

# Child Friendly News



**TIGER TIGER BURNING BRIGHT**

PG 4-5



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## MORE 'POWER' TO INDIA, AGREES THE US



US President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

**U**nited States (US) President Barack Obama was in town last weekend as the Chief Guest of India's Republic Day parade on January 26 but what he and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi achieved in their discussions was the bigger news of the presidential visit. The two leaders have worked out a way for US nuclear power companies to help set up power generating units in India, something that was long pending.

### What is the big deal?

In 2008, India and the United States signed an agreement to work together on nuclear power. Nuclear power, which is energy generated when certain atoms (the tiny building blocks that make up all things in the universe) are split, can be used to generate

large amounts of electricity very efficiently and with far less pollution than power plants that use coal and oil.

But an accident in Japan in 2011 that caused harmful gases to spill out of a nuclear power plant made the world wary (cautious) about using nuclear power. The fear of such accidents had already caused India to insist that US companies that help set up plants in India would also need to take responsibility – in other words 'be liable' – if there was an accident. The US refused to agree – and the matter was stuck at this point for 6 years.

### What's new now?

India and the US have now agreed that India will set up an insurance fund (money) that would be used to pay for damages to affected people if an accident occurred. With

the US and India agreeing to this, US nuclear power companies may decide to invest in India.

### What will be the impact?

Nuclear energy is a clean source of energy and is not based on a resource like oil that India has very little of. So, it will help us generate the power we need to run our homes and offices.

### What's the downside?

However, there are big questions on the safety of nuclear energy as the accident in Japan showed. India needs to move carefully.

## 'COMMON MAN' NO MORE

India's most loved cartoonist R K Laxman died in Pune this Tuesday at the age of 94. Laxman was famous for his daily cartoon in *The Times of India* newspaper which appeared for many years.

Laxman's famous cartoon strip in *The Times of India* featured the character known as the 'Common Man' through whom the cartoonist gave us his take (views) on modern life in India. The cartoons often poked fun at the politicians of

the day, much to their discomfort. R K Laxman was the brother of the famous author R K Narayan and he also illustrated some of his brother's stories such as *'Malgudi Days'*.

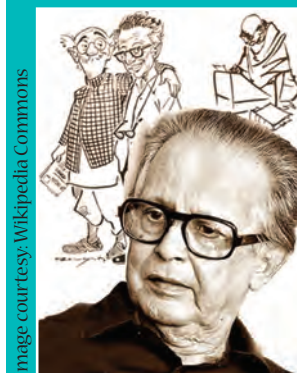


Image courtesy: Wikipedia Commons

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I think the important thing is that this demonstrated how much we still have to learn about nature in general, and even some of the largest and most charismatic wildlife species on the planet

—Canadian professor and hippo expert Dr Joseph P Dudley on the recent discovery regarding hippos.

# OCEANS FACE MASS EXTINCTION

**M**any ocean dwelling creatures face mass extinction thanks to a number of problems, all created by us humans, says a new report created by ecologists (scientists who study the environment) from the University of Santa Barbara in the United States. The good news and the silver lining in this cloud is that we still have the time to solve the problem.

Due to their sheer size (71% of the Earth is water) the oceans have not been as affected by humans as the land. Plus it is more difficult for humans to damage ocean habitats, many of which lie thousands of kilometres away from our dwelling places. As a result, fewer species extinctions have occurred in the oceans as compared to the land. According to data from the report quoted in the New York Times newspaper, compared to 514 extinctions that have occurred on land in the last 500 years, only 15 extinctions are known to have occurred in the oceans in the same period.

## But that pattern is beginning to change:

- Global warming – which is the rise in the Earth's temperatures caused by human activity – is beginning to affect the oceans. This is partly the reason why coral reefs are dying (40% of the world's reefs have been affected already) and fish are migrating en masse (in large numbers) to cooler waters.
- Carbon emissions from human activity is changing the content of sea water in a harmful way
- Deep sea mining is beginning to destroy habitats
- Mangrove ecosystems are being replaced with fish farms
- Trawlers that pull nets along the ocean floor are spoiling the sea bed



## How do we stop all this?

Scientists who wrote the report have pointed out that it may not be practical to stop all human activity but it may become necessary to limit these to specific areas leaving others undisturbed. But the problem of global warming requires a change in human lifestyles so that we generate fewer amounts of harmful CO<sub>2</sub> gases (which are produced by power plants, factories and vehicles) that make temperatures rise. The good news from the report is that if we take action in time, we can save the ocean.

## ARE HIPPOS CARNIVORES?



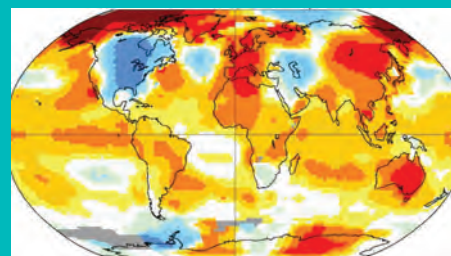
Image courtesy: Wikipedia Commons

**H**uge, hulking hippos are often thought of as gentle, grass-eating giants who like to wallow in pools in the warmth of the African sun. Well, these massive creatures are not gentle at all – as any knowledgeable safari guide in Africa will tell you. But now it turns out that hippos may not be exclusive (only) herbivores, and that they may eat meat too. Proof of this was recorded by a research student from London who was visiting South Africa's Kruger National Park. There he chanced upon a hippo sharing the carcass (dead body) of another hippo with crocodiles. So, they may not just be carnivores, but also cannibals (species who eat their own kind). Scientists studying hippos are however yet to find out why and when hippos turn into meat eating creatures.

## 2014 THE WARMEST YEAR EVER

2014 was the hottest year on record, says a new report prepared by two United States government agencies - space agency NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Global temperatures have been recorded for the last 150 years or so, and in that time, the ten warmest years have been since 1997. 2014 was the warmest of them all. Higher temperatures were seen in various parts of the world including, most of Europe stretching into northern Africa, the western United States, far eastern Russia, western Alaska, parts of interior South America and parts of eastern and western coastal Australia (see areas marked in orange and red on the map), the report said.

NASA data shows that since 1880, Earth's average surface temperature has warmed by about 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 degree Celsius). This increase is caused mainly by the burning of fossil fuels like coal to generate electricity. The increase, though it may appear small, is enough to upset the natural balance. For example, a warmer Earth causes Arctic ice to melt – this in turn reduces the living area for polar animals that live on the ice. It also causes ocean levels to rise and ultimately leads to low islands being submerged (covered) by sea water. Entire island nations like Mauritius may disappear this way.





I think the cost of energy will come down when we make this transition to renewable energy.  
—Al Gore



Features

CHILD FRIENDLY NEWS

29 January 2015

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3

## CREATIVE SCIENCE

# THE RENEWABLE ENERGY ISLAND

A small island off the coast of Denmark named Samsø has become the world's first renewable energy island by producing more energy from 'green' sources than what the 4,000 inhabitants of the island consume.

### What is wind power?

Situated as it is on the windy Kattegat Strait that connects the North and Baltic Seas, Samsø is never short of strong winds. These winds power (move) the 21 wind turbines that its residents have installed on the island and in the nearby sea. Wind turbines convert the energy in gusts of wind into electricity that can be used to light up homes and heat water. As a source of energy, it is good for the environment because wind turbines are not polluting. Plus, the wind is a resource that the Earth is not going to run out of – that is why it's called a renewable energy resource.

### Samsø shows how

Earlier, the people of Samsø used electricity produced by burning coal at a nearby power plant. This is how much of the electricity in India is produced as well. The problem with burning coal is that it releases the gas Carbon Di-oxide or CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, thus polluting it. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from power plants are a major cause of air pollution the world over.

Now, Samsø's residents get their power from wind turbines. Not only do they make all the power they need, they also 'sell' their excess power, making a good amount of money in the process. As they learnt about making their energy use 'green', the people of Samsø also began



Wind turbines rise above Samsø

looking at others ways in which they could save energy. To prevent heat from escaping rooms, layers of insulation using newspapers were added to Samsø's homes. People also began installing solar panels on their roofs to generate energy for heating water – solar energy is also green and renewable as it uses the heat of the sun. One farmer is even producing diesel from plants and using that to drive his car and tractor.

By embracing renewable energy, the little island of Samsø may be showing the way to the world. Indeed, the green fields growing strawberries, potatoes and pumpkins that dot Samsø's landscape are way 'greener' than they look.

## THE BOOK NOOK

### Indian Mammals: A Field Guide by Vivek Menon

If you are an explorer at heart who loves to visit the jungles of India, then Vivek Menon's updated field guide on Indian Mammals will prove to be a worthwhile travelling companion. The only such guide of its kind in India, the book has details of virtually every mammal known to exist in India.

Over 400 species of land and water mammals are grouped into categories such as Primates, Carnivores, Whales and Dolphins to make locating an animal easy. For each species, there are descriptions of the animal, important facts on their behavior, their habitat as well as colour photographs that will make identification in the field easier.



For key species like elephants, the book offers an entire chapter with information on their foraging habits, the way they communicate and the way elephant society works. Our favourite parts of the book were the introductory section on 'Watching Mammals' which tells you what to look for while observing mammals and how to interpret their behavior as well as Menon's personal field notes on his unusual experiences in the wild regions of India.

Price: Rs.850

Available at: Most large bookstores and online



# TIGER, TIGER BURNING BRIGHT

The latest data released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority shows that the number of tigers in India has increased by 30% in the last 4 years. Does this mean the tiger is no longer in danger of extinction now?

## The good news

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NCTA), which is responsible for protecting the tiger in India, says that by the end of 2014, the number of tigers in India stood at 2226. This is a 30% increase (30% means that if there were 100 before, there are 130 now) from the 1706 tigers counted in 2010.

The tiger, our National Animal, is an endangered species, and its numbers had fallen to just 1411 in 2006. This made a lot of people, including the Government of India, sit up and take notice. Since then, some efforts have been made to protect tiger habitats, and this may have led to the increase in numbers.

## How was the count done?

The count uses a combination of men and machines to count the tigers. While officials travelled through India's 47 tiger reserves to manually count the tigers they saw, the NCTA also used 9735 cameras that were fitted out as camera traps. When an animal goes past the camera, a camera trap is triggered to take a photo.

But how do people in the count avoid double counting a tiger – i.e., ensure each individual is counted only once? Trained trackers and forest guards can identify one tiger from another by studying pugmarks and the pattern of stripes on their coats.

## Where are India's tigers?

Karnataka has the largest population of tigers in India with 408 while Uttarakhand stands second with 340 tigers counted there. Madhya Pradesh comes third with 308 tigers. These states are home to some of India's best known national parks such as Nagarhole, Corbett, Kanha and Bandhavgarh.

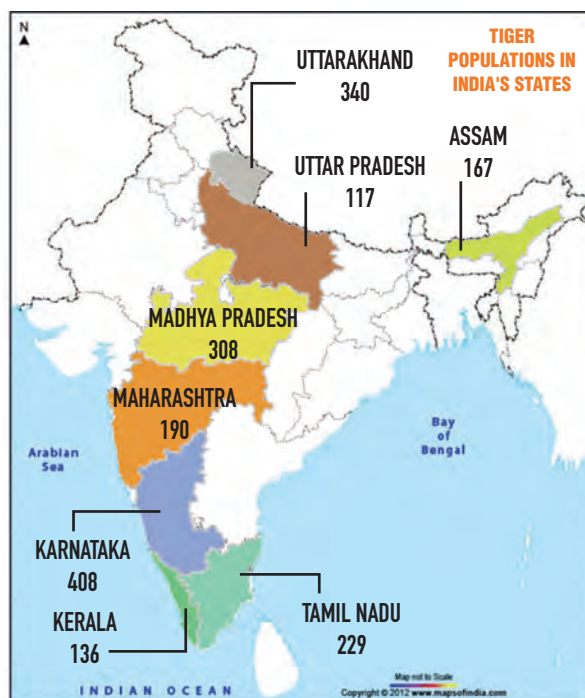


Setting up a camera trap

Photo courtesy: WCS



Photo Courtesy: Dibyendu Ash/ Wikimedia Commons



**DID YOU KNOW?** India has over half the world's population of tigers. We are therefore responsible for ensuring that the tiger does not become extinct.

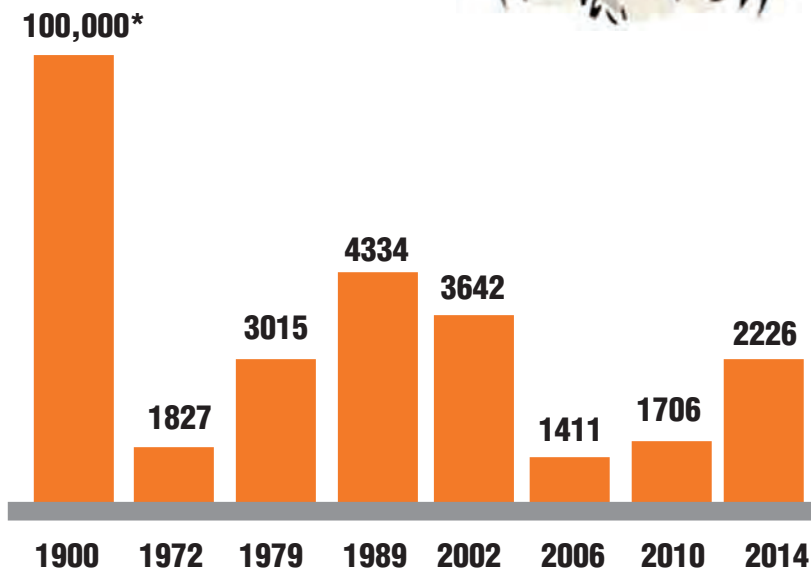


## TIGER NUMBERS

It is believed that over 100 years ago, around one lakh tigers roamed the forests of South Asia and Russia. India's population had shrunk to less than 2000 tigers 70 years later. Indira Gandhi, who was then the Prime Minister of India, launched Project Tiger in 1973 with the goal of protecting our national animal. The number of tigers climbed up to over 4000. But, as tiger poaching increased in the 1990s, tiger numbers started to fall.

## TIGER POPULATION IN INDIA

### SHRINKING NUMBERS



The numbers on top of the rectangles refer to tiger populations.  
\* Overall world population



Tiger bones are used in Chinese medicine

### What threatens India's tigers?

Habitat loss – the size of the area available to them – is a big reason for the reduction in tiger numbers in the last 100 years. While they once freely roamed all of India, tigers are now boxed into small pockets in scattered locations. As human population increased, we ate into the tiger's space. This is generally true for all wildlife in India.

Poaching is the other big problem. Traditional Chinese medicine uses tiger bones and to meet this demand, tigers are regularly poached (killed). Around 274 tigers died in India in the last four years and most of them were killed by poachers.

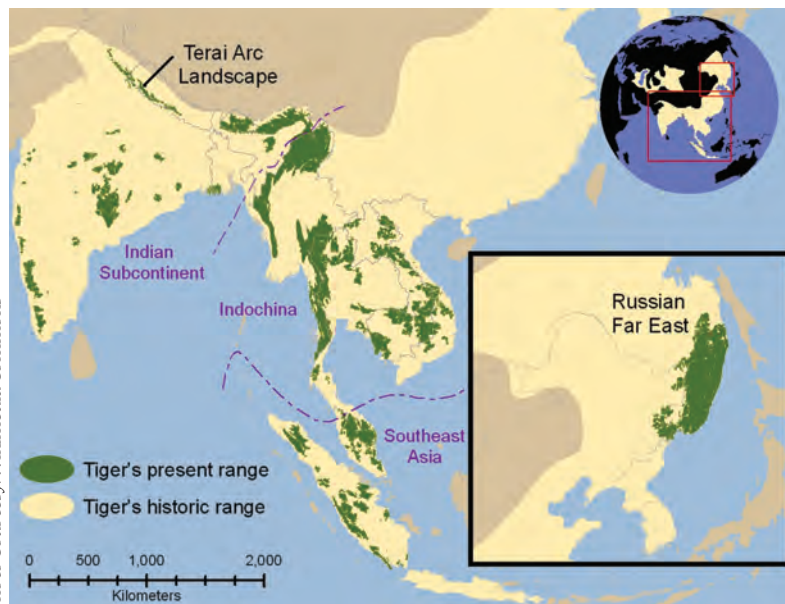


Photo Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons

The tiger once roamed over a large part of Asia. Its habitat has now shrunk to a few pockets.

## QUESTION TIME

To understand the news about tiger numbers better, we spoke to Ramki Sreenivasan, a Bangalore-based technology entrepreneur, birdwatcher and wildlife photographer. He co-founded and coordinates Conservation India, a non-profit, non-commercial portal that facilitates wildlife and nature conservation. Here are his thoughts:



**Q: Does the increase in tiger numbers mean the tiger is no longer in danger in India?**

**Ramki:** While it is heartening that tiger numbers are rebounding, the tiger is not out of danger. We should not become complacent and develop a false sense of security looking at the new figures. Poaching, loss of habitat, loss of prey species (ie food!) and, increasingly, conflict with humans at the edge of forests are real issues.

**Q: Did the use of camera traps make the count more accurate?**

**Ramki:** Absolutely. The erstwhile 'pugmark census' was not scientific and led to serious inaccuracies in tiger numbers. Fortunately, it was phased out and a new methodology using camera traps was introduced in 2006.

**Q: Poaching or loss of habitat – which is the bigger problem for tigers in India?**

**Ramki:** Difficult to say! I would say both are serious issues. The growing Chinese middle and upper class have become big consumers of tiger parts which has led to creation of dangerous international poaching networks.

**Q: What else should the government do to save the tiger?**

**Ramki:** The government should continue relocating people stranded inside our sanctuaries and tiger reserves. It is a win-win solution for both people and wildlife. People would get a better future and we would create more space for tigers and wildlife. It should also invest more in building good relations with communities living in the fringes of forests so they can be a big support in conservation. Human-wildlife conflict should also be addressed.

**Q: What can I (as a child) do?**

**Ramki:** Understand the real issues. Watch the film "The Truth about Tigers" which is an amazing documentary about the real issues conservationists in the country are grappling with. "Saving the Tiger" is not an actionable phrase. It comes with a lot of small steps an individual can do like being part of watchdog NGOs, keeping one's eyes open for violations while visiting parks and reporting these issues to park and authorities.

## WHY ARE TIGERS IMPORTANT?

Tigers are apex predators – this means that they sit on top of the jungle food chain. A healthy population of tigers is needed to keep the numbers of other animals particularly their prey (such as deer) in check. This is important because if the number of herbivores shoots up, it will lead to over-grazing of the habitat. A good tiger population indicates that the jungle ecosystem is healthy.



INDIA



We believe we are equal and second to none. We have already marched for the first time on the Army Day and now another first would be the Republic Day parade. So, yes, we do wish to be in the combat force —Captain Divya Ajith of the Indian Army asking for equality for women in the armed forces



# 'Women Power' at Republic Day parade

This year's Republic Day Parade had some 'firsts'. For first time in the history of the Parade, an exclusive contingent (group) of women from the Army, Navy and Air Force marched down Rajpath in New Delhi. While women have taken part in the parade before, this was the first time there was an all-women contingent. Women have been part of the military (armed forces) in India for some time but they are only assigned to support roles (such as communication, transport)

There were other firsts as well. It was the first time that the President of the United States was the chief guest at the parade.



The all-women contingent of the Air Force



The Daredevils – the motorbike riders of the Border Security Force (BSF)

and do not take part in the fighting. But our military women seem ready to fight. As Captain Divya Ajith who led the all-women Army contingent on the parade said recently: "We believe we are equal and sec-

ond to none. We have already marched for the first time on the Army Day and now another first would be the Republic Day parade. So, yes, we do wish to be in the combat force." Do you agree?

## A salute to brave soldiers

Republic Day is also the time when India's top military awards are given out. During the Republic Day parade on Rajpath, New Delhi, the winners of the Ashok Chakra, the highest peacetime gallantry award, were honoured. This is an award given to a soldier for an act of bravery during a time when India is not at war (such as the present).

The Ashok Chakra was given this year to Naik Neeraj Kumar Singh and Major Mukund Vardarajan who fought bravely against terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir. Unfortunately, both soldiers died in their battles, so the award was given posthumously (after their death) to their widows (wives), who received the medals from the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, at the parade.



The widow of Major Mukund Vardarajan receives the Ashok Chakra from the President

## Bill Gates gets Padma Bhushan

India's most important national awards such as the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri are announced on Republic Day. This year, two foreigners – Bill and Melinda Gates – have been



Bill and Melinda Gates

chosen for the Padma Bhushan, the third most important award given in India. The Indian American Manjul Bhargava (who won an important international mathematics prize in 2014) will also be given the Padma Bhushan.

Bill Gates is the founder of Microsoft, an American company which makes computer programmes you probably use at home or school. But he and his wife have been given the award for the charity work they have been doing for many years. The couple has donated billions of dollars for improving health and education of poor people in many countries including India.

The Padma Vibhushan is the second most important award in India and this year actors Amitabh Bachchan and Dilip Kumar (both Hindi film actors) have been chosen for the award.



Bravery is the capacity to perform properly even when scared half to death.

—Omar N. Bradley



News

7

CHILD FRIENDLY NEWS

29 January 2015

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INDIA

# A bravery lesson from an eight year old

At the age of eight, you were probably busy with school, friends and sports. The world is very different for Mhonbeni Ezung, an eight year old girl from Nagaland who has been much feted in New Delhi this past week. This little girl has traveled far to reach India's capital where she took part in the Republic Day parade on January 26 as the youngest winner of the National Bravery Awards. Last January, Mhonbeni had gone fishing with her 78 year old grandmother near a village in Nagaland when the old lady became unwell and fell into a stream. Young Mhonbeni managed to pull her grandmother out and rescue her. She then ran 4-5 kilometres through the jungle alone to get help. Her grandmother survived the incident thanks to Mhonbeni's bravery.

This year 8 girls and 16 boys were given National Bravery awards for the exceptional courage they showed in fighting thieves, kidnappers and rescuing other people. One of the children was given the award posthumously as she died saving her father from people who attacked her home. The Bravery awards are given each year during Republic Day celebrations.



Mhonbeni Ezung

SPORTS

## Saina, Kashyap win Syed Modi titles



Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap won the Women's and Men's singles titles at the Syed Modi International Badminton Championships in Lucknow on Sunday. The tournament is named after Syed Modi, one of India's top badminton players in the 1980s.

While Kashyap easily defeated fellow Indian K. Srikanth in two games, it was a tougher match for Nehwal who was up against World Champion Carolina Marin of Spain. She dropped (lost) the first game but went on to win the last two to lift the trophy. Nehwal is the No 3 ranked player in the world and the win at the first big tournament of the year should give her a boost for the year ahead.

SPORTS

## Old stars fade at Australian Open

The first Grand Slam tennis tournament of the year – the Australian Open – is underway in Melbourne right now. At the start of the second week, it is clear that age is calling time on the careers of stars like Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, both of whom crashed out of the tournament.

Federer lost in the third round to unknown Italian player Andreas Seppi. This is the first time since 2001 that he has lost in the first week of the Australian Open.

Nadal held on for the first week but, but lost in the quarterfinals to Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic, a player he has defeated the last 17 times he played against him. But Nadal, who was trying to make a come-back after an injury was not the fighting player he used to be. He lost to the Czech player in three straight sets.



Rafael Nadal: Not the player we knew

### Things you should know about Grand Slam tournaments

- Men's games last 5 sets and women's games last 3 sets
- The top 8 players make it to the quarterfinals, top 4 to the semi-finals before the two best players of the tournament play the final



## Are you clued-in on cats?

Sure, you know the tiger. Can you recognise any of these cats?



1. Clouded Leopard  
2. Ocelot  
3. Caracal  
4. Cougar

Answers

## UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS

Re-arrange the alphabets to find the word

**Hint:** All clues are linked to the theme of big cats

1. **ELNIEF**

2. **KPGARUM**

3. **BCU**

4. **ERDPAOTR**

1. Feline  
2. Pugmark  
3. Cub  
4. Predator

Answers

## SUDOKU TIME

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	4		1		
	2	4	3		
		1	2	4	
		6		3	
3					

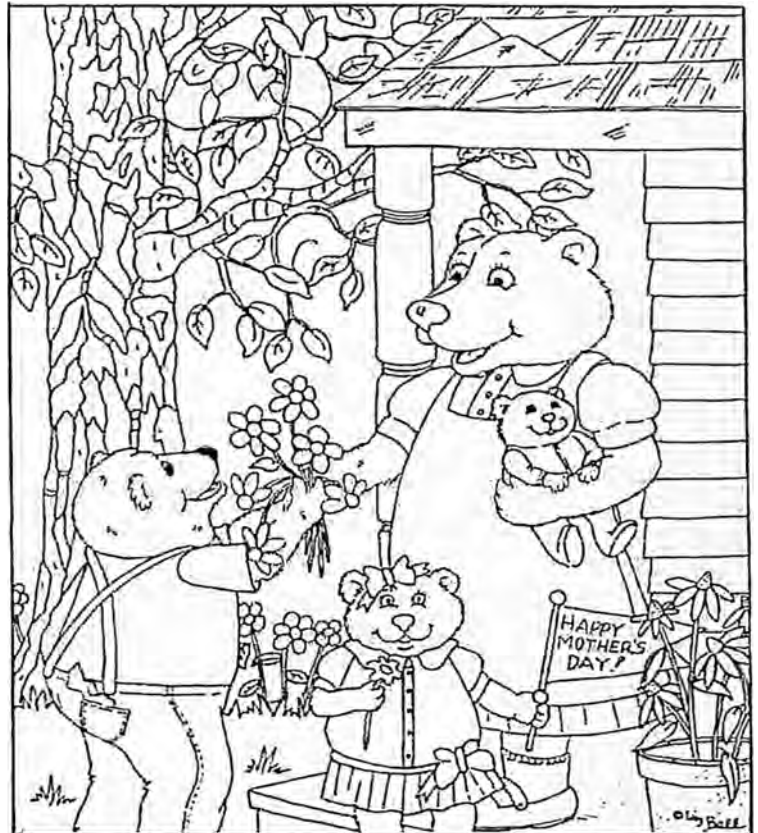
Try your hand at this Sudoku. Remember that numbers 1 to 6 can appear only once in each of the six rectangles. They can also appear only once in each row and column of the overall square.

3	5	2	6	1	4
4	1	9	5	3	2
5	3	1	2	4	6
6	2	4	3	5	1
2	4	5	1	6	3
1	6	3	4	2	5

Answer

## FIND THE HIDDEN PICTURES

Can you find the objects listed at the bottom of the picture?



## Top Reads for Kids and Young Adults

1. Dragons at Crumbling Castle by Terry Pratchett
2. Awful Auntie by David Walliams
3. Malgudi Schooldays by RK Narayan
4. Girl Online by Zoe Sugg
5. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul by Jeff Kinney
6. Pashu: Animal Tales from Hindu Mythology by Devdutt Pattanaik
7. The Incredible History of India's Geography by Sanjeev Sanyal
8. Thea Stilton and the Missing Myth by Geronimo Stilton
9. The Bane Chronicles by Cassandra Clare
10. Young Bond: Shoot to Kill by Steve Cole



To know more about these books and to buy them, check out [www.toptenbooksoftheweek.com](http://www.toptenbooksoftheweek.com)

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Child Friendly News or CFN is an age appropriate newspaper for children in the age group 7-13. The newspaper comes out every fortnight. Every issue is written using language that young readers can understand on their own interspersed with pictures and imagery. Quick explanations of difficult words and terms and boxed elements that explain concepts accompany every article — this is to help build vocabulary as well as context understanding. Special reports take up one topic in depth

while regular columns on everyday technology concepts keep children up-to-date with the world around them. A subscription costs Rs. 650 for the year.

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