

# SCHOOL LIVE

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DECEMBER 2024

Monthly  
₹160



## REWIND 2024





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GURUGRAM  
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INTEGRATED SCHOOL  
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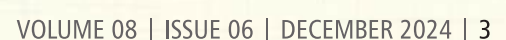


*Extensive support to Economically Weaker Sections*

**'Arise Awake and Stop not till the Goal is Reached' - Swami Vivekananda**

Lotus Valley International School, M-Block South City-II, Nirvana Country, Sector-50, Behind The Close (North), Gurugram-122018







**Ms. Sonia Chhabra, Principal  
Bal Bharati Public School, Pitampura**

**A**s the year 2024 draws to a close, I am filled with a sense of pride and joy. What a remarkable year it has been for our nation, and for the world of chess in particular! The crowning glory of the year is undoubtedly D. Gukesh's historic win, as he brings the World Chess Championship title to India. This achievement is all the more remarkable, given that Gukesh has broken numerous records, including becoming the youngest-ever undisputed Chess Champion of the World.

As we bid adieu to 2024, we welcome the new year with hope, optimism, and excitement. To help you stay organized and focused in the coming year, this issue of School LIVE magazine comes with a beautiful calendar for 2025. Simply detach the center-spread

pages and place it wherever you please – on your study desk, bedroom wall, or anywhere else that suits your convenience.

For all you young scientists out there, our feature on scientific experiments will surely delight you. Who says science has to be boring or complicated? With a little creativity and curiosity, you can conduct amazing experiments in the comfort of your own backyard!

In this issue, we also explore the fascinating world of gossip in our Mindscape section. You'll be surprised to learn that gossip is an integral part of our daily lives, and how it can have both positive and negative impacts on our relationships and communities.

As we step into the new year, many of us will be making new year resolutions. While making resolutions can be inspiring and motivating, it's the adherence to these resolutions that ultimately leads to success. So, take the challenge and test your resolve in the forthcoming year.

This issue also brings to you a recap of 2024, highlighting key events and happenings that defined the year. In doing so, we also pay tribute to many luminaries whom we lost during the year. The recap also serves as a valuable reference point, ensuring its relevance and shelf-life for years to come.

School LIVE remains committed to inspiring and creating time-relevant content for you. From brain teasers and fun articles to knowledge sections that will stay with you forever, we strive to make learning an enjoyable and enriching experience. As always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions, and wish you a happy, healthy, and successful new year!

**Sonia Chhabra** ■





# — DECEMBER — THE MONTH — OF GIVING ! —

December, the last month of the year, is a time for celebration, reflection, and giving. It's a month filled with myths, legends, and beliefs that have been passed down through generations. In this article, we'll explore some of the fascinating stories and traditions associated with December.

### The Origins of December

December gets its name from the Latin word "decem," meaning ten. It was originally the tenth month of the Roman calendar, which began in March. However, when the Romans later changed their calendar to start in January, December became the twelfth and final month.

### The Month of Giving

December is often referred to as the "month of giving." This is largely due to the tradition of exchanging gifts during Christmas, which falls on December 25. However, the spirit of giving extends beyond just Christmas. Many people use December as an opportunity to give back to their communities, volunteer at local charities, and donate to worthy causes.

### A Month of Divine Significance in India

In India, December is considered a sacred month, often referred to as the "month of the Gods." It is believed that during this time, the Gods descend upon the earth, and divine worship and poojas associated with Gods are undertaken. Human engagements like marriages and other auspicious rituals take a backseat during this period.

Instead, Gods' marriages are celebrated with great fervor, and cultural extravaganzas are held throughout the month. The mood is upbeat, and people come together to rejoice in the divine presence.

### A Foodie's Delight

December is also a time for foodies to rejoice. In India, where winter is in full swing, the markets are filled with an abundance of delicious winter vegetables and fruits. Traditional dishes and goodies associated with winter are also prepared during this time, making it a culinary delight.

### Myths and Legends

December is steeped in mythology and legend. In ancient Rome, December was a time for festivals and celebrations in honor of the gods. The Romans believed that December was a time when the veil between the mortal world and the spirit world was at its thinnest. This made it an ideal time for divination, fortune-telling, and communicating with the dead.

In many cultures, December is also associated with the winter solstice, which falls on December 21 or 22. The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year and the beginning of the sun's journey back towards the equator. Many ancient cultures

celebrated the winter solstice as a time of renewal and rebirth.

### Beliefs and Traditions

December is a month filled with beliefs and traditions that have been passed down through generations. In many cultures, December is a time for feasting, merriment, and celebration. In others, it's a time for reflection, prayer, and contemplation.

Some popular December traditions include:

- Decorating homes and trees with lights, ornaments, and garlands
- Exchanging gifts with family and friends
- Cooking special meals and treats, such as cookies and cakes
- Singing carols and festive songs
- Attending church services and midnight mass

### Revel in the Transition Period - Old to New !

December, and January that follows, are months that are steeped in history, mythology, and tradition. It's a time for celebration, reflection, and giving. Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or simply the winter solstice, December is a month that's full of joy, wonder, and magic. So let's make the most of it and fill our hearts and homes with love, laughter, and all the things that bring us joy !



# CHess SPECIAL Knowledge Hub!

## QUIZ TIME

1. Who is the author of the book "My 60 Memorable Games"?

- a. Bobby Fischer
- b. Garry Kasparov
- c. Viswanathan Anand

2. Which chess piece can move in an L-shape?

- a. Knight
- b. Bishop
- c. Rook

3. What is the name of the opening move 1. e4?

- a. King's Pawn Opening
- b. Queen's Pawn Opening
- c. Ruy Lopez

4. Who won the 1972 World Chess Championship?

- a. Bobby Fischer
- b. Boris Spassky
- c. Mikhail Botvinnik

5. What is the term for a pawn that has no opposing pawn on the same file?

- a. Passed Pawn
- b. Isolated Pawn
- c. Weak Pawn

6. Which chess tournament is considered the most prestigious?

- a. World Chess Championship
- b. Grand Slam
- c. Linares Tournament

7. Who is the youngest player to become a grandmaster?

- a. Sergey Karjakin
- b. Viswanathan Anand
- c. Magnus Carlsen

8. What is the name of the chess opening that starts with the moves 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5?

- a. Ruy Lopez
- b. Italian Game
- c. King's Gambit

9. Who won the 2013 World Chess Championship?

- a. Magnus Carlsen
- b. Viswanathan Anand
- c. Levon Aronian

10. What is the term for a position where a player's king is in check and there is no way to escape the check?

- a. Checkmate
- b. Stalemate
- c. Draw

11. Which chess piece is the most powerful?

- a. Queen
- b. Rook
- c. Bishop

12. Who is the author of the book "How to Reassess Your Chess"?

- a. Jeremy Silman
- b. Mark Dvoretsky
- c. Garry Kasparov

13. What is the name of the chess opening that starts with the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4?

- a. Queen's Gambit
- b. Slav Defense
- c. King's Indian Defense

14. Who won the 2000 World Chess Championship?

- a. Viswanathan Anand
- b. Vladimir Kramnik
- c. Garry Kasparov

15. What is the term for a pawn that is not supported by other pawns?

- a. Isolated Pawn
- b. Passed Pawn
- c. Weak Pawn

Answers: 1. Bobby Fischer 2. Knight 3. King's Pawn Opening 4. Bobby Fischer 5. Passed Pawn 6. World Chess Championship 7. Sergey Karjakin 8. Ruy Lopez 9. Magnus Carlsen 10. Checkmate 11. Queen 12. Jeremy Silman 13. Queen's Gambit 14. Viswanathan Anand 15. Isolated Pawn



# A CELEBRATION OF AHMEDABAD'S VIBRANT CULTURE

Every year, the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, comes alive with the vibrant sounds, colors, and rhythms of the Kankaria Carnival. This annual festival, held in the last week of December, is a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage and its ability to bring people together in celebration.

The Kankaria Carnival has a history that dates back to 2008, when it was first initiated to coincide with the renovation of the Kankaria Lake area. Over the years, it has evolved into a massive week-long event that showcases Gujarat's art, music, and culture. The carnival is a brainchild of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, which aims to promote the city's tourism and cultural landscape.

The carnival offers a diverse range of activities and events that cater to all ages and interests. Visitors can enjoy traditional dances, folk music, and performances by local celebrities. The carnival also features magic shows, horror houses, and roller coaster rides, making it a thrilling experience for families and children. Art enthusiasts can participate in painting competitions, while

history buffs can explore the Gujarat Police's Arms Exhibition.

One of the highlights of the Kankaria Carnival is its stunning lakefront setting. The carnival takes place around the picturesque Kankaria Lake, which is adorned with mesmerizing light shows and decorations. The lake's serene atmosphere provides a perfect backdrop for the carnival's vibrant celebrations.

The Kankaria Carnival is a celebration that embodies the spirit of Ahmedabad. It is a testament to the city's ability to come together and celebrate its rich cultural heritage. The carnival's success lies in its ability to create a sense of community and belonging among its visitors. As the carnival continues to grow and evolve, it remains an integral part of Ahmedabad's cultural landscape, a celebration that is deeply ingrained in the city's identity.

The Kankaria Carnival is an experience that will leave a lasting impression on its visitors. With its stunning lakefront setting, diverse range of events, and mesmerizing light shows, the carnival is an unforgettable experience that showcases the best of Ahmedabad's vibrant culture.



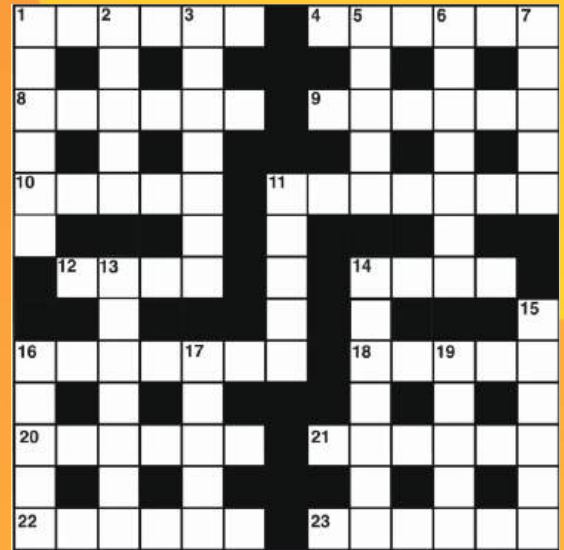
## Crossword

**Across:**

1. Sudden muscle movement (6)
4. Confused mess (6)
8. Unsullied (6)
9. Sharp curved weapon (6)
10. Veneer (5)
11. Bombarded (7)
12. \_\_\_\_ Rabbit/Fox (brother) (4)
14. Term of endearment for cat (4)
16. Locket (7)
18. Excessively sentimental (slang) (5)
20. November meteor showers (6)
21. Capital of Macedonia (6)
22. Suppressed (emotion) (4-2)
23. Organized way of doing things (6)

**Down:**

1. Stimulate one's curiosity (6)
2. Its capital is Rome (5)
3. Wedding food provider (7)
5. Die down (5)
6. Sunglasses (7)
7. Made a mistake (5)
11. Divide (5)
13. Old name of Myanmar's former capital (7)
14. It opens a lock to enter a secure area (7)
15. Ancient Greek academy (6)
16. Creature that builds coral reef (5)
17. Goodbye (5)
19. Ground-dwelling songbird (5)



**Answers:**  
**Across:** 1.Twitch 4.Tangle 8.Chaste 9.Dagger 10.Layer 11.Shelled 12.Ber 14.Puss 16.Pendant 18.Soppy 20.Leonid 21.Skopje 22.Pent-up 23.System  
**Down:** 1.Tickle 2.Italy 3.Caterer 5.Abate 6.Goggles 7.Erred 11.Split 13.Rangoon 14.Passkey 15.Lyceum 16.Polyp 17.Adieu 19.Pipit

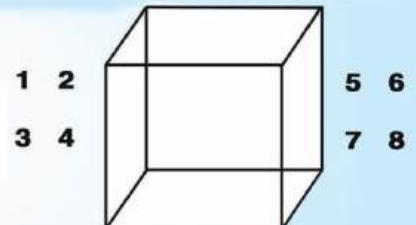
### A Quick Think

1. What kind of house weighs the least?
2. What kind of bet can you never win?
3. How can you write 'cow' using 13 letters?
4. When things go wrong, what can you always count on?
5. Sweety's favourite book is one that makes her rich if she gets a page from it and which makes her poorer if she gives away a page from it.  
Can you guess the book?



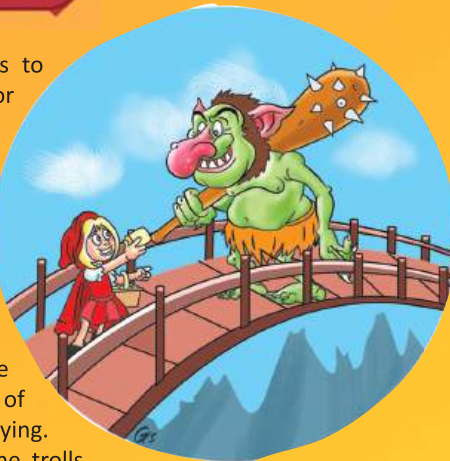
### B Corner to Corner

Place the numbers 1 to 8 on the vertices of the cube such that the sum of the four numbers on every face is the same.



### C Troll Toll

Red Riding Hood wants to take birthday cakes for her grandma who lives in the next town. On the way, she has to cross seven bridges, each of which is guarded by a troll. Each troll demands a tax. Before she can cross the bridge, she has to give them half of the cakes she is carrying. However, being kind, the trolls give her back one cake.



If Red Riding Hood wants to give two cakes to her grandma, how many cakes should she leave home with?

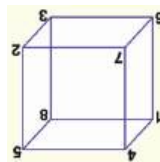
### D All About Wheels

Alex rides to the playground on his new bicycle gifted by his grandfather. When he reaches the playground, he sees 14 tricycles and bicycles parked there.

If there are a total of 38 wheels, how many tricycles are there?



**Answers:**  
 A. 1. A light-house 2. The alpha-bet 3. See o double you 4. Your fingers 5. A cheque book  
 B. \_\_\_\_  
 C. 2. At each bridge, Red Riding Hood gives one cake to the troll and receives one back in return, leaving her with 2 cakes after every bridge.  
 D. 10 tricycles  
 If there are 14 cycles, all have at least 2 wheels, i.e. 28 wheels. If there are 38 wheels in all, then  $38 - 28 = 10$  wheels are extra. This means there are 10 cycles with one extra wheel, i.e. 10 tricycles.





THE word 'gossip' comes from the Old English word 'godsip'. It was used to denote talk with people who are very close. Over a period of time, the word has come to mean idle chit chat about someone who is not present during the conversation.

We generally tend to think that gossip is bad. Why, then, do people gossip? Researchers have found that gossip is a universal phenomenon — people from almost all cultures engage in gossip. Contrary to popular belief, both men and women gossip, although what they gossip about may differ. It has been found that gossip serves some purpose and is beneficial in a way.

Gossip is a source of bonding. You typically gossip with people you

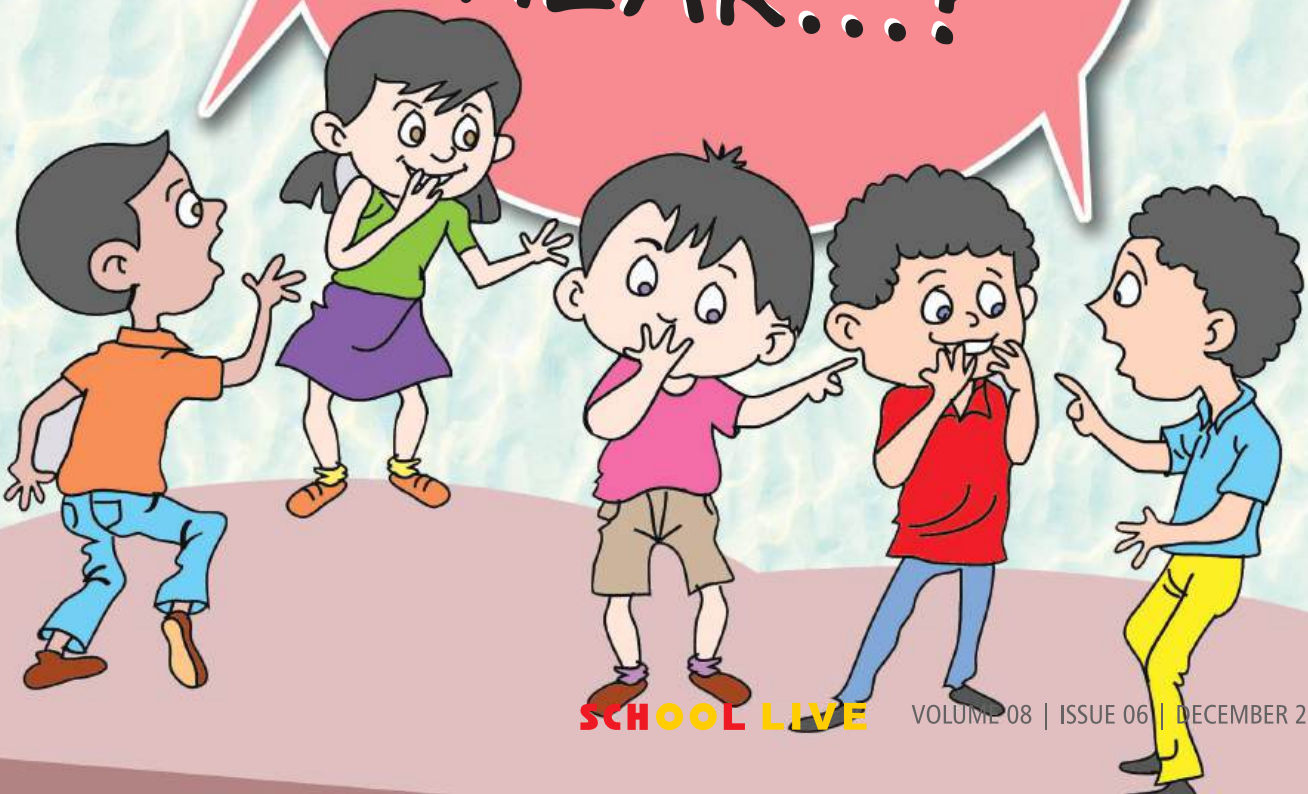
are comfortable with, and sharing confidential information tends to strengthen the alliance.

Gossip is a form of social regulation, through which norms about appropriate behaviour are taught to others and enforced. What you gossip about informs others in the group about what behaviours are seen as acceptable or unacceptable in your group. Gossip tends to keep people cooperative and well-behaved. If people believe that they may be gossiped about if they behave in undesirable ways, they are more likely to behave in appropriate ways, i.e. the threat of gossip is sufficient to enforce good behaviour. At the same time,

when you gossip about someone's undesirable behaviour, it may provide that person (when he/she finds out about the gossip) with an opportunity to change that behaviour, without others having to directly confront that person.

However not all gossip is helpful. Malicious gossip that is used to harm others and purposefully damage their reputation causes a lot of harm, and is seen as a kind of interpersonal violence. Cyber-gossip (engaging in gossip online through social media) can even be a form of cyber-bullying. It affects the atmosphere of the college/workplace. In general, it has also been found that individuals who gossip a lot are not trusted and are viewed unfavourably.

**DID  
YOU  
HEAR...?**





# Science in Your Backyard

MOST people think that scientific research is done by people in white coats and labs and after years and years of practice. But it is not so. You don't need a chemistry kit or a PhD to do research. You can do it in your own backyard with these simple steps.

### STEP 1. Think of a question.

It sounds too easy, but the first step to solving a problem is as basic as first describing a problem or a question to answer. The question can be just about anything. Your backyard can be a rich source of questions about the natural world.

For example: Do all flowers have five petals? Do all rabbits have white tails? Is the sky blue? How many spots does a butterfly's wing have? Or for more advanced learners, what will happen if I feed a plant salt water?

Now you'll notice that a lot of the questions described here can be answered in a yes/no format.

### STEP 2. Observe the natural process related to your question.

Your question becomes more specific as you discover more information about the thing that you





are trying to study. For example, you might find that the sky changes colour during the course of the day (morning, noon and night) or with the weather. Your question “Do flowers have 5 petals?” might depend on the type of plant that you are studying. Try to make your question specific. For example: Is the sky blue in the afternoon on a sunny day?

### **STEP 3: Collect information and document it.**

Now that you’ve got a pointed question, you have to collect information. If you want to find out the colour of the sky in the afternoon, you can take a picture of the sky. If you want to figure out how many petals a flower has, you have to count the petals. But, it is not possible to make an estimate about the question from just one observation. What if the flower you are studying is flawed or damaged because a squirrel has eaten some of its petals? What if the sky changed colour from blue to white on a particular day because of a mysterious space phenomenon?

That’s why it’s not enough to just make ONE observation. The more observations you make or samples you collect, the more information you will get, and the better and more nuanced your answer will be. But of course, the experiment has to end somewhere. Make sure you decide on an adequately large number of observations so that you can prove your findings.

### **STEP 4: Summarize your findings and present them to a willing audience.**

For this step, all you have to do is describe what you did to a willing audience. Presentation of findings is a key step in science. Thousands of people attend scientific conferences all around the world to find out what kind of questions people are asking and what are their conclusions. As you get more adept at this, you’ll learn to ask questions and find answers that nobody before you has ever found, and that is what we call ‘scientific research’.

Let’s take an example of a conclusion. You could say: “I wanted to find out the colour of the sky. I saw that the sky is pink in the mornings and in the evenings. If the sky was cloudy then there were patches of white in it. If it was about to rain then the sky was grey. But on 10 out of 10 sunny days, the sky was a bright blue in the afternoon!”

### **STEP 5: A more advanced question...**

Now that you’ve figured out the colour of the sky on a sunny day, you could build on this question. You could ask: why is the sky blue? Once again, you can start with the same sequence of steps to answer this new question. But bear in mind, as soon as the question gets more advanced, the techniques to answer them become more difficult as well. Why something is the way it is, is a higher level question because it does not have a yes/no quality.

And this is how the top brains in the world think about questions. Good luck in your quest to demystify the natural world!

**—Ambika Nadkarni**

# The Healing Touch

*This is the first part in a series about careers in medicine...*

MEDICAL courses train individuals in various aspects of healthcare, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to diagnose and treat patients. They involve in-depth studies of the human body alongside rigorous training and extensive practical experience.

While these are highly competitive courses, the financial reward can also be substantial.

## Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)

This is the basic degree required to practise as an allopathic doctor in India. A doctor can choose to specialise in a particular domain or be a general physician.

### Entrance Exam

The qualifying exam is the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test – Undergraduate (NEET UG). Students must qualify for NEET by completing Class 12 with Physics, Chemistry, Biology/Biotechnology and English with a minimum of 50 per cent aggregate marks in the Science stream and take part in the NEET counselling process.

### Course Details

The duration of the course is 4.5 years followed by a 12-month internship where students must complete a compulsory rotatory internship in hospitals. In the pre-clinical phase (first year), subjects like Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry are covered. The para-clinical phase (second year) includes Pathology, Microbiology, Pharmacology and Forensic Medicine. The clinical phase (third to final year) focuses on General Medicine, Surgery, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology as well as other specialities supplemented by clinical experience. The ethics of medical practice and information about various national-level health programmes is included in the curriculum that follows the National Medical Commission guidelines.

If a student wishes to specialise in a particular field, they can pursue a fellowship programme which is aimed at





enhancing skills and providing in-depth education in that speciality. They are usually short term, lasting from a few months to a year.

Doctors can also pursue a post-graduate degree in medicine or surgery.

The Master of Surgery (MS) is a three-year programme designed to provide aspiring surgeons with comprehensive knowledge and skills.

Doctor of Medicine (MD) is a three-year postgraduate degree with specialisations like Pathology, Gastroenterology, Psychiatry, etc.

MBBS graduates can also choose to do a post-graduate qualification called Diplomate of National Board (DNB). This is a full-time three-year programme that is considered equivalent to an MD or MS in terms of academic qualifications, as it provides advanced training in medical or surgical specialities.

### Job Opportunities

Medical doctors are employed in hospitals, clinics, etc. as a general physician, surgeon or a specialist. They can also have their own private practice.

## Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSc Nursing)



Nurses play a crucial role in the healthcare system by promoting health and assisting in patient recovery.

### Entrance Exams

To qualify for admission, candidates need a minimum of 50 per cent in the Science stream, with Physics, Chemistry and Biology (PCB). Some institutes accept state-level nursing entrance exams conducted by the respective authorities. Certain central institutes provide admission through NEET UG and candidates need to participate in NEET counselling.

### Course Details

The course lasts for 4 years and students acquire knowledge in subjects such as Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Nutrition, Medical-Surgical Nursing, Paediatric Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing, Community Health Nursing and Research Methodology.

The curriculum combines classroom learning with clinical training to develop essential skills.

Nurses also have opportunities for specialisations such as Critical Care Nursing, Paediatric Nursing, Nurse Education or Nursing Administration with additional diplomas. They may also pursue a Master of Science in Nursing (MSc Nursing) or a Master of Public Health (MPH).

### Job Opportunities

Graduates work as registered nurses in a variety of healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, community health centres and nursing homes. They can provide direct patient care, administer medications, assist in surgeries, educate patients and their families and contribute to healthcare management.

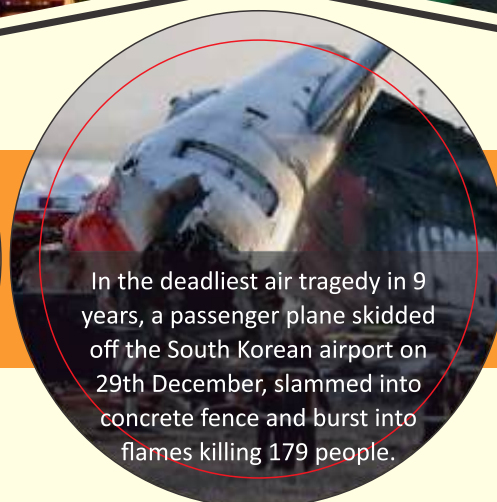
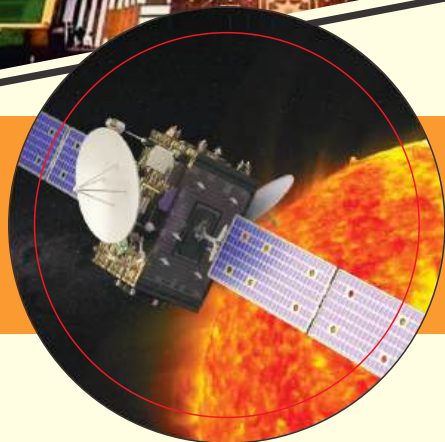


The Ayodhya Ram Mandir is a Hindu temple complex in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India was consecrated on January 22, 2024.

## RECAP 2024



D. Gukesh became the youngest-ever undisputed Chess Champion of the World.



In the deadliest air tragedy in 9 years, a passenger plane skidded off the South Korean airport on 29th December, slammed into concrete fence and burst into flames killing 179 people.



R. Ashwin retired from international cricket, leaving a legacy.

- The 96th Academy Awards saw "Oppenheimer" winning Best Film, and Cillian Murphy winning Best Actor.
- The K-Town Festival in Mumbai featured performances by several K-Pop artists.
- Maggie Smith, the renowned actress, passed away.

- Hurricane Helene caused widespread destruction and loss of life.
- Severe flooding affected several regions in Spain, resulting in significant damage and displacement.
- The Paris Summer Olympics took place, with the United States leading the medal count.
- Google's quantum chip innovation sparked technological advancements in various fields.
- India's economy demonstrated strength amidst global challenges, driven by key sectors.

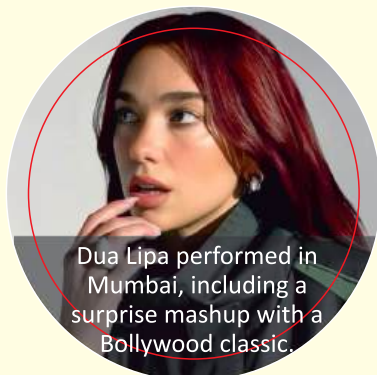
- Indian Bollywood films failed to make a significant impact globally.
- "Laapata Ladies" was selected for nomination but failed to advance.
- The Syrian Civil War saw Bashar al-Assad's regime ousted.
- Taylor Swift concluded her record-breaking world tour.
- Dua Lipa performed in Mumbai, showcasing her music.
- Toby Keith, the American singer-songwriter, passed away.

- NASA's Artemis III mission to the Moon saw Prada team up with Axiom Space to create spacesuits.
- Google unveiled a quantum chip that completes 33.3 trillion years of calculations in 1 nanosecond.



Taylor Swift's album "Midnights" won the Grammy Award for Album of the Year.





Dua Lipa performed in Mumbai, including a surprise mashup with a Bollywood classic.

- India's economy demonstrated resilience amidst global challenges.
- India's economy showed resilience, with growth in various
- The global economy faced challenges, including a geomagnetic storm.
- NASA's Artemis III mission made significant progress.

- Climate change remained a pressing global concern, with ongoing efforts to address its impacts.
- India won several international cricket tournaments.
- The UK held general elections, resulting in a new government.



Bryan Adams went on a seven-city tour in India, performing his iconic hits.

- The Indian government's budget focused on key allocations, in tandem with the development agenda of the ruling government.
- Spain experienced severe flooding, resulting in significant damage.
- The Russia-Ukraine War entered its third year.
- "Oppenheimer" won several Academy Awards.



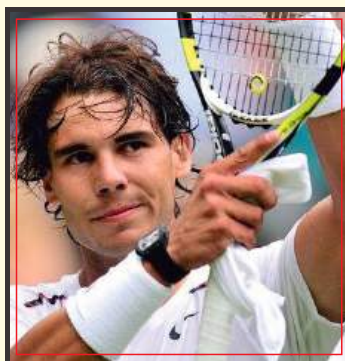
India wins T20 world crown.

- Renewable energy sources became increasingly prominent, reducing reliance on fossil fuels.
- The United States and China engaged in diplomatic efforts to resolve trade tensions.



Indian ace shooter Manu Bhaker gained wide recognition after her performance at the 2024 Olympics where she became the first Indian woman shooter to win an Olympics medal by winning a bronze in the 10m pistol event. She won another bronze in the 10m pistol mixed team event, thus becoming the first Indian to win two medals in a single Olympic Games.

Grandmaster Koneru Humpy won the Rapid world title in FIDE Women's Chess for the second time in her career, after defeating Grandmaster Irene Sukandar of Indonesia.



Rafael Nadal retired from tennis, leaving behind a legacy of 22 Grand Slam titles.

Allu Arjun returned with the blockbuster film "Pushpa 2," but faced challenges and criticism after a mishap.



Sumit Antil won the gold medal in the men's javelin throw F64 class at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, becoming the first Indian man to defend his title. He set a new Paralympic record of 70.59 meters.



## BJP RETAINS POWER

The general elections of 2024 in India for the Lok Sabha seats threw up quite a few surprise-wins and shock-defeats. Historically BJP has faced debacle whenever it has campaigned with overly confident slogans, as the 'India Shining' campaign and the 'Ab ki Baar Char So Paar' have demonstrated. Although far from reaching the 400 seats in the Lok Sabha, the BJP managed to scrape through as the single largest party in the lower house and retain power with its strategic alliances (NDA), particularly with Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar. In the latter part of the year in the state elections, BJP however staged a significant come back, particularly with victories in key states of Haryana and Maharashtra.



Former Indian Prime Minister and Economist of eminence, Dr. Manmohan Singh passed away on 26th December.



The 2024 US presidential election has yielded a significant outcome: Donald Trump's re-election. This development is poised to reshape the global landscape, sparking a mix of anticipation and uncertainty.

Trump's presidency has been characterized by a distinct blend of policy initiatives and leadership style. His re-election is likely to perpetuate these traits, influencing domestic and international affairs in profound ways.

The international community is now engaged in a collective reassessment, seeking to discern the implications of Trump's re-election. Some analysts foresee continuity in his administration's policies, while others anticipate adjustments or even seismic shifts.

### **Several key domains are likely to be impacted by Trump's re-election:**

**Global Economic Architectures :** Trump's trade policies have sparked intense debate. His re-election may lead to further renegotiations of trade agreements, potentially recasting the global economic order.

**Diplomatic Engagements :** Trump's approach to foreign policy has been marked by a complex interplay of cooperation and confrontation. His re-election may lead to continued tensions with certain nations, while also fostering cooperation with others.

**Regulatory Frameworks :** Trump's administration has been known for its efforts to streamline regulatory environments. His re-election may lead to



Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, passed away, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, integrity, and tireless advocacy for human rights and social justice.



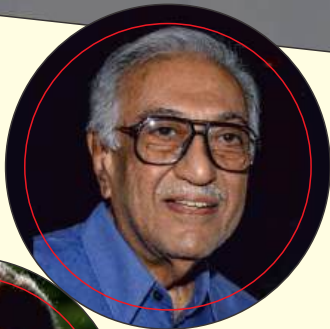
further changes in these frameworks, impacting various industries and sectors.

**4 Socio-cultural Narratives :** Trump's presidency has been marked by intense social and cultural debates. His re-election may continue to shape these conversations, influencing the trajectory of social movements and cultural narratives.

As stakeholders adapt to this evolving landscape, they will need to be responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. A nuanced understanding of the intricate relationships between politics, economics, and society will be crucial in addressing the implications of Trump's re-election.



Ratan Tata, revered by all and sundry, whose visionary leadership and philanthropic spirit have left an indelible mark on India's industrial landscape, passed away.



The most renowned for voice of Indian Broadcasting Ameen Sayani, Ghazal Maestro Pankaj Udhas and Fashion Legend Rohit Bal passed away in 2024.

Yamini Krishnamurthy: vibrant dancer who strived hard to take Bharatanatyam to the global stage passed away.



The Queen of Bhojpuri music Sharada Sinha passed away.

Zakir Hussain Allarakha Qureshi renowned Indian tabla player, composer, percussionist, music producer, and film actor passed away.



Shyam Benegal, the acclaimed Indian filmmaker, passed away.



# What is the Google graveyard?

IT is the place where discontinued Google apps go to die!

A technological giant, Google is in the forefront of developing new apps, services and products designed to make life easier for its users. Over the years, many of them have fallen into disuse owing to various reasons like low popularity, failure to meet the expectations of the users, software bugs or a change in company plans. If Google feels that a particular product has outlived its use, it pulls the plug on it.

So far, 289 products have ceased to exist since 2006. Google Deskbart, Google Answers and Writely were the first to be axed. The most recent ones are Goo.gl (2025) and Google Jamboard (2024). The earlier products killed include Google Plus (in April 2019) and Google Hangouts (in October 2019). Every one of the discontinued apps and products gets an honourable mention in the Google cemetery/graveyard along with the reason why it was discontinued. It is Google's way of paying its respects!



# What is the Elephant Express?

BOTSWANA, a landlocked country in southern Africa, has a population of around 1,30,000 elephants, the largest of any nation in that continent. The animals were responsible for killing 67 people between 2009 and 2019, the highest number of fatalities caused by a wild animal in Botswana, and 26 injuries, second after leopards.

The two-million hectare Okavango Delta, a World Heritage site, is located in north-west Botswana. It consists of a vast

inland river delta and wetlands. The eastern Okavango panhandle, a strip of territory extending north to Namibia's border, is an important crossing point for the elephants, which migrate to the Delta for water. This is where most of the man-elephant conflicts occur.

In the 13 villages here, there are an equal number of elephants and humans. Nearly 15,000 elephants live cheek-by-jowl with as many humans. The elephant population has tripled over the last 20 years, while many wild areas have been turned into farmland. So elephant encounters in the area have increased. It's not only cultivators who bump into elephants regularly but also schoolchildren and healthcare workers.

A small NGO called the Ecoexist Project, launched the Elephant Express bus in 2020 to ferry children and healthcare workers safely across elephant corridors. The buses, painted with attractive pictures of elephants, cover six villages identified as ones that experience the maximum conflict.

Now, attendance in school has improved, there is better access to healthcare and the fear of getting trampled by an elephant has all but vanished.





# A Kidnapped Santa Claus

SANTA CLAUS lived in a rambling castle located in Laughing Valley where even the brooks chuckled, the wind whistled cheerily, the sunbeams danced merrily and the flowers smiled up from their green bowers.

Santa had many ryls, knooks, pixies and fairies to run his workshop and churn out toys for children all over the world.

On one side of Laughing Valley was the huge Forest of Burzee and on the other was a mountain that contained the Caves of the Daemons. There were five Daemons living there — of Selfishness, Envy, Hatred, Malice and Repentance.

The Daemons had grown to hate Santa Claus because he made children happy.

One day, the Daemons had a meeting.

“Santa is so lavish with his presents that children are infected by his generosity,” said the Daemon of Selfishness

The Daemon of Envy nodded his head. “Yes, all the little ones are content.”

“And that’s bad for me!” muttered the Daemon of Hatred. “Because only those who are selfish and envious can hate others.”

“You can imagine my plight,” added the Daemon of Malice.

“Hmmm,” said the Daemon of Repentance. “I am quite as neglected as you are. If children are not bad, they have no cause to repent!”

“That fat old fool has ruined our business!” exclaimed the Daemon of Envy.

The Daemons decided to wait for Santa to come out on his sleigh.





On a moon-lit night when the snow lay crisp and sparkling on the ground, Santa's helpers packed his sleigh with sacks full of toys. Santa climbed into the sleigh and dashed off singing and whistling joyfully.

Suddenly, a rope shot through the moonlight and the big noose that was at the end of it settled over Santa. It drew tight and before he could even cry out, he was jerked from his seat. He tumbled headfirst into a snowbank. The reindeer dashed on and in minutes, they were out of sight.

When Santa recovered, he found that the Daemons had bound him with stout rope. They carried him to a secret cave and chained him to the wall.

"Ha, ha, ha," they chuckled wickedly. "When the children wake up and find no gifts in their stockings or under the Christmas tree, they are going to cry and throw temper tantrums! They will be punished and they will flock to our caves!"

Santa's assistants whom he usually took with him to help him distribute the gifts were snugly tucked underneath the seat. They knew something was wrong only when they missed Santa's cheery voice and his whistling. Wisk the fairy stuck out his head and found that there was no one guiding the reindeer!

"Whoa!" he called out, and the deer stopped.

"What do we do?" asked Wisk anxiously.

"We must go back and find our master," said Nuter the ryl.

"No," said Peter the knook. "If we go back it will delay the giving of gifts. That will hurt Santa more than anything."

"It is certain that something wicked has taken him," said Kilter the pixie thoughtfully. "We should distribute the gifts and then look for Santa Claus."

So the little helpers went about distributing the gifts.

In the morning, the little folk found out from the Fairy Queen in the Forest of Burzee that the Daemons had kidnapped Santa Claus.

Meanwhile, the Daemons had taunted Santa Claus all through the night. He was very worried about the presents.



When Christmas Day dawned the Daemon of Malice crowed triumphantly.

"The children are waking up, Santa!" he cried. "To find their stockings empty! How they will quarrel, and wail, and stamp their feet in anger! Our caves will be full today!"

When Santa Claus did not reply, the Daemon went away disappointed and sent the Daemon of Repentance to guard him. This gentlest of Daemons was feeling bad about his part in the crime. He did not hate Santa Claus all that much.

"I am not really a bad chap, you know. I hope you will forgive me," said the Daemon of Repentance. "I am letting you go."

Santa Claus stepped out gratefully and said, "I forgive you. The world would be a dreary place without repentance. Merry Christmas!"

Santa met an army of his little helpers marching to the mountain to rescue him! What a wonderful reunion it was!

As for the rest of the Daemons, they were furious when they found Santa Claus gone and their plan foiled by his helpers. They retreated into the deepest part of the mountains and were never seen again on Christmas Eve.

**Amidst the debate surrounding the quality of chess in the world title championship between D. Gukesh and Ding Liren, we revisit the visionary concept introduced by the legendary Bobby Fischer, aiming to revolutionize the game.**

Chess, the ancient strategy board game, has been a staple of competitive play for centuries. However, a fascinating variant has emerged, offering a fresh and exciting twist on the classic game: Freestyle chess. Also known as Random Chess or Chess960, this variant randomizes the starting position of the pieces, opening up a vast, unexplored territory for players to discover.

Fischer Random Chess, also referred to as Chess 960, is a variant of the classic board game that introduces randomness to the starting position of pieces on the back rank. This innovative twist was first proposed by Bobby Fischer, the former world chess champion, in 1996. Fischer's goal was to shift the focus away from extensive opening preparation and toward fostering creative play. Although Chess 960 utilizes the same board and pieces as traditional chess, the starting arrangement of pieces on the home ranks is randomized, adhering to specific guidelines. As a result, relying on memorized openings to gain an advantage becomes impractical, and players must instead rely on their strategic skills and creative thinking.

#### **The 960 Possible Openings**

In traditional chess, the starting position of the pieces is fixed, leading to a well-trodden path of established opening variations. In contrast, Freestyle chess offers an astonishing 960 possible starting positions, each with its unique set of challenges and opportunities. This vast array of possibilities ensures that players will rarely encounter the same position twice, making each game a truly unique experience.

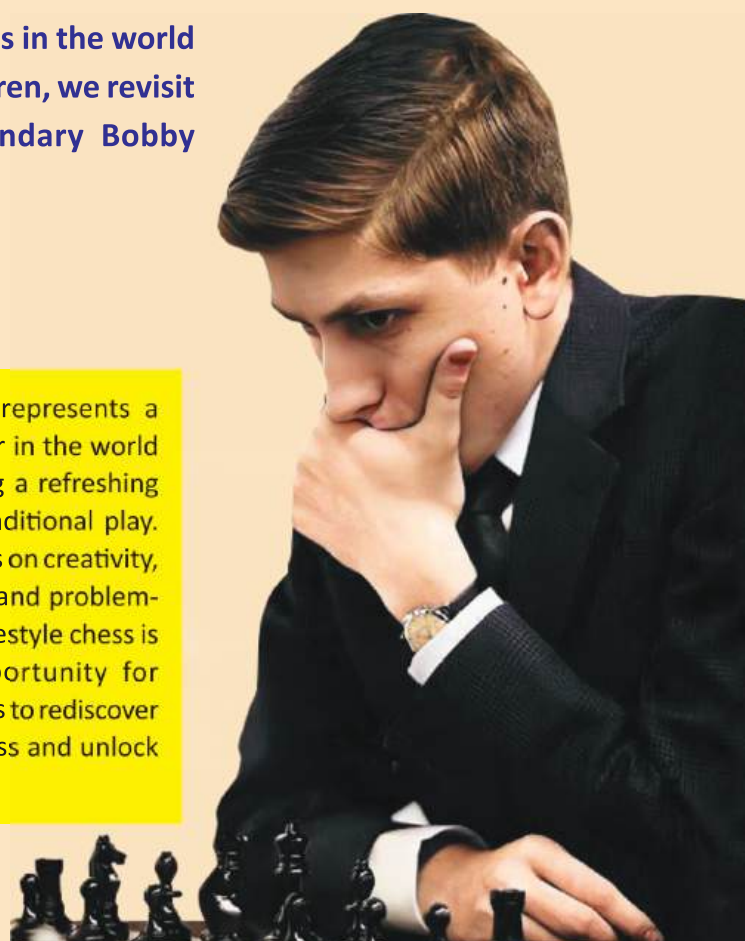
#### **A New Frontier for Chess Exploration**

The randomized nature of Freestyle chess creates a fertile ground for innovation and experimentation. Players are encouraged to think creatively, as familiar patterns and opening lines are no longer applicable. This freedom from traditional constraints allows players to develop new strategies and techniques, pushing the boundaries of what is possible in chess.

#### **The Future of Chess?**

As the chess community continues to explore the vast expanse of Freestyle chess, it's clear that this variant has the potential to revolutionize the game. By emphasizing creativity and problem-solving skills, Freestyle chess offers a refreshing alternative to traditional chess. Whether you're a seasoned grandmaster or a casual player, Freestyle chess presents an exciting opportunity to rediscover the magic of chess and unlock new possibilities.

Freestyle chess represents a bold new frontier in the world of chess, offering a refreshing alternative to traditional play. With its emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, Freestyle chess is an exciting opportunity for players of all levels to rediscover the magic of chess and unlock new possibilities.



## **RETHINKING CHESS: BOBBY FISCHER'S ENDURING LEGACY**

#### **The Benefits of Freestyle Chess**

So, what can players expect to gain from exploring Freestyle chess? For one, it offers a unique chance to develop critical thinking skills, as players must adapt to new and unfamiliar positions. Additionally, Freestyle chess encourages creativity and innovation, allowing players to explore new ideas and strategies. Finally, the randomized nature of the game ensures that each match is a unique and exciting experience, reducing the likelihood of repetitive or predictable games.

#### **The Growing Popularity of Freestyle Chess**

As more players discover the joys of Freestyle chess, the variant is gaining popularity worldwide. Online chess platforms and tournaments are now offering Freestyle chess options, making it easier than ever for players to try their hand at this exciting new variant. Whether you're a chess enthusiast or simply looking for a new challenge, Freestyle chess is definitely worth exploring.

Some of the top players including five time world champion and current World no-1 Magnus Carlson also exploring experimenting with Freestyle Chess, the variation is gaining momentum and is likely to catch on. Bobby Fischer, the eccentric genius, considered the greatest of all time in Chess did give something back to the sport, that may become the future of chess afterall.



# Some Promises Not To Keep !

Hey there, students! It's that time of the year again – the time when we promise ourselves that we'll become better versions of ourselves. Yeah, right!

You know the drill: we make a list of New Year's resolutions, vow to stick to them, and then... well, let's just say that our resolutions often end up in the same place as our missing socks – nowhere to be found!

## We spoke to some school students who say they make these resolutions every year !

1. I will score above 90% in my final exams this year.
2. I will complete my homework on time every day and never postpone it.
3. I will participate in at least two extracurricular activities, such as sports or clubs, this year.
4. I will read at least one book every month from the school library.
5. I will help my parents with household chores for at least 30 minutes every day.
6. I will practice yoga or meditation for 15 minutes every morning to improve my concentration.
7. I will make new friends in school and be more social.
8. I will reduce my screen time by one hour every day and use that time to study or read.
9. I will participate in the school's annual science fair or exhibition.
10. I will learn to play a new musical instrument or join the school choir.
11. I will improve my handwriting and make it more legible.
12. I will respect my teachers and follow school rules.
13. I will make a time table and follow it strictly to manage my studies and other activities.



## So, here are some ridiculously realistic New Year's resolutions that you might actually be able to keep:

1. I will eat at least one vegetable a week... even if it's just a potato chip.
2. I will exercise regularly... by walking from the couch to the fridge and back.
3. I will read more books... as long as they're not too heavy to hold.
4. I will be more organized... by using a planner that's only slightly more organized than my room.
5. I will learn a new skill... like how to make the perfect grilled cheese sandwich.

## And here are some resolutions that you might actually want to keep:

1. Spend more time with family and friends.
2. Take care of your physical and mental health.
3. Learn something new and exciting.
4. Volunteer and give back to your community.
5. Be kind to yourself and others.

So, go ahead and make those resolutions. And remember, it's okay if you don't stick to them – after all, there's always next year!

Happy New Year, and may the odds be ever in your favor!



# A Critical Skill

*Critical thinking is the ability to actively reason, question, evaluate and make an objective judgment of available information.*

DEVELOPING such analytical thinking from early on helps a person make better decisions in life, be well informed, become more self-aware, quickly identify false or misinformation and develop problem-solving skills.

**What are the important components of critical thinking?**

## **Open-mindedness**

To begin dealing with any information objectively, one needs to process the information without bias, prejudice or preconceived notions. An analytical person first listens carefully to new information, without jumping to conclusions or forming a snap judgement.

## **Questioning**

Asking questions is one of the main qualities of a critical mind. However, the main aim of the questioning is to gain clarity, rather than to discredit the information, or to win an argument. The first kind of questioning tries to clarify unclear concepts and understand the thought process behind the new information presented. The second kind of questioning involves examining personal beliefs that are in opposition to the new information. This helps remove bias.



## Reasoning

When all available information is clarified and discussed, one must reason justly taking all the points and possibilities into consideration before coming to a logical conclusion. Time should be spent in patiently evaluating a situation. Hasty reasoning often results in less-than-ideal solutions.

## Conclusion

Conclusions must be objective, regardless of conflicting feelings and beliefs. It is also important to realise that conclusions may not be final. When more information becomes available later, the conclusion may have to be re-evaluated. It is perfectly fine to conclude that the new information is useless as it is inadequate or questionable.

### How to develop critical thinking skills

## Constant Learning

Firstly, be constantly learning. A mind that is constantly fed remains healthy and is able to reason well. A habit of constant learning opens the person to more ideas and facts from others' perspective. This helps in developing an objective mind. When learning stops, one is more likely to get stuck in preconceived notions and outdated information. For example, it is because of ceasing to learn that many superstitions still exist.

## Active Listening

Listening must be deliberate and attentive. Listen carefully to the new information without considering if the person is someone likeable, someone with a great reputation or someone who seems less smart than you. Receive every piece of information generously, but withhold judgment.

## Seeking Out Diversity

Actively seek the opinions of those who think differently from you and are from a differing field of expertise. This helps you see things from multiple perspectives and helps you develop objective reasoning.

## Cross Examination

Constant learning should be carefully filtered by thoroughly examining the information. Gaining new information is good, but if it is not examined, it can prove disastrous. Check every possible line of thought — both positive and negative, including everything in support and in opposition to the new information. Careful analysis can reveal if it is trustworthy.

## Self-reflection

Develop a constant habit of examining your own way of thinking and observing the kind of society that shaped you. This helps recognise your own tendencies and limitations. Once personal shortcomings are recognised, it is easier to eliminate them, or at least make sure the limitations don't hinder objective reasoning.

## Making Decisions

Finally, after a conclusion is made, the last course of action is to decide how it is going to affect your decisions. The consequences of your actions following the decision must be carefully weighed to understand whether it will affect you and those around you positively or negatively.

Make critical thinking a habit by indulging in recreational activities that require such an ability. For example, play games and puzzles that make you think and analyse situations, and creative games that exercise your mind, just like outdoor sports exert your body.



# Gift of the Magi

*There were two things among their meagre possessions that were Jim and Della Young's joy and pride. One was Della's hair and the other was Jim's gold watch that had belonged to his grandfather, and then his father.*

It was the day before Christmas. Della had shaken out her savings from the piggy bank and counted one dollar and eighty-seven cents, most of it in pennies. Pennies she had pinched one by one over the last six months and yet, it was such a small amount, not enough to buy Jim a good present. Della slumped back onto the shabby couch and burst into tears.



After she'd had a good cry, she rose and went to the window. Her heart felt as heavy as the leaden sky outside. As she came away from the window, she caught a glimpse of herself in the sliver of glass that passed for a mirror. Her eyes suddenly brightened.

Standing in front of the glass now, Della unwound her hair and let it fall. It rippled and cascaded around her shoulders till it reached her knees. There were two things among their meagre possessions that were Jim and Della Young's joy and pride. One was Della's hair and the other was Jim's gold watch that had belonged to his grandfather, and then his father.

Della turned away before she could change her mind, put on her hat and coat and hurried out into the cold December afternoon. She had passed Madame Sofronie's at the corner before, but had had no occasion to pause before it. Now she pushed open the door and entered.

She asked a little breathlessly, "How much will you pay for my hair?"

"Depends on your hair, doesn't it?" replied Madame Sofronie. "Let's have a look."

When Della took off her hat and removed the pins, the hairdresser lifted the gleaming golden mass in practised hands as if weighing it.

"Twenty dollars," she said.

"Quick, take it and give me the money," said Della.

When Della dared to glance in the mirror, she saw her hair standing up in spikes all around her head. She felt like bursting into tears again.

She stepped out into the street again, the precious twenty dollars clutched in her hand. After climbing in and out of a dozen stores, Della finally found what she was looking for: a platinum fob chain for the watch. Its silvery gleam proclaimed quiet elegance. Jim was ashamed of the old leather strap that the watch was attached to and usually looked at it on the sly. The chain cost \$21, which left Della with 87 cents.

When Della reached home, a little of the euphoria left her and she sat down to repair the damage as best she could.





The tiny little curls sprang out in truant fashion around her head, making her look like a naughty schoolboy.

Della sighed. Jim would have to accept it and anyway, it would grow back in no time. She began cooking dinner, all the while listening for his step on the stairs.

When he came in, he stood stock still and when she went towards him, his expression was frozen, like a cat caught in the glare of a torch.

"Oh, Jim," she said in a rush. "It doesn't look so bad and it will grow out, I promise. I'm so sorry, but there was no money to buy you a present. And I so wanted to..."

Jim said haltingly, "You...cut...your hair?"

"Yes. But when you see what I've bought you, Jim, you would say I did the right thing!"

Jim didn't reply but sat down on the couch. Then he brought out a package from his coat pocket and threw it down on the table.

"A gift for me!" exclaimed Della and she fumbled eagerly with the string. When she saw what the package contained, she went pale and gave a little scream of anguish. Her hand instinctively went up to her hair.

For they were the delicate tortoise-shell combs she had admired in the shop window for months – gold-edged and just the colour to wear in her hair.

"Oh, Jim," she sighed and hugged him fiercely. "I will be able to wear them, very soon."

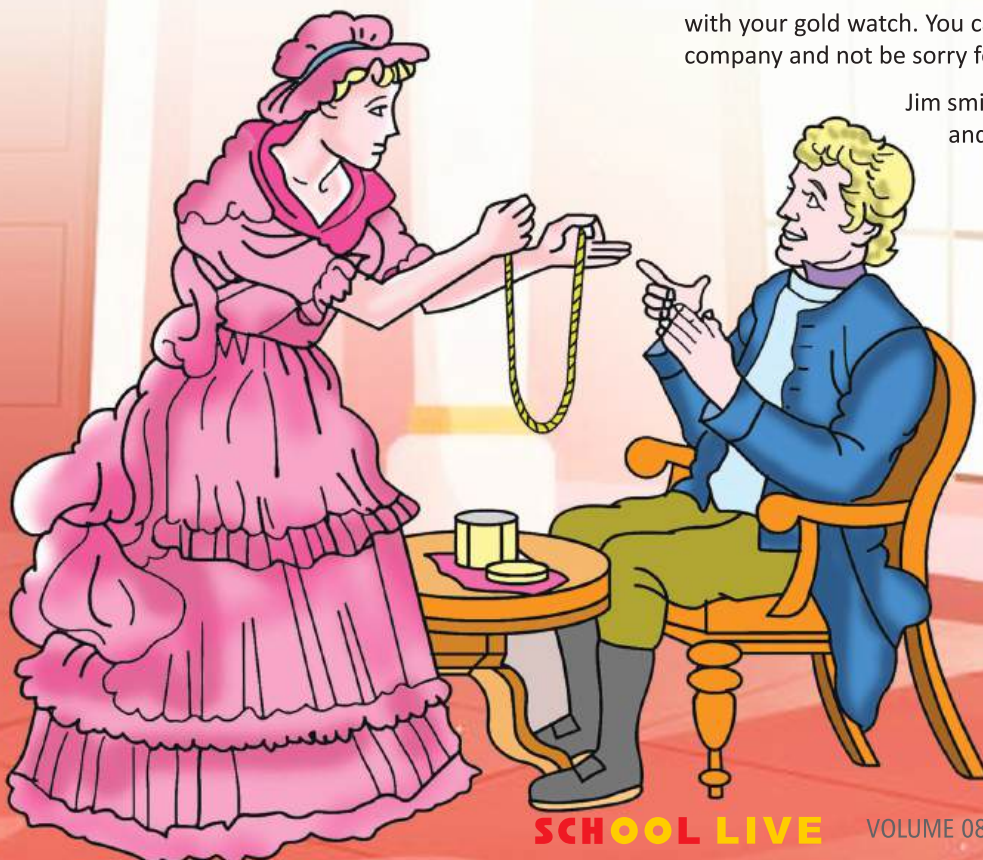
She put the chain in his hand.

"Isn't it the most beautiful thing, Jim? It would look so well with your gold watch. You can take it out in the most exalted company and not be sorry for it! Now give me your watch."

Jim smiled, put his arms behind his head and leaned back.

"Come, Dell, let's put away the gifts for a while. We can enjoy them later. I sold the watch to buy you the combs. Go see how the dinner is coming along, love!"

—a story by O. Henry retold.



# WE WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR !

As the clock strikes midnight on December 31st, people from all corners of the globe come together to bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new one. The celebrations, though differing in style and tradition, share a common thread – hope, renewal, and joy. Let's embark on a journey to explore how different cultures and countries ring in the New Year.

parties, and family gatherings.

However, it's worth noting that several regions and cultures have their own traditional New Year celebrations, which may not coincide with the January 1st date of the Gregorian calendar. For instance:

- The Chinese New Year, which falls between January 21st and



In Japan, the New Year (Oshogatsu) is a time for family reunions, visits to shrines and temples, and traditional foods like mochi and soba noodles. At midnight, many Japanese people visit shrines and temples to pray for good luck, health, and happiness in the coming year. The famous Tokyo Tower is also a popular spot to watch the sunrise on New Year's morning.

In Brazil, the New Year (Ano Novo) is celebrated with great fanfare, especially in Rio de Janeiro. Millions of people gather on Copacabana Beach to watch the spectacular fireworks display and enjoy live music and dancing. Many Brazilians also follow the tradition of jumping waves at the beach, believed to bring good luck and purification.

In India, the New Year is celebrated with varying traditions across different regions. In the southern state of Tamil Nadu, the New Year (Puthandu) is celebrated with the exchange of gifts, traditional foods, and visits to temples. In the northern state of Delhi, the New Year is celebrated with fireworks,

February 20th, marks the beginning of the new year in the traditional Chinese calendar.

- The Islamic New Year, which falls on the first day of Muharram, marks the beginning of the new year in the Islamic calendar.

- The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, falls in September or October and marks the beginning of the new year in the Hebrew calendar.

- The Thai New Year, Songkran, falls in mid-April and marks the beginning of the new year in the traditional Thai calendar.

These diverse celebrations highlight the rich cultural heritage and traditions of different communities around the world.

As the world celebrates the start of a new year, it's a time for reflection, renewal, and hope. Whether it's watching the sunrise in Japan, eating grapes in Spain, or dancing in the streets of Scotland, the New Year is a time for people to come together and look forward to the possibilities and promise of the year ahead.



# WHAT DOES YOUR ZODIAC SAY ?



## Aries (March 21 - April 19)

**Career:** Aries can expect significant recognition and rewards in their career, especially if they've been working hard towards their goals. New opportunities and promotions are on the horizon, and Aries should be

prepared to take on new challenges.

**Love:** Aries can expect a passionate and exciting year in terms of love, with a strong emphasis on romance and relationships. They may meet someone new and special, or rekindle an old flame.

**Health:** Aries should focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, as they may be prone to stress and anxiety. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.

## Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

**Career:** Taurus can expect a stable and secure year in terms of career, with a focus on long-term goals and financial stability. They may receive a promotion or a raise, or start a new business venture.

**Love:** Taurus can expect a year of deepening relationships and emotional connections, with a strong emphasis on trust and loyalty. They may strengthen their bond with their partner or make new friends.

**Health:** Taurus should focus on maintaining a balanced diet and regular exercise routine to avoid health issues. They may also benefit from stress-reducing activities like meditation or yoga.



## Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

**Career:** Gemini can expect a dynamic and exciting year in terms of career, with new opportunities and challenges on the horizon. They may start a new project or take on a new role.

**Love:** Gemini can expect a year of socializing and meeting new people, with a strong emphasis on communication and intellectual connections. They may meet someone new and exciting, or strengthen their bond with friends and family.

**Health:** Gemini should focus on managing stress and anxiety, as they may be prone to burnout. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



## Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

**Career:** Cancer can expect a year of growth and development in their career, with a focus on nurturing and caring for others. They may take on a new role or start a new project.

**Love:** Cancer can expect a year of deepening emotional connections and relationships, with a strong emphasis on family and home life. They may strengthen their bond with loved ones or create a new sense of community.

**Health:** Cancer should focus on maintaining a healthy work-life balance to avoid burnout. Regular self-care and stress-reducing activities can help them stay grounded and focussed.

## Leo (July 23 - August 22)

**Career:** Leo can expect a year of recognition and achievement in their career, with a focus on creativity and self-expression. They may receive an award or recognition for their work.

**Love:** Leo can expect a year of passion and romance, with a strong emphasis on drama and excitement. They may meet someone new and special, or rekindle an old flame.

**Health:** Leo should focus on maintaining a healthy ego and avoiding burnout. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



## Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

**Career:** Virgo can expect a year of hard work and dedication in their career, with a focus on attention to detail and analysis. They may take on a new project or role.

**Love:** Virgo can expect a year of practical and down-to-earth relationships, with a strong emphasis on trust and loyalty. They may strengthen their bond with their partner or make new friends.

**Health:** Virgo should focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and avoiding perfectionism. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



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JUNE 2025						
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29	30					



## JULY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		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 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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## SEPTEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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## OCTOBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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## NOVEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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## DECEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	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			

# WHAT DOES YOUR ZODIAC SAY ?



## Libra (September 23 - October 22)

**Career:** Libra can expect a year of balance and harmony in their career, with a focus on relationships and partnerships.

They may start a new business venture or collaborate with others.

**Love:** Libra can expect a year of romance and socializing, with a strong emphasis on beauty and aesthetics. They may meet someone new and exciting, or strengthen their bond with loved ones.

**Health:** Libra should focus on maintaining a healthy balance between work and play. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.

## Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

**Career:** Scorpio can expect a year of intensity and passion in their career, with a focus on power and transformation. They may take on a new challenge or start a new project.



**Love:** Scorpio can expect a year of deep emotional connections and relationships, with a strong emphasis on intimacy and trust. They may strengthen their bond with their partner or meet someone new and exciting.

**Health:** Scorpio should focus on maintaining a healthy emotional balance and avoiding obsession. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



## Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

**Career:** Sagittarius can expect a year of expansion and exploration in their career, with a focus on adventure and learning. They may start a new business venture or take

on a new role.

**Love:** Sagittarius can expect a year of freedom and independence in their relationships, with a strong emphasis on exploration and discovery. They may meet someone new and exciting or strengthen their bond with loved ones.

**Health:** Sagittarius should focus on maintaining a healthy sense of adventure and avoiding restlessness. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



## Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

**Career:** Capricorn can expect a year of ambition and achievement in their career, with a focus on discipline and responsibility. They

may receive a promotion or recognition for their work.

**Love:** Capricorn can expect a year of commitment and loyalty in their relationships, with a strong emphasis on building strong foundations. They may strengthen their bond with their partner or meet someone new and special.

**Health:** Capricorn should focus on maintaining a healthy work-life balance and avoiding burnout. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.

## Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

**Career:** Aquarius can expect a year of innovation and progress in their career, with a focus on humanitarian pursuits and social justice. They may start a new project or take on a new role.



**Love:** Aquarius can expect a year of unconventional and exciting relationships, with a strong emphasis on freedom and independence. They may meet someone new and exciting or strengthen their bond with loved ones.

**Health:** Aquarius should focus on maintaining a healthy sense of rebellion and avoiding emotional detachment. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



## Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

**Career:** Pisces can expect a year of spiritual growth and development in their career, with a focus on intuition and creativity. They may start a new project or take on a new role.

**Love:** Pisces can expect a year of deep emotional connections and relationships, with a strong emphasis on empathy and compassion. They may strengthen their bond with their partner or meet someone new and special.

**Health:** Pisces should focus on maintaining a healthy emotional balance and avoiding escapism. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help them stay energized and focussed.



# DO GOODERS DAY

A New Month



A New Mission

**EveryBuddy needs a Home**  
**Let's protect their natural habitat**

Meet Elie



## Mission #1

To protect the habitat of  
Elie and his friends and family

## Did U Know?

Unique Footprints:  
Each elephant's footprint  
is unique, like a fingerprint  
revealing information  
about the animal.



Scan to become  
a Do-Goeder!

# doozieDO®

Find your Buddy at [www.doozie-do.com](http://www.doozie-do.com)

Use your creativity to make posters, artwork or projects that highlight  
the beauty and importance of elephants and the need to protect them

**Winners would be a part of Doozie Army!**

Send your entries at [support@doozie-do.com](mailto:support@doozie-do.com)

# THE IMPERATIVE OF INSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION: A REBUTTAL TO THE CULTURE OF BLAME

Juvenile crimes often spark a cacophony of outrage, with institutions, particularly schools, bearing the brunt of public ire. While it is essential to acknowledge the role of schools in shaping the behaviour of young minds, it is equally crucial to recognize that institutions cannot be held solely responsible for the actions of their students. The knee-jerk reaction of blaming schools for juvenile crimes is not only misguided but also detrimental to the very fabric of our education system.

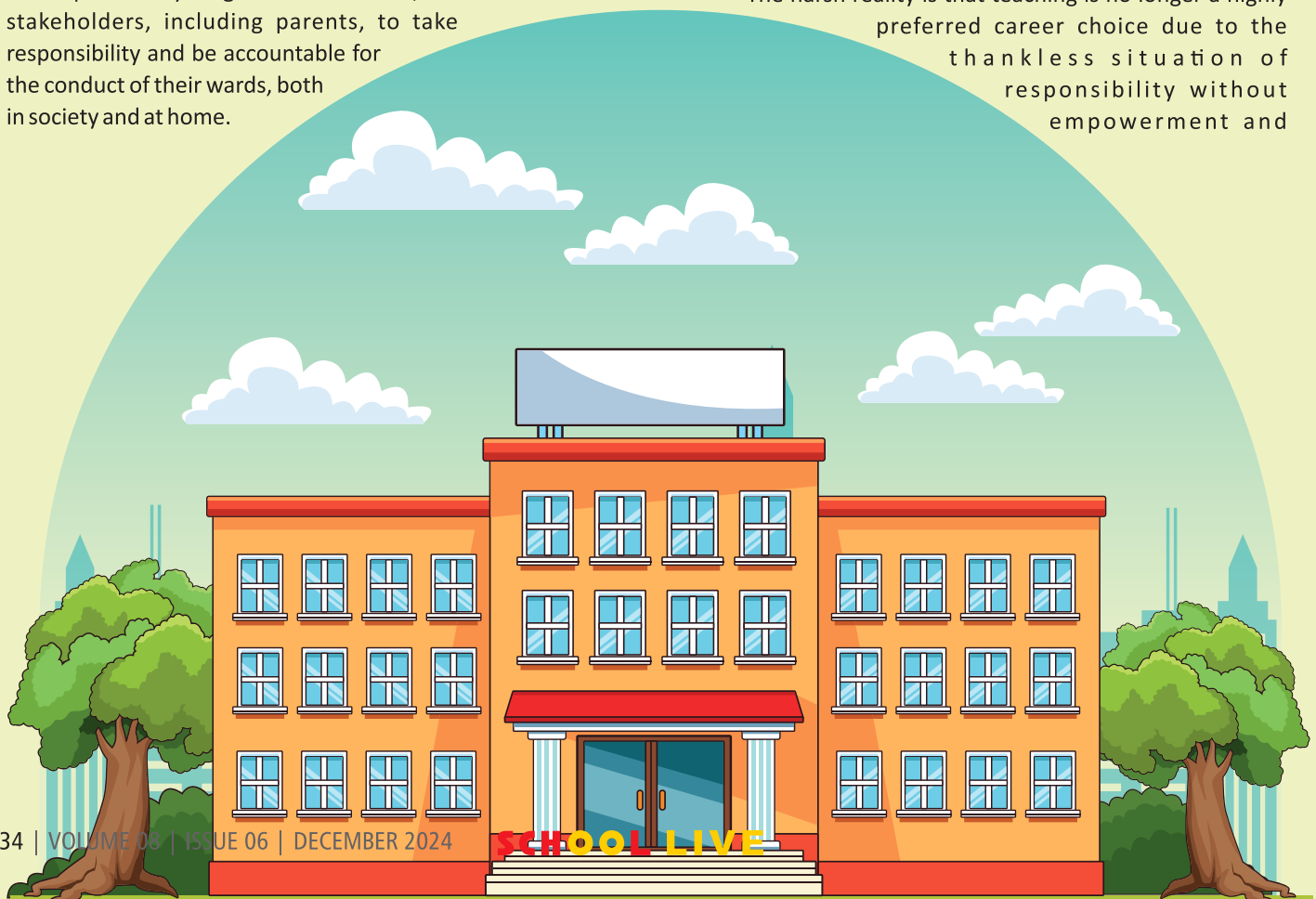
The notion that schools are responsible for the actions of their students is a flawed one. Schools, by their very nature, are public domains that provide a platform for socialization, education, and growth. However, they cannot be expected to monitor every student's actions minute-to-minute, just as parents cannot be expected to do the same at home. The reality is that children spend a significant amount of time outside the school premises, where they are exposed to various influences that can shape their behaviour.

It is crucial to acknowledge that parents and homes are primarily responsible for the upbringing of children. Schools can only play a supplementary role in the growth and development of young minds. Therefore, it is essential for all stakeholders, including parents, to take responsibility and be accountable for the conduct of their wards, both in society and at home.

Research has consistently shown that children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to be impacted in different ways than others in their growing years. A disturbed childhood can pave the way for adult crimes in later years. It is, therefore, vital for parents to recognize the importance of providing a stable and nurturing environment for their children.

In the event of an incident occurring within a school premises, it is essential to stay calm and not jump to conclusions. The principal or head of the school should not be held immediately accountable without a thorough investigation. Legal processes must be allowed to take their course, and media trials, public outcry, and threats of violence must be avoided.

The harsh reality is that teaching is no longer a highly preferred career choice due to the thankless situation of responsibility without empowerment and





Accidents can and do happen when children play together, push, or even engage in minor fights. Unintended outcomes should not be treated as crimes but as mere accidents, however serious the outcome may be. This distinction is crucial, as it can help to prevent the stigmatization of children and the criminalization of childhood behavior.

protection. It is essential to create awareness and continuously sensitize parents, teachers, and the community at large about the importance of providing a safe and supportive environment for children.

Institutions, including schools, must be given certain immunity and insured and protected against any untoward consequences resulting from an unanticipated incident. This will help to prevent the deterrence of academically equipped individuals from taking up teaching as a career.

The need for curbs on explicit OTT content, as raised by Arun Govil, MP from the Meerut constituency, during the recent winter session of the Parliament, is a timely reminder of the impact of media on young minds. The brutal violence and crimes depicted on OTT platforms can have a severe impact on the mindset and behaviour of viewers, particularly children.

The culture of blame that pervades our society must be challenged. We must recognize that juvenile crimes are often a symptom of deeper societal issues, such as poverty, inequality,

and social exclusion. Rather than blaming schools and institutions, we must work towards addressing these underlying issues.

However, it is equally important to recognize that not all incidents involving juveniles should be termed as crimes. Accidents can and do happen when children play together, push, or even engage in minor fights. Unintended outcomes should not be treated as crimes but as mere accidents, however serious the outcome may be. This distinction is crucial, as it can help to prevent the stigmatization of children and the criminalization of childhood behaviour. By recognizing that children will inevitably make mistakes and engage in risky behavior, we can work towards creating a more nuanced and compassionate approach to juvenile justice.

The imperative of institutional protection cannot be overstated. We must recognize that schools and institutions are not responsible for the actions of their students, but rather play a supplementary role in their growth and development. By staying calm during adversity, providing a stable and nurturing environment, and giving institutions the necessary immunity and protection, we can work towards creating a safer and more supportive society for our children.

It is our collective responsibility as a society to ensure that our children are provided with a safe and supportive environment that enables them to grow and thrive. By working together, we can create a brighter future for our children, one that is free from the scourge of juvenile crime, many of them unintended.

**Suggested References:**

National Crime Records Bureau. (2022). *Crime in India*.

Ministry of Education. (2022). *National Education Policy*.

UNESCO. (2022). *Global Education Monitoring Report*.



# Living Dangerously

*Some people find the pursuits of everyday life rather insipid. For them the adrenaline rush comes only by pushing their body and mind to inconceivable limits.*



WORLD-FAMOUS magician and endurance artist David Blaine stunned the world with his 'electrifying' act in 2012. He stood for 72 hours on a 6 m high platform in a New York park, surrounded by seven huge Tesla coils that continuously bombarded one million volts of electricity at him.

Blaine wore a specially-designed stainless steel chain-mail Faraday suit and metal headgear for the high-voltage stunt. The Faraday suit is an adaptation of the Faraday cage made of a highly conductive material. It shields whatever is within the enclosure from the electric field.

FELIX BAUMGARTNER dived to Earth from the edge of space, a distance of 38.6 km, becoming the first human being to travel faster than the speed of sound without a parachute. The Austrian reached a speed of Mach 1.24 or 1340 km per hour. The free fall lasted four minutes and 20 seconds.

The then 43-year-old made the historic sky-dive above Roswell, in New Mexico, USA, in 2012.



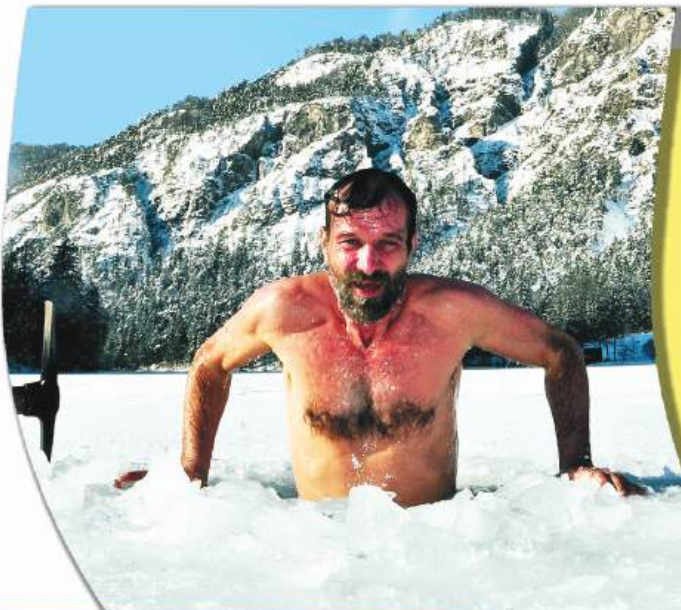
THE many jaw-dropping feats of American ultra-marathon runner Dean Karnazes include the 217-km non-stop run across Death Valley in California and running 50 marathons on 50 consecutive days!



AUSTRIAN free-diver Herbert Nitsch holds the world record for the deepest dive in a single breath. He dived 214 m below sea level and resurfaced without using any breathing apparatus. Nitsch holds 32 records in various diving categories.



FRENCH daredevil Philippe Petit is famous for the high-wire walk between the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York in 1974. He made eight crossings between the towers, a staggering 400 metres above the ground, doing all sorts of acrobatics!



DUTCH climber Wim Hof planned to set a bizarre world record by reaching the top of Mount Everest wearing only shorts in 2007. He trained himself for the event by sitting on ice on Mt Blanc for long periods. Unfortunately, he did not succeed in his attempt. Hof who is now in his sixties, is called the 'ice man' for his ability to withstand extreme cold. Doctors are puzzled at his body's ability to regulate heat to suit the climate.

Hof has several 'cold' records to his credit.

Once he ran more than 20 km in shorts above the polar circle in Finland. On another occasion, he held his breath below the ice for a considerable time in the North Pole. He attributes his success to his Wim Hof Method (WHM), a combination of frequent cold exposure, breathing techniques, yoga and meditation.

# DISCOVER THE LAWYER IN YOU

**As a school student, have you ever found yourself arguing passionately for a cause you believe in? Do you enjoy debating, negotiating, and finding creative solutions to complex problems? If so, you may have a natural inclination towards a career in law.**

**L**aw is a fascinating and rewarding profession that requires a unique combination of skills, traits, and knowledge. As a lawyer, you will have the opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives, fight for justice, and uphold the rule of law.

So, how do you know if you have what it takes to become a successful lawyer? Let's explore some of the natural instincts, traits, and inclinations that can indicate a potential career in law.

## **Argumentative and Analytical Mind**

Lawyers need to be able to analyze complex information, identify patterns, and build strong arguments. If you enjoy debating, discussing, and arguing about various topics, you may have a natural aptitude for legal analysis.

## **Strong Communication Skills**

Effective communication is critical for lawyers, who must be able to articulate complex ideas, negotiate with clients and

experiences, often in high-stress situations. If you're empathetic, able to understand different perspectives, and can manage your own emotions effectively, you may be well-suited to a career in law.

## **Attention to Detail and Organizational Skills**

Lawyers must be meticulous and organized, able to manage complex documents, deadlines, and cases. If you're detail-oriented, able to prioritize tasks, and can stay focussed under pressure, you may have the skills necessary to succeed in law.



opponents, and present cases in court. If you're comfortable speaking in front of groups, writing clearly and concisely, and adapting your communication style to different audiences, you may have a strong foundation for a career in law.

## **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence**

Lawyers work with people from diverse backgrounds and

## **Passion for Justice and Fairness**

Lawyers are often driven by a desire to make a positive impact on society, fight for justice, and protect individual rights. If you're passionate about creating positive change, standing up for what you believe in, and advocating for others, you may find a career in law deeply fulfilling.



## Exploring Different Streams of Law

The field of law is vast and diverse, with numerous streams to choose from. Here are some of the most popular streams of law:

**Corporate Law** : Corporate lawyers work with businesses and organizations, advising them on laws and regulations related to mergers and acquisitions, contracts, and corporate governance.

**Criminal Law** : Criminal lawyers specialize in cases involving crime and punishment, working to prove the guilt or innocence of their clients.

**Civil Law** : Civil lawyers handle cases involving disputes between individuals, organizations, or government entities, such as personal injury, property damage, or contract disputes.

**Taxation Law** : Taxation lawyers help individuals and organizations navigate the complex world of tax laws and regulations, advising them on tax planning, compliance, and dispute resolution.

**Environmental Law** : Environmental lawyers work to protect the environment and promote sustainability, advising clients on laws and regulations related to pollution, conservation, and climate change.

**Intellectual Property Law** : Intellectual property lawyers specialize in protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights, such as patents, trademarks, and copyrights.

**Human Rights Law** : Human rights lawyers work to promote and protect human rights, both domestically and internationally, advocating for the rights of marginalized and vulnerable populations.

**International Law**: International lawyers work on cases involving international relations, treaties, and agreements between countries. They may work on issues such as trade law, human

rights, territorial rights, and international criminal law.

**Labour Law** : Labour lawyers specialize in laws related to employment, industrial relations, and trade unions. They may work on cases involving employment contracts, workplace safety, and labour disputes.

**Family Law** : Family lawyers handle cases involving family relationships, such as divorce, child custody, and adoption.

**Administrative Law**: Administrative lawyers work on cases involving government agencies and regulatory bodies. They may work on issues such as licensing, permits, and regulatory compliance.

### How to Pursue a Career in Law

If you're interested in pursuing a career in law, here are some steps you can take:

- Research different streams of law to determine which area interests you the most.
- Talk to lawyers, law students, or career counselors to learn more about the profession.
- Participate in mock trials, debates, or Model United Nations programs to develop your argumentation and negotiation skills.
- Consider taking courses in law, politics, or philosophy to build your knowledge and critical thinking skills.
- Gain practical experience by interning with a law firm, legal aid organization, or government agency.

### The Future of Law

The field of law is constantly evolving, with new technologies, laws, and regulations emerging all the time. As a lawyer, you will need to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in your field, adapting to new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

The legal profession offers a wide range of career paths, from corporate law to human rights law, and everything in between. Whether you're passionate about fighting for justice, protecting the environment, or advocating for individual rights, a career in law can be a fulfilling and rewarding choice.



# Escape From Oryzya

— A Captain Shiva Adventure

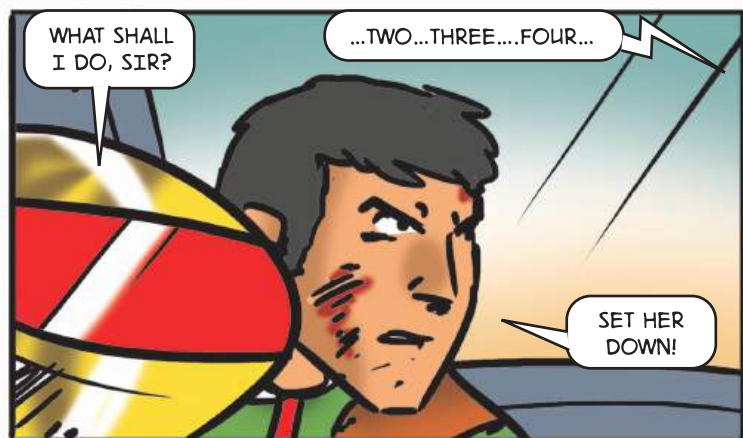
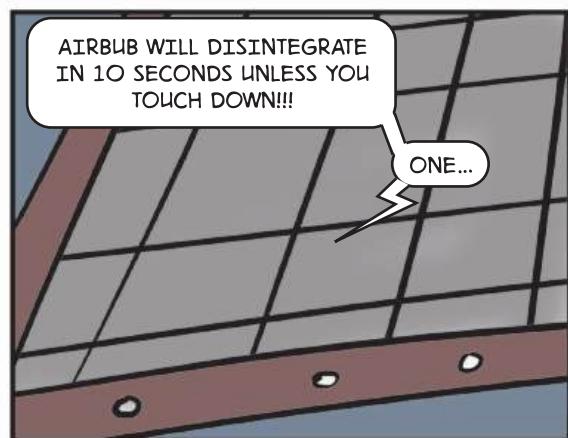
Story: Luis Fernandes

Artwork: Abhijeet Kini

**STORY SO FAR:** WITH THE ADOR OUT OF THE WAY, CAPTAIN SHIVA HITCHES A RIDE ON A PREDATORY BIRD AND JUMPS OFF.



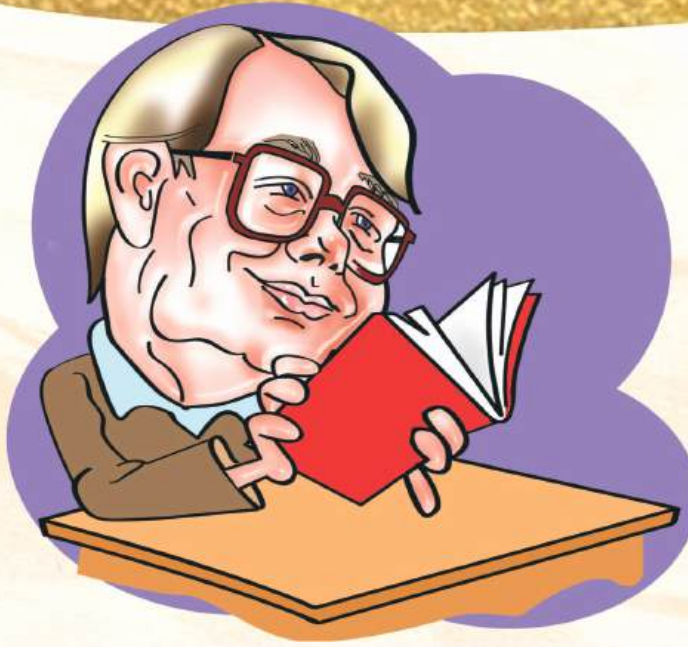




TO BE CONTINUED



# Accidental Geniuses



He memorised nearly 12,000 books in his lifetime and could recall every page whether it was history, geography, sports, music or literature! Kim could also recall dates going back 2000 years. He could read one page with his left eye and the facing page with his right and memorise both in three seconds. He was fondly known as 'Kimputer'.

Some savants display astonishing musical talent like Leslie Lemke who was born in 1952, totally blind and with other severe birth defects. As a baby, Leslie had to be taught how to swallow food. He was 15 by the time he learned to walk. When he was 16, his mother heard Leslie playing the piano on his own — a composition by Tchaikovsky. He had heard it once on the television and now he rendered it flawlessly! He found he could play all kinds of music. He had to hear a piece just once to reproduce it perfectly.

Savants have been known since early times, though extensive research on the syndrome has been carried out

A SAVANT is someone who is unable to perform the simple daily tasks of life because of disability, but has an extraordinary mental ability. For example, he is able to memorise pages of text in a short time, do complicated sums in his head or play a musical instrument without ever having learned how. Savants usually have autism (a kind of mental disorder), severe brain damage at birth or childhood epilepsy. Sometimes the condition is brought on by a traumatic brain injury, as in an accident.

The 1988 Oscar award-winning film *Rain Man* focused the world's attention on the savant syndrome. The film was loosely based on the life of Kim Peek (1951–2009), an American savant. Kim was born with severe brain damage. He had trouble walking, buttoning his shirt and doing other ordinary tasks. His IQ was below average and he had difficulty in interacting with people.

However, his parents noticed that Kim could perform astonishing feats of memory from an early age. He could read at the age of two and would memorise the books he read.





only since the 1960s. Englishman Jedediah Buxton, born in 1707, was one of history's earliest-recorded savants. He could not read or write but calculated the area of his village just by walking around it! The Royal Society found that he could figure out sums involving 39-digit numbers in his head.

A modern autistic savant with amazing artistic ability is Stephen Wiltshire. Born in 1974, Stephen was mute till the age of five, when he began drawing animals, London buses, landmarks and then whole cities. In 2005, he drew a panoramic 10-m-long sketch of Tokyo after a short helicopter ride over the city. His 76-m-long sketch of New York City drawn from memory in 2011, is displayed at the JFK airport.

The savant syndrome occurs in more men than women. Scientists don't yet know why this happens but it may be because autism is more prevalent in men.



## The Amazing Brain

Scientists believe the savant syndrome occurs when the brain tries to over-compensate for the parts that are damaged. The brain has two hemispheres — left and right. The left brain controls abilities related to logic, language and reasoning. The right brain controls creative and intuitive abilities, such as mathematics, music and the arts. Most savants show left brain injury which explains their astonishing skill in tasks requiring creativity.



## Sudden Savant

There are a number of people in the world who acquired their ability due to a sudden brain injury. One of them is Jason Padgett of USA. Twenty-two years ago, Jason, now 54, was mugged. He was kicked and hit repeatedly on his head. When he recovered, the college dropout found he could 'see' complex mathematical formulae (like pi) and turn them into intricate diagrams! His drawings, called fractals, are termed 'brilliant' and 'stunning' by mathematicians.







# Nobel Land

## Fact File:

**Capital:** Stockholm

**Population:** 10.6 million

**Language:** Swedish

**Currency:** Swedish Krona

ONCE a land known for its marauding Viking raiders, Sweden is today a country that has shunned involvement in war for two centuries. It is also the birthplace of Alfred Nobel, who invented dynamite and later instituted the Nobel prizes, and the home of video game Candy Crush, Skype and Spotify.



and with the country maintaining an official policy of neutrality in foreign affairs, Sweden has not gone to war since 1814, even skipping the First and Second World Wars.

Today, Sweden is a constitutional monarchy as well as a parliamentary democracy, with a monarch as head of state. The monarch has largely ceremonial duties, with the government being run by the prime minister and his cabinet.

Sweden joined the European Union on January 1, 1995.

Ranked high on quality of life, health, education and protection of civil liberties, Sweden maintains a Nordic social welfare system that provides universal health care and tertiary education to all its citizens.

Sparsely populated, this picturesque Scandinavian country in Northern Europe has vast archipelagos along its long coast, thousands of acres of unspoiled forests and majestic lakes.

Sweden borders Norway to the west and north, Finland to the east, and is connected to Denmark in the southwest by a bridge-tunnel across the Oresund strait. Sweden's borders have remained unchanged since 1905



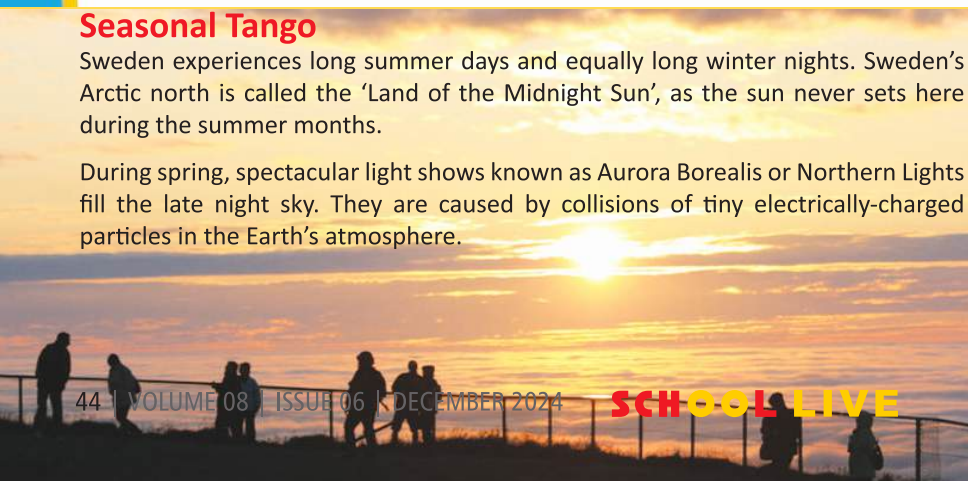
## Green Statement

Green has always been in style, with Sweden being home to plenty of green spaces. In 1910, Sweden became the first European country to establish national parks, helping save its wilderness from exploitation. Today, there are 29 national parks and many nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries, which provide rich habitats for many endangered animals and birds, including the critically endangered Arctic fox. The northern forests are home to brown bears and wolverines. Hunting is closely regulated, and many species of animals are completely protected.

## Seasonal Tango

Sweden experiences long summer days and equally long winter nights. Sweden's Arctic north is called the 'Land of the Midnight Sun', as the sun never sets here during the summer months.

During spring, spectacular light shows known as Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights fill the late night sky. They are caused by collisions of tiny electrically-charged particles in the Earth's atmosphere.





Swedes have high environmental awareness, with public transportation, recycling and organic food figuring high on their list. The country also takes huge pride in the fact that 99 per cent of its waste is either burnt for energy, recycled or reused in some way, meaning that only 1 per cent finds its way to a rubbish dump. Having run out of trash, Sweden imports garbage from Norway to fuel its power plants.



## Stockholm Saga

Stockholm, the capital city, called the 'Venice of the North', comprises 14 islands and more than 50 bridges on a Baltic Sea archipelago.

Stockholm prospered as a result of a trade agreement with the German city of Lubeck and became the official capital in 1436.

In the old town Gamla Stan, one can see the 13th century Storkyrkan Cathedral, the Kungliga Slottet Royal Palace and the Nobel Museum, which displays artifacts belonging to Alfred Nobel and Nobel laureates. East of Gamla Stan is the island of Djurgården, which houses several museums including the Vasa Museum that has a salvaged Swedish warship dating from 1628.

Stockholm is also home to World Heritage Sites such as the fairytale Drottningholm Palace (the official residence of the Swedish royal family), Skogskyrkogården or the Woodland cemetery and Birka, a Viking trading centre.

## Coffee Culture

In Sweden, the coffee break is so ingrained in the culture that there's a special word for it — Fika. The art of catching up over coffee and cake, Fika is a sacrosanct daily tradition whether one is at work, at home, out for a walk or shopping.

The classics on the Swedish menu include meatballs, fried herring and toast skagen.



## Sights & Sounds

From the world's oldest open-air museum in the historic village of Skansen, to the world's first ever ice hotel at Jukkasjärvi, Sweden has it all. Skansen has representative houses and farmsteads from all over the country, along with churches, manor houses, a funicular railroad and a Sami camp with reindeer.

The 'Pearl of the Baltic', Visby, brims with ruined churches, quaint cobblestone streets and timber buildings steeped in medieval history. While exploring it, one can lose the sense of being in the modern world.

The Lund cathedral in the southern province of Skåne is an imposing



Ice Hotel at Jukkasjärvi

Roman structure with its magnificent twin towers. Founded in 1080 by Danish King Canute IV, it's famous for the 14th century astronomical clock with figures of the Three Kings, which emerge twice daily.

After its opening in 1990, the ice hotel — maintained at a temperature below -50°C — has been rebuilt each year from December to April. The hotel, including the chairs and beds, is constructed from ice blocks taken from the nearby Torne River. Artists are invited to create different rooms. The ice chapel here is popular for weddings. Interestingly, during summer, this site is popular for river rafting, stand up paddle-boarding, fishing and canoeing.

## Did You Know?

- ◆ Dating back a thousand years, the Swedish monarchy is one of the oldest in the world.
- ◆ Sweden pays students US\$187 per month to attend high school.
- ◆ In 1979, Sweden became the first country to ban corporal punishment.
- ◆ One of the biggest acts in the history of music, ABBA, is a Swedish group.
- ◆ The pacemaker, ultrasound, safety matches, astronomical lens, refrigerator and computer mouse have all been invented by Swedes.
- ◆ The official Twitter account of @Sweden was given to a random citizen every week to manage from 2011 to 2018.

# SCREAM MACHINES

THE first known roller coasters were built in the 1400s in Russia where large wooden ice slides were constructed during winter. In 1884, an American businessman and inventor called LaMarcus Thompson installed a Switchback Railway in Coney Island, New York. The ride was an unparalleled success and Thompson recovered his entire investment within a week, though he charged just five cents a ride.

However, the real pioneer was John Miller, the 'Thomas Edison of roller coasters', who began work as an engineer with Thompson when he was barely 19. He was the most prolific roller coaster designer and builder, with over 100 to his credit in the 1900s, including the Big Dipper at Blackpool in England. Some of his rides are still in operation, among them the Racer and Jack Rabbit at Kennywood Park in Pennsylvania and the Big Dipper at Geauga Lake in Ohio. Many of the safety features he invented like the safety ratchet which prevented the cars from slipping backwards if the pull chain broke; the underfriction wheels which kept them locked to the track and various braking and lock mechanisms, are still found in modern roller coasters.



# How does a roller coaster work?

A roller coaster generally consists of a series of connected cars running on a track that rises in designs and loops. A typical roller coaster is not self-powered. It relies on gravity for its motion.

Initially, a roller coaster is brought to the top of a tall hill at the beginning of its track. This is usually accomplished by a long chain running up the hill under the track. The cars grip onto the chain by means of hooks and the coaster is pulled to the top of the hill where the hooks disengage.

An alternative to this traditional chain-lift is the catapult launch. Instead of dragging the coaster up a hill, it is given a forceful launch by mechanisms like electromagnets, hydraulic or pneumatic pumps, etc.

The objective of bringing the train to the top of the hill is to build up its store of potential energy (energy of position). The taller the hill, the greater is the potential energy amassed. Once the train starts its descent due to gravity, its potential energy is converted into kinetic energy

(energy of motion), causing it to speed up. As it reaches the bottom of the hill, it gathers a lot of kinetic energy which propels it up the next hill/loop. Now, the kinetic energy is converted into potential energy and the cycle repeats.

As per Newton's first law of motion, an object in motion tends to keep moving until it is stopped by an external force. Thus, the roller coaster remains in motion until external brakes are applied. These brakes are usually in the form of clamps operated by a central computer. When the roller coaster is to be halted, the clamps are closed around a metal fin under the train. The friction causes the coaster to come gradually to a stop.

## Roller Coaster Records

### Fastest roller coaster

Formula Rossa, Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi, UAE Accelerates up to 240 km/h in just 4.9 seconds.

### Tallest roller coaster

Kingda Ka, Six Flags Great Escape in Jackson, New Jersey, USA. Also the tallest steel roller coaster.

Maximum height: 139 m above ground level.

### Fastest vertical launch roller coaster

The Storm Coaster, Dubai Hills Mall in Dubai, UAE

Vertical launch speed of 41 km/h.

### Tallest and fastest inverted roller coaster

Legendary Twin Dragon, Chongqing Sunac Land in Shapingba, China

It is 69.9 m at its highest point.

### Most track inversions in a roller coaster

The Smiler, Alton Towers in Staffordshire, UK, with 14 track inversions.

### Most expensive roller coaster

Expedition Everest, Walt Disney World Resort, Florida, USA  
Cost \$100 million in 2006.

### Longest roller coaster made of wood

The Beast, Kings Island in Ohio, USA

## Quiz

1. What kind of 'rainfall' does the planet Venus receive?
2. A daughter of English poet Lord Byron wrote what is thought to be the world's first computer programme in 1843. What is her name?

Answer: 1. Sulphuric acid rain 2. Augusta Ada, Countess of Lovelace





# **iVolunteer and UNICEF YuWaah Celebrate India's Changemakers at 13th iVolunteer Awards**

**New Delhi, 6th December 2024:** The 13th edition of the iVolunteer Awards, a flagship event celebrating selfless service and community impact, **was held** recently in New Delhi **to mark** International Volunteer Day. The event recognized individuals and organizations for their remarkable volunteering efforts that have made significant contributions to their communities. This year, the event introduced a new initiative, **'Green Guardians,'** supported by UNICEF YuWaah (Generation Unlimited India). The initiative highlighted youth climate champions and amplified their volunteering efforts in combating climate change.

The iVolunteer Awards were given by distinguished guests, including **Shri Nitesh Kumar Mishra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India; Mr. Arjan De Wagt, Deputy Representative Programmes, UNICEF India; Ms. Radhika Bharat Ram, Joint Vice Chairperson, Shri Ram**

**Schools; Ms Zafrin Choudhury, Chief of Communication, UNICEF India, and Mr. Shalabh Sahai, Co-founder, iVolunteer.** The Awards celebrated young people and partners across four distinct categories, identifying **Youth Champions, Volunteer Heroes, and Leaders in Volunteer Engagement.** In addition, they recognized ten youth climate champions as **Green Guardians,** underscoring UNICEF YuWaah's commitment to celebrating young volunteers who are shaping a brighter, greener future for all.

A significant focus of the event was the importance of climate-conscious actions by young people. Through the Meri LiFE platform, UNICEF and YuWaah have encouraged over 20 million children, adolescents, and youth to take pro-planet actions for environmental sustainability, reflecting the power of collective effort in combating climate change.



Arjan De Wagt, Deputy Representative Programmes, UNICEF India, emphasized, *“Volunteering bridges gaps—between rural and urban, privilege and poverty, ignorance and awareness. It is the collective strength of volunteers that transforms not just individuals but entire communities, equipping young people with empathy, purpose, and skills for the future.”*

Reflecting on the event’s journey, Shalabh Sahai, Convenor of the iVolunteer Awards, shared, *“Volunteering is a universal*

#### About iVolunteer

Since 2001, iVolunteer has been India’s heartbeat for volunteering, connecting over 25,000 volunteers annually with 350+ NGOs across the country. With a knack for tailoring meaningful experiences for volunteers and even sending them abroad to serve, iVolunteer continues to lead the charge in putting service at the center of personal and professional growth. **For more information, visit:** [www.ivolunteer.in/awards](http://www.ivolunteer.in/awards).



*language of connection, purpose, and shared humanity—it’s the quiet courage to step forward and say, ‘I care.’ Over the years, I’ve seen individuals, young and old, come alive through acts of service, finding meaning not just in what they do but in how they connect with others. As we celebrate the 13th iVolunteer Awards, we honor the resilience and innovation of volunteers who tackle the world’s biggest challenges with unwavering dedication. This moment is not just about recognition; it’s a call to action, reminding us that every small act of service is part of a much larger story—one we will continue to write together as we approach the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026, a milestone proclaimed by UN Resolution 78/127 to reaffirm volunteerism as a cornerstone of global progress.”*

#### About UNICEF YuWaah

YuWaah is a multi-stakeholder platform that aims to prepare young people to transition from education and learning to productive work and active citizenship. It was formed by UNICEF, together with public and private sector partners, UN Agencies, civil society organizations, foundations, and young people as the Generation Unlimited (GenU) partnership in India. **For more information, visit:**

<https://www.unicef.org/india/yuwaah>.

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# Walling out the Sand



*As deserts expand, swallowing up fertile land, countries around the world are using various methods to overcome the onslaught...*

THE SAHARA, the world's largest hot desert located in North Africa, has expanded 10 per cent southwards into the Sahel since 1920.

The Sahel is a vast semi-arid region separating the Sahara from the tropical savanna grasslands to the south. It is mostly barren, with sandy, rock-strewn and degraded landscapes. It stretches from Senegal in the west to Eritrea in the east, and cuts through more than a dozen countries in between. It is also one of the world's poorest regions.

The people who live in the Sahel are regularly beset by drought and famine. Overgrazing, increasing population and poor farming techniques have added to the problems.

In 2007, the African Union, made up of all 54 countries in the continent, decided to do something about regenerating the Sahel. It launched an ambitious project called the Great Green Wall, an 8000-km-long 'belt' of greenery that would encircle the waist of Africa! The plan was to plant millions of trees across the Sahel to hold back the Sahara.



The Wall aimed to revitalize 100 million hectares (247 million acres) of degraded land, sequester 250 million tons of carbon, and create 10 million jobs in rural areas by 2030. Completed, it would be Earth's most massive living structure. It was also expected to benefit the communities living in the Sahel and reduce conflict over land and migration due to drought.

It began with 11 countries, which later increased to 20, and then 26. In some countries, many of the planted trees died, either because they were not the suitable species for that region or because they were attacked by pests. Trees planted in remote, sparsely inhabited areas also perished. In many cases, the locals were not motivated enough and lost interest in looking after the trees.

It turned out that constructing a 'wall of trees' was not child's play.

The project leaders decided that each country would work according to its own plan and adapt indigenous methods of land use, such as soil conservation and rainwater harvesting that were already being followed by farmers and landowners. In some places, grasses and not trees were planted. In others, it was a mix of both. Hardy native species that were resistant to insects were chosen. For instance, the Sahel's acacia trees became one of the project's staple



plants. Its sap, called gum arabic, is used in a range of products, from paints and cosmetics to candies and sodas. The export of gum arabic became a steady source of income for the locals.

The project has had patchy success, depending on the country, its capacity to invest money and the enthusiasm of its farmers. Ethiopia began reforestation early and has so far planted more than 40 billion seedlings on 1,61,000 hectares of land. Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Chad have also reforested large swathes of degraded land, planting trees numbering in the millions. Countries like Cameroon and Ghana were slower off the blocks. Civil unrest in some countries has also slowed down progress.

Roughly 30 million acres have been restored between 2007 and 2024 at a cost of more than \$200 million. More than 20 million acres of land need to be restored every year and over \$4 billion invested annually, if the Wall is to be finished by 2030. That goal is now unlikely to be met.

However, the project has created more than 3,50,000 agro-forestry jobs and generated \$90 million in revenue in the countries where it has been implemented, giving them an incentive to soldier on.

### Did You Know?

In 1996, 197 nations came together to ratify the United Nations' Convention to Combat Desertification.

More than 24 billion tons of fertile soil is still lost yearly to desertification, while 40 per cent of the Earth's land surface is now considered degraded. Dry land degradation affects the economies of developing countries. The UN estimates that desertification impacts 3 billion people on Earth.

Desertification cannot be blamed only on deserts! Similar to climate change, human activities are often the main cause of land degradation. Intensive agriculture, overgrazing by livestock, industries set up in remote areas, an exploding population and increasing urbanisation—all have led to desertification.

### Indian Initiative

Africa's Great Green Wall has inspired our own government to create a 1,400-km-long and 5-km-wide 'green belt' from Gujarat to the Delhi-Haryana border, from Porbandar to Panipat. The plan hopes to reforest degraded land along the Aravalli Hills that will also act as a barrier to the shifting sands of the Thar Desert.



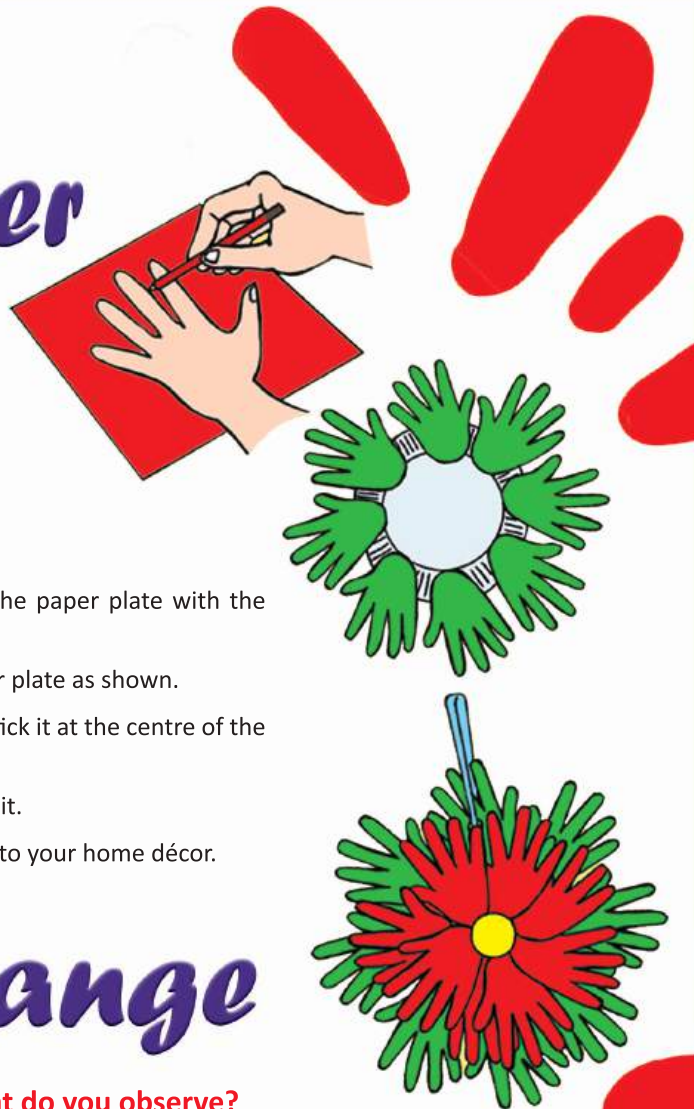
# Xmas Flower

**What you need:** Red, green and yellow card papers; small paper plate; scissors; punch; string; ribbon and glue.

**What you do:**

1. Trace out your hand on the red card paper. Cut it out and using that as a guide, trace out 15 more handprints—seven red and eight green.
2. Stick the green handprints all around the outer edge of the paper plate with the fingers pointing outside.
3. Similarly, stick the red handprints on the inside of the paper plate as shown.
4. Draw a tiny circle on the yellow card paper. Cut it out and stick it at the centre of the red handprints.
5. Punch a hole on the top and string a dainty ribbon through it.

Your Christmas poinsettia ornament is the perfect addition to your home décor.



# Floating Orange

**What you need:**

An orange, a bucket and some water.

**What you do:**

1. Fill the bucket with water.
2. Toss the orange into the bucket of water.
3. Observe what happens to the orange.

**What do you observe?**

The orange floats on the water.

Next

1. Peel the orange.
2. Toss it into the bucket of water.

**What do you observe?**

The orange sinks.

**Why does this happen?**

An object will float in water if its density is less than that of water. Density is the mass of one cubic centimetre of the substance. The density of water is 1 gram per cubic centimetre.

An unpeeled orange will float in water because its density is less than that of water. The peeled orange, on the other hand, will sink because its density is greater than that of water. There are tiny pockets of air in the peel which reduce the density and allow it to float. Removing the peel makes the orange denser!





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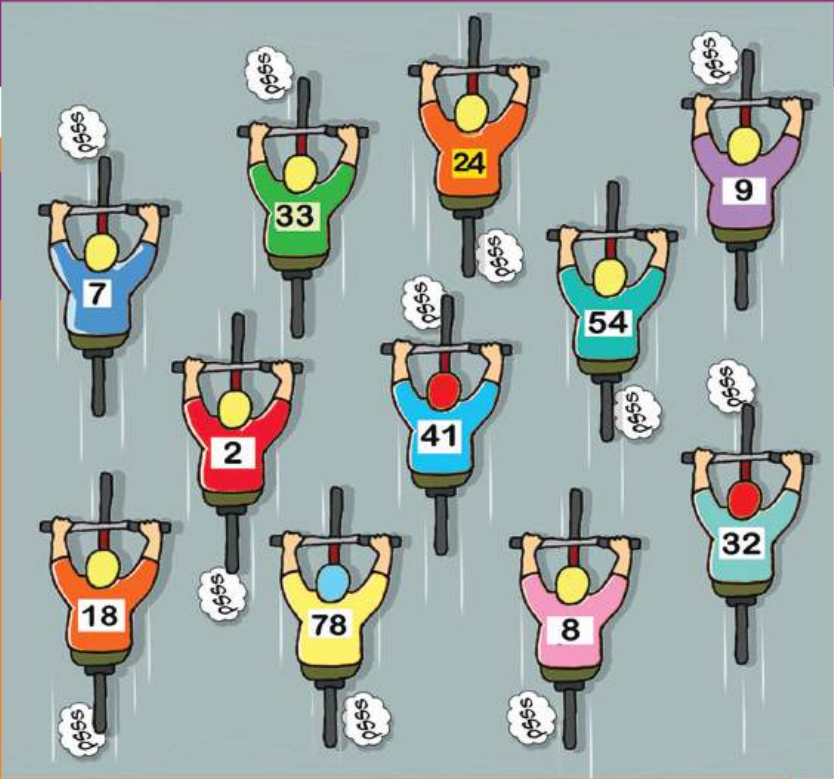
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# Mindbender

Can you spot which cyclist does not belong in the group?



**Answer:** No. 32. All riders with an even number have a punctured back wheel; those with an odd number have a punctured front wheel. No. 32 is an even-numbered cyclist with a front-wheel puncture.

# SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every horizontal row, vertical column and 2x3 box has the digits from 1-6 without repeating them in the same row, column or box.

6			2		
			4		
	1	6			3
			1		
3	4			5	
1		5			2

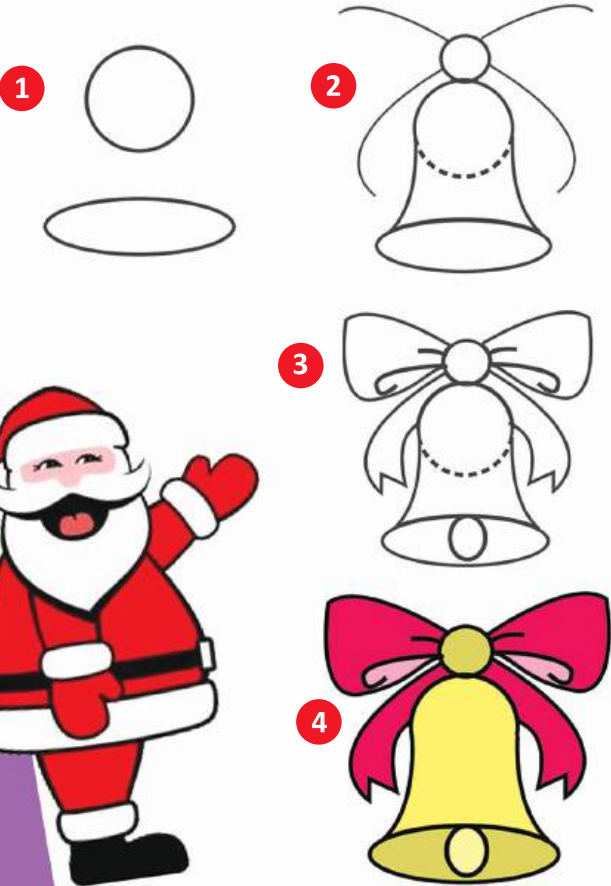


1	6	5	3	4	2
3	4	2	6	5	1
5	2	4	1	3	6
4	1	6	5	2	3
2	3	1	4	6	5
6	5	3	2	1	4

Answer:

# EASY DRAW

Draw a Christmas bell in four easy steps.







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### Costly Screams

Upon receiving the bill for the extraction of a tooth, Pradeep phoned his dentist and complained: Why, that's three times what you usually charge!"

"Yes, I know," replied the dentist, "but you yelled so loudly that you scared away two other patients!"



### Dead Silence

Rohit: I've never been troubled with back-seat drivers.

Mohit: Why? What kind of vehicle do you drive?

Rohit: A hearse.



### Case of Hiccups

Walking into a chemist's shop, a man asked the salesman at the counter, "Do you have anything for a bad case of hiccups?"

Without warning, the salesman reached over and gave the man a sharp smack on the back. "Did that help?" he asked.

"I don't know," the startled customer. "I'll have to ask my wife. She is waiting in the car."



### Horse Sense

Roma: Is your new horse well-behaved?

Soma: Oh, yes. Whenever we come to a fence, he stops and lets me go over first.



### The Good News

Doctor: I have some good news and some bad news for you.

Patient: What's the good news?

Doctor: They are going to name a disease after you.



### No Swimming Please!

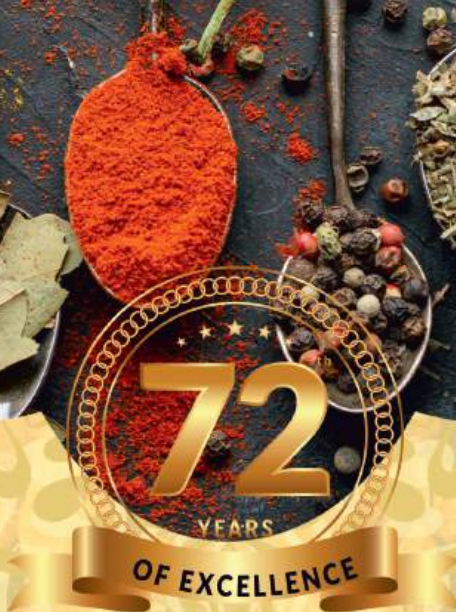
The guard was doing his rounds when he noticed a man in the lake. He shouted, "Don't you know swimming in this lake is prohibited?"

The man in the water gasped, "I'm not swimming, I'm drowning!"

"Then it's all right," said the guard and continued on his rounds.

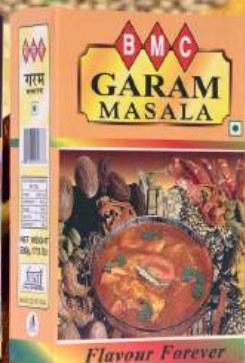






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