



MegaWhats 2026

PRELIMS

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How it works

60 questions for 60 points

1-20 & 41-60: One parters (1 point each)

21-40: Two parters (0.5+0.5 each)

Surnames are fine, unless a full name is asked for. Wrong first name, but correct surname won't fetch you points

Spelling variations are fine, as long as they “sound” like the correct answer

What's underlined in the answer slide is good enough for points

No trickery, no starred qns, no list-its even, nothing – just guess

Don't cheat!

The questions follow

one part each

Qs 1-20

1

In April earlier this year, Greenpeace India and some civil society groups in Bangalore and Mysore launched the #_____ campaign to protest against “stupid projects” that have left them with hands to their faces.

What late 19th century work's name did they use for the campaign, venting out against the government's absurd urban development ideas?

2

Who holds the record for the highest score (270) for a No. 7 batsman in Test cricket?

This is only because he reversed the batting order to let the lower-order batters face the worst of a wet pitch in the 1936-37 Ashes Test in Melbourne.

3

This word has two meanings in the dictionary. One – each of a pair of hinged pincer-like claws terminating the anterior limbs of a crab, lobster, or scorpion, typically curved and sharply pointed and used for feeding, defence, and courtship.

The other, more familiar to us in India, refers to a follower or a pupil of a guru.

What 5-lettered word?

4

All of these share the same two words. **Which country do they belong to?**

A payments provider



payment

Logo of RDU, a political party



A national pavilion at Expo 2025, Osaka

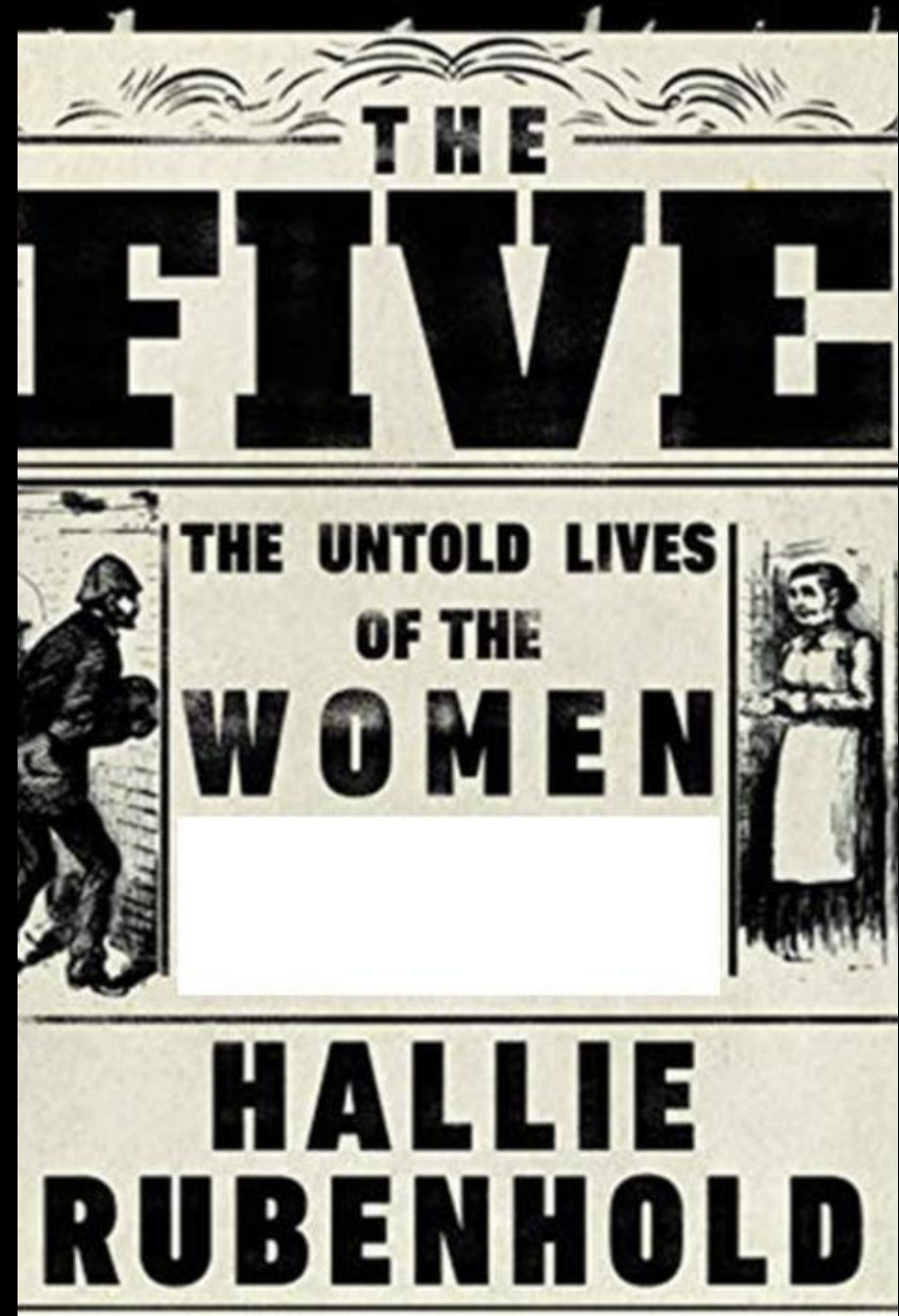


5

In this book, historian Hallie Rubenhold offers a slice of the lives of Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly.

The author chooses to look at how these 'Five' lived, unlike what newspapers of the times would have reported with headlines designed like the typography on the cover.

Who were these women?



6

Kaze no denwa, or the _____ phone booth in Otsuchi, Japan, is an unconnected telephone box meant to help people communicate with loved ones they have lost.

What do the Japanese trust to carry their messages?

You may find the answer in an Abbas Kiarostami movie.

7

Hutch the One Armed _____ Man with a Defense is 1970 sculptural work by H.C. Westermann. It stands inside the Art Institute of Chicago as a statement against the 'dominance of plastic'. Yet the artist's choice to use a specific material represents a loss of touch with nature. Rolled out a few years prior, it was a replacement that ended the need for constant care and maintenance. **FITB with the material used**, prompting one viewer to comment "I thought it was a cat scratcher".



8

Venerated as the first martyr of Christianity, **which saint** with an elite Indian connection, is the patron saint of stonemasons and bricklayers owing to the circumstances of his death?

He has been portrayed in art among others by Rembrandt and Van Dyck.



9

Along with a premiere party at an NYC Strip Club, initial watchers of the movie *Anora* were treated to a free _____ class at New York's Everybody's Nimble Studio.

Their official X handle posted- "NYC, you are getting the VIP Treatment...From now until Nov 3, see *Anora* and sign up for a free _____ class!"

FITB. (4,7)

10

Talamana is a proportional canon followed in South Indian sculptures of yore where every part of a human figure is sized in the multiples of **what element of the figure?**



11

Identify the stage name of this pop-star.

If it helps, his first solo album was released under the name Agust D, with the last two letters being a tribute to his hometown crew, D-Town.

12

Banned in 1958 Egypt, these artefacts are used in the manufacturing and storage of **what items?**



Moulds for shaping and stiffening



Carrying case

13

LA-based Rico Nunga was the first company to offer balikbayan box services in 1981 – to help OFWs send gifts to their families back home.

Soon, other companies followed suit when they figured the tax relaxations offered by the country's government made it a lucrative business idea. For travellers with valid balikbayan status, customs fees would be waived upon entering the country.

Which Asian country saw an opportunity to revive the economy using balikbayan boxes?



14

The works of **which artist** is the inspiration for this Simone Rocha designed dress?

15

The largest islands in Africa are, in order:

Madagascar (586,500 sq km)

Socotra (3665 sq km)

Reunion (2512 sq km)

_____ (2034 sq km)

Like Socotra, the missing element maybe claimed by two continents. Recently, it saw protests by dock workers (and locals), amid quite a bit of media focus. **What is Africa's fourth-largest island?**





“_____ deserves respect!
We are not second-class citizens!”



“A port without resources = insecure port”



16

Thomas Vautrollier was a Huguenot refugee who set up a publishing business in London in the 1570s. He printed a wide range of books – Calvin's *Institutes*, Ovid, Cicero, illegal copies of Martin Luther's sermons, etc.

Perhaps, the most influential book he published was Thomas North's translation of a work from its French translation. It introduced the work to the English-speaking world, but more importantly found its way to one William Shakespeare, who ended up using it as primary source for *Julius Caesar*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Which older work?

(For points, need both author and work)

17

One of the shooting locations for the filming of *Adimai Penn* (1969) was Rajasthan, with parts set in the hot desert. It was here, that an item was used to protect someone from the elements beating down upon them – the dry hot air and the overhead sun.

What iconic stylistic choice thus resulted?

18

Which part of the human anatomy has a name that indicates its size – twelve finger lengths?

19

At the edges of the Thar, where the grasslands are dry and human settlements sparse, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has set up a 'goat bank'. In case of livestock loss, a goat is offered as replacement.

The fear? Predation by one of the last remaining populations of an animal locally called the padang. Once common in Rajasthan and Gujarat, only 50 survive in India. However, recent sightings of a new male-female pair and increased pugmark trails around the scrublands of Jaisalmer have lent hope to conservationists at WII.

Which predator of the Thar is this, so named due to the colourations on a body part – long and pointy?





20

“...here dome and minaret outline the sky/ in the shadow of the golden moon/ there the tropic breeze softly sighs, as you hear the lovers croon”

This tune was written by the Baghdadi Jew composer Mena Silas. In 1936, Crickett Smith and his Symphonians recorded this to create what is possibly India's first jazz song. The band was then touring India, contracted to play at a posh ballroom for Bombay couples to swiftly scroll past, with a lively dance or two.

What was the song called, the name of which was the source of a 2012 work?

two parters begin

Qs 21-40

21

Near Ayodhya, stands Nandini Nagar Mahavidyalaya in the town of Gonda. Study desks at its central hall were removed to make space for about 1400 men and women to show off their worth. Aadhar cards were a must, while alert officials grappled to bust fake domiciles.

Hopefuls reached here from UP, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana etc, but the talk of the town was the one missing in action. Sangeeta Chhikara, a head constable from Meerut, was lined up to meet first, but that never happened. Many have called out intentional wrongs and a missed chance to instead celebrate an inspirational u-turn following a major life update.

What took place in Gonda – to decide a merit list? (few keywords)

Which person was missing? (full name)

22

The catastrophic drying up of the Aral Sea is thanks to Soviet era large irrigation projects that diverted the flows of **which two rivers** that were the primary source of water to the Aral Sea?

The common suffix in the names of these rivers happens to be the Persian word for water bodies like 'sea' or 'river'.

23

Two Dutch fellows. One has a country named for him (L), the other (R) gives name to a museum in their home country, by way of the building being his residence at one point.

Give both nearly
homophonic entities.



(1567-1625) A prince of the House of Orange



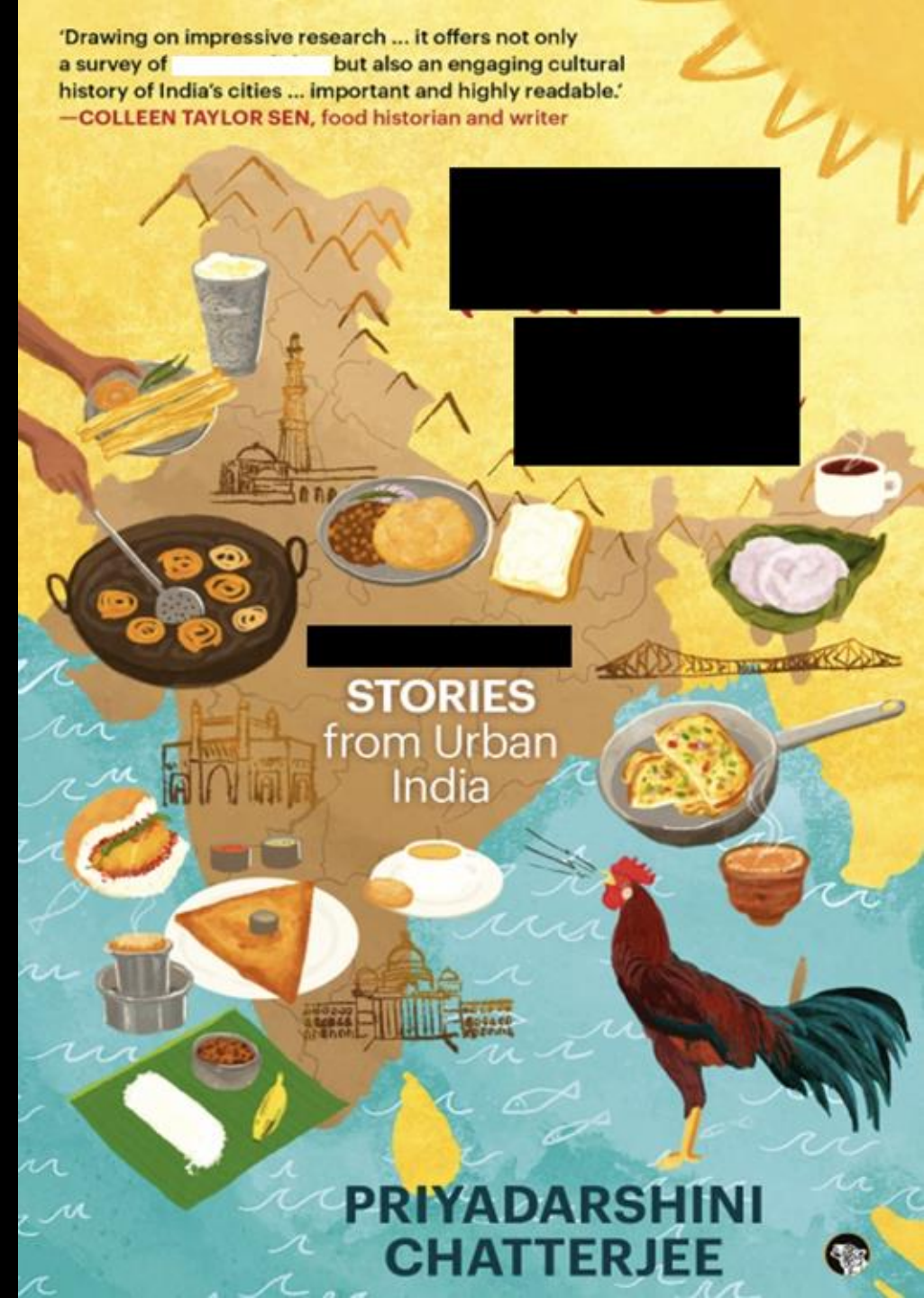
(1604-1679) Prince of Nassau-Siegen & Governor of Dutch Brazil

24

What is the subject of this book in which the author examines a similar set of dishes, their histories and eating patterns in various parts of India? (Your answer should have a 9-letter word, which fills in the blank above 'Stories')

What is the title of the book? (5,4)

It is a phrase to describe the initial taste, but also an action apt for the subject of this book.



25

One of the lesser known achievements of this late Indian actor is the organisation of India's first ever triathlon. One of the competing teams featured a soon-to-be superstar in cycling, a debutant actor in running, and Milind Soman in swimming.

The trio was practising for their upcoming film, released in 1992, in which Milind Soman was eventually replaced by Deepak Tijori.

Name the actor-organiser, who also has other sporting creds.

Which 1992 coming-of-age movie is this?

26

Based on the essay *Technologyyym Moolyangalum*, this painting is a commentary on whether tech is truly solving society's problems.

With an element at the bottom cropped out, **what older work** is this painting based on?

Name the painter who got himself into a spot of bother in January this year for depicting a semi-nude Mata Hari as Christ at the Last Supper.



27

Italian-derived for 'to touch' - Rapid and agile music characterised by virtuoso playing to showcase the player's skills on the instrument

Latin for 'flight/escape' - Popular Baroque composition in which a melodic line (called the subject) continues playing but gradually blends into a new melodic line of the same subject, but in a different key.

These two terms can be found together in the BWV catalogue as works meant for the organ, across major and minor chords.

What are the two terms?

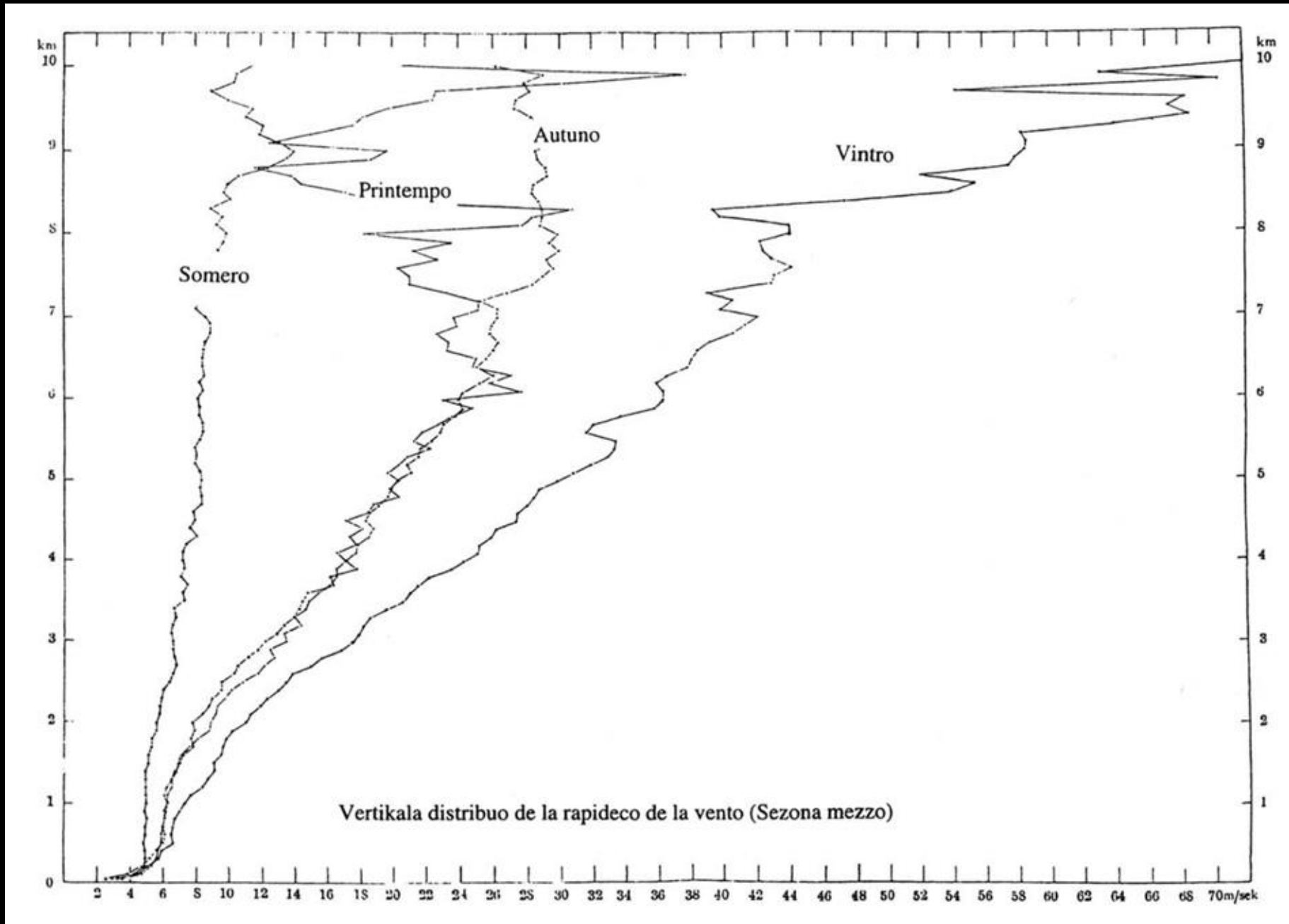
28

Between 1923-1925, Wasaburo Ooishi made over 1300 observations from the Tateno Observatory. He made climbs on Mt Fuji and studied direction, speed and seasonal changes of balloons he had launched. Later, Ooishi's discovery enabled over 340 Japanese balloons to make landfall in North America in 1944-45. As head of the JES, he jotted down his findings in a paper titled *Raporto de Aerologia Observatorio de Tateno*. However, it went unrecognised in the international community, and among academics.

What did Ooishi discover, a phenomenon likely first written about in the aftermath of the 1883 Krakatoa eruption?

Why did his research go unnoticed?



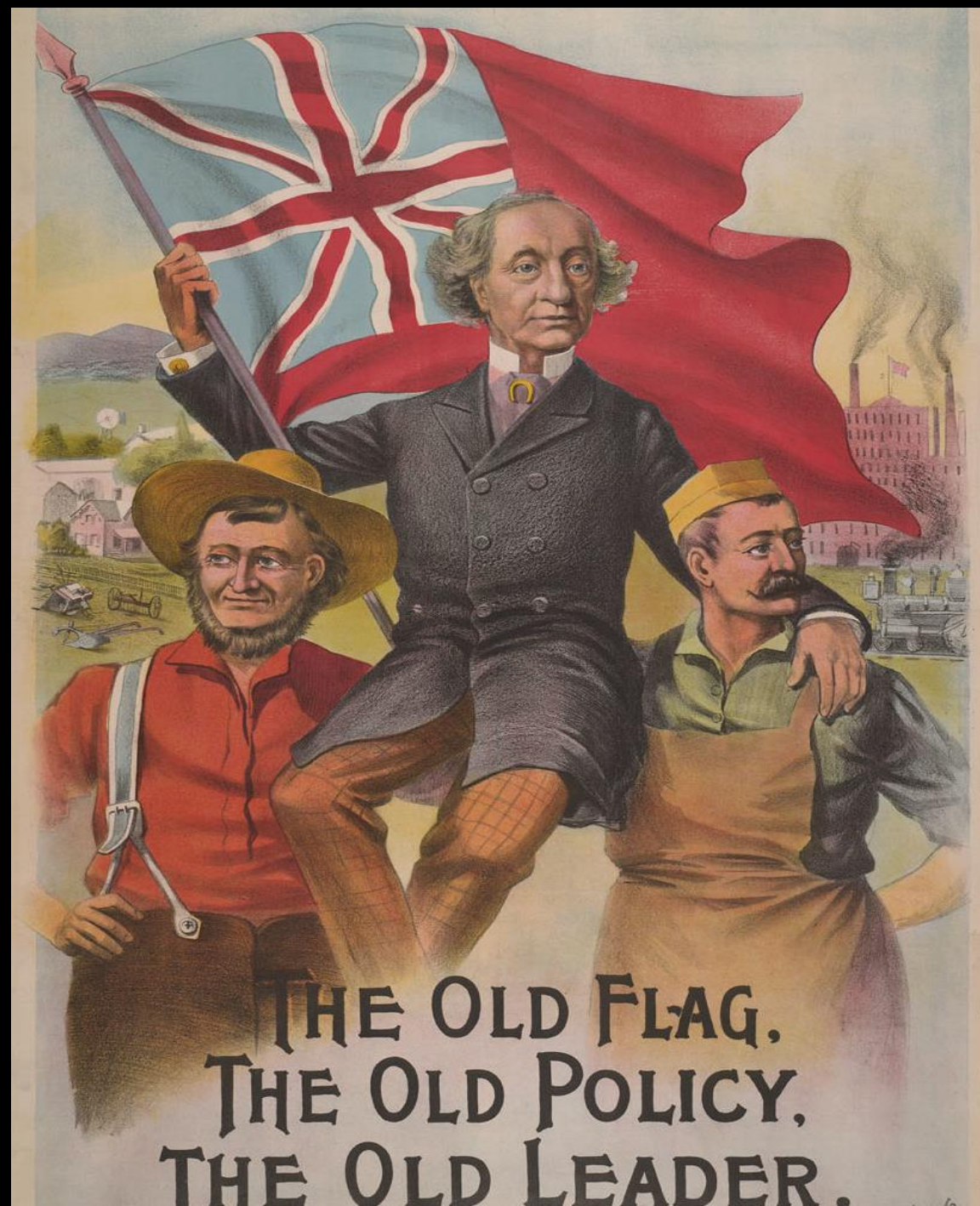


Ooishi's observations on seasonal speed of his balloons

29

Identify the **leader**.

Name the **country**.



30

Canting is the primary tool used in **which traditional Asian craft?**

The copper container holds *malam* which the pipe spout carries to trace hand-drawn (*tulis*) patterns, which is why the art is often called _____ *tulis*.

After his 1927 visit to the land of this art, **which individual** introduced it at his institution?

Understanding the lack of expertise to make the canting, it was replaced by the paintbrush (also called *tuli*). This is why the variant produced by students of the said institution was often called *tuli* _____.



Nyamplung



Cucuk

Gagang

31

Who designed these walls for JP Morgan Chase headquarters in New York City? She first came to fame when a memorial designed by her was inaugurated in Washington DC in 1982.

She was inspired for this by the nearby rock outcropping called the Dene, in Central Park. **What type of ancient rock**, forms this outcropping? Something similar can be seen in Lal Bagh in Bangalore, too!





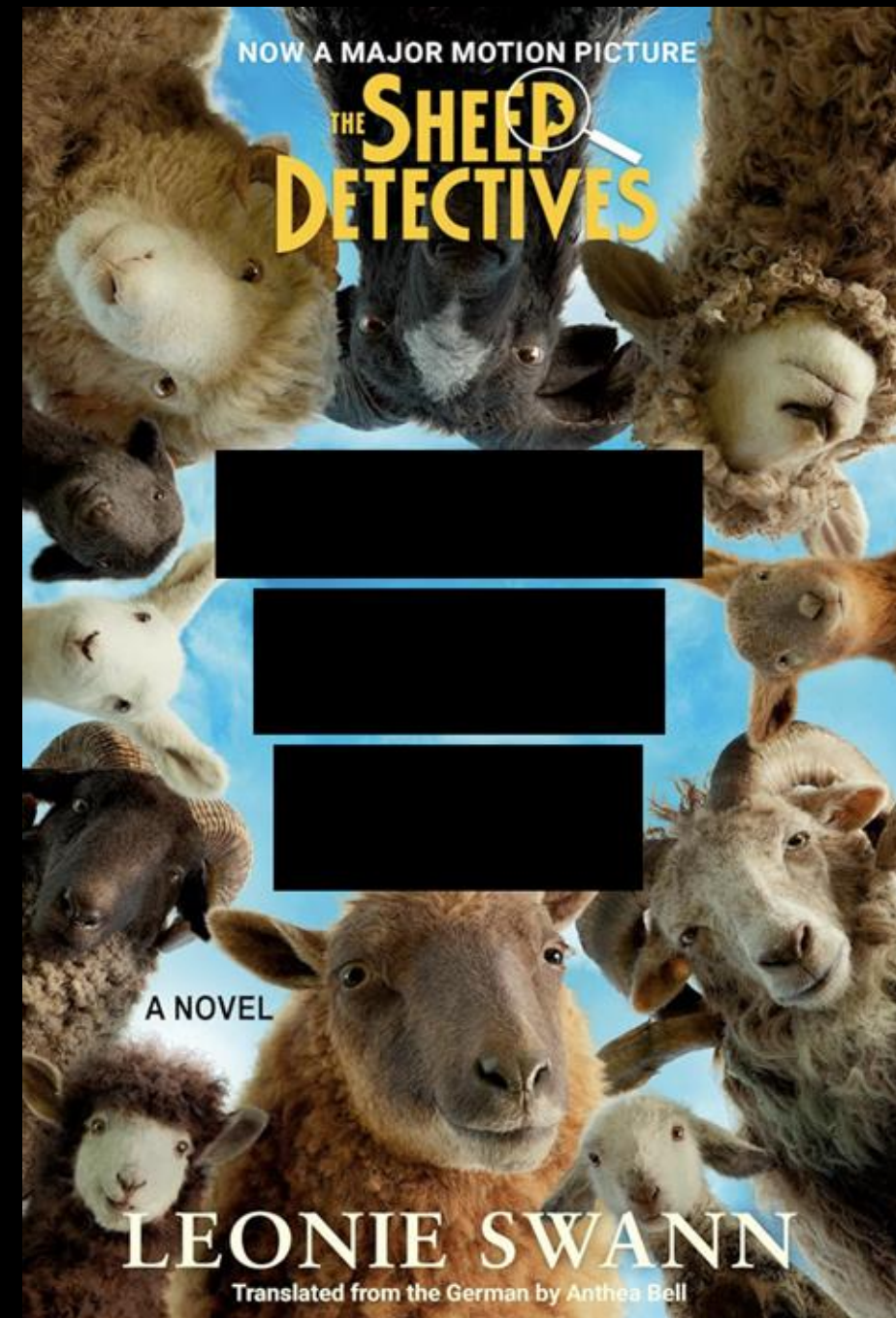
32

Sheep Detectives is a 2026 film in which Hugh Jackman, a shepherd, is murdered, following which the flock gets together to solve the crime.

The film is based on a 2005 German book by Leonie Swann that has **what three-word title in English?** It's derived from the collective first line of an answer, individual components of which were meant for the master, a dame, and a little boy.

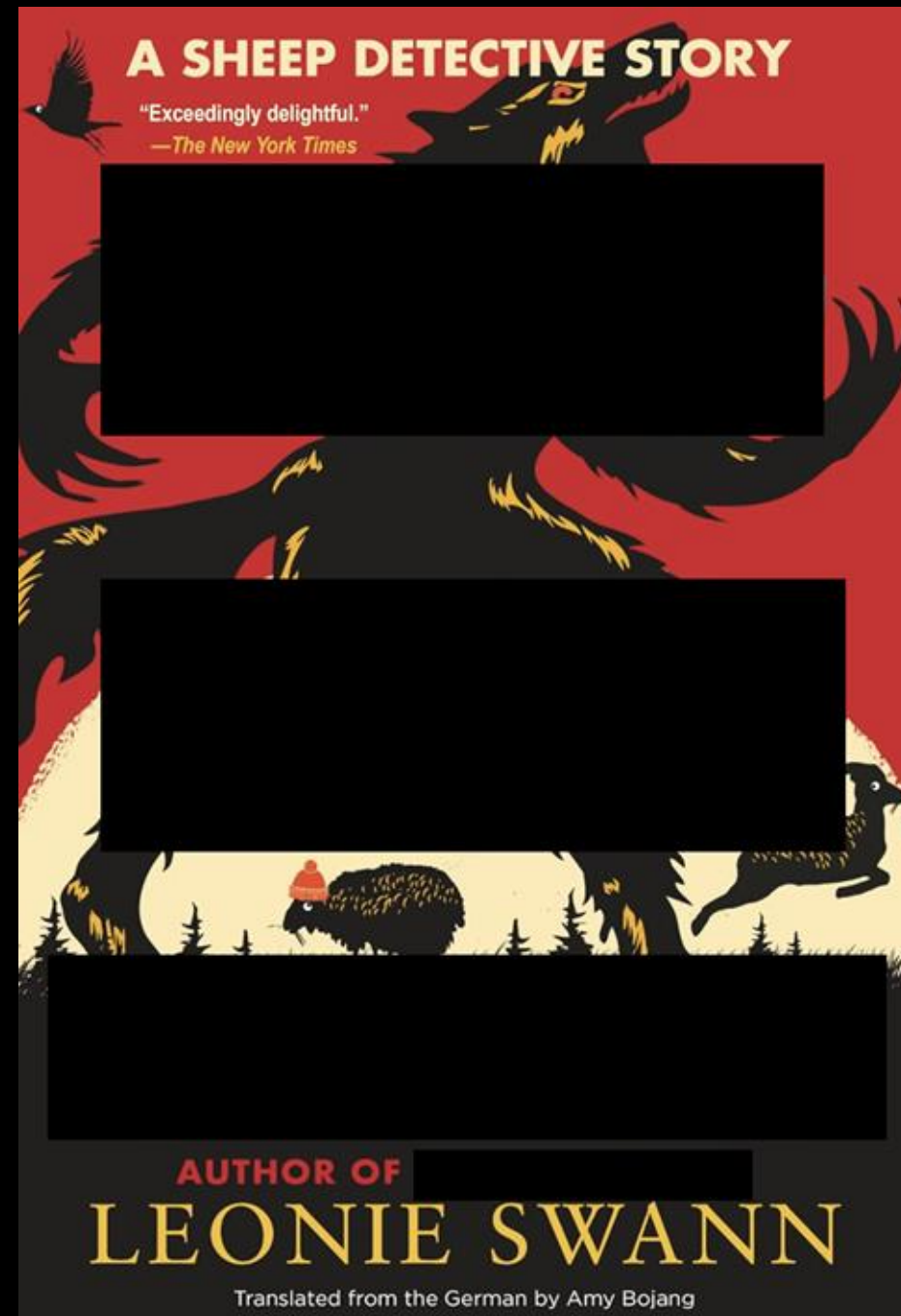
In the book's sequel, the flock solves unnatural deer deaths. The culprit likely is a menacing predator. The title makes a sheepish pun on a three-word description of such creatures in folk tales. **Name the sequel.**





>> 1st book,
derived from
the first line
of an answer

2nd book <<
Sheepish pun
on the creature



33

Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy is a non-invasive surgical procedure that uses ultrasound shock waves generated by a machine **to do what?** Following the procedure, it usually takes the body a few days to self-rid itself of the problem.

The wall of the machine is in **what specific geometrical shape?** It helps to reflect the shock waves generated at one focal point and target the problem element at the second focal point.

34

Identify the **caricaturist**.

Who is being caricatured here?



35

Charburja Durbar, a palace in the Thapathali Complex, doesn't exist anymore. It got wrecked by the 1934 earthquake. Built in 1849, it was the refuge of the last queen Chanda Kunwar, a local corruption of the name.

In 1847, she was imprisoned at Chunar Fort, before an escape through dense jungles took her over 500 km east. She spent days in hiding and later found asylum from the Prime Minister, who got the palace built. Fearing an uprising, the British resident of the city kept a watch. She fled after the 1857 Munity, as the local ruler had sided with the British.

Chanda Kunwar was **last queen/regent of which empire?**

Which person provided her asylum, a brave but rusty warrior? (full name)

36

This is the new logo trademarked by **which company** for its upcoming Roadster model?

Critics have compared the logo to **what from the world of comics?**





37

Who is this, making an appearance as the stripper named Magick in the ongoing third season of a TV show?

Name the TV show as well, whose first season saw her contribute to the soundtrack.

38

On May 2, 1519, inside the Clos Luce in Amboise commune, Francois I arrived to seat himself by the bedside. Fragile, the chateau's resident tried to lift himself up. Francois I held his head to provide comfort as he listened to his confessions of past faults. This story has been proven inaccurate, but artistic depictions have helped propagate the myth.

You will see a 1818 Neoclassical painting on the next slide, perhaps its most famous depiction. In the 18th-19th centuries, it had become a popular subject with the first-known depiction displayed at the Royal Academy in 1778 (by founding member Angelica Kauffman).

What event is being shown? You will also see some other examples.
Name the painter of the 1811 work, now housed at Petit Palais.



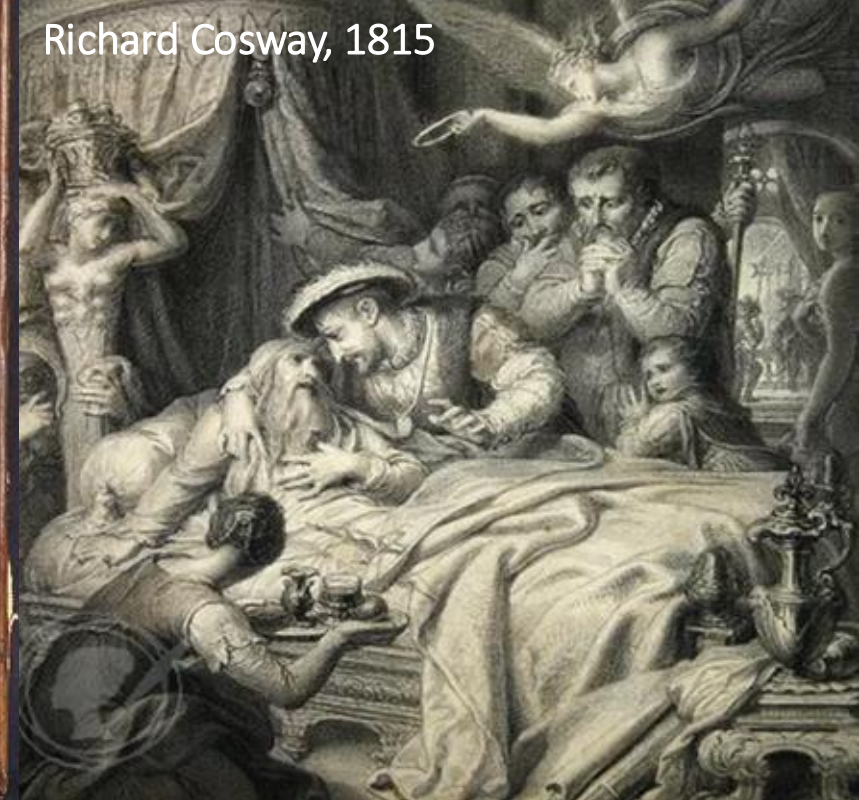


Who is the painter of this 1811 work?

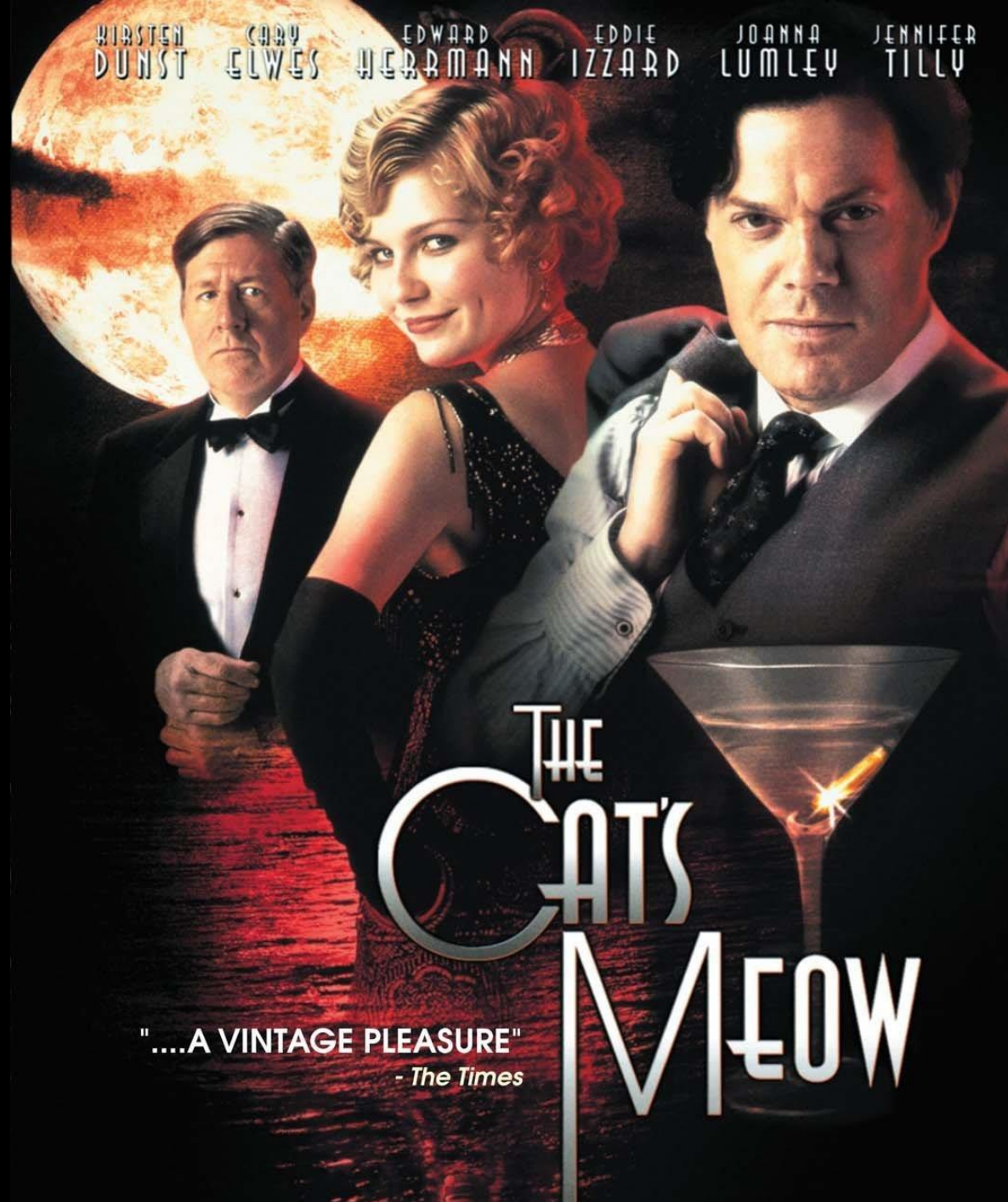
What event is being shown in all three works?



François-Guillaume Ménégoz, 1781



Richard Cosway, 1815



39

If Kirsten Dunst is playing the role of Hollywood starlet Marion Davies in this movie, **identify the two men** being portrayed here.

40



This is the *Labeo kaage*, a species endemic to the waters of **which river?**

What does the word “kaage” mean in the local language?

end of two parters

back to one parters

Qs 41-60

41

In 1888, George Melies bought the Theatre Robert-_____ in Paris when it was still being used for stage illusions. It was here that he would screen his trick and special-effects laden films, including the *Trip to the Moon*.

He acquired the theatre from the widow of its eponymous owner. The venue also fittingly finds mention in another Melies film - *The Conjuring of a Woman at the House of Robert* _____ (aka *The Vanishing Lady*).

Name this person, perhaps better known as having left a lasting influence on a Hungarian Jew.

Chile has 16 provinces, the southernmost of which is called the *Provincia _____ Chilena*.

Despite it covering an area of over 1.27 million sq kms, it consists of only two communes in this sparsely populated stretch of land – Cape Horn and another wedge-shaped claim that isn't recognised by the international community.

FITB.

43

In the southern states, these come fried. In North India, they're slow roasted to a char. In both cases, they do not get their name from a movie. Instead, they refer to the same thing in different ways.

In South, marinated chicken is fried to a deep red and tossed with a spicy masala, lending itself to a visual similarity with the added heat. In the North, it differs from a tikka in the cooking method. The name comes from whatever helps it get roasted. There's also a veg variant, made of hung curd. They are cut in shapes that apparently look like these items.

What is the name of the dish being described? (two or three words)

South Indian variant - fried



North Indian variant - roasted



Dahi version – cut into similar shapes



44

This piece by Ghanaian poet Adjei Agyei-Baah pays homage to an individual who claimed he hasn't had a haircut since 1960. He had just finished his studies in London, and had no money for a barber. The only exception to that, he said, was once "when I had my hair burnt by candlelight at Abeokuta".

Who is this poem a homage to, a person with a volume of cloud-like hair?

In The Grey Hair of

There's something mystical
About your grey hair, Baba
Not in its seductive whiteness
Your flower that continues
To bloom on high
Even in its twilight years.

Your hair is much more of a spectacle —
Rising embers that end as fireflies
Fire flights that radiate a dream fulfilled
A dream fulfilled which remains our haven
The expansive shade of the baobab tree
For generations to savour our ageless tales.

This hair indeed envisioned a path
This hair, the stepping stones of African literature
This hair whitens the dark corridors for humanity
Indeed, this hair caused a stir
Perhaps the reason it knows not a fall.

45

Brinda's (aka Tulsi) chastity was the secret to Jalandhar's immortality. Shiva slayed him after help from another deity who came disguised as Jalandhar. Furious at this deceit, Brinda turned herself into a river, and cursed the deity to be born from her, trapping him in the karmic cycle. Thus, she flows giving birth to these divine manifestations.

This is the creation myth of the Kali Gandaki, a river in Nepal that cuts through ancient valleys of sal trees between Dhaulagiri and Annapurna.

Kali Gandaki thus finds reverence among Hindus as the only true source of what? (Points only for a specific keyword)

46

Production designers sourced over 8000 jiggly items, each made with a soft, stretchy rubber to create the desired plop, instead of a hard bounce. The team had to first test. They placed a conveyor belt and a trampoline above a parking lot to see the action play out.

The results were unfavourable, leading to a hybrid solution. Digital effects would create volume and coverage. The camera would capture macro moments on surfaces like the road, car windscreen and hood, in the pool, through the trees and more. Many more then were strewn around physically.

What prop from which film?

“When Forbes listed the 40 highest-paid entertainers in 1990–91, Grateful Dead ranked 20th, with \$33 mln – putting them within touching distance of pop sensation MC Hammer. What a _____... for a band who started out three decades earlier playing in San Francisco's Victorian ballrooms to soundtrack hallucinogenic drug experiments.”

What are the three missing words in this excerpt from a BBC profile?

It also titles a 2017 Scorsese-produced documentary that examines the weirdities behind the band's extensive acid-fuelled successes.

48

Sam Dalrymple's *Shattered Lands* opens with John Simon and his commission leaving England in January 1928. However, the journey gets extended by a week, delaying the group's arrival in Bombay.

Curiously, the delay is caused due to the party spending a lot of time marveling at something that made news earlier that decade.

Why did they stop/where did they go en-route?

49

Newspaper seller Giuseppe branched out to a different kind of publishing in late 1960s. He wrote testimonials as Pipino The Knight for a fan magazine that came with their albums, thus the knight on their logo.

The album for this year has hit the markets, but American firm Fanatics will take over next, after a contract that held the glue for over half-a-century expires in 2030. **Name this company.**



50

The word “cyprine”, which literally means “from Cyprus” is a term used to refer to vaginal secretions when a woman is sexually aroused.

Why Cyprus?

51

Project CETI was recently able to capture one of the most elusive sights of the natural world – the birth of a sperm whale.

What social practice, once considered to be uniquely human but later discovered among bonobos and other primates, did the CETI scientists observe among sperm whales too during this sighting?



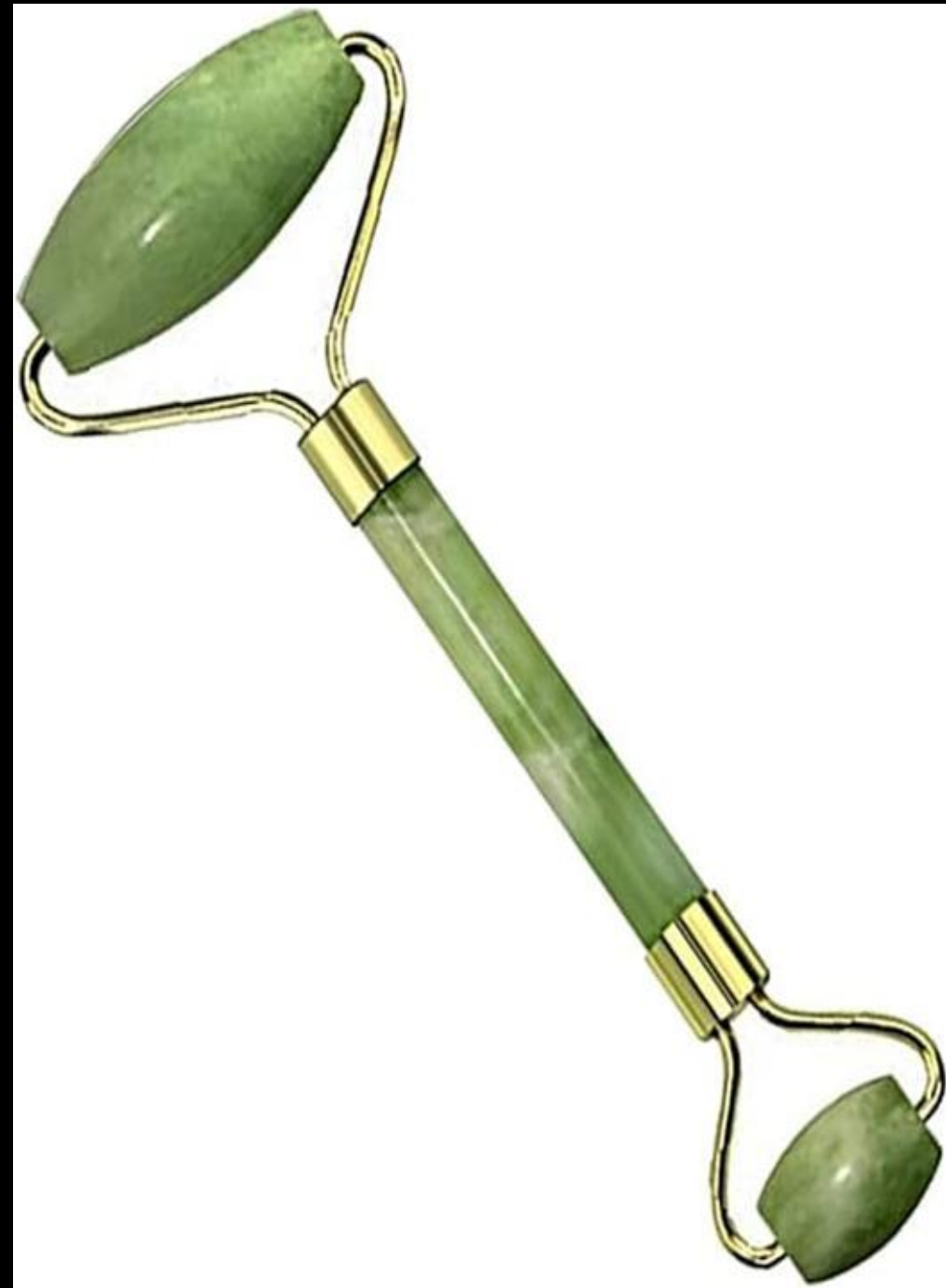
52

While Hindustani Classical music is fluid in nature, as opposed to the strict adherence to sheet music in Western Classical, **what component of a Hindustani classical recital** gets its name from the Sanskrit word for '*restricted*' or '*fixed*' as an exception in a largely free-flowing exposition within the structure of a raag?

53

Gua Sha is a traditional Chinese healing technique that has now been coopted by global beauty brands which are offering it as part of their collagen treatment products, among others.

What is the most common Gua Sha tool (4,6) that uses a cylindrical piece of imperial mineral to glide over facial skin and lift, sculpt, depuff, and improve lymphatic circulation?



54

In Tribeny Rai's debut feature, the protagonist quits her corporate job and returns to her village in Sikkim. Patriarchy steams over the lunch table in front of a prospective groom - her inconsistencies in constructing the correct _____ is called out.

The title of this Nepali-language film is thus an allegory of how a woman's identity in her Himalayan village is moulded by such domestic handiwork. This aspect is also outlined in the film's posters, within stylised depictions of its title.

Name this film (5, 2, 4), that has roped in the likes of Payal Kapadia, Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti as exec producers.



NFDC

SBC

Chalk Artworks

HAF

Kathkala Films

DALLEY KHORSANI PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH KATHKALA FILMS



छोरा जस्तै



A film by Tribeny Rai

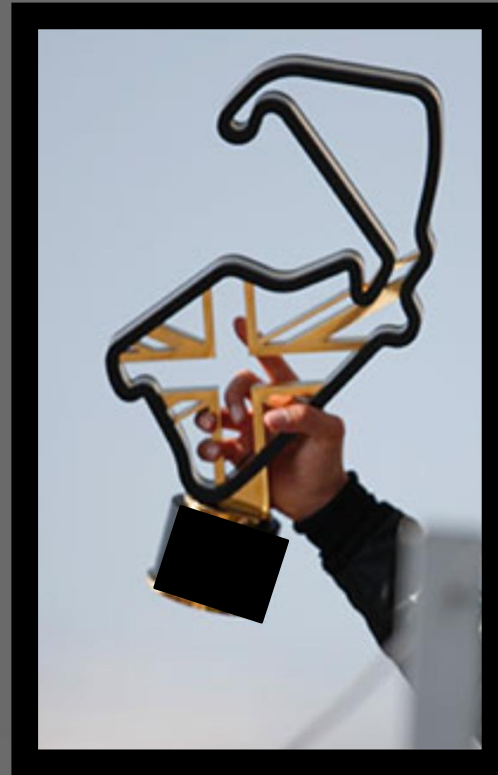
DALLEY KHORSANI PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH KATHKALA FILMS



a film by Tribeny Rai



55



In 2021, this trophy was awarded to the winner of **what annual competition?**

(inset shows the winner holding it)

56

This Indian company has a name that references its speed in service. In 2024, it dropped two letters from its name across its social media channels to help raise awareness and encourage its customers to go out and do some thing.

They could have also done the same thing selectively last month.

What was the changed name of the company?

57

Occurrences of the _____ Hand, a mild-to-serious kitchen injury, have increased over the past decade or so.

The wound is caused by the knife slipping during cutting or destoning of the pit, which needs to be removed prior to consumption. Forceful stabbing or twisting often dislodges the knife.

Which food item, that fills in the blank, causes this injury?

58

Writes Arundhati Roy in *Walking With The Comrades*:

“In Dantewada, the police wear plain clothes and the rebels wear uniform. Across the Indravati River, in the area controlled by the Maoists, is the place the police call _____. There, the villages are empty, but the forest is full of people”

Roy reveals to us that security forces in Operation Green Hunt would refer to the Naxal-controlled areas using a word that sparks an unquestionable sense of being enemies.

What word?

59

The Metropolitan design had a cute light on top. The Birmingham design had oddly shaped windows. The Lorimer had a pagoda-style flourish on top. The Burnet had a dome-shaped top and small rectangular glass panes all over.

If these were the losing finalists of a competition in 1924, and K2 was the winner, **what once-ubiquitous iconic object** are we talking about?

60

After their defeat in the Battle of Talikota (aka Rakkasatangadi), the royal family of Vijayanagara fled the capital and settled down in **which place in present-day Andhra Pradesh**, from where they continued to rule over a much smaller kingdom?

Today the town, among other things, is famous for its Korean cuisine due to the presence of a large Kia factory.