

Meet sparrow man Gurusamy from Coimbatore

Gurusamy, the 'Sparrow Man' from Coimbatore wants schools to organise awareness activities for kids on World Sparrow Day - March 20. "Children should be encouraged to plant more trees and keep a bowl of fresh water on the terrace or windows of their house", he tells Times NIE



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When was the last time you spotted a house sparrow in your balcony or garden? The sparrows are not a rare sight for the people especially for those residing in cities. The rapid urbanisation in the last few decades had a significant impact on sparrows, which was once commonly found in cities and villages, and it has been disappearing from our lives. But the trend does not suit Sirumugai, a town in Coimbatore's outskirts. It is inevitable for one to spot the flocks of small brown coloured birds around the house of 46-years-old Gurusamy. The constant chirping of the birds fills the air and brightens the mood. A farmer by profession, Gurusamy reared a few chickens as pets and it has been his morning ritual to keep water and grains in bowls for them. After a few days, he saw some sparrows visiting his house to quench their hunger and thirst by eating the leftovers. Gurusamy was surprised. For, sparrows are usually very shy and prefer to stay away from people. But then he started to keep separate bowls of grains and water for the sparrows and that was the first step he had taken towards sparrow conservation in 2007. As the number of sparrows visiting him started to increase, he began planting trees around his house. Slowly the sparrows started building nests on the trees and within a short span of time there were nearly 50 sparrow nests on the trees. Gurusamy did not stop there. He had also converted old boxes into nests. Gurusamy shares, "We have been living with sparrows for more than a decade and they are like a part of our family. The

chirping of the sparrows gives us a different kind of energy and joy." He has not renovated his house for years as it would mean chopping off the nearby trees and throwing the birds out of their shelter. Such is his love towards these birds.

The entire family including two dogs, are deeply attached to the sparrows. His wife says, "Since 2007, we have not attended a function or gone anywhere locking the house. One person would always stay back to give food and water to the sparrows. The dogs have taken over the responsibility of protecting the sparrows from crows, rats and other predators." His house is a great example of co-existence of different species of animals and birds.

Gurusamy's effort has created a huge impact on the people in the surrounding areas.

People who had been shooing away sparrows or attacking them with slingshots, have started keeping bowls of water and grains for the birds. The region also refrains from bursting crackers on festivals to conserve the species.

Besides providing water, nests and grains to the sparrow, Gurusamy also makes a veterinarian visit his house to check on their health. "Every month I invite a veterinarian home to take advice on types of supplements and preventive medicines to be included in their diet to keep them safe from bird flu and other diseases. The medicines are mixed in their bowls of water," adds Gurusamy.

Gurusamy strongly feels that schools should organise awareness activities for children every year on World Sparrow Day, celebrated on March 20, as they are the planet's future. Children should be encouraged to plant more trees and they can also convert small carton boxes with a hole and place it in their balcony, which will serve as a safe space for sparrows.

Quarantine brain is real!

Caught yourself trying to zoom in for a clearer view of the tiny printed letters on the back of a product packet with your fingers? Or picked up your phone to call a friend about something important, but ended up scrolling through videos and posts online long enough to make you forget why you picked up the phone in the first place? This momentary lapse of one's judgement has been termed as 'Quarantine Brain'.



Quarantine brain is the psychological impact the quarantine period had on your mind and emotional state

HOW TO RECHARGE YOUR DROWSY BRAIN

- ▶ Begin by connecting with people, even online, mentally and emotionally
 - ▶ Make self care your priority, such as working out and taking out 'me time'
 - ▶ Practicing mindfulness helps calm the mind and nerves
 - ▶ Try to re-adapt to your pre-corona routine
- (Tips by consultant clinical psychologist Akanksha Pandey)

STAY HEALTHY

5 Game changers to your salad bowl

A salad a day keeps diseases at bay. It is packed with freshness, antioxidants, nutrients and is a great low-cal food besides being fuss-free. If you have been enjoying your salad in just one or two predictable ways till now, use these simple additions to give it a flavourful twist...

TIPS TO JAZZ UP YOUR SALAD

1 GO BEYOND LETTUCE:

Usually, when you think of preparing a salad, the first thing you reach for is lettuce leaves. But this time, think ahead of that and include roasted pumpkin, brussels sprouts, moong, boiled sweet potato and roasted paneer. You can also add pickled veggies to it.



You will end up with a healthier salad this way.

2 CHOP HERBS INTO IT:

Instead of basic seasonings, try sprinkling herbs such as basil and rosemary into the bowl, which can add new flavour to it.

4 ADD SOME CRUNCH TO IT:

Fresh salads are definitely delicious on their own, but give them a taste upgrade on their own by adding crunchy croutons, pumpkin

5 MAKE IT FRUITY:

Who says a salad has to be just veggies? For a sweet-tangy twist, introduce fruit into it. You can add whatever you have at home - watermelon chunks, peeled orange slices, apple and cut mango cubes. Chop some mint over it and you are set!

3 MAKE IT COLOURFUL:

Prepare your salad with chick-peas, lettuce leaves and boiled rajma beans and add purple cabbage, red cherry tomatoes and yellow peppers to it, too.



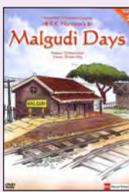
9 books for children that are equally enjoyed by adults



Most children's books are misunderstood to be meant only for young readers. But many stories written for children are deep and insightful and can be enjoyed by young minds as well as adults. Some books are so enlightening that no matter what a reader's age might be, there are always some lessons to be absorbed from them. Even if you have read the books as a child, re-reading them from an adult's perspective is a unique experience. Here are those gems:

MALGUDI DAYS by RK Narayan

This collection contains 32 short stories that perfectly capture rural life. Set in a fictional village called Malgudi and with recurring characters across the stories, the book is wonderfully insightful. Among the many interesting characters that RK Narayan created, Swami, a young boy whose adventures and curiosity is reminiscent of our own childhood, has almost become a household name.



MATILDA by Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl created magic with his book 'Matilda', where besides giving us a lovable young protagonist, he also created the larger-than-life headmistress Miss Trunchbull. Armed with telekinetic abil-



ties, the once-bullied Matilda becomes confident. While children relish how Matilda wins over evil with her intelligence, courage and goodness, for adults this book can also be a guide on parenting.

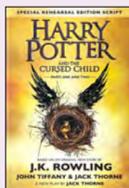
THE JUNGLE BOOK by Rudyard Kipling

This classic has had so many adaptations, yet rarely do they capture the essence of the original. The book shows us how the strict and harsh laws of the jungle can sometimes also be kinder (when the situation demands) than man-made diktats. This masterpiece by Rudyard Kipling is a constant reminder of how man is losing touch with nature.



THE HARRY POTTER SERIES by JK Rowling

This modern classic made headlines when it was published with two covers - one meant for children and the other for adults - as the publishers were aware that their readership didn't fall into an age group. Though the books are about a magical world and wizards, they address real issues and are thought-provoking for children and adults alike.



THE LITTLE PRINCE by Antoine De Saint-Exupéry

This bitter sweet fable is about a stranded pilot in the Sahara desert who had a chance encounter with a prince from outer space. Although the stories revolve around the prince and the many friends he makes, the narration is often filled with poetic language and philosophical discussions - making it a fitter read for adults as well.

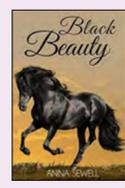


LITTLE WOMEN by Louisa May Alcott

This American classic is timeless as it has four sisters who are very different from each other, trying to understand and accept their own place in the world. The book is filled with practical lessons that are helpful for all age groups.

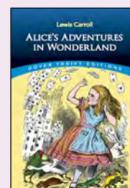
BLACK BEAUTY by Anne Sewell

This book was one of its kind at the time it was published because it was the fictional autobiography of a horse. The author Anna Sewall brought to life various unforgettable characters, both animals and humans.



ALICE IN WONDERLAND by Lewis Carroll

This classic children's book by Lewis Carroll is also popular with adults. In this masterpiece, Carroll has created a unique world, which no reader had experienced before. As the title suggests, the story is about Alice, who falls down a rabbit hole and lands in a wonderland filled with characters like Mad Hatter, Queen of Hearts, Humpty Dumpty and others.



GEORGE by Alex Gino

Not everyone is comfortable in the body they are born in and no book highlights that better than 'George'. The book is about a transgender girl born in the body of a boy. George knows he is a girl and suffers as he is born in a world that doesn't respect transgenders. This book is an eye-opener for all readers, irrespective of their age.



CAN CSK GET BACK TO WINNING WAYS?

Three reasons why MS Dhoni's CSK can challenge Mumbai Indians for IPL title this season

Former India skipper MS Dhoni could very well be participating in his last IPL

MS Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings (CSK) will be heading into the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) with some familiar faces missing and some new ones eager to impress. While Shane Watson has retired, the likes of Harbhajan Singh and Kedar Jadhav were released by CSK ahead of the IPL 2021 player auction in February this year. Chennai Super Kings headed into the auction with six slots to fill, including an overseas one. They roped in two quality off-spin all-rounders in the form of Moeen Ali and Krishnappa Gowtham to add firepower to their squad and fill in the gaps which had been left exposed last season. CSK will be hoping to plot a title challenge in what can be Dhoni's last season for the Yellow Army. Apart from the new signings, CSK will be boosted by the return of their leading run-getter of all-time Suresh Raina, whose absence was dearly felt last season. Here we take a look at 3 reasons why CSK can challenge Mumbai Indians for the IPL 2021 title.

1. Firepower in the middle-order

Chennai Super Kings were massively let down by their middle-order, which struggled in the absence of Suresh Raina last season. Raina pulled out of the tournament due to personal reasons leaving a

He (MS Dhoni) had an indifferent season last year but as we saw how keen he is (spoke to him a few times) and he is very determined to get CSK's ball rolling to start with. These are the teams who have done well and they know that once they win the first game or the second game, they can start believing again. So, it won't take much time for CSK to start the tournament in a positive manner.

PARTHIV PATEL,
former Indian cricketer



huge void in the CSK line-up. While Kedar Jadhav and MS Dhoni failed to fire, Dwayne Bravo too looked out of touch and his injury issues further worsened CSK's woes. This year, with Raina's return and the addition of Moeen Ali and K Gowtham, who can both bat in the lower-middle order, CSK will be hoping to produce better batting performances.

2. Quality all-rounders

There is some serious depth when it comes to the all-rounder's department in the Chennai Super Kings squad. For someone like MS Dhoni, who loves to have all-rounders in his XI, the likes of Ravindra Jadeja, Sam Curran, Dwayne Bravo, Mitchell Santner, K Gowtham, and Moeen Ali will become crucial to CSK's chances this year. While Gowtham is expected to feature in every game along with Jadeja, Moeen Ali can take Bravo's place in the line-up with Curran to be certain to be in the scheme of things. With some quality all-rounders in their set-up, CSK will be hoping to capitalise and not repeat the mistakes from last season.

3. Settled spin attack

Apart from Raina, another player who CSK missed dearly last season was Harbhajan Singh. The veteran off-spinner, along with Piyush Chawla, was released ahead of the auction, leaving CSK thin in the spin department. However, with two off-spinners in Gowtham and Ali, along with the likes of Imran Tahir, Karn Sharma, Jadeja, and R Sai Kishore, CSK's spin attack wears a settled look and can prove to be game-changing in Indian conditions. Dhoni would be keen to get the best out of his spinners and guide them in plotting against the opposition batsmen.

WILL TRY TO CONVINCE MESSI TO STAY AT BARCELONA: LAPORTA

Joan Laporta, who recently won Barcelona's presidential elections, said he will try to convince Lionel Messi to stay at the club before terming the latter the best player in the history of football

With regards to the men's first team, this season we are going for the Copa del Rey and the league. I will try to convince Leo Messi to stay. He is the best player in the history of football. The team is getting better and we hope it can continue that way. Ronald, we trust in you. We want to win things again and do it in style, to continue our history of success in the Champions League.

JOAN LAPORTA,
Barcelona president

Laporta was elected as the president by the club members in the elections for the Presidency and Board of Directors held on March 7. Last year, Messi and Barcelona had a fallout after the striker had expressed his desire to leave the club. However, in the end, the Argentine stayed with the club as he did not want to settle matters in court.

Milestone man

Messi on Tuesday achieved yet another milestone as he equalled former player Xavi's club record of 767 appearances in a Barca shirt. Mes-

si had touched the figure when he stepped out to play the La Liga game against Huesca. The Argentine had made the moment more special as he netted twice in the match, powering Barcelona to a 4-1 win. The 767 games played so far by Messi are divided into a total of six different competitions.

La Liga is the competition with the most matches, with Messi playing a total of 510 in the Spanish top flight. As for the Champions League, he has played 149 games, while 79 have come in the Copa del Rey, 20 in the Spanish Super Cup, five in the Club World Cup, and four in the European Super Cup.

Chelsea march into CL quarters with win over Atletico Madrid



Chelsea beat Atletico Madrid 2-0 to reach the Champions League quarterfinals for the first time since 2014 as Hakim Ziyech and Emerson Palmieri were on target to give coach Thomas Tuchel's rejuvenated team a 3-0 aggregate win. Ziyech squeezed the ball under Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak in the 34th minute of the last-16 second leg as he connected with a cross from Timo Werner, who had raced down the left after being fed by fellow German Kai Havertz. The three players involved in the goal had come under pressure after falling short of expectations since they arrived as big-money signings at Stamford Bridge last summer. Substitute Emerson made sure of the victory with a 94th-minute strike on the break for Chelsea's second goal.

QUIZ TIME!

Q1: Neymar won the treble of La Liga, Copa del Rey and UEFA Champions League in 2015 with which club?

- a) Paris Saint-Germain b) FC Barcelona
c) Santos FC d) Manchester United

Q2: Who was appointed as Arsenal's manager in December 2019, replacing Unai Emery?

- a) Mikel Arteta b) Mauricio Pochettino
c) José Mourinho d) Pep Guardiola

Q3: Sourav Ganguly was given an emotional farewell in

his last Test in Nagpur in 2008, with the then captain handing over the reins to him for a while towards the end of the match. Who was this captain?

- a) Rahul Dravid b) Virat Kohli
c) MS Dhoni d) Sachin Tendulkar

Q4: Which cricketer has played in Women's World Cup?

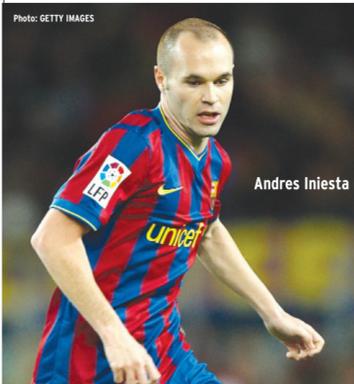
- a) Trish McKeivley b) Susan Goatman
c) Belinda Clark d) Mithali Raj

Q5: Who won the 2018 NBA Coach of the Year award?

- a) Gregg Popovich b) Mike D'Antoni
c) Dwane Casey d) Mike Budenholzer

Q6: In which year was Andres Iniesta installed as captain of Barcelona?

- a) 2015 b) 2016 c) 2017 d) 2018



Q7: Rahul Tewatia plays for _____ in IPL.

- a) Rajasthan Royals b) Mumbai Indians
c) Delhi Capitals d) Kolkata Knight Riders

Q8: How many grand slam titles has Naomi Osaka won?

- a) One b) Two c) Three d) Four

Q9: Which country has the highest number of Olympic gold medals in Hockey?

- a) South Korea b) China
c) The United States d) India

Q10: Which of the following two players have scored in most consecutive UEFA

Champions League football seasons?

- a) Lionel Messi and Karim Benzema
b) Cristiano Ronaldo and Álvaro Mora
c) Marcus Rashford and Neymar
d) Gerard Moreno and Luis Suárez

Q11: In which year did Serena Williams win her first singles major at the US Open, at the age of 17?

- a) 1997 b) 1998 c) 1999 d) 2000

ANSWERS: 1 b) FC Barcelona

2 a) Mikel Arteta 3 c) MS Dhoni

4 c) Belinda Clark 5 c) Dwane Casey

6 a) 2015 7 a) Rajasthan Royals 8 d) Four

9 d) India 10 a) Lionel Messi and Karim

Benzema 11 c) 1999