



The captancy
conundrum P4

Christmas Edition
27 December 2021, Monday

Hollywood Highlights P4

IN BRIEF



COVID
UPDATE

IN INDIA

CONFIRMED : 8,440
DEATH : 117
VACCINATED : 4,603,203

WEST BENGAL

CONFIRMED : 784
DEATH : 6
VACCINATED : 359,796

Darjeeling, where mysteries prevail

Aryadeb Mukhopadhyay visits the queen of the hills and has a story to tell.

Reality struck when we all came across the pandemic. Time seems to have stopped for a moment. Getting constricted between walls is kind of challenging both physically and mentally. P2

Built on the ruins of a desecrated church Shampa Dey visits Bandel Church in the run-up to Christmas.

Let's celebrate Christmas in one of the most prominent historical churches in West Bengal called Bandel Basilica. You can travel by train, which takes approximately two hours from Howrah. The Basilica of the Holy Rosary is one of the oldest Christian churches, situated at Bandel in Hooghly district of West Bengal, stands as a memorial to the Portuguese settlement in Bengal. P2

Weather Forecast

SUNNY



Kolkata, West Bengal

MONDAY
SUNNY

Temperature -23°C
Precipitation - 2%
Humidity - 78%
Wind - 5 km/h

FINALLY, CAMPUS CALLING

Students back in Brainware University after months



The MSc Third Semester class



The Bsc First Semester class



Priyantani with friends

ইউনিভার্সিটির প্রথম দিন

করোনার দাপটে দীর্ঘ দেড় বছর বন্ধ থাকার পর অবশেষে শুরু হল অফলাইন ইউনিভার্সিটির ক্লাস। যদিও সবটা অফলাইনে হচ্ছে না, শুধু প্র্যাক্টিক্যাল ক্লাসগুলোই দেওয়া হয়েছে। কিন্তু ভবুও, শুরু তো হল। আস্তে আস্তে স্বাভাবিক হচ্ছে জনজীবন। সবকিছুই খুলতে শুরু করেছে। আমাদের ব্রেনওয়ার ইউনিভার্সিটিও তার ব্যতিক্রম নয়।

আজ বুধবার গেলাম ইউনিভার্সিটি, অফলাইন প্র্যাক্টিক্যাল ক্লাস করার উদ্দেশ্যে। ইউনিভার্সিটির গেট থেকেই শুরু বিধিনিষেধের কড়া কড়ি। শুরুতেই গেটে হাতে স্যানিটাইজার নিয়ে বডি টেম্পারেচার পরীক্ষা করে তারপর মিলল প্রবেশের অনুমতি। অবশ্যই মুখে মাস্ক থাকা জরুরি ছিল। এ তো গেল প্রাথমিক পর্যায়। এরপর আডমিট কার্ড দেখানোর পর ফাইনালি ইউনিভার্সিটিতে প্রবেশ। অসাধারণ অনুভূতি। দীর্ঘদিন পর বন্ধদের সঙ্গে, স্যরের সঙ্গে দেখা। প্রথম ল্যাবে বসে প্র্যাক্টিক্যাল ক্লাস করা, সব মিলিয়ে সেই হারানো দিন ফিরে পাওয়া। এ এক অন্য অনুভূতি।

আমরা ২০২০ সালের ব্যাচ হওয়ার কারণে শুরুটাই হয়েছিল অনলাইনে। আমাদের চিচাররা ভীষণ বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ এবং দায়িত্ববান হওয়ার কারণে অনলাইন ক্লাস করতে কোনরকম সমস্যা হয়নি। কিন্তু এটাও ঠিক, ক্লাসে বসে বন্ধুদের সঙ্গে ক্লাস করাটা কোথাও যেন মিস করতাম। আর কিছু জিনিস ক্লাসে বসে করাটা হয়ত খুব প্রয়োজন ছিল। কিন্তু সেগুলো বাদ দিলে অনলাইন ক্লাসের কোন সমস্যা এই দেড় বছরে হয়নি।

তবুও দিন গুনতাম কবে খুলবে ইউনিভার্সিটি। কবে সশরীরে গিয়ে ক্লাসে বসে ক্লাস করব। শেষ পর্যন্ত অপেক্ষার অবসান। অসাধারণ সুন্দর সাজানো আমাদের ইউনিভার্সিটি। মূল দরজা দিয়ে

চুকে কিছুটা যাওয়ার পরই বড় একটা ফোয়ারা। তারপর শুরু পরপর ডিপার্টমেন্ট। চারিদিক সুন্দর করে গাছপালায় ঘেরা। চির সবুজের অবস্থান। ক্যান্টিন, ফুড কোর্ট, টেনিস কোর্ট কি নেই সেখানে! বিস্তীর্ণ এলাকা জুড়ে এই ব্রেনওয়ার ইউনিভার্সিটি, লাল-নীল মোড়কে মোড়া।

এরপর পৌছলাম ল্যাবে। রেডিওর প্র্যাক্টিক্যাল ক্লাসের জন্য গেছিলাম আমরা। প্রফেসর অর্গন বসুর তত্ত্বাবধানে শুরু হল প্র্যাক্টিক্যাল ক্লাস। হাতে ধরে শেখানোর মত স্যার সবটুকু শেখালেন। দীর্ঘক্ষণ ক্লাসের পর কিছুক্ষণের বিরতি। তার মাঝেই বন্ধুদের সঙ্গে ভীষণ ছল্লাড়া। ক্যান্টিনে একটু খাবার খেয়ে ফের ক্লাসে ফেরা। বিকেল ৫ টা পর্যন্ত ক্লাস করে ঘরে ফেরার পালা। সারাদিনের পর যেটুকু শারীরিক ক্লান্তি ছিল, মানসিক আনন্দ ও শান্তিকে তা ছাপিয়ে যেতে পারেনি। আর সবটুকুর ফাঁকে বন্ধুদের ও স্যরের সঙ্গে তোলা নিজস্বী, এক নতুন মাত্রা যোগ করেছে। বড় ভালো আমাদের ইউনিভার্সিটি ক্যাম্পাস। ততোধিক ভালো আমাদের চিচাররা। গিয়ে মনেই হল না, প্রথম দিন এসেছি। আমাদের ইউনিভার্সিটি সম্পর্কে যতই বলি, কম বলা হবে। তাই আপাতত এখানেই শেষ করলাম।

সুস্মি বোষাল

Initial impressions



সুস্মি বোষাল

A good college will develop your love for learning. In the same way, Brainware University helps us to upgrade ourselves. I have been a student of this university for about four months now, but it was only recently that I visited our campus and felt like I was moving to my dream place.

It was very clean, well maintained, and everyone's behaviour was decent. While entering, our temperature was checked and our hands were sanitized, and we do need to register our name and the purpose of visit. The behaviour of the staff was impeccable and they were very helpful. It was a delight to visit the studio and lab of our media science department. After having a glance at the same, a shiver went down my spine. It looked so beautiful that it cannot be explained in words.

There is a boys' hostel that was perfectly maintained and seemed sanitized. In front of it, there was a playground with beautifully trimmed grass. On the left was a girls' hostel that was so refreshing because it was surrounded by natural beauty. To be very honest, it is impossible for me to describe my university in a few words. I will cherish every moment spent on the campus.

Priyantani Kashyapi

The euphoria
A college is a new beginning in the life of any student. After the much-disciplined life of school, comes a whole new world: college. It gives us a sense of responsibility as well as

freedom. As soon as I entered the campus, my long-cherished dream after over three months of online learning at Brainware, I was delighted to launch a new journey. Meeting friends on Thursday, December 23, was an amazing feeling. The student in me woke up when I attended the class and then having the student teaching-learning process after a gap of 2 years. The first day at university will also remain etched in my memory forever for the treat that Arnab Sir gave us! It was indeed a lovely day spent at the campus.

Supratik Roy

কলেজের প্রথম দিনের সাথে স্বপ্নের মিল
গত দুই বছরের পরিস্থিতির শিকারে শেষ দিনেও প্রবেশ করা নিষেধ ছিল সেই জায়গাটায়, যেই জায়গার সাথে কিনা বিগত ১২ বছরের সম্পর্ক যাকে একসময় 'দ্বিতীয় বাড়ি' দাবি করেছি, যাঁ সেই বিগত ১২ বছরের স্কুল জীবনের সাথে সম্পর্ক শেষ করে এবার কলেজ, এবার ভাবছি যাঁ বড়ো হয়ে গেছি আর ওই ক্লাস রুমের বাইরে কান ধরে দাঁড়াতে হবেনা, আর খেতে হবে না বকুনি, মন খারাপ এর মাঝেও



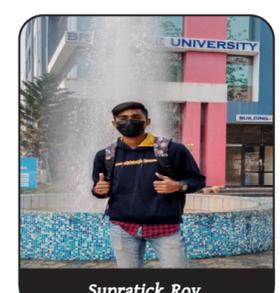
শর্মিষ্ঠা হাজারা

একটা চেপে রাখা আনন্দ যেন কোথা থেকে উঁকি মারার চেষ্টা করতো, কারণ এবার কলেজে উঠে গেছি, ছোটো বেলা দিয়েই কলেজ নিয়ে অনেক রকম আনন্দ, নতুন জায়গা, কত নতুন বন্ধু হবে ভাবলেই মনটা ভালো হয়ে যায়, তবে সেই আনন্দের কাঁপে হাত দিয়ে ভয়ও বেশ সেজে গুজেই দাঁড়িয়ে ছিল, কারণ সেই ছোটো বেলা দিয়ে ঠিক যেমন কলেজ এর যে স্বপ্ন টা দেখতাম সেই স্বপ্ন সত্যি হবে তো? সেই স্বপ্নের মতো কলেজ আমার ও হবে তো?

তবে হ্যাঁ সত্যি হয়েছে, স্বপ্নের মতো কলেজ পেয়েছি, দিনটা ছিল নাভেম্বর-এর শেষে আর শীতের শুরুতে প্রথম দিনে কলেজে ঢোকার অনুভূতি টা আলাদাই হয়, হয়তো ভাষায় বোঝানো যায় না, প্রথমেই গেট দিয়ে চুকে সামনে ফোয়ারার জল ধরে পড়ছে, চারদিকে শুধু সবুজ, কত রকমের গাছ, ফুলের গাছ, ফুলের কাজ আর তাঁর সাথে পাখি দের কিচিরমিচির, কত বড়ো বিল্ডিং, ইচ্ছে হলো ক্লাসরুম গুলো ঘুরে দেখি, ঘুরে দেখতে গিয়েই সেই পুরোনো স্কুলের স্মৃতি গুলো মনে পরে যাচ্ছিলো, কেউ যেন কানে এসে বলছে কিরে মনে হচ্ছে না সেই তোর হারিয়ে যাওয়া দ্বিতীয় বাড়ি? হ্যাঁ ধীরে ধীরে সেই ভাবনাও যেন সত্যি হলো সেখানকার শিক্ষক দের ব্যবহার দেখে একেবারে যেন পরিবারের মতো, না তারা একেবারেই সেই স্কুলের বড়দির মতো নয় যে কিনা ভুল হলেই বলবে "যাও কাল বাড়ির লোককে আমার সাথে দেখা করতে বলবে" না

একেবারেই তেমন নয় এখানে একটু ভুল হলে শুধি "ভুল করলেই তো বুঝবি কোনটা ঠিক, আর যদি ভুল নাই করিস তবে কি করে বুঝবি যে ভাবনা, নতুন জায়গা, কত নতুন বন্ধু হবে ভাবলেই মনটা ভালো হয়ে যায়, তবে সেই আনন্দের কাঁপে হাত দিয়ে ভয়ও বেশ সেজে গুজেই দাঁড়িয়ে ছিল, কারণ সেই ছোটো বেলা দিয়ে ঠিক যেমন কলেজ এর যে স্বপ্ন টা দেখতাম সেই স্বপ্ন সত্যি হবে তো? সেই স্বপ্নের মতো কলেজ আমার ও হবে তো? তবে হ্যাঁ সত্যি হয়েছে, স্বপ্নের মতো কলেজ পেয়েছি, দিনটা ছিল নাভেম্বর-এর শেষে আর শীতের শুরুতে প্রথম দিনে কলেজে ঢোকার অনুভূতি টা আলাদাই হয়, হয়তো ভাষায় বোঝানো যায় না, প্রথমেই গেট দিয়ে চুকে সামনে ফোয়ারার জল ধরে পড়ছে, চারদিকে শুধু সবুজ, কত রকমের গাছ, ফুলের গাছ, ফুলের কাজ আর তাঁর সাথে পাখি দের কিচিরমিচির, কত বড়ো বিল্ডিং, ইচ্ছে হলো ক্লাসরুম গুলো ঘুরে দেখি, ঘুরে দেখতে গিয়েই সেই পুরোনো স্কুলের স্মৃতি গুলো মনে পরে যাচ্ছিলো, কেউ যেন কানে এসে বলছে কিরে মনে হচ্ছে না সেই তোর হারিয়ে যাওয়া দ্বিতীয় বাড়ি? হ্যাঁ ধীরে ধীরে সেই ভাবনাও যেন সত্যি হলো সেখানকার শিক্ষক দের ব্যবহার দেখে একেবারে যেন পরিবারের মতো, না তারা একেবারেই সেই স্কুলের বড়দির মতো নয় যে কিনা ভুল হলেই বলবে "যাও কাল বাড়ির লোককে আমার সাথে দেখা করতে বলবে" না

শর্মিষ্ঠা হাজারা



Supratik Roy

Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu

India brings home Miss Universe crown after 21 years

Aiyushe Maity

The day was December 13, 2021 and the whole world was watching. People from 180 different countries sat with their eyes glued to their television sets with palpating hearts and just one question in mind – "Who is going to be the new Miss Universe?"

Breathtaking beauties from 80 different countries, clad in designer wear, participated in the three-hour beauty pageant hosted by Steve Harvey, all with the hope of bringing back the crown and prestige to their home.

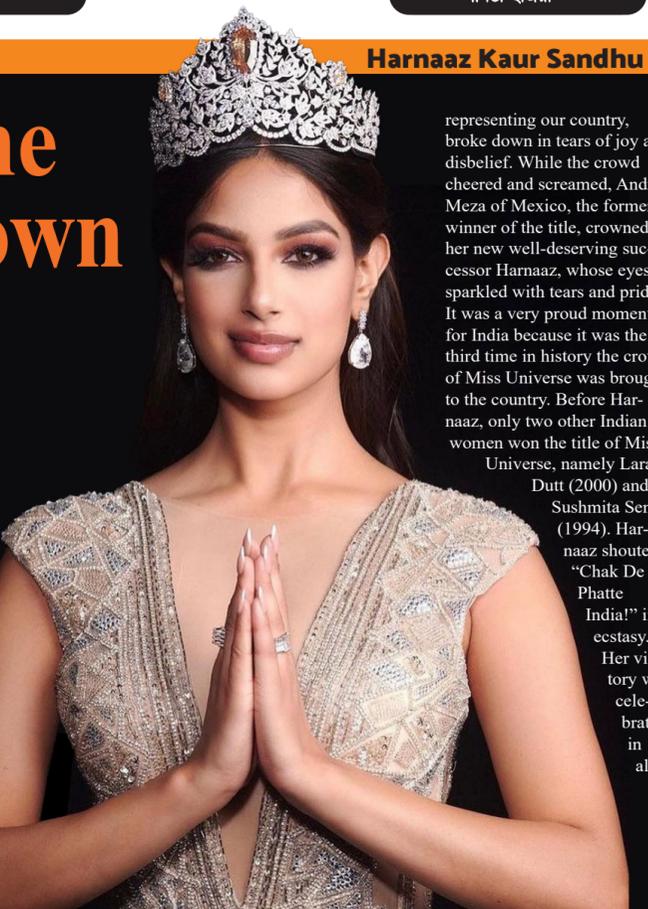
Miss Universe was started back on June 28, 1952 and became the

first international beauty pageant which is also considered to be the most watched beauty pageant of all time with a viewership of over 500 million people. Thus, winning the title of "Miss Universe" doesn't only bring fame and prestige but also gives the winner a chance to influence a large audience which can be used for the collective betterment of the world.

The 70th Miss Universe was held on December 12, 2021 on Port of Eilat in Israel and was telecast on FOX channel. Women from over 79 countries competed in the beauty pageant where only a woman with beauty and

brains would be able to rejoice in the crowning moment. After many rounds of intense competition, finally the moment of truth arrived.

Two lovely ladies — one from India and the other from Paraguay — stood hand-in-hand, while Harvey slowly opened the envelope. "And the name of the new Miss Universe is", he briefly paused and then announced "India!" Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu, the 21-year-old



representing our country, broke down in tears of joy and disbelief. While the crowd cheered and screamed, Andrea Meza of Mexico, the former winner of the title, crowned her new well-deserving successor Harnaaz, whose eyes sparkled with tears and pride. It was a very proud moment for India because it was the third time in history the crown of Miss Universe was brought to the country. Before Harnaaz, only two other Indian women won the title of Miss Universe, namely Lara Dutt (2000) and Sushmita Sen (1994). Harnaaz shouted "Chak De Phatte India!" in ecstasy. Her victory was celebrated in al-

most every Indian household and was spread around through word of mouth and the media but what was her winning answer? Or her winning move that finally helped her to bag the crown? On being asked – "How would you advise young women facing pressure?" she answered confidently "Stop comparing yourself with others".

Harnaaz was born on March 3, 2000 in a small and simple Jat family based in Kohali village. Her father is a realtor and her mother a gynecologist. According to her brother who is a musician, Harnaaz wanted to become a judge before beauty pageants caught her fancy. Harnaaz has completed her Bachelor of Arts in IT. According to her college professor, she was a very bright student and great at mimicry. After the news of her victory reached her town, everyone rejoiced at the transition of "a small-town girl" into one of the most influential women in the world. Harnaaz's presence of mind and impeccable intelligence was the reason she was able to win the crown. Her smart choice in the "National Costume"

segment was the main reason why she was able to win the hearts of the judges.

She paid homage to her motherland by donning a pink embellished traditional lehenga with a gorgeous wedding parasol. The lehenga was designed by Abhinava Mishra. Her gorgeous custom-made umbrella was designed by Reza Chirag. Her soft yet bold fashion choice caught the attention of the judges as well as the audience. Her winning answer was also extremely heartfelt and moving. Her confident walk in the shimmering white gown designed by transdesigner Saisha Shinde portrayed her grace and confidence which was well received by the crowd who cheered for her.

Harnaaz will spend the next year in New York and become a spokesperson for Miss Universe Organization where she will work actively for various cases during her "reign". Harnaaz is a wonderful personality, a beauty with brains and a woman of character who truly deserved to win and now let's hope that she continues to make India proud with her actions.

Gender equality: How close to it are we?

Acknowledged but not accepted, a forlorn community

Piyush Mahanta
(Department of Law)
Over centuries humans have lived in societies that show-cased various forms of discrimination from time to time. One of the prominent is gender discrimination. With time and by the emergence of new democracies around the entire globe, we were able to tackle a lot of inequalities. But sadly, gender bias somehow still exists in our societies.

For ages, patriarchy dominated all the cultures across the world. Most of the economic and cultural importance was given to the males.

But in the late 19th century, awareness movements towards gender equality began in Western cultures. The world saw great changes in past decades and at present, the status of women as a whole is much better although a huge part of the female population still suffers in many parts of the world. With the modern form of equality movements termed "Feminism,"



it seemed that the dream of having an equal society was near. But with the recent trends around the world, the term "Equality" itself now seems to be in danger. The movement of feminism was started to seek equal rights and status. Now, people often misinterpret this term by thinking of it as an idea of a female-dominated society. Several cases were reported where wrongful use of feminism caused males to face false acquisition, even punishment in worst cases.

This usage of feminism has been coined as

"Pseudo-feminism". This type of activity is very dangerous and harmful. Not only it does injustice to the other sex but also it distracts the very goal of actual feminism, which is seeking equality, not dominance.

So why is it so dangerous and why should we be concerned about it? That is because not does only a person have to go through abuse and shame when a false acquisition is made, one's entire career and social reputation gets tarnished too.

Women's violence

over men and domination has grown in recent times and that too, is in the name of feminism. These women were often caught saying "I am a woman", "Don't dare to oppose me, you don't know what a woman can do", "you just wait to see how a woman can destroy you", etc.

This has sparked fear in the minds of the young male population towards the feminine gender and this fear is in no way good for society and the world. Such acts are not only suppressive but also threaten the real struggle of feminism and hence endanger those women who 'actually' suffer in society.

Unfortunately, no media house, intellectuals and government seem to be interested in addressing this issue, maybe because it is the fear of feminists that stops them from speaking up.

With this approach, the "equal future" that once seemed a possibility is now growing remote.

Payal Dhauria

Everywhere, everything and everyone teaches us to be kinder, more patient and more compassionate towards others, but what happens to these morals when we see something or someone that we don't understand or mis-understand because we never learnt to accept it since the beginning?

Misunderstood and mistreated is what India's transgender community is. What do we think when we hear the word "transgender"? There is a lot of misinformation about what it means to be transgender. People often think that one day some people wake up and choose to be a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth, but that is far removed from reality.

Transgender is a term used for people whose sense of personal identity doesn't correspond with their gender at birth (an umbrella term used to refer to people at varying points



in transition). That leads to the person feeling hugely distressed due to the mismatch between their gender identity and their gender at birth, and this is called gender dysphoria and it can be experienced by a child as young as six. Other terminology includes transwoman, trans-people, transwoman and transman. Meanwhile, another term, "transsexual" refers to someone who has undergone surgical or hormonal alterations and lives as the gender they identify with.

Even though scientific studies validate the experience of transgender people, they still suffer from

depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts due to societal discrimination and inequality. Shut out from the mainstream, many have reportedly even been deprived of medical treatment. "Gender identity disorder," "transvestite," and "tyranny" are terms that are being used since ancient times to refer to transgender people as mentally ill, sexually deviant, or inferior. Even the Indian term "hijra" for third gender is a demeaning and insulting term.

Bollywood has a religiously large following in India and most of the time, the regular inaccurate portrayal of transgender people on the big screen, either used

as a laughing stock or shown as creepy, had painted a prejudice canvas in the minds of Indian audience. Hence, the engagement of the community — be it with politics, art or films — needs to provide an accurate representation of them.

Even when discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity has been prohibited under Article 15 of the Constitution, we are failing to provide the community with proper safeguards.

India has acknowledged the existence of transgenders or the third gender but refuse to approve of it. Though, laws have been introduced to spread awareness amid various communities and establishments to respect and recognize rights of a transgender person, invisibility of statutory laws by the public makes the transgender community victims of gender violence and other human rights abuses. Society is not going to change until and unless we treat them as basic human beings.

আদর্শবর্ণনা

সিউরিন মন্ডল

অকারণে আঁতরায়ে আঁতরায়ে যুগে শতাব্দীর।

শতাব্দীর বার আঁতরায়ে নিরাশায়।

তুর্কি রামা নব্বুন সোনা তুমি, নিতুন নতুন স্বপ্ন দেখার মতো।

ক্লাসিকালিষ্টক রাজনামচার জীবন: গার মণ্ডুই প্রবন্ধু খোলা হৃদয়ায়

প্রবন্ধুয়ে পুই কুম্মিলের মায়ে

ক্লাসিক মেলো তোমার কথা শুঁ গারি

প্রায়োজনের গুরু চারি বর্ষি

মানটা বোধেয় বড় বর্মই যবে, বন্দ্য চারি বর্ষেই বল গার

যজ্ঞার পর্যাণ্ডি কম পড়বে জারি।

লো-লোর গল্প প্রবন্ধ থাকে,

গার জন্ম দুইয় পড়ে গোস্,

জিঁব মেলঙি অবাক গারের সুরে

আমোদা রা যুই ফিরব বার-বারে:

বী যবে ছুই আমিই কি তা জানি?

আমের স্কুই আমোতি পুঁতে গুয়,

আঁতরায়ে করণপ্রলা বোধেয়

প্রবন্ধুয়ে অকারণেই নয়।

প্রবন্ধি কথা বলঙি গার পারি,

তুমি প্রবন্ধ অকারণেই মতোই

আমের বন্ধু প্রচন্ড দরেকারী।

The train to Titagarh Episode 1: Friend Request

Ayushi Maity
(Different compartments of a train are filled with different stories and emotions but how will it all end when the train suddenly stops?)
"Babu jhalmuri leben ki? Bhalo jhalmuri ahey babu, sudhu 15-taka babu, len na?" the vendor kept nagging Suman who appeared visibly uncomfortable yet unrelenting. Suman was quite accustomed to this unrelenting nagging from vendors who boarded the train to Titagarh. "Dhur babu, apnake kichui litey hobena", the angry vendor stormed off but Suman looked unfazed. It was a regular day for Suman. He boarded the train at sharp 8.30am to reach his office by 10 O'clock where he would work till 7.30 pm and return to his bachelor pad by 9.

Suman was a very ambitious man but an honest one. He had very strict principles and followed them religiously, one of which included never giving money to the poor because he was a capitalist. Due to his workaholic lifestyle, he had no friends. Often his colleagues said that "his work lust has sucked his soul out of his body". But Suman was quite alright with his way of living and very honestly, he enjoyed it very much.

As the train moved ahead, Suman took out a novel to read, a daily ritual for him. He started reading the book unaware

that within the next few hours his life was going to be turned upside down due to an unexpected encounter with a stranger.

Suman was completely lost in his book, quite unaware of his surroundings, when he heard the vendor call out again. It was not a surprise to him but what followed stunned him. "Aye nin dada takata, baki taka ta rekhenin", said a familiar female voice. Suman froze, he slowly closed the book, his throat dried up and he slowly looked up quite nervously indeed. He was correct, there she was sitting beautiful as ever... Priyanka, his first true love. She was sitting facing Suman but a little far away and hadn't noticed him yet because she was too busy feeding a little boy.

Suman felt a gush of emotions flowing through his heart. He immediately looked out of the window. The train was going through a dark tunnel yet it was Suman who felt the darkness within himself. "Did Priyanka marry? No, but she isn't wearing any sindur or sankha pola... but Priya was quite the feminist so maybe she chose not to. But who is this kid? Is it her son? Or her nephew?" Suman's mind was flooded with questions. He could feel the emotions taking over, he could feel a dry lump in his throat and he shook his legs convulsively. Suman was still looking outside the window but he couldn't look away for long. He took an-

other look at Priyanka. She still had those limpid eyes, not the kind you get lost in but the kind that consumes you from within and leaves an impression forever. She had lost a few pounds but she still looked like a wax figure sculpted with utmost care and dedication. The wind played with her lustrous hair. In a word, she looked breathtaking.

Suman couldn't stop himself from smiling as all the old memories came back gushing back, the memories he had long buried. He recalled how Priyanka always gave ten rupees extra to the vendors to help them. Suman and Priyanka were two opposite personalities. Priyanka was a bubbly and kind soul whereas Suman was always very serious and stern but still somehow, they managed to be together for five years.

It all started when Priyanka sent a friend request to Suman, who was initially reluctant to accept it but then acceded. Priyanka started the conversation by saying "You are so handsome, why don't you smile more in the pictures?" It almost looks like you try too hard to look intellectual". Suman was obviously very offended and claimed that he is indeed very intellectual and started to randomly quote lines from poems and novels. To his astonishment, Priyanka started quoting lines from the same poems and novels and that is how a

never-ending war of intellect and intelligence started between the two.

Slowly the war turned into conversations and conversations ended up in a meeting and soon enough, both of them were head over heels in love. People around them were quite curious about how they managed to be with each other because they had no similarities. Suman was the kind of guy who ignored the music on the radio while Priyanka was accustomed to singing along. Suman learned how to live life to the fullest from Priyanka and in return taught her how to be determined and organized. They brought out the best in each other. Towards the end of their fifth anniversary, things started to go downhill. Repeated conflicts and arguments soon snatched away the curtain from a perfect fairytale and exposed a rather dark story.

Suman recalled the day of their last fight. They had an extremely heated argument where insults were hurled at each other but Suman said something very hurtful. "Priyanka, you know what's wrong with you? You have a lot of trauma. Your dad left you and your mom. Then your mom decided to choose alcohol over you. She chose a bottle over her own daughter. Your parents made the right decision of leaving you because you aren't worth it", Suman said. There was

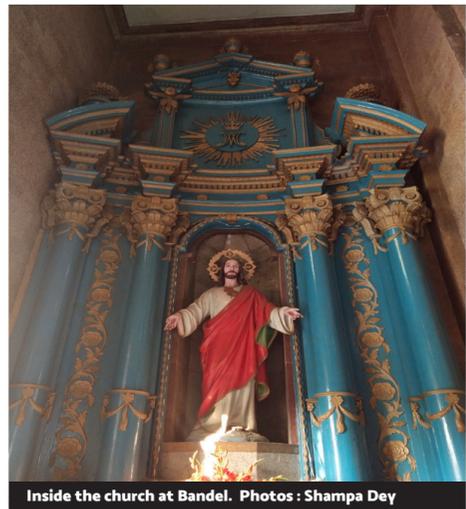
a long pause, it was quite obvious that Priyanka was so hurt that she couldn't find words. Her last words to Suman were, "You disgust me" and then she hung up. Suman later discovered that she had blocked him from WhatsApp and even Facebook.

"THE FACEBOOK", Suman broke his chain of thoughts and shook himself back to reality. He immediately took his phone out. He searched "Priyanka Raichoudhary" and there she was at the top of all the suggestions. Priyanka seemed to have unblocked him sometime in the last six years and it seemed like she didn't change her surname as well.

He clicked on the profile picture, it felt quite strange after so many years. Priyanka was wearing a blue saree and held a flower in her hand, Suman looked up to take a look at Priyanka and suddenly they made eye contact. Both of them looked away immediately. It felt weird. Looking into the eyes of someone who once held your hand but was now a stranger. The feeling of knowing them, but somehow forgetting who they really are. That sense of being very close yet so very far. Will Suman and Priyanka finally reunite? Or will they choose to remain strangers who once shared a passionate kiss, a warm hug and a half-burnt cigarette?

To be continued...

Built on the ruins of a desecrated church



Shampa Dey visits Bandel Church in the run-up to Christmas. Photos: Shampa Dey

Let's celebrate Christmas in one of the most prominent historical churches in West Bengal called Bandel Basilica. You can travel by train, which takes approximately two hours from Howrah.

The Basilica of the Holy Rosary is one of the oldest Christian churches, situated at Bandel in Hooghly district of West Bengal, stands as a memorial to the Portuguese settlement in Bengal. Founded in 1599, it is dedicated to Nossa Senhora do Rosario, Our Lady of the Rosary. Around the middle of the 16th century, the Portuguese began using Bandel as a port. Around 1571, Portuguese were given permission by Akbar, the Mughal Emperor, to build a town in Hooghly.

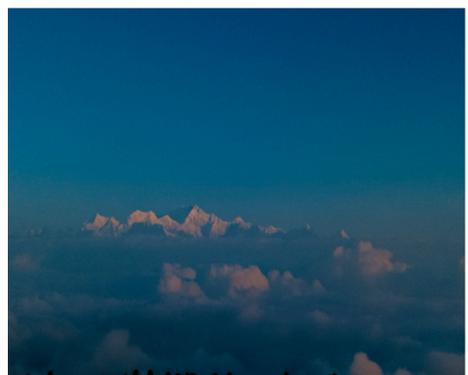
In 1579, the Portuguese built a port on the banks of the Hooghly, as well as a fort named Fort Ugolim, and enlisted the services of a band of Augustinian friars, then the largest religious body in Goa. The following year, Captain Pedro

Tavares obtained the Emperor's full permission to preach the Catholic faith publicly, and erect churches.

Bandel Church was constructed in 1599. The first church was burnt down during the sacking of Hooghly by the Mughal siege in 1632. Four of the five priests were killed except Fr. Joan de Cruz. He, along with fellow survivors, were taken to Agra for execution. Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan condemned the prisoners to die at the mercy of ferocious elephant. Miraculously, one elephant carried Fr. de Cruz on its back instead of killing him and placed him in front of emperor for mercy. The Emperor and the public got impressed and set the prisoners free. Shah Jahan even gave money to reconstruct the church and endowed 777 bigha of land in 1633. A new church was constructed by Gomez de Soto, which was built over the ruins of the old one in 1660. The keystone of the older church can still be seen on the eastern gate of the monastery, bearing the date 1599.



Darjeeling, where mysteries prevail



Aryadeb Mukhopadhyay visits the queen of the hills and has a story to tell Reality struck when we all came across the pandemic. Time seems to have stopped for a moment. Getting constricted between walls is kind of challenging both physically and mentally.

Good fortune prevailed when we planned for a little visit to Darjeeling, one of the magnificent hill stations located in West Bengal. It offers breathtaking views of snow-capped Kanchenjunga, torrents flowing down the mountain slopes, lovely tea gardens with pines, firs and all that combined friendly people along with a touch of modern colonial charm.

The atmosphere all around Darjeeling seems foggy which creates a mystical vibe. Walking through Mall Road gives you a feeling that here you are free and no one is here to interrupt your peaceful moments.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, also referred to as 'Darjeeling Toy Train', is a 2-foot narrow-gauge train that runs between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. On December 2, 1999 Unesco declared Darjeeling Toy Train as a World Heritage Site. A ride on such a heritage transport is no doubt a relaxing and charming one but is also prestigious because this train is what once provided the first and

most important mountain transportation link in the country.

The Peace Pagoda, also known as the Japanese Pagoda, is located on the slopes of Jalapahar hills in Darjeeling. Designed to establish unity, harmony and goodwill among people residing in that society, its tranquil atmosphere ensures its popularity all over Darjeeling.

Moving towards Tinchuley, about 32 km from Darjeeling close to West Bengal-Sikkim border, we found that the most

interesting fact about this place is that both the rivers Teesta and Rangnet meet and the confluence offers a spectacular view.

Last but not the least, the Tiger Hill at an altitude of 2,590 meters and 15 km from Darjeeling, is famous for its spectacular sunrise from where the Kanchenjunga looks ethereal with the first rays of the sun. Facing the snow-covered peaks is so relaxing and soothing. It reminded me that nature can be beautifully tenacious.



বাদাম দিয়ে বাজিমাট



স্বপ্নাতীক রায়

সাম্প্রতিক কালে ভাইরাল হয়ে ওঠা একজন বাদাম বিক্রেতা যার বাদাম বিক্রি করার পদ্ধতিতে মুগ্ধ সমগ্র নেট দুনিয়া। মোটর বাইকে করে বাদাম বিক্রি করছেন আর মুখে তার একটা গান -
আমার কাছে নেই তো বাবু জাজা বাদাম।
আমার কাছে আছে শুধু কাঁচা বাদাম।

হ্যাঁ শুধু এই গানেই মাতোয়ারা হয়ে ওঠেছে গোটা নেট পাড়া। কত মানুষ তার গানের রিমিক্স বানিয়ে আয় করেছে প্রচুর টাকা। তবে কে এই বাদামওয়াল? থাকেন কোথায়? সে সব তো আর আমাদের জানা নেই জানার কথাও নয়, হয়তো জানার চেষ্টাও করিনি কখনো।

তিনি হলেন পশ্চিমবঙ্গের বীরভূম জেলার সিউড়ি অঞ্চলের কাজুরি গ্রামের বাসিন্দা ভুবন বাদ্যকর। পরিবারে তার ৬ জন সদস্য স্ত্রী, দুই ছেলে এবং এক মেয়ে। তাদের মধ্যে বড় ছেলে মনোজ বাদ্যকর স্ত্রী নিয়ে একসাথে থাকেন। দুই ছেলেই পরিবারের আর্থিক দুরবস্থা দেখে পড়াশোনা ছেড়ে কাজে যোগ দিয়েছেন। বাড়ি ঘর বলতে গ্রামে নিজের মাটির বাড়ি তবে সেই বাড়ির অবস্থা ভালো নয় বললেই চলে। বৃষ্টি পড়লেই বাড়িতে জল ঢুকে যায় এমনকি খড়ের ছাদ থেকেও জল পড়ে। পা-এ সমস্যার জন্য অন্য কোন কাজ করেন না ভুবন।

বিগত ১০ বছর ধরে বাদাম বিক্রি করেই তার সংসার চলেছে। তিনি তার মোটর বাইক নিয়ে খালি পায়ে বাদাম বিক্রি করে বেড়ান আশে পাশের গ্রামে, কখনও বা পাশের রাজা বাড়িও। তিনি তার এক সান্দ্রাংকারে বলেছিলেন যে দৈনিক ৫ থেকে ১০ কেজি বাদাম বিক্রি করে তিনি তা থেকে আড়াইশো টাকার মতো লাভ করেন। তবে মোদা কথা হল তার বাদাম বিক্রি করার পদ্ধতি, বাদাম গান, যার দৌলতে মন জয় করে নিয়েছেন সমগ্র বিশ্বের।

তার কথা অনুযায়ী আগে তিনি মুখে "বাদাম নেবেন" বলে হেঁকে হেঁকেই বাদাম বিক্রি করতেন। কিন্তু তাতে তেমন লাভ হতো না। তারপর নিজেই তৈরি করে ফেললেন এই বাদাম গান, আর এই গানের দৌলতেই তিনি এখন নেট দুনিয়ার বিখ্যাত "বাদাম কাকু" নামেই পরিচিত।



বুড়োশর বখা আঁটবো পড়ে, গাছ-পাতাগুলো অলীক জালে; ছবি: সুব্রত্যান ব্রানার্জী



Wrinkles speak of experiences, Photo by Debkanta Banerjee

Lean into the wind

Payal Dhauria

The wind is loud and deafening, it's soft and caring. Lean into it, inhale deeply as it pours out greetings for something new.

Let the promised wind push through, allowing us the passage to drive into shattered memory lanes. Let it carry out the secrets from deep groves.

Let the wind change the barren patch of sun-baked land. Let it turn into an oceanic field of vibrant blossoms.

Let the wind help the florets to retain their beauty in the soil so poisonous. Let it accompany those sparse trees.

Let the wind whisper cold murmurs of nothing. Let it help us weep out the clouded vision, extinguishing our rage.

Let the wind stitch the pockets of our mistakes. Let it ignore caution, untangling our whimsical desires.

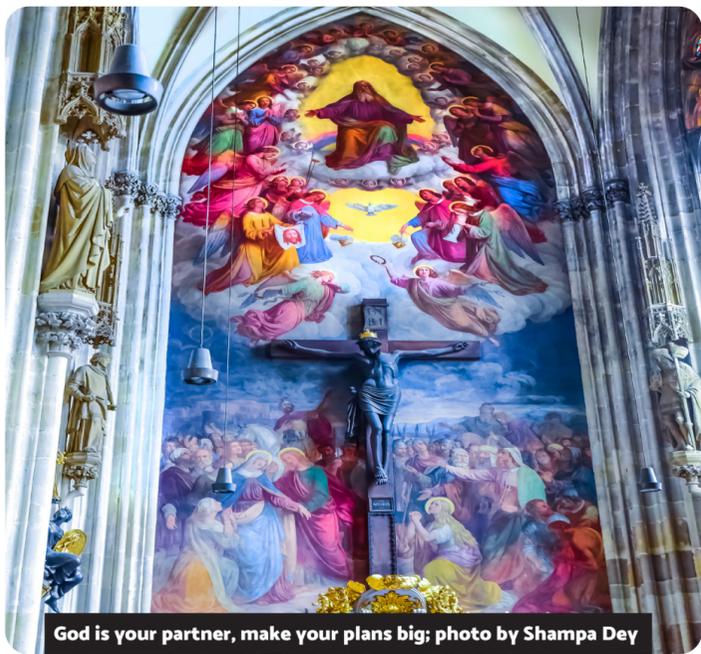
Let the wind stir some sour and sweet memories. Let it rouse the innocence that we lost along the way.

Loss of a mother

- Sandipta Ghosh

The flowers had withered. It was a sudden stop of the nation. All eyes were filled with tears! We lost them. We lost them. It was a loss of the nation.

It was burning all around. All were running to save them. But all in vain! We lost them. Darkness had descended.



God is your partner, make your plans big; photo by Shampa Dey

সোদনের বখা

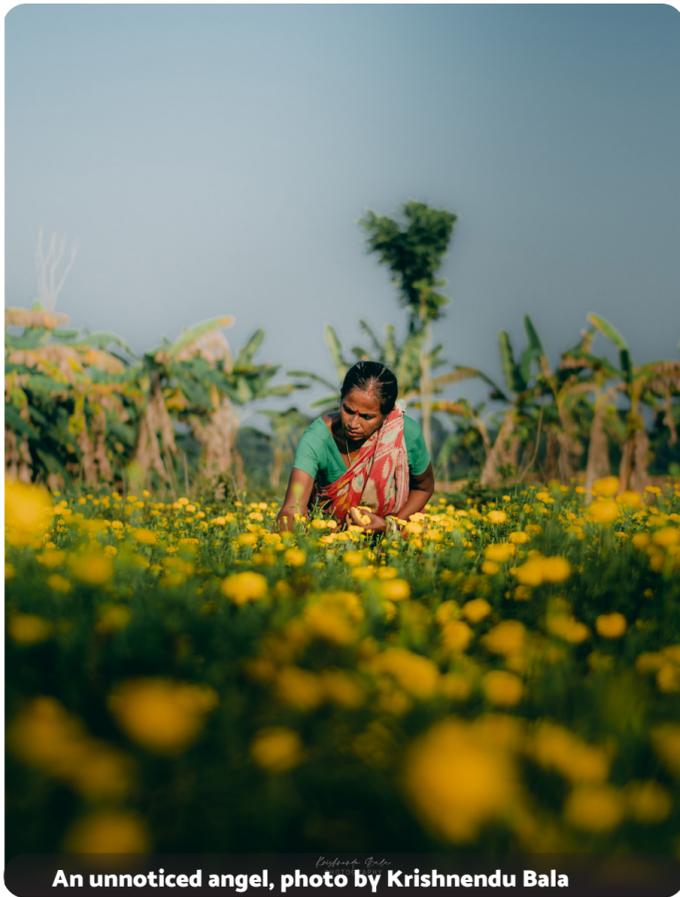
কণ্ঠে বাক্যে জেগেছি, বণ্ঠে গান গেয়েছি
অন্যায় চঞ্চলবর্গে
ক্যান্টিনের ছেঁয়ে গাছে

সোদনে ছিল উদ্বেগে আবেশ
মেসার্সের পরিবেশে, তোমার সামনে আমি
আজ শুধু দ্বিধা, দিশের হৃদে দাঁড়িয়ে।
অনলস প্রোগ্রেস হারিসের মাঝে
বাকিটা থাকে ব্যক্তিগত
তুমি গ্রন্থনো দুপাট বন্ধে,
ফিরবে হৃদয়ে আমায় রেখে।

তোমার সাথে বখা হয়না বহুদিনে
বহুদিনে তোমার বখা গুলিনা
সোদনে ছিল উৎসাহ স্বাদেশী, তখন তোমায়
প্রথম দেখে
প্রবণর বেঁটেছে বণ্ঠে বর্ষা আসেছে বুড়োশা
তোমার বখা অনাছে বণ্ঠেবার,



Mountain rests, wrapped in snow shawl; photo by Anjan Sahoo



An unnoticed angel, photo by Krishnendu Bala

আমার শীতি।

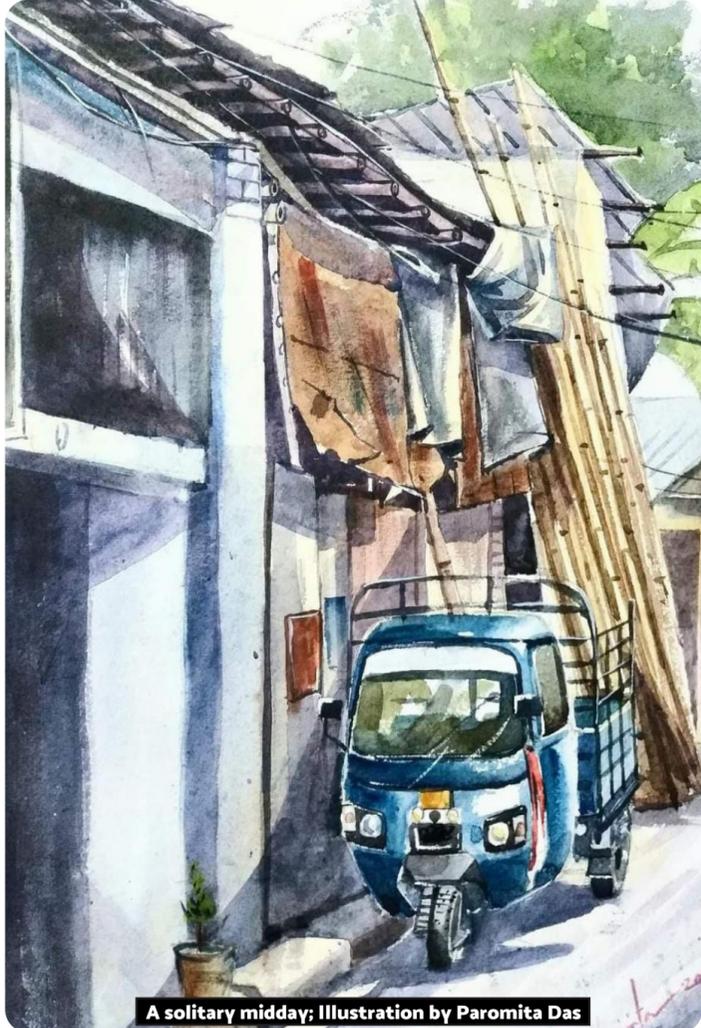
- দ্বীপ দত্ত

রক্ত জীবন অলসতা গায়ে
মনের মণ্ডো বুড়োশা পায়
উষ্ণ আঁচে প্রেমের প্রোগ্রেসে
বিল্বেনে মাখি বিচরণে;
চায়ের ভাঁড়ে বন্ধু খুঁজি
রাসি গড়ি বন্ধনায়
শীতি তুমি বণর?

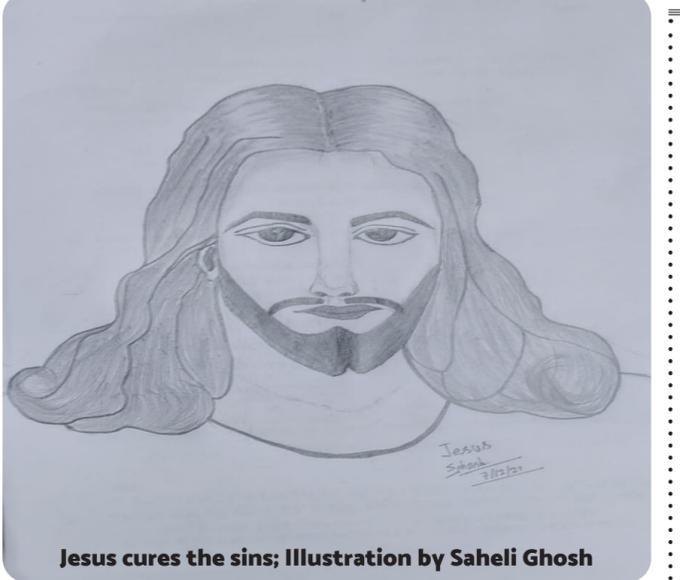
ডিসেম্বরের শহর জুড়ে
বুড়োশা লেখে ব্যর্থতা
শীতি গলেই মনে হয়
সময় আনে ভিন্নতা।
আমার জন্য অপেক্ষা করে
স্বপ্নের বেগনার উষ্ণতা
শীতি তুমি বণ?

রক্ত আমি পাখির মতো
মোমের দেশে বারান্দায়
শুকনা রাতে বাপস্যা বণ্ঠে
বুড়োশা জমে বিচরণে
নির্ভরতার ধোঁয়ায় আজ
ভুগছি আমি শূন্যতায়
শীতি তুমি আমার।

গাভা পড়ে শহর কুলে
তুমি গ্রন্থন ব্যস্ততায়
শীতি গলেই মনে পড়ে
আমার তুমি ব্যর্থতায়
শীতিই কেবল মনে পড়ে
শহর বণ্ঠে নিষ্করণে
শীতি তুমি কেবল আমার।
শীতি শুধু তুমিই আমার।।



A solitary midday; Illustration by Paromita Das



Jesus cures the sins; Illustration by Saheli Ghosh



Mary and Jesus. Illustration by Tiyasa Neogy



কণ্ঠে ভরা সরসে খুলে ছবি: রাজলক্ষ্মী সরবণার



Titanic (1997) 'Rose Dewitt Bukater' (Kate Winslet); Illustration by Vianca Dhar

Let's have a look at Korean myth

Priyanti Kashyap

Many myths are inherited in Korea. Some people think of them as less interesting, since they do not have the well-organised hierarchy of the gods in Roman or Greek myths.

In Korea, there are differences in the way of life between those who lives on the mainland and other on Cheju Island. In turn, these

differences generate different forms of myths. As such, our life tends to influence the myths we create, in one way or another.

The Korean myths sampled here from different regions clearly demonstrate that there exist many variations describing God who take essentially identical rules, but appear in different plots. Korean myths tend to focus on the

role played by the God who is the protagonist in the story. Some names of the gods are, 'Maitreya', a future Buddha who resides in the heavens, in a form of a baby. Next is the 'Great King Yeomma' he was the king of the underworld and often known for passing judgment on the dead. He leads dead spirits to their abode in the underworld, which reflects their life on earth.

There are many others god of were formed on the basis of nature. Korean dragons are legendary creatures in Korean mythology. There are many types of dragons. 'Imoogi' is a kind of snake, wingless and with a hood, who were not formed but created during the period of plague, who got a curse of not having its own body but can enter to a particular person who would born

as 'Imoogi' every 100 years. Korean myths have unlimited mythology stories which also have some creatures who also refer as a god or guardians, one of the famous and well known is 'Gumiho' a nine-tailed fox, who refers to peace and power. They could change their appearance. In Japan, 'Gumiho' is a fox who could freely transform into a beautiful woman and often set out to



Aiyushe Maity brings you top celebrity gossip, rumours, movie updates and more...

The top story of the month had to be the most sensational rumour of all time, that Rihanna was pregnant. The Internet was flooded with posts and stories congratulating Riri but Rihanna shut the rumours down like a boss. In a conversation with her fan who wrote "Can I come to the baby shower sis!?! True or not your babies are going to be beautiful. Sorry everyone's up in your uterus right now," Rihanna responded, "Haaaaa! Stawwwp! You ain't came to the first 10 baby showers! Yall breed me every year lol!". Rihanna surely has a good sense of humour and a lot of patience because she has to deal with pregnancy rumours every alternate year. It's almost like the patriarchal mindsets cannot watch a woman glow and grow until and unless she has a baby and settles down.

Rihanna was able to conjure our attention twice this month but the second time was definitely no rumour. Rihanna has been officially named the "National Hero of Barbados" by the government because her home country changed its Constitution, renouncing a 396-year-old British Monarchy.

Nina Dobrev, who is very known for her versatile acting in the famous fictional series *The Vampire Diaries*, has hinted towards a possible cameo in the new season of the extremely famous show *Stranger Things*. It seems that the actress sent her fans a cryptic message when she posted a picture of herself standing outside the Hawkins High School (a spot location of *Stranger Things*) with the caption – "Stranger Things have happened". Needless to say that the fans are extremely excited and have already started speculating about the possible storyline.

Nina isn't the only actress who created a buzz among her fans. Priyanka Chopra seems to have created a lot of waves in the media industry by bagging the role of adult Sati in the successful movie franchise *The Matrix*. Although she received a lot of praise after she posted the first look of her character, most of her comments were regarding her marriage. She recently changed her name from Priyanka Chopra Jonas to just Priyanka Chopra which seemed to bug her fans and even though the concern is appreciated but it is certainly not fair towards Priyanka Chopra since she just wanted to share some good news.

Emma Watson applauded Indian women for the "Chipko Movement" with an Instagram post where she wrote "Thanks for protecting our forest and trees". Emma Watson has always been very vocal about social, political and environmental issues and her little appreciation post was well received and extremely heartfelt.

Britney Spears is finally free but is she really? Britney shared a disgusting incident that occurred to her on first of December. She went to use a public restroom in LA and was relentlessly followed and harassed by paparazzi who took pictures of her in the restroom. For several years Britney was abused by her family and bullied by media but even though she was finally free from her "conservatorship," it still feels like she has to face a lot of unwanted media attention.

Another heart-breaking news is that BTS might have to disband. As reported by Billboard, BTS signed a new seven-year contract in 2018 — meaning that they have a vested interest in remaining together as a group until at least 2025. The K-Pop boy band announced that they are taking an "extended period of rest" after a busy year but a source claims that they might not reunite due to some severe disagreements within the group. The fans are anxious but are trying to remain positive.

Instagram hyperventilated when a "Harry Potter" reunion picture was posted. The picture of Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson sharing one of Hogwarts's common rooms like they had never left definitely made the fans feel nostalgic and extremely emotional. The whole world is eagerly

After a long wait, the nomination list for 79th Golden Globe Awards has been released. Belfast is the most nominated (7) followed by *The Power Of Dog* and many more. Netizens have already started their predictions regarding who's going to bag the awards in each category.

Meghan Thee Stallion has officially completed her Bachelor's degree in health administration. Apart from delivering one after another hit songs and raps, the pop icon also took time out of her busy schedule to study and pass with flying colours.

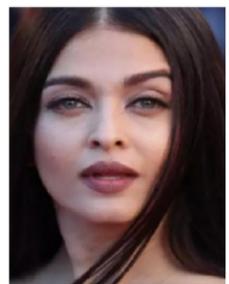
Pete Davidson, the current boyfriend of Kim Kardashian, and MGK, the current partner of Meghan Fox, currently generated a lot of debate on the Internet after they stripped on Instagram live for an ad campaign of Calvin Klein which soon went viral. Netizens seemed quite divided in their opinion. While some took it lightheartedly, others started to call them out for irresponsible behaviour. Whether or not Pete Davidson and MGK did it for clout, their so called "famous girlfriends" haven't commented on the matter.

Bollywood bucket



Asmita Ghosh

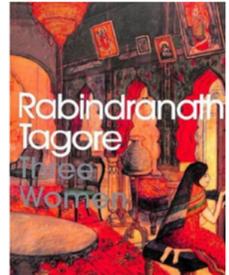
Paving the way for others in the transgender community, Sruthy Sithara becomes the first Indian to hold the Miss Trans Global title. Taking to Instagram, she said, "Miss Trans Global 2021. This smile means a lot. For me, for my community, for my country, for the transglobal organisation, for all those who are oppressed and marginalised. Here I am, Sruthy Sithara, Miss Trans Global 2021 title winner. Thank you so much to all who are behind this successful journey."



The most rumoured couple in B-town Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif finally tied the knot on December 10.

According to sources, the actors were very much in rumours for a week regarding their marriage news. But finally, it is "OFFICIAL." The couple tied the knot at the Six Senses Fort Barwara, Rajasthan. The wedding festivities started on Tuesday, December 7, and continued till Friday, December 10, at the royal venue. The wedding pictures are official as they both along with several media houses have disclosed it.

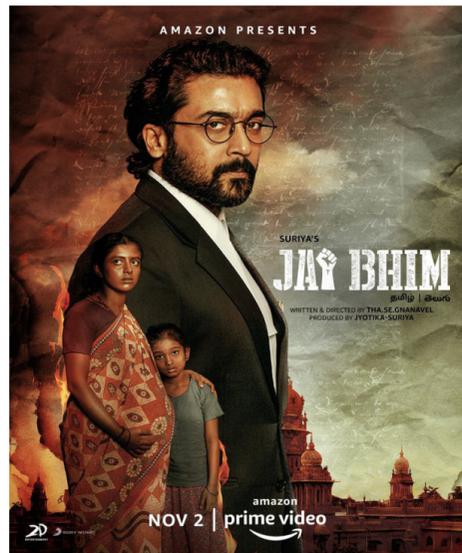
Aishwarya to play lead role in Indo-American project Former Miss World Aishwarya Rai is one of the most beautiful and gor-



geous actresses in the Indian film industry. Her fans have been waiting for a long time now to watch her back on the big screen as she has been away from the glamour industry for a long time now. Sources reported that Aishwarya has signed her new international project. Her upcoming project will be Indo-American and will be based on Rabindranath Tagore's story *Three Women*. Isheeta Ganguly, a theatre writer and fusion singer, will be making her directorial debut with the movie and she is also adapting her successful music theatre into the film. Ganguly, while confirming the news, told a leading news website, "Aishwarya Rai Bachchan will be playing the main protagonist in the film. While the play was called *Three Women*, we are changing the name and have titled our film *The Letter* as the film is based around the letter of Kadambari Devi who was Tagore's sister-in-law. I am really glad that Aishwarya loved the script and agreed to be a part of my directorial debut.

Breaking all the stereotypes male influencer Shantanu Dhope on *Cosmopolitan Digital Cover* Shantanu Dhope (Content Creator) "Growing up, I felt excluded from the beauty industry because I never saw anyone who looked like me being represented in mainstream media", says Shantanu Dhope. In India, it is frowned upon if a boy loves makeup. I was also bullied because I was an overweight child. I remember it being a very difficult time to navigate, especially because I still hadn't come to terms with my sexuality. But today, I embrace my body just the way it is, as it does so much for me."

A film of brutal reality



Payal Dhauria

Sengenni, played by Lijomol Jose, knocks on every possible door she can until she finds advocate Chandru, played by Surya to help her fight for revoking the falsified allegation of theft on her husband, Rajakannu, who was arrested and later went missing from the police station. This movie shows how easy it is for officials to put false accusations over the working class and portrays a vicious picture of severe police brutality.

Jai Bhim is an official Amazon Prime original directed by T.J. Gnanvel and produced by Jyothika and Surya. Starring Surya and Lijomol Jose is a Tamil legal drama, inspired by real events. *Jai Bhim* focuses on a case of uncovering the faces of corrupt people in authorities as well as, aims towards protecting the basic rights of minorities in India. It is a commercial film of 2 hours and 44 minutes that had intentionally been overdramatized to not be labelled as a documentary.

Inspired by real-life events which happened in 1995 when the Irula tribe of Tamil Nadu had become victims of police brutality and Justice K. Chandru, a human rights lawyer, put up a fight for them. This movie successfully brings the at-

tention of the masses to this tight-knit community and the injustice they endure. The representation of this tribe is done with a sense of respect by the creators that are important in sensitive cases like these.

The character of advocate Chandru puts the lime-light on the cruelty towards the tribe. He is passionate and determined, as he challenges the authorities who misuse their power over a helpless community, exploiting their basic human rights and treating them like animals, forcing them to accept their fate of humiliation. The character of Sengenni does everything to rebel against this "fate". Both of the main characters were very well delineated.

The music provided by Sean Roldan has evoked a mixed response from the audience. More than half of the film centres around the drama in the courtroom, where the public prosecution against advocates seems inadequate at the very best. Lijomol Jose as Sengenni easily steals every scene with her unbelievably heartbreaking performance.

A sensitive topic that got handled with care and portrayed well, without diverting the audience from the main message, *Jai Bhim* deserves all the appreciation it has received.

The captaincy conundrum

Sheuli Mondal

The loss in the t20 World Cup, 2021 didn't only mark

the end of the Kohli era in limited-overs cricket but also the beginning of Rohit Sharma's captaincy. And

along with that, rumours about the tussle between the two captains. Currently, Rohit

Sharma is the India captain for the t20 and ODI teams. And Virat Kohli will continue to lead the test team as of now. Before the t20 world cup tournament started, Virat had announced his decision of stepping down as the captain for the shortest format of cricket. Though he stated nothing about the ODI team, later Rohit Sharma was named captain of both formats. Rumours were heard that Kohli was pressured to give up as the ODI team's captain.

Although the BCCI president, Sourav Ganguly, cleared the board's decision about not wanting different captains for the limited-over cricket; the current sequence of incidents indicates that it is completely opposing the former t20 captain.

Virat skipped the t20 series against New Zealand whereas Rohit Sharma wasn't in the test squad, adding more fuel to the fire. Rumours about the rift between the two players had arisen in the past too, though both of them denied

these. The Indian team is going to appear in the test series against South Africa which will be followed by the ODI series. Rohit Sharma won't play in the test matches as he's nursing an injury.

A few days ago there was news that Kohli won't play the one-day matches either. This gave rise to gossip that both the captains are not willing to play under each other's captaincy. But Kohli, in a recent interview has blown away the rumours with his statement that he will be available for the ODI series.

Team India has not yet won any test series in South Africa. Under Virat's captaincy India didn't manage to win any of the ICC trophies, but several other important trophies have been bagged, specifically in test cricket. But Virat has not been in peak form for the last few series.

Now this is time to see whether the team can win its first test series in South Africa under his captaincy.

