



International Accounting Day

While accounting may seem like a boring profession, it's vital to every business out there. Without accountants, people won't get paid promptly nor be able to understand their debits and credits. Even with an accountant, these can still be hard to understand. Accounting is work that isn't something many people enjoy. Accountants enjoy the prospects of so much that they form their whole career around managing numbers and company finances. That's why, for those mathematicians out there in the industry, there is International Accounting Day to celebrate!

#ART

Diwali Rangoli

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Diwali Rangoli art is a cherished tradition in Indian culture, celebrated with vibrant patterns during various festivals. These designs are crafted using coloured powders, rice, or flower petals. While some rangoli patterns are quite complex, there are also simple designs that are perfect for beginners. This article will introduce you to various easy rangoli design for diwali designs inspired by flowers, traditional symbols, and natural beauty.

Simple Geometric Rangoli
This easy geometric rangoli is perfect for those who enjoy drawing shapes in their school notebooks. It involves drawing repetitive geometric shapes and filling them with striking colours to make the design stand out.



Ganesh Rangoli
In many Indian celebrations, drawing a Ganesh rangoli is customary to seek blessings. Your design can feature a central Ganesh figure or a simple freehand depiction.

Dot Rangoli (Kolam)
Dot Rangoli Also called Kolam or PulliKolam, consists of patterns made by connecting dots. These designs are believed to bring positivity and can be drawn regularly.



Peacock Rangoli
Peacock designs are common in rangoli, typically featuring colours like blue, green, yellow, and white.

Freehand Rangoli
Freehand Rangoli For a more creative approach, freehand rangoli allows for spontaneous patterns. Begin with a basic color outline.



Spiraling Rangoli
Spiraling Rangoli (Sanskar Bharti) Known for its complex spirals, Sanskar Bharti rangoli is popular across India. It features circular or semi-circular designs filled with spiraling lines.



OWLS TANTRICS LIGHTS PATAKHAS ROYALS AND ORDINARY DIWALI IS BRIGHT



An old resident of Dholpur, he claimed that owls were sacrificed at Diwali even during the decadent years of the Mughals. He mentioned Mohammad Shah Rangila and before him Muizuddin Jahandar Shah and his successor Mohd Farrukseyer. Lal Kanwar, the concubine who was elevated to the exalted title of Begum Imtiaz Mahal by Jahandar Shah, was the one whose menstrual cloth was used, he said, for one such ritual.



Anjali Sharma
Senior Journalist & Wildlife Enthusiast

With Diwali only a few days away the Uttarakhand forest department finds itself grappling with an annual crisis the smuggling of owls. Believed to be the steed of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, these birds are killed in the thousands in superstitious rituals held to gain sidhhi by people who believe the "sacrifice" will help them fulfill their wishes.

One owl is sold for at least Rs 20,000 with a bird weighing more than 4kg fetching anything between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 7 lakh on the day of the festival. Special teams have been deployed in the forests of Nainital and Udham Singh Nagar district to deter poachers.

"Tantrics perform these rituals for people who believe in the 'powers' of tantra pooja," a local priest

said. The "sacrifice" takes place at isolated locations, including cremation sites and riverbanks, and involves hacking the bird into pieces before its body parts are smeared with sindoor (vermillion). Poachers later extract the claws, bones and feathers, dry them in the sun and sell them to people who believe in their "medicinal value". Some of these birds have false 'ear tufts' which are also believed to bestow great 'magical' powers on the individual who performs the sacrifice.

As per the popular and age-old beliefs and customs, it is said the Goddess Lakshmi comes to earth on the night of Diwali to bless her devotees with happiness and prosperity. With this popular belief still celebrated actively, people worship the Goddess to get her mercy.

It is commonly believed that her devotees get some indications beforehand, of the arrival of the Lakshmi. Let's look at some of the auspicious signs that mark the arrival of the Goddess:

Seeing the auspicious
As per the Hindu Shastra, if you happen to see certain animals in the night, it is a sign of the goddess benevolence on you. If you see Owl,

On the auspicious night of Diwali, if you see a lizard on your wall, it marks the arrival of Goddess Lakshmi. An event like this is considered a good omen and a welcome symbol of the Goddess. If a cat comes to your house on the night of Diwali, then it is an indication of money growth and prosperity.

the vehicle of goddess Lakshmi, in the night, then it means the Goddess is pleased with you and has decided to shower her blessings on you.

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If a cat comes to your house on the night of Diwali, then it is an indication of money growth and prosperity. The presence of the cat in your premises harbors positive energies.

Transgressors are believed to be the messengers of God, and getting blessed by them on the auspicious occasion of Diwali can bring happiness, prosperity, and growth. If they happen to visit your house on Diwali, then welcome them happily and express your gratitude to them.

Their blessings can bring in fortune for you.

Seeing a mole rat on the night of Diwali is considered a fortune symbol. It is a general belief that all the financial problems come to an end and marks the beginning of good times and financial growth.

Why sacrifice the owl?
According to Hindu mythology, the owl, specifically a barn owl, is the vehicle or "vahana" of Goddess Lakshmi. It is said that Lakshmi is always seen with her owl, which symbolizes wisdom in using the wealth and prosperity that she bestows. Others also believe that the owl symbolizes Alakshmi, Lakshmi's sister who stands for poverty and strife.

On the occasion of Diwali, guided by Tantrics (occultists), some indulge in ritualistic sacrifices of the owl in hopes that this will bring

#TANTRA-MANTRA



them good luck and wealth. Some hope they will take away Lakshmi's wealth by killing the owl, forcing her to stay in their homes all year round and bestowing on them the most splendid fortunes.

Every year during Diwali, the Wildlife SOS Rapid Response team run in collaboration with the Gujarat Society for Prevention of

Wealth and acquiring it has been will be a preferred strife for mortals and then who to propitiate other than Lakshmi? But there have been other sensitivities to the matter, when John Keats wrote about the Nightingale: "Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird/No hungry generations tread thee down"

from months of surveillance on behalf of Wildlife SOS' undercover informants, who spent countless hours gathering information about suspects and their movements.

After getting information about a religious ritual wherein a large number of owls were to be sacrificed to a local deity, the team sprung to action by posing as buyers interested in obtaining the bird for another religious ritual.

Accompanied by undercover officials, they were able to capture the suspects and as a result, nineteen perpetrators were apprehended by the Forest department and Police officials.

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"bride-to-be" responded that there was no dearth of deserted villages so long as Sultan Mahmud was alive. The revelation had its effect and Mahmud decided to sheath his sword after that. Those fond of bird flesh can never think of making the owl (considered to be both wise and idiotic) part of the menu.

But come Diwali and, believe it or not, the slaughter of owls begins for Kali Puja. The trade is most widespread in Rajasthan and UP where owls are caught by Kalandars residing mostly in rural Jaipur, Bharatpur, Alwar and Fatehpur Sikri areas. The village of Korai-Karavili is notorious for clandestine trade in owls. Nearer Mathura Kosi Kalan is just as infamous for it. The tribals, mostly Bahelias, catch owlets and breed them for the festival of Lights. A fully grown bird is then ready for sale. Each of its body parts is the meat are all used in tantric puja on Amavasya night, preceding the new moon.

The one performing the puja is guided by a tantric well versed in black magic. He has to avoid sexual intercourse, shave all unwanted hair, bathe at 12 midnight, wrap a white dhoti around his waist, keeping the top portion of the body bare. After that he has to sit with closed eyes while the tantric recites the mantras during which the sanitary pad of a girl who has just attained puberty is burnt around the captive owl, who has been intoxicated with strong drink. The stool of a newborn infant is smeared on the bird, and he is then covered by the petticoat of a bride worn on the wedding night. After that more rituals are performed taking care that no woman or child is around.

The curse is that if a woman even peeps in out of curiosity she would become barren for life and if a child does so he or she would die an early death. According to Ibrahim Bhai, who was born in Ibrahim Patti and has died some years ago, there was a lot of mumbo-jumbo associated with the sacrifice of the owl (vahana of Lakshmi) and people greedy for instant wealth, used him for doing anything ordered by the tantric.

An old resident of Dholpur, he claimed that owls were sacrificed at Diwali even during the decadent years of the Mughals. He mentioned Mohammad Shah Rangila and before him Muizuddin Jahandar Shah and his successor Mohd Farrukseyer. Lal Kanwar, the concubine who was elevated to the exalted title of Begum Imtiaz Mahal by Jahandar Shah, was the one whose menstrual cloth was used, he said, for one such ritual. Ibrahim Bhai was no historian and semi-literate as he was, probably had heard these fanciful tales from his elders and their ancestors made weirder by years of repetition.

If history is to be relied upon, Mohd Shah was crowned at Fatehpur Sikri alright but spent Diwali in the Red Fort. After his defeat by Farrukseyer near Agra, Jahandar Shah and Lal Kanwar escaped to Delhi where the ousted ruler met his end at the hands of the victorious nephew whose only association with Agra was the Delhi Gate he built there, 26 miles from Fatehpur Sikri. A man called Kanje, because of his blue eyes inherited after an American soldier's affair with his mother, a kanjar woman, during World War II, used to breed owls for the night in Ranginji and sell them at Diwali. He was warned that he would meet a bad end. Kanje, his wife and four children all died of TB within a short time.

Was it the curse of the slaughtered owls? Owls are predators and help to clean up the environment. To invest with magical powers is a superstition which made even Shakespeare mention that among the weird stuff brewed by the Three Witches in "Macbeth" were parts of an owl, lizard and toad too. The poor bird has undergone wanton massacre in our times. As for the wealth the ritual is supposed to bring, the less said the better or Kanjars and Minas would be teem-

ing with crows! Despite superstitions, Diwali comes with great expectations as the joy it kindles pervades all communities, especially Hindus for whom it is the greatest festival of the year seconded by Holi. But over the year a certain change has come about in the celebration of the Feast of Lights. It's noisier with many crackers breaking the harmony of the evening. However, it was not so thirty years ago when one used to live in the Walled City of Jaipur, where women led their children through the gullies by candlelight.

Before that, Diwali was much calmer. One is reminded of the time when diyas were bought by the basketful and outshone electric lights. One of the attractions those days was Diwali celebrations at the mills - DCM, Swatantra Bharat, and earlier the John's Mills.

Nearly the entire city made a beeline for the mills to see the grand celebration of Diwali at which the Atish-Baaz set off fireworks, fairy lamps burnt, coloured fountains played and soft music floated to the ears as the pretty women of the royal family of Jaipur walked about in long trailing dresses to the hushed comments of awe and admiration. But after Partition, the royal fell on bad days and Diwali celebrations became less colourful in their palaces. However, the city's seth continued to enliven the festival but the old charm was missing, and today few remember those glorious days and the old philanthropists.

So ended the Diwali of a bygone era. However, the celebrations in Delhi's Chandni Chowk until the 1970s followed the pattern of those times. The Chowk was the hub and centre, and all around it were the spokes of the wheel, as it were. At Fatehpuri, Mori Gate, Kashmiri Gate, Darya Ganj, Jama Masjid, Nai Sarak and Chawri Bazar, the shops were a festive look days before Diwali - as they do now too. Sweetmeat-sellers, toy-sellers, grocers, general merchants, jewelers, and bullion dealers all seemed to be part of a similar medieval set-up. The same was the case in Jaipur.

Some of the sights are still there and the spectacle is grander, for now people are better off and celebrate accordingly. The widespread use of electric lights makes it a brighter Diwali year after year. But at the same time the sound of crackers grows louder and louder, though last time, mercifully High Court restrictions helped check the noise to an extent, which otherwise could be heard till the wee hours of the night.

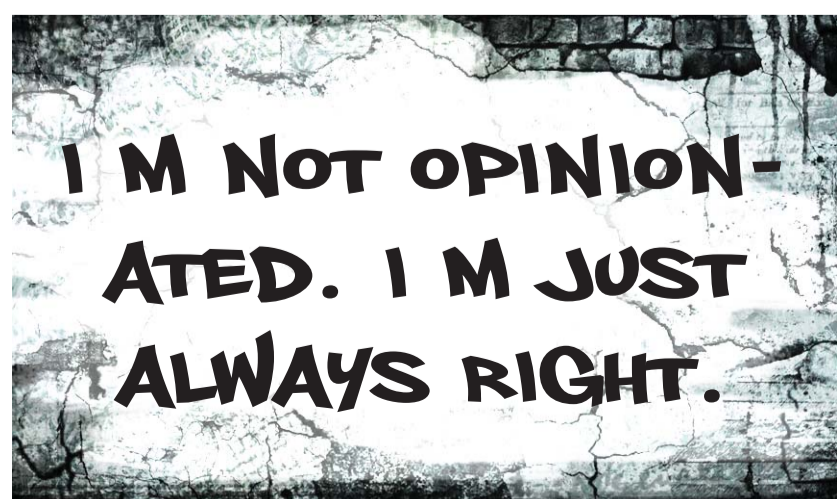
But the nostalgia for the Diwali of lore lingers for the older folk and one sometimes dreams of the sublime ambience that attracted the Mughals too - Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Dara Shikoh, Jahandar Shah Rangila, Shah Alam, Akbar Shah Sani and Bahadur Shah Zafar - who had a chiragh-khana and a darogah in charge of it.

For them like Jaipur's royalty it was a sibilant festival of lights, louder than Dusserha and brighter than the ancient Egyptian, Roman and Chinese festival of lamps, though their wives and daughters did not climb the ramparts of the Mahabharata and Amber forts to see the illuminations.

Earlier the Jashan-Chiragh of the mughals held sway in the mahals and courtyards where the giant light wick diyas, 40-foot Akash diyas, ticks weighing 20 kgs, each with candles and marshals with the jharfanos to lend a perpetual glow to the gay and golden night which came once in a year.

It was during Diwali celebrations that Shah Jahan's daughter Jahannara was badly burnt and was saved by a European doctor. You can imagine the festivities that followed! They were even grander than the ones held after Maharani Man Singh II's miraculous escape in an air-crash, with Maharani Gayatri Devi (while watching the mishap from atop her palace) swooning away at the dire scene unfolding itself before her eyes.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman