

## #INCREDIBLE INDIA

### Best Mountain Experiences For The Summer



Ride The Toy Train.

Make the most of your next mountain retreat!

Summer is beginning to kick in. The sun is shining brighter, the breeze is getting warmer and the mountains are calling a little louder. And while the rolling hills and bridges from Kalka to Shimla? As the train chugs along at 22kmph, you can soak in the sylvan beauty of the Himalayas with pines and deodars within an arm's length. And at an altitude of 2000m, the Darjeeling toy train runs from Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling in West Bengal.

#### Flower Valleys

As the winter begins to wane, carpets of fresh blooms cover up the Himalayas. Begin with the rhododendron trail at Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary, Sikkim, and spend the next few months walking through the many flower valleys of India. Watch the flower carpets of Kaas Plateau in Maharashtra change colours every 15 days from June to October; trek through Uttarakhand's Valley of Flowers for its poppies, daisies, primulas, calendulas and other alpine flora (from July to September); and visit Nagaland's Dzuko Valley (June to September) for the unique Dzuko Valley Lily, which grows only in this pocket behind the Japfu mountain range.

#### Go Tea Picking

India sure loves its tea, and doing a damn good job of producing it in its own lap. From Kangra to Munnar, hill stations across the length and breadth of the country boast undulating hills covered in bright green tea leaves. And a few tea estates and heritage bungalows at these destinations let travellers live like tea planters themselves.

In Darjeeling, you can pick tea under the full moon at Mahabari Estate, or enjoy a field day of learning how the leaf reaches from the tea to the cup at Glenburn Tea Estate.

Down south, you can enjoy sweeping views of Coonoor's tea plantations from your vantage point at Teanest, a 19th-century bungalow that was once an international tea school. Think crackling fires, horse rides through lush green estates, and of course, a hot cup of tea to keep you constant company.

#### Heal In The Himalayas

Across the Himalayas, several yoga retreats and wellness centres offer a range of healing therapies in the lap of nature. Rishikesh is the birthplace of yoga, and here, Ananda in the Himalayas offers yoga, Ayurveda and vedanta programmes. You can enrol for a course, or undergo personalised treatment at the sprawling retreat against views of the Ganges valley.



Go Tea Picking.

Professionals help plan your day with activities in line with your wellness goals. With the weather always beautiful in the Himalayan foothills, it's never a bad time to book yourself a retreat.

#### Ride The Toy Train

The Himalayan Queen trundles along the steepest rise in altitude in the world from 656m to 2,075m-a feat the toy train holds a world record for. Why not hop on the joy ride as it takes you through 800 bridges from Kalka to Shimla? As the train chugs along at 22kmph, you can soak in the sylvan beauty of the Himalayas with pines and deodars within an arm's length. And at an altitude of 2000m, the Darjeeling toy train runs from Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling in West Bengal.

With cool wind in your hair, tea plantations all around and the breathtaking Mt Kanchenjunga greeting you from a distance, this experience is the stuff of dreams.

#### Chase The Glow



When monsoon showers begin to drench the Western Ghats, forestal secrets begin to reveal themselves. Wander deep into the evergreen forests at this time, and you will spot rotting bark and twigs emitting a blue or green glow. These are bioluminescent fungi and mushrooms, which generally grow in tropical climates and are found in the Western Ghats in India. Trek along Goa's Mhadai Wildlife Sanctuary and Chorla Ghats, or go exploring the forests of Shri Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga Wildlife Reserve in Maharashtra. An overnight hiking trip will be worth it here, with the neon colours showing you the way and the sunrise over the Sahyadri marking the end of the night.

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# I Have Done My Best.....!! (...1)



Commando operation.

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Dr Goutam Sen  
CTVS Surgeon  
Traveller  
Story teller

## #SURGEON AND PATIENT

or the first decade (Late 1980s onwards) of my professional life I was a General Surgeon in the true sense. In today's world this branch of surgery has been decimated into so many segments that the concept of a 'generalist' has totally disappeared. In fact, the description of a speciality is a butt of jokes.

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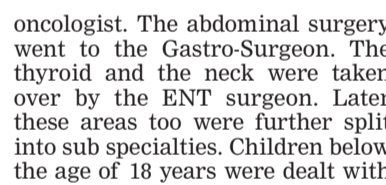
**Dramatic Improvement**  
In the early days we would often keep telling our physician colleagues that they should let us do the surgery early but we got to see the patients when it was near the end. I can never forget Sher Khan. He was a constable in the police in his mid-thirties (I wonder how he passed his medical test for admission!) He was lying listless in a corner bed in the general ward. Two screens had been put

around the bed-indicating a serious condition or a near death possibility (Pre ICU era). Its other intention was to avoid frightening other patients. On his bedside was a large bowl of fresh blood that he had coughed out. I was told by the senior nurse that it was not the first one. The resident told me that his haemoglobin had dropped to 4 grams (This is one fourth the normal level). He was gasping. The investigations showed that his mitral valve in the left side of the heart had narrowed considerably (In fact it was now the width of a pencil tip where in normal people it is at least three fingers wide). I remember being very angry in my heart because this patient had been there for more than a week and only now I was condescendingly asked to see if an operation would help. It seemed a hopeless task. But something made me and my teams of anaesthetists think that if we did not try he would certainly be dead by the end of the day. We spoke to the spouse and relatives. It was explained that what was offered was a last chance. They had seen the bowls of blood and so reluctantly agreed for the surgery.



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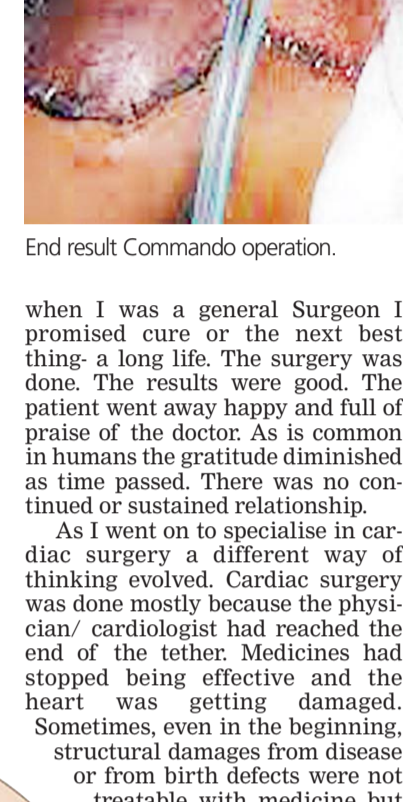
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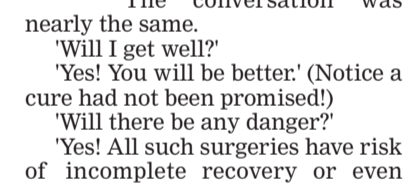
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## International Guide Dog Day

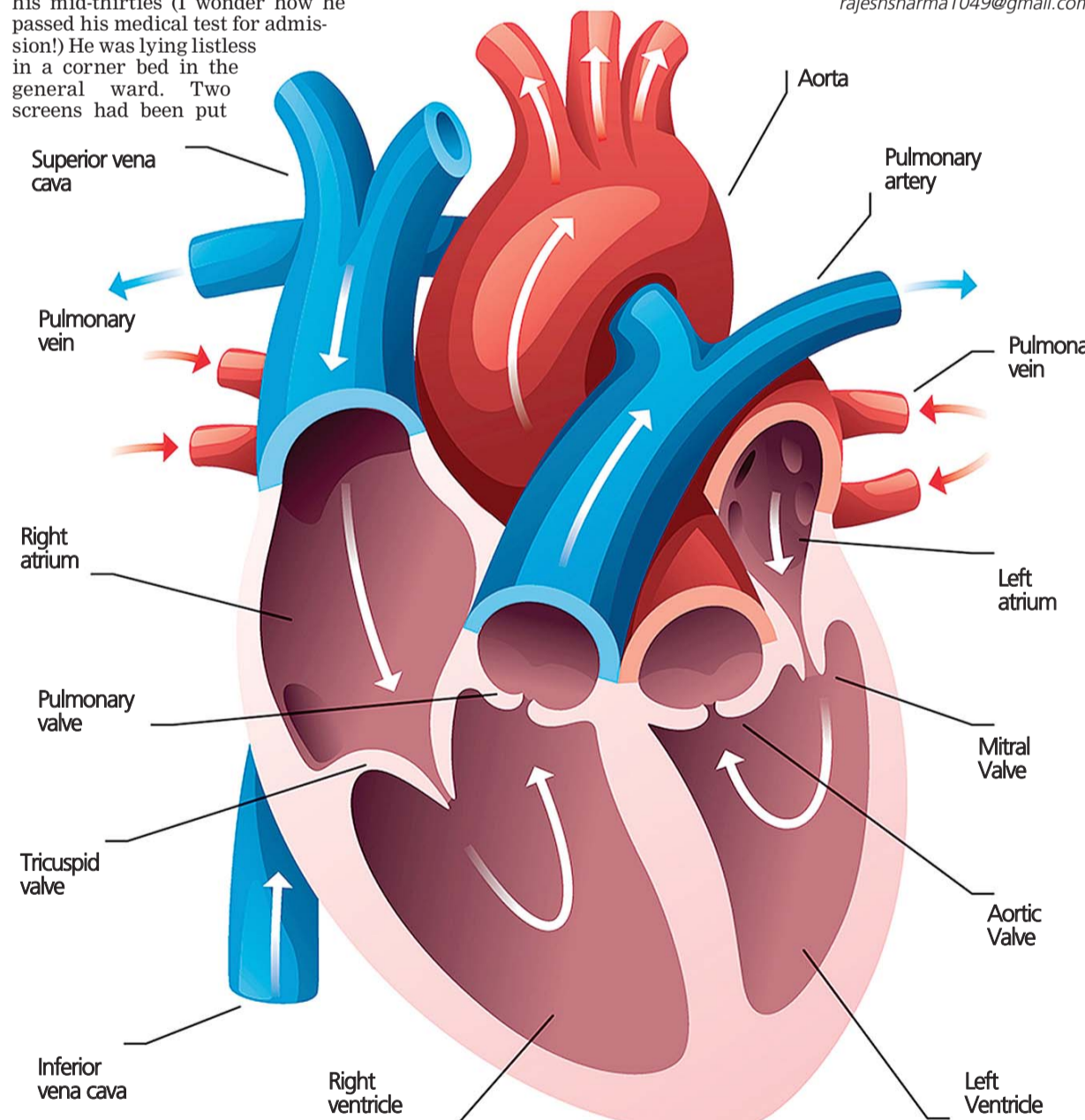
Guide dogs do a great deal for their owners. Not only do they help guide their owners throughout the day, but they also protect them from harm, assist them with tasks, and provide consistent emotional support like no other. Guide dog trainers work hard to help these loyal partners hone these skills. These dogs are seen by many as a joy that makes the world a better place for their owners and their families. And International Guide Dog Day aims to help others show appreciation for the hard work they do.



Baloned heart.

given. I remember that four medical students had donated blood for him. There was dramatic improvement. It proved to us again what my chief used to say: 'There is no medicine for a narrowed valve. Widening the opening is the only hope.' It was like a miracle. Sher Khan bounced back as soon as some colour returned to his body. He had recovered. It was not a cure. It was improved wellbeing. He became a regular visitor to my Out Patient Department. It was the beginning of a relationship which lasted for more than thirty years through complications and repeat heart surgery. He was able to see his children grow into adult hood. He was also able to get his pension. The difference from the general surgery patient was that it was not a cure and so the doctor was not forgotten. Over the years some patients have remained in close touch with me. The relationship changed from doctor-patient to more like two fellow travellers. They would bring the children conceived after the surgery to meet me. They always wanted a check-up for them to rule out any cardiac problems. The spouses stayed back often to complain about smoking and drinking habits. I was the ultimate authority. The patient headed only to my reminders. To be continued...

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By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

## #EVENT

### Insights on Food, Travel & Tourism



Chef Ranveer Brar preparing the dish with millets.

Tusharika Singh  
Freelancer  
and city blogger

Indian food is misconstrued to be very spicy," stated Celebrity Chef Ranveer Brar, emphasizing that Indian cuisine can be broadly categorized into 1100 micro cuisines, and out of this, only 700 make use of spices. He added that there is a need to stop over-abusing spices in our food and use them according to the culture and season of the place. "Rest do not use spices," said Brar, highlighting the diversity of Indian food.

Brar, who was recently in Jaipur for the 12th edition of the Great Indian Travel Bazaar, stressed that there is no mention of travel without food, as one can understand the culture of a place better with food. "Food really is the window to the world," he said.

When it comes to Rajasthan food, the chef explained that the cuisine predominantly uses three spices - Turmeric, Chilli, and Coriander. While chilli allows the natives of Rajasthan to perspire, turmeric is a universal healer, and coriander adds to the meatiness of the food, said Brar. In essence, there is nothing in our food that is not therapeutic, and it is designed to inherently nourish.

Since 2022 is the International Year of Millets, Brar gave a live demonstration of two dishes for the attendees - Jowar Ke Gatte and Jowar Ki Chaach. "A lot of misconceptions need to be broken about millets. One of them being that it takes a long time for millets to cook," said Brar, educating the audience about the nutritional benefits of millets. Having grown up in a quintessential Punjabi household, Brar has an innate affinity for ghee. He said that he has traveled across the world but has not come across a better concoction than ghee. "Ghee has been around for over 5000 years of

recorded history. If you are visiting India and someone says ghee is unhealthy, then they are on the wrong side of history," remarked Brar.

Brar also spoke about the latest trends in the food industry, stating that there is a renewed focus on sustainability in food, grains like millets, and looking inwards rather than outwards. However, he added that this has always been a part of our culture, and there is nothing new. "This is why this is more like a circle trend," said Brar. As a key takeaway, Brar emphasized the need for

renewed history. If you are visiting India and someone says ghee is unhealthy, then they are on the wrong side of history," remarked Brar.

He revealed new destinations that have been developed in the state such as Palghat on Chambal river, Boat Safari in Dholpur etc. Talking about leopard safaris, he said that while Jalana is already well known, Amargarh leopard reserve has also started recently and now another leopard safari will start in Malia Bagh - giving Jaipur as many as 3 leopard safaris. A bird park is also being developed in Jaipur. While Ranthambore continues to be a major attraction, new developments are also being done in the Sariska and Mukundra reserves.

#### G 20 Tourism Golf Expo

As a part of the Bazaar, over 50 golfers participated in the G20 Tourism Expo Golf at the Rambagh Golf Course. The game was teed off by Secretary Tourism, Government of India, Arvind Singh. The South Korean Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Chang Jae-Bok also played in the game. The participants included Senior Government Officials, Diplomats, Industry Leaders and lady golfers. The 18-hole tournament was played on a Stableford format. The G 20 Tourism Expo Golf Event, organised in conjunction with The Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2023 (GITB), aimed at promoting Golf Tourism.

#### About GITB

The international mart was organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). It was supported by leading national and regional associations like Hotel & Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO). As many as 283 tour operators from 56 countries and State Tourism Board representatives from 9 states participated in the event.

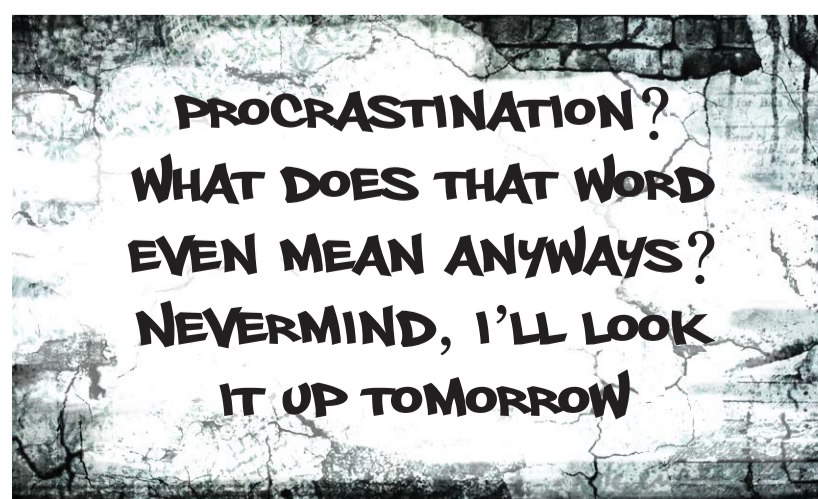
#### Jaipur as the Leopard Capital of the world

During an interaction between foreign buyers and the Department of Tourism, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Government of Rajasthan, Shikhar Agarwal highlighted the sustainable and eco friendly tourist destinations in the state.

Secretary Tourism, Government of India, Mr. Arvind Singh teeing off the golf.

A B2B meeting in progress.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott