

## TOP PICKS

### A Thursday



Atharva Agashe

"A Thursday" starring Yami Gautam, Atul Kulkarni, Neha Dhupia, and Dimple Kapadia is an absolute thriller. It keeps the audience nailed to their seats for the entire duration of 129 minutes. Neha Jaiswal (Yami) is a preschool teacher, and holds 16 children hostage and the film revolves around the situations that she has to face.

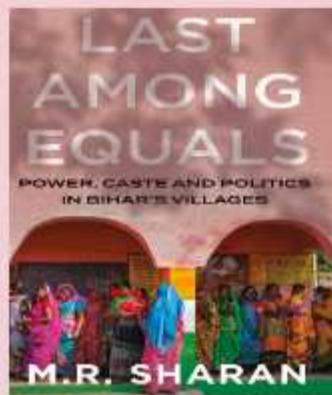
### Turning Red



Aarya Haresh Trivedi

Turning Red follows the story of Meilin Lee, a 13-year-old smart and quirky Chinese Canadian girl. The film is set in early-2000s Toronto, and it celebrates teenage girlhood, puberty. The movie is a thoughtful depiction of a child grappling with complicated issues of family, community, and repressed history. The movie transcends the story of a child and grows to be a story about mothers and daughters and their relationships. Mei and her mother, Ming are able to understand that they share the same weaknesses and have shared the same experiences growing up.

### Last Among Equals



Abhishek Anand

Authored by M.R. Sharan, the book describes the real-life story of Sanjay Sahni from Bihar, who migrated to Delhi, turned into MGNREGA activist and now is an aspiring politician. It chronicles the spirit of under-resourced people succeeding despite the odds. The book is priced at Rs. 475 and available on Amazon.

### Jhund



Krishna Barot

'Jhund' is not your typical mainstream sports biopic. In the Nagraj Manjule-directed film, football is a medium that immerses audiences into the lives and hardships of Dalits. Aside from the elements of a masala entertainer, 'Jhund' forces audiences to acknowledge their bias, as it humanizes the trials and tribulations of the slum-dwellers – who tackle a vicious life cycle but take joy in little things.

## VNWC - empowering women, making a difference

Aadhya Venkatesh

Just like every drop of water makes up the ocean, every small effort contributes towards great change. It is only the implementation which matters. Stemming from an idea to give a platform to women in the Viman Nagar Women's Club (VNWC).

A forum created by the women, for women to support women led to the formation of the VNWC. An idea conceived by Bobby Karnani, VNWC allows people across Viman Nagar to mingle and do meaningful work. The organisation began to empower women by providing them with a dais to showcase their potential. With the organisation's help, women are urged to promote themselves, their businesses, and their talent on a stage that was filled with opportunity.

The club consists of 11 founder members, with the four earliest founders being Bobby Karnani (Founder President), Sonali Saripalli (Founder Treasurer), Geeta Jeswani (Founder Secretary) and Shalu

Parihar (Founder Vice President). VNWC was launched on September 10, 2017, at the hands of the Mayor of Pune, Ms. Mukta Tilak, Commissioner of Police, Pune Ms Rashmi Shukla, MLA, Mr Jagdish Mulik and Corporator, and Ms. Mukta Jagtap.

After its conception, the organisation swiftly worked for societal welfare and is now registered as an NGO. The NGO conducts various donation drives, 'Padman' drives in rural areas (raising menstrual awareness), education drives, tree plantation drives, traffic awareness drives, etc.

With the onset of the pandemic, the organisation also began to distribute homeopathic medicines and masks to security guards. They also took the initiative to supply migrant labourers with packed food and received a contribution of over two thousand chappatis within two hours of the call being made on their platform. These food items like chapattis, sabzi, bananas, and water were sent to those in need.



VNWC's initiative during the pandemic

VNWC's efforts have been lauded by the Commissioner of Pune, MLA, corporator etc. The NGO also hopes to get recognised for their work conducive to fulfilling the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

VNWC is a free platform with absolutely no process or fee for registration. The organisation functions through social media, using WhatsApp groups or with the help of the hashtag, '#VNWCHelp'.

## 2Blue regales crowd with classics and originals

Rishab Sengupta

Viman Nagar's Phoenix Mall on the evening of the 8th of April saw the performance of one of India's most celebrated rock musicians, Tirthankar Poddar, or as he is better known as 2Blue. The much-awaited concert took place in the mall's Liberty Square, with a crowd that at its peak numbered in the hundreds.

All through the evening, 2Blue and his band enthralled the audience, which was filled with fans and casual mallgoers alike. Tirthankar Poddar has made a name for himself as a rock singer in the Indian music scene, with a musical career that spans over two decades. In 2014, he made waves when he quit his job as Vice President of an IT company to pursue his dreams of becoming a rockstar. Aside from his music career, 2Blue is also an actor, writer, and orator.

Tirthankar and his band put on a massive two-hour long performance, smoothly alternating between covers of classic rock songs and original tracks. If the loud, headbang-inducing music wasn't enough to impress, the flashing lights and smoke machines certainly iced the cake. The



Tirthankar Poddar's rocking performance at Liberty Square, Phoenix Mall, VN

band performed rock superhits such as it's My Life by Bon Jovi, Paradise City by Guns 'n' Roses, and Wonderwall by Oasis, every song riling up the crowd more than the last. 2Blue's original tracks were also met with enthusiasm and applause. Ever so often, the tattooed 47-year-old would break into a monologue, delivering inspiring messages about perseverance and gratitude.

One would usually not think of a mall as being a good venue for a rock show; how-

ever, the band's skilled musicianship, the technical team's incredible visual effects, and Tirthankar's charm and stage presence kept the audience in place for the entirety of the show.

The band ended with their rendition of Guns 'n' Roses' November Rain, after which Tirthankar was kind enough to speak to us. "I'm glad you people enjoy rock shows... especially now when most music is digital. It seems that these days the pen-drive is mightier than the sword."

## UPI - making payments and life simpler

Akshat Bhatnagar

In this day and age, transferring money has become unbelievably easy. Whether it is paying for items at a grocery store or sending some money to a friend, it can all be done within seconds using an app on your phone. There is no need to remember complex passwords, bank account numbers or IFSC codes. All you need to do is point your phone camera towards a QR code and enter your short 4 to 6 digit passcode. People are starting to forget the struggles of scrambling for the exact change, quickly calculating the balance and being physically present at the location for the exchange to take place. All of this is possible due to the development of the UPI payments system.

Unified Payments Interface is an instant real-time payment system created by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

UPI facilitates both peer to peer (P2P)

and person to merchant (P2M) transactions. This means you can transfer money to your friends and family as well as use it to make payments at stores and other businesses.

NPCI was formed in 2009 with the aim of unifying and integrating the country's online payment mechanisms. In 2016, after years of development, UPI was finally released to the public. Over the years, new features like the ability to pre-authorise transactions, set up recurring payments, and improve access on feature phones were gradually added to the payments system.

Since its introduction, UPI has solved several problems that are associated with paper money. One of the biggest issues that this system has tackled is that of black money.

Due to the transparency and traceability of UPI transactions, it has become hard for people to carry out illicit transactions via UPI, especially with large sums of money. Looking at the huge success of the



The ubiquitous UPI QR code

UPI system, many countries have taken inspiration and planned on making their own payment systems. In fact, countries such as Singapore, UAE, Bhutan, Nepal, Malaysia and others have already started accepting cross border UPI transactions by partnering with the RBI and NPCI.