राष्ट्रदुत

#SCIENCE

Racing Fire: The Parker Solar Probe's Daring Mission to Touch the Sun

If the Sun were a magician, its magnetic fields would be the invisible strings pulling off spectacular tricks.



ne Sun, a blazing ball of fire, the center of our solar system, and the reason life exists on Earth it it in awe, wondering about study something so powerful, untouchable? Enter NASA's Parker Solar Probe, a spacecraft on a daring mission to 'touch' the Sun and unravel its deepest mysteries. Sounds like science fiction? It's real, and it's hap-

before it, flying through its

scorching outer atmosphere

the corona. And how does it

survive? A revolutionary heat

shield keeps it from melting,

allowing it to endure tempera-

tures over 1,377 degrees

charged particles hurled

gling speeds. Ever wondered

why we get mesmerizing

auroras? That's solar wind

interacting with Earth's

atmosphere. But sometimes.

these winds turn into violent

storms that can disrupt satel-

lites, GPS, and power grids.

The Parker Solar Probe is

getting up close with these

charged particles to figure

out how and why they behave

interfere with technology on

Earth and pose dangers to

astronauts. By studying these

powerful magnetic forces up

close, the Parker Solar Probe

is helping scientists predict

space weather and protect our

Celsius (2.500

A Mission Like No Other

magine sending a spacecraft into a furnace hotter than a million ovens combined, sounds impossible, right? Well, the Parker Solar Probe is built just for that. Launched in 2018, this fearless explorer is diving closer to the

most laver, hotter than its surface? Logic suggests that temperatures should decrease as ou move away from the Sun's core, yet the corona blazes at millions of degrees while the surface is just around 5.500°C. The Parker Solar Probe is flying straight into this mystery. gathering real-time data to help scientists understand this puzzling solar paradox.

Magnetic Fields: The Sun's Invisible Puppeteers

T f the Sun were a magician, Lits magnetic fields would be the invisible strings pulling off spectacular tricks. solar flares, coronal mass ejections (CMEs), and gigantic explosions of plasma. These

And then, there's the solar

outbursts have the power to planet from cosmic tantrums. Shaping the Future of Space Exploration

W hy stop at protecting Earth? The Sun's influence stretches far beyond our planet, shaping the atmospheres of other celestial bodies. Take Mars, for example, Its once-thick atmosphere was stripped away by relentless solar winds. Understanding this process could help us unlock planetary evolution

let's not forget the technology! The Parker Solar Probe is proving that spacecraft can withstand extreme heat and radiation, paying the way for future missions to harsh environments, maybe even to distant exoplanets orbiting stars just as fiery as our own.

A Historic Leap for Humanity

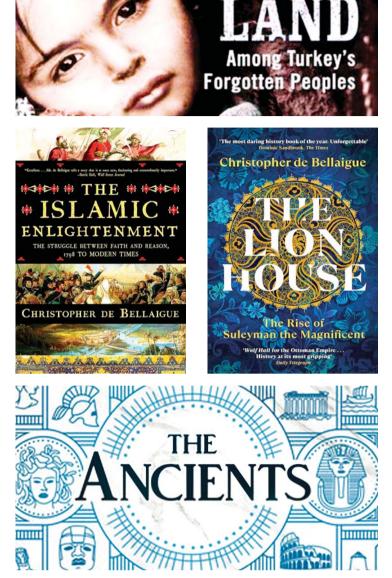
his mission isn't just about science, it's about pushing boundaries, about humanity's relentless curiosity. Named after Dr. Eugene Parker, the astrophysicist who first theorized solar wind, this probe is a testament to human ingenuity and our unstoppable desire to explore the unknown. With each daring dive towards the Sun, it's

rewriting what we know about our star, one blazing encounter at a time. So, the next time you feel the warmth of the Sun on your skin. remember, somewhere out there, the Parker Solar Probe is soaring through its fiery embrace, bringing us closer than ever to understanding the heart of our solar system. Now, isn't that electrifying?



An Engagement With The World From the streets of Kolkata to the

war zones of Afghanistan, Christopher de Bellaigue has spent decades chronicling the stories that shape our world. With a keen eye for detail and an unquenchable thirst for truth, he has traversed continents, immersing himself in cultures, conflicts, and revolutions. When we caught up with him at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2025, it sparked a candid conversation which took us through his journey, one of adventure, discovery, and relentless pursuit of understanding.



tural nuances. I've always believed people. That's why I prefer walking over taxis and buses over private cars. Many journalists are insulated, travelling in guarded convoys. and they miss out on real interactions. The more you blend in, the

and learned something Christopher de Bellaigue: One of my most memorable experiences was in Herat, Afghanistan, in

November 2001, just two days after the Taliban had left. The city was transforming overnight The men were all at barber shops, shaving off their beards, music was being played in the streets. and people were dancing for the first time in years. But the scars of the Taliban remained. A local man befriended me and took me to a cemetery. He pointed to a burial site and said, "Two weeks ago, the Taliban killed three of my friends because they were in the opposition. Their families have come to retrieve their bodies for proper burial." I watched as they unearthed the remains, identified distinguishing marks, and mourned their loved ones. The grief, pride, and resilience were overwhelming. It was a moment

iournalist and writer. of raw humanity, and it stayed



Christopher de Bellaigue: There's a deep ignorance comprove themselves as the 'best century interpretation of Islam.

Q: Can vou share an experi ence where you blended in

more you understand.

invaded by the British, the Russians, and later the Americans, they see defiance as a form of nationalism Q: What makes India special to Christopher de Bellaigue: worked in an orphanage in West Bengal, taking care of six children who had been badly treated. That experience left a deep mark on me. I saw love, kindness, and trust. India has a sense of humour I greatly enjoy and, of course, I love the food. Eating with my hands always felt natural.

India was my first love as a traveller, and it continues to be an important part of my journey as a

pined with a competitive desire to

Muslims, following a strict 8th-

They believe in returning to the

origins, emulating the Prophet's

time, but in reality, the Prophet

was a reformer. His rules were pro-

they appear repressive

gressive for his time, yet today,

of the West. After being repeatedly

They also have a deep mistrust



A Journey Through Time: India's Theatrical Heritage

he story of Indian theatre is

From Stage to Screen: Theatrical Roots of India's Iconic Performers

ome of India's most revered



#CULTURE

India's Stage: A Theatrical Legacy on World Theatre Day

As the final bow is taken and the curtains fall, one truth remains, Indian theatre is timeless. It is not merely an art, it is an emotion, a revolution, a legacy.



he spotlight rises, the curtains part, and the stage breathes life into stories waiting to be told. Theatre is more than just an art form, it is a mirror reflecting society, a voice challenging norms, and a canvas upon which human emotions are painted in their rawest form. As the world unites to celebrate World Theatre Day today, India stands as a testament to the undying spirit of theatrical expression, a legacy that has evolved over millennia

 ■ as old as civilization itself, a
 journey that began with the Natya Shastra, penned by Bharata over two thousand years ago. The grand epics, 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayana,' first found their voice in dramatic retellings, performed in royal courts and temple court yards. Kalidasa's Shakuntala and Bhasa's plays set the gold standard for classical theatre, where poetic dialogues and elaborate expressions formed the essence of story-

But theatre in India is not confined to the grandeur of classical Sanskrit drama. It thrives in the vibrant folk traditions of 'Jatra'

actors began their journey under the stage lights before conquering television and cinema. Shah Rukh Khan, the undisputed 'King of Bollywood,' first honed his craft in Delhi's theatre circuit under the mentorship of Barry John. His performances in TV shows like Fauji and Circus carried the echoes of his theatrical training, laying the foundation for his cinematic superstardom. The

same can be said for Pankai Kapur whose precision in Karamchand and Office Office stems from his deep-rooted theatre background. The late Irrfan Khan, before mesmerizing the world with his subtle brilliance, sharpened his skills on stage. Naseeruddin Shah and Ratna Pathak Shah, both theatre veterans, continue to oscillate between stage and screen, proving that theatre is where true artistry

in Bengal, 'Nautanki' in Uttar

Karnataka, and 'Therukoothu' in

Tamil Nadu. Each region, each

dialect, each community has

shaped theatre into an organic

entity, one that evolves while stay-

rule, proscenium theatre took

center stage, blending Western

storytelling structures with

Indian narratives, Post-independ-

ence, theatre became a tool for

revolution with stalwarts like

Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar,

Habib Tanvir, and Badal Sircar,

crafting stories that held a mir-

With the arrival of colonial

ng rooted in its essence.

'Yakshagana' in

Pradesh.



Theatres That Breathe **Life Into Stories**

he beating heart of India's the Latre culture lies in its iconic per formance spaces. Delhi's National School of Drama has birthed some of India's finest theatre practitioners while Mumbai's Prithvi Theatre remains a sanctuary for experimenta storytelling. Kolkata's Academy of Fine Arts, Chennai's Koothu-P Pattarai, and Bengaluru's Ranga Shankara are sacred spaces where the legacy of live performance continues to thrive. Festivals, too, play a crucial role in keeping this art form alive. The Bharat Rang Mahotsay in Delhi brings the best of Indian and global theatre to the forefront, while the Prithvi Theatre Festival in Mumbai celebrates experimental narratives. The International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFOK) showcases cutting-edge performances, proving that Indian theatre is not just surviving, it is reinventing itself.

Theatre as a Voice of Change

T n the bylanes of bustling cities and L quiet corners of small towns, street theatre, *nukkad natak*, remains an unfiltered voice of the people. Groups like Jana Natva Manch use theatre to challenge societal injustices, turning sidewalks into stages and passersby into audiences. At a time when digital media dominates, these performances serve as a reminder that live theatre holds an unparalleled power, it is immediate, it is raw, and it is deeply personal.

A Standing Ovation for India's Theatre

W orld Theatre Day is not just a celebration, it is an ode to the storytellers, the dreamers, and the visionaries who step onto the stage night after night, breathing life into characters that make us laugh, cry, and reflect. It is a tribute to an art form that has shaped India's cultural identity, one performance at a time.



: What made you want to

become a journalist?

reporting.

Shailaza Singh

Published Author, Poet and a YouTube

spent almost 18 months between school and university, travelling as a backpacker. I was on a shoestring budget of \$10 a day, and I spent a lot of time in India, along with other countries. But India particularly

I went back to Cambridge University, and I changed my Bellaigue is a journalcourse when I got home. Instead of ist and author, best doing History of Art, I switched to known for his works, Indian and Persian studies. I knew I didn't want to stay in Cambridge Enlightenment' and for too long. It felt restrictive, a small town where I couldn't fully 'The Lion House. Having covered sigengage with the world I had just nificant events in the Middle East and South Asia, his career has been marked by a deep engagement with history culture, and conflict. A former correspondent for India Today and *The Economist*, de Bellaigue has spent years immersing himself in the regions he writes about, learning languages and experienc ing firsthand the tensions and transformations shaping these

discovered. I was waiting to get out. In my last term at Cambridge, I wrote a letter to Arun Puri, the editor and owner of India Today asking for a job. It was a long shot Three months later, in 1993, received a reply. He offered me a staff writer's salary, not a huge amount, and asked if I could survive. I said, "Well, I'll have to." So, I found a little flat and started working at India Today societies. In this interview at the What was your first real Jaipur Literature Festival 2025, he shares his journey, motivations,

Christopher de Bellaigue: My first major story was an investigation into the illegal trade of historical artifacts in India. I had to pretend to be the son of an antique dealer. At the time, there was a craze in England for turning doors and window frames from Indian

and insights from decades of Christopher de Bellaigue: My desire to see the world. I realized I wanted to do this when I was at havelis into glass tables. Whole university, but my real journey

> covered the war on terror and witnessed firsthand the transformations happening in the Middle Some people become journalists because they love the truth. Others do it because they love the story. I became a journalist because I wanted to get away. I wanted to travel, and I wanted to write. Over time, I learned what a story was, and eventually, I understood what the truth was. But initially, my main goal was just to be a foreign correspondent and see the

really felt like a journalist.

Today?

temples were being dismantled and nalist in the UK. transported illegally to America. I visited warehouses and godowns, speaking to dealers and seeing ous places like Iran and war firsthand the extent of the destruction. It was shocking. I broke the

story, and it turned into a five-page cover piece. I was proud of it. People at India Today said that I did a great job, and that was when I Q: What happened after India Christopher de Bellaigue: I was there for about a year before I got an offer from The Economist to be their correspondent in Turkey. I staved in Turkev for five years, and then I moved to Iran, where I lived for seven years. During that time, I

ence in Iran and Turkey?

you want to go to Iran? You can't world. I never wanted to be a jourdrink, there's no political free-Q: Did your family worry dom, and women are oppressed. But I wanted to see it for myself. about you covering danger-Iran has one of the richest cul-

#CHASING TRUTH

Christopher de Bellaigue: My mother passed away when I was young so. I don't know what she would have thought. But my father was very understanding. He said. "If you know what you're doing and you've done your research, then you have my full support." He understood journalism because he had worked in publishing, so, he knew how things worked in those days. Of course, journalism has changed now. He may have worried occasionally, but I've always been quite cautious. I am very fond of my skin, and I don't want to lose it Q: How was your first experi-

Christopher de Bellaigue: When vou arrive in a new country, especially on a difficult assignment. the first experience is often an airport or a border crossing. It's rarely pleasant. In Iran, for example, people had a certain perception of it from the outside. When I lived in Turkey in the late 1980s, my Turkish friends, who were very secular, would ask, "Why do

so well? Christopher de Bellaigue: The kev is to learn the language. I had

There's a deep ignorance

combined with a competi-

tive desire to prove themselves

as the 'best' Muslims, following

a strict 8th-century interpreta-

tion of Islam. They believe in

returning to the origins, emu-

reality, the Prophet was a

reformer. His rules were pro-

gressive for his time, yet today,

also have a deep mistrust of the

tures in the world, and I was fasci-

found a country that was coming

alive. By 1999, during the

reformist government's tenure

students, intellectuals, and jour-

an exciting time to be there. And

of course, I met Bita Ghezelayagh,

would later become my wife, so,

Iran became personally signifi-

understand these countries

Q: How did you navigate and

When I first went in 1989, I

they appear repressive. They

lating the Prophet's time, but in

studied Persian at university, but that's not the same as using it in real life. When I moved to Iran. I learned Persian very quickly, within six months, I didn't need any help. Speaking Persian at home with my wife accelerated my learning. If you don't have the language. you need someone who not only translates but also explains the cul-

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

JIST READY?







THE WALL

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS WONDER-FUL- UNTIL YOU SAY SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T LIKE

BABY BLUES

SHRIEEEK! SHRIEEEK! SHRIEEEK!



WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO. SOUNDPROOF HER ROOM BY PILING MATTRESSES AGAINST THE DOOR AND STUFFING THE PACKS WITH HIS LAUNDRY?



ZITS