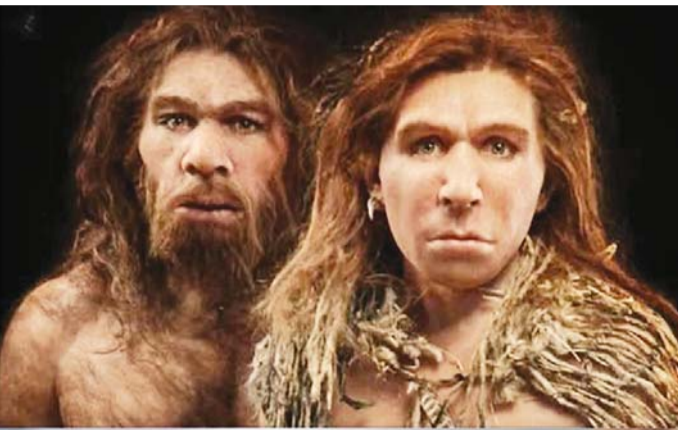


rogrammers' Day is celebrated on the 256th day of the year, which usually falls on September 12 (or September 13 in leap years). The number 256 is significant because it is the highest power of two that fits within one byte, a fundamental unit in computing. This day honours software developers, coders, and programmers who build the digital systems and tools that shape modern life. From writing code for everyday apps to powering critical infrastructure, their contributions are the backbone of our digital world. Programmers' Day is a moment to recognize innovation, problem-solving, and the creativity behind technology.

#PALEO

Dragon Man Is A Denisovan

Ancient 'Dragon Man' Skull Confirmed to Be Denisovan in Groundbreaking Genetic Study

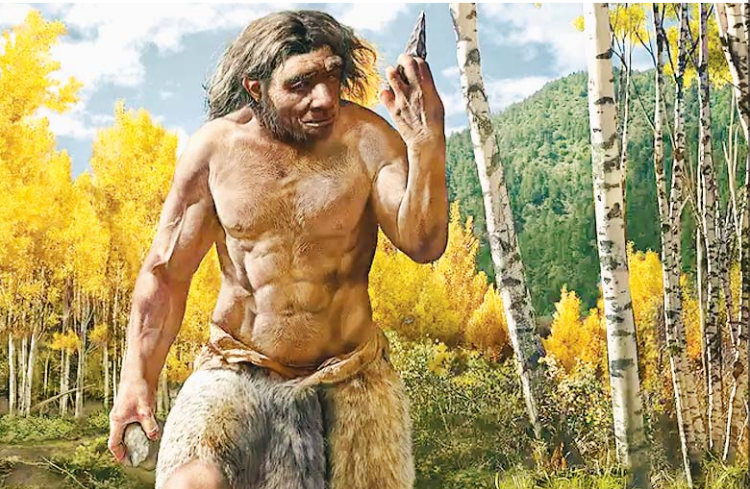


In a major breakthrough for paleoanthropology, scientists have confirmed that the 146,000-year-old skull known as 'Dragon Man' belongs to the Denisovans, a mysterious and long-extinct branch of the human family tree. This finding reshapes our understanding of human evolution in Asia and offers new insights into the ancient relatives of modern humans.

The skull, formally known as the Harbin cranium, was originally discovered in 1933 near Harbin, in northeastern China. However, it remained hidden from the scientific community for more than eight decades. It wasn't until 2018 that the skull was brought to researchers' attention, sparking immediate excitement due to its unusual size and anatomical features. Some scientists even proposed that it represented a previously unknown human species, separate from both Neanderthals and Homo sapiens.

A 2021 study argued that Dragon Man might be the closest known relative of modern humans, based on its morphology. But the mystery surrounding its true identity has now been definitively solved. In a study recently published in Science, a team led by paleoanthropologist Gaoxiang Fu from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, conducted a genetic analysis that confirms that the skull is Denisovan.

The breakthrough came from the careful extraction of mitochondrial DNA from a fossilized molar found with the skull. This tiny fragment of genetic material, despite being tens of thousands of years old, was surprisingly well-preserved. When analyzed, the DNA matched sequences from known Denisovan genomes previously recovered from a Siberian cave. Further analysis of ancient proteins extracted from the tooth also showed



The Jungle Flower

The river was another constant in her life, a shimmering ribbon that carved its way through the landscape, a liquid mirror reflecting the ever-changing sky. She knew it in all its moods: the tranquil whisper of its waters on a still afternoon; the playful gurgle over smooth pebbles; the fierce roar of a monsoon-swollen torrent that could rip trees from their roots. Her father taught her to read its currents, to find the best fishing spots and to navigate its unpredictable depths in their small, hand-carved canoe. She learnt to swim early and loved the feel of the cool water on her skin. She was enthralled by the way it embraced her when she plunged beneath the surface, emerging breathless and renewed.



Champa's favourite perch was the lower horizontal branches of the gnarled mango tree adjoining the hut. When she had finished her chores, she would sit on the branch swinging her legs and enjoy the breeze from the nearby

fast flowing river and occasionally sucking at an unripe mango. She had lost her mother soon after her birth. The only person she knew was her father. He was an army veteran, who had married in his forties and lost his young wife within two years of their marriage. They had actually lived together for two short periods, once when he came to get married and later when Champa was born. For Champa, his weathered presence filled her world. His hands, rough from years of felling the stubborn

earth, were also surprisingly gentle when he pointed out the delicate lace-winged dragonfly hovering over the water lilies or traced the intricate patterns on a butterfly's wing. Her father had chosen to live and farm a piece of land adjoining a dense forest in Madhya Pradesh. He had been awarded the plot for an act of gallantry in the last war. He preferred to live away from his family. The twosomes days were a rhythm dictated by the sun and the seasons. Mornings began with the milking of their single cow and the aroma of roasted maize. Afternoons were for tending the meagre crops and more often than not, for venturing into the jungle with her father. He was her guide, her teacher, her entire universe. The occasional visitor left no impact on her. She avoided them on



most occasions. The jungle, to many, was a place of foreboding, a tangle of shadows and unseen dangers. But to Champa, it was a living, breathing entity, a symphony of sounds and colors. Her father taught her its secrets. He showed her how to identify the flame-red blossoms of the forest gladiolus and the velvety leaves of the medicinal banyan. He taught her to distinguish the chattering of monkeys from the rustle of a snake in the undergrowth. The mournful coo of a dove and the piercing cry of a hawk were familiar sounds. He showed her the tell-tale tracks of the elusive panther, the iridescent scales of a cobra coiled in the dappled sunlight, not with fear, but with a deep, abiding respect for their place in the intricate web of life. "Every creature has its purpose, Champa," he'd often say, his voice a low rumble. "Even the ones that bite!"

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#TALES

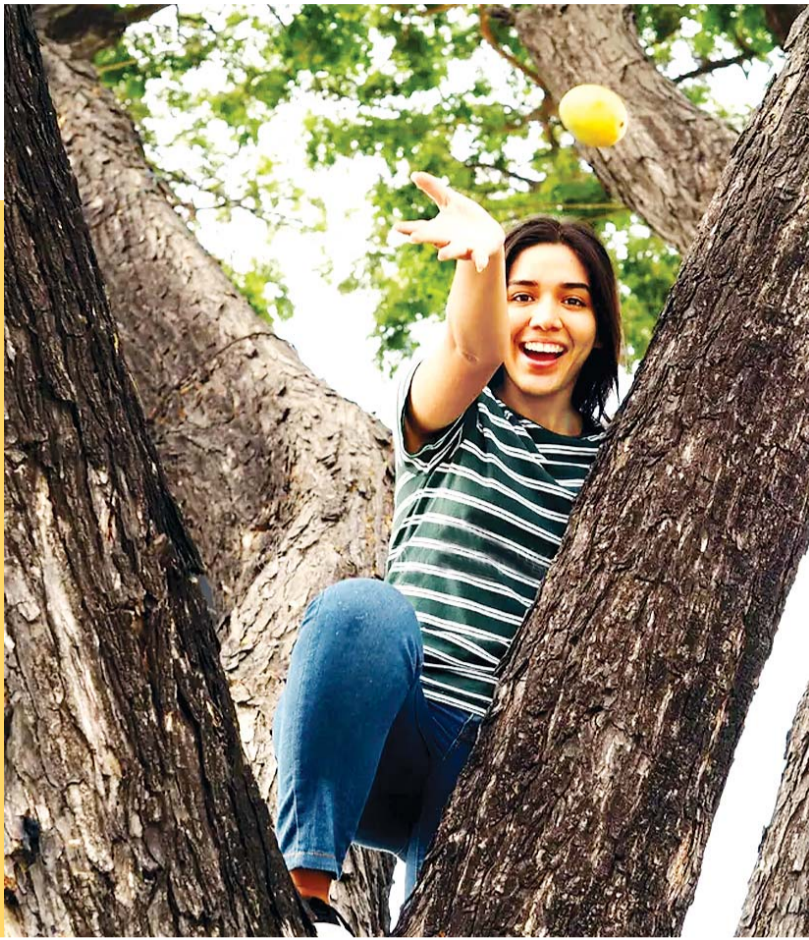


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plunged beneath the surface, emerging breathless and renewed. Survival was not a lesson, but a way of life. Her father, a man of few words but immense practical wisdom, instilled in her the skills needed to thrive in their isolated existence. He was constantly aware that he had to make her self-sufficient, considering the forty years age difference. She would have no back up! She learned to mend fences, to preserve fruits and to track small game. Then, there was the shooting. He'd painstakingly taught her to load the old 12 bore shotgun, the weight of it surprisingly comforting in her small hands. "Accuracy, Champa," he'd emphasise as his eye aimed at a distant mark.

"One shot, true and clean. For sustenance, never for sport." The kick of the gun against her shoulder, the acrid smell of gunpowder, became familiar sensations, not thrilling, but essential. Life was a predictable tapestry woven with sun-drenched days and star-studded nights, until the day the thread snapped.

Her father had gone into the deeper parts of the jungle, seeking a rare medicinal herb for a persistent cough that had plagued him for



#TALES



weeks. "Will be back by sunset, Champa." He'd called out, his voice slightly hoarse, as he disappeared into the emerald depths. It was quite common for him to do so. Champa went about her daily routine.

Sunset came and went. The sky bled from fiery orange to bruised purple, then deepened into an inky blackness studded with indifferent stars. Champa waited, a knot of dread tightening in her stomach. She lit the lantern, its feeble glow mocking the vastness of the encroaching night. Every rustle of leaves, every distant hoot of an owl, sent a jolt of hope and then despair through her.

By dawn, the dreadful certainty had settled in. He was in trouble. Frantic, she plunged into the jungle, calling his name until her throat was raw. She retraced the paths they had walked countless times, searching for any sign: a broken branch, a dropped tool, anything. She spent many days combing the dense foliage, her heart a leaden weight in her chest. The jungle, once her sanctuary, now felt vast and indifferent, swallowing her father whole. The river, usually a comforting presence, seemed to murmur secrets she couldn't decipher. Her search was of no avail. He was finally gone.

The silence that descended upon the farm was deafening. His absence was a gaping wound. The first few weeks were a blur of grief and desperate loneliness. She cooked meals she couldn't eat, walked paths she no longer saw. The sheer enormity of her situation pressed down on her; she was alone. Completely, terrifyingly alone! But then, the lessons of

Champa's heart, which had been a tightly closed fist for so long, fluttered with a strange, unfamiliar sensation. Her solitude had been a heavy cloak and now, a sliver of sunlight seemed to have pierced through the darkness. She looked at him, truly looked, taking in the dust on his clothes, the weariness in his eyes, and the genuine exhaustion and hunger.

her father, who had painstakingly taught her, began to surface, a lifeline in the drowning despair. The need to survive, ingrained deep within her, slowly asserted itself. She fed the cow, tended the garden, harvested what little was ready. She hunted with the old shotgun, her aim still true. She learned to mend her own clothes, to repair the leaky roof, to make decisions she had never had to make before.

Gradually, life became steady, if not vibrant. The sharp edges of grief dulled into a constant ache, a quiet companion. She still spent many days combing the dense foliage, her heart a leaden weight in her chest. The jungle, once her sanctuary, now felt vast and indifferent, swallowing her father whole. The river, usually a comforting presence, seemed to murmur secrets she couldn't decipher. Her search was of no avail. He was finally gone.

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to the small, sharp knife she always kept tucked in her belt. Standing a few yards away, silhouetted against the emerald backdrop of the jungle, was a young man.

He was tall, with broad shoulders, and eyes, the colour of the rusty brown leaves of the trees. He carried no weapon and his expression was hesitant, almost apologetic. "Forgive me," he said, his voice a surprisingly gentle rumble. "I didn't mean to startle you. My name is Shyam. I got lost. My hunting party... we got separated a few days ago. I can't find my way back."

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"You're far from any settlement," she said, her voice a little

thing she hadn't done ever before. "You can stay for the night. There is place in the cow shed. I will give you a blanket," she said, her gaze fixed on the distant tree line. "The jungle gets unforgiving after dark."

"Come! Share my meal." And so, he stayed. They spoke little at first, a cautious dance around their respective solitudes. Shyam shared tales of the distant villages with bustling markets and noisy celebrations, a world Champa had only ever imagined. She, in turn, found herself describing the subtle changes in the jungle, the different calls of the birds, the ebb and flow of the river. He listened with a quiet attentiveness that surprised her.

Shyam, after resting and regaining his strength, didn't leave immediately. He helped with tasks around the farm, his strength and willingness a welcome addition. He learned about her rhythm of life, about the jungle she loved and about the father she missed so deeply. He never pressed her for details, simply offered a steady, comforting presence. They met often after that first encounter. A sense of familiarity was gently developing.

Their conversations grew longer and deeper. He spoke of his old parents, of the responsibilities that awaited him back in his village. Yet, he didn't rush to return. Champa, guarded and independent, found herself sharing snippets of her life. She reminisced of the lessons her father had taught her. Shyam admired the quiet strength she had found in her solitude. The farm, once a symbol of her isolation, began to feel less like a fortress and more like a home, slowly and tentatively opening its doors to an unexpected companionship. Shyam was long gone. The desire to have him by his side was a constant. One day, he came back in a horse cart. An old couple, in their stiff clothes, was accompanying him.

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#DELHI OR?

How Did Delhi Get Its Name?

Was it Dhillika, Indraprastha, or something else entirely?

Delhi, a city that has witnessed empires rise and fall, dynasties etched in stone, and myths come alive, is more than just the capital of modern India. Its

name alone carries layers of history, legend, and speculation. In his exploration of the city's fascinating origins, author Rajeev Katyal peels back the centuries to trace how this iconic city came to be called 'Delhi'.



Dhillika: The First Recorded Name

Moving from mythology to history, the earliest documented name of Delhi is Dhillika or Dhillika Puri, dating back to around the 11th century CE. It appears in stone inscriptions during the reign of the Tomara dynasty, particularly under King Anangpal Tomar II, who is credited with either founding or revitalizing the city around 1052 CE.

Over time, the name Dhillika naturally evolved into Dhilli, a transition common in languages influenced by oral tradition and regional dialects. This shortened form is believed to be the linguistic root of the present-day 'Dilli,' which is still commonly used in Hindi and local parlance.

Raja Dhillu and Ancient Origins

Another theory attributes Delhi's name to a Mauryan-era king named Dhillyu or Dilu, who may have ruled the region around 50 BCE. This explanation, while cited in some medieval Persian texts, lacks concrete archaeological support. Still, it offers another layer of narrative to Delhi's already rich identity, a city possibly named after a forgotten king, tucked into the folds of ancient Indian history.

The Colonial Influence: Delhi Emerges

The name 'Delhi' was standardized during British colonial rule, anglicized from 'Dilli' for easier pronunciation and administrative convenience. When New Delhi was inaugurated in 1931 as the capital of British India, 'Delhi' had already become the internationally recognized name, a legacy that continues to this day.

A Name with Many Faces

So, was Delhi once Indraprastha, the mythic capital of the Pandavas? Or Dhillika, the fortified city of the Tomaras? Was it named after a 'loose pillar,' a forgotten king, or its status as a threshold between worlds? The answer is: all of the above, and more.

Delhi's name is not just a label, it is a palimpsest, a layered manuscript of India's cultural, historical, and mythological journey. It embodies the dialogue between past and present, between legend and archaeology, between poetry and fact.



Indraprastha: A City of Legends

The journey begins in myth. The Mahabharata, India's great epic, describes the city of Indraprastha, founded by the Pandavas on the banks of the Yamuna. Built with divine architecture and ruled with dharma, it was the capital of a just and noble empire. While historians debate the exact location of Indraprastha, many

believe it was situated near Purana Qila, one of the oldest forts in present-day Delhi. Though archaeology hasn't definitively confirmed the existence of Indraprastha, the name remains woven into the cultural and emotional identity of Delhi, reminding us that sometimes, cities are built not just with bricks, but with stories.

The 'Loose Pillar' Legend

One of the more colourful stories tied to Delhi's name involves the famous Iron Pillar of Mehrauli. According to legend, King Anangpal Tomar had the pillar installed to symbolize the city's strength and stability. But when it was later removed, it was found to be

loose, dhili in Hindi. This led some to believe the city earned its name from this event, as a kind of poetic irony: a mighty capital named after a wobbly pillar. Though the tale may lean more towards folklore than fact, it reflects a uniquely Indian blend of wit, symbolism, and respect for myth.

Delhi as a 'Threshold'

Linguists and historians have also explored the idea that 'Delhi' may derive from the Prakrit or Persian word 'dehleez,' meaning threshold or gateway. This would make symbolic sense: geographically, Delhi sits at the gateway to the Indo-Gangetic plain, often serving as the frontline for invading empires and the entry point to the heart of the subcontinent.

Though this theory isn't well-supported by ancient records, it reflects the city's strategic importance and its role as the ever-watchful door-keeper of Indian civilization.



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL

