

#PARENTING

Health Benefits Of Swimming For Kids

Concerned that your child is not getting enough outdoor exercise? Swimming is the perfect answer.



Given the sedentary lifestyle and widespread fascination for gadgets of modern-day children parents often worry about ensuring how to make them spend enough time outdoors. The lack of physical exercise causes children to fall short on stamina and flexibility of the body. It also results in poor posture.

For all these concerns, swimming – with all adequate safety measures in place, of course – is the perfect answer. The multiple health benefits of swimming for kids makes it one of the best modes of exercises. It is also a very valuable life skill your child needs to learn.

Importance of Swimming

Introducing your children to swimming is a great way to establish the importance of a healthy lifestyle. One of the biggest advantages of swimming is that it allows children to be naturally adventurous and have fun. Both kids and adults tend to exercise for longer periods of time while swimming than while pursuing most other types of exercise.

The human body is 90% buoyant when in water up to the neck, and this makes swimming a perfect low-impact yet high-energy workout for children. It is also less strenuous on the body when compared to any other sport or workout. Further, this makes buoyancy of water and its effect on the human body is more calming than other forms of exercises.

One major physical benefit of swimming is that it promotes the release of endorphins. Endorphins, famously known as the 'happy hormones' or the 'feel-good chemicals' lift our spirits and leave us refreshed.

Swimming has been proved to be an effective form of physical exercise for both mind and body. It is a great exercise regimen for the joints, offering around 20%-30% more mobility than many playground sports. At the same time, it offers a challenging workout which is not too harsh on the joints and connective tissues in the body.

Health Benefits

Swimming is a wonderful exercise and offers so many health benefits to children. Of course, swimming helps in weight loss. However, there are other primary benefits too:

- Maintenance of optimal body weight.
- Enhanced strength, flexibility and overall fitness.
- Increased muscle strength and tone.



Who trusted, God was love indeed. And love, Creations final law. Tho Nature, red in tooth and claw. With ravine, shrieked against his creed. (Alfred Lord Tennyson.)

The past few days all the papers and news channels have been full of the account of the attack and killing of a couple by a rogue bear in my home town Panna. This is perhaps the first time in the history of TV that a video of a canine feeding off the bodies of the two humans it had killed has been recorded and broadcast. The horrific incident took place less than a couple of hundred yards from the municipal limits of the town. This article attempts to give a human face to the victims, who they were, what they did and where they lived and whom they have left behind. It also tries to put into context the causes for such a tragedy.

On the south Eastern side of Panna is a forested hill called Madar Tung'a on its Western slope are a few Government buildings including the Circuit House and the Collector's bungalow and some distance from them on the slope is a medieval 'madar' around which an undemarcated graveyard is used by the muslim community from the nearby Raniganj Mohalla, where the two victims also had their home. The problem is that the hill is rocky and difficult to dig, so most of the bodies are buried in shallow graves just a couple of feet deep. These attractive scavengers like bears, hyenas, jackals, civets (kabarjiju in Hindi), honey badgers and wild boar who after scraping of the top soil feed on the bodies.

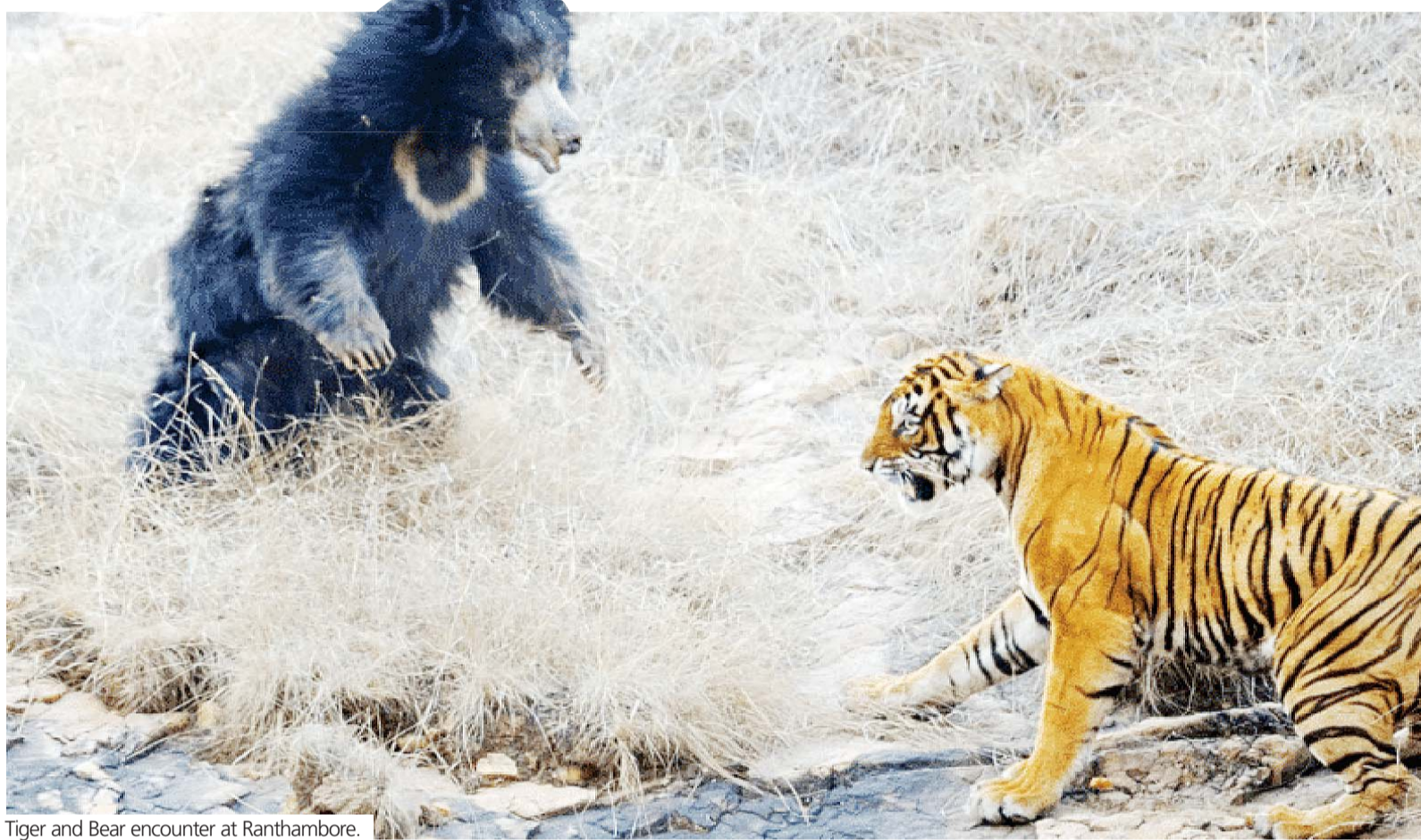
The Madar Tung'a Hill and the 'madar' has an interesting history which is recorded in the box accompanying this account. The Madar Tung'a Hill is also regularly visited by the townsmen to collect firewood. Many years ago when cooking gas was unheard of, even the local collector a Lushai used to come to the forest accompanied by



Fearsome long claws of the bears.

Nature

Red in Tooth and Claw



Tiger and Bear encounter at Ranthambore.

#WILD-CITY-CLASH

his wife to collect firewood for their kitchen. The proximity of the hill and forest to the town is the perfect environment for human and wild life conflict and the couple were its latest victims.

Earlier this year we had a unique case of a hyena attacking a farmer who would have been killed if his plough bullocks not broken their tethers and come to rescue him and kill the rogue hyena. Photograph of the cutting from a newspaper giving an account of the incident is printed with this account.

On Sunday morning Mukesh Rai and his wife Gudiya had gone to Khermai shrine located on the hillside about a kilometer from their home in Raniganj Mohalla Panna. They belonged to the Kharang community who claim Rajput origins, a claim which is however not accepted by other Rajputs. The clan however had its

moment of glory under Prithviraj Chauhan but it did not last long after his death. Mukesh and Gudiya were owners of a small tea and snacks shop on the boundary of Baldeoji Temple and are survived by a 18 year old son and 12 year old daughter who are now rendered supportless. The government has promised an ex-gratia amount of 4 lacs but they need long term support.

Khermai is a Goddess of Adivasi origins and shrines to her are generally located in isolated places in jungles close to villages and town next to Kher trees, 'kher' in hindi also means spear which is her symbol. Kher is also called 'Kathaa' the red substance which is added to 'paan' and other tobacco products, which is the cause of red spittle stains in much of India. Kher is extracted by boiling the heart wood of the Kher tree. The heart wood is very hard and in earlier times when iron was not easily available, pieces of it were sharpened and hardened over fire to make spear and arrowheads and hence its association with

On their return they were accosted by a rogue bear, we do not know who was attacked first, but both put up a heroic defence of each other and were killed. The bear ripped apart their clothes and limbs and dragged their bodies into a dry nullah bed and was feeding on them when their screams attracted some people who were nearby, but in spite of all the noise and clamouring by the crowd the bear remained undisturbed and no one dared to approach close for bears have a fearsome reputation which even tigers respect.



Bear attacking the victims.

On their return they were accosted by a rogue bear, we do not know who was attacked first, but both put up a heroic defence of each other and were killed. The bear ripped apart their clothes and limbs and dragged their bodies into a dry nullah bed and was feeding on them when their screams attracted some people who were nearby, but in spite of all the noise and clamouring by the crowd the bear remained undisturbed and no one dared to approach close for bears have a fearsome reputation which even tigers respect.

I have seen one such encounter between a bear and a tiger, and it was the tiger that had to retreat. Recently there was a video on Youtube of a similar encounter at Ranthambore and once again it was the tiger that gave way.

What is surprising is that it took all of five hours for the forest department to come and tranquilize the bear by which time the bodies of the victims had been torn to smithereens. Worse the



Fresh Veggies Day

How many portions a day of fresh veggies does it take to keep a person healthy? Five? Seven? Ten? And what makes up a portion? Nutritionists agree, when it comes to fresh fruit and vegetables, the average person simply is not getting enough in their regular diet. An increase in daily consumption of vegetables (and fruits) is the entire point of the day. Get ready to make a healthy change on Fresh Veggies Day for a fun and surprising meat-free feast with your loved ones!



victims tea shop.



Children of the victims Risab & Palak.



Bear attack victims Mukesh & Indira.

India for it provides the right habitat, and the National Park provides them and other animals additional protection. It was for this reason that it was chosen as the site for research on sloth bears by my friend Clifford Rice of the US Wild Life Board. Clifford was India born and lived in India before moving to the US. His study of the Nilgiri Tahr of Ervaikulam National Park is a classic and most authorities work on the subject.

It was during his work on the Nilgiri Tahr that Clifford had come in contact with our son in law Devendra Singh and his father Raja Saheb Samar Singh both of whom worked with Tata Tea on its Estates close to Ervaikulam. Both father and son are wild life lovers and fond of Shikar, their farm in Rampura UP is adorned with trophies including of bears who guard the entrance to the sitting room.

writetoarbit@rashtradoot.com



Trophy room Rampura Fort, two stuffed bears guard the entry door.

Madartunga and the Battle of Panna 1683

The name Madartunga is associated with Maharajah Chhatrasal a maternal ancestor of mine and his defeat of Sher Afghan. Chhatrasal was the ruler of Eastern Bundelkhand with Panna as his capital. His father Champat Rai had fallen out with his cousin the Maharajah of Orchha who ruled over Western Bundelkhand comprising of the districts of Jhansi, Tikamgarh, Datta and Lalitpur. Chhatrasal had been orphaned early when both his parents had been killed by Moghul forces. Having no support and knowing no other profession Chhatrasal joined the Moghul army where Mirza Raja Jaisingh spotted him and seeing his potential took him under his wing. Jai Singh became his mentor and took him with him for his campaign in the Deccan including the capture of the fort of Devgiri near Aurangabad. Realising that a person like Chhatrasal had no future with

the Moghuls but would have one in his own home land, Jai Singh advised him to join Shivaji. In place of Jai Singh, Shivaji now became his mentor and guide, soon Chhatrasal having mastered the art of kingship and generalship under the tutelage of Shivaji and with his blessings returned to Bundelkhand and carved out an independent kingdom for himself which comprised the area of the present day districts of Panna, Chhatrapur, Saugar, Mahoba, Damoh, Kanj, Banda and Hamirpur. Chhatrasal never forgot Jai Singh and the Marathas and voluminous correspondence between him and Jai Singh and the Peshwa are still available in the Jaipur and Poona archives.

In 1683 Panna was attacked by Sher Afghan (not to be confused with the Sher Afghan who was Noor Jehan's first husband before his murder at Jehangir's behest). Chhatrasal having learnt his lessons

well from Shivaji abandoned Panna alongwith its entire population and withdrew into the hill and forest. The town was occupied without a fight by Sher Afghan's army who celebrating their unexpected easy victory, were in a celebratory mood when Chhatrasal's men emerging from the hills and forests late at night caught the invaders unawares and killed or captured all of them. The enemy dead were buried on the hill which from that time onwards has been called Madar Tung'a after their graves. Sher Afghan was mortally wounded and died soon afterwards. News of his death was not told to Sher Afghan's son, who offered to vacate all areas of Bundelkhand captured by him in exchange for his fathers release. Chhatrasal agreed to his terms. After the enemy had withdrawn, Sher Afghan's body was handed over to his son. Another lesson in statecraft which only Shivaji could have taught.

#BOTANY

World's Largest Known Plant

Researchers happened across the plant when they took genetic samples of what they thought were two different plants over 180 km apart.



Researchers have discovered what is now believed to be the largest plant in the world. The single plant of Posidoniaaustralis was discovered in the shallow waters of the World Heritage Area of Shark Bay in Western Australia. The ancient specimen of an incredibly resilient seagrass stretches across 180 km. It is estimated to be at least 4,500 years old.

Researchers from The University of Western Australia (UWA) and Flinders University were taking samples of seagrass shoots from Shark Bay to generate 'fingerprints' that used over 18,000 genetic markers. But they were stunned by the results when they did so. What they thought were different plants more than 180 km apart turned out to be the exact same plant with the same genetic fingerprint.

Evolutionary biologist Elizabeth Sinclair from UWA, who is a senior author of the study said that the research project began when researchers wanted to understand how genetically diverse the seagrass meadows in Shark Bay were. They also wanted to know which plants should be collected for seagrass restoration.

"The answer blew us away - there was just one! That's it, just one plant has expanded over 180 km in Shark Bay, making it the largest known plant on earth. The existing 200 square kilometres of ribbon weed meadows appear to have expanded from a single, colonising seedling," said UWA student researcher and lead author of the study, Jane Edgelo.

Its enormous size is not the only thing that sets it apart: the plant also has twice as many chromosomes as its oceanic relatives; making it a 'polyploid'. "Whole-genome duplication through polyploidy - doubling the number of chromosomes - occurs when diploid 'parent' plants hybridise. The new seedling contains 100 per cent of the genome from each parent, rather than sharing the usual 50 per cent," said Sinclair.

The plant appears to be extremely resilient without successful flowering and seed production. It experiences a wide range of temperatures and salinities and also extremely high light conditions. Usually, this would be highly stressful for most plants, but the giant plant seems to thrive in these conditions.



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

Human & Animal Conflict

Bear attacks are not unique to India, they occur in North America too, on an average there is one mortality and several injured every year. In Panna too we have an average of one case every year. In most cases they are women living in hamlets close to forests and the attacks happen when the women go out at night or early morning to answer the call of nature. Bears are omnivorous and will eat almost everything particularly the carcass of dead animals, having comparatively poor eyesight they are drawn by their highly developed sense of smell to women during their monthly cycle.

In India attacks by tigers are comparatively rare, it is wild elephants and snake bites that are the biggest

killers. But more than all animals combined are bites from rabid dogs in urban areas. Irresponsible feeding of feral dogs without taking care to control their breeding and administering anti-rabies vaccines needs to be looked into.

Over the last few years the hills surrounding Jaipur have become home to a healthy population of leopards who feed on stray dogs, monkeys and peafowl. They have also started straying into built up areas, where children are particularly vulnerable and residents must take suitable precautions. If care is not taken now, then we can be certain that we will have an incident and then there will be a clamor to eliminate all leopards from the neighborhood of Jaipur. Which will be a tragedy.

Sloth Bear

India is home to three types of bears, Himalayan Black and Brown bears and the Sloth Bear. It is estimated that there is healthy population of over twenty thousand sloth bears in India and its range covers most of the country.

The sloth bear Melursusurusinus, it is also called the labiated bear because it has a long lower lip which is used for sucking up termites and other insects including bees and hence termed asmyrmecophagous. Most attacks on humans are on the head and upper parts of the body, sometimes the bears do not kill their victims outright but will chew and suck the blood. This is what the bear was doing to its victims in Panna before it was tranquilized. If attacked by a bear it is advisable to lie flat facing the ground and cover the face and head with ones arms, running away is not an option.

A couple of years ago some people travelling by car in Orissa spotted a sloth bear close to the road. One of them got down to take a selfie. The next thing was the bear was on him and clawed and chewed him to death in spite of all the shouting and noise made by his co-passengers. The incident was video-graphed by a passenger in a following car.

Baldeo Temple

The victims had a small humble tea shop near the entrance to the magnificent Palladin style neo-classical late nineteenth century Baldeoji Temple.

There are not many temples devoted to Baldeo or Balam the elder brother of Krishna, the only ones I know of, one is in Jaipur on the road to Amer and the other in Panna. Balam is an interesting deity, the only God whose image stands alone in a temple without his spouse. The reason for this is that Balam was a little too fond of his wine and would often get into brawls, so having got a bit fed up of his rowdiness, Revati his spouse refused to accompany him when ever he went out. This however did not prevent him from continuing with his errant ways and on returning home being harangued by Revati, told her that he could not resist the temptation when he saw the amber coloured liquid which reminded him of her beautiful eyes.

The symbol on Balam's banner is the Tar/Toddy tree. The other symbol that he has like Ram has a bow and arrow, Balam has the plough which connects him

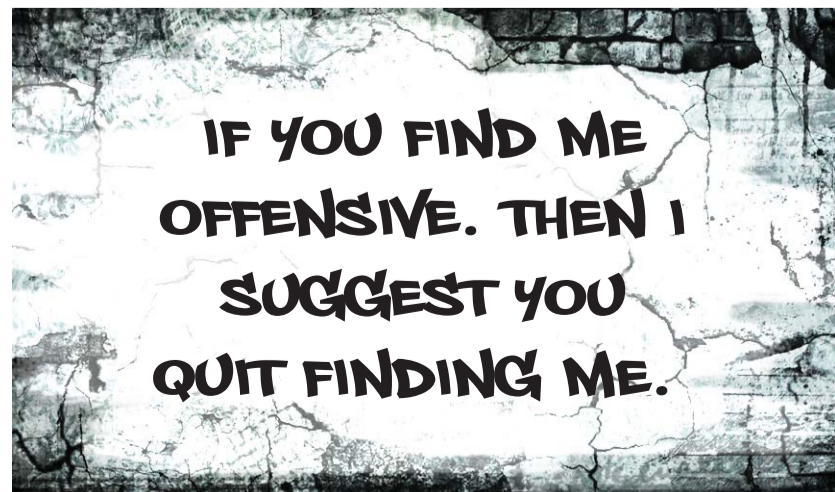
to farmers and this is the reason why in 1860 the then Maharajah of Panna Nirpat Singh built a temple devoted to the God of Farmers Balam/Baldeo. Panna and its surroundings are on a plateau in the Central Vindhya's, the soil is poor and farming was limited to the lowlands, most people were cattle grazers or adivasi dependent on their herds of cattle and goats or forest products for sustenance. Maharajah Nirpat Singh wanted to change this and had several lakes and tanks constructed in and

around Panna to provide irrigationand encourage people to take up cultivation. An English visitor was taken around by the Maharajah himself to inspect his model vegetable and fruit tree plantations, the Maharajah telling him that he wanted people to grow vegetables and fruits thereby removing the curse of malnutrition amongst his subjects. The temple to the Farmers God would provide the right encouragement and spiritual context to his ambition and work for the benefit of his subjects.

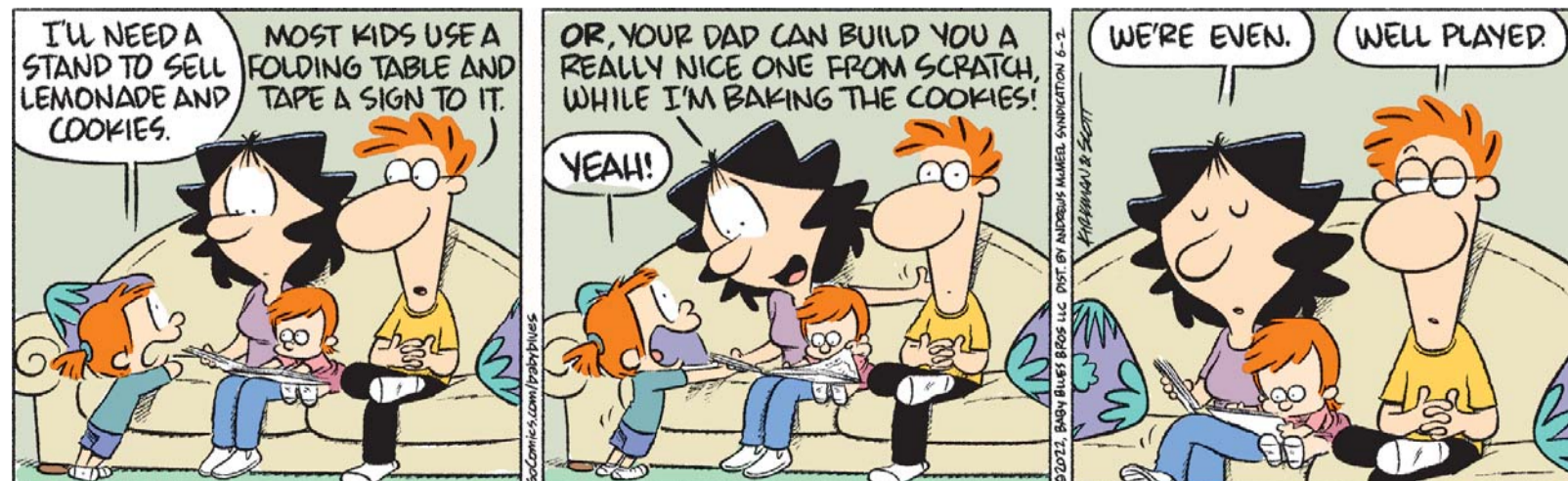


Baldeoji temple where victims had tea shop.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS

