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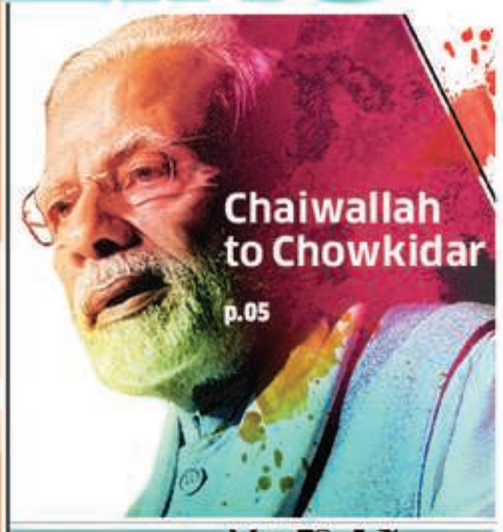
March 17-23, 2019

BED, BREAKFAST & APP

Students and young professionals are escaping temperamental landlords and taking refuge in co-living spaces – the modern and glamorous cousin of the PG digs of the past

p.08-10





Chaiwallah to Chowkidar
p.05



High-Tech Startups Looking for Deep Impact
p.14



Radhika Piramal: Being a VIP
p.11



On Friday, New Zealand Lost its Innocence
p.07



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All are Chowkidar in Fight Against Graft: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday urged his supporters to take the "Main Bhi Chowkidar" (I too am a watchman) pledge and said he was not alone in the fight against graft and social evils, drawing ridicule from Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

"Your chowkidar is standing firm & serving the nation. But, I am not alone. Everyone who is fighting corruption, dirt, social evils is a chowkidar.



Everyone working hard for the progress of India is a chowkidar. Today, every Indian is saying- #MainBhiChowkidar," the prime minister tweeted. He also posted a short video to drive home his message.

Soon after, Rahul tweeted, "Defensive tweet Mr Modi! You feeling a little guilty today." The Congress president earlier alleged that Modi only served the interests of his industrialist friends.

Following Modi's tweet, several BJP leaders also used the #MainBhiChowkidar hashtag and tweeted.

"I am proud to join #MainBhiChowkidar movement. As a citizen who loves India, I shall do my best to defeat corruption, dirt, poverty and terrorism and help create a New India which is strong, secure and prosperous," Union Minister Piyush Goyal said.

RK Singh, minister of state for power and renewable energy, said anyone who took a stand and raised their voice was a chowkidar. "In our fight against corruption, social injustice of any manner and on any person; anyone who takes a stand and raises their voice is a chowkidar. I'm proud to play my part for a corruption-free and Clean India. Let's all raise our voices and take the pledge. #MainBhiChowkidar," he said.

In another development, the BJP said it would come out with details of the Modi government's work toward fulfilling the promises it had made in its manifesto in 2014. Party sources asserted that over 520 of a total of 549 assurances given were either met or work on them was successfully going on.

–PTI/New Delhi

Goa: Cong Stakes Claim to Form Govt

Panaji: The Congress Saturday staked claim to form a government in Goa claiming that the Manohar Parrikar dispensation has lost its majority in the Assembly following the death of BJP MLA Francis D'Souza. In a letter to Goa Governor Mridula Sinha, Leader of Opposition Chandrakant Kavlekar demanded the dismissal of the BJP-led dispensation. The strength of Goa Assembly has reduced from 40 to 37 after the death of D'Souza and resignation of two MLAs – Subhash Shirodkar and Dayanand Sopte. While the Congress has 14 MLAs, down from 16 after Sopte and Shirodkar left it to join the BJP, the latter has 13 MLAs. Three MLAs each of the Goa Forward Party, MGP and an Independent and the lone NCP legislator are supporting the BJP. *–PTI*

No Dilution on Feb 12 Circular: RBI

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India Saturday maintained there was no dilution in its stand with regard to February 12 circular on stressed assets recognition and resolution. The statement comes amid reports the RBI seems to be considering relaxing some aspects of the revised framework on resolution of stressed assets. *–PTI*



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern speaks to representatives of the Muslim community at the Canterbury refugee centre in Christchurch, New Zealand, on Saturday

Hyderabad Man Killed in New Zealand Terror Attack

A man from Hyderabad was killed in the horrific terror attack on two mosques in New Zealand's Christchurch on Friday, his family said here Saturday.

Software engineer Farhaj Ahsan, 31, who was reported missing by the authorities after the incident, was among 49 killed in the indiscriminate firing by a gunman. "We have received information a short while ago that my brother was martyred in the attack," Kashif Ahsan, elder brother of Farhaj told IANS.

A pall of gloom descended on the family's house in Nadeem Colony of Toli Chowki area after the family received the shocking news. Relatives and friends were pouring in to console the family. Authorities in Christchurch informed Ahsan's wife and her uncle, who rushed from Australia, about his death. They were at a hospital in Christchurch, waiting for some information since morning.

Meanwhile, another man from Hyderabad who was injured in the terror attack was recovering. Ahmed Iqbal Jehangir, who was at the same mosque, sustained bullet injuries in his chest and shoulder. "Alhamdulillah (grateful to Allah). He is out of danger and recovering," his brother Mohammed Khursheed Jehangir told IANS here on Saturday. *–IANS/Hyderabad*

Now, India Eyes Dawood

New Delhi: Upping the ante, the government on Saturday said Pakistan must hand over mafia don Dawood Ibrahim and terror operative Syed Salahuddin to India as verifiable evidence on them has been shared with Islamabad. Very specific details were shared, said government sources. If Islamabad thinks India cannot verify their presence in Pakistan, New Delhi can get international verification done, they added. Putting people under detention is a cosmetic move, sources said, referring to the recent "crackdown" by Islamabad on terror groups.

–Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury

BJP's Tezpur MP Quits Party

Guwahati: Ram Prasad Sarmah, BJP MP from Tezpur in Assam, announced his resignation from the party Saturday, saying he was pained to see the "new intruders" in the party, neglecting old BJP workers. Sources said he was unlikely to get a BJP ticket from Tezpur for the Lok Sabha polls. Sarmah said other senior leaders of the party will meet a similar fate: "Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who is like a brother to me, will also meet a similar fate one day." *–Our Political Bureau*

NZ Mosque Attack Suspect Charged With Murder

Christchurch: A right-wing extremist flashed a white power gesture as he faced the first of many murder charges in a New Zealand court Saturday, while a shell-shocked community dug graves for 49 mosque-goers he stands accused of slaying. Australia-born, 28-year-old Brenton Tarrant stood largely impassive in the dock wearing handcuffs and a white prison smock, as the judge read the first of what are expected to be a host of murder charges that could mean he dies in jail. Flanked by armed police, the former personal fitness trainer gestured an upside-down "okay", a symbol used by white power groups worldwide.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern arrived in the city and, wearing a black headscarf, met with survivors and victims' families. Ardern said the victims came from across the Muslim world. She said gun laws would change in the country as her government announced it will ban semi-automatic rifles in the wake of the Christchurch terror attack that left 49 people dead. The attacks on the Al Noor and Linwood mosques have prompted an outpouring of grief and deep shock from across the world. At an old gravesite, excavators were called in to remove the vast amount of earth needed to bury the dead, although police have not yet been able to release the bodies to anxious families.

–AFP

How Long Will China Save Azhar?

Come October, China will have the chance to redeem itself in the world's eyes as chair of Financial Action Task Force



Protesters carry a picture of Azhar in Mumbai on February 15, a day after the Pulwama attack

:: Indrani Bagchi

It was close to midnight, but the very fact that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) responded within minutes to China blocking Masood Azhar's ban at the UN Security Council's 1267 Committee showed that the news was greeted with very little surprise in India.

This was China's fourth "block" on a proposal to ban Jaish-e-Mohammed's chief. China opposed the move in 2009, and has consistently done so. Incidentally, China's "technical" hold barely has ground to stand on since there is no such term in the UNSC. But the script, as it stands now, is this – in six months, the Azhar file will be resurrected and China has an opportunity to keep the "hold" for another three months, or lift it. In another nine months, China can let it through or block it, as they have done before.

China defended its actions with bland words that cut no ice anywhere. "China conducts thorough and in-depth assessment of these applications and we still need more time, so that is why we put forward the technical hold," its foreign ministry said. "Only a solution that is acceptable to all sides could fundamentally provide a chance for a lasting solution to the issue. China is ready to communicate and coordinate with all sides including India to properly handle this issue." What does Masood Azhar, or his Pakistan ISI handlers, have on China? Why is China, the world's putative superpower, expending diplomatic capital to keep a known terror leader out of the banned list, and its international reputation of being soft on Pakistani Islamist terror intact?

Theories abound. The China-Pakistan relationship is very deep, Pakistan being China's only real ally at present – even Kim Jong Un is showing distressing signs of independence. China does not want to let Pakistan down, not when there is intense international pressure on Islamabad-Rawalpindi to roll back its terror infrastructure.

Every time the Azhar issue comes up, China has no option but to bat for Pakistan, even at the risk of being seen as soft on terror, or worse, that Masood Azhar is a Chinese asset as much as a Pakistani one.

There are reports that say China has made a deal with terror groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed to keep their activities away from the restive Xinjiang province, which would light up like a powder keg with just a sniff of terror.

The reasoning goes that China would rather JeM and Azhar direct their operations against these two countries rather than China. With China now joined at the hip, literally, with Pakistan through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, JeM could wreak havoc on Chinese people, workers and projects on Xi Jinping's flagship project. China may be afraid of that.

But let's be clear, China keeps India off-kilter by Pakistan and its terror proxies. It is low-cost, high returns. What's not to like? Nevertheless, anyone familiar with Terrorism 101 would know that China's approach is unsustainable. You can only bribe your way out of terror for so long.

In 2007, it was Chinese pressure that compelled Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf to act against Abdul Rashid Ghazi and his goons in the Lal Masjid operation. That botched enterprise was ironically the trigger for the creation of the TTP – "bad" Taliban that turned on the Pakistani state. JeM allied with those groups and spent a few years in the ISI doghouse. The Jaish has clawed back into their good books and is now the preferred "sword-arm" against India and Afghanistan. LeT, ISI's other favourite, became damaged goods after 26/11 – at this moment, the ISI wants to mainstream LeT into a political party. Hafiz Saeed even applied to the UN to lift his terror tag.

Meanwhile, Azhar is merely a symbol – a UNSC ban on him will have little effect. Hafiz Saeed has been running tame in Pakistan for years wearing a UNSC ban like a badge of honour. The real game should be to roll up the Pakistan Army-ISI's terror infrastructure, because the groups are merely tools by which they conduct jihad as foreign policy.

The UNSC has no power to enforce any such thing on Pakistan. The only multilateral organisation that does is the FATF (Financial Action Task Force). FATF's actions are not only enforceable, but the international financial system will treat a country like an outcast if it is on the infamous black list.

Pakistan is currently on the grey list, which means there is much greater scrutiny on its financial system. Pakistan has been given a list of 27 actions to be completed by October 2019, if it wants to avoid the black list. It could have gotten out of the grey list in February, by taking five specific actions. It did not. By October, China will become the next president of the FATF – as a result of a deal with India and the US, where China agreed to put Pakistan on the grey list in return for Indian and US support for its candidature. Pakistan must believe that China will save it from the black list after October.

Both India and US and the rest of the world have a chance to get China to do the right thing at the FATF. Therefore, the Indian government has agreed to cut China some slack on Azhar. Will it work? ■

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ELITE GROOMS

Pune based Businessman, 29, 6ft, Mali. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match. Contact: 8939677764

Ahmedabad based Businessman, 32, 5ft 11", Nagar Brahmin/Gujarati. MBA. Father is a Businessman. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from the same community. Contact: 8690466155

Mumbai based Chartered Accountant, 28, 5ft 3", Gaud Saraswat Brahmin. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a compatible and well educated match from any community in India. Contact: 9324864361

California based Scientist, 27, 6ft 2", Rajput/Singh. Father is a Senior Government Officer. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from same community in India. Contact: 9883624342

UK based Chief Technology Officer, 31, 6ft 2", Mudaliyar. Aerospace Designing and Astronautics Graduate. Father is a retired Businessman. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match. Contact: 9344134621

Hyderabad based Businessman, 34, 5ft 7", Brahmin. MBA from a premier Institute. Family has a net worth of several Crores. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from Brahmin community in India/USA. Contact: 9392149193

ELITE BRIDES

Delhi based Management Professional, 29, 5ft 3", Khatri. Masters from UK. Father is a working Professional. Family is financially well off with a net worth in Crores. Looking for a compatible and well educated match in India/Abroad. Contact: 7428751516

Mumbai based Entrepreneur, 28, 5ft 5", Brahmin. Graduate. Father is an IAS Officer. Family is financially well off. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match. Contact: 9375968850

Mumbai based Entrepreneur, 26, 5ft 4", Gujarati/Vaishnav/Baniya. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from Gujarati/Marwari community in India. Contact: 8939677756

Mumbai based Account Manager, 30, 5ft 5", Bhandari. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible and well educated match in India. Contact: 9324864361

Delhi based Management Professional, 30, 5ft 3", Gupta/Baniya. PGDM from Hyderabad. Family is into Business. Looking for a compatible and well educated match (caste no bar). Contact: 7428751516

USA based Consultant, 27, 5ft 1", Maheshwari. Family is into Business with a good net worth. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from any Hindu community in USA/UK. Contact: 9310867897



Faridabad based Doctor, 27, 6ft 2", Agarwal. MBBS/pursuing MD. Family is financially well off with a net worth in Crores. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from any Hindu community in India/Abroad. Contact: 9312092381

Kolkata based Doctor, 25, 5ft 4", Kayastha/Ray. Father is a Rheumatologist and Mother is an Ophthalmologist. Family is financially well off. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from any community in India. Contact: 7092344555

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Gender Wise

The decision taken by Naveen Patnaik and Mamata Banerjee to field women in at least a third of the Lok Sabha seats in their states moves the needle on gender parity but is also politically expedient

:: **G Seetharaman & Madhuparna Das** | Mumbai & Kolkata

The 2014 general elections saw the largest-ever number of women being sent to the Lok Sabha – 62. But women still accounted for just 11% of the winners, and 48% of the electorate, according to the Election Commission of India. That is why the announcements by two political parties to field more women in the Lok Sabha elections are significant.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) chief and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said on March 10 the party would field women in seven of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The party had just two women in the fray in 2014. Two days later, his West Bengal counterpart and president of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) Mamata Banerjee revealed the names of the party's candidates for the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The list had 17 women. In 2014, there were 12 women candidates from the party. "Everyone is talking about 33% reservation for women. 41% of our candidates are women," Banerjee said.

Naveen Patnaik and Mamata Banerjee have shown a reservation bill is not required to give women more electoral space

Congress President Rahul Gandhi also recently promised to reserve 33% government jobs for women and pass the Women's Reservation Bill that promises 33% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, if the party was voted to power. The Women's Reservation Bill, which also seeks to reserve seats for women in the state legislatures, was passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010, but was not taken up in the Lok Sabha. It lapsed in 2014.

Now, there are 66 women in the Lok Sabha, out of 543 elected members (two are nominated). India ranks 149th in the world in women's representation in the lower house, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

While the BJD and TMC deserve credit for pushing the cause of gender parity in electoral politics, observers say these parties might not have fielded more women candidates if there was no political dividend. With general elections to be held in seven phases between April 11 and May 19 (results on May 23), parties would look to gain brownie points, they say.

Pratap Deb, a BJD member of the Rajya Sabha, says Patnaik's decision is a culmination of the state's initiatives to empower women, including giving financial assistance to pregnant women and raising the reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions from 33% to 50%. "Elections are not just about taking a stand, but also about winning."

Rabi Das, a senior journalist in Bhubaneswar, says this will consolidate the popularity of Patnaik – India's second longest-serving incumbent chief minister – among women. "Naveen has forced other parties to think of women candidates." State Congress chief Niranjan Patnaik also said the party would give more tickets to women this time. Besides bolstering support for Patnaik among women, this move could also help Patnaik replace unpopular MPs, Das adds.

According to a survey conducted by Lokniti after the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, 47% of the women in Odisha voted for BJD, compared with 41% of the men. The party bagged 20 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats. Both its women candidates won. Later that year, after the death of one of its male MPs, his wife Pratyusha Rajeshwari Singh contested the by-election and won.

The opposition, however, has questioned Patnaik's decision. Kanak Vardhan Deo, a state BJP leader, asks why Patnaik did not extend this policy to the assembly election, too, which will happen concurrently with the general elections. But BJD's Deb says the party should be appreciated for being the first to make such a commitment. None of the BJD's three women Lok Sabha MPs – Sakuntala Laguri, Rita Tarai and Pratyusha Rajeshwari Singh – was available for comment.

Around 9% of the candidates in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in Odisha were women – 17 of 196 candidates – higher than the national average of 8% (668 of 8,251). West Bengal scored even higher, at 11%, or 51 of 472.While the TMC had 12 women candidates, the CPI(M) had seven, the Congress six and the BJP just one. More impressive than the number of women candidates in West Bengal is the number of women MPs. Women emerged victorious in 12 of the 42 seats, or 29%, the highest percentage among all states.

Among the TMC candidates this time are actors Mimi Chakraborty and Nusrat Jahan; schoolteacher Birbaha Soren; and Rupali Biswas, the wife of a Trinamool MLA who was shot dead last month. Banerjee probably hopes a sympathy wave will see Biswas through. Also on the list of candidates are incumbent MPs Moon Moon Sen and Satabdi Roy and MLA Mahua Moitra. With more than a third of her candidates being women, Banerjee intends to be seen as a champion of women's participation in electoral politics. MLA Moitra says: "The BJP, despite mentioning it in their manifesto, could not pass the Women's Reservation Bill. But Mamata Banerjee has shown that if you want to do some good, you do not need a bill." There have been attempts to pass the bill since 1996 and the next government is also likely to take it up. But even if there is no law, it would be a welcome trend if more party chiefs emulated Patnaik and Banerjee. ■

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Status Check
2014 Lok Sabha elections

Parties with most women contestants



How women fared in the general elections

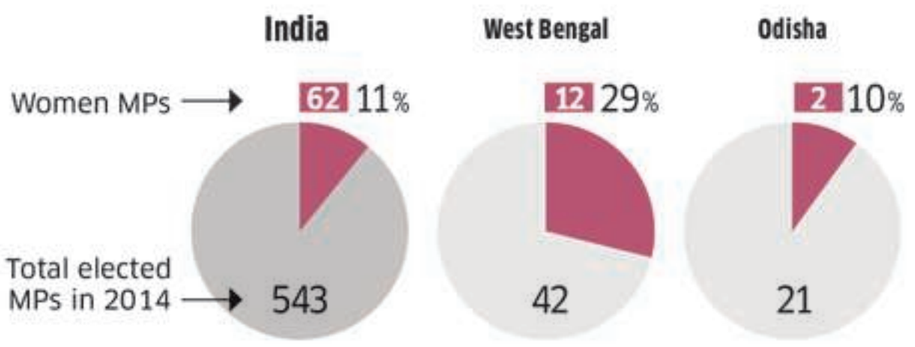


Source: Datanet India, electionsinindia.com

One in 10 Lok Sabha candidates in West Bengal and Odisha was a woman



Share of women victors



Source: Election Commission of India

Chaiwallah to Chowkidar



Narendra Modi becomes accommodating of allies, raises the bar for his party and defangs Rahul Gandhi's jibe with "Main Bhi Chowkidar" campaign. What do the first moves in 2019 elections signal?

:: Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay

Reinvention of Modi

Paradoxical though it may sound, the idea of "Naya" or "New" is sweeping India and Pakistan amid a resurgence of the old narrative of mutual suspicion. Two years after he unveiled the idea of New India, are we also seeing the first signs of a "new" Prime Minister Narendra Modi? This question rises from the spirit of accommodation which has been the basis of sealing electoral alliances with troublesome partners. In absolute contrast to 2014, when Modi believed that existing, one-time and potential allies would accept the BJP's terms and conditions because they stood to gain, this time Modi and party president, Amit Shah, have shown a large heart, ceding seats in Bihar, accepting incessant derision from Shiv Sena's leaders and willing to "sit down" with minor partner, Apna Dal, to decide the second seat for the ally.

In every pact the BJP has clinched, a more amiable face has been evident. This "newness" is indicative of a confident Modi who does not feel the need to play the game of one-upmanship any longer, the way he did with Nitish Kumar when he hoisted the Bihar chief minister's hand for that infamous picture. Certainly, the BJP has taken one step backward while refurbishing the National Democratic Alliance. This will enable Modi to take two steps forward in a post-poll scenario if the BJP's tally does not match its 2014 performance and he is forced to get more partners on board. Is it because of this possibility that we are witnessing early signs of a reinvention of Modi, a Naya Vajpayee or Flexipurush?

Vadakkan & Defection

Defections are part and parcel of polls and there are several reasons why these happen on election eve. For starters, once elections are called, lawmakers who change sides do not lose retirement benefits as parties rarely seek their disqualification. For instance, Savitri Bai Phoole, BJP MP from Bahraich, quit the party and is now a Congress nominee. She officially remains a BJP MP; the seat is not among 22 vacant Lok Sabha constituencies. Similarly, Saumitra Khan, the West Bengal legislator from Trinamool Congress who joined BJP in January, remains a Lok Sabha member. Another reason is denial of party ticket. Case in point: Arjun Singh, Trinamool MLA from North 24 Parganas, who joined BJP. Parties encourage defectors based on calculations of what the turncoat brings along, a social base or an embarrassment for the rival.

Tom Vadakkan, for instance, has seemingly been assured of a BJP nomination from Thrissur in Kerala, the seat he desired to contest but was rebuffed for long. With little political base, he brings nothing but personal ambition to the BJP. Yet, BJP sees several headlines and a wider political message in his defection – if personal aides of the Congress leadership are joining the saffron party, things must really be going its way. There are less high-profile defections too, for instance to BJP from BSP in UP, which have subterranean impact. A star defector has yet to appear, although speculations were rife on whether Sheila Dikshit would cross over after declaring Modi was stronger than Manmohan Singh on terror. There is still time for defections.



400 Ke Paar, Raising the Bar

Is Narendra Modi the Sergey Bubka of Indian politics? Audacious, though, this may seem, the analogy is inescapable if one compares how Modi raises the bar for himself and the party to the Ukrainian pole-vaulter who represented the Soviet Union and broke the world record for men's pole vault 35 times, including his own record 14 times. In 2014, when Mission 272 was announced, it appeared the then Gujarat CM was biting more than he could chew. But he astounded admirers and critics alike. Subsequently, in one state election after another – save for a couple of embarrassments in Delhi and Bihar – Modi encouraged colleagues to aim for the sky. This time is no different. "Abki Baar 400 Ke Paar" is as much a claim to outrage opponents as it is a slogan to galvanise cadre and spell an objective. It is not just a national target; in states, too, different goals are being set and satraps encouraged to do one better. Most daringly, the bar has been raised in 80-seat Uttar Pradesh where Yogi Adityanath has set a target of "Abki Baar, 74 Ke Paar". The ploy may not work, but the BJP has raised the bar for itself one more time, unlike Congress president, Rahul Gandhi, who announced he was simultaneously preparing for 2022.

Too Late for Hardik Patel, Too Little for Congress

After the drubbing in Bihar in 2015, the closest that Modi came to receiving a jolt was in Gujarat in December 2017. History possibly will record this as Rahul Gandhi's finest moment when he came closest to dislodging Modi from his citadel. Ending up with a tally which was lower than the three-digit mark that had become BJP's normal in the state, the prime minister knew he had had a close shave. Modi managed to save face mainly because the X-factor in that election, Hardik Patel, did not have as much value in the election equation. Since then, the former firebrand has found it tough to retain support. Crowds dwindled and popularity sagged, the last straw possibly being the 10% reservation for the EWS. In this period, the BJP has also been slowly chipping away at the Congress and by now has weaned away five Congress MLAs, getting them to quit both party and the state assembly with the promise of re-nomination in the ensuing by-election. Yet another Congress legislator has been disqualified from the House following conviction in an illegal mine case. Hardik Patel's entry into the Congress in this backdrop may well end up being too late for him and too little for the Congress to bolster its fortunes.





Chor versus Chowkidar

Exactly at 9 am on March 16, Modi tweeted a video, launching the campaign "Main Bhi Chowkidar" (I'm a Watchman Too) and effectively defanged Rahul Gandhi's "Chowkidar Chor Hai" campaign. Smart politics and ace campaign – yet another evidence of how Modi faces challenges or accusations head on. By saying common citizens too are watchmen, Modi again positions himself with the lowest common denominator. In 2014, the "chaiwallah" jibe was greatly responsible for his mandate. This time, it may well be by appropriating the slogan that Gandhi thought he could floor Modi with. ■

The writer is a political commentator

Polls Apart

With next general elections starting next month, *ET Magazine* parses data from the 2014 Lok Sabha elections to bring you interesting snippets on the number of voters, candidates and size of constituencies

Voter Watch

In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the number of voters an MP represented between 31,83,083 and 49,922

Total Electors: 83,40,82,814

Highest

Rank	Constituency	State	Electors
1	Malkajgiri	Telangana	**31,83,083**
2	Bangalore North	Karnataka	**24,01,472**
3	Ghaziabad	Uttar Pradesh	**23,57,553**
4	North West Delhi	Delhi	**21,94,343**
5	Bangalore Rural	Karnataka	**21,90,398**

Lowest

Rank	Constituency	State	Electors
1	Lakshadweep	Lakshadweep	49,922
2	Daman & Diu	Daman & Diu	1,11,827
3	Ladakh	Jammu & Kashmir	1,66,763
4	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1,96,597
5	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	2,69,360

Candidate Watch

Voters in two seats had 42 candidates to choose from, while some constituencies had only a handful of candidates

Total Candidates: 8,251

HIGHEST

- **Chennai South** (Tamil Nadu) — 42
- **Varanasi** (Uttar Pradesh) — 42
- **Hisar** (Haryana) — 41
- **Chennai North** (Tamil Nadu) — 40
- **Beed** (Maharashtra) — 39

LOWEST

- **Tura** (Meghalaya) — 2
- **Arunachal East** (Arunachal Pradesh) — 3
- **Mizoram** (Mizoram) — 3
- **Nagaland** (Nagaland) — 3
- **Daman & Diu** (Daman & Diu) — 4

Polling Population

Voter turnout in the 2014 general elections ranged between 88.36% and 25.86%

Overall Turnout (%): 66.44

HIGHEST

	Turnout (%)
Dhubri	88.36
Nagaland	87.91
Tamluk	87.63
Bishnupur	86.72
Kanthi	86.71

LOWEST

	Turnout (%)
Srinagar	25.86
Anantnag	28.84
Baramulla	39.14
Kalyan	42.94
Patna Sahib	45.36



Women in Poll Battles (1957-2014)

While there are more women contestants now, winning percentage has been falling

Year	Women candidates	Elected candidates	% of candidates who won	% of women MPs
1957	**45**	22	48.9	**4.45**
1962	**66**	31	47.0	**6.27**
1967	**67**	29	43.3	**5.57**
1971	**86**	21	24.4	**4.05**
1977	**70**	19	27.1	**3.50**
1980	**143**	28	19.6	**5.29**
1984-85	**171**	43	25.1	**7.94**
1989	**198**	29	14.6	**5.48**
1991-92	**330**	39	11.8	**7.11**
1996	**599**	40	6.7	**7.36**
1998	**274**	43	15.7	**7.91**
1999	**284**	49	17.3	**9.02**
2004	**355**	45	12.7	**8.29**
2009	**556**	59	10.6	**10.86**
2014	**668**	62	9.3	**11.42**

Source : Datanet India | ElectionsinIndia.com

On Friday, We Lost Our Innocence

The Christchurch terrorist attack has irrevocably changed and scarred New Zealand. Auckland-based writer and artist Lipika Sen says this is the time, if ever there was one, to annihilate racism and prejudice in everyday Kiwi lives

Home alone on Friday, March 15, the day that would change everything, I found myself melting into a heap of baffled grief in front of TV1, New Zealand's national news channel. How could this be? How could a man walk into the mosques in Christchurch, shoot randomly and kill 49 of our people?

One is conditioned to bad news on TV but not in our laid-back slice of paradise. Why, just the other day, a couple of anchors spent a good quarter of an hour of prime time debating the merits of splatting someone's face – baby, cat or colleague – with a slice of cheese, some silliness picked up from social media. That triviality of another evening suddenly felt strangely reassuring. It is also a chilling reminder of what really should have been picked up from social media posts by the New Zealand intelligence – the lurking threat that was planning to rip right through the heart of our beautiful bubble.

Yet, today what would I not give to turn back time – to go back to cat videos or the genial weatherman and his gushing promise of sunny weekends, or the unsuspecting sweet old lady, crying in disbelief, while being awarded 10,000 dollars, in acknowledgement of her selfless services to the community.

For this should have stayed an innocent Friday – with friends on the deck, the BBQ fired up, a beer chilling, a chorus of cicadas in the backyard and all that one savours in the land of "Sweet as, Bro". This should have stayed an innocent Friday for those going to offer their special jumma prayers at the local mosques, like every Friday. Like every Friday, a son was to meet his parents for lunch after prayers, perhaps a five-year-old was to join friends in the park, perhaps there were friends and family who were to catch up over a potluck. This should have stayed an innocent Friday. Except, it didn't.

In a calculated act of devastating carnage, he caught innocent men, women and children unawares, mid-stance, on their way and in the midst of their prayers, subjecting them to his point-blank ruthless bullets. Again and again and again. Not in one, but two mosques, leaving behind a trail of limp bodies, blood and anguish, with the callous glee of a gamer, broadcasting the horror live on social media, along with an alleged manifesto that spews extreme racism and terror.

"This is not who we are," said New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. Yes, Jacinda, this is *not* who we are. Even our policemen don't carry firearms on a normal day (Bless them for catching the perpetrators before they caused further harm). We don't spend billions buying weapons. We have access to subsidised, quality health care and education. We are committed to staying nuclear free. Our children were protesting climate change on the streets, just minutes before the massacre. We welcome and celebrate our diverse, migrant population.

And, yet, in a sudden turn of fate, at this ominous moment, on this wretched day, realisation strikes in a dramatic "before and after" that we too have been infected. The dreaded words are written large on the screen for the first time in our history and the heart breaks to hear our young PM acknowledge and utter them: "This can only be described as an act of terrorism." And just like that, in a matter of seconds, we lose our innocence.

And with that follow the consequences. For the first time since I've called New Zealand home about 17 years ago, our security levels have been heightened to a "high" from the usual "low", a cricket match with Bangladesh has been cancelled and flights couldn't fly out of Christchurch because the airport was not equipped with the sudden requirement for high-security baggage clearance facilities. From a peaceful, outdoorsy, rugby-loving, cricket-loving, wine-loving, earnest, inclusive people, we suddenly have to look out for perpetrators at large. "New Zealand's darkest day", indeed. One can only see a shimmer of light and hope in the love and support that has flowed in for those directly affected by the tragedy, from Kiwis across the country, hurt and stumped, witnessing so much hate directed towards fellow Kiwis.

On my Facebook feed, friends and art organisations wrote:

"Let's stand up for the world we want to give our children, a world in which we respect others, embrace our differences and where care for the environment is the norm."

"The whanau at Corban Estate Arts Centre are heartbroken over yesterday's atrocious act of violence and hate. Our diverse community includes many migrant and refugee organisations and people of many faiths and we value how these relationships enrich our lives."

While coping with our collective grief, perhaps it's time for a reality check. As a Kiwi of Indian origin, with friends from every race, religion and colour, one knows all too well terrorists do not belong to any. However, let our loss of innocence steer us towards confronting the truth. Our PM has promised a change in gun laws that proposes to ban all semi-automatics. As individuals, if ever there was a time to annihilate the tiniest hints and nuances of racism or prejudice that simmer under the surface among us, it would be now. Let's stop ourselves and our friends from voicing opinions and enjoying seemingly harmless jokes that perpetuate clichés about race, religion or community. Because every time we alienise a community, through thoughts, opinions or actions, we unwittingly contribute to the rhetoric that leads to such atrocities.

Arohanui New Zealand. Stay strong and stay safe. ■


1



2

1. Mourners pay their respects at a makeshift memorial near the Masjid Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand; **2.** A sign is seen after Friday's mosque attacks outside a community centre near Masjid Al Noor; **3.** New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

"This is not who we are," said New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern about the Christchurch terrorist attack


3

Bed, Breakfast & App

Students and young professionals are escaping temperamental landlords and taking refuge in co-living spaces – the modern and glamorous cousin of the PG digs of the past

:: Rahul Sachitanand

Tavarakere is something of a mecca for millenials working across Bengaluru, who need a cheap place to live. The locality, in the south east of the city, is a warren of narrow, congested roads, with apartment buildings standing cheek by jowl with budget restaurants, grocery stores, salons and realtors' offices.

At 8 pm on a warm Thursday, working executives and students stroll about grabbing a bite from a corner kebab store, headed to a dive bar for a beer or bought eggs for breakfast the next day. On the streets, residents buzz about amidst the waft of deep fried food and fresh fruit being sold off hand carts.

The locality is a hub of millennial executives and students, being close to Christ University, a large education institute, and under half an hour from Electronic City, home to the campuses of Infosys and other marquee names in tech. The startup hubs of Koramangala, HSR Layout and Bellandur are also close by.

At nightfall, they will all cram into rooms in one of 500 hostels and paying guest accommodation that cram the neighbourhood. Most of these places offer residents a room and sometimes food, charging upwards of ₹3,000 per bed per month.

Young professionals and students are at the mercy of owners and agents, who decide amongst themselves who gets in and who's banned. Rules are arbitrary and often over-bearing for young adults [curfews, no friends or family, vegetarian fare only], making the experience of house hunting for these millennials one long-drawn nightmare.

Bengaluru landlords typically demand 10 months' rent as deposit, for example, and that's a heavy burden for someone starting out in their careers while living away from home. It is into this mess of arbitrary demands, unkept promises and all-around disarray that a glamorous cousin of hostels and PGs has checked in– the co-living space. A number of hospitality companies are now expanding in this market, offering clean and comfortable dwellings and hygienic food, clear policies and pricing, on-demand services through apps, and a collegiate atmosphere with group activities, performances and that ultimate marker of casual, cheerful spaces–foosball.

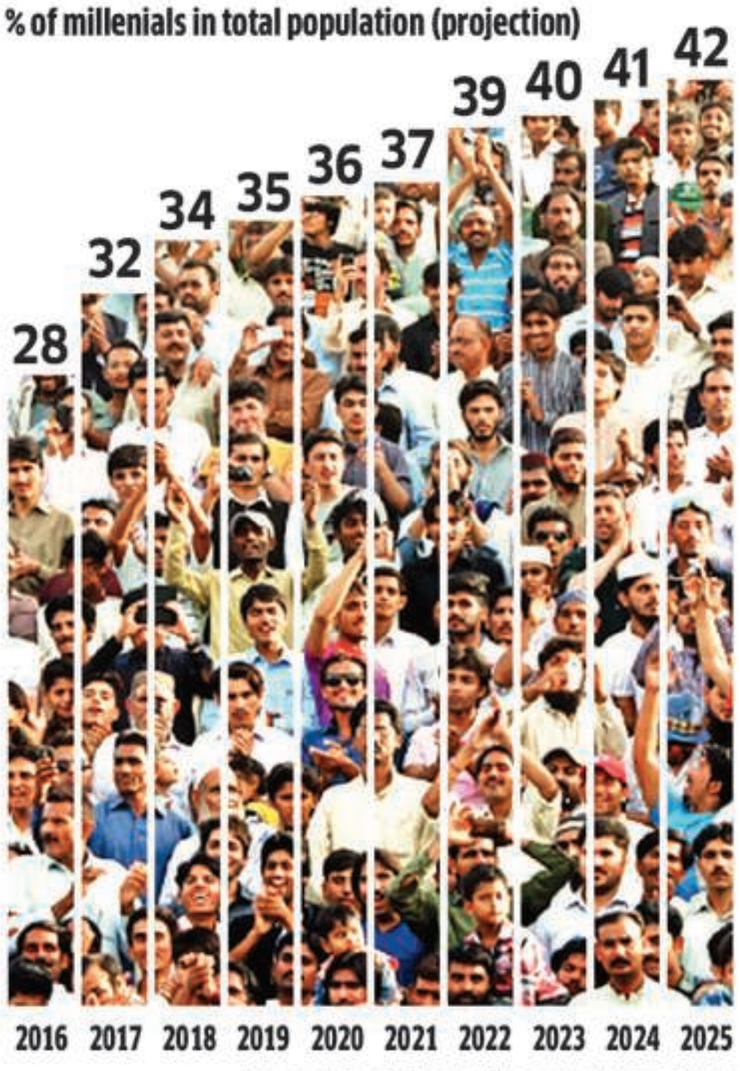
If co-working has taken the world of work by storm, the

TL;DR

- **A raft of startups are recasting the unorganised space for shared living**
- Beyond a bed, they aim to build a more social residence for young residents
- **Large investors and real estate firms are also eyeing a piece of the pie**
- Large rivals including We Live and Oyo are muscling in too

Targeting millennials

% of millenials in total population (projection)



Source: Morgan Stanley Research & Knight Frank

ASHWANI NAGPAL



Stanza Living

Beds: **2,000**

Cities: NCR & Bengaluru

Investors: Sequoia Capital, Matrix Partners & Accel Partners

Expansion: **Adding 3,000 beds this year**



"We want to build a hospitality-led business in the premium student accommodation market"

Anindya Dutta, Cofounder



Co-living spaces **20% costlier** than old-school paying guest accommodations and hostels

New co-living spaces in huge demand, with **occupancy at over 80%**

Interstate migration rate doubled to 4.5% in 2001-2011 compared to previous decade

Workforce in India likely to increase to 600 million by 2022, compared to 473 million in 2018

Between 2013-14 and 2017-18, number of new colleges rose by **25% triggering a rush for student accommodation**

belief seems, co-living could well be the next big trend for young professionals and students.

Plug & Play Stay

Zolo Stays, one of India's largest providers of co-living accommodation, is trying to stand out in the Tavarkere din. There are at least 20 to 25 accommodation options on the road where Zolo Destiny, one of the firm's units, is located. This five-floor building, a new unisex property, has 200 beds. Current occupancy is 50%. The average Zolo property has 160 beds and the smallest units have 50.

Company executives say another 20% of capacity at Zolo Destiny will be filled in weeks. This is a premium offering, with foosball, table tennis, carroms and a gym, with an indoor cricket pitch being laid to coincide with the start of the latest edition of the Indian Premier League tournament.

Inside, each flat comes with a refrigerator, kitchenette and basic utensils. There's a kitchen on premises and menus are constantly tweaked based on resident feedback. "We have premiumised the previously unorganised market and are streets ahead of the competition," Nikhil Sikri, Zolo's CEO and co-founder, said. Two months from now, the company will also launch a community product to give residents more reasons to hang out together and a one-stop platform to socialise.

I was so troubled by the fact that I didn't know my mind [whether to enter politics or not in 1999], I just disappeared and went for 10 days of rather than what other people want

At Zolo Destiny, Anshuman Jayant, 22, does a quick jig after scoring a goal at the foosball table. He moved into this property with six of his BITS Pilani classmates nine months ago and loves the plug and play environment. For Jayant, who works at a startup 20 minutes away, this building works well. They initially took the usual route, hunting for a shared apartments or a PG, but found this far more convenient, given their crazy work days.

"Everything here--from booking the room to paying for it and add-on services–are done on the app. So it frees us from the typical headaches of fixing utilities, finding help and housekeeping," he says.

Viral Chhajer, the co-founder of Stay Abode, another co-living player, is putting the final touches to a 1,400 bed in the tech hub of Whitefield. This will more than double the firm's 1,200-bed capacity. "We want to focus on building a community and give them a place like home," he says.

Across Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and even in the education hub of Kota, such co-living ventures are taking root. For instance, Hyderabad, with some 400,000 new seats being built out in the outsourcing space, could easily evolve into India's co-living hub.

For students who arrive in a new city, these facilities are emerging as top options.

Eighteen months ago, Gunjan Bansal arrived in Delhi from her hometown of Chandigarh to start her Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) from Shri Ram College of Commerce. As a newcomer to the city, she did the usual rounds of hostels and PGs, but found little to her liking.

"This is a much more social experience for someone who is new to a big city," the 19-year old says. "As a social person, the group activities, including movie nights, music and bonfires are all welcome distractions from classes and course work."

Bansal has had a good first year at a five-floor facility run by Stanza, rather modestly named Los Angeles. Her roommate is a fellow-Chandigarh resident, now a friend, and she has also made other friends at the place. The location, close to Delhi University, means her commute is just five minutes.

In cities hustling with entry-level coders and educations hubs such as Delhi and Pune, there's something of a co-living boom afoot.

Beyond adding a layer of technology to ease service delivery, these players also focus on the experience, nudging

DEEPAK G PAWAR



Zolo Stays

Beds: **20,000**

Cities: **7**

Investors: IDFC Alternatives, Mirae & Nexus Venture

Expansion: **50,000 rooms by 2020**



"We have premiumised the previously unorganised market and are streets ahead of the competition"

Nikhil Sikri, CEO & cofounder

How costs stack up

Koramangala, Bengaluru

Rent for fully furnished flat (125-165 sq ft)	₹27,000-35,000
PG- single occupancy (160-170 sq ft)	₹13,500-14,000
Service apartment (120-150 sq ft)	₹75,000-106,000
Co-living (120-170 sq ft)	₹12,000-17,000

Source: Knight Frank



ASHWANI NAGPAL



CoHo

Beds: **3,000**

Cities: NCR & Bengaluru

Investors: Angel investors including serial entrepreneur Sachin Bhatia

Expansion: **Hyderabad and several other cities**

"This is a consumer lifestyle business, not a real estate of technology"

Uday Lakkar, Founder & CEO

(Left) Amber Sajid, COO

residents to socialise rather than retreat quickly to their rooms after they return from work or college.

If these residents earlier spent extra hours at work--thanks to free aircon and broadband--over dodgy PG digs, that trend is reversing. "This accommodation is much more comfortable and service more reliable than old-world options," says Kanieka Dhupar, an executive with a public relations firm, who lives at a Coho property in Gurgaon. "It is minutes away from a large market and the metro, making it much safer for women."

Safety for women residents is a big reason for them to opt for residences such as CoHo, which offer security all-around-the-clock, biometric access control and accessible locations. "I looked at many places, but for someone new to the city, this offered a soft landing and a clean, hygienic accommodation option," says Tanvi Vyas from Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh.

Besides more vibrant common areas, these companies are organising events, tying up with brands to offer discounts and promotion to residents and offering adjacent services [think CV writing for final year students] to keep them engaged.

Today, the overall market share of rental housing in India can be anywhere between 35-45% of the total residential market, according to estimates from real estate consultants.

This share of rentals is increasing, especially rapidly in urban areas, which account for more than two-thirds of the rental market. In the 2011 census, 28% of respondents said they were renters, but experts think that number has spiked sharply in the past few years.

According to IMF's last estimate in 2016, India's residential rental market was estimated to be a more than $20 billion market comprising of $13.5 billion in urban areas, $0.8 billion in rural areas, and $5.7 billion of vacant properties held by non-resident Indians living abroad

If the opportunity appears massive, bringing some of this into the co-living market is harder than it appears. While old school PGs are upping their game [yay, free wifi] to cling on to market share, newer players have the additional burden of finding either several floors in a building or an entire complex to suit their needs.

Industry executives say doing this is difficult. Existing three and four bedroom flats are mostly rigged for family living [puja rooms, servants quarters], which offer little to companies building co-living spaces. Instead, these companies are pushing real estate companies to increasingly construct custom facilities for them.

It's not as if everyone's happy, however. While some of them offer seemingly prime places [Zolo has an infinity pool in one Bengaluru property], some residences can be rather bare. Several students told *ET Magazine* that they discovered how poor their room looks only once they landed up and had to change rooms and bookings twice or more before settling down.

Elsewhere, 22-year old Jaya Purwar, a Zolo resident, complains that some old rules die hard--friends and family aren't allowed to stay late or stay over, despite her facility being unisex.

While many co-living players got off the ground a couple of years ago, they seem to have hit critical mass only now, netting funding to back ambitious expansion plans and recast singles accommodation nationwide.

"This is a consumer lifestyle business, not a real estate or technology one," says Uday Lakkar, co-founder and CEO of CoHo, a co-living provider with 3,000 beds operational and thousands more in the works.

Market Ripe for Biggies

As millenials look beyond staid co-living places, the newcomers to this market have their work cut out. The devil may be in the detail. For example, at Co Live, standard iron beds have been replaced by customised ones and low-cost, cotton-stuffed mattresses with pricier options.

"For our target group, style is an important factor when they consider a place to live," contends Suresh Rangarajan, CEO and co-founder of the venture. "To friends and family, they want to appear style-conscious."

Co Live is spending time and money sprucing up its premises with modern furnishings, fitness and games rooms and has started rolling out facial recognition access to properties. By standardising these offerings and aggressively using technology, Co Live plans to have 100,000 beds operational in three years.

Stanza, which focusses on the student population, on the other hand, has tweaked its offering focused on its core demographic. Backed by marquee investors such as Sequoia and Accel, this co-living services provider runs an initiative called Stanza Social [think games night] and Springboard where residents are offered career-focused services including CV writing and app building.

Having helped fund, grow and sell a co-living venture in the UK and Europe, for around a billion dollars, co-founder Anindya Dutta now wants to do an encore in India. "We want to build a hospitality-led business in the premium student accommodation market," he says.

Stoked by the size of the opportunity, the biggies are now coming into this space. Over the past few months, SoftBank-backed global co-working major WeWork has been piloting its WeLive unit in India, tying up with real estate firm Embassy Group. OYO, the hospitality platform valued at $5 billion, waded into the market with 2,000 beds across five cities, with plans to hit 50,000 beds by the end of the year.

Hotel chain LemonTree has tied up with private equity giant Warburg Pincus for a co-living foray too. New age co-living providers say that they are being inundated by interest from large realtors who are looking to get a piece of this pie, too.

Industry executives say the inflection point for this industry may now be around the corner. "By 2022, we largely believe the word co-living will replace phrases such as hostels and PGs in common usage," says Rangarajan, CEO of Co Live. ■

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Co Live

Beds: **11,000**

Cities: **3**

Investor: Ncubate Capital

Expansion: **25,000 beds by March end**



"By 2022, we largely believe the word co-living will replace phrases such as hostels and PGs in common usage"

Suresh Rangarajan, CEO & cofounder



We want to focus on building a community and give people a place like home

Viral Chhajer, Cofounder



Stay Abode

Beds: **1,200**

Cities: Bengaluru

Investors: Anupam Mittal and others

Expansion: **Another 1,400 bed unit in Bengaluru & foraying into Hyderabad**

Growth potential

Current size $120 million

Forecast for 2022 $2.2 billion

Source: RedSeer

BEING A VIP

India's largest luggage maker is at the cusp of change, with Radhika Piramal at the centre of the transition

:: Suman Layak

Change is in the air at India's largest luggage company VIP Industries, and the mood is palpable at the headquarters in central Mumbai. Located on the top floor of a building in Prabhadevi, the office sports an open architecture and is in itself a contrast to the rest of the building's old world look. The youthful decor has Bollywood stars posters endorsing VIP brands on the walls and colourful pieces of luggage placed along the corridors.

In two weeks' time, on April 1, VIP Industries promoter Dilip Piramal, 69, will give up his executive role to become a non-executive chairman, and Sudip Ghose, currently the CEO, will become the managing director. Around the same time, the VIP brand will be relaunched.

Central to this transition at VIP remains Piramal's daughter Radhika, who gave up the managing director's role two years ago since she wanted to shift to London. The 41-year-old herself is a breath of fresh air in India's corporate world, possibly the first Indian CEO who was open about her homosexuality.

In 2011, Radhika married her long-time partner Amanda in London. In 2017, Amanda, an American, wanted to shift back to London, and Radhika decided to partially shift there to support her partner. That was another rarity – a young CEO of an Indian family-run business moving away from a leadership role for the sake of love.

Radhika, an MBA from Harvard who worked in management consultancies in the US, continues as vice-chairperson and executive director of VIP Industries, valued at nearly a billion dollars.

While Ghose prepares to lead the charge, Radhika guides much of the company's strategy, flying to Mumbai from London several times every quarter or sometimes every month. She sees herself pushing the change further – by making VIP bigger, more global and inclusive. She can also take much of the credit for creating VIP Industries as it looks today.

Radhika started leading the company from 2010 after moving back to India the year before. Three years later, Ghose joined as marketing head of the company, moving in from rival luggage maker Samsonite. Soon, under Radhika, VIP Industries transformed itself into a company with a storied brand structure -- Carlton, VIP, Skybags, Aristocrat and Alfa in luggage and Caprese in handbags.

VIP and Samsonite today dominate the organised luggage market in India, with Safari being a distant third.

"Since I moved to London in 2017, I focus less on managing the quarterly and annual performance. That is now managed by Sudip Ghose, who will become the MD on April 1. I focus more on long-term strategic and organisational goals. Strategic goals include increasing our international business, which is currently less than 10% of VIP's turnover," Radhika told ET Magazine in an interview.

Today, nearly 70% of inputs for VIP products are imported from China, and Radhika says she would like reduce this since the costs have gone up.

Margins have been under pressure too in the last two quarters with profits before depreciation, interest and tax dropping to a single digit in the September-December quarter of 2018-19.

The company has two factories in India – in Nashik and Haridwar – and a soft luggage factory in Bangladesh.

VIP is now looking to expand its production capacity in India but its real growth will have to come from new markets. There is a five-year-plan in the works, which includes entering new markets and new categories and increasing annual revenue to ₹4,000 crore from ₹1,700-1,800 crore the company is likely to touch in the current fiscal.

The company's growth plan includes increasing its access to the overseas markets. VIP acquired Carlton, a British luggage brand, in 2004. Carlton used to be among the UK's top three luggage brands in the 90s and it is now a premium offering in the VIP Industries portfolio in India. But more than Europe, Radhika sees Carlton as an entry vehicle for VIP Industries into the US market. "The US is a more exciting market," she says.

Currently, most of VIP Industries' foreign revenues come Africa, Middle East and Southeast Asia.

The other change Radhika would like to see at VIP is the organisation becoming more inclusive. "VIP has a long journey ahead in this area as we are just starting to make the necessary changes. We have formally changed our HR policies to include sexuality in our non-discrimination clauses. But there is a long way to go from drafting a policy to seeing a change on the ground," she says.

Radhika also wants to ensure that rules to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace are not reduced to a "tick-the-boxes" exercise and that there is genuine discussion between management and employees on improving diversity-- be it members of LGBTQ community or the differently-abled.

Radhika says in the UK, "LGBT people have same rights as straight people when it comes to family rights, marriage, adoption." Asked if she takes on speaking opportunities in London on LGBTQ issues, she says: "There is more need for speeches in Mumbai than London." ■

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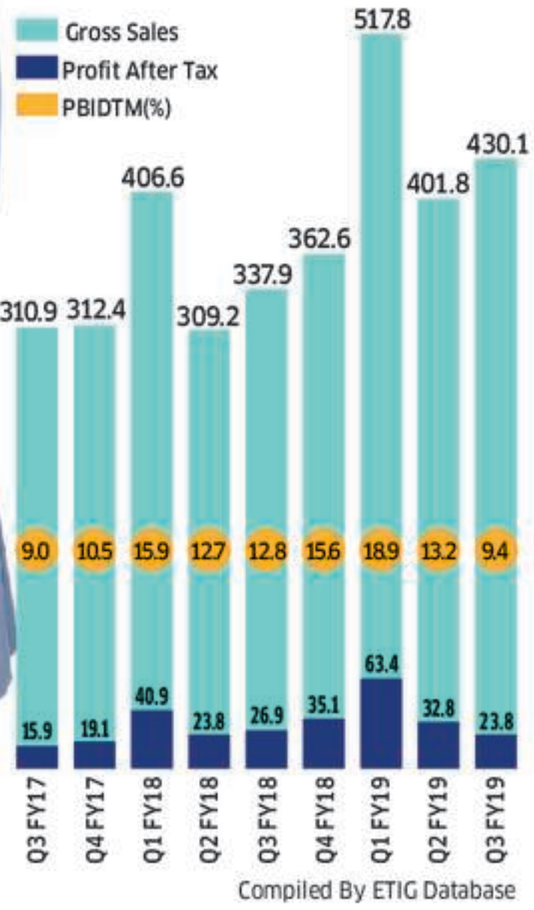
BHARAT CHANDA

Since I moved to London, I focus less on managing the quarterly and annual performance. I focus more on long-term strategic and organisational goals

Radhika Piramal, vice-chairperson and executive director

Margin Pressure

Consolidated Quarterly Results (₹ cr)



Compiled By ETIG Database

Ready to Go

60 mn
No. of luggage sold since inception

₹1,416 cr
Total sales (FY18)

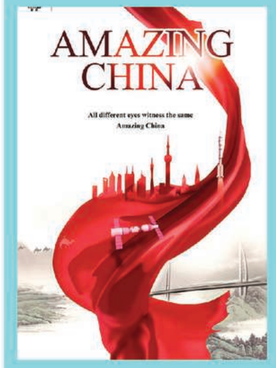
₹126 cr
Profit after tax (FY18)

<10%
Share of overseas revenue (FY18)

REELING FROM PROPAGANDA

For those in power, cinema has remained a favoured medium to sway public opinion. Here are some known and not-so-well-known propaganda films over the decades

:: Shephali Bhatt



Backtracking in China

Last year, China released a propaganda film called **Amazing China** to highlight recent achievements in science & technology. But soon, the film was taken down by the authorities. Some linked it to the US-China trade war. While in the film, China is supposedly shown as a world leader in semiconductor tech, it was struggling to import semiconductor chips from the US.

From Russia, with Pun

A documentary like no other, **Our New President** (2018) by Russian filmmaker **Maxim Pozdorovkin** tells the story of the 2016 US Presidential election verdict through the Russian lens. It shows clippings of Russian TV channels celebrating Donald Trump's victory as if it were a personal victory for Russia. Russian civilian videos congratulating Trump for ensuring a woman doesn't take up the president's chair is just the tip of the iceberg in this satirical film conveying the extent of Russian propaganda and its influence on the US elections.





Reality Bites in North Korea

A North Korean propaganda film that was meant to highlight happy families backfired when its Russian director, Vitaly Mansky, decided to also weave the behind-the-scene footage into the film. Called **Under the Sun** (2016), it exposed North Korean authority's intervention in the film-making process to control the narrative.



That Time for Africa

British imperialists often used cinema to influence people in its colonies in Africa into believing oppression was for their greater good. In 1935, the propaganda film, **Sanders of the River**, celebrated the courage of unsung British heroes who "governed and protected" tens of millions of native Africans.

Boy Kumasenu (1952), one of the most popular British colonial films made for Africans, highlighted how 20th century Africa owed its economic growth and prosperity to European magnanimity.





How to Make a Propaganda Film

In his 1997 dark comedy **Wag the Dog**, Barry Levinson gives an insight into the making of a political propaganda film. The plot revolves around PR professionals hired to fabricate a war-like situation in the country to take voters' attention off a presidential sex scandal. The film's plot appeared to play out in real life when the Bill Clinton administration ordered a bombing campaign on Iraq days before the president was impeached over his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky



Japanese Animal Farm

The first full-length Japanese anime was actually a propaganda film. Released in 1945, **Momotar: Umi no Shinpei** (Momotaro: Sacred Soldiers), shows Japanese animals fighting to take back their island from cruel British officials. News reports from that period suggest the director, Mitsuyo Seo, was told by the naval ministry to turn his film into a propaganda tool.

Anti-War to Pro-War in US

During World War I in 1916 when Britain and Germany were investing in military-themed movies to justify the war, American producer Thomas H Ince made an anti-war film called **Civilization**. The silent movie is about a soldier who refuses the king's order to blow up an enemy civilian ship suspected of carrying ammunition. He dies fighting his own men but inspires the king to sign a peace treaty after seeing the carnage a war leaves behind. The movie was credited for the re-election of Woodrow Wilson as US President since voters saw him as the leader who kept them out of the war. But the US joined the war right after!





A Spanish Twist

In 1942, Spanish dictator **Francisco Franco** scripted a film under a pseudonym to promote fascist ideology and anti-US sentiment. But by the end of World War II, Franco was burning every copy of **Raza** (Race) since the fascists had lost the war and the US was to become an ally. The movie was edited and sanitised and given a new title – **Espíritu de una Raza** (Spirit of a Race)



SOURCE: BBC.COM, NYTIMES.COM, EDITION.CNN.COM, HISTORY.COM, SLATE.COM, ALLTHATSINTERESTING.COM

Deep Impact

A new breed of startups that distinguish themselves with proprietary high technology are hoping they are part of the next big wave



TL;DR

- A new wave of startups are leveraging deep tech knowledge to power ahead
- They are winning investor dollars and building businesses targeting global market
- Technologists and scientists who have worked with R&D units of tech giants or at top academic institutes are branching out

:: Rahul Sachitanand

Geeta Manjunath turned entrepreneur in the backdrop of a tragedy. In 2017, a cousin she was really close to succumbed to breast cancer at a relatively young age. Breast cancer is the most commonly occurring cancer in women and the second most common worldwide.

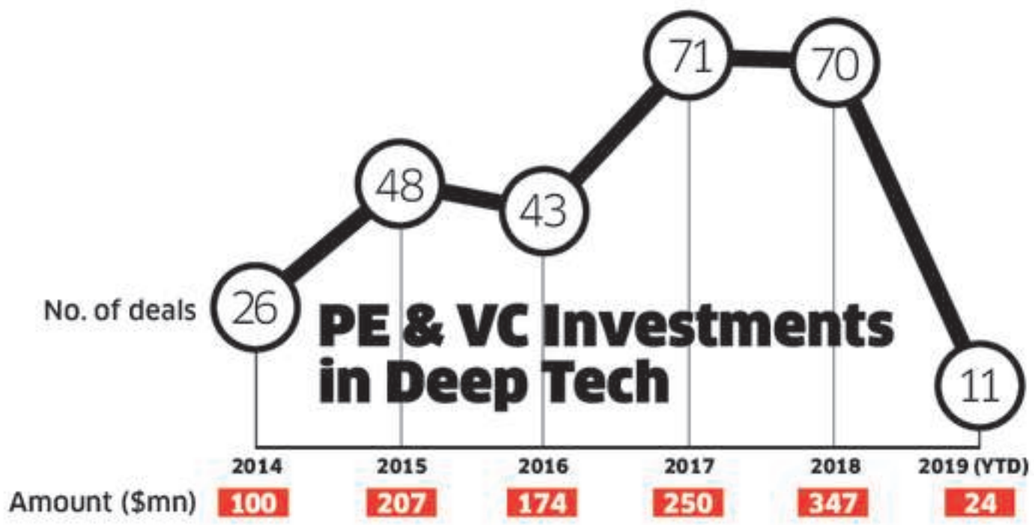
Gopinath, who has a PhD in computer science from the Indian Institute of Science, applied her scientific mind to the issue. Ubiquitous screening and early detection vastly reduces fatality from cancer. Gopinath had been part of the team that built India's first supercomputer, and most recently headed data analytics at Bengaluru's Xerox Research Centre and worked in various roles at Hewlett Packard Labs for 16 years.

Her venture, Niramai, has over the past three years notched up eight US patents as it has gone about developing a revolutionary method of targeting this ailment. Its technology uses a combination of a high-resolution thermal sensing device, machine learning and artificial intelligence to detect breast cancer more accurately and early [by scanning women below the age of 45, for example, too young for conventional mammograms]. It is hoping to disrupt the market with its high-tech solution developed entirely in India.

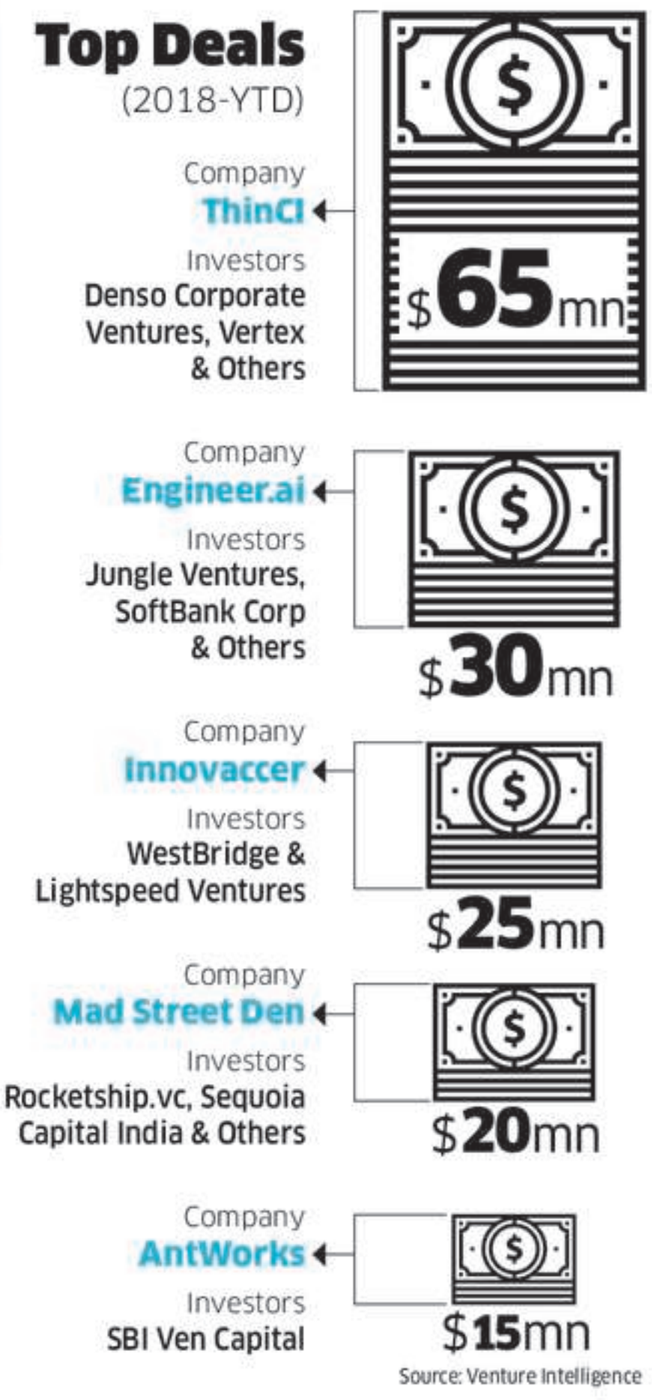
Niramai – which raised some $6 million in funding from Pi Ventures, Axilor Ventures and Flipkart cofounder Binny Bansal in November 2018 – has installed its products in some 20 hospitals and plans to ramp this up to at least 50 by the end of the year. Manjunath says some 6,000 tests have already been administered and several unexpected cases detected. "We have built a unique use case for using cutting-edge technology to vastly improve breast cancer detection," she says.

Manjunath's venture is part of an emerging breed of startups that distinguish themselves with proprietary high technology that they apply to solve very specific problems. Known by the wide-cast moniker deep-tech startups, these firms are typically staffed by elite scientists and technologists, possess deep scientific expertise in a range of fields and are prized by investors because rivals can't compete with such startups by outspending them. Patented technology, it turns out, is a terrific competitive moat in the startup world.

While all startups these days involve some technology, most companies that we think of when we think of startups, are real-world operations enabled by a layer of technology, typically web applications and computer code. With deep-tech startups, it could be expertise in areas such as space, imaging, data analytics, materials, and others. And because the boundaries of science are global, if you manage to push that envelope, it also typically means you have a product that could work anywhere in the world. Sure enough, many Indian deep-tech startups are developing products for the world.



Source: Venture Intelligence

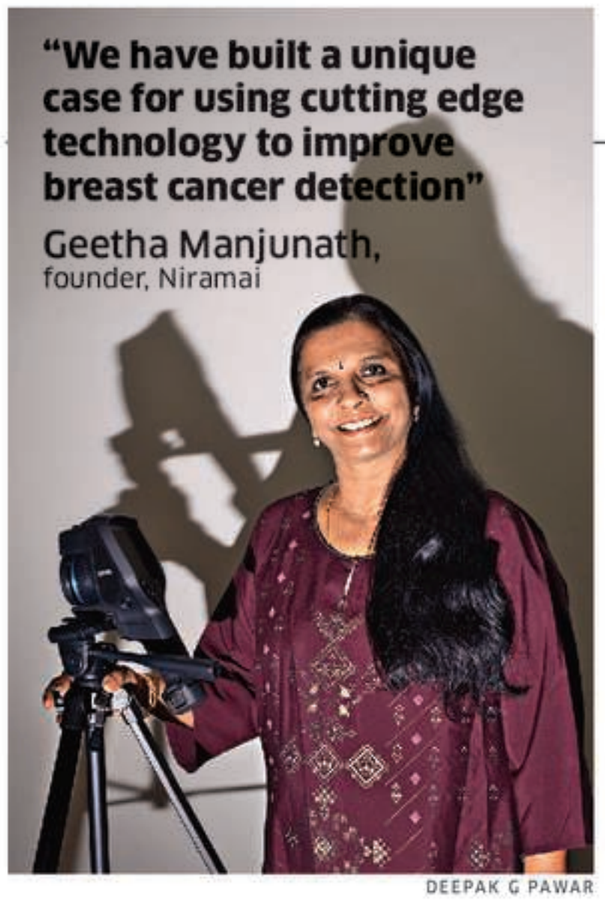


Source: Venture Intelligence

It is still an emerging story, but if it hits its stride, this could well be the third wave in India's now four-decade-long tryst with homegrown tech companies and startups. The first was when the legendary IT services and BPO giants were built, starting in the 1980s. Second was the wave of Flipkart-led consumer-focused ventures that exploited India's massive domestic market that started transacting online. The next could well be a slew of companies with deep scientific expertise developing solutions for the world, out of India. The ingredients are available. But can we get the mix right?

Ventures such as Niramai, SigTuple, Agnikul, Scapic and Alphaics, are developing tech-centric products, tools and solutions from their India labs. Often these startups are founded by engineers or leaders who have worked with R&D units of global tech companies in India and have experience dealing with global audiences, or they have sprung from the labs and innovation hubs of India's top academic institutes.

For instance, Dipanjan Gope, an assistant professor at Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science, has co-founded SimYog technol-



DEEPAK G PAWAR

Top Deep-Tech-Focused Funds (2014-YTD)

INVESTOR NAME	FUND NAME	SIZE ($M)	SELECT INVESTMENTS
Speciale Invest	Special Invest Fund I	NA	Frontdesk.ai, Scapic Innovations & TotalCloud
IIM-A CIIE	Bharat Innovation Fund	50	Detect Tech & Entropik
Exfinity Fund	Exfinity Technology Fund II	45	Uniken, Mariana & Mad Street Den
	Exfinity Technology Fund I	20	
SRI Capital	SRI Capital Fund-I	40	Videoken, Edgetensor & Dreamvu
Pi Ventures	Fund I	33	SigTuple, Flutura, Altizon Systems
Arali Ventures	Seed Fund I	2.5	NA

ogies, a provider of electronic testing tools, and raised funding from German engineering giant Robert Bosch in January 2019.

As investors in India's startups have found their feet again – deal flow went up by 51% year on year in February 2019, according to EY – entrepreneurs are also thinking outside the box. In a lab at the 620-acre IIT, Madras, Srinath Ravichandran is trying to rethink small satellite launch with Agnikul. Currently, it costs $70,000 to $80,000 per kg to launch small satellites and there is at least a three-year waiting period to get airborne. Using 3D printing and building from India, his team wants to bring this cost down to as little as $5,000 and drastically shrink the wait, too. This venture is housed in an ideal environment to stage such a breakthrough. IIT-Madras is a hotbed of 3D printing, material design and other engineering disciplines that all need to link together to help Agnikul take this unprecedented launch into space.

Building Global Products

One part of this entrepreneurship evolution are the founders themselves. The second is the market. These ventures aren't building for India. They are very much building global products. They don't see speed as an asset. It is the depth of their technology expertise and ability to target a long-term opportunity that matters. "They aren't interested in vanity metrics such as GMV [gross merchandise value], or ARR to judge the growth of our investments," says Som Pal Choudhary, cofounder of the Bharat Innovation Fund (BIF), based in the Centre for Innovation Incubation and Entrepreneurship at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. "They are building more slowly and predictably for a global audience." According to multiple investors, deep-tech ventures typically need to raise around $30-40 million between the first seed round and the Series B tranche to stay afloat.

Sai Krishna is in the early stages of his global gameplan, having raised his first round of funding from Axilor and Speciale Investe. Now, his venture Scapic hopes to build India's definitive artificial and virtual reality technology product, for a global audience. His bet is that evolving technologies such as 3D, 360, VR and AR could be the next big formats on the internet. Scapic has built a SaaS (software as a service) platform to give developers a solution to build content around these technologies, without any coding required. The firm wants to rope in brands to pay and use its content development platform.

The evolution of BIF itself over the past few years points to the potential of this space. CIIE has had a presence as a mentor and early investor in startups [including the $20 million Infuse Ventures, focused on clean energy companies] since 2006, and with its latest iteration, made a broader, bolder bet on these deep-tech ventures. In July 2018, the fund announced its first close of $50 million, with limited partners including the likes of Bajaj, Philips and unnamed banks and financial services companies. It has already made three deals and is now focusing on its second close to bring the total to $100 million. BIF joins a growing list of investors in this space, including Entrepreneur First (committed $115 million to its India unit), Endiya Partners, Speciale and Pi Ventures. "These firms mark the next evolution of India's startup story," says Sateesh Andra, founder of Endiya Partners.



DEEPAK G PAWAR

Riding this wave hasn't been easy for entrepreneurs. While investor apathy has been a running complaint, there are other issues to be surmounted. For one, while there are droves of wannabe deep-tech entrepreneurs in the market, staffing their dream venture is hard. Viable engineering talent, already in short supply at old-school outsourcers and the previous generation of startups, comes at a hard-to-afford premium for deep-tech companies. "We are somewhat lucky being in IIT and having a lab and other facilities to show off to potential recruits," says Ravichandran of Agnikul. "It can be very lonely on the outside."

If Los Angeles is a global space hot spot [think SpaceX], then entrepreneurs in the field here are queuing up for lower costs and talent, with investors eyeing this leverage while sizing up investments. "The cost for a data scientist is around $300,000 a year... for that amount, I can run a small startup here," says Vishesh Rajaram of Speciale Invest Advisors, a specialised investor in deep-tech startups. The fund has so far made seven investments in India, including Scapic, Iauro, Total Cloud and Strings.ai.

Since founding Agnikul, Ravichandran has worked with IIT professor Satya Chakravarty and found himself two cofounders to propel Agnikul forward.

Purpose and Durability

According to Ravichandran, the goal is to dramatically reduce the cost of deploying these small satellites [sub-100 kg] from around $70,000 to $80,000 to as little as $5,000, due to cheaper, indigenously developed launch vehicles. The company [and the segment's] ace-in-the-hole? A raft of qualified experts from India's space programme, keen to pass on their know-how to these entrepreneurs.

Building with a purpose and durability in mind is something these deep-tech ventures focus on. At Niramai, the team focused, for months, on testing products at three different types of healthcare outfits – tertiary hospitals, basic diagnostic centres and rural healthcare units. According to Manjunath, this helped build a strong data set, given its focus on artificial intelligence and machine learning, and allowed the team to tweak its products before launch. "We fine-tuned the product and deployed it live... now we're in the early stage of revenue generation and believe we're at the start of the hockey stick growth phase," she says.

It takes more than this kind of gumption to build a successful deep-tech venture out of India. Veteran entrepreneurs caution that you have to spot untapped markets at a global level and aim to occupy that space or lean on your technology chops to disrupt an existing market. "This is costly and requires time and capital, neither of which Indian startups have in spades," says K Ganesh, serial entrepreneur and founder of Growth Story, an incubation outfit. Gestation is also much longer among these ventures, says Manjunath of Niramai, and this could deter entrepreneurs keen to cash out quickly, from building viable ventures.

Meanwhile, some ventures are stepping on the gas. Locus, a logistics solutions provider, is raising a new round of funding, even as AlphaIc, a developer of specialised computer chips, is looking to raise around $15 million soon. SigTuple has made the leap, raising $19 million from Accel Partners and IDG Ventures for its healthcare tech. "Deep-tech startups have made an impact and raised early rounds of funding," says Manish Singhal, co-founder of Pi Ventures, a specialist investor in the space. "Now they need to show they can sustain this momentum and build viable businesses." ■

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KESHAV RAJ

Deep-Tech Startups with Maximum Funding

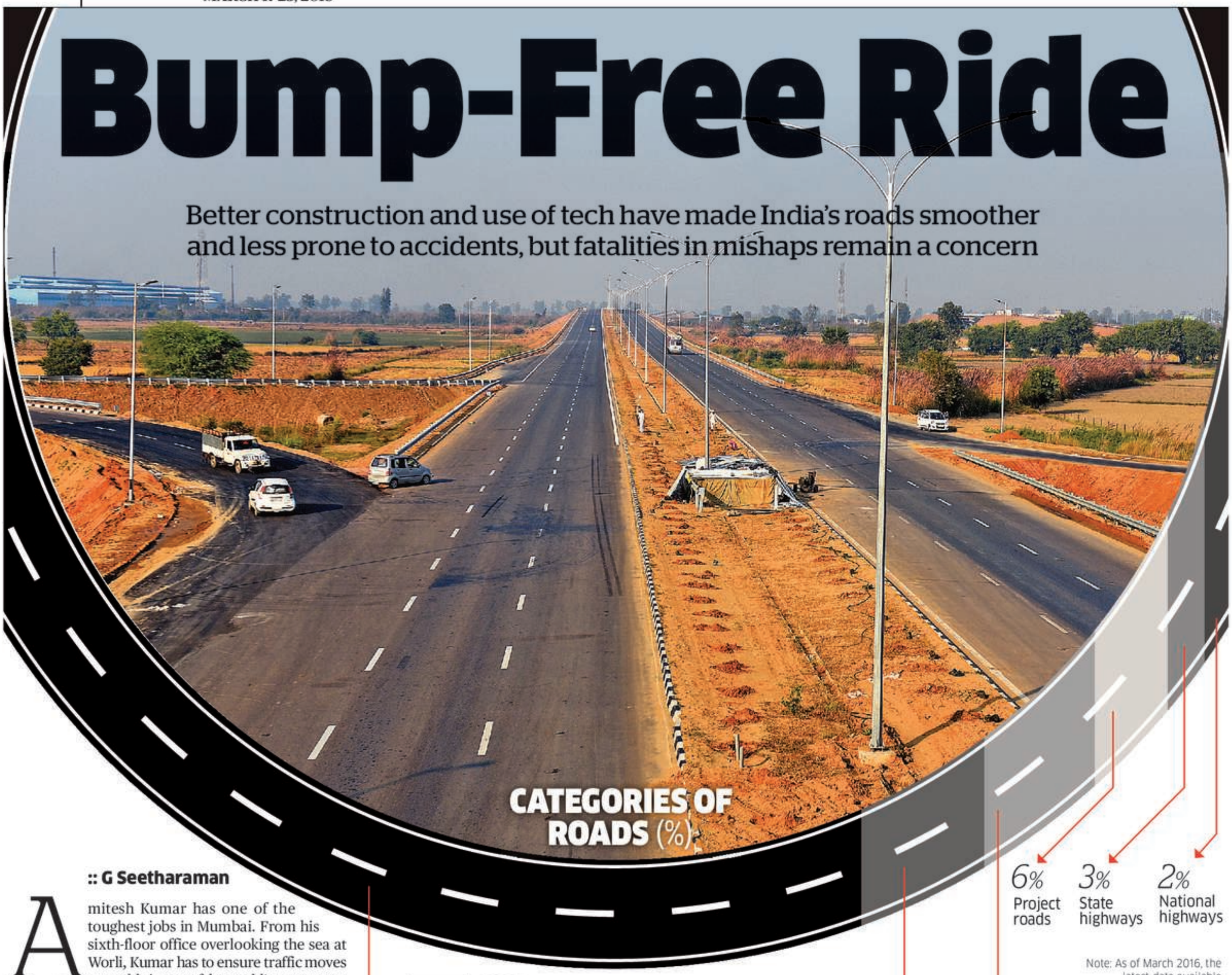
Amount ($mn)

105	80	75	51	30
Company: Manthan Systems	Company: ThinCI	Company: Qubole Data Service	Company: Innovaccer	Company: Engineer.ai
Investors: Chiratae Ventures, ePlanet Ventures, Eight Roads Ventures, Norwest, Eight Roads Ventures, SIDBI VC & Temasek	Investors: Denso Corporate Ventures, Vertex & Others	Investors: Charles River Ventures, Harmony Partners, Institutional Venture Partners, Lightspeed Ventures, Norwest & Singtel Innov8	Investors: Pravega Ventures, WestBridge, Lightspeed Ventures & M12	Investors: Jungle Ventures, SoftBank Corp & Others

Source: Venture Intelligence

Bump-Free Ride

Better construction and use of tech have made India's roads smoother and less prone to accidents, but fatalities in mishaps remain a concern



:: G Seetharaman

Amitesh Kumar has one of the toughest jobs in Mumbai. From his sixth-floor office overlooking the sea at Worli, Kumar has to ensure traffic moves smoothly in one of the world's most populous cities. That is easier said than done, given that India's financial capital is notorious for its interminable gridlocks. During our 30 minute conversation, the bespectacled joint commissioner of police (traffic) had to stop mid-sentence several times to attend to calls and visits by officials. To the right of his desk is a nearly wall-sized screen with 16 windows showing live feeds from CCTVs – there are 5,217 in all installed on various roads of the city.

TL;DR

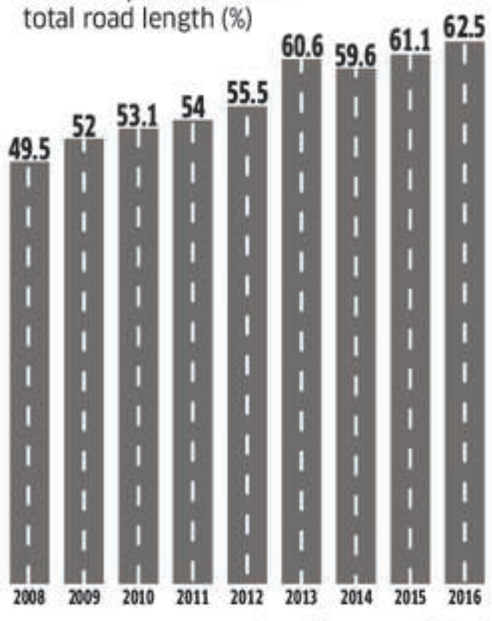
- It is not just highways, even the state of rural roads is better now
- **The country's share of paved roads has increased**
- Some cities are using tech to improve road safety
- **Having a national road policy will go a long way in improving the situation**

Talking in a measured tone, Kumar is quick to rattle off statistics: there were 41,000 speeding violations in the city in 2017, which shot up 19 times to 7,70,000 in 2018. What changed? In January 2018, the Mumbai traffic police started installing cameras with automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system. These cameras – there are 56 in the city – are more effective in zeroing in on speeding motorists than portable speed guns. Use of such technologies, combined with the identification of accident-prone spots and a crackdown on drunk driving, has brought down Mumbai's road fatalities 15% from a year earlier to 430 in 2018, says Kumar. "Enforcement should be strict enough to act as a deterrent." ANPR cameras have also been installed in other parts of the country, including the NCR, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

With safety increasingly become a top priority for authorities, it would not be wrong to say that our roads are becoming less dangerous, according to some metrics such as the number of accidents, though fatalities are still a problem. Quality of roads, which has a huge impact on safety, has seen a marked improvement over the years. But quality and safety are still very much works in progress and India cannot afford to take its eyes off the road.

Paved is the way to go

Share of paved roads in total road length (%)



Note: Figures as of March
Source: Ministry of road transport and highways

An indicator of improving quality of our roads is the increasing number of lanes separated by a median, which avert head-on collisions, says Vinayak Chatterjee, chairman and cofounder of integrated infrastructure services provider Feedback Infra.

Piyush Tewari, founder of non-profit SaveLife Foundation, says steps like plugging gaps in medians, which prevent illegal U-turns, also help. SaveLife worked with the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation to identify engineering factors responsible for crashes on the Mumbai-Pune expressway. They identified median gaps, missing shoulders (on the side of the road) and plants obstructing vision, among others. In 2016, when the NGO started working on the project, there were 151 deaths on the stretch. In 2018, the figure fell to 110, says Tewari.



India has been moving up on global road quality index

Rank on road quality index*

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
87	89	90	85	86	84	76	61	51	55	51

*Countries covered ranged from 133 to 148 depending on the year; index based on survey of business executives; in 2018, for instance, around 16,700 executives from 140 countries were polled

Source: World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report

Road accidents in India have declined from 42 per 1,00,000 population in 2010 to 36 in 2017, according to the ministry of road transport and highways. Even in absolute terms, road accidents have been falling since 2015, and the 2017 figure – 4,64,910, or 53 every hour – is the lowest since 2006. But it is a slightly different story in fatalities due to road accidents. While both absolute deaths and fatalities per 1,00,000 population declined marginally in 2017 – to 1,47,913 (17 every hour) and 11.5, respectively – the number of fatalities per 100 accidents rose from 31.4 in 2016 to 31.8 in 2017.

Interview requests sent to Nitin Gadkari, minister for road transport, did not yield any response.

One explanation for the high level of fatalities is the woeful state of emergency response across the country. There are over 25,000 ambulances plying under the National Health Mission. Of that, around 9,300 ambulances are for emergency response through the toll-free number 108. Besides, hospitals and private companies also operate ambulances. But there is no data available on how many road accident victims lose their lives because of lack of medical attention within the first hour of the mishap, called the "golden hour" when treatment can mostly prevent death.

India has the highest number of road fatalities in the world. In 2016, the latest year for which global figures are available, India accounted for more than a third of global road accident deaths. The World Health Organization says such deaths are under-reported and estimated that in 2016, the figure for India was likely twice as big as that reported by the government.

Even the Indian government's figure is alarmingly high. But technologies like ANPR cameras and other safety interventions will start giving improved statistics in a few years, says S Sundar, a former Union transport secretary and a fellow at The Energy and Resources Institute.

India, despite having around 230 million registered vehicles, does not have a national road safety policy. The only legislation to deal with road safety is the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. An amendment was proposed to the law to ensure children's safety while commuting, increase penalties in line with inflation, ensure liability of road contractors, digitise the licensing system and to recall old vehicles that do not adhere to safety norms. It was passed in the Lok Sabha in 2017, but faced opposition in the Rajya Sabha, particularly from regional parties, supposedly over state governments' powers being taken away. The ordinance has now lapsed. India is a signatory to the 2015 United Nations Brasilia declaration, which aims to cut road traffic deaths and injuries by half by 2020.

One reason for bad driving habits is that most people do not go through formal driving lessons before getting a licence, says Tewari of SaveLife Foundation. "And in several places you can get your licence delivered to your home for a price." Improving driving skills and a proper licensing system can ensure better road behaviour and effective law enforcement. Getting riders to wear helmets and those travelling by car to wear seat belts, simple as they may seem, has proved to be challenging. But these can help reduce fatalities. Enforcement without the physical presence of personnel, like ANPRs, is fast becoming the norm around the world. "Cameras don't go home at night nor can they be bribed," says Tewari.

But such methods are not without their lacunae. For instance, less than half the offenders identified by ANPR cameras in Mumbai actually pay the fines. In an ideal situation, a text message would go to the offender with a link to an e-challan, along with a picture of him taken by the camera. But if the motorist's mobile number is not linked to his vehicle documentation, it does not work. The driver finds out about past penalties only when he is stopped by a traffic cop for a different violation and his vehicle number is run through the database, or if the driver does the check himself.

That is what happened to Mayank Singh in 2018. He had bought a Renault Duster in December 2017 and used it to drive from Mumbai to Pune. In March 2018, he learned that he could go to www.mahatrafficechallan.gov.in and find out if he had violated road rules. He found out that he had exceeded the 80 km per hour speed limit 17 times in Mumbai and had racked up penalties of ₹17,000. "After that, I became speed-conscious at those points and used to check online every fortnight." In September, he relocated to Jakarta for work.

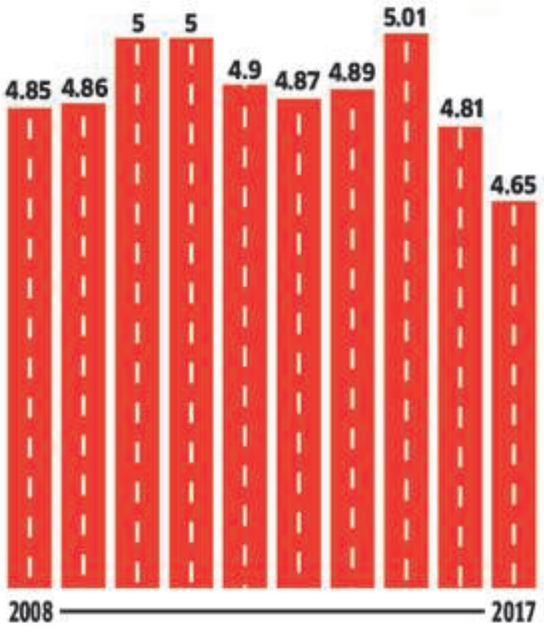
The fundamental problem with our roads is they are designed for motorists. "Pedestrians are not prioritised and that should change," says Kelly Larson, who oversees Bloomberg Philanthropies' work on road safety in 10 cities across the world. Pedestrians accounted for 13% of those killed in accidents in 2017 in India.

Not far from Joint Commissioner Amitesh Kumar's office, Girija Ambala had to pay with her life due to the carelessness of another person. A speeding motorcycle with three young men hit Ambala when she was crossing a road on a January evening in 2018. Her jacket snagged on the handlebar and she was dragged for 100 meters. She sustained fatal injuries to her skull. Ambala was to turn 20 three weeks later. Her father, Ganga Murli Ambala, says pedestrians had complained about speeding on this stretch of the road for years but no action was taken. Not much has changed since the tragedy, he adds. "They can't put cameras everywhere but they should at least have speed breakers every 50 or 100 metres and a zebra crossing. That way, it is very hard to speed." The straighter a road, the lower the chances of an accident on it. But a linear stretch is not always possible because of the terrain and land acquisition problems.



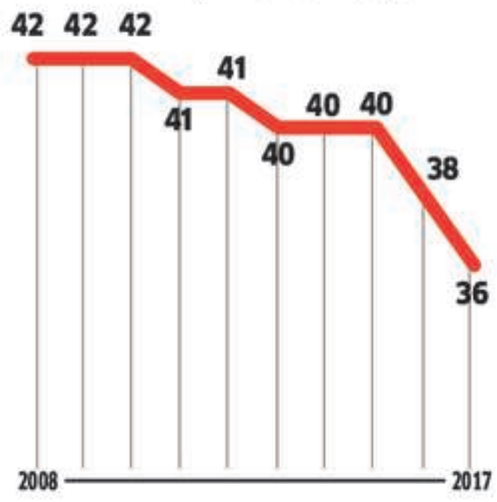
Road accidents have declined

Road accidents (lakh)



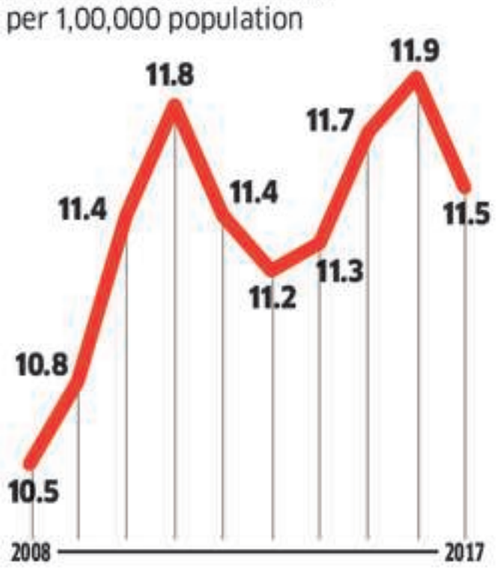
Accidents relative to population have come down

Road accidents per 1,00,000 population



Fatalities are still high

Persons killed in accidents per 1,00,000 population



Deaths in absolute terms saw a decline in 2017

Accident deaths in lakh



Source: Ministry of road transport and highways

Road Index

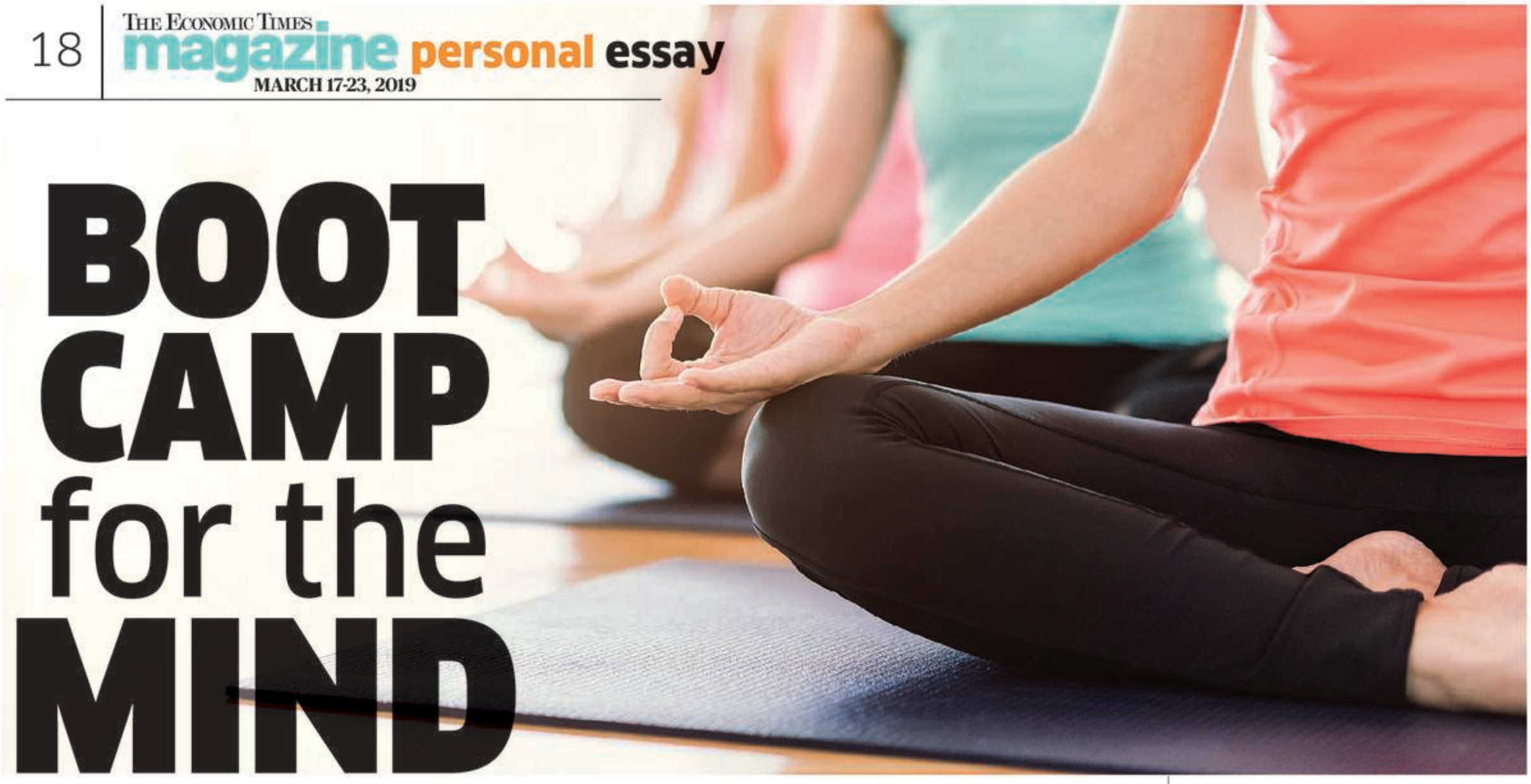
Aside from factoring safety considerations into the design of a road, the quality of Indian roads has seen a notable improvement over the past decade or so. For instance, an annual survey of business executives conducted by the World Economic Forum on the quality of roads in around 140 countries reflected that. Between 2008 and 2018, India's rank in road quality rose from 87 to 51. The share of paved roads in our road network has increased from half in March 2008 to nearly two-thirds in March 2016, according to the latest available figures. India has a road network of 5.6 million km, of which national highways contribute just 2% and state highways 3%. Rural roads account for the lion's share, at 70%.

While national and state highways almost entirely have a black top surface (with bitumen as a binder) or cement concrete, just over half of rural roads are paved.

National highways, which carry 40% of the country's road traffic, get most of the attention among roads and have been one of the few bright spots in infrastructure development over the past few years; 34,300 km were built between April 2014 and November 2018. "Earlier, there were mostly brownfield projects, which were for the widening of highways and there were latent defects in the design we had to work with. But now there are a lot of greenfield projects," says Satish Parakh, managing director of Ashoka Buildcon, which has built 10,000 lane-km of roads so far. Lane-km takes into account the number of lanes constructed on a km. So 4 lane-km would mean four lanes of one km each have been constructed. Besides highways, rural roads have also seen a transformation, especially under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Launched in 2000, this scheme has led to the laying of around 5,80,500 km of rural roads.

But all is not rosy. Reports of worsening potholes after rains are common in cities, due to inefficient drainage, and multi-lane highways are built without into account the needs of villagers who need to cross it, resulting in accidents. Most of India's roads do not befit the fastest-growing major economy and way too many people lose their lives in accidents. But there are certainly signs of change. ■

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BOOT CAMP for the MIND

No phone. No internet. No television. Complete silence. Frugal meals at odd hours. The 10-day-long Vipassana retreat is where you disconnect from the outside world to recharge your inner self

:: **Malini Goyal**

For 10 days, I disconnected from the world.

No phone. No internet. No TV. I observed complete silence. Woke up at 4 am. Meditated for over nine hours a day. Ate frugal meals at odd hours – breakfast at 6:30 am, lunch at 11 am and dinner at 5 pm. Slept in a barely 9 ft x 4 ft barrack-like cell.

I had gone for a Vipassana workshop.

And it is the best 10-day break I have given myself.

The decision to go was not easy. About 10 years back, a friend first mentioned Vipassana to me. It felt too difficult to even consider. Five years back, another Dutch friend who goes for her silent retreat every year, pitched it. I had a slew of valid reasons not to go, including my teenaged son and work deadlines.

Then in January this year, a friend forwarded a link to the Vipassana centre at Sohna. Within days I registered and left for the programme.

Maybe the author Yuval Noah Harari should get some credit. Earlier that month, I had read about him and his annual silent retreat. Or, maybe, it had more to do with the stirrings inside me. Since last September, I had felt it simmer. Telltale signs were all over. My morning calls to my family had stopped or become brief. My patience threshold had dipped. Noise tolerance had plummeted. Once, at a food court in a mall, I thought the ambient chatter would drive me crazy. I lost my cool with people honking on the road or jumping queues. Gory tales of murder and rape in newspapers upset me disproportionately. The aggressive posturing on news channels unsettled me. The vitriol on social media was viscerally repulsive.

I tried all I could, deploying my own noise-cancellation mechanisms. I stopped my cable TV subscription to avoid news channels. I mastered the art of skipping city news pages. I avoided malls. But the escape seemed near impossible.

Then suddenly, Vipassana offered me an escape.

Think of Vipassana as a boot camp for the soul. A rehab centre to help recharge and rejuvenate the mind. An executive education programme to update and upgrade mental skills. It's where one goes to disconnect to live optimally in a connected world.

Life in the digital era suffers from a constant sensory onslaught. Vipassana offers a respite from the status-update treadmill. In the post-truth world where alternate reality is more than a phrase and human mind struggles to separate reality from perceptions, switching off external variables can bring some internal clarity in how one sees the world.

This is why Vipassana – a meditation technique believed to have been practised by Gautam Buddha 2,500 years ago – holds relevance in today's digital age.

The Retreat

Wednesday, 6 pm. It was windy and chilly outside. Sohna's 16-acre campus was lush green. Inside a modest hall, an instructor took us through the strict code of conduct as our 10-day Vipassana began. Men and women would be segregated. To observe noble silence, we must avoid even eye contact. Even though I had read about it, this felt like another world. Each participant was assigned



No. of Centres

India: **91**

Abroad: **115**
in over 90 countries

No. of Participants

(on an average, annually)

India: **1,00,000**

Abroad: **75,000**

The centres in **US, Germany, Australia, Thailand and Myanmar** have the highest number of participants

Source: VRI



"For my birthday this year, I did a 10-day silent Vipassana meditation, this time in Pyin Oo Lwin, Myanmar. We went into silence on the night of my birthday, the 19th"

Jack Dorsey, cofounder, Twitter
(Tweet on December 9, 2018)

WORLD OF VIPASSANA

It is believed to have been practised by Gautam Buddha 2,500 years ago

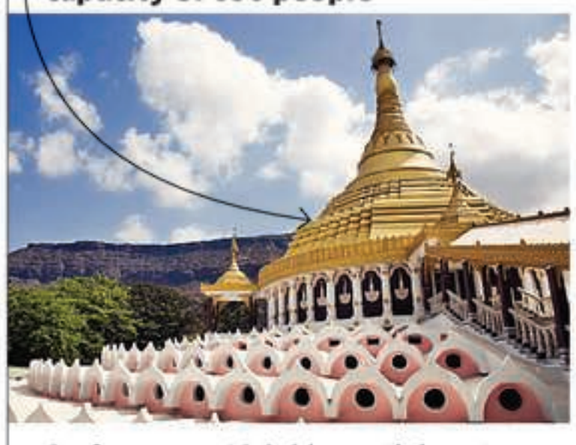


The Vipassana Research Institute teaches the technique as taught by the late SN Goenka

It is a silent retreat where one disconnects from the outside world

The meditation courses are offered for free; centres run on donations

The centre at Igatpuri in Maharashtra, spread over 175 acres, is the largest, with a capacity of 650 people



So far, over 40 lakh participants have taken Vipassana course

The Vipassana course entails disciples to live frugally and in silence, and to avoid eye contact

The day begins at 4:30 am; there are over nine hours of meditation every day

a room with an attached bathroom.

In the dining hall, seats and utensils were marked. One must face the wall while eating. That evening, as I silently ate dinner – daliya, fruit and milk – for some strange reason I recalled Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, a dystopian novel where human clones live in special institutions governed by a strange set of rules.

Disconnecting from the outside world came easy. In fact, I had longed for it. It was the silence and the difficult meal schedules that I had dreaded the most. I need not have. Amid strangers, staying silent wasn't tough. The simple, non-spicy food felt good. When I reached Sohna, I was on antibiotics for a persistent allergic cough. I had a stiff neck and back. My biological clock was sending alarm signals. Within three days, my body began to feel better at multiple levels. My metabolism dramatically improved.

The toughest part – which I hadn't anticipated – was sitting and meditating for long hours. The first five days were about Anapana meditation in which one focused just on one's breath. But my mind wandered often. Sitting still with a stiff shoulder was hard. My poor capacity to focus bothered me. By the fifth day, I was reaching breaking point and plotting excuses to drop out.

Fortunately, everything changed on the sixth day. Meditation entered a new phase, exploring a deep interconnection between the mind and the body. Just by shifting attention to different parts of the body, one could sense vibrations in each part. The discovery almost felt like magic. I, like some enlightened meditators, experienced a free flow of energy throughout the body, truly a unique and special state of being. That night, as I retired to bed, my head throbbed with vibrations, pronounced enough to not let me sleep for a few hours. But that night I got a deep sleep that I hadn't in years. Next morning, despite multiple bells, I woke up late and missed my morning session.

What was it like to spend 10 days on a campus with 40 other women and not speak to any? Initially, it felt odd. Then one began to read body language and facial expressions to know them better although noble silence disallowed it. Walk was the easiest to notice – playful walk, resigned-retired walk, walk full of energy and life, walk that was calm and serene. One day, a bubbly girl started dancing impromptu. On a rainy day, a woman wearing hijab stepped out in the courtyard, got drenched and smiled a rare smile. Another day, two peacocks, with feathers fanned out, created ample excitement in a dull place.

Why did I feel so good in that 10-day break? I have often asked this myself. Here are three broad reasons. Disconnecting from the outside world to connect with myself is perhaps the biggest one. Shorn of all distractions, Vipassana allows one to see reality and introspect without distortions.

Two, the frugal and egalitarian life has its appeal. In a stratified world, one's designation, caste and class often define the terms on which one engages with the world. This was an equal place that didn't charge anyone for anything. At least two ashrams that I had been to earlier had a tiered approach towards participants. At Vipassana, money could buy you nothing.

Three, it helped me learn a new meditation technique that has boosted my meditative rigour. My first meditation course was during schooldays. Over the years, I have done many more, including Transcendental Meditation. But it is only after Vipassana that I have truly begun to experience meditation's benefit on both body and mind – better focus, higher self-control and lower stress levels.



"I could not have written this book without the focus, peace and insight gained from practising Vipassana for the last fifteen years"

Yuval Noah Harari, author
(In the dedication to *Homo Deus*)



The Vipassana centre at Igatputi in Maharashtra

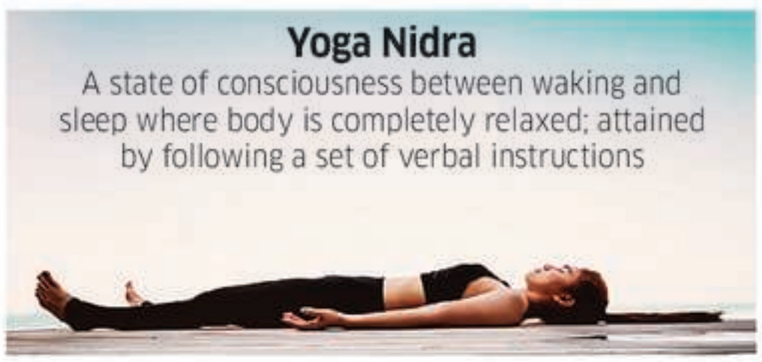
MIND POWERED



Many Paths to Meditation

Vipassana
It focuses on deep interconnection between the mind and the body, realised through disciplined attention to physical sensations

Yoga Nidra
A state of consciousness between waking and sleep where body is completely relaxed; attained by following a set of verbal instructions



Traktaka
Called yogic gazing, this involves fixing your gaze on an object for some time and then visualising the object with your eyes closed

Osho Dynamic Meditation
A form of meditation that involves physical actions including rapid breathing

Sahaja Yog
A meditation technique that involves the awakening of Kundalini and chakras in the body



The Silent Show

The Vipassana Research Institute (VRI) was established by the late SN Goenka. The centre at Sohna is one of 206 set up globally – 91 of them in India. Each centre's capacity varies. The Sohna centre, which can take in 100 participants, runs a 10-day workshop for beginners and has 15-member staff and five volunteers, says Om Talwaar, who heads the trust that manages the facility. Igatpuri in Maharashtra – spread over 175 acres and with a capacity of 650 students and 80 volunteers – is the biggest centre.

Demand, supply and availability of land are the three crucial factors behind the setting up of a centre. Typically, these are located outside the city, either in a forest or in the mountains, but with some mode of public transport available. The land parcel, which is a donation, must be at least five acres in India but it could be slightly smaller abroad. New centres are coming up, including one in Virar, Mumbai.

The length of a Vipassana course varies – from refresher courses that last one or two days to intensive ones lasting 60 days. There is a seven-day course for children (12-17 years). A programme called MITRA Upakram, teaching Anapana meditation, is offered in 80,000 schools in Maharashtra.

OP Pathak, manager of the Vipassana Research Institute at Igatpuri, says expenses per person for the 10-day course come to about ₹2,000. The entire costs are met by donations. Over the years, Pathak has noticed many changes. Earlier, the disciples of this Buddhist pursuit were mostly older people; now Vipassana's appeal is rising among youngsters and professionals. A small section of people who enrol grapple with alcohol or tobacco addiction. Pathak claims Vipassana has helped some of them quit.

The centres also see a steady flow of foreigners. For example, 70% of students at Sikhara Dhamma near Dharamshala are foreigners. Most of them are from Germany, Australia, Japan, China, Israel and Italy. Of late, Iranians lead the pack.

Back to the Daily Rhythm

It has been over a month since I returned from my Vipassana course. I have only managed an hour-long morning meditation every day, skipping the evening one. Despite my busy schedule, its benefits push me to find time. The days I find myself restless, I resolve harder to do it.

For the world outside, here's a suggestion. Tourism is one of the biggest job creators with minimal investment. India has what no other country in the world has. It is home to multiple traditions and techniques of yoga and meditation whose relevance and following have only multiplied in today's world. India has a chance to tap its rich traditions like Vipassana to offer experiences that will appeal to a growing number of digital natives.

As for me, I intend to make this silent retreat an annual affair. ■

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"I went for Vipassana meditation. I was so troubled by the fact that I didn't know my mind [whether to enter politics or not in 1999], I just disappeared and went for 10 days of meditation to better know my own mind rather than what other people want of me"

Priyanka Vadra Gandhi, Congress leader
(In an interview in the *Hindustan Times*, April 25, 2009)

Kitchen Grind

Despite their deep involvement in cooking food, the work domestic helpers do in their employers' kitchens is rarely valued



File photo of Baby Halder, who wrote a book on her life as a domestic helper

:: Vikram Doctor

Buttermilk's need to find work started with a crab. In *Karno's Daughter*, Rimli Sengupta's narrative about the life of her domestic help, referred to as "Buttermilk", starts when, as a village girl in Bengal, she caught a large crab.

Her mother wanted to cook the crab with rice, but past crop failures meant that all that was available was cornflour doled out by the government as relief.

Her father had bought some newly harvested rice to de-husk and sell for a small profit. He would then buy broken rice to feast with the crab, carefully kept alive in a pot with water.

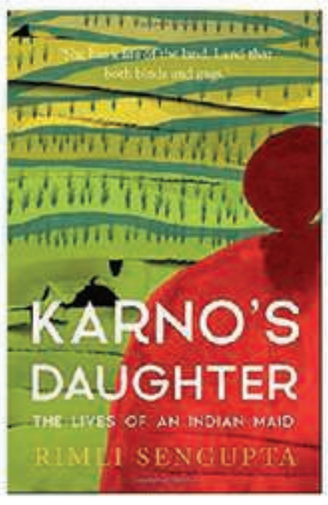
But when her father took the rice to the market, police seized it. The family was ruined and had to leave the village to find work in the city. (The crab was finally eaten with cornflour).



In the film Roma, the domestic helper's unending and vital work is hardly acknowledged as such

And so, Buttermilk began a life of working in other people's homes – sweeping the floor, chopping vegetables, cleaning fish and sometimes, cooking too. It is a story like lakhs of others, in India and around the world.

Baby Halder was one of the first domestic workers to pen down her own life in *A Life Less Ordinary*.



In *Maid in India*, Tripti Lahiri chronicles many such lives, and their complex interactions with their employers.

And Alfonso Cuaron won an Oscar for *Roma*, about a life in Mexico very different in details yet the same in being about a person whose work is tough, unending and vital, yet hardly ever acknowledged as such.

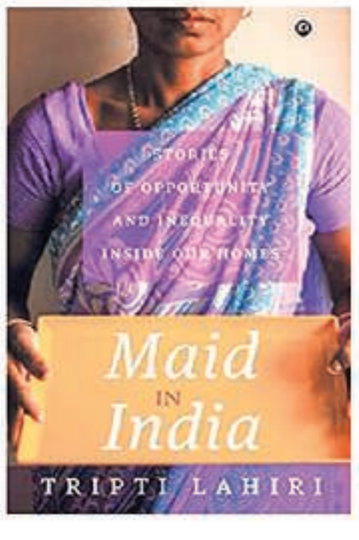
Food forms just a part of their world of work and yet looms large, for domestic workers must eat too yet must often go hungry or have leftovers from their employers' meals.

Sengupta's account of Buttermilk's world explains the complex routines that go into ensuring that her family has food even as she spends time preparing food for others.

Food sustains and informs all parts of Buttermilk's life. It is her link to her village, to which she returns in the winters to get fresh date-palm syrup, and the rice varieties she misses in the city. When the elections come, she looks forward to feasts the parties provide the night before polling day and tells Sengupta: "When I go to vote, how will you know which button I will press?"

Before her parents died one after the other, both longed to eat shoroo chaklis – pancakes of rice and lentil batter. But both the times, to her deep regret, she was too busy working to find time to make them. (In a vivid detail, she explains the pancakes are made by spreading batter in a hot pan with the flat end attached to a cut off brinjal stem).

Despite this deep involvement in food, the work these women do in the kitchen is rarely valued. Cooks may be commended but not the hard work of cutting, chopping and grinding that their food depends upon.



In his *Culinary Jottings for Madras* (1880), Colonel Kenney-Herbert has grumbling appreciation for "Ramasamy", his name for all male Indian cooks but only mentions in passing (and using an odd name) "*tunny-cutch ammah* to whose delicate fingers is entrusted the making of chutneys..."

Mostly their labour is never mentioned but in her poignant essay, Patoler Ma, Chitrita Banerji recalls the woman who ground spices in her childhood home.

As was the practice, she was not called by her own name but as the mother of her child Patol and the stick-thin body of the woman with the massive grinding stone she had to wield made Banerji realise "the unfairness that women contend with every day in many traditional societies."

Banerji describes the daily battle Patoler Ma fought with the shil-nora – the grinding stones.

She started with the hardest lumps of dried turmeric, then pungent red chillies, then cumin, coriander and mustard – each spice exploding with aroma as it was ground down. And one day, Patoler Ma tells her of the most basic unfairness involved here: "People like me can't afford to buy gorom moshla," she said. "We only handle and smell it in the homes of people like you."

Today, the use of electric grinders allow us to avoid much of this kitchen labour, and there is a lot to be thankful in that. Yet there is loss, to the women for who it was a job, even if underpaid, and to us, who eat food that is subtly different.

Manual grinding gives a granularity that is part of the traditional texture of the dishes, and perhaps even a particular flavour that high-speed electric grinders change. And machines don't bring the knowledge that many of these women have, of different rice varieties and various edible greens and how to cook with dried fish and organ meats, all foods that are full of value but disdained as being for the poor only.

But just occasionally, there are cases where this kind of traditional kitchen work is both demanded and gets its due.

When chef Ananda Solomon was setting up Konkan Café – his tribute to the food of India's west coast – he was determined to have his masalas ground the traditional way. So he found a few older women (not domestic servants in this case) who had done it all their lives, and persuaded them to join his kitchen.

They were given the same status as the other kitchen staff, and came to work each day, putting on white chefs coats over their saris as they got down to the grinding.

Some of the Taj restaurants that specialise in traditional food still follow this practice of hiring these experienced women to perform these most essential of tasks, but just given the respect now that they truly deserve. ■

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Have a Naga Mocha

How Nagaland has made it to the coffee map, cultivating specialty beans in the shade of its high-altitude forests

:: Avantika Bhuyan

Until five years ago, no one could have imagined that coffee could grow in the forests in the mountainous district of Zunheboto in Nagaland. Today, the lush woodland, located at an altitude of 1,852 metres, yields a well-balanced cup, which is redolent with peppery, spicy aromas, contains notes of carrot cake and caramel, and has a delicious aftertaste of vanilla ice cream.



Coffee is grown in the shade of the forests in five districts of Nagaland. This is different from sun-grown coffee where berries ripen very fast

Zunheboto is one of the five districts, the others being Mon, Wokha, Khar and Boje, which offer specialty high-altitude coffee, grown in the natural shade of the forest – unlike the recent cultivation in the sun where the berries ripen very fast – thus adding Nagaland to the coffee map. This is part of a unique public-private partnership called Naga Coffee, which was formalised three years ago, as a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Land Resources, Nagaland, and Noble Cause, a South African company by Pieter Vermeulen.

Today, Naga Coffee Pvt Ltd is jointly managed by Vermeulen – a certified coffee taster and roaster – and two young Naga entrepreneurs, Kajiikho Arücho and Vivito Yeptho. Says Yeptho: "Our main motive is to promote homegrown coffee. Also, we want to generate employment for the young people in the state by training them as baristas and offering them franchises to our coffee shops," says Yeptho. The team is following a five-year, comprehensive plan, drawn up during the signing of the MoU, for coffee development in Nagaland, which aims to cover an area of 5,000 hectares till 2020. Already, 6,00,000 coffee saplings have been planted in five districts. The seeds are procured from the Coffee Board of India, and sent to several small farmers to be planted. These farmers then supply the cherries to Yeptho and his team, to be roasted at their cafe in Dimapur. Naga Coffee isn't just showcased at its cafes in the state, but is exported to South Africa, Dubai and Bahrain as well.

Vermeulen has had a long tryst with coffee. "My grandfather used to farm grapes. Alongside that, he used to grow coffee as well for the family's consumption," he says. Also, while growing up in Cape Town, he witnessed a strong coffee culture, with the city boasting over a thousand coffee shops. Vermeulen started to experiment with roasts and blends, and soon started Noble Cause to build economically sustainable coffee-growing societies. He was working in Nepal, when he heard that the Department of Land Resources of Nagaland was looking to revive coffee cultivation in the state. The ensuing collaboration combined his interest in forest-grown, high-altitude coffee, with the land resources team's need for expertise and access to international market.

This isn't the first time that coffee cultivation has been tried in Nagaland. "In the early 1980s, the government of Nagaland started coffee cultivation. But due to middlemen, farmers would only get ₹10-15 a kilo and were left disillusioned. They had no direct access to the market," says Hoto Yeptho, who has just retired as director of the Department of Land Resources, and was part of the project since its inception. Political unrest further worsened the situation and coffee farms were abandoned.

Before the state government thought of coffee, it had entrusted the department with yet another project – to cultivate rubber, a crop that was equally alien to the region, but was being successfully grown in the neighbouring states of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. "It proved to be a success in Nagaland. So, the government thought of trying its hand at coffee again. And we took up the challenge," says Hoto. The mandate was that fair prices should be offered to farmers to empower them to grow the crop.



"We want to promote homegrown coffee. We also want to generate employment for young people by training them as baristas and offering them franchises to our coffee shops"

Vivito Yeptho, director, Naga Coffee

Some of the varieties being grown include the signature "Cauvery", developed by the Coffee Board of India, and a hybrid descendant of "Caturra" and "Hybrido-de-Timor". "It has a citrus, chocolate flavour. The terroir plays an interesting role in the acidity of the coffee. The crop, here, is interplanted with pineapple and black cardamom trees," says Vermeulen, "We do micro lots and micro processing. Last year, 17 different varieties were cupped." For instance, the plantation in Wokha is located in a space that used to be a ginger farm some time ago, and hence the cup has ginger flavours with some citrus notes.

In 2018, around seven tonnes of green beans – out of the 10 tonnes harvested by Naga Coffee – were exported to Cape Town. These were the yield from the old trees. This year will see new plantations bearing fruit, hence the produce is likely to be higher. Both Yeptho and Vermeulen see this as a long-term project, with newer techniques of fermentation to be introduced in a couple of years. Naga Coffee has a lot of potential due to the citrus flavour peculiar to Himalayan coffee. It is likely to do well, maintains Vermeulen. ■

The writer is a Delhi-based journalist



Pieter Vermeulen, a South African who is part of this unique PPP venture, says Naga Coffee has a lot of potential due to the citrus flavour peculiar to Himalayan coffee







A house built with corrugated iron is now a gallery



The Royal Hotel

Gold Time's Sake

Pilgrim's Rest in South Africa is a town in a time warp when gold diggers rushed in, looking for yellow dust

:: Kalpana Sunder

The picturesque Panorama Route winds its way through the Mpumalanga highlands in South Africa. Pine forests, cascading waterfalls, steep canyons and low-hanging, cotton-candy clouds make for a breathtakingly beautiful road trip. London, Berlin, and Lisbon are the names of some of the farms along the route, harking back to the origins of many miners who flocked to the area in search of gold and riches.

Winding roads and mountain passes lead to the small gold rush town of Pilgrim's Rest tucked in a valley. They say the town's name was derived from the fact that after many false starts, the gold prospectors finally found their home here. The town is steeped in history and drama of the feverish gold rush days. It is like stepping into the 19th century when gold prospectors and highway robbers dug for gold in the fields of Transvaal. Heritage buildings of wood and corrugated iron from the late 1800s line the main street, which are now converted into charming bed-and-breakfast hotels, cafes, souvenir shops and heritage museums.

"It all started when a prospector called Alec Patterson moved away from the main gold rush at Mac-Mac in nearby Sabie, started by a German prospector in 1866," explains a local guide. The town started as a cluster of basic canvas tents that functioned as diggers' accommodations, canteen and even billiards room. At first they found alluvial gold in streams and later gold dust and nuggets. Soon the town attracted as many as 1,500 gold diggers. Besides the gold diggers, shopkeepers, tradesmen and canteen suppliers moved here, to exploit the commercial opportunities.

By 1876, the town had permanent buildings, as families of miners moved in. Gardens, clubs, even croquet lawns and the Royal hotel came up. Most buildings were made of corrugated iron and wood which were easy to transport and the only stone buildings were the bank and the church. They say that the town was the second in South Africa to have electric street lights. The first settlers had challenging times – they made their own furniture, the women sewed clothes and the men grew wheat, fruits and vegetables. The gold created a whole new economy.

The gold mining had its ups and downs over the years with wars, British annexation, floods and landslides. In 1971, the last gold mine was closed and it was in 1986 that the town was declared a national monument. "A concerted effort has been made by historians and architects to ensure that the integrity of its history is preserved at all times," says the guide.

I walk through the street lined with jacaranda trees in full bloom, where women sell macadamia nuts. A group of boys strike a tune with sticks on the lids of garbage tins.

A landmark on Main Street is the Royal Hotel with sepia images, antique chairs, four-poster brass beds, lace curtains and doilies, and Edwardian lounges. The vintage bar at the hotel still stands. This was where the miners celebrated their victories and drowned their sorrows. It has wooden stools and walls lined with black-and-white images from the town's past. In those heady days, miners would sometimes throw a gold nugget across the counter to buy a round of drinks. "The bar was once a chapel at a school in Cape Town. It was transported to the town by ship and ox-wagon," says the guide.

History whispers from every corner of the town. At the Central Garage Museum, there are horse-drawn carriages, vintage cars and trucks and wagons from the gold rush era. The dark and musty Printing Museum showcases vintage printing presses that published the town's first newspaper, *The Gold News*, which was distributed to prospectors and stockbrokers. Old equipment, copies of newspapers and other antique machines from the early 1900s make this an enjoyable experience.

One of the most atmospheric buildings in the town is the well preserved Victorian House museum, which gives a peek into what life was like. The living room, bedroom and the kitchen have been furnished with period furniture and objects from the past. Black-and-white photographs of families on walls, antique washbasins, ceramic hot water bags, Victorian baths and wooden commodes: it's a throwback to another era. Close by is the Dredzen Store, a general store with wooden floors and an old-fashioned cash register. The shop is re-created in the 1930s style, with vintage advertisements, glass cupboards with tin boxes, and chairs and bicycles hanging from the ceiling.

A vintage building is now a restaurant called Pilgrim's Pantry that serves pies and coffee. You could sit outside with a cup. If you listen closely, you could still hear the rush of hundreds of people looking for gold dust in the stream. If you close your eyes, you might see it glinting in the dark.■

The writer is a Chennai-based freelancer


A vintage Model T Ford


The Victorian House Museum

PHOTOS: KALPANA SUNDER, GETTYIMAGES

FACT FILE

HOW TO REACH: Fly to Johannesburg. Pilgrim's rest is a four-hour drive from Johannesburg and 16 km from the town of Graskop

OTHER ATTRACTIONS: From Pilgrim's Rest, you can visit major attractions along the Panorama Route, including God's Window, Bourke's Luck Potholes and the spectacular Blyde River Canyon


Vintage printing presses that published the town's first newspaper, *The Gold News*, for prospectors



A general store

Artwork in Hiding

A search at jeweller Nirav Modi's Mumbai house revealed a treasure trove of paintings. Here are some instances of art treasures found at unlikely places

Purchased for: $5

Estimated value: **$50 mn**

Retired trucker Teri Horton purchased an "ugly" painting from a thrift store in San Bernardino in the 1990s. Later when trying to dispose it off at a garage sale, someone suggested it could be a work of Jackson Pollock. Horton response was, "Who the f*** is Jackson Pollock?" Ever since, Horton has been working with authenticators to prove that her painting is in fact by the abstract expressionist master. She is currently asking $50 million for the painting.





Found in the Attic

Estimated value: **$136 mn**

When a leaky roof forced the house owners in Toulouse to repair the attic in 2014, little did they know they would stumble upon a painting by Italian Baroque master Caravaggio. Some say the work depicting the biblical scene of Judith beheading Holofernes has been lying there for years. It would be auctioned on June 27, and experts said, could fetch up to 150 million euros ($170 million).



Bought for: $215

Estimated value: **$27,630**

In 2007, an unidentified student bought a pullout couch for $215 at a flea market in Berlin. When she unfolded the sofa at home, she found a tiny 10- by 15-inch oil painting. The work titled 'Preparation to Escape to Egypt' was by an unknown artist close to Venetian painter Carlo Saraceni between 1605 and 1620, according to auction house Kunst Kettler. The painting was sold for $27,630 at a Hamburg art auction.



Found while cleaning out parents' home

Estimated value: **$85 mn**

An anonymous British brother and sister came across a 16-inch Chinese vase while clearing out the home of their deceased parents in London. Luckily, they took the vase to an expert who dated it to the reign of 18th-century emperor Qianlong. It was put up for auction in 2010 with an estimated price of $1.9 million. But a bidding war took its value to $85 million.

Purchased for: $ 14,000

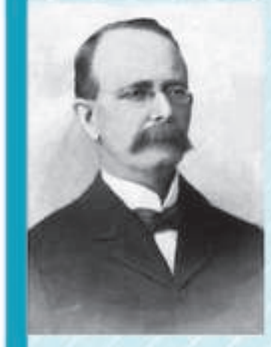
Estimated value: **$33 mn**

An American paid $14,000 for this gold egg –one of the 50 such eggs jeweller Peter Carl Fabergé created for the Romanovs – the Russian royal family – before the 1917 revolution. The American wanted to melt it and sell the gold. But a Google search made him realise its value. It is now with private collector.

SOURCE: HISTORY.COM, NEWS AGENCIES, CNN, DAILY MAIL

THIS WEEK, THAT YEAR

Events that shaped the world



March 17, 1989
John Philip Holland tests the first modern practical submarine. The 53 feet vessel remains submerged for an hour and 40 minutes off Staten Island.

March 18, 1852
William Fargo, Henry Wells and others set up the Wells, Fargo and Company to provide banking and freight services in the wake of the California gold rush. The firm is a today a leading bank in the US.





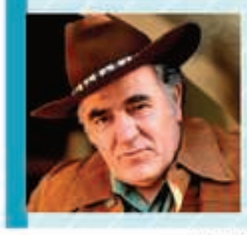
March 19, 1931
To stem the outflow of population, **Nevada legalises gambling.** A year later, divorce is also made legal.



March 20, 1852
Uncle Tom's Cabin, a anti-slavery novel by **Harriet Beecher Stowe** that was to have a huge influence on America, is published.

March 21, 1963
The notorious Alcatraz prison in San Francisco Bay is closed. The facility on an island was known for its harsh treatment of inmates.





March 22, 1903
The author of Wild West novels, **Louis L'Amour,** is born in Jamestown, North Dakota.

SOURCE: HISTORY.COM, ONTHISDAY.COM

WEEKLY VECTOR

Art Mart

Global art market share by value in 2018 (share of sales)

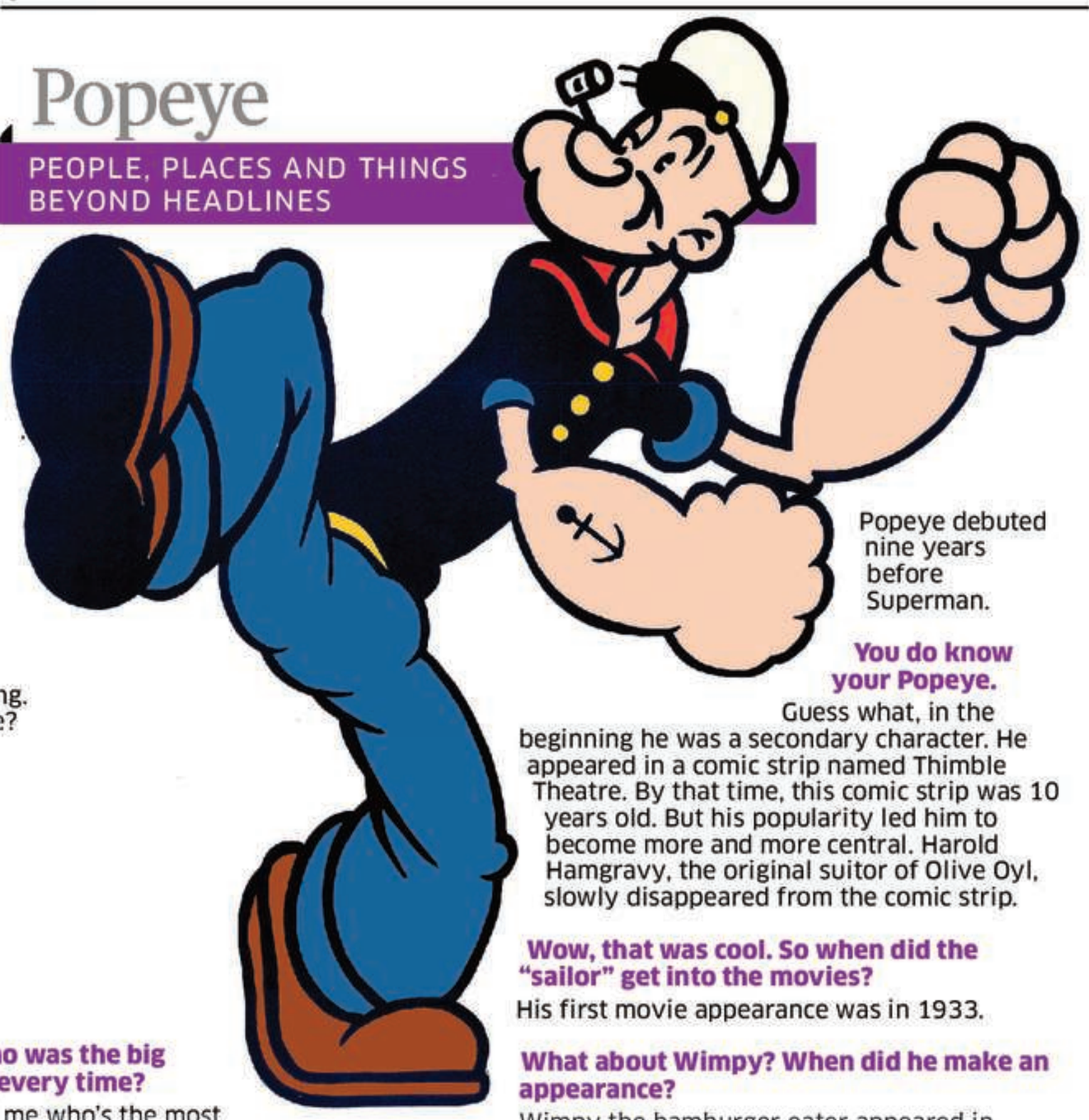


Source: Art Basel and UBS



Popeye

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS BEYOND HEADLINES



Why Popeye? Popeye is so passé.
May be, but did you know he turned 90 this January?

Ninety? Oh my, really?
Yes. See the spinach kept him going. So let's do a Popeye quiz, shall we?

Ok, am game.
Who's his girlfriend?

Olive Oyl, of course.
That's just for warming up. Tell me her sister's name.

She had a sister?
Yes, Castor Oyl.

But of course. OK, my turn – who was the big bad guy Popeye would beat up every time?
That's easy. It was Bluto. Now tell me who's the most famous man to play Popeye on stage.

That would be Robin Williams. Now, tell me who was the creator of Popeye?
It was EC Segar, an Amercan cartoonist. And Popeye has been by far his biggest ever creation. And think about it, Popeye debuted nine years before Superman.

You do know your Popeye.
Guess what, in the beginning he was a secondary character. He appeared in a comic strip named Thimble Theatre. By that time, this comic strip was 10 years old. But his popularity led him to become more and more central. Harold Hamgravy, the original suitor of Olive Oyl, slowly disappeared from the comic strip.

Wow, that was cool. So when did the "sailor" get into the movies?
His first movie appearance was in 1933.

What about Wimpy? When did he make an appearance?
Wimpy the hamburger eater appeared in 1932, and baby Swee'pea came only in 1936. But there is folklore about a real life inspiration for Popeye.

Really? Who would that be?
A sailor called Frank Fiegel, who lived in the same town as cartoonist EC Segar.

Text: Suman Layak

GET | LISTEN | DO | BROWSE | WATCH

Luna Display

Wireless display solution for MacOS & iPad; **Get it For:** $79.99



All newer iPads have beautiful displays. Why not put that display to good use by using it as an external monitor for your Mac? This tiny adapter from Luna Display does exactly that - wirelessly, without any setup and in the most hassle-free way possible. The only thing you need to do is plug the Luna Display into your Mac, connect your Mac and iPad to the same WiFi network and download the Luna Display software on both. Once you start the app on the iPad, it automatically connects to the server software on the Mac.

Just like any other second monitor, you can mirror/extend the display and choose the placement (to the left or right of the main computer). You will soon realise that having a large second display is the most underrated productivity tool. Rather than constantly switching between apps or resising the boundaries, you can keep all important activity open to see at a glance. We tried it with the web, Office document editing and Photoshop – it works. Since it is completely wireless, there is no cable clutter and you can also place the iPad at a distance.

There are a couple of downsides though. Luna Display won't work with any kind of USB C dongle or adapter, so keep that in mind if your Mac only has two USB C ports. Second, the wireless nature of the display signal means that it can't be used for video mirroring from the Mac. Depending on which Mac you're using, you can buy either the USB-C variant or Mini DisplayPort. They both work in the same way. Unfortunately, you cannot use two Luna Display on the same Mac (for two wireless displays) and there is no Windows version (but they're working on it). Luna Display ships to India for an additional $9.

If you're looking for a cheaper solution for the same thing, there's always Duet Display (a wired solution that works on both Windows and Mac). You can get the app for ₹799 and a USB C to Lightning cable for ₹499 onwards.

– Hitesh Raj Bhagat

DOWNLOAD

VidMax

Get it For: Free for Android



There is a tonne of interesting content out there and a lot of it is shared through social media. Sometimes, you might want to download a video from a social media platform to watch later but you're not always given that option. With the free VidMax app, you can download videos from places like Facebook, WhatsApp status, Instagram and Twitter. The app lets you browse these websites and has a built-in video player. The way to download something is simple: on the video you want to download, tap the three dots to bring up the options menu and tap copy URL. Then open VidMax, select the relevant social media app icon, paste the URL that you copied earlier and tap download. There are no ads, which is a welcome feature. Keep in mind that the app only works as a tool to give you the option to download and they clearly state that you're responsible for any copyright violation or misuse of the tool. *–Karan Bajaj*

PLAY

Hyperminimal

Get it For: Free, for iOS



This game is easy on the eyes – quite literally, because of the "sweet, sweet darkness", in the words of the developer. They encourage you to play in the dark. Plus, it helps if your iPhone has an amoled screen. The game is incredibly simple to learn but frustratingly hard to master. A light ball travells on a straight path to its goal but there are obstacles in the way. You can tap anywhere to slow the light ball and take your finger off the screen to let it continue at normal speed. You will fail the level if the light ball touches any of the moving obstacles. More than anything, you will marvel at the deviousness of the obstacles. There are ads after each level and you can remove them with an in-app purchase of ₹249. *– Hitesh Raj Bhagat*

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