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MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS    INDIA

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## FIRST COLUMN

## THE SCIENCE OF MUDRAS

Rooted in the five elements, the five pranas and the three doshas, mudras have therapeutic properties



RAVI VALLURI

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says, "There is nothing as sacred as knowledge." Knowledge can be acquired by the human mind through the 5 Ds—dedication, determination, dynamism, devotion and discipline and one H—Humility. The science of mudras, is intrinsically related to the esoteric knowledge of yoga and which can be further segregated into the five elements, the five life forces (or subtle forces of energy called the pranas) and the three doshas. The five elements are namely—Akash (ether or space), Vayu (air), Agni (fire), Jal (water) and Prithvi (earth); the five life forces or pranas are Prana, Udana, Samana, Apana and Vyana and the three doshas are Vata, Kapha and Pitta. Humans unconsciously practice mudras. For instance, the Namaste Mudra or a young child begins learning to walk with his thumbs raised which is called the Meru Dand Mudra. An infant even in a deep slumber, his index finger would involuntarily touch the thumb and the other three fingers are on the base of the palm (Chinmaya Mudra). The universe in its auto-mode conjures these processes to take place and we are oblivious to the occurrence. Some other mudras which need to be practised are:

(a) Jnana mudra: This is performed to increase brain power, improve memory and for the removal of negative thoughts. Thereby one attains peace and bliss.

(b) Prithvi mudra: This helps in balancing the five sense organs, improves blood circulation and enhances our energy levels. Practice of this mudra assists in increasing our alertness.

(c) Apana mudra: This facilitates an improved elimination process, revitalising the digestive system, improving the gums and strengthening immunity.

(d) Prana mudra: This mudra addresses the problem of fatigue; it also



provides essential vitamins to the body besides increasing stamina and vigour to the human body. It also helps in maintenance of the health of our eyes.

(e) Dhyana mudra: Essentially, this mudra helps in making us mindful and wakeful and we are at peace with ourselves. Over a period, we attain peace of mind.

(f) Shunhya Vayu mudra: Practice of this mudra helps in combating problems of flatulence and gastric ailments. The gut houses our solar plexus, which is also referred to as the second brain. We need to take adequate care of our abdomen as most human ailments arise from this part of the body. Therefore, there is enormous merit in the adage, "Health is in your hands".

Sudarshan Kriya: The unique breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya is the fulcrum of the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living. Su means proper, Darshan implies vision and Kriya is a purifying action. Through the actions of our breath, we appreciate a proper vision of who we are. It is momentous to understand that nature runs on a rhythm. For instance, the sun rises and sets at a particular time, similarly, seasons arrive and exit at predetermined times. Humans feel hungry or sleepy at certain times. Our emotions, feelings and thoughts are all cast in the symphony of rhythm. We are unable to distinguish between cacophony and symphony in this frenetic pace of life which is cannonaded by innumerable thoughts, continuous action and noise. When sounds are harmonised by the syllable of Soham, we can term it as magical music. Enlightenment is not accruing anything providential but harmonising our whole being rhythmically. During the breathing process participants feel varied sensations, emotions, tingling sensations, laughter, weeping among others. This wonderful knowledge and wisdom have triggered humaneness to blossom when every cell is energised.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

# Cornered in the wild: Trapped tigers spark conservation debate

As human encroachment, tourism and habitat fragmentation continue to blur the boundaries between nature and civilisation write **BKP Sinha and Arvind Kumar Jha**

A viral video capturing a distressing scene of a tigress and her cubs blocked by a throng of safari vehicles in Maharashtra's Umred Pauni Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary has recently stirred significant concern and legal action. The Bombay High Court has taken suo-motu cognizance of the incident. Soon after, the Supreme Court sought a uniform national policy for managing the country's tiger reserves. The harrowing sight of the tiger family, seemingly gripped by fear while navigating the available space, serves as a poignant metaphor for the troubling dynamics between humans and wildlife, whether inside a tiger reserve or not. Mankind's relentless drive to dominate and exploit nature has led to a disturbingly eroded sense of ecological sanity. Tigers, magnificent predators endowed with a formidable set of adaptations, have long been revered for their prowess. Their sharp teeth and claws, exceptional vision and hearing, flexible spines and explosive bursts of speed enable them to efficiently stalk and capture prey.

Their striped coats act as camouflage, making them elusive both as hunters and as well as prey. Tigers, being solitary creatures, are known to be fiercely territorial, marking their domains with scents, claw marks, and vocalisations. While frequent and close encounters with tigers may thrill tourists, these experiences come at a significant cost to the animals' well-being. Increased human presence not only exacerbates stress and vulnerability among these majestic creatures but also alters their natural behaviour. After several populist initiatives to regularise forest encroachments, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) was legislated in 2006. It marked an era of mass-scale recognition of habitation, self-cultivation, and community forest resource rights. However, it has also resulted in new encroachments and a notable influx of human populations into forest areas increasing the proximity and chances of conflict between wildlife and humans.

The data from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs shows that by November 2024, an overwhelming 4.35 million (85.7 per cent) out of 5.07 million claims under the FRA had been disposed of. Titles on forest rights in 33 million acres of forest land having been given, illegal occupation continues in the rejected cases which are 36.5 per cent in left-wing affected states and 60 per cent in others.

The absence of a final deadline for claim submission, ease of securing recommendations from Gram Sabhas that many times are not held, the prevalent use of the FRA as a political tool, and the quality of scrutiny at the authorities' levels have created an environment encouraging encroachers confident of regularisation. In Gujarat, 434 cases have been disposed of, and Maharashtra accepted 4,322 new individual forest rights claims in November while distributing 498 titles. Triggered by legislation, such a trend of ingress into wildlife habitats is unprecedented. There has been a significant surge in recognition of community forest resource rights (CFRR) after the FRA Rules were amended in 2012. Management rights of forests have been granted to communities by violating the eligibility conditions stipulated in sections 3(1)(i) and 4(3) of the FRA. Not sparing even tiger reserves and National Parks and Sanctuaries, such rights are granted, for example, in huge areas in Chhattisgarh in Dhamtari (5,544 ha), Achankmar and Sitnadi Udanti tiger reserves (12,527 ha), 60 per cent of Billigiri Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, and the



IN AN UNPRECEDENTED MOVE, THE ODISHA STATE GOVERNMENT ISSUED AN ORDER IN 2024 HOLDING FOREST OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE FOR TIGER DEATHS WHICH HAS STIRRED CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY FORESTERS IN BALANCING CONSERVATION EFFORTS WITH THE RIGHTS AND SAFETY OF PEOPLE

Tansa Sanctuary in Maharashtra. Such actions do trigger a surge of human presence within wildlife habitats. As regards human casualties resulting from tiger attacks, they were recorded at 110 in 2022 and 82 in 2023. Data from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), however, sheds light on troubling trends in tiger mortality. In 2021 and 2022, tiger deaths within reserves exceeded those outside. However, this pattern reversed in 2023 and 2024, with more tiger fatalities occurring outside protected areas. As of January 2025, 17 tiger deaths have been reported, 12 of which occurred outside reserves. The conversion of spared areas into shared spaces impacts the behaviour of wildlife. Tigers are no exception.

They naturally respect territorial boundaries but get forced to venture into human habitations due to encroachment and habitat degradation. It does result in harm to locals, mostly accidental and out of hunger rather than retaliatory or revengeful. People, however, in contrast to their erstwhile prevalent spirit of tolerance and co-existence, mostly respond now through retaliation or out of vengeance resulting in the escalation of human-wildlife conflict.

In an unprecedented move, the Odisha state government issued an order in 2024 holding forest officials accountable for tiger deaths which has stirred conversations about the responsibilities and challenges faced by foresters in balancing conservation efforts with the rights and safety of people. The interaction between humans and wildlife species that are naturally active during the day (diurnal) or at dawn and dusk (crepuscular) face substantial behavioural changes when their activity patterns overlap with human activities. In the case of recreational activities in parks also, animals that typically forage or hunt during these times may alter their routines due to the presence of people, leading to stress and changes in feeding, mating, and territorial behaviours. Inside and near forests, light pollu-

tion, such as artificial lighting from streetlights, homes and recreational areas disrupts wildlife in numerous ways.

It can interfere with their natural movement patterns, making it difficult for animals to navigate their habitats, find food, or avoid predators. Light pollution can also impact predation, as predators might find it easier to spot prey, or conversely, prey might become disoriented and more vulnerable. Additionally, artificial lighting can affect reproductive behaviours, as many species rely on natural light cues for mating rituals and timing. The current approach of providing electricity etc. to interior forest habitations, seemingly beneficial for human populations, does pose a significant threat to long-term wildlife conservation. Along with this, large-scale proposals such as those recently announced in Telangana and Nagarhole (Coorg district) of Karnataka must consider their potential impact on human-wildlife conflict too.

Mitigating adverse impacts on wildlife necessitates more than merely avoiding times when human activities overlap with wildlife activity periods, the large-scale nature of such disturbances can still have a profound effect on wildlife. These disturbances often displace animals from their natural habitats, causing significant behavioural changes that can threaten even their survival. Instances from the area near Pench National Park in Maharashtra highlight the negative consequences of the changed behaviour of tigers. In one such case, a tiger in Parshiwni village attacked only tethered cattle, easy prey. During the necropsy of this tiger, excessive fat was found due to changes in its behaviour and diet. In the Ramtek area tigers have exhibited a concerning loss of territorial instincts indicating a breakdown in their natural order and social structure. Another tiger from the Kanhan region displayed unusual behaviour by regularly avoiding consuming its kill. Such avoidance

suggests, prima facie, a high level of stress and disturbance. Such instances are alarming as they simply indicate that the natural predator-prey dynamics and status of the health of the tiger population are compromised. Minimising disturbance to wildlife is paramount inside tiger reserves. However, with the current onslaught by humans and the pace of blurring of ecosystem boundaries, a more nuanced approach is necessary which requires a deeper understanding of the spatial and temporal dynamics of wildlife movement, recognition of the varying levels of sensitivity among different species, and consideration of a broader ecological context that includes fragmented landscapes, human settlements, and the impacts of climate change.

While the whole country is eagerly waiting for an early decision in the matter of Wildlife first and Ors Vs Union of India & Ors (109/2008) from the Supreme Court, the need for a national policy framework for not just tiger reserves but for all habitats cannot be overstated. It should be implemented by State Governments while duly considering the local contexts and the unique challenges faced by each region.

Evicting illegal encroachments on forest and wildlife habitats and relocating the genuine right-holders onto non-forest areas with adequate infrastructure should be the first step towards restoration of the ecological integrity of our natural systems. The impacts of climate change and natural disasters are no longer theoretical threats but stark realities. Recognizing the broader public interest in wildlife conservation and ecosystem sustainability, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the National Tiger Conservation Authority, and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs must collaborate closely to develop and implement effective conservation strategies that address these challenges.

(The writer are former PCCFs, UP and Maharashtra; views expressed are personal)

# Budget 2025 puts sustainability at the forefront, but execution holds the key

With substantial investments in renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture and afforestation, the budget lays a strong foundation for a greener future

The Union Budget 2025 signals a decisive shift towards environmental sustainability, reinforcing India's commitment to a cleaner, greener future. With a strong focus on renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, afforestation, waste management and climate resilience, the government has intended to balance economic growth with ecological responsibility. Expanding solar, wind, and hydro energy, along with incentives for green hydrogen, is a welcome step toward reducing India's carbon footprint. The emphasis on electric vehicles (EVs) and battery storage solutions will further bolster the transition to clean energy, reducing



RAJ KUMAR SRIVASTAVA

dependence on fossil fuels. However, the challenge remains in efficient implementation and ensuring accessibility to these technologies, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Agriculture, often at the crossroads of economic and environmental policies, has received a much-needed sus-

tainability boost. The PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana and Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses are moving in the right direction, ensuring climate-resilient farming and reducing excessive reliance on chemical fertilisers. However, agroforestry, regenerative farming and watershed management need further integration into mainstream agricultural policy to create a truly sustainable food system. The budget's allocation for afforestation and biodiversity conservation reflects an increased understanding of the role that forests and ecosystems play in mitigating climate change. With the Compensatory Afforestation Fund

Management Authority (CAMPA) receiving enhanced support, there is hope that India's forests will be managed with greater transparency and scientific precision. However, urban greening and nature-based solutions in city planning deserve stronger commitments, given the growing challenges of urban heat islands and pollution.

The circular economy model gets a notable push with incentives for waste-to-energy projects, stricter plastic waste management, and extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations. These are positive steps, but enforcement remains a crucial hurdle. Ensuring that industries comply with waste management norms and



moving towards a zero-waste economy will require robust monitoring and public participation. The budget's recognition of climate resilience, particu-

larly through disaster management investments and early warning systems, is a commendable effort. Coastal and flood-prone regions will benefit from increased fund-

ing for disaster-resistant infrastructure, but a long-term climate adaptation roadmap needs further detailing.

One of the most promising aspects of Budget 2025 is the expansion of India's Green Finance ecosystem. With tax incentives for Green Bonds and carbon trading markets, the government is encouraging private sector participation in sustainability efforts. However, ensuring that green investments translate into real environmental benefits will require stringent regulatory oversight and transparency. While Budget 2025 takes significant strides in promoting environmental sustainability, its true success will be measured by execu-

tion, enforcement, and long-term commitment.

India has demonstrated political will in tackling climate change, but the challenge remains in aligning policy promises with on-the-ground realities. Sustainability is not just a budgetary allocation; it is a mindset shift. To truly achieve a green future, India needs a whole-of-society approach, where the government, private sector, and citizens work together to ensure that economic growth does not come at the cost of ecological wellbeing. With this budget, India has set the direction—what remains is the resolve to act decisively.

(The writer is a retired IFS officer; views are personal)











## UNLOCKING THE K-BEAUTY MAGIC

Get your skin analysis at the KorinMi's clinic that brings authentic Korean skincare to Delhi, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



Ever wanted to have glass skin looking at all those viral Instagram reels and products? Ever wanted to get a 3D analysis of your skin like it happens in Korea? Then the quest for the radiant, flawless "glass skin" just got easier. KorinMi, India's Korean skin clinic has expanded its footprint with a new location in Defence Colony in Delhi.

Korean glass skin is a skincare trend that emphasises achieving skin that looks incredibly smooth, radiant, and intensely hydrated, almost like a pane of glass. The term originated from Korean beauty (K-beauty) and has gained global popularity for its focus on achieving a naturally luminous complexion.

To get your skin have qualities for the glass skin, there is KorinMi, at the the prestigious Centre for Skin & Hair Pvt Ltd, under the guidance of dermatologist Dr. Deepali Bhardwaj. The new space promises a transformative skincare experience. Known for its unique fusion of time-honoured Korean beauty rituals and cutting-edge dermatological techniques, KorinMi offers bespoke treatments tailored to a diverse range of skin concerns.

The Defence Colony clinic offers a range of exclusive treatments, including a comprehensive 3D Skin Analysis & Consultation to personalise treatment plans. Clients can also indulge in various K Glow Treatments targeting specific



concerns like brightening and anti-aging, sensitive skin, and acne and pore control. For those seeking a quick and effective radiance boost, the KorinMi Glass Skin Resurfacing Treatment promises visible results in just three days. And for special occasions, the KorinMi Diamond Glass Skin Treatment delivers an instant glow and brightness. "The overwhelming response and remarkable results we've seen at our Gurgaon clinic inspired



us to bring KorinMi to Defence Colony," says Reshba Munjal, Co-founder of KorinMi. "This new location makes authentic Korean skincare more accessible to Delhi, providing a luxurious and personalised experience designed to address every skin need. We're thrilled to continue our mission of helping clients achieve radiant, glass skin through the elegance and expertise of Korean beauty traditions." This exciting collaboration with Dr. Deepali

Bhardwaj adds another layer of expertise to KorinMi's offerings. As an internationally trained Skin Allergy Specialist, Dr. Bhardwaj brings a wealth of knowledge to the table, particularly relevant in today's environment of increasing pollution and skin allergies. "I've incorporated an Indian scientific perspective into these Korean treatments," Dr. Bhardwaj explains, "which has significantly enhanced the results, helping Indians achieve their desired clear and glass-like skin. It's a fantastic treatment approach, especially with its holistic focus."

KorinMi's philosophy centres on enhancing natural beauty through safe and effective skincare solutions that embody the elegance and precision of Korean beauty. Every detail, from the personalised care to the luxurious ambience, is designed to create a pampering and transformative experience. The clinic uses products, treatments, and technologies imported directly from South Korea, ensuring authenticity and quality.

This expansion isn't just about opening another clinic; it's about making the transformative power of Korean skincare accessible to a wider audience. For those seeking the coveted "glass skin" look and a truly personalised skincare journey, KorinMi's new Defence Colony location offers a unique and exciting opportunity. It's an invitation to experience the best of Korean beauty, right here in Delhi.



## IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL LIGHT

By **ANURAAG BHARDWAJ**

As we spend increasingly more time indoors, it's essential to consider how our built environments impact our physical health. A well-designed residential building can significantly boost occupants' mood, sleep quality, productivity, and overall well-being.

### NATURAL LIGHT AND VENTILATION:

Exposure to natural light and fresh air is crucial for our physical and mental health. Natural light regulates our circadian rhythms, influencing our sleep-wake cycles, hormone secretion, and mood. Adequate ventilation, on the other hand, removes stale air, reducing the concentration of pollutants and allergens.

### To incorporate natural light and ventilation into your residential building design:

- Orient windows to maximize natural light exposure.
- Incorporate skylights, clerestory windows, or solar tubes.
- Use light-coloured interior finishes to



reflect natural light. ■ Install ventilation systems that provide a consistent supply of fresh air.

### ERGONOMICS AND ACCESSIBILITY:

A Well-designed space should accommodate occupants of all ages and abilities. Ergonomic design principles prioritize comfort, reducing the risk of injury and strain.

### To design ergonomic and accessible spaces:

- Incorporate adaptable fixtures and furniture
- Ensure sufficient clearance for wheelchair navigation
- Install grab bars, non-slip flooring, and tactile signage
- Design spaces with flexibility in mind, accommodating different user needs

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY:

The air we breathe indoors can be up to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Indoor air quality is influenced by various factors, including building materials, ventilation systems, and occupant activities.

### To improve indoor air quality:

- Specify low-VOC (volatile organic compound) materials
- Install effective ventilation systems, including air filtration

- Incorporate plants, which naturally purify the air
- Implement regular maintenance schedules for HVAC systems

**THERMAL COMFORT:** Thermal comfort significantly impacts our mood, productivity, and overall well-being. A well-designed thermal environment should maintain a consistent, comfortable temperature range.

### To achieve thermal comfort:

- Install efficient HVAC systems with precise temperature control
- Incorporate passive design strategies, such as insulation and shading
- Specify materials with high thermal mass, which absorb and release heat
- Design spaces with flexible thermal zoning, accommodating different occupant needs

By incorporating these design principles into your residential building, you can create a healthier, more comfortable indoor environment that supports the well-being of occupants.

— The author is an architect and is the founder of Anjaney Vastu & AB Architects



## Holistic Wellness in the Digital Age



The world is changing rapidly, and with it, the way we think about wellness. Gone are the days when wellness was simply about hitting the gym or following the latest diet trend. Today, wellness is a multi-faceted, deeply personal journey, one that goes beyond physical fitness to encompass mental, emotional, social, and even environmental well-being. It's no longer just about feeling good; it's about being whole, in mind, body, and spirit. And in this digital age, brands are stepping up, weaving holistic wellness into their DNA to foster deeper connections with consumers.

### A SHIFT IN CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS:

The wellness movement began quietly at first a small ripple in the wellness community, but over time, it turned into a tidal wave that reshaped industries. We saw yoga studios spring up, organic food brands gaining prominence, and mindfulness apps becoming household names. But as technology began to play an even larger role in our lives, the scope of wellness began to widen. Today's consumer is informed, engaged, and expects brands to be more than just a product or service. They want companies that reflect their values, understand their needs, and contribute to their holistic well-being. The conversation around wellness has evolved into something much larger than simply improving physical health. It's a fusion of mind, body, soul, and environment, all wrapped into one.

As a result, brands have a unique opportunity. The challenge, however, is in how to craft campaigns that not only resonate with consumers' needs but also inspire them to live healthier, more sustainable lives. It's not enough to sell a product; brands now have to sell a



lifestyle like the one that nurtures well-being on every level.

### THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION:

In a world where social media dictates trends and influencers have the power to shape movements, the digital age has been both a blessing and a challenge for brands trying to tap into the wellness space. The power of digital platforms cannot be overstated. The most successful brands are those that recognise this and align their core values with the principles of holistic wellness. Take Patagonia, for example. The outdoor apparel brand's commitment to sustainability and environmental well-being extends far beyond their product offerings. They have built a narrative that connects consumers with the idea of wellness as a

global movement—one that includes not only personal well-being but also the well-being of the planet. By promoting responsible consumption and environmental conservation, they are not just selling jackets; they are selling a lifestyle that speaks to the core values of their audience.

### A PERSONALISED APPROACH TO WELLNESS:

But it's not only about big, global brands. Small, direct-to-consumer companies are equally making their mark. Take the wellness app, Headspace, for example. Its digital-first approach has made mindfulness and meditation more accessible than ever before. What sets it apart is not just the meditation guides or breathing exercises but it's the way Headspace taps into the emotional wellness of its users.

In the wellness space, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and brands that can offer personalised, tailored experiences will always be one step ahead. Whether it's a beauty brand offering skincare solutions based on specific skin concerns or a fitness brand offering virtual personal training sessions tailored to your fitness level, the more personalised the experience, the deeper the connection.

### WELLNESS THAT LASTS:

Ultimately, the goal of holistic wellness is not just to make consumers feel good in the moment but to empower them to make choices that lead to long-term health, happiness, and sustainability. Brands are now tasked with being more than just vendors. They must be allies in their customers' wellness journeys.

In a crowded market, it's the brands that prioritise education, emotional connection, and authenticity that will truly resonate. Take for example, Lulu lemon - what began as a yoga apparel company has grown into a lifestyle brand that is rooted in the idea of holistic wellness. Lulu lemon has built a community of consumers who don't just wear their clothes; they live by the principles of mindfulness, self-care, and personal growth that the brand promotes. By creating a community around wellness, they are inspiring healthier lifestyles, not just through the products they offer, but through the values they embody.

— Excerpts from Ishani Ghosh, Business Head, Brand Street Integrated

