 3D computer-animated film, *The Grinch* is an adaptation of Dr. Seuss' classic holiday tale *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (1957). British actor Benedict Cumberbatch of *Sherlock* fame provides the voice of the Grinch. With its cast of endearing characters, witty jokes and rich visuals, *The Grinch* makes for a wonderful family movie. Its biggest strength is its heart-warming story and message, emphasizing that Christmas is not just about gifts and candy canes but also about sharing, kindness and togetherness.

Title: The Grinch (2018)

Directors: Yarrow Cheney, Scott Mosier



That's so cool, er... cold!

THE United States was caught in a polar vortex in the winter of 2014 and again in 2019, when temperatures plunged to record levels. A polar vortex is the super cold or frigid air that normally circulates around the Arctic or the North Pole. It usually remains there, occasionally causing outbreaks of cold weather in North America, but in those years, high pressure systems over Alaska and Greenland drove large chunks of it further south. Sub-zero temperatures cause a number of weird phenomena. Here are some!

Soda Slush

Soda will transform to slush almost magically. A sealed bottle of soda cooled for a few hours in the snow, and then opened, turns the liquid to slush. Normally, pure water freezes at 0°C but the added ingredients in soda lower the freezing point, making the beverage liquid at super-cool temperatures. Opening the soda bottle lowers the pressure inside and releases tiny bubbles of carbon dioxide that serve as the seeds for ice crystals, forming a frosty and delicious slush. Glass bottles and aluminium cans tend to work better than plastic bottles.

Instant Snow or Hail

Throwing boiling water into freezing air produces instant hailstones or snow. Cold air is very dense, meaning its molecules are packed close together, leaving little room for water vapour molecules. When boiling water is thrown into the chilly, dry air, there's no place for the water droplets to go. So the vapour condenses on microscopic particles in the air and forms crystals.

Frozen Bubbles

When temperatures dip below -11°C , you can make frozen soap bubbles. The trick is to blow them up in the air so that they have the time to freeze before hitting the ground. The bubbles will form crystalline patterns and when they break, they look a bit like the shell of a cracked egg.

Don't Get Stuck!

NOWADAYS icetrays are usually made of plastic. Formerly they were invariably made of metal and whenever one took the ice tray out of the freezer, the fingers would get stuck to the tray.

The reason is that there's always some moisture on the hand and when the hand comes in contact with the cold surface of the tray, the moisture freezes, cementing the fingers to the tray.

Children living in cold climates sometimes dare each other to touch a metal flagpole with their tongue. If this is done in winter the tongue can get stuck to the pole — for the same reason that the fingers get stuck to the icetray.

Early explorers in Antarctica found that if they touched cold metal with moist bare hands, the hands would get stuck to the metal. If they then tried to pull their hands free they would lose some skin.

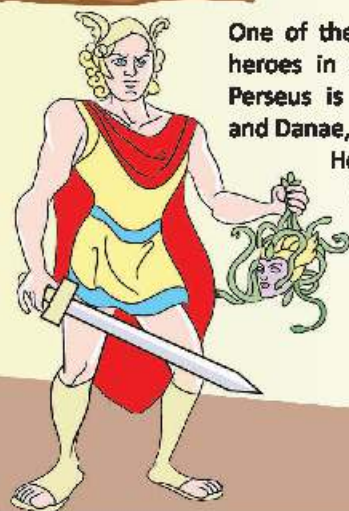
A surgeon in the U.S. navy, Captain E.E. Hedblom, writing in the 'Polar Manual', offers this advice to travellers in Antarctica:

"Do not touch cold metal with moist bare hands. If you should inadvertently stick a hand to cold metal, urinate on the metal to warm it and save some inches of skin. If you stick both hands, you'd better have a friend along."



It's all Greek!

PERSEUS



One of the most celebrated heroes in Greek mythology, Perseus is the son of Zeus and Danae, a mortal princess. He slew the Gorgon Medusa and rescued Andromeda, the princess of Ethiopia, from a sea monster.

GRAEAE, OR PHORCIDES

Also called the three grey sisters, they have a single eye through which they all see and a single tooth with which they eat. Perseus compelled the Graeae to reveal the location of the Gorgons by stealing their eye.



GORGONS

They are three dreaded monsters who are sisters. Named Stheno, Euryale and Medusa, they have ugly faces and snakes in place of hair. Anyone who gazes into their eyes is instantly turned to stone. Of the three, only Medusa is mortal. Perseus cuts off her head by observing her reflection in his shiny bronze shield.



STYX

It is the mythical marshy river that forms the boundary between the Earth and the Underworld. The goddess of this river, also called Styx, is the personification of hatred. The gods swear binding oaths by the river Styx. In some versions, Styx has miraculous powers and can make a person immortal.



NIKE (VICTORIA IN ROMAN MYTHOLOGY)



She is the winged goddess of victory in both wars and peaceful competitions. She wears golden sandals, carries a lyre to play the victory song and a laurel wreath to crown the winner. The daughter of the giant Pallas and the river Styx, Nike and her three sisters, Kratos (power), Bia (force) and Zelus (zeal), are sentinels of Zeus' throne. Nike is also his charioteer.

ART BEAT

Music from Ice

EVERY year, Norway stages an Ice Music Festival. It is the only event in the world dedicated to the art of playing music on instruments made out of ice! And not any ice will do. Manmade ice produces instruments with an inferior tone, so only naturally frozen ice is used.

In 2018 a team of ice carvers chose the frozen waters from Lake Finse, as well as ice from a glacier located nearby. Armed with chainsaws, chisels and hammers, these special sculptors transformed great blocks of ice into guitars, keyboards, drums and woodwind instruments. Even the stage was carved out of ice.

Terje Isungset, a renowned Norwegian jazz percussionist, came up with the idea of ice instruments in 1999 when he was performing inside a frozen waterfall. He first made a drum, then an ice trumpet and an ice harp.

The goal of the festival is to challenge musicians to try new instruments that might not sound exactly like the normal ones. The tones are similar but softer.

Playing an ice instrument is uncomfortable because the musicians cannot wear gloves. They take turns performing, so they have time to warm up their fingers.

Icy Wonders

SCULPTING ice is actually more difficult than carving metal, wood or stone. Not only is the mood of the raw material dependent on whether it's sunny or chilly, it is also notoriously difficult to find the best ice — made from pure, clean water with the minimum of air bubbles.

Ice sculptors use traditional chisels as well as modern power tools and die grinders to help them create enormous works of art, some of which are as high as a five-storeyed building! And where do they display their wonders? At the numerous international ice and snow festivals that are held from January to March in countries that are located near the Arctic Circle — like Canada, China, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Alaska (USA) and Russia.

Oldest among these is Canada's Quebec City Winter Carnival that began in the 1880s. It attracts thousands of visitors. Twenty teams, half of them from other countries, are chosen to take part in the competition.

In neighbouring Alaska, the Ice Art Championship held in February–March sees 100 sculptors from all over the world display their creations made of pristine natural ice. The Kids Park is a lure for children of all ages who glide down its ice slides or take a spin in the ice merry-go-round!

One of the attractions at the 2003 Harbin International Ice & Snow Festival in China, was an impressive 15-m-high Taj Mahal replica in ice built by a team from Air-India, the first time that India took part. For centuries, Harbin was just a dot on the map. During the long, freezing winters, when temperatures dipped to -25°C , the local fishermen would carve ice blocks from the frozen rivers into rough lampshades and hollow bulbs. These were placed over candles to prevent the icy winds from blowing them out. In 1963, the residents organised the first ice lantern show. The show was a success and since then Harbin has been host to the annual Ice and Snow Festival, which was officially launched in 1985. The ice is harvested from the Songhua River to craft the likenesses of political bigwigs, television and movie legends, comic book heroes, animals, fairytale characters, religious figures, glittering castles and replicas of world famous monuments.

Thousands of neon lights fixed inside the sculptures come on at night, transforming the entire site into a breathtaking and surreal thing of beauty.



LOOKING BACK

The Spy Explorer



The British East India Company set into motion a mammoth project in 1802 — the Great Trigonometrical Survey. It aimed at measuring the entire Indian subcontinent with scientific precision.

In the 1860s, a young Indian named Nain Singh Rawat joined the Company's ranks. He was a pioneering surveyor who explored the Himalayas, especially Tibet, for the British. His efforts were commendable because he braved high altitudes and difficult terrains without any maps to guide him.

Nain Singh was born in 1830 in Kumaon, Uttarakhand. During his growing years, he visited Tibet many times with his father for trade purposes. He interacted with the Tibetans and learned their language and customs. The experience stood him in good stead in his later career.

His first foray into mapping happened when he was recruited by two German geographers, the Schlegel brothers, in 1855. With them, he travelled to Manasarovar Lake and Rakshastal and then further to Gartok and Ladakh.

Secret Service

In 1863, he joined the Great Trigonometrical Survey in Dehradun. He was trained for two years in the use of scientific instruments and some clever ways of taking measurements and recording information. He was adept at recognising constellations. He was also taught the art of disguise — at the time, the British were competing with the Russians to make inroads into Tibet and wanted to map its land secretly. Moreover, they could not survey the land themselves as foreigners were forbidden from entering Tibet, which was under Chinese rule.

Nain Singh learned to take steps of a fixed length, irrespective of whether he was climbing up or down or walking on level surface. He was given a rosary with 100 beads to record the distances he walked. Singh would slip one bead after every 100 steps; so a complete length of the rosary represented 10,000 steps. Accordingly, a mile (1.6 km) was calculated to

be around 2,000 steps. To determine the altitude of a place, he would dip a thermometer into tea water just as it came to a boil.

Over the next decade, Nain Singh undertook many expeditions into Tibet. To avoid suspicion, he disguised himself as a monk. His prayer wheel concealed his compass and scrolls of vital observations and measurements while a walking stick hid his thermometer. The sextant and other surveying instruments were hidden in false bottoms of chests.

Charting New Ground

Between 1865–66, Nain Singh travelled 1,931 km from Kathmandu to Lhasa; he met the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama during the trip. He travelled along the Tsangpo and realised that the Tsangpo and Brahmaputra rivers are one. He returned to India via the Manasarovar Lake.

On his second expedition, in 1867, he visited the fabled Thok Jalung gold mines. He observed that the workers mined gold only near the surface as they believed that digging deeper was a crime against Mother Earth. He also mapped the sources of the Sutlej and Indus rivers.

He embarked on his final expedition in 1874, going from Leh (Ladakh) to Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh) via Lhasa. During this journey, he located the easternmost point of Lake Pangong.

The intrepid 'spy explorer' was code-named Pundit and his cousin, Mani Singh, who accompanied him, was called Second Pundit. Thereafter all surveyors were called Pundits.

For his extraordinary contribution in amassing new geographical data, Nain Singh was awarded several honours by the Royal Geographical Society.

Tidbits

- ◆ When Nain Singh was in Lhasa during his first expedition, his true identity was discovered by two Kashmiri businessmen who lived there. However, they did not give him away and even lent him some money.
- ◆ Nain Singh had originally intended to visit Peking (Beijing) on his final trip but the fear of being discovered and imprisoned made him abandon his plan.
- ◆ His work was instrumental in helping the British lead a military expedition into Tibet in 1903.
- ◆ His detailed diaries are probably the first examples of travelogues written in Hindi.



HANDBALL

The 26th World Women's Handball Championship (29 November to 17 December, 2023) was co-hosted by Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

History

HANDBALL was probably played in Rome, Egypt and some South American nations in ancient times. However the modern version of the game started as late as the 19th century, in northern Europe. It is much younger than other team sports.

It is a game resembling football but played with the hands instead of the feet. Players try to score goals by throwing a ball into their opponent's goal, which is 2 m high and 3 m wide. The court on which it is played is 40 m wide and 20 m long. Each team consists of seven members.

The first International match for men was played between Germany and Belgium in 1925. Handball became an Olympic sport for men, in 1972, and for women, in 1976.

The Partille Cup is the largest handball tournament in the world.

Rules

- ◆ The ball is made of black rubber. The ball in men's competition is 58 to 60 cm in circumference. The ball used by women is smaller.
- ◆ Players can hold the ball for 3 seconds only before they pass or shoot it.
- ◆ Players cannot block each other from hitting the ball.

Greats

John Cavanagh, an Irish immigrant, was a popular player. Phil Casey was the first world champion. He beat all rivals till he retired in 1900. He was the one who built the first proper handball court with four walls, in Brooklyn, in 1882. He came to be known as the father of American handball.



Did You Know?

A South Korean film, *Forever the Moment*, released in 2008, is about a few housewives who take to handball and make it to the Olympics. Based on a true story, it ran to packed houses.

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SCHOOL LIVE

CALENDAR 2024

JANUARY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

MARCH

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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APRIL

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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MAY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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JUNE

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

■ Listed Holidays

■ Saturdays & Sundays

SCHOOL LIVE

CALENDAR

2024

JULY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

AUGUST

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

OCTOBER

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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NOVEMBER

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

DECEMBER

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

■ Listed Holidays

■ Saturdays & Sundays

APPLY GLUE STICK HERE TO PASTE ON YOUR NOTEBOOK

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THE MANY SPLENDoured GRASS

There are many varieties of grass—some useful, some decorative and some others, just plain weeds. In size, they vary from the diminutive lawn grass to the gigantic bamboo.

Grass is classified as 'wild' and 'domesticated'. The high elephant grass grows in jungles. It is so named because it is a favourite food of elephants and can grow to the height of an elephant, from 4 metres to 7 metres. Stretches of elephant grass offer the perfect cover to predators like tigers to get close enough to their prey. Besides, it is also useful as fodder and scientists are experimenting with it for a biofuel.

Grass does have its decorative uses as well. Red fountain grass looks quite gorgeous in any garden setting. It grows up to 1.2 m high and can spread very rapidly if not controlled. The colour of the leaves ranges from red to purple and the bloom

wisps (flower heads) are also red. The Japanese silver grass is statelier with muted silvery tones. It grows upright and dense and so can be grown as a hedge or a screen.

On Sporting Ground

Without Bermuda grass, there wouldn't be any golf. It is grown in golf courses around the world. It grows in over 100 countries and is known by different names including "Kweekgras" in South Africa, "couch grass" in Australia and "devil's grass" in India. While it is indispensable to sport, it is also considered a weed, which can wreak havoc in sugarcane, corn, cotton fields and vineyards. Because once it has taken root it is very difficult to eradicate.

As for lawns at home, people prefer the Korean or Mexican Carpet grass varieties. Both are known as jumping grass, probably because they grow in thick spongy clumps that are most inviting to jump on. They are quite hardy and require little maintenance.

Any lawn, along with plenty of water and sunlight, also requires weeding. It can be very easy for weeds, if left to grow for long, to take over your lawn and choke out the other grass you have carefully tended. The prime culprit among these is the crab grass. It is a creeping variety of grass which lies flat against the ground. While it dies in cold weather, it leaves ugly yellow or blank patches in the lawn.

In Africa, the seeds of crab grass are used to make flour.

Fast Facts

There are about 10,000 species of grass in the world, which cover almost 20 per cent of the earth's surface.

- ◆ Some grasses can clone themselves and so the species are hundreds of years old.
- ◆ Grass is made up of 70–80% water.
- ◆ They are the toughest plants around, being able to tolerate varying temperatures and grow despite being trampled and grazed upon.
- ◆ They are food for many insects, birds and animals.

Strange but True

The unusual grass trees are native to Australia. These grow very slowly as their trunks are made up of leaf bases held together by the plant's resin. A tree can take 27 years to grow just 30 cm. It can grow to over 4 metres in height and has a canopy of long grass-like foliage, hence its name. The trees flower once in 2–3 years and can live for over 600 years!

Did You Know?

'Autumn Light', 'Dixieland', 'Flamingo' and 'November Sunset' are exotic names of silver grass.

Name



Elon Musk

Entrepreneur and investor. Considered the wealthiest man in the world with a net worth of approximately 230 billion US dollars. Born in Pretoria, South Africa on June 28, 1971, he heads companies such as Space X and is CTO of X corp. Also co-founded companies like Neuralink and Open AI and former head of Tesla, Inc. Took over Twitter for 44 billion US dollars and re-named it 'X'. A controversial figure, Elon Musk's products and ideas kick the hornet's nest.

Place



East Jerusalem

Seen as one of the most 'intractable' issues in the 'Israeli-Palestinian' conflict. East Jerusalem is a disputed territory. A number of countries recognise it as the capital of Palestine while quite a few more assert that it will be the capital of the Palestinians and call it an 'occupied territory'. So termed as the Israelis have occupied this area and the international community regards the Israeli settlements as 'illegal' under international law.

Thing



Elephant's Ear

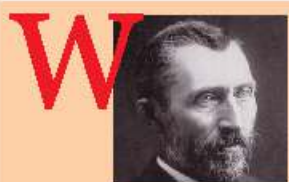
'Colocasia esculenta'. A common name for a group of tropical perennial plants with large heart shaped leaves rich in Vitamin C and thiamine (Vitamin B1) and Flavin (Vitamin B2). It is used to treat insect stings and to prevent swelling and pain. Grows best in part shade or under filtered sun, it has optimal growth in areas where it receives morning sunlight and afternoon shade. Also known as 'Buddha's Hand', it is believed to attract good luck.

Animal



Egret

Wading bird found in wetlands in warm, temperate to tropical parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Type of Heron that has long bills, long necks, long legs and short tails having white or buff plumage. The word 'Egret' has its origin in the word 'algrette', which means both 'Silver Heron' and 'brush' which refers to the long feathers that seem to cascade down an egret's back. Living near water, their diet consists of fish, frogs, snakes and insects.



Van Gogh

Vincent Willem Van Gogh, born on 30 March 1853 and died on 29 July 1890, was a Dutch painter and among the most influential figures in the history of western art. In a little over ten years, he created nearly 2100 artworks. Including portraits, landscapes, still life and self-portraits. His works are marked by bold colours and telling brush work that contributed to modern art.



Vizag

Visakhapatnam is a port city on the bay of Bengal in the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Also known as Vizag and Waltair, it is the most populous metropolitan city in the state. It is famous for its numerous beaches. Vizag is home to the oldest shipyard in India. It is popular for its traditional textiles and handicrafts and other local produce. It has a stunning coastline.



Velvet

A type of woven fabric made from silk, cotton, nylon, etc, defined by a soft, downy surface formed by clipped yarns. Originally made from silk, pure silk velvet is a rare commodity these days. Today it is made from synthetic material like polyester, nylon, rayon or viscose. They can be made water repellent and crush resistant. It is used in clothing and upholstery.



Vampire Bat

Members of the sub-family 'Desmodontinae', they are generally found in Central and South America. They are leaf nosed bats. Their primary and virtually sole food source is the blood of other animals, a dietary trait called hematophagy. Though bat bites don't hurt, vampire bats can spread the disease called rabies. This bat can harm farmers' livestock but can be tame and friendly.

THAT'S A FACT!

Thanda Thanda, Cool Cool!

Here are cool (pun intended) facts related to winter that are sure to bring you some cheer!

Salt is commonly used to melt ice on roads. But since it harms the environment, some places are now using beet juice, beer waste, pickle brine and even cheese brine to prep roads before snowstorms.



An extreme fear of cold, including cold weather and cold objects, is called cryophobia. (Cryos is Greek for cold.) Other winter-related phobias include chionophobia (fear of snow), chionoethyellaphobia (blizzards) and nivisophobia (avalanches).



Every winter, participants at the International Hair Freezing Contest held in Canada's Takhini Hot Springs dunk their heads underwater, emerge into the cold air and style their hair into stiff, gravity-defying hairdos.



The little known sport of ski ballet was once part of the Winter Olympics. It featured the same kind of spins and jumps that are seen in ballet and figure skating, except that these were performed on skis.



A unique winter getaway is the Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort in Finnish Lapland. Guests stay in glass igloos that offer spectacular views of the snowy landscape, as well as the Northern Lights that shimmer in the night sky above.



To survive the winter of New Zealand's Southern Alps, a species of giant cricket called the mountain stone weta simply freezes over. Up to 82 per cent of its body water can freeze — the highest known percentage for any invertebrate in the world. When spring arrives, the weta thaws out.



THE LIGHTER SIDE

English Vinglish

THE English class was on. Mrs. Sherman was teaching the students new words. She wrote the word PREGNANT on the board.

"Who can use this word in a sentence?" she asked the class.

Jasleen raised her hand and said, "The pregnant fireman came out of the burning building like a superhero."

Mrs. Sherman looked at her quizzically and asked, "Jasleen, do you know what 'pregnant' means?"

"Sure, Ma'am. It means, 'carrying a child'."



Twist in the Tale

IT was storytelling time in Little Tots playschool. As the little ones looked on expectantly, their teacher Sonia picked out a large colourful book. It was the fairy tale about the three little pigs and the big bad wolf.

She read about how the first little pig wanted to build his house. She asked the children, "Where do you think the little pig went to get the materials for building his house?"

Chandni said, "He went to a shop."

"Very good, Chandni. What do you think he said to the shopkeeper?" Sonia asked the others.

A child put her hand up and said, "Please may I buy some straw?"

Sonia nodded appreciatively and continued, "And what do you think the shopkeeper said?"

Tarun's hand shot up and he said excitedly, "Aaaaaaagh! A talking pig!"



The Phantom Hand

IT was already dark when Buddy's classes got over. He was walking home from college when he got caught in a fearsome storm on the highway. It rained in torrents and Buddy could barely see where he was going. He hoped a car would come along and he could ask for a lift.

Suddenly, a car drew up next to him and stopped. Grateful for the lift, Buddy quickly hopped into the back of the car and shut the door. It was only then that he realised to his horror that there was no one behind the wheel and the engine wasn't even on! The car lurched forward and Buddy yelped with fear.

The car picked up speed until it came to a curve. Buddy opened his mouth but could not scream. Then out of nowhere, a hand stuck itself inside through the window and turned the wheel! Buddy almost fainted with fright.

The ominous hand disappeared, only to appear seconds later to turn the wheel again. This happened repeatedly, convincing Buddy that he would meet a sinister end. But never did the hand touch him.



After what seemed like the longest five minutes of his life, Buddy saw the hopeful glimmer of a light down the road. He could make out it was a roadside café. Buddy jumped out of the car and fled to the café, not daring to look back.

Panting and wet, he squealed, "I saw a ghost! I got into a car and..." And Buddy described his eerie experience to the other diners.

A silence fell upon the café. The door opened and in walked two men, both soaking wet and panting like Buddy. As they walked to a table, they heard Buddy blabbering. Pointing to him, one of them exclaimed, "Hey Randy, that's the moron who jumped into our car while we were pushing it!"



BRAND MASALE

Swad Jo Reh Jaaye Yaad



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on our website!





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