

# Expressions



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## Pandemic on rampage: World race to find cure

Aakarsh Bajpai

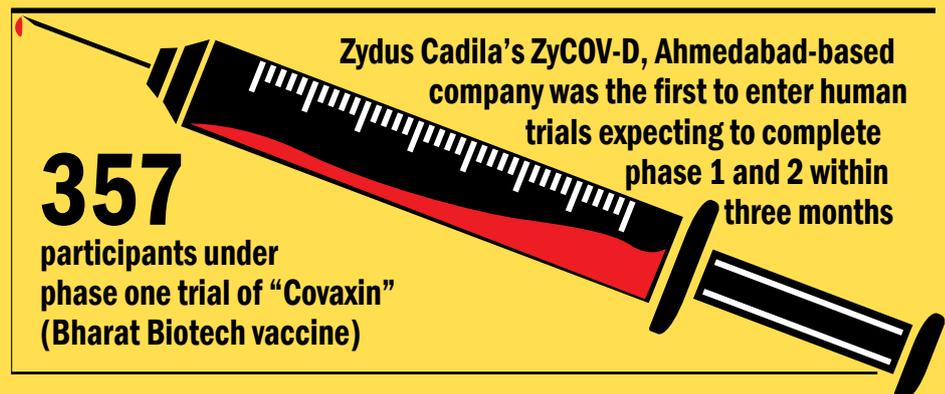
**W**ith Russia granting patent to the world's first Covid Vaccine- 'Sputnik V' on August 12, which is facing flak for fast tracking the trial stages, the race for finding the cure to the global pandemic has just gone up several notches.

Similarly, home of Wuhan virus, China recently became the second country to grant patent to Cansino vaccine being produced by its biopharmaceutical firm CanSino Biologicals with phase 3 testing underway.

### COVID VACCINE

As per reports, the vaccine induces an immune response with a single dose and was declared safe, however, the major flaw is low number of people (508) on whom it was tested.

Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech from the Red Fort assured the nation that three Indian scientists were working on three Covid vaccines that were into stage 2 trials.



"If successful, a road map has been prepared for the doses to reach the common man within a short span of time," said Modi.

As the pandemic has already claimed unprecedented lives and affected millions globally, the entire scientific machinery is working 24x7 to find a cure. Sample this: Worldwide there are 25 candidate vaccines in clinical trials and around 140 in the pre-clinical phase according to the World Health Organization (WHO) database. These are numbers like never seen before in terms of vaccine research. In March, Anthony Fauci, Director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious

Diseases told the Senate Committee: "We would not have a vaccine that would even be ready to start to deploy for a year to year and a half. That is the time frame."

Russia though seems to have upped the game, debatable though it might be. "We can accelerate the funding and the bureaucratic elements of the vaccine trials, but the scientific method and randomized controlled trials cannot be accelerated," said Professor Peter Piot, Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who himself had been recovering from COVID-19 for 2 months.

Continued on P5

## Editor's Desk

**A** readjusting world! With India accounting for a sharp rise of nearly 70,000 Covid-19 cases per day, the country is the third worst-hit globally only after the USA and Brazil.



However, exponential rise in infections clearly indicates that we need to learn to cope up with Coronavirus by changing the habits and attitudes in general. While the virus is going to stay for a longer period, over the next few months, India's economy will have to operate alongside COVID-19 by building the capability to manage granular, dynamic, and localized lockdowns and restarts.

Despite surge in cases the only silver lining is the virus is less virulent and fatality rate is much lower than many countries in India as we seem to have fought the virus with better immunity.

How Indian businesses, consumers, and workers are equipped to resume their activities, even amid the ebb and flow of the virus, will decide how lives and livelihoods fare in India.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says it is possible to "get rid of the Coronavirus in less than 2 years", faster than the 1918 Spanish Flu – the deadliest in modern history. There are many vaccine candidates that are under different stages of trial and we seem to conquer it faster.

A post-Covid world won't and shouldn't be the same as before as we have already started witnessing transformational 'new normals' in the way we work, consume, travel and even in the very way we relate to and interact with one another.

It is no surprise that India is the most preferred offshoring destination in the world with a 55% market share of the global services sourcing business. We have an almost unparalleled entrepreneurial base, with the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world, and the third-highest number of unicorns after China and the US.

Prof (Dr) Sanjay M Johri

Part 2

## 'Take chances; dream and see beyond'

**T**aking cue from my teaching and field training at Amity during which I got a chance to work in a film 'Tanu Weds Manu' & 'Tanu Weds Manu Returns' thus enhancing my repertoire. I pursued dance, theatre, and being part of Amity Films took part in many events. In 2011, I gradually moved to Mumbai to conquer the world with all the knowledge I had from my mentors.



I interned in "Contiloe"- a production house where I worked on a show called 'Mahadev'. After four months of internship, I got my first salaried job as an Associate Creative Head in Hats off Productions and I was the ACH on set for a show on Sab TV 'Chintu Chinki aur Badi ki Love Story' where I was going through scripts, creatives and making sure that everything was there for the show to run smoothly.

Six months into the job I started to miss the real creative side of it, brainstorming, discussions, ideation.

### ALUMNI CORNER

That's when I realized it's time to switch on non-fiction. I switched to Zee network's channel 'Living Foodz' from

2012 to 2018 where I made food and travel shows as an executive producer.

Traveling the length and width of the country and it was a big opportunity to work with the best of chefs from Ranveer Brar, Kunal Kapoor, Pankaj Bhaudaria, Vikaas Kapoor & Ajay Chopra on shows like The great Indian Rasoi, Pickle Nation, Northern Flavours. Thanks to my work I not only explored and travelled India but abroad as well like Greece, Paris, Thailand, Bali, Prague in search of ingredients and flavours.

Six years into the job and once again I changed gears as I believe in the maxim, 'Change is the only constant.' I moved to an entertainment boutique 'Tamboo', a firm that is into artist management, content, & Event curation. Since then I have been working with Piyush Mishra, Tigmanshu Dhulia, lyricists Raj Shekhar, Puneet Sharma, music directors Sneha Khanwalkar & Krsna Solo, singers like Shaan among others.

Now I also do theatre, choreography, dance and painting a space that gives me the adrenalin rush besides keeping me calm and happy. I owe a big chunk of this journey to ASCO and Sanjay sir for all the support.

I would only like to share few life lessons with all the young talent: Take chances; Dream & see beyond. Make friends but the right ones. Take care of your body, mind & soul if you want to make it big.

*Ambika Chandra batch of (2008-2011)*

# From campus to computer: A shift in higher education

Yashita Arora

**A**s COVID-19 forced schools and universities to forgo traditional face-to-face learning and switch to digitalized process of attending lectures, it has also cast a cloud of uncertainty on higher education.

Now as campuses around the globe remain empty; administrators are scrambling to prepare for what comes next. Will the classroom we once knew gradually return or could COVID-19 permanently transform how we learn? Virtual education can never match the one imparted through campus-based learning.

2020 admission amidst COVID-19 Due to COVID-19, new academic session has come to a halt as students applying to Indian universities or abroad are finding difficult to make a suitable choice. Large number of students applying to foreign universities have been pushed to an uncertainty as they are unable to apply for visa. Some are unsure of paying large amounts to foreign colleges in return for a home-based education. Studying abroad goes beyond classroom setting, the opportunities, facilities, networking and diversity of campus life and involvement are some of the factors which cannot be emulated in online education. In one of the reports by The Quint, it stated that “even with the disruption of campus life, colleges in US continue to charge the same tuition fee for online education.”

**Educational sector might face disruptions for the first time in 100 years because of the fact that universities are not resilient and inadaptable**

**Prof Dhananjay Nanda**

(IN A REPORT BY MIAMI HERBERT)

Universities abroad depend on international students who pay full tuition fees while domestic students receive financial aid from state and government. International students on the other hand are only offered limited number of scholarships that are only awarded on first come first join basis. A report by State Department and Institute of International Education (IIE) states that “1.1 million foreign students attend U.S higher education institutions in 2018-2019 in which China was the highest contributor to the foreign students body followed by India and Saudi Arabia”. In a report by The Times of India, it stated that “international students pay full tuition fee and that is the source of revenue that enables schools to offer student aid and other discounts to students.”

IDP (International Development Program) consultant Ankita works with students to help them apply to colleges in U.S as well as other countries, she states that “pandemic has

affected the enrollment in comparison to last year. Only 30-40% students have enrolled this year for online classes but rest are confused and are waiting to file for visa applications.” She further says that some students are willing to apply for next year as applications are already in progress because most of them want in campus experience. U.K and Canada have hinted to open embassy by the end of August but U.S is not cooperative during this scenario.

Ankita further says that “master’s students are less keen to apply for online-based education in comparison to bachelor’s due to the course duration. As master’s course is only for a year and by switching online, they won’t get proper experience, which is why the ratio is less among master’s applicants this year.”

The hybrid model

With Corona cases rising every day, foreign universities are finding it hard to manage their financial aid during this time as the fall semester is about to begin. Some universities abroad are considering opting for a hybrid model, which is both face-to-face as well as online instruction. According to a report by Forbes “If universities keep teaching online they may lose a third of committed students by fall, which is why universities like Southern California, Harvard and, Stanford are considering opting for hybrid model for education. The article further specifies that “universities are considering three options: on campus housing and live classes, on-campus housing and online classes, off-campus fully online classes”.

It is now need of the hour for universities to become highly resilient and adaptable because the future is uncertain and only flexibility and new norms in education can help us thrive.

**300 MILLION**  
students both at school and university level have been affected due to this unprecedented contagion\*

\*UNESCO for India

# Schools, colleges must explore feasible options

Kanika Singh

**H**ow much do kids miss running in the playground, sharing lunches with friends, drinking water directly from taps, hopping onto swings and living a carefree school life? These are just a few memories of school life that the pandemic had made us value. Not only the teachers but students for a change are also desperate to return.

However, before re-opening of educational institutions several questions need to be answered. How educational places can be made safer for people to counteract transmission of the virus provided that India has multifarious schools: rural and urban, government and private, single-sex and co-educational, and so on, it is quite difficult to think of a solution applicable to pan-India. Similarly, the reactions of children will also differ with their varying ages; a 7-year

## PANDEMIC FALLOUT

kid will struggle to adjust in post-pandemic times. However, it would be easier for college-going students to adapt to the new normal.

The idea of practicing social distancing in schools and colleges is going to be challenging for both teachers and students. Sitting next to your best friend, sharing food and the usual strategy to use the washrooms may not be possible. Maintaining discipline among students in the class and buses will be a perplexing task for the masters.

Apart from these, educational institutions are also going to witness a lesser number of attendees as the pandemic has compelled many students to drop out of schools. Migrant workers have returned to their native places, many people have lost their source of income and hence chances of spending less on education is quite possible. All of this will result in affecting both the health and future of students even when the situation is under control.

We must be ready for the plethora of challenges that the re-opening of schools and colleges will bring along. Since our lives were unfavorably affected due to the pandemic; we must start on a fresh note to achieve good health and better future.

# OH! THE JOY OF MISSING OUT

Sanjana Saxena

**S**ome eight months back we would wonder why we have not been invited to a party or a get-together by friends; the Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) was a constant companion. Little did we know that very soon it would turn to Joy Of Missing Out (JOMO) and what a relief it would be!

In a lifestyle-driven by social distancing and isolation, all of us are inside our homes and social activities have come to a halt. The fear of going out has superseded the fear of missing out. As a result, there is a peace of mind that we are not missing out on any event and making a choice together. The pandemic has lightened the load that many of us did not even realize we were carrying with our lives centered around vanity.

We finally got a break from decision fatigue regarding going to this event or that, taking metro or cab, what to wear, and other inconsequential questions. Now, we stay at home, virtually keep a check on our loved ones and cherish this aspect of life. The FOMO-Less world has a life in our nurturing shelter with the support of our family- our partners through thick and thin. Things are indeed challenging but there is still a lot to be grateful for and keep our sanity intact. Find peace in the life that JOMO fosters. After all, being in solitude is now a selfless deed by which we are saving people around us and ourselves.

## Pre-Covid 'FOMO'-fied world

Often, when we are not a part of the group, a moment, or an event, it contributes to the feelings of anxiety and frustration. Lack of not getting an invitation to social gatherings, etc. can lead to FOMO. Around 7 out of 10 millennials suffer from FOMO. Not just them, it can affect people of all ages.

In no time, FOMO grows into an anxiety disorder, stooping our self-esteem down to a very low level. From our spending to social life, FOMO affects every sphere of our lives and leads to insecurities, indecisiveness, envy and dissatisfaction.

At least the pandemic has made us realize the futility of such petty things. The fear of virus transmission has become an integral part of our thoughts and is influencing our daily lives.

In the beginning, a lot of people felt like the coronavirus lockdown might lead to an overall psychological tailspin. We cannot go out, meet our colleagues, or even work in the traditional working environment much less mingle with people. Job loss and life-threatening disease pervaded all conversation. However, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise and now JOMO has become the mantra.

# To do or not to do is no longer an option!

Shifa Dutt

Over the years, how often have you wondered if you had time, you would do this and that? "If I had time I'll read more, if I had time, I'll finish that series." From doing yoga, losing or gaining weight to something as simple as spending time with family; our bucket list had a lot on its plate. Enter the pandemic and we have tremendous amount of free time to do everything and more. Now, how many of us were able to tick off those 'wishful

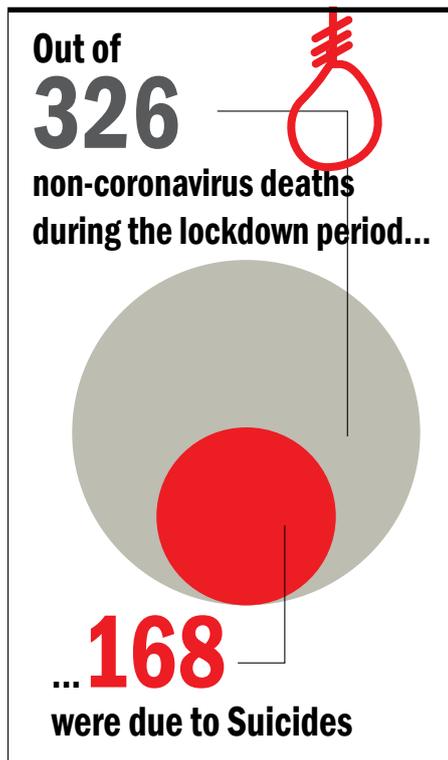
ture started giving sleepless nights.

In addition, due to no work it resulted in a situation of mass panic as people had no idea how to protect themselves and their loved ones. In places, which were hotspots the sense of panic and anxiety was even worse.

A report by First Post on May 13, 2020, said that out of 326 non-coronavirus deaths during the lockdown period, 168 were due to suicides. Actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death triggered a long-overdue conversation. Mental health is the most real thing there is and there are still people who make little of depression or suffer in silence with disastrous consequences sometimes.

However, the silver lining of the lockdowns was that there were close to no accidents and no robberies. But a report by The Hindu, dated June 22nd, 2020, said "In 2020, between March 25 and May 31, 1,477 complaints of domestic violence were made by women. This 68-day period recorded more complaints than those received between March and May in the previous 10 years. UP Reported 600 complaints, which is the highest out of all states". This is just the tip of the iceberg. Data says 86% of women in India do not report domestic violence. Lockdown might not have been the sole reason behind these incidents, but almost all of them were most certainly influenced by it. People had no jobs to keep themselves busy and that anxiety came out in self-harm or harm to the people accessible within the four walls.

It is time we took collective stock of ourselves and our loved ones. No one knows when the pandemic will end, and things will go back to normal, but we can use this time to do all things in our bucket list, which never had the time to do earlier.



thoughts' from our list?

Work/study from home scenario during and after lockdowns as Covid persists has limited our mobility. The lockdown of course was unprecedented for all, especially students. All were baffled about the future. While initially some enjoyed being free from the daily drill but soon anxiety pangs about uncertainty of examinations and their fu-

## Russia jumps...

Continued from P1

Of the several vaccines keenly observed by the World Health Organization, ChAdOx1 nCov-19 vaccine being developed by Oxford University in partnership with AstraZeneca, is among the six vaccines to have reached the 3rd stage of the clinical trial. The promising results of ChAdOx1 nCov-19 first two trial phases were published on July 20. It is a viral-vectored vaccine that uses a non-infectious chimpanzee virus as a medium to transport the gene for the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein into a human cell to trigger the immune system against Covid. The clinical trial was done on 1077 healthy adults between the 18-55 years age group. The only major criticism it faced as to be an ethnically flawed trial as 91% of the participants were white. Though the vaccine shows promising results, yet it is still not confirmed how much longer the immune system stays activated and protects an individual.

Meanwhile, US-based pharmaceutical company Moderna Therapeutics has also begun a late-stage trial of its RNA platform vaccine on 30,000 healthy participants from July 27.

Eight months of Covid siege has crippled the world economy and the vaccine seems to be the only solution. Addressing a press conference on the issue Dr. Poonam Singh, Regional Director of WHO in South-East Asia said, "We know rollout of a vaccine requires community acceptance. Vaccines need to be considered a common good and WHO is promoting equitable access with the COVAX and ACT-Accelerator programs." Summing it up Klaus Stohr Vice President, Global Head - Influenza Franchises said "In the long war of finding the vaccine first, the small battles that we have won may keep us optimistic and positive."

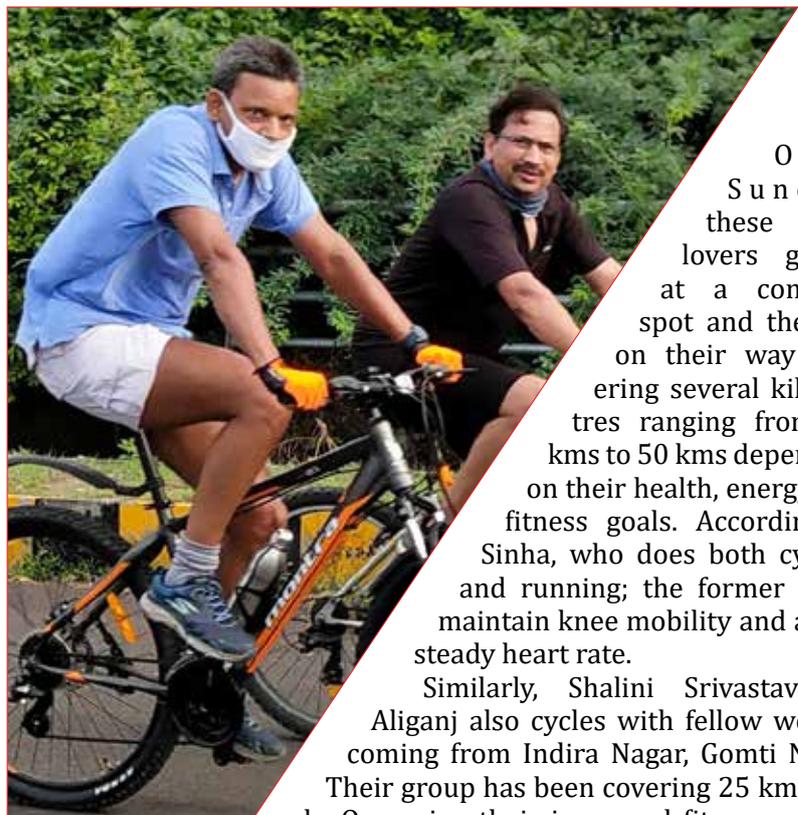


# 'CYCLE' OF LIFE

**T**ired of 'incarceration' due to repeated lockdowns and Covid-19 health protocols, bicycle seems to have become people's fitness fad. The sheer pleasure of riding a cycle and feeling the cool breeze on your face while burning calories is three-in-one healthy bonanza.

The two-month lockdown stopped the pace of life as initially even parks and gyms were shut for regular morning walkers who then started looking for other exercise options. As restrictions eased and with parks still being closed, Lucknowites thought of riding the bicycle again.

The nawabi shehar has large number of 'cycle lovers' who travel from 50 to 100 km in groups. Senior member of one such group Amartya Sinha believes that owing to Covid protocols, people are preferring to cycle to boost their immunity and fitness. "Not everyone can run for several kilometres to get the required cardio workout and here cycling has come out to be an optimum choice as it is easy on the joints when compared to running," Sinha says.



On Sunday, these cycle lovers gather at a common spot and then go on their way covering several kilometres ranging from 10 kms to 50 kms depending on their health, energy and fitness goals. According to Sinha, who does both cycling and running; the former helps maintain knee mobility and also a steady heart rate.

Similarly, Shalini Srivastava of Aliganj also cycles with fellow women coming from Indira Nagar, Gomti Nagar. Their group has been covering 25 kms daily. On seeing their improved fitness several new members including Maya, Neelam Shukla, Namrata, Rashmi also joined the group.

The fad has become so popular that stocks at cycle shops have run out and customers have to wait for several days to get their 'mean machine'. Now that's 'cycle of life'!



Not everyone can run for several kilometres to get the required cardio workout and here cycling has come out to be an optimum choice as it is easy on the joints when compared to running



Amartya Sinha



Lensman: Trilochan S Kalra



# ...AND THE SHOW GOES ON!

Riddhi Bhargava

Watching Big B and Ayushman Khurana baiting each other in Gulabo Sitabo, the first major Bollywood movie to be released on an OTT platform before a theatrical release due to Covid-induced lockdown in June, set the trend.

So be it feasting eyes on Vidya Balan as a feisty 'Shakuntala Devi'; or gushing over Sushant Singh Rajput's last labour love 'Dil Bechara', the OTT platforms provided much relief from the mundane lifestyle courtesy Covid-19.

Meanwhile, a study, 'Back to the Theatres,' conducted online among Hindi, Tamil, and Telu-

gu film audiences across 58 cities and towns in India by Ormax Media Pvt. Ltd though did underscore the fact that audiences across all three industries were missing theatres. However, the government is yet to take a call on opening of movie halls and here OTT platforms have stepped in as

## OTT PLATFORMS

a ray of hope for movie lovers.

People are enjoying binge watching their favourite shows online with the comfort and safe surrounding of their homes. As a result, platforms like Hotstar, Amazon Prime, and Netflix have witnessed an 82.63% increase in screen viewing time by people. Many more movies are being

lined up for release.

Seeing the trend actors like Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, Tarun Katiyal and company like Eros Now, are all talking about the new normal in terms of adjusting movie budgets and going for small sets. Even the OTT platforms are also observing this surge in viewership and need to retain their audience through various initiatives like balanced subscription charges, new upgraded frequent fresh content, geographical content targeting etc.

A lot of competition has increased on these platforms, which is good for consumers who have several options.

So, until the pandemic is over, lounge on your couch and watch your favourite flick/show online!

## Sporting encounters of another kind!

Nitin Kumar

### STRESS BUSTER

■ **Sports is a major contributor to economic and social development with an estimated industry of \$756 billion annually faces millions of jobs at risk**

■ **Lack of access to exercise and physical activity also has mental health impacts and leads to stress and anxiety**

It takes years of hard practice, discipline to become a good sportsman and compete in an international event, a proud moment every athlete eagerly awaits. COVID-19 certainly pushed that dream into uncertainty. The readjustment in playing regulations, fan engagements, and challenges of the physical well-being of a sportsman put all major events under scrutiny.

Sports is a major contributor to economic and social development with an estimated industry of \$756 billion annually faces millions of jobs at risk, not only for sports professionals but also for people associated with the retail and sports equipment industry. Many sporting events have been cancelled or postponed safeguarding the health of athletes. The 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo has been rescheduled for next year. Making do with

the situation, Lovlina Borgohain, a 22-year-old Indian boxer, practiced in the muddy water instead of the Olympic boxing ring. She has been seen training at her flooded farms in Assam.

Novak Djokovic, a tennis star tested positive for Coronavirus after tak-

ing part in his own organized tennis exhibition series, a move for which he was widely criticized. The squad of 10 Pakistan players was too infected before assembling for their tour to England. ICC has made various interim changes to its playing regulations like the ban on applying saliva to the ball, additional DRS review, and non-neutral umpire so on. The Board too postponed the Men's T20 World Cup for next year.

It was the historical ground The Oval that witnessed the applause of a crowd on July 27 post Coronavirus lockdown. The rescheduling of IPL in UAE brings hope to new players, sponsors and broadcasters. UN recommends sporting federations, organizations and governments to seek safety measures for athletes. It directs for creating a professional sports ecosystem, promoting positive mental attitudes and physical activity at home. As the great boxer Muhammad Ali said, "Don't count the days, make the days count."

# COVID TAKES AWAY FESTIVE SHEEN

Adeeba Lari

**F**estival, a word of Latin origin, that means 'a day or period of celebration, typically for religious reasons' is scarcely defined. Especially in a country like India where festivals amount to big hooplas of extensive house cleaning and days lined with traditions and family.

Whether you celebrate it or not, the specialty of living in a cultural mosaic like India is that we all have tasted a little of the contagious happiness that spreads itself around at times like these. Then how do we celebrate any of this amidst a pandemic that compulsively demands social distancing from our friends and relatives? An answer we lived with Bakra Eid and Raksha Bandhan that fell right in the middle of the Corona chaos.

Though the two festivals are poles apart in their nature, history, and tradition what resonates between the two is the requirement of spending it with your loved ones.

Bakra-eid recounts the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham for the love

of Allah and Muslims all around the world to sacrifice an animal to pay their respect. The meat is then shared with family, relatives and the less privileged.

As a kid, I remember going to the goat markets with my father where he would let me choose a goat and I would find a companion for the next ten days. This year, the markets were only partially allowed much to the distress of the goat breeders and Muslims.

Many states went for online sale of goats and others bought their livestock from private villages. My brother is allowed to venture to the streets two times a year- on Eid. The 'Chand Raat' (moon night) markets hold a feast of delicacies and joys. But this year, he spent the night grumpy and confined with his games- there were no festivities. A family friend recovering

**On Raksha Bandhan many online rakhis saw a growth in their business while people made do with video calls instead of getting together**

**The Eid prayers were held with the COVID norms and people instead of embracing each other scattered away quickly in the fear of police**



from Covid-19 refrained from sacrificing this year. "Another thing that COVID stole from me," she muttered upset over the video call.

The prayers were held with the COVID norms and people instead of embracing each other scattered away quickly in the fear of police. There were no chains of barbecue events or visiting any relatives, the

Eid was spent as quietly as the moon that comes up and disappears on a cloudy night.

Something similar was observed with Raksha Bandhan. Many greetings were exchanged on video calls, online rakhis saw a growth in their business, and festivities were crippled. A

friend who is rather busy a day before festivals complained of spending it on her bed all day as the laptop passed from one sibling to another. This time, her family including many others did their shopping online. From constant bargaining with the shopkeepers to looking out for online deals, this was a major shift.

The few people who are still away from their homes celebrated the festivals with video calls and a longing for the old life. Celebrations have taken on a Covid hue this year and there seems to be no end in sight at least for now.



# BUSINESSES ADAPT TO THE NEW NORMAL

Rahul Mahanto

**W**hat do Amazon, Microsoft, Zoom, Facebook, Netflix, Shopify and even our very own desi Reliance Jio have in common other than being the most valued companies globally? Well, they saw a surge in their online

**The need for digital tools has teamed and revolutionized the whole business environment. By confronting the new challenges, assimilation of new plans and strategies, fortifying new tools and technology at hand, we can easily chalk out the further course of action**

businesses even as the pandemic crippled most corporations/economy as work from home and lockdowns became the new normal.

Amazon added approx. 400 billion market cap to its kitty while Mukesh Ambani became the fourth richest man in the

world as per the Forbes, mainly due to foreign investments in his digital business. The pandemic more than ever forced people to opt for online services and those companies which took advantage of the situation even though they faced initial hurdles during the global lockdowns, came out with flying colours.

Taking cue many companies have now started adapting to the changes while those failing to do so will perish. Atul Bhakta, CEO of One World Express, affirms this as he says the idea of furloughing staff, closing shop and relying on savings to ride out the storm might be tempting but in the long run, it's an utter failure. "Due to this faulty strategy many businesses will see themselves surpassed by innovation-driven startups in the future," he concludes.

Entrepreneur Anurag Roy, founder and CEO of Max Digital Academy, Lucknow, said in an interview that the COVID-19 pandemic has surprised the world, which is something no one saw coming. Organizations whose endurance relies upon the in-person collaboration with their customers or clients have battled the most. Some have adjusted to the new normal while others are still having a hard time.

Both affirm that digitalization is the germane response.

The initial move towards adjusting to the new normal is by the digitalization of the businesses because the associations into the Digital Age now are not by choice but by necessity. During such waves of exigency, the business needs to continually concoct new thoughts and techniques to serve clients better. Plans that worked a couple of months back may not be pertinent

any longer. Getting the staff back to work after a significant stretch of work from home and simultaneously swearing an oath of their well-being ought to be the need of the organizations.

Moushumi Pal, founder and CEO of Woodpecker Media, Mumbai, reckons that upending and upskilling is an antidote in such challenging times. "All businesses need to be more creative and disparate in their approach," she says.

Now the dimensions of challenges have taken a new conformation as it is more digital and intellectual than physical. The need for digital tools has teamed and revolutionized the whole business environment. By confronting the new challenges, assimilation of new plans and strategies, fortifying new tools and technology at hand, we can easily chalk out the further course of action, predict experts.

All businesses need to reconfigure and reconstruct themselves to maintain their vitality in the future and to stand out in the competition. Clemency towards employees by extending the deadlines and helping them to attune with new work business topography is important to boost their performance. The management needs to act as a catalyst to implement learnings of the past months to aid a new business ecosystem.



# Of morning tea & online news in corona times

Anjali Singh

Remember the days when we all read newspapers with a cup of morning tea or some of us kept that newspaper in our bags to read it in our free time either in college or office? However, the novel Coronavirus ushered in radical lifestyle



changes including the way we got our daily dose of news.

Newspapers were replaced by news apps as people told their hawkers not to deliver the subscribed newspapers as they feared it could lead to an infection due to improper handling during circulation.

Says Vineet Kumar, has been distributing newspapers in Sector-16 of Faridabad district for the last 28 years, "I have always taken pride in my job. Now I am unable to do my work as customers told me not to drop newspapers until the pandemic is over. Nowhere is it mentioned that COVID-19 spreads

## TECH THIS!

**According to a joint study by Broadcast Audience Research Council of India (BARC) and Nielsen India, there has been a 41% increase in time spent on news apps. Users spent around 40 minutes per week tracking news on their smartphones. Overall, the news franchise on smartphones has grown 34%, the report revealed**

through newspapers, but we cannot do anything if a customer doesn't want a newspaper." Like him there are several hawkers who have seen their customers dwindle.

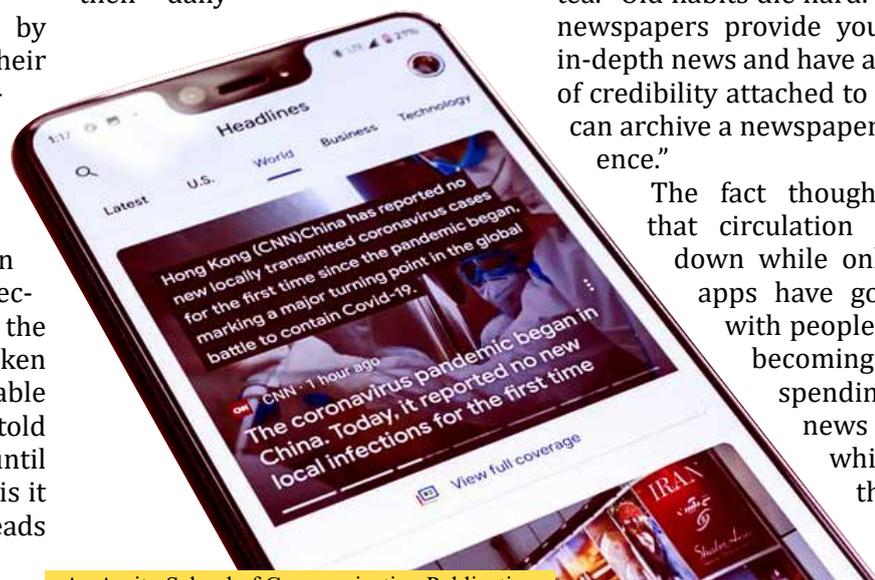
News consumption though has increased manifold with over 68% of Indians using online news apps on their smartphones, which is higher than the global markets of Brazil and Turkey, as per reports. Accessing news from social media has overtaken the print media as a primary source of information for people under 35 years. Online news app became popular, which gradually changed the way people got their daily

news.

Seeing the surge in readers, news apps started demanding subscription fees while opting for digital advertising to generate high revenues. With the ability to zoom in and out, addition of videos, saving previous editions of the paper and going digital are altogether making the journey of readers colourful while generating revenue for news apps, portals, media houses.

However, there are some like Amish, who still loves reading a newspaper early morning. As a precaution he sanitises the newspaper before reading it while sipping tea. "Old habits die hard. Moreover, newspapers provide you with an in-depth news and have an element of credibility attached to them. You can archive a newspaper for reference."

The fact though remains that circulation has gone down while online news apps have got a push with people gradually becoming used to spending reading news online while sipping their morning tea.



# No mad rush for seasonal sale

Aashi Anand

The series of lockdowns around the world have severely impacted the fashion retail ecosystem because people are forced to stay at home to protect themselves from the deadly Coronavirus. This season many have lost their opportunity for seasonal sale. Consumers desperately wait for sales and new arrivals throughout the seasons, but this year it all went for a toss.

Seasonal clothing has become a headache for the industry. All the spring wear apparels are now seasonally irrelevant and require high promotion, which explains the reason for surprisingly high discounts

over the market. Yet retailers have need of fewer discounts on the products that have sold well during this lockdown like Nutan Patel, an employee at a clothing store, says, casual clothing has been in demand for comfortable lifestyles for people working from home.

Retailers also had to oversee their return policy because new health and safety measures do not allow consumers to try on clothes before buying them. Even after these unusually high sales and promotions, retailers are unable to entice consumers who do not want to risk their lives by shopping for apparels.

Pari Saxena and Rishabh Singh who were avid seasonal discount shoppers before Covid outbreak are

now content with online shopping, which is convenient, safe and come with good discounts. Some brands and stores that are struggling in offline markets have made it through on the online platforms.

Online marketers ensure the safety of their consumers and the consumers staying at home receives the product without any physical contact, which makes it more trustworthy. It was a first for many people who opted for online shopping like Bimla Verma who bought her granddaughter's birthday gift and was very satisfied with the product and the discount.

So seasonal sale or not, online shopping seems to be the only viable option for the time being.

## Faculty Corner

# NEED FOR GENDER NEUTRAL JOBS

The negative effects have outnumbered the positive effects in the pandemic era in almost every country. Even superpower the United States of America is struggling to get the situation under control. The loss of lives and the loss of jobs have become a new norm of Covid pandemic around the world. The world is witnessing numerous changes in lifestyle and work culture. "Work from home" has become the new normal around the world for all but not surprisingly in India half of its population was on "work from home" mode for years or would be more suitable to say, "work for home".



The latest Economic survey 2020 has revealed that around 60 percent of the females from the productive age bracket is limited to household work only. There has been a constant decline in the participation of women in the workforce from 2011. The latest economic survey 2019-2020 reveals even more distressing facts. Female Force Labour Rate stands at 23.4 percent. In the year 2011, the rate was 33.1 percent. Pandemic is certainly going to take this rate down deeper. The loss of jobs in the pandemic remained a heavy toll on the jobs of the females in India.

As per the data received from the centre for monitoring the Indian Economy's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, four in ten females in India lost

their jobs during the lockdown due to Covid-19. Moreover, the pre-pandemic facts are even more disheartening. The 2020's Global Gender Gap Index, which is released by world Economic Forum places ranks India at 112th place out of 153 countries in equal work prospects for men and women. Women are generating only 18 percent of the total economic labour force. Considering the stated facts and the pre-existing wide gender gap in India, it is apparent that the new job will be going to the men first in our country.

Pandemic may allow making things equal for women. A reference to one of the speeches of Prime Minister Modi during the nationwide lockdown is significantly apt to mention. The Prime Minister said that we need to transform this adversity into an opportunity. Countless interpretations have already been done for this part of his speech. One more could be that this time the Indian government can keep the productive age bracket of the females in India in mind while creating new job opportunities. The government can put in some honest efforts to fill the existing gender gap in the economic workforce in India. Let the job opportunities be gender-neutral this time. And, it is natural to expect from the first full-time female Finance Minister of India. A genuine effort is all that is needed.

**- Rekha Pachauri**  
Assistant Professor

Amity School of Communication