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CHINNARA CHETANA

Ace archer SHEETAL DEVI

Have you heard of an archer named Sheetal Devi? This 16-year-old has no arms since birth. But when she lifts the bow with her leg, pulls the bow string strapped to her back, and lets the arrow fly, it never misses the target! This girl from a farming family in Kashmir has excelled in archery since class seven and won many international awards. She bagged not one, but two gold medals in the Asian Para Games held in China this year. What makes it even more special is that she won the gold by competing with others who had normal hands but otherwise handicapped. She has not only made her shepherdess mom proud, but made the whole country proud.



Every year, December 3rd is celebrated as "International Day of Persons with Disabilities". We should not ignore or make fun of those who have some disability. If such people get the respect of the society, their confidence will go up. Then they can forget their disabilities and showcase their special capabilities.

On December 3, 1984, tens of thousands of people died in a gas leak from a factory in Bhopal. It was the biggest industrial disaster in the world. Pregnant women who inhaled the poisonous gas gave birth to disabled children. Even in the normal course of time, every now and then, a disabled child is born. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed in support of such people in leading a comfortable life like everyone else and to solicit others' understanding and cooperation.

An interesting Asteroid 'Dinkinesh'



'Dinkinesh' means 'marvellous', 'awesome' or 'amazing' in Ethiopian language. Thousands of asteroids orbit between the planets Mars and Jupiter in our solar system. In 1999, NASA scientists identified some of them with a telescope and named one as 'Dinkinesh'. It is a potato shaped rock just 790 meters in diameter. Recently, a NASA probe called 'Lucy' which was heading towards Jupiter focussed its attention on Dinkinesh on the way. And surprise! Attached to it was another small rocky satellite, 220 meters in diameter! The funny thing is that it is orbiting its 'mother' Dinkinesh almost touching its surface. Not like our Chandamama (Moon) which orbits the earth at a distance, but clinging to it! Imagine what would have happened if our moon was clinging to our earth!

The image of this pair of Dinkinesh asteroids was sent to Earth from 480 million kilometres away from us on November 7th, this year by the 'Lucy' spacecraft.

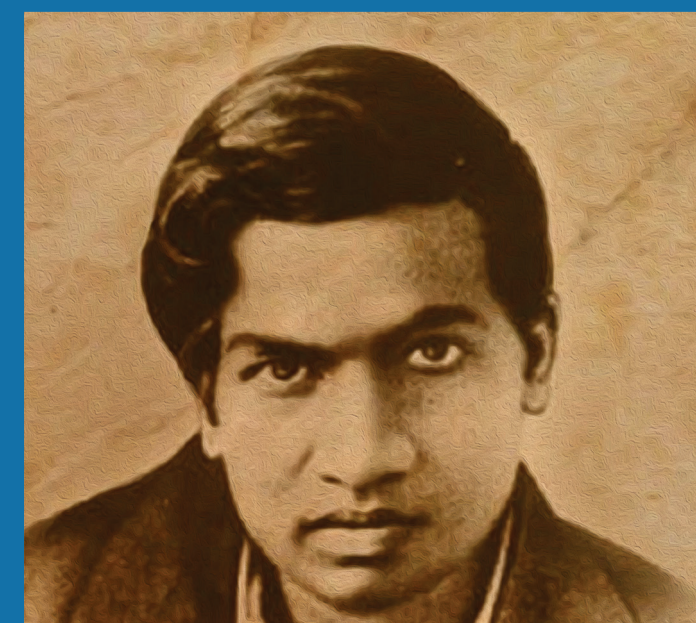
8	1	6
3	5	7
4	9	2

Magic square

You may already know what a magic square is. Here is an example. Sum of all the numbers on any row or column adds up to 15. Sum of numbers on its diagonals too comes to 15. You also can create magic squares along the same pattern which add up to a different number. With a bit more effort, it is possible to create magic squares of four, five, six, or more rows and columns. Sudoku puzzles that you see in the newspapers have something similar, but their diagonals do not add up to the same number.

India's iconic mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan (born in 1887) used to create magic squares when young. From there, his mathematical talent blossomed. Although he did not have a formal degree then, England's Cambridge University invited him from Madras (as it was called then) and helped him in his further studies. In a short span of just four years, he joined the ranks of the greatest mathematicians in the world. Ramanujan returned home due to illness and unfortunately died at a young age of 32.

We celebrate his birthday on December 22 as "National Mathematics Day" in our country.



Poor Pangolin

If anyone is found wearing a tiger-claw amulet, they may end up in a prison. Do you know why? Using parts of wild animals is against the wild-life conservation acts.

Poor Pangolin (anteater), look at its misfortune. It doesn't bother anyone. At night, this mammal goes to the anthills (built by ants or termites) for food. It thrusts its tongue that is as long as its body itself in to the anthills, pulls the insects out

and swallows them. If it has cubs, it carries them on its tail and roams around in the bushes. When a tiger or a leopard come to hunt it, it lies down curled up in to a ball protected by its hard scale. No animal can penetrate its shell. If they try to poke more, pangolin squirts foul-smelling urine that drives the predators away! Nature has provided the pangolin so much protection. But all this fails against man wielding crowbars and daggers. Man kills the pangolin, tears off the scales and sells them. There is a superstitious belief among the Chinese that if the scale is ground to a paste and consumed, it will cure any disease. That is not true. Scientists keep clarifying that "there is no special medicinal property in the scale; it just contains keratin, same as our nails and hair". But blind faith continues. Hapless pangolins are on the verge of extinction.

These hard scales are nature's protection for this animal against predators. But man is hunting them down for this very protective scale.

'God has protected them against fire, ice, earthquake, predators and diseases but alas, he could not protect them against foolish men', said the famous American naturalist John Muir. How true!

Appearances can be deceptive

We do not see things as they are but as we are, goes a saying. Eyewitness testimony can frequently be wrong. It is always better to verify what you see. Just look at the picture given here. A vertical bar stands on a horizontal bar. Which bar do you think is longer? The vertical bar? Measure and see for yourself. Both the bars are equal in length!



Winter dress for Spathodea

This African Tulip tree is a vibrant spectacle. Nowadays, its crown bursts with palm-sized, fiery-orange flowers, resembling a blaze against the sky. Clusters of these blossoms wrap the tree, attracting curious birds and butterflies. With its majestic stature and a burst of color, it paints a mesmerizing sight, adding a touch of tropical magic to our landscape. Its scientific name is *Spathodea campanulata*.

This is not a native Indian tree species but imported from Africa just to add beauty to the urban landscape. Because it is not found in our village forests we don't have general Kannada word for it, although they call it 'Gudde Kai' tree. Because it squirts water when you press the centre of the flower, it is also known as a tree of urinating flowers. But there are some curious scientific facts here. How and why does this flower accumulate water when there is no rain? Yes, it collects water from the moisture in the air. And surprisingly, it is not just nectar, this plain water too attracts birds and insects.

Let's learn to recognize the tree (spathodia) while it is in full bloom. You can also find out how to propagate it, through seeds or stem.

There is a saying: "The eyes cannot see what the mind does not know". This tree could be a perfect example for it. Now that you know the importance of this tree, you will see this beautiful bloom everywhere.

वृक्षो रक्षति रक्षितः, सृष्टिरेषा वनेचराः।
 प्राणिनो यस्य दुर्बुद्धिः, स सर्वप्राणभक्षणः॥

Vruksho Rakshati Rakshitah, Srushtiresha Vanecharah.
 Prāṇino Yasya Durbuddhih, Sa Sarvapraṇabhakṣaṇah.

The trees protect those who protect them;
 those who harm the forests lack wisdom and destroy the very life force.



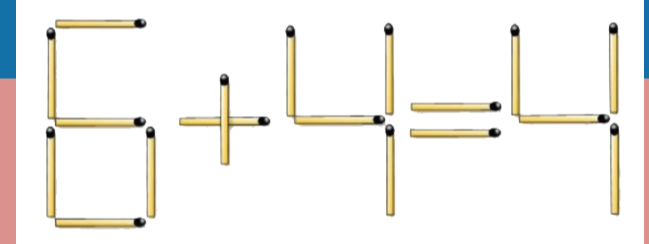
Pristine mountains or garbage dumps?

Our Himalayas are known as the abode of Gods – "Devabhumi". Did you know that we have converted in to a garbage dump? Mountains in many countries across the world are suffering the same fate due to overcrowding and people leaving their trash behind. Every year, 11th December is celebrated as 'World Mountain Day', especially in schools and colleges. Mountains are so important in an ecosystem. All rivers originate in the mountains. In many places, thick forests and medicinal herbs are found high on the hills. Rare flora and fauna are also found there. It is imperative that destructive activities like garbage dumping, blasting and mining for minerals and granite using dynamite, hunting, etc. be stopped to preserve the ecosystem.

On the 'World Mountain Day', plan some interesting activities in your school. Write an essay, read a poem, collect pictures of hills, mountains, recite the story of Hanuman. If possible, go on a trip to a nearby hill and observe the special landscape there.

Quiz

Here's an equation that is obviously wrong! It is depicted using 18 match sticks. Here is a simple challenge for you – correct this equation by moving just one stick.



(This can be done in three different ways).
 Try and see...

Remember the quiz question from our last edition in November?

A few parrots came to a corn field. One parrot sat on each cob. One parrot remained without a cob to sit on. The parrots thought this was unfair. They changed their position and two parrots sat on each cob. Then they saw that one cob was left with no parrot on it. So how many parrots were there and how many cobs?

Answer: 4 parrots, 3 cobs

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