

World Curlew Day



Graceful shorebirds, facing threats, symbolize the delicate balance of ecosystems, urging awareness for their preservation and conservation. Get to know this, one of the world's rarest birds, on the day dedicated to it, *World Curlew Day*. This iconic bird has inspired poets, artists and songwriters for many generations. But, sadly, today the *curlew* birds on the endangered list as 'vulnerable', with two species possibly extinct and expectations that three more will disappear in the next decades, if nothing is done to preserve them.

#RESEARCH

Air Cleaners Don't Reduce The Risk Of Falling Sick

A new study reveals that technologies designed to make 'social interactions' safer in indoor spaces are not effective in the real world



Air filtration systems do not reduce the risk of picking up viral infections, according to new research from the University of East Anglia.

A new study reveals that technologies designed to make 'social interactions' safer in indoor spaces are not effective in the real world.



The team studied technologies including air filtration, germicidal lights and ionisers.

They looked at all the available evidence but found little to support hopes that these technologies can make air safe from respiratory or gastrointestinal infections.

Prof. Paul Hunter, from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said, "Air cleaners are designed to filter pollutants or contaminants out of the air, that passes through them."

When the Covid pandemic hit, many large companies and governments, including the NHS, the British military, and New York City and regional German governments, investigated installing this type of technology in a bid to reduce airborne virus particles in buildings and small spaces.

But air treatment technologies can be expensive. So it's reasonable to weigh up the benefits against costs, and to understand the current capabilities of such technologies.

The research team studied evidence about whether *air cleaning technologies* make people safe from catching airborne respiratory or gastrointestinal infections.

They analysed evidence about microbial infections or symptoms in people exposed or not to air treatment technologies in 32 studies, all conducted in real world settings like schools or care homes. So far, none of the studies of air treatment, started during the Covid era, have been pub-



lished. Lead researcher, Dr. Julia Brainard, also from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said, "The kinds of technologies, that we considered, included filtration, germicidal lights, ionisers and any other way of safely removing viruses or deactivating them in breathable air."

"In short, we found no strong evidence that air treatment technologies are likely to protect people in real world settings." There is a lot of existing evidence that environmental and surface contamination can be reduced by several air treatment strategies, including *germicidal lights* and *high efficiency particulate air filtration* (HEPA). But the combined evidence was that these technologies don't stop or reduce illness.

There was some weak evidence that the air treatment methods reduced likelihood of infection, but this evidence seems biased and imbalanced. "We strongly suspect that there were some relevant studies, with very minor or no effect, but these were never published. Our findings are disappointing but it is vital that public health decision-makers have a full picture. Hopefully these studies, that have been done during Covid, will be published soon and we can make a more informed judgement about what the value of air treatment may have been during the pandemic."

This research was led by the University of East Anglia with collaborators at University College London, the University of Essex, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Trust, and the University of Surrey. 'Effectiveness of filtering or decontaminating air to reduce or prevent respiratory infections: A systematic review' is published in *Preventive Medicine*.



Dr. Shoma A. Chatterji
Film scholar, journalist & author

Suchitra Sen's birth anniversary fell on April 6. It was celebrated across Kolkata, the city where she spent a major part of her life and passed away. Around this time, functions, film retros are held by different organizations in the city as a tribute to this 'great star.' One of these was a poster exhibition organized by poster archivist, collector and music expert, Sudipta Dey, who has been collecting film posters of different film personalities over the past years. The exhibition displays 46 posters featuring Suchitra Sen in the lead.

Few, who have seen Bimal Roy's *Dadas*, starring Dilip Kumar, Suchitra Sen and Vyjayanthimala, will be unable to forget the 'beautiful Parvati.' Who can ever forget the ambitious politician hungry for love but regal in her bearing in Gulzar's *Aandhi*? The romantic role in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Musafir* would also have been memorable but for the fact that the film flopped. 'Suchitra Sen's charisma in Hindi films may not have caught on. But it did not make a single dent in her audience pull and her mesmerizing 'star-power' in Bengali cinema.

Suchitra Sen was a living legend. She is the greatest female star to have graced the Bengali screen. Till date, not one female star from Supriya Devi to Madhabi Mukherjee through Aparna Sen to Rituparna Sengupta, has been able to reach anywhere near her charisma, glamour, talent and audience

Pathey Holo Deri was re-released in late 1982, around two decades after its first release. It celebrated a silver jubilee run! Yet, not once did they kiss. Suchitra was almost always draped in a sari with a sleeved blouse. She did not need to show skin, or flash a thigh or reveal a cleavage to exude sex appeal. "It was all there in her beautiful face," said Uttam Kumar once. "She is so beautiful that thousands come to the theatres just to look at her face."

THE HEARTTHROB-SUCHITRA SEN



#REMEMBERING



She shut herself from the world that existed beyond the four walls of her home, which was earlier a beautiful bungalow with a pretty garden of its own, where the famous Ritwik Ghatak once resided as tenant. She gave it away to promoters and accepted in exchange four large apartments on the same floor of this new multi-storied construction.



of her Ballygunge circular Road apartment, neither her daughter Moon Moon Sen's short foray into films nor the debut of her two granddaughters, Raima and Ria. What does Moon Moon Sen have to say about her mother's total withdrawal into seclusion? "I respected and took pride in my mother not only because she entered films when very little technical know-how was available to play tricks with her looks and with her performance, but also because long before the *hoo-haa* about women's liberation began, she stood for the 'triumphant woman' who won over her male peers. She brought respectability to her profession at a time when there was little of it to pass around. I respect her because she defined herself as a 'legend' in her lifetime, something that even Uttam Kumar could not boast of, since he passed away too soon. She was a woman who held herself with dignity through her long career. She has proved that she is a true sophisticate, in the manner in which she gave up her career when she did, proving her unwillingness to be greedy and thus keep the 'magic'

intact. She placed great importance to a good and solid education in my upbringing and I am grateful to her for that. She insisted that I learn drawing and painting and I completed my master's too. Thanks to my mother."

Suchitra Sen's childhood is shrouded in mystery. Some say she studied in *Shanti Niketan*. She grew up in distant Pabna, miles away from Bolpur in Birbhum district, presently in West Bengal. During her time, daughters of middle-class Bengali families did not go to boarding school. But then, her maternal uncle, B.N. Sen lived in Bolpur with his family and she would often come to stay with them. For some time during her early childhood, she lived with her maternal uncle's family in Patna. She was born in Pabna, originally in the northern parts of undivided Bengal and now in Bangladesh, on April 6. She was the fifth among three brothers and five sisters. Her father's name was Karunamoy Dasgupta and her mother's name was Indira. Her nickname was Krishna.

When she was admitted to Pabna Girls' High School, her father entered 'Roma' as her name

in the admission form. She was noted for her beauty, right from the time she was a child. In 1947, it was perhaps 'her beauty' that heralded an early marriage to Dibanath Sen, son of an extended joint family that migrated to Calcutta. Suchitra is perhaps the *first Indian actress* in Bengal to have made her film debut after marriage and motherhood. The year of her birth is somewhat clouded because some sources trace it back to 1931 while others say the year was 1934. Nitish Roy, assistant director, in one of her earliest films, christened her 'Suchitra' in 1952.

She bagged the Best Actress Award at the Moscow Film Festival for her brilliant performance in Ajoy Kar's *Saat Paak Bandha*. But she refused the *Dadasaheb Phalke Award* because it needed her to come out of her seclusion and into the public domain.

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exchange four large apartments on the same floor of this new multi-storied construction. She lived in one of them, and the other three now belong to Moon Moon, Raima and Ria. The four apartments are joined, but the one, Suchitra Sen lived in, is completely shut out to visitors.

"In all the years of my life as still photographer in films, I have never met a woman more decent, warmer, more beautiful, more complete and ideal than *Madam*. Her outstanding personality finds no comparison with any star-actress in the country. I have taken photographs of Suchitra Sen right through her career in films. No photographer, press or otherwise, was permitted on her sets during a shooting. She would report to the studio at least five minutes before reporting time, so punctual was she. It is this dedication that makes her reign supreme as the 'queen of Bengali cinema' more than twenty years after she called it a day," wrote the late Dhiren Deb, Suchitra Sen's personal photographer.

Shesh Katha (1952) was her debut film. In 1953, she was paired with Uttam Kumar for the first time in *Saarey Chuattar*, an effervescent comedy, marking a breakthrough in director Nirmla Dey's career. They became icons of *Bengali romantic melodrama* for more than twenty years, creating a distinct genre unto themselves. They starred in 30 films beating the Spencer Tracy-Audrey Hepburn pair hollow.

As one watches the young and beautiful Suchitra Sen exude a love scene with Uttam Kumar in *Chaoa-Paa*, *Pathey Holo Deri*, *Alo Amar Alo*, *Shaaede Chuattar*, *Kamallata* and so on, the electrically charged feelings between the pair come across so forcefully and tangibly that one can almost stretch one's hand to feel and touch them. Their films were famous for soft-focus close ups, particularly Sen's and lavishly

mounted scenes of romance against windswept expanses and richly decorated interiors with fluttering curtains and such mnemonic objects such as bunches of tuberoses etc. Some popular films of the pair include *Shap Mochan* (1955), *Sagarika* (1956), *Harano Sur* (1957), *Saptapadi* (1961), *Bipasha* (1962) and *Grihadaha* (1967).

Pathey Holo Deri was re-released in late 1982, around two decades after its first release. It celebrated a silver jubilee run! Yet, not once did they kiss. Suchitra was almost always draped in a sari with a sleeved blouse. She did not need to show skin, or flash a thigh or reveal a cleavage to exude sex appeal. "It was all there in her beautiful face," said Uttam Kumar once. "She is so beautiful that thousands come to the theatres just to look at her face. Where can you get a photogenic face like that?" *Roma* is the most beautiful, the most glamorous among all my leading ladies," he said in an interview to critic Ranjan Bandyopadhyay. Every film, starting from the end with the two going into a tight clinch and for the audience, it was happily ever after. That was all the physical intimacy they needed to send their fans into a tizzy.

Suchitra Sen had a beautiful, oval face, with large, almond-shaped eyes, a beautiful mouth, a long, graceful neck and lustrous black hair falling all the way down to her waist. She presented the typical *Bengali girl stereotype* with her saree draped around her slender frame to reveal the contours of a soft feminine body, that appeared more sensuous because it was concealed, a loose lock of hair that fell over her forehead and which she moved away with the back of her hand. There was instant audience identification with the *Suchitra-Uttam* pairing and that is precisely the reason why it was such a big hit. There will never be another *Suchitra Sen*.

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#HEALTH

The truth about protein: How to get enough at every age

We need protein to build muscle, produce hormones, regulate mood and appetite, and strengthen bones. But how much, and what kind, should you eat every day?

Eating protein is non-negotiable. Like carbs and fats, it's a *macronutrient* that bodies need, in relatively large, regular doses (compared with micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals). But our protein needs change throughout life, according to age, sex, activity levels and more. In fact our requirements can be highly individual and hence easily misjudged. There are conflicting messages around how much protein we should be eating.

What's the official advice?

The recommended daily intake of protein for healthy adults is 0.75g per kilogram of body weight. Your ideal protein portion should fit into the palm of your hand. There are plenty of non-animal foods that are high in protein and rich in other nutrients and fibre to boot like beans, peas and lentils, soy products such as tofu, not to mention a plethora of nuts and seeds. You can find out how much protein is in individual foods by checking the packaging.

What if you eat too much?

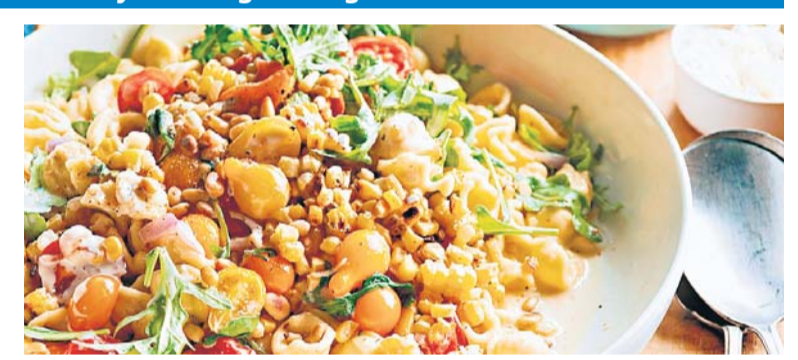
There is undoubtedly a 'sweet spot' for protein. And the big reason is that we cannot store it. So any protein, that's not needed to build or repair tissue, will be converted into fat, leaving nitrogen as a by-product to be peed out. That process, if taken to extreme, puts stress on our kidneys. Also, most of our protein consumption still comes from animal products, which often deliver more saturated fat than vegan sources, and meat elevates numerous cancer risks.

What if you're a child?

If you're able to give your children a balanced diet, you don't need to be pedantic about protein levels. Growing children can probably stand to take a little bit more protein because they're using it, but they're smaller than adults, so their portions should still reflect that. Start with 14.5g (about two big eggs) a day for one- to three-year-olds, 19.7g (add a small portion of peas) for four to six, 28.3g (one cup of cooked soya beans) up to 10, then the low 40s until 14. Then, the sexes split and from 15, girls need a little more than the adult women's figures, at 45.4g, whereas for boys, the recommendation sits just below grown-ups at 55.2g.



What if you don't get enough?



Everyone knows that protein is essential for replenishing and building muscle, but that's not the half of it. It's needed to produce and transport hormones around the body and it's important to make sure that you have enough of the right building blocks for hormones, particularly as you get older, and production slows. Protein also affects mood regulation. Different types contain various amino acids, of which there are about 20 found in the human body, and some are the building blocks for neurotransmitters, the chemical messengers that help govern your mood and memory. Protein helps appetite and blood-sugar

regulation, too. It's a very complex molecule but on a basic level, your body has to work quite hard to break down amino acids, so if you include protein at a meal, it slows down the absorption of carbohydrate eaten with it, releasing it more slowly into your body. Eggs on toast will fill you up for longer than jam on toast.

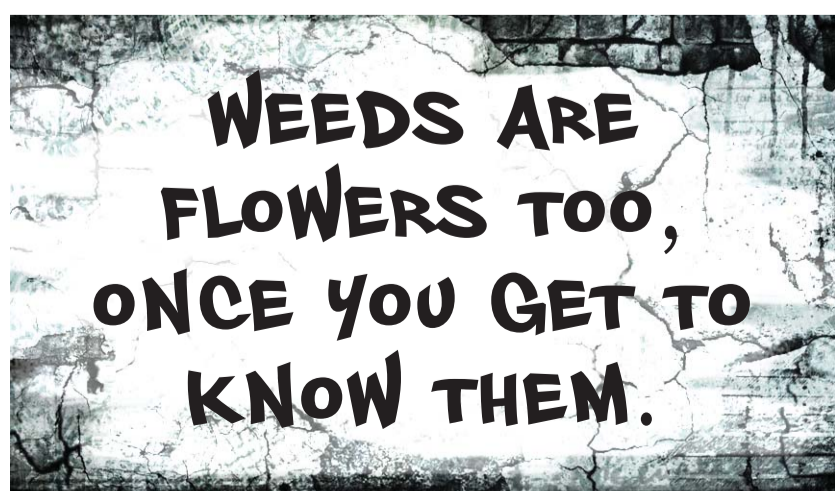
Fifty per cent of your bone structure is protein. So a low-protein diet weakens your bones. One of the first signs when you're a bit low on protein is that your nails become brittle. Your skin begins to suffer. Because what do our bodies use to make collagen? It's amino acids, silly.

How do you know if you're getting enough?

You could work with a dietitian to establish your sweet spot, or try to learn for yourself. You can start by aiming to consume 1g per kg of body weight a day, and start monitoring muscle mass. The gold standard method is a *Dexa scan*, which uses low-dose X-rays, but most of us wouldn't have access to one. The next best thing are the *body composition* scales that you find at the gym. They're not accurate like a Dexa, but they can give you an indication over time, if they're used right, like you're weighing yourself at the same time every day and not after a workout.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman