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POST

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ATTAR

FRAGRANCED
MEMORIES
IN A BOTTLE



FLOWER STAR POWER



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INVESTMENT IS
HEADACHE FREE

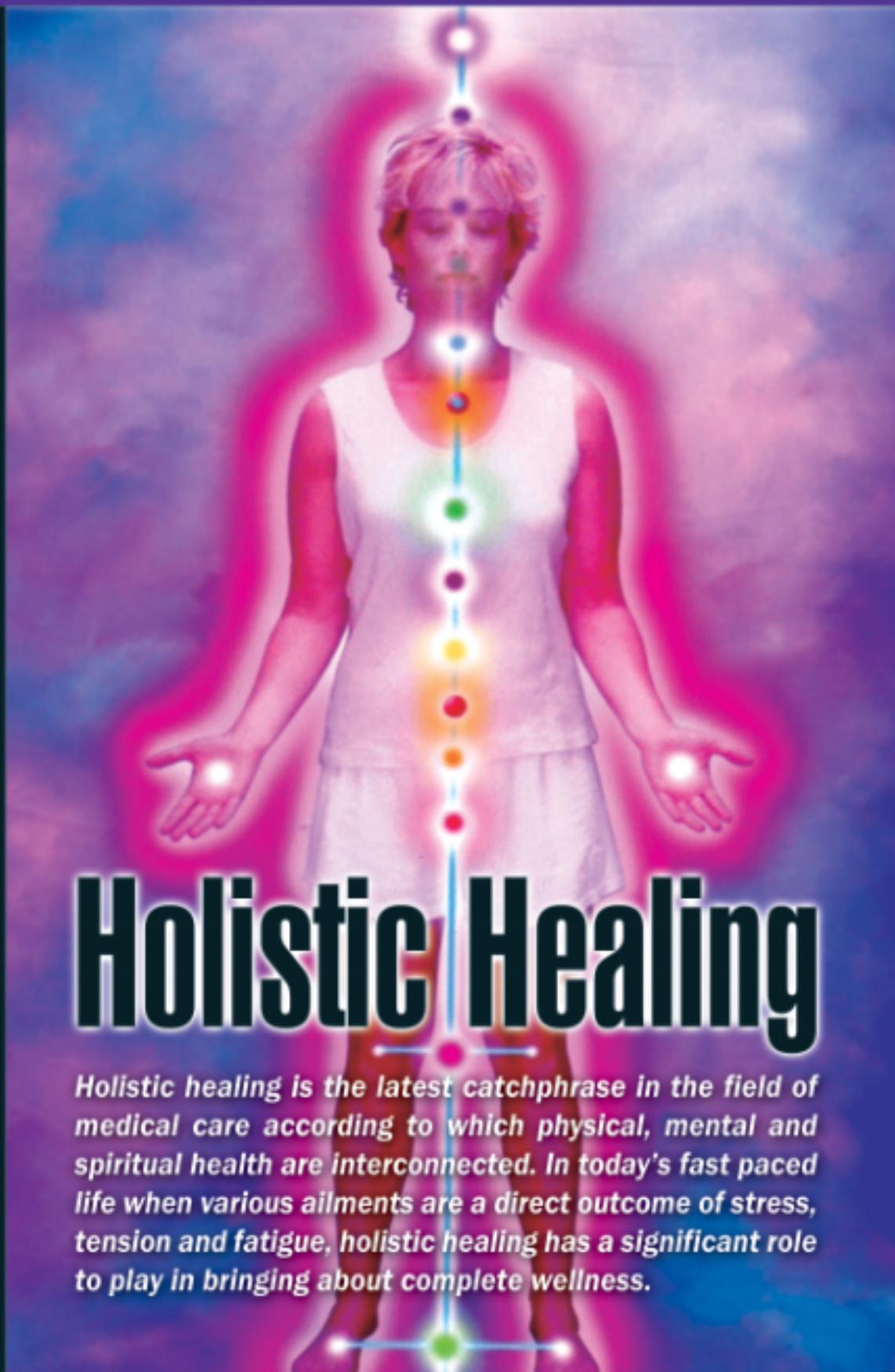


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THE DELUGE OF INFORMATION

In my email box, I have received the Annual Reports of most of the Postal Administrations from all over the world. I've also received the annual and quarterly reports of courier and logistics companies.

Each one of the organisations is in a conscious overdrive to reduce costs and increase its quality of service. The competition is on a global scale.

There is also the daily news on postal scenario which keeps one engrossed. On the 31st of January 2008, there was a news item which expressed the concern of USPS CFO H. Glen Walker that the 3 percent drop in mail volume for the first quarter in fiscal 2008 is due to the "disturbing trends" in the overall US economy.

There is also the engaging news that European MEPs have approved postal liberalisation by 2013. Full liberalisation would take place by 2011, but in the case of some countries like Greece which joined the EU later, concession is given up to 2013. The countries which have decided to postpone their liberalisation are Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The deluge of information perhaps is resultant of the process of liberalization.

J. Panda
General Manager

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Attar

Fragranced memories in a bottle



BY RACHEL ARORA

THE FABLED ATTARS ARE THE MESMERISING FRAGRANCES THAT BRING TO LIFE THE MANY TALES OF THE ANCIENT PAST. THE STYLE OF THE ITRFAROSH (ITR SELLER) COMES TO LIFE WITH HUGE HAVELIS IN THE BACKGROUND SET AMID LUSH LAWNS WITH A WAFT OF SEASONAL FRAGRANCE COMING IN THROUGH KHUS JAILS.

Fragrances are known to invoke memories. They are like a resplendent treasure that lingers on to the soul. The precious aroma escapes a crystal bottle igniting dull notes of the past over shimmering years...

The fabled *attars* are the mesmerising fragrances that bring to life the many tales of the ancient past. The style of the *itrfarosh* (itr seller) comes to life with huge *havelis* in the background set amid lush lawns with a waft of seasonal fragrance coming in through *khus* jails.

Attar is a Persian word meaning fragrance or essence. Legend tells of Arab alchemists who spent their lifetime collecting sweet-smelling flowers in a basket and devised perfumes and oils that could cure anything from an eating disorder to an ailing heart. In modern times one would call them aromatherapists as they not only collected sweet smelling flowers but also used them for medicinal and therapeutic purposes based on their properties.

Old streets of itrland take us back to rustic times when beautiful ladies bargained for a bottle of the magic potion that was regarded as a treasure. Pure *attar* is fragranced oil made from flower petals distilled in water using low heat and pressure. Some *attars* also contain exotic woods, resins and spices.

Attars are in great demand in the international market today. They are extracted from various flowers, oils and mixed with others to obtain non-alcohol based fragrances.

It is said that *attar* was first manufactured by the great Persian Hakim Ibn Sena who was regarded as the greatest physician of his time. These fragrances were used by him for medicinal purposes. *Attars* can be both individual essential oils and pure fragrances such as sandalwood, amber and patchouli. Sometimes 30-40 *attars* are blended in careful proportions to develop rich fragrances, a secret known and practiced by attar making families, passed down from generations.





ATTARS ARE IN GREAT DEMAND IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET TODAY. THEY ARE EXTRACTED FROM VARIOUS FLOWERS, OILS AND MIXED WITH OTHERS TO OBTAIN NON-ALCOHOL BASED FRAGRANCES.

Gulab (Rose)

The mystic charm of the queen of flowers is hard to ignore. As the tale goes, Mughal Queen Noorjehan's *hammamis* (royal bath keepers) forgot to replace the rose petals in her bath. The following day, when the Queen noticed a filmy coating of oil floating in her bath she asked her *hammamis* to collect it in a bottle. Thus, the mother of all itrs, *Gulab* or rose was discovered.

In Medieval times, royal cocktails were diluted using *Gulab ark* (rose water) and it was also added to cool drinks during summers. The husk of mustard or sesame was applied with rose water to cure sunburn and iron out wrinkles.

Mushk (Musk)

This was Rasullullah's favourite attar along with rose. As history narrates, a large quantity of *Mushk* was available in the *khazana* (treasury) of Imam Husain in Karbala. For men, *Jamua* (Friday) is the best day to wear *mushk*. The magnificent Queen of Yemen, Syeda Arwa Sulayhi was an expert *attar* creator. She manufactured some rare fragrances which became famous among the monarchs of Arabia.

When Mughal Emperor Humayun heard of Akbar's birth, he had nothing else to offer his *omrahs* when they congratulated him except for a bag of musk. He broke it on a china plate and distributed it among them. One of the departments under Emperor Akbar was *khushboo khana* (aroma room) where fragrances were blended with gold, silver, pearl and opium. *Mushk* was obtained from the gland of Musk deer and expeditions were sent to Kashmir, Nepal and Tibet.

Khus (Vetiver)

Delhi summers saw the arrival of *Khus* blinds in courtyards. Special *khus khana*s were made for the summers in the havelis where a fountain was placed behind the blinds. *Khus* oil was applied to these blinds



during hot afternoons while the servants sprinkled water on the blinds. Adding a few drops of *khus* to your drink in summers can keep you from getting a heat stroke.

Zafraan (Saffron)

Zafraan is one of the most popular attars globally. It is known for its rich aroma that is likely to tickle your senses. It has been used for thousands of years by alchemists and herbalists in several medicinal formulations. Think about rich Mughal dishes, mouth-watering *biryanis* and *kormas* and you will immediately think about saffron. The rich *Zaffrani pulav* has saffron as one of its prime ingredients. Zafraan strengthens the digestive system, has a calming effect on teething infants, is used for treating insomnia and is an excellent anti-depressant.

Pannadi (Patchouli)

This particular fragrance was a hot favourite of the hippies. As tradition goes, it was added to *paan* along with *gulab itr* and offered to guests to indicate the end of an evening of entertainment, a friendly visit or an official interview. This fragrance is also applied by tobacco industries in *kewam* and *zarda*.

Chameli (Jasmine)

This is one of the most romantic of all fragrances. The past speaks of love letters being touched with this fragrance and sent to the beloved. The lover had to carefully choose the *itr* in reply, a clear give away of class and taste. Ghalib, the Persian poet was famous for indulging in this practice.

Henna

Gul henna is the *itr* extracted from the flowers of this shrub. It is said that a drop of *itr henna* at night and there is no need for a quilt. This is the undisputed claim of every *itr farosh*. During *kabutarbzi*, owners rub a drop of this *itr* on the wings of the

bird which is said to keep it flying for days. Henna is also associated with women's sexuality and fertility in some way.

Ood (Frankincense)

It is said that in ancient times aromatic oils were popularly known as *saba* after the Queen of Saba, Noah's granddaughter. It is said that the Queen offered large quantities of Frankincense to King Solomon on her visit to Jerusalem. Frankincense is known for its aphrodisiac effect that exudes from the tree's resin. This *itr* was used for embalming mummies in Egypt to delay the decaying of their bodies. In contemporary times, it is one of the most expensive perfumes. The wood comes from Assam and Bangladesh and is worth lakhs of rupees.

Kewra (Panadanus)

It is one of the most amazing fragrances known for its cooling effect in summers. It makes one crave for *sewayian* or *kulfi*. This one is quite popular among food connoisseurs.

Itr Gil

This is also known as *Itr khakhi*. This fragrance smells like wet earth after the first monsoon shower. This *itr* is extracted from *peeli mitti* (yellow soil) and is an excellent choice for the monsoon months. It is useful for curing blood pressure and flow of blood from the nose due to intense heat.

Attar fragrances are known to have a unique effect over the body. The smell travels directly to the mid brain area known as the limbic system. This limbic system processes the brain and memory. In several religions across the world, *attars* and fragrances are used to evoke spirituality and freshness. Pleasant *attars* attract positive energy, light and uplift the spirit. For years they have been used for anointing and healing the mind, body and soul. ■



ARIES – The Ram

As Aries is the first sign of the zodiac, those born under this sign are born leaders with a natural positive and enthusiastic energy that allows their aura's to shimmer in a dazzling ruby shine. Lovers of life in the fast lane, Ariens possess a high physical energy level, which they need to express without any bounds. However, it's important for them to realise that there is a world of difference between 'aggression' and 'assertion', the latter being a more constructive way of releasing excessive energy. Their high ambitions and ideals often allow them to become pioneers in their respective fields, forever willing to take every challenge head-on, for Aries know no fear, and never shy away from achieving their biggest and wildest dreams.

Juniper is a perfect herb for Aries, for it is believed that carrying a sprig of Juniper protects them against accidents and attacks by animals and people (and even themselves). Often people tend to be jealous of Aries's natural energy and tend to project negative vibes upon them, so carrying juniper or burning it as incense during meditation protects them such influences and drives negativity away. It will also do them good if they keep honeysuckle plants outside their homes, as ancients believed it prevented fevers and colds (something Arians are prone to) and when fresh honeysuckle flowers are crushed and rubbed on the forehead, it acts as a soothing agent, enabling them to gain clarity. And a pillow stuffed with dried hops will enable them to sleep peacefully.



Flower Star Power

FLOWERS AND HERBS HAVE PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND. FROM THEIR MEDICINAL AND HEALING VALUE, TO THEIR MAGICAL PROPERTIES; FROM CALMING OUR NERVES, TO CURING LIVER DISORDERS, TO ELEVATING MOODS AND PROMOTING OPTIMISM, FLOWERS POSSESS POWERFUL QUALITIES THAT SEEM TO HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.

BY STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most people are aware that each flower and each colour of flower has its own meaning. It is also true that particular events traditionally demand the exchange of certain flowers. However, did you also know that each star sign has a particular type of flower that is closely associated with it? Yes, the power of astrology isn't just limited to the fate of human beings; it's also connected with the various forces and powers of nature. Each sign has certain flowers associated with it. Now these aren't known as 'lucky flowers' for the signs, but if people born under the signs incorporate the flowers into their life, either through growing them in their gardens or pots, or bathing in their infusions, burning dried herbs as incense, or even drinking teas made from them, they can surely benefit from their powers. However, it is important to study about the way a flower is used, as some can be quite poisonous if taken internally so before using them always consult your local herbalist.

TAURUS – The Bull

A sharp contrast from Aries, those born under the sign of Taurus, the second sign of the zodiac are steadfast, stable, and conventional in outlook. One of the most reliable, and charming, signs of the zodiac, they possess an ability to inspire confidence in others, and impress everyone with their genuine sincerity. Although they rarely lose their tempers, always preferring to solve matters calmly, once roused, their rage knows no bounds. This can cause them to hold on to a lot of resentment, which can truly be overcome by learning to be a little more magnanimous in life. Lovers of luxury and the 'good life', they are blessed with natural good tastes, preferring classical conventional styles to funky new-fads that are ever changing. Although known to be stubborn and lazy, Taureans need to keep a healthy balance between working hard to afford the lifestyle they desire and pursuing indulgent hobbies of leisure.

Ruled by Venus, the goddess of beauty and love, it's obvious that the flower for Taurus is the rose. A single rose in a vase can be a powerful magical tool, forever bestowing Taureans with Venusian delights. Bathing in fresh rose water should become a regular habit bringing great relief to body pains, and drinking tea made of rosebuds has been known to induce prophetic dreams. As all Taureans are protective of their homes, they should grow foxgloves in their gardens (or in potted plants if they live in



apartments) as Celtic lore claims that doing so protects the home from thieves and the 'evil eye'.

GEMINI – The Twins

Natural born multi-taskers, Gemini's are known to possess numerous talents and a mind that functions like a hurricane. Although known to be 'two-faced', Gemini's actually are adrenaline junkies that need to be excited and stimulated (intellectually) all the time. If not, they switch off and focus on something that catches their fancy. Fuelled by an endless supply of nervous tension, Gemini's need to be 'informed' about everything and anything going on around them, which might bring upon the reputation of being a gossip, which is why they love the old saying, 'don't shoot the messenger'. They work hard, and party hard, and can switch roles at the drop of a hat. When inspired and motivated, they can achieve great heights, hence it's important they nourish their versatility, yet make sure they don't fall into the category of 'Jack of all trades, Master of none'.

Ruled by Mercury, the planet of the mind, Gemini's would do well to carry a Lily of the Valley with them as they are known to



improve the

memory and sharpen the mind. When placed in a room, or worn on the lapel, these flowers cheer the heart and lift the spirits of those present.

Bergamot-Orange flowers are known to boost their energies and slipping the leaves into wallets and purses are known to attract more money. In fact, it is also believed that rubbing fresh leaves onto money before spending it enables it to return three-fold.

CANCER – The Crab

Kind and sensitive, Cancerians are known to be private, moody, and blessed with a fertile imagination. However, they don't respond well to strangers, and often put up a defensive shield (shell) for protection, often unconsciously giving out 'stay away' vibes. However, with the right amount of tact and patience, Cancerians open up, in their own time of course, and you realise what warm and caring individuals they can be. Often known to be an eternal mother, nurturing their friends and family, they go to lengths to make sure every need is taken care of. However, like the phases of the moon, their moods are changeable and infectious. When joyful, they exude a silver radiance, when sad, a bitter grey cloud blocks their auras. While they are easily hurt by the strangest things, Cancerians are often unaware about the way they can be harsh and hurtful in return. However, born with a tendency to hoard, saving odd things like old letters, papers, empty bottles, never throwing things out, they will always hold onto friends and loved ones.

Planting lilies in the garden will enable Cancerians to curb their lunar ruled moods and enable them to feel protected from all things that seem to haunt them, be it ghosts, evil spirits, the evil eye, and even unwanted visitors. Wearing fresh lilies



serves the same purpose, along with having them as potted plants in your apartment. It is believed that the first white lily of the season will bring strength to the person who finds it. If a Cancerian does, then the strength is even more powerful. Fresh gardenia blossoms when placed in sickrooms can promote healing, and perhaps even cure Cancerians of their hypochondria, and dried gardenias when sprinkled around a room can enable Cancerians to sleep peacefully and soundly.

LEO – The Lion

Gregarious and generous, forever loving the spotlight, Leo's enjoy taking centre stage, and often encourage their loved ones to get the most out of life. With a great zest for life, they put so much into it that they always get a great deal out of it. Nothing satisfies them more than to sit back at the end of the day and admire how well their tasks have been executed with flair and finesse. Excellent organisers, Leo's have a way of knowing how to get things done, and things are always done by their way. However, it's important for them to balance their egos when they are in charge of people; or else they come across as bossy and domineering, and often unbearable. It's important for them to learn how to delegate with charm and warmth, remembering that other people thrive on encouragement and praise just as they do. They thrive on drama, and display a flair for theatrics, for a Leo is the picture of extravagance and magnificence, and hence do everything 'king size'.



Ruled by the glorious and magnificent sun, Sunflowers are the natural flower of Leo. Some believe that when you cut a sunflower at sunset while making a wish, the wish shall be granted before the next sunset - provided it's not too grand and is done with an earnest and pure heart. Ancient Peruvian lore claims that anointing ones self with the juice of sunflower stems enables them to become virtuous, and gardeners who plant and tend to sunflowers are often granted with the best of luck. Marigolds are also flowers that seem to be fitting for Leo's. It is believed that picking them at noon, when the sun is at its peak, will strengthen and comfort the heart when worn or scattered around ones self. Garlands made of marigolds strung around the doorposts prevents evil from entering the house, and when scattered under the bed, prevent nightmares. When added to bath water, they help win the respect and admiration of everyone we meet. And to enable a Leo to rest and be at peace, it is best they carry chamomile or drink teas made from them.

VIRGO – The Virgin

Practical, pragmatic, with plenty of common sense, Virgo's are known to be the 'workers of the zodiac' and always enjoy working for other people in one way or the other. They have a need to always keep busy as they often find it hard to sit and listen, without worrying about numerous tasks that are yet pending. Nevertheless, they can be surprisingly good listeners and wonderful speakers (if given the opportunity). Excellent at expressing their opinions, they often tend to be a tad too critical, often over analysing everything. This is only because they are mainly critical of themselves, and criticise everything else to mask what they consider are flaws within them. Once they're able to curb the self criticism, Virgo's often carve out successful careers for themselves, often becoming 'self-made-millionaires', yet they never lose their humility and self-effacing charm. Dedicated and loyal, they always lend a helping hand when asked politely, and always make sure that every task done by them, is done as close to perfection as possible.

Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but Virgo's of both sexes should bestow that title to Lavender, for it is one flowering herb that really can be a boon to them. When burned or smouldered, lavender induces a cleansing and restful sleep, soothing Virgo's frazzled nerves. When scattered around the home, it maintains a peaceful and calm atmosphere. So powerful is this flower, that gazing upon it is known to elevate depressive feelings, and open the individual to positive energies. Taking time out to smell the lavender flower enables a Virgo to lead a long and contented life. It would do well if they slept with pillows or sachets stuffed with dried lavender.



LIBRA – The Scales

Attractive, affectionate and diplomatic, Librans are known for their natural charm and their remarkably clever knack of seeing both sides of every problem. Always willing to give their time to others, they often find themselves insecure within relationships, and in some extreme cases, end up 'buying' friendships. Most Librans find loneliness intolerable and sometimes are unable to feel psychologically whole without having someone special in their lives. However, when in the company of friends and loved ones, one can see a considerable blossoming within their personality. It's important to keep a proper balance in their lifestyle and habits, and realize that even though being a peacemaker wins them popularity, sometimes it is essential to be assertive in order to succeed. They need to realise that they can't please everyone, and not take criticisms to heart. Although they are indecisive, it's only because they don't like being rushed and prefer doing things in their own sweet time.

Like Taurus, Libra is also ruled by Venus, and so the flower Rose is its signature flower. However, in the case of Taurus, it's best to keep the roses in shades of red and pink, while for Libra's white roses shall serve the purpose. White rose petals when sprinkled



around the house enable a sense of balance and calm to prevail. And to help with making decisions, Celtic women would take 3 leaves from white rose bushes, and write an option on each. The leaf that stayed the longest was said to contain the best option to choose. Nordic lore claims that when sleeping with a daisy root beneath your pillow would bring the return of an absent lover. And when worn, the daisy brought love to one's life.

SCORPIO – The Scorpion

Intense and passionate, Scorpios come across as striking, and make memorable first impressions. With their strong and passionate belief in whatever they do, they have the ability to become great achievers, as they contain a never-ending source of physical and emotional energy that always fuels every thought, feeling, and action of theirs. Scorpios crave power more than anything, and if this goes unchecked, they can spiral downwards, developing quite a cynical and nihilistic view of life. Extremists to the core, they don't understand the meaning of the word 'moderation', as they are driven by their passions and at times can be a complete pain to the people around them. However, they devote themselves to whatever, and whomever they pursue, and never give up until they have won them over. Illogically envious of the achievements of others, they are known to be underhanded and vindictive, scheming and plotting ways to gain control of the situation. Nevertheless, Scorpios enjoy life to the fullest, living out every pleasure to the fullest, often encouraging their loved ones to join them on the thrill ride of life.

Geraniums of all types (especially red) are protective when grown in the garden or brought into the home freshly cut and placed into water. To help ease Scorpio's paranoia, legend has it that plots of red geraniums, planted near the house, told of coming visitors by their movements. The flowers are known to be magically charged to point to the direction of the approaching strangers and thus warn the home owner of their impending arrival. Rubbing fresh leaves of rose geranium upon the doorknobs and windows is



known to keep intruders away from home, allowing Scorpio all the privacy they need. Although known to possess a fowl smell, it is believed that women (especially Scorpio women) who pinned a sprig of Valerian to their clothing (next to their heart) would cause men to be bewildered by them and follow them mesmerised. When placed in a bedroom, married couples were known to curb their tempers and not fight with each other.

SAGITTARIUS – The Archer

Enthusiasm is what defines a Sagittarian as they can be so enthusiastic, that it knows no bounds, and is very infectious. Eternal students of the world, Sagittarians possess a natural wonder for the world, and love to learn about everything and anything under the sun. Known as the 'explorers of the zodiac' Sagittarians love to travel and see the world. They love to learn about various cultures and often make brilliant story-tellers of their numerous exploits. However, exaggeration and a lack of tact is something for which they are infamous. Born philosophers, they at times can take an interest in religion and spirituality, and create their own unique take upon it, living their lives to their own special code of ethics and morality. However, their enthusiasm can often lead them to take on numerous uncalculated risks that



can have severe consequences. However they tend to have lady luck on their side, forever being able to scrape through the toughest situations, due to their unabashed optimism and belief in truth and justice.

Carnations are the flowers of Sagittarius as they are known to enhance optimism. When placed in the room of a patient, carnations are known to provide a sense of pep and optimism, enabling the patient to heal quicker and be more positive about it. They were worn during Elizabethan times to prevent coming to an untimely death on the scaffold. To forever have good luck on their sides, its best to keep Dandelions buried in the northwest corner of the house. The steam made from dandelion root tea was believed to enable one to communicate with spirits, and drinking the tea was known to enhance psychic powers as well.

CAPRICORN – The Goat

Austere, and prudent, Capricorn possesses numerous noble qualities, including caution and circumspection, and a surprisingly large amount of patience and persistence, that enables them to climb the mountains of their ambitions, overcoming obstacles that prevent others from doing so. However, they often tend to be the hardest people to understand for they possess two very contrasting parts to their persona. One part forever doubts itself with a depressing inner voice that makes them doubt their value of themselves and their achievements, making them feel as though they carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. The other being a fun-loving side that enables them to be motivated to reach for the sky, and they may well go so far as to touch it. Even though they may lack confidence, they shouldn't let that hold them back, for they are able to take care of themselves as no matter what, they are able to survive under every possible circumstance. They can truly defy gravity.

For our dear Saturnine Capricorns, Pansies are a potent flower. Shaped like a heart, if they prosper and flourish in your gardens, so will love in your life. Ivy, though not a flower, is quite a powerful charm for Capricorns; for when carried by women, it brings good luck from all directions, and growing ivy along all corners of the boundary wall, protects the house against negativity and disaster. A crown of Amaranth flowers worn on the head is known to help elevate the heart from feelings of self-pity. Dried Amaranth flowers are known to mend a broken heart (something Capricorns have a hard time getting over) when carried with them.



AQUARIUS – The Water Bearer

Inventive and unique, Aquarians are the individualists of the zodiac. They enjoy being different from the crowd and value their independence and their individuality over everything. Sure, this can lead them to be quite stubborn and unpredictable; nevertheless, they possess a natural humanitarian streak and are friendly and kind to everyone. However, even though they can become everyone's friend, they never get too close, for they are

surprisingly private. In fact, they may roam around in very different circles, with natural ease and efficiency. They should learn to foster their originality and creativity as they can truly move mountains with their 'genius' ideas. However, they are also known as the 'mad scientists' of the zodiac, so they should possess a sense of grounding as well. Nevertheless, their need to have a highly distinct individual lifestyle, as well as overall independence, is likely to provide them with great motivation to break the rules of conventions and establish a new wave of thought.

Common everyday flowers do nothing for the unique Aquarian, and hence the flower for them is the Orchid. The rarer the better! Some types of orchids are used in creating visions, trance-states, and inducing psychic powers; perfect for our psychedelic Aquarians. Goldenrod is another flower that suits Aquarian, for legend has it, when held in the hand, the flower nods in the direction of hidden or lost objects. Aquarians can find it handy when they've absentmindedly forgotten where they put the keys or the remote, or even experiment with it and search for buried treasure.



PISCES – The Fish

Dreamy, whimsical, and self-sacrificing, Pisces are the born romantics of the zodiac. Even though they may not be well versed with words, they are all poets of sorts, forever romanticising every aspect of life, viewing the world from creative artistic eyes, finding inspiration in the strangest of places. They are natural counsellors and often take on the burdens of all their friends and loved ones, just so that they can see them happy. They hate being stifled and often prefer careers with no pressure and allow them to exercise their creativity without any restriction. However, they have a tendency to be vague and ambiguous and hence it's important that they are steered on a productive path with proper direction. Although, don't be fooled into thinking they are too delicate and weak and need to be protected. Pisceans can easily find their way around every situation, and surprisingly manage to gain control of it, in their own creative yet demure manner.



For these incurable romantics, the flower for them is the Lotus. A flower that's known to possess the wisdom of goddess Saraswati enables Pisceans to untap the deep wisdom of numerous centuries that is trapped within their psyches. Ancient Egyptians considered Lotus as antidotes to love spells; perhaps Pisceans can use it to help mend their broken hearts, for these fish of Neptune find it hard to live after the heart that they completely gave away is broken beyond repair. Water lilies can help them be inspired with creative energies, and make them forever believe in the eternal and undying power of true love. For to the Piscean, love is what truly makes the world go round. ■



Holistic Healing

Holistic healing is the latest catchphrase in the field of medical care according to which physical, mental and spiritual health are interconnected. For effective treatment, it is important for the patient to be in harmony with all three spheres of life. Holistic healing is a branch of alternative medicine and is gaining immense popularity in the contemporary society.

In today's fast paced life when various ailments are a direct outcome of stress, tension and fatigue, holistic healing has a significant role to play in bringing about complete wellness. Holistic concepts of wealth focus on the overall development of the body and not just its physical aspects. Emotional and spiritual well being of the body is just as important in order to bring about complete healing.

Karan Thapar, Senior manager in a spa says, "Holistic healing has various health benefits as it relaxes a person and aims at overall health benefits and not just curing any pains or diseases of the physical body. People these days hardly have time to take care of themselves and fall prey to several diseases. Lack of time and rest has ended in making man a machine. Holistic healing is not only a medical process but is a means by which all treatments should be carried out."

While traditional doctors only believe in studying the symptoms and prescribing drugs or advising surgery, holistic healing has wide and varied dimensions. Several approaches are combined to analyse the needs of an individual and enhance his health care system. The focus in this type of treatment is not on the disease but on the individual.

IN TODAY'S FAST PACED LIFE WHEN VARIOUS AILMENTS ARE A DIRECT OUTCOME OF STRESS, TENSION AND FATIGUE, HOLISTIC HEALING HAS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE TO PLAY IN BRINGING ABOUT COMPLETE WELLNESS.

The various dimensions of holistic healing include meditation, reiki, ayurveda, naturopathy, homeopathy, yoga, acupuncture, reflexology, acupressure etc. A number of spas and health centres offer holistic healing facilities. Holistic healing claims to treat problems associated with anxiety, insomnia, hypertension, blood pressure, psychiatric problems, joint pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, paralysis, diabetes, hair loss, cardio-vascular disease etc.

Hot stone massage and facials can help de-stress tired muscles in the body and improve blood circulation. Naturopathy uses the multi-disciplinary approach of natural healing materials such as herbs, fruits, earth, magnets, water and sun. Hydrotherapy, aromatherapy and Swedish massage form a prominent part of holistic healing.

Nishi Mehta, designer says, "I was unable to sleep for several days after suffering a major loss in business. A friend advised me to visit this amazing place near Haridwar that offers holistic healing and I recovered. I didn't even have to face any side effects of allopathic medicines."

Arjun Sood, Project Manager in an MNC says, "I often got this sharp pain in my lower abdomen at odd times. The pain would be so bad that I'd faint. No doctor was able to diagnose the problem. I then went in for holistic healing and it was figured out that the pain would occur as my body was incapable of handling stress and working under pressure. I was treated and cured."



Some holistic healing centres also offer exclusive packages on which you can avail a heavy discount and even take a vacation. If you are planning a trip out of station, go in for a holistic healing centre for long term health benefits. You can also opt for family packages, corporate packages or couple packages.

Holistic healing centres have their own doctors, nutritionists, therapists and psychologists to provide total wellness. Yogasans, pranayama, breathing exercises, meditation and relaxation techniques are combined with massage and other therapies to restore complete health and well being of the individual.

Holistic healing also focuses on prayer and singing hymns. According to various studies and practitioners people who believe in god and are religious are less depressed and prone to illnesses than those who are not religious.

In today's quick paced life, it is important for one to focus on their health. It is the overall well being of an individual that matters rather than just paying attention to a particular disease or ailment. Holistic healing is emerging as a preferred form of treatment over traditional healing methods and is gaining a lot of popularity all over the globe. More and more people are availing holistic health benefits which is the new age wellness process. ■



Whether Mutual Fund Investment is Headache Free

BY MRS BHATIA, PVSP & CO. CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

THE ADVANTAGE OF INVESTING IN MUTUAL FUNDS IS THAT WE CAN GET BETTER RETURNS AND PLAY THE GAME OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE SAFE WITH FEWER HEADACHES BY TRANSFERRING OUR HEADACHE TO THE FUND MANAGER. BY INVESTING IN MUTUAL FUND, ONE'S BLOOD PRESSURE CAN ALSO BE CONTROLLED.

There is the general perception that once you invest in the mutual fund you are bound to get a good return without headaches. You issue a cheque and forget about it. Thereafter it is the mutual fund Manager's headache as to which industry is doing good or bad; whether to invest and when to invest.

During November and December '07, around 12 new equity mutual funds were offered to the public. Almost all the funds that are launched nowadays are specialised in some way. There are real estate funds, energy funds, small companies funds, emerging marketing funds, and so on.

This is as such a good idea when the GDP of our country is growing at more than 8 percent and all of the sectors of industry including agricultural, services, manufacturing, infrastructure, etc are on the rise, whereas a country like Japan which at one time seemed to be a most energetic country is practically dyeing. When you invest in good equity funds it is the Fund Manager who decides what type of sector, industry or size of the company to invest in. It is also the role of a financial analyst to analyse trends and figure out where your money should be invested; whether that is in companies of the technology, energy, infrastructure or real estate sectors, amongst others of course.

To analysis the gains which you will make by investing your 1 lakh in equity, let's take a look at the past performance of ELSS funds and make a hypothetical calculation of how much money you could have made by letting your tax-break money fly freely in an equity-linked scheme instead of chaining it down to fixed-income returns. We assumed that for the last nine years, you had invested a steady Rs. 1 lakh per year into an ELSS fund. Following the best practice for steady, long-term investment, we assumed that you made your tax saving investment at a regular Rs. 8,333.33 a month instead of waking up on March 28, as many people seem to do. For comparison, we made a total of three investments, one in an ELSS that was a high performing one, one in an ELSS that turned out be a poorly performing one compared to others and one in a hypothetical fixed instrument that yielded a constant 10 percent a year.

The results were an eye-opener which should convince anyone about how important the changes made in. Over nine years, you would have invested a total of Rs. 9 lakh. The fixed income option would have resulted in this 9 lakh growing to Rs.14 lakh. The 'bad' ELSS would have resulted in your principal becoming Rs.32 lakh while the 'good' ELSS would be worth a total of Rs. 82 lakh. These numbers

are obviously astounding. However, as discerning investors, we must look a little deeper and see what exactly is happening.

Both the ELSS funds have done much better than the fixed income option but the scale of their returns is heavily influenced by the enormous gains that the stock market has made over the last couple of years. There is nothing wrong with this, as this is the way of equity and this is why equity is only suitable for the long-term. To summarise:

(1)	(2)	(3)
Over the last nine years, an investment of Rs. 8333 a month (1 lakh a year) would add up to Rs.14 lakh in a fixed income instrument that yields 10 percent p.a.	Over the same period, a badly-performing ELSS fund would have resulted in a total value of Rs. 32 lakh.	A top performing ELSS fund would result in the 9 lakh rupees becoming Rs. 82 lakh.

This is called Equity Magic.

Under section 80C, a person can invest in the following sectors: Insurance Policy premium; Contribution to public provident fund; Contribution to statutory/recognised PF; National Savings Certificate; Equity Linked Saving Scheme of MFs; Pension funds of MFS; and Infrastructure Bonds to claim Income Tax benefit up to Rs.1 lakh. In the above sectors some will give the fixed return. For instance, Contribution of Public Provident Fund will give the return of 8 percent p.a. Contribution to statutory/recognised PF will give the return of 9.5 percent, and NSC can give the fixed return of 8 percent. So only the equity linked saving scheme of mutual funds can give a better return as explained above. So it is up to the person to distribute the portfolio into different sectors to maximize his return.

Not only this return but investment in mutual funds will give you some Income Tax Benefit which will be available under Section 80C.

To summarise, the advantage of investing in mutual funds is that we can get better returns and play the game of the Stock Exchange safe with fewer headaches by transferring our headache to the Fund Manager. I am confident that by investing in mutual fund, one's blood pressure can also be controlled. ■

INDIA'S IMPORTS IN 2006-07 & ITS IMPACT ON THE *inbound* LOGISTICS

BY JASHOBANTA PANDA

India is a major importer of commodities and though higher imports as compared to exports would mean trade deficit, of late, the imported goods are value added and re-exported. The movement of goods offers opportunities to the post especially in case of imports. After the consignments reach the port, the goods travel out of the port to the bonded warehouses and the final destinations.

MAJOR COMMODITIES IMPORTED IN 2006-07

Commodity	Quantity in Ton	Value in Rs. Crores
Wheat	1475421	1473.35
Pulses	2255649	3851.44
Cotton yarn, fabrics		1441.43
Man made fiber, yarn		2513.44
Cashew nuts		1820.74
Fruits & nuts	586491	1911.74
Spices	118541	739.01
Other textile, yarn		4079.73
Vegetable oil, edible		9416.27
Natural rubber	89699	780.19
Synthetic rubber	225369	2060.29
Pulp and waste paper	2175800	2875.01
Wood, wood products		4607.19
Raw silk	99560	1077.45
Wool raw	99560	1077.45
Silk yarn and fabrics		900.49
Leather		1307.13
Gold		65,435.78
Silver		832.83
Software in physical form		4257.08
Fertilizer, crude	5006557	1632.12
Metal, scrap		37,709.89
Coal, coke	48103004	20,794.03
Petroleum, crude	130440791	2,58,259.05
Organic chemical		24,597.01
Inorganic chemical		10,748.72
Fertilizer manufactured	10603624	12,097.12
News print	794220	2407.16
Pearl, stones precious etc		33,880.12
Iron & steel	6415322	27,346.40
Non-ferrous metals		11,791.80

MAJOR PORTS OF IMPORT

Goods imported into India in 2006-07

Name of Port	Value of Imports in Rs. Crores
Bangalore Airport	30,188.42
Mumbai Air	69,479.50
Kolkata Air	10,143.11
Kochin Air	510.96
Delhi Air	46,688.87
Chennai Air	28,715.78
Ahmedabad Air Cargo Complex	10,495.75
ICD Bangalore	4,590.70
SEEPZ (Maharashtra)	5,428.45
SIKKA Sea (Gujarat)	1,800.17
BEDI Sea (Gujarat)	2,165.27
Mumbai Sea	34,033.96
Kolkata Sea	21,140.07
Cochin Sea	5,892.23
Delhi ICD	17,476.12
Kakinada Sea	4,512.63
Kandla Sea	20,478.75
Chennai Sea	58,241.35
Marmagoa Sea	3,389.54
New Mangalore Sea	3,103.81
Nhava Sheva Sea	79,159.68
Paradip Sea	6,460.65
Tuticorin Sea	20,986.49
Vishakhapatnam Sea	12,705.15
Petrapole land	423.20
Bhavnagar	376.79
Surat	1,679.87
Raxaul Land	872.59
Other Ports	1,02,902.39
Petroleum, Crude etc	2,58,259.05
Grand Total	8,62,301.52

As the list above indicates, import takes place through all the corners in the country, though major concentration is there in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Over the years, even the smaller ports have come of age. It would be interesting to know the manner in which the goods imported go to the final destination in India or are finally re-exported.

In case of bulk goods imported, some of them may get transported out of the port by railway wagons immediately to the destination, say coal imported could go across to the steel plant. In this case if there is delay, the importer would have to pay demurrage to the port. In some cases, the goods may remain in the bonded warehouses. At each stage there is warehousing cost, hence the logistics requirement would necessitate tailor made movement schedules.

MAJOR COUNTRIES FROM WHICH INDIA IMPORTS

Export and import is a two-way process and is often positively related. The following major countries have been our source of imports in 2006-07: (Imports above Rs.20,00 crores is highlighted in red ink)

Country	Value of imports in Rs. Crores
Algeria	3394.88
Argentina	3780.83
Australia	30,942.15
Baharain IS	2120.65
Belgium	18,732.93
Brazil	4571.67
Brunei	1290.68
Canada	6851.71
Chile	8682.91
Taiwan	7583.99
China PRP	78,729.50
Czech Republic	1531.29
Denmark	1539.08
Egypt ARP	7884.73
Finland	2759.24
France	18,804.40
Germany	57,315.20
Hong Kong	11,229.40
Indonesia	18,846.67
Iran	34,529.90
Iraq	25,005.01
Ireland	1306.03
Israel	4875.32
Italy	12,131.69
Japan	20,773.30
Jordan	2132.23
Korea DP RP	2227.35
Korea RP	21,623.26
Kuwait	27,104.25
Malaysia	23,892.03
Myanmar	3576.49
Morocco	2223.09
Nepal	1384.70
Netherlands	5233.07
Nigeria	31,796.51
Qatar	9470.32
Russia	9566.03
Saudi Arabia	60,468.71
Singapore	24,752.17
South Africa	11,160.84
Spain	2833.68
Sri Lanka	2129.06
Sweden	8756.51
Switzerland	41,246.08
Thailand	7881.02
Turkey	1506.19
UAE	39,091.09
UK	18,876.58
Ukraine	4359.94
USA	57,035.63
Venezuela	3362.43
Yemen Republic	9098.88

The internal distribution of goods is a lucrative business handled by railway, logistics firms and truck owners of different sizes. In some cases the goods keep lying in the bonded warehouses and are taken out after the payment of customs as per requirement.

As far as re-export of commodity is concerned, with the creation of special economic zones, there has been better integration of exports and imports. The successful example is that of SEEPZ in Maharashtra which has handled more that Rs.5000 crores of imports.

Another major development is the efficiency of new ports like SIKKA and BEDI etc in Gujarat. Each of the port has a specific commodity profile and its understanding would open up scope for new business for the posts. ■



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General Information & Conditions Governing *Electronic Intimation of Delivery (e-IOD) Facility*

BY RISHIKESH, ADG (Mail Operations)

Introduction

e-Intimation of Delivery (e-IOD) is a web based value added facility, which provides electronic information about delivery of articles through e-mail, Department's web site or electronic web based access to the senders. Delivery information of e-IOD articles would be uploaded by delivery post offices on to the central server, and an e-mail would be generated to the sender at the e-mail address provided by him at the time of registration. On request, the senders could also be provided a limited access to e-IOD server to download the delivery information in respect of articles sent by them.

If the customers need a paper-based proof of delivery, they can continue to use the Acknowledgement Due (for registered articles) or PoD (for Speed Post and EPP) till other paper based proof of delivery services are devised.

The e-IOD facility is offered with Bill Mail Service, National Bill Mail Service, letter/ILC/Postcard, Book Post, Greeting/Invitation Cards, Direct Post, newspapers, Registered letters, Registered parcels, parcels, and VPP articles. For Speed Post and Express Parcel Post (EPP), however, tracking facility is already available through speednet. Therefore, the e-IOD is not extended to these products.

Conditions Governing e-IOD Facility

a. The service is available only when the articles are booked in bulk, as given below:

- b. The articles must be posted only in the offices designated in the registration certificate. The offices designated to accept these articles may be different for different products, and would be fixed from time to time by Heads of Postal Circles.
- c. You are required to print a bar code on the address side of the articles or envelopes containing articles. In case, a window envelope is used and the bar code is printed on the article and not the envelope, the bar code should be fully and clearly visible through the address window in a scannable manner. It would, however, be preferred that bar code is printed on the envelope itself. Alternatively, the bar code can be printed on both the envelope and the enclosed article. In such cases, the bar code shall be affixed in the right bottom corner of the envelope, leaving at least 5 mm space from the both right and lower edges of the envelope.
- d. Though it would be preferable to print the bar code, there is no objection if pre printed bar codes are affixed, instead. However, the placement of bar codes must be as indicated in (b) above.
- e. The bar codes must be printed/affixed in a manner that not only bars, but also the numbers written with the bars are clearly visible/scannable.
- f. The specifications and other technical details of Bar Codes to be printed on articles availing e-IOD facility are annexed.
- g. You would be allotted a bar code range, from which you would print the bar codes serially on articles tendered for availing

e-IOD facility. When you reach the end of the range, you can start from the beginning, again. However, if you reach the end of range within 6 months, do not proceed further, and ask for allotment of additional range.

- h. In case the printing/affixing of bar codes is not in accordance with these instructions, or are affixed in a manner that it is not possible to scan them properly, it may not be possible to provide the e-IOD, and no claim for refund/compensation would be admissible or entertained.
- i. An amount of Re. 0.50 (50 paise) per article shall be charged for e-IOD facility. The charge would be paid in the form of postage/frank etc. For example, for a Bill Mail Service article requiring a postage of Rs. 3 for weight up to 50 grams, and Re. 0.50 for e-iod facility, the postage affixed/ franked should be Rs. 3.50
- j. In case of National Bill Mail Service (NBMS), however, no e-iod charges would be payable on NBMS articles, as e-iod facility is an integral part of the NBMS.
- k. The articles presented at the Office of Acceptance/Posting must be presented duly sorted delivery post office wise and bundled PIN code wise. The requirement of printing postman beat codes in a prescribed manner on the addresses may also be added by the Heads of Postal Circles, where deemed fit. You are also required to bring at the time of posting, along with articles, a statement showing range of bar code on the mail pieces. The format for the information to be furnished is given below.

Minimum Number of Articles to be Posted for Availing e-IOD Facility

Sl	Category of Mail Articles	Minimum no. of articles to be posted at a time to avail e-iod facility	Comments
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1	Bill Mail Service	5,000	Besides the minimum number of articles required to be posted to avail e-iod facility, the articles would have to satisfy the specific conditions for mailing the products, and other conditions prescribed for e-iod service.
2	National Bill Mail Service	10,000	
3	Letters /ILC /Postcards	5,000	
4	Direct Post	5,000	
5	Book Post	5,000	
6	Greeting/Invitation cards	200	
7	Newspapers	5,000	
8	Registered Letters	200	
9	Registered Parcels	200	
10	Parcels	200	
11	VPP	200	

TO BE SUBMITTED SEPARATELY FOR EACH CATEGORY OF ARTICLES
VIZ. LETTERS / BILL MAIL SERVICE / PARCEL / REGD / SPEED POST ETC

FORMAT FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES FOR USING e-IOD FACILITY

(To be submitted in DUPLICATE along with articles at the Office of Posting)

Product Date
(BMS/Regd letter/letter/parcel etc)

Customer ID:

Barcode Range of Articles:

From to (Total)

From to (Total)

From to (Total)

Grand Total.....

Signature.....
Name and Designation of
Authorised Signatory

For use in Office of Posting

Received (No. of articles), as above.

Manager

MBC/Office

Date Stamp 

- l. If the articles are posted in more than one bundle (e.g. for different PIN codes), the check slip tied to the bundles should also contain information on bar code range affixed/printed on the articles therein. Though it is not an essential condition, it would be preferred if the replicas of first and last bar code in the bundle are reproduced on the check slip.
- m. The bar codes in one bundle should be in sequence, to avoid the need for avoidable data entry. The price for e- IOD has been kept to the minimum by keeping the handling processes to the minimum.
- n. A receipt would be generated by the computer after acceptance of articles. This would be supplied to the customer by office of posting. In case there is a problem with this, the office may sign a copy of the format mentioned in (k) above and return it to you.
- o. Over 5,000 post offices have already been computerized, and more offices are being computerised rapidly. Therefore, the Department of Posts would be able to provide e- IOD for most of the articles. However, it would not be possible to provide e- IOD for articles to be delivered from non-computerised offices, and it will also not be possible to check at the time of acceptance as to whether any articles were destined for non-computerised offices. Therefore, the Department would not be held liable for non provision of e- IOD in such cases, nor would it be liable to return the e- IOD charges.
- p. While the Department will try its best to provide the e- IOD, there could be cases where the information could not be provided on account of unavoidable technical, administrative or any other reasons. The Department would not be liable to return e- IOD charges or to give any other compensation in such cases.
- q. The delivery information would start coming to you by email after one day of posting, and will continue coming for next few days. However, no intimation would be issued in respect of articles posted more than 10 days before. In case intimation is not received within 10 days, but you would still like the Department to check, the matter may be taken up in writing with the office where the articles were posted. However, no such request would be entertained after 15 days of posting the articles. This is necessitated on account of data for a very large number of articles that would have to be kept to provide the e- IOD service, and the need to keep costs low to provide the e- IOD facility at such an economical price of 50 paise per article.
- r. On request, the customers could also be provided access to India Post e- IOD server to download delivery information related to articles submitted by them. However, the system would be able to provide the information only in respect of articles booked till 15 days before the inquiry.
- s. e- IOD system gives information only with reference to the bar codes, and does not keep any information regarding the addressee or his address. It would not be possible, therefore, to give any information on that or any other connected account.
- t. Requirement of Dispatch Slip and Franking Machine Dockets etc. prescribed for machine-franked articles under existing rules and procedure would also continue.

Specifications for Bar-Code for e-IOD service

- The bar code would contain 13 characters (only numeric). First two characters (digits) of the barcode would denote the numeric code of the concerned postal region in the Circle. The next eleven characters would be in a serial order. The numeric codes given to the circles/Regions are given in annexure VI.
- Bar Code Dimensions:
 - o Dimension X (nominal width of narrow element): between 0.25 and 0.43 mm
 - o Dimension N (ratio between width of wide element and width of narrow element): minimum of 2.5 to 1 and maximum of 3.0 to 1. Ratio of 3.0 to 1 to be used wherever possible.
 - o Space between characters: minimum of 1X, maximum of 1.524 mm when $X \geq 0.287$ mm or 5.3X when $X \leq 0.287$ mm.
 - o Height of bars: 15 percent of width of entire symbol or 9.0 mm, whichever value is greater.
- The print quality will have to be assessed according to standard ANSI X3.182-1990, which specifies a reader light beam diameter of 0.127 mm and a light beam wavelength of 630 or 660 nanometers.
- The minimum level of print quality shall correspond to letter "B" according to the notation of this standard. Digits of bar code must also be printed in the usual manner, above or below the bar code symbol.
- The bar code symbology code 39, with 13 digits (without any check digit) is the basis for the barcode for the e-IOD articles.
- Circles would assign specific range of bar code, within the parameters laid down above, to customers. However, it should be ensured that range allotted is large enough so that no bar code number is re-used within a period of 6 calendar months.
- A specimen of the bar code using the above parameters is reproduced below.



However, this reproduction is only illustrative. Bar codes produced by the customers must conform to the specifications mentioned above. ■

WORD POWER

- 1) Aegean Sea: A body of water separating mainland of Greece & Turkey; named after Aegeus; Father of Theseus, a Greek hero.
- 2) AD: Anno Domini.
- 3) AM: Ante Meridian, before noon.
- 4) Salary: named after salt, as salt was difficult to prepare in ancient times, thus soldiers were paid with it.
- 5) Lucullan Life: A life of great pomp and luxury, from Lucullus (115-67 BC), Roman general.
- 6) Being Croesus: Having lot of wealth, from Croesus King of Lydia (560-545 BC).
- 7) 'Napoleon Complex': An inferiority complex which is said to affect some people who are physically short, from Napoleon I (1769-1821), Emperor of France.
- 8) 'Achilles Heels': A fatal weakness inspite of overall strength, actually or potentially leading to downfall; from Achilles, a Greek Hero.
- 9) 'Raining Cats & Dogs': means raining heavily, from medieval England where houses were covered in thatch roofs that was the only place for little animals to get warm. When it rained, the small animals like dogs, cats, etc would slip and fall from roof.
- 10) 'Coup de Grace': A death blow intended to end the suffering of a wounded creature, from French (*ku/da gras/*).
- 11) Poetic Justice: It's a literary device in which virtue is ultimately rewarded or vice punished often in modern literature by an ironic twist of fate initially related to character's own conduct. Coined by Thomas Ryner in '*The Tragedies of Last Age Considered (1678)*'.
- 12) 'Crossing the Rubicon': means Point of no return, phrase coined when Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon river in northern Italy in 49 BC, starting a civil war.
- 13) Herculean Task: A difficult & improbable work, from Hercules and his 12 Labours in Greek mythology.
- 14) Last Stand: A loose military term used to describe a body of troops holding a defensive position in the face of overwhelming odds. For example, Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC) or Battle of Persian Gates (330 BC).
- 15) Pyrrhic Victory: It's a victory achieved with a great loss to the victor, from Pyrrhus of Epirus and his Campaign against Romans (280-272 BC).
- 16) 'Discretion is the better part of valour': means caution is preferable to rash bravery; from King Henry, part I by Shakespeare.
- 17) Fabian Strategy: It's a military strategy where pitched battles are avoided in favour of wearing down an opponent through attrition warfare, from Fabius (260-204BC), Roman dictator.
- 18) 'That's Greek to me': Means an expression is incomprehensible due to complexity or imprecision. From 'The Tragedy of Julius Caesar' by Shakespeare.
- 19) 'The face that launched a thousand ships: A reference to Helen of Troy, from Christopher Marlow's *Doctor Faustus* (1604).
- 20) 'While Rome burned, Nero fiddled': means 'goofing off' or to describe activities which might otherwise be considered recreation, but which occur while other important obligations are being neglected; from Nero, Roman Emperor (54-69 AD).
- 21) 'Spartan Life': A very disciplined way of living, from Sparta—a state of ancient Greece. ■

How to Make Teams Effective

BY STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People in every workplace talk about building a team, working as a team, and my team, but few understand how to create the experience of team work or how to develop an effective team. Belonging to a team, in the broadest sense, is a result of feeling part of something larger than yourself. It has a lot to do with your understanding of the mission or objectives of your organisation.

In a team-oriented environment, you contribute to the overall success of the organisation. You work with fellow members of the organisation to produce these results. Even though you have a specific job function and you belong to a specific department, you are unified with other organisation members to accomplish the overall objectives.

The bigger picture drives your actions; your function exists to serve the bigger picture.

You need to differentiate this overall sense of teamwork from the task of developing an effective intact team that is formed to accomplish a specific goal. People confuse the two team building objectives. This is why so many team building seminars, meetings, retreats and activities are deemed failures by their participants. Leaders failed to define the team they wanted to build. Developing an overall sense of team work is different from building an effective, focused work team when you consider team building approaches.

Team Building

Executives, managers and organisation staff members universally explore ways to improve business results and profitability. Many view team-based, horizontal, organisation structures as the best design for involving all employees in creating business success.

No matter what you call your team-based improvement effort: continuous improvement, total quality, lean manufacturing or self-directed work teams, you are striving to improve results for customers. Few organisations, however, are totally pleased with the results their team improvement efforts produce. If your team improvement efforts are not living up to your expectations, this self-diagnosing checklist may tell you why. Successful team building, that creates effective, focused work teams, requires attention to each of the following:

Clear Expectations: Has executive leadership clearly communicated its expectations for the team's performance and

expected outcomes? Do team members understand why the team was created? Is the organisation demonstrating constancy of purpose in supporting the team with resources of people, time and money? Does the work of the team receive sufficient emphasis as a priority in terms of the time, discussion, attention and interest directed its way by executive leaders?

Context: Do team members understand why they are participating on the team? Do they understand how the strategy of using teams will help the organisation attain its communicated business goals? Can team members define their team's importance to the accomplishment of corporate goals? Does the team understand where its work fits in the total context of the organisation's goals, principles, vision and values?

Commitment: Do team members want to participate on the team? Do team members feel the team mission is important? Are members committed to accomplishing the team mission and expected outcomes? Do team members perceive their service as valuable to the organisation and to their own careers? Do team members anticipate recognition for their contributions? Do team members expect their skills to grow and develop on the team? Are team members excited and challenged by the team opportunity? ■



OBJECTIVE ART

WHAT IS OBJECTIVE ART? IS CREATIVITY SOMEHOW RELATED WITH MEDITATION?

BY RACHEL ARORA



Osho: Art can be divided into two parts. Ninety-nine percent of art is subjective art. Only one percent is objective art. The ninety-nine percent subjective art has no relationship with meditation. Only one percent objective art is based on meditation.

The subjective art means you are pouring your subjectivity onto the canvas, your dreams, your imaginations, your fantasies. It is a projection of your psychology. The same happens in poetry, in music, in all dimensions of creativity - you are not concerned with the person who is going to see your painting, not concerned what will happen to him when he looks at it; that is not your concern at all. Your art is simply a kind of vomiting. It will help you, just the way vomiting helps. It takes the nausea away, it makes you cleaner, makes you feel healthier. But you have not considered what is going to happen to the person who is going to see your vomit. He will become nauseous. He may start feeling sick.

Look at the paintings of Picasso. He is a great painter, but just a subjective artist. Looking at his paintings, you will start feeling sick, dizzy, something going berserk in your mind. You cannot go on looking at Picasso's painting for long. You would like to get away, because the painting has not come from a silent being. It has come from a chaos. It is a by product of a nightmare. But ninety-nine percent of art belongs to that category.

Objective art is just the opposite. The man has nothing to throw out, he is utterly empty, absolutely clean. Out of this silence, out of this emptiness arises love, compassion. And out of this silence arises a possibility for creativity. This silence, this love, this compassion - these are the qualities of meditation.

Meditation brings you to your very centre. And your centre is not only *your* centre, it is the centre of the whole existence. Only on the periphery we are different. As we start moving toward the centre, we are one. We are part of eternity, a tremendously luminous experience of ecstasy that is beyond words. Something that you can *be*... but very difficult to express it. But a great desire arises in you to share it, because all other people around you are groping for exactly such experiences. And you have it, you know the path.

And these people are searching everywhere except within themselves - where it is! You would like to shout in their ears. You would like to shake them and tell them, "Open your eyes! Where are you going? Wherever you go, you go away from yourself. Come back home, and come as deep into yourself as possible."

This desire to share becomes creativity. Somebody can dance. There have been mystics - for example, Jalaluddin Rumi - whose teaching was not in words, whose teaching was in dance. He will dance. His disciples will be sitting by his side, and he will tell them, "Anybody who feels like joining me can join. It is a question of

feeling. If you don't feel like, it is up to you. You can simply sit and watch."

But when you see a man like Jalaluddin Rumi dancing, something dormant in you becomes active. In spite of yourself you find you have joined the dance. You are already dancing before you become aware that you have joined it.

Even this experience is of tremendous value, that you have been pulled like a magnetic force. It has not been your mind decision, you have not weighed for pro and for against, to join or not to join, no. Just the beauty of Rumi's dance, his spreading energy, has taken possession of you. You are being touched. This dance is objective art.

And if you can continue - and slowly you will become more and more unembarrassed, more and more capable - soon you will forget the whole world. A moment comes, the dancer disappears and only the dance remains.

There are in India statues, which you have just to sit silently and meditate upon. Just look at those statues. They have been made by meditators in such a way, in such a proportion, that just looking at the statue, the figure, the proportion, the beauty... Everything is very calculated to create a similar kind of state within you. And just sitting silently with a statue of Buddha or Mahavira, you will come across a strange feeling, which you cannot find in sitting by the side of any Western sculpture.

All Western sculpture is sexual. You see the Roman sculpture: beautiful, but something creates sexuality in you. It hits your sexual centre. It does not give you an uplift. In the East the situation is totally different. Statues are carved, but before a sculptor starts carving statues he learns meditation. Before he starts playing on the flute he learns meditation. Before he starts writing poetry he learns meditation. Meditation is absolute necessity for any art; then the art will be objective.

Then, just reading few lines of a haiku, a Japanese form of a small poem - only three lines, perhaps three words - if you silently read it, you will be surprised. It is far more explosive than any dynamite. It simply opens up doors in your being.

Basho's small haiku I have beside the pond near my house. I love it so much, I wanted it to be there. So every time, coming and going... Basho is one of the persons I have loved. Nothing much in it: *An ancient pond...* It is not an ordinary poetry. It is very pictorial. Just visualise: *An ancient pond. A frog jumps in....* You almost see the ancient pond! You almost hear the frog, the sound of its jump: *Plop*.

And then everything is silent. The ancient pond is there, the frog has jumped in, the sound of his jumping in has created more silence than before. Just reading it is not like any other poetry that you go on reading - one poem, another poem... No, you just read it and sit silently. Visualise it. Close your eyes. See the ancient pond. See the frog. See it jumping in. See the ripples on the water. Hear the sound. And hear the silence that follows.

This is objective art.

Basho must have written it in a very meditative mood, sitting by the side of an ancient pond, watching a frog. And the frog jumps in. And suddenly Basho becomes aware of the miracle that sound is deepening the silence. The silence is more than it was before. This is objective art.

Unless you are a creator, you will never find real blissfulness. It is only by creating that you become part of the great creativity of the universe. But to be a creator, meditation is a basic necessity. Without it you can paint, but that painting has to be burned, it has not to be shown to others. It was good, it helped you unburden, but please, don't burden anybody else. Don't present it to your friends, they are not your enemies.

Objective art is meditative art, subjective art is mind art. ■



Beefing up Higher Education to Sustain Growth

BY SAVITA MEHTA*

India has taken giant strides in economic and social development during the past two decades but little has been done in the area of higher education to make India a knowledge based global economy. A fundamental change in our mindset in looking at education as an integral component of social development is needed with globalisation and privatisation. Higher education in India suffers from two major setbacks - ill devised regulatory framework and lack of vocational content and curriculum that doesn't job-ready our youth even when they pass out with high level degrees. As such, the curriculum that we follow is quite alienated from the demands of the industry. To amend this situation, this sector needs to be re-vamped - from ground up - in terms of both quality (industry-oriented) and access.

The traditional way of education based on rote learning and theoretical expertise is now giving way to experiential instruction based on a combination of practice and theory. This is the right time to introspect and ask ourselves if we want to continue with a factory production of students who merely run from pillar to post with degrees in hands searching for gainful employment opportunities or are we going to prepare for a resurgent India with specialists in their fields, who are accomplished to do ground breaking research in their respective fields of knowledge?

Today's youth has so much exposure, be it the Internet, books or other new media tools

that one doesn't have time to waste and wait for the right opportunity to strike. They are ready to grab an opportunity and exploit it to the fullest. Gone are the days, when a student with a graduate degree could easily land a job with the government/private sector and afford a laid back attitude until retirement.

Today's youth aspires to be noticed with their potential fully harnessed and are willing to work hard on the road to success. With an ever increasing number of avenues opening up in the BPO industry, sales and marketing, fashion, advertising and media, to cite just a few of the more happening sectors, everyone wants to specialise in a particular field that complements his/her innate abilities. Nobody indeed wants to be caught in a bind where one is a square peg in a round hole. One finds that even an engineer is now going in for an MBA degree realising that management is an integral aspect of any business operation.

Thankfully, the demand for these skills is adequately being met with the numerous private institutes, universities and vocational colleges that have begun to offer tailor-made professional programmes at the graduate and post graduate level in management, engineering, sciences, law, biotechnology, nanotechnology, mass media, telecom management, computer sciences, hospitality, tourism, fine arts and a slew of other streams.

These institutes command relevant infrastructure and faculty to equip graduates with multiple skills in order to be able to make the

A STUDENT WHO GRADUATES FROM A REPUTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITY DOES NOT BURDEN THE EXCHEQUER FOR EMPLOYMENT, RATHER THE INSTITUTE SHARES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVIDING HIM/HER A JOB. CAN IT GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS?

most of the current boom in our knowledge-driven economy. With professionals drawn from industry to instruct these students, they realise the difference between education and knowledge. They realise that imparting education may be a simple task but the same cannot be said about imparting knowledge because attaining knowledge is a life-long, on going process.

Recently, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh announced the launch of 1600 new Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Polytechnics, besides 10,000 new Vocational Schools and 50,000 Skill Development Centres. According to the Planning Commission, enrolment in universities and colleges must go up at an annual rate of 8.9 percent in order to meet a minimum target of a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 15 percent by 2011- 12, which implies that an additional 8.7 lakh students have to be put in the university stream and another 61.3 lakh in colleges in another five-six years. Does the public sector have adequate resources to meet this target?

The repercussions of this are being faced by the Indian industry which is currently reeling under an acute manpower crunch despite the presence of 16,885 colleges and 350 universities, churning out two million graduates every year! Unfortunately, only 10-15 percent of these graduates are eventually found suitable for employment and nearly two- thirds of the 300,000 engineering graduates need to be re-skilled in order to be absorbed in the industry.

Despite the Government's proposal to open 30 universities, 370 colleges, seven IITs, eight IIMs and twenty IIITs within the next five years, the big question is— why are we not ready to support the institutions which already exist and are providing professional courses under one banner and most important, where the placement is 100 percent and the student is taught as per industry requirement?

Just think about it: A student who graduates from a reputed private university does not burden the exchequer for employment, rather the institute shares the responsibility of providing him/her a job. Can it get any better than this?

Amity University Building



**AMITY UNIVERSITY
GUARANTEES HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT OF ITS
STUDENTS TURNING THEM
INTO NOT JUST SUCCESSFUL
PROFESSIONALS BUT ALSO
ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE
HUMAN BEINGS. WITH IT'S
MOTTO WHERE "MODERNITY
BLENDS WITH TRADITION",
THIS IS INCIDENTALLY, THE
COUNTRY'S FIRST LARGEST,
MOST HI-TECH PRIVATE
UNIVERSITY. WITH THE
UNIQUE MENTOR-MENTEE
CONCEPT THAT IT FOLLOWS,
STUDENTS RECEIVE
CONTINUOUS GUIDANCE
FROM TEACHERS, PARENTS,
ALUMNI AND THE INDUSTRY.**

All that we need to do is evolve a policy framework that facilitates an enhanced inflow of private investments in the resource-starved education sector, including removal of entry barriers and relaxing certain regulatory norms.

While there are also others, Amity University is one such institute. It guarantees holistic development of its students turning them into not just successful professionals but also ethical and responsible human beings. With its motto where "modernity blends with tradition", this is incidentally, the country's first largest, most hi-tech private university. With the unique mentor-mentee concept that it follows, students receive continuous guidance from teachers, parents, alumni and the industry. This support goes a long way in moulding the student and enabling him/her to eventually stake a claim to a career of his/her choice and choosing.

No doubt, professional education is expensive and beyond a common man's reach but then there are banks and other financial institutions of repute to underwrite higher educational dreams through a slew of soft loan schemes. Several educational institutions even offer scholarship to meritorious students at the graduate or post graduate level.

All said and done, the goal of higher education should be to bridge the existing social divide and ensure equal opportunities for all. If our country has to evolve into a Superpower by 2020, it can only happen through the strengthening of our educational infrastructure; labour market and business community and it must eventually be ensured that people with knowledge and skills emerge as the most important production factor in the knowledge economy. ■

(*Savita Mehta is VP-Communications, Amity Group of Institutions)





Wind Chimes for Good Luck

HANGING WIND CHIMES IN YOUR HOMES OR OFFICES WILL ATTRACT GOOD LUCK AND PROSPERITY. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT WISH TO SPEND A HUGE AMOUNT OF MONEY ON RE-DOING YOUR HOME OR OFFICE INTERIORS AND WANT TO ATTRACT POSITIVE ENERGY, WIND CHIMES ARE THE MOST ECONOMICAL AND HASSLE FREE WAY OF DOING THIS.

BY STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If you are looking to enhance your luck and increase the flow of positive energy in your home get a wind chime. Feng Shui literally means wind and water— the two indispensable elements of life. Feng Shui principles emphasise that good luck and fortune can be attracted by creating equilibrium of natural energies in the home or office.

Wind Chimes attract good fortune and have a calming effect on your senses. The music of wind chimes is known to have a soothing effect on your body and mind ensuring prosperity and contentment.

The flow of energy in Feng Shui is known as Chi. Wind chimes enable positive flow of Chi and ensure your health, happiness and good fortune. The reverberation of wind chimes relieves stress, enhances well being and expands awareness. Wind Chimes also open your mind, increase relaxation and reduce anger and tension. It is one of the best ways to uplift your spiritual side and feel in unison with the divine.

Hanging wind chimes in your homes or offices will attract good luck and prosperity. Wind chimes come in a number of materials. For best results you must purchase one that blends well with the element of the surrounding environment the wind chime will be facing. Metal wind chimes (consisting of aluminum, copper, stainless steel or brass) slow down the energy flow in a building and are best suited for the West, Northwest and North corners of the building. Wooden wind chimes must be hung in the East, Southeast and South corners of the building. Wind chimes made of glass or clay can be hung in the Southwest or Northwest direction.

The number of rods in a wind chime determines the kind of luck that needs to be attracted or suppressed. Solid rod wind chimes are used to suppress bad luck from beams or poison arrows. 4,6,7,8 or 18 rods are used to attract luck.

The rods of a wind chime are made hollow to allow chi to smoothly flow through it. Properly designed wind chimes ward away evil with the tones of metal energy.

Do not hang wind chimes directly above sleeping, eating, sitting, resting or working spaces as it suppresses energy flow. If there is shortage of space wind chimes should be hung below waist level.

The existence of wind chimes can be traced back to the pre-historic era of many civilizations. The oldest wind chimes date back to 3000 BC and were found in an excavation in South-east Asia. Bells were developed by the Mediterranean people in 2000 BC and the Egyptians started casting them in bronze. The Chinese were the first to create wind bells known as 'feng -ling' during 1100 BC. Wind chimes came to play a significant role in Buddhist ceremonies since the pure, piercing sound of a struck bell was associated with that of the purity of an enlightened mind.

For those who do not wish to spend a huge amount of money on re-doing your home or office interiors and want to attract positive energy, wind chimes are the most economical and hassle free way of doing this. Buy a wind chime this year and attract good luck. ■



IF THE THOUGHT OF MEETING THE KING OF THE JUNGLE FACE TO FACE GIVES YOU A RUSH OR THE IDEA OF SLEEPING ON THE GREEN GRASS UNDER THE STAR STUDDERED SKY MAKES YOU SMILE, IT IS HIGH TIME YOU THINK ABOUT EXPLORING YOUR WILD SIDE AS A WHOLE WORLD OF WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES AND NATIONAL PARKS AWAITS YOU...

Destination Wildlife

BY RACHEL ARORA

Wildlife sanctuaries and National parks seem to be the latest fad in the world of travel and tourism. According to a survey, more and more people are visiting the wilderness in order to seek solace from the daily rush of city life. The cosmopolitan culture is taking a toll on most people and wildlife is the best way to keep in close contact with Mother Nature. People nowadays want to harmonise with the environment and are looking to explore wildlife destinations more than historical places and romantic destinations.

Neharika Ahuja, Travel Agent says, "Wildlife sanctuaries are great getaways that extend the opportunity of retiring to the lap of nature and exploring a world full of new surprises. The demand for visiting wildlife destinations is growing each year. This is primarily because one feels happy to reconcile with nature and gets the feel of living like animals. All of us have an animal instinct and the wilderness is the best place where you can discover yours."

Wildlife destinations are great hideouts for those looking for some peace and tranquillity in this fast paced life along with a dash of adventure. These days, you are likely to find every possible facility in the wilderness. You could opt for a five star bungalow or luxury tent for the night or simply settle for a campfire in the heart of the forest.

There are a number of Wildlife destinations in India that can be explored. It's just about identifying your wild side before you pack your bags and book your tickets.

Jim Corbett National Park

Jim Corbett National Park is named after the legendary hunter turned author, the late Jim Corbett. This is a popular tiger reserve located in the foothills of the Kumaon Region. The river Ramganga flows through the National Park and there are numerous streams emerging all over the place. Jim Corbett National Park is known as the land of trumpet and roar. This beautiful National Park has diverse flora and fauna.

Here one can explore the park in a Jeep or on the back of an elephant back to catch glimpses of the cheetal, sambhal, the hog deer and barking deer, and if you're lucky, the elusive tiger. You can also spot the mugger, crocodile or the *ghariyal* on the banks of the Ramganga. Corbett has a variety of 50 mammals, 580 birds and 25 reptiles.

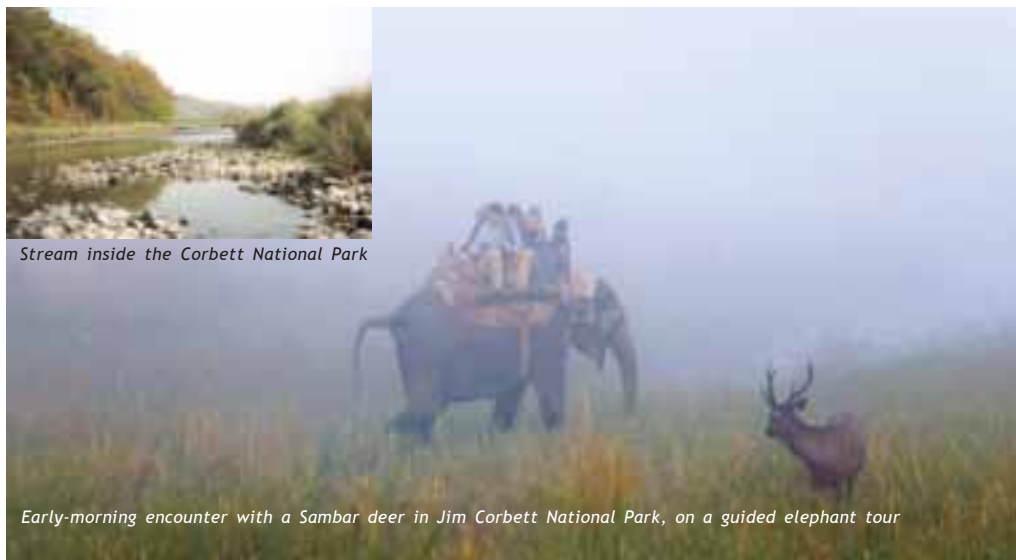
Jim Corbett National Park covers an area of 1200 square kilometres and the 'Project Tiger' was launched here in 1973. The vegetation of Corbett National Park consists of mixed deciduous forests and Sat trees. It is an exotic destination that offers a variety of activities for everybody. You can also visit The Corbett House and The Jim Corbett museum.

The popular excursions around include Ramnagar, the administrative centre of Jim Corbett that provides excellent fishing opportunities.

Jim Corbett National Park is a getaway that provides ample recreation facilities and you can escape from the busy city life to find solitude. The best months to visit Jim Corbett National Park are April to June and November to March (ideally for bird watching).



Stream inside the Corbett National Park



Early-morning encounter with a Sambar deer in Jim Corbett National Park, on a guided elephant tour



Jim Corbett National Park, Uttaranchal

Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga National Park is located on the banks of the Brahmaputra River in the North East of India in Assam. It covers an area of approximately 430 square kilometres. It is the best place to see the one-horned Indian Rhino. In 1940, the Kaziranga National Park was declared a wildlife sanctuary owing to the endangered rhinos.

Besides the great one horned Indian rhino one can also spot the Indian elephants, Indian bison, swamp deer, hog deer, tigers, sloth bears, leopards, otters, langurs, wild boar, jackal, wild buffalo, pythons and monitor lizards. Several birds like the black shouldered kite, Himalayan griffon, grey headed fishing eagle and oriental honey buzzard can be seen. You can also spot



An Indian Rhino in Kaziranga National Park



Wild Asiatic Water Buffalo - Female with calf in Kaziranga National Park

migratory birds during winters like the greylag geese, bar headed geese, gadwall, falcated duck, red crested pochard and northern shoveller.

Travellers can enjoy elephant safaris or take a ride through the jungle in jeeps. The best time to visit Kaziranga is from mid-November to early April.



Deers in Ranthambhore National Park

RANTHAMBHORE NATIONAL PARK IS FAMOUS FOR ITS TIGERS AND IS REGULARLY VISITED BY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS. THE PARK ALSO HAS 300 SPECIES OF TREES, 50 AQUATIC PLANTS, 272 BIRDS, 12 REPTILES INCLUDING THE MARSH CROCODILE AND AMPHIBIANS AND 30 MAMMALS.

Ranthambhore National Park

Ranthambhore National Park is situated in Eastern Rajasthan and was once a famous hunting reserve of the Maharajas of Jaipur. It is flanked by the river Chambal in the South and the river Banas in the North and boasts of six man-made lakes and several streams.

Ranthambhore has a diverse flora and fauna. One can catch a glimpse of ancient Banyan, Dhok and Pipal trees, mango orchids and evergreen belts. The terrain comprises massive rock formations, steep slopes, perennial lakes and streams. Dry deciduous forests shelter lazy days and starry nights paving way for leisure and solitude.

Ranthambhore National Park is famous for its tigers and is regularly visited by wildlife photographers. The park also has 300 species of trees, 50 aquatic plants, 272 birds, 12 reptiles including the marsh crocodile and amphibians and 30 mammals. One can also spot other animals like the sambhar, chital, nilgai, gazelle, boars, mongoose, Italian hare, monitor lizards and a large number of birds.



Tiger at waterhole in Ranthambhore National Park



Painted Stork in Ranthambhore National Park



Elephant Safari in Kanha National Park

Kanha National Park

Kanha National Park, located in the Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh, is one of the most famous tiger reserves of India. Extending over an area of over 1,949 square kilometres the region's horseshoe valley is surrounded by spurs of the Mokal. The Surpan River runs through the park providing picturesque views of a dramatic landscape.

Kanha National Park has a diverse fauna and flora. Bamboo forests give way to Sal forests and meadows. One can see the spotted deer, antelope, the black buck, the barking deer and the Barasingha.



Blue Jay or the Indian Roller at Kanha National Park

Sunderbans National Park

Home to the Royal Bengal Tiger, Sunderbans National Park covers an area of approximately 1,330 square kilometres. It is also the largest mangrove forest of the world and the region got its name from the Sundari trees once found here in abundance. The Ganges and the Brahmaputra form this alluvial archipelago comprising 54 islands watered by the Bay of Bengal. The islands Goasaba, Sandeshkali and Basanti form the northern boundary of the Sunderbans; towards the south is the sea; the Malta and Bidya Rivers lie to the west and the international boundary of Bangladesh lies to the east.

Sundari Tree



Bengal Tiger in Sunderbans National Park

April and May see the park covered with flaming red leaves of the Genwa along with crab like red flowers of the Kankara and the yellow blooms of Khalsi. The Sunderbans is home to more than 400 tigers, chital, deer, monkey, a large number of fishes and red Fiddler crabs and Hermit crabs. One can also spot crocodiles, Ridley Sea Turtle, the King Cobra, Rock Python and Water Monitor.

Bird watchers can spot seven colourful species of the Kingfisher, white bellied Sea Eagle, Plovers, Lap-Wings, Curfews, Sandpipers and Pelican. The best time to visit Sunderbans National Park is during the months of September and May. ■



A Crocodile in Sunderbans National Park

What Makes Pets Aggressive?

PUPPIES ARE KNOWN TO GROW UP AS AGGRESSIVE DOGS WHEN THEIR OWNERS KEEP THEM CONFINED OR TIED AND DO NOT LET THEM SOCIALISE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE PEER GROUP OF CANINES. MUCH AGGRESSION IN THE PETS CAN BE TAMED IF THEIR SOCIAL NEEDS AND PECULIARITIES ARE UNDERSTOOD.

BY PRADEEP RANA

Denying pets their right to socialise is among the commonest causes of aggression among them, be it dogs, cats, or bird companions such as parrots.

Puppies are known to grow up as aggressive dogs when their owners keep them confined or tied and do not let them socialise, especially with the peer group of canines.

Socialising is very important for dogs right from their puppyhood. Biting is the manifest form of aggression and a dog must understand his bite and what it can do to others.

Though biting itself may not be necessarily an aggressive behaviour, puppies do bite by instinct and to control biting is not something humans can teach them. For this, they must socialise with fellow puppies, play, chase, roll and bite each other and learn in the process. This is the only period when a puppy learns about his bite and knows how much to bite while playing with humans.

The ideal age for this learning curve is less than four months. After that it grows too big to learn. The owners who let their puppies socialise do not face much aggression from their grown-up pets. Such pets are usually safe with children around.

Most pet owners do not look for a dog-trainer; so much of the training of dogs and don'ts for dogs depends on the owner only. Much of the behaviour and personality of dogs is similar to humans and the good part is that they are less complicated creatures and lend themselves to understanding easily.

If a dog is reprimanded, on each time of biting, and is refused the usual reward, the chances are he may eventually learn this is a wrong thing to do. Besides this, owners who are usually aggressive toward their pets invariably find their pets getting more and more hostile toward them as well as neighbours, visitors and other pets. Like man like dog!

The owner should also look out for factors like pranksters or neighbours teasing, poking or throwing stones at the dog when he is on leash in your absence. When tormented in such helpless situations, dogs become aggressive very fast. They will bark, chase and bite the moment they are let off.

Being left alone, when going out to office or shopping for long hours, without sufficient reassurance also makes dogs very troubled and aggressive creatures. How much is too much? - Should be kept in mind when leaving the dog back home. Too much hugging, display of affection can excite the dog who will not let the owner go and thus become aggressive. This is commonly known as 'separation anxiety'.

A dog needs to be patted and calmed down, but only to the extent that he is assured that the separation is not permanent. A



good exercising walk, before leaving the house also has calming effect on this energetic creature. And when you come back, your arrival itself is a reward for his patience. Chances are your dog will learn you are not away forever and lie quietly in the house.

Unlike dogs, cats have separate reasons to be aggressive. But the golden rule of taming the aggression remains the same - let them socialise well when they are pups and kittens. A cat does not like to be lifted by strangers. They are also quite territorial in nature and do not like to see their house being occupied by a new pet dog.

So if from the very start kittens grow up with other pets and children around, and are frequently touched by lifting or petting, they are usually less aggressive. Unlike dogs, the predatory instinct is deeper in cats and they must scratch or pounce. Too much petting can also excite a cat and make it suddenly snarl at you.

Parrots as pets are perhaps least understood and most underestimated in terms of their companionship needs. Few know that certain species of parrots need as much as two hours of socialising with humans everyday. Since they are used to flying as much as 30 kilometres as day, even big houses are not big enough for them. Result, insistent loud calls which they know will irritate everybody and even digging their hooked beak into the scalp in an aggressive dive from the top! Their aggression is also often turned to themselves. They may start biting off their own feathers and make a wretched creature of themselves.

In conclusion, much aggression in the pets can be tamed if their social needs and peculiarities are understood. ■

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