



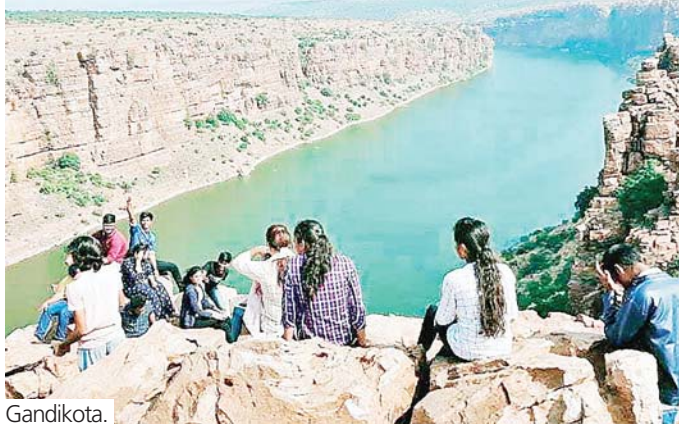
## International Sudoku Day

o one can explain exactly why Sudoku has become so popular all around the world, but some people think it has to do with the human's innate desire to find order from chaos. In addition, when a person is able to finish a Sudoku puzzle, it offers a sense of accomplishment and productivity. It makes a person feel like a winner. And they are! In 2013, International Sudoku Day was founded by the World Puzzle Federation to pay heed to this unique, challenging and somewhat addictive game.

## #TRAVEL

### Most Offbeat Places in South India

In case you have already explored most of India and are in search for that secret gem in the Southern part of India, then here are a list of offbeat places in South India.



Gandikota.

Have you been to South India yet? If yes, you must have ticked off all the tourist hotspots, and must be thinking what more this part of the country has to offer. So here is the list of most offbeat places in South India that you need to bookmark, and visit during your next trip.

#### Skandagiri Hills

Known for being a paradise for trekkers, it's an ancient mountain fortress located around 3 km from Chikkaballapur. It can be best explored in a day trip from Bengaluru. As you reach the place, embark on a 2-hour easy trek up a well-marked route on the 1350 m high peak. And as you reach the top, you are rewarded with some gorgeous views around, and not to forget, some fresh air.

#### Araku Valley

If you have been seeking a relaxed vacation for a long time, Araku Valley should be the ideal place where you get to romance the beauty of Eastern Ghats. Undoubtedly an absolute stunner, this place sees less crowds, and is yet to become touristic. If possible, plan your visit to this place during



Belum Caves.

winters, when it turns more pleasant and beautiful than you can imagine.

#### Belum Caves

It's the longest cave system in India that is open to tourists. Belum caves are also the second largest in the Indian sub-continent, which has been formed in black limestone, and features spacious chambers, long passages, and fresh-water galleries. There are some spots where the caves go as deep as 46 m, and there are around 16 different pathways, including the main entrance.

#### Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu

Not frequented by a lot of visitors, you are sure that Dhanushkodi will give you all the serene ambience and space that you need. Make sure you hit the roads, as the best way to explore this beautiful off-beat destination is via road. Mark the Dhanushkodi Beach in your itinerary, and you will



Hogenakkal Falls.

not regret it.

#### Hogenakkal Falls

Also referred to as the Niagara Fall of India at times, this place is a true beauty! The very view of the water falling on the rocks, which seems like emanating smoke from the top of the rock due to the force of water, is just unbelievable. You can spend hours of your precious time here, and let time slip by, as you appreciate the beauty around.

#### Ponnudi Hills

The serene ambience of this place will instantly soothe your senses and keep you hooked for some time. This place boasts of a scenic location that manages to catch the attention of every kind of traveller. Since it's offbeat and one of the less-explored hill destinations in South India, you can expect less crowd and get all the space that you want. When here, spend time admiring the gushing water streams, exploring beautiful hilltop spots, and much more.

#### Athirapally Falls

Do you remember watching the breathtaking waterfall in the blockbuster movie Bahubali? If yes, you should visit the Athira-

Talk Journalism, an event which was recently held at Clark's Amer Hotel did not have jostling crowds like JLF. It did not have people vying for attention from their favourite celebrity or attending the sessions for merely showing off their presence on the social media. Yet it was way more interesting and engaging. It was more of a melting pot of ideas, where journalists and journalism students met and shared their stories and lives. It was a forum where journalists talked about themselves and their craft more than the world events or lives of other people.



Shailaza Singh  
Published author, poet  
and a YouTuber

Who are really journalists? Are they people who merely hound celebrities or are they people who report events, happenings and keep an eye on what is going on in the world? Every time that I have attended the Jaipur Literature Festival or many other such events as a journalist, I have felt like an intruder or a 'houlder' of celebrities and other speakers. The moment one tries to speak to a guest at the festival or a known person, a zealous PR person steps from nowhere and almost chases the person away. But since one has a deadline to meet and an article or a story to deliver, it becomes a saga of constant cajoling and pleading to get that interview that teeny weeny byte, that small little quote which when given feels like a big favour from a big celebrity in Jaipur, who quite paradoxically is mostly seen wandering alone and unnoticed in cities like Mumbai or Delhi or their own abode.

pally waterfalls, where the said scene was shot. Flowing from a height of around 80 ft, then breaking into numerous parallel streams, it's a sight to behold. It's the largest waterfall in South India, and the flow of water during the monsoon season is at its peak. Make sure you bring a set of extra clothes or a raincoat, as you might get drenched due to the splashing waterfalls.

#### Gandikota

The beauty of Gandikota is just magical! In other words, very few sights in India can match the grandeur of this place. You can hike all the way up to the top to the gorge to witness the spectacular beauty of the area. It's India's own Grand Canyon that is vast in size, and features landscapes that are way more dramatic than you can imagine. Over the years, it managed to gain momentum in the tourism circuit, and deserves a visit at least once.



Asaduddin Owaisi, CP Joshi, communist leader D Raja with Rajdeep Sardesai at a session in Talk Journalism.

## Thank God! There is Talk Journalism

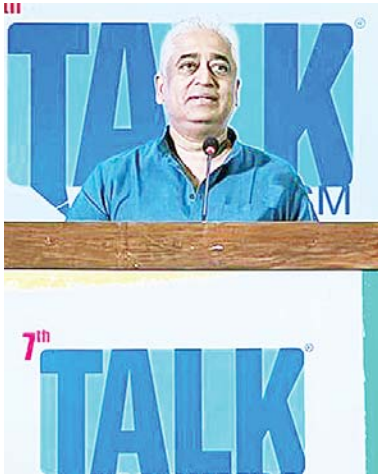
## #PONDER

#### Men in Black

So, this time when one walked down the lane that led to the Clark's Amer Hotel for 'Talk Journalism', a recently held event, I was all set to deal with the zealous PRs again. It was common knowledge that celebrities like Sachin Pilot, Barkha Dutt, Rajdeep Sardesai, Sagarika Ghose would be attending the event. However, I saw no men or women in black around the venue. Maybe they were invisible somewhere and will only appear when I approach a celebrity, I thought. I made a mental note to keep a watch out for them as I made my way to the hall where the sessions were underway.

#### With Their Own Tribe

Unlike the multiple venues of JLF, Talk Journalism had only two venues: a hall on the ground floor and another one in the basement. Life was quite easy as one did not have to rush from one venue to the next or deal with the maddening crowd on the way. Whether it was about Sachin Pilot discussing his destiny and politics with Rahul Shrivastava, national affairs editor, India Today TV or various workshops about fact checking or distinguishing real news from fake news, the halls were filled with students and spectators who were hanging on to every word. When Rajdeep Sardesai took over the stage, it was not a glamour stricken, unruly celebrity-mad crowd that was listening to him. Instead, the audience mostly comprised of their own tribe- journalists, budding and vet-



Rajdeep Sardesai addressing the audience.

#### erans both.

#### Varied Discussions

The discussions were also very varied. While on one hand, some speakers like Hyderabad MP and All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi tried to transform Talk Journalism into a political arena and announced his intentions of coming to power in Rajasthan, on the other hand BJP state president for Rajasthan, Satish Poonia sparked off a new discussion when he said that politicians should retire at the age of 60. He cited Nanaji Deshmukh who had stated that politicians should retire at the age of 65. This statement was quite interesting since the audience, especially the students then started asking if stalwarts like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vasundhara Raje Scindia, Ashok



Manish Kumar discussing media censorship in Bihar.

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In yet another session, well known political biographer and author Sankarshan Thakur educated the audience about the dangers of journalism and told them not to be swayed by glamour or power or money even if their friends succumb to it.

Gehlot, chief minister of Rajasthan will give up the power play and embrace retirement that easily. Later, a thought-provoking discussion ensued between Meenal Baghel, executive editor, Hindustan Times, Naresh Fernandez, editor, The Scroll and Mukesh Mathur, state editor, Danik Bhaskar Corporation where they talked about how people showed their dedication and zeal to their respective news organizations during the pandemic. Mukesh Mathur was quite matter of fact when he said, 'The newsrooms were always on during the pandemic. Journalists fell sick during the pandemic, rested, recovered and came back to their jobs. For us, it was business as usual in the sense that the newsrooms never stopped working.'

In fact, in a session with Barkha Dutt, a student from the Christ University, Bangalore (there was a whole batch which attended), got overwhelmed and started weeping tears of joy on meeting her idol in person. Barkha Dutt, who was hav-



Sagarika Ghose discussing her book on Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

ing a very interactive session with her audience went to her and hugged her to console her. I wonder if JLF ever witnessed such a moment?

In yet another session, well known political biographer and author Sankarshan Thakur educated the audience about the dangers of journalism and told them not to be swayed by glamour or power or money even if their friends succumb to it. He said that these days the trend is that a politician becomes friends with the journalist and bestows him with so many favours that the journalist despite knowing the stark truth of the politician cannot write the truth. He talked about how 'being friendly' with someone is different than 'being friends' with someone. He cautioned them to accept favours and advised them to ask the right questions before taking any decisions.



Barkha Dutt, Amav Kumar, Saanika R and Divyanshi Sumrav discuss the stress journalists go through.

every day for the next four days. There, I could talk to Sagarika Ghose, journalist and author of Atal Bihari Vajpayee: India's most loved Prime Minister. I asked her the same question; what makes her attend Talk Journalism? She said, 'I think Talk Journalism is a very lively forum, whereas JLF attracts a more literature inclined audience. My current book is a political biography of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Previously I had written about Indira Gandhi. Many people know these personalities and they are very interested in knowing the details of their lives. So, in Talk Journalism, it is a very engaged audience for the kind of books that I am presenting since lot of them are journalism students and I am myself a journalist. I have a particular fondness for being amongst journalists and journalism students. Moreover, there are also discussions about challenges facing the media, journalism, news gathering. So, those are all issues that are very close to my heart. I think we get down to the level of basic issues regarding journalism, current affairs and politics.'

Perhaps the only celebrity I couldn't talk to was Asaduddin Owaisi, not because his best friend



Students of various universities attending Talk Journalism.

was a PR person but because he was flanked by mean-looking, beefed-up security men who didn't know how to smile.

#### An Ongoing Conversation

Avinash Kalla, the organizer of Talk Journalism believes that there should be an ongoing discussion about what journalism and journalists truly are. People identify celebrities like Rajdeep Sardesai or Barkha Dutt as journalists, but there is more to this. I am a journalist, you are a journalist, there is more to journalism and media than what is advertised or depicted in the social media. Since its inception, I have been able to get people like Edward Snowden, the well-known American author, to speak in this forum. The people who come here also make friends with other people and more ideas are generated. My idea is not to have masses attending this forum, I am only interested in people who would like to have meaningful discussions, sessions that can help us understand what's going on in the current scenario. Moreover, I think that this forum is all about celebrating those known and unknown journalists who work day in and day out to bring the truth to people. So, they too deserve their place in the sun. Though we journalists cover celebrities, for once on this forum, let us also be the celebrities!

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## #EVOLUTION

### Family Dog



Many people think today's family dog is spoiled and has it all too good. However, they often suffer from loneliness and the unrealistic social expectations of owners.

Dogs that live with a family have it better than dogs that roam free when it comes to safety, nutritious food, and vet care. But it's a different story with regards to their mental health.

You would need to travel far from Denmark to meet a dog that roams the village streets freely, without belonging to any one family, one that may seem a bit shabby and underweight. One could easily believe that "village dogs" would be better off in a safe and stable environment alongside a family in suburban

the equation. In today's Denmark, where dogs are not allowed to roam freely in public spaces, the free-roaming village dog no longer exists.

To compare the typical Danish family dog's welfare with something more "original," the researchers looked at studies of village dogs in Mexico. Along with many other less economically developed countries, Mexico is home to the majority of dogs in the world today. Many of these dogs live a life closer to their species' primal nature.

"Until about 50 years ago, dogs that lived more or less naturally. Since then, we have yanked them from their natural niche and created the modern family dog, which presents a few challenges for dogs," explains co-author Peter Sandoe, professor of bioethics.

"Most dog owners have heard that socialization is important; puppies need to learn to be with other dogs, etc. Therefore, people seek out places with many other dogs, expecting for their dog to be social on command. The problem is that this is not very natural for a dog, which can risk having a bad experience that persists and can contribute to developing problematic behaviour," Sandoe says.

"Socialization is about giving a puppy positive experiences with other dogs and humans. If your puppy's boundaries are crossed or they don't have the opportunity to pull away, it won't have a good experience and could lead to problems with aggressive behaviour," Meyer adds.

#### Give Your Dog A Break

To make life easier for your dog, researchers suggest that it is very much about accepting that our dogs cannot always live up to everything we expect of them. Dogs are social and not designed to be home alone, all day long. This needs to be considered before getting a dog.

Finally, we need to learn to take our dogs' differences into account.



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS

