

Magazine

**FRAMED**

Every day, a train travels 200km to Chennai carrying that precious commodity — water p16

SPOTLIGHT

Soham Gupta's haunting photographs of Kolkata went to the 2019 Venice Biennale p12

**LITERARY REVIEW**

A weekly round-up of essays, reviews, interviews and more p18-25

**60 MINUTES**

Don't come to a restaurant if you want to create your own food, says chef Manu Chandra p3

Why is he chucking a corporate career to grow mushrooms or go running? That intensely male drive to earn money seems lower now and the desire to find happiness higher p6



The millennial man



Dosa king dead The 72-year-old P. Rajagopal, owner of the famous Saravana Bhavan restaurant chain, and a convicted murderer, died of a heart attack in Chennai only days after he finally reached the court to serve out his life sentence. Rajagopal was sentenced for the kidnapping and murder of Prince Santhakumar, the husband of an employee he desired, nearly 18 years ago.

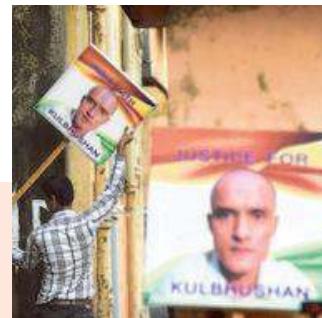


Live wire Harley-Davidson confirmed that its first electric motorcycle, the Livewire, is to be launched in the U.S. and some European countries in the next few months. The bike, which can reportedly go from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.5 seconds, has been priced at \$29,799 (roughly ₹20.4 lakh) in the U.S., excluding taxes.



House divided The U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning President Trump's incendiary tweets telling four ethnic minority Congresswomen to "go back to where they came from". The 240-187 vote was split mostly on party lines, with all but four Republicans defending Trump against accusations of racism.

Mind reader Elon Musk's start-up Neuralink has devised "threads" finer than human hair that can be injected into the brain, by a robot, to detect neuron activity. Early applications are likely to be medical, though Musk's idea is for human brains to interface directly with machines.



Jadhav verdict The International Court of Justice ordered Pakistan to review retired Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav's death sentence for espionage. In a 15-1 ruling, with only the judge from Pakistan dissenting, the court noted that Pakistan had violated the Vienna Convention by failing to inform Jadhav of his rights or to allow him consular access.



Abort, abort India's Chandrayaan-2 moon mission had to be halted 56 minutes before take-off due to a leak in the cryogenic engine, which stores fuel at low temperatures. This meant there was insufficient pressure to maintain a constant fuel flow to the combustion chamber. ISRO announced a new launch date: July 22.



Face off FaceApp, which shows people how they'll look when they're older, went viral. Launched in 2017 but overhauled recently, the app has features like adding beards and swapping genders. It's used by vast numbers of people, but there are privacy concerns as the Russian-origin app acquires private user data.



GoT it The final season of HBO's *Game of Thrones* received a record-breaking 32 nominations for the 2019 Emmy Awards, the most for a single season of any show. It was nominated in many categories, including Outstanding Writing and Outstanding Directing. It broke a 25-year-old record set by *NYPD Blue*. The awards show will be held on September 22.



The kill A photo of Canadian couple Darren and Carolyn Carter kissing next to a lion they shot in South Africa sparked outrage and renewed the debate on trophy hunting. Legelela Safaris, whose tour they were part of, wrote on their Facebook page: "Hard work in the hot Kalahari sun... Well done."



Arjuna awardees Cricketer Smriti Mandhana and tennis player Rohan Bopanna were conferred the Arjuna Awards. Bopanna won the gold medal in the men's doubles category in the 2018 Asian Games, while Mandhana was ICC women's player of the year in 2018.



Madam President German defence minister Ursula von der Leyen was elected president of the European Commission, the EU's executive branch. Elected in a secret ballot by members of the European Parliament, she will be the first woman to hold the post.



Road nixed The Bombay High Court quashed the Coastal Regulation Zone clearances for Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's ₹14,000-crore project to build a 29.2-km coastal road connecting South Mumbai's Marine Drive area with North Mumbai's Borivali. Petitions had been filed against the project by activists, residents and fishermen.

Giant jelly Two divers off the coast of Cornwall spotted a giant barrel jellyfish, a metre-and-a-half long. A video of them swimming beside the frilly-tentacled animal soon went viral. The encounter, one of the biologists said, was "humbling". Barrel jellyfish are the largest of their kind off U.K.'s coast.

WITH MANU CHANDRA

'Food will always evolve and change'

Don't tweak recipes when you dine out and don't talk food trends with this celeb chef

CHITRA V. RAMANI

A chef who grew up in Delhi and made Bengaluru his home, his restaurants too reflect this deep intermingling of cultures and flavours. The 38-year-old Manu Chandra, who featured in *Fortune's* 40-under-40 list of entrepreneurs, is chef-partner at Olive Bar and Kitchen, which owns nine famous restaurant brands, including Toast and Tonic, Fatty Bao and Monkey Bar. His latest is Cantan. There's a reason India is so in love with Chinese food, he says: "It's sweet, sour, salty, spicy," hoping to lure desis away from their ubiquitous chili chicken. Edited extracts:

What explains our love for Chinese food?

■ It's bold, it's big flavours. It can be bent – noodles, fried rice and gravies. It sort of hits home as it meets the carbohydrate-meets-gravy combination. Paneer can be turned into a Chinese dish. It's sweet, sour, salty, spicy. Given that we've had history with that food, one of the first international cuisines to have arrived here many centuries ago and stayed, for it to get into mainstream India was very easy. If you go to Raipur, Khajuraho or any small town, you can get chow mein everywhere. You could go to Sarojini Nagar Market and get Chinese food served by vendors on pushcarts or vans. Umami just takes over the entire palate. That's why people love it.

What inspired you to explore Cantonese cuisine in a country where chilli chicken is clearly the go-to Chinese dish?

■ The genesis of Cantan was my recent travels to Hong Kong and Taipei. I was so used to eating Indian-Chinese food that I had completely forgotten what Chinese food would probably be like. Indians appropriate a lot of cuisines, as does the rest of the globe. We give it a desi twist.

I felt the market has evolved and is discerning enough, adventurous enough now. I thought it was time to open a Chinese restaurant that would challenge the existing paradigm. It was all about introducing a layer to a Chinese product that didn't really exist.

Do you believe foods should stay authentic? That foods are heritage?

Yes, I believe in heritage, preservation of heritage, biodiversity. I do believe that what is inherently ours, what we grow or cultivate that was culturally relevant shouldn't disappear. We shouldn't become a mono culture. But authenticity is tricky. Food will continue to evolve and change.

A lot of Indian cuisine has come from confluences, cross-cultural contamination, practices that have seeped into different cultures.

Two generations from now, people may be eating something completely different. Hopefully, healthier, better for the environment. People are

realising the benefits of eating more millets, local monsoon greens.

Can you as a restaurateur help create healthy eating trends?

■ The whole millet movement started from this restaurant (Toast & Tonic). The then Agriculture Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and I got together and said we should do this, push for millets. That was nearly three years ago. Now, there has been a lot more traction, which is great. Unfortunately, a lot of millets have disappeared from the repertoire of farmers. There is no price elasticity, so it is expensive. Suddenly the thing which was the cheapest thing to grow has become expensive due to short supply. It is going to take a while for it to mend. The 65-70% per capita consumption of millets in Karnataka has come down to 7-8% in 40 years.

You have said that you don't want to be part of food shows.

■ I would never introduce myself as a celebrity chef; I think it is terribly self-defeating. I can't be fake on TV. Let me be me, and I can be quite crass at times in the kitchen and that's my

►
A lot of Indian cuisine has come from confluences, cross-cultural contamination, practices that have seeped into different cultures

personality. If Indian TV doesn't want to accept that and they want me to wear foundation and make audiences swoon... that's not my scene. I cook for a living and I enjoy it.

Are you social media shy?

■ I consider myself a social media pariah. I hardly use Facebook, I Instagram occasionally. I have been off Twitter for more than a year now. There was an episode where I ranted and it made me realise later that Twitter had become a platform to rant. It was a toxic and negative space and I felt I had to get off it. While I understand the importance of social media, it doesn't appeal to me. There is a level of voyeurism and I want to keep my life private.

Why is cuisine suddenly so talked about now?

■ TV, in combination with travel, is making people experiment. That and the restaurant boom of the last 10 years. A lot of people who have studied abroad or live abroad have opened restaurants with new cuisines. The customer has been able to experience a lot.

With apps, one can order Vietnamese from the comfort of the home. While growing up in Delhi, my only option for Thai was Imperial, and my parents couldn't afford that. So when I finally tried Thai food years later, my first reaction was, oh my god, it is so Indian.

Who is your least favourite kind of customer?

■ The kind who tries to make his own food. Don't come to a restaurant if you want to create your own food. Cook at home. You can't pick a dish and change it 20 different ways. Cooks are creatures of habit. Not every cook in the kitchen is a gifted chef. They work on muscle memory, experience, benchmarks have been set for them. A particular dish can only go out (of the kitchen) this way. It should taste a certain way.

If you are gluten intolerant and want to eat a burger, then take the bun out and eat the meat. But don't expect the chef to run around and make a cauliflower-something for you. It's the sense of entitlement. I am seeing this a lot more these days.

You have started your own artisanal cheese enterprise, Begum Victoria. Is cheese-making coming of age?

■ It's due to cow milk availability. Cow milk makes much better cheese than buffalo milk. Cheese making has been around for a while, but it's still nascent. It has not got a tremendous quality benchmark. It's bizarre, since we have such a large dairy industry. Good cheese requires a lot of nuanced processes, effort and time. The cheese industry is going to grow. The market is small now, for artisanal cheese.

What is the one millennial food trend that irks you the most?

■ Every food trend irks me. Trend by definition is something that dies. It keeps coming and going. Instant gratification is how things work these days, but I try to keep my restaurants as consistent brands that evolve.



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

DHAKA

The troubled legacy left behind by Ershad



What does it mean to grow up in the shadows of the Ershad regime? It's just living in a dark age that changed Bangladesh for the worse, says a political analyst based in Dhaka.

The dictator is gone, but the legacy General Hussain Muhammad Ershad has left behind will continue to influence Bangladesh politics for many decades to come. He will be judged for a deadly mix of religion-peddling and gun-toting, carefully designed to tighten his grip on power. That set the future course of politics in Bangladesh.

The death of Ershad at the age of 90 on July 14 brought down the curtains on a long life reviled by many and revered by his legions of supporters in his stronghold in northern Bangladesh. Immediately after his death, his burial place was designated in a military graveyard in Dhaka, about 300 km from his hometown of Rangpur. In a dramatic turn of events, his supporters forced his family and party to change their decision to bury him in the capital. He was later laid to rest with full state honours at his ancestral home in Rangpur. "Ershad's popularity among his voters indicates that every dictator has an enclave of support. He was a man of means to them," said Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, a teacher of international relations at Dhaka University.

Brute force

In his desperate endeavour to hold on to his position, Ershad leveraged the brute force of local ward commissioners, armed hooligans and thugs, according to Mr. Khan. He still remembers the day his classmate showed him a pistol, a new-found weapon given by his friend's "big brother". "Those memories are still deep in my mind and don't help me have a better picture of Ershad," said Mr. Khan, who was then a school student in Mohammadpur, Dhaka.

A former Army chief, Gen. Ershad took over the state power in a bloodless coup in 1982. He declared himself the chief martial law administrator, suspending the Constitution and dissolving Parliament and the Council of Ministers appointed by figurehead President Abdus Sattar. Gen. Ershad ran the country with enormous power until he was forced to step down in a pro-democracy movement in 1990. Sheikh Hasina, the current Prime Minister, and her supporters led the campaign, along with Khaleda Zia, chief of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), against the man who once seemed unassailable.

Despite being imprisoned



The death of former dictator General Ershad brought down the curtains on a long life reviled by many and revered by his supporters in Bangladesh

subsequently on several charges, Gen. Ershad later emerged as a powerful leader after his Jatiya Party became the country's third largest political outfit. His election-time allegiance to either of the two major political parties – the Awami League and the BNP – was a routine subject of discussion in the media. His last political title was that of the leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

In the days since his fall, he battled a barrage of court cases and moved past all of them but one – the murder of Major General Abul Manzoor in 1981. Ershad, who was the Army chief during the murder of Maj. Gen. Manzoor, pleaded not guilty. "No one is as unfortunate as I am. No one has suffered more than me for my party," Gen. Ershad said at an event in 2018.

Gen. Ershad's legacy has found its way into modern-day politics. "Our leaders should have rejected his legacy. It's unfortunate that the major parties failed to free themselves of the culture he established in Bangladesh. Politics now completely hinges on a structure built with muscle power and mindless hooliganism," Mr. Khan said.

The ruling Awami League brought Ershad into the fold in the final years of his life, just as the BNP used the Jamaat-e-Islami to boost its political fire-power. "This political strategy is devoid of ethics, a culture that disenchanted a whole new generation," Mr. Khan said.

Now, with the political actor's exit from the stage, a question emerges: will his party survive without him? There's uncertainty on the horizon.

In his political career, Gen. Ershad triumphed by his sheer force of personality. His party had never reigned supreme. Mr. Khan says the future of the party depends on whether the new leaders hold financial resources and means to keep the party up and running. The Jatiya Party, as it appears, will flounder in the days to come.



Arun Devnath is a journalist based in Dhaka.

STUTTGART

The captain who riled Europe's far-right



German boat captain Carola Rackete (in picture) has made headlines all over the world in the past few weeks.

Together with a crew of volunteers of her *Sea Watch 3*, the 31-year-old woman rescued 53 refugees from a small dinghy in the Mediterranean in June. Two weeks after that incident, Ms. Rackete's ship, still carrying 40 refugees, defied authorities and docked at a small port in Sicily, Italy. As a result, she was welcomed with handcuffs.

Officially, the captain was arrested for breaking an Italian naval blockade that was trying to stop her from docking the ship at Lampedusa. The ban was initiated by Italy's far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, known for his harsh anti-migration policies and rhetoric.

Shortly after Germany called for the release of the captain, Ms. Rackete was set free by Italian judge Alessandra Vella, who said that she had not broken any law. The judge also pointed out that Ms. Rackete had been carrying out her duty to protect human life. While Ms. Rackete still faces possible charges of helping in illegal immigration, her release was a setback to Mr. Salvini and his supporters.

Nevertheless, the controversy rages on, with one side celebrating Ms. Rackete as a heroine, and the other projecting her as a criminal.

'Dirty political game'

Europe's far-right parties and movements have immediately found a common enemy. Even before Ms. Rackete was arrested, Mr. Salvini had attacked her and NGOs for supporting and rescuing refugees. "We will use every lawful means to stop an outlaw ship which puts dozens of migrants at risk for a dirty political game," Mr. Salvini had said on a Facebook video. He repeatedly attacked Ms. Rackete, calling her a "pirate" and a "criminal German".

After her release, the captain said she would take legal steps against Mr. Salvini. In detail, Ms. Rackete's complaints said that the Minister spread a "message of hatred" and participated in "vilification", "delegitimisation" and "dehumanisation" of refugees. One of Ms. Rackete's aims is to prevent Mr. Salvini from using social media channels like Facebook and Twitter.

"I believe that Carola Rackete did the right thing. She saved the lives of those people while many other European countries ignored the situation. The Mediterranean Sea has become like a wall that regularly kills people," said Maryam Akbari, 29, an office employee from



Emran Feroz is a journalist based in Stuttgart.



German captain Carola Rackete, who rescued 53 refugees from a small dinghy in the Mediterranean, has been called "a pirate" by far-right leaders

Stuttgart. Ms. Akbari, who has Afghan roots, believes that many people who entered Europe as refugees have a better understanding of the ongoing events than many white Europeans who live in wealth and security.

"Nineteen years ago, I came to Europe with my mother and my siblings. It was a harsh trip, and often we risked our life. I know the situation of refugees from African, Asian or Arab countries very well. Anyone who saves them should be considered a hero in this rotten society," she said.

In the meantime, another refugee and migration debate has emerged in Germany and other European countries. Ms. Rackete herself is participating in this debate. Recently, she stated that Libya was not a safe country and that Europe needs to absorb refugees from there.

Additionally, she demanded the absorption of climate refugees from African countries. "In some African countries, basic food resources are being destroyed. This destruction is caused by industrialised countries in Europe. For that reason, Europe can no longer say 'that we do not want those people'. It's Europe's responsibility to take them," Ms. Rackete said.

It was obvious that such words created anger among certain circles. *Die Welt*, a conservative German daily, described Ms. Rackete's demands as "irresponsible" while far-right politicians like Mr. Salvini described her as a "crazy communist".

However, many continue to express their solidarity with Ms. Rackete. "Many know that her words reflect the truth. But they want to continue their lives in wealth and prosperity. They believe that young men from Libya, Syria or Somalia are going to steal their good lives from them. We have to break this narrative, and Carola Rackete is one of those who can break it," said Maria Farhad, 63, a teacher from Vienna.

BEIJING

Trade war taking a toll on China's economy



Langfang, the furniture capital of northern China, is facing a hard time. A 25% tariff hike on furniture imported from China by the Trump administration is chipping away at the already shrinking margins and jobs in the city.

Visitors to Langfang's vast showrooms say the crowds of shoppers are thinning out. Pressure on order books has been mounting, especially after May, when the U.S. levied a 25% duty on \$200 billion worth of Chinese products.

"There has been an unmistakable impact ever since the U.S. raised tariffs," the *Asian Nikkei Review* quoted Wang, a sales associate in one of the city firms, as saying. Exporters in Langfang say European and South Korean clients had already elbowed out American furniture buyers. But the U.S. numbers have further dropped after the tariff hike.

Some analysts say higher labour and other costs in China had already pushed out some of the manufacturers from Langfang to Vietnam, where production costs are much lower. But alarm bells are ringing louder in the Langfang business circles and elsewhere out of fear that the Trump administration could also clamp down on Chinese exports routed through Hanoi, with a 'Made in Vietnam' label. Earlier this month, the U.S. Commerce Department imposed steep duties on South Korean and Taiwanese steel products that had undergone final processing in Vietnam.

Two other factors have dampened the commercial mood in Langfang, located in Hebei province – the heart of China's coal mining belt and steel industry.

Many private steelmakers in the city have been forced to down their shutters after authorities in Beijing imposed strict pollution controls on factories. But more pain and job losses could follow as the Central government is unhappy with the efforts of the local administration to clean up the water and toxic air, which can easily drift into neighbouring Beijing.

Last month, authorities in the Chinese capital admonished the Mayor of Langfang and his counterparts from five other cities for failing to meet the country's iron laws on pollution. This followed findings by China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment that air quality in the six cities had deteriorated. It attributed the rise in PM2.5 particles to the sluggish efforts by local authorities to enforce the country's anti-pollution norms.

Many observers have been tempted to conclude that the slowdown in the



The perception that the U.S. has won the first battle in the trade war is taking root after China's growth hit a 27-year low in the first half of 2019

Chinese economy, amply visible in Langfang and elsewhere, is a partial victory for the Trump administration in its trade war with China. The perception that the U.S. has won its first battle in the tariff war is taking root after the Chinese economy grew by 6.3% in the first half of 2019, the slowest in 27 years.

Natural transition

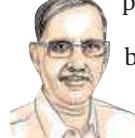
Soon after the numbers were out, President Donald Trump triumphantly sought to link the slowdown to the trade war by tweeting that the U.S. tariffs were having "a major effect" on China's economy. He laced it with a warning that Washington could impose more pressure on Beijing.

But the hard-nosed Chinese, known for playing the long game, have been unfazed by this attempt to browbeat Beijing into a compromise. In their riposte, they asserted that the slowdown was the result of a natural transition of the Chinese economy as it moves up the value chain.

They pointed out that in tune with the changes in the global industrial landscape, high-end companies were expected to expand in China, while the low-tech industry was likely to move overseas, chasing lower labour costs and other advantages.

"Most of those pulling out are mid-to low-end firms and the impact on China's economic growth, industry upgrading and employment is generally controllable," said Meng Wei, a spokesperson of the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top planning body, at a press conference.

Rejecting the possibility of an industrial exodus from China, she stressed that "it is not easy for companies to relocate, and there are a number of factors to consider, including operating costs, industrial workers, supply chain support, transportation and even manufacturing culture".



Atul Aneja is *The Hindu's* Beijing correspondent.

COLOMBO

Tapping the palmyra to boost the economy



Whether in popular culture or in niche art, the palmyra tree has, for long, been an icon for all things north in Sri Lanka. It is often invoked as a symbol of the "Tamil homeland", a witness to the community's incessant struggle for political rights, the tragedy that befell the people during the years of war and in its gory end, and their endurance since.

After a decade and many futile attempts by the central and provincial governments to revive the war-hit economy, the palmyra tree is standing tall, as it renews hopes of boosting livelihoods in the north and east.

With the palmyra cooperatives taking the lead, its worker-members and marketing experts have come together to jazz up palmyra arrack and toddy in quality and packaging, to make the drinks export-worthy. "It is the first time in some four decades that we're exporting palmyra arrack from northern Sri Lanka," says M. Selvin Ireneus, a member of the Palmyra Development Board, Jaffna.

The palmyra tree is abundant in the north, he says, citing old government records of "about 11 million trees" in the region. While shelling and war-time destruction altered the landscape, the trees that remained have persisted. "But neither the development board nor the palmyra research institute here has done enough to tap the economic potential of this rich natural resource in our midst," Mr. Ireneus adds.

The current efforts to rejuvenate the sector have come as a boost to the palmyra cooperatives. There are 41 across the Northern Province with 12,000 members, all either full-time or seasonal toddy tappers.

Set up in 1972 by then Finance Minister N.M. Perera, a Marxist politician, the move came on the heels of an anti-caste struggle in the north, in which activists, including from the Communist Party, agitated for temple entry and equal rights. "The cooperatives challenged the Vellalar caste dominance of the trade and gave control to the members, who had to be toddy tappers," says Ahilan Kadircamar, a senior lecturer at Jaffna University.

After functioning intermittently during the war, the cooperatives are on revival mode now. According to P. Selvarajah, general manager of the Federation of Palmyra Cooperatives, the immediate focus is on upgrading the three distilleries and replacing old machinery to scale up production.

This is where the government's belated but significant budgetary allocation to the sector has come in handy. Amid mounting protests by residents of the north and east over rising



Palmyra cooperatives in the north and east are trying to jazz up palmyra arrack and toddy in quality and packaging, to make the drinks export-worthy

household debt, often induced by predatory microfinance loans, the Ministry of Finance in 2018 allocated LKR 1 billion for small industries and cooperatives, with an additional LKR 40 million exclusively for palmyra cooperatives. This year, over the LKR 750 million allocated for the sector, the government has pumped in another LKR 100 million into the palmyra industry, as per official data.

While welcoming the funds, Mr. Selvarajah points to the challenges. "What we lack is the technical knowhow to enhance production methods and quality. If the government can help us acquire that through training, then we can put all this money to even better use."

Hidden treasure

The palmyra is a "hidden treasure", says Suganthan Shanmuganathan who returned to Jaffna in 2014, after 25 years in Canada. An engineer with experience in business, Mr. Shanmuganathan, who fled Jaffna during the war, is sourcing modern bottles and labels for the cooperatives.

"If we can raise the quality of palmyra liquor and the packaging, there is an eager export market." His company is already exporting to Canada, France and Australia and is about to add England to the list. It is not just old arrack in a new bottle, but a host of allied products, including padaneer (the sap, considered a healthy drink), toddy, palmyra jaggery, mats and baskets that are in line for export.

However, Mr. Sevarajah, of the cooperatives' federation, doubts if the next generation would take to climbing trees and tapping toddy – which is hard and risky labour. "Our children are studying to become doctors and engineers. But for the previous generation of tappers, this was the primary source of survival. The recent efforts have motivated our members after a long time," he says.



Meera Srinivasan is *The Hindu's* Colombo correspondent.

**CHOICES**

Man on a mission

The millennial man is chucking the rat race to go looking for meaning in life. In the process, he is redefining malehood and the breadwinner role

SUNALINI MATHEW

Anand Chowdhary, 21, is on the millennial cusp. He established a company in 2014 while still in school, and then moved to Finland after Class XII to pursue a degree in design technology, while continuing to work in his start-up. "Over the last 30 years, work has become a larger part of life," he says. So, it's important to "do what you like to do versus just a job." Chowdhary likes to travel and is happy to spend on it. "Our generation

doesn't have savings, we don't own homes, and we live in the moment." He says a lot of his friends live and work out of their parents' homes, and, "It doesn't matter that they don't bring significant money in; it's about doing what makes you happy."

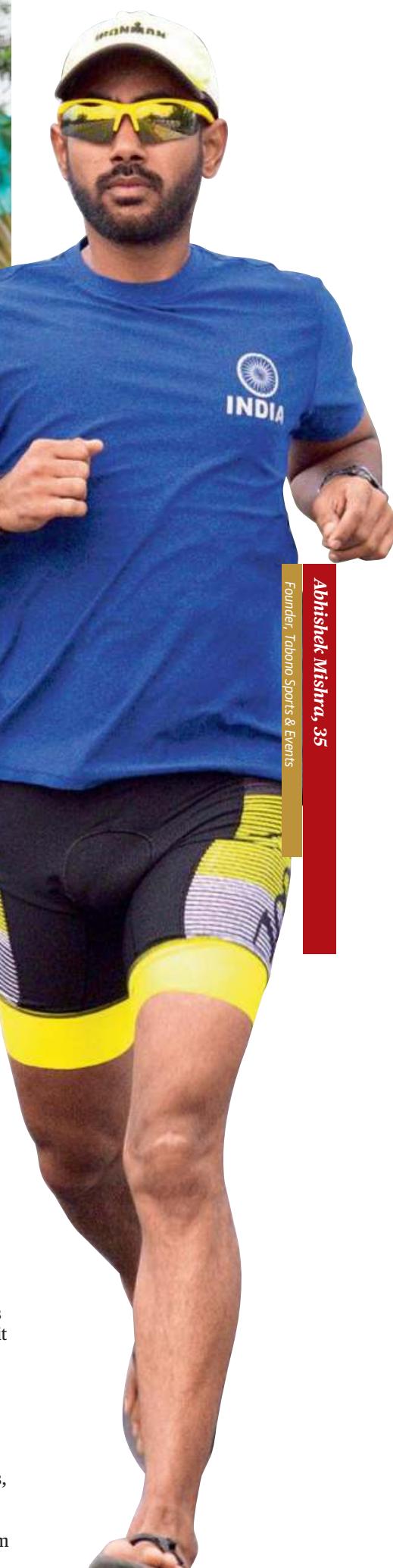
In 2013, *Time* magazine ran a cover article that said: "The Me Me Me Generation: Millennials are lazy, entitled narcissists, who still live with their parents; why they'll save us all." The article summarised the generation as people who are growing up with tech and abundance, have high self-

esteem to the point of being cocky about their place in the world, and measure their success "with 'friend' and 'follower' tallies that serve as sales figures".

The article didn't make a difference between men and women, but Sujata Sriram, a professor at the School of Human Ecology, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, says there is. "Millennial women are performing better and better at both school and college, and if you look at the toppers, they are often women," she says. So while more women are taking on corporate jobs, and choosing the swipe-in-swipe-out system, horrible bosses and traditional 'secure' workplaces, men, who have always had more choices, are opting out, supported by their families in their decision.

Building the business

Take Sumit Sharan, 31, who worked with Airbnb and quit to grow oyster mushrooms at a farm on the outskirts of Gurugram. He has always been a bit of an entrepreneur, starting a solar energy plant right after college. And he has always had the support of his parents and doctor wife (he wasn't married when he began the venture) and his parents. Right now, he's building the business, talking to chefs, stabilising output, and speaking to customers, "looking for a sweet spot between people appreciating what I'm



doing and giving me the price I want." The burden of expectation on men seems to have gone down, at least in some parts of urban, upper-middle-class society.

In that sense, the millennial man is quite unlike his father, even if you put aside cultural crutches like bean bags, tech toys and coffee shops. For starters, he doesn't resent his father, because he's not rebelling. In fact, he's almost sympathetic towards him: parenting is about "paying to have

another human being grow up; and then you die," as Chowdhary puts it, talking of the linear graduate-work-marry-children life that his parents' generation followed.

It's a reshaping of opportunity, feels Anjali Raina, Executive Director, Harvard Business School India Research Centre. She believes the change is gender agnostic, with a wider safety net today.

"People are willing to hire you again if you fail. There's no social

stigma in changing jobs," she says.

Sriram disagrees, however, saying androgyny, when it comes to work, is more acceptable coming from men. She also sees the phenomenon of men moving out of high-paying MBA-centric jobs and into more flexible options as a good thing for women. "It is increasing the market value of that job," she says. Women have been 'steered' towards part-time and freelance work, or options that offered 'easier' work hours (education,

therapy, NGOs), so that they could care for families on their next shift; but it's also true that these jobs paid much less. This move that men are making, she hopes, will increase salaries in jobs that were traditionally held by women.

In a sense then, there is a redefinition of malehood, a relinquishing of the power that comes from being the breadwinner. There has to be, says Harjant Gill, a documentary filmmaker and Associate Professor of Anthropology at Towson University, Maryland. He's studied populations in Punjab and says that the lack of jobs is a major factor in this shift in attitude. Also affecting the sense of manhood is upward class mobility, where "being a bureaucrat, the epitome of masculinity, available to only a few castes and classes," is no longer the 'gold standard'. Now, there are more opportunities.

21st century skills

Tarang Tripathi, 26, is a part of this shift. He originally thought of going abroad for higher studies after a degree from Hindu College in Delhi. Both his parents, at the time media professionals who had reached senior positions in their companies, supported him. Before he left, however, he thought he would do a fellowship with Teach For India. "I thought it would look good on my CV," he says frankly. After that stint, however, he decided not to go overseas after all.

Finding a gap in the existing school curriculum, he piloted an organisation called Awaaz under the Teach For India mentorship (a word and concept millennials love). His organisation imparts what are called 21st-century skills (critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking) to students, both in government and private schools.

When I quit my job, my father didn't ask me what my plan was; he asked me what people would say. The risk appetite was zero in their generation

Tarang, who lives with his parents, says he wouldn't have it any other way. "I'm extremely active. I have classes all over the city, and it never gets boring," he says, echoing the thoughts of the generation. "It gives me an opportunity to do things I like." Today, he and his co-founder employ 10 people, five full-time and five part-time. "Everybody does everything," he says, in a sense overturning generations of class and role superiority.

He derives the most pleasure when he sees an immediate response to his work, with children as young as 8 or 10. "They have a deep understanding of things, even of ideas like caste. They just need the right environment to express themselves," he says.

This desire and ability to carry a project from start to finish is unique to this generation – they don't see themselves as part of an assembly line, but as people changing the world, a little at a time. In a sense, it's



Anand Chowdhary, 21

Student and founder of Oswald Labs, Finland

CREDITS

**Moti Bagh**

NIRMAL CHANDER, 59 MIN

This award-winning documentary about a man who quit his government job more than 50 years ago to take up farming is both a portrait of a survivor and a study of conditions in rural Uttarakhand — rising aspirations leading to a declining interest in agriculture, locals moving away and discrimination against migrant workers who try to fill the gap.

**The Trans Women Athlete Dispute**

BEN RUMNEY, 58 MIN

Martina Navratilova had courted controversy earlier by saying that allowing trans athletes to compete in professional sport was "insane", but presenting this BBC documentary — in which she speaks to trans athletes and scientists — seems to have changed her opinion; she concludes that trans women should be included at all levels of sport.

**Seadrift**

TIM TSAI, 68 MIN

In 1979, in the fishing village of Seadrift, Texas, a refugee Vietnamese fisherman shot a local white fisherman to death, after communal hostility had escalated over the past couple of years. The Ku Klux Klan responded to the murder with a campaign of violence. This documentary brings to light a microcosm of issues that are ever more relevant today.

**Tarang Tripathi, 26**

Founder, Awaaz

Man on a mission

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

a new start-up culture of moving fast, but being careful not to break things. "Success is about having an impact," Tarang says, adding that it's about being socially and economically responsible. Emotional intelligence and ethics are not concepts that were commonly articulated by men of previous generations.

This need both validates and veers from the findings of the Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2019, which finds that the biggest driver for millennials (born between January 1983 and December 1994) and Gen Zs (born between January 1995 and December 2002) is to travel the world, with 57% aspiring to this, while the second is the need to be wealthy (52% millennials, 56% Gen Zs).

Living the life

This might be why they're okay with opting out of the rat race of the previous generation, which continues with its stressful demanding jobs, with pollution and commuting adding to ill-health. Abhishek Mishra, 35, who graduated with an engineering degree, went on to do his MBA and work for several years, until at 29, he decided to quit and start a company that specialises in taking running to small-town India.

His father was a government employee, and Mishra, from Varanasi, didn't have the English-as-native-language advantage or parents who understood what he was doing.

"When I quit my job, my father didn't ask me what my plan was; he asked me what people would say," says Mishra, understanding of where his father was coming from. "The risk appetite was zero in their generation. Once you know *why* you're living, you'll find out *how* to live. They didn't know why they were living."

There is a definite shift from respectability to respect, and Mishra feels it's about knowing yourself better first, and then following a path — respect will follow. He talks of the son of the *pujari* from his family temple who moved to Gurugram, learnt Chinese, and is now on a path very different from what his father would have imagined.

He remembers how he took to running at a time when the country's top business heads were passionately doing marathon after marathon. He began to meet them informally, at the start and finish lines, and soon realised that his passion and profession could intersect.

Dominating ideas

A study by Michael Baas and Julien Cayla, published earlier this year in *Consumption Markets & Culture*,

He talks of the son of the *pujari* from his family temple who moved to Gurugram, learnt Chinese, and is now on a path very different from what his father would have imagined

recorded interviews of 85 new-service professions (baristas, gym trainers), about 70% of these of men. They found that even in lower socio-economic classes, the idea of speed, of fast progression, dominated. "I remember this interview with a barista, who talked about how his brother was a driver and had a stable job. But it came with the idea of being stuck. It felt like he wanted to be in a profession that followed India's idea of progression," says Cayla. Ironically, it mirrors what Tarang, who comes from a relatively privileged family set-up, says — of wanting to see results immediately.

As men follow their dreams, connect with their passions, and look at transforming themselves and their realities, women still have fewer choices, people still expect more from them, mobility remains an issue, and financial decisions are still not in their hands. "There is a tacit barrier," says Sairee Chahal, CEO of Sheroes, a community platform for women. Even in the most well-to-do, liberal homes, women "should do things that are containable, that don't impact marriage choices; the degree of audacity must be low," she says. But within the marriage, things are changing, and relationships are being co-managed, with women abandoning permission-seeking behaviours, even in small towns.

Is the millennial man stuck in Guyland, refusing to grow up, or is he really transitioning to work fluidity? We'll only know a few generations on.



RITIKA KOCHHAR

Everyone is talking about Choksi, Modi, and so on, but no one remembers that 4.5 million Indians are employed in the gem and jewellery industry," says Rishabh Tongya, the young creative director of luxury jewellery brand Diacolor.

He plans to change this by offering the Inkalamu – a 5,655 carat or 1.1 kg emerald – to an Indian museum. Inkalamu or 'the lion' in Zambia's Bema language, is possibly one of the largest gemstones ever found, and while Tongya won't reveal the exact price offered for it at the auction in Singapore last September, experts peg the cost at around \$50 million, making it one of the most expensive gemstones in the world.

In 2017, Diacolor bought an even bigger emerald, called Insofu or 'baby elephant', that weighed 6,100 carats. Both stones were found in Zambia's Kagem mines, albeit nine years apart, by Gemfields, a U.K.-based mining, processing and marketing company.

But are these really among the largest uncut emeralds the world has seen? Tongya and Gopal Kumar, Director of Gemfields India, refuse to confirm this, choosing to talk instead about the clarity and quality of the stones.

The Kagem mines are relatively young, but emeralds go back to the age of Cleopatra of Egypt. She was known to love emeralds and the Cleopatra emerald mines, dating back to 2000-1200 BC, were some of the earliest known mines. The emeralds from these mines had healing and spiritual properties ascribed to them, including the ability to prevent

epileptic seizures, cure dysentery, drive away evil spirits, and preserve chastity!

In fact, unlike rubies, diamonds and sapphires, emeralds are fairly uncommon. "The rich green colour is created by small amounts of chromium or vanadium embedded within the crystalline lattice of the stones, and chromium is fairly rare," explains gemmologist Amit Kapoor. Small quantities used to be found in Rajasthan, but Kapoor says they're now mined out.

Rarest and finest

The Panjshir mines in Afghanistan once had the rarest and finest emerald stones. And in Russia, an emerald weighing more than 1.5 kg was found in the Malyshevsky field last year.

But the world's finest emeralds originate in Colombia, specifically the Muzo mine, and it is from here that their association with cruelty begins, as well as their link to the greatest gemstone lovers in history – the Mughals.

The Incas had always used emeralds, but when the Spanish reached Peru and Mexico in the 16th century and saw the brilliant green stones, less than 10 years later they had started developing and exploiting the mines in incredibly cruel conditions.

And it was from the Spaniards that the Portuguese bought the exquisite Colombian emeralds that they

LUSTRE

Romancing the green stone

An Indian museum might soon get the world's largest emerald ever, weighing 1.1 kg and costing over a \$100 million



Precious find (Clockwise from top) The Inkalamu from Zambia; an emerald mined in Colombia; and the world-famous Patricia Emerald with a gun's silhouette embedded in it. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

presented to the Mughals in return for trading rights.

The most famous emerald in the world today is the Patricia Emerald from Colombia's Chivor mines. This 632-carat rare bi-hexagonal uncut stone resides in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and has the silhouette of what looks like a gun embedded in it, a



subtle reminder of the link between gems and drug wars in Colombia.

There's also a strong connection between emeralds and India. Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II of Jaipur invited craftsmen to the city in 1728 to help develop it as a trading centre. Today, most of the world's coloured gemstone cutting and polishing happens in Jaipur. Overall, around nine of every 10 rough emeralds from Zambia and Brazil are cut and polished in India, and it's this statistic that Zambia would like to change. The Zambian High Commissioner, Judith K.K. Kan'goma Kapijimpanga, says she would like Zambia to become a polishing centre instead of just a raw material provider. Gems and jewellery is the second largest foreign exchange earner for India, while Zambia says it loses billions to foreign miners.

Interestingly, Zambia has a policy India could learn from. Mining companies like Gemfields have to contribute a percentage of their auction proceeds to conservation efforts. In the case of the Inkalamu emerald, the partner was the Zambian Carnivore Programme, which looks at conserving large carnivores and their ecosystems.

Meanwhile, Diacolor hasn't decided yet which museum will get the Inkalamu. So watch this space.

The writer, the author of a fantasy series, specialises in the art and culture of Southeast Asia.

Many virtues and healing properties were ascribed to emeralds, including the ability to prevent seizures, cure dysentery, and preserve the chastity of the wearer

DRAMA DOCU

A holy place I can't visit



An unusual documentary film traces the making of a play — *Chandala: The Impure*, which weaves caste politics into *Romeo and Juliet*

NAMRATA JOSHI

Koumarane Valavane's play *Chandala: The Impure* is a radical reinterpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*, which moves away from the family rivalry trope and instead places it at the intersection of caste and gender politics. Pankaj Rishi Kumar's documentary *Janani's Juliet* is equally significant in taking us backstage to show how director Valavane and his Puducherry-based theatre group Indianostrum introspect on, respond to, negotiate and weave these faultlines into the original. The film deconstructs, so to speak, Valavane's own deconstruction of Shakespeare, and makes us privy to how a critical play of our times has evolved and taken shape.

Kumar's camera follows and documents the "device process" that

Valavane works with. "There is no script but a lot of improvisation in his plays," says Kumar; it comes together from an outline of the story and lots of conversations and discussions. It's a democratic, participative process where everyone pitches in with ideas and contributes to the emerging performance. In the film, Valavane talks about the original not being sacrosanct, about questioning it; changing, deleting and adding to it.

The filmmaker's camera is intimate but not intrusive — seemingly a silent fly on the wall. However, Kumar was deeply involved and engaged when it came to the rehearsals. "I had complete access. I participated in the group discussions as though I was one of the actors. I would ask all possible questions. I participated in the theatre exercises. It wasn't about flying in and out but being a part of the process," he says.

Kumar shot the film over 75-odd days from June to September last year. They still hadn't finished work on the play when he finished shooting. Incidentally, *Chandala* had its international première at the Festival des Francophonies en Limousin last September. In India, it premiered at the Ranga Shankara Theatre Festival in Bengaluru late last year, and was also staged at the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards and Festival in New Delhi earlier this year.

What's love?

It's fascinating to see the thinking that the group's members are going through. For instance, while handling the caste issues, it's the centrality that the play eventually accords to Janani (Juliet) that sets things apart. The three actors working on the lead role find it strange that not much is spelt out about her in the original. What is it

for her to love Romeo? Is love a look? Or does a touch inspire love?

Somewhere along the way they begin to be drawn heavily towards the story of the real-life Tamil couple Shankar and Kausalya, and how Shankar was the victim of an honour killing in 2016. They eventually speak to Kausalya on the phone.

Kausalya's life inspires Janani's within the play, with many real-life incidents such as her parents demanding that she return everything they gave her, down to the clothes on her back. Despite being a privileged Brahmin girl, she faces patriarchal restrictions. No short hair, no playing the drums.

Kumar and Valavane met and interviewed her on August 19 last year. "We were overwhelmed by the interview," Kumar says; it was something they wanted to share with the team. Kausalya became the

Love struggles to survive as Jack and Janani are trapped in different worlds — Ambedkar Colony and Vaishnav Nagar — that can't be brought together



Radical Stills from *Janani's Juliet*.

starting point for Kumar's editing as well. "My interpretation is nothing but Kausalya's story," he says. It wasn't difficult to edit the 120-odd hours of footage into a 52-minute documentary. "I knew exactly what I wanted. It was one of the easiest edits, effortless. The film was in place in a week."

Two worlds

Love struggles to survive in real life. Jack and Janani are trapped in different worlds – Ambedkar Colony and Vaishnav Nagar – that can't be brought together. "Your hand feels like a holy place I can't visit," Jack tells Janani, kissing her hand in a movie hall. The hall, which has traditionally granted privacy to many couples, remains a divided space for them. Despite paying for a first-class ticket,

Jack is shown sitting at a lower level. Kausalya's interviews are interspersed through the documentary, played back to the actors. Her related experiences punctuate the action. How, when she was in Class VII, her parents discouraged her from talking to a lower-caste friend. How she was told not to walk fast, to walk soundlessly, how music and dance were forbidden. "Purity of caste is dependent on a woman's behaviour," she says.

But she could play the drums in Shankar's house. "I got freedom, of being myself," she says. It makes the actors dwell on the transformative power of love.

Kausalya is now a social activist working on caste issues. How do I end my play, wonders Valavane. "I wouldn't die for love," says one of the actors playing Janani. The consensus of the actors is that she shouldn't die. There has to be an alternative for her. It's about carrying on without Romeo. Says Kumar: "That's why the title is *Janani's Juliet*."

Kausalya was told to walk slowly and soundlessly; music and dance were forbidden. "Purity of caste is dependent on a woman's behaviour"



BINGE WATCH

All about mom

Big Little Lies is a masterclass on the traumas of motherhood

By the time you read this, HBO's *Big Little Lies* (streaming in India on Hotstar Premium), by any standards one of the most remarkable TV shows of recent times, will be just hours away from the final episode. Based on Liane Moriarty's 2014 novel of the same name, the show brought together an ensemble cast including Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, Laura Dern and now Meryl Streep in the ongoing second season. The narrative follows the fortunes of the so-called Monterey Five, five women connected by a death that they all allegedly witnessed. Beyond its acerbic humour and its thoughtful critique of American suburbia, *Big Little Lies* gave us a masterclass in depicting trauma, sexual violence and intimate partner violence, among other things.

The second season does a wonderful job of showing us the perpetual scrutiny mothers (especially young mothers) are subjected to. In the very first episode, Madeline (Witherspoon) remarks that the first day of a new school session meant having to "earn our 'good mother' tags" all over again. It's worth noting that according to almost every other character, Madeline is, if anything, a little too involved in her child's school.

Single and on trial

The first season saw Jane (Shailene Woodley) battling a group of angry parents after her son Ziggy was accused of bullying one of his classmates – yes, the parents were angry on their kids' behalf, but they chose to highlight Jane's status as a young, single mother. Her youth and singlehood are both seen as proof of her incompetence as a mother – because mothers are supposed to be asexual creatures, young (but not too young) or old (but not too old).

In the ongoing second season, we see Celeste (Kidman) fighting a custody battle for her twins because her scheming, old-fashioned mother-in-law Mary Louise (Streep) feels she's not a good enough mother. Every aspect of her personal life (sleep medication, therapy, one-night stands) is brought up loudly and persistently in court. Everything is fair game for the world to dissect. In a masterstroke, HBO even hired a famous TV mom to play the family court judge here (Becky Ann Baker from *Freaks and Geeks* and *Girls*), amplifying

the motherhood-on-trial angle. "I am a good mother, all this has nothing to do with my capability as a parent," Celeste keeps insisting, but nobody has any intention of seeing her as a person. Strictly speaking, the mother is not corporeal.

Bunker mentality

This idea, of mothers being omnipresent, incorporeal entities – essentially empathetic voices – is explored in an impressive way by the recent Netflix movie *I Am Mother*, a post-apocalyptic thriller starring Hilary Swank and Clara Rugaard. The movie is set in a wasteland where, after a massive extinction event, a robot named Mother grows an embryo and comes to care for the girl, referred to only as Daughter (Rugaard).

Mother, tasked with repopulating the earth, raises the child in a hermetically sealed bunker designed for surviving a war-ravaged landscape. Soon, Daughter starts asking Mother why she can't ever venture out. Mother's response is a familiar one: which mother would risk her child's life for a few, fun-filled outdoor hours? An even more interesting moment happens when Daughter asks why the robot hasn't developed more embryos. Mother says she needs time in order to be a better parent. "Mothers need time to learn," she says.

Her youth and singlehood are seen as proof of her incompetence as a mother – mothers are supposed to be asexual creatures, young (but not too young) or old (but not too old)

A robot is the source of these insights on motherhood – *I Am Mother* does a fair bit with this conceit. What's even more impressive is the way it plays with the idea of 'competitive motherhood' – in the Monterey of *Big Little Lies*, it's a plague, especially if you're the long-suffering school principal.

In a post-apocalyptic wasteland, however, it's precisely what a robot mommy is shooting for. Failure, after all, means having to start humanity all over again.

For real-life young mothers, however, both narratives will sound all too familiar, our judgmental world's engines humming along as soundtrack.



Aditya Mani Jha, a writer and journalist, is working on his first book of non-fiction

SPOTLIGHT

The language of the night

Soham Gupta's haunting photographs of Kolkata went to the Venice Biennale this year



RUSHATI MUKHERJEE

When Soham Gupta, 31, first received the email inviting him to be a part of the 2019 Venice Biennale, he assumed it was a hoax. Perhaps that fits the Kolkata-based photographer's personality: quiet, reserved, a little socially awkward, but belying that is the mind behind the haunting series of photographs titled *Angst* that was exhibited at the Biennale.

The series, invited by curator Ralph Rugoff, the director of London's Hayward Gallery, is reminiscent of Francisco Goya's Black Paintings, and was developed over eight years. It began in 2011 as an aimless series of pictures taken under the Howrah Bridge, and solidified into a project with a specific goal around 2013, after a workshop with French

Starkness (Above)

Soham Gupta's photos at Venice Biennale; photos from *Angst*; (below) Gupta.

FRANCESCO GALLI/LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA,
SOHAM GUPTA &
RUSHATI MUKHERJEE

photographer Antoine d'Agata: "A series of psychoanalysis and soul-searching led me to *Angst* when I returned home," says Gupta.

Taken in black and white as well as bleached colours of a startling starkness, the project has expanded in scope to include not only large-scale exhibitions but also a photobook, whose first edition was published last year.

Gupta read comparative literature at Jadavpur University before



dropping out, hinting at the literary bent that's clearly visible in his works, especially in the text that accompanies the images. The novel *Last Exit to Brooklyn* affected him deeply with its portrayal of the human condition; "the decay of the characters in a city," as he



says. Other influences are more obvious: the picture of a man called Raju from the *Angst* series, his mouth gaping open and face covered in some sort of powdered drug, immediately recalls Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Son*.

Bleached white

There is a certain quality to the collection that makes it hard to look at the images for too long. Perhaps it's the closeness of the subjects, the harshness of the lighting or the unflinching corporeality of the bodies portrayed. He attributes his bleached-white choice of colour to the visual nature of the city: "Calcutta is a colourful city, but I don't see colour anywhere I go, I only see dust." Fiction and reality merge and overlap in his works: he creates a fiction out of reality, creating an idiom of his own. "Instead of simply photographing the city, this time I focused on a specific language; the language of the night."

In 2018, Gupta won a place in the *British Journal of Photography's* 'Ones To Watch: The Talent Issue', along with 15 others from across the world, and his book was shortlisted for the Photo and Text Book Award at Les Rencontres d'Arles and the Paris Photo-Aperture Foundation First Photobook Award.

The day we meet, he is giving a talk on his Biennale exhibition at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity. He says he liked watching people looking at his images in Venice, and noting their reactions: "I saw some of them weeping," he says. This he takes as an achievement, believing that the role of the artist is to shock the viewer out of complacency. "I like to make people uncomfortable with my pictures." In India, his work has made people angry, as happens at the Q&A after the talk. Two angry men question him for portraying India in a 'bad' light.

For someone whose eye turns again and again to the harshness and beauty of the streets, what does Gupta think about the ethics of viewing uncomfortable art in comfortable spaces? "But this is exactly where I want

These places are where I want my photographs to be seen, because they are subversive. I want to provoke a reaction among these people who wear Chanel No. 5

SCANNER



Skin: The Finer Nuances

An exhibition themed around human skin, in the context of race but also its "personal and erotic aspects," is on at Delhi's Threshold Art Gallery until August 20 and features works including a sculpture by Mithu Sen and photographs by Shibu Arakkal and Baptist Coelho.



Trucks of Art

New York City's Department of Sanitation has added five new trucks to its fleet — trucks hand-painted by artists, that is. The five final designs were selected from among more than 100 entries submitted for the 'Trucks of Art' project.



to make people uncomfortable," he says. "These places are where I want my photographs to be seen, because they are subversive. I want to provoke a reaction among these people who wear Chanel No. 5".

Venice vs. Calcutta

Venice will never be seen in his photographs. It lacks the complexity of nightlife that one finds in Calcutta, he says. "I want them to see this, especially in times like now. When you see the city being polished and gentrified, almost cleansed, I feel strange because people are made to move away. The places I have shown, with people, they have been shooed away from there."

The images in *Angst* are not spontaneous. Gupta spent hours getting to know the people, sharing cigarettes and meals with them, listening to their stories, and then he asked them to pose with objects he found lying around at the locations. His subjects chose how they would pose, deciding how they wanted to be captured, thus effectively telling their own stories with Gupta as the medium. He stays in touch with them even now.

Gupta's works have never been sold. Does he want them to? "To museums, yes. I will be gone in some time, and I want my work to survive."

And if he ever makes money, he would like to open an NGO for the mentally ill on the streets. "As of now, I can only be a messenger. Nothing else is possible."

The writer is a journalist, poet, blogger and translator from Kolkata.



Olafur Eliasson: In Real Life

A retrospective of the artist's career, with around 40 sculptures and installations, is on show at Tate Modern until January 5. Eliasson's interests range from geometry to natural phenomena; one installation is an 11-metre high waterfall made from scaffolding.

POP-A-RAZZI

Jai Shri Ram, or else

Rallying cry, dig at Didi, weapon of the lynch mob. The slogan has done very well in Bengal

The day after the election results came out, a friend said that an excited woman on the treadmill next to her in a gym in Kolkata started pumping her fists in the air and shouting *Jai Shri Ram*. "Oh, I remember a woman in my gym gleefully greeting trainers with *Jai Shri Ram*," I said. In the wake of the elections, *Jai Shri Ram* has been getting quite the workout in these parts.

It's true that as a religious slogan it's a bit of a cultural immigrant in Bengal. Whenever we set out on a journey, our mothers and grandmothers would say *Dugga Dugga*, invoking Ma Durga's blessings. Rama didn't feature much. Even the BJP gets that. It has said that it will also use *Jai Ma Kali* among its slogan offerings in Bengal.

But as a political tool, *Jai Shri Ram* has worked extraordinarily well. Thanks in part to Mamata Banerjee herself. When Didi grossly over-reacted to youths taunting her with the slogan, she gifted the BJP a dream weapon. They understood they had found a way to get under her skin. BJP leaders chanted it at every rally, daring Didi to arrest them. The BJP said it would send her 10 lakh postcards with *Jai Shri Ram* written on them.

Now, *Jai Shri Ram* has become not just a rallying cry for the faithful or a slogan of resistance, but also the cry of the lynch mob. While the Prime Minister asked us to help fulfil the dream of a safe, modern and inclusive nation, a 20-year-old madrasa teacher was allegedly punched, kicked and pushed off a Kolkata local train for refusing to chant *Jai Shri Ram*. A 24-year-old man suspected of stealing a motorcycle in Jharkhand was tied to a pole and beaten, and in a video that went viral, he was seen being forced to chant *Jai Shri Ram* and *Jai Hanuman*. He died of



Sandip Roy is the author of *Don't Let Him Know*, and like many Bengalis likes to let everyone know about his opinions whether asked or not.



Kali Raja Ravi Varma. WIKI COMMONS

I hear it all the time these days everywhere from my local market to my gym in Kolkata. The vegetable sellers *Jai Shri Ram* each other as if doing a high five

his injuries. Members of a little-known right wing organisation uploaded a video of themselves stopping an autorickshaw in Barpeta, Assam, and forcing the Muslim occupants to shout *Jai Shri Ram*, *Bharat Mata ki Jai* and *Pakistan Murdabad*. A youth in a skull cap in Gurugram, a doctor in Pune, a cleric in Rohini in Delhi, they have all claimed harassment *Ram ke naam*.

Alleged attacks

On the other hand, the BJP says the West Bengal Police shot at three of its supporters in Bankura, including a 14-year-old boy, for chanting *Jai Shri Ram*. They also allege that a 43-year-old party supporter was strangled by Trinamool Congress workers in Howrah district for chanting the slogan, though Trinamool denies it.

The Prime Minister has said he's

pained. Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi says there is nothing communal about the slogan and Rama is a part of Indian culture. That's not the point. The issue is whether I get to hector, harass and beat up someone who does not chant *Jai Shri Ram*.

That Rama, the most righteous of our heroes, the likely winner of any mythological Good Conduct Medal contest, can be brandished as a bully's truncheon is ironic to say the least. But the weaponisation of *Jai Shri Ram* did not start with Banerjee confronting slogan-shouters in Midnapore.

Out of the wilderness

When L. K. Advani kicked off his Rath Yatra at the Somnath Temple in Gujarat in 1990, it happened amidst ear-splitting chants of *Jai Shri Ram*. It was a political slogan for a party seeking to come out of the wilderness and it worked. In 1992, Babri Masjid fell and *Jai Shri Ram* became the slogan for victory, a way to knit Hindus together into a voting bloc. Now that the BJP has achieved a thumping majority, the victory slogan has morphed into a weapon, a bludgeon to show minorities their place in new India.

Banerjee wants to counter the resurgent *Jai Shri Ram* in Bengal with billboards of Bengali icons proclaiming *Joy Bangla*, a face-off between Hindutva and Bengaliita as it were. Whether it will work remains to be seen. The slogan has crossed the blood-brain barrier from politics to pop culture. I hear it all the time these days everywhere from my local market to my gym in Kolkata, not just as a war cry in a pumped-up BJP rally. The vegetable sellers *Jai Shri Ram* each other as if doing a high five. Thanks to Banerjee's shrill opposition, it's acquired a cultural life of its own, a mocking taunt, a dare, a sly poke in the ribs, a new code word for comeuppance.

Once we had the politics of Aya Ram and Gaya Ram. Welcome to the age of *Jai Shri Ram*. As my mother would say, *Dugga Dugga*.



Nicholas Roerich

The Indian Museum in Kolkata will host an exhibition of the Russian painter's works this August. The works on display will mostly come from Allahabad Museum's collection of the landscapes that Roerich painted during his expedition to Central Asia in the 1920s.



Colossal A view of Vellore Fort; (below) the entrance to the ammunition dump; (facing page, from top) the memorial in a traffic island; and the flagstone where the mutineers hoisted the Mysore flag. UDAY BALAKRISHNAN

RUBRIC

John Company's bloody lesson

A little over 200 years ago, soldiers at Vellore Fort staged India's very first uprising against the British, but the city and the country have long forgotten it

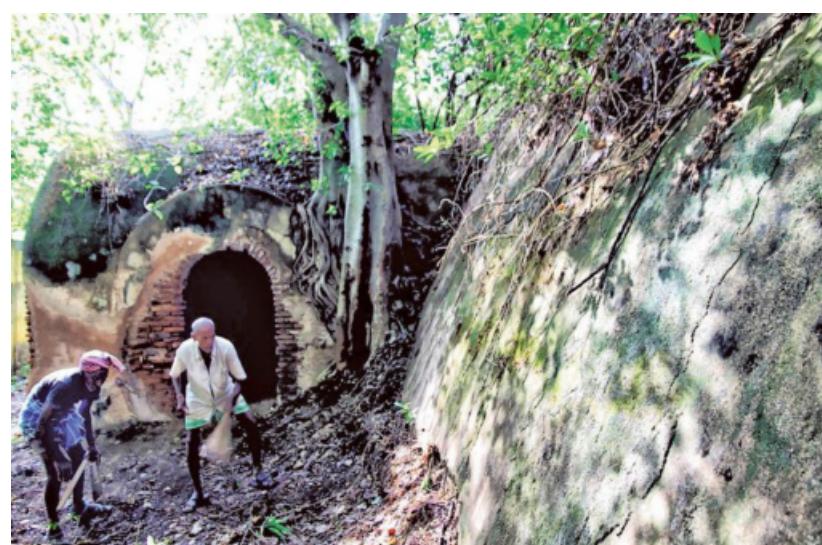
UDAY BALAKRISHNAN

The fort in Vellore dwarfs everything else in the city like a massive man o' war in a small bay. I spent two days exploring it, and marvelled at its vastness, the solidity of its construction and the durability of some of the buildings within, such as the surprisingly well-preserved ammunition dump and jail.

Built by chieftains of the Vijayanagara Empire in 1566, Vellore's fort was designed to hold out indefinitely, as a British garrison did for two years against Hyder Ali before the latter gave up and lifted his siege. Following Tipu Sultan's defeat and death at the battle of Srirangapatna in 1799, his large family and their massive retinue were relocated there.

Vellore Fort is best known for the brief but violent mutiny there in 1806 by the East India Company's sepoys. It was no freedom struggle. Rather, as three inquiries revealed, it was a violently emotional reaction to a move that hurt the religious sentiments of Hindu and Muslim sepoys in British pay.

If Sir John Cradock, the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, had not insisted that the sepoys exchange their turbans for round hats, compelled them to shave off their moustaches and beards, and barred them from wearing caste marks and ornaments, the mutiny would never



have happened. It was a direct result of Cradock's obduracy and the pusillanimity of the Governor of Madras, Lord William Bentinck, who, against better advice, supported him.

Cassandra truth

The Auditor-General of the British army at Madras, Colonel Brunton, had sent a letter well before the mutiny, warning Cradock that "many things of serious moment have originated in trifles," and advising him to redress the grievances of the sepoys, considering that "native troops" were "absolutely and indispensably necessary". His warning went unheeded.

were killed by the mutineers. Of the Indian dead I could find no trace.

Early in their uprising, the sepoys cleaned out the paymaster's treasury, and soon after raided the munitions depot, leaving them in control of the formidable fort. The rebels could have held out much longer had they not gone on a looting spree and got drunk on a large cache of arrack they happened upon, while failing to firmly secure the fort's entrances or man its ramparts. All this enabled the few surviving British soldiers to regroup and position themselves strategically, enabling a relief force from nearby Arcot led by Rollo Gillespie to easily break into the fort and regain control.

A bloody reprisal followed, with Gillespie and his men killing over 600 of the mutineers, including 100 who were lined up and summarily shot against one of the walls of the fort. A subsequent court martial resulted in the execution of 19 ringleaders of the mutiny, five or six of whom were blown from the mouths of cannons. Although the mutineers raised the flag of Mysore in the fort, investigations failed to establish any involvement of Tipu's family in the bloody event.

As an uprising, the mutiny was brief and confined to Vellore Fort. However, it had far-reaching administrative and military implications reaching into our times. Cradock and Bentinck were sacked and recalled. The British began to reorganise their largely Indian army

The mutineers killed over 100 unsuspecting British soldiers and their families, most of them in their sleep



A subsequent court martial resulted in the execution of 19 ringleaders of the mutiny, five or six of whom were blown from the mouths of cannons

on more humane lines, while bringing in a degree of professionalism and regimental pride in the soldiers.

Imperial academies

At the time, the British were in the early stages of appreciating that administering an India with a rich and complex civilisation and culture of its own required a depth of understanding beyond what they then possessed. A few months before the Vellore mutiny, the East India Company College had been established in Haileybury to train administrators for India, drawing its faculty from the best that Oxford and Cambridge had to offer. Indian languages like Hindustani, Telugu, Bengali and Marathi were taught there in addition to Persian. Three years after the mutiny the East India Company Military Seminary was opened in Addiscombe to train military officers for service in India. Clearly, patronage was giving way to merit in selecting administrators and soldiers for their prized domain.

Strangely, the British did not heed the warning of the Vellore revolt, repeating their mistake half a century later to devastating effect, sparking the first war of independence in 1857.

India's first major armed uprising against the British deserves to be commemorated by something more substantial than that slight and absurd memorial set in the middle of a small traffic island facing the fort, one that fast receded in my wing mirror as I headed back to Bengaluru.

The writer teaches at IISc, Bengaluru.



PLACE, WORK, FOLK

Out of the box

Why city planners need to add “recognition” to their lexicon

MATIAS ECHANOVE &
RAHUL SRIVASTAVA

The idea of recognition is central to gender and identity theory. Philosopher Judith Butler argues that not everyone has equal access to social and political recognition. People with identities that don't fit the norm can easily be disenfranchised. According to her, we should recognise others based on the shared precariousness of our human condition, rather than fixed qualities or status.

She invites us to acknowledge the expression of complex identities. We must learn to recognise even what goes beyond our normative framework. It is not because we can't quite comprehend what something is, that it becomes irrelevant or doesn't deserve to exist.

We take this unusual detour through identity politics only to come back to our familiar topic – places and the people that shape them. We often find it difficult to talk about habitats that don't fit the urban development framework but which nonetheless have enormous relevance. Neighbourhoods such as Paraisópolis in São Paulo, Cazucá in Bogota, or Dharavi in Mumbai are generically referred to as slums, even though they represent a more nuanced reality to their inhabitants. The slum label reinforces reductive stereotypes, which have heavy implications on planning and policy.

Homegrown settlements

We coined the phrase “homegrown settlements” to describe certain kinds of habitats, including those mentioned above. Many such habitats exist all over the world. They are built from within, by people who live and work in them. Homegrown evokes a process rather than a steady state. The term admittedly has a positive connotation, because nowadays, everyone values what's local and organic.

However, we are not arguing that everything that is homegrown is necessarily good. It depends on the context: mould on the kitchen wall is local and organic, yet not really desirable. Garden vegetables, worms and mosquitoes are all homegrown. A vernacular house is homegrown. Neighbourhoods like Paraisópolis and Dharavi are homegrown because their inhabitants built it incrementally, just like hundreds of thousands of other settlements around the world.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong about user involvement in the gradual development of habitats. It can even be seen as a strength.



Alley art The “Alley Gully” biennale was held in Dharavi, 2015. VIVEK BENDRE

However, the urban planning normative doesn't allow homegrown neighbourhoods to be recognised and accepted. This lack of recognition makes them particularly vulnerable. They don't fit in and what doesn't fit in must be thrown out. Slums are often equated to urban junk that must be cleared up and redeveloped.

Slum stigma

Not only are homegrown habitats stigmatised, but the stigma extends to the people who live in them.

The urban planning normative doesn't allow homegrown neighbourhoods to be recognised and accepted. Slums are often equated to urban junk that must be cleared up and redeveloped

Residents are framed (as Butler would say) as “slum dwellers” – a modern term evoking disenfranchisement and deviance from the urban normative. The only recognition they get is a negative one.

The problem goes well beyond social stigmatisation. Negative recognition makes homegrown neighbourhoods vulnerable to abuses of power. Not only are “slum

dwellers” forbidden to improve their own infrastructure – only the state is empowered to do so.

“Slum dwellers” can be dispossessed from the houses they built at any point. The result is a form of “arrested development”, a status quo imposed from above. In India, unlike in countries such as Japan, homegrown neighbourhoods are prevented from following their developmental logic. If instead they were recognised and normalised, they could continue their gradual evolution, absorbing new technologies and infrastructure along the way.

A first step towards recognition of homegrown urban habitats may be for planners and policymakers to question their frame of reference. What is considered legitimate urban form and why? What does it take for atypical neighbourhoods to enter the normative? Can they at least be tolerated on the basis of what they mean to those who inhabit them? And finally, shouldn't we recognise the precariousness and strength of disenfranchised habitats as our own collective condition?

The writers are co-founders of urbz.net, an urban network in Mumbai, Goa and beyond.

ON TRACK

Water wagon

Water now comes by train to drought-hit Chennai every day

TEXT BY R. SRIKANTH & T. MADHAVAN

Every day, a 50-wagon train chugs from Jolarpet in Vellore to Chennai 215 km away, carrying that precious commodity – water.

It is a laborious process. It takes nearly four hours to load 2.5 million litres of water on the train, another four hours for the journey, and four more hours to offload the water at the depot near Villivakkam railway station, where it is pumped to Kilpauk Water Works. That's a 12-hour ride.

An official of the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board explains how around 5 million litres of Cauvery water is sourced from Mettur Dam and sent through a pipeline to Mettusakkarakuppam village, into an underground tank especially built for the purpose. The pipeline is part of the old Cauvery-Vellore Combined Water Supply Scheme.

From the tank, the water is sent via a new 3.2 km pipeline to Parsampet village (near Jolarpet) where the source valves are located. Here, it is loaded on the train.

A Southern Railway official says the train has two engines, one in the front pulling it and the other in the rear pushing it, for extra speed and to avoid any delays in the turnaround time. Each wagon can carry 50,000 litres of water. A second rake will soon bring in the remaining 2.5 million litres, officials say.



The source The Mettur Dam from where the water's journey to Chennai begins. VENKATACHALAPATHY C.



Pipe dream The pipeline to carry water from Mettur to Jolarpet being laid beside the highway. Water is sent to Mettusakkarakuppam village near Jolarpet. VENKATACHALAPATHY C.



Conduit Another pipeline being laid near the tracks at Jolarpet station. From here, water is transported in wagons. VENKATACHALAPATHY C.



Tinker Some final welding work at jolarpet. VENKATACHALAPATHY C.



Nuts and bolts Workers fit ball valves and hoses to a wagon in Villivakkam. B. VELANKANNI RAJ



Destination Water flows into the Kilpauk Water Works where it is treated. B. VELANKANNI RAJ



By road From the water works, tankers carry water across the city. B. VELANKANNI RAJ



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

THE LEAD

I am a woman and I write about food

Unfazed by criticism that cooking is frivolous and writing about it is tosh, generations of women have been making literature out of cookery

ARCHANA PIDATHALA

On a cold winter night this January, I was on a flight to Colombo from Bengaluru, to attend the Galle Literary Festival where I was to talk about my cookbook, *Five Morsels of Love*. The man seated next to me struck up a conversation, and after the initial pleasantries, asked, "So, from when have cookery books become literature?" I laughed the question away but, of course, felt stung.

Some years ago, in the aftermath of my grandmother's sudden death, I traded pantsuits for aprons, as I became the unlikely custodian of my grandmother's recipes. After what seemed like a lifetime of running after grades and scholarships and job titles,

I decided to drop out of the race to write about food. In those early days I would evade questions around how long this break was for, if I was on a sabbatical, and when I would go back to a 'real' career. I even sounded apologetic at times for having the courage to chase a dream. And as I looked back over the history of women in food, I realised I wasn't alone. One of the greatest food writers of all time, M.F.K. Fisher, whose autobiographical essays created a genre, was dismissed by critics and serious writers for years. To begin with she was a woman and to add to that she was writing about food, a trifle. The poet Maya Angelou, who authored two cookbooks, once said in an interview with *The Guardian* that people thought it was odd – unworthy

even – for her to have written cookbooks. "But I make no apologies" she retorted.

A gendered trap?

I never seem to have an answer to the question 'Aren't you overqualified to cook and write recipes?' In a world where women are constantly made to feel apologetic and small for their choices and food is somehow the lesser genre in literature, I worried if I was at the losing end of a battle in both gender and genre. I think the anxiety also stemmed from having espoused a worldview – not unlike many women of my generation – that cooking is a gendered trap. Would writing about food then be falling into the same trap albeit through a different door? It did not help that I

In a world where food is somehow the lesser genre, I worried if I was at the losing end of a battle in both gender and genre

didn't own a single cookbook till that point and the only food writing I knew was the kind classified as lifestyle journalism.

While I don't have scientifically verified data to back this claim up, a scan through the 'Cookbooks & Food' genre under the 'Books' category on Amazon suggests this is a genre upheld, overwhelmingly so, by women. And if one were to exclude the restaurant cookbooks that seem to be written mostly by male chefs then the verdict becomes even clearer – over 90% of all food writing is done by women. Here I was at the threshold of tumbling into a 'female' genre in writing which the world seemed to think suited women home cooks with artistic aspirations and plenty of time on hand. I had to find out what I was getting into.

One of the first writers I discovered in that journey was M.F.K. Fisher and she led me to places in a way only language can. In my imagination I shared a warm peach pie with cool yellow cream with her, ogled at kettles of strawberry jam on juice-stained tables, had my first taste of oyster and travelled to Paris enveloped in a passionate mist. Fisher wrote like a poet. Soon I was following Claudia Roden into the markets of Cairo, getting immersed in the kitchen bustle of her Egyptian childhood, stuffing grape leaves with ground beef, passing around plates of mezze and taking in the delicate scent of rose- and orange-blossom waters. Roden wrote *A Book*



Ben Okri's latest book, ***The Freedom Artist***, is a sombre allegory about society under authoritarianism p22



In ***The McMahon Line***
J.J. Singh gives an exhaustive account of the Indo-China border dispute p24

of *Middle Eastern Food* in an effort to preserve the flavours, emotions and memories of a land she and her family were forced out of during the Suez crisis in the mid-50s. In reading her I encountered a woman who communicated history through taste.

Heritage in the kitchen

To read Anissa Helou's *Feast: Food of the Islamic World* – an extensively researched 500-page tome – is to trace the history and food of Islam from the oasis of Medina to the Mughal dynasty in over 300 recipes. Helou, a former art consultant, tells me over a shaky phone connection from New York that it worried her that post 9/11 Muslims were vilified the world over and Islam was presented in such a negative way. "I travelled from Zanzibar to Senegal to Indonesia to Xinjiang collecting recipes, social information and historical context. We owe this people and civilisation a great debt in terms of ingredients and culinary lore," Helou writes with authority and scholarship and her approach to food writing has always been that of preserving culture, especially in conflict-torn regions like Syria and Lebanon where populations are displaced, entire cultures wiped out and the matrilineal transference of food knowledge is all but broken.

Zaitoun, a book on Palestinian cuisine by Yasmin Khan, captures stews and meat dishes from the West Bank, plant-based dishes from Galilee and Gazan food in danger of extinction, depicting the everyday life of Palestinians in an effort to humanise them. A former human-rights activist, Khan believes that her current role as a food writer is no different from that of her previous one as a journalist and activist to bear witness to a human-rights situation. "I am really committed to do what I can to use the power of story and cookery to shine a light on places of conflict. I strongly believe that cultural change is a precursor to political change. And food provides a neutral entry point to open up conversations, build empathy, challenge stereotypes and shift perspectives. Being a woman was an advantage as it helped take me into the kitchens and hearths of Palestinian women. It was such a responsibility and honour to translate the personal heritage that the Palestinian women shared with such generosity into recipes," she tells me.

Redemptive power

While writers like Helou and Khan usher us into geographic and cultural worlds where we otherwise might never go, writers like Laurie Colwin are interpreters of the less-than-perfect everyday life.

"...and that life itself is full, not only of charm and warmth and comfort but of sorrow and tears. But whether we are happy or sad, we must be fed. Both happy and sad people can be cheered up by a nice meal," Colwin writes in the introduction to her book, *More Home Cooking: A Writer Returns to the Kitchen*.

Colwin inspired a whole generation

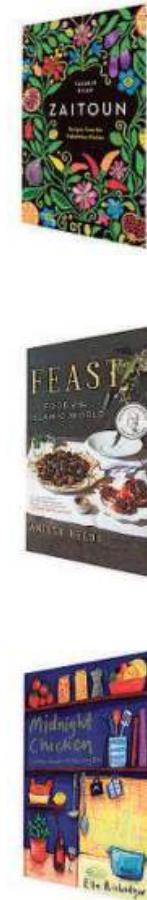
of food memoirists to blend in prose and recipes in an engaging first-person voice. Colwin's essays are like dinner conversations with an old friend, weaving together tales of triumph and disaster in her kitchen and life. Tracing that line of descent from Colwin to the present, one arrives at Ella Risbridger. Risbridger's *Midnight Chicken & Other Recipes Worth Living For* is being hailed as a genre-bending cookbook as it could find itself in the memoir, self-help or food sections of any bookstore. Cooking and writing about it was Risbridger's way of lifting herself out of depression and face the loss of her partner, the writer John Underwood, who died just as she finished the last draft of her book. It is a book that celebrates the redemptive power of cooking and offers a way to look at life with hope.

In the bones

Moving into the realm of food journalism, one encounters Ligaya Mishan, who has been writing the 'Hungry City' column for *The New York Times* for several years now where she reviews 'smaller' restaurants, almost always immigrant-owned, guiding one into hitherto undiscovered alleys of New York. She tells the stories of immigrants with food at the centre but questions of politics and race are never too far away. Mishan has been challenging and stretching the boundaries of food writing by always evocatively describing food (she has an MFA in creative writing and poetry) but giving just as much importance to the lives and thoughts of the people around the food. For years food writers have been given the memo to stay apolitical and Mishan detonates that by wearing her Asian-American activist hat every single time she writes about food. This is urgent and important work in a world most definitely swerving to the Right everywhere, with no tolerance for minorities and immigrants.

As this journey of discovery of women's voices in food continues, I am more convinced than ever that some of the most significant stories of our times are related to food – from hunger, to issues of ecology and sustainability, to questions of identity and the self. Food writing isn't about peripheral text around glossy-styled photographs, endless descriptions of how a dish or an ingredient tastes or culinary flights of fancy. As with food, the writing about it can help us understand what forms our body and bones, our thoughts and aspirations and who we are as a civilisation. Untouched by criticism that cooking is frivolous work and writing about it is sentimental tosh, generations of women have tirelessly documented life as it happens, transforming themselves into unacknowledged anthropologists, ethnographers, historians and activists. It is perhaps time we begin to take notice and recognise that contribution in the pages of world history.

The writer is the author of the cookbook, *Five Morsels of Love*.



I am more convinced than ever that some of the most significant stories of our times are related to food — from hunger, to ecology, to questions of identity and the self

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

Cook for life

The exceptional few who broke out of traditional roles to become chefs

RAHUL VERMA

A musician friend of mine is particularly fond of a line that figures in a Dev Anand-Hemant Kumar song from the 1952 film *Jaal. Zindagi key geet ki dhun badal key dekh ley* (Change the melody of your life), he often sings. He knows what it means. A toxicologist, he chuckles academics several years ago and now regales millions with his music. Whenever I hear the song, I doff my cap to people who break out of a familiar and comfortable world. And I am sure that people who follow their hearts have stories to tell.

Ritu Dalmia, for one, certainly does. She is a self-taught chef who runs several Italian restaurants. In her book, *Italian Khana*, she writes about how she embraced cooking. "My love affair with Italian food began when I was sixteen," she writes. "I had dropped out of school and was travelling all over Italy, trying to sell marble. Everywhere I went, I was surrounded by food. Markets overflowed with boisterously coloured fruits and vegetables. In small shops I found baskets of still warm ricotta cheese. I could hear the hiss and sizzle of artichokes dropped in hot oil in the Jewish quarters in Rome. If I close my eyes I can still smell them."

Eureka moments

I love reading this book, not just for the simple recipes it carries, but also for the way she describes food. She travelled around Italy, trying out a red mullet encrusted with black olive pâté, with just a squeeze of lemon over it, buttery goose liver, and zucchini and feta cheese fritters. Her Italian love affair soon turned into a "full-blown obsession" and she started out as a chef-entrepreneur with a restaurant called MezzaLuna in New Delhi.

In many of the books in my

Perfecting the craft of cooking could be a lifetime's very happy work, even in the domestic kitchen of an enthusiastic amateur



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

cookbook corner, chefs mention the eureka moments that pushed them towards food. In *How I Learned to Cook*, Tamasin Day-Lewis refers to her turning point – a meal with her boyfriend and a rich American at La Tante Claire in England when she was 19 and about to study English at King's College, Cambridge.

"The moment the fine linen was napped across my knee, the menu perused, the champagne poured, and the bread served with sweet, unsalted French butter, I felt as excited as one does after a spectacularly fine overture or the first act of a brilliant play. But it wasn't until the dinner that I was really blown away," writes the filmmaker, author, and TV show presenter. Dessert was feuilleté aux poires: "A coffin of the most stratospherically light puff pastry into which was set a perfectly poached half pear covered with a thin vein of caramel arrived." The dish had an "extraordinary influence" on her life. "It was about entering the world I had seen as somewhat frivolous before, realising that it could be serious, that perfecting the craft of cooking could be a lifetime's very happy work, even in the domestic kitchen of an enthusiastic amateur."

My friend, celebrity chef Ranveer Brar, has often talked about how he started. His landowning father wanted him to be an engineer. But Brar had been charmed by the culinary art ever since he prepared some *meethey chawal* (sweet rice) in a gurdwara where he was helping as a small boy. He recalls in *Come into My Kitchen* how he ran away from home as a teenager, and started working with Ustad Munir Ahmed, one of Lucknow's oldest kababchis. "At 17, after six months with Munir Ustad, my parents finally gave in to my decision," writes Brar.

Whether Brar or Dalmia, I am glad they chose to become cooks. Feeding people well is a special skill not everyone can boast of. Clearly, the marble and engineering industries' loss is the culinary world's gain.

The writer likes reading and writing about food as much as he does cooking and eating it. Well, almost.

IN CONVERSATION

'Turkish is a language of the heart'

Bestselling Turkish author Ayşe Kulin says it's foolish to ban the written word

ARUNIMA MAZUMDAR

Freedom of speech is a much-abused concept in Turkey today. In the last five years, more than 100 Turkish journalists have been detained, writers have gone into exile, and several bookstores have been shut down in the country. Recently, authors like Elif Shafak and Abdullah Şevki have been charged of 'promoting' child abuse in their fiction because they have dared to deal with this ugly social reality.

Naturally, these topics come up when I meet bestselling Turkish author Ayşe Kulin for a breakfast of coffee and apple pie at a café in the historic Taksim Square of Istanbul.

"We are going through one of the most difficult periods of our republican life. As Ottomans, we faced war and collapse. All our institutions are getting shattered again, economically we are busted, and our secular system, which made us very proud, is falling apart," says Kulin, sipping her coffee and staring into space.

Kulin has several novels to her credit, besides five short-story anthologies and one poetry book. "I was in Rome for a literary conference when I heard about the controversy around Abdullah Şevki's novel. Frankly, I have never heard of him or



his book. Elif (Shafak) and I are writers who make critical statements about our leader from time to time. I've written three open letters to the President till date. Both our names were dragged into this debate but I've chosen not to react."

No boundaries

"Literature is not meant to preach or teach. It is meant to portray all aspects of life and human nature, and it's foolish to censor the written word. Time has proved that today we read freely all the works that were banned once, like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or the works of Oscar Wilde. Whatever is banned today will be free tomorrow, because literature has no boundaries."

Kulin won her first literary award, the Haldun Taner Short Story Award, in 1995 for her short story 'Foto Sabah Resimleri' ('Morning Images'). A year later, the story won her the prestigious Sait Faik Short Story Award. Then, in 1997, she was chosen as the Writer of

the Year by the Istanbul Communication Faculty for her biographical novel, *Aylin*. From then on, she has received at least two to three awards every year from different organisations, societies, foundations and universities. Today, at the age of 77, she has 40 awards – national and international – to her name.

Kulin writes in Turkish, and her works have been translated into as many as 23 foreign languages. Yet she is not happy.

"Turkish is not like any other methodical language of the European linguistic group. A writer like me, who writes with the dancing steps of her tongue, capturing readers with the eloquence of her language, making them feel each time as if they are reading their own story, does not benefit from translation."

I know it's not the fault of the translators, but I am always disappointed with my translated work. Turkish is not a language of the mind,

but of the heart, and it loses its soul when translated," she explains. Her novel, *Kanadı Kirik Kuşlar*, translated into English as *Without a Country*, was released in India recently.

Life as literature

Kulin's novels are based on the life she has lived, the relationships she has experienced, and the people she has grown up with. Her journey has been unique.

She married soon after graduating in 1961 and then went to study at London School of Economics (LSE). But fate had different plans.

"I had no idea of birth control pills at that time and with my two boys born 11 months apart – almost like twins – I had to drop out of LSE and become a mum instead," she recalls.

The marriage lasted only three years, she says. She then worked, first as a journalist and then as an art gallery director. She remarried in 1967, and gave birth to two more boys and

BOOKMARK



Translation award

Sumangala Mummigatti has received this year's Kannada Sahitya Parishat's Translation award for *Koneya Ale*, her translation into Kannada of *The Last Wave*, Pankaj Sekhsaria's debut novel on the people, ecology and history of the Andaman Islands.



Library of the year

North Yorkshire's Harrogate Library has won *The Bookseller's* Library of the Year Award 2019. A further eight libraries are also celebrated in the shortlist, published on July 12, including a school library and a specialist audiobook library.

translated tonnes of books on history.

By 1978, Kulin was twice divorced and working behind the camera as a stage producer, art director and assistant director. She continued writing for daily newspapers and magazines as a freelance journalist.

Unwise transition

"You see, I had to work overtime to make ends meet. Filmmaking is very exciting and rewarding, but a tiring profession. So I gave it up to try my luck at public relations. I wrote the two short stories that won me awards. I also started writing *Aylin* at that time. I used to write either late into the night or wake up early in the morning to write. When *Aylin* became a bestseller, I quit my job and decided to write non-stop. That's what I have been doing since."

Of course, when you talk about Turkish literature, Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk's name crops up automatically. Speaking about Pamuk, Kulin says, "I think he's a great writer and I am thankful to him for the honour he has brought to Turkey. For me, his best work and what I'll call his masterpiece is *My Name is Red*. How I wish that I had written that book! To be honest, I like the books he wrote before he won the Nobel. *The Museum of Innocence* and the actual museum (of the same name) have had no impact on me."

"But yes, his victory had a global significance and it did open a locked door to Turkish writers, including me. For the first time in many years I had the chance to meet a foreign publisher in Switzerland and had my first book translated into German. It's a novel called *One Day* (in Turkish) and is about the Turkish-Kurdish conflict," she adds.

In her spare time – which is very rare – Kulin likes to visit art galleries and watch "meaningful cinema or theatre". She likes to spend her summers with her big family – consisting of four sons and eight grandchildren – at a farmhouse on the Aegean coast.

"The whole world is experiencing an unwise transition. Take a look at the most influential leaders, they are either dictators like in the far East and West-Asian countries or the fools in the U.S. Fascist movements are on the rise in Eastern Europe. And then there's the bigger issue of climate change that hangs like death over all our heads. The future looks scary," she says. Suddenly, the sunny Sunday morning seems a little bleached.

The interviewer is a Delhi-based writer.



Mountain Echoes

Mountain Echoes - Bhutan Festival of Art, Literature and Culture, now in its 10th year, will take place from August 23 to 25 in Thimphu. The theme for this edition of Mountain Echoes is 'Many lives: Many Stories'. It will have 80 speakers from countries across the globe.

STRANGER SHORES

Leaving the fields behind

Dhan Gopal Mukerji was writing diaspora fiction in the 1920s, long before the concept became fashionable

SACHIDANANDA MOHANTY

Indian-American authors might be all the rage today but they were a rarity at the beginning of the 20th century. But there was one man in the 1920s writing children's books in America with clearly Indian themes and settings.

He was Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1890-1936), a writer largely forgotten today. Eminent Stanford critic Gordon H. Chang describes Mukerji as a person who "holds the distinction of being the first author of Asian-Indian ancestry who successfully wrote for American audiences about Indian life".

Dhan Gopal was born on July 6, 1890, in a village on the outskirts of Calcutta. His early education was in schools set up by Scottish missionaries; eventually he went to the University of Calcutta, where he displayed a special flair for English. The memories of his serene childhood would serve him well in his later turbulent years.

An intellectual life

Dhan Gopal greatly admired his elder brother Jadu Gopal, who was part of the militant nationalist movement in British India. Although Jadu seems to have played a crucial role in the immigration of his younger brother, what Dhan Gopal did exactly to make his way to American academia remains ambiguous. Chang says there are two versions, one heroic and another more practical, and both seem to have been encouraged by Dhan Gopal himself. According to the first, "Heeding his brother, Mukerji escaped by diving into the Ganges in Calcutta and swimming out to seek refuge aboard a Dutch ship, which happened to be bound for Japan."

To his family, he said that "he may have worked as a laborer in Idaho harvesting sugar beets, and somewhere along the way, his charm, intelligence and English language ability impressed the



The cosmopolitan Portrait of Dhan Gopal in the April 1916 issue of *The Hindusthanee Student*. WIKICOMMONS

foreman, who encouraged him to leave the fields to get a higher education." Whatever the case, Dhan Gopal entered the University of California in August 1910, one of the few of his compatriots to do so.

Dhan Gopal's fame has to be measured against the fact that there was a fair bit of discrimination at this time against Asian-Americans, which had culminated in The Immigration Act of 1917, also known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act. Dhan Gopal probably survived by largely keeping himself confined to academics, unlike his celebrated countrymen Sailen Ghosh and M.N. Roy, who were part of the Indian freedom struggle in the U.S.

Jungle tales

Although sensitive to race relations, Dhan Gopal never allowed racial prejudices to affect him. His books for children were mainly his own versions of tales he had heard in India, filled with nostalgia for a life he had left behind. They were hugely successful.

One of them, *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*, won the 1928 Newbery

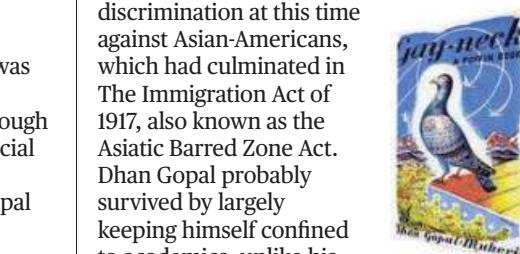
Medal, awarded for the best children's literature of the year. He also wrote non-fiction, poetry and translations, which were published in prestigious forums such as *The Century Magazine* and *The Atlantic*. The first part of his 1923 autobiography, *Caste and Outcast*, deals with his India experience, in particular his rebellion against the Brahminical tradition of his family ('Caste'), while the second section ('Outcast') is about how he felt in America.

As Dhan Gopal's publishing fortune declined, he often came into conflict with his editors, publishers and literary agents. But he continued with his lecture tours, and even wrote a rejoinder to the hostile account of India by Katherine Mayo in a book called *A Son of Mother India Answers*. While it was well received in critical circles, it was not a commercial success. This, combined with personal difficulties, made him seek refuge in the Ramakrishna Mission, but he ended up taking his life in New York at the age of 46.

Dhan Gopal is one of the earliest cosmopolitan Indian modernists who travelled abroad and wrote from there. His stories, rooted in Indian myths and folklore, brought his native world view to a culture that was notoriously insular. He married an American and had friends from across the globe –

Will and Ariel Durant, Romain Rolland, Witter Bynner, Jawaharlal Nehru. In his life and letters, Dhan Gopal is a sparkling example of an intellectual who combined tradition and modernity. As the world becomes more intent on closing borders, Dhan Gopal reminds us of that once cherished ideal of cosmopolitanism.

The writer, who taught English at the University of Hyderabad, is the author of *Cosmopolitan Modernity in Early 20th Century India*.



New children's laureate

Cressida Cowell, author of *How To Train Your Dragon*, has been named the new Children's Laureate of the U.K. She will hold the title for two years. She plans to make reading interesting so that children are weaned off the telly and learn to exercise their imagination.

BROWSE FICTION

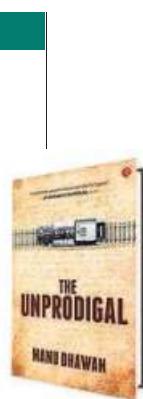
The Unprodigal

Manu Dhawan

Rupa

₹295

• Aryan, the genius and now-failed son of the country's richest man, finds himself trying to unearth the truth behind the death of the only person he loved — his grandfather. The conspiracy he sniffs out is bigger than what he had imagined. He will have to make the longest journey of his life — both mental and physical — to fight and find the truth.

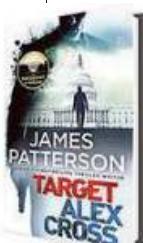
**Target Alex Cross**

James Patterson

Penguin Random House

₹399

• Alex Cross and his family join men and women on the streets of Washington, DC, to mourn the unexpected death of the president. Then a prominent senator is assassinated. The new president calls on Cross to lead an FBI investigation to capture America's most-wanted criminal. What follows plunges the country into chaos.

**Nirvana in a Corporate Suit**

Runjhun Noopur

TreeShade Books

₹350

• On an average bad day, a troubled corporate guy finds himself sucked into a mystical world of talking mirrors, alternate dimensions, crazy set designs, terrifyingly apt background music, and one crazy Baba who loves Cobain and sarcasm. Will he survive this adventure to find the happiness he craves for?

**The Nickel Boys**

Colson Whitehead

Fleet

₹599

• In this follow-up to the Pulitzer-wining *The Underground Railroad*, this is the story of two boys sentenced to a stretch in a reform school in Jim-Crow-era Florida. The Nickel Academy is a chamber of horrors, where abuse is rife, and where any boy who resists is likely to disappear.

**Dust Under Her Feet**

Sharbari Zohra Ahmed

Tranquebar

₹499

• In 1940s' Calcutta, Yasmine Khan is the doyenne of the nightclub scene. The U.S. sets up an army base in the city and Yasmine falls for an American soldier, Lt. Edward Lafaver. Set in the last years of the British Raj and World War II, this novel is about love, betrayal, racism and social pressures.



Shadow play That most ancient of Western metaphors: Plato's cave. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ALLEGORY

A river runs through it

As a critique of authoritarianism, Ben Okri's latest book questioning the nature of reality is relevant but toothless

KEERTHIK SASIDHARAN

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a writer in possession of a singular idea must be in want of new ways to return to it. Like V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, who have wrestled with their favourite themes time and again — self-deception for Naipaul and exilic non-belonging for Rushdie — Ben Okri, in his latest novel, *The Freedom Artist*, returns to that most ancient and unanswerable of questions: what is reality?

Despite having lived in England for much of his life, Okri's imagination has remained entwined with the histories of Nigeria in particular, and Africa more generally. What this has meant is a persistent awareness of the tumults following decolonisation, the disfigurement of social life by violence and corruption, the claustrophobias of decades-long military rule and, finally now, the venality of democracy even as corporate powers disembowel its resources and the barbarisms of the Islamic militant mar the body politic.

The silver lining of being part of such a complex historical and cultural landscape is that Okri's writings are imbued with two vast ambitions.

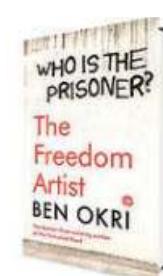
One, to salvage portions from the ocean-like vastness of African, and Nigerian, storytelling traditions. And second, to repurpose these findings for the world, not as a didactic bore or a moralising scold, but as an individual artist, a sculptor of worlds with porous boundaries between our all-too-real world and the many unseen ones human societies carry within.

Ancient metaphor

In *The Freedom Artist*, written as an assemblage of fictional vignettes — readers of Eduardo Galeano might find it familiar — Okri returns to meditate upon the white whale of his literary career: the nature of reality. But unlike his most famous novel, *The Famished Road*, where a child's life amidst humans and spirits

becomes a narrative means to see an agrarian society, a thinly veiled post-colonial Nigeria, acquire the accoutrements of a modern state, *The Freedom Artist* is after something darker. *The Famished Road* is marked by a child's (and young author's) lightness while *The Freedom Artist* is a sombre allegory by an author in his 60s about a society quivering under the jackboot of authoritarianism.

The book situates itself in that most ancient of metaphors in Western philosophy: Plato's cave. Similar to the inhabitants in that thought experiment, the characters of Okri's novel are born into a prison — a cognitive and psychological confinement — that they mistake, or have been told to believe, is freedom. Humans deriving meaning from being attached to some authoritarian ectoplasm that is the arbiter of moral rights and wrongs.

**The Freedom Artist**

Ben Okri

Head of Zeus

₹1,292

Until one day, greenshoots of free thinking burst forth in unexpected ways. An autodidact reads in an ancient book: "Humans are born in prison, and everywhere think they are free." Then a young girl discovers through another book the hidden beauties – "a river of light" – about reality.

Enemy within

These epiphanies born from reading however become "anomalies". They threaten the calibrated falsehoods in that panopticon. Books are then proscribed, the inquisitive are declared enemies of the state, languages atrophy, and mass media becomes a facile organ of the state. Eventually, the state, run by a shadowy "Hierarchy", declares in a fit of utilitarian zeal that all who can't contribute to social happiness will be eaten by the jackals of the state. As in any authoritarian rule, these bureaucratic carnivores set out with great gusto to devour in the name of social order. Ultimately, the people recognise the much-dreaded Hierarchy as themselves.

All of this strikes one as force-fitted, far-fetched and even indulgent in its loopiness. Yet, as I write this, we learn of popular uprisings in places like Sudan where military grade weapons spray death onto protests led by young women who seek to break free from encrustations of official truths.

Because Okri's allegory is denuded of cultural specificity, it has a timelessness to it, no different from Kafka's parables or Borges' fiction

This, of course, should not be surprising, for great artistic sensibilities are far-seeing, unbound by the heaviness of facts. Yet, one can't escape feeling that Okri's allegory is neither subversive nor unknown. In fact, there is a certain harmlessness to it – it speaks the truth, but it speaks softly and without bite.

The book has a gentleness of a poetic sensibility that other contemporary works that have resorted to allegories in order to critique don't have. Be it the Algerian writer Boualem Sansal, who writes allusively but bitingly about Islam and Muhammad, or the dystopias of Michel Houellebecq, where hijab-wearing women and dreams of oral sex commingle as paranoias about Europe's demography.

Yet, unlike them, precisely because Okri's allegory is denuded of cultural specificity, it has a timelessness to it, no different from Kafka's parables or Borges' fiction.

As long as tyranny views the written word as potentially subversive, Okri's *The Freedom Artist* will have offered us a sketch of how individuals and societies sometimes break free to bathe once again in the "river of light".

The writer lives in New York City.

REIMAGINING

The mystic and the myth

The Kabir of the novel is the historical Kabir in name alone: our Prime Minister might well mark him down as part of the Khan Market gang



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ADITYA SUDARSHAN

Kabir as you've never known him" is the promise *The Arsonist* holds out to the reader, and one that it fulfils, albeit dubiously. As far as I can judge, the most striking traits of the character Kiran Nagarkar has created here are not even imaginative glosses on historical reality, but simply the preferred features of the writer's own imagination. We know, for instance, that the historical Kabir criticised hypocrisy in religion, that is, showy religiosity, unaccompanied by personal virtue. We know that purity of heart was the thing he championed as the path to god. We also know that some concept of a personal god was real and absolutely dear to him though he did not concern himself with doctrine.

Contemporary Kabir

But Nagarkar's character emerges, from the first page to the last, as practically the opposite personality. Kabir in this book is fascinated by religious doctrine, which he loves to dissect and mock, for the edification of his disciples. He is highly sceptical of a personal god, whom he speaks with, he says, only "to play it safe". He does not preach any kind of purity, but is a lover of pleasure, particularly sexual pleasure. Moreover, for a large chunk of the book he is presented as a confidante of the ruling king of the region, who depends on him to solve various socio-

political problems (these being the only occasions where Kabir is observed to perform "good deeds".)

In sum, 'the arsonist' Kabir is the mystic Kabir in name alone. What we really have here is an intellectual man of the world with a coterie of followers, basking in political favour and excelling in virtue-signalling. Unfortunately for him, our present Prime Minister might mark him down as a member of the Khan Market gang (a badge he would no doubt wear defiantly). But this is a significant observation, because it points to the *raison d'être* of Nagarkar's book: that the present-day Indian liberal stands in dire need of a hero.

For this reason, I suspect the minds behind the publication of this book might regard the issue of historicity and accuracy as a non-issue. After all, their avowed goal is to turn "Kabir into our contemporary", to which end *The Arsonist* flaunts such blatant anachronisms as Kabir speaking of dark matter, the unified theory of the universe, and women's magazines. But the supreme nonchalance of the tack does not really legitimise it. Ironically, it calls to mind the most egregious kinds of right-wing myth-making. Now, the intentions involved may be laudable, and the storytelling quite enjoyable, as Nagarkar's storytelling naturally is, but the result of all such wilfulness is identical: the sought-after hero is reduced to a cipher, which is quickly filled by one's own self. Therefore, *The Arsonist* does not cast

Kabir as our contemporary; it casts our contemporary as Kabir.

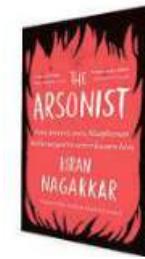
Burning heaven

This is a double-disaster, whose pieces must be carefully picked up, because they block the way forward, substituting salvation with delusion. Nagarkar's instinct in writing this book is probably astute. Kabir is probably a most edifying figure for the Anglicised Indian to get to know (his name is an increasingly popular one for their children). An intensely secularised community, now at its most broken-hearted, would do well, via the mystic, to seriously consider god, who, we are told, is closer to the broken-hearted. But if pride is incorrigible, then such proximity becomes fatal. It hardens disbelief into hatred.

Then, snatching the cloak of the mystic, we use it to parade as angels of light, while indulging our nihilism all the more. "Now we'll burn heaven and hell and smoke and flush out God himself," exults the arsonist Kabir of Nagarkar's imagination, at the close of this book, by which point he is hard to distinguish from The Joker. It is difficult to say if he really considers this a helpful sentiment, just as it is difficult to know what our leading liberal politician has meant, in recent times, by claiming his politics to be "love".

Nevertheless, a better acquaintance with love in the public sphere and a better acquaintance with the historical Kabir are indeed to be recommended. Not so much the arsonist Kabir.

The writer is the author, most recently, of *The Outraged: Times of Strife*.



The Arsonist
Kiran Nagarkar
Juggernaut
₹599

BROWSE NON-FICTION

Kashmir: Rage and Reason

Gowhar Geelani

Rupa

₹395

• “The new generation has only witnessed oppression and violence,” writes Geelani in the preface, “Kashmir’s generation born after the 1990s is fearless, conscious, educated and articulate.” Blending analyses with anecdotes, he traces the Valley’s tortured history and the many facets of Kashmiri ‘nationalism’ and the betrayals.

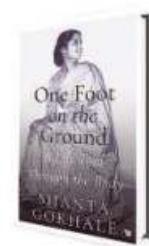
**One Foot on the Ground: A Life Told Through the Body**

Shanta Gokhale

Speaking Tiger

₹399

In this autobiography, Gokhale, writer, translator, cultural commentator, traces the arc of her life over eight decades through the progress of her body, as it grows, matures and begins to wind down. It’s a story of a life filled with happiness, heartbreak, wonder and acceptance.

**Caste Matters**

Suraj Yengde

Penguin Random House

₹599

A first generation Dalit scholar reveals how caste crushes creativity and is disturbingly similar to other forms of oppression, such as race and class. Yengde argues that until Dalits lay claim to power and Brahmins join hands against Brahminism to effect real transformation, caste will continue to matter.

**Tawaifnama**

Saba Dewan

Context/Westland Books

₹899

This is a multi-generational chronicle of a family of well-known tawaifs with roots in Banaras and Bhabua. Through their stories, Dewan explores the history of a community, which had once played a crucial role in the cultural life of northern India, but was eventually violently dismantled.

**The Extraordinary Life and Death of Sunanda Pushkar**

Sunanda Mehta

Pan Macmillan India

₹599

A former schoolmate traces the life of Sunanda Pushkar, her early years in cantonment towns, the first two marriages, a stint in Canada, her rise as a businesswoman in Dubai, and finally the much-publicised years with politician Shashi Tharoor until her controversial death in 2014.



All for peace A little girl poses for a picture with an Indian flag at the India-China border in Bumla, Arunachal Pradesh. AP

POLITICS

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The disputed frontier

J.J. Singh writes a comprehensive account of the India-China border row

STANLY JOHNY

At the turn of the 20th century, Tibet became a strategic chessboard in the Great Game between the Russian and British empires. Russia was seeking to expand its influence across Central Asia. The Manchu empire in China was on its last legs. Britain feared that the Russians would come to a weakened China and raise new threats to British India. In 1903, British troops under the leadership of Col. F.E. Younghusband invaded Tibet. The British plan was to create a buffer between China and India, secure the border between Tibet and India and get favourable trade deals with Tibet. The Younghusband “expedition” set off a chain of events in the eastern Himalayan region the effects of which are still felt in Indo-China relations.

Shifting goalposts

Understandably, J.J. Singh, former Army chief and Arunachal Pradesh Governor, goes straight into the Younghusband expedition, after explaining the geography of Tibet, in his exhaustively-researched book, *The McMahon Line: A Century of Discord*. In 441 pages – a substantial chunk is dedicated to notes and appendices with original documents – Singh offers one of the most comprehensive accounts of one of the most complex border disputes of the modern world.

While Great Game is well-known, *The McMahon Line* narrates the less-talked about story, of its impact on East Asia. After the Younghusband mission, an alarmed China sent troops to Tibet to directly occupy the region. While Britain accepted the de facto Chinese control of Tibet, it wanted the Indo-Tibetan border demarcated and Tibet to remain a buffer. In 1914, Britain called for a conference in Simla between British, Tibetan and Chinese

officials. Sir A.H. McMahon, a secretary in the Foreign Department of the British Indian government, represented India in the conference. After parleys that stretched across months, India and Tibet signed a convention that demarcated the Indo-Tibetan boundary but the Chinese side refused to sign it despite the convention’s promise to respect China’s suzerainty over Tibet (not sovereignty).

This boundary, the red line drawn by McMahon on the map, came to be known as the McMahon Line, which is also internationally accepted as the border between India and China in the eastern sector. But it also remains a bone of contention between the two countries. Singh writes that though China did not sign the Simla convention, it had not opposed the McMahon Line initially. Tibet also saw decades of independent rule after the Simla conference. But the Chinese, he writes, kept changing their goalposts.

Singh is extremely critical of the way Jawaharlal Nehru handled China’s reoccupation (liberation, according to China) of Tibet in 1950. He calls Nehru an idealist, who failed to foresee China’s strategy. “The British strategy of over half a century, of having an autonomous Tibet as a buffer, was put to rest as India looked on passively,” Singh writes. “The Chinese takeover of Tibet by force... exposed the northern borders of India to potential Chinese threat for the first time, highlighting our vulnerability.”

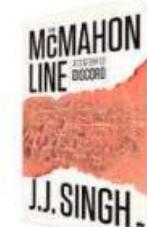
Tangled history

While it’s doubtful whether India at that time could have done something effectively to prevent China from

taking over Tibet – India had its own problems in Kashmir, the unification process was still under way and Tibet itself had signed an agreement with China after troops reached Lhasa – it could certainly have prepared itself better for possible Chinese aggression. There were repeated skirmishes along the border. Nehru, despite his emphasis on friendly relations with China, had told his ambassador to Peking in 1958 that he didn’t trust “the Chinese one bit... They are an arrogant, untrustworthy, devious and hegemonic lot”. But still, Nehru didn’t think there would be a war. The Chinese assault in 1962 led to a humiliating defeat for India.

Both India and China have come a long way since the 1962 war. Though the border issue remains unresolved, bilateral relations have markedly improved over the decades.

India is a rising economic power which is now perhaps the only country that could challenge China in the developing world, Singh writes. “There is an equilibrium and strategic balance of sorts between India and China.” But going forward, he emphasises on three points: India should expand its defensive, offensive and deterrence capabilities; the political leadership of both countries should resolve the border dispute, and work together for a stable and peaceful Asia. India should deepen its engagement with world powers including the U.S. and Russia. While stressing that “peaceful rise” should be India’s motto, Singh repeats the geopolitical axiom: “The unilateral desire of a nation to live in peace cannot be a guarantee of its peaceful existence.”

**The McMahon Line: A Century of Discord**

J.J. Singh

HarperCollins

₹799

POLITICS

Saving the idea of India

A bevy of fighters is pitting themselves dauntlessly against a coercive and polarising Hindu right

SUPARNA BANERJEE

Once in a while a book comes along that makes one rethink the boundaries defining the world of publishing. *Battling for India* is a book of that genre-bending kind. It is not the usual research-led monograph; nor is it a mass market book meant to cater to the popular taste. In other words, it blurs the lines between the serious and the popular, the high-brow and the massy.

This is because the rather weighty theme – the rise of sectarianism and an exclusionary hyper-nationalism in India and the nationwide resistance to these – is treated in an altogether unconventional manner by the editors. Instead of prioritising rhetoric or intellectual discussion it adopts an illustrative, empirical methodology that emphasises lived experience over proselytism or debate. It is an approach that shows us both the corrosive effects of the reigning ultra-Rightist ideology upon the lives and liberty of the Indian people and the diverse ways in which citizens, nationwide, have been resisting the oppressive, divisive regime. The



Justice delayed A protest in Bengaluru against the Gauri Lankesh murder. V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

Introduction identifies this group of resisting men and women who are battling to save both themselves and an 'idea of India' that would guarantee equal citizenship to all Indians.

This bevy of fighters that includes farmers, students, union members, journalists, teachers, and artists – many of them Dalits or Muslim – is 'Battling for India', pitting themselves dauntlessly against a coercive and

polarising 'Battling India'. This contingent, whose tales of gritty resistance to sectarianism and oppression the book presents, speaks not the uniform language of fascist, militarist 'nationalism': its voices, its languages are many and diverse, and in this very diversity it upholds the Constitution-based pluralist idea of India, trying to save it from the jaws of the 'many-headed beast' that is the

'Battling India Parivar'. Subsequent chapters consist of articles laid out in six parts that delineate the fight against 'the thought police', against raw brutality and persecution, unreason and lies; relive notorious incidences of violence against minorities; discuss economic issues like demonetisation; and then deal, medley-fashion, with transgender rights, hate crimes, Section 377 and the like.

Among this eclectic mix of essays some are by stalwart writers or academics like Githa Hariharan and Prabhat Patnaik, while others come from anguished students or activists like Alash Vadakara and Teesta Setalvad. Yet others are by senior journalists pained by the 'toxic atmosphere' of the country.

Amidst all this righteous angst is also Pushpamala N's 'elegy' for Gauri Lankesh that lingers in the mind both for its personal warmth and the veneration it generates for the late Lankesh.

In all, *Battling for India* is a soul-stirring read. The sad irony of having to critique it now – after the 'Battling India Parivar' has won a second term – keeps it from being invigorating.

Battling for India: A Citizen's Reader
Edited by Githa Hariharan & Salim Yusufji
Speaking Tiger Books
₹399

ENVIRONMENT

Life in the mountains

Two ecologists outline what needs to be done to protect the Western Himalayas

INDRANI DUTTA

Think of the Himalayas, and the images that come to mind is that of lofty peaks, glaciers, gushing rivers, rows upon rows of greens and simple hills-people eking out a living. Writings on these high mountains have mostly been in the nature of travelogues or hikers and mountaineers' tales narrating their trials, tribulations and triumphs.

The partnership of Sanjeeda Pandey, an officer of the Indian Forest Service, who played a key role in the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area being listed as a World Heritage site, and Anthony Gaston, who has studied Indian wildlife and its birds since 1969, including a research for his Ph.D. at Oxford University, has brought forth this book.

It diligently surveys the wildlife of the Western Himalayas, and examines what remains of the fauna and how seriously it is endangered. Importantly, it also documents lives of the people – their cultures, religion, arts, craft, styles and superstitions,



Close connect The attitude of local communities to the ecosystems is important. WIKI COMMONS

complete with pictures. The book is thus intended both as history and an ecological guidance of the region which won the Unesco tag in 2014 in recognition of its rich biological diversity.

The book has been neatly divided into chapters on ecological setting, trekking, development of the GHNP, its people, its uniqueness, its birds

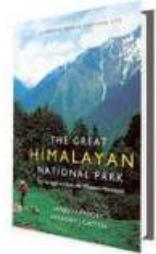
and mammals. A fair amount of research has gone into it with the authors drawing from the 1886 *Civil and Military Gazette*, annual reports on forest administration and 1926 journals of the Bombay Natural History Society for citing a note on birds of Kulu.

"The key to future protection lies in the attitudes of local communities

towards the natural ecosystems that surround them," the authors write in the chapter on people and GHNP. Their thoughts on the future of biodiversity in the western Himalayas must be taken note of.

The writers observe that the GHNP experiment shows that suddenly stopping people from using an area will result in conflicts and confrontation. "Hence the park's management is arranged in a particular order of prioritising working with the local communities (their livelihoods) to reduce their dependencies on the Park's natural resources and making interventions to manage, monitor and protect the natural habitats/species and resources which will happen only when local communities co-operate."

Listing the lessons learnt from the various experiments at the GHNP, the writers say facilitation by a (flexible) bureaucracy, scaling up community-based natural resource management, interactions between forest department staff and local organisations are some of the key enablers.



The Great Himalayan National Park
Sanjeeda Pandey & Anthony J. Gaston
Niyogi Books
₹1,500

NOSTALGIA

The menu was so not the point

As IIT-Madras turns 60 this month, remembering its famous canteen named after a subatomic particle



Freedom at midnight Quark (above) was built by the students of IIT in the 80s; and (below) the sprawling green campus. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT & M. VEDHAN

VIIJAYSREE VENKATRAMAN

Quark, a boardless eatery at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, was an insider destination. Deep inside the campus, flanked by hostels, the canteen would open late in the evening. As students, we went there for an after-dinner snack or a hot drink, so we could study or work on problem sets late into the night. At least, that was the intent.

The tech school in the urban forest campus turns 60 this year, but Quark hasn't been around that long. In the early 80s, students asked for a canteen that would stay open long after the hostel kitchens closed for the day. When they got the go-ahead, the students went on to design and build the canteen themselves, with guidance from professors in the structural engineering department.

Small is beautiful

Prof. P.S. Rao, now retired, recalls how the students wanted something that looked different from the campus's flat beam and column structures. They made components of the umbrella-

shaped roof in the lab and erected the structure on site with a make-shift crane. The crane, with its limited lifting capacity, decided the size of the canteen.

In 1984, the tiny canteen came into

being with a name that honoured its size. Quark is a subatomic particle, smaller than a proton or neutron, and is a basic constituent of all matter in the universe. Physicist Murray Gell-Mann, who originally named quarks,

was inspired by James Joyce's novel *Finnegan's Wake*. He considered Joyce's line 'Three quarks for Muster Mark' as a take on a pub owner's call of 'Three quarts for Mister Mark.'

No one ever ordered three quarts of anything at Quark, but the name stuck. It was so widely accepted that a name board was deemed unnecessary. "Students gravitated naturally towards Quark in the evenings and after dinner," says Prof. C.V.R. Murty, one of the student-architects.

At first, Quark sold tea, coffee and some snacks. The students organised cooks and supplies and kept the books. Sometimes, they even did the cooking. But Quark lost its student-run status after an embezzlement scandal came to light. The authorities turned Quark over to professional caterers. This was just as well because it meant that students from the 90s on, like me, got an extensive menu.

The fried rice at Quark – flecked with green beans, capsicum, and tiny cubes of carrots – was a memorable item. For an extra rupee, you could add bits of scrambled egg to the rice. Whether you were escaping from the hostel's uranium-yellow 'radioactive'

At first, Quark sold tea, coffee and some snacks. The students organised cooks and supplies and kept the books. Sometimes, they even did the cooking



lemon rice or the idli-sambar dinner, you were grateful for this warm, flavourful dish. Kheema dosa, noodles and pao bhaji were other staples. Everything was reasonably priced.

But Quark's menu was beside the point really. If you lived in Sarayu, the only girl's hostel on campus back then, you went to the canteen because you could.

Riding a bicycle, enjoying the cool night breeze, and hanging out with friends was a treat. Anywhere else in the city, getting out so late for coffee or tea would be impossible for a spirited girl or even a whole gaggle of them. Quark gave some of us Sarayuites with strict curfews at home that first taste of freedom.

Questions and more

What else was Quark good for? Students sat on its steps or its cuboid concrete blocks, a stand-in for café furniture, to nurse their beverages and take big decisions. Which electives to pick? How to pass courses with tough instructors? Which American university's admission offer to accept? Quark was also our informal venue for skits, and a brain-storming base for the altruistic to plan relief work.

Prof. Murty recalls the devastating cyclone of 1985, when residents of Taramani and Velachery, then villages, took shelter on the campus, and students gathered at Quark to organise help for them.

Today, few old students will recognise Quark's replacement. In its new avatar, the canteen is a multi-cuisine restaurant. It now has a board that says Quark, but in a strange reversal students refer to it by the name of the restaurant chain that runs the place.

Not too long ago, I returned to Quark, with a former Sarayuite, who is now a professor at the institute. We ate rotis with bhindi masala and dal fry. It was broad daylight but, as before, everything tasted delicious.

The writer is a Boston-based science journalist and an IIT-Madras alumna.

PEACE IN A POD

No beginning or end

Why the mystery of the Isdal woman continues to draw an audience

USHA RAMAN

We like stories to begin at the beginning and give us a nice sense of an ending (thank you, Julian Barnes). But what if the only entry to a story was from its end? A tantalisingly brief window into a life, with nothing to outline a past and the way it got to this point? Then again, isn't that how most mysteries begin? The discovery of a body, the slow (or quick) unravelling of the knots that lead to possibilities in the past and some idea of roads to the end. We read into the patterns formed by those twisting back-and-forth strands and build a story.

This tale unburies its end with the remains of an unknown woman on a snow-covered Norwegian slope. "Objects had been laid out around the body, labels had been cut off from her clothes," narrates podcast host Marit Higraff, an investigative journalist

from Norwegian public broadcaster NRK. "All traces of her identity had been deliberately removed," says her co-presenter Neil McCarthy, a radio documentary producer from the BBC. At the service in Bergen, in 1971, continues Higraff, "not even the funeral guests knew who she was."

Death in Ice Valley, a collaborative podcast from the BBC and NRK, follows the investigation into the mysterious death of this person who came to be known as 'the Isdal woman'. Running into 10 episodes and a special feature that was aired on June 24 this year, the podcast resembles the bleak Nordic murder mysteries we have all so grown to love. That the events are set in the conifer-and-snow covered hills near the port-town of Bergen (Isdal translates to Ice Valley), and the death at the height of the Cold War lends atmosphere and mystique to what is a fairly sparse basket of evidence to build a story upon.



Higraff had been investigating the story of the Isdal woman for two years before the idea of a podcast was born, and her tenacity and patience in pursuing leads to their minutest detail have yielded a compelling narrative. The listener is drawn in first by the hauntingly beautiful theme music and the strategic use of ambient sound. As they begin to tell the story, Higraff and McCarthy are walking through the woods on a rainy day, their breath catching as they trek uphill, and you hear the crack and rustle of twigs and leaf underfoot. Accompanying them is the only police officer still alive from that day 47 years ago when the body was discovered by two young girls out for walk with their father. "It's almost like we're inside a cloud," says McCarthy, and Higraff tells him that this part of the valley is actually called 'Death Valley'.

The story of the Isdal woman captured the imagination of the Norwegian public when it was first reported, and nearly five decades later, Higraff and McCarthy build on that potential to captivate. They call on newer forensic techniques and the potential of information networks to fill in the yawning gaps in the story. The podcast's Facebook page has some 22,880 followers, many of whom have turned amateur detectives themselves, offering suggestions and attempting to follow through on the clues or decode the scraps of notes left behind by the Isdal woman.

A special episode, recorded live in Bergen, brought together some of these listener interventions and made clear that even though no significant advance has been made in either identifying the woman or figuring out what she was doing in Ice Valley, her story continues to draw an audience.

(A fortnightly series on podcasts.)

The Hyderabad-based writer and academic is a neatnik fighting a losing battle with the clutter in her head.

SUNDAY RECIPE



Veg fried rice

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked white rice
1 carrot finely chopped
3-4 garlic cloves thinly sliced
Small piece ginger, peeled and chopped
8-10 green beans thinly cut
1 medium green capsicum finely chopped
1 medium onion finely chopped
1 stalk spring onion thinly sliced
Oil to cook
Salt to taste
White pepper powder to taste

METHOD

- Heat oil in a non-stick pan, add garlic and sauté for less than a minute. Make sure the garlic doesn't burn.
- Add all the veggies except spring onion, and cook in high heat till they appear tender.
- Add salt, pepper and mix well.
- Add the rice after gently separating the grains with your fingers. You don't want rice to clump together.
- Toss everything together well till the rice is finely coated with oil.
- Turn off heat. Garnish rice with spring onion and serve.

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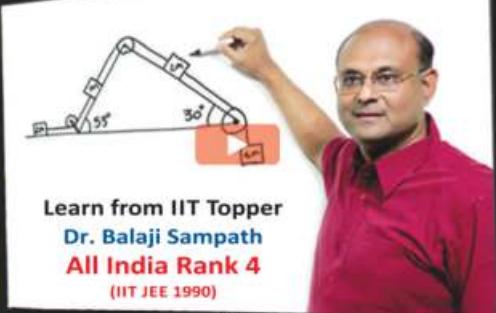
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CLOSE CALL

Let's talk about the C-word

That climate change affects us all is a reality middle-class India continues to dodge

OM ROUTRAY

Something dramatic was happening in India in the 80s. Old India was breaking down. Most of our experiments as a new democracy were failing but no new models were to be seen. In politics, a new generation was growing up after the Emergency but there was no leader of eminence that India could boast of. The economy was hollow but the worst was yet to come. Popular culture was constantly propping up heroes who were angry, disillusioned and fighting the "system".

At the peak of fighting and surviving against all odds came the era of liberalisation. Suddenly, as a nation and as an individual, one could be all that one wanted to be. Families became nuclear, firing the booster rocket and getting rid of deadweight, all in search of a prosperity that was now ready to be grabbed. Among the children from that era there was immense stress on the smartest kid to achieve wealth and pull the rest of the

family up. Trickle-down theory was being practised in every Indian family. The smart child was the achiever and the saviour. If there was ever a set-up ripe for heady individualism, this was it.

Moral arrogance

Today, this is the generation that leads and populates our corporates and industries. Growing up as admired individuals that left the rest behind, this generation is marked by moral arrogance, righteous scoffing at society, and indifference towards the larger community. The feeling is that they rose despite the conditions around them and they could rise only by being apathetic and maintaining a distance from those conditions. They saw age-old practices of frugality as poverty, and consumption as an expression of power.

It is in this context that we are now trying to create dialogues around climate change, food security and environmental awareness. This generation is also the reason why

these conversations have rarely found any resonance. Business leaders today, used to relegating social issues to the CSR team, find themselves on the back foot when asked about climate change. Thankfully, many younger leaders are talking about the climate these days and there is a change at the institutional level.

The problem, however, is that the ownership and intent of making a change has not percolated to the individual employee or citizen level. Departments across corporates are full of highly educated and globally travelled Indians who think of the environment as a topic from their children's textbooks or something the NGOs work on. Despite Delhi topping the list of most polluted cities in the world many times, talk of clean air is something that comes and goes with the winter. Last year, I heard people discussing brands of face mask as if they were buying a new fashion accessory.

Eight countries in the EU have proposed spending 25% of the EU

budget on climate change. The African Development Bank has announced the tripling of its climate financing to reach nearly \$5 billion annually by 2020; similar numbers for the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank are \$6 billion and \$16 billion a year, respectively.

Slow to wake up

While a rare few sectors and corporates have seen business value in climate change, most others have been slow to wake up. More than the leaders, we need the middle rung to be engaged in such conversations.

The challenge is how to sensitise people across strata and roles. Every time I tell people that we compost all of our kitchen waste, they wonder if the house stinks. The conversation usually ends there. Every time I suggest that parents should take their children to farmlands to play with plants and earth, I am told that nobody wants their children to become a farmer. Many people want to buy organic, but they think it is just

Business leaders, used to relegating social issues to the CSR team, find themselves on the back foot when asked about climate change

a fashion label, understanding little of what the process entails. Many talk about farmer distress and how they deserve a better life, but are neither aware nor interested in knowing how our lifestyle choices negatively impacts farmers.

Severed roots

The wealth and good life that today's middle-class enjoys has made them strangely selfish and righteous at the same time. The roots that were torn decades ago are completely severed now. Being the first generation to enjoy New India's wealth, middle-class India carries apathy and arrogance from drawing room to boardroom. The world to them is a binary – they are on the side of development and wealth, while NGOs and development folks are the 'others' who needlessly worry about soil, water, air and poverty.

But we need to persist. There is a small but growing number of people who are becoming aware, responsible

Being the first generation to enjoy New India's wealth, middle India carries the same apathy and arrogance from their drawing room to the boardroom

and appropriately alarmed. We need to take these conversations to the spaces where no one wants them. We need to talk about traceability and slow food at posh dining tables, and about earth and water in corporate boardrooms. We need to talk about microbiomes when we discuss new toys for children and we need to talk about sacred groves when people ask about the business book we are now reading. At the next cocktail party, we need to talk about climate change.

The writer farms in the balcony, complains vocally about issues that bother him and eats his way across the world.



ALLEGEDLY

Life after spine

My spine may be a phantom. But my pain is real. How do I get rid of it?

Having struggled with back pain for three months, I finally, on the recommendation of my friend OTG, visited an orthopaedic who offers a special discount for journalists.

When he saw my X-ray, he nearly fell off his chair. "Get out of my chamber right now!" he shrieked.

"Excuse me," I said. "What do you mean 'chamber'? Are you Chief Justice or orthopaedic? If I don't get out, you'll hold me in contempt or what?"

"I already hold you in contempt!" he said. "You are not even a journalist. You're claiming to be one just to avail my discount!"

"You're mistaken," I said, and showed him my press card.

"Obviously Photoshopped."

I Googled myself and showed him the bylines that came up, with my name and picture. He still wouldn't believe me.

I finally got a letter from a cabinet minister, stating that I am indeed a top journalist of not just India, not just SAARC, but also the entire BIMSTEC. If you don't know what BIMSTEC stands for, please jump into the nearest cup of filter coffee.

Having a Union minister vouch for me seemed to have a calming effect. The ortho held my X-ray against the light. "Look," he said, pointing at what looked like the Milky Way but with several teeth. "What's this?"

"Spine?"

"Exactly!" he said. "It is well known that mammals such as the Great Indian Journalist shed their spines within six months of their first job. No way someone of your vintage still has a spine. You are no journalist." He threw me out.

More investigation

When OTG heard this, he was shocked. "The X-ray revealed a spine?! Are you sure it's not a spine-shaped tumour?"

"No," I said. He advised me to go see Peet Baba, a Unani-Siddha spine specialist, with a fresh X-ray and MRI. Peet Baba gathered all my test reports and dumped them in the dust bin. "All this X-ray and MRI are useless." He wrote down the address of a lab that had an Aura Chakra Machine (ACM).

The ACM images of my back were a colourful mishmash, like faded bathroom tiles. When Peet Baba saw them, he smiled. "The good



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

news is that you don't really have a spine. See," he said, placing the ACM film over UV light. Sure enough, I could see a rib cage and pelvis but no spine.

"Baba-jji, if I don't have a spine, how come I have a backache?"

Peet Baba sighed. "Have you heard of what we call a phantom limb?"

"Of course. It's where an amputee feels sensation in a limb that's been amputated."

"Not just sensation. Amputees can also feel pain in their phantom limbs."

Having a Union minister vouch for me seemed to have a calming effect. The ortho held my X-ray against the light

"So?"

"You have a case of phantom spine," he said. "That's where the pain is coming from."

"So how does one treat an organ that doesn't even exist?"

"Hahaha," Peet Baba guffawed. "That's the limitation of modern Western medicine. Ancient India's *rishi-munis* have long known the answer to your problem. You see, they also spent long hours sitting, day after day. But unlike you journalists, they were meditating, not spending their days proactively retweeting influencers that you wish to suck up to."

"My spine may be a phantom," I said. "But my pain is real. How do I get rid of it?"

"Knowledge is power," Peet Baba

said. "Now you know your spine is not real. Use that knowledge. Act like you don't have any kind of spine. Avoid sitting or standing."

"That's what my ortho also said. But how is that practical?"

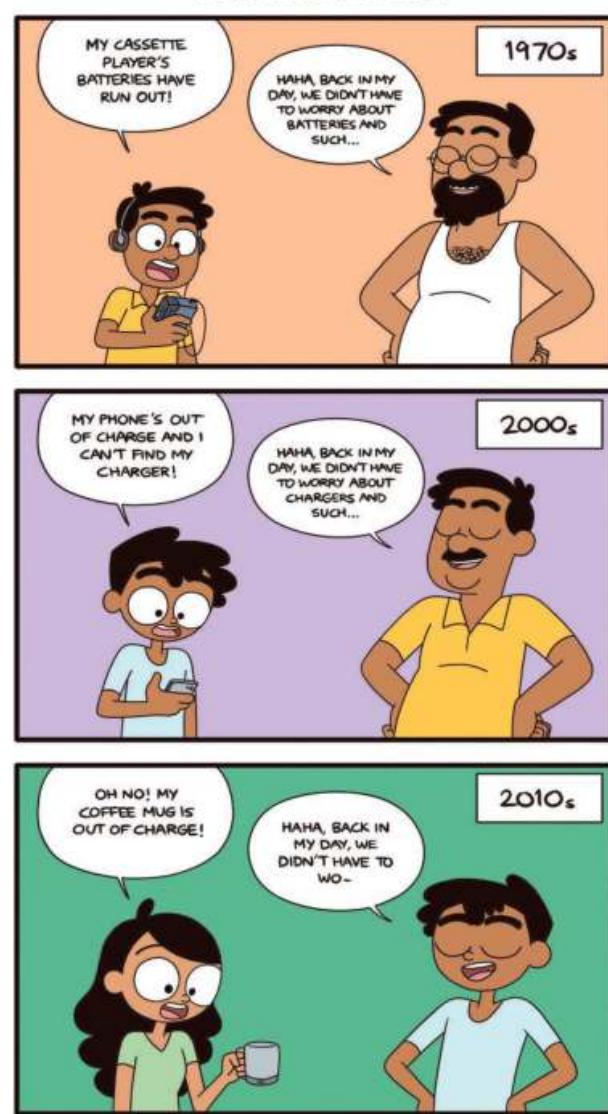
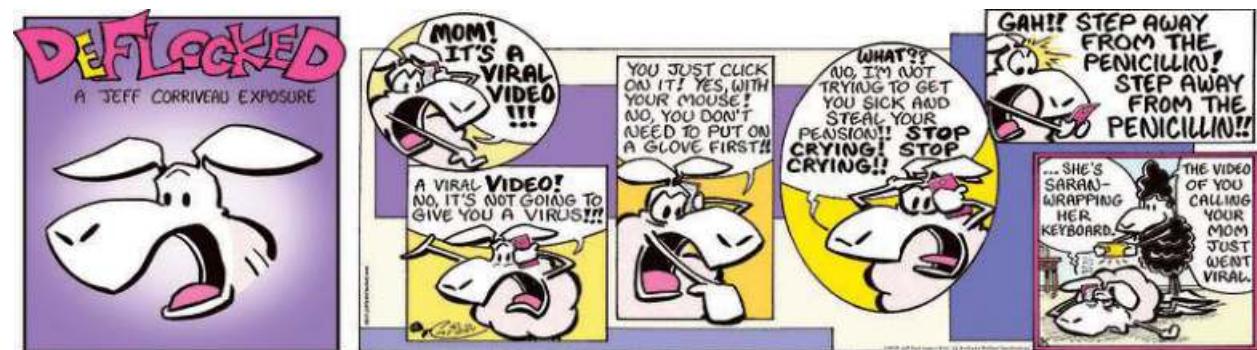
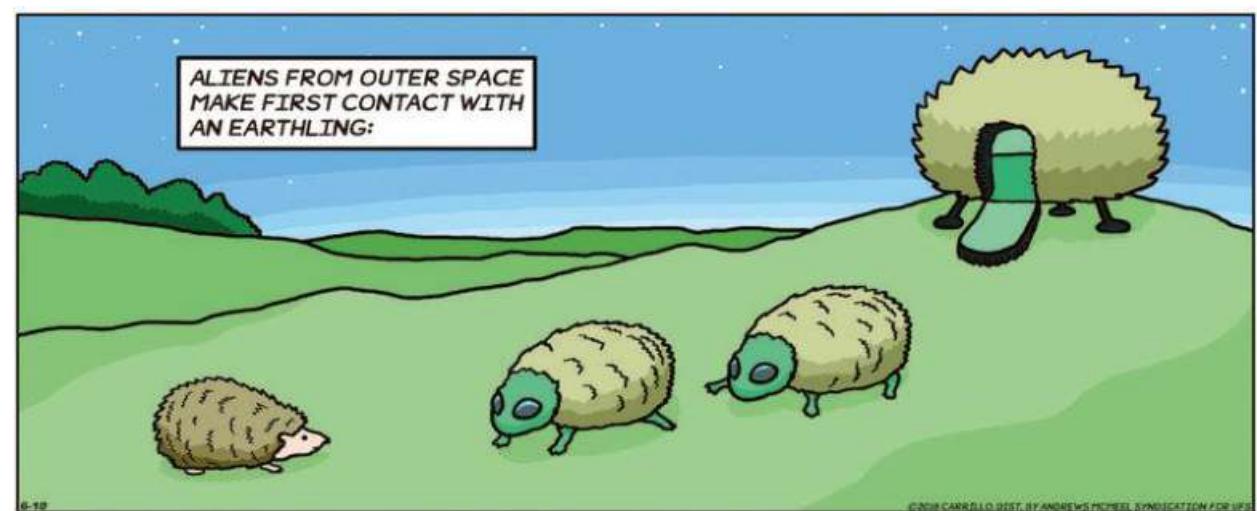
"Who said it's not practical? Aren't you a journalist? You should have no problem spending all your time crawling. You will even get collateral benefits." He explained how, for instance, I could easily circumvent the latest media restrictions and gain access to the Finance Ministry and other government offices by crawling into them.

Secret mantra

He whispered in my ear a secret disyllabic mantra. "Chant it during your morning crawl for 30 days. Watch your professional colleagues on prime time and learn how it's done. I guarantee that your pain will vanish."

I've been following Peet Baba's advice for a week now, and I can tell you, 30 minutes of morning crawl is the best exercise to exorcise a phantom spine and related problems. The more time you spend crawling, the more genuinely spineless you become. Where there is no spine (phantom or otherwise) there is no question of back pain.

As more and more people from every crawl of life – not just journalists but also bureaucrats, judges, cops, tycoons, celebs – adopt the crawl as their default nationalist posture, India could soon become the world's largest democracy of authentically spineless and healthy individuals.

BROWN PAPERBAG BY SAILESH GOPALAN**TECHNOLO GEEZ!****FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND****MODIFY BY XXXXX****THE ROMANTICS BY VASINI VARADAN**

GOREN BRIDGE

Vienna coup

East-West
vulnerable,
South deals

BOB JONES

NORTH	♦ Q 10 8
	♥ J 4
	♦ J 9 4 3 2
	♣ K 10 5
WEST	♠ K 7 5 3
	♥ K 10 6 3
	♦ 8 7
	♣ Q J 7
EAST	♠ J 9 6 2
	♥ Q 9 8 7
	♦ A 10 6
	♣ 9 6
SOUTH	♠ A 4
	♥ A 5 2
	♦ K Q 5
	♣ A 8 4 3 2

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	10	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All pass

Opening lead: Three of ♡

Some plays in bridge have been given exotic names. One of these is the Vienna Coup. Legend has it that it comes from "the greatest whist player in Vienna." In reality, it is just a sexy name for a simple unblocking play.

South in today's deal was Ginny Swift, of Gulfstream, Florida. She was playing in the World Mixed Pairs in Orlando this last October. She treated her excellent 17-point hand with a five-card suit as worth 18 points. Most experts would agree, but it landed her in a difficult contract.

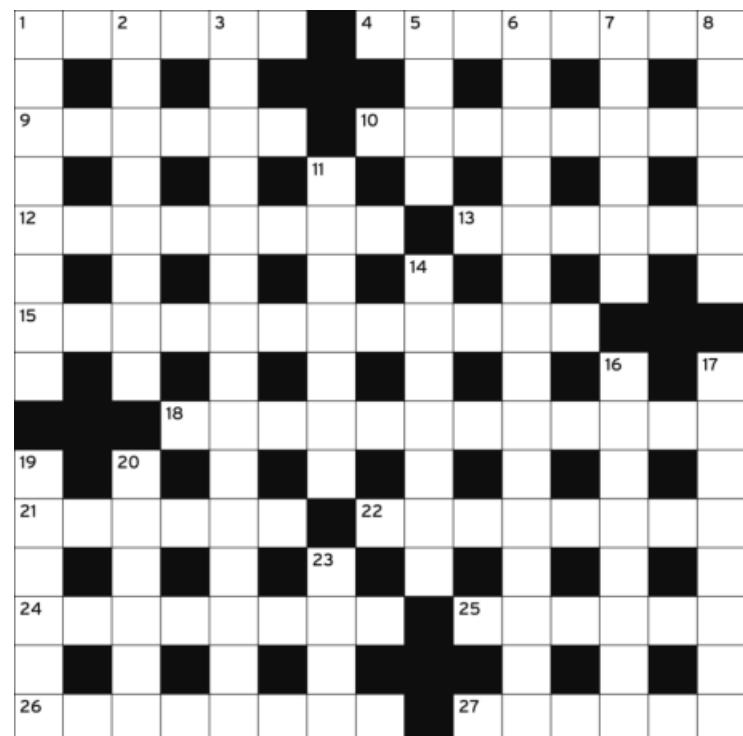
She ducked the first two hearts before winning the third with her ace, discarding a spade from dummy. The king of diamonds held the next trick, but East captured the queen of

diamonds with his ace and led a heart to West's king, as dummy shed a club. West exited with the deceptive jack of clubs. Swift won with dummy's king and made the essential play of leading a spade to her ace – the Vienna Coup. She ran the diamonds and West couldn't defend the position. In the two-card ending, West couldn't keep the king of spades and two clubs, so he had to give Swift a ninth trick.

Note the importance of cashing the ace of spades. Had Swift not cashed the ace, West would have defended the position because he discards after South. Should South bare the ace of spades, West could safely bare the king. The ace would drop the king, but there would be no entry to dummy's queen. Nice play!



THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD NO. 3057



Across

- 1 Passage from tango and bolero's composer (6)
- 4 Rambling, untoward rambling (5-3)
- 9 Frightfully loud neckwear for a sentimental type (6)
- 10 Roaring missiles, second becoming first (8)
- 12 Group getting around the law in America? (3,1,4)
- 13 Tell the cops about lunatic fringe (6)
- 15 Philosopher with urges for fatty food (5,3,4)
- 18 Ludicrously citing Nando's as stereotypical middle-class fare? (3,3,6)
- 21 I tear around centre of Bonn in my dreams (2,4)
- 22 It was Byzantine, garbled, convoluted and ultimately intricate (8)
- 24 Shunned by society, stems endless desire to discuss work (4,4)
- 25 Stimulating dream I like very much (6)
- 26 Hallowed figure that is the source of many mysteries (8)
- 27 Village greens used to have these stores (6)

Down

- 1 Cricket match underground as part of an experiment (4,4)
- 2 Close? Far? Out – that is, not in the house (8)

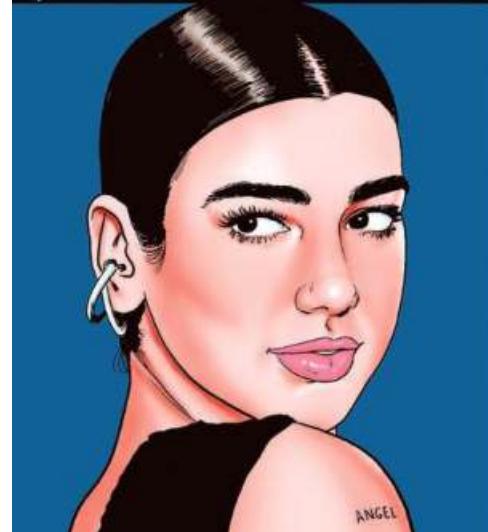
Solution No. 3056



BAKER STREET



BIOGRAPHIC



DUA LIPA WAS BORN IN LONDON ON AUGUST 22, 1995. HER PARENTS ARE FROM ALBANIA, AND HER FIRST NAME MEANS 'LOVE.' SHE GREW UP IMMersed IN MUSIC - HER DAD, MUSICIAN DUKAS JIN LIPA, IS AN ALBANIAN ROCK STAR. SHE ATTENDED THE SYLVIA YOUNG THEATRE SCHOOL, WHOSE ALUMNI INCLUDE AMY WINEHOUSE, SPICE GIRL EMMA BUNTON AND SINGER-ACTRESS RITA ORA. AT THE AGE OF 11, DUA MOVED TO KOSOVO WITH HER FAMILY. TWO YEARS LATER, HER PARENTS ALLOWED HER TO RETURN TO BRITAIN TO CONTINUE STUDYING AT THE SYLVIA YOUNG SCHOOL AND PURSUE HER MUSICAL AMBITIONS. SHE DID SOME MODELING AND WORKED AS A WAITRESS WHILE GAINING ATTENTION FOR THE COVER SONGS SHE POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

HER DRIVE AND AMBITION IMPRESSED BEN MAWSON, A MUSIC MANAGER WHOSE CLIENTS INCLUDE LANA DEL REY, ENOUGH TO SIGN DUA TO HIS COMPANY AND IMMEDIATELY BOOK STUDIO TIME. HER SINGLE "BE THE ONE" WAS A TOP-10 HIT THROUGHOUT EUROPE, "HOTTER THAN HELL" WAS A WORLDWIDE HIT, AND "BLOW YOUR MIND (MWAH)" GAVE DUA HER FIRST BILLBOARD HOT 100 ENTRY.



THE SINGLE "NEW RULES" WAS HER ROCKET TO STARDOM. IT TOPPED THE U.K. CHARTS, WAS A MASSIVE WORLDWIDE HIT AND BECAME A RADIO STAPLE IN THE STATES, WHERE IT REACHED NO. 6 ON THE BILLBOARD CHARTS. THE VIDEO HAS RACKED UP MORE THAN A BILLION VIEWS! SPOTIFY NAMED DUA THE MOST-STREAMED FEMALE ARTIST IN THE U.K. IN 2017, AND SHE RECEIVED A RECORD FIVE NOMINATIONS IN THE BRIT AWARDS!

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Dua, by Steve McWayne Syndication

STEVE
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QUIZ

Easy like Sunday morning

You're only given a little spark of madness.
You mustn't lose it: Robin Williams

BERTY ASHLEY

1 Born on July 21, 1951, Robin Williams became one of the most loved comedy actors of his generation. In 1992, a company wanted Williams for the voice of a character that they animated and lip-synced the character doing actual stand-up comedy. Williams was so impressed that he immediately signed on. During recording he improvised many of his lines that the movie's script was nominated for the Best Adapted Screenplay Academy Award. Which iconic character is this and the movie?

2 In 1993, this director was filming a dark and heavy film about a German businessman who saved refugees from the Holocaust. It was a traumatic experience for the crew. The director would put Robin Williams on speaker phone to cheer them up. Which multiple-award winning movie was this and who was the director who credited Williams with giving them the energy to finish the movie?

3 William's first major performance was this 1980 movie about a sailor searching for his missing father. He eventually finds his father who tells everyone about his dislike for a certain vegetable. In the climax, the villain force-feeds him the leafy vegetable, which revitalises the sailor who knocks him out. Who was this character that Williams played?

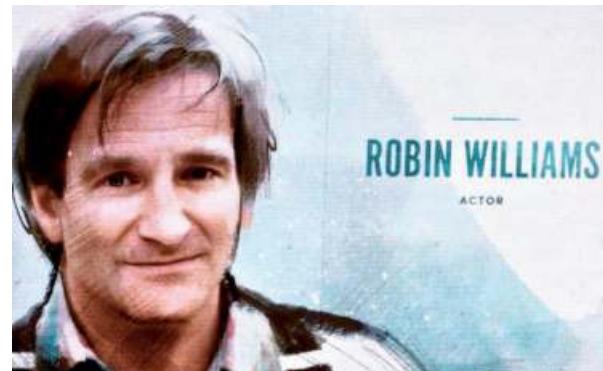
4 In 1981, American author Chris Van Allsburg wrote and illustrated a children's book, which is about a magical board game that features animals from the jungle coming to life in the real world. In 1995, it was made into a successful movie starring Robin Williams. What is the name of the game that means 'many effects' in Zulu?

5 Adrian Cronauer was a U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class who studied broadcasting and media operations. From 1965 to 1966 he was stationed in a certain country the U.S. was at war with at that time. He ran a programme called *Dawn Buster* which was well liked by the soldiers. He proposed a movie about his experiences which was titled after the phrase he used to start the show with. What is the name of this film, which won Robin Williams a Golden Globe and a nomination for the Best Actor at the Oscars?

6 In the movie *Dead Poets Society*, Williams plays the role of an English professor whose unusual methods of teaching inspires the students but annoys the authorities. In an iconic

scene at the end he returns to pick up his things after being fired. His students jump on the table and quote from a famous poem by Walt Whitman written about the death of Abraham Lincoln. What poem is quoted by his students?

7 In 1991, Spielberg directed a movie, which was a sequel to the popular children's novel *Peter Pan*. It features Williams in the role of an adult Peter Pan who is now a workaholic lawyer. This movie is rare in that it is titled after the villain and not the hero as



movies usually tend to be. The name of the movie refers to the artificial body part the villain has. Which is the movie?

8 Anne Fine wrote a novel for young adult readers in 1987 about a family in which the parents divorce and the father decides to disguise himself as a nanny to meet his children. In 1993, it was made into a movie starring Williams who was so good at his role that once when he went shopping no one recognised him. The movie inspired both Tamil and Hindi remakes starring Kamal Haasan. What is the name of the nanny and consequently the title of the book and movie?

9 This 1997 movie is named after an invention by William's character Professor Brainard who invents a sentient green goo with enormous amounts of elasticity and kinetic energy that increases in speed as it bounces. The title of the movie refers to the name given to the goo by the professor's assistant. It gets its name because it is a flying rubber. What is the name of the movie?

10 One of the last movies Williams acted in was a series about things in a museum coming to life at night. He plays the role of the 26th President of the U.S. who is a mentor to Larry, the security guard. What character did he play that has this memorable line 'Anything's possible Lawrence. If it can be dreamed, it can be done'?

A molecular biologist from Madurai, our quizmaster enjoys trivia and music, and is working on a rock ballad called Coffee is a Drink, Kaapi is an Emotion. @bertyashley

- Answers
- 1. The Genie From Aladdin
- 2. Schindler's List, Steven Spielberg
- 3. Popeye Spilletberg
- 4. Jumanji, Good Morning, Mr. Monkeemani
- 5. Oh Captain, My Captain!
- 6. Vietnam!
- 7. Hook
- 8. Mrs. Doubtfire
- 9. Flubber
- 10. Theodore Roosevelt

LETTER FROM A CONCERNED READER

Ask me anything

Respected Madam/ Sir,

What is the capital of Madagascar?
I don't know.
How is the president of Canada?

I don't know.

Who is the inventor of Beethoven?

I don't know.

Where is the formula for Potassium permanganate?

I don't know.

What is the capital of the aalumadoluma of the mandashiromani of the Bulgaria?

I don't know i don't know i don't know i don't care if you ask one more time who is the person who has committed murder in anna nagar and breakdanced on dead body then correct answer j. Mathrubootham.

Madam/ Sir, since childhood itself I have 100% total hatred of all GK quiz programmes. First of all there used to be quiz on All India Radio. My father used to listen and tell, "Hello, Mathrubootham, whether you know any information or your head is pure jackfruit."

Immediately I used to say, "Appa, at least jackfruit you can eat, what you will do with information about first man on moon, first elephant on Uranus, first adai-avial on Neptune." Then I would jump out of room and run quickly before arrival of father's footwear.

When I was in school same thing. During PT class if monsoon is falling and falling, PT master Captain Nair will say, "Ok children, let us do some exercise for brain with GK questions. Master Mathrubootham whether you can tell name of one country that is having equator line going through it?"

Bloody fool Nair just because ex-military with moustache means you are the managing director of Equator? I would immediately say, "Bulgaria."

Madam/ Sir, you ask any quiz question I will say Bulgaria. No tension. If you give stupid answer then people will stop asking stupid question. This is excellent life philosophy for myself, please share if possible with youths in your office.

So what should Mrs. M do when housing complex people are organising quiz contest for

senior citizens? She should say many thanks for opportunity but unfortunately we are unable. Mr. Mathrubootham is wanting to keep all his GK for private use only.

Instead what is she doing? She said, "Quiz oho! Immediately we will participate, please take entry fee for couple team of Mr and Mrs. M." Then she is coming home and asking what name to give our team? I said, "How about Public Humiliation of Husband Corporation of India Ltd?"

She laughed and laughed like olden days internet connecting sound. And then said, "Old man, what nonsense. Just enjoy quiz, give two-three correct answers." I said,

"Kamalam, you please take part on your own, why in retired age quiz and all."

She said, "Fine, no problem, I will ask Dr. Shankaramenon to come. He is true gentleman with guts. Also have you seen he has reduced weight last two-three months?"

Madam/ Sir, this is the situation in the house these days. Own wife blackmailing husband. I said, "Ok ok ok have some shame, I will go to Easwari Lending Library and read some GK books."

Finally, what happened yesterday? Kamalam is answering question after question immediately like enquiry counter at railway station. Then we reached final round against Mr. and Mrs. F.N. D'Costa.

Quiz master Mrs. Nalini said, this is tie-breaker question, it is difficult question, world famous Danube River is flowing through many countries, whether you can name any one?

Mr. F.N. D'Costa said, "Is it Italy?"

Wrong, wrong thousand times wrong.

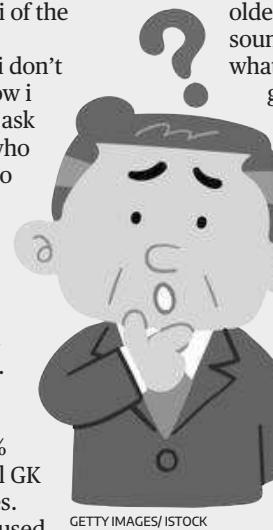
Then Mrs. M looked at me. She said, "Old man, say something, my head is *kaali*." I said, "Kamalam, I told you from the beginning, avoid avoid avoid. Did you listen? Now you are asking me about river and country."

She said, "Old man, say something otherwise people will laugh and laugh."

I said, "Fine. Bulgaria."

And now we are quiz champions of housing complex. One small trophy and gift voucher for online shopping.

*Yours in too much intelligence,
J. Mathrubootham*



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