



World Parkinson's Day

On the birthday of Dr. J. Parkinson, the first to describe and diagnose the disease, learn about Parkinson's, donate or volunteer, and raise awareness. The first World Parkinson's Day took place in 1997. It was started by a collaboration between the World Health Organization and the European Parkinson's Disease Association (EPDA), with the two groups having a focus on raising awareness and support for research and information surrounding prevention of and a cure for this medical condition. It is now an official WHO holiday, supported by the United Nations.

#MIND-BOGGLING

World Record Temperature Jump in Antarctic

An unprecedented leap of 38.5 C, in the coldest place on Earth, is a harbinger of a disaster for humans and the local ecosystem.



On 18 March, 2022, scientists at the Concordia Research Station on the East Antarctic Plateau documented a remarkable event. They recorded the largest jump in temperature ever measured at a meteorological centre on Earth. According to their instruments, the region, that day, experienced a rise of 38.5 C above its seasonal average, a world record.

This startling leap, in the coldest place on the planet, left polar researchers struggling for words to describe it. "It is simply mind-boggling," said Prof. Michael Meredith, science leader at the British Antarctic Survey. "In sub-zero temperatures, such a massive leap is tolerable but if we had a 40 C rise in the UK now, that would take temperatures for a spring day to over 50 C, and that would be deadly for the population."

This amazement was shared by glaciologist Prof. Martin Siegert, of the University of Exeter. "No one in our community thought that anything like this could ever happen. It is extraordinary and a real concern," he said. "We are now having to wrestle with something that is completely unprecedented."

"Poleward winds, which previously made few inroads into the atmosphere above Antarctica, are now carrying more and more warm, moist air from lower latitudes, including Australia, deep into the continent," says scientists, and these have been blamed for the dramatic polar 'heat-wave' that hit Concordia. Exactly why these currents are now able to plunge so deep into the continent's air space is not yet clear, however.

Nor has this 'huge temperature hike' turned out to be an isolated event, scientists have discovered. For the past two years, they have been inundated with rising numbers of reports of disturbing 'meteorological anomalies' on the continent. Glaciers, bordering the west Antarctic ice-sheet, are losing mass to the ocean at an increasing rate, while levels of sea ice, which float on the oceans around the continent, have plunged dramatically, having remained stable for more than a century.

These events have raised fears that the Antarctic, once thought to be too cold to experience the early impacts of global warming, is now succumbing dramatically and rapidly to the swelling levels of greenhouse gases that humans continue to pump into the atmosphere.

The continent is now catching up with the Arctic, where the impacts of global warming have, until now, been the most 'intense experienced' across the planet. The Arctic is currently warming at four times the rate experienced by the rest of the planet. But the Antarctic has started to catch up, so that it is already warming twice as quickly as the planet overall.

A key reason for the Arctic and Antarctic to be taking disproportionate hits from global warming is because the Earth's oceans, warmed by fossil fuel burning, are losing their sea ice at their polar extremities. The dark waters, that used to lie below the ice, are being exposed and solar radiation is no longer reflected back into space. Instead, it is being absorbed by the sea, further heating the oceans there.

Essentially, it is a vicious circle of warming oceans and melting of sea ice, though, the root cause is humanity and its continuing burning of fossil fuels and its production of greenhouse gases. This whole business has to be laid at our door.

'Ajeeb!' I say to myself. Then, I check to see, if the people talking, were blind or blindfolded. But no, they weren't. Bright eyes and each had a camera and lens worth at least 3- 4 lakhs each. One, a Nikon and the other, a Sony. But we shall not hold that against them. What was more, this conversation or different versions of it, were happening all around me. So, it wasn't only this 'one woman' who saw nothing.

"What did you see?"



Kabini River Resort is on the bank of the Kabini Reservoir, bordering Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. I am in the *Gol Ghar* (which is actually rectangular) at tea and snack time, after the afternoon safari.

"What did you see?" asked an American, who had come to Kabini for the first time.

"Nothing. Totally dry. Five safaris, and we saw nothing," said an extremely bossy Indian woman, whose rude behavior was on display wherever she went, with the only saving grace that nobody was exempt from it. One must be grateful, when people with bad manners, display them equally for everyone.

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How could this be? How can people go for a three-hour drive in one of the most beautiful forests in India and say that they saw nothing? Unless of course, one was to ask, "What does 'seeing' mean?"

Well, what did I see? I saw a *silent life and death struggle* between a strangler fig and its saprophytic host, a nameless giant of the forest, whose fate

was sealed when the first tender filament of the fig started its climb upwards towards the sun. After that, it would only be a matter of time, measured in decades, perhaps, but the ending, inevitable. The fig strangles the host. As I saw this struggle without motion, I thought how closely it resembles what is happening in our national politics. Politicians, of all hues, have taken hold of the nation like strangler figs and are busy throttling its life out. There is one exception to this, however, in our case. Unlike the forest giant, we, the people of India, are not helpless. *Unless we choose to be.* We are not helpless unless we choose to vote for the one who gives us Rs. 200 instead of voting for the one who is most likely to serve our best interests. 'Rs. 200' doesn't even buy a chicken. Is this what we have priced our futures at and the futures of our generations, yet unborn, at less than the price of a chicken?

I saw *Chital* (Axis deer) or Spotted deer in their hundreds. Chital is one of the most beautiful of the deer species. In Nagarhole, they abound. Grass and shrubs are aplenty. The terrain suits them very well. There are predators, wild dogs (*Dhole*), leopards (black and regular) and tigers but the Chital have liquid black eyes, with eyelashes. Their coats, golden brown with white spots showing shadowy in the morning mist, are a sight to behold.

Then, their behavior, the way the entire weak die early and only the strong are left to breed, so, predation helps and promotes survival of prey species. I saw their fawns, ranging from some, which must have been literally days old to older ones. *Chital fawns* simply must be the most beautiful creatures on earth. All Chitals have liquid black eyes, with eyelashes that will give every Bollywood actress a complex. Their coats, golden brown with white spots showing shadowy in the morning mist, are a sight to behold.

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FOREST-VIEW



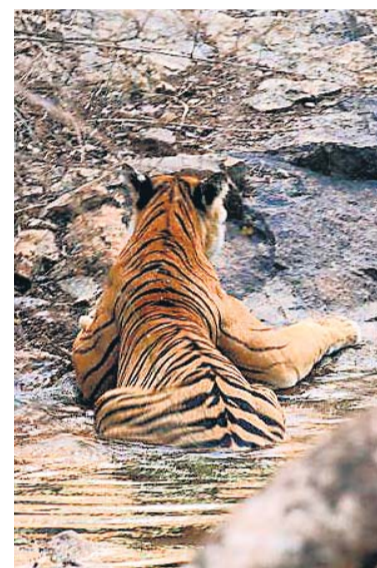
Tiger Kills Bison in Nagarhole reserve.

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the dominant alpha males strut. The *stags*, with a full rack of horns, which they shed every year to grow a new pair, clothed first in skin called 'velvet,' which they then rub off on trees until it is at first hanging in rags and then is totally cast away to show the shiny bone beneath. It is *rutting season* and you can hear the territorial *braying call* of the alpha males, challenging all takers. The stags eat very little during this time, being focused almost entirely on protecting their harem of hinds from other roving males, ready to give battle at the slightest provocation. When there is none, they sometimes take out their testos-

terone on innocent bushes, bashing them to smithereens with their impressive horns.

But if you are a Chital, no matter how impressive, you are at the bottom of the food chain. Everyone eats you and you eat grass. So, if you want to survive and live to tell tales of your life to your grandchildren, you need to be 'extremely alert.' Chital learn this lesson early in life. Those that don't never grow old. The result is that Chital will sound their typical alarm, that sounds like a very high-pitched bark, at practically



every suspicious movement. I have seen Chital calling, when they see a Sloth bear, Dhole, Wild boar, eddies of wind rustling the bushes and simply because they imagined that they saw a tiger or leopard. But you can hardly blame them for this because they are no.1 on the menu of any predator on a *keto diet*. One of them calls while striking the earth with one fore-foot with every call. The rest, run. Chital learn two *CTS* (Critical to Survival) lessons in life, which are good lessons for us to learn also!

Lesson No. 1: Complacency is death.

Lesson No. 2: It is better to run twice than to be caught once. A much more reliable alarm giver is the *Grey Langur*. These have a symbiotic relationship with Chital. Langur feed in tree tops and drop more than they eat, of leaves and fruit, which the Chital eat off the ground. And all bands of Langur have a sentinel, who doesn't feed but sits on the highest branch of the tallest tree in the area and scans the forest for threats. When he sees anything suspicious, he calls the alarm and the Chital take off. Since this sentinel is watching from a vantage point, he is much more accurate in his risk assessment. When his shift is over, another of the tribe takes over and he goes to feed. It is amazing to see how this entire sys-



tem works to the advantage of two different species that are united in threat. How much can we learn, I muse, about being 'united,' despite our differences because we face the same threats in our societies. Threats of moral degradation, drug abuse, unemployment, domestic violence, rape, murder, crime of different kinds, all of which don't differentiate between us because *criminality minus all victims equally*. It makes the forest, with its lurking leopards and tigers, seem positively safe!

Langur are playful in the extreme. Most amusing are the young. They fight, chase each other, up and down trees, making some leaps which almost amount to flight. I saw one young chap, simply hanging from a vine and swinging back and forth. Just like a child on a swing! He was simply having fun. Another one climbed up behind his older sibling and used his tail for a swing. That didn't last too long because the owner of the tail had a different opinion about this 'kind of liberty.' Some older individuals simply sit on a branch with their hind legs stretched out before them. Occasionally, those lower in the pecking order, come up behind them and start grooming them. I saw one Langur, sitting on one branch and leaning out, holding another with his hands while resting his chin on his hands, fast asleep. His instinct ensures that he doesn't let go of the other branch even in his sleep. Our driver stopped the *jeep* under a tree, but noticed some Langur sitting directly above, and very wisely and hurriedly, moved us out from beneath them. I could almost hear one of them look down at us and say to the other, 'Are you thinking what I am thinking?' I didn't fancy being the recipient of their donations.

To be continued...

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JKK: 31 YEARS OF NURTURING CULTURE

On the momentous occasion of its 31st Foundation Day, Jawahar Kala Kendra, the art and cultural hub of the Pink City, treated its patrons to a two-day extravaganza of art, dance and music.



Amidst the growing need for nurturing of art and artists, the establishment of an international art and culture center, 'Jawahar Kala Kendra,' in Jaipur emerged as a pivotal response in 1993. Known affec-

Musical Melodies



The inaugural day commenced with soul-stirring *Ghazal* performances at the Rangayan Auditorium. Classical vocalist, Navdeep Singh Jhala, accompanied by a talented ensemble, serenaded the audience with classics including Mehdi Hasan's '*Ranjish Hi Sahi*.' Following his mesmerizing performance, Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Mega Final winner, Mohammed Vakil, rendered his enchanting pieces, captivating everyone with timeless melodies such as '*Aaya Tere Dar*'

Folk Dance Extravaganza

The culminating event of the 10-day folk dance workshop, which had been ongoing at JKK, overseen by Dr. Roop Singh Shekhawat, took place at the Krishnayan Auditorium as a part of the Foundation Day celebrations. Over 25 participants, adorned in traditional attire, commenced the performance with a vibrant dance symbolizing the forthcoming *Gangaur* festival. Adorning the auditorium were stat-

tionately as *JKK*, this institution has dedicated itself to the preservation and promotion of various genres of Indian art and culture, enriching the visual and cultural heritage of Jaipur. In recent years, JKK has risen to prominence as a popular cultural destination, serving as a beacon for emerging art and cultural centers.

Throughout the year, its premises buzz with a vibrant array of cultural activities, including seminars, workshops, dance and music recitals, theatre shows, and literary discussions. This dynamic organi-

zation not only embodies the essence of an international art and cultural center but also resonates deeply with the authentic performances of indigenous folk singers and dancers, showcasing genuine modes of expression. Moreover, it serves as a platform for interaction among art connoisseurs, scholars, artists, and artisans, fostering a rare sense of community and exchange, rarely found in commercial destinations. On 8 April, JKK celebrated its *31st Foundation Day*, with a two-day extravaganza of art, dance and music.

Two exhibitions also began on this occasion. The center's eclectic art collection is being displayed in the Sphatik gallery. Simultaneously, an overview of Jawahar Kala Kendra and its artistic journey is being showcased through photographs and prints at the Alankar Art Gallery. These exhibitions are on till 14 April at JKK.

ues of *Isar* and *Gangaur*, serving as a poignant backdrop as everyone swayed to the melodious tunes of '*Bhanwar Mahane Poojan Do Gangaur*' and '*Hatila Hat Chhodo*,' immersing themselves in the rich folk culture of the state. The presentation reached its crescendo with a captivating *Ghoomar* dance, leaving the audience enthralled by the spectacle.

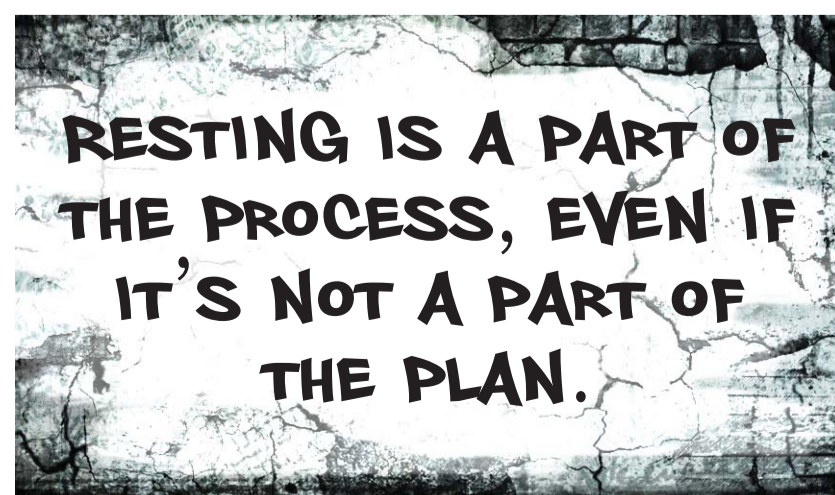
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THE WALL

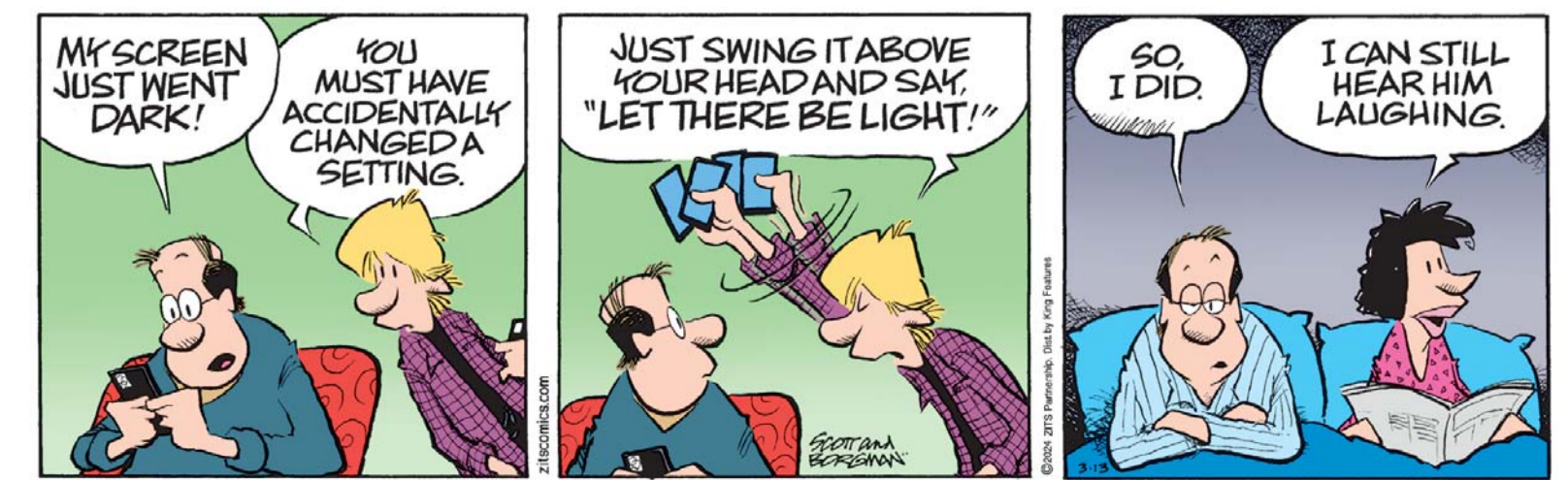


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman