

THE PIONEER

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CITY
NATION
STATES
LUCKNOW
SPORTS
BUSINESS
WORLD
EDITS
OPED
FILMS

In light of old lamp Sanjay Kumar Bose

It is indeed lucky that we do not live in China and that my wife is not the princess of that country. If she were, that evil magician who was Alibaba's nemesis would have found it a tough proposition to get her to exchange old lamps for new. For she firmly believes in the adage, "Old is gold", and refuses to give up any of the old things in the house.



"Who knows?" she insists, "there may indeed be a pot of gold in there somewhere."

FEATURES

AVENUES
BAZAAR
FORECAST
BOOKS
VIVACITY

I do not really know about the pots of gold, but our house tends to take on a look which would make a junkyard proud. We have our new TV, with all the modern features, in the living room. The one that we had earlier has been dumped on my unwilling daughter. The one before that is in the kitchen and the one, which is even older, now graces the garage. I have never had an occasion to use the one in the garage but my better half insists that I would thank her the day I have to watch the world cup match while changing the oil in the car.

SUNDAY PIONEER

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When I press the remote in the living room, odd things tend to happen to these old TVs all over the house. Still she would not dream of selling any one of them. As a matter of fact, the one in the garage had to be exiled there, because it would turn on by itself in the middle of her father's afternoon siesta.

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Talking about cars, there is a problem there too. We were perfectly happy with our old car, which would grunt and gurgle but would do a pretty fair job of transporting the three of us from point A to point B. Then the lady of the house declared that we have to get one of the new Korean cars to keep up with the Joneses. With the old one, we were more used to doing our mileage calculations in litres per kilometer so I was not exactly averse to the move.

In due course of time, a gleaming new Matiz showed up at our door step, to be admired by one and all (including the Joneses, whose not-so-new car looked like a jalopy in comparison).

GAMES

JACKPOT
BLACKJACK

The problem arose about garage space. The institute - the Kanpur IIT, with which I am associated - gave us one garage per quarters, assuming that with the pittance that we were paid, even one car would require us to limit our protein intake to one piece of meat on Sundays.

HOME

They had not really bargained for people like my better half who got all misty-eyed at the thought of selling the old car. "Why do we have to sell it?" she protested, "It is still running all right," blissfully ignoring the fact that that car would be almost responsible for the next oil crisis.

So now we have both the old car and the new one, elbowing each other for space in the narrow driveway and the even narrower garage. We probably should do something about this very soon. The rate at which we are collecting new things, without discarding our old ones, we may have to think of moving into a tent in the lawn.

I want to start training my spouse on how to let go of the old, to change old things for new. Beginning with the small articles that have been pushed into the attic after the arrival of the newer ones I should perhaps persuade her to trough off the TV in the garage so that the old car may not be squeezed by the Matiz.

Or better still, I could explain to her how to embrace the new, forgetting about the old and tell her to get rid of the old telly and the jalopy together. But my fear is in that case she would go the whole hog in embracing the new only. Who knows if she would also not come to see (I mean, imagine) the uselessness of the old husband and hug a new one!

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