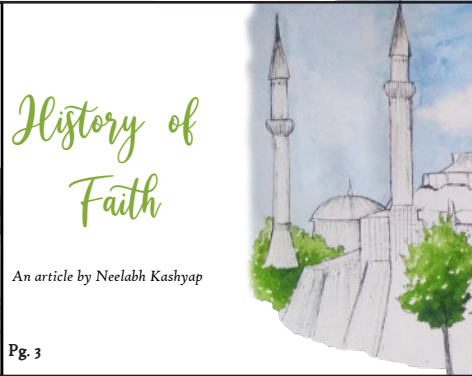


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PILOTING IT!

-Vasumann Lohia, XI

The new joke around time reads, “The BJP planned to celebrate Holi in Madhya Pradesh, Raksha Bandhan in Rajasthan and Diwali in Maharashtra”. Sachin Pilot’s war on the Congress was long waiting to happen, ever since the Congress chose Ashok Gehlot over him as Rajasthan’s Chief Minister after the December 2018 Assembly Elections. Pilot made no bones about his resentment. Given his hard-work ahead of the assembly Election, it was only natural for Pilot to feel disappointed when Gehlot was made the CM.

Pilot has risked coming across as being petulant, over-ambitious and narrow-visioned. He should have decided to question his party’s leadership for its ineptness, and reluctance to allow young and capable regional leaders to grow. There is no real future for young, capable leaders as long as the dynastic rule promoted by the Gandhi family continues to reign. Considering the Gandhis have proven themselves to be incapable to help their candidates win elections, with Rahul Gandhi having to contest from two constituencies to secure his victory. Pilot would have shown courage and conviction, rare in a party where everybody competes to display their loyalties to the Gandhis. The young leader ended up squandering the chance, and now appears to be someone who is only interested in the CM’s chair. In politics, ambition is natural, important and fair. For now at least, it seems as if Pilot has lost sight of the all-important optics and the bigger picture of building a lasting legacy as a politician. The desert drama resembles a family

soap opera with every passing hour.

The Congress high command comprising *the Holy Trio* have a remarkable hold over the party strongest perhaps in its history. This is possibly because no one in the party see themselves contesting a power battle in the regions against them. Congress has long broken into family politics where important ancestral powerhouses reign over small regions. The Congress has since been happy to play third fiddle to them.

Pilot’s revolt should have been for principles, and not for power. However in a party whose principles have long since eroded, power-play is the new name of the game. Pilot lost that one golden chance of making a bold, much-needed statement.

This can happen if Pilot is made to return to the fold with the same responsibility - maybe with greater leeway - and the summons against him withdrawn. This too is unlikely for two reasons - Sachin Pilot has put his entire political might at the stake, considering the BJP has treated Jyotiraditya Scindia too well. If Pilot develops second thoughts about following his former party colleague Scindia, and stays with the Congress, he would be completely marginalized within the party. If he quits and his loyalists follow suit, they all lose their membership but this also reduces the strength of the assembly. To make the Gehlot government fall, Pilot needs to pilot nearly 50 MLAs away from the Congress camp. Pilot has reached a point where quitting the party is the only “honourable” exit route lying before him.

Our Echo of Her

GUEST WRITER

Vikas Mehra,
JIMS, Greater Noida

This is the second story the writer has penned down, seemingly random instances take place. The writer continuously drifted from one topic to another, poets to autumn to Polish struggle for independence and back to Kumaon.

Pardon the writer if the story seemed quite random, he read this story in a Hindi magazine which was in his grandpa's collection. The pages had turned yellow and many words were unrecognizable, most of the details had to be translated to English and the writer made a mess out of them at a lot of places. This is indeed a true incident told from the perspective of a writer who genuinely admires this legendary poet. The writer had to bribe his sister for sketching how the legendary poet looked. He thought it's a good idea to should share that too:

The Neruda of Kumaon, Girda:

In a remote village situated in the hilly terrain of Uttarakhand, the sky is exhibiting an orange hue, the fleeting colors of dusk begin to fade away with the silky, smooth concoction of sky burst reds and yellows slowly diluting into the calm of the night. The barns are enveloped with the warmth of smoke, and just like tendrils in a vineyard crave for support, the calves cry out for their mothers. The wooden stove is finally lit after many futile attempts, for the wood is wet and so is the smoke. Tempering

the spices, the entire village is engulfed with the sweet aroma, the moon shines like a bronze plate and a flute can be heard from a distance, the notes of which cause the soul to quiver and giggle in pure ecstasy.

This serene translation of one of the most beautiful poems written by Jankavi (the poet of the masses), Girish Chandra Tiwari who was popularly known as 'Girda', paints the picture of a sunset and the myriad of activities that are taking place simultaneously. He was a multi-hued, beautiful man who along with being an exceptional poet was a scriptwriter, lyricist, singer and a renowned social worker having participated in the Chipko Movement and later, the Uttarakhand Andolan.

His emotional demeanor was contagious and his words struck a chord in the hearts of men.

It was mid-October, 1996, when two of Girda's friends made their way towards his house which was situated nearby Nainital. Both of them were acclaimed writers and were discussing the onset of autumn.

Autumn, the vivid tranquility had crept into these serene mountains. They discussed how autumn was an amalgamation, a mosaic of all seasons combined and how Nainital looked ever so beautiful in October with the fallen leaves appearing as if a golden carpet had spread across the mountains while leaves crackled beneath their feet and the cool crisp breezed in the air.

Girda welcomed his guests warm heartedly, hugging tightly and asking lots of questions, which was one of his habits. Having

exchanged basic pleasantries, he led them to a small living room. It was well lit with an assortment of magazines, books and newspapers neatly assembled in a wooden cabinet. In the middle of the room spread an oval rug sewn with swirly patterns and a small coffee table atop which lay a book by the famous Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz, much of whose work had been translated into Kumaoni by him.

The discussion went from local to national issues and finally to how various cultures were getting extinct all around the world, to which Girda quipped that when people try to grab the whole world into their

hands, they first wound up your culture, destroy your sense of identity.

In the midst of this discussion, Girda suddenly turned towards the two guests and said "Wisława Szymborska" which took both of them by surprise. He inquired if they had read her work. Wisława was a Polish poet who had recently won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Unfortunately, most of her work was in Polish and translations were hard to get by those days.

The result of his insistent question was that in the next few months, they translated and recited dozens of poetry of Szymborska to Girda. She was an exceptional poet, referred to as the "Mozart of Poetry" by the Nobel

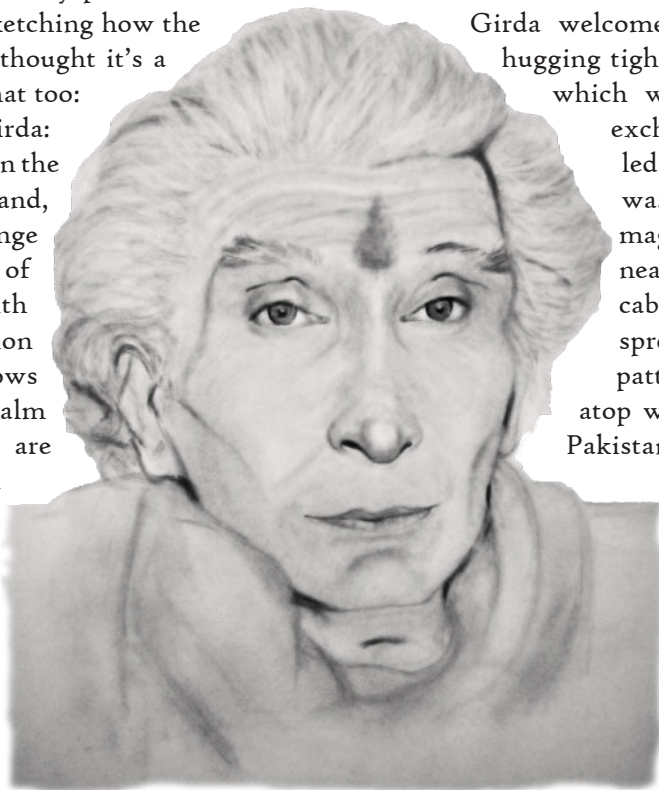


Illustration: Pahal Mehra (Vikas Mehra's sister)

committee.

Her poem 'The Joy of Writing', gives an insight as to how the Polish struggle for independence and the innumerable atrocities affected her poetry, for it said that writers often rise from the ashes of war; a small snippet from the poem reads:

"The joy of writing.

The power of preserving.

Revenge of a mortal hand! "

On 22 August 2010, Girda left the world like an autumn leaf, with a splash of everlasting beauty forever engraved in the conscience of the populace.

History of Faith

-Neelabh Kashyap, XI

The Hagia Sophia, literally translating into "Holy Wisdom", is one of the most intriguing and oldest standing shrines in the world, located in the beautiful city of Istanbul in the Republic of Turkey. What is most fascinating about this World Heritage Site, though, is neither its architecture nor its iconic beauty, but the tumultuous history behind it.

Commissioned by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, the Hagia Sophia was built between the years 532 AD and 537 AD as an Orthodox Christian Cathedral for the then city of Constantinople. After the Ottoman Empire conquered Constantinople in the year 1453, the Ottoman ruler, Mehmed II, converted the church into a mosque. Most of the Christian elements were destroyed and was replaced by Islamic elements and architecture. The Hagia Sophia continued

to be a mosque till 1935,

when the first Turkish

President and founder of

the modern Republic of

Turkey, Mustafa Kemal

Ataturk, transformed

the building into a

museum in a bid to

strengthen and display

the secularism of the

country and to reduce

the growing tensions

between the people of

the two faiths. The

monument had, after

undergoing many stages of

metamorphosis, finally

seemed to fall into its

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However, the recent

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The Turkish

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He did not forget

to emphasize

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was well within

their



Illustration: Eloziini Senachena

undergoing many stages of metamorphosis, finally seemed to fall into its position as a museum and has remained an important tourist destination for years.

However, the recent decision by one of Turkey's highest courts to reconvert the Hagia Sophia Museum into a mosque, and President Erdogan's statement that the cultural monument would be open to Muslim worship has once again brought this controversial monument to the front pages and headlines of every newspaper and news channel across the globe. The Turkish President stated that namaz would be read in the Hagia Sophia on July 24, a first since Turkey's emergence as a secular Republic. He did not forget to emphasize that whatever they did with the Hagia Sophia was well within their

right to constitutional sovereignty and nobody else could have any say in it.

This anti-secular move has garnered a wave of international criticism and displeasure. The European Union and countries such as the USA, Greece and Russia have been clear in describing the decision as "regrettable". Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church, has also expressed his 'grief' on the conversion. UNESCO has warned Turkey that the Hagia Sophia will lose its status as a World Heritage Site if it was converted into a mosque. This move seems to draw Turkey away from the great Ataturk's vision of Turkey as a modern Republic with a liberal society.

It is important to mark that Turkey, especially Istanbul, has no shortage of mosques. The Blue Mosque was

constructed in the

image of the Hagia

Sophia specifically

to be used for

religious purposes.

The decision to

therefore reconvert

it from museum

to mosque is

clearly politically

driven tightening

the already

stranglehold

of the orthodox

Muslim clergy over

the Turkish society.

In a vastly

polarized world,

Erdogan continues

to fan Islamist-

Nationalist

sentiments in

Turkey, with the

intention of

strengthening

his position for

the next elections.

The aura of the Hagia Sofia lay in the visage of its history as a key witness that saw Constantinople as a cradle of civilizations and the seat of the world's major religions. Its walls run marked with the name of Allah in exquisite calligraphy in one, while the other hold remnants of delicate artwork depicting Biblical stories. While the world topples from one erroneous decision to the other, this timeless grace that silhouettes the modern city of Istanbul, knows well that its spirit lay captured not within its ancient minarets, but runs unbridled in the heart of time.

A VIRAL INTRUSION

- Mrs. Pooja J. Benjamin

Dear Corona Virus,

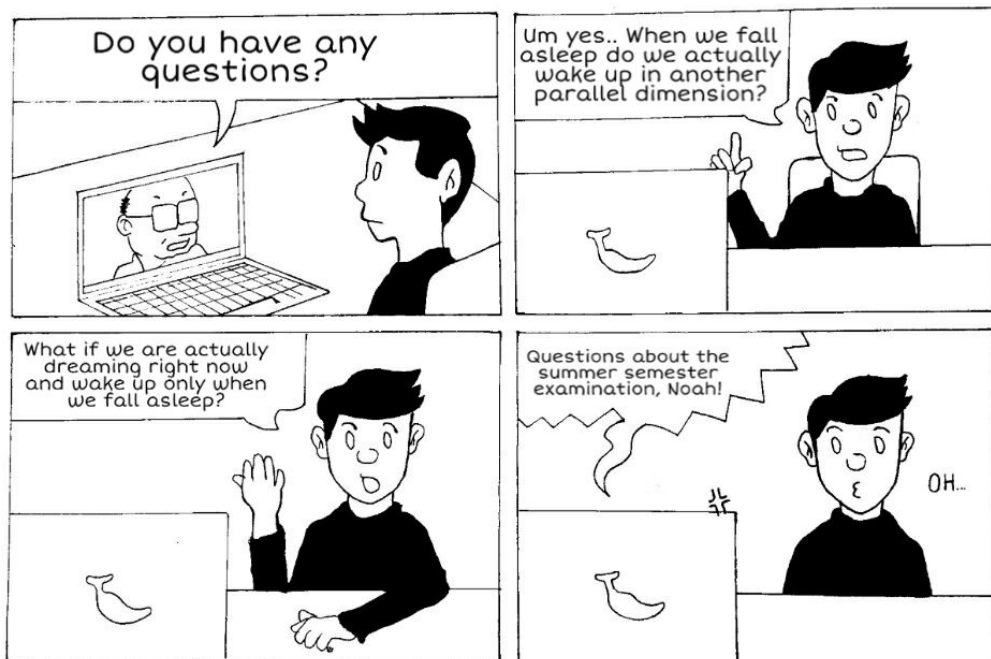
We know you came in as an uninvited guest and have been with us for quite long now, almost becoming a part of our lives and quite reluctant to leave. We assume that you like our kind a little too much perhaps but we implore you to leave us and let us be. We have not had too amazing an experience with you and yet we made you a part of the New Normal and you made everything for us a Virtual Reality. We appreciate your love for us but no more. You have deprived us of our innocence, mischief, playfulness and socialising skills, confining us within our houses, something we detest the most. It seems an eternity that we have met our friends, jumped into puddles, rolled in mud, swung and swum, eaten Domino's or KFC and most importantly, attended school. Although we are a generation next and love technology, we miss the petty squabbles with friends, the love and care of our teachers, celebrating birthdays and meeting grandparents. Funerals and weddings now seem a distant reality. Hope you leave with dignity although much damage is done. Looking forward to never meeting you or your kind again,
The affected generation.

Illustration: Takhe Tamo Reela



the middle page #2

By Eloziini Senachena and Neelabh Kashyap

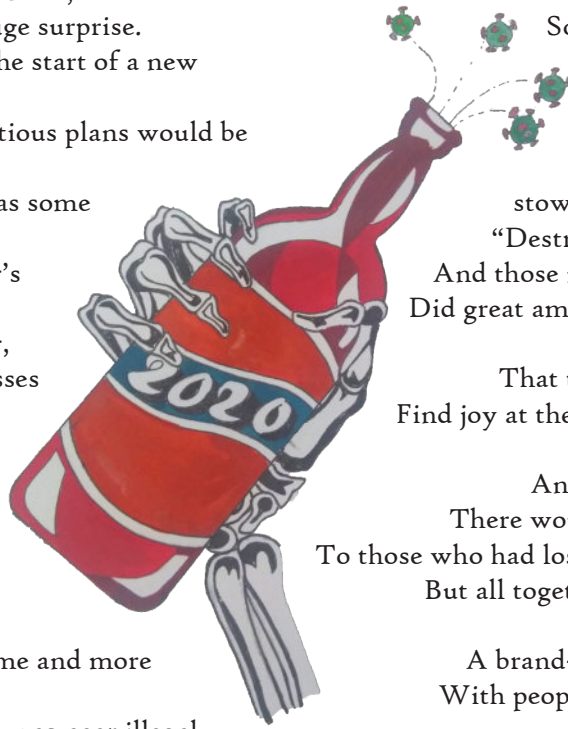


Confinement for Betterment

-Anushka Barua, 11

It was the 30th of December when my ears picked up
this argument,
Year 2019 and 2020 expressing their pent-up sentiments.
2019 was sad upon its oncoming demise,
2020 said everyone was in for a huge surprise.
The world was all excited about the start of a new
decade,
Busy making sure that their ambitious plans would be
obeyed,
While in a lab in Wuhan there was some
danger brewing,
Something that would be the year's
undoing.
Not long after people far and near,
Had toasted to 2020 and had 5 glasses
of beer,
The Corona virus entered the
world.
"Confined to our homes!" people
cried "This is ABSURD!"
Governments across the globe
declared a quarantine,
Suddenly all everyone had was time and more
time.
After reluctantly excepting that it was near illegal
to sneeze,
And fervently washing our hands, thanks to the
Chinese,

Illustration: Elozini Senachena



Everyone decided to make most of what the situation
would bring,
While Mother Nature went in for a bit of well-
deserved pampering.
Soon the Earth healed and the skies
cleared,
What felt like a feeling of peace
nearly
"With those nasty humans
stowed away," Mother Nature mused,
"Destruction could be kept well at bay!"
And those nasty humans cooped up at home,
Did great amounts of introspection and soon it
was known,
That they had learnt how to live better,
Find joy at the slightest, maybe compliment the
weather.
And when this pandemic would end,
There would be a thousand prayers to send,
To those who had lost a loved one to the vicious virus,
But all together so that the sadness would not
overwhelm us.
A brand-new world would emerge slowly,
With people who had learnt the art of living
completely.
All I'd wish is that next time (I pray for none) it
shouldn't take a virus to see,
How our world is actually supposed to be.

THE OUTPOST

Wisdom seems to finally dawn as President Trump was seen wearing a mask either wary of the pandemic or impending elections. The Hagia Sophia Museum recedes back in time as Erdogan restricts it as a mosque negating its historic past. China funds Pakistan's Diamar-Bhasmar Dam with a 70% stake which threatens to submerge large parts of PoK. 90% of the Kaziranga National Park and 40 lakh people affected by Assam floods. India's Chabbar project with Iran becomes a casualty as the latter signs agreement with China due to US sanctions. China's string of pearls continues to tighten noose around India.

Illustration: Elozini Senachena



The Quarantine Watchlist

Ripple #136

-Eloziini Senachena, XI

*He often walked by the
morning shore,
Today he saw the fish
skipping in the sand,
And the ocean waves hidden
in the horizon
Waiting to spring and hug
the mountains.*

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

INCEPTION: An intense and complex story about Cobb, a skilled thief and an international fugitive who is offered a chance at redemption. However, a dangerous enemy anticipates Cobb's every move.

SOUND OF MUSIC: This musical is about the powerful story of Maria, an aspiring nun, who is sent to take care of seven motherless children. Her kindness, understanding, and sense of fun soon bring the much needed joy in their lives.

ALONG WITH THE GODS: Having died unexpectedly, firefighter Ja-hong is taken to the afterlife by 3 afterlife guardians. Only when he passes 7 trials over 49 days and proves he is innocent in human life, he will be able to reincarnate.

GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES: This heartbreaking anime movie tells the story of a young boy and his little sister's struggle to survive in Japan during World War II. With a powerful plot and emotional depth, this movie will not disappoint.

Keep It Reel!

High Noon

-Dhrupad K. Choudhury, XII

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