



THE LOCKDOWN IS ON MOVEMENT, NOT INFORMATION

What everyone is seeking during the lockdown is credible news on the corona virus outbreak, update on the developments and hacks to negotiate the city - gathered by the team of experienced journalists at Mumbai's favourite newspaper, **mid-day**.

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Red zone Mumbai to wait for BMC guidelines

Containment zone restrictions likely to stay till June end. P06



1,510 new cases in Mumbai

State reports 2,940 new cases and 99 deaths; Dahisar takes over Ghatkopar as ward with highest growth rate. P02



India unlocks this week, says MHA

Malls, religious places, hotels, restaurants to open from June 8, but not international travel, gyms, cinemas, schools. P05

sunday mid-day



Falling out of love during the lockdown

Have the last two months proven we can all live alone? What are the breakup rules during a pandemic? The truth about heartbreak in a heartless time. P14



Making the most of a bad time

Imaginative start-up founders are using the opportunity to find solutions to problems in a calamity. P24

HEALTH CRISIS IS TEACHER TO CORP INDIA

Leaders of top Indian firms admit two months of grappling with a virus, the lockdown and an economic downturn has challenged every corporate rule in their book, leading to an enlightened unlearning they are both grateful for and surprised at

QITANJALI CHANDRASEKHARAN ON P18-19



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COUNTRY HEAD,
AARDOR INDIA

1,510 new cases in Mumbai; 2,940 in Maharashtra

While 1,084 patients were discharged in Mumbai on Saturday, 99 deaths were reported across the state, 55 from city



BIP MLA Rahul Narvekar with brother Makrand Narvekar and Harshita Narvekar, both BIP corporators, protesting against the BMC and Shri Sana-led coalition state government asking them to conduct more COVID-19 tests in Colaba and Cuffe Parade. **PH: BIP/NARVEKAR**

**COVID-19
TICKER**

65,168

TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES IN MAHARASHTRA AS OF TODAY

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MAHARASHTRA reported 1,940 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, with the total count crossing 65,000. The death count was 99. Ward-wise data released by the civic body indicated that the growth percentage recorded in N Ward (Chhatrapati) dropped from 8.8 per cent to 7.5 per cent, while 8 North ward (Dahisar) now has the highest growth rate at eight per cent.

Civic officials said that the average daily growth rate of the city was at 4.52 per cent on May 29, marginally lower than the 4.99 per cent recorded a day before. The highest number of cases continue to be in G North (Dharavi) with 2,900 cases followed by E ward with 2,528 cases.

Mumbai reported 1,510 new cases, taking the total count to 38,442. Of the total number of cases in the state, 34,481 patients are currently being treated at various health facilities; 1,084 patients were discharged on Saturday.

State health department officials said that of the 99 deaths, 55 were from Mumbai (including a resident of Bharu who died in the city). Eight other deaths were from Pune, among them a resident of Rajasthan, seven from Vashi, Thane and Solapur, three each from Raigad and Jalgaon, two each from Navi Mumbai and Kalyan-Dombivli and one from Nagpur. Of the total deaths, 48 were senior citizens. Sixty-six patients were suffering from other ailments. State health department officials said that 40 of the 99 deaths occurred in the last two days, while the rest took place between May 6 and May 27. Till date, there have been 2,197 COVID-related deaths in the state.

Officials said that in Maharashtra, the patient doubling time (number of days it takes for the count of cases to double) that

was recorded to be 11.3 days last week has now increased to 17.5 days this week. While the recovery rate currently stands at 43.07 per cent, the mortality rate is currently 1.17 per cent.

The number of cases in G North ward continued to increase and one death that took place earlier in Dharavi was confirmed on Saturday. Civic officials said that there were 18 new cases in Dharavi, 14 in Dadar and 41 cases in Malin. Officials said that the new cases from Malin were detected during fever camps and majority of the cases involve employees of Breach Candy and Kobra hospitals.

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Kerala joins Mumbai doctors to help win COVID-19 fight

Special team of medics led by Dr Santosh Kumar from Thiruvananthapuram will assist doctors at Seven Hills hospital; all docs have volunteered for the job

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A TEAM of medics, including nurses, from Kerala, will be assisting the existing team of doctors fighting COVID-19 cases at Seven Hills Hospital, starting Monday.

Interestingly, the entire team from Kerala has taken up the task voluntarily, as the Kerala government has only granted permission to the team lead, Dr Santosh Kumar, deputy superintendent, Thiruvananthapuram Medical College, to visit Mumbai. Dr Kumar, who is also the associate professor of orthopaedic at the same medical college, had set up a 200-bed COVID-19 special ward in Kasargod, Kerala in April, within a short period of time.

The development came after Dr TP Lahane, Director Medical Education and Research, who is also the nodal officer for COVID-19, had written a letter to KK Shailaja, Minister Health and Social Welfare, Kerala, requesting them to send experienced doctors and trained nurses for management of patients in Mumbai.

The idea was to have the team from Kerala help in setting up the 600-bed COVID unit at Ma-

hadevi Race Course, which will start functioning from Wednesday. However, on arrival of two members from the team on Saturday, and post discussion with Dr Lahane, it was decided that Seven Hills would be a better set-up and closer to their place of lodging, which is at a private luxury hotel on the Sahar Airport Road, Andheri East.

Highly-placed officials within the health ministry of the Kerala government told mid-day that while they had received the letter from Dr Lahane, they could not officially send any team to Mumbai. "We only gave permission to Dr Santosh Kumar. The number of COVID cases is on the rise in Kerala too, as people are returning from different states, as well as the Gulf. Our government doctors are already pre-occupied handling fresh COVID cases," said the officer, who wished to remain anonymous.

On Saturday, the number



Migrants workers and their families trying to catch a train from CSMT on Saturday. **PH: BIP/NARVEKAR**

of positive cases in Kerala had gone up by 58, taking the total number to 635.

Dr Lahane, however, said that it was Dr Kumar, who expressed his desire to provide assistance to Maharashtra government. "We then extended an official invitation to him," he said.

Out of 50 doctors, 23 will be coming on Monday, which will include six intensivists and physicians. Eighty trained nurses have also confirmed. "The remaining 27 doctors and nurses will be arriving by Thursday or Friday. We are providing for their transportation, lodging and boarding. They will be insured for 150 lakh each," said Dr Lahane.



Dr Santosh Kumar (in yellow shirt) joined the team of doctors at Seven Hills on Saturday.

doctors will be paid ₹2 lakh per month, and trained nursing staff will be given a salary of ₹30,000 per month.

"When asked why the government had decided to send them to Seven Hills, Dr Lahane said, 'Seven Hills is a 1,000-bed COVID hospital with 100 beds in the ICU. We are increasing the ICU beds to 200, and the team from Kerala will be helping us with this.' Dr Kumar, who has already arrived in the city, said that he had already visited Seven Hills and was impressed with the services being provided by the team of doctors. "The number of positive cases in Mumbai

has been increasing daily. We are here to only provide assistance to the existing team and won't be introducing any new line of treatment."

Dr Kumar said that his team will be coming from different districts of Kerala. "Most of them are MBBS graduates, and some are specialised intensivists, pulmonologists and anaesthetists like Dr Sajeeb Gopalan, who is attached to SP Fort hospital in Thiruvananthapuram and has joined me in Mumbai already. Majority of them have one to five years of work experience and some are pursuing their post-graduation courses."

Retail body 'not very positive' about reopening of shops

Although mood in the retail camp was optimistic after a meeting between the state and the federation, retailers await state, BMC guidelines for fifth phase of lockdown



All over Mumbai, standalone grocery stores have seen long lines and no social distancing. The retail shops are saying that if allowed to open, they will follow all necessary precautions. PIC/SAYED SAMIRABEDI

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THE responsibility of the retail trade, if it happens, will lie on the Maharashtra government. This is what Viren Shah, president of the Federation of Retail Traders Welfare Association (FRTWA), told mid-day on Wednesday, when he warned of the consequences of retailers taking a heavy hit on their business as the lockdown entered its fifth consecutive phase. Even as the central government announced a lockdown extension to June 30, with many relaxations, guidelines for Maharashtra and Mumbai are expected today. The retail federation is eagerly

awaiting these. A day after Shah spoke to us, a meeting took place between Shah, Aditya Thackeray and Maharashtra Chief Secretary Ajay Mehta, during which the state government opened the floor for suggestions and advice on how to go about re-opening establishments, while ensuring maximum safety and security. They wanted my advice and suggestion on what

measures of security could be taken should shops be allowed open," Shah said.

Although Shah was positive in the immediate aftermath of the meeting, he said (on Saturday) that after reading Sena supreme Uddhar Thackeray's comments in the morning's newspapers, the prospect of establishments being reopened by next week now

looked "bleak". Shah said that he had offered his suggestions to the administration on how they could ensure reopening of establishments, without compromising on the safety and security of its staff and customers. "All shops will be sanitised regularly before opening. They will have to use electronic thermometers. We will do everything necessary."

He added: "There will be a severe impact on business, and lakhs of people will be rendered jobless due to unemployment. If the economic revival of Mumbai does not happen soon, then the direct benefit will go to the e-commerce industry and retailers' stock will be a dead stock."

If the revival of Mumbai does not happen, then the direct benefit will go to the e-commerce industry and crores of rupees worth of retailers' stock lying in shops and godowns will be a dead stock within a few months

Viren Shah, Federation of Retail Traders Welfare Association

Andheri walkers made to do sit-ups

Lokhandwala residents value fitness over safety, served notices for flouting lockdown

**RANJEET JADHAV AND
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WHILE Mumbai has witnessed a spike in COVID-19 cases and it becomes all the more important to stay home, some Mumbaiians seem to be flouting lockdown rules. Residents from the posh locality of Lokhandwala complex in Andheri West were seen going for their morning and evening walks. Police officials initiated action against the reckless residents by not only fining them, but also by making them do sit-ups. It may be noted that time and again, mid-day has highlighted the fact that walkers have been flouting lockdown norms issued by the



government in several areas, including Aarey Milk Colony and Charkop. Other residents from these localities allege that they have appealed to the walkers to stay at home, but to no avail. Many pictures depicting walkers

have also gone viral. Ashish Rane, the photo editor of mid-day, had visited the Lokhandwala back road area, infamous for its walkers, on Thursday evening. He noticed that cops were taking

action against those illegally roaming on the road around 6 pm. Officials from the Versova police station were halting vehicles to check the licences of the drivers. Those who were found to be roaming without a valid reason were served with a notice. Around 30 to 35 people were served with one. A jogger who saw the police, and tried to run away, was caught and made to kneel down.

"We have been serving notices to people who are illegally roaming on the road. If we find out that the person is a regular offender, a case is registered against them for flouting lockdown norms," said Bhushan Rane, assistant commissioner of police (ACP), of the DN Nagar division.



SUMMER GAMES

Tired of being cooped up, young boys chose to play on a swing at Aarey Colony in Goregaon on Saturday. PIC/SATEJ SHINDE

61-yr-old held for conning migrants

Accused is caught on video taking money from labourers, to help them board free train service

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THE Taling police have arrested a 61-year-old real estate agent for cheating unsuspecting migrants, desperate to leave the city. The accused, identified as Satyanarayan Sharma, allegedly assured migrants that he'd put them on a train leaving for Uttar Pradesh, in return for a hefty sum. The police have been receiving complaints from various people about him, who are brazenly demanding money from migrants, who want to reach their hometowns. Sharma has been caught on a mobile clip, while taking Rs 9,000 from a migrant.

In the 6:44-minute-long clip, Sharma is heard telling the migrants to carry their Aadhar card. He also says they won't have to stand in a long queue, and that he'll be giving them a token, after which they will take a bus from Nalasa-



Satyanarayan Sharma in the video clip that shows him asking for money. PIC/HANIF FOTEL

para to Vusat station, from where he will put them on the train. A migrant worker is then seen paying the agent Rs 9,000 for two tickets.

A police officer privy to the investigation said that Sharma has been denying his role in the case. "He said as that he was falsely trapped in the case, and that he had returned the money to the migrants. He is suffering from diabetes and hypertension, so we have to be careful while interrogating him," said an officer, attached to the Taling Police. The police are currently investigating if Sharma is part of a gang, running a racket to con migrants.

₹6,000

The amount that the real estate agent was charging



Police officials served notices to those who were found breaking lockdown rules by walking, jogging, or driving their vehicles. PIC/ASHISH RANE



Wedding bells during lockdown

MONISHA Aggarwal, a professional photographer, had no idea how the experience of shooting a wedding during lockdown would feel like. When Aggarwal (in pic) was approached to do just that, she took on the challenge because she wanted to get her creative juices flowing. She made her way to the groom's house, where the wedding was hosted, along with a videographer. The small team of two from The Photo Diary was coronavirus-ready. They were wearing protective gear, such as face masks and a bottle of sanitizer was always handy, using which they would regularly sanitise their hands and equipment.

They shot the wedding,



which was held in Marathi, while adhering to social distancing norms. "I'm used to shooting a wedding with a 1,000 people but in this case, there were only 15 people. It was a calm and unique experience," she said. The bride and groom, their family, and everybody else, including the priest, were wearing masks. The bride and groom's extended family, as well as their friends, were witnessing their wedding ceremony through Zoom. "The important thing to remember is that love survives. No matter what's happening in the world, there will always be an occasion to celebrate love," she added.

History lessons on Bombay police

POLICE historian Deepak Rao is using the lockdown time to do what he enjoys most—share his love for all things Mumbai. Over the last few days, Rao has been digging out rare finds from his prized collection of books and magazines, to acquaint his Instagram followers with the Bombay Police force of the early 20th century. From the postcard of a traffic police constable from 1947, who is seen going about his duties while taking shade under an umbrella that is harnessed to his uniform, to a 1936 picture of a loudspeaker man, which was used to alert motorists, and the portrait of AE Cuffin, the last British Commissioner Of Police, Bombay taken at Hamilton Studios—Rao is keeping history buffs glued to his page. "How much can one read in a day? I thought why not use this time, to share some of the pictures in my collection," Rao told this dossier. The back story behind the 1947 postcard of



PICTURE BY DEEPAK RAO ON INSTAGRAM



the constable is most interesting. "A Swedish traveller visiting Bombay had sent the postcard to his friend back home in Sweden. It eventually landed at a London market, and my friend Dr Shekhar Krishnan [historian and archivist] got hold of it online, and gifted it to me on my last birthday," says Rao, who has previously authored a coffee-table book on the Mumbai police force.

Steve and his wonder calls

RETIRED West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor turns 34 today and he won't be getting many birthday wishes in the form of calls from international players around the world.

Not because Bucknor was an arrogant official, far from it. But his dreaded finger sent many a batsman back to the pavilion rather unjustifiably. This dislike can never forget Bucknor's horrendous leg before wicket call that shocked Sachin Tendulkar and everyone else at the

Gaithis in Brisbane during the opening Test of the 2003-04 Border-Gavaskar Trophy series.

If there's one batsman whom Bucknor was 'kind' to, it was chirpy Pakistani Javed Miandad. The England camp was stunned when Bucknor negated two confident leg before shouts-off pacer Derek Pringle in the 1992 World Cup final at Melbourne.

A little birdie tells us that Miandad made it a point to



spend some time chatting with Bucknor on the flight to Melbourne after the semi-final in Auckland. Wonder whether their friendship spilled over to the hallowed turf of the Melbourne Cricket Ground on March 25, 1992 when Pakistan clinched world cricket's greatest prize.

West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor. PICTURE BY GETTY IMAGES



COAST IS CLEAR

The sky hasn't been bluer, and water cleaner. Mumbai sparkles like a topaz on Saturday morning in this picture clicked in Bandra. PICTURE BY SHAMUS KHAN

A celebration of drag queens

POORVA Dinesh made her debut as a documentary filmmaker, writer, and producer with Haus of Maya last year. Dinesh was very intrigued by the growing drag culture in Bengaluru, India and soon her intrigue grew into a strong desire to tell the stories of drag queens in urban India. The

movie tells the story of Maya, India's most popular contemporary drag queen and a matriarch to a drag family. Maya, the drag persona of 30-year-old queer Alex, recounts her journey of discovering her passion for drag, fighting her internal demons, surviving failures and establishing her drag family 'Haus of Maya'. The movie is available on YouTube starting today and is worth a watch during the lockdown. "I want to tell stories that are thought-provoking and make people more aware of themselves and the world they live in. And Haus of Maya is just that. It makes you aware of a different side to India, which is also very promising in current times," says Dinesh.



More than just a restaurant

AT A time when city restaurants remain locked up, Chembur's Pat Pourni has been witnessing activities of a different kind. The owners are using the 5,000-sq-ft diner to store and distribute relief material. "A big advantage we have is the space and we wanted to put it to good use," says co-owner Apurva.

"Seven staffers have been helping us prepare the food and pack it. Another team picks it up and distributes it to families in the nearby slums." The team collated a list of needy families in M-West ward with the help of the BMC and are reaching out to over 2,000 families per day.



Tackling trauma, one game at a time

A city NGO is helping children from disadvantaged families develop deeper resilience with their activities

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It's not just adults who are experiencing bouts of anxiety and helplessness during the lockdown, but children as well. Members of Mumbai non-profit Apni Shala sensed the distress when they began reaching out to members of lower income groups last month. The NGO has been actively working towards building life skills among municipal school students since 2013. With regular activities suspended, the initial intention was to help households with essentials. "We did that in the first two weeks, where we became a conduit between families and community kitchens because we were able to source contact numbers of families given our association with the BMC," says CEO Rohit Kumar.

The objective was soon broadened to include mental aid in line with the inputs they received while conversing with parents. "People shared that their children have become more aggressive since the lockdown was first announced. Some said the kids are feeling lonely as they do not get a chance to play with their friends."

We built a psycho-social first aid kit to assess the emotional assistance an individual needs. It's the mental equivalent of physical first aid kit

Rohit Kumar, CEO, Apni Shala



Until now, the organisation has reached out to 2,000 families

"We may not notice it, but children are very sensitive to what is going on around them," says Kumar. Over the last two months, the team has helped 2,000 families in Kurla, Chembur

and Ghadgaon through their interventions. This includes not just supporting them with ration, but also offering well researched content on emotional resilience in their language and devising games that families, which do not have access to resources, can indulge in. "Because our team is trained to handle mental health issues, we built a psycho-social first aid kit to assess the emotional assistance an individual



Members of Apni Shala on a video call with the children

Another game devised by the team that has gained favour is an indoor treasure hunt, where parents are encouraged to determine the type of hunt that is right for the child. It is suitable to any home, however small

val needs. It's the mental equivalent of physical first aid. Injuries might be easy to see and fix, but that's not necessarily the case with trauma." He points out that children living in challenging home environments are especially vulnerable.

The activities are conducted by involving parents, who, Kumar says, are their critical partners in the lockdown period. Every day, volunteers phone families to check on

their well being and suggest ways to keep their children engaged. Zoom calls are done with those who have access to smartphones, but that's a negligible number, says Kumar. One activity includes teaching a calming technique called Steel the Dymers, blow the candle. "Telling children to simply calm down is likely to make them more frustrated. It is important to acknowledge their emotions and help them process it." This is done by telling the child to use their nose to take a big deep breath (as if they are smelling flowers), and blow the breath out (like they are blowing out a candle).

"Now, it has become a part of our day-to-day conversations. There are days when the kids remind us, 'Bhaiya, don't forget to dekho rako aur saans lo'," says programme facilitator Shabbir Shah.

Another game devised by the team that has gained favour is an indoor treasure hunt, where parents are encouraged to determine the type of hunt that is right for the child. It is suitable to any home, however small. "Parents have tried this by asking their children to locate chut patti and masalas in the house. This leads to motor strengthening," explains teacher Pallavi Rajkar. Kumar says they ensure parents are made active stakeholders. "We encourage them to share fun stories from their childhood with kids. This helps build a connection."



Law will decide if students in final year of college can pass

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THE state government will now take legal advice on whether or not final year students of different universities can be passed, without a final examination. The idea is to understand if it can be possible with average of marks scored throughout the course and allowing an option at improving grades with an examination that can be held later. This was discussed in a video conference held by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday with different vice-chancellors, as well as other concerned officials. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss various options possible to conduct evaluation of final year students ensuring that no student is exposed to the danger of infection amid the pandemic.

Confusion over final year examination of university and affiliated colleges continues to worry students. While the UGC had issued an advisory asking universities to hold final year examinations in the month of July, Maharashtra state after declaring that it will follow the UGC guideline, later suggested that it should be cancelled.

The suggestions discussed in the meeting also included taking opinions on the legal aspect of allowing evaluation of final year students with average of marks scored until now. "Examinations in July are looking impossible. A new approach is required," said Thackeray in the meeting.

COVID benefit for all

Teachers can have a sigh of relief as the state has extended the 150 lakh insurance benefit for all non-medical government employees who may die of COVID-19, while on duty. After schools and colleges were taken over as quarantine facilities, government teachers were asked to manage these centres. Lack of benefits had left many anxious.

'Came looking for Salman Khan, lost everything'

Allahabad man, who wanted financial help for ailing daughter, has run through his savings; NGO gives family shelter, food

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ALLAHABAD resident, 55-year-old Dablu Khan, had arrived in Nafasopara in the second week of March with the hope of getting treatment for his 15-year-old daughter Alia, who he says suffers from a neurological disorder. Khan had hoped to seek help from a rich Salman Khan's NGO Being Human Foundation.

However, locked down in the city, Khan's savings have diminished and he has not been able to pay rent for the last three months. He reached Vasal's Sunday grounds on Wednesday, hoping to catch a train home, but alleges that he was teased by a policeman.

"I have no money to bear my daughter's medical expenses and a few friends in Allahabad

told me that Salman Khan helps poor people like me. So, I had reached Nafasopara with my wife and four children in the second week of March but have been stranded here," says Khan, who runs a business of sale and purchase of animals back home.

"We could not even pay rent. The landlord was screaming at me. Today, I vacated the room without paying rent as a few neighbours told me that there is a train for Allahabad from Vasal Road station and that free tickets are being distributed at

Khan had taken Alia to Hyderabad where he met a neuro physician at Sai Krishna Super speciality hospital a couple of years ago

Sunday ground."

Khan says he then flagged an autorickshaw, paying ₹400 to reach Sunday ground, but a policeman cursed him and his family was chased away. "I had come here to arrange medical facility for my ailing daughter but remained stranded inside a house. We could not even meet and contact Salman Khan. I don't know how my daughter will be cared," he added. Khan had taken Alia to Hyderabad where he met a neuro physician at Sai Krishna Super speciality hospital a couple of years ago. "But she is yet to recover. She collapses while walking, she cannot even speak properly. We are completely destroyed," he says, sobbing.

Khan and his family have now been provided shelter in Vasal by volunteers of Sama-



Dablu Khan and family have now been provided shelter in the office of Samarpan Foundation and Jeevanti Trust. PIC: HANU RATUL

dhan Foundation and Jeevanti Trust. "We have been distributing food and water among migrants as the government is not offering them help. Khan and his family were in distress as the landlord had forced them to vacate the room, so we have

Centre in lockdown exit mode, limits curbs to containment zones till June 30

Termed Unlock 1, MHA allows opening of religious places, hospitality services and shopping malls from June 8

COVID-19
TICKER

1,73,763

FROM NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES IN THE COUNTRY AS OF TODAY

NEW DELHI A day before the end of the fourth phase of lockdown, the Home Ministry on Saturday issued new guidelines for the phased reopening of all activities outside containment zones till June 30.

MHA said that activities to be allowed with effect from June 8 in Phase I include religious places, places of worship for the public, hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality services and shopping malls.

"Sporting activities, entertainment, academic, cultural and religious functions and other large congregations will not be allowed. The dates for their opening will be decided based on assessment of the situation in Phase III," said the MHA.

In a press release, MHA said that the Health Ministry will issue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all permitted activities in consultation with the Central Ministries/Departments concerned and other stakeholders, for ensuring social distancing and to contain the spread of COVID-19.

It may be recalled that the MHA order of March 24 imposed a strict lockdown throughout the country. Only essential activities were permitted. All other activities were prohibited.

Subsequently, in a graded manner and keeping the overarching objective of containing the spread of COVID-19 in view, the lockdown measures have been relaxed. "New guidelines have been issued based on extensive consultations held with States and UTs," said the MHA.

As per the new guidelines, "there shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods. No separate permit-



Last Tuesday, people in Varanasi near Mathura displayed placards demanding opening of temples amid the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown. PIC/PRI

The ministry reiterated that all precautions must be taken while 'living with the new normal' of COVID-19

tion/approval permit will be required for such movements."

However, its State/UT, based on reasons of public health and its assessment of the situation, proposes to regulate the movement of persons, it will give wide publicity in advance regarding the restrictions to be placed on such movement, and the relaxed procedures to be followed," said the MHA.

According to the Union health ministry, the total number of COVID-19 cases in the country is 1,73,763.

'Doubling time improves'

The doubling time of cases in India has improved to 15.4 days from 13.3 days, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday, as the country's COVID-19 death toll climbed to 4,571 and the total cases rose to 1,73,763.

The doubling time improved during the past three days, it said. As many as 31,264 COVID-19 patients have been cured in the last 24 hours till Saturday 8 a.m. the highest number of recoveries recorded in one day.

pushing India's recovery rate to 47.40 per cent, it said.

"As on May 31, the doubling time in the past 14 days was 13.3, it has improved to 15.4 days in the last three days. The fatality rate stands at 2.66 per cent," the statement said.

As on May 29, 255 per cent of the active COVID-19 patients are in the ICU, 0.48 per cent on ventilators and 1.96 per cent are on oxygen support. The testing capacity has increased in the country through 462 government laboratories and 200 private laboratories.

The ministry reiterated that all precautions must be taken while 'living with the new normal' of COVID-19.

It is imperative that all guidelines on physical distancing are followed at public places and workplaces, hand hygiene including frequent hand washing and respiratory hygiene is maintained, mask or face covers are worn in public places and coughing/respiratory etiquettes are followed, it said.

"It is highlighted that the management of COVID-19 is only possible when all the due care is taken by everyone," the ministry underlined.

All flight returns

A special ferry flight of national carrier Air India which took off from Delhi for Moscow on Saturday returned after a crew member was found positive.

The flight being operated under the Varanasi Bharat mission was halfway over Central Asia, when it was called back.

The airline's medical staff which is overseeing the massive testing campaign of its crew, mistook the pilot's test report as 'Negative' for COVID-19.

AGENCE

Mumbai, other red zones will have to wait for state orders

The Maharashtra government will ask BMC to demarcate containment zones in Mumbai

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MUMBAI: While the Centre's fresh guidelines give a breather to non-containment zones in the country, red zones like Mumbai would have to wait for a little longer till the state government eases restrictions.

The aim of Unlock 1 is to resume more economic activities. However, the states have been asked to follow existing guidelines to tackle COVID-19 till more instructions follow.

Similar to the previous four lockdowns, the Maharashtra government will ask local authorities such as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to demarcate containment zones by considering guidelines issued by the Union Health Ministry and assessment of local health crisis.

The state government is expected to issue revised orders after studying the MHA guidelines and assessing the ground reality. The BMC would decide for Mumbai. Similar exercise would be conducted for red zones that the government will define in its new orders.



The Maharashtra government is expected to issue revised orders after studying the MHA guidelines. PIC/SATEESH SHINDE

What continues to remain shut

- International air travel of passengers
- Operation of metro rail
- Gymnasiums/swimming pools
- Entertainment parks
- Theatres
- Bars and auditoriums
- Assembly halls and similar places
- Social/political/sports/entertainment/academic/cultural/religious functions/and other large congregations



Union Home Minister Amit Shah. PIC/APP

'Modi 2.0 first year historic'

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated the people of India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of completion of the first year of the second term of the Modi government.

Shah tweeted: "I heartily congratulate the country's popular Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the successful one year of Modi 2.0. It has been full of historic achievements."

Shah said the Modi government in its six years has corrected many historical wrongs and laid the foundation of a self-reliant India which is on the path of progress. Meanwhile, the Congress on Saturday launched an attack on the Narendra Modi government and said that the country is standing at the crossroads in the seventh year and the people are exhausted by the weight of the government's sins.

Addressing a press conference, Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal said, "The first year of the second term of the Modi government has been a year of disappointment, disastrous management and diabolical pain."

He said at the start of the seventh year, India stands at the "crossroads". "Citizens are exhausted by the weight of this government's sins, ineptitude and callous insensitivity to the widespread suffering," the Congress leader said.

AGENCE

Citizens are exhausted by the weight of this government's sins, ineptitude and callous insensitivity to the widespread suffering

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal

India death toll closes to 5,000

There is no data available [with which we can] persuasively argue that there are strain-specific differences among SARS-CoV-2 viruses, which are leading to more deaths, says Jeffrey Townsend, professor at Yale University. Quoted on the L-strain behind deaths.

Townsend said, "There is no data available that argues that there are strain-specific differences among the viruses." In April end, the high mortality rate due to COVID-19 in Gujarat was reportedly attributed to the "L-strain" though it is yet to be established.

AGENCE

US Prez severs ties with WHO over virus

Accusing the health body of being a 'puppet of China,' Donald Trump says America will no longer grant Hong Kong special status



A pro-China activist holds an effigy of Trump during a protest outside the US consulate in Hong Kong. PIC/APP

**COVID-19
TICKER**
30,11,317

NEW NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES IN THE WORLD AS OF TODAY

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said on Friday the US will terminate its relationship with the World Health Organisation over its handling of the Coronavirus outbreak in China and will begin the process of withdrawing special trade benefits for Hong Kong because of the Chinese government's imposition of a new security law in the semi-autonomous city.

Trump, who has complained for weeks about the WHO as the virus death toll surged in the United States, said the global health body failed to adequately respond to the outbreak because China has "total control" over the

US move doomed to fail, says China

BEIJING: The mouthpiece of China's ruling Communist Party said the US' moves to end trading privileges for Hong Kong "grossly interfere" in China's internal affairs and are "doomed to fail". It was the "firm determination of all Chinese people" to oppose interference by any external forces, it further stated.

global organisation. "We have detailed the reforms that it must make and engaged with them directly, but they have refused to act," the American president said from the White House. "Because they have failed to make the requested and greatly needed reforms, we will be today terminating the relationship."

The US is the largest source of financial support for the WHO and its exit is expected to significantly weaken the organisation.

Trump said the US would be "re-directing" the money to "other worldwide and deserving urgent global public health needs" without providing specifics. He said Chinese officials "ignored" their reporting obligations to the WHO and pressured it to mislead the world when the virus was first discovered.

He noted that the US contributes about \$450 million to the world body, while China provides about \$40 million.

Trump said the administration would begin eliminating the "full range" of agreements that had given Hong Kong a relationship with the US that mainland China lacked, including on trade and extradition. He said the State Department would begin warning US citizens of the threat of surveillance and arrest when visiting the city.

Officials said the administration was considering expelling thousands of Chinese graduate students enrolled at US universities.

AP/CEA

Browser

KARACHI PLANE CRASH TRIAL SUSPENDED

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has suspended proceedings of a plea seeking a transparent probe into the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane crash in Karachi on May 22, until the release of the conclusive findings of an ongoing inquiry. The plea contended that the procurement and employment of "out of order" aircraft by the PIA puts around 800 lives at risk daily.

AUS MINING COMPANY DESTROYS HERITAGE SITE

CANBERRA: The blasting of two ancient rock caves in Australia, part of a 46,000-year-old indigenous heritage site, by a mining company for expanding its iron ore extraction operations has sparked a wave of indignation and anger in the country. Indigenous Affairs minister Ken Wyatt said that the destruction of the indigenous heritage was extremely disappointing and "incomprehensible", although adding that the company, Rio Tinto had expressed regret for the incident, and it appeared to be a "genuine mistake".

AP/REUTERS

Brazil COVID-19 death toll hits 27,878, surpassing hard-hit Spain

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil on Friday reached 27,878 Coronavirus deaths, official figures showed, surpassing the toll of hard-hit Spain and making it the country with the fifth-highest number of fatalities.

The epicentre of the South American Coronavirus outbreak, Brazil saw 1,124 deaths in 24 hours, the Ministry of Health said.

It also had a record number of new cases—26,908 in one day—bringing the total number of infections to 4,65,166.

The United States, Britain, Italy and France lead the world in Coronavirus deaths. As of Friday, Spain had recorded 27,121 deaths, with virus fatalities there rapidly slowing. Brazil could soon surpass France,



A worker prepares to bury a victim in Rio de Janeiro. PIC/APP

which has seen 28,714 deaths.

"There is no way to foresee when the outbreak will peak," the Ministry of Health said. Experts say the number of cases in Brazil could be 15 times higher than the confirmed figure because there has been no widespread testing.

REUTERS

Russia's Coronavirus cases near 4 lakh

MOSCOW: The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Russia rose by 8,952 to the 3,96,575, the third highest in the world, in the past 24 hours, the anti-Coronavirus crisis centre said on Saturday. That said, the total number of cases has increased by 2.3 per cent.

Coronavirus vaccine could be ready by Oct, claims Pfizer CEO

NEW YORK: Global pharmaceutical major Pfizer believes that a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 could be ready by the end of October, the company's CEO Albert Bourla said.

Pfizer is conducting clinical trials in the US and Europe for the BNT162 vaccine programme to prevent COVID-19 in collaboration with German company BioNTech.

Bourla made the comments while participating at a virtual event organised by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) this week.

120

No. of vaccines proposed across the world



A researcher works in an Amsterdam laboratory. PIC/APP

"If things go well and the stars are aligned, we will have enough evidence of safety and efficacy for us to feel comfortable, for the FDA [US Food and Drug Administration] to feel comfortable, and for the EMA [European Medicines Agency] to feel comfortable, to have a vaccine around the end of October," Bourla said.

AP/REUTERS

White House on lockdown, nationwide protests over black man's death



A police officer kneels the final moments of George Floyd. PIC/APP

WASHINGTON: The White House has been put under a lockdown as protests over the death of an unarmed black man in custody reached Washington on the fourth day of nationwide demonstrations against the incident in Minneapolis.

The nationwide protests were against the death of 46-year-old African-American George Floyd on Monday after being detained on suspicion of trying to use a

fake \$20 bill at a supermarket.

In videos recorded by passers-by, Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, is seen holding Floyd down with a knee on his neck although the victim repeatedly pleaded, "I can't breathe", and "please, I can't breathe".

On Friday, Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter.

In Washington DC on Friday,

hundreds of protesters gathered in Lafayette Park just outside the White House, chanting "No justice, no peace".

Some demonstrators also tore down barricades in front of the White House on more than one occasion, resulting in moments of tension, while some other demonstrators clashed with Secret Service personnel, witnesses said.

In unusual move, US embassies in Africa speak up on Floyd

Some US embassies on the continent have issued critical statements, saying no one is above the law. Head of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, condemned the "murder" of George Floyd.

AP/REUTERS

Paatal Lok — The next level

zara hatke

RAHUL DACUNHA

SO, the makers of the web series *Paatal Lok* called me.

"What did you think of Season 1?" they enquired. I said, in my view, it's the most watchable web television series, plus Jitendra Ahlawat can do what no other actor in India can—create deep simmer in his eyes, coupled with deep sadness, and shoulders that sag with excessive bureaucratic rejection.

"What did you think of the writing?" they asked.

Adaptations can be tricky, I answered. I'm more of a fan of an entirely original material, because in adaptations, the author of the book has done much of the hard work, which is to give us all that all-important—sugget—the story. Also, it's the issue of perspective. Taran Tejpal's *The Story of my Assassins*, sees the book from the journalist's POV. *Paatal Lok* is from the cop's. Skill, *Paatal Lok* is first-rate writing, and character creation.

In my view, original Indian fare, on OTT platforms, is a mixed bag. The shows



ILLUSTRATION/UDAY MOHITE

fall loosely into two broad categories—the hip and the Hindi heartlands.

The former has been patchy—the characters are usually a bunch of supposedly cool people punctuating every sentence with "bro" "dude" and "giggle", but they appear anything but cool, while the latter has totally uncool goons mouthing "believe it" and "bhik" "bhik", pretty cool. In

my view, we handle grit far better than glamour.

"Do you envision a Season 2?" they queried.

Season 1 had a completeness, a definite beginning, middle and end. Hath Ram Chaudhary, the protagonist cop, has cracked the case but the story was as much about him finding the suspects as it was about him finding himself. Also, Ahlawat's character

has won a Pyrrhic victory, the most dramatically powerful of all wins, so whenever you go from here, it'll seem lame.

"So, what do you suggest as an extension?" they asked. I'm seeing an animation series that will have a concurrent video game.

So, in this animation series/video games, our Hath Ram Chaudhary, is a desi superhero to face with a series of tanks.

Each episode sees him taking on a new antagonist, sometimes natural, sometimes human.

These antagonists include cyclones in Bengal, Coronaviruses in Bombay and cruel sarpanches in Bihar, disallowing weary migrants from entering their village.

Hath Ram's trusted mode of transport is a giant locust that flies through the air and delivers him from place to place.

In the season's finale, I have conceived a cross OTT platform, mouth-watering prospect: Prezko Trump has just condescendingly announced that he's prepared to "mediate" between India and China. Hath Ram is pissed off. "Who needs his help, handle your own affairs, Donald Trump," he thinks to himself. His boss advises him, "Tell Trump yourself."

So, Hath Ram enlists the help of Sartaj Singh from *Sacred Games* (Saili Ali Khan) and Srikanth T'wast from *The Family Man* (Manoj Bajpayee) and they fly on the locust to the US on an undercover mission and infiltrate the White House.

"What will you call this season?" they asked.

"PAATAL LOCUST" I concluded.

Rahul da Cunha is an actor, theatre director, playwright, photographer and traveller. Reach him at rahul.dacunha@mid-day.com

Rotis: The shape of love

beyond bollywood

MEENAKSHI SHEDDE

GIVEN that I haven't touched a polpat-latte in about 20 years, I was amazed I could make 25 rotis at a stretch. I did it on Saturday last week, and again on Tuesday, and plan to continue. It all started when a good friend, Palguni Desai, forwarded me a WhatsApp message from Circle of Love, a group of volunteers from all over Mumbai, saying "30,000 roti rolls needed" for distribution to the poor, hungry and migrants. Palguni herself was making 120 theplas (thick rotis with spices and meat). Bas, I jumped in. Many Indians are feeling terrible about the Coronavirus has left millions devastated, and are unsure about how to help beyond donating money; here was an opportunity,

and from home.

I aimed at a modest 25 masala rotis. As I had just two hours to deliver them (I saw the message late), I quickly tested friends, who immediately helped. Diphen bought me thepla atta. Viju lent me two large tawas. Soon, I was belching the rotis, and simultaneously running three rotis at a time. Imagine, some even turned out round. But, mostly, they were the shape of love.

Working with your own hands has a much deeper and different pleasure than donating money, though each is extremely valuable to the cause. It felt a bit Biblical, making something as basic as rotis, unleavened bread, to feed those you didn't even know. In fact, every Ramadan, many Muslims fast for a month to personally experience the suffering of the hungry, and they also donate to

charity and feed the hungry. My friend Tanuja brought a generous stack of rotis, as did Viju. The entire Salarjung family—Vinodkhal, Viju, Prateek, Ritika—helped pack the theplas to paper, in sets of three. We couldn't believe the final tally: we had made 85 rotis in two hours! Nandini dispatched her husband Ranjit to help drop off the rotis at a collection centre nearby.

The next time, I posted on the local residents' group, and prioritised the Gujaratis, who are accustomed to making rotis daily any way. Overnight, Sejal, Hemal and their friends organised the bulk of the 489 theplas/rotis we organised. Imagine, nearly 500 theplas, five times more than the first time. Circle of Love posts regular updates: once Mumbai's people contributed over 11,000 rotis a day, 36,000 another day, and counting. Yet on other days, there were 75,000 migrants leaving by various trains, as well as buses, so we needed to step up our efforts.

Later, I discovered the NGO



ILLUSTRATION/UDAY MOHITE

Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur was backing Circle of Love, and has distributed 4.8 lakh theplas in 2.65 lakh migrants and needy till date. Circle of Love provides to the full spectrum of needy people, including settlements, and areas in quarantine. Like Dharam-

pur, and especially to migrants leaving Mumbai at various railway and bus stations, from VT to Vasai. Migrants must wait up to 10 hours in the hot sun while being "processed" before boarding trains: some have died during travel, from heat and hunger.

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World's first queer non-binary superhero

devlok

DEV DUTT PATTANAIK

NEARLY 4,000 years ago, the land between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates was known as Mesopotamia. It is now called Iraq. This is where some of the world's most ancient civilisations such as Sumer, Assyria and Babylon thrived. Sumerian, Akkadian or Babylonian society was familiar with queer people—from homosexuals to transgressors to intersex people. From them rose the world's first queer 'non-binary' superhero.

Inanna, the goddess of love, sex and fertility, fell in love with a beautiful man called Dumuzi. He was so beautiful that even her twin sister, the goddess of death, Ereshkigal, fell in love with him. Ereshkigal caused Dumuzi to die an early death and took him to the land of the dead, where he would stay with her forever. Inanna

misses Dumuzi so much that she decided to go and search for him in the land of the dead.

So, Inanna, also known as Ishtar, descended and crossed seven gates of hell, to find her beloved Dumuzi. At each gate, she had to give up a piece of clothing. As a result of which, when she reached Ereshkigal, she had no sacred clothes, and hence no divine power. She was told that those who are dead cannot return to the land of the living. So, Dumuzi could not be given to Inanna. Inanna was heartbroken and prepared to return to the land of the living but then realised that she herself could not leave. Those who came to the land of the dead could not return to the land of the living. Undeath, powerless,

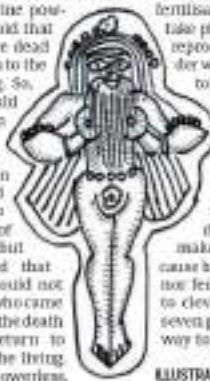
she had to submit to Ereshkigal's whims. Ereshkigal had effectively trapped Inanna, her more popular twin sister, in the land of death.

Since the goddess of fertility was trapped in the land of the dead, no birth took place, in the land of the living. No male approached the female, no bee went to the flower. Pollination, fertilisation and sex did not take place. Animals stopped reproducing. The natural order was disturbed. The gods told Enki to help release Inanna from the land of the dead. So, he created a queer being known as Ashurbanir.

The guardians of the land of the dead did not know what to make of Ashurbanir, because he/she was neither male nor female. He/she was able to cleverly pass through the seven gates and make his/her way to the land of the dead,

where he met Ereshkigal. He/she sang for the goddess of death, regaled her with dance, and finally charmed her into giving him/her the waters of life. Using these waters of life, Ashurbanir revived Ishtar, and brought her back to the land of the living.

Ereshkigal who fell in love with this queer being suddenly realised that she had been tricked by him/her. But, she could do nothing about it. She was so angry that she cursed the queer being that he would always live in the shadows of the sewers. Nobody would give him respect. However, Ishtar was happy and said that all queer beings would have mystical powers and capabilities, that no male or female would have. He/she would have pride of place in temples as entertainer, guardian, healer and priest. And so, queer people thrived in the temples of the goddess in Mesopotamia and Near East, before puritanical, monotheistic religions came along and wiped out their culture forever.



ILLUSTRATION/DEV DUTT PATTANAIK

Masked meanings para-normal activity

PAROMITA VOHRA

MASKS are the new black. Maso's making them, Chanel and Fendi are making them, a designer in Punjab is making them to match your lehengas, that over-enthusiastic webiste is making them with sequins on, the small non-essential shop with spider and skull motifs. Perhaps, the mask as fashion item, an accessory to our times, indicates we are accepting the new normal. If we must live with COVID-19, better live as a masked ball than a war of terror.

The origins of the word mask are appropriately, uncertain. One source possibly being the Arabic 'maskharah', or the Fool, who seems to be fooling around, while revealing truths about power. Masks in the time of COVID-19 are certainly that. They symbolise that COVID-19 is a great leveller—except when it's not.

Once the people who needed masks were conservancy workers, rat killers, medical workers. They rarely had them and like the labouring poor today, we saw them with the tri-

angle of handkerchief, the saris wrap of chanel. Even now, even those who most need them. On the Instagram account, Behnbox you can hear Asha workers, reassigned to pandemic duties, say only the few brought before masks.

Today, we may be anxious that people don't wear masks, but we have always been anxious that people do wear masks, whether they are really how they project themselves. Kottayam's Beena photo studio is making faceprint masks—where a photo of the lower half of your face is printed on the mask, like on maps. This may save you from loss of face, so to say, but is disorienting because when you speak, your lips don't move.

Seeing these I thought, wouldn't it be something if these masks were magical, revealing your true nature when you put them on. For instance, I know a woman with a very sweet, earnest demeanour who, classic masala girl style, promotes

herself by appropriating other people's work, steals those who have helped her in the back and makes innocent faces when called out. In contrast, a misquoting and stand-offish woman I know has a gentle, vulnerable heart. One masks herself to attack others better, the other to protect herself.

People mask themselves for many reasons, most revolving around the uneven nature of power. You may take on an anonymous identity online in order to speak truth to power. But as that brings you power, your mask can become the very disease you sought to quell, your anonymity a one-way denouncement tool, not unlike governments who mask themselves with laws that curtail everyone but themselves. A mask worn for too long becomes infected as toxic and must be changed. Even between lovers, when the antidote of revealing and hiding carries on too long, a mischance, exciting game into a competition for invisibility.

Masks, which seek to wound, are often opaque, hence we are quickly fooled by them, taking them at face value. The idea of



ILLUSTRATION/USAB MONITE

unmasking is tied to the quest for justice, but righteousness can also be its own mask, so it's tricky. But most masks are translucent, people's inner selves peeking out, sometimes hesitant, sometimes playfully, in an exchange of trust. We lower our masks voluntarily, when we trust—rightly or wrongly—that the onlooker's gaze is not harsh but honourable. As with body, so with feelings, we risk exposure on a hopeful chance.

Devdutt Pattanaik writes and lectures on the relevance of mythology in modern times. Reach him at devdutt.pattanaik@mid-day.com

Letters

The art of the brain

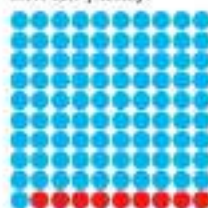
What a visual treat it was to read Dr Mazda Turef's article. The brain, neuroscience has always fascinated me. I have just begun an online course on 'The Brain and Space' at Coursera which talks about how our senses form a map construct of the space that surrounds us. I have a collection of drawings by Santiago Ramón y Cajal, stored on my computer as I couldn't afford the book. SIMRAN OSHIDAR

Tune into Bombay

Mother Marfatia's column on the songs of Bombay was well written. The odds to Bombay/Mumbai/Bombai will never cease, and on occasion can emanate from very unexpected sources. As she writes, tragedy always inspires creativity. BEHRAM KHODAJI

mid-day Poll

Do you think Indian government websites need to be more user-friendly?



91.3% YES

8.7% NO

Tweet talk

@SavvyReader
Replying to @pandev
I too was thinking about the future of intimacy in cinema. At least in the immediate future. Let us hope no one comes up with shooting guidelines and boundaries in our country at least. The historiography of intimacy and romance in Indian cinema is quite interesting

have your say!

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SOCIAL MEDIA HOWLER

The snout-y sensation

Two-year-old Iris, a white Borzoi Sighthound living in Virginia, has been making waves on Instagram for her unusually long snout and super-friendly personality. Her 181k followers love watching her adorable antics. Although Borzoi hounds have long snouts, Iris might have the world's longest snout, which is 31 cm long.



OUT OF THE LEFT FIELD

Drop some F-bombs

If you time it right, flipping someone off verbally can help. Richard Stephens, a psychologist from Keele University, tested if swearing under the right circumstances can increase a person's pain threshold. Findings showed that those who said the F-word were able to withstand more pain.



BRIEFS



REPRESENTATION PIC

Kids with Spidey dream land up in hospital

A footy movie caused three, young, Bolton boys to wind up in a hospital. Apparently, they had forced a black widow spider to bite them, to see if they transformed into their favourite superhero, Spider-Man. According to El Deber, the three are brothers and live in Detroit.

Drunk mayor plays dead to avoid jail

The mayor of a Peruvian town, Tantar, Jaime Rolando Urbina Torres, was caught by the police lying in a casket and pretending to be dead. Torres broke curfew rules to drink with his friends. Residents, alerted by the racket, Torres and others were making, called the police around midnight.



Ford's new car can kill the Coronavirus

Ford has developed a software for some of its Explorer-based Police Interceptor Utility patrol vehicles in the USA. It will allow cop cars to use the climate control system to raise the cabin temperature to 133 degrees for 15 minutes, to help kill any pathogen on a surface inside.

IS THIS WORLD'S STRONGEST SIX-YEAR-OLD?

Chhota Bheem

An Iranian kid, who is also a budding soccer star, stuns everyone with his six-pack abs



PICS/WARATIM/INSTAGRAM

If you think Arat Hosseini is just another six-year-old, think twice. The Instagram star, soccer prodigy and expert gymnast has won the likes of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, as well as tennis great Novak Djokovic. Hosseini, who is of Iranian origin, has become an Internet sensation because of his training routines and six-pack abs. His father, Mohammad, recognised his son's talent and has been nurturing it ever since Arat was a toddler. They moved to the UK so that he could train at the Liverpool Academy. "After realising my son's talent, at the suggestion of those around me, I started a page on Instagram, which was extraordinarily welcomed not only in Iran, but also abroad," said the proud father.

40L

Number of followers on Arat's Instagram page

to Iran Front Page. Arat has a dedicated following on the social media platform, and has been dubbed the "world's strongest six-year-old". The posts on his page have to do with his fitness and training, most of them taking in over 10 lakh likes.

As Arat started training at a young age, it's normal for him to be in great physical shape. However, his impressive biceps, shoulder muscles and pectorals have taken the Internet by storm. The young boy hopes to play for the football club Barcelona some day. Going by the way he's handled himself so far, one can be sure the bright-eyed boy will get there, too.

After realising my son's talent, I started a page on Instagram

Killing it at 103!

A centenarian grandma from Massachusetts celebrated beating the Coronavirus with a chilled beer



PICS/TELEMETRO, FACEBOOK

A WOMAN from Easton, Jennie Stenja, beat the Coronavirus. What's out of the ordinary about this story is that Stenja is 103 years old and she was at the brink of death owing to her ripe old age, which makes one extra vulnerable to the novel viral disease. She celebrated her recovery in style by sipping on an ice-cold beer. "She's feisty and tenacious. She is legendary in so many different ways. She speaks her mind and doesn't put up with anything," said Dave Stenja, her doting grandson, when speaking to the New York Post.

The grandmother was admitted to the hospital after her health condition deteriorated. Her family even ended up saying their final goodbyes to her. When she surprised them the next day by pulling through, they treated her to a beer, her favourite beverage. "She put it to her lips and said, 'Ooh, that's cold. It's good when it's cold,'" added her grandson.

IT'S A VIRAL



PICS/INMELDYBOOR, TIKTOK



INTO THE BLUE

A family in Ohio transformed their drab, brown pond into a blue lagoon using non-toxic dye. The epic transformation can be seen in a TikTok video, which garnered 260 lakh views. "It turned out way better than we imagined it would," said Melody Boop to Newsface.

LOVE LETTERS

An American love story that took root in India. P20

HOT ON TELLY

Find out how Ishwak became Imran Ansari. P15

SKETCH PAD

When kids draw the dark out of their life. P31

GALLERIE

11
sunday
mid-day
31.03.2020

Portrait of a lady in quarantine

AASTHA ATRAYBANAN

When photographers itch to take a picture of someone they can't be in the same room with, they capture their muse through the phone lens. P21

Shwaji Storm Sen began taking pictures on FaceTime as he wanted to keep creating. His models are usually set against books he has bought from all over the world. "This my life—taking pictures. And now I am in this situation [lockdown], but I must keep taking pictures," he says.



GITANJALI CHANDRASEKHARAN

A SHORT video posted on Twitter shows a grandfather hugging children through a plastic barricade with caps and gloves for the arms. A world where hugs, pats on the back, pinks on the cheeks and holding hands were common, will now start looking at these simple gestures of love and support with caution, if not downright suspicion. And, perhaps rightly so. The novel Coronavirus has not just stolen time from us, but also our sense of security with fellow humans.

And it's the huggers who will suffer.

Sumit Vaswani, a 34-year-old culture curator, says no work day is complete without hugging colleagues. "Physical touch and hugs

are not just friendly social gathering mechanisms, they are a form of energy transmission. They say that a hug has healing powers, I truly believe it does."

A 2004 study printed in the *Social Psychology of Education*, Netherlands, titled *Nonverbal encouragement of participation in a course: the effect of touching*, mentioned "the fact of a teacher touching a student twice on the arm during an interview following a first examination, results in the student improving his/her later performances, more than those observed in a control group where students were not touched during the interview."

How then will we cope in a world

where we can no longer touch as a sign of affection?

Tecana Jain, a clinical psychologist at MindPeers, says hugging releases the happy hormone, oxytocin. "It reduces the stress levels and boosts the body's immune system, and we need it even more now. When we don't get to touch or hug people we are close to, it aggravates the stress levels. This situation is called touch deprivation," says Jain. On how to mitigate the effects, she says, what scientists and psychologists have found works is the power of visualisation. "Sit down, close your eyes, and visualise memories of when you have hugged someone close, and feel that warmth. When we recreate the memories, the brain is tricked, leading to the release of oxytocin.



Sit down, close your eyes, and visualise memories of when you have hugged someone close, and feel that warmth. When we recreate the memories, the brain is tricked, leading to the release of oxytocin. This method is used during clinical therapies as well.

Terana Jain, clinical psychologist

"This method is used during clinical therapies as well."

She adds that there's something called tactile stimulation in which your skin gets activated when you touch someone, which also releases oxytocin. Another way of recreating human touch is by petting animals. It's an effective way to decrease cortisol. This, she says, is the basis of animal therapy. "It won't be an exact substitute, but a good substitute."

It's not just touch. With masks on, we are also going to miss the smile on a friend or colleague's face. Or even the random stranger on the train, Jain says. "Facial cues are very important for social feedback. This was initially shown in a research by American psychologist Paul Ekman. Switch to virtual communication via video call, when you will be able to see all their expressions. If facial cues are getting hidden, it's important to improve verbal cues. Make the tone warm, polite and add comforting and encouraging words."

Sangade-based therapist Rutika Lakshmi says, a coping mechanism for not being around human touch and reduce the stress levels that may induce, is journaling about your own feelings through the day. This will help you emotionally and teach you to be comfortable with yourself. "When we write, we become aware of our thoughts. Certain kinds of thoughts make us feel miserable. Thoughts like 'I can't handle it, it's impossible'. These are intense thoughts. Replace 'it's impossible' with 'this situation is uncomfortable, but I can manage it'."

Although you can't see a friend's face, being around them even with social distancing, helps, adds Lakshmi. "You will still enjoy the comfort of their presence."

And hugs needn't die a complete death.

Vaswani hopes it'll still be okay to hug really close friends and family when you meet them, with a mask on.

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The good touch, now gone bad

A world without hugs looks bleak indeed. Psychologists tell us how to cope without the warmth of an embrace





Hello, do I know you?

Professionals who joined a new workplace right before the lockdown are navigating the twin challenges of WFH and unfamiliarity

P VATSALYA

HARI Chakraborty was barely getting to know his colleagues at Pruthi Digital Media, when the lockdown was announced. It had been under a month since he joined the Andheri-based firm as creative director.

"Usually, 20 days is a good enough time to put names to faces and understand who does what. Working remotely makes this challenging. I still don't know half the people in the company," he says. "It usually happens at the water cooler or in the cafeteria, during lunch. I miss being able to do that."

While most professionals have spent the last few weeks trying to get accustomed to working in isolation at home, those like Chakraborty, who joined a new workplace right before lockdown, are dealing with the hurdle of unfamiliarity too.

Putting in full work hours is one way to cope, believes Abhishek Vatsanya. Vatsanya is a copywriter at Putanscape Advertising. He is five-months-old at the firm and says he clocks in a minimum of nine hours of work every day. Since he doesn't have to commute from Sea Woods to Vashi in Navi Mumbai, he doesn't mind putting in the extra

hours to wrap up pending assignments. He believes he is fortunate to have work during a crisis that has seen lay-offs and salary cuts.

Rahul Balakrishnan from Arthan, a New Delhi-based social enterprise specialising in career planning and employability for government school students, agrees. "The overall climate in the social sector is not prone to hiring. The organisations which were actively looking for candidates in March have put positions temporarily on hold."

Balakrishnan heads executive search and business strategy



HARI CHAKRABORTY
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
PRUTHI DIGITAL MEDIA PVT LTD



ABHISHEK VATSANYA
COPYWRITER
PUTANSCAPE ADVERTISING



JERRIN JACOB
EDUCATOR
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



RAHUL BALAKRISHNAN, HEAD OF
EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND
BUSINESS STRATEGY, ARTHAN



RYNELLE OLIVER
SENIOR CONTENT CREATOR
NEVER GROW UP

BRIDGE THE FRESHER GAP

Tips from Ashita Ashare, psychotherapist.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE ANXIETY THAT COMES WITH STARTING A NEW JOB: It is an uncertain time, globally and personally. Staring at a screen continuously can be tiring, too. So, be mindful that there will be some discomfort. You can engage in grounding exercises or practice mindfulness or quick meditation to alleviate some of it.

FIND WAYS TO FRATERNISE: Put in some effort to reach your colleagues in a non-work setting, virtually or over call, read up on the company, its seniors, the work culture of your organisation, etc.

DON'T DIVE IN, EASE YOURSELF INTO WORK: While you may be enthusiastic to perform to the best of your capabilities, it's important to gradually take on more and challenging work so as to not overwhelm yourself. Find out what works to enhance your productivity and efficacy.

IDENTIFY WHERE YOU NEED HELP: If you're not comfortable using tech tools like Zoom, Google docs etc., reach out to your supervisor or a trusted friend who can help you learn. Or turn to the net and YouTube, which offers tutorials on practically everything.

at Arthan, which conducted an anonymous survey in April, which saw participation by over 130 outfits from the social impact sector. "The survey revealed that 62 per cent of all organisations have put hirings on hold; 17 per cent are hiring only for extremely critical positions and 21 per cent are continuing to hire." Those who are hiring are doing so on a short-term or project basis versus long-term hirings in the previous months. Most of them (82 per cent) have discussed or implemented cost-cutting measures.

But Balakrishnan says it's not all doom and gloom, because Arthan has observed a spike in hiring in technology-centric organisations dealing with specific domains like ed-tech, health-tech and fin-tech. Such organisations have invested in fleshing out systems and processes to manage their workforces remotely.

Jerrin Jacob is an educator, who teaches literature and language at a city-based international school. Jacob has been teaching online, using Google services like Meet and Classroom, since the beginning of May. She was informed that the school is looking at moving classes to the virtual medium for the foreseeable future right when she

worried. "We were trained via webinars, about how to navigate the virtual space to teach effectively. Divisions of each class or standard have been clubbed together, which allows one teacher to teach the content while another one keeps a tab on questions coming in via the chat box. Students' doubts get clarified in real-time without distracting the flow of the class."

Jacob has had to have her family be mindful of her time and privacy when at work from home, given that she can't afford to have her students distracted.

Organisations have been trying to conceive innovative solutions to engage their workforce, keeping in mind employee wellness and motivation. Rynelle Oliver is a senior content creator at Never Grow Up, a work culture consultancy company dedicated to the pursuit of happiness at work. She joined the team on February 29 and had to switch to WFH almost immediately. "We have fun activities like virtual quizzes every week, which keep us engaged. If I am having a bad day and I find myself unable to meet a deadline, I have the option of communicating the same to my team, which is reassuring."

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ILLUSTRATION/IBBY WHITE



Cut and keep

What are the rules of a breakup in a pandemic? Couples who've struggled through the grief of separation during the lockdown, make sense of the pain

JANE BORGES

IT took a breakup for Brooklyn-based filmmaker and writer Sarah Rosen to realise the pleasures of being alone during the pandemic. Rosen recounted her story in the recent Modern Love column for the *The New York Times*, sharing how her now ex-boyfriend broke up with her, just a week before her octogenarian neighbour succumbed to COVID-19. Where she had just about started coping with being cut off from her lover, her "neighbour dying alone in his apartment felt like a harbinger of more grief". "I was suddenly scared of living alone. I tried my ex to tell him what happened and to ease the unbearable loneliness this death had unleashed in me. We talked every day. He offered to do my laundry. And one night, after two weeks of being together, we ate a meal and watched a movie," she writes. This grey zone lasted for 18 days, until her ex asked, "What are the rules of a breakup in a pandemic?" There were none. Her experience had been unprecedented, with no guidebook or well-known to fall back on. They stopped talking soon after, and the writer slowly began to find the courage to enjoy her solitude in this new, diseased world.



JANE BORGES

Rosen's experience of heartbreak is as real as the uncertainty around the global health crisis. The grief may not be the same, but the struggle of dealing with bad timing is not any different. In stark contrast to couples, over-relying on each other for emotional support during this period of isolation, there are a handful, who for the first time have been forced to take stock of what's wrong in their relationship. Choosing to call it quits, when life seems to be far from perfect, might then be a decision that is hardest to take, but sometimes also, the most important.

Mumbai-based freelance writer and editor Alia Khos, who met her boyfriend of two years at an NGO where she worked, says the lockdown exposed the cracks in their already crumbling relationship. "When we started dating, it felt like I had found 'the one'. Apart from



sharing a deep connection, we both also had very similar views about life," she shares. The couple hit a rough patch six months ago. Khos says she is someone who craves physical touch, but her boyfriend was the opposite. "He didn't mind not seeing me for months on end." They were trying to work things out, when the lockdown was announced. "I was overwhelmed by everything that was happening around me, especially the fact that we were now doomed to be in a long distance association. But he was zen, almost unaffected by the situation."

The first 15 days were spent checking out WhatsApp messages and video calls, before Khos's boyfriend dropped the bomb: "I can't do this anymore." And just like that, he cut off. I think it was the most painful experience of my life. Suddenly, all my primal fears of loneliness and abandonment surfaced out of nowhere. I had stopped eating and sleeping. What was worse is that I couldn't grieve privately, as I was surrounded by my family, who knew nothing about us. It was honestly, a near-death experience," she shares, in a telephonic interview. Her boyfriend, eventually, messaged her, beating himself up for everything he had done. "But

he refused to take accountability. I knew we had reached the end of the road."

Another-based Sharnaz Patel, 22, broke up with her boyfriend in May. She says she had become vulnerable and prone to anger after the lockdown. "He couldn't handle this, and felt it was best to part ways." The pair lives five minutes from each other, but because of social distancing, they only met once, when her parents allowed her to go grocery shopping. "Usually, when we fought, we'd meet the very same day, and patch up. Now, there was no room for that, either." The two ended it on a bitter note. "We deleted each other on social media. That's the only space we are visible to each other now. And finally, that's the only way, we can let each other know, we have moved on."

Not all relationships need to end on a sour note, feels advertising professional Parikshit Sahani, 29. Long distance and odd-working hours took a toll on his relationship with his girlfriend. "This was my first relationship in six years, and maybe, because of that, I was unable to handle her insecurities better. We ended it just so that we would stop fighting over the little

After breaking up, we've realised that we don't owe each other anything. But, as friends, we are still around. The other day, she sent me ice cream. I found that very sweet. It's hard to remain friends with the ex. But, this is too uncertain a period, to abandon the people you truly care about

Parikshit Sahani, 29, ad professional

Usually, when we fought, we'd meet the very same day, and patch up. Now, there was no room for that, either. We deleted each other on social media. That's the only space we are visible to each other now. And finally, that's the only way, we can let each other know, we have moved on

Sharnaz Patel, 22, digital media professional

things. But that doesn't mean, I have stopped caring for her," says Sahani, who moved to Nashik from Mumbai, to be with his family when the lockdown began. "I think after breaking up, we've realised that we don't owe each other anything. But, as friends, we are still around. The other day, she sent me ice cream. I found that very sweet." Sahani admits that it's hard to remain friends with the ex. "But, this is too uncertain a period, to abandon the people you truly care about."

Stand-up comedian Kago Srinivasan, who dissolved relationships in her online set this week that was themed around breakup. During the Lockdown, says, "When you don't see somebody for two months, you could realise how much you care in your life. I realised that boyfriends to me were just acquaintances; you have to learn to be on your own." Yet, many are reluctant to burn bridges, because they aren't sure of the future, feels Srinivasan. "My neighbours, who are married, have been fighting since the start of the lockdown. Every night, they have a shouting match, and the wife throws her husband out of the door. Because, he can't go anywhere, he waits quietly near the landing," she laughs. Srinivasan says that if anything, the lockdown has made us realise who we can be with, and who we don't need. Psychologist Pooja Shah warns that impulsive decisions taken during high stress periods, yield little good. "When you are stressed, you tend to overreact or withdraw your emotions in a way, that will prevent you from thinking straight. I would suggest waiting it out, before taking a decision that has consequences. And if you are unable to, it's best to give the relationship a break, so that you can focus on yourself, and heal. If you feel there is a possibility of things working out, leave that conversation for when this situation ends. You need to be less harsh on yourself."

Like Khos, who is still finding it hard to move on, shares, "Recently, when two of my close friends were having fundamental issues in love, I told them, 'Please hang on. We are already facing a crisis, and adding another one for your and someone's life, is just so cruel.'"

Some names have been changed on request.

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Bouncing high from a low

Writer-director Kartik Shetty's first movie deals with an actor whose grandest performance will be his suicide

AASTHA ATRAY BANAN



Debut is the story of an actor who gets a director friend to film his death

It was student Arjun Bhargava's suicide from a suite at Taj Lands End in 2007, captured on Facebook Live, that first made Kartik Shetty ponder over depression. After Bhargava hit national headlines, a friend's sister committed suicide, and Shetty was revisited by thoughts of giving up. "In the entertainment industry, self-doubt is a problem. You constantly question yourself. You ask yourself if you are talented, if you are doing the right thing," says Shetty, who worked as part of the creative marketing team at ATR Rajaji.

Shetty's first film, called Debut, is the story of a wannabe actor

who contemplates suicide, and decides to film it as his last letter to the world.

Shetty, a Nerul boy, has been a movie buff since childhood. He remembers watching Amit Kapoor star in Mr India on VCR and the film becoming the defining moments of his life. His parents were bankers, so making them understand his love for cinema was hard. "But they wanted me to do what I loved," says Shetty, 33. After working on the creative side for production houses, he upped the ante and decided to attempt the need to attend film school, because he wasn't everything he needed on field.

His writing dreams came to fruition when after the suicide, his friend told him: "What if she had just told me that she was depressed? Maybe I would have been able to help her."

Debut is the story of Anjali Sharma, played by Rishabh Sharma, who decides that he will get his friend, a wannabe director to film him jumping off a building. "Like

Arjun, he went live on Facebook before he jumped off a building, much like Bhargava who had gone live before he jumped from the window of a suite of the Bandra five-star."

The film, available for viewing on YouTube, hopes to start a discussion on an emotion

several grapple with, but few wish to discuss. "Even if we are connected through social media, we are so alone. A huge star like Deepika Padukone has spoken about depression. Actors face a lot of instability—some

don't get paid. It's a do or die situation, even though it may not seem so to an outsider. What they need to know is that suicide is not an option. And we all need to look around us, be kinder to people, and make our loved ones know that we are there for them."

Shetty is encouraged by the response, glad that the audience "gets" what he was trying to say. Ask him as an industry insider if things seem to be changing, and he seems hopeful of the future, despite the entertainment industry suffering as ever flow due to the pandemic. "They postpone, people weren't out at coffee shops and attended random parties since they thought that it would get them roles. Some even rescheduled to the casting couch. Now, thanks to the OTT platforms and social media, there is so much more to work to do and opportunities available. Now, it's no longer a pipe dream. It's possible."

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'Ansari born during chats with Mangolpuri cops'

A theatre actor noticed for his role in Pataal Lok, says it's when he spent days with officers who operate on the fringes of Delhi, that a believable character took shape

AASTHA ATRAY BANAN

To prep for his role as young police officer and IAS aspirant Imran Ansari in the recently dropped web series Pataal Lok, which is centred around the team at the fictional police station of Jamna Par in New Delhi, Ishwak Singh says he had to literally cross the Yamuna. "These are as the outer districts, places like Mangolpuri, where the crime rate is very high. I hung out there, made friends with the cops and saw what their daily life was like. Most of them end up tackling 350 cases each. You begin to empathise with them, you know what they do is difficult. When they shared their stories, the de-

tails of their interrogations, that's where Ansari was born."

Singh, who is trained in theatre, says the method seems to have worked, with the materialising in a circuit calling him the new "Bad". His phone has been ringing off the hook, with calls and messages from fans and admirers who monitor. He thinks Ansari stands out because he represents the good in a story that's centred around greed, corruption and disillusionment, within the media, the police force and society in general.

But this journey to attention has taken a while. Singh's first big break was Hansal Mehta's 2015

film, Aligarh. He is philosophical about the right break. "It's all about doing it well; I would've waited 15 years if needed," he says. The Delhi resident had studied to be an architect like his brother, but couldn't get the urge to act out of his head.

"An actor just knows! But I was far removed from this world. I was scared to even say that I wanted to do it." After college, he signed up for a weekend acting workshop and took up small roles. It was at Ananta Theatre Group, that he came into his own, and after someone noticed him during a stage performance, he received a call from



Singh plays Imran Ansari, a young officer who accompanies Inspector Hatharam Chaudhary on his most arduous case to date

Yash Raj Films. "That role didn't work out, but then I met Mahesh Chhabra [casting director] at Aligarh happened, and then Tamasha." Singh then went back to theatre, because he knew that to hone his craft he had to continue to act. "I started to look at it seriously—as a profession. The more you do it, the better you get. I played the same character again and again; that's how you develop techniques

and characters."

It came to fruition when developing Ansari, the positive and upright Muslim cop. "He has to be right. He is a member of a minority community, and has to keep the larger picture in mind. He can't afford to slip into cynicism. He is not in his comfort zone as a young Muslim police officer. He has to keep going and prove himself, much the way I'm trying to do in Bollywood."

Having been termed crush-worthy on Instagram, means he may be the new flavour of the season. Singh is enjoying it because "without the audience, we are nothing".

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He [his character] has to be right. He is a member of a minority community, and has to keep the larger picture in mind. He can't afford to slip into cynicism. He is not in his comfort zone as a young Muslim police officer

Debating Carry Minati

While YouTube may have removed the popular influencer's video of him roasting TikTok creators, after homophobic slurs caused an outrage among the LGBTQIA+ community, supporters argue, a joke is after all, 'just a joke'

YouTube star Carry Minati's original roast video of TikTok stars may have been bad enough, but his second apology video is being considered tone deaf as well



'People in India get offended easily'

AASTHA ATRAY BANAN



GAURAV TANEJA,
AKA FLYING BEAST



SEJAL
KUMAR

TWO weeks ago, Ajay Nagar, better known by his YouTube personality CarryMinati, made a video titled YouTube vs TikTok: The End. Very soon, like all his videos, it became viral. He has almost 20 million followers, after all. And yet, this video ended up being a bit more of a standout.

It all started when TikTok user Amir Siddiqui, who has around four million followers, posted a video calling out YouTubers, saying that TikTok videos were better in quality, and that most YouTubers were only plagiarising. He also targeted makers of "roast" videos, asking them to respond to him. Siddiqui's account has been banned since then for violating community guidelines. Carry, known for his roasts, responded with a video that ended up being a toxic rant.

He dissected Siddiqui's video line-by-line, and attacked him with homophobic slurs such as "fairy" and "moocha". After a lot of dissent, which included tweets that Google CEO Sundar Pichai was tagged in, YouTube took down the video. Pichai had last year reportedly sent a mail to their LGBTQIA+ employees saying that YouTube was taking a "hard look" at its policies to make the platform safer and more inclusive. Carry came back with an "apology" video, but said he didn't even understand why his video was taken down. He meant no harm, he said, not mentioning the objection by the LGBTQIA+ community. When we tried to reach out to him, we were told he was not up for an interview right now. In 2018, during an interview

with this writer, Carry had said that young people connected with him as, "They look up to me because I create content they can relate to, and then when they ask me questions, I can give an answer, because I myself am going through it. But, when someone says, they are thinking of suicide, I recommend they get professional help, because I can't help with that."

Having started on YouTube in 2010, Carry has become the roast king, taking on popular social media stars like Mr Faisu, Bhuvan Bam and Ashish Chanchani. Yet, when his video was taken down, it was these people who stood up in support of him, along with fans who started the hashtag #JusticeForCarry. Bam even said "we love you".

Most YouTube stars believed that roasting should be seen as a joke. Social media star, Be YouNick, who has around 3.8 million sub-



Like all things comedy, it's hilarious when it happens to someone else, but not as much as when it happens to you. You'd find Charlie Chaplin falling from a cliff funny, but you wouldn't be laughing if it happens to you or your loved ones. A roast is just like that

Be YouNick

scribers took the original video just spiralled out of control after a lot of chatter. "Ajay has been doing his version of comedy since the inception of his channel. He is quite easily one of the most popular stand comedians in India and not just on YouTube, and that's exactly what he did. A roast is often about grilling people in a mighty offensive manner. Like all things comedy, it's hilarious when it happens to someone else, but not as much as when it happens to you. You'd find Charlie Chaplin falling from a cliff funny, but you wouldn't be laughing if it happens to you or your loved ones. A roast is just like that. When you watch a roast, you need to remember that it's done not to harm, but to have a laugh at someone else's expense. But, everyone should recognize their limits and boundaries." Like him, YouTuber Mridan Govil, who has 3.45 million followers, felt that the audience's sensibilities dictate if a roast needs to be dropped or not. "If you like it, support it, or else don't."

And Carry's videos have been getting enough support. In 2019, he made it to Time magazine report, that was headlined, "How a Viral YouTube Star Is Embracing His Indian Roots". Yet, do social media stars, even those who must, need to be politically correct and socially responsible?

Fitness influencer Gaurav Taneja, aka FlyingBeast, made an astute observation when he said that the "roast" per se is not apt for Indian culture. The definition of a roast could be seen as a form of humour in which a specific individual, a guest of honour, is subjected to jokes at their expense. As he says, "People in India get offended easily. We have to change that mentality, or the kind of content won't run. Also, a roast is a roast if the person you are roasting deserves a roast." It's Sejal Kumar, with 1.2 million subscribers, who adds to this by saying that even though roasts are entertaining, a line has to be drawn. "We are all creators and we need to respect each other. For me, I can't make such videos, as I don't believe in bringing anyone down for the sake of views."

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THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY
SPEAKS OUT ON PAGE 17



'Even audiences can move court'

PRIVANKA KHIMANI
Entertainment and
Music Rights Expert



Almost all platforms, including YouTube and TikTok, have thorough and well-articulated community guidelines which set out what sort of user behaviour and content will and will not be tolerated on the platform. The platforms, YouTube included, reserve absolute and wide discretion, to take action against users or accounts that violate these community guidelines and other terms of use of the platform, including removal of such content or even suspension or termination of such user accounts. If the audience finds something disagreeable, don't engage with it in any manner whatsoever. In addition to

this, even the audience can report content, using the same tools made available on the platform, to complain about abusive content or behaviour, or request a takedown of inappropriate content. And lastly, for a more formal legal approach, even audiences and viewers could move courts or approach the police, like we have witnessed several times in the past, to address issues that affect members of the public and society at large.

'A so-called harmless joke, normalises such behaviour'

P. VATSALYA

GROWING up, Anurag Sahoo often heard people jeer at him for his sexuality, an inherent and crucial aspect of his being. That is when he first realised the damaging pain that words can inflict. Sahoo admits that pop culture, whether it is movies or songs, has played a huge role in reducing gay men and transgender people to caricatures. Overcoming such odds, he went on to represent India in the Mr Gay World pageant in 2016. He is a proud "feminine" man and sees no reason why people think it's okay to equate femininity with indignity.

Sahoo penned an open letter to Carry Minati, in response to the video. "Some of India's most popular and influential YouTubers like Bhuvan Bam supported Carry Minati. They cosigned him when his problematic video was taken

down. I refuse to believe that these creators are so naive that they can't understand why what Minati said was unacceptable." Although the design student watched the video in question, he chose not to report it because he believes that his fight isn't against one man, but the pervasive culture of toxic masculinity and homophobia. He hopes that Minati and others of his ilk put in the effort to sensitise themselves.

Sudharita Tyagi, a film critic who also makes YouTube videos, says that if she can't understand, so can others. "I took the time to educate myself. You have to be aware of the fact that there are young, impressionable minds watching your videos. Especially with the lockdown in place, everyone is turning to the Internet to keep themselves entertained." She called out Carry Minati's reprehensible video on her Instagram, demanding better from content creators and asking them to realise the responsibility that comes with being one. "When you make a joke that punches down instead of punching up, you're making fun of a community which is already marginalised and vulnerable."

When one uses a word with a queer connotation to insult someone, it also acts to demean



the queer community as a whole, even if that wasn't their intention. "Carry Minati should understand that when he cracks a so-called harmless joke, it normalises such behaviour. It's this micro-aggression that can amplify the othering of the LGBTQIA+ community. The least he can do is apologise," explains Gauri Shringarpure, a queer-affirmative counsellor. Shringarpure makes a valid point about Minati's popularity and the possible influence of his ignorant remarks over his (now) 2.8 million followers. If one's favourite YouTube thinks it's okay to make LGBTQIA+ people the butt of his jokes, then one might end up thinking it's okay to ridicule the community. That his video became the most-liked Indian video on YouTube before it was taken down, speaks volumes about our lack of sensitivity towards the queer community and its struggles.

Mocking someone's sexuality or gender expression serves to increase a queer individual's feelings of alienation, even as it serves to diminish their self-confidence and self-acceptance. "It takes a toll on one's mental health to constantly hear invalidating things about oneself. My roommate's friends would come to our room and what passed for banter between them used to really hurt me. People make offensive remarks about the LGBTQIA+ people flippantly, as if there are no queer individuals around them who can hear them," says Christy, a trans woman and research scholar, speaking about their experience of having to live in a men's hostel. Clearly, this is not the first time that content creators and others have targeted vulnerable groups in the guise of humour. However, the backlash that this video received is a step in the right direction, towards a more inclusive future.

Christy is of the opinion that the lack of specific legislation

My roommate's friends would come to our room and what passed for banter between them used to really hurt me. People make offensive remarks about the LGBTQIA+ people flippantly, as if there are no queer individuals around them who can hear them

Christy



targeting hate speech against the queer community contributes to the impunity of homophobic people. Shakti Waghela, a former customer executive, watched Carry Minati's video and went on to report it. "I am a trans woman and I think it's important to call out such behaviour. Carry insulted women and he insulted the queer community in a multi-pronged manner. He clearly benefitted from the traction and the views. Even more people know him now. If he's going to profit from ridiculing LGBTQIA+ people, then he should be accountable to us too."



GAURI SHRINGAPURE

Carry insulted women and he insulted the queer community. He clearly benefitted from the traction and the views. If he's going to profit from ridiculing LGBTQIA+ people, then he should be accountable to us too

Shakti Waghela



SHAKTI WAGHELA

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Lockdown lessons from India Inc

From cutting volume of video conferences to setting up more efficient meetings, here's how Indian firms have managed a successful WFH culture, that'll hopefully extend beyond 2020

GITANJALI CHANDRASEKHARAN

BY the time PM Narendra Modi announced the Janata Curfew on March 20, as a measure to arrest the Coronavirus pandemic, most of India's firms had already asked their employees to work from home. But no one had a clue how long this would last.

The initial days were rough sailing. For a work culture that's taken pride in long hours, constant monitoring of productivity, and strict attendance, suddenly not being face to face proved a challenge. In fact, a Twitter poll conducted by this newspaper in the first week of April, asking if India is ready for a work from home culture, registered a 60 per cent 'No' vote.

And yet, nearly two months down the line, most people are not just comfortable working from home, but many firms have informally extended their return to office deadlines to cope better with the pandemic.

What, then, has changed? Surprisingly, many firms say, that productivity at home, despite strenuous circumstances and the absence of help, has improved. Companies have learnt to listen to employees and reduce video calls, and be flexible about work hours. Leadership across top firms in India says they've learnt in two months what they hadn't in a career.

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PHARMACEUTICALS

'Learning resources are valuable'

Sanjay Murdeshwar //
Managing Director,
Novartis India

THERE was a time when work from home was viewed as a privilege even at organisations where it was offered. People were sceptical of how this would be construed by the organisation. Now, it is the norm. The culture at Novartis is

based on the tenets of being curious, unbiased and inspired. All of these elements are now in action and inhibited during a regular work day. For example, we have restructured the time available to our associates on personal learning via advanced learning resources, to build on our culture of being curious and accelerating the use of digital to self-manage their time

and resources. While we had begun offering learning resources to our people last year, the uptake was slower than desired. But, with the lockdown, people are looking at learning as an opportunity and using the time saved from commuting on learning.

While we had begun progressing in the digital space even before the lockdown, we found that our people adapted to it faster. So, whether it was moving to a new digital engagement platform internally or using the digital medium to engage with customers or supporting patients on our patient support programmes, we have seen a speedy adoption of technology.

Productivity has gone up. Our associates are more disciplined in interactions with colleagues. Meetings are shorter and more consequential with clear goals.

A crisis, it is said, brings out either the worst or the best in people. I have experienced resilience and fortitude. I have seen my team rally around each other, being ever ready to go that extra mile. I have seen a greater willingness to experiment with new ideas and to look at things from a different perspective. I have actually begun to get to know them better because we now also see the human side to our colleagues, and how we deal with running our homes and our work lives. The video calls actually brought the team members into my home, which is a very personal space. I think this has made us appreciate better the contribution that everyone has made to keep the organisation running.



MORE
LOCKDOWN
LESSONS
ON PAGE 19



For the first time, we looked at time management and planning which were polished at every level. And the output started picking up. At home, you don't have the luxury of indiscipline that you have at office, where you say let's go into a conference room and walk in 10 minutes later. If a Zoom call is at 12 noon, everyone needs to log in within a minute max of noon.

ENTERTAINMENT

'Short meetings are productive'

Gautam Dutta //
CEO, PVR Cinemas

IN the initial days of the lockdown, we didn't know where we were going. For a week or so, it was a holiday with all of us anticipating and seeking clarity. Then we got together on a clear call to decide the course of action.

We realised that we needed technology, a place to sit and a certain discipline. That bit was important. Whenever we went, we had to have the discipline to stay connected. Time frames were to be created, with rosters and calendars updated.

We divided the work amongst ourselves and moved it to the IT team. It was the first team to get into action and work on setting up of site operations. Everyone was trained for a day on the various apps we'd now be using—Zoom, Microsoft team, and so on. We have international vendors and partners and not everyone was using Zoom. Several of us were at age 45 and above and not very tech savvy. In the office, it's differ-

ent; you can make a call to the IT department for help, but here we were on our own. We had our kids to help a bit, fortunately.

Once these modalities were in place, we fixed our calls and held internal discussions with our BOBs. For the first time, we looked at time management and planning which were polished at every level. And the output started picking up.

At home, you don't have the luxury of indiscipline that you have at office, where you say let's go into a conference room and walk in 10 minutes later. If a Zoom call is at 12 noon, everyone needs to log in within a minute max of noon.

There are lessons to be learnt there and hopefully they will stay with us. The output of the meetings surprised us. We knew when we left the meeting exactly what we had achieved, the minutes were mailed immediately and action plans formulated. We have discovered great new ways of working in the process, and I am sure this is happening the world over.



The big business lessons have been that calamity can come at any time, and you need to diversify your risks. The second is that employees are your biggest asset and motivated employees will make the difference between successful and unsuccessful companies.

MUSIC

'Productivity can be high without policing'

Vikram Mehra ///
Managing Director, Savengem
India Ltd

There was shock initially about what had happened and apprehensions about whether everyone would perform efficiently and effectively at home. We are a creative company and it's believed that people are creative if they are together, feeding off each other and debating.

A big issue that's germane to this conversation is how we are brought up. Parents check everything the child does. Even if they are 13 or 14 years old, they will check notebooks and ensure that the child has done the work. The idea being that if you don't monitor, people don't do what they are assigned. The

assumption is therefore, that it's easier to monitor people in office.

But, my greatest learning has been that the only thing that matters is if the employee is motivated to contribute. By putting the fear of the boss in the staff's mind, nobody has achieved anything great. We have always paid more heed to attitude than skills, and this I believe has kept us in good stead. Our productivity is higher now.

I belong to a bunch of oddies, who thought that WFH couldn't be efficient, and was a prehistoric. And I have been proven wrong. You realise that commute in Mumbai drains you out so much that by the time you reach work and get into a relaxed state, it's time to start thinking of going back home. Once we settled into the WFH cycle, people

began to contribute at far higher levels of engagement.

There were initial hiccups in March, and we looked at timelines for calls that were suited for most people and finalised 12 pm to 4 pm. Those with kids were allowed to attend to calls during that time. People are not being called on a daily basis. We are only measuring output. If you want to work at 1.30 am, and not at 12 pm, how does it matter? The big business lessons have been that calamity can come at any time, and that anything can happen to corporations and you need to diversify your risks. The second is that employees are your biggest asset and motivated employees will make the difference between successful and unsuccessful companies.

AUDIO BOOKS

'Flexibility can encourage discipline'

Shailesh Sawhney ///
Country Head, Audible, India

There were apprehensions initially because we didn't have a shared schedule, there was the absence of physical space where we could collaborate and meet. We weren't concerned about not having employees in front of us, because we have had a policy of flexibility and treating them as individuals anyway, and we have been practising a fair share of that, but to apply that to the whole team at a given time, was certainly a point of concern.

We have a diverse workforce of all age groups and different accommodation circumstances; some live in a studio apartment, some have a larger home; then there were personal circumstances that could affect their productivity. Some of the physical infrastructure that they make use of in the office was also possibly no longer available—an ergonomic desk and chair, external monitor so that you don't have to bend and stoop your shoulders to look into a laptop, and so on. These are the things you take for granted at office.

And, at home, there are family commitments. If your spouse is also working from home, you have to share the load, especially if there's a kid at home and home-based learning is happening.

We conducted surveys to keep a pulse check and colleagues revealed issues with steady/speedy internet connections and too many meetings being scheduled on conference call. In an office environment, you can walk up to a person and get an answer. Over here, with messaging on a platform, that creates so many different interruptions and fatigue with an 'always on' mentality; it became difficult to disengage from work. The way we connected with the team before the lockdown—going out for lunch together or a lunch walk—was also



something we realised we took for granted.

So, we set up a reimbursement policy to resolve any needs pertaining to equipment—keyboard, dangle etc. To manage excess of meetings, we made cultural changes as well and encouraged people to block their calendars during lunch time. Say a slot of between 12 pm to 1 pm. If you block that time, other colleagues try not to set up a meeting during that slot.

We also marked a meeting-free day where people could be focused on their individual work, or coordinate with spouses and family for personal arrangements. Everyone was always free to choose what hour they wanted to work.

We also started fortnightly catch ups on VC on Friday evenings, whether to play a fun quiz or unwind and bond with colleagues.

In a situation where external circumstances are not as pronounced, this has taught us that some amount of flexibility actually works in an organisation's favour. It certainly warrants a constructive discussion on what the future of work from office and home looks like.

BEAUTY

'To keep staff productive, they must be engaged'

Samir Srivastava ///
CEO, Jean Claude Rignone Salon & Spa India

OURS is an industry that is reliant on physical touch and contact with the customer. So, we shut our salons, across the country on March 15, as we were worried for clients and staff. But during the lockdown, we had to keep our hair dressers and beauticians engaged. Used to a busy schedule of nine hours of work, they were experiencing a void where they had nothing to do.

We engaged our brand partners and put together trainers and created planned calendars for 45 days. We organised skill sessions, pertaining to hair training, refresher courses on how to propose products. This is the time when new haircuts are exhibited in Paris, as the spring, summer, fall and winter looks, so we took 153 hair dressers through various modules.

At some point, we realised that



it had become monotonous and interest was waning. So we changed the approach and started attitudinal training by getting in retail and hospitality specialists. When that became boring, we turned to other fun workshops.

I think this is the time when

leaders need to be most visible. You have to understand your team's apprehensions and what motivates them. I'd send them messages in the morning, popping them up, asking about their families, and keeping the channel to share information open.

DIGITAL PAYMENT

'Critical to know person behind the colleague'



Shailaz Nag ///
Co-Founder, Dorpe

WE realised that communicating and connecting frequently with team members was key. During isolation, nothing was more unnerving than silence. Apart from this, several new employees joined us during this phase and the HR team ensured smooth onboarding. While WFH has given us more flexibility, the need and time to commute has reduced. The importance of personal and one-to-many connect during the meetings is something we miss at times, and hope that humanity will be able to overcome this crisis soon.

I have realised that so many of my team members have emerged as cooks over the past two months, a talent which they didn't imagine they had. We have seen people experiment with food and share skills on chat groups and video calls during the all hands meet. In fact, since the onset of the lockdown, we have held weekly all-employee catch-ups to hear from everyone directly and answer any questions they may have. Gradually, these calls turned into talent shows! We invited colleagues to share inspiring personal stories, showcase their love for music, food or life in general. This worked wonders in helping bring people closer.

An American romance in South India

A North Carolina-based author relies on a trunk full of letters from 1920s India and Google Earth to reconstruct a love story of her ancestors for an upcoming book



The suitcase Laurie Winslow Sargent found with Gladys' letters inside

PRUTHA GHOSLE

I SMILED at the name Winslow, scribbled in fancy letters on an old trunk. I'd written that myself, back in the 1970s, when I thought that the suitcase was cool. I wanted to claim it to store my stuff. But I knew it was stuffed to the gills with dusty documents given to me when her parents Gladys Gose Pearce and J. Kenneth Pearce passed away. However, I never looked at the papers inside it," writes Laurie Winslow Sargent in a blog post titled, *Adventures in the Attic*.

It was only last year when Sargent scooped out the heap of correspondence—postmarked between the 1920s and 1930s from India—that she realised it was the discovery of a lifetime.

Nearly a century has passed since Gladys, a young American woman living in India, wrote these to her family in Walla Walla, Washington. And now Sargent, her granddaughter, is writing a book inspired by them, titled *Tigres, White Gloves, and Cuddles*. "After my mother Jillian passed away in 2017, all her stuff ended up in the attic of our North Carolina home. Last year, I cleaned it out and opened some trunks. This was when I found a particular suitcase with a belt wrapped around it. One after the other, I unearthed thousands of artefacts, ranging from documents, photographs and maps of India, diaries and letters. They all belonged to my grandmother, Gladys," says 63-year-old Sargent, an author, adding that her grandparents lived in Southern India and the Andaman Islands for seven years.

In her letters, Gladys mentioned how she did not need servants to take her around. This kind of hierarchy and casteism, which was prevalent in British India, was new to an educated American like her



Laurie Winslow Sargent



Kenneth Pearce was hired by the British government to introduce mechanised logging techniques to elephant lumber camps and supervise the building of sawmills in South India

Gladys and Kenneth met in high school in Walla Walla. Kenneth, who was a year younger to Gladys, bumped into her again in college. After they graduated, he often wrote to her, listing at his attraction for her. In 1923, the British government hired Kenneth to introduce mechanised logging techniques at elephant lumber camps and supervise building of sawmills in South India. "He continued to write to Gladys from India. You can see the progression of their romance through the letters. He then made a brief trip to the States to meet her. He had grown from a young boy to a man with a mustache. She felt in love," Sargent narrates. Three years later in 1926, Gladys sailed to India. "Soon after she disembarked, they married in a church in Madras (now Chennai). And thus began their honeymoon jungle tour of Kerala, by train, car and foot."

They started at Ottavott (Ottavott) and Tipu Sultan Fort in Palghat (Palakkad). From Sappal, they crossed streams with their car on ferries made from bamboo platforms on dugout canoes. They went on to the Nilambur Test Forest, in Nedargayam (Nedumkayam), where Kenneth worked in the elephant lumber camp. "Gladys was taught to brew a concoction and centipedes hiding in shoes, and to avoid cobras. She took an elephant ride through the jungle and they enjoyed playing with a baby elephant, who would later outgrow her welcome, busting down doors looking for treats," shares Sargent.

Next they visited the Forest Rest House at Beyport, on the Malabar Coast of the Arabian Sea, where Kenneth supervised construction



Gladys Pearce was a physical education teacher, who moved to India in 1926; (right) Kenneth and Gladys's daughter Pamela was born in Ooty



of the first sawmill built in South India. "The honeymoon lasted for about one month from what I understand from the photographs. All these photos and letters carried detailed information about the trip. Gladys, who was a physical education (PE) teacher in the States, knew she wanted to publish these some day, so she made an honest effort in writing everything she saw in India."

Kenneth and Gladys finished their honeymoon with a hike through Silent Valley, where few women had ever been. In one funny story, Gladys wrote: "I had been looking forward to some needed exercise on this trip. But wood had gone ahead that Ken, the Chief Engineer Sahib, was bringing his Mensabih. So when we arrived at the end of the road to meet the coolies, we found that the Indian ranger had arranged to have a chair provided to carry me. Two long bamboo poles had been lashed to an office chair and four husky coolies stood by."

Sargent says, "In her letters, Gladys mentioned how she did not need servants to take her around. This kind of hierarchy and casteism, which was prevalent in British India, was new to an educated American like her. But her husband convinced her to sit on the chair eventually."

From 1926-1928, the couple lived in Madras, with many invitations to Government House from Lord Goches, Viscount and Governor of the Madras Presidency. At an elegant banquet for Lord Linlithgow (1887-1952), who would later become Viceroy of India, Gladys's dinner partner was the beloved Sir Ganga Ram, (1851-1920), an Indian civil engineer and architect. In one of the letters, Gladys wrote of him: "He's done much for India by building dams and reclaiming millions of acres of wasteland to gift them unselfishly to the people of India. He's been knighted for his outstanding service to India."

Gladys was able to use her experience as a teacher for a year, when the government of India hired her to tour and assist physical education programmes in Indian schools in the region. Then the couple

moved to Ooty (Oodagamandalam) and lived in a house they affectionately called Braemar. "They were so cute, they even wrote letters to each other while living in the same house," Sargent laughs.

In 1929, their daughter Pamela was born. In 1930, Kenneth was hired to work in the penal colony of the Andaman Islands. "The couple lived at Intermittent Island's remote logging camp (where Gladys was the only woman), Port Bonnington, Port Blair (home of the infamous Cellular Jail), and at Ross Island (now with vines twisting among crumbling buildings, that island is reminiscent of scenes from *The Jungle Book*, with few hints of its former opulent life). They lived in the Andamans until 1933."

Gladys and Kenneth then moved back to America. Although it was in the middle of the Great Depression, the University of Washington hired Kenneth and he became a beloved professor there for decades. In 1935, they had their twins, John and Jillian (Sargent's mother). "When I was in my thirties, I was working on some magazine articles. Gladys told me she wanted to get her journey in India published in a book. But the content she provided did not seem satisfactory. I wish I had found these letters back then, maybe her dreams would have come true," Sargent shares, adding that after being married for 64 years, Kenneth died in 1994 and Gladys in 1994. They had three children, eight grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and now four great-great grandchildren. A total of 27 descendants in all.

For the past one year, Sargent has been trying to find the missing pieces. "I use historical documents online, Google Earth and YouTube to procure information so that I can add the exact dates to the book," she says, hoping to release the book next year. But her big dream is to trace her grandparents' home in Ooty. "I have heard that there are many old structures still standing in Southern India. Who knows, I might get lucky to see where this bed-diffed, funny and smart woman had lived once upon a time."

prutha.ghosle@mid-day.com



'I can't stop creating'

SHIVAJI
SEN

I FIRST got this idea when I came to India six years ago from the UK. I didn't know anyone and wanted to shoot my friends back home. But then, I got too busy and didn't end up doing it. Lockdown or not, we can't stop creating. We have to keep making something. I have now used the technique to shoot my friends, some of them models, through a WhatsApp video call. Some are in India, and some are in

the UK, Indonesia and Australia. It's a lot of shooting into the camera. You are trying to get the light right, and asking them to place the phone a certain way. It's a lot of communicating. I shoot the phone screen from my DSLR. So, I decided to create an aesthetic environment around the phone. I use books as props, titles that I have bought from all over the world. They are my backdrop now. Taking pictures is my normal state. I would do it in whatever situation I am in.



Saying, cheese! on FaceTime

Inspired by an Italian photographer known for his atmospheric portraits, Indian shutterbugs with itchy hands make the most of the isolation by shooting portraits from a DSLR, but across a video call

AASTHA ATRAY BANAN

IN Italy, one of the countries hit hardest by Coronavirus deaths, photographer Alessio Aloi found a novel way to stay in touch with friends. He started shooting them through the laptop webcams. "Social distancing doesn't mean you stop creating. We are lucky to live in an era that offers all the recommended,"

one of his captions read. In this case, it could mean that all you need is a phone, a willing model, and maybe a Zoom account. Taking the pictures could be one way of saying, we won't let the virus beat us, becoming our way of trying to hold on to the way things used to be, all the while moving into the future with

whatever resources we have. Four Indian photographers who have been shooting celebrities, friends and models right through the lockdown, on their phone and via Zoom, tell us why the experiment requires more skill than usual.

aasthaatrav@gmail.com

'I hope this is not the future'



TARAS
TARAPOREWALA

IT WAS all about trying to create when there was nothing to do. I chose my models, most of whom I knew and had worked with. I use Zoom, which has a screen sharing option, so I can see their surroundings, and their camera set up, and can direct them accordingly. It's a completely new form, and many will frown at it. I do hope this is not the future, because it's the worst way of doing photography, but for me it's episodic—I'm looking at subjects, their surroundings and what they are doing in the time of quarantine.



'It's still very realistic'



GAURAV
SAW

AFTER Alessio Aloi did it, it went viral, and everyone started experimenting. I was a messenger in the beginning: a photographer always wants to control everything—lighting and the camera we use. But then, I decided to give in. I got on call with Gayatri Barikar, who is also a model. We haven't ever met before. So this is the first we were seeing each other in person, but virtually. She showed me her space and told me what clothes she had. She had a six-year-old iPhone, and her Wi-Fi was really patchy, and so the image we managed was blurry. I shot her image as seen on the phone with my DSLR. I was surprised at how much fun it was, and felt very close to the real thing. You are still directing the model, and sending her references—much like I would do with any shoot. I have received inquiries after this shoot from corporates who want me to take pictures of their board members!



'This is the way forward'

SASHA
JAIRAM

AFTER Aloi started the trend, I thought it was interesting, and wanted to have some fun digitally. I started with the FaceTime series with Anusha Dandekar (singer, TV host) and Ananya Pandey (actor). For me, this is the way forward, and it's completely normal. I am 23, and I am targeting Gen Z. I don't want to think about the past. An old-school photographer also moved on to the digital camera from an analogue one, right? New-age ones are moving to their phones. I am now collaborating with stylists, who help

the model (or by offering suggestions remotely). I have landed a project where a furniture brand wants me to take pictures of their products in this way! It's luck by chance, really.



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01261/82	Lokmanyastika (T) Ghatkopar	Dadargunge Express		Daily	26-June	23-June							
01217/02	Lokmanyastika (T) Vazirpur	Kanayana Express		Daily	26-June	23-June	02290/89	Durgam	H.N.R. Bengal's	Bangalore Express	Daily	03-June	25-June
01203/34	Mumbai CST	Vandri	Mumbai Express	Daily	22-June	02-June	02130/91	Durgam	Secunderabad	Deccan Superfast Express	Daily	08-June	14-June
01138/08	Mumbai CST	Ballia	Mumbai CST-Ballia Express	Daily	01-June	08-June							
01201/82	Mumbai CST	KCR Bangalore	Uday Express	Daily	01-June	02-June	02021/82	Pune	Lokmanyastika (T)	Pune-Lokmanyastika (T) Express	Daily	01-June	16-June
02270/80	Bandra (T)	Jodhpur	Suryajyoti Express	Daily	01-June	08-June							
02270/82	Mumbai CST	Hyderabad	Hydrabad Express	Daily	02-June	01-June	02051/84	Secunderabad	New Delhi	Madan Express	Daily	01-June	24-June
02273/78	H. N. Mandvi	Amritsar	Delhi-Mumbai Express	Daily	01-June	03-June	02057/58	Amritsar	Amritsar-Vad	Swat Kanti Express	Daily	01-June	16-June
02203/24	Mumbai Central	Amritsar	Karnatak Express	Daily	01-June	01-June	02273/74	Bangal	Amritsar-Vad	Satyagrah Express	Daily	01-June	17-June
02242/40	Mumbai (CT)	Tripura-Vadodra- Amritsar Central	National Express	Daily	03-June	01-June	02280/88	Pune	Pune	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
02250/58	Mumbai Central	Jaipur	Mumbai Central- Jaipur Express	Daily	01-June	02-June	02290/88	Dadargunge	New Delhi	Bhar Sampark K.R.S.	Daily	01-June	21-June
02141/40	Lokmanyastika (T) Matunga	Lokmanyastika (T) Pune	Lokmanyastika (T) Pune Express	Daily	14-June	03-June	02457/58	Amritsar	Amritsar	Karnatak Express	Weekly	16-June	20-June
02451/42	Bandra (T)	Delhi	Bandra-Delhi Express	Bi-weekly	26-June	27-June	02564/63	Amritsar	Mumbai Central	Golden Temple Intl. Express	Daily	03-June	03-June
02140/40	Pune	Durgam	Pune-Durgam Express	Daily	14-June	03-June	02560/62	Amritsar	Bandra (T)	Pune Express	Daily	08-June	02-June
02454/46	Lokmanyastika (T) Ghatkopar	Lokmanyastika Durgam Express		Bi-weekly	26-June	17-June	04073/74	Amritsar	Jaipur	Delhi Express	Five days	13-June	20-June
06057/58	Bandra (T)	Gandhinagar	Andh Express	Four days	19-June	18-June	04060/60	Amritsar	Jaipur	Rajya Vardak Express	Tri-weekly	12-June	25-June
06038/40	Bandra (T)	Mumbai	Kandl Express	Tri-weekly	23-June	04-June							
01105/28	H. Nizamuddin	Haridwar	Haridwar Express	Daily	02-June	01-June	02033/34	Amritsar	Haridwar	Amritsar-Haridwar Express	Daily	15-June	01-June
02230/08	New Delhi	Lucknow Jn.	Lucknow Mail	Daily	28-June	02-June	01130/68	Amritsar	Delhi	Delhi Express	Tri-weekly	13-June	06-June
02280/81	New Delhi	Rajni	Shivraj Express	Daily	14-June	03-June	01171/78	Amritsar	Vadodra	Shivraj Express	Four days	11-June	04-June
02294/43	New Delhi	Hopital to Hopital	Bangalore-Kathi Express	Daily	12-June	01-June	02050/48	Bandra	Chennai	Swat Kanti Express	Four days	11-June	03-June
02418/17	New Delhi	Prayagraj	Prayagraj Express	Daily	03-June	02-June	02067/68	Amritsar	Patna	Amritsar Express	Bi-weekly	15-June	03-June
02420/78	New Delhi	Lucknow	Grand Express	Daily	05-June	02-June							
02422/81	New Delhi	Kanpur	Shree Shakti Express	Daily	10-June	01-June							
02260/88	New Delhi	Moradabad	Shree Ganga Express	Daily	09-June	01-June							
02473/77	H. Nizamuddin	Brindavan	Mughal Express	Daily	04-June	05-June	02071/78	Amritsar	H. Nizamuddin	Amritsar Express	Tri-weekly	01-June	02-June
04203/70	Amritsar	Moradabad	Changpau Express	Weekly	01-June	03-June	02420/84	Jodhpur	Delhi S. Parthi	Swat Kanti Express	Tri-weekly	12-June	11-June
02203/30	New Delhi	Vadodra	Karnatak-Bangalore Kanti Express	Bi-weekly	11-June	13-June	02471/78	Jaipur	Jodhpur	Jaipur-Jodhpur Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
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02473/76	Delhi	Amritsar	Amritsar Express	Daily	05-June	01-June	02030/82	Kala	H. Nizamuddin	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	02-June	01-June
02203/34	H. Nizamuddin	Udaipur City	Mewar Express	Daily	02-June	01-June	02030/88	How	Gwalior	Gwalior Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
02454/83	Delhi	Amritsar	Maharaja Express	Daily	21-June	02-June							
02102/81	H. Nizamuddin	Jaipur	H. Nizamuddin- Jaipur Express	Daily	28-June	01-June	02061/62	Bhubaneswar	New Delhi	Punjabian Express	Daily	06-June	21-June
02217/46	New Delhi	Vandri	Maharaja Express	Tri-weekly	02-June	12-June	02126/4	Vadodra	Delhi	Telangana-Durgam Express	Daily	01-June	02-June
02218/20	Amritsar	Gwalior	Banbhok Express	Four days	01-June	16-June	02025/88	Vishakhapatnam	New Delhi	AP Express	Daily	01-June	04-June
02230/34	Amritsar	Gwalior	Amritsar-Vad Gwalior Express	Bi-weekly	22-June	12-June	02021/82	Gwalior	Secunderabad	Gwalior Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
02255/56	New Delhi	Dadargunge	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	04-June	01-June	02193/64	Tiruvadi	Amritsar	Rajaputana Express	Daily	01-June	02-June
02287/88	New Delhi	Uda-Hemadoli	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	03-June	02055/56	Durgam	Delhi	Brahmaputra Mail	Daily	03-June	16-June
01246/70	Dadargunge	Lokmanyastika (T)	Kandargunge Express	Daily	23-June	23-June	02071/89	Bombay	Calcutta Town	Jai Shreebhai Express	Six days	01-June	01-June
02203/32	Lucknow Jn.	Moradabad CST	Parbhani Express	Daily	01-June	19-June	02061/82	Dadargunge	Habibnagar	Jai Shreebhai Express	Five days	02-June	02-June
02461/82	Dadargunge	Lokmanyastika (T)	Dadargunge- Lokmanyastika (T) Express	Daily	01-June	16-June							
02275/76	Secunderabad	New Aligarh	Patelkoti Express	Daily	01-June	02-June	02033/34	Howrah	Bombay	Jai Shreebhai Express	Six days	01-June	01-June
02270/84	Howrah	Secunderabad	Patnam Express	Daily	23-June	08-June	02070/88	KCR Bangalore	Pune	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
02218/39	Howrah	Moradabad CST	Habibnagar Mail	Daily	01-June	19-June	02080/80	Vadodra	Bhubaneswar Town	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	02-June
02207/85	Howrah	Jodhpur-Thane	Howrah- Jodhpur-Bikaner Express	Daily	19-June	12-June	02233/84	Bombay	H. Nizamuddin	Durgam Express	Weekly	09-June	06-June
02281/82	Howrah	New Delhi	Porini Express	Tri-weekly	02-June	16-June	02270/78	Calcutta	Tiruvadi	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
02203/84	Howrah	New Delhi	Porini Express	Four days	04-June	24-June	02091/82	Kanpur	Tiruvadi	Jai Shreebhai Express	Five days	01-June	01-June
02245/46	Howrah	Vadodra	Durgam Express	Five days	02-June	25-June							
02201/82	Secunderabad	Bhubaneswar	Durgam Express	Tri-weekly	01-June	02-June	02121/82	Hyderabad	Vishakhapatnam	Gwalior Express	Daily	06-June	09-June
02213/14	Secunderabad	Pune	Durgam Express	Tri-weekly	01-June	02-June	02295/86	Secunderabad	H. Nizamuddin	Durgam Express	Bi-weekly	04-June	09-June
02273/74	Howrah	Bhubaneswar	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	01-June	02060/73	Rajpur	Gandhi	Jai Shreebhai Express	Six days	01-June	01-June
02223/34	Howrah	Pune	Jai Shreebhai Express	Six days	09-June	24-June	02061/82	Habibnagar	Jodhpur	Jai Shreebhai Express	Daily	01-June	01-June
02170/82	Vadodra	New Delhi	AP Express	Daily	11-June	01-June							

* Teilergänzung zum 33. Jahrgang vom 20. Juni 1990, S. 40/41

* This research is an EU FP6 Project of 2000-2006.

Chance pe dance

The Coronavirus pandemic has jumpstarted the innovation game as companies develop smart solutions to meet new challenges

ANJLI MASKERI



KESHAV MEDA,
Co-founder
and chief
business
officer

'You can view seats in real-time'

Smart Q cafe pass ///
By Smart Q mobile app
For food courts and cafeterias

IT is no secret that outdoor dining experiences will never be the same until we find a wonder vaccine to beat the galloping virus. To ensure that cafeterias and eateries are able to navigate the new rules, Smart Q, a mobile-based application that enables queueless ordering at food courts, has launched the SmartQ Café Pass. The product aims to eliminate

the peak-time cafeteria crowd and enable contactless, cashless, and queueless pre-ordering of meals. "It is essentially a cloud-based booking and allocation system that allows the user to book the desired slot and also pre-order the food," says Bengaluru-based Keshav Meda, co-founder and chief business officer. Users can view the seats both booked and available for each slot on a real-time basis. The app also facilitates the uniform distribution of the crowd across the most breaks, thereby en-

abling physical distancing. The number of slots, duration of each slot, and the number of employees allowed can be set up by a self-service control dashboard for clients. Meda says the technology is suitable for any set-up where crowds need to be regulated, whether at malls, food parks or large retail chains. The technology is hardware agnostic and works on a range of platforms from Windows to Android. Goldman Sachs, Boeing, Compu Group, Airtel and Siemens have already signed up.



The technology is suitable for any set-up where crowds need to be regulated



FAHAD KHATEEB,
Director

'UV-C rays can kill pathogens on any surface'

Santising chamber ///
By Indilites LED Lighting
For any product, surface

WE might wash our hands obsessively to keep the Coronavirus infection at bay, but what about the household items that could well be a source of infection? Indilites LED Lighting has come out with a solution to disinfect everyday paraphernalia with their new UV chamber. The portable device uses ultraviolet C radiation of 254 nanometres wavelength to kill pathogens. "The rays are invisible to the human eye, but have the capacity to destroy bacteria on any surface," says

director Fahad Khateeb. The lights have been traditionally used by the medical fraternity to sterilise equipment. The main challenge was to ensure the product is 100 percent safe for use. "UV-A and UV-B lights have greater wavelengths and can cause acute skin damage, but that's not the case UV-C." Since they were already in the manufacturing of lighting products, it became relatively easy to create the chamber. They say jewellery retailers have come forward to buy the product.

UV Chamber can be used to disinfect household items.



to disinfect the trinkets they manufacture and those being brought to them by clients for sale, which jewellers say they are seeing an increase in given the cash crunch during the pandemic.

'We want to expedite the process of buying and selling'

Myryfy, online to offline marketplace app ///

By Myryfy, a Hyderabad-based start-up
For bottom-of-the-pyramid retailers

IF you're a buyer who likes to visit multiple stores to sniff out the best deal, varieties and offers, the Myryfy app is for you. The anonymous Hyderabad-based start-up founded by a group of techies is optimising the process of shopping by allowing the buyer to create an online order mentioning product details and location of preference. Sellers, who are registered on this platform, will get to see this order and accordingly quote their price and offer. Once finalised, the user can pick up the order from the store.

"We want to make the process of buying quick and easy, which is especially useful right now because of the pandemic," says Kiran Vaka, who launched the app with Vikram Yedavelli, Krishna C Pavuluri, and Naveen Vedala. The app is aimed at helping retailers at the bottom of the pyramid. "It is difficult for them to join an e-commerce marketplace. Moreover, online orders also mean arranging for packaging, logistics, refund and cancellation, which is difficult



Kiran Vaka, Vikram Yedavelli,
Krishna C Pavuluri, and Naveen
Vedala, founders

for a small brick and mortar shop. Here, they only have to respond to the order created by the buyer with their best price, offers and alternatives, if any. This will help retailers with online visibility instantly." So far, 200 retailers have joined the pan-India platform, which is free of cost.



ASHISH DHAKAN,
MD & CEO,
Prama Hivision
India Pvt Ltd.

'The terminal can detect mask flouters'

MinMoe face recognition terminal ///

By Prama Hivision India Pvt Ltd
For offices, retail establishments, education centres,
healthcare facilities and warehouses

AT a time when contactless technology is the mantra, the MinMoe face recognition terminal by Prama Hivision India Pvt Ltd, a Mumbai-based video security solution provider, is a worthy addition. These terminals are equipped with a visible light lens and an infrared lens. Access is granted only when both lenses detect the same person. "If the visitor is not wearing a face mask, the device will prompt a voice reminder after

the face recognition process is carried out," says Ashish P Dhakan, MD & CEO. The voice prompts are also triggered if the machine detects the temperature to be above normal levels. Dhakan says the touch-free nature of the terminal makes access easier and safer, and suitable for long-term temperature screening with access control for any building with high footfall.

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The voice prompts are also triggered if the machine detects the temperature to be above normal levels

The month of meh

May, associated with vacations and mangoes, wore an apocalyptic colour this year. A recall of summer joys toppled by a pandemic

city scan

SUMEDHA RAIKAR-MHATRE

MADHAV Deshmukh sits pensive in his bedroom balcony at Akola. Not the Vidarbha host, but the fact that he cannot be in Sinagar, his second home, is troubling him. For the last 25 years, he has taken immense pride in "showing India's heaven" to tourists and also in being a Maharashtra with a strong connect with the border state. In May this year, he was to take his 23rd Kashmir tour, not to forget the Amarnath-Rudranath yatra as he was looking forward to.

"Four operators such as myself live off magical Kashmir, which ranks among the topmost vacation choices. For years, we have told fellow Indians 'don't go to Switzerland as you have one in India'. Today, no destination is open, and I have to make peace with this balcony view," Deshmukh jokes. His loss of business and the deeper loss of connect with Kashmir cloud his summer. Likewise, most Indians feel robbed of the May joys of travel—be it family excursions, jungle safaris or annual sojourns to grandparents' homes.

The lockdown has restricted mobility in a month that has been traditionally clubbed with outdoor train/bus travel. Before Shriangudi took to Croatia and Laos, ICA-governed families were adept with railway wait lists, sleeper berth politics, window seat thrills and allied acronyms (RAC, PNR, IAC). Advance booking of rail tickets was pursued passionately and it continues to tickle many households. The Marathi song *Zhukhukhi-zhukhukhi Aagla Gaadi* brings alive train journeys in which families created life-shaping memories. Having grown up in the India of the seventies, I am privy to the pleasure of the epic packing of suitcases one month before the annual exam.

Critic-author Dr Ramesh Wad-



kar, who has studied children's literature as a discipline, says train journeys (Mamaicha Genda, Lanya magi) run as a common theme in many literary streams in India. "Be it the writings of Chitra Joshi, Ruskin Bond, Bha Ra Bhagwat or other regional literatures, Indians tend to glamourise the tropical summer in children's tales. The community connect in May-June months recurs in many hues." He feels the month of May is also perceived in popular literature as a facilitating bridge between rural and urban India. Children's travel to rural wilderness is a favourite backdrop.

The month has also been a month free from school/college exam tedium, a time to do away with a structured routine. Tier two and three cities in India add new layers to the summer break because of their space quotient, as against crowded metros. But, the May vacation is a unifying emotion. It is characterised by

Families were adept with railway wait lists, sleeper berth politics, window seat thrills and allied acronyms (RAC, PNR, IAC). Advance booking of rail tickets was pursued passionately and it continues to tickle many households

hobby classes, theatre workshops, personality development activities (Playtime At Peethri), swimming, sports pursuits, trekking, not to forget extra coaching for the tenth. The reigning sentiment in May facilitates meritism. The current lockdown, therefore, plays with the assumed May fest. This year, some exams have been ruled out, some loom large over July-August, which disturbs the cyclical rhythm of the academic journey, denying a sense of closure to the year.

The pandemic has impacted the outdoors and altered the indoors as well. May was a month for mango eating; the fruit's sundried forms being an industry in its own merit. But no longer so, as the fear of spread of the Corona virus has dictated the choice of seasonal fruits. The Whatsapp university has enough warnings against mango, melon, and banana consumption. Also, you don't need doctors for dietary guidance when the online yoga tutor or neighbourhood therapist share ready theories on the Coronavirus's contamination potential. They can guide you into washing each fruit with chlorine. That's why mangoes, which are anyways unaffordable, now are accompanied by microbiology-epidemiology insights along with a good dose of fear-suspense-uncertainty.

A joke is doing the rounds in experimental theatre circles: if a play audience, which is anyway sparse, is compelled to practice distant seating, performers will need telescopes to notice a presence

To drink or not to drink, is also the dilemma this May. Usually, colas, pils, sam panha take precedence. Tricycle trolleys selling lollies tinkle their presence in housing colonies. But this year, the fear of the Coronavirus (the virus dies in higher temperatures and humidity) has discouraged people from consuming cool beverages. Why invite a cold during a pandemic?

Indoor dynamic has been distinct. Life gravitates towards FB watch parties, zoom conferences, online concerts, and digital content available on private video streaming services, especially if you are not content with a Ramayana TV version shot in the last century.

Is it just coincidence that actor Kareena Kapoor Khan's Instagram account opened in March? Where else, but on Twitter and Instagram, a star-studded film industry express itself? Last May saw 35 Bollywood releases—Chhota Bheem, PM Narendra Modi etc. With screenings

(and shows) rendered impossible this year, one has to make do with Sonam Kapoor's Insta-post into her palatial home. Or Karan Johar's 'live' chat with Seerat Kapoor.

Mumbai's theatre, despite being perennially resource-crunched, usually gears up for lively May-June shows. Summer workshops (Warun Kende, Ravi Padmanab) and children's plays bring variety to the palette. But this May, no productions were mounted, especially in the Marathi theatre circuit, which runs on the fuel of enthusiasts who proudly occupy the backstage. A joke is doing the rounds in experimental theatre circles: if a play audience, which is anyway sparse, is compelled to practice distant seating, performers will need telescopes to notice a presence.

This May, a significant number of theatre persons have gone online to keep their art relevant. Theatre director Sandi Shantap shared his journey on #VirtualLive. Institutions like Royal Opera House and NCPA have opened their 'virtual' showcase. The month of May has triggered considerable brainstorming and soul searching in theatre groups, which aim to remain afloat in the post-COVID-19 world. It is said that theatre, of all the performing arts, will be the first to be compelled to change its stripes. We can look and support, as it changes.

Sumedha Raikar-Mhatre is a columnist in month of the sub-text. You can reach her at sumedha.raikar@mid-day.com



'If we don't speak out now, we will pay the price'

In his historicised novel, Pakistani writer Osman Haneef reveals why his country's blasphemy laws are a misinterpretation of Islamic scholarship, and why someone must question them

JANE BORGES

EVERY once in a while, comes a novel that makes you realise that your problem is not yours alone. Where the growing right-wing extremism in India has ruffled the minorities, and even spurred riots right before the Coronavirus outbreak shifted the country's focus, in neighbouring Pakistan, similar battles are being fought. And this is often exacerbated by the upholders of law.

Pakistani writer Osman Haneef's new novel, *Blasphemy: The Trial of Danesh Noori* (Rednomia Publishing) is an insightful account of the consequences of ill-thought, morally corrosive laws. Through the story of Danesh, the young son of a Christian house-help, wrongly charged for blasphemy, Haneef explores Pakistan's controversial law.

Only earlier this week, the brother-in-law of Asia Bibi—a Pakistani Christian woman who was convicted of blasphemy by a court and sentenced to death by hanging, before being acquitted by the apex court in

2018—was murdered in Sheikhupura city of Punjab, once again putting the spotlight on killings in the name of religion.

Haneef, who has worked as TV actor, a strategy consultant, and a diplomatic adviser, and was selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in 2013, hopes his "novel can reopen conversations about reforms," which he says is a "difficult hill to climb".

Edited excerpts from the interview.

Pakistan's blasphemy laws have been a concern for human rights activists and academicians alike. What prompted you to write this novel now?

I wrote the first draft without a strong sense of the narrative arc. But no matter what I wrote, my mind kept returning to a blasphemy case from the

1990s. An illiterate teenage boy, Salamati Masih, and two others, were accused of writing blasphemous statements on the wall of a mosque in a village in Punjab. There was no physical evidence, and the judge was never told what was actually said because to repeat the statement, would have been blasphemous. The conviction was eventually overturned, and Masih fled the country. However, the glaring injustice of an innocent boy wrongfully convicted in a Kadaknag court proceeding in Pakistan stayed with me. I had to tell this story.

Whether it's Asia Bibi (who spent eight years on death row) [lawyer] Rashid Raheem, who was gunned down, or now [university lecturer] Jamil Hafeez, we have seen people

twist the law to their own ends, and the topic, sadly, has stayed relevant.

Though Pakistan is one of the 15 countries where blasphemy is punishable by death, it hasn't executed anyone for the same as yet. But, make have been using "death penalty" as a sanction for vigilante killings?

When I was creating the character of Pir Piyu, a religious figure in the novel who uses the blasphemy law to further his own end, I examined much of the literature around religious radicalisation. The research on religious extremism examines the issue from an individual, organisational, societal, economic, and historical dimension. It is fair to say that the Islamisation of Pakistan under Zia [former President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq] has twisted narratives to spread an extremist ideology in Pakistan, which has created an acceptance

and understanding of the law among the general population. It is this acceptance that made people flock to Mumtaz Qadri [the assassin of politician Salman Taseer] funeral. But it is also worth noting that this extremist ideology doesn't explain why certain individuals become radicalised and others don't. After all, for every Mumtaz Qadri, there are countless human rights activists and campaign leaders, such as Amina Jahangir, who have fought for a more tolerant and open society. And when individuals turn to religion as a form of oppression, it is often a convenient tool rather than the actual reason. For instance, in the novel, Danesh is not accused of blasphemy because of a religious reason, but because of a spurned lover.

Part of your novel has been historicised, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. Why did you choose this treatment over, say, a straight non-fiction account?

I didn't just want to tell the story of a single blasphemy trial. I wanted to tell a story that would be compelling, multi-layered, and engage the reader on multiple issues. Fiction allowed me to explore the underlying motivations of the characters, which is not always possible in non-fiction accounts, and to cover multiple truths.

The very nature of this novel, involves walking a tightrope. Are you prepared for the backlash?

Honestly, I don't know. When I think about people like Salman Taseer, who was unjustly murdered because of his moderate views and advocacy, I worry. But if those of us who are able to speak out, don't because of our fear, we will abdicate the decision making to more extreme factions of our society, and we will all pay the price.

Do you think Pakistan would some day be in a position to repeal this law? What is the country's stand on the issue, currently?

We must have hope. The blasphemy law in its modern form and its repercussions, have come about because of Zia's [ul-Haq] government and policies of Islamisation. It is not an essential part of the fabric of our culture and society, but there are elements who want to make it one. The basis of an unpardonable death penalty for blasphemy is a misinterpretation of Islamic scholarship. If we could reopen the debate around the original interpretation, we could at least remove the most abhorrent features of the law. However, currently, any political leader who challenges the law or proposes any amendments faces very real threats to his or her personal safety and security.

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OSMAN HANEEF



In this file picture from November 21, 2018, Islamist activists are seen carrying placards against Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman, who was released after spending eight years on death row for blasphemy, in Karachi. PIC: GETTY IMAGES

Watch them play

Up your gaming ante, by escaping into the world of live streaming, where you'll be watched and heard



Animesh Agarwal, aka 8Bit_Thug, says he thought of trying streaming when PUBG mobile game entered India

GAME streaming is a form of entertainment, where you watch someone else play games and comment about it to an audience live.

Should I become a streamer?

This is the obvious question. To be a successful streamer, you have to be one of two things: You should either be extremely good at playing a particular game—bonus points if it's a multiplayer online game like PUBG or Fortnite. Or, you must be good at talking—the kind of person who can comment on every aspect and have a smart or funny opinion about everything you come across. If you can hold an audience on either or both fronts, game streaming is for you. You may also need to choose where you plan to stream from: i.e. PS4, mobile phone, PC or Xbox. "I was more of an academic nerd pursuing a couple of degrees. Gaming was the only escape during free time. In 2015, I started playing the mobile game Clash Royale, and became an avid follower of several game streamers. With the advent of

PUBG mobile in India, it struck me to try out streaming," said Animesh Agarwal, who goes by 8Bit_Thug and streams PUBG mobile on YouTube.

What do you need?

An internet connection, preferably a good one with unlimited bandwidth. A computer, especially if you want to overlay a video of yourself in your stream. A web camera; get something good that won't make you look like a blurry blob, at least a 720p. Get a decent microphone; you could use one of those computer headsets with the mic built-in. A device to game on; it can be a powerful PC or one of the consoles, or even your mobile phone. For the more serious players, you might want to get a capture card. This is especially useful if you want to stream console games and have an overlay of your face in the corner like most professionals do.

For software, you can either use OBS Studio or XSplit. Once you decide between various streaming platforms and what software to use, you will

need to get a stream key from the site you plan to stream on. There are good tutorials online on how to do this; it is super simple and you don't need to be a computer whiz to figure it out.

"I did a detailed study on the best equipment required and started with a gaming laptop, capture cards, a nice gaming condenser microphone, gaming headphones and a high-resolution webcam," said Agarwal.

Figure out your audience

Before you stream, you need to figure out who your target audience is. For example, a PUBG player who is good at the game. This will not only define the game you want to play, but also what your content will look like. In this case, you might be good at PUBG, so you will want to show off your skills or share tricks and tips about the game while playing it live.

"My gaming channel is mainly for live streams. Besides, I use it for podcast-type VODs, where I share information about my experience and try to educate the audience about

Streaming essentials

→ **EQUIPMENT**
Laptop/PC to handle the streaming

Game capture card/box
Microphone +
suspension stand + pop
filter / gaming headset
HD webcam capable of
1080p

→ **OUTPUT**
Green Screen
Software (OBS Studio,
XSplit)

→ **GAMES**: You can
stream any game,
but PUBG, League of
Legends, CS:GO and
Garena Free Fire require
the least effort.

gaming. One such Series is Thug Talks," said Agarwal aka 8Bit_Thug.

Where to stream?

There are several options for this, each with its advantage.

Facebook: Facebook is a powerful platform for

streaming live. Its advantage lies in the ability to target your audience and find new viewers. Considering most of the world is already on Facebook, it makes sense to use that to your advantage.

Twitch: Twitch is where all the gaming action is, which is why there are a lot of game streamers on it. However, competition is stiff. You may need to distinguish yourself from the other streamers if you want to get noticed. Just gaming prowess might not be enough to stand out here.

Mixer: Mixer is quickly emerging as the streaming of choice for many professional streamers. It is hyper-focused on gaming and big names in streaming like Ninja.

YouTube: YouTube is probably one of the easiest to set up. A lot of people consume videos on YouTube, which means there is major competition for viewers and you will be competing with gag videos, shows and all sorts of other content.

Others: There are several other streaming players, but they aren't popular in India yet. If you choose a platform that isn't popular yet, you may have a first mover's advantage, where your popularity can grow along with the site. NimbleTV, dLive and gossu games are some of the platforms not explored as much right now. "I started with Twitch in July 2018 and continued to stream for three months, before switching to YouTube due to lack of response on Twitch. Right now, I am focused entirely on YouTube because the trend demands I do that," said Agarwal.

What if I can't game?

Streaming on most of the popular platforms isn't only for gaming, a lot of new popular channels have emerged that do everything from workouts to live cooking shows.

Twitch, Facebook Live and YouTube Live are a great choice, if you don't want to start a gaming live stream.





Super-ness on a plate

Nutritionist Kavita Devgan's new book is an A-Z dictionary on must-eat superfoods to fight disease and improve wellness

JANE BORGES

THERE'S no problem in the world that food cannot fix. It's just a matter of what you choose to eat and how much, says nutritionist and holistic health consultant Kavita Devgan, whose new book on *Kiss It With Food* (Rupa Books), may just be what you need to read most right now.

A guide on 40 superfoods, Devgan supplements her food dictionary with easy-to-follow tips and nearly 90 recipes to improve energy and also, kick-start weight loss. That it's apple, banana, dates, cauliflower, ghee and palak, and not the fancy and expensive-to-praise foods that make the cut in this guidebook, comes as little surprise. Only earlier this week, a news report spoke of how the "green, spicy" jackfruit, often termed as a backyard nuisance, was generating interest among global consumers in the midst of the Coronavirus crisis, as people are now turning to more plant-based options over meat. Jack fruit is also a superfood that Devgan recommends, for its "anti-cancer and anti-aging properties, thanks to the lignans, isoflavones and saponins—all the phytonutrients it is loaded with".

"Almost every week a new food is successfully branded as a superfood, whether or not it deserves to be branded, and we fall for the gimmick, ignoring local eats available to us at a fraction of the cost," says Devgan in an email interview.

Superfoods, she says, deliver concentrated—extra-large doses of vitamins and minerals—nutrients that are good for you. "They are so nutrient-dense, that they are almost like a supplement. But, of course, far better. Here it is important to understand that both nutrient density [lots of one nutrient] and diversity [lot many nutrients] are essential to a food being called 'super'." The richness of the nutrients in food and the number of different nutrients help us understand the super-ness of a particular food.

But superfoods don't stop here. "Besides regular



nutrients like vitamins or calcium or protein, they also pack in antioxidants, phytonutrients and flavonoids. These healthy chemical compounds that exist in plants help build immunity, extend life and prevent diseases from occurring."

Devgan admits that these secrets to healthy eating, propounded even in Ayurveda, aren't ground-breaking in nature. But "our dependence on processed foods and fewer hours of cooking at home" has necessitated recall. "In fact, I am just trying to reiterate the age-old, common-sense eating that is steeped in ancient wisdom, told to children by mothers since the dawn of time: eat your veggies, and fruits and all foods natural."

What Devgan suggests is variety in one's diet. "All fruits being with them some good, so ideally it is important to eat two to three servings daily of the rainbow [different coloured fruits]—to cover the entire spectrum of nutrients that our body needs."

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Parippu payasam

INGREDIENTS

- 100 gm parippu or yellow moong dal
- 150 gm jaggery
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 tsp ghee
- 125 ml coconut milk
- Cashew nuts and coconut pieces for garnish

METHOD

Roast parippu (yellow moong dal) without oil for 5-6 minutes. Then cook with boiled water. Melt jaggery by adding 1/2 cup of water.

Now add the melted jaggery to the well-cooked parippu and stir well. Add 1 tsp ghee and mix well. Add coconut milk and



HEALTHY
TIPS

And it. When the mix evaporates and reduces to half, remove from the stove. For the garnish, fry a few cashew nuts and coconut pieces in 1 tsp ghee and add to the payasam. Serve hot.



TOP IMMUNITY BOOSTING FOODS

- TURMERIC
- TULSI LEAVES
- GARLIC
- CHICKPEA
- LEMON
- ONION
- CARROT
- WATER (Hydration)

They are so nutrient-dense, that they are almost like a supplement. But, far better. Here it is important to understand that both nutrient density [lots of one nutrient] and diversity [lot many nutrients] are essential to a food being called "super"





MAWYNNONG

ANKIT GUPTA, 31

 Restaurateur,
Mumbai

WHAT
Mawynnong
INGREDIENTS

15 gms of seeded green tea leaves, rind of half an orange, 2 strips of basil, 100 ml coconut water, 60 ml of semi dry gin, a pinch of Himalayan pink salt, 45 ml carbonated water and 1 tbsp crumbs of leftover bread.

METHOD

- 1 Steep gin with green tea, orange rind and basil overnight
- 2 Strain the steeped liquid in a cocktail shaker with 4 cubes of ice, coconut water and rock salt
- 3 Pour it in a chilled cocktail glass and top it up with carbonated water
- 4 Finish with adding bread crumbs
- 5 Garnish with a basil leaf

Verdict: Mawynnong is a cocktail discovered by the chef's wife in Asia, using the refined recipes at home. Mawynnong is a village in the Basse Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. Going with its name, the drink is refreshing and soothing for your system.

GRETEL HENDRICKS 29

 Executive
assistant,
Mumbai


GRETEL HENDRICKS

TROPICAL COOLER


WHAT
Tropical cooler
INGREDIENTS

Malibu rum, pineapple juice, ice, lemon juice, soda and mint leaves.

METHOD

- 1 Take a tall glass and fill the base with ice cubes
- 2 Add Malibu rum 1/3 of the glass
- 3 Add pineapple juice 2/3 of the glass
- 4 Add some lime juice and a little soda for the fizz
- 5 Give it a stir
- 6 Add chopped mint leaves

Verdict: In this soothing treat, the cocktail serves both tropical and refreshing.

PARTH ADIYAL, 28

 Lawyer and
chef, Mumbai


PARTH ADIYAL

GINTINI


WHAT
Gintini
INGREDIENTS

60 ml gin, 15 ml lime juice, 15 ml sugar syrup, 15 ml ginger ale, 100 grams ice.

METHOD

- 1 Put ice in a shaker
- 2 Add 60 ml gin and 25 ml lime juice
- 3 Add 15 ml sugar syrup (optional)
- 4 Add 30 ml ginger ale (can be replaced with tonic water)
- 5 Shake and strain in a cocktail glass or any glass (as available during lockdown)
- 6 Garnish with lime wedge or lime peel

Verdict: Had more ingredients were available, I would have liked to add 25 ml dry vermouth and 15 ml orange bitter as it would go really well with gin. But, Gintini is a little sour and also sweet, so it's smooth on the palate.

That's the spirit!

A global pandemic is a great time to try new drinks or get reacquainted with old recipes at home. As they rightly say, when all else fails, bottoms up

PRUTHA BHOSLE

DURING his first date with Kylie, JD suspects a patient has SARS and gets the staff quarantined in the hospital. Soon, cocktails are made to make it through social distancing and that is how quarantine originated in the American medical comedy, Scrubs. Ten years after the series ended, the global pandemic has given us reason to have a top-notch cocktail hour. It all began on March 12, before a majority of United States went into the Coronavirus lockdown. Twitter saw a rise in the number of

cooped-up drinkers flexing themselves a quarantine. Almost two months later, there are over 65,000 posts with the hashtag #quarantini.

The Quarantini is whatever you want it to be, so long as it demonstrates a creative effort to get drunk with whatever ingredients you still have on hand. Some use years-old holiday booze lurking at the back of the drinks cupboard and others experiment with cocktail party leftovers. The result, however, is a state-of-the-art cocktail which these young drink enthusiasts should make an entry into your nearest bar.

pruthabhosle@mid-day.com



BOOZY COCONUT

ABHISHEK THUKRAL, 31

 Publicist,
Mumbai


ABHISHEK THUKRAL

WHAT
Boozy coconut
INGREDIENTS

30 ml gin, 50 ml coconut milk, 1 tsp of honey, 2 basil leaves and a dash of half of lime.

METHOD

- 1 Add lime to incubate the flavour of gin
- 2 Instead of sugar syrup, use honey as not all ingredients are available in lockdown
- 3 Add two cubes of ice and use a cocktail shaker and aggressively shake the mix between the two glasses
- 4 Pop it up with tonic water
- 5 Then garnish it with basil leaves to make for an aesthetically good looking glass

Verdict: Tastes refreshing. It doesn't feel indulgent, because it's not too strong. It may go down well with veggie drinkers since it has coconut.

REVIEW

Becoming the land

Hairstylist Sapna Bhavnani's docu drops online, revisiting the largest migration of a culture in the world, through her body

JANE BORGES

PUNJAB Sindh-Gujarat Marathi, Dravida-Utkala-Banga'—singing the national anthem, during the morning school assembly, as a six-year-old, was how I was first acquainted with my country's diversity. I remember peering over the map of India, to find the places that we sang poems about. Sindh was impossible to locate. For that, my teacher later informed, I'd have to seek outwards, in the neighbouring country of Pakistan. A place my eyes had never travelled to, until then.

Celebrity hairstylist Sapna Mohi Bhavnani's documentary, *Sindhustan*, also draws from her own ignorance of Sindh, where her ancestral roots lie. "All I knew about my culture was Sindh's kathi," says Bhavnani in the film, that she has also co-produced. The hour-long film is both a physical and meditative invocation of her lost roots and land.

Two years ago, Bhavnani turned her body into a canvas, tattooing the journey her Sindh ancestors had undertaken via land, air and sea, in the wake of the Partition. Refugees, as they were, many of them found themselves a home in bustling Bombay, a far cry from the mystical land, where the Sufis from Iran had settled. "I was 36



years old, when I realised, I was the daughter of a refugee," says Bhavnani, in the opening lines of the film. "I remember being at this concert watching some folkies from Sindh perform. And I was so blown away, that I ran home and Googled Sindh for the first time. When I found out this was the largest migration of a culture in the history of the world—and I had no idea being a Sindh—I knew it was time to start [making this film]."

Sapna Mohi Bhavnani in *Sindhustan*

Bhavnani's body is a recurring trope in this documentary, an image of the pain and anguish that her relatives and other Sindh families experienced, having been forced to abandon home and hearth, and seek the unfamiliar. The motivation to tattoo her body, and make this film, were intrinsically tied. When Bhavnani was denied a visa to visit Sindh, she decided to "become the land."

"My legs carry the story of their journey, and my feet the lack of our roots," she shares. In the film, the hairstylist recounts the time when she had just started getting her self inked, and had to cover up, before meeting her grandmother for lunch. "You are so old-fashioned, Sapna," her grandmother had chided her, amused that she was hiding the tattoos. "When we first came on this planet, we lived in tribes. We didn't have countries, boundaries and governments. We lived as extended families. We all had markings that signified where we belonged. I see your ink, and

Bhavnani's storytelling is nuanced, and draws from the self. That she is heavily inspired by 18th century Sindh poet and mystic Shah Abdul Latif is visible—his words resound through her work, sometimes radiating sadness, but also often hope

I see you're going back to your roots...our roots," she was told.

But this journey of uprooting is not just told through the body, alone. Bhavnani brings together diverse voices that revisit their land of yore. There is her aunt from whom we learn the recipe for the delicious Sindh kadi. Scholar Jitram Rupani shares how Sindh is given to speak so loudly that their voices can travel to other villages. There is, of course, the tormenting experience of migration. Parti-

tion survivor Sundar Nachaney was slapped by an immigration officer, when he answered him back. The pain still lingers, he says. Most delightful is the story of Dr Sundar Kewani. "Do you miss Shikarpur?" Bhavnani asks her, of her erstwhile hometown. "Yes," says the old woman, adding, "A river used to flow. Still must be flowing, no? I can never forget...I am Shikarpuri."

Bhavnani's storytelling is nuanced, and draws from the self. That she is heavily inspired by 18th century Sindh poet and mystic Shah Abdul Latif is visible—his words resound through her work, sometimes radiating sadness, but also often hope. I wonder, if it's her body that is the story, and not the land. But as she says, sometimes that's also "the best way to tell a story."

AVAILABLE ON www.mammoth.com/movies/sindhustan
jane.borges@mid-day.com

The driving force

If you aren't lucky enough to ride a BEST bus with Mumbai's first female driver, catch her in a just-released YouTube film



Pratiksha Das agreed to be a part of the film in August 2019

PRUTHI BHOSLE

MASS media graduates, Uday Kotecha and Krunal Acharya, took nine months to complete the shoot of their latest project, *BEST ONE*. This 15-minute-long documentary celebrates the journey of a 25-year-old woman, who is Mumbai's first female bus driver, "Pratiksha Das was a junior in college. We weren't really friends, but had added each other on Facebook. Around last year, I was looking for a real story to tell through my documentary project. I came across a news article on Pratiksha, and how she was making waves in a male-dominated job. I had found my protagonist," remembers Acharya, 27.

Released on YouTube two weeks ago, *BEST ONE* lauds the mechanical engineer and motorcycle enthusiast, for breaking stereotypes. "In this film, she beautifully and casually is aware with an important lesson. If you want to do something in life, just go and do it. She wanted to drive a bus and she did it! It's as simple or as complicated as that. She faced

rejections for two years from the department, but kept trying. As they say, the universe falls in love with a stubborn heart," Acharya, the film's director, adds.

This self-funded project was shot during the monsoons last year. "It was pouring. The other challenge was that while she had cleared the placement, she wasn't yet on duty, so filming her on the driver's seat was tough and this can be seen in most shots in the film. Nonetheless, we managed some lovely shots of her," Kotecha, 28, recalls.

WATCH ON <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mbM2ocdQ>



UDAY KOTECHA

KRUNAL ACHARYA

pruthi.bhosle@mid-day.com

SCRATCHPAD |

Making sense of darkness in colour

A selection of three free illustrated books with sparkling sketches that are perfect for installing hope in the little ones

JANE BORGES

Breaking down the virus

One day, this strange time will be over. The last line of Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson & Nia Roberts's digital book is brimming with optimism, and so is the book. Titled *Coronavirus: A book for children* (Harper Collins), and available for free download in seven languages, including English, Hindi and Marathi, it serves as a guide to help kids make sense of everything that's happening around them due to the novel Coronavirus. Put together with inputs from Professor Graham Medley of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, two teachers and a child psychologist, the book answers key questions that kids might have. It is suitable for five to nine-year-olds.

READ HERE: <https://harpercollins.co.in/product/coronavirus-a-book-for-children/>



World of possibilities

Hope is everything, and sometimes the only thing. It's why author Katherine Rundell's new collection, *The Book of Hopes: Words and Pictures to Comfort, Inspire and Encourage Children in Lockdown*, which has contributions from over 100 children writers and illustrators, makes for a delightful read.

The book, which has been made available as a free PDF on the National Literacy Trust website, is full of optimism, with poetry and fairytales about humans, animals, birds, machines and many other alien and surreal beings. Rundell

likes to describe herself as a "possibilist"—a believer in the possibilities of creating a world of our dreams. A few weeks ago, when the world came to a grinding halt due to the Coronavirus scare, Rundell launched the Hope Project, getting fellow writers and artists, whom she describes as "professional huffers of hope", to contribute short fiction/non-fiction and drawings that could inspire, especially in unsettling times like these.



TO READ: literacytrust.org.uk/familyzone/9-12/book-hopes/

Nurse Doty has advice

At a time, when we are confused about what's happening around us, an illustrated online book by Southampton-based Molly Watts, a registered children's nurse, is the sunshine that we and all the little ones need. *Dave the Dog is Worried About Coronavirus*, "aims to open up the conversation about the Coronavirus and some of the things they might be hearing about it and provide truthful information in a reassuring and

child-friendly manner". The short read takes us through a conversation between an owl named Nurse Doty who works in a "children's hospital up the hill" and her doggie neighbour, Dave. She tells him the truth about the illness—busting myths and rumours. You ought to read this heart-warming book.

READ HERE: <https://nursedotybooks.com/dave-the-dog-is-worried-about-coronavirus-2/>



DON'T MISS TODAY'S STITCH YOUR OWN CLOTH PAD

Sign up for a virtual acting masterclass

Hone your craft by attending a masterclass by playwright Anil Satya Koushik. The sessions will be about approaching a script, designing a character and working on oneself.

WHEN: June 5-7, 10 AM to 2 PM
PRICE: ₹500 onwards
CONTACT: drfs_click@rediffmail.com, Instagram



Master the art of faux calligraphy

Attend a faux calligraphy workshop hosted by SD Academia. The faux calligraphy technique uses fine lines to imitate the effect of calligraphy.

WHEN: May 31, 5-6 PM
PRICE: ₹60; CONTACT: sdacademia@rediffmail.com, Instagram



Learn how to navigate therapy

Tune into a free webinar on finding a counsellor who works for you, led by Rakat Sanghat, a therapist and Apurva Vatsalya.

WHEN: June 2, 10 PM; WHERE: www.rakat.org/, Instagram

Curated by P Vatsalya and Kashi Gadgil

Lol with Sumukhi Suresh and others

Tune into Choddi Ke Chutkole, featuring Sumukhi Suresh, Sumaira Shabbir, Neeti Palta and Kaneez Surka. From a round-up about Modii to YouTube's TikTok, you will have witty banter on all kinds of trending topics.

WHEN: May 31, 10 PM
PRICE: ₹199
CONTACT: comedy@rediffmail.com



DIRECTORY |

Meet a person with a skill you can use

Monica Mishra, 30
Visual Artist

Mishra decided to pursue a diploma in Commercial Arts and found her niche in packaging art.

AVAILABLE FOR: Digital and printed wedding invites, professional websites, logos, social media creatives etc.
CHARGES: Vary
EMAIL: stadshales2018@gmail.com

Monica Mishra began her art journey 12 years ago by joining a small scale ad agency, where she created print ads. She ended up working with top agencies such as Saints & Warriors and Ogilvy & Mather eventually. Four years ago, she founded Studio Kalea. Mishra's work is design-based and helps brands build their identity. She recently finished a package design for Emporio Patisserie's new range of premium cookies. She is currently working on creating a grocery brand's e-commerce website, packaging and handling their social media marketing. "A lot of technical aspects are important in designing. For instance, colour choices need to be in tandem with the brand. But once the job is done and you see the product on the rack of a leading grocery store, it's a proud moment."

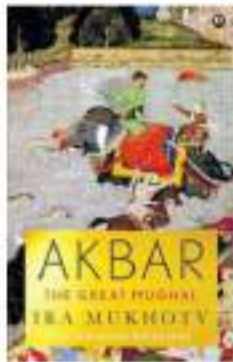
RECOMMENDED BY: Arun Indulkar, founder of Khadi Premium Cosmetics, says, "The comfort Monica gave us while understanding what we require, and adding her knowledge and expertise helped us immensely in building our brand."



The Mughal lord of lords

Akbar is to us, a genius—a jewel in pre-colonial India's crown, and the greatest leader that the Mughal dynasty had ever seen. School textbooks will tell you how he built a formidable kingdom with the help of wise courtiers, and how his religious tolerance won him peace and respect from within the Rajput community. In popular imagination, thanks to cinema, he is the level-headed, unerring father of the rebellious, love-struck Salim, and also, the romantic and soft-hearted son of Jodha Bai. In Mukhoty's new biography, *Akbar: The Great Mughal* (Aleph Book Company; ₹999), doesn't take us into uncharted territory, but she does open it up for us like a true storyteller. Her exceptional research and narrative writing of history (she is a scientist, by the way) makes her a significant voice among modern-day chroniclers of Indian history. The 500 pages is divided into

six parts, beginning with the arrival of the Mughals into India from Central Asia, Akbar's glorious years in Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore, and finally, the Padshah's slackening of ambition as he "becomes more and more caught up in a battle of wills with his sons, especially Salim". In the book, we are told, that even before Akbar was born, his father Humayun had seen a dream, where an ancient man, who identified himself as Ahmad of Iran, a 12th century mystic, promised that he would have an "Eminent son", for whom he proposed the name Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar. Many others known to Humayun would experience such miraculous perceptions. No wonder Akbar ruled for over five decades, and with such panache.



BUY:
amazon.
in: ₹512
(Kindle
edition)



Who killed Jaspal Singh?



Singh's father
in a still from
the film



A Gurkha family is sitting next to the photograph of a young slain member, Jaspal Singh. Their home in Gurdaspur's Sidhwan Janitta village is filled with Singh's memories. "Jaspal" was 18 years and nine months old when he was shot dead," he father rues. "He was a kind-hearted, soft-spoken boy who religiously followed the Gurm. 'Wohogani, I have been shot', were in fact his words when he breathed his last."

Directed by Parmjeet Singh, *Outjusticed 2* is the second documentary in the series. *Outjusticed*—the untold stories—that focuses on the denial of justice to victims of human rights

violations in Punjab. This one revolves around the Punjab police firing incident of 2012 in which Sikh student, Jaspal Singh, lost his life.

First screened in Chandigarh in 2015, and later in various places across England, the film is now open to public viewing on YouTube. Singh's parents take the viewers back to March 29, 2012. They and activists reveal that video and forensic evidence indicated that the police had opened fire on peacefully protesting Sikhs. "Still the police filed the closure report in this case," claims his father.

The film takes you through the life of Singh, an engineering student at the Beant College in Gurdaspur. His parents, still coming to terms with his death, continue to fight for justice and against loopholes in state policies. With new back video evidence and stand in solidarity with Singh's family. For those still reeling in the aftermath of Netflix documentary, *Who Killed Little Gregory*, this should be on your watchlist.

Curated by Jane Borges and Pruthi Bhoole



Letters for the soul

Reading 56 letters. That's like going through 56 different kinds of emotions. And for someone, who loves all things epistolary, it's pure literary gratification. Terribly Tiny Tales' new volume, *With Love: A Collection of Letters* (Penguin Random House) is created from thousands of contributions by readers, and is the perfect bedtime read — one letter each night. It's like reading a story, just that it's not.

Megha Rao writes to "a man, who doesn't exist in her life yet, but will be her husband some day, about how she'd love their kids to be beautiful, the kind 'that blossom from the heart'". Roshni Thakur pens a heart-warming letter to her dad, a soldier, whom she is yearning to spend some time with, "collecting pictures of you without the uniform". Joel Thakur writes to his friend with benefits, to ignore the I love you, "I sent you last Thursday. That was a quarter of Old Monk typing."

Illustrated by



Garden genie in a bottle

A Kandivli resident is sharing the art of making miniature gardens come alive in glass containers

PRUTHI BHOOLE

DESPITE being 36, had an IT job for 11 years until she decided to change paths in 2016. "I had attended a few workshops on creating miniature terrarium gardens, which I returned to after I quit my job," she says of *The Breaking Art*.

Terrariums are a unique way of preserving nature in a wide and



amazing variety of glass containers. They not only help you go green, but are also a great addition to your interiors. There are two types of terrariums—tropical and succulent. In the tropical ones, you can either keep the indoor gardens enclosed or open. If enclosed with a glass lid, they need to be watered once in 20 days. If left open, they

can be watered once in three days," she explains. The succulent terrariums have a dry habitat so they need to be watered only once a week. "Terrariums require very less care since they are self contained and miniature ecosystems. If natural daylight is not possible as in case of an office setup, artificial lighting can be used to simulate daylight."

Pruthi's workshops (₹1,000 onwards) for children and adults last two hours, enough time for a newbie to learn to create these miniatures, she says. With the lockdown firmly in place, she is facilitating online workshops focused on terrarium making.

CALL: 9820839656



SHREYAS
ANASUYA
THE EDITOR
OF SKIN
STORIES

Voices of the marginalised

Skin Stories is an anthology of powerful and personal essays. The overarching themes in the book are disability, chronic pain, sexuality and gender. The book is divided into 12 different sections in the book: mind, body, romance, friendship, sex, work, violence, marriage, self, children, discrimination and myths. There are different essays under each section. "The book weaves a rich tapestry of many experiences, and all the narratives within are complementary," says Shreyas Anasuya, the editor of the book. For instance, both Antara Thakur

and Tony Kaur's essays in the romance section, deal with their experiences as people with disabilities on a popular dating app. It was heartening to read Tony's words honestly about using Tinder to realise that her disability wouldn't define her, or affect her dating life. Both Christina Thomas and Dhanraj and Rachelle Bharati Chandra's essays deal with the structural barriers they faced when accessing mental health services as Dalit folk. Chandra's eye-opening tale makes one think about how unfair it is that some have to bear the brunt of inaccessibility of basic health services.



It's almost as if the book's essays are speaking to each other. Apart from being an insightful read, *Skin Stories* should be treated as a credible resource that can be used in the fields of gender and

disability justice. It amplifies the voices of people from the marginalised communities through storytelling, in the hope of creating a more just and accessible world.

info@porthavew.org

Curated by Jane Borges and PV Anasuya

HITLIST

'Prefer not to be socially visible'

As Devon Ke Dev Mahadev returns to the tube as part of the lockdown line-up, Mohit Raina discusses how his reclusive nature is at odds with showbiz



SHAHEEN PARKAR
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FIVE years after it was first telecast, *Devon Ke Dev—Mahadev* is returning to television as part of the lockdown line-up. The mythological series made Mohit Raina, who played the titular role, an overnight sensation. His popularity can be gauged from the fact that Priyanka Chopra's assistant stated then that Mahadev would be the ideal partner for her niece.

Even as he has graduated to movies and web outings, Raina considers the television show the turning point of his career. "It got me noticed. I am thankful for the immense love I still receive from fans," he says. While most actors would be flattered to have fans and paparazzi following their every move, in Raina's book, that may not be necessarily a good thing. Known to guard his privacy, the recent actor prefers to stay away from the public glare. "That's my nature. I prefer not to be socially visible. I want to lead a normal life as far as possible. One can only talk about something when s/he has a project that is up for release, otherwise there is not much to say." As an afterthought, he takes a good-humoured dig at his co-star as he gulps, "I should be more out there and try to beat Jacqueline Fernandez who has over 40 million followers on Instagram."

The actor recently shared screen space with her in the Netflix film, *Mis Serial Killer*. He recounts that when Mahadev was at its peak, producer Farah Khan had got two kids, Anya, Diva and Char, to meet him as they loved the show. "Later, I connected with her at Punit Malhotra's birthday party. She invited me home for tea, and offered me the role of the cop."

Raina, whose recent digital outings include *Bhaskar* and *Kaali*, is keen to balance Bollywood with the web world. He has wrapped up *Kunal Deshmukh's* *Shiddat: Journey Beyond Love*. "It was slated to release in September, but with the turn of events, I don't know how things will play out."

I should try to beat Jacqueline Fernandez who has over 40 million followers on Instagram



Shoutouts for a price

An online start-up finds novel way to connect stars to their fans; ropes in Shankar Mahadevan and Shaan

UMA RAMASUBRAMANIAN
uma@mid-day.com

THERE'S a price for everything, even birthday wishes. A Mumbai-based start-up, GoNats, finds a novel way to get fans closer to their favourite stars. The platform opened avenues for fans to receive personalised greetings in the form of video shoutouts from celebrities, garnering a pocket-friendly price.

"The pricing starts from ₹1,000 for a lookalike," informs Vinayna Pandya, founder, GoNats, adding, "Rates fluctuate depending on the popularity of the artists. If you want someone like Shankar Mahadevan, [the shoutout would be priced] at ₹30,000. Singers gain more popularity because they sing too."

"For a personal video message from artists like Shaan, the cost is about ₹25,000

per video plus taxes," says Pandya, adding that every star would take 20 per cent out per video. Pandya adds, "We are targeting one genre at a time. We have begun with music because it has a huge fan base. The idea is to use a celebrity as a medium to convey your feelings to amplify the message. It can be for an anniversary, birthday or any milestone in your life."

The most trending personality on the platform has been the lookalike of Donald Trump. He says, "The lookalike of Donald Trump is one of the best-selling creatives as it is loaded with humour." The platform has a portfolio of over 200 celebrities across fields, including Salim Merchant, Sivaram, Jonty Rhodes, Lance Klusener, Gaurav Bishnoi, The Phogies, among others.



'Casting for web shows has been a fair process'

Betaal actor Aahana Kumra on how digital entertainment gives a platform to talented artistes

SHAHEEN PARKAR
shaheen@mid-day.com

AAHANA Kumra is sitting pretty with two web releases, *Mari* and *Betaal*, in barely two months. Thrilled to essay dramatically different characters in the offerings, she agrees that OTT platforms have opened up a new world for actors. "In films, it takes years to get what you want to do. But, in the web world, you are playing different roles in show after show, in quick succession."

After being part of the television show *Yash*, and *The Blueberry Hunt* (2016), Kumra made the audience sit up and take notice of her in *Upstic Under My Barista* (2017). Even as she featured in several films thereafter, her web outings—*8 numbers* (2019), *Ranghaaz* (2018) and *Inside Edge* (2017)—made her a household name. Having seen both worlds from close



quarters, the actor believes that the digital medium nurtures meritocracy. "It gives you an opportunity to showcase your performance. [Casting] is a normal, fair process. Actors can get good parts with some great producers and amazing directors," she analyses.

While shooting for *Betaal*, she was inspired by producer Shah Rukh Khan's stories. "He knows how to make you feel included. As an actor, you face rejection every day. So, it was encouraging to hear him say that you should keep giving your best shot."

Wheel of life

Jackie Shroff is trying his hand at pottery at his Lonavla farmhouse where he is spending the lockdown. He posted a snapshot of his latest fascination on Instagram and wrote, "Maati se kuch aaj Sikandar kahan hai?" Pottery is considered therapeutic and relaxing. For Jaggu dada, it also teaches life's lessons.



Arjun's two beauties

As soon as Arjun Rampal returned to Mumbai, he caught up with daughters Mahika and Myra. The actor was in Kajal with girlfriend Gabriella Demetriades and son Arik when the lockdown was announced. The doting dad refers to the teenagers as his 'beauties'. Looks like the Rampal girls love to read. Check out the floor-to-ceiling bookshelf with another pile of books on the table.

Home sweet home finally

After over a decade of pretending to be cousins, so that they could rent a home together, Apurva Asrani and partner Siddhant Pillai have finally bought a home in Mumbai. The *Aligarh* (2015) writer disclosed that their neighbours know about their relationship. They have even put a name plate on the door that reads 'Apu & Siddhant'. "It's time LG-BTQ families are normalised," says Asrani.



The house that Kangna built



After designing her dream abode in hometown Manali and her work space at Pali Hill, Kangna Ranaut is now providing final touches to sister Rangoli Chandel's Manali home. The actor is partial to vintage and rustic looks. As Rangoli did not want too much of the purana look, Kangy threw in some modern-day touches.

She prefers wooden furniture for a soft, warm feel. Due to the lockdown, some things are still left undone. The walls need a final coating and heaters need to be installed. Whatever Kangy can do herself, she is at it. Actor, producer, writer, director, designer and of late, poet too. What's next, Kangy?

Helping daily wage earners

Vani Kapoor will go on a virtual date to raise money for daily-wage earners. Five winners will get a chance to meet her virtually. The funds will provide cooked meals, including rice, dal, vegetables and chapatis to wage earners and families in various parts of Maharashtra as well as in Bengaluru and

Chennai. The *War* (2019) actor has teamed up with Arjun Kapoor's sister Anshu's online fundraising platform, Rankind.



Art of selfies

Anil Kapoor is learning something new every day and upping his 'selfie game'. He has now discovered the self-timer. "Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?" he asks. Kapoor's fondness for admiring himself in the mirror is well known. Now, the timer will record his obsession too.



What a guy

It was a fanboy moment for Karanvir Malhotra when he met Abhay Deol on the sets of the Netflix film, *What are the Odds?* The youngster recalls seeing Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye! (2008) when he was in class five and loving Deol's character. The model-turned-actor says Deol has a wacky sense of humour and kept the crew energetic and motivated. On their Whatsapp group, he would post hilarious stuff. Malhotra, who was earlier seen in *Selection Day* and *The Forgotten Army*, plays Ashwin, a school student in Megha Ramaswamy's film.



THE PLAYLIST

If there's one thing to listen to this week, make it this

There are many artists who are looking at the lockdown to create new music. Let's listen in, shall we?



1 **Stuck With U by Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber:** "I could stay here for a lifetime"—this one is for couples who are so happy with all this time they are getting to spend together. The ballad is sweet sounding, and will have you slow dancing with her in the living room. Play so.



2 **All Together Now by OK Go:** The American band has called this song their "vampire prayer for hope". It starts with "It's all still the same, everything's untouched but forever changed". Right, ain't that the truth. Listen. It's lovely.

3 **How I'm Feeling Now by Charlie XCX:** This whole album is a trip—you could think you are in an underground club, with bright lights shining into your eyes. My favourites are *Claws* and *I Finally Understand*—the best of upbeat pop you can get at this time. Bound to make you happy and light!

Aastha
Atray Raman





Dear Shopkeepers and Hawkers... Do you know?



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- Rs. 1500 crore interest subvention for small business and cottage industries has been announced under Mudra Shishu loan. Under this scheme beneficiaries can avail interest benefit of 2% for a year.
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Your Win is Nation's Victory



“ Let us pledge to make
Aatmanirbhar Bharat
(A self-reliant India) ”

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



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WHAT TO DO Fill each empty cell with a digit from 1-9, ensuring that no digit is repeated in any row, column or 3x3 square.

MID DOKU



WORDSEARCH

Find the listed items in the grid. They may read horizontally, vertically or diagonally, either backwards or forwards.

BEHOLD MONOCLE SIGHT
BINCULAR OBSERVE SPECTACLES
CLEAR PEEP SQUINT
EYEBALL PEEK STARE
EYES PERUSE VIEW
GLANCE RIPE VISION
GLASS RETINA WATCH
LOOK SCOPE
LOUPELETTE SETTING

Sneak peek



MID-DAY QUIZ

The answers to the following questions begin with the initial letter of each question.
Example: A One of these a day proverbially keeps the doctor away. Answer: Apple
G In what sport is the Ryder Cup awarded?
S Which movement was founded by L Ron Hubbard?
A In P G Wodehouse novels, what was the name of aunt

Dadla's French chef?
R Which is the largest living flying bird?
P What is a scale comprising of just five notes called?
L Which was the smallest of Mumbai's original seven islands?
J Who won the Best Actor award for his portrayal of The Joker at 2020 Academy Awards?

TEA-TIME TEASER

What is represented by this brand?

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IF IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK

Taking the easy choice when you have options may feel good in the short term, but you could actually lose out on opportunities. Your finances and investments may need a revamp, which would need a fair amount of research and an understanding of the options available to you.



PISCES

FEB 19 - MARCH 20

Spent where necessary. Do what is right and honest, and you will achieve the success you want.
Career tip: Stand up for yourself without jeopardizing your reputation with colleagues.



ARIES

MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

Think before you speak, and say what you need to in an appropriate way, instead of losing your temper.
Career tip: Have all your paperwork ready and organized before getting into a meeting with your boss.



TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 20

Do not take what seems to be a simple situation completely at face value. A friendship needs clear and honest communication. Speak your mind truthfully.
Career tip: Use all your resources, and do not depend on colleagues if you are dealing with a tight deadline.



GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUNE 20

Any legal issue should get sorted out, provided you handle it in an effective manner. Avoid getting into a disagreement with your father or father figure.

Career tip: Handling competitive or competitive colleagues will be easy as long as you focus on your goal and keep eyes out of the equation.

GEMINI AS A SPOUSE

Life with a fun-loving, young-at-heart Gemini is never boring. Their spouse may have a difficult time keeping up with them and their unpredictable nature. Though cool-headed, they can be quite scary when they lose their temper. However, they can calm down almost quickly and get back to normal like nothing ever happened.



CANCER

JUNE 21 - JULY 22

Take a practical and realistic approach to situations that are beyond your control. This is a positive time for property matters, especially anything that requires paperwork and documentation.
Career tip: Any stress you may be experiencing can be managed with efficient time management.



LEO

JULY 23 - AUG 22

Taking an additional approach to finding solutions to problems or questions will give you the best results.
Career tip: Self-employed professionals must be extremely cautious if they plan on working with a client or project from the past.



VIRGO

AUG 23 - SEPT 22

Work within circumstances, and do not allow the opinion of other people to influence you. Sometimes, letting go and walking away is really the best option.
Career tip: Keep your ego out of the equation while dealing with competitors or competitive colleagues.



LIBRA

SEPT 23 - OCT 22

Back an impulsive decision with the experience you have from the past, and lessons learnt from it. Any restrictions you are experiencing may be largely self-created.
Career tip: Try and finish pending projects before taking on more. Putting in your best may sometimes be a struggle.



SCORPIO

OCT 23 - NOV 21

Be cautious about what you say and post online, and avoid getting into arguments. Single looking for a match should not divulge sensitive information about themselves.
Career tip: Think before you speak, while interacting with colleagues. Multiple responsibilities will keep you very busy.



SAGITTARIUS

NOV 22 - DEC 21

Look at the opportunities coming toward you, rather than the ones you have lost. A huge amount of your success or failure will depend on how you approach situations.
Career tip: Advice from someone who might be well-meaning may not work for you.



CAPRICORN

DEC 22 - JAN 19

Doing what you want need not come at the cost of relationships if you find the right balance. Do not leave your wallet unattended as it could get stolen.
Career tip: Teamwork may be a challenge, and you might not feel you can depend on your colleagues for support.



AQUARIUS

JAN 20 - FEB 18

This is a good time to review your mid-year goals. Take care of yourself if you have conceived.
Career tip: Self-employed businesspersons who have to deal with government authority or departments should have all the paperwork they need in place.

MUMBAI STAYS AT HOME WITH ITS FAVOURITE TABLOID

TOP 10

Mid-day continues to rank
among India's Top 10
English dailies through the year.

Thank you readers for the love and support.

International Cricket Council's announcement that all decisions have been deferred till June 10 just because chairman Shashank Manohar and some members were concerned about the leaks of so-called confidential information is...

BEWILDERING



Team India members react after dismissing New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson during the third T20 International at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui on February 11. The visitors clinched the series 5-0. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

straight drive

SUNIL GAVASKAR



CRICKET lovers all over the world who were waiting anxiously to hear what the ICC Board decision is about the many items on its agenda mainly their decision about the ICC World Twenty20 must have been bewildered at the announcement that all decisions had been deferred till June 10 just because the Chairman and some members were concerned about the leaks of so-called confidential information.

Those in the sub-continent must have laughed heartily knowing that there's no such thing as confidential even in government matters at high levels.

Imagine if a BCCI meeting had been put off because of a confidentiality issue. There would never ever be any decision taken. Osama bin Laden and Al Baghdadi were found, cornered and dealt with but as yet, the 'Board official' who doesn't wish to be named or who speaks on condition of anonymity, is around. You can be India's super intelligence agency RAW, USA can get the CIA and England can get its MI6, S-7 or whatever but one can

guarantee that none of them will be able to find The Board Official. He has been around forever and will continue to be so as long as there is this sacred tag of Exclusive that the media strives for in their stories.

The media understandably wants to protect its sources of information and mainly it is to prevent the competition from knowing who they are getting the information from.

BCCI's approach refreshing

So recently, we had a situation where Arun Dhumal, the honorary treasurer of the BCCI, went on record and spoke. While most papers carried his name, there were a few that still used his exact quote as in the papers that had named him and still called it their source.

Not for a moment it is being suggested that he is the invisible source, for he has just taken over a few months back. In fact, it is so refreshing to see a Board official speak openly on matters related to the BCCI so that there is no wild speculation, which does no good

for Indian cricket. After all, this is about a sport that most Indians love and follow and not matters of national security, so where's the need to be secretive?

What is also ironical is that there's so much of this and that to become a Board official and then they don't want their names to appear in print? Then, why jostle to become an administrator anyway?

Thankfully, the ICC meeting was via teleconference otherwise just imagine the expense of all the guys gathering in one place and then dispersing without taking a decision while the cricket world waited with bated breath for their decisions.

It is understandable for the ICC to find out where the leaks are coming from, but to defer taking decisions is abdication of responsibility to the game. Even here, some decisions could have been deferred but certainly those about the recommendations of the Cricket Committee could have been dealt with. Of course, the question is why recommendation of a committee

of some of the most distinguished names in the game should be deliberated on by some of those who haven't even lifted a bat in a sports shop, has been asked ever since the game began a century or more ago.

Hopefully, there won't be any monthly-dallying when they next meet even if by then the leaders have not been found.

Well done, ICA

Back home in India, it was wonderful to see the initiative of the Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) in giving a one-time payment to those former cricketers who have been having a tough time making ends meet. This is exactly what the Association should be doing and while it will never be possible to look after every former first-class player, if some sort of a method is found to reach out monthly to those who aren't the beneficiaries

of the monthly pension from BCCI, then the ICA will be a blessed body.

This pandemic has shown that people can work from home especially with modern technology. So the ICA would be well-advised to forget about getting itself office space and instead use the money



ICC chairman Shashank Manohar

saved to benefit those not fortunate enough to be BCCI beneficiaries. The BCCI too could do something for those in the past because of whom the game is what it is today and remember that it's not just due to the luminaries but also those who played a lesser but crucial role in the success of those stars flourishing today. So by all means increase the infrastructure subsidy from ₹70 to ₹100 crore for the year to each Association but also make a substantial contribution to the welfare of former first-class cricketers and current ones too. They deserve it especially in these tough pandemic times.

With a legendary Indian captain at the helm of the BCCI, known to kick his neck out for his teammates, this decision is definitely not the one to be deferred, leaked or not.

PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

'Be the best stay-at-home fans'

Manager Jurgen Klopp wants Liverpool supporters not to crowd outside the stadium and abide by rules

PREMIERSHIP

LONDON: Jurgen Klopp wants Liverpool supporters to prove themselves the best 'stay at home fans in the world' after English police said on Friday they wanted any potential Premier League title-clincher for the Reds played at a neutral venue in a bid to avoid a mass gathering outside Anfield.

Premier League chiefs have set June 17 as the date for the top flight to restart following the Coronavirus delay. They hope to play the majority of the matches behind closed doors on a home and away basis at clubs' usual stadiums.

However, police are concerned about the issue of hardcore fans potentially flouting social distancing rules by congregating wherever their team play and want several fixtures, including Manchester City and Manchester United games not involving Liverpool, played at neutral venues.

Liverpool are two wins away from sealing their first English title for 30 years. The Reds could be crowned champions as early as the first weekend of the restart if Manchester City lose to Arsenal and they beat Everton in a Merseyside derby.

We are really desperate to play because we want to become champions on the pitch and it looks like we can do that wherever it will be. We hope it will be at Anfield but we don't know, and that's not important

Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool boss

"I heard a few days ago a really good phrase about how we have the best home fans in the world, so we should maybe now say the best stay at home fans in the world," Klopp told BBC SPORTS.

"Now we are really desperate to play because we want to become champions on the pitch and it looks like we can do that wherever it will be," the German

boss added. "We hope it will be at Anfield but we don't know, and that's not important."

"Most of the people on this planet have never had a chance in the life to become champion of the Premier League, for as it looks like that we have that chance. So we take it."

"However, there will be a moment in our life when we have time and the opportunity and it's allowed again to celebrate together."

Klopp instead winning the title in an empty stadium would still be an "absolutely exceptional day in my life."

"It's not perfect, but we know for a while and it will not be perfect but we are already used to that," he said.

For the latest sports news, log on to www.mid-day.com

Local police ready to host any Liverpool tie

LONDON: Local police have said they would be "ready" to hold any possible Liverpool Premier League title-clinching match at Anfield, despite the UK's football policing lead suggesting otherwise.

"Merseyside Police is ready to provide whatever policing is required of us in relation to games being played at our Premier League stadium once the season restarts," the force said in a statement to the Liverpool Echo.



Jurgen Klopp shows appreciation to the fans during Liverpool's EPL match against Southampton on August. PIC/GETTY IMAGES

Young Havertz sets Bundesliga record in Leverkusen's 1-0 win



Leverkusen's Kai Havertz (left) celebrates a goal on Friday. PIC/APP

BERLIN: Rising youngster Kai Havertz broke another Bundesliga record on Friday after scoring the winner in a 1-0 victory at Freiburg which moved Bayer Leverkusen into third place.

Havertz, 20, became the first player in the history of the league to reach 36 goals before turning 21 years old eight minutes after the break, when

he combined with Leon Bailey before squeezing home under intense pressure from Dominique Heintz.

The dynamic German was already the youngest player to reach 50 and 100 appearances in the German top flight and became the youngest ever player to score a league goal for Leverkusen in 2017.

Saturday results

- Hertha 2-0 Augsburg
- Mainz 0-1 Hoffenheim
- Schalke 0-1 Werder
- Wolfsburg 1-2 Frankfurt

LIVE ON TV TODAY

- Paderborn v Dortmund, 5.55
- Select 2 and HD, 21.30

Focus on positives is Olympian Shikha's advice to swimmers

SUNDARI IYER
sundariyer@mid-day.com

OLYMPIAN Shikha Tandon tried to lift the spirits of Indian swimmers, who are staring at a gloomy future due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While sports worldwide are steadily trying to resume, swimming seems to be the worst affected as the wait will be longer because of the risk of spreading the virus through saliva is far greater.

Although Australia and the UK have allowed their athletes to train, Indian swimmers

are still prohibited to take a dip. However, Tandon, who represented India at the 2004 Athens Olympics in both 50m and the 100m freestyle events, urged swimmers to focus on the positives during the lockdown.

"It's just a little break"

"Swimmers the world over are sailing in the same boat. Nobody knows when the pools will open. My advice would be to treat this as a little break. We never get a break. Make the most of the additional year [postponement of Tokyo Olympics to next year].

you have," Tandon, 35, said during a webinar organised by The Sports School on Saturday. It was hosted by India's top swimmers, SP Likhith and Sriharsha Nataraj.

Tandon, who works as a

Nobody knows when the pools will open. My advice would be to treat this as a little break. We never get a break. Make the most of the additional year [postponement of Tokyo Olympics to next year] you have

Swimmer Shikha Tandon

project manager in San Francisco, felt the break is a perfect time to work on the mental aspect. "It's a golden opportunity to think about non-pool related training like your mental training. Use this time to reset, re-

charge and re-evaluate your goals. Mental training is a very big component of good performance. Learn more about your sport."

Long haul

Likhith, who achieved the B qualification for the Tokyo Games last year in the 100m breaststroke, is not expecting things to normalise soon. "We just don't go in and jump in the pool. There is a lot of social interactions that are involved. We are looking at three to four months to come into action," said Likhith.



BCCI NOMINATES ROHIT SHARMA FOR KHEL RATNA

NEW DELHI:

India's limited-overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma has been nomi-



nated for the prestigious 'Khel Ratna', the BCCI announced on Saturday, acknowledging the prolific batsman's stupendous performance in the 2019 ODI World Cup. Rohit's opening partner Shikhar Dhawan has been once again nominated for the Arjuna award along with team's senior-most pace bowler Ishant Sharma. In the women's category, all-rounder Deepthi Sharma was BCCI's pick for the Arjuna for her consistent show in both ODIs and T20s in the past three years.

ONE OPTION IS TO CANCEL T20 WC THIS YEAR: SANGA

SRI LANKAN batting great Kumar Sangakkara feels that one of the options is to cancel the T20 World Cup this year as many questions around the COVID-19 pandemic remain "unanswered".

"Everyday, there are new learnings, new things being found out, so we will have to wait and see, but the options may be to cancel it this year, postpone it to another year, but to have in place anticipatory procedures that take into account health and safety of both the players and the spectators, and make sure that's iron clad," Sangakkara, who is the president of the prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club, said.

BIO-SECURE WINDIES TOUR OF ENGLAND

ST JOHN'S (ANTIGUA): The West Indies cricket board has approved next month's tour of England where the regional side will play three Tests in a "bio-secure" environment.

The BCB has proposed two venues for the Test series starting July 8, Hampshire's Ageas Bowl and Lancashire's Old Trafford, both of which have on-site hotels.

WI BOARD ANNOUNCES TEMPORARY PAY CUT

ST JOHN'S (ANTIGUA): Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced a temporary 50 per cent salary cut and funding across the entire regional cricket system, effective from the start of July, due to financial crunch caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision was made after CWI's Board of Directors received recommendations from the Financial Strategy Advisory Committee (FSAC) during a tele-conference.



Mike Fisher

Underwood didn't want kids until she met Fisher

AMERICAN singer Carrie Underwood has revealed she never imagined having a family before she met National Hockey League (NHL) star Mike Fisher. The couple are parents to Isaiah, five, and Jacob, one.

The *Before He Cheats* hit-maker said she and Mike had different ideas about family when they first met. While Carrie never saw herself getting married or having a family, the former ice hockey player wished to replicate his own childhood. "I was never good with other people's kids. Why would I be good with mine of my own?" Carrie was quoted as saying by *Female First* website.

Meanwhile, Mike said: "I grew up with three siblings and I had a great mom and dad. I just wanted something similar. I dreamed of, to be the best dad, to be like my dad and have a wife like my mom, have kids and [live] in the country. I got everything and more than I dreamed of to be really honest."



Former Playboy model Prodan plans to buy football club

FORMER Playboy model, Anamaria Prodan, who is married to ex-Romania footballer Laurentiu Reghecamp, has revealed plans to purchase FC Hermannstadt despite the club's alleged debts of around €630,000 (approx £5.87 crore).

According to a report in

**Romanian football club
FC Hermannstadt's
alleged debts amount
to around €630,000**

Romanian daily, *Gazeta Sporturilor*, Anamaria, 47, when asked about her interest in Hermannstadt, she replied: "I don't know, I'm thinking of buying a football club." Anamaria, who has 641,000 Instagram followers, is also known as the world's hottest football agent.

She helped in the transfer of Nicolae Stancu from Steaua Bucharest to Anderlecht for almost €20 million in 2016, making him the most expensive Romanian export of all time.



Ron takes family for bike ride

PORTUGUESE football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo spent a sunny morning in Italy recently by taking his partner Georgina Rodriguez and his four kids — Cristiano Ronaldo Jr, nine, Alana Martina, two and twins Eva and Mateo, two, on a bike ride.

Cristiano shared this picture (right) with his 220 million Instagram followers and wrote: "Family Bike Ride." Cristiano, 35, landed in Turin earlier this month to train with Juventus, after he spent two months in his native Madeira during the coronavirus-caused lockdown.



'My world is literally complete'

Little Mix singer Leigh-Anne Pinnock confirms engagement with footballer beau Andre Gray in an emotional post; calls him soulmate



TEARS of joy welled up in Little Mix singer Leigh-Anne Pinnock's eyes as Wolverhampton-born footballer Andre Gray got down on one knee and proposed to her, as the couple celebrated four years of togetherness on May 28.

The Little Mix singer, 28, and Andre enjoyed a romantic night to celebrate the moment during lockdown. Leigh-Anne shared the news with her 5.5 million Instagram followers and wrote: "Guys...and has just happened...he b****y did it, and I said yes, I'm marrying my soulmate, the man of my flipping

dreams. I am lost for words, so I think I'm just going to go cry some more @andreygray. I love you so much. My world is literally complete."

Meanwhile, Andre, 28, Instagrammed the above picture and wrote: "Let the caption speak for itself this time [heart and ring emoji] Hasta la muerte."

Hasta la muerte in Spanish means until death. This must have come as a welcome surprise for Leigh-Anne, who revealed last month that her summer wedding plans to Andre had been shattered due to COVID-19.

Forbes list of highest-paid athletes has only one Indian — Virat Kohli!

NEW YORK: Cricket superstar Virat Kohli remains the only Indian in the Forbes list of world's highest-paid athletes with total earnings of USD 36 million (approx ₹96 crore), jumping to the 66th spot from 300 in the 2020 standings.

Virat's earnings from endorsements stand at USD 34 million and USD 2 million from salary/winnings. Virat, 30, is also the only cricketer in the Top 100 list. With earnings of USD 25 million, Virat was ranked 109th in 2019 and 63rd in 2018 with USD 24 million.

Tennis legend Roger Federer tops the list for the first time with earnings of USD 306.3 million (approx ₹802 crore), rising from fifth place last year.

Football icons Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are second and third respectively with earnings of USD 105 and USD 104 million.

The others in the top-30 are Neymar (football), LeBron James (basketball), Stephen Curry (basketball), Kevin Durant (basketball), Tiger Woods (golf), Kirk Cousins (American football) and Camero Wentz (American football).

The athletes' earnings have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which led to suspension of sporting activities all around the world.



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