

OPINION, P2

The ghost of
Rafale appears

ACROSS THE AISLE, P CHIDAMBARAM



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**FE LINES**

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Vaccine rollout is essential, but
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Jhumpa Lahiri's book
takes readers on a tour
of a woman's mind

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The fault in our stars



The pandemic brought with it a sea of changes, leaving people to cope with a whole new paradigm of daily life. Unable to cope, many turned to astrology services to seek 'answers'. In the process, the industry witnessed a boom, with many astro ventures mushrooming in the past year

LEISURE, P7

The cancel culture code

Could cancel culture change contemporary culture?

**ODD & EVEN**

ROHIT PHORE

**QuickPicks**

Alibaba fined \$2.8 billion on competition charge in China

ALIBABA GROUP, the world's biggest e-commerce company, was fined 18.3 billion yuan (\$2.8 billion) by Chinese regulators on Saturday for anti-competitive tactics, as the ruling Communist Party tightens control over fast-growing tech industries, reports AP. The party says anti-monopoly enforcement, especially in tech industries, is a priority this year.

Pentagon defends US Navy, asserts rights inside India's EEZ

THE PENTAGON has defended its Navy asserting its navigational rights within India's exclusive economic zone without taking New Delhi's permission, calling the move "consistent with international law", reports PTI. In an unusual move, the US Navy announced that on Wednesday it conducted a freedom of navigation operation in Indian waters without prior consent to challenge India's "excessive maritime claims". [PAGE 12](#)

MIND & GAMES**THE MAIN REASON FOR YOUR PANDEMIC BOREDOM**

It comes down to lack of control

Page 10

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About 1.3 million retail stores with 5 million staff in Maharashtra alone are getting impacted by the 'retail lockdown'

Mumbai and Delhi-NCR account for nearly 50% of the total organised restaurant market

Over 20% of the hospitality establishments across the country have not opened fully even after the first lockdown was lifted

At least 30% of hospitality businesses have shut down permanently due to financial losses

The rest continue to operate in losses and revenues are below 50% of the pre-Covid level

Malls have been witnessing significant decline in footfalls since the past two weeks with night curfew timings and random testing norms at place

shutting down operations widely, the association said in a statement. "While implementation of stricter rules to curb the spread of the pandemic is necessary, it is also important to calibrate a balance between lives and livelihood," RAI added.

Already footfalls had seen a significant decline since the past two weeks with night curfew timings and random testing norms at place, said

Mukesh Kumar, CEO at Infiniti Malls that runs two properties in Malad and Andheri. "Customers who usually visit the mall for leisure activities were not confident to step out and some were hesitant to get themselves tested," Kumar said. Basis the new guidelines issued by the state government, the malls will now be only operational for essentials and home deliveries of food till the end

of the month.

The hospitality industry is staring at another crisis. The Hotel and Restaurant Association Western India (HRAWI) said over 20% of the hospitality establishments across the country have not opened fully even after the first lockdown was lifted and 30% of them have shut down permanently due to financial losses. The rest continue to operate in losses and revenues are below 50% of the pre-Covid level.

The new guidelines introduced by the state government will force almost 90% of restaurants to shut down completely, the association said. "We request the government to either allow us to continue regular operations with

the mandated SOPs or permanently shut us down, rather than keep us half alive and in a state of misery," said Sherry Bhatia, president, HRAWI.

As per analysts at Crisil Research, Mumbai and Delhi-NCR account for nearly 50% of the total organised restaurant market.

"My suggestion to the government is that if they are worried about people crowding at pubs and clubs to drink, they should put the curfew timing at 11 or 11:30 pm. That way customers can still frequent restaurants for dinner which would be a lifeline for the industry," AD Singh, founder and MD at Olive Group of Restaurants, said in a recent tweet.

Opinion

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

MEMORIES ARE SHORT. For ordinary people, living every day is a challenge. They are conscious of the larger challenges to the country and its governance, but cannot dwell on them for too long. They trust the institutions that they have installed to tackle these challenges including Parliament/ Legislature, the judiciary, the free media, the CAG and the Opposition political parties. When these institutions fail — separately or collectively, because of incapacity or collusion or fear — the people just give up and move on. That is what happened in the Rafale aircraft case.

Four institutions failed

Four institutions had an opportunity to scrutinise the case. First, the media. There was enough material to raise a number of questions and demand answers. A major section of the media refused to raise these questions; on the contrary, many media organisations published handouts of the government as if they were authentic 'news'. In this column, on October 7, 2018, I had raised 10 questions for the Finance Minister. Among them were:

1. Why was the MoU between India and France under which India would buy 126 Rafale twin-engine multi-role fighter aircraft cancelled and a decision taken to enter into a new agreement to buy only 36 aircraft?

2. Is it correct that the price per aircraft under the new agreement is ₹ 1,670 crore (as disclosed by Dassault) as against the price of ₹ 526.10 crore under the cancelled MoU?

3. If the first aircraft will be delivered in September 2019 (four years after the new agreement) and the last in 2022, how does the government justify the transaction as an 'emergency purchase'?

4. Why was the agreement to transfer technology to HAL scrapped?

5. Did the government suggest any name as the offset partner and, if not, why did the government not suggest the name of HAL?

These and other questions have not been answered so far. The media, with the notable exception of a few, failed the country.

Second, the Supreme Court expressed its inability to probe vital questions in a petition under Article 32 of the Constitution. For instance, the Court declined to examine the issue of price or matters relating to technical suitability; the decision to buy only 36 aircraft instead of the 126 aircraft that were needed by the IAF; or the deviations from the established procedure of acquiring military equipment. The Court also accepted the contents of a note submitted by the government in a 'sealed cover' and in the 'oral submissions' of the government. The Court was misled into believing that there was a report of the CAG, when none had been placed before Parliament or the Court until that day. Hailing the judgment, the government claimed that its position had been vindicated when the truth was that vital issues had not been examined by the Court.

Parliament abdicates powers

Third, Parliament was divided on party lines and failed to exercise parliamentary oversight into the actions of government. Parliament alone could have asked — and found the truth —

ACROSS THE AISLE

P Chidambaram

The ghost of Rafale appears



Indian Youth Congress activists during a protest against Rafale jet deal, in New Delhi

why the transfer of technology and work share agreement dated March 13, 2014, between Dassault and HAL was abandoned when 95% of the negotiations had been completed; if the price under the new agreement was 9–20% cheaper, why was the offer of Dassault to sell 126 aircraft not accepted; and why did the government not push the case of HAL to be chosen as the offset partner? Parliamentary oversight was scuttled by the brute majority of the government.

Four, the most egregious failure was by the CAG. In a 33-page report, the CAG placed a dark shroud on the transaction and buried the facts of the case along with the truth. Unprecedented for the CAG, the authority conceded that the government had "strongly reiterated their stand for redaction of commercial details in MMRC case on the grounds of security concerns". Such forbearance — and deference —

was not shown in the Bofors case or in any other case. As a result, pages 126 to 141 of the report made no sense to a person of average intelligence. In particular, Table 3 on page 131 and Table 4 on page 133 were just gibberish. Yet, the CAG was forced to reject the claim of the government that the new deal was cheaper (per aircraft) by 9%. The CAG had a wider brief than any other authority but the independent constitutional authority miserably failed the country.

Disturbing revelations

I may recall that the new agreement, unusually, waived the mandatory anti-corruption clauses, namely, clauses on no undue influence, no agency, access to books of account and integrity pact. Was there a hidden purpose behind that waiver? We don't know, but the absent clauses have come back to haunt the

government. A French media organisation, *Mediapart*, has, in a three-part investigation found that France's Agence Francaise Anticorruption (AFA) had found evidence that Dassault had agreed to pay one million euros to a known middleman who is under investigation in India in connection with another defence deal, and actually paid € 508,925 to an Indian company, *Defsys Solutions*. The *Mediapart* story also revealed that French and Indian investigators discovered a great deal of compromising information but "the affair was buried in both countries".

This is as specific as an allegation can be. The Rafale deal will be exhumed. Until then, the ghost will haunt the government.

Website: pchidambaram.in
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New season, tougher challenges

The IPL is necessary for the nourishment of India's cricket economy. It must go along trouble-free

RINGSIDE VIEW



Shamik Chakrabarty

ON APRIL 8, India reported 780 Covid deaths, the highest fatalities in a day since October 18, 2020. Nearly half the deaths, 376, were from Maharashtra. By 9 am on April 9, India detected 1,31,968 new cases of the novel coronavirus in a new daily high. Maharashtra alone had reported 56,286 new Covid cases on April 8, as the state government enforced a complete lockdown on weekends to curb the spread of the virus. Mumbai, along with Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Chennai, is one of the venues for the 14th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and for the next one-and-a-half months, everybody related to the IPL will be walking a tightrope.

The IPL is necessary for the nourishment of India's cricket economy. This is the tournament that fills the BCCI coffer and a big chunk of the money is spent to nurture talent at the grassroots and develop infrastructure. Last year, the

Indian cricket board had earned ₹ 4,000 crore as revenue from hosting the tournament despite closed-doors matches.

"We earned ₹ 4,000 crore during the pandemic time. Our TV viewership went about 25% higher; we got the highest-ever opening game (Mumbai Indians versus Chennai Super Kings) viewership. Those who doubted us came and thanked us for hosting the IPL. Had this IPL not happened, cricketers would have lost one year," BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal had said after the last year's IPL that was shifted out to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Indian board deserved credit for pulling off an impressive logistical and organisational feat in the middle of a pandemic.

By January this year, Covid caseload had reduced considerably in India, prompting the BCCI to even allow a limited number of spectators for the India versus England Tests. With vaccines rolling out, it felt like the virus was behind us. The second wave has caught everyone off guard. Even before a ball was bowled in this year's IPL, 36 people associated with the tournament got infected. In hindsight, maybe it would have been wiser to relocate the IPL to UAE this year.



But now the show has begun and it would be imperative to ensure that it goes along trouble-free. The IPL has contributed immensely to the growth of Indian cricket. Over the last few months, especially during the Test series in Australia, the world saw the strength and depth of Indian cricket and the IPL's contribution to make the young players

international cricket-ready has had been immense. "What a Test match! The depth of Indian Cricket is scary," South African legend AB de Villiers had tweeted after India's memorable Test series win in Australia.

This is the ICC T20 World Cup year and India will host the event in October-November. From that perspective, this

year's IPL is an audition for a lot of players. Chainman bowler Kuldeep Yadav's decline has intensified the demand to bring Ravichandran Ashwin back to the limited-overs fold. Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, too, is going through a form slump.

"If I were the chief selector (now), I would have brought Ashwin back (to the white ball set-up). Why not? Because he is such an experienced bowler and he has variety. As they say, spinners mature late and he has done so well over the years. He is in terrific form in red ball cricket. I think it will suit the team if he is brought back," Dilip Vengsarkar told *The Indian Express* last month, after the Indian spinners were taken to the cleaners in the second ODI against England.

A good performance for Delhi Capitals, on the heels of his exploits in the Tests against Australia and England, might bring the senior off-spinner firmly back into the T20 World Cup contention. The likes of Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Rahul Chahar, Rahul Tewatia, Krunal Pandya and Varun Chakravarthy will leave no stone unturned to make a mark, with T20 World Cup spots up for grabs.

Kuldeep, if he gets enough game time for Kolkatta Knight Riders, he should aim redemption. He is only 26 years old and a bowler of his talent cannot become bad overnight. Kuldeep needs to regain his confidence and

quickly hit his straps.

As for pace bowling, Navdeep Saini will look forward to regain his form, while Prasidh Krishna will be striving to improve even more. The KKR seamer has already made his ODI debut and this season should be about building on a good start.

Two Mumbai Indians batsmen graduated to international cricket by dint of their performance in the last year's IPL. Suryakumar Yadav made such a serious impression that India captain Virat Kohli decided to open the innings with Rohit Sharma in a T20I, keeping the newcomer's slot at No. 3 unchanged. Yadav now gets a chance to enhance his reputation, while Ishan Kishan would like to further strengthen his case. And new talents will emerge this year as well, adding to Indian cricket's embarrassment of riches.

Once again, Mumbai Indians will be the team to beat, for they have arguably the most complete squad in the IPL. But Chennai Super Kings (CSK) are unlikely to take their last year's failure lying down. CSK chief executive Kasi Viswanathan has spoken about how he doesn't see this year being MS Dhoni's IPL swansong. And as long as Dhoni is in charge of the team, writing off the three-time champions would be a mistake. Expect the great captain to walk the extra mile to bring his team back to winning ways.

COVID CLAMPDOWN

First weekend lockdown: Maha streets deserted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai, April 10

THE WEEKEND LOCKDOWN imposed across Maharashtra to bring under control the Covid-19 surge, has elicited a positive response from people so far with the streets and markets in most parts of the state, including Mumbai, Pune, Aurangabad and Nagpur, wearing a deserted look, officials said on Saturday.

However, at some locations in the state, including some market areas in Mumbai, people were seen flouting social distancing and other norms by gathering at one place in large numbers. The first weekend lockdown in the state began at 8 pm on Friday and it will continue till 7 am on Monday.

The announcement about the weekend lockdown had been made on Sunday, when the state government also declared some other restrictions, like night curfew during the week days and prohibitory orders during the day time as part of its 'Break the Chain' Covid-19 action plan. The weekend lockdown and other curbs will continue till April 30.

In the country's financial capital, some areas like south Mumbai were completely deserted due to the lockdown. But people in some other pockets of the city, like the market

GJEPC: Gems, jewellery manufacturing exempted

THE GEM AND JEWELLERY Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) on Saturday said the Maharashtra government has allowed export operations to resume with restrictions in the number of people working in the manufacturing units during the ongoing night curfew and weekend lockdowns. In a virtual meeting with the gems and jewellery manufacturers and exporters on Friday, CM Uddhav Thackeray said manufacturing and ancillary activities in the state would be exempted from the ongoing emergency measures.

—PTI

areas in the central parts and some suburbs in the eastern parts, could be seen stepping out of their houses and also crowding at some points.

A large number of people were seen in Dadar vegetable market, with many of them not even wearing face masks, eye-witnesses said.

Lockdown not an option, some curbs will be imposed: Delhi CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 10

AMID ESCALATING CASES of Covid-19 in Delhi, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said lockdown is "not an option" but some restrictions will be put in place in the national capital, which is reeling under the fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The CM said this during an interaction with reporters after visiting the LNJP Hospital—the mainstay of Delhi's fight against Covid—to review its preparedness. "Lockdown is not an option, however, we will be putting some restrictions in place to contain the spread of the virus. We will release the restrictions in the coming few days. Covid centres are being rebuilt and some have already started functioning," he was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the CMO. Kejriwal said



the administration and hospitals are working to contain the fourth wave of the pandemic in the city. "We are currently in a comfortable position with reference to beds and ventilators. We will ensure that the people of Delhi stay safe, to the best of our abilities," he added. Coronavirus cases in Delhi have mounted at a very rapid rate in the last few days, and the number of deaths too have risen.

Delhi recorded 8,521 fresh cases on Friday, the highest single-day surge since November 11 last year, while 39 more people died due to the virus infection, taking the death toll to 11,196.

K'taka gears up for night curfew from April 10 to 20

THE 11-DAY 'corona curfew' will come into effect in some districts of Karnataka, including the state capital, from Saturday night to contain the spread of coronavirus and only essential services, patients and passengers would be allowed to ply.

The state government had announced night curfew between 10 pm and 5 am every day from April 10 to 20 in Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Bidar, Tumakuru, Udupi-Manipal cities. This apart, the curfew will be in place in other prominent towns and district headquarters, the government said. The police have made elaborate arrangements to ensure compliance of the rules at night.

—PTI

areas in the central parts and some suburbs in the eastern parts, could be seen stepping out of their houses and also crowding at some points.

A large number of people were seen in Dadar vegetable market, with many of them not even wearing face masks, eye-witnesses said.

RSS chief Bhagwat tests positive, hospitalised: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has tested coronavirus positive and has been admitted to a private hospital in Nagpur, the RSS said. Bhagwat, 70, has been showing common symptoms of coronavirus infection, the RSS said on Saturday.

However, he welcomed the voluntary imposition of lockdowns at a local level by vil-

lages or market associations in cities.

"The state government is not willing to impose a lockdown in the state considering its impact on the poor despite the rise in coronavirus positive cases, CM Vijay Rupani said on Saturday.

However, he welcomed the voluntary imposition of lockdowns at a local level by vil-

Rupani said when asked if the government was thinking of clamping a lockdown in view of the rising cases.

Rupani was speaking to reporters after flagging off 20 new 'Dhanvantari' vans, which will conduct virus tests in public places and also suggest treatment.

—PTI

Gujarat govt not in favour of lockdown: Rupani

THE GUJARAT GOVERNMENT is not in favour of imposing a lockdown in the state considering its impact on the poor

despite the rise in coronavirus positive cases, CM Vijay Rupani said on Saturday.

However, he welcomed the voluntary imposition of lockdowns at a local level by vil-

lages or market associations in cities.

"The state government is not willing to impose a lockdown in the state considering its impact on the poor despite the rise in coronavirus positive cases, CM Vijay Rupani said on Saturday.

However, he welcomed the voluntary imposition of lockdowns at a local level by vil-

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25	Expandable Housing Scheme Plots - EHS (Freehold)	24	Kiosk Units (License Fee Basis)
06	Restaurant Units (License Fee Basis)	125	Built-up Shops/Units (Freehold)

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS

13.04.2021 (Tuesday) Opening of Helpdesk and commencement of E-Registration on portal	6 PM on 15.05.2021 (Saturday) Closing Time of E-Registration & online EMD Submission	18.05.2021 (Tuesday) Online Bidding for Residential (36), Institutional (76) & Function Sites (18)	19.05.2021 (Wednesday) Online Bidding for Industrial (27) & Group Housing (07) Properties & Built up shops (125)	20.05.2021 (Thursday) Online Bidding for Commercial (33), EHS Plots (25), Kiosks (24) & Restaurants (06)
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For details about plots/properties and procedure, kindly visit our e-auction website www.ddaeauction.co.in or click the e-auction link available on our site www.dda.org.in and download the same through "E-AUCTION OF PROPERTIES" link available at home page of e-auction portal. Intending bidders may register themselves / their firms online at the above site through "REGISTER WITH US" link. Kindly note that digital signature of all the intending bidders are mandatory to participate in e-auctioning of DDA. A help-desk has been opened at the Nagrik Suvidha Kendra, Ground Floor, 'D' Block, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi which will start from 13.04.2021 to assist the intending bidders in the ongoing process of e-auction. For obtaining digital signatures and registration / training of prospective bidders and for any other clarification on e-auction process, please contact our help-desk no. 011-49424365 / 8800991846 / 8800378610 from 11.00 am to 5.00 pm (all working days) or at: ddaauction@etenderwizard.com

Neeraj Bharti, Commissioner (LD)

For further details contact: Commissioner (LD), Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110023
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SCHEDULE OF SALE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

S.No.	Name of the Borrower/Bank Branch	Demand Notice Date & Outstanding amount mentioned therein	Description of property along with name of mortgagor (Owner of property)	Status of possession (Physical or Symbolic)	Reserve Price/EMD/Bid Incremental Amount	EMD Submission Account Details (deposit through RTGS/NEFT)	Property Inspection Date & Time	Last Date of EMD / Date & time of E-Auction	Name & Contact N. of Authorized Officer
1.	Borrower- Mr. Vishal S/o Mr. Mahesh Kumar B.O. Guru Ka Tal Agra	10.10.2017	house measuring 29.26 Sq mt. at House no 27 part of Khasra No 133 ,basera neelkanth,(basant residency) Maija Khaspur,The & Distt Agra in name of Sh. Vishal W/O Sh. Mahesh Kumar	Physical	Rs.5,75,000/-	A/c No. 07931100000396 A/c Name: EMD SUBMISSION IFSC: PSIB0000793	22.04.2021 11.00 a.m to 4.00 p.m	23.04.2021 upto 4.00 pm	Mr. Umesh Kumar Jayant (Chief Manager); Mobile-9650133665; Email:ibd.Agra@psb.co.in
		Rs.7,23,597/- as on 30.09.17, plus further interest, expenses & other charges etc thereon			Rs. 60,000/-			26.04.2021 10.00 am to 11.00 am	
					Rs. 10,000/-				
2.	Borrower- Mr.Naseem Pathan s/o Mr. Bashir BO Guru Ka Tal Agra	02-07-2018	Residential house measuring 83.61 Sqmt. at Plot No 02, Khasra No 618 situated at Mahak Garden, Mauza Patholi, Agra in name of Mr.Naseem Pathan s/o Mr. Bashir	Physical	Rs. 11,60,000/-	A/c No. 07931100000396 A/c Name: EMD SUBMISSION IFSC: PSIB0000793	22.04.2021 11.00 a.m to 4.00 p.m	23.04.2021 upto 4.00 pm	Mr. Umesh Kumar Jayant (Chief Manager); Mobile-9650133665; Email:ibd.Agra@psb.co.in
		Rs. 15,11,117.50 as on 30.06.2018 plus further interest, expenses & other charges etc thereon			Rs.1,20,000/-			26.04.2021 11.00 am to 12.00 pm	
					Rs.15000/-				
3.	Borrower- Sh. Ram Kumar s/o Mr.Tej Singh. BO Guru Ka Tal Agra	11-04-2018	house measuring 29.26 Sqmt at House No 24 situated at Basera Neelkanth, ,(basant residency) khasra no 133 mauza Khaspur, Agra in name of Mr. Ram Kumar s/o Mr.Tej singh	Physical	Rs. 4,70,000/-	A/c No. 07931100000396 A/c Name: EMD SUBMISSION IFSC: PSIB0000793	22.04.2021 11.00 a.m to 4.00 p.m	23.04.2021 upto 4.00 pm	Mr. Umesh Kumar Jayant (Chief Manager); Mobile-9650133665; Email:ibd.Agra@psb.co.in
		Rs. 19,572,00/- as on 31.03.18, plus further interest, expenses & other charges etc thereon			Rs. 50,000/-			26.04.2021 12.00 pm to 01.00 pm	
					Rs. 10,000/-				

Words Worth

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

ON THE SHELF

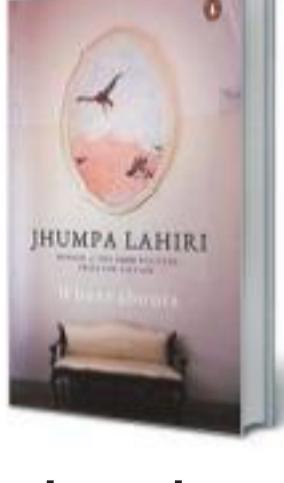


INDIA'S POWER ELITE
Sanjaya Baru
Penguin
Random House
Pp122, ₹299

A journey through the mind

Jhumpa Lahiri's new book takes readers on a guided tour of a would-be everywoman's mind

SUVAKSHTI SINGH



Whereabouts
Jhumpa Lahiri
Penguin Random House
Pp 163, ₹499

I SAVED WHEREABOUTS for the train. I figured, what better company on a pilgrimage to a land and language that was mine but also distant from me than a title that announced displacement.

My journey was marked by names and crowds — names that recalled to memory crossings down the same tracks, years ago, crowds whose masked mishmash of sounds and smells and speech fuelled my escape into Jhumpa Lahiri's masterful prose. That of Lahiri's narrator, in contrast, was enfolded in wide-open space, enclosed by emptiness, devoid of a single name.

She is 45, beautiful, contemplative — a voyeur of other people's thoughts, fascinated to presume — alone, both rueful and protective of her solitude. The novel

itself sets out as an anonymous ode to an unnamed city, recording with loving attention the intimate, unconquerable features of its streets and sidewalks. But, it becomes much more — at once a guided tour of a would-be everywoman's mind and an exercise in linguistic alchemy.

I follow the narrator through bookstores, coffee bars and theatres, each location a breadcrumb on a fragmented

memory trail. I follow her also to dinner parties and country retreats, through petty hostilities and casual musings, to baptisms and graveyards. I become privy to her home, her dread at the moment of waking, and her resentment of spring.

Lahiri's words, spare though they are, create a world worth a thousand pictures. Here, clouds are masses of jellyfish, the sea magnificent in its restless, per-

petual agitation, and hotels are parking garages designed for human beings. A world of generous gazes and routine spectacles, where intimacies are imposed and indisputable, and painted nature trembles with life.

Beautiful though the world Lahiri crafts through words is, the one I find myself inhabiting is also just of words. There is something of the transmutative in the novel's deployment of language. The sentences stretch, explicitly and subliminally, the limits of what words can mean and do. The title, so obviously evocative of place, comes to encompass space and time, seasons and states of being, nostalgia and remembrances of the future.

The narrator, like Lahiri, loves words. She is at home with phrases you or I would rather our lives steered clear of — at sea, adrift, bewildered, uprooted. These words, she confesses without guilt, are her abode, her only foothold. And Lahiri certainly is surefooted, in translating as much as in her writing, prompting deep dives out of oneself and into the heart of anxious emotion, only to return to impassive reflection in the space of a conjunction.

Whereabouts has everything to recommend itself. It is penned by a celebrated writer, and born of a love of two literary languages — one of my favourite moments in the novel is a parenthetical interlude that breaks the translator's fourth wall to reflect on the polysemic joys of jewellery boxes. A slim, elegant, memorable book.

Yet, what endeared it to me most was that it was a novel to get lost and liberated in, to belong to when I couldn't belong to where I was. A novel whose pages echoed my struggle for escape. It is an ethereal world I was transported to, the shadow of an idea; yet, nothing could feel more solid, more real.

Suvanshkruti Singh is a freelancer



Jhumpa Lahiri's words create a world worth a thousand pictures

EXPRESS PHOTO

Looking forward to your 170th birthday

In Ageless, Andrew Steele explores the science of ageing and the advances that might let humans prolong their lives by decades



Ageless:
The New Science of
Getting Older
Without Getting Old
Andrew Steele

travel together. In this effort he relies heavily on examples from the animal kingdom, such as the Galápagos tortoise, which dwells for the many decades of its life in an enviable state known as "negligible senescence."

As Steele explains: "Negligibly senescent animals have no obvious impairments of movement or senses as they get older, and they experience no age-related decline in fertility." A Galápagos tortoise is as sprightly at age 170 as it was at age 30 (which is to say, not very). Steele offers the Galápagos tortoise as evidence that negligible senescence "doesn't break any laws of biology," and as affirmation that maintaining ourselves in this mode could constitute a plausible goal for humans.

This is, in fact, "what we should aim for," Steele says: "a risk of death, disability, frailty and illness which doesn't depend on how long ago you were born." In precise and sometimes dense detail he lays out the means by which science could effectively eliminate human ageing. These approaches fall into four categories: "removing bad things that accumulate," "renewing things which are broken or lost," "repairing things which are damaged or out of kilter" and "reprogramming our biology to slow or reverse aging."

Our ultimate aspiration, Steele makes clear, should not be simply improving people's quality of life as they age; it should be radically extending the human lifespan, postponing death for many decades or even centuries. Making this happen, he declares, is "the defining humanitarian challenge of our time."

And when it does occur, then what? Herein lies this book's flaw. Steele does not begin to grapple with the deeper implications of the project he champions so enthusiastically. Ageing, much as we may dread it, is an essential part of the human experience. It can't simply be excised, snipped out by science, without causing enormous disruption to our social structures and practices, and without plundering the meaning we make of our lives.

The relationship between ageing and the indignities that have invariably accompanied it — physical infirmity, expiring fertility, slackening acuity, greater vulnerability to disease — has traditionally been so tight that Steele works hard to show that the two need not

be.

The question of what it means to age — and what it would mean not to — goes entirely unaddressed in Ageless, a book that is technically impressive but morally and emotionally shallow.



The women in Teji Grover's fiction seem like mythical creatures in search of a heaven they were exiled from

EXPRESS PHOTO

Feeling blue

A celebration of women, their many moods and temperaments

ASHUTOSH BHARDWAJ

THERE CAN BE two broad vantage points to enter *Blue and Other Tales of Obsessive Love*, an English translation of Teji Grover's selected Hindi short stories. One, it's the fiction of a writer who is essentially a poet of fragile emotions and delicate sensibilities. Second, it's the translation of a prose into a language that, despite India's long colonial and postcolonial encounter, does not yet fully capture the myths and fables of Indian languages.

When poets turn to fiction they often bring a distinct dreamy element to the narrative. It is not what one often calls an 'experiment' in the want of a better description; it's a seamless fusion of the palette of poetry into the realm of prose. Grover's prose has no edges, it curves along the seam and lends her fiction an elusive temperament, a transcendence that emerges from the echoes and images the narrative weaves.

This selection has a novella *Blue* (*Neela*, 1999), and eight other stories, seven of which are from her earlier collection *Sapne Mein Prem Ki Saat Kahaniyan*. All these works, to use her words, "have the same intertextual logic and are born of the same body heat; they are also linked together by the same incestuous union of the desire to write and the desire for love".

These works, then, carry both an intertextuality as well as a sensuality not often

seen in Hindi literature. Grover is in an intense and intimate conversation with her contemporary writers. Each of these stories draws from the life of her favourite poets like Sylvia Plath and Marina Tsvetayeva, and lends us an alternative window to look at their lives. It's a celebration of women, their many moods and temperaments, their longings that are often laced with a self-destructive tendency, a candle that burns at both ends. The many women in her fiction seem mythical creatures, who are smouldering with an ancient memory, in search of a heaven they were exiled from.

But where does one place her fiction in the genre of 'women's writing'? Grover belongs to that tribe for whom an artist is essentially androgynous. And yet, as she strives to retrieve the primal



Blue and Other Tales of Obsessive Love

Teji Grover; translated by Meena Arora Nayak
Vani Book Company
₹225, Pp 168

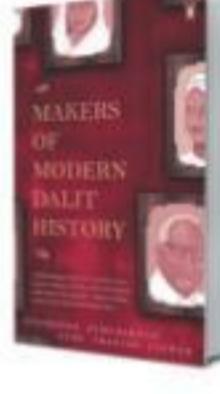
woman in her fiction, a woman unencumbered by the civilisational constraints, the identity returns by a different route, creating a distinct discourse.

Though the language of her creative works is Hindi, Grover is a bilingual writer, translator and painter. She has extensively translated into Hindi several titles of Norwegian, Swedish, Latvian and French literature. Among her many awards include Sweden's Royal Order of the Polar Star.

The finest artistic achievement in the selection is the novella *Blue*, which has already acquired a status among Hindi readers. The colour blue has hypnotised several artists and writers through the ages. "We love to contemplate blue, not because it advances to us, but because it draws us after it," the German poet Goethe once wrote, and the Hindi poet Raghuvir Sahay has a wonderful poem on the colour. To this rich body of work is added Grover's meditation. In her novella, *Blue* is a character, a colour, as well as a state of heart. Consider this sentence: "She writes blue. She thinks she will be able to write blue in Blue's bereavement." The lyrical layers of her prose often resemble the multiple coatings on a canvas.

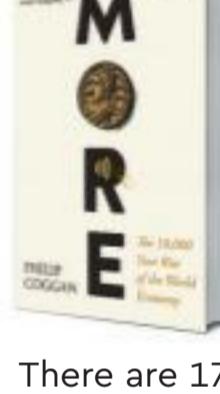
Having read Grover in Hindi, I was somewhat initially unsure with the translation. Hindi has an innate mythical character, more so when it comes to the writings of poets like Grover. Hindi has often resisted the demands of rationality that modern European languages were once subjected to. However, Meena Arora Nayak, herself an accomplished author and a professor of English and mythology, has rendered Grover's fiction into English with an extraordinary deftness. This book can also be read as an intimate conversation between the two languages.

Ashutosh Bhardwaj is an award-winning writer and journalist. His recent book, *The Death Script*, received the Atta Galatta Non-Fiction Book of the Year award



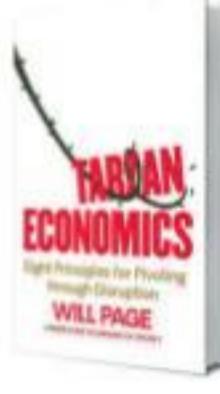
MAKERS OF MODERN DALIT HISTORY
Sudarshan Ramabhadran & Guru Prakash Paswan
Penguin Random House
₹399

Featuring inspiring accounts of individuals who tirelessly battled divisive forces all their lives, this book seeks to enhance present-day India's imagination and shape its perception of the Dalit community. Based on original research on historical and contemporary figures such as BR Ambedkar, Babu Jagjivan Ram, etc, the book is a significant addition to the Dalit discourse.



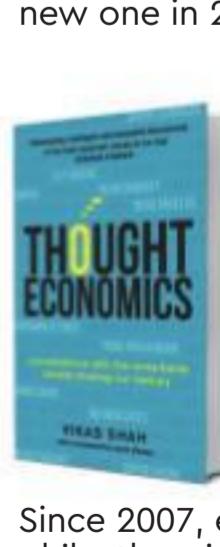
MORE
Philip Coggan
Hachette
Pp480, ₹799

There are 17 ingredients in a typical tube of toothpaste, from titanium dioxide to xanthum gum, and that's not counting the tube. Everything had to come from somewhere and someone had to bring it all together. The humblest household product reveals a web of enterprise that stretches around the globe. More is the story of how we spun that web.



TARZAN ECONOMICS
Will Page
Simon & Schuster
Pp336, ₹699

A new insight into how the most crucial lesson you can learn in today's business environment is how to change the fundamentals of what you do, rather than carry on fighting a battle that is lost. As we emerge from the unprecedented disruption of a global pandemic, *Tarzan Economics* shows all of us that if the vine we are holding onto is withering, we can have confidence to reach out for a new one in 2021 and beyond.



THOUGHT ECONOMICS
Vikas Shah
Hachette
Pp288, ₹550

Since 2007, entrepreneur and philanthropist Vikas Shah has been on a mission to interview the people shaping our century. Including conversations with Nobel prize-winners, biz leaders, politicians, artists and Olympians, he has been in the privileged position of questioning the minds that matter on the big issues. In this incredible collection, Shah shares some of his most emotive and insightful interviews to date.

All books available as e-books

Spotlight

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC



The 12 signs of the zodiac were first devised by the Babylonians in the 1500s. They were named similar to the constellations that we know today and were later adapted into Greek divination.

REYA MEHROTRA

WHEN THE LOCKDOWN was imposed in March last year, Puneet Gupta's astrology business saw a sudden decline. "We had been consistently growing since we started our platform in 2017. But when the lockdown was imposed, the business went down," says Noida-based Gupta, CEO and founder, AstroTalk, an online astrology portal.

The slump, however, was shortlived as, within two weeks, people started reaching out to them again. The triggers were Covid anxiety, layoffs, shrinking business, questions about the pandemic and a desperate need for hope. So much so that business surpassed even pre-Covid levels. "By the first week of April, we had recovered and were doing business worth ₹25 lakh a day as compared to ₹10 lakh a day before Covid," shares Gupta.

AstroTalk is not alone in witnessing a sharp boom in business post-Covid. With uncertainty prevailing about the pandemic, scores of people flocked to astrology services to allay their fears and seek 'answers'. In the process, the sector hit a jackpot, with many astro ventures coming up to fulfill demand. In India, apps like Ganesha Speaks and Gurujii saw a significant upsurge. While AstroYogi saw more than 20% surge in users, AstroSage, with more than 40 million app downloads, noticed a 100% increase in the first quarter of 2020.

Interestingly, this phenomenon isn't just restricted to India. Globally, too, psychic and mystical services saw an upswing. Take, for instance, New York-headquartered Sanctuary, which provides on-demand astrology readings. The app witnessed "real growth in paid offerings, surge in new users and deep engagement in 2020," said CEO Ross Clark. Other apps like Co-Star, The Daily Horoscope, TimePassages, iHoroscope, Astro-Matrix also became popular. San Francisco-based Sensor Tower, which provides market intelligence and insights for the global app economy, estimated that the US spent \$39.7 million on the top 10 astrology apps in 2019, a 64.7% increase from 2018. The psychic services industry in the US, which comprises palm reading, astrology, aura readings, cartomancy, etc., grew at an annualised rate of 1.6% from 2014 making it a \$2.2-billion industry by the end of 2019, as per market research company IBIS World. Experts say this growth will continue in the next five years.

In pre-Covid times, people's interest in astrology was the direct result of the uncertain times and, today, the pandemic has increased that anxiety manyfold, leading to a significant push for the industry across the world. According to a survey conducted by AstroTalk—which currently has 1,200 astrologers and 300 tarot readers onboard and whose app has more than one million downloads—American users prefer psychic and tarot readings, while Indians prefer astrology. AstroTalk has hired astrologers and readers across languages as people are more comfortable talking to someone who speaks the same language. "We also have a good NRI base and so we are hiring people from America and Canada," says Gupta, adding that after India, most of their users are from America, Canada and UAE.

Rising tide

Delhi-based Gunjan Sharma, a communications professional during the week and tarot reader and reiki healer on weekends, says she did more readings in the past year than the previous two years combined through phone calls, WhatsApp and her social media page Tarot with Gunjan. The peak period, says Sharma, was between April and June last year.

Roshan Sylvia, a France-based Indian tarot reader, spiritual healer and palmist, took a break from her YouTube channel, which has more than two lakh subscribers, in 2020 as she found the year's energies overwhelming. And yet she witnessed an increase in views on previous videos, as well as her number of subscribers. "I had thousands of requests for personal consultations during the lockdown," says Sylvia, who has been in the profession for five years. According to her, the questions that people asked most in 2020 ranged from health to relationship issues, jobs and finances. Sylvia, who has a good number of followers not just in India, but other countries too, says people seek astrology more in desperate times. "Astrology and divination have always been a refuge in times of uncertainty, as one needs assurance."

Another astrologer for whom work pressure has quadrupled since the pandemic is Lucknow-based Mridul Misra. "There are a lot of questions related to careers and opportunities to travel abroad as people are anxious about their jobs and finances. Some even ask when work from home will end and when new jobs will come up. There are questions about marriages too," says Misra, who has been in the business for 20 years.

Delhi-based astrologer and vaastu consultant Jai Madaan also observed a 30% growth in business. "When times are tough, people need guidance, direction and answers and so they gravitate towards things that feel natural to them. Initially during the pandemic, there were

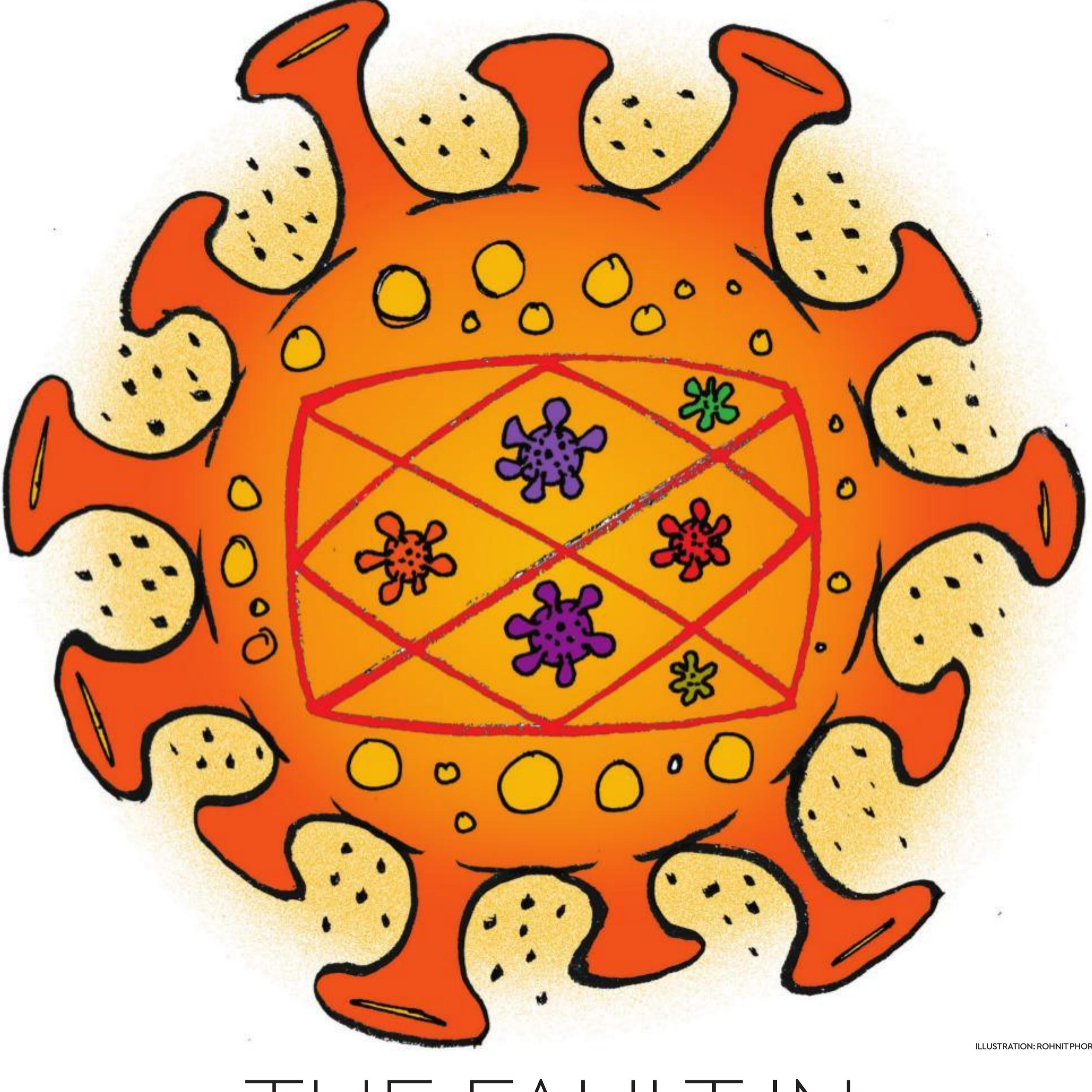


ILLUSTRATION: ROHINI PHORE

THE FAULT IN OUR STARS



Initially, there was not much competition, but now, many astrology portals have come up

— BHUPESH SHARMA,
ASTROLOGER & FOUNDER,
ASTROBUDDY, AN
ASTROLOGY SERVICES APP



By the first week of April 2020, we were doing business worth ₹25 lakh a day as compared to ₹10 lakh a day before Covid-19

— PUNEET GUPTA,
CEO & FOUNDER,
ASTROTALK, AN ONLINE
ASTROLOGY PORTAL

no answers in science, so they turned towards us to see if the cosmic world had an answer," says Madaan, who has been a motivational speaker, astrologer, life coach, corporate trainer, relationship counsellor, spiritual healer, graphologist and face reader for 12 years now. Talking

The pandemic brought with it a sea of changes, leaving people to cope with a whole new paradigm of daily life. Unable to cope, many turned to astrology services to seek 'answers'. In the process, the industry witnessed a boom, with many astro ventures mushrooming in the past year

about the appeal, she says, "It is just a sugar pill, but one that can fix ailments because that mindset is there. People were insecure as they lost jobs and loved ones. They were also worried about their relationships since a lot of people were distanced from their partners. Many individuals over 40 also had concerns about the health of their parents and children."

Launched in 2018, AstroBuddy is another astrology services app that is benefitting from the new wave of those seeking answers from the stars. Founded by astrologer Bhupesh Sharma, the app struck gold with the arrival of the pandemic and reached its peak in 2020—there was a 150% jump in the number of calls and text chats versus the base figure a year ago. Elaborating on the most common questions people wanted answers for, Sharma says, "Earlier, 60% of the questions revolved around relationships and marriages and 40% around financial issues and jobs. But now, after the pandemic, 60% questions are about jobs, finances, alliances and careers, and 40% around relationships. People are also asking questions like when will Covid end?"

Sharma says the competition in the industry has become more intense now. "Initially, there was not much competition, but now, many astrology portals have come up, as internet speeds have gone up."

Talking about the challenges of developing an astrology portal in a country where almost every household knows an astrologer, Gupta of AstroTalk says, "Establishing an online astrology portal in such a place was challenging at first, but we noticed that once a user had a free session, they came back for a paid one. It is easy to acquire a customer here. People already know about astrology."

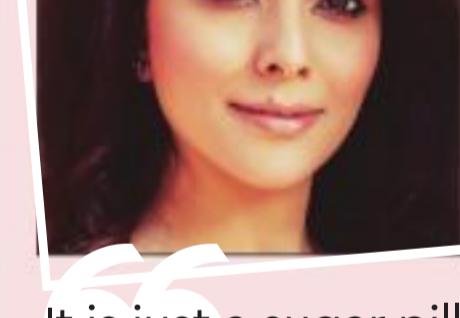
Counselling mode
The pandemic has seen cases of stress,

anxiety and depression go up across the world and many astrologers say they found themselves donning the counsellor's robe as well to help people. "We maintained that it's a difficult time but will pass. Every person has been impacted because of the pandemic in some way or the other—some have come out easily while others have been hit hard... while talking to people, we realised that they needed more of a counsellor's help," says Bhupesh Sharma of AstroBuddy.

This is how Seref, a counselling and therapy platform, was born. The brainchild of Delhi-based Seema Gandhi (who holds a doctorate in micro-finance), Seref, which started in August 2020, offers counselling services in areas like mental health and career, hypnotherapy, dance and movement therapy, past life regression, spiritual and crystal healing, etc. It has counsellors (online and offline) across the country and has tied up with hospitals to come up with clinics in cities like Gurugram, Mumbai, Lucknow and Jammu. The idea, says Gandhi, originated when they found that a number of AstroBuddy users were depressed or anxious—Gandhi and her husband are AstroBuddy's silent partners/investors.

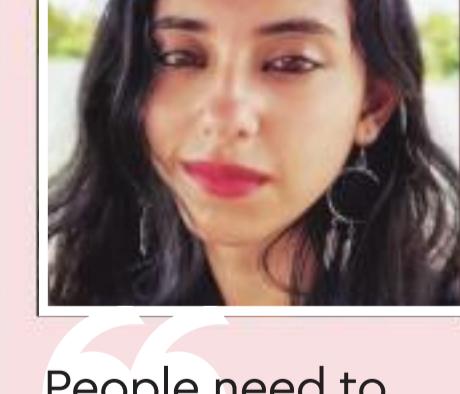
The response so far, she says, has been quite positive. "At least 10 corporates across the country have come forward to seek counselling packages for their employees. Our clinic in Jammu has done especially well because there aren't many mental health counselling services there. We also conducted research that showed that Jammu had a number of mental health patients as the place has gone through a lot," she adds.

Gupta of AstroTalk says he was surprised to notice certain trends among people last year that reflected the need for a counsellor. "We noticed that people were asking the same questions again



It is just a sugar pill, but one that can fix ailments because that mindset is there

— JAI MADAAN, A DELHI-BASED ASTROLOGER AND VAASTU CONSULTANT



People need to understand that a psychiatrist or therapist is the way to go when you need help with mental health

— GUNJAN SHARMA,
COMMUNICATIONS
PROFESSIONAL, TAROT
READER & REIKI HEALER

gives them hope. There have been researches aplenty that suggest that after every pandemic, astrology businesses boom," says Gupta, who has introduced a number of new features like free birth charts, live sessions and astrology lessons on his platform.

When an astrologer gives advice to seekers, it gives them positivity, believes astrologer Mridul Misra. "If the planetary positions are bad for a person, we tell them the truth, but we also give them certain solutions like donating to the poor or feeding animals that will help motivate them and earn them good karma," he says.

Delhi-based Gunjan Sharma, however, cautions that astrology can't be the ultimate refuge and can't replace the need for a psychologist. "People need to understand that a psychiatrist or therapist is the way to go when you need help with mental health. With tarot and oracle card readings, we tend to speak a lot about the message of hope, positive thinking and law of attraction/universe, but all these will work temporarily for those who really need help from a therapist." As an oracle reader, she says that even if the cards turn out to be negative, the readings end with a guidance message to motivate the seeker.

Spiritual healing

India has a long history of spiritual healing, with an endless and ever-increasing number of spiritual gurus. Many have found followers abroad as well. Mystic Rajneesh, better known as Osho, for instance, enjoyed a strong follower base in all parts of the world. From celebrities flocking to them for healing to the common man turning to them as part of their faith, many families today have a spiritual guru whom they swear by. Recently, actor Gwyneth Paltrow's wellness and lifestyle brand Goop also released a list of popular spiritual and energy healers offering remote sessions. These included the likes of Dana Childs, Frank Butterfield, Diane Goldner, Sonja Grace, etc.

Likening astrologers and tarot readers to spiritual healers, Roshan Sylvia says they don't just help people on the psychological level, but also on the spiritual level. "It's a combination of the mind, the body and the soul. I have to find the right balance between giving them the truth of the situation and keeping them positively hopeful," she says.

Delhi-based Madaan, however, disagrees, saying there's a difference between seeking a healer's help and taking guidance from an astrologer. "A spiritual healer uses a simplistic way of managing things through healing a person mentally, physically and emotionally. Healing revolves around cleaning of auric, energy and magnetic fields around a person. On the other hand, an astrologer is an expert in understanding outer space changes and how they affect our minds and positions in life. Healing, thus, is more rooted in divinity, while astrology is more calculative. Outer space changes affect our mind position in life," says Madaan, adding that Indians are generally more spiritual than people in other parts of the world as our mythologies, religions and scriptures all talk about past life and rebirth. "So when you talk about the past, present and future in a healing and therapeutic way, it relaxes people and makes them happy," she adds.

Indore-based healer Krishna Mishra, popularly called Krishna Guriji by his followers, received an overwhelming number of calls last year. Mishra, who has been invited to several countries like the US, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Thailand, Dubai, Romania and several states in India for healing through prayers, says he healed many around the world last year through video calls and phone calls.

"I call it 'divine astro' healing. Usually, three types of people come to me—those who are worried about jobs and finances, those worried about relationships, and those worried about health. I only those who want healing for their health because I have healed myself healthwise too," says Mishra, who was operated in 1982 for a brain tumour, which left the right part of his body paralysed. He then started training to write with his left hand and gradually healed himself and even got himself a job. "Now, I am independent and want to heal others as well," he says.

Since the lockdown was imposed, Mishra says he has been praying for the world to heal. "Whenever people call me for healing, I listen to them and then say a prayer for them. That is the only process. I believe collective prayers can do wonders," says Mishra, who has been healing people for 10 years now.

Since the pace of life slowed down during the lockdown, people were able to tap into their spiritual side, feels Mumbai-based Tamanna C, a psychic, spiritual therapist, columnist and author, who identifies herself as a clairvoyant. Tamanna, too, noticed an increase in the numbers of clients as the uncertain times brought in people an "urge to transform". During the lockdown, Tamanna says, people were okay with the slow pace of life, but were concerned about relationships. Usually, the end and beginning of a year are the busiest times for her as people want to know how the coming days will unfold. The most frequently asked questions, she says, remain about love, marriage, career and finances.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

Fe Lines

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



Tackling vaccine waste

Vaccine rollout is essential to curb the spread of the virus, but responsibly discarding syringes and needles is also important for the planet's health

VAISHALI DAR

N THE FIGHT against climate change, countries across the world are banning plastic bags and cups to eliminate single-use plastic. Recently, the environment ministry in India also proposed a three-phase ban on single-use plastic by 2022 under the draft Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2021.

Last year, *Financial Express* on Sunday wrote about how the coronavirus crisis introduced the world to plastic in personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, which include goggles, face shields, masks, gloves, coveralls or gowns, head and shoe covers. All these are highly beneficial in reducing the risk of the person using them from contracting an infection, but it's important to dispose them properly.

A year has gone by since the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus a pandemic. The scale of the upheaval since then is difficult to capture, but some extraordinary numbers tell the tale: according to *Our World In Data*, a scientific online publication that focuses on large global problems such as poverty, disease, hunger, climate change, war, existential risks and inequality, more than 122 million cases of Covid-19 have been reported worldwide, with more than 2.7 million deaths. Around 94.5 million vaccine doses have been administered so far globally.

It's true that vaccine management is essential to curb the spread of the

waste every day since last year to 6,000 kg per day during the month of May when the virus was spreading in the city at a very fast rate, over a dozen vans collected the biomedical garbage everyday and transferred it to the facilities, says a news report in *The Indian Express*.

Environmentalists fear negative consequences for wildlife, as the pandemic poses difficult short-term choices between health and the environment. The contaminated plastic, cloth and latex could even end up in the waterways, blocking oceans.

Gurpreet Sandhu, president, Council for Healthcare and Pharma, a global think tank that advocates the development of sustainable health systems, finds that India's public healthcare system is among the best equipped to handle large-scale vaccination programmes. "We have over the years successfully run the largest universal immunisation programme in the world, vaccinating over 26.5 million infants a year for a number of diseases. The country also vaccinates over 29 million pregnant women annually for tetanus. This has helped to hone its capacity for large-scale vaccination efforts. While the Covid vaccination drive is humongous by any yardstick, there are well-laid protocols and stringent guidelines for storage and disposal of medical waste at the hospital level. To minimise the medical waste likely to be generated, only multi-dose vials have been distributed to medical establishments. The waste generated is bagged and marked as per best practice before it is removed and safely disposed by authorised and licenced third-party vendors having the capability and wherewithal to safely manage medical waste. The health and municipal authorities too have redoubled their efforts to oversee and manage the colossal effort underway. The track-and-trace mechanisms deployed have made the system geared to deal with the exigencies generated by the scale of the effort."

While it's tough to say exactly how much plastic is in the ocean, scientists think about 8 million metric tonnes of plastic enters the ocean every year. That's the weight of nearly 90 aircraft carriers, as per the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Department of Commerce.

virus, but—just like PPE kits—discarding syringes and needles from vaccines is also important for effective waste management. WHO guidelines for planners and managers state that inadequate management of wastes generated by immunisation activities, such as sharps and infectious non-sharp wastes, can cause direct negative health impacts and pollution on the community working during and after the campaign, causing indirect health effects in the community and impacting the environment.

Practical guidelines like a strategy for clarification purposes and a checklist of basic actions to cope with waste created during immunisation activities is essential. Vaccine waste goes in sharp containers and is picked up from healthcare facilities and transported to the processing centre to be sanitised with high-pressure steam in a machine before it's sent to the landfill alongside other trash. If it isn't picked up by a disposal company, it adds volume to the already piled up waste, a challenge for healthcare facilities with no space.

Through organised drives like those done by staffers at Pune's Common Bio-Medical Waste Treatment Facilities (CBWTF), over 1,100 tonnes of Covid-related waste from public and private hospitals has been collected and disposed of in the last 11 months. The operation has been outsourced to Passco Environmental Solutions, a private firm contracted by Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal corporations. From 250 kg of Covid-19-related

POLITICAL DRAMA

It's true that there is nothing more dramatic than politics. With poll fever running high in the country, we have recently seen a lot of action on the field. From Mamata Banerjee injuring her leg to Rahul Gandhi diving in the sea, this election season has been full of drama. Here are some politicians who caught our attention for campaigning in some of the most bizarre ways.

By Reya Mehrotra

**Prabhakar Raja**

Prabhakar Raja, a DMK candidate who is contesting from Virugambakkam in Chennai, showed off his dosa-making skills. He made hot dosas for voters at a roadside stall. A video of him cleaning the pan, spreading the batter and sprinkling oil on it has gone viral on social media.

Thanga Kathiravan

AIADMK nominee Thanga Kathiravan from Nagapattinam, that lies in the Cauvery delta region, chose to wash dirty linen in public. Quite literally. He washed clothes in the presence of the public and media to attract attention. His supporters joined and cheered him too and naturally, the video went viral on social media. After diligently washing one piece of cloth, he handed it over to its owner asking her to "take care". The message was loud and clear—

Rahul Gandhi

When it comes to Rahul Gandhi, he never fails to entertain either with his actions or speeches. Particularly with his Kerala campaign, a win that Congress is eyeing, Gandhi has gone hyperlocal and is interacting with students, youngsters and the needy alike. Instead of large public rallies, he is going to specific places. He visited St Theresa School in Kochi where he taught some lessons of Aikido, Japanese martial arts to students. In Kanyakumari's Mulagumudu, he danced with the students of St Joseph School. His most famous campaign in Kerala remains the dive with a fisherman in the sea where he swam for 10 minutes and cooked mushroom biryani with a local.

**KR Jayaram**

Tamil Nadu candidates are leaving no odd job undone to win the assembly elections. AIADMK candidate KR Jayaram chose to sell vegetables in a vegetable market in Coimbatore while also attracting the public and interacting with them. If re-elected to power, he promised new schemes for traders and

the poor need no longer suffer with household chores as they can now get washing machines.

AIADMK's campaign plan

that focuses on serving the public like a common man. In his constituency Thirumangalam, he worked in the paddy fields for votes. He sowed paddy seeds in the field and was cheered by women farmers. In door-to-door campaigning, he fell to the feet of the elderly voters and sprinkled water on buildings' foundations, asking for votes.

RB Udhayakumar

AIADMK MLA and minister for revenue and disaster management RB Udhayakumar too played a part in

**Roshy Augustine**

Kerala MLA Roshy Augustine from Idukki constituency tried his hand at making parotta at a local hotel and he did it like a professional. In a viral video, he is seen slapping the parotta dough on the slab of the kitchen multiple times as it gets bigger with each slap. He then cuts it into two and rolls it into thin circular rolls for making the parotta.

AIADMK's campaign plan

that focuses on serving the public like a common man. In his constituency Thirumangalam, he worked in the paddy fields for votes. He sowed paddy seeds in the field and was cheered by women farmers. In door-to-door campaigning, he fell to the feet of the elderly voters and sprinkled water on buildings' foundations, asking for votes.

T Sampath Kumar

DMK candidate T Sampath Kumar, who

is contesting from the Edappadi constituency in Salem against chief minister K Palaniswami, showed off his creative campaigning skills. He visited a beedi-making unit to help the women workers roll the beedis.

Mansoor Ali Khan

At first, actor Mansoor Ali Khan had said he would not contest for the elections but he surprised everyone when he not only decided to contest, but also took on a bizarre campaign strategy. He sat next to a pile of garbage along with a notepad and noted down the grievances of voters. Khan, who is contesting as an independent candidate from Coimbatore's Thondamuthur, wore a black vest and sported messy hair to complete the look. He was also seen patting a street dog who sat next to him, as an elderly female beggar sat behind him.

Noor Mohammed

Noor Mohammed of Podanur's Kinathukavadi Assembly constituency decided to impart a message of secularism through his campaign. He wore a white shirt and a white Islamic skull cap, a *rudraksh mala* around his neck and held a rosary in his hand to give out the message of religious harmony and equality. He asked for votes by beating a small two-headed drum with two gift boxes, his election symbol. His video, which was shot on the streets, went viral.

TECH-NOW-LOGY

Click for culture lessons

Virsa, a digital cultural education initiative, imparts awareness, education and knowledge about Indian culture and performing arts through interactive online classes

NAMRATA RAO

VIRSA, A DIGITAL CULTURAL education initiative by the NGO Routes 2 Roots (R2R) in collaboration with the ministry of culture, aims to preserve and promote India's rich cultural heritage and legacy of performing arts. The programme seeks to impart awareness, education and knowledge about Indian culture and performing arts, including classical music, dance and drama through interactive digital classes.

Virsa reaches out to school students across the country, with the aim to subsequently reach other parts of the world as well. The programme has digital interactive classes for students and covers 14 different genres of Indian art, music and dance as part of the five-day schedule of the school's curriculum. The digital live classes air from a Noida-based studio. The platform offers free classes, which are available for every student (lower-, medium- and higher-income) across India.

This is in addition to periodic workshops in each school with inter-school, inter-region and inter-country performances organised with the programme's board of advisors, including Pandit Birju Maharaj, L Subramaniam, Pandit Rajan and Sajan Mishra, Shovana Narayan, Kavita Krishnamurthy, Shafqat Amanat Ali, Jui Chawla and Ehsaan Noorani.

Interestingly, Virsa entered the Limca Book of Records for covering two crore students and 20,000 schools across the country.



VIRSA, WHICH OFFERS FREE CLASSES FOR EVERY STUDENT, HAS ENTERED THE LIMCA BOOK OF RECORDS FOR COVERING TWO CRORE STUDENTS AND 20,000 SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

non-profit organisation, which strives to bridge the socio-cultural distance between India and the world through music, art, culture, heritage and people-to-people exchange programmes.

Routes 2 Roots is a member of the World Association of NGOs, New York, US. Based in Delhi, its vision is to bring people closer and promote cultural diplomacy across the world. It has hosted numerous cultural events in more than 12 countries and 30 cities, promoting people-to-people understanding for sustainable peace. It provides a platform to artists and performers to display the culture and heritage of their countries as well, resulting in enhancing tolerance among people of different nationalities and cultures.

Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat—are covered under the project.

Routes 2 Roots is a Delhi-based



Leisure

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021



IN POPULAR CULTURE

Animated TV series *South Park* mocked cancel culture with its '#CancelSouthPark' campaign in promotion of the show's 22nd season (2018). In 2019, cancel culture featured as a primary theme in stand-up comedy shows *Sticks & Stones* by Dave Chappelle and *Paper Tiger* by Bill Burr

VAISHALI DAR

IN OCTOBER LAST year, *Interstellar* star Matthew McConaughey appeared on *The Joe Rogan Experience* podcast hosted by Joe Rogan. Among the myriad issues the actor talked about was 'cancel culture'. "We're making people persona non grata because of something they do that is right now deemed wrong or it's the hot point in a hot topic right now," he said. "You can't erase someone's existence. Where does some forgiveness go?"

McConaughey was talking about a phenomenon that has gathered steam over the past few years, irreparably damaging people's careers. Cancel culture can be defined as a sort of ostracism through which someone is 'cancelled' or exiled from social and professional spheres. Why? Because they said or did something that was seemingly objectionable. For some, it constitutes trolling and harassment. For others, it is an effective way to hold people accountable for their words and actions. From affecting public figures and celebrities to even brands, books and films, cancel culture can take the form of group shaming or even public denunciation.

Take, for instance, the incident involving Bloomsbury India last year. The publishing house was all set to publish a controversial book on the 2020 Delhi riots, but chose not to after there was massive outcry over the book's promotional event. The decision to withdraw it at the last minute, however, led to further uproar, with writers of all ideological persuasions criticising the publishing house for stifling the voice of authors it didn't agree with. "I have not read the book in question and have no idea if it is good or bad. However, this is obviously not a quality control problem but about censorship. I commit to never publish a book with @BloomsburyIndia," tweeted principal economic advisor Sanjeev Sanyal.

Economist Jayati Ghosh's tweet said, "I'm now ashamed at having contributed to a chapter in a @BloomsburyIndia book. When the history of our times is written, the role of publishers who colluded and published falsehoods to serve current powers will also be noted. Shame on you. You're no longer a credible publisher."

Critics of cancel culture view the movement as a modern form of mob rule, while its supporters view it as an important tool to achieve social justice. Recently, e-commerce website Myntra changed its logo after a Mumbai-based activist lodged a complaint with the state cyber police, alleging that the signage was "insulting and offensive" to women. Following the controversy, Myntra decided to change the logo on its website, app and packaging material.

One thing is clear: you may support it or abhor it, but there's no way you can ignore it. Cancel culture is both a sort of mob mentality and a way of speaking truth to power. But could it also change contemporary culture?

Toxicity metre

In October last year, online provocateurs attempted to cancel *Guardians of the Galaxy* star Chris Pratt, labelling him a Trump supporter despite him being largely apolitical. (above, from left) actor Roseanne Barr lost her hit TV show after a racist tweet; there was a call to cancel JK Rowling for her views on transgenders; and

The cancel culture code

You may support it or abhor it, but there's no way you can ignore it. Cancel culture has been gathering steady steam over the past few years, sometimes as an extension of mob rule, at other times, a way of speaking truth to power. But could it also change contemporary culture?



(Top) Online provocateurs attempted to cancel *Guardians of the Galaxy* star Chris Pratt, labelling him a Trump supporter despite him being largely apolitical; (above, from left) actor Roseanne Barr lost her hit TV show after a racist tweet; there was a call to cancel JK Rowling for her views on transgenders; and



CANCEL CULTURE CAN TAKE THE FORM OF PUBLIC DENOUNCEMENT OR EVEN GROUP SHAMING



Tanishq withdrew an advertisement featuring an interfaith couple after backlash on social media

authors and academics in denouncing the cancel culture trend.

Critics argue that free exchange of information and ideas, the lifeblood of a liberal society, is becoming more and more constricted today, and that cancel culture is an unhealthy and toxic practice. "For long, ideas, books and art have influenced public opinion in more ways than tangible. It was for this reason that totalitarian governments banned books and exiled writers or other influencers they believed could change public perception. The cancel culture movement is, however, inherently different. People pile onto, call out opinions by celebrities and others in a vastly negative manner," says Delhi-based danseuse and culture multiplier (someone who uses their intelligence and position to amplify the capa-

bilities and talent of the people around them) Prathibha Prahad, who was the founder-director of annual arts festival, Delhi International Arts Festival. "While they may be holding them accountable to what they said or did, which is vastly unpopular with accepted notions of speech and behaviour, it can be very toxic and contrary to democratic principles of free speech. Accountability has to be for all across the board," she adds.

Prahad believes social media can be easily manipulated. "The worrisome part is that the internet is not the space for debate or dialogue and is no space for alternative opinion. Therefore, a social media upbeat government, which while on the surface upholds democratic values, but wants to control public opinion, can manipulate the social media space.

Anyone can fall victim to this mass hate movement and all the fabulous work done over decades can be cancelled in no time," she says, adding, "Social media users must be made accountable and held to question by the laws of the land, as Twitter and Instagram can't be allowed to hold to ransom peoples and cultures."

Recounting an incident from 2017, Prahad says, "We had invited a Pakistani theatre group to perform and the overzealous director gave an interview and announced their performance in the festival, while speaking about India-Pak relations, etc. The auditorium and the partners cancelled our booking and refused to have them stage their play. Finally, with a platoon of policemen, we had them perform late in the night because as festival organisers we were

bound to have them perform," she says.

Delhi-based feminist writer, author and columnist Sreemoyee Piu Kundu feels cancel culture is an emblem for social spinelessness and moral corruption. "It is the ultimate act of hypocrisy on the part of large and powerful multinational corporations, especially those that tom tom about diversity, inclusion and gender equality, but lack the grit and determination to stand by with conviction on their messaging, branding and content," says Kundu. "Also, why are we so scared of social media—why have and when did a bunch of faceless trolls become the bane of our sanity? Why do we attach so much power to social media—so much so that we cave into the slightest pressure, apologise, swallow our words and bow down our

heads...to me, this is the toxic and direct side effect of populism and consumerism," she asserts.

Catalysing change

Over the years, books, ads and films have helped contemporary culture evolve. "Pop culture has always influenced change and continues to be a catalyst for evolution," says Mumbai-based Anuja Deora, founder and CEO, Filter Coffee Co., a digital agency that has catered to brands like L'Occitane India, Estee Lauder, Forest Essentials, Kiehl's, etc. "A lot of artists and filmmakers have been coming up with more and more work pieces without losing that original shine on their respective content in trying to fit in this era of modern democracies," adds Deora, who has worked on films like *Bhavesh Joshi Superhero*, which was inspired by Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement. "It went on to become a cult favourite. The film spoke about larger issues and how sentiment can impact a situation. The core message, though, was how it is every individual's responsibility to ensure and uphold their rights and freedom," she adds.

Kundu believes that the number of public intellectuals, student leaders and independent artists arrested for speaking their minds have no freedom of speech in a country that brands dissenters as 'urban Naxals' and stifles independent thought as dangerous or political conspiracy. "As a single woman, I am not afraid of being trolled, rape threats... that is a common medium to silence a powerful woman's voice. I have lost friends and have rejected many populist things like awards and lifestests... but my only consolation is I stand for myself. And I need no external validation but the truth to prove my views or my point," she says.

Creativity is something that can be criticised, but can never be targeted, she believes. "An artist is unafraid and free," Kundu asserts.

Calling cancel culture a form of "cultural boycott", Lisa Nakamura, University of Michigan professor of media studies, says it's the "ultimate expression of agency", which is "born of a desire for control as people have limited power over what is presented to them on social media" and a need for "accountability which is not centralised".

Take, for instance, a March 2020 KFC ad in the UK, which featured its catchphrase 'It's finger-lickin' good' and showed friends licking their fingers after eating chicken. After social media users criticised KFC for promoting behaviour that could result in the spread of Covid-19, it temporarily suspended its slogan.

Closer home, Tanishq withdrew an advertisement featuring an interfaith couple after backlash on social media. The ad showed a baby shower being organised for a Hindu mother-to-be by her Muslim in-laws. After being trolled, Tanishq removed the ad, even as Twitter users expressed disappointment at how bigotry and cancel culture led to an ad with a beautiful message being withdrawn.

In 2019, a Surf Excel advertisement had also received backlash after it sought to promote its brand showing Hindu-Muslim harmony.

"Human beings are emotional beings and the kind of backlash brands have been receiving from consumers is on an emotional viewpoint. Emotions change and evolve and so do the sentiments about and around things," believes Deora. According to her, creativity evolves over time and always finds a way to get the message across. "Your ideas might not work the first time, but could become a revolution in the near future," she offers.

Bengaluru calling

The F&B scene in the city might not have quantity, but it certainly has quality worth envying

BETWEEN SIPS



Magandeep Singh

RECENTLY, WHILE ON A visit to Bengaluru, a local friend lamented the lack of good places with an international flavour in the city. "There are many joints for great local fare, but when you want to eat international, then Bangalore is way behind Delhi and Mumbai," I pondered. Was she really onto something? Save for name-dropping and muscle-flexing, in nothing else is Delhi ever to be considered ahead. Mumbai has a much more eclectic scene, but if you don't live within 5 km, then you'd sooner fly to Paris and come back before others have even cleared the perennial Pedder road jam.

Now, to be fair, Delhi does have more

places, and all open with the confidence and flair of a seasoned stalwart: minimalist names juxtaposed with lavish OTT decor, superlatives hanging off every wall. There's no denying that the Delhi set likes to keep it plush. Plush, yes, but rarely classy. Few can match the effortless charm of Olive or the refined elegance of Indian Accent or the culinary dedication of the more modest Aku's and Leo's.

And now, let's talk Bengaluru. In my barely three days there, I managed to visit three fabulous spaces. The Bira91 Taproom (with an unmatched and fresh raspberry sour on tap) in Koramangala goes much beyond the standard brews that they sell in cans and bottles, and Harshvardhan, the in-house limited-release brew specialist, has gone to town experimenting with flavours and styles. Not one—and I mean not even one—brewer in the NCR area comes remotely close to the quality of the beers that I tried here. The



food by chef Vicky Ratnani was just the kind of added bonus that makes me want to drink on Monday mornings.

Next, I was at Araku Coffee and it was love at first whiff not just for the attention they pay to their in-house blends, but also to the way the entire space is slickly curated. From the coffee-related paraphernalia to even the books and props, it all lends to an ambience of effortless luxury and charm. Chef 'Jedi' Rahul's brand of food is something to watch out for and

FROM EXCITING BEER FLAVOURS TO DELECTABLE CULINARY FARE, THE CITY DELIVERS A REFINED EXPERIENCE

here's a fitting example of why Delhi doesn't have it better—he worked in a luxury hotel in the capital for a year right before this stint and never once got to showcase his culinary genius as Araku is allowing him to now. As for the coffees, they have four roasts which they can prepare in various formats—pour-overs, cold brews, espressos—and they will guide you as to which works better and how. I'd vouch for all depending on the time of day, my mood and company. This was proper coffee and not the dishwater that many other chains peddle in the name of java. I will certainly be back for the coffee, but I will equally certainly be back for the food. Admittedly, it's a pricey proposition considering all the other places around it (or what 'luru folk are used to doing out), but the experience is unmissably modern and nothing that any other metro can match.

And then I revisited Bengaluru Oota Company, a cosy little space run inside a cosy little house by Divya Prabhakar and Vishal Shetty, ladies who have a compendium of experience in F&B, but an equally finely-tuned ear for service and delivering an overall refined experience. Sure, it's local fare, but it's not off just any menu. It's a fixed menu, it's made fresh daily and it's served to you

with all the love and personal attention that not even your family may afford you. The adaptation of how they present regional cuisines is what makes it a contemporary affair for me. Do other cities have anything similar? Possibly, but even then, if I had to list my topmost memorable F&B memories nationwide, this would be right up there.

Since a man has only one stomach, I was unable to do any justice to the fare at Navu, which I hear (from reliable sources) is equally spectacular. Then there are bakeries like Labonel, Lavonne and even NYC's Magnolia first opened here rather than elsewhere. Caperberry was too ahead of its times for the entire country till the very end.

In short, and take this from an industry veteran Delhi-zen who spends an inordinate amount of time scouring the world for a good plate and a sip, the Bengaluru F&B scene might not have quantity, but it certainly has quality worth envying. And then, it has that one thing which Delhi is rarely ever going to be able to serve up, not just now but even for the next few decades, no matter how much money the smug home-grown restaurateurs keep pumping in: erudite eloquent company!

The writer is a sommelier

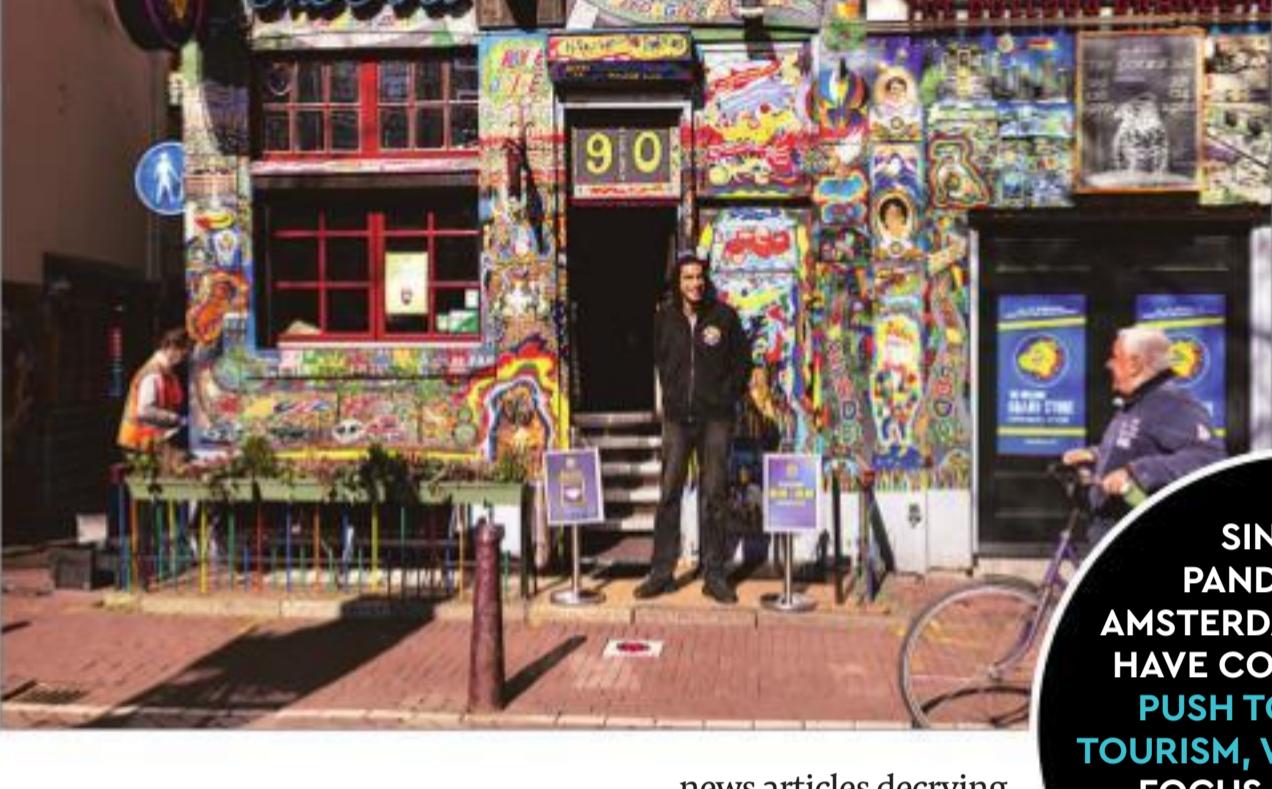
Footloose

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021



NOTABLE RESIDENTS

A few of Amsterdam's notable residents throughout history include painters Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh, the diarist Anne Frank, and Baruch Spinoza, a Dutch philosopher of Portuguese Sephardi origin.



SINCE THE PANDEMIC HIT, AMSTERDAM'S LEADERS HAVE CONTINUED THE PUSH TO REGULATE TOURISM, WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT, A HUGE MAGNET FOR TOURISTS

(Clockwise from left) The Royal Palace. The square is usually bustling with tourists, but since the pandemic, it has been very quiet; an employee stands outside a coffee shop in the Red Light District; and a bicyclist crosses a canal bridge in the historic centre of Amsterdam

hoods in the city centre, including the Red Light District. The ban was overturned in court, but city officials are now working to find a way to reimpose the measure legally, the spokeswoman said.

Amsterdam has also joined more than 20 other European cities to advocate stricter rules on vacation-rental platforms at the European Commission and in the European Parliament. The measures are in line with the Dutch hands-on approach to tackling problems, the city's deputy mayor, Victor Everhardt, said, adding that, while the pandemic had not shifted the city's course of action, it may have accelerated its pace. Amsterdam residents have high expectations for city life, and politicians aren't afraid to push through new measures, Everhardt explained — even if some of those measures may end up being challenged in court. "We're just moving ahead and dealing with the problem," he said, adding: "There is no silver bullet."

But some of the proposed measures have proved controversial. The idea of relocating sex workers, for instance, is widely opposed by those who work in prostitution, said Irina, a spokeswoman for PROUD, a union of about 300 prostitutes across the Netherlands. "The problem is not with the prostitutes. We've been in the same area for centuries," said Irina, who declined to share her last name, citing privacy concerns. "The issue is the exploding number of tourists coming to Amsterdam, and they're coming for a whole bunch of reasons."

Irina noted that the government's Project 1012 — an initiative that closed more than 100 sex-worker windows in the Red Light District over the past decade — had done nothing to ease the neighbourhood's overcrowding or reduce disruptive behaviour. Instead of focusing on prostitutes, she added, the government should put more police officers on the streets and ramp up the enforcement of existing rules against public urination, public drunkenness and disturbing the peace.

The mayor's recent proposal to forbid Amsterdam's coffee shops from selling cannabis to non-Dutch residents has similarly attracted opposition. Tourists and locals who frequent the city's 167 licensed coffee shops come to relax, socialise, maybe play a board game — and smoke cannabis, which is decriminalised for personal use in the Netherlands. Alcoholic drinks and hard drugs are not allowed.

Joachim Helms, a coffee shop owner and spokesman for the Dutch Cannabis Retailers Association, said that the proposed ban would force visitors to buy their cannabis on the street, where they are more likely to be taken advantage of; it would also damage Amsterdam's reputation as an international city, he said. "If people have experienced a lot of disturbance from tourists in the city, then of course you have to look at where that disturbance comes from," he said. "Usually, it's guys being loud on the street and being drunk — and those aren't typical coffee shop people."

Support for the prostitutes and coffee shop owners was echoed in several interviews with Amsterdam residents, including Roy Van Kempen, a 31-year-old marketing manager who has lived in Amsterdam since 2008. "Paris has the Eiffel Tower, and we have the Red Light District and this idea that everything is possible in Amsterdam. And I would like to keep it like this, actually," he said.

NYT

In empty Amsterdam, reconsidering tourism

Before Covid-19, the city was packed with visitors. Now efforts to rein in the expected post-pandemic crowds are ramping up, but not without controversy

PAIGE MCCLANAHAN

WHEN INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL came to a halt last year, Amsterdam — like cities everywhere — was drained of tourists almost overnight. The effect, according to Sonia Philipse, the owner of the restaurant Lavinia Good Food, was both surreal and serene: Without the crowds, her city was quieter and more beautiful than she had ever seen it. "At this point we're missing our tourists again," Philipse said recently. "But I think there was a moment of really big joy in getting our city back."

It's a tension that Amsterdam has been trying to navigate for years: how to embrace its status as a vibrant, international hub without making the city unlivable for its residents — and without letting go of its famous, free-spirited roots. Now, with visitor numbers still low, Amsterdam's leaders are trying to introduce important new restrictions on short-term vacation rentals, sex tourism and cannabis sales to visitors — all in an effort to ensure that old problems stemming from tourism don't reappear when visitors return.

The measures make Amsterdam one of



Empty canal boats in the centre of Amsterdam on a recent evening

PHOTOS: ILVY NIJOKIKIJEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Europe's front-runners in taking a hands-on approach to managing tourism. But even as many locals may be enjoying the current quiet in Amsterdam, many also disagree with some of the city's tactics.

The tipping point

The complaints from Amsterdam residents started to crop up in 2013, when tourism had fully bounced back from a downturn following the financial crisis of 2008. Locals said that tourists were being loud and disruptive in the city centre; disrespecting prostitutes; occupying short-term vacation rentals that drove up housing prices; and taking over some of the

city's most beautiful, historic areas. Visitor numbers grew steadily every year from then onward — 2020 excepted — and the pressure of all those tourists continued to escalate. In 2019, a record-breaking 21.7 million people visited Amsterdam, a city with a population of about 870,000.

"You see this tipping point where the visitor economy causes more harm for the locals than it adds value, and then you're in an unhealthy situation," said Geerte Udo, the director of amsterdam&partners, a non-profit, government-supported organisation that manages tourism in the city. "We need to change everything we have on offer in the city centre if we want to bring the balance back to living, working and

recreating," she said.

Before the pandemic, city leaders had already put in place a number of measures to try to mitigate the problems stemming from tourism, including a ban on guided tours of the Red Light District; a ban on new hotels in the city centre; an increase in the tourist tax; and a ban on new shops that cater to tourists. As early as 2014, Amsterdam stopped promoting itself as a destination in new markets overseas. Instead, the city's marketing organisation worked to guide and manage all of the visitors who showed up in the city.

But even with those measures in place, tourism continued to grow, and the rising numbers attracted attention. By 2019,

news articles decrying surging tourist numbers mentioned Amsterdam, alongside Venice and Barcelona, as a prime example of overtourism in Europe.

Cannabis and the 'monoculture'

Since the pandemic hit, Amsterdam's leaders — led by the mayor, Femke Halsema — have continued the push to regulate tourism, with a strong focus on the Red Light District, an ancient part of Amsterdam's city centre and a huge magnet for tourists. On a typical Saturday night before the pandemic, the district, known as De Wallen, would have been heaving with young men going from bar to bar — perhaps stepping into sex shops or coffee shops or eyeing scantily clad prostitutes posing in their windows. Several Amsterdammers interviewed for this story said that they would never consider visiting the neighbourhood at such a time because of the rowdy, crowded scene. "The public space is dominated by facilities that are almost entirely redolent of sex, drugs and drink," Halsema wrote of the historic city centre in an official letter to the city council in July 2019. "Constantly increasing numbers of visitors, misconduct, a shrinking retail mix, rising property prices, commercialisation of public space and criminal subversion all call for measures to be taken."

In the same letter, Halsema proposed four scenarios for the future of sexwork in the Red Light District (prostitution is legal and regulated in the Netherlands). One of those scenarios — the relocation of sex workers to a "prostitution hotel" elsewhere in the city — has recently attracted the support of a majority of city council members. The proposal has not been fully approved, however; further discussions are scheduled this summer, a spokeswoman for the city of Amsterdam said. Another headline-grabbing proposal from the mayor's office would make it illegal for visitors to buy cannabis in Amsterdam's coffee shops, which are concentrated in the Red Light District and which have long been popular with tourists. The potential effects of such a move are currently being studied, the spokeswoman said.

And last summer, in response to complaints about the rise in home sharing, the city imposed a complete ban on all short-term vacation rentals in three neighbour-

Family travel gets complicated without a vaccine for kids

Amid the chatter of travel's long-awaited rebound one year into the pandemic, many families with children feel largely left out of the conversation

DEBRA KAMIN

NEARLY EVERY SUMMER, Ada Ayala, a teacher, and her husband, Oscar Cesar Pleguezelos, travel with their children to visit Cesár Pleguezelos' parents in Spain. But this year, even though they will both soon be fully vaccinated in their home state of Florida, they are changing their plans. The reason? There is still no pediatric Covid-19 vaccine available for their kids.

The travel industry, buoyed by news of vaccine rollouts, is anticipating a summer

rush after a year of devastation. But amid the chatter of travel's long-awaited rebound, many families with children — who comprise roughly 30% of the global travel market — say they are largely being left out of the conversation.

In a March survey on Bébé Voyage, an online community for travelling families, 90% of respondents said that amid unclear guidelines on Covid-19 testing, they were searching for flexible bookings. The topic also comes up often on Bébé Voyage's Facebook page, particularly among

A FULL PEDIATRIC COVID-19 VACCINE CURRENTLY ISN'T EXPECTED UNTIL THE END OF 2021 AT THE EARLIEST



parents in the United States. "It's the Americans in the group that are the most nervous travelling with kids," said the Bébé Voyage chief executive, Marianne Perez de Fransius. Ayala, 44, is among those nervous parents. "If it wasn't for the kids, we would definitely be flying this summer," she said. Ayala already received her shot as a teacher. Her husband, also 44, will soon receive his shots, too, because Florida recently opened vaccinations to those age 40 and up. But their children, Charlise, 6, and Oscar, 2, will have to wait many more months to be inoculated. "My two-year-old isn't going to wear a mask for 10 hours on a flight, and I don't know if I want to expose him for a 16-hour trip with layovers," Ayala said. "I'll feel more confident when vaccination reaches more people worldwide, or at least in the destinations we want to go."

Nearly one in three adults in the United States have now received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. But a full pediatric Covid-19 vaccine currently isn't expected until the end of 2021 at the earliest, and while they wait, parents are struggling to figure out how they, too, can travel safely this summer, and even where their chil-

dren are welcome as rules on quarantine and testing continue to shift.

"This is the elephant in the room right now," said Cate Caruso, an adviser for Virtuoso, a network of luxury travel agencies, who also owns her own travel planning company, True Places Travel. The potential that a child could become infected with Covid-19 while abroad and not be allowed on a return flight, she said, is a major deterrent for parents. "Anywhere you go outside of the US right now, you've got to think about how you're going to get back in," she said. "It's leaving behind a whole bunch of people who are ready to go."

In Ayala's case, a compromise has been struck: Cesar will travel to Spain with their daughter, Charlise, while Ayala will remain in Florida with Oscar. "She goes to school and is very good with wearing her mask, cleaning her hands and keeping distance," Ayala said of her daughter. "So I think she can be safe. But it's just not possible with a baby." But she doesn't plan to stay home all summer. Whether or not her husband and daughter make it to Spain, Ayala is planning a family road trip at some point this summer, likely within Florida.

NYT

Well-Being

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

HISTORICAL RECORD



The sixth-century Greek physician Aëtius of Amida reportedly coined the term 'ionthos' or 'acnae', which seems to be a reference to facial skin lesions that occur during the 'acme' of life (puberty)

ANNA NORTH

FIVE YEARS AGO, I decided to write a novel set in the aftermath of a terrible pandemic. The novel was an alternate history, a revisionist western set in the 19th century, and I ended up doing copious research on everything from cattle brands to midwifery. But I'm somewhat embarrassed to say now that my research on public health disasters was relatively slight. Essentially, I pulled up a list of flu outbreaks, picked one that best suited my plot (an 1830 pandemic that may have begun in China), and started writing.

But as I finished the book, its events collided with the present. I was working through copy-edits in March 2020 when New York City, where I live, began to shut down. Suddenly I had a lot of time, and a lot of motivation, to consider what I had gotten right and wrong about the devastation wrought by disease on a society.

In many ways, my imagination had strayed far from reality. For one thing, no known pandemic has ever been as deadly as the one I wrote about, which kills 90% of the United States population. But I had one instinct that turned out to be right: that pandemics have the potential to shock societies into new ways of living. The Black Death, for example, led to the end of serfdom and the rise of the middle class in England.

But a disease outbreak can also cause governments to double down on repression and bigotry, as when the United States scapegoated Asian-Americans during 19th-century plague epidemics.

History can't tell policymakers and activists exactly how to respond to Covid-19 — more often, it offers an example of what not to do. Still, outbreaks in 20th-century South Africa, medieval England, ancient Rome and more can offer some lessons for those working to heal the damage of Covid and forge a more just society in its wake.

Five years ago, the history of pandemics was a jumping-off point for me — an inspiration, little more. Now it's something more urgent: an example of what we can dare to hope for in these dark times, as well as what awaits us if we fail to act. Here are some lessons learned.

Adapt

The Black Death, a pandemic caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* that spread across Asia, Africa and Europe beginning in 1346, was "without question the most catastrophic health crisis in recorded history," Mark Bailey, a historian and the author of *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England*, said in an interview. In England, it killed around 50% of the population in 1348 and 1349; in Europe as a whole, estimates range from 30 to 60%. The sheer scale of mortality was an enormous shock, though its effects went far beyond that. As Monica Green, a historian of medicine who specialises in medieval Europe, put it, "Who will bring in the harvest if half the people are gone?"

Different societies responded in different ways. In many parts of north-western Europe, such as Britain and what is now the Netherlands, the sudden death of a huge share of working people meant it was easier for the survivors to get work and acquire land. "You get an increase in wealth per head and a reduction in wealth inequality," Bailey explained. Economically, at least, "ordinary people are better off."

The reverse was true in much of eastern Europe, where lords consolidated their power over the now-scarce peasants.



file photo of people sitting in circles painted on the grass at Domino Park, New York

What the history of pandemics can teach us about resilience

Widespread disease outbreaks have the potential to shock societies into new ways of living



(Left) A beer bar in St Louis, US, has labelled tables with caution tape so patrons can maintain six feet of social distancing; and an empty street during rush hour in London



try to reimpose serfdom, forcing them to work the land on terms favourable to landowners. There, inequality flatlined or actually increased in the wake of the plague.

There are many competing explanations for the split, but one possibility is that "the Black Death tends to accelerate existing trends," like a movement toward a less feudal, more consumer-based economy in northern Europe, Bailey said. But that region didn't magically become a bastion of equality post-plague — the English government

imposed wage caps in the mid-14th century to keep pay from going too high. The result was widespread unrest, culminating in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, which brought together people of a wide variety of social backgrounds in an expression of "pent-up frustration" at government mismanagement of the economy, Bailey said.

Overall, if "resilience in a pandemic is coping," he continued, "economic and social resilience subsequently is adapting." The modern lesson: "Adapting to the new reality, the new paradigm, the new

opportunities, is key. Fight inequality

The move toward greater economic equality in England post-plague may have been a bit of an outlier — throughout history, epidemics have tended to intensify existing social inequities.

In 1901, for example, when an epidemic of the plague hit South Africa, "thousands of Black South Africans were forcibly removed from Cape Town under the assumption that their free movement was having an effect on the spread of

plague within the city," said Alexandre White, a professor of sociology and the history of medicine whose work focuses on pandemic response. That expulsion laid the groundwork for the racial segregation of the apartheid era.

The United States, too, has a history of discriminatory policy during epidemics, including the targeting of Asian-American communities during early 19th- and early 20th-century plague outbreaks in Hawaii and San Francisco, and the sluggish federal response to the HIV epidemic when it appeared to affect primarily LGBTQ+ people.

Americans, White said. Such decisions have ended up not only widening inequality but also hampering efforts to fight disease — ignoring HIV, for example, allowed it to spread throughout the population.

And now, the United States faces a pandemic that has disproportionately sickened and killed Americans of colour, who are overrepresented in the essential work force yet less likely to have access to medical care. As federal and state governments manage the vaccine rollout, access to testing and treatment, and economic relief packages, it's crucial to learn from the past and target policies specifically at reducing the racial and economic inequalities that made the pandemic so devastating in the first place.

"If the effects of racism and effects of xenophobia were less systemic within our society, we would likely see fewer deaths as a result of Covid-19," White said. "Bigotry is fundamentally bad for public health."

Embrace unexpected innovation

Even as pandemics have often re-entrenched old prejudices and forms of marginalisation, they've also often given rise to something new, especially when it comes to art, culture and entertainment.

Ancient Rome, for example, was tormented by epidemics, with one occurring every 15 to 20 years for portions of the fourth, third and second centuries BC, said Caroline Wazer, a writer and editor who completed a dissertation on Roman public health. At the time, the primary public health response was a religious one, with Romans experimenting with new rites and even new gods in an attempt to stop the spread of illness. In one case, Wazer said, with an epidemic dragging on for three years and the public increasingly agitated, the Senate adopted a strange, new ritual from northern Italy: "they bring in actors to perform onstage." According to the Roman historian Livy, "this is how the Romans get theatre," Wazer said, though that fact has been debated.

An spiritual response to disease brought cultural change to 14th-century England, too. Recalling the mass graves of the Black Death, Britons feared dying without a Christian burial and spending eternity in purgatory, Bailey said. So they began to form guilds, small religious groups that essentially functioned as "burial insurance clubs," raising money to give members the proper treatment after death.

These guilds hosted parties and other events, and over time there was concern "about boozing of ale going on in and around the church," Bailey said. So the guilds began to build their own halls for socialising. Then, during the Reformation in the 16th century, the guilds were dissolved, and the halls became something new: pubs.

Indeed, historians have argued that the rise in consumerism and the wealth of ordinary people following the Black Death paved the way for the pub culture for which England remains known today.

It would be flippant to call such cultural innovations a "silver lining" of pandemics — after all, plenty of new art forms and social venues have emerged without the catalyst of mass death. It is worth remembering, though, that in the wake of even the most devastating public health disasters, human social life and creativity have re-emerged in new and unexpected ways.

Pandemics are both catastrophes and opportunities," Bailey told me. And in the coming years, the world will face the tragic opportunity of rebuilding after Covid-19 — and if we learn the lessons of history, we may be able to do so in a way that's more fair, more inclusive, and even more joyful than the past we've been forced to leave behind.

NYT

Your 'maskne' might not be acne at all

Perioral dermatitis, a complex facial rash that is often mistaken for acne, is becoming more common, some experts say. Here's how to spot, treat and prevent this irritating condition

ELIZABETH SVOBODA

IT STARTED AS A MINI constellation of red dots near the right corner of my lips. Probably just "maskne," I figured. I slathered on some acne cream and tried to forget about it. But the inflamed, rashy spots didn't fade away. In fact, they grew larger, spawning dandruff-like scales and flakes. Within days, the red dots had spread to the left side of my mouth, and even sprinkled across my eyelids. When I opened my mouth, I felt the raw, burning skin at the corners crack.

After a telemedicine visit with my dermatologist, I learned that I had perioral dermatitis — a non-contagious facial rash that often shows up as clusters of tiny, scaly, red, uncomfortable bumps above irritated skin. "We see it mainly around the mouth," said Anna Chien, a dermatologist at the



a member of the American Academy of Dermatology's Covid-19 task force. "People confuse it with 'maskne,' and they are two different things." With mask-induced acne, your pores get clogged with dirt, skin flakes or oil, giving rise to inflamed cysts that may burst. But perioral dermatitis is more of an inflammatory rash. There can be various causes, but it tends to be triggered by a disruption of your skin's natural equilibrium, Sprague said, from the use of topical substances like steroid medications or irritating cosmetics.

The rash appears most often in adult women, but can also crop up, albeit less frequently, in young children. Unlike

cold sores, perioral dermatitis bumps are not thought to be caused by a specific virus and usually do not migrate onto the lips themselves.

How to prevent and treat it

Since perioral dermatitis is so complex, it can be challenging to treat and may take a long time to clear, Sprague said. But if you monitor your skin closely and follow some simple rules, you might be able to steer clear of the condition completely or nip it in the bud.

Practice good mask hygiene:

Masks are currently a public health necessity, but cleaning them regularly may help keep perioral dermatitis at bay. As soon as you are home and can safely remove your mask, wash your face with a gentle, fragrance-free cleanser, Sprague said. When it's time to don your mask again, resist the temptation to use one that is dirty, since it can disrupt your face's microbial balance. "It's like underwear," Bowe said. "You wouldn't wear your underwear two days in a row!"

Avoid steroid-based skin creams:

Many people use steroid-based anti-inflammatory medications, like hydrocortisone cream, to manage symptoms of perioral dermatitis, Chien said, but while such medications may clear redness temporarily, a rebound rash is likely to appear once you stop using them. "It's very reasonable to think, put on some steroids, but that tends to make it worse," she said. "The minute you stop, it comes back with a vengeance!"

Researchers don't completely understand why this happens, but some think that steroid creams might allow bacteria to overgrow by suppressing the body's local immune response. If you have allergies or asthma, think about switching your meds. As with steroid creams, Sprague said, inhaled or spray steroid medications commonly used to treat allergies or asthma — like Flonase, Nasacort or Symbicort — are thought to trigger perioral dermatitis, perhaps because they modify the body's immune response.

Streamline your skin-care products:

Using too many skin care products can throw off your skin's natural balance, according to Bowe, increasing the risk of an outbreak. In one study of 232 people in Australia, those who used foundation, night cream and moisturiser were 13 times more likely to develop perioral dermatitis than those who used moisturiser alone. Similarly, if you're managing a flare, minimalism is key. "The best thing you can do is baby your skin," Sprague said. "Stop any thick cosmetics, serums, etc."

Don't dabble in unproven treatments — see your dermatologist:

Plenty of alternative treatments for perioral dermatitis are available on the web, from swabbing the skin with apple cider vinegar to taking supplements of certain herbs, like neem. But those haven't been scientifically proven to work, Holman said. And since the rash is notorious for sticking around, it's important to seek professional help.

NYT

Mind & Games

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

The main reason for your pandemic boredom

It comes down to lack of control

JESSICA GROSE

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, I found comfort in the routine of my life and the rhythms of my family — what Nora Ephron once called the "peanut-butter-and-jellyness" of days with children. I liked the morning thunderdome of getting the children dressed and fed and breaking up some fights along the way, dropping them at school and taking the 20-minute walk to the subway. When I got off the subway, I had an array of coffee shops to choose from, which at the time did not seem exciting, but after a year of pandemic isolation would probably feel like bungee jumping.

At this point my commute is the five feet from my bed to my desk, and I am somehow both tired and agitated when I start work each day. My kids never leave the house, except when we go to the same three parks in our neighbourhood. Sometimes when I go running outside, I fantasise about just... not stopping, my eyes thirsty for some new horizon. In other words, I'm so freaking bored.

I'm not the only parent — or non-parent, to be sure — having trouble with the monotony of this moment. A study conducted early in the pandemic of more than 4,000 French people found that though respondents felt an increase of stress and fear, they mostly experienced a "slowing down of time" that was attributed to boredom and sadness.

"I've particularly struggled with boredom this year, in fact it resurfaced so many of the mixed emotions of maternity leave for me, feeling lonely and bored but simultaneously guilty for not treasuring every moment with my daughter," said Jenny Brewer, the mom of a toddler in London. She said she feels her brain cells "ebbing away," and like she's not achieving anything at work. "I am so used to organising days out and time with friends and family, that when it was taken away I was at an utter loss for how to kill the hours," she said.

The way Brewer describes boredom is actually very close to the way boredom researchers — yes, there are boredom researchers — have defined the emotion. "Feeling unchallenged" and per-



ceiving one's activities as meaningless' is central to boredom," according to a study by Wijnand Van Tilburg, an experimental social psychologist at the University of Essex in England.

Or, as Leo Tolstoy put it, boredom is "the desire for desires."

"The bored person does want to do something quite desperately, but does not want to do anything in particular," said John D Eastwood, an associate professor of clinical psychology at York University in Toronto, and co-author of *Out of My Skull: The Psychology of Boredom*. Boredom is distinct from apathy, because if you're apathetic, you don't want to do anything at all — but if you're bored, you're both restless and lethargic, Eastwood said.

Even in normal times, boredom is a very common emotion — a study of almost 4,000 American adults found that 63% felt bored at least once in a 10-day sampling period. While most cases of boredom are mild, chronic boredom can metastasise into depression, poor health behaviour like drug use, or risk-taking behaviour, said Van Tilburg. The causes of boredom are multi-

faceted, but a lack of control over your situation is a common one. He added, "There's research that shows when you're limited in your control over the situation — that intensifies boredom."

Parents of very small kids may find our pandemic lot particularly stifling because it's both repetitive and involuntary — we have no choice about keeping up the routines for our little ones, who cannot do things for themselves. Emily Lyn-Sue, a stay-at-home mom of two in Miami, said that while her husband and older son have outlets outside the home with work and school, she feels isolated and bored at home

with her three-year-old. "We speak an entirely different language that no one else understands. We are literally on an island alone, together — he is my Wilson and I am his Tom Hanks," she said, referring to the relationship Hanks' character develops with a volleyball while shipwrecked in the movie *Cast Away*.

Knowing that many of us may not be able to have much control over our

PERCEIVING ONE'S ACTIVITIES AS MEANINGLESS AND FEELING UNCHALLENGED ARE CENTRAL TO BOREDOM



movements for at least the next few months, how do we try to alleviate our boredom? First, the researchers spoke to say it's important to acknowledge there's no easy fix for our doldrums — so much of what is happening right now is beyond our control, and the vaccines are just beginning to be tested in children under 12, so we may not be able to make big moves just yet.

That said, there are small changes you can make to break the monotony. James Danckert, a professor of psychology at the University of Waterloo in Ontario and the co-author with Eastwood of *Out of My Skull*, said that because boredom can result from a lack of control over your life, finding even small ways to assert your agency can make you feel more engaged. For me, that means sometimes walking to a restaurant in the neighbourhood to pick up lunch rather than making myself the same sad desk salad every workday.

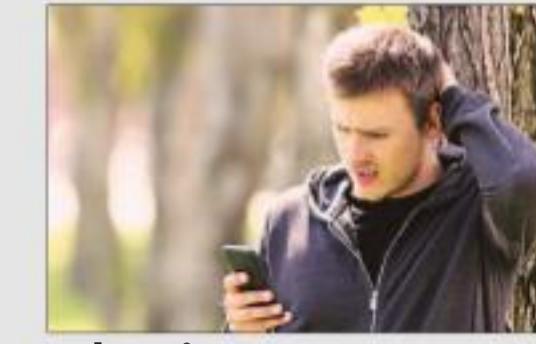
Danckert also suggested finding some joy in the minutiae of a regular activity; he quoted Andy Warhol, who said, "You need to let the little things that would ordinarily bore you suddenly thrill you." To be honest, I have struggled with this approach. When I took my younger daughter to a place we call "toy park" — a park filled with discarded and half-broken toys, which she loves — I tried paying close attention to the interactions of the children and the interplay of light from the spring sun breaking through the trees. But boredom won out, and I ended up looking at Twitter.

One bit of advice that resonated more with me came from Van Tilburg, who emphasised that boredom doesn't just have to be a negative thing — it can also be a wake-up call encouraging you to find activities that are more meaningful.

I am by nature sort of a hermit, but pandemic isolation has stretched the limits of my introversion. Recently, we saw relatives I adore for an outdoor Easter egg hunt. Just 90 minutes of warm interaction with these beloved adults made me feel so happy and alive that I was smiling for the rest of the day.

As the weather gets warmer and more of my peers are inoculated, I am planning more get-togethers, with and without my kids. Whenever I drop back into the doldrums among those discarded toys, I will think about all the walks and dinners and hugs on the horizon.

NYT



The joy & envy of seeing all your friends get vaccinated

■ At the start of the year, Shay Fan felt relief: vaccinations were on their way. Her relief turned to joy when her parents and in-laws got their shots. Three months later, Fan, a 36-year-old freelance marketer and writer in Los Angeles, is still waiting for hers, and that joy is gone.

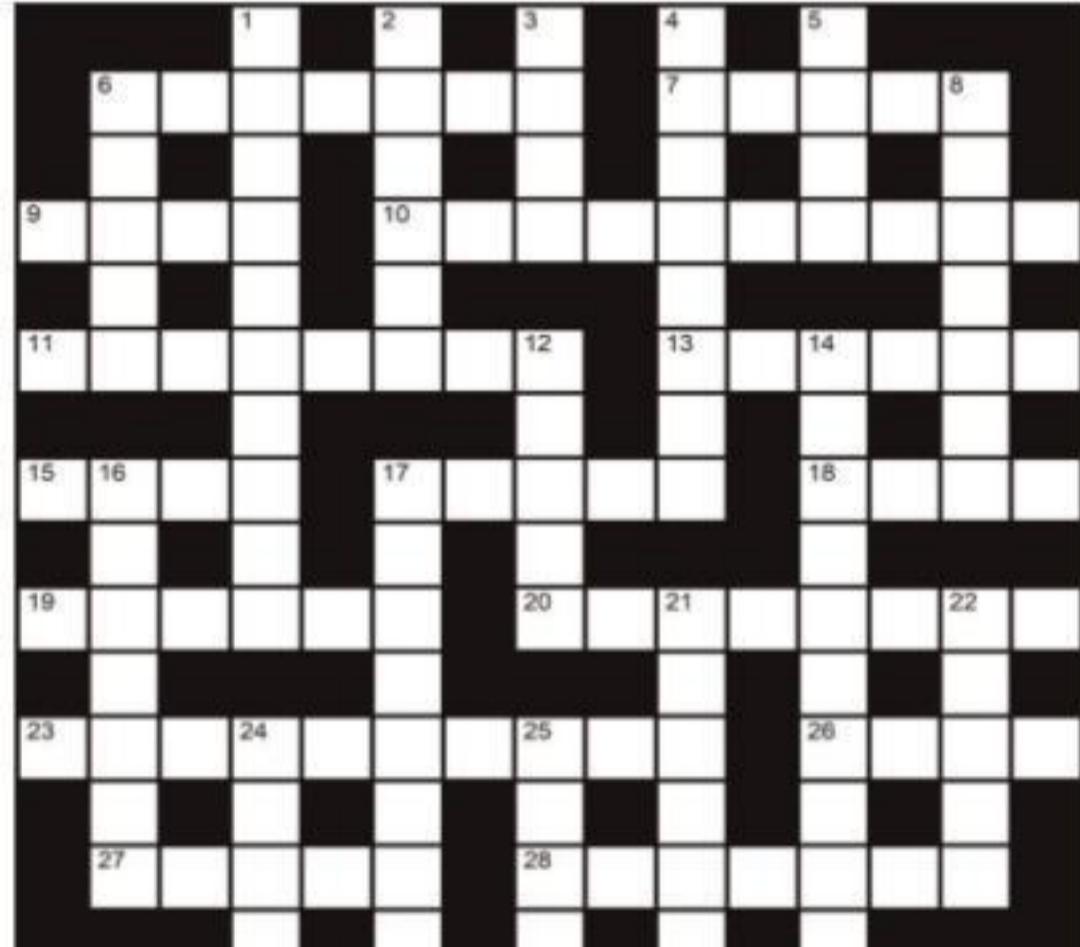
■ "I want to be patient," she said. But scrolling through Instagram and seeing "people in Miami with no masks spraying Champagne into another person's mouth" while she sits in her apartment has made patience hard to practice.

■ For much of the pandemic, the same rules applied: stay at home, wear a mask, wash your hands. But now, with vaccine distribution ramping up in some areas but not others, the rules are diverging around the world, and even within the same country.

■ Lynn Bufka, a psychologist and senior director at the American Psychological Association, said the pandemic has weighed heavily on teenagers, and a long wait for vaccines to be distributed to them could add to the stress. "Children are in many ways those individuals whose lives have been disrupted as much as anyone but with less life experience on how to adapt to these kinds of disruptions," Bufka said.

JENNY GROSS &
JESUS JIMÉNEZ/NYT
Constant Méheut
contributed reporting

CROSSWORD



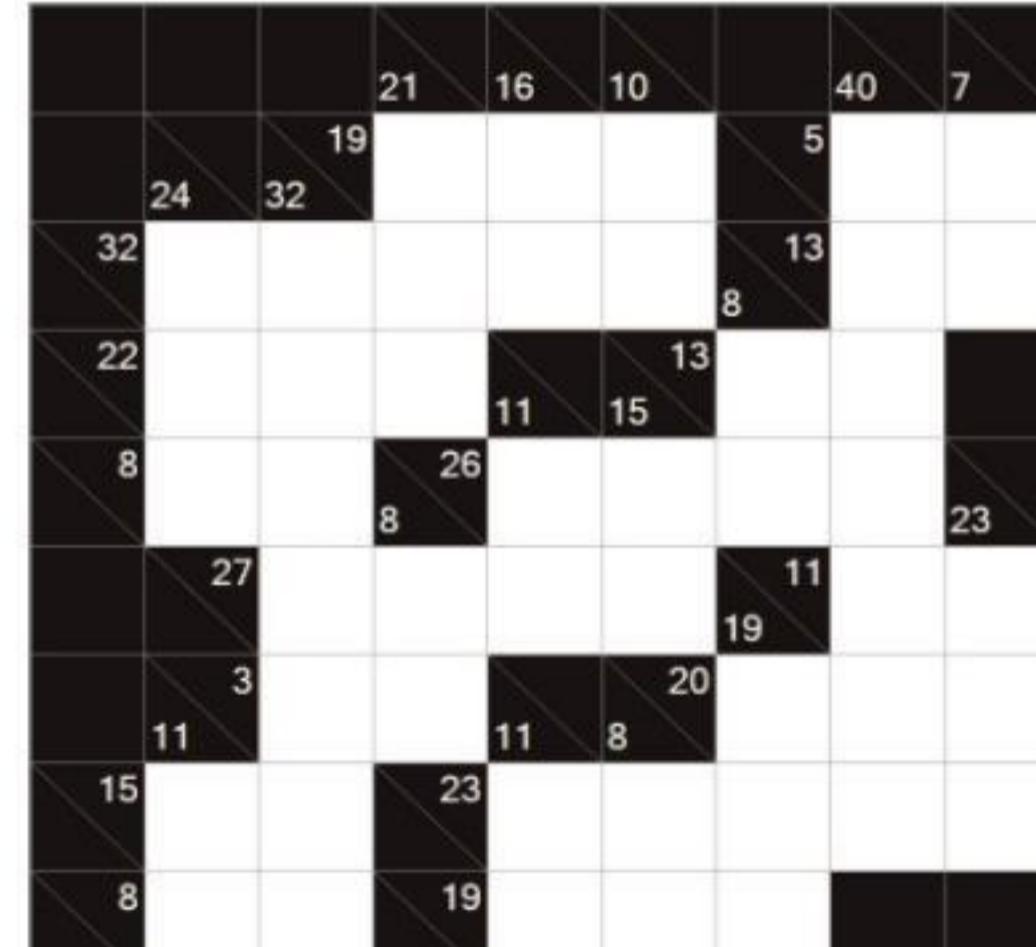
ACROSS

- 6 Transactions of professional or public interest (7)
- 7 Unpaid, or due for payment (5)
- 9 Out of work (4)
- 10 An unexpected but fortunate chance (5,5)
- 11 Captive (8)
- 13 Person or thing, in a way? (6)
- 15 Chinese secret society indulging in vice, etc. (4)
- 17 "G" in AIG the insurance company (5)
- 18 Source of inspiration (4)
- 19 A musical composition written for seven performers (6)
- 20 Juvenile, young or adolescent (8)
- 23 Look after; deal with? (4,4,2)
- 26 Custom ___ : you may have to pay it at

the airport (4)
27 Aperitif - even for a cricketer! (5)
28 Indian state neighbouring Bangladesh (7)

year or two too soon? (7)
17 Escapes (4,4)
21 Inequitable (6)
22 "U" in UHF or UV (5)
24 ___ Brute....said Julius (2,2)
25 They are related to a newt (4)

KAKURO



BIZ QUIZ

1. What is the new limit of EPF contribution up to which interest would be tax exempt, as per the amendments made in the Finance Bill 2021?
2. Which global rating agency releases the report titled Global Economic Outlook (GEO)?
3. Which country is set to re-establish the Homeland Security Dialogue with India?

ANSWERS

SOLUTIONS

BRIDGE BOUTS

L SUBRAMANIAN

MORE SPECIAL SITUATIONS

We continue with our discussion on special situations, which we saw a few weeks ago. In today's deals, your partner has to decipher the meaning of your call which appears with the question mark.

1) W	N	E	S 1S
pass	1NT	pass	
2D			dbl?

He should play you for a hand like the one below:

S K-J-x-x H A-x-x D x C A-Q-x-x. He can see, you could not to take any action in the beginning because you had length in their suit. However, you are able to describe now your shortage in opener's second suit and an opening hand with your take-out double. Good idea!

2) W	N	E	S
1C	1H	dbl	rdbl

When a negative double is made after an overcall, opener usually picks one of the implied suits, spade or diamond in this case. Sometimes, he bids 1NT to indicate a stopper in the overcalled suit. To assist partner, you can redouble to show honor-doubleton, Q-x/K-x/A-x. This is sometimes called 'negative re-double.' The idea is to get your partner to lead the suit. Partner may not want to lead the suit, if he had over-called with say, K-J-x-x-x. South may have: S x-x-x H Q-x D A-x-x C x-x-x-x. With a three-card support and 5-7 points, he can raise partner.

3) W	N	E	S
1D	1H	1S	dbl

With only clubs the unbidded suit, partner may wonder what the double should indicate. The idea is to show a doubleton for the over called suit and a five-card club suit, so that over caller can decide correctly what to do. He may have a three-card support for your suit. With a six-card club suit or a very good five-card suit and no doubleton support, you would bid 2C at once. Your hand maybe something like: S x-x H K-x D x-x-x-x CA-J-T-x-x

4) W	N	E	S
1C	pass	1S	2S?

Sometimes a one over one comes with four small, leaving you helpless with a good hand and six-card spade suit. So, this bid of righty's suit should show something like: S A-K-J-x-x-x H K-x-x D J-x C x-x

5) W	N	E	S
1S	pass	pass	2NT?

Usually, a 2NT bid in the direct seat shows 5-5 in the minors with the idea of making it difficult for the opponents to bid more accurately. In the pass-out seat, unusual NT has no meaning as you could well pass the hand. So, this jump should be played to show 18-19 points and stopper in the opened suit, something like: S A-J-H K-Q-J-D Q-T-x C A-J-x

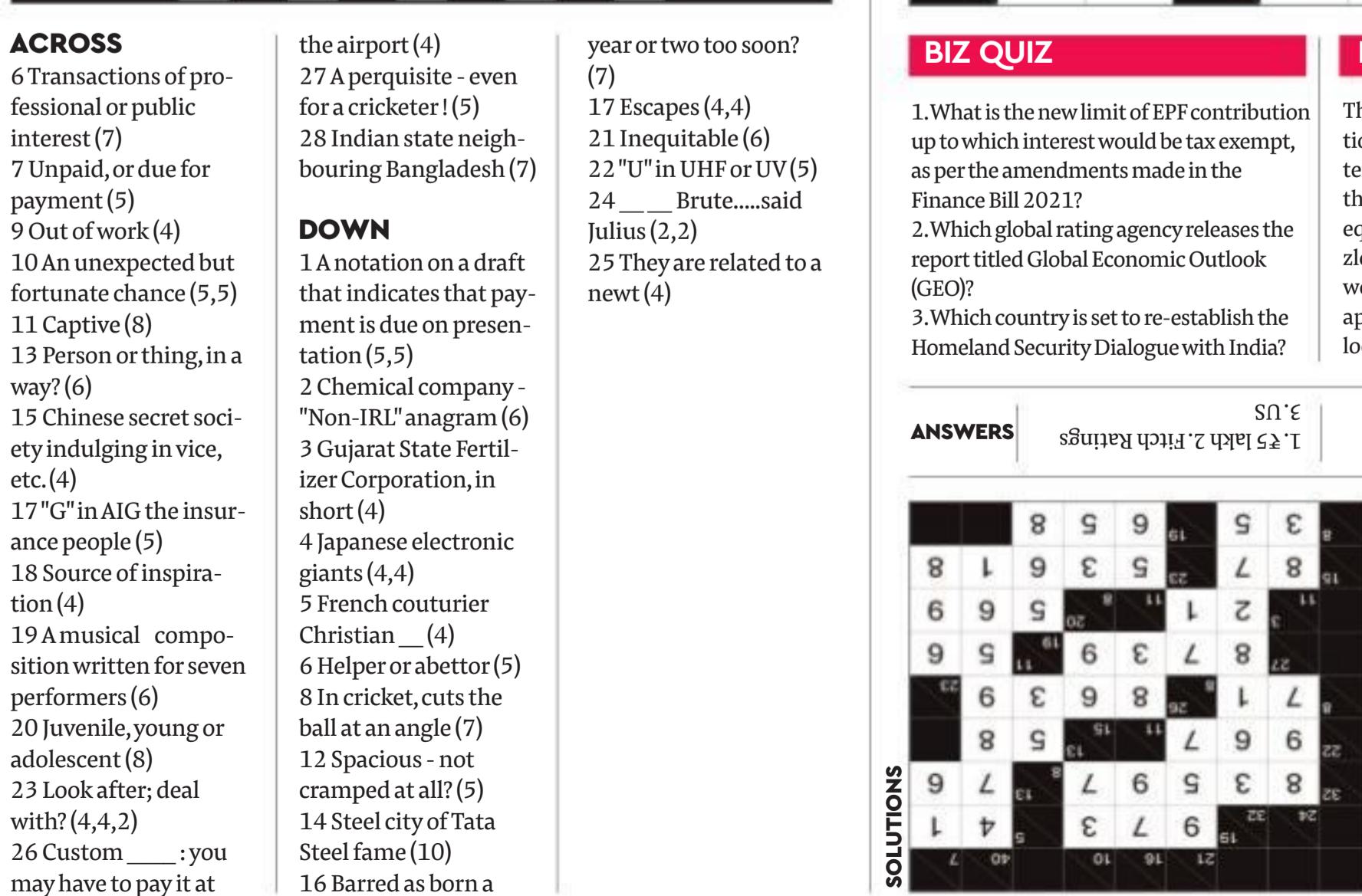
LEXICON

VENTURE CATALYST

■ n. A firm or person that obtains financing for new companies that would otherwise not have access to venture capital.

Garage.com is part of a new and emerging group of so-called venture catalysts. Armed with more than just a catchy name, the catalysts help funnel some of Silicon Valley's venture capital to startups that for various reasons can't otherwise get their hands on it.

—Melanie Warner, "No Funding for Your Startup? Try a Venture Catalyst," Fortune, April 12, 1999



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.

Today's clue: KMI equals FOR
Du vwnnavn, bqis mk ls
naisqlxhu, lv scqs l cqa
kmmnwaj lx mx q kao sclrv.

My success, part of it certainly, is that I have focused in on a few things.



Online dispute resolution to decentralise justice delivery: DY Chandrachud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 10

ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ODR) has the potential to decentralise and democratise the justice delivery system for citizens, Justice DY Chandrachud has said.

Speaking at the launch of Niti Aayog's Online Dispute Resolution Handbook on Friday, the Supreme Court justice mentioned that the ODR would make dispute resolution more affordable, amicable, and accessible. "Online Dispute Resolution has the potential to decentralise, diversify, democratising and disentangle the justice delivery mechanism for the citizens in India," he said.

Justice Chandrachud mentioned that one of the most important learnings from the past one year of virtual hearing has been that the process can often be far more efficient because of very simple changes—the use of digital file by all parties, the ability to make digital notes and having all documents in one place. "These small changes which improve the efficiency of the proceedings lead to quicker resolution," he added. He said the ODR handbook helps us identify three things. "First, the problem with status quo; second, how ODR can resolve the challenge; third, how this is the right time for mechanism," Justice Chandrachud said.

Justice Chandrachud mentioned that one of the most important learnings from the past one year of virtual hearing has been that the process can often be far more efficient because of very simple changes—the use of digital file by all parties, the ability to make digital notes and having all documents in one place. "These small changes which improve the efficiency of the proceedings lead to quicker resolution," he added. He said the ODR handbook helps us identify three things. "First, the problem with status quo; second, how ODR can resolve the challenge; third, how this is the right time for mechanism," Justice Chandrachud said.

Kant also said a panel led by Justice(Retired) AK Sikri is finalising a report on online dispute resolution, which will help in making it the option of first recourse for several categories of claims in a dynamic fashion.

Tata Sons vice-president Poornima Sampath said, "We need to run businesses and judicial processes keeping in mind the value of time - Online Dispute Resolution enables that."

India needs to grow faster to make up for contraction during pandemic: IMF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Washington, April 10

INDIA, WHICH IS projected to grow at an impressive rate of 12.5% this year, needs to grow at a much faster pace to make up for the unprecedented contraction of 8% that it clocked during the pandemic in 2020, according to a senior IMF official.

The International Monetary Fund deputy chief economist, Petya Koeva Brooks, in an interview to PTI on Friday also made a strong case for an additional economic stimulus to address the impact of the pandemic on the country's economy.

"When it comes to India there was a major collapse of output last fiscal year and the number as you mentioned is eight. So, we are very glad to see the strong rebound this year with projected growth of 12.5 for fiscal year 21-22 and we are seeing also high frequency indicators including PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index), and trade and more mobility indicators which give us a sense that there is continued recovery in the first quarter of this year," she said.

That said, there are some recent emergencies of the new variants in the localised lockdowns that are seen as one of the threats to this recovery, Brooks noted.

"On the recovery itself, when it comes to level in terms of the level of output, we are expecting that level to return to the pre-crisis one from 2019 to this fiscal year. That is what we have in our projections."

"However, if you look at a concept of scarring, which just compares what the level of output would have been hadn't there not been a crisis in 2024, which is the measure which we are using. Then at and compare where our current growth trajectory is for India that gap is much larger," Brooks said.



GUJARAT HOTELS LIMITED

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Tel No.: 0265-2330033 E-Mail: ghlinvestors@yahoo.co.in
Website: www.gujarathotelsltd.in

NOTICE

As per Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company has been convened for Saturday, 17th April, 2021, inter alia, to consider and approve the Audited Financial Results of the Company for the Quarter and Financial Year ended 31st March, 2021 and recommendation of Dividend for the financial year ended 31st March, 2021.

The above intimation is available on the Company's website www.gujarathotelsltd.in and also on the website of the stock exchange www.bseindia.com.

For Gujarat Hotels Limited
Sd/-
Parinita Bhutani
Company Secretary

Date : 9th April, 2021

Place : New Delhi

Infimedia Press Limited

CIN: L22219MH1955PLC281164
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Website: www.infomediapress.in
E-mail: investors@infomedia18.in
Tel: +91 22 4001 9000/ 6666 7777

NOTICE

In terms of Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on **Saturday, April 17, 2021, inter alia**, to consider and approve the Audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2021.

The said notice may be accessed at the Company's website at www.infomediapress.in and Stock Exchanges' website at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com.

For Infimedia Press Limited
Sd/-
Tasneem Cementwala
Company Secretary

Date : April 10, 2021

Mutual Funds

Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund



PROTECTING INVESTING FINANCING ADVISING

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC Limited (Investment Manager for Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund) Registered Office: One World Center, Tower 1, 17th Floor, Jupiter Mill Compound, 841, S.B. Marg, Elphinstone Road, Mumbai - 400 013. Tel: 4356 8000. Fax: 4356 8110/8111. CIN: U65991MH1994PLC 080811

Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, in accordance with Regulation 59(A) of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996 read with SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/IMD/DF2/CIR/P/2018/92 dated June 5, 2018, the half yearly portfolio of the Schemes of Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund ('the Fund') as on March 31, 2021 has been hosted on the website of the Fund viz. www.mutualfund.adityabirlacapital.com and on the website of AMFI viz. www.amfiindia.com.

Investors can request for a physical copy* or electronic copy of the half yearly portfolio through any of the following modes:

- 1) Telephone: Call at our Investor Contact Centre at 1800-270-7000 (Toll free)
- 2) Email: Send an email to care.mutualfunds@adityabirlacapital.com
- 3) SMS: Send a SMS to 567679 from investor's registered mobile number. SMS format: HYR <SPACE>PAN. Example: HYR ABCD12345H
- 4) Written request (letter) to:
 - a) Registered office or any of the Investor Service Centres of Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC Limited.
 - or
 - b) Computer Age Management Services Limited (CAMS) at Rayala Towers, 158, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600 002.

*Physical copy of statement shall be provided subject to ability to deliver due to current pandemic.

Unitholders are requested to update their latest e-mail id and mobile number to help us serve better.

For **Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC Limited**
(Investment Manager for Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund)

Sd/-

Authorised Signatory

Date : April 10, 2021

Place : Mumbai

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.



FRANKLIN TEMPLETON

Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund

Indiabulls Finance Center, Tower 2, 12th and 13th Floor, Senapati Bapat Marg, Elphinstone Road (West), Mumbai 400013

Income Distribution cum capital withdrawal (IDCW) in the Schemes of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund

The Trustees of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund have decided to make Income Distribution cum capital withdrawal (IDCW) the following Schemes/Plans/Options:

Name of the Scheme	Face value per unit (Rs.)	Amount of IDCW per Unit# (Rs.)	NAV per Unit as on April 8, 2021 (Rs.)
Franklin India Fixed Maturity Plans - Series 2 - Plan C (1205 Days) (FIFMP-2-C)			
FIFMP-2-C - Quarterly IDCW	10.00	0.12	10.1588
Franklin India Fixed Maturity Plans - Series 4 - Plan B (1098 days) (FIFMP-4-B)			
FIFMP-4-B - Quarterly IDCW	10.00	0.16	10.3146
Franklin India Fixed Maturity Plans - Series 4 - Plan F (1286 days) (FIFMP-4-F)			
FIFMP-4-F - Quarterly IDCW	10.00	0.18	10.5980
FIFMP-4-F - Quarterly IDCW-Direct			10.6246
Franklin India Fixed Maturity Plans - Series 5 - Plan A (1273 days) (FIFMP-5-A)			
FIFMP-5-A - Quarterly IDCW	10.00	0.17	10.5586
FIFMP-5-A - Quarterly IDCW-Direct			10.6438
Franklin India Fixed Maturity Plans - Series 5 - Plan D (1238 days) (FIFMP-5-D)			
FIFMP-5-D - Quarterly IDCW	10.00	0.165	10.5487
Franklin India Fixed Maturity Plans - Series 5 - Plan E (1224 Days) (FIFMP-5-E)			
FIFMP-5-E - Quarterly IDCW	10.00	0.17	10.5505
FIFMP-5-E - Quarterly IDCW-Direct			10.6136
Franklin India Dynamic Asset Allocation Fund of Funds (FIDAAF)			
FIDAAF - IDCW Plan	10.00	0.75	32.1034
FIDAAF - Direct - IDCW Plan			36.0730

The Record Date for the same will be April 16, 2021 (Friday). If in case the Record Date falls on a non-Business Day, the immediately following Business Day shall be the Record Date. All the Unitholders / Beneficial Owners of the IDCW plan / option of the scheme whose names appear in the records of Registrar / Depositories as on the Record Date shall be entitled to receive IDCW. The investors in the IDCW re-investment plan/option will be allotted units for the IDCW amount at the NAV of next Business Day after the Record Date.

Please note that the IDCW payout shall be subject to the availability of distributable surplus and if the available distributable surplus as on the record date is lower than the aforementioned IDCW rate, then the available distributable surplus shall be paid out. The payout shall be subject to tax deducted at source i.e. TDS, as applicable.

Pursuant to payment of IDCW, the NAV of the scheme would fall to the extent of payout and statutory levy (if applicable).

For **Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) Pvt. Ltd.**
(Investment Manager of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund)

Sd/-

Sanjay Sapre

President

Date: April 9, 2021

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

ITI Asset Management Limited
Investment Manager for ITI Mutual Fund
Registered Office: Naman Midtown, 'A' Wing
21st Floor, Senapati Bapat Marg, Prabhadevi
Mumbai - 400 013

Toll Free No: 1800 266 9603
B : 022 6621 4999 • F: 022 6621 4998
E : missates@itifm.com
W : www.itifm.com
CIN: U67100MH2008PLC177677

ITI MUTUAL FUND
Long-term wealth creators

NOTICE No. 10/2021

Hosting of Half-yearly Portfolio Statement of the Scheme(s) of ITI Mutual Fund

NOTICE is hereby given to the Investors / Unit Holders of the scheme(s) of ITI Mutual Fund that, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 59(A) of SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996 read with SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/IMD/DF2/CIR/P/2018/92 dated June 05, 2018, ITI Asset Management Limited ("the AMC") has hosted a soft copy of the Half Yearly Portfolio Statements of all the Schemes of ITI Mutual Fund for the period ended March 31, 2021 on its website viz www.itifm.com and on AMFI's website viz www.amfiindia.com.

The Investors/Unitholders may accordingly view and download the Half Yearly Portfolio Statements from the website of the AMC and AMFI.

Unitholders can also submit a request for electronic or physical copy of the Half Yearly Portfolio Statement by writing to the AMC at the email address mfassist@itifm.com or calling the AMC on the toll free number 18002669603 or submitting a written request at any of the official points of acceptance of ITI Mutual Fund.

For ITI Asset Management Limited
(Investment Manager for ITI Mutual Fund)

Sd/-

George Heber Joseph

Chief Executive Officer & Chief Investment Officer

**Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks,
read all scheme related documents carefully.**

HDFC MUTUAL FUND

BHAROSA APNO KA

HDFC Asset Management Company Limited

A Joint Venture with Standard Life Investments

CIN: L65991MH1999PLC123027

Registered Office: HDFC House, 2nd Floor, H.T. Parekh Marg, 165-166, Backbay Reclamation, Church

From the Front Page

With 1.45L cases, surge stronger

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7 last year, the 30-lakh mark on August 23, the 40-lakh mark on September 5 and the 50-lakh mark on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 25,52,14,803 samples have so far been tested in the country for the viral disease, including 11,73,219 on Friday.

The life goes out of live events

"Our open-air music property, Live At DLF Avenue, saw artists like Ritzviz, Peter Cat and Seedhe Maut perform live," Srinivasan added.

However, the resurgence of lockdowns has cast a shadow over such events. According to reports, IPL's offline activities such as player-fan meet-ups and dine-in tie-ups have already been affected.

Brands are cautious about sponsorships and offline activations because of the looming uncertainty. "With the unfortunate turn of events, brands are slow to respond to live events now," says Deepak Kumar, director, Hyperspace, a shopper marketing agency.

In 2020 several event organisers and content creators used platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Zoom to organise live events online. One year on, consumers and brands want more from online live events. "For online events to succeed, we require deep engagement, gamification and most importantly, broadcast quality streaming," observes Roshan Abbas, president, Event and Entertainment Management Association.

In India, despite there being several apps and services that add multiple layers of gamification and integrations, live online events have not come close to replicating the offline experience for audiences, say experts.

"Audiences have multiple entertainment options in the form of both free and paid content. And those experiences are far more engrossing for consumers in comparison to live online events," says Hariom Seth, founder, Tagglabs, a company that provides technology solutions to event organisers. He says that not only are sponsorships for online live events lower, even selling tickets in the price range of ₹300-1,000 per user is tough for a purely online experience.

This is possibly why people are looking to pay for upskilling tutorials or online courses that teach hobbies and not necessarily alternatives to entertainment. "Digital events that are trending now allow people to upskill,

build on a talent/hobby or learn something entirely new. About 60% of events listed on our platform are workshop-focussed," says Srinivasan.

Abbas says corporates have leveraged online events to organise everything from product demos to product launches (especially automotive brands). Further, existing IPs such as the Lakmé Fashion Week and Bacardi NH7 Weekender adopted digital avatars. Lakmé Fashion Week's virtual event integrated the element of shoppable content while Bacardi NH7 Weekender had features like virtual parties during the stream, games, virtual photo-booths, etc.

Attendees could even join live parties along with artists and fans. However, creating innovative technological experiences for virtual events within limited budgets is resulting in sub-par products that are not attractive to consumers, say experts.

The deals between event organisers and brands are not limited to creating one blockbuster event. "On digital, brands are spreading their risk by multiplying the number of online events they do until the desired ROI has been achieved," says Abbas.

Senior living a young market

Another point, says Antara Senior Living CEO & MD Rajit Mehta, is that senior population in India is fast growing with over 20 million elders who stay alone, which will increase in next two

decades. Data suggests that share of elders as a percentage of total population will have increased from around 7.5% in 2001 to almost 12.5% by 2026 and surpass 19.5% by 2050.

Columbia Pacific Communities CEO Mohit Nirula emphasises that it is a different experience. "In today's fast-paced world, parents often find their children employed in a different city or country. Loneliness is the biggest accelerator of ageing. These communities are designed to offer a holistic living experience," he added.

Nirula is optimistic on the demand for senior living facilities. "We serve nine communities and 1,600 homes. Of all these communities across 5 cities, today we have a waiting list of people who either want to take a home on rent or purchase one in resale. Ready-to-move-in (RTMI) is in huge demand at all our communities," he noted.

Another early entrant in this segment, Ashiana Housing, says the biggest change is that children were against senior living before Covid and after the pandemic, they have come out in support.

"We are very bullish at Ashiana and are looking at land deals especially in Chennai, Pune and Delhi-NCR.

Brand names have a big play in senior living because it is not about the house but about services," said Ashiana Housing joint MD Ankur Gupta.

Ashiana has five projects across Chennai, Lavasa (Pune), Jaipur and Bhiwadi, Gupta said, adding the com-

pany is looking at launching 3-5 projects in Delhi-NCR, Pune and Chennai over the next two years.

Antara Senior Living also saw increased customer enquiries and quicker conversions. "Antara Noida has had cumulative net sales of 150 units since its launch and is seeing continued strong interest and heavy footfall at the community site, giving us confidence that sales momentum will continue during the coming financial year," Antara's Mehta noted.

Anarock Property Consultants research head Prashant Thakur said over the years, senior living projects have sprung up either on the outskirts of major cities or largely in tier II and III cities. Bhiwadi in NCR, Neral in Mumbai, Talegaon in Pune and Devanahalli in Bengaluru are some prominent locations in tier-I cities.

"Covid could very well reshape the future of senior living in India as demand for such residences is reportedly rising amidst the pandemic-induced uncertainties. Currently, there is only limited supply in this segment – there are as many as 55 projects (developed or ongoing) by top 12 players in this segment," Thakur added.

The future is bright, asserts Nirula, adding "There are all the conveniences you want in a serviced apartment with safety protocols in place, 24x7 medical support and a like-minded environment. RTMI units and the demographic buying such units is getting younger than what it was earlier."

UNUSUAL MOVE**Pentagon defends US Navy ship in India's EEZ**

Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby said that the move was 'consistent with international law' diplomatic channels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Washington, April 10



Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby

(FONOP) by the guided-missile destroyer USS John Paul Jones "upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses" of the sea recognised in international law by challenging India's "excessive maritime claims".

When asked about India's reaction over the US Navy's move, Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby on Friday said: "I can tell you is that the USS John Paul Jones, a Navy destroyer, asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the vicinity of the Republic of the Maldives by conducting innocent passage through its territorial sea in normal operations within its exclusive economic zone without requesting prior permission".

In an unusual move, the US Navy announced that on Wednesday it conducted a freedom of navigation operation in Indian waters without prior consent to challenge India's "excessive maritime claims", triggering a reaction from New Delhi, which on Friday said it has conveyed concerns to Washington through diplomatic channels.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) also contested the US Navy's 7th Fleet statement of April 7 that the freedom of navigation operation

Paul Jones (DDG 53) asserted navigational rights and freedoms approximately 130 nautical miles west of the Lakshadweep Islands, inside India's exclusive economic zone, without requesting consent, consistent with international law."

Kirby in response to a question from reporters at a Pentagon news conference said: "That's consistent with international law."

"Again, we continue to maintain the right, indeed the responsibility, to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international law," he said.

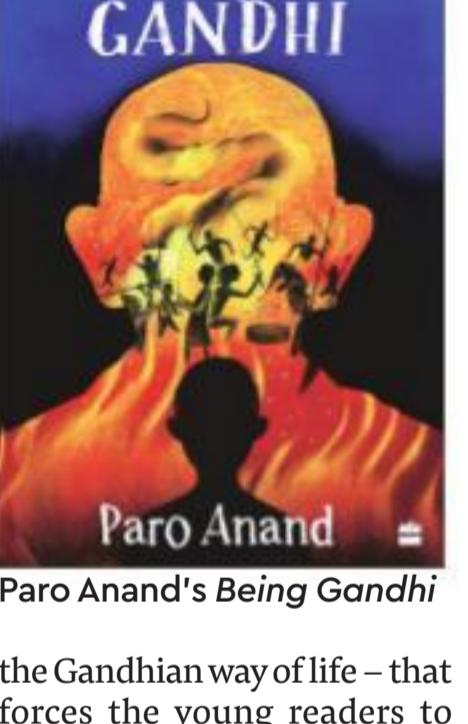
Kirby said that it is the responsibility of the US to uphold the freedom of navigation and the rights and freedom and lawful uses of the sea recognised in international law.

Earlier, announcing about the operation, the statement by the 7th Fleet said, "On April 7, 2021 (local time) USS John

'Gandhi was such a holy god of a person I couldn't connect with him'

US approaching China from position of patience and is not in a hurry: White House

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Washington, April 10



Paro Anand's Being Gandhi

"I DON'T SEE the point of celebrating one man, one leader, year on year," a 13 year old Chandrashekhar, agitated by the re-introduction of the nation's father every year in academics, thinks. Out of perhaps a thousand books on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, analysing the man, exploring his life and immense contribution in driving India to freedom.

Paro Anand's 'Being Gandhi' caters to as much as the young readers as it does to the adults. Paro's story captures the growing relevance of Gandhian philosophy and the need to revisit it with each decade's passing and with each plague of social and political divide.

When we sat down to read the 2019 book published by HarperCollins Children's Books in 2021 at Neev Literature Festival's Reading Challenge for Junior Readers aged between 10-13, we reacquainted ourselves with the national leader's ideology. Set during the time of the 1984 riots, the book sees a burning country from the eyes of a young teen.

There is something unique in the way Paro Anand approaches the book. This is not just another Gandhi book but a coming-of-age book on

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION is approaching China from the position of patience and is not in a hurry, the White House has said. White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on Friday that the relationship with China is one based on steep competition.

"We have been publicly and privately expressing our growing concerns about China's aggression towards Taiwan. China has taken increasingly coercive action to undercut democracy in Taiwan. We've seen a concerning increase in PRC military activity in the Taiwan Strait, which we believe is potentially destabilising," she said. "We are approaching this from a position of patience; we're not in a hurry. We are

the Gandhian way of life – that forces the young readers to think what Gandhi would do if he were in place of them, just like the protagonist thinks.

Chandrashekhar steps into Gandhi's shoes unconsciously and transforms from a new teen into a responsible, sensitive teen-adult who cares about those close to him.

It is that part in the book where he gives up his favourite ice cream for his mother, when he wants to save the neighbours being attacked by the mob, thinks of calling up his school friend Daman, who is a Sikh to check if his and his family were okay during the time of the riots, that one realises the birth of Gandhi in his adolescent mind.

Eastern Ladakh: India, China agree to resolve outstanding issues expeditiously

der point on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The parleys began at around 10:30 AM and ended at 11:30 PM.

People familiar with the negotiations said the Indian delegation, led by Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps Lt Gen PGK Menon, particularly insisted on resolving outstanding issues in Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang. "The two sides had a detailed exchange of views for the resolution of the remaining issues related to disengagement along the LAC in eastern Ladakh," the Army said in a statement. It was the second high-level military talks between the two sides after disengagement of troops in the Pangong lake areas in eastern Ladakh in February.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all general public at large that my client Smt. Krishna Maan W/o Late Sh. Rajender Maan R/o H.NO. 1419, Gaushala, Kishan Garh, Vasant Kunj, Delhi-110070 has severed all relations and dissolved her son Sandeep and his wife Chanderla from all her movable & immovable properties due to their misconduct and bad activities. My client and her other family members shall not be responsible for any wrongful and illegal act in future. Any person(s) deal with them shall be self responsible.

Bhaskar Upadhyay (Advocate)
Ch. No. 025, Lawyers Chamber,
Supreme Court, Delhi-01

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my client Shri. Braj Kishore Prasad S/o Lt. Shri Prabhanjan Prasad aged about 63 years, and Smt. Madhu Kumar W/o Late Sh. Bhagwan Prasad, residents of Narayan Nagar, Roop Nagar, Sector 19, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201009 has severed all relations with his son Name Shri. Neeraj Kumar and his wife Smt. Neha Sinha and their threat to falsely implicate the entire family of my client.

If either of them will ever try to enter in premises of my client in any way same shall be construed to be Criminal trespass and shall be prosecuted as per the law of the land.

Whosoever deals with them in any manner, calls at his/her home, risk and consequences shall be held liable for that.

PUNEET RAJ BANDERWAJ (Advocate)
B-7154, Sector V, Rohini
New Delhi 110085

Financial Express (epaper.in)

www.financialexpress.com

Financial Express (epaper.in)</

"Garvi Gurjari – Setting New Milestones to Revive, Develop and Promote the Rich Craft Heritage of Gujarat."

Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd., (GSHHDC), an undertaking of the Government of Gujarat was established in 1973 with the main objective of identification, revival and development of handicrafts and handlooms of Gujarat. With the advent of GSHHDC, it has been possible to develop handloom and handicraft products with a continuous process of providing design inputs to make these products have more utilitarian value and make them suitable for a contemporary lifestyle without altering the traditional values of craftsmanship. Thousands of artisans/weavers, who come from rural, urban and even remote areas of Gujarat are covered under its various schemes of training and design development.

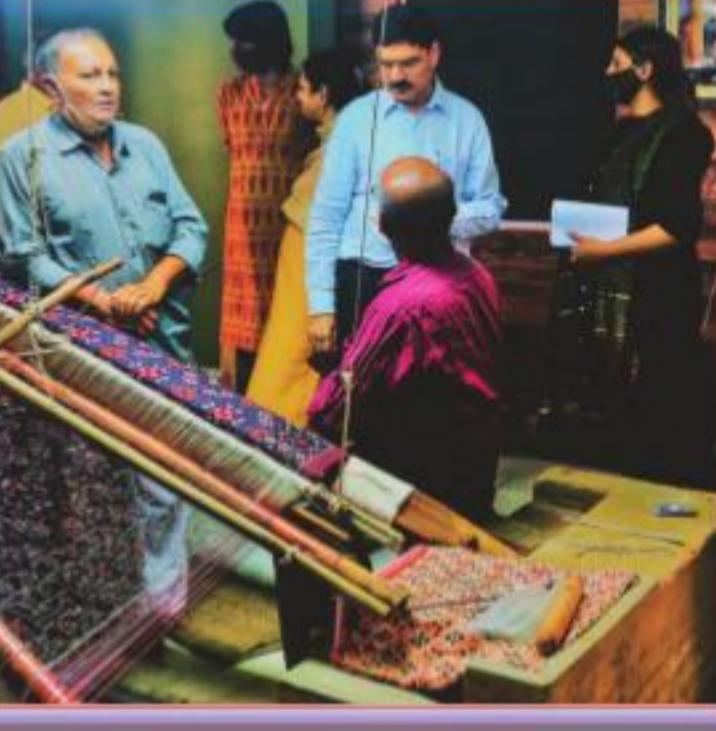
Garvi Gurjari is initiating strategies to take the crafts of our state to a greater level. There have been several positive steps that have been taken to bring about a change in the way Garvi Gurjari works for a collective benefit of our artisans, consumers and the brand itself. This has been done with the support and guidance of the Managing Director, Shri Mahesh Singh (IFS). Garvi Gurjari under GSHHDC is involved in the following:

Revival of Languishing Crafts

Gujarat is home to various kinds of crafts that form the backbone of our rich culture and heritage. Several crafts are veiled in the corners of small towns and villages. Due to the effects of modernization, lack of awareness and a gap between the artisans and buyers, these crafts have unfortunately become languishing. The revival of these precious crafts is acutely imperative for Garvi Gurjari. There have been numerous measures that have been taken to re-establish these crafts. Ashwali, Sadeli, Sujani, Agate, Saudagiri and Pithora are some of the languishing crafts that needed utmost attention and through Garvi Gurjari, these artisans have gained plenty of work. Further, many Training and Design Development Workshops have been conducted to create products suited to modern taste and these have been made available to consumers through Garvi Gurjari Emporiums and E-store. Every product has special craft tags attached that enlighten the consumer with the story and the process of that craft to spread awareness.

Incorporation of Design Cell

Design is the pillar of any product development that encompasses a systematic thought process that begins with the market research and trend forecasts followed



**Vocal for Local
Support the Artisans
Embrace our Heritage**



by various design processes. The Design Cell pays close attention to the upcoming seasons and trends that enables them to create various color combinations and designs. Design Development Workshops are conducted by the Design Cell to give their valuable inputs. New products are developed without altering the traditional techniques, keeping the core intact and at the same time catering to the needs of a modern consumer. The Design Cell is responsible for Product Diversification, Branding Inputs and Enhancement of products in any possible way.

Development of Central Store

The Central Store has been recently incorporated to assure a centralized flow of goods to various emporiums. Further, all the products undergo a regular intense quality check to avoid any defective products reaching the emporiums. The central store ensures timely movement of goods to all the emporiums making the supply process simpler and efficient.

Decentralized Training and Design Development Workshops

Design development and product diversification according to the current market trends are vital in ameliorating the sale of handcrafted products in the era of cut-throat competition. There have been several steps that have been taken in order to de-centralize the workshops by engaging the Master Craftsman of the craft. Numerous workshops related to marketing, product-shoot, design development and intervention have been conducted to ensure enhancement in the finishes, quality, raw materials used, product aesthetic and product diversification. Several other workshops in different regions of the state have been planned to ensure revival and development of various craft clusters.

Perspective Planning

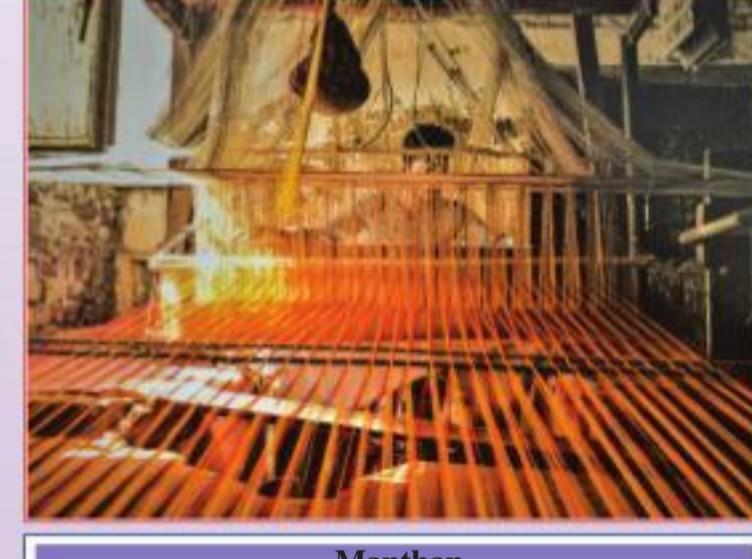
Stemming out from the current education policy, GSHHDC has embarked in the arena of creating awareness amongst the adolescent students, particularly in the age group of 12-16 years. It is well-known that cognitive learning, which is, learning while doing is of utmost importance. Hence, it is planned to engage the students from across the state into basic craft workshops which will expose them to various techniques and processes of handmade products. This way, the students will come closer to our cultural heritage and know different aspects of art and crafts of the state. Moreover, they will be encouraged to try their hands on developing innovative hand-crafted articles. These creative articles will be given to them on completion



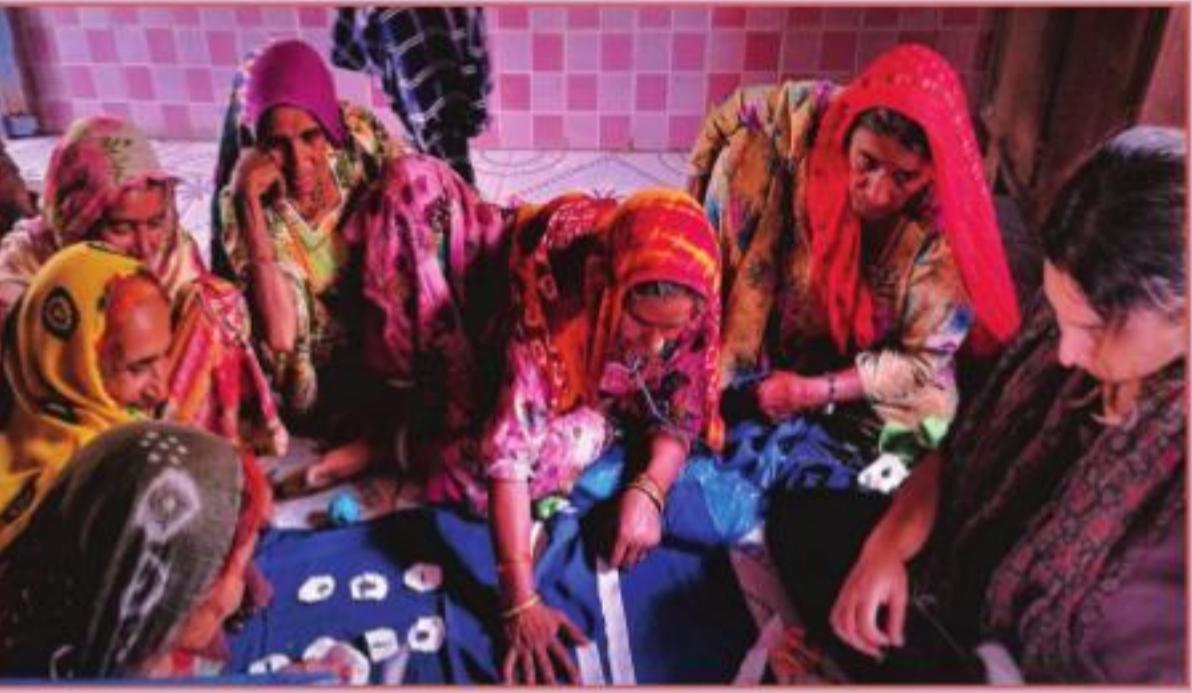
of the workshop which will act as their prized possessions.

Capacity Building Exercises

There are several skill development programs incorporated by GSHHDC to sustain the knowledge growth of the artisans enabling them to explore the possibilities in newer and diverse products. For the same, an action plan has been strategized to provide field training by organizing a number of workshops at the production centers.



Manthan



artisans. All the artisans were given individual attention during the group discussion so that the details of their expectations, problems and ground reality can be captured and necessary changes can be made to have efficient working methods and ease of the problem-solving process.

Frequent Field Visits

Garvi Gurjari employees from various departments including the Managing Director make frequent field visits where the artisans work and reside, to have a close interaction with them and to understand their requirements and problems. These visits give important and detailed insights into what is actually happening. This ensures necessary changes that can be made, makes the procurement process simpler and allows the team to understand the technical advancement, design development and other requirements needed.

Development of a New Range for Corporate Gifting

A new initiative is being taken in terms of product diversification for B2B products range that can be used for Corporate Gifting purpose. This has led to receiving ample orders during Diwali and otherwise, that is aiding in giving the artisans more work. It also helping them develop new articles catering to the taste of modern clients.

Covid-19 Support

The Pandemic has proven to be an afflictive time for people in all the economic strata of society. The cottage industry has suffered greatly due to cancellation and deferment of orders from their buyers across the country. The investment was stuck in the making of these products that led to the accumulation of non-

moving stock and a blocked investment used in making these products. Hence, Garvi Gurjari took a proactive decision to increase its procurement to the maximum it can, which was thrice of what was previously procured that was more than 10 crores for the year 2020. This helped the artisans sell their products favoring the recovery of the cost of production and gain income during the carking time.

E-Marketing in relation to Covid-19

There have been many changes in the consumers' behaviour post-pandemic. One of the major impacts has been a boost in the usage of technology and online platforms for marketing and sales. E-marketing has now become a significantly integral part of our lives and we at Garvi Gurjari have taken several steps to promote E-retailing. There will be a number of changes that will be made on our e-platforms which will act as a stepping stone towards effective social media and E-marketing success.

New Branding Strategies

Garvi Gurjari is commencing new branding strategies to improve the overall aesthetic of the brand in terms of marketing, visual merchandising, customized packaging for specific products along with creating exclusive corners in the emporiums and several other areas to bring about a positive change. This is captivating for the existing and prospective clients. Garvi Gurjari has also introduced Craft Tags to give insights about the crafts to the valuable consumers which will help them see the world of art and craft in relation to fashion and lifestyle differently.

Concern for the Environment

The products of Garvi Gurjari are all made out of natural fibers that are easily decomposable and are environment friendly. Moreover, the waste yardages have been up-cycled to make cloth bags that are used as packaging bags replacing the plastic bags that cause immense harm to the environment. Garvi Gurjari encourages naturally dyed products and all the other products are made using azo-free dyes. Garvi Gurjari is proactively determining methods to improve the health of the environment by adopting eco-friendly measures.

Garvi Gurjari is continuously trying to improve its services and its relationship with the artisans and consumers for mutual benefits and continuous growth of the society. Garvi Gurjari under GSHHDC (Gujarat State Handloom and Handicrafts Corporation Limited) is promoting the idea of our Honourable

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi which is "Vocal for Local" enabling various strategies that work in that direction.

Mahesh Singh, IFS Managing Director,
Garvi Gurjari,
Mousmi Sejpal, Designer, Garvi Gurjari



Corporate Gifting 2021



Agate



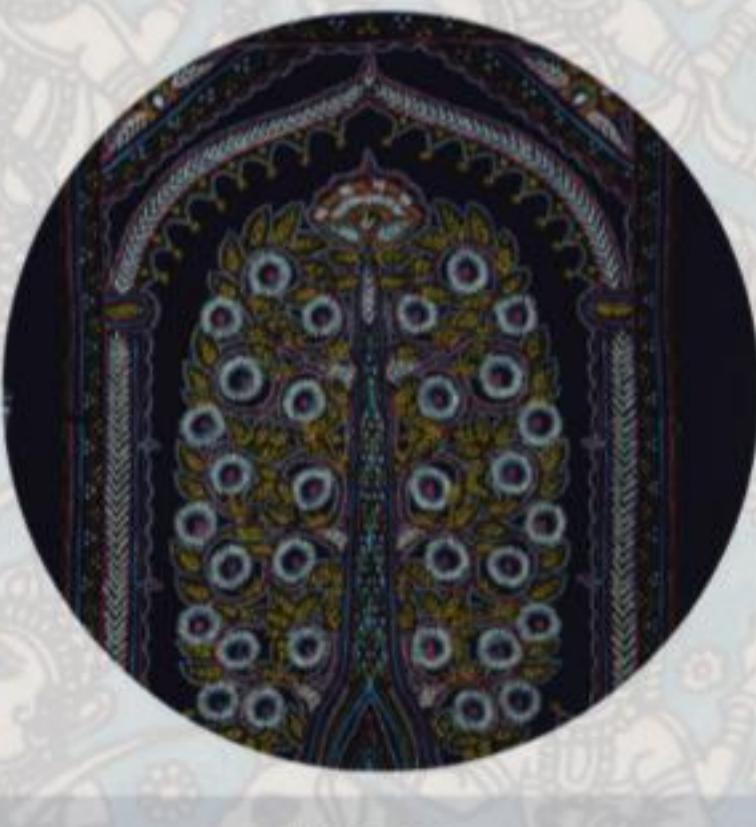
Sadeli



Soof Embroidery



Patola



Rogan

HANDLOOM AND HANDICRAFT OF GUJARAT

CELEBRATING CORPORATE CULTURE

visit : www.garvigurjari.in

OUR EMPORIUMS: New Delhi | Mumbai | Bangalore | Hyderabad | Kolkata | Chennai | Lucknow | Ahmedabad | Rajkot | Bharuch | Anand | Gandhinagar | Bhuj | Baroda | Surendranagar