

# The Card Readers

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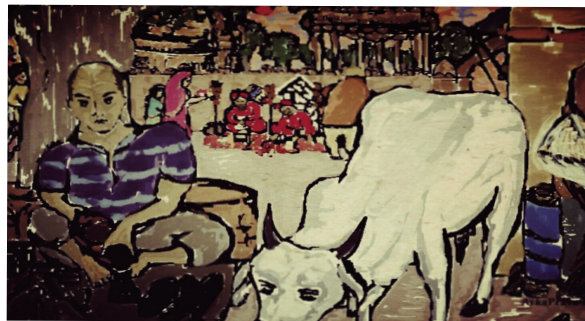
It is morning. The vast temple premise is buzzing with people - pilgrims, priests, beggars, tradesmen and many others. In the contrasting tranquillity of spreading daylight, the place presents a prominent scene of intended busy rush. This is the time when the city still sleeps in peace while the place is practically active. This is the auspicious time for the pilgrims to come and be blessed. This is the vital time for the tradesmen to start their business. They've all assembled in this early hour of the day with the aim to fulfil their desires. In this lot, there sits three card readers besides the temple wall. It is their usual beginning time. Each of them is equally occupied organizing themselves. One has already obtained a client; other one is seriously going through a scroll while the third one is quickly putting his stuff in their proper places. None of them can spare to look elsewhere.

The cobbler sits in front of them under a banyan tree. He is much sluggish than these three figures whom he is observing once or twice while mending a torn footwear. Angry words brew inside his mind for them for no such clear reason. The cobbler is a sad person. He has cluttered many reasons that will stand to prove he is sad indeed. Old and new reasons come and hover on his head and drown him more and more. What to say. He is sitting in the place where once his father used to sit doing the same job that he is now doing. Neither the place nor the profession has changed even after a complete sweep of generation. Yet, his surrounding has changed and it is beyond his ideas to fathom how it all happens.

Naturally enough, it is beyond for him to withstand the three card readers sitting to his front. That place was once empty and often used by animals or beggars. Then, one card reader selected the spot to begin his business. At first, he began by selling holy picture cards and rosary beads. Then, how it is not known to

the cobbler, but he gathered two other companions and shifted to the business of card reading. It is certainly by some power of strong witchcraft as the cobbler interprets that three of them are doing well. Very well indeed. But, he is picked as the easy prey before this deceitful world with no provision and no escape from its ruthlessness. The cobbler has cursed himself in numerous ways but even his curses are damn useless.

He relieves his fingers and the footwear from the process of repeated pricking in and out. He never senses the stiffening of his finger muscles or any parts of his body. He picks the brush and readies the sole for fixing. There are so many stories of miracles and blessings that are popular in this holy place. He looks up and watches the golden pot of the shikhara shining in sunlight with his glum eyes. Priests of this temple and many other people say it often that it was actually an ordinary metal pot that belonged to one of the poor artisans who was working in the construction of this temple. Once, after the day's work, he became so tired that he slept without eating anything. Next day, he found his pot to be filled with food and gold. It now adorns the temple top, believed as a talisman. Not for him. He



thinks. And he wishes to forget it fast. Once before, he seriously prayed. But, not anymore. He has nothing to ask from that ornate pot again. In many ways, he urged his upliftment and they all resulted as a torture to his soul. Now, he has submitted. Let him fix the sole and wait for other customers.

".....Its the matter of at least three four months....that I count....You will outfox your rivals if you play safe....."

Few pieces of sermons from front reach cobbler's ears. A shade of defeated smile floats on his face. They certainly have the skill to entice the world. He knows well that his wits or abilities are too commonplace and he is incapable to hide or die to erase this shame. He remembers the day when he came to these card readers to reveal his endless worries and sort a quick remedy. He saw their unmoved faces that day. Quickly, one of the card readers mentioned him to go for a better option that he could find. He was actually thinking to join a local shoe factory those days. So, he followed their opinion.

On his first day, he stood puzzled looking here and there to grasp the exact work that he was called for. He felt abandoned, stifled and scared. He saw people working with shoes, yet he felt a strange apathy growing and swelling inside him. After a long time, he was called and questioned on his skill sets. He could not recount what he said in response. He was allotted in some part time work and allowed to get it done from his home. He returned with a pack of shoe parts and found his family to become little relieved and cheery with what he told them. His wife cooked his favourite plate that night. His son was

eager to do what he brought back home. He, in turn, suddenly slapped his son when he was patterning. That night, he stayed out of his home.

--The cobbler remained in home to work for a few days and returned the completed set to his employer. He was paid and given more works. He passed the working men in that factory and returned home with a fresh pack. He suddenly felt sick and disturbed with his own tools. A perplexing pain

was pinching hard in him and he wanted to move out of everything around him. He let his son do his work that he brought from that factory. He even spent some time to show what to do with those shoe parts. The cobbler decided to go back to his ancestral workplace.

So, when he returned to the temple under the old banyan tree, he saw a tiny boy loudly chanting scriptures and explaining what they mean placing himself easily on his working box that he left there locked. The cobbler felt puzzled for sometimes. Then, he went ahead and stopped the boy's humming, but the boy was obstinate. He refused to let the cobbler sit in his place. A little skirmish broke in, in which the tiny boy was supported by the card readers and the cobbler left alone. Still, it was settled at last and the cobbler got back his position. But, the bitterness of the incident never left him. "Are the shoes ready?" The cobbler looks up. There is a man. A woman and a child are standing behind him.

".....I had sent a pair of sneakers yesterday...." The man elaborates.

".....Oh...Yes, Sahib....." Cobbler reciprocates in answer.

".....Keep it to dry for the day....." Cobbler gives the man his sneakers and says. "What do you mean?" Cobbler hears the man's disturbed voice.

"I need them today....I told that boy to say you so yesterday....." The man states.

".....Yes, he told me that you'll be coming today to take them back....." Cobbler reverts.

".....Then, why you haven't dried them yesterday...you....fool....." The man speaks in a raised temper.

".....Sahib....I do not keep anyone's shoes to dry here.....And the boy never mentioned that you need them to wear today...." Cobbler raises his voice too.

".....Now, this is simply a good nonsense.....And I'm not going pay you for this.....Put it clearly inside your mind.....I needed the shoes today only....You damn idiot.....I'm not going to take them

back....." Fury of the man exceeds beyond limits. The woman from behind comes ahead to console him promptly.

".....You know that I'm very comfortable with those sneakers....And we have to travel a lot today.....You know that....." The man seems difficult.

".....I'm not going to take them back....." The angry man turns around and the family follows.

".....Sahib....give me money....." Cobbler shouts.

".....Don't make me kick you.....You filthy rat.....Take the shoes....I don't care....Take them and sell them.....That's your business I know....." The man struggles hard to unwind his wife's grasp but is dragged away.

A money is pushed in the hand of the cobbler and the family leaves the spot. The cobbler sits still and watches them go. The sneakers lay in his front.

".....Now, look here Sire.....Your obstructions are mainly coming since your mind is so easily shifted toward silly things.....These are not going to help you in anyway.....You've to consider yourself first.....Otherwise, you'll miss the vital things that are coming your way and going by without getting your attention....." Words enter through cobbler's ears. One card reader is making a curious customer look away from him and concentrate to the reader's depictions.

".....Yes....Yes....People's troubles are always silly and funny for you....Have the least shame of not making them parts of your show....." The cobbler growls suddenly.

".....Talking to me.....?" The reader stops and questions. ".....Yes....You....." The cobbler growls again.

".....See....Better for you to do your own work and don't spoil our time....." The card reader becomes stern.

".....And everything else is just stupid to be your prey....." Cobbler's voice becomes equally stern.

".....Are you mad or what.....We'd told you earlier to leave from this place if you have any problem with us....Anyway, forget..Better



let's work and not talk....." The reader snaps.

".....I know that's what you three want....But, know it clearly that this is my father's place and I won't leave from here.....Spread bad words or trouble me, I don't care....But let's see how you can make me leave this place....." The Cobbler stands up straight, picks up one sneaker and throws it instantly toward the card reader. The shoe lands directly over the cards arranged in front of the reader. It was certainly a loud event much more in its intensity than the prayer bells reverberating in the temple core at that time. But, they all diminished too leaving some unsettled interesting rumours - criminal, communal, commercial and others.

## Synopsis:

The story is about a poor common man whose frustration breaks the control of his mind and results in an abrupt unusual reaction that never finds a defined conclusion through people's opinions.

Arkprava Das, Science Editor and Animation Script Writer for Educational Publishing by profession, has contributed several creative and technical contents of ecards, blogs, articles, for various clients whom she served in her career.

Coming from Science and Multimedia background, she is involved in learning and editing. As an amateur writer, Arkprava Das has worked on many articles, poetries and short stories. Her creative thoughts explore various corners of world and even more. Personally, she is innovative and adventurous and through her works, she wishes to impart optimism to her readers, of all age groups.

## Earthen Lamps lit to remember Pratap

Udaipur: A seven-day program organized on the 480th birth anniversary of Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap, in partnership with Mewar Kshatriya Mahasabha Institute, Municipal Corporation, Sarva Samaj Organizations, on the



seventh day of the birth anniversary on Sunday, on Sunday evening, wreathed with a wreath, and lamp on the picture of Pratap. The seven-day function convenor Kamendra Singh Panwar said that the workers of Adarsh Nagar situated on Vishwavidyalaya Marg paid wreaths and lit five lamps on the photograph of Smriti Pratap in the morning. On this occasion, activists including Advocate Hanuman Prasad Sharma, Narendra Jain, Krishnakant Kumawat, Suresh Rawat, Jagdish Gayari, Suresh Gayari, Hardik Badala, Arhan Sharma, Harshal Kumawat, Hariom Odichya remembered Pratap by paying floral tribute

## 60 food packets delivered, sweets made for Muslims

Udaipur: As part of the "Save Humanity" campaign, Ayubkhan and Nakshatramal Tank "CA," the founder of the National Institute of Udaipur, distributed 60 meal packets free of cost to the needy today.

500 packets of sweets have also been prepared & distributed among Muslims on the occasion of Eid.

## Make people aware of blood donation - Phoolsingh Meena

Udaipur: Mewar Kshatriya Mahasabha Institute, Municipal Corporation, Sarva Samaj Sangathan in partnership with Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap's seven-day program committee. On Sunday, the seventh day, donated blood, wreaths on the picture of Pratap Smriti Pratap, and memorized by lighting a lamp. The seven-day ceremony convenor Kamendra Singh Panwar informed that inauguration of blood donation camp organized at Sanatan temple in Shakti Nagar by Bajrang Sena Mewar, Rural MLA Phool Singh Meena, President of Mewar Kshatriya Mahasabha Institute Chandraveer Singh Karelia, ceremony coordinator Prem Singh Madara, Shivdan Singh Chandel, Shivdan Singh Devra, Pratap Rai Chugh, Nanak Ram Kasturi, social worker Mahesh Jain, Mukesh Khatik, Sunil Kalra lit a wreath and lamp on Pratap's portrait. Collectively On this occasion, felicitating the blood donors, rural MLA Ful Singh Meena said that the people should also be motivated to donate blood, and there can be no donation more than blood donation. Blood donation keeps the body healthy. Organizing Secretary Karnveer Singh Rathore said that women also participated in the camp in a big way and donated 40 units of blood. The workers got registered for blood donation if needed in the future. Hemoglobin, blood sugar, blood pressure were also investigated in the camp. Medical College doctors, Dr. Bhagchand Regar, Dr. Anita, Dr. Pramod Singh, Dr. Seema, Dr. Rajendra Patel, Dr. Manohar Lal Meena, rendered their services in the camp

On this occasion, Sunil Kalra, Karanvir Singh Rathore, Rishabh Singh Ghelot, Activists including Dr. Ghanshyam Singh Bhinder, Krishnakant Kumawat, Suresh Rawat, Gopal Singh Titardi, Jitendra Jain, Ramesh Vasita, former councilors Vijay Ahuja, Harish Sidwani, Rajesh Chugh, Rahul, Ashwin Pahuja were present.

Naman to Deepak Jala Pratap: - The function coordinator Kamendra Singh Panwar told that while keeping the lockdown, the seven-day celebrations were done on a small scale. On the eve of Pratap Jayanti, Mewar Kshatriya Maha Sabha Sansthan, Bajrang Sena Mewad, all social, social, religious organizations remembered Pratap by lighting 51 lamp & wreath and on Pratap's picture in their homes.

On the occasion of Pratap Jayanti, Pushpanjali has done in their homes: - Convenor Prem Singh Madara told that on the 480th birth anniversary of Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap on Monday.

## Sixth "Shree Parshuram Food Stuff Kit" distribution program completed

Udaipur: | On Sunday, on behalf of all Brahmins Group Marriage Ceremony Committee, Parashurama ration kits of ration to the needy were also distributed

Ceremony committee spokesperson Harish Paliwal said that during the ration packet distribution, social distancing was maintained, and distributors and kit recipients, who tied the mask on the mouth, used the sanitizer to maintain social distance by tying the mask on the mouth.

Committee administrator Harishankar Paliwal told that for the sixth time in the association of senior officials Ram Chandra Paliwal, Om Prakash Nandwana, Vishnu Shankar Paliwal, Vinod Srimal, on behalf of all Mewar Paliwal, Menaria, Nagda, and all Brahmin community marriage committee "Mr. Parshuram Food Stuff Kit" Was distributed. Ingredients were distributed in the kit, including flour, incense sticks, camphor, matches, tea leaves, milk, sugar, onions, rice, mangoes.



## Narayan Sewa distributed ration in Khejda village

Udaipur: Continuing the help of unemployed daily wage laborers and the poor in Lockdown 4.0, the Narayan Seva Sansthan distributed rations of kits to laborer families in Khejra village of Gram Panchayat Dewali.

Institute President Prashant Agarwal said that for the help of unemployed rural laborers, the institute has been distributing food, masks, and rations for the last 65 days. Apart from this, an ambulance vehicle free service is also being operated. Ration has been distributed to the needy in more than 70 villages.

Vandana Agarwal, who is heading the relief service team, said that on Sunday, 40 poor people were identified for ration and distributed 22 ration material kits in Khejra tribal village. Village teachers Prabhulal, Ramesh Lal, and institute service seekers Dilip Singh Chauhan and Fateh Lal were present on occasion.

# Maximum people in institutional quarantine are satisfied with facilities: Veenu Gupta

Jaipur: Migrant labourers returning to State are being kept in mandatory quarantine. Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot wants that these labourers should not face any problems at the quarantine centres during their 14-day quarantine.

A state-level quarantine management committee was formed on May 13 on the directions of Shri Gehlot to manage the facilities at the quarantine centres and Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department Smt Veenu Gupta was made the head of the committee.

Smt Gupta said that all the migrant labourers returning to the State have to be in compulsory 14-day quarantine. These labourers are screened while entering into the border of the State and if no symptoms are found then they are asked to remain in home quarantine. If symptoms are found then the person is sent to the institutional quarantine.

She said that if any migrant says that there is not much space in the house for home quarantine then such migrants are sent to the institutional quarantine. Gram Panchayat

Buildings, Hostels, Schools and other such buildings are being used as institutional quarantine.

Gram Panchayat, district administration or philanthropists arrange provide food to the people at the institutional quarantine and at many quarantine centres in villages, the migrant gets the food from home.

Smt Gupta said, "People at quarantine centres are called randomly to take feedback about the facilities provided to them and to know their grievances. I am happy to say that more than 80% people were satisfied at the quarantine centres."

The state-level quarantine management committee chief said that the state has 10,212 quarantine centres. More than 12.10 lakh migrants have returned to State of which more than 7.43 lakh are presently quarantined including approximately 7.08 lakh in home quarantine and around 35,000 in institutional quarantine.

There were 61 grievances lodged at Sampark Portal related to facilities provided at quarantine centres of which bar-

ring six complaints, rest all were disposed.

Districts including Pali, Udaipur, Jalore, Nagaur and Dungarpur have witnessed a huge influx of migrants, while Jalore, Pali, Nagaur, Hanumangarh and Barmer are the districts, where the number of people in home quarantine is high. Similarly, number of people in institutional quarantine is high in Nagaur, Rajasamand, Jhunjhunu, Chittorgarh and Churu districts. He said people who are in home quarantine are strictly monitored and those who violate it are first counselled and then sent to institutional quarantine. Monitoring of people in home quarantine is done through Covid Quarantine Alert System (CQAS) through Department of Information and Technology (DoIT). If any person breaches the quarantine, then information is received on CQAS and immediately action is taken.

Smt Gupta informed that maximum breaches take place in rural areas and 390 people have been shifted from home quarantine to institutional quarantine, while legal action has also been taken in few cases.

## Printing business should move ahead with new technology

Udaipur: The meeting of Mewar Printers and Papers Association was held on Zoom. In which the printing businessmen of Mewar participated. The meeting was chaired by Hansraj Chaudhary, president of the association.

Hasanraj Choudhary said that given the perspective of COVID-19 and the impact it has had on the printing business due to this digital printing, now printing business people will have to use more innovative technology in their business. This was discussed

extensively with all the traders. He said that the digital age printing industries have to face more challenges. Looking at this, how to set up your business was discussed in depth. He said that in the coming time, every product would be available in packing. In such a situation, there will be a boom in packing industries in Udaipur.

Chaudhary urged business people to expand their business and take advantage of government schemes.

He said that a committee of the association would be formed soon to take advantage of government schemes. In this, efforts will be made to provide one crore assistance to the members through banks, financial institutions, and Sidbi and District Industries Center.

The meeting was attended by about 50 members, including secretary Vijay Arora, & Sanjay Kothari, Ishaq Bhafer, Mukesh Choudhary, Digvijay Singh Choudhary, Ahuja Offset, Umesh Agarwal, Baluram, Pankaj Jain.

## Planted 51 water and 51 granules

Bhilwara: Activists of Kesariya Vahini of Shri Balaji Seva Group, provided food grains for birds and water to feed being inspired by



Jeevadaya on the birthday of Ghanshyam a senior RSS pracharak..

Convenor of Shri Balaji Seva Group, Dinesh Chhipa said that as per the date of the Indian Panchag today, Jyeshtha Shukla Pratipada was celebrated by planting 51 water panes and 51 water grains, for birds

Activists Prabhu Teppan, Mukesh Jethani, Nirmal Sen, Nandram Koli, Ajit Jain, Bhairu Teppan, Bhanwar Lal Koli, Jitendra Khariwal, Bharatraj Chhepa, Kuldeep Talich of Balaji Seva Group, put water and grains in parade every day. Pledge was administered to 51 families, and 200 masks and soaps were distributed in service settlements on the occasion of birthday.