# its not all bad 6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2020

#### **REASONS TO...**

#### laugh (pg 1)

soaring bidet sales trash can chic mask-erade balls corona-style

#### innovate (pg 1)

a COVID chartbuster sharing-is-caring test test test!

#### **act** (pg 2)

hello netaji 'I volunteer as tribute!' miles to go before I sleep

#### explore (pg 2)

avant-garde puzzles food for thought (homecooked) beyond the virus



Whether it is making art <u>like this</u> or refraining from panic buying like Raja Ravi Varma's <u>Ahalya</u> 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 Netflixwatching 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! (WhatsApp: +91 9920510577/ email: salsan7@stanford.edu)

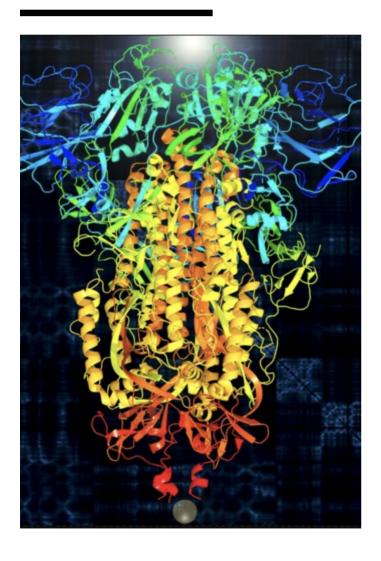


# reasons to laugh

From the ashes of decimated **toilet paper stock** emerges the new hope of America: **the bidet**. Bidet manufacturer Tushy reports a 10-fold <u>increase in sales</u>, while Bromwell has been a 300% increase in demand. Who knows, on your next trip to the US you mind 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 <u>glam outfits</u> 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)

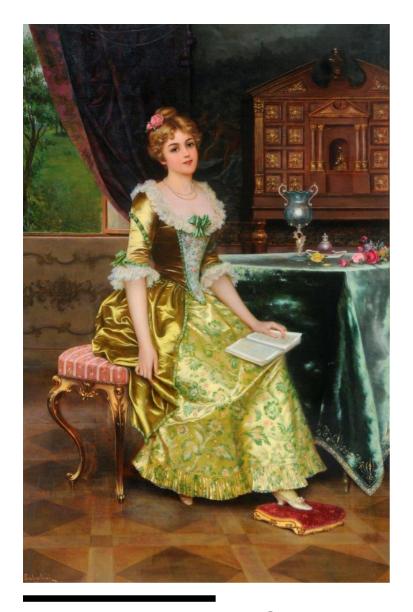


## reasons to innovate

Using a technique called **sonification,** <u>MIT researchers</u> have created a **musical score** of what the **coronavirus** <u>sounds like</u>. In this format, each feature of the virus' protein structure has a different music signature (note, duration, volume), which might help <u>researchers</u> 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 <u>rapid antibody COVID-19 tests</u> 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 <u>HelloNetaji</u>. 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 <u>arduous journey</u> 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 **foo**d 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 <u>new digital jigsaw puzzle</u> 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 <u>witnessing gender roles</u> 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 **ruminate** on the little changes you are observing in your **own world** and form your own view.

The **Antidote** is the <u>Guardian's list</u> 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 <u>that trend</u> has forsaken us for good). **Stay safe!**