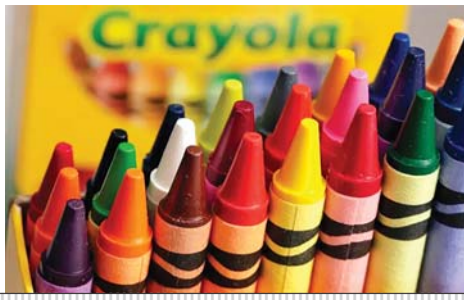


Celebrating Creativity And Colour : National Crayon Day

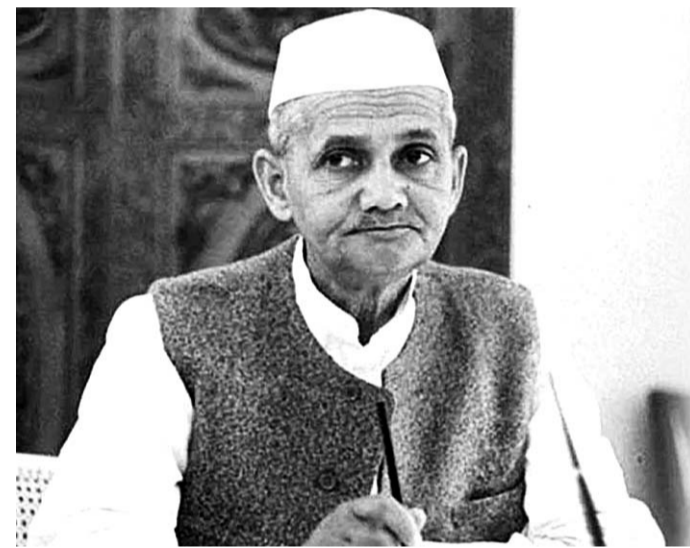


Observed annually on March 31, National Crayon Day celebrates the simple yet powerful tool that has sparked creativity for generations. Crayons have long been a child's first introduction to art, imagination and self-expression. The day honours not just the colourful sticks themselves but the joy of drawing, storytelling and creative exploration they inspire. From classrooms to homes, crayons encourage artistic freedom without boundaries. National Crayon Day is a reminder that creativity begins with small strokes of colour and that artistic expression, at any age, can brighten perspectives and nurture imagination in meaningful ways.

#INTERVIEW

Lal Bahadur Shastri On BBC

Lal Bahadur Shastri's 1964 BBC Interview from his first visit to the UK



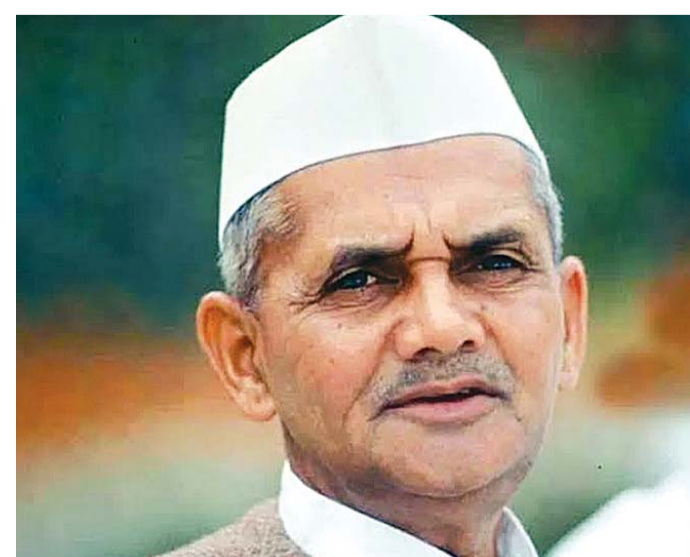
A few months after taking office, Lal Bahadur Shastri, India's second PM, made a state visit to the UK. In this interview, he talks about his background, India's development and its policy on nuclear weapons.

Question- You, perhaps, with your humble origins and your dedication to poverty, find this a positive advantage as a leader of the people, compared with Pandit Nehru's very cosmopolitan, upper-class English education.

Answer- It would be correct to say that I belong to the category of common men and common man. And I do find it easy to fight the battle of the common man, to think of taking measures to give relief to him.

Question- Pandit Nehru himself ranged far and wide in his travels and his interests. But this is only the second time that you yourself have ever been outside India. Does this mean that you are going to concentrate more on Indian affairs than on world affairs?

Answer- Well, I would very much like to concentrate on the home front, but some of the international problems are so interlinked with national issues that it would be difficult for me to confine myself to national problems only. I am here today in spite of the Indian Parliament being in session. Similarly, the Chinese aggression, although it was confined to India, yet, it has had a great international impact. So, I shall continue, I shall have to take interest in international problems and issues also.



WHEN THE 'WEREWOLVES' RODE AGAIN



In the 19th century, there was a 'vampire panic' in England, with many belated children being supposedly bitten by dead relatives, who had been attacked by a vampire and become vampires themselves. It was this panic which inspired Bram Stoker to write his famous book, 'Dracula,' and the coming back to life of a bloodthirsty medieval count. Nor was this the only vampire plague. Earlier too, various countries in Europe had suffered such plagues, sometimes resulting in the death of innocent people who were targeted as potential vampires.

● Verna Mohan

The death of 30 children in 40 villages of Pratapgarh, Jaunpur and Sultanpur districts of U.P. some years ago had created panic, with nobody too sure about who killed them, man or animal. The authorities blamed wolves and hyenas, which the shikaris had been unable to shoot, while the villagers felt that it was either a gang which collected kidneys for sale or a mania (werewolf) that was behind the killings. One did not expect the district administration to subscribe to the latter view, though the incidents of the past several weeks were reminiscent of similar happenings earlier in Rajasthan, particularly in Dausa, Sawai Madhopur and Ganganagar.

In the 19th century, there was a 'vampire panic' in England, with many belated children being supposedly bitten by dead relatives, who had been attacked by a vampire and become vampires themselves. It was this panic which inspired Bram Stoker to write his famous book, 'Dracula,' and the coming back to life of a bloodthirsty medieval count. Nor was this the only vampire plague. Earlier too, various countries in Europe had suffered such plagues, sometimes resulting in the death of innocent people who



Werewolf Gargoyles.

were targeted as potential vampires. The same thing happened in East U.P. and Rajasthan where suspects were killed by the villagers. One may not subscribe to their views, but it goes without saying that belief in werewolves is world-wide and not limited to any region or country. According to Eliphaz Levi, a werewolf is the sidereal body of a man which comes into action as soon as his baser instincts are aroused. Sometimes, the real body is asleep while the sidereal body is on the prowl. It's a Jekyll & Hyde case, pure and simple.

Superstition has endowed the werewolf with superhuman powers. The same man who is timid in the day sheds his human form at night and becomes a ferocious wolf, but with devilish ingenuity which the real animal lacks. And it is not only men who become werewolves, Levi records the case of an old woman who roamed about the countryside at night in the form of a wolf, preying on children. It is said that a silver bullet can put an end to a werewolf, but it must be fired when it has assumed that shape.

How many people, especially those whom age and disease had deformed, suffered in the past because they were suspected to be werewolves is besides the point, though the killing of 'witches' in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Rajasthan and M.P. can be an indication. Superstitious fear, jealousy,



The Werewolf by C.A. Kincaid is from the British Colony India. The story is of Upper Sind region, of a place called Sehwan.

sexual exploitation or lure of property are generally among the motives. Any sudden or unexplained calamity, disease, loss of assets or death is reason enough to whip up passions and end the existence of the so-called witch. Those who have heard of Anu Kasai of Sind might perhaps not agree with this. The butcher was affluent at one time, and though, he lived in Sehwan, which is even more in the interior than Sukkur, he had mistresses in distant Karachi. Anu's weakness was wine, women and song. After getting drunk, he just lost his balance and squandered his hard-earned wealth on the ladies of the night. His wife committed suicide after their only son got drowned, and then, there was no stopping Anu Mian. All his wealth gone by 1860 and he started killing people and selling their cooked flesh.

Anu's macabre trade came to an end after he murdered a dervish. "The very dish he served to unsuspecting customers started calling for revenge." Anu Kasai was arrested and entombed in the wall of a fort by the British, like Anarkali is said to have been done away with on

#MYTH



MASTER QAMARUDDIN, the maternal uncle of noted Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai, was usually found on the Yamuna bank, resting after swimming to Delhi all the way...

in Agra and he bore the name of Dina Sanichar or Saturday, the day on which he was rescued.

Another such boy was found in rural Agra and restored to his parents in Jat-ka-Nagla. Named Parusram, he was lifted by wolves while he slept with his mother in the fields one night and had developed a love for raw meat during his captivity in the jungle. He also could not speak. Parusram did not live long after his rescue, said my father, who and other Indian and foreign journalists had gone to the Nagla to do a story on him.

These wolfchildren were not wolves, but there was a khansama known as Kammu, who would offer hospitality to wayfarers in an old dilapidated house, and at midnight, turn into a wolf and devour them. He was also fond of preying on girls who had just reached the age of puberty. Many such girls and women were said to have been ravished and killed by him. Surprisingly, it was sodomy in all cases and not rape as defined in law.

The incidents were reported from Morena and Shivpuri in M.P. and Bundi in Rajputana in the 19th century. One of the victims who

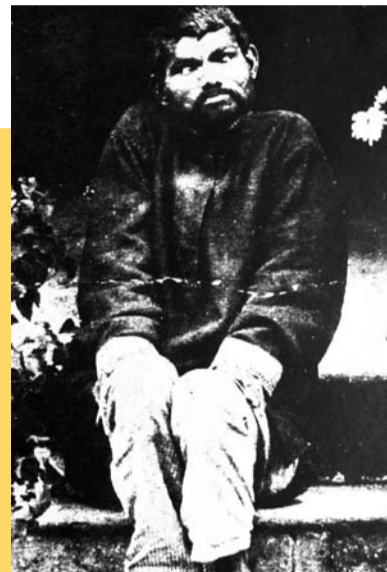
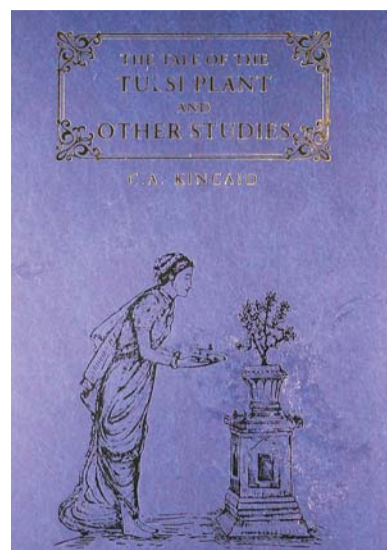
escaped recounted in terror of how the man, who had been so polite in the day, turned into a wolf at dead of night and attacked her so savagely that she despaired for her life. But being young and strong, she picked up an old sword lying in the room and hit him with all her might, cutting off one of the hands that had become a paw. The werewolf gave a howl of pain and the girl made her escape. The man was later arrested but the magistrate refused to believe that a human being could turn into a wolf. He, therefore, sentenced him to jail on a charge of ravishing a young girl. But after a few months, he was killed by fellow prisoners who had noticed that he underwent a complete transformation every night and tried to attack other jail inmates with a view to drinking their blood.

Kammu had his counterpart in Daroga, who lived at a burning ghat near the Taj Mahal. But he ate only the carcasses of dead girls and was considered more of an 'aghor' than a werewolf. Master Qamaruddin, the maternal uncle of noted Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai, also spent his time on the Yamuna bank near the Taj, but he was a mystic who sometimes swam from Agra to Delhi. His limbs were said to disintegrate every night and so nobody ventured into his room till dawn.

It was he who is believed to have warned a British District Magistrate about an old pandit who could



Banshee on a Werewolf.

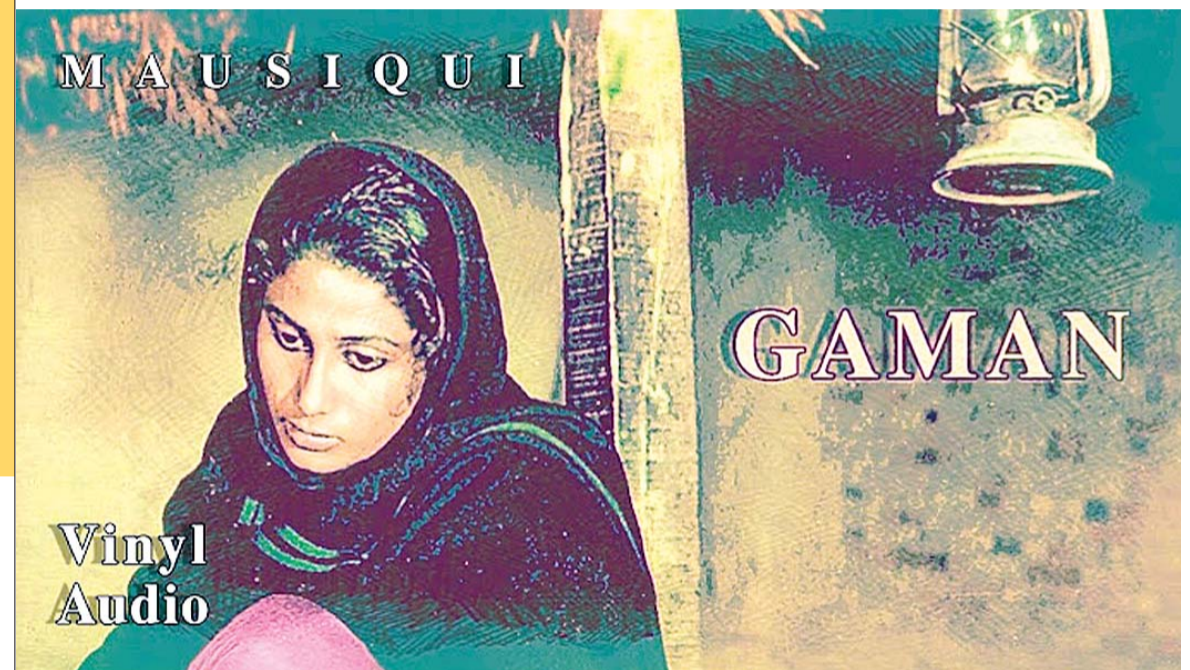


Dina Sanichar photographed in the late 18th century.

#GAMAN

Aapki Yaad Aati Rahi Raat Bhar...

Set in Raag Bhairavi, the composition flows like a slow, delicate river. It unfolds as a vilambit, gradually rising with interludes that feel like gentle sighs of the heart



Some songs don't just play, they linger. They become memories, echoes of a feeling too deep for words. "Aapki Yaad Aati Rahi Raat Bhar" from Muzaffar Ali's 1978 classic *Gaman* is one such song, a haunting ode to longing that continues to captivate listeners decades later.



Composed by the legendary Jaidev and written by the eminent poet Makhdoom Mohiuddin, the song draws from Mohiuddin's celebrated ghazal tradition, bringing poetry to life through music. But the magic truly comes alive in the voice that carries it. Chhaya Ganguly, trained personally by Jaidev for this piece, poured her husky, soul-stirring voice into the composition, capturing every nuance of *soz*, the intense, lingering emotion of melancholy and longing.

Chhaya Ganguly's mastery of voice was no accident. Before playback, she honed her craft at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai, one of India's premier institutions for classical music. There, she immersed herself in

Hindustani classical vocal training, focusing on voice culture, raga interpretation, and emotional expression. During this period, she shared the stage of learning with other budding talents, including Kavita Krishnamurthy, receiving guidance from some of India's most respected gurus. This rigorous foundation, combined with Jaidev's mentorship, prepared her to meet the exacting demands of a song like "Aapki Yaad Aati Rahi Raat Bhar."

Set in Raag Bhairavi, the composition flows like a slow, delicate river. It unfolds as a vilambit, gradually rising with interludes that feel like gentle sighs of the heart. Every pause, every modulation is deliberate,

mirroring the ache and yearning embedded in Mohiuddin's poetry. The result is a song that isn't just heard, it is deeply felt. Jaidev's sensitive composition earned him the National Film Award for Best Music Direction, while Chhaya Ganguly's unforgettable rendition won her the National Film Award for Best Female Playback Singer.

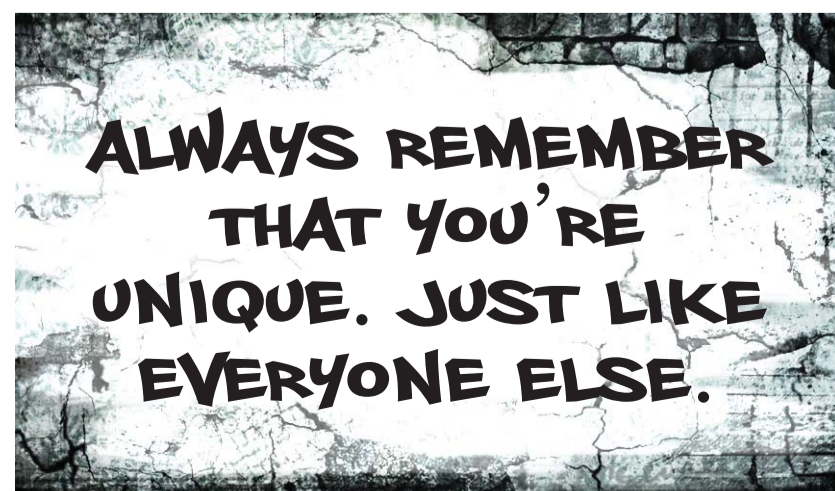
The cultural impact of the song extended beyond the film. Poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz, in homage to Mohiuddin, later composed a poem in the same meter, weaving in some of Mohiuddin's verses, a testament to the enduring beauty and influence of this ghazal tradition.

Gaman itself is a landmark film, starring Farooq Sheikh, Smriti Patil, Nana Patekar, and Jaiid Aga. It explores the trials of urban migration through the story of a man traveling from Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai, struggling to survive as a taxi driver in an unfamiliar city. The melancholy of displacement, the quiet desperation of survival, and the longing for home find their perfect voice in "Aapki Yaad Aati Rahi Raat Bhar," making it more than a song, it is the emotional core of the film.

Decades later, the song still resonates, a reminder of the delicate alchemy of poetry, music, and human emotion. In every hushed note and lingering sigh, it whispers the universality of longing, the bitter-sweet beauty of memory, and the timeless artistry of Jaidev, Makhdoom Mohiuddin, and Chhaya Ganguly. From rigorous classical training at NCPA to the intimate guidance of a master composer, Chhaya Ganguly's voice remains an enduring testament to the power of dedication, emotion, and artistry in Indian music.



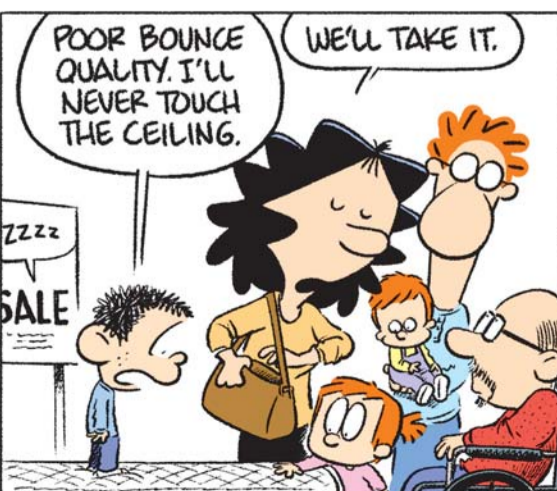
THE WALL



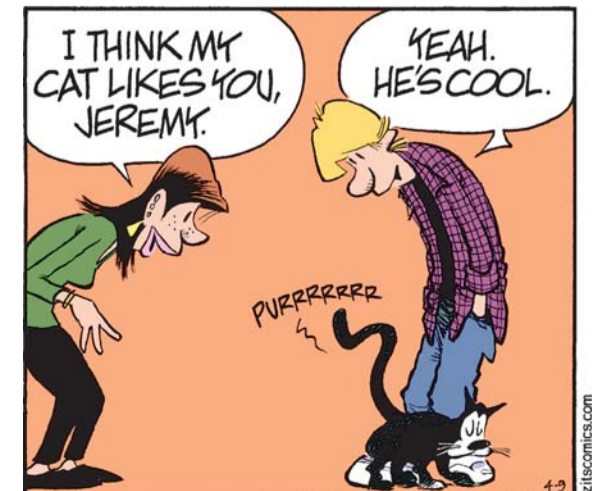
BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman