



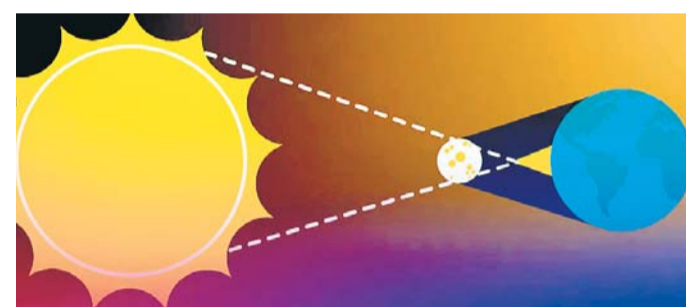
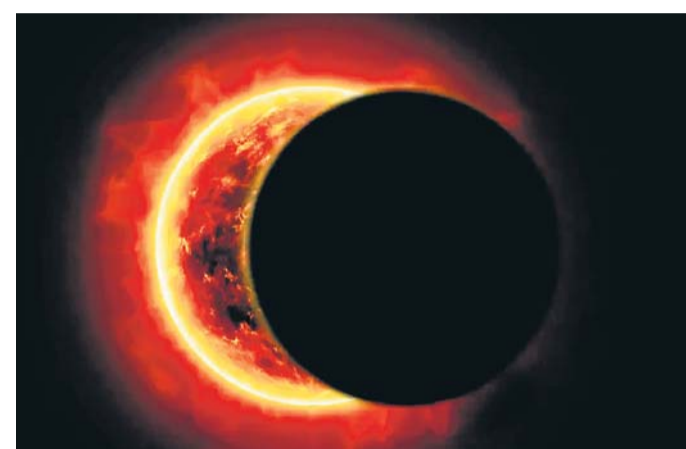
World Autism Awareness Day

Autism affects approximately 1 out of every 150 children around the world. It is a neural development disorder that affects their ability to socialize normally by impacting their abilities to utilize verbal and non-verbal communication. Since 2012, there has been a 30% increase in the amount of children being affected with autism, and World Autism Awareness Day helps to bring awareness to this growing health concern. Learn about the symptoms and effects, be better prepared to help those with autism, in your life, or participate in a fundraiser or event on Autism Awareness Day.

#CELESTIAL EVENT

Total Solar Eclipse 2024

The upcoming solar eclipse in April is going to be the first eclipse of the year

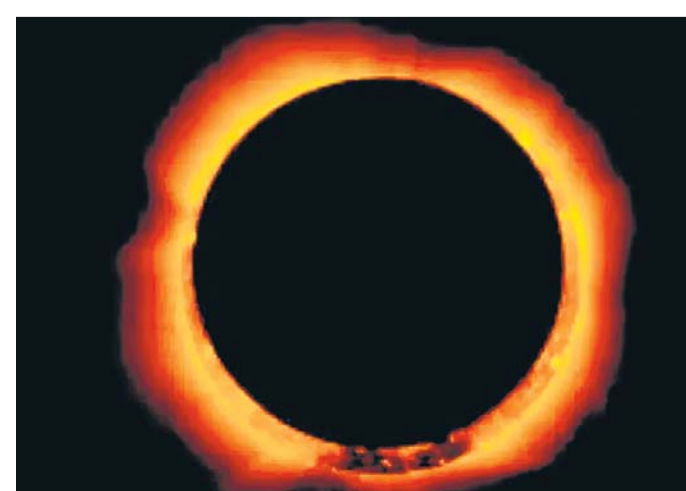


Attention skywatchers! You can expect a unique 'celestial spectacle' this month, as a solar eclipse will appear in the second week of April. Millions of people, along a narrow band in North America, will look up when the sky darkens during a 'Total Solar Eclipse' on April 8. This will be the first Solar Eclipse of 2024. It happens when the moon moves in front of the Sun and Earth, partially or obscuring the Sun's face.

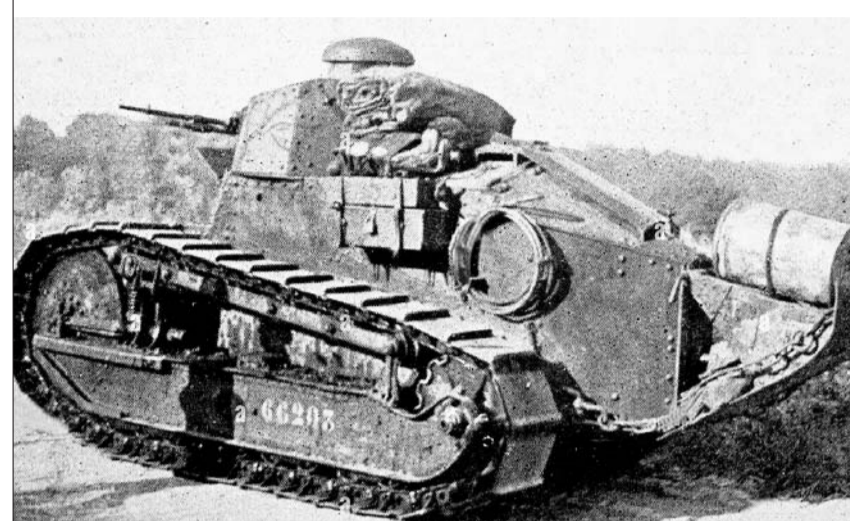
Starting directly at the sun, during a Solar Eclipse or at any other time, can lead to permanent eye damage. The Eclipse is only safe to witness with the naked eye during totality or the period of total darkness, when the moon completely covers the sun.

Here's a 10-point guide on Solar Eclipse 2024

1. This time, there will be a total solar eclipse that can be seen across North America including the United States, Canada, Mexico, and other countries. Hence, the rare astronomical event will not be visible in India.
2. "On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over Mexico, the United States, and Canada," NASA wrote on its official website.
3. A total solar eclipse time can range from a few seconds to 7.5 minutes and can last for several hours.
4. The Solar Eclipse will begin on April 8 at 2:12 pm and end at 2:22 am on April 9. Therefore, the entire solar eclipse will last for about twelve hours.
5. "A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, completely blocking the face of the Sun. The sky will darken as if it were dawn or dusk," the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said.
6. It is best to avoid staring directly at the sun during a solar eclipse, as it can put your eyes at risk. To view the celestial event, one must wear 'specialized eye protection' for solar viewing.
7. If a special-purpose solar filter is not fastened over the front optics of a camera lens, binoculars, or telescope through which any portion of the bright Sun is viewed, severe eye damage may result.
8. The Moon will be 3,60,000 kilometres away from the Earth, the closest distance between the Moon and the Earth, a day before the total Solar Eclipse. Due to its close proximity, it will also appear larger in the sky than usual. This will produce a stunning cosmic view in addition to the ideal alignment for the Solar Eclipse.
9. The first location of the Solar Eclipse will be North America. After Mexico, it will move towards the United States in Texas, and then travel through Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.
10. The next total Solar Eclipse will occur in 2026 on August 12 and will be visible across the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America.



Perhaps more than anything else, the Russia-Ukraine war has shown the relevance of the tank again. In spite of the initial drawbacks, which were largely the result of bad handling, the mechanised forces were at the forefront of actions by both sides. In fact, the Ukrainians have used it better, both in the offensive and defensive roles. They used them effectively in a series of defensive battles, and their utilisation in the Autumn offensive of Oct. 22 was exemplary. However, they were found wanting during their Spring offensive of 2023, largely because they were not used in adequate numbers and most importantly because they could just not effect a penetration of the Russian defensive layout. The Russians faltered in the initial handling of armoured vehicles, deploying them on roads and using them to break their way out of built-up areas, roles they were not optimally designed for.



French first world war tank EC7PBB.

Col Ajay Singh (Retd.)

It is over a hundred years now that the first tank rumbled over the battle-scarred landscape of Somme on 15 September, 1916. Created to break the impasse of trench warfare, the tank did more than that. Even though it advanced less than six kilometres on that fateful day, it created a 'psychological impact' that changed the very nature of warfare.

But then the origins of the tank go even beyond that. The idea actually fermented in the mind of the great genius, Leonardo Da Vinci, who conceived an 'iron war machine' with slits on its sides to permit firing of weapons. The machine would be physically moved by a two-man crew, pushing it from within. The idea remained just a thought on paper till the invention of the internal combustion engine gave it a form.

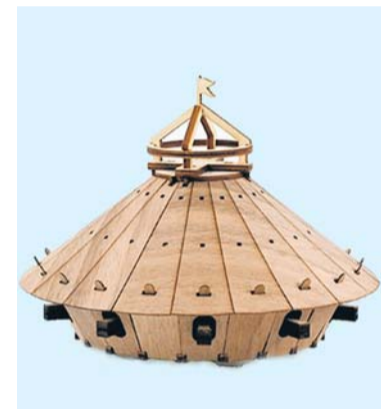
The first workable tank designs were made in 1914 by a British Engineer Officer, Ernest Swinton, who proposed an armoured vehicle using 'Holt farm tractor caterpillar tracks.' Aided by the efforts of Winston Churchill, then the First Lord of the Admiralty, the idea of 'Landships' took shape and on Sep. 15, 1915, the first machine, 'Big Willie' came into existence. Armed with rhomboidal tracks and two six pounder guns, it was eventually sent to France in August 1916, designated as tanks-a-cister to carry water' to ensure secrecy. Its induction to battle in Somme, on the morning of 15 September 1916, was not very impressive. 49 tanks were deployed, of which only 30 reached the start line and only 9 managed to make some penetration in ones and twos. It was only in 20 Nov, 1917 that tanks were used in the way they had to be, en masse, when 476 tanks were deployed in the Battle of Cambria and attained a six-kilometre penetration on a seven-mile wide front.

The tank had arrived

Other nations began their own programs. The French developed the Snieder, Saint-Chamond and the Renault FT, the first tank with a revolving turret. The Germans responded with their own ATV, a clumsy 30-ton monster, with a crew of 18. On 24th April 18, the inevitable happened. The first 'tank engagement' in history took place when three German ATVs clashed with four British Whippet tanks, both sides withdrawing after losing one each. The stage was being set for the future.



The first French tank design, the Schneider CA1, was not considered a success.



Leonardo's tank.



M1917 Tank.

World War II

World War I brought about the initial interest in the tank, but in different ways. The British believed that it was to be used primarily in the infantry support role, in spite of the writings of Gen J.E.C. Fuller and Capt. Basil Liddell Hart. The Germans, under the genius of Heinz Guderian, realised that the panzer arm had to be an all-arms force, comprising of aircraft, tanks, infantry, artillery and engineers, working in unison and evolved their concepts of 'Blitzkrieg.' The Russians developed their concepts of 'Deep Battle' under Marshal Tukachevsky. As the concepts evolved, so did the equipment. Then came World War II and the 'tank' really came into its own.

The 'German concept of Blitzkrieg' was validated when the Germans invaded Poland in Sep. 1939 and then followed up on 10 May 1940, by skirting the so-called impregnable Maginot Line and executing a huge envelopment behind the French lines. The tank did in twenty-one days what could not be achieved in four years of the First World War. It had arrived as the main instrument of manoeuvre.

The six years of the war saw a spurt in design and concept. The Germans accelerated through three generations of tank design, creating the light Panzer I, the Panzer II, the medium Panzer III, IV and the formidable Panther and Tiger tanks. The Soviets deployed the T-26, the T-34, perhaps the best all-round tank of the war, using a simple design that became the basis of Soviet tank production, thereafter. The US, with the entire weight of its heavy industry behind them, produced an amazing 88,410 tanks in the wartime years, evolving from the M3 Lee Grant, to the M-24 Chaffee, the M 26 Pershing and the M4 Sherman, with its powerful 75 mm gun, which became one of the icons of tank production. The British, too, produced

The Tank A Modern-Day Machine?



The British tanks had some success, but were slow, ungainly, and difficult.

#WARRING



The mushroom cloud of the Atomic Bomb, which ended the war, gave impetus to the 'tank,' the only weapon system that could operate in a nuclear environment. As the Cold War heated up, tank design developed. The Soviets followed up the T-34 with the T-55, the most widely produced tank in history, with over 80,000 machines serving in 27 armies across the world. Then came the T-64, the first tank that could fire a missile from its barrel, then the T-72, another iconic tank and the T-90.

The Western nations countered the Soviet concept of 'massed armour' by designing fewer but far more sophisticated tanks. The US M47 and 48 evolved into the M60, and then the M1 Abrams, perhaps, the

best in the world, whose depleted uranium body and array of sensors gave it unprecedented protection and situational awareness. The UK followed up their Centurions with the Chieftain and then the Challengers while the Germans and French unveiled their Leopard and AMX series. The need for infantry, to keep pace with tanks, also saw the development of the ICV with the BMP proving to be, perhaps, the best to date.

And tanks continued to prove their worth in the spate of wars that followed. In January 1950, North Korea launched a stunning blitzkrieg across the 38th parallel into South Korea, led by two armoured prongs. The Vietnam War saw over 1000

tanks deployed, though with limited effectiveness. The Iran-Iraq war, too, saw a series of tank battles. But it was the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent that saw some of the world's major tank battles post the World War.

The Israelis had inherited the German mantle of being the 'masters of manoeuvre' and they proved it in all three Arab-Israel wars. In 1958, their 7th Armoured Brigade raced 241 kilometres in two days, in the 1967 Arab-Israel War, they reached the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights. And in 1973, they launched a brilliant riposte behind the Egyptian bridgehead, to cut off two Egyptian armies. That was, perhaps, the last 'great armoured manoeuvre' in history.

hammer and not as a rapier; and the result was never really in doubt.

60 Years of the Indian Armoured Corps

The Indian Armoured Corps came into being in 1938, when two old and proud Cavalry Regiments bid farewell to their horses and took on Armoured Cars. Mechanisation

ambushed and destroyed in the town of Grozny by Chechen rebels, the largest single loss of Armoured vehicles to an unconventional adversary. And during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006, it lost 40 of its prized Merkavas, 10 percent of its fleet, to an enemy that did not possess a single tank or helicopter.

Yet, the tank came back to its conventional roles in the 1993 and 2003 Iraq wars. The sophisticated M1 Abrams and Challengers virtually decimated the antiquated T-55s, T-62s and T-72s, manned by ill-trained and equipped Iraqi crew. This war saw three major tank battles, the first was when the famed 7th Armoured Brigade clashed with the Iraqi 51st Mechanised Division at Basra and again at the Karbala gap between the US 3rd Division and the Iraqi Medina Division, and at the outskirts of Baghdad.

Perhaps more than anything else, the Russia-Ukraine war has shown the relevance of the tank, again. In spite of the initial drawbacks, which were largely the result of bad handling, the mechanised forces were at the forefront of actions by both sides. In fact, the Ukrainians have used it better, both in the offensive and defensive roles. They used them effectively in a series of defensive battles, and their utilisation in the Autumn offensive of Oct. 22 was exemplary. However, they were found wanting during their Spring offensive of 2023, largely because they were not used in adequate numbers and most importantly because they could just not effect a penetration of the Russian defensive layout. The Russians faltered in the initial handling of armoured vehicles, deploying them on roads and using them to break their way out of built-up areas, roles they were not optimally designed for. The developments in Anti-tank weaponry meant that new generation missiles could easily get the better of a tank's armour, through top-attack and tandem warhead modes. Drones too proved a potent adversary, both for providing early warning and to launch anti-tank strikes. Perhaps, the most significant aspect that emerged, was the fact that drones have to be co-opted into Armoured and Mechanised units and formations, as force-multipliers. The other is that battlefield management systems, enhanced recon and surveillance systems, and active protection is essential for the tank to perform effectively in today's battlefield.

The Changing Contours of Tank Warfare

The decade of the 70s and 80s saw major changes in armoured warfare. The Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1978 and in the rugged mountains, over 1000 tanks and APCs were deployed and 147 eventually destroyed there. Faced with Fourth Generation Warfare, they encountered a new form of 'warfare.'

The role of the tank, in this kind of conflict, changed. They were used by the Israelis in Lebanon in 1982, but the proliferation of hand-held weaponry reduced its role. Armour was used by the Russians to curb the Chechen uprising, in 1994, with disastrous results. Over 102 Armoured vehicles of the Russian 131 Brigade were

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#PARENTING

Tips To Raise Confident & Happy Kids

Happiness takes many forms, and we want our children to have a skill set that brings out self-confidence.



Confidence and self-esteem may be among the most admirable qualities that someone can hold. But if we aren't taught how to be confident in our younger years, it can make for a self-conscious, insecure adulthood. Happiness takes many forms, and we want our children to have a skill set that brings out self-confidence. In a highly scheduled and frenetic world, with lots of external events happening regularly, we can forget that intellectual engagement is actually a pretty important part of a kid's happiness and confidence. Here are a few tips on how to raise and motivate children to be their most confident, happy selves.



Push children beyond what is 'easy'



Oftentimes, parents and educators believe that self-confidence grows by having kids do tasks that are easily 'achievable.'

Actually, self-confidence comes when kids work through a struggle, when they are given a hard math problem or given a difficult opponent. When they are given a difficult learning task, and they make it to the other side, which is what builds 'confidence.' And we take that away from children at our own peril and, frankly, at their own peril.

In a world of instant gratification, it's easy to get fed up when we don't succeed immediately. But success and self-confidence come from navigating and recovering from failure. Plus, it feels great to finally achieve something that you've been working towards. Sports and clubs can teach some skills better than the classroom. After-school activities such as sports, theater, debate team, and other clubs play an integral role in creating 'intellectually vibrant' children, who are intellectually stimulated, energized, and challenged, which boost confidence and happiness. The notion of recovering from failure and the need for resilience are actually sometimes easier to teach in the realm of sports or other team activities than in a classroom. Take self-confidence, you can gain that in the theater and in the debate team, in a way that is harder to develop in, say, an English or math class.

Teach coping mechanisms for anxiety and stress

School, home life, friendships, extracurricular, and even things like appearance and crushes are factors that all can weigh heavily on children of all ages, leading to stress and anxiety.

Childhood anxiety disorders affect one in eight children and nearly one in four teenagers. Anxiety can lower self-confidence, but a little of it is actually normal and healthy. "It's a bit of a Goldilocks theory."

Every child responds to stressors differently. So, it's important to be in tune with your child's behaviour and how they respond to academic rigor or their social environment.

Most children can learn to deal with stress. You're not going to be able to protect them entirely from the thrust of the external world, whether that is economic pressures, or any number of influences in their lives or, frankly, world events.

To help a child with anxiety, try teaching them the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding method. Ask them to identify five things they can see, four things they can touch, two things they can hear, two things they can smell, and one thing they can taste. This will help engage their senses and calm their nerves. This method may be beneficial at any age.

If a child has the tools to ground themselves and knows how to talk through what they are feeling, they can be confident in their ability to deal with stress and anxiety.

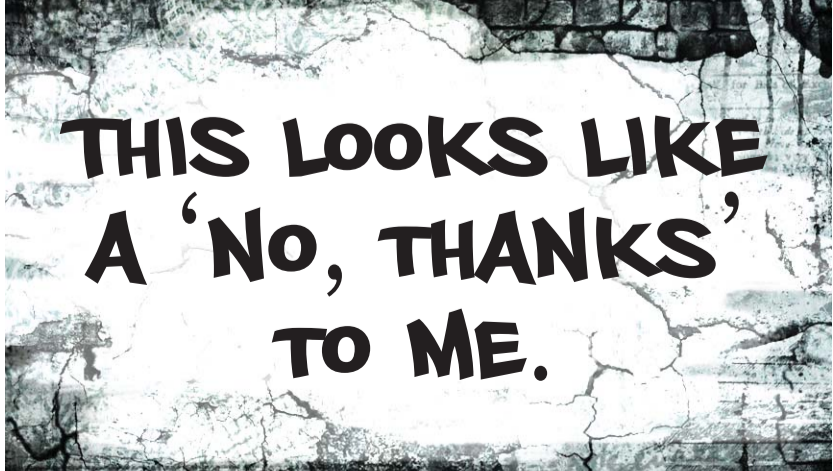


Parents: Enjoy parenting

It's easy to get caught up in the hullabaloo that is parenting, frantic school drop-offs, overtired kids (and yourself), a million and one items on a never-ending to-do list. But kids sense when you're stressed, too. If you impose your parenting angst and stress on your kids, they won't enjoy childhood as much as they can, and you won't enjoy parenting. And it's really important that one's child knows that they enjoy being a parent, being their parent."

Watch movies and TV shows with your children that you actually enjoy and play games you like to play. Do these things to not only bond with each other but also to ensure that you're happy, too.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman