# ARBIT it happens here...

Most people want to have a say in how their body will be treated after they pass away. The author too had an important realization about his end when he visited the mummy of Ramesses II, who despite being a powerful king in his time ended up in a museum with thousands of people gaping at his mummy every-day.

# I Have My Own Way **To Be Remembered**



Shravan Murlidhar **Presented by Shailaza Singh** 

> ome vears back Jaipur's Albert Hall Museum was flooded in mid-August. requiring the evacuation of an Egyptian mummy that is among its prize exhibits. Important documents and arte-

facts were damaged but luckily, the 2,300 year-old mummy, one of six in India, was lifted out of its display box in time and moved to higher ground. The mummy was first brought to India in 1883 for an exhibition in Jaipur as a gift by Brughsch Bev, the then curator at the Museum of Cairo, to Sawai Ishwar Singh, the ruler of Jaipur at the time. The Egyptian mummy named Tutu was from a family of priests who were devotees of Kehm in Egypt's Penopolis. Tutu was a teenaged girl belonging to the Ptolemaic dynasty, the last dynasty of ancient Egypt that lasted from early 300 BCE to 30 BCE. It is one of the six mummies in India. The others are in Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai and Hyderabad

#### **Rain Rain Go Away!**

The monsoon is conservation's scourge. Describing India's weather in his memoirs, the Mughal emper or Babur wrote: "During the rainy season, the weather is unusually good when the rain ceases.... The one drawback is that the air is too humid.... Bows cannot be used to shoot or they are ruined. Armour, books, bedding and textiles are also

#### **#MY WAY**

affected. Buildings do not last long either

#### **Mummies all Around**

Mummification generally demands aridity, though tissue can be protected by the acidic water of bogs and by chilly permafrost. Bodies preserved for millennia are found mainly in the world's driest regions, places like the Sahara, Atacama and Taklamakan deserts. They are found above all in Egypt, where the practice of mummifica tion reached a peak of sophistication. The Egyptians mummified not just kings and high-ranking officials but millions of cats, dogs, ibiscobras and crocodiles. Mummies were so commonly found in Egypt by 19th and 20th century archaeologists that their distribu tion to museums around the world caused no great loss to the parent

Although I had seen a number of such artefacts before my first (and thus far only) visit to Egypt, view-

ing mummies with their faces

hose individuals might have feared having their graves desecrated but surely they could not have imagined being plucked from their resting places to be placed in a room where travellers who had arrived in flying machines from all parts of the world would gawk at their uncannily lifelike faces. The indignity of their present circumstance contrasts sharply with what they wished for themselves but since nobody any longer shares their belief system, no activists demand their reburial.

Mummy kept in Jaipur museum.

final rites of a number of family members and friends. Sadly, it is a dispiriting place, lacking all solemnity and grace.

Those are words I associate with funerals I have attended in churches, where architecture, ritual and speech combine to endow the occasions with poignancy. I have also found grace and solemnity in the Shia Kabristan, where many of my family members are buried. Entering the aptly named Arambagh graveyard from a typically busy street in central Mumbai, one is transported into a tranquil, tree-filled space which feels far away from the bustle just



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was tempted for many years to sign on for organ donation. What held me back was a lack of trust in our system to conduct a dignified procedure that would save family members' additional trauma. The obvious second option was cremation. There is an electric crematorium at a walking distance from my home, where I have witnessed the final rites of a number of family members and friends

left behind. Each year, on a day called Shab-e-barat, members of the community visit the final resting places of loved ones, water their graves and say prayers at the graveside. It is a wonderful way to keep alive memories of the depart-

The churchyard and kabristan are, however, unavailable to resolute unbelievers like me. And so it was that, approaching my 30th year, still confused about the issue, I walked into the royal mummy rooms of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo's Tahrir Square, having paid extra for the privilege of seeing men and women who had died thou sands of years ago, laid out on slabs for examination by visitors.

Among them was Ramesses II or Ramesses the Great, one of the history's most prolific builders; peraps the world's most powerful man in 13th century BCE. A monarch dentified by many Jews, Christians and Muslims as the vilainous Pharaoh who opposed Moses, and the ruler who inspired Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous sonnet. Ozymandias. The poem tells of a colossal statue lying shattered in the middle of the desert, mocking the pretensions of the king who commissioned it. Many damaged statues of Ramesses the Great had been found in Egypt by the time Shelley published Ozymandias in 1818, but a greater mockery of the emperor was yet to come.

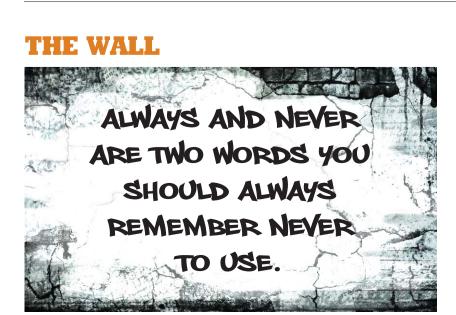
The riches of the Theban necropolis that held the pharaohs'



ed but surely they could not have imagined being plucked from their resting places to be placed in a room where travellers who had arrived in flying machines from all parts of the world would gawk at their uncannily lifelike faces. The indignity of their present circum stance contrasts sharply with what they wished for themselves but since nobody any longer shares their belief system, no activists demand their reburial.

While most of my mind connect ed present with past during the walk through the mummy room, a part linked present with future. We can no more predict the value sys tems and technological capacities of humans who will be alive 300 years from now like the Egyptians who lived 3,000 years ago who could predict ours. We have no idea what they will be capable of doing with our physical remains, and it is possible they will manipulate and use them in ways we shudder to contemplate The more I pondered over this

fact, the clearer it became to me that I want no part of those future experiments. Where the Egyptians sought to preserve the body forever I choose to obliterate it. Since the surest route to oblivion is through incineration, I have settled on the default option I had long resisted. It is the furnace for me, though I hope not for a while yet. writetoarbit@rashtradoot.com



### **BABY BLUES**

exposed in a Cairo gallery catalysed

an important personal decision: It

resolved my uncertainty regarding

how my corpse would be disposed

off when the time arrived. In this

vear of the pandemic, with the

ing constantly over us, news of the

I do not believe in an afterlife and

therefore the funeral rituals are

designed to help us grab congenial

spots in the hereafter. Since the

dead can have no interests, perhaps

it should not matter at all how my

cadaver is dealt with. An opposing

viewpoint, which I can share, is

that life has a justifiable stake in its

treatment following death, arising

from a legitimate concern about

procedure that would save family

nembers' additional trauma. The

obvious second option was crema-

tion. There is an electric crematori-

um at a walking distance from my

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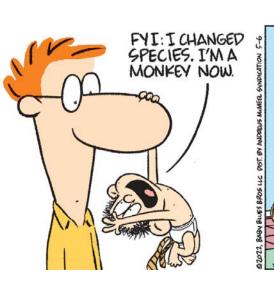
moment of decision back to me.

**Afterlife Thought** 

shadow of disease and death hang-

Albert Hall mummy brought that



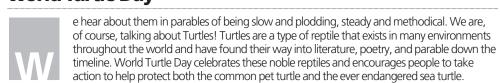


By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



I was tempted for many years to sign on for organ donation. What held me back was a lack of trust in our system to conduct a dignified

#### World Turtle Day



#### #GUINNESS-ALERT

### World's Largest Scotch Egg

Notably, the dish saw Leigh use the largest egg from their collection, a 1.7 kg ostrich egg, along with vegetarian outer ingredients like peas, cheddar cheese, sage and onion, breadcrumbs as well as various seasonings.

UK chef has registered a Guinness World Record for creating the world's largest Scotch egg with a vegetarian outer layer. Can you guess the size? According to the records site, it weighs a whopping 8.341 kg (18 lb 5 oz)

For the unversed, the Scotch egg is known to be a British snack which consists of a hard-boiled egg enclosed in sausage meat, rolled in breadcrumbs, and fried.

The chef Leigh Evans who works for the egg supplier Clarence Court based in Lacock, Wiltshire, took it upon himself to 'demonstrate the versatility of their eggs, creating his own recipe of a pea, mint and cheddar Scotch egg'.

Notably, the dish saw Leigh use the largest egg from their collection, a 1.7 kg ostrich egg, along with vegetarian outer ingredients like peas, cheddar cheese, sage, onion, breadcrumbs as well as various seasonings. The ingredients were all premixed and made



It was then wrapped around the ostrich egg. Then the whole piece was wrapped in cling film and placed in a blast-chiller, to assist in making it robust enough to be safely handled without falling apart, the website reported.

After 30 minutes, it was rolled in semolina and liquid egg, and rolled in panko breadcrumbs

It was then placed in a tray of preheated sunflower oil, basted and placed into the oven for 26 minutes. Next, it was weighed by an independent gualified surveyor. To check that the thickness of the vegetarian outer layer did not exceed the width of the egg as per the Guinness guidelines, the egg was cut in half.

"This was a first for me, having not created anything so large in my cooking career! I always enjoy a challenge, and this was one that I really did enjoy doing. I am delighted to have broken a Guinness World Record (title) and have had enormous fun creating this much-loved picnic staple but glad I got lot of practice in it before the judging day!" Chef Leigh told the records site After measurement and the

certificate presentation, the Scotch egg was taken to the onsite staff restaurant where it was consumed by Clarence Court employees.

## Of Premiums, Patience & Persistence



and city blogger

e your own boss, work for as many hours as you want and make as much money as you can dream of! Doesn't it sound too utopian? Well, it is not that hard to achieve if you are an LIC Agent. Even though this profes sion might seem 'so vesterday' to some but for those who have

pared with 1.1 million individuals for the entire private life insurance industry. However, there is no denving that the number of LIC Agents is now significantly going down. Arbit spoke to some LIC Agents from the city to find out what led them to be in this field, the challenges they face the impact of sale of insurance policies online, the reasons for high attrition in the industry and their tips for new entrants.

been in this trade for over a peri-

od of time swear by it as the best

line of work there can ever be. As

of 31 March 2021, LIC had a

whopping 1.35 million individu-

als in its agent network com-

"After being an agent for two decardes, now I am also training my daughter to become one": Hukam Singh

working and relationship building are extremely essential when i comes to becom ing a successful LIC Agent," advises Hukam Singh (55), who has been in this field for two decades and is now also train ing his 25-vear-old

daughter to become an agent Attending international meets and seminars is also something that one should invest in as it



# acquaints the agents

innovative ways expanding their business he adds Sharing his views on how LIC can work on retaining its agents, he says: 'Trainings and seminars at reg ular intervals might help. The private insur-

with

ance companies also give perks to the agents who help in keeping them motivated



LIC has been charting the business headlines owing to its latest IPO. Take a little breather from the wearisome numbers, as Arbit brings to you insights straight from the unsung heroes of LIC.

#### "LIC carved my path to an audi from a bicycle": Vimal Saxena



I have 7 other siblings and unlike them I was not good in studies. My family was always concerned about what I would do in life. My objective was to create an identity for myself and carve a career path that would let me buy whatever I wanted. Being a LIC agent has not only given me financial freedom but it also earned me mmense respect, " says Vimal Saxena (66), an LIC agent who primarily deals with NRIs and bureaucrats. When Saxena started this profession back in 1986 he used to commute on a bicycle. Today he has a chauffeur driven Audi and has travelled across the globe to attend LIC meetings and has no qualms in sharing this success

story with people around him. Ask him what made him choose this profession and he says: "There is absolutely no investment and the customer is available everywhere - right from a paan shop to a corporate office. Even during Covid-19 pandemic when people were facing huge losses in their business, my work was only expanding.

A target-led career plan, honesty in work and refraining from over-promising when making new clients are the ideals which Saxena suggests for new entrants in this field. "If the LIC agents are given the same regard and honour as is meter out in the private sector, it would be hugely motivating," he adds.

"LIC is synonymous with insurance": **Parminder Singh Chadha** 

has become such a force to reckon with that it is almost synonymous with an insurance policy. The trust that people have in LIC agents is

people may use the inter

net to cross check informa-

tion about a desired policy,

they still go for agents as

are Chipkoo" : Gaurav Garg

Parminder Singh Chadha (55), who's been in this profession for over three While freedom to work

tomers are some advantages of this profession, being available for clients ing to Chadha. "Growth in this profession relies on referrals and word of mouth publicity. The new entrants in this field should focus on always helping their customers and thereby expanding their network,' he adds while sharing a word of advice for newcomers in this field.

24x7 is a downside, accord-



#### Bet you didn't know.....

- A shrimp's heart is in its head. It is physically impossible for pigs to
- look up into the sky. The 'sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's
- sick' is believed to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language. If you sneeze too hard, you could
- fracture a rib.
- Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.
- A shark is the only known fish that can blink with both eyes.
- The longest one-syllable words in the English language are 'scrunched' and 'strengthened'
- 'Dreamt' is the only English word that ends in the letters 'mt'
- Almonds are the member of the peach family.

"LIC has been around for a their after-sale services long time now and today it can never be replaced by online services." opines decades now. remarkable. Even though

whenever one wants and

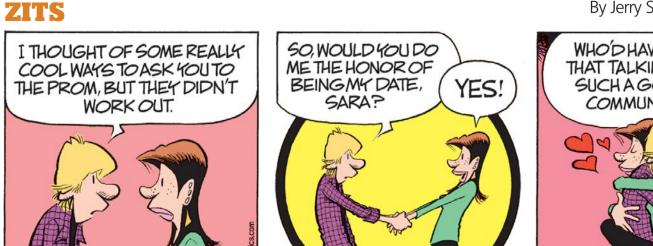
direct interaction with cus-

about LIC agents being 'chipkoo' Throwing light on the growing trend of LIC agents moving towards other professions, he says: "Once a customer is made, it is imperative to provide them good service after sale. For instance, if an address change in policy is needed, the client should not have to go to the LIC office. But the present generation refrains from putting in hard work and personalized service, which helps in expanding the work.'

ple have in their minds

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman





of this profession is the

negative perception peo-





my father for helping them with the right policy and its claim. That's when I realized being an LIC agent is not just about commissions but it also serves a huge purpose in the society," shares Gaurav Garg (34). However, he believes that the biggest shortcoming

"Patience, net-



"After 20 years of being an accoutant, I decided to become an LIC agent": **Ranjeet Jha** 



A senior accountant by profes sion who has an experience of working with clients with annual businesses of over INR 500 crores. Ranieet Jha decided to become an LIC agent at the age of 43. "In addition to earning some extra bucks, being an LIC agent enables me to help people around me to choose the right policy for them and secure their future. Even though at times people do not treat us appropri ately and try to avoid us but the merits of this profession far outweigh the disadvantages," says

Commenting on the high attrition rate of LIC agents, Jha adds: "The reason for the high attrition is that in the first year. the commission earned by the agents is high. At that time the profession appears to be lucrative but with time one needs to keep expanding their customer base to grow in this sector. This is a difficult task which requires strong communication skills and good understanding of the product and at this point, instead of being patient, people often leave."

### "LIC agents are treated like gods in

"People do not take up the profession of LIC agents only for money, but also because it is considered a noble profession. In rural areas, they are not treated less than Gods, shares Gaurav Khandelwa Development Officer in LIC Jaipur. Highlighting the training module of LIC Agents. Khandelwal informed that they are first and fore most given information abou the product, followed by joint calls to teach how to convince clients, giving them good and honest advice and also checking whether the party is insurable or not.

