

**OPINION, P2**

The tragedy of the missing middle

ACROSS THE AISLE, P CHIDAMBARAM



NEW DELHI  
SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021, 14 Pages, ₹10 (Patna ₹10, Raipur ₹10)

**MIND & GAMES****DRAG KINGS ARE READY TO RULE**

Blurring of gender boundaries has allowed for more freedom in pageants, with performers who explore the tropes of manhood getting a closer look

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# FE SUNDAY

FINANCIAL EXPRESS ON SUNDAY

READ TO LEAD

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There are signs of growth in luxury retail, with people eager to invest in items like art, cars, wine, etc **Page 6**

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Once a no-holds-barred medium, will OTTs continue with their bold streak to rule the hearts of audiences? **Page 5**

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In a world grappling with the pandemic where physical ad shoots have been difficult, animation in advertising, using 2D, 3D or mixed media, has taken centrestage

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**Green, saffron & shades of them**

The various hues of politics in Bihar

**ODD & EVEN**

ROHIT PHORE

**CONTENT CONTROL**

## More rules for regulation of OTTs by govt unlikely

Centre may stop at guidelines notified under IT Act on Feb 25

**FE BUREAU**  
New Delhi, March 13

**THE GOVERNMENT IS** unlikely to make any fresh legislation regarding regulating offensive content like pornography on over-the-top (OTT) platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, etc, as it feels that the existing laws have clauses to deal with such cases. Sources said though a final decision has not been taken, it is likely that the Centre may inform the Supreme Court about the relevant provisions and await further directions.

Sources told *FE* that the Information Technology Act – the new guidelines notified on February 25 were part of this Act only – already has Section 67, 67A and 67B which deal with issues relating to pornography and obscenities and lays down punishments. For instance, Section 67 deals with transmission or publication of obscene material; Section 67A prohibits transmitting or publishing sexually explicit acts in electronic form; and Section



67B bars child pornography and child grooming or exploitation. Punishment in these cases range from three-five years and additionally fines can be imposed.

Further, the guidelines notified on February 25 with regard to nudity and sex lays down that "no content that is prohibited by law at the time being in force can be published or transmitted".

Government sources feel that if the same is brought

visions to regulate content on OTT platforms, and also submit a copy of the draft legislation for its consideration.

The apex court's remarks and direction had come while granting protection from arrest to Amazon Prime Video's India head Aparna Purohit in the ongoing probe against the web series *Tandav*.

As part of that hearing, the court had also expressed displeasure with many over-the-top platforms streaming objectionable content, including pornography, and had stressed upon a need for pre-screening of content on OTT platforms due to presence of pornographic material. The new laws, which were notified on February 25, covering OTTs apart from other social media platforms, which the Centre described as light touch regulation, mandates OTTs self-classify content into five age-based categories as is done by films and TV currently.

The categories are – U (Universal), U/A 7+ (years), U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and A (Adult). If consumers find that there's been violation of any of the guidelines or code of ethics laid down for OTTs, then they can seek redressal through a three-level grievance redressal mechanism with different levels of self-regulation.

**Continued on Page 11**

**COVID-19**

## Over 6 vaccines in offing in India: Harsh Vardhan

■ Says 1.84 crore doses have been administered to people so far

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
Bhopal, March 13



Union health minister Harsh Vardhan

**India evaluating vax reactions**

**AMID CONCERN OVER** dangerous side-effects of the Oxford's Covid-19 vaccine, India is evaluating all serious adverse events post-vaccination to determine the causality aspects of Covishield and Covaxin, an expert associated with the process said Saturday. India has reported 234 adverse events following immunisation, including 71 deaths, for both the vaccines till Friday, said Dr NK Arora, advisor to the national AEFI committee, adding initial investigations have found no causal relationship vaccine and these events. —PTI

**NATION NEEDS**

## CEA bats for growth over inflation

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
Kolkata, March 13

**CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR** Krishnamurthy Subramanian on Saturday said the country requires growth at this juncture, even with economic tradeoffs, as it aspires to increase its dominance and self-reliance in the global economy.

Subramanian's comment comes ahead of the revision of policy framework and inflation targets by the Monetary Policy Committee headed by the RBI governor by March 31.

It will be the first review for RBI since it was tasked with a mandated inflation target of 4% with a 2% deviation either way in June 2016, when it adopted a flexible inflation targeting model.

"At this juncture we must focus on growth and when it comes to pressures for trade-offs, we must be leaning on growth," Subramanian said at a virtual annual regional meeting of the CII eastern region.



DGCA has directed airlines to treat a passenger as 'unruly' in case the person violates the protocols

**AIR TRAVEL**

## Passengers breaking Covid protocol to be deboarded

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
Mumbai, March 13



this has pressed the brake on sale of entry level price sensitive variants."

Two-wheeler retail sales recorded a decline of 16% in February, according to Fada data.

Fuel consumption, which had almost recovered from the lows of pandemic, is once again witnessing headwinds due to historic price hikes.

This will have a negative impact on two-wheeler sales, the dealers' body said.

**Continued on Page 11**

**SEEKING TO ENSURE** strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols by air travellers, aviation regulator DGCA on Saturday asked airlines to deboard passengers who do not wear their mask 'properly' despite repeated warnings. Also, the watchdog has directed airlines to treat a passenger as 'unruly' in case the person violates the protocols. The latest directives come against the backdrop of rising number of coronavirus cases in certain parts of the country even as domestic air traffic is improving.

In a circular issued on Saturday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has also directed the airport operators to ensure that the passengers wear their mask and maintain social distancing norms at all times during the air travel.

The DGCA said it has noticed that some travellers undertaking air journey do not adhere to Covid-19 protocols, which essentially involve wearing of masks properly -- not below the nose, right from entering the departing

airport to exiting from the arriving airport.

Observing that some passengers after entering the airport do not wear their mask properly and maintain social distance while being in the airport, the regulator said that some passengers have been noticed not wearing their masks properly while on board the aircraft.

"On board the aircraft, in case any passenger does not adhere to wearing a mask properly even after repeated warnings, he/she should be deboarded, if need be, before departure," the circular said.

"In the case of any passenger on board an aircraft refusing to wear a mask or violates the 'Covid-19 protocol for passengers' even after repeated warnings, during the course of the flight, such passengers may be treated as 'unruly' passengers," as per the DGCA.

**Continued on Page 11**

for the past few months. Bengali movies released during Durga Puja and film releases in south India around Pongal supplied content to a starved audience.

Gautam Dutta, CEO, PVR, says the south Indian market led the revival of cinemas. "The release of big movies like *Sooryavanshi*, *Bunty Aur Babli 2*, *Thalaiv*, and *Chehre* in April and films like *Roohi* in March will drive Bollywood towards revival. Mumbai -- the hub for Bollywood movies -- is still at 50% occupancy," he says.

Adarsh points out that not all single screens have

reopened yet. Some multiplexes, too, are yet to be 100% operational. Carnival Cinemas has reopened about 60% of its cinema halls and hopes to be completely operational around mid-March.

Filmgoers are going to be spoilt for choice in 2021 as the release of several movies may clash on Fridays. This could potentially reduce the box office collection of a single movie as audiences would be forced to choose between movies, say analysts.

**Continued on Page 11**

**SPOILT FOR CHOICE**

■ **Roohi**, a horror comedy starring Janhvi Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao, was released on March 11 in theatres.

■ At least four more Bollywood releases are expected in March, including *Mumbai Saga*, *Saina* and *Haathi Mere Saathi*.

■ **Master**, starring Tamil actor Vijay, which released on January 13, was among the first movies to be screened in theatres in 2021.



■ **Industry** watchers say it is regional language movies that have kept theatre-owners afloat for the past few months

tributed to ₹1.89 crore of the box office collections on day one. About ₹1.17 crore came from ticket sales in tier-2 cities.

*Master*, starring Tamil actor

Vijay, which released on January 13, was among the first movies to be screened in theatres in 2021. The movie reportedly collected ₹1 crore at

the box office on the first day of its release. "Master not only broke the shackles, but also encouraged other studios to plan their releases," says Rajen-

der Singh Jyala, chief programming officer, INOX Leisure.

Industry watchers say it is regional language movies that have kept theatre-owners afloat

New Delhi

## The box office is back in business and Bollywood has plenty to offer

With easing of restrictions, film industry ready for theatres with a string of new releases

**VENKATA SUSMITA BISWAS**

Mumbai, March 13

With vaccination underway and cinema halls opening to full capacity, Bollywood film-

[financialexpress.epaper.in](http://financialexpress.epaper.in)

# Opinion

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

**IN A COUNTRY** of 138 crore people, a per capita income of ₹ 98,000 and extreme inequality, it is difficult to estimate the size of the middle class. The first hurdle is definitional. What is the income slab which may be taken to count the middle class? Just 1% of the population holds 73% of the wealth. Given that the bottom 20% of any developing country must be assumed to be poor, that leaves 7% which may be called the middle class. Even that is a humongous number — nearly 10 crore, which is more than the population of all but 14 countries!

The second hurdle is the quality of life that can be described as a middle-class life. What kind of a life can a per capita income of ₹98,000 buy? At ₹8,000 per month per person, it is barely sufficient to meet the requirements of shelter, food, clothing, education, health, leisure, entertainment and some savings. That is what everyone should have. Hence, to be counted in the middle class, one must have an annual income of at least twice or thrice that amount. I suspect that number will be not more than the number who pay income tax. That number was 3.29 crore in 2018-19 — barely 2.4% of the population.

**Neither seen nor heard**

Suppose we make a rough estimate of the size of the middle class as between 3 crore and 10 crore. Let's pick the number as 6 crore. Among them are businesspersons, farmers, judges, lawyers, doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, actors, writers and other professionals.

The subject of this essay is, what is this 'middle class' of an estimated size of 6 crore doing?

Through the 1930s and 1940s, and up to the 1980s, there were thousands who would cheerfully identify themselves as belonging to the middle class. They were active in public life, including politics. They were candidates in elections to Parliament, the state legislatures and local bodies. One found them in executive posts in municipalities, cooperative societies, voluntary associations, sports bodies and the like. They were found among speakers, writers, poets, actors and artistes. They debated issues that were relevant and topical. They wrote letters to editors and, sometimes, op-eds and middles.

**No more a resource**

The middle class served as a rich intellectual resource during the freedom struggle. Hundreds belonging to that class were counted as friends and advisers by political leaders. They brushed shoulders with those in power. Their views shaped public discourse. In Bengal, they were called the *bhadralok*. In Tamil Nadu, they read *The Hindu* and *Dinamani*, thronged music concerts and cinema halls, and led religious festivals like *Theppam* (the float) and *Ther* (the *rath* or chariot). In Maharashtra, they were patrons of Marathi literature and theatre. In Kerala and Karnataka they were active in churches and *mutts*. The middle class was really in the middle of things.

Politics was enriched and civilized by the participation of the middle class, not always as candidates, but as opinion makers and opinion leaders. Out of this middle class emerged leaders like

## ACROSS THE AISLE

P Chidambaram



# The tragedy of the missing middle



Farmers shout slogans and wave flags during the ongoing farmers' protest in Haryana

## INSIDE TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR

### Club class

It was surely adding insult to injury. Last month, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs handed over the administration of the 108-year-old Gymkhana Club to MM Juneja, a government official, after first invalidating the duly elected managing committee. Juneja, who created ripples in the posh club by arriving with a posse of policemen, was soon replaced by VK Yadav from the Railways. Members of the club have challenged move in the Supreme Court. However, since one of the first acts of the new administrator was to block access to funds, the members cannot avail of the club resources for any purpose, including paying for a lawyer. The administrator, on the other hand, has issued a handsome demand draft from the club account to hire leading lawyer Harish Salve. Ironically, Salve is a member of the club.

### Report without GoM

The purported report of the Group of Ministers on Government Communication which was recently scooped by a magazine appears odd for several reasons. The report gives detailed discussions by ministers as well as statements from journalists and businessmen as to how the Modi government can better manage its image in the media. Since none of the ministers named, including Ravi Shankar Prasad, Smriti Irani, S Jaishankar and Kiren Rijiju, have denied the reproduced PDF of the report, it is widely assumed to be genuine. But amateur sleuths point out some anomalies. There is no gazetted notification of any such group of ministers. The document published is not signed. Normally when a document is leaked it is the photocopy so that the source cannot be traced. There is a logo on the letterhead. Participation in GoMs is conventionally restricted to bureaucrats or those formally invited to meetings, not stray persons who were given no indication of the purpose for which they were invited. This has led to suspicions that the report may have been a trial balloon floated by the government either to serve as a warning or test the waters.

### Gag order?

The amended rules for Overseas Citizens of India cardholders which require them to get permission before engaging in journalistic activity could silence some influential editors and columnists, often critical of the government. OCI journalists based in India include Mark Tully, formerly of the BBC, and Siddharth Varadarajan, editor of *The Wire*. OCI journalists not based in India but who write on their country of birth include Fareed Zakaria of CNN, Bobby Ghosh from Bloomberg

and Somini Sengupta of *The New York Times*. Other expert commentators on India living abroad are Harsh Pant, Kaushik Basu, Amitav Ghosh and Pankaj Mishra.

### Better late

Last March eminent jurist Soli Sorabjee was eagerly looking forward to his 90th birthday and his family had organised a grand bash. But as the birthday drew closer, the coronavirus spread to India as well. A day before the event, the celebratory dinner was cancelled. A belated birthday celebration in December was also called off. Finally, Sorabjee's 91st birthday was celebrated on March 9 last week when a biography on him was released. While most speakers praised Sorabjee's legal acumen, Justice Rohinton Nariman mentioned another aspect of Sorabjee's multifaceted personality: he is a fanatical jazz buff.

### No stakes

VK Sasikala's announcement to quit politics immediately after her release from prison came as a rude shock to her nephew TTV Dhinakaran. He was depending on Jayalalithaa's former aide to back his AMMK in the Assembly polls, to counter the ruling AIADMK's claim to be the true inheritor of Jayalalithaa's mantle. Most assumed that Sasikala at 66, with nearly two dozen pending criminal cases against her, had lost her appetite for a fight, and wanted a peaceful retirement, especially when the BJP had put its weight behind Chief Minister E Palanisamy. But, a feud in the family also played a part. Sasikala's brother Dhivakaran is opposed to Dhinakaran and helped persuade his sister that since Dhinakaran projected himself as CM, Sasikala had no stake in this battle.

### Reaching out?

It has become increasingly difficult for the media to get appointments with senior members of the government. The Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) was therefore pleasantly surprised when last week two important politicians volunteered to interact with journalists on Women's Day. Speaker Om Birla invited IWPC members for lunch, at which ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Smriti Irani and over two dozen women MPs were present. A journalist enquired about Parliament's refusal to renew the annual Lok Sabha press pass for those in the Long and Distinguished category. Birla tried to reassure her remarking, "Maybe later." Javadekar also sought to break the ice when he came to the club for a frank off-the-record session.

# The fitness debate

**Fitness in cricket has a tricky edge, which doesn't adhere to the template of any other outdoor sport**

## RINGSIDE VIEW



Shamik Chakrabarty

**LONG AGO, WHEN** Dr Darshan Kumar Tandon was assisting the Indian cricket team as its first fitness expert, he took exception to a senior player not completing his running drills. Dr Tandon took his complaint to team manager Raj Singh Dungarpur, who handled the issue with a snappy wisecrack. "Don't worry about him. He will score centuries. Better to focus on the lesser mortals."

Raj bhai was a goldmine of cricket stories, apart from his cricketing acumen and administrative skills, and his passing in 2009 was a big loss for those who knew him at close quarters. Dr Tandon, who died in 2015, was an exceptional conditioning expert, one of the early birds in that field in India, whose outlook towards fitness oozed modernity.

Fitness in cricket has a tricky edge, which doesn't adhere to the template of any other outdoor sport. The Indian cricket team in the 1980s for example, didn't have

too many natural athletes — Kapil Dev and Mohammad Azharuddin were exceptions, while Maninder Singh deserved an honourable mention. But the batsmen could bat for hours and they hardly cooled their heels under the pretext of batting long, when the team fielded. The bowlers bowled long spells on unresponsive pitches in India — left-arm spinner Raghu Ram Bharat bowled 94 overs in an innings for Karnataka at the 1981-82 Ranji Trophy final against Delhi, which went into the sixth day — and they rarely broke down. They were supremely cricket fit.

Cricket has always been a skill-based sport. Has it changed enough to make batting and/or bowling skills secondary, with fitness taking precedence? During an interview with *The Indian Express* four years ago, Sri Lanka's World Cup-winning former captain Arjuna Ranatunga had addressed the issue. "I think if you don't have skill, then it's better for someone to get some models and allow them to play cricket. You need skill and talent as far as cricket is concerned. Fitness is very important, but I don't agree with some of these comments made by some of the people who haven't played cricket. Overall, it's all about cricket talent and the most important thing is cricket fitness. I think what we



Virat Kohli and KL Rahul at the first Twenty20 International in Ahmedabad

REUTERS

lack at the moment; some of our players are very fit, but they don't have cricket fitness," Ranatunga had said.

He also elaborated on cricket fitness. "When you are a batsman, you need to bat for a longer period. When you are a bowler, you need to bowl certain number of overs. Some of the fast bowlers who played under me, they used to bowl at least one-and-a-

half hours for a day and at least three-four days for a week, and they never had any injuries at that time. So that's where people should realise what is cricket fitness. There were players even under my captaincy who could run 25 rounds at the SSC. But they couldn't bowl more than four-five overs."

Cut to March 11, 2021...At a press con-

ference ahead of India's T20I opener against England, Virat Kohli told reporters in no uncertain terms that fitness is non-negotiable. "Individuals have to understand and appreciate the kind of system that's been created for the Indian cricket team. We should operate at very high levels of fitness and skills. There's a reason why this is the top of the ladder when it comes to playing cricket in our country. And yeah, you would obviously expect players to abide by what's required to be a part of Team India. There should not be any space for any compromise in that regard."

This came after two Indian spinners, Varun Chakaravarthy and Rahul Tewatia, failed to clear the fitness tests. The Indian team has two fitness test norms — a player needs to either clear the yo-yo test where the level has been upgraded to 17.1 from 16.1 or run two kilometres in eight minutes and 15 seconds for fast bowlers and 8:30 for the rest.

Varun is a mystery spinner who had an excellent last season for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL). He could have been quite a handful for England, already spin-spooked after the Test series in the T20Is. But he is out of the Indian squad now after failing his fitness test.

Baseyo-yo score for most international teams is higher than the prescribed mark for the Indian players even after the upgrade. Australia had set the minimum level at 19 before discounting with the yo-

yo test. England and New Zealand, too, have 19. Both South Africa and Pakistan have set it at 17.4. As far as the Indian team is concerned, when a basic fitness requirement has been put in place, players are expected to adhere to it. In terms of fitness, the captain himself leads by example.

T20s have made the game a lot more fast-paced. Players these days don't have the luxury of an off-season. Playing all three formats round the year is serious workload and top level fitness is required to carry on with the pace and demands of modern-day cricket. As the Indian team head coach Ravi Shastri said at a press conference last week, during his time, India used to have 8-12 Test matches in a year. Now it is entirely different. Between December 2020 and March 2021, India have played eight Tests inside 75 days. From that perspective, fitness has become supremely vital and a comparison with the past would be a little off the mark.

All said and done, there should be some flexibility. Fitness is non-negotiable all right, but it shouldn't be the foremost criterion for the Indian team eligibility. A player's fitness can be upgraded even after integrating him into the squad. Over 144 years one aspect of cricket hasn't changed; it still remains a skill-based sport.

**PS:** *The Indian team that won the World Championship of Cricket in 1983 remains the country's finest fielding unit yet.*

## DRAFT E-COMM POLICY

# Data misuse safeguards to be put in place

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, March 13

**THE GOVERNMENT WOULD** lay down principles for use of data for the development of any industry where such norms do not already exist, and put in place adequate safeguards to prevent misuse and access of data by unauthorised persons, according to a draft national e-commerce policy.

The government is in the process of developing regu-

lations for personal and non-personal data, the policy, which is under discussion, said.

The draft has stated that sharing of data for industrial development would be encouraged and regulations for data will be provided for the sharing mechanism.

"The government shall lay down principles for usage of data for the purpose of development of any industry, e-commerce, consumer protec-



not already exist and put in place adequate safeguards to prevent misuse and access of data by unauthorised persons," it said.

According to the draft, the government acknowledges the importance of data as an asset and needs to use data emanating from India for "Indian entities first."

An inter-ministerial meeting, under the chairmanship of a top official of the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT), was held on Saturday to deliberate upon this draft.

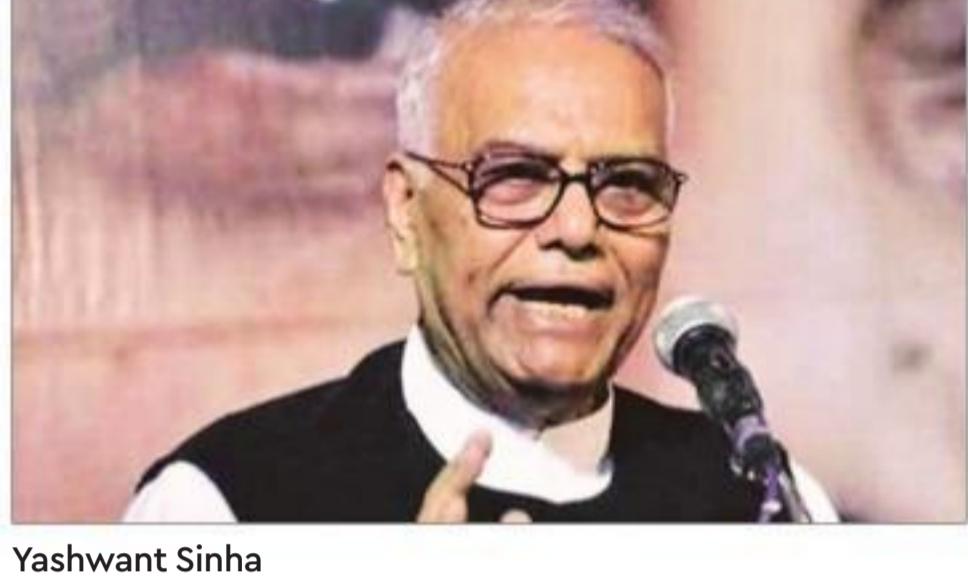
For free and informed choice, it said that e-commerce operators would have to ensure that algorithms used by them are not biased and that no discrimination due to digitally induced biases is prevalent.

"Consumers have a right to be made aware of all relevant details about the goods and services offered for sale, includ-

ing country of origin, value addition in India, and any other such information which may be necessary for making an informed decision at the pre-purchase stage," it said.

To promote fair competition, the draft said that e-commerce operators must ensure equal treatment of all sellers/vendors registered on their platforms and not adopt algorithms which result in prioritising select vendors/sellers.

## Former Union minister Yashwant Sinha joins TMC



Yashwant Sinha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Kolkata, March 13

**FORMER UNION MINISTER** Yashwant Sinha, a bitter critic of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi regime, on Saturday joined Trinamool Congress days ahead of the high-octane West Bengal assembly polls. Sinha, who served in the Cabinet of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had quit the saffron party in 2018 after having serious differences with the party leadership.

His son Jayant Sinha is the BJP MP from Hazaribagh in Jharkhand. "The country is passing through a strange situation. Our values and principles are in danger. The strength of democ-

racy lies in the robustness of its institutions, and all the institutions have been weakened systematically," Sinha said.

The octogenarian leader pledged support to West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee in her fight against the BJP. "We welcome Yashwant Sinha to our party. His participation would strengthen our fight against the BJP in the elections," TMC Lok Sabha party leader Sudip Bandopadhyay said. Sinha had served as Union finance minister twice—once in the Chandra Sekhar cabinet in 1990 and then again in the Vajpayee ministry. He also held the portfolio of external affairs ministry in the Vajpayee cabinet.

The report unveiled on Saturday details the findings from the study that Boston

## Draft notification: Renewal of registration for 15-yr-old govt vehicles to stop from Apr 1, 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, March 13

**THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS** will not be able to renew registration of their vehicles older than 15 years from April 1, 2022, if a proposal in this regard issued by the ministry of road transport and highways is finalised.

It has sought stakeholder comments to amend related rules in this regard issuing a notification. Once approved, this will be applicable to all government vehicles—central or state governments, Union Territories, PSUs, municipal and autonomous bodies, as per the

notification. "From April 1, 2022, government departments will not be able to renew the certificate of registration of their vehicles, after 15 years. This will apply to all government—central, state, UT, PSUs, municipal bodies &

autonomous bodies," the ministry of road, transport and highways said in a tweet.

The development comes close on the heels of the voluntary vehicle scrapping policy announced in the Union Budget on February 1 for 2021-22

which provides for fitness test after 20 years for personal vehicles while commercial vehicles would require it after the completion of 15 years.

Notification of the draft rules has been issued to this effect on March 12 by the ministry seeking comments, objections and suggestions from the stakeholders within thirty days. The certificate of registration shall not be renewed after the laps of 15 years for government vehicles, it said. Presenting the Budget for 2021-22 in Parliament, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 had announced vehicle scrapping policy.

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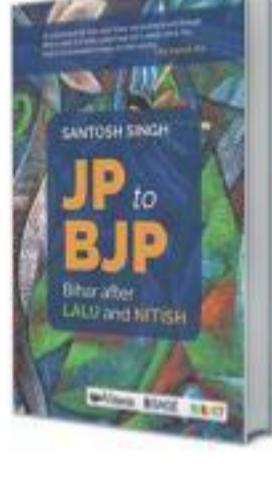
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# Words Worth

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

DYED IN GREEN,  
NITISH KUMAR HAS  
HAD DALLIANCES WITH  
SAFFRON. HE IS HAVING  
ONE IN HIS FOURTH TERM.  
BUT HE IS NOW A PALE  
SHADOW OF THE  
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SUITOR THAT HE  
WAS



**JP to BJP**  
Santosh Singh  
Sage  
₹595, Pp 352



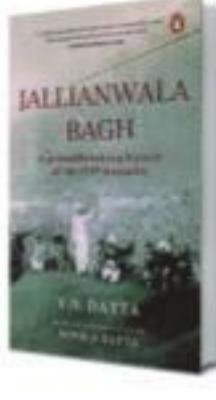
A file photo of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar (left) with former CM Lalu Prasad Yadav

ON THE  
SHELF



**KARUNANIDHI**  
S  
Panneerselvan  
Penguin  
Random House  
Pp480, ₹699

Writer-politician Muthuvel Karunanidhi is amongst the most important political leaders India has ever seen. He was the chief minister of Tamil Nadu for five terms and the leader of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) for over five decades. Panneerselvan tells the story of the man who became a metaphor for modern Tamil Nadu, where language, art, films, etc, coalesced to lend a unique vibrancy to politics.



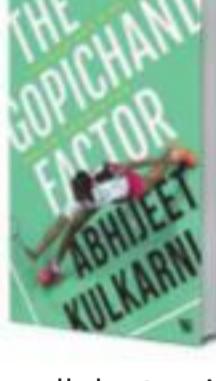
**JALLIANWALA  
BAGH**  
VN Datta  
Penguin  
Random House  
Pp248, ₹399

Based on a meticulous exploration of the primary sources and oral testimonies of the survivors and victims of 1919, Datta crafts a unique and first-hand narrative of the most violent event and its legacy in the history of modern India and provides a complex picture of the city of Amritsar, where he grew up. *Jallianwala Bagh* is a rigorous account of the causes, nature and impact of the carnage that shook the nation.



**MR HUMBLE  
AND DR  
BUTCHER**  
Brandy  
Schillace  
Simon &  
Schuster

In the days of the Cold War, a spirit of desperate scientific rivalry birthed a different kind of space race: not the race to outer space that we all know, but a race to master the inner space of the human body. While surgeons on either side of the Iron Curtain competed to become the first to transplant organs like the kidney and heart, a young American neurosurgeon had an even more ambitious thought: Why not transplant the brain?



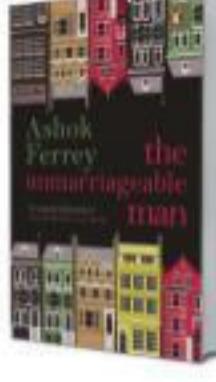
**THE  
GOPICHAND  
FACTOR**  
Abhijeet  
Kulkarni  
Westland  
₹399

Pullela Gopichand's band of racquet-wielding champions, among them Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, etc, have excelled on the world stage. Since 2011, India has bagged a medal in every edition of the World Championship, not to mention Saina's Olympic bronze in 2012 and Sindhu's silver in 2016. *The Gopichand Factor* is the definitive history of the rise and rise of Indian badminton.



**A RED NECKED  
GREEN BIRD**  
Ambai;  
translated by  
GJV Prasad  
Simon &  
Schuster

Myths and legends jostle with the contemporary in these stories where social issues of our times resonate with the inevitability of the past. The lyricism of Carnatic ragas permeate the pages of this quiet and powerful book in which love is rendered in all its immeasurable avatars—parental, carnal, platonic, romantic, divine. Ambai has been a significant voice in Indian literature.



**THE  
UNMARRIAGE-  
ABLE MAN**  
Ashok Ferry  
Penguin  
Random House

Sanjay de Silva lives in Colombo, under the thumb of a controlling Sri Lankan father, having lost his English mother at an early age. When his father is diagnosed with cancer, he feels the ground shifting under his feet, the balance of power realigning. Though it is something he has dreamed of all his life, he is uneasy when it happens. At its heart, the book is about grief and how each of us copes in our inimitable way.

*Suvanshkruti Singh is a freelancer*

AMITABH RANJAN

**S**PEAKING RECENTLY ON the birth anniversary of Kapoori Thakur, the socialist stalwart and Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's beacon, the latter offered the political circles a lot to chew on. Kumar prefers speaking in Hindi. Reported by the media, the English translation of what he said on the occasion runs something like this: "Kapoori Thakur worked for the welfare of all sections of society. But he was removed within two years. We are too working for the welfare of all sections of society. Sometimes, some people get annoyed at the prospect of working in the interests of all sections of society."

For those whose staple is politics, in Bihar and beyond, nothing is lost in translation. He was alluding to Thakur's second term as CM from June 24, 1977, to April 21, 1979. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the pre-1980 version of the BJP which was part of the Janata Party government, revolted against the decision of 33% job reservation for backward castes and propped up Ram Sundar Das, another socialist leader, as the CM.

Dyed in green, Kumar has had dalliances with saffron. He is having one in his fourth term. But he is now a pale shadow of the once self-assured and even flamboyant suitor that he was. The reason lies in

## Green, saffron & shades of them

Various hues of politics in Bihar come together in a book with impressive span and detail

the numbers in the Assembly, an outcome of the carefully calculated and scripted 2020 poll arithmetic by the BJP. No one knows the implication better than Kumar. He understands that not rejection, but dejection could be his fait accompli soon.

That, in a nutshell, is what *JP to BJP*, the latest book by Santosh Singh, a senior journalist and the Patna correspondent with *The Indian Express*, leads up to.

While doing so, Singh takes you through the veritable kaleidoscope of the state's politics, from the rise of socialism, its fall and its revival till it finds its feet, first under Thakur and then under Lalu Prasad Yadav and Kumar. You come across unsung heroes of socialism without whom the politics of Bihar would certainly not have been what it is today. The book also captures how the Congress withered in Bihar, failing to read the state's social pulse. And how our very own GOP lost its moorings, caught as it was in a cesspool of casteism, corruption and lust for chair.

The present-day socialism in Bihar is substantially the legacy of Thakur, the Jan Nayak. Despite many more years at the helm than him, Yadav could not rise to the level of the visionary predecessor and remained all theatrics. It was Kumar who

worked on the template provided by Thakur not only to connect with the masses, but also to hammer out quite a few schemes to empower the marginalised and weak, starting with job reservation for backward castes, divided into OBCs and EBCs.

Reservation for women and EBCs in panchayats will go down in history as one of the greatest social empowerment tools under Kumar. Added to this, his bicycle scheme for girl students and prohibition helped him build a caste- and community-neutral women vote bank. He, however, always needed an ally to remain in power. Kumar went with the NDA in November 2005 when he became the CM in a coalition government. In a way, he added to the script, which had its beginning in the JP movement when BJS was opted in, ending its

status of a pariah on the soil of socialism. Since then, it has been love, hate, love between Kumar and the NDA.

Veteran journalist Nalin Verma says the RSS-BJS (and its post-1980 avatar BJP) has worked with socialist forces to increase its political space, but has always been ambivalent on the "preferential treatment" to the weaker sections. Kumar is not the one to be ignorant about this. The author says the BJP has a game plan of sidelining Kumar and that it will unfold sometime in 2022. The moot point is: will Bihar's OBCs and EBCs easily allow the gains from the socialist dispensations fritter away? His contention will be tested.

The book's span is commendable, the compilation of facts and anecdotes impressive. The narration could have been tighter. One area where the book leaves much to be desired is basic editing and proofreading. The onus lies on the publisher.

The latest ministry expansion and portfolio allocation would have the impression that Kumar is still in control. Will the author's 2022 proposition hold good? What after Kumar? As Raj Kamal Jha, chief editor of *The Indian Express* and a celebrated author, says in his foreword, Singh provides a compass to navigate the future. That's what makes this book readable.

*A former journalist, Amitabh Ranjan teaches at Patna Women's College*

## Four columns of childhood

An ordinary story towers with elegance, warmth and intelligence

SUWANSHKRITI SINGH

**U**NTIL I BEGAN reading it, I didn't know what had drawn me to *Name, Place, Animal, Thing*. To me, the title's capaciousness, its playfulness beckoned Borgesian undertones—perhaps, an emporium of defamiliarised knowledge. But the pleasures of this debut outing, I was to learn, are far simpler in their elegance, and quite categorically universal.

Darhiba Lyndem's book is a compendium of vignettes of girlhood, narrated by D from memory, and one is tempted to classify it as an auto-fictional bildungsroman. Lyndem, however, insists on the novel's fictionality, even as she admits that the inspiration for the stories comes from her own experiences. The book is all the better for it.

*Name, Place, Animal, Thing* is framed almost as an ethnographic record of the characters that shaped D—from her landlady's help and the Chinese restaurant her family could afford only sparingly to the eccentric Hindi teacher and the stuffed toy out of which D makes a totem. The novel's form and frame, then, allow Lyndem to touch on issues as wide-ranging and ubiquitous as class, racism, xenophobia, sexism, bullying, loss and sexual harassment. One of the aesthetic achievements of the book is that the handling of these issues never feels heavy-handed. In one espe-

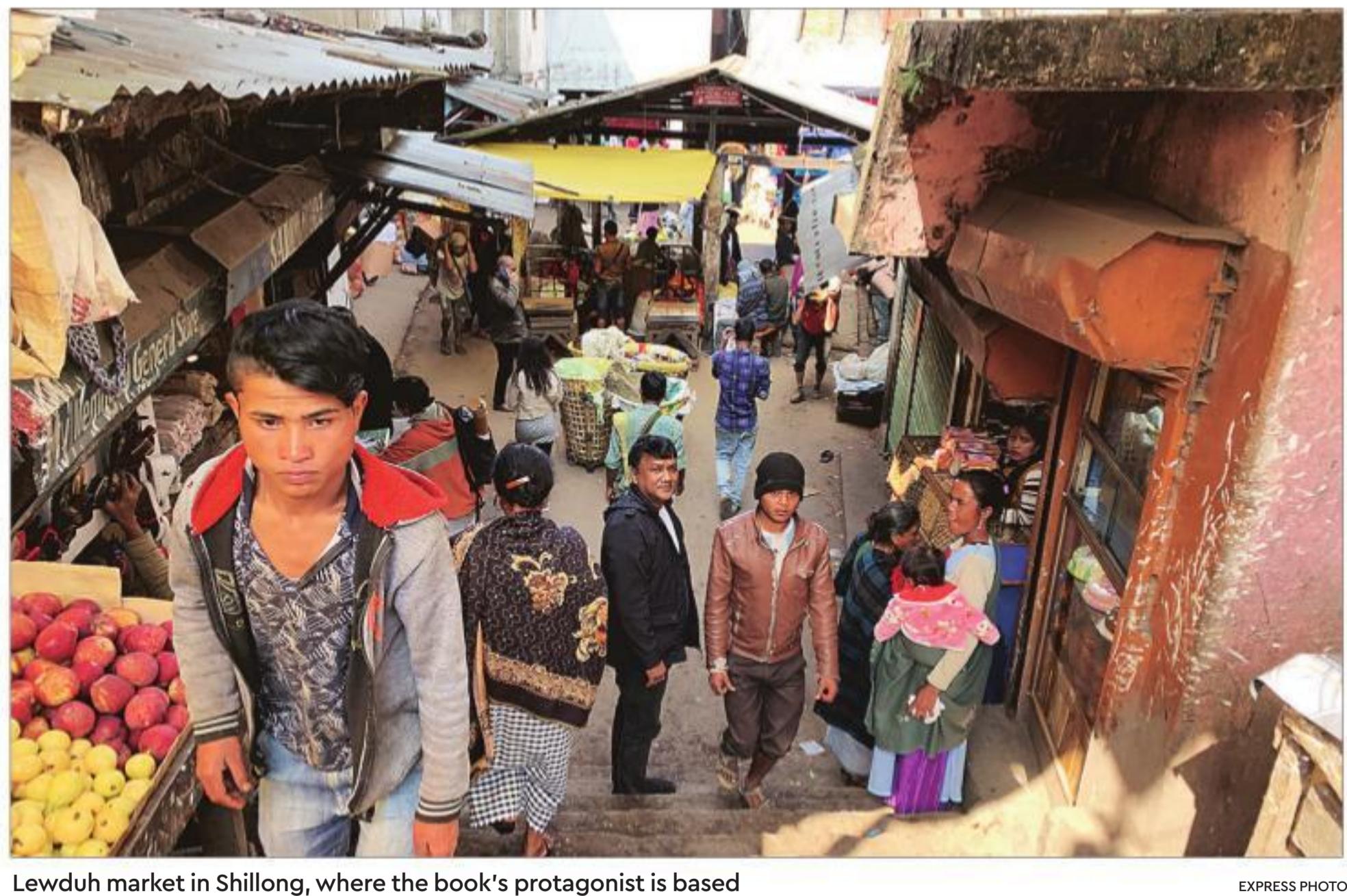


**Name, Place,  
Animal, Thing**  
Darhiba Lyndem  
Zubaan Books  
Pp 208, ₹300 (e-book)

cially well-executed scene—a school senior has a propensity to pinch D's bathroom parts—the harassment itself, and the exploration of the victim's psyche become ancillary to the establishment of Bear as D's lucky charm.

This lightness of touch extends to problems that are less immediately relatable. D's early experience of Shillong's political insurgency, for instance, is primarily mediated through the *bandhs* that allowed her to miss school and cycle on traffic-free roads. The book's final chapter is similarly touching in its unflinching yet tender narration of the friendship of a lifetime.

Lyndem's great achievement is the way in which she has inhabited a child's voice—and gaze. If memory weren't already a deviously slippery element, its purity is rendered all the more inaccessible by the tact of an adult's socialised perspective. It



Lewduh market in Shillong, where the book's protagonist is based

EXPRESS PHOTO

takes no insignificant skill to eschew the tomes of digests that teach one how to respond, to react—and crucially, to think—in favour of foregrounding the immediacy of childhood experience. For the most part, *Name, Place, Animal, Thing* is all verbs, all movement, whether the action happens to, around or within D.

The skilful consistency of Lyndem's narrative voice—D has an eye and a memory for the sizes of doors, and is especially attentive to caterpillars—lends the moments that collect to form D's life. D's world may be collected in Shillong, built of cherry blossoms and pine cones, but geography does not mediate the passions, pastimes, and apprehensions of which it consists, whether it be the ritualistic consumption of *alo muri chaat* post-tuition, exchanging prurient literature in the name of sex-ed or agonising over one's

potential for romance.

In her employment of language, however, Lyndem acquits herself more ambivalently. On the one hand, it is refreshing to see the Khasi words incorporated into the text not being italicised or endlessly translated, avoiding the post-colonial insecurity of explaining the margin to the centre. On the other, there are moments rife precisely with such over-explanations of D's—and Lyndem's—culture as undercut the security of her authoritative position. In terms of craft, trite formulations coexist with vibrant descriptions of houses as colourful graves and mortality as ensnared butterflies. Similarly, her treatment of life in the north-east can sometimes feel wilfully idyllic or romanticised, even as clear-eyed, incisive representations of poverty, natural disasters, and classism offset this nostalgia.

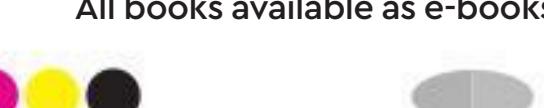
*Name, Place, Animal, Thing* is not an extraordinary novel—and I mean this in the most complimentary of ways. This is an ordinary story, told with elegance, warmth, and intelligence. The game after which the book is titled is not merely an exercise in taxonomy, but one also in reminiscing. And, I realised, that it was the title's invocation of hours spent laughing, playing, and quarrelling over trifles, hours in which my relationship with life and time was much more personal, unmediated by theory, that attracted me to the novel.

My associations with the memory of the game are much the same—in its preoccupation with names and naming, with capturing in four columns the elements of a young girl's life, what *Name, Place, Animal, Thing* portrays is the fleeting eternity that is childhood.

*Suvanshkruti Singh is a freelancer*



New Delhi



# Spotlight

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021



## AWARD WINNER

*Delhi Crime*, a 2019 Netflix series starring Shefali Shah, Rasika Dugal, Adil Hussain, etc, became the first Indian web series to win an Emmy for the Best Drama Series at the 48th International Emmy Awards that were held virtually in 2020.



REYA MEHROTRA

**N**OT TOO LONG ago, over-the-top (OTT) platforms were being touted as the next big thing. Filmmakers and audiences both flocked to OTTs to present and consume content that would rarely be dealt with in mainstream cinema. Be it social taboos, politics, corruption, same-sex relationships or gender equality, the 'no-holds-barred' medium was a hotbed of diverse and experimental content, giving filmmakers complete freedom of creative expression.

The hold of the medium increased exponentially last year when the pandemic struck and the subsequent lockdowns kept cinema hall doors firmly shuttered. Stuck to the confines of their homes and with no other avenues of entertainment, people across the country logged in to OTT services like fish take to water. With even silver screen releases shifting to OTT, there was a huge surge in viewership.

The intensified attention, however, brought with it a lot of viewer scrutiny, leading to eyebrows being raised and content being increasingly questioned and frowned upon. Take, for instance, the *Mirzapur* controversy. The crime thriller web series on Amazon Prime Video was served a Supreme Court notice for portraying the city of Mirzapur in a bad light and FIRs were filed against the makers. Similarly, the web adaptation of author Vikram Seth's novel *A Suitable Boy* (1993), which released on Netflix last year, came under the scanner for showing a Muslim man and Hindu woman kissing in the backdrop of a temple. Sentiments were hurt, apologies were demanded and boycott calls were made.

The controversy had not long been laid to rest when another one erupted. Amazon Prime Video's web series *Tandav* drew viewers' flak and ire soon after its release for ridiculing Hindu deities. Soon after, the makers, as well as the OTT platform issued an apology, promising to delete the controversial scenes.

And now, the latest blow comes in the form of the new government regulations, announced on February 25, which bring OTT platforms—which were so far under the ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY)—under the purview of the I&B ministry. This, in turn, opens content on OTTs to censorship, which many are terming an assault on free thinking and democracy. However, on March 4, a Supreme Court bench, hearing the anticipatory bail plea of Amazon Prime Video's commercial head Aparna Purohit (against whom an FIR had been filed for hurting religious sentiments over the *Tandav* row), raised concerns over the need for screening of shows as they sometimes showed pornographic content.

Perhaps it wouldn't be wrong to say that the OTT medium—once hailed as the harbinger of change—is today becoming a part of a bunch of mediums under intense scrutiny and regulation, which is a direct result of its popularity. All this brings us to the question: what lies ahead for OTT platforms in India? Going ahead, what will be the distinction between content on OTTs and the big screen?

### Everyone's medium

The biggest reason that OTTs became a magnet for creators and actors alike was the creative freedom offered plus the plethora of opportunities for everyone. While Bollywood is often accused of nepotism, OTTs are very inclusive. Earlier, few celebrities would venture to the small screen, shying away from the medium except for reality shows. But OTTs opened the floodgates, presenting them an opportunity to be part of quality content that had a place for everyone. Many careers were launched and relaunched. Take, for instance, Amazon Prime Video's *The Family Man*. The action thriller web series starred acclaimed actor Manoj Bajpayee whose potential, many say, Bollywood couldn't fully utilise.

Calling the show a global success, Bajpayee says, "You can't ignore OTT. I was at Cannes a couple of years back and I saw a young boy, 18-19 years old, on the red carpet. There was such a huge crowd around



OTT will lose its charm if it comes under censorship. At this point, that's the fear looming over every creative person

— ACTOR  
MANOJ BAJPAYEE



Censorship should lie in the minds of the makers... it is upon them to make responsible content

— ACTOR  
RAJESH TAILANG

In the last one year, the OTT medium has gone through major upheaval with controversies and even calls for boycott. Government regulations are being termed an assault on free thinking & democracy. Once a no-holds-barred medium, will it continue with its bold streak to rule the audience's hearts?

Ram Chaudhary in Amazon Prime Video's web series *Paatal Lok*.

Talking about the democratic nature of OTTs, actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas had also said at the Jaipur Literature Festival that she felt happy seeing so many writers, directors, actors and shows across languages getting opportunities on streaming platforms. One of these actors is Adarsh Gourav who starred with Chopra in Netflix's original *The White Tiger*, which she also produced. "He is a treasure, Gourav really walked into Balram's shoes (the character he played) and worked at a tea stall to learn the nuances of the job. That's what I want to champion," Chopra said in a conversation with Shobhaa De. *The White Tiger* was based on Aravind Adiga's novel of the same name, which won the 2008 Man Booker Prize. "A movie with Indian actors and based in India was trending on a global platform like Netflix. This is a huge thing. We didn't have representation in the West, but now that is changing," Chopra had said.

Actor Rajesh Tailang, who has been part of *Mirzapur* and the Emmy Award-winning Netflix show *Delhi Crime*, credits OTTs for giving work to everyone. "Talent is being recognised. Not just of actors, but directors and writers as well... everyone is getting a chance," he says.

As everyone lined up to have a taste of OTT success, so did major production houses. Netflix's 2019 series *Bard of Blood*, featuring new talent Shobita Dhulipala, Jaideep Ahlawat, etc., was produced by Shah Rukh Khan. Actor Anushka Sharma and brother Karan Sharma also produced successful content for Amazon Prime Video (*Paatal Lok*) and Netflix (*Bulbbul*).

"The emergence of OTT has definitely presented more opportunities for talent to come forth," says Manish Kalra, chief business officer, ZEE5 India, an OTT platform by Zee Entertainment Enterprises. "The fact that the canvas is wider has given a lot of deserving talent the opportunity to connect with the audience. OTT does not have the pressure of the box office, which probably gives it the freedom and additional confidence to explore the various facets of storytelling," says Kalra. "However, Indian cinema, especially over the past few years, has provided immense opportunities for budding talent and that can't be credited just to OTT platforms," he adds.

However, now treading cautiously, OTTs like Amazon Prime Video have decided to cancel shows that are likely to lead to controversies. New seasons of *The Family Man* and *Paatal Lok* have been cancelled, while some shows have been postponed indefinitely. Netflix's *Bombay Begums*, starring Pooja Bhatt, is under the scanner, too, with the National Commission For Protection of

LAST YEAR, MANY WONDERED IF OTT'S COULD THREATEN THE MULTIPLEX BUSINESS. BUT TODAY, THINGS LOOK HAZY ON THAT FRONT, AS IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW THE NEW NORMS WILL CHANGE CONTENT ON OTTS

Child Rights asking for it to be stopped. NCPCR alleges that it normalises casual sex and drugs for minors which is "inappropriate portrayal of children."

### Tightening the reins

After the controversy around *Tandav*, director Ali Abbas Zafar released a statement announcing that the controversial scenes would be dropped. The statement read, "We have utmost respect for the sentiments of the people of our country. We did not intend to hurt or offend the sentiments of any individual, caste, community, race, religion or religious beliefs or insult or outrage any institution, political party or person, living or dead. The cast & crew of

*Tandav* have made the decision to implement the changes to the web series to address the concerns raised towards the same. We thank the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the guidance & support in the matter. We once again apologise if the series has unintentionally hurt anybody's sentiments." (sic)

After the I&B ministry's announcement of the new regulations and a week after a top

Amazon Prime Video official was questioned by the UP police about *Tandav* hurting religious sentiments, the platform, too, issued an apology on March 2. "Amazon Prime Video again deeply regrets that viewers considered certain scenes to be objectionable in the recently launched fictional series *Tandav*. This was never our intention, and the scenes that were objected to were removed or edited when they were brought to our attention," said the statement. It further added that it would continue to develop entertaining content with partners while complying with Indian laws and respecting the diversity of culture and beliefs in the country.

While movies releasing in theatres need to have certification from the CBFC under the Cinematograph Act of 1952, content on TV follows the dos and don'ts laid down by the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act of 1995. Before the government announced the new regulations, OTTs had remained untouched by regulations and censorship.

However, the need for self-regulation was felt and, in February, around 17 online streaming providers had announced the adoption of an 'implementation toolkit' that pressed upon self-regulation as one of its core principles under the aegis of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). However, the Centre's announcement of the regulatory guidelines on February 25 caught the OTT sector unawares.

Though most of the new guidelines make for self-regulation norms, others—



OTT platforms and movie theatres will co-exist in the future

— MANISH KALRA,  
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER,  
ZEE5 INDIA, AN OTT  
PLATFORM BY ZEE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
ENTERPRISES



Some regulation was needed as, in some cases, even pornography is being shown on such platforms and a balance has to be maintained

— SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

to the government in September as well, but it was rejected as the I&B ministry felt that a third-party monitoring mechanism was lacking. Now, players are worried with the announcement of an inter-departmental committee with the right to block content, as the third party. However, I&B minister Prakash Javadekar, who met key OTT players, tweeted on March 4 that he had a 'fruitful meeting' and that the representatives welcomed the laws. "The Ministry and industry will partner together to make the OTT experience better for all audience," he wrote. On March 11, after another meeting with OTTs and Digital News Publishers Association, Javadekar reinstated that the new rules had been welcomed by both the parties while they also offered a few suggestions.

Pitching for creative freedom, Bajpayee had said last year in an interview to *Financial Express on Sunday*, "I would only pray that there is no censorship. I am morally opposed to banning and censorship in any form. As a citizen of the country, I want creative people to have the freedom to express their opinions in the manner in which they wish to. At the same time, I would hope that they do so responsibly. OTT will lose its charm if it comes under censorship. At this point, that's the fear looming over every creative person. I want the OTT space to be liberating. I want filmmakers to keep flying and soaring with ideas, creating fresh experiences with each outing."

Actor Rajesh Tailang agrees, saying that censorship should lie in the minds of the makers and it is upon them to make responsible content. Author Prachanda Praveer—who wrote the 2016 book *Abhinava Cinema*, an introduction to world cinema as per the *rasa* theory of Indian classical aesthetics—believes in censorship of 'worthless creations'. "Censorship should be done against idiocy and worthless creations, which is a difficult and monumental task. The important idea is to keep the artwork alive rather than to deal with propaganda, commotion, hatred," he says.

### OTT vs 70mm

When the pandemic struck and OTTs became the 'living room's cinema hall', many wondered if the medium could threaten the multiplex business in the long run. But today, things look hazy on that front, as it remains to be seen how the new norms will change OTT platforms. And with the home affairs and I&B ministries permitting the reopening of cinema halls with 100% capacity, time will tell if the interest of the audience remains with the newly-regulated OTTs.

But evolution is and has always been the name of the game, and this goes for OTTs as well. Director Nitya Mehra, whose 2016 debut *Baar Baar Dekho* did not fare well but OTT debut *Made in Heaven* was a blockbuster, feels that as we evolve there will always be newer things and challenges to overcome. "When TV came, people on radio were worried. OTTs have given theatres a run for their money, but each format finds its own space. There are enough human beings on this planet to consume it all," Mehra said in a news interview.

Producer Tanuj Garg, who is backing Tapsee Pannu's upcoming film *Lootupata*, says the reopening of cinema halls would usher in the era of co-existence of the two mediums. "We will be back to 100% capacity for cinemas soon. Contrary to perception, I don't believe the theatrical medium will ever pass away in #India. Time for OTT and cinemas to co-exist peacefully," he tweeted in January.

Perhaps that's the reason Netflix has announced 41 new Indian titles for 2021, the biggest tranche the platform has announced in one go from India. ZEE5 India's Manish Kalra, too, is optimistic and believes that OTTs will co-exist with the theatres. "Digital platforms have helped keep the entertainment quotient high during the pandemic. We saw platforms acquiring films slated for a theatrical release, but had to release digitally. Our strategy was focused on acquiring meaningful films and not just big-budget ones and this proved successful. We continue to see viewership on these films increasing in spite of most of them launching last year. This is another advantage of OTTs... there is a longer shelf life for content," says Kalra.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

# Fe Lines

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



## The luxury closet

Even as luxury retail looks at a post-Covid strategic plan, there are signs of growth, with people eager to invest in items like handbags, jewellery, art, watches, wine and classic cars

VAISHALI DAR

**L**AST YEAR WAS a very challenging one for almost all sectors, forcing them to constantly evolve to stay relevant. With disrupted lifestyles and shopping behaviour, many luxury brands faltered and then pivoted to address urgent public health needs. Factories that produced scarves and perfumes started manufacturing face masks and hand sanitizers and even made monetary donations to hospitals and other needy organisations.

A 2020 McKinsey & Company report titled 'A perspective for the luxury goods industry during—and after—coronavirus' reviews the 2020 inventory and rethinks 2021 collections. It suggests developing a plan for dealing with unprecedented levels of unsold 2020 inventory—without resorting to steep discounts which jeopardise brand equity—and to stay informed about wholesalers' and e-retailers' plans to clear extra inventory. One way to use the extra inventory could be to reward loyal customers, while also whetting their appetite to shop across categories.

But even as luxury retail looks at a long-term strategic plan in the global marketplace, there are evident signs of growth in exposure and interest among people eager to invest in retail items like bags, jewellery, art, watches, wine and classic cars. According to the recent Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2021, Hermès handbags topped the Knight Frank Luxury Investment Index (KFLI), with prices increasing by 17% over the past 12-month period. Fine wines come in the second place, with a strong growth in 2020, up 13% compared to a year earlier. From the Indian ultra-high-net-worth individuals' (UHNWI) van-

tage, jewellery is the most preferred passion-led investment, followed by art, watches, wine and classic cars.

In line with global trends, Indian UHNWIs, too, cited a higher preference for wine compared to rare whisky in 2020.

"In the global context, the shift in consumer preference is a result of climate change, a bigger influence on the wine trade. Unlike the global financial crisis, the wine market has held its nerve throughout the pandemic, merchants did not mark down prices and the market has been stable. While Indian UHNWIs, too, revealed a preference for fine wine over rare whisky, it is actually jewellery, which is the most prized object of desire, topping both these and other passion-led investments," says Shishir Baijal, chairman and managing director, Knight Frank India.

The Forevermark brand of De Beers Group continues to see an upward trajectory of demand. Sachin Jain, managing director, De Beers India, says, "Diamonds are a meaningful store of wealth, and we have seen a change in the purchasing power of women in the past few years. Today, women don't need a reason to shop. They celebrate the small

joys of life, aspire to own an exquisite, priceless piece of jewellery that connects at a deeper personal, emotional level and has been self-purchased... a trend witnessed during the pandemic."

The year 2021 will follow one of significant changes, as the desire will be to invest in purchases that are meaningful and have enduring value. "Brands like ours will take precedence as consumers are moving towards the digital space, looking for transparency as well as the latest trends in the segment. Diamonds are not pure-play luxury, but they hold deep emotional, tangible value, offering a store of value for the consumer," says Jain.

Passion investments like luxury handbags were the best-performing asset class. "The ever-increasing category of luxury handbags outperforms art, classic cars and even fine wine to claim the number one position on the index," says Andrew Shirley, editor of *The Wealth Report* and the Knight Frank Luxury Investment Index.

Da Milano, an exclusive brand offering luxurious leather bags and accessories, saw events returning to normalcy last year, which shows how quickly people were willing to spend on luxury brands. Sahil Malik, managing director of the brand, believes the luxury sector wasn't affected by the pandemic. "Brand value and trust have a vital role to play. Our sales resumed even at slight signs of the lockdown coming to an end. It wasn't a usual fact, knowing the market would change post the pandemic. Passion-led and innovative people were looking for space and with the market being at an all-time low, those with a more secure and greater income were able to make investments. I think this is just the beginning for luxury shopping in India," adds Malik.

AS PER KNIGHT FRANK'S WEALTH REPORT 2021, HERMÈS HANDBAGS TOPPED THE KNIGHT FRANK LUXURY INVESTMENT INDEX, WITH PRICES INCREASING BY 17% OVER THE PAST 12-MONTH PERIOD

## ICONIC INTERVIEWS

Meghan Markle and Prince Harry's interview with Oprah Winfrey has created ripples around the world. Markle's revelations, including her struggle with mental health, conversations in the royal family about baby Archie's skin colour, among others, have become the highlights of the interview. Here are some celebrities whose interviews became the most iconic conversations of all times.

By Reya Mehrotra



Princess Diana

Princess Diana's most iconic interview that created headlines around the globe remains the BBC's Panorama series, *An Interview with HRH The Princess of Wales*. In the interview, she revealed the truth about her marriage and her place in the royal family. The interview was conducted by Martin Bashir. Now under the scanner, it was the first time any member of the royal family had spoken so openly to the media.

### Ellen De Generes

In 1997, two women hugely popular around the world for their shows, Ellen De Generes and Oprah Winfrey, came together for an iconic interview show. The moment is still labelled an important one for the LGBTQIA community as De Generes came out about being gay. The history-changing episode was titled *Coming Out Interview* and garnered 42 million views.

### Michael Jackson

Michael Jackson's interview with Oprah Winfrey in 1993 is the most watched interview in television history with 90 million views. It was also special because after more than a decade of refusing interviews, he agreed for an interview with Winfrey. The questions ranged from his surgeries to relationships. He also revealed about missing out on a normal childhood as he was always working and that is why, he said, he always had children around him.



### Donald Trump

In 1988, former US president Donald Trump sat with Oprah Winfrey for an interview. He came on the show to promote his then new book and also talked about his views on foreign policies. He was asked by Winfrey if he would ever run for US presidency. "I think I'd win," he had said. "I tell you what: I wouldn't go in to lose. I've never gone in to lose in my life. And if I did

decide to do it, I would say I'd have a hell of a chance of winning," a confident Trump said 30 years ago.

### Sarah Ferguson

Another royal on *The Oprah Show* to create headlines was Sarah Ferguson, the former wife of Prince Andrew. In the 1996 interview, she talked about how staying in the palace was not a 'fairytale'. She also opened up about the treatment



Rihanna

In 2009, Rihanna's pictures with a bruised body surfaced leaving the world shocked. It was disclosed that she had been abused by her then boyfriend Chris Brown who was sentenced to five years' probation. In her 2012 interview with Oprah Winfrey, Rihanna talked about forgiving the singer and said that she had "lost her best friend". As she broke down during the interview, she also mentioned that she thought Brown was the love of her life.

### Mike Tyson

In 2009, former professional boxer Mike Tyson gave an emotional interview to Oprah Winfrey. He broke down while talking about the accidental death of his four-year-old daughter Exodus whose neck was trapped in a cord dangling from a treadmill at his home. Later, Winfrey had to apologise to Tyson's former wife Robin Givens as, during the interview, she did not call Tyson out for his boastful claims on domestic violence he inflicted on Givens.

## TECH-NOW-LOGY

# Will disposables be the future of photo sharing?

Some are calling the new photo app, Dispo, the next Instagram

TAYLOR LORENZ

**D**ISPO, A NEW PHOTO-sharing app that mimics the experience of using a disposable camera, is taking off. People are clamouring for invites to test the beta version. Early adopters are praising its social features. And investors are betting big on its future.

In the app, users frame photographs through a small rectangular viewfinder. There are no editing tools or captions; when the images "develop" — that is, show up on your phone at 9 am the next day — you get what you get. Multiple people can take photos on the same roll, as might happen with a real disposable camera at a party.

"When I used to go to parties with my friends, they would have disposable cameras all throughout the house, and they'd urge people to take pictures throughout the night," said David Dobrik, a YouTube star and a founder of the app. "In the morning, they'd collect all the cameras and look back at the footage and be like, 'What happened last night?'"

He and his friends loved the serendipity of scrolling through fleeting and forgotten moments. "It would be like the ending of *The Hangover* every morning," Dobrik, 24, said. He started posting his developed photographs on a dedicated Instagram account in June 2019, and quickly racked up millions of followers. Other influencers and celebrities, including Tana Mongeau and Gigi Hadid, soon started their own "disposable" accounts; their fans followed suit.

Sensing a trend, Dobrik sought to recreate the disposable-camera experience digitally, as an antidote to the

obsession with getting the perfect shot. "You never looked at the picture, you never checked the lighting," he said of using disposables. "You just went on with your day, and in the morning you got to relive it."

In December 2019, he introduced a photo app called David's Disposable, through which people could take retro-looking pictures that "developed" overnight. Its early following suggested that the model had bigger potential. So, over the course of a year, it was developed into Dispo, a full-fledged social network that began beta testing with the public recently.

Though Dispo's latest version has only been available to the public for less than a week, it's already generating buzz. The app climbed the ranks in Apple's App Store recently. Dispo-themed discussion rooms have popped up on Clubhouse. YouTubers are sharing reviews, tips for scoring invites and growth hacks. Just as VSCO gave rise to the VSCO girl, Dispo has produced a stable of "Dispo boys." Some photos from Dispo have even hit the online art market as NFTs, or "nonfungible tokens."

The app's beta users have lauded its restraint. "I feel like photos are just simpler," said Goldie Chan, 38, the founder of Warm Robots, a social strategy agency in Los Angeles. "Apps like Clubhouse are so much noise, literally. When you have something like Dispo or VSCO, you're just taking pictures. You can snap a moment in time and let it go."

This shift away from highly curated feeds has been in the works for several years. In 2019, the rise of "relatable" YouTubers like Emma Chamberlain helped pioneer a goofy and irreverent editing style that became the default for Gen Z. And throughout 2020, TikTok gave birth to a new wave of creators focused more on personality than perfection.

"Where Instagram filters in 2011 made everyone beautiful, TikTok filters in 2021 make everyone ugly," Rex Woodbury, a principal at Index Ven-

tures, recently wrote. "And where Instagram gave you filters to help your bad photos look good, Dispo purposefully makes your good photos look worse."

Anyha Garcia, a 31-year-old stay-at-home mom in Utah, started using Dispo recently. She's a fan of its simplicity. "I don't have to sit and crop it or edit it," she said. "I take a pic, and hopefully it turns out. I can go back and look at it later instead of looking at it now and making these tweaks or worrying about taking 10 to 12 more photos of that thing I'm trying to take a picture of."

People have also taken to the app's emphasis on collaboration. "Insta made everyone a general photographer. Dispo makes you a photographer with a purpose," said Terry O'Neal, 31, a brand manager in Los Angeles who has been using the app. He has created several colour-themed camera rolls and asked other users to help him find objects that fit each theme. "That's where the community building is, everyone looking for the same thing through their own lens," he said.

"The big thing with Dispo is the collaborative rolls," said Luke Yun, 31, a social media director in Los Angeles. "People are finding ways to be creative together. It's like an innate contest to out-create each other in these community rolls that I haven't seen before on any social network."

Though Dispo's photos don't have captions, the comment sections of collaborative camera rolls can be lively. There are rolls where people are invited to guess the story behind each photo, or comment with song lyrics they feel match the mood of an image. Another roll features photos of handwritten notes meant to spark conversation.

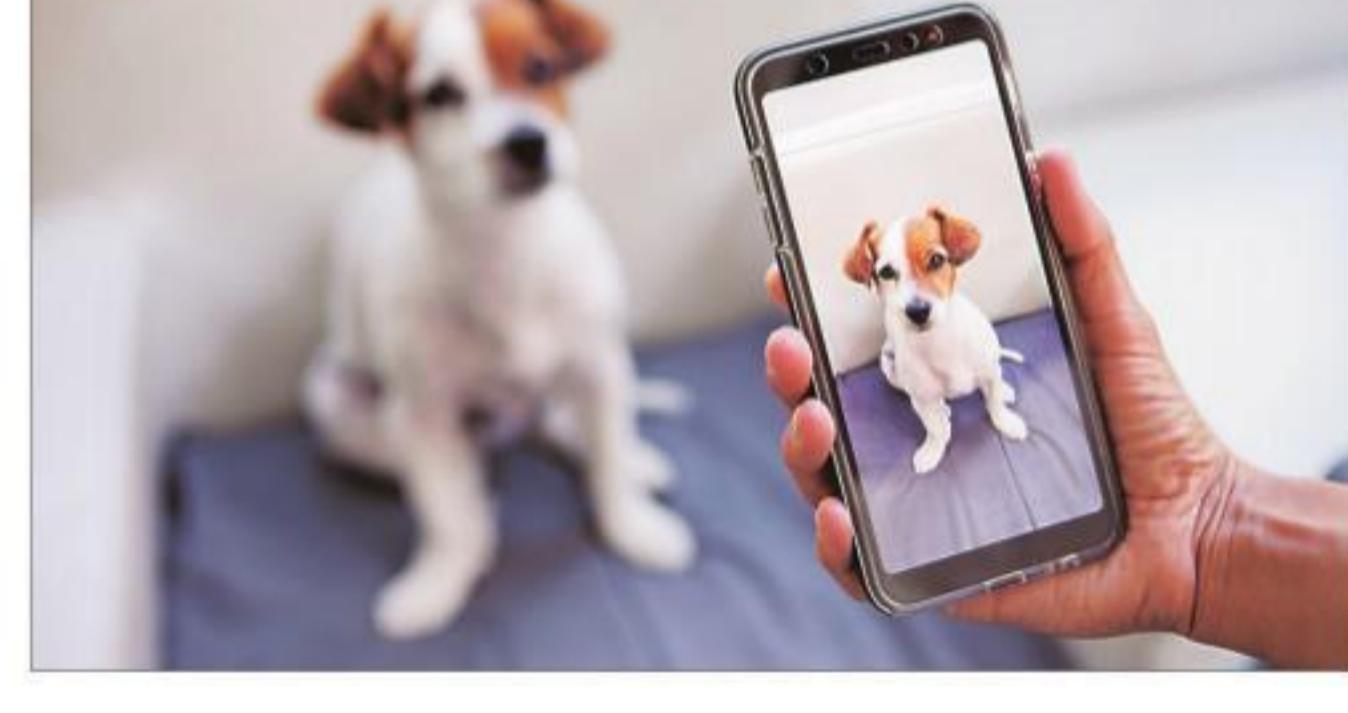
The social network has avoided the spammy growth-hack culture that often emerges on early-stage apps, and Easter eggs in its display poke fun at the obsession with boosting one's metrics. Dobrik, for instance, appears to have 69 million followers and 420 likes on Dispo.

Small creator collectives have emerged, however. "I created a roll called the Dispo Hype Group where we were adding everyone and accepting everyone's invite," Garcia said. The group, which includes about 40 people, is hoping to organise an IRL meet-up when it's safe to do so.

Dispo has already begun expanding internationally, especially in Japan, where the company plans to open an office. Though it's currently only an eight-person company, the start-up's rapid expansion has made it an appealing target for venture capitalists.

Though there will always be competition and copycats, Dobrik believes what Dispo offers is something that photo filters can't replicate.

NYT



# Leisure

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

VAISHALI DAR

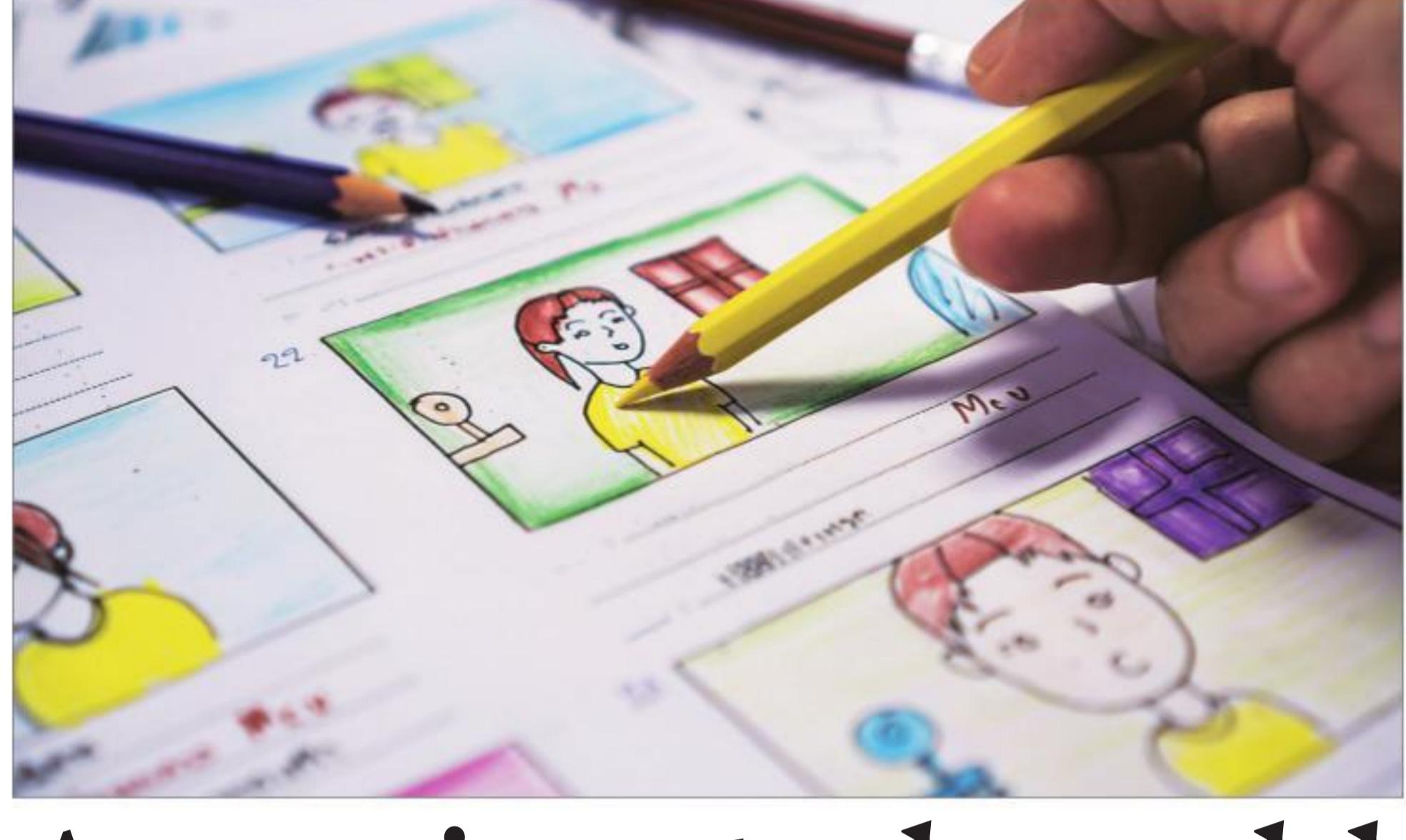
**W**HEN SYLVESTER DACUNHA created the Amul girl in 1966, little did he know that the unassuming blue-haired girl in a red polka-dotted frock would become one of India's most celebrated animation characters. As a social commentator portraying witty and timely executions over the past five decades, the Amul girl has become a trendsetter in the advertising world. "The idea of the character, devised by my father, was to sell butter while she's also telling us what is happening in the country at that moment," says Rahul daCunha, the son of Sylvester and creative director of daCunha Communications, the Mumbai-based advertising agency that has handled the Amul account since 1966. "Many times, advertising agencies let go of the property or the animated idea, but the popularity and connection with the Amul girl — or, for that matter, Vodafone India's popular mascot ZooZoos — have been around for some years," adds daCunha.

In a world run down by the pandemic where physical ad shoots have been difficult, animation in advertising is occupying a central role. Using 2D, 3D or mixed media, it is serving as a powerful storytelling medium and is being accepted by many marketers such as Grofers, Chennai Super Kings, Castrol India, Acko General Insurance, among others. And why not? As it is not only serving as an instant solution to production problems, but also helping them stay connected with consumers. "In the absence of shoots, animation advertising is a great substitute in the current work-from-home scenario. Animators can provide the same kind of output from home as they would in a studio," says daCunha. "But a lot of agencies and marketers might see this as a stop-gap measure and not as a viable alternative to live action," he adds.

A 2019 KPMG report, however, revealed that the demand could hold up, as the animation and VFX industries work for the long term. Further, the animation industry revenue for FY19 was estimated at ₹88 billion. Talking about the appeal of animation in advertising, Chris Garbutt, global chief creative officer of New York-based advertising agency TBWA Worldwide, says, "Brands turned to animation and design to help them stand out from the sea of sameness."

Garbutt says the lockdown made brands reinvent their way of showing up in culture. "There are only so many times brands can repurpose old film footage to suit new messages before it becomes boring for the intended audience. Animation design sets brands free to be bold and original in their narratives. It's also a much nimble way of producing content at the speed of culture, and often it's much more affordable than other techniques. Animation design will continue to be a powerful way for brands to communicate in a bespoke manner," he offers.

In recent months, TBWA has used animation and design in several executions, including work for the state of New York and the Canadian Women's Foundation.



## An animated world

**In a world grappling with the pandemic where physical ad shoots have been difficult, animation in advertising, using 2D, 3D or mixed media, has taken centrestage**



In June last year, Mother Dairy launched Rocket Ice Creams with the mascot Neila, an intergalactic alien

dation. TBWA\Chiat\Day New York (the American division of the advertising agency TBWA Worldwide) created a series of out-of-home (OOH) posters, billboards and animations for Broadway, Times Square and Columbus Circle, as well as signage around Albany, the state capital, and Buffalo, to encourage people to stop the spread of Covid-19 by wearing a mask, practising social distancing and washing hands.

There are no constraints in animation, feels Anish Mehta, chief executive officer, Cosmos Maya, a Singapore- and India-based animation studio that produced *Motu Patlu*, a kids' show on Nickelodeon in India. Further, filming at home with a mobile or hand-held equipment sometimes does not solve the brand's objective. "Animation gives flexibility and artistic space to experiment by giving more colour and variety to a brand's voice. For any kind of extraordinary and dreamy-looking visual directives, animation is required," says Mehta.

Animation also provides a level-play-

ing field when it comes to cost. "Brands had to work around the logistical constraints of advertising with content creators and consumers all working and interacting from home, owing to which they had to condition the ad spend to adapt while staying relevant and creative. In this regard, animation is a better option, as it provides a playing field at a fraction of a cost," adds Mehta.

Bengaluru-based dairy venture MilkLane recently launched Nutrinos, dairy products for children in the age group of 3-8 years, using animation advertising. Their animated mascots — Proto, Vita, and Calci — explain the importance of nutrition to kids. "The mascot have a unique role to play. Proto talks about muscle growth, Calci talks about strong bones and Vita, with a shield, talks about immunity. So it contextualises the conversation with moods and expressions, very apt for kids and mothers," says Vivek Sharma, chief

marketing officer, MilkLane. "With content consumption changing, the focus has shifted to digital. For advertisers and marketers, this is the time to reimagine communication and find newer ways to create a memorable digital experience. Animation can simplify complex topics to bring any concept to life without being bound by physical or logistical constraints," he adds.

In June last year, Mother Dairy, too, launched Rocket Ice Creams (in French vanilla and Belgian chocolate variants) with the mascot Neila. "The need to employ an adorable intergalactic alien called Neila is not only derived from the alien's colour as referred to the colour blue in Hindi, but has a fun trivia hidden in it. It is alien spelt in reverse. Thus, making the product more relevant, experiential and fun for young consumers," says Gurugram-based Ritu Sharda, chief creative officer at Ogilvy, which has worked on the concept.



## EARLY ADVERTISING

In 1450, Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type printing. This led to the birth of a new era of advertising in the form of the handbill. The lithographic process was perfected in 1796, giving rise to the illustrated poster

## The party is coming. Here's what to wear

**Designers have looked into their crystal balls and predicted the future. It's fancy**

VANESSA FRIEDMAN

**T**O A CERTAIN EXTENT every designer is also a prognosticator; a seer, looking six months or even a year into the future and predicting what we will want to wear. Which really means: Who will we be? What costume will we need to define us?

This part of the job is only more crucial in a period like the present, when what happens next feels both urgent — we are desperate to get there — and difficult to imagine. You can understand how Joseph Altuzarra and Luke and Lucie Meier of Jil Sander ended up with butterfly prints in their collections. If the metaphor is not exactly subtle, it still looks awfully pretty, suggesting we will emerge from our current cocoons in either a glorious splash of colour or of delicate, swishy movement. But either way, it seems, most designers have agreed on one thing: By the time these clothes hit stores, we will be ready to take wing. And we're going to want to dress for the moment.

"I'm determined we will be wearing clothing," said Jonathan Anderson, which sounds ridiculous — no one thinks we're going to become nudists when social isolation ends — but he meant capital-C Clothing: clothes that announce their presence in a room; clothes in unapologetically bright, Play-Doh colour combinations and curvaceous, sculptural shapes; clothes decorated with plate-size buckles and iridescent fringed plastrons. Clothes that celebrate the sheer fun and playfulness of getting dressed up to show up.

Clothes shown not via video or

livestream but rather in the form of a Loewe 63-page broadsheet newspaper. The headline read, aptly enough, *The Loewe Show Has Been Canceled*, but a more apt title may have been *Get Ready for the Party*. The point being, if you've got out — out of the house, that is — flaunt it, which was also the conclusion, apparently, of Donatella Versace, who took logo-a-gogo to a new level with... yup, a new logo.

Called La Greca, it was a mélange of deconstructed Greek key slashes with "Versace" sprinkled inside, and she printed it all over pretty much everything for both men and women. There were skinny cigarette-shaped (and toned) trousers and knitwear, sharp-shouldered jacquard coats and faux furs, chunky loafers and ultra-mini whips of chain mail. Even on tights under SBDs (sheer black dresses), the monogram powered through, as if to say enough with discretion already.

There were, of course, those who begged to dis-



Versace, fall 2021 VIA VERSACE

agree, most notably Nadège Vanhee-Cybulski at Hermès, whose triptych of a show offered movement and ambition in more ways than one. It travelled across the world via videos of two different modern dance troupes, one in Shanghai, one in New York, performing in Hermès-orange environments, while in Paris the collection was revealed.

But whose garments remained reticent as always. Built on supple skins, silk scarves and dark denim, touched with fringe, the big news of the collection was ... rectangles, etched out on trouser suits and via contrasting textures.

Still, she was the exception that proved the rule — or where the rule was going — as otherwise expressed by the romantic fripperies of Giambattista Valli, and the extravagant imagination of Thom Browne, which cooked up a *Wizard of Oz*-inspired story set in a snowy mountain far, far away, populated by living stick figures and the Olympic skier Lindsey Vonn. There we found her on a quest to schuss home, which she did in high style and black tie, zipping past a variety of guards who marked the path in ever-more extraordinary combinations of tuxedos and winter sportswear. "Extreme skiing meets extreme tailoring" was how Browne characterised it in a Zoom call.

Indeed, these down puffers were not the down puffers of our current hibernation. They were, rather, category-defying constructions of corsetry and cable knit; bustles, big bows and bow ties; trains and tulles and tongue-in-cheek details, like bejewelled mitten fringe and those little stick figures reproduced in lace.

When not in action, Vonn appeared in a gold gown with a gold puffer train over a tuxedo, the only non-black-and-white outfit in the collection and a mash-up of gender stereotype and fairytale fantasy that went fully over the rainbow. It was a winner — and a direct riposte to the whole idea of dressing down.

As, in a very different way, was Matthew Williams's Givenchy collection. His official "show" debut, after a low-key presentation last season, was also largely black and white, with dashes of lipstick red, lavender and smoky orange. Filmed in a cavernous arena with a flooded floor, it was high in aggression and attitude, rife with extreme accessories that will probably become viral hits, clear in its vocabulary, but not exactly original.

Exaggerated fur chubbies, big-shouldered bomber jackets and razor-tailored jackets were whittled down to tight little waists, the silhouette weighted at the neck with heavy metal chain-link necklaces, at the hands with yeti-mittens and at the feet with hoof-like block platforms. Hemlines were given spiky, asymmetric cuts and slithery lace gowns were shredded to expose what was underneath. Atop it all came bat-eared knit balaclavas and Jughead bandanna crowns. Imagine what you might want to wear if you went to a gold-knuckled fight club, and this would be it.

While such luxury hardcore, haute-street territory has been mined before, by designers such as Riccardo Tisci, one of Williams's Givenchy predecessors, as well as Williams's former employer, Kanye West, an argument could be made that each generation should get to experiment with it anew. At least until the bare breasts in little triangles of bra tops minus the actual fabric appeared.

NYT



(Above) As a social commentator portraying witty and timely executions over the past five decades, the Amul girl has become a trendsetter in the advertising world; and (right) Bengaluru-based dairy venture MilkLane launched Nutrinos, dairy products for children, using animation advertising

## The wine legend

Wine expert and merchant Steven Spurrier was a legend who wouldn't rest on his laurels and never stopped being curious

BETWEEN SIPS



Magandeep Singh

**T**HE YEAR WAS 1976. Steven Spurrier was a young English wine merchant in Paris and decided upon a crazy idea. He travelled to the United States and connected with what were considered some of the top winemakers that side of the pond. He brought their prized wines back and organised a blind tasting comprising an eminent (largely French) jury where he pitted these finds against the top French Bordeaux — both reds and whites. The results of the tasting changed the wine industry forever. Americans won and, for

the first time, the world sat up and took notice of wines that were not just French. To this day, I am sure many a French critic can be heard mumbling under his/her breath about the exercise and its impact.

And that is how influential Spurrier was and remained several decades later. He wasn't an MW, or MS. He didn't need titles. And somewhere that allowed him to maintain his child-like curiosity about wines right till the end. He wasn't one of those wine critics who taste a wine only to criticise it and complain about how the berries were picked a day too early or that the oak was a touch too toasty. Instead, he heraldised them. He found a way to connect the wine to a mood or sentiment, to the essence of an occasion, thereby finding its right place in the world. To him, not all wines were good, but if a wine was free from technical flaws, he would

always make the time to see that it merited its rightful place on the shelf.

Spurrier had a peculiar interest in the wines of India. The first time he mentioned Grover's La Reserve as a wine to watch out for, he put India on the wine map and brought considerable recognition for our nascent industry. He remained a constant force for our scene, visiting regions, tasting vintages, always encouraging and positive, finding ways to assist the industry and move it forward.

That same gentle nature carried forth when he interacted with wine lovers. I remember my first year as a judge at Decanter World Wine Awards, which Spurrier chaired for the longest time. My apprehensions about being expected to taste and judge alongside the best palates in the business already



SPURRIER  
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had my stomach in knots. And then along came this gentleman on his bicycle. He parked it and dusted a few creases off his jacket as he walked into the venue. He was immediately accosted by the organisers who wanted his attention for a million things. He attended to all with a sense of calm that was infectious even from a distance. A few minutes later, at the coffee counter, he spoke to me, welcoming me, asking me about the weather back home and, in many ways, disarming me in the gentlest way possible. Never once did I feel the intimidation that should normally come with the premise of talking wine with the most important wine personality alive!

And from that point on, every meeting went like that. He complimented me on my energy when I helped with running a wine auction for his Wine Society in Mumbai, and once he even taught me how to fold my suits when travelling, so that they don't crease too heavily. Wine always anointed these meetings, but never once did he let his gravitas on the subject and in the field over-ride the buoyant pleasures of the moment.

The late Kapil Sekhri of Fratelli Wines

even managed to engage Spurrier's curiosity and interest to the point that the man himself came down and worked with Fratelli's chief winemaker Piero Masi to develop a special label for the Indian market. Trying the M/S range of wines is like having a conversation with Spurrier. It disarms you. Whether you are a wine imbibing or not, it speaks to you. They were made with that very intent of making quality wines in India at an accessible price and in packaging that wouldn't confuse the consumer. Between Sekhri, Masi and Spurrier, they achieved this in every sense and the Indian wine shelf stands positively reinforced thanks to their efforts and experience.

Spurrier passed on this week and the loss to the industry is insurmountable. Given that we lost Sekhri a few months ago, I intend to open a bottle to honour them both. Maybe the Fratelli M/S rosé, as it would be the most fitting tribute to Sekhri, and also to Spurrier, a legend of a man who wouldn't rest on his laurels and never stopped being curious. RIP.

The writer is a sommelier

# Footloose

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021



## BUSIEST AIRPORTS

Heathrow Airport, originally called London Airport, is the second busiest airport in the world by international passenger traffic, as well as the third busiest airport in Europe by passenger traffic

ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

LISA W FODERARO

**F**OR THE PLANET, the year without tourists was a curse and a blessing. With flights cancelled, cruise ships mothballed and vacations largely scrapped, carbon emissions plummeted. Wildlife that usually kept a low profile amid a crush of tourists in vacation hot spots suddenly emerged. And a lack of cruise ships in places like Alaska meant that humpback whales could hear each other's calls without the din of engines.

That's the good news. On the flip side, the disappearance of travellers wreaked its own strange havoc, not only on those who make their living in the tourism industry, but on wildlife itself, especially in developing countries. Many governments pay for conservation and enforcement through fees associated with tourism. As that revenue dried up, budgets were cut, resulting in increased poaching and illegal fishing in some areas. Illicit logging rose too, presenting a double-whammy for the environment. Because trees absorb and store carbon, cutting them down not only hurt wildlife habitats, but contributed to climate change. "We have seen many financial hits to the protection of nature," said Joe Walston, executive vice-president of global conservation at the Wildlife Conservation Society. "But even where that hasn't happened, in a lot of places people haven't been able to get into the field to do their jobs because of Covid." From the rise in rhino poaching in Botswana to the waning of noise pollution in Alaska, the lack of tourism has had a profound effect around the world. The question moving forward is which impacts will remain, and which will vanish, in the recovery.

### A change in the air

While the pandemic's impact on wildlife has varied widely from continent to continent, and country to country, its effect on air quality was felt more broadly. In the United States, greenhouse gas emissions last year fell more than 10%, as state and local governments imposed lockdowns and people stayed home, according to a report in January by the Rhodium Group, a research and consulting firm.

The most dramatic results came from the transportation sector, which posted a 14.7% decrease. It's impossible to tease out how much of that drop is from lost tourism versus business travel. And there is every expectation that as the pandemic loosens its grip, tourism will resume — likely with a vengeance. Still, the pandemic helped push American emissions below 1990 levels for the first time. Globally, carbon dioxide emissions fell 7%, or 2.6 billion metric tons, according to new data from international climate researchers. In terms of output, that is about double the annual emissions of Japan. "It's a lot and it's a little," said Jason Smerdon, a climate scientist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. "Historically, it's a lot. It's the largest single reduction percent-wise over the last 100 years. But when you think about the 7% in the context of what we need to do to mitigate climate change, it's a little." In late 2019, the United Nations Environment Program cautioned that global greenhouse gases would need to drop 7.6% every year between 2020 and 2030. That would keep the world on its trajectory of meeting the temperature goals set under the Paris Agreement, the 2016 accord signed by nearly 200 nations.

"The 7% drop last year is on par with what we would need to do year after year," Smerdon said. "Of course we wouldn't want to do it the same way. A global pandemic and locking ourselves in our apartments is not the way to go about this." Interestingly, the drop in other types of air pollution during the pandemic muddied the climate picture. Industrial aerosols, made up of soot, sulfates, nitrates and mineral dust, reflect sunlight back into space, thus cooling the planet. While their reduction was good for respiratory health, it had the effect of offsetting some of the climate benefits



## For planet earth, no tourism is a curse and a blessing

From rise in poaching to the waning of noise pollution, travel's shutdown is having profound effects. Which will remain and which will vanish?



(Clockwise from top) London under lockdown; a file photo of a herd of goats walking the quiet streets in Llandudno, north Wales, last year; and a quiet street in New York

of cascading carbon emissions.

### Wildlife regroups

Just as the impact of the pandemic on air quality is peppered with caveats, so too is its influence on wildlife. Animals slithered, crawled and stomped out of hiding across the globe, sometimes in farcical fashion. Last spring, a herd of Great Orme Kashmiri goats was spotted ambling through empty

streets in Llandudno, a coastal town in northern Wales. And hundreds of monkeys — normally fed by tourists — were involved in a disturbing brawl outside of Bangkok, apparently fighting over food scraps.

In meaningful ways, however, the pandemic revealed that wildlife will regroup if given the chance. In Thailand, where tourism plummeted after authorities banned international flights, leatherback turtles laid their eggs on the usually

mobbed Phuket Beach. It was the first time nests were seen there in years, as the endangered sea turtles, the largest in the world, prefer to nest in seclusion.

Similarly, in Koh Samui, Thailand's second largest island, hawksbill turtles took over beaches that in 2018 hosted nearly three million tourists. The hatchlings were documented emerging from their nests and furiously moving their flippers toward the sea. For Petch Manopawit, a marine



GLOBALLY, CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS FELL 7% IN 2020, AS PER DATA FROM INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE RESEARCHERS. IN TERMS OF OUTPUT, THAT IS ABOUT DOUBLE THE ANNUAL EMISSIONS OF JAPAN

conservation manager of the Wildlife Conservation Society Thailand, the sightings were proof that natural landscapes can recover quickly. "Both Ko Samui and Phuket have been overrun with tourists for so many years," he said in a phone interview. "Many people had written off the turtles and thought they would not return. After Covid, there is talk about sustainability and how it needs to be embedded in tourism, and not just a niche market but all kinds of tourism."

### An increase in poaching

In other parts of Asia and across Africa, the disappearance of tourists has had nearly the opposite result. With safari tours scuttled and enforcement budgets decimated, poachers have plied their nefarious trade with impunity. At the same time, hungry villagers have streamed into protected areas to hunt and fish.

There were reports of increased poaching of leopards and tigers in India, an uptick in the smuggling of falcons in Pakistan, and a surge in trafficking of rhino horns in South Africa and Botswana.

Jim Sano, the World Wildlife Fund's

vice-president for travel, tourism and conservation, said that in sub-Saharan Africa, the presence of tourists was a powerful deterrent. "It's not only the game guards," he said. "It's the travellers wandering around with the guides that are omnipresent in these game areas. If the guides see poachers with automatic weapons, they report it."

While animals around the world were subject to rifles and snares during the pandemic, one thing was missing: noise. The whir of helicopters diminished as some air tours were suspended. And cruise ships from the Adriatic Sea to the Gulf of Mexico were largely absent. That meant marine mammals and fish had a break from the rumble of engines and propellers.

So did research scientists. Michelle Fournet is a marine ecologist who uses hydrophones to listen in on whales. Although the total number of cruise ships (a few hundred) pales in comparison to the total number of cargo ships (tens of thousands), Fournet says they have an outsized role in creating underwater racket. That is especially true in Alaska, a magnet for tourists in search of natural splendour.

Man-made noise during the pandemic dissipated in the waters near the capital of Juneau, as well as in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Fournet, a postdoctoral research associate at Cornell University, observed a threefold decrease in ambient noise in Glacier Bay between 2019 and 2020. "That's a really big drop in noise," she said, "and all of that is associated with the cessation of these cruise ships."

NYT

## Changi Airport: Waiting for passengers who don't come

As an airport that has relied on an international market, analysts say Changi will struggle more than most of its peers in recovering from the pandemic

SUI-LEE WEE

ON A RECENT Thursday morning at Singapore's Changi Airport, six people tapped away on their laptops surrounded by plush chairs in the Changi Lounge. On every other chair, a sticker exhorted people to keep it empty, reminding them that "maintaining a distance keeps everyone safe." Gone were the buffet of refreshments and snacks. Instead, waiters brought croissants and coffee. Alyss Leow, a 36-year-old human resources executive, works from

the lounge every two to three weeks. She paid \$200 for a three-month period.

"There are days when I don't want to work from home and this is a sweet spot," said Leow. "It gives you that kind of psychological break that you need." Two years ago, Singapore's Changi Airport was on a roll. It opened a sleek \$1.3-billion shopping and entertainment complex with a movie theatre and the world's tallest indoor waterfall. It was voted the world's best airport for the seventh consecutive year. Over-the-top and instantly iconic, Changi han-



CHANGI HANDLED A RECORD 63.8 M PASSENGERS IN 2019. IN 2020, THOUGH, PASSENGER TRAFFIC FELL NEARLY 83%

dled a record 63.8 million passengers in 2019. Then, as Covid-19 spread around the world, passenger traffic at Changi dropped nearly 83% last year. The airport's net profit fell 36% to roughly \$327 million. It suspended construction on a fifth terminal. In January 2020, 33,000 flights took off from Changi. That number dropped to 7,500 the following January.

To cope with the slowdown, the airport decided to focus on its only market: Singapore residents. Even before Covid, many locals flocked to the airport to eat, shop and study. Adapting to the pandemic, airport executives have offered "glamping," go-karting and converted the Changi Lounge into a co-working space. They invited parents to bring their children for sleepovers and educational tours. Analysts say these efforts are mostly stopgap measures that could tide the airport over a little until travel comes back, but they would not improve revenues in any meaningful way.

"It's mainly hibernating until things come back," said Brendan Sobie, a Singapore-based independent analyst for Sobie Aviation, an aviation consultancy. "For Changi, 2021 will be worse than 2020." As

an airport that has relied solely on an international market, analysts say Changi will struggle more than most of its peers in recovering from the pandemic.

The pause has prompted the airport to rethink its role in a post-Covid world. It had always been a destination in itself but the pandemic gave it a reason to launch a more ambitious experiment: Could the airport draw people to stay longer? Airport executives started thinking about how travel-starved Singaporeans could experience Jewel, the mega shopping complex, "in a brand-new way," said Jayson Goh, managing director of Changi's airport operations management. Their idea for "Glamping in the clouds" put 10 tents in an empty airport plaza facing the famous waterfall. But it was skewered by internet users who questioned why people would spend at least \$240 a night to sleep on a concrete floor without an en-suite bathroom. (There were queen-size beds.) "It was ridiculous," said Jason Chua, a lawyer who had walked past the tents. "It's like they were animals in cages and people were looking at them sleep."

NYT

# Well-Being

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021



## GRIEF DISORDER

Prolonged grief disorder, formerly known as complicated grief disorder, is a pathological reaction to loss representing a cluster of empirically derived symptoms that have been associated with long-term physical and psycho-social dysfunction.

AC SHILTON

**F**OR MONTHS, I've felt like the emotional equivalent of a car with a cracked windshield. I'm still rolling through daily life, but one good knock is bound to shatter me. Although the number of coronavirus cases has been declining, the number of deaths has soared, and now we have the new variants to worry about. I know that if I have not yet lost a loved one, I'm one of the lucky ones — and no one's luck lasts forever.

I love being proactive — I'm all about having a go bag with extra batteries, duct tape and granola bars ready for any emergency. But what, if anything, could I do to prepare myself for grief?

Anticipatory grief is a well-documented phenomenon in grief counselling, said Katherine Shear, the founder and director for the Center for Complicated Grief at Columbia University. But usually researchers study anticipatory grief in environments like hospices, where loss is imminent. What many of us are experiencing right now is more nebulous. Shear cautioned that spiralling into anticipatory grief for a loss that may not even happen is likely to be unhelpful.

Of course, even if you do not lose a family member or friend in the pandemic, that does not mean you will not experience grief. At its core, grief is a reaction to a change that you didn't want or ask for, said David Kessler, a grief expert and author of many books on the subject, including his most recent, *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*.

Even those who have not lost family members are experiencing some level of loss in the pandemic, he said, from the disappointment of missing in-person experiences and holiday celebrations to the losses of our jobs and even our homes.

"The problem with comparisons in grief is if you win, you lose," Kessler said, adding, "and the world is big enough for all our griefs."

Inoculating yourself against feelings of loss may prove harder than getting a routine vaccine. "Grief is as unique as a thumbprint. What works for one person may not work for another," said Deanna Upchurch, the director of clinical outreach services at the Providence-based hospice Hope-Health. Still, should the worst happen, knowing what tends to help others could help you gird yourself — even just a little bit. If doing something feels better to you than doing nothing, consider this your packing list for a grief go bag.

### Practice experiencing your emotions

"In our culture, we tend to think painful emotions are bad," Shear said. "But that's really not true. It's true that they're painful, but we can learn from them," she said. Next time you feel something unpleasant, take a moment to sit with it and think about why you're feeling the way you're feeling.

Kessler suggests looking to the animal kingdom for inspiration on learning to live with uncomfortable emotions. After his 21-year-old son died suddenly in 2016, Kessler was watching a documentary on buffalos. The documentary noted that buffalos run straight into oncoming storms.

"Because they run into the storm, they minimise the time they are in the discomfort. We live in a society that minimises grief. Unlike the buffalo, we try to stay a mile ahead of it, but it's just



## There is no vaccine for grief

### But there are ways to prepare to face it



always there, chasing behind us," he said. Consider, instead, being willing to run into the rain.

#### Shower the people you love with love

Maureen Keeley, a professor of interpersonal communication at Texas

State University, has been studying the final conversations between family members for nearly 20 years. In that time, one theme has emerged over and over again: "We need to tell those we love that we love them," she said.

This advice sounds so simple. And yet, when I tested it out by calling my



## Here's how exercise sharpens and enhances ageing brains

Sedentary, older adults who took aerobic dance classes twice a week showed improvements in brain areas critical for memory and thinking

GRETCHEN REYNOLDS

**E**XERCISE CAN CHANGE HOW crucial portions of our brain communicate as we age, improving aspects of thinking and remembering, according to a fascinating new study of ageing brains and aerobic workouts. The study, which involved older African-Americans, finds that unconnected portions of the brain's memory centre start interacting in complex and healthier ways after regular exercise, sharpening memory function.

The findings expand our understanding of how moving moulds thinking and also underscore the importance of staying active, whatever our age.

The idea that physical activity improves brain health is well established by now. Experiments involving animals and people show exercise increases neurons in the hippocampus, which is essential for memory creation and storage, while also improving thinking skills. In older people,

regular physical activity helps slow the usual loss of brain volume, which may help to prevent age-related memory loss and possibly lower the risk of dementia.

There have been hints, too, that exercise can alter how far-flung parts of the brain talk among themselves. In a 2016 MRI study, for instance, researchers found that disparate parts of the brain light up at the same time among collegiate runners but less so among sedentary students. This paired brain activity is believed to be a form of communication, allowing parts of the brain to work together and improve thinking skills, despite not sharing a physical connection. In the runners, the synchronised portions related to attention, decision-making and working memory, suggesting that running and fitness might have contributed to keener minds.

Helpfully, as the director of the Aging & Brain Health Alliance at Rutgers, he already was leading an ongoing exercise experiment. Working with local churches and community centres, he and his collabora-

tions systems of creakier, older brains and what effects, if any, the rewiring would have on thinking.

So, for the new study, which was published in January in *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, Mark Gluck, a professor of neuroscience at Rutgers University in Newark, NJ, and his colleagues decided to see what happened inside the brains and minds of much older people if they began to work out.

In particular, he wondered about their medial temporal lobes. This portion of the brain contains the hippocampus and is the core of our memory center. Unfortunately, its inner workings often begin to sputter with age, leading to declines in thinking and memory. But Gluck suspected that exercise might alter that trajectory.

Helpfully, as the director of the Aging & Brain Health Alliance at Rutgers, he already was leading an ongoing exercise experiment. Working with local churches and community centres, he and his collabora-



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tors previously had recruited sedentary, older African-American men and women from the Newark area. The volunteers, most of them in their 60s, visited Gluck's lab for checks of their health and fitness, along with cognitive testing. A few also agreed to have their brain activity scanned.

Some then started working out, while others opted to be a sedentary control group. All shared similar fitness and memory function at the start. The exercise group attended hour-long aerobic dance classes twice a week at a church or community center for 20 weeks.

Gluck and his research associate Neha Sinha, along with other colleagues, invited 34 of those volunteers who had completed an earlier brain scan to return for another. Seventeen of them had been exercising in the meantime; the rest had not. The groups also repeated the cognitive tests.

Then the scientists started comparing and quickly noticed subtle differences in how the exercisers' brains operated. Their scans showed more synchronised activity throughout their medial temporal lobes than among the sedentary group, and this activity was more dynamic. Portions of the exercisers' lobes would light up together and then, within seconds, realign and light up with other sections of the lobe. Such promiscuous synchronising indicates a kind of youthful flexibility in the brain, Gluck says, as if the circuits were smoothly trading dance partners at a ball. The exercisers' brains would "flexibly rearrange their connections," he says, in a way that the sedentary group's brains could not.

Just as important, those changes played out in people's thinking and memories. The exercisers performed better than before on a test of their ability to learn and retain information and apply it logically in new situations. This kind of agile thinking involves the medial temporal lobe, Gluck says, and tends to decline with age. But the older exercisers scored higher than at the start, and those whose brains displayed the most new interconnections now outperformed the rest.

NYT

# Mind & Games

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

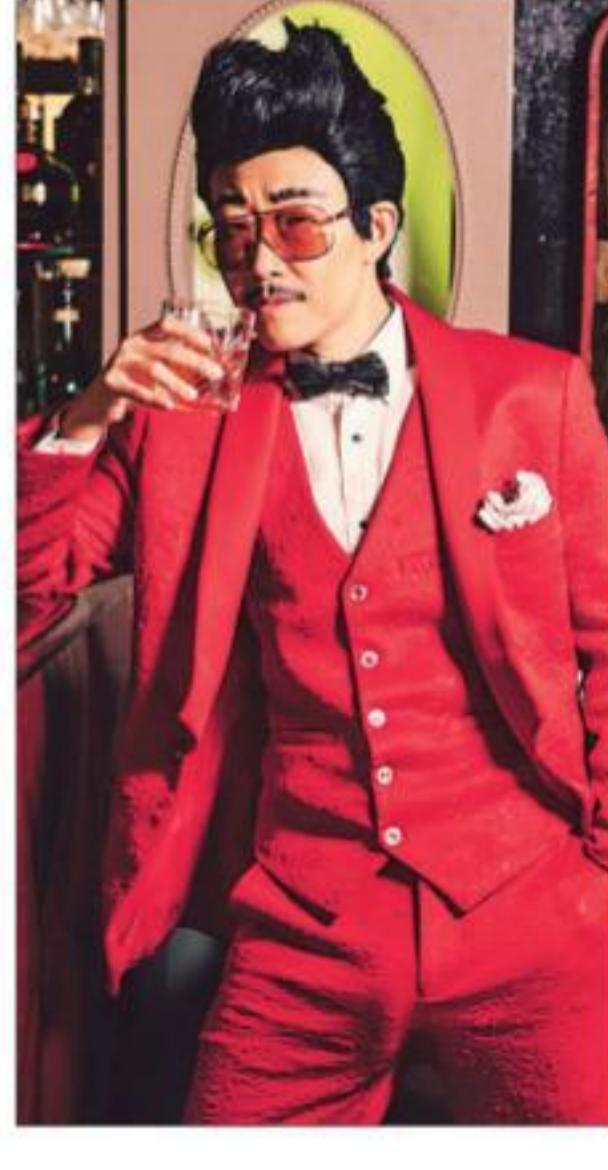
## FRANK DECARO

**T**HIS SHOULD NOT BE a big hairy deal that a 32-year-old Chicago-based drag performer named Tenderoni participated in a recent virtual talent competition, and yet it is truly a reason to wig out. The pageant was called Drag Queen of the Year 2021. But despite a penchant for lip-syncing to Missy Elliott, Tenderoni isn't a drag queen. He's a drag king, which, generally speaking means a performer born female, who takes the stage in men's clothes. He is what was once called a "male impersonator," penciled-on mustache, compressed chest and all. Tenderoni, his creator says, "is a mash-up of Michael Jackson, Bobby Brown, Prince, George Michael and Boy George." It's drag, it's cosplay.

While androgynous costume in this direction is hardly new — Marlene Dietrich famously set libidos afire in top hat and tuxedo in the 1930 movie classic *Morocco* — drag kings tend to be the lesser-exposed and underappreciated segment of drag. Casual fans who get their drag from TV or with a side of waffles at brunch, in fact, may never even have heard of this particular practice. "In the past, many of our audience members didn't understand the concept of drag kings," said Chad Kampe, a producer who has been staging popular drag brunches in Minneapolis since 2012. "We often got questions." Chief among them: "What the heck is a drag king?"

But now that drag has gone mainstream — the Season 13 premiere of *RuPaul's Drag Race* on January 1 drew 1.3 million viewers — performers who exaggerate and explore the tropes of manhood are getting a closer look. Although a king has not yet been featured on *Drag Race* (a trans man named Gottmilk who performs in female drag has), drag kings at last are getting more exposure elsewhere, and surprisingly, the pandemic may have helped. The closing of bars and restaurants has hit most performers' pocketbooks very hard, but the mandated move to online entertainment may have helped level the playing field. "Covid made everyone have to go digital," said Tenderoni, who developed his act at Berlin, a club in Chicago. "That has made the audience for all kinds of drag so much bigger. I've done shows and heard, 'I'm from Brazil,' 'I'm from London.' It has opened the floodgates."

The Drag Queen of the Year pageant takes such diversity as its mandate. "We've worked with trans men and trans women and drag kings and all these different kinds of performers our whole lives," said Alaska 5000, 35, the *RuPaul's Drag Race All-Stars* winner who founded the competition with a fellow drag queen, Lola LaCroix, in 2019. Why, they wondered one sleepless night flying home from a gig, shouldn't such performers all compete against and celebrate each other? "Everyone has something to prove, and everyone brings so much," Alaska 5000 said. "This gives us a seat at the table," said Tenderoni, who started performing in drag less than five years ago. "Drag is a buffet. I don't need to be the main course — I just want to be included."



## Drag kings are ready to rule

**Blurring of gender boundaries has allowed for more freedom in pageants, with performers who explore the tropes of manhood getting a closer look**

Male mimics Vesta Tilley and Hetty King were widely celebrated on British music hall stages of the 19th century. Stormé DeLaVerie, a Stonewall activist who preferred the term "male impersonator" to "drag king," passed for a man while touring America with the Jewel Box Revue in the '50s and '60s. In the '80s, the comedian and actress Lily Tomlin played Tommy Velour, a Las Vegas lounge lizard with more chest hair than talent. He lives on, in all his hirsute glory, on YouTube.

In a June 2000 episode of *Sex and the City* titled *Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl...*, prim Charlotte York (Kristen Davis) is photographed in a mustache and a man's suit, and her portrait is featured in a gallery show. The show used real drag kings, but only as background players. More recently, *Vida*, a Starz show about two Mexican-American sisters, featured the drag king Vico Suave, the creation of Vico Ortiz, a nonbinary actor. Tanya Saracho, the show's creator, said she wanted to include drag kings in the cast because they're an "underrepresented initiative" in queer entertainment. "The artistry is there," she said, asking, "Why are they not part of the mainstream wave

that's happening right now with drag?" Twenty-five years ago, fans had to venture far beyond their living rooms to underground clubs late at night to see drag kings perform. In New York back then, that meant a watering hole like Flamingo East on Second Avenue, in an East Village much rougher than it is today.

"Those early days in the clubs were electric, uncharted and riveting," said Murray Hill, 49, a New York comedian known as the "hardest-working middle-aged man in show business" since his emergence as a

young drag king in 1995. His earliest drag performance was as a "fat sweaty Elvis," to use his words, at 2 am on a Sunday at a party called Club Casanova at a venue called Cake on Avenue C. "It felt very underground," he said.

Mo B Dick, 55, the drag king who ran Club Casanova before decamping for the West Coast in 2004, said that in that era, "it was more about drag king realness. You were passing as a male." Kings were spirit-gumming their own hair clippings to their chins and chests in the name of entertainment. The illusion worked well enough, but such makeovers would be considered underwhelming today. Thanks to the special-effects-grade prosthetics and precision paint jobs seen on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, drag performers of every stripe have had to up their game. "Now when folks go to their local drag bar, they expect to see what they saw on television," said Kampe, the Minneapolis producer, which encourages artists "to continually invest in new looks."

Dick thinks standards have gone up. "These kids today, I'm pleased at how extraordinary they are," he said. "Now, there's more artistry and more makeup. Being a

king is more 'draggy.' The showmanship is phenomenal." At a good brunch, he noted, "Performers now go through three or four costume changes during a one-hour show."

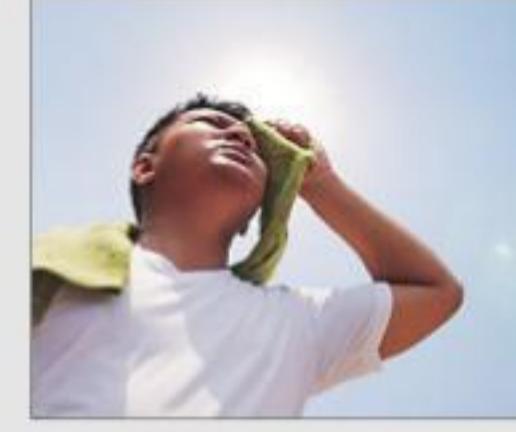
A 2018 all-drag-kings tribute to the boy bands Backstreet Boys and NSync was so popular that Kampe said he had to do six shows to meet the demand. Dick recently created a website, *dragkinghistory.com*, to help new audiences learn about the art form's past. On February 21, he celebrated veteran drag kings with an international online event called "Drag King Legends." The pay-what-you-can show featured stalwart performers like Fudgie Frottage of San Francisco, Flarington King of Toronto and Ken Vegas of Washington, D.C. All have been drag kings for 25 years or more.

Hill, who is perhaps the RuPaul of drag kings, headlined the night. In the coming months, he will appear in roles on three high-profile TV series: Amy Schumer's *Love, Beth* on Hulu, Bridget Everett's *Somebody Somewhere* on HBO, and the American reboot of the British sitcom *This Country*, on which he will play a magician. "A regular character on TV is something I've wanted since I started over 25 years ago," he said. Paul Feig, the producer-director of *Bridesmaids*, *Freaks and Geeks* and *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*, wrote in an email that "I've been a huge fan of Murray's for a while. When Jenny Bicks and I sold *This Country* to Fox, one of my first goals was to get him on it. I love talented people who have their own unique take on the world and will do whatever I can to get them opportunities to shine."

Most drag kings, though, are still fighting an uphill battle. "Kings are rising in popularity in many large American cities, but they aren't provided with the same opportunities as queens," Kampe said.

Live shows often are booked by male promoters who may not appreciate drag king artistry. "Often, a show will feature a dozen queens and only one king," Kampe said. "Drag kings face as much discrimination in the workplace as women, and they often earn less." Another obstacle, Dick notes, is that audiences "don't necessarily see the comedy in a woman putting on a suit. Female masculinity is still scary to some." There's less inherent theatricality and, till now, less glitz to performing in male drag, too; plus, people are more accustomed in everyday life to seeing women in pants than men in skirts. "Doing a male character is so much harder than doing a female character," Alaska 5000 said. "Men are just not as exciting to look at."

But the most exciting drag kings are making do, spectacularly. Landon Cider, 39, a performer in Long Beach, California, for instance, was the first drag king to win an American reality competition when, in 2019, he took home the title of *The World's Next Drag Supermonster* on *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula*, a Netflix series that plays like a goth version of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. "We've been reigning in the darkness this entire time," he said. "Now we have more light shining down on us. If audiences think they're just getting a lesbian in their dad's clothes, I take that as a challenge to show them," says Cider.



### Global warming's double whammy: Heat and humidity

■ Here's one more reason the world should aim to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a goal of the international Paris Agreement: It will help keep the tropics from becoming a deadly hothouse.

■ A recent study suggests that sharply cutting emissions of greenhouse gases to stay below that limit, which is equivalent to about 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit of warming since 1900, will help the tropics avoid episodes of high heat and high humidity — known as extreme wet-bulb temperature, or TW — that go beyond the limits of human survival.

■ The study is in line with other research showing that high heat and humidity are potentially one of the deadliest consequences of global warming.

■ "We know that climate change is making extreme heat and humidity more common," said Robert Kopp, a climate scientist at Rutgers University who was not involved in the study. "And both of those things reduce our ability to live in a given climate."

■ Above a wet-bulb temperature of 35 Celsius, the body can't cool down, as sweat on the skin can no longer evaporate. Prolonged exposure to such conditions can be fatal, even for the healthy. Lower but still high wet-bulb temperatures can affect health in other ways.

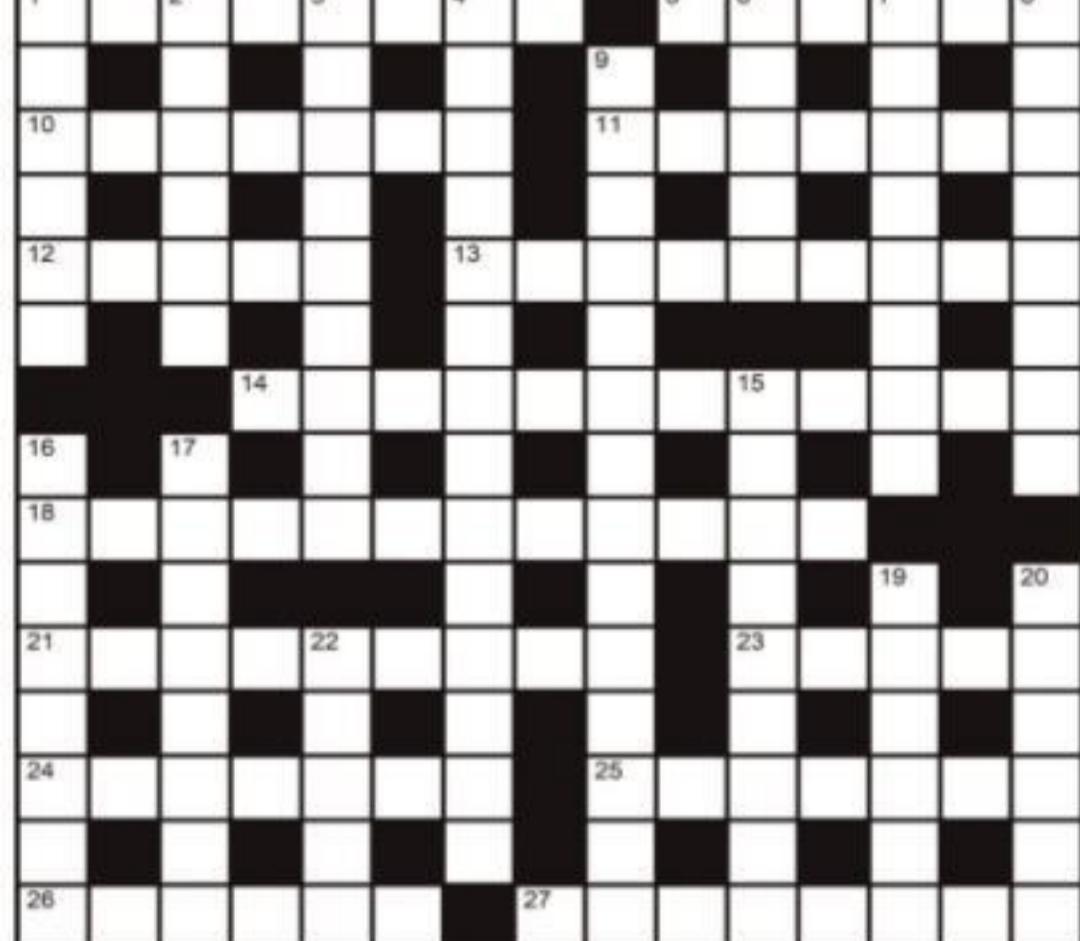
HENRY FOUNTAIN/NYT

## CROSSWORD

## KAKURO

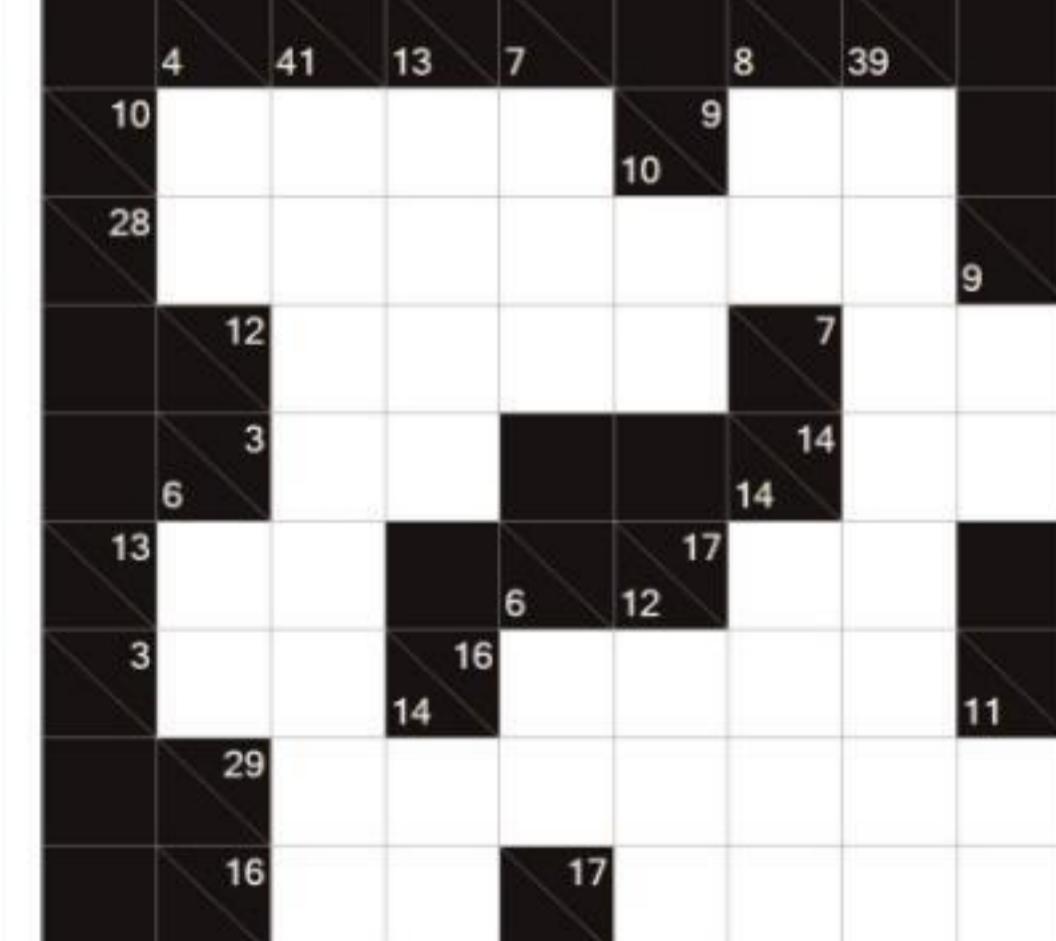
## BRIDGE BOUTS L SUBRAMANIAN

## LEXICON



**ACROSS**  
1 \_\_\_ partner: partner who is not taking active interest in day to day running of a company? (8)  
5 Like some houses (6)  
10 Counterpart of imports (7)  
12 \_\_\_ Thomas: British poet born in Wales in 1914 (5)  
13 2012, 2016, etc (4,5)  
14 Intentionally (12)  
18 Linea manufacturer (4,5,3)  
21 SE in ASEAN (5,4)  
23 African animal related to the giraffe (5)  
24 Remote stronghold (7)  
25 \_\_\_ by: remaining faithful to; acting upon the promise or word given? (7)

26 Despite anything to the contrary (4,2)  
27 Almost destitute or having almost next to nothing (4,4)  
**DOWN**  
1 Rapid (6)  
2 Drives out (6)  
3 Ms Chopra of Bollywood (9)  
4 Manufacturers of Nescafe (6,5,3)  
6 Card game that seems a bit strange? (5)  
7 Casts off, discards or disavows (8)  
8 The exact centre of a target? (5,3)  
9 The commerce between two countries (9,5)  
15 "A" in SAIL (9)  
16 Aban Lyod Group's oil drilling outfit: Aban \_\_\_ Ltd. (8)  
17 Long French loaf



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

**BIZ QUIZ**  
1. India has donated a 'Digital cobalt therapy machine', developed by BARC, to which country?  
2. The National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Non-immigrants (NO BAN) Act has recently been reintroduced in which country?  
3. Which Indian state recently approved a Bill to reserve 75% private jobs for locals?

**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: APS equals TAB  
Pyyagh agiqqlz j yinh jz kqpa to sxzjqhz zj py psixa.  
-Tpdagp Zahkpd  
All the things I love is what my business is all about.  
-Martahe Stewart  
1. Madagascar 2. US  
3. Harryana  
ANSWERS

## WHY COMMIT?

Take the east seat in today's deal from an IMP pairs tournament and see whether you can defeat the declarer.

Dlr: South	S K8 6 4	W	N	E	S
Vul: E-W	H J9 7 6 5 3	-	-	-	1S
	D K7	Pass	2S	dbl?	3S
	C 5	4D	4S	pass	pass
		dbl	All pass		
N S 9 H QT4 D J5 4 3 CA QT8 7					
S					

**Contract:** 4S by south; doubled by west. West leads the D2, lowest from odd.

**Bidding comment:** Without a full-blooded opening hand and with only three cards in the other major, the take-out double is unwarranted.

**Initial play:** Declarer wins the opening lead in dummy with the king and plays a club. You win with the ace. What do you do as east?

**Analysis:** You should realize that partner has doubled with two tricks in his hand, hoping you would provide at least two more, for your take-out double.

**Defence continues:** You should exit in diamond, after winning the club ace. Let us say declarer wins with the ace and tables the ten of spades from his hand. When partner follows with the two, declarer plays small and it wins. He continues with a small spade towards the king. West wins the ace and plays back the jack of spades. Dummy wins and plays a heart. You insert the ten. Declarer puts up the king, and partner wins with the ace. You win partner's heart return with the queen to defeat the contract. The complete hands are:

S K8 6 4
H J9 7 6 5 3
D K7
C 5
S A J 2
H A 2
D Q T 8 6 2
C 6 3 2
N S 9 H QT4 D J5 4 3 C A Q T 8 7
S Q T 7 5 3
H K 8
D A 9
C K J 9 4

S Q T 7 5 3

H K 8

D A 9

C K J 9 4

## HE-VAGE

■ *n.* A man's chest, especially when revealed by an unbuttoned shirt.

Having come of age post-Take That, in an era where JLS leads the way in cheeky winks to camera and male cleavage (the hevage, bulging beneath American Apparel extended V-necks like a beast about to burst from a chest, signifying, in the same way Ridley Scott's phallic birthing alien did, both the masculine and feminine in one single swell), One Direction has got the combination of sex and son down pat.

—Eva Wiseman, "Up front: Eva Wiseman, The Observer, December 12, 2010



**Discussion:** The point of the hand is you should not commit hearts. If you do that, declarer can escape with one loser in the suit, which is what happened at some tables where east got busy and shifted to a heart. Since declarer's heart loser cannot go anywhere, there is no need to shift to a heart. Another important point is not leading the H at trick one, which many west foolishly did. Since you have the trump control, the heart shift can be made later, if required.

## More rules for regulation of OTTs unlikely by govt

In the first level, the grievance would be handled by the publishers/owners of these entities.

In the second level, there would be a self-regulating bodies of publishers/owners to be headed by a retired judge of Supreme Court, or high courts, or eminent person from the domain. If these two levels fail to satisfactorily address the grievances then the matter would be looked into by an oversight mechanism which would comprise an inter-departmental government panel.

## Passengers breaking Covid protocol to be deboarded

The procedure in respect of handling such unruly passengers will be followed by the airline concerned as per the Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR), it added.

Directing the CISF/ police

## From the Front Page

personnel deployed at the entrance of the airport to ensure that no one is allowed to enter the airport without wearing a mask, it said that chief airport security officer and other supervising officers must ensure this personally.

In case any passenger found violating protocols at the airport, they should be handed over to security agencies after proper warnings, directive said. "If required, they may be dealt as per law," the circular added.

### The box office is back in business and Bollywood has plenty to offer

"We are requesting producers to stagger releases so that films do not eat into each other's business," says Kunal Sawhney, senior vice-president, Carnival Cinemas.

The other hurdle with a flurry of releases while occupancy rates are still low, is a short theatrical window, that

is, a short duration between a movie's theatrical release and its digital release. Industry insiders say that producers of movies that have been waiting to hit the screens since last year are negotiating for shorter theatrical windows. Master, for instance, made its OTT premiere on January 29, only about two weeks after its release.

### CEA for growth over inflation

Speaking about realising 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', he said the private sector has to get back to 'subh labh' (ethical profit) and not profiteering as India intends to move out from doing business. He gave examples from healthcare studies for Ayushman Bharat where it was found that rates of the private sector hospitals were 6-7 times higher than those run by the government and that readmission rates in them were also higher.

The chief economic advisor also called for a change in the mindset on how to increase the pie of government taxes instead of seeking its reduction across sectors. He said the cycle of private sector investment will begin though there is a lag and to support it government spending in capex is necessary. The government has already begun it and it will trigger private investment.

### Rising ownership cost hits sales of two-wheelers

Commenting on the retail sales, CARE Ratings said the factors that affected sales during February were rising fuel prices which led to deferment of consumers' decision to purchase a vehicle, shortage of semi-conductors and high container charges, which deterred the production levels of OEMs, imposition of new lockdowns in some cities affecting the sales of price-sensitive entry-

level categories.

The automotive sector also faces the headwind of a consistent rise in commodity prices, which is affecting margins of OEMs, it said.

Motilal Oswal in its research note said the demand for entry-level two-wheeler models remained subdued, whereas the premium segment saw some recovery. The month of February had just one auspicious day for weddings against 10 days during the same month last year. The pain will continue till mid-April, it said.

Nomura said the retail sales were lower than wholesales for two-wheelers while the invent-

tory levels would have remained at 5-6 weeks. In addition, the jump in fuel prices over the past few months, coupled with vehicle price increases earlier, impacted the cost of ownership, it said.

Though the wholesales of two-wheelers had clocked a low double-digit growth of 10.20% in February, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (Siam) said it is still lower than the sales recorded in February 2018.

The two-wheeler whole-sales had declined 17.69% in April-February 2021, compared to April-February 2020 period.

## Despite hacks, US not seeking widened domestic watch

ERIC TUCKER & FRANK BAJAK  
Washington, March 13

**THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION** is not planning to step up government surveillance of the US internet even as state-backed foreign hackers and cybercriminals increasingly use it to evade detection, a senior administration official said.

The official said the administration, mindful of the privacy and civil liberties implications that could arise, is not currently

seeking additional authority to monitor US-based networks. Instead, the administration will focus on tighter partnerships and improved information-sharing with the private-sector companies that already have broad visibility into the domestic internet, said the official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity.

The comment was an acknowledgement of the fraught political debate surrounding domestic government surveillance.

## Nippon India Mutual Fund

Wealth sets you free

### Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited

(Formerly known as Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management Limited)

(CIN - L65910MH1995PLC220793)

Registered Office: 4th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganapatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel (W), Mumbai - 400 013. Tel No. +91 022 6808 7000 • Fax No. +91 022 6808 7097 • mf.nipponindiaim.com

MUTUAL FUNDS Sahi Hai

NOTICE NO. 124

Record Date

March 19, 2021

## DIVIDEND DECLARATION

Notice is hereby given that the Trustee of Nippon India Mutual Fund ("NIMF") has approved declaration of dividend in the undernoted Schemes of NIMF, with March 19, 2021 as the record date:

Name of the Scheme(s)	Dividend (₹ per unit)*	NAV as on March 10, 2021 (₹ per unit) (Except Liquid and Overnight Scheme)
Nippon India Short Term Fund - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	0.0066	14.5544
Nippon India Short Term Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	0.0326	14.8362
Nippon India Low Duration Fund - Retail Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	6.6225	1019.0190
Nippon India Low Duration Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	6.8237	1019.0981
^Nippon India Ultra Short Duration Fund - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	8.5970	1020.8613
^Nippon India Ultra Short Duration Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	9.5073	1013.6741
Nippon India Money Market Fund - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	11.5003	1021.6381
Nippon India Money Market Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	8.8127	1017.0593
Nippon India Income Fund - Dividend Plan - Half Yearly Dividend Option	9.0630	1017.2294
Nippon India Income Fund - Dividend Plan - Half Yearly Dividend Option	0.0059	12.1455
Nippon India Income Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Half Yearly Dividend Option	0.0740	13.0156
Nippon India Income Fund - Dividend Plan - Annual Dividend Option	0.6953	13.1785
Nippon India Income Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Annual Dividend Option	0.8951	14.5456
Nippon India Nivesh Lakshya Fund - Dividend Plan - Half Yearly Dividend Option	0.0632	11.6995
Nippon India Nivesh Lakshya Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Half Yearly Dividend Option	0.0803	11.7203
Nippon India Nivesh Lakshya Fund - Dividend Plan - Annual Dividend Option	0.6410	12.1098
Nippon India Nivesh Lakshya Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Annual Dividend Option	0.6800	12.1502
Nippon India Liquid Fund - Retail Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	6.9035	1219.8067#
Nippon India Liquid Fund - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	7.2095	1008.6634#
Nippon India Liquid Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	7.5609	1010.6902#
Nippon India Overnight Fund - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	0.7025	100.8460#
Nippon India Overnight Fund - Direct Plan - Dividend Plan - Quarterly Dividend Option	0.7232	100.8681#

\*Income distribution will be done/dividend will be paid, net of tax deducted at source, as applicable.

# For Liquid and Overnight scheme NAV as on March 11, 2021 is shown in the above table.

Note: ^NIMF has segregated portfolio in Nippon India Ultra Short Duration Fund. In this regard investor shall note that the details mentioned above pertains to the main portfolio only and do not pertain to the segregated portfolio.

Face value of all the above mentioned Schemes is Rs. 10 per unit except for Nippon India Low Duration Fund, Nippon India Liquid Fund, Nippon India Ultra Short Duration Fund & Nippon India Money Market Fund which is Rs.1000 per unit and Nippon India Overnight Fund which is Rs.100 per unit.

**Pursuant to payment of dividend, the NAV of the Schemes will fall to the extent of payout, and statutory levy, if any.** The dividend payout will be to the extent of above mentioned dividend per unit or to the extent of available distributable surplus, as on the Record Date mentioned above, whichever is lower.

**For units in demat form:** Dividend will be paid to those Unitholders/Beneficial Owners whose names appear in the statement of beneficial owners maintained by the Depositories under dividend plan/option of the Schemes as on record date.

All unit holders under the dividend plan/option of the above mentioned schemes, whose names appear on the register of unit holders on the aforesaid record date, will be entitled to receive the dividend.

**For Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited**  
(Formerly known as Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management Limited)  
(Asset Management Company for Nippon India Mutual Fund)

Sd/-

Authorised Signatory

Mumbai  
March 13, 2021

**Make even idle money work! Invest in Mutual Funds**

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

**Mutual Funds**  
Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund



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

**Record Date for Dividend**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT**, the Trustees of Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund have approved Friday, March 19, 2021\*, as the Record Date for declaration of dividend subject to availability of distributable surplus on the Record Date, in the following scheme:

Name of the Scheme	Plan/Option	Dividend Rate [₹ per unit # on face value of ₹ 10/- per unit]	NAV as on March 12, 2021 (₹)
Aditya Birla Sun Life Arbitrage Fund (An open ended scheme investing in arbitrage opportunities)	Direct Plan – Dividend Option	0.0150	11.1181

**The NAV of the scheme, pursuant to pay out of dividend would fall to the extent of payout and statutory levy (if applicable).**

#As reduced by the amount of applicable statutory levy. \*or the immediately following Business Day if that day is a non-business day.

All unitholders whose names appear in the Register of Unitholders / Beneficial owners under the dividend option of the said scheme as at the close of business hours on the Record Date shall be eligible to receive the dividend so declared.

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

Sd/-  
**Authorised Signatory**

Date : March 13, 2021  
Place : Mumbai

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

**L&T Mutual Fund**  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Brindavan, Plot No. 177  
C. S. T. Road, Kalina  
Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 098

call 1800 2000 400  
email investor.line@lntmf.co.in  
www.ltfs.com



**L&T Financial Services**  
Mutual Fund

**Notice (No. 50 of F.Y. 2020-21)**

**Notice for Declaration of Dividend in certain schemes of L&T Mutual Fund:**

Notice is hereby given that L&T Mutual Fund Trustee Limited, the Trustees to L&T Mutual Fund ("the Fund"), have approved declaration of dividend (subject to adequacy and availability of distributable surplus) under the dividend options of the below mentioned scheme:

Name of the Scheme	Quantum of Dividend (Rs. per unit)	Face Value (Rs. per unit)	Net Asset Value ("NAV") as on March 12, 2021 (Rs. per unit)
L&T Conservative Hybrid Fund - Regular Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.22		11.2084
L&T Conservative Hybrid Fund - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.23		11.8001
L&T Equity Savings Fund - Regular Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.18		13.36
L&T Equity Savings Fund - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.19		14.176
L&T Gilt Fund - Regular Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.25		11.9549
L&T Gilt Fund - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.27		13.1348
L&T Triple Ace Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.20		11.5655
L&T Triple Ace Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.21		11.8818
L&T Triple Ace Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Semi Annual Dividend	0.40		17.1803
L&T Triple Ace Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Semi Annual Dividend	0.45		20.0642
L&T Triple Ace Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Annual Dividend	0.70		12.3257
L&T Triple Ace Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Annual Dividend	0.70		12.3978
L&T Short Term Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.14		11.0181
L&T Short Term Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Quarterly Dividend	0.14		11.6574
L&T Short Term Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Annual Dividend	0.80		13.0935
L&T Short Term Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Annual Dividend	0.85		13.5202
L&T Flexi Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Annual Dividend	0.70		11.4848
L&T Flexi Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Annual Dividend	0.72		11.8712
L&T Low Duration Fund - Regular Plan - Annual Dividend	0.70		11.1871
L&T Low Duration Fund - Direct Plan - Annual Dividend	0.70		11.4276
L&T Resurgent India Bond Fund - Regular Plan - Annual Dividend	0.77		12.0606
L&T Resurgent India Bond Fund - Direct Plan - Annual Dividend	0.80		12.7162

**Pursuant to payment of dividend, NAV per unit of the dividend options of the aforesaid scheme will fall to the extent of the payment and statutory levy (if any).**

**Distribution of the above dividend is subject to the availability and adequacy of distributable surplus and may be lower to the extent of distributable surplus available on the record date.**

**Past performance of the aforesaid scheme may or may not be sustained in future.**

The record date for the purpose of declaration of dividend shall be March 19, 2021 ("the Record date"). The dividend will be paid to those unit holders, whose names appear in the register of unit holders of the aforesaid scheme as at the close of the business hours on the Record Date.

Under the dividend re-investment facility, the dividend declared will be re-invested at the ex-dividend NAV. The payment of dividend shall be subject to Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) as applicable.

Please note that in case the aforesaid Record Date falls on a non-business day, the next business day would be considered as the Record Date.

For **L&T Investment Management Limited**  
(Investment Manager to L&T Mutual Fund)

Date : March 13, 2021  
Place : Mumbai

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

**VIKAS PROPPANT & GRANITE LIMITED**

Corporate Office: F-88/89, Udhog Vihar, RILCO Industrial Area, Sriganagar-335002 (Rajasthan)  
CIN: L14100HR1994PLC036433  
Registered Office: Hisar Road, Siwan - 127046 (Haryana)  
Email: office@vikasgranaries.in, Telephone: 0154-2494319, Fax: 0154-2494361  
Visit our Web Site: www.vpgl.in or www.vikasproppantandgranite.com



**UNAUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS  
FOR THE QUARTER & NINE MONTH ENDED AS ON DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2020**

(₹ in Lacs)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended		Nine months ended		Year ended
		31-Dec-20	30-Sep-20	31-Dec-19	31-Dec-20	
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1.	Total Income from operations (net)	-	940.35	425.85	2,205.01	453.06
2.	Profit/(Loss) from operations before tax and exceptional items	(6.70)	1.09	262.07	432.91	278.63
3.	Profit/(Loss) from operations before tax and after exceptional items	(6.70)	1.09	262.07	432.91	278.63
4.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period/year after Tax	(6.70)	(27.45)	162.70	282.37	259.76
5.	Total Comprehensive income for the period/year	(6.70)	(27.45)	162.70	282.37	259.76
6.	Paid up equity share capital (face value of share of ₹ 1/- each)	5146.75	5,061.75	5,061.75	5146.75	5,061.75
7.	Earnings/(Loss) per share (Not annualized)					
	Basic (₹)	(0.001)	(0.01)	0.03	0.05	0.05
	Diluted (₹)	(0.001)	(0.01)	0.03	0.05	0.05
						0.08

**Notes:-**

1. The above Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter ended December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 ("the Statement") has been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and has been reviewed by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.
2. The previous period's figures have been re-grouped/re-arranged wherever considered necessary.
3. The format of the quarterly financial results is available on the website of Bombay Stock Exchange and the website of the Company ("www.vpgl.in").
4. During the quarter, the Company has allotted 85,00,000 (Eighty Five Lac) Equity Shares having face value of ₹ 1/- each to Vikas Gran Employees Welfare Trust pursuant to Vikas Gran Employees Stock Option Plan 2018 on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at the exercise price of ₹ 1/- each.

Place : Sri Ganganagar

Date : 13.03.2021

For and on behalf of Board of Directors  
Sd/-  
Bimla Devi Jindal  
Managing Director

**"IMPORTANT"**

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**FORM URC-2**

Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI [Pursuant to section 374(b) of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the Companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application is proposed to be made to The Registrar at The Office of the Registrar of Companies, Central Registration Centre, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No.6,7,8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana India 122050 that M/s. SR HOLDINGS a partnership firm may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company private limited by shares.

2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:  
a. To continue and carry on the existing business of M/s. SR HOLDINGS (a partnership firm) on a going concern basis.

3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office 3-6-504/A/1 and A/2, Street Number 7, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Office of the Registrar of Companies, Central Registration Centre, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No.6,7,8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana India 122050 within twenty one days (21 days) from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its office and to the Registrar of Companies, for the State of Telangana, 2nd Floor, Corporate Bhawan, Bandlaguda, Nagole, Tattiananram Village, Hayat Nagar Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Hyderabad-500 068.

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2021

Name of the Applicant  
M/s. SR HOLDINGS  
D VARUN REDDY  
Managing Partner

BIRLA TRANSASIA CARPETS LIMITED

REGD. OFFICE ADDRESS: Plot No.3 & 4 Industrial Area, Sikandrabad, Bulandshah, Uttar Pradesh, 203205

CIN Number: L1722UP1972PLC004772

E-mail address: btclmumbai@rediffmail.com; Tel. No. : 05735-222382/222388

**NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT**

NOTICE is hereby given that we have received the documents for Transfer of Shares (Old Transfer deed 7B) as per below mentioned:

Seller Folio No.	Seller Name	Certificate No.	Distinctive Range from-to	No. of Shares	Buyer Name
L0291	Lalit Kumar Lalubhai Gandhi and Aruna Lalitkumar Gandhi	11735-11739	1250111250400	250	Manish Shah
P0616	Pandurang Krishna Bhat	007705	1080001108025	25	Manish Shah

The public is hereby warned against purchasing or dealing in any way, with the above Share Certificates. Any person(s) who has/have claim(s) in respect of the said Share Certificates should lodge such claim(s) with the Company / RTA i.e. Purva Sharegility (India) Pvt. Ltd. at its registered office at Unit No-

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Be it known to all that my Great Son, Shiv Singh S/o Lt. Sh. Tika Ram and Smt. Ram Shri w/o Sh. Shiv Singh both R/o-B-69, 20 Futa Road, Budhi Vihar Mandoli - Delhi-110093 have severed their all relation with their daughter namely Sonia w/o Deepak Yadav and debt has been incurred on immovable and movable properties. Anyone dealing with her shall do so at one's own risk and consequences.

Atul Trivedi (Advocate)  
Ch. No. E-419, Lawyer's Chamber, E-Block, Karkardooma Court, Shahdara, Delhi

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**Superhouse Limited**

Registered Office : 101, Sector 10, Jagmohar, Kanpur-208010  
CIN: L24231UP1984PLC000001  
Email: share@superhouse.in

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that share certificate no. 95926 (100 shares) in the name of Omprakash Muchhal is reported to be lost. The company will issue duplicate share certificates in lieu of original share certificates, if no objection will be received within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice.

For Superhouse Limited  
Date: 13.03.2021  
Place: Kanpur  
Sd/-  
Secretary

**ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਬੈਂਕ**

...the name you can BANK upon!  
GSAD SECTION, THIRD FLOOR, C-13, SECTOR-1, CIRCLE OFFICE: NOIDA-201301

**NOTICE TO GENERAL PUBLIC**

Due to unavoidable circumstances and operational convenience, it has been decided to merge our Branch Office: B-6, Gamma Shopping Complex, Gamma Sector-1, Jagat Farm Greater Noida -201308 (PNB) with Shop no. 12, Gamma Shopping Complex, Gama Sector- 1, Jagat Farm, Greater Noida (eOBC) on 26.04.2021 (Tentative).

All customers of BO: Gama -1 (PNB) are hereby informed that all bank dealings will be conducted from BO: Gama -1, Shop No. 12 (eOBC) as usual w.e.f 26.04.2021 (Tentative). Inconvenience caused on account of this is regretted.

For any assistance/enquiry kindly contact Branch Head, Sh. Anil Kumar, BO: Gama -1, Greater Noida (PNB) on Mobile No. 9599221157.

Date: 12.03.2021  
Authorized Officer  
Punjab National Bank  
Place : Noida

**FORM G  
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Under Regulation 36A (1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016

**RELEVANT PARTICULARS**

Name of the Corporate Debtor	ARENA SUPERSTRUCTURES PRIVATE LIMITED
Date of incorporation of Corporate Debtor	15.06.2012
Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies, NCT of Delhi and Haryana
Corporate Identity Number/ Limited Liability Identification number of corporate debtor	U70100DL2012PTC237604
Address of the registered office & principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	Flat No. 14, Ground Floor, Puri Pehlai Pur, DDA MIG, Suraj Apartment, New Delhi-110044
Insolvency commencement date of the corporate debtor	29.10.2020 (Order uploaded at website on 02.11.2020)
Date of invitation of expression of interest	14.03.2021
Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code is available at	Eligibility criteria is mentioned in the detailed 'Invitation for Expression of Interest' and can be obtained from Interim Resolution Professional by sending an email at: <a href="mailto:cirp.arena@avmresolution.com">cirp.arena@avmresolution.com</a>
Norms of Ineligibility applicable under section 29A are available at:	Available at the website of IBBI ( <a href="https://ibbi.gov.in/legal-framework">https://ibbi.gov.in/legal-framework</a> ) and also given in the detailed 'Invitation for Expression of Interest'.
Last date for receipt of expression of interest	31.03.2021
Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	10.04.2021
Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	15.04.2021
Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	25.04.2021
Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	15.04.2021
Manner of obtaining request for resolution plan, evaluation matrix, information memorandum and further information	By seeking the same from Interim Resolution Professional through an Email: <a href="mailto:cirp.arena@avmresolution.com">cirp.arena@avmresolution.com</a> Information will be shared in electronic form or by sharing link of virtual data room with the eligible Prospective Resolution Applicants.
Last date for submission of resolution plans	17.05.2021
Manner of submitting resolution plans to resolution professional	In a sealed envelope by post / by hand, hard copy as digital copy, in both editable and non-editable formats in a pen-drive, to the Interim Resolution Professional.
Estimated date for submission of resolution plan to the Adjudicating Authority for approval	22.06.2021
Name and registration number of the resolution professional	Pawan Kumar Singal Reg. No.: IBBI/PA-001/IP-P-01172/2018/2019/12229
Name, Address & e-mail of the resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Pawan Kumar Singal Address: MP-114, Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034 Email: <a href="mailto:pawansingal0@gmail.com">pawansingal0@gmail.com</a>
Address and email to be used for correspondence with the resolution professional	Cirp.arena@avmresolution.com
Further Details are available at or with	Can be sought by an email from Interim Resolution Professional Email: <a href="mailto:cirp.arena@avmresolution.com">cirp.arena@avmresolution.com</a>
Date of publication of Form G	14.03.2021

Sd/- (Pawan Kumar Singal)  
Interim Resolution Professional for Arena Superstructures Private Limited  
Date : 14.03.2021  
Place: New Delhi  
Registration No.: IBBI/PA-001/IP-P-01172/2018/2019/12229  
Registered Address: MP-114, Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034

**DEMAND NOTICE**

Branch : Sun Tower, Sector- 17 C,  
Sukhrali Mahruli Road, Gurugram - 122001

**DEMAND NOTICE**

TO :  
1. MR. RAJENDER KUMAR (RESPONDENT NO. 3)  
ARA MACHINI MOHALLA  
SHAHWAZPUR, BUDUAN-243601  
UTTAR PRADESH  
2. MR. AJAY MITTAL (RESPONDENT NO. 4)  
HOUSE NO. 34, SHEETLAGANJ,  
BULANDSHAHAR- 203001,  
UTTAR PRADESH

3. MR. SANDEEP SINGHAL (RESPONDENT NO. 6)  
SF-14, SHASTRI NAGAR, BLOCK- E & F  
GHAZIABAD- 201001

4. MR. PRADEEP SINGHAL (RESPONDENT NO. 7)  
SF-14, SHASTRI NAGAR, BLOCK- E & F  
GHAZIABAD- 201001

UTTAR PRADESH

WHEREAS, The Pooja Bahry, Resolution Professional of Fourth Dimension Solutions Limited has filed I.A. No. 2158/2020 under Section 43, 45 and 66 read with Section 25(2)(h) of IBC, 2016 and whereas, the Hon'ble NCLT, New Delhi, Court II issued notice on the concerned parties including you the above-named on 11.11.2020 and 01.03.2021. That vide order dated 11.11.2020 and 01.03.2021 the Hon'ble NCLT has permitted the undersigned to serve you the Addressee through substituted service.

TAKE NOTICE that the above-captioned matter will now be listed on 17.03.2021 before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi Court II. You may either appear in person or through your Authorized Representative.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, the Application will be heard and determined in your absence.

For Fourth Dimension Solutions Limited

**Classifieds**

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**TRUMP REGIME POLICY****Biden admin to reconsider objections to H-1B visas**

LALIT K JHA  
Washington, March 13

**THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION** has said it is willing to reconsider the objections or adverse decisions to foreign workers on visas like H-1B, the most sought after among Indian IT professionals, due to the three policy memos by the previous Trump regime which have been rescinded.

The move is expected to come to the rescue of a large number of Indian IT professionals who were having a tough time during the previous Trump administration due to various policies and memorandums on

non-immigrant work visas, in particular the H-1B.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Friday announced "it may reopen and/or reconsider adverse decisions" on Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, made based on



three rescinded policy memos.

The USCIS said it will generally use its discretion to accept a motion to reopen filed more than 30 days after the decision, if filed before the end of the validity period requested on the petition or labour condition application, whichever is earlier, and the decision was based on one or more policies in the three rescinded H-1B memoranda.

On June 17, 2020, the USCIS issued Policy Memorandum 602-0114, which officially rescinded two prior policy memoranda. First titled "Determining Employer-Employee Relationship for Adjudication of H-1B Petitions, Including Third-Party Site Placements," that was issued on January 8, 2010; and second "Contracts and Itineraries Requirements for H-1B Petitions Involving Third-Party Worksites," issued on February 22, 2018.

On February 3, 2021, USCIS issued Policy Memorandum 602-0142.1, which officially rescinded PM-602-0142,

"Rescission of the December 22, 2000 'Guidance memo on H-1B computer related positions,'" issued on March 31, 2017. Both Policy Memorandum 602-0114 and Policy Memorandum 602-0142.1 state that they apply to "any pending or new (H-1B Petitions), including motions on and appeals of revocations and denials of H-1B classification." The USCIS said a petitioner may request that it reopen and/or reconsider adverse decisions based on the three rescinded policy memos by properly filing Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion,

accompanied by the appropriate fee. In addition, the USCIS has the discretionary authority to accept and consider untimely motions under certain circumstances as explained in the form instructions and permitted by regulation. "Petitioners who received an adverse decision on an H-1B petition based on the now-rescinded policy memoranda should consider whether there is time remaining in the validity period requested on the previously filed H-1B petition and the relevant labour condition application," the USCIS said.

—PTI

**Sullivan: Quad leaders discuss 'challenge' posed by China**

**US National security advisor** said 4 leaders have agreed to hold an in-person summit later this year



US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan

**The leaders addressed key regional issues, including freedom of navigation and freedom from coercion in the South and East China seas, the North Korea nuclear issue and the coup and violent repression in Myanmar, Sullivan said**

Addressing a White House briefing soon after the historic virtual Quad summit between US President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, the top American official said the four leaders have agreed to hold an in-person summit later this year.

The leaders addressed key regional issues, including freedom of navigation and freedom from coercion in the South and East China seas, the North Korea nuclear issue and the coup and violent repression in Myanmar, Sullivan said.

"Over the course of the meeting, a sense of optimism for the future, despite the hard times we're in, was on full display. The four leaders did discuss the challenge posed by China, and they made clear that none of them have any 'illusions' about Beijing," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has said.

In a joint statement, the Quad leaders pledged to strengthen cooperation on the "defining challenges of our time."

"We bring diverse perspectives and are united in a shared vision for the free and open Indo-Pacific. We strive for a region that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion," said the joint statement titled "The Spirit of the Quad."

Sullivan said the four leaders also spoke to the competition of models between autocracy and democracy and expressed their confidence that despite setbacks and imperfections, democracy is the best system to deliver for people and to meet the economic, social and technological challenges of the 21st century, he said.

"This is our effort to communicate clearly to the Chinese government how the United States intends to proceed at a strategic level, what we believe our fundamental interests and values are, and what our concerns with their activities are whether it's on Hong Kong, or Xinjiang, or in the Taiwan Strait or, frankly, the issues that we heard today from our Quad partners: their coercion of Australia, their harassment around the Senkaku Islands, their aggression on the border with India," Sullivan said.

The Quad summit took place as the China and India are involved in a military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh since

the Politburo of the ruling Communist Party of China and State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yinan Anchorage, Alaska on March 18-19.

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Sullivan, who along with the Secretary of State Antony Blinken are scheduled to meet their Chinese counterparts Yang Jiechi, a member of

the Politburo of the ruling Communist Party of China and State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yinan Anchorage, Alaska on March 18-19.

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**US authorisation for AstraZeneca vaccine this month or early next: Sources**

REUTERS  
Chicago, March 13

**ASTRAZENECA PLC IS** preparing to file for US emergency use authorisation (EUA) for its Covid-19 vaccine later this month or early April after accumulating enough data to judge the inoculation's efficacy, sources with knowledge of the ongoing clinical trial told Reuters. The British drug maker completed enrolment in its trial of more than 32,000 volunteers in January and now has data on at least 150 cases of Covid-19,

### Antibodies raised by vaccines less effective against some virus variants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Boston, March 13

May last year. After lengthy rounds of talks, the two sides simultaneously withdrew troops from the Pangong Lake area last month while talks are on for the withdrawal of soldiers from the rest of the friction points along the LAC.

In a joint statement, the Quad leaders pledged to strengthen cooperation on the "defining challenges of our time."

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two sources familiar with the trial told Reuters. The number of Covid-19 cases among those who got the vaccine versus infections in participants who received a placebo will show how effective the AstraZeneca shot was at preventing illness in those aged 18 and over. The AstraZeneca vaccine, developed in collaboration with Oxford University, has been authorised for use in the European Union and many countries but not yet by US regulators. "The US Phase III study results are necessary for the FDA's evaluation of an EUA

request for our vaccine," a company spokeswoman said, without confirming trial details. "We expect data from our US Phase III trial to be available soon, in the coming weeks, and we plan to file for emergency use authorisation shortly thereafter."

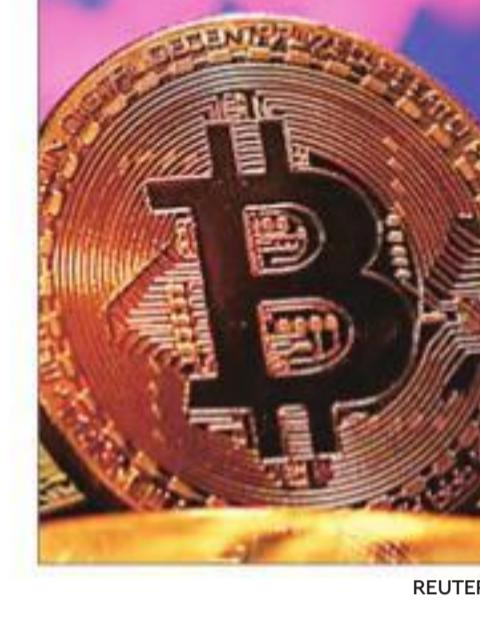
Highly anticipated results from the US trial could help settle safety concerns arising over reports of serious blood clots in some vaccine recipients that have led several nations to pause administering the vaccine.

**Bitcoin hits record high; trades as high as \$59,755**

REUTERS  
March 13

**BTC**ON, THE WORLD'S biggest cryptocurrency, on Saturday reached a record high, trading up to \$59,755. Bitcoin is up more than 2% from its previous year high of \$58,354.14 on Feb. 21.

Bitcoin's price soared this year as major firms, such as BNY Mellon, asset manager BlackRock Inc, credit card giant Mastercard Inc, backed cryptocurrencies, while those such as Tesla Inc Square Inc and MicroStrategy Inc invested in bitcoin.



REUTERS

NOTICE BY WAY OF SUBSTITUTED SERVICE UNDER RULE 38 OF NCLT RULES, 2016 READ WITH ORDER V RULE 20 OF CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE, 1908 IN THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, NEW DELHI, COURT II AMERICAN EXPRESS BANKING CORPORATION V. FOURTH DIMENSION SOLUTIONS LIMITED I.A. NO. 2158 OF 2020 IN C.P. (I)-1232/ND/2019 TO, 1. MR. REDHEX IT SOLUTIONS PVT LTD. (RESPONDENT NO. 8) FLAT NO. 211, 2ND FLOOR, MEGHDOOT, 94, NEHRU PLACE, NEW DELHI-110019 2. NOVUS IT SOLUTIONS LIMITED (RESPONDENT NO. 9) 312-A, 3RD FLOOR, VISHAL TOWER, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-110058 WHEREAS Ms. Pooja Bahri, Resolution Professional of Fourth Dimension Solutions Limited has filed I.A. No. 2158/2020 under Section 43, 45 and 66 read with Section 25(2)(j) of IBC, 2016 and whereas, the Hon'ble NCLT, New Delhi, Court II issued notice on the concerned parties including you the above-named on 11.11.2020 and 01.03.2021 that vide order dated 11.11.2020 and 01.03.2021 the Hon'ble NCLT has permitted the undersigned to serve you the Addressee through substituted service.

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For Fourth Dimension Solutions Limited

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TO, 1. MR. RAJENDER KUMAR (RESPONDENT NO. 3) ARA MACHINE MOHALLA SHAHWAZPUR, BUDJUAN-243601 UTTAR PRADESH 2. MR. AJAY MITTAL (RESPONDENT NO. 4) HOUSE NO. 34, SHEETLAGANJ, BULANDSHAHR- 203001, UTTAR PRADESH

3. MR. SANDEEP SINGHAL (RESPONDENT NO. 6) SF-14, SHASTRI NAGAR, BLOCK- E & F GHAZIABAD- 201001 UTTAR PRADESH

4. MR. PRADEEP SINGHAL (RESPONDENT NO. 7) SF-14, SHASTRI NAGAR, BLOCK- E & F GHAZIABAD- 201001 UTTAR PRADESH

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Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2021

M/s. ANMITHA VENTURES LLP MADANA MOHANA REDIY MUDDIPUDI Designated Partner

Name of the Applicant

FORM URC-2 Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI [Pursuant to section 374(b) of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the Companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with applicable Rules if any, an application is proposed to be made to The Registrar at The Office of the Registrar of Companies, Central Registration Centre, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6.7.8, Sector 5, I.M.T. Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana India 122050 that M/s. ANMITHA VENTURES LLP a LLP may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company private limited by shares.

2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:

a. To continue and carry on the existing business of M/s. ANMITHA VENTURES LLP (a LLP) on a going concern basis.

3. A copy of the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at Plot 25 A, Journalist Colony, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana, 500033 IN.

4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Office of the Registrar of Companies, Central Registration Centre, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6.7.8, Sector 5, I.M.T. Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana India 122050 within twenty one days (21) days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its office and to the the Registrar of Companies, for the State of Telangana, 2nd Floor, Corporate Bhawan, Bandlaguda, Nagole, Tattianaram Village, Hayat Nagar Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Hyderabad-500 068.

Name of the Applicant

M/s. ANMITHA VENTURES LLP MADANA MOHANA REDIY MUDDIPUDI Designated Partner

Date of filing

For Fourth Dimension Solutions Limited

Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantors	Amount due as per notice	Description of Properties	Reserve Price EMD A/C Details
1. M/s Aligarh Agency Aligarh Add.: Shop No. 27 Harayana Complex Opp. Pt. Deen Dayal Hospital Quarshi Ramghat Road Aligarh, 2. Imran Khan S/o Sri Bundu Khan Add.: H- No. 4076 Raj Nagar Quarshi Ramghat Road, Aligarh, 3. Anwar Khan S/o Sri Bundu Khan Add.: No-4092 Raj Nagar Quarshi Ramghat Road, Aligarh Mortagator/Guarantor-Smt. Munni Begum W/o Bundu Khan Raj Nagar Quarshi Ramghat Road, Aligarh	₹ 15,48,385.77 as on 12-03-21 + int. & other charges	Residential property situated at Part of Khasra No. 89 & 90 Raja Nagar Near Jeevan Garh Aligarh, Area-83.61 sq. mtr., in the name of Smt. Munni Begum W/o Bundu Khan Bounded as: East-House of Achhan Khan, West-Ramghat Road, North-Ramgat road, Other property	₹ 14,47,000/- Alc No 1331295000003 IFSC Code CNRB001331
Borrower- Shri Mahi Pal Singh S/o Ramal Singh Guarantor- Sh. Pushpendra Kumar S/o Mahipal Singh Add. of All: Vill- Balram Pur (Nagla) PO-Adau, Aligarh	₹ 49,82,100.51 as on 12-03-21 + int. & other charges	Dairy project property (Abadi Land) Khatauni No. 567, Khasra No. 1157, situated at Vill. Adau, Teh. Koil, Distt. Aligarh, Area-53.92 sq mtr., in the name of Sh. Mahipal Singh, Bounded as: East-Khet of Gajendra Pal Singh, West-Road, North-Chakroad there after khet of Ramveer Singh, South-Khet of Vendor	₹ 58,53,000/- A/C No. 1331295000003 IFSC Code CNRB001331
Borrower- M/s Jashoda Enterprises Through Its Prop. Mr. Bablu S/o Gulab Singh, Guarantor- Mrs. Jashoda Devi W/o Shri Bablu Mahour Add. of All: 1018 Sarai			