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Discovering the uncanny with a peek behind the curtains

Samixa Bajaj, Mahi Aneja



The team behind the scenes of Uncanny Explorations

The Department of English organized its first-ever international conference on Feb 22 and 23, themed 'UNCANNY EXPLORATIONS'. Organized in hybrid mode, it was a multi-disciplinary conference on 'DELINEATING THE BORDERS OF THE UNCANNY'. The conference attempted to unravel and interpret the uncanny and review the existing order. In an effort to capture the essence of this academic venture, Car-

mel Beat engaged in interviews with three members of the Organising Committee from the Department of English: Dr. Sreevidya Surendran, Dr. Mamatha V Freeman and Dr. Aditi Chatterjee. Their insights revealed the ambi-

tion behind the conference: to establish it as an annual highlight, showcasing MCC's intellectual contributions alongside its celebrated cultural events. The planning phase, initiated in July 2023, was charged with enthusiasm seen through vibrant theme selections, task assignments and collaboration with partners and sponsors, setting the stage for an exceptional event. With the participation of over 50 presenters and 70 at-

tendees, the conference aimed to push boundaries, thanks to the relentless efforts of students, teachers and particularly the tech team, who expertly managed its hybrid format, ensuring a seamlessly executed and memorable conference.

The keynote speakers of the conference were Dr Ruth Vanita, Professor at the University of Montana; Dr Priyanka Tripathi, Associate Professor of English at IIT Patna; Dr Ashwini Tambe, Director of WGSS (Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies) and Professor of History and WGSS at George Washington University; and Ramendra Kumar, an award-winning writer, performance storyteller and inspirational speaker, who, together with the presenters and organising teams, turned this into a memorable event, sparking hopes for an encore in the upcoming academic years.

White summerland ignites Cul-Ah '24 fever

Haniya Zaini

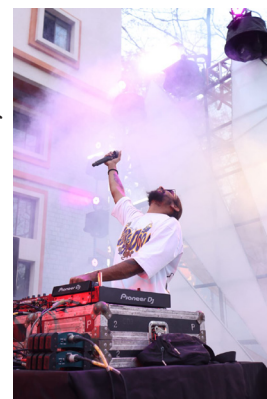
White Summerland, widely recognised by MCC as the pre-Cul-Ah event, took place on January 27 amidst excitement, energy, and the presence of brilliant musicians.

The event began with a live performance by the band "Barfi," which quickly piqued the audience's interest. Their incredible beats and mesmerising tunes set the tone for the evening, putting everyone on their feet and eager to dance.

As the night followed, the line-up showcased various genres and music styles with DJ Ravator, DJ Shanaya and DJ Prithvi, each artist brought their unique sound and personality to the stage. The crowd cheered and applauded as the artists took their spot on the stage.

The art and decor team created a visually magnificent background for the evening by artistically decorating the campus. The surroundings were embellished with exquisite details and beautiful touches, creating a wonderful atmosphere that enveloped every corner. Attendees dressed in various hues of white, which complimented the decor and contributed to the event's ethereal mood.

The event showcased the beauty of live performances and groovy dances. The captivating beams matched the music, adding to the night's entire experience. On the same day, the Student Council also declared the Cul-Ah 2024 theme, which fired up the audience for the fest.



DJ Zeus

Cul-Ah roars its way into 2024

Nicole D'souza

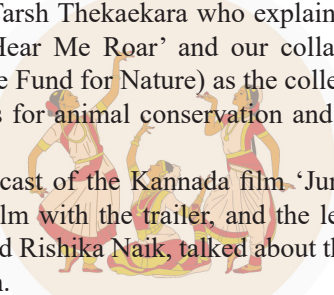
Mount Carmel College hosted its very own 'Queen of Fests' CUL-AH with the theme 'HEAR ME ROAR' on Feb. 2-3, 2024. The inauguration commenced with prayers and melodies by the CSA (Christian Students Association) followed by a welcome address by Principal Dr. George Lekha to all the participants gathered.

Cul-ah 2024 was declared open by the honourable chief guest, Meenakshi Byre and the Student Council. The gathering was then addressed by Dr. Tarsh Thekaekara who explained the motive behind the theme 'Hear Me Roar' and our collaboration with the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) as the college aimed towards creating awareness for animal conservation and an understanding of our biodiversity.

Further on, the cast of the Kannada film 'Juni' was welcomed to promote their film with the trailer, and the lead pair of actors, Pruthvi Ambaar and Rishika Naik, talked about their works and the journey of this film.

The inauguration proceeded as the cultural associations put on wonderful performances for the crowd to enjoy and relax. As they got ready for a two-day extravaganza packed with thrilling rounds and never-ending fun, all of the associations managed to put together a range of events that attracted large crowds for both days.

Lastly, Cul-ah 2024 was officially closed with the valedictory announcing Jain CMS as the winner who bagged the overall trophy to take home the title 'Mr Culah'.



Soul Salon's Secret to Affordable Beauty

Khadija Zulfikhar

Situated at Vasanth Nagar's third cross, Soul Salon is a luxurious women's parlour on the ground floor of a white, three-story building. Mary, the sole owner of Soul Salon for eight years, has overseen its remarkable growth. Expanding citywide, Soul Salon now operates branches in Sahakar Nagar and Rajajinagar. As a proud woman entrepreneur, she also brings in her expertise as a skilled beautician, hairdresser, and makeup artist.

Soul, like every other salon, offers a wide range of services to their diverse clientele. Their eyebrow-shaping service starts at an unbelievable 40 rupees,



Devi Chhetri and her team at Soul Salon

making Soul Salon a standout in affordability. Basic haircuts beginning at just 400 rupees further solidify their reputation as the most wallet-friendly pick. With a continuous stream of regular clients and a daily footfall of 20 to 30 consumers, they mostly see college students come in for brow shaping and

upper lip threading. They pride themselves over not recommending unneeded procedures. Soul Salon's principle is simple: prioritise regular clientele above daily income, with an emphasis on regular customer flow. When asked what makes them stand out, Devi Chhetri, originally from Darjeeling and leading her team of five for seven years now, modestly chuckles and simply says, "That I don't know, but we're doing good only." However, she proudly claims that they're the most budget-friendly option on Loafers Lane, a reassuring fact for the students living there.

Comme Live'24

The Department of Communication Studies hosted their annual career show CommE Live on Feb. 10, 2024. It included events like open mic, film screenings, workshops and several contests. While the contests and workshops were paid events, the exhibits showcasing the work of the students were free and open for all to view.

Samixa Bajaj

Khel'24

Khel, the intercollegiate sports fest hosted by the Department of Physical Education was held on Feb. 26 to 28 at the MCC Grounds. With 16 colleges participating, events included basketball, football and volleyball for both men and women and hockey for women. The valedictory ceremony took place in the Amphitheatre.

Khadija Zulfikhar



BRIEFS

Rau's IAS '24

Rau's IAS Study Circle seminar on career prospects for aspiring UPSC candidates took place on Feb. 7. Held in the DJB Auditorium, the seminar looked into how the aspirants should prepare for the exams and the courses offered to those who are interested. Later, the students also wrote a scholarship test organised for them.

Khadija Zulfikhar

Republic Day 24'

The 75th Republic Day celebrations took place on Feb. 25. The event included readings of holy scriptures and the recitation of the college song. The presence of Chief Guests Lt. Colonel Bin CK Thomas and Colonel Mahesh Pratap Singh marked the occasion which aimed at conveying that 'Harmony Unites People.'

Ditika Kanungo



Harvesting Hope

From the pre-independence era to the present day, protests and resistance movements have played a pivotal role in shaping the socio-political fabric of the nation. However, in the current scenario, the impact of agitations and protests has assumed a new significance, reflecting both the aspirations and challenges of a rapidly evolving society.

At the heart of this phenomenon lies the relentless quest of the people for justice and equality. Across the length and breadth of the country, individuals and communities have taken to the streets to voice their grievances, challenging oppressive systems, and demanding accountability from those in power. Whether it's farmers rallying against contentious agricultural reforms, students advocating for educational reforms, or citizens protesting against discriminatory laws, the underlying message is clear – the voice of the people cannot be silenced.

One of the most striking examples has been the recent farmer's protest, which captured the attention of the nation and the world, serving as a poignant reminder of the power of resistance in the face of injustice. At the crux of this movement lies a demand for the aforementioned justice and equality for agricultural workers, whose livelihoods are intricately tied to the land they cultivate. As we delve into the complexities of this protest, it becomes evident that words and slogans play a pivotal role in galvanizing collective action, shaping public discourse, and mobilizing support for the cause.

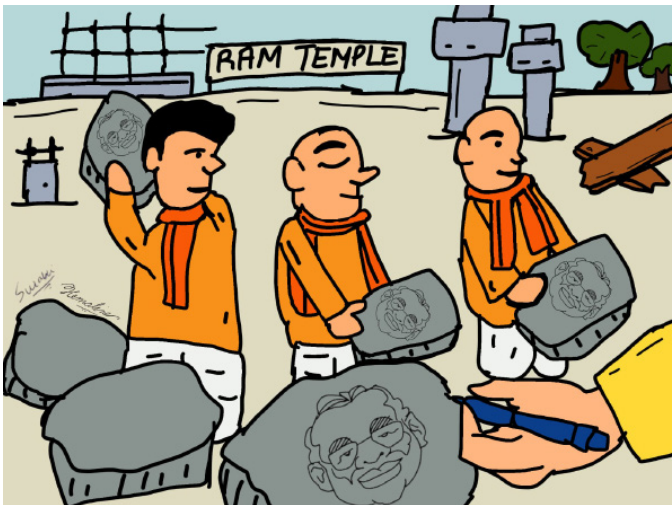
Central to the farmer's protest are a series of demands, chief among them being the implementation of a legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for agricultural produce. MSP is a price that is declared before the harvesting of a crop takes place. If the market price at which the farmers can sell falls below the MSP, the government steps in to buy the crop from them. However, there is no legal backing for such 'support' and the government decides how much to buy, leaving a dose of uncertainty in the expected income of farmers.

This demand for MSP, and the subsequent protests, symbolizes the farmers' struggle for economic security and fair compensation for their labour, which has been undermined by market forces and government policies that prioritize profit over people. The rallying cry of "MSP Sarkar, Zindabad!" reverberates across sites of protests, encapsulating the collective resolve to hold authorities accountable and secure a dignified livelihood for farmers.

Beyond its economic implications, the farmer's protest is imbued with broader socio-political significance, reflected in slogans that speak to the aspirations and grievances of rural communities. "Jai Kisan, Jai Jawan" echoes the sentiment of solidarity between farmers and soldiers, highlighting their shared struggles and sacrifices in service of the nation whereas "Inquilab Zindabad" resonates with the spirit of revolution and resistance, invoking the legacy of freedom fighters who fought against colonial oppression. These slogans serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of struggle and resilience that defines the Indian ethos. Slogans act as potent tools for challenging dominant narratives and articulating alternative visions for the future. In the face of government repression and media vilification, slogans serve as a form of resistance, empowering farmers to reclaim their agency, voice their grievances, and assert their demands for justice.

As the farmer's protest continues to unfold, it is imperative that we recognize the transformative power of words and slogans in shaping social movements and advancing the cause of justice. In a world marked by inequality, injustice, and oppression, slogans serve as a shining light, guiding us towards a future where the voices of the marginalized are heard, their rights respected, and their dignity upheld.

In the words of Faiz, "This is how people fight oppression, their ritual isn't new, nor are my ways new. This is how we always grew flowers in fire, their defeat isn't new, our victory isn't new."



India's Temple Run: The building blocks of a godly homecoming

Let's Burn Some Toast

Saranya Ramesh

Have the words "Everything happens for a reason" ever gotten on your nerves? Well turns out the internet has found a new way to tell us that life takes turns in the most obnoxious ways. The burnt toast theory—TikTok and the internet's latest theory on how everything happens for a reason and how every inconvenience is just the universe's way of protecting you. Take, for instance, something most of us have experienced: burning your breakfast toast before you head to college. You're frustrated and don't want to be late to class. But, you take an extra 10 minutes to make another toast. Turns out you soon discover an accident occurred on your usual route during that lost



time. Ingrid, the creator of the burnt toast theory believes that the extra time you spent making that toast, has inadvertently protected you from the accident.

So what is it about the theory? A lot of us could say that it's

another repackaged way of saying that much of our lives are out of our control and that we shouldn't even bother. Someone else could say that it's a recurring sign that we should have faith in something bigger than us. The burnt toast theory provided me with solace during a difficult time in my life. At its core, it helps us believe that sometimes, in life there are things out of our control but also emphasizes the profound impact of seemingly insignificant events.

To me, the underlying message of the burnt toast theory is one of hope and resilience, I can't help but like it. So, the next time you are late for a class or miss a flight, look at the bigger picture—the burnt toast.

Beyond Kale Smoothies: Diet Culture's Silent Path to Eating Disorders

Aamina Azhar

In today's whirlwind of wellness trends and 'must-have' diets, the allure of a quick fix for a beach-ready body or a fresh glow often overshadows its hidden dangers. The rise of diet culture, exemplified by social media and societal pressures, has become a tricky path littered with pitfalls, leading many down the slippery slope of eating disorders.

Take it from Sana Galar, the brains behind the nutrition company Drop Your Kilos, who wisely advises, "Variety is key in a balanced diet. Craving biryani today and a salad bowl tomorrow keeps things in check. Extreme diets? They can trigger eating disorders and hit hard on mental health."

The extreme fear for today's nutritionists lies in the fact that

eating disorders aren't a rarity any longer. They've become a haunting reality for millions, hitting hardest among the young adult population.

Research from the National Eating Disorders Association highlights that a whopping 20 million women and 10 million men in the US grapple with eating disorders at some point, thanks in part to the pressures of fitting into society's 'thin ideal.'

In India, NIMHANS conducted studies which have shown that the prevalence of eating disorders is increasing due to dietary pressures especially among women.

But there is still hope in dodging this unhealthy obsession! We have to simply flip the script. Embrace body positivity, champion the Health At Every Size (HAES) movement and foster a

love for food and self-image.

It is time to educate ourselves and others about the pitfalls of extreme diets while advocating for self-acceptance and self-care.

Let's decipher the real deal from those fleeting fad diets. Instead of chasing after miracle fixes, work with your body rather than against it, focusing on mindful eating and overall well-being. Say goodbye to the rollercoaster of crash diets and hello to a healthier, happier you!

By shining a light on the toxic impacts of diet culture on our mental health and self-esteem, together, we can steer clear of the siren song of extreme dieting. It is high time we placed value on individual health over society's impossible standards set by the diet industry and growing media ideals.

STUDENT SPEAK

The CIA timetable for certain third year combinations were extremely hard to work with. Two core subjects were placed on the same day consecutively for all the papers making it impossible to focus on each subject.

We appreciate the department of physical education for taking initiative and so much effort to host their fest- KHEL. We had student requests for this event in our September student speak. To see the request addressed is great!

Please give clarity on the graduation date. The one mentioned in the calendar falls within Ramadan, causing concern among many of the Muslim students.



“During my days, we were super excited about cul-ah. I feel like now the excitement has slightly come down among students, but we were all in it. And, of course, the DJ, the pro-night, is always popular!”
- Sheryl Puther, English Dept.

“Har Kisi Ki Kala Hoti Hai and that’s what Cul-ah means to me.” -

Dr Varshali Brahma, Sociology Dept.
(Batch 2012-15)



“Vibrant decor surrounded me as the entire campus buzzed with excitement for its annual festival, Cul-ah. Every corner was filled with cheerful people, marking the beginning of my first-ever experience in 2021 as a first-year student.”

CUL-AH ROADMAP



2003

“Cul-ah was like a big festival and the fashion show was something that we looked forward to.
There was good competitive spirit everywhere.”
-Dr. Vivitha MK, Batch of 2006



1994



1994



2023



2024

“Culah, when I was in my first year was much crowded and highly publicized even though there was a wave of COVID. The fest had a lot of hype and energy when compared to this year’s.”
-Anonymous

So you cut your hair with the kitchen scissors. Oh no.

Mahi Aneja, Nicole Dsouza

In the grand chronicle of questionable decisions made during moments of stress, the saga of your impromptu bang-trimming session with the kitchen scissors stands out as a testament to the lengths you will go for a semblance of control. There you were, on a soul-stormy Tuesday, staring into the mirror and thinking, “Yes, bangs are the missing piece to my life puzzle.” And not just any bangs, but the kind you see on effortlessly chic individuals who drink black coffee and read philosophy for fun.

Armed only with determination and scissors better suited for wrestling open pasta packages, you dove into this follicular (that sounded needlessly disgusting) journey. The first snip was thrilling, a bold claim of independence in an unpredictable world. Yet, by the third snip, as hair piled up on the floor like confetti after a wild party, you realized your inner stylist might have been overly optimistic. The mirror now reflected less of a ‘Parisian philosopher’ and more ‘craft project by a particularly enthusiastic six-year-old.’

You feel the laughter bubbling up. You can suddenly relate to Claire from Fleabag (“I LOOK LIKE A PENCIL!!”). Frankly speaking, life sucked. But god, anything was better than the current mop on your head. Despite the mishap, grabbing a hat to hide your daring do (and to avoid your best friend’s inevitable horror), you couldn’t help but find joy in the chaos. This impulsive make-over was a wild grab for control, but it taught you the beauty of letting go and embracing life’s unpredictable moments. And really, isn’t the point of having control over your life knowing when to let go and find humor in the chaos? Because it’s fine. Your hair will grow back. Maybe this is the sign you needed to go bald.

Later, calling your best friend only to have her hang up at the sight of your new ‘do? Priceless.

And then, you hear the lock of the front door click. Your parents are home.

Oh no.

Baking Beyond Perfection: Homely Advice for New Bakers

Aamina Azhar

Hey there, first time bakers! I am your self-taught flour magician, conjuring up delightful creations in my cozy home bakery for the past 5 years. Let me tell you, my baking journey was more about sticky dough mishaps than picture-perfect Pinterest moments. But hey, those very messy mistakes were the secret ingredients to my eventual baking triumphs! So, roll up those sleeves, tie on your aprons and heat up those ovens because I’ve got a batch of playful tips for all you budding bakers hoping to sprinkle some magic in your own kitchens.

Tip #1: Have a Blast While Baking!

First things first, throw perfection out the window and embrace the messy, flour-covered countertops! Baking isn’t just about creating culinary masterpieces; it is about the warm chaos that comes with it. Imagine making cookies — toss that dough, roll it into balls and watch them spread into golden circles of deliciousness. En-



Freshly baked cookies from the writer’s kitchen

joy the process, every step and every crumb.

Tip #2: Taste Trumps Presentation

Let me spill the icing: taste reigns supreme! Sure, beautifully decorated pastries are Instagramworthy, but what truly matters is the flavour. Take cupcakes, for instance. Focus on nailing that perfect chocolate overload or fluffiness. Whether they’re perfectly round or slightly wonky, as long as they

taste heavenly, that’s the real win!

Tip #3: Bake Up Memories with Loved Ones

Baking is a warm, delightful affair meant to be shared. Get your crew involved! Recruit your grandma, partner or little ones for a day of family fun. Revive those cherished family recipes. Trustme; the scent of baking together will create memories sweeter than any dessert.

Picture this: you’re making your grandma’s classic chocolate chip cookies. You’ve got flour on your nose, laughter in the air and the oven wafting that irresistible aroma. That’s the magic of baking together and baking happier.

So, my fellow budding bakers, remember, it’s not about being a pro but relishing every moment in the kitchen. Don your aprons, dust off those measuring cups and dive into the world of home baking. May your oven always be hot, your creations delicious and your heart full of joy.

Movie Marathon for the Blue Hearted.

Mahi Aneja

Valentine’s Day: A time for lovers, flowers, and endless amounts of heart-shaped... well, everything. It’s a day where love is celebrated in all its forms, manifesting in grand gestures and whispered sweet nothings. But what if you’re not on board the love train this February 14th? Fear not! Who says you need Cupid’s arrow to have a blast? For those skipping the romance but craving some good vibes, we’ve got you covered. Whether you’re happily single, in a relationship, or just seeking a different form of pleasure, don’t worry—the world of movies provides a huge getaway.

1. Blue Valentine:

We had to start with the name-sake of the article. Starring Ryan Gosling, ‘Blue Valentine’ is a heart-wrenching exploration of love’s lifecycle, from the dizzying heights of passion to the inevitable descent into heartbreak.

OTT: Amazon Prime

2. Gone Girl:

We’ve all seen our parents’ low-key toxic marriages, but this film is the ultimate guide to why sometimes, ‘till death do us part’ might just involve a clever disguise and a one-way ticket... to hell.

OTT: Netflix, Amazon Prime Premium, Apple TV

3. The Break Up:

A comedic reminder that splitting the dishes can be harder than splitting up. This movie, starring Jennifer Anniston, shows us how how breaking up

isn’t just ‘hard to do’. It’s a full-blown strategy game.

OTT: Jio Cinema

4. Kill Bill:

Hums “I might... I might kill my ex” A love story with a twist: instead of getting back together, she gets a sword. And is absolutely and amazingly badass. (I mean, it’s Uma Thurman. That’s all.)

OTT: Amazon Prime, Apple TV

5. Darlings:

A dark comedy, starring Alia Bhatt and Shefali Shah as a mother-daughter duo who navigate love’s lost labour, which gets a little too literal with a side of sweet, sweet revenge.

OTT: Netflix

6. Why Women Kill:

A stylish blend of eras and murders that puts a whole new spin on the vows of marriage. This series proves that the deadliest

weapon in a woman’s arsenal isn’t poison or a knife; it’s her wit, and makes you wonder if love is truly eternal, or just waiting for the murder plot twist.

OTT: Jio Cinema

7. Bulbul:

A gothic romance that turns into a vengeful fairy tale, proving that sometimes the monster under the bed is nothing compared to the demons in our relationships. Remember: the scariest part of a relationship isn’t the end—it’s what comes after.

OTT: Netflix

8. La La Land:

A jazzy romance that dances around the truth: sometimes, love is about chasing dreams, even if it means missing out on the perfect duet partner. If the ending doesn’t make you lose your faith in love, then please, give us your optimism. Please.

OTT: Apple TV



Q. How to deal with the stress of the approaching end of the year especially for final years?

Your graduation year can constantly make you feel like you’re on the brink of your future, ready to fall at any moment. Look bedside you and you’ll realise that you’re not alone. Almost everyone is as clueless as you are about their future plans. While some begin CUET prep months in advance, remember the stress that comes with it may not be worth it for you. Prep at your pace. Have a safety net to fall back on but realise that not everyone gets their dream job or college on the first go, an experience filled CV or not. Learn to take it easy when you can, pretend like you have your shit together for your own mental peace and make your existential crisis a group problem so you feel like everyone’s falling apart with yours. Trust me, it works wonders!

Q. How to navigate which associations you join?

If you’re a first year, do not fill up ALL the sign-up sheets. If you’re a second year, fill up 2 instead of your 5 ambitious sign-up sheets. If you’re a third year, fill up ATLEAST one sign-up sheet. As you move through the years, your enthusiasm to be a part of something more will slowly die out. Hold on to atleast one association that resonates with you each year. Don’t hesitate to move from association to association each year if it doesn’t serve your ideals. Before you sign up, make sure your principles align with that of the association. Tiffs with your secretaries should not be your biggest concern. This is an extra-curricular so find a space that you can enjoy and people that you can call your own. Of course, if you’re a writer, a thinker or someone with an opinion, Carmel Beat should be your first option!



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