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# ECOTRAIL

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## ON THE BRINK

*INDIAN WILD DOG*

## TRAILBLAZERS BACKYARD

*DISCOVER THE DELIGHTS  
OF ONE-DAY TRAILS*

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

*FROM TRAILBLAZERS FOUNDATION*

## SPECTACULAR SWITZERLAND

*OUR SIGNATURE SWISS SKI CAMP IS  
AROUND THE CORNER!*



# CONTENTS

03

**FROM THE EDITOR**



04

**ON THE BRINK**  
COUNTRY CHRONICLES

06

**CAMP STORIES**  
CAMP MONSOON MAGIC



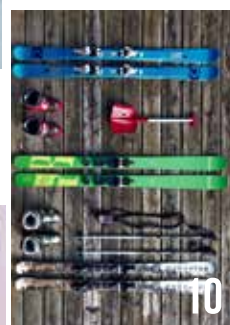
07

**CAMP STORIES**  
BACKYARD TRAILS



08

**NEW FRONTIERS**  
SWITZERLAND



10


**KNOW YOUR GEAR**  
SKI GEAR


11


**TRAILBLAZERS FOUNDATION**  
WILD TAILS




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**TRAILBLAZERS ADVENTURE TRAVEL PVT. LTD.**  
Edenwoods, Bay House, Ground Floor A, Gladys  
Alwares Marg, Off Pokhran Road No. 2, Thane  
(West) 400 610

Download softcopy from  
[www.trailblazersindia.com](http://www.trailblazersindia.com)  
Call us to participate in our camps/activities:  
022 21739737 or 022 21739732  
OR email us on: [contact@trailblazersindia.com](mailto:contact@trailblazersindia.com)

Editor : Ranjan Biswas

Associate Editor : Sachin Sata

Reporters : Nayantara Deshpande  
Aalap Kulkarni, Sachin Sata,  
Nitisha Sethia, Krusha Mota,  
Manali Gindra, Kiran Islania,  
Shardul Bhogle, Riya Kartha

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Shardul Bhogle, Riya Kartha



# A SPORT FOR GLOBAL CITIZENS

Dear Reader,

The ski slopes of Switzerland, scenic as they are, represent far more than the natural beauty and exquisiteness they are famed for. Skiing is much more than just a congregation of active adventurers in the Alps. It is an avenue to broaden professional horizons, an international sport of renown and also a ticket to becoming a global citizen, sharing in an activity with people of all ages, from the world over. At Trailblazers, we have always maintained that our goal as outdoor educators is to raise a generation of these global citizens. As a result, we break away from traditionally sought-after destinations to create unique, more

personalized experiences for our campers, exposing them to international standards of adventure activities as well as making them aware of the importance of networking with diverse individuals. I believe that the more our children can be encouraged to develop a wider, more extensive view of the world, the more well-rounded they will be as citizens of tomorrow. Of course, the important thing is to have fun while you are at it, and that is the kind of holistic approach that helps create memories of a lifetime. For students who seek international shores for further education, it is important to build a portfolio of activities-

soft skills and travel experience included. Our previous ski campers have continued to write to us to share their memories of their time on Ski camp, and many of them are now crafting their lives in international communities. Your global child undertaking a Trailblazers Ski or Snowboarding camp this December will not only fortify him or her to deal with an alien environment but also enable the child to call the shots when they plan to study in Universities internationally and be both a leader and an influencer of sorts. This camp can be a truly great gift you can give your child this year.

**Ranjan Biswas**

*Editor*

*ecotrail@trailblazersindia.com*

## DHOLES: INDIAN WILD DOGS

Found in the forests of the Western Ghats, Central and North Eastern India, this russet coated canine is as elusive as the tiger. Also known as Dholes, Indian Wild Dogs have been classified as an endangered species by the IUCN. Social mammals, Dholes live in packs that can range from ten to almost twenty-five individuals.



Indian Wild Dog- *Cuon alpinus*

They are master predators and a pack can bring down animals thrice their size such as the Indian Bison. Stamina and teamwork is their greatest strength as the pack relentlessly pursues its prey till the animal is completely exhausted.

A study has revealed that the Dhole diet can change based on the season, reflecting prey availability in that habitat.

Populations of these species are declining in most areas due to threats in the form of depleting prey base, habitat fragmentation, retaliatory killing by livestock owners and spread of canid diseases from stray dogs. Apart from these, Dholes are in severe competition for resources with the Tiger. The Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Vishakhapatnam, is running a conservation breeding centre for the species and plans to reintroduce a pack of 16 into the forests.

## A SOILED AFFAIR

In 2011, a bespectacled, unassuming man stood before members of the Indian government and shared his findings on the fragile ecology of the Western Ghats. He pointed out that as one of the eight biodiversity hotspots in the world, this 1600-km range of mountains are “not merely sensitive areas but are also ‘Ecologically Significant Areas,’ significant for their “biological value, ecological value, cultural and historical values and also because they are sensitive to external and natural pressures.”

Madhav Gadgil’s Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) Report, put together by a team of 14 experts and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, went on to outline in clear terms the vast richness of the Western Ghats, an area that it points out as being among the “most significant repositories of India’s biodiversity,” pointing out an urgent need to address the illegal land mining and quarrying as well as the rampant deforestation taking place. The report warned of severe repercussions if quick action and preventive measures were not taken to curb the rapid depletion of this ecologically fragile stretch of land.

The WGEEP report, then rejected for its recommendations and findings is now back in the spotlight, with the state of Kerala experiencing the severest floods since 1924. These floods have allowed us to take a deeper look into one of the most important factors in any healthy ecological system—soil. Soil plays the vital role of an absorbent for water. It is also a nutrient and a protector and nourisher of all things that grow within it. Like all other valuable and coveted resources, soil is formed over millions of years. This makes it a finite- and infinitely precious resource.

The Western Ghats are a rich resource of iron, bauxite and manganese ores in certain parts, which has led to the ranges being exploited, often in violation of laws, causing severe environmental degradation. In addition to this, findings from the report also suggest the depletion of soil as being one of the factors contributing to the detriment of the Western Ghats.

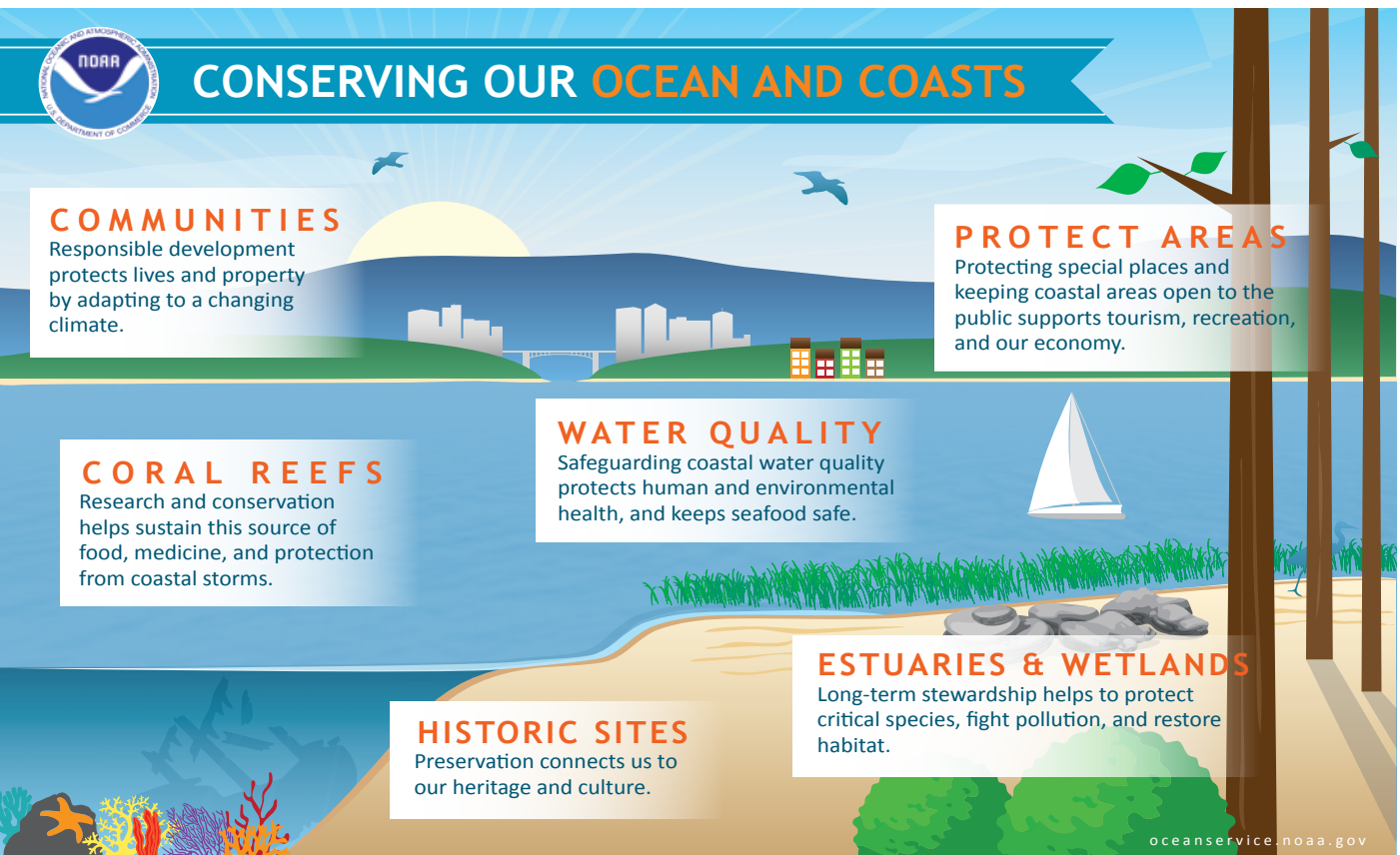
The WGEPP report points out that “one of the most crucial ecological issues of great concern is that degradation and contamination of soil and water in the upper reaches of the Ghats gets carried downstream leading to the degradation of midlands

and coastal regions,” and that “the expansion of commercial plantations in the Western Ghats has led to fragmentation of forest, soil erosion, degradation of river ecosystems and toxic contamination of the environment.”

It's clear from recent events in Kerala that to turn the tide of natural disasters, we must certainly heed the WGEPP's warnings, and place an emphasis on changing the way we view soil- that most basic and foundational of resources.

# PROTECTING OUR PLANET STARTS WITH YOU

<p><b>BIKE MORE DRIVE LESS</b></p> 	<p> <b>reduce REUSE recycle</b></p> <p>Cut down on what you throw away. Follow the three “R’s” to conserve natural resources and landfill space.</p>	<p><b>choose sustainable</b></p>  <p><b>seafood</b></p> <p>Learn how to make smart seafood choices at <a href="http://www.FishWatch.gov">www.FishWatch.gov</a>.</p>	<p>Trees provide food and oxygen. They help save energy, clean the air, and help combat climate change.</p>  <p><b>PLANT A TREE</b></p>
<p> <b>EDUCATE</b></p> <p>When you further your own education, you can help others understand the importance and value of our natural resources.</p>	<p><b>CONSERVE WATER</b></p>  <p>The less water you use, the less runoff and wastewater that eventually end up in the ocean.</p>	<p> <b>-SHOP- WISELY</b></p> <p>Buy less plastic and bring a reusable shopping bag.</p>	<p> <b>Don't send chemicals into our waterways.</b></p> <p>Choose nontoxic chemicals in the home and office.</p>
<p><b>Volunteer!</b></p>  <p>Volunteer for cleanups in your community. You can get involved in protecting your watershed too!</p>		<p> <b>Long-lasting light bulbs - ARE A - BRIGHT IDEA</b></p> <p>Energy efficient light bulbs reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also flip the light switch off when you leave the room!</p>	





## CONSERVING OUR OCEAN AND COASTS

**COMMUNITIES**  
Responsible development protects lives and property by adapting to a changing climate.

**PROTECT AREAS**  
Protecting special places and keeping coastal areas open to the public supports tourism, recreation, and our economy.

**CORAL REEFS**  
Research and conservation helps sustain this source of food, medicine, and protection from coastal storms.

**WATER QUALITY**  
Safeguarding coastal water quality protects human and environmental health, and keeps seafood safe.

**HISTORIC SITES**  
Preservation connects us to our heritage and culture.

**ESTUARIES & WETLANDS**  
Long-term stewardship helps to protect critical species, fight pollution, and restore habitat.

[oceanservice.noaa.gov](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov)

# BRINGING IN SOME MONSOON MAGIC

Life in Mumbai translates to a busy, hectic schedule, and citizens of this city often lack quality time with their loved ones. The senior management of a large conglomerate wanted to make sure that their employees could spend a memorable Sunday with their families and reboot their enthusiasm and drive.

Trailblazers gladly took over the responsibility of making their vision a success and brought to life a one-day camp for a large group of over 250 employees and their families at a popular resort near Mumbai. It was a perfect idea to enjoy the lovely monsoons.

With participants coming together from many different parts of the city, it was a power packed onward journey where they reminisced old songs, recollected their days in college and connected the dots between generations. Their children found out how mischievous their parents were back in the day. Having a gala time, no one understood how time passed and before we knew it, we had arrived at our destination.

To kick-start the exciting day, Trailblazers welcomed the participants with a flash mob, and were cheered on by the enthusiastic crowd. Beginning with power-packed icebreakers, the Trailblazers team took the group by storm, engaging each participant with their choice of sport or game. Adventure activities, a game of lawn football and box cricket, and a dance workshop by the Trailblazers team kept everyone engrossed and the strains of laughter could be heard throughout the resort.

Later, the group came together for a calming and peaceful nature walk along the river, kids were really excited also they were briefed about the flora and fauna around accompanied by our in-house botany and bio-diversity experts. The group enjoyed the feel of the flowing river and dipped their feet into the gentle water.

Post lunch, a fun game of Housie kept the adults occupied while the children were free to choose from a variety of stalls set up by the Trailblazers team, which

included a photo booth, a tattoo art stall, face painting, a nail bar, story-telling and graphology. Excited to visit all the stalls, participants queued up in glee! Next, a vibrant and spirited dance party followed, where everyone showcased their moves and enjoyed themselves without inhibition. The dance session saw both the participants and the Trailblazers come together to shake a leg, and this was followed by the prize distribution ceremony where employees won prizes for various categories of games played over the day.

To round off a great day, the group endeavored to fit in the same frame and pause time with a photograph. This programme gave the participants a platform for them and their families to interact amongst themselves and with other families as well, leaving them looking forward to more such trips. The participants went home with smiles and great memories to treasure-- which was the biggest reward for the Trailblazers team!



## TRAILBLAZERS BACKYARD TRAILS

The word 'backyard' first brings to mind a picture of a fresh green lawn with a tree in corner, sporting either a hammock or a swing, and perhaps a wooden table and two chairs on a bright, sunny day. But to lovers of the outdoors, a backyard can be anything. It is popularly defined as an open space at the back of your house, but is it limited to just that? We are so busy admiring distant ships that we often forget to take a dip in our own lagoons.

And that's how the thought of Backyard Trails struck us. The feeling of standing face upwards, nose pointing at the dark cloudy sky as your face is bombarded with soothing droplets; all you can smell is petrichor, and all you can

see is lush vegetation, with the mountains begging you to take those steps to the top so you can admire the bounty of the land. How does one find such a utopian monsoon trek without travelling halfway across the country?

That is where Trailblazers came to the rescue. Having recently collaborated with Decathlon Thane to announce "Backyard Trails," Trailblazers catered to all nature and monsoon lovers who wanted to spend a weekend outdoors. We made sure that it was not just a simple trail but an enriching experience. We had all our subject experts brainstorming on how we can make it an informative, different, engaging and fun

experience. We announced four Backyard Trails and got a phenomenal response. Participants were stunned by the beauty of nature, happy to make friends with like-minded strangers who live in the same neighbourhood, and happy to share in laughter with everyone as they played exciting group games. We did it all, from dancing in the rain to listening silently to the sounds of the forest. Trailblazers has always been honoured to be able to spread smiles and love for the outdoors across people. Don't forget your backyard is right there just waiting for you to enjoy its company. To arrange your own Backyard Trail, get in touch with us!



# SWISS SPECTACULAR

Switzerland - the land of cheese, Alps and romance. The country every Indian has grown up watching on the big screen. There's a reason it has swept away many-a-director; Switzerland's majestic beauty is not overrated.

Situated in central-west Europe, Switzerland is marked by three distinct geographical regions- the Alps, the Swiss plateau and the Jura.

The Alps, constituting over 60% of Switzerland, is undoubtedly

one of the most picturesque mountain ranges in the world. Whether hiking up the Matterhorn near Zermatt, the most photographed peak in the world, or taking a cable car up to Mount Titlis from the quaint town of Interlaken, one can enjoy these high peaks in different ways. And for the adventurous looking for some thrill, no place provides a ski experience like the Swiss Alps do. With one of the longest ski seasons and one of the highest-altitude skiing

available, SaasGrund and Saas Fe are the ideal locations to take your awkward first steps on the skis or hone skiing skills you may already have acquired earlier.

North of the Swiss Alps is the Swiss plateau region. Almost all the major Swiss cities like the capital Bern and other cities including Zurich, Basel and Geneva lie on the plateau. The cities of Switzerland provide as good an old-Europe charm as any other.





Even with their signature Old Towns, churches and castles, the cities are also modern in their infrastructure, consistently ranking as some of the most developed cities in the world. Another defining natural feature of Switzerland is its lakes, with over a 100 lakes. Two of the largest of them are Lake Geneva and Lake Constance, also marking border of the Plateau and the Juras. The northernmost part of Switzerland is the Jura mountains, traditionally known

for watch-making. Characterised by the forested cantons, the Jura are most famous for its hiking trails, cycling and cross-country skiing, accessible from around the Jura capital Delemont. For practicalities, English is widely spoken in Switzerland, although the official languages are German, French, Italian and Romansh. A Schengen visa suffices for travel to Switzerland, and the currency used is the Swiss Franc (1 CHF = 71 INR)

Switzerland is certainly more than what is showed on screen and what meets the eye. The land of cheese, chocolate, knives, watches and cuckoo clocks, one has to be there to enjoy the feel of this country. Riding the Glacier Express across the picturesque Alps interspersed with pristine lakes, while nibbling on a bar of creamy Swiss chocolate, is an experience one can enjoy only while in this beautiful country.



# SECRETS TO SKIING SMARTER

From time immemorial, the thirst for adventure, travel and the excitement to explore different terrains of our blue planet has led human beings on a journey to unravel the mysteries of nature. This wanderlust has led to the exploration of snow clad mountains too and what developed has a mode of transport soon turned into a recreational and competitive winter sport.

The origin of modern skiing evolved in Scandinavia and the word ski was coined in Norway which is derived from a North Germanic language called Old Norse. The Old Norse word "skíð" meant a split piece of wood or firewood.

The gear used earlier was very rudimentary and has gone through a huge transformation emphasizing on the technique used and the science of crafting the skis for various purposes. The skis in Northern Finland and Sweden which were used until the late 19th century were primarily used for transportation and were asymmetrical skis.

A long straight non-arching ski waxed with animal fat was worn by the skier for sliding on one leg and a shorter ski covered with animal skin was worn on the other leg for kicking. One long spear or pole carried by the skier almost completed the gear used. With the equipment being evolved in the late 19th and early 20th century, skiing too

formed two main genres – Alpine and Nordic.

## ALPINE SKIING

Alpine Skiing is 'downhill skiing' and is typically done on a 'groomed' or marked ski run called 'piste' at a ski resort. The Alpine skiing is the most common type of skiing and due to the nature of equipment, a skier is unable to walk and will require ski lifts, chairlifts to reach the top of the slope.

## NORDIC SKIING

Nordic Skiing has the adrenaline rushing ski jumping and cross-country skiing. Cross country skiing is generally done on flat terrain using thin skis, lightweight boots and groomed pistes. This type of skiing was used more as a means of transportation. Skiers are able to cover large distances. Whereas the ski jumping is done in certain areas specifically reserved for high jumps.

The other styles of skiing which have branched out from Alpine and Nordic are Backcountry, Freestyle, Telemark, Race, Teleskiing.

Backcountry is a wide-ranging term that covers all skiing that is in the mountains but not on a groomed piste. Ski-touring also comes under the term backcountry as does long-distance ski-touring which is done from ski hut-to-hut. It is a

very flexible type of skiing which helps the skiers to explore the entire mountain range after assessing the avalanche risks.

A relatively new type of skiing makes everything look cool and trendy. Freestyle is a much more playful sport. This style uses the whole ski resort as their playground and use some special features on pistes, half pipes and snow-park. This style of skiing is constantly evolving and is very popular.

## CHOOSING YOUR SKI TYPE

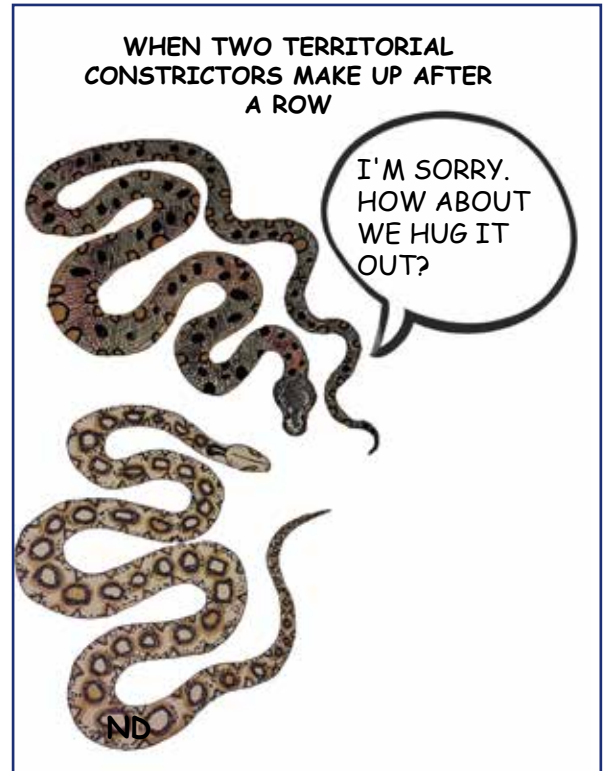
Though there are multiple types of skiing, the best part is that if you are in a ski resort or ski town then you can try most of them in the same week as chances are that they all are available. Almost all skiers will either start alpine or cross country skiing as all other types of skiing emanates from these. Lot of ski resorts have easy off-piste areas that are visibly marked and patrolled. This helps give alpine beginners a great opportunity to try backcountry skiing or even try out some off-piste skiing. Ski gears or guides can easily be hired based on your ability. With technology, artificial snow is created and alpine skiing can be done.

To enjoy any sport, the gear has to be right and that goes for skiing too. So get your ski gear and explore this adrenaline rushing sport in the snowy mountains.

The common gear used in Alpine skiing: (Clockwise L-R): 1. Ski poles and Skis, 2. Ski Boots and Bindings, 3. Ski Goggles, 4. Ski Helmet, 5. Ski Gloves, 6. Ski Suits or Ski Jackets and Ski Pants



## WILD TAILS



## TRAILBLAZERS FOUNDATION

### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:HYDERABAD

As the pioneers of outdoor education in India, Trailblazers has been integrating academic curricula into the outdoors through various pedagogies since its inception and bringing the joy of learning to both students and teachers. In line with its philosophy of the outdoor school, Trailblazers conducted the 'Beyond the Classroom' (BTC) workshops for teachers and principals of premier schools in Hyderabad.

The teacher training workshop held on the 9th of August, focussed on various pedagogies and was followed by a Principals' Summit on the 10th of August, where Principals shared their inputs on content, safety and the school's responsibility towards making outdoor education a crucial part of academia today. The workshop began with the key note speech of Ms. Anjali Razdan, Principal, P. Obul Reddy Public School, Hyderabad. The BTC

workshops focussed on interdisciplinary education and on implementing various innovative and fun pedagogies in imparting knowledge to students. Teachers were also shown various props that can be made out of the materials easily available in the school. It was emphasized that expensive instruments or props are not needed to explain fundamental concepts of science or any subjects.

Activities in the workshop focussed on learning about ecology, astronomy, biodiversity, the food chain, and other relevant subjects through the lens of both the Arts and the Sciences. Teachers happily accepted their role reversal as students and had fun playing nature games and learning various activities during the workshop. It brought back the child in them. It was indeed a great teaching and learning experience for everyone involved.



L-R: Mrs. Sonali RC Singh, Principal, Kairos Global School; Mr. Paramesh Murali, Vice Principal, Oakridge International School; Mr. Ranjan Biswas, Trustee, Trailblazers Foundation



BTC participants learn a fun new outdoor teaching technique



Principal's Summit, Hyderabad, BTC 2018

# BALI SCUBA DIVING ESCAPE



- EXPERIENCE THE UNDERWATER WORLD
- EXPLORE BALINESE CULTURE
- CYCLE THROUGH RICE TERRACES
- KNOW MORE ABOUT KOPI LUWAK
- EXPLORE AN UNDERWATER SHIPWRECK
- BECOME A SKILLED DIVER

- SKI/ SNOWBOARDING LESSONS
- CHOCOLATE AND CHEESE FACTORY VISIT
- SNOW SCULPTURES
- CERTIFIED FOR C.A.S.
- CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
- SLEDDING AND ICE SKATING

# SWISS SKI ADVENTURE



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