

ational Wear Your Pearls Day is a celebration of timeless elegance and classic style. Pearls, long admired for their lustrous beauty and sophistication, symbolize grace, purity, and confidence. On this day, people are encouraged to adorn themselves with pearl jewellery, be it necklaces, earrings, bracelets, or rings, to embrace both tradition and contemporary fashion. Beyond aesthetics, wearing pearls is seen as a reminder to carry oneself with poise and dignity. From casual ensembles to formal occasions, National Wear Your Pearls Day (15 December) inspires everyone to shine with understated glamour and style.

#OURSELVES

The Three Faces

A Japanese Saying on the Layers of our Identity, the nuanced realities of our identities



There is a timeless Japanese saying that touches on the depth and complexity of human nature: "Every person wears three faces." This phrase elegantly captures the different layers of ourselves that we show to the world, to our loved ones, and, most intimately, to ourselves. It speaks to the nuanced realities of our identities, the parts we reveal and the parts we conceal. Let's take a closer look at these three faces and the truths they hold.

The First Face: The One Shown to the World

The first face is the most public of all. It's the version of ourselves that we present to the world every day. The smile, the pleasantries, the small talk, all the rituals that make interaction smooth and social life manageable.

This is the face we wear in public spaces, whether at work, in a store, or during casual encounters with strangers. It's the social mask, designed to create harmony and avoid friction. In many ways, this first face is necessary. It helps us navigate life's complexities, balance relationships, and foster cooperation. But it also represents a version of ourselves that isn't fully whole. It's a mask, and like any mask, it's only a partial representation of the true person beneath.

The Second Face: The One Seen by Close Friends and Family

The second face is the one you show to those who are closest to you, family, close friends, those you trust implicitly. This is a more intimate version of yourself. Here, the cracks begin to show. The walls that were carefully built with strangers start to come down, and what remains is a version of you that's more raw and vulnerable.

The laughter here is genuine, not forced. The conversations go deeper. You share fears, dreams, and unspoken truths, knowing that these people will hold them with care and without judgment. The second face is where you allow yourself to feel human.

This face is more revealing and more fragile, because it opens the door to emotions that we often keep hidden behind the first mask. It's a place of honesty, where you can be messy and imperfect, and yet be loved and accepted.

The Third Face: The One That Belongs Only to You

And then there is the third face, the most private and most mysterious of all. This face is never shown to anyone. It's the one that exists within the quiet recesses of your own mind and heart. The thoughts you never say out loud, the feelings that remain unspoken, the dreams you dare not voice to anyone. This is the face that is most difficult to access, even for yourself, at times.

The third face is a landscape of silence. It's where self-doubt, introspection, unexpressed desires, and deep truths lie. It's where the most intimate thoughts that are too personal, too raw, or too complicated to share with others reside. It's where you hide your deepest fears, your private joy, your unspoken grief. This face disappears the second someone else is watching, because it's a space of vulnerability that only you are allowed to inhabit.

The Truth About These Three Faces

The Japanese saying reminds us that we all have different layers of identity. The first face is a public persona, essential for societal interaction. The second face reveals the human side of us, open, vulnerable, and true to those we trust. The third face, however, remains hidden from everyone, even ourselves at times, revealing a deeper, more complex truth about who we are.

These three faces exist in a delicate balance, shaping the way we interact with the world, the way we connect with others, and the way we understand ourselves. As much as we might wish to reveal our true selves, the third face, full of secrets, unspoken emotions, and deep thoughts, remains elusive, even to the people who know us best.

Linguistic Pride and Religious Assertion Are Rising Together



What emerges from these stories is not a crisis of nationalism but a crisis of confidence. A secure nation-state embraces diversity without needing to enforce dominance; an insecure one polices identity to reassure itself. When cultural pride morphs into cultural policing, when majority comfort becomes a legitimate argument for reshaping shared spaces, the plural scaffolding of the republic begins to creak.

Sukumar Sah

Two recent incidents in Mumbai, both seemingly routine confrontations, have touched a deeper national nerve. In one, workers allegedly linked to Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) are seen slapping a man from Bihar after he reprimanded his Marathi employee for arriving late. In another, a quarrel over a seat on a Mumbai local spiralled into a linguistic stand-off: "If you want to live here, speak Marathi." These episodes are not isolated; they echo a wider unease about identity, belonging, and who gets to shape the cultural norms of shared spaces in an increasingly diverse India.

Adding to this pattern is another revealing incident, this time not on the streets but within the virtual corridors of a soon-to-be-built housing society. Prospective residents, communicating over WhatsApp, are

discussing how to pressure the builder to construct a temple within the complex as an 'amenity'. The building is not yet occupied; the residents are not yet neighbours; and already, the assumption is that a religious structure representing one faith can be installed as a default community space. The question this raises is both simple and profound: What about the sensibilities of non-Hindu residents, however few or many they may be? If a temple can be demanded as a communal amenity, why not a mosque, a church, or a gurudwara? And more fundamentally, should any religious monument occupy what is meant to be a common, secular residential space?

These three strands, linguistic regionalism, cultural dominance, and creeping religious majoritarianism, are not disconnected. They point to an India where identity is increasingly asserted not through celebration but through exclusion. Language, which should be a marker of cultural richness, becomes a tool for policing who belongs in a

#THE NEW SOCIAL SIGNALS



city. Religion, meant to be personal, becomes a parameter for designing public or semi-public spaces. The impulse is the same: to define community in narrow terms, and to sig-

nal who is the insider and who is the outsider. The Maharashtra flash-points are familiar. For decades, the politics of sons-of-the-soil has cast migrants, especially from Uttar

Pradesh and Bihar, as cultural intruders in Mumbai. What is newer is the frequency with which ordinary disagreements now escalate into identity-based aggression. A reprimand at work becomes a Marathi-versus-Bihari contest; a crowded train negotiation becomes a battlefield for linguistic purity. These are not political rallies; they are everyday encounters. That is what makes them significant.

Similarly, the housing society episode reflects a shift in how urban communities imagine themselves. Instead of assuming neutrality in shared spaces, there is a growing tendency to superimpose the identity of the majority. A temple in a society may be intended as a source of convenience or cultural comfort, but in a plural setting, it inevitably carries an exclusionary undertone. It tells minorities: This is the dominant culture here; adjust according-



ly. That is a departure from India's post-independence ethos, where secularism was not a matter of personal belief but an architecture for coexistence.

The linguistic pushback in southern states against perceived Hindi imposition emerges from the same anxiety, the fear that one identity will overwhelm another. Tamil Nadu's historic anti-Hindi agitations, Karnataka's sporadic resentment over Hindi signage, and Kerala's insistence on linguistic equality are not just administrative disputes; they are assertions of cultural survival. They stem from a belief that uniformity is being mistaken for unity.

India's federal structure was designed precisely to avoid such friction. The recognition of 22 scheduled languages, the freedom of states to choose official languages, and the secular character of public institutions were all meant to ensure that diversity was protected, not flattened. But the recent spate of incidents, from trains to office WhatsApp groups to neighbourhood

planning, suggests that the guardrails are being tested.

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India's promise has always rested on the idea that many identities can coexist without any single one claiming primacy. The challenge today is to reclaim that idea, in trains, in workplaces, in housing societies, and in the national imagination. The incidents may seem small, but the pattern they reveal is not: an India choosing between a nationalism expansive enough to include all, and an identity politics that slowly narrows the circle of belonging.

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#WORLD

Magnetic North is not where it used to be

The discrepancy between the World Magnetic Model and the real-time location of the north magnetic pole had nearly exceeded the threshold needed for accurate navigation

Since 2015, the place to which a compass points has been sprinting towards Siberia at a pace of more than 30 miles (48 kilometres) a year.

And this week, after a delay caused by the month-long partial government shutdown in the United States, humans have finally caught up.

Scientists released an emergency update to the World Magnetic Model, which cellphone GPS systems and military navigators use to orient themselves.

It's a minor change for most of us, noticeable only to people who are attempting to navigate very precisely, very close to the Arctic.

But the north magnetic pole's inexorable drift suggests that something strange, and potentially powerful, is taking place deep within Earth. Only by tracking it, said University of Leeds geophysicist Phil Livermore, can scientists hope to understand what's going on.

The planet's magnetic field is generated nearly 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometres) beneath our feet, in the swirling, spinning ball of molten metal that forms Earth's core.

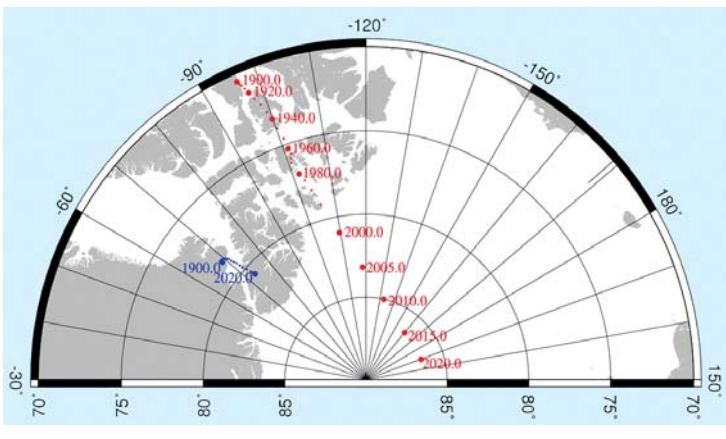
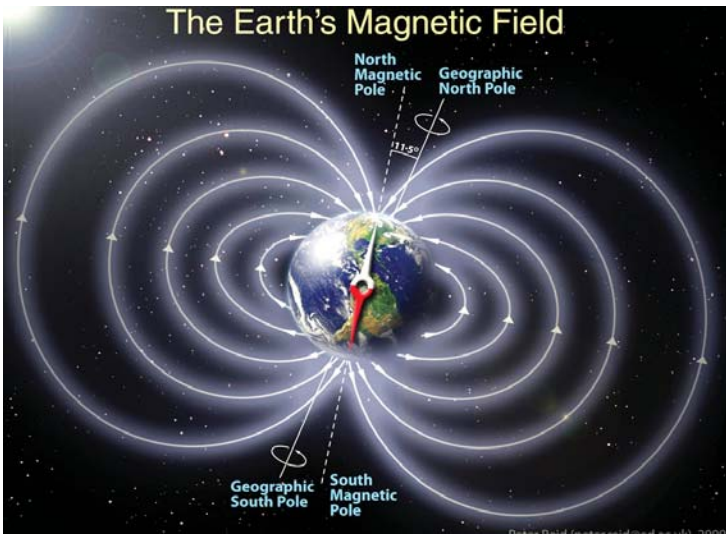
Changes in that underground flow can alter Earth's magnetic field lines, and the poles where they converge.

Consequently, magnetic north doesn't align with geographic north (the end point of Earth's rotational axis), and it's constantly on the move. Records of ancient magnetic fields from extremely old rocks show that the poles can even flip, an event that has occurred an average of three times every million years.

The first expedition to find magnetic north, in 1831, pinpointed it in the Canadian Arctic. By the time the US Army went looking for the pole in the late 1940s, it had shifted 250 miles (400 kilometres) to the northwest.

Since 1990, it has moved a whopping 600 miles (970 kilometres), and it can be found in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, 4 degrees south of geographic north, for the moment.

Curiously, the south magnet-



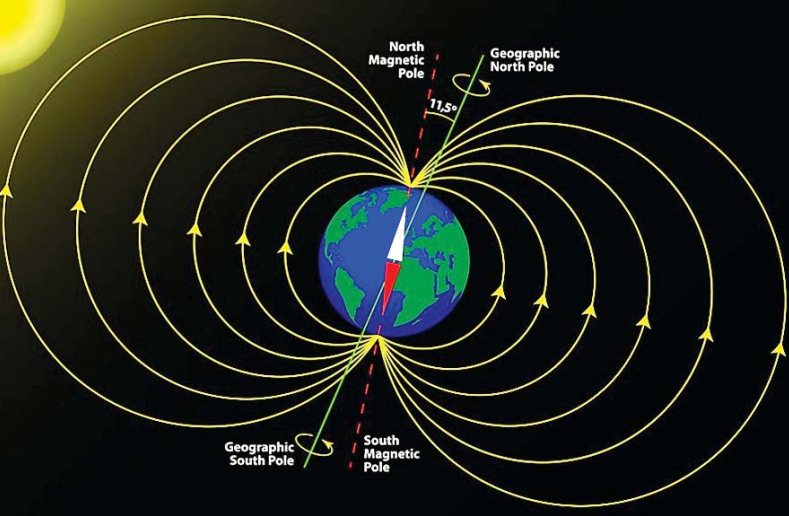
ic pole hasn't mirrored the peregrinations of its northern counterpart. Since 1990, its location has remained relatively stable, off the coast of eastern Antarctica.

Livermore's research suggests that the North Pole's location is controlled by two patches of magnetic field beneath Canada and Siberia. In 2017, he reported that the Canadian patch seems to be weakening, the result of a liquid iron sloshing through Earth's stormy core. Speaking at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in December, he suggested that the tumult far below the Arctic may explain the movement of magnetic field lines above it. Scientists for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the British Geological Survey collaborate to produce a

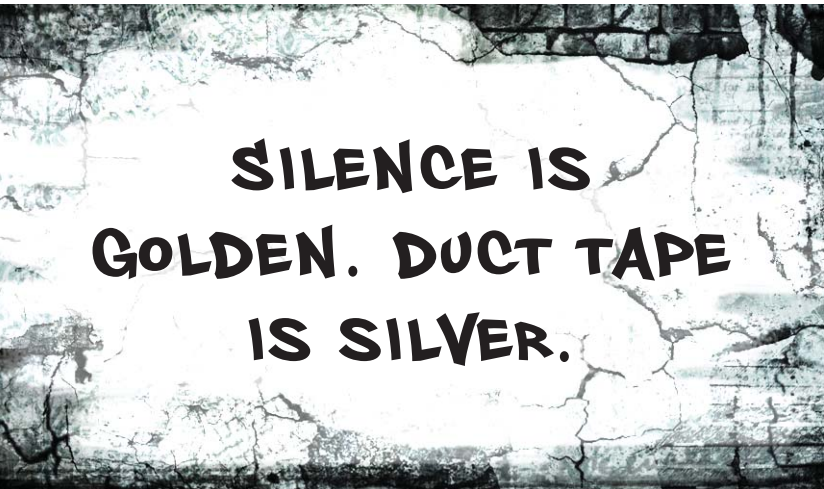
new World Magnetic Model, a mathematical representation of the field, every five years. The next update wasn't scheduled until 2020, But Earth had other plans. Fluctuations in the Arctic were occurring faster than predicted. By the summer, the discrepancy between the World Magnetic Model and the real-time location of the north magnetic pole had nearly exceeded the threshold needed for accurate navigation, said William Brown, a geomagnetic field modeller for the BGS.

He and his US counterparts worked on a new model, which was nearly ready to be released when much of the US federal government ran out of funding. Though, the British agency was able to publish elements of the new model on its site, NOAA was responsible for hosting the model and making it available for public use. This portion of the model didn't become available until Monday, a week after most NOAA employees were able to go back to work.

Some have speculated that Earth is overdue for another magnetic field reversal, an event that hasn't happened for 780,000 years, and the North Pole's recent restlessness may be a sign of a cataclysm to come. Livermore was sceptical. "There's no evidence that the localized changes in the Arctic are a sign of something bigger," he said. Anyway, magnetic field reversals have typically unfolded over the course of 1,000 years or so, giving plenty of time for even the US federal government to adjust.



THE WALL



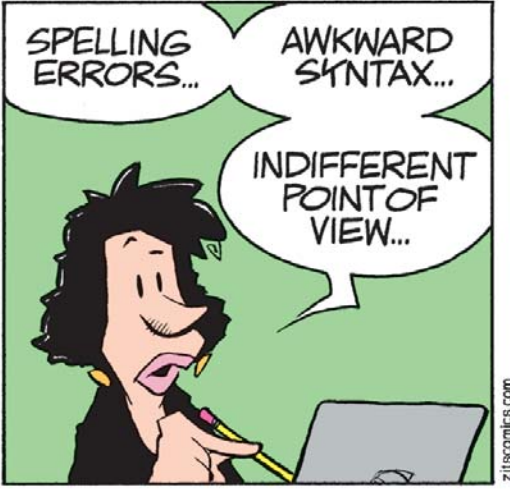
BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

