



EXCLUSIVE: SAURABH INTERVIEWS THE BOLLYWOOD MAA

FREE INAUGURAL EDITION

THE SUNDAY ROAR

June 2010

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TOGETHER WE ROAR !

From The Tiger Den

*We speak, we write, we tell the truth. We fight corruption, we fight the corrupt.
We voice out your concerns and call spade a spade.*

We are back again with another Roar on another Sunday. So what are you waiting for? Just grab a cup of tea, or even coffee for that matter, and get ready to go on a full package of fun, entertainment, taking you to places and above all, spreading awareness.

This volume of Sunday Roar brings you a full report on the Bhopal Gas Tragedy - the history, the facts and the victims too, written by Adv. Debosmita Nandy - in our cover story section.

Go on a not so bumpy ride to Hampi with Rashmi and enjoy Domestic Olympics laughing riot with Sudhakar as the narrator.

Saurabh interviews the most underrated and over hyped reel character of Maa of Indian Cinema and Neha keeps you hooked up with her limerick on Indian politics.

Kanagu has all the data and statistics about Print Media V/s Electronic Media while Pal's micro fiction will surprise you with the magic that it holds.

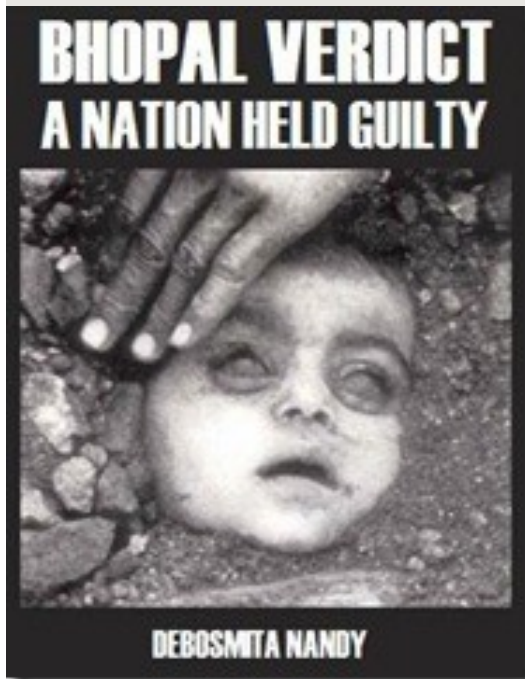
The special feature of this volume is a Short Story on Crime Fiction by Sudhakar that will keep you glued to your seats till the very end.

But The Sunday Roar is never complete without you. Please leave a word behind if you like the article. Do leave a word behind if you dislike something.



COME ON... ROAR WITH US...





For many of us, breaking news last a day or two and if we happen to be a part of it, then for a few years or may be a lifetime. But for many in the city of Bhopal, the breaking news of gas leakage on the eve of December 3, 1984 will haunt for generations to come.

On that day, the poisonous Methylene Isocyanate gas which engulfed the city, not only killed 25,000 people and affected 5,00,000 more with permanent injuries over the years, it has also affected children born to exposed parents with unknown and undiagnosed cognitive diseases. Moreover, children born even today, after a quarter of a century has lapsed, are born with congenital defects of varying degrees. The gas has

contaminated the groundwater to such an extent that the city still suffers from toxin-related problems. Survivor stories of woe, series of heart-wrenching pictures, mind-numbing statistics, and details of protracted litigation for justice have all been in the media glare over the years, as a reminder that Bhopal was indeed the worst disaster mankind has ever seen.

In the last week, the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Bhopal, in one of the many criminal cases instituted against functionaries of Union Carbide sentenced 7, including UCIL chairman Kesub Mahindra to 2 year imprisonment and then grant them bail on a bond of Rs. 25,000/-. While the nation is expressing its outrage on the outcome of the trial and revelations of how the Indian government itself allowed the main perpetrator to go scot-free, the story of Bhopal is much beyond that nightmare which started in 1984. The nation not only prevented arrest of the-then Chairman of Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) Warren Anderson but has failed to deliver any relief, respite or justice to its affected people.

Bhopal Gas Tragedy is a story of collective failure of all the machineries of a state before its own people and the rest of the world.

The story of Bhopal is full of horrors with multi-dimensional layers. At one layer is the causal reason behind the disaster, a multinational's disregard for the life and safety of people, wide-spread devastations caused and the attempt to compensate for it with handful of money. At another layer is the toxic waste produced, which no one, not even the present owner, Dow Chemicals is willing to clear up and which contaminates the surrounding even today. Yet, another layer is the torturous legal battle culminating in

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last week's mockery of justice, subversion of judiciary in the face of politics. In the end, all these layers build up the story of a mass murder perpetrated by a multinational corporation, with the aid of the home state.

Initially the proposed site plan was to be the far-flung and more deserted Jagdalpur, but the-then Industries Minister Shankar Dayal Sharma, who later became President of India wanted it to come up in Bhopal, his own constituency.

In 1981, Ashraf Muhammad, a worker in UCIL was found drenched in phosgene gas and did not survive till he could be taken to the shower. His death failed to prompt the management to take notice of the situation, just as frequent outbursts of gas leakages till then had failed to be taken seriously. In the **words of Kumkum Saxena**, a medical officer with UCIL who quit her job in 1982, *“There was exposure to chemicals at totally unacceptable levels. There'd be a bag full of acid sitting there waiting to kill somebody. Silica and hydrocarbon levels were higher than prescribed. Sometimes there would be a leak not fixed, and yet the personnel were allowed to go there.”*

After the death of Ashraf Muhammad, Union Carbide management sent a team of US engineers to conduct a **'business confidential' safety audit**. The May 1982 report identified 61 hazards, 30 of them major and 11 in the dangerous MIC unit. Safety measures were improved at UCC's MIC plant in West Virginia, but not in Bhopal, where, incredibly, Carbide intensified its cost-cutting in the most dangerous areas of the plant.

The UCIL pesticide plant was set up in 1969 as a joint venture between UCC owning 50.9% and various Indian investors and public sector financial institutions owning 49.1% to manufacture pesticide carbaryl, to be sold under the trademark Sevin. Initially the proposed site plan was to be the far-flung and more deserted Jagdalpur, but the-then Industries Minister Shankar Dayal Sharma, who later became President of India wanted it to come up in Bhopal, his own constituency. RK Sahi, who was then Deputy Director in the ministry, confirmed this **when he told *The Hindu*** that the entire department was against granting the industrial licence. *“We knew that discarded technologies were being transferred to India. It was obsolete in the US, but it was being dumped in our country. We all knew that,”* he said. *“These things were finally decided at a high level. There was a lot of talk of political interference in those days. Union Carbide had been trying for a licence since 1970. They only got it during the Emergency, which was not a democratic government. So, whatever somebody wanted to do, he or she did it then.”* Union Carbide applied for a licence on January 1, 1970. Mrs. Gandhi invoked Article 352 to declare the Emergency on June 25, 1975. The licence was granted on October 31, 1975.

Methyl Isocyanate (MIC), an intermediate in carbaryl manufacture, was used instead of less hazardous but more expensive materials. UCC had not originally manufactured MIC in Bhopal, but used to import it from the US. In 1973, the Indian government enacted the Foreign Exchange & Regulation Act (FERA), capping foreign equity in Indian companies at 40%. An alarmed UCC which owned 60% of UCIL's shares, then proposed to the Indian government that it should start manufacturing MIC in Bhopal. In return, Carbide asked to be exempted from FERA. The exemption was granted, enabling UCC to retain majority control.



On the eve of December 3rd, 1984, **large amounts of water entered tank 610**, containing 42 tons of methyl isocyanate. The resulting exothermic reaction increased the temperature inside the tank to over 200 °C (392 °F), raising the pressure to a level the tank was not designed to withstand. This forced the emergency venting of pressure from the MIC holding tank, releasing a large volume of toxic gases into the atmosphere. The gases flooded the city of Bhopal, causing great panic as people woke up with a burning sensation in their lungs. Thousands died immediately from the effects of the gas and many were trampled in the panic. Water dissolves the gas and so many immediately put wet handkerchiefs on their faces. But a lack of widespread awareness of such simple safety rules resulted in mounting death toll.

If the gas leak from the plant produced actual and toxic impacts on the people of Bhopal, the fight for justice which ensued, aggravated and accentuated their agony for years. At the end of it all, the outcome was nothing but the biggest travesty of justice.

India articulated a new concept of *parens patriae* by which it assumed the role of litigant on behalf of all the victims under the newly formulated Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, 1985 and sued the UCC before the US court. All the claims of the Indian government were dismissed by Keenan J. on the ground of '*forum non conveniens*', meaning improper forum. The reasons cited by him were primarily that the catastrophic industrial accident in Bhopal had only a 'tenuous connection' with New York, and it would impose a considerable burden on the court system and would 'tax the time and resources of citizens'.

A corporation incorporated in the US has a wholly owned Indian subsidiary, which fails to take adequate safety measures against toxic gases stored in its premises and unleashes a human tragedy in an entire city and the US Courts easily dismisses the case as having little nexus with it!

"The Union of India is a world power in 1986 and its court(s) have the proven capacity to mete out fair and equal justice." – Keenan J., United States of America

The US Court also said that India had a “*very strong interest in the aftermath of the accident and the litigation would offer a developing nation the opportunity to vindicate the suffering of its own people within the framework of a legitimate legal system*”. Repelling India’s contention that ‘*the courts of India are not up to the task of conducting the Bhopal litigation*’, Judge Keenan further observed that “*The Union of India is a world power in 1986 and its court(s) have the proven capacity to mete out fair and equal justice. To deprive the Indian judiciary of this opportunity to stand tall before the world and to pass judgment on behalf of its people would be to revive a history of subservience and subjugation from which India has emerged.*” [1]

Surely, a very admirable stance taken by the US Courts! Its a real shame that the Indian courts failed to meet the expectations of not only a Judge sitting in an US court, but that of its own people as well.

India filed all claims not against UCIL, but against UCC, the parent company, which it contended, was the multinational operating the pesticide plant in Bhopal with full control over its management and affairs. It also took recourse to the principle of absolute liability, which has been propounded in the 1986 **Delhi Oleum Gas leak case**, [2] whereby any corporation storing hazardous substances in its factory premises would be absolutely liable for any untoward consequence. The defences taken by UCC were varied: Firstly, they argued that UCIL was an independent Indian corporate entity, not under the control of UCC. Secondly, it was argued that the principle of absolute liability was not recognized in tortious jurisprudence and hence not applicable to UCC. Thirdly, Methyl Isocyanate gas was not ‘ultra hazardous’ and even if it was so, India stored such toxic gases in profound quantities as a matter of its industrial policy. Fourthly, Indian government and the state government of Madhya Pradesh were also argued to have been equally liable.

As against the billion dollar claim, the Indian government entered into an out-of-court settlement with UCC whereby UCC agreed to pay a compensation of Rs. 713 crores to the victims and the Government agreed to drop all criminal and civil charges against the Corporation. After five years of prolonged human suffering, the Supreme Court of India finally held the UCC absolutely liable for the mass disaster, but recorded the compensation as an act of mercy ‘*for the benefit for the claimants and not as fines, penalties or punitive damages*’.

This largely reflects the utmost failure on the part of the Indian government who gave in to the influence and pressure of UCC, without the consent of the survivors whom it was representing and the judiciary who stamped its approval on an wholly unconstitutional deal. It violated the established norm ‘*criminals cannot pay their way out*’ and here UCC has done just that.

Even the statistics of the injured and the dead were manipulated. The 470-million dollar compensation was meant for only one lakh and eight thousand victims, quoted at that time by the government despite wide spread protest against this underestimation.

Eventually, the number of those affected was increased to nearly six lakhs. But the compensation money was not, so each victim got far less than they should have and there were many who did not even get a single penny. Of the Rs 713 crores, Rs 113 crores was for loss of livestock and property. The balance Rs 600 crore distributed among 5.74 lakh persons works out to about Rs 12,410 per victim on average. Moreover, shocking news reveal how people from other states went and registered themselves as gas leak victims, in order to lay their hands on the compensation package. Two installments of compensation – of up to Rs 25,000 each – have been given till now to the injured, one in 1994 and the next in 2004. No wonder, lakhs of genuine gas leak victims are still languishing, without any monetary compensation. The state machinery has utterly failed in its responsibilities. First, by striking a deal with the main accused and dropping all charges and then by failing to ensure that monetary comfort reached the needy. When the Indian government assumed charge of fighting for justice on behalf of the victims, it was hailed as a unusual move, almost laudatory. Neither could it achieve justice by nailing the accused, nor could it make use of the deal that it struck at the price of justice. It was a resounding failure of the government from all sides.

However, the Bhopal victims filed proceedings to overturn the settlement in a case that went all the way to the Indian Supreme Court. Citing inaccurate statistics for the number of dead and injured victims, the Apex court ruled in 1991 that the quashing of criminal charges was unconstitutional and that the criminal cases against Carbide, its CEO Warren Anderson, and other officials must be reinstated. The settlement amount was allowed to stand. In characterising this judgement as “full and final settlement”, Union Carbide and Dow carefully avoid mentioning the reinstatement of criminal charges. They were not mentioned even in Dow’s SEC filings during the process of its takeover of Union Carbide.

In 2001, Union Carbide was bought by Dow Chemicals, a company with its own history



of human rights violations. It was one of the primary manufacturers of **Agent Orange**, used by the U.S. military in its **herbicidal warfare** program during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971, and faces lawsuits for manufacturing **silicone breast implants** which caused systemic health problems and a soil fumigant with a chemical component known as **DBCP**, which caused male sterility among its workers.

As per the “Polluter Pays” principle under Environmental Law, UCC or its successor Dow Chemicals should have caused the cleanup of the toxic waste still in the factory premises. Indeed, immediately after the acquisition, Dow set aside \$2.2 billion to meet Carbide asbestos liabilities in the US. However it bluntly refuses to accept Carbide’s liabilities in Bhopal – or even admit that they exist. According to Dow, the agreement with the Indian government clearly absolves it of all its liabilities of UCIL. Dow’s sensitivity for a third world country like India was **best summed** by its PR officer Ms. Kathy Hunt in response to the fact that the average ‘lifetime compensation’ for each victim has been reduced to \$500, *"You can't really do more than that, can you? \$500 is plenty good for an Indian."*

By not forcing Dow to take responsibility for cleanup of UCC’s crime, the Indian government has managed to fail the expectations of its people. Not for a single instance, did Indian government push for enforcement of the “Polluter Pays” principle by Dow. Instead, to please Dow Chemical, a special **Technical Committee under a Government Task Force**, directed 40 metric tonnes of the lethal waste from the Bhopal factory to be disposed of in an incinerator and storage facility at Pithampur, near Indore, run by Ramky Enviro Engineers Limited. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has made several adverse remarks during its inspections about leaking drums, spillages, unscientific evaporation ponds and the general shoddiness of the Pithampur facility and also noted that the Tarapur village is right next door. When the court ordered that surface hazardous material at the Bhopal factory should be packed and put away somewhere safe, Ramky hired some local labourers and got barefooted men and women, with accompanying children, to handle and sweep all the waste – without even the charade of protective gear.

"Lucky were those who died on that day; the one's who were left to die a slow and painful death are living nightmares everyday" – a survivor

In the whole epic that is Bhopal Gas tragedy, there is just one entity which can be assailed as guilty. It was not the Union Carbide Corporation whose callous attitude towards Indian lives marked the lives and times of innumerable victims with sufferings; it was also not Dow Chemicals, which inherited only the assets and liabilities in the US, but steadfastly refused to acknowledge the aftermath of the disaster. It is only the Indian Government along with all its machineries, which is guilty. It is guilty of breaching the fiduciary duty which was reposed by hapless victims to represent them in the trials. It is guilty of extracting only a nominal amount as compensation package and agreeing to withdraw all charges in exchange. It is guilty of letting the main perpetrator go scot-free under State hospitality. It is guilty of not ensuring a reasonable compensation for all the genuine victims. It is guilty of reducing the charges from ‘culpable homicide amounting to murder’ to mere ‘death caused by negligence’, a section meant to book accused in car accidents. It is guilty for bending so low before the multinational corporations that they

have flagrantly violated all norms while doing business in India. It is guilty of putting international investment before lives of its own citizens.

"You can't really do more than that, can you? \$500 is plenty good for an Indian." – Ms. Kathy Hunt, PR Officer of Dow Chemicals

Even before the Bhopal horror has sunk in, India is pushing for a potentially dangerous Nuclear Civil Liability Bill that excuses foreign suppliers from all criminal liability and seeks to cap their maximum financial liability at Rs 500 crore in the event of a nuclear disaster. It further states that potential victims will have no right to take foreign suppliers to court and only the Indian operator — Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) — can sue the suppliers if it so wishes. It allows victims only 10 years within which to make claims and it deems that all nuclear disaster related litigation will be outside the purview of ordinary Indian courts, claims and civil cases will only be entertained in a Nuclear Damages Commission.

With India relentlessly pursuing such a law, there will be no end to the nightmare that started in 1984. India shall always remain guilty of its own people.

All images from the Internet; copyright belongs to the respective authors

- 1. The deserted Union Carbide factory in Bhopal*
- 2. Jars containing deformed fetuses preserved from the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster at the forensic department of Gandhi Medical College in Bhopal*
- 3. Protestors on the road against Dow's reluctance to clean up toxic waster in Bhopal*

[1] Upendra Baxi, *Inconvenient Forum and Convenient Catastrophe- The Bhopal Case*, 69 (1986)

[2] *M C Mehta v Union of India*. The Supreme Court propounded this principle in a case of gas leak in a Delhi factory, mainly keeping in mind the ongoing Bhopal litigation.

A Future (Not) So Bright

Neha

The following post is in the form of a Limerick. Limerick is a humorous, often risqué, verse of five lines with the rhyme scheme aabba.

One day I told my father: "I want to achieve instant success.
I am tired of getting sidelined; power is all I want to possess."
He asked me one question,
Whether I want to be a politician
Maybe yes, but tell me more about the Indian political process.

Father said:

People like LPY, did [Fodder Scam](#) and made a big name.
During this time, [the mother of 9 kids](#) played political game.
Now Railway ministry salutes him,
All his scams seem so dim.
No [NK](#) or [MSY](#) can snatch his hard earned precious fame.



We have names like [VRD](#) with his actor son and director friend,
for upcoming movie publicity, he walked on the terrorized land.
Though his act took away his chair,
But the damage did quickly repair
With The high command giving him power and a strong ministry stand.

A criminal with lifetime imprisonment can still [rule](#) the state,
All Evidences against him fail miserably on the judgment date.
Though his crime roots are deep,
But Judiciary is his personal keep,
Acquittal is the only outcome; at any cost and at any rate.

These are but a few names in the endless list;
Their Mantra is simple - cut a throat or bend a wrist.
Progeny of a powerful generation
are in the very best position.
who follow old footsteps and become another chauvinist.



Now I am thinking,

Indian Politics is the best option, for my father is a minister.
He committed a murder, a few rapes and became sinister.
That's the required qualification,
To enter into politics profession,
I will not have to pass any exam or clear any semester.

I already have a few molestation cases booked under my name
Murder will be accomplished, if opposition plays a dirty game
I am now going my father's way
Oppositions, better start to pray
I am going to rule the state and get away with all the shame.



The Reality

This is the scenario of our country's politics even today.
Murderers and criminals rule the states; find their safety way.
Success is all they strive to achieve
Unethical is nothing - they believe.
All they want is power-position-money, come what may.

Become a criminal and politics will welcome you with an open arm
Bigger offenses and more publicity will help you spread your charm
Your errors will be corrected
Your black money will be protected
In the name of ancestral property & farmer's land without any harm.

Mere Paas Maa Ka Interview Hai

Saurabh

It was one of those days. My editor had sent me to interview a weird personality again. It was not a problem for me, I'd done loads of interviews of variety of people from drunk superstars to sleeping beauties (!) But this was a tricky one for me. Loaded, maybe overflowing with emotion and tears, the quintessential Bollywood ki Maa was my interviewee!

I'd grown up watching Bollywood movies, but the Maa factor had always fascinated me. So I was looking forward to it as well. I reached the Haveli that she lived in and rung the bell (I was wondering if I should cry "MAAAAAA" instead!)

She opened the door in a *Tide-ki-safedi-white* saari. It got me thinking about my own mom in flashback. (maybe its the bollywood effect). She invited me in and I followed her inside into the Haveli.



Wondering how to address her I simply said, "Hi Maa" Just then she broke into tears all the while repeating her signature "Tumne mujhe Maa kaha!" at least 5 times. Oh God! this was not going to be easy!

We then started the interview. I asked her about her childhood to which I got a stunning reply. She did not have a childhood at all! She was directly born a Maa. I asked her how it was possible, to which she explained that every director wants to focus on the Hero's childhood (at least in flashback) but there was no reference to the Maa's childhood. After-all she had lived her whole life in the movies. She has no separate existence.

This was beginning to get all the more interesting. I decided to go for some serious grilling now...

Me: So how has life been for you in general? I mean you are not the usual everyday human being you know.

Maa: Believe me beta it has been tough. I've gone blind 13 times only to get back my eyesight from the lights of *Sai Baba's mandir*. Believing in God has been one of the greatest principles of my life.

Me: Oh I can imagine the agony you must have been through.

Maa: You never can. I've undergone surgeries all over the world with no time to recuperate because the next film is always waiting. Plus most of the time I was made to travel on foot, so my back hurts as hell. Its not easy being a mother you see...

Me: What do you think about Hollywood then?

Maa: Hollywood moms have the easiest life out there. Wearing Gucci and YSL and what not while I'm tied up to this white Saree all the time only because my husband had to die so that my son could live. Hollywood moms sleep around all the time. But I'm a strict Pativrata. I don't like all these things.

Me (a bit uncomfortable now): But people all over the world salute the Bollywood Maa...

Maa: Why shouldn't they? I'm one poor suffering soul who lives for others. I'm bound to be worshiped. Considering the god-forbidden-things their moms do, I'm like an epitome of purity.

Me: So true... So tell me some interesting incident from your reel life.

Maa: (smirks) As if I have a Real Life! Well once these people from a NGO crashed onto the sets to complain about my crying on screen. They said that most of the area was suffering from droughts and I was crying buckets on screen. People had even stopped crying because they couldn't afford to lose anymore water. The director had to halt shooting for two days. I was so relieved that I'd get two days off, but at that moment itself my son returned home with a tattoo that said "Mera Baap Chor Hai". Imagine my frustration, having to roam from laser clinic to laser clinic to find someone who could get rid of it, but all in vain. Finally the director decided to use it in the movie itself!



Me: (Eyebrows raised) Oh so that was how it.... Umm never mind. Lets talk about the famous Gajar ka Halwa now.

Maa: DON'T YOU DARE! You people have taken me for granted! You leave the poor me and get lost somewhere for years and then return and expect me to whip up some halwa in a jiffy? Are Gajar ka season bhi nahi hai ab to! Plus there is no sugar in the house.

Me: I was not asking you to make it.

Maa: Then it ok. These day everyone is asking me about it. So I got a little worked up. Sorry. I feel I've made more halwa in my life than the *nukkad wala halwai* himself! Sometimes he even asks if I got any surplus left!

Me: Oh OK never mind. So what have you been up-to lately? Movies are changing fast these days. You finding it easier to adapt?



Maa: Not a bit. Its been a long journey for me. These days mom's don't get much roles in movies. So I'm kinda jobless most of the time.Plus these days the director makes me wear negligees and seduce older men, which frankly I find disgusting. Before the only worry was whether my Beta will come home alive. Now I have to worry about his sexual orientation as well. I thank God if he is straight. But when I see him clinging to another guy, I see 9 months of my life go down the drain! Its not easy to swallow you see. I mean the Truth is not easy to swallow. (winks)

With these words she gets me a cup of tea. I say "Are itni kyu taklif ki" to which she get dramatic again and say "Bete ke liye banai hai. Isme taklif kaisi?" I make a mental note to be aware of potential words that may spark her emotions.

We return to the interview.

Me: Lets talk about your *Bahus* now.

Maa: (sighs) I've spent my whole life in the movies. I wonder why my sons believe I can't spot their acting... I see these gals struggling to carry of those Sarees they are wearing. Hell they can't even bend to touch my feet without showing off some or the other part of their bodies. *Jo umar bhar bikini pehente ayi ho, woh ek din mein saaree kya pehenegi!* Sometimes I think they're just in for my sons' money. But after all it is all about mere bete ki khushi. So usually I keep my thoughts to myself and agree to the proposal. *Waise bhi* they can't cook *mera wala Gajar ka Halwa!*

Me: And your Betas?

Maa: Mostly I've been blessed with good sons. Even if they go rogue during the movie, they become good at the end. *Sab bollywood ki maya hai!* But these days I'm worried. I see lot of these *vrudhashrams* running these days. Before it was not a problem. But now I fear even my sons may consider putting me in one of those. So I'm planning for the future. But its next to impossible to work out these new insurance company plans.

Me: Speaking of the future... What are your future plans?

Maa: As I told you... Films these days do not need the Maa character at all. Hell time will come when even the lead actress will become obsolete. But I haven't thought much into the future right now. Maybe I get a nice retirement and spend the rest of my days relaxing in this haveli. (Looks out of the window)



Me: Are you expecting someone?

Maa: *Mere Karan Arjun ayenge.* I had asked them to get a plumber to fix the bathroom pipes. So waiting for them. But *Mere Karan Arjun jaroor ayenge!*

Me: Last question. Do you have any message for the people of today?

Maa: *Tum to mere bete jaise ho...* Only thing I would like to say is: Stay good to your parents. Don't act in any way that would hurt them or make them repent of the time they gave birth to you. The same way, as myself, even the Earth is your mother. So take care that you do not hurt her in any way (I'm surprised how she inserted the Green element so effortlessly! Now that will win some brownie points!) *Tumne achha kiya to tumhara achha hi hoga.*

The last line touched me and I decided to follow it in my life too. Saying goodbye to Maa was not easy. She came to see me off at the doorstep and I could see tears in those eyes. Suddenly I felt my heart get heavy. I hugged her and promised her that I'll be back soon, not giving a date, making her wait, like she always does for all her sons. It had been the best interview of my life and the first thing I want to do it thank my editor for letting me do it.

BREAKING NEWS... AGAIN

Pallavi



The first call was at 4:00 am. Within an hour, every reporter worth his salt had arrived.

The chief doctor emerged, nervous.

'Sir, this is BREAKING NEWS?'

'Matter of national importance.....'

'...Our right to information'

'Do you realise We are THE MEDIA!'

The mob threatened dangerously.

'Okay!' the doctor relented.

'Its a boy. bABy Bacchhan'

CITY CITY - BANG BANG **HAMPI**

Rashmi

October 31, 2008

10:00

In a bus

The wife and I are riding a bus from Hospet to Hampi. I'm quite excited. I think choosing Hampi as our travel destination this year is a good choice. After hearing so much about the World Heritage Site from Mr. Das, the tourist in me longed to visit this quaint little town in Karnataka, India. My last visit to this country had me mesmerized and I had promised myself that I would soon return to check out the rest of this amazing country.



The journey thus far has been quite comfortable. Flight to Bengaluru, and a train to Hospet. The travel agency has put us on a tour which includes sightseeing, lunch and the guidance of a local who's already briefing us on the history of Hampi.

Two local village heads by the name Hakka and Bukka once witnessed a peculiar sight. A hare that was being chased by a hound suddenly turned fearless and dared to chase the hound right back. The surprised chiefs turned to Guru Vidyaranya for an explanation. He tells them that the spot is a very auspicious and special one and advises them to set up their village capital there. This capital soon grew into the large metropolitan of Hampi under the rule of King Krishnadeva

Raya of the Tuluva dynasty.

I found the name 'Hakka' particularly amusing as I never imagined someone to be named after a type of noodle! Hehehe. Well that's the reason I travel the world. Different countries and cultures have always fascinated me.

Looks like we've arrived at the first stop for the day, the **Virupaksha Temple!**

October 31, 2008

14:00

Eating rice

We've taken a break to have lunch. The Virupaksha Temple was brilliant indeed! It is the principal temple of Hampi and it is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is one of the main gods for the Hindus. Legend has it that this temple has been functional since the 7th century AD! This makes it one of the oldest functional temples in India. The tallest tower (called 'gopura') has horn-like structures at the apex.



Entry to all temples requires us to take our footwear off as a mark of respect to the deity. It's a good thing I was wearing socks. Bare feet on prickly stones is definitely not my thing. How easily the Indian tourists seem to manage!

One of the smaller gopuras has a dark chamber with a narrow slit in the wall. This slit lets in a ray of light which then forms an inverted image of the main gopura, by a scientific phenomenon called '*The pin hole camera*' effect. An application of physics is the last thing I expected to find in a place of worship. Impressive!

The main entrance to the temple is through a local market called the **Hampi Bazaar**. The streets are lined with little shops selling fruits, souvenirs, clothes, bags etc. There are also carts selling ice cones (called 'gola's) and coconuts! The water of tender coconut seems to be a very common thirst quencher around here! The guy pokes a straw into it and you drink right out of the coconut. It's very refreshing! My wife couldn't resist a second one.



Yup, lots of bananas around. No wonder the place is crawling with cows!

Next up was the statue of **Sasivekalu Ganesha**. Lord Ganesha is also a popular Hindu god who is the giver of knowledge. He is known to be quite a foodie and legend has it that he once ate so much that his stomach was about to burst! He caught a snake and tied it around his tummy to keep it intact.



'Sasivekalu' in Kannada (the local language) means mustard seeds. This statue is so called in comparison with a giant statue of Lord Ganesha just a bit north of this one called **Kadalekalu Ganesha** ('kadlekalu' is a type of pulse which is much bigger than mustard seeds.)



The Kadalekalu Ganesha is located in a dark chamber. I went in to take a closer look and was immediately driven out by dozens of bats!

October 31, 2008

23:00

By the bedside lamp

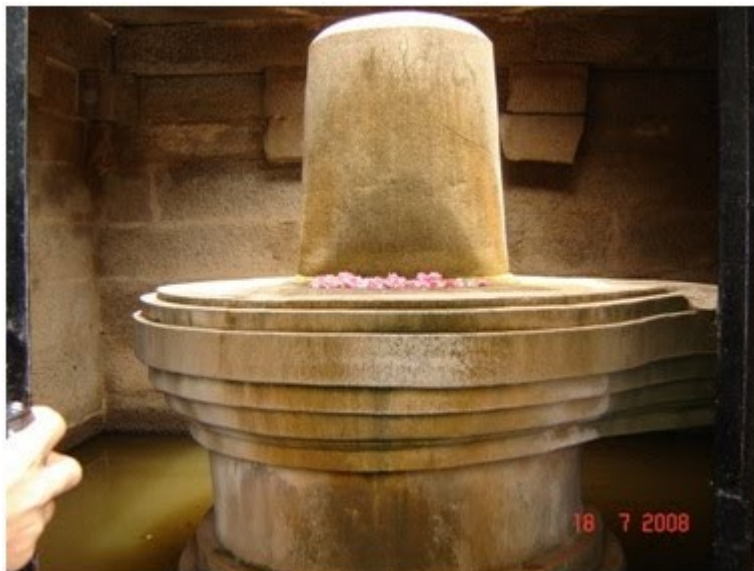
The Hemakuta Temples situated on a hill is a group of temples once again dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is a pleasant place which gives a good view of the Sasivekalu Ganesha, Lakshmi Narasimha and The Badavilinga shrines.

The **Lakshmi Narasimha** statue is the best one I have seen yet. Narasimha means half human and half lion. Narasimha is one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. In this form, the deity is depicted seated on the coils of a seven headed cobra, who heads form a hood over the deity. He is seated in a yoga posture with a supporting belt. Goddess Lakshmi, his consort, was originally sitting on his lap. But this part of the statue was destroyed during the plundering of the Vijayanagara Empire.

This statue is sometimes called the Ugra Narasimha statue, meaning the fierce or cruel Narasimha.



The **Badavilinga Temple** has a monolithic structure in its inner shrine called the 'linga' which is surrounded by a pool of water.



My wife is commenting that I spend more time writing in this diary than I do actually seeing the sights. What's the point if we don't remember the things we saw, I tell her. I definitely cannot remember the names of all these temples and structures. I can't even pronounce them!

I even learnt two Kannada words today-

How-dhu meaning "yes"

Neeru meaning “water”

Oops she’s asking me to turn off the lights. Seems annoyed. Better oblige!

November 1, 2008

10:30

Sitting on a rock

We’re at the **Hazara Rama Temple**. On the way here, the bus passed under a crop of rocks called **The Sister Rock**. Legend has it that the two rocks were actually a pair of sisters who got turned into stone because they made jokes about the place. Boy I’d better start watching what I say!



‘Hazara Rama’ means a thousand Rama. This temple has thousands of carvings on its walls that tell the story of the Ramayana, one of the epics of Hindu mythology. They’re like old-fashioned comic strips!



The guide told us that the Zenena enclosure, the Lotus Mahal and the underground Shiva Temple are a short walk from here. Have to stop writing if I want to keep up!

November 2, 2008

13:30

Window seat in the bus

The **Zenena enclosure** was the local hang out for royal women. It includes the Queen's Palace in the center. It is said that it was guarded by eunuch soldiers! The **Lotus Mahal** is a popular part of the zenena enclosure. Quite guessably, the building is shaped like a half open lotus flower. The **elephant stables** are nearby too, the parking lot for the royal elephants! It's a beautiful long building with several low arches.

After lunch we're going to see the Stone Chariot! Been waiting for this one!

November 2, 2008

19:30

Hotel Room

I'm no longer surprised why the **Stone Chariot** at the **Vittala Temple** is the USP of Hampi. It is simply spectacular! The base of the structure is sculpted with scenes of battle. It has four large wheels shaped like lotuses which actually revolve and elephants to draw it. The elephants seem tiny in proportion!



Another attraction of the Vittala Temple is the hall of **musical pillars**. Tapping these pillars produces musical sounds.

I must admit to an embarrassing incident that happened today. Seeing a number of ‘kalyana mantapa’s or marriage halls in the temples, my wife and I were reminded of our own wedding. I swooped her up and kissed her. Within seconds I heard several gasps and some mutterings (which sounded quite like curses!). Some Indian tourists glared. The tour guide was quick to reproach me, quite loudly to add to my embarrassment. “No Saar, kissing not allowed here. This is temple. Very holy place.”

Both of us turned a bright shade of pink and apologized profusely. It seems odd to me that they took offense to what we did, when there are a large number of what one could call “objectionable images” carved on walls!



Whatever it is, we don't have the right to insult the people of this country who have been very hospitable to us. It's a conservative town, and we have to respect that. So I guess our displays of affection have got to be strictly private while here!

November 3, 2008

7:30

Hotel Room

Today's going to be an entirely different adventure! We're going rock climbing!

November 3, 2008

14:00

At a café

Phew! That was some feat.

Hampi's landscape is jam-packed with boulders of all shapes and sizes. The perfect place for **rock-climbing** and **bouldering** enthusiasts. But quite a challenge for first timers like us! They made us climb relatively easier rocks as most people in the group had never done this sort of thing before.

The rock was about 40 ft in height. While climbing the rock, there was a possibility of slipping and falling along the way. So a rope was tied to our waist and held tightly by a couple of rock-climbing experts who were positioned on top of the rock.

It was my turn. It had to be done bare foot as we did not expect to be doing this, and didn't pack the necessary shoes. Thin cracks in the rock with little to grab hold of, some steep portions that required decent strength to traverse and the mid-morning sun burning our backs made the route up the rock challenging. But I made it. I was up there on the top of the rock, perspiring and feeling proud I didn't fall! And then I felt on top of the world!

If rock climbing was up hill, then **rappelling** was down it. We were strapped into safety gear and given instructions to climb down a 120 foot tall nearly vertical boulder. Shiver me timbers!

The instructor demonstrated it for us. It was to be done backwards! A sturdy rope was fixed from the top to the bottom of the boulder. The rope had a device attached to it that acted as a brake. We had to stand backwards, clutch the device and lower ourselves to the edge. Then we had to slowly release the brake which would enable us to walk down the rock, while facing it. The amount you release the device determines how fast you go (read: slip) down. It was very important to remain perpendicular to the rock at all times, he said. That's an awful lot to remember when you're hanging on for your dear life!

It was a terrifying and hair-raising experience. Thrilling at the same time!

November 3, 2008

17:00

At the Elephant Stables

Today is the inaugural day of the grand cultural extravaganza known as the **Hampi Utsav** (Hampi Festival). The festivities last for three days and it includes performances by renowned musicians, dancers other artistes.

We came early to grab good seats to view the sound and lights show glorifying the beautiful state of Karnataka.

November 4, 2008

11:45

Watching my wife try on folkish jewels

We started off the day taking part in the **Heritage Walk** that began at the Virupaksha Temple. We were drained out of energy within a couple of hours and treated ourselves to our now hot favourite 'yell neeru' (local term for coconut water!). Later we let ourselves get distracted by the plethora of fascinating traditional items being sold and exhibited.

Hey what's that over there. Elephant rides! Magnificently decorated elephants with a large ornate seat attached to its back. We went on a camel ride the last time we were in India. This time it's going to be an elephant ride!

Absolutely loving the carnival so far!

November 4, 2008

19:00

Watching a procession

Our last evening in this mythological town. We're completely enchanted by the colourful procession of men dressed as kings, elephants, soldiers, scenes from mythology and the like!

November 4, 2008

23:00

Back at the hotel

The parade was followed up by a beautiful classical dance performance. The costumes, the colours and the music were all something we had never witnessed before. India is truly a country with such cultural diversity that it's amazing!

Dozens of local and national musicians and singers belted out all kinds of music. Slow and classical melodies to upbeat folk music. It was brilliant! The musical instruments they used (the veena, the tabla, the violin, the mandolin, the flute) were out of this world. The wonderful sounds were so soothing that it makes heavy metal that I normally listen to seem like noise!

The reviving of visual senses was not far behind. Next in the programme was dramatic performances recounting fables of mythology and emperors. The extreme costumes, expressions and moves were beautifully executed!



It's been a fantastic and immensely tiring day. Too bad we have to leave tomorrow and miss the grand finale of the Utsav. Better get some sleep.

November 5, 2008

12.00

Watching rushes of countryside

We're travelling by train to the city of Mumbai, the last leg of our itinerary. The bright and colourful images of the festival interspersed with images of majestic ruins of a royal kingdom are running through my mind as we leave the exotic capital of the Vijayanagara Empire.



The Domestic Olympics

Sudhakar

It's a wonderful morning in Suburbia. The Summer Sun is only just up and the stage is perfectly set up for the Weekend Edition of The Domestic Olympics. A very warm welcome to all our dear readers who have joined us from all corners of the world. We are coming to you live from a random household in Suburbia, the venue for today's games. I am your friendly neighborhood Commentator, and this is The Domestic Olympics.

We'd love to have included a logo for the games, but our players keep adding a new 'ring' to the games each day. Jokes aside, this one should be one hell of a Tournament. The Domestic Olympics is one of the oldest sporting events on the face of this planet. There are many versions of these games, played everyday across the world. Our players today, in a way, symbolize all the married brave Men and Women of the planet, who fight it out each day to co-exist. Here's our tribute to all of them.

Here's a quick pre-game analysis of our players.



Previous games have seen Her routing the competition by relentlessly overpowering Him in the games and winning quite comfortably. Will today's result be different? I have a gut feeling it would. So without further delay let's start off with the Tournament. Here we go...



And we're off. The alarm goes off sharp at 6.30 in the morning to kick off the contest. He and She are fast asleep and the annoying alarm attempts to bring them out of their dream world. This is tense... Both of them reach out to find the alarm, but fail. They prod each other to find and shut it off. But both are unmoved. The alarm continues on with its annoying cacophony. This is the real test, to see who can withstand it. Nothing happens for a while, and then... she relents and wakes up. Is this His break? She seeks out the noise maker, hits the stop switch, sees the time, and with a realization that she can have no more of her sleep anymore, wakes up. She tries to wake Him up, but he doesn't move. She switches off the AC, draws the curtains, and turns on the light... But He sleeps... He wins the first event **1-0**. 😊 He is off to a flyer.

This event involves our players to fetch the sachets of milk from the gate along with the day's paper. A relatively easy sport compared to the rest of the games, this is usually made difficult by the sleepy, half-paralyzed state our players usually are in after the first game.

He totters out of the bed making immense effort to reach the couch in the living room. He switches on the TV, when She yells at Him from the kitchen to 'fetch' it. He tries to drown it out by increasing the TV volume. She makes an appearance, and pulls out her best move. Hands on hips and a mean stare directed at Him. He switches off the TV instantly. But in a swift move, He clutches his stomach,



distorts his face, looks at the toilet, looks at Her, and pleads with an almost choking tone, “2 minutes?”. Nice... He deftly avoids the task, dashing into the toilet, staying there for the next half hour or so. She shakes her head, and goes on to complete the game. He wins this handsomely. **2-0** to Him. 😊 He is on a roll.



He used to excel at this sport in his college days, and when he was a bachelor. But ever since He graduated to being a husband, his skills at this event have waned down considerably, to a point where he now lacks them in good measure. She, having lost out at the first two events, wants to win this one real bad.

She orders him into the kitchen, and asks him to help her out. Helping out, usually means, running the food processor, cutting vegetables, lighting the stove, making *rotis* and so on. Clearly cooking is not His forte. The jar of the food processor is loose, and the tomato pulp spills out to the kitchen wall. Oops, that’s going to come back to bite him sometime in the future. 😊 The cut

vegetables, hardly look cut at all. She shows him how one slice of his can be further cut down to four more slices. He doesn’t care, he tells her that he’d rather be watching TV than being an ‘overhead’ to her. He burns the roti to prove his point and almost scores 3-0. But She is onto him in a flash. She tells him, that it doesn’t matter if he burns the food, because he’ll have to eat it anyway. A smart move. I think that has scared him. She opens her account impressively. But He still leads **2-1**. Closely fought out this one.

Trying to make amends for his loss in the last round, He starts off cleaning in style. He dusts off a little spec of dust on his 32 inch LCD TV, cleans off the remote and settles down on the couch, proclaiming a successful completion of the event. But She has other big plans. She hands him a feather duster, a Vacuum cleaner, a mop and points to all corners of the house. He is devastated. He argues that weekends are for resting. She just does not listen. After all She has a perfect record in these games. So He goes about, with a long face, dusting, vacuuming and mopping



the house, under the strict supervision of a smiling Her. And there's the equalizer. **2 all** folks. This one's going to be tight.



After the first few ferociously fought out contests, we reach a more relaxing Eating round. The burnt *rotis* that He had made along with some delicious gravies made by Her have been served. Having been warned that He might have to eat the *rotis* he would make, He managed to do a decent job in the Cooking round. Except for a few black, burnt *rotis*, the rest of them seem fairly edible. But what's this? In a wonderful exhibition of sportsmanship, She takes pity on Him and declares that He wouldn't need to eat the burnt ones after all. He is happy. So happy that he gobbles up half the food on his plate, before She has even finished serving. And soon enough, Her hands are on her hips again, and the stare is back.

He is told to eat slowly. He frowns. It is against his nature, but right now that doesn't matter. He has only 2 choices now – food or no food. And he cannot afford the latter. She takes an amazing lead **3-2**.

This is His favorite sport. He was born for this. He turns on his full HD, LCD TV, connected to his 5.1 Home Theater, and finds that the match is on. He grabs a can of his favorite drink and a big bag of chips and sits himself in front of the big screen. This is the perfect way to unwind, after going down consecutively in 3 previous games. He puts his leg up, sips his drink, and is about to say "What a life...", when She comes in. She smiles at him (oh no, that's a sign of impending doom) and asks him if she can watch the rerun of Indian Idol? He tries to explain that it's a very crucial match, but She says, its her favorite singer's turn. He tries to protest, but that sad, dejected, frowning face of her's, makes him give up.



This is his favorite sport alright. But that doesn't mean he can win it always. **4-2** in Her favor.



With the TV round gone down, He has nothing more to do than to go to his dear old laptop. With the live match now being a distant possibility, the live scorecard is what He will have to do good with. He checks his Facebook page where a friend has posted an interesting video. He plays it, only to be interrupted by Her. He thinks She wants to check out her farm on Facebook, and proclaims that Facebook is down. But oh no.. That was a googly there, She says the sound from the video is interfering her show on TV, and asks him to get his headphones. He quietly acknowledges. And then when she sees how beautiful the guy on Indian Idol is singing, she gets excited and yells out to him. But He is on headphones and can't

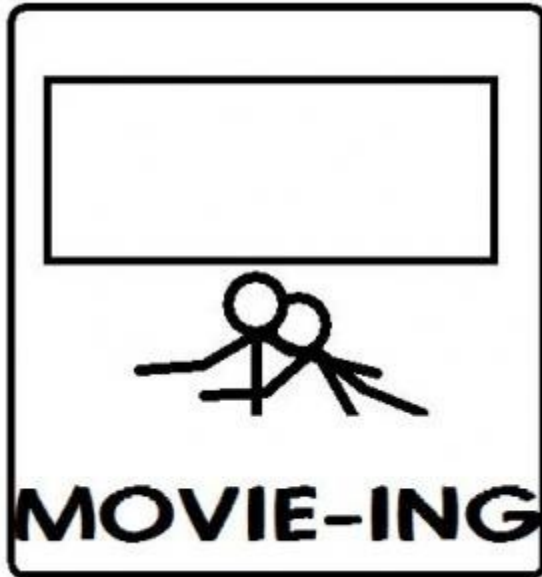
hear her.

So a frown, a stare and an angry yell later, the laptop is turned off and He has no other choice than to watch Indian Idol, with the permission to check the score for a few seconds during the Commercial breaks. **5-2**, she's winning today as well. Can He stage a comeback?

They are at a Super Market shopping for groceries. He goes straight to the snacks section and picks up a trolley full of snacks. She shakes her head, picks a couple of packs from it, and sends him to keep the rest of them back. Ouch. That would've hurt. And she picks up packets of groceries from the shelf like a scientist picking up chemicals for a life saving experiment. She picks three different brands, compares prices, looks at offers, and then keeps all of them back saying they don't really need that. Boy this is real slow. He is losing his patience and it shows up on his face. Will he lose it? Tense moment guys, anything can happen here. Wow. This is a masterstroke. She cools him off by buying him a pack of his favorite drink. He is happy and She continues with her shopping. This is going to take a while. Let's break for commercials.



Alright we are back. This is a totally one sided match today. **6-2**. And She has won it.



We are reaching the business end of the games, and we have the Movies event to go. Our players have settled into the couch and have decided to watch a movie at home. This should be exciting. He pops in a no-brainer action flick and sits back. She protests almost immediately and the DVD is got rid off. Next is a Bollywood Rom-Com suggested by Her. He agrees at the prospect of watching the 'hawt' actress on screen, and possibly ogle at an *Item Number*. The movie continues, but He is slowly getting bored of it. The actress does not have too much of a role and is mostly fully clad. Oh no. Poor Him. He protests now, and another change of DVD is on the cards. After intense debate, a horror movie is agreed

upon, and is soon popped out after She gets scared in the opening scene. And finally a classic movie is played, and He has no other option but to agree. After all, She, although being his competition, is also the love of his life. 7-2 it is then.

And as the movie chugs on towards the climax, reaches the final part, there is a power cut. Now this is a new twist to the tale. What is He going to do? Will She go wild now? But wait. What's happening there? They drag their chairs to the balcony under a splendidly silver moon. The gentle cool breeze seems to be carrying romance in the air. And He and She are sitting there embraced and enjoying every bit of the moonlit, night. All the competition of the games seems to have gone away. The cut throat screams of one-upmanship seem to have been replaced with gentle whispers of "I Love You." She tells Him that she was sorry to make him work today, and promises to do all the work herself tomorrow. He says that He doesn't want anything at all, than to be with her tomorrow. Wow. That's cute. This calls for a point for each of them. The scores are now 8-3.



I'm just getting news that this renewed love between our competitors has led to the announcement that there will be no more competition going forward. He and She, in a carefully worded announcement have declared ceasefire. They will not be competing anymore.

So would this mean that there would be no more games from tomorrow? Are we witnessing the last edition of The Domestic Olympics? Will all this excitement cease to exist henceforth? Well it looks like that. Here's wishing our dear He and She a wonderful future ahead.

Before we go, let's talk to our players. He, what do you have to say about your performance today?

He: "Well I started off real well. 2-0 up against her is a rollicking start. But I failed to capitalize on that momentum. But all's well that ends well. It was a delight to lose to my sweet-heart. Full marks to Her. Love you."

Commentator: "That was sweet. She... happy?"

She: "Oh Yes, its always been. It was, is and will always be a delight to win. I mean He is a sweetheart..."

He: "Will always be...? Darling I thought we will not be competing anymore?"

She: "Oh yeah yeah. My bad, darling... Love you. So like I was saying He is an absolute sweetheart. He almost shook me up when he took a 2-0 lead. But then winning has sort of become a habit now. 😊 But darling, I must say the *burntrotis* were truly hilarious."

He: "Hilarious, darling?"

She: "Oh yeah. In a cute sort of a way. I was hoping, you would learn it after all these days, but..."

He: "Oh ho ho.. hold on, I did it on purpose, dear ma'm."

She: "Agreed.. But even if you had tried, it would still have been burnt, my dear."

He: "Oh yeah? Atleast I don't put my hands on my hips and stare to get things done."

She: "Of course... You'd rather hide in the toilet, isn't it?"

He: "That's it. Me letting you win, is going to your head?"

She: "Excuse me... Letting me win? You are crazy."

Commentator: "Err guys..."

He: "I am? Let's see. Tomorrow, the games continue."

She: "Sure about it? Can you survive another humiliating defeat?"

He: "We'll see who loses. Bring it on..."

Commentator: "Aww Come on guys... That was unsportsmanlike.... Ouch! That hurt.... Why are you guys hitting me?... Oh no not there... Time out guys..."

That's one painful way of bringing the games to an end. The Olympic Night 'fights' will continue into the night, and I've decided not to play peacemaker. But the good news coming out of this commotion is that the games will continue tomorrow. Tomorrow is a new day, and the next games should be super fun.

We wouldn't be meeting next time, because frankly I've had enough. I do hope someone with a strong voice and stronger bones, meets you in the next edition. This is your dear commentator signing off. We would like to thank our sponsors for helping us bring this to you. Hope you had as much fun reading this, as much we had presenting this to you. Good bye. God bless.

Kill or Co – Exist?

Print media vs. Electronic media

Kanagu



Are they fighting it out against each other? It does seem so on the face of it. But look a little closer and you will find that it is not really the case! Print and electronic media – Each has its own distinct set of readers and viewers. Very often, a common subset of readers. But more importantly, each media has its unique advantage and disadvantages.

Back to basics – Let us be clear on WHAT is media? *Media is a tool which is used to store and deliver information.*

Print media – An Overview:

What comprises Print media? Only newspapers? Certainly not! Besides newspapers, an entire gamut of magazines, books and anything that propagates information to people falls under the broad category of print media. Print media presents information in the form of news, editorials, stories, analysis and biographies.

Believe it or not,

- Print media has been around for more than two centuries!
- It played a very crucial role in changing the lives of people by propagating bold News and Views
- Every nation's freedom, people movements and revolutions after the 18th century is rather inseparable from the success of its newspapers and other print media
- Newspapers became an integral part of people's lives
- And till date, media is the mirror of what happened over the last couple of centuries and will simply continue to be so.



Electronic media – An Overview:

Electronic media is fairly recent, and started with the invention of the motion picture camera and Radio. The biggest outcome of Radio was that people started to receive news updates almost as soon as the event happened and did not have to wait until the evening or next day to read all about it!!



Technology has its costs. So Radio and other electronic media were not as cheap as the newspapers. Understandably, it took some time for the media to be accessible to the masses and reach a wider range of people.

The most astounding aspect of electronic media is, it grew rapidly from one form to other. From radio, it moved on to television, and more recently the Internet has invaded every home and office and *virtually* rules the world (pun unintended :)) !

Each of these forms of electronic media started as very an expensive invention, but then went into mass production and become an irreplaceable companion of humans.

Electronic media made possible, the dream of watching LIVE – an action that is happening at the other side of the world!!

Print media – The current situation:

Worldwide, the number of newspapers in daily circulation is gradually falling. According to Audit Bureau of Circulations (2009), of the 52 editions of various English dailies in India that were surveyed, only a mere 7 registered a higher circulation compared to the results of the previous survey.

The reason – Internet and television usage!

People are not ready to wait to read the news AFTER 24 hours, when it is READILY AVAILABLE on the internet or television, and that too, with graphic pictures and videos!

Coming to think of it, many of the newspapers have smartly accustomed themselves to the present situation by hosting a parallel internet site with latest news updates.

The growth of Magazines has not been affected much, as this media is more specialized. Therefore, readers who are interested in that field are still ready to spend money to read it!

Again, sales of Books, has not been affected by the electronic media.

It is interesting to note, however, that the Internet is playing an important role in increasing readership through online bookstores, as these reduce the pain of a customer to travel to a physical bookstore to buy a book.

Electronic media – Current situation:

As is always the case with electronics, introduction of a new product results in the old one becoming obsolete!!

Television & Radio: When the ‘television’ was available at an affordable price, it quickly replaced the radio. The rise in internet usage, however, hasn’t provided enough challenge to television as the latter still possesses some unique characteristics that cannot be provided through internet.

Another main advantage of a television is its simplicity. Unlike the internet (where the user needs to be technically knowledgeable about operating a computer), on Television, everything from news to documentaries is available at the simple click of a button!!

Internet: Now, the growth of **internet** in India in the recent years is alarming – there is more than 100% growth every year!!

The last 10 years have shown a great leap – from 2 million internet users in year 2000 to 50 million users by 2010!

It will definitely be on the upswing in the coming years too, considering

1. the increasing youth population in India
 2. the very important fact that Internet has started to reach out to rural areas.
- And as you know, the Internet is highly interactive, thereby increasing its appeal.



Print and Electronic media – A comparison:

| Aspect | Print Media | Electronic Media | Which media has the upper hand? |
|------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Affordability | Very cheap. News can't be bought in any other medium for just 2 rupees! | Much more expensive (hardware and software) compared to the newspapers and magazines. | Print media |
| News delivery | Rather delayed! News is at least 8 hours 'stale' by the time the paper is in the hands of its reader! | Instantaneous. Real-time! Faster than fast-food J | Electronic media |
| Content | Most of the time a complete view on the news item, covering all possibilities. | Comparatively, there is often a lack of in-depth analysis of an event. | Print media |
| Space constraint | To store all the news in the newspaper or magazine for future | All it needs is the lap of the user as all the details are stored in | Electronic media |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|------------------|
| | reference, a lot of space is required. | hard disk or some server. | |
| Accessibility | Easily accessible (Even the smallest town will have some newspaper or book) and can be taken anywhere without much effort | Requires a lot of effort and also requires other features like Wi-Fi to be connected everytime. | Print media |
| Interaction/Participation of common people | Almost nil, except for letter to editors. | Highly interactive. Huge participation of people, with their thoughts in blogs and in the form of comments and polls in news sites on each event | Electronic media |
| Concern for the environment | Lots of trees are cut down for paper. The only reprieve is they can be recycled. | Power wastage and there is no proper e-waste management. | Neither! |

The Way forward:



Electronic media *seems* to be poised to rule in the following years.

Electronic media – Internet: The common man is going to embrace the Internet just like he/she has embraced television. The resources available on the internet are drastically



improving every single day, with millions of people contributing new thoughts, insights and information.

Electronic media – Television: Though Television cannot update itself more in the future, it will not go out of fashion, because it is the prime entertainment and knowledge provider for this generation and the ones to come.

Print media: Print media will continue in the same fashion as one can't circulate an edition of paper every hour with updated news. Neither will there be a level playing field, as established newspapers will try to form an entry

barrier to new players. Magazines and books will continue to thrive, perhaps without as much success as in the past.

So is it the end of the print media?

Yes. But ONLY If,

- Every individual can afford to buy a television or computer with internet connection
- Every reader/viewer is tech savvy enough to operate the electronic media (eg., internet)
- Uninterrupted electricity and internet service is available in even the remotest village
- People find pleasure in pressing the next button in an e-book reader to turn a page rather than turning a page on their own in a printed book.

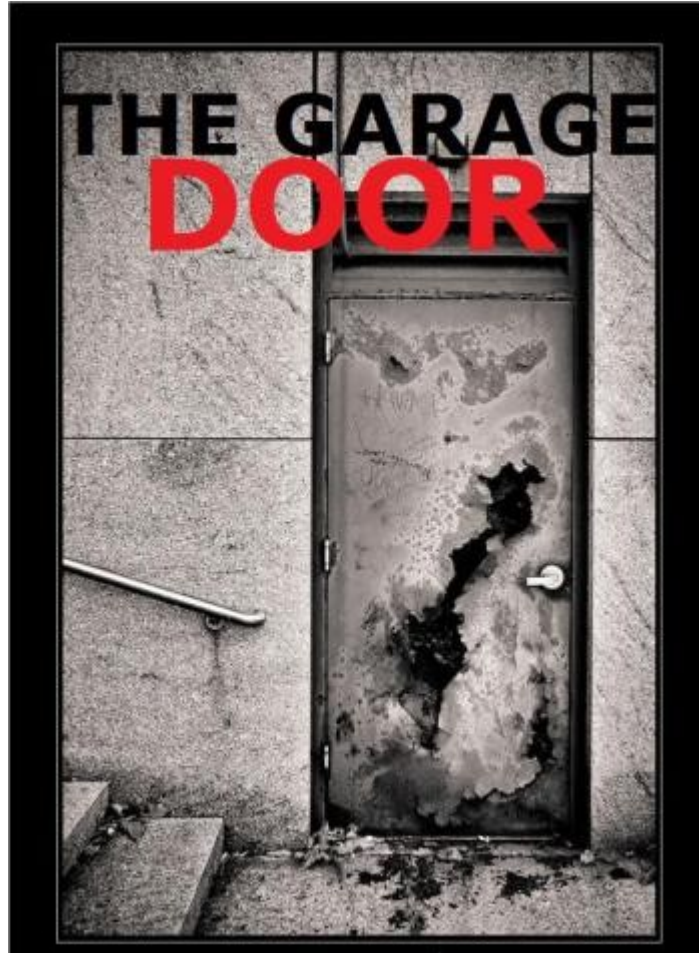


So as you can imagine, none of the above seems likely to happen in the near future 😊

Therefore, until the above can be a Reality, print media will definitely survive, albeit without as much glory as it enjoyed in the earlier centuries.

CRIME FICTION

Sudhakar



“This guy must be richer than I thought. Insanely rich.” Narendran Iyer mused to himself, as he nervously rested his old legs on the comfortable couch in the middle of a huge hall, of the palatial bungalow, sipping quietly on to a hot cup of tea, all of which, belonged to the affluent and insanely powerful Rajan family of South Chennai. The Rajans were a well to do, and an equally notorious family in Chennai. They practically ruled the Real Estate scene of the city and every new deal, every new business proposal executed around the city, had to have their stamp of approval. Police, Politicians, Businessmen, were their puppets and the current Chief Minister of the state was a not so distant relative of the Rajans’. Power was their middle name. And Narendran sat there hoping for an audience with the young one of the family, Sarvesh Rajan, at his swank beach house property on the ECR. Sarvesh had a property for sale, and Narendran was interested in buying.

Narendran Iyer was getting his daughter married next month, and he felt buying a beach front bungalow would be the perfect gift to the new couple. He had made some calls, and someone had

promptly put him onto Sarvesh. He had fixed an appointment for Sunday at the Rajan Home. And Narendran Iyer was promptly there, on time.

As Narendran sat there, extracting the last drop of the delicious, expensive hill-side tea, from the soaked tea leaves at the bottom of the cup, he was making mental calculation of the price that Sarvesh would quote. "I hope he realizes that I'm not as rich as him and sells it fairly cheap. What on Earth is he going to do with more money?" he mumbled to himself with a smile. He admired the hall he was sitting in. Marble floors and Italian furniture seemed to be in perfect harmony. A grand stairway, the likes of which he had seen only in the movies, lead to a huge portrait of Mr. Vishwendar Rajan, Sarvesh's Father, in the centre of the hall. The setting was fit for Royalty. However, the only sore point that Narendran felt, was an old, rusty, open door in a distance which seemed to be leading to the garage. "Hmmm. That doesn't look right" he strained his neck to get a better look.

"Ahem.." a young voice coughed. "Mama will be down here soon. He is taking his medicines." announced a young man to Narendran. "I hope you are comfortable Mr. Iyer? Would you care for another cup of tea?" he enquired, looking at the empty cup in Narendran's hand. "Ah, No... Thank you. I'm fine. Please ask Mr. Sarvesh to take his time." he said in the politest tone possible, putting the tea cup down on the table. "And you are...?" he hesitantly enquired to the identity of his young host.

"You are new here, aren't you?" spoke the young boy, not more than 18 year old. His new, juvenile, sprouting moustache was the only counter argument to his eyes, which shone with an intensity much ahead of his age. His casual T-Shirt over his faded jeans could have advertised him as yet any other school/college going youngster, if he hadn't properly introduced himself "My name is Karthik, Mr. Iyer. Karthik Rajan. I am Sarvesh Rajan's nephew." He introduced himself, hinting a dash of pride when he said the last line.

"Of course, of course..." continued Narendran extending his hand for a shake. "The reputation of your family shines in your eyes young man. Glad to meet you. I'm sure you'll carry on the tradition of..."

"Like I said sir, Mama will be downstairs shortly." Karthi cut short Narendran's sweet talk. Narendran nodded and sat back down. His eyes went back to the garage door again. Karthi saw that and he had to chip in. "Mr. Iyer, I think this will be the first time you'd be talking to Sarvesh Mama, isn't it?"

Narendran nodded in agreement.

"Well in that case Sir, it is my duty to educate you about certain facts and truths that you should keep in mind, before meeting Mama, lest you do not irritate him asking something that you shouldn't. You do know how much of a hot-headed character he is, don't you?" continued a solemn faced Karthik.

Narendran nodded and sat in rapt attention.

"Mr. Iyer. I shouldn't be telling you this. Its a family secret, and not many people know it. But I respect your age sir. And knowing well that you are entering into a business deal with the family, it kind of makes you family as well. Also I see that you just cannot take your eyes off the garage door. There is a

rather sinister story attached to it. And that's the reason why that door has been kept that way. A story which explains Mama's current condition." Karthik continued, with Narendran listening to him like an attentive child.

"Sarvesh Mama, had a beautiful wife and a lovely young son. They were his greatest possessions that he guarded fiercely with his life. His life revolved around these two. In short he was the happiest person in the whole wide world. Until that cold, December Morning. That cold fateful December Morning."

"What happened then young man?" asked a curious Narendran, judging the lump in the throat of the narrator.

"Mama wasn't at home, as he had to go out on a business meeting. Maami and young Jeeva were at home. Those days, there wasn't much security at home. We Rajans are peace loving people. We've never harmed anyone, and there was no reason for others to hurt us either. But clearly, the family's success and incredible growth, did not go too well with certain people in the city. A few business rivals got together, and planned to get rid of Mama. Three men their faces covered, armed with sickles and knives, sneaked into the bungalow to bump off the indestructible Sarvesh Rajan. He wasn't home, but his family was. These innocent looking walls have been witness to a sinister and barbaric act that cannot be put down in words. They killed Maami and the innocent little Jeeva in that very garage. The police later reconstructed the events of that night. They dragged Maami by her hair through these stairs and murdered her in the garage." he choked. "I can not even imagine the coldness in the heart of a man to look at those innocent eyes of a 5 year old, and then see the light of life fading away from them. They were Barbarians Mr. Iyer. Demons. That innocent looking garage, Sir, has been witness to a gory past." said a choking Karthik, pointing out to the open door.

"Who would do such a thing to a family?" Narendran shook his head.



"They never found out. There was absolutely no evidence left. The top sleuths of Police landed here, and carried on their investigation for months. They found absolutely nothing. The Rajan family hasn't taken it lightly either. We still have people trying to sniff out the orchestrators of such a gruesome act. And believe me they will be found. And that day, I hope, Mama will go back to being normal from his present condition. That incident affected Mama's mental health in a way none of us

could imagine. Most people don't know this sir, but the man you are going to meet today is not in perfect mental health."

Narendran jumped from his seat.

“Relax Sir. He is not like what you think. He is perfectly normal in every sense. Except that he has not come to terms with the loss of the love of his life, yet. Schizophrenia you see. He keeps looking at that rusty garage door every day and every night, expecting his lovely wife to walk back through the door, with his baby in her hand, smiling at him. We have tried explaining to him, but he gets insanely angry when we try to. His medication has been increased of-late, and that is why he doesn't make as many public appearances as he used to. My Uncle is ill Sir. I hope you treat him with a respect that an ailing man commands. Please do not ask him anything that might hurt him. Please.” Karthik said with tears in his eyes.

Narendran wiped away his tears and said, “Do not worry young man, God is watching. He'll bring the evil people who've done this to your family, to justice. I know that for sure. And I'm intensely grateful to you, to have shared this grief with me. Do not worry Karthi. The Rajans will see this through.”

Just around that time, a man in his thirties, with unkempt hair and an overgrown stubble, wearing a spotless white dhoti and shirt, descended down the stairs. Karthik wiped his eyes, and addressed him, “Mama. This gentleman is here to see you.”

Narendran clasped his hands, stood up and welcomed Sarvesh Rajan, multi-millionaire, business magnet, Real Estate king and lately the face of the Rajan family. He usually kept a low media profile, but was the most approachable, and the most soft spoken member of the Rajan clan. He had heard stories of his kindness and yet ruthless business acumen of the man. And yet the dark glimpse of the man's history, made him look at him slightly differently. It was a stark reminder that he was human after all. Beyond the aura of royalty, there existed a man who had lost what he had most cherished. A man who wasn't well. Then in a minute his eyes turned pensive.

“Hello Mr.Iyer. Sorry to keep you waiting. They say I'm not too well, you see.” Sarvesh extended his hand to Narendran.

“Not at all sir. My pleasure.” Narendran shook his hand.

“Would you like to see the bungalow now? It's quite close. My secretary will accompany you. We can talk business after you see the property.” Sarvesh offered.

“That would be really great. Sure.”

“But I hope you don't mind waiting a couple of minutes. I usually ask my wife to fetch the keys. Silly tradition you see. She's my lucky charm.” Sarvesh chuckled with a dry laugh.

Narendran was shocked. He saw Karthik on the other side, clutching his head in despair. Narendran did not know, if he were to pity at the poor state of the man, or humor him by accepting to stay for a while expecting someone who would never return.

“Err...” He muttered.

“It won’t be long Mr. Iyer.” Sarvesh explained pointing to the garage. “She’s in there. You see. Little Jeeva is in there as well I think. Should be out any moment.” he continued, looking gingerly at the door.

Narendran was devastated to see the plight of this man. Why did God choose good men for such a plight, he wondered. He said a silent prayer for the man. He hoped he would realize his loss soon.

“There they are...” cried Sarvesh.

Narendran felt, it wasn’t right for him to stay there anymore, so he started to rise from his seat, when a faint sound of muffled footsteps came from the open door. He sat up with a fright. He turned towards the garage as fast as his body would let him to. What he saw, shook him out of his wits. To his horror, he saw a lady in a red saree, with a baby in her arms, walking out of the door.

“There, see. There they are.” Sarvesh repeated pointing out and breaking into fits of cough.

Narendran looked at Karthik who reached his Uncle’s shoulders and held him softly with grief in his eyes swelling up with tears. Couldn’t the boy see the figures there. Was he sharing the visions of that sick man sitting across him. Was he making him sick as well. Narendran’s heart started beating faster. He rose from his seat and darted out in a flash, fear writ large on his face, with a surprised Vaidi looking at him. Narendran ran as fast his legs could take him, with Sarvesh yelling “Mr. Iyer...? Sir? Hello...”

“There. That patch of dust on your shirt looked hideous.” said Karthik, who dusted off the shoulders of his Uncle’s shirt.

“What’s wrong with him Karthi?” asked Sarvesh.

“Nothing Maama. Nothing at all.” Karthik continued, as he traced the stumbling figure disappear from the room, from the bungalow, and with the sound of a car engine revving up, he figured, from the locality. The man had gone cuckoo, and Karthik cracked a sly smile. He walked towards the portico, a thousand thoughts riding his head on what Mr. Narendran Iyer would be feeling at this point, when suddenly he was startled by a lady in red saree, with a kid in her hand, reaching out to his shoulder.

“Maami... You scared the living daylights out of me.” shrieked Karthi to a beautiful, smiling lady in her late twenties, with a smiling baby in her arms. His aunt walked in with a bowl of unfinished food, and young Jeeva licking the food off his lips.

“There you are. Where were you guys by the way? And what were you doing in that garage?” Sarvesh had all the enquiries directed at his coy wife.

“You know how Jeeva is, don’t you? He and his fussy eating habits are driving me crazy. Your son will only have his meals in your Toyota Corolla, see. And that is why, our garage has sort of become his dining room. How is your cold? Did you take the pills? And Karthi, who is that poor old man who ran away from the house like he had seen a ghost?” asked Sarvesh’s wife.

“Oh, that’s nothing Maami. Just some poor old guy, who I guess was suffering from some mental ailment. Guess the he had one of its mental breakdowns here. Poor thing.” explained Karthik with a glint in his eyes.

“Oh that’s so sad. God bless him.” said his Aunt, as she continued, “Karthi close that wretched garage door now, we should get that lock fixed soon. And someone get that rusty door changed please. It looks quite frightening”

Karthik was more than happy to oblige.

18 year old Karthik Rajan was a student of English Literature. Apparently, Crime Fiction, just happened to be his forte...