



### International Choreographers Day

People have probably been moving to rhythms as long as there has been music. The earliest evidence that archaeologists have found for dancing dates back to at least 7000 BC, and it's likely that dancing goes even further back than that! In most cultures, human beings have shown an innate desire to move their bodies in unique ways that have developed over time. International Choreographers Day is here to pay attention to and show appreciation for those people who help the rest of the world enjoy, share in and be entertained by dance.

### #INNOVATION

## Life-Saving Light Beam



The technique is chemical-free, needle-free and detects malaria through the skin using infrared-light, it's literally just a flash on a person's skin and it's done.



A fast, needle-free malaria detection tool developed by a University of Queensland-led team could help save hundreds of thousands of lives annually. Malaria is usually detected by a blood test, but scientists have devised a method using a device that shines a beam of harmless infrared light on a person's ear or finger for five-to-10 seconds. It collects an infrared signature that is processed by a computer algorithm.

International team leader, Dr. Maggy Lord from Iq's School of Biological Sciences, said that the technology would revolutionise how malaria is fought globally. "Currently, it's incredibly challenging to test large groups of people, such as the population of a village or town. You have to take blood from everyone and mix it with a reagent to get a result," Dr. Lord said. "But with this tool, we can find out very quickly whether a whole village or town is suffering from, or carrying, malaria." The technique is chemical-free, needle-free and detects malaria through the skin using infrared-light, it's literally just a flash on a person's skin and it's done. "The device is smartphone operated, so, results are acquired in real time." The researchers believe that the

# The Biter Bitten

Smiling at the boy's naivete, the worldly-wise Sethji replied, "Son, cupidity and money are our impregnable defence. The right amount placed in the right hands at the right time and there is no such unpleasantness for us as surprise raids and sudden checks. Even if by some mischance, we are apprehended, the only punishment that we may have to undergo is a fine. The loss incurred can be made up by us in a few days."



Seth Kundan Lal subscribed to two tenets, namely, 'Business before scruples' and 'Never employ obsolete techniques.' This simple philosophy had enabled the shrewd trader to expand a modest patrimonial inheritance to a flourishing business.

Foodgrains and general goods were his forte. His principle of keeping abreast of the times had paid rich dividends. While his fellow traders still stuck to mixing *vansapati* with *ghee*, he had already advanced to the more refined.

Behind that mild, meek and unassuming facade of his, there lurked a keen and incisive mind, which could diagnose with startling accuracy the future market trends from his daily sales. This uncanny prescience was the cornerstone of his phenomenal success in hoarding and black marketing.

By knowing what and how much to hoard, he was never caught with an unsold stock, by gauging accurately the maximum blackmarket price that could be squeezed out of the customers, and he reaped the greatest rewards from scarcity. The customer, to him, was the goose that

technology is the first step to eliminating malaria. "According to the World Health Organisation's malaria report in 2020, there were an estimated 241 million cases worldwide and more than 600,000 died from malaria," Dr. Lord said. "Most of the cases are in sub-Saharan Africa, where 90 per cent of deaths are of children under five years. The biggest challenge in eliminating the disease is the presence of asymptomatic people in a population, who act as a reservoir for transmission by mosquitoes. "The World Health Organisation has proposed large-scale surveillance in endemic areas and this non-invasive, affordable and rapid tool offers a way to achieve that." The technology could also help tackle other diseases. "We've successfully used this technology on mosquitoes to non-invasively detect infections such as malaria, Zika and dengue," Dr. Lord said. In our post-COVID world, it could be used to better tackle diseases as people move around the globe. "We hope that the tool could be used at ports of entry to screen travellers, minimising re-introduction of diseases and reducing global outbreaks." "It's still early days, but this proof-of-concept is exciting." The research is published in *PNAS Nexus*.

laid the golden egg. He took care of prices or not to overkill it by charging exorbitant prices or over-adulterating, as many of his competitors did. The percentage of stones in the fodgrains, the amount of horse dung in the curypowder, the dose of sand in the flour, all such proportions were finely adjusted to the reigning tolerance levels.

Shrewd tactician that he was, he forbore from wasting money on priming up his shop. He well-realized that customers usually shied away from an opulent shop front. And then, the dim interior of the store provided a convenient screen for the dexterous sleight of hand, required to substitute the 'virgin' sample that he showed the customer with the adulterated stuff. One of his deepest regrets was that, unlike in other professions, there was no relevant technical *Journal* for his sphere of business wherein persons, of his ilk, could exchange information on the latest innovations in adulteration, trends in blackmarket prices and the like.

The Sethji was quite proliferate in the matter of progeny. But, unfortunately for him, despite his persistent invocations to the relevant deities, he had been rewarded by only a solitary son. On this heir apparent, he showered all the attention, devotion and affection, not swallowed up by his business. The best of everything was lavished on this hope of the household. When it came to the wishes of his most important offspring, prudence deserted him and his fists remained extraordinarily open. Sethji had long ago resigned himself to the life of a tradesman. But for his son, he had higher aspirations. According to the *fond*



### #JUSTICE

ppa, the child was slated to be a big time industrial goods trader, concerned not with kilos of wheat but tonnes of steel.

It was with eyes towards this ambitious goal that Kundanlal took what was to him a 'distasteful' step, sending the boy to college. When it came to Higher Education, Sethji was a heretic. "What is the use?" he would query. "You spend half your life acquiring a string of letters behind your name, and then sweat the other half as a salaried slave for some wise man who utilized his time in acquiring wealth."

But this worldly fact was not his main objection to higher education, as he pointed out to his doubting son. "The worst consequence of higher education, my son," advised the parent sagaciously, "is that it gives you scruples and a conscience. And in the world of business, you cannot afford either. However, for your goal to be an industrial goods dealer, you have to get a college education for your own safety since, in that line of business, you will be dealing with highly educated people, whom you have to comprehend before you can outwit."

To offset the harmful effects of education, Seth Kundanlal took the lad under his wing at an early age. Great was the merchant's pride and pleasure when his son

took to business as a duck takes to water. Not only did he pick up the tricks of the trade with ease, but, with an acumen and insight rare for his youth, even suggested very practicable sophistications. A strong empathy was established between father and son, an exchange of affection and veneration as between the 'Guru' and 'Sishya' of yore. Seth Kundanlal's eyes glowed with a strange light, that was free of the glint of money, whenever he gazed at his son. It was the light of love. Of course, despite his inherent talent and inclination for business, the lad sometimes exhibited

streaks of youthful immaturity and sensitivity. Like when he queried, "But are we not running a great risk of being sent to jail at any time for what we are doing? How do we evade the clutches of the Law?"

Smiling at the boy's naivete, the worldly-wise Sethji replied, "Son, cupidity and money are our impregnable defence. The right amount placed in the right hands at the right time and there is no such unpleasantness for us as surprise raids and sudden checks. Even if by some mischance, we are apprehended, the only punishment that we may have to undergo is a fine. The loss incurred can be made up by us in a few days."

However, the harmful effects of the boy's schooling began to manifest themselves in such queries as, "But, father, are not we endangering our customers' lives?" whenever the action of adulteration was initiated.

Usually, Sethji was equal to the occasion in fielding such doubts. Pat would come his reply, "Tut, tut son, there you go again, exaggerating things. My dear boy, our customers are inured to much more than a few stones in rice or a bit of red oxide in chili powder. Besides, you must look at it this way, we manage, by our skill, to distribute a minimum of foodstuff amongst a maximum of people. And, in our



food scarce country, what could be better?" Of course, Kundanlal realized that such softness in the lad was a passing phase of youth, and was confident that under his tutelage, his son would blossom into a hard-headed, capable businessman.

Imagine the father's anxiety and consternation then, when the apple of his eyes arrived home one rainy night, drenched to the skin, shivering uncontrollably and breathing in gasps. 'That night, nobody could have recognized the cool and collected Sethji in the harried and wild-eyed parent, gazing with helpless misery at his panting, fever-flushed son and anxiously awaiting the arrival of the doctor. An interminable hour after the frantic phone summons the doctor arrived, sedate and professional as ever. His unhurried, precise and methodical examination of the boy acted as a sedative on the restless parent.

The doctor's manner was professionally grave as she informed Kundanlal, "The lad is suffering from a severe attack of pneumonia. But do not be frightened. I will give him an injection now that will bring down the fever and ease his breathing. I will come again in the morning and see how he is."

From a nearby chemist's shop, the servant brought the injection prescribed by the doctor. After administering it, the doctor gave a few instructions to the pathetically grateful parent and departed. The reassured parent settled down for a night long vigil by his son's bedside.

Late in the night, Kundanlal was jerked out of a bout of dozing by the sound of gasping. To his horror, he found his son taking



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

### ZITS



### #THEATER

# The Verdict: When Justice Takes Center Stage

The *Verdict* saw a fallen lawyer take on an influential hospital and its godman patron, challenging a flawed system with newfound faith and conviction. This gripping drama, presented at the Irrfan Theatre Festival at Rajasthan International Center, left audiences reflecting on courage and redemption.



The tale of David and Goliath is as old as time, a shepherd boy armed with nothing but faith defeats a towering giant against impossible odds. It is a story of courage and conviction, but what happens when David is a washed-up lawyer and Goliath is a charitable hospital run by a powerful godman? This modern-day retelling comes alive in *The Verdict*, adapted for the stage by Margaret May Hobbs and directed by Akarsh Khurana.

### The Underdog's Fight

At the center of this narrative is Anil D'Souza, a once-brilliant lawyer, who has now hit rock bottom. Reduced to ambulance-chasing cases and drowning in alcoholism, D'Souza is a shadow of his former self. His mentor, Indranil Gupta, reluctantly entrusts him with an open-and-shut medical negligence case, offering it as a lifeline for redemption. The case involves a charitable hospital, backed by a *swami* with powerful connections. The initial aim is simple, settle out of court and move on. But when D'Souza meets the victim, a family devastated by the loss of their loved one due to medical malpractice, his conscience stirs. For the first time in years, he feels compelled to fight for justice, even if it means



### A Play with Many Layers

While *The Verdict* revolves around a courtroom case, it is much more than just legal drama. Akarsh Khurana's direction and staging adds layers of nuance, exploring societal issues like corruption, the disparities between the haves and have-nots, and the moral dilemmas of second chances. The play also touches on debates about Hindi as the national language, the intersection of power and religion, and the cultural divide between privilege and struggle. The dialogues are rich and textured, peppered with literary and cultural references from Shakespeare and



Akarsh Khurana, Sutapa Sikdar and Abhishek Mudgal in conversation.

explores themes of systemic corruption, moral redemption, and the necessity of faith. Held at the Rajasthan International Center (RIC) as part of the inaugural Irrfan Theatre Festival, the play resonated deeply with audiences, offering not just a gripping legal battle but a reflection on societal inequities and second chances.



taking on a deeply entrenched and corrupt system. As the courtroom drama unfolds, D'Souza's battle becomes not just against the hospital and the *swami's* influence, but also against his own cynicism and self-doubt. It's a gripping tale of moral awakening, where faith, not in religion, but in the possibility of change, takes center stage.

### A Gripping Performance

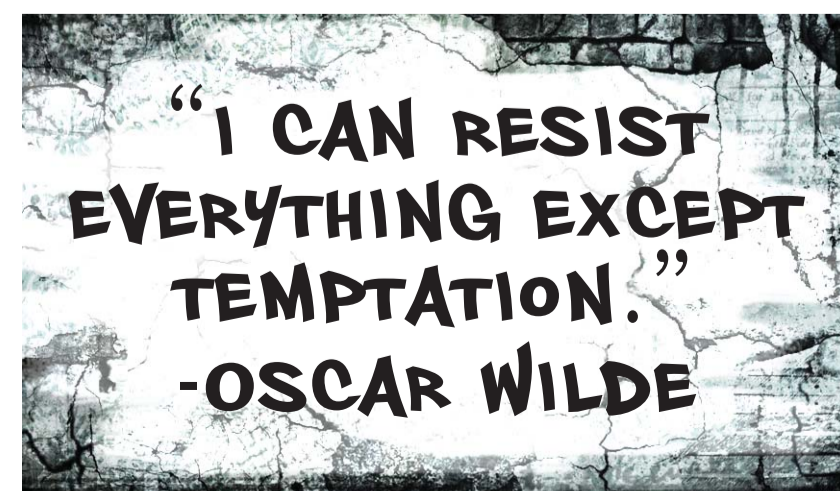
The audience's reactions during the play underscored its impact. Cheers erupted during key moments of the courtroom scenes, reflecting their investment in D'Souza's fight against the system. Khurana's direction, combined with powerful performances and a thought-provoking script, created an experience that was as immersive as it was emotional. The play served as a fitting tribute to Irrfan Khan's legacy, celebrating the power of storytelling to reflect and reshape the world. With its layered narrative, immersive staging and compelling performances, *The Verdict* left a lasting impression, both as a work of art and as a mirror to the society we live in.



### A Tribute to Irrfan Khan

The play was held as a part of the first-of-its-kind Irrfan Theatre Festival, a three-day event, celebrating the life and legacy of one of India's finest actors at RIC. The festival opened with an engaging talk session featuring Sutapa Sikdar, Irrfan's wife, and director Akarsh Khurana, who shared fascinating insights into the actor's craft and personality. Khurana described Irrfan as an unconventional artist who prioritized storytelling over stardom. He revealed how Irrfan approached his roles with quiet dedication, often rehearsing lines 100 times until they became part of his being. Sutapa added that Irrfan's command over Hindi set him apart. He could deliver even the darkest lines with an effortless charm that captivated audiences. She shared that Irrfan had dreamed of becoming an urban farmer, having even purchased land to fulfill this vision. Two other plays, *Qisse Kinaaron Ke*, directed by Abhishek Goswami, and *Maharathi*, directed by Abhishek Mudgal, were also staged as a part of the festival.

### THE WALL



### BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

