

on Sunday



IAS officer arrested for scribe's death in accident
page 8



U.S. bars Air India from self-handling at five airports
page 11



Hong Kong protesters seize roads, ignoring China's warnings
page 12

Saini proves too hot for WI batsmen, India wins first T20I
page 17



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Doctors told to return to work or face action

NEW DELHI
The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Safdarjung Hospital and others on Saturday directed their doctors on strike to resume work immediately or face disciplinary action. The doctors have been agitating for the past three days against the National Medical Commission Bill, 2019.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 11
MAGAZINE ▶ 32 PAGES (TABLOID)
CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGES 4 & 6

Adeeb returns home, held with India's help

SUHASINI HAIDAR HARIPRASAD RADHAKRISHNAN
NEW DELHI/THOOTHUKUDI

The dramatic escape of former Maldivian Vice President Ahmed Adeeb in a tugboat to seek asylum in India came to an end on Saturday with him being taken back to Male by the Maldivian police after his arrest on international waters. Sources in the Government of India made it clear that Mr. Adeeb had not been deported by India but merely refused entry.

COAST GUARD'S ROLE ▶ PAGE 11

Despite the outrage, Unnao bats for rape-accused Kuldeep Sengar

Villagers speak of once close ties having gone sour between families

OMAR RASHID UNNAO
A posse of CRPF troops and Uttar Pradesh policemen are spread out outside the abandoned family home of the Unnao rape survivor. An advertisement on the door speaks of the wiring business run by the uncle of the young woman who remains on life support at the King George's Medical University in Lucknow.

It is an eerily quiet afternoon, and only a few people are outside their homes.

Across the road stands a large white house with a

sizeable temple area and a private school adjoining the compound. This belongs to the expelled BJP MLA and rape accused Kuldeep Singh Sengar.

SPECIAL

The sprawling compound is a testament to Sengar's dominant position in the village, located 75 km west of Lucknow.

The MLA, now at Sitapur jail, is charged with raping the young woman, the custodial death of her father and allegedly plotting the



At work: Officials of the CBI arriving to interrogate expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar at Sitapur jail on Saturday in connection with the accident. ▶ PTI

car collision in Rae Bareilly, which resulted in serious injuries to the survivor and her lawyer and the death of her two aunts.

While the outside world outrages at the alleged crimes, which are being investigated by the CBI, and the delay in action against

the accused MLA by the BJP, in his maternal village he still garners sympathy. Many residents feel he is being falsely implicated due

CBI questions MLA in jail

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday questioned expelled BJP MLA and rape accused Kuldeep Singh Sengar in Sitapur jail in connection with the accident in which the rape survivor and her lawyer were critically injured and her two aunts killed.

The 19-year-old survivor, who is on ventilator support, remains critical as she has

developed pneumonia, doctors at the King George's Medical University in Lucknow said. Her lawyer has been taken off the ventilator, but is still not out of danger.

The CBI has deputed several teams to speed up the investigation following the Supreme Court's order that the probe be completed in a fortnight. ▶ PAGE 10

verdict in the case. Those who spoke up did so in defence of the jailed MLA.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Home Ministry's nod for terror prosecutions peaked in June

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry sanctioned prosecution of over 400 terror suspects in the past three years, with the maximum number granted in June this year.

An analysis of the sanction of prosecutions under UAPA between June 2016 and June 2019 shows an average of 11 sanctions every month.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

On the fast track

The Home Ministry cleared action against 400 terror suspects in 3 years. The maximum clearances were given in June 2019

Month/year and the number of prosecutions sanctioned:		
June 2019: 44	August 2018: 16	April 2017: 27
May 2019: 12	April 2018: 7	March 2017: 9
April 2019: 19	March 2018: 23	December 2016: 10
March 2019: 21	February 2018: 9	November 2016: 7
February 2019: 31	January 2018: 2	September 2016: 2
January 2019: 19	November 2017: 6	August 2016: 6
November 2018: 17	August 2017: 22	July 2016: 38
September 2018: 23	June 2017: 7	June 2016: 28

Uncertainty grips Kashmir Valley

Troop deployment purely a security issue, Governor Malik tells NC delegation

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR

Even as Governor Satya Pal Malik on Saturday said he had "no knowledge of any constitutional changes being made in Jammu and Kashmir", there was no let-up in the implementation of fresh security orders, adding to the uncertainty. "The State has no knowledge of any changes to constitutional provisions," Mr. Malik told a National

Conference (NC) delegation, led by its vice-president Omar Abdullah, in Srinagar.

"A pure security measure is being mixed up with issues with which it has no connection," he asserted.

On the evacuation of pilgrims and tourists, Mr. Malik said they were vulnerable in case of any terrorist or fidayeen attack.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10



Amarnath pilgrims leaving following the government advisory in Srinagar on Saturday. ▶ ANI

Cong. seeks PM's statement

The Congress on Saturday demanded a statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament on the Central and Jammu and Kashmir governments' advisory to curtail the Amarnath Yatra and on the deployment of additional troops in the State. ▶ PAGE 10

Rahul's IAS Coaching Institute for Judicial Services Exams.

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LAW
English & Hindi Medium

"Rahul's IAS at its best"
Exceptional, unmatched... unparalleled!!!

644 final selections from Rahul's IAS in Judicial Services, with 12 First Rankers, in the last 2 yrs. alone, apart from thousands of our earlier overall (Judicial, APO, Law officers, etc.) selections over the last almost two decades. In 2019, Jan. - July results alone, we have 27 final selections in Delhi Judiciary (Jan.), 22 final selections in M.P. Judiciary, one final selection (2nd Rank) in Assam Judiciary & 6 final selections (including 1st Rank) in Gujarat Judiciary, 2 final selections in Jharkhand HJS (including 1st Rank), One final selection (668th Rank) in UPSC-IAS, 95 final selections in Delhi Judiciary (May), 2 final selections in H.P. Judiciary & 2 final selections (including 1st Rank) in Tripura Judiciary, 227 final selections (including 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 10th Ranks from Foundation Course) (more than 1/3rd of total selections) in Uttar Pradesh Judiciary, 1 final selection in UP HJS & 1 final selection in Bihar HJS.

We have a record success in Delhi & UP Judiciary, 2019: 27 Final Selections from Rahul's IAS, out of 32 Total selections (85% approx.) in Jan., 2019 Delhi results and 95 out of total 126 selections (75% approx.) in May, 2019 Delhi results and 227 final selections (more than 1/3rd) in UP Judiciary, 2019.

"Hard work, sincerity, honesty, consistency, perseverance, compassion and determination are the key to success."
Just do it. God bless you."
...Rahul Sir.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019 : 387 SELECTIONS ALREADY (TILL DATE)

DELHI JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 (MAY) - 95 Selections out of 126

DELHI JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 (JAN.) - 27 Selections out of 32

M.P. JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 - 22 Selections.

GUJARAT JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019

ASSAM JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS 2019

* TS & IGP - Attended Mains Answer Writing Skills & Feedback Special Sessions - P.T. & Mains Full Test Series & Interview Guidance Programme.
* IGP - Attended Interview Guidance Session - Special Lectures on Concepts & Interview related conduct + Mock Sessions by Retd. H.C. & Session Judges + Latest Case Laws.

The Registration for English Medium Judiciary Batches for Nov. 2019 to March 2020, will start online from 24th of Sept., 2019 at 10:00 a.m. (through our website www.rahulsias.com) Admissions can be taken directly by visiting our office in Delhi, or 'Online' at our website : www.rahulsias.com.

Join the specially designed objective and subjective test series for the forthcoming Judicial exams.

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English & Hindi Medium

UTTAR PRADESH JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 - 227 Selections out of 610.

Grid of 227 candidates with names, ranks, and photos.

Office: B-13, 1st Floor, Commercial Complex, (Above HDFC Bank ATM) Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-9
Eng. Med. Classroom & Office: 14-1, 1st & 2nd Floor, Westpark Industrial Area, Ring Road, Near Shalimar Bagh Metro Station Gate No. 3, Delhi-52
Ph. : 011-27654216, 27655845, 9811195920, 9811197581 10AM to 6:30 PM

OFFICE OPEN FROM 10 AM TILL 6:30 PM (MON-SAT)
SUNDAY CLOSED

We don't have any branches.



Congratulations Deoli!

Laying of Water Pipeline in 13 Unauthorised Colonies of Deoli Assembly Constituency starts

Inauguration Ceremony

Sunday, 4 August, 2019 at 4:00 PM

Venue: Shri Ram Barat Ghar, Bandh Road, Sangam Vihar, Delhi

“We will make Delhi the best city in the world”

- **Arvind Kejriwal**
Chief Minister, Delhi

Highlights of the project:

- The project will benefit about 2 lakh residents of the area
- Total Cost of the project is Rs. 14.4 Crores

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

Urban Development Department
Government of NCT of Delhi

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

Illegal scrap plastic market on defence land cleared

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI The Delhi Pollution Control Committee on Saturday cleared an illegal plastic scrap market on a 10-acre defence land in Jahangirpuri.

DU teachers condemn 'attack' on syllabus

Syllabi of four subjects referred back to respective depts. AARUSHI AGGARWAL NEW DELHI Over 80 English teachers across Delhi University colleges issued a statement on Saturday over what they termed a "politically motivated attack on a democratically drafted syllabus".

One dead, two injured as truck falls off flyover

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI A 45-year-old man died while two others were injured when the truck they were travelling in fell off a flyover in central Delhi's IP Estate on Saturday.

Class VI boy found dead in pond

His father lodged complaint after he did not return from school. STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI A 12-year-old boy was found dead in a pond in south Delhi's Fatehpur Beri on Saturday morning, the police said.

Family of accident victim gets ₹11.81 lakh

NIRNIMESH KUMAR NEW DELHI A Motor Accident Claims Tribunal has awarded a compensation of ₹11.81 lakh to the family of a Nepali citizen who was killed in a road accident in Uttarakhand in 2017.

Man found dead with head injury

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI A man was found murdered with a head injury in east Delhi's Ghaziपुर on Saturday morning, the police said.

Senior citizen killed in road accident; driver on the run

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI A 61-year-old man was killed when his two-wheeler was hit by an unknown vehicle in Dwarka on Saturday morning, the police said.

NORTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (M-II) ZONAL BUILDING, NARELA, DELHI-110040 NIT No. E.E.(M-II)/NDMC/2019-20/3.14 Dated:-01.08.2019

SOUTHERN RAILWAY (CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION) E-TENDER

NOTICE NO. 25-CECNMS-19-20-MSB-KOK-4 DATED 02-08-2019 NOTICE NO. 26-CECNMS-19-20-A-SUR-116 DATED 02-08-2019 For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal www.reps.gov.in.

Bharat Nirman through Rural Roads Chief Engineer (Kangra Zone) HPPWD Dharamshala H.P., 176215

BHARAT NIRMAN UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice

The Government of India has received a loan/credit number "P124639" under PMGSY (Rural Road Project) Rural Roads Financing towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works.

Table with 8 columns: Division, Package No, Name of the Work, Estimated Cost (Rs Lacs), Total Cost (Rs Lacs), Period of completion (Months), Bid Security (Rs), and Bid Security (Rs). Rows include Chamba HP-02-289, Chamba HP-02-288, Bhamour HP-02-299, Bhamour HP-02-318, and Bhamour HP-02-319.

Other details can be seen in the bidding document. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder.

Submission of all physical documents will be accepted only up to or before the time and date of submission of bids. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.

Last Date/ Time and place for receipt of bids through e-procurement- Bids can be submitted online from Date 08 Month 08 Year 2019 to Date 28 Month 08 Year 2019 upto 1700 Hours and will be opened on Date 30 Month 08 Year 2019 at 1130 Hours in the office of Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, HPPWD, Dalhousie.

For further details please log on to https://pmgsytendershp.gov.in

The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons there-of. Sd/- Chief Engineer, Kangra Zone, H.P.P.W.D., Dharamshala-176215. Fax:011892-223100. Tel: 011892-224948.

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited PUBLIC NOTICE

M/s. BSES Rajdhani Power Limited ("Petitioner") filed Petition for True-up of FY 2017-18 ARR for FY 2019-20 for Distribution (Wheeling & Retail Supply) Business which was admitted by Hon'ble Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission vide Order dated 21.02.2019.

After having considered the above, the Hon'ble Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, vide its Press Release dated 31.07.2019, in exercise of the power vested in it by the Electricity Act, 2003 and the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and Conditions for Determination of Wheeling Tariff and Retail Supply Tariff) Regulations have approved a new Tariff Schedule to be applicable from 01.08.2019.

TARIFF SCHEDULE

The Tariff Schedule shall remain in force till new Tariff Order comes in place and/or amended, reviewed or modified in accordance with the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the Regulations made thereunder.

Table with 5 columns: S. No., Category, Fixed Charges, and Energy Charges. Rows include DOMESTIC (1.1, 1.2), NON-DOMESTIC (2.1, 2.2), INDUSTRIAL (3), AGRICULTURE (4), MUSHROOM CULTIVATION (5), PUBLIC UTILITIES (6), DELHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LTD. (DIAL) (7), ADVERTISEMENTS AND HOARDINGS (8), TEMPORARY SUPPLY (9), CHARGING STATIONS FOR E-RICKSHAW/ E-VEHICLE ON SINGLE POINT DELIVERY (10), and Supply at LT (10.1, 10.2) and HT (10.2).

- Notes 1. For domestic category of consumers, fixed charges shall be levied on sanctioned load or the contract demand as the case may be. 2. For all categories other than Domestic, Fixed Charges are to be levied based on billing demand per kW/kVA or part there of.

Table with 5 columns: Month, Peak Hours, Surcharge on Energy Charges, Off-Peak Hours, and Rebate on Energy Charges. Row: May - September, 1400 - 1700 Hrs. & 2200 - 0100 Hrs., 20%, 0400-1000 Hrs., 20%.

- 4. Rebate of 3%, 4% & 5% on the Energy Charges for supply at 11kV, 33/66kV and 220kV shall be applicable. 5. Maintenance Charges on street lights, wherever maintained by DISCOMs, shall be payable @Rs.84/light point/month and material cost at the rate of Rs. 19/light point/month as per the Commission's Order dated 22nd September 2009 in addition to the specified tariff.

Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC11527 Telephone No.: +91 11 39999707 | Fax No.: +91 11 39999890 | Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy to very heavy rain likely at isolated places over Goa, central Maharashtra, Gujarat, east Rajasthan, Odisha, Kerala, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand

Table with 6 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN, CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists rainfall and temperature data for various cities like Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, etc.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Table with 6 columns: CITIES, SO, NO, CO, PM2.5, PM10, CODE. Shows air quality data for cities like Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, etc.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI) SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system...

Heavy rain brings Mumbai to its knees, again

Commuters were the worst-hit as rail, road and air travel came to a halt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI Incessant rain that lashed the city since Friday night threw life out of gear again.

Trains suspended Train services were completely suspended from 1.55 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., after which trains were run up to Kurla and from Dadar to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus...

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) recorded 52.2 mm rainfall at the Colaba observatory and 83.8 mm at the Santacruz observatory till 8.30 p.m. on Saturday.

The Western line did not witness much delays. However, on the Harbour line, a part of the footover bridge between Chembur and Govandi stations collapsed on the overhead wires...

Water logging was recorded in Sion, Wadala, Chembur, Vidyavihar and Ghatkopar in the central and eastern suburbs...

Civics officials said the Mithi crossing the danger mark, combined with the high tide of 4.9 m, resulted in severe waterlogging on the tracks between the Kurla and Sion stations.

After Vadodara, it's now the turn of Surat and other southern Gujarat districts to be battered, prompting the State administration to deploy an NDRF team in Bharuch and shift people from vulnerable locations as extremely heavy rain is predicted.

South Gujarat battered by heavy rain

In less than six hours on Saturday, Olpad taluka in Surat received 298 mm of rain while Umerpada got 204 mm...

Mangrol in Surat received 269 mm rainfall in the 24 hours till 8 a.m. on Saturday, as per the State Emergency Operation Centre data.

Unlikely visitor: A crocodile being rescued by an NDRF team from Vadodara, Gujarat on Saturday.

'Martyrs week' passes off peacefully this year

Security personnel continued strikes on their hideouts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD After Vadodara, it's now the turn of Surat and other southern Gujarat districts to be battered...

Traffic at King's Circle, Antop Hill, Hindmata junction, Samajmandir Hall, Pratiksha Nagar, Vihar lake, Sheetal Cinema, Kurla, Oberoi junction, Malad and several other areas had to be rerouted.

Civics officials said the Mithi crossing the danger mark, combined with the high tide of 4.9 m, resulted in severe waterlogging on the tracks between the Kurla and Sion stations.

After Vadodara, it's now the turn of Surat and other southern Gujarat districts to be battered, prompting the State administration to deploy an NDRF team in Bharuch and shift people from vulnerable locations as extremely heavy rain is predicted.

Seven Maoists killed in Chhattisgarh

Rifles, other weapons recovered

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL Seven Maoists were gunned by the police on Saturday in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh.

Based on intelligence inputs, District Reserve Guard (DRG) personnel, part of a special operations team of the Rajnandgaon police, around 7 a.m. attacked 40 Maoists in Sailpar forest in Sitagota village...

On July 28, seven Maoists were killed at Tiriya in Bastar district by a DRG and special task force team.

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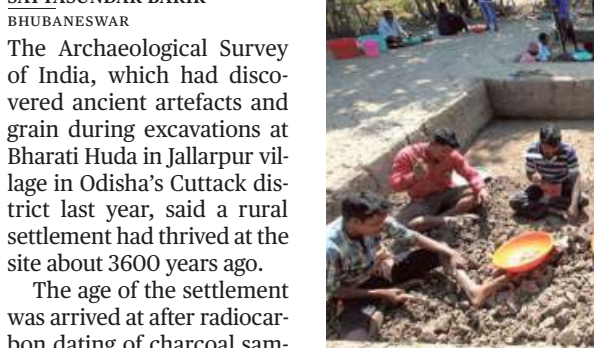
Odisha delta site is 3,600 years old

Remains reveal rural settlement with proto-sun worship, domesticated cattle

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR The Archaeological Survey of India, which had discovered ancient artefacts and grain during excavations at Bharati Huda in Jallarpur village in Odisha's Cuttack district last year, said a rural settlement had thrived at the site about 3600 years ago.

The age of the settlement was arrived at after radiocarbon dating of charcoal samples found at the site by the Inter University Accelerator Centre (IUAC) in New Delhi using Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS).

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History unravels: A mud wall structure is seen during the excavation at Jallarpur village in Cuttack.

dated back to 1072 BCE, Layer 4 to 1099 BCE, Layer 5 to 1269 BCE and Layer 7 to 1404 BCE.

Pieces of pottery According to Mr. Garnayak, a new religious belief emerged in the form of nature worship as evident from a single specimen of the Sun motif found arrayed in chocolate-slipped pottery.

Four students drown in Pandavkada

STAFF REPORTER NAVI MUMBAI Four students, including three from SIES, Nerul, drowned in the Pandavkada waterfalls near Kharghar on Saturday.

For seven students, a last-minute plan to bunk college and go on a picnic turned into a tragedy when three girls drowned.

Workers recovered the bodies of Aarti Nair, 18, and Shweta Nand, 18, while a search is on for Neha Dama.

M.P. peon hits students, gets suspension

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL KATNI A peon posted at a government school in Katni was suspended on Friday after a video showing him mercilessly thrashing students inside the classroom...

The peon, identified as Jai Prakash Mishra, is seen in the video sitting on a bench and the students huddled on the floor in fear.

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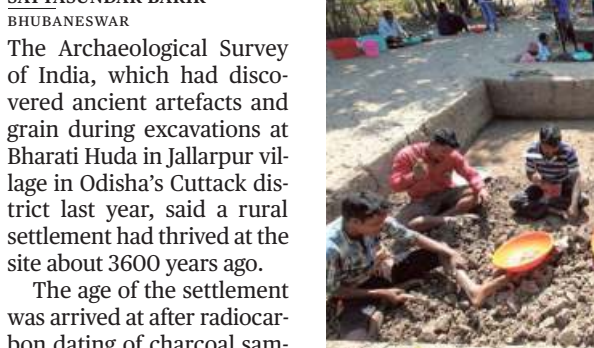
Assam man gets death penalty for killing friend

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI A local court on Saturday awarded the death penalty to a man convicted of murdering his girlfriend, who was a Class 12 topper, 20 months ago.

The court also sentenced the man's mother, Kamla Devi, and sister Bhawani to life imprisonment for abetting him in the murder of Shweta Agarwal on December 4, 2017.

Shweta was found dead at the house of Govind Singh, her boyfriend. After investigation, the police concluded that Singh had murdered her.

Annual call: A banner commemorating Maoists killed in encounters put up during the Martyrs Week in Balaghat.



Annual call: A banner commemorating Maoists killed in encounters put up during the Martyrs Week in Balaghat.

Markam, alias Jamuna, killed in an encounter on March 19. Abhishek Tiwari, Balaghat SP, said, "In the past few years, no recruitments happened in Balaghat, which has only four-five members. They highlight 'wrongdoings' against tribal people to entice youth to join them."

Markam, alias Jamuna, killed in an encounter on March 19. Abhishek Tiwari, Balaghat SP, said, "In the past few years, no recruitments happened in Balaghat, which has only four-five members. They highlight 'wrongdoings' against tribal people to entice youth to join them."

IN THE COURT OF SPECIAL JUDGE UNDER TNPID ACT 1997, CHENNAI-104.

O.A.No. 12 of 2018 The Competent Authority / District Revenue Officer, Chennai District. Petitioner

Accused/ Respondents The petitioner has filed O.A. No 12 of 2018 before the Hon'ble Special Court TNPID Chennai under Section 4(3), 4(4) and 7(6) of TNPID Act 1997, The Hon'ble Special Judge ordered notice to R1 to R9 returnable by 14.08.2019.

Hence you are instructed to be present on that date i.e. 14.08.2019 at 10.30 A.M. before the Special Court under TNPID Act, 1997 Chennai, Tamil Nadu, failing which the matter will be decided in your absence.

A.C.Jayalakshmi Special Public Prosecutor (Civil) Counsel for Applicant

TENDER CUM AUCTION SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES IN I.P.NO.25/2014 - INSOLVENCY OF ARJUNAL SUNDERDAS (EXEMPTED FROM STAMP DUTY)

Description of Properties Item-I: Land and building situated at Door No. 23, Anderson Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai-34, sq.ft., in the Ground Floor together with 832 sq.ft., proportionate share in the common area in of O.S. No. 424 and R.S.No.85 and part of O.S. No. 424 and R.S.No.86, measuring 3 sq.ft., in ground floor-2350 sq.ft. and in first floor-2050 sq.ft.

Upset Price Rs.21,66,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Crores and Sixty Six Lakhs only)

Invites Sealed Tenders with Earnest Money Deposit Amount E.M.D. amount : Rs.2,16,60,000/- (Rupees Two Crores Sixteen Lakhs and Sixty Thousand only).

For other details, intending bidders may contact: The Section Officer (Property Section), O/o the Official Assignee, High Court, Madras-104 Phone No.044-25301275. Email id: gahctms@gmail.com

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For Details : http://www.nielit.gov.in/calicut/content/course-calendar

STARTING DATE 19th August 2019

Magazine



BIG SCREEN

Why Deverakonda is creating the kind of excitement in Bollywood that Nagarjuna did after *Shiva* p10

FIELD NOTES

Ranganathittu was devastated by last year's floods; but this monsoon will be different p14



LITERARY REVIEW

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

FRAMED

A ploughing contest in a little Maharashtra hamlet aims to take people back to farming p16



Growing pains

Mumbai's new infrastructure projects struggle to find the balance between development and sustainability p6



CCD founder dead Café Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha's body was found on the banks of the Netravathi river in Mangaluru, a day after he went missing. In a letter he purportedly wrote, he said harassment from income tax authorities, among other reasons, had led him to succumb "to the situation".



Princess pause Princess Haya of Jordan, the sixth and now estranged wife of Dubai's millionaire ruler Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, applied to a UK court for an order to prevent her child from being forced into marriage. The princess also asked for both her children to be made wards of court.

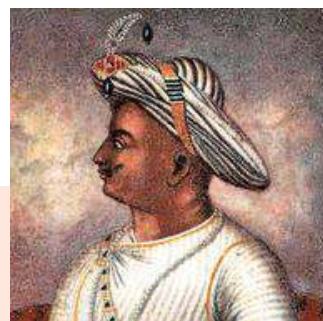
Pak crash A Pakistani military plane crashed in a residential area of Rawalpindi, killing at least 18 people, — five military personnel and 13 civilians. The Pakistan Army's media wing said the plane crashed during a "routine training flight" and set several houses on fire.



Maori anger With disproportionate numbers of their children taken into state care, hundreds of Maoris in New Zealand marched to Parliament House to demand an overhaul of the child welfare agency. Another group occupied the settlement of Ilhumatao, considered sacred to the Maori, which has been sold off for housing development.



Triple talaq Both houses of Parliament passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, which criminalises the practice of instant divorce through triple talaq with a three-year jail term. Triple talaq had already been declared void and unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in August 2017.



Tipu toppled The first thing the new BJP government in Karnataka did after winning the trust vote was to cancel Tipu Jayanti, an annual event that takes place each November. The new government called the celebration — introduced by a Congress government in 2015 — "controversial and communal".

Modi's wild side Bear Grylls announced that PM Modi would feature in the next *Man vs Wild*, the adventure show hosted by Grylls on Discovery Channel. The episode was shot in Jim Corbett National Park, allegedly during the Pulwama attack, a detail the PM's office refutes.



Roaring success The latest tiger census has revealed that India has 2,967 big cats, more than double the 1,411 recorded in 2006. With the majority of the world's wild tigers in India, there is global interest in the census. MP, with 526 tigers, recorded the highest number, followed by Karnataka with 524.



Eat, pray, hate A man cancelled his Zomato order because the delivery person was "non-Hindu". Zomato responded to the customer's now-deleted tweet, saying: 'Food doesn't have a religion. It is a religion'. Zomato CEO Deepinder Goyal said the company was "not sorry to lose any business that comes in the way of our values".



Undoing Unnao After a huge public uproar, the SC transferred the Unnao case to Delhi, setting a 45-day trial deadline. It also gave the CBI one week to investigate the accident that severely injured the survivor and killed her two aunts last week.



Just desserts Odisha got itself a GI tag for the 'Odisha Rasagola', recognised as being distinct from West Bengal's 'Banglar Rasogolla', which got a GI tag two years ago. This might finally settle the battle between both States about who gets credit for the famous confection.



Minnie's silence Actress Russi Taylor, who was the voice of Disney's Minnie Mouse for more than three decades, died at the age of 75. She also voiced Martin Prince on *The Simpsons*. In 1991, Taylor married Wayne Allwine, the voice of Mickey.

Online jackpot At the first ever major competition held by online video game Fortnite, at Arthur Ashe tennis stadium in New York, 16-year-old Kyle Giersdorf won \$3 million — the largest prize yet awarded to any single player in an e-sports competition.

WITH E. SREEDHARAN

'I am single-minded in my approach'

The Metro Man on being a guiding force for infrastructure projects across the country for more than five decades

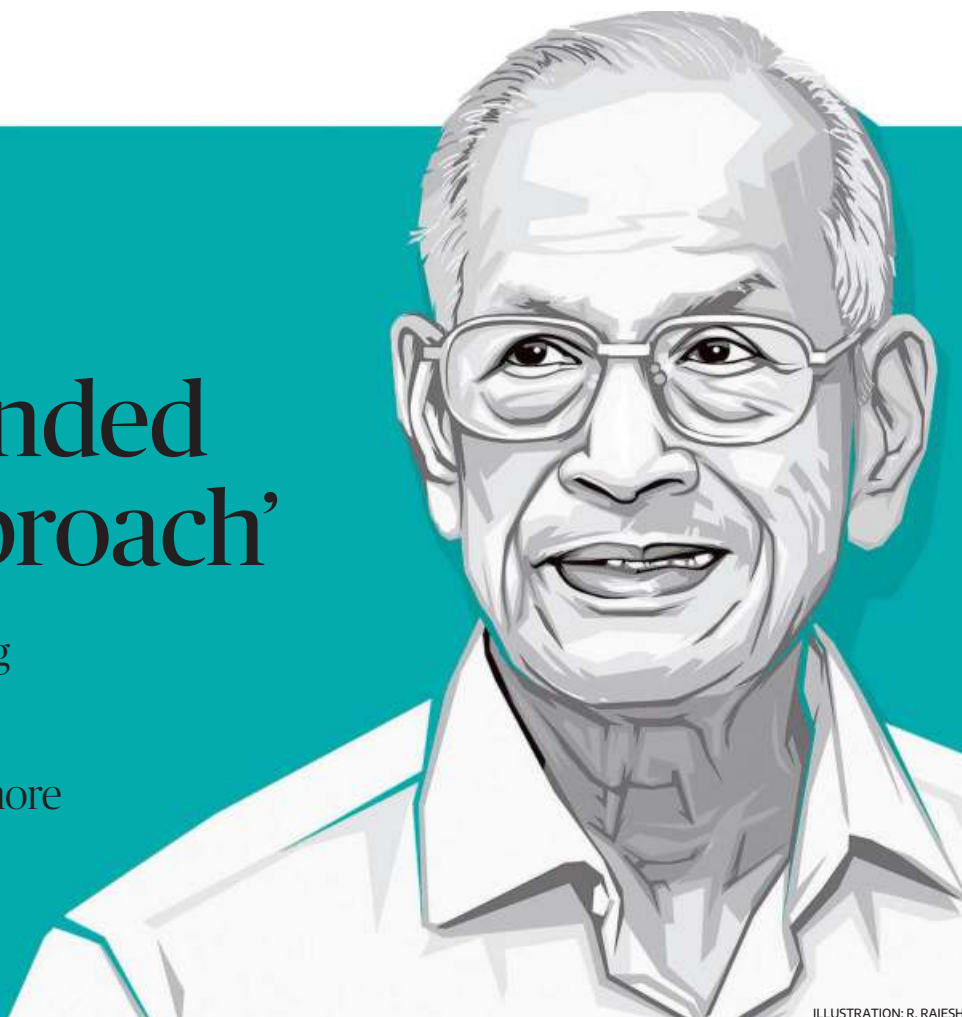


ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

JOHN L. PAUL

The zeal that Elattuvalapil Sreedharan has for excellence in engineering feats is unparalleled, even at the age of 88 when most people might want to be tending their roses. Fondly called Metro Man, he loves engaging with policy makers, urban planners, civic administrators and students, sharing with them experiences gathered over 56 years of professional life. He travels across India and sometimes abroad, and is considered a treasure trove of information on the Metro, overbridges, railways and other infrastructure projects. In a freewheeling chat, he spoke about his life and times with grace and positivity. Excerpts:

You are India's best-known technocrat, having taken up many challenging projects. What ignites the fire in you even today?

■ Somehow there is a great demand for my time and expertise. When the assignment is for the good of society, I don't pull back. It is the job satisfaction which excites me. My guru Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirthaji has told me that as long as I have reasonably good health, I should continue to serve society with the attitude that it is an offering to God.

What are the things that have helped keep you on the move?

■ I have always led a disciplined life, getting up very early in the day (4 a.m. formerly, now 5 a.m.) and going to bed by 9 p.m. I usually take a short nap after lunch. I am fastidious about exercise, be it in the open air, or regular yoga. I was a sportsman in my young days, was captain of the college football team. This addiction for regular exercise has remained with me. I was very religious in my early years – shaped by my parents that

way. And I moved to spirituality, particularly after the association with my guru. I like austerity and simplicity.

Were you considered for the President's post in 2017?

■ I was never considered for the President's post by any political party. This was mere kite-flying by the media. Even if I had been considered, I would have declined due to the age factor.

Which metro rail projects are you presently associated with?

■ I am directly in charge of the 24-km Kochi Metro. I am a consultant to the U.P. government for the Lucknow, Kanpur and Meerut Metros. Likewise, I am consultant to the J&K government for the light metros in Jammu and Srinagar. Last month, I resigned from the U.P. assignment due to time constraints, but the resignation has not been accepted. In addition, officials of Mumbai Metro Line No. 3 and Delhi's Rapid Rail Transit often consult me for technical guidance. I monitor their progress with regular visits.

Metro is a social service and should not be guided by business considerations alone. Its fares must be affordable, to attract commuters who rely on public transport

Passenger patronage of Delhi Metro is high, but that's not the case with many others. What might be the solution?

■ Most Metros make the mistake of fixing high fares – they adopt the Delhi Metro fare or even higher, in hopes of increasing revenue. Metro is a social service and should not be guided by business considerations

alone. Its fares must be affordable, to attract commuters who rely on the road. Also, the other Metros are in the infant stage. Their network must cover most city areas. Ridership will increase only if Metro stations are within half a kilometre of commuter destinations. Link bus services and a common ticketing system must be introduced to provide door-to-door connectivity.

Tell us a little bit about some of your most important projects.

■ The restoration of Pamban Bridge was a work thrust on me when I was an executive engineer at Southern Railway at the age of 32. I was able to complete the task in 46 days, as against the six-month deadline. This was a record and made possible by adopting innovative engineering methods. The 760-km Konkan Railway, which goes along the most difficult terrains ever encountered in the history of railway construction in India, was completed in seven years. This was possible mainly due to financial engineering and adoption of superior technology.

Delhi Metro, again, was thrust on me but I was able to make it an astounding success due to teamwork and a unique work culture. In all these projects, I was single-minded in my approach and did not succumb to political and bureaucratic pressures. My philosophy was "performance is the best publicity". I was able to get my way in these projects because of the unparalleled success of my previous projects.

What could be a sustainable solution to the maddening traffic snarls and chaos in urban India, which impose a heavy toll in the form of pollution, accidents and wastage of time?

■ Many people would switch from private vehicles to public transport if

they were convenient, safe, reliable and affordable. The government must introduce disincentives in the form of increase in road tax, surcharge on fuel, high parking fees, and so on, to increase the patronage of public transport.

You have always advocated the appointment of technocrats in crucial government posts held by civil servants. The Centre has now begun direct recruitment to such posts, overlooking IAS officers.

■ The Indian bureaucracy as it exists today is a sad legacy of the British days. To believe that a civil service officer will fit all roles is wrong. Specialisation is a must, especially in these days of fast-changing technology. Proven technocrats must be posted in such fields. Sadly, politicians prefer generalists and they sideline technocrats.

As President of the Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV), what is being done to ensure value-based development in the country?

■ FRNV has not been able to achieve much in the last 11 years of its existence. Our flagship programme is value-based education so that individually and collectively, people have a persuasion to be honest, patriotic and show concern for society. Education being a State subject, we have not been able to achieve much in this area. Fortunately, the new draft education policy contained in the Kasthurirangan report lays great emphasis on value-based education at all levels.

Is spending billions on bullet trains worth it? Or are semi-high-speed corridors a way out?

■ High-speed trains are necessary in a vast country like ours. But they are expensive. The country committed a mistake by going in for dedicated railway freight corridors at huge expense instead of going for dedicated high-speed passenger corridors, which would have released sufficient capacity in the existing rail system for freight traffic. It is still not too late to convert freight corridors to passenger corridors. The cost difference between bullet train corridors and semi-high-speed corridors is not much. Adopting semi-high-speed corridors will again be a mistake, which cannot be corrected later.

Metro Rail is considered very expensive. Does it have any cost-effective alternative?

■ Metro Rail is no doubt very expensive; it costs ₹250 crore per km for elevated corridor and ₹450 crore for underground rail. But its capacity is anything from 45,000 to 90,000 persons per direction per hour. An alternative to such a high capacity transport is the suburban railway system, but it cannot substitute for an urban mass rapid transport system. Cheaper options like Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rapid Transit, and tramways have lower passenger capacities. Roads would have to be widened for them and this is equally expensive.

■ Recipient of the Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan, and the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur (2005) awarded by the French government

■ Named one of Asia's heroes by *Time* magazine in 2003

■ Appointed by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to serve on the UN's High Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport for three years in 2015

■ Earned the sobriquet of Metro Man for completing the Delhi Metro on time and within budget

KABUL

Amrullah Saleh, the enemy of the Taliban



The political campaign for the September 28 presidential election in

Afghanistan got a bloody start on July 28 when the office of vice-presidential candidate Amrullah Saleh came under attack. Mr. Saleh, a former intelligence chief and President Ashraf Ghani's running mate, survived the attack, which killed at least 30 people. He was rescued from the building when security personnel fought the gunmen for hours.

At first, a car bomb went off outside the office of the Afghan Green Trend (AGT), Mr. Saleh's political party, and then gunmen entered the building. One eyewitness, who spoke to this reporter, described the carnage that followed the explosion. "The area has a number of buildings with glasses and the explosion caused a rain of shards. I saw several hundred people injured, including children who had glass cuts on their faces," said 24-year-old Fazal Ahmad, who was close to the site at the time of explosion. "If you ask me, I would guess hundreds are injured and killed," he added, while waiting outside the Emergency Ward and Trauma Hospital in Kabul to hear news about his cousin, who was among those injured.

While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, members of the Afghan Green Trend are certain that the perpetrators were from the Taliban, which had made several attempts at Mr. Saleh's life in the past. In November last year, an attack on his house in Kabul was averted by the security forces. "There were always standing threats against the Green Trend, but we were made aware by the NDS [National Directorate of Security] of a specific threat against our offices in the run-up to the election campaign," an AGT member said on condition of anonymity. "No one has claimed responsibility yet, but we are certain it is the Taliban."

A challenge

Mr. Saleh, best known for his tenure as the NDS chief, as well as for his most recent, short-lived, profile as the reformist Interior Minister, has been extremely critical of the Taliban. Despite the threats to his life, Mr. Saleh has also persistently rejected the claims of the Taliban's growing control and influence in the country.

In February, he tweeted: "A challenge: Those who claim that terror groups controls nearly half of Afg are invited to visit my office in Kabul & join us for a tour of the country by road, by plane, by bike, on horse and by foot. This falsehood & fake news is mostly spread by stooges, agents & idiots." He followed up his statement by taking a ride around Kabul on a cycle and



While no group has claimed Sunday's attack, Amrullah Saleh's party is certain that it's an act of the Taliban, which had tried to kill him in the past

meeting the locals.

A staunch critic of the Afghan President, Mr. Saleh's decision to join President Ghani's re-election campaign as his running mate has raised many eyebrows. In a campaign event on July 28 just hours before the attack, Mr. Saleh explained his decision. He said he wants to "turn Afghanistan into a regional hub for trade and a centre of civilisation".

That the attack happened on the day President Ghani launched his campaign for the much-delayed election suggests that the election season could be violent. Already, the civilian casualties figures of the first six months of 2019, released by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan on Tuesday, paints a grim picture with over 3,800 casualties. While the overall figures for the first half are lower than those for the first half of last year, there was a 27% increase in civilian deaths since the first quarter report. The UN has documented a total of 1,366 deaths this year.

The report also points to a worrying trend of deliberate targeting of civilians, aid workers, religious leaders, places of worship and public places such as schools and government offices. This has led to serious concerns among international humanitarian groups and stakeholders over the protection of civilians as the country gets down to the election process.

"We urge all parties to heed this imperative, to answer the call of Afghans for immediate steps to be taken to reduce the terrible harm being inflicted," Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, said during the Intra-Afghan peace dialogue held earlier this month between some Afghan leaders and the Taliban in Doha.

"Everyone heard the message loud and clear from Afghan delegates in the Doha talks – 'reduce civilian casualties to zero!'" he said.

BERLIN

40 years of Berlin Pride: party, parade & politics



After a week of soaring temperatures, on the sunny last Saturday of

July, the rainbow dominated Berlin. In Kurfürstendamm, a popular shopping avenue in the city, one could barely see the road and shops through the scores of people, flags, placards and parade buses. An hour before the biggest LGBTQAI+ event of the year, Christopher Street Day (CSD) parade, flagged off, over 100,000 people, soaked in glitter and confetti, had already congregated in an assortment of costumes, ranging from over-the-top drag to bare skin.

Forty years ago, when the first Pride took place in West Berlin, it gathered only over 450 people. The 41st CSD on July 27 witnessed an estimated 1 million visitors from around the world, according to the organisers. The parade culminated at Brandenburg Gate, where Berlin's Mayor Michael Müller welcomed visitors to the "best and biggest CSD" the city has ever had. "Each and every one of us must act against discrimination together," he declared.

This year's march, themed "Stonewall 50 – every riot begins with your voice", was dedicated to the clashes that took place between the queer community, led by drag queen Marsha P. Johnson, and the police in New York City in 1969. "The fight that started with Stonewall is not over yet," announced one of the organisers on the leading bus, as the engines turned on. The U.S. Embassy float, with a poster informing that over 70 countries still decriminalise homosexuality, urged for global solidarity against homophobia.

Onboard the float of Berliner Aids-Hilfe e.V., a non-profit association which supports people with HIV, senior citizens hurled condom packets in the crowd marching along the open-top bus. On one side, a teenage girl, donning rainbow wings, held onto a fluttering queer flag, along with her grandmother. Some marchers broke into impromptu voguing as Todrick Hall's *Nails, Hair, Hips, Heels* played on popular request. Every hour, the DJ lowered the music, to announce the six demands for this year's CSD. Among the international appeals were to "stop stigmatisation and exclusion of HIV-positive people" and "to hell with patriarchy". National demands included the right for all threatened LGBTQAI+ people with migratory history to stay in Germany and action against the far-right wing. For Berliners, the demands were to have the first inclusive living and cultural centre for lesbians in the city and professional diversity management for the employees of the Berlin administration and in the municipal companies.



The 41st Christopher Street Day parade, in which a million people took part, was dedicated to the 1969 riots between the queer community and New York police

Reaffirming the status of Berlin as the "rainbow capital of Germany", Senator for Justice, Consumer Protection and Anti-Discrimination, Dirk Behrendt released a 92-pointer action plan, four days before the CSD, advocating self-determination and acceptance of gender and sexual diversity for 2020-21 and beyond.

Right to determine

The plan supports a person's right to determine their own sexuality and gender identity, which especially affects the transgender community and queer refugees.

Germany has had a tumultuous past with queer rights. After the golden 1920s, when Berlin housed sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexology, a centre for study and medical research on sexual and gender diversity, the Nazis prosecuted homosexuals and sent them to concentration camps, where thousands died of starvation and diseases. The prosecution of queer people in Germany did not end with the Nazi regime. Paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code, which criminalised homosexuality, was only abolished 25 years ago in 1994.

Keeping up with its political messaging, the Berlin Pride was also accompanied by 'alternative' protests. A day before the CSD, the Dyke March, organised by and for lesbians, protested against gentrification, displacement of open spaces and climate change.

The Radical Queer March, which took place on the same evening, sought to be independent of and demonstrate against corporate, State and police intervention. Within the same march, the 'Queers for Palestine' block advocated against pinkwashing in Israel. But as the day turned into night, the sloganeering and advocacy gave way to concerts and after-parties, where drag performances, pop and techno music, turned a massive protest into a celebration.




Ruchi Kumar is a journalist based in Kabul.



Kenneth Rosario works with *The Hindu*.

DALIAN

At the heart of China's Arctic dreams

 As the polar ice in the Arctic begins to melt, opening new shipping channels to Europe and North America, Dalian port – China's eighth largest and a rising trade and transit hub of northeast Asia – is gearing up for business.

"We are exploring the Arctic trade route in detail and Dalian Port Group is doing substantial groundwork," says Zhang Hongguang, Deputy Director of the Dalian Free Trade Zone Management Committee, in a conversation with *The Hindu*.

Dalian, which has witnessed ebbs and flows of history, including the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 when a rising Asian power had humbled a European thoroughbred, is not unfamiliar in exploring the Arctic's freezing waters.

Six years ago, China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) sent a ship from Dalian to Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with a plan to arrive at its destination in 30 days. The ship accomplished its mission after crossing the Bering Strait and Russia's northern coastline. The voyage of the *Yong Sheng*, in turn, trickled vital first-hand data for tackling practical problems that Chinese shippers would encounter in the future. Over the past five years, COSCO has logged 22 jaw-dropping voyages, emerging as a global leader in transiting shipments through the Russian Arctic.

"Our development strategy is to serve the Polar Silk Road and international trade between the North Atlantic region and the Far East," said Chen Feng, the head of COSCO's marketing and sales division, earlier this year, at the Arctic Circle China Forum in Shanghai.

The Arctic is the gateway to three routes. The Northeast Passage or the Northern Sea Route is the most commercially viable of the three, which connect to the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. The Northwest Passage, the second promising route, goes along the northern Canadian and Alaskan coasts. The third, the Transpolar Sea Route, is the shortest, but the most unviable, as it passes through the thick ice sheets of the North Pole, which are not navigable.

Distinct advantages

Despite the natural hardships and shortfalls in infrastructure along the way, the Arctic routes offer China some distinct advantages. Shippers heading from Shanghai to Hamburg in Germany are able to shave off a cost-saving distance of 5,200 km, if they choose the Northern Sea Route over the traditional sea passage via the Suez Canal.

Then there is geopolitics that is



Dalian port, China's eighth largest and a rising trade and transit hub of northeast Asia, could be a crucial transit point in the Arctic sea route

drawing the Arctic zone into the rivalry between a multipolar Eurasia, which includes Russia, China and India, with the U.S. The U.S. resents China's forays into the Arctic passage, as this will lower Beijing's strategic dependence on the Washington-dominated Strait of Malacca that links the Indian and the Pacific oceans.

In tune with the growing trade and technology war with the U.S., China is bonding with Moscow to develop the Arctic passage. The two have also emerged as major stakeholders in developing the Russian Far East – President Vladimir Putin's pet project.

Encouraged by Mr. Putin, the Russian Far East, rich in oil, gas and timber, is also drawing India into the Arctic's equation. The Russians have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to head the table at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September. New Delhi and Moscow have already hailed the Arctic region's oil and gas as a "new area of focus".

Positioned on the frontline of the Arctic zone, Dalian is playing a key role in the economic consolidation of western and eastern flanks of Eurasia. At the port, officials acknowledge that Russia is their biggest supplier of crude, which is channelled through a pipeline to a Petrochina refinery on the premises. "Not only is this crude used for China, but from Dalian, it can be further exported across the sea to other demand centres such as South Korea and Japan," says Xia Ting, Business Manager, Dalian Port Container Company.


From the top of a tower at the sprawling port, a maze of intersecting rail lines also come into view, some heading in the direction of Central Europe and Russia. The rail connection allows Dalian port to lubricate Japan and South Korea's trade with Central Asia, Russia and Central Europe. On arrival in Dalian, seaborne containers from South Korea and Japan can be transhipped by rail to destinations to the West.



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

LAHORE

A year of promises, crackdown & censorship

 It's been a year since the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) formed its government in Islamabad. Opposition parties, including the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), had alleged that the 2018 general elections had been rigged in favour of Imran Khan's PTI. But nothing stopped Mr. Khan becoming the Prime Minister.

A year later, many issues still remain the same, if not worse, according to political analysts. "What do they have to show? All they have done is to repeat the mantra of '*chor, daaku, luteray*' [thieves, dacoits and looters] for the Opposition, while not doing much for the people of Pakistan," said Iftikhar Ahmad, a senior journalist. "The PTI is on a mission to eliminate the Opposition. That's all this government is interested in."

The PTI used to accuse other parties of nepotism. "Look at all the key positions in the government organisations today – all have been given to PTI cronies. Where is the *tabdeeli* [change]. It's all talk but things on the ground remain the same; in fact, they have got worse under this regime," said Mr. Ahmad. He added six years of the PTI's provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shows that they have no plan for improvement anywhere.

A senior political analyst, who did not want to be named, said people are now questioning if it is now Imran Khan vs Prime Minister Imran Khan as his popular rhetoric has caught up with the hard reality of governance. "Imran Khan stands in the category of 'great popular' leaders like [Donald] Trump, [Narendra] Modi, [Vladimir] Putin, [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan and some others who think the press is the enemy rather than questioning their own failures and shortcomings."

'Middle ages'

Media is going through one of its worst phases of censorship. A journalist working for a leading TV channel said: "If I could tell you the stories of censorship, you would think Pakistan is living in the middle ages. Journalists are tired, they have given up. I fear, real journalism is dead in Pakistan."

Recently, two interviews of opposition leaders were taken off air. Several TV channels are reportedly under pressure over content.

Foreign policy analyst Hassan Akbar believes Mr. Khan has performed better on foreign policy than other areas. His deft, yet resolute, handling of the Pulwama crisis earned him praise at home and abroad, he said. "The decision to retaliate after Balakot and subsequently release Wing Commander



A year after Imran Khan became the PM, most of Pakistan's problems, from economic crises to developmental issues, remain the same, say analysts

Abhinandan [Varthaman] as a gesture of de-escalation demonstrated an appreciation of the horrors of conflict. Despite heightened tensions with India, Imran Khan has consistently offered dialogue to New Delhi."

Perhaps Mr. Khan's greatest success this year has been his ability to open new avenues of engagement in Washington, Mr. Akbar added. "Pakistan's help in reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan has played a major role in rejuvenating the bilateral relationship. But pressure from the U.S. on FATF [Financial Action Task Force], delivering a withdrawal agreement (from Afghanistan) and cracking down on non-state actors will likely continue."

Economic expert Hasaan Khawar believes the government did better in managing the economy, especially after Hafeez Sheikh replaced Asad Umar as Finance Minister, than the initial months. "I don't think they have done badly in the last few months but in terms of managing people's expectations, they have not done a good job."

In May, the International Monetary Fund agreed to lend Pakistan \$6 billion to bail it out of a balance-of-payments crisis. In return, the government has promised to initiate economic reforms. Economic growth is expected to fall to less than 4% in the current fiscal, from 5.8% last year.

Mr. Khawar said a lot of people thought that the PTI would be able to deal with the structural economic issues. "Much is still to be seen. They have set up a very ambitious revenue target, devalued the currency, and increased gas and electricity tariffs, but more important is how they deal with some of the deep-rooted issues like privatisation and export growth, and how the government manages the IMF programme."

According to senior editor and journalist Rashed Rahman, a crisis is brewing. "The economy, Parliament and policy are all in disarray."



Mehmal Sarfraz is a journalist based in Lahore.

As a slew of big, costly infrastructure projects gets under way in Mumbai, urban planners ask for a holistic vision that will address housing and sustainability issues

1

New Metro corridors

Metro 2A (Dahisar West - Andheri West)
Length: 18.6 km
Project cost: ₹6,410 crore
Agency: MMRDA
Completion date: December 2020

Metro 7 (Dahisar East - Andheri East)
Length: 16.5 km
Project cost: ₹6,208 crore
Agency: MMRDA
Completion date: December 2020

Metro 3 (Colaba - SEEPZ)
Length: 33.5 km
Project cost: ₹23,136 crore
Agency: MMRCL
Completion date: January 2022

Metro 2B (DN Nagar - Mandale)
Length: 23.6 km
Project cost: ₹10,986 crore
Agency: MMRDA
Completion date: December 2021

Metro 6 (Oshiwara - Vikhroli)
Length: 14.4 km
Project cost: ₹6,672 crore
Agency: MMRDA
Completion date: December 2021

Metro 4 (Thane - Wadala)
Length: 32.3 km
Project Cost: ₹14,549 crore
Agency: MMRDA
Completion date: December 2021

2

Road Projects under way

Versova-Bandra Sea Link
Length: 17.17 km
Cost: ₹6,993.99 crore
Agency: MSRDC
Completion date: September 2023

Coastal Road
Length: 9.98 km
Cost: ₹12,721 crore
Agency: BMC
Completion date: December 2022

3

Navi Mumbai International Airport

Project cost: ₹16,450 crore
Agency: CIDCO
Completion date: 2020

4

Eastern Waterfront and port development projects

International Cruise Terminal
Project cost: ₹300 Crore
Agency: Mumbai Port Trust
Completion date: June 2020

New Marina
Project cost: ₹230 crore
Completion date: December 2021

5

Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link

Length: 22 km
Cost: ₹17,843 crore
Agency: MMRDA
Completion date: December 2023

6

Bullet train

Project cost: ₹1.08 lakh crore
Agency: NHSRCL
Completion date: December 2023

CITIES

MAXIMUM MUMBAI

ILLUSTRATION:
DEEPAK HARICHANDAN



AJEET MAHALE

Bursting at the seams” has been the most popular phrase to describe Mumbai for more than 20 years now. As the population of the city has grown exponentially, there have been few corresponding infrastructure projects to meet the demands of its 20 million residents.

Now, all of a sudden, there is a surfeit of projects competing for attention. ‘Mumbai is upgrading,’ proclaim slogans on barricades. There’s Mumbai Metro 3 plus five other Metro corridors. There’s a new airport coming up – the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA). There’s the Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link (MTHL), the Coastal Road, the Versova-Bandra Sea Link (VBSL), and the Eastern Waterfront Project. Put together, the slew of projects costs ₹1.22 lakh crore, with each one in various stages of execution. If you add to these the Centre’s ambitious High Speed Rail Corridor between Ahmedabad and Mumbai or the bullet train (route), then the expenditure crosses ₹2 lakh crore.

Costly time lag

Many of these projects have been on paper for several decades, but they have been given the go-ahead only in the last few years. A classic example is NMIA, the bhoomi pooja of which was done in 1997. The Metro is another example of the time it has taken for plans to get off the ground, with the original concept dating back at least 20 years and having seen several iterations. The idea for MTHL goes as far back as 2004; the contracts were signed in 2017, after several changes in executing agency and funding model.

R.A. Rajeev, in his 50s, with a salt-and-pepper moustache, has been in the administrative service for over 30 years now. He heads the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA). He says the current government is displaying a

political will to execute infrastructure projects that wasn’t seen earlier. “Once you get political backing, you must be ready to execute the project swiftly, as you don’t normally get such opportunities,” he says.

It is not all smooth sailing though. There has been stiff opposition to several of the projects from environmentalists. A few weeks ago, the Bombay High Court quashed the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) approval for the Coastal Road, and the Supreme Court has upheld the order. The Bombay High Court order said that the project needed environmental impact assessment (EIA) and noted not only that there were “serious lacunae” in the decision-making process but also a lack of proper scientific study.

Not just the Coastal Road, the Bombay High Court has also quashed the CRZ clearance for a casting yard at Juhu set up for VBSL. And the Supreme Court is presently hearing a petition on whether a car shed for Metro Line 3 can come up in Aarey Milk Colony. With its thick vegetation, Aarey Colony in Goregaon is

considered a green oasis. Sewri, where MTHL is coming up, is famous for the flamingos that migrate here every winter. There is a forest reserve north of the city and mudflats along the Thane Creek, and the bullet train will pass underground through this area.

Overnight changes

Stalin Dayanand, director of the non-profit Vanashakti, has a different opinion on the way the infrastructure projects have been fast-tracked. He was among the petitioners challenging the Coastal Road project in Bombay High Court and says the key difference between the present government and its predecessors is that this government changes rules and laws overnight to fit the needs of the project. “Aarey was declared a no-development zone (NDZ) under the previous government. This government removed the NDZ. If the project is stalled today, it is only because of vigorous opposition by citizens.”

The 33.5 km Metro Line 3 will be the city’s only underground Metro

line. Last month, when the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) was reviewing a proposal to cut some 2,000 trees for a car depot for Line 3, it received over 82,000 objections from Mumbaikars.

Rajeev objects to this. Environmental activists should understand the problems of project authorities, he says. “Considerable time is spent planning these projects and a lot of time goes in obtaining the clearances. If anyone has an issue with the project, they should go to court before the tenders are awarded. After the tender is awarded, it only delays the project and there is a loss of public money.”

Rajeev chafes at the petitions and court cases. “The Metro lines should

BMC is saying we are going to give Mumbai more open spaces. You don’t have to reclaim from the sea to give the city more open spaces, says Dayanand of NGO Vanashakti

have been operational by now, but the projects didn’t take off. The first Metro line took nearly 10 years to complete. If we implement one line at a time, completing the entire network will take considerable time, which the city does not have. We are essentially making up for lost time,” he says. MMRDA plans to build 14 corridors in all, of which three got the State government nod earlier this month while six are under construction.

There is no denying the crying need for infrastructure upgradation in booming Mumbai. Its population is mushrooming and its suburban train service is stretched to the limit. The locals, as they are popularly known, ferry over 80 lakh people a day. And it is this statistic the administration uses to justify the environmental damage caused by projects.

Urban planners, however, say that the projects are being executed



By the bay The Mumbai ‘locals’ ferry over 80 lakh people a day. (Top) Sewri, where work on the Trans-Harbour Link is ongoing, is famous for the flocks of flamingos that migrate there every winter. REUTERS & EMMANUEL YOGINI



Maximum Mumbai

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

without understanding the present needs of the city.

For instance, nearly all the Metro lines are being built within the city and its suburbs, whereas the real demand for new infrastructure is in the satellite towns that are part of the larger Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), which has exploded in population but is served only by the suburban trains.

According to the 2011 census, Mumbai City district saw its population shrink by 7.6% from the previous decade with people crowding to areas around it. Thus, in the same period, the population of Mumbai Suburban district grew 8.3% while that of Panvel and Alibaug in Raigad district grew by over 100%. Thane district increased by 36%, while Vasai in Palghar district also nearly doubled.

As city planner and architect P.K. Das says, “Around 30-40 years ago, South Mumbai was the magnet. It was the centre and nearly all major offices across sectors and industries were located there. Today, that’s no longer the case. There has been a visible decentralisation of business districts and travel patterns have therefore

changed.” There has, however, been no corresponding change in planning. Das pointed to the absence of a single comprehensive transport plan. “Each agency seems to be executing projects individually without considering other projects and, more importantly, without understanding the needs of the city today.”

Metro vs. roads

In fact, experts are also divided on whether Mumbai should focus on the Metro or on more roads. Rajeev defends the decision to build the Metros first; there’s a more urgent need for it, he says, pointing to the 11.4 km Metro Line 1, which ferries 4.5 lakh people daily. It’s a classic example, he says, of how starved the city is for new infrastructure.

Engineers like the famous E. Sreedharan have always maintained that Metros are cheaper than roads and can carry more people. Hussain Indorewala, planner and activist, points to the high cost of the Coastal Road, a 10 km road costing nearly ₹12,000 crore, compared to Mumbai Metro 3, which has a project cost of around ₹23,000 crore but is nearly three times as long. But focussing on roads could have got the city a better

Snaking through Deep inside the belly of South Mumbai rumbles this massive tunnel boring machine working on the upcoming Metro 3 line. VIVEK BENDRE

bus rapid system for a fraction of the cost.

As Indorewala says, “It would have been cheaper and more flexible in terms of planning routes to meet the changing patterns in the city in the future.” If, however, the idea is to reduce private cars on the road, then too many roads achieve the opposite. As Uwe Brandes, urban design expert and associate professor at Georgetown University, points out, building more roads and highways seems to create a demand for vehicles even where there were none before.

The administration itself seems a bit muddled, using contradictory arguments to justify its Metro and road projects. Says Indorewala, “Coastal Road is justified by the assumptions of increasing car ownerships in the city.

On the other hand, Metro Line 3, which runs nearly parallel to Coastal Road, is also justified saying it will reduce road congestion. Similarly, VBSL will run parallel to Metro Line 2B.” On its website, the Mumbai Metro 3 project says it will reduce 4,56,000 vehicle trips, even as the Coastal Road project says it will cater to 1.2 lakh cars every day.

Tackling congestion

Rajeev, however, says the Metro and road projects complement each other. “The city’s congestion is around 70% at present. Once you implement the Metro, the congestion will reduce by 25% at least. But with the road projects implemented, the average speed on the road will increase, and we can expect another 10% reduction, thus reducing overall congestion to around 35%,” he says.

This is not entirely convincing. Experts point to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL). Built in 2009, the 6 km long BWSL was expected to carry nearly 1 lakh vehicles daily. The figure is not even close to half of that even after 10 years. The proposed VBSL, 17.17 km long, projects that it will carry 39,334 vehicles over the entire length every day; it projects a toll fee for 2023 that’s nearly 3.5 times the current toll for BWSL.

Both the sea links and the Coastal Road are planned as part of a single coastal road on the city’s western waterfront, and once complete, these numbers might be achieved, but the damage to the coastline ecosystem seems to have been left out of consideration. Instead of the Coastal Road, says Das, the government could have used the money to build all the Metro lines underground. Except Mumbai Metro Line 3, all other lines under construction are elevated.

According to the 2011 census, Mumbai City saw its population shrink by 7.6% from the previous decade, while that of Panvel and Alibaug grew by over 100%

“Elevated lines leave little scope for road expansion,” says Das, and Indorewala points out that after completion, the elevated Metros will permanently eat up road space on arterial roads.

Into this heady mixture, a new ingredient has been thrown in: water transport. Can this be the magic mantra with the potential to change the way people commute in Mumbai? Despite being an island city with a natural harbour, Mumbai has a very poor water transport network, with only a few slow jetties in some parts. Now, that could change, with Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) developing a 1 km waterfront on the city’s eastern front.

Water transport too

This, says Sanjay Bhatia, chairman of MbPT, will become the hub. “We are bringing in cruise tourism and water transport.” MbPT is acquiring fast boats that can navigate shallow waters. And it is planning routes from the hub at Ferry Wharf to parts of Navi Mumbai such as Belapur, Nerul, and even to the new airport, as well as Ro-Ro ferries to Alibaug and Nerul that will allow people to take their cars on the boats. “Things will be different,” says Bhatia. “We are even testing to see if it’s possible to have boats travelling up the creek to Thane, Airoli and even Vasai.”

Are these plans relevant or sustainable?

“If all cities build infrastructure to meet peak demand then, by definition, there’s too much infrastructure,” says Brandes. Instead, technological interventions such as congestion pricing and dynamic toll rates must be used to manage demand and regulate congestion. The integration of multiple transport systems is important for sustainable infrastructure, he says.

Das points out that the two key questions of ‘relevance’ and ‘sustainability’ seem to be missing. The projects under way are seen by the government as ‘contracts’ rather than part of a comprehensive plan for the city, he says. Such ad hoc measures cannot be considered ‘infrastructure’, he says, as the term represents a holistic view of planned development, and that must include a strong housing policy.

Dayanand agrees. “For the Coastal Road, 90 hectares is being reclaimed, of which less than 20 hectares will be used for the road. BMC is saying we are going to give Mumbai more open spaces. You don’t have to reclaim from the sea to give the city more open spaces. You need a robust housing policy to successfully rehabilitate the slums that occupy nearly 40% of Mumbai’s area.”

The administration, it would seem, has kept the focus firmly on mobility, putting that at the centre of its infrastructure strategy. But, as Brandes points out, mobility itself is going through a disruption and it’s impossible to anticipate all the dynamics associated with it. This is why a holistic vision for the city is required, one that integrates mobility with a long-sighted understanding of housing and sustainability issues. Is Mumbai listening?



YOUNG MINDS

Children of a science god

e-slippers, gliding platforms, walking sticks with sensors: a school in Maddur produces student innovators

GAYATRI RAMDAS

It is morning in Maddur, a little village nestled in the valley of the lush Tiruttani hills in Tamil Nadu. I make my way past the railway crossing that looks straight out of an R.K. Narayan story and climb into a rickshaw. It takes me past houses with decorative pillars and *thinnaish* (porches) of old-fashioned houses. As the auto sputters down, I hear the rattle of power looms – the main occupation in Maddur is weaving.

Maddur, of late, has earned a new distinction. The students of Buchireddy Palli Government School have been winning accolades for their

clever innovations aimed at saving lives and improving the lives of people with disability. Maddur has few streetlights, and many pedestrians fall prey to road accidents. So Class X students S. Parthiban and V.M. Akashwaran came up with ‘e-slippers’.

The footwear operates on the principle of piezo-electricity and has LED strips that light up when the user walks. Rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, which charge devices like mobile phones, are connected to the slippers.

The duo has also come up with a multi-purpose walking stick with sensors that can detect hazards such as fires or floods.

The Buchireddy Palli Government School is an austere, three-storied building that houses both English and Tamil departments from classes VI to XII. When I get there just before lunch break, I spot some bright-eyed children sneaking out of their classrooms. Science teacher R. Dharmalingam, has nothing but appreciation for his students. “They are self-driven, curious and never afraid to ask questions,” he says.

“Most of their projects are self-funded, but the headmaster has also helped. I have sat with them after school hours to encourage them.” The school’s encouragement is obvious. Dharmalingam accompanied Akashwaran and Parthiban when they showcased their work at the Southern India Science and Technology Fair in Bengaluru.

Out of the box

At Akashwaran’s house, we are greeted with effusive hospitality. Akashwaran and his friend Gunasekaran, still in their uniforms, are poring over a cardboard model. I ask them what they are working on. “This is a gliding platform meant for people with disability or the elderly so that they can cross railway platforms without having to use the overbridge,” Akashwaran tells me. The two then demonstrate the working model.

“Akash thought of this when I complained about the climb at the station. Since then he’s been trying to figure out a workable solution,” beams his mother Vatsala.

“It used to be based on hydraulic motion but I changed it to a motor-based system. The platform will move forward when the switch is pressed. IR sensors will detect approaching trains and the platform will then retreat,” Gunasekaran explains. They have even thought about warning systems –

a buzzer sound to alert the blind and a flashing red light for the deaf.

M.N. Haripratap is in Class IX in the same school. He has designed a bridge model where the structure opens up during high tide to allow ships to pass and then folds back again. It won him a district-level prize from the Chief Education Officer of Thiruvallur district.

The students’ love for science and innovation is apparent. “Akash took part in a science exhibition at Sri Krishna Polytechnic and was fascinated by what he saw,” says Vatsala. Interested in electronics, programming and robotics, he recently received a special prize for excellence in science from Anna University, Chennai, during its tech fest, ‘Kurukshetra’. He was also awarded a token of appreciation by former ISRO director Mylswamy Annadurai.

They are self-driven, curious and never afraid to ask questions. Most of their projects are self-funded, but the headmaster has also helped.

“I want to be a scientist,” says Akash. Abdul Kalam has always been a role model for me.” I ask him what’s next on the agenda. His small, serious face lights up as he talks of solar-powered cycles, ambulance-sensitive speed-breakers, and earthquake-sensing fences.

Whatever the students of this special school do next, I know they will put Maddur on the map with their thoughtful, people-focused innovations.

The writer is a civil engineer and dog lover with a nose for music and art.



Future-ready Students of Buchireddy Palli Government School with their inventions — a model of a gliding railway platform meant for the elderly and disabled, and (top) a walking stick with sensors. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

BIG SCREEN

Deverakonda rides to Bollywood



With Vijay Deverakonda's *Dear Comrade* being released simultaneously in four southern languages to much praise, the actor thinks it's time to go north of the Vindhyas

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

Bollywood is all abuzz. The excitement is reminiscent of the frenzy over Nagarjuna after *Shiva*. From the bungalows of Hyderabad's Banjara Hills, Telugu actor Vijay Deverakonda has taken a metaphorical leap into the production houses of Mumbai's Aram Nagar, where he is being spoken of as a talent to watch out for.

I meet him a day after the release of *Dear Comrade*. This is Deverakonda's first film to release simultaneously in all four southern languages: the Telugu film was dubbed into Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada. And Karan Johar's Dharma Productions will be remaking the film in Hindi.

Deverakonda will not be acting in the Hindi remake, he says; he has two other projects in Telugu and doesn't fancy going through the emotions of *Dear Comrade* all over again. However, he is keen to do a Telugu-Hindi bilingual film. "It's just a matter of time before I lock in on the right project." This, he thinks, will expand his reach; but he also sees it as necessary in the larger context of Indian cinema. "Shah Rukh Khan broke barriers and widened the market for Hindi films overseas. Now, we have to blur the boundaries between cinema in different languages in India. Or else we will end up watching *Avengers* in every theatre. We cannot compete with Hollywood. But we can collaborate within the country and tell stories in different languages."

Shah Rukh Khan broke barriers and widened the market for Hindi films overseas. Now, we have to blur the boundaries between cinema in different languages in India

For decades, Hindi film producers have been remaking Tamil and Telugu hits, but after *Baahubali*, there has been renewed interest in Telugu cinema. In contrast, actors from the South have so far only bagged occasional Hindi projects – whether Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan, Chiranjeevi and Nagarjuna, or the current crop of Dhanush, Rana Daggubati and Dulquer Salmaan.

Deverakonda isn't keen on giving up his reign in Telugu cinema, but he likes how Daggubati does a few films that transcend language barriers (in *The Ghazi Attack* and his forthcoming *Haathi Mere Saathi*). Deverakonda commends Daggubati for going that extra mile to introduce *Baahubali* to Karan Johar and get things rolling. "It's because of him, and director S.S. Rajamouli and producer Shobu Yarlagadda that Telugu cinema is in the reckoning again," he says.

On Twitter, director Vasana Bala (*Mard ko Dard Nahin Hota*) and Deverakonda have expressed interest in working together. Says Bala: "Deverakonda is comfortable being himself, speaking his mind, and has a distinct personality."



Trendsetter
Stills from *Dear Comrade*.

Bala also admires how Deverakonda encourages new talent: “He has worked with a few directors he knew from 10 years ago, when they were making short films. He’s creating a fresh ecosystem and empowering them to tell stories,” he says.

Small but pivotal

Deverakonda first got noticed for his supporting role in Nag Ashwin’s *Yevade Subramanyam* (2015). Then debut director Tharun Bhascker’s rom-com *Pelli Choopulu* (2016) put him in the spotlight. The massive fan following he has today began with his role in *Arjun Reddy* (2017), after which he starred in *Geetha Govindam*, *NOTA* (Tamil) and *Taxiwala*.

He also played a supporting role as a photojournalist in *Mahanati* (2018), a biopic on the late actress Savitri, where Keerthy Suresh and Dulquer Salmaan played Savitri and Gemini Ganesan respectively. In this, Deverakonda came across as an actor who knew when to step back and be a small but pivotal part of an interesting project.

If there is an emotion that Deverakonda owns as an actor, it’s anger. But this rage comes with a vulnerability and honesty that made even the worst critics of *Arjun Reddy* appreciate his performance.

Is there a method to his choice of work? “When I heard the story of *Taxiwala*, I was laughing away and thought it would be a fun film to do. I sometimes pick up stories that I feel the world needs to know. The films that stay with you longer are those that move you personally and emotionally,” he says.

There’s a bit in *Dear Comrade* that brings up the #MeToo discussions. An incident of sexual harassment is investigated three years after it occurred, and the survivor, who has gone from chirpy to depressed, finally finds the strength to fight for justice. As #MeToo stories came tumbling out in India,

Deverakonda found that eight out of 10 women he knows had faced some incident. “There were men who had been abused in their childhood. A few years ago, a woman I was close to was molested by an auto driver. She was shaken. I was enraged and rode around the city (Hyderabad) on my bike trying to trace this guy,” he says, then pauses. “Women are vulnerable on the road, in public transport, at the workplace... so we wanted to urge them to be vocal.”

From the heart

When Deverakonda speaks, it comes from the heart – a quality that’s endeared him to young audiences.

He’s among the very few in

Telugu cinema who hails from a non-filmi background and enjoys immense popularity. “People like me for who I am, with all my flaws, and I am thankful. I can speak without pretence,” he says.

This has also helped him in his acting. He has worked with new directors – Ashwin, Bhascker and Kamma – who brought fresh perspective to Telugu cinema with their hunger to narrate stories without formulas or frills.

This matched Deverakonda’s performances that come from a real place. The young actor has also started a production company called King of the Hill, a literal translation of Deverakonda, which is also a town in Telangana.

Deverakonda recalls his years of struggle. “It was extremely tough to break in. It still takes every ounce of energy I have to keep the passion alive and to do what I want to do. The only excitement is to make an impact through the stories we tell.”



BUFFER ZONE

Netflix, the new norm(al)

Now, streaming mobile subscription plans for the Indian viewer

The much hyped – and much panned – fourth season of cult American sitcom *Arrested Development* was released in 2013, brought back to life after years in the wilderness thanks to Netflix (and the show’s rabid fans). It was around this time that I first got to know of Netflix’s global impact as a streaming giant. It was still three-or-so years away from launching in India, so I found an ‘extralegal’ way to watch the show. A few months after *Arrested Development* came *Orange Is The New Black* (OITNB), again developed as a Netflix original, about life inside a women’s prison. The first season was unanimously lauded, and served to put Netflix on the map. Suddenly, ‘bingeing’ on shows became a worldwide concept.

Late last month, poetically at around the same time that OITNB finished its seven-year run, the company announced a new India-only mobile subscription plan, for which users can sign up at ₹199 a month.

In return, users get to ‘Netflix and chill’ on their mobile phones or tablets. It only provides the rather fuzzy 480p streaming – Standard Definition (SD) – but that’s more than enough for a phone screen.

Business mumbo-jumbo

This is a departure from their previous pricing models, which were prohibitive for a large chunk of our population. Netflix’s ultra super-duper 4K HD premium plan is priced at ₹799 a month – close to ₹10,000 annually – which is arguably more than what most people pay for general cable TV access. For scale, an Amazon Prime membership sets you back by approximately ₹1,000 a year, for which you get access to Prime Video, as well as their music library and priority delivery. So, finally some sense.

There’s plenty of business mumbo-jumbo to parse here, about how economical this plan really is for the users (it’s still more than double what they’d pay for Prime Video). Or what Netflix’s cost of acquiring a new customer is and whether a low subscription price offsets that. Or how this move makes sense because they have a higher number of users viewing Netflix on mobile phones in India compared to anywhere else, and how a lot of people here wouldn’t own or be able to afford TVs and laptops. Or how quickly

they can convert mobile plan users into basic plan users, into standard users, into, ultimately, premium users.

It’s a sign, perhaps, that Netflix has embraced the peculiarities of Indian audiences. From complaints about explicit content – remember the fuss around *Sacred Games* – to roping in Bollywood stars to, most recently, accusations of airing ‘Hinduphobic’ material. But what struck me most was how we view content now.

Personally, outside of TikTok or the occasional meme video that pops up on Facebook or Twitter, I don’t watch anything on my phone. I much prefer a laptop screen. But I can understand why it’s such a big thing. As Indians, we’re cursed with being forever in transit. Rushing to get to school or college or work. In a crowded train or Metro. Standing in line at some government office or the other. There’s always something. And watching something is a way out of the limbo.

We’re a nation reared on cinema halls and Bollywood excess. We’ve gone from iconic single-screen halls

In a crowded train or Metro. Standing in line at some government office. There’s always something. And always something to watch.

to multiplexes to huge dome-shaped theatres. We have spent hours in front of TVs.

Those things remain, but there’s a new addition to our viewing habits, first with YouTube and now video streaming platforms (in addition to Prime and Netflix, there’s Hotstar and a bunch of smaller ones), so it’s natural that viewing habits will adapt accordingly. And while it’s easy to bemoan the smaller screens as an inferior experience, these are exciting times.

Netflix has a position in pop culture that’s arguably unparalleled, in part because of its attempts to redefine how TV shows and movies are viewed.

With a new tech challenge ahead, where a significant chunk of people will be viewing content in crowded places on six-inch phone screens and middling earphones, it’ll be interesting to see how they acclimatise and adapt (if at all).



Akhil Sood is an author and freelance culture writer from New Delhi who wishes he’d studied engineering instead.

SPOTLIGHT

The rhythms of rain

A Kolkata-based percussion ensemble that blends Carnatic beats with Hindustani



Success story Layavinyas' concerts are a lively rendezvous of Carnatic and Hindustani idioms. E. PADMAKUMAR

SREEVALSAN THIYYADI

Midsummer in Kerala meant advanced mridangam classes for N. Shankar. Barely out of his teens, the Kolkata-based Shankar made it a point to take lessons from maestro Mavelikkara Velukutty Nair (1926-2012) whenever he went home to Kerala for the holidays. This continued over four summers from 1979. Nair had been a disciple of the iconic drummer Palakkad Mani Iyer (1912-81), as had Shankar's first guru, L.V. Vaidyanathan in Kolkata. For the young man, it was very important to continue his training in the style of Palakkad Iyer.

Bengalis are no strangers to Carnatic music; you can even hear it in a couple of Satyajit Ray's films where he composed the background score himself. Decades before that, Rabindra Sangeet had incorporated

Dravidian ragas, while pre-Independence Kolkata was already home to a thriving population of Tamils, the community to which Shankar basically belongs. All the same, Shankar sensed that Carnatic music – and its sophisticated rhythms in particular – had the scope and need for greater exposure beyond its cradle south of the Vindhyas.

Mission possible

In 1990, thus, he launched Layavinyas, an ensemble that has since charted a steadily successful profile. Its concerts soon turned out to be a lively rendezvous of Carnatic and Hindustani idioms. Did that not dilute the original mission to popularise Carnatic? "Not at all," says Shankar, 59. "Such a collaborative effort ensures that we draw people who are more familiar with Hindustani or have some constraints in appreciating Carnatic."

Today, the group, with its emphasis on the rich rhythms of both classical idioms, tours widely across the country. "Initially, we were just three percussionists, playing the mridangam, tabla and ghatam. Plus a violin that would work as a filler of sorts," recalls Shankar. "The programmes were also much shorter." 'Laya Tarang' today spans more than two hours.

Layavinyas chose to celebrate its first anniversary by ushering in a major Hindustani instrument into the ensemble. This was the sitar, which marked the beginning of the north-meets-south spirit in the collective; they also picked up a vocalist later on. But none of this has detracted from the group's focus on talas and their myriad patterns.

"That will always be the case, notwithstanding certain additions and subtractions," smiles Shankar. "Much like ragas are largely common to both

Carnatic and Hindustani, the two idioms also share rhythms that are the same, though known by different names. Within the talas we have different gaits (*nada* in Carnatic) that magically alter each one's swing," he notes. "That's why a piece may have a curious change of mood midway through its course, courtesy of a change of *nada*. It can sound more pronounced than even a change of raga. Also, there's a strong difference in percussion playing styles between the south and the north. That's how a Kalavati or Hamsadhwani may sound much the same when our Carnatic violin takes its cue from the Hindustani bansuri (flute), but it's never so when the tabla and ghatam play the same tala."

Aesthete Vipin Chandran K.P. agrees, and adds a valid point: despite the lineup totalling no less than a dozen artists, not for a moment does Layavinyas stray into cacophony. "The

Hamsadhwani may sound much the same when the Carnatic violin takes its cue from the Hindustani bansuri, but it's never so with the tabla and ghatam playing the same tala

SCANNER

**Award for Pattnaik**

Indian sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik won the People's Choice Award at the Boston International Sand Art Championship with a sculpture titled 'Stop Plastic Pollution, Save Our Ocean'. Pattnaik called it a 'special award' for his 'public awareness sculpture'.

**Natalia Goncharova**

A retrospective of the legendary 20th-century Russian avant-garde artist is on at the Tate Modern until September 8. Goncharova left behind a massive and varied oeuvre — ranging from religious paintings to fashion design to futurist body art.

combo of two string and one wind instrument alongside three types of drums works joyfully to achieve a tuneful deployment of both ragas and talas," says Chandran, who is associated with an arts movement in Ernakulam.

Dance and drums

During the late 1990s, Layavinyas almost regularly featured Western instruments such as the drums, bass guitar and keyboard in its works. And for eight years from 2002, it showcased Indian classical dances as well.

"Be it Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, Mohiniyattam or Kathakali, their varied footwork added to the vibrancy of our tala systems," says Shankar, whose mother Lakshmi Narayanaswamy used to sing for

During the late 1990s, Layavinyas almost regularly featured Western instruments such as the drums, bass guitar and keyboard in its works

dance. "It's another matter that our music also accorded vitality to the facial *abhinaya* and body language of these forms. We even had the *navarasas* (nine emotions) portrayed through them."

If the induction of the sitar in the early 1990s gave Hindustani a place on the team, the mandola too has joined in today. Joy Guha, who plays the Western-origin fretted string instrument, points out, "See, its bass sound lends our concerts the gravitas of the veena." Adds Shankar: "Its music has the joviality of the sitar, minus the shrillness at the top registers."

Renowned masters

Shankar's counterpart on the tabla is Arindam Chakravarty, a disciple of the late Shankar Ghosh of the illustrious Farukhabad gharana. Indeed, all the troupe's artists are students of renowned masters; flautist Rupak Mukherjee's guru, for instance, is Hariprasad Chaurasia.

As the monsoon crisscrosses India, sometimes briskly and sometimes reluctantly, the rain raga Brindavani has become a regular at Layavinyas shows. "But then, it's not just the tune," says Shankar. "We bring out the splendour of the rains. The rhythms with their pulsating momentum effectively symbolise thunder amid lightning."

The writer is a keen follower of Kerala's traditional performing arts.

UNPLUGGED

Thuggery and magnanimity

Two new books offer rare insights into the workings of the Hindustani music scene



Like melodies Aneesh Pradhan and Shubha Mudgal at a performance. S. SIVA SARAVANAN

It is a strange 'concatenation of circumstances', to quote P.G. Wodehouse at his straight-faced best. It's a neat and lively coincidence, and a felicitous one: the second half of July has given readers and music lovers two new English language books examining the world (or 'ecosystem', as everyone likes to call everything) of Indian music, both popular and classical. One is written by singer, teacher and columnist Shubha Mudgal, and the other by tabla player, teacher and writer Aneesh Pradhan. Husband and wife.

Revelations and ruminations

And no, this was no grand orchestration on the part of their two different publishers. (Delhi publishers are hardly capable of such hand-eye co-ordination.) It just so happens that the two books came out within days of each other. I have been reading them almost simultaneously, and both have supplied a series of revelations and ruminations.

Interestingly, on the face of it, they're very different, these two publications, right from their covers. Mudgal's bright green one with playful fonts, titled *Looking for Miss*



Gouri Dange is a novelist, counsellor and music lover who takes readers on a ramble through the Aladdin's cave of Indian music.

Sargam – Stories of Music and Misadventure, is a set of fiction stories that take the reader on a fasten-your-seatbelts wild ride through bumpy and bewildering terrain. Pradhan's book, with its sepia, almost elegiac cover and sober title font, is non-fiction. *Chasing the Raag Dream – A Look into the World of Hindustani Classical Music* is a quiet and scholarly examination of the contemporary Indian classical music scene.

And yet, both books reference the same world, echo the same concerns, underscore the same lessons that need to be learnt. Both

Both look at the people, institutions, patrons, awards, audience, policies, corporates and other entities that musicians must learn to carefully negotiate

walk you through "the incredible maze of contradictions that lie behind the music..." as Pradhan puts it. Both look at the people, the institutions, the patrons, the awards, the audience, the policies, the corporates and other changing and changeable entities that musicians

must learn to carefully negotiate in the search for their own *pehechaan* or identity. Both books talk about a search, a chase, in which the music itself becomes an elusive, almost amorphous entity (in the form of the fleeting Miss Sargam in one book, the Raag in the other).

Exploring the space

Both books tell us, in their very different ways, that the core is weighed down, mired, in all the hoopla surrounding the actual performance space that a musician can hope for. The see-saw between the world of music holding on to its dignity and accepting various hidden indignities to survive are well-etched in both books. The *badmaashi* (thuggery) and the *badappan* (magnanimity) that co-exist uneasily in this world are also in evidence in both books, with Mudgal's stories leaving you laughing helplessly and yet muttering darkly to yourself and Pradhan's explorations giving you much food for thought about where it is all headed.

Both books provide us examples, explanations and echoes of what some of us learners and listeners have often wondered about. For instance, why and how various music foundations and 'dot orgs' work in surprisingly non-cooperative modes for what is originally the same cause. Or why we get to listen to less-known greats only after they are well past their prime, and why the well-known fixtures remain on high-rotation on the concert circuit. Pradhan tells you about the politics behind concert organising and state awards. Mudgal shows you the same thing, but the hidden jockeying and jostling is presented in all its lurid-florid hues. The sharp eye for detail and for the ridiculous that was evident in her non-fiction columns burgeons unabated in these stories.

Reading these two works has been for me like watching the plumes of smoke rising from two lit agarbattis: together and intertwining in their themes and yet most distinct in their treatment.



Ramayana paintings

A collection of *Ramayana* paintings from Rajput and Pahari courts, created between the 17th and 19th centuries, will be on show for a year from August 10 at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. It will include "paintings from the early Punjab Hills Shangri/Mankot *Ramayana* series".



Pirates of the Queen

After Britain's Royal Marines took part in the seizure of an Iranian oil tanker — and Iran retaliated by seizing a British-flagged tanker — an exhibition of cartoons depicting Queen Elizabeth II as a pirate, complete with parrot and eyepatch, has opened at the Osveh Art and Cultural Centre in Tehran.

One of the country's most famous bird sanctuaries is being readied for the full force of the monsoon after last year's floods destroyed vast portions of it



RED EARTH

Islands on the wing



Feathered force
(Clockwise from far left) Tickell's blue flycatcher; Spot-billed pelican; Eurasian spoonbill; Brown fish owl; Pied kingfisher, and (facing page) Asian openbill.
BABU C. GURURAJ



SIBI ARASU

My row boat drifts down the Cauvery, skirting around giant rocks and little islets. Occasionally a cloud of plumes erupts from the treetops – they are painted storks, spot-billed pelicans, spoonbills. On every other rock surface is a basking marsh crocodile. And when I look hard enough along the riverbank, I can spot a smooth-coated otter or two.

I am in Karnataka's Ranganathittu bird sanctuary, one of the country's most famous ones, home to over 200 species of birds. Many of them – white storks, northern shovellers, wagtails and warblers – are migrants from as far as Central Asia, Siberia and the Himalayas.

The sanctuary, which typically sees nearly four lakh visitors every year, is

now bolstering itself for the full force of the monsoon: this time last year, the floods that inundated vast parts of Kerala and Karnataka destroyed hundreds of nests in Ranganathittu and eroded its islands. After the rains of last July, the gates of Krishna Raja Sagara dam were opened to release the excess water and this submerged several islands in the sanctuary where birds roost and nest.



"After more than two decades, the sanctuary had to be shut down for a few months, both for safety and also to assess the damage," says Sidramappa Chalkapure, then the deputy conservator of forests, Mysuru (wildlife division). The sanctuary was closed last July and August and again in October because of the high water levels in the river. The sanctuary's authorities found that the floods had destroyed 1,135 nests – of little cormorants, egrets, black-headed ibis, and night heron. The black-headed ibis, which builds its nests on lower branches, was the worst affected: more than 85% of their nests were destroyed.

Kingly declaration

The floods damaged the islands too. Ranganathittu's islets were formed during the construction of a weir

between 1645 and 1648 by Mysore king Kantirava Narasaraja Wodeyar. The weir created 25 islets in the region, which soon began to attract birds. When the celebrated ornithologist Salim Ali visited in 1940s, he was so impressed by the bird diversity here that he requested the Mysore king to declare it a protected area. It was, and has remained one ever since. Two decades ago, Ranganathittu was re-notified as a sanctuary.

Six major islands

Last year, two of the six major islands – 'purple heron' island and the 'wild-tamarind' island – underwent enormous soil erosion and lost most of their vegetation; boating platforms were damaged; water even entered the sanctuary's offices. The bamboo clumps that dotted the sanctuary were uprooted. "This was the worst damage

Sanctuary authorities found the floods had destroyed 1,135 nests — of little cormorants, egrets, black-headed ibis, and night heron

FLASHPOINT



Down to 19

There could be no more than 19 vaquita porpoises left in the world, according to a new study. The critically endangered species, found in the Gulf of California in Mexico, are often caught as bycatch and drowned in gillnets.



Hottest years

The U.K.'s 10 hottest years, since records began in 1884, have all occurred since 2002, according to the met office there. While 1892 was the coldest year, 2014 was the warmest, with average temperature at nearly 10 degree Celsius.

the sanctuary has seen in recent times,” says Chalkapure.

“Many islands here are buffered by sandbags along the circumference, which were destroyed too. So we’re reinstalling over 15,000 of them,” says M. Puttemadegowda, Deputy Range Forest Officer at Ranganathittu. The Karnataka Forest Department is spending an estimated ₹30 lakh to bring the sanctuary back on its feet. “Fortunately, though our census shows that the floods took a toll on the birds, we also found that they began rebuilding their nests as soon as the water receded. We’re confident that this winter we will see as many migratory birds as we did in the previous years,” says Chalkapure.

Eco-sensitive zone

Ranganathittu is just 67 hectares in size, but 28 sq.km. around the sanctuary was declared as an eco-sensitive zone in 2014. This means that certain commercial activities cannot take place without the government’s permission.

Ananya Kumar, range forest officer at Ranganathittu, hopes that the sanctuary will get a Ramsar Site tag. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that looks to conserve wetlands of importance around the world. “Getting a Ramsar tag would bring the sanctuary international recognition. It would also bring in more government funds for the sanctuary’s upkeep and maybe even increase tourist numbers.” Kumar also hopes to conduct scientific research through GPS tagging of birds – and this would be aided by a Ramsar Site tag.

The sanctuary now braces for heavy rain again. “Last year, the KRS dam reached a record capacity and began overflowing. This had happened only once before in 1991. So, barring an extraordinary event again, the sanctuary should be safe. And, even in case of such an event, our island stabilisation work will hopefully ensure that the damage won’t be as bad as last time.”

The writer is an independent journalist based in Bengaluru. Twitter: @sibi123



BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

Live like a lioness

It’s all about the Lion Queen. The pride increases because of her



Aggressive A courting pair mates 50 to 60 times a day for an average of three days.

STOTRA CHAKRABARTI

Stotra Chakrabarti’s heart was in his mouth when a wild lion plonked companionably next to him. The dusty ground between his kneeling profile and the cat spanned a mere two metres, close enough to smell the beast’s rank breath. A moment earlier, it had been lying somewhere else while the researcher watched another lion tucking into a nilgai kill some distance away.

“I became a statue,” Chakrabarti recalls. “I didn’t even bat an eyelid.” Every time he moved a muscle in a slow motion effort to get away, the cat opened its eyes. It didn’t help to know the predator was famished and waiting its turn at the carcass. “That was the longest half hour of my life.”

No to water and food

Asian lions are easy-going since they have a long history of living alongside people. But they are not always so tolerant. Males amorously consorting with females become irritable. A courting pair mates 50 to 60 times a day for an average of three days. They seldom drink or eat. They may not live on love and fresh air, but get



Janaki Lenin is not a conservationist but many creatures share her home for reasons she is yet to discover.

by on their surcharged hormones. High on testosterone, lions see even a moving bush as a rival, says Chakrabarti.

Survival strategies

He watched 134 mating events, and the males rushed at him every time. Although his basic instincts of self-preservation urged him to run, he held his ground instead, shouting

Lions kill young they didn’t sire to force the mothers to bear their offspring. To avoid this tragedy, lionesses outwit the males

and thrashing his bamboo staff to thwart the attacks. “If you show your back to a lion, your chances of surviving go to zero,” he says.

The researcher survived without a mark, but those under real threat from the lusty males are the cubs. Lions kill young they didn’t sire to force the mothers to bear their offspring. To avoid this tragedy, lionesses outwit the males.

A pride’s territory may overlap with three or four male coalitions of

two to four lions each. Lionesses mate with each one and confuse them all. Different males tolerate the same litter, thinking they are the fathers.

“The females control the whole show,” says Chakrabarti. “It’s not the Lion King here, rather the Lion Queen that reigns.” This strategy of promiscuity works on familiar males but not with newcomers.

The two lionesses

Chakrabarti and his assistants perched on their vehicle, watching two lionesses with three-month-old cubs feasting on a buffalo kill in a drying swamp.

There wasn’t a tree or bush in sight. When he spied two unfamiliar males approaching, he feared for the cubs.

The quick-thinking older lioness, which he had named Jodha, dashed towards the humans with the cubs on her heels. The suddenness of the situation caught the researcher, who was sitting on the bonnet of the vehicle, off-guard. Jodha braked beside the 4WD and sprinted back to join the other lioness, alone. A bewildered Chakrabarti swivelled around. Where had the cubs gone? They had crawled to safety under the vehicle.

As the two lionesses chased after the strangers, the researcher wanted to follow. But how was he to move with the cubs ensconced between the wheels? Besides, his assistants refused to cooperate. “She has given us a responsibility,” one argued. “We can’t let her down.”

Chakrabarti had no choice but to wait until the lionesses returned two hours later. The mother hummed, a signal for the cubs to come out of cover. As the family walked away, Jodha glanced back at the men as if to say ‘Thank you’, the researcher recalls.

If the lionesses’ devotion to their families melted Chakrabarti’s heart, he’s still coming to terms with the lions’ disdain.

“A dhole’s or wolf’s gaze pierces you,” he says. “A tiger’s glance sends chills down your spine. But lions destroy your ego with one look. We were just persistent nagging flies that followed them everywhere.”

It’s impossible to tell if the hungry lion that’s sprawled next to Chakrabarti thought it was keeping a fly company.



Hopping everywhere

Swarms of grasshoppers descended on Las Vegas, which, entomologists believe, are migrating in larger numbers because of the heavy rain. A Vegas pizzeria meanwhile offered customers pizza topped with garlic roasted grasshoppers.



Dead deer

Researchers found that some 200 wild reindeer had starved to death in Svalbard, an Arctic archipelago. The animals were found during an annual census. Scientists pointed to climate change and its impact on grazing ground as the possible cause.



Player's kit A farmer enters the arena of the ploughing competition in Gawlipada in Mucheri village.



Right as rain The downpour does not dampen the enthusiasm of the young participants.



Testing the slush The farmers warm up before the real race begins.



Man and beast A long line of oxen stand in line with their owners, ready to enter the field.



Last lap Parth Brid, 21, guides his winning pair of Khillari oxen to the finish line.

TILL TALE

RACING HOOVES, POURING RAIN

A tiny hamlet in Maharashtra encourages farming with a ploughing contest

TEXT & IMAGES BY PRASHANT NAKWE

In the thick of a monsoon downpour, 40 farmers, reins in hand, raced with their oxen through slushy fields in the tiny hamlet of Gawlipada in Mucheri village in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district.

The unique ploughing competition had been organised to promote farming in this picturesque region nestled in the foothills of the Western Ghats. Young farmers, aged 18 to 25, used social media to invite participants to the first event of its kind in this village.

Players had to plough a 200-metre circular track without touching the fluttering flags set along its edges, and the first to finish won ₹5,100 and a trophy. The sound of thundering hooves, loud cheers and folk songs brought alive a village that has no more than 120 families.

Dubbed a 'festival for the farmer, by the farmer', the competition was organised by Sunil Bhalekar, Pratik Bhojane, Sanket Bhalekar and Sanjay Kamble. It was supported by Mucheri villagers now settled in Mumbai. Bhalekar, overwhelmed by the response, said: "We are always looking for a reason for villagers to return and take up farming again."



... And go Setting the stopwatch.



Cheer leaders Large crowds gathered to cheer.



Decked up Farmers return their painted oxen to the trucks after the race.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

THE LEAD

The lament of Arokkyam

Imayam's Tamil novel *Koveru Kazhuthaigal*, written 25 years ago, still speaks to us with poignant immediacy, pointing to the persistence of the issues it first raised

A. MANGAI

Koveru *Kazhuthaigal* turned Imayam into a Tamil literary icon. First published in Tamil in 1994, the novel celebrates its silver jubilee this year. Publishing house Cre-A has marked the occasion with a table-top copy of the novel that includes plates of paintings and

sculptures by seven Tamil artists. The seven insets reveal how evocative the text is. To commemorate the jubilee, the book's English translation by the renowned Lakshmi Holmström, called *Beasts of Burden*, has been reprinted by Niyogi Books this year. It was first published by Manas Publications in 2001. The celebration of the novel's 25th year is as much a celebration of

the book as of the storyteller as witness.

Women of agency

The novel, considered a classic of modern Tamil literature, is a landmark in Dalit writing. It tells the story of a family of washerfolk who clean the clothes of other untouchables. They are paid not in cash but in kind, with

rice, grains, vegetables and so on.

I have always been a fan of Imayam's writings, even though my responses to his views have very often been quite contradictory. He claims that as a creative writer he can observe his world impartially. But his writing speaks of a heart that melts, bleeds and howls at injustice. In fact, it's the nightly chant of the



It's easy to visualise the story of Fernando Aramburu's *Homeland* being played out in any conflict-divided land p22



Journalist Katherine Eban raises troubling questions in *Bottle of Lies: Ranbaxy and the Dark Side of Indian Pharma* p24

washerwoman begging for grains at the top of his street that made Imayam write *Koveru Kazhuthaigal*, which literally translates as pack mules, the animals on which laundry used to be carried. In the book, of course, the writer is visualising the washerfolk themselves as the mules.

What moves me the most in Imayam's works are his women. Though most of them come from the margins, they are never presented as victims. However small their role, they exercise agency, and one admires them for that. The grit with which his women face life is amazing – captured in Tamil for the first time with an everydayness that goes almost unnoticed.

Absent presence

In *Koveru Kazhuthaigal*, for example, Arokkyam the washerwoman wonders:

“Is there a single person in this town whose pollution I have not cleaned?”

Is there a woman who has not had trouble suckling her child?

Is there a woman whose umbilical cord I have not cut and buried?”

The scene where she helps an under-aged mother suckle her child churns your stomach.

Imayam has resisted being labelled as a Dalit writer and with good reason. His affinity to the DMK, one of Tamil Nadu's leading political parties, supersedes the question of his identity. Tamil Nadu has a long and continuing tradition, inherited from Periyar, that has focussed on building the self-respect and dignity of subaltern classes. ‘Identity’ politics, therefore, is problematised in the State in more ways than one. Poomani, a senior Tamil writer, also opposes the labelling and slotting of writers on the basis of their caste. While I understand this position, I also think that it remains the luxury of a privileged few to actually ‘transcend’ identity questions.

Azhagarasan's introduction to the English reprint draws attention to a key feature of Imayam's work – the seemingly minor and absent characters. One of them is Savuri, Arokkyam's husband. This absent character, “who is in collusion with the witnessing narrator”, functions as the “central principle of Imayam's fictional universe,” says Azhagarasan, adding that this gives the narrative “the impact of a narrative painting”.

Azhagarasan surmises that this absent character is as helpless and invested a witness as the storyteller, and this probably points to Imayam's preference of anonymity over identity. The impact of a text, however, depends on the way it speaks to each reader's individual consciousness.

Imayam's work emphasises the stark reality of caste in all its ugly forms. By exposing its dark

underbelly, the writer builds an implicit argument for its eradication. As a writer with keen powers of observation, he also complicates his fictional universe with questions of religion, with education as social agent, and the onset of modernity. Arokkyam's family being the only Christian family in the village, she fears that her son might become a priest. Her fears, the setting up of a barber shop and ironing shop in the village, and the failing monsoon are all interconnected.

Everyday language

Imayam critiques the continued existence of dehumanising caste practices while wishing desperately that things will change. His brilliant novella *Pethavan* (translated into English as *The Begetter*), which almost uncannily predicted the honour killing in Dharmapuri that would happen in 2012, captures the tension and helplessness of castebound lives in tragic detail.

Imayam's writing has remained firmly rooted in the real. Not swayed by fashionable isms, he tells his story in a disarmingly everyday language, replete with rich folklore, folk music, proverbs and with the musicality of sheer repetition. What keeps ringing in my head is the voice of Arokkyam asking for food each night as she walks from doorstep to doorstep. “Don't forget the vannatti woman, saami’/ ‘It's your paraya-vannatti, saami’/ ‘Yes, yes, saami’/ ‘It's your paraya-vannatti Arokkyam’/... ‘Where else can I go and stand except at your feet?’”

In the new Cre-A edition, artist Narendran has evocatively visualised this section as a deaf ear. And don't forget, it is in Arokkyam the washerwoman's household that millets and grains would have been stored for winter once upon a time.

The writer is a theatreperson and academician.

C.SUBRAMANYAM



THOUGHT FOR FOOD

Tea, tattle and toast

Tiffin can mean anything from MP's khasta kachori to TN's vazhaipoo vadai

RAHUL VERMA

Growing up in a village in western Uttar Pradesh, I missed out on some of the pleasures of the urban schoolboy's life. For instance, the concept of tiffin and tiffin box was alien to me. Our morning meal resembled a lunch, and since school was near home, I would nibble on something like a laddu when I returned after school hours.

In college, again, I never had a tiffin box. Instead, we had what was known as a ‘Diet’ – an arrangement in one of the neighbourhood eateries, where we were given, for a certain sum of money, a fixed meal. Our tins of ghee (which came from the village, old Hindi film style!) were kept in lockers inside the eatery.

It's never too late. These days, when I go out to meet friends for lunch, I carry an insulated three-layered tiffin box. It actually carries my lunch, but I have come to the conclusion that tiffin in India means different things to different people – and in some quarters, it is just another word for a meal.

A light meal

I have been going through an interesting book called *Tiffin: 500 Authentic Recipes Celebrating India's Regional Cuisine* by Sonal Ved. The book has recipes from across the country, and spans the entire gamut from soups and snacks to entrées and desserts. I have been in particular salivating over the snacks, from Banarasi tamatar chaat and Indori poha to Kanchipuram idli and kori gassi.

“When we have friends over for tea we often daydream of matching a Jabalpuri chicken samosa with khasta kachori from Madhya Pradesh, along with vazhaipoo vadais from Tamil Nadu and Kutchi kadak toast,” Ved writes. “And on Sundays, with brunch on our minds, we want our tables laden with Bhojpuri dum aloo, Bengali luchis, Rajasthani gattey ki sabzi, chingri cutlet, Assamese chicken-and-banana-flower stir-fried, and adhirasams from Tamil Nadu,” she says.

How did tiffin originate in India? The word comes from the Old

One of these days I plan to take some chicken samosas for lunch. Ved's description of the Jabalpuri samosa is mouth-watering



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

English ‘tiffing,’ which means having a little drink or a sip. It is believed that it entered the Indian lexicon sometime in the beginning of the 19th century. The colonial sahib used to have a light midday meal because of the heat and the fact that he'd had a heavy dinner the night before. Tiffin was his light meal.

“...tiffin is a play on the time of the day and the nature of food served in many homes in India – an informal snack or light meal served at breakfast or with late afternoon tea,” Rukmini Srinivas writes in *Tiffin: Memories and Recipes of Indian Vegetarian Food*, a delightful book that alternates between descriptions of dishes such as masala vadais and vegetables cutlets to the author's memories as she moves from city to city with her social anthropologist husband M.N. Srinivas. “Significantly, as dinner time changed and was pushed to later in the evening..., ‘tiffin,’ the transition food, became important and continues to be so.”

It may have come late into my life, but it certainly continues to play an important role in it. A major part of the morning is devoted to discussions on what the day's tiffin should be. One of these days I plan to take some chicken samosas for lunch; Ved's description of the Jabalpuri samosa is mouth-watering. Boil some chicken, she says, then pull the meat out into thin shreds. Fry onion, green chillies and ginger-garlic paste. Add the chicken, turmeric, red chilli powder and coriander leaves. Top with lemon juice and chat masala. Stuff the meat into samosa casings and fry. Sounds good!

For me, the word ‘tiffin’ itself is magical. It's all about thinking out of the box for what goes into the box.

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



SWARUP MANDAL

IN CONVERSATION

Gay, Muslim, Afghan, immigrant

The writer of *The Carpet Weaver*, Nemat Sadat, is the first Afghan national to come out as gay, for which he has been declared persona non grata in his country

SHARIF D. RANGNEKAR

I saw a number of gay men openly holding hands at a party in New York. I had never seen such affection between two men before

Rejection followed by triumph – not once but several times – this defines the life of author and LGBTQIA+ activist Nemat Sadat. Faced with racism and homophobia, and barred from returning to his home country, Afghanistan, Sadat has overcome all these obstacles to emerge as a major voice of the rainbow movement.

“Even the manuscript of my recently released book, *The Carpet Weaver*, was rejected by agents and publishers from across the U.S. and Europe,” says Sadat, smiling. It was declined over 400 times before Penguin Random House India took it

up. The novel was published in early June this year.

Based in Washington DC now, Sadat spent less than a year in Afghanistan before being “kidnapped” by his mother to the U.S. “My father was a diplomat and while we lived briefly in Germany, my mother decided we needed to move. The politics of conflict of that time was the main reason,” he explains, referring to the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Juggling identities

Growing up in south Carolina, he slowly got accustomed to the American way. “But it wasn’t that I had lost touch with our Afghan roots. Our family didn’t want to cut away

from tradition,” he says. His parents maintained a steady relationship with their extended family and with other Afghans in the neighbourhood, pretty much replicating the rituals and beliefs of their home country in America. This also meant that it was never easy for Sadat to be accepted as gay by his family.

“I was 32 when I came out to my family – that is eight years ago,” he recalls. His family did not accept him. “My sister was more welcoming but she didn’t want me to talk about it.” She secretly hoped he’d marry and lead a parallel life. Sadat, however, didn’t wish to hide his sexual identity, a reality he had come to terms with at the age of 23.

“This was when I was in New York City,” he says. He had moved there looking for financial independence, and a chance invite led him to a party hosted by someone from the fashion world. “I saw a number of gay men openly holding hands. I had never seen such affection between two men before,” he says. This is when he saw himself among them and them within him. “It wasn’t the easiest period in life though, as I was depressed and overweight.”

Yet, this was also a liberating moment.

Sadat went on to become a noted journalist and academic, acquiring degrees from institutions such as Oxford and Harvard. This gave him

BOOKMARK



Arthur C. Clarke award

The Arthur C. Clarke award for sci-fi novels has gone to British Yoruba author Tade Thompson for *Rosewater*, a story of alien invasion set in a futuristic Africa. In the novel, Rosewater is a new town in rural Nigeria where people acquire telepathic powers because of an alien presence.



Amish in the Top 10

Six novels by Amish — *Raavan-Enemy of Aryavrata*, *Sita-Warrior of Mithila*, *Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku*, *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, *The Oath of the Vayuputras* — have made it to the top 10 of the HT-Nielsen Bookscan national bestseller list for the July 27 week.

social recognition, and more importantly, confidence.

He says, "I had to prove myself not only as a gay man but also as a Muslim, an Afghan and an immigrant." The politics was such that his multiple identities "cut" in different ways. He was responding as a Muslim – even though he had broken away from religion – to 9/11 and terror at one end, and as a gay Muslim man at the other.

Unfazed by hostility

While he took these realities in his stride, his deep desire was to return to his country, a nation he only knew from his parents. So he grabbed the first opportunity, while working as an Assistant Professor of political science at the American University of Afghanistan. "It was a thrill to return and contribute," he says. However, Sadat, who had learnt to stand for who he was and express himself freely, immediately felt the contrast: "I could see the repression first-hand be it in relation to women or to the LGBTQIA+ community," he says.

Using social media, Sadat secretly started mobilising the community in Afghanistan. As the word got around, his position at the university became shaky. "I had gone for a course at Oxford as soon as the semester ended. Around this time, I posted some cross-dressed photos of myself." This led to an avalanche of hostility. Sadat was dubbed a "national threat" to Afghanistan, and told not to return.

"I was very upset and this is when I came out on social media. It led to a lot of hate from Islamic groups," he recalls. There were videos posted on how to kill him.

Sadat has the distinction of being the first Afghan to come out publicly. "But it was not until the Orlando massacre in 2016 that the American press spoke to me," he says. America woke up to the problems of queer people in Afghanistan, a country it had occupied, only after this incident where 49 people were gunned down in a gay nightclub by an Afghan security guard.

"At times life was terrifying," Sadat admits. But his novel, detailing the 40 years of his brave journey, should inspire many. Meanwhile, Sadat has moved on. "I am doing a course in creative writing, taking on a few projects and negotiating life on my terms," he says, a touch of pride evident in his voice.

The writer, a communications consultant, is the author of *Straight to Normal* and Director, Rainbow Lit Fest.



Using social media, Sadat secretly started mobilising the queer community in Afghanistan. As word got around, his position at the university became shaky

THIS WORD FOR THAT

Vak devi's gift

Our literatures and the English language are two of the hinges of India's unity

Like the many Hindus who respectfully visit churches, gurudwaras and mosques saying, "When we have a thousand gods why not one or two more places of worship?" Indians should be able to say, "When we have 22 major languages, some of them very old and highly developed, why not one or two more languages, particularly if they provide a voice to those who have not been heard?"

Isn't Vak devi sacred? Isn't the word god?

Yet, somehow, the grip of English as a metaphysical empire long after India ceased to be Britain's colony is a source of disturbance to some of us who have developed a neurotic antipathy for not just English as a language, but also for the different world cultures that came with and through it. We fantasise about a golden era when we were untouched by European influences.

Exchange to enrich

But why? Our best writers pre- and post-1947 are bilingual, at ease both in their mother tongues and in English. Manoj Das, Girish Karnad, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Mridula Garg, Paul Zacharia, Kiran Nagarkar, U.R. Ananthamurthy and K. Satchidanandan.

Let's pause before proceeding! Did the Vikings cling to their outdated agricultural implements when they saw more efficient ones upon invading

England? No. How long did Anglo-Saxons resist Norman culture



Mini Krishnan edits translations for Oxford University Press.



Joy Students enact poems. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

which reached them in the 11th century and integrated itself into the land they conquered? The Norman conquerors brought England into an enriched new millennium with their poetry, architecture and masonry, laws and sophisticated weaponry.

In the years between 1880 and 1914, when Britain was at the height of her imperial power, large sections of her population were in a shocking state of decline: sickly, undernourished and illiterate. Alfred Marshall denounced the educational poverty of the English working class mind as the world's biggest wasted product, and Samuel Smith warned that "unless we teach these classes the same virtues which have elevated other classes," the proletariat would strangle the whole country. Many reports were prepared in Britain, and finally the formidable English Association stated that the teaching of the English language and literature was the only way the country's disparate populations could be unified. An almost evangelical mission was undertaken to spread a standard form of English in the British Isles. Ironically, at a time when English was about to become a universal language, its native speakers were hardly acquainted with its riches.

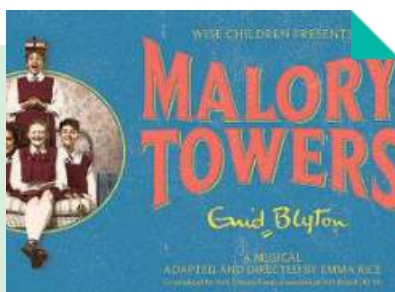
No word of all this reached the larger public in India. At that time we were in a state of cultural retreat: our languages starved for funds, our religions and arts ridiculed. A century later, despite our incalculable linguistic wealth and 72 years of independence, India is at a point where even our college-educated populations are in a dangerous state of language illiteracy. Two generations of Indians have been deprived of sustained language immersion and merely grilled to pass exams.

Barring rare exceptions, the joys of reciting poetry or reading a play aloud or staging one are unknown to the schoolchild today. Hardly any school curriculum seriously introduces mind-expanding poetry and fiction from either a regional language or in English translation.

The neglect of literature and languages at all levels has gradually diminished us without our being aware of it. This is nothing short of a tragedy because secularism, our various literatures, and the English language are the hinges of India's unity. The potential for appreciating and gaining from bilingualism is truly vast and a huge storehouse of material is readily at hand. For instance, an exchange of literatures between languages could be a memorable and emotional way to teach history and politics. The Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation has taken the lead and introduced a brilliant Tamil translation of W.H. Auden's famous poem 'Partition' on the Radcliffe Line. The translation, by T.S. Saravanan, is part of the Class XII History textbook.

*Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
Having never set eyes on the land he was called to partition
Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
With their different diets and incompatible gods.
"Time," they had briefed him in London, "is short. It's too late
For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:
The only solution now lies in separation.*

S. Ramakrishnan has prepared a transliterated excerpt for this column.
viTutalait tiTTattaic ceyalpaTutta vantapootu avar naTunilaitaan naaTTunilai aRiyaamal parinturaitta pirivinai peru vilaitaan veRikoNTa iru inattiRkumiTaiyee vilakiyatu oRRumai ivarkaLin iraiyilum, iRaiyilum evvaLavoo veeRRumai viTutalait vazhanga ilaNtan vitittirunta neeramoo konjcam camaraca muyaRcikkum, vivaata payiRcikkum atil neeram enge enjcum pirivinaitaan oree tiirvenRu vaisraay varaintaar kaTitam
As Raja Rao said in an essay called 'The Caste of English': "Truth can use any language."



Malory Towers

Malory Towers, a play based on the novels by Enid Blyton, is running at different theatres in England. Adapted and directed by Emma Rice, the novels are made into the "original Girl Power" story, touching upon themes of friendship, bullying and postwar trauma.



Dean Koontz with Amazon

Bestselling horror and thriller author Dean Koontz has signed a five-book deal with the Amazon Publishing imprint Thomas & Mercer. He will also release a collection of six short thrillers titled *Nameless*, under the imprint, Amazon Original Stories, this autumn.

BROWSE FICTION**I Am Sovereign**Nicola Barker
William Heinemann
\$11.49

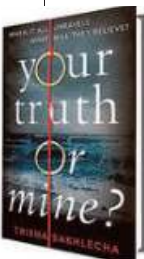
In this hilarious novel about the tussle between an eccentric 40-year-old teddybear maker trying to sell his house and his much-harassed real-estate agent, the personal expands into meditations on culture and history. The boundaries between fiction and real life blur as the characters sabotage and break through the fictional world they inhabit.

**Someone We Know**Shari Lapena
Penguin Random House
₹599

In a leafy suburb, where everyone is polite and friendly, an anonymous note has been left at some houses. "I'm so sorry. My son has been getting into people's houses. He's broken into yours." Who is this boy, what has he uncovered? Then a missing local woman is found murdered and the peace is shattered forever.

**Your Truth or Mine?**Trisha Saklecha
Pan Macmillan India
₹499

This psychological thriller is about the dark secrets couples keep from one another and how a marriage unravels. The perfect marriage of Mia and Roy Kapoor crumbles when Roy is questioned over the disappearance of a woman. They must question everything they know about each other if their marriage is to survive.

**Sweet Sorrow**David Nicholls
Hodder & Stoughton
₹599

Charlie Lewis has a crappy family life. Then he finds a friend in Fran Fisher and begins to hope that his life will improve. This is a tragicomedy about the rocky path to adulthood, coming to terms with a dysfunctional family, as well as a celebration of the reviving power of friendship and love.

**Flyaway Boy**Jane De Suza
Puffin
₹250

Kabir doesn't fit in. Not in the hill town he lives in, not in his school, where only strait-laced and rule-abiding kids are encouraged. Unable to bear it all any longer, Kabir decides to vanish. Finding Kabir will mean understanding who he really is. This is a story about embracing everything that makes you uniquely you.



Looking for answers The old town area of San Sebastian. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

POLITICAL REALISM

The heart of terror

By tracing the relational contours of two families, *Aramburu* explores the nativist political ideology that spawned terrorism in Spain

VENKY VEMBU

Towards the tail end of Fernando Aramburu's expansive, 592-page metanarrative about a Spanish community that finds its soul cleaved by the terrorist impulse of Basque's ETA separatists, there's a self-referential scene in which the "writer" makes a cameo appearance.

It is framed as an event to memorialise the victims of terrorism in the cause of establishing a Basque 'homeland', and the 'writer' – presumably Aramburu himself – provides the backstory to why and how the book came to be.

The story cuts close to the bone for Aramburu, who was himself born in San Sebastian, where the novel is set: as a Basque teenager, he too had in some ways been exposed to – but not

indoctrinated by – the nativist political ideology that spawned terrorism. "I've thought it all over many times and I think I've found the answer," the writer says.

Oh, would that answers to such existential civilisational questions were so easy to find! After all, one man's 'terrorist' is another man's 'freedom fighter'. In *Homeland*, the frontiers that separate the two opposing ideologies are very proximate: the novel traces the relational contours of two families – one on either side of that divide – whose matriarchs, Bittori and Miren, were once good friends.

Promised land

Their husbands hang out together, as do their children. But when Bittori's businessman-husband Txato receives extortionist demands from Basque

separatists, the idyllic neighbourly spirit is torn asunder – because Miren's son Joxe Mari is now with ETA, and the mother's loyalties are conflicted. Txato's murder by Basque terrorists accentuates the rift.

It is easy to visualise the story at the heart of *Homeland* being played out in many other conflict-divided geographies, from Kashmir to Sri Lanka to Palestine. Wherever the quest for a "homeland" has embraced violence as a vehicle to get to the promised land, it has driven families and friends apart. In many ways, those individual stories are just as tragic and no less consequential than the larger political narrative about nationhood and competing ideologies.

Aramburu is at his best when he focusses up-close on the personal tribulations of the two families. As the "writer" at the memorial event says: "I

tried to answer concrete questions. How does a person live intimately the disaster of having lost a father, a husband, a brother in an attack? How does a widow, an orphan, a person who's been mutilated face life after a crime?"

All Bittori wants, in order to bring a closure to the tragedy that has overrun her life, is an acknowledgement of her plight, a simple act of contrition on the part of Joxe Mari. In this enterprise, she has the moral and material support of Miren's own paralytic daughter Arantxa, a sterling character who rises above the limitations of her bodily frame. Soldiering on, with quiet dignity, Bittori finally secures the balm that can heal her family's bruised soul.

And what of Joxe Mari? After 17 years in prison – during which period he nursed hate as an antidote to the poison of nostalgia – he abandons ETA, broken down by the loneliness of jail life and doubts, "which are like mosquitoes in summer". And when ETA decides to end its armed struggle, the announcement leaves him cold, as if it was "a matter that didn't concern him". So, when Arantxa writes to him, to persuade him to make peace with Bittori, he reasons that seeking forgiveness takes more courage than firing a weapon or setting off a bomb. It is a confirmation of the futility of the 'cause' that overwhelmed his life.

Strong women

All through *Homeland*, it is the two matrons and the other female characters who bear the story along, typifying the strong women who are characteristic of the Basque region. In contrast, the men are less stirring, and fall into stereotypical portrayals, frequently as philanderers. And Aramburu deploys a curious literary technique to propel the story: the characters often intervene, *sotto voce*, in the narrator's rendition of events, sometimes even mid-sentence. It serves as a way of fleshing out the narrative, adding layers and facts to the storyline, and occasionally questioning it. It takes a while to get used to, but when the reader gets into the stride, it makes for a refreshing style.

On the other hand, Aramburu's narrative style, at least in the English translation of his work, is somewhat antiseptic – perhaps deliberately so, given the author's conscious effort, despite a manifest empathy for victims of terrorism, to avoid "making a judgement about who is good and who is bad".

In interviews, he has noted that since he is "not a historian, not a politician, and not a journalist," he has "placed his bet on literature". Also, he has self-admittedly steered clear of "sentimentality" (or pathos) and "sanctimony" – or what he calls "the subordination of facts to a thesis".

Which is actually something of a pity. An exploration of the morality of the whole 'homeland' enterprise, and of the methods adopted therein, may have arguably led Aramburu to more engaging geographies of the mind. As it is, for all its expansiveness of scope, and its fleeting flirtation with, and gentle tugs at, readers' heartstrings, *Homeland* leaves us a little less than sated.



Homeland
Fernando Aramburu,
trs Alfred MacAdam
Picador
₹799

How does a person live intimately the disaster of having lost a father, a husband, a brother in an attack? How does a widow, an orphan, a person who's been mutilated face life after a crime?

PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM

Blue and beyond

The account of Amy's trauma and recovery is heartfelt. But will a woman in Amy's position in a less liberal society be able to bounce back as easily?

RASMI BINOY

I planned it. I invited it. I was an equal partner. And nothing ever happened till I was seventeen," broods Amy Blue in *Blue Tide Rising*. Amy, all of 24, washes up in a grungy neighbourhood of Manchester where "people fetch up like flotsam". Amy gets through life with a heavy supply of Diazepam that keeps her from breaking out into a scream any moment.

The novel opens on a dismal Balmoral Street and proceeds to sketch out Amy's past and her journey towards redemption. Orphanhood, abandonment, grooming, abuse, rape, depression... Amy goes through it all, but *Blue Tide Rising* is no pity party. It even has a crime thriller thread woven into it later on which makes up the larger part of the book.

Finding closure

When Jay – beautiful, pale, tall – visits Amy in her dingy 'studio', she doesn't know who he is. Assuming he is a random guy sent by social services to help her, and with her brain still muddled by drugs and traumatic memories, Amy recounts her life to Jay. She listens to him when he advises her to get out and talk to new people and explore new places, and eventually escapes to a Welsh farm near the sea, Môr Tawel, to find herself.

Once in Môr Tawel, she not only gets a grip on herself but also 'discovers' Jay, along with a host of new faces. Amy sees people from her strife-ridden life walk back to her at Môr Tawel, if not physically, at least as a renewed memory, helping her find closure.

The nuances of Western lifestyle are by now familiar to readers of English fiction. These days, our cities too sport gleaming cafés and themed pubs. We are aware of depression



and anxiety as conditions requiring medical help and do our best not to stigmatise these illnesses.

But stepping into Amy Blue's shoes and walking her path did entail some struggle for me as an Indian reader. For one, an average Indian woman would not have it this easy.

Blue Tide Rising is all about second chances. Amy's gut-wrenching experiences, most of which have their roots in her gender, do not yet make her a 'gone case' even though she gets judged by friends and family for falling in love with an older man.

They are not ready to see it as 'grooming', where an abuser draws in a victim little by little, over the years, until she is completely trapped, vulnerable and clueless. But even under such circumstances, Amy manages to find a way out of

her small town, that too without even a college degree.

After each of the debacles, Amy is able to pull herself together at the earliest – something a majority of girls in India in Amy's situation would not be able to do. She finds employment. She finds rooms to stay. She gets treatment. She gets social support. Yes, she ends up on Balmoral Street, but even there, she has her sessions with her psychiatrist. There is some kind of social accountability.

Out there

When Amy eventually finds people whom she can call her own at Môr Tawel, she is welcomed warmly irrespective of her past. They do not look at her with disdain for having had her body violated by scheming older men.

In a culture where staying 'pure' is still regarded as a woman's ultimate virtue, in a system that prefers silence and secrecy to truth and justice; amidst a mindset that does not mind crushing a woman's dreams if it feeds male entitlement, it feels novel to imagine that lives like Amy's are getting redeemed somewhere out there. That voices like hers are being heard. That experiences like hers are being counted. Even if it is set in another land. Even if it is all fiction.

One is reminded that *Blue Tide Rising* is a work of fiction more strongly towards the end, which is too saccharine to be realistic. That remains a disappointment, but this journey with Amy Blue is worthwhile.

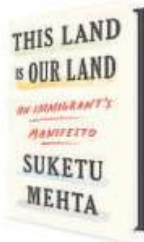


Blue Tide Rising
Clare Stevens
Inspired Quill
₹9.99

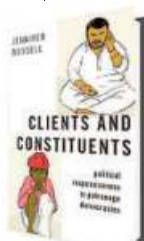
BROWSE NON-FICTION

This Land is Our Land: An Immigrant's ManifestoSuketu Mehta
Penguin Random House
₹599

• Drawing on his family's experience emigrating from India to Britain and America, and years of reporting, Mehta subjects the anti-immigrant backlash to scrutiny. The West, he argues, is being destroyed not by immigrants but by the fear of immigrants.

**Clients and Constituents: Political Responsiveness in Patronage Democracies**Jennifer Bussell
Oxford University Press
₹1,100

• As Bussell demonstrates, legislators in 'patronage democracies' provide substantial constituency service: non-contingent, direct assistance to individual citizens. She highlights the potential for a form of democratic accountability, one that is rooted in the character of patronage-based politics.

**One Heart, Two Worlds - The Story of the Jews of Kochi**Stark World Publishing
₹2,500

• This 177-page coffee table book is a visual odyssey, with 200 vintage images, of the Jewish community that made Kerala its home. The riveting real life account of the Jews in Kochi, their hearts caught between their adopted motherland India and the 'Promised Land' Israel, is a trip down memory lane.

**Trust in Transactions**Prasanta Ray, Rukmini Sen
Orient BlackSwan
₹975

• The chapters analyse a range of transaction spaces and stakeholders engaged in making, sustaining and reconfiguring trust. The spaces include factories, financial institutions and homes; and the players include organised labour, migrant workers, domestic workers and street children.

**Operation X: The Untold Story of India's Covert Naval War in East Pakistan 1971**Captain M.N.R. Samant,
Sandeep Unnithan
HarperCollins India
₹499

• In 1971, Naval Commando Operation (X) was formed, comprising Indian navy officers, divers, and others in then East Pakistan, to destabilise the West Pakistani efforts to bring East Pakistan to its knees. This is an account of the covert guerrilla operation that facilitated the birth of Bangladesh.



Picture for representation purpose only. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

HEALTH

Lessons from Ranbaxy

The troubles of Indian pharma companies abroad raise questions about the domestic drug regulator

PRIYANKA PULLA

Bottle of Lies, a book about the quality problems plaguing generic drugs, should make Indian readers furious. While it focuses on medicines intended for American consumers, the real and continuing victims of the failings described in the book are consumers in developing countries, including Indians.

In May 2013, soon after the erstwhile Ranbaxy Laboratories admitted in an American court to selling adulterated drugs, journalist Katherine Eban published a gripping 10,000-word account of the saga in *Fortune* magazine. But the story left Eban wondering if Ranbaxy was an isolated case. Could there be more rotten eggs, she asked, given the United States Food & Drugs Administration's (FDA) lax policing of overseas manufacturers? *Bottle of Lies* is the result of the multi-year investigation that followed.

Web of chicanery

It begins with Dinesh Thakur, the whistle-blower who exposed Ranbaxy's misdeeds. In 2003, Thakur left his job at Bristol Myers Squibb's New Jersey office to join the Gurgaon office of Ranbaxy – then a rising star of the Indian generics industry. There, he encountered a shocking web of chicanery. An early warning sign came when Thakur's boss told him that the World Health Organization (WHO) had uncovered fraud at Vimta Labs – the company that tested Ranbaxy's AIDS drugs. Vimta, it emerged, had never carried out these tests.

The finding led to Thakur unravelling an elaborate tapestry of fraud that enveloped all of Ranbaxy. When he dug for quality data supporting the company's drugs in

other countries, he found falsification everywhere, with weakly regulated markets like India being the worst hit. In a dramatic scene in Eban's book, Thakur asks a colleague how much of the data supporting the company's Indian drugs was fraudulent. The executive tells him the number is 100%. Thakur eventually shared his findings with the FDA, leading to Ranbaxy's conviction.

Indian readers will note a disturbing fact here: despite the substantial evidence against Ranbaxy, FDA's Indian counterpart, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), never found problems with the company's drugs in India. The glaring discrepancy between the FDA's and CDSCO's responses to quality problems is a recurring theme in the book. While Eban's investigations paint both agencies as ill-equipped and under-funded, the FDA does redeem itself at times. Ranbaxy Laboratories did end up paying a record \$500 million fine, thanks in part to the FDA's efforts. Other companies with quality issues have also been under the American agency's scanner: three of Wockhardt's manufacturing plants are blocked from exporting drugs to the U.S., for instance. Further, in 2018-19, over 15 Indian companies received FDA import alerts, according to the regulator's website.

Turning a blind eye

The CDSCO, on the other hand, never acted even against the biggest offenders, such as Ranbaxy and Hyderabad's GVK Biosciences. In the latter's case, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) found the company to

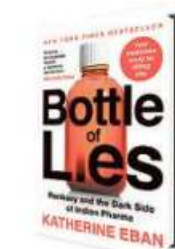
be manipulating drug-quality data in 2015. Still, former CDSCO chief G.N. Singh tried to explain away the findings by alluding to conspiracies against the Indian industry.

For those inclined towards conspiracy theories, there's plenty of grist for the mill. Earlier this year, several U.S. states sued 20 generic drug-makers, including Indian firms, for price collusion. American trade bodies, such as the medical-device association AdvaMed, have often expressed their displeasure with India's intellectual-property regime and price-caps. Is the American industry's simmering unhappiness driving the FDA's tough stance against Indian manufacturers?

It's a valid question, but one that is easily answered. A reader merely needs to ask whether Eban presents evidence for the claimed

malpractices. The answer is yes. Ranbaxy's misdeeds are a matter of public record today. Details of other companies that subsequently came under the FDA's or EMA's scanner, such as Wockhardt and GVK, are also verifiable.

Eban convincingly answers the question she set out to ask: was Ranbaxy an isolated case? The answer is no. While not every company flagged by foreign regulators is indulging in systematic fraud, it is obvious that quality slip-ups happen frequently enough to endanger patient safety. The only defence that consumers have is a strong drug regulator. Eban's powerful book may force the USFDA to pull up its socks. But who will force the CDSCO to do its job? Indian consumers must start asking tough questions.

**Bottle of Lies**
Katherine Eban
Juggernaut
₹699

POLITICS

The principle of justice

Why the state must ensure freedom from discrimination for all citizens in pluralistic India

UMA MAHADEVAN-DASGUPTA

How can people with different beliefs and customs live together in a pluralistic society with civility and mutual respect? One can think of few more important questions, not just for the world's largest democracy but for the world itself, in the 21st century. Political scientist Neera Chandhoke takes on this fraught question in a thoughtful analysis that reinterprets and powerfully reworks the concepts of pluralism, secularism, tolerance and coexistence in the context of India today.

Secularism in India, says Chandhoke, is not the same as western secularism: for in India, it has acquired a distinctive meaning ever since, in the context of the bitter communal riots, the leaders of the freedom struggle adopted secularism as a basic principle of democratic polity precisely as a response to the atmosphere of strife.

Chandhoke begins by drawing from the text of the Santi Parva, the book of the Mahabharata in which, after the Great War, the dying patriarch Bhishma, lying on a bed of arrows, teaches the new king



Idea of India Our society is diverse, marked by various beliefs and customs. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Yudhishtira about the responsibilities of a ruler. It is kingly 'dharma', says Bhishma, to protect the people. A just and dutiful king should nurture and hold his people together, protecting them from violence, and ruling without bias.

Chandhoke situates the concept of secularism in this conception of justice. Indian society is plural: marked not just by heterogeneity but by deep differences in beliefs and customs, from ways of eating and ways of living, to ways of religious worship. In order to treat all its citizens justly despite their

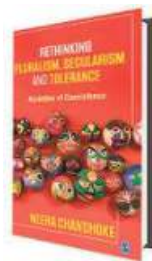
differences, the State must adopt the principle of treating them equally, providing equal protection to all, and ensuring freedom from discrimination to all citizens. These commitments require the presence of an environment of civility and mutual respect, implying fraternity; and in building such an environment, pluralism becomes valuable in itself.

Chandhoke suggests that a transition from empirical plurality to normative pluralism is necessary not just because individuals could be harmed if their constitutive community is harmed, or to enable

individuals to achieve their aspirations and full potential while protecting secure access to their constitutive community; but also, and perhaps most importantly, because respecting pluralism for itself adds to the conception of what it means to be human.

The right to freedom of association allows citizens to come together across boundaries of class and ethnicity to strengthen civil society. On the one hand, the realisation of political equality in India and the existence of a vibrant civil society, are laudable successes; on the other hand, deep and troubling inequalities continue to exist in the economic and social spheres.

Against this background, Chandhoke shows that it is the norm of secularism, embedded in the vision of a just society that can enable the transition from an empirically plural society to one that recognises pluralism as valuable in itself. Secularism, or non-discrimination between different religious groups, is thus an integral part of the vision of democracy. As Chandhoke remarks, "To infringe the basics of secularism is to infringe the fundamentals of democracy."



Rethinking Pluralism, Secularism and Tolerance: Anxieties of Coexistence
Neera Chandhoke
Sage
₹895

SOCIETY

Into the dark unknown

A collection of essays documents the price people pay to earn a living outside their South Asian countries

R. KRITHIKA

When we talk about migration, it's the success stories that come to mind first: the prosperous entrepreneur, the award-winning doctor, tech wizards. Have we ever spared a thought to those who return battered and bruised but alive, or in coffins and body bags if their luck ran out?

It is this dark side of human migration that *Uncertain Journeys: Labour Migration from South Asia* examines. What the book does – and very well at that – is to put "a human face", as A.S. Panneerselvan who has edited the slim volume calls it, to the data and statistics of labour and migration. In his Introduction, Panneerselvan gives the reader the context for the stories that follow: "These essays document the price people pay to earn a dignified livelihood, as well as the joy and pain of distance employment... (and) help us understand the labour migrant from South Asia as a human being and not as a mere remittance machine for



Nothingness In Sri Lanka, war and climate change have escalated the problem. AFP

the family or a precious foreign-exchange earner for the home country."

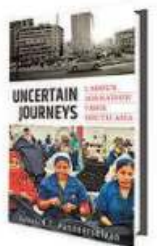
The essays by Nila Kumar and Rejimon Kuttappan examine the racist underpinnings of West Asian economies. The glitz and glamour fades as one climbs down the ladder, just like the fig leaf placed strategically to cover a male nude at the Louvre, Abu Dhabi. From Nepal, Upasna Khadka, Janak Raj Sapkota and Kesang Tseten offer insights into how the

desperation of migrants has played into the hands of human traffickers and how lack of governmental cooperation has led to an increase in illegal migration. Khadka's essay is titled 'The Lottery of Migration' and she writes that individuals take risky decisions, "not always because of lack of information, but despite it... it is the possibility of being lucky that encourages so many to take risks." Pakistan is covered by Haniya Javed and Sabrina Toppa, while Porimol

Pulma takes on Bangladesh. In Sri Lanka, war and climate change have added another dimension to the problem, say Amantha Perera and Thulasi Muttulingam. But Muttulingam also offers a tiny sliver of hope in documenting how some of the women also discovered their own rights.

This is not an easy book to read; despite the authors sticking to a bare bones narrative, the testimonies and the statistics present a gut-wrenching and distressing picture. The saddest image of all comes from R.K. Radhakrishnan's 'Return to Nothingness'. Despite all the hardships they have faced and the deaths they have seen, migrants prefer to take the risk of getting away from their country. The piper's song they hear is the chance of making good; of something that will take them out of their current condition.

What will it take for our governments to look inwards and ensure a decent standard of living for their citizens? The other question I am left with is: Will there be a similar book on migration within India?



Uncertain Journeys: Labour Migration from South Asia
Edited by A.S. Panneerselvan
Speaking Tiger
₹399



NOSTALGIA

Aromas of the bazaar

Is there a word for the *mehak* of freshly-fried ‘salty with a hint of sweet’ bhatura?

SUBHA J. RAO

Row after row of shops selling everything from garish toys, curtains and cushions to those that mixed and matched fabric in a jiffy or sold carpets and dhurries by the kilo. Veer Bazaar (Thursday market) at New Rajendra Nagar in Delhi offered, and possibly continues to offer, a smörgåsbord of goodies for every possible buyer.

The real stars of the bazaar, vegetable vendors from the hinterland, sat deep inside the heart of this shanty that would crop up once a week. And this is where we headed every week for the freshest of produce – bright green palak and methi, pearly-white mooli and cauliflower, red carrots for halwa, water chestnuts during the season, pods bursting with green peas, plump parwal and purple eggplant...the list was endless.

But we had a stop before that. Cutting through all the noise and clutter and people’s voices was the aroma of just-cooked food. Is there a

word for the *mehak* (fragrance) of freshly-fried ‘salty with a hint of sweet’ bhatura? Or for the puff of steam that rises when the finger makes a dent in the oblong bhatura? I’ll get to the chole, a dark-brownish black thanks to the sachets of tea powder dropped into the bubbling cauldron, in a bit.

Market antics

It’s been 17 years since I left Delhi, but fond memories drop by to say hello every now and then. In the five-odd years I lived there, some routines never changed – Thursday’s dinner for my husband and me, and Sunday brunch for the former. Thursday was my weekly off at the news agency where I worked, and it coincided with Veer Bazaar.

Sheela Aunty, who is possibly smiling now from heaven reading this, and I would wash our casseroles and dabbas, and carry these along with the bags for vegetables.

The dabbas would be dropped off at *cholewale bhaiyya*. It was a rite, almost to convince ourselves that

some good would emerge out of this Thursday evening expedition. Our dabbas would join the long line of containers already sitting patiently on a counter while a ‘*chhotu*’ would bag the onions and pickled mango and carrot that accompanied every parcel. Half an hour of shopping later, we would have just enough money left to pick up the chole-bhature and hire a ride back home.

The *cholewale* corner was a beehive of activity. Some men would be patiently pulling out small bits of dough and rolling them into small roundels before semi-stretching them. As soon as we identified our dabbas, the *bhaiyya* would stretch the bhatura further and slip the hand-shaped dough into the dark hot oil.

He’d fish them out as soon as they resembled puffy off-white rugby balls and pack them in the casseroles. The chole would be put into another dabba, ready to be heated before being served at home. Even after all these years, though people tell me I make good chole, it’s nowhere near

my gold standard – that dark flavourful concoction spiced just right and flavoured by the swirling dust of New Rajendra Nagar. Its texture was neither thick nor runny, but just perfect to scoop out with a piece of bhatura. No spice overpowered the masala; it was like they’d become best friends during the hours of simmering, helping each infuse the other’s special secret, but also remove any sharp edges from the flavour profile.

Bhatura drama

Some days, overwhelmed by the aroma, I’d order a single bhatura to eat right there at the shop, and convince the utterly dignified Sheela Aunty to take a bite too. All charged up, we would head home to our banker-husbands. They would have missed all the drama associated with the chole-bhature, but the sheer taste made up for it, I guess.

Sundays usually meant the early morning shift at United News of India, and I would head out by 7.45 a.m. And

My chole is nowhere near my gold standard — a dark flavourful concoction spiced just right and flavoured by the swirling dust of New Rajendra Nagar



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

my husband would wait patiently for the street vendor who brought chole-kulche just in time for Sunday brunch. This *bhaiyya*, always in a spotless white kurta-pyjama, rode royally into Old Rajendra Nagar on his bicycle. He had a peculiar sing-song voice. His call was usually ‘OoooooOoooooOooooo,’ and as if he were the Pied Piper, children and adults would make a beeline for his cycle, plates in tow. He sold pre-made kulcha, which he would quickly heat on a kerosene-fuelled stove attached to his cycle carrier. The chole would emerge from a huge dabba hanging from one handle. This was quite the poor cousin of the Veer Bazaar version, but had its dedicated army of followers. Was it the way he called out his wares, or was it the joy of seeing him create culinary magic from a bicycle?

In those narrow bylanes of both the Rajendra Nagars, I discovered and embraced a food routine that also served as a socialising tool. Now I live thousands of kilometres away in a coastal city, and that particular chole-bhatore thrives only in my memory.

PEACE IN A POD

Women of the world

NRI Woman podcast features stories of women who've done something different, overcome a challenge, or just have something inspirational to share

USHA RAMAN

Two friends, a series of interesting conversations, a seemingly unending supply of fascinating real-life stories from women in the Indian diaspora: a great recipe for a podcast. Dubai-based Bettina Tauro and Ninorah Brookshire have been friends forever – “Sisters from different mothers,” quips Ninorah in their introductory episode of the *NRI Woman* podcast. Their own intense exchanges about the challenges and joys of settling into foreign cultures led them to wonder about the million other stories that might be out there, that were bound to speak to millions of women struggling and succeeding in their own ways.

“Everyone has a different story about moving away from home, and we wanted to create a platform where NRI women could share their experiences,” Tauro tells me over telephone from Goa, where she was visiting family. She quickly adds, “We were clear we didn’t want it to be another agony aunt column.”



Social media seemed to be the easiest way to go, and they set up a Facebook page in 2016. “We quickly realised the limitations of this medium,” she explains. “We found we were fairly decent at having conversations, but writing was not our strength.” So, in March 2018, the first season of the *NRI Woman* podcast was launched, each a 15- to 20-minute episode featuring the story of a woman who has done something a little bit different, overcome a struggle or challenge of a certain kind, or who simply has an inspirational account to share.

The narratives range from discussions around raising “third culture kids” (episode #45) to overcoming addiction (episode #43) and human trafficking (episode #37) to professional growth stories from women who made unconventional choices, and a good measure of old-fashioned love-in-the-face-of-all-odds. In case you’re thinking all this sounds much like a podcast version of chick lit, the pleasant voices and soft music disguise the dead-serious nature of some of the discussions. Tauro and Brookshire have not shied away from featuring guests who have been through some pretty tough situations, including chronic

Tauro and Brookshire have not shied away from featuring guests who have been through tough situations, including mental illness, abuse and abandonment

mental illness, abuse and abandonment. While they do not take on an overtly feminist tone or use “woke” vocabulary, Tauro notes that the focus is on empowerment, with women “talking about making choices they want, without judgement”.

Limited diversity

What makes the show different is the fact that neither are the hosts your seasoned interviewers nor the guests experienced speakers. Using a narrative format, the two hosts deliberately restrict their voices to framing the episode and providing background information, allowing the guest to emerge as the main storyteller. The 49 episodes spanning four seasons reveal a fair level of diversity along certain axes – women from a variety of geographies, ages and to some extent, varied social and professional situations. Tauro admits that they have had to restrict themselves to guests who are able to speak in English, even if not fluently, given their own level of comfort with the language. This leaves out the large swathe of women in the diaspora who most certainly have rich stories that contain layers of social, cultural and political complexity.

The show has found an audience not only across the globe but in India as well, where, Tauro notes, the largest number of downloads come from after the U.S. and West Asia. “We also have a fair number of non-Indians who listen to it – perhaps to gain cultural insights.

For now, *NRI Woman* is an independently produced podcast that is “a labour of love” for Tauro and Brookshire and their young editor, Deepthy Shibish. The show is about to go into its fifth season – and fiftieth episode – on September 1, with new episodes released weekly through the end of December.

(A fortnightly series on podcasts.)

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

SUNDAY RECIPE

Roadside chole

Dear friend, chef and restaurateur Rangeeta Murada, a fellow Rajendra Nagar resident, says the secret to perfect roadside chole is generous quantities of dalda and baking soda, something no one will admit to adding.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup Kabuli chana
1/4 cup Chana dal
Ghee
Ginger
Salt



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

METHOD

1. Soak overnight and pressure cook till soft, adding some tea leaves in a potli for colour.
2. Heat some ghee in a pan, add chopped ginger to taste, tip in the chole masala (Rangeeta's recommendation is Morning Glory store's special chana masala or Roopak's Pindi chole masala), add salt to taste and the boiled chole.
3. Mash some for a gravy-like consistency. Simmer and serve with a drizzle of fresh julienned ginger.
4. Serve with store-bought kulcha, homemade bhaturas and a side of carrot pickle or onion steeped in vinegar.

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OFF-CENTRE

A colonel fields at silly point

Social media is gushing about Dhoni's decision to skip the West Indies tour and serve in an Army unit instead



NISSIM MANNATHUKKAREN

In response to a news photograph of Mahendra Singh Dhoni in his Army uniform, a reader commented: "A soldier is never off duty... Representing his country on and off the field." This perfectly sums up the increasingly visible trend in India: the blurring lines between the soldier and the sportsperson.

This is not just a reaction to the fact that Dhoni is formally enrolled in the Indian Territorial Army as a lieutenant colonel, but is also a reflection of the larger societal expectation that every citizen should be a soldier, so to speak.

How else do you explain Dhoni's decision to skip the West Indies tour and instead serve the Army at that time? Dhoni has not retired from international cricket; so isn't it natural to assume that his primary commitment would be to play for the nation? Yet, instead of asking probing questions about the country's senior-most player picking and choosing

which tours he will play, or examining his performance in the recent World Cup, we get a gushing media that raves about Dhoni's "brave" decision to serve in an Army unit in Kashmir.

Gautam Gambhir, who has been a virulent nationalist whether it comes to making the national anthem mandatory in cinema halls or to forfeiting India's match with Pakistan in the World Cup, and has ridden his jingoistic fame to a parliamentary election victory, called Dhoni's decision "a historic step," while Kapil Dev says it will "motivate the youth of the country" to "spend some time with the Army". The Army chief said that Dhoni "will be protecting a lot of people" while businessman Anand Mahindra tweeted that Dhoni looked good in the military uniform.

Symbolic struggles

The enveloping of sport by military symbolism was most prominently seen after the Pulwama terror attack, when the Indian cricket team wore military caps on the cricket ground. Then there was the *balidan* badge controversy during the World Cup, when there was a nationalist outpouring of support for Dhoni's right to wear gloves with military insignia. There were even calls for a boycott of the World Cup, while Union Minister Smriti Irani posted the *balidan* badge on social media in solidarity. No cricket team of any other nation has done what the Indian team was trying to claim as a right in both the instances.

This whole development is ironical, considering that hundreds of Army personnel have represented India in various sports, and not one of them has felt the need to display their patriotism through Army symbols.

The veneration of the army, of masculinity, violence and nationalism is an integral part of authoritarian societies, especially fascist ones. As the *Oxford Dictionary of Sports Studies* puts it: "Fascism in the first half of the 20th century proposed a doctrinaire ethos of physical culture in which the body as the armoury of the individual was little more than the tool of the state." The Italian fascist state under Benito Mussolini exemplified this total alliance between the state and sport. Italy winning two football World Cups

Historic step M.S. Dhoni with Army officers in Kashmir; and (below) Benito Mussolini with the Italian football team in 1938. NISSAR AHMAD & AFP



Italy winning two football World Cups in 1934 and 1938 aided the regime's pursuit of national glory and, in turn, its attempt to enforce discipline and order in society

in 1934 and 1938 aided the regime's pursuit of national glory and, in turn, its attempt to enforce discipline and order in society.

The danger of creeping militaristic values in democracies cannot be understated. It has the power to destroy democracies. The entire public discourse in India is governed now by issues of national security, as tellingly seen in the 2019 general election. In this mood, any doubting or critical voice on the issue of national security is shot down as anti-national.

Authoritarian values

Sport does not exist in a vacuum, but is constantly interacting with other social spheres. Fascistic and authoritarian values are not isolated to the political sphere alone, but gain traction through their resonance in popular culture. And sport has always been an arena where national identity and feelings of nationalism were constructed and celebrated. What has changed under the present right-wing regime is that the nationalism has acquired a distinctly religious character. A tweet from Harbhajan Singh – a cricketer of such stature and himself from a community that has undergone the worst communal massacre – after the Chandrayaan 2 launch, mocking not just Pakistan but other Muslim nations, is an indicator of this new character of nationalism. American sports writer John Tunis wrote in 1936, "An Italian triumph in football, cycling, tennis, or any other sport... is seized upon, written up and paraded as proof positive of the superiority of the race and its governing principles."

Such forms of masculine, war-mongering nationalism are particularly attractive to a nation like India, marked by the angst of being a developing country and one with few international sporting laurels. The angst is channelled by right-wing ideologies into finding internal and external enemies. Conveniently, sports stars' political views are confined to showering laurels on the present regime's hyper-nationalist achievements. (Yet, ironically, the Pakistan-obsessed cricket nationalism of India has no trouble with its team being sponsored by a Chinese company – after all, China is the main strategic ally of Pakistan).

Indian sporting stars are lauded for their courage in serving a basically ceremonial role in the Army, but are they capable of displaying the courage of a Kumar Sangakkara to speak out against lynching and the spread of hate and bigotry?

Let the Army do its job, and let sportspeople do theirs. Let us not confuse the two. A nation becomes great when its citizens perform conscientiously the thousands of occupations they are engaged in. Let them respect the Army without unnecessarily valorising militarism. If militaristic dominance of society is the greatest hallmark of success, then Pakistan, ruled by the military for half of its existence, should be India's role model. Does that give our new nationalists some food for thought?

The writer is Chair, International Development Studies, Dalhousie University, Canada.

ALLEGEDLY

Congratulations, you are a terrorist!

Every non-violent dissenter is a terrorist in spirit if not in act



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

If you publicly accept your guilt, do penance by feeding 10,000 cows and beg Chota Voldemort for mercy, you may get a prison cell with Wi-Fi that actually works

I've spent the last few weeks reading about life in prison. I must say it's time well spent. Advance preparation always helps. Tomorrow I could be carted off to jail. So could you. In case you've been too busy stealing hotel towels in Bali to get what I'm talking about, let me bring you up to speed. According to a proposed new amendment to the UAPA, the government can unilaterally declare you a terrorist. The onus will then be on you to prove that you aren't one. The best part is you don't even have to do any actual terrorism – such as shooting, exploding bombs etc. All that's needed is for the government to think the thought.

It's like how God created the universe: let there be light, and there was light. One fine morning, Chota Voldemort wakes up and says, "Let Sharma-ji be a terrorist", and lo and behold, from that day on, Sharma-ji is Kasab-ji. The logical next step is to pick up Sharma-ji and throw him in jail, which is what's in store for you and me and every other non-cow in India – no matter how garishly patriotic you are or how loudly you proclaim on Twitter that you're privileged to be followed by our beloved leader.

So what's your plan? I have a Plan A and a Plan B. My Plan A is simple: to be the one person in India who will NEVER EVER be designated a terrorist. Come what may. Even if it means in the entire country I'm the only non-terrorist left standing, my sexy Aadhaar and handsome PAN linked majestically in glorious digital matrimony.



G. Sampath is Social Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*.

Even if it means I have to vote again and again for rapists, serial murderers, street thugs and certified fraudsters. Even if it means turning a blind eye to the fact that at this precise historical moment, Rwanda is superior to India as a democracy.

Plan B

But there's a good chance that Plan A may fail, on account of factors beyond my control. Hence Plan B, whose first part involves acknowledging the inevitable: if you are an ordinary citizen of India and not an MP from Bhopal, it's just a matter of time before you're declared a terrorist. Why? Because you really are a terrorist, you fool! Think about it: if tomorrow you are deemed a terrorist, and you respond by telling the government, "No, I'm not," you are finished. First, you will be speaking as a terrorist, which means your words mean nothing. Second, by trying to prove the government wrong, you are, *ipso facto*, questioning the government's wisdom – in other words, you are dissenting, and voila, you are a terrorist!

It's a truth universally acknowledged that any form of non-violent dissent is a potential act of terrorism because it could, in the future, inspire disaffection against the government, leading to an actual act of terrorist violence. Every non-violent dissenter is, therefore, a terrorist in spirit if not in act. The government is right in holding that the traditional method of declaring a person a terrorist – through a conviction in a court of law after a

trial – is outdated. In this day and age, anyone the government considers a threat to its interests is a terrorist. So why shouldn't it have the right to declare you or me a terrorist?

Pure *desi* penance

This brings me to the second part of Plan B. I encourage you to memorise this section as it's certain to come in handy. As soon as you are declared a terrorist, don't make the mistake of proclaiming your innocence. Acknowledge right away that the government is right.

If you publicly accept your guilt, do penance by feeding 10,000 cows (pure *desi* ones, not foreign or mixed breeds) and beg Chota Voldemort for mercy, you may (there is no guarantee) get a prison cell with Wi-Fi that actually works.

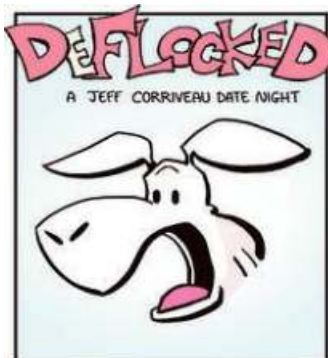
Speaking for myself, my only prayer is that I should be permitted to take lumbar cushions and allowed to go for physiotherapy thrice a week. Ideally I would've liked to start a campaign for better living conditions in Indian jails – but I don't want to end up in jail earlier than I have to. Anyway, you don't have to be influenced by my personal aversion to imprisonment.

If you think about it, you'll realise it may actually be a blessing in prison uniform. Haven't you always complained about not getting the time to write your novel? As you probably know, some of the greatest works of literature were written in prison. Write yours in Tihar Jail and a Booker is guaranteed. When you collect the prize, don't forget to thank me in your acceptance speech.

BROWN PAPERBAG BY SAILESH GOPALAN
SLANGDERING



FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND



F MINUS BY TONY CARRILLO



THE ROMANTICS BY VASINI VARADAN



GOREN BRIDGE

The safe play

Both vulnerable, North deals



BOB JONES

NORTH
 ♠ J 4
 ♥ K J 9 8
 ♦ K J 7
 ♣ K 8 5 2

WEST
 ♠ K Q 10 9 2
 ♥ Q 7
 ♦ 10 6 4 3
 ♣ J 9

EAST
 ♠ 7 5 3
 ♥ 10 6 3
 ♦ A Q 9 5
 ♣ Q 6 4

SOUTH
 ♠ A 8 6
 ♥ A 5 4 2
 ♦ 8 2
 ♣ A 10 7 3

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣*	Pass	4♥	All pass

*Four-card support

Opening lead: King of ♠

Modern players happily open the bidding on balanced 12-points hands and force to game as responder with a balanced 12-point hand of their own. The defenders frequently have a good chance to defeat them, but the way to do it is sometimes not obvious. The overbidders often rule the day, so they keep on bidding. Who can blame them?

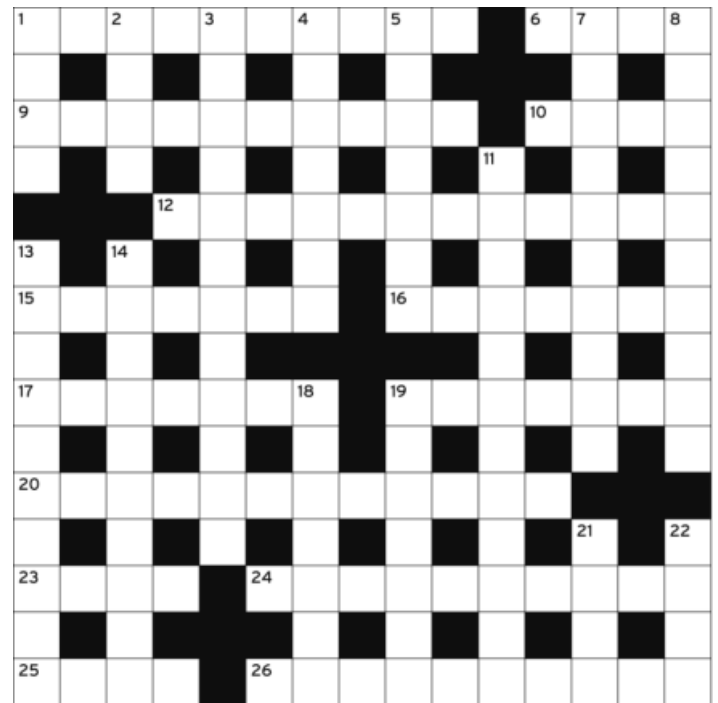
Consider today's deal. North-South bashed to game with 12 opposite 12, with neither a five-card suit nor a singleton between them. West's opening king of spades lead held the trick and he had to consider his next move. A

diamond shift would have defeated the contract, but that shift looked risky to West. He chose the "safe" continuation of the queen of spades. South grabbed this with his ace, cashed the ace of hearts, and led a low heart to the queen and king. The jack of hearts drew the last enemy trump.

Declarer led a club to his ace and ruffed his last spade in dummy. The king of clubs and another club put East on play with nothing left in his hand but diamonds.

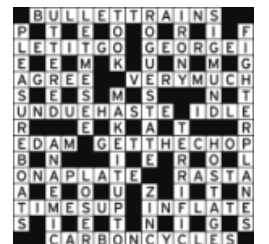
East was forced to give dummy the king of diamonds for declarer's tenth trick. Nicely played, but the defence missed their chance. Would you have found it?

THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD NO. 3059

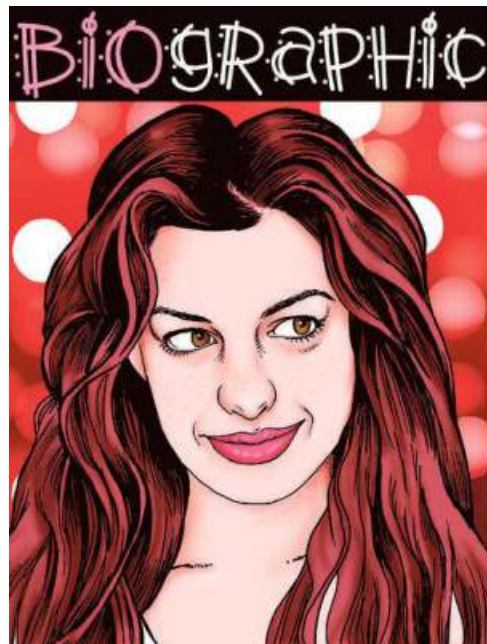
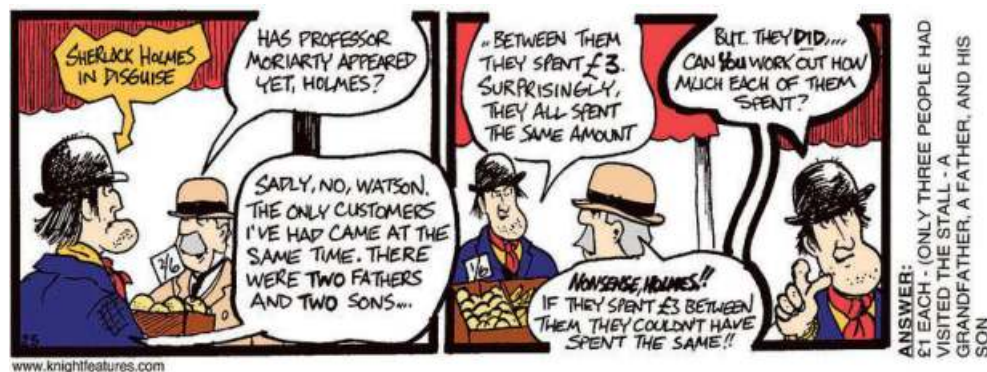


- Across**
- 1 Flames from bonfires you'd vacantly started (10)
 - 6 First of Carlings imbibed by drunk Caledonian (4)
 - 9 Oh dear: in Asia, soy pod undergoing 'modification' (4-1-5)
 - 10 Pro bono lawyer's rate: that's about right (4)
 - 12 Football pundit's behind Yorkshire side: 'I don't like that, giving ground' (12)
 - 15 Terrible dragon overcomes island, becoming object of worship (4,3)
 - 16 Nobody, after embracing Chinese philosophy, remains nobody (3,1,3)
 - 17 Caught fish between banks of Tweed (7)
 - 19 Less substantial (when describing noise, primarily)? (7)
 - 20 Sticky secreting structures revealed as mud unclogs sloppily (6,6)
 - 23 Sour spell (4)
 - 24 Show contempt as chicken amateur finally beats retreat (4,1,5)
 - 25 Apply layer of coolant, not evenly (4)
 - 26 Misreading of Jude: priest is a joke! (3,7)
- Down**
- 5 Hullabaloo about the French (7)
 - 7 Wealth taken from dodderly OAP? I concur (10)
 - 8 Operatic act avoiding bum note? It's kids' stuff (3,5,2)
 - 11 They're seen in classrooms strewn kids around (7-5)
 - 13 Calculating, cold: possibly I'm the replacement for Conservatives' leader (10)
 - 14 'Select' prison: more spacious, by the sound of it, with pleasant place for lunch (6,4)
 - 18 Infernal, horrible poetry, 'When Half Becomes One' (7)
 - 19 Acknowledged North Korea originally involved in suspicious death (7)
 - 21 In favour of vociferously delivering a number (4)
 - 22 Second outfit to offer little satirical observation (4)

Solution No. 3058



BAKER STREET



BORN IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, ON NOVEMBER 12, 1982, ANNE HATHAWAY WAS ALREADY AN AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS AND A SUCCESSFUL SOPRANO WHILE STILL IN HER EARLY TEENS. SHE WAS CAST IN THE SHORT-LIVED TV SERIES "GET REAL" AT THE AGE OF 16, AND WENT ON TO BEAT OUT 500 OTHER YOUNG HOPEFULS TO LAND THE STARRING ROLE IN 2001'S "THE PRINCESS DIARIES." THE LIKES OF "NICHOLAS NICKLEBY" AND "ELLA ENCHANTED" WERE FOLLOWED BY "THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2," AFTER WHICH SHE BEGAN TO WIDEN HER RANGE. LIGHTER FARE, SUCH AS A REMAKE OF TV'S "GET SMART" SPY SPOOF AND "THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA," WAS BALANCED AGAINST "BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN" AND "RACHEL GETTING MARRIED," A MOVIE THAT EARNED HER A FLETHORA OF AWARDS, AS WELL AS OSCAR AND GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS. SHE ALSO RECEIVED GREAT ACCLAIM FOR HER STAGE ACTING AND AN EMMY FOR HER VOICE WORK ON "THE SIMPSONS."

SUBSEQUENT CREDITS RANGED FROM THE FROTHY "BRIDE WARS" TO THE BOLDER "LOVE AND OTHER DRUGS," AND FROM THE FANTASY OF "ALICE IN WONDERLAND" TO THE ANIMATED HIT "RIO," BEFORE SHE ENJOYED A STELLAR 2012. THAT SUMMER'S HUGE BLOCKBUSTER, "THE DARK KNIGHT RISES," GAVE HATHAWAY HER BIGGEST COMMERCIAL SUCCESS, AND HER PORTRAYAL OF FANTINE IN THE SCREEN VERSION OF THE MUSICAL "LES MISÉRABLES" - A ROLE WHICH SAW HER SPORTING A BRUTAL CROP - EARNED HER A SLEW OF AWARDS, INCLUDING A GOLDEN GLOBE AND THE OSCAR FOR BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS. THAT SAME YEAR, SHE MARRIED BUSINESSMAN ADAM SHULMAN. THEIR FIRST CHILD WAS BORN IN 2016.

FOLLOWING SUCH FILMS AS "THE INTERN" AND "INTERSTELLAR," THIS SUMMER HAS SEEN HER STAR IN TWO MAJOR MOVIES, FOLLOWING UP "OCEAN'S 8" - A SPIN-OFF OF THE STEVEN SODERBERGH "OCEAN'S" TRILOGY - WITH "THE HUSTLE," A RE-MAKE OF "DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS."

Anne Hathaway

QUIZ

Easy like Sunday morning

A hand came out of August/ And flicked his life away: Cecil Day-Lewis

BERTY ASHLEY

1 On August 4, 1693, it is said that a French Benedictine monk who was the cellarer (supervisor of the monastery's cellar) for Hautvillers Abbey invented a certain drink. He looked after the vineyards and under him it flourished. He brought in a few rules to ensure high quality in the wines they produced. He also introduced the idea of blending grapes from multiple vineyards and was an advocate of making wine using only natural processes. All this led to his name being associated with a certain type of wine, which is usually used in celebrations, though it had been in the market before him. Who was this monk and what wine did he popularise and not invent?

2 Born on August 4, 1821, this gentleman was a French bag maker. At 37, he introduced his revolutionary stackable and waterproof rectangular shaped trunks and the world's first pick proof lock. In 1854, he started a fashion house that now has more than 450 stores worldwide. Who was this bag maker whose name you would spot in many high-end shops?

3 Born in 1834, John 'X' was an English logician and philosopher. His greatest work was his book *The Logic of Chance* which espoused the frequency theory of probability. In 1881, he developed a system that could show all possible logical relations between a collection of sets. These became known by his name. What is John's full name which you would have first heard in your high school Maths class?

4 Born on August 4, 1898, Ernesto Maserati was an Italian automotive engineer and racer who, with his brothers, started the Luxury Vehicle manufacturing company Maserati. The logo of their company is based off a trident found in a huge fountain in Bologna, Italy. The trident is held by the Roman god of the sea, who represents strength and vigour. Who is this god after whom the current most distant planet is named?

5 On August 4, 1901, this gentleman was born in a poor family. His grandparents, who took care of him, had been slaves. He dropped out of school when he was 11 and discovered a love for playing the cornet. By the 1920s he became a virtuoso trumpet player and by the 1940s a legend in Jazz circles. In 1967, he performed a song which went on to become one of the most popular ballads ever written, thanks to its picturesque lyrics. Who was this musician, known as 'Satchmo', and what was the song that was even covered by

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

Hrithik Roshan in a movie?

6 Born on August 4, 1929, as 'Abhas', this gentleman was the youngest of four siblings. His eldest brother became an actor and Abhas was given a small role in a movie starring his brother. In 1948, he had a chance to sing a song. He had no formal training but S.D. Burman motivated him and soon Abhas became a popular singer and actor, even winning a Filmfare award in 1969. How was Abhas better known as?



7 On August 4, 1936, an American athlete won his second gold medal at the Berlin Olympics by beating crowd favourite German Luz Long in the long jump final. He even set an Olympic record and in the process was credited with 'single-handedly crushing Hitler's myth of Aryan supremacy'. Who was this legendary sprinter who once set three world records and tied another, all in less than an hour?

8 On August 4, 1956, Apsara started operating at Trombay in Mumbai. For over 50 years, Apsara was used for basic research, shielding experiments, neutron activation analysis, neutron radiography and the testing of neutron detectors. In 2009, Apsara was shut down, and in 2018 it was upgraded and re-commissioned. What was Apsara the very first of in India?

9 Born on August 4, 1961, this former attorney was born in Hawaii to a Kenyan economist and an American Anthropologist. His mother divorced his father and married an Indonesian geographer with whom he lived for four years in Indonesia. He returned to the U.S. and did a degree in political science and majored in law at Harvard Law School. Who was this gentleman whose birth details were debated on the global stage?

10 The Republic of Upper Volta is a landlocked country in West Africa. On August 4, 1984, it was renamed by then-President Thomas Sankara (who is known as Africa's Che Guevara) with its present name. The name means 'land of the honest (incorruptible) men'. What is the name of this country whose citizens are known as Burkinabé and celebrate August 4 as National Day?

Lightning This legendary sprinter 'single-handedly crushed Hitler's myth of Aryan supremacy'.

GETTY IMAGES

Answers
1. Dom Perignon
2. Louis
3. John Venn
4. Neptune
5. Louis Armstrong
6. What a wonderful world
7. Kishore Kumar
8. Jesse Owens
9. Nuclear Reactor
10. Barack Obama
Faso
10. Burkina

LETTER FROM A CONCERNED READER

One quiet coffee, please

Respected Madam/Sir,

What and all is happening in the world? Every day morning I wake up and go to living room and definitely one thought is there in my brain. Guruvayoorappa, today at least let there be two-three good news type items in the esteemed newspaper.

And what is there every morning? Tragedy tragedy tragedy only. Whether any god is listening these days? Or they are also fed up and gone?

Have you seen news of coffee company owner? Business and all means success will be there and failure will be there. But suicide and all... I can't think of such topics, it is too bad. Too bad.

Ten or fifteen years back, first time I went to Coffee Day cafe. Let me tell the story. One day in the evening I went to Ganga Sweets. Did I go alone? Or did Mrs. Mathrubootham come with me? Or Mohammed Usman? Or maybe I went alone. Retirement life means time to forget all details.

Ok maybe I went alone. As soon as I entered Ganga Sweets, suddenly I realised one tragedy. No money in the purse. Not even one *naya paisa*. Immediately I did about turn and left. Ganga Sweets manager said, excuse me uncle, what nonsense is this, after decades and decades you are leaving without having even single ras malai. I said *thambi*, purse is *kaali*. I will go to bank and get money. He said one ATM is nearby, please go.

Madam/ sir, this is before the PayTM, UPI, Bhim, Boom, *Om Kreem Kuttichaatha* trend started. Money means money. ATM card means ATM card.

I went to one ATM, no money. I went to other ATM, too much line. So I walked and walked till I found one HDFC ATM. It is working. I thought it is ok, I will pay charge for using other bank ATM. After taking money, I came outside and on the right side, I saw one new restaurant. Near 6th Main Road maybe. No memory.

Oho. Bright colour. Nice furniture. Staff wearing good uniform. I thought whether to try this restaurant or not? What if it is

some expensive international type place for NRI fellows? Then I thought, ok I have idea, I will go inside and sit down and ask for menu. If seeing it, water is coming from my eyes, I will say oh my god, I thought this is Ganga Sweets, sorry for confusion, *thambi*, please give direction.

India means old people can do anything.

I went in. First of all, too much AC. Immediately urine feeling came. I sat down and one boy came running. I said one coffee please. He said what coffee you want sir? I said what coffee is there? He said many words. Not one word was coffee. I said what nonsense young man, wasting my time?

He said no, no uncle, this is little bit different coffees for youths. Shall I only choose and give? I said fine. He asked you like coconut? I said whether any people who don't like, don't ask stupid questions. He said please give two minutes.

Madam/ sir, I was very suspicious. But as soon as coffee is going into my mouth, it is like Meenakshi Seshadri disco dance on the tongue. I said young man, this is superb coffee. Little bit expensive but ok. Who is the owner? He said some details. I said very good, all the best to Coffee Day Cafe.

After that, once in a while I used to go and try different coffee and sometimes samosa. Suddenly all over India branches are opening. Now every corner, it is there.

So when I saw the news, I am feeling very sad. But what to do. I hope the prayers and thoughts of happy customers will give him some happiness now. What else to say?

Yours in condolence,
J. Mathrubootham



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