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GULF TIMES

Monday, July 13, 2020
Dhul-Qa'da 22, 1441 AH

Doha today: 33° - 42°

COMMUNITY



In the forefront

With new series *Stateless*, Cate Blanchett tackles the human drama of immigration. **P4-5**

HOLLYWOOD

Looking for a follow-up to *Tiger King*? Watch these.

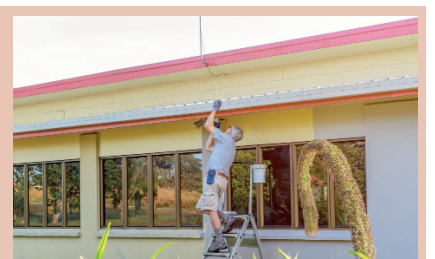
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BACK PAGE

DIY danger: 'It's not a sensible thing to do when you get older'

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PRAYER TIME

Fajr	3.23am
Shorooq (sunrise)	4.53am
Zuhr (noon)	11.41am
Asr (afternoon)	3.06pm
Maghreb (sunset)	6.29pm
Isha (night)	7.59pm

USEFUL NUMBERS



Emergency	999
Worldwide Emergency Number	112
Kahramaa - Electricity and Water	991
Local Directory	180
International Calls Enquires	150
Hamad International Airport	40106666
Labor Department	44508111, 44406537
Mowasalat Taxi	44588888
Qatar Airways	44496000
Hamad Medical Corporation	44392222, 44393333
Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation	44845555, 44845464
Primary Health Care Corporation	44593333
Qatar Assistive Technology Centre	44594050
Qatar News Agency	44450205
	44450333
Q-Post - General Postal Corporation	44464444

Humanitarian Services Office

(Single window facility for the repatriation of bodies)

Ministry of Interior	40253371, 40253372, 40253369
Ministry of Health	40253370, 40253364
Hamad Medical Corporation	40253368, 40253365
Qatar Airways	40253374

Quote Unquote

"The traveller sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see."
 - Gilbert K. Chesterton

Community Editor
 Kamran Rehmat

e-mail: community@gulf-times.com

Telephone: 44466405

Fax: 44350474

SERIES TO BINGE WATCH ON NETFLIX



The Crown

DIRECTION: Peter Morgan

CAST: Claire Foy, Olivia Colman, Matt Smith

SYNOPSIS: The show focuses on Queen Elizabeth II as a twenty-five-year-old newlywed faced with the daunting

prospect of leading the world's most famous monarchy while forging a relationship with legendary Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill. The British Empire is in decline, the political world is in disarray, and a young woman takes the throne....a new era is dawning.



Riverdale

DIRECTION: Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

CAST: K.J. Apa, Lili Reinhart, Camila Mendes

SYNOPSIS: After the death of one of the rich and popular Blossom twins on the 4th of July, the small town

of Riverdale investigates the murder. The series starts in September, the beginning of a new school year, that brings with it new students, relationships, and reveals the mysteries of the past 4th of July. The teenage high school drama follows the plot.



The 100

DIRECTION: Jason Rothenberg

CAST: Eliza Taylor, Bob Morley, Marie Avgeropoulos

SYNOPSIS: Set ninety-seven years after a nuclear war has destroyed civilisation, when a spaceship housing

humanity's lone survivors sends one hundred juvenile delinquents back to Earth, in hopes of possibly re-populating the planet, the mystery unfolds that there may be more survivors on Earth already than they were actually anticipating.

Growing plants inside

Having green fingers is not as complicated as you might think, writes **James Wong**

After months of self-isolating, this weekend I masked-up and joined the queue for my garden centre. As someone who normally visits nurseries or plant shops at least twice a week, it was a huge relief to be surrounded by all the greenery. But perhaps what was even more exciting were the enormous numbers of young people waiting patiently in line to get a houseplant fix. Working in an industry that has struggled for decades to figure out how to make itself relevant and accessible to those under 50, it's wonderful to finally see a new generation discovering the joys of the natural world through indoor gardening.

But with so much frankly terrible advice on houseplants out there (ironically on the very social media platforms that have created this new flowering of interest), I also had to repress the desperate compulsion to advise the 20-somethings on the plants they were buying. However, doling out unsolicited advice is a bit more socially acceptable in a magazine column than to random people in queues, so here are my top tips for those starting out on their adventure in the great indoors.

Cacti and succulents are experiencing a huge spike in interest, and there is one simple tip that will eliminate the key cause of death and ill health. Place your plant no more than 1m away from a window. Despite glass appearing transparent, it filters out almost all UVB rays. For every metre you go from a window this can halve, then halve again – something these desert dwellers can't handle. If you don't have any sill space, consider another plant.

Ferns are the number one houseplant people tell me they struggle to grow, and the problem



LOW MAINTENANCE: A bird's nest fern.

is almost always simple: lack of moisture – in particular, the consistent, stable moisture levels these plants love. As even the best gardeners can lapse from time to time, the solution to this is to pick large, waxy-leaved species, such as bird's nest ferns and staghorn ferns. They have developed a shiny coating as a way to prevent water loss. Maidenhair ferns are lovely, but not a great choice for total beginners, unless you're up for a challenge and lots of dedication.

When it comes to the oh-so-trendy terrariums, the secret really is to ignore everything you have seen on Pinterest and never, ever plant cacti or succulents in them. The glass creates a low-light, high-humidity

environment within, which is a perfect microclimate for plants from the rainforest floor, but the exact opposite of what desert dwellers need. Go for ferns, mosses and orchids instead.

Finally, if you are a timid first timer and want something unkillable, ZZ plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*) and cast iron plant (*Aspidistra eliator*) are almost bombproof. A delivery man once left an aspidistra in my mum's bin cupboard, which she eventually discovered a couple of months later, only for it to appear totally unscathed.

Most importantly, don't give up. I say it a lot, but it's true: the only secret to having green fingers is persistence. – *The Guardian*



INSIDE STORY: Ferns and mosses do well in a terrarium.



SWEET AND INTENSE: Boysenberries 'taste like someone has injected them with blackberry jam and raspberry cordial'.

Sweet treats: berries for tight spaces

When it comes to growing edible plants, market research has shown that home gardeners are still far more interested in growing vegetables than fruit. Perhaps – because most vegetables are annuals – it is the promise of faster results. Or maybe it's down to perceived cost – after all, vegetable seeds are far cheaper to buy than fruit bushes or trees. Or maybe it's just that people are put off by all the complex pruning rules...

However, if it is maximum reward for minimum cost and in minimum space that you are after, fruit beats vegetables hands down by almost every measure. For starters, most fruit bushes are perennial, so will come back year after year without significant extra cost or effort. Add this to the fact that, generally, their harvests cost more to buy, too. So, with this in mind, here's my take on the best fruiting plants for small patches, all of which you can plant right now.

If you are looking for the easiest of all fruit to grow, it would be hard to find a better example than the wild strawberry. Containing a whopping five times the sugar of the traditional cultivated variety, plus a far heftier dose of aroma compounds, each tiny fruit is so intensely flavoured, it's like biting into living confectionery. Unlike regular strawberries, they don't produce those pesky runners that need constant trimming or replanting, either. They will even fruit well in shady spaces where most fruit plants would not be happy.

As their fruit are, at best, thumbnail-sized, you will need to plant quite a few to get a decent harvest. However, considering

they are extremely cheap to propagate from seed (each packet will produce 100 plants or more) and can be crammed in as underplanting in any gap in a bed, pot or border, this is surprisingly easy to do.

Sticking with berries that grow well in shade, raspberries are an excellent candidate, too. A new generation of dwarf varieties means you can grow them easily even if all you have are pots. 'Ruby Falls' has to be the best contender here, producing good yields on plants no more than 1m high. They don't have thorns or require staking, either, which is a real godsend.

If you have a little more space to play with, the weird, purple-coloured fruit of 'Glen Coe' have a wonderful fusion of classic blackberry and raspberry flavour. They grow on thornless, silvery blue stems. They are vigorous and will grow fairly tall without a few snips of the secateurs, but they will happily live in a 1m-wide border without spreading laterally.

Lastly, I have to give a shout out to the boysenberry, probably the least grown of the traditional berries, yet undoubtedly the tastiest. This complex, intergenerational hybrid of a range of different bramble species, including both raspberries, blackberries and more exotic species like the American dewberry, is essentially unbuyable in supermarkets due to its short shelf life and low yields. But it has a flavour, both in terms of aromatic intensity and sweetness, like no other. It's as if someone injected them with blackberry jam and raspberry cordial. There are now thornless varieties, too, and none will take up much room. I'd say it was an absolute must-grow.

– *The Guardian*



“For me, it’s about balancing the pragmatic with the creative”

— Cate Blanchett, Oscar winning actress, on new TV series *Stateless*

It’s human drama. It’s not just delivering some political message. It’s asking more questions than it answers

— Cate Blanchett

By Meredith Blake

Debates over immigration and national identity dominate the political discourse in the Trump-era United States, but many Americans may be unaware that Australia has grappled with similar issues for decades.

That’s about to change with the debut of *Stateless*, a Netflix series co-created by Cate Blanchett that dives into her home country’s treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

The drama is set during the mid-aughts, as wars in Iraq and Afghanistan sent thousands fleeing to other countries, including Australia, with the hopes of beginning a new life. The six-part series follows the unusual journey of Sofie (Yvonne Strahovski), an Australian flight attendant who gets involved in a cult, suffers a breakdown and mistakenly winds up in an immigration detention centre, where she claims to be a

German tourist who overstayed her visa.

At the centre — in a parched, economically depressed corner of South Australia — she is held along with hundreds of so-called UNC’s (or unlawful noncitizens). These refugees include Ameer (Fayssal Bazzi), an Afghan man hoping to reunite with his family after a traumatic separation. Outfitted in a silver wig and sequins gowns, Blanchett has a small role as Pat, the singing- and-dancing wife of a charismatic cult leader played by Dominic West.

As implausible as it may seem, Sofie’s story is partially inspired by the case of Cornelia Rau, a white Australian woman who was held in an onshore detention centre for several months and helped bring attention to the country’s severe immigration policies.

Blanchett created the series with Tony Ayres and Elise McCredie. Though *Stateless* deals with subjects that remain deeply polarising in the US and Australia — and are explored in greater depth in an accompanying podcast called *Post Play: Stateless* — Blanchett



insists the series is “not a piece of agitprop.”

“It’s human drama. It’s not just delivering some political message. It’s asking more questions than it answers,” says the two-time Oscar winner, who was also an executive producer on this spring’s politically charged miniseries, *Mrs. America*.

Blanchett and Ayres recently spoke via Zoom about the series and the difficult themes it explores.

What made you want to get involved behind the scenes on this series? Is producing satisfying in a way that performing isn’t?

Blanchett: The producers I truly admire are infinitely inventive. Some of them also happen to be performers or directors, as these skill sets are often interlinked. For me, it’s about balancing the pragmatic with the creative. Sometimes I am compelled to be involved in a project but know that to shoehorn myself artificially as an actor into that project would capsize or pervert the material. Then also knowing that if one is not in it, that certain financiers may not be willing to take a risk on the material. Some of the most fulfilling creative experiences I’ve had, the most fascinating conversations, have been in and around facilitating the work of others. It’s never been about what role I play, more the quality of the conversation.

The idea for this series originated with a kitchen-table conversation back in 2013. Can you tell me about that?

Blanchett: We were thinking about telling stories that were elephants in the room, so to speak — those stories that everybody needed to talk about. Drama is the most inclusive way to have those conversations. It’s the space for long-form empathetic examinations of quite complicated and confronting stories in any culture. Australia’s treatment of refugees over the last 20 years was one of those subjects that wasn’t being discussed. So we all wanted to find a way we could bring it back into the national conversation in a nonfear-based, inclusive way.

Can you talk about the inspiration for this series and how you decided on setting it in the recent past — rather than the present day?

Ayres: We decided that the best period to tell our story was looking at when Australia still had on-shore detention so that we could understand the current iteration. There were stories of Australian citizens that had been mistakenly put in detention, there were stories of people breaking out of detention, there were stories of Australian citizens who were standing up for refugees, and there were a lot of stories of trauma.

Blanchett: It took a long time to find partners who were brave enough to look at the human drama behind the obviously political patina. For us, it was almost too hot and polarising and



SPOTLIGHT: Playing Yvonne Strahovsky in a scene from *Stateless*.

political to deal with what is still an ongoing situation in Australia and globally. So we decided to set it slightly back in time, almost as a prequel to offshore detention, when refugees were processed onshore so that we could reverse-engineer how we’ve got here. There’s so much about Australia that I am deeply proud of. So many of our cultural and scientific and athletic exports. But it’s been a great source of shame for me to hear the rhetoric around the building of the wall, the rhetoric around Brexit. The DNA of that is absolutely born inside of Australia. This has massive international relevance and resonance. We need to sort that out in our own country, but that language has absolutely been exported overseas.

Why make Sofie one of the central characters? As a white Australian, she is not representative of the people who end up in detention.

Blanchett: I had been inspired by my work as a goodwill ambassador for the (UN High Commission for Refugees) to shine a light on the human stories. Whenever I went on a mission with UNHCR, I would speak to mothers, to daughters, to sisters. The profound takeaway I had is that this could be me in different circumstances. That was something we carried into the DNA of the series.

We wanted to find a window for people who hadn’t had interface with the refugee experience, to ask themselves, “What if it was my sister? What if it was me, what if it was my daughter who fell through the cracks as our character Sophie did in the mental health system, the judicial system and the immigration system and ended up by complete mistake inside one of these detention centres?” We felt like we could only create that through a middle-class, white Australian character. That was very deliberate.

Ayres: The choice to enter the story with a white Australian woman was a form of Trojan horse. It was strategic: Who can we give to an audience that they can connect to? I think that Yvonne in particular is so extraordinarily empathetic in her performance. She brings us into the story, but then we hopefully will experience other people’s dramas within that, and the dramas of people who are not white.

How did you develop the cult storyline and the character of Pat?

Blanchett: I was happy to be involved as an actor in any way that would help the material, and Elise came up with the character where I got to sing and dance. The show is a lot about identity and what happens to the identity of citizens when they are separated from their humanity.

Cult Behavior 101 is you separate yourself from your family, from your past, and your future is

“There’s so much about Australia that I am deeply proud of. But it’s been a great source of shame for me to hear the rhetoric around the building of the wall, the rhetoric around Brexit. The DNA of that is absolutely born inside of Australia”
— Cate Blanchett

reinvented. It’s all about being a new you, a better you, a you that is separate from anything that you did in the past. That was kind of a metaphor to what we saw happening in Australia.

When Tony and Elise and I grew up, “Brand Australia” was built on multiculturalism (and) the welcoming embrace of refugees and asylum seekers. And we saw that atrophy and calcify and we use that metaphor of the cult to speak to that story.

Ayres: For us, the idea of a cult where you are made all these promises of what you could be felt a little bit like the experience for the refugees — the promise of what Australia was, that you could escape the past, all of those things. It’s not a direct parallel, but those two stories resonated against each other for us.

How conscious were you of trying to draw parallels between the situation in Australia and similar issues in the US and Europe?

Blanchett: We’ve always been of the belief that if you make something deeply specific and true and accurate and well-researched, that it will have universal resonance. And that’s what we hoped the story would achieve. The only way to battle the pandemic is globally and yet we’re still labouring under this rhetoric of nation-building and how each country should deal with it in their own, individual way, but that’s not going to solve the problem. The global displacement crisis is not going to be solved by any one country, nor is climate change, nor is the pandemic.

Ayres: In Australia, we compare how we’re dealing with the pandemic to the charts we’re seeing from America. That’s the problem — when it’s not a global issue.

— Los Angeles Times/TNS



LEADING FROM THE FRONT: Cate Blanchett has publicly supported UNHCR since 2015 and was named a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador in May 2016. Her support ranges across advocacy, awareness raising and fundraising and focuses both on humanising the refugee issue and amplifying the voices of refugees so that their stories, experience and needs can reach a wider audience.



ICC organises webinar workshop for parents and teachers

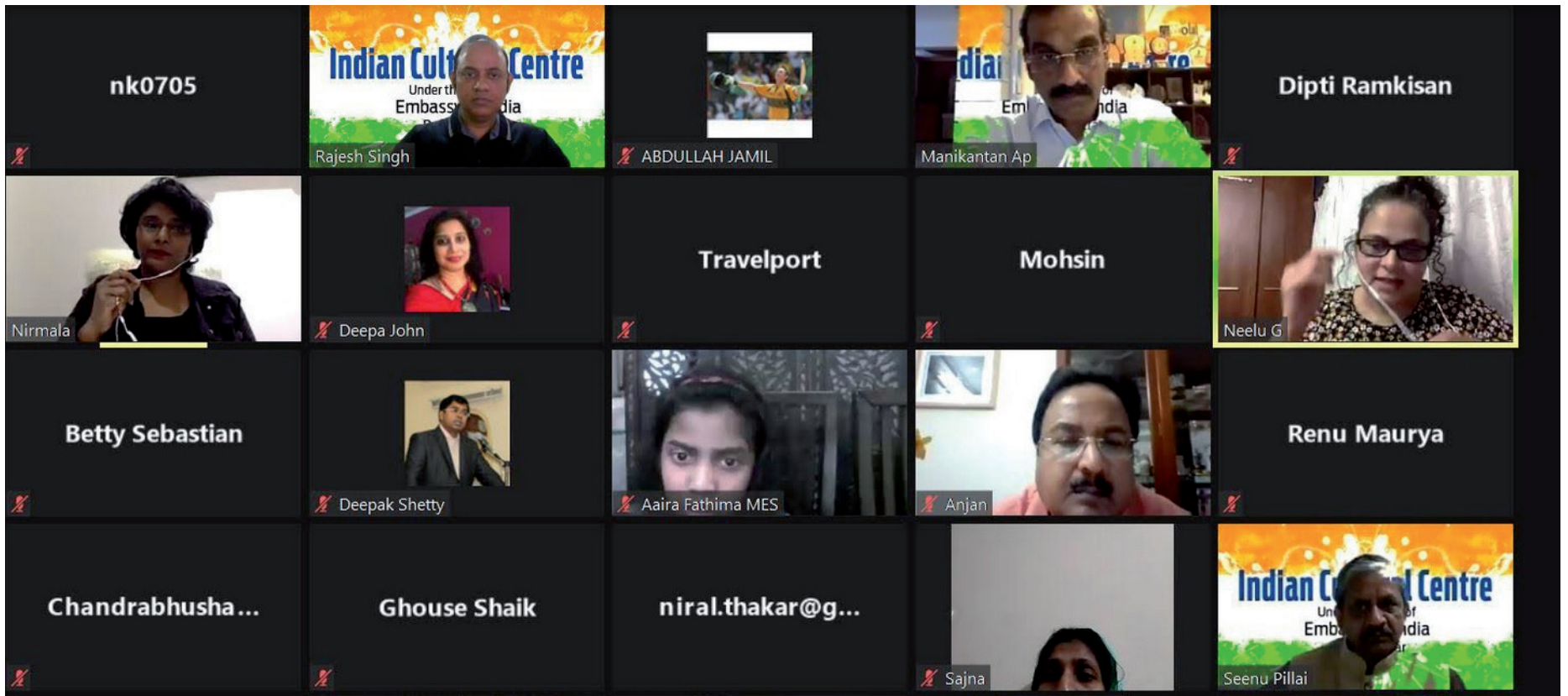
Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), under the patronage of the Embassy of India, recently organised a webinar workshop for parents and teachers on 'Helping Children to be Good Netizens' conducted by Neelanjana Grover, a certified trainer and a training consultant from Mumbai, India.

As education has moved to online learning and due to the lockdown, the children are spending more time in the virtual world than ever before, raising concerns about their teen's digital well-being. The workshop provided new evidence-based tips and tools on ways to manage and keep the children safe. Parents and teachers were briefed on ways to guide and ensure the children to be healthy netizens. Workshop also addressed compelling questions regarding the media and its impact on children's development. The speaker elaborated on the

screen time and conversations around it for all age groups, including tiny tots, tweens, and emerging adults, highlighting ways to deal with issues like grooming, abuse and addiction, and false identities.

Neelanjana has been working in the field of child development and child safety for the last 20 years. She is an educator and advocate for the well-being and safety of children and emerging adults. She has worked with individuals and groups, schools, and communities at various projects.

Manikantan AP, President of ICC, welcomed the attendees. Rajesh Singh, Head of Finance of ICC, hosted the session and proposed a vote of thanks. Nirmala Shanmuga Pandian, Cultural Co-ordinator of ICC, was the Master of Ceremonies.

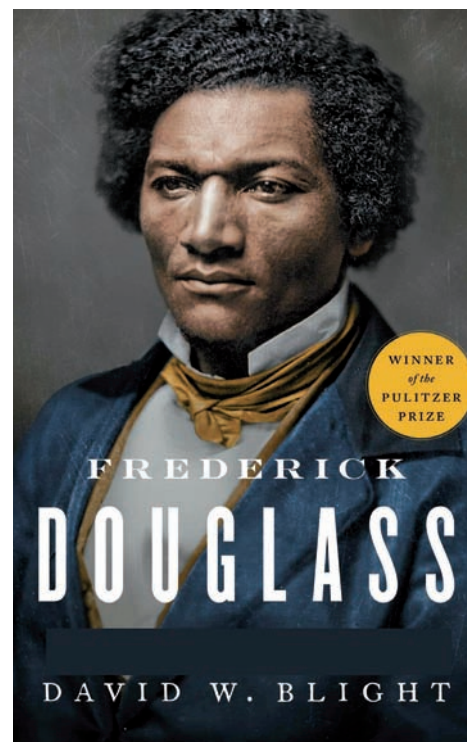
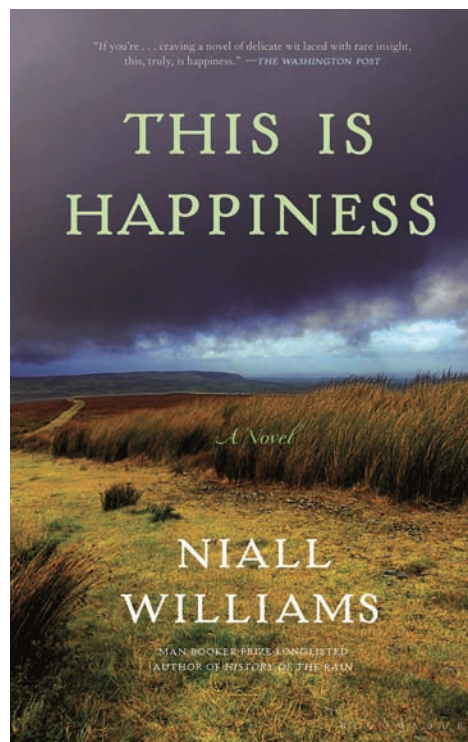
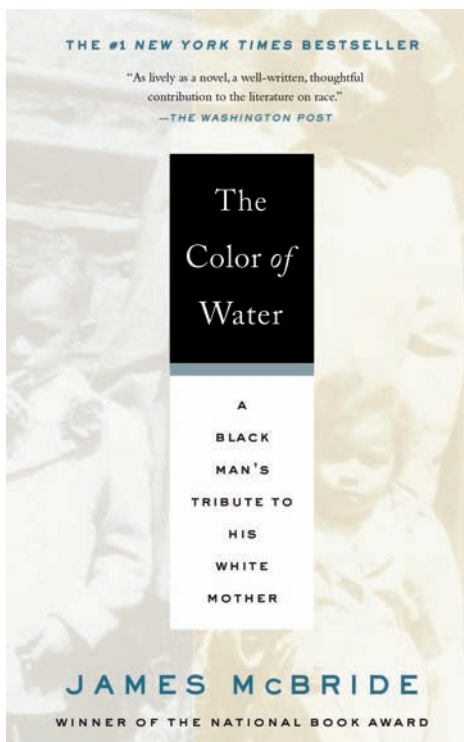


ICT holds Premier Awards Nite

Indian Club Toastmasters (ICT), one of the oldest and largest clubs in Qatar, recently conducted its annual Premier Awards Nite via online platform. The awards nite was attended by several luminaries from the Toastmasters fraternity, including Raghavan Menon, District 116 Director. Fifteen unique awards were given to chosen club members, in recognition of their significant achievements and contributions. The awardees, included Anita Samanta, Guiding Godmother award; Uday Shankar Shah, Mr Present Perfect; Jananee R, Youth Icon; KP Murali, Virtual Virtuoso; Rajendra P, Lifelong Learner; Uttam Vaidya, Enterprising Entertainer; Nirmala R, Super Sub; Marnta Babbar, Extra Mile; Shweta Shah, Most Improved; and Surya Narayanan, Brand Ambassador. Joseph Stanley and Alarmel Mangai were felicitated for reaching DTM status and were bestowed with Dr Smedley Speaker and Club Toastmaster of the Year awards, respectively. The executive committee of club led by Sekar Thangavel, President of ICT, were formally installed in their offices for the year 2020-21. Chendil Kumar, renowned humorist, trainer and TedX speaker, delivered an engaging keynote speech, all the way from India, on finding and using humour effectively in daily life. Kumaran C S, outgoing president of ICT, presented the annual report card, outlining the all-round achievements of the club and its members, including record breaking 53 educational awards during the year 2019-20. The meeting was anchored by Ravishankar J.



'Eclectic' work to feast on, now



for this moment, so I took a deep breath and started. To my surprise, I was riveted and glad it was so long so I could live in it awhile. It's a nuanced portrait of a complicated man and also a sweeping history that illuminates our country today.

The Plague by Albert Camus
 Hmm. One spring a highly contagious disease arrives in a community. The authorities try to keep it quiet. But soon people are sick and dying. As quarantines are imposed, the people's disbelief turns into anger, fear, grief, exhaustion. And still they lament they can't go to the beach in summer. At the heart of the story is a doctor who keeps speaking the truth and doing his job.

Sound familiar? Camus' eerily prescient 1947 novel - there's even a mention of flattening the curve - is suspenseful, clear and full of memorable lines, like this from the heroic doctor: "There's no question of heroism in all this. It's a matter of common decency. That's an idea which may make some people smile, but the only means of fighting a plague is common decency."

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett, read by Tom Hanks
 I've loved some of Patchett's books so I was disappointed not to love this one when it came out last year. But when I saw that the audiobook, read by Tom Hanks, was available on Libby (the free public library app), I decided to give it another try. This time I did love it. Hanks breathes life and meaning into the characters that escaped me on the page.

The story focuses on a brother and sister who grow up in a grand glass house on an estate outside Philadelphia. Their mother walks out. Their father remarries. The past haunts them into middle age. I recommended the audiobook to my former colleague Barbara Brotman, who offers this review: "A great and often funny multigenerational tale, with an unforgettable tough gal at the centre and Tom Hanks hitting it out of the ballpark!"

Disappearing Earth by Julia Phillips
 Two sisters, ages 8 and 11, are abducted one summer afternoon from Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula by a stranger they meet on the beach. Through a series of intertwined stories, Phillips evokes the remote landscape of this Far East part of Russia and how the disappearance of the sisters affects a wide variety of women. It's been called a "literary thriller" but it's less conventional than that sounds. *The New York Times* named it one of its 10 best books of 2019.

Happy reading, and support your local independent bookstore if you can. - *Chicago Tribune/TNS*

By Mary Schmich

In the earliest days of the pandemic, I heard a lot of people say they couldn't focus on a book. I felt the same. When yet another media organisation would issue a jolly 'Pandemic Reading List' I would think, "Are you crazy? Who can read anything but the news?" But something has shifted. Recently I've heard several people say, "I'm ready to read again." Me too. In fact, I've read with more appetite and pleasure in the past month than normal. Here are an eclectic few books I've liked, a couple of them on audio.

The Colour of Water by James McBride, read by Andre Braugher and Lainie Kazan:

A few weeks ago in my column I recommended McBride's recent novel *Deacon King Kong*, and many Tribune readers wrote to say how much they enjoyed it. I found it so good that I yearned for more of McBride's work, which led me to his bestselling 1995 autobiography.

The story focuses on his mother, a white woman who grew up Jewish in the South and married a black man. Through the tale of how she raised 12 kids in New York City, McBride reflects on family, race and place with the same energetic prose and wit he brought to *Deacon King Kong*.

I'm sure the book is wonderful in

print, but listening to Chicago-born actor Andre Braugher inhabit the words gave them a unique power.

This Is Happiness by Niall Williams

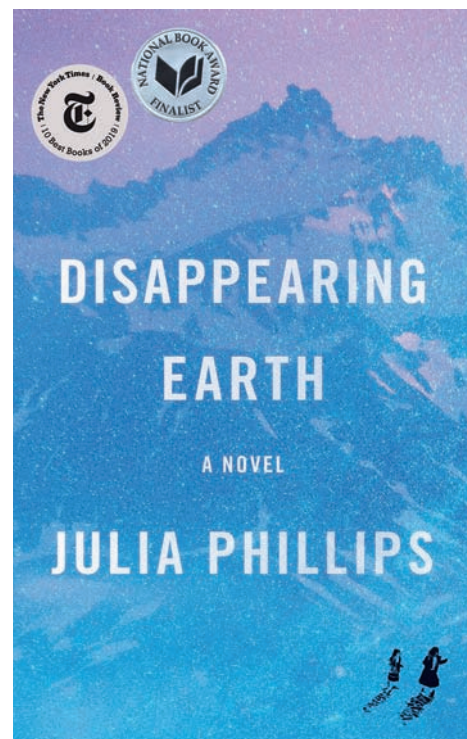
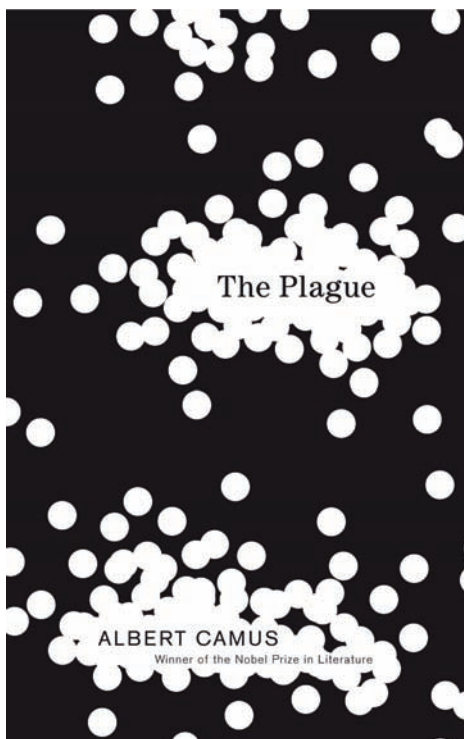
This Irish novel made me deeply happy. In the 1950s, a 17-year-old boy leaves the seminary in Dublin to spend time with his grandparents in an Irish village that, like many at the time, still lacked electricity. Then a stranger arrives, in charge of signing the villagers up for the electricity being imposed from the capital. But the stranger has a secret, which involves a woman he left at the altar decades earlier.

Narrated by the 17-year-old as an old man, the story is about the

coming of electricity but about so much more - language and music, the nature of ageing and change, young love and young love remembered. The sentences and insights stirred and surprised me on every page and the plot, though seemingly simple, kept me going.

Frederick Douglass: by David W. Blight

No way was I going to read an 892-page book, even if it won the Pulitzer Prize and even if 121 of those pages are footnotes. But this biography of Douglass - who rose from enslavement in the South to become one of our nation's great 19th-century orators and abolitionists - seemed like an important book





Must-know: Are breathing tec

The market is flooded with books and classes claiming 'breathwork' can help with mental health, sleep and even Covid-19. But are experts convinced?

By Nic Fleming

Alan Dolan couldn't afford market research when he started out as a breathing instructor in 2005. Instead, he took soundings from London taxi drivers. "I'd tell them I taught people to breathe for a living – they'd be in hysterics and say: 'What a great scam!'" says Dolan. Recently their reaction has changed: "Now they tell me about their sleep apnoea or their wife's panic attacks, ask me how that relates to breathing and often download my app."

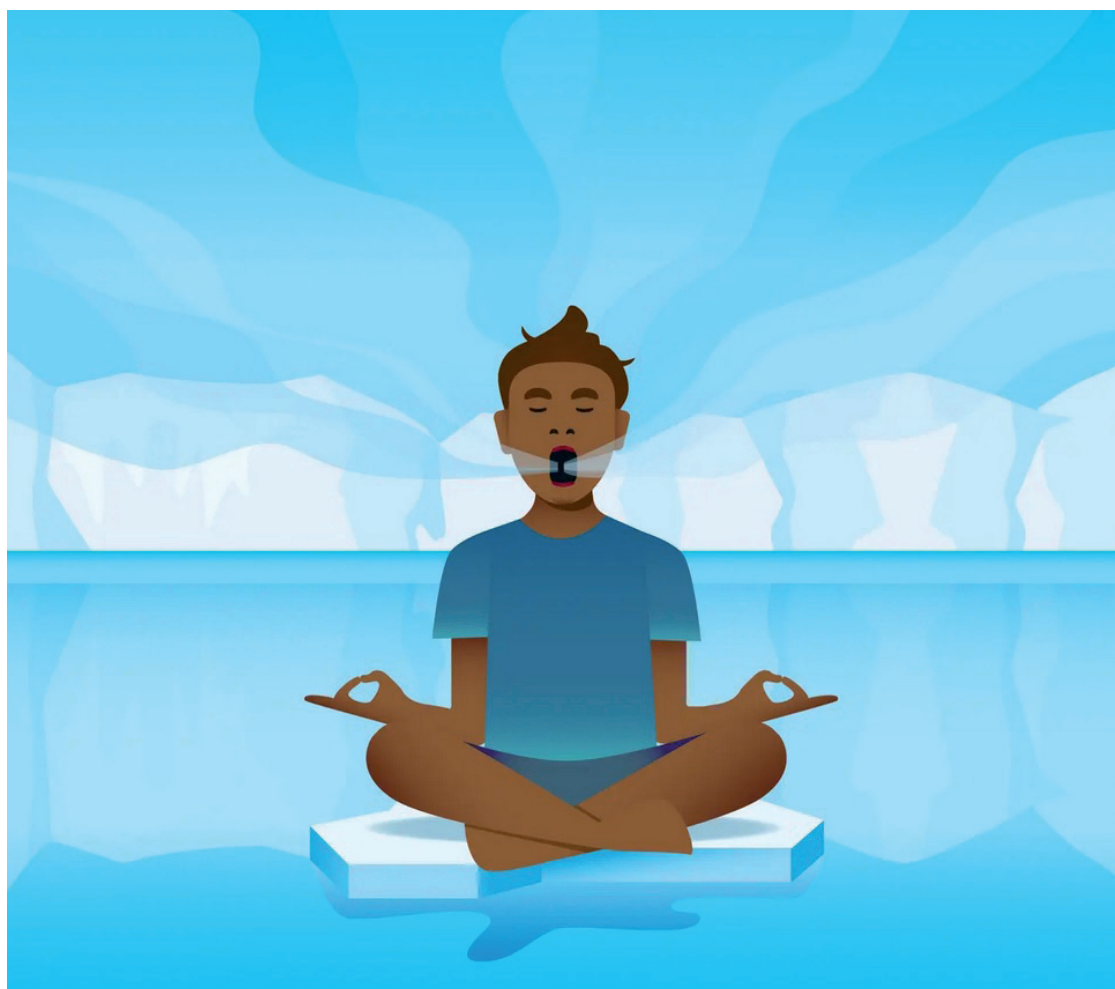
Dolan, whose company is called Breathguru, teaches people to breathe deeply from their diaphragm, inhaling for longer than exhaling, without pausing between the two. He says this can, among other things, release stress, alleviate depression, tackle sleep issues, ease respiratory conditions, boost energy and the immune system and eject emotional baggage. Until Covid-19, his retreats in Lanzarote were, he says, fully booked. Such is the level of demand that Dolan has taught 24 trainees to lead sessions like his.

Other "breathwork" practitioners report similar surges in interest, YouTube and Instagram Stories are teeming with breathing courses, and publishers clearly agree it's a wave worth surfing. Books called *Breathe Well*, *The Power of Breathwork*, *The Breathing Book* and *Breathing for Warriors* have already been published this year. Still to come in 2020 are *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art*, by James Nestor, *Exhale*, by Richie Bostock, *AKA The Breath Guy*, and *The Wim Hof Method* by Wim Hof.

All of which is a little puzzling to some. Sure, a bit of deep breathing at the end of a yoga class feels good, and many use simple breathing exercises to help them relax. But most people manage their 23,000 or so breaths per day without pause for thought, never mind instruction. So are advocates right that breathwork has a long list of physical and mental health benefits? Or is it just a load of hot air?

There is good-quality evidence to support the use of breathing exercises for asthma. A randomised controlled trial published in 2018 found that quality of life ratings were higher in UK asthma patients who underwent training in deep, slow, nasal and diaphragm breathing. Guidelines used by doctors in the UK state that breathing exercises can help reduce asthma symptoms.

"The evidence is strongest for interventions that involve properly trained physiotherapists," says Mike



LINK: Breathing routines are also used to manage pain. Other research linked breathing exercises to reduced heart rates and blood pressure in cardiovascular disease patients.

Thomas, professor of primary care at the University of Southampton, who led the asthma study. Thomas's emphasis on registered therapists relates to the use by some of alternative therapies such as the Buteyko method, a controversial technique which includes taping the mouths of people during sleep to train them to breathe through their noses. Adherents say it can treat sleeping disorders, depression, ADHD, chronic fatigue syndrome, asthma and other respiratory conditions.

Patrick McKeown, a Galway-based Buteyko practitioner who advocates mouth-taping during sleep, travels widely to speak at conferences. Prior to Covid-19 he was booked up 18 months in advance. "Five years ago, it was sleep," he says. "Right now, breathing is hot." McKeown believes a range of conditions including asthma are caused or exacerbated by a modern human mouth-breathing tendency brought on largely by dietary changes. This, he says, causes excessive oxygen intake, low carbon dioxide levels in the blood, and sub-optimal

delivery of oxygen around the body. While Prof Thomas acknowledges that more nose-breathing might help some asthma patients, he says the Buteyko method's emphasis on increased oxygen intake and low carbon dioxide levels in the blood is simplistic. "People with asthma don't overbreathe, and we've measured CO₂ levels in asthmatics before and after retraining and found no relationship whatsoever between severity of asthma and CO₂ levels," he says. "The claim that asthma is caused by hyperventilation and low carbon dioxide are scientifically untenable."

Many of those who turn to breathing exercises do so to deal with stress or anxiety. The NHS website suggests these can be alleviated through short sessions of deep, belly breathing. Scientists have long been interested in studying the effects of practices like yoga and meditation on stress and anxiety; however, there is less research on breathing exercises.

One study found that anxiety levels dropped in a group of Indian medical students who underwent a six-week

course of pranayama breathing exercises, while no change was seen in a control group. The pranayama group also saw increases in their heart rate variability (HRV). When we breathe in, our heart beats momentarily faster to speed the flow of oxygen around the body. When we breathe out, our heart slows down. HRV is the difference between these two rates, and higher HRV is seen as a marker of the body's resilience and flexibility in response to outside stimuli.

A study published in 2017 found that a group of 20 Beijing-based IT workers had lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol in their saliva after undergoing eight weeks of deep, diaphragm breathing sessions – a change not seen in a control group. Italian researchers who reviewed 15 previous studies found slowing breathing promoted short-term increases in HRV, increased comfort and relaxation, and reduced anxiety.

Scientists don't know precisely how slow, deep-breathing promotes relaxation. However, many believe its ability to increase HRV is key. HRV

is controlled by the autonomous nervous system, which regulates subconscious bodily processes including breathing rate and blood pressure. It is subdivided into the sympathetic nervous system, which triggers "fight or flight" responses such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, and the parasympathetic nervous system, which triggers "rest and digest" responses.

Parasympathetic responses are controlled by the vagus nerve, a nervous system superhighway that sends signals back and forth between the brain and different parts of the body. The higher a person's HRV, the greater the strength of their vagal response to stimuli and the quicker their bodies can activate parasympathetic responses to stress.

When psychologist Roderick Gerritsen, of Leiden University in the Netherlands, reviewed physical and mental health benefits associated with contemplative activities, he concluded that their common focus on breathing reduced stress by increasing parasympathetic nervous system activity. "By slowing the breathing down, your heart rate goes down, you stimulate your vagus nerve, and you're telling your body it doesn't have to respond to any immediate threats," says Gerritsen.

Breathing exercises have been proposed to treat symptoms of many other conditions. Researchers at Augusta University in Georgia, US, suggested that insomnia is largely the result of an evolutionary mismatch between the lifestyles of our caveman ancestors and the "toxic, long-term activation of the sympathetic nervous system" of modern life. They suggest slow, deep breathing can stimulate parasympathetic responses that facilitate both initiating sleep and returning to sleep after night-time waking. Breathing routines are also used to manage pain. A study involving 48 healthy volunteers published in January found that deep breathing reduced pain caused by heat, especially at rates of about six breaths per minute. Other research linked breathing exercises to reduced heart rates and blood pressure in cardiovascular disease patients.

It has also been suggested that simple breathing exercises can help people with Covid-19. In April, for example, a London doctor recorded a video advising patients to take two sets of five deep breaths held for five seconds followed by a big cough, before lying on their fronts breathing deeply for 10 minutes. The clip was widely shared online. Some

Techniques good for your health?

patients reported that this helped, however the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Respiratory Care said such exercises were unlikely to help those with the dry coughs seen in the majority of Covid-19 sufferers.

There are many animal and short-term laboratory human studies that show breathing slowly and deeply triggers changes in the body linked to healthy outcomes. That, however, is a long way from saying there is solid evidence that breathing exercises can help people change the way they breathe or improve their health in the long term.

Italian physician Luciano Bernardi has shown that breath-control training helped chronic heart failure patients to significantly reduce their breathing rate as well increasing the amount of time they could exercise. "A month after the study the benefits were still present, and we found that most had continued the practice," says Bernardi. "Like any other training, if you continue to do it you maintain the benefits, and if you stop, after a while, you lose them."

US researchers found that people with high blood pressure who did daily slow breathing sessions for four weeks exhibited short-term but not long-term reductions in blood pressure. "The problem is that in most human studies any effects of slow, deep breathing seem to be isolated to the lab conditions in which they are measured," says Don Noble, a physiologist at Emory University, in Atlanta. "Despite some promising results, there haven't been many well-controlled human studies investigating long-term changes, so the jury is still out."

Current gaps in the scientific evidence base is readily filled by those with books and classes to sell. Extraordinary claims that breathing techniques can treat serious diseases and improve performance in various ways are based on preliminary findings, small studies and research that shows only associations. The claims on Wim Hof's website, for example, that his method "is linked to reducing symptoms of" diseases including rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease are unsupported by high-quality research. Dolan's website quotes a US doctor as stating: "Possibly one of the best therapies ever discovered for HIV, other infectious diseases, and most degenerative, or chronic illnesses (including cancer) is oxygen therapy."

Many people undoubtedly benefit from breathing exercises. However, overblown claims about these powers are frustrating for scientists who believe they do have potential for more widespread use, but that this should be supported by good-quality research and trials. "It is likely there will be uses for breathing techniques in a variety of medical settings," says Thomas. "However, it's not a magic bullet. "There are a lot of people peddling snake oil. What one has to do is look at these claims with a sceptical



TECHNIQUE: Yoga enthusiast practises nadi suddi pranayama breathing techniques.



DIETARY CHANGES: A range of conditions including asthma are caused or exacerbated by a modern human mouth-breathing tendency brought on largely by dietary changes.

eye, and do proper scientific studies to show whether or not it works. If you are just generally worried about your health, it won't do you any harm. Just don't expect it to turn your life around."

Breathing: what's in and what's out?

Breathwork is far from new. Yogis,

mystics and others have linked disturbed breathing to illnesses and advocated breath control both for health and as part of the path to enlightenment for thousands of years. Breathing-based therapies proliferated in the 60s and 70s. Here are just a few of dozens of different ways to get your oxygen.

Pranayama

Breathing techniques are key to yoga. Breath retentions, alternate nostril breathing, explosive exhales, stretching out the tongue and other techniques are used to calm or invigorate the body, support yoga poses and are considered integral to reaching enlightenment.

4-7-8 breathing

Designed to reduce stress, calm anxiety and help people sleep, it involves inhaling through the nose for four seconds, holding your breath for seven seconds, breathing out through the nose for eight seconds. Yes, there are apps for that.

Holotropic breathwork

A psychotherapy method developed in the 1960s that uses rapid deep breathing, music and physical support to supposedly induce altered states of consciousness as a way to release emotional blockages and heal buried traumas. Considered unsafe for those with cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and mental health issues.

Butekyo method

A controversial alternative therapy that uses exercises and mouth taping to train people to breathe lightly and nasally. There are GPs who say it can help people, but claims by advocates that many health conditions are the result of chronic over-breathing are not supported by sound scientific evidence.

Wim Hof method

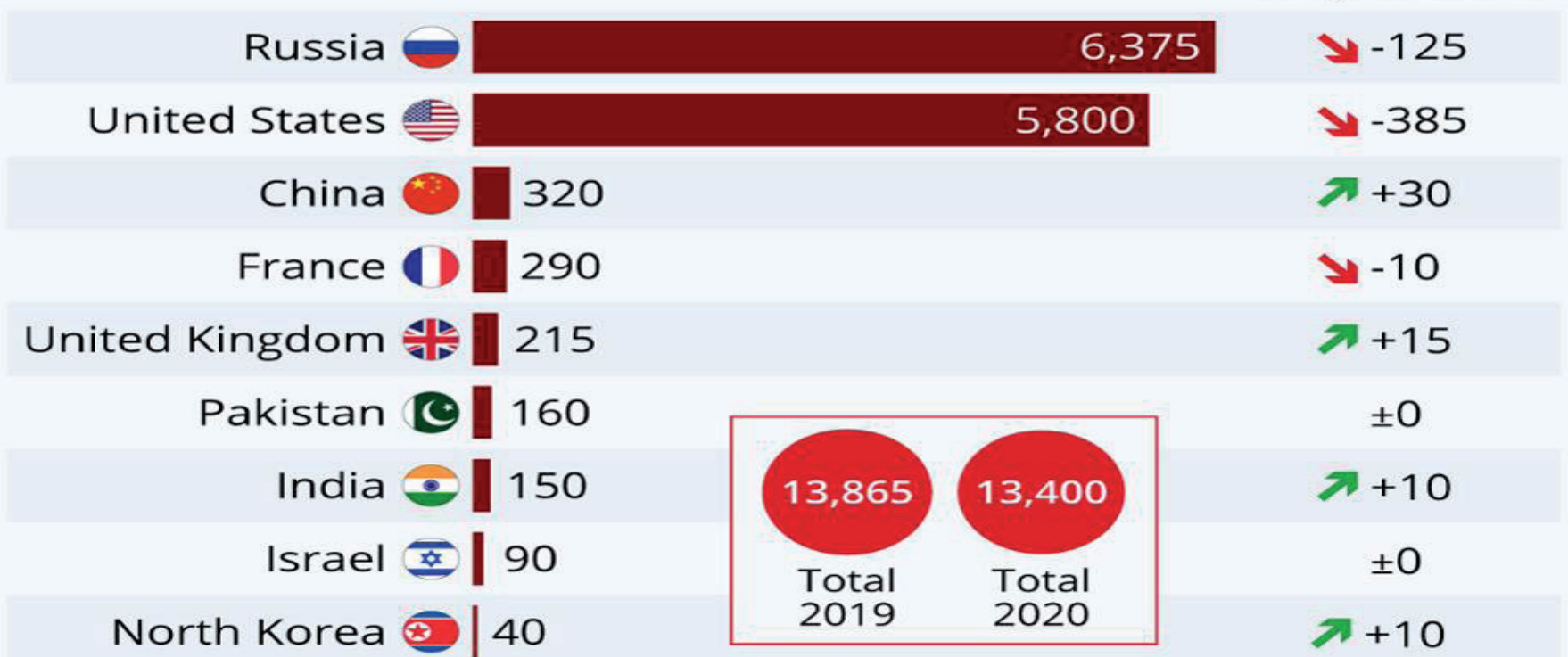
Cycles of controlled hyperventilation, extended exhalations and breath-holding, combined with exposure to cold and meditation, designed to trigger positive immune system changes. As seen on the Gwyneth Paltrow *Goop Lab* series on Netflix. – *The Guardian*



Nuclear Warhead Reductions Continue Despite Global Tensions

Number of nuclear warheads by country in January 2020

Change since 2019



Source: SIPRI

Bringing opulence to your home on a budget

Capitalising your life savings in the house of your dreams is an exciting experience but it is a huge responsibility as well. If you are a first-time buyer, you may be tight on budget but your home can still be glamorous or elegant depending if you want it to.

Hemil Parikh, founder of Elysium Abodes LLP, shares with IANS some tips to lend some high-end appeal to your personal space without you burning a hole in your pocket.

Live up with bright hues

Spruce up your living room with vibrant colour palettes like classic blue, tangerine or red. Bright walls finely paired with large textural artwork and shiny brass accents lend nothing but sheer elegance to your homes. Bright coloured upholstery,

coupled with rows of radiantly coloured books, kitchen cabinets designed in bright shades paired with marble counters, pantry decked up with blue cabinets paired with gold accents, master bedrooms done up in shades of red with accents matching the colour will all surely lend your space a magnificent appeal.

Reshuffle furniture pieces

Prior to buying new fixtures and furniture, first consider doing up your space with what you already have. You can start by rearranging your existing furniture like your sofa sets being pushed against a wall and coffee tables being in the middle. You can also declutter some furniture pieces to make your room look spacious.

Add some green

Plants are an effortless win to

add to your design resource. One can opt for reasonable, superior quality foliage which is extremely budget-friendly. Instead of making use of large planters which will take up a lot of space, you can arrange small groups of plants at different heights.

Add-ons ramp it up

If you do not wish to splurge more on furniture or fixtures, you can consider using attractive embellishments like fringes, feathers and macrami. These are the most exceptional ways to add charisma and texture to your space and transform it into an alluring one.

Vintage lighting

Well-executed lighting can definitely help to gear up a humdrum space and enhance the atmosphere of



an entire home. Instead of investing in expensive pieces, you can always opt for floor lamps of different heights that are sure to lend your homes the required look at your preferred budget. One can also opt for vintage lighting to lend a rich yet

functional appeal to your spaces.

The best tip is to invest in statement pieces that are the highlight of your space, those that can you help in building the entire room around it, concludes Hemil Parikh. — IANS



ARIES

March 21 – April 19

Your slow and steady approach may need a sharp kick today, Aries. Don't withhold your opinions. This is a time to get it all out on the table, despite the tension that it may cause. Strong forces are at work, so don't be surprised if things get a bit more heated than you're used to. The fact is that incredible breakthroughs can be made through disagreements among different types of people.



CANCER

June 21 – July 22

Suddenly you've found your energy again. Your engine is oiled up and ready to go, Cancer. Put yourself in high gear and don't let anything stand in your way. If disagreements with others arise, try to keep focused on the lessons that come from the situation instead of dwelling on the negative aspects. Take things to a higher level and don't be afraid to suggest radical change.



LIBRA

September 23 – October 22

Don't be surprised if unexpected actions from others give your heart a jolt today, Virgo. You could find that a strong force of erratic energy affects your emotions. It's working to stir things up quite a bit. Use your beliefs and morals as guideposts to help you navigate difficult waters. Stay true to yourself and don't let others make decisions for you. You have the power to make very significant breakthroughs.



CAPRICORN

December 22 – January 19

You may have the spark that wants to light things today, Capricorn. Indeed, there's a fast-paced tendency to the day that is right up your ally. You should be able to accomplish quite a bit under the prevailing trends. Just make sure you're constructive with criticism and be careful that you aren't too abrasive toward the people you deal with. In other words, be nice.



TAURUS

April 20 – May 20

Try to seek freedom and new experiences today, Taurus. This is an important time for you to spread your wings and explore. Keep in mind that something or someone may be working to restrain you emotionally. An opposing force is promoting war while you insist on keeping things peaceful. Perhaps there's an important lesson you need to learn. Be more assertive in your actions.



LEO

July 23 – August 22

You may be a bit daunted by the frenzy of energy present in the air today, Leo. Try not to get thrown off balance by others who may be more abrasive than usual. Use this as a time of release for yourself. By letting others open up the cold, hard truth to you, you have the opportunity to let out your own truth as well. Unexpected events are likely to come on the scene.



SCORPIO

October 23 – November 21

Your mood should be quite good today, Scorpio. Generally, you'll find that people will react to your tendency to take the lead. Keep in mind that this also indicates that they'll probably be more likely to fight back. You may have the tendency to lean toward the bizarre and unconventional. The route to take today is the one that fosters diversity and revolutionary thinking. Be a pioneer in every situation.



AQUARIUS

January 20 – February 18

Interaction with others may not be especially satisfying for you today, Aquarius. You could get the feeling that other people don't really care as much as you thought they did. Keep in mind that everyone is doing the best they can. Most people aren't as sensitive as you. They probably have no idea what sort of impact their words have on you. Give others the benefit of the doubt.



GEMINI

May 21 – June 20

If people insist on having things their own way, let them, Gemini. Fighting isn't going to do any good. This kind of reaction will only cause more tension between you and the other person involved. Approaching the situation with a hostile attitude will most likely result in a lose/lose situation. If arguments do occur, try not to take things personally. Try your hardest to stick with the facts.



VIRGO

August 23 – September 22

Don't be surprised if unexpected actions from others give your heart a jolt today, Virgo. You could find that a strong force of erratic energy affects your emotions. It's working to stir things up quite a bit. Use your beliefs and morals as guideposts to help you navigate difficult waters. Stay true to yourself and don't let others make decisions for you. You have the power to make very significant breakthroughs.



SAGITTARIUS

November 22 – December 21

Be a little braver than usual today, Sagittarius. Take some risks and show others that you have the strength to accomplish anything. There is a lively, anxious feeling to the day that could make you restless. This energy is encouraging you to get up and get going. Initiate something rather than wait for someone else to take the lead. Don't be afraid to fail. You'll never succeed if you don't try.



PISCES

February 19 – March 20

The clouds have finally lifted, and you should be able to see clearly again, Pisces. The fire is burning red hot and you'll find people likely to stick up for themselves more than usual. You should do the same. Arguments could be especially heated today, and interesting facts and revolutionary information will be passed from person to person. Make sure you have your facts straight before you open your mouth.



Wordsearch



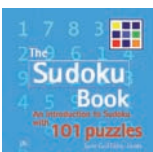
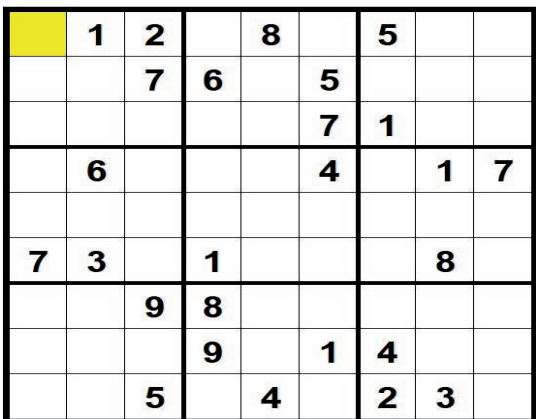
- | | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| AGATE | GOLD | SPINEL |
| GALENA | SCHIST | FLINT |
| QUARTZ | BERYL | MICA |
| BASALT | GRANITE | TALC |
| GNEISS | SHALE | GABBRO |
| RUBY | DIAMOND | OPAL |
| BAUXITE | GYPSUM | TOPAZ |

Codeword

Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Squares with the same number in have the same letter in. Work out which number represents which letter.



Sudoku



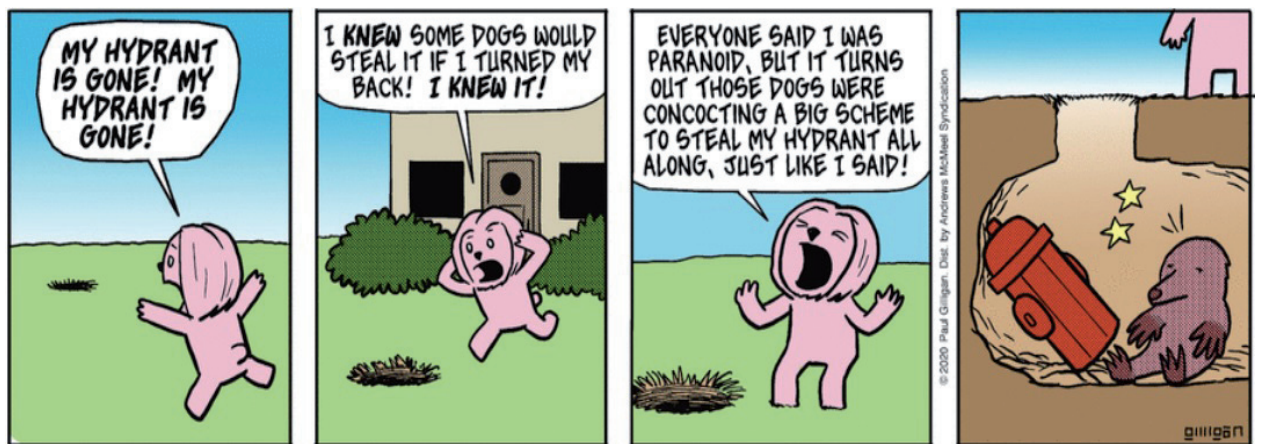
Sudoku is a puzzle based on a 9x9 grid. The grid is also divided into nine (3x3) boxes. You are given a selection of values and to complete the puzzle, you must fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9.



Adam



Pooch Cafe



Garfield



Bound And Gagged

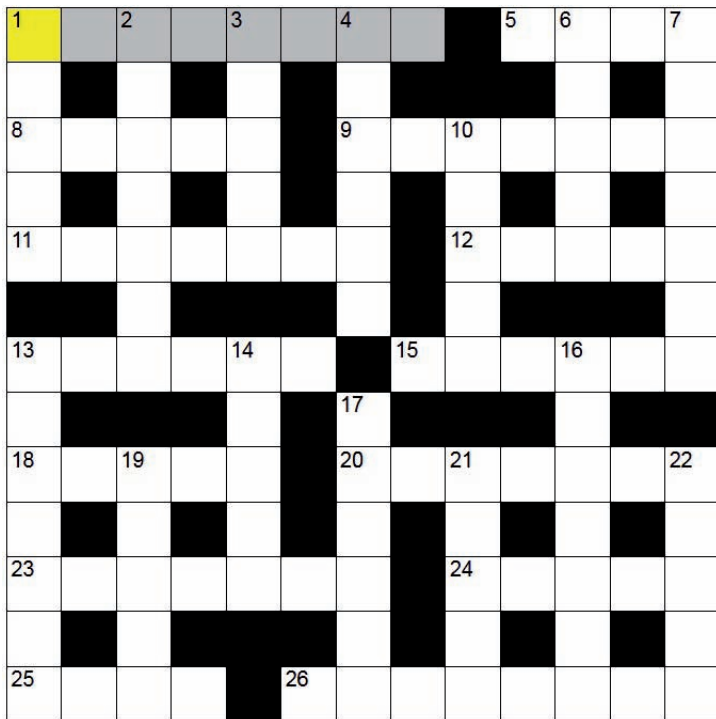


PUZZLES

COMMUNITY



Super Cryptic Clues



Across

- 1 Tree feller may be civic dignitary (8)
- 5 Be conscious of payment that's left behind (4)
- 8 Foreign currency found in a remote part (5)
- 9 Dutch capital and part of London doing business (7)
- 11 Glass for the acrobat (7)
- 12 Start using some paint rollers (5)
- 13 Fools start to suspect judge (6)
- 15 Persian king holding power in island (6)
- 18 Wide awake right after drink (5)
- 20 Cut out tax before the start of December (7)
- 23 Animals after stolen food (3,4)
- 24 Country seen when one's left Indonesia (5)
- 25 Bogarde's knife (4)
- 26 Freedom of speech is blessing in disguise (8)

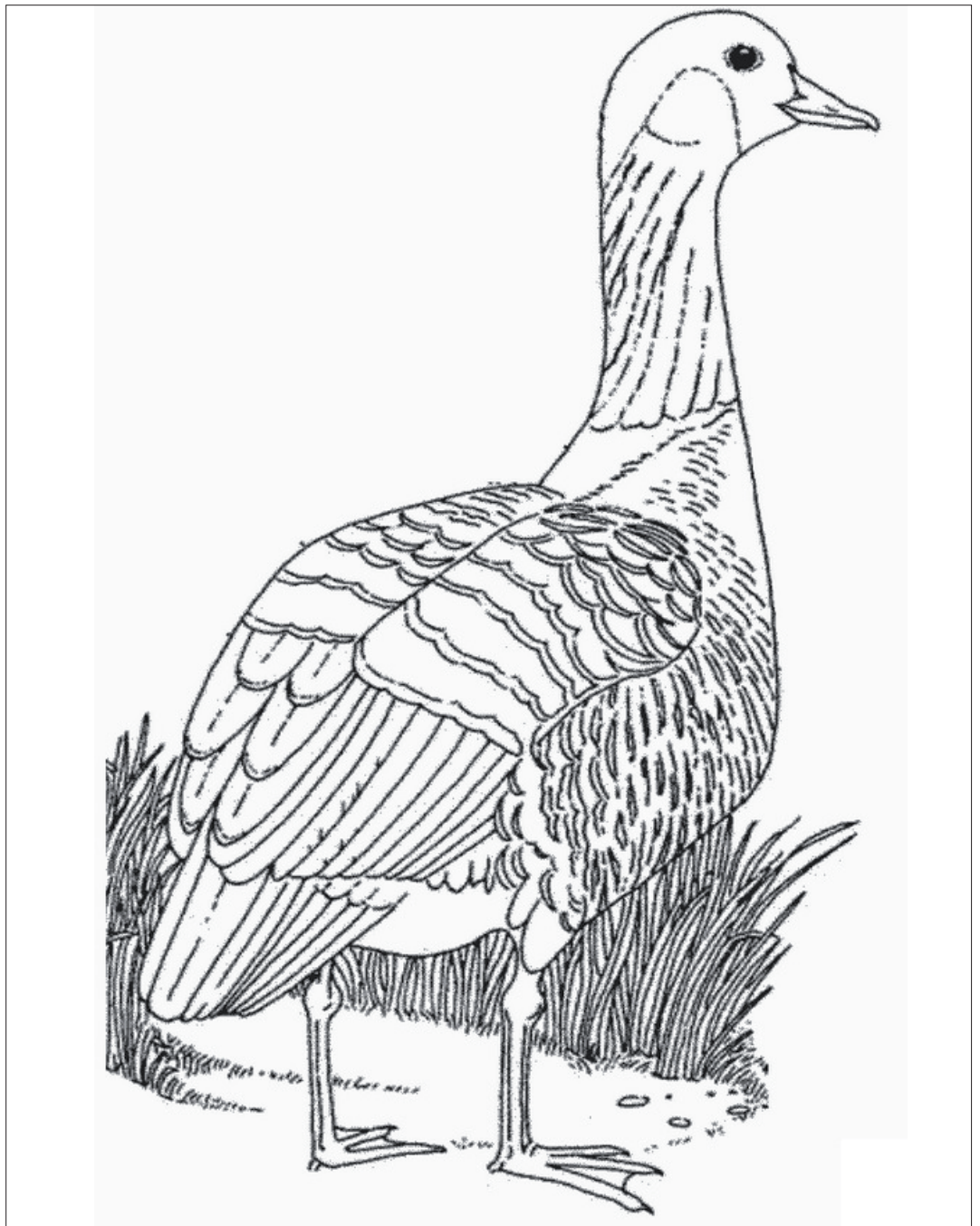
Down

- 1 Examination of car taking little time (5)
- 2 Monday's awkward for current suppliers (7)
- 3 Rustic part of the lower Urals (5)
- 4 Poisonous snakes, they reckon (6)
- 6 Order used in the dictionary (5)
- 7 Sloe gin is bad for lots of soldiers (7)
- 10 Friendship? Girl embraces it (5)
- 13 Embarrassed sailor with a place for tools? (7)
- 14 Fight with animals turning up right away (3-2)
- 16 Rest cut short? One expected rest (7)
- 17 Popper with stand? (6)
- 19 Carpenter is to go in without fish (5)
- 21 Go up and get caught on branch of tree (5)
- 22 Churchmen carried away in sedan? (5)

Solution

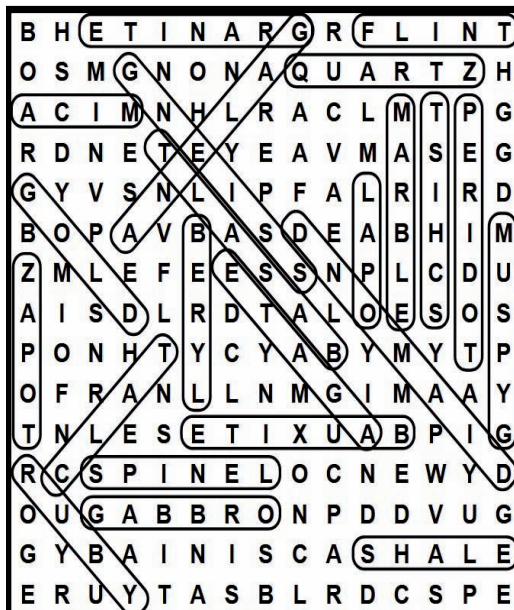


Colouring

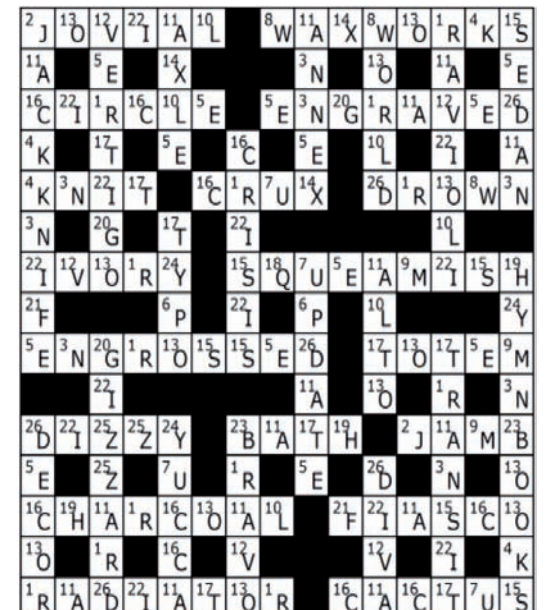


Answers

Wordsearch



Codeword





Wishes for speedy recovery continue pouring in for Bachchans

Wishes for a speedy recovery have continued pouring in from film industry colleagues ever since Bollywood veteran Amitabh Bachchan tweeted on Saturday evening to say that he has been hospitalised with Covid-19, followed by his son, actor Abhishek Bachchan, confirming that he too has been infected by the virus.

On Saturday night, Big B had tweeted: "T 3590 - I have tested Covid-19 positive .. shifted to Hospital .. hospital informing authorities .. family and staff undergone tests, results awaited .. All that have been in close proximity to me in the last 10 days are requested to please get themselves tested!"

Soon after Bachchan's tweet, his son Abhishek tweeted to confirm that he too had tested Covid positive. The Covid-19 antigen test reports of Jaya Bachchan, her daughter-in-law Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and grand-daughter Aaradhya are negative, while swab test results are awaited.

Since then, the virtual world has been pouring with love and good wishes for the whole family.

Actor Akshay Kumar said: "Praying for your speedy recovery Sir. Love and prayers", and for Abhishek he wrote: "Get well soon brother. Lots of love."

Playback legend Lata Mangeshkar wrote: "Namaskar Amit ji. Aap aur Abhishek dono par bhagwan ki kripa hogi aur aap jald swasth hokar ghar aayenge aisa mujhe vishwas hai. (God will bless you and Abhishek and you will get well soon and come home)."

Bachchan's *Sholay* co-star Dharmendra Deol said: "Amit , get well soon. I am sure of my



STABLE: Amitabh Bachchan was on Saturday admitted to a city hospital after testing positive for Covid-19.

courageous younger brother..... he will soon be fit and fine in a day or two ...Jaya, don't worry...every thing will be fine my brave baby.... Look after yourself and everyone at home.....Love you all.....take care."

Actors Priyanka Chopra tweeted: "Wishing you both a speedy recovery Amitji and AB... sending you prayers and positive energy... @SrBachchan @ juniorbachchan

Actors Ranveer Singh and Bhumi Pednekar sent in "love and positive energy".

Among the earliest to wish Big B was his *Badla* costar Taapsee Pannu. "And you shall be back to health n happiness soon! champ!" she wrote on Saturday night.

Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan wrote: "I wish both the Bachchans @SrBachchan @ juniorbachchan a speedy recovery. I trust the Indian doctors and

Sr. Bachchan's will to overcome health hazards. Get well soon and become an icon again for survival and wellness."

Malayalam superstar Mammooty tweeted: "Get well soon sir."

"Get well soon sir! Wishing you a speedy recovery," tweeted Telugu superstar Mahesh Babu.

Tamil star Dhanush shared: "Get well soon sir, my sincere prayers for your speedy recovery."

Rakul Preet Singh shared: "Hoping you recover real soooooon sir... sending across lots of positivity", while Preity Zinta said: "Take care of yourself @juniorbachchan and get well soon. Praying for you and Amitji... Love you loads."

"Oh no! Take care, Sir! Get well soon! Sending you tonnes of love and good wishes!" wrote Ranveer Shorey on Twitter.

Actor Vinay Pathak said: "Wishing you and @ juniorbachchan a speedy recovery sir ! Pl get well soon. This too shall pass... Our wishes and prayers are with thee always."

Singer Yo Yo Honey Singh shared: "Wishing you a speedy recovery sir lots of love and prayers."

Actress Genelia Deshmukh said: "Dear Amitji .. Please get well soon.. We wish you lots of love and a speedy recovery."

Actress Sonam K Ahuja also posted: "Get well soon amit uncle. All my love and prayers", and sent good wishes to Abhishek separately.

Filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj wrote: "Get well soon. You are in our prayers."

Shilpa Shetty shared: "Praying and sending you lots of positive energy , strength and love to recover at the soonest", while Tiger said: "Feel bad for The virus it messed with the toughest hero! sending u power and positivity sir."

"Never Have I Ever" actor Poorna Jagannathan shared: "The speediest recovery to both of you."

Actress Neha Dhupia also posted: "get well soon.. sending you and sir @SrBachchan heaps of love and energy."

Boney Kapoor tweeted: "Get well soon Amit ji."

— IANS

Singing therapeutic for me: Malaika Arora

Actress Malaika Arora says a lot of people don't know the fact that she can "actually sing".

Talking about her hidden talent, Malaika said: "People don't know the fact that I can actually sing. It is one of the most therapeutic things for me."

She also shared her love for reality shows, saying: "I would never give up hosting reality shows, as I really enjoy working on them."

Talking about her bond with her son, the dancing diva said: "I would never check my son's phone without his permission."

"Because that's the pure bond and trust I've built with him," she said in an episode of *Go Fun Yourself*, which streams on Voot.

Recently, Malaika has shared a "Make in India" home remedy to boost immunity.

"This is a true blue Make in India home remedy. Age-old traditional, tried and tested homemade immunity booster. Indian gooseberry (Amla), fresh organic turmeric and ginger root with some Apple cider vinegar and a dash of peppercorns is all it takes to make this magic potion," she wrote on social media along with a video showing how to prepare it.

She continued: "For better

results, ensure that your ACV is with mother and in its purest form. Just blend these ingredients together and enjoy its health boosting properties. With all the immunity booster clutter suddenly available in the in the name of Covid-19, stick to this homemade, quick and organic recipe for best results. #HomeRemedies #Malaika'sTrickOrTip #LoveYourGut #Malaika'sNuskha #HomeMadeWithLove."

Earlier, she had posted a throwback photograph of herself with her son Arhaan Khan, asking fans to focus on their health and their loved ones. — IANS



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: Malaika has asked fans to focus on their health and their loved ones.

Elisabeth Moss not afraid to put up a fight

Actress Elisabeth Moss feels she has a strong personality and says she is good at "fighting back".

In an interview with *OK!* Magazine, the 37-year-old actress shared that she is thankful, her parents always taught her to believe in herself, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "I was raised to believe in myself. I was raised to believe that I should have a voice and that I have a place.

"I was raised to believe that my voice is as important and

relevant as anyone else's."

In a way, I suppose I'm good at fighting back if I need to. I think you always find strength physically and mentally when you need it," she added.

Asked what she is scared of, she said: "Speaking publicly, especially at big events. Silence frightens me too.

"I'm a city girl, so I'm not used to silence. I would be terrified if you put me in a country home by myself, surrounded by woods and silence. And water, I'm afraid of deep water."

"Also, something you can't see – an invisible presence or

an invisible threat is terrifying because you're just powerless. I could go on and on," she said.

One thing that doesn't scare Moss is horror films.

She said, "I have a very high tolerance for dark material and am not easily frightened. I love horror. I love scary movies. I always have, ever since I was little. When I was 11 or 12, me and my friends from ballet school used to have sleepovers. We would watch all the scary movies – *It*, *Poltergeist*, *Halloween*, *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *The Shining*. I guess I've never been too afraid to watch them." – IANS



CONFIDENT: Elisabeth Moss says she was raised to believe in herself.

Looking for a follow-up to *Tiger King*? Watch these

By Chris Hewitt

To save repetition, let's just stipulate that "shocking" describes every true-crime movie on this list.

Lots of excellent documentaries examine crimes – *The Times of Harvey Milk* climaxes with a murder and little-girl-becomes-art-superstar charmer *My Kid Could Paint That* may involve fraud – but, in my mind, a true-crime doc only pops if the crime itself is front and centre. The Holocaust was criminal, for instance, but the many fine nonfiction films about it belong to a different category.

As shown in HBO's current true-crime series, *I'll Be Gone in the Dark*, these are the kinds of stories that lead to obsessively tweeting about *Tiger King* (I have not seen it but, in any case, I'm only including feature films) or, in pre-social media days, jamming message boards with theories about the unbelievably twisty murder investigation of *The Staircase* (whose director made a previous, even better, movie you'll find on the list below).

Given our fascination with crime, there's no surprise it features in so many nonfiction films, but it is surprising it took Hollywood so long to take notice. Academy Awards have been handed out for documentary features since 1942 but no true-crime doc won until six decades later (*Murder on a Sunday Morning*). Trophies almost always went to World War II-themed documentaries before Oscar shifted its attention to nature films and then biographies, including 1957 winner *Albert Schweitzer*, by St. Paul native Jerome Hill.

In keeping with an organisation that has usually favoured safety over risk, Oscar docs avoided

controversy until the anti-Vietnam film *Hearts and Minds* won in 1974. An inspiring portrait continues to be the clearest path to awards – think of Muhammad Ali in *When We Were Kings* or last year's daredevil mountain climbers in *Free Solo* – but Oscar has begun to reward compelling filmmaking, not just compelling topics.

After years of pushback because of his use of dramatisations, Errol Morris finally won in 2003 for *The Fog of War*. In the aftermath, documentaries have become even more open to experiments that get at deeper truths. It's exhilarating to see documentarians explore the possibilities of animation (*Waltz With Bashir*), re-enactments of events that weren't captured on film (*Man on Wire*), surreal storytelling (*The Act of Killing*), autobiography (*Faces Places*) and personal essay (*Minding the Gap*).

Those experiments demonstrate that there's no limit to what a documentary can do. These true-crime titles demonstrate there's also no limit to the peculiarity of the human experience.

Dear Zachary (2008)

Warning: It's a gut punch. Director Kurt Kuenne originally intended the film, which can be seen in its entirety on YouTube, for an audience of one: a baby named Zachary who never knew his dad, Andrew. He was murdered by Zachary's mother, who fled to Canada, launching a jaw-dropping sequence of events that ended in unimaginable tragedy and, ultimately, new Canadian laws.

Paradise Lost trilogy (1996-2011)

The story of the West Memphis Three has been told in numerous films and books, but these movies, which follow the arrest of three Goth teenagers for supposedly satanic murders in Arkansas,



HISTORICAL: This documentary looks at the legacy of the US Constitution's 13th Amendment.

were there from the beginning. Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, who also made the heartbreaking *Brother's Keeper*, about an elderly man on trial for the murder of his sibling, went deep, following multiple bad leads and false witnesses until the trail led to the truth.

Murder on a Sunday Morning (2001)

The only true-crime documentary Oscar winner is surprisingly obscure, given the phenomenon that was director Jean-Xavier Lestrade's next project, *The Staircase*, the twisty true-crime series that kept adding new chapters as new developments surfaced over a 14-year period. Equally gripping, *Sunday Morning* is tidier – when it's over, you know what happened when a Jacksonville, Fla., tourist was murdered – but also turns on issues of truth and subjectivity.

Leap of Faith (2004)

Its startling intimacy comes from the fact that much of the footage

was shot by the participants, who were hesitant to share their story. Ultimately, all is revealed in a conflict that comes to a head when a man, abused by a Roman Catholic priest when he was a teenager, realises that not only has the priest escaped justice but he's his neighbour.

13th (2016)

Ava DuVernay's best film, currently free on YouTube, is this disturbing look at the legacy of the US Constitution's 13th Amendment. Unlike others on this list, it doesn't concern one specific crime, but *13th* convincingly argues that, in a way, slavery never ended, continuing to the present with mass incarceration and an unfair justice system. Historian Kevin Gannon is one of many who argue that racism in America is a crime: "If we are Black, we are the products of history that our ancestors did not choose."

The subjects include the Central Park Five, later the protagonists of DuVernay's *When They See Us*.

The Thin Blue Line (1988)

Often pointed to as an example of the power of movies, Errol Morris' classic led to the release of Randall Adams, who had been wrongly convicted of the murder of a police officer. Weaving interviews and re-enactments while accelerating the pace of the story, Morris' film is a tense, provocative thriller – and it wasn't even the movie he planned to make. Morris stumbled on the case while researching what would eventually become his *Dr. Death*.

Tower (2016)

My favourite of a very narrow subgenre of nonfiction films, animated documentaries, is this hypnotic one about shootings at the University of Texas in 1966. A gunman positioned himself in an observation deck and took aim at students and faculty, which this poetic film captures, with a special emphasis on the heroes who helped some people survive and others avoid danger. The animation is simple, beautiful and a unique solution for depicting events that left little video evidence. – IANS



DIY danger: 'It's not a sensible thing to do when you get older'

Trauma researchers have found that even months after falling from a ladder, patients still suffer, and plead that people need to be more cautious

By Alyx Gorman

“We see ladder climbing as quite a benign thing to do,” says Dr Helen Ackland, a researcher at the National Trauma Research Institute. “When someone dies in a car accident we hear about it on the news, when someone dies from a ladder, it’s not on the news.”

However, that perception does not match up to reality. In 2018, 22 people died in ladder-related falls in Australia – and for every death, there are dozens of people who suffer from debilitating injuries.

A new study from Queensland University of Technology and Queensland Health, published in the journal *Plos One*, has found that, even six months after falling from a ladder, 49% of patients experienced a clinically significant deterioration in their quality of life, including depression, anxiety, trouble sleeping and pain.

The study looked at 255 Queensland hospital admissions due to ladder falls, then followed up with 134 patients six months later, conducting qualitative interviews.

Most of these injuries did not occur on worksites, where strict occupational health and safety codes are in place, but in the home. The largest cohort of patients were men over the age of 50, “people who like myself, would know better than climbing up and down ladders”, says Dr Rob Eley, a researcher at University of Queensland’s faculty of medicine, who worked on the study.

Over the course of the study, “we had a couple of people who died as a result of ladder falls”; “we had several more people who were permanently disabled”; and “then large numbers of people with abrasions and fractures”.

“But,” Eley says, “there’s a lot of psychological aspects to it as well, because as you get older and don’t heal quite as quickly ... people end up off work, there’s a financial aspect, and it’s just very, very difficult. There are a lot of consequences that you don’t normally think of as being the result of just a visit to the hospital.”

Eley found that almost all of the injuries that occurred could have



“We’ve had 80- and 90-year-olds up ladders, just to give an example ... they’re used to doing things at home themselves, so they continue doing it past the age where they probably should be delegating to someone else”

– Dr Helen Ackland, a researcher at the National Trauma Research Institute

been avoided. Often, they were the result of inattention – people climbing back up a ladder to fix one last thing or grab a tool; or reaching too far, then falling.

Ackland, who also researches trauma as a result of ladder falls, sees a similar pattern. She says often these injuries are “completely preventable, plus in many ways the severity of the injury can be preventable with a little bit of extra care.”

Ackland found the *Plos One* study “very good”, and says “in our current research project we followed up at 12 months and we’ve found a similar picture.”

As Australia’s population

ages, and more men enter into retirement age, these types of home improvement injuries are on the rise, says Ackland. “We’ve had 80- and 90-year-olds up ladders, just to give an example ... they’re used to doing things at home themselves, so they continue doing it past the age where they probably should be delegating to someone else.”

Eley is well aware of the temptation to climb a ladder without thinking about it – he experienced a ladder fall himself, while attempting to cut some bananas down from a tree. Fortunately, he was unharmed by this incident (he fell into bushes;

while most of the worst injuries both he and Ackland have seen were the result of falling onto hard surfaces such as piles of bricks, or fences) – but, he says “I have been banned” from using ladders alone.

Now, Eley and his wife “do it together – you know somebody holds the bottom and the other person climbs”. He recommends having a ladder buddy as a basic safety precaution for all home ladder use. He has also set himself a height limit for climbs, because “it’s just not a sensible thing to do when you get older”.

Ackland points to a lack of legislation around ladder usage in the home as a driver of injury, but

also says “we’ve found that people who are working in jobs where they climb ladders all the time, and are guided by [occupational] health and safety, when they’re at home they don’t use the occupational health and safety regulations.” She says that while there’s some evidence to suggest that wearing helmets while using ladders in the home will help mitigate brain injuries in the case of a fall, prevention is better. “How about not falling to begin with?”

“The message that I say to people is be very careful when you’re using a ladder, even more careful of using a ladder with a power tool.” – *The Guardian*