Child Friendly News

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SPECIAL REPORT

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INDIA ALL SET TO GET ITS 29TH STATE

Its official – Telangana will be the 29th state of India. Both the houses of Indian Parliament have passed a new law that will divide the state of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Seemandhra. The law is waiting for the signature of the President of India (which is expected soon) to become reality. For ten years, both states will share a common capital city – Hyderabad. After that, Hyderabad will continue to be capital of Telangana while a new capital will be chosen for Seemandhra. The decision to divide the state comes after nearly 50 years of protests from the people of Telangana who have long wanted a state of their own.

The people of Telangana believe that their region has been neglected (not taken care of) by the government of Andhra Pradesh. They feel that once they are part of a separate state, more attention will be given to the development of the region.

Not everyone is happy though with the division. For the people of coastal Andhra Pradesh, which will come under Seemandhra, the biggest pang is giving up Hyderabad city. There were many protests over the division, but finally the government decided to grant the people of Telangana their wish.

The people of Telangana celebrate the news

Facts about Telangana
- Telangana means 'Land of the Telegus'
- Will be the 29th state of India
- Will be the fifth state of southern India – the other four being Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Seemandhra
- Will be the 12th largest state in India by size
- Will again be the 12th largest state by population (number of people living in it)
- Two of India's major rivers – the Krishna and Godavari – flow through the state

Leopard causes panic in Meerut

A leopard that had found its way into the heart of Meerut town last Sunday caused panic among the residents as it showed up inside a hospital. Meerut is about an hour's drive from New Delhi.

Although the animals was cornered in a hospital room and wildlife officers tried shooting tranquilizer darts at it (to calm it down and make it sleepy so that it could be safely captured), it managed to break out of the room on Sunday night.

The town was in a state of panic on Monday and schools remained closed. At the time of printing, the animal was still at large in Meerut and the police were out in force, guarding the streets.

As cities and towns get bigger, taking over wild areas, big cats end up wandering into human habited areas. In the case of the Meerut leopard, the reactions of the people – who tried to frighten the cornered cat – may have panicked the animal more.

> Space exploration is a force of nature unto itself that no other force in society can rival.
>
> — Neil deGrasse Tyson

INDIANS IN SHORTLIST FOR RACE TO THE MOON

A team from India has been shortlisted for important 'milestone' prizes in the Google Lunar X Prize, a competition sponsored by Google for which teams from around the world are racing to launch a moon rover by December 2015.

The grand winner will get 20 million US dollars (Rs.125 crore), provided they are the first to land an unmanned craft (a 'rover') on the moon, move for it at least 500 metres across the moon's surface and send back high quality images and video to Earth. But before the grand prize, there are important milestone prizes up for grabs. These include prizes for demonstrating hardware and software that will enable a soft-landing and movement on the moon's surface. To award the prize, the competition's judges will visit the shortlisted teams and inspect their work.

Team Indus, the only Indian team in the competition, has been shortlisted for two milestone prizes. The team consists of engineers from the Indian Institutes of Technology and other experts based in Bangalore. Indus, along with four other shortlisted teams, will have to prove to the judges that their hardware and software will work on the moon. They don't need to launch a spacecraft for this, instead, they will use simulations or 'make-believe scenarios' created on computers. Winners of the milestone prizes could earn between a quarter of a million to a million dollars (Rs.1.5crore – 6 crore) as prizes.

Members of Team Indus

What Team Indus' vehicle could look like

Cheetahs for MP

Nauradehi wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh's (MP's) Sagar district has been chosen as the site for the re-introduction of cheetahs in India. The cheetah, the fastest mammal on Earth, has been extinct in India since 1947. Nauradehi was chosen as the most suitable site for the cheetah during a survey carried out by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). A few years ago the Government announced a plan to re-introduce cheetahs in India.

Nauradehi was found ideal as the forest cover is not dense in the sanctuary. The cheetah relies on speed to chase down prey and it needs stretches of open ground to hunt freely. Small herbivores, the natural prey of the cheetah, are also found in large numbers at Nauradehi. The cheetahs will come from Namibia, a country in Southern Africa.

(Photo courtesy: Wikipedia)

Owlie's view:
India is struggling to protect existing species such as the tiger. In this scenario does it make sense to import new species into the country?

Dogs, cats may have a sixth sense

Have you ever had the feeling that your pet dog or cat is able to see something that you can't? The news from the scientific community is that they may indeed be able to see more as they have Ultra-violet (UV) vision.

The human brain blocks UV light but some animals such as bats, reindeer and some mice and moles were known to possess UV vision. Deer for instance are said to use UV vision to scan for camouflaged polar bears while bees use it to identify flower patterns that guide them to the best source of nectar for honey. Scientists in England who examined the eyes of cats and dogs have confirmed that pets also have UV vision.

It's not yet clear exactly how pets use UV vision – that research is still work in progress!

> When I look at the human brain I'm still in awe of it.
>
> — Benjamin Carson

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CFN CHRISTMAS STORY CONTEST WINNER

SANTA'S CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

Rahul Ramachandran is the winner of the first prize in the 10-14 years group. He is 11 years old and studies in Class V A of the National Public school, Rajajinagar, Bangalore.

Hope you enjoy reading his story!

When Santa walked through the door, he was nervous. It was the first time ever he had walked through a door of a house. He normally climbed down roofs. But, he had no choice, since the chimney of that house was under construction. It was the night before Christmas.

Santa stealthily crept across the living room, deposited the presents under the huge Christmas tree and was about to take off when he heard a noise . It sounded like someone crying. He paused, turned back and furrowed his brows. The children ought to be in bed, considering it was so late at night. Greatly daring, Santa crept up the stairs. He very well knew it was against the rules to go in, looking for a mystery .But his curiosity got the better of him. He stopped outside a door and listened. He heard a child wailing in a sorrowful voice.

Santa looked at his watch. A couple of houses to go, he had lots of time to spare! He knew he couldn't leave a child crying on Christmas Eve. He slowly opened the door and peeped. A small boy, about 5 years old, was lying in bed curled up beneath layers of blankets, thoroughly wetting his pillow. Santa looked at the child in dismay. It was absolutely devastating to see a child of that young an age in such misery, especially at a time like Christmas. The first thing he had noticed was that the house seemed quite deserted, except for a maid in the neighbouring room, who was sound asleep.

Santa enquired softly "What's the matter, little fella?" This got an immediate response. The child was so startled that his tears stopped at once. He gasped, "Santa! Is that really you? Am I in a dream?

Santa smiled at the boy "Yes, child, it's really me. Now tell me why you're crying." The boy sorrowfully said "My parents are too busy to celebrate Christmas. My mummy works in an office and my daddy is an engineer. They are never home. I did so want them at least to spend Christmas with me."

Santa exclaimed, "But that's terrible! Christmas is family-time!" "I know," said the boy miserably.

Santa smiled broadly at the boy and said "Never mind. I'm almost finished with my rounds! Let's see what I can do for you, little fella! Now close your eyes and make a wish and go to sleep. You'll wake up tomorrow, only to find a jolly good surprise!"

With these reassuring words, Santa left the poor little boy and hopped into his sleigh. He set off for the office where the boy's mother worked. Santa took out some magic dust and threw it on the guard. The guard closed his eyes sleepily. Santa made himself invisible so that he wouldn't be seen and entered the office. It was a busy place. Santa saw many people rushing about and others in their cubicles, busily tapping on their computer screens. Then he saw the boy's mother. She was on the cell-phone, answering enquiry after enquiry. She looked tired and sad.

Santa dug into his breast pocket and whipped out some more magic powder. He had an idea. His eyes glinted with mischief. What these busy people could do with was a bit of a holiday and some Christmas spirit. He went right into the boss's cubicle, and sprinkled the boss with the powder. In a few moments, all the people heard the boss announcing, "Good work folks! You have just earned yourselves a day-off. You have been working very hard for me and I am pleased with you all .Now,spend Christmas with your families." For a moment, everyone gaped. Then, they cheered and the boy's mom happily thought to herself "Now I can spend Christmas with my dear son!"

Santa then set off for the boy's father's office and repeated his prank. His good work done for the night, Santa set off to complete his rounds and before it struck midnight, headed back to the North Pole, chuckling to himself.

The next day, the little boy woke up. At first, he felt sad, then, he remembered Santa's words. With the faith that only children can have, he crept happily down the stairs.To his utter delight, he saw both his parents sitting happily under the tree. His Christmas wish had come true, all thanks to dear Santa. It was going to be the best Christmas ever!
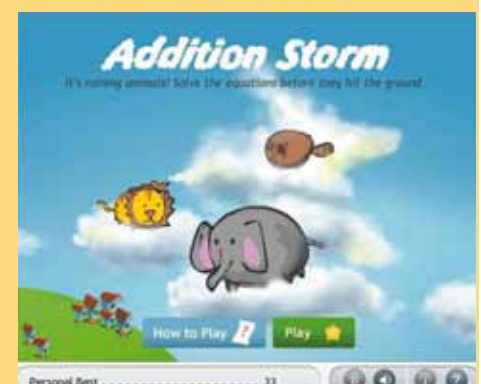
Website Wanderings

A GYM FOR YOUR BRAIN

You play a sport to get fit, but how do you exercise your brains? Do you know you could actually give your brain a work-out by playing some fun on-line games? That's what the people at Lumosity, a game maker based in the United States believe.

Their website – **www.lumosity.com** – offers games that can be played online. Some can be played free while others require a subscription. The games work to sharpen memory, attention and (mental) flexibility.

The games are fun to play and may be a good way to relax for short spells between studying for tests and exams when you can't go out and play.

Addition Storm

'If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

— John Quincy Adams'

Showing the way

JANAAGRAHA

The Bala Janaagraha Programme

All the children and schools who made change happen were part of Bala Janaagraha, a programme that is run by the Bangalore-based Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (JCCD). The purpose of the programme is to prepare children to become informed, responsible, and active citizens of tomorrow. Bala Janaagraha works with 324 schools across the country reaching out to 16,000 students to make this happen.

Why should I train to be an active citizen?

We all study to become doctors, lawyers and teachers, but many forget that we also need to train ourselves to become active citizens of India. Citizens who know their rights and how governments operate can get a lot of things done – they can ensure that their neighbourhoods stay clean, roads are repaired and street lights work.

Getting their hands dirty

Through the Bala Janaagraha programme, not only do students learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, they also work on a real-life civic project. This project could be about roads, traffic, garbage collection or any civic issue in the neighbourhood.

The most successful projects of 2013-14 were showcased at the Bala Janaagraha's National Civic Fest held in Bangalore on February 7, 2014. This year the winning schools were Delhi Public School, Ludhiana, The Chandra Devi Saraf School, Nagpur and the Little Flower Public School, Bangalore.

Let's find out what these winners did to bring about change in their cities.

Carving out a new road....literally!

Threekay Road in Ludhiana used to be called the 'gadde main road' due to the number of potholes. Students of Delhi Public School (DPS) Ludhiana conducted a detailed survey of the road and came up with a plan for its improvement. Then began the tough task of persuading the civic authorities (the government agency that is in charge of city maintenance) to improve the road. Thanks to the hard work of a bunch of 13 year old DPS students, Rs.5.13 crore was sanctioned by the government to improve the condition of the road. The improved road is likely to be opened to the public shortly.

Clearing the Clutter

Students of the Chandra Devi Saraf School also took on a project on road improvement. They surveyed an 800 metre stretch of Abhyankar Road in Nagpur and took their findings to the Nagpur Municipal Corporation. They suggested improvement of the road surface, a new traffic signal as well cleaning of garbage and drains. Although unable to convince the agency, they were determined to be heard and finally went to the city's mayor. The mayor couldn't say no to the students who had done their home-work. Work on the improvement of Abhyankar Road has begun and the new road will be opened to the public on March 31 2014.

> **Don't find fault, find a remedy.**
> — Henry Ford

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T he roads are dirty, garbage isn't collected regularly, traffic is disorderly and no one seems to care. Sounds familiar? Can you do something about it other than complain? Children from schools in cities across India certainly thought so. So, they went ahead and brought about change in their neighbourhoods. Let's find out how.

Local solutions for local problems

T he students of Little Flower School in Bangalore decided that their project would focus on the big problems faced by the residents of Ittimadu Main Road in East Bangalore. They distributed flyers among the residents asking for suggestions on what needed to be done to improve the area. They also invited suggestions through a website and mobile phones. These were then studied to make a list of improvements for the area. One of the main problems faced by the residents was the narrow width of the road which creates traffic problems. The students have come up with the solution of making the road open for one-way traffic only with traffic flowing in the opposite direction down a parallel road. In addition, they have created a list of improvements needed in the area such as removal of encroachments from pavements, sterilization of stray dogs and removal of garbage. The students have also met with local civic authorities including the Mayor of Bangalore to convince them of their plan.

Little Champions of Change

A t the National Civic Fest, 'Little Champions of Change' – children who had done impressive civic work in their neighbourhoods were also recognized. Let's meet a few of these change makers.

Cleaning up the neighbourhood

R utuja Paraskar, Salwa Cisekar and Aishwarya Sood of Sadhu Vaswani International School, Mumbai, embarked on a journey to improve the quality of life of slum-dwellers in their area. They got their area cleared of accumulated garbage and ensured that parking lanes were made in the vicinity to avoid haphazard parking. They also plan to install bins for collecting dry and wet waste in all roads near their school.

Getting to the root of things

P rajaktha V. Joshi and nine of her friends from GHS Saneguruvanahalli, a locality in Bangalore were concerned about the growing piles of garbage in their area. When they dug deeper into the problem, they found out that the municipal cleaners were afraid to clear garbage near electric poles as they feared getting an electric shock. With the help of their local municipal official, the students got the electricity company to educate the cleaners that they were in no danger from the poles. Thanks to the work of the students, the area is much cleaner than before.

Being the change

B othered by the fact that residents were dumping garbage wherever they liked, Roopavathi M and her team of three from GHS, Saneguruvanahalli began a campaign in the locality. They collected money from the residents of the area and installed a huge dustbin in their area. This is now being used by residents for collecting garbage – as a result, the local area is no longer dirty.

> In order to see birds it is necessary to become a part of the silence.
> — Robert Lynd

DELHI'S SHORTEST-LIVED CHIEF MINISTER

When he resigned as Delhi's Chief Minister (CM) just 48 days after taking on the job, Arvind Kejriwal became Delhi's shortest-lived Chief Minister. Kejriwal, who heads the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) resigned because he wasn't allowed to introduce a new law called the Jan Lokpal in the Delhi Assembly (which is the state's mini version of Parliament). Kejriwal's Jan Lokpal is a proposed law that seeks to punish officials of the Delhi government who are corrupt. This was mainly targeted at officials who take money to issue government certificates and permissions. Kejriwal's law is different from the Lokpal law that already covers the central government as it gives the Lokpal (the anti-corruption agency that will be set up under this law) powers to investigate, judge and punish an official who is believed to be corrupt. The central government has been saying that all these powers cannot be held by one organization. As a result, Members of the Delhi Assembly, who are not part of the AAP, did not allow Kejriwal to even introduce the law for discussion in the Assembly. In India, laws are passed by the people we elect after they have discussed them in Parliament or state assemblies. Bringing in the Jan Lokpal was one of Kejriwal's chief promises to his supporters before he was elected. Unable to keep his promise, the CM resigned.

INDIA

Without a CM, Delhi is under 'President's rule' and is being run directly by the central government. The official in charge is Najeeb Jung, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi.

Uproar in the Ukraine

Do you remember the winds of change that swept through West Asia and North Africa three years ago, toppling unpopular governments? Well, those winds are now blowing through Ukraine, a country in Eastern Europe that was once part of Russia. A few days ago, after months of protests, Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovych was removed from his job. The former president was considered a supporter of Russia and this is one of the reasons for his unpopularity. For months now, the people of Ukraine have been protesting in the streets of their capital Kiev for removal of Yanukovych. Their wishes have now been granted.

Ukraine occupies an important position on the map as it connects Western Europe with Russia. Important gas pipelines through which Russia supplies natural gas (used to generate electricity) to Europe run through the country. Peace in the Ukraine is therefore very important to both Russia and Europe. That's why the stormy situation in the country has attracted so much attention all over the world.

WORLD

The big bird count

INDIA

The 16th of February dawned foggy and cold in Delhi and parts of northern India while rain lashed the north-east, but that didn't stop around 3000 bird watchers across the country from setting off early in the morning to record as many birds as they could find. The occasion was 'Big Bird Day', when a nationwide bird count was organized.

Around 787 species of birds were seen on this day, which is 65% of the birds known to be found in India. The highest number of birds (in a single place) were seen in Kaziranga National Park (in Assam, famous for its rhinos), where an amazing 253 species were spotted on a that day!

The data reported by the birdwatchers was also a cause for concern, especially in the Delhi region, where the number of species has been declining (reducing) as habitats, especially wetlands, are taken over for construction of homes.

> I have only been captain for about eight games till now. It went pretty good but this is a big tournament. It's a challenge I'm looking forward to

— Virat Kohli

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INDIA LOSE SERIES TO NZ

India has lost the two match test series to New Zealand (NZ) 0-1. After setting up a winning position on Day 2, India proceeded to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory by allowing NZ captain Brendon McCullum to slam a triple ton, thus drawing the match.

If there were any silver linings for India, it certainly included Ishant Sharma, who bowled a wonderful spell in the first innings of the second test to notch up 6 wickets while conceding just 51 runs. When their turn to bat came up, Ajinkya Rahane and Shikhar Dhawan repaid the favour, scoring 118 and 98 respectively. By the end of the Indian innings, the Kiwis were 246 runs behind. At this juncture, several fumbles happened, chief among them a dropped catch that would have dismissed McCullum for just 9 runs. As a result, McCullum went to score NZs first triple ton ever, taking his team to series victory. India had already lost the first test.

New Zealand's first triple ton man, Brendon McCullum

Kohli to lead

With captain M S Dhoni suffering from an injury, Virat Kohli will captain the Indian team in the Asia Cup tournament. The Asia Cup will be played in Bangladesh between February 25 and March 8 between the teams of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Kohli's captaincy will be watched keenly as many commentators have not approved of Dhoni's captaincy in the NZ series, saying that he was very 'defensive' and not attacking enough in his approach. Several of these people want Kohli as India's new captain.

RUSSIA TOPS SOCHI MEDAL TABLE

Host country Russia topped the medal table at the Sochi Winter Olympics, finishing with 13 golds, two more than Norway. The Winters Olympics came to an end last Sunday.

The shadow over (problem faced by) the Games was the number of athletes who were found to be taking drugs that improved their field performance. Taking of such drugs is banned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Six athletes were found guilty of such 'doping' which is much higher than the single case recorded in the previous Winter Olympics held in Canada.

The Sochi Games were the largest Winter Olympics ever. It included more than 2,800 athletes from 88 countries - both records - and featured 12 new events.

Fireworks at the Sochi closing ceremony

← The Canadians won the coveted ice hockey gold at Sochi

MEDAL TALLY

Country	Gold Medals	Silver Medals	Bronze Medals	Total
Russia	13	11	9	33
Norway	11	5	10	26
Canada	10	10	5	25

Somdev wins Delhi Open

India's top ranked singles player, Somdev Devvarman won the Delhi Open tennis tournament on Sunday. He beat Aleksandr Nedovyesov of Kazakhstan to win the title. This is Somdev's third ATP title. The win earned Somdev valuable ATP points and he has jumped 18 places to become world number 78 in the latest ATP rankings.

ALL EYES ON THE ROAD

Traffic signs help you navigate safely around roads. Other than the regular signs for 'Right Turn', 'No Entry' and 'Parking' you occasionally come across some unusual ones. Here are some for you to decipher

1 **2** **3** **4**

Answers

1. Zebra crossing ahead 2. Wild animal crossing 3. Steep road ahead 4. Slippery road ahead

SUDOKU TIME

4					2
		3	4		
		6			
			2		
		5	3		
1					5

Try your hand at this Sudoku. Remember that numbers 1 to 6 can appear only once in each of the six rectangles. They can also appear only once in each row and column of the overall square.

Answer

4	6	1	5	3	2
5	3	2	1	4	6
3	2	6	4	1	5
1	4	5	6	2	3
6	5	4	2	3	1
2	1	3	5	6	4

FIND THE HIDDEN OBJECTS
Can you find the objects listed at the bottom of the picture?

ARROW   ELF SHOE   CRAYFISH   BIRD
TULIP   SALT SHAKER   MOON   BOOTS   CAP   MATCH   HEART
TEPEE   ENVELOPE   BADMINTON   (2) NAILS   BUTTERFLY
NEEDLE   PEAR   MUSHROOM   CANDLE   BIRDIE

Top Reads for Kids and Young Adults

1. The Secret of the Fairies: Thea Stilton by Geronimo Stilton
2. Wonder by RJ Palacio
3. Demon Dentist by David Walliams
4. The Abominables by Eva Ibbotson
5. The 39 Clues: Unstoppable #1: Nowhere to Run
6. The Puffin History of the World by Roshen Dalal
7. National Geographic Kids Almanac: 2014
8. Chained by Lynne Kelly
9. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck by Jeff Kinney
10. Phiss Phuss Boom: Stories from Our Grandparents by Anushka Ravishankar/ Jerry Pinto/ Sayoni Basu

To know more about these books and to buy them, check out
www.toptenbooksoftheweek.com