

April 2025 ₹ 100

# Woman's era



THE CURLY  
DRAMA

GRANDEUR AND  
ARTISTRY

THE ROYAL  
RESIDENCES

THE CHARM OF  
RUNWAYS

OBSESSION OF  
BIO HACKING

REDEFINING YOUR  
DREAM SPACE

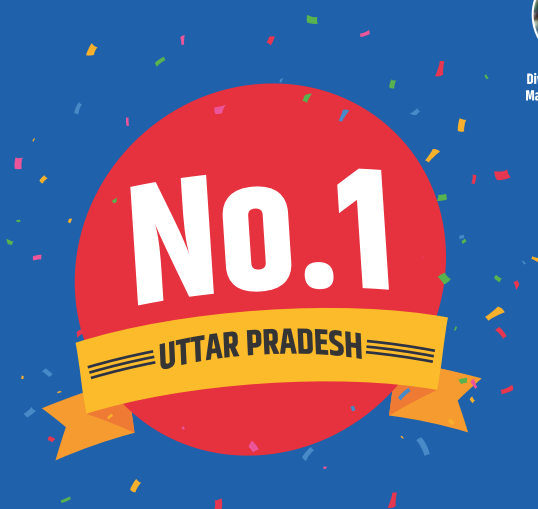
DREAMS AND  
DRAMA

FEAR OF  
MISSING OUT

DIGITAL  
LOVE TRAP

VINTAGE  
KOLKATA LEGACY

SYMPHONY OF  
BALLET



**WATER IN  
EVERY HOME  
A BETTER  
TOMORROW**



**Drinking water facilities now reach every home**

**Tap Connections to More than**

**2.36 Crore+ Families**



- Youth in Bundelkhand receive technical training under the Jal Jeevan Mission
- Empowering women in Bundelkhand with training in water testing using field test kits as part of the Jal Jeevan Mission
- Achieved 98% control of water-borne diseases and complete eradication of Japanese fever
- Successfully provided clean drinking water to every household in Bundelkhand and the Vindhya region
- More than 88% of rural houses in Uttar Pradesh now have tap water facilities



# No.1

UTTAR PRADESH

## EXPRESSWAY STATE UTTAR PRADESH



**Maximum No. of Expressways**

**6 Operational, 7 Under Construction**



- Purvanchal Expressway: Lucknow to Ghazipur (341 km.)
- Bundelkhand Expressway: Chitrakoot to Etawah (296 km.)
- Agra-Lucknow Expressway: Agra to Lucknow (302 km.)
- Yamuna Expressway: Greater Noida to Agra (165 km.)
- Delhi-Meerut Expressway: Meerut to Delhi (82 km.)
- Noida-Greater Noida Expressway (25 km.)

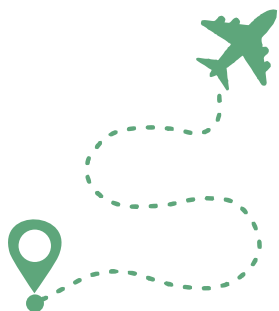
# No.1

UTTAR PRADESH

## SOARING HIGH WITH CONNECTIVITY



### Uttar Pradesh: Leading the Skies with 16 Operational Airports, 5 under construction



- International airports operational in Lucknow, Varanasi, Kushinagar and Ayodhya
- Domestic airports operational in Agra, Bareilly, Gorakhpur, Ghaziabad, Prayagraj, Kanpur, Aligarh, Azamgarh, Moradabad, Shravasti, Chitrakoot and Saharanpur
- Under construction International Airports : Noida International Airport
- Under construction Domestic Airports : Sonbhadra, Lalitpur, Meerut and Pallia



CATFISHED AND CONNED  
BY SAM D WALIA



LIVING ROOM GOALS  
BY LISHA N R



LEPAKSHI  
BY RENUKA KRISHNARAJA



GEN ALPHA  
BY DR VEENA ADIGE

19 KAUSAR KIDWAI:  
DRIVING THE CHANGE

29 NEHA SAMPAT:  
HERITAGE, HEART AND HUSTLE

32 A LEGACY OF LIFE  
BY COL R D SINGH

58 PSYCHOLOGY  
OF WAR

74 THE BANGALORE  
PALACE

82 CHANGING  
DYNAMICS OF FASHION  
SHOWS

94 UNCERTAIN PLACES,  
DREAMS AND REALITIES  
BY SHIVANI AND SAMRITI

98 THE WANDER  
WOMAN  
BY DR ELSA LYCIAS JOEL

106 LETTING GO  
BY TANIMA RAY



FOMO  
BY SHIVANI UJJAINWAL



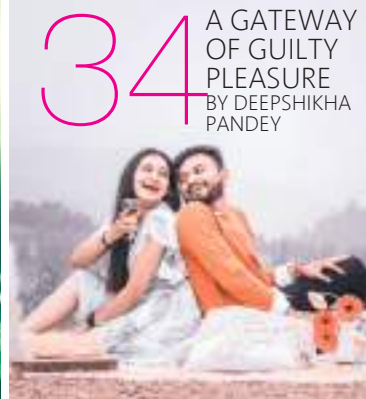
ARTIST AMIT KALLA:  
INTERSECTION OF  
SPIRITUALITY AND  
ABSTRACT



BODY NEUTRALITY  
VS BODY POSITIVITY  
BY M VINAYAK



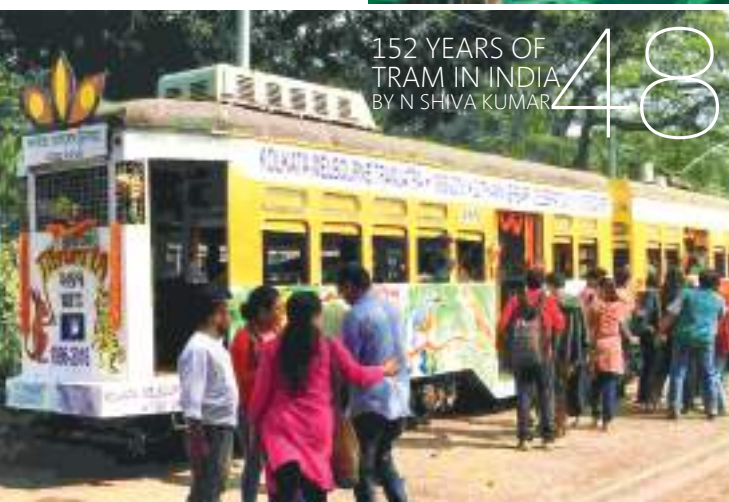
THE RISE OF  
BIOHACKING  
BY A KARTIKEYAN



A GATEWAY  
OF GUILTY  
PLEASURE  
BY DEEPSHIKHA  
PANDEY



EMBRACING  
CURLHOOD  
BY BHAVANA R



152 YEARS OF  
TRAM IN INDIA  
BY N SHIVA KUMAR



## Shots of Health

- Homemade Fresh Gingerale
- Immunity Booster Shots
- Turmeric Shot
- Fat Loss Shot
- Mucus Removing Tea
- Pineapple Mint Wellness Shot
- Carrot And Turmeric Shot

...And Many More





5

CINEPLEX

- 38 HOW I SAVED MY MARRIAGE
- 53 UNRESTRICTED AND UNAPOLOGETIC
- 59 NEW LAUNCHES
- 66 PERSONAL PROBLEMS
- 71 BEAUTY QUERIES
- 77 TEENACHE
- 81 CHILD CHALLENGES
- 93 KITCHEN QUERIES
- 107 INCIDENT I CANNOT FORGET
- 114 AS YOU SAY

## Features



Fashion

40

THE DANCER'S SYMPHONY



72 MUGHAL-E-AZAM  
BY OUR  
CORRESPONDENT



A WOMAN'S  
REVENGE  
BY TASNEEM SARIYA

108



54

ELAN BY NOURIA



110

NEWS IN PICTURE



## Fiction

60 PROFITED BY  
REALISATION  
BY ANGHA NYAPATHY

102 THE PITCH  
BY PIERRE FRANCIS

78 THE UNFORESEEN  
LESSON  
BY DR. DIPIKA DAS

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# CINEPLEX



**N**itanshi Goel had won the Best Actress Award at the IIFA Awards 2025 and had become the youngest actress ever to win this honour. She had begun her career as a child model, appearing in many shows and ads before entering Bollywood. In 2015, she also won the title of Miss Pantaloons Junior Fashion Icon.



Laapataa Ladies' Fame Nitanshi Goel Gets Emotional After Win IIFA Best Actress

'Have Mercy On Me': Ranveer Singh Reacts As Deepika Padukone Shares Photos



**B**ollywood actress Deepika Padukone had recently stunned fans with a series of glamorous Instagram photos, showcasing a chic beige oversized blazer dress from Louis Vuitton's Cruise 2025 collection. Styled by Shaleena Nathani, her sophisticated ensemble had been elevated with an oversized hat and black leather gloves, exuding high-fashion elegance.

## FROM BOLLYWOOD...

Suhana Khan Dazzles In Pastel Dress, Dinner With BF Agastya and Shweta Bachchan

**S**uhana Khan, Shah Rukh Khan's daughter, had gone out to supper with her reported beau, Agastya Nanda, and his mother, Shweta Bachchan, the previous night. Following in her father's footsteps, Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan had started her acting career with *The Archies*.



Tamannaah Bhatia And Vijay Varma's SHOCKING Reasons Revealed Behind Their Breakup



**A** recent news report claimed to have revealed the reason for Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma split. The couple had started dating three years ago. Recently, there were reports that their relationship was facing issues. Some fans and news outlets had speculated on the possible reasons for this. A report from *Siasat Daily* suggested that the conflict had begun because Tamannaah wanted to settle down but Vijay Varma didn't.

Recently, Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor had been spotted with her alleged beau Rahul Mody on her birthday, where she had spent quality time with him and the couple had twinned in white. Shraddha Kapoor had been making headlines for all the right reasons recently.



Shraddha Kapoor Celebrates Her Birthday With Rumoured BF Rahul Mody

Kiara Advani And Sidharth Malhotra Announces Pregnancy With A Special Picture



Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra have announced their pregnancy in a heartwarming post on IG. The actors called it the 'greatest gift'. The couple had tied the knot in an intimate wedding in February 2023. Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra had announced their first pregnancy that day on social media handles.



Alia Bhatt Defending Ranbir Kapoor Against 'Womaniser' Allegations From Haters

On social media, Ranbir Kapoor had often been the target of vicious abuse and called a “womaniser” and a “mama’s boy.” Alia Bhatt publicly responded to a post defending Ranbir Kapoor against “womaniser” allegations from online haters, with the actress seemingly taking the opportunity to shut down the negativity.



Prateik Babbar Gets Emotional At His Wedding With Priya Banerjee, Sings For Her



Priya Banerjee has recently taken to her Instagram page and provided inside views from her wedding with Prateik Babbar, where he is seen becoming emotional during the ceremony and even sang for her. Prateik Babbar had married actress Priya Banerjee, on 14 February garnering media attention.

Shahid Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan's friendly Hug Breaks The Internet

Shahid Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan recently surprised everyone by reuniting on stage for an event. They were friendly with each other and also shared a warm hug, which had thrilled fans online. Many hardly believe this heartfelt moment, reminiscent of their film *Jab We Met*.



Kareena Kapoor Khan Reveals Reason Behind No S\*x Scene Policy



Kareena Kapoor recently explained why she avoided intimate scenes in movies. She believed these scenes were not necessary to tell a story and felt they were not needed for the plot. Kareena shared that she might not have felt comfortable acting in such scenes and had never done so.



Rekha's Timeless Charm In  
Regal Pink-Gold Ensemble  
By Manish Malhotra

**R**ekha stunned everyone with her latest photos in a gorgeous ensemble by Manish Malhotra. As one of Bollywood's most iconic actresses, she continues to captivate her fans with her timeless elegance. Once again, Rekha mesmerised with her regal charm during a shoot with Dabboo Ratnani.



Athiya Shetty And KL Rahul  
Blessed With A Baby Girl



**B**ollywood actress Athiya Shetty and cricketer KL Rahul have embarked on a new journey together - parenthood. Athiya and KL Rahul have announced the arrival of their baby girl, sharing the joyful news with their fans on social media.

Deepika Padukone Reveals  
She Feels 'Mom Guilt' After  
Returning To Work

Recently, at the Forbes Summit in Abu Dhabi, Deepika Padukone revealed about adjusting to life after welcoming her daughter, Dua, with husband Ranveer Singh in September 2024. She shared her experiences, including the challenges of balancing motherhood.



Rakul Preet Singh Opens  
Up About Bollywood's PR  
Machine



In a recent conversation with Raj Shamani, Rakul shared her thoughts on how celebrities today navigate the PR industry. When asked about the amount she spends on PR, given the significant investments many make in publicity, the actress candidly responded, "I don't believe in buying media."

We



# CATFISHED AND CONNED

The hidden dangers of online dating.

By Sam D Walia



Scammers typically create fake profiles on dating platforms or social media, often using AI-generated images or stolen photographs. These profiles are designed to attract unsuspecting individuals seeking love or companionship. When setting up a profile, dating applications generally offer a range of recommendations on likes and dislikes. Scammers usually select all the given recommendations to enhance their chances of finding a match.

This entire scamming process follows five stages. The first is baiting, where scammers use attractive profiles to draw in victims. Next comes conditioning, where they build emotional connections through intimate conversations. Then comes crisis creation, where they fabricate emergencies or crises to request money. This is followed by manipulation, where they blackmail victims with threats of exposing private information or images. Finally, there is revelation, where the scam is exposed, often after incurring significant financial losses.



## Who Are The Scammers?

The perpetrators of these scams can assume various identities. They might be men posing as women, women posing as men, or even organised groups employing multiple individuals to execute their schemes. Reports indicate that a significant percentage of online daters—39 per cent in India alone—have encountered scammers during their search for love. These scammers exploit vulnerabilities in their victims, often targeting those who are emotionally open and looking for genuine connections. According to another report, 47 per cent of men aged above 50 and 44 per cent of women of all ages have reported being scammed.

## How To Identify Them?

Scammers lure their matches by posing as exceptionally attractive individuals with supermodel-like body frames. If someone looks too good to be true—stop right there. Within two days of knowing you, they are eager to take the conversation to another platform, such as WhatsApp. They want to know everything about you—your date of birth, address, and personal details. There is a 100 per cent chance that these scammers are either not available on any social media platforms or, if they are, their accounts are newly created.

If someone is a scammer, they will fall in love with you within a day. They work their charm in such a way that victims find themselves emotionally attached almost instantly. This is another key trait of scammers. Their love and affection will be showered only through the internet. They will avoid meeting in person, citing various reasons, and to protect their identity, they will also avoid video calls, as they prefer no face-to-face interaction. To gauge your financial standing, they may initially send small gifts, such as flowers. However, in return, they will ask for large sums of money or expensive gifts.

## A Real-Life Example of Deception In Delhi

Scammers can go to any lengths to deceive their victims. In one instance, on a dating app a young man met a woman who insisted on meeting at a specific café. After an extravagant date filled with expensive food and drinks, the woman abruptly left, leaving him with a hefty bill of nearly 1.2 lakh rupees, which he was forced to pay alone.

In another case, a man was extorted after being lured into a situation where he was threatened for payment when he refused to cover an inflated bill at a restaurant. These incidents highlight how scammers often collaborate with local businesses to create elaborate schemes that ensure they profit from unsuspecting victims.

**ONLINE DATING HAS MADE FINDING LOVE EASIER, BUT IT COMES WITH HIDDEN DANGERS. FAKE PROFILES, CATFISHING, AND SCAMS ARE COMMON, LEADING TO EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION, SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION.**



This was a real-life example, but if one wants to watch a series to learn more about the dangers of online dating, *Missing You* on Netflix is a recommended watch.

## The Role of Technology In Online Scams

The rise of technology has made it easier for scammers to operate undetected. Many dating platforms lack robust verification processes for user profiles, allowing fake accounts to proliferate unchecked. Additionally, the use of AI-generated images complicates efforts to differentiate genuine users from fraudulent ones.

Victims are often advised to conduct reverse image searches on profile pictures and scrutinise conversations for generic responses indicative of AI-generated messages. As online scams increase, dating applications are introducing verified profiles.

These apps now require applicants not only to provide their social and personal interests but also to upload a government-issued document for verification.

It is advisable for dating app users to connect only with accounts that have verified badges. Additionally, AI tools such as Bitdefender Scamio can help detect fake profiles. Users can send any text, image, or QR code to Scamio's chatbox to verify its authenticity.

## Conclusion

While online dating offers exciting opportunities for connection and romance, it also poses significant risks due to the prevalence of scams, where “the guy is not the guy, and the girl is not the girl.” By understanding how these scams operate and taking proactive steps to protect oneself, individuals can enjoy the benefits of online dating while minimising their risk of falling victim to fraud.

As technology continues to evolve, so must our strategies for navigating this complex digital landscape safely.

We



# Living Room Goals

Turn your living room into a dream space.

By Lisha N R

A living room is the most important place in our home. It is the first room seen by anyone who visits us. This room gives an accurate idea about the people who live there. Here are some tips and tricks for designing a perfect living room.

When you want to design your living room, you have to take certain things into consideration.

Give a good colour to your living

room to make it look lively and pleasant. This will provide fresh energy to the whole family.

Your living room should be full of life.

Feature walls are a very good choice. You can use wallpaper for your walls. Either you can feature one wall with wallpaper and paint the rest of the walls, or you can use wallpaper for all your walls. Wallpapers with vertical stripes



will give the impression that the room has more height. Similarly, wallpapers with horizontal stripes can give the feel of more width to the room.

There should be a focal point in the living room. Usually, the television takes that place. Most of us watch TV while sitting in the living room. Try to keep your television at an appropriate place that enhances the look of your living room.

Arranging or rearranging your furniture is the next thing to do. A good sofa set can give a beautiful look to your living room. Avoid too much furniture. Provide ample space in the living room.

Lighting in your living room is another important aspect to take



**MOST OF US WATCH TV WHILE SITTING IN THE LIVING ROOM. TRY TO KEEP YOUR TELEVISION AT AN APPROPRIATE PLACE THAT ENHANCES THE LOOK OF YOUR LIVING ROOM. ARRANGING OR REARRANGING YOUR FURNITURE IS THE NEXT THING TO DO. A GOOD SOFA SET CAN GIVE A BEAUTIFUL LOOK TO YOUR LIVING ROOM.**

care of. Use bright lights in your living room. Avoiding overhead lights is always better. There should always be a calm and soothing ambience in the room.

You can place some indoor plants in your living room. This will add beauty and also purify the air around you. It will also make the room look lively. Corner stands are a good option for keeping your indoor plants. This will save space and make your room look elegant. Money plants, jade plants, and snake plants are good air purifiers.

Another idea is to include some beautiful flowers in your home décor. You can place some flower vases in your living room.

Soft furnishings also add beauty and elegance to your living room. You have to choose appropriate curtain fabrics that match the colour of your room. Carpets should also be specifically selected. All these will provide a good vibe to your living room.

The flooring of your living room is something you should give importance to. Light-coloured tiles

usually brighten up your rooms. The colour choice is always yours.

Beautiful wall hangings will add extra beauty to your living room. You can even place a small aquarium in your living room to enhance the space. Artworks and mirrors can also be included.

Try to make it more aesthetic and minimalistic. A perfect living room is everyone's dream. If you take some care and give some time, anyone can design a perfect living room. Let the dream of a perfect living room come true for everyone.

We

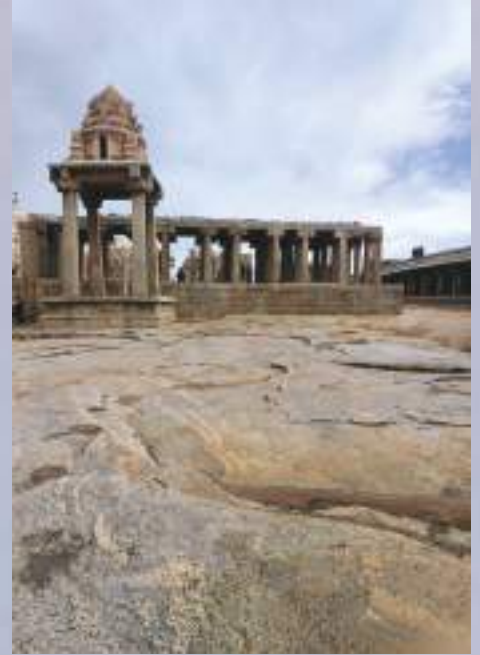
# Lepakshi

An ancient Vijaynagar architectural splendour.

By Renuka Krishnaraja

**L**epakshi is an ancient land known for its Vijaynagar architectural splendour. It might not be at the same grand scale as Hampi, yet there is abundance of beauty and esthetics all around. Situated approximately 140 km from Bengaluru in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, this tiny village impresses us with its classic magnificent architecture, mysteries and legends.

As per the legends, after being attacked by the demon Ravana while attempting to rescue Goddess Sita, the divine bird Jatayu fell down in this region. When Lord Rama saw the wounded Jatayu, he said, 'le pakshi,' which means 'rise, oh bird,' and hence the name Lepakshi.



Veerabhadra Swamy temple precinct.

**RECOGNISING AND APPRECIATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE, SRI VEERABHADRA SWAMY TEMPLE WAS BUILT HERE IN THE 16TH CENTURY DURING THE REIGN OF ACHYUTA DEVA RAYA OF VIJAYNAGAR KINGDOM. THE TEMPLE IS FAMOUS FOR ITS HERITAGE, ART AND CULTURE.**



## Grandeur In Granite

Upon entering, we could distinguish the three main sections of the temple complex – *natyamantapa*, *ardhamantapa* and the *garbha griha* or the *sanctum sanctorum*.

With exquisite stone carvings, sculptures and paintings, the interior architecture is overly imposing, to say the least. As I looked around, it felt like every stone had a story to relate and every corner was strikingly photographic. The *natyamantapa* houses 70 pillars where one can witness various deities in their artistic dance forms.

Here, it is crucial to note that this is a brilliant example of interlocking construction. And indeed, the most intriguing aspect is the unique hanging pillar, which is sculpted like a *gopuram* and literally hangs from above with no support on the ground. There is a clear gap between the pillar and the floor where cloth or paper can be passed through, which defies the logic of gravity. It seems that in the early 20th century, a British engineer named Hamilton was keen to unearth the secret behind it and tried to move the hanging pillar.

But he had to stop his endeavour as he discovered that any such mobility could lead to the collapse of the entire framework. Because of his venture, one edge of the hanging pillar had hit the ground permanently; however, the mystery behind it continues to be unsolved even to this date. Besides the stone carvings, we did adore vivid fresco paintings depicting the tales of the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata and the *puranas* predominantly on the ceilings.

Adorned with more sculptures and paintings, the *ardhamantapa* leads to the inner sanctum wherein dwells the presiding deity, Veerabhadra Swamy – a fierce form



Jatayu statue in honour of the divine bird.



Artistic pillars.

of Lord Shiva. The temple complex is enormous and within the enclosure there is an open-air *Kalyana mantapa* which appears to be incomplete in construction. Several pillars adorned with traditional carvings can be found here as well. Also, some scriptures and inscriptions can be seen upon the walls written in old Kannada as Lepakshi is close to Karnataka border. Apart from many other exceptionally chiselled structures within the temple precincts, of note is a beautiful monolithic *Nagalinga* which represents a coiled multi-hooded serpent sheltering a *Linga*.

Likewise, Lepakshi Nandi is another colossal masterpiece located



Monolithic statue of Nandi.



Intricately carved granite pillar.

about 500 m from the main temple. Made out of a single granite boulder, the statue is decorated graciously with necklaces, a bell and chain. Being 20 feet in height and 30 feet in length, this huge granite bull is one of the largest of its kind. Right across the Nandi, at the entrance of Lepakshi village, we can spot the Jatayu sculpture installed upon a rocky hill.

Having leisurely strolled around the revered little historical town, an inexplicable spirit of fulfillment overpowered us. Many centuries have passed since, yet thousands of tourists and pilgrims visit Lepakshi every day to view the glorious spectacle and experience the devotion created by the Vijaynagar dynasty artisans. Isn't it really marvelous?

# Gen Alpha

The digital natives redefining childhood.

By Dr Veena Adige



If there were any doubts about how difficult and smart Gen X is, one should see the confident, permanently connected Gen Alpha. Born entirely in the 21st century, they seem to have no connection with any of the previous generations. They are smart, confident, and have been born with electronics in their heads, eyes, fingers—in fact, their entire beings.

Also called the iGeneration or Gen Tech, these young ones are now around ten to twenty years of age. But do they sound like children? No, not at all. They are so smart and confident that they put even the senior most electronics experts to shame. They seem to have had no childhood at all. From babyhood to adulthood, their metamorphosis has been consistent.

They are natural leaders and self-appointed monitors; they take charge of situations and make decisions on their own. The advent of COVID during their formative years changed the course of their lives. They were segregated, alone at times, with no friends and no socialising, glued to their iPads like lifelines, as all schooling revolved around them.

With no access to gardens or travel, holed up in one-, two- or three-bedroom homes, with busy

**THE IGENERATION OR GEN TECH, THESE YOUNG ONES ARE NOW AROUND TEN TO TWENTY YEARS OF AGE. THEY ARE SO SMART AND CONFIDENT THAT THEY PUT EVEN THE SENIOR MOST ELECTRONICS EXPERTS TO SHAME.**

working parents as company, these Gen Alpha children have become different—alien. With online friends and virtual studies, they know typing better than writing. Their handwriting is more difficult to decipher than a doctor's, and they



are self-centred and cold-blooded. Added to this is soft parenting, where parents act like friends and talk to them as adults. There is no discipline, as we seniors describe it, as parents bow, cajole, and request—only to be told, “I am what I am.”

Requests to talk nicely are met with “freedom of speech” and “we are in a free country” arguments. “We are a democracy” is taken more seriously than by politicians. This generation is firm, decisive, and unstoppable.

Schools too cannot do much. Their diktats are to go slow on Gen Alpha, to speak sweetly, use sugar-coated words to tell parents the truth, and never enforce any physical punishments.

It has been four years since COVID disappeared, and though the world seems to have recovered, these ten-to twenty-year-olds are cocooned and still have to break away if they are to become full-fledged butterflies. Meanwhile, Gen Beta is knocking at the doors, and we are in trepidation about what to expect from them.

However, all is not lost. There is still a ray of hope that this generation will exceed expectations and conform to the norms.

We

# Driving The Change

## An Interview with Kausar Kidwai

**K**ausar Kidwai, CSR Head at Medanta, is a dynamic healthcare professional with over 16 years of experience in healthcare advocacy, strategy, policy development, and operational management. She speaks about her journey, work on women's health, cervical cancer screening, and policy in India, emphasising women's roles and CSR in healthcare's future.

***What motivated you to follow path of healthcare advocacy and policy development, and what are the most transformative projects you have led?***

Raised in a protective family, entering public health was initially daunting, especially in remote areas like Madhya Pradesh. However, my passion for women's health led me to UNFPA in Bhind, where I established "Lalli," the first female child ward. One of my key initiatives, the "Har Ghar Dastak" campaign, tackled declining female child sex ratios, launching Shakti Chaupals in 400+ villages, and earned recognition from the PM Modi as one of the 20 innovative interventions by MWCD.

This helped Rewa rank among India's top 10 districts for improved sex ratios. Leading India's largest cervical cancer screening, reaching 2.3 lakh women in Madhya Pradesh and expanding to six states, I also pioneered screenings for HIV (WLHIV) and incarcerated women, utilising HPV DNA testing and vaccines, significantly advancing healthcare access and empowering women nationwide.

***What innovative strategies have you implemented to improve Cervical cancer screening accessibility in India at the GOI level?***

Ayushman Bharat supports those below the poverty line,

but millions remain vulnerable to medical expenses. To address the rural-urban divide, brand champions like ASHA workers, ANMs, and Anganwadi workers have been vital for awareness and screening. Using culturally familiar terms like "infection" or "sikai" has improved understanding. Additionally, educating Self-Help Groups (SRLMs) and enabling screening and treatment at the supply side were essential.

Policy-wise, the GOI must include HPV vaccination in the National Immunisation Program for both genders, establish PPP models for screening and treatment, and mandate cervical cancer screening for all frontline workers, similar to COVID-19 vaccinations.

***How do you see CSR initiatives driving impact, particularly in cancer prevention and early detection?***

CSR initiatives can significantly impact cancer prevention and early detection by:

- Adopting specific areas and studying the local demographics. Designing tailored programmes that suit the unique needs of the community.
- Building trust and confidence to ensure a continuum of care, preventing abandonment of treatment.
- Focusing on decentralizing cancer care, making it accessible, affordable, and available to all.

This approach strengthens healthcare systems and promotes long-term impact in cancer care.

***How can India ensure inclusive healthcare access for marginalised communities like LGBTQIA+?***

Inclusivity and acceptance are key to equitable healthcare for the LGBTQIA+ community.




Kausar Kidwai, CSR Head at Medanta

Acknowledging the third gender and personal choices is essential in making them feel normal and supported. We must ensure that healthcare services, both in the public and private sectors, are accessible and accommodating. LGBTQIA+ healthcare should be integrated into regular OPD services to ensure inclusivity and reduce stigma.

***What role do you see for young professionals, especially women, in shaping the future of the healthcare industry?***

Women are vital in shaping India's healthcare future as both visionaries and changemakers, whether at home or in the workplace. They bring a unique perspective and resilience that can drive innovation in the industry. My advice to young professionals, especially women, is to recognise that life is not a sprint but a marathon. Start by being part of implementation teams, gaining experience, and then assist the policymakers. Informed policy shaping is crucial for impact. Above all, remember that self-care is essential—prioritise your health, as it is the foundation for sustained impact in the healthcare sector.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a desk and looking at a laptop screen. Her hands are clasped together under her chin, and she has a thoughtful or perhaps anxious expression. The background is a blurred interior with blue lighting. The overall mood is contemplative and slightly somber.

Have you ever felt anxious after seeing photos from a party you didn't attend, wishing you had been there? Maybe you wondered if you were missing out on the best night of your life while scrolling through someone's Instagram post. Missed friends or cousin's wedding and hoping you could be there? If this sounds familiar, you have probably experienced FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).

In the digital era, social media has significantly changed the way we interact, communicate, and view the world. Over the past decade, digital technology has reshaped how people live, work, and connect globally, with many experiencing this transformation firsthand. Smartphones, social media platforms, and internet connectivity have created a new digital ecosystem where connectivity is nearly ubiquitous. While the advantages of this digital landscape are clear, it also faces the challenges due to the negative effects of constant digital engagement. Are you aware of the most impactful word that is redefining our experiences in this digital age? Find out more here!

# FOMO

## A DIGITAL DILEMMA

The ultimate fear of missing out.

By Shivani Ujjainwal



### FOMO? Anxiety or Psychology?

FOMO, or the “Fear of Missing Out,” is a psychological phenomenon characterised by anxiety or fear of being left out of important, exciting, or trendy events occurring around us. This fear can significantly impact the society by fuelling excessive social media usage, which in turn leads to increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. This is often due to the individuals constantly comparing themselves to others’ curated online lives, causing disruptions in their daily routines.

The younger generation, particularly millennials and Gen Z, is especially vulnerable to FOMO. Social media platforms frequently portray an idealised version of life, creating unrealistic standards for success, happiness, and fulfillment. In a society where peer pressure and social expectations already play a significant role in shaping individual behaviour, FOMO can have detrimental effects on mental well-being. One of the most pervasive effects of digital overload is the phenomenon of FOMO.

This cultural shift is rapidly becoming a central issue for many Indians, especially the younger generation, who feel increasingly pressured to stay constantly connected.

**THE YOUNGER GENERATION, PARTICULARLY MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z, IS ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO FOMO. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FREQUENTLY PORTRAY AN IDEALISED VERSION OF LIFE, CREATING UNREALISTIC STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS, HAPPINESS, AND FULFILLMENT.**



Additionally, a person’s sexual life can significantly influence their FOMO. They may feel more susceptible to the anxiety of missing out on exciting or diverse sexual experiences, particularly when they see others engaging in seemingly more adventurous activities.

This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and a desire to “catch up” or try new things themselves, which can be heightened by social media exposure to others’ sexual lives.

### How FOMO Impacts Today’s Sexual Life?

Researchers suggest that heightened levels of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) can increase the desire to avoid anxiety by actively seeking social connections, including short-term sexual relationships.

**Comparison to Others:** Constantly comparing one’s own sexual experiences to the perceived experiences of others on social media or within one’s social circle can trigger FOMO. This may lead individuals to feel like they are missing out on something “better.”

**Sexual Insecurity:** Feeling insecure about one’s sexual abilities or attractiveness can intensify FOMO, making individuals more likely to seek validation through sexual activity.

**Social Pressure:** Societal expectations regarding sexual activity, especially within certain demographics can contribute to FOMO. This pressure may push individuals to engage in sexual behaviours they might not typically consider. The FOMO culture greatly impacts mental health, especially for teenagers and young adults. People often fear missing out on social events, being excluded from groups, or not keeping up with trends. This fear can lead to anxiety that is hard to manage.

In families, the desire for social approval influences personal choices, and the pressure to fit into digital norms is strong. Young



people feel they need to share pictures of their social lives to get likes and comments, which leads to comparing themselves to others. This comparison can make them feel not enough, as they see only the perfect moments others share. Over time, this can lower self-esteem and lead to issues like depression and loneliness.

Additionally, FOMO can cause sleep problems. When people constantly check their phones late at night or scroll through social media before bed, it can disturb their sleep. This leads to tiredness and affects overall well-being.

Social media causes many people to feel FOMO, or the fear of missing out. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok provide a constant flow of contents that show what friends, celebrities, and influencers are doing.

These platforms use algorithms to show users contents that stir emotions, often leading to feelings of being left out or not good enough. Worrying about missing trends, events, or opportunities makes people spend more time online, which adds to feeling overwhelmed by digital content.

Moreover, now the influencer

## **YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL THEY NEED TO SHARE PICTURES OF THEIR SOCIAL LIVES TO GET LIKES AND COMMENTS, WHICH LEADS TO COMPARING THEMSELVES TO OTHERS. THIS COMPARISON CAN MAKE THEM FEEL NOT ENOUGH, AS THEY SEE ONLY THE PERFECT MOMENTS OTHERS SHARE.**

culture has made FOMO even stronger. Influencers often show glamorous lifestyles that seem out of reach.

This creates unrealistic expectations for everyday people life, especially young ones, who may feel pressured to copy these lifestyles through their clothing, travel, or possessions. Seeing this content repeatedly increases the gap between reality and their dreams, leading to stronger feelings of disturbance and loneliness.

## **The Cultural Context**

The fear of missing out (FOMO) is worsened by strong cultural expectations in India. In this collectivist culture, family, friends, and community matter a lot. People value social status and reputation, often feeling pressure to follow the latest trends, even if it means spending more than they can afford. Young people may feel they must attend every wedding, festival, or social event. They worry that not going could lead to being left out or the subject of gossip. Social media makes this fear stronger.

When individuals see their friends posting about events they weren't invited to or didn't attend, it adds to the pressure. In cities, where digital connections are strong, the competition to showcase a perfect life online is intense. People often share posts about vacations, parties, new purchases, and achievements. This creates a cycle of comparison, leading to unhealthy habits like overspending, overworking, or taking unnecessary risks to maintain a certain image online.

One way to tackle this issue is for individuals to take breaks from social media to reconnect with their real lives. This can involve spending less time on screens, turning off unneeded notifications, or engaging more in hobbies and outdoor activities. Practising mindfulness through meditation and journaling can help individuals become more aware of their emotions and reduce comparison with others. It's also important to have open discussions about mental health and the effects of social media to lessen the stigma around anxiety and depression.

Teaching healthy social media habits is crucial, especially for younger people. Schools, colleges, and workplaces can promote a balanced approach to online activity, highlighting the importance of self-care and mental health. FOMO impacts mostly the young people, who are in a key stage of brain and emotional development. However, this issue can affect people of all ages.

**We**

# 8 Glorious Years of Yogi Government

Transforming uttar pradesh with development, empowerment, and prosperity.



**U**nder the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh government has embarked on a transformative journey, ensuring holistic development, economic progress, and social welfare. With a strong focus on women's empowerment, rural upliftment, and infrastructure enhancement, the state has witnessed unprecedented growth. From sanitation and child welfare to education, employment, and financial inclusion, the government has implemented visionary schemes that are changing lives.

## AMRUT Mitra Initiative

The Yogi government launched the AMRUT Mitra initiative, empowering Self-Help Group (SHG) women in Sitapur to manage Fecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs). These women handle operations and technical aspects, promoting sanitation, hygiene, and self-reliance while contributing to waste management efforts under the AMRUT Mission in Uttar Pradesh.

## Anganwadi Centers Expansion

To enhance rural child development, Uttar Pradesh is rapidly constructing Anganwadi centers in every village. These centers provide early education, nutrition, and healthcare, ensuring children's holistic growth. Built under MGNREGA, in collaboration with the Child Development and

Panchayati Raj Departments, this initiative creates a safe and nurturing environment for children.

## One Stop Center Scheme

The One Stop Center scheme provides crucial support to over 2 lakh women in Uttar Pradesh, offering medical, legal, psychological, and police assistance. These centers ensure women's safety, rehabilitation, and empowerment, strengthening their rights while addressing cases of domestic violence, harassment, and exploitation through comprehensive welfare measures across the state.

## Annapurna Bhavan Initiative

The Yogi government is constructing over 2,000 Annapurna Bhavans across Uttar Pradesh to provide essential commodities, electricity bill payment services, and warehousing under one roof. These centers aim to improve access to daily necessities in rural areas, ensuring affordability, convenience, and economic empowerment for the underprivileged communities in the state.

## Ujjwala Yojana Subsidy

Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the Uttar Pradesh government transferred ₹1,890 crore directly into beneficiaries' accounts, providing free gas cylinders for Holi and Diwali. This initiative supports 1.86 crore underprivileged families, ensuring clean cooking fuel

access while reducing health risks associated with traditional cooking methods, particularly for rural women.

## Mukhyamantri Samuhik Vivah Yojana

To support underprivileged families, the Mukhyamantri Samuhik Vivah Yojana provides ₹1 lakh for daughters' marriages. This initiative promotes collective wedding ceremonies, ensuring financial assistance for families while upholding social equality. Over 4 lakh girls have benefitted, making weddings more affordable and eliminating the financial burden of marriage expenses.

## Meritorious Daughters' Scooty Scheme

The Uttar Pradesh government will distribute scooters to meritorious girls excelling in board exams, promoting higher education and mobility. This scheme aims to empower young women by easing transportation barriers, fostering independence, and encouraging academic excellence, further strengthening the state's commitment to women's education and empowerment.

By fostering self-reliance, transparency, and efficient governance, UP has emerged as a model of progress, setting new benchmarks in good governance, public welfare, and economic empowerment across the nation. **We**



# Amit Kalla: The Intersection of Spirituality and Abstract Art



Artist Amit Kalla

**Could you walk us through your latest collection and the inspiration behind it?**

**M**y latest collection is 'Neti Neti' an exploration between form and formlessness. It is a Bhartiya philosophical concept introduced in the Advaita Vedanta, a Sanatan philosophy. The term

interprets to "Not This, Not This" in Sanskrit. It summarises the process of withdrawal intended at understanding the ultimate reality or Brahman. The philosophy is briefly captured in a Vedic shloka, specifically in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (2.3.6): a discourse between the tangible and the inexpressible. The title emerges from the interplay, resonating the transient yet eternal nature of artistic expression.

**Today who is most drawn to your work, and has your target audience changed over time?**

My work resounds deeply with individuals who venture beyond surface-level aesthetics in search of profound meaning. Those attracted towards spirituality, and abstraction find a dialogue in my art. Over time, this audience has expanded,

transcending boundaries of culture and experience. Seasoned collectors engage with the layered complexity of my work. Newer audiences are drawn to the meditative quality of abstraction.

**What's the heartbeat of your latest work?**

My work pulses with the manifestation of energy, and also an interplay between time, space, and the environment. The theme is of spiritual introspection, of the unconscious onto the canvas. My paintings are bound together by a semiotic and meditative approach, capturing moments of stillness and movement. Each piece becomes a vessel through which I try to speak the unspoken. This introspective exploration aligns with the philosophy, and attempts to move beyond the limitations of

conventional forms. The formalist ideas contribute to dynamic activities juxtaposed with moments of settled emotions.

**About the last three exhibitions, how did each event shape or influence the direction of your current work?**

Each exhibition has been an evolving dialogue, shaping the trajectory of my artistic inquiry. The 63rd National Exhibition of Art, along with international residencies and cross-cultural exchanges, has refined my perspective on abstraction. These interactions have reinforced my commitment to synthesising traditional Indian sensibilities. Exhibiting on global platforms has depicted how my work travels across diverse visual languages.

**How do you ensure your work remains timeless while connecting with both seasoned collectors and newer audiences?**

Timelessness is the most important essence in today's time. It resides in authenticity and depth. My work remains rooted in the spirituality, exploring energies and forms that are universally felt yet uniquely interpreted. My artistic language remains anchored in a transcendent narrative that invites viewers to engage beyond the visuals.

**As you look ahead, what themes or ideas are calling to you for future projects?**

The future hints a deeper target of excessive semiotics within abstraction. I am drawn to the idea of visual narratives that transcend morphological and cultural barriers, and also moving towards more multi-dimensional form of storytelling. I wish to create spaces within my work which are spiritually evocative, not visually engaging.

**Is there an artist, whether international or native, whom you admire and consider a role model?**

Mark Rothko's wraithlike colour fields and the profound expressive depth within his abstractions have



left an indelible mark on my artistic sensibilities.

Also, the explorations of Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, both of whom sought to merge the ethereal with the material. Klee's synthesis of mysticism, symbolism, and musical use of line and form, echoes in my search for visual languages.

Beyond these influences, traditional Indian arts, the ancient iconography and indigenous visual motif have also been an inspiration. The seamless dialogue between the sacred and the contemporary in Indian art urges me to explore more. Much like the Bauhaus artists sought a unification of artistic disciplines and spiritual harmony through form. I strive to weave together diverse visual languages, and create a space where the meditative and the modern converge.

**How have the themes and your artistic approach shifted across your last three collections?**

My journey has been one of evolution and introspection. Earlier, I engaged with monochromatic tones, where minimalism dictated the visual field. Now I have embraced a more expansive palette, where colour becomes a conduit of emotion and energy. This transformation mirrors my own expanding consciousness, where the viewer becomes part of the artwork's contemplative space.

**For artists stepping into the world of art today, what advice would you give?**

Art is a journey, an unending quest for truth and self-realisation. My advice to emerging artists is to develop their own voice, and repel the pressures of fleeting trends. They should engage deeply with their roots. Truthfulness, patience, dedication are the key. Above all, art must remain an act of devotion, an offering to the unknown, with the self and the cosmos.

We



# BODY NEUTRALITY VS. BODY POSITIVITY

Why Gen Z is focusing on  
function over appearance.

By M Vinayak

For years, the body positivity movement has dominated social discourse, encouraging individuals to embrace their bodies regardless of societal beauty standards. While its intentions were noble—challenging unrealistic beauty ideals—the movement has evolved in ways that some find overwhelming and unsustainable.

Now, Gen Z—a generation known for its pragmatic and mental health-conscious approach—is reshaping the conversation with body neutrality. This philosophy shifts the focus from loving one's body aesthetically to appreciating it for what it can do. It removes the pressure to feel beautiful at all times and replaces it with a healthier, function-focused mindset.

This shift is more than a fleeting trend—it's a revolution in self-perception, deeply rooted in psychological research, personal experiences, and a rejection of performative self-love.

Body positivity as a movement had begun in the 1960s as part of the fat acceptance movement, challenging societal norms that equated thinness with worth. By the early 2010s, social media fuelled its rise, with brands like Dove, Aerie, and Fenty Beauty showcasing models of diverse shapes, sizes, and ethnicities.

While the movement initially aimed to create a more inclusive definition of beauty, it inadvertently placed a new kind of pressure: the obligation to love one's body at all times.

### The Pressure To Love Yourself

Take 21-year-old Mira, for instance. One summer afternoon in 2022, she was scrolling through Instagram, feeling increasingly detached from the messages flooding her feed. "Love your curves," one caption read. "Your body is beautiful just as it is!" said another. But Mira didn't feel beautiful that day. In fact, she felt the opposite. Instead of lifting her up, body positivity made her feel like she was failing at self-love.

A study published in the *Body Image Journal* (2021) found that forced body positivity can backfire, leading to increased body dissatisfaction and emotional distress. Many individuals, like Mira, find it exhausting to constantly celebrate their bodies, especially on days when self-esteem is low. This paradox is at the heart of why many Gen Z individuals are shifting toward body neutrality—a mindset that does not require love, just acceptance and respect.

### More Than The Body

Unlike body positivity, which promotes active self-love, body neutrality encourages a neutral and functional perspective on one's body. Instead of forcing admiration, it allows individuals to acknowledge their bodies without judgment.

Consider Jordan, a 19-year-old college athlete recovering from a sports injury. He once saw his body as something to be admired—strong, agile, and sculpted. But during his recovery, he felt frustrated by his

limitations. "I used to think of my body as something that needed to look a certain way. Now, I see it as something that lets me move, breathe, and experience life," he shares.

This philosophy aligns with scientific research. A study in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (2020) found that individuals who practice body neutrality exhibit lower levels of

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body-related stress and greater overall well-being compared to those striving for body positivity.

By shifting the focus from appearance to function, body neutrality offers a healthier and more sustainable relationship with the self. Gen Z has grown up in an era of intense digital scrutiny. While Millennials saw the rise of filtered perfection on Instagram, Gen Z has been exposed to a mix of authenticity and unrealistic beauty standards—making them hyper-aware of how social media influences self-perception.

### Social Media And The Shift In Narratives

Social media played a major role in spreading body positivity, but now, it's becoming a space for body neutrality discussions. Take Instagram creator Rachel, for example.

She gained millions of followers not by posting transformation photos or self-love mantras, but by celebrating small joys of movement—taking a deep breath, feeling the sun on her skin, and appreciating her body for simply existing. "I don't need to love how my stomach looks; I just need to appreciate that it helps digest my food," she says in one of her viral videos.

A report by *GlobalWebIndex* (2023) found that 63 per cent of Gen Z social media users prefer content focusing on mental and physical well-being over content emphasising beauty standards or self-love affirmations.



## FUNCTIONAL FITNESS TRENDS—LIKE CALISTHENICS, YOGA, AND MOBILITY TRAINING—ARE GAINING POPULARITY, EMPHASISING WHAT THE BODY CAN DO RATHER THAN HOW IT LOOKS.

companies like Athleta and Dove now highlight:

- Strength over aesthetics
- Comfort over perfection
- Movement over calorie-burning

Even the fitness industry is adapting. Functional fitness trends—like calisthenics, yoga, and mobility training—are gaining popularity over traditional bodybuilding, emphasising what the body can do rather than how it looks. If you're tired of the pressure to love your body, here's how to embrace body neutrality:

**Shift Your Language:** Instead of saying, “I hate my thighs,” try, “My thighs help me move and sit comfortably.”

**Practise Mindful Movement:** Exercise not to shape your body, but to feel stronger and energised.

**Diversify Your Social Media Feed:** Follow influencers who promote body neutrality, movement, and well-being rather than just aesthetics.

**Appreciate Small Functions:** Take a moment to acknowledge your breathing, digestion, and mobility—things we often take for granted.

**Detach Self-Worth from Appearance:** Remember: Your body is not the most interesting thing about you. Focus on personality, skills, and passions instead.

As Gen Z continues to redefine wellness, body neutrality is emerging as the dominant mindset. While body positivity played a crucial role in challenging beauty norms, body neutrality offers something even more valuable—freedom from the pressure of self-love.

As Mira, the 21-year-old struggling with body positivity, puts it: “I don't need to wake up every day and love my reflection. I just need to respect my body for getting me through the day.” In the end, your body is not an ornament—it's an instrument. Focus on its functionality than its appearance. And that's more than enough.

**We**

Psychologists argue that body neutrality can be more sustainable than body positivity. According to research from *The Journal of Eating Disorders* (2022), self-acceptance without forced positivity leads to:

- Lower stress levels
- Reduced disordered eating behaviours
- Higher emotional resilience

Clinical psychologist Dr. Renee Engeln, author of *Beauty Sick*, suggests that body positivity can sometimes reinforce the beauty norms it seeks to dismantle by keeping the focus on appearance. “When we tell people to love their bodies, we're still making the body the centerpiece of self-worth,” she explains.

On the other hand, body neutrality aligns with mindfulness

practices and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), reducing anxiety, depression, and compulsive body-checking behaviours.

### Education: Shifting the Health Curriculum

Some schools have started embracing body neutrality principles in their health and wellness programmes. For instance, a high school in Oregon recently replaced BMI-based assessments with holistic fitness evaluations that emphasise strength, endurance, and flexibility rather than weight.

### Corporate Wellness & Fitness Industry

Brands are also shifting their messaging. Instead of “body transformation” campaigns,

# Heritage, Heart, and Hustle

## The Neha Sampat Way

**N**eha Sampat, Co-Founder & CEO of Contentstack, shares her journey of redefining leadership in tech. As a champion of diversity and innovation, she offers insights on breaking barriers and driving meaningful change.

***As a female, non-technical CEO in a highly technical field, how have you navigated industry norms and turned them into an advantage?***

I've always believed that being an outsider can be a superpower. Coming from a background in PR and marketing, I had a unique perspective on the challenges enterprises faced in digital transformation. I wasn't bound by "how things have always been done," which allowed me to spot opportunities that others overlooked. My journey from communications to leading a global software company serving the world's best brands proves that leadership is not about technical expertise alone—it's about vision, resilience, and building the right team to execute that vision.

***How do you ensure Contentstack fosters an inclusive workplace?***

At Contentstack, fostering an inclusive workplace isn't just a policy—it's a core value to which I am deeply committed. As a strong advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), I believe that great company culture is just as important as innovation. Being recognised as "Best CEO for Diversity" and "Best CEO for Women" reinforced my dedication to ensuring inclusivity is embedded in everything we do. Beyond Contentstack, I actively champion representation and empowerment as an owner of Austin Woman magazine and by serving on the Austin Habitat for Humanity Board.

***How has your Indian heritage and family values shaped your leadership style?***

My Indian heritage and family values have profoundly shaped my leadership style, emphasising the importance of community, resilience, and shared success. Growing up in a culture that values collective progress over individual gain, I learned that leadership isn't about authority—it's about empowerment. This perspective has influenced every company I've built, fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusion, and trust. At Contentstack, we embrace a 'tribe mentality', where every voice matters, diverse perspectives fuel innovation, and success is measured by how well we lift each other up.

***You have a unique leadership approach where you "fire and rehire" yourself every six months. What inspired this, and how does it impact Contentstack's growth?***

Leadership isn't about holding onto a title—it's about evolving with the company. Inspired by Gainsight CEO Nick Mehta's philosophy, I regularly assess if I'm still the right leader for Contentstack. Every six months, I ask myself tough questions: What would a new CEO do differently? Where can I improve? This introspection helps me identify blind spots, refine my skills, and ensure that Contentstack continues to lead in the rapidly evolving digital experience technology space. It's a mindset of continuous growth that has been instrumental in scaling our company.

***What advice would you give to women looking to break into leadership roles in the tech industry?***

First, it is important to believe in yourself. The tech industry has often



Neha Sampat, Co-Founder and CEO of Contentstack

lacked gender equity, but innovation happens when different voices and ideas come together. Leadership is about vision, problem-solving, and building great teams. Surround yourself with mentors and allies who uplift you and never be afraid to challenge industry norms. Most importantly, stay true to yourself. Your unique experiences and insights are your greatest strengths—embrace them and use them to drive meaningful change.

***What has been your biggest lesson as an entrepreneur?***

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that adaptability is key to long-term success. The market, technology, and customer expectations are constantly evolving, and as an entrepreneur, you have to be willing to pivot, learn, and grow. Lastly, culture is everything. A strong, inclusive, and value-driven company culture not only attracts the best talent but also fuels innovation and resilience, which are critical for scaling a business successfully.

# The Rise of Biohacking

Gen Z obsession with longevity science.

By A Kartikeyan

Imagine waking up at 5 AM, plunging into a tub filled with ice water, sipping on herbal adaptogen-infused tea, and tracking every biological function in your body with a smartwatch. No, this isn't a scene from a sci-fi movie—it's the daily reality for thousands of young Indians who are embracing biohacking to optimize their health and performance.

Biohacking, once a niche concept among Silicon Valley tech elites, is now a growing movement in India, fuelled by the country's deep-rooted traditions in Ayurveda, yoga, and natural healing. With Gen Z leading the charge, practices like cold therapy, cognitive enhancers, and longevity science are gaining traction across urban centers and digital communities. But what's driving this obsession, and does science back up their efforts?



## The Biohacking Boom

For the Indian Gen Z, health isn't just about avoiding illness—it's about maximising every facet of life. Raised in the era of digital productivity and hyper-connectivity, the young Indians are increasingly looking for scientific solutions to enhance mental clarity, physical endurance, and longevity.

Influencers like Rujuta Diwekar, Luke Coutinho, and platforms such as iThrive and HealthifyMe are making biohacking aspirational and accessible. The philosophy? If you can enhance your brainpower, boost your energy levels, and potentially extend your lifespan—all while using ancient wisdom blended with modern science—why wouldn't you?

Take the case of Aarav Mehta, a 22-year-old engineering student from Bengaluru. After struggling with chronic fatigue and stress due to long study hours, Aarav started experimenting with nootropics—natural brain enhancers. “I began with Brahmi and Ashwagandha,” he says. “My focus and memory improved significantly. Then I explored Shankhpushpi and L-Theanine. Now, I feel sharper and more balanced than ever.”

Aarav isn't alone. A growing number of young professionals and students are turning to biohacking methods to stay ahead in their fast-paced world.

## Cold Plunges

One of the most viral trends in Indian biohacking circles is the cold plunge. From Mumbai's elite wellness centres to makeshift ice baths in home balconies, cold therapy is being hailed for its mental and physical benefits.

But does science support this? Research suggests it does. Cold exposure triggers the release of norepinephrine, a neurotransmitter that enhances focus and mood while reducing inflammation. A 2018 study published in *Medical Hypotheses* found that regular cold exposure could help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety.



**BIOHACKING IS BECOMING MORE POPULAR AS PEOPLE LOOK TO IMPROVE THEIR BODIES AND MINDS. MANY USE NOOTROPICS TO BOOST BRAIN FUNCTION OR TRY METHODS LIKE COLD THERAPY, AND IMPLANTABLE DEVICES TO ENHANCE THEIR HEALTH.**

Ishita Kapoor, a 24-year-old entrepreneur from Delhi, swears by her morning ice bath routine. “Initially, it felt unbearable, but after a few weeks, I noticed reduced stress, improved focus, and better sleep,” she says.

## Nootropics

From Ayurvedic herbs to modern cognitive enhancers, nootropics have become a staple in India's Gen Z toolkit. Traditional ingredients like Brahmi, Shankhpushpi, and *Mucuna Pruriens* are now being combined with global nootropics such as L-Theanine and Alpha-GPC for cognitive enhancement.

A meta-analysis published in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* highlighted that *Bacopa Monnieri* (Brahmi) significantly improves memory recall, while Ashwagandha reduces cortisol levels, aiding stress management.

Samarth Rao, a 20-year-old NEET aspirant, has curated his own nootropic stack for maximum efficiency. “Before exams, I take a mix of Ashwagandha, Brahmi, and green tea extract. It keeps me sharp without the caffeine crashes,” he explains.

## Quest For Longer, Healthier Lives

David Sinclair, a global expert on aging, has popularised the idea that




longevity isn't just about adding years to life, but adding life to years. In India, this philosophy aligns with ancient wellness traditions such as intermittent fasting, Rasayana therapy, and circadian rhythm alignment.

A study in *Cell Metabolism* found that fasting triggers autophagy, a cellular cleaning process that removes damaged cells and promotes longevity. Many Indian Gen Zers are now incorporating 16:8 fasting windows into their routine, inspired by both modern research and traditional Hindu fasting practices like Ekadashi.

Kiran Sharma, a 23-year-old fitness enthusiast, practises fasting and takes supplements like Giloy and Resveratrol. "I want to be fit and active even in my 70s. If tweaking my diet and lifestyle can help me achieve that, I'm all in." While biohacking offers exciting possibilities, it's not without risks. The lack of regulation in India's supplement industry means that some nootropic stacks may be ineffective or even harmful. Similarly, extreme cold exposure without proper adaptation can lead to hypothermia or adverse reactions.

Moreover, the obsession with self-optimisation raises ethical questions. Are we heading toward a society where people who don't biohack are at a disadvantage? Will access to cutting-edge longevity treatments create an even wider health divide?

Despite the risks, biohacking is here to stay. As technology advances, we may see even more personalised health optimisation techniques. Imagine AI-driven Ayurvedic diagnostics that not only track your biometrics but also provide real-time herbal and lifestyle recommendations tailored to your genetic makeup.

Perhaps one day, biohacking will be as common as morning yoga. Until then, India's Gen Z is leading the charge—one ice bath, herbal nootropic, and wellness hack at a time. Self-improvement experimentation becomes less clear, making biohacking a debated topic in today's health industry. 

# A Legacy of Life

## Remembering Mrs. Kanta Saroop Krishen.

By Col R D Singh

She was the 'Mother of the Voluntary Blood Donation Movement in India'! As blood donors, we feel a deep void in our hearts today.

Mrs. Kanta Saroop Krishen, pioneer of the blood donation movement and our mentor, left us at the age of 95 on 30 November 2024.

Our heads bow in reverence to this great social worker who made Chandigarh nearly self-sufficient in safe blood. It is thanks to this remarkable lady—wife of the first Chief Secretary of Haryana, Mr. Saroop Krishen, ICS—who motivated me, while I was at DAV College, Chandigarh (1971–73), to join the blood donation movement. Ever since then, I have been a part of the Blood Bank Society of Chandigarh and a regular blood donor. Today, our entire family has become blood donors. Before hanging up my uniform in 2012, wherever I was posted, I took this noble movement to every corner of the country. We even inspired our village, Pilimandori (Fatehabad), to organise blood donation camps. My wife leads by example, encouraging village women to participate.

Mrs. Saroop Krishen was a powerhouse of energy and devotion. Even at 90+, she was full of cheer whenever we visited her as a family in her home.

A recipient of the Padma Shri, she assisted Dr. J.G. Jolly in the establishment of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh (BBS), and the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohaematology (ISBTI). She also contributed significantly



Mrs. Kanta Saroop Krishen


towards the formulation of the National Blood Donation Policy by the Government of India.

As a family, we visited Mrs. Saroop Krishen at her residence in Chandigarh in 2019 and presented her with a beautifully written memoir of my 48-year journey with her as my mentor in this noble

movement. The book contains over 50 photographs of blood donation-related events, several articles and write-ups, and various anecdotes. The memoir also showcases her dedicated team, including her committed daughter Niti Sarin, and her son-in-law, Advocate Mac Sarin, a senior lawyer in the Punjab & Haryana High Court.

The grand old lady, who played a key role in making Chandigarh self-sufficient in safe blood, was deeply touched by the presentation. For us and our family, it was an extremely humbling experience. We wanted to express our gratitude to her while she was still with us. She was overjoyed to see the memoir and cherished it until her last day.

Mrs. Saroop Krishen was more than a mother—bedridden, yet still calling us to ask about our family's well-being during the COVID-19 period. She was full of love and care, never without her sweet smile.

Thank you, Ma'am. You were par excellence—bringing a smile to others even while bedridden. We, the blood donor family across the country, woven together by the red thread, will miss your graceful and inspiring presence. But we assure you: we will continue to give the 'gift of life' to those in need, for as long as we can. 



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# A Gateway of Guilty Pleasure

Rekindling the lost passion through romantic getaways.

By Deepshikha Pandey

In the whirlwind of marriages—where responsibilities often outweigh romance—it's easy for the passion to take a backseat. The early days of love, filled with stolen glances and whispered confessions, slowly give way to bills, in-laws, children, and societal expectations. In a culture where marriages are deeply rooted in duty and tradition, couples often forget that nurturing intimacy is just as important as managing family obligations.

Recent studies show that 38 per cent of individuals in long-term relationships admit to straying due to a lack of physical attraction in marriage, while 33 per cent feel emotionally neglected. But what if the solution to reigniting the lost passion isn't in looking elsewhere but in rediscovering each other?

A quiet escape—a secret stay at a boutique haveli in Rajasthan, a private Airbnb in Goa, or a cozy villa in the hills of Himachal—can be the perfect remedy. An environment free of daily chores, work stress, and social obligations can help couples rekindle their bond, just as they did in the early days of their relationship.



## Why Do Couples Need A Romantic Escape?

In relationships, especially after marriage, it often becomes more about family and less about the couple. The demands of a joint family, social obligations, and even workplace pressures leave little room for romance. Unlike in the West, where “date nights” and vacations are routine, couples often hesitate to prioritise themselves. The result? A relationship that, though filled with love, lacks the spark of desire.

Psychologist Dr. Harish Shetty, a leading marriage counsellor, notes that a lack of privacy and spontaneity is one of the biggest reasons couples struggle with intimacy. Between living with extended families, raising children, and managing work-life balance, romance is often reduced to a mere responsibility rather than an exciting journey.

Studies in psychology prove that novelty plays a crucial role in keeping the passion alive. Dr. Arthur Aron’s research on love and relationships found that couples who engage in new and exciting experiences together release more dopamine, the same chemical responsible for the euphoria of falling in love.

Additionally, a study from the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* revealed that couples who take occasional vacations together experience greater

emotional closeness and sexual satisfaction compared to those who don’t. When couples break free from the monotony of routine, they create opportunities to rediscover each other in an uninhibited, judgment-free space.

## Finding Your Private Heaven

### Choose an Offbeat Destination:

India is full of hidden gems perfect for romantic escapades:

- The misty hills of Coorg or Munnar for cozying up with chai and long, uninterrupted conversations.
- A private beach house in Goa or Gokarna where you can relive the thrill of young love, walking hand-in-hand under the stars.
- A luxurious haveli in Udaipur or Jodhpur for a royal retreat filled with candlelit dinners and cultural indulgence.
- A treehouse in Wayanad or a floating cottage in Kerala’s backwaters for an exotic, intimate escape.



**A QUIET ESCAPE—A SECRET STAY AT A BOUTIQUE HAVELI IN RAJASTHAN, A PRIVATE AIRBNB IN GOA, OR A COZY VILLA IN THE HILLS OF HIMACHAL—CAN BE THE PERFECT REMEDY.**





marital satisfaction and lower rates of extramarital affairs.

### Indulge the Senses

Indian culture has always celebrated sensuality, from ancient texts like the Kamasutra to Mughal-era love poetry. Romance isn't just about physical intimacy but about awakening all five senses.

**Sight:** A scenic sunset in Rishikesh or Jaipur's Amer Fort lit up at night.

**Smell:** The intoxicating aroma of jasmine and sandalwood in a spa or a room filled with scented candles.

**Taste:** Feeding each other chocolate-dipped strawberries or

**Disconnect to Reconnect:** In India, where WhatsApp family groups, office emails, and social media never stop buzzing, digital detox is crucial. A 2023 study by *The Indian Journal of Psychiatry* revealed that 60 per cent of couples experience “phone distraction” during conversations, leading to emotional disconnect.

A simple rule for your getaway: turn off notifications, put away laptops, and focus entirely on each other. Even a weekend of undivided attention can work wonders in reviving lost intimacy.

### Experiment With New Experiences

Many couples shy away from discussing desires or trying new things in their relationship. But stepping out of your comfort zone can reignite the excitement.

- Role-playing as strangers meeting for the first time at a luxury hotel bar.
- Exploring sensory experiences like a candlelit bubble bath or couple's spa therapy.
- Playing nostalgic games—truth or dare, romantic scavenger hunts—to bring back the thrill of young love.

According to *The Indian Journal of Sexology*, couples who explore new experiences together report higher



**A SIMPLE RULE FOR YOUR GETAWAY: TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS, PUT AWAY LAPTOPS, AND FOCUS ENTIRELY ON EACH OTHER. EVEN A WEEKEND OF UNDIVIDED ATTENTION CAN WORK WONDERS IN REVIVING LOST INTIMACY. SO, IT'S ALL ABOUT DISCONNECT TO CONNECT WITH LOVE.**

indulging in a slow, romantic dinner with exotic flavours.

**Touch:** A relaxing Ayurvedic massage for two or simply holding hands under the moonlight.

**Sound:** The rhythmic waves of the ocean, the rustling of leaves in a forest retreat, or a romantic Bollywood playlist in the background.

### Unscripted Conversations

In a country where open conversations about love and desire are often considered taboo, emotional intimacy is often neglected. Use this getaway to talk—



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not just about family responsibilities or finances, but about dreams, fantasies, and unspoken desires.

A study from The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) found that Indian couples who engage in deep, intimate conversations at least once a month are 50 per cent more likely to feel fulfilled in their relationship.

*"After 15 years of marriage, we had become just 'Papa' and 'Mummy'. Our getaway to the Andamans reminded us that first we were lovers before parents. That weekend reignited something we had almost forgotten existed."* – Meera & Ravi, Chennai.

*"We had been caught up in careers, barely spending quality time together. A two-day retreat in Coorg made us feel like newlyweds again. No phone calls, no emails, just us."* – Sanya & Arjun, Bengaluru.

*"I surprised my wife with a stay at*



*a Rajasthani palace. Watching her in a traditional lehenga, with candlelit dinners and slow dances, made me realise that romance doesn't fade—it just needs a reminder."* – Rohit, Delhi.

Many couples struggle with the idea of prioritising their personal happiness. Societal norms often equate self-indulgence with selfishness, especially for married

individuals. But romance is not a luxury—it's a necessity.

Psychologists confirm that a strong romantic connection leads to better mental health, lower stress levels, and a longer life span. A well-nurtured relationship doesn't just benefit the couple but strengthens the foundation of the entire family.

A romantic getaway isn't about escaping responsibilities—it's about nurturing the love that holds everything together.

Whether it's a planned trip to the Himalayas or a spontaneous weekend stay at a heritage haveli, what matters is the effort to rediscover each other.

Love doesn't die from a lack of time; it fades from a lack of attention. Perhaps, all it takes to rekindle the flame is a quiet place, a slow dance, and the willingness to fall in love all over again.

We

## How I Saved My Marriage



### SECOND CHANCE

I stared at the packed bags by the door, my heart pounding with anxiety. Ananya sat in the bedroom, silently wiping away tears. Our five-year marriage was unraveling before my eyes, and I felt helpless. I thought about the early days, how we laughed over pani puri at Juhu Beach, how we drove along Marine Drive late at night, hands intertwined, dreams in our hearts. But somewhere along the way, life had pulled us apart. Long work hours, endless arguments, and unspoken resentment had created a chasm between us.

"I can't do this anymore, Aarav," Ananya stated, her voice

heartbreakingly calm. I wanted to tell her she was wrong, that we could fix this. But deep down, I knew the truth. I had neglected her, missed anniversaries, overlooked the small, important moments.

I had become a shadow in our marriage, too consumed by work to see what I was losing. "Don't go," I pleaded, my voice barely a whisper. She turned away, twisting her dupatta in her fingers. "You're never really here." Her words cut deep because they were true.

Regret filled my chest as I took a step closer. "I know I've let you down, but I don't want to lose you. Just give me a chance." She hesitated, searching my eyes. "One month," she finally said.

The next morning, I took leave from work. For the first time in years, my priority was us. I started with the little things, helping around the house, listening without distractions, being present. I planned a surprise trip to Lonavala, where we once watched sunsets in comfortable silence.

This time, we talked. We spoke about our disappointments, fears, and unfulfilled dreams. We laughed. We cried. We reconnected. One evening, as we cooked together, she reached for my hand. My heart raced at the warmth of her touch. I knew then that hope wasn't lost. Days passed, her bags remained untouched. Last night, she sat beside me, "I don't want to leave," she whispered. Relief washed over me.

I pulled her into my arms, holding her as if I could shield us from the pain of the past. "I won't let us fall apart again." We weren't magically healed. That was enough.

–Payal



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**The First Leap – Flight of Dreams**

She leaps beyond the earthbound chains,  
A fleeting echo, light remains.  
Arms stretched wide like wings of air,  
A whispered dream, a silent prayer.  
Her body carves the sky so vast,  
A moment held, a breath so fast.  
Gravity yields beneath her feet,  
As she and heaven softly meet.

*The  
Dancer's  
Symphony*



**Crimson Serenade – The Heart's Song**

Her dress ignites in shades of red,  
Like embers bright where passions tread.  
A step, a spin, a heartbeat's call,  
She dances where the wild stars fall.  
With fire in soul and wind in hair,  
She writes a love song in the air.  
Each motion speaks of joy untamed,  
A tale of love that can't be named.



***The Black Waltz – Elegance Unveiled***

*She drapes herself in velvet night,  
Her body flows like liquid light.  
A curve of grace, a poised refrain,  
A melody spun in the rain.  
Each twirl, a whisper of the past,  
A fleeting step that will not last.  
Yet in this moment, bold and true,  
She wields the dark in shades of blue.*



**Poise in Motion – The Moon’s Whisper**

Upon her toes, the world stands still,  
A moment shaped by sheer free will.  
Her fingers carve the air so light,  
She dances with the silver night.  
A shadow bends, the echoes grow,  
A rhythm soft like drifting snow.  
With every turn, the silence sings,  
As though she wears the moon’s own wings.



***The Floral Waltz- A Blossom's Breath***

*She floats like petals kissed by spring.*

*A tender touch in everything.*

*Each leap, a bloom, so light, so free.*

*A dance entwined with poetry.*

*Like morning's breeze upon the land.*

*She moves with grace, a soft command.*

*Her feet embrace the air's embrace.*

*A flower spun in time and space.*



***The Ethereal Glow – A Heavenly Drift***

*Her fingers stretch towards skies untold,  
A story bright, a dream of gold.  
She lifts the air as if it's hers,  
A voice without the need for words.  
Her form is light, her touch divine,  
As though she leaves the stars behind.  
With every turn, with every sigh,  
She melts into the endless sky.*



***Rebellion's Twirl – The Wild Beat***

*A breath, a bow, the echoes fade,  
Yet in the dust, her steps remain.  
Each rhythm carved in space and time,  
A dancer's tale, a fate divine.  
A rebel's grace, a fearless stance,  
Her body speaks, her soul commands.  
With every stomp, with every sway,  
She bends the night and makes it play.*



***The Last Pose – A Timeless Echo***

*No lace, no chains, no rules to stay,  
She twists and bends the world her way.  
With denim torn and boots so high,  
She waltzes past the judging eye.  
For though the lights may dim to dark,  
Her dance ignites an endless spark.  
A fleeting moment, yet it stays,  
Alive in hearts, in dreams, in praise.*

# 152 YEARS OF TRAMS IN INDIA

A Journey of Heritage and Friendship.

By N Shiva Kumar

The clang of a Tram bell echoed through the din of Kolkata traffic, a sound that had once been as familiar as the city's heartbeat. Yet now, it is a rare melody, drowned in the ceaseless honks and screeches of modern transport. But once in a while, something magical happens along the old Tram tracks. Its Trams on a tantalising trip lovingly called TramJatra—the festival that breathes life into the city's dwindling Tram system, transforming the streets into a moving canvas of history, nostalgia, and hope.

At the heart of this movement is an unsung hero—Roberto D'Andrea, a Tram conductor from Melbourne, Australia. A man whose passion for Trams knew no borders, Roberto had seen the fate of Kolkata's Trams hanging in the balance and had vowed to keep them alive. Dressed in his Melbourne Tram conductor's uniform, his infectious energy turned him into an icon in Kolkata, a bridge between two cities separated by geography but united by a love for their Trams.

TramJatra had begun as a vision—a dream shared by Roberto and a group of enduring enthusiasts determined to preserve Kolkata's century-old Tram network. What started as a small cultural exchange had evolved into a full-fledged movement.

Drenched in a hypnotic blend of purple and blue, the majestic double-carriage Tram No. 635 stands sturdy at Kolkata's iconic Esplanade Tram Station. A silent beast of the tracks, it awaits its next adventure, ready to weave through the city's timeless streets.



Bathed in a striking lemon-green hue, the double-carriage Tram numbered 256 stands majestically at the Esplanade Tram Station, its vintage charm blending seamlessly with the city's throbbing traffic. Poised for its next journey, it beckons eager passengers aboard, promising a ride through history and hustle.



On February 27, 2023, the iconic Tram No. 611 was transformed into a rolling masterpiece—lavishly decorated and fine-tuned to perfection—to honour a century of the legendary film maker Satyajit Ray. A moving tribute to the maestro, turning the streets into a reel of nostalgia and artistic splendour!





**THE FESTIVAL THAT BREATHES LIFE INTO THE CITY'S DWINDLING TRAM SYSTEM, TRANSFORMING THE STREETS INTO A MOVING CANVAS OF HISTORY, NOSTALGIA, AND HOPE.**

● Electrifying nostalgia on wheels! The legendary Wooded Body K-Class Tram draped in dazzling decorations for ecofriendly TramJatra. It royally rolls through history in honour of the grand 150th anniversary celebrations of Trams in India surviving at Calcutta!



● Roberto, the spirited Tram conductor from Australia, ignites a spark of wonder in the streets of Calcutta, sharing his boundless love for the Tramway with wide-eyed children. With an infectious grin, he hands out coveted Connie Tram Cards, weaving magic and nostalgia into the city's historic tracks!



● Tram number 449 with a dazzling masterpiece draped in vibrant flora and exotic fauna, roared to life for the electrifying 2016 TramJatra Festival! A rolling jungle of colour and creativity, this iconic Tram transformed the streets into a moving spectacle of nature and artistry.

As the Tram rattles and lumbers through the chaotic streets of Calcutta, the conductor stands effortlessly poised at the entrance—his leather bag brimming with coins, his fingers deftly flipping through a fan of tickets.



A grand spectacle where decorated Trams trundled through the city, carrying artists, poets, historians, and musicians, their voices and melodies reverberating through the air. Passengers didn't just board a Tram; they stepped into a moving museum, an ode to sustainability and urban heritage. Over the years nearly 70,000 followers from far and near got hooked on to this Tram testimonials. Some supporters link up physically, others digitally, some symbolically, some via video streaming on WhatsApp or Instagram or FaceBook etc. but all enthusiastically.



College students eagerly explore the vibrantly adorned Tram, a rolling spectacle of culture and nostalgia, as the electrifying Kolkata–Melbourne TramJatra marks two thrilling decades of celebration (1996–2016). A fusion of history and festivity on wheels.



Passengers revel in the rhythmic clatter of the Tram as it glides through the bustling streets, while the vigilant conductor, armed with his trusty paraphernalia of tickets and cash, stands poised at the entrance.



Luxury on Rails! A sleek, air-conditioned single carriage Tram no.245 has started to hit the tracks, promising a ride in silence and cool comfort inside the Tram, away from the sweltering air outside.

This year, the theme of TramJatra is programmed with Sundarbans mangrove jungles, a tribute to the lungs of Bengal. Trams will be adorned with Sundarbans' rich biodiversity—majestic Royal Bengal tigers lurking in emerald-green foliage with other denizens and migratory birds soaring in the sky. It will be more than an artistic display; it was a call to action, urging the city to embrace sustainability.

Roberto wasn't alone in this mission. The Calcutta Tramways Users Association (CTUA), under the leadership of Debasish Bhattacharyya and Mahadeb Shi, had fought tirelessly with their dedicated team of members and enthusiasts to



Some Trams dazzle with impeccably polished exteriors and vibrant, flashy interiors, designed to lure in thrill-seeking passengers and reignite the fading charm of Tram travel in India.



This sleek Tram, originally crafted by the renowned Jessop Company in 1989, underwent a bold transformation—its front and back were thrillingly revamped to mirror the iconic Melbourne B-Class Tram, blending heritage with modernity.



The dashing Australian team of conductors with styled uniforms, brought a touch of flair and spectacle to the bustling streets of Calcutta. Their striking attire wasn't just a symbol of national pride but became a magnet for curious children and captivated bystanders during a TramJatra.

With the sleek poise of a pink panther on the prowl, this vintage Tram—crafted by Burn Standard Company Ltd. in 1984—now rests at Kolkata's Tram Workshop, awaiting a thrilling rebirth. A silent witness to the city's timeless charm, it gears up for a grand comeback.



A historical night-time scene of the first horse-drawn Tram introduced in Calcutta in 1873. The Tram is an open wooden carriage with benches, a modest mode of travelling in time.

Yet, the struggle was real. Each year, more Tram routes were being decommissioned, the metal tracks vanishing under layers of asphalt. Just months ago, I had stood at a deserted Tram stop, waiting in vain for a Tram that never arrived. The realisation was heartbreaking—was this the beginning of the end of Calcutta Tramways Company (CTC).

But TramJatra was a rebellion against that fate. As the festivity unfolded for the last thirty years intermittently, citizens flocked to the Trams, embracing them as symbols of resilience.

Roberto, waving from the conductor's cabin, reminded everyone that heritage wasn't just about preserving the past—it was about shaping the future.

As night descended, the final Tram of the day rolled into the depot, its wheels whispering against the tracks. The clang of the Tram bell lingered in the air, a promise that as long as TramJatra and CTUA existed, the spirit of Kolkata's Trams would never fade.

And somewhere in the crowd, a new fan of the Tram heard that bell for the first time and smiled, unknowingly inheriting the love for a legacy that refused to be forgotten. **We**



A dazzling fleet of vibrant, multi-hued single-carriage Trams, forged from wood and iron, majestically roll through the heart of Calcutta in a mesmerising TramJatra spectacle—a nostalgic yet electrifying parade that paints the city in motion.



The Melbourne and Calcutta Tramways Friendship Tram has been beautifully modified to celebrate the charm of classic tram travel. Designed to captivate and inspire, this rolling tribute invites passengers to rediscover the magic of trams.

ensure Tramways remained part of Kolkata's identity. For them, Trams weren't just a mode of transport; they were a testimony to the city's soul, a relic of an era when life moved at a pace that allowed one to appreciate its beauty.

**Courtesy:**

Photo © CTUA & N. Shiva Kumar



**Iron Man Full Rim Square Sunglasses**

Power, precision, and style—embody them all. The navigator frame, in a stunning gold, mirrors the hero's signature look.

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**The Paramour Women's Cat Eye Opticals**

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**Assemble Unisex Wayfarer Opticals**

Honour the legacy of the First Avenger. Be a man transformed with the brand-new range of eyewear.



**Iron Man Full Rim Navigator Sunglass**

Featuring mirror lenses for that perfect balance of style and function, these sunglasses are polarised and offer 100% UV protection for all-day comfort.



**Serum Unisex Navigator Sunglasses**

This one-of-a-kind collector's item celebrates your individuality, reminding you that your true superpower lies in being yourself.



**Colorfornia Lime Yellow Unisex Square**

These frames don't discriminate between faces and treat each one fair and 'square' by looking awesome on them all.



**Colorfornia Raven Unisex Round Opticals**

From John Lennon's time to Harry Potter's, the round frame has kept evolving while staying true to their form.



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# UNRESTRICTED AND UNAPOLOGETIC

Founded in 2019, Ranbir Mukherjee embodies power, boldness, and visionary design.

The label seamlessly blends vintage elegance with contemporary aesthetics, offering statement-making Indian silhouettes, sarees, blazers, and resort wear. With a fusion of Indian textiles and modern tailoring, the brand celebrates individuality, ensuring effortless style for every shape and size.



Solid yellow blazer set is a coordinated outfit featuring a tailored blazer and matching bootcut pants and bralette, all in a single colour.



An ivory small pleated dress is a delicate and elegant piece featuring soft pleats throughout, creating a flowy and flattering silhouette.



Blue checkered cropped blazer features a trendy checkered pattern with a cropped, tailored fit blazer & pleated pants.



Black stone work blazer set features a tailored black blazer paired with matching wide leg pants, adorned with intricate stone embellishments.



Colourful cluster printed saree paired with a corset blouse offers a blend of traditional and modern style.

# ÉLAN By Nouria

A poetic ode to ever-changing dance between the light and water.



## Coral Dress

This ethereal mini dress features a soft watercolour print on flowy fabric, with Raglan sleeves and an elegant bow-tie neckline.



## Raina Co-ord Set

Nouria's most loved signature co-ord set is a must have, The bottom sarong skirt can be tied up in multiple ways that looks stunning on all versatile body types.



## Marina Co-ord Set

This breezy three-piece set features a strapless bandeau top, a high-slit wrap skirt, and a flowing cape, all adorned with a soft watercolour print.



## Tasi Co-ord Set

This elegant kaftan set features a flowing asymmetrical tunic with a soft V-neckline and relaxed sleeves, paired with wide-leg pants.



#### **Eka Grey Co-ord Set**

The bottom sarong skirt can be tied up in multiple ways that looks stunning on all versatile body silhouettes paired with Eka Short waterfall Jacket over it to complete the look.

#### **Pasha Co-ord Set**

Featuring a strapless bandeau top, flowy wide-leg pants, and a breezy kimono. The geometric print adds a modern touch, perfect for coastal escapes.



#### **Viora Skirt**

A flowy, high-waisted maxi skirt with a front ruched detail and a soft drape.



#### **Jenna Dress**

A statement of fluidity and charm, this dress boasts a bow-tie detail at the neck and a relaxed, flowy fit for timeless sophistication.



#### **Oki Trench Jacket**

A statement short trench jacket featuring an oversized collar, structured shoulders, and an abstract dot print.

# DC by Donny Chawla



Where Indulgence Meets Conscious Living



Donny Chawla

At DC by Donny Chawla, desserts are more than just sweet treats—they are an experience of love, craft, and conscious indulgence. Founded with the belief that you don't have to choose between health and the taste, Donny Chawla has redefined baking by bringing together gluten-free, vegan, and health-conscious options that satisfy even the most

indulgent cravings. Whether you're a dessert lover following a sugar-conscious diet or someone who enjoys a balance of both healthy and indulgent treats, her creations are designed to bring joy to every bite.

## A Vision Rooted in Passion & Community

Inspired by her love for baking and a deep understanding of quality ingredients, Donny Chawla started her home-baking business from her very own kitchen. She carefully crafted recipes that were not only delicious but also catered to modern dietary needs—gluten-free, refined sugar-free, vegan, and wholesome. Her passion quickly turned into a brand, making her a trusted name in Cuffe Parade and beyond.

At the heart of DC by Donny Chawla is a simple yet powerful vision:

To create a community where people can enjoy desserts guilt-free, without compromising on taste.

To bring families and friends together through the magic of handcrafted treats.

To inspire mindful indulgence while ensuring every bite is made with love, precision, and the best ingredients.



## Crafted with Health in Mind

DC by Donny Chawla specialises in 100% eggless, gluten-free, and refined sugar-free baked goods. Natural ingredients like coconut sugar, dates, and jaggery replace traditional sweeteners, while whole wheat, ragi, and oats bring nutrition to every bite.

## Signature Offerings

- Cakes & Loaves: Date & Oat Granola Cake, Ragi Mocha Walnut Cake, Mango Tea Cake
- Brownies & Cookies: Ragi Fudgy Brownies, Walnut Fudgy Brownies
- Handcrafted Chocolates & Energy Bites

Whether you're craving something light and healthy or rich and indulgent, Donny ensures there's something for everyone.



Bawan Chawla



### Bawan Chawla: The Art of Luxury Packaging

Beyond the delicious treats, DC by Donny Chawla is also known for its exquisite gift hampers and trousseau packaging, curated by Bawan Chawla. With an eye for detail and a flair for elegance, she ensures that every hamper is as beautiful as the treats inside. Whether it's a wedding, a baby shower, or a festive occasion, Bawan creates personalised packaging that adds a touch of sophistication to every celebration.

For customised gift hampers and trousseau packaging, contact Bawan Chawla at **977940077**.



### Influencing Through Passion & Purpose

Donny Chawla isn't just a baker—she's an influencer in her own right. Her dedication to quality and innovation has inspired her friends, family, and community to embrace a more mindful way of enjoying desserts. Whether it's through her delicious recipes, thoughtful tweets, or personal recommendations, she's always encouraging people to experience the joy of handcrafted desserts that don't compromise on health.

### A Future Rooted in Innovation & Love

As DC by Donny Chawla continues to grow, Donny remains committed to her vision of creating value through high-quality desserts and premium tea-time experiences. She believes that desserts should be memorable, meaningful, and made with love—and that's exactly what her brand delivers.

For orders and inquiries, call or WhatsApp Donny Chawla at **9619087836** or **9619102158**.

Experience the magic of DC by Donny Chawla—where every bite tells a story of love, craft, and indulgence.

# “Psychology Of War”

## By Deep Trivedi



Deep Trivedi

“Psychology of War” by Deep Trivedi is an insightful book that shows readers how to handle life’s challenges using lessons from war. The author emphasises that life is full of battles in areas like relationships, careers, and personal growth, and having the right mindset is essential to overcome them. Trivedi uses simple language and practical advice to help readers build a strong attitude to face difficulties with confidence and understanding.

### Author’s Background

Deep Trivedi is a well-known author and speaker, recognised for his insights into human psychology and spirituality. His earlier books, “I am The Mind” and “I am Gita,” have received praise for their ability to inspire change. Trivedi simplifies complex psychological ideas into easy-to-understand stories, helping people use their inner strength. He writes and leads workshops to

guide individuals in reaching their full potential. He has a unique talent for discussing deep life topics in clear language, leaving no room for confusion.

### Book Overview

“Psychology of War” is not just a book about fighting; it is a helpful guide to understanding and dealing with everyday challenges. It has 242 pages and gives readers practical psychological tools and strategies. You can use these to handle problems in different areas of life, including family disagreements, work issues, and personal struggles.

### Core Themes

**Life as a Battlefield:** Deep Trivedi believes that life is a series of conflicts, both internal and external. Recognising this is the first step to handling challenges effectively. By accepting that conflict is always present, people can get ready mentally and emotionally for what lies ahead.



**Psychological Tactics of War:** The author makes connections between historical and modern warfare to explain strategies for everyday situations. These strategies include planning ahead, understanding the opponent (whether a person or a situation), and using one’s strengths while being aware of limitations.

**Principles of War:** Trivedi explores key principles like surprise, quick action, and flexibility. He shows that when people use these principles wisely, they can achieve success in different situations.

**Warrior Mindset:** A major theme in the book is developing a warrior’s mindset. This mindset includes resilience, focus, and a strong spirit. Trivedi believes that by embracing this mindset, people can face challenges with strength and determination.

### Style And Presentation

Trivedi writes in a unique and engaging way. He uses personal stories along with research findings to create an informative and relatable narrative. The language is clear, making complex ideas easier to understand for everyone. Each chapter is well-organised, with summaries and practical insights that encourage readers to reflect and take action.

### What’s Good About the Book?

**Easy to Understand:** One of the greatest strengths of “Psychology of War” is its simplicity. Deep Trivedi presents complex psychological concepts in a manner that is easy to understand, even for readers who may not have a background in psychology or self-help literature.

The language is straightforward and free from heavy jargon, making it accessible to a wide audience. The book is well-structured, offering clear explanations and practical insights that keep readers engaged without overwhelming them.

#### **Advice For Real-Life Situations:**

The book goes beyond discussing theories; it offers actionable strategies for everyday situations. Whether you're experiencing stress at work, having difficulties in relationships, or coping with personal setbacks, the lessons in this book provide practical solutions. The advice centres on developing mental strength, and maintaining calm under pressure, valuable skills for managing challenges in any circumstance.

#### **Encourages Positive Thinking:**

The book highlights the significance of a strong, resilient mindset.

It encourages readers to view obstacles as opportunities for growth, promoting self-discipline, confidence, and a proactive attitude. With its motivational tone, the book inspires readers to overcome fears and limitations in their pursuit of success.

"Psychology of War" is a must-read for anyone interested in military history, psychology, or human behaviour. This book looks at how war affects individuals and societies. It provides well-researched insights and encourages thought. By exploring historical conflicts, psychological theories, and human emotions, it explains how war impacts soldiers, leaders, and civilians. The book discusses what leads people to war and also shows the resilience, adaptability, and survival instincts that arise during conflict. Psychologists will find valuable insights into human

emotions like aggression, fear, and trauma. General readers can also relate to its lessons about everyday challenges.

"Psychology of War" is not just about war, it offers lessons on mental strength and resilience for everyday life. Deep Trivedi shares valuable insights that help readers develop a strong mindset to tackle personal and work challenges. The book encourages readers to change their perspectives, solve problems with confidence and strategy, and build the inner strength needed to overcome difficulties.

If you want to understand warfare and human behaviour better and gain tools to handle life's challenges wisely and bravely, read "Psychology of War".

It will help you understand human nature more deeply and inspire you to face challenges with strength and a positive attitude.

**We**

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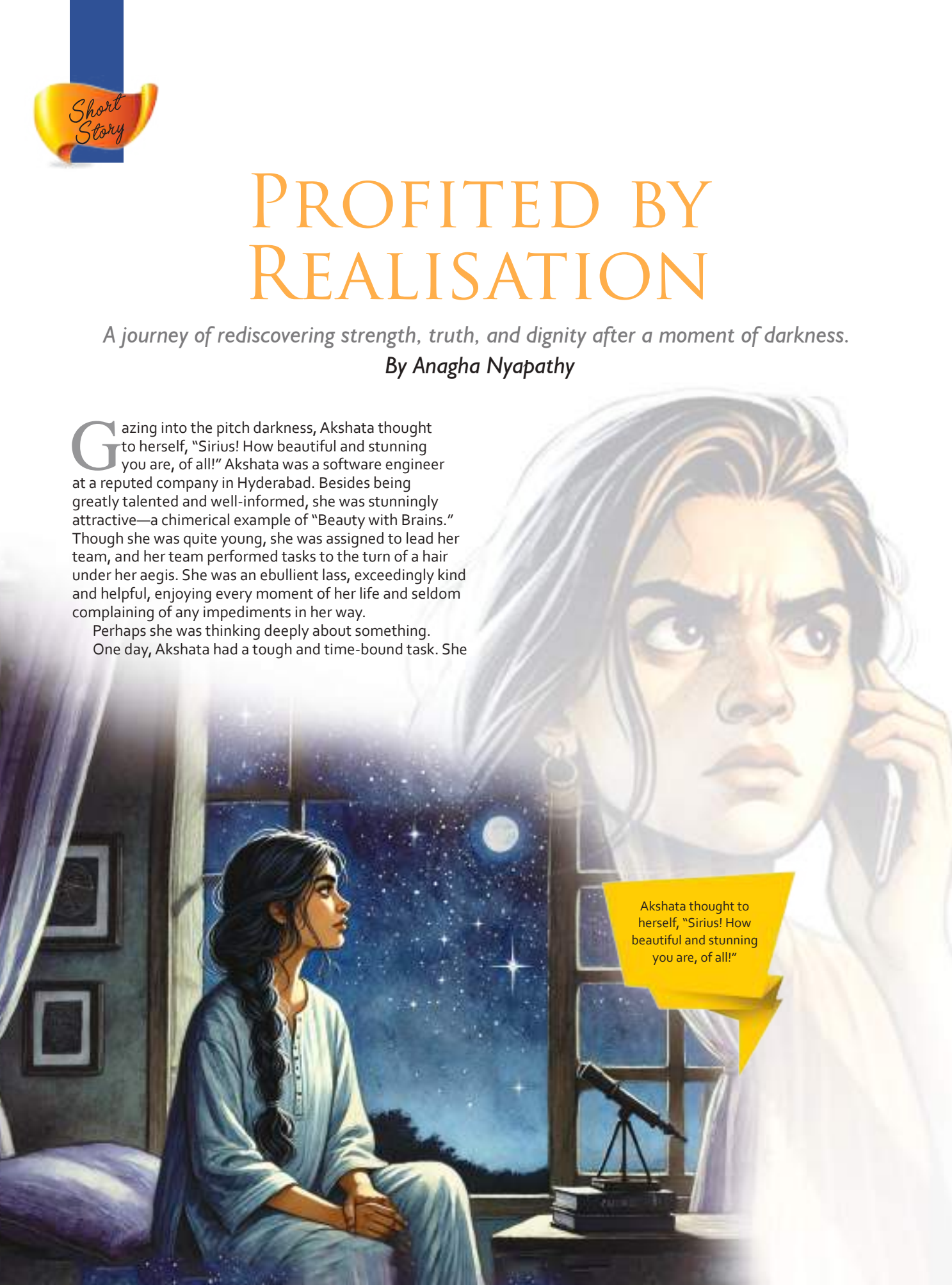
*A journey of rediscovering strength, truth, and dignity after a moment of darkness.*

*By Anagha Nyapathy*


Gazing into the pitch darkness, Akshata thought to herself, "Sirius! How beautiful and stunning you are, of all!" Akshata was a software engineer at a reputed company in Hyderabad. Besides being greatly talented and well-informed, she was stunningly attractive—a chimerical example of "Beauty with Brains." Though she was quite young, she was assigned to lead her team, and her team performed tasks to the turn of a hair under her aegis. She was an ebullient lass, exceedingly kind and helpful, enjoying every moment of her life and seldom complaining of any impediments in her way.

Perhaps she was thinking deeply about something.

One day, Akshata had a tough and time-bound task. She

A detailed illustration of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue nightgown, sitting on a bed and looking out a window at a starry night sky. A telescope is visible on a table next to the window. A large, semi-transparent image of the same woman's face is overlaid on the right side of the page, holding a phone to her ear. A yellow speech bubble contains text.

Akshata thought to herself, "Sirius! How beautiful and stunning you are, of all!"



She tried to book a cab or auto to return home, but her efforts were futile, as none was in the vicinity—perhaps.

had to work late into the night to accomplish it and was the last person to leave the office. She tried to book a cab or auto to return home, but her efforts were futile, as none was in the vicinity—perhaps. Left with no other alternative, she began walking on the lonely street, hopeful of finding some means of transport.

Akshata's parents were worried about her, as she had not returned home. They were checking with friends and relatives. Her phone, too, was switched off. While they were in a state of quandary, they received a call from the police station requesting them to visit. When they did, they found their daughter there with bruises on her face and arms. The police informed them, "These idiots had troubled your daughter. Though she was intelligent enough to immediately contact us, she was already injured by the time we reached the spot." They pointed at some hoodlums in the cell. Later, they sent her home.

On her way back home, Akshata was silent in the car. Whenever she tried to speak, she was shunned by her parents. Thus, she had no say. Her parents felt guilty for educating her well and letting her work. If she were a homemaker, this situation would never have arisen.

It was decided that she should be married off immediately, and to avoid further trouble, she would leave her job. Eventually, she left her job, though she did not want to.

Word spread like wildfire. Many people came to know about the incident—including her relatives, friends, and neighbours. Naturally, her parents' concern doubled. "Who would ever marry her?" they thought.

Spending time alone at home, she revived her interest

---

*She should be married off immediately, and to avoid further trouble, she would leave her job. Eventually, she left her job, though she did not want to. Word spread like wildfire. Many people came to know about the incident—including her relatives, friends, and neighbours. Naturally, her parents' concern doubled.*

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in astronomy. So, speaking to the stars became her hobby. Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky, became her favourite. She also read many books on astronomy.

That fine evening, Akshata was sitting at the window porch, looking into the starry sky. Her intensive thoughts were now interrupted by her mother's call.

"Akshata, come here. I must tell you some great news."

"Coming, Ma!" She went to her mother and asked, "What's that?" She was inquisitive.

"We got a call from Quick Matrimonial Services in the city this morning. The manager informed us that a boy and his family were impressed with your profile and are visiting us tomorrow morning. Look at his picture here! He is handsome and smart. He hails from a decent family, and his father is a senior IAS officer."

Though she was not inclined to see it, she obeyed her mother. She took a casual look at the picture.

"He is Arjun! I recognise him. He was my colleague," she disclosed voluntarily.

The next day, Arjun and his parents arrived around 10

a.m. Clad in a bright blue saree, she stepped into the living room like an angel from the heaven. No sooner had he seen her than Arjun stood up.

"Madam, it's a surprise to meet you after such a long time!"

"You lose no opportunity to tease me, Arjun!" she countered with a smile.

Though senior to her by a year, Arjun respected and admired Akshata for her knowledge and nature and often addressed her as "Madam." Though they bonded well, professionally they gave each other tough, healthy competition, leading their respective teams very well.

The meeting went well. Arjun's parents loved Akshata, and so did Arjun. They gave their consent for the wedding. Akshata's family was happy but also concerned at the same time.

Akshata's parents were discussing.

"The boy and his family are good. But I wonder if he still wants to marry her after knowing about her," her dad said.

"He must know her well from working together. He must also know about the incident. I am not sure how his family will react to it. I don't want her to face any more problems," her mom expressed her concern.

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Arjun's mother was very happy. After all, Arjun had chosen someone, and the girl seemed no less than an angel, she thought. She was discussing this with her cousin, showing Akshata's

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*Arjun's mother was very happy. After all, Arjun had chosen someone, and the girl seemed no less than an angel, she thought. She was discussing this with her cousin, showing Akshata's photograph.*

---

photograph. Her cousin immediately recognised her, as she knew about the unfortunate incident and explained it. As expected, Arjun's mother was worried. She did not want her son to marry such a girl.

As soon as Arjun returned from office that day, she expressed her opinion. While they were discussing, Arjun's sister, Gayatri, who stayed in Bangalore, visited them without notice. Learning that her brother was to get married, she couldn't contain her excitement and decided to visit home for a few days.

Listening to the current discussion at home, her expression changed. In a low voice, she said, "Akshata is not to be blamed, Ma. It was me."

Arjun tried to cover up.

"Thank you for supporting me, brother. But I think it's time for me to speak out. Otherwise, it will always remain a secret."

"That day, I was returning from my friend's birthday party. The next day, I was to leave for Bangalore to join my new job. I was returning

"That day, I was returning from my friend's birthday party. The next day, I was to leave for Bangalore to join my new job."





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"Dear, there was no mistake of yours in the incident. Your only mistake was hiding the truth from us. I know my daughter well."



in a cab when the driver halted the vehicle all of a sudden, citing a car breakdown. I grew suspicious. My phone battery had run out, and I was unable to contact anyone. Then, I saw him and his aides coming towards me. I tried to run and escape, but they quickly waylaid me. I let out a scream for help. Akshata, who was nearby, heard my shriek and ran to me. She contacted the police and, in the meantime, tried her best to protect me by fighting against them. The police came and saved us both. I was scared it would spoil Dad's reputation and also affect my career. My dream of working in Bangalore had just come true, and I had to leave the next day. For my own selfish reasons, I refrained from complaining. Akshata was adamant about filing a complaint. The police said they would not file an FIR unless one of us gave an official complaint. So, she did it on my behalf. I requested her and the police not to mention me in the case."

"My brother knew what happened to her. Though he liked her from the beginning, he was concerned about how you would react. When he shared this with me, I told him the truth and made him promise never to disclose it to anyone," Gayatri burst into tears.

"Dear, there was no mistake of yours in the incident. Your only mistake was hiding the truth from us. I know my daughter well. She would never do anything wrong. I will support you. But never hide the truth from us again," her father consoled her.

"I accept my mistake, Papa. I'm sorry. I will apologise to Akshata and her parents as well."

"Also, we shall file a case against them. Though Akshata lodged a complaint, it didn't proceed further as her

*Arjun's father discussed this with Akshata's family and lauded Akshata for her actions. Her parents felt proud of their daughter. They realised their mistake in not letting her speak. With the support of her family and future in-laws, Akshata felt immensely relieved. They filed a case and ensured that the culprits were booked and punished.*

parents were against it. So let us take it forward," Arjun said.

This truth brought a sense of relief to the whole family, who began to love Akshata even more than before for her bravery and sense of responsibility.

Arjun's father discussed this with Akshata's family and lauded Akshata for her actions. Her parents felt proud of their daughter. They realised their mistake in not letting her speak. With the support of her family and future in-laws, Akshata felt immensely relieved.

They also filed a case and ensured that the culprits were brought to book and punished.

Akshata was now hesitant to return to work. Arjun supported her and made her realise that others' opinions should never affect her self-confidence. She returned as the lead. People who had taunted her realised their mistake after learning the truth.

Akshata and Arjun got married and led a happy life as a lovely couple, along with being competitive colleagues at work.

We



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Size F	10.94 x 13.86	27.8 x 35.2	Medium Size	11,000
Size G	7.44 x 20.83	18.9 x 52.9	Shares and Deeds	12,000
Size H	12.64 x 16.65	32.1 x 42.3	Good Size	14,500
Size L	15.91 x 20.83	40.4 x 52.9	Big Cabin Baggage Size	24,000
Size L2	15.16 x 20.83	38.5 x 52.9	Extra Big Size	24,000
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## Personal Problems



**I'M A 30-YEAR-OLD COPYWRITER,** and lately, I've started feeling strangely jealous of how much people—including my own clients—are depending on AI tools for creative work. A client recently complimented an AI-generated draft more than the version I poured my soul into. It's not just professional; I feel emotionally replaced. How do I process this feeling without sounding petty or outdated?

Acknowledge your emotions without shame—it's okay to feel displaced. Reframe AI as a tool rather

than a competitor. Reflect on what makes your human creativity unique: empathy, context, and emotional resonance. Open a dialogue with clients about what they value most in your work. You might even experiment with blending AI drafts with your personal touch, showing that your skill elevates the content.

**I'M A 27-YEAR-OLD WOMAN WHO** pretends to have food allergies to get out of eating in social gatherings. The truth is, I have an irrational fear of eating in front of people. I always worry I'll chew weirdly, drop something, or make a mess. I've missed out on weddings, dates, and work dinners because of this. How can I deal with this anxiety and be more comfortable eating around others?

Your fear is valid and more common than you think. Start by identifying the exact triggers—is it chewing, messiness, or judgment? Gradual exposure therapy works well: start by eating small, non-messy foods with one trusted friend. Practise mindfulness and grounding techniques during meals. A therapist specialising in social anxiety can help reshape your thoughts.

**I'M IN A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP,** and I feel constant resentment toward my partner's dog. It's not the dog's fault, but I find myself irritated by how much attention, time, and even affection my partner gives to the pet. I feel secondary in my own home but can't admit this without sounding cruel. How can I deal with this secret jealousy without damaging my relationship?

Acknowledge the emotion without self-judgment. It's not about the dog; it's about unmet emotional needs. Communicate with your partner

compassionately, focusing on how you feel rather than blaming the dog. Suggest more intentional couple-time to reestablish your bond. Find small ways to connect with the dog to transform the tension into shared affection.

**I'M A 33-YEAR-OLD MAN, AND THOUGH** I've blocked my ex on every platform, I compulsively check mutual friends' stories and photos to see if they feature them. I don't want them back, but I'm obsessed with knowing what they're doing, who they're with. It's a loop I can't break. How can I finally let go of this weird, passive obsession?

Recognise the loop as a coping mechanism for unresolved grief or control. Journal your feelings when you catch yourself checking on them. Replace that habit with a healthy distraction—exercise, art, or reaching out to a friend. Consider therapy to explore what you're really seeking: closure, validation, or something deeper.

**I'M A FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE** graduate from a marginalised background. I benefit from certain community-led spaces, but sometimes I feel like I don't belong there. I fear I'm not "authentic enough" because I grew up in a different city, speak differently, or don't carry the expected trauma story. I want to connect with my roots without feeling like I'm performing them. How do I overcome this quiet identity crisis?

Authenticity is not a performance. Your experiences are valid even if they don't fit a narrow narrative. Reclaim your identity by engaging with your community in ways that resonate with you—art, activism, conversation. Speak your truth, and you'll find others who relate more than you expect.

**I'M A 26-YEAR-OLD TWIN, AND** although we're close, I feel like I'm constantly being compared—silently or explicitly. We look the same, but my twin is more successful, more social, and more liked. Even when people compliment me, I wonder if they mean to say it to them. I want



to feel like my own person. How do I escape this identity merge?

You deserve individuality. List your accomplishments and interests outside your twin dynamic. Explore settings where you're not immediately identified as a twin. Therapy can help you develop boundaries and build self-worth independently. Create rituals that affirm your identity—journaling, solo trips, or projects only you do.

I'M IN MY 30S AND DOING WELL IN LIFE, but I constantly hear my parent's voice in my head criticising every small thing—from the way I sit to how I pronounce certain words. I left home years ago, but their commentary lives on like background noise. I want to live on my own terms, not through a filter of their judgment. How do I quiet this voice?

That inner voice isn't yours—it was installed. Identify when it speaks and counter it with your own affirming voice. Practise "reparenting" yourself by imagining how a kind, supportive parent would respond. Therapy can help you unlearn this internalised narrative and replace it with your authentic voice.

I'M A 29-YEAR-OLD PHD STUDENT, and I secretly enjoy celebrity gossip, fan fiction, and tabloid articles. But I go to extreme lengths to hide this from my academic peers. I even delete my browsing history obsessively. I'm tired of pretending all I read is research papers. How can I stop being ashamed of liking things that aren't considered "smart"?

Intelligence and joy aren't mutually exclusive. Indulging in gossip or fan fiction doesn't negate your academic achievements. Own your interests proudly—they bring you joy and connection. You don't have to share them with everyone, but you also don't need to hide. Self-acceptance starts with honest self-permission.

I'M THE ONLY ONE IN MY FAMILY WHO'S financially stable and mentally healthy. My siblings are constantly struggling, and every time something good happens for me, I feel an overwhelming wave of guilt. Recently,

I got a promotion and told no one because I didn't want to make them feel worse. How can I allow myself joy when the people I love are stuck?

Guilt often comes from empathy. But your light doesn't dim others—it can guide. Share your joy with humility and offer help where appropriate. Celebrate your wins privately if needed, but don't shrink to make others comfortable. You're not responsible for their journey, only your kindness.

I'M A 36-YEAR-OLD REMOTE WORKER, and I've mastered the art of looking cheerful on Zoom while feeling numb or depressed inside. Turning on the camera feels like slipping into a costume. Lately, I dread calls, not because of the work, but because I have to pretend I'm okay. I want to stop living in this emotional split. How can I show up authentically without risking professional fallout?

Start by checking in with yourself before each meeting. Are you safe to share more of yourself? Practise vulnerability in small doses—mention being tired or overwhelmed without oversharing. Create a support group outside of work where you can be fully honest. Therapy can also help integrate your inner and outer lives.

I'M A 39-YEAR-OLD WORKING professional, and I never learned to read properly due to circumstances in my childhood. I've mastered the art of pretending—memorising forms, recognising logos, and relying heavily on others without revealing the truth. Recently, I panicked when asked to read aloud at a work meeting. I want to overcome this long-held shame and genuinely learn. How can I seek help for adult illiteracy without exposing myself to judgment?

You are not alone. Seek adult literacy programmes—many offer private, judgment-free support. Start with audiobooks or literacy apps to ease into learning. Confide in a trusted mentor or coach if possible. Remind yourself: seeking help is brave, not shameful. Your worth isn't tied to what others assumed you already knew.

I'M A 31-YEAR-OLD WOMAN, AND I live in constant fear that I smell bad, even though I maintain good hygiene. I carry deodorant in every bag, avoid close proximity to people, and frequently excuse myself to check in restrooms. Last week, I skipped a job interview because I was convinced I smelled and didn't want to face embarrassment. I want to stop letting this anxiety rule my life. How can I deal with this fear of body odour and regain my confidence?

This sounds like olfactory-related OCD or social anxiety. Keep a symptom journal and consider therapy for obsessive thoughts. Exposure therapy might involve slowly increasing social proximity and learning to tolerate uncertainty. Reality checks from close friends can help recalibrate your perceptions.



Have you a personal problem of any nature, which you hesitate to discuss with your family or friends? Share it with us. We will try to help you.

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New Delhi-110 055.

A woman with voluminous, dark, curly hair is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is holding a gold-colored hairbrush in her right hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text 'Embracing Curlhood' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Embracing Curlhood

Celebrate your natural curl  
and love them unconditionally!

By Bhavana R

**C**urly hair has, for years, been looked down upon for reasons that are both baseless and unfair. Society has perpetuated the idea that smooth, straight hair is the gold standard of beauty, leaving curls and waves sidelined as “unruly” or “messy.” Some people even go so far as to label curly hair as “ugly,” which couldn’t be far from the truth. This stigma has left a lasting impact on curly-haired individuals, especially girls, who often find themselves battling insecurities about their natural hair texture.

Back in school, it wasn't uncommon for girls with curly hair to be teased relentlessly. Classmates would poke fun, comparing their beautiful, natural curls to a "jhaadoo" (broom) or asking the age-old, condescending question: "Did you forget to comb your hair?" These comments weren't just annoying—they were downright damaging, planting seeds of doubt and self-consciousness in the young minds.

The result? A generation of curly-haired girls who desperately wanted to fit in, often resorting to extreme measures like straightening their hair to conform to societal norms. For many, the sight of steam rising from their flat irons became a regular routine, even though it meant subjecting their hair to damage and losing its natural luster. Straight hair was seen as neat and professional, while curls were dismissed as untamed and chaotic.

But why should that be the case? Curly and wavy hair is beautiful in its own unique way. Its texture, volume, and character bring life and personality to one's appearance, making it anything but ordinary. The problem isn't with the hair itself—it's with the mindset that has been drilled into us over the years.

Well, today, I'm here to change that. It's time to embrace your natural texture—whether it's curly, wavy, or even just slightly wavy—and finally say goodbye to that straightener that's been frying your hair.

No more fighting your natural beauty to fit into someone else's mold. This is about celebrating what makes you unique and understanding that your curls and waves are just as stunning, professional, and manageable as any other hair type.

Let's rewrite the narrative and put curly hair in the spotlight where it belongs! Whether your hair coils tightly, flows in loose

waves, or falls somewhere in between, it deserves love, care, and appreciation. It's time to leave behind the societal pressure to straighten and start a journey of acceptance, empowerment, and, of course, fabulous curls.

### How Do You Know If You Have Curly Or Wavy Hair?

For women with tight curls, it's pretty obvious. But if your hair is on the borderline between wavy and straight, how can you tell?

Start with freshly washed and air-dried hair. If your hair naturally forms coils or spirals, it's slightly curly—no doubt about it. If the pattern is looser, especially near the ends, you've got wavy hair.

**WHETHER YOUR HAIR COILS TIGHTLY, FLOWS IN LOOSE WAVES, OR FALLS SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, IT DESERVES LOVE, CARE, AND APPRECIATION. IT'S TIME TO LEAVE BEHIND THE SOCIETAL PRESSURE TO STRAIGHTEN AND START A JOURNEY OF FABULOUS CURLS.**



Still unsure? Try brushing it. If brushing leaves your hair a little frizzy, then congratulations, you've got wavy hair, and it's time for a completely new routine to let those curls thrive.

Remember, frizz is just curls waiting to be defined.

### So, What's My New Routine?

It's actually pretty simple. Let's ease into this with the most minimalist approach, using just a few basic products so you don't feel overwhelmed or give up halfway through.

#### Step 1

**Detangle Before Washing:** Before you hop into the shower, detangle your hair. Start from the ends and work your way up to avoid breakage. If you're feeling extra fancy, you can apply hair oil or a hydrating mask beforehand—whatever works for you and your usual routine.

#### Step 2

**Wash and Condition:** Wash your hair with shampoo and follow up with conditioner. While the conditioner is in, comb or brush through your hair to detangle it one last time and make sure every strand gets a good dose of moisture. Once you're done, rinse it out as usual.

#### Step 3

**Ditch the Brush (Until the Next Wash Day):** From this point on, your brush is off duty until your next hair wash.

Squeeze the excess water out of your hair and wrap





the ends up to your scalp. Hold it in place for about five seconds before gently uncoiling. Repeat this process section by section until all your curls are defined. You can even use a pencil and coil each section around it. There are so many ways to style your curls—you just have to find what works best for you!

### Step 5

**Finishing Touches:** Once your curls are defined, you can optionally use a non-greasy hair oil for added moisture and a hair serum for extra shine. Simply scrunch it or run it through your hair, focusing on the ends. If you've used a gel, your curls might be crunchy. To soften them, simply scrunch out the crunch by gently scrunching your hair once it is completely dry.

### Step 6

**Making the Curls Last:** Letting go of your brush or comb until your next wash day might feel a little intimidating at first, but maintaining your hair between washes is the secret to gorgeous curls that last.

The key? Protect your curls while you sleep. Wrap your hair in a silk or satin scarf to shield it from friction and frizz overnight. If you want to take it up a notch, invest in a silk pillowcase—it's a game-changer for taming frizz and keeping your hair soft, shiny, and well-defined.

Now, let your hair air-dry or use a diffuser, and voila—you're all set with beautifully defined curls!

Your curly hair journey is exactly that—a journey. But remember, the first and most important step is to embrace your natural hair texture and pattern and love it as it is. Ditch that hair straightener and reverse that heat damage with this routine. There's so much to learn, unlearn, and experiment with. Once you've nailed the basics, you can start expanding your routine to include fun products like curl creams, mousse, and gels.

Here's to falling in love with your curls, waves, and everything in between!

We

it in a towel—but here's the deal: do not towel-dry your hair by rubbing it aggressively!

That's a surefire way to invite frizz. Instead, gently squeeze your hair with the towel until it's about 30% dry.

### Step 4

**Define Those Curls:** Now comes the fun part—defining your curls. Try running some hair gel or even aloe vera gel through your hair lengths. It provides the necessary hydration and also makes styling easier. There are so many ways to do this, but the most popular ones are scrunching and finger coiling. Pick whichever method feels right for you and watch those curls come to life.

Most importantly, your hair should be dripping wet before styling so that products like gel, oil, and serum get absorbed properly, allowing curls to hold longer. Before defining your curls, you can optionally use a leave-in conditioner. This step isn't mandatory, but it can make your curls smoother, softer, and better defined. If you're keeping it simple, feel free to skip it. Styling your hair upside down tends to give it more volume.

If you've got the time, finger coiling is a game-changer. Take a small section of hair and start coiling it around both fingers from

**THERE'S SO MUCH TO LEARN, UNLEARN, AND EXPERIMENT WITH. ONCE YOU'VE NAILED THE BASICS, YOU CAN START EXPANDING YOUR ROUTINE TO INCLUDE FUN PRODUCTS LIKE CURL CREAMS, MOUSSE, AND GELS.**



## Beauty Queries

Q & A

**A**S THE COOLER WEATHER SETS in, my foundation seems to look cakey and accentuates dry patches on my face. How can I adjust my makeup routine to achieve a smoother, more hydrated look?

To combat cakey foundation in cooler weather, start by ensuring your skin is well-hydrated. Use a hydrating serum under your moisturiser to boost moisture retention, and switch to a more emollient moisturiser that suits dry weather. Consider using a hydrating primer before your foundation to create a smooth base. Opt for a foundation that offers a dewy or satin finish rather than a matte one, as these formulas are less likely to cling to dry patches. Finally,

apply foundation with a damp beauty sponge to achieve a more even, less cakey finish.

**I** LOVE WEARING MATTE LIPSTICKS, BUT lately, they've been drying out my lips. What can I do to prevent this and keep my lips smooth and moisturised?

To prevent dry lips from matte lipsticks, ensure your lips are well-moisturized before applying lipstick. Use a nourishing lip balm regularly, and exfoliate your lips gently with a sugar scrub to remove dead skin cells. Apply a hydrating lip primer or a light layer of lip balm before your matte lipstick. Consider switching to creamier matte formulas or layering a gloss over your matte lipstick for added moisture without sacrificing colour.

**T**HE CHANGE IN WEATHER HAS MADE my skin dull and pale. What kind of diet or supplements should I consider to naturally enhance my skin's glow from within?

To enhance your skin's glow from within during dull weather, focus on a diet rich in antioxidants and healthy fats. Foods high in vitamins C and E, such as oranges, almonds, and leafy greens, can help revitalise your skin's appearance. Omega-3 supplements, like fish oil or flaxseed oil, are also beneficial for maintaining healthy skin. Drinking plenty of water and staying hydrated is crucial for a radiant complexion.

**M**Y SKIN REACTS POORLY TO heavy moisturisers, but the uncomfortably cooler air is making my skin dry. Are there lightweight alternatives that provide enough hydration without causing breakouts?

If heavy moisturisers cause

breakouts, switch to lightweight, non-comedogenic hydrators. Gel-based moisturisers are excellent for providing hydration without the greasiness. Look for products containing hyaluronic acid, which hydrates effectively without clogging pores. Adding a serum tailored to your skin type can also help maintain moisture levels without overwhelming your skin.

**I**'VE NOTICED THAT THE COLD WIND makes my eyes water, which in turn ruins my eye makeup. What can I do to protect my eye makeup from watering eyes?

To protect eye makeup from watering eyes, start by using waterproof eye products, including mascara and eyeliner. Applying an eyeshadow primer can also help to create a barrier that keeps makeup in place. Set your under-eye area with a fine, loose-setting powder to prevent makeup from running. Consider wearing less makeup on the lower lids, focusing more on defining the upper eyelid and using false lashes for drama.

**W**HAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE ways to keep my hands soft and well-moisturized without feeling greasy?

For dry and rough hands, use a rich hand cream several times a day, especially after washing your hands. Look for creams with shea butter, glycerin, or lanolin, which are effective at sealing in moisture. At night, apply a thicker layer of hand cream and wear cotton gloves to bed to help the moisturiser absorb more effectively. Keeping a hand cream in your bag and at your work desk will remind you to reapply throughout the day.

Readers are invited to send their problems of child care and child rearing. Woman's Era will provide the answers, solutions to problems usually encountered by mothers, young and old. Address your letters (neatly written on white paper) to:

**Woman's Era** E-3, Jhandewala Estate, New Delhi-110 055.



# Mughal-e-Azam

## *The Musical*

A spectacle of grandeur and artistry. By Our Correspondent



Few theatrical productions manage to capture the essence of cinematic brilliance while carving out their own legacy in the world of performing arts. *Mughal-e-Azam: The Musical*, directed by the visionary Feroz Abbas Khan, is one such rare masterpiece. As it gears up for its 300th show, this larger-than-life spectacle continues to mesmerise the audiences, reaffirming its place as one of the most celebrated musicals in Indian theatre history.

### **A Grand Visual Experience**

From the moment the curtains rise, the audience is transported to the opulent world of the Mughal era. The set design is nothing short of breathtaking, with intricate detailing that evokes the magnificence of royal

courts. Over 550 meticulously crafted costumes by renowned designer Manish Malhotra add an unmatched regal charm, making every scene a visual feast.

The lighting and digital projections enhance the mood, effortlessly shifting between grand palace halls and the intimate chambers of forbidden love. Every frame of this theatrical production echoes the grandeur of K. Asif's iconic 1960 film while bringing a fresh dynamism that only a live performance can offer.

### **Live Singing – The Show's USP**

What sets *Mughal-e-Azam: The Musical* apart from other stage productions is its commitment to live singing by the actors. Unlike traditional musicals that rely on

pre-recorded tracks, this play thrives on the raw, heartfelt performances of its singers-turned-actors and actors-turned-singers. The soul-stirring melodies, including classics like *Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya* and *Teri Mehfil Mein Qismat Azmaakar*, are not just performed but lived by the cast, adding layers of emotion and



authenticity. Anarkali played by Neha Sargam and Rupsha Mukherjee as Bahar sung their bits of songs.

### A Dance Extravaganza

The choreography, helmed by Mayuri Upadhyay, is another standout feature of the show. The fluidity of Kathak, interwoven with dramatic storytelling, brings every emotion to life—whether it's the passionate defiance of Anarkali, the turmoil of Salim, or the imposing authority of Emperor Akbar. The dance sequences are mesmerising, seamlessly blending tradition with contemporary presentation.

At its heart, *Mughal-e-Azam: The Musical* is a love story—one that has stood the test of time. The timeless tale of Salim and Anarkali is rendered



## WHAT SETS MUGHAL-E-AZAM: THE MUSICAL APART FROM OTHER STAGE PRODUCTIONS IS ITS COMMITMENT TO LIVE SINGING BY THE ACTORS, UNLIKE THAT RELY ON PRE-RECORDED TRACKS.

with poetic finesse, powerful dialogues, and an emotional depth that leaves a lasting impact. The cast embodies their roles with sheer dedication, ensuring that the audience is completely immersed in the drama, heartbreak, and rebellion that define this historical saga.

Beyond its entertainment value, *Mughal-e-Azam: The Musical* is a cultural experience. It revives the rich traditions of Indian theatre, paying homage to the cinematic masterpiece while offering a fresh, immersive experience. As it prepares for its milestone 300th show, this production continues to set new benchmarks in theatrical storytelling.

For those who have not yet witnessed this grandeur, the upcoming performances in Mumbai and Delhi provide the perfect opportunity to experience history, music, and drama in its most magnificent form.

Whether you are a lover of theatre, music, or history, *Mughal-e-Azam: The Musical* is a spectacle that should not be missed.

We

# THE BANGALORE PALACE

An iconic royal residence. By Renuka Krishnaraja

As is well known, Namma Bengaluru has gained the reputation as the 'Silicon Valley of India.' So, in recent times, due to the rising demand, the city has been outlined by many high-rise commercial and residential buildings. In such a scenario, isn't it fascinating to witness an elegant structure right in the heart of the city that stands as a testimony to its multicultural past? Welcome to the Bangalore Palace, the complementary abode of the Wadiyar dynasty rulers. Here, one can experience the splendour of the erstwhile royals and their influence on the region. Along with that, you can catch a glimpse of the colonial times as well. As a glorious 19th century landmark, the palace is of immense historical and sociopolitical significance.



## Our Visit

We walked through the beautiful greenery of the vast palace complex sprawling over 450 acres. The palace is a majestic granite construction. At first glance, what's eye-catching is its classic medieval look that is reminiscent of old British castles. Well, that was the perfect requisite of Chamarajendra Wadiyar X, the 23rd Maharaja of Mysore, who, while visiting the Windsor Castle in England, thought of having one such of his own! And thus, an architectural marvel blending the Tudor and Gothic styles was created. The initial construction was completed in 1878 and as one would expect, several modifications and expansions were made to the original structure over a period of time.

The tall towers and turrets, manicured vine-covered walls and the grand Roman arches at the entrance are all imposing and spontaneously cast a regal spell





**WELCOME TO THE BANGALORE PALACE, THE ABODE OF THE WADIYAR DYNASTY RULERS. HERE, ONE CAN EXPERIENCE THE SPLENDOUR OF THE ERSTWHILE ROYALS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE REGION.**

upon the visitor. As we stepped in, a unique blend of heritage trends could be appreciated. The audio guide provided here offers an elaborate description at specified spots.

Perhaps, the Durbar Hall meant for assemblies is the most exquisite part of the palace. Situated on the first floor, it has stained glass windows and vibrant yellow walls. Interestingly, there is a screened-off area from where women would participate in the events. The wooden staircase leading to the ground floor renders an old world charm.

#### **The Majestic Ballroom**

The ground floor has a spacious ballroom and an open courtyard. Adorned with meticulous motifs, cornices and wooden carvings, the décor of the interiors is brilliantly artistic. The ceilings too are decorated with intricate relief paintings. Also, adding to the vintage



**THE HALLS OF THE PALACE HAVE WITNESSED SEVERAL ROYAL CEREMONIES AND ARE SYMBOLIC OF THE CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ESSENCE OF AN ERA EXEMPLIFIED BY ROYAL AFFLUENCE AND EUROPEAN IMPACT.**



tone are the Victorian, Neo-Classical and Edwardian furniture. All of these are remindful of the opulent lifestyle of the Mysore royals. Entry to some rooms and areas was restricted.

Another noteworthy feature of the palace is that it houses an exhaustive collection of the 19th and 20th century artworks and

paintings and historical photographs of the Wadiyar dynasty. Some of the masterpieces made by the famous painter, Raja Ravi Varma, are also showcased here. There is an endless display of photographs of the Wadiyar Dynasty.

All the rulers over the course of time, their childhood pictures, photographs of the queens, how the children spent their vacation in this palace, royal pastimes like hunting, numerous hunting expeditions, how they hosted parties and gatherings for the British and many more aspects of their daily life and their effect on the common people of Mysore can be seen on display everywhere on the walls of the palace.

### **The European Impact**

The halls of the palace have witnessed several royal ceremonies and are symbolic of the cultural and architectural essence of an era exemplified by royal affluence and European impact. Since 2005, Bangalore Palace has been open to the public. The palace grounds are currently in use for cultural events like music concerts and shows. Overall, a visit to Bangalore Palace would be a day well spent. It is a treasure trove for art lovers as well as history enthusiasts.

**We**



**I'M A GIRL OF 15. LAST YEAR, MY mother's health took a serious turn, and I've been the one taking care of her since. It feels like I'm a mini-adult now, managing everything—cooking, cleaning, running errands—while still trying to keep up with academics.**

The weight of all of it is exhausting, and sometimes, I'm scared that if I don't keep it all together, things will fall apart. How do I handle the responsibility of being the 'adult' at home when I'm still just a teenager?

You're doing an incredible job under unimaginable pressure. You're not supposed to carry all this alone. Try to reach out to a school counsellor, teacher, or a trusted adult who can help connect your family with local support services or NGOs.

If possible, ask extended family or neighbours for help, even if it's with small tasks. Prioritise at least one part of the day just for yourself, even if it's 10 minutes to breathe or write. You're not weak for needing rest—you're human.

**I'M A BOY OF 16. I DISCOVERED THAT my best friend has been secretly self-harming for months. He's been hiding it, and when I found out, he begged me not to tell anyone.**

I want to help him, but I don't know how to approach it without betraying his trust. It's been eating me up inside, and I feel like I'm losing my best friend to something I don't fully understand. How do I help someone close to me without crossing boundaries or making the situation worse?

It's not betrayal to seek help. In fact, it could save your friend's life. Approach a trusted adult—school counsellor, teacher, or parent—and share what you know. Let your friend know you care deeply, but this is something they shouldn't face alone.

Reassure him that you're doing this for, not against him.

**I'M A GIRL OF 14. FOR THE PAST FEW months, I've been sleeping with a pillow over my head every night because of the nightmares. I wake up in cold sweats, shaking, feeling like someone's watching me. They're so vivid and frightening that I'm afraid to fall asleep at night. It's affecting my mood and my ability to focus at school, and I haven't told anyone because I'm scared they won't take me seriously. How do I get over my fear of nightmares without making it worse?**

Nightmares often signal unresolved stress. Start by keeping a dream journal—writing them down

helps reduce their power. Practising calming activities before bed (like light music, breathing exercises, or a warm bath) can help. If they persist or worsen, consider talking to a school counsellor or a therapist. You deserve restful sleep and peace.

**I'M A BOY OF 17. I RECENTLY realized that I don't feel anything anymore—no excitement, no joy, nothing. I go through the motions, do what I'm supposed to do, but there's this emptiness inside me that I can't shake.**

I feel like I'm disconnected from everything around me, even my family and friends. I'm afraid it's something more serious, like depression, but I don't know how to talk to anyone about it without being judged. How do I deal with feeling emotionally numb, and how can I start feeling again?

You might be experiencing signs of depression. Start by reaching out to someone you trust—a school counsellor, family member, or doctor. You don't have to describe everything perfectly; just say, "I haven't been feeling like myself lately." You are not broken. With the right support, these feelings can be understood and eased.

**I'M A GIRL OF 16. I OVERHEARD MY parents talking about sending me away to a boarding school because they think I'm in a 'bad influence.' They said they don't know what happened to me, but I'm not the child they used to know.**

I know I've made mistakes, but I don't think I deserve to be treated this way. It feels like I've been written off as a lost cause, but I want to prove them wrong. How do I show my parents that I'm not beyond help without pushing them further away?

It's okay to want to be understood. Write a letter to your parents if speaking feels too hard. Acknowledge your past mistakes and express your desire to improve. Ask for a chance to prove your growth. Show them small, consistent efforts. Often, change speaks louder than apologies.





# THE UNFORESEEN LESSON

*From the depths of a cyber-fraud nightmare emerged a groundbreaking programme to protect every student. By Dr. Dipika Das*



**M**s. Neerja Raghavan is a school teacher in Chennai. In the midst of her Maths class, her lesson was interrupted by an urgent call from an unknown number. She excused herself to answer the call and left the classroom, unaware of the impending storm about to engulf her tranquil life.

"Are you Ms. Neerja Raghavan?" questioned the voice on the other end. She replied, "Yes."


The person asked again, "Is Aditya your son who studies at VIT?" She said, "Yes. Why? What happened?"

Then the voice said, "I am calling from the Vellore Police Station. Your son, Aditya, is in police custody for



"Are you Ms. Neerja Raghavan?" questioned the voice on the other end. She replied, "Yes."





She could hear her son's desperate cries for help over the phone—the sounds of thrashing and beating amid the chaos.

committing a heinous crime against a female student. You understand what I am telling you. How could you have raised him to commit such a heinous crime?"

She could hear her son's desperate cries for help over the phone—the sounds of thrashing and beating amid the chaos of the police station. She heard his voice: "Mummy, I am very sorry. Please forgive me... I will never do this again. They are torturing me. Please take me out of this hell. Please... please..." The policeman continued, "If you want your son back, deposit one lakh rupees immediately. Otherwise, he will be charged with rape and produced in the court." His voice was loud and firm, sending shivers down her spine.

She cried, "No, sir! Please release him. I will send the money immediately." The voice continued, "OK. We will send a link to your WhatsApp. Please pay through the link within fifteen minutes." Then the call disconnected. She immediately called her son's number, but he did not pick up despite several attempts. Her husband was travelling abroad and was not reachable for the next few hours.

She was very frightened and, not knowing what else to do, transferred the money through the WhatsApp link.

After about an hour, she received a call from Aditya: "Mom, why are you calling again and again? I was in class and couldn't answer. What's the matter?" Neerja asked, "Are you OK, beta?"

Aditya replied, "Yes, Mom. Why do you ask?"

Then Neerja told him the full story. Aditya realised it was nothing but a cyber-scam using AI; these people had copied his voice. He said, "Mom, artificial intelligence (AI) can now mimic human speech patterns with incredible accuracy, making it difficult to distinguish between a real person and a scammer. What you heard was not my voice—it was a sophisticated scam that preyed on your maternal instincts."

He asked, "Mummy, have you sent money to them?"

Neerja said, "Yes, beta. I was so panicked that I transferred the money they had demanded."

Aditya said, "Mom, please report this to the nearest police station and the Cyber Crime Cell."

Neerja went to the Cyber Crime Cell of the nearest police station, where she met many people who had experienced similar cyber frauds and come to lodge complaints.

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*She promised to embark on a crusade against cybercrime, determined to arm each child in her school with knowledge to combat such deceit so that no one becomes a victim of these frauds. She launched a course named "Cyber Taekwondo," meaning a martial art to fight against cyber crimes.*

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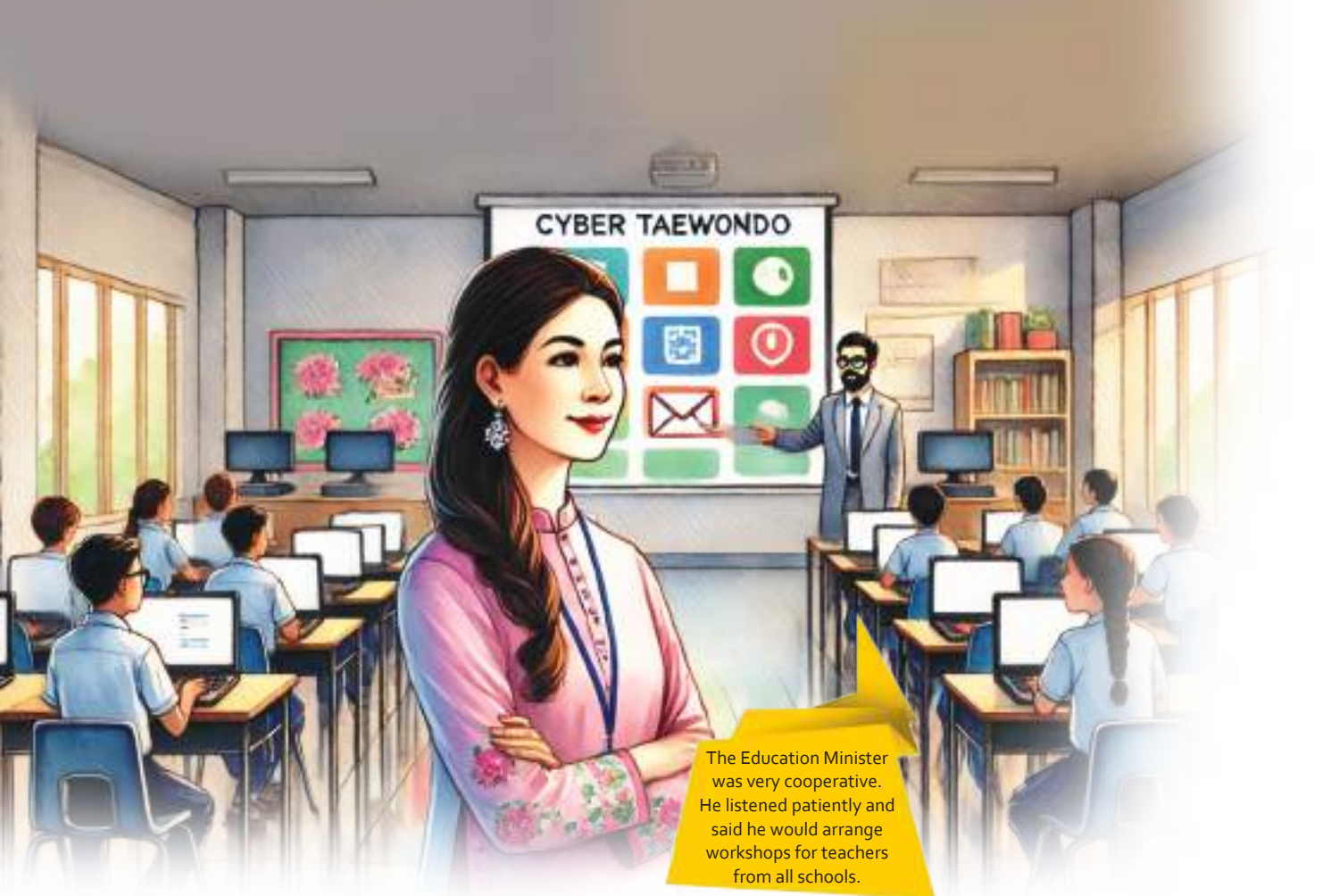
The policeman was very cooperative. He said, "Madam, you are an educated person—a Maths teacher. If you can become prey to these frauds, imagine what will happen to the common person. Why don't you share your experience and educate your students about cyber crimes?"

"Sure—I will try my best," she replied.

She promised to embark on a crusade against cybercrime, determined to arm each child in her school with knowledge to combat such deceit so that no one becomes a victim of these frauds.

She launched a course named "Cyber Taekwondo," meaning a martial art to fight against cyber crimes. Like Taekwondo, every student would be empowered with the tools to recognise and thwart cyber threats. In the course, she taught students about all types of cyber frauds—phishing, ransomware, online scams, identity theft, social engineering, and deepfakes—using live examples to illustrate each.

She then arranged a meeting with the Education



The Education Minister was very cooperative. He listened patiently and said he would arrange workshops for teachers from all schools.

Minister of the state to discuss how to spread the lessons of the "Cyber Taekwondo" course to all school students in the state.

The Education Minister was very cooperative. He listened patiently and said he would arrange workshops for teachers from all schools. "In the workshop, you can train the teachers and share your presentation so that they, in turn, can teach it in their schools," he said.

The "Cyber Taekwondo" workshop was conducted with teachers from every school in Tamil Nadu, and it was very successful. Every teacher was enthusiastic about spreading cybersecurity awareness among students. In the workshops, all participants were instructed to collect reports of any cybercrime incidents they encountered and update the presentation continuously so that the "Cyber Taekwondo" materials remained updated.

One day, Neerja was surprised to receive a call from the Prime Minister's Office. She answered and heard the Prime Minister's voice: "I am the Prime Minister speaking. I am very happy with the work you have done in Tamil Nadu regarding cybercrime awareness. We would like to implement this programme across all schools in India. Can you please help us? You will be provided with full support from the Central Government."

Neerja could not believe her ears. She said, "Sir, I am so fortunate to receive a call from you. I can't believe it." He replied, "I am proud of you, Madam. You are an example of Nari Shakti."

*Neerja then formed a working group comprising the teachers already trained in Tamil Nadu. Every two to three teachers were given responsibility for training educators in one state. Over time, students from all schools in India were trained in "Cyber Taekwondo."*

Neerja responded, "Thank you very much, Sir. I promise I will do my best."

Neerja then formed a working group comprising the teachers already trained in Tamil Nadu. Every two to three teachers were given responsibility for training educators in one state. Over time, students from all schools in India were trained in "Cyber Taekwondo."

From remote villages to bustling metropolises, the echoes of "Cyber Taekwondo" reverberated, fostering a culture of vigilance against cybercrime. She received an award from the government.

As she basked in the glory of her achievements, she looked up and whispered, "Almighty God, on the day I became a victim of cybercrime, I questioned why it happened to me. I had done no wrong to anyone. Now I understand Your purpose: to use me to spread the light of knowledge, illuminate the path toward a safer and more secure digital future, and safeguard others from the shadows of cybercrime. Thank You, Almighty."

We



**M**Y 3-YEAR-OLD SON, AARAV, IS showing signs of allergies—sneezing, itchy eyes, and congestion—whenever the weather changes. I'm concerned because he has a hard time adjusting to both the heat and cold.

Weather changes can trigger allergies due to pollen, dust, or changes in air quality. Consult your pediatrician to discuss potential allergy treatments, such as antihistamines or allergy-friendly practices at home. To help Aarav, keep windows closed during high pollen seasons and make sure his play areas are dust-free. Use a humidifier in the winter to prevent dry air, and bathe him after outdoor play to remove any allergens. Make sure his clothing is cleaned regularly to avoid the buildup of dust or pollen.

**D**URING THE RAINY SEASON, MY 4-year-old daughter, Meera, spends a lot more time indoors and ends up using screens for longer hours, watching cartoons or playing games on my phone, which I feel is affecting her behavior.

Limit screen time by establishing screen-free hours during the day, especially on rainy or indoor days. Encourage alternative activities that stimulate her creativity and cognitive skills, like reading, colouring, puzzles, or building with blocks. Engage in outdoor play when possible, even if it's just for a walk under an umbrella, or introduce indoor physical activities like dancing, jumping games, or building obstacle courses to help her burn off energy.

**W**ITH THE WEATHER TURNING colder, my toddler, Arjun, is spending more time indoors. He's becoming restless, and I'm worried that the lack of physical

activity is affecting his energy levels and mood.

Cold weather can limit outdoor play, but there are plenty of ways to keep Arjun active indoors. Set up indoor games that require movement, like a mini obstacle course, scavenger hunts, or dance parties to his favorite music.

You can also try simple exercises like jumping jacks, stretches, or even yoga designed for toddlers. Take him to indoor play zones or soft play areas if possible, and ensure he gets regular outdoor time when the weather permits, even for a short walk or a quick trip to the park.

**M**Y 2-YEAR-OLD SON, ARVIND, has started getting dry, cracked skin with the changing weather. His skin becomes irritated and rough, especially after outdoor play, even when using lotion.

Seasonal changes can affect the skin, making it dry or irritated. Ensure that Arvind is wearing soft, breathable clothing made of natural fabrics, especially in winter. Use a thick, gentle moisturiser that's appropriate for his age to lock in moisture after bath time. Consider using a humidifier in his room during the colder months to prevent the air from drying out his skin. Also, be mindful of the soap and laundry detergents you use, as harsh chemicals can exacerbate skin irritation.

**M**Y 4-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, Nisha, is scared of thunderstorms and heavy rain. Whenever there's a storm, she gets anxious, cries, and asks to stay with me all the time.

Create a comforting routine for Nisha when there's a storm, such as reading a special book or singing

a calming song. Explain to her that thunderstorms are common and not dangerous.

You can even make a 'storm kit' with her favorite toys, a blanket, or a flashlight, which she can use to feel safe. Validate her feelings and let her know that it's okay to be scared, but she is safe. Over time, providing reassurance and normalising the experience can reduce her fear.

**W**ITH THE WEATHER CHANGING, my 3-year-old son, Raghav, caught a cold and has been sneezing and coughing. I'm worried that it's becoming a regular issue, and he keeps getting sick during the colder months.

To help reduce the frequency of Raghav's illnesses, focus on building a stronger immune system by ensuring he gets adequate sleep, healthy food, and regular physical activity. Encourage frequent handwashing, especially before meals and after playing outside, to reduce exposure to germs. Keep his environment clean and free from dust or allergens.

In colder months, make sure he is bundled up appropriately when outdoors, and keep the windows closed to prevent cold air from entering the home.

**M**Y 18-MONTH-OLD DAUGHTER, Tanvi, struggles with wearing different clothing as the weather changes. She refuses to wear sweaters or warmer clothes in winter, and gets fussy about hats and socks, even when it's cold outside.

Tanvi may resist seasonal clothing changes due to discomfort or unfamiliarity. Introduce warmer clothes gradually by allowing her to try them on during playtime rather than immediately when going outside. Let her pick out a warm hat or sweater with fun colours or characters to make it more exciting. Make sure the fabrics are soft and comfortable, and allow her to feel in control of what she wears by giving her a couple of options.

Praise her for wearing the clothing and make it a part of a fun routine, like singing a special 'getting dressed' song.

# Changing Dynamics of Fashion Shows

The charms and harms of fashion shows. By Samriti Dhatwalia

If one types the fashion shows on Google, we see that they are defined as Wasteful, Exhausting and Disorganised. But somewhere movies like *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Coco Before Chanel*, *Fashion*, *Phantom Thread*, create a love for fashion in each one of us. The famous Emily Blunt's dialogue from *The Devil Wears Prada*, "You sold your soul to the devil, when you wore your first pair of Jimmy Choo, I saw it".



This dialogue shows that everyone likes fashion and brands along with how accessories can be used to represent an individual's personality. Well that was fashion, and the 80s and 90s were glamorised with these shows and glossy magazines were the charm of the period.

Earlier the purpose of these fashion shows was for the buyer to make a decision on what pieces they should be purchasing the next season.

Brands loved these fashion shows as it helped them in building relationships with journalists, get wider press coverage, and collaborate with traditional print/media advertisers.

But with this dynamic transformation of the fashion industry, various trends indicate a move towards sustainability, inclusivity, and the integration of technology, influencing both design and consumer behaviour. Today fashion speaks a different language and it operates differently.

### The Beyonce Strategy

But one wonders, if these fashion shows did not exist in the first place, would brands, or sellers would even try to go for these shows. Today brands and designers adopt the Beyonce Strategy. The "Beyonce strategy" is increasingly becoming the norm for luxury brands.

This method bypasses conventional media, enabling brands to manage their story and interact directly with their audience via platforms such as Instagram.

Favoured by the celebrities, this approach is currently embraced by luxury brands to engage more genuinely with their clients. We have Sonam Kapoor as the brand ambassador for Dior, Alia Bhatt for Gucci, Anne Hathaway for Versace. This approach has totally removed the need for fashion shows, as hiring the celebrities as brand ambassadors totally removes the need for showcasing your product at fashion shows and removes the need for models, in a way.



**FAVOURED BY THE CELEBRITIES, THIS APPROACH IS CURRENTLY EMBRACED BY LUXURY BRANDS TO ENGAGE MORE GENUINELY WITH THEIR CLIENTS. WE HAVE ALIA BHATT FOR GUCCI, ANNE HATHAWAY FOR VERSACE.**

### Fashion Shows And Social Media

But for a person who knows fashion, and loves fashion realises that fashion shows are becoming extinct day by day. With this new age of social media, Instagram influencers are being invited to the fashion shows and provided with front rows to the show. The question here is, "Are these Instagram influencers knowledgeable about

fashion?", other than their basic Get Ready With Me. Well, they are invited for views, some of them are paid to attend the shows and whosoever posts the videos of the walking models first from their handle, gets more work with the brand. Their presence is judged by the Earned Media Value (EMV). This acronym represents the tangible monetary worth to the online visibility gained by these social media luminaries. Such behaviour by the brands depict that even online presence is more important to them than their own fashion shows.

Well, a bold step was taken against these phones by the brand The Row, a fashion brand by Mary Kale Olsen, and Ashley Fuller Olsen, (The Olsen Twins) at the Paris Fashion Week, 2024.

They requested their guests to come without cell phones. One could see the fashion Industry being transported back to the times when fashion Events were reserved solely for the eyes and the editors were



seen clenching a pen and notebook.

But other than social media, the fashion industry faces other threats as well. The clothes which are being displayed in these shows are unsustainable, mostly unwearable, the whole cost of setting up a runway is expensive, and the return of interest is low.

### **Fashion Speaks Language Of Sustainability And Inclusivity**

The consumer is aware of the fact that fashion shows are nothing but a showcase of wealth and power. Today, consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental and social impacts of their fashion choices, with a substantial 85 per cent considering sustainability when making purchasing decisions.

Sustainability is becoming a core principle in the Indian fashion industry.

The idea of fast fashion devastates the environment through carbon emissions, water pollution, and micro-plastic waste.

## **THIS GROWING AWARENESS IS PUSHING THE INDUSTRY TOWARDS ECO-CONSCIOUS PRACTICES. EVENTS LIKE LAKMÉ FASHION WEEK EMPHASISE SUSTAINABLE COLLECTIONS AND ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES.**

This growing awareness is pushing the industry towards eco-conscious practices. Various brands like No Nasties, The Summer House, A Big Indian Story, Ambiya work on zero-wastage apparel and ensure fashion remains aesthetic and environmentally conscious. Events like Lakmé Fashion Week emphasise sustainable collections and eco-friendly practices, with increased participation from designers and

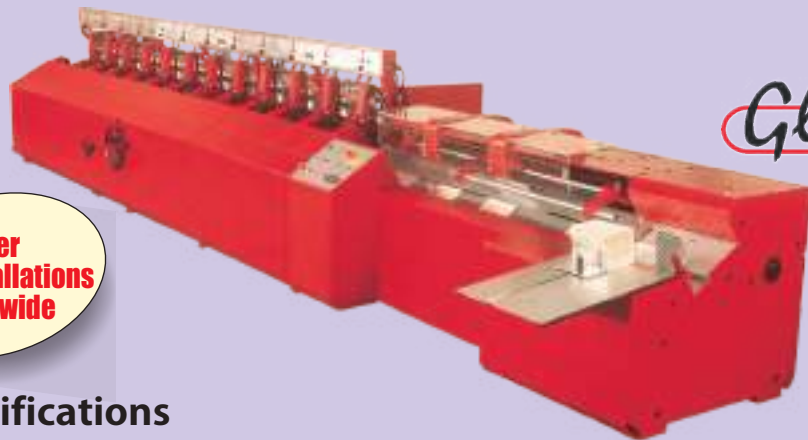
brands committed to sustainable fashion expectations.

But one thing which has truly changed for the better in the fashion world is inclusivity. Brands are embracing diversity in their designs, campaigns, and communication. Collections are being created for plus-size, transgender, and disabled consumers, challenging traditional beauty standards. Runways are becoming more representative, featuring models from various backgrounds.

The Indian fashion market is projected to grow significantly, but the industry faces challenges such as increasing competition and changing consumer preferences. Brands need to distinguish themselves through innovation, quality, and customer experience. Personalised experiences and digital-first engagement strategies are crucial for success in the evolving fashion landscape. Accept it or not— fashion shows are not leaving. Thus, Runways can never RIP.

**We**

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# Shots of *Health*



A vibrant collection of healing shots, soothing teas, and detoxifying potions. By Kavita Nagpal

## HOMEMADE FRESH GINGERALE

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups water
2 cups peeled, chopped fresh ginger
3 strips lemon peel
1½ cups granulated sugar
3 quarts chilled club soda

### METHOD

In a saucepan, mix water, chopped ginger, and lemon peel. Bring the mixture to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Add sugar and continue boiling for another 5 minutes. Strain the mixture into a clean bowl. Let the ginger syrup cool down.

To serve, mix ¼ cup of ginger syrup with 1 glass of chilled club soda. Stir and enjoy fresh homemade gingerale.



Homemade  
Fresh Gingerale





Immunity  
Booster Shots

## IMMUNITY BOOSTER SHOTS

### Ginger Shot

#### INGREDIENTS

Fresh ginger  
Lemon juice  
Cayenne powder

#### METHOD

Grate fresh ginger and extract the juice. Mix the ginger juice with lemon juice. Add a pinch of cayenne powder. Consume as a daily immunity shot.

#### Benefits

Helps reduce inflammation, aids digestion, and boosts immunity.


## TURMERIC SHOT

#### INGREDIENTS

½ tsp ground fresh turmeric  
2 tsp water  
A pinch of black pepper  
1 tsp honey

#### METHOD

Mix turmeric, water, black pepper, and honey together. Stir well until combined. Serve immediately in a shot glass.



Turmeric Shot

## FAT LOSS SHOT

### INGREDIENTS

1 grapefruit  
1 handful fresh mint leaves

### METHOD

Blend grapefruit and mint leaves together.  
Pour into a shot glass and sip.

Fat Loss Shot

Powerful  
Turmeric Detox  
Smoothie

## POWERFUL TURMERIC DETOX SMOOTHIE

### INGREDIENTS


1 tsp fresh turmeric  
½ cup milk  
½ tsp cinnamon powder  
A pinch of black pepper  
½ tsp ginger

### METHOD

Add all ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth and creamy. Pour into a glass and consume immediately.

### Benefits

Helps cleanse the liver and aids in weight loss.



Mucus Removing Tea

## MUCUS REMOVING TEA


### INGREDIENTS

1 tsp ginger  
1 inch piece of fresh turmeric (Kachi Haldi)  
A pinch of black pepper  
1 tsp honey

Juice of half a lemon  
1 glass water

### METHOD

Boil 1 glass of water in a saucepan. Add ginger and turmeric to the boiling water. Add a pinch of black pepper and boil for a few more minutes. Turn off the heat and add lemon juice and honey. Strain and serve hot.



Pineapple Mint Wellness Shot

## PINEAPPLE MINT WELLNESS SHOT

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups chopped pineapple  
½ cup fresh mint leaves  
1 tsp lemon juice  
1 inch ginger  
1 glass coconut water

### METHOD

Add pineapple, mint, lemon, ginger, and coconut water to a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve chilled for a refreshing shot.

## CARROT AND TURMERIC SHOT

### INGREDIENTS

3 peeled carrots  
1 tsp lemon juice  
1 inch ginger  
½ tsp turmeric powder

### METHOD

Add carrots, lemon juice, ginger, and turmeric to a blender. Add water as needed and blend until smooth. Strain using a muslin cloth. Pour into a jar and serve.

Carrot and  
Turmeric Shot

WITH THE CHANGING WEATHER, OUR BODIES BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO FATIGUE, ALLERGIES, AND DEHYDRATION. STAYING HYDRATED IS ESSENTIAL TO BALANCE ENERGY LEVELS, AND FLUSH OUT TOXINS. SEASONAL DRINKS MADE WITH NATURAL INGREDIENTS HELP REPLENISH FLUIDS WHILE BOOSTING WELLNESS FROM WITHIN.

## BEETROOT LEMON SHOT

### INGREDIENTS

1 beetroot  
1 apple  
Juice of 1 lemon

### METHOD

Peel and chop beetroot and apple. Blend with a little water until smooth. Strain into a glass or jar. Add lemon juice, stir, and serve.

## LEAFY GREEN SHOT

### INGREDIENTS

Juice of 1 lime  
1 handful greens (kale or spinach)  
1 handful mint or parsley  
2 celery sticks  
1 kiwi

### METHOD

Wash and clean the greens and herbs. Chop the kiwi and celery. Blend all ingredients with water until smooth. Strain and add lime juice. Serve fresh.

Beetroot  
Lemon Shot



Leafy Green Shot



Everything Green Wellness Shot



## EVERYTHING GREEN WELLNESS SHOT

### INGREDIENTS

1 apple  
6 celery stalks  
1 cucumber  
1 cup spinach  
1 cup parsley  
½ cup water  
1 tsp matcha powder

### METHOD

Peel and chop the apple, celery, and cucumber. Add all ingredients to a blender. Blend until smooth. Strain and serve.

Coconut Iced Tea



## COCONUT ICED TEA

### INGREDIENTS

1 glass coconut water  
1 cup cold brewed green tea  
1 tbsp honey  
¼ tsp rock salt

### METHOD

Blend coconut water and green tea together. Add honey and rock salt. Serve with cucumber slices for a refreshing drink.

Homemade  
Electrolyte Drink



## HOMEMADE ELECTROLYTE DRINK

### INGREDIENTS

1 glass coconut water  
Juice of 1 lemon  
1 tbsp raw honey  
1/8 tsp Himalayan salt

### METHOD

In a glass, add coconut water and lemon juice. Stir in raw honey and Himalayan salt. Mix well and serve.

## HEALTHY HAIR TEA

### INGREDIENTS

1 tsp rosemary  
1 tsp hibiscus  
½ tsp methi seeds (fenugreek)  
1 tsp tea leaves  
½ tsp cinnamon  
1 cup water  
1 tsp honey  
1 tsp lemon juice

### METHOD

In a saucepan, add rosemary, hibiscus, methi seeds, tea leaves, cinnamon, and water. Bring to a boil and simmer for a few minutes. Strain the tea into a cup. Add honey and lemon juice. Serve hot.

### Benefits

Strengthens hair, prevents premature greying, and promotes hair growth.

We



## Kitchen queries

# Q & A

**M**Y KITCHEN FEELS EXTRA HUMID during the monsoon and my fried foods turn soggy. How can I fix this?

High humidity prevents moisture from escaping, making fried foods limp. Pat ingredients completely dry before frying, and fry in small batches so oil temperature stays between 350–375°F. After frying, drain on a wire rack (not paper towels) so air circulates underneath. Finally, keep your oven at 200°F and transfer cooked items there while you finish frying the rest — this maintains crispiness until serving.

**I'M** NOTICING MOULD SPOTS ON stored spices and grains. What's the best way to prevent pantry mould?

Store dry goods in airtight glass or BPA-free plastic containers, removing as much air as possible.

Keep your pantry cool (below 70°F) and dry (humidity <50%) — use silica gel packets or a small dehumidifier if needed. Rotate stock using a “first in, first out” system, and wipe shelves monthly with a 1:1 vinegar-water solution to kill lingering spores.

**G**REASE BUILDUP ON CABINETS drives me crazy — any quick cleaning hack?

Mix equal parts baking soda and liquid dish soap into a paste. Apply it with a microfiber cloth, scrub gently in circular motions, then wipe clean with warm water. For stubborn spots, let the paste sit 5 minutes before scrubbing. Finish by buffing with a dry cloth to restore shine.

**H**OW CAN I ELIMINATE PERSISTENT cooking odours without harsh chemicals?

Simmer a pot of water with slices of lemon, a few sprigs of rosemary, and 1 teaspoon of baking soda for 15 minutes. The citrus and herbs neutralise odours naturally. Leave bowls of white vinegar or activated charcoal around the kitchen overnight to absorb lingering smells.

**M**Y CAST-IRON SKILLET OFTEN sticks even though I season it regularly. What am I doing wrong?

After each use, clean your skillet with hot water and a stiff brush (avoid soap). Dry it immediately over low heat, then apply a thin layer of high-smoke-point oil (like grapeseed) while still warm. Store it uncovered to allow airflow. If sticking persists, bake at

400°F for 1 hour after oiling to build a stronger nonstick layer.

**HOW DO I TACKLE FRUIT FLIES IN MY KITCHEN?**

Make a simple trap by filling a small jar with apple cider vinegar and a drop of dish soap. Cover with plastic wrap, poke a few holes, and place near fruit bowls or trash cans. Empty and refill weekly, and store ripe fruit in the fridge to remove their breeding grounds.

**I LIVE AT HIGH ALTITUDE — MY CAKES keep collapsing. How should I adjust recipes?**

Decrease baking powder or baking soda by ¼ teaspoon per teaspoon called for, reduce sugar by 1–2 tablespoons, and increase liquid by 2–4 tablespoons per cup. Bake at 5–10°F higher oven temperature and shorten baking time slightly — start checking 5 minutes earlier than recipe directions.

**M**Y TAP WATER LEAVES WHITE scale buildup in kettles and coffee makers. What's the easiest way to descale?

Fill the appliance with equal parts white vinegar and water, then bring to a boil (or run a brew cycle). Let it sit for 30 minutes before discarding. Rinse thoroughly by running two full cycles with clean water. For regular maintenance, repeat monthly.

**H**OW CAN I STORE SPRING produce like asparagus and herbs so they last longer?

Trim asparagus ends and stand stalks upright in a jar with an inch of water, loosely covered with a plastic bag, stored in the fridge. For fresh herbs, treat like flowers — trim stems and place in water on the counter (away from direct sunlight) or wrap loosely in a damp paper towel inside an airtight container in the fridge.

If you have any problem in cooking or kitchen, write to Woman's Era. We shall try to help you sort it out.

Address your queries to:

**WOMAN'S ERA**

E-3, Jhandewala Estate,  
New Delhi-110 055.



# UNCERTAIN

## PLACES, DREAMS AND REALITIES

Uncertainty is all what urban migration is all about.

By Shivani and Samriti

Migrating from one place to another is not a new phenomenon. People have moved from one place to another for various reasons, be it in search of a better life, more money, or a better climate to live in etc. In our history lessons we have learnt about great travellers like Vasco Da Gama, Christopher Columbus, Nicolo Conti, who travelled around the world and made a name for themselves. But unfortunately we do not see many women travellers in history. But the times have changed, and women are travelling more.

They are looking for jobs, or education, and money.

Reasons behind catching a train to the city are *Dreams, Desires, Ambitions and Career*.

It may be expectations of a greater livelihood, educational opportunities, moving away from conflicts at home, or dreams for a glamorous life. Migration is one process which helps in changing the fabrics of the

society. Along with this the demography of the place also changes and it brings business and culture to the city. But the question is how it impacts women from villages and small towns. The city will become the reason behind their enlightenment, and knowledge. This knowledge would help them to be a part of this new city.



## Migration To The Middle East

The Indian real estate industry employs 71 million people, of which only 7 million are women, resulting in a low female employment rate of 25.1 per cent. Addressing gender inequalities through targeted upskilling and fair pay could lead to significant economic benefits and improve inclusivity and productivity in the industry. The Middle East is undergoing a significant demographic shift in the workforce, with Indian women leading the way. According to the recent statistics from Huntr, the number of Indian women migrant workers in the Middle East is expected to increase by more than 71 per cent in the next two to three years. This increase will be fuelled by growing opportunities in the hospitality, construction, healthcare and technology sectors.

This trend shows a major shift in the region's labour force as more Indian women take up jobs in fast-growing industries. The MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region is becoming a key location for this change as the number of Indian women workers is expected to increase from 3.5 million to 6 million by 2027. Many Indian women have moved to the MENA region to work. While India's growing economy offers opportunities, the UAE's diverse labour market, supportive policies and high standard of living attract many skilled Indian women to cities such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi.



**MANY INDIAN WOMEN HAVE MOVED TO THE MENA REGION. WHILE INDIA'S GROWING ECONOMY OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES, THE UAE'S DIVERSE LABOUR MARKET, SUPPORTIVE POLICIES AND HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING ATTRACT MANY SKILLED INDIAN WOMEN TO CITIES.**

## Demand For Labour

Leading the way are sectors such as construction and hospitality. The demand for Indian women workers in the hospitality industry will increase by 23 per cent by 2023 compared to the previous year. With the UAE's state-of-the-art medical facilities and growing expat community opening up new prospects for Indian professionals, there is also strong interest in the healthcare and education sectors.

In addition, growing sectors such as renewable energy, banking and technology are opening up opportunities for competent Indian women, reflecting the region's drive for economic diversification. This shift is in line with broader initiatives to modernise economies and improve workforce inclusivity.

## Gender Diversity In Leadership And Stem Fields

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are increasingly promoting gender diversity in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields and in leadership positions. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, the proportion of women among STEM graduates from the state universities is 41, which is higher than the global



# SMALL TOWN GIRLS MAKING BIG NAME

## Dolly Singh

Dolly Singh was born and brought up in Nainital, Uttarakhand. Raised in a middle-class household, she wasn't initially immersed in the allure of the entertainment industry. She studied fashion designing at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in Delhi. During her studies, she developed an interest in content creation and expressing her creativity, but she never aimed at achieving social media recognition. After finishing her studies, Dolly Singh had difficulty securing a stable position. Similar to numerous other young adults, she confronted the tough realities of the job market, and even worked as an emcee, sometimes at malls and sometimes at parties... In spite of her credentials,



she struggled to obtain a job in the fashion sector or any other area she desired to pursue. Dolly's major achievement occurred when she developed the persona of "Bengali

Mom," a humorous character inspired by her personal experiences. This character quickly struck a chord with many, and her relatable, eccentric depiction of the typical "Indian mother" became popular and adored by the audiences.

Her wit and originality drew in additional followers on her Instagram and YouTube accounts. Recently she walked the Red Carpet at the French Riviera wearing Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla and Tarun Tahiliani.

Dolly's achievements were driven by her talent for crafting relatable, humorous, and distinctive content that connected with the audiences, demonstrating that authenticity can serve as a strong instrument for bonding.

average. This trend is expected to continue as programmes such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 actively encourages women to enter the workforce, with a target of 36% by 2025.

## Opportunities With Equal Pay Initiatives

The UAE's 2020 law mandating equal pay for men and women in the

commercial sector and Saudi Arabia's ongoing efforts to close the gender pay gap suggest a promising future. By 2025, women in sectors such as consumer goods, technology and healthcare are expected to see salary increases of up to 4.5 per cent, which would make Middle Eastern markets even more attractive to Indian women. Lucrative packages are one of the most desirable things.

## Push Entrepreneurial Ambitions

Indian women are also making a significant economic contribution to the UAE through their 50,000 businesses worth AED 60 billion. Hub71 and the Dubai Business Women Council are enabling women to start and grow businesses in sectors such as renewable energy and fintech.

The growing number of Indian women working in the Middle East shows that a revolutionary era of gender diversity, inclusivity and economic collaboration has dawned. The MENA region is poised to become a hub for supporting Indian women entrepreneurs and professionals.

The UAE's growing healthcare sector, supported by world-class medical facilities, has proved particularly enticing for Indian nurses and medical professionals looking for a better salary and work environment.

Similarly, the country's growing education industry, fuelled by a growing expatriate community, offers attractive teaching opportunities for Indian women looking to enhance their careers.



## Nancy Tyagi

Nancy Tyagi is a name that resonates with many who have experienced the struggles of migration, from Uttar Pradesh and helping her parents financially. Despite facing financial hardship, Nancy remained resilient. She kept pushing through, learning new skills in stitching and making beautiful dresses.

Nancy's perseverance allowed her to carve out a successful life, after she was invited to Cannes Film Festival, where she had worn a dress made by herself. Recently she also designed an outfit for Ananya Pandey for her series on Amazon Prime, *Call me Bae*. Her story is a testimony to the strength and determination of migrants striving for a better future.

Even after such success stories, there is still an unending fight for migrant women. Struggles ranging



from legal and economic struggles to cultural barriers and gender-based discrimination. Yet, despite these hardships, their resilience, determination, and unwavering

hope allow them to overcome the immense obstacles. Whether in the workforce, education, or their communities, migrant women continually demonstrate remarkable strength and adaptability.

Their stories are a testimony to the power of perseverance and the human spirit, proving that even in the face of adversity, success is not only possible but often also a result of their relentless pursuit of a better life for themselves and their families.

As we recognise and amplify their experiences, we must continue to advocate for the resources, support, and policies that enable migrant women to thrive, ensuring that their successes are not just exceptions, but a reflection of their collective potential. Many young girls tend to become like these women who have achieved significant status for themselves in their lives.

Indian women looking for active, customer-facing positions now have more options as the UAE has a growing hospitality and retail sector that also guarantees world-class healthcare and education.

Due to the country's booming tourism industry, there is a great demand for skilled workers in these fields, which often pay better than in India.

The UAE's strategic geographical location at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilisations has also proved beneficial for Indian women seeking international exposure. Moreover, the UAE's multicultural diversity, which thrives on the glorious blending of traditions from around the world, has certainly enriched the life experience for Indian expatriates.

The growing number of Indian women in the Middle Eastern workforce reflects a changing era of gender diversity, inclusion and economic cooperation.

The MENA region is poised to become a hub for the empowerment of Indian professionals and women entrepreneurs, thanks to encouraging policies, growing



sectoral opportunities and improvements in entrepreneurship.

If one ever looks at any journey of a woman, we have seen how women can be both emotional and strong at the same time. Looking at a woman's journey in her early 20s about making a life in the city has always been an inspirational story.

After battling with their dreams and parents in many cases, when these women come out

in the society, it seems as if they are presented as debutantes.

Underneath are the stories of two such debutantes who migrated to the city for education, but life had different plans for them.

Sometimes, it maybe looked down upon, but it does encourage many young girls to leave their cities and move to a big city in order to pursue their dreams and achieve big for themselves.

We

# THE WANDER WOMAN

Interview with Dawn Lwakila.

By Dr Elsa Lycias Joel



Dawn in rural Central African Republic, 1991.

**E**lsa Lycias Joel interviews Dawn Lwakila, a Canadian travel writer and founder of Wander International, a travel company specialising in tailored itineraries and unique destinations. A strong advocate for travel as therapy for women, Dawn shares her journey, experiences, and insights on making travel safer and more enriching.

**Where were you born and brought up? Is there a story behind your name, 'Dawn'?**

I was born in Yukon, Canada's far north, where I spent my early years growing up. As a child, I had the freedom to roam the vast Canadian wilderness, often without

adult supervision. A group of us kids would set off on adventures with a couple of dogs to chase away bears and other wild beasts. We climbed mountains, discovered hidden lakes, and explored sand dunes formed by the remnants of ice-age glaciers. We navigated unfamiliar landscapes with ease, returning home only when the sunlight faded and our stomachs rumbled.

These northern communities were close-knit, where elders were respected, and people generously shared what little they had. Long, dark winters were filled with laughter and storytelling, strengthening bonds within the community.

My name, 'Dawn,' often gets

confused with 'Don,' like 'Gunda' (gangster). My parents, part of the hippie generation, had a completely different name in mind for me. However, when I was born early in the morning, at first light, they felt inspired to name me Dawn. It turned out to be fitting, as I have always been a nature lover, drawn to the great outdoors.

**What intrigues, bothers, terrifies, and excites you about life in India? Also, tell us about your book.**

People often ask how someone from Yukon, Canada, chooses to live in Chennai, India. The journey has been long and winding, spanning four continents. More than the places I have travelled, the lessons I have learned along the way have shaped me. I believe that if we focus on what connects us as humans rather than our differences, we can feel at home anywhere. This mindset has helped me turn strangers into family and see obstacles as opportunities, allowing me to embrace India as my home.

During the pandemic, I finally wrote the book I had been planning for years. *Wander Woman: A Travel Guide for Beginners* is a step-by-step illustrated manual for aspiring travellers. It covers everything from budgeting and packing to safety tips and my secret travel hacks. I condensed over 30 years of travel experience into a simple, easy-to-follow guide, which I published on Amazon worldwide. Publishing this book was a dream come true and a major achievement on my bucket list.

**Why did you choose India, specifically Chennai?**

In 2015, I was invited to rural Maharashtra to help establish an international boarding school. This was my first time in India, and I was immediately captivated by the hospitality and sense of community. Arriving during monsoon season, I danced in the rain with my new friends, sipped tea with *pakor*as on misty afternoons, and hiked through the lush Western Ghats.

Many ask if I experienced culture



Dawn and her group in Jaisalmer.

**MANY ASK IF I EXPERIENCED CULTURE SHOCK IN INDIA. INDIA IS A BEAUTIFUL MOSAIC OF LANGUAGES, RELIGIONS, AND TRADITIONS. PEOPLE TEND TO SEEK A SINGLE NARRATIVE TO DEFINE AN ENTIRE COUNTRY, BUT I PREFER TO EMBRACE ITS COMPLEXITIES.**

shock in India. India is not just one culture—it is a beautiful mosaic of languages, religions, and traditions. People tend to seek a single narrative to define an entire country, but I prefer to embrace its complexities. Rather than resisting the differences, I approached my new life in India with curiosity and enthusiasm.

Though I enjoyed my work, when my contract ended in Maharashtra, I didn't want to jump into another teaching job. Instead, I embarked on a year-long backpacking journey across Southeast Asia. It was an incredible experience. Eventually, I accepted a teaching position in Chennai, but even then, I missed the freedom of the open road. I used every opportunity to travel, slowly realising that Chennai was becoming my home.

#### ***When did Chennai start feeling like home?***

During the pandemic, I explored the districts surrounding my home, sometimes walking 45 km a day through backroads and trails. I hiked to empty hilltop temples at sunrise, marvelled at lush green rice paddy fields, and found solace in the rhythmic lull of the ocean waves. I fell in love with Chennai.

I began using social media to showcase the beauty of my home, and my followings grew. My



Dawn hosting a women's trip to Cambodia.

travel articles were published in various platforms, and my travel photography was also featured. This visibility allowed me to turn my passion for travel into a career.

#### ***How did 'Wander International' come into existence?***

After publishing my eBook and gaining recognition for my travel

photography, I decided to brand myself as Wander Woman. Growing up, people often told me I resembled the original Wonder Woman, Linda Carter, so I played with the name as a reminder to channel my inner superheroine.

Around this time, resorts and travel companies reached out to collaborate, and people started



Dawn Solo Travelling in Myanmar.

asking me to organise trips. I realised that this passion could become my full-time career. I took a leap of faith, left teaching, and founded *Wander International*, my Chennai-based travel mentoring company.

***Have you travelled with a women-only group before launching Wander International?***

Before starting my company, I had travelled with women many times, though not as part of organised tours. Solo female travellers often form a sisterhood, meeting at hostels or while exploring new places. I have made lifelong friends through these connections, and we have sometimes travelled together for extended periods.

***What inspired you to make travel your career? Did you travel a lot in your younger days?***

My parents were constantly on the move, which instilled in me a nomadic spirit. At 17, straight out of the high school, I embarked on my first major international adventure. Back then, youth standby tickets allowed those under 25 to fly at heavily discounted rates. My friend

**AFTER PUBLISHING MY EBOOK AND GAINING RECOGNITION FOR MY TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY, I DECIDED TO BRAND MYSELF AS WANDER WOMAN. PEOPLE OFTEN TOLD ME I RESEMBLED THE ORIGINAL WONDER WOMAN, LINDA CARTER, SO I PLAYED WITH THE NAME.**

Meghan and I jumped on a plane to spend a year in the Central African Republic.

***Which travel experience changed you the most?***

That year in Africa profoundly shaped me. Meghan and I lived with a local family in Bangui, learned to speak Sango, and travelled the country using whatever means available. Whether trekking deep into the jungle to pygmy villages, crossing

rivers in dugout canoes, or walking 40 km through the jungle after our bus caught fire, each experience was transformative. The love and hospitality I received from complete strangers laid the foundation for how I travel today.

***How do you manage the responsibilities of leading travel groups, especially for women?***

Empowering women through travel is one of my greatest joys. While I also lead family trips and corporate retreats, my niche is women's travel. Many women, especially in India, struggle with guilt when travelling solo. Some wait until their children are grown, while others are realising that taking time for themselves allows them to give more to their families.

While my personal travel style is free-spirited, *Wander International* trips are meticulously planned. I conduct thorough research, coordinate with professional guides, and create structured yet flexible itineraries. I accompany every trip, ensuring emotional and physical well-being. Some travellers are confident but enjoy the convenience of an organised trip, while others need more guidance, which I am happy to provide.

***How do you challenge yourself while travelling?***

Travel constantly pushes my boundaries. I have always feared heights and deep water, so I made a conscious effort to conquer them. I paraglided off a mountaintop near Dharamshala, and though the anticipation was nerve-wracking, the experience was exhilarating. In the Andamans, I faced my fear of deep water and earned my scuba diving certification. Once I saw the beauty of the underwater world, I was able to move past my fears.

***Your sign-off note?***

I am deeply grateful that a simple girl from remote northern Canada is now living her dream in India, travelling the world, and empowering others to do the same. **We**



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# THE PITCH

*A decision that could spell triumph or disaster.*

By Pierre Francis

The day before she started this job eight years ago, her grandfather took her aside for a dose of advice. 'Geeta, if you work hard, you'll go far,' he said. "You'll get well paid and gain a top position. Your peers will envy you."

She could not fault the octogenarian for believing in this wisdom, as he had spoken from experience. He had slaved throughout his adult working life in the pharmaceutical industry and had risen from a simple clerk to a sanctified CEO before deciding to rake in his rewards and enjoy his retirement. However, she could not imagine her life following the same pattern, because things were different these days. If people were not jumping from job to job like ants grasshoppers, they were being given the golden handshake at short notice.

As a result, she found it well nigh impossible to keep track of some of her friends' careers. In the advertising business—her

"Geeta, if you work hard, you'll go far," he said. "You'll get well paid and gain a top position. Your peers will envy you."

own sphere of experience—she had seen too many senior colleagues retrenched in their prime—ironically, when they had gained enough experience to prove themselves in the key positions. The excuse given was always the same: 'The economy is sluggish, Mr Kumar. The company isn't making enough money to cover your salary and other perks. Mr Kumar ... you have to go!'

Nowadays, she found it easier to believe in the adage that the longer you stayed in an organisation, the less value it placed on you. She had been a senior writer at Adline for years, but her salary had not increased a single paisa, and the respect her granddad spoke of was yet to be felt. How much longer would she have to wait before she got the pink slip—or was she being unnecessarily negative? Was this simply a case of the blues?

She shook her head and tried concentrating on the task of writing copy for a soap advertisement. She was a martinet when it came to setting standards for herself. She would not tolerate slipshod punctuation. Her grammar had to be impeccable, though pedantry was to be avoided. There would be no split infinitives, no lazy sentences fading into ellipses. Most important, the writing had to induce the reader of the advertisement to make a purchase. It was what good copy was all about.

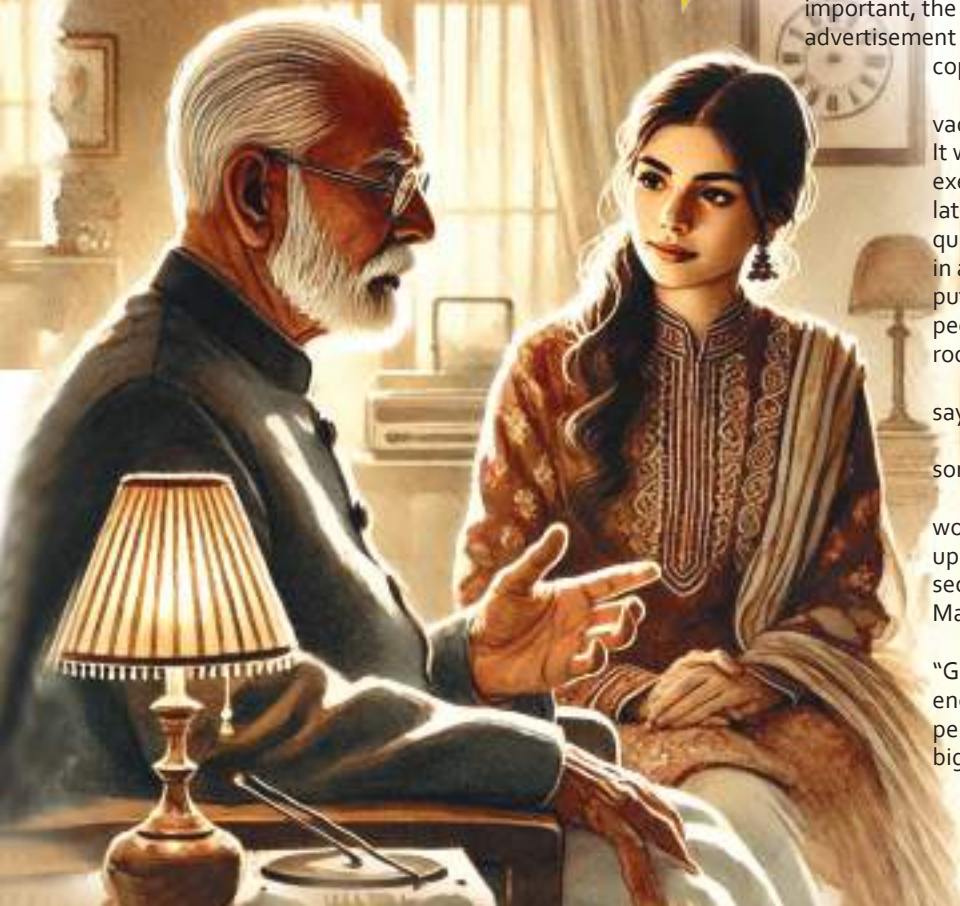
She had decided to write the ad in a vacant cubicle at the far end of the office. It was reserved for a newly appointed executive who would be arriving a week later, and she chose it because it was much quieter than her own space, which was in a busy section of the agency. As she put pencil to paper, she became aware of people entering the adjoining conference room.


"It's a major job," she heard her boss say. "We'd better get outside help."

"Mr Rathod, sir, why can't we hire someone competent, once and for all?"

Whenever a pitch is to be made, we wonder whether our creative people are up to the mark." Geeta recognised the second voice as belonging to the Account Manager.

"Let me correct you," Rathod said. "Geeta is competent, but not mature enough to have developed the right perspectives. The Centurion account is a big fish and half the bloody advertising





"We're not pitching every day. Besides, the type is too expensive, my dear!"

industry will be pitching—and bitching—for it. This is why we need a senior writer—creative director level, if necessary—who'll be ready to freelance for us."

"Why not hire a hotshot creative director and place him or her permanently on our rolls?"

"We're not pitching every day. Besides, the type is too expensive, my dear!"

"OK, so whom should we call up? Got a list of mercenaries?"

"Ask our art director, Vinod Salgaonkar. He's been in this business since Ogilvy was in diapers—if you know what I mean!"

An explosion of guffaw followed, but Geeta was not amused. She left the cubicle and headed back to her desk, her head on fire. So they still didn't have enough confidence in her, despite knowing that she'd proved herself through eight long years? How could they forget all those times when she had to decode unintelligible briefs?

Those marathon stretches she did, well into the late hours of the night? The many large accounts she had worked on—although none of them had been pitches? The few awards she had notched up for the agency?

She sulked for the rest of the day, and after work was done, she couldn't leave the office fast enough to catch the shuttle home. As it happened to be a Saturday—a half-day for many—the train compartment was not crowded, and she managed to get a window seat. But so steeped was she in her misery that the wind couldn't lift her spirits, and she remained oblivious to the world that rushed past her window to the rhythmic clatter of wheels on the tracks: an endless stream of forlorn shanties, bustling townships, trash heaps, junk yards, mills, factories, people and more people.

Later that evening, as she took the final flight of stairs to her flat in a restful corner of suburban Andheri, she asked herself if it would not be such a bad idea to quit Adline while her pride was still intact. However, her mother's cooking put her in a more positive frame of mind at dinner, and she hoped the following Monday would

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bring a change for the better. It did.

She was having a discussion with Ravi, her hopelessly overweight art director, when the phone rang.

"There's a Mr Mirchandani wishing to speak with you," the telephone operator said. 'Wanna talk?'

She did not know any Mirchandani, but her curiosity got the better of her and she decided to take the call.

"Is this Ms Geeta Rao?" a male voice responded to her 'hello'.

"Yes, what's this about?"

"Is this line secure? Can we talk without being overheard?"

This sounded like a job offer, she told herself. It was always the same guarded opening. She asked Ravi to excuse her and waited until he had waddled away before resuming her conversation with Mirchandani.

"We can talk now. Sorry for the interruption," she said.

"It's all right. I want to ask if you're willing to freelance."

"Of course. Anything for a little money."

"It will be more than a little—quite substantial, really, if everything works out fine."

"OK, so what's the brief?"

"We can't discuss it over the phone, but you may come to our offices. Would half-past six tomorrow evening do?"

She replied that it was okay with her and jotted down the address Mirchandani provided. Then she spent the rest of the day proofing artworks, studying competitive advertising, and browsing an issue of *The Brief*, a magazine whose breezy coverage encompassed the inanities as well

as the more weighty aspects of the ad biz. It was staple reading for those in the profession, and she would ensure she got the latest issue from the media department when it arrived.

\*\*\*\*\*

After work on Tuesday, she caught a cab to Nariman Point, where Mr Mirchandani's company, FocalPoint Communications, was located. It was a large office painted grey and ultramarine blue, and it occupied the twelfth floor of a high-rise. The walls of the reception area showcased the agency's latest advertisements, and the receptionist looked like an advertisement for *Elle*.

Geeta introduced herself to the diva sitting behind the switchboard, then picked a magazine off a rack and began flipping through it. The receptionist did her thing to the accompaniment of beeps and whirrs, then flashed Geeta a perfect set of pearly teeth.

"Mr Mirchandani will see you now," she said. "Go down the corridor and turn right when you reach the end. His cubicle has his name on the door, so you can't miss it."

Geeta thanked the woman and made her way to Mirchandani's cubicle, past busy workstations, scurrying peons, chatting typists, and a tea boy who wore the wistful expression of one who wished he were elsewhere.

Moments later she was greeted by a middle-aged chap who seemed to epitomise the senior advertising professional with his pipe and suspenders, pepper-coloured hair, and half-moon reading glasses.

"Come in, Geeta!" effused Mirchandani, in a curiously British accent. "Would you like tea... coffee?"

"I'll have tea, thank you. No sugar," she replied, and took the seat Mirchandani indicated.

"I think we can get started right away," he said. "First, I must tell you that whatever we discuss here is absolutely confidential, whether or not you agree to

work with us. OKAY?"

"Of course."

"Then let me start." The man rubbed his hands and shuffled papers. "Our agency has been invited to make a pitch for the Centurion account. The company is a world leader in safes and other security equipment, including fire, smoke, and burglar alarm systems. It has recently entered the area of advanced electronic surveillance and will launch its products and services in this country next year.

Naturally, Centurion wants an agency to provide a range of services, from advertising to public relations support and even multimedia products like websites and interactive CDs."

Mirchandani took a deep breath before continuing: "Our goal is to get Centurion to sign us on for all its communication requirements. For this to happen, we have to produce a campaign—Centurion considers this a test of sorts—that's up to the mark. Our work must be original and reflect our understanding of the client's business."

He leant forward and stared at Geeta as if he were trying to read her mind.

"Do you think you can handle it?"

She was being asked to work on the very same job that her agency was unwilling to give her! It might seem unethical if she accepted, but how could she ignore an opportunity to prove herself?

"Sure, I can," she replied. "But I want to know why you're not using your creative team—and how much you're ready to pay."

"Well, our copy chief left us just a week ago and we've not been able to replace him," Mirchandani replied. "If your campaign's liked—and Centurion selects us—we'll offer you twenty thousand.

Ten, if your campaign's presented by us but doesn't score. That would be your rejection fee."

Going by industry standards and her experience, Mirchandani

She was being asked to work on the very same job that her agency was unwilling to give her! It might seem unethical if she accepted.



wasn't coughing up as much as he should. But he had guessed—correctly—that she was at a stage in her career where adding gloss to her portfolio was more important than adding bucks to her bank account. As Vito Corleone would have put it, it was an offer she couldn't refuse.

"Fine, I'll take it," she said, and shook the man's extended hand to seal the pact. "Give me the information I need and I'll start working as soon as possible."

"It's all in this," Mirchandani said, handing over a file. "Get cracking on the job right away because we need to present by the end of next week. That's two weeks from now, but you'll have to deliver earlier."

So she "got cracking" every evening after work in the quiet confines of her little study at home. It had grown cluttered with the acquisitions of the years, which included a Beatles poster, a stack of advertising volumes, a beanbag, her trusty Apple Mac, and various knick-knacks, but it was her space, and she wouldn't have it any other way. She went through the file Mirchandani had given her, made some notes, then plunged into the exciting part: letting her imagination transport her to realms beyond the reach of logical thought, making wild connections with random images, considering outrageous notions.

A week later, she had two promising routes for Mirchandani, complete with headlines, tag lines, and suggested visuals. He studied them in silence and nodded appreciatively. Then he stuffed his pipe with flavoured tobacco, lit it with practised flair, and puffed vigorously, filling the air with the distinctive aroma of cherries.

"We'll run with this. It's good, and so is your rationale. I'll discuss the campaign with our art director. We should be ready on schedule."

Geeta shook the man's hand and left, pleased that her work had been swallowed without a hiccup. The best part of creating campaigns was the ideation bit: cogitating in a half-dream state, brainstorming with colleagues, being wilfully ridiculous. But the fun usually ended when the campaign was put on paper and presented to the high-and-mighty in client servicing. The rationalists would pick it apart, piece by piece, until there was nothing left to analyse. The creative team would object volubly and bemoan the lack of appreciation for good work, but the "suits" usually won. As she headed home, she told herself she had been fortunate. Now, all she had to do was wait and hope that FocalPoint would bag the prestigious Centurion account.

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A whole week went by without further word from the agency. Meanwhile, she became aware of a regular visitor to the office—a squat, bearded chap with a tobacco-stained smile and a jute satchel slung from his shoulder. He introduced himself as Sachin and went on to explain that her boss had hired him on a freelance basis to write copy for the Centurion campaign. He was friendly, quick with wisecracks, and seemed to know a lot about advertising, which was not surprising considering he had two decades'

experience behind him. The level of competitiveness his seniority implied made her nervous, but she could do nothing about it except wait for the presentation day to arrive and hope for the best. She heard that five agencies were vying for the Centurion account, and though she tried to be as nonchalant as ever, she did not realise she was biting her lower lip out of excitement.

The presentation day came and went. Two weeks passed. With no intimation from FocalPoint, she began to wonder whether Mirchandani had taken her for a ride.

Would he pay the rejection fee, at least? Should she buzz him and find out what was happening? Then, finally, his call came.

"We've got the account! The contract has been signed by the client, and your cheque's already in the mail. Congratulations!"

Her hand trembled as she held the receiver, and her eyes misted over.

"Thank you... it's great news!" she said.

"We'd like you to work with us, so let's discuss the matter in my office," Mirchandani said. "See me tomorrow evening, around six."

She had no reason to refuse.

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days later, a meeting was called in Adline's conference room. Mr Rathod presided over a motley group of seven—the account manager, the studio manager, Sachin, and other lesser mortals.

"I'm sorry to tell you we've not won the Centurion account," Rathod announced.

"Oh, then who's got it?" the account manager asked, looking disappointed.

"Centurion informed us they've chosen FocalPoint Communications."

"What?" said Sachin. "It's the agency from which I recently resigned. As far as I know, they don't have any writers."

"Must have hired freelance help, like we did," the studio manager said.

"By the way," Rathod continued, "where is Geeta? I haven't seen her for a while. Is she ill?"


"She's on leave," the account manager answered.

Rathod was about to say something when a peon walked in with a fax and handed it to him. He peered at it, frowning, and then began reading:

"Please accept my resignation as I've joined another agency to improve my prospects. As I've not given a month's notice, you may withhold this month's salary from me as per the terms of my employment. Thanking you. Regards, Geeta."

Rathod's face took on an alien hue, and he seemed on the verge of an apopleptic fit.

"These young writers are most unreliable," he sputtered, as anger consumed him. "Who in their right minds would want to hire them?"

"Yes," came the sycophantic chorus. "Most unreliable!" 

# Letting Go

A tale of loveless marriage, disease & loss. By Tanima Ray

Calling Amrinder Bajaj's book – *Letting Go* – a mere tale of a loveless marriage might be explanatory but still improper or incomplete as how does one live with and stand by a person unless there is no belonging. Love becomes habitual or taken for granted in most marriages. It may not be uttered or emphasised but it surely exists in whichever form it can. Even as a promise or duty.

Bajaj touches a harrowing narrative of a disease we see all around us now – cancer. In a series of diary entries in the first-person narrative, she presents a couple, both of whom are doctors, an obstetrician and her husband, a private practitioner. It is the latter that is afflicted by the ailment in its fourth and final stage.

Like most marriages, this one too has turned bitter over time. And it is perhaps the negligence or busy lives of the two that delayed the diagnosis. Now the wife bears the additional burden of attending her sick partner which she fulfils despite his disregard for her all these years. She records each day of struggle to treat and keep her MS, as she calls him, alive.

What is the most alarming is the series of events where she mentions the apathy of the alopahs who do not care for the patients and extract money in both private and public institutions even when she herself and MS are both doctors. They are forced to adhere to the incorrigible expenses while being on duty themselves, treating others in need.

Just as it sounds, it is an actual reflection of Dr. Bajaj and her

real-life husband who could sense death while she prepared herself for the absence like gulping a pill that chokes in your throat leaving its aftertaste. And as she is a gynaec herself, she does not choose to ornate her words at all.

It is said that a friend in need is a friend indeed. And during such testing times, all true colours are revealed. She goes on to add the details of who stood by and who did not, starting from the negligible support from her family to her absent sons. Though there is a sister-in-law, sister, and a sweet nurse who remain her strong pillars. Such vulnerability often makes way for old



lovers or new which was also what happened in her case, muddying the waters she was drowning in.

In those two and a half years, she watched her husband grow 'pale' with each PET scan, chemotherapy, and countless tests. Beds soiled with bouts of vomit and his teeth were all yellow, she writes. There was no respite as it kept appearing.

All of this is set in the heart of Delhi where the narrator begins the book by expressing her discomfort over the city's heat and her husband's selfishness of not paying heed to it by switching off the AC as she twists and turns on the bed struggling to sleep. Only when she tells the same to her peers, they imagine the reason to be otherwise, something steamy not to realise that it is rather the global warming.

She further states his body odour and all that was distasteful in him and how they ended up living apart under the same roof.

Yet this one disease flipped everything. Her dedication towards him generated warmth. She could sense the vacuum in her life without him, how she depended or lived with him, while MS found himself to be indebted to her. They were well aware of all the nuances and he kept his spirit up by engaging in dark comedy.

“Life would be empty without him. It wasn’t a great love that I would miss but the set patterns of our lives, the little things we did as a couple,” she writes in the final chapters as she accepts his passing away.

Why this book needed to exist in the first place is to instate that the cancerous cells may grow in one host, but it affects those who are left behind or nurse to heal. It brings to life the ugly parts that one would generally shy away from speaking of. It is raw and rightly so.

While it may not appeal those looking for drama or diction, you cannot expect something like ‘The notes from the underground’ when it is a doctor narrating cancer in her diary. Though the tonality is but the same with no filters.

For those from the younger generation, this is also a read that would make them realise how and why marriages worked. There is absolutely nothing rosy about it, other than the companionship.

The amount of patience and compassion in this very relationship is a stark opposite to the fickleness in these times over minor inconveniences. While it is sad that there is no love that is claimed, at least there is commitment which is a myth now.

Dr. Amrinder Bajaj has an experience of over four decades as a gynecologist. Apart from that, she writes. She has published is a memoir based on her association with Khushwant Singh, and two wellness books other than this one. She also pens on and off for *The Times of India*, *The Tribune* and *The Indian Express*. She used to write a column titled *I’m pregnant*, for *The Woman’s Era* magazine from 1999 to 2012. **We**



## ENCOUNTER WITH A MAMA BEAR

Last summer, an unforgettable incident unfolded during a family camping trip that still lingers in my memory. While we were hiking through the dense woods, we unexpectedly stumbled upon a mother bear and her adorable cubs. The moment we locked eyes, the mother bear emitted a series of deep, menacing growls, clearly feeling threatened by our presence.

My heart raced, and a wave of terror washed over me. In an instant, my parents clasped my hand tightly and began to retreat slowly, their voices low and calming, trying to ease the tension. It felt like the time stood still until, at last, the mother bear turned and guided her cubs away from us.

That encounter left me reflecting on how narrowly we escaped a potentially dangerous situation. It underscored the vital lesson of being vigilant and respectful of wildlife while exploring nature.

I came to understand that the nature is a realm of both breathtaking beauty and hidden perils, reminding me to always stay prepared and cautious. The fear I experienced that day is etched in my memory, a stark reminder of the wild’s unpredictable nature.

## SCARY NIGHT

I can’t forget that night. It was supposed to be just a weekend trip, a quick escape from the city grind. Me, Aarav, Karan, and Sameer: four idiots craving adventure. A hill station, a rented cottage, and endless pine forests. What could

go wrong? The first two days were all laughter and cheap rum by the campfire. On the third day, Karan, always the daredevil, suggested a night hike into the forest. The locals had warned us about venturing too far after dark, muttering about spirits and curses, but we shrugged it off. Ghost stories were for tourists, we thought.

We left just past midnight, flashlights carving narrow tunnels through the mist. The trees huddled close, branches creaking in the wind. An hour later, the trail split, and Karan, grinning like an idiot, chose the narrow path. None of us argued. We should have.

The silence deepened the farther we went. No insects, no rustling leaves, just the crunch of our boots and our uneasy breaths. Then came the whispers. Faint at first, like wind slipping between trees. But the words grew clearer, though I couldn’t understand the language.

“Guys, did you hear that?” Aarav stopped, swiveling his light. “Hear what?” Sameer scoffed, but his voice wavered. “The... voices,” I muttered, my throat dry. Karan laughed it off, until his flashlight flickered and died.

One by one, our beams sputtered out, plunging us into darkness. Sameer cursed, smacking his torch. That’s when we saw them. Figures, just beyond the trees. Pale and still, eyes reflecting moonlight. Not moving, not blinking.

Panic set in. We bolted back, stumbling over roots and rocks, the whispers rising into a wail. Aarav screamed, and I turned in time to see something, someone brushed past him, icy and airless.

We didn’t stop running until the trees thinned and the cottage lights. Back inside, shaking and breathless, we locked every door and window. Karan, sat pale and silent, eyes fixed on the forest. None of us slept that night. That was three years ago. We never talked about this incident again.

- Sneha



# A Woman's Revenge

Love, dreams, and defiance. By Tasneem Sariya

With bloodshot eyes and tears streaming in a frenzy, she screamed at her image. “You will pay for this. Do you understand? You will pay a heavy price for this!” The reflection stared back at her—helpless, trapped, and unable to shed that pathetic expression of hopelessness, heavily mixed with anger and suffocation.

Of course, revenge is the word. These people cannot see you happy. They will avenge you for being light-spirited, for being sure of yourself, for pursuing a dream, for saying no, and for being you.

These stoic, cool-as-ice people. These people who claim to be your well-wishers, your friends, your family. These very double-faced hypocrites who call themselves society. Damn the social structure, damn the family structure, and damn humanity! Oh no, damn you and damn me. These very people will hound and haunt you until they kill you, cut you into tiny pieces, and fling them away with a nonchalance that is so them.

Yes, they will either strangle you until you cannot breathe or bend you until you break. The question is, do you want to live or do you want to be alive?

And so, here I realise that when they grope me with their cold, ruthless hands—when my invisible, to-the-naked-eye blood trickles and makes me feel limp—only then will they feel avenged. Only then, when they see me unable to move, unable to think, and unable to take a single step outside their defined boundaries, will they assume that they have set the record straight.

What record? I am a woman! Not a girl, not a dreaming, bubbling fountain of hopes and inspirations, not a dreamer, not an achiever. I am a woman! I broke the unspoken, generationally understood law—the law that makes every woman here a willing and automatic participant. The law that clearly states: you can think and work as hard as you want, but you shall do only what the we, the us deem fit. You will study, you will learn, but you will spend the rest of your days looking after us.

You will see a whole range of possibilities before you, but you shall not dream of pursuing them without our permission. You may be good at some things, but we hardly care if you are running a company, a school, or anything for that matter. All that matters at the end of the day is how well you fit into our compiled list of duties. Are you married?—Check. Can you cook well?—Check. Do you make sure your husband is entertained?—Check. Do you take utmost care of your children?—Check. Do you refrain from late nights and tight

clothes?—Check. Do you actually have the need or time to do anything else?—Uncheck. Are you serious about yourself?—Uncheck. Do you solemnly believe that ‘I is absorbed into the ‘we’?—Check. And, by the way, these rules only apply to me.—Double Check.

Alright, we were kind enough to let you have your way earlier; mind you, most girls here are not even allowed that. Girls here are taught how to cook delicacies and how to keep the home clean—more than how to stand up for themselves. Why? Because obviously, darling, there is no need to stand. Just grovel, crawl, and succumb. Must we remind you of this over and over again?

The reflection now began to move. The creases relaxed, and a

**NOT A GIRL, NOT A DREAMING, BUBBLING FOUNTAIN OF HOPES AND INSPIRATIONS, NOT AN ACHIEVER. I BROKE THE UNSPOKEN, UNDERSTOOD LAW—THE LAW THAT MAKES EVERY WOMAN HERE A WILLING AND AUTOMATIC PARTICIPANT.**



slow, sly smile played around those thin lips. Oh yes, I fooled them all right. Not that I didn't try to be a good girl and live up to those outrageous standards. Trust me, I tried very hard. But there is this voice inside of me. A voice that has a heart and a head. The voice that silently fuelled my thoughts, reminding me to trudge along the path of truth, wisdom, elevation, and skill. The voice tells me now that it had always reasoned they would come—with an array of weaponry ranging from emotional drama, assault, abuse, and taunts to outright force. Please. I knew it. Yet, how could I help it? How could I help falling in love with X even though he belonged to caste Y? How could I help being single and independent despite knowing that I was born to be someone else's arm candy? How could I help believing that managing both a career and a home was possible, even when it's always the home that takes precedence? How could I help slapping that ogling, touchy guy, knowing fully well he would seek revenge? Oh, please tell me, how could I pretend to just not exist, not have an opinion, not feel angered, not feel alive! Please, someone tell me, how could I just pretend not to be me?

But the us and the we never understand, do they? They find it infra dig them to acknowledge our existence, our wants, and our innermost unsaid being. All they want is for the pattern to continue—the age-old phenomenon of subordination must persist. Those who falter will pay. They will be discarded and desecrated.

She checked the image reflected in the glass once again. Oh Gosh, why didn't I become like one of those women who set examples—who do what they want, live by their own standards, and are successful just being who they are? She flinched. The image shook her head, and her eyes said it all. Yes, those women exist—few of them—but are you so certain that those women paid no price? That they got it as easily as the he of the world?

**We**

# NEWS IN PICTURES

## A Celebration of Music, Arts, and Culture

The 12th edition of the Games welcomed approximately 3,125 athletes from 102 countries, who competed in eight sports disciplines. Venues included Inalpi Arena for floorball and Palasport Tazzoli for figure skating and short track speed skating.

WOMADelaide 2025



## Vive Latino 2025



## Celebration of Latin Music and Culture

Held in Mexico City on March 15-16, 2025, Vive Latino showcased a diverse lineup of Latin American artistes, attracting thousands of fans who celebrated various musical genres. The festival featured electrifying performances from both renowned and emerging artists, creating an unforgettable atmosphere. Attendees enjoyed vibrant energy, dancing and singing.

## Thrilling Races in Lake Placid

The International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF) World Championships had featured seven events, including two-man and four-man bobsleigh, women's monobob, and skeleton races. The 2025 International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF) World Championships had taken place in Lake Placid, the USA.



IBSF World 2025

### International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH)

The 23rd edition of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) had been organised in Geneva, Switzerland, from March 7 to 16, 2025. This annual event served as a significant platform for filmmakers, activists, and the public to engage in discussions and screenings centered on human rights issues.



Film Festival (FIFDH)

### 28th Málaga Film



### Celebrating Spanish & Ibero-American Cinema

The 28th Málaga Film Festival, held from March 14 to 23, 2025, celebrated Spanish and Ibero-American cinema. Spanish singer Dani Fernández premiered his documentary *Todo Cambia* on March 19 at the Teatro Cervantes, offering a glimpse into his personal and professional journey in the music industry.

### Royal Treasure: 1820 Tiara Makes Historic Return

Queen Mary of Denmark recently unveiled a historic tiara—that had not been seen for over 140 years—during a state banquet in Finland. The tiara, created around 1820 for Queen Caroline Amalie, featured eleven semi-precious cameos set in carved gold. These gemstones had been collected by her husband, King Christian VIII, reflecting the classicist taste of that era and originally intended for everyday wear.



### Queen Mary



### Bold Statements & Redefined Workwear

Paris Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2025-2026, which had been held from March 5 to 11, showcased innovative designs and had highlighted female designers who redefined workwear with sharp tailoring. A standout moment had been actress Sarah Paulson's runway debut at Miu Miu, where she had worn a plunging black dress with schoolgirl and Madonna-inspired elements, making a bold fashion statement.



Paris Fashion Week

NBL Finals 2025



### Melbourne United's Championship Pursuit

Melbourne United reached the NBL Grand Final after a thrilling 113-112 semi-final win over the Perth Wildcats. Ian Clark shone with 38 points, while Chris Goulding's clutch free throw had secured the victory. United had then set their sights on their first title since 2021, facing the Illawarra Hawks in the Grand Final series from February 11 to March 23, 2025.

### Vancouver International Dance Festival (VIDF):

From March 5 to 15, Vancouver hosted the VIDF 2025 festival, celebrating its 25th anniversary. The festival turned the city into a lively centre for live art. It showcased raw, kinetic, and experimental dance, focusing on a mix of contemporary, Indigenous, and avant-garde performances. VIDF 2025 aimed to present world-class dance without creative limits, bringing together different artistic styles and pushing the boundaries of creativity.

We



Vancouver Dance Fest



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# AS YOU SAY

## STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Referring to the article *The Cost of Kindness* (March 2025), kindness is a wonderful human trait that brings inner satisfaction. However, selfish and manipulative people often take advantage of your generosity. They can be neighbours, colleagues, or even family members. The more you do for them, the more they expect. Your inability to say "no" makes them insensitive to your needs, and you start believing it's your responsibility to please them. This leads to overthinking, stress, and declining mental health as you realise you'll never receive appreciation for your selfless care. Excessive kindness can also make you a victim of exploitation. It's important to strike a balance between kindness and assertiveness, as silently done acts of kindness are often taken for granted.

— Harinder Kaur

## A GROWING CONCERN

In the article *Raging Smartphones* by Sammy D (March 2025), the author highlights the negative effects of excessive smartphone use on children. Smartphone addiction makes children angry, irritable, and detached from reality. Unaware of the health risks, parents hand smartphones to young children for entertainment, and as they grow, these devices are used for learning, but they also lead to excessive use

of social media. When the device is taken away, children may become aggressive, anxious, or even suicidal.



nor give them the liberty to use it 24/7. As parents, we can work on this trend.

This alarming trend worsened during the lockdown, when online classes were held via gadgets. Some students misused their laptops under the guise of studying.

Parents should avoid using smartphones as a distraction and should monitor their children's device use. One thing that parents can do it, they can encourage outdoor activities and face-to-face interactions instead of excessive screen time. By setting a positive example, parents can instill moral values in their children.

— Harinder Kaur

## AAP'S DOWNFALL

Apropos the editorial *As written in the last editorial*, AAP ----- in WE (March 2025), the decline of AAP is clearly linked to corruption, the liquor scam, and overall governance failures, which have negatively affected the lives of Delhi's residents. Kejriwal's arrogance and overconfidence sent a strong message to disillusioned voters that his constant confrontation with the Central government was counterproductive. It halted progress in areas like infrastructure, air quality, and overall development. This gave the BJP an advantage, resonating with voters across Delhi. It also provided an opportunity for the resurgent BJP to dismantle AAP's dominance and position itself as a credible alternative. Modi's calculated narrative helped



the BJP take control of Delhi after 26 years, reminding AAP that relying solely on freebies without a clear strategic plan won't win votes.

— R. Srinivasan

## HANDWRITTEN LETTERS

This is in reference to the article *The Timeless Charm* by Santosh Pattanaik (WE - February 2025). Despite rapid technological advances in communication, handwritten letters still hold a unique power to express thoughts and emotions. A handwritten letter creates a lasting impact on the recipient, as it conveys sincerity and effort. The written words have the power to captivate the reader, encouraging them to read the letter repeatedly. Handwriting letters foster a deep emotional connection between the sender and recipient. Writing by hand helps improve memory retention and strengthens mental clarity, making it an invaluable practice for dealing with life's challenges. In short, handwritten letters are not a stressful task but a pleasurable experience that can shape the mind and encourage thoughtful use of the time.

— R. Srinivasan



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