



Here's one of the most mindboggling facts about the world - you're always seven years behind in Ethiopia. Just like the Gregorian calendar (the one most of us are on), the Ethiopian calendar marks Christ's birth as the starting point. However, following alternate calculations of the annunciation of Christ, the Ethiopian calendar is seven to eight years behind. The most interesting differences are the yearly holidays. Ethiopia celebrates New Year on September 11th and Christmas on January 7th (in Gregorian calendar).

#THEATRE

Of Love, Sin and Life



The first theatrical adaptation of the story 'Chitralekha' is all set to take place at Ravindra Manch on March 4. Directed by Dheeraj Bhatnagar, the play is based on the 1934 Hindi novel of the same name and is being presented by Rangsheersh Art and Cultural Research Society.



Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer and city blogger

The theatre lovers of Jaipur will be in for a mesmerizing treat as the first theatrical adaptation of the story 'Chitralekha' is all set to take place at Ravindra Manch on March 4. Directed by Dheeraj Bhatnagar, the play is based on the 1934 Hindi novel of the same name by Padma Bhushan awardee Bhagwati Charan Verma about Bigupta, a feudal lord serving under the Maurya Empire king Chandragupta Maurya (340 BCE - 298 BCE) and his love for the courtesan Chitralekha, who had become a slave to the circumstances.

The play inspires the viewers to delve deeper into the definitions of love and life as well as sin and virtue. Telling more about the play Dheeraj Bhatnagar said that the novel of 22 chapters has been brought on stage in 19 scenes on the stage. In this play, 15 actors will bring different characters to life on stage, while 15 members will co-ordinate the backstage activities. "We have worked tirelessly for the audience to watch and decide - what can be the definition of

sin," he adds.

On being asked about the relevance of the story of Chitralekha today, Dheeraj shares: "If we talk about the relevance of the play, then every line of the novel written in 1934 is relevant even today. Through the character of Chitralekha, the struggle of empowerment of women comes to the forefront. Also, Chitralekha is a wonderful example of a woman's strong self-confidence and ability to stick to her decision. I believe that present-day women will definitely like the play and resonate with the character and story of Chitralekha."

It is worth noting that written in 1934, this novel was also filmed twice, in 1941 and 1964. Directed by Kidar Khan, it was the second-highest grossing Indian film of 1941. Its music was composed by noted classical musician Ustad Jhande Khan, giving popular songs like 'Sun sun Neelkamal Muskare', 'Saiyyan Saware Bhaye Beware' and 'Thum Jaso Bade Bhagwan Bane, Insaan Bano'. Khan used classical Ragas like Bhairavi and Asavari to the score, making it influential for classical based Hindi film songs. The film was remade by Sharma in 1964, also titled Chitralekha, starring Meena Kumari and Ashok Kumar.

Date: Friday, March 4
Time: 6 pm
Venue: Ravindra Manch
Entry: Ticketed (M-99833 23333)

#RESEARCH

Pre-sleep Nesting Behaviour

For people suffering from chronic difficulties initiating and maintaining sleep, adopting a regular behavioural pre-sleep routine was found to be more efficient in facilitating sleep than medication, yet the biological link between the pre-sleep phase and sleep initiation was until recently a mystery.

Humans, as well as many other animals including mice, engage in routine behaviours prior to sleep initiation, including attending to personal hygiene and preparing a space in which to sleep. It has

long been suggested that these pre-sleep behaviours promote tranquility and de-arouse the brain, yet causal evidence was lacking. In the newly published study, University of Michigan researchers characterized mice's routine prior to sleeping and demonstrated that if mice are not able to engage in pre-sleep nesting behaviour, it takes them longer to fall asleep and the quality of their sleep declines.

The researchers used new methods to tag neurons that were activated during the pre-sleep phase and subsequently modulate their activity. They successfully pinpointed neurons or brain cells in the lateral hypothalamus which is a brain structure located in the forebrain and responsible for many behaviours including hunger, fear, and thirst that not only controls pre-sleep nesting behaviour, but also sleep intensity. The findings could eventually lead to the development of alternative medication to treat sleep disturbances other than currently available prescribed drugs which pose many health risks.



When enough stocks of the jalebi are ready the next fast food item was put in the hot oil. Dal and Pyaz Ki Kachori are traditionally made first. The first customers are quickly attracted to the strong aroma, waiting patiently while the oil is drained from the piping hot batch to relish it with green coriander paste (chatni) and sweet tamarind syrup (Sonth ki chatni). An hour had to pass when the samosa had its turn with equal number of aficionados. This alteration of the two savouries goes on till noon when it is the turn of Mirchi Baras (stuffed long green chillies dipped in Besan batter) is put to fry. Variety of fast food was provided throughout the day to choose from. In bigger stalls Dal or Besan Pakoras are regularly being brought out in batches. There are some constants that are devoured throughout the day, Pani Puri and Bhel Puri are the common ones. With burgeoning number of tutorial classes beginning early in the morning, the corner Poha man on a cycle, is now seen everywhere.

Fast and Melting Moments

Then and Now

#FOODIE



Dr Goutam Sen
CTVS Surgeon
Traveller
Story teller

There are those rare and precious moments when adult grandchildren saunter into our bedroom looking for something and have time enough to stop and say a few words. It is then important to strike while the iron is hot and try to make a sensible conversation which is of interest to both of us.

The other day when Sukriti arrived on some quest I quickly shifted the conversation to her dinner meeting with her friends the night before. They were about twenty of them and we could hear them clearly at the corner open air restaurant near the gate of our residence. Although we did not ask about what was discussed but could easily talk about the food eaten. Our whole family is a bunch of foodies and they are always on the lookout for a good meal - a different meal, in some place out of the way. Once in a while they will also eat something close to a regular meal (joking! We do have dal chawal on regular basis with sabzi).

As the conversation went on the question arose what was the fast food of our generation? She imagined that the concept of fast food and take away was very much something that her generation had initiated. You know what I mean - the generation in a hurry with all the time for the mobile.

It was more of a way of suggesting that we were not adventurous enough as youngsters as far as food was concerned. I had to admit that there were no takeaways or these

combinations of buns with tasteless readymade stuffings which are currently available in most of the multinational chains. It was not a part of our food requirements.

We had fast food both outside and inside our homes. It had been there for generations. As long as the halwai was willing to get up early in the morning and start boiling the milk and putting the huge cauldrons on a well-lit fire (later to be replaced by the powerful and noisy gas flame) there was fast food for the seekers. In fact it was very much ritualistic and time scheduled thing. While the milk boiled the flat dish full of ghee was put on the fire and the first batch of sizzling jalebi was poured out. The combination of Doodh-Jalebi has been a traditional starter for morning walkers and people returning from the sports activity. Some even got the jalebi packed for the family. Each of us had our favourite jalebi shop just as much as the present generation has a choice to pick their pizza shops.

After an hour or so when enough stocks of the jalebi was ready consumed the next fast food item was put in the hot oil for other enthusiasts. Dal and Pyaz Ki Kachori are traditionally made first. The first customers are quickly attracted to the strong aroma, wait patiently while the oil is drained from the piping hot batch to relish it with green coriander paste (chatni) and sweet tamarind syrup (Sonth ki chatni). An hour had to pass when the samosa had its turn with equal number of aficionados. This alteration of the two savouries goes on till noon when it is the turn of Mirchi Baras (stuffed long green chillies dipped in Besan batter) is put to fry. Variety of fast food was provided throughout the day to

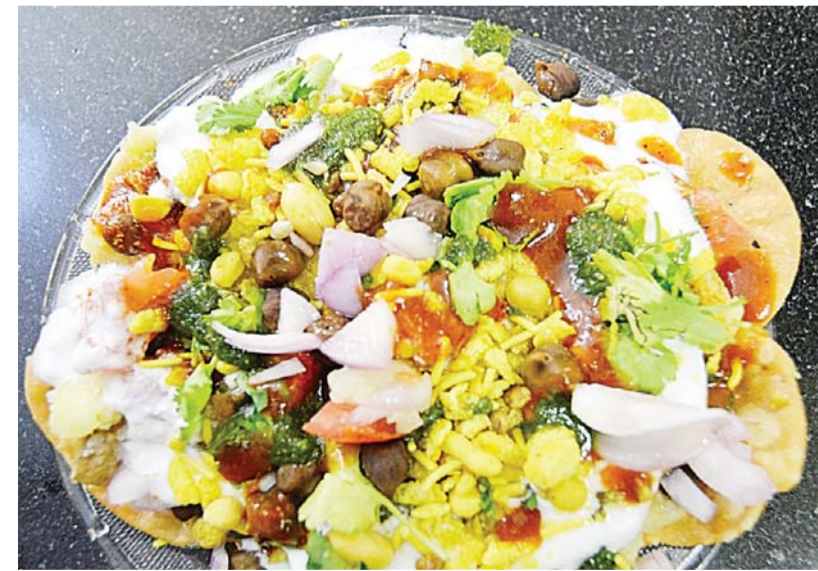


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At home, innovative parents knew how to tackle hungry children in a hurry. Oh yes! We too were always in a hurry. We had to be on the basketball court ten minutes early or the world would end. Our fast food may not have had classy names like burgers and wraps but similar stuff was innovatively handed over to us in magical flurry of activity. The thick slices of white bread or buns from the local bakery spread with ample of butter and our favourite mixed fruit jam was quick and quite fulfilling on the run. There was this character in a comic strip that was called Dagwood. His poor wife Blondie was at her wits end trying to keep her dear husband grumbling tummy full. One of our commonest requests was for this 'Dagwood sandwich'. A pile of bread slices quickly buttered and then all varieties of stuff waiting in the refrigerator varying from cheese, salami, ham, coleslaw sliced cucumber, tomato, onion and even lettuce were overloaded on each slice. All the slices were stacked together making it a minimum four slice high sandwich. It was nearly impossible to have a single bite from top to bottom and yet we somehow managed just as today's generation does with a Maha burger which stands six inches high. The advantage was that this sandwich had such flexibility depending on what stuffing awaited our palate.

A huge variety of such sandwiches were polished off by all in a jiffy. To my mind this was the commonest fast food of our generation which later converted itself into the 'august' burger. The present generation cannot even claim that the wraps are something that they generated. Any leftover chapattis or paranthas was quickly organized into a wrap or a roll in some other name. I cannot even remember the official name but we called it 'Pongi'.



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Just as today's generation will go a long way to get the right bun or pizza we too had our favourite eateries. Even today if there is a need to buy samosa and Kachori I will always go to the small lane next to Natraj restaurant. There is no shop better than the one near the rear entrance of the Hawa Mahal in Tripolia Bazaar for all varieties of Pakoras.

Sukriti and I agreed that fast food is a concept. Basically it means a food which is easily and universally available but should hit the palate and fill stomach with complete satisfaction.

Come to think of it there was fast food in ancient times too. In archeological excavations roasted corn on the cob has survived as one of the fast foods for the last 5000 years. Isn't it amazing? | | | | |

write@arbit@rashtrdoot.com

#LIFESTYLE

Ultimate Summer Hangout

As the temperature rises to an acceptable 'cotton tee and jeans' level, it's time to uncover the patio furniture and get ready for summer.



ing, the more organic the setting will look.

Quality Dining Table



Your dreams of dining al fresco can become your reality with the right table. Invest in a solid wood piece that's low maintenance and weather resistant and make sure that it's long enough to fit the whole family. A quality table will last for years to come and can easily be customized through the seasons with flatware, caddies, runners, cushions and more.

Pile on Pillows

I'm pretty sure the saying is actually 'The more pillows, the merrier.' Amp up the style and comfort of your sitting area by topping each seat with a cute, all-weather cushion. You'll want to choose a colour palette to set the tone - whether that's vibrant pinks and greens for a playful, tropical look or black and white for something chic and modern - and then stick with pieces in that colour scheme.

Bring the 'Cool Factor

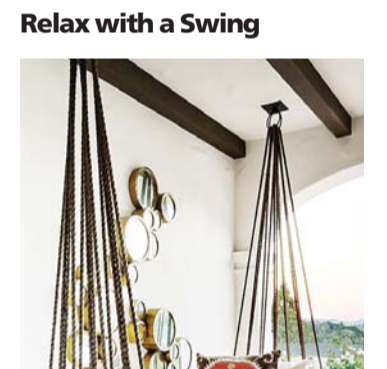


Outdoor ceiling fans are great options for helping to cool an outdoor space. They can also provide air circulation, illumination, and charming ambience on a patio, pergola, or deck. As summer approaches, there are many spaces for the family to hang out while keeping cool.

Hang Ambient Lighting

Strategically adding lighting to certain spaces around your yard or patio helps to illuminate the area while setting a certain mood and ambience. Lighting fixtures can be solar and LED, including different types of spotlights and patio string lights. To have beautiful mood lighting in the evening flowing into the night, the homeowners hung bistro string lights on to their privacy fence.

Weather Resistant Rug



The first rule of designing an outdoor living room is to define the space with a rug, preferably one that's made of polypropylene and is resistant to the elements. This essential piece will not only protect bare feet and pet paws from rough wood planks or concrete, but it will also serve as a base for your furniture.

Natural Touches

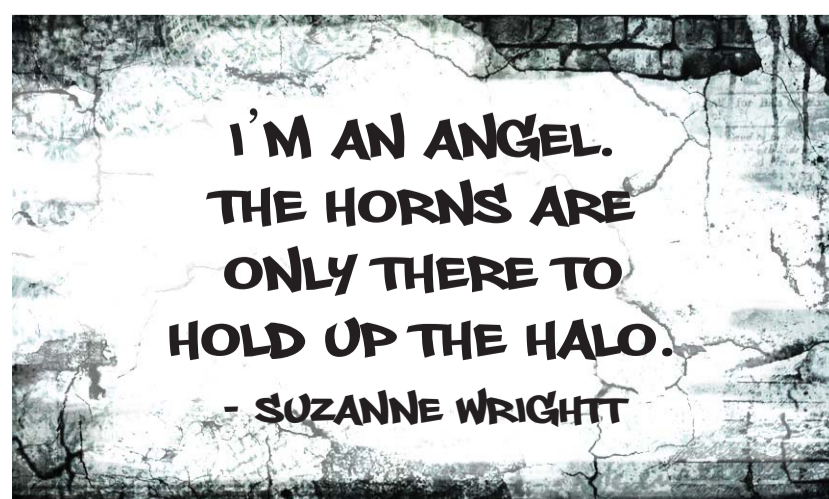
Too much metal can make a space feel cold and stiff, so it's important to balance those glossy surfaces with natural textures and finishes. A couple of rattan chairs, for example, will not only give you more seating options, but will also bring warmth and life to the setting. You can even customize them with cushions.

Feel Organic

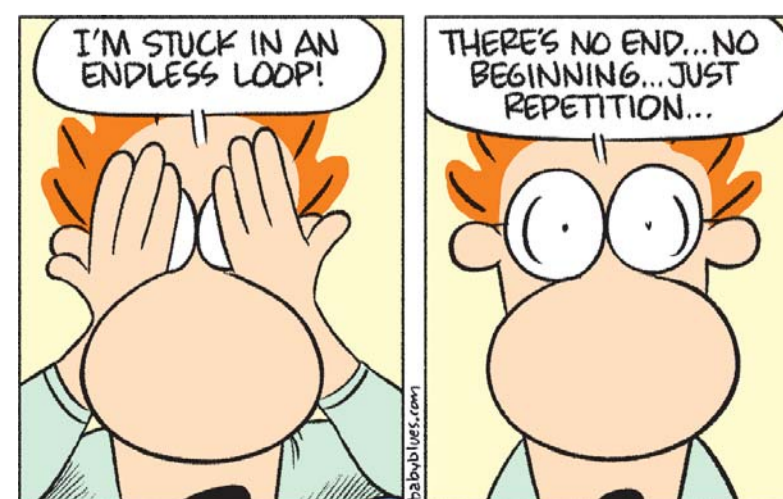
What would an oasis be without lush greenery? Help your space feel far away from everyday stressors and breathe a sigh of relief every time you step outside by putting in planters overflowing with foliage. You'll notice that the more types of containers you use, from freestanding to hang-



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



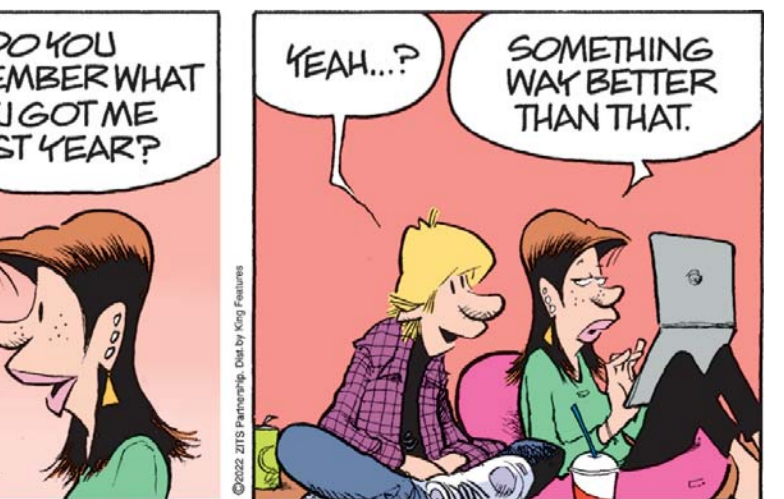
ZITS



ZITS



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By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman