

#AGE

# Aging Without Nagging

When wrinkles bloom and joints protest, Don't teach the world, just give it rest. Even if you're right (and you often are), Unsolicited wisdom leaves a scar



Found this lovely poem on linkedin

When wrinkles bloom and joints protest, Don't teach the world, just give it rest. Even if you're right (and you often are), Unsolicited wisdom leaves a scar.

Help only when someone pleads, Don't plant advice like stubborn weeds. Don't bubble-wrap your kin from pain, Just love them deep, and not explain.

No moaning 'bout your knees or pills, Or neighbours' netas, unpaid bills. Don't turn bitter, don't be loud, Grumpy elders aren't allowed!

Don't expect your kids to bow, They love you, just not like you. Gratitude's not their daily bread, It's us who dream it in our head.

Avoid the dreaded elder speech: "In my time..." or "I did each..." "I'm older, hence I know it all!" That's not wisdom, it's just gall.

Don't waste your cash on youth's disguise, On creams or potions full of lies. Better to travel, dance, and roam, Than Botox your way back to home.

Stay with the times, don't lag behind, Learn new tech, expand your mind. Read the news, decode the apps, Don't be the one who always naps.

Do what you love, while you still can, Be your own fan, your biggest stan. No guilt-trips down memory lane, You did your best, now don't complain.

Hold your pride, your grace, your name, Don't play the martyr's aging game. Keep giving love, your finest art, That's the secret to a youthful heart.



# The baraata has come PART:1

Jaipur celebrates Teej, Gangaur, Makar Sankranti and the Lit Fest with great pomp. One more festival comes every year without fail, but it never makes it into the tourism brochure. This year, it has arrived on New Sanganer Road just before the festive season, with bulldozers, police and a lot of dust, right when the shopkeepers were dusting off their Diwali stock. As usual, the people paying for it are not the ones who were invited.



Shailaza Singh  
Published Author,  
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'Didi, sorry. Poora road band hai.' (Didi, sorry. The whole road is closed.)

'Kyon?' 'Bulldozer aaya hai.' 'My maid said it the way people once announced 'baraat aa gayi hai.' Everything

stops, the traffic goes mad, someone is dancing in the middle of the road and nobody gets home on time. The only difference is that this baraot comes on a JCB instead of a ghodi, and the groom is the Jaipur Development Authority.

She was an hour late the day it began. In my house, an hour late means last night's utensils in the sink, staring at me like a pet left behind at the kennel. It means morning chai made by the one person in the house who least wants to make it. I will not name her. She is writing this article.

With the main road shut, all of New Sanganer Road's traffic has squeezed into the lanes behind it. These gullies were built for one scooter, one cow and one sabziwala's thela, in that order of priority. Now, they carry buses, autos, tractors, cars, and, the other day, one gentleman on a bike with a full-size desert cooler tied to the back, as if he was migrating for the summer.

The cow does not move an inch. To her credit, she has seen many drives. Bulldozers come and go. Cows are permanent.

## What the bulldozer came for

So, here are the boring facts before the fun begins.

On paper, New Sanganer Road is 100 feet wide. In real life, officials say that it has shrunk to 40 or 60 feet at many places. Patrika reported that at some spots, it is barely 3 feet. From 100 to 8! If this road would only share its diet plan, half the aunties in Jaipur would sign up tomorrow.

To be honest, I have lived near this road for years and never once

A building with its face sliced off is a strange sight. One day, a shop has a shiny glass front with its name in golden letters. The next day, it has exposed bricks, dangling wires and a signboard lying on the ground like a fallen hero in the second half of a Sunny Deol film. The whole building looks like a man who went to the barber for a trim...

thought of it as 100 feet wide. I always thought it was a road with shops on it. It turns out it was shops with a little bit of road in between. Now, the JDA wants to widen it, from Sodala to Gurjar Ki Thadi, to about 100 feet. On directions from the Rajasthan High Court, the demolition drive is on. Notices have gone to around 250 structures. Down are coming shop fronts, facades, extensions, tin sheds, ramps and staircases. In short, all the parts of buildings that quietly walked out onto the road over the years, one step at a time, like a husband slowly taking over the whole bed.

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## Shubh Muhurat

The traders have one complaint above all others. Why now?

Navratri, Dussehra and Diwali are standing in a queue, one behind the other. This is the season a shopkeeper waits for all year, and then spends the rest of the year saying that it was not as good as last year. Every saree shop has ordered its stock. Every mithai shop has booked extra karigars. And right now, the JDA is taking their faces off.

Imagine Dhanteras. A customer walks in to buy a silver coin, and the shop has no front, no glass and no golden letters. Just bricks, wires and a shopkeeper smiling bravely. It

## #ATIKRAMAN UTSAV



looks less like a jewellery showroom and more like a crime scene with a discount offer. This Diwali, the only thing on sale at fifty percent off is the building itself.

So, why now? Did someone at the JDA open the panchang and find that this was the *shubh muhurat* for breaking things?

The answer is much simpler, and much more Indian. The JDA had a compliance report due before the High Court.

The bulldozer arrived the day before it was due. Yes. One day before.

The interesting bit is that the High Court had cleared the way for this widening months ago, back in the monsoon. Months with no festival, no customers and nothing on the road except rain and mosquitoes. The JDA used none of them. It waited, like every student in India, for the night before the exam.

I spent two years in an engineering college, so, I know this method well. The semester starts. Nobody opens a book. Then, the date sheet comes out and the whole hostel turns into a temple of learning overnight. Chai, Maggi, photocopies

of somebody else's notes and a great deal of prayer.

The JDA, it turns out, is just a very large hostel. Its files sleep in a government almirah, under three other files and a dead lizard, and wake up only when someone in a black coat clears his throat.

If the JDA ever printed its own calendar, it would have only one day marked in red. The day before the hearing.

The traders had been checking the panchang. They should have been checking the cause list.

## Diwali Safai, Sarkari Style

To be fair, the JDA is only doing what every Indian home does before Diwali. Safai.

In most Indian homes, Diwali safai begins with great ambition. Every cupboard will be emptied, every fan will be wiped, every old newspaper will go to the kabadiwala. By the third day, the ambition has shrunk to the drawing room, because that is where the guests will sit. Everything else is stuffed into the store room and the children are

told never to open it till Holi.

The JDA is doing exactly the same. Around 250 notices went out. When the drive began, officials said the first round covered only about 15 structures on one kilometre near Gurjar Ki Thadi. It is like a teacher who announces a surprise test for the whole class and then checks the copies of the first bench only. The drawing room is being cleaned for the judge. The rest of the road is waiting in the store room.

And then, a miracle happened. Several traders started breaking their own extensions before the JDA arrived, so that the bulldozer would not damage their shops and their Diwali stock. Men with hammers, taking down their own staircases, on their own time, at their own cost, before the government deadline.

In all my years in Jaipur, I have never seen anyone finish government work voluntarily and on time. It took a bulldozer to make it happen. The JDA should give these traders an award. Or at least a job. My maid, meanwhile, is now late for two kinds of safai. The JDA's, which she cannot help, and mine, which she will not let me forget.

## Savouring the Versatility of Mushrooms

National Mushroom Day, observed annually on October 15, shines a spotlight on one of nature's most versatile and nutritious foods. From earthy shiitakes to delicate button mushrooms, these fungi are celebrated for their rich flavours, culinary adaptability, and health benefits, including immune support and antioxidants. On this day, chefs, home cooks, and food enthusiasts explore creative ways to incorporate mushrooms into meals, from hearty soups and savoury sautés to gourmet dishes. Beyond the kitchen, National Mushroom Day also highlights sustainable farming and foraging practices, encouraging appreciation for this humble ingredient that adds both taste and nutrition to our plates.



## #GARDENS

# HOW PLANTS KNOW WHEN TO BLOOM?

This information could also help us design restoration strategies for plants that are struggling



An expert has answers for you about how plants know when to bloom. Last December was the warmest on record for Washington state, according to the Washington State Climate Office. As the mild winter continues, many of the plants in our gardens are starting to show signs of small buds, even though it's only February. Takato Imaizumi, a University of Washington professor of biology, studies the genes that plants use to monitor seasonal changes. Here, Imaizumi talks about how plants know when to bloom and whether this might change in warmer winters.

Q: How do plants know when it's time to bloom?

A: There are two major factors that plants use to sense the seasons: light, the presence or absence, the intensity, or the colour at a specific time of day, and temperature. To control flowering time, plants sense light conditions in the leaves and temperature at shoot tips,

which are buds that contain cells that allow the plant to grow and make a flower.

All plants use both factors, but some plants rely more on temperature than light. Some examples include tulips, crocus, and cherry blossoms. Plants that rely more on light include mustard greens, cabbage, rape-seeds, and chrysanthemum, though temperature is still important for these plants.

Other environmental factors that can affect bloom time include water and the availability of nutrients. Q: How do you think the warmer weather in December has affected the plants here in, say Washington?

A: Temperatures will affect plant growth and development. I assume that warmer ambient temperatures will accelerate the flowering process of some plants that use temperature information to control flowering time.

But warmer temperatures could possibly lead to delays for others. While many plants are "dormant" and not growing dur-

ing the colder winter months, some plants require exposure to prolonged cold periods before they can bloom, a process called vernalization. If the winter isn't cold enough, these plants might not be able to initiate the flowering process.

Earlier flowering may be detrimental to plants if the weather gets cold again. That cold weather may kill them because they are no longer in their dormant phase. Also, plants that flower too early may misalign with their usual pollinators if the pollinators respond to different temperature cues.

Q: How does studying the genes involved in the timing of plant flowering help with conservation biology?

A: Proper timing of flowering is crucial for reproductive success and the health of a plant species. Understanding how the flowering genes are regulated will help us predict how future changes in climate may affect flowering times. That will give us a better sense of which plants may struggle.

This information could also help us design restoration strategies for plants that are struggling. For example, if we wanted to introduce a plant to a novel environment, we would have some ideas about what it would require to thrive. Plants are adapted to local environments. Even within the same species, a plant that lives farther north may require different light and temperature conditions to grow and flower compared to the same species growing farther south. When we think about transplanting plants for conservation, learning specific environmental requirements may increase the chance of transplant success.



## The Twist

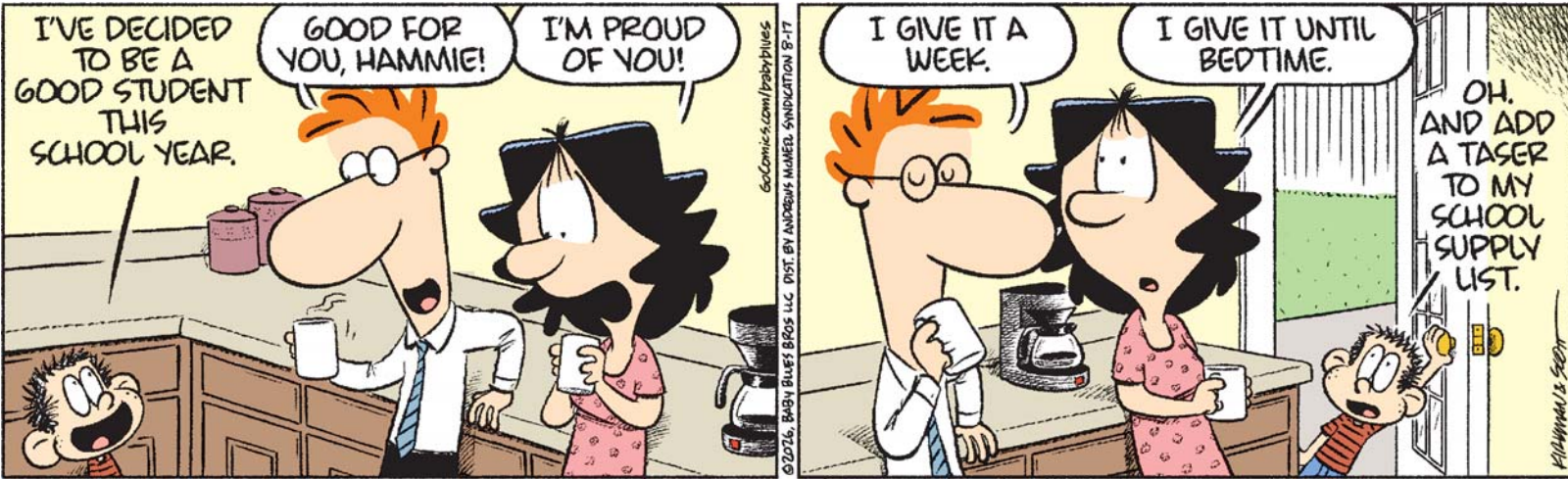
But this year, the festival has one surprise. Near the Gurjar Ki Thadi turn, the bulldozer slices through shop after shop like a hungry man going through a thali. Then, it stops. Sitting right on the road are small rooms, each just big enough for an idol. The bulldozer looks at them. It thinks for a moment. Then, it goes around. Very brave with shop fronts. Very polite with gods.

To be continued...

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By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## THE WALL

