

#AOUND-D-WORLD

Most Unique Marathons

Intro: These marathons promise to be bucket list travel experiences.



Marathon du Medoc, France

Have you resolved to dedicate more time to fitness and travel in 2023? Then these marathons will allow you to kill two birds with one stone. Marathons are no longer just about getting to the finish line. Foot races today are offering participants off-beat opportunities to soak in local culture while on the move.

Some of these races require ample training beforehand, so take note of registration dates and prerequisites. If you want something more leisurely, stay away from the ultramarathons and opt for shorter versions of these races, often conducted simultaneously.

Either way, these marathons promise to be bucket list travel experiences. Each of them also highlights a feature or structure unique to their respective regions.

Marathon du Medoc, France

Who said a marathon needs to leave you sweaty and tired? Participants in the Marathon du Medoc in France are treated to refreshments like wine, oysters, steak and ice cream as they run through beautiful vineyards near Bordeaux.

Along with food tastings, runners are regaled with musical performances by the small orchestras that dot the 42km course. Held since 1989, this race is also popular because runners are required to dress in costumes based on a yearly theme.

Past editions have seen themes like cinema, superheroes, circus, the animal kingdom and so on. The theme for 2023 is gastronomy.

Big Five Marathon, South Africa

A far cry from classic city marathons with noise and traffic, the Big Five Marathon takes place in the savannahs of Entabeni Game Reserve in the Limpopo Province in South Africa. The race is thus named because participants may find themselves running alongside some of the 'Big Five' lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos, and buffaloes at a thrilling distance.

There are no special artificial barriers or enclosures set up within the reserve. However, the 42.2km course is under aerial and on-ground surveillance to ensure that the animals don't get too close for comfort.

Athens Classic Marathon, The Authentic, Greece

At the Athens Classic Marathon The Authentic, participants are said to trace the footsteps of the famed messenger Pheidippides. According to an ancient Greek, he is the one who brought the news of the Greek victory over the Persians during the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. Although set in urban terrain, the course slopes uphill and down-

hill in many places. The finish line is at the glorious Panathenaic Stadium, the world's only stadium made entirely of marble. Also known as the Kallimacharo, this stadium has hosted the Panathenaic Games in ancient times as well as certain editions of the modern Olympic Games. Since 1982, the Athens Classic Marathon has been dedicated to the memory of Gregoris Lambrakis, a revered anti-war activist who was himself a track and field athlete.

Inca Trail Marathon, Peru

If you're looking for another epic run, sign up for the Inca Trail Marathon. Participants in this race take a scenic yet gruelling route in the Andes Mountains to reach Machu Picchu, the legendary 'Lost city of the Incas.'

This route is one believed to have been followed by ancient pilgrims who wanted to visit the religious capital of the Inca Empire. The steep ascents and uneven terrain that characterise the Inca trail have led many to term it one of the most difficult marathons in the world.

The Great Wall Marathon, China



The Great Wall Marathon offers you the unique opportunity to actually run on one of the new seven Wonders of the World. With a distance of more than 40km, steep steps, frequent rubble and overgrown terrain, this ultramarathon is also considered to be one of the most challenging in the world.

The Khmer Empire Marathon, Cambodia

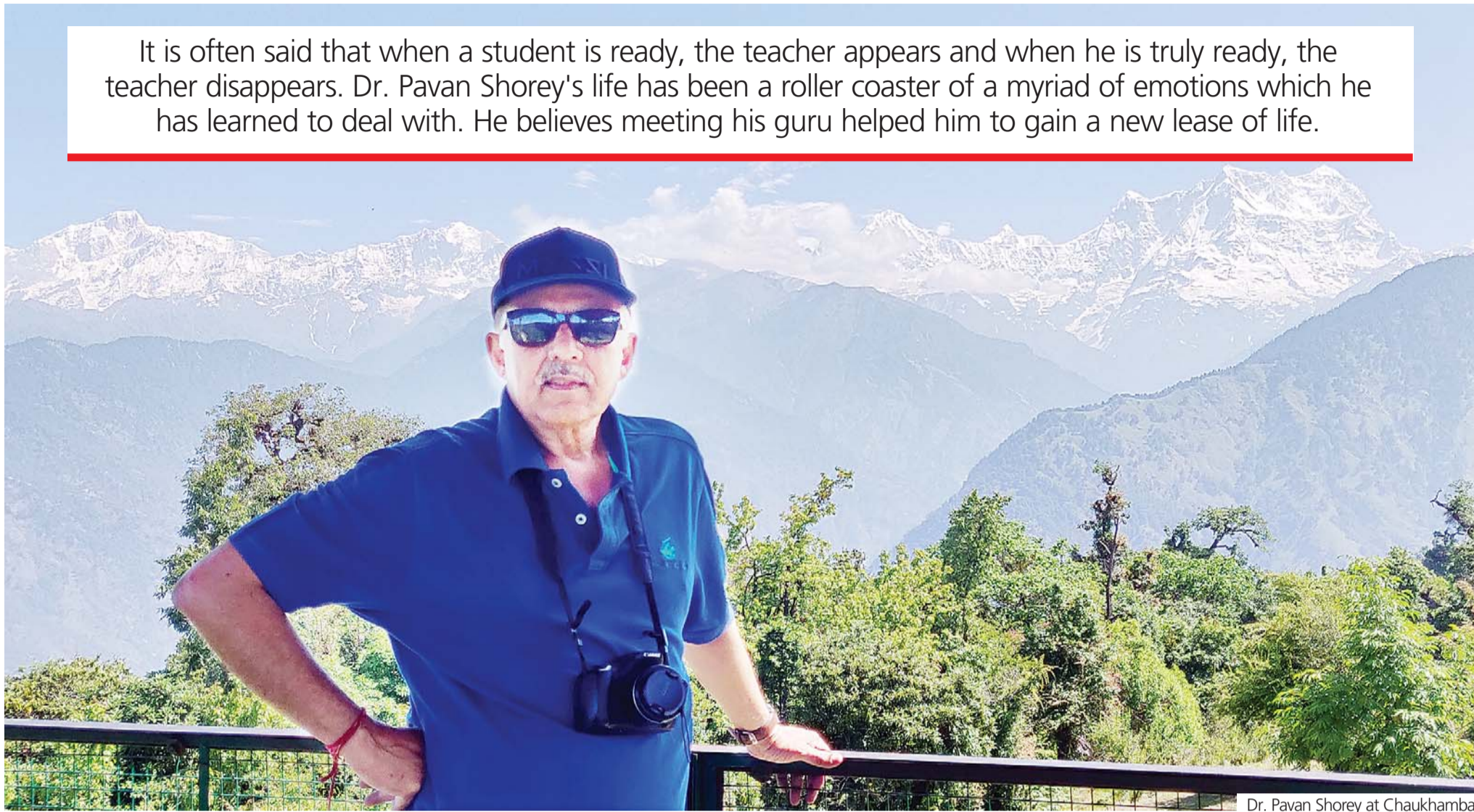
The Khmer Empire Marathon offers not only a feast for your eyes but also upliftment for your soul. Participants race across the magnificent Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia, considered to be the largest religious monument in the world.

This marathon is another memorable historic experience as the structures and ruins in the complex date back to the 12th century. The course itself is smoother than most of the others on this list.

On the way, marathoners will pass by ancient temples, rice fields and forests. Throughout the year, half marathons and other races also take place here.



Big Five Marathon, South Africa



It is often said that when a student is ready, the teacher appears and when he is truly ready, the teacher disappears. Dr. Pavan Shorey's life has been a roller coaster of a myriad of emotions which he has learned to deal with. He believes meeting his guru helped him to gain a new lease of life.

Dr. Pavan Shorey at Chaukhamba.

A Doctor With His Eyes Wide Open (...2)



Shailaza Singh
Published author,
poet and a YouTuber

#DOCTOR-ON-A-SPIRITUAL-QUEST

'I was associated with my guru for about ten to fifteen years. He had helped me to overcome my grief and see the world in a different way. Though he passed away in 2019, even when he was around, I always wondered why can't there be a book with his teachings in it? When I sat down to write 'Conversations on a Park Bench', in 2012, I had initially thought of writing about a lady who is groped by her boss and experiences vishad and wonders about the purpose of her entire existence. But then, I thought of taking my story and fictionalizing it.'

Fiction Meets Real Life

How long did it take for him to write the two books? 'I finished 'Conversations on a Park Bench' within a year. My friend Nihal was incredulous when I told him that I had written the book in a year. According to him, a book takes years of research and writing. However, I

took four years to write my second book 'The Mountain Deer'. 'But why didn't he think of writing an autobiography?' 'I don't believe that I am that important. I had read somewhere that the great author Khushwant Singh had once told Amrita Pritam that the story of her life was so inconsequential and tiny that it could be written on the back of a revenue stamp. I too am of the same opinion. Moreover, I believe when you write fiction, you have the liberty to create conflict to keep the narrative flowing. A personal story is quite boring because you just keep listing your achievements and failures.'



The trekker Doctor.



On a trek to Tunganath.

waits for him in the parking lot of the building where he sees the watchman sitting with his wife. Their small daughter (who is toddler) is playing nearby. Prashant comes down and they get into the car. Just then, Prashant's phone rings and he starts reversing the car while talking on the phone. As he backs the car, they hear a thump sound. They get out of the car to find that the watchman's small daughter has been crushed under the car. Vivek is shaken by the incident but he sees that his friend is so materialistic that he has no qualms about what he has done. He strikes a deal with the watchman and the doctor who was in charge of the case and wriggles out of the situation by paying both of them some money. When the watchman protests, he tells him that the child was a girl and had she lived he would have had to pay a lot of money for dowry and her marriage. So, this amount is good enough for him. Later he boosts to Vivek about how he used his 'marketing skills' to get out of the situation. Vivek feels repulsed and it is then that he questions himself about his life and who he really is.

This chapter was based on a real incident. There was a man who brought the body of a small child to

the hospital and I could see that the poor mother of the child sitting and crying helplessly. My friend got out of the situation by giving her a mere 30,000 rupees. Tears came into my eyes when I saw the plight of this couple and I was repulsed by the whole thing. How can someone be so callous and cruel?'

Turning Points

There is another incident in the book that has been inspired from real life. In the book, after his wife Radhika's death, Vivek's father-in-law asks him to return the flat which was a wedding gift to the couple. Vivek feels bad but his guru advises him to become detached with such materialistic things and return the flat. This again happened with a friend of mine. When his wife died leaving behind his infant son, his in-laws took away the baby on the pretext that he will not be able to take care of the baby. They held the baby to ransom and demanded his wife's provident fund money, jewellery, car etc. My friend was distraught and asked Guruji for advice. Guruji promptly asked him to return everything and get his son back.'

In both his books, death has been the turning point in the story. Being a doctor, how does death



On a trek in the mountains



In the valley of flowers

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I regularly go on treks to the mountains. I have trekked to the Valley of Flowers, the Great Lakes of Kashmir and many other such places. When I am at home, I like to spend time gardening. I love to see my flowers grow and bloom. I like reading and listening to the works of Meena Kumari, Sahir Ludhianvi, Neeraj and many other famous poets.



From Dr. Shorey's garden

frame. She asked me who I was and when I said it was me, Pavan, she recognised me. It was then I realized that though the body had almost gone, there was something in her that was still recognizing and responding to me. She passed away after a couple of days.'

All-time Inspiration

From a bystander's point of view, Dr. Shorey's life has been quite a journey. So, doesn't he feel lonely? 'No, I don't. I have my practice where I see my patients. My son who is 37 years old is married and we keep meeting every now and then. I spend a lot of time with my friend Nihal and his family. Apart from this, I regularly go on treks to the mountains. I have trekked to the Valley of Flowers, the Great Lakes of Kashmir and many other such places. When I am at home, I like to spend time gardening. I love to see my flowers grow and bloom. I like reading and listening to the



Please join us on the 15th of January, 4 p.m. for an exclusive interaction with Dr. Pavan Shorey where he will be talking about his books, trekking, life and much more at Sudharma, Chameliwala Market, Opposite GPO, MI Road, Jaipur.



Dr. Pavan Shorey on a trek to the Great Lakes of Kashmir.

#BRAVERY

Indian Army Day

The history of the Indian Army dates back to the early 18th century, when the East India Company established a standing military presence in the country. The Army played a key role in the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also known as the Indian Mutiny, and in the subsequent annexation of India by the British Empire.

Honouring the sacrifices and achievements of the Indian Army, Indian Army Day is celebrated on January 15th each year. Parades and military displays are held, and awards are given to recognize the bravery and service of the soldiers. It's also a time for the nation to remember the sacrifices made by soldiers who have lost their lives defending the country.



General Kodandera Madappa Cariappa.

History of Indian Army Day

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Display the National Flag

One simple way to show your support for the Indian Army is to display the national flag. This can be done at home, at work, or in any other public place. You can



Kodandera Madappa Cariappa as the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army in 1949. Prior to this appointment, the Indian Army was led by British officials. The decision to appoint an Indian as the head of the Army was a significant step towards greater autonomy and independence for the country. Since then, Indian Army Day has been celebrated annually on January 15th to recognize the service and contributions of the Indian Army.

How to Celebrate Indian Army Day:

Indian Army Day is celebrated across India by the general public, as well as by members of the military and government officials. There are a variety of ways that individuals can participate in the celebration of Indian Army Day. **Attend a Parade or Military Display** Many cities and towns host

also consider wearing clothing or accessories that feature the flag.

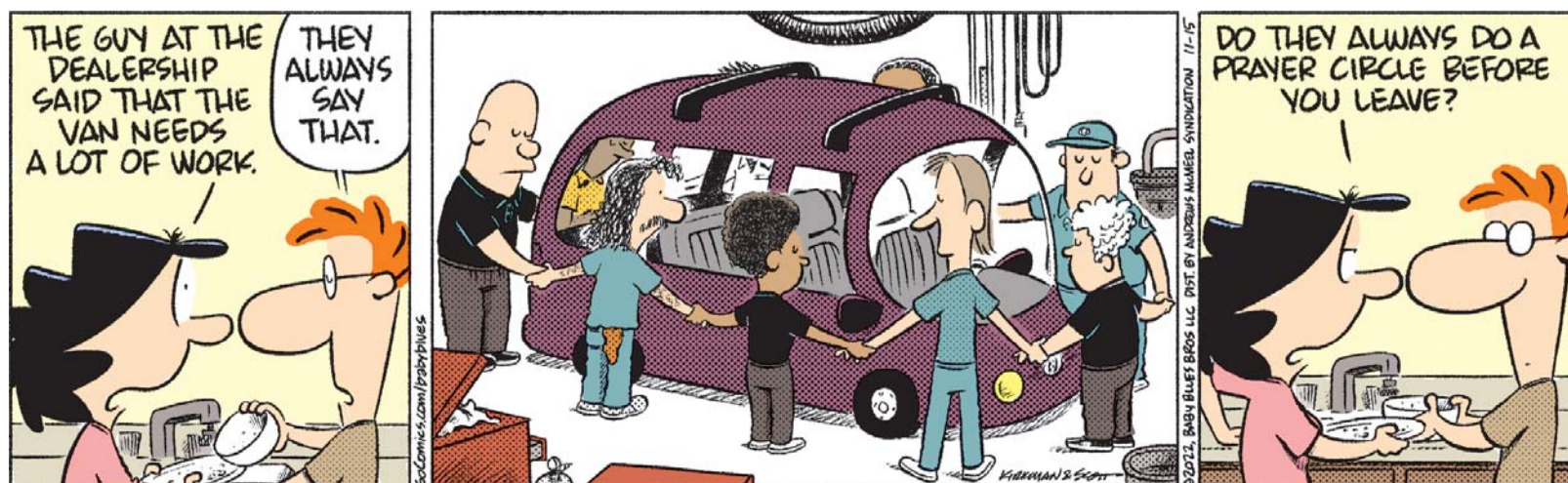
Show your Appreciation to Members of the Military

If you know someone who is serving in the Indian Army, take the time to thank them for their service and sacrifice. You can also consider writing a letter or making a phone call to a soldier serving overseas. Additionally, you can make a donation to organizations that support the military and their families.

Participate in a Community Service Project

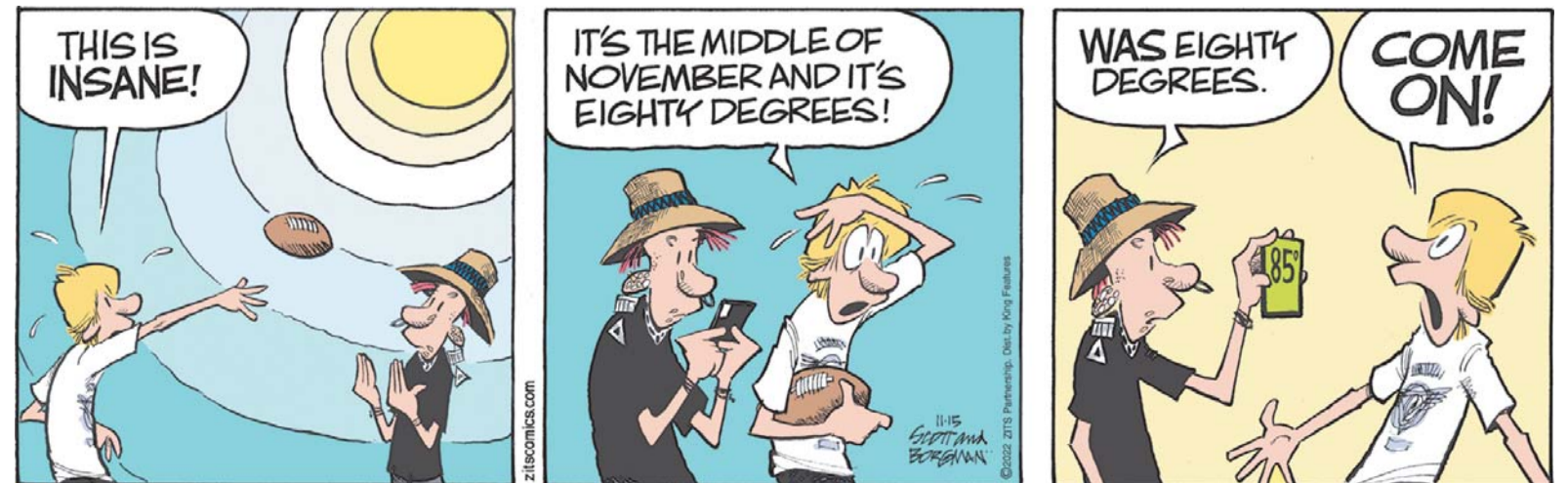
Another way to honour the Indian Army is to engage in community service. This could involve volunteering at a veterans' hospital, working with a military-focused non-profit organization, or participating in a local fundraiser for the military. By giving back to your community, you can show your appreciation for the sacrifices made by members of the military and their loved ones.

BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL

