

MARCH, 2026

THE

# LIGHTER

MORE THAN JUST STORIES

SIDE

World  
Wildlife  
Day

## NERD ZONE

HIDOKU PUZZLES,  
RIDDLES AND MORE!



## SPORTS

INDIA WINS T20 MEN  
WORLD CUP

## COMIC STORY

LAWNCHAIR LARRY:  
THE FLYING MAN



## TEEN TRIUMPH



13-YR OLD BRAVES THE  
OCEAN

FOR

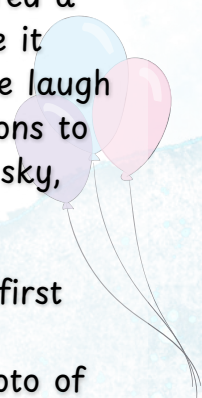
7 to 10 year olds

# Hello!

February and March have been exciting months. India played some wonderful cricket in the T20 Men's World Cup. RCB won the Women's IPL. My YouTube shorts feed was filled with clips from the Winter Olympics. Watching people ski and skate has inspired me to plan a winter vacation - I am looking at places with lots of snow and hot chocolate.



Putting together this month's edition gave me plenty of "Today I Learned" moments. I found out that the cheetahs that came to India from Africa are thriving in our forests; that a young British scientist discovered a new species of crocodile and has decided to name it after his science teacher. The story that made me laugh the most was about a man who tied helium balloons to a lawn chair and flew thousands of feet into the sky, while munching sandwiches.



This month also brought something special - our first handwritten letter from a young reader, full of thoughtful ideas to improve **The Lighter Side**. Photo of his postcard is on Pg 15. Please keep your messages, drawings, and ideas coming.

Sit back and enjoy the March 2026 edition!

# Revati

The Lighter Side | Mar-2026

# THE LIGHTER SIDE: MAR 2026

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# A 13-YR OLD BOY VS. THE GIANT ANGRY SEA

**A true story about a kayak that broke, an ocean that roared, and a boy who bravely swam.**

Sometime in early Feb 2026, one bright Friday morning in Perth, Australia, a young mother Joanne took her kids Austin (13), Beau (12), and Grace (8) to a beach near Perth. They had paddleboards and a kayak. They were splashing around in shallow water having "a bit of fun." Then things went sideways.



The kids drifted too far. The wind got angry. They lost their oars. Suddenly, they were being pulled out to sea like someone had tied a rope to them and yanked. Joanne realized they were in big trouble.

She knew she had to get help. She could not leave the young ones alone at sea and paddle back. So she sent 13-yr old Austin on the kayak to get help. Along the way, Austin discovered that his kayak was broken. And then he lost his oar.



Meanwhile, Mum and the little kids kept drifting further away from shore. The waves got bigger. They had life jackets but no food or water. Joanne started panicking. Had she sent Austin to his death? Was anyone coming to save them?



Austin, meanwhile, was having his own adventure. He ditched the kayak. And his life jacket. Because it wasn't helping. He just started swimming with his bare hands. For two hours.

He kept himself going by singing songs and thinking happy thoughts about his friends.

Finally, after swimming 4 kilometers, his feet touched sand. He crawled onto shore. He was exhausted. He was even confused, "Is this a dream?".

Then he remembered, "My family is still out there! I have to save them!"

He found his mum's bag and phone on the beach. He called the coastal guards to rescue his family. Right after that, the little boy was exhausted beyond limits and fell unconscious on the beach.

Out at sea, Joanne was freezing in the dark, holding her kids, thinking they were done for. Then a rescue boat appeared.



Austin, in the meanwhile had been taken to a nearby hospital. When he woke up, his dad was there, but he wasn't sure if his mom and siblings were safe. Minutes passed. Then came the good news. They had been found and were being brought back! Everyone was jumping up and down with joy, next to his bed. Doctors. Police officers. Complete strangers, probably.

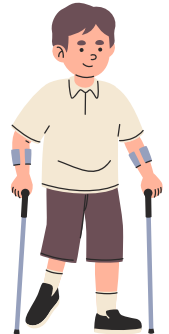
The whole family was back safe and sound. Warm blankets. Hot chocolate. Happy endings.



The police called Austin a super-hero. Austin shrugged and said, "I did what I had to do."

Sure, mate. You just swam 4 kilometers in the ocean after your kayak sank, saved your mum and siblings, and then passed out. Just an average weekday for a 13-year-old boy.

Oh, and he went back to school on crutches because his legs were sore. Priorities.



# Ever met a Radio Ham?



## WHO



Before the internet, if you wanted to talk to someone in Japan or Antarctica from your house, you had to build a radio station. A radio ham (or amateur radio operator) is someone with a license to use designated radio frequencies for non-commercial, two-way communication.

## A teenager radio-ham who saved hundreds

Tom K. Jose, a 15-year-old from Andhra Pradesh is a radio ham (got his license when he was 13). When Cyclone Hudhud hit in 2014, it destroyed phone lines in Andhra Pradesh. Tom stepped in to fill the gap in communication. He was the one passing vital messages to the government (about blocked roads and people stranded) using his radio station at home.

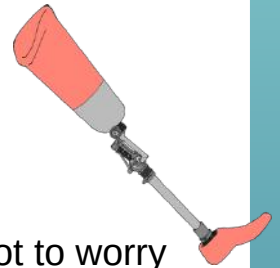
## India has over 22,000 radio hams

India has an active radio ham community. They have played heroic roles in national emergencies, such as providing the only working communication links during the 2004 Tsunami. As of 2026, there are over 22,000 licensed operators in India



# BRENDA GOT HER LEG BACK

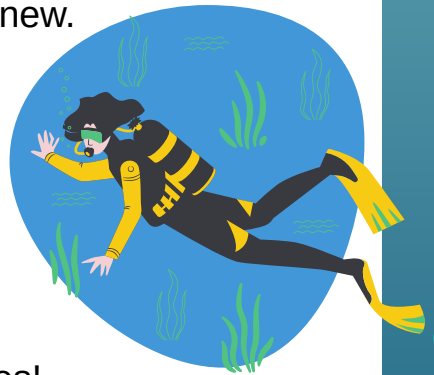
Have you ever lost something really important? Maybe a favorite toy or a shoe? Well, Brenda lost something way bigger. She lost her special leg (it is made of titanium!)



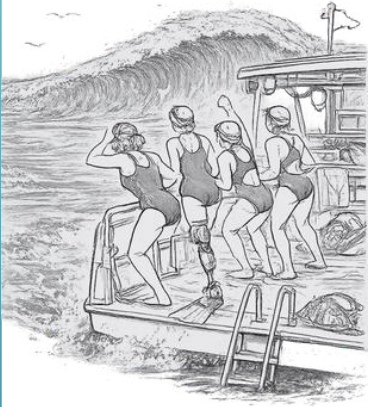
Brenda is a 69-year-old grandma from Britain. Five years ago, she lost one leg in a car accident. The doctors told her not to worry and made her a new one. This special leg is made of titanium. That's the same super-strong metal they use in rockets and airplanes!

When people recover from accidents, doctors suggest that they try something new. Brenda's doctor thought she would try new cake recipes.

Brenda decided she wanted something more challenging. She decided to go open-ocean swimming. In the sea! With waves!



She joined a local swimming group; hopped on a boat with her friends and rode into the sea. They were about to jump in when someone said, "Group photo!" So they all posed. Big smiles. Ready for adventure.



Then, a sneaky giant wave crashed into the boat. And whoosh! The wave snatched Brenda's titanium leg and swam away with it!

Her friends rushed her back to shore.

After that, they jumped into the water and searched for her leg. They could not find it anywhere. They hoped the waves would be nice and bring it back to the shore. But it was nowhere to be found.



The leg was gone. Probably on vacation.

## Inspirational

Ten months passed. In Feb 2026, a lady named Elizabeth Forbes was walking on a beach nearby. She collects seashells and fossils for a hobby. She spotted something black in the sand. It looked like an upside-down lemonade bottle. Or maybe a bomb! She poked it carefully. "Hmm," she thought. "This looks like someone's leg..."



She took a photo and put it on Facebook. The very next day, Brenda saw it on social media. It was her leg! Her long-lost titanium buddy! The leg had traveled 23 kilometers all by itself.

It must have floated in the ocean for ten months, saw some fish, probably made some friends, and finally washed up on a beach.



Brenda met Elizabeth and picked up her leg. And now she has a great story to tell.

"I didn't think I'd ever be swimming in the sea again. I'm going to be able to now, so that is brilliant."

# DID YOU KNOW?

The word "prosthetic" comes from ancient Greek words that mean "to add". Every time someone wears a prosthetic leg or arm, they are wearing an "add-on."

No two prosthetic legs or arms are the same. Every single one is custom-made just for that one person.

You might think prosthetics are a modern invention. Nope! Archaeologists found the oldest one ever in Cairo, Egypt. It was a fake big toe made of wood and leather. It was 3,000 years old! Some ancient Egyptian was walking around with a wooden toe while everyone else was busy building pyramids.

# ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

## INDIA MADE HISTORY IN THE FINALS MATCH

Team India won the 2026 T20 World Cup. They beat New Zealand. India created many records in the finals

- India won the cup for the third time (after 2007 and 2024). That's the most number of times any country has won the cup.



- India put up a monster total of 255 runs. That's the highest score ever in a T20 men's world cup finals match. History made.

- Boom Boom Bumrah: Jasprit Bumrah was on fire, taking 4 wickets. He's only the second person ever to do that in a T20 world cup final.

- Sanju Samson smashed 89 runs against New Zealand. That's the highest score anyone has ever made in a T20 World Cup final. Legend.

### FASCINATING STATS & TRIVIA ABOUT THE WORLD CUP!

The biggest sixer of the tournament travelled more than 110 metres, and it was hit by Hardik Pandya



Sanju Samson broke Virat Kohli's record for most runs for India in a single edition of the men's T20 World Cup. That too in only five innings.



The cricket ball travelled over 3 kilometres in total distance from boundaries and sixes in the finals



When Bumrah took a wicket in the final, the roar from the fans at Ahmedabad was measured at over 100 decibels.



India's win margin against New Zealand is their biggest, by runs, in the men's T20 World Cup. Their previous biggest was 93 against Namibia earlier this World Cup.



### ALSO, THE LEFT-HANDED STRANGER FROM INDIA WHO HELPED THE DUTCH TEAM

Amidst all the drama, one of the stories that caught our eye was during a practice session for the Netherlands team. It involves a local cricket hero you have probably never heard of.

When the Dutch team was practicing to face Team India, they had a problem. They were about to play India, whose lineup was packed with powerful left-handed batters. The entire Netherlands batting squad was made up of right-handed players. That meant their bowlers had no one to practice against!



Facing a lefty is totally different, and they needed help. So, they called the local cricket association in Gujarat (which was where they were practicing) and requested for a left-handed batter. They needed someone in two hours. It seemed impossible, but the local organizers got to work. They found the perfect person: Manan Hingrajia. He wasn't just ANY player; he was the captain of the Gujarat Ranji team.

## Sports

Luckily for the Dutch team, Manan was just then practicing 11 kilometers away and rushed to where they were practicing within 2 hours.

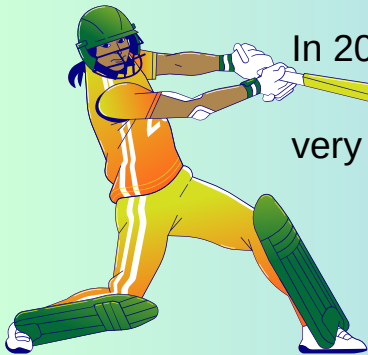
He walked into the nets, played some great shots, giving the Dutch bowlers the perfect practice session.

They got a real taste of what they would face against India's stars. Thanks to Manan, they felt ready.



Not-so-fun-fact for the Dutch: Team India still beat the Netherlands in the T20 world cup match.

*This kind of request for local talent to help an international side happens all the time, especially in cricket.*



In 2023, Pakistan went to Australia for a big cricket tournament. In the very first match, Australia smashed them.

Pakistan's coach Mohammad Hafeez, had an idea. "Can we get a practice match?" he asked.

*\*Source: Instagram*

Pakistan's team wanted to face some local players. They had one special request: make the pitch feel exactly like a real Test match.

Cricket Australia said yes. They sent some of their finest local cricketers (players who knew Australian pitches like the back of their hand. The extra bounce. The scary pace. The rock-hard wickets.)

Pakistan's batsmen stepped onto the practice pitch, ready to learn. They faced bowler after bowler, trying to figure out how to survive the Aussie conditions. It was tough, but helpful. They felt prepared.



*After all that practice, Australia still won the series against Pakistan 3–0.*

But hey, that's sports for you. Sometimes you do everything right and still lose.

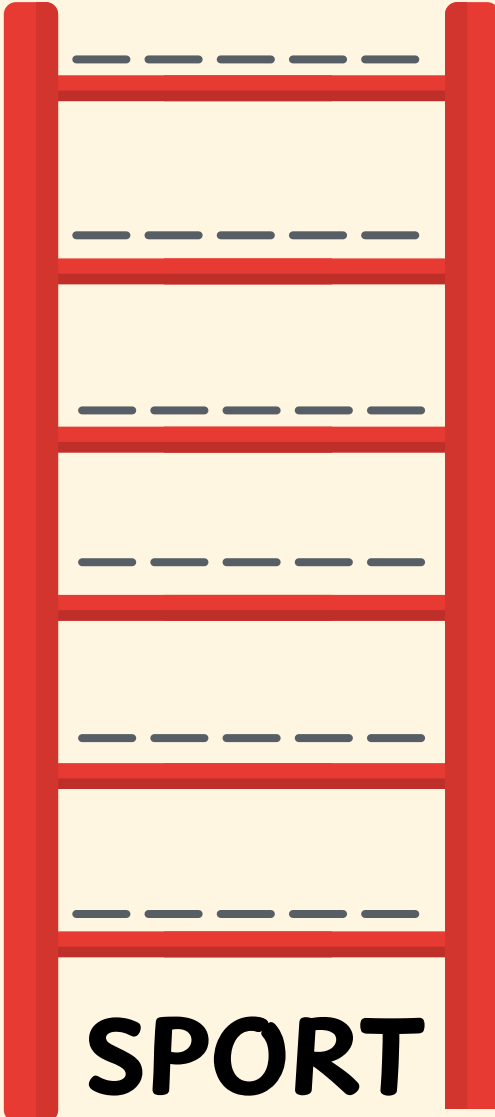


Afghanistan men's cricket team do not have a home ground in their own country, due to conflicts and war there. India has supported the team by offering them stadiums and training facilities of Dehradun, Lucknow, and Greater Noida. These are 'home-grounds' available for Afghanistan to play their matches against any international team.

# WORD LADDER

You  
GOT  
THIS!

Change only one letter at a time to make a new word for each step. Start from the bottom.



**HINT: Shelter from sunlight**

**HINT: To give part of something**

**HINT: To frighten someone**

**HINT: Points in a game**

**HINT: Land beside the sea**

**HINT: Not Tall**



**Solution:** SPORT | SHORE | SHIRT | SHORT | SCORE | SCARE | SHARE | SHADE

# The US attacks Iran

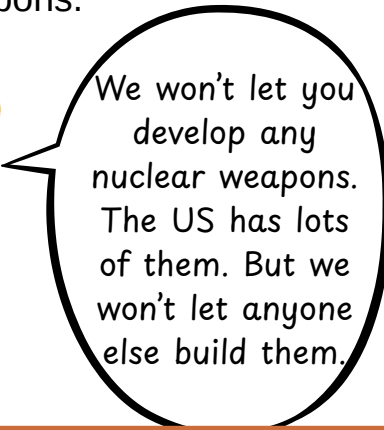
Iran is a country far, far away from the US. A long time ago, it used to be famous for the world's fanciest carpets. It was also home to brilliant scientists and mathematicians. One of them invented algebra.



All that changed when someone found giant puddles of oil underneath Iran, 100 years ago. Britain was then a powerful country and took away most of Iran's oil. In 1979, a new leader took over Iran. He declared Iran's oil were now its own. The UK and US were furious that Iran was not giving any more of its oil for free. The US declared "No more buying anything from Iran!" Iran got poorer; still its leader spent money on building powerful weapons.



US telling Iran





That's not fair. At the moment, we are a bit weak, so let's negotiate.

President Trump realised that Iran was weak. It gave him an opportunity. So, bright and early Saturday morning (Feb 28, 2026), the US and Israel decided to kick off a "joint military strike" on Iran. Bombs were dropped all over Iran.

**Feb. 28:** Tehran (the capital of Iran) woke up to some very loud bangs.



A little later, Iran responded:



Oh yeah? Well, we are hitting YOUR military bases!

There were explosions in countries nearby that had US military bases: Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Saudi, Kuwait, Jordan.

Iran, Israel and their neighbouring countries declared "Our skies are now too dangerous for commercial jets to fly. Be careful."

**March 1:** Iran's top leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed during one of the missile strikes.



This regime will soon learn that no one should challenge the strength and might of the United States Armed Forces.

**President Trump**

In other words: Don't mess with us, we are the biggest bullies on the block.

Why are two nations, separated by half a globe, locked in open war? I have unwrapped the backstory of Iran and the US, in an online post, filled with comic panels.

**Scan this QR code to read for free.**



# ANCIENT NEW REPTILE *Discovered*

A fossil found in England had the worst luck: it was dug up many years ago and then ignored. It sat on a museum shelf, gathering dust for many years.



Then a clever young scientist named Ewan came along. He was doing a big science research on ancient fossils under a program in college (called a PhD). He looked at this fossil with a special microscope. He dusted it off. He did all the cool scientist stuff.

Then, he made a HUGE discovery. The fossil was not from any known animal. It was from a kind of crocodile that nobody had yet heard about. This crocodile had legs that let it move super fast, zipping after its prey. It was not the sluggish, lazy kind we know today.

**Ewan called it a "reptilian greyhound."**

When you discover a new animal, you get to name it.

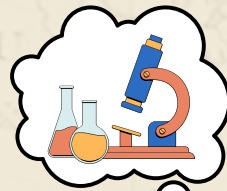
It was Ewan's turn to name this newly discovered crocodile species. He picked a Latin name: *Galahadosuchus jonesi*.

The first part (*Galahadosuchus*) came from stories he had read as a child (Galahad was one of the warriors of King Arthur in ancient England).

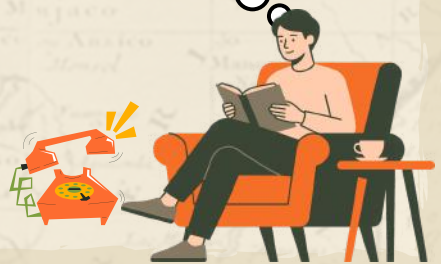


When it came to choosing the second part of the name, he decided to honour his favourite science teacher, Mr. Jones!

One afternoon in February 2026, Ewan video-called Mr. Jones to share the news.



It was 3 pm. School was over. Mr. Jones was sipping tea, probably dreaming about an experiment.





"Hello, Mr. Jones!" Ewan beamed.  
"Remember me? Your old student? I recently found a new crocodile fossil. And I am naming it after you."

Mr. Jones nearly choked on his tea!  
"Good God, what an honour!"  
Mr. Jones couldn't believe it.



Ewan explained, "You were the best teacher I had. You loved science, and you inspired me."

Ewan's parents were the other two contenders for the crocodile's name. They didn't mind losing though, not to a teacher who made science cool for generations of students.



Fossil, that led to the discovery\*

\*Bodenham, E. H.; Spiekman, S. N. F.; Maidment, S. C. R.; Upchurch, P.; Mannion, P. D., CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

# Trivia about *Galahadosuchus jonesi*

This speedy crocodile lived a mind-boggling 215 million years ago. That was even before the dinosaurs! Imagine a world with no T-rex yet, but with this lizard zooming around.



Live reconstruction of *Galahadosuchus jonesi*\*

This means that the earliest crocodiles did not lurk in muddy swamps. They sprinted on land like cheetahs. Whoa!



\*Matt Dempsey, CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

# Word Search



S C I E N T I S T M Y L M R A  
 O D R P B I T O S I P O Z V R  
 G Q Z O T M A L S L G M M F T  
 T O E U C N I F C L L U X P H  
 N X B R Y O S O M I W S E V U  
 V S X O P A D W B O T E X X R  
 J T D J C R E I A N F U P L I  
 F V X R P I V F L M Z M E I B  
 R M V T N Z W A D E P G R Z Q  
 K Y E B Y O L F F K B I I A A  
 G B R S H F W L O A L I M R B  
 T E A C H E R L R S S N E D M  
 K D E W W D C V A N S K N P G  
 R E P T I L E O B N X I T I W  
 W D D I S C O V E R Y R L Z Q



1. Reptile
2. discovery
3. museum
4. fossil
5. scientist
6. crocodile
7. teacher
8. Arthur
9. experiment
10. million
11. swamp
12. lizard

# *Flying into the sky sitting on a chair*



13-year old Larry Walters had a big dream 'to fly'. But there was a problem. His eyesight was poor, so joining the US Air Force was not possible. Still, Larry did not give up.

Years later, while he was working as a truck driver, he came up with a plan.

He was going to tie helium balloons to a lawn chair. He would sit in the chair, float up gently by cutting the ropes tying the balloons to the ground. He would reach ~300 feet, munch sandwiches and enjoy the view. When he was ready to come down, he was to pop the balloons one by one with a pellet gun.

Brilliant, right? What could possibly go wrong?

## **The preparation began**

Larry and his friends pretended to be from an advertising company and walked upto a store and bought 42 weather balloons.



# World Records

Their mission control was in a friend's backyard. The ground crew consisted entirely of Larry and his trusty buddies.



Are you sure about this?

Never been more sure!



Please buy a parachute.  
Learn to use it.

Fine, fine! If it makes you happy.



Sandwiches? Check.  
Pellet gun? Check.  
2-way radio? Check.  
Let's do this!



You are going up too fast and too high! COME DOWN now before it is too late!

No way. After all this effort, I am not coming down this quickly!

Friends untie the ropes. The chair SHOOTs up like a rocket.



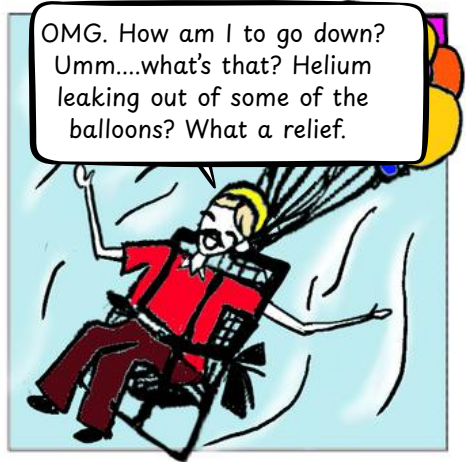


# World Records

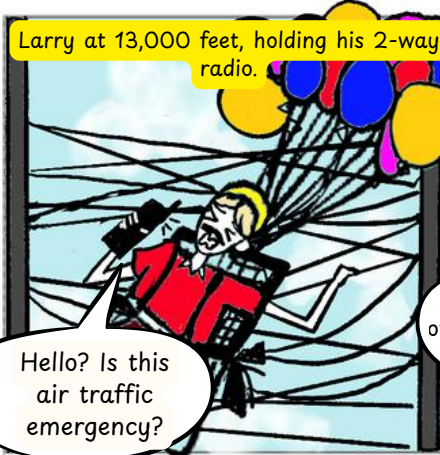
A sudden gust of wind blows and the pellet gun slips from his lap.



OMG. How am I to go down? Umm....what's that? Helium leaking out of some of the balloons? What a relief.



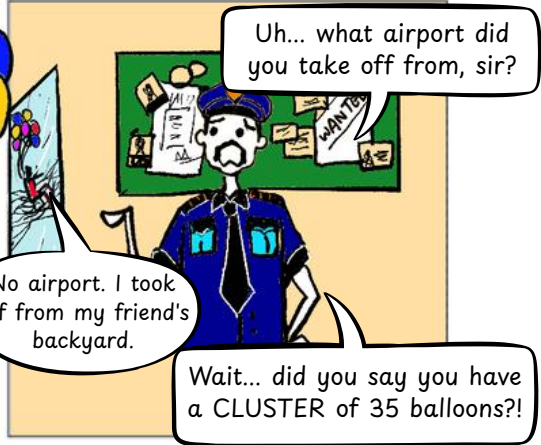
Larry at 13,000 feet, holding his 2-way radio.



Uh... what airport did you take off from, sir?

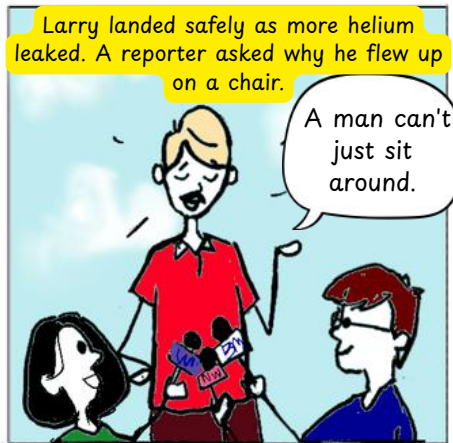
No airport. I took off from my friend's backyard.

Wait... did you say you have a CLUSTER of 35 balloons?!



Larry landed safely as more helium leaked. A reporter asked why he flew up on a chair.

A man can't just sit around.



# Fun Facts



Larry Walters

After his flight, newspapers around the world gave him the famous nickname of "Lawnchair Larry" ..

Police fined him for flying a 'non-airworthy aircraft'.

He named his flying machine - Inspiration I

His famous lawn chair is now in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

He is in the record books for the highest altitude reached by a chair attached to balloons

He inspired a 2003 film called 'Danny Deckchair', and Pixar's 2009 movie 'Up'.



# BOOK OF THE MONTH

## *A Book of maps for you*

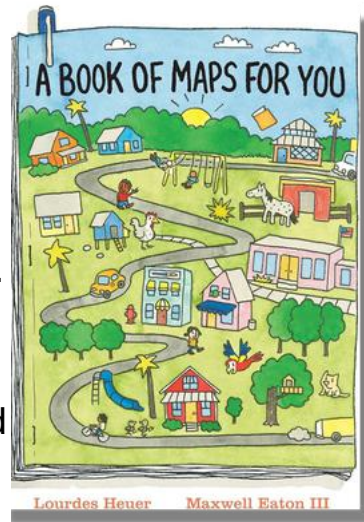
*By Lourdes Heuer,*

*Illustrated by Maxwell Eaton III*

A man who draws maps lives in a house. Before he moves to another house, he creates something awesome for the kid who is moving in to the same house, next. He leaves hand-drawn maps of the neighbourhood. Every playground. Secret spots where the child could read books quietly.

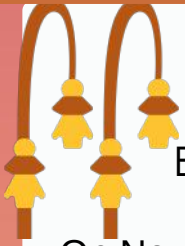
Everyone says "be excited!" when you move to a new house. But children do miss their old houses. The squeaky pipes. The funny taps. The faces they know.

This book is about that. It says it is okay to miss an old home. And a new home might be good too.



This book honours the homes we leave behind AND the ones waiting for us. The illustrations are a delight.

# NYEPI



Balinese New Year (March 19, 2026)

On New Year's Day in Bali, everyone believes evil ghosts fly down looking for trouble. They love loud noises and bright lights. So what do the Balinese people do to ward away these spirits? Absolute silence. No lights.



The day before Nyepi (new year), the Balinese hold huge parades with giant, scary puppets called ogoh-ogoh to attract all the demons. Then, on Nyepi itself, everyone goes quiet. No lights, no work and no noise.

The locals believe that when the spirits fly over, they look down and think, "*Whoa, this island is empty and boring.*" They fly away, looking for trouble somewhere else.



A silent but powerful trick!

# SAY WHAT?!

Want to add some spice to the way you speak? Toss in this phrase in your speech.

## **BREAK A LEG**

**Meaning: Wish you good luck**

**How it all started:** People in the acting and theatre business can be superstitious. They think that if you say "good luck" out loud, it might bring bad luck!

So they started making bad wishes like "break a leg." They believed that this would trick the theater ghosts into giving them a really, really great show.

There could be another reason for this saying. When actors do a great job in a theater performance, the audience cheers them and the actors would keep coming back on stage to take a bow. And when you take a bow, you have to bend your knee, or "break" your leg line.

So, when you tell an actor to "break a leg," you are really wishing that they are so fantastic that they get to come out and bow again and again.

# DOODLING helps you Focus



*Roopa Prabhu*

Artist by hobby

Brand Head Titan, by profession

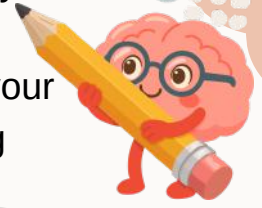
*Expert's Corner*

Art isn't about technique. It's about listening to your brain, especially when it's screaming "I CAN'T DO THIS RIGHT NOW."

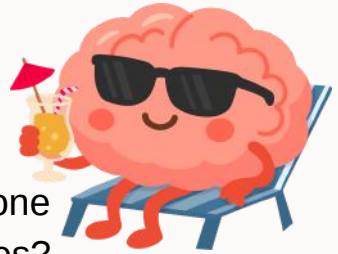


When you are sitting in class, bored out of your mind, sometimes you start doodling.

That is *NOT* you being distracted. That is your brain calming itself and retaining the boring information.



Ever drawn the same thing over and over? That spiral? That cube? That one character you've drawn a million times? That is therapy. Your brain is relaxing.



In 2009, a scientist Jackie Andrade conducted an experiment: she asked 40 people to listen to a boring phone message. Some doodled while listening, some didn't. Later, a pop quiz happened! When both groups were asked to recall details, those that doodled were better. They recalled ~30% more information!

*This study was published in the Harvard Medical School journal in 2016.*

Maybe your teachers  
don't know about this.  
But now YOU do.



As an artist who also navigates the demands of a corporate career, I have come to understand that creativity cannot be forced. Artistic expression is fluid and deeply connected to our state of mind. That's why I allow my *EMOTIONS* to guide my choice of medium.

When I seek calmness and mental clarity, I turn to sketching or doodling. It works like meditation, for me.



When I feel happy and want to create something aesthetically pleasing, watercolours is my choice.

When I feel like doing something challenging and more textured, I immerse myself in acrylics or oils.



You can see Roopa's art work on her Instagram page @ roopay\_arts (scan this QR code, it will take you there)



# MIND TWISTERS

QUESTION 1

SOME MONTHS HAVE  
30 DAYS, SOME HAVE  
31.  
HOW MANY MONTHS  
HAVE 28 DAYS?

QUESTION 2

I HAVE CITIES BUT NO  
HOUSES, RIVERS BUT  
NO WATER, AND  
ROADS BUT NO CARS.  
WHAT AM I?

QUESTION 3

IF YOU'RE RUNNING A  
RACE AND YOU PASS  
THE PERSON IN  
SECOND PLACE, WHAT  
PLACE ARE YOU IN?

QUESTION 4

WHAT HAS HANDS BUT  
CAN'T CLAP?

QUESTION 5

A FARMER HAS 10  
COWS. ALL BUT 7 RUN  
AWAY.  
HOW MANY COWS ARE  
LEFT?

QUESTION 6

WHAT GETS WETTER  
THE MORE IT DRIES?

Answers | Towel | Seven | Clock | Second | Map | 12 months

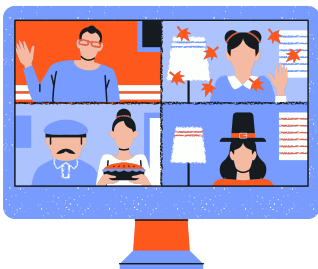
# EUROPE VS. BIG TECH

## THE DIGITAL BREAKUP

Starting soon, French government officials cannot use Google Meet, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams for their video calls. All these are owned by US companies.

France is worried about security. They are worried that American tech companies might be peeking into France's data and controlling it.

To replace Google Meet etc. France has built its own video app called Visio. This app is run by a French company that follows France's rules regarding data handling.



Will it work as smoothly as Zoom? Nobody knows yet. But France is taking the first step to protect itself.

## WHY DID FRANCE GET WARY

It all started after the war in Gaza (Palestine). In Europe, there is an international group of judges who look at crimes committed by various countries and leaders. This group is called the International Criminal Court.

In Nov 2024, these judges declared that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had committed war crimes (i.e. starve people in Gaza by not letting any food enter the country).

The U.S. President Trump got angry seeing this. *You see, Israel and the US are good friends.* President Trump declared that the judges of this court were not permitted to come to the US. Ever. Neither could the lawyer who argued against Israel. *The lawyer Karim Khan is a British national.*



In 2025, Karim Khan's email address was canceled by Microsoft. Poof! Gone.



Khan lost all his old data. *Imagine losing all your school work overnight.*



That scared Europe. Microsoft deleted an important person's email just because politics said so. What was to stop them from deleting or locking European government's data, if an American President got angry with them!

*"Technology is not neutral. Tech companies have social and political interests."*

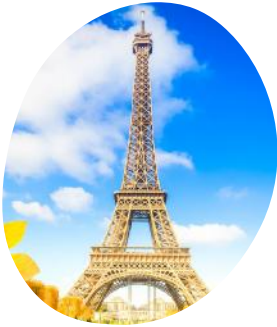
Jathan Sadowski, a computer scientist



**Remember:** When we use ANY app, we should be ready for that app to use or misuse our data.

# Where in the WORLD

Travel the world with your eyes and see how many famous places you can recognise!



.....



.....



.....



.....

Answers Eiffel Tower (France) | Machu Picchu (Peru) | Mt. Fuji (Japan) | Leaning Tower of Pisa (Italy)

# MAKE YOUR OWN BUTTERFLY MUD-STATION



Did you know that butterflies require more than just nectar to thrive? To survive and reproduce, these insects seek out "puddling" spots, where they can extract essential minerals from damp earth.

Here is how you can construct a 'puddling spot' for butterflies in your neighbourhood.

## Steps

1. Grab a shallow bowl or an old plastic lid.
2. Mix together some sand, a little bit of dirt, and a pinch of salt.
3. Pour in water and stir it until you have a sloppy, muddy mess.
4. Place a bunch of flat rocks or smooth glass pebbles sticking up out of the mud. These rocks are like landing pads that keep the butterflies' wings dry while they drink the salty water.
5. Put your masterpiece in the garden and wait for the magic to happen. If you see a whole bunch of butterflies having a party, you did it right!



# A Cheetah Comeback Story

A female cheetah named 'Gamini' recently gave birth to three cubs; another cheetah mum 'Jwala' gave birth to five cubs; both inside Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park. This is not a simple 'yay' birth announcement of new, spotted babies. Peel back the layers. You will discover that it is a landmark event in wildlife conservation in the world.

For a long time, the cheetah has been absent from India's forests. In fact, the very last one was shot in 1948 by a maharaja.



Sigh! The cheetah now exists only in old photographs and history books!



50 years ago, Indian forest officials wanted to reintroduce the cheetah. They found that the Asiatic cheetah (the same species found in India earlier) still survived in Iran. They asked Iran if they would be willing to send Asiatic cheetahs to India. Iran said 'yes' and requested India to share its famous Asiatic lions, in exchange.

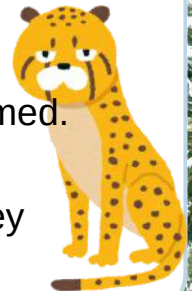


*Indian Diplomat*

**A lion for a cheetah.  
Seems a fair trade. We get  
speed, they get majesty. A  
triumph of diplomacy!**

It was a clever idea, but politics got in the way. The Shah of Iran fell from power, the Iranian Revolution happened, and the deal fell apart.

In the early 2000s, Iran's government was more stable. The cheetah-for-lion talks resumed. But sadly, Iran's cheetah numbers had plummeted to ~50, a critically low figure. They were hardly in a position to share.



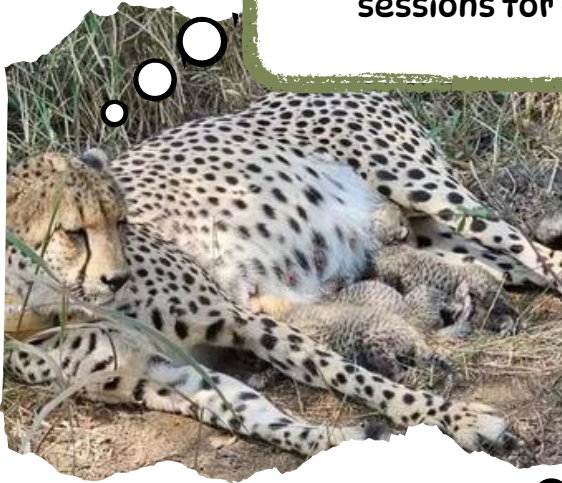
So India shifted its focus to the African cheetah. They first requested Namibia for a few cheetahs. Indian officials promised Namibians that the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh was a perfectly good place for the African cheetahs to live happily.



In July 2022, India signed a deal with Namibia. Just two months later, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, the first batch of eight cheetahs were released into Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh. A second batch of twelve arrived from South Africa in February 2023.

Gamini's three cubs and Jwala's five cubs born on the third anniversary of that historic arrival, are proof positive that the experiment is working. It shows that African cheetahs can not only live in India but can thrive, hunt, and successfully reproduce in our forests.

**I was told 'Go to India' and help repopulate the species. Nobody mentioned the 3 a.m. feeding sessions for my cubs!**



*Gamini the cheetah with her cubs.\**

**Cheetahs in India: 53**

**Credibility of Project Cheetah: significantly strengthened.**

**My moustache: immaculate.**



Photo Source: X

## Wildlife

As of early March 2026, the total cheetah population in India has reached a remarkable **53**. All of them are tracked with GPS collars, allowing scientists to study their every move, their hunting techniques, and how they adapt to their new home.

Most recently, nine more cheetahs arrived from Botswana on 28-Feb-2026. The newly arrived cheetahs are in a month long quarantine in Kuno National Park.

We celebrated the United Nations World Wildlife Day on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and it feels like the perfect time to revisit the amazing story of Saroj Raj Choudhury - the brave forest officer who once rescued a tigress cub and ended up raising her as part of his own household.

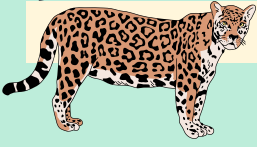
Curious about how a man and a tigress became family? Scan the QR code and dive into the story!



[thecronica.substack.com/p/man-and-tigress-saroj-raj-and-khairi](https://thecronica.substack.com/p/man-and-tigress-saroj-raj-and-khairi)

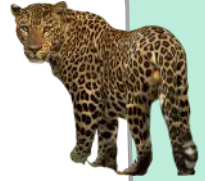


# RUN FOR THE PUNS



Paws-itively Cheetah-tastic

If you see a cheetah running  
in the jungle, what should  
you do?



**Run fast, because you just spotted it!**

Why don't cheetahs wear watches?

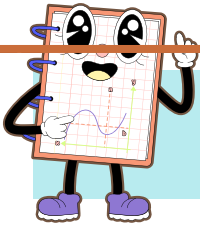


**Because they're always running late!**

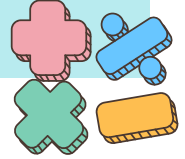
What do you call a cheetah  
that loves to play hide-and-  
seek?



**An a-meow-zing player**



# Hidoku Puzzle



Instructions (Read Carefully!)

- Fill in the missing numbers from 1 to 25.
- Every number must connect to the next number.
  - 1 must touch 2, 2 must touch 3, 3 must touch 4, and so on...
- Numbers can touch sideways, up, down, or diagonally.
- Each number can be used only once.

Think of it like making a number path!

|  |          |           |           |           |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  |          |           |           |           |
|  |          | <b>14</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>1</b>  |
|  | <b>8</b> | <b>5</b>  |           |           |
|  |          | <b>7</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>25</b> |
|  |          |           |           |           |

Turn the page around for the **Answer**

|    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 19 | 6  | 7  | 3  | 25 |
| 18 | 8  | 5  | 4  | 2  |
| 17 | 9  | 14 | 13 | 1  |
| 16 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 |

# ASK ME ANYTHING..



**I like your stories in the Lighter Side. I also like reading about fighter planes. Could you write about them please.**

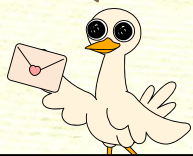
**- Parth Garude, 5-yr old, Mumbai**

Fighter planes are fascinating. Here's a true story about one pilot who flew a fighter plane during the Kargil War.

Some Pakistani soldiers had climbed up Tiger Hill, a hill-top in Kashmir, and the Indian Air Force had to destroy this camp.

On June 24, 1999, Wing Commander Raghunath Nambiar took off in his Mirage 2000 fighter plane carrying a special laser-guided bomb. First, he flew his jet super high, to 30,000 feet, to avoid being hit by enemy missiles. He waited till the windspeeds were right, and then pointed his plane down and dove super-fast towards the mountain top of Tiger Hill. At the exact right moment, he released the bomb. Immediately after, he pulled his Mirage into a sharp, twisting turn to escape from enemy fire. Through a camera in his plane, he watched the bomb fall. It felt like forever, but in under 30 seconds, the screen showed a flash. The bomb had hit the enemy camp perfectly. He was later awarded a Param Vishisht Seva Medal.

# Letters from our Little Readers



21.2.2026  
 To Sangeetha Auntie  
 I'll start off by saying that the Dec, Jan and Feb issues were fantastic. In the December issue I loved the 'Spot the Fake' news and the India Sports. Please also continue and finish the 'Africa: Why should Zebras protest' and Quiz time was really good.  
 In Jan, I loved the mythology and the bear comic very much.  
 Please bring similar things in the next edition. The pictures were also really good in all editions.  
 In Feb, I liked the fact that men wore ~~Red~~ ~~hats~~ ~~below~~ ~~women~~. If you could ~~keep~~ ~~on~~ ~~publishing~~ ~~fun~~ ~~facts~~ ~~like~~ ~~that~~.

It would be great great.  
 I have some suggestions.  
 Some people (not me) like building things and I think it would be better if you say like "Make a bird bath, it will save the environment" and things of that ilk.  
 2. Add personality quizzes like what monster are you!  
 Love these!  
 3. Remove Ram & Ravana. The common man does not like being told how to live his life. Instead, make stories with morals. Not better.  
 Sincerely Vishnu  
 (Vishnu)



-Vishnu (10-yr old from Chennai)



That story you wrote about a 11-year old boy who invented a new toy? That was cool. Did he really set up his own company? Wow! I am going to try and invent something. Like a pen that automatically writes my homework.



-Nandini Madhu (10-yr old from San Francisco)



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I found the science story in the January edition on 'Horses can smell fear' is so cool! If a horse smells fear on me, can it still be my friend or will it just run away laughing?

Kartikeya Rao (11-year old, Vizag)

We had a great time researching that story on 'How horses can smell fear.' Glad you enjoyed reading it. But don't worry, they won't run away laughing if they smell fear. They are more likely to give you a gentle nudge as if to say, "It's okay, I get scared of the vacuum cleaner too."

-Lighter Side

That story you wrote about Adidas and Puma was fun. Have the two families made-up now?

Vani.G (14-year old, Madurai)


Today neither family runs the companies anymore. They sold them off like that old bike you outgrew. The famous "feud" is mostly just a family rumor for the younger kids, something to roll their eyes about at reunions. That said, it is possible that some of the older Dassler relatives still don't hang out (but honestly, they are just stuck in old habits from when their grandparents told them, "No, you can't go to that birthday party. They are a Puma.")

-Lighter Side

# JASPRIT BUMRAH

*The GOAT, the Magician*





*I loved finding out which Chinese animal my birth year corresponds to, from your January edition. Also T-rex could swim? Really?*

*I can't wait to read more stories.*


*- Vihana Arora (9-year old, Frankfurt)*

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*I loved the Great Indoors Bear Story - it was my favourite part!*

*-Kyra Bhattacharyya, Mumbai  
(10-year old)*

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Lighter Side is a monthly publication dedicated to making general knowledge and science accessible and engaging for young minds. Our child-friendly content includes a podcast and a newsletter that cover a wide range of topics. We also help children become better writers through our Writing Courses. Scan the QR codes below to find out more. You can also reach us at [hello@wsnt.in](mailto:hello@wsnt.in)



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