

it's not all bad
6TH APRIL, 2020

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food for thought (home-cooked)
beyond the virus



Whether it is making art [like this](#) or refraining from panic buying like Raja Ravi Varma's [Ahalya](#) try to find some silver linings in this pandemic.

If you, like us, are stuck in quarantine (or self-isolating, as you probably should), there's a good chance that you have **(a)** checked you preferred COVID- 19 cases tracker no less than five times today **(b)** tried to bake banana bread and convinced yourself that it's not as bad as even your mom says it is **(c)** exhausted your Netflix-watching capacity—because we certainly have. In our pandemic-induced boredom, we decided to write this **newsletter**; and it seems that you have decided to read it. Here, you will find **some** of the **good** that is being generated by the world around us. Whether you are inspired or amused, we hope that you are, at the very least, **entertained**.

*PS: If you like what you read, let us know so we can send one out tomorrow!
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reasons to laugh

From the ashes of decimated **toilet paper stock** emerges the new hope of America: **the bidet**. Bidet manufacturer Tushy reports a 10-fold [increase in sales](#), while Bromwell has seen a 300% increase in demand. Who knows, on your next trip to the US you might even find an unassuming **lota in the bathroom**— alas, one can hope!

'Take out the trash' took on a **whole new meaning** in Australia, when people took it personally and **threw out their raddi** (albeit highly comfortable) quarantine **pyjamas** for [glam outfits](#) for their daily trash disposal outing.

No N-95, **no problem**. [These people](#) got innovative with their **DIY coronavirus masks**. Will they win against the virus? Probably not. Did they **win our hearts**? Definitely. *(featured on the left)*



reasons to innovate

Using a technique called **sonification**, [MIT researchers](#) have created a **musical score** of what the **coronavirus sounds like**. In this format, each feature of the virus' protein structure has a different music signature (note, duration, volume), which might help [researchers](#) identify **antibody binding sites** faster and more intuitively than conventional methods!

Pharmaceutical advances to fight against Covid-19 largely belong to two camps: **preventative** (think vaccine) and **curative** (think drugs). Some hospitals are using a century-old technique to combine the two using the **blood plasma (containing antibodies)** of recovered patients for **compassionate use** to **cure** ailing patients unable to produce their own, like a losing army getting last-minute help from an ally. [The good news](#)? Two US FDA **approved trials** for such plasma treatments are now underway!

India has approved [rapid antibody COVID-19 tests](#) which are **faster** (15 minutes), **cheaper** (Rs. 300) and **don't** require specialist administration. This test checks for the presence of **antibodies** and a positive result can tell whether a patient is (i) currently infected or (ii) was infected and has fought off the virus. Although private labs aren't authorised to carry out the tests just yet, it is definitely a step towards the nation-wide call for **more testing**!



reasons to act

Last week, the UK extended its 250,000 volunteer target to 750,000 after **more than** 500,000 signed up to join the 'NHS Army' [within the first 24 hours](#)! The volunteers provide 'simple but vital' services like grocery and medicine delivery to vulnerable people in self-isolation. Positive action is a **give-and-take between** the govt and public— the more **initiative** we show, the more **change** we engender! To **volunteer**, check out [Project Mumbai](#)

Last night, a group of students launched [HelloNetaji](#). How it works: find your **ward**, identify your **BMC corporator**, use their sample guidelines to give them a **quick call**. Why do we love it? **Easy** to use multi-lingual tool, takes less than **5 minutes** of your time, and urges **two-way action** ("ask not what your country can do for you..." to quote JFK). **Accountability**, like charity, begins at home!

On April 2nd, a watchman from Mumbai undertook an [arduous journey](#) to care for his ailing father – **2100 kms** from Mumbai to Kashmir – **on a bicycle**. As his **journey** garnered attention and support, **agencies** stepped in to **help**. Gujarat police personnel gave him **food** to eat and **transportation** for a leg of the journey. The Central Police Force sent a team to his house and **admitted** his father into a **hospital**. Life gives you lemons, yes, but people (if you make yourself heard) can give you the **lemon squeezer**.

reasons to explore

Wishing you hadn't **thrown out your puzzles** when you were trying to Marie Kondo your life last summer? **Same**. Luckily, the **Cooper Gallery** has you covered. They publish a [new digital jigsaw puzzle](#) of a painting from their collection every day, for art and **puzzle lovers** like us (and hopefully you) to complete.

Katrina Kaif's viral **bartan** video asks us to evaluate the **impact** of this lockdown **on gender roles**. [One could hope](#) that it might inspire men to take a more **active role** in household chores going forward or at least cultivate a new-found **appreciation** for women tasked with professional and **household duties**. On the other hand, poor urban households are [witnessing gender roles being reinforced](#) – small **everyday freedoms** like making a phone call are **taken away** from women who are now **limited** to the **physical space** of their homes, still largely a **patriarchal** domain. As on almost everything else, we urge you to **observe** and **reflect** on the little changes you are observing in your **own world** and form your own view.

The **Antidote** is the [Guardian's list](#) of the five most-popular, completely **corona-free** articles on their website. Taking a cue from them, we recommend allocating a few minutes (or hours) of **corona-free time** during quarantine. It is important to self-isolate—and that includes **from** virus news!

On that note, this is **the end** of our newsletter! **Until tomorrow** (just kidding; let's hope [that trend](#) has forsaken us for good). **Stay safe!**