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A day of awards: PU's 19th convocation



(Left) From left to right: Mr. Mylswamy Annadurai, Project Director of Chandrayaan-I; Prof. J.A.K. Tareen, Vice-Chancellor of the University; Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, Former Speaker of the Lok Sabha; Mr. Madanjeet Singh, Founder of South Asia Foundation and Goodwill Ambassador to UNESCO. (Middle) A student receiving his degree from Mr. Somnath Chatterjee. (Right) Scholars wait in anticipation.

Puducherry: The 19th convocation organised by Pondicherry University was held on March 20 at Jawaharlal Nehru Auditorium. Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, Former Speaker of the Lok Sabha delivered the convocation address. He said that the convocation is an occasion to take stock of what has been achieved and what remains to be done. "Our commitment should be that all those who were denied education

should now have access to quality education. True education is indeed a liberating force, bringing down all narrow barriers and enabling us to think critically and scientifically without fear or prejudice," he added.

Mr. Chatterjee and Mr. Madanjeet Singh, Founder of South Asia Foundation and Goodwill Ambassador to UNESCO were conferred with the Degree of Doctor of Let-

ters (Honoris Causa) in recognition of their remarkable contributions to the nation. Mr. Mylswamy Annadurai, Project Director of Chandrayaan-I, Indian Space Research Organisation was conferred with Degree of Doctor of Sciences (Honoris Causa) for his contribution to the field of science and technology.

A total number of 15,046 degrees were awarded during

the convocation. This included 56 PhDs, 24 M.Phils, 4,939 masters, 8,847 bachelors, 1,180 diplomas, 220 gold medals and 85 prize winners.

Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. J.A.K. Tareen elaborated upon the steps and actions taken by the University to accomplish new goals in the academic sphere.

Suja Das
Mass Communication

Puducherry celebrates Independence Day

In Puducherry



Puducherry: India's 62nd Independence Day was celebrated at Indira Gandhi Stadium on August 15. Chief Minister, Thiru Vaithilingam hoisted the flag and awarded medals to the contingents of Police, Army, Navy, Air Force and Departments of Health, Family Welfare and Social Work for meritorious service. The event commenced with a performance by the Police Band.

The Chief Minister highlighted the need for secular government rule in the state. He touched upon various developmental programmes for Agriculture, Fisheries, Education and Health Awareness. He added that efficient measures are being taken to prevent swine flu and effective treatment is being given.

The marchpast by various con-

tingents of armed police, traffic and civil police, IRB, women police, home guards, fire service, ex-servicemen, NCC, scouts, guides, NSS and various school children added colour to the event.

V. Nathy
Mass Communication

On campus



Prof. Tareen hoists the flag.
Photo: Jitendriya Jena

Puducherry: Vice-Chancellor, Prof. J.A.K. Tareen, Registrar S. Loganathan, faculty and students of Pondicherry University assembled to celebrate the 62nd Independence Day at the B.R. Ambedkar building. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice Chancellor said that each citizen plays a crucial role in the building of a nation. "A country with the largest human resources and technical efficiency will excel in the near future," he averred.

He urged all the students to achieve their goals and contribute to the development of the nation.

Jitendriya Jena
Mass Communication



The Inkpot

Greetings to our readers in the new academic year. We are just coming out of hibernation after a lengthy and sweaty summer and the ending of another University year. We are gradually beginning to get our bearings and kick-starting the engines of creation again. Adrenaline rushes, collective frenzy, flashes of inspiration and waves of frustration have characterised this issue of THE INQUIRER, as always.

It has all our regular columns

and brings you a varied spread of reading matter that will keep you immersed for at least a couple of hours. The content for this one has mostly been produced by our sophomores, now quite seasoned journalists in their own right.

Our new batch has just joined us and will soon begin to grace our media lab with their presence, contributions and creative fire. You will see them large as life in forthcoming issues -

engaging, entertaining, provoking and informing you in equal measures.

So sit back and enjoy this issue of THE INQUIRER that I take pride to present. And continue to send us your opinions, comments and features at puinquirer@gmail.com. Remember, this is an open playground for the creative. It has no entry barriers, save those of talent and imagination.

Radhika Khanna
Editor

Campus Round-up



The Department of Politics and International Studies of Pondicherry University, in collaboration with the School of Social Sciences of Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi organised a two day national seminar on Aug. 27-28. The topic of the seminar was India's Foreign Policy: Continuity and Changes.

The Department of Tourism Studies, School of Management in association with the South India Hotel and Restaurant Association (SIHRA) took a step forward in organising a one day national seminar on 'Crises Management – The Challenge of Tourism & Hospitality' on April 30. This was to deliberate upon many underlying issues and challenges of the global tourism industry vis-à-vis the Indian Tourism sector.

The Department of International Business, in collaboration with the National Stock Exchange of India Limited, Mumbai, organised a two-day faculty development programme on 'Capital and Derivatives Markets' on April 17 -18. Faculty members teaching Management, Commerce, Economics and other allied subjects participated in this programme.

A national seminar on 'The Role of Fitness in Enhancing the Quality of Life' was organised by the Department of Physical Education and Sports on April 3-4. M.P.Ed., M.Phil and Ph.D scholars participated in this seminar.

A workshop on 'The Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands – The Role of Youth in Conservation' was conducted at Port Blair on March 30-31 by the Department of Ocean Studies in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy.

A one-day workshop was organised on 'Personality Development and Life Style Education' by Centre for Adult & Continuing Education in collaboration with the Community College, Lawpet on March 31.

The Department of History conducted a three-day National Seminar on 'Cultural Transformation from Iron Age to Early Historic Age: An Archaeological Perspective' from March 25-27.

The Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Sociology jointly organised a National Seminar on 'Youth Education, Empowerment and Employability: Trends, Issues and Prospects' on March 16-17.

The Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology conducted a one- day national seminar on 'Recent Advances in Biological Sciences' on March 13, at the Earth Sciences Seminar Hall.

Workshop on Contemporary Issues in Engineering Education

Puducherry: On July 30, the Department of Economics of Pondicherry University organised a workshop on 'Contemporary Issues in Engineering Education' which was held at the Pondicherry Engineering College auditorium. Various issues related to technical education were discussed and deliberated upon.

In his inaugural address, Prof. A. Gnanam, former chairman of NAAC and former Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University said that the government has not only permitted private participation on a larger scale but also initiated serious steps to establish government -funded national level technical institutes to improve the accessibility and quality of technical education in the country. He also pointed out that in the 18-24 age group, only 2% enroll in technical education, indicating a huge gap between demand and supply.

The privatization of technical education in our country is most welcome, but this trend affects the teaching process of tutorial colleges without any substantial results. Ahmed Khan, Dean, School of Management, Pondicherry University in his presidential address said that the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) in its 2006 report recommends active participation by the government to create more accessibility, especially in technical education. The challenge is to increase the access to higher technical education without compromising on quality. The technical education scenario is rapidly changing in terms of ownership, equity, quality and relevance.

Prof. M. Ramadass, Head of Dept. of Economics also spoke on the occasion.

*Jitendriya Jena
Mass Communication*

Reaching destinations made easy



Puducherry: The electric shuttle service, which was launched a few months ago at Pondicherry University, has made life easier for the students. These non-polluting electric vehicles are eco-friendly and efficient, making rides a pleasure. The shuttle service is a wonderful initiative taken by the University as it helps in commuting to any place at any time of the day.

Three shuttles go around the University from 8.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. The students are delighted by this facility but some argue that this service needs to be provided even more frequently and that drivers should be more commuter-friendly. Distances can be covered faster as the shuttle will take you to your destination.

*Suja Das
Mass Communication*

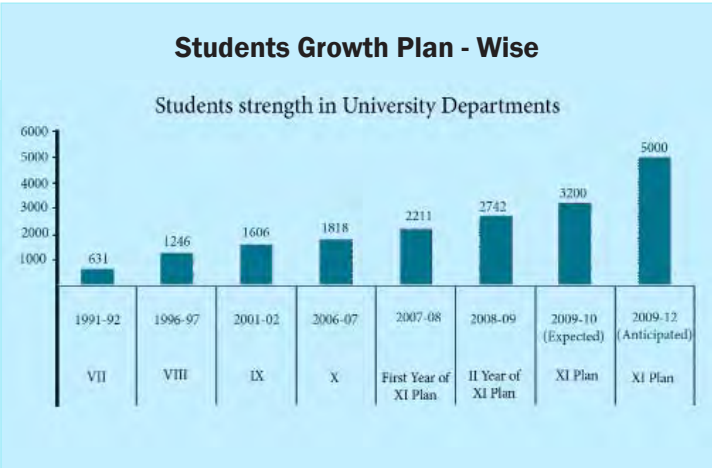
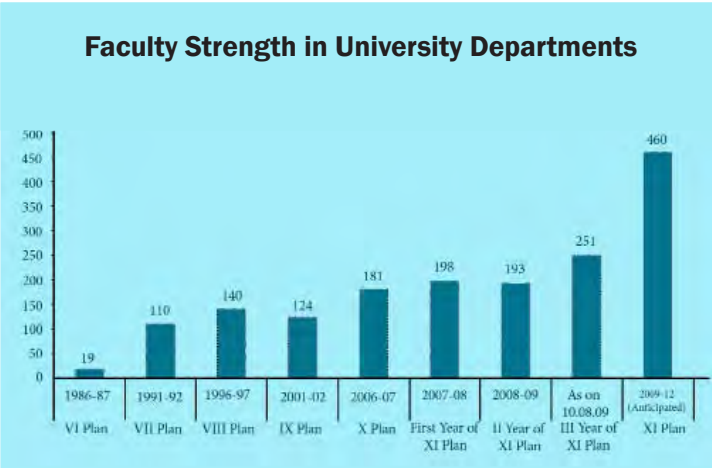
Pondicherry University: One of the fastest growing universities in the 11th plan

With its motto of expansion, excellence and equity, Pondicherry University is witnessing an exponential expansion. In the 11th plan, the built area has grown from 90,000 sq. mtrs. to 200, 000 sq. mtrs. A truly central university, it has students and faculty from all parts of the country as well as a growing number of students from overseas. Beginning with an initial number of 631 students in the

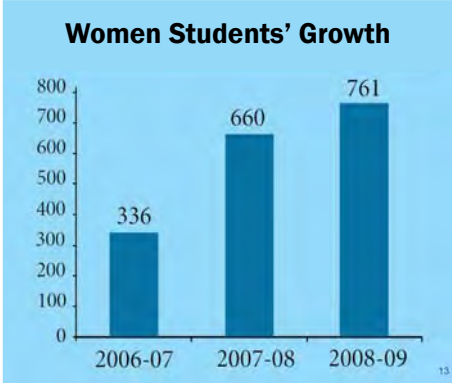
in the University departments has grown from 110 in the 7th plan to 251 presently and is expected to reach a high number of 460 by 2012. The University has 80 affiliated colleges/ institutions which teach various courses. In 2008-09, the University departments, the Community College, the affiliated colleges and distance education offered an opportunity to 53,764

09. Women are especially encouraged, through the facility of free hostel accommodation. Looking at the admissions statistics in the University in recent years, there has been a phenomenal increase of nearly 150 percent: 10,992 applications received in 2008-09 to 26,560 in 2009-10. The University has adequate infrastructure includ-

students commuting from the town to the University. It has also launched free taxi bicycles for commuting within the University. With an increasing range of programmes, including short term diploma courses and certificate courses in areas of contemporary relevance, the University continues to reach out to a larger number of students. The evening courses



Students Strength (2008-09)	
University Departments	- 2742
Community College	- 929
Affiliated Colleges	- 31399
Distance Education	- 18694
Total	- 53764



Admissions in University Departments		
No. of applications received		
	(2008-09)	(2009-10)
P.G.	- 8442	20382
M.Phil	- 1318	2340
Ph.D	- 1231	3829
P.G. Diploma	- 1	9
Total	10992	26560

departments during the 7th plan, the university has come a long way. The present strength of students on campus is 3200 and is anticipated to reach 5000 by 2012. The no. of scholars too have grown from 404 in 2005-06 to 764 in 2008-09. Along with it, the faculty strength in

students for higher education. The Empowerment of Women is given considerable importance here, and this is reflected in the growing number of women scholars enrolling in the University every year. Women students have doubled from 336 in 2006-07 to 761 in 2008-

ing 800 acres of Wi-Fi enabled campus, 15,000 full text journals available online in the central library, and 14 hostels to accommodate the increasing student population on campus. It provides subsidised food to all hostellers and free transport facilities to all

are open to both students and outsiders. The students can concurrently join and at the end of two years, walk out with a degree and two diplomas.

*Radhika Khanna
Suja Das
Mass Communication*

Creating a Knowledge Society: Ananda Rangapillai Library

A National Seminar was conducted by the library on Aug. 26-27 in collaboration with the Departments of French, History, Anthropology and Tamil as a part of the tercentenary celebration of Sri Ananda Rangapillai which began with his birthday on March 30.

On June 27, a workshop on e-resources was organised for principals of affiliated colleges. The objective was to provide a broader perspective of the information products available, to facilitate e-learning and research and to enable them to be part of the National Information Infrastructure network initiated by the UGC/MHRD.



On June 8, a workshop on e-resources was organised for the librarians of affiliated colleges. Course material on overview of e-resources, how to search e-resources – namely, e-reference, e-books, e-databases and e-journals, UGC INFONET Digital Library Consortium with e-journal access facility was given. Online demo and training enhanced the librarians knowledge and search skills. They were given hands-on experience at the e-resource browsing centre of the library.

On May 28, a User Orientation Workshop on EBSCO databases namely Academic Source Complete (6100 + full text periodicals) and Business Source Complete (3383 full text + Journals) was organised. Faculty members and research scholars were trained in search skills to access the databases being subscribed by the University.

Talent search by Hello FM

Hello FM 106.4, under its ‘College Semestar Talent Hunt’ stepped into Pondicherry University on Aug. 18 to conduct auditions. The team has been going to various colleges and universities to conduct games and contests to identify radio talent. The channel is looking for people who can run one-day transmission programmes including show-producers, copy/script writers, music masters and radio jockeys.

14 students were selected from Pondicherry University. The students were trained for three days and their programmes were broadcast on air for a day.

Monalisha Basumatary
V. Nathy
Mass Communication

Perseverance, hard work and sincerity are keys to success: Prof. M. Ramadass



Prof. M. Ramadass

Prof. M. Ramadass, former MP of Lok Sabha and Head of Department, Economics, Pondicherry University interviewed by Jitendriya Jena.

Politics and teaching, which do you like more?

Both. Because my aim is to serve the country. Academics helps in character building of the youth, who are the future of the nation. But in my view politics is an instrument of public service. There are so many examples of politicians falling for the trappings of office, and forgetting the needs of the people. Did you observe this in your tenure?

In my tenure I was totally committed to the needs

of the people. I was always with the people and had fought for the cause of the people of Puducherry. I have tried hard for their upliftment in social life. And I have raised social issues in the Lok Sabha for the development of women, the scheduled castes and tribes, the socially and educationally backward classes and the unemployed. I have also raised issues like reservation of OBCs, price-rise and budgetary issues.

Why did you join politics?

I was invited by a political party to file my nomination for the Lok Sabha. My passion is to fight for the needs of the people and to serve them. I

thought politics is the best way to get in touch with the common people. My hard work, devotion and sincerity have contributed to my success in this endeavour. Now that you are back on campus, what are you looking forward to?

I have more responsibilities this time, for developing my department. The University has to arrange for more funds for students who would be stepping into the developing world of economics. I hope to use my experience to introduce better schemes, programmes and provide financial assistance to the University. I am also looking forward to setting up new departments.

Finally, what is your message to the youth?

Life without values is meaningless. Perseverance, hard work and sincerity are all keys to success. So they must inculcate these qualities and develop their skills in their respective fields. To be a valuable citizen of this country one ought to contribute to make India a developed nation by 2020; a cherished dream of former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

A peek into PU’s English Department

The life in the University is rich with various departments and schools contributing to its diversity. In this issue, we begin this new section which is similar to the “Know your University” initiative on the campus. Each issue will showcase one school/centre/department, in order to share its working with our readers. We begin with the Department of English and request other departments to contribute for the upcoming issues.

-Editor

All roads will soon lead to the English Department ...

The English Department has always been bustling with intellectual and cultural activities, but has chosen to keep it all strictly in-house. Now we are all set to announce ourselves with flair and flamboyance.

Those coming up the southern entrance to the second floor of the English Department in the last ten days would not have missed our inviting new reading space, where research scholars and postgraduate students alike like to linger. Students are seen here flipping through the newspaper, or simply taking a break in between classes. A wall-mag that will soon go up on the walls of the reading area is going to bear the signature of our students’ creativity.

The new entrants were inducted into the Department with a

small, colourful booklet profiling the Department’s academic activities, faculty and scholars



Reading space at the Department of English

currently pursuing Ph.D. It is the first step for students from different parts of India to learn that they have now acquired a new identity, as belonging to the English Department.

Efforts are now on to draw up an Alumni list, to see how far and how high our students have gone. Already students, past and present, are networking informally through pondyunipeers@yahoogroups.co.in. Now it’s also going to become official, and more structured. A plan to develop a web portal is also on the anvil to visibilize the Department in cyberspace.

Be it in teaching or research, journalism or new media, editing or technical writing, our students have forayed into diverse fields of employment, an advantage English Department

students often have over others.

Now a Placement Cell is going to ensure that our finest

will get the best opportunities and positions in the job market, that none of our students need to face an uncertain future after their Course with us.

The English Department’s pride, and the showcase of our research, has been the Research and Journal Alert Forum that has been assiduously nurtured by the Department almost since its inception. Presenting a Paper at the Research Forum has always marked the rite-of-passage for a student in the Department, a forum that tests both scholars and faculty alike, giving first-hand experience of the rigors of research to even the newcomers. The RJAF is all set to resume its activities in the new academic year, setting new challenges and goals for scholars and faculty.

All in all, working with a vision and making ourselves visible is the new mantra of the Department.

Prof. S. Murali
Head, Dept. of English
Pondicherry University

The Milky Way!



The Ponlait milk parlour is the latest centre of attraction for everyone at the University. Ponlait (Pondicherry Co-operative Milk Producers Union) has recently opened two outlets inside the campus. One is opposite the Indian Bank and the next is near the 24 hours shopping complex, opposite the Biotechnology department. The students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff of the University can now enjoy dairy products like badam milk, butter milk, coffee, lassi, milk pedas and ice-creams. It is yet another initiative taken by the University to make dairy products easily available on campus. Teachers and students who stay back to pursue their academic assignments are looking forward to the extension of the parlour timings to 9 p.m.

Arathi Krishnakumar
Mass Communication

PU launches new Diploma & Certificate Courses

Evening courses, open to both students and outsiders are beginning soon. At the end of two years, PU students can walk out with a degree and two diplomas. These include certificate courses in Tamil and 5 Foreign languages (Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Russian) and 20 Diploma courses in areas of contemporary relevance: Functional Hindi & Translation, TV Production, Media & Communication, Women’s Studies, Library Automation & Networking, Industrial Psychology, Planning and Evaluation, Biotechnology, Health Fitness and Life Style Management, Investment Management, Rural Development, Statistical and Research Methods, Human Rights, Industrial Relations and Labour Law, Teaching Skills, Computer Applications, Simulation & Modeling, Theatre Arts, Event Management and Professional Communication in English.

Minimum duration of a course: Two Semesters (One Year)
Maximum Duration to complete a course: Four Semesters (Two Years)

For detailed information visit www.pondiuni.edu.in

Check out THE INQUIRER in FULL COLOUR at www.pondiuni.edu.in

The sad art of rag picking



The population explosion has ensured greater migration from the villages to the cities. Waste is a natural byproduct of large and overcrowded cities with poor infrastructure. Garbage piles in public places are a common sight in Indian cities and towns. Since there is no reliable system of waste management, the problem of waste is left to care for itself. Rag picking, while socially deplorable, is a valuable service whose benefits are not immediately visible. It does not get factored into our economics but it is estimated by some experts to be a mini enterprise in itself running into a few crores a year. In the absence of clear and enforceable policies on waste disposal and management, this service cannot be overestimated. This faceless army braves inclement weather, unbearable odour and filthy 'working conditions' to select, sort and sell waste.

While rag picking may not solve the problem of India's waste by any stretch of the imagination, it would be fair to say that the problem would have been worse had it not been for their silent intervention.

Unlike in the developed world where there is greater awareness on waste and its potential to scar the environment, India and other countries of the developing world, have no effective policy to tackle the issue of waste. The mantra of "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" is not on the lips or on the agendas of our policy makers, industry or citizenry. Terms like 'conservation' and 'eco-friendly' are still to permeate our public lexicon and awareness. Thanks to the media, the problem of waste has been put into the limelight, forcing people and politicians to think about it, even if we cannot do much about it. Hopefully, in the years to come more social enlightenment, political will and technologies to contain the waste problem will come about. Till then, let us treat the rag picking community with more respect, since they actually provide a very valuable service, even if they are not recognized and compensated for this adequately.

Monalisha Basumatary
Mass Communication

Lens View



Children and adults as they toil day and night to construct our buildings. We are grateful to them, for without their efforts, we wouldn't be able to enjoy the benefits of well constructed spaces.

(Photos from a photojournalism assignment by Jitendriya Jena.)



பிஞ்சு மனசு

வழக்கம்போல காலை நேர பரபரப்பில் பஸ்சைப் பிடிப்பதற்காக நின்றிருந்தேன். பஸ்சும் வந்து நின்றது, என்னைப்போல பஸ்சுக்காகவே காத்திருந்த குறவன், தோளில் குழந்தையோடு குறத்தி, ஆறு வயது குட்டிக் குறத்திப்பெண், பஸ்சில் ஏற தங்களை தயாராக்கிக் கொண்டு பஸ்ஸில் ஏற போனாங்க, அதிலும் படுச்சுட்டியாய் இருந்த அந்த குட்டிக் குறத்தி கொள்ளை அழகோடு இருந்தாள். இருப்பில் சின்ன பாவாடை மேலே சின்ன சட்டை, தோளில் ஒரு டப்பாவைப் போட்டுக்கிட்டு, கையில் அவள் சக்திக்கு மீறின கனத்த பைய, தூக்கிக்கிட்டு எல்லாரையும் முந்திக்கொண்டு பஸ்சுல ஏறப்போனாள். அவள் பஸ்சின் படிக்கட்டில் காலை வைத்த அந்த நேரம், 'சீச்சீ... த... ஏறாத ஏறங்கு மொதல்ல என்று நாயை விரட்டுவது போல் துரத்தினார் பஸ்ஸின் கண்டக்டர்.

அந்த ஒரு நொடியில் அந்த பிஞ்சு முகத்தில் தெரிஞ்ச கலவரம் நாம் ஏன் விரட்டப்படுகிறோம். நாம் பஸ்ஸில் ஏறக்கூடாதா என்ற ஒரு ஏக்கமும், பரிதவிப்போடு இருந்த அந்த பார்வை பட்டுப்போன ரோஜாவாய் மாறிய அந்த அழகு முகம், சொல்ல முடியாத வேதனையாகத் தோன்றியது. அவங்களுக்கும் சமுதாயத்தில் சமமான பங்கு உண்டு என்பதை அந்த கண்டக்டர் மறந்தது ஏனோ தெரியவில்லை.

இந்த ஆடம்பரமான உலகத்தில் எவ்வளவோ சந்தோஷமான விஷயங்கள் குழந்தைகளுக்கு இருக்கு. அவங்களுக்கான சேனல்கள், கம்ப்யூட்டர் கேம்ஸ், சுட்டிக் குழந்தைகளுக்காகவே ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்ட உல்லாசத் தலங்கள் என்று பலவிதமா

இருக்கு. ஆனா எல்லா குழந்தைகளுக்கும் எல்லாமும் கிடைக்கறதில்லை. பஸ்சில் பயணம் செய்யுற உரிமைக்கூட கிடைக்கப் பெறாத நம்ம குட்டிக்குறத்தி மாதிரி இன்னும் எத்தனையோ பிஞ்சுகள், சமுதாயத்தால காயப்படுத்தப்படறாங்க. குழந்தைத் தொழிலாளி கூடாது என்று சொல்லியும், இன்னும் எத்தனையோ பேர் குழந்தைத் தொழிலாளர்களை வேலைக்கு



அமர்த்தி வேலை வாங்குறாங்க. அதுமட்டுமில்லாம அந்த குழந்தைகள் அவர்கள் சக்திக்கு மீறின வேலைகளை செய்ய முடியாமல் திணறுப்போது, உடலாலும் உள்ளத்தாலும் காயப்படறாங்க. இன்னும் சில குழந்தைகள் இன்னைக்கு நம்ம வாழ்க்கையோட நிலை என்ன? என்ன சாப்பாடு? எங்க படுப்போம், என்ன உடுத்திப்போம்னு வாழ்க்கையோட அன்றாடத் தேவைகளைத் தேடித் தேடி மனதால் குமுறி, குறுகி கருகியேப் போறாங்க. சில குழந்தைகள் பெற்றோர்-

களோட சுய நலத்துக்காகவோ, மத்தவங்க சுயநலத்துக்காகவோ, பிச்சை எடுக்க வைக்கப்படுறாங்க. இன்னும் சில குழந்தைகளோ தாங்களாகவே ஏதாவது சின்னச்சின்ன வேலைகளை கையில் எடுத்துக்கிட்டு உதாரணமாக ரோட்டோரமாக தாள், குப்பை பொறுக்கிறது மாதிரி, ஏதோ ஒன்னு செஞ்ச அவங்க தேவைகளை அவங்களே பார்த்துக்கறாங்க. அப்படிப்பட்ட

குழந்தைகளோட எண்ணிக்கையும் அதிகமாகிக் கிட்டே போகுது. நான் சொல்றததான் நீ கேக்கணும் நீங்க சொல்லி நான் கேக்கணும்னு அவசியம் இல்ல இப்படி வாக்குவாதத்தில் உருவாகிற குடும்பச் சண்டைகள் பிஞ்சுகளின் மனதில் சமுதாயத்தின் மேலயே பயம் உண்டாக்க காரணமாகிறது. ஏம்மா, நாம் அப்பாகிட்ட போகக்கூடாதா? என்று அந்த குழந்தை எழுப்பும் கேள்வியில் தானை விட்டோ அல்லது தந்தையை விட்டோ வாமு வேண்டிய சூழலுக்கு தள்ளப்படுகிறோமோ? என்ற அச்சம் அந்த பிஞ்சு மனத்தின் சந்தோஷத்தின் பெரும் பகுதியை மென்று தின்றுவிடுகிறது. வீட்ல எப்ப பாத்ராலும் பிரச்சனைதான், இருந்தாலும் என் குழந்தைக்காக பொறுமையாகப் போகிறேன் என்று சொல்லி ஆனோ, பெண்ணோ விட்டுக் கொடுத்து வாழக்கூடிய நிலை, இன்று குறைஞ்சகிட்டு வருது. தன்னோட சந்தோஷம் மட்டுமே பெருசு அப்படின்னு நினைக்கிற சுயநல போக்கிற்கு மனித இனம் கொஞ்சம் கொஞ்சமா மாறிகிட்டே வருது. பாரு அந்த சுந்தர, எவ்ளோ மார்க் எடுத்திருக்கான். தண்டம் தண்டம் நீயும் தான் இருக்கியே! என்று, சின்ன மார்க் விஷயத்தில் ஆரம்பித்து ஒவ்வொன்னும் மத்த பசங்களோட ஒப்பிட்டு அந்த பிஞ்சு மனசை நோக்கிக்கிறோம். அதனால, நமக்கு எதுவுமே தெரியாதோ? நாம் எதுக்கும் லாயக்கில்லையோ? என்று நினைக்கிற அளவிற்கு தாழ்வு மனப்பான்மையை குழந்தைங்க மனசுல உருவாக்குகிறோம். இப்படி அந்த பிஞ்சுக்களின் தனிப்பட்ட திறமைகள் என்ன

என்று அவர்களே உணரும் முன்பே கிள்ளி எறியப்படுது. இதுபோல அடுக்கடுக்கா பிஞ்சு குழந்தைகளோட மனசு தெரிஞ்சோ தெரியாமலோ, நாம் காயப்படுத்திக் கிட்டுதான் இருக்கோம். அதுக்கு நாம் முக்கியமா செய்ய வேண்டியது குழந்தைங்களை குழந்தையா பாக்கணும். கண்டிக்க வேண்டிய விஷயங்களை கண்டிச்சு, பாராட்டப்பட வேண்டிய சமயங்களில் கண்டிப்பா பாராட்டித்தான் ஆகணும். வருங்காலத்த உருவாக்கற வலுவான தூண்களா இருக்கும் குழந்தைகள் மனதாலும் காயப்படுத்தாம பாத்துக்கறது ரொம்ப முக்கியம். பெற்றோர்கள் குழந்தைகளை புரிந்து வாழும் மனப்பக்குவத்தை உருவாக்கிக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் மேல தெருக்களிலே பரிதவிச்ச ஆதரவின்றி நிற்கும் குழந்தைகளுக்கு ஆதரவு காட்டும் சூழல் நம்மிடையே உருவாகணும். ஒரு வேளை உணவு கொடுப்பதைவிட நம்மால் முடியுமானால் அவர்களது வாழ்வில் கல்வி ஒளி ஏற்ற முயற்சிக்கலாம். குடும்பம்னாலும், சமுதாயம்னாலும் ரெண்டும் ஒண்ணுதான். இன்னைக்கு குடும்பத்துல பாக்குற விஷயத்தை தான் குழந்தைங்க நாளைக்கு சமுதாயத்துல பாக்கும், வீட்டிலிருந்து மட்டுமல்லாமல், ரோட்டிலிருந்து குழந்தைகளை, அவர்களது மனதோடு ஒன்றி அரவணைக்கும் பண்பு நம் அனைவரிடத்திலும் வர வேண்டும். சரியான அன்பும் அரவணைப்பும் தான் நாளைய நம் சமுதாயத்தை வலுப்படுத்தும் என்ற உண்மையை நாம் நிச்சயம் உணர வேண்டும்.

வெ. அறிவுக்கனி

Nature as architect



The exterior of a house in 'Petite Ferme', Auroville

The international township of Auroville near Pondicherry is a place for experimenting with the arts, technology, agriculture, health and education. Architecture in particular is adventurous. It freely borrows themes and ideas from everywhere and weaves them into a tapestry that is unique. Natural houses, or houses built predominantly with natural building materials, are commonplace. The inherently simple lifestyle promoted by the township's philosophy makes such quaint dwellings appealing to many of its inhabitants. A lot of research goes into the many possible applications of natural building materials. Many designers and builders in Auroville are inspired by native and



The interior of a house in 'Petite Ferme', Auroville

elements into residential and other buildings. Natural and alternative building materials are also gaining popularity despite their scarcity and high prices. Chief amongst these is the humble coconut palm leaf that is on hand if one needs to build a semi-permanent or makeshift structure at short notice on a small budget. Straw and reed grass are equally sought after for roofing.

These are some of the most comfortable and climate friendly building materials one can find. However, their restricted availability, rising costs and dependence on skilled labour ensures that their use is limited. Ironically, they are being used increasingly by the wealthy who are drawn to down-to-earth,



The exterior of a house in 'Petite Ferme', Auroville

native simplicity. Designers also use this element as part of a new and emerging design aesthetic.

One can see the innovative use of natural building materials and styles in the houses featured in this article. They include *Achikal*, a traditional type of very slim burnt brick that is no longer available commercially, *Manchatti* (earthen pots) for walls and ceilings, *Keeth* (coconut leaves), *Vezhal* (reed grass) and Bamboo for roofing. Granite slabs and natural boulders are used in gardens and in landscaping. These houses then become a creative mixture of various ingredients taken from Nature herself. Being of varied character and function, these materials affect and regulate the internal climate

of these buildings, while significantly adding to their aesthetic presence. Living in such aesthetically pleasing and environment-friendly structures must be a truly unique experience!

Our urban mindset predisposes us to seek sanctuary and security within the concrete confines of apartments and tenement blocks. But where is the choice, one may argue, given the spiraling costs of land, buildings and space constraints that most of us encounter today? Be this as it may, the natural houses and buildings of Auroville and elsewhere will be a reminder of a way of life that is friendly to the environment and the human spirit.

Rinoy Basumatary
Mass Communication

Plastic at your peril

The next time you go shopping and carry home your purchase in a compact plastic carry-bag, think: you are contributing to a deadly pollutant whose ill-effects are irreversible and which can remain on the face of the Earth for numerous generations to come. Plastic is one of the major toxic pollutants of our time. Being a non-biodegradable substance, composed of inorganic chemicals, plastic pollutes earth, air and water. There is no way one can 'safely' dispose of plastic waste. Every year, around 500 billion plastic bags are used world wide. 500,000,000,000. Five hundred followed by nine zeros. That's a lot of bags. So many that over one million bags are being used every minute and they're damaging our environment. Polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride, polystyrene are largely used in the manufacture of plastics. Synthetic polymers are easily molded into complex shapes, have high chemical resistance, and are more or less elastic. Some

can be formed into fibers or thin transparent films. These properties have made them popular in many durable or disposable goods and for packaging materials.

These materials have molecular weight ranging from several thousands to 1,50,000. Excessive molecular size seems to be mainly responsible for the resistance of these chemicals to biodegradation and their persistence in soil environment for a long time. Due to their relatively low cost, ease of manufacture, versatility, and imperviousness to water, plastics are used in an enormous and expanding range of products, from paper clips to spaceships. They have already replaced many traditional materials—such as wood, stone, horns and bones, leather, paper, metal, glass and ceramic—in most of their former uses.

It is expensive to recycle plastic and most end up

on landfill sites where they take



around 300 years to photodegrade. They break down into tiny toxic particles that contaminate the soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals accidentally ingest them. But the problems surrounding waste plastic bags start long before they photodegrade. Our planet is becoming increasingly contaminated by our unnecessary use of plastic bags. They were rarely found during the 60s and 70s. Their usage has increased at an alarming rate since they came into common use during the 80s. Plastic bags can be seen hanging from the branches of trees, flying in the air on windy days, settled amongst bushes and floating on rivers. They clog up gutters and drains causing water and sewage to overflow and become the breeding grounds of germs and bacteria that cause diseases.

Plastics are used because they are easy and cheap

to make and they can last a long time. Unfortunately these same useful qualities can make plastic a huge pollution problem. Urbanisation has added to plastic pollution in a concentrated form in cities. Plastic disposed of on land can enter drainage lines and choke them, resulting in clogging. Animals also inadvertently ingest plastic while chewing their food - for instance, in the stomach of a dead cow, as much as 35 kg of plastic was found. Since plastic does not decompose, and requires high energy ultra-violet light to break down, the amount of plastic waste in our oceans is increasing steadily. More than 90% of the waste found on the beaches contains plastic.

The only way out of this deadly and lasting danger is to cut down on the use of plastic, or better still, avoid it altogether.

Say no to plastic – whenever and wherever you can.

Sandosh Kumar.J.M
Mass Communication

Ease stress

Stress is everywhere, it is inescapable and it is definitely unhealthy. Some people have high hopes on themselves and try to do too much which will end in stress. One should take control of those actions that cause his/her stress. Stress leads to depression, obesity, suicide, drug addiction and other harmful behavior.

Challenges make our life colorful. Life with only roses makes us complacent. Always live in the present, do not carry over the bitter feelings of the past and carry forward the high hopes of future. Be sanguine. Always look at the positive side of life. If you always look on the negative side you are halfway down the road to Stress Ville. You must learn from your mistakes and see to it that the same mistakes should



not be repeated.

Exercise and meditation give you energy to cope with problems and help to reduce stress.

Do not give promises which you cannot keep, otherwise, you will face unwanted stress if the given promises are not made.

Do not hurt anyone by your

abusive words. Such action will fetch nothing except entering into their bad books. Always leave people with a happy feeling that they've spoken to you.

Beena Anilkumar
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Dependency, freedom and love

Attaching ourselves and depending are two habits that we have so deeply ingrained that they seem normal to us. On attaching ourselves, we create fears, amongst which the main one is the fear of loss. Fear, anger and sadness originate in the habits of latching on, attaching oneself and depending. With them our heart has lost freedom. The pressure that those emotional states generate and the absence of true freedom bring us suffering and even a state of feeling ourselves victims or miserable.



We are so accustomed to these forms of suffering that we come to believe that they are aspects of human nature and are, therefore, natural. And so we are prepared to pay the price of maintaining dependencies with stress, suffering and unhappiness to the point that some of us become ill. The natural state of the self is free and not trapped into dependencies. The suffering indicates to us that there is something not natural and abnormal. It is possible to stop suffering these emotional upsets. To do so we first have to understand our inner mechanisms. What happens when we become dependent and clinging?

When we cling-on to something we attach ourselves to the object that we are clutching on to. On saying 'object' I refer both to external things, such as people or places, and to internal things, such as ideas, beliefs or memories. However, the act of clinging on is always internal. For example, if you clutch onto and attach yourself to the armchair, you will say "my armchair". The armchair is an external object, but you hold on to it inside you – in your consciousness. You have an image of the armchair in your mind

and you attach your being to the image in your mind. You are not your mind and neither are you what is in your mind. However, one of our most deeply-rooted habits is that of losing ourselves in what is in our mind; confusing the self with what is in our own mind. What is in the mind is always only an image or an idea.

Many times the attachment originates in a bad channelling of love. Love is the energy that inspires us, motivates us, moves us, embraces us and opens us to embrace life. What is paradoxical is that many dependencies begin with this energy, the most powerful – love. The energy of love is a magnet that has a lot of power. When you love someone there is a magnet that attracts you and keeps you connected to that person, but the moment that the love turns into a dependency and into attachment, freedom is lost. Is it possible to love and be free? Or, when we love do we automatically trap ourselves and become dependent?

When you add attachment and dependency to love, that love will not be healing, because there will be expectations in it. Unconditional love is healing, and never wounds. When love is mixed with a desire for possession and attachment, you want to control the other. From this control, you exercise a power over them which means they are under submission or influence. That way, you feel that you have them and that they belong to you. In this kind of relationship there is pain.

When the people that love you begin to feel that they possess you, you do not feel free, but rather controlled. It is one thing for someone to look out for you and care for you out of love. However it is a very different thing for them to control and dominate you.

It is important for us to realise that we can choose and take the decision to allow ourselves to be

controlled and dominated, or we can choose to express what we feel without being affected by the reaction of the other and maintaining respect.

So many influences from the past, from others, from fear and anxieties, cause us to wilt. We have disconnected from the root and from the seed. The seed is divine energy. The roots are our values that connect us to our seeds, to our origins, to what really matters, to what is authentic and essential. When you are connected to the roots, a marvellous plant grows and your beauty emerges. You are unique, you are different.

The challenge is to know how to love and be free at the same time; to learn to love, maintaining respect and freedom in such a way that, in this love, you feel free and the other does too. The reality is that you cannot possess anybody and, therefore, neither can you lose them. To feel a loss arises out of living out the mirage of possession.

If we ask ourselves who has caused us the most suffering in life, it will possibly be those who we most love or have loved. It happens like that because we believe that the energy of love will come from the outside and will fill our inner void. We haven't cultivated our spirituality. Due to our lackings we cling to the person or the object of our love, believing that they will fill us, and, as it does not always happen like that, we suffer.

Love is an energy that goes from the inside out, and, when it comes out of that clean, free and silent place that rises up within you, it has the healing, energising and creative power to open the other to receive and give the best of themselves.

Miriam Subirana, Ph.D.
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International Space of Creativity
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A little 'philosophy' is good for you

Do not wait for others to begin anything in life. Begin them yourself and begin with yourself.

The nobility of your actions and reactions depend upon your wider vision of life. The nobler your vision, the greater your mission will be. If your mission is right then your actions will generate beauty and grace.

Spend time to know yourself. It requires patience, intensity and dedication to know your nature, your purpose and your rightful place on earth. You are the only person to determine your contribution to your own greatness. You will get out of life only what you put into it.

Be sure your aptitude and attitudes to life match to help you get what you desire. "Yes I can" and "Yes it is Possible" should be your behavioural mantras. Your sensory reports must not be in alignment with your environment as much as possible. Each consistent and confident step laid towards your commitment clears your path and transports you to new territories of the self. Openness of the self stimulates intellectual awakening and brings you closer to fulfilling your responsibilities.

You will never lose, unless you give up. It is easy to find reasons why things won't work and why you can't be great. Some have starting problems – they keep asking but never start. Others find it difficult to sustain their enthusiasm and involvement after starting. But achievers always find ways to make things work and, in the process, witness the birth of new possibilities

within themselves. Remember extraordinary people are simply ordinary people who achieved extraordinary things.

You are living in a universe of wonders, an embryo of possibilities. It is this that turns beliefs and dreams into possibilities and achievements. Never be your own obstacle, preventing yourself from going where you want to go. The moment you realize that you are the single deciding authority then you will initiate your success plans. The wonderful part of all this is that you can think, plan and achieve all that you want by believing that it is all possible.

You are born to manifest your inner talents and use your capabilities to execute actions that befit your singularity as a human. No matter how bleak and dim your life may look, achievement is still possible for you because you are special, you are different and you are unstoppable!

Therefore, realize that you have within you all the resources, abilities, energy and power you need to build a world of possibilities and a successful way of living. You should refine the art of living through making 'possible' the 'impossible'.

Living with a sense of purpose does not mean that you have to rule the world. It only means that you should live your life fully and passionately, to the brim of your own cup. Let your life and actions leave an inspiring trail for posterity.

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HEALING PICTURES



Photo: Iyappan. E



Photo: Sandosh Kumar. J.M

Preserving Assamese Culture



Dilbar - A traditional art form

The diverse culture of the people of Assam is well-preserved in the famous Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, a park-cum-museum located on the outskirts of Guwahati city. Various facets of Assamese life are reflected in the artefacts in Kalakshetra. The museum possesses almost all the cultural artefacts from the ancient and the present times. Many weapons and shields used by ancient warriors are also on display. The handicrafts and handloom, sericulture etc mainly practiced by tribals are

also preserved very well by the museum authorities. The intricate designs and delicate style of weaving dresses and handicrafts attract tourists from different countries and other states of India. Also the bright colours and designs of the clothes appeal to all visitors. The bright colours used by the tribals hence promote the quality of their dresses to add light to their own culture. The people of Assam are proud of their unique heritage.

Rinoy Basumatary
Mass Communication



Clay Art



Mukhas(Masks) depicting mythological characters



Bodo Dance



Flutist plays Karha Nalar Banhi



Karbi farmers tilling land

Life In A Wounded Country In Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Khaled Hosseini, the author of the best seller, *The Kite Runner*, through his other work, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, relates a poignant story of life in the war-struck country of Afghanistan. The dedication note by Hosseini in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* itself reveals that the novel is about 'the women of Afghanistan'. It brings to light the life of two women, Mariam and Laila. The courage with which they bear each dilemma that life throws at them is in itself commendable.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam is described by her 'Nana' as an heirloom breaking, clumsy little 'harami' as she is an illegitimate child born to Jalil, a wealthy man from Herat. She is deprived of basic education and her mother compares the idea of schooling her as 'shining a spittoon'. Her long cherished dream that her father would take her to his home at Herat, to live just like his other 'legal' children is crushed and this disillusionment comes as a major blow to her. Jalil, who always bestowed her



Khaled Hosseini the author of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* which is about the plight of Afghan women

with endearments is later discovered to be actually ashamed of her existence. Her marriage to Rasheed who is much older than her makes her life worse as she lives in constant fear of his shifting moods. Life, for Mariam, is filled with endurance in 'A Thousand Splendid Suns'.

Born a generation apart and having a completely different attitude towards life, Laila doesn't escape the negative effects of war either. She comes from a family which cleaves to liberal views, and is given a good educational background, Tariq, her lover, who is all the more faithful to her. These positive

aspects soon crumble and she finds herself devastated due to the atrocities of war. Her life is shattered when her parents get killed in a rocket attack; she finds herself pregnant with Tariq's child and then she gets the news that the war has taken Tariq's life. These forces drive her to consent to marry Rasheed.

The most heart-wrenching part of the novel is how Mariam and Laila come together to face the dreadful circumstances; "how quietly we endure all that falls upon us." Mariam, whose grief is unaccountable as she faces one abortion after other, finds solace in Aziza - the daughter of Laila. The domestic violence that they face at the hands of Rasheed illustrates the hardship the women in Afghanistan are subjected to.

The novel is an account of life in Kabul before and during the harsh reign of the Taliban. The perils faced by the Afghans especially the Afghan women is reflected upon. The demolishing of the giant Buddhas in

Bamiyan by the Taliban, calling them objects of idolatry and sin shows their strong resolution to destroy the centuries-old culture of Afghanistan; the atrocities by the Mujahideen and so on are evidence of how vulnerable the lives of people in Afghanistan is.

However the possibility that life always changes for the better is the point that Hosseini wants to make through this piece of literature. In a country where tragedy and unrest is the way of life; two women find solace in each others' company. An act of sacrifice by Mariam proves life-giving to Laila. Laila realises that happiness does not come without a price. The triumph of love over death and destruction accompanied by an 'act of startling heroism' is depicted. Khaled Hosseini through this 'unforgettable portrait of a wounded country leaves his reader 'simultaneously devastated as well as inspired in an equal measure'.

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'Bastille Day' in Puducherry

Puducherry: 'Bastille Day' as the day of French independence is called, was celebrated in Pondicherry at the French War Memorial monument on July 14. The Governor of Pondicherry and the Consulate General of France paid homage to the soldiers (*soldats* in French) and Combatants who fought for France in the World Wars. All the Franco-Indians of Pondicherry enthusiastically took part in the celebrations, proud and honored at being both Indian and French citizens. The Indian Army and the French Army marched side by side in a show of cultural and national solidarity.

The Prime Minister of



India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, was invited to France to take part in the celebrations.

'Bastille Day' is the National Day of France (also referred to

as Fete De Nationale and Quatorze Juillet, variously) and on this day, the French people, revolted against monarchy, and demolished the Bastille, the



infamous prison in Paris. France became a republic on this day, ending the king's rule for ever. The republic was a new political institution, a model that would

national anthems.

soon be emulated by other nations of the world.

This day is an important one in the festival calendar of Pondicherry as she was once a part of the French colonial empire in India. It was a moving and colourful moment when the flags of both nations, India and France were hoisted together to the strains of their respective

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In the clutches of the credit card....

Aadi month is a behemoth season marked by a blitzkrieg of advertisements. Newspapers are heavily laden with discount ads and sale offers. Television and radio too sing the same tune. The bait is all too inevitable for the moneyed class, who earns and burns because they could afford that luxury. There are others, most of us belong to this second league, which earn to meet expenses squarely. And the tantalizing offers too snare them. But, how do we cope with the Aadi pull?

Quite gingerly, and finding ourselves hard pressed to calm the gnawing dilemma, we step into showrooms or sale venues. As soon as we enter, 'to buy or not to buy' gives way to 'how many to buy?' We feel a gush of temptation fizzing within us obscuring our sanity. Shedding every vestige of restraint

unmindful of the fact that we don't have enough money to buy more than a single unit, we attempt to fulfill our longing.

We rifle through our purse and fish out the 'credit card'. Some of us, feeling heady and conceited, show off that I am a privileged person possessing the most coveted card on earth (not knowing that we are privileged enough to be bullied later). But, credit card is tricky bait we fall for like a shot. After buying more than what our salary would allow us to, we come out elated. And that is just the beginning of crisis.

Once initiated, nothing stops us from using credit card. We start making all purchases and we tend to purchase goods too often. It comes handy, one may suppose. But sooner than later, it will leave us high and dry. We will not realize the danger credit

cards pose to us till our bill swells to dizzy figures.

Things come to such a bad pass, when we start confronting representatives (sometimes heavies) the moment we start hedging the bank off. Persist with evasive tactics and then worse moments follow such as threats from thugs specifically appointed for collecting money from defaulters. However, a few, shrewd and tough, get away with it.

In all, it is painful and disturbing to be on the run or to have someone hounding us out. So card holders, treat your credit card as fire. That is the only way out to make sure you don't get your fingers burnt. So, shall we learn to use it sparingly...not indiscriminately? Or, the safe bet is to junk it.

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