



# Xpression

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## Memories Of 2022

# A WORLD CUP OF CONTRADICTIONS

By Rudranshu Sengupta

The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar has certainly been lively, to say the least. When the bid for hosting the 2022 World Cup had been given to Qatar, many questioned the wisdom of giving a small, obscure Middle Eastern nation with no real history of the game, and little in the way of facilities to host such a mammoth tournament. The infrastructure had to be built from scratch at an eye-watering cost of over

\$200 billion, making this the most expensive World Cup in history, never mind the construction workers being treated like slave labor. The tournament, in a first time, was to be hosted at the end of November to the month of December, rather than the usual months of June and July, due to Qatar's 40+ degree and 80% average humidity summers. This was met with groans and protests for domestic league clubs, as this would create further fixture congestion in the later months of the season and increases player fatigue and strain. Nevertheless, despite all the negative press, this has truly been a world cup to remember for the right reasons. There were surprise wins, strong performances from established nations and disappointing lows for others.

France, without the talismanic Karim Benzema who sustained a thigh injury, broke the much-feared World Cup winner's curse of group stage exits, going back to the 2002 World Cup. Italy did not qualify for the World Cup for the second straight time, and Germany would crash out of the group stage yet again. Both Belgium and Denmark would disappoint considerably. Saudi Arabia shocked the world by winning 2-1 against Argentina, and Morocco were the surprise package of this tournament going all the way to the semi-final, becoming only the second African nation since Cameroon in Italia 90'. However, this World Cup was also the final chapter of the careers of the two most illustrious players in world football in the current age- Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

The World Cup also revealed two contrasting performances of these two great players. Ronaldo's World Cup, fair to say, is a send-off to forget. The termination of his contract by Manchester United overshadowed his campaign. He scored only once, and was subbed off in the first half in the quarterfinal against Morocco. In fact, his presence seem to have effected the overall performance of the team, which seemed to per-



Source: Google

form way better than he did.

Lionel Messi, on the other hand seized what was his very last chance to World Cup, in style. Granted, that shock loss to Saudi Arabia in Argentina's first match soured the mood.

However, from thereon, they were flawless, not losing a single game

in their road to football's biggest prize. Messi's 21 goal contribution (13 goals, 8 assists) are the most by a player since 1966, and he also bagged the Golden Ball for the tournament. Not just Messi, the entire squad gave a nation that has experienced some incredible lows a win that united the entire nation.

## Dusk till Dawn

By Barkha Mishra



Source: Google

Living a comfy life and stepping into this world became a nightmare, a whole lot of excitement and a new adventure which turned out to be one of the best memories of this year. An introverted person fighting her own battles was set free in this world.

Our parents want us to fly but are scared of the idea of flight. I was all by myself in the hostel for the first time, away from my parents. I have always manifested this life, staying away from parents, enjoying with friends and taking my own decisions. All this was so much fun to think about, but the reality flipped me upside down. Day 1 in the hostel was so weird. Knowing no one, absolute no one, having dinner by oneself and staring at people who stare back at you was so weird. Everything was so weird and difficult. I had dinner and went back to my roommate whose name I didn't

even know. I called her 'AAP' for three days straight without asking her the name and took to minding my own business. All I knew was - I can't stay here; I want to go home.

This feeling was scary enough already, but intensified when I had the first set of clothes needing to be washed. The place was depressing because no one was even close to what I'd call 'friendly'.

Days passed. It's like... there are relations which are meant to be made. Thank God I bumped into this crazy bunch of people who were lost in this wonderland as was I. I'm glad I had dinner with them for the first time and went on a walk with them. I found my forever home with this crazy bunch. It's hardly months left for me to be here in this hostel now. But every time I sit back and reminisce down this memory lane, I have this fear of losing out.



# 2022: A Rollercoaster

By Yukti Karwa

Sitting back, I retrospect how 2022 has been - memories, both good and bad, run past my mind like a flashback.

No short of a rollercoaster, 2022 did take a toll on me mentally, emotionally and physically. When the world was resuming back its course steadily post Covid'19, we soon got notified by the University about it's reopening. We had one last semester in University before graduating and I looked forward to it. However, on the very first day everything felt different, friendships that would refresh us, suddenly seemed estranged. Bonds that should have grown by now made me feel out of place and uncomfortable. I realised our social batteries were low and we had almost forgotten how to

interact and communicate with people. Everyday felt like we were pushing ourselves one extra mile to keep up with people.

Assignments, back to back events in college, trying to be cordial with people, examinations, entrance tests for other Universities to pursue Master's, it felt surreal to be part of the rat race. In between all of it, spending quality time with family and close friends became obsolete. Standing up to people's expectations of giving them time weighed heavy on my shoulders. As hard as I would try to stop overthinking and outrun my anxiety, thoughts of losing equations with my closed ones always enveloped my mind. However, I tried to remain focused my on entrance

exams because I wanted to move out of the stagnancy that did not allow me to sit back, relax and be optimistic. Hence, I applied to colleges outside Kolkata, mostly in Bangalore. Fate has it and I had probably jinxed my dream, because the University I wanted admission in had their entrance exam on the day of my semester examination. I could not even sit for the exam. It came as a turbulence and I felt STUCK and MISERABLE. Everything seemed to fall apart because it was not just one University's test, 3 entrance tests for different colleges were scheduled back to back and they clashed with my University exams.

You'd think that's where my peril ended but then I lost my

grandfather. After which my family and I had to pick every ounce of our strength to come back and resettle emotionally and financially.

I had surrendered, I wanted peace and my sister took me on a mini vacation to Manali. I realised I was postponing my moment to enjoy life, I was being too harsh on myself. 2022 has taught me that what is lotted cannot be blotted, no matter how hard you try. I have learnt to accept things as is, pause every now and then, take a deep breath and start over as and when required. I had lost myself and most of my precious friendships somewhere in 2022, but I hope to recollect everything and be a happier version of myself in 2023!



## My Watchlist of 2022

By Aindrila Basak

As my professors say, "Mass communication students do not watch films, they read films." Even if I have not fully learnt to read films, I am really proud that I chose a subject for my higher studies which actually synced with my passion. I love films, any film, from any industry, any

director, and any genre. Film is film; first you need to watch everything, then you can choose the best, provided that you first watch everything that is there!

I watch all films, from Tarantino to Tarun Majumder, oh! What a range, right? But it's true! This year, I watched new films and

1. Abar Byomkesh
2. Batman Begins
3. Calcutta 71
4. The Dark Knight
5. Erin Brokovich
6. Fight Club
7. The Green Mile
8. The Hangover
9. Indecent Proposal
10. Jerry Maguire
11. Kal Ho Na Ho
12. Lagaan
13. Marley & me
14. The Notebook
15. Omkara
16. The Passion of Joan of Arc
17. Quantum of Solace
18. Ratatouille
19. Schindler's List
20. Tumbaad
21. Udham Singh
22. Vanilla Sky
23. Wolf of Wall Street
24. X-men
25. You only live Twice
26. Zodiac

**Couch is ready! Chips are ready! Let's binge!**

repeated the films that I loved all my life.

I believe that this university has plenty of film lovers, of which some watch films, some read films, some criticise films, some wait for films, some write films

to make, while some dream about films!

For all dreamers who believe in films, here's a list of some of the films I have loved all my life and lost count of how many times I have watched them.

**Lights, Camera and..... Action!**

# The London Bridge Plan

By Pragya Sen

The phrase used for the rituals that followed the death of the longest-ruling monarch. The entire execution of the plan of action staring from announcing the deteriorating condition of the ailing monarch to the new government at 10 Downing street, to emergency charters carrying the royal household members to the Balmoral Castle and the announcement of the queen's last breath... was a planned procedure called the London Bridge plan. Before online media platforms prepared their posts for the world to upload and reshare, the governor-general, ambassadors and the prime minister will have to dress in black to address the public and media.

The shortest-running Prime Minister in the history of the United Kingdom announced the mournful news of the passing away of the longest-running Monarch. Her death followed few of the biggest turn of events for the entire nation. The queen who was the last link of Britain to its former glory takes away the id and the egoistic self-regard of her nation with her last breath.

All these ridiculously perfect

planning and quintessential course of action around any event even closely related to Royalty were recreated with the appropriate resemblance in the famous Netflix series 'The Crown'.

The grim realities of inside the palace, the tense relationships, questionable marriages, and rigid 'Elizabethan' traditions were not as pleasant as the series of Anne Hathaway's 'The Princess Dairies' with her fancy gowns and jeweled crowns and utopian Genovia. Surpassing the talk over all of the above mentioned, the Netflix documentary on the life of Prince Harry and his doting wife Megan Markle-the infamous royal family walkout, created a stir big enough for people to fuss over.

The final nail in the coffin of the highly regarded Royal family was the release of 'Spare' Prince Harry's personal memoir on his life as a spare member of the royal household spilling the details of his grim experiences. As the queen's soul rests in peace leaving her family and nation in utter unrest exposed to public criticism, the sun now finally sets on her empire.



Source: Vaani Netam

## Memories of 2022

By Aneek Bhattacharya

As far as years go, I had lived through better ones than 2022. Yet there was something in that year itself that touched me like a breath of fresh air. The lockdown had finally been lifted, and having been afflicted with the dreaded disease twice by then, I was weary of how I used that newfound freedom, handling myself with utmost caution... Of course not-do you think a bird who was kept chained for the better part of its life would think where it will fly first? It will flap its wings to the fullest of its whims and fly to wherever its eyes could see. I walked distances huge enough that any sane person would board a locomotive.

When I returned home every day with my feet cramped and my fit-bit showing 20,000-something steps, I felt a sense of fulfilment, that I had craved to breathe the city air heavy with joy and carbon for almost 2 years. But with its freedom, came other things. Having studied from home for so long, through online classes and giving exams on computers, I had almost forgotten how to hold a pen. And with online classes came a certain comfort, I could do my classes while lying on my bed playing games on my phone, sometimes even falling asleep. The professors knew we did that, they just didn't have a

way to stop us. Have you ever heard of teenage students falling short of excuses? A network issue only came up when the professor asked us a question or asked us to turn on the camera, the sun would rise from the west if that same network issue came up during a PUBG match.

But in conclusion, when we had to resume physical classes, I found myself outgunned.

The classes seemed too long; the days too short. And having attended half the semester online, giving physical exams seemed unfairly difficult, and I performed as well as you'd expect me to perform. I walked into the exam hall valiant and left it bruised, and defeated. The academic struggle was one I accustomed myself to, I try not to be burdened by it, and focus on other things which also matter just as much.

There were certain things I learnt about myself. That I can work and earn for myself, that I can cook better than I thought, and that I can make friends, and lose them just as quickly. Having learnt that, I didn't feel shy from going out into the world and making as many friends as I could. Some came and went, easier forgotten than remembered. Some left an imprint, memories of joy and sorrow. But some stayed, and might just last a lifetime.



Source: Google

# Do I go back to December all the time?

By Mayurika Bhattacharyya

**"Did anyone tell you that pain isn't something that you thrive in?", Peter asked.**

**"Why do you say so?", I said while realising very well how much truth this statement held**

Dear Peter,  
Do you think that after everything, I go back to December all the time? Well let me tell you. Ever felt like an Alfred Tennyson poem in the world of Robert Louis Stevenson poems? Well turns out you always find an Arthur Henry Hallam to confide in when there's too much positivity around. We all cherish the feeling of amusement, happiness, laughter or anything that have a positive connotation to itself but what happens to us when we start to find peace in the negativity? How do we get out of it then and how do we look at the Stevenson poems and not feel like we do

not belong?

As we stroll through life, we more often than not are stuck with a certain vehicle - vehicle of emotion. Guilt, pain, grief, joy, jealousy, insecurity, anger, confusion and what not? Although, are we the only ones that are stuck? The answer is always no, always.

2022's kindness towards me was similar to the kindness that Sylvia Plath showed to herself so I guess we all can say that it wasn't at the top of the line.

With exams and a miniature phase of depression, December gave me loads of reasons to feel like a Martin Czerny in a Taylor

Swift world. I kept whining, complaining, hating and just existing with the guilt of my own existence until one day - one day I just started living for the easy moments and surviving for the difficult ones. So yes, to answer my own question, I go back to December all the time. If not for anything else - the moments.

And maybe someday, in some December, we will not be surviving the difficult ones and would have the strength to live through them.

Till then, yes I'd have to agree with you Peter, I do for the matter of fact thrive in pain. But someday I won't, Peter - I promise I won't.



Source: Aindrila Basak



Source: Vaani Netam

# Twists of 2022

By Paroma Dey Sarkar

2022 at SXUK has been a rollercoaster ride of emotions and more so since it was the year we returned back to campus after spending 2 long years in quarantine. Right from meeting new people to ending old relations to starting some afresh, it had multiple episodes and turning points - so much so that now when I look back it is hard to believe that all these happened in one single year!

Keeping aside the really personal ones, two of the most significant things that happened this year was my selection to the university's debating and drama society, namely XUDS and XUCAS - places I've always wanted to be a part of.

I remember how most of my memorable UG days have been about me and my then best friend trying, retrying and lamenting over not being able to make it up to XUDS, no matter how much we brushed up on our debating skills. This year, not only did I finally get selected but also got applauded for my 'exceptionally well-constructed arguments'! This victory however

didn't mean the same without her. The joy of winning was somewhere lost with our friendship...

The year didn't end on a very good note. Most often than not, breaks are bleak for me anyway. However this time, things were worse, especially since I hoped they'd be far better!

I'm into films and theatre but never got the exposure or chance to actually perform on a big stage, that's until winter break when XUCAS finally gave me the opportunity.

Needless to say, I was very excited and enthusiastic about it. But soon things took an ugly turn and I had to quit. Every passing day ever since was pretty disturbing for me and all the more since I really spent days working on it! It wasn't easy letting it all go but at that moment, it seemed to be the only option.

Sometimes one can feel hollow even after achieving the things they've always wanted to, because of some unexpected twists life brings about. But as some wise person said, everything has a purpose.



Source: Paroma Dey Sarkar



Imagine being imprisoned in your own houses for more than a year now. I think it takes courage to do so. For once, we feel like those animals in cages waiting to get their freedom, waiting to land their feet in the softness of the grass, waiting to feel the warmth of the sun on our skins, waiting to get wet in the rain.

Our mental health has reached rock-bottom, it shows. Multiple arguments with families, friends, strangers every single day. We are trapped in this insidious world, feeling suffocated and lonely. How much can we take? We are humans with emotions, rather extremely strong emotions I'd say. We let these emotions out in the form of anger or by crying or by watching a baby sleeping

# You are not alone

By Samantha John

peacefully. We tend to overthink scenarios particularly at night, I know I do. If only we would get a goodnight sleep as peaceful as the sleeping baby.

This pandemic has weakened us physically and has drained us mentally. There's no inner peace that any of us have. As teenagers, young adults, none of us are supposed to go through this. None of us should feel alone, because loneliness is the biggest demon that we have within ourselves, and we cannot let it win at any cost. Talk to a friend, talk to a par-

ent, talk to a stranger or just write down your deepest thoughts in a diary.

Do what makes you happy, shut your doors, dance your heart out, cook your favorite meal, rewatch your favorite childhood movies, sing your hearts out, play board games with your family.

I am no expert, but I know how difficult this time has been on us. I deal with problems every day; I cry myself to sleep. Then I begin to think of all those other people who are dealing with way bigger problems than mine. Then I re-

mind myself - no problem is small in this world, it's on us, how we deal with it, how we fight it, and how we learn from it. We all suffer in different ways we are unaware about, but we are strong enough to fight our demons, bravely.

Hope is the only thing we have left now, that's our strength, that's what's keeping us going, that's what gives us courage to survive every single day in this mad world. We have come SO far along, so giving up is not an option. Sooner or later, this will be over too, we will be like the free birds flying high in the sky. This is a phase; this too shall pass. We are in this together.

*You are not alone.*

## Why I did not mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth II

By Armaan Agarwal

Queen Elizabeth II passed away on September 8, 2022. It seemed as if the entire world paid their condolences to the longest ruling British monarch. However, I beg to differ. I believe that we shouldn't mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Queen of the United Kingdom served as its head of state for 70 years. During this time, Britain lost its colonial empire. Yet, the atrocities did not stop. For Britons, of course, their monarch holds immense significance. Contrarily, the subjects of the former empire suffered a worse fate.

During the inception of the reign of Elizabeth II, British security forces committed wide-scaled forced labour, detention as well as forced relocation of millions in the empire. Be it Kenya, Cyprus, Northern Island, virtually no colony still under control was left from these crimes. Yet, the world seemed to care about the 'positive' aspects of such a brutal ruler simply because she was a British monarch.

The existence of the commonwealth is an entire different issue. But the group seems to be nothing more than a way of the UK to still hold significant control over its

former colonies. A way of reliving its old past. The past which may have been wonderful for the Brits but not for the colonies. After everything that has happened in our own colonial past, why did we need 3 days to mourn the Queen's death?

Our freedom fighters spent their entire lives for independence of our country. But today, it's us who are paying respects to a member of the monarchy which ruled upon us. Is that just to the millions of lost lives during that reign? India is no longer a small player on the world stage. There is international pressure in diplomacy and I do understand that. But, this also provided an opportunity for the country to establish its stronghold on the world stage.

Yes, most will argue that diplomacy was the main reason for the global mourning of Queen Elizabeth's death. Albeit, my thoughts stand firm. Paying condolences to a head of state who destroyed the lives of millions of 'subjects' is not morally correct. This serves as a way of tarnishing the mass efforts done in the past several decades to try and fight against this institution. Maybe one day, we'll see a change for the better.

## Personal memories of 2022

By Tilottama

We forget mostly everything, but those memories of something we cannot afford to forget are like a rewind button, of memoirs personal. Memories can be merry if we remember things or people with a smile, and sometimes melancholic as well. But memories, nonetheless – especially those which are personal, sometimes help us turn out to be known as better human beings to the world, or maybe like revamped version of ourselves.

Memories start from childhood; it is the part which wires the mesh in our minds. Recollecting from my childhood, I remember I always wanted to be a teacher. From embracing myself in the costume of teacher, to teaching my dolls as students, I clearly remember everything. In 2022, after overcoming a severe, dark phase of my life, I started teaching children. Currently, I am teaching eleven students successfully which I think would constitute the best memory I have ever made till now. Every day I learn new things from them. Their joyous faces bring joy in my life as well. I think to myself, this might just be the best thing, to identify a new version of myself, my new capabilities in a new field.

Another best memory for me in 2022 would be the breaking of menace of the COVID-19 pandemic, and me finally coming to my dream place, the St. Xavier's University. After two years of feeling caged behind the laptop screens and cell phones, I was finally able to touch the place, meet people in Kolkata and even my professors in person! The virtual world turned into reality. From seeing the gates of St. Xavier's University to touching the benches of my classroom, and having the first class with Somak Sir, I think I had splendid moments. Studying in such a reputed university was like felicitation to my dreams, which put feathers to my hopes and gave me the confidence to move ahead and carry them forward.

I lived these moments in 2022 which, as scholars would rightly say, turned into memories. These memories, these moments gave me a newer version of myself and eradicated all things negative or silly, for which human beings often judge themselves and delve into regrets about life not being their cup of tea. On the contrary, I would say life is the most beautiful gift of God, which has an automated album called 'memories'. These memories, being personal as they are but truly the foundational memories of 2022, brought me a new lesson, that life is synonymous with 'learning' and being a Xaverian now, I know only one thing - "Nihil Ultra" which says there is "nothing beyond" and thus, sky is the limit of the will.

# Winter Olympics in Beijing

By Aishi Majumdar and Reshmi Saha

The XXIV Olympic Winter Games demurred off spectacularly with a stunning Opening form at the Beijing National Stadium. The "One World, One Family" theme of the Opening form was represented by the image of a single snowflake and was central to the showpiece from the beginning to the end of the Ceremony. The theme was grounded on an ancient Chinese byword which meant that "a truly wise person sees the whole world as a family". The lighting of the Olympic jug symbolized the launch of Beijing 2022 and brought a mesmerizing Opening form to an climactic end. The aphorism, in a Game inescapably affected by the Covid epidemic and mired with political contestation, was to be simple, safe, and splendid. Athletes from 91 NOCs marched into the Beijing National Stadium for the Cortege of Nations at the Opening form stirring a strong sense of déjà vu. The Beijing National Stadium, or Bird's Nest as it's affectionately known, came as the first venue to host Opening observances of both the Olympic Winter and Summer Games.

Between February 4th and 20th and March 4th and 13th China successfully hosted the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics. Overcoming multiple difficulties and challenges China presented a simple, safe, and splendid event to the world. Beijing also became the first dual Olympic city in the history of the games. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for efforts to ensure full success for the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics stating that China has made a solemn commitment to the international community to host great games. Beijing 2022 was a journey comprising both physical and human infrastructure. Encompassing green construction and reuse of facilities. All venues were powered with renewable energy, with solar and wind as primary energy sources. For the first time in the history of the Olympics natural CO2 refrigeration systems were used at four ice venues to reduce carbon emissions from the cooling process to nearly zero. Water-conserving snowmaking techniques were also adopted at some facilities. The opening ceremony

of the Beijing Winter Olympics was officially held at the national stadium on February 4th. The show was captivating with the theme of building a community with a shared future for mankind running through integrating Chinese culture with ice and snow elements the program demonstrated the beauty of strength and unity as well as the grandeur of sports.

China claimed 9 gold and 15 overall medals at the Olympics; as well as 18 gold and 61 overall medals at the Paralympics, to enjoy its best-ever results at the Winter Games. Norway tallied the most gold medals, 16 as well as the highest total number of medals, 37; but medals are not the only thing that matter at this event. Beijing 2022 engaged more than 300 million people in ice and snow activities accelerating the growth of China's winter sports industry and boosting tourism. The official motto of the game is together for a shared future which corresponds to China's aspiration of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

A total of 31 heads of state and government, royal families, and



international organizations attended the games. UN secretary general Antonio Guterres stressed that the world needs a successful Winter Olympics to send a clear message that people of every country, ethnicity, and religion can rise above differences to achieve solidarity and cooperation.

After 17 days of action, the Beijing 2022 Winter Games come to an end on Sunday, February 20, with a Closing Ceremony. The highlight event marked the formal conclusion of the Olympics, and the hosts passed the Olympic torch to Milano Cortina in 2026, the site of the following Winter Olympics.

## Reaching out to a friend: the other side of the Russia-Ukraine

By Soumyaroop

**The war will end, and leaders will shake hands.  
That old woman will keep waiting for her martyred son.  
And those children will keep waiting for their hero father.  
I don't know who sold our homeland, but I saw who paid the price.  
-Mahmood Darwish**

Whenever I think of these lines, my thoughts wander off to the people who are pillaged by these vehement and cancerous wars. Recently, I had the greatest misfortune to see the naked truth of these geo-political conflicts which have a lasting impact on mankind. It was a bright winter morning in February when a lunatic head sitting in Moscow thought of the 'denazification' of the prosperous and peace-loving people of Ukraine. A few days later, I re-

ceived a call from one of my best friends from school, who asked me very casually to check what was happening in the news as they were facing a short power cut. Although the international media was not that active at that part in time, it was just minor skirmishes that were going on in the border areas of Ukraine.

However, 15 days later somewhere in the middle of the march at around 1/1:30 am, I got a call from my friend who was sobbing as well as whispering at the same time: "Somu!! things have become horrible over here". As a reaction to this, the first thing that came to my mind was to check the situation of the war. For the first time, I witnessed human carnage never seen with my own eyes. I was baffled at the situation by the extraordinary pace with which the

entire war has progressed in a few days. When I came back to my senses, the next thing was to get my friend out of that situation.

Over the next few days, I was trying to connect to her anyhow through WhatsApp or normal text messages. However, the connectivity was badly affected, it was became impossible to stay connected to her. After, a few days the first signs of distress started within the country with the system of rationing food. Sitting in our cosy homes, thinking of such a thing is just unbelievable! Gradually, the international community woke up from its slumber and ran helter-skelter to take out their residents from the country. Similarly, India also started its operation Ganga to bring back stranded students from Ukraine. This operation did not come at a fair price; Naveen Shekharappa who was a medical student had to give away his life as a result of a bombshell dropping in Kharkiv.

While these things were developing, I fixated on getting my friend out of Ukraine. She spent

every waking hour stuck inside the basement of her building. The emotional and mental shock that she was going through amidst the dropping of bombs and continuous firing is something that can never be explained in mere words. Finally, after repeated attempts of talking with the Indian embassy, she was evacuated from Kharkiv and brought back to India.

Even now, whenever my friend talks about the incident she breaks down completely. I have not been able to collate the entire incident as she always goes into an emotional frenzy while narrating it. However, I am happy that my friend has returned home safely. But, what about the lakhs of Ukrainians who have to still lived in that hell on an everyday basis? The result of the war will be the annexation of some territory or some natural resources but what about the human carnage that it leaves in the mind of the people? Who will take accountability for these ravages? Sadly, however hard I try i do not find any answer to these.





## Sports and Politics- Inevitably Intertwined

By Krish Saini

20th November 2022, marked the beginning of the 22nd edition of football's most prestigious event- the FIFA World Cup. Every four years, the grand event celebrates the beautiful sport as teams from countries worldwide battle it out to win the ultimate prize.

However, the tournament was not just about celebrating football. Ever since the hosting rights for the 2022 edition were handed over to Qatar, there have been a number of controversies regarding the tournament. Accusations of human rights violations, corruption, and sports washing only increased as the World Cup grew closer. These accusations- and the geopolitical dynamics that shaped them- served as a stark reminder of sporting events being viewed with the backdrop of cultural and political identities and issues.

For most, sports should be kept away from politics- they should be a celebration of innate human values and a display of the heights of human athleticism. Sporting events and achievements should be seen in isolation and be focused on the athletes' performances. Despite this belief, it's almost impossible to keep sports and politics separate from each other. Throughout history, sporting events have been treated as a display of not just athleticism, but of a country or culture's dom-

inance.

Sports, for good or bad, is a political tool. December 2022 was a reminder of this fact. Western nations and media, in their criticism of Qatar, showed their bias towards the Arab world and Asia. Many of their allegations were rooted in ignorance, bias, and hatred. Not to mention the hypocrisy in the various arguments put forward. This, however, does not absolve Qatar of the numerous violations of human rights that took place in the build-up to the tournament and prior to it. There should be no doubt that regimes like those of Russia and Qatar are engaging in sports washing. Saudi Arabia, too, can be accused of the same with its recent push for women's golf despite having an abysmal record of women's rights. Over the years, numerous regimes have engaged in sportswashing- Mussolini's 1934 World Cup, the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936, and the 1978 FIFA World Cup in Argentina are some of the most common examples.

Sports, much like art forms, are a reflection of society- the good, bad, and the ugly. Successful sporting nations are often those that are financial superpowers and have the ability to develop quality infrastructure. The composition of teams indicates the extent of development of different social and

economical groups in a region(- for example, most players in the Indian cricket team and management belong to the upper classes, indicating a lack of infrastructure availability to people from lower classes). These are uncomfortable conversations for any sports fan. After all, these games should serve as a form of escapism and allow us to celebrate the heights of human achievements. But one simply can't ignore the social, cultural, and political undertones of every sport.

From Mohammed Ali refusing to serve in Vietnam to Colin Kaepernick taking the knee to protest against race-based violence and to Iran's team refusal to sing their country's national anthem in the World Cup- political acts have often defined sporting events and shaped the conversations in society at large. While "keep sports and politics apart"- a statement

echoed by scores of people, seems to be the right call, it is impossible. This World Cup allowed us to witness some of the finest matches in the history of the tournament (my favorite being Argentina vs Netherlands). We saw incredible upsets with Asian and African teams ushering in a new era where footballing prowess won't be limited to European and South American nations.

We saw Messi, arguably one of the greatest of all time, finally lift the coveted trophy in a breathtaking final. It was truly a celebration of one of the greatest sports. However, the tournament held in December showed how politics and sports always go hand in hand- right from the buildup (with Western media criticizing Qatar) to the end (with Messi being given the bisht). December reminded me how sports and politics are inevitably intertwined.

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## Can you really learn everything?

By Aindrila Basak

Years pass by... we all grow up, grow up into better or worse, but we all do grow up, even if we don't want to at a point, but we need to, we are destined to.

As days get covered and ticked as 'completed' on the checklist of life, I wonder within myself, can we really learn everything or can we really unlearn anything?

Last year was all about things that cannot be learned or read about, like the last days of my Bachelor's felt so empty and completed at the same time. I couldn't learn how to leave behind something that made me, how do you move on?

Can you actually move on and forget a place or a person? Or do you just get used to their memories deep down?

I could not learn to keep my tears inside when I left my college, I could not learn to throw away my notes... I could not leave my one friend, and find new ones here.

This year taught me things, things that only life can teach you, like you need to be someone you are not to survive in this generation.

You are not special but odd if you are different. You should change yourself in a way that one day

you should forget who you really were! But no, I didn't learn these things from life. I learnt the opposite.

I learnt to be the person who I am ought to be. I learnt to be that person whom I want in my life. I chose to be different.

I learnt to be that smile in my friend's face when she's upset.

I learnt to help someone who couldn't figure out what to do, and also learnt to move on from that very person when they didn't need me anymore without any regret. I learnt to express openly my principles and views in front of the world, without any insecurity. I learnt to trust that one person with whom I need to breathe in life.

I learnt to never trust people without observing them. I learnt to mind my own business.

I learnt to be happy with the little things I have in life. Yes, I'm different. I'm not one of those rats you see beside you in the race.

I run for my own self. I smile when I admire myself. This was my last year of learning things that cannot be learnt if you run and forget to walk in life!



## Memories of December: A Recollection in Fragments

December—for a month so cold, all I found was (mostly) warmth. In the places and the people, their eyes and their smiles. While some days felt tainted with blue, others were mostly yellow. Gentle. Constant. Hopeful. This is the primary reason behind my recalling not just one, but an amalgamation of many memories. As I might fail to adhere to chronology, I present to you, a recollection of my December in fragments.

Every year, the beginning of December tends to be quite eventful. It's my birth month, after all. Ah. Birthdays. The wistful reminders of fleeting human existence. Too grim? Sorry about that. It's mostly scary and partly humorous to me. I had been lucky enough that this year-round, thanks to my exams, I was spared from having to cry over my limited time on this earth. Instead, I spent my time crying over my exams. Fun!

Can't be too complain-y, though. My friends spent their free time planning details. They prepared quite the surprise. Gifts and all. My fancy was definitely tickled. And the cherry on top? I felt genuinely happy.

As I mentioned earlier, just a few sentences back, December also constituted my exams. And I disliked every bit of it. But hey, they're quite dominant in my memories of that month, so you'll have to deal with my whining. Thankfully, after a few days of consistent torture—mainly inflicted by the consequences of my action (the action being me not studying the entire semester)—I was free to enjoy the rest of my

month.

Well. What I mostly did was sleep. Can you blame me?

Besides my momentary hibernation that continued for the first half of December, I also did other noteworthy things in what came after. Some of them were fun. Others were wildly plain. However, what remained consistent throughout those days was, as some of you may have guessed, my happiness after Argentina won the World Cup.

Sorry. My thoughts got derailed. What I was meaning to say is that what stayed a constant throughout the last few days of December were the people. My mother, my sister, my friends, and even my favourite fictional characters—whom I often (always) dote on. These folks brought smiles to my face; gave me days that felt better than having a nice, cosy nap under the quilt.

From the Matir Bharer Cha I didn't have to pay for, to the late nights of binge-watching 'Modern Family', they remained the same. Warm and good. Good; unlike the bad that plagued me, in bits and pieces, throughout the rest of my year.

Hence, what I can say with complete certainty is that in the tumultuous and scandalous book, titled 2022, the last chapter offered a heartfelt, gentle, and warm conclusion.

So... December? I may have not always liked you, but it's about time we call a truce, buddy. I'll see you again, very soon.

Signing off,  
Debdipta Bhattacharya



Source: Google

## The non corporate banter with Ahmed

By Aparajeeta Sinha

—“Didi, do you you know how the corporates laugh?”

—“Oh yeah, “I know... It’s annoying and super fake.

—“Wanna try laughing like that?”

Okay!! Let’s do it.. “

And with that we would enact the little moment of how every social event would start in an office.

This was Ahmed, a 10-year-old boy, my best friend and an aspiring painter. His sole motive was to keep finding something for himself in order to not get bored while his father would showcase his creations at the AMI Arts Festival.

We first started talking as he threw a paper ball at me to grab my attention. The paper read, “Bleh bleh bleh, you fly away”.

This piqued my interest as I felt like I found my childhood version in him. A kid, who was always curious about mannerisms of certain people, an expert at making funny faces and who would always look out for ways to run away to his kind of people.

During the course of the nine days at the festival, we would keep a lookout for each other and gallop around the area. With an aloo tikki in my hand, we would talk about our classmates, Harry Potter movies and also how certain people should just fly away. It was a hard time for him to believe that I was 23 and he was 10! He wished that I was younger to him. But alas! Ahmed was always intent on taking awkward videos on my phone.

Along with that he would tell me some verses of the Quran which his mother had taught him. They were all new to me and I would listen to them carefully. He became a little mature when he would talk about them. A certain obedience was evident in his

voice, until his brother would tell him that it was time to go home. Ah poor thing!

Back at home I would keep my parents updated about the shenanigans we did throughout the day. It never occurred to me that we had differences. You know in terms of age or religion. Ahmed and I simply bonded because made fun of how the corporates would act in social events. We both united over our love for art. And also on how we loved our siblings. He again taught me how to look at the world with a whimsical lens. Oh, did I tell you how he helped me initiate conversation with my crush. Not only that he clicked a picture of us!! Just like a little brother.

On the last day of the Festival, we held hands and walked beside the stalls holding hands. We were a little dispirited thinking how it might be the last day of us meeting in this way. That’s when Ahmed quietly said, “Hum hume-sha ke liye best friends rahenge, okay?”

“Yes! Always” It was hard for me to not let my voice choke. I promised myself that this would not be the last time that I meet him. We will again recreate BFF tattoos on our hands and click pictures or just simply photobomb somebody’s pictures again.

—“Aap Hindu ho. Aur main Muslim.”

—“Haan to? Religion ka kya usse”

—“Matlab Bhai Bhai”

—“Ahmed !! Seriously!! Chup!! there’s nothing like that between friends

Okay... Wanna do our corporate laugh again?”

—“Let’s do it”

—“And with that, we would again grab the attention of the onlookers. But did we care? “



Source: Rounak Majumder

# Winter Liberation

By Diya Shah

I got sidetracked while observing the varied hues that were in front of me. The most ideal red and pink shades that petunias could have ever had: not too dark, not too light. Well, there was my university's beauty—just by glancing at the garden, you could tell it was winter.

As I strolled towards the exam room while enjoying the warm sunlight, I couldn't help but grin at the myriad of vibrant flowers. Strangely, even though it was my last exam, there was a sense of peace and it seemed like time had slowed down.

People were hyped up and revising last-minute around me. I continued to be in my own dream world despite the wild babble buzzing in my ears.

Guess, had arrived too early since I went upstairs to find that the doors were locked. So I made the choice to wait. The security guard eventually unlocked the door.

While sitting on the designated bench, I glanced at the window, which had cream-coloured curtains. They had an incredibly attractive appearance. Time passed by and students entered one after another. I made an effort to closely scrutinize each one's attitude.

It was amusing that they were anxious about an exam which would be over in a few hours, or

perhaps I had just mastered the art of being calm under pressure.

I started writing when the invigilator entered at ten o'clock and distributed the papers. Have you ever concentrated on two things at once, or is it just me?

Yes, I was attending to my examination paper while daydreaming about the hot chocolate I had been desiring since morning.

My paper was over after 2 hours and 40 minutes of rigorous writing. Hence, I proceeded with the process of revision and grinned with satisfaction as I submitted my paper. Winters always induce laziness and relaxation.

I chose to make a compromise with a coffee that was available downstairs in the university canteen because cosiness always seems to find a way in.

Well, it goes without saying that warm beverages make your soul happy, and coffee being my favourite.

I sat there enjoying it while losing myself in the lushness of the natural surroundings.

Every breath felt revitalising because my exams were finally over, and although my mind was quiet, it felt as if a psychological burden had been lifted.

A feeling of liberty prevailed. And just like that a beautiful December morning passed by.



Source: Shreya Bose

## THE SUN WAS A WITNESS!

By Shreya Bose

We all require the comfort of sunlight. It calms not only our bodies but also our minds, hearts, and souls.

We probably all complain about having to travel so far to come to the university; it almost feels like a daily road trip, to be honest. However, there is a sense of tranquility and peace in meeting your friends, laughing together, and realizing that time can slow down.

Taking a year gap after my graduation and joining masters seemed like I had to start from scratch. I was anxious about meeting new individuals and reiterating myself in front of the class.

I had gradually discovered my circle of pals as time passed. We are a group of three!! We are three unique people, but we are also incredibly similar; we have practically all of the same views, attitudes, and opinions. Having said that, I can't really recall how we first connected; perhaps it was because of our favorite professor or because we three despised some of the same classmates. We nevertheless became close.

On the final day of the first semester, we were overjoyed at having finished it successfully. On that particular day, we took our coffee and blue lays to the green bleachers next to the basketball court. We sat there as we saw the sunset and talked about how lucky we are to have found each other. That day the sunset was extra

beautiful. Our skin was warmed by the sun's rays. There was this silence as we sat there, soaking up as much of it as we could.

We sipped on our warm coffee while munching blue lays as the wind blew through our hair. We didn't chat much, but we felt the presence and understood that true love is found in friendship. We just sat there and watched everything, like how a mother flew down and picked up some biscuit crumbs that were nearby to feed her kid, or the lovely flowers in front of the boys hostel. Even if it's chilly outside, winters have a certain warmth to them, hence I always say that I enjoy them.

On that particular day, all I wanted was to have a quiet talk with my two best friends. For a brief period, I thought time had stopped, but then it was 5.00 o'clock and time to go home. We were there for about an hour, although it just seemed like a minute. It's true what they say about how you don't really notice how time flies when you're with the right person. Let's just say that I have found my two people.

That day our hearts were heavy and happy. It was the last day of the sem 1 but the best day of 2022.

Nothing else is on my wish list besides that day! The sun was a witness to the fact that true love always exists in friendship. That day the sun not only calmed our bodies but also our minds, hearts, and souls!



Source: Diya Shah



# CHAI PE CHARCHA

By Haimosree Chakraborty, Shivangi Basu and Samantha John

**“Chol giye cha khai.”**

[“ Let’s go drink tea”]

University, Kolkata, we have heard this innumerable times since the beginning of the academic year. If asked why, the standard response is that the brewed cup of goodness served at the shacks provides energy for classes-before and after. Having said that, somewhere amidst this rush of meeting assignment deadlines, getting to classes on time, never forgetting to wear I.D Cards and so forth while maintaining a healthy sleep schedule, the essence of cha/chai often remains underrated. For some, it is a sense of belongingness, and for others mostly overlooked, a source of livelihood.

On a usual November morning, Prof. (Dr.) Sithara Puli Venkatesh briefed us about the field trips we would have to take for our next assignment. In a class full of procrastinating young adults, this idea was met with long-drawn sighs and murmured “ugh, not another one”. However, in the coming weeks as we visited areas extending to the interior of Salt Lake, Maheshtala corners, Jodabagan, Kumartuli and many unturned nooks and crooks, spoke to free-spirited souls such as Rukhsana Bibi and Madan Pal, each

group conversed with individuals who, as Aritro Das stated, “taught us the art of storytelling through their anecdotes and delivered reality checks through their narration of life experiences”. While preparing presentations for this field work, the academic purpose of it was long forgotten. This undertaking has been about letting privilege step aside to make way for an open heart with a door ajar for honesty in humans.

While discussing this project, Erika Roy reckoned that it would not be difficult to strike up conversations and relate to our interviewees. She said, “we are all wrecked by unemployment and maladministration”. Most of us concurred. In many ways we were right but also so very wrong. As students of Mass Communication and Journalism, the plight of common people in our country is often spoken about at length but we cannot even begin to fathom the reality of it all. Electricity cuts, one-week displacement notices and pandemic induced debts are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the issues they grapple with on a daily basis. What sets them apart from us is their zeal to ensure the sustainability of the daily dose of tea by taking small steps towards the will to dream bigger. They strive for proper education for their children, expansion of business and a better life for their family, with a hearty smile as they



attend to their visitors.

Speaking of customers, vibrancy is furnished by the diverse people who visit these social spaces. Farheen Halder noted that a humble setting such as that of a tea stall permits the people to comfortably sprawl themselves both mentally and physically. Hence, the range of issues discussed stretched from the exorbitant prices of basic sustenance goods to low employment rates and shortcomings of government initiatives such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme. We found individuals wary of their expenditure, bringing their own steel glasses for tea worth 10 rupees and buying biscuits exactly costing them 2 rupee. Goes on to show how important money is in today's world. Though heated public discussions based on political affiliations are seemingly on the wane, differences notwithstanding, Partha Chatterjee's actions were condemned and frustrations regarding the multiplicity of such scams were expressed. At the end of the day, it boils down to what impacts them at a personal level. For them, there is very little merit in discussing global political events or climate change issues when they are already burdened and disillusioned by their local state of affairs. It was understood that this is what mainstream media should

become increasingly cognizant of while trying to curb its sensation-alist tendencies.

Such settings, in a compelling way, demonstrate how strangers are embraced and included in the social discourses, just as we were. Not all encounters were pleasant though. Some groups were at the receiving end of views in contrast to their opinions regarding proliferation of ‘western’ clothes, ideas and principles, as well as certain patriarchal beliefs about gendered roles and slight hostility due to language barriers.

That being said, other groups witnessed role reversals with the women handling the books and running the show, both at home and at the stall. A thoughtful gesture by Mr. Ananthbandu Ghosh was that he treated the team visiting him to biscuits and copious amounts of tea free of charge. The reason?

He might never be able to see the members again. This speaks volumes about the emotions that prevail in such close-knit semi-rural communities. In proper urban areas, people hardly make time for themselves, let alone for others. It's a contrast one must consider carefully.

Now, as we reminisce, what truly warms us is not the piping hot cup of tea but the memories of the people we met and the bonds thus forged in cups and saucers.





# December

By Mouli Majumdar

**When you experience loss, people say you'll move through the 5 stages of grief....**

**Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance**

**..... What they don't tell you is that you'll cycle through them all every day.**

**-Ranata Suzuki**

You'll cycle through them all every day, but you'll probably be the same old you with that stupid smile on your face because guess what?, that's life. And I am an unwilling member in its rat race to the finish line of happiness.

I have never liked institutions-schools or colleges and studying but god did my father make education fun. He spoke a lot about Kolkata's culture while I was busy partying in Bangalore, and I'm

pretty sure he would loved listening to my after college rants about the good and bad of my Xavier's days. If I take a deep dive into everything I am today, I won't call myself self-made, I'm here, opinionated and strong because of my father. December was all about my mom and I spending the 3rd Christmas without him, watching another year pass by, wishing everything was as normal as families can be. You move on from grief, but that doesn't necessarily mean you get rid of it completely. It becomes a part of you. It grows with you. It breathes in the air of new cities, new love, new experiences and then makes you cry because normalcy is never a choice, not in this lifetime.

But I guess I will be fine. Decembers are endings, and I hate capitalistic positivity that would perhaps add that Decembers mean new beginnings too. It doesn't need to. Grief, I have learned, is just love with no place to go. To more Decembers and endings that leave nothing but love behind....

# Of Vexation and Comfort

By Anjali Rajgovind

How could we expect one to know comfort if they haven't known vexation? Let me reflect upon the past year, and tell you my story over a cup of frothy, fuzzy coffee. We talk, with warmth in our hearts and winter around us, of personal memories of the year gone by. Aye, I dedicate the year to the comfort I've been lucky enough to discover. And yet, as I mentioned earlier, that comfort was found but in the heart of the most vexatious moments. Oh, the pain...

To be or not to be, to do or not to do... both came together and made a serendipitous totality of creation visible to the naked eye. Eye... eyes... eyeing. I remember the way those eyes were eyeing me, as my eyes ran red in anguish. Rivers stopped to run red in shame.

This has been happening for far too long now. Being blamed for things I haven't done. Being called things I am not. Betrayals from those we trust not are betrayals. But stones pelt from hands that patted our heads once... they kill us inside.

Until...

I see that smile. And that smile... hiding under eyes laden with pain of a thousand years, was precious.

It healed. Vexation needs healing, does it not? Humour is a defence mechanism, but to reopening sutures, healing is the requirement.

"Hello..." This person says the word and I feel life pulsing in me. And for the first time in my life, I feel at home. Hands holding hands, warmth embracing warmth, heartbeats pulsing, love-lyrics forming somewhere in a higher realm that unlike serendipity, isn't visible to the naked eye. And songs... and poetry... and love... are born again. They fill the voids that we are, and make us something more than numbers...

Hopefully, something more than just data. "If my curiosity gives you the strength to answer questions, if my efforts find a home in the shrine that your existence is, if my energy brightens even by a spark a dark corner of your mind, and if you allow me to hold your hand... then, my dear, our love shall transcend time and space.

Then, my dear, our ephemeral lives will turn into eternal memories." I dedicate the above lines to all the readers finding solace in the eye of the storm that surrounds us all. Comfort exists amidst vexation; a little bit more... and we'll find hands to hold. A little bit more, and we'll be home.

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