

WPAI NEWSLETTER

Issue 5, April, 2022

Exploring and updating the emerging trends of photography



A big big thank you!

Wildlife Photography Association of India thanks all photographers and well-wishers for your contribution, support, and motivation behind the publication of the 5th Issue of WPAI Newsletter!!!

Wildlife Photography Association of India

WPAI Newsletter

April 2022

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Preface to the 5th Issue

Warm Greetings of the Holi and the Spring!!!

Spring appears to be more beautiful this time as the whole world has been lively once again after two years' trauma of the COVID 19 pandemic. We wish that Spring and the colours of Holi have added incessant happiness to your life and indomitable spirit to your academic and professional activities. We wish that our photographer friends and colleagues have resumed their journey to capture the beauty and varieties of the world. We, at the Wildlife Photography Association of India (WPAI), are pleased to come up with the 5th issue of the WPAI Newsletter to bring more exposure to your photography-related activities.

Macro Photography is a popular genre of photography that enables us to enjoy the minute details of smaller objects like the interior of flowers, small insects, water drops, etc that mostly remain unnoticed in our naked eyes. Dinesh Verma, a passionate photographer and an expert in Macro Photography discusses the object and technique of Macro Photography in his article "**Art of Macro Photography**" with theories and his observation in it. He explains how a specific object is photographed in "larger than life-sized" using a Macro lens following some techniques related to distance and depth sensing. He illustrates the technique of Macro Photography and the post-processing of photographs through a series of his Macro photographs of different objects of Nature.

Born in Colorado, and brought up in Germany, Jerry-Louis RUFF found his passion for photography at the age of 10. The photographer brings a vivid detail of his growth as a photographer in his article "**Favorites Theme**". The author has delineated his favourite themes of photography that include lost places, night photography, animal, and nature. He shares his experience of how his close observation of animals such as toads, lizards, birds, and rare insects for hours helped him to capture the Flora and Fauna of his adjacent land so perfectly. The author cherishes a special interest in photographing the interior of lost places that have fallen into ruin or going to be demolished. RUFF likes to play with the mystery of lights at night using the long exposure of his camera. He brings some specimens of his night photography that rediscover various cityscapes in completely new ways.

Technology is continuously changing and simplifying our ways of living life. The introduction of the slim and trim Mirrorless Camera with almost similar technology and more advanced features than the traditional bulky DSLR camera has brought a revolution in our journey of photography. Subhas Sapru, in his article "**Mirror to Mirrorless**", has discussed this gradual transition from DSLR to Mirrorless throwing some light on the previous transition from manual to auto-focus and from film to digital photography. Sapru has noted that this transition hardly bothers the users to adapt to the new technology because popular brands like Nikon or Canon have structured the menu and buttons in the mirrorless cameras almost similar to their DSLR versions.

The 5th Issue of the WPAI Newsletter has added some excellent photo-feature articles by noted photography artists on festivals and travels. Abhishek Kundu's article "**Moichara (Bull Race)**" presents a series of photographic illustrations of a unique festival named Moichara or Bull Race that is celebrated by the farmers in Canning block of South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, India. The primary purpose of this 100 years' festival is to test the capacity of the bulls before the season of harvesting begins. The next article "**Alpine Skiing**" by Stefan Stuppung recounts the author's experience of Skiing in different regions of The Alps with photographs and narratives. The author recommends having a fast camera, especially with auto-focus to capture the unique moments of skiing. "**Gypsies in Romania and Europe**" by Tibor Jakob presents an ethnographic study of Roma People (often referred to as Gypsies) who mostly live in different parts of Southern and Eastern Europe, Western Asia, Latin America,

Southern America, and the Southern part of the Middle East. The article interrogates the possible migration of Roma people from their roots in the Indian sub-continent to different parts of the West and the Middle East. The series of photographs reflect different aspects of their life, child bringing, migration, nomadic adventure, vocations etc. The next article “**Landscape: An Overview**” by Asis Sur redefines the genre of landscape photography and provides valuable insight into the perfection in it. Sur points out some important factors like composition, lighting, camera and lens, and filters to treat with importance in landscape photography. He also gives some insight into how to use natural objects like the sky and human figures in landscape photography perfectly.

The concluding article “**Gajan Festival**” by Aniket Paul tells the history, tradition and rituals connected to the Gajan Festival which is celebrated on Chaitra Sankranti (the ending day of Bengali Year). Through detailed analysis and a series of catchy photographs, the article depicts the restricted lives of Gajan Sanyasis and their spiritual devotion to the deities through piercing different parts of their bodies.

We are overwhelmed to receive so many rich and insightful articles of different genres of photography for the 5th issue of the WPAI Newsletter. We are grateful to all the contributors, readers, well-wishers, members of WPAI, photographers and photography lovers for supporting us since the beginning of our journey. We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions so that we can enrich our newsletter for the sake of more academic and artistic interaction. Wish you a colourful and rewarding photography career ahead!!!

Thanking you

Chitrangad Kumar
Editor
WPAI Newsletter

Art of Macro Photography

by Dinesh Verma



Dinesh Verma

Passionate about photography, Dinesh Verma, Regional Manager with a Public Sector Insurance Company, has been pursuing his hobby for quite some time. He loves capturing Nature in any form, be it flowers, landscapes, rain drops, birds. His interest in nature makes him travel to various places. His major area of interest is Macro photography. Portraiture, fashion photography and architectural photography are his new areas of interest.

He has to his credit two Solo Shows at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi and two in Chandigarh. Apart from this, he has participated in several group shows organized by Photographic Society of Chandigarh and various other group exhibitions at Chandigarh, Karnal, Chennai etc.

He was also part of the 8 member team to visit and shoot in Telangana for a Coffee Table book "Telangana India – A Visual Journey" published by Photographic Society of India, through an initiative of the Department of Art & Cultural Affairs, Government of Haryana under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat Programme', to which he made major contributions through his photographs.

What is Macro photography?

Close-up means you're just shooting from a short distance from the subject. You can use virtually any lens to achieve close-up photos. Macro means you're taking super close-ups of objects at 1:1 or greater. Meaning, the size of the image on your sensor is equal to the size of the object you are photographing in real life or it's larger than life-sized.



Pic-1

Why Macro photography:

You can create a large detailed image of a small object that is normally too so small and thus not clear to the naked eye like an insect, water drops, interior of a flower etc. You are able to show to the world the minutest beauty that most of the people normally skip.

It is easily manageable anywhere and thus its popularity amongst beginners as well as professionals.

One can simply try macro by adding a diopter lens to the front of the existing standard lens which would impart a fair degree of magnification; one can even use extension tubes between the normal lens and the camera body; one can also acquire a set of macro bellows and place them between lens and body or one can try by using a reversing ring that allows one to fit the lens on backwards, which improves the lens' close-up resolution and allows one to focus much more closely. But the best option is, if you are really keen on Macro photography, to buy a macro lens which is far superior to all the options mentioned above.



Pic-2

Working distance:

The distance between the subject and the front end of the lens is referred to as the working distance. A larger working distance will make lighting and composition easier. In macro, the longer the working distance, the easier it is to stay away from the subject which is helpful when the subject is some insect. You will be safer as well as not disturbing to the insect.

Depth of Field:

As one goes closer to the subject, the depth of field becomes smaller and smaller. At the closest distance, you won't even be able to completely focus even a very small object. If shooting an insect or a flower, only a part of it will be in focus even though the whole subject is smaller than a centimetre. Even at higher f number say f22 or higher, the depth of field remains shallow. So you need to take multiple images with different parts of the object in focus and then merge all the images using some focus stacking software.

Requirements:

- You need just a camera and a Macro lens
- Better to use a tripod
- No requirement of a Studio
- Can be done in the comfort of your home
- Props/additional arrangements are optional
- Lighting, background are important but comfortably manageable. Natural window light is one easy option and for background, anything like colourful flowers (artificial or natural) or some green plants can prove to be interesting.

Settings:

The following tips may be helpful in taking macro shots:

- Aperture — for the very small subjects (one inch or smaller), it's best to use a lower aperture setting between f/11 and f/16. But if you are going for Focus Stacking, you can afford to open the aperture more.
- Shutter speed — with magnified macro shots, any movement is amplified in the picture. If using camera handheld, a speed of 1/320 or higher is ideal. On tripod, nothing to worry about if subject is totally still. So better to do it inside a room unless it is totally still outside. However, you should preferably use a Tripod with shutter release to achieve maximum sharpness. Turn on the mirror lockup if you want total sharpness.
- Focal Length — A focal length of around 90-105mm is often regarded as ideal for macro photography (and particularly so for full-frame cameras), as it allows you to get closer but not too close to what you're shooting. In case of insects, it's better to keep distance.
- Use camera lens in manual focus mode as you need to focus on different parts of subject which is not possible with auto focus settings. In case of insects, auto focus mode is preferable.
- Background, arrangement and composition are important. In macro, the background is normally blurred.
- Lighting is the most important part - natural window light or defused/reflected light are the best. Flash light can also be helpful at certain times.
- You may try with back lighting, side lighting or you may experiment by moving light with slow shutter speed.

Technique:

When you are so close to an object and focus on it, you will get only a small part of the object in focus and rest of it will be totally out of focus. If you want whole object or a bigger part of an object in focus, you will have to take multiple shots by shifting focus minutely after each shot, thereby covering complete portion of the object that you want in focus. After taking multiple shots, say 5 to 10 shots, you will need to merge these photographs into one using some Focus Stacking software. The most commonly used software for Focus Stacking is Adobe Photoshop. Other good software is Helicon Focus.



Pic-3

Focus Stacking in Photoshop:

Open all the files you want to merge in Adobe Photoshop.

Go to File --> Automate --> Photomerge

Add open files

Select all the files in Layers window

Go to Edit ---> Auto-Align Layers

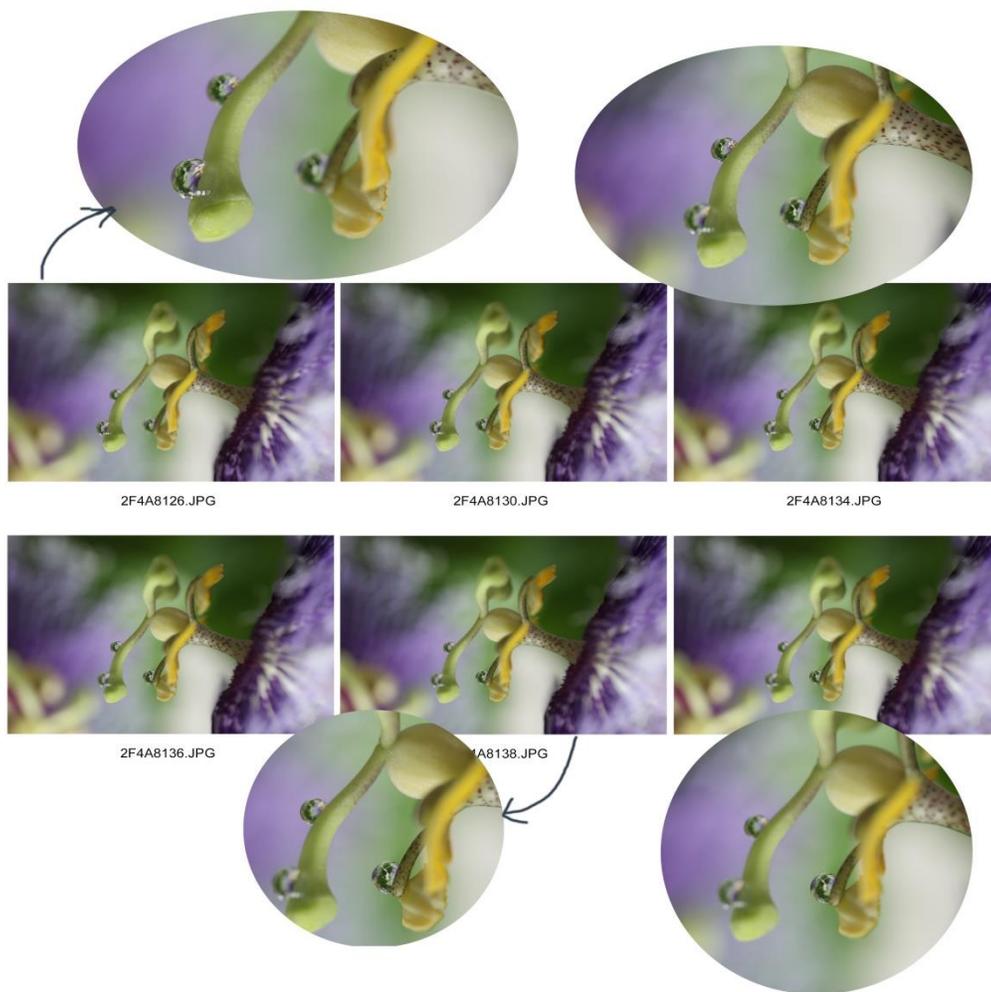
Then, Edit ---> Auto-blend Layers

It merges the focussed parts of all images into the final one.

Merge the layers and save the final focussed image.



Pic-4



Pic-5

In the series of images above, you will notice that only one of the water drops is in focus in different images. If we magnify it further, you will find that either the outer surface or the reflection inside the drops is in focus. You have to merge all these images into one using Focus Stacking software so as to get all the desired parts of the image in focus. After merging all the above images, the final output is shown below:



Pic-6

To capture the complete Fly (Pic -7) in full focus, I had to take 10 shots with different parts in focus and then merged them using Focus Stacking software. Similarly, multiple shots of Dragonfly had to be merged for this photograph (Pic -8).



Pic-7



Pic-8

Macro photography technique can be used for Nature, Product and Food photography. There is lot of fun and creativity in Macro Photography. I hope you will enjoy it.

List of Photographs:

- Pic – 1: Macro shot of water drops on the stamen of Gladiolus flower.
- Pic – 2: Macro shot of water drops on Gerbera flower.
- Pic – 3: Passion flower
- Pic – 4: Reflections in water drops on stem of a plant
- Pic – 5: Six photographs with varying focus points
- Pic – 6: Final output after photo stacking of above six photographs
- Pic – 7: Photo stacked image of a Fly
- Pic – 8: Photo stacked image of a Dragonfly

Favorites Theme

by Jerry-Louis RUFF



Jerry-Louis RUFF

Born in Denver Colorado in 1970, we moved a few years later to Germany. I found my passion in photography around 1980. First playfully at age of 10, I discovered a language to speak with others without having to say a word. In the following years I felt more and more, the passion in architecture, nature and urban and my favorites theme "Lost Places", night photography, animal and nature. Therefore, it was close for me to study photography and then to deepen with the study photo / graphic designer.

What equipment do I prefer for myself: it's my Fuji X-T30 with manual lenses from 7Artisans and Laowa. These lenses force me to deal with photography more deeply and also to experience it more intensively.

Flora and Fauna

In animal and nature photography I spend many hours watching and waiting for any animals, such as like toads, lizards and birds or some rare insects. In the time I am observe I sink inwardly into a total calm and contentment. As far as its possible, I try not to disturbing the nature around me.



Birds 01



Birds 02



Landscape



Lizards 01



Lizards 02



Toads 04



Toads 05



Wolf 01



Wolf 02



Wolf Thrust

When I'm watching wolves or lynx, I'm not just interested in getting the action loaded images, I want to capture the social life of the wolf pack. The behavior of the animals among themselves is what fascinates me personally. My favorite image is "Wolf Thrust", which expresses an endless peace and trust. Unfortunately, the wolves in Germany have a bad image and are therefore hunted, they are not seen the social essence in the pack. Nor does people see how they bring nature back into balance.

All my wildlife and nature images are taken where I living and I show them in exhibitions around my local area. Thereby very intensive nature and animal welfare issues come up that we always discuss intensively to protect or support the flora and fauna with small things that everybody could do, this aspect of photography are fascinating the viewers, because they see the wildlife more rarely animals like the reptiles near they home where they thought that they are already extinct. Unfortunately, most people have lost their eye for the beautiful things outside their front door, which I try to show them again in my exhibitions.

Lost Places

In this section, I photograph interiors of buildings of the last centuries, that have fallen into ruins and are about to be demolished, they are like time capsules for me. My goal with these images are not to show reality as a original image what we all see, it's rather my view with the image processing, which is reflected partly gloomy and mystical. I try to breathe the building some life back in, which will soon no longer exist anymore longer it's the mystic of ruin what I see and would like to show.



Bearbeitet



Der letzte macht das Licht aus



Bearbeitet Kopie



Tanzsaal



Wendeltreppe

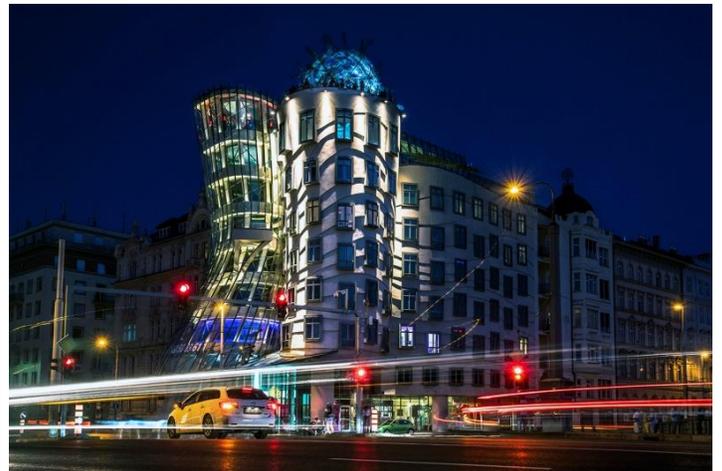
Nightphotography

Night photography for me is a reflection of playing with light, rediscovering a city not in the hustle and bustle of tourism.

The long exposure is also a relaxing effect, in which you have to take the time for the subject and also concentrate on it. You inevitably deal with light and shadow and how best to stage it. Lines, edges, traces of light, reflections and people in a hurry are usually my favorite motifs.



Auf der alte Mainbruecke



Dancing Houses at Night



Hauptbahnhof Frankfurt



Eiserner Steg



Little Paris



Night Walk in Vienna



Skyline Frankfurt



Tourists in Prague

Mirror to Mirrorless

by Subhash Sapru



Subhash Sapru

The ongoing transition from DSLR to the mirrorless may be gradual, but it reminds of the earlier transitions, especially of “manual” to “auto focus” and “film” to “digital”. While both the “manual” as well as “film” are still being accepted and used, they are now more of a hobby. Technology keeps rolling out new developments and many innovations get accepted. Reports indicate that Canon no longer intends to produce any more flagship DSLR and Nikon has discontinued its popular D500 and no replacement has been announced.

In the recent years, the mirrorless cameras have undergone tremendous technological improvement that has given push to the camera market thus setting the pace for gradual phasing out of DSLR cameras. But this hard task master will not die at least in the near future. Let’s try to understand how good is the mirrorless, especially for wildlife photographers, who like photojournalists often question its parity with the one they have been using with trust for decades. They have accumulated an array of lenses and accessories for their DSLRs which would be hard to part with.

One of the basic observation is that it is easy to switch from a Canon or Nikon or any other DSLR brand to its mirrorless sibling because the menu is structured in their well-known style with almost similar buttons as previous cameras. Therefore, finding and using the basic functions takes hardly any adaptation time. However as mirrorless camera offers quite a few more functions and options. To some the menu may be slightly different and a little hard to find a few of its functions.



The latest mirrorless cameras are packed with a lot of new and impressive features into their rugged bodies having drip and dust resistance. They can also be operated in extremely low temperature. Now these cameras are up-to-date in every aspect. Like a smart phone, we can easily touch their screen to focus on our subject. The Wi-Fi and Bluetooth features make it easy to pair these with other devices such as smartphones to transfer large amounts of data without any wire.

Although both the DSLR and the mirrorless cameras do differ in their construction and design, yet they have similar sensors, image quality, technologies and basic features. With removal of mirror and prism, camera size and weight have been considerably reduced. Those who are used to bigger size of camera bodies to handle long lenses may find these smaller bodies inconvenient, especially if they have to wear gloves. Adapters are available for mirrorless systems so that photographers are able to use most of their SLR lenses with full autofocus and aperture control.

In both the DSLR and the mirrorless cameras, we see through the lens, but they have different ways to show us how will be the image. In DSLRs the optical image is reflected by the mirror and we see it through the view finder. With the release of shutter, the mirror flips upward and sensor gets exposed to the image. On the other hand, mirrorless camera being without a mirror, a live view is created and we see the image either on back screen or through the Electronic View Finder (EVF). Nowadays the EVFs are much improved with high resolution and clarity of the optical view finder. The fast refresh rate has eliminated viewfinder lag to quickly follow moving subjects. The blackout effect that we used to see while shooting continuous bursts of images is now a thing of the past. In a mirrorless camera, what we see in EVF is what we get. This ability to see our exposure while composing an image is a significant advantage of these cameras. It also enables us to see in real time how our settings change our exposure, depth of field and more. If required, changes can be applied instantly while looking through the viewfinder. It is something optical viewfinder cannot do. The EVF is good enough to show a more clearly visible view of a scene even in low light.

The autofocus system too has been further improved and its features either match or surpass DSLRs for autofocus speed. Although the DSLR cameras are fast yet the focusing speeds on most mirrorless camera can be just that bit faster. This comes down to the fact that mirrorless cameras use many more focus points than DSLRs. In the absence of mirror, they can read sensor while performing autofocus and this is a significant advantage. Therefore, mirrorless camera's focus is more accurate than DSLR. Also, they neither suffer from lens alignment issues nor back or front focusing issues. The Face/Eye Detection AF and Animal Face/Eye-Detection AF are interesting features. Unlike the DSLRs, the AF sensors in mirrorless AF systems can go right upto the edges of the frame. When live-view is engaged in a DSLR, it behaves the same way as a mirrorless camera, but does not always have the same features of a mirrorless.

Before you go in for a mirrorless camera, its better to ensure that it has no trouble in achieving subject auto focus that is AF-C in low contrast situations. Although many new mirrorless cameras have quick start up and no viewfinder blackout, yet some mirrorless cameras take a moment to start up. It can be half a second or so to come out of standby mode.

A more prominent feature of mirrorless cameras is the responsiveness of the shutter release button. These cameras instantaneously capture photos as there is no mirror to move out of the way when the shutter release button is pressed. This is useful especially in capturing fast action, such as a fast flying bird or any other fast action taking place. Their frame rate is also very high and the silent mode is appreciably silent. Some mirrorless cameras can record 10-bit 8K UHD video at 24, 25 or 30 FPS for extended period of time, which can be two hours in some cameras. So is the capability of sustained fast continuous shooting bursts with very high FPS burst speed for both JPG and RAW files.

As compared to the DSLRs, the size and life of a mirrorless camera battery is short. The functions like LCD display or the electronic viewfinder and built in image stabilization in camera bodies make them dependent on battery. When using long lenses, their long focal length having larger and heavier focusing elements, require a lot more power to move than the typically smaller and shorter focal length lenses. The best solution is to keep extra batteries in your bag. Some mirrorless cameras support USB charging thus having the advantage of charging the battery within the camera body. For this there are three options to charge--with a wall plug or a power bank or with a computer.

The wildlife photographers and photojournalists look for parity of the mirrorless cameras with the DSLRs. The hard core DSLR users may feel that the mirrorless has neither yet replaced the DSLR nor has fully reached parity with it. For many their concern is availability of lenses and focus performance while tracking subjects. The fact is they have not only attained parity, but have even surpassed the DSLR in some significant areas. Therefore, you aren't losing out in any way if you opt for a mirrorless camera. This replies the much talked about question "does mirrorless holds key to the future", 'yes' future belongs to the mirrorless.

Moichara (Bull Race)

by Abhishek Kundu



I am a commerce graduate from, Calcutta University. I started my career as a retail management professional. Photography was a hobby from my childhood days. After working for 10 - 12 years in retail industry. I switched myself from retail industry to my childhood hobby - photography. I have done professional Photography course from "Light & Shadow – An Institute of Photography" and professional Cinematography course from "Chitrabani – A Human Touch in Communication" in Kolkata. I have started my photography career from the year 2013 -14. have received various awards across the globe in various category of photography. Now I am totally into commercial photography and cinematography segment, performing all kind of commercial shoots, specially in wedding photography. Converted my childhood hobby to my current profession, after crossing lots of hurdles in my life.

Cows, these domesticated benevolent animals more often find a place as the subject of heated political debates than their actual breeding grounds these days. But they definitely play an intrinsic part in the lives of farmers living in the Canning administrative block of South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. India, an agro - economy based nation, welcomes and celebrates the harvesting season as a gala. And for over decades, villages across Canning have been fervently taking part in celebrating a unique festival that goes by the name "Moichara".



Villages across Canning has been fervently taking part in celebrating a unique festival that goes by the name "Moichara". The specialty of this festival lies in the way it is celebrated, which is marked by cattle race among villagers. Though this festival has over a 100-year-old history in different regions of West Bengal, unable to keep pace with time, it is now on the verge of extinction. However, the villagers of Canning with their whole-hearted efforts have kept the tradition alive. The primary purpose of this cattle race is to test the capacity of the bulls before the start of cultivation in the rainy season and increase the fertility of the land. Moichara usually takes place during late June or early July. Local farmers decide upon a paddy field, and they come from neighboring villages with their bulls to race them in the waterlogged fields.



The primary purpose of this cattle race is to test the capacity of the bulls before the start of cultivation in the rainy season and increase the fertility of the land. All the farmers join this festival, forgetting their religious differences. Although the purpose is to improve the agriculture of the place, it bears the harmony of the festival, which only instill joy to the people participating in it. The bulls taking part in Moichara are meticulously reared for this wild racing event.

The bulls taking part in Moichara are meticulously reared for this wild racing event. The race is a relentless show of men's physical strength in competition with the brutal force of bulls. The bulls are always restless and impatient. They drive the guides out of breath and pace. At times, they slide and get stuck in the mud. Men too slip in the mud while keeping pace with the animals. However, this festival is devoid of religion, politics, colour and jealousy. It merely marks the beginning of a harvest season. Earlier, the winners of the race were honored with a new bull. However, nowadays, they are given prizes like motorcycles, almirah, furniture, etc. It is a sight to watch the bulls race down the sloppy field, splashing the muddy water everywhere, which creates intense drama in the environment. Therefore, hundreds of photographer's hordes at the venue of the race to capture the intensity of Moichara. For the locals, it is not only a competition but a way to celebrate and take part in the fervor of expecting a good harvest.



Alpine Skiing

by Stefan Stuppig



Stefan Stuppig

Ski has been around for 10,000 years. Skiing has existed since the 19th century in the 20th century: skiing became Olympic.

The Alps are the name giver for alpine skiing.

In the beginning there was the giant slalom, the slalom and the downhill, nowadays there are some variations such as the parallel slalom, ski cross, etc.

The giant slalom is a wonderful discipline for taking photos, the runners are not as fast as on a downhill run and do not change direction as often as in slalom.

In order to get good pictures it is advisable to have a fast camera, especially the autofocus should be very fast and the sequence of images is also not insignificant furthermore an aperture plus should be chosen when taking photos in the snow, otherwise the runners will be too dark.

I am using a Nikon D500 with the 3rd generation VR 70-200 f2.8, this combination is very advantageous for good results

With the quick image sequence it is possible to create sequences and it is also helpful to have the right image, since it is not a good image if the athlete has the goal pole in front of their face.



Angelika



Antonia



Arlberg Express 0642



BASLER Michelle



Giant Slalom 0696



Mathias_3823



Noel_5135



Skicross 4500

Gypsies in Romania and Europe

by Dr. Tibor Jakab

The Roma People often referred to as Gypsies, are a heterogeneous ethnic group who live primarily in Southern and Eastern Europe, Western Asia, Latin America, the southern part of the United States and the Middle East. The English term Gypsy (or Gipsy), originates from the Greek word 'Aigyptoi' in the erroneous belief that the Roma originated in Egypt, and were exiled as punishment for allegedly harboring the infant Jesus. This ethnonym is not used by the Roma to describe themselves, and is often considered pejorative.

Linguistic and genetic evidence indicates the Roma originated on the Indian Subcontinent. The cause of the Roma diaspora is unknown. One theory suggests the Roma were originally low-caste Hindus recruited into an army of mercenaries, granted warrior caste status, and sent westwards to resist Islamic military expansion. Or perhaps the Muslim conquerors of northern India took the Roma as slaves and brought them home, where they became a distinct community; Mahmud of Ghazni reportedly took 500,000 prisoners during a Turkish/Persian invasion of Sindh and Punjab. Why the Roma did not return to India, choosing instead to travel west into Europe, is an enigma, but may relate to military service under the Muslims. Wherever they arrived in Europe, curiosity was soon followed by hostility and xenophobia. From the time of their arrival in Romania Gypsies were the slaves of the landowners for five centuries until abolition in 1864. Elsewhere in Europe, they were subject to expulsion, abduction of their children, and forced labor. The Gypsy way of life still leads to hostilities from the people of their host nations. Europeans regard "private property" as sacrosanct, whereas gypsies do not have a word for "possess", which gives rise to two incompatible ways of life and a continual problem of gypsies being regarded as "thieves" from the European's view. In each host nation gypsies appear to take on the religion, names and language of their hosts, but within the Rom they maintain their Rom language, names, music, customs and Indian looks. This tight community has meant that after some six hundred years there is still a large population of gypsies not integrated or assimilated with Romanians.

While in Romania some of the Gypsies took to speaking a version of Romanian called Bayesh which can be heard in some of the songs of Gypsy groups. Nowadays about 40% of the Gypsies still speak Rromany and many can still be seen travelling in lines of carts along the roads of Romania. The majority live in the towns and villages, some fully integrated into villages, some in large ornate houses standing out from the Romanians, but others in small buildings on scraps of lands on the villages edges.

The Gypsy tribes from Romania distinguish themselves by the names of their trades:

- **Lautari = musicians and dancers**
- **Caldarari (Kalderash) = Tin and coppersmiths**
- **Argintari = Jewellers**
- **Fierari = Blacksmiths**
- **Zlateri = gold panners**
- **Ghurara = sieve makers**
- **Lovari = horse dealers**

The Roma/Gypsies form a group of approximately 8-10 million people in Europe. They are to be found in almost all Council of Europe member states and indeed, in some central and east European countries, they represent over 5% of the population.

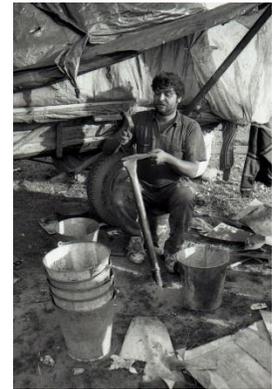
Yet, although they have been in Europe since the 14th century, very often they are not recognised by the majority society as a fully-fledged European people and they have suffered throughout their history in Europe from rejection and persecution, culminating in the Nazi's attempt to exterminate them. As a result of centuries of rejection many Roma/Gypsy communities today live in very difficult conditions, often on the fringe of the societies in the countries where they live, and their participation in public life is very limited. It is also very difficult for them to ensure that their contribution to European culture is fully acknowledged.



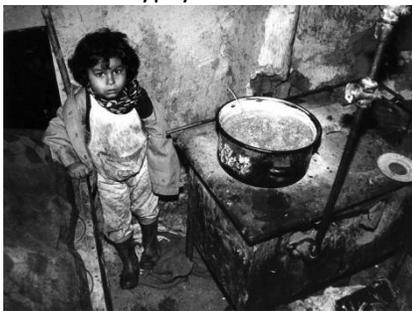
Gypsy Children



Gypsy handicraft



Handicraft



Hope



making a brandy distiller



Mother and child

When thinking of the Gypsies of Europe, one may envision a dark-skinned group of people, traveling in a band of wagons and playing music - seemingly unaffected by their surroundings. If one has traveled in Eastern Europe he may think of the barefoot children walking the streets and singing in the Metro stations for money. One may also remember the typical warning by others to "Beware of the Gypsies, they will try to steal from you!"



Mother with children



newspaper



Nomade family in wagon

In fact, the Gypsies are a diverse group of people, differing in occupation, standard-of-living, historical experience of their home country, education and levels of "integration." Contrary to the typical stereotype, it has been estimated that only 5% of the entire Gypsy population in Europe lead an itinerant mode of life. Though there are subtleties of different dialects, the Roma share a common language based on old Sanskrit.

In general, the policies (few in number) addressing the Roma in Romania have been policies of assimilation, reflecting an intolerance toward Rromani cultures and often defining all of the social characteristics, especially those of a marginalized way of life, as something inherent in the "Roma nature." Today, the majority of Romanian society perceive the Roma ("Tigani") as a whole to be untrustworthy, lazy, uneducated and "rich" from illegal businesses, conniving or thievery. The country with the largest populations of Roma is [Romania](#). Other countries where Roma populations probably exceed half a million are [Bulgaria](#), [Hungary](#), [Slovakia](#), the former [Yugoslavia](#), and the [United States](#).

Because of their nomadic life-style, there has always been a great deal of mutual distrust between the Roma and their less mobile neighbours. They were, and frequently still are, popularly believed to be [thieves](#) and [kidnappers](#), unfit for sedentary labour, resulting in a great deal of persecution. Where possible, many Roma continue their nomadic lifestyle travelling in caravans (small [trailer homes](#)), but in many situations in Eastern Europe, they live in depressed [squatter](#) communities with very high [unemployment](#). In some cases — notably the Kalderash clan in [Romania](#) who work as traditional coppersmiths — they have prospered. To this day, there are still clashes between the Roma and the sedentary population around them. Common complaints are that Roma [steal](#) and live off [social welfare](#) and residents often reject Roma encampments.

The traditional Roma place a high value on the [extended family](#). Virginity is essential in unmarried women. Both men and women often marry young; there has been controversy in several countries over the Roma practice of child marriage. Roma law establishes that the man's family must pay a dowry to the bride's parents.



Nomades with tent



Nomades



Old gypsy



Nomadok



Outsiders



On Horseback

Roma social behaviour is strictly regulated by purity laws ("marime" or "marhime"), still respected by most Roma and among Sinti groups by the older generations. This regulation affects many aspects of life, and is applied to actions, people and things: parts of the human body are considered impure: the genital organs, because they produce impure emissions, and the lower body.

Fingernails and toenails must be filed with an emery board, as cutting them with a clipper is taboo.

Clothes for the lower body, as well as the clothes of menstruating women are washed separately. Items used for eating are also washed in a different place. Childbirth is considered impure, and must occur outside the dwelling place. The mother is considered impure for forty days.

Death is considered impure, and affects the whole family of the dead, who remain impure for a period of time.

Many of these practices are also present in some Hindu cultures such as those of Bengal and the Balinese.

Roma music is very important in Eastern European cultures such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Hungary, Russia and Romania, and the style and performance practices of Roma musicians have influenced European classical composers such as Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms.

Many eastern European countries still have substantial populations of Roma. The level of [integration](#) of Roma in society still remains limited today. They usually remain on the margins of society, living in isolated [ghetto](#)-like settlements. Only a small fraction of Roma children graduate from secondary schools. Usually they feel rejected by the state and main population, which creates another obstacle to their integration. Roma are usually the targets of various form of [prejudice](#). Their situation actually became worse after the [fall of communism](#) in some of these eastern states. Little or no effort has been made by governments to improve the living condition of Roma.

Landscape : An overview

by Asis Sur



Asis Sur

Retired Govt. Officer, Writing photographic articles for photographic Magazines and papers etc. Teaching Photography and guiding students. Giving lectures on various topics of Photography. Performing as a judge in national and international salons and other photographic contests. Published a book on basic photography in Bengali language. Mainly doing Landscape Photography, Still Life, Indoor Portrait, Human Interest etc.

What is Landscape? Landscape is everything what we see when we are out of our indoors. It includes natural features like hills and trees, fields and hedges, rivers, lakes, waterfalls and countryside objects, e.g. church, cottages, inn, farms, agricultural operations and the cities and so many.

Landscapes are directly and visibly get influenced by natural impacts like sunshine and storm, light and shade, seasons of the year and even different time of the day. The raw materials are available in the landscapes. A photographer has to select a proper view point, time of the day, right season, lighting conditions, framing of the scene, correct exposure with necessary composition etc. to produce a picture portraying some characteristic of the scene or mood of the nature where the viewer will feel his existence into the picture. A Landscape Photograph must contain beauty, emotions and engrossment. It should be the art of capturing images that embody the essence of the nature and the outdoors so that the viewer can feel the sense of being there.



Picture 1

Let's see what are the things to be known by a landscape photographer at the beginning.

Composition : The first thing to consider is the composition which includes item of principal interest and homogenous other related elements which support the main item and helps to make a complete story altogether at the end.

Lighting : Then the lighting condition of that particular scene has to be studied to select the best lighting time suitable for the shot. The direction, quality and strength of the light on the scene creates a huge differences in the final image. Generally, we get side-lighting, back-lighting, front-lighting, top lighting and overcast lighting. Photographers prefer 'golden-hour' lighting. This light provides different shades of warm colours and low contrast. Landscape photographers should avoid 'front lighting' and 'top lighting'. Preferable light conditions for landscape are side-lighting and back-lighting. Duration of good lighting conditions depend upon the longitude-latitude of that area, season, the daytime and the other natural factors like fog, haze, dust, rain, ice-fall etc. Hills and mountains provide more time for photography but plain lands, sea-sides in summer provide short time for photography. Side lighting creates wonderful depth and drama.

Camera and Lens : Fixed focus cameras are not very suitable for landscape. For controlling perspective and creative composition, interchangeable lenses are invaluable. Bigger sensor size capture more details in the picture which is an essential requirement for landscape photography. Hence, now-a-days, DSLR full frame camera will be the best for landscape photography. Lenses bearing 18mm to 105mm focal length is mostly required and sufficient to capture most of the landscape images. Lenses longer than 105mm may be used sometimes. Prime lenses will give the better results always. But considering the changing of lenses, weight and cost etc. a single short zoom lens (18-105) with 'wide-single aperture' of good quality can be very useful for most of the occasions.

Longer focal length lens narrows the angle of view. It cuts out unwanted near foreground and the upper sky which are not much interesting in a scene. It helps to capture the important part of the scene, e.g., middle ground with a little foreground and the small part of the sky. Wide angle lenses are used mostly in landscape photography because it facilitates to exaggerate the size of near objects, convey impression of spaciousness, depth of field, sharpness etc.



Picture 2

Exposure : Generally, small aperture is used for Landscape to give the maximum sharpness and depth of field. So, the shutter speed becomes the limiting factor. Hence, camera tripod is an essential item for landscape photography. Exposure also depends upon the direction of light. Roughly, it can be said that make the exposure double when it is side-light and multiply by four when it is back-light.

Colour : Colour in open landscape tend to be disappointing because of the overall monotonous green. Spring and Autumn are the best times for colour landscape photography. Spring appears with its blossom and varying shades of green, and autumn with its galaxy of multi-colours . But an appropriate object as focal point of the image is essential in the foreground.

Sky : It remains and generally a part of the image. If it is without colour then it should be small. When the sky is colourfull and very attractive then it may occupy the major part of the image.

Figures : Human figures may be included but it should fit naturally into the seen but not in a big size so that it becomes the main interest. Again, photos of towns and cities appears to be vacant without people in the streets. But be alert.



Picture 3

Filters : Two dark filters are mostly used in landscape photography—Circular Polarizer Filter (CPL) and Neutral Density Filter (ND). CPL reduces reflections, brings out the subject from the background, enhances colour and contrast. It also reduces atmospheric haze. By using ND filter we get silky and smooth effect in the image especially of waterfalls and streams. CPL should not be used at the time of shooting in harsh environments. Wide-angle lens do not work well with CPL like normal and tele lenses. ND filter prevents light to enter into the lens. Hence, slow shutter speed is a must here and tripod comes in the scene which facilitates to induce creative blurs etc. Variable ND filters (2-8) are also available. Again, graduated ND filters darkens the sky and keeps the foreground brighter.

These are the essential backgrounds of Landscape Photography. Now some tips are suggested on Camera settings, Exposure settings and on others as under for better Landscape Photography. Let us talk a few words about black and white landscape photography. It presents single message by removing complexities, dynamics and differences of colour. It forces the eye to examine the composition and content value. It keeps the mind free from excess data in the picture.



Picture 4

Camera Settings

1. Mode : Keep it in manual.
2. Aperture : Do not go below f8 and above f 16.
3. Shutter Speed : Adjust it according to ISO and aperture.
4. ISO : Maintain base ISO of the camera—100 or 200. Do not go for auto ISO.
5. Format : RAW.
6. White Balance : When shooting in RAW, WB does not matter. It can be rectified easily at the editing stage.
7. Colour Profile : Does not matter so much. Still, Adobe RGB can be set.
8. Vignette Reduction and other Lens Corrections : Keep it OFF.
9. Auto Focus : Easy to handle and sometimes work well. Works well in good light conditions. But not always. Sometimes manual focus is better especially in low light.
10. ISO Noise Reduction : Generally, keep it OFF. Keep it ON at low light shooting.
11. D- Lighting : Keep it OFF.
12. Picture Control : Default.
13. Image Stabilizer : Keep it OFF. It softens image and meant for hand-held Shooting.
14. Remote Control : When shooting on camera stand, use cable release.
15. Auto Bracketing : Whenever possible, bracket your images using your Camera's Auto Exposure Bracketing feature and then combine the images to create HDR images.



Picture 5

Exposure Settings

Use manual or aperture priority mode.

Set aperture to maintain a balance between Depth Of Field and diffraction of Light.

Set aperture f8 to f16 in a full frame camera for daytime.

Set ISO at base for each camera. Turn off auto ISO.

Set Shutter Speed accordingly. Use tripod if necessary.

Use any metering mode which is comfortable to you.

Exposure Compensation : When the daylight is too bright then use it in minus And in low light use it in plus.

Use single servo not the continuous servo.

Other Tips

1. Shoot at the right time, at 'Golden Hours' of the day.
2. Play with long exposures for smooth effect.
3. Use foreground, middleground and background properly.
4. Show vast space in your landscape.
5. Shoot from unique angle discovered by you.
6. Apply the 'Rule of Third' in your picture.
7. Use leading lines in the frame.
8. Use natural frame.
9. Have a clear message in your shot.

Picture 6



At the end, we should talk about 'Light' specially, as 'Light' is called the 'Mother of Photography'. "Light makes photography. So, embrace it, admire it, love it. But above all, know light. Know it for all you are worth, and you will know the key to photography".---George Eastman said it. Knowing how to 'read' the light is the most important key to good photography and especially true for landscape photographers. "Work the Light" means let the light and shadow work for you. During golden hours, everything gets enriched in warm light and shadows become soft and long. Shooting in such a glorious and directional light, allows you to capture mood and atmosphere of the landscape. This light and shadow will turn your 'Landscape' into an ART.

Gajan Festival

by Aniket Pal



Aniket Pal

GAJAN India is a diverse land with many festivals. Every Year people eagerly wait for the arrival of festivals. Indian festivals reflect the culture and religious diversity. The atmosphere is filled with zeal and happiness. Festivals are divided as religious, national and seasonal. Festival act as an interval from the mundane tasks and fill us with bliss and happiness. It invigorates us with new spirit and liveliness. Furthermore, it allows us to celebrate small and big things in our life. They can be religious or be events.

Now we shall talk about the festivals of Bengal.

Bengal is known as the land of festivities where religious ceremonies over the number of months in the calendar and a proverb goes as baro maash e tero parbon (12 months constituting 13 festivals). And hearing the proverb every child in Bengal grows up.

Today we'll be focusing on the festival Charak Gajan.

The word Gajan is derived from the word Garjan or the sound made by the Sannyasis during a festival.

Charak Gajan is considered to be the most idiosyncratic festival of Bengal. However there are two different types of ritual known as Charak and Gajan. But over time people consider as festival Charak Gajan which is celebrated on the last few days of Bengali month of Chaitra just before the Bengali New Year. Bengali New Year or Poila Boishakh which takes place on the mid week of April as per the Gregorian calendar and thus the festival is celebrated from 11th to 14th April every year.

Origin and History of Charak Gajan festival-

According to the religious veneration and devotion of West Bengal, it is divided into two portions-one which takes place before the agricultural epoch begins and post the agricultural season closure.

The performances or actions in West Bengal, which takes place before the agricultural season are mostly related to fertility function and famous for the metamorphosis of Life and Land.

The gala of Charak Gajan is associated to Buddhism expressly Tantric Buddhism. Basically the festival Charak Gajan was started as a celebration by the Buddhist sect which was conversant as "Dharmer Gajan" and later when it was accepted in the Hindu community it became renowned as "Shiber Gajan".



Essentially the festival Charak Gajan is amalgamated to the agricultural society where the confluence crave to Lord Shiva for good production of harvest and shower (rain). The main aim of the festival is to bring back the fecundity (fertility) of the soil.



The people who follow the rituals of Charak Gajan festival are mainly devotees of Lord Shiva and are respected in the society.

The festival consists of 3 parts(mainly)

1. Charak Puja
2. Neel Puja
3. Gajan

The Gajan celebration is performed signifying the marriages of male forces of Shiva, Neel or Dharmaraj with their respective consorts. It basically signifies the union of Sun and Earth. The Gajan festival is considered one of the powerful festival. The festival brings prosperity and eliminates people from their sorrows and the sins committed at past.



The Gajan sanyasis follow strict restrictions. They can't sit on bare ground. The Gajan sanyasis can't cut their hair and nail and even shave and to follow an extremely simple appetite like fruits, milk and rice. They can't have flesh. They must live a life a life of discipline and penance . People dances as Shiva, Parvati, Kali, Krishna and other deities and perform various dances and acts depicting scenes from Hindu mythology. The Gajan sanyasis moves from house to house to beg for food . However nowadays these scenes are found in villages. The most interesting part of Charak Gajan festival is the Charak puja. The festival involves worshipping the Charak tree and the sanyasis perform several acts of penance during the Charak puja. The Charak tree is not any particular type of tree,the trunk of the tree measures approximately 20-30 feet and is completely straight and shouldn't have any leaves. The Charak tree is erected on the ground using bamboos. The Charak tree is considered as Ardhnarishwar i.e. the amalgamation of Lord Shiva and Parvati. The Gajan sanyasis pierces their tongue with long stainless steel rods most of the time, more than 5 or 6 as an act of penance. The Gajan sanyasis also pierce their body with hooks. However the thick hooks do not injure them. The hooks are pierced on the back of the Gajan sanyasis and they hang themselves with ropes on the Charak tree and moves in a circular motion by tying the rope to one end on the hook. In many places, you'll notice that many dreadful acts such as lying on the bed of nails and also some plays with skull of deads or semi decomposed body parts of human beings.



The main rituals of Shiva Gajan are-

- 1) The day of fasting (upabash in Bengali).When the Shiva Sannyasis don't drink a drop of water.
- 2)The day of Habishyi, when the sannyasis put on sacred thread.
- 3)Maha-habishyi, the day of fasting.
- 4)Phala Utsav,the festival of fruits.
- 5)Neela puja, the day when Shiva is ceremonially married to his consort Nilavati.
- 6) Charak, the final day of Gajan.









The popularity of Shiber Gajan can be grasped from a short verse (rhyme) sung by the children's of Bengal-

Amra dujon Bhai

Shiber Gajan gai

Thakuma gelo Gaya-Kashi

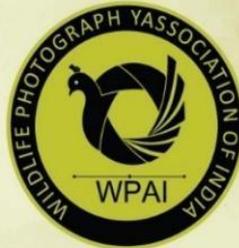
Dugdugi bajai

(We two brothers Sing Gajan songs for Lord Shiva Grandma has gone to Gaya-Kashi Let's play dugdugi (musical instrument) in joy).

In conclusion, festivals make our life enthusiastic and passionate. It brings the people of different communities together irrespective of their caste differences. They symbolize victory over evil and spreads joy and mirthful energy across. It strengthens the bond and promotes harmony among the human race.

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July Edition - Closing date for articles 31st May

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***Please send your articles as early as possible to help us ensure WPAI Newsletter goes out on time.**

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Try to keep articles to less than 1500 words.

Article must be typed in English language and provided in an electronic document that can be opened in Microsoft word.

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Maximum of 15 photos.

Must be 1024px on longest dimension, at 96ppi, regardless of photo orientation.

A list of the image files must be provided with any applicable text that is to accompany each image, eg who and what is shown in photo. This list can either be at the bottom of the article or provided in a separate document.

Images must be of a good quality and edited for best presentation, eg colour, cropping etc.

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** Articles for the "Recommendations From a Local Photographer" mini article section are to be a maximum of 400 words and two photos.

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If possible, please send all articles and accompanying images via WeTransfer or a similar file transfer system to the Editor of WPAI Newsletter Service.

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