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on display

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MIND & GAMES**GUITARS ARE BACK, BABY!**

Painted by some as a boomer relic just years ago, the guitar is seeing a revival that may just extend past the stress-purchase quarantine bounce **Page 10**

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We tell you how to banish the fear of missing out and embrace the joy of missing out **Page 6**

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From grab-and-go yogurts to fruit and nut bars and nutritious burgers, snacking today has gone the healthy way **Page 7**



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SUNDAY

FINANCIAL EXPRESS ON SUNDAY

READ TO LEAD

**WHAT'S INSIDE****SPOTLIGHT, P5****Word on the street**

The pandemic has not only altered the way we live but also our lexicon. Body mullet, maskhole, covideo, domino distance, herd immunity, covidiot, coronageddon are just some of the neologisms that have taken over our language and lives

WORDS WORTH, P4**And Trump still stands**

Another tell-all book on the US President, this one revealing his family feuds, fails to make any dents

**ODD & EVEN**

ROHNIT PHORE

**COVID****Vaccine trials resuming, says AstraZeneca**REUTERS/FE BUREAU
London/Pune, September 12

pendent committees, and international regulators," AstraZeneca said. "The UK committee has concluded its investigations and recommended to the MHRA that trials in the UK are safe to resume."

The company said it could not disclose further medical information. "All trial investigators and participants will be updated with the relevant information and this will be disclosed on global clinical registries, according to the clinical trial and regulatory standards."

Adar Poonawalla, ED and CEO, Serum Institute of India, tweeted that once the DCGI gives them permission to restart trials in India, they will resume the trials.

BRITISH CLINICAL TRIALS for the AstraZeneca and Oxford University coronavirus vaccine have resumed following confirmation by the Medicines Health Regulatory Authority (MHRA) that it was safe to do so, the company said on Saturday.

The late-stage trials of the experimental vaccine, one of the most advanced in development, were suspended this week after an illness in a study subject in Britain.

"The standard review process triggered a voluntary pause to vaccination across all global trials to allow review of safety data by inde-

pendent committees, and international regulators," AstraZeneca said. "The UK committee has concluded its investigations and recommended to the MHRA that trials in the UK are safe to resume."

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QuickPicks**Fresh infections push India's Covid caseload to 46,59,984**

INDIA'S COVID-19 caseload raced past 46 lakh with a record 97,570 infections being reported in a day, while 36,24,196 people have recuperated so far taking the national recovery rate to 77.77% on Saturday, according to the union health ministry data, reports PTI. The total number of coronavirus cases has mounted to 46,59,984, while the death toll climbed to 77,472 with 1,201 people succumbing to the infection in a span of 24 hours, the data showed. **PAGE 16**

BACK HOME

Five youths allegedly abducted by the PLA of China from Arunachal Pradesh after their release on Saturday, in Anjaw district. They were handed over to the Indian army

Fuel efficiency costly task for car cos

• Makers trying to find cheaper routes to meet new norms

VIKRAM CHAUDHARY
New Delhi, September 12

THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY, which has seen a decline in demand and sales since the pandemic, is looking for cheaper alternative routes to meet certain regulatory norms as it is not in a position to take on any further heavy financial investment at this stage.

After investing in Euro VI

financialexpress.epaper.in

NEW HIGHWAY

Maruti focusing on both CNG, mild hybrid



Hyundai, Kia taking turbo-petrol route



Hyundai, Kia taking turbo-petrol route

engine, the next regulation that the industry needs to meet is the corporate average fuel efficiency (CAFE) norms, which kick in April 2022.

While BS VI emission norms focus more on reducing harmful exhaust gases from the tailpipe of new vehicles, under CAFE norms carmakers have to improve fuel efficiency of vehicles and reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions; the 'corporate average' refers to sales-volume weighted average for every carmaker — under CAFE, average corporate CO2 emission must be less than 130g/km till 2022 and below 113g/km thereafter.

When CAFE regulations were first mooted in 2017, carmakers expected to meet these by focusing on diesel fuel, because diesel is traditionally more fuel efficient than petrol. But then due to diesel car sales falling for many carmakers, extra investment into developing cleaner diesel engines to meet BSVI norms was not worth it; carmakers had to find newer solutions. One of which is hybrid technology.

Som Kapoor, partner, Auto-

mobile Sector, EY India, says that going forward, to meet CAFE regulations, one of the alternatives is hybrids.

Continued on Page 11

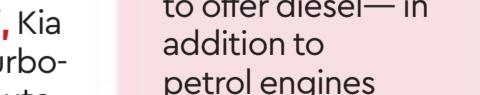
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financialexpress.epaper.in



Honda continues to offer diesel—in addition to petrol engines



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Continued on Page 11

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New Delhi



Opinion

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

BOTH HOUSES OF Parliament will begin their delayed Monsoon Session tomorrow. It will be a physical attendance-only session. Some days ago, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha rejected my suggestion to allow virtual attendance by Members who are unable to be physically present.

Even if the attendance is satisfactory, the atmosphere will be unreal. I suppose the Houses will observe the form of parliamentary democracy with the spirit absent and the soul missing.

One nation, one everything

The main business of the Houses will be pending Bills and the 11 Ordinances promulgated during the inter-session period. It is beyond comprehension that when the nation faces multiple crises — the economic collapse, the raging pandemic and the threat from China — why the government is making an insidious attempt to alter Centre-State relations in key areas. The Ordinances are part of the pet theory of the Prime Minister that there must be *One Nation, One Everything*. The theory cuts at the very root of the Constitutional compact between the States and the Union that India will be a Union of States and federalism — sharing of legislative and executive powers — will be the fundamental principle.

Over the years, States have ceded too many powers to the Union government. All parties have governed India and all parties are to be blamed. Mr Narendra Modi has taken the usurpation of States' powers to a new high and the assault is continuing through executive action and legislation. Look at some of the new Ordinances.

Banking (Regulation) Act

Today, banks, some non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and all major financial intermediaries are regulated by the Banking (Regulation) Act. RBI is the regulator. It is already overburdened. The record of RBI as a regulator is mixed: under its watch major scams have taken place. The only significant financial intermediary that is under the control and supervision of state governments is the Cooperative Bank. In most states, there are District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) and Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs). They are the district apex banks and re-finance member cooperative banks. Some DCCBs and UCBs are legendary and have rendered yeoman service, some are bad apples. Good or bad, there is a state government with enough powers to regulate them. Why should that position be altered? Through the Ordinance, the Modi government has brought all DCCBs and UCBs under the Centre's control and designated RBI as the regulator. Power has been taken to alter the membership structure and the financial structure of the cooperative bank which may result in transfer of control and management to strangers and predators. The motive behind the Ordinance is that all major financial intermediaries should be under the control of the central government and all those who are in the management of DCCBs and UCBs (elected Directors) should be obliged to the central government. The Ordinance is a naked aggression on States' rights.

Essential Commodities Act

I hold the view that the Essential Commodities Act (ECA) belonged to the age of shortages and controls. It has really no place when India is surplus in food grains

ACROSS THE AISLE

P Chidambaram



Coercive federalism on display



Punjab Youth Congress leader Brinder S Dhillon during protest against ordinances on farming, outside Mandi Bhawan in Mohali

EXPRESS PHOTO: JASBIR MALHI

and has the capacity to produce essential goods according to demand. Yet, it cannot be denied that there is hoarding and black marketing taking advantage of seasonal shortages or floods or droughts. That is why the ECA remains on the statute book and gives adequate powers to the state government to regulate the trade, including imposing stock limits for various intermediaries. If the central government desired to liberalise the law further, it could circulate a policy paper or enact a Model Act and commend them to the states. Nothing of that kind would satisfy the Modi government's overreach.

Through the Ordinance, the powers of the state governments to 'regulate' have been circumscribed and the power to fix 'stock limits' have been rendered illusory. Through a Proviso and an Explanation clause, the Ordinance has rendered the concept of 'stock limit' illusory and meaningless. If the Ordinance became an Act,

the hoarders will celebrate.

APMC Acts and freedom of contract

I hold the view that Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts must be amended from time to time and marketing of agricultural produce must be gradually liberalised. The way to achieve this goal is through Model laws and persuasion, not through legislative fiat. Through the Ordinance, the central government has overridden the state-legislated APMC Acts. The worst affected are Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and any other state that has invested heavily in public procurement and assuring MSP to the farmers. The suspicion is that the Modi government is attempting to implement the controversial recommendations of the Shanta Kumar Committee that will have the effect of diluting public procurement, the

public distribution system, the MSP principle and food security. The companion Ordinance on Freedom of Contract does not oblige the purchaser to pay *not less than the MSP* for the produce, deepening the suspicion that MSP will be done away with. Punjab farmers are on the streets protesting the Ordinances, the Punjab legislative assembly has unanimously rejected the two Ordinances. The Akali Dal voted for the resolution. Chhattisgarh has demanded withdrawal of the Ordinances. Haryana and MP are inexplicably silent. It is evident that the Modi government will use its brute majority and pass the amendments, irrespective of the views of state governments, dealing another blow to federalism.

One Nation, One Everything will eventually destroy One Nation.

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One Nation, One Everything will eventually destroy One Nation.

New season, old favourites

The world's most high-profile league is back. It now needs fans inside stadiums to raise the pitch

RINGSIDE VIEW



Shamik Chakrabarty

JOSE MOURINHO'S TWO-AND-A-HALF-YEAR reign was catastrophic for Manchester United. Forget the League Cup and Europa League that United had won under the Portuguese manager. Mourinho destroyed the United-way, and in the process damaged the dressing-room culture as well.

Both Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial were regressing under him. Paul Pogba was sulking. David De Gea was unhappy, and Mason Greenwood probably would have been plying his trade as a loanee at a Championship club if Mourinho were still in charge at Old Trafford.

Rashford, Martial and Greenwood now form arguably the most exciting front-three in the Premier League. Credit goes to Ole Gunnar Solskjær for reviving the careers of Rashford and Martial, and unearthing Greenwood. When Solskjær took over from Mour-

inho in December 2018, he came into a fractured dressing-room. His big-spending predecessor had destroyed the dressing-room equilibrium by bringing in Alexis Sanchez on a reported £560,000-a-week deal from Arsenal. Solskjær quietly offloaded Sanchez at the first available opportunity. Little wonder then that after securing a permanent move to Inter Milan, the Chilean striker took a dig at United.

"I ended up signing without much information about what was happening in the move. The first days that I was with my colleagues, sometimes there are things that you do not realise until you arrive."

"The first training I had I realised many things. I came home and I told my representative: 'Can't the contract be terminated to return to Arsenal?' They start laughing and I told them that something did not sit right with me. It (the contract) had already been signed," Sanchez told his fans through an Instagram post.

Seemingly a prisoner of his ignorance, hopefully someday the 31-year-old will understand the significance of playing for United. Solskjær had to get rid of the mercenaries. He did that.



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær during a training session in Cologne, Germany

Under him United finished third in the Premier League last season, although with 66 points, they were 33 points shy of the champions Liverpool. Still, it was a season of real progress. Right players

were brought in. A world-class acquisition was made in Bruno Fernandes. The process continues with Donny van de Beek's arrival from Ajax this term. One of the reasons why United are holding

firm in their deal of £120-million rated Jadon Sancho is that the club has learnt from its mistakes and it will not pay over the odds. Solskjær's United are gradually returning back to the United-way.

Solskjær's challenge this term would be to reach the next level. A Covid-induced market has restricted transfer activities for all the top clubs except Chelsea. There would be no squad overhaul at United this term. Then again, the Red Devils are back in the Champions League and they have to raise the standard of their football. Beyond the starting XI, United have very few quality players on the bench. Solskjær's job would be to improve the likes of Fred, Brandon Williams, Scott McTominay and Daniel James. Eighty points in the league, a Cup triumph and a decent run in the Champions League will see the team build on the last season's performance. To become serious title contenders, United need some defensive reinforcements and two more transfer windows.

Defending champions Liverpool so far have made just one low-key signing — Greek defender Kostas Tsimikas for about £11.7 million, as a back-up option to Andy Robertson at left-back. And yet, Liverpool have the ability to defend their title, thanks to Jurgen Klopp's managerial genius. The 53-year-old German is almost as good as Sir Alex Ferguson in terms of develop-

ing the players and making the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

The development of Trent Alexander-Arnold, Robertson, Mo Salah and Sadio Mane attests to Klopp's managerial success.

Manchester City finished 18 points off Liverpool last season. Their manager Pep Guardiola was keen to fill the left-centre-half void and brought in Nathan Ake. Winger Ferran Torres has come in as a replacement for Leroy Sane. City are expected to respond and a failure in that regard could be deflating for Guardiola.

The crazy shopping spree notwithstanding, Chelsea will have to defy steep odds to win the Premier League. The Blues have already forked out £200m to sign up midfielders Hakim Ziyech and Kai Havertz, striker Timo Werner and left-back Ben Chilwell. Defenders Thiago Silva and Malang Sarr have come on free transfers. And Chelsea are still reportedly going after Rennes goalkeeper Edouard Mendy and West Ham midfielder Declan Rice. But bridging a 33-point gap in one season usually doesn't happen in football. New players take time to gel with the squad.

Both Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur would do well to finish top-four. Unlike last season, hopefully it wouldn't be a one-sided title race this term. The world's most high-profile league is back. It now needs fans inside stadiums to raise the pitch.

New Delhi

INSIDE TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR

Artful czar

The cultural czar in Modi-II is neither the Culture Minister, Prahlad Singh Patel, nor the Secretary, Culture, Anand Kumar. The man who calls the shots is Raghubir Singh who retired as culture secretary last year and was appointed to the newly created position of CEO, Development of Museums and Cultural Spaces. Singh's most recent coup is the appropriation of 4,000 priceless art works owned by Air India, for which an MoU is to be signed shortly. The paintings will be stored at the National Archives in Delhi, which does not have adequate wall space to display them. Logically, the collection should have gone to the Museum of Modern Art, which does not fall under Singh's purview, or it should have been auctioned off to cover the airline's debts.

Singh first came to notice when as culture secretary he was put in charge of setting up a museum for all Indian prime ministers at Teen Murti Bhavan, as well as looking after the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. The CEO's empire has grown steadily since. Ten British-era Army barracks at the Red Fort have been converted into exhibition halls, and, in one, a private Delhi art gallery is permitted to display its own collection. Another hall has been requisitioned by an industrial house. In Kolkata, Singh has opened a museum in the Old Currency Building with the private Delhi gallery again favoured.

New parliament

It is a strange new Parliament which begins on Monday. No question hour, alternating four-hour sessions daily for the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, and MPs to be spread over seats in both the Houses and the visitors' galleries. Even Central Hall will seat Lok Sabha MPs. Only 39 journalists will be permitted in the press galleries and except for seven they will rotate daily. Despite the precautions and compulsory Covid tests, threat of infection looms. Already 50 Parliament staff members have tested positive.

Political debut?

Raihan Rajiv Vadera opened a Twitter account early this year. Judging from his tweets, Priyanka Gandhi Vadera's son is more interested in photography than in politics, though his profile states he is co-founder of a panel for creating communities around

democracy. That he will eventually enter the family profession seems likely since he already has a fan club on Twitter. In the last few years, Raihan's middle name Rajiv is regularly included, leading to speculation that like his uncle, Feroze Varun Gandhi, he may opt for his second name in politics. Both Feroze and Raihan, which means sweet basil, are Parsi names, from their great-great-grandfather Feroze Gandhi's side. The name Rajiv is more likely to resonate with voters.

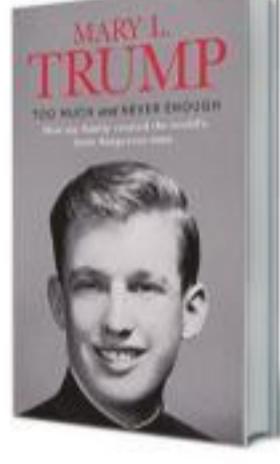
Selective axing
Government offices such as Shastri Bhavan, Rail Bhavan, Nirman Bhavan, Krishi Bhavan, Vigyan Bhavan et al, with the soulless architecture of the 1950s, are slated for demolition in the proposed Central Vista project. But there is uncertainty whether the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and Jawaharlal Nehru Bhavan will survive bulldozers. Sceptics joke that their names alone make them vulnerable, although Nehru Bhavan which houses most of the Ministry of External Affairs was built less than 10 years ago for ₹220 crore. One learns that the Nehru Bhavan building will remain, though MEA staff will shift to the new inter-connected secretarial building complex bordering Central Vista. However, the IGNCA, with acres of land which has been put to very little use, is to be re-located.

Undiplomatic tales

Retired diplomat Pascal Alan Nazareth has interesting anecdotes in his autobiography. In 1989, as consul general in New York, he was asked by an ED team to authenticate a customer copy of a bank in St Kitts island which stated that V P Singh and his son had \$21 million in their account. Nazareth refused, pointing out that it was customary for the bank customer to ask for the verification. The ED team was furious and an IFS joint secretary in the PMO pressured Nazareth. But he was adamant. In October 1989, the *Arab Times* and some in Indian media carried reports of the fake bank account. Soon, Rajiv Gandhi lost the elections and V P Singh became PM. A CBI case was registered against those who planted the St Kitts story, including the Enforcement Director. The joint secretary, however, was let off the hook.

Words Worth

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020



Too Much And Never Enough: How My Family Created The Most Dangerous Man

Mary L Trump
Simon & Schuster
Pp 240, ₹699

ISHAAN GERA

THIS IS THE second book I am reviewing on Donald Trump. There are several more that haven't come my way. Excerpts from Bob Woodward's book *Rage* have already started doing the rounds, claiming that Trump underplayed the coronavirus threat and lied to the American public about the severity of the situation. One would expect so much talk would sink a presidency, if anything, it has made Trump's case stronger. While Hillary Clinton's campaign could be sabotaged with email leaks, Trump seems Teflon-coated. Each time he comes under attack, his supporters spring up in support. Consider the Axion interview, even though Donald Trump tanked, his supporters blamed it on a biased media. Not that Trump did any better on Fox, but deflecting questions on topics unrelated to the pandemic did solve certain things. But then probably there is a master strategy, making him look like an average Joe, and he can pass any muster. The fault of the books has been that none have been as damning of Trump as one would expect them to be. But then again, people have been robbed of the power of disbelief. Besides, to be fair, none of the books are about Trump. If one was a self-aggrandising affair, the other is a family feud narrated by a relative.

Mary L Trump makes it clear that her book is not about revenge, but saving America or salvaging whatever is left of it. As honest as that appeal sounds, it ultimately does become a tale of how she and her brother, children of Donald's elder brother, were cheated out of their fair share. The book is divided into four parts and 14 chapters. It starts with Trump's father and his sociopathy. His inability to love anyone other than himself. The story revolves around the two brothers pitted against each other to take reins of the empire. One would



The author does psycho-analyse Trump, but such instances are rare

ON THE SHELF

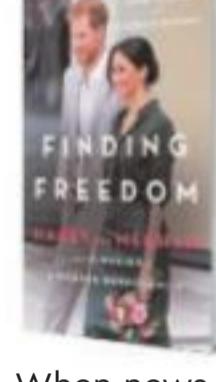


RAGE
Bob Woodward
Simon & Schuster
Pp400, ₹899

Woodward's new book, *Rage*, is intimate reporting on the Trump presidency. It goes behind the scenes like never before, with stunning new details about early national security decisions and operations and Trump's moves as he faces a pandemic, economic disaster and racial unrest. *Rage* shows how Trump's responses to the crises of 2020 were rooted in the instincts he developed in the first three years as President.

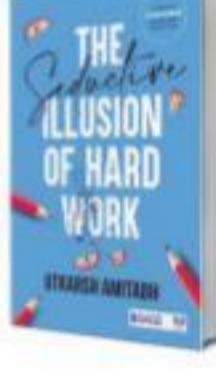
THE DEFICIT MYTH
Stephanie Kelton
Hachette
Pp336, ₹799

Through illuminating insights on government debt, deficits, inflation, taxes, the financial system, and financial constraints on the federal budget, Stephanie Kelton (a public advocate of modern monetary theory) dramatically changes our understanding of how to best deal with important issues ranging from poverty and inequality to creating jobs and building infrastructure in *The Deficit Myth*.



FINDING FREEDOM
Omid Scobie,
Carolyn Durand
HarperCollins
Pp368, ₹599

When news of the budding romance between a beloved English prince and an American actress broke, it captured the world's attention and sparked an international media frenzy. But while the Duke and Duchess of Sussex have continued to make headlines—from their engagement, wedding and birth of their son Archie to their decision to step back from their royal lives—few know the true story of Harry and Meghan.



THE SEDUCTIVE ILLUSION OF HARD WORK
Utkarsh Amitabh
Pp308, ₹495

The Seductive Illusion of Hard Work establishes that hard work is necessary but insufficient for success. In fact, misdirected hard work is way worse than no work at all. This book includes various real-life examples from the corporate world that has constantly exaggerated the role of hard work and underplayed the critical role of choices and mentorship in creating conditions for success.

And Trump still stands

Another tell-all book on the American President, this one revealing his family feuds, fails to make any dents

assume this is the theme of HBO hit *Succession*; sadly, it isn't. Mary starts well, explaining her visit to the White House and setting a base for characters, but then loses the plot. There are numerous repetitions. Mary does psycho-analyse Donald sometimes, but such instances are rare. There is no psychological profile as promised, but a detailed history of the Trump family feuds. For someone who

spent most of their time away from the family, there are hardly any insights. Instead, it becomes a repetitive note on how Donald Trump's psychology was affected by his father, and that he is still a bully and a child. I guess that one point has been underlined enough by everyone. Mary just gives it a backgrounder. In no way is she trying to absolve Trump of the horrors that he has wrought on the presidency and the American people. She does explain how Donald built the Trump brand, but again that has been the subject of many documentaries.

Ultimately the phrases, words and insults get repeated far too often like a bad soap opera. The author starts with a quote from *Les Misérables*. Victor Hugo's famous lines "If the soul is left in darkness, sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness."

After Donald Trump won the democ-

ratic nomination, my colleague and I could only concur on one point that he would win the presidency as well. We both had different reasons on why we thought this would happen—anti-establishment, global trends, Hillary Clinton—and we both were fully aware of what this would mean for the world. Yet, when the results were announced, we were shocked. Some part, I guess, still believed that this would not be possible. Four years hence, situations haven't changed much. One would assume whatever predilections the American electorate had for Trump should have been shed by now; instead, he has always been able to rally supporters. Although Trump is trailing in polls by 12%, two months is a long time. Besides, he does not have to win the popular vote; he just has to secure his presidency.

I remember watching a documentary in my college days called *Nero's Guests*. The documentary is about farmer sui-

cides in Maharashtra, nothing to do with Trump or the American election. It starts by explaining the rule of Nero and how he would invite the poor or the prisoners to his parties only to burn them so that the gardens are lit. Nero, they say, started the fire which raged for three days, turning most of the city into ashes. Nero, meanwhile, partied with his advisers. Some claim that Nero played the fiddle as Rome burned. Nero was no doubt responsible, but what about others who just stood watching?

I believe what needs to be introspected is why America voted the way it did, and why in the upcoming elections it will again vote the way it will. Blaming Trump would be like blaming social media for igniting hate and bringing out the worst in people. Facebook or Twitter did not make people bullies or racists; they just used the platform to their advantage.

Darkness can also lead to introspection.

The thieves' honour

A fictional universe built around ancient India's treatise on thieving

FAIZAL KHAN

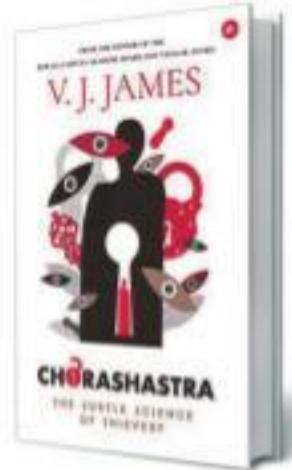
IT HAS BEEN claimed that ancient India's scientific achievements extended to areas from aviation to atomic energy and medicine to military. Interestingly, thievery wasn't left out either. The odd science of stealing boasted of a treatise and presiding deity. It was one of those references to the science of thievery that award-winning Malayalam writer VJ James one day found in the library of the space research organisation, where he worked.

The serendipitous discovery led James, who is known for his works *Purappadinte Pustakam* (*The Book of Exodus*) and *Anti-clock*, to an imaginary world where thieves are sworn to protect the rules of the game. Just published in English as *Chorashastra: The Subtle Science of Thievery* (*Chorashastram* in Malayalam), the author's second novel goes beyond the reference book on sciences that flourished in India several millennia ago.

First published in Malayalam in 2002, the novel begins with a thief (called the thief) eager to put to practise his newly-acquired skill of opening a lock just by looking at it. The man, from a family of thieves, had just acquired the rare knowledge from a college professor (called the professor). The professor had come across the science of thievery in a palm-leaf scroll while working to bring back the lost treasures of the country's ancient knowledge.

The palm-leaf scroll, named *Chorashastra* or the science of thievery, laid out rules for stealing, and one of them was to consider it as karma or duty, and, therefore, not sinful. The thief, the first disciple of the professor, takes heart from his lessons that considered thievery as an act of righteousness. Indulging in petty theft until then, he learns to acquire the internal strength essential to a 'noble' thief, and along with it the thousands of laws that a thief must honour and never break.

Having graduated with honours, the



Chorashastra: The Subtle Science of Thievery

VJ James; translated from the Malayalam by Morley J Nair
Westland
Pp 166, ₹299



An ancient Buddha statue which was stolen and found its way to the UK

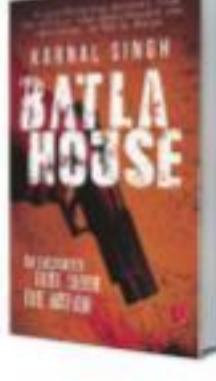
thief, who is now armed with the supreme knowledge of opening a lock just by looking at it, returns to thievery with renewed vigour. He grows in his belief about the respectability of the profession. But once he hits the road, the thief forgets the laws that govern the science of thievery. Instead, in his greed to get rich without wasting time, another thief in the village becomes one of his first victims. The thief also begins to distrust his own disciple, who waits eagerly for his master to pass on the supreme knowledge.

Resting on the foundations of knowledge, in this case the science of thievery, the novel stretches to expound on theories of philosophy and justice. It is forbidden to steal from the old and handicapped. Stealing from places of worship is a taboo. So is stealing animals. A thief must not fall to temptations of lust, greed and hunger for power. But as soon as the learning is over, the thief tells his wife, "I am not for petty thievery at pinched households anymore," his voice betraying a hidden purpose rather than a belief in the sense of duty.

After assembling his characters like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the author lets the novel run its course. The thief is married to a she-thief, who always rushes to promise another measure of grain as offering to the deity. There is Sofia Maria, a widow who is seen to be opening her heart only to thieves. The book's imaginary world of palm-leaf scrolls and petty thieves comes together to lay bare the enormity of human greed and lust for power.

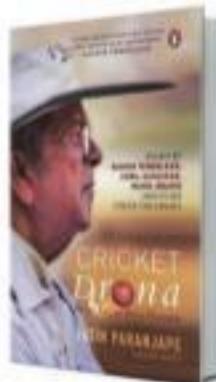
Like its main character Kunjootti in *Purappadinte Pustakam*, who toys with the meaning of playing the role of Lucifer in a Bible play at his village church, the thief in *Chorashastra* too dabbles in the discovery of his own power. James sets to piece together an ancient science, but opens doors to the realms of the unknown. Where science can't offer answers, philosophy often pitches in. Or literature.

Faizal Khan is a freelancer



BATLA HOUSE: AN ENCOUNTER THAT SHOOK THE NATION
Karna Singh
Rupa
Pp220, ₹295

September 2008: A series of ghastly bomb blasts shakes Delhi. Following investigations, a special cell of Delhi Police raids Flat no. 108 in Batla House. The instructions for the team were clear: Raid the flat and catch the suspected terrorists alive. What followed, however, was an encounter that stirred a political storm, instigated a witch-hunt, divided public opinion and remains a raging controversial topic in the media even today.



CRICKET DRONA
Jatin Paranjape and Anand Vasu
Penguin Random House
Pp256, ₹499

Cricket Drona takes us through the life of cricketing genius Vasu Paranjape, who left a defining impact on the game, shaping the careers of some of Indian cricket's greatest figures, from Sunil Gavaskar to Sachin Tendulkar, from Rahul Dravid to Rohit Sharma. This book is a first-hand chronicle of stories, life lessons and game-changing experiences, written in the words of those who crossed paths with him.

All books available as e-books

Comics flourish on crowdfunding sites

Prominent arrivals include Boom Studios, which is working with Keanu Reeves on a Kickstarter project

GEORGE GENE GUSTINES

CROWDFUNDING HAS LONG been a tool for aspiring comic book creators trying to break through, but lately some established names have taken to it. Recent arrivals include the publisher Boom Studios, which is working with Keanu Reeves on a Kickstarter project, and Todd McFarlane, the creator of the *Spawn* comic books.

Part of the appeal of crowdfunding, they say, is that it allows them to connect directly with their audience, bypassing the industry's traditional distribution model. Some critics argue, however, that heavyweights with deep pockets are muscling into a marketplace intended to help beginners introduce their creations.

But Kickstarter has evolved since it was established in 2009 to become more inclusive, said Greg Pak, a comic book writer and the author of *Kickstarter Secrets*, a book of crowdfunding tips. "There was a sense early on if you were an established person, you were stealing someone else's opportunity," he said. "There is an understanding now that



backers: "We can talk to them. We have the email list," he said. "We want them to get hooked on comics."

NYT

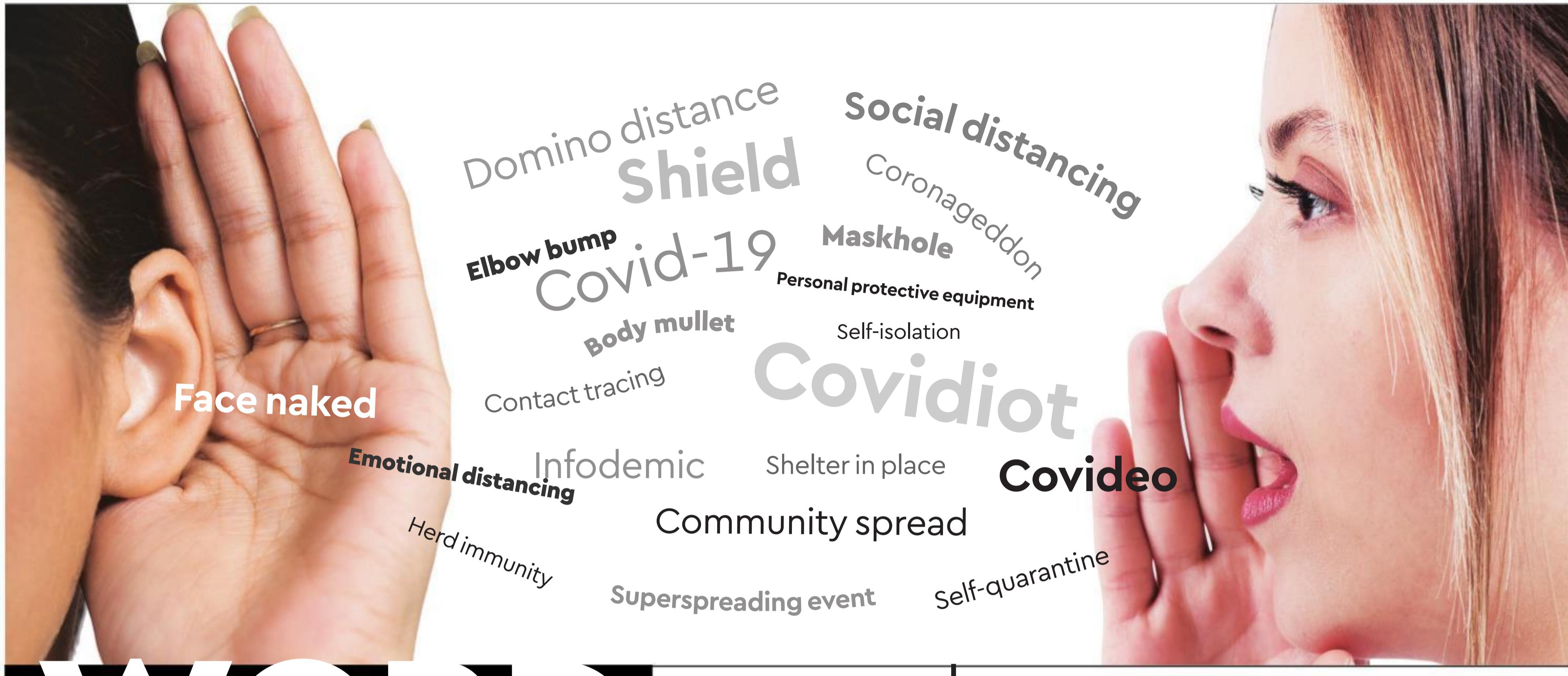
Spotlight

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020



MOST MEANINGS

The word 'set' finds mention in the Guinness World Records as the English word with the most meanings. It has about 430 meanings listed in the second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (1989)



WORD on the street

REYA MEHROTRA

MASKHOLE, SPREADING EVENT, covidiot, face naked, coronageddon, domino distance. Till last year, one would struggle to grasp the meaning of these words and phrases. But not today. The pandemic has not only altered the way we live but also our lexicon. These and many other neologisms have taken over our language and are here to stay thanks to social media. The most common one is, of course, 'social distancing', which is practised everywhere today, from general stores and offices to banks and malls. Not surprisingly, observing this lexical evolution, popular dictionaries, too, are recognising and incorporating 'pandemic words'.

Some other such words and phrases include community spread, co-morbidity, contact tracing, dexamethasone, Zoom, flatten the curve, social recession, among others. Even words like essentials, sanitiser, migrant labourers, hoarding, unprecedented, antibody and containment have come into popular usage and are the most commonly searched keywords online now.

Between April and July this year, Oxford University Press announced including words related to the pandemic in its Oxford English Dictionary (OED). It listed 32 entirely new words appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary for the very first time, including Covid-19, self-isolate, infodemic, self-quarantine and so on. Fourteen new sub-entries or phrases were integrated into the body of new entries, with nine updated sub-entries and eight additions to unrevised entries like PPE (personal protective equipment), WFH (work from home) and so on. "We have published two special updates, outside of the normal publication cycle, which focus on words related to the pandemic. The first, in April, concentrated on words that were new to the OED and the second, in July, was a mixture of new entries and some revision of existing relevant OED entries," says Fiona McPherson, senior editor, Oxford English Dictionary, who is based in Oxford, UK.

Linguistic change

Our world as we know it has suddenly been divided into two time periods: pre-pandemic and post-pandemic, with the phrase 'newnormal' occupying prime space in our vocabularies today. However, there is nothing new about the phrase. It, in fact, finds mention in the 2004 book *The New Normal: Great Opportunities in a Time of Great Risk*, which was authored by American capitalist Roger McNamee with writer David Diamond. McNamee used the term more than a decade ago to talk about the dawning era of corporate scandals, terrorism, outsourcing of jobs overseas and a time of great uncertainty in general. "But the good news is that the new normal also offers tremendous opportunities," McNamee wrote in the book.

Just like this phrase, the evolution of our dictionaries isn't a first-of-its-kind event either. In fact, with every global event, language evolves. The phrase 'die hard', for instance, was coined during the Battle of Albuera in 1811 and its meaning differed from the contemporary one today. At that time, it was used to encourage soldiers in the war. Work from home (WFH), too, is not a new phrase, but gained more relevance this year, as several major companies announced WFH indefinitely for their

The pandemic has not only altered the way we live but also our lexicon. Body mullet, maskhole, covideo, domino distance, herd immunity, covidiot, coronageddon are just some of the neologisms that have taken over our language and lives

ciency," she says.

A wordy year

In July, *The New Yorker* compiled a list of the new pandemic words that are taking the internet by storm. 'Body Zoom-morphia', for instance, is finding your image on Zoom calls so unappealing that your attention decreases. It could be relevant to all working professionals operating from home, especially those dealing with body image issues and those conscious of facing the camera. Other words include 'Covid-30' (which means gaining weight while at home), 'pan-demic' (increased baking of bread at home), 'helter shelter' (when the quarantine day feels chaotic and everything seems dirty) and 'domino-distancing' (standing too close in a queue).

In fact, '2020' alone could be the new term for everything that goes wrong (as the year has seen one disaster after another since its start: the pandemic, multiple celebrity suicides, the Beirut explosion, Mauritius oil spill, among others). Who knows one would, in some years, remark,

"Oh, my life is a complete 2020!"

Recently, linguist Andrea Beltrami, a postdoctoral fellow in the linguistics department of the University of Pennsylvania, said in an article in *Penn Today* magazine (the university's official news hub) that words come and go out of trend just like fashion. Talking about the impact on language at a time when video calls have replaced in-person meetings, he says, "I wouldn't be surprised in a situation where there's less opportunity to be exposed to people in our geographical proximity, it will lead some groups to hold on to particular linguistic features even more strongly as a way of retaining identity and signalling that, in this changing landscape, we still want to retain this particular aspect of who we are."

Cautious usage

Some recent reports of the elderly being abandoned by family after being discharged from Covid-care facilities shocked many. In July, a 62-year-old woman committed suicide in Andhra Pradesh after her relatives refused to take her in suspecting Covid. In such a time, use of words that create a stigma must be avoided since words have the power to impact minds. One such phrase is 'social distancing', which more aptly should be 'physical distancing'.

Arya Babu, a linguistics scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University, warns against the wrong usage of the phrase, saying that socially distancing the affected might mean abandoning and banishing them from society. "Today, everyone knows what social distancing is... even the uneducated are using it. These words have become a part of our everyday lives, but what we need is physical distancing or else it becomes an ostracisation of those affected by the disease. The media must be careful in the usage of such words," she says.

Words are often understood in the context of the situation rather than their literal meaning, which is the case with a lot of the pandemic words, feels Shubham Bokade, who is pursuing a master's in linguistics from Jawaharlal Nehru University. "These new terminologies are being introduced in situations and contexts, where it is very easy to grasp the meaning without knowing what they primarily stand for. The function of physical distancing, for instance, has been assigned to social distancing," says Bokade.

POPULAR PANDEMIC WORDS



Today, everyone knows what social distancing is... even the uneducated are using it. These words have become a part of our everyday lives, but we must be careful in their usage

— ARYA BABU, LINGUISTICS SCHOLAR, JNU, DELHI

employees. The term was actually coined in 1995, according to an Oxford English Dictionary article titled *Social Change and Linguistic Change: The Language of Covid-19*. It further says that several epidemics in the past have given birth to words like 'self-quarantine', 'plague', PPE, social distance and more. These words have just gained

more relevance again now. "Global events like wars and pandemic have had great impact on the vocabulary. Today, certain words like 'quarantine' have become common in even non-English-speaking households. When a word becomes popular, the context is set too around the conceived meaning," says Pranab Bagartti, a Delhi

University linguistics scholar.

Some popular terms today such as 'shell-shock' and 'basket case' were the products of World War I, says Soumya Shree, a Jawaharlal Nehru University linguistics scholar. "The influence could be of a different wavelength, ranging from the coinage or borrowing of new words and

expressions to the creation of a new language and even to its death, as there arises language contact situations, which could disturb and change the language sphere of an area. For instance, the audio-lingual method of teaching came into being during World War II when there was a requirement of quick learning with oral profi-

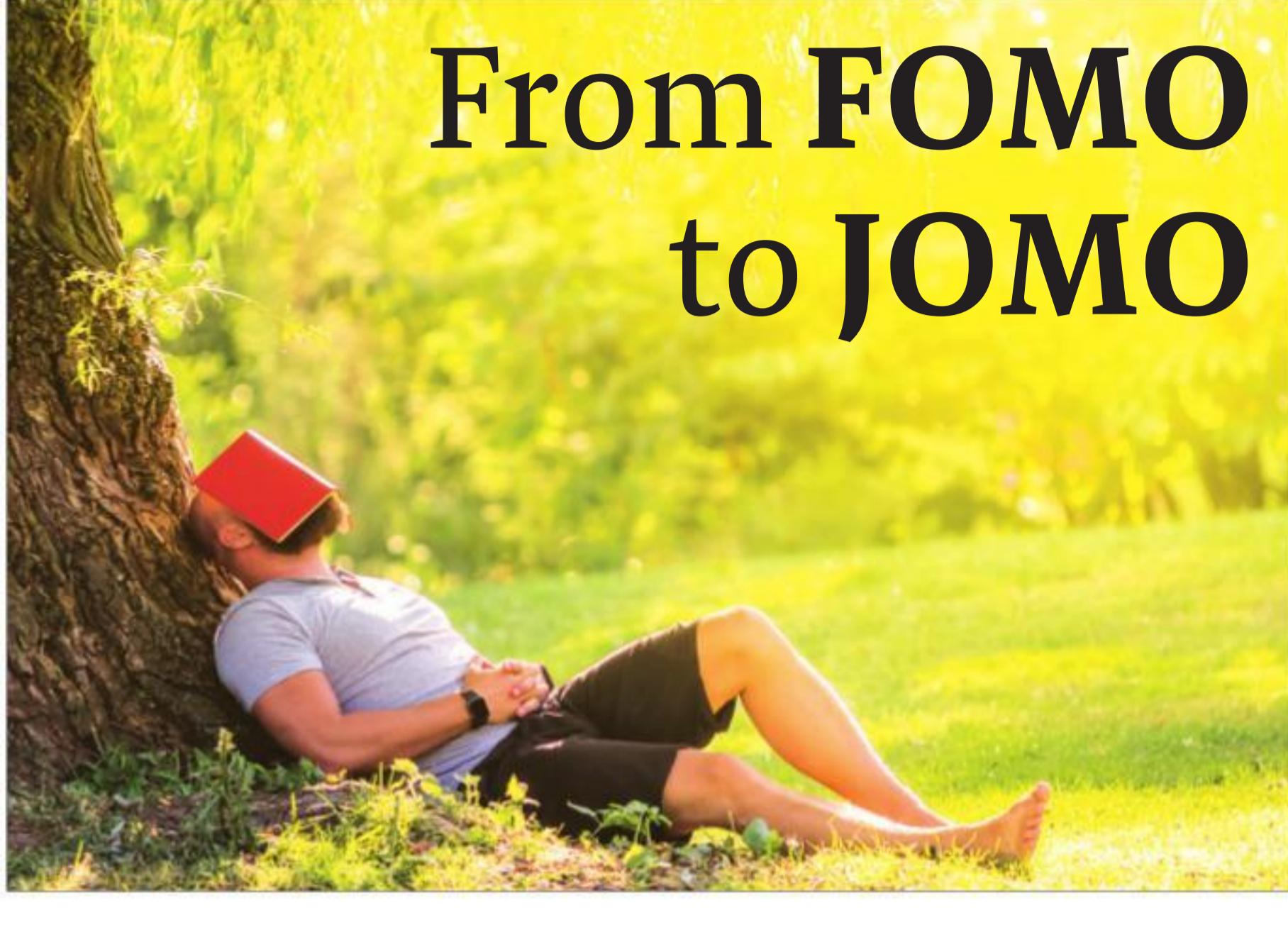
Certain words like 'quarantine' have become common in even non-English-speaking households. When a word becomes popular, the context is also set around the conceived meaning

— PRANAB BAGARTTI, LINGUISTICS SCHOLAR, DELHI UNIVERSITY

• SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

Fe Lines

STORIES AND TRENDS FROM INDIA AND AROUND THE WORLD THAT CAUGHT OUR FANCY



From FOMO to JOMO

Here's how to banish the fear of missing out, which can be exhausting and overwhelming, and embrace the joy of missing out to reconnect with life

VAISHALI DAR

THE LOCKDOWN HAS pressed the reset button in many people's lives. The stressors and pressures of daily life, including the never-ending rat race, the need to keep up with peers or please everyone, have come to a standstill. Maybe it's time now to banish the fear of missing out (FOMO), which can be exhausting and overwhelming, and embrace the joy of missing out (JOMO). JOMO is choosing what one wants to do (or not do). One can disconnect from devices, reflect on life or reconnect with friends or family.

Social media is a major reason for experiencing FOMO, as one sees all the fun things their friends are doing, which can make one feel lacking. Another factor is loneliness and solitude, which is associated with a bunch of negative effects such as depression, suicide and even cardiovascular diseases. Anxiety (with nervous behaviour) is another cause. Bhavna Barmi, co-founder, PsyCare (Neuropsychiatry Care Centre in Delhi), and senior clinical psychologist, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Delhi, finds FOMO as the fear or excitement that social media users experience when they want to be part of a community or a moment that others shared. "It stems from the feeling of social alienation, loneliness or fear, which may be so severe that people may leave what they do to participate or experience a brief moment on social media. JOMO, on the other hand, helps us live life in the slow lane, enjoy human interactions and tech-free breaks, etc," she says.

A big factor behind stress in current times is the pandemic, which has left multitudes fearful, as uncertainty has crept into our lives. For actor-turned-entrepreneur Pooja

Bedi, founder, Happy Soul, a health-and-wellness-focused lifestyle brand, positivity is very important. "Fear has a negative impact on our mind, body and soul, and serves no purpose. The single most important skill to develop in life is a positive set of eyes. I believe in empowering people to become the architects of their lives and encourage them to focus on their dreams and not their fears, as whatever we vibrate is what we attract. A wonderful tool is a vision board where you pin pictures, targets of what you want: a dream home, holiday, professional milestone, and place it by your bedside. Look at it for five minutes every night before sleeping and every morning as you wake up. Watch it, absorb it, feel it coming alive, manifest it. Thank circumstances for putting an abrupt halt to a series of meaningless experiences that consumed you and diverted time, energy and focus from what is actually important to shape life into one you're excited and proud of," she says.

FOMO is a new social disorder, feels author Neil D'Silva, who regrets "the countless shows and movies I wasted my hours on just because everyone was talking about them. Holiday plans, restaurant visits, electronic purchases, hashtags and

FOMO can lead to burnout and chronic stress. It can be detrimental to mental health, negatively impacting self-esteem and leading to feelings of loneliness

trends followed. But sometimes you need to miss out on things to keep your mental sanity. The joy of missing out helps. Instead of regretting wasting money and time on unnecessary things, it is worth noting that in the longer run, true happiness is in discovering what you want to do and not succumbing to trends and fads," he says.

When applied to work, FOMO can lead to burnout and chronic stress due to missing out on opportunities or career progression. It can be detrimental to mental health, negatively impacting self-esteem and leading to feelings of loneliness. "Workplace instills a sense of competition among colleagues. It is a place where everyone tries to be at the top and there's no room for mistakes. In such an environment, it is natural that an employee is struck with FOMO. One is persistently under the impression that with the disappearance of important work, their image will tarnish before the boss. So they not only drain their energy, but also waste a lot of time. The very first problem here lies in the fact that people are not aware of their FOMO. If realised, they are unaware of how to deal with it. So take a moment to understand your fears. The key element driving FOMO's force can be characterised by the human habit of comparing oneself with others. To overcome such insecurities, one needs to delve into something that truly motivates them," says Delhi-based Sumit Mittal, founder, VentAllOut, a vernacular mental wellness-promoting platform.

Agrees Bengaluru-based Mudit Dandwate, co-founder, Dozee, a proactive contactless health monitor device. "Use excess time to pursue hobbies, sharpen technical knowledge and skills or invest in health and overall well-being," he says.

SpongeBob Squarepants

During Pride Month this year, TV channel Nickelodeon, which airs the cartoon show, tweeted the image of SpongeBob and wrote, "Celebrating Pride with the LGBTQ+ community and their allies this month and every month". The tweet confirmed SpongeBob's sexuality and #SpongeBobIsGay started trending on Twitter. Rumours had been doing the rounds that SpongeBob and his starfish friend Patrick Star were gay owing to their close friendship, but the show's creator Stephen Hillenburg clarified in an interview that he considered the character to be almost asexual.



Star Trek: Discovery

The showmakers recently announced that they will be casting two non-binary and trans characters in the third season of the show for the very first time since the show was cast. For this, Ian Alexander, a trans actor, and Blu Del Barrio, who identifies as non-binary, have been cast. While Alexander will play Grey, a trans character, Barrio has been cast as Adira, a non-binary character. The show will be airing on October 15. The move has been praised by the LGBTQIA community, as for the first time, transgender characters are set to get proper representation as intelligent and complex characters.

Cinderella

The story of Cinderella has been told hundreds of times in the form of books, shows, as well as movies, but the upcoming *Cinderella* movie promises to narrate the fairytale in an all-inclusive, gender-neutral way. The fairy godmother who turned Cinderella into a princess for one

night is set to be portrayed in a new avatar. For the first time in history, the role will be genderless. Actor Billy Porter, who is known for his appearances in extravagant and elaborate outfits on red carpets, has been roped in to play the godmother. The actor said that the role was "non-conforming" and that magic

was "genderless".

Onward

The film by The Walt Disney Co and Pixar Animation Studios became the first in the studio's history to celebrate an openly gay character. The lesbian character of purple Cyclops Officer



Mulan

The 2020 movie can be called a semi queer narrative. In the film, Mulan disguises herself as a man to join a battle against invaders. Her struggle to fit in with the other men in the battalion and the identity crisis has been relatable to the queer community, especially teenagers who struggle to conform to gender roles. In the film, Mulan's romance with Captain Li Shang becomes the minor plot, while her bravery takes centrestage. The character's appearance, too, was designed to appear less feminine. The film stars Yifei Liu in the title role, alongside Donnie Yen, Tzi Ma, Jason Scott Lee, Yoson An, etc.

Specter, voiced by openly lesbian actor Lena Waithe, appears in the film briefly. The movie was, however, banned in countries like Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and the word 'girlfriend' was censored to 'partner' in Russia. The lesbian character talks about co-parenting her girlfriend's daughter to the two

and has garnered a massive fan following. It's a first-person shooter (FPS) game, but has a battle royale mode with a huge map and even zombies. It is also one of the oldest franchises in the FPS game genre.

Free Fire was released in 2017 and is a lesser-known battle royale game. The 10-minute survival shooter game is fast-paced and allows up to 50 players to play alongside. The game has been included in Google Play Store's editor's choice and has a rating of 4.1 after more than 500 million downloads.

Rules of Survival is another battle royale game, which is probably the closest to the experience of *PUBG Mobile*. The similarity is so great that it was involved in a legal dispute with *PUBG* over copyright issues. A maximum of 300 players are allowed to compete at once in the latest version of the game.

Another popular first-person action game in the arena has been *Knives Out*. This game was launched as an attempt to revive the genre of first-person action games and is based on a multi-player battle royale format. The advantage that this game has over *Rules of Survival* is its storage, which roughly comes to 600 MBs compared to 1 GB for other battle royal games.

The biggest player in the market right now, however, is *Fortnite*. The premise of the game includes 100 players jumping on to a battlefield to fight it out. The last player standing becomes the winner. The biggest advantage that the game enjoys is that, unlike *PUBG Mobile*, *Fortnite* supports cross-platform functionality, so that the player can compete against PC and console players.

TECH-NOW-LOGY

A level playing field

The ban on online gaming platform PUBG has proved to be a blessing for other players who have jumped to the occasion to fill the void

SHRIYA ROY

THE RECENT BAN on online gaming platform PUBG by the government came as a shocker to gamers across the country. The ban, however, proved to be a blessing for other gaming platforms, as it has opened up the online gaming arena for all, making it a level-playing field.

Within only two days of the ban, a home-grown competitor called FAU-G was unveiled by Bollywood star Akshay Kumar. Released by Bengaluru-based nCore games, FAU-G stands for Fearless and United Guards and has pledged to donate 20% of its revenue to the government's fund for paramilitary forces called Bharat Ke Veer. The first level of the game is based on Galwan Valley in Ladakh, where 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives in June.

Amazon, too, recently launched its Prime Gaming platform. It's the new version of Twitch Prime, a service that Amazon launched four years ago, which was tied to the popular game streaming platform Twitch that it acquired in 2014. Prime Gaming offers free games, game content and a free Twitch channel subscription as part of a Prime membership. It currently offers in-game content for *Grand Theft Auto Online*, *Red Dead Online*, *Apex Legends*, *EASports FIFA 20*, *League of Legends* and more than 20 other PC, console and mobile games. It also includes a free collection of PC games every month. "Prime members already get the best of TV, movies and music, and now, we're expanding our offerings to include the best of gaming," Larry Plotnick, general manager, Prime Gaming, said. "We're giving customers new content that makes playing their favourite games on every platform even better. So no matter what kind of games you love and no matter where you play them, they'll be even better with Prime Gaming," he added. The Prime Gaming service is available now with a 30-day free trial for new members.

The launch of the service comes on the heels of the rocky launch of Amazon's *Crucible*, a free-to-play multiplayer game that was launched in May this year. After the launch and reception did not go as expected, Amazon moved *Crucible* back to the garage, admitting it launched the game before it was ready. *Crucible*'s lack of overall originality and its lacklustre characters, combat and art style made it largely forgettable. It also suffered from a bit of an identity crisis by trying to be a bit of everything.

Like Amazon, other alternative online gaming platforms, too, have raised the bar to match the demand in the market. *Call of Duty* has been around for a while, but the mobile version was launched in October last year



THE GENDER BENDERS

Recently, Marvel Cinematic Universe announced that it will be introducing its first transgender superhero in an upcoming movie. It's a welcome move, but not the first such instance, as the cinematic world is now increasingly accepting and introducing genderless, non-binary characters. Here are some such movies and shows. By Reya Mehrotra



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The showmakers recently announced that they will be casting two non-binary and trans characters in the third season of the show for the very first time since the show was cast. For this, Ian Alexander, a trans actor, and Blu Del Barrio, who identifies as non-binary, have been cast. While Alexander will play Grey, a trans character, Barrio has been cast as Adira, a non-binary character. The show will be airing on October 15. The move has been praised by the LGBTQIA community, as for the first time, transgender characters are set to get proper representation as intelligent and complex characters.

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teen elf brothers, a scene which was both praised and criticised by many.

Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated

The show has been a favourite of many, but little did anyone imagine that Velma, the nerdy girl in an orange turtleneck, red skirt and square-framed glasses with a bob haircut, would turn out to be a lesbian. During Pride Month in June this year, Tony Cervone, the co-creator of *Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated*, announced that Velma was indeed a lesbian. He also shared her picture with the rainbow background that stands for Pride Month. He also confirmed that Marcie was Velma's girlfriend. In fact, the makers also confirmed that she was explicitly gay in the 2001 script itself, but the character was watered down to having a boyfriend eventually.

It Chapter 2

The 2019 American supernatural horror film, based on the 1986 novel by Stephen King, has Richie Tozier's character, a stand-up comedian, as gay. The sequel of the 2017 movie *It*, the film reveals secrets of its characters. The fast-talking teenager who grows up to be a popular comedian comes out as gay. Richie is secretly in love with his friend Eddie Kaspbrak. He, however, never shares his feelings, as Eddie dies in the movie. Actor Bill Hader, who played the character, suggested that it be "what it is" and "overt", and that knowing this detail about the character gave him more room to play.

Leisure

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020



NUTTY AFFAIR

Studies demonstrate that nuts can help you lose weight and may also help fight type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Additionally, your body doesn't absorb 10-15% of the calories in nuts

VAISHALI DAR

STRESS HAS DIFFERENT ways of manifesting itself. Faced with it, some people sleep, some indulge in retail therapy, yet others pump iron. A sizeable number of people, however, resort to binge eating. In these current stress-filled times, in fact, people have been snacking more than ever before. But snacking today is very different from what it was some years back. Today, there is a visible shift in the narrative, with the focus being on healthy snacks that don't compromise on taste. Crackers laced with sodium and cookies dipped in sugar have made way for grab-and-go yoghurts, fruit and nut bars, vegetable and bean snacks, quinoa soup and burgers, and amaranth cupcakes.

"For long, snacking had been associated with unhealthy food—deep-fried and loaded with salt and empty calories. But the paradigm has shifted towards healthy versions now. Snacks like roasted black chana with puffed rice, mixed nuts and seeds (trail mix), wheat/quinoa/bajra puffs, roasted makhana (fox nuts), whole fruit, cucumber/celery/carrot sticks with hummus dip, etc., boost health and immunity," says Delhi-based nutritionist Nmami Agarwal, who is the CEO and founder of Nmami Life, a health and wellness brand, which is associated with celebrities like politician and former cricketer Gautam Gambhir, Australian cricket commentator Michael Clarke (for sports nutrition) and beauty queen Manushi Chhillar.

The 2020 report of Euromonitor International, a global strategic market research firm, also suggests that 'snackification' as a trend is catching up in India. Not surprisingly, brands and companies are cashing in on the trend. Tea café chain Chaayos, for one, serves handcrafted and healthy snack options. "Lip-smacking, health-first options like egg white chaat and kala chana chaat are high in natural protein and fibre content... it's a popular snack category for breakfast and a favourite among millennials," says Raghav Verma, co-founder, Chaayos, which serves home-style chai in a funky café setting.

Many local and branded makers have introduced products like roasted grains as nutritional options in the 'easy snack' category. Ready-to-eat snack brand Sattvik, which is based in Delhi, introduced a gur chana snack, which is packed with protein and carbohydrates, and is good for the respiratory system. It also flushes out pollutants from the lungs.

A variety of beverage brands offer healthy alternatives like camel milk as a substitute to cow milk. "Camel milk has medicinal and health benefits... It helps the autistic and those suffering from diabetes and lactose intolerance. Camel milk has three times more vitamin C and 10 times more iron than cow milk," says Delhi-based Shrey Kumar, co-founder, Aadvik Foods, which sells camel milk, as well as sugar-free chocolates of the variant.

Nutrition first

The Access to Nutrition India Spotlight Index is developed by Access to Nutrition Initiative (which focuses on developing tools and initiatives that track and drive the contribution made by the food and beverage sector to address the world's global nutrition challenges) to drive positive change in the food and beverage industry in India on diet, nutrition and health issues. The 2020 index reports that healthy products form a small but significant part of the fast-growing Indian food industry. "ATNI



Snack tales

Snacking today is vastly different from what it was till some years back. Crackers laced with sodium and cookies dipped in sugar have made way for grab-and-go yoghurts, fruit and nut bars, vegetable and bean snacks, quinoa soup and burgers, and amaranth cupcakes



(Access to Nutrition Initiative) sees food and beverage companies in India showing their commitment to provide healthy food and engaging in a dialogue on how to support India's Eat Right Movement.

India has enormous opportunity for companies to make nutrition a core part of their business plans and to adopt comprehensive, public and commercial strategies to address issues related to the double burden of malnutrition in India," says Inge Kauer, executive director, ATNI.

A perfect balance of carbohydrates and protein, khichdi has been savoured by Indians for generations, making it a healthy meal option packed with

flavours. Ola Foods, the ride hailing app's food business, is busting the myth that the healthy meal doesn't deliver on flavour with its Khichdi Experiment.

Currently operational in Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai, Khichdi Experiment offers 20 variants of khichdi such as palak paneer khichdi, Mumbaiya pav bhaji khichdi, Kerala mathan khichdi, etc. There are also non-vegetarian variants such as murgh dalcha khichdi and mutton khichdi.

Some recently launched variants include Masala Veggie 7 grain, Spinach Multi-grain and Masala Quinoa Khichdi. "Khichdi has been deprived of the status of a super food even though it has high nourishment value and is a wholesome meal. A traditional and seemingly simple dish, khichdi has been

savouried by Indians for generations... it is equipped with nutritional benefits, making it a suitable alternative to junk food. It helps in digestion and is a great source of the 10 essential amino acids, making it a complete protein. The addition of vegetables and ghee makes it rich in fibre and antioxidants and, at the same time, gives the much-needed dosage of healthy fats," says Bengaluru-based Anshul Khandelwal, head of marketing and revenue, Ola Foods.

Five-star hotel brands have also revitalised healthy meals by introducing alternate foods. Hotel Vivanta Surajkund in NCR is experimenting with grains like amaranth, millets, oats, ragi, quinoa, barley, red rice and bulgur to toss up a new-age snack meal category for millennials.

Dishes like oatmeal salad and quinoa



(Clockwise from above) Roasted chana; a dish of flattened rice or pooha; and quinoa and beetroot burgers

burger, for instance, are made with centuries-old healthy ingredients, but offer contemporary flavour, as per junior sous chef executive Geetika Gupta. The ingredients provide nutrition, as well as suit the healthy preference of millennials. A tasty yet healthy option for those who don't want to compromise on health," she says.

Getting children to eat healthy may sometimes be an uphill battle, but some brands offer children-focused food and

nutrition, which has natural ingredients, zero preservatives and good flavour. Bengaluru-based children-focused food and nutrition startup Lil'Goodness, founded by IIM-Calcutta alumnus Harshavardhan and nutrition expert Pariksha Rao, aims to build immunity in children using vegetables, cereals and milk in crackers, porridges and shelf-stable yoghurts. "Our dry snacks are 100% baked and not fried, and we use fruits

(From top) Egg white chaat by Chaayos; fruit and nut bars; and quinoa salad

and vegetables in a format that ensures that the little ones get nutrition without compromising on taste. Our guava fruit yoghurt smoothie, for instance, provides 100% of the daily recommended allowance of vitamin C for a child, acting as an immunity booster... plus, it can be stored at room temperature for six months. Jaggery oats banana porridge, too, is rich in protein, calcium and healthy carbs. A creamy smooth texture makes it easy to consume, yet keeps the stomach full for a longer duration. The multigrain carrot cracker is rich in beta carotene (vitamin A)... it is baked not fried, a healthy alternative to potato crisps and nachos," shares Harshavardhan, the co-founder and CEO.

Healthy food brands are shaking up the grocery scene with not just crackers and porridge, but even popcorn now. Hyderabad-based Timla Foods' ready-to-eat flavoured popcorn brand PopiCorn offers low-calorie whole grain popcorn, which is rich in fibre. The popcorn comes in a variety of flavours such as tomato chilli, tangy jalapeno, piri piri masala, salted, creamy cheese and butter in a price range of ₹5-₹49 depending on the size of the pack. "The new consumer demands options. Hence, better-for-you and packaged snacks are at an inflection point in India, as they provide the perfect intersection of taste, nutrition, convenience, quality, cost, availability and sourcing. We call them 'hunk', or healthy junk," says Prashanth GowriRaju, 'chief dad' and CEO, Timla Foods.

When the crowd doesn't show

Live audience is said to hold great power over professional performers. Its sudden absence has upended the worlds of sports, comedy and politics

AMANDA HESS

THEY USED TO ARRIVE before dawn. Hundreds of them came to scream and wave posters scrawled with the names of their hometowns as they vied to be caught on camera among the *Today* show crowd.

"People dream about coming to 30 Rockefeller Plaza," Hoda Kotb, the show's co-anchor, told me recently over Zoom. But for the last several months, Kotb has heard the eerie sound of her own footsteps as she heads into the studio and slips behind the anchor desk, where she perches at a socially distanced remove from her co-stars and broadcasts in front of a ghostly plaza.

Since the coronavirus swept across the world, the audiences have not shown. Their sudden disappearance has spot-

lighted the mythical role they play in popular entertainment. The crowd is said to hold great power over professional performers. The crowd lends a democratic sheen to an event, legitimising the performer's skill and authenticating the show as real. If the crowd laughs, the joke was funny. If it boos, the call was bad. The crowd is, as Kotb put it, "the juice". And for now, it is gone.

This has proved to be a vexing experience for entertainers. When *The View* first banished its studio audience, in March, Whoopi Goldberg cried "Welcome to *The View!* Welcome to *The View!*" again and again into silence, as cameras swept an expanse of empty seats. Before he sealed himself into the NBA bubble at Disney World, LeBron James could not conceive of



The crowd lends a democratic sheen to an event, legitimising the performer's skill and authenticating the show as real

the game without a crowd, saying: "If I show up to an arena and there ain't no fans there? I ain't playing." When even A-list celebrities seem bored enough to appear at events hosted on videoconferencing software, it is the crowd that has stepped into the role of the withholding diva. A long-anticipated reunion of *Friends* is on hold, not for David Schwimmer or Jennifer Aniston, but for the anonymous audience members tasked with observing them: "We cannot do it without them," Marta Kauffman, the show's co-creator, has said.

So longing are the shows for their crowds that they have grasped for imitations. The *Today* show has erected a "virtual plaza" and enlisted performers of its once-outdoor music series to surprise superfans at home. For the Video Music Awards recently, MTV crafted an orgy of simulation, stitching together uncanny CGI fans and fake crowd buzz into a dystopian New York cityscape.

The ultimate audiences for sports, politics, talk shows and award presentations are not found inside arenas or convention halls or studios—they are watching from home, slack on the couch, absorbing ads

and paying for cable and streaming packages. In normal times, the live crowd mounts a performance for the remote audience. But this summer, without our stand-ins to guide us, we home viewers confront a void. The pretense of the crowd always provided the true audience a bit of cover; we could vicariously ride its emotions, feeding off its energy, absorbing its delight and its outrage, even as we sat quietly alone at home. But now we are directly implicated in the show itself.

The last few months have cracked an opportunity for a new kind of crowd relationship. Our new era of "live" performance requires something not exactly like cinema, not quite like TV, but something more like the internet. Traditional entertainers now feel in direct competition with internet stars, who are preternaturally skilled at performing one-sided conversations to unfeeling camera lenses, then riding waves of online reactions that spin off in unexpected directions. The best internet videos carry a frisson of intimacy and spontaneity; they seem crafted not to please the crowd but to connect with one individual, millions and millions of times. NYT

Well-Being

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020



LIVING WITH OCD

Harry Potter actor Daniel Radcliffe opened up about his experience of OCD in 2012, saying he had lived with the condition since the age of five, as per a report in *Daily Mail*. "I had to repeat every sentence I said under my breath," he said

The pandemic of WFH injuries and exertion

Chiropractors report a surge in problems as millions of workers have spent months clacking away on sofas and beds and awkward kitchen counters

JEFF WILSER

ELIZABETH CUTRELL, a Manhattan-based film producer, used to work in an ergonomic office space: comfortable desk chair, monitor at eye level, external keyboard. Then came Covid-19. During stay-at-home, she worked on a laptop from a wicker chair, or sometimes on a couch with "cushions like marshmallows." A month later, she felt pain in her neck, wrist and shoulders that sent her to a chiropractor.

"It's hard to quantify, but this has been a really, really big issue for a lot of my patients," said Karen Erickson, the chiropractor who treated Cuthrell. Chiropractors report a surge of injuries and discomfort stemming from the worldwide push to work from home, as millions of workers have spent months clacking away on sofas and beds and awkward kitchen counters. Out with ergonomics, in with hunching over laptops.

According to an April Facebook survey from the American Chiropractic Association, 92% of chiropractors (out of 213 respondents) said that patients report more neck pain, back pain or other musculoskeletal issues since the stay-at-home guidance began.

The typical pattern: in March, people thought they would work from home for just a couple of weeks, so it was no problem to work from the couch. Or perhaps their spouse or roommate, also working from home, claimed the one serviceable desk.

At first they felt only mild discomfort. Then, gradually, the pain sharpened. This is most commonly an "overuse injury" that stems from repetitive trauma, said Michael Fredericson, professor of orthopedic surgery at Stanford University, adding, "It's kind of like when a tire blows out on you. It wasn't necessarily one incident; the tread was wearing down over time."

While some offices have reopened, for many people, what they thought would be a temporary work-from-home arrangement has become the norm. And with many schools and colleges opening remotely this fall, the problem is even more widespread.

Laptops are a big culprit. You're forced to either look down to see the screen, or (if it's elevated) raise your hands to type. Both options are bad. Chronic looking down, Erickson said, puts us in a "forward head position" that loads pressure on the discs and joints of the spine, as well as causing muscle imbalance in the neck.

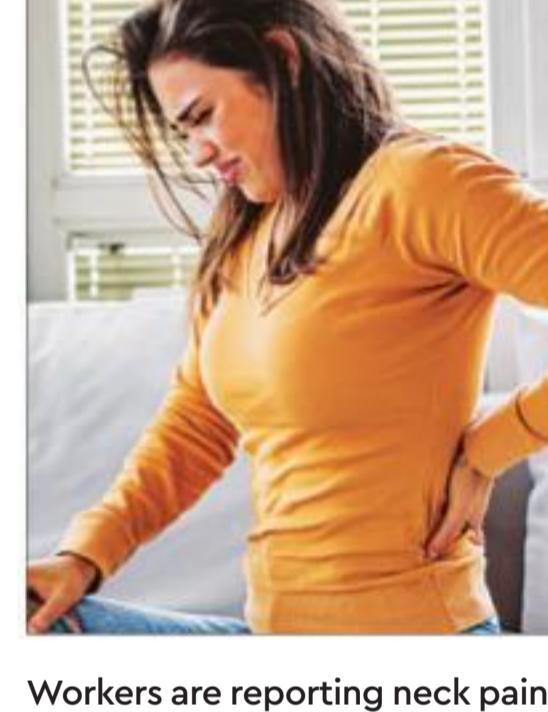
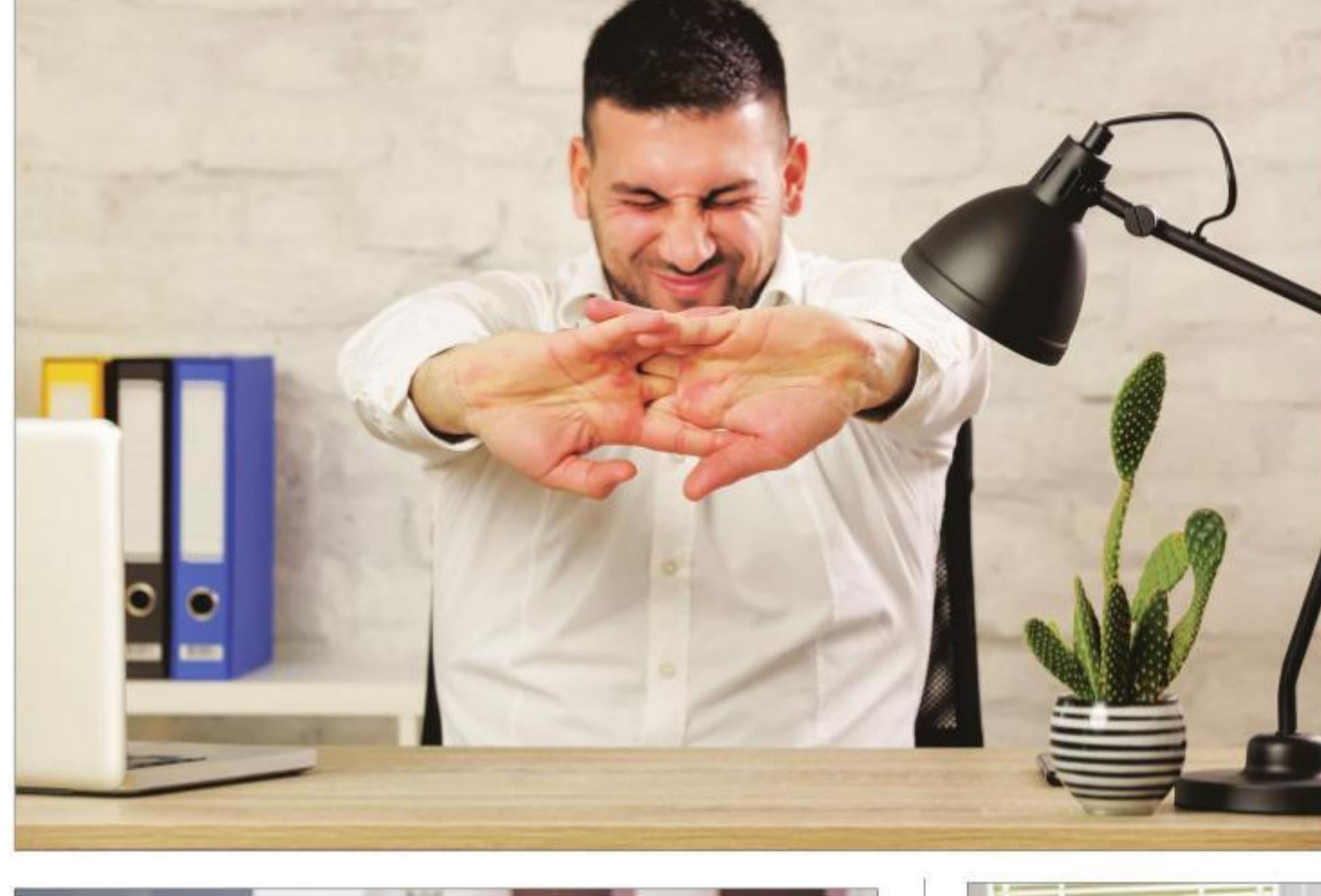
Then there's the chair. When we morph our kitchen stools or sofas into desk chairs they're often the wrong height, preventing us from sitting in what Nikki Weiner, an ergonomics consultant, calls the neutral posture, or "ears over shoulders, over hips": hips slightly higher than the knees, arms relaxed at your side, neck relaxed and straight, forearms parallel to the ground, feet resting on the floor.

Many of us haven't just changed where we work; we've also changed how we work. We no longer walk down the hall for a meeting, dart across the street for a coffee, or even walk to the subway for a commute. Instead we just sit.

"My workstation is in the bedroom. I get up from bed—and if I'm being honest, sometimes don't even bother showering—and then literally move to the chair, and I sit there for most of the day," said Ryan Taylor, a New York-based software engineer, who now has pain behind his shoulder.

"The body needs movement," said Heidi Henson, an Oregon-based chiropractor, who, like the other chiropractors interviewed, said that pandemic-fuelled inactivity has caused injuries and pain. "Even if you have perfect, perfect ergonomics, if you're in the same position for too long, your body is not going to respond well."

Increased screen-time on our phones—such as doom-scrolling Twitter—only inflames the inactivity. "Cellphones are a huge deal," said Erickson, explaining that we tend to bend our necks to look down at our phones. She instead recommends holding your phone up to eye level, rest-



Workers are reporting neck pain, back pain and other musculoskeletal issues

ing your elbow on your body for support. Scott Bautch, the president of the American Chiropractic Association's Council on Occupational Health, says that as screen time has exploded, we're more at risk of "Text Neck" and "Selfie Elbow."

College students, teenagers and even younger kids are also at risk. "Teenagers are already prone to being on their screens a lot," Henson said. "And then we've taken away everything that is good for them in terms of movement—sports are gone, gyms are gone." She calls teens and college students an "overlooked population" from a health perspective.

Erickson agrees, adding that college students are "absolutely at risk," particularly for neck tension, shoulder pain and headaches. Most middle school to college-age students, said Erickson, "are doing their work in bed, sitting rounded over like Linus on the piano, leaning over their laptop or phone for hours." Thanks to increased screen time and inactivity, young children are also reporting more headaches and discomfort. "It's not normal for an eight-year-old to have neck pain," said Erickson, but now she's seeing that in her practice.

There is some good news: the solutions can be simple and cheap. For laptop users, the one purchase that the experts resoundingly recommend is an external keyboard and mouse; and then place your laptop on a stack of books, raising the monitor to eye level. If your chair is too high for your feet to comfortably rest on the floor, use a footstool; if it's too low, make it higher with pillows.

Two other important fixes are free: more breaks and more movement. Bautch suggests setting a timer for every 15 to 30 minutes to remind yourself to move, and recommends three different types of breaks: frequent "micro-

breaks" of just five seconds, in which you change your posture in the opposite direction of where it had been (so if you were looking down at the screen, for example, look up at the ceiling for five seconds); then periodic "macro breaks" of three to five minutes, such as deep breathing or stretching your shoulders; and finally "the big workout" of at least 30 minutes of exercise (ideally in one session), whether it's riding a bike or the elliptical.

"It doesn't always take that much," said Fredericson, adding that because increased stress can boost the risk of injury, we should do what we can to relax. "It's really the simple things. Get out. Take a walk."

Cuthrell is a convert. She now has an alarm on her phone that pings every 30 minutes, reminding her to stand or walk. She tries to take an hour-long walk every day. She rests her laptop on a boxed game of *Balderdash*, bringing it to eye level. "It's incredible, the shift," she said. "I was in a lot—a lot—of pain. Now I'm not."

NYT



For kids with OCD, Covid precautions can go too far

Here's how parents can distinguish between handwashing that is a reasonable reaction to a real threat and something more concerning

JENNY MARDER

IN MAY, A 15-year-old boy set up a socially distanced visit with a friend. They met on opposite sides of a sidewalk—a full six feet apart—and talked. But when the teenager returned home, he brought with him a new set of Covid-19 fears, according to John Duffy, the boy's therapist and a child psychologist in Chicago. How could he be sure six feet was a safe distance? The teenager wanted to know. He began washing his hands more frequently. And he hasn't wanted to see friends since.

The pandemic has understandably intensified our need for good hygiene and safety precautions. But for some children and teens, these precautions have crossed the line from careful to compulsive. And for parents, it can sometimes be hard to distinguish between a reasonable reaction to a very real threat and something more concerning. There's little data available yet on the toll the pandemic has taken on the mental health of children. But Eric Storch, an expert on obsessive-compulsive disorder and a professor at the Baylor College of Medicine, said calls to the university's OCD programme have jumped significantly, by about 25%, since March. He attributed it in part to telemedicine improving access, and in part to worsening mental health concerns. Duffy said the number of his patients experiencing OCD-like symptoms has tripled during this time.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder has two main components. Obsessions take the form of uncontrollable thoughts, urges, feelings or uncomfortable sensations. Compulsions are behaviours repeated over and over. These can include excessive handwashing, showering or sanitising, but also checking things, putting things in order, tapping, touching, seeking reassurance or asking the same question repeatedly.

"The key in OCD is this functional relationship between the two," said Jennifer Freeman, director of research and training for the Pediatric Anxiety Research Center at Bradley Hospital in Rhode Island, and an OCD specialist. The compulsion neutralises the worry, but the relief is often short-lived, "so obsessions come back, ritualising seems like the only answer, and a vicious cycle is created."

OCD is far more complicated than germs and handwashing. Obsessions can be about dirt, germs and illness, but also about self-injury or thoughts of harm coming to oneself or one's family, or the world. So how should parents address their kids' fears and behaviours? How can they tell the difference between a reasonable response to a dangerous virus and something that might require treatment?

Look for disproportionate fear
It makes sense to be cautious, but with OCD, you're disproportionately afraid, said Tara Peris, co-director of the child OCD, anxiety and Tic Disorders Program and an associate professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. Parents should look for behaviour that falls outside their family's norms and the guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC, for example, recommends washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water after being in a public place. "If somebody moves into the realm of washing their hands 20 to 30 times a day, or if they're spending 15 to

20 minutes when they do wash, or they can't get out of the bathroom, then they're clearly more worried than they need to be," Peris said. "I'm interested in whether kids are following instructions around them or whether they're washing to relieve distress, and whether that need is expanding over time or building and taking on a life of its own." If it's affecting family life, friendships and a person's ability to do schoolwork, those are red flags, Peris said.

Trust your instincts

One complicating factor, Duffy said, is that it's difficult to assess whether a person's basic functioning is disrupted when the pandemic itself is disruptive to basic functioning. We're working with a modified baseline, he said. "What I tell parents is trust your radar," he said. "If your child seems off emotionally, or raw or fragile in a way you wouldn't expect, or significantly different than peers or siblings, then you won't regret bringing a professional into the situation."

Treatment works

The most effective approach for those with mild to moderate OCD is cognitive behavioural therapy with exposure prevention, which involves gradually introducing a person to the thing that scares them without giving in to rituals, Storch said. And the good news, he said, is that this treatment is effective at reducing symptoms more than 75% of the time. In more extreme cases, these therapies can be paired with medication.

Lara Koelliker, who is 18 and has been treated for OCD since age eight, said she had severe symptoms for three years before finding a therapist who specialised in exposure therapy. The treatment helped her manage her symptoms by giving her coping mechanisms, she said. "I've learned how to sit with my uncomfortable feelings, and I don't give in to my compulsions," she said.

"Now the part of me that has been equipped with all these strategies jumps in."

Therapy on screen

Many therapists are using video calls to treat patients now. And being inside a patient's house, virtually speaking, can be useful for exposure treatment, as home is often "where OCD lives," Freeman said. Some kids, for example, have fears involving contamination from pets, family members, or parts of their house. "On Zoom, I can say, 'Can you show me that room? Can you show me that couch? Do you think you can sit on that couch? Can we do it together?'"

Validate feelings

Beyond therapy, parents' top priority needs to be listening to their kids and be willing to have difficult conversations that stir up anxious distress in all of us. Beyond therapy, parents' top priority needs to be listening to their kids and validate what the kids are feeling," she said. "And be willing to have difficult conversations that stir up anxious distress in all of us. It's really important not to tell a child they shouldn't be sad, anxious or upset. That invalidates the emotions they're feeling."

Address school anxieties

Young people anxious about returning to school "should be encouraged to express their anxieties, and parents and school personnel should not dismiss them," Freeman said. It's important that students understand that some school rules may be more strict than the rules at home to accommodate more people. They should also know, she said, that it's possible to feel simultaneously anxious and excited about going back.

Footloose

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

SARAH FIRSHEIN

LAST YEAR, AMANDA Morgan watched a production of *My Fair Lady* at the Sydney Opera House, drove from Queenstown to Christchurch on New Zealand's South Island, roamed through lavender fields in Provence and spent a week in Mykonos. She celebrated Christmas in Amsterdam and New Year's Eve in Paris. When the coronavirus struck the US, Morgan, 40, cancelled this year's big trip, which would have taken her to Jordan and Egypt in early May. She spent her vacation kayaking and watching cotton-candy sunsets at the Inns of Aurora, a resort in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. "If I can see something truly beautiful four hours away — as opposed to halfway across the world — then I'm fortunate to be able to have that opportunity," said Morgan, who lives in New York City and works in the financial services industry.

This summer, most vacationers followed Morgan's playbook. She drove. She spent much of her time outside. And she eschewed splashy international experiences for humbler ones close to home. If that sounds quaint, if not an outright throwback, it is. Certain mid-century preferences — like driving over flying and a focus on domestic exploration — experienced a revival that made summer travel feel like 1965, not 2019. The conditions and causes were different because of this pandemic, but the trend lines this summer were clear: What's new is old is new again — just add Google Maps, face masks and curbside pickup.

Hit the road

Vacations — as in, travelling for leisure — weren't common for most people until incomes rose and paid time off became more widespread. The popularity and affordability of cars were instrumental in the cultural shift. In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, driving became the norm for family trips. Some 85% of Americans, for instance, vacationed by car in 1963. In turn, road trips became a cultural rite of passage for many families. "Automobile companies produced all sorts of marketing materials telling parents how to travel," said Eric GE Zuelow, a professor of history at the University of New England and author of *A History of Modern Tourism*.

Jessica Nabongo, the founder of the travel website The Catch Me If You Can, has always found joy in travelling by car, which she believes "allows you to explore deeply and on your own time."

"When you fly, you just get where you want to go and you don't think at all about what you're flying over," said Anthony Harkins, a Western Kentucky University history professor who studies the cultural implications of air travel and transportation. Nabongo wasn't the only one on the road. There were many others like her.

But the pandemic may belie parts of the glamorous, carefree vintage snapshot — top down, head scarf tied, sunglasses positioned just so. Morgan packed masks, gloves and sanitiser. On her drive up, she stopped only for drive-through coffee and the bathroom. "So much of what made road trip meaningful is serendipitous and unexpected, like chatting with someone next to you at a diner," said Andrew Wood, a San Jose State University communication studies professor who specialises in Americana. "If we're all wearing our masks and otherwise social distancing, we're also cultural distancing."

Centrality of tourism

During the "golden age of road trips", as Richard Ratay, author of *Don't Make Me Pull Over! An Informal History of the Family Road Trip*, described the 50s, 60s and



CULTURAL SYMBOL

Caravans have served both as a significant cultural icon and symbol of the nomadic gypsies. The caravan offered greater protection from weather conditions and could be outfitted with other amenities such as stoves, etc

for the band Black Crystal Wolf Kids.

Similarly, after being cooped up for months, Morgan "felt human again" simply by catching sight of Cayuga Lake. "The goal was to feel safe but not wear a mask 24/7 on vacation — and the best way to do that was creating a trip where we could do creative things outdoors," she said.

Motel is here to stay

With reliable cleanliness and security, motels rose in popularity in the 1950s. "Chain motels were predictable, family oriented and easy to find, and they set motorists' minds at ease," said Roger White, the road transportation curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. In a 1957 *Times* article entitled *The Motel: Here to Stay*, motels were described as "like a family room at home, without housework. Maybe, even, a little luxurious; though, because of the privacy, not disturbing." *The Times* reported in 1963 that Howard Johnson's — described as "one of the most familiar landmarks in the eastern half of the United States" — was set to expand nationwide. In a campaign speech in Pittsburgh in 2012, President Obama painted a nostalgic picture of his childhood vacations: "We'd rent a car — not that often — and stay at Howard Johnson's. It didn't matter how big the pool was, if there was a pool I'd jump in. I was 11 years old and I was excited just to go to the vending machine and get the ice bucket and get the ice."

Data from the Red Roof hotel chain suggests a demand for exterior-corridor properties in the Covid-19 era. Sixty-eight per cent of all Red Roofs in the US have an exterior entrance; in April, May and June, occupancy for those properties was 14% higher than interior-only hotels. "The classic motor-court-style hotel pairs perfectly with travellers looking for a low-contact — but still a memorable — experience," said Tenaya Hills, the design director at Bunkhouse Group, an Austin-based hospitality group. "In the time of Covid, the motel model is light touch — you're not spending time in a lobby and fresh air is just outside your hotel room."

Whereas motels in the mid-century were meant as a mere place to sleep, in the last few years, a crop of independent motels have opened with the opposite goal: to keep guests on-site as long as possible. Some, like Tourists, in the Berkshires, are revamps of mid-century motels with buzzy restaurants and of-the-moment wellness activities. Their retro panache was Instagram catnip before the pandemic; now, operators say, exterior corridors have been just as much of a draw.

"People are thrilled to access their rooms without having to push a button or try to remain socially distant in an elevator," said Jud Hawk, the general manager at Aspen Meadows Resort, in Colorado, where guest room buildings have no interior hallways or elevators.

Leave your home

Air travel's high cost made it largely inaccessible to most vacationers until the late 70s. After that, things became a little easier and affordable. Suddenly, families who were never previously able to afford to fly to their vacations were able to afford it. That made it possible to go to much more distant destinations," Ratay said.

This summer, by contrast, was about what Nabongo called "slower, more local travel". No longer, she said, will "go big or go home" or "do it for the gram" be the focus. That's the benefit, perhaps, to travel's retrograde: more attainable expectations, less pressure, more mindfulness in the moment. "For me, travel means to leave your home — travel isn't necessarily how far you can get from your home," Nabongo said.

NYT

For many, 2020 was the summer of 1965

Driving over flying. Domestic destinations. Though the conditions and causes were different, certain mid-century travel preferences experienced a revival this year

70s, previously sleepy backwaters near cities transformed into tourist destinations. "Many people sought to escape the heat and stench of eastern cities during the summer," said Peter Liebhold, a curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. "Beaches, lakes, amusement parks and the mountains were all popular destinations."

The pandemic, with its travel restrictions at home and abroad, has forced travellers to look again to their own backyards. But the lure of travel persists. "We believe we must travel, and we have internalised that need," said Eric GE Zuelow, a professor of history at the University of New England and author of *A History of Modern Tourism*. "The centrality of tourism is deeply rooted in us as modern people because we tie a lot of our identity to the places we go. So when there's a moment of crisis, we still want to travel, but we fall back on what's realistic at the time." When considering where to go in May, Morgan researched drive-to regions that promised an escape from what she called her "concrete box" in Manhattan.

"After being in an apartment for the better part of three months, I was searching for the opportunity to be in nature and see such a beautiful setting," she said.

Out-of-doors vacation

Much like station wagons and quirky roadside attractions, camping was an essential part of what comprised the typical family vacation. "By being able to bring along their own shelter and gear, families could maintain a degree of control over their accommodations," said Ratay, the road-trip expert. "I think that idea of control is also why we're seeing a return of camping in the age of Covid-19."

Visitation to national parks surged in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Once again, the system — which offers ample open space and privacy — experienced high demand this summer, with some parks and seashores seeing higher numbers in July and August than those months last year.

Last month, Jeff Miller, 41, rented an RV and drove with his girlfriend from Los Angeles to Zion National Park and several other national parks. "It had been so long since I had been on a hiking and outdoors trip, and it felt so great to be doing something that still felt safe," said Miller, 41, the frontman



Glamping for first-timers

The safest vacation possible involves the outdoors and camping

NIKITA STEWART

I'VE NEVER BEEN an outdoorswoman. Though I'm from Texas, spent pivotal teenage years in Kentucky and grew up around hunters and farmers, there's a difference between spending time outside and living, cooking and sleeping with nature. Giselle Burgess, a mother of five and a Girl Scout troop leader whom I met while researching a book about a troop that started in a homeless shelter, helped me with my first camping trip in 2017. She loves camping, loves the lingering scent of campfire smoke in her clothes and even prides herself on locating, pinching and plucking ticks. Staying at Camp Kauf-

mann, the sprawling campground owned by the Girl Scouts of Greater New York, I had the right gear thanks to Giselle, but I slept in a bed and was allowed to shower.

I'm not above sleeping outside, and because of my reporting, I never forget that thousands of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness call the city's streets home. But camping in wooded areas, in a tent? I was scared. All I could imagine was a bear tearing into my tent because a graham cracker crumb from a s'more had followed me. What's scarier, more dangerous and more likely than bears this year? The coronavirus.

The thought of the virus creeping through the HVAC systems of hotels and restaurants has paralysed me. All my fears meant the only vacation possible this summer would have to involve the outdoors and camping. But stretching a blue tarp between trees the way Giselle expertly shields a campsite from rain was



Since glamping can take you to remote or semi-remote places, it's advisable to pack enough food and snacks

not happening. So I opted for a little more comfort and plunged into the no-muss, no-fuss world of glamping.

My partner and I planned three glamping trips: to Maine, the Finger Lakes and the Hudson Valley. All were within driving distance of my Manhattan apartment and all the sites had new virus-related health and safety measures in place. Altogether, we spent nine nights sleeping under the stars. Sort of. Since glamping can mean remote or semi-remote, I packed food and snacks. Though we planned to eat out occasionally, I also wanted to grill and brought chicken, ribs and sausages, which I marinated and kept in a small cooler. The food from home included pizza dough, which we cooked on a small grill, in a flat cast-iron pan that we placed atop the firepit. It made for great, wood-fired pizza.

Another big concern for me, even before the virus, was bathroom facilities. The campgrounds in Ithaca and Kennebunkport had shared bathrooms with running water, so I had to have faith that other campers were wearing their masks as directed by staffers and posted signs. While Sandy Pines had small, all-in-one bath-

rooms with sinks, toilets and showers, Firelight had separate showers and a shared area with toilets and sinks.

From my adventures this summer, I must admit that I'd prefer a flushing toilet, a hot shower, Wi-Fi and a refrigerator. So maybe a cabin and a cottage with lots of windows would be my best bet. But if I go glamping again, I would pack less. I would leave behind those just-in-case-I-go-to-a-nice-restaurant dresses and pack another sweatshirt. There's a lot of sitting around at camp once night falls, and it gets cold. You want to stay up to enjoy the fire and night sky.

Relaxing in my own space without worrying whether I was six feet away from someone, however, was rejuvenating. At Sandy Pines, I went to a beach and fell asleep on a blanket one afternoon. At Firelight, I took a walk around the property and then followed a trail into nearby Buttermill Falls State Park. I rode one of the bikes that Gatherwild has available to meander around its old apple orchard. And those starry nights with no face mask in sight were worth a cold shower in front of some goats.

NYT

Mind & Games

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

ALEX WILLIAMS

NOT SO LONG AGO, things didn't look so great for the guitar, that global symbol of youthful freedom and rebellion for 70 years running. With hip-hop and Beyoncé-style spectacle pop supposedly owning the hearts and wallets of millennials and Generation Z—and so many 20th-century guitar heroes either dead (Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain) or soloing into their 70s (Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page)—electric guitar sales had skidded by about one-third in the decade since 2007, according to Music Trades, a research organisation that tracks industry data.

Gibson guitars, whose celebrated Les Paul line had helped put the Led Zeppelin, was sliding toward bankruptcy. All of this was enough for *The Washington Post* to declare the "slow, secret death of the six-string electric" in 2017. That same year, even Clapton himself, known simply as "God" to devotees more than half a century ago, sounded ready to spread the ashes. "Maybe," he mused at a 2017 news conference for the documentary *Eric Clapton: A Life in 12 Bars*, "the guitar is over."

Hold the obituaries. A half-year into a pandemic that has threatened to sinkentire industries, people are turning to the guitar as a quarantine companion and psychological salve, spurring a surge in sales for some of the most storied companies (Fender, Gibson, Martin, Taylor) that has shocked even industry veterans. "I would never have predicted that we would be looking at having a record year," said Andy Mooney, the chief executive of Fender Musical Instruments Corporation, the Los Angeles-based guitar giant that has equipped Rock & Roll Hall of Famers since Buddy Holly strapped on a 1954 sunburst Fender Stratocaster back in the tail-fin 1950s.

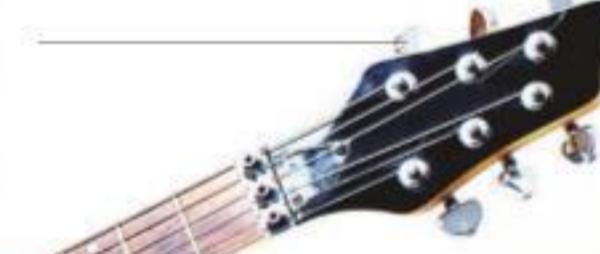
"We've broken so many records," Mooney said. "It will be the biggest year of sales volume in Fender history, record days of double-digit growth, e-commerce sales and beginner gear sales. I never would have thought we would be where we are today if you asked me back in March."

It's not just graying baby boomer men looking to live out one last Peter Frampton fantasy. Young adults and teenagers, many of them female, are helping to power this guitar revival, manufacturers and retailers said, putting their own generational stamp on the instrument that rocked their parents' generation while also discovering the powers of six-string therapy.

It all started with a collective breaking point, according to Jensen Trani, a guitar instructor in Los Angeles whose thousands of instructional videos on



Painted by some as a boomer relic just years ago, the guitar is seeing a revival that may just extend past the stress-purchase quarantine bounce



YouTube, he estimated, have attracted some 75 million views over the past 14 years. "There was this point with my students where I could tell that numbing out on Netflix and Instagram and Facebook was just not working any more," Trani, 38, said. "People could no longer go to their usual coping mechanisms. They were saying, 'How do I want to spend my day?'"

For many, apparently, the answer was "strumming." Shortly after stay-at-home orders were announced in the spring, Trani saw a surge of traffic for his videos, he said, and quickly tripled his number of private students taking lessons remotely. Popular instructional sites like JustinGuitar.com and GuitarTricks saw similar spikes during the spring. And most of the new students were not looking to rekindle

memories of Foghat live in 1976. Most of them probably did not know who Foghat was, given that the majority of Trani's new students were, as he put it, female-presenting people in their late 20s or early 30s. The biggest names in the business of online guitar instruction were seeing a similar pattern. Fender said that its guitar-instruction app, Fender Play, which features Trani as an instructor, saw its user base shoot to 930,000 from 150,000 between late March and late June, with a considerable assist from a three-month promotional giveaway.

Nearly 20% of the newcomers were under 24, and 70% were under 45, the company reported. Female users accounted for 45% of the new wave, compared with 30% before the pandemic. In a narrow sense, the surge made sense. Prospective players who had never quite found the time to take up an instrument suddenly had little excuse not to. As James Curleigh, the chief executive of Gibson Brands, put it: "In a world of digital acceleration, time is always your enemy. All of a sudden time became your friend."

But there was more to it, Trani said. Many newcomers to the instrument seemed to be looking for an oasis of calm in a turbulent world. "There is," he said, "this sense of learning how to sit with yourself." That was the case for one of his new students, Kayla Lucido, 31, of San Jose, California, who decided to make good on her longstanding ambitions to learn guitar in March, despite a frenzied schedule juggling remote work as a project coordination manager at a technology company and parenting duties for



her 17-month-old son.

"It's been quite healing for me, learning something new, and being able to drown everything else out," said Lucido, who has been plucking out songs like *Beautiful Stranger* by Halsey or *Bluebird* by Miranda Lambert, even for 10 minutes each day. "You just really have to focus on your hand placement, the chords you're playing, then pairing that with the strumming," she added. "If I'm working out, my mind still wanders, but when I'm playing guitar, I just get lost in it. It's like meditation."

No wonder. Learning guitar, or piano, or oboe or bassoon, benefits the brain on profound levels, according to Daniel Levitin, a neuroscientist, musician and the author of the 2006 *New York Times* best seller *This Is Your Brain on Music*.

The process, Levitin wrote in an email, is "neuroprotective" in that it "requires that you grow new neural pathways—something you can do at literally any age." He added that "using your brain for something that is challenging, but not impossible, tends to be rewarding, and hence comforting."

Learning the guitar, he wrote, is also a forward-looking process, kindling hope and optimism, which helps regulate stable mood chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. And "there is a very real sense of mastery and accomplishment," Levitin said. "I'm working on a Chopin piece on the piano right now—the Prelude in E minor—and I keep reminding myself I'm putting my fingers in the same configurations that Chopin did. For a few minutes, I can be Chopin."

"The same," he added, "holds true for Clapton when I play guitar."

Brendan Murphy, a senior salesman at Sweetwater, an online retailer of guitars and other instruments, wrote in an email in July: "I've been in the instrument retail business for 25-plus years and I've never seen anything like it... It feels like every day is black Friday."

Other online retailers were reporting the same thing in the spring and into summer. Despite having to close 293 of its 296 giant retail showrooms in March and April because of the coronavirus, Guitar Center was soon seeing triple-digit sales growth for most top guitar brands on the website, according to Michael Doyle, the company's senior vice-president of guitar merchandising.

Sure, there's still the issue of the idols. The calendar is not suddenly running in reverse for Jeff Beck or Pete Townshend. Maybe the issue isn't too few guitar heroes, but too many of them. As any 30-minute foray through cover-song videos on YouTube will attest, there are approximately 1,000,000,007 much-better-than-average guitarists out there, many of whom are in their teens or early 20s.

A great many of them are tearing through Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen or Jimmy Page licks. And a great many of them positively shred. In other words, you could argue that the guitar god is dead. You could also argue that the guitar gods did their job.

NYT



Meet the new caregiver: Your home

■ There is perhaps no real estate buzzword more worn out than wellness, which now seems to apply to any number of features, including yoga rooms, vertical gardens, vitamin C-infused showers and ambient lights.

■ But over the past decade, wireless-enabled wearable technology has allowed us to track our heart rates and sleep cycles from wristwatches.

■ Artificial intelligence's capacity has also grown exponentially and smart-home features have become de rigueur

■ Not surprisingly, some of the wealthiest homeowners are embracing a new kind of wellness today.

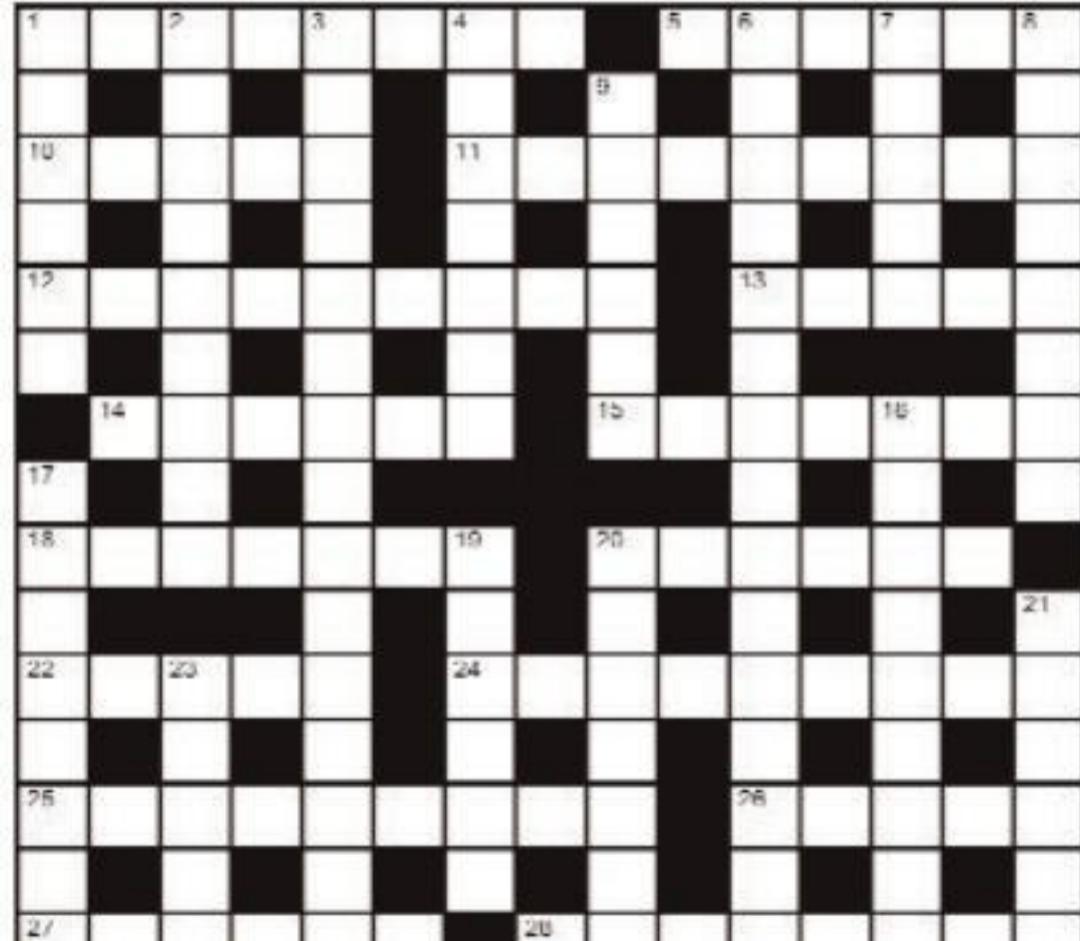
■ This trend, which involves high-priced, high-tech upgrades to bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchen appliances, allows those who can afford it to keep tabs on their health.

■ The houses are wired to become smart homes and then fitted with health-tracking devices customised to each client's needs.

■ Is the homeowner prone to seizures? The floorboards will be lined with sensors to detect a sudden fall. Or is he or she diabetic? The designer might order a specialised bathroom mirror to check the homeowner's vision.

DEBRA KAMIN/NYT

CROSSWORD

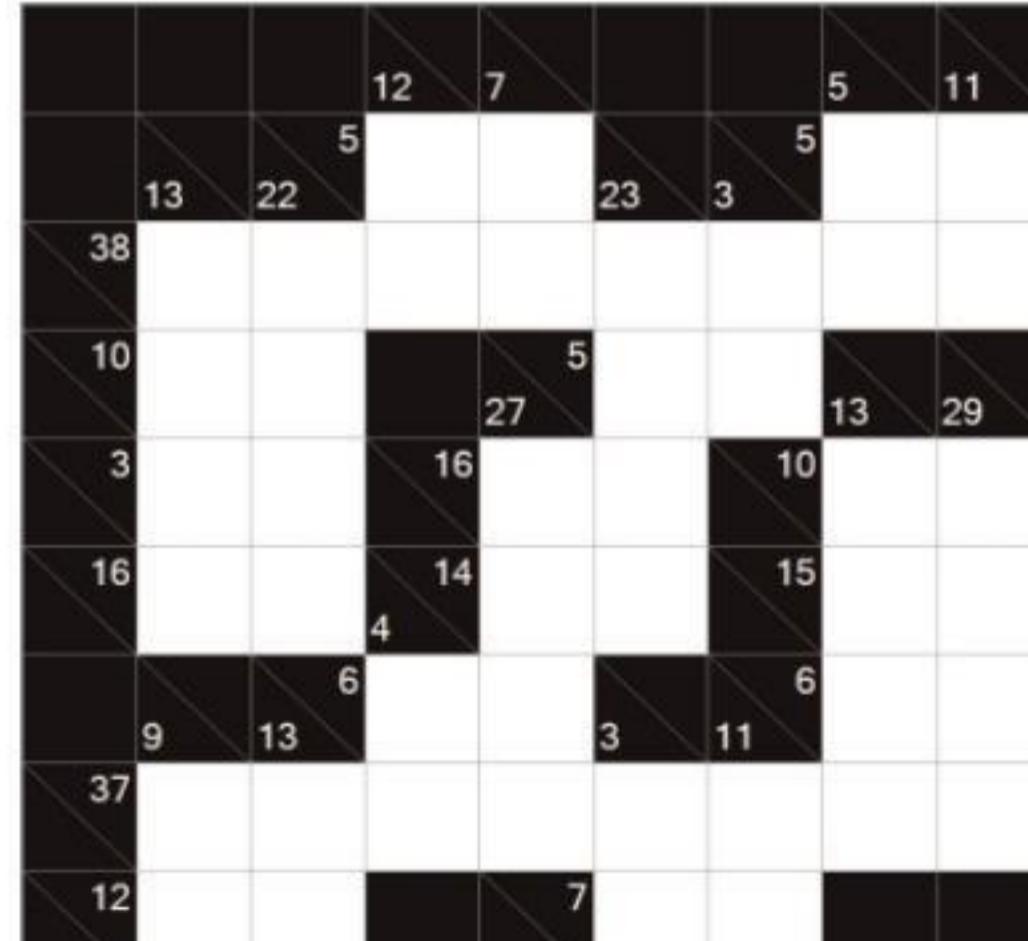


ACROSS

- 1 Hinder the passage or progress of (8)
- 5 Disturbance in the air? (6)
- 10 Khan: Ex-Pakistan skipper and now a political leader (5)
- 11 Make someone accompany one, in a way? (4,2,3)
- 12 Consortium (9)
- 13 Dismal, boring or lusterless, poetically speaking? (5)
- 14 Cleanses, showers or washes (6)
- 15 Thin sheet in which a pattern is cut and is used as a template (7)
- 18 OPEC member-country (7)
- 20 Washes or launders? (6)
- 22 Stitch again (5)
- 24 cost: cost involved in running of a business (9)

- 25 A general and progressive increase in prices (9)
- 26 The girl of peace? (5)
- 27 Ex-English batsman Thorpe (6)
- 28 Decorative design on the title-page of a book (8)
- 1 Ineffecive or futile; superfluous or useless (6)
- 2 Becoming smaller (9)
- 3 Founder of RSPB movies (6,9)
- 4 Snoozes (7)
- 6 It is 3G in short (5,10)
- 7 10% tax of yore (5)
- 8 Yellow-bellied (8)
- 9 Mogul moguls (6)
- 16 Food seasoning (9)
- 17 Growing with bared teeth like an

KAKURO



BIZ QUIZ

- 1 As per data from the CGA, what is the quantum of India's borrowing from April-July to tackle Covid-19?
- 2 What is the name of the new platform launched by the Prime Minister for managing livestock?
- 3 Which country has launched a campaign named 'Asol Chini' to curb fake information on social media?

ANSWERS 1. ₹39,165 cr 2. e-Gopala app

BUZZ WORD

- The Buzz Word is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

In Kakuro sum puzzles, the numbers in the black squares refer to the SUMS of the digits, which you are to fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the black square containing the number. No zeroes are used here, only the digits one through nine. An important point: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination.

BRIDGE BOUTS L SUBRAMANIAN

ONE AND THE SAME

'Partner, you made a strange and interesting play' observed north. 'Yes, I did' said the declarer, with a smile on his face. Take a look at today's deal below from a Rubber Bridge game and enjoy declarer's play.

Dlr: South Game All

SAQ4 HK53 DK732 C943

S 2NT 3D 6D! Pass

N

S

SK95

HAQ7

DAQ86

CAQ2

Contract: 6D by south. West leads the SJ. Plan the play.

Bidding explanation: 3C by north was the Baron convention, requesting opener to 'bid up the line'. 3D by south showed a four-card diamond suit. North bid 6D as he felt opener could have a doubleton on the side. Also, south could have five diamonds with a 5-3-3-2 distribution.

Play: Declarer won the opening lead in dummy, removed trumps in three rounds, finishing in hand. Declarer made the key play of cashing the CA in hand next, and cashed out his side winners, ending in dummy, this time. A second club was led off the table now and when east played the ten, declarer followed with the queen from hand. LH won with the king but did not have a third club! He was forced to give a ruff and discard, enabling declarer to fulfill the contract. The complete hands were:

SAQ4

HK53

DK732

C943

SJT87 HT82 DT54 CK6

N S

S632 HJ94 DJ9

CT875

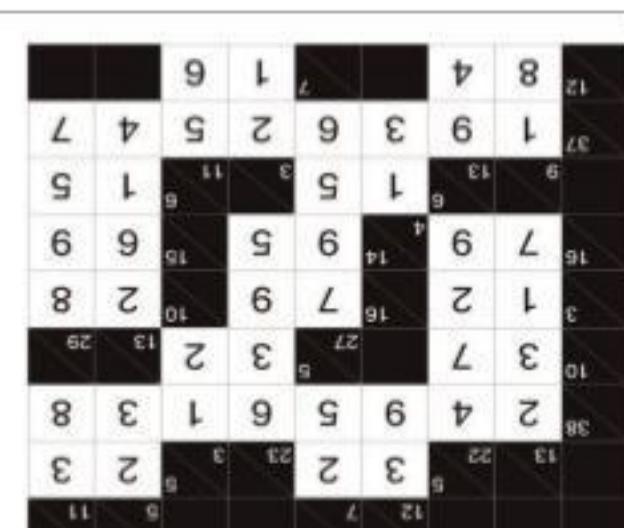
SK95 HAQ7 DAQ86 CAQ2

NEUROMYTH

■ n. A popular but false belief about the brain.

And it's a pity that Dr Leo, one of the neurologists we encounter, perpetuates the American neuromyth that Ondine's curse is named after a Greek nymph. He (not she) was a Nordic water nymph condemned never to sleep again, having been caught with his swimming trunks down, so to speak.

—Alan Crockard, "Confessions of a brain surgeon," *New Scientist*, December 21, 1996



Discussion: When his partner asked why he didn't take the first round finesse in clubs, declarer said he would have gone down if he had done so, for west would have played back a club after winning the king. It would be incorrect not to put up the queen from his hand in the last three-card ending when declarer led a club from dummy, for east could have followed with the ten with K-T in his hand!

Cashing the ace and leading to the queen is one and the same as the normal first round finesse of the queen...but with a slight twist! How beautifully declarer has played to improve his chances!

