



World Mosquito Day

You may be wondering why we have a World Mosquito Day when these animals are responsible for the transmission of malaria. Well, that is what this day is all about, raising awareness regarding this, so that more people will be safe and protected. World Mosquito Day was created in order to honour the discovery made of the link between humans, malaria, and mosquitoes. This is something that has changed the health industry considerably, ensuring that humans can be protected.

#TIPS & TRICKS

Better Smartphone Photos

The smartphone is now the go-to camera - but how can you take the best smartphone photos?



Over the past decade or so, we've seen the compact camera market crash, photo sharing explode and smartphones evolve into the most important cameras around.

At the same time, camera performance has evolved into the most important aspect of those phones. It's not about call clarity, it's about photo quality.

We're not saying there's no space for real cameras any more - far from it - but for the everyday user, the smartphone has become the go-to camera.

Whether you have the most expensive flagship iPhone or the cheapest entry-level Android, we've rounded up some top tips to ensure that you're getting the most out of your phone's camera.

Clean The Lens

Photos looking a little milky? This is the biggest problem we see on smartphone cameras. Because the lens is so small, it's very easy for it to get dirty while you're using your phone for other things.

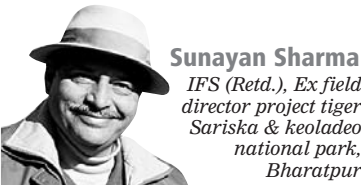
You spend the whole day groping your phone, so make sure you wipe away those smeary marks before you start snapping.

Focusing

Focus makes a photo. Cameras have become a lot better at focusing on the subject in the past few years, but don't just point and press the button. Take time to make sure that what you want to take a picture of is in focus.

Composition

Think about what you're looking at and what your picture is trying to show. You can very easily change the shape of your photo afterwards, but if it's full of distracting background elements or it's not clear what you're taking a photo of then it's never going to look great. Stop and think about the photo you actually



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From the latter half of October in Sariska, days are warm but the mornings and evenings are cold. The weather is ideal for long walks in the forest. On one such day, while inspecting the grasslands of Doraka valley and sloping hills full of Anogeissus pendula, I decided to check further upwards crossing the circle boundary of Kalighati naka. After crossing the middle slope along the nullah, the dense growth of bamboo made our trek rather tough. Crossing the hill we reached the plateau of Bhensota. It is about 6 km long but is a narrow plateau with rich grass, bamboo and several patches of Dhak (Butea monosperma) trees. The entire water of this beautiful plateau drains towards its southern slope beyond which are located the villages of Ghevar and Nadu. These villages have a



sizeable human and livestock population. It was only after this visit that I realised the importance of this area from the point of view of wildlife as well as the potential threat it faced here. As a result, patrolling along this area was intensified.

Sariska Tiger Reserve is in the Northern Aravalli region and has many valleys and plateaus. In the 1990s, there was no check-post in this sensitive plateau. After an exhaustive tour of the area in the evening at around 5 PM, we decided to return to Kalighati check-post which was about 8 kilometers away. We anticipated, we'd reach there by 8 in the night. We had hardly covered a kilometer when suddenly the sky became cloudy. It could rain any moment. We quickened our steps but nature had some other plans. It was so overcast that with dimmed sky light it was becoming difficult to walk through grasses and shrubs at normal pace after a while. The Kalighati forester accompanying us handed out a small torch from his haversack but it was insufficient. We had to be on our guards. After all, we were passing through an important tiger area. The topography and vegetation of Bhensota plateau supports a mentionable population of rodents

and birds which in turn have supported a sizeable population of reptiles. The forester cautioned the party to be alert against encountering poisonous snakes like cobras. As a precaution we started moving in a single file. We were yet to begin the down slope march when it began to drizzle. It made our movement more difficult because the animal tracks we were using were devoid of grass and were becoming slippery as the water from both the sides was collecting and draining on this track. We could not take the risk of walking through grass. It was barely a 15-minute walk but we were fully drenched. To add to our woes, wind had started blowing north to south and we were heading towards north. The entire scene had changed so abruptly just within an hour that it was becoming difficult to cope with. Under such conditions, we were left with no option other than waiting for the rains to stop. There were bamboo clumps all around us. We decided to take shelter under one such dense clump. An old forest guard was carrying a match box in his pant pocket but it was fully soaked in water. It was really frustrating but smile returned on every face of the contingent when the guard lit fire from this box. It was nothing short of magic. Enough dry-wet bamboo leaves and some twigs from shrubs had been stocked to light sufficient fire. After all, we had to dry our clothes and also ensure protection against wild creatures in this tiger country.

Suddenly from the northern side, a metallic dhak, the call of a sambar deer echoed in the jungle. It repeated twice within a minute's gap. Then again with a

#TREKKING



After a kilometer's walk, we found the route to Kalighati. It is an animal track which goes along the nullah draining from Bhensota plateau to Doraka valley. The slope is highly undulating and full of rocks. The herbivore animals like chital, sambar, blue-bull, wild pigs use this route commonly and as a result several shallow-deep pits have developed which are overflowing with water making the track highly slippery. The small torch was of some help but was insufficient to guide us through safe passage. Also, the water that collected on the plateau had started flowing down the slope. We had not forgotten the tigers. We were cautiously moving down. We had covered hardly one-third of the slope when along a turn, we heard a low growling of the tiger.

slight pause, series of these calls marked the presence of some large carnivore, probably a tiger. Ram Prasad, the forester of Kalighati told us that for the last two days, an adult tigress was roaming in Doraka-Bhensota jungle. Two days back she had made a kill in Bhensota jungle but yesterday early morning had moved towards Tehla nullah passing through the savannah forest of Doraka and the Kalighati watchtower. Maybe now she was returning to the kill, which might have been finished by hyena, jackals and wild pigs. Rain had now slowed down but not stopped. The sambar call had subsided and no other call followed. Signal was

clear that the tigress had sat down. We decided to start but again the sambar emitted a call. Though the lady tiger was comparatively a shy animal and was not likely to attack us but I could not take a chance. I did not want to meet the tigress in this darkness face-to-face. A little more waiting was advisable. Within 5 minutes the sambar called again but this was certainly a panic call. Two more bleat mufing calls and then all silence. Perhaps the animal was killed by the tigress. Or it might have escaped from the clutches of the tigress and the jungle had become all silent. The old forest guard with us pleaded to move ahead fast lest it started raining again making our movement impossible. It was already 8 pm. Even at normal pace, in this hour of the night with light drizzle, it was impossible for us to reach Kalighati before 10 pm. I consented. We were again in single file.

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one-third of the slope when along a turn, we heard a low growling of the tiger.

Ram Prasad cautioned us that may be she had succeeded in killing the sambar and is sitting close to the track. It was very risky to move ahead in this situation as tigers are very possessive about their kills. It was a panicky situation. We were all tired and hungry after the day-long excursion. All the trees and shrubs were so wet that we could not prepare even a vegetative torch from these. The main risk was that a little tumbling or slip could throw us in to the nullah. The beat guard was leading us as he was best conversant with this track. After another thirty minutes we reached the ground. Except few, light to hard bruises from shrubs, we were more or less safe. Another one hour and we reached Kalighati naka. We did a bonfire to dry our clothes. The fire provided heavenly pleasure. The tikkad (roti) baked on chulla and open fire with garlic chatni (pesto) was one of the most delicious dishes I ever had.

On the second day, early morning, the beat guard found the sambar kill. The tigress was still sitting by the kill. It was about 15 meter from the track we covered last night. I very much wished to visit the site myself but could not make it as I had already fixed a plan to visit Kankawadi that morning.

The experienced forester said that we had passed the tigress and



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By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

#NOSTALGIA

Revisit The History & Origins Of Traditional Indian Games

The charm of these games lies in their simplicity and the joy they bring, making them an integral part of our diverse cultural heritage.

Earning follows when we look back at the times we spent during the breaks we used to get at school - running out to spend those precious minutes, gathering our friends, and rushing to the field.

This nostalgia of the old days is a reminder of the excitement we used to feel when the bell rang, soaring through our bodies.

Not to say, however, that this childlike essence of those days cannot be returned. All we need to do is remember and safely nestle in the feeling of physical agility, excitement, speed, and pure bliss that is carried within it.

Today living in the era of the digital age, there is a slight dread of the many games we played in our childhood leaving our minds - abandoned and disregarded, with none of it being passed down to the children of today.

To prevent such an affair in the smallest capacity, we are going down a lane that will rekindle the deepest parts of our childhood.

Especially intriguing are the traditional games that have etched themselves into our lives - carrying with them a rich heritage and a sense of cultural identity.

Pithu, 7 Stones, or Languri

Pittu, a personal favourite that has defined a significant part of many of our childhood memories. Typically played outside the school premises, it entailed collecting flat stones and using tennis balls to hit each other.

Due to its spirited nature, playing Pittu within the school playground was deemed a bit aggressive.

Also known as the game of Seven Stones, it is an ancient sport that traces its history back to the BhagwataPurana, a Hindu religious text written 5000 years ago.

Lord Krishna is mentioned to have played this traditional game with his friends. Originating in the southern parts of the Indian sub-continent, it was a popular outdoor sport in India and Pakistan during the 1990s but has now become less known among urban crowds.

Dog and the Bone: A Classic

RumalJhapatta, also known as the Dog and the Bone game, is a beloved outdoor team game that originated from the rural parts of Rajasthan. For years, Rumal Jhapatta has been a common game played in schools all over India. This simple game requires nothing more than a handkerchief or Rumal. Although, this item can be replaced by anything that is small in size and quick to pick and run.

Kho Kho: Mythological Origins

Kho-Kho is believed to have been inspired by the Hindu sacred text of Mahabharata. The legend goes that the tactic used by Abhimanyu to



Kabaddi

Kabaddi, a sport with its roots centred on Jallikattu, was once common among the Ayar tribal people living in the Mullai region of ancient Tamil Nadu. In this game, a player going against the opposition is treated like a bull, reminiscent of taming a bull without physical contact. With a rich history, kabaddi traces its origins back over 4,000 years in Tamil Nadu. India played a pivotal role in popularizing kabaddi as a competitive sport, witnessing organized competitions in the 1920s and its inclusion in the Indian Olympic Games in 1938.

In every nook and corner of India, a plethora of traditional games exists, each with its own unique name and variations. Notably, we have Marbles, also known as MaramPittu, where players try to eliminate each other by skillfully throwing a ball. Indian games involving marbles are known as Kancha/Kanche or GolliGundru, with players flicking marbles to capture as many as possible and emerge victorious.

Additionally, we have the game of Lock and Key, also called Vish-Amrit, akin to the Western freeze tag, where players freeze opponents by tagging them, and their teammates can unfreeze them by tagging them back. As we rediscover these traditional Indian games, we are not only preserving our past but also ensuring that future generations can embrace the same sense of excitement and camaraderie that once filled our own childhoods.

