

it's not all bad

16TH APRIL, 2020

ISSUE #7

REASONS TO...

laugh (pg 1)

covid-life crisis
bhoot hoon main
CFW Spring 2020

keep going (pg 1)

thanks T-Hanks
konichiwa
christ the healer

tech (pg 2)

two-in-one
embrace the distance

do (pg 2)

is it a bird? Is it a crane?
do it for the memoir
the real nerd nation



In 2006, Time Magazine's Person of the Year was: 'You,' recognising the power of user-generated content on the internet. Who will it be in 2020? Us?

Artwork: Sharanya Menon; please donate to: [Maker's Asylum](#)

"Not much, just watching gains lectures," I replied, when my friend asked what I was upto. Autocorrect had changed the word "some" to "gains." My joke about how 'gains lectures' was an apt substitute for the home workout videos we've all been watching yielded a higher-than-average success rate (three laughing emojis, to be exact); needless to say, it's been a smashing day.

The etymologist within me has reawakened – what other new words are out there? There's the eponymous 'zoom' (*verb*): to video chat using the application Zoom (often in a professional or academic context). Or the less popular 'Covideoparty' which obviously requires a 'quarantini' or 'locktail' (you decide). My personal favourite is 'Covidiot' (*noun*): someone who takes '9 baje 9 minute' to mean Diwali celebrations in April, goes outside to shame people for going outside etc (see also: *bhakt*). How will the lexicon of this crisis translate to different languages? This might be the age of 'Covidyarthi' (*noun*): a student taking online classes. Maybe 'Dettol Devta': a sanitizer- hoarding lord. For the Spanish-speaking, perhaps we'll talk of 'Coronacimientos': babies born during lockdown. It's a changing world out there, and we must equip ourselves with the words to tell its stories. If you think of any (in whatever language), or serendipitously discover them as I did, send them to us! Let the dictionary-writing begin.

reasons to laugh

Quarantine seems to have given rise to [three kinds](#) of quarantine parent: *the paranoid* (WhatsApp forwards, miracle *haldi* tonics), *the anti-boomer* ("look at this meme (pronounced mee-mee)" and "let's make a TikTok"), and *the contemplative* (takes 3 naps a day, "hear this talk by Shashi Tharoor"). Any others you can think of?

You probably saw photos of Indian policemen donning virus-shaped helmets. Turns out every culture has its own flavour of fear, and [Indonesian authorities](#) have decided to unleash the *pocong* in a bid to get residents to stay home. These mummy-esque ghosts from Indonesian folklore (in reality, volunteers covered in white fabric) are bound to terrify the bravest of souls.

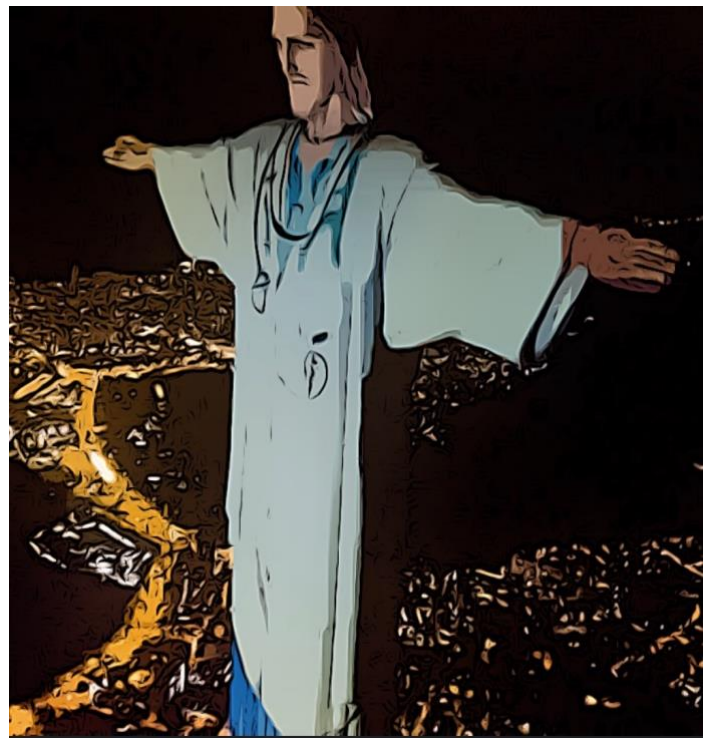
Drake says, "If a guy can't handle you in sweatpants, he doesn't deserve you in a wedding dress." Amen, sister. Corona Fashion Week Spring 2020: [sweats](#) are IN. From the 'grey sweatpants challenge' to sweats becoming acceptable office-wear, the movement has just begun. Whether you watch Rocky (and his iconic grey tracksuit) or listen to Childish Gambino's 'Sweatpants' – put on your sweats and revel in the fashion moment of the new decade.

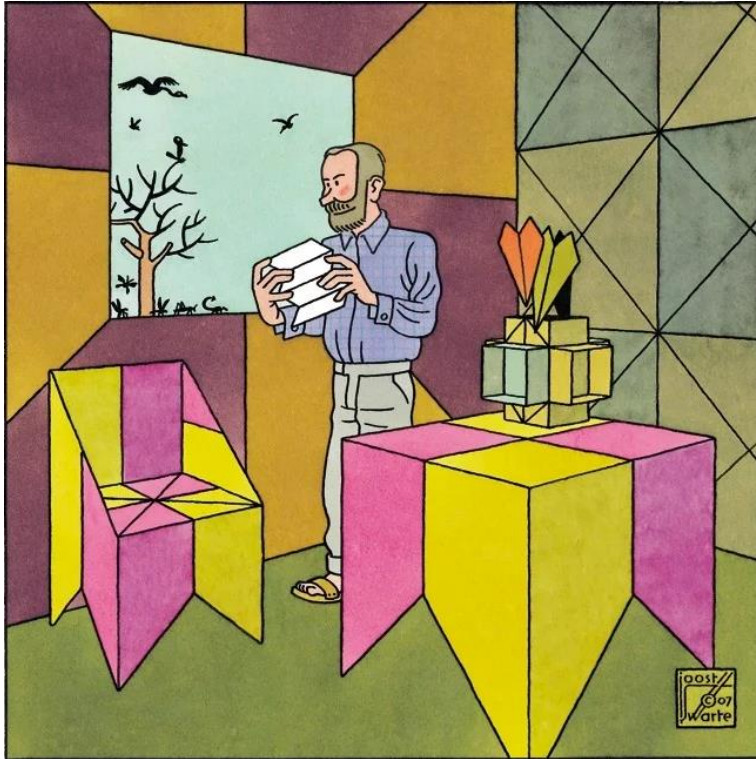
reasons to keep going

One thing that I really wish India DID borrow from the US is a political comedy show like Saturday Night Live (I know, AIB tried and blooped). Watching [SNL From Home](#), a first in the show's 45-year history, honestly gave me hope. Tom Hanks' opening monologue, Kate McKinnon's 'RBG Home Workout', a tribute to the late Hal Willner – it's reassuring to see funny people being funny (and healthy, for that matter)!

The virus has succeeded where years of cajoling and subtle nudges from restaurant bathroom signs have failed – getting people to wash their damn hands. Positive side effects are already showing up! For instance, influenza cases in Japan are [far below](#) numbers from previous years.

Imagine if the government projected a lab-coat and stethoscope onto Sardar Vallabhai Patel's Statue of Unity in Gujarat? That's essentially [what happened on Sunday](#) in Brazil, when they illuminated the magnificent Christ the Redeemer to pay tribute to the healthcare workers across the world. A true display of faith if you ask me.





reasons to tech

Geneticists in Korea combined two gene-sequencing techniques to [reveal new insights](#) into (a) new, smaller strands of genes that help the virus produce enzymes essential to its survival and (b) where these genes are located on the long strand of RNA (the virus version of DNA). Think of the result as a super high-resolution map that researchers can study in detail to understand how it replicates and infiltrates human defence systems, which takes us leaps ahead in engineering a vaccine and finding effective treatment!

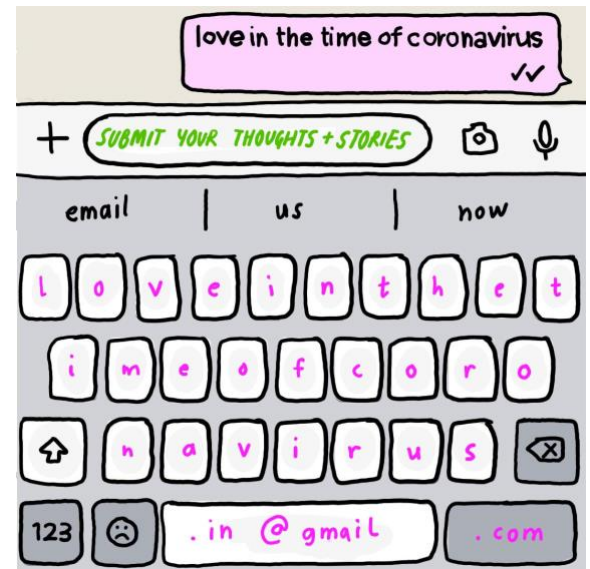
"10 years of change in a single week". Such is the sentiment surrounding the rapid adoption of [telemedicine](#), a practice that can be critical to save many doctors from unnecessary infection. Previously skeptical doctors are embracing virtual consultation like never before; we hope to see its benefits extend to the communities that it was initially designed to help – low income, remote and in need of urgent-care.

reasons to do

Looking for a new 'hands on' activity for the quarantine? I bring you: my beloved origami. The practice has been foundational to [mathematical progress](#), has [symbolized hope](#) for victims of the Hiroshima bombing, and has even been used for [espionage](#). There's something just deeply satisfying about its simplicity – no glue, no scissors, just a single sheet of paper! Here's some of my favourites to get you started: [stars](#), a [crane](#) and this [lily](#)!

"We will all have our own metaphors and images to make meaning of this time", as has been in [pandemics' past](#). Whatever yours may be – a TOI cartoon? A Zoom background? — we urge you to remember and record. If you're feeling especially creative, our favourite arts collective is accepting submissions of thoughts / stories of love experienced during this time. Written, drawn, screenshots, songs, poems, collages, a sentence, a 5 page thesis – the choice is yours! Email them: loveinthetimeofcoronavirus.in@gmail.com

We may not thrive at the Olympics, but when it comes to brain games, Indians are the dominant species. Spelling bee? [Arvind](#) is unfazed. KBC? Eyes glued. In the UK, 'the Corona Arms' is taking the [long-standing tradition](#) of Pub Quizzes online. Why not join in? Try professional games, QuizUp with friends or the less formidable but equally enjoyable BuzzFeed selection.



That's all for today! As always, let us know what you think, [subscribe \(click here\)](#), and **stay safe**. M&S.