



# Xpression

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## HELLO *Spring*

EXPLORING COLOURS AND BEYOND







# Xpression

## Mumbai: Indeed, the city of dreams



*Paradigm of struggle, zeal and determination – Deshraj Singh (Humans Of Bombay)*

Abhimanyu Basu

Every great sacrifice has a greater return in life', the phrase is glorified by Deshraj Singh, a 74 year old auto driver in Mumbai. In a short span of time, Deshraj lost both of his sons and the responsibility of earning livelihood for a family of seven fell solely upon his delicate shoulders but that never became a hurdle for his granddaughter's dreams of becoming a teacher. The day used to begin at 6 am and till midnight, Deshraj drove his auto and that's how was able to earn Rs. 10,000 a month – Rs. 6,000 was spent on

educating the grandchildren and only Rs. 4,000 used to remain for the family until last year, when his granddaughter scored 80 percent in the class 12 board exam and expressed her dream of studying B.Ed(Bachelor of Education) in Delhi. Sending his wife, daughter-in-law and grandchildren to their relative's home in their village, Deshraj sold his house in Mumbai and paid the fees for his granddaughter's education in Delhi while not hesitating a moment to spend the nights in his auto after exhausting days of driving the samen auto Humans of Bombay, a team of storytellers in

Mumbai, covered the story of Deshraj Singh and it went viral on various social media platforms. Thereafter, a crowdfunding was initiated with a target of Rs. 20 lakh but eventually, the amount went upto Rs. 24 lakh. An overwhelmed Deshraj received the cheque. An inspiration to many by now, Deshraj Singh continues to drive his auto in Mumbai besides dreaming of seeing his granddaughter graduate in Delhi. 'She would be the first graduate in our family,' said an overwhelmed and proud grandfather, Deshraj.

## Saraswati puja in the new normal

Harmanjot Kaur

The festival of Saraswati Puja or Basant Panchami marks the end of harsh winter and the beginning of springtime and the goddess of wisdom, knowledge, art and music is worshipped. As a gesture of offering to the goddess, students keep their books and other things related to academics beside the idol of the goddess on the day of Saraswati Puja and blessing for academic progress is being sought from the goddess. The Covid-19 pandemic brought the whole world to a standstill and sent daily life to a virtual mode where people became extensively dependent on the internet. The academic scenario witnessed a paradigm shift under this condition where students attended classes online, submitted assignments virtually and gave online exams – laptops and smartphones became the new classrooms with laptops playing the major role specifically. The Saraswati Puja of this year marked the relevance of this paradigm shift



*Technology marks the beginning of the spring season. (The Times Of India)*

## A journey from monochrome to polychrome

Oishi Basu & Shayanki Roy Chowdhury

March is indeed the festival of colours – one of the joys that a person revels but some were denied the privilege to celebrate this auspicious

possessions. Breaking the stereotypes is a form of welcoming the spring and that's how braving all odds, thousands of widows in

non-profit organisation in India. Earlier, the priests of the temple also used to join this celebration and that's how enhancing the process of societal acceptance by adding colours to the lives of persons who earlier used to lead monochromatic lives. Change is something that should constantly happen with time. As we call ourselves modern so our thought process and its implementation should reflect that modernity where there will be no stigma and stereotypes. The barricaded lives of widows have been portrayed in Rabin-drath Tagore's 'Chokher Bali' as well as in Vikas Khanna's 'The Last Colour' but trends like the one in Mathura's Gopinath Temple makes one feel that as generations pass by, we will move forward to a better tomorrow.



*A canvass full of colours. (Curly Tales)*

festival. Under the clutches of patriarchy and as part of an archaic social norm, the Hindu widows were barred from adding colours to their lives, be it in the form of celebrating Holi or owning world-

ly Vrindavan and Varanasi, clad in white saris, assemble at the Gopinath Temple in Mathura to celebrate Holi. This path-breaking inclusive trend was initiated in 2013 by Sulabh International Organisation, the largest

in the academic world where besides books, students were also seen offering their laptops for the puja. Some even offered their smartphones and tabs while worshipping the goddess. In the new normal, this kind of offering to the goddess came as a contemporary to the traditional offerings of books, musical instruments and dancing anklets. This can also be explained as a step forward to modernity where the use of new media is an integral part but in the backdrop, the tradition was kept intact.



## Human feelings becoming consumables

**Ahana Basu**

Saraswati puja has always been invoking the feeling and essence of springtime both in nature and in human minds. Primarily a festival for students and practitioners of any form of art, this puja has its own significance among various age groups and

From the beginning of the new millennium, the concept of brand and branding has changed people's mindset where the time has become a scarlet dominated one – red roses and goodies have replaced the erstwhile dominance of yellow



*A day of affection and togetherness. (The Quint)*

professions – the chant of 'Saraswatistotram' is one such significance especially among classical music practitioners.

The festival is marked with yellow colour which bears its special resemblance with the 'Basanti' colour saree of Goddess Saraswati. The colour also invokes the sense of affection and togetherness among people. Marigold and yellow rose have been signifying love, warmth and affection among Bengalis since time immemorial.

rose and marigold. Human's expression of love has found a special date of February 14 through social media worthy pictures and the reactions that they further generate.

What's in vogue cannot only be western in nature, the acceptance of newer concepts has a point but the tradition should be kept intact because our roots are where we belong and the metaphysical sweetness of love should not take the shape of a market economy based consumption process.

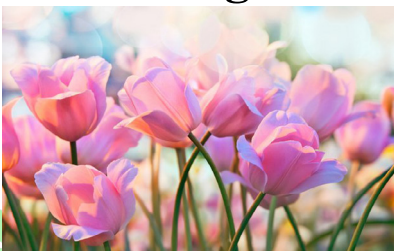
## Nature's way of pronouncing new life

**Oishi Basu**

As the winter leaves us by taking away the coldness filled with greys and whites, we eagerly wait for something to fill us up with warmth and the arrival of spring perfectly fulfils our longing – the season waltzes in with a new lease of life for every living thing.

At the very outset of this season, we feel a change around us – from the tran-

quillity to the buzz of new energy in the air as if a beckoning light at the end of a wintry dark tunnel. Crossing its heart, spring fills the minds with a sense of optimism and passion through the radiance of the endless blues



*The spring palette in full bloom. (medium.com)*

above and the greens around and by painting the world with the vivid colours of blooming flowers. The cool breeze of the early morning and the afternoon and the warbling of birds fulfilling the breeze, up-

## Of sweet tooth and sweetness

**Sudeshna Banerjee**



Growing up in Burdwan has made me a sweet tooth. Besides, the rich heritage of the place, the district is also popularly known for some of the sweet delicacies that are being produced here.

The first production of Mihidana and Sitabhog here dates back to the colonial time when the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon visited Burdwan in 1904 to confer the title of 'Maharaja' to the then King of Burdwan, Vijay Chanda and a local confectioner made the delicacies named Mihidana and Sitabhog to mark the occasion.

Basmati rice blended with gram flour and saffron. The blend is then fried in ghee before being dipped into sugar syrup – that's the recipe of Mihidana and for Sitabhog, cottage cheese and powdered rice are rolled into dough. It is then broken into tiny bits and fried in ghee. It is then put into sugar syrup.

The business potential of these sweet delicacies has drawn the district administration's attention and it

was then decided that the makers would be trained in packaging and marketing their products to establish a market across the country and abroad.

'Shaktigarh's Lyangcha' has a separate fan base among Bengalis and other sweet lovers. Shaktigarh falls under the East Burdwan district and is famous for a host of confectioneries primarily selling 'Lyangcha' besides other delicacies. Cottage cheese and chikoo pulp are mixed and cardamom is added for the scent and flavour. The elongated pieces of dough are then deep-fried in ghee. It is then put in sugar syrup and the resultant delicacy is known as 'Lyangcha'.

It is being said that 90 years ago, when the Queen of Burdwan desired to eat a sweet of different kind, a local confectioner from Shaktigarh presented the Queen with this delicacy and as the sweet maker walked with a limp which in Bengali is called 'Lyangchano', the sweet got its name 'Lyangcha'.

lift humans' emotions and make them happy.

Springtime also hosts several Indian festivals, the likes of Basant Panchami, Holi, Gudi Padwa, Baisakhi and so on. Besides welcoming the New Year in their own ways, these festivals also justify the fact that spring is indeed a new beginning. With a hope of prosperity, well being and endurance to fight the evil, let's welcome the spring of 2021.





## Work hard, the star will shine bright

Akansha Vijay

The journey from Hata in Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai was a tough one as the road was full of thorns – some said that the look was not good, some called the ability to speak English not upto the mark and some even rejected for a lower family income. Coming out of the Mumbai station, the first thing that came in sight was a Pizza Hut store and later on that store gave a part time job to live the daily life in an expensive city of dreams.

On February 11, 2021, Manya Singh saw light at the end of the tunnel through thousands of camera flashes as she stood as the runner up of VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 and that too came after she struggled to audition for over 10 pageants but they rejected her by framing her look and the inability to



*Manya Singh with her father Omprakash Singh and mother Manorama Singh. (India Today)*

speak English as reasons.

Manya is the daughter of Omprakash Singh, an autorickshaw driver in Mumbai. Omprakash inspired and supported her daughter in all her endeavours. At the age of 14, Manya ran away from her home in Uttar Pradesh and boarded a train to Mumbai and knowing about their daughter's dreams, very soon, her parents also arrived in Mumbai. The

days of struggle began as Manya funded her education by doing part time jobs in a Pizza Hut store and a call centre. Manya's mother, Manorama Singh, a homemaker turned beautician recalled their days of struggle when they found it hard to make ends meet but now is a bright morning when Manya will start fulfilling her dreams while providing the best to her family. Mumbai – indeed, the city of dreams!

## The scarlet petals of spring

Shayank Roy Chowdhury

The arrival of spring is marked with the blooming of the Palash flower in some districts of India. The 'Flame of the Forest' as it is popularly known, has been romanticized by poets since time immemorial, for instance, the lines of Tagore's memorabilia of Holi, 'Ore Grihobasi' welcomes the spring season with the vermilion hue of palash under the clear sky of spring.

In contrast to it, Kipling's narrative of these flowers speaks about the arrival of summer and foresees the turbulence that follows- The Jungle Book is based on the Pench National Park of Madhya Pradesh which is a part

of the Satpura range that is filled with vast stretches of palash flowers. The nightmarish reminder of the horrific colonial rule is the dark aspect that these flowers talk about. Interestingly, the wood pulp of palash tree is also suitable for the production of newsprint.

The tribal communities use this flower to satiate various purposes – the women adorn themselves with it and sherbet is also made from these flowers. Besides medicinal properties, this flower also acts as a host to lac insects that produce Rangini lac. West Bengal is the second largest producer of lac – lac cultivation is one of



*Palash flowers – the scarlet petals of spring. (Pinterest)*

the major economic activities of the tribal people of Purulia but lately, drastic climatic changes and global warming have affected lac cultivation and production.

## A spring of unity

Praggya Sikdar



*Indian and US soldiers dancing to Punjabi songs.*

(@ISRCT\_Ghost/Twitter)

The closing ceremony of the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indo-US joint military exercise named 'Yudh Abhyas' recently took place on February 21, 2021 at the Mahajan Field Firing Range. The event began in Rajasthan on February 8, 2021 as part of the mandate of the United Nations regarding counter terrorism operations.

Besides regular military drills, weapon handling techniques and other exercises, these kind of joint military exercises act as solid platforms for the exchange of culture between nations and that's how the relationship between the armies enhance and improve. Amidst the exercise, a 38 minute video went viral on the internet and the trend began from Twitter. In the video, the soldiers from India and the United States were seen celebrating Basant Panchami by dancing together to a Punjabi song. The US soldiers were also clad in traditional Indian kurta. After the video went viral in social media platforms, it was received with great warmth and enthusiasm among people and armies of both the countries.

Ghost Brigade of the US Army first tweeted this heart-warming video on the occasion of Basant Panchami and wished their Indian counterpart. Indeed, it was a spring of unity as Basant Panchami marks the arrival of spring in the country.





## First pink ball test in the world's largest cricket stadium

Anuvab Deb Sinha

Pink ball in itself is a fascination for cricket enthusiasts, after all, it's something with which the day-night test cricket is being played and how wonderful a memory can be if the world's largest cricket stadium hosts its first match with the pink ball?

After its re-construction, Motera Cricket Stadium in Ahmedabad hosted the second pink ball test in India from February 24 between India and England – it marked the inception of the day-night test match in the world's largest cricket stadium which has a capacity to accommodate 1,32,000



Motera Cricket Stadium's new look after its re-construction.

(Scroll.in)

spectators. In honour of the present Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, the stadium was also renamed as the Narendra Modi Stadium.

The match lasted for only a couple of days with early collapses of wickets

in both the sides and it became the shortest test match played (in terms of number of balls bowled) ever since the time of the second world war. India's spin magic stood victorious for the home side as Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin restricted

### Brief Scoreboard

#### 1st Innings

England – 112 all out

India – 145 all out

#### 2nd Innings

England – 81 all out

India – 49/0

England to a meagre 81 in the second innings – the lowest and the first two digit score by England against India. England set a target of only 49 runs and it was easily chased down by Indian openers Rohit Sharma and Shubhman Gill just within half an hour after the dinner break and India won the second pink ball test on home soil.

## IPL to make a comeback

Sampurna Majumder

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is back in the native soil this year, as announced by the IPL Governing Council under BCCI on March 7, 2021. Kolkata, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru will be the cities to host this grand event across the country.

The first match will be played between Mumbai Indians (defending champion) and Royal Challengers Bangalore, in Chennai on April 9, 2021. The Playoffs and the final will be held at the world's largest cricket stadium at Motera. A total of 56 matches will be played where Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru will host 10 matches in total and Ahmedabad and Delhi will have 8 matches in total. None of the teams will be playing in their home venues resulting in playing at 4 venues



IPL 2021 Auction Room.

(BCCI/SPORTZPICS)

out of the 6 – thus, a preventive measure to control the crowd and maintain social distance. As usual, the afternoon matches have been scheduled at 3:30 pm IST whereas, the evening ones will commence from 7:30 pm IST.

Last year, the league successfully happened in the UAE (United Arab Emirates) by maintaining all the safety protocols. BCCI is hopeful about this year's IPL in the native soil. Players are to follow all the safety protocols and the rules of the bio bubble and if the pandemic situation in the country remains under control, the stadium gates may open for spectators.

## In pursuit of a many-hued spring

Rupsha Putatunda

The balmy air, the warmer hues, the sweet melodious tunes of chirping birds and the familiar scurrying around of animals, mark the arrival of the spring season and the

climate change and the deteriorating ecosystem only when we come across social awareness campaigns conducted by organizations like WWF (World Wildlife



An unfamiliar spring. (Flickr)

season spreads an inexplicable bond between the human beings and the nature. Spring has a tempting charm.

Time has changed us and in turn, we have forced the nature to change – we now live and swear by urbanization and a digital world where deforestation is blatantly being practiced, poisonous emissions are being released into the air by vehicles and industries causing the global temperature to rise and consequently melting the glaciers all over the world. Animals going extinct only make for light lunch talk. We ponder about the

Fund), PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and so on. It hits us straight when we find our cities void of tree shades on a scorching summer day. The night sky is seldom clad with twinkling stars these days.

Spring is definitely arriving but are we experiencing it in the same way that our ancestors did? Will the future generations witness the vibrant colours of flora and fauna? Because the spring of modernity is not left with a variegated range of colours.





## PHOTO GALLERY



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