

#CONSERVATION

International Vulture Awareness Day

Due to their scavenger nature, many misunderstand the wonderful and important birds known as *vultures*, many species, of which, are threatened or endangered.



It's safe to say that vultures, in general, and turkey vultures, in particular, have a pretty bad reputation. People, in many cultures, believe that vultures are disgusting, filthy, disease-carrying birds.

Sadly, this stereotype has some negative consequences in the real world and has brought about some struggles for these important birds. Many of which can actually be quite beautiful! In order to correct it, various conservation groups

History

International Vulture Awareness Day, which aims to raise awareness of all species of vultures, began in 2009 through a collaboration between the *Birds of Prey* program in South Africa and the *Hawk Conservatory Trust* in the United Kingdom. Because of the strength of these two programs, the day quickly spread around the world.

Zoos and wildlife organizations from the United States and Canada to India, Uganda, Serbia, Australia, Tunisia and elsewhere host events where members of the public can learn more about vultures, and sometimes, even get up close to see and experience them! The first Saturday in September has been set aside as a day to consider the ecological importance of a *bird of prey* that is, otherwise, mostly

How to Celebrate

Looking for fun ideas and plans to celebrate International Vulture Awareness Day? Check out some of these ways to get involved with honouring this bird on this important day.

Watch a Documentary About Vultures

Learn more about vultures in the environment and for humans. International Vulture Awareness Day, and get that info from reading books, researching online or watching a documentary. Check out some of these shows and films that feature the important

Host a Vulture Themed Party

Sure, it's a weird reason to have a party, but it's a great way to raise awareness about vultures! Gathering a group of friends to watch a vulture-centric nature documentary can help share the love of these noble but misunderstood animals, in celebration of International Vulture Awareness Day. And, of course, the decorations for the party should certainly be themed around vultures and birdies. For the ambitious, a vulture-shaped cake could make the perfect accompaniment!

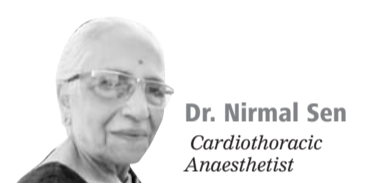
Make a Donation to Help Vultures

Considering that some vultures are now at risk or in danger, International Vulture Awareness Day would be an ideal time to help out a charity that assists them.



Role Reversals In The OT

With advances in surgery (incidentally only possible because of good and safe Anaesthesia), the Anaesthetist is being given a separate identity. Those laid back physicians, who had restricted themselves to the Operation Theatre (OT), have now stepped into nearly every section of medicine. They now play a role in the care of the patient not only in the OT, but also have expanded into esoteric roles of helping in pain relief and care of all sorts of issues in the Intensive Care Unit, to name a few! They are also considered to be experts in therapeutics and pharmacology. Truly, they are the present era alchemists.



Dr. Nirmal Sen
Cardiothoracic
Anaesthetist

or a long while, during the beginning of our careers in medicine, Goutam and I were in a quandary as to which branch to choose for our post-graduation (PG). Being top level students in the class, we had the option of many subjects to choose from. This was in those days when selection was made on the basis of Final MBBS marks. The All India PG entrance exam was not in existence at that time.

For Goutam, the choice was easier because he could choose according to his inclination. He was the class topper in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OB & G). Some of the best specialists in the bigger metros in this branch were men. This was not true in Rajasthan as people were conservative and did not welcome men as specialist for the care of women in their families. All the same, he felt that the time had come to break this glass ceiling in Rajasthan. He applied for OB & G.

When he was called in for the interview, amused glances were

exchanged after seeing his six foot plus figure. The Professor of OB & G, who knew him well, gave a half-amused and half-querulous glance. She began by saying that the application was refused. She maintained that even if she allowed him to join as a post-graduate, he would, probably, be limited to paper work and never be allowed to touch a patient. Leave alone caring and operating! So, that was the end of the aspirations to become Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. His father had been an eminent surgeon, and so, he decided to follow his footsteps.

My case was different. I, too, had many options because of my high scores in Final MBBS. I could choose any main subject. Those, who knew me, expected my choice to be OB & G. It would probably have been so too, but for an incident. There was a one month gap between the ending of our internship and the counselling for post-graduation. I was accepted by Dr. S. N. Kakkar, Professor of Anaesthesia, in the corridor.

He asked: So, what are you doing now?

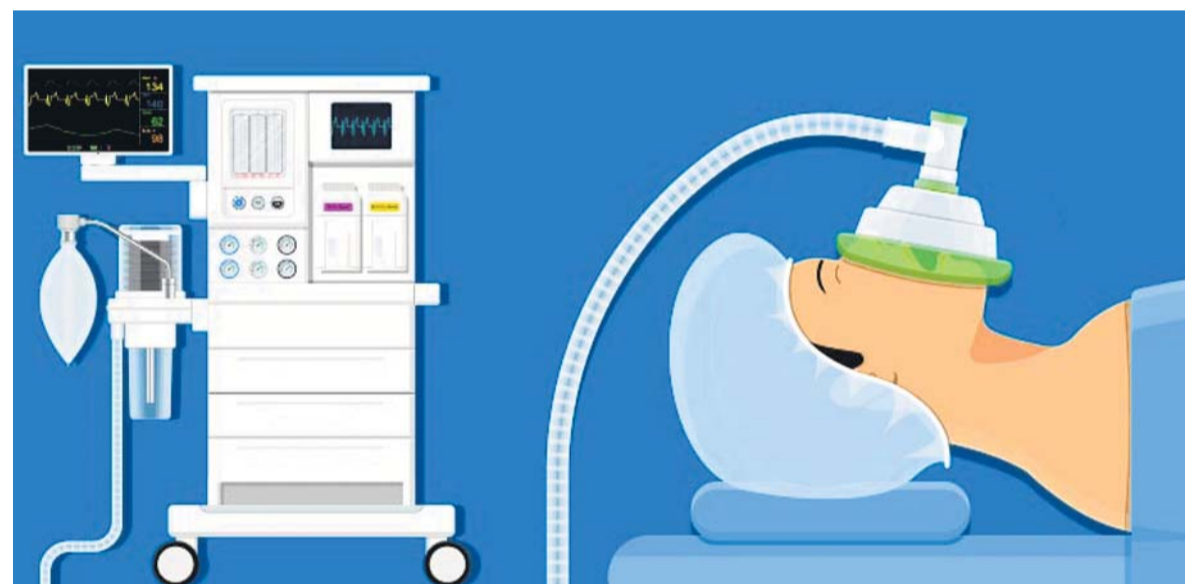
I answered: I was looking forward to the break.

He suggested: Why don't you come to the Anaesthesia department and help me with the handling of cases. I am desperately short of staff and would be grateful to have an extra hand. You would have a wonderful exposure to the subject.

I accepted the offer hesitantly.



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Within few days, I realised how interesting the subject was. At that time, there was a major rush of work in the plaster room where reduction of fractures, dislocations and correction of congenital defects was done in large numbers. Normally, all of them required anaesthesia. The little children usually had very short duration procedures. The impatient and overworked orthopedic residents did not have the time or patience for the children to undergo anaesthesia because they would have to wait for the anaesthetist for long, at times. So, they would stun the child with a tight slap (*Jhapat*), and quickly get their job done. I was horrified to see this. Then and there, I chose Anaesthesia as a career.

So, when I entered the Principal's chamber for counseling, one of the senior professor in Medicine, Dr. L. R. Sarin, stated abruptly, "What is this nonsense? You have chosen Anaesthesia. It is a behind-the-screen career. You are a bright girl. You could do wonders in OB & G or any other main branch. We are not going to give you a PG seat in Anaesthesia."

I was adamant. I was asked to go out and reconsider. Later, I was called in, and seeing my steadfast-

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ness, I was reluctantly given the option. This was the year 1964. It is true that in those days, patients did know the name of their surgeons, but did not have any idea of anaesthetist and the important role played by him/her. Knowing the name was a far dream.

For long, the role of the Anaesthetist has been hidden behind many curtains from the patient and the general public. It is only now, sixty years later, in 2024 that the situation has changed. With advances in surgery (incidentally only possible because of good and safe Anaesthesia), the Anaesthetist is being given a separate identity. Those laid back physicians, who had restricted themselves to the Operation Theatre (OT), have now stepped into nearly every section of medicine. They now play a role in the care of the patient not only in the OT, but also have expanded into esoteric roles of helping in pain relief and care of all sorts of issues in the Intensive Care Unit, to name a few! They are also considered to be experts in therapeutics and pharmacology. Truly, they are the present era alchemists.

As a result of 12000 to 16000 hours of training during PG, the present day anaesthetist is the

expert who is often consulted in the usage of specific drugs and their interaction. They are aware of even the minutest nuances of medicines used in the ICU. The fact is that in most ICUs, the anaesthetist has now taken over the post-operative care of the patient, giving the surgeon more time to do what he is skilled in, surgery in medicine too, there are now ICU intensivists, who were initially anaesthetists, and now, the complete 'moment to moment' caretaker of the sick patient.

This is extremely hard work. The question often asked is, What does the present day Anaesthetist do all day? It is quite to the contrary today! He can be seen to be busy in the obstetric suite, giving epidural anaesthesia for a painless delivery; and at the next moment, he may be asked to resuscitate a severe trauma patient in the emergency. It has been calculated that most anaesthetists do 8000 to 12000 steps in an 8 hour shift, moving from one place to another. This too may be a low estimate as most hospitals are short-staffed and the steps may easily increase by another 3000. Studies show that such duty doctors burn up about 3000 calories while having time for only a hurried cup of coffee/tea and maybe, a *kachori* or *samosa*.

World Beard Day

The beard has been the ultimate symbol of manliness since time out of mind. Close trimmed, full, or properly manicured, the beard stands supreme in the world of masculinity. In fact, in many cultures, the beard has often been a representation for many masculine virtues. Many people and cultures carry a great deal of admiration and respect for someone who chooses to sport a fine beard. World Beard Day celebrates the beard, and all it has been, become, and will be, in days to come.



#FESTIVITIES

Ganpati Bappa Morya

Ganesh Chaturthi 2024: Why is the festival celebrated for 10 days?

Ganesh Chaturthi is one of the most auspicious Hindu festivals in India, and is also known as *Vinayaka Chaturthi* or *Ganesh Utsav*. It is widely observed in India and marks the birth of Lord Ganesha. It is believed that Lord Ganesha removes all the obstacles and is worshipped at the beginning of any new activity, such as a new business venture, endeavour, or intellectual pursuits.



Why is Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated for 10 days?

According to Hindu mythology, Goddess Parvati created Lord Ganesha from the Sandalwood paste, that she used for her bath, where she breathed life into the idol. One day, when she was bathing, she instructed him to stand guard. However, when her husband, Shiva returned, Ganesha denied entry to him. Resultantly, Lord Shiva beheaded Ganesha. Later, to make up for what he had done, Shiva granted Ganesha a new head, that is, of an elephant. This is being reenacted during the festival of *Ganesh Chaturthi*, which lasts for 10 days, representing the birth of Lord Ganesha, and his journey back to his mother, Parvati.

Ganesh Chaturthi 2024: 10 Days Celebration

Day 1: Ganesh Chaturthi

The 10-day festival begins with the installation of *Ganesh* idols in homes and temples, making the ritual of *'prana pratishtha'*, invoking the spirit of Lord Ganesha into the idol. Apart from this, *Ganapati Puja* is also accompanied by the chanting of hymns and offering sweets like *modaks*, the favourite sweets of Ganesha.



Day 2-3: Bhajans and Cultural Programmes

The second and third days are generally devoted to devotional singing and cultural performances. Temples with local communities organise *Bhajans*, dance performances and cultural programmes, celebrating Lord Ganesha. This is one of the most joyful days as competitions and events are also organised in different places.

Day 4-5: Community Celebrations

The day four and five are prominent, featuring elaborate decoration and theme events in public pandals. The festival's spirit is reflected in street decorations, lights and vibrant processions where devotees carry idols to different locations, and are often accompanied by music, dance and firecrackers.

Day 6: Ganesh Chaturthi Special Puja

On the sixth day, a *special puja* is performed which is known as *'Rajya Ganpati'*. This festival offers special prayers and rituals, seeking blessings of Lord Ganesha to gain prosperity and success.

Day 7-8: Immersion Preparations

The focus shifts towards preparing for the grand immersion procession on day 7 and 8. Families and communities begin arrangements for the final procession, taking the *Ganesh* idol to a water body for immersion, symbolising deity's return to this divine abode.



Day 9 Anant Chaturdashi

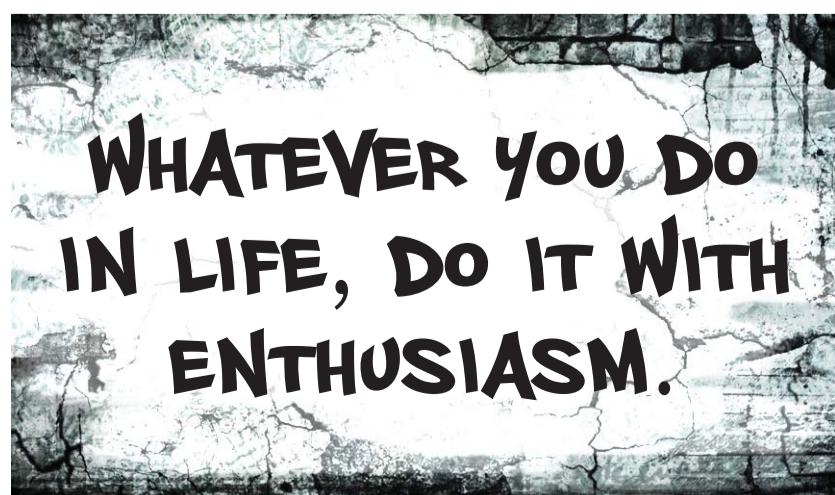
Anant Chaturdashi should mark the end of the *Ganesh Chaturthi* festival. On the day, the grand procession for immersion takes place. This is the day when devotees will bid farewell to Lord Ganesha, with great reverence, chanting *'Ganpati Bappa Morya, Purchayi Varshi Laukariya'*. The immersion takes place with traditional music, dance and celebration.

Day 10 Post-Immersion Rituals

There are many post-immersion rituals and clean-up activities. A small *puja* is organised to thank Lord Ganesha for his blessings.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman