

## Flora Fountain restoration stuck

FOR those travelling in South Mumbai, the Flora Fountain is an iconic landmark. This venerable fountain has withstood the test of time and has seen the passage of several decades (over 150 years to be exact!). Several generations of Mumbaikars and their descendants have gone past it, many on their way to work. Now comes news that the restoration work on the structure, which began late last year — and which often resulted in traffic bottlenecks in the area and which wasn't a pretty sight either what with the black scaffolding and all — has been stalled due to a financial disagreement between the BMC and INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), the heritage society which was undertaking the conservation. The sum that the BMC is holding back from the restorers is relatively petty — reportedly Rs 8 lakhs plus — but it has blown up into a cause for obduracy and inconvenience to citizens. BJP spokesperson from Mumbai Shaina NC says, "Any heritage structure in the city that is being restored ought to be given priority. Whether it is Flora Fountain or Byculla railway station, a cause that I am personally involved with, heritage structures need to be brought back to their former glory. I hope that the BMC will resolve the dispute so that work is not held up there and so that the restoration can be brought to its logical conclusion."

## Delnaaz for all seasons



TELEVISION actor Delnaaz Irani has been receiving compliments galore for her delicate portrayal of a woman who goes in for a second marriage in 'My Mother's Wedding'. The YouTube film which has been sponsored by an organ donation firm, depicts the ambivalent emotions the to-be-bride feels on her wedding day. The under-20-minute film, which is directed by the 23-year-old Sanil Gosavi had garnered over 2,30,000 hits within a few days of its release, and is adding more as we write this. Says Delnaaz about playing the mother's role, "Sanil was very keen on having me in the film and since I'm at a stage in life when I can no longer play the friend (to the heroine) in films, I agreed." Delnaaz says what really floored her was a remark that the youthful Sanil made on comedienne's being able to do emotional roles with ease and as a result she agreed to the project even before reading the full script. Publicity for the film so far has been primarily by word-of-mouth and social media

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In an attempt to pass their time during the noon hours, women play Kabbadi at the Central Ground in Thane

messaging but it's nevertheless resulted in a super response. Meanwhile the actress is busy with her television serial 'Ek Deewana Tha' where she plays an exorcist and is also acting in the Bharat Dabholkar musical play 'Blockbuster'. Delnaaz is also pretty chuffed with the response to the web series 'Virgin Women Dairies' where she and actor Amit Behl play parents to an 18-year-old, who they are worried will lose her virginity too early. Contemporary in its theme it portrays the generation gap between conservative parents and new-age children. Certainly sounds like a real-life issue, doesn't it?

## Happiness is vital

SOMEONE once perceptively said that humans instinctively seek joy in life and that a life without some kind of happiness, however small, is empty. Indo-Canadian author and entrepreneur Anu Vittal's book 'Create Happiness by Being Spppffy: Happy People in Happy Places' which is due for release in Mumbai next month is the latest tome in the pursuit of happiness,



which is a major goal of our times. Vittal has lived in Canada much of her life but her homeland (India) drew her back with its magical allure. "I fell in love with Mumbai when I came here. There is something about the city's vibrational energy that is so compelling," says this energetic and young-looking lady who is also a life

coach. As someone who experienced painful growing up years to the extent that she began to question the nature of life and of her existence, Vittal came to the realisation a few years ago that pain is inherent in life -- the question is how to convert it into happiness. "I realised that we are like rough diamonds and hardships polish us into exquisite creations," she says. Her book introduces a structured programme for empowering people with a proven process to create 'happy moments' in all areas of life (Spppffy stands for Spiritual, Physical, Personal, Professional, Financial and Family/Friends). Vittal's next goal, one of the things on her bucket list, is to travel to the Himalayas since they fascinate her. And though she has been something of a serial entrepreneur in Canada, she wants to cook and paint and "remain in the flow" of following her bliss.

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## Brave, talented Film-maker



ONE of the starkest films that was screened at the recently concluded Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) was director Teena Kaur Pasricha's '1984, When the Sun Didn't Rise'. The documentary depicts the plight of the Sikh widows whose husbands were massacred in the riots that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards that year. Teena, who belongs to the Sikh community, was just a child living in Ajmer, Rajasthan when the riots took place but members of her family including an uncle were humiliated and traumatised during that awful period. The fact that an entire community could be victimised, haunted her during her growing up years and she decided to discover the reality for herself. So, for a considerable period Teena filmed the widows of Delhi's Widow Colony and their offspring, relying on their personal testimony of those horrific days between October 31 and November 3, 1984. She also bravely interviewed a politician, one of the main accused in the massacre, and gave him a space in the film, even though, as she says, he initially put the State machinery on her trail. What did she discover? "We are living in precarious times. Violence happens all over the world, but when you deny that a part of your history, then it is bound to be repeated as happened subsequently in Godhra, Kasganj and numerous other places," says Pasricha. The filmmaker says that while the Sikh widows were certainly compensated monetarily, they were left out of the mainstream for a number of reasons including their own lack of education and now feel like castaways. But there's a bright side too. Teena feels that by spending her time and resources (she has funded most of the film from her own finances) "I've become a better human being by standing up for truth and justice". And she also discovered a number of stories of people whose lives were saved from the rampaging mobs by their neighbours and communities, a ray of light amid the encircling gloom of that time.

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