

In & Around

A New Reality



Sidharth

Lockdown 4.0 began on Monday May 18th as the 4th edition of the national lockdown, leaving many wondering how many more of these we are to expect. A 1.3 billion populous has started to accept the bleak preview of their reality, the comfort of their homes is their only solace and their gadgets their only escape into a digital world. People have started venturing out into their

cities and towns (at their own risk of course) as we begin to see more cars on the road, more foot traffic and public transport with cities struggling to get back up on their feet. Just as I was running an errand today morning, I noticed the blues, reds, blacks and whites zoom past each other; cars seeking thrill in an unregulated traffic; speeding and accelerating at random, considering most traffic signals have decided to take an extension in their naps. Hey, at least they're trying to follow the lockdown!

After my visit to the outside world (actually a visit with my dog to the vet), a trip that I took after a considerable amount of time being locked up, the familiar sights had me choked. As we meandered through the streets, memories of 8 years of my time in this neighborhood came flooding back and I realized how much life has changed since I last saw them. You would never think that one day, you're a care-free teenager, never questioning your freedom in the world. The next, the whole world sinks into a virus-infested dystopia and your freedom is under airtight and super-sanitized supervision. Therefore, the big question that we definitely have in our head but may be fearful to face: 'What is the new norm of our reality?'

First things first: THE WORLD WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AS IT WAS BEFORE. The sooner we accept that reality, the easier it would be to move forward. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the very fabric of our existence, and the small stuff that we usually tend to ignore is now under intense consideration, as we tread each step carefully. This means reviewing everything we touch, the food we put in our mouth, the environment outside the safety of our house and even how often we wash our hands.

As students, when we look at the future of education, we see digital classrooms becoming the new norm. Gone are the days of 30 students cramped into one dingy classroom, sharing lunches, standing in mile long assembly lines and from time to time, ending up at the principal's office. A revolution has taken place with the digital

classroom. Education has now become more about the process of actualized learnings as opposed to the holistic experience offered by a school or a college. To students of all ages, it's time to realize that we are what we make of the tools presented to us; self-discipline and self-study will be our only guiding factor. An economic stimulus plan of Rs. 20-lakh crore was announced by the Indian government, the largest so far by any developing country. UN economic experts such as the Chief of the Global Economic Monitoring Branch, Hamid Rashid publicly welcomed and applauded the development by the Finance Ministry of India. The care package (approximately 10% of the GDP for the FY21) is expected to revive an

injured MSME sector and offer loan and financial benefits to industries. Perhaps these are signs of what's to come; will large multinational companies start to become irrelevant and will we see markets move to local production and consumption? Is the future of business perhaps with the MSME sector?

The movement to localise demand trends is expected to fashion the crusade of 'Made in India'. This should eventually lead to the creation of new brands, new product choices and a more sustainable way of life; as organisations move to localised production to cater to local demands. With one of the youngest demographics in the world and a

market of 1.3 billion consumers, India is poised for this change better than any other nation in the world.

For too long we chose to live in a bubbled reality; where constant security and permanency made us numb to change our untenable and self-destructive ways. We thrived in mindless consumerism, with an insatiable appetite for choice and luxuries that we knew were intoxicating, but chose to ignore. It is time we start to grasp the realms of our new reality, as a change has now been forced upon us. It may not be in every fibre of our existence, but it has certainly left us questioning our ideals and the new reality of a future that awaits us.

This is the new norm- dystopia or eutopia?

ASTROLOGY

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Murli Menon

- Aries (March 21 - April 20):** You are likely to make that long delayed visit to your saloon. Catching up with long lost friends over video calls is also likely.
- Taurus (April 21 - May 21):** You are likely to feel lonely and will be actively learning a new skill to beat your boredom. You will be learning pencil sketching and will progress well with regular practice.
- Gemini (May 22 - June 21):** You are likely to get minor headaches and pains during the week and your siblings will alleviate your pains through massage therapy.
- Cancer (June 22 - July 22):** You are likely to attend webinars throughout the week to enhance your skills. You may be required to report to work for some important reasons once during the week.
- Leo (July 23 - August 23):** You will be cheerful and happy, as your family members will gift you something you missed during the lockdown. Health of a near and dear one could be a concern.
- Virgo (August 24 - September 22):** You are likely to meet an attractive soulmate during this week. Friendship blossoms and you can look forward to something more meaningful by the end of the year.
- Libra (September 23 - October 23):** You will find yourself planning to start a new home based startup, with a partner. This venture will have better prospects than your present job.
- Scorpio (October 24 - November 22):** You will find yourself listening to soothing music, as you will feel highly stressed due to events in your neighborhood. However your faith and patience will see you through this difficult phase.
- Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21):** You will be learning colour therapy after discomfort in your eyes. You are likely to help the less privileged through voluntary work and feeding the hungry.
- Capricorn (December 22 - January 20):** You will find yourself running errands for your family and friends. Visit to a chemist is likely. You will take a break from the mobile and go for short walks. You will get a bit of sunlight during your morning walk in the society.
- Aquarius (January 21 - February 18):** You will spend most of the time immersed in work from home. A new friend is likely to drop in later in the week. You will be bonding with your sister and cooking and cleaning together.
- Pisces (February 19 - March 20):** You will be trying out new vegan recipes for your family and learning to cook for the first time. Your efforts and delicacies you make will be appreciated by your family members.

COVID 19: Psychological problems could be the next pandemic says psychology expert

TC Bureau Chandigarh: In the COVID 19 era, the focus is on the clinical testing and treatment of COVID 19 positive patients and slowing down the spread of the pandemic by asking people to stay home and also work from home. With majority of people around the world in lockdown and quarantine, their psychological strength is being tested to the hilt.



Dr. Shelly Singh

The 'psychological cost' of COVID 19 is quietly growing parallel to the disease and gradually assuming gargantuan proportions. Dr Shelly, a well established & qualified tricity based Psychological Counsellor, feels that Psychological problems could be the next pandemic. Dr Shelly, who has recently started a website drshellysinghal.in which will act as a help line for people in psychological distress during COVID 19 says,

"The resultant conditions due to lockdown are turning out to be the world's biggest experiment in psychology. We are witnessing people developing a wide range of symptoms related to psychological stress and disorder. These include low mood, insomnia, stress, irritability, and emotional exhaustion among others. There are a plethora of reasons for these mental issues striking people. Some factors that have contributed to the problem are fear generated due to risk of getting the COVID 19 infection, fear of losing loved ones, as well as the prospect of financial hardship."

Dr Shelly feels that not much is being done to put in place a system for providing psychological help to people facing myriad mental stress related issues during these extraordinary times. Adds Dr Shelly, "The situation has already started manifesting itself even during the pandemic and many people are committing suicide due to the conditions they are being pitted against. The problem is serious and needs an immediate redress system."

Dr Shelly provides a prescription to tide over the psychological crisis gripping humankind. Her recipe includes boosting mental health in the COVID 19 era to minimise the impact of the virus & social distancing in our lives, and to develop a healthier and more resilient 'new normal' for the future.

Contact family and friends: It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused during the crisis. It is absolutely alright talking to people you can trust. Try reconnecting with old friends through mails, social media, phone etc.

Maintain healthy lifestyle: This includes proper diet, sleep, and exercise, as these improve both physical and mental health. Exercise in particular increases brain growth factors.

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques: These can improve mood and sleep quality through enhancing control over the body's arousal system. Investing in mental health will surely pay long lasting dividends for an individual's future mental and physical health.

Stay focused: It is necessary to focus every day on what you can do and take actions. No matter how small although. We can learn to be more flexible and have acceptance.

Spread empowerment: We can all take ownership of and be supportive and responsive to our community, family, neighbours, society etc. We are in a moment of 'increasing revelatory tensions' in all age groups & genders. For the first time for many of us, we are seeing how the 'old normal' in terms of both physical and mental health can take a backseat in the prioritization of daily life.

Sums up Dr Shelly, "Now is the time for individual and collective action, to shift to a healthier 'New normal' for all; by establishing an even stronger and more resilient global community, one that practices both physical and mental hygiene."

Webinar on 'Periods don't stop for pandemics' organised by Padwoman Renu Mathur

TC Bureau Panchukula: After a training module from 24-26 May a webinar was organised by social activist Padwoman Renu Mathur, who is official spokesperson with NGO Nanhe Kadam, & associated with many women empowerment activities, addressing the issue of sustainably. Renu Mathur taught key volunteers how to make reusable pads, from old fabric available at home through a virtual training session. Connecting with volunteers from Jaipur, Delhi, Chandigarh, Bhatinda, & Panchukula, online, she elucidated on how to stitch cloth pads. Considering the adverse repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially on the rural population of the country, the idea behind the webinar was to go back to the roots and delve out an organic course to deal with menstrual



stitch about 5 or 6 and they can last for about 6 months. Second, it is cost effective, which is a boon for rural women, who are already suffering the financial blows of the pandemic." Preeti, manisha and Shrutu from Rajasthan, feel great to be able to learn a skill and help those in need & Meera shashi & Pallavi from Delhi will add this skill to their efforts of teaching children. Rinkle from Panjab, Neeru, seema from Chandigarh and renu goyal from Haryana were part of this project. All women who were part of the seminar shared ideas on how they will disseminate information to rural/ underprivileged women around them. Renu Mathur shared that she and her team are proud to contribute & be foot soldiers of the sanitary pad revolution in India. RJ Geet from 94.3 My Fm was the moderator of this webinar.

"When we went to the rural areas, it was found that women would use old clothes and that's not ideal for reproductive health of a woman," She said. "It is imperative that the cloth pad is stitched in way that is to avoid unnecessary staining and, it can also be washed & reused, and disposed in an environmentally safe way, she added. Talking about the sustainable aspect of a reusable cloth pad, she said, "First these pads