The big deal

Incredibles 2 is a dream job for actress Sophia Bush. P2-3
Sophia finds her calling

‘I want to do all the animation and all of the voice-over work forever. I hope this opens the door,’ Sophia Bush tells Rick Bentley

PHILOSOPHY: “You get reminded that society is better when we let every single person have a seat at the table and we let every single person offer their own brand of personal magic to make the world around them a better place,” says Sophia Bush.

Quote Unquote
Nature always wears the colours of the spirit.
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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USEFUL NUMBERS

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Nature always wears the colours of the spirit.
— Ralph Waldo Emerson
Wishes do come true. Just ask Sophia Bush.

The Southern California native has been a fan of Pixar movies all her life, particularly The Incredibles. She was so determined to land even a tiny role in one of the company’s animated movies, Bush approached executives with the company three years ago.

“I told them if they ever needed someone with a raspy voice, I was game,” Bush says in a voice that’s somewhere between Kathleen Turner and a female Batman.

They finally needed her, as Bush lends her voice to V oyd in the new Pixar animated offering, Incredibles 2, the sequel to the 2004 film that was released at the same time Bush was starring in One Tree Hill. V oyd is one of several new superheroes in the tale of a family with superpowers who can’t use their skills because it’s against the law.

Director Brad Bird told Bush it was her “cool voice” that caught their ear during the casting process. They took samplings of Bush’s voice from her acting jobs to play against samplings of Holly Hunter’s vocals. Hunter plays Elastigirl, the hero who ends up spending the most time with V oyd. The blend was exactly what the team wanted and is something Bush looks to use as a launching pad.

“I want to do all the animation and all of the voice—over work forever. I hope this opens the door,” Bush says.

Bush is proud to be part of the kind of movie that can be enjoyed by every member of the family. And, she loves being part of a film that is both entertaining and touches on serious topics from family to acceptance.

V oyd has had to deal with a lifetime of denying her true nature just because those who make the law have deemed her kind unacceptable. It’s not just part of a plot for an animated movie for Bush, but an important way to make some serious points in a subtle way.

“Everyone can relate to this movie, but because it’s not preachy, all of the tension is taken out of it. And you get to witness something that feels exactly like your family even though it is an animated superhero family.” Bush says. “It feels like a world you can relate to. A story you can relate to.

“You get reminded that society is better when we let every single person have a seat at the table and we let every single person offer their own brand of personal magic to make the world around them a better place. That’s a big theme for a cartoon.”

Animated roles have been the major acting work to elude Bush, as she has rolled up a long resume of credits including the feature films The Hitcher, The Nervous, Acts of Violence and Marshall. The brunt of her work has been in television dramas, including One Tree Hill, Chicago PD, Chicago Med and Chicago Fire.

Bush has been guided by a simple road map in selecting roles: She has a commitment. Through most of her career, that meant dramatic roles, but in 2012, Bush got to fulfill her original acting plan when she was cast opposite David Krumholtz, Michael Urie and Brandon Routh in the CBS comedy Partners.

Her intention when she started acting was to do comedy, but nine seasons on the dramatic One Tree Hill made it difficult to make the comic transition. She took any opportunity to be funny available during that time, including the feature John Tucker Must Die and one episode of Phineas and Ferb.

Whether it was through serious or funny work, Bush has earned multiple Teen Choice Awards in the categories of: Choice Movie Actress: Comedy; Choice Movie Actress: Horror/Thriller; and Choice Movie: Breakout Female.

She was awarded the Rising Star Award at the Vail Film Festival and the Bing Philanthropy Award at the Young Hollywood Awards.

She used the fame she’s earned over the years to bettering girls’ education and the environment. Bush has raised nearly $500,000 for charity, built three primary schools in Guatemala and Laos and serves as a global ambassador for Glamour’s The Girl Project.

Landing the role in the Pixar movie was a massive thrill for Bush — she screamed in a cafe when she read the email offering her the part — in regards to her acting career, but the casting came with even more bonus points because V oyd is a superhero who has superintelligence.

“I’m always talking to girls about education being of paramount importance, how their brains are the most valuable parts of their bodies, and how smart is sexy,” Bush says. “And I get to play a science nerd who manipulates space.

“It makes it exponentially more special when you get to check something off your bucket list and it is this fulfilling. It is a dream come true.” — SOPHIA BUSH

Nelson finds animation work Incredible

By Rick Bentley

Craig T. Nelson put together a varied collection of acting credits through the first 36 years of his career. Although he starred in multiple television series and appeared in numerous feature films, one type of acting job had eluded him.

“I had never been a voice in an animated film before I was offered the part of Mr. Incredible in The Incredibles,” Nelson says. “I was in Hawaii and just watched Iron Giant for the fourth time and remember very specifically saying ‘You know something. Why can’t I do something like that? I want to do one of those. Who do I talk to?’”

In what still remains a mystery to Nelson, two weeks later, he got the script for the animated movie about a family of superheroes written by Brad Bird, the man behind Iron Giant. Nelson jumped at the chance to be part of the animated film that went on to be a hit with fans and critics. It ended up taking home the 2004 Academy Award for best animated feature.

The only clue to why Bird thought of Nelson is over the years, he has played a lot of father figures. That’s not been by choice, but Nelson knows a lot of people think of him that way.

It’s taken 14 years, but Nelson has returned to the recording studio for Incredibles 2. The action picks up immediately after the first movie with the family members trying to deal with a world where using superpowers is against the law. A fast-talking salesman (Bob Odenkirk) has come up with a plan that will change the public’s perception of superheroes and get the law changed. It wouldn’t be an action movie if something big didn’t go wrong.

Nelson is joined by Holly Hunter, who voices Elastigirl (Holly Hunter), plus Sarah Vowell and Huck Milner, who voice their children. Other voice talents include Samuel L. Jackson, Catherine Keener and Sophia Bush.

After the first movie was released, Nelson was constantly asked when a sequel would be produced. The Spokane, Washington, native was certain after the first movie was released that a sequel would be made within three or four years, but that timeframe came and went as Bird stuck to his statement that he would only make an Incredibles sequel when he had the right idea for the script. — TNS
**Concern:** Children's social-emotional well-being could be at stake due to less engaging activities at home.

Do you spend more time on your smartphones or watching television and engage less in family activities at home? Beware; your child's social-emotional well-being could be at stake.

According to researchers, technoference - the term they used to define everyday interruptions in face-to-face interactions because of technology devices - may lead children to show more frustration, hyperactivity, whining, sulking or tantrums.

"Children may be more likely to act out over time in response to technoference as opposed to internalise," said Jenny S. Radesky from the University of Michigan in the US.

"The study showed that in almost all cases, one device or more intruded in parent-child interactions at some stage during the day. Moreover, parents who use their smartphone to escape the stress of their child’s bad behaviour may be making it worse because when on their devices, they have fewer conversations with their children and are more hostile when their children try to get their attention."

"These results support the idea that relationships between parent technoference and child externalising behaviour are transactional and influence each other over time," said Brandon T. McDaniel from the Illinois State University.

Men turning to plastic surgery to look as young as they feel

If you thought that only women go under the knife for beauty enhancement, think again.

According to a study, there has been an increase in cosmetic procedures in men, both young and old, from liposuction, tummy tucks to botox.

The study, released by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, showed that a lot of young men are looking for cosmetic procedures, enhancing their looks and building confidence. In the past five years, liposuction has seen a 23 per cent rise and tummy tucks have gone up by 12 per cent.

"For a lot of men, just having a job and looking younger is a big deal," Lorelei Grunwaldt, a certified plastic surgeon in Pittsburgh, told The Telegraph.

"Men are seeking ways to look younger. — IANS

**Looking Young:** Older men are having more minimally-invasive procedures to take years off of their faces to continue to compete in the workplace.

Lorelei Grunwaldt, certified plastic surgeon in Pittsburgh.

Besides young men, older men are having more minimally-invasive procedures to take years off of their faces. Nearly 100,000 men had filler injections in 2017, up 99 percent since 2000, with Botox quadrupling in popularity, the study showed. "Some people call it the 'executive edge' because a lot of patients report that they want to look younger to continue to compete in the workplace," said Jeffrey Janis, from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. — IANS

**Smoking, diabetes linked to increasing dementia risk**

While smoking and diabetes have long been known to increase the risk of cancer and heart disease, researchers have warned that it can clog brain region crucial to memory, increasing the risk for dementia as well.

The findings showed that smoking and diabetes may have link with increased risk of calcification, calcium salt deposits, in hippocampus - a brain structure important for both short and long-term memory storage. Decline in functions of hippocampus have been associated with Alzheimer’s disease, the most common type of dementia.

"We do think that smoking and diabetes are risk factors for hippocampal calcifications", de Brouwer added.

In the study, published in the journal *Radiology*, the team studied the association between vascular risk factors like high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking, and hippocampal calcifications on 1,991 patients with an average age of 78 years.

They also assessed the effects of calcifications on cognitive function. The patients had a standard diagnostic work-up including cognitive tests and brain CT scans. — IANS

"In other words, parents who have children with more externalising problems become more stressed, which may lead to their greater withdrawal with technology, which in turn may contribute to more child externalising problems," McDaniel added.

The study published in the journal *Pediatric Research*, included data from 172 two-parent families that is a total of 337 parents who had a child, aged 5 years or younger. — IANS

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Food at workplace may be unhealthy, warns research

If you are in the habit of having lunch from your workplace cafeteria, think twice. It tends to contain high amount of sodium and refined grains, calories and very little whole grains and fruit, leading to unhealthy eating putting you at risk of various disease including cancer, researchers warn.

The study over 5,000 employees from a US firm, showed that nearly a quarter had food from work at least once a week and that the average weekly calories obtained was almost 1,100.

The food tended to be high in empty calories – those from solid fats and/or added sugars, with more than 70 per cent of the calories coming from food that was obtained for free.

“Our results suggest that the foods people get from work do not align well with the recommendations in the dietary guidelines,” said Stephen Onufrak, epidemiologist at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“So since we found that a lot of the foods obtained by employees were free, employers may also want to consider healthy meeting policies to encourage healthy food options at meetings and social events,” he suggested.

Workplaces can play more of a role to help ensure access to and promote healthier food options, the researchers said.

They suggest that employers could help their employees eat better at work by using worksite wellness programmes to promote healthy options that are also appealing. They could also ensure that foods in cafeterias or vending machines follow food service guidelines.

“Worksite wellness programmes have the potential to reach millions of working people and have been shown to be effective at changing health behaviours among employees, reducing employee absenteeism and reducing health care costs,” Onufrak said.

The study, presented at the Nutrition 2018 meeting held in Boston, included data from 5,222 employees.

Automated robotic device developed for faster blood testing

Researchers have developed an automated blood drawing and testing device that provides rapid results and allows healthcare practitioners to spend more time treating patients.

The study, published in the journal Technology, suggests that the device provides highly accurate results from a white blood cell test, using a blood-like fluid spiked with fluorescent microbeads. It includes an image-guided robot for drawing blood from veins, a sample-handling module and a centrifuge-based blood analyser, researchers said.

The testing used artificial arms with plastic tubes that served as blood vessels.

“This device represents the holy grail in blood testing technology,” said co-author Martin L. Yarmush from the Rutgers University-New Brunswick in New Jersey.

According to researchers, diagnostic blood testing is the most commonly performed clinical procedure in the world, and it influences most of the medical decisions made in hospitals and laboratories. But the success rate of manually drawing blood samples depends on clinicians’ skill and patient physiology and nearly all test results come from centralised labs that handle large numbers of samples and use labour-intensive analytical techniques, researchers added.

The device could provide rapid test results at bedside or in ambulances, emergency rooms, clinics and doctors’ offices.

Healthy lifestyle habits may quickly lower blood pressure

Researchers have demonstrated that a programme aimed at helping people modify lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise is as effective as medication at reducing blood pressure.

The study, presented at the Nutrition 2018 meeting in Boston, suggested that the participants saw their blood pressure drop 19 points, on average, after taking part in a lifestyle programme for just 14 days.

“By adapting selected lifestyle habits, half of the people in our study achieved normal blood pressure within two weeks while avoiding the side effects and costs associated with blood pressure medications,” said lead researcher M. Alfredo Mejia, Associate Professor at Andrews University.

The researchers found that the reduction in blood pressure accomplished by the programme was equivalent to what can be achieved using three half-dose standard medications for blood pressure. In addition, 93 per cent of the participants were able to either reduce the dose (24 per cent) or eliminate their blood pressure medications (69 per cent).

For the study, the researchers evaluated data from 117 people with high blood pressure who had participated in the lifestyle programme. The participants followed a vegan diet, walked outside daily, drank substantial quantities of water, got adequate daily sleep and participated in optional spiritual activities.

At the end of the programme, half of the participants achieved a systolic blood pressure below the recommended 120 mmHg, the researcher said.

The programme was effective at lowering blood pressure in varying types of individuals, including otherwise healthy men and women and people with diabetes or who were obese and those with high cholesterol levels, they noted.

OMIT: Workplace food tends to contain high amount of sodium and refined grains, calories and very little whole grains and fruit.

COMMUNITY BODY & MIND
Tangy Hyderabadi Lukhmi, snack with no comparison

During a recent trip to Dallas, Texas and a visit to a local restaurant, owned by a Hyderabadi entrepreneur, I was reminded of a long lost dish – Lukhmi. It is always a great feeling to see people preparing their traditional food and serving them far away from their hometowns and carry the legacy forward. Lukhmi was the hot selling item in their menu and patrons used to flock for this delicacy. So what is Lukhmi?

It is everything that can satisfy the mind, taste buds and everything else used to see people preparing their Lukhmi. It is always a great feeling to see people preparing their traditional food and serve them prepared in their traditional style. Even the day to day food is prepared and served as it is a work of art. When Hyderabadi cuisine is mentioned, the first thing that comes to the mind is the Hyderabadi biryani, but there is much more than that. There is a long list of recipes and dishes that are on the verge of extinction due to the modern and busy lifestyle and availability of other common food items in supermarkets. Once found on the table in almost every Irani Café, the flavoured mince meat stuffed starter is slowly disappearing. Dishes like Lukhmi, Shalmamiri kebab, Sheer khurma are few of them Lukhmi might appear to be a variation of popular samosa, another stuffed and deep fried savoury pastry from the region but they differ greatly. The moment you bite into the crisp, fluffy, light pastry of Lukhmi you will realise it is a class of its own.

The filling is traditionally made with lamb mince but you can also choose chicken or beef. Use as little oil as possible to cook the mince meat and cook till it is completely dry. Any excess liquid in the filling will make it difficult to prepare and pastry go soggy. When making Lukhmi for iftar or big gatherings, you can cook the minced meat ahead and freeze or refrigerate. It covered with plastic wrap for a day or two. You can make your Lukhmi with your choice of meat like chicken, lamb or beef. Vegetable stuffing can also be prepared.

### Keema Lukhmi

**Serves 6**

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**For filling**

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<td>Lemon juice</td>
<td>2 tbsp</td>
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<td>Mint leaves, chopped</td>
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**Method**

To prepare the filling for Lukhmi, heat oil in a heavy bottom pan over medium heat.

1. Add chopped onions, till they are light brown, add ginger garlic paste and sauté for few minutes.
2. Add all the spices and add the mince meat and stir to avoid burning the meat.
3. Reduce the heat and add water if required, cover and cook the meat till fully cooked.
4. Grind the cooked Lukhmi in a food processor.
5. Drizzle lemon juice and ensure the mixture is dry, remove from flame.
6. Sprinkle chopped coriander, mint and chopped green chilli and keep aside.
7. For the pastry, slit flour in a mixing bowl.
8. Add semolina and salt, rub in clarified butter and add water gradually.
9. Make a firm yet elastic dough, knead well to make the dough smooth, cover with plastic wrap and leave aside for 10 minutes.
10. Divide the dough into equal sized dough balls.
11. Roll out a big, thin, dusted dough ball onto the work top.
12. Roll out a big, thin, dusted dough ball onto the work top.
13. Roll out a big, thin, dusted dough ball onto the work top.
14. Repeat this process two more times, you can allow the dough to rest in refrigerator between each fold for about 10 invites.
15. Cut 3 inch square out of the rolled dough, place 1 tbsp of mince meat mixture in the centre.
16. Brush the sides with water, cover with another square or turn half of the triangle over the other half to make a triangular pastry.
17. Press the edges with a dusted flour to seal the pastry.
18. Repeat for the remaining dough and proceed filling.
19. Heat oil in a very deep bottom pan over medium heat and fry 204 prepared Lukhmis to the hot oil, fry till light golden and puffed.
20. Drain on a sieve to remove excess oil, serve hot immediately with mint chutney or tamarind chutney.

**Note:** You can prepare the Lukhmi in advance and half fry them and then store them in freezer for later use. Just thaw them in microwave for a minute and then deep fry them to light golden brown colour.

Chef Tarun Kapoor, Culinary Mastermind, USA. He may be contacted at tarunkapoors@gmail.com
Marzooq Shamlan Al Shamlan Holding holds Iftar for staff

Marzooq Shamlan Al Shamlan Holding recently organised an Iftar event at Crown Plaza Hotel, where employees from all associated companies enjoyed the ritual of breaking the fast together. The joyful event was an opportunity for both executives and employees to connect, bond and share the spirit of Ramadan in the extended family of the Shamlan Holding.

The gathering was attended by Tarek al-Shamlan, Chairman, and Joe Lahoud, Group CEO, along with managing teams. Lahoud applauded the efforts of every staff member and said, “We believe in the individual initiative and our organisation is designed to be an efficient and supportive structure for developing talents. Our team of highly professional individuals, who will continuously drive our firm forward through their hard work, passion, dedication and perceptiveness.”

Far away from the work and projects, teams from Q-Tire, Qatar Trading Company, International Tire Centre, International Construction Solutions, Karcher Centre and Marzooq Al Shamlan & Sons attended the gathering. A lucky draw for all the attendees was enjoyed by everyone, adding a fun element to the evening.

NPFG holds Iftar gathering for charity

Nadapuram Polima Facebook Group (NPFG) Qatar chapter, a group of Indian expatriates, recently hosted an Iftar gathering at Doha’s Al Bidda Park. As many as 480 needy families benefited from Polima’s charitable initiative during Ramadan. The group has nearly 11,000 members spread across Nadapuram in Kerala and in four GCC countries. Hashim Abdulla Parakkadavu, Qatar chapter administrator, lauded the support of the members in facilitating the charitable activities.

DMCC wins Franciscan cricket cup

Doha Mar Thoma Community (DMCC) recently won the first St Francisian Cup Inter-Church T10 Cricket League, organised by Malankara Catholic Youth Movement (MCYM) of St Mary’s Malankara Syrian Catholic Community. The month-long tournament, played on the weekends, was held as part of the community’s golden jubilee year celebrations.

In the final, DMCC defeated St Peter’s team, represented by St Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Community, by 19 runs. St Peter’s, who had to chase a total of 112 for a victory in 10 overs, could score only 92 for 7. For DMCC, captain Jain Joy scored a whirlwind 64 off 31 balls. Jain Joy was adjudged as man of the match in the final. Melvin CBabu of DMCC was adjudged the best batsman and Nibu Thomas of St Peters the best bowler of the tournament. The matches were played in the presence of a large number of spectators at Barwa City cricket ground.

The organisers said they planned to make the tournament an annual event in honour of Qatar’s contributions to promote sport events at different levels all through the year.
Top 10 Tips for Learning Languages

1. Don't Focus Too Hard

Research shows that your brain subconsciously works away on learning the language without you realising.

So put on a foreign movie, listen to some music by your favourite French singer or turn on the Spanish radio and start cooking (or ironing)!

2. The Love Factor

Get a native partner! (Only if)

Sharing daily activities together will introduce you to new vocabulary and allow you to practise your language skills every day!

3. Visual Memory?

Do you have a favourite book?

Pick up a copy in the foreign language of your choice. You will be amazed at the progress you make.

4. How's Your Listening?

Watch your favourite movie dubbed in French, Spanish, etc. – the one where you know all the lines by heart.

5. Get Familiar with Different Styles

Read foreign magazines, online newspapers, blogs, etc. so you can get familiar with different styles.
Immerse Yourself!

6. There is nothing like immersing yourself in the target culture and language.
   So attend a language course or start planning your next weekend break or holiday now!

Work on Your Reaction Time

9. Focus on doing your daily routine or leisure activities in the target language.
   This will help you reduce your reaction time when you need to speak unprepared.

Practise Everyday Language

7. Practise your writing by sending WhatsApp messages to friends who are native speakers and ask for feedback.
   It will also help you to learn abbreviations, slang and text speak.

They Are Popular for a Reason!

10. Download a foreign language app (or two) to your phone and practise on the go!

Old-fashioned Ways Still Work!

8. Get a notepad and write down new words that you learn and review them regularly.
   For fun, place Post-its with translations of everyday items around your house. You'll be amazed!

#BonusTip - The Final Test

Your mission is complete when you can tell a joke in a foreign language and your audience laughs!
Scientists seek to establish effect of noise pollution on penguins

By Martina Rathke

The young male Humboldt penguin with the yellow tag on his right wing is a star pupil: He touches the coloured board with his beak for a full four seconds. After a clicking noise, there’s a tasty sprat from his trainer, Anne May as a reward.

May has been working with four birds at the Ozeaneum in the northern German city of Stralsund for the past several weeks, training them to react to certain stimuli. But the birds, separated from the rest of the flock, aren’t being taught tricks in order to amuse visitors.

The tests have a scientific purpose: Marine biologists from Germany and Denmark are researching penguins’ powers of hearing, with the goal of training the birds to be able to indicate whether they hear an audio signal on land or in the water at a later research stage.

As the world’s oceans have become increasingly crowded in the last few decades, the amount of underwater noise has also grown enormously: a ship’s propeller, for example, produces a constant drone. Anchors for oil rigs and wind turbines are drilled into the ocean floor, where mining companies are also digging for minerals.

“The problem of noise is similarly as bad as the problem of rubbish for [the health of] animals, but the public is not nearly as aware of it,” says Harald Benke, director of the German Oceanographic Museum.

It is not yet known what effect underwater noise has on penguins’ hearing and whether it confuses the birds when they travel the world’s oceans. In fact, scientists have only rudimentary knowledge about what frequency and volume of noise that penguins can hear.

Aside from a 1969 study on the hearing of African penguins on land, there have hardly been any scientific examinations of the subject, according to marine biologist Michael Daehne, who has been leading the project in Germany.

“In order to make predictions about what effect underwater noise will have on penguins in the future, we need to have some basic data to start with,” he says in explaining the motivation for the study.

During the three years that the project has been scheduled to run, the researchers want to develop audiograms – a graph that shows the range of hearing levels – for the different penguin species.

The birds won’t be sent to a sound laboratory for the tests, but instead they’ll later be put in sound booths on land and underwater, where they’ll be played various noises and audio signals.

The University of Southern Denmark, the Marine Science Center at the University of Rostock in northern Germany and the Natural History Museum in Berlin are also taking part in the study on penguins.

“Penguins are amphibious beings, living between two worlds – land and water,” says Daehne. Through evolution, penguins lost their ability to fly in order to better adapt to the waters of the ocean. They can spend long times at sea and efficiently hunt and move underwater.

Like all birds, penguins don’t have an outer ear, and unlike mammals, which have three auditory ossicles, birds only have one,” says Daehne.

Sound waves spread at different speeds through the air and through the water, he adds, meaning scientists can assume that penguins hear noise differently on land and in the water. Exactly how is what they are hoping to find out during the course of their project.

As well as Humboldt penguins, native to South America, the researchers in Odense are also testing gentoo penguins, southern rockhopper penguins and king penguins.

“The Humboldt penguin’s learning curve is really steep,” says May of her charges, who rub up happily against her legs, stretching their necks to look up at her without hesitation. However, a lack of reserve should not be mistaken for intelligence, May adds, saying she doesn’t want to pass judgement on the brain power of her charges. – DPA
LEISURE

Colour by choice

1. YELLOW
2. BROWN
3. RED
4. BLUE

Maze

Help the lioness find her way to her missing cub.

Connect the dots

Join the dots in order to find out more!

Picture crossword

WILD ANIMALS

USE THE PICTURES BELOW AS CLUES

ACROSS


DOWN

Pooh Café
By Paul Gilligan

Where are we? What are we doing in here?

It's a giant kibble! Prepare to be eaten, my tasty little morsels!

Chomp, chew, gorp!

Ah-ha! Ah-ha! Ha ha ha! So hungry!

What's that?

Puncho! Breakfast!

Kibble?

It was just a dream. It's not like I'm going to stop eating kibble.

Zoo Vet

Gorilla glue.
What to keep in mind while selecting travel bags

1. Always opt for padded backs and check if the backpack has a lot of storage space, say experts. Sridhar Thirunakara, Founder and CEO, the bag brand Arctic Fox and Srikanth Thirunakara, Director of Outshiny, have suggested the following to keep in mind while choosing travel bags.

2. **Favourable storage:** An old-fashioned backpack has a front pocket for quick access and then a king-sized empty space for whatever you want to keep in it. For some people, that’s enough, but most of us prefer a little more orderliness. So, one should choose a bag with helpful storage slots that you don’t have to carry more than one travel bag. A good bag must have multiple compartments. This way, you can segregate your belongings and makes them easily accessible.

3. **Water-resistant fabric:** Your pack does not need to be 100% waterproof but semi-waterproof so that everything doesn’t get wet in a mizzle. The material should be thick enough, but lightweight. — IANS

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**Aries**

Today you should have a lot of vitality, Aries. Recently, you may have decided to take more matters into your own hands. Your relationships will only benefit from this decision. The conflicts you’ve had to deal with were generally based on a lack of understanding. You sometimes have to make compromises. Try not to be too demanding.

**Taurus**

Your generosity and altruism will be put to the test over the next few days, Taurus. You’ll probably help the underprivileged. After all, you’ve always felt concerned about humanitarian projects but have never gotten involved. Today this attitude will enable you to understand who you really are. You’ll be able to learn a lot about your motivations and the keys to your success.

**Gemini**

Today’s aspects will influence you to interact naturally with your circle of friends, Gemini. You’re tired of hiding your feelings. You want to act in the way your instincts guide you. However, you’re afraid of other people’s reactions. Sometimes you don’t express your emotions or opinions simply because you’re afraid of what they might say or think. Try to gain more self-confidence.

**Cancer**

You’re defining new strategies concerning your private life, Cancer. You could be feeling like a completely different person today. You’re no longer afraid of society, and you enjoy meeting people. You’ll probably sympathise with the goals of an individual or a group of people you have recently met. Try to fulfill your needs and forget any preconceived ideas.

**Leo**

Unfortunately, today’s planetary energy will place you in a rather uncomfortable situation, Leo. You’ll be the one having to smooth things over with your group of friends. Try to impose your point of view. On the contrary, you should try to become more diplomatic and gentle with the people around you. You could also learn a lot by observing how people behave.

**Virgo**

Even though the times are favorable for relaxation, you won’t be able to fully enjoy this period, Virgo. You’ll instead try to adjust your agenda so you can lead a more balanced life. The planetary aspects in play will incite you to change your attitude toward work. You should try to lighten your responsibilities to avoid stress at the office.

**Libra**

Today’s celestial configuration will be favourable to changes in your relationships, Libra. Your professional and private lives will be influenced by how well you deal with these relationships. You may have decided that in one way or another your behaviour needs to change. Now it’s time for you to act. Don’t be discouraged if it takes a while to see lasting improvement.

**Scorpio**

You’ve felt the need to create over the past several days, Scorpio. This attitude is certainly due to the planetary positions, but it could also underlie your desire to change your professional and private lives. Therefore, you should let your creative mind come out. How about writing poetry or enrolling in a ceramics class? Don’t refrain from showing this secret part of your personality to those closest to you.

**Sagittarius**

When you feel that your friends are trying to change your everyday life, you shouldn’t try to resist it so stubbornly, Sagittarius. Open up your heart and let yourself be led. You’ll be surprised at the feeling of freedom this brings. You’ll probably have some interesting encounters today. They might change your life completely. Get ready for an exciting day!

**Capricorn**

Over the last few weeks you’ve been working hard so you don’t have to worry about your finances, Capricorn. Try to forget your problems, and especially avoid focusing on and talking about money today. Do what you feel like doing. You’re probably already aware that you need to take care of yourself from time to time. Don’t neglect your health.

**Aquarius**

Today you’re about to put your sense of humour to the test, Aquarius. You’ll likely confront a few unexpected situations. Even if you’re used to finding exciting things to do in an ordinary world, you’ll be in for a big surprise or two. Today there will be a lot of excitement where you least expect it. Try to let the day’s energy guide you.

**Pisces**

Today you’ll question yourself about your private life, Pisces. Indeed, you have to change your behaviour. You’re used to making decisions just for yourself. Now you’ll realize that you need to think not only about yourself but also about your partner. This phase in your relationship is difficult and will lead to drastic measures. You now have to assume your responsibilities.
2018 an extremely exciting year for me: Kiara Advani

By Nivedita

Actress Kiara Advani, who made her acting debut with the 2014 release Fugly, went on to star in successful films like M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story and the Telugu political drama Bharat Ane Nenu. With Kalank and her digital anthology Lust Stories, she is excited for 2018 and says being versatile is her goal.

“2018 is an extremely exciting year for me as I’m exploring a wider audience... I’m doing a film in a language that I don’t know and working hard to master that, then there is a film for Netflix which will reach a global audience and of course the Hindi language film. The ability to reach out to such a diverse audience is just the most exciting,” Kiara said in an interview.

Lust Stories, an Indian anthology film, consists of four short film segments directed by four different directors: Anurag Kashyap, Zoya Akhtar, Dibakar Banerjee and Karan Johar. She is also excited about Kalank, a film directed by Abhishek Varman and produced by Karan Johar, Saajid Nadiadwala and Fox Star Studios. It stars Madhuri Dixit, Sonakshi Sinha, Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Sanjay Dutt in the lead roles.

“It’s a beautifully written special appearance. And it’s the first time I’ll be seen in a commercial item song. To top it, it’s a period film so the costume and the look is very different for me, even I haven’t seen myself looking this way before.

“This is the first time I’m working with Manish Malhotra for a film so you can only imagine how glamorous his vision is and that was exciting. We have almost finished shooting my part for the film, I’m now looking forward to shooting with Madhuri ma’am and sharing screen space with her is the cherry on the icing,” she said.

Kiara says that she wants to be an actor who can slip into any character without any baggage or stereotype.

“But what’s important is luck and opportunity because no matter how good you are, if nobody gives you that opportunity then no one will ever know,” she said. — IANS

Fitness to me is a way of life: Rakul

Actress Rakul Preet says being fit is a way to sanity and rejuvenation for her. She has pushed her limits to get the right frame for her role in romantic comedy with Ajay Devgn. In fact, she flaunted her washboard abs on the cover of a health magazine.

“Fitness to me is a way of life. It’s sanity and rejuvenation for me. Whether stressed or happy I like to work out... I feel each cell of my body breathes,” Rakul said in a statement. “What you sow is what you reap. So, how you treat your body is how it will treat you back. I eat clean and I don’t call it a diet! I love to eat a lot and I workout everyday,” she added.

Rakul has also featured in Telugu films. In Bollywood, she has done Yaariyan and Aiyaary. — IANS

Backlash be damned: Kanye has No. 1 album in the US

As Kanye West well knows by now, controversy sells.

The polarising rapper’s new album, Ye, is No. 1 in the US, weeks after his comments on slavery and public support of President Trump led to a backlash and calls to boycott the performer.

Ye is West’s eighth consecutive album to open atop the Billboard chart — a feat that ties him with Eminem and the Beatles for the longest streak of No. 1s — and all seven tracks of the record have debuted on Billboard’s Top 40 chart.

The album earned 208,000 equivalent album units in the week ending June 7 (85,000 of the tally was traditional album sales), according to Nielsen Music; that’s the fifth-largest opening week for an album this year. Ye is West’s first record since 2016, a year that ended in tumult amid a canceled tour and hospitalisation for a psychiatric emergency. In the weeks leading up to its release, many wondered if the rapper’s career would be derailed by the intense scrutiny he brought on himself when he returned to Twitter and fired off a string of provocative dispatches.

There was the declaration of Trump as his “brother,” the picture of him wearing a Make America Great Again hat (the president signed it), gushing over Black conservative pundit Candace Owens and an erratic appearance on TMZ Live — where West rattled off about slavery to a stunned TMZ staff.

West’s actions infuriated and confused fans, peers and critics considering he came to fame with work that offered thoughtful observations on family, sexuality, religion, education, prejudice and wealth and that he famously admonished then-President George W. Bush in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In the days after West’s TMZ appearance, a Detroit radio station banished his music from its airwaves and fans took to social media to denounce the rapper, and for a moment it appeared the new album was off to a cold start.

West surprise released a pair of singles — Lift Yourself and Ye vs. the People, which tackled Trump endorsement amid the online backlash to tease the project. Both singles were maligned by critics, failed to entice listeners and ultimately didn’t make it onto the album, which the rapper retooled before he debuted it at a surreal party in Wyoming’s Jackson Hole valley.

The current version of Ye — and we say current because the rapper has a penchant for updating albums in real time and has already altered one track after release — saw West open up about suicide, mental illness, drug use and disappointing his spouse, Kim Kardashian West.

“I’m proud of him,” Kardashian West told The Times recently. “I know that he’s been through a lot and, you know, he feels his best when he’s creating.”

Ye is the second release in a string of projects he worked on in Wyoming, including Pusha T’s Dr. Pepper, which opened at No. 3 last week, and Kid Cudi that arrived last Friday. — Los Angeles Times/TNS
QFIS students learn through charitable Ramadan project

Students of Grade VII and VIII at Qatar-Finland International School (QFIS) worked hard during Ramadan, creating their own school-based charity initiative. Traditional subjects such as English, mathematics and science were replaced with the project. The ultimate goal of the project was to bring all the students together and raise money for a number of good causes.

The students were recently invited to apply for five different project teams namely, Art and Design, PR and Marketing, Finance, Research and Development, and Audio/Visual. They were asked to write a CV and covering letter and apply for a job. Each student was given a salary for each day work on the project.

The students led the project, creating the logo and website for the charity, researching and designing an exhibition space on the cultural and religious traditions of Ramadan. Original musical compositions and a documentary of the event were also created. They invited members of the public and the media to the special event. The funds were raised through a donation drive and the students encouraged the school community and members of the public to donate clothing, dry foods, toys, books and games. The students then created a pop-up shop to sell the items during the week. In only three days, the students raised over QR5,000 for the charity.

Neel Shah, one of the project supervisors, explained the educational value behind the project and said, “We wanted the students to participate in a project that instilled the religious, moral and spiritual values of Ramadan with an opportunity for the project-based learning. The Finnish curriculum places a great emphasis on holistic learning and opportunities for the students to learn experientially. Academic subject content has been covered in a number of practical tasks in novel ways. The students have been learning without even realising. The skills such as teamwork, communication, organisation and working to project briefs and deadlines are all valuable assets for the students in the workplace. The students will have a better idea of the demands of the workplace and how a major project is managed through the schedule of this project. It has given the students an opportunity to immerse themselves in mastering a particular skill and an opportunity to work on something that is going towards a great cause.”

Due to its success, the sale and exhibition will be extended for the last week of term from June 24 to 27.

For more information on the event and for making donations, please contact: neel.shah@qfischool.com / qfc@qfischool.com

Indian Women’s Association organises Iftar gathering for members

As a mark of respect to the holy month of Ramadan, Indian Women’s Association (IWA) recently hosted an Iftar party. The Dessert and Mocktail competition was also organised for the members on the occasion. Asna Nafees, Principal of DPS-Modern Indian School, spoke about the significance of Ramadan. The presence of esteemed judges along with Ritu Kumaran, patron of IWA, made the evening memorable.