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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Reaching for the Sky

In this issue of *Pravasi Indians*, we turn the spotlight on two extraordinary achievers who have scripted intensely heartwarming and inspiring life-stories.

The first is the cover story on Sunita Kohli, famed interior designer, who had redone the Prime Minister's Office during Rajiv Gandhi's time, the British Library building in New Delhi, and the ballroom in Kolkata's Oberoi Grand Hotel, where she met Mother Teresa and felt she was in the presence of a saint. A Padma Shri awardee, the 75-year-old Lahore-born Kohli is still bubbling with energy. She is waiting for her *India Cook Book – From the Tables of My Friends* to come out. And she continues with her lifelong passion – interior design, blending many of the regional Indian traditions into a timeless style.

The other story of this month is that of the Indian New Yorker, Jini June, also known as 'Ranjini', who went from a childhood of 5 am lessons in Carnatic music from her mother to piano lessons from the age of 11 to her decision to leave university and opt for music as a career. She had a casual chat with Lady Gaga before she became famous as a pop/R&B singer/songwriter after launching her debut album, *Instant Message*.

In the Business and Economy section, we have a piece that analyses what the rollout of 5G means in the telecommunication sector in the country, and what needs to be done to make it accessible in the nooks and crannies of the country to transform the social and economic life of the people. The other article is about the Reserve Bank of India creating an inter-operable home-grown digital platform for Indians abroad for sending money home. In the existing system, expats pay a huge amount as transfer charges. The RBI intervention reduces the burden of inbound remittances for NRIs.

The Money Matters column this time takes a close look at the emergence of warehouses and data centres as attractive alternative investment classes that offer long-term, stable returns for both domestic and global institutional investors.

In Book Nook, we bring you a perceptive review of scholar-administrator Ramesh Inder Singh's vivid articulation of Punjab's turbulent 15 years: from the early Eighties to the mid-Nineties, which included Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and its aftermath across the country.

We also have an interview with cricket writer Boria Majumdar on his new book on the controversial Lalit Modi, who created the Indian Premier League (IPL) which is now flourishing more than a decade later. There are many more engrossing pieces that merit readers' attention. Happy reading!

CEO and Publisher

We would love to hear from you. We also invite diaspora members to write for us and share their experiences

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HUGS FROM THE UNIVERSE

A MUSICAL JOURNEY

RANJINI 'JINI' JUNE chose an unusual path; as she puts it, music chose her. From plans to pursue a law degree in New York City, Jini changed course to pursue a career in music. Her story is powerful because of her unique journey as a South Asian in a typically western-dominated industry

I have a core memory of walking home from school when I was seven. Taking advantage of being alone, I started to sing. The sun was bright, its warmth like a blanket on my skin. As I sang, the heat from the sun felt like a hug from the universe. It wasn't a song I had heard on the radio; just a little ditty I came up with from the top of my head from what I felt at that moment. You couldn't pay me to remember the lyrics or the melody, all I vividly remember was the feeling of fullness it gave me. Technically speaking, it was the first song I ever wrote. It was then that I realised I had been given a gift of music, an outlet for creativity. I don't say 'gift' from a place of

pride, rather it's from a space of gratitude. It was also just the beginning.

I'm a middle child, flanked by my elder and younger siblings who were far more athletic and extroverted than I was. I had no interest in organised sports, and honestly have zero regrets about not having the 'soccer team experience'. I dreaded outdoor recess and would pray for rain so we could stay inside and read. My mother, a musician and dancer, proficient in Carnatic vocal, the veena, and Bharatanatyam, ensured that my sister and I learned the Indian performing arts even though we were pretty much your typical American kids. At the time, I did not fully appreciate the 5 am Carnatic vocal lessons

or that she would handwrite two copies of a *kirtan* for my sister and me because that was easier than breaking up a fight between us over one copy. Looking back, it was those lessons that would form the foundation of my musical roots. In elementary school, Thursday quickly became my favourite day of the week. That was music day! I hadn't started lessons yet and remember being envious of my classmates who were lucky enough to take piano lessons. I would play on an electric keyboard my parents had gifted me for Christmas. I had pleaded with my mom to get me started with piano but for one reason or another, it kept getting put off.

I remember seeing a yellow flyer in the

mail with an advertisement from a piano teacher two neighbourhoods over, when I was 11. When my mom told me to book the first lesson, I wasted no time in picking up the phone to make the call. With no proper acoustic piano at the time, to prepare for my lesson each week I would take my piano books to school on Wednesday (my lesson day), skip lunch and practise on a real piano in the chorus room. I'd take a different bus to my teacher's home and walk the 30 minutes back home and sing on those walks back home when I thought no one was around.

It was my background in piano that propelled me to become voice captain at my high school choir. As a sophomore, I was charged with leading upperclassmen through their warm-ups and harmony parts. It was my first introduction to playing a leading role as a musician. My director's belief in me helped plant the seed that music was my calling. I remember asking him, "What chance do you think an Indian girl has in the music industry?" He said, "I believe you have more of a chance because you are Indian." It was what I wanted to hear at the time, but the reality was that using my ethnicity as a crutch was a weak strategy to break into the industry.

I remember sitting with Lady Gaga about a year before she rose to fame. We were chatting about how much piano we use in our sets and what we felt made us different from other artistes. She asked how much of my 'Indian-ness' I relied on to market my music. By then, I had learned the hard way that you can pigeonhole yourself by forcing Indian nuances into your music for the sake of sounding different. I responded that I used Indian flavours in my music sparingly and that it depended on whether that fit organically in a recording. The last thing I would want is to cheapen the Indian art form by using it as a gimmick. Gaga's reaction was one of appreciation and respect.

My first real break in the industry came when I met my producer, Quincy Patrick, who years later would become my husband. At the time, he was riding high at having two #1 singles on the pop and R&B charts simultaneously. He would go on to win a Grammy for Best Contemporary R&B Album for his work with The Temptations. Quincy was assembling a multi-cultural girl group at the time. I auditioned and he signed me on the spot. He said I had a lot to learn, but would be a perfect fit in the group.

After six months of working with the group and trying to juggle classes at NYU,

Jini has gone on to do some remarkable things, from working with Grammy-winning music producer Quincy 'Q' Patrick to co-founding the non-profit organization, Dreamality, Inc, which brings music classes and scholarships to schools in underserved communities.

a meeting was called regarding my plans about continuing with school. The consensus was that if I was serious about a career in music, I would have to take a break from school. It was the hardest decision I've ever had to make, but I chose to put my college career at my dream school on hold to focus solely on music. While it was terrifying, there was something liberating about knowing I now had a singular focus—that I no longer had one foot in and one foot out of the door.

The college drop-out conversation with my father went something like this: "Dad, you know I love music, and this is what I've decided to do—quit school to become a pop star." I wasn't asking, simply stating what I was going to do and how I planned to go about making it happen. I'd like to think my parents supported me because of their belief in me; but if I'm honest, I think at the time they just knew it would be futile to try to change my mind.

After around 10 record label meetings, and countless performances throughout the tri-state area, the group broke up. That's when the panic set in. The only saving grace was the overwhelming response from insiders who had watched us perform and that Quincy should go solo with the 'Indian chick'. That was the birth of my solo music career.

My first breakout single was a remix of Akon's "Don't Matter" which went viral on Myspace. This was followed by my R&B

single, "Instant Message", which was my first song that ever received radio airplay. My Carnatic remix of Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You" received viral attention via Facebook specifically among the Indian diaspora. Amid the pandemic, my piano videos mashing up classical and rap music began to take off on TikTok. Surfing from one social media platform to the next as the years have gone by has been no easy feat, but is necessary to self-market as an independent artiste. At the moment, I'm on the verge of releasing my newest single, "Pleasure Island", a sultry, mid-tempo song with a throwback vibe especially for my R&B audience.

In the midst of my music journey, Quincy and I co-founded a non-profit music charity, Dreamality, Inc., which brings music education programmes, music therapy and scholarships to kids in communities of need and the developmentally disabled. This passion project is our way of paying it forward. If it weren't for the incredible teachers that we had access to in school growing up, we would not have been inspired to pursue music careers ourselves. To date, we have brought our programmes to close to 4,000 students since our inception in 2013. In addition to our outreach, I teach piano and voice to students globally thanks to Zoom and maintain a roster of about 60 students. Many of my piano students have performed as soloists at Carnegie Hall and one of my voice students was invited to sing the national anthem at the NFL's New York Jets opening game. Witnessing their wins is an unexplainable feeling.

Sometimes, especially when I can't quite see the light at the end of the tunnel, I wonder what my life would look like had I gone to law school. Would it have been easier to follow a more straightforward path, with all the goal posts in place to let me know I was on the right track? But if I'm honest, there was never a fork in the road that offered me a choice. I have always been walking on a cracked, foggy, trail of dreams. When the pressure gets too much, I remember my seven-year-old self and the way the universe hugged me all those years ago when walking home from school. No better affirmation is needed for me to know that I am, indeed, right where I was meant to be. ■

Jini June is an Indian-American pop/R&B singer-songwriter, and pianist.

Money Matters

SMART CHOICES FOR STEADY RETURNS

Warehouses and data centres have emerged as attractive alternative investment classes that offer long-term, stable returns for both domestic and global institutional investors, including those of Indian origin

BY VISHAL DUGGAL

Housing Development Finance Corp Ltd (HDFC) chairman Deepak Parekh, while addressing the company's 44th annual general meeting in July 2021, described warehousing and data centres as the segments that will drive future demand for commercial real estate in India. He attributed his premise to the rapid growth in e-commerce and digital infrastructure in recent years. Significantly, the increasing demand for warehouses and data centres is based on the underlying need for sound logistics that e-commerce and digital transformation in the new millennium have in common.

Both warehouses and data centres are integral to the industrial sector's growth. Pertinently, Prologis, the largest industrial real estate company in the world and a dominant player in warehouses, is also foraying into data centres. In the US, Prologis has partnered with Skybox Datacenters to convert industrial sites that it owns into data centres. Largely, Prologis is the majority partner in a joint venture which owns the land or property, while Skybox works on the development, marketing, and operation of the resulting data centre. Similarly, reputed Indian real estate developers are partnering with global operators for developing hyperscale warehouses and data centres.

PROSPECTS OF WAREHOUSING

Warehousing has emerged as a promising asset class in the real estate sector. According to Coldwell Banker Richard Ellis (CBRE), each \$1 billion in e-commerce sales needs an additional 1.25 million sq ft (116,000 sq m) of distribution space to support it.

The usage of warehousing facilities saw a sharp increase in the wake of the pandemic-induced lockdowns as e-commerce platforms sought to meet the high demand for goods. Similarly, the organised food delivery segment also gained great momentum, fuelling cold chain warehousing space requirements. Even as the pandemic has waned, e-commerce continues its growth trajectory on the back of growing incomes, and changing lifestyles and work patterns that reflect consumers' increasing reliance on e-commerce players for the delivery of groceries, food and numerous other items.

Investment in the industrial and warehousing segment is on the rise owing to strong demand from e-commerce companies, which feel enthused by India's strong post-Covid economic recovery coupled with a steady positive outlook. The country is likely to emerge the third largest consumer economy by 2030 with proven strengths in the manufacturing

domain. Significantly, the Warehousing Market in India 2022 Report published by Netscribes (India) projects the warehousing market in the country as growing to ₹2243.79 billion by 2026, expanding at a CAGR of 10.90 percent.

As its construction costs are much lower, and occupancy rate much higher, warehouse investment is gaining traction as a stable and reliable avenue in commercial real estate. Companies in the e-commerce segment prefer to stock inventories closer to customers' locations to improve the quality of products at delivery, and optimise efficiency. As a result, demand for warehousing in smaller cities too has shown an uptick.

E-commerce is not the sole factor for the growth of the warehousing segment. The government's Bharatmala Project focuses on establishing 35 multimodal logistics parks throughout the country.

According to a report by investment management firm Colliers, during the first six months of 2022, the gross absorption of industrial and warehousing real estate in the top five cities of India stood at 10.8 million sq ft. Of this, Delhi-NCR accounted for the highest activity at 28 percent, with Pune a close second with 24 percent share of demand. About 55 percent of the gross absorption was led by third-party logistics



players, followed by the engineering and automobile sectors with 12 percent each.

GROWTH OF DATA CENTRES

India's digital economy is currently valued at around \$200 billion, and is estimated to be around \$800 billion to \$1 trillion by 2025, as per a 2019 report by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITy). The surging demand for technology consumption and favourable policy climate have spurred the requirement to set up physical spaces to store whopping amounts of digital information.

According to a CRISIL Ratings report, data centre capacity in India is expected to double to ~1,700-1,800 megawatts (MW) by fiscal 2025 from ~870 MW last fiscal. This will require investments of over ₹40,000 crore, out of which a third will be for acquiring land, a fifth for substations, and the balance for civil work, purchase of equipment and fit-outs. The corporate embrace of advanced technologies and digital infrastructure, and the increasing use of smart devices by individuals have led to a massive spurt in data and cloud usage (wireless mobile data traffic grew ~31% to ~253 exabytes in 2021), creating huge demand for data centres, adds the report.

The upcoming rollout of 5G services will

According to a report by investment management firm Colliers, during the first six months of 2022, the gross absorption of industrial and warehousing real estate in the top five cities of India stood at 10.8 million sq ft.

enable faster content delivery over the internet, higher bandwidth with increased connection density and lower latency. Government policies, regulatory and policy-based incentives which support digitisation and data localisation, seeking storage of

sensitive data within the country, coupled with the proposal to build economic zones specifically for data storage have further empowered the data centre ecosystem to evolve and scale up quickly.

Data centres currently occupy nearly eight million sq ft across the top seven metros and have emerged as an important asset class in the real estate business. According to property consultancy Savills India, real estate demand for data centres is set to increase by 15-18 million sq ft in the next four to five years across major Indian cities. Thanks to fast expanding network connectivity, cost-effective data services, availability of skilled labour, and low climate risk, India is likely to serve as a regional data centre hub in Asia-Pacific, drawing significant investment in data centres.

Data centres are all set to push up demand for land with similar impact on price points in industrial belts where there is existing infrastructure for ample supply of high-tension power and high-speed internet from multiple network providers.

Warehouses and data centres offer cost-effective, resilient, and efficient avenues for meeting the increasing needs of India's fast-growing industrial infrastructure sector, which holds out promising prospects for both domestic and overseas investors. ■

GEARING UP FOR THE BIG GAME

The telecom industry needs to come up with ₹1.5-2.5 lakh crore investment in the next two years towards infrastructure development to facilitate effective roll-out of 5G services in India

BY B. SHEKHAR

The writer is a Bengaluru-based business journalist associated with IMS Foundation.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck India in 2020, the true colours of the digital divide became strikingly visible. The stark picture was that students, especially in the rural belts, had to climb trees to get strong enough internet signals to attend classroom lectures or write exams.

But things started changing very rapidly. The Internet Service Providers (ISPs), who until then had been into merely raking in the moolah from customers without bothering about service, started improving their network speeds by building digital infrastructure so that they could retain customers. At the close of 2021, the digital infrastructure had improved manifold.

Expanding the digital network was extremely important in 2020 because broadband networks became lifelines due to the unforeseen requirement to work, learn and shop remotely. Stay-at-home orders, endless video calls, collaboration sessions and home-based education for students of all ages put networks to the test, and the wireless industry stepped up to meet the capacity needs. In some cases, the flexibility offered by virtualised networks enabled additional capacity quickly. Whether deployed in fixed wireless or hotspot applications, ISPs successfully demonstrated ability to deliver adequate wireless broadband access.

Even tech honcho Kris Gopalakrishnan, former Infosys chairman, commented that during the pandemic there had been massive acceleration and adoption of digital technology in everybody's life. He said: "The digital transformation which would have happened in five years has occurred in just five months—be it e-com, WFH, consumption of digital content, financial transaction, business and so on. The pandemic literally exposed and amplified the digital divide in our country. In this backdrop, I strongly feel that access to internet and technology access devices be made a fundamental right to every citizen of our country."

Internet speed was a major issue. But, with the digital infrastructure network build-up in the past two years, India is now ranked 117th in Ookla's Speedtest Global Index for mobile broadband while it stands 70th for fixed broadband. The average mobile download speed was 13.41 Mbps for July 2022.

But the question now is will the speed ranking for India dramatically improve with the deployment of 5G networks. The answer is obviously yes. But that comes with a cost for the ISPs.

According to a CRISIL study, the telecom industry needs at least ₹1.5-2.5 lakh crore investment in the next two to three years

towards infrastructure development to facilitate meaningful roll-out of 5G services given that India's fibre layout is much below the required levels. The 5G network infrastructure will need to support up to 10 times more bandwidth than 4G infrastructure currently supports.

It forecasts: "The low level of fiberisation at present will necessitate network capex of Rs 1.5-2.5 lakh crore in the next 2-3 years. The fiberisation is just about 35.11 percent in India as of June 2022. More than 3 lakh km has to be covered at the pan-India level between fiscal 2023 and 2025."

It is indeed a gargantuan financial deployment for Indian telecom operators. But experts indicate that, considering the quick Rate Of Return (ROR), the ISPs, especially the cash-rich Reliance Jio and Airtel, will not hesitate to pump in the required capex as the appetite for the internet is ever-growing across the country and more so in rural areas.

5G PLAYERS IN INDIA

India's biggest ever auction of airwaves ended on August 2, 2022, when Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio emerged as the largest bidder for the 5G spectrum, acquiring half of all the airwaves sold in the auction for ₹88,078 crore. Gautam Adani's group, whose entry in the auction was billed by some as

WHAT 5G TECHNOLOGY REPRESENTS

- 5G is the 5th generation mobile network technology. It is a new global wireless standard after the 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks.
- It basically enables a new kind of network that is designed to connect virtually everyone and everything together including machines, objects, and devices. A multifaceted seamlessly integrating network facility.
- Internet speed in the high-band spectrum of 5G has been tested to be as high as 20 Gbps (gigabits per second), while, in most cases, the maximum internet data speed in 4G has been recorded at 1 Gbps. The technology is superfast.



another flashpoint in the rivalry with Ambani, paid ₹212 crore for 400 MHz, or less than 1 percent of all spectrum sold, in a band that is not used for offering public telephony services. Telecom tycoon Sunil Bharti Mittal's Bharti Airtel made a successful bid of ₹43,084 crore, while Vodafone Idea Ltd bought spectrum for ₹18,799 crore.

According to the latest statement by Union Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, 5G networks will become operational in 20-25 cities and towns by the end of this year. The government has auctioned over 72,000 MHz, or 72 GHz, of airwaves with a validity of 20 years.

Network operators appear confident in 5G's abilities, as they are expediting deployments, signalling that the industry is commercialising 5G faster than prior technologies.

While there are competing 5G applications for consumers in the offing, ISPs expect 5G to have an even more significant impact on the enterprise. Various enterprise verticals ranging from manufacturing to healthcare to logistics are actively exploring the benefits of 5G in both public and private networks. Many enterprise applications require the ultra-low latency, reliability and capacity offered only by 5G. These use cases include fault detection in manufacturing plants, real-time security analysis and analytics and automated guided

vehicles in distribution centres.

For the record, back in 2018 when India's National Digital Communications Policy was launched, the document emphasised the importance of 5G when it stated that the convergence of a cluster of revolutionary technologies including 5G, the cloud, Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics, along with a growing start-up community, promised to accelerate and deepen digital engagement, thereby opening up new horizons of opportunities in India.

ROLLOUT OF 5G IN INDIA

The earliest player in the telecom market, Airtel, has already confirmed that it will begin its 5G rollout in September 2022, while its staunch rival, Reliance Jio, is also expected to announce the date of its launch.

Contrary to popular belief, 5G roll-out by the telcos will not result in widespread change immediately. Like the initial rollout of 4G, expect a gradual increase in 5G services and adoption in the country. According to reports, Airtel will begin its rollout with 5G, hitting 1,000 towns and cities across the country, while Jio is expected to hit 5,000 towns and cities in the initial rollout.

As for tariff increase, it is expected that the 5G users will have to shell out about 15-25 percent more for the latest mobile

technology. "It is possible that there could be another price hike in 2022. Certainly, at some point, a price hike will take place," Vodafone Idea CEO Ravinder Takkar had said while announcing the revenue for the third quarter of the financial year 2022. Bharti Airtel MD and CEO for India and South Asia Gopal Vittal had similar thoughts to share: "I do expect a tariff hike sometime in 2022."

The Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) schemes for mobile handsets, telecom equipment and the launch of the India Semiconductor Mission is expected to help build a strong ecosystem for the launch of 5G services in India. The time is not far away when India is going to emerge as a leading country in the field of 5G technology and the upcoming 6G technology.

Recently, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar indicated how far India has moved when it comes to technology integration and adoption across the country. He said he was recently in the US, visiting his son, and they went to a hotel. The management insisted that, before entering the hotel, they show vaccination certificates. He flipped his phone and showed the CoWIN app-developed live certificate while his son showed a tattered certificate tucked in his wallet. He joked, "Such is the state of affairs of the US and its technology adoption at the mass level." ■



CUTTING REMITTANCE COSTS

The transfer charges that Indians abroad pay to send money home are very high, and the Indian alternative to SWIFT will help reduce them sharply

BY KUMUD DAS

The writer is a Mumbai-based senior business journalist.

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the company that built India's digital payments backbone United Payments Interface (UPI) platform, plans to make it cheaper and easier for the nation's 32 million expatriates to bring their money home by building a home-grown alternative to SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), the Belgium-based cross-border payment system.

At present, remittance costs \$13 on average to send \$200 across borders, which

makes the job of sending money home expensive for Indians living abroad. In fact, the UN Member-States have pledged, in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to reduce the cost of remittance from an average of 7 percent to less than 3 percent by 2030. And the effort being made by NPCI is very much in that direction.

Once the NPCI's home-grown alternative to SWIFT becomes operational, this cost is likely to nosedive and give a boost to inbound remittances.

Indians overseas remitted \$87 billion last

year, the biggest inflow for any country tracked by the World Bank. The remittances market is ripe for disruption, according to Ritesh Shukla, chief executive officer of NPCI International Payments Ltd.

"We have displaced cash in India to a large extent and are now looking to repeat the success in cross-border corridors," said Shukla, adding, "Overseas Indians can use our rails to remit money inwards straightway into their bank accounts and for the markets where Indians travel frequently, we will build acceptance for our instruments."

At a time when there is talk of doom and gloom with the developed world fighting record inflation and the spectre of recession looming, India is poised to emerge as the fastest growing economy.

The very objective was not to displace existing platforms. About 330 banks and 25 apps—including Alphabet Inc's Google Pay and Meta Platform Inc's WhatsApp—share NPCI's unified payment interface, which has helped make instantaneous digital transactions a \$3 trillion market in India.

NPCI is in the process of connecting the UPI platform to systems in other countries to replicate its domestic success. "The UPI integration will be a big step in that direction," says Mayank Goyal, CEO of moneyHop, a cross-border banking app that lets users make international remittances through the SWIFT network.

The cost of cross-border remittance, Goyal said, is higher primarily due to involvement of several intermediaries in the payment chain. With the integration of UPI with the real-time payment systems across various jurisdictions, the role of these intermediaries will reduce and hence the cost of cross-border remittances will also come down.

According to Goyal, "UPI will certainly help in aligning the real-time payment systems across the globe and will help in reducing not just the cost of the remittance but also the processing time. It has the ability of a pioneering project for governments globally to make the various payments systems interoperable."

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up NPCI along with the country's lenders to

make retail payments faster, more accessible, and cost-efficient. A user just needs a virtual payment address to instantly transact with vendors and exchange cash between friends or family members.

The size of the outbound remittance market from India under LRS (Liberalised Remittance Scheme) stands at roughly \$18-\$20 billion with the studies abroad, travel, maintenance of close relatives and gift segments contributing the most to the overall market. This market has been growing at roughly 30 percent year-on-year excluding 2020, owing to the pandemic. There was a dramatic jump in 2015 and 2016 due to the change in the regime where the outbound remittance limit increased from \$75,000 to \$250,000 over a few remittances. The inbound market stands at \$88 billion. This market has been growing at 6-8 percent.

As per Michel D. Patra, deputy governor, RBI, India is likely to contribute about 14 percent of global growth in 2022, making it the second most important driver of global growth after China. Moreover, India's GDP at market exchange rates is expected to reach \$5 trillion by 2027 and \$10 trillion by 2032.

Now, the moot question arises: why should one invest in India?

Analysts believe that the most attractive aspect of investing in India is the outsized alpha opportunity that the Indian market presents when compared to any other equity market globally. The return from the Indian stock market during the past decade is 14 percent in INR and 11 percent in USD.

This makes India one of the favourable investment destinations both for Indian and NRI investors. The assets under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry have seen a nearly four-fold rise from ₹10 trillion in May 2014 to ₹37.77 trillion at the end of July 2022.

At a time when there is talk of doom and gloom with the developed world fighting record inflation and the spectre of recession looming, India is poised to emerge as the fastest growing economy.

"Investors should seriously consider investing in India to leverage the compelling secular Indian growth story and attractive risk adjusted return," says Dr Nirakar Pradhan, chief executive officer, Professional Risk Managers' International Association (PRMIA) India.

According to Pradhan, equity must be a part of any NRI's investment portfolio in India considering the unique drivers behind

the Indian economy and market, including:

- Strong domestically driven growth profile
- Profitable and diverse corporate universe
- Institutional infrastructure of a mature democracy
- Transparency and ease of access to capital markets
- Structural reforms grounded on digitalisation of transactions and financialisation of assets
- Simplified and attractive tax system with only a 10 percent rate on capital gains from stocks exited within one-year holding period. Similarly, for bond investors, India provides attractive risk-free rates of nearly 7 percent and capital gains tax of 20 percent after factoring in inflation index.

It is said that the 19th century belonged to Europe, the 20th century to the US, and the 21st century is likely to belong to Asia.

Going by a paper from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the Russian invasion of Ukraine will cause disruption of the cross-border payment systems and could, in conjunction with technological advances, challenge the dominance of the SWIFT network.

SWIFT, the study notes, has "encountered criticism for its relative inflexibility and lack of transparency" and seen a decline in the number of correspondent banking relationships over the past decade.

Of late, Russia has been excluded from the SWIFT network, a move which could see the country and others such as China and India double up regarding their nascent SWIFT alternatives.

Nevertheless, the paper says, "setting up and scaling a full-fledged alternative bank-messaging system would be expensive and time consuming. It would also have limited real-world impact, given the prevalence of dollar-denominated cross-border flows. SWIFT will remain the dominant network, as long as countries and lenders come together to improve the Belgian network."

In its Payments Vision 2025 document, the RBI said that Structured Financial Messaging Solution (SFMS) could provide faster, convenient and cost-effective direct payment channels with other jurisdictions.

Separately, cross-border payments will be disrupted by government-backed efforts to link systems. In Asia, moves are already underway to do this, allowing travellers across the region to purchase goods and services by scanning QR codes. ■

Review

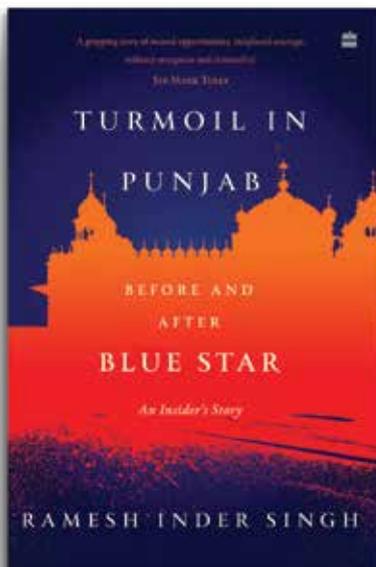
A CHRONICLE OF TURBULENT TIMES

Ramesh Inder Singh who served in Punjab during the 1980s and mid-1990s recapitulates the turmoil in the state in its sheer starkness



BY
DR SANJEEV CHOPRA

The reviewer is a historian, public policy analyst, and Festival Director at the Valley of Words, Dehradun. Until recently, he was the Director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.



Turmoil In Punjab ~ Before and After Blue Star ~ An Insider's Story
Imprint HarperCollins India | ₹435 | Pages 704

The magnum opus, *Turmoil In Punjab ~ Before and After Blue Star ~ An Insider's Story*, by Ramesh Inder Singh is much more than the narration of the most difficult 15 years of Punjab: from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, which included Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and its aftermath across the country, including Punjab. It is also a story of the breakdown of the civilian hierarchy, competitive politics, misplaced bravado, electoral compulsions, broken promises and the failure of the political leadership at the helm to respond to grievances in time. As late as March 29, 1984, Rajiv Gandhi called Bhindranwale a religious leader and argued that the police should not enter the Golden Temple. Under such circumstances, he was also making it difficult for the Akalis to oppose Bhindranwale.

However, two months later, on June 2, 1984, in a broadcast to the nation, Mrs Gandhi talked about the situation in Punjab, spoke about the need for a dialogue, but in the same breath announced that the Army would be moving into the state. However, neither the President of India, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, nor the top echelons of the Ministry of Defence, including the serving chief (Gen. A.S. Vaidya), and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) were actually aware of the confabulations between the prime minister and the Western Army Commander, Lt Gen. K. Sundarji.

A day later, Ramesh Inder Singh was literally catapulted into Amritsar as the deputy commissioner without the chief secretary or home secretary briefing him. The same evening, at 5 pm, Gen. K.S. Brar reached Amritsar and took charge of the operation and convened a meeting with the civil and police administration as well as the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), who had not been briefed about the decision to hand over the operation to the Army. For all the bravado and pluck, the army commanders lacked an appreciation of the on-ground conditions but, more importantly, showed a noticeable disinclination to take the administration on board. Gen. Sundarji, who liked to think of himself as a strategist, had given a commitment to the political leadership that in a blitzkrieg operation with elements of speed and surprise, he would be able to flush out the terrorists in a matter of hours and that the sanctum sanctorum would not be damaged. However, his lack of



knowledge of the precincts of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht, and his failure to anticipate the resistance from the cashiered Major General Shabeg Singh led to hundreds of avoidable deaths—of soldiers, militants and innocent bystanders. Incidentally, Sundarji's propensity to bypass whoever he did not like also became clear during Operation Brasstacks and the fiasco with the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). This has also been corroborated independently in Wahajat Habibullah's book on Rajiv Gandhi.

Well, given the might of the Indian Army, Shabeg stood no chance but, as Singh points out, Blue Star was not the epilogue but the prologue to the violent struggle for Khalistan. It is fortuitous that things did not go out of hand but for the record 29,000 troops in various Sikh *paltans*—the Ramgarh Training Centre in Bihar, the First Sikh, Ninth Sikh at Rajasthan, the Third Sikh in the Northeast, and Eighteen Sikh at Meeran Sahib near Jammu—abandoned their positions, the first time ever in the history of independent India. Although both Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi insisted that Blue Star was not a blunder, Gen. P.N. Hoon called it "ill-planned, ill-conceived and ill-implemented—a black chapter in the history of the armed forces".

The visits of the President and the PM did not help: It made matters worse. They had no explanation to offer, and no one was fooled by the 'symbolic' gestures. They were not given the traditional *siropas* (traditional welcome scarf) and after they left, the hymn sung in the Durbar Sahib was from *Babur Vani*—Nanak's

We now come to the Gill doctrine—the physical elimination of terrorists without conceding any of their demands. K.P.S. Gill secured political endorsement from Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

anguish against the ruler—and it read, "Kings are like bloodthirsty tigers, and their officials are bloodhounds."

Although the President was able to negotiate a pardon for himself, the government of the day wanted to deny him any credit for the withdrawal of the Army. Punjab had become a garrison



Although both Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi insisted that Blue Star was not a blunder, Gen. P.N. Hoon called it 'ill-planned, ill-conceived and ill-implemented—a black chapter in the history of the armed forces'.

state in which civilian authority—starting from the divisional commissioner of Jalandhar to the SDMs and OCs—was placed under the Army, who in turn started with the impression that 'no one in the civil police and administration could be trusted'. Thanks to the patient and mature handling by officers like Singh and his rapport with the senior Army commanders, many issues were resolved. However, reading the chapter gives one an idea of why Pakistan has descended into the chaos that it is today.

Although Rajiv Gandhi started his term with the unfortunate statement about collateral damage when a big tree falls and an election campaign which was blatantly communal and holding the entire Sikh community responsible for Mrs Gandhi's assassination, once in power he displayed political sagacity and opened a dialogue with Longowal, conceding most points. The credit for the Punjab Accord and political settlement goes to Arjun Singh, the politically savvy governor who began his short but meaningful innings in Punjab with an oath in Punjabi, and reached out to the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and the Akali leadership and S.S. Barnala took over as the chief minister. However, the machinations of Buta Singh continued and the first breach of the Rajiv-Longowal accord took place when Chandigarh was not transferred to Punjab because in an extremely short-sighted, or if one may say cynical, move the focus had shifted to the elections in Haryana and the commitments made to Longowal were set aside, besides placing the state under President's Rule yet again.

Taking a cue from the botched Blue Star, Operation Black Thunder—a joint operation of the National Security Guard (NSG), paramilitary and Punjab Police in April 1986—was better planned, and even though there were acrimonious moments, including the author threatening to withdraw the state government's requisition

of the NSG, the swift and short operation was completed in less than seven hours. But the key factor was negotiation and involvement of the high priests. The second edition of *Black Thunder* took place on May 9, 1988 and was even more successful. It resulted in the death of 30 militants and meek surrender of the rest in single file formation with their hands raised above their heads in broad daylight.

We now come to the Gill doctrine—the physical elimination of terrorists without conceding any of their demands. K.P.S. Gill secured political endorsement from Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, Governor Surendra Nath and the newly elected chief minister, Beant Singh. The Gill doctrine included the 'militarisation' of Punjab Police—arming it with bullet-proof cars and jeeps with mounted machine guns, LMGs, AK-47s, mine detectors, bomb disposal squads, coupled with the induction of young operational commanders from the CRPF and BSF, and the direct reporting of SSPs to the DGP. The jury is still out on whether there was any alternative to the Gill doctrine, considering that the political leadership—both in the Congress and the Akali Dal—often dithered.

In my view, this book will become an iconic book, much like Joseph Davy Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs: From the origin of the nation to the battles at Sutlej*, and Khushwant Singh's two-volume scholarly study, *The Sikhs*. Cunningham talks of the origin of the movement, and the consolidation and decline of political authority after the death of Ranjit Singh, and Khushwant Singh takes the narration up to the partition of the country and the establishment of present-day Punjab. Correspondingly, *Turmoil...* is indeed the book to be read for understanding Punjab in the turbulent Eighties and mid-Nineties, and there was no one who could have done a better job than scholar-administrator Ramesh Inder Singh. ■

ON THE SHELF BY RUKMA SALUJA

WELCOME TO LALA LAND

By Rajiv Gupta

Harper Business | ₹399 | 240 pp

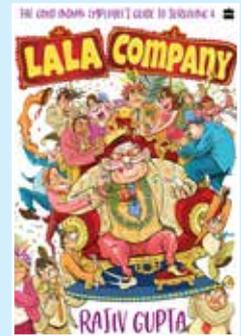
Here, Lalaji, the business owner, calls the shots. Here, every day is an event; every commitment may not really be a commitment; every promotion may not be a career ascent and every salary hike may not mean more money in your bank account. Lalaji's strategies are not based on the size of his business, its market share or the competition but often on the whims and guidance of sycophants, advisers and friends. For a 'good' employee, working in a Lala company is akin

to swimming in crocodile infested waters—tread cautiously or become the next casualty. Drawing on his intimate study of several large and small family businesses, Rajiv Gupta provides a hilarious, no-holds-barred account of how things work in Indian family businesses. Here's a survival guide to help you navigate the tricky terrain of Lala Land.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rajiv Gupta was born in a business family and is an alumnus of BITS Pilani, FMS Delhi, and Harvard Business School. In a career spanning 30 years, he has worked with both family-owned businesses and global multinational

corporations. In his role as national head of sales, marketing and channel management across diverse industries, he appointed and worked closely with hundreds of dealers, each of which was a family-run enterprise. The conversations at home, within his extended family, and with dealer-owners, exposed him to the world of family businesses intimately. He is passionate about the unfolding of human potential.



TRUE TO THEIR SALT

By Ravindra Rathee

HarperCollins | ₹699 | 388 pp

True to Their Salt is a radical retelling of how India came to be colonised by a handful of Europeans in the 18th century, how the British held sway over the country for almost two centuries, and their sudden departure from India in 1947, all told from the perspective of Indian soldiers. The British held India by an army predominantly comprising Indian soldiers, and relied on their fidelity. This loyalty stood the test of time but was eventually breached during the Second World War, leading to India's independence. This book looks at the world of the Indian soldiers who enlisted in the armies of India under British rule.

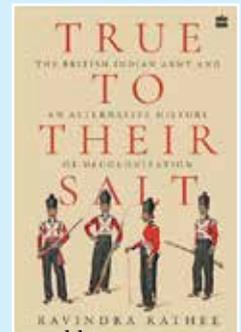
In India, the recording of military history has been piecemeal, with attention focused on specific decades, epochs and wars. There has been very little literature that brings together the rich history of the Indian Army, with its vast experience in international and national wars.

Ravindra Rathee seeks to fill this literary lacuna—and brings a personal perspective to this urgency. His research stems from his grandfather's service to the Raj during the Second World War. *True to Their Salt* is not just a story of war and bloodshed for another country—it is an in-depth survey of the professional layers that involved the running of the military: from recruitment to salary structure, and from how Indian soldiers preserved

their faith to how they dealt with their frustration at the racism they encountered.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ravindra Rathee started his career as a journalist with the *Times of India* in Delhi, writing on human rights and conflict resolution. After graduating from St Stephen's College in Delhi, he did an MA in politics at the University of Hull as a British Chevening Scholar. This is his first book, stemming from extensive research on the military life of his grandfather.



SAMSARA

By Saksham Garg

Penguin | ₹250 | 298 pp

Perfect for fans of Harry Potter, *Samsara* by Penguin editor-turned-author Saksham Garg is a mythological fantasy novel with a powerful twist ending. What if you came face to face with the gods?

Phones stop working. Smartwatches die. And arms start glowing with blue scars. This is what happens to Aman Chandra and 10 other Souls of Samsara when they are kidnapped from modern-day India and transported to a hidden

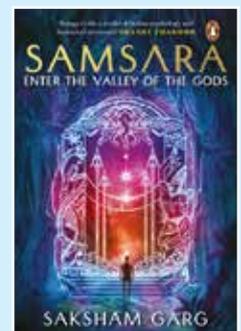
valley in the Himalaya. In this realm of magic, home to Hindu gods, immortal yogis and mythical beasts, the mission is clear for the Souls of Samsara: to learn the ancient art of yogic sorcery and prepare for a treacherous journey not many can survive.

But why must they go on this journey? And how are the gods connected to it all?

Before they get any answers, the Souls of Samsara realise that there is a larger scheme at play. The king of the gods has passed a controversial order. And Aman must make a tough decision that will change not just his life but the fate of an entire nation....

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Saksham Garg is an editor at Penguin Random House India. For seven years, he studied at Woodstock School, Mussoorie, from where he could see the snow-capped Seven Hills of this story. He currently spends his time between New Delhi and Jaipur, and, outside of work, is often found on the football field or practising the violin.



INTERVIEW

A CONTROVERSIAL MAN

The biggest gamble of Lalit Modi's life turned out to be its biggest success story and biggest controversy! The BCCI found a goose that lays golden eggs. But, he was ultimately banned by the cricket board and had to flee the country under a cloud. However, what he created lives on

BY RUKMA SALUJA

For what will Lalit Modi be remembered?

Boria Majumdar: LM will be remembered for creating cricket's greatest brand and property. World cricket will never be the same again compared to what it was before April 18, 2008 and there's no debate that LM will be remembered for giving us the IPL. However much he lost or that he did not govern it in the manner he could have later, the fact is that he was instrumental in creating the IPL and nobody can deny him that credit. Look at where the brand is today. This is his legacy. He will be remembered for having transformed cricket forever.

Can you say that IPL is his legacy?

BM: Absolutely. As the book conclusively proves, on the basis of hundreds of interviews, even the BCCI did not know at that point in time what the IPL meant. It was left to Lalit to deliver. If he failed he failed, if the IPL did not take off, it would be LM's failure. The BCCI backed him but backed him blindly. And you've got to give the man credit. It was Lalit who was taking risks, taking punts, it was Lalit who was making mistakes, it was Lalit who was doing things right, it was Lalit all the way. So the IPL has to be his legacy and there's no denying that.

What's the upside of this legacy? And the downside?

BM: The upside is the fact that cricket got its greatest ever brand, that Indian cricket got transformed forever. We are the nerve centre of the world game. India continues to be the financial powerhouse that it is. All of this is owed to Lalit Modi, the cricketing ecosystem owes to him. Look at the number of people that have come to the fore, look at the talent we have now, look at the bench strength, the resurgence of the small town.

The downside, it is unfortunate that he could not stay on, that he could not continue with further innovations, unfortunate that he had to leave the IPL and leave India for good. Whether he will come back to India, we are not sure. He wasn't able to govern it in the manner that he should have. He created something incredible. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to sustain his model of governance for him to run it in the long term.

Lalit Modi comes across as the wronged one in this book...

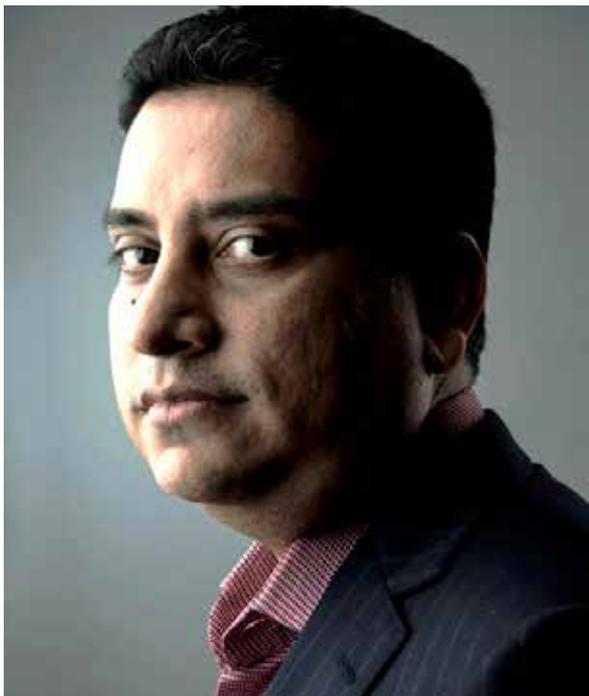
BM: No, I don't think he comes across as someone wronged. The book doesn't take positions and I'm very clear on that. He comes across as someone who created the IPL and was a genius. But was unable to hold on to what he had created. That is why he had to leave. You could question his style of governance while celebrating the way he created it. That's what the book wants to do.

What could he have done differently?

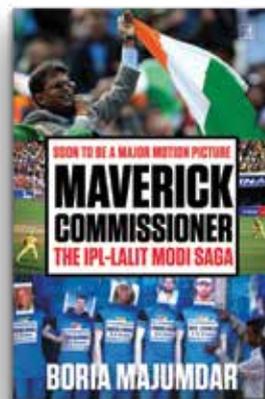
BM: He could have acted differently, he could have governed it differently, he could have taken the team along, in this case the BCCI. Modi created a billion-dollar enterprise and he could have been more democratic and less autocratic in running it. He could have behaved in a less high-handed manner. And that's how he could have sustained the brilliance over a period of time.

What was the inside deal between LM and the BCCI?

BM: There was no inside deal. Modi was a functionary of the BCCI and was working for, as a part of and at the behest of the BCCI. If there was a deal, then that's where it begins to go wrong. Frankly, there was no deal. The BCCI had invested in Lalit Modi to create this property because none of the other officials had a vision of it or was capable of doing it and that's what sets Modi apart. After that Modi became bigger than perhaps the institution was trying to be. That's perhaps when things fell apart. He and the BCCI were at loggerheads in no time. That is what happened. If there was an inside deal and if they had cut a deal, then perhaps Modi could have stayed on. That's not a premise that even needs to be considered.



Excerpts from an interview with Boria Majumdar, who has written *Maverick Commissioner: The IPL-Lalit Modi Saga*, on the man and the creation of the IPL, a league that turned into a cash cow for cricket



Maverick Commissioner: The IPL-Lalit Modi Saga by Boria Majumdar
Simon & Schuster India | 249 pp

The book highlights some unknown aspects and behind-the-scenes exchanges that haven't come out in public earlier, which one baffled you the most?

BM: Several things have baffled me. I would say a lot of things have not come out earlier. The way Modi conducted himself, for example, the whole Kochi saga, the signing saga, the way it was enacted, the way he dealt with his suspension notice, even the night when he was suspended. I would say a lot of it has not come out. What has baffled me is the way he functioned even under that kind of stress, the way he continued to function.

Could he have functioned differently?

BM: Maybe he could have because he's a maverick. Ego could have played a part. Could he have compromised, could he have done things differently, maybe. That's what makes Modi so fascinating. Here was a man willing to give it all up rather than change the way he was functioning. That's what makes Modi one of the most interesting characters in the echelons of the game.

How was the IPL of Lalit Modi different from the IPL of today?

BM: There can be no IPL of Modi and IPL

of today. It is Modi's IPL and the BCCI's IPL and that's how it will be for time immemorial. It is the same idea, the same formula, the same format that has been carried forward by the BCCI from day one. Two teams have been added and more money has come in, but that's only logical progression. To say that it was Modi's IPL till 2010 and BCCI's IPL from 2011 is not correct because it's the same model that has continued and become successful and continues to bring in this kind of money and this kind of traction for the BCCI. That's what makes him the genius that he is.

This is also the story of a business idea and its success—a cricket start-up, after which several others came into being in other sports. Do you think Lalit Modi's continuation in the top job would have led to a different scenario?

BM: That is my favourite question. See, this is a business model. That's why this should be a business school case study: the IPL model. Had Modi continued, I'm sure he would have brought in innovations because that's what his marketing genius was all about. And maybe he would have replicated the model in other sports. I still believe a model like the IPL's in other sports can help India become a multi-sporting country. Pullela Gopichand, at my book

launch in Dubai, for example, mentioned that the IPL model can be replicated across other sports. I've mentioned that you need a maverick like Modi for all the other sports to create successful leagues of their own and that's where innovation might have come in. The business of sport is at the core of this book and how sport can be monetised, commercialised and made into a successful business proposition. That's the real takeaway.

The book is being made into a movie, why do you think the story needs to be told through different mediums?

BM: The moment the book is made into a movie more people will see, more people will know, will learn, appreciate, criticise, debate, discuss. Because the IPL story is also a story of India, the story of a resurgent India speaking out to the world. Here's a man who created perhaps India's biggest global sports brand of all time, a brand that is robust and recession-free. Now, that story needs to be told and consumed by the maximum number of people. And that is why a movie of the book would make such a difference. Whether it is a podcast, audiobook, a movie, every little thing contributes. And a big-budget Bollywood movie will obviously make the book reach a million times further and that makes me very satisfied and pleased. ■

FOR THE LOVE OF ART & INDIA

The only person to be awarded a Padma Shri for interior design and perhaps India's first woman interior designer, SUNITA KOHLI is a dynamo and a fascinating person. Her notion of paying back to her country with her skills, preserving its prominent historical and heritage structures for posterity, and using indigenous arts and crafts in contemporary Indian spaces, gives new meaning to the idea of patriotism

BY MALATI K. VIJAY

The writer is a Bengaluru-based freelance journalist and content consultant. Formerly with the *Times of India*, *Economic Times* and *Livingetc India*, she writes primarily on design, art and lifestyle. She also enjoys giving a healthy twist to various cuisines.

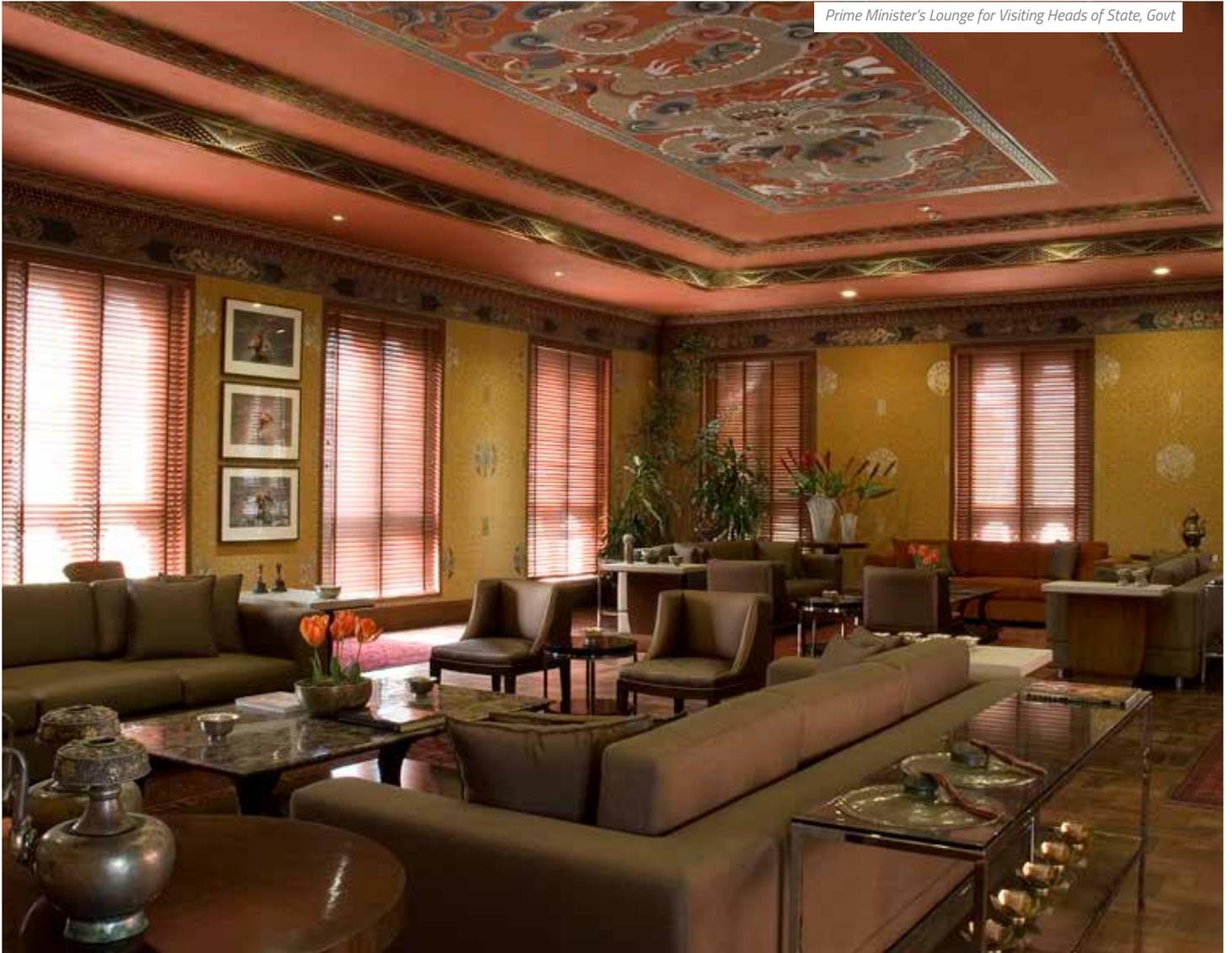
Restoration work at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister's Residence, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Museum, the British Council building and Hyderabad House in Delhi... if that is not impressive enough, get ready to be boggled a little more by Padma Shri Sunita Kohli.

Wearing multiple hats: interior designer, a globally recognised architectural restorer, cultural icon, furniture maker, researcher, guest lecturer, author, social worker... Kohli's career in interior design coincides with the start of the profession in India in the early 1970s, placing her historically as perhaps the first woman interior designer in the country.

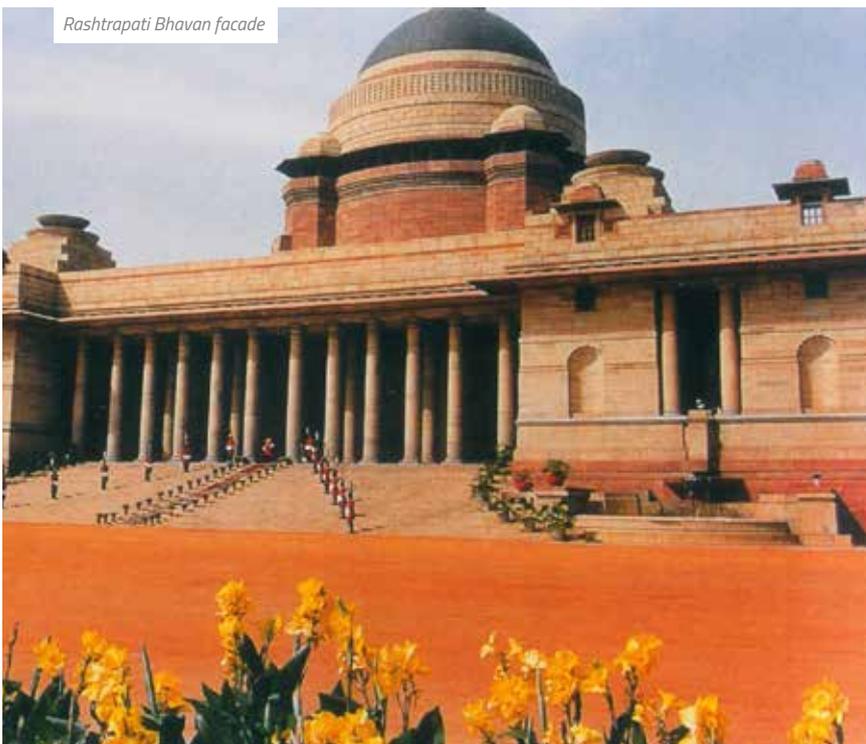
"India's design culture is a unique one. What the western world refers to as a collective of art, craft, architecture and design, is evocatively referred to by a singular term in the Indian context — *kala*," she says in *Kala—Essays on Contemporary Design Aesthetics*, a coffee-table book she has edited.

Born in Lahore in 1946, she grew up in Lucknow post-Partition. The architectural heritage of Lucknow, its plurality, and the 18th and 19th century furniture and lamps she got to see and collect from the *kabadiwalas*, all had an indelible influence and she started





Prime Minister's Lounge for Visiting Heads of State, Govt



Rashtrapati Bhavan facade



Rashtrapati Bhavan interiors

Mother-Daughter Dynamics

In 2010, Sunita Kohli co-founded K2India—a multidisciplinary architectural and design firm—with her daughter, Ar. Kohelika Kohli. It brought together various disciplines—Kohelika Kohli Architects (established 2004), the architecture and project management unit of K2India; Sunita Kohli Interior Designs Pvt Ltd (established 1972), the interior design unit of K2India; and Sunita Kohli & Co (established 1971), the furniture manufacturing unit of the company.

“The dynamics of working with one’s daughter have worked out quite well. The interesting fact is that, apart from being mother and daughter, we are two professionals who work together and respect each other’s viewpoints. Each one of us often brings another perspective, and there is a multiplicity of viewpoints happening simultaneously. That is good for any given project. The change from being a classical designer to a contemporary one happened naturally as all of us evolve through travel, reading, research, meeting and learning from other great minds. Kohelika, who studied architecture at the Pratt Institute of Design, New York, and worked in New York, Italy and England, imbibing diverse design cultures, brings another exciting dimension into our workplace.”



off as a furniture restorer. Soon Kohli started manufacturing, and then went on to design homes, hotels, and restore iconic heritage buildings in India and abroad.

As India completes 75 years of independence, her notions of paying back to her country with her skills, preserving its prominent historical and heritage structures for posterity, and celebrating its syncretic culture through her work, give new meaning to the idea of patriotism. She is credited with preserving the legacy of Sir Edwin Lutyens. Barring the British Council building, she says she did this restoration work gratis, as her contribution to nation building. “My education has made me aware of my privileges, and that compels me to give back to society in whatever ways I can,” she says.

Globally, Kohli has done a boutique hotel project in the Old City of Lahore (Pakistan); designed the National Assembly building in Thimphu (Bhutan); done hotels and a stunning casino for The Oberoi Group in Cairo (Egypt); done luxury hotel boats on the Nile; and done residences in Sri Lanka.

Currently, K2India, the award-winning multi-disciplinary architecture and design firm she co-founded with her daughter, architect Kohelika Kohli, in New Delhi, has interior architecture projects underway across India and in the US, UK, Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

In 1972, Kohli had started furniture manufacturing. “I started with reproduction of period furniture in perfect proportions. Rather than

doing heavily carved French pieces, I tended to do much simpler, but to me, far more sophisticated 18th century English styles. Gradually, I moved on to other styles, each deeply researched before the making of its prototypes, like Biedermeier, Art Deco, Colonial, Mid-Century and Classical-Contemporary furniture,” she says. Sunita Kohli Interior Designs happened in 1972. Her first major project was a small hotel in Khajuraho for the Oberois in 1975-76.

Straddling the classical and contemporary styles with equal ease, Kohli says, “The quintessence of my style is a certain timelessness. My style is contextual to the cultural milieu of the place where I am designing the project. Even though I have worked on disparate projects, across many regions of India and in many countries, I think I have always endeavoured to create interiors that are rooted, but always with wit and flourishes of whimsy. Charles Correa would often say: Sunita, you could be 10 designers rolled into one!”

Kohli is well-known for introducing indigenous art and crafts into contemporary Indian homes. She championed the use of the now ubiquitous Urli and Tanjore paintings in the interiors of North India. “I love Tanjore and Mysore paintings because they are native art. I admire the craftsmanship that goes into it. I could write a whole book on the uniqueness of the genre. I have always loved the form of Urli and the lost wax process by which they are made, since the first time I saw them in Kerala in the early 1970s. I have used them extensively within contemporary spaces.”

Midnight's Child: Vatan Lost and Vatan Found

"I was born in Lahore in 1946. I was what Salman Rushdie would have called a Midnight's Child. After the Partition of 1947, my parents, after a short stay in Delhi, moved to Lucknow and made it their home. Lahore has had a huge impact on me because of the many stories my parents told us about the city from where my father came, and also Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, which is my mother's home town.

"Lucknow has moulded my personality in many ways and played a seminal role in my later career as an interior designer, architectural restorer and a manufacturer of furniture. The beauty of the Indo-Saracenic buildings and other architectural heritage played an important role in influencing my interest in architecture and design, and later added to my visual vocabulary. With my father, I used to visit many *kabadiwalas*, who now grandly call themselves antique shops, and look at many 18th and 19th century objects—furniture, artefacts, glassware, old lamps by Osler and Wright & Butler, some of which I still possess."

Not only do these objects add a cultural context, they also spark nostalgia for one's roots, as Kohli recalls from an incident in 1985: "This was after I had completed the interiors work at the PMO in South Block. The drill used to be that if the PM was coming, everyone had to stand facing the wall while he and his party with security walked by. Rajiv Gandhi was then the prime minister and he would run up the stairs, taking them two at a time. One could hear the footsteps as his posse of SPG men would also be running after him. That day, after the PM had gone up, one SPG officer came down to talk to me, which was surprising since the SPG followed such a strict code of conduct that they would never greet anybody or utter a word. But he burst out: 'Ma'am, where did you get this Urli from, because this has the name of my village on it?'"

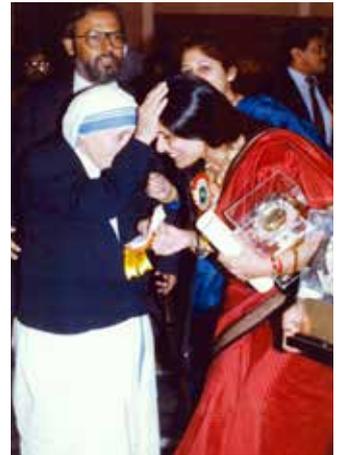
Sunita Kohli has many firsts to her credit. She is a recipient of the Padma Shri in 1992, the only person to be awarded in the interior design field. In the same year, she received the Mahila Shiromani Award from Mother Teresa. Kohli is also the first Indian designer-architect to be invited to give an illustrated lecture at the prestigious National Building Museum in Washington, DC, in 2003. As chairperson of the board of the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, she was the first woman appointed to this position in a National Institute of Excellence.

She recounts meeting Mother Teresa as an unforgettable

Sunita Kohli has many firsts to her credit. She is a recipient of the Padma Shri in 1992, the only person to be awarded in the interior design field. In the same year, she received the Mahila Shiromani Award from Mother Teresa.



Receiving the Padma Shri in the Darbar Hall, 1992



Receiving the Mahila Shiromani Award from Mother-Teresa

memory. "The ceremony was to be held at the Oberoi Grand, Kolkata. I was staying in the same hotel. I decided to come down early to have a look at the ballroom, where the ceremony was going to be held, as I had refurbished the space in the past. To my surprise, Mother Teresa, with Sister Nirmala, walked in unannounced half an hour early. And there was no one to receive her! So I went over to welcome her and shook hands. Even though she was bent, the handshake was so firm. I felt I was in the presence of a saint, and felt so small. She said to me: Each one of us has come to earth to do what God wanted us to do. For you it is design."

Kohli's many interests led her to co-author a book with her mother, Chand Sur, *The Lucknow Cookbook*, which is a collection of recipes that celebrates the *tehzeeb* and *nazaakat* of Lucknow and showcases its culture, entwined with culinary traditions.

She has several new books in the pipeline. "The manuscript of my book, *The India Cook Book — From the Tables of My Friends*, is with the publishers. I am working on a few other books—one on heritage, the other is a design memoir, and yet another is a children's book on Delhi's architecture which has been illustrated by our three grandchildren, Anadya, Zohravar and Aaryaman. There is another book of poems, *Not a Fall from Grace*. These should all come out by 2023 and 2024, if I live long enough to tell these tales!"

Yes, at the age of 75, her energy and multiple interests are inspiring! She, however, just thinks of it as natural, as these are interests from her youth. "I have multicultural interests, many of which may be pursued within the same overall time-frame, but never at the same time. I am not a multi-tasker. I work on one thing at a time, in a compartmentalised and concentrated way, even though in a day I might be doing a few different things." ■

THE INTERVIEW

I travel to understand architectural heritage and design sensibilities



Share with us the experience of restoring India's complex heritage buildings.

SK: The first restoration work of Rashtrapati Bhavan and Hyderabad House was done in 1982, when the Queen of the UK, the head of the Commonwealth, visited Delhi. I undertook another intensive and extensive conservation and design project at Rashtrapati Bhavan from 1985 to 1990.

I worked on the Prime Minister's Office and Secretariat in 1985. The Prime Minister's Residence, which was then Bungalows No. 5 & 7 on Race Course Road, was also completed in 1985. No. 7 was always the Residential Office. In 2004, I did the Prime Minister's Residence again under Dr Manmohan Singh. The Residence was now Bungalow No. 3 and No. 5 was the Guest House of the PM. This complex then comprised only three bungalows.

Later, during Mr Vajpayee's time, they added Bungalows No. 1 and 2... so virtually all the bungalows on Race Course Road.

In 2004, I undertook work on the Indira Gandhi Memorial Museum at 1 Safdarjung Road and the adjoining bungalow on Motilal Nehru Marg. The former bungalow was the residence of Indira Gandhi and the latter was her Prime Ministerial Office. This included work on the buildings, structural reinforcements, floorings, electrical

planning, etc. However, I must clarify that the Museum artefacts had been selected much earlier by Sonia Gandhi and the Museum had been designed by Ar. Ronesh Ray. I worked just on the physical restoration of these bungalows. I completed the British Council building in 1992.

How did you prepare for the task?

SK: What needed to be done in these buildings, first of all, was removing the accretions of the years from when it was built to when I started work. For example, in South Block, because of shortage of space, the courtyard between the PMO and the Ministry of External Affairs had structures built for staff members and drivers. I had them all removed and found an alternative place within the building for them. I then had the landscape re-laid by landscape architect Ravindra Bhan in the style of the period.

Similarly, in Hyderabad House, I designed the two courtyards within the two main wings of the building, by partly paving and partly covering with grass, in a Lutyenesque style. This was possible because of poring over many photographs and drawings in the RIBA Drawing Section in London, and reading extensively about the Lutyens houses landscaped by Gertrude Jekyll, his collaborator.

Can you recount your meetings with Mary Lutyens, the daughter of Sir Edwin?

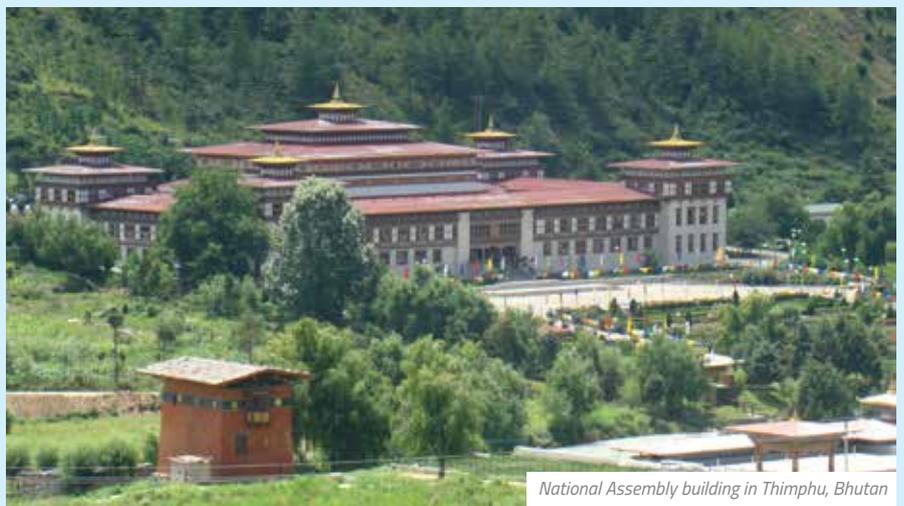
SK: I first met Mary Lutyens, the youngest daughter of Sir Edwin, in London in the late 1980s or early 1990s. I was taken to meet her by her niece, Candia Lutyens, the daughter of Robert Lutyens, who went on to catalogue much of his father's work. Later I did share with her the photographs of the completed restoration of Rashtrapati Bhavan. She looked at each picture minutely, and then said something wonderful: "You should have been part of my father's original team." I took that as a huge compliment.

Regarding your restoration work in Bhutan, Egypt, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, apart from the extensive research, what were the resources you relied on to complete the task?

SK: All these countries have totally different architecture and culture. Apart from intense research, I also travelled extensively to understand their



Hotel Meena House, Oberoi, Cairo, Egypt



National Assembly building in Thimphu, Bhutan

architectural heritage, their design sensibilities, and the uniqueness of their cultures. I would make a directory of their craft and textile traditions, find master craftsmen in each discipline, and then go on to work with many of them.

In Bhutan, the then king, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, had appointed as my guide the late Dasho Khandu, whose knowledge of Bhutanese culture was encyclopaedic. I visited many monasteries with him, looking at the architecture and architectural decorations. In the main Assembly Hall, it was my concept to decorate the ceiling with *mandalas*, as they are supposed to bestow blessings on all those below. Public buildings must represent and reflect the culture of their respective countries.

In Egypt, I introduced the use of 'balady' glass, that is, traditional blown glass made from the eighth century. In the first hotel I designed in Egypt, The Oberoi El Arish, located on the Mediterranean coast, the main motif in the coffee shop features tall date palms cast from solid brass, with their fronds fashioned from balady glass.

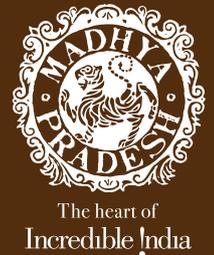
For the iconic Hotel Mena House Oberoi, overlooking the great pyramids of Giza, I had got special *jamevar* woven for the upholstery in the palace wing rooms. It was a huge success. Well-known Egyptian designer Amy Matouk wanted to use my fabric for their Prime Minister's Office, and I happily consented.

You are probably the last of the aesthetes who took great pleasure in studying and promoting the arts, crafts, design, architecture, cuisines and culture of this country in a secular manner. What kind of future do you foresee for the Indian cultural milieu?

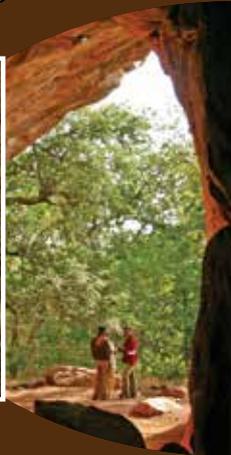
SK: We are essentially a deeply secular country. Our history is witness to this. As the world moves closer together, we cannot be otherwise but secular. It is so embedded in our DNA. We each have to look within ourselves as Indians, and be proud of who we are. That pride comes from the secular fabric of this country. If we tear it, we will forever destroy the soul of this great nation.

Rock Art

A secret treasure in Madhya Pradesh



The heart of incredible India, Madhya Pradesh possesses wealth of prehistoric art painted on the walls of rock shelters



In November 2016, a report appeared in many news platforms that petroglyph rock art at Daraki-Chattan (hillock) near Bhanpura in Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh is the "world's oldest rock art" and is almost 2 to 5 lakh years' old.

There are several such findings that have showed how wealthy Madhya Pradesh is when it comes to rock art.

While the World Heritage Site of Bhimbetka is well-known, Madhya Pradesh has many other equally glorious examples of ancient art. Indeed, rock art has a unique beauty – the stylised deer of Hathitola, the great bison of Adamgarh, the mythical beast of Bhimbetka, the vigorous and playful – but what makes these paintings truly valuable is the link they forge with a human past as distant as a half-forgotten dream.

In 1958, the archaeologist Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar happened to be travelling by train from Bhopal to Itarsi. As he gazed out of the window at the landscape of green fields and low hills, something caught his eyes. A series of rocky outcrops were jutting out in startlingly unusual shapes on a low hill in the near distance. The archaeologist got off the train at very next station and made his way up the hill. What he discovered were Bhimbetka rockshelters- today, a UNESCO world heritage site and one of the most eminent examples of pre-historic art in the world.

Bhimbetka is under 50 kms southeast of Bhopal on the National Highway 69, which makes it a comfortable day trip even for travellers with limited time. The town nearest Bhimbetka is Obaidullaganj, 6 kms from the Highway Treat Hotel and restaurant, which is located at the foot of Bhimbetka Hill.

Here the paintings show men, women, boys, girls, infants, dancers, hunters, cattle herders, charioteers, weapons and decorative motifs and offer insights into the way of life and the environment, of that era. There are various animals and hunting scenes depicting rhinos, bison, deer and even camels.

Scholars have also found rock shelters on the Betwa River's banks decorated with several images, including the hunting images, hunting elephant and of bison.

The Vindhyas that rise and fall in bursts of dense green across Bhopal, Raisen, Sehore, Vidisha and Chanderi districts of Madhya Pradesh contain a vast network of rockshelters- more than any other region in India. Apart from this, many places in Pachmarhi, Adamgarh, Mandsaur and Rewa are adorned with beautiful rock art paintings.



Over times these soft sandstone hills were carved into shelters so ideally suited to habitation- with floors and ceilings and dimensions of just the right size that you need only look at them to understand why these were the most popular habitation 'complexes' of prehistoric times.

Jungles of Ratapani near Bhopal are home to some of the oldest and unique rock art. Ran Bhaisa Chittauri in Ratapani is Bhopal's best



kept secret, which has one of the largest single rock paintings. Located near Dahod Dam, the rock art galleries in Kathotiya and Ran Bhaisa Chittauri have several paintings, which belong to Mesolithic as well as Neolithic age.

Another example of this art can be found at Chaturbhujnath Nala. Situated in Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary near Bhanpura of Mandsaur district in Madhya Pradesh, Chaturbhujnath Nala Rock Art Shelters, named after Chaturbhujnath Temple, are considered the longest rock art gallery in the world. This site was discovered in 1977. It is now under care of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). This site is home to around 2,510 paintings on 800-metre-long site. These paintings offer a glimpse of the everyday life of the then native inhabitants of the area and how it progressed with time. This is a depository of rock art images in 12 different styles and time periods, starting from the Upper Palaeolithic period (50,000 – 12,000 years ago) to early historic period.

According to research, these paintings were done not at one go but over centuries and are representative of the evolving human ability to depict and document their lives through.

Back in BUSINESS

Tourists are gradually heading back to J&K as the long shadows of militancy and Covid-19 start receding

BY PEERZADA SHABIR

The writer is a senior journalist based in Kashmir. He mostly reports on defence, internal security, politics and tourism



Despite simmering terrorism and pandemic fears, the tourism industry in Jammu & Kashmir is gradually returning to normalcy for the first time after a decade. An estimated 1.06 crore tourists have visited Kashmir from January to July 3 this year, reveals the official data released by the Office of Commissioner/Secretary, Department of Tourism, J&K. Tourism Commissioner Sarmad Hafeez said that during the current calendar year – from January 2022 till July 3, 2022 – the tourist footfall in the Union Territory of J&K increased significantly and is estimated to be around 1,06,24,000. The Valley is witnessing an exponential increase in tourist flow and official data suggests that tourist arrivals have broken the 10-year record.

Over the years, tourism, one of the mainstays of the Kashmir economy, was hit the hardest. There is a large section of people who had largely been without employment for the past two and a half years. Their savings were depleted. As a result, in 2021, many suicides and suicide attempts took place. The major reason was financial distress caused by the turmoil of the preceding two years and the extended lockdowns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Athar Ahmad Bhat, owner of Earth Explorers Travel and Tours, thousands of bookings were cancelled after the Pulwama attack of 2019. Then, the lockdown in August in the wake of the abrogation of Article 370 and successive lockdowns during the pandemic brought tourism to a grinding halt. Athar added that the number of tourists visiting the Valley plummeted drastically. The Kashmir Valley as a tourist destination was largely boycotted.

Shikara owner Bilal Dar shared that for three years, they earned nothing. He said that some sold their boats because they could not afford to maintain them, and the meagre amount of money they had went into looking after basic necessities.

The second wave of Covid-19 dealt a huge blow to the tourism industry in J&K, which is one of India's biggest tourist attractions globally. A United Tourism Forum member says, "According to an estimate, this industry suffered a loss of about ₹1500 crore."



"Winter tourism was very successful here. The Tourism Department worked hard and organised many festivals and road shows in different parts of the country and abroad not only to attract tourists but also provide prospective investors the facility to have a dialogue on investment opportunities in the region. These roadshows covered cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad and even Dubai. All this came as a ray of hope to recover the losses of the past three years, triggered by the February 2019 suicide attack in Pulwama, South Kashmir, killing around 40 CRPF personnel. But when the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic started, we didn't expect that it would bring such disaster that everything would get halted. Tourism, which is a very

delicate sector, was impacted badly," said Director Tourism G N Itoo.

Moreover, people who used to come from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi to Kashmir couldn't move about due to the lockdown. However, the situation has now become stable, resulting in resumption of tourism activities.

Over the years, the Dal has become a symbol of Kashmir's booming tourism industry. The houseboats on the lake are quite popular with tourists and are likely to be for some more years before they sink into oblivion for want of repairs or reconstruction. Both have been banned due to their contribution to water pollution, something the lake dwellers decry as an 'injustice'.

The Jhelum, which flows like a serpent,



The tourism sector has the potential to shore up the UT's beleaguered economy. The waning pandemic is creating conditions for unhindered tourism in the Valley.

divides the city into two halves and lofty chinars adorn it like emeralds. There are some structures like the new government secretariat that are easily recognisable from the top. From the hillock, the rest looks like a mosaic of flowers in a pond. It is pleasant from above but most things in Kashmir look beautiful from a distance. The landscape of the city, which is expanding on all sides, has changed significantly.

The boulevard leads to some of the major tourist attractions, including the Mughal Gardens. Scores of new hotels and guest houses, and homestays have come up in the past few years and after the two-

year slump, this year has been rewarding. Even as agriculture and especially horticulture is the economic backbone of J&K, there is greater focus on tourism. The government has made significant contributions with a record allocation of ₹786 crore to the sector this year.

"The tourists visited 64 offbeat destinations across J&K," Hafeez said, adding that there were almost no complaints from tourists about the arrangements at these destinations. He said that in February around 1.42 lakh tourists arrived, breaking the seven-year record. In April, the Srinagar International

Airport recorded its busiest days ever, with 15,014 people travelling on 90 flights in and out of Kashmir in one day.

Right now most hotels are booked with the resorts in Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and near the Dal lake attracting increasing numbers of tourists. However, the UT government has now increased the options for tourists by developing more resorts. For example, Aharbal, Yusmarg, Tosamaidan, Gurez, and the historic old city in Srinagar are finding prominence on the tourist map of Kashmir. These places are being further developed with tourist infrastructure and also being given wider publicity.

A combination of factors has made the tourism boom possible: One is the perception across the country that after revocation of Article 370, J&K has been fully integrated into India. Second, the Covid-19 fallout has severely reduced options for going abroad and, third, the sweltering summer in the plains of India has forced people to escape to colder places like Kashmir. The Tourism Department has said that an advertising campaign across major Indian cities and the opening of new destinations were also attracting more tourists.

The tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir's GDP and employs two million people. The sector has the potential to shore up the UT's beleaguered economy. The waning pandemic is once again creating conditions for unhindered tourism in the Valley. The tourists can thus continue



visiting Kashmir, which would help resuscitate the economy and generate jobs.

Many hoteliers and houseboat owners say that this year tourists booked rooms in advance and the earnings helped them pay part of their debts. Hoteliers, taxi drivers and tour operators are doing brisk business after years. "Hotel room tariffs have gone up by over 43 percent from the pre-Covid period, and there is a huge rush for bookings," said Azad Mukhtar, a houseboat owner. The rush is so strong that tour operators said they are having a hard time finding bookings for their clients as hotels are between 80 percent and 90 percent full and airfares have increased.

Tour operators said that hotel rooms are full in premier locations. They said that many high-end tourists from wealthier Indian states such as Gujarat, Delhi and Mumbai were opting for the Kashmir Valley instead of destinations in Europe because of pandemic-related uncertainty.

Mohammad Yasin Tuman, managing partner of Mascot Travels, says that they have limited high-end accommodation and commercial transport services which is a major challenge. At the same time, tourists are not overly bothered. A Sikh couple who came from Australia said they were mesmerised by Kashmir's beauty.

The J&K government has started to give a boost to adventure tourism under a scheme called J&K Tourist Village Network as part of Mission Youth. The initiative, officials said, is aimed at transforming 75 villages of the UT known for historical, picturesque beauty and cultural significance into tourist villages. The move aims at recognising the uniqueness of each village and showcasing the landscapes, indigenous knowledge systems, cultural diversity and heritage, local values and traditions, besides encouraging film shooting and offering financial incentives as well as ensuring a digital platform to these villages. The youth-led sustainable tourism initiative will strengthen the rural economy and community entrepreneurship, empowering youth and women by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities.

"The J&K administration is putting special focus on the tourism sector, and the region has started witnessing significant growth in terms of increased number of tourists and creation of tourism-related infrastructure," officials said, adding that dedicated focus is also being laid on bringing unexplored religious places of J&K on the religious tourist map.

Of late, the J&K Tourism Department has also organised events such as the Jammu festival, a whitewater rafting championship, a Christmas Carnival in Gulmarg and Pahalgam, a Winter Carnival, the Gulmarg Snow Festival, a Lohri Festival and Mata Vaishno Devi Sangeet Sammelan as part of its calendar of activities. This wide array of celebrations and activities has given tourism a definite boost. The administration is promoting 75 new tourist places by developing comprehensive facilities in an

integrated manner with adequate provisions for recreational activities, eateries and restrooms to facilitate a deeper and more comprehensive insight into the cultural and architectural heritage of J&K.

Mumbai-based business tycoon Ajay Maheshvari, who recently visited Kashmir, said its beauty had mesmerised him in different ways, especially when it snowed heavily. The introduction of direct evening flights has given a shot in the arm to tourism in J&K. Night flight operations have already begun at Srinagar's Sheikh Ul Alam airport, thus allowing travellers to get into the Valley at all times of day. In addition, direct flights from large cities like Bengaluru will attract more visitors to the UT. The director of Kashmir Tourism, Dr G N Itoo, said that the Valley has been aiming for such a development for a long time, since the direct and evening flights will help travellers, especially busy people like businessmen, to save time. He said that such flights would increase the tourist inflow into the UT.

Kashmir was traditionally the favourite filming location for Bollywood movies until militancy erupted three decades ago. However, with conditions improving by the day, Bollywood filmmakers are once again showing a willingness to return to the Valley.

Also, the Centre and the J&K government, at the first J&K Real Estate Conference held in Jammu, have decided to throw open local real estate for "second homes and summer homes" to all the citizens of the country. This is a major push to attract investments and a step towards development, which will also enhance business opportunities in J&K, especially the tourism sector.

The government is also working hard to woo business leaders in Dubai into becoming prominent players in key sectors like tourism and handicrafts as well as taking advantage of investment opportunities in the UT. In its ongoing efforts to strengthen the hospitality and tourism industry, it has signed an MoU with UAE's pioneering financial services company, Century Financial, that will invest \$100 million in the UT. This investment will cover three hotels and one commercial-cum-residential complex in J&K.

The signs of tourism revival bode well for J&K, hitherto referred to as one of the world's trouble hotspots. ■

फर्श से अर्श तक

डॉ दर्शनी प्रिय

मिलिए तेलंगाना के ऐसे अनोखे लोक कलाकार से जिन्होंने परिस्थितियों के क्रूर आघातों के बावजूद भी अपने संगीत की साधना को अनवरत जारी रखा।

लेखिका जेनयू से डॉक्टरेट की डिग्री प्राप्त हैं और संप्रति भारत सरकार में ट्रांसलेशन अधिकारी हैं



पांच सौ साल से भी पुराने वाद्ययंत्र को घूम घूम कर बजाने वाला यह लोक कलाकार जंगलो में रहकर अपना जीवन गुज़र बसर कर रहा था और एक ख़ास तरह का वाद्ययंत्र बजा कर लोगों का मनोरंजन कर रहा था। ये ख़ास वाद्ययंत्र बारह प्रकार की विशेष खूंटियों को आपस में जोड़ कर बनाया जाता है।

आज लोक कलाकार श्री दर्शनम मोगुलुय्या किसी नाम, पद या शोहरत के मोहताज नहीं। वर्षों पहले एक अति निर्धन परिवार में जन्मे मोगुलुय्या को अपने जीवन का एक बड़ा हिस्सा निर्धनता में गुजारना पड़ा। उन्होंने कभी बुलंदी के ख्वाब नहीं देखे पर उनकी सतत कर्मशीलता ने उन्हें ज़बरदस्त शोहरत दिला दी। अथक प्रयासों और संघर्ष के बाद उनका वाद्ययंत्र और मधुर लोकसंगीत लोगो की जुबां पर चढ़ गया।

एक अत्यंत गरीब परिवार से आने वाले पद्मश्री मोगुलुय्या ने जीवन में खूब मुफ़लिसी देखी पर कभी उससे हार नहीं मानी। तेलंगाना के सूदूर ग्रामीण इलाके से आने वाले मोगुलुय्या के घर में गरीबी तो थी पर मन में जीतने का ज़ज्बा भी खूब था। पांच सौ साल से भी पुराने वाद्ययंत्र को घूम घूम कर बजाने वाला यह लोक कलाकार जंगलो में रहकर अपना जीवन गुज़र बसर कर रहा था और एक ख़ास तरह का वाद्ययंत्र बजा कर लोगों का मनोरंजन कर रहा था। ये ख़ास वाद्ययंत्र बारह प्रकार की विशेष खूंटियों को आपस में जोड़ कर बनाया जाता है। जिसमें मोम, शीशा, लकड़ी, धागे आदि का प्रयोग किया जाता है।

सालों पहले मोगुलुय्या के पूर्वज इस वाद्य यंत्र को सम्राटों के दरबार में जाकर बजाते थे। बाद में उनके पिता ने और आगे चलकर मोगुलुय्या ने इसे अपना लिया। उस दौर में इस वाद्ययंत्र को सुनने वाले लोगो की तादात ज्यादा थी पर बदलते समय ने इस आकर्षण को कम कर दिया। मोगुलुय्या को इसे बजाने से सराहना तो खूब मिलती पर पेट भरना मुश्किल था। वर्षों तक अपने गीत और वाद्ययंत्र को लेकर भटकते रहे। शहर शहर, गाँव गाँव घूमकर इसे बजाते पर कद्रदान कम ही मिलते। धीरे धीरे उनका मन खिन्न होने लगा पर उन्होंने हार नहीं मानी। कहते हैं जिस वाद्य यंत्र को वे बजाते हैं वो अब लगभग विलुप्त है।

उनके विस्थापित परिवार में अक्सर आर्थिक तंगी रहती। यद्यपि उन्होंने खूब श्रम किया पर धन की कमी उनके सपनों की चमक धूमिल करती रही। आशातीत सफलता न मिलने पर अपनी दादी के सुझाव पर इन्होंने बारह खूंटी वाले किन्नर वाद्य यंत्र को बनाया और अपनी सुरीली आवाज में इसे बजाना शुरू किया। बहुत छोटी उम्र से ही उन्होंने इसे बजाना शुरू कर दिया था और मात्र 16 साल की उम्र में इसका इस्तेमाल करने में निपुण हो गए। एक बार भ्रमण के दौरान एक स्थानीय विधायक ने इनकी आवाज को पहचाना और उन्हें बड़ा अवसर दिया। कोविड महामारी के दौरान आजीविका की तलाश में वे अपने गाँव से दो सौ किलोमीटर दूर तेलंगाना की राजधानी हैदराबाद पहुंचे तब एक दिन गाते बजाते एक फिल्म निर्देशक की नज़र उनकी सुरीली आवाज़ पर पड़ी। उनकी आवाज़ ने उनको आकृष्ट किया। उन्होंने तुरंत उन्हें अपनी आने वाली फिल्म *भीमला नाइक* में एक गीत गाने का मौका दे दिया। बस इसी एक मौके ने उन्हें विश्व फलक पर चमकता सितारा बना दिया। इसके बाद उन्हें दक्षिण की कई फिल्मों में गाने का अवसर मिला। धीरे धीरे उनकी पहचान एक लोक गायक के रूप में स्थापित हो गई।

तेलंगाना के लोग अब उन्हें उनके नाम से पहचानने लगे थे। उनके जीवन चरित्र को तेलंगाना राज्य की कथा की एक किताब में शामिल किया गया है। यह छातों को इस रूप में प्रेरित कर रहा है कि मानव की क्षमता अपरम्यार है। जीवन के विभिन्न क्षेत्र में उनकी गौरवमयी गाथा को एक नायक के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जा रहा है। उनकी लोकप्रियता का आलाम ये है की बेगमपेट मेट्रो स्टेशन पर उनके नाम का एक स्तम्भ निर्मित किया गया है। उस स्तंभ पर राज्य सरकार द्वारा उनका चित्र बनाया है।

राज्य के कई विश्वविद्यालय ने उन्हें न केवल संगीत प्रदर्शन के लिए आमंत्रित किया अपितु उन्हें सम्मानित भी किया। आज ये लोक कलाकार तेलंगाना का नायक बन चुका है। तेलंगाना राज्य के प्रथम स्थापना दिवस पर सौ कलाकारों में से एक के रूप में उन्हें 'उगादि' पुरस्कार से भी सम्मानित किया गया। अनेक पुरस्कारों और सम्मानों से विभूषित इस कलाकार के आस पास दंभ की कोई लकीर भी नहीं दिखती। आज भी मोगुलुय्या अपनी मधुर धुन के साथ किन्नरा वाद्य यंत्र से सम्राटों की कहानियाँ गाते नज़र आ जाते हैं। स्वभाव से बेहद सरल और विनम्र, मोगुलुय्या दुसरों के लिए नज़ीर है। उनकी कहानी इस बात का जीवंत प्रमाण है की सपने देखने का हक सबको है और सपने बिना किसी हैसियत की सीमा में बंधे सबके लिए लभ्य है। सपने यदि सच्चे हैं तो पूरे होंगे। पद्मश्री जैसे अलंकरण ने इस नायक को आज वास्तव में असली हीरो बना दिया है। ■

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Flavours

INNOVATING TO CHANGE THE WAY SOUTH ASIANS EAT

“Our food intake is based on our agriculture, so we as consumers need to demand more diversity through what we choose to spend our money on.”

No matter where South Asians are living around the world, we bring our food traditions with us. While there is tons of diversity when it comes to South Asian food, there is usually one similarity: rice and/or wheat. Both wheat and rice are high-calorie carbohydrates that don't give our bodies the necessary nutrients. The reliance on these two food types has led many South Asians to succumb to lifestyle diseases like diabetes and heart disease. The truth about rice and wheat is definitely hard to swallow. But what if you could improve your nutrient intake without drastically changing your favourite foods?



BY VENKATESH RAGHAVENDRA & PAYTON SOUDERS

Venkatesh Raghavendra is a global social entrepreneur who works with the Indian diaspora and deepens their engagement in India.

Payton Souders is a young professional and social impact consultant.

The reliance on certain food types has led South Asians to suffer from diabetes and heart disease. Could changing eating habits be the answer to healthier solutions?





DR SRINIVASA RAO

Dr Srinivasa Rao has some science-backed solutions to share with us. Dr Rao is a scientific superstar who has helped develop vaccines for diseases like dengue and HPV, founded the Indian Institute of Biotechnology to train Indian students, and persuaded the governments of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Rajasthan to focus on nutrition and health through better grains and seeds to farmers. Addressing malnutrition has always been a passion for Dr Rao—he engages with the Indian government on this subject. In 2016 Dr Rao founded Granova Naturals India, a company that brings superfoods like quinoa and avocado to the Indian market.

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

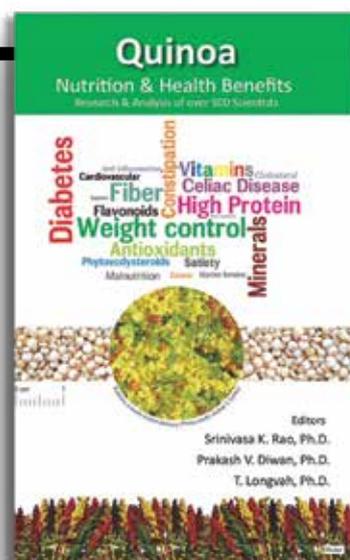
It has become difficult for South Asians to get all the nutrients we need while eating the foods we love. Do you have any advice on how to address this?

Dr Rao: Yes, as the world gets increasingly globalised, the modernised versions of traditional recipes have lost some of their nutritional value. The traditions of home-based knowledge have been disappearing. Our food which once was an asset has now become a liability. Now, our food choices have emerged as the top cause of morbidity and mortality.

To help us get back to our roots science, computational power, and nutrition knowledge have come together. A new area of science has emerged—Computational Gastronomy, led by Dr Ganesh Bagler. Dr Bagler and his team have created a database called RecipeDB, which contains an incredible 1,18,000 recipes from cuisines across the globe. These recipes include over 23,500 ingredients that were chosen based on their nutritional profiles and flavour molecules. Appropriate use of this database can help people to select and design the individual choice of food, flavour, taste, and nutritive elements that ensure good health. We have developed 365 edible plant foods of South Asian origin, mostly, to help people design their own food and enjoy eating affordable healthy food year-long.

Can you discuss the work you have done regarding quinoa and how you brought it to the Indian marketplace?

Dr Rao: There are 20 grains that humans have been using for staple food, quinoa being the most nutritious of all of these. Quinoa comes up as a good alternative in terms of global food security



and sustainability because its water requirement is one-third that of rice. Quinoa is so nutritious that NASA considers it a top candidate for any long-term space mission. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations declared that quinoa could play an important role in eradicating hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

The issue is that quinoa is an expensive grain, costing ₹1,771 (\$23) per kilo, while rice is available at ₹77 or less in India. I knew that if quinoa could help us fight poverty, we needed to make it affordable. I circled the world learning about quinoa, starting in its native country, Bolivia, where I met a remarkable engineer who had created a simple machine to process it. I brought some of these machines back to India. Next, I travelled to villages near Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh to speak with hundreds of farmers about quinoa and its value. Together we began growing quinoa and set up a small processing centre. By the end of 2015, we got a few hundred kilos of Indian-grown quinoa.

After this the Dr Quinoa story began, our very own brand. We began selling in supermarkets for ₹600 per kilo and have now brought the price down to ₹200 per kilo. Our goal is that one day soon, it will be available all across India at the same price as rice, wheat and millets. Wherever you are in the world, quinoa is a great food to add to your regular diet. And if you aren't sure how to use it, the RecipeDB database is a great place to start!

Another project you are working on is high-protein rice. Can you tell us about this, and how we can find this product?

Dr Rao: India is already producing far more calories (over three times) than necessary per year to feed all her citizens. All of the food is there, but we are not getting the nutrients we need from it, nor distributing it effectively. One potential solution is high-protein rice. This rice is not grown in a lab, but grown using natural selection methods. In 2021 I began to grow this high-protein rice in collaboration with the National Rice Research Institute, Cuttack, Odisha, with the help of Dr Trilochan Mohapatra, director general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi. After a successful growing season, we tested the crop and found that our rice had a protein content of 10 percent, while most other qualities of rice contain up to 8 percent. This might not seem like a huge difference, but even this level of increase can have significant health benefits for those of us who do not get enough protein in our diets.

In 2022 we are going to plant 20 acres with this high-protein rice in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, and by the end of the year it should be available in the market under the Dr Rice brand in India. We are also introducing the US-grown 12 percent protein rice developed by Louisiana State University scientists available in the US market under the same brand name—Dr Rice. This rice will give us the unique opportunity to improve our health without changing the foods we eat.

Now that we know about quinoa and naturally fortified high-protein rice, what are some other foods we should incorporate into our diets more regularly?

Dr Rao: We need to use wheat with higher fibre content. Normal

wheat has 3.2 percent fibre, but there are varieties that have 5-10 times more fibre protein (up to 32 percent). We are working on possibilities to bring those to the market just as we have done with quinoa and rice.

Additionally, there are some 40 different varieties of pulses and lentil beans with high protein, fibre content and several micronutrients. Their availability and consumption should increase to improve public health. There are also some 1,888 edible plants, and we are preparing a list of the most nutritive and useful plants to help people to increase the diversity in their food. Eating a wide range of foods can easily meet our

nutritive requirements and improve health.

And of course, we can't forget about water. Quality, availability, and consumption of water are major determinants of population health. Water naturally contains many minerals that are needed for health. Governments and people should focus not only on safe drinking water but also well-balanced water with needed minerals.

A problem you talk about in your work is the lack of diversity in crop production. How does this affect the way we eat? What can be done to improve on this?

Dr Rao: Ideally, all of us should eat a wide range of foods to provide our bodies with what they need. But according to Biodiversity International, out of over 6,000 edible plants, less than 200 are cultivated commercially. Only five of these 200—rice, wheat, maize, millet and sorghum—account for 60 percent of our consumption. With each passing generation our food choices become narrower and narrower, and so do our nutrients. Loss of required nutrients leads to chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Our food intake is based on our agriculture, so we as consumers need to demand more diversity through what we choose to spend our money on.

Malnutrition significantly affects a lot of people around the world. Could you tell us about what is being done to address this problem?

Dr Rao: Malnutrition can be calorie malnutrition (lack of energy needed) and/or nutrient malnutrition (lack of nutrients needed for good health). At present, some two billion people are affected by malnutrition. Scientists around the world have developed high-yielding varieties to reduce calorie malnutrition significantly. Now malnutrition due to a lack of the required nutrients in terms of quality and quantity is the major problem the work is facing. If one can consume nutritively rich food items commonly used and available locally, one can be healthy. Scientists have developed nutrient-rich varieties of some 200 or more food items.

The World Vegetable Center, Taiwan, analyses vegetables for their nutrient content and publishes the information. Last year they analysed 2,727 samples of vegetables like several varieties of tomatoes, pepper, amaranth, okra, and mungbean. Using these results, people can get the nutrients they are missing to improve their health by choosing the nutrient-rich varieties of their choice of food.

ADD *some* SPARKLE

With the festive and wedding season upon us how can we not showcase what is out there. That's not to say jewellery can't be worn casually or when socialising with friends. Whether a part of the whole ensemble look, or simply to look and feel good. These gems will add the right amount of bling. The designs are a mix of the old and the new, the modern and the traditional

BY RUKMA SALUJA

A peacock centerpiece in yellow gold with a dangling pearl supported by semi-precious green beads (Kalyan Jewellers)



Eye catching briolette drop earrings in silver alloy with electro-rhodium plating (Joolry by Karishma Mehra)



Eternity ring in pink and rose gold baguettes set in silver and alloy with zirconia and electro rhodium plating (Joolry by Karishma Mehra)



Coloured diamante band in silver with alloy and zirconia with electro rhodium plating (Joolry by Karishma Mehra)





Handcrafted silver necklace with glass stone for a trendy ethnic look (Sangeeta Boochra)

Contemporary earrings in eye catching blue gems for a dramatic look (Anmol Jewellers)



Diamonds in roundels make an eye catching difference (Anmol Jewellers)



Green onyx stone ring with gold plated inlay work when you want to impress (Sangeeta Boochra)



Diamond ring in cubic zirconia set in nickel free and hypoallergenic metals (Joolry by Karishma Mehra)



With its high precision cut and contemporary design, this one is a showstopper for men (Kalyan Jewellers)



TRENDING NOW

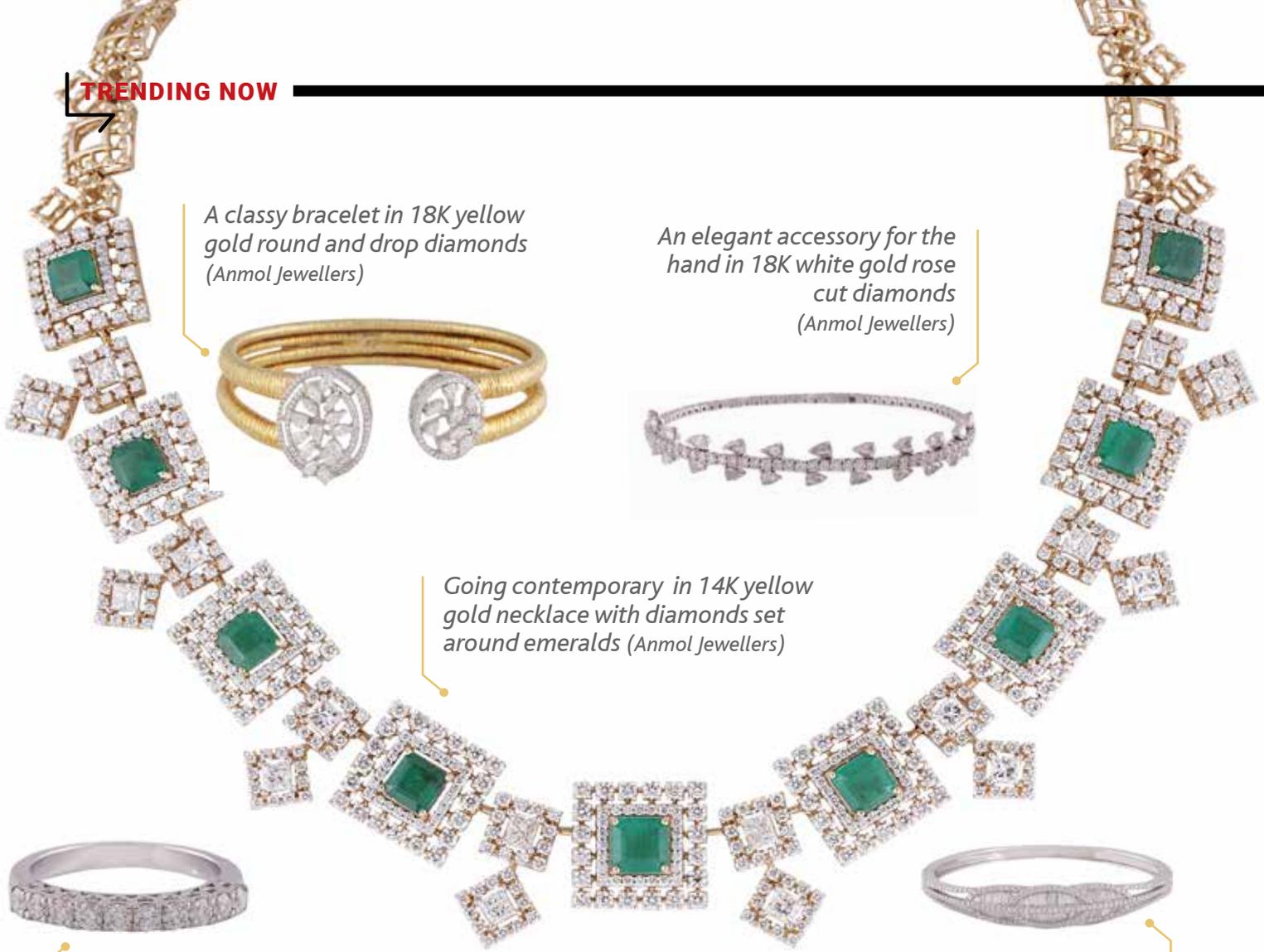
A classy bracelet in 18K yellow gold round and drop diamonds (Anmol Jewellers)



An elegant accessory for the hand in 18K white gold rose cut diamonds (Anmol Jewellers)



Going contemporary in 14K yellow gold necklace with diamonds set around emeralds (Anmol Jewellers)



Simple yet chic 18K white gold round cut diamonds (Anmol Jewellers)



Simple yet chic 18K white gold baguettes and round cut diamonds (Anmol Jewellers)



Multi studded band set in yellow gold (Joolry by Karishma Mehra)



Intricately carved gold bangles with simple floral designs have an elegant yet classy look (Kalyan Jewellers)



Hand-made ring in 925 silver with kundan highlights (Sangeeta Boochra)



This silver bangle is sure to enhance your look with its refined finish
(Sangeeta Boochra)



Traditional motifs in gold and pink precious stones offer a flawless look
(Kalyan Jewellers)

Kundan and beads lend a sophisticated touch
(Sangeeta Boochra)



Handcrafted silver necklace with kundan, turquoise, blue stone
(Sangeeta Boochra)



BLACK ROSE 22x30 Inches Soft Pastel on Paper

TRANSCENDING THE TEMPORAL

Bipin Kumar brings a refreshingly original style and touch to the realm of abstract art



BY
JAI TRIPATHI

The writer is an artist and art critic

FANTASY 60x36 Inches Acrylic on Canvas



The creative consciousness of the contemporary milieu permeates the various images that Bipin Kumar draws with colours and lines but he also manages to go beyond the layers which society and events occurring around him impose on him. The sensations that his works spawn keep evoking a plethora of emotions from the viewer.

Kumar, who has established his identity as an abstract painter at the national level, composes a series of paintings which test the prominence of the subjects that he takes up. For this reason, in his paintings, from beginning to end, the allure of abstraction remains like an ethereal illusion constructed by a gifted magician. This is evident in the subtle play of lines, colours and shapes visible in each work. In the interesting "Dog" series, the viewer

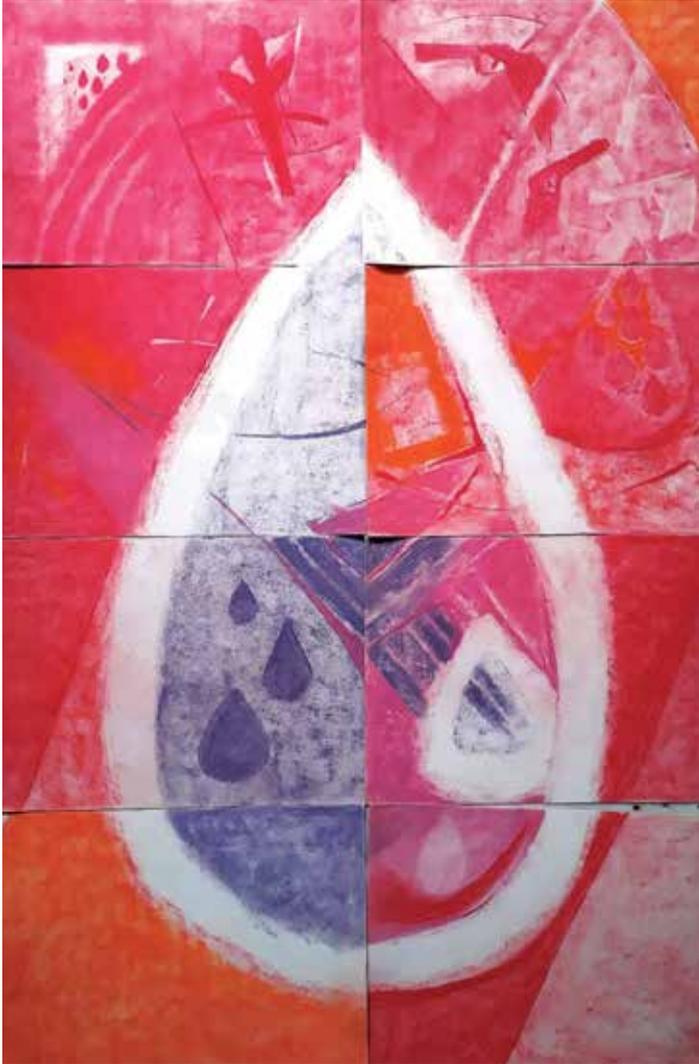


Bipin has worked with the art departments of leading advertising agencies, and is currently employed as Creative Director in a prominent media house. Besides professional commitments, he has been participating in various group shows, solo exhibitions and painting workshops all over the country. His works have been exhibited in the National Exhibitions at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and in the 3rd and 6th Biennales at Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal.

derives a sense of the dogs in his own surroundings. At the same time, there are

paintings on the water crisis confronting the country and the world—which I

WATER CRISIS 30x50 Inches Soft Pastel on Paper



FANTASY 22x30 Inches Soft Pastel on Paper



Kumar's aesthetic vision is very subtle and comprehensive so the beauty of all of creation is encompassed in his works ... the beauty of nature, of action, of toil, sweat and blood.

consider among his best series.

This experimental artist seeks to recreate the world with his highly sensitive and poignant paintings. He understands the creative combination of modernity and traditionalism very well. In the "Migration" series, he uses abstract shapes—a testament to the detailed thinking which must've preceded the actual painting. The extent of his canvas is so vast that along with the fascination of the marvels he creates, there is also the poignant portrayal of the sheer lack of mirth, the pangs of hunger and the travails of migration in addition to many other nuances.

It often happens that the talent of a

painter is judged by limiting the appraisal to his paintings; however, today artists display their talent in multiple forms, one being 'performance art'. Some years ago, Kumar's paintings were displayed at the Bodh Gaya Biennale. In addition, a video of a very touching performance by him was presented. Art connoisseurs from India and abroad were pleasantly surprised to see the performance which had a wide gamut of narration and expression in silent language and showed the creative potential of imagination.

Kumar's aesthetic vision is very subtle and comprehensive so the beauty of all of creation is encompassed in his works ... the

beauty of nature, of action, of toil, sweat and blood. According to him, "If you could say everything in words, there would be no reason to paint."

Kumar is one of the first line of abstract painters in the contemporary art scene. The feeling of anger at injustice, tyranny and oppression are intensely present and visible in his black and white work. Apart from colours, he has been highly experimental on these subjects by using small to large sizes and unique shapes in black and white.

At the same time, he has done a wonderful job by creating paintings in soft pastel colours. Looking at his works, it seems that in the future he may once again return to this expression.

In life, often there come times when one faces great frustration and hardships. There are those who emerge from the ravages of pain with undiminished vitality. Such exceptional courage was shown by Kumar when in 2000, due to a major road accident,

MIGRATION Acrylic on Canvas 144x96



SPACES IN CHAOS 47x29 Oil Pastel on Paper,
Size Inches, Year 2021

one eye was completely damaged and, after long treatment, vision in the other eye came back but dimmed with time. Recalling this, I feel the prickle of goosebumps. Today, witnessing his art and his zeal to create daily, no one could believe that he has been steeped in such creative fervour for the past two decades with only partial vision in just one eye. The monumental spirit of this gifted artist is humbling.

Kumar grew up in Munger, Bihar. He studied art at the College of Arts and Crafts in Patna and subsequently received his MFA from Delhi College of Art. Influenced by Raza, Gaitonde and Ram Kumar, he has had an inspiring and interesting journey from intense struggle to success. He has tirelessly engaged in his artwork by staying away from any kind of award or fellowship. Delhi's reputed Vadehra Art Gallery recognised his talent two decades ago and displayed his works.

His artworks have also been included in many prestigious art exhibitions of the

country such as the National Art Exhibition, the third and sixth editions of the Biennale organised by Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal, and many more. His paintings are displayed in major art galleries in India and abroad, including Canada and the US, and in private collections where they receive considerable attention.

Bipin Kumar's paintings have always been rooted in nature and human lives. Besides conservation of water, he has chosen to delve into the complexities of human relations, conflicts, dichotomy and duality of human character. If you look carefully, you will find there is a man present in all his series. And, every time it is on the canvas he is seen confronting some new predicament of human existence or fighting some new sets of crisis produced by human greed and destruction of natural habitats. Several of Kumar's works are with Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, private collectors and corporate houses both in India and abroad. He lives and works in Ghaziabad. ■



DINACHARYA AND RITUCHARYA

THE KEY TO MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DAY



BY
VIBHUTI ARORA

Vibhuti Arora is a Faceyogi, a staunch believer in non-invasive beauty tools and techniques to defy gravity, and co-founder at House of Beauty & Face Yoga School. With her profound knowledge of face yoga, she has formulated her own Signature 1-Minute massage.

As day follows night and summer follows winter, as surroundings change, there is a change in energies around us and our bodies need to respond accordingly for well-balanced mental and physical health

This article is not to bore you with Ayurvedic do's and don'ts. It is your self-help guide to help you understand your body and customise your very own daily and seasonal routines for better physical and emotional stability, and to increase your sense of belonging to nature. Because we, too, are a product of nature.

Dinacharya refers to the daily routine. Planning the day's activities in advance allows for both our body and mind to carry them out effectively. This encompasses activities like *surya*

namaskar, cleansing the body, performing 'oil pulling' to flush out the toxins from the body. No particular morning routine or *dinacharya* is suitable for everybody. What's important is the purpose, to get in touch with our inner self and then radiate this energy throughout the day. Yoga *asanas*, *pranayama*, meditation, prayers, etc. can help us relax, and connect with nature, bow down to the greater energy and be thankful for our immediate homes—our bodies.



Wondering how setting up a *dinacharya* proves to be beneficial in all aspects of life? In today's time when many of us fall prey to problems like stress, sleep deprivation, obesity, mood disorders, health problems (cardiovascular) and mental health issues, following a daily routine proves to be advantageous and sets a path to wellness. It keeps us in harmony and in sync with nature and maintains the overall balance between our body, mind and soul. Keeps the toxins at bay and helps strengthen the body's immunity as well. Following a regimen brings discipline and is a step towards removing anxiety and bringing internal peace. Integrating yoga *asanas* and meditation into our *dinacharya* is a way of relieving mental stress and tension. The highlight of *dinacharya* routine: *dosha* balance.

Our bodies are comprised of the three types of *doshas*: **Vata**, **Pitta** and **Kapha**. The five elements of nature—earth, water, fire, air and space—make up the three *doshas*, *Vata* (air + space), *Pitta* (fire + water) and *Kapha* (earth + water) which are found in different percentages in different human beings. *Doshas*, according to Ayurveda, influence a person's physical, psychological, emotional and social attributes. Following the right physical exercises and dietary routine, therefore, helps balance the natural *dosha* of the body and corrects any imbalances.



These three *doshas* are present in various permutations and combinations in different human beings. Following a *dinacharya* enables *dosha* balance and a path towards growth and longevity, healing our body, mind and soul by addressing physical issues like digestion, psychological issues like stress or emotional issues like anger.

Steps to Bhramari or Bee breath to manage Pitta Dosh

- Close your eyes and push your thumbs in the ears; index and middle fingers on your eyes, ring finger next to your nostrils and little finger on the chin
- Inhale through the nose and exhale while making the sound 'mmmm' like the sound of a bee buzzing
- Repeat this 3 times

Sensitive to hot weather? Suffering from anger and mood swings? You have a natural Pitta Dosh in your body and here's the yoga *asana* for you to manage it.

Do you get depressed easily? Do you have a slow metabolism? That indicates a prominent Kapha Dosh in your body. Suffering from digestive problems and anxiety issues? You have an active Vata Dosh. *Dhanurasana*, a Hatha Yoga *asana*, works best in this case.



Living in harmony with nature defines *Ritucharya*. Incorporating these morning practices according to the season is the best way to start the day. Just like our bodies, the three *doshas* are also found in nature.

Summer—Pitta Dosh

Late winter and early spring—Vata Dosh

Autumn and early winter—Kapha Dosh

As our biological energies change along with the season, i.e. a shift in the universal energies, it becomes important to follow a *ritucharya* routine to maintain an ideal *dosha* balance. For example, eating foods that cool the body like citrus fruits, coconut, chickpeas, quinoa, and avoiding spicy foods, practising yoga and swimming are the best combinations of *dinacharya* and *ritucharya* in summer—Pitta Dosh.

Keeping the body moisturised with *Abhyanga*, eating root vegetables and ground foods like sweet potato, radish, carrot, beetroot, lentils, pistachios, etc. are essential during late winter and early spring—Vata Dosh. For Kapha Dosh which is autumn and early winter, dry granola and wholegrain foods are beneficial with morning meditation.



Those with Vata Dosh should eat butter/ghee along with their meals and could even try DIY hydration masks. Including ghee in your diet would help strengthen your organs.

Know your body type and adopt a corrective diet, yoga *asanas* and exercises. It becomes essential to tailor your very own everyday routine based on your *doshas*. *Dinacharya* is the way. ■

Young
&
Restless

MEN IN THE TIME OF FEMINISM



Feminism with its many shades has empowered women and left the men gobsmacked

When a man falls for a woman, there is a list of things he knows he'll have to do. From winning her parents' approval to having enough money in the bank, this list is deeply entrenched in our society; heterosexual men are almost born with the knowledge. It's that whole 'man is the provider' idea embedded in the human psyche and passed on from one generation to another for aeons. But when that woman says she's a feminist and won't settle for anything less than absolute equality in the relationship, the man has no idea what to do and things

take a topsy-turvy, somewhat messy turn.

Let me introduce you to the newest dating conundrum for millennials and Gen-Z—feminism with a side of anti-patriarchy. The women of today won't settle for anything less than equality and the men are massively struggling to deal with it. You know something's hit a nerve when even the fashion crowd is talking about it.

Dating in the age of feminism led to a heated discussion at yet another fashion week recently concluded in Delhi, when designer Bhairav Gupta (name changed) brought up the issue. "I don't think straight

men really understand an equal relationship; for them, it's always about a man having the upper hand because that's what they've grown up seeing all around them!" Stirring the pot further was model-of-the-moment Bhavna Mehra's (name changed) revelation about the demise of her most recent relationship. "I had to dump him because he just couldn't accept that my career was just as important as his and I couldn't be bothered about dropping everything in a heartbeat just to be by his side."

Women aren't trying to make it work with a man who isn't treating them as

It's amusing to see men struggling with their place in society, for a change. We don't know if they'll transform into feminists or come to hate it with a vengeance but for now, they're learning to adapt to a whole new world.



equal. They're dumping him and moving on, all in an instant. And men, who never got the memo, are wondering when and how things changed.

"You know things have gone a bit too far when people start ending their relationships because of it." When you want to know what the average young man in India is thinking, you must always go to Samar Pirzada (name changed), one of Mumbai's most dynamic young entrepreneurs and the man behind a popular chain of restaurants in the city. "Yes, men and women are equal but every relationship is different. And sometimes, a man just has to lead from the front, you know?" Leading from the front doesn't, and ideally shouldn't, come in the way of an equal partnership though, does it? "If a man lets the woman be, he isn't that into

her. When he checks up on her, he's being controlling. What is a man to do?"

It's a confusing scenario, yes. Both for men and women. Where does feminism stand on, say, chivalry? "A man opening the door for his woman is romantic and adorable. But as a woman, who identifies as a feminist, am I to expect or want such a gesture? Honestly, I don't know!" Stylist and society queen Sheetal Singhania (name changed) isn't the only woman flummoxed about the ever-evolving man-woman equation. There are many like her who are on the fence when it comes to feminism and men. "I don't want my man to pay my bills or treat my career as a hobby but I also don't want him to not buy me a nice gift on our anniversary or expect me to run the home, you know?"

It isn't just about who picks up the tab. As more and more women insist on gender parity and women's empowerment, it's changing the way men even approach a woman. "I don't even know the correct way to make a move on a girl. Will she be offended or flattered? Uncomfortable or indifferent?" Rohan Nanda (name changed), one of Bengaluru's prominent advertising executives, is echoing the thoughts of a large number of people belonging to the not-fairer sex. "I can't help but wonder whether feminism, which I'm all for, by the way, has majorly emasculated men!"

Emasculated might be a tad extreme but men are definitely feeling the pressure.

They can't just walk up to a woman at a bar and strike up a conversation, as was the case in days bygone. They can't expect their wife to give up her career after having a child. Paying the bill in full post a date isn't romantic or acceptable anymore. They can't ask their girlfriends to not stay out late, even if it's anxiety for their safety. They have to cook food, do their laundry and run the home.

It's amusing to see men struggling with their place in society, for a change. We don't know if they'll transform into feminists or come to hate it with a vengeance but for now, they're learning to adapt to a whole new world.

My advice to womankind would be to exercise patience and let them figure it out—after all, men are infamous for not asking for directions! ■

Who Am I?

Think of me as someone who knows the minds, hearts and bedrooms of the young Indian today. I have a social life across cities that allows me access to coveted parties, people and positions (pun absolutely intended!). Through this column, I aim to keep you abreast of how the young people of India go about their personal lives. I promise to keep it honest and to-the-point. No judgements, no prudishness.

Epitomising shared **HERITAGE**



Urdu, one of the most beautiful languages of the Indian sub-continent, should not be associated with any narrow religious or regional identity, says **AKHLAQ A. 'AHAN'**

There are many views among scholars about the genesis and development of the Urdu language. Some suggest it is derived from Khariboli, a dialect spoken in and around Delhi and adjoining areas including Western Uttar Pradesh, parts of Uttarakhand and Haryana. Some believe it is an offshoot of Brij Bhasha or the dialect prevalent in the Brij area (the Agra and Mathura region). A leading scholar of Urdu, Mahmood Sherani, argued that Urdu was born in Punjab and wrote a book in 1928, *Punjab Mein Urdu*, in support of his hypothesis. This view of Punjab being the place of Urdu's origin was earlier propounded by linguists like George A. Grierson (1851-1941) in the Linguistic Survey of India (1916) and Sher Ali Sarkhush in *Tazkira-e-Ejaz-e-Sukhan* (1923). One assumption is that it was a camp language (*lashkari zaban*), born of interaction among people of different groups while employed in the Mughal Army.

Similarly, the Deccan and Sindh too are proffered as places of the origin of Urdu. Nonetheless, among all these hypotheses, the most credible amongst the linguistic historians is the theory that Urdu has its origin in Shauraseni Prakrit, a middle Indo-Aryan language, concomitant to Sanskrit, and was spoken in early medieval northern India, mostly between the third and 10th centuries. Later, due to various reasons, it spread to different

parts of the country, incorporated local idioms and became akin to a lingua franca of the sub-continent.

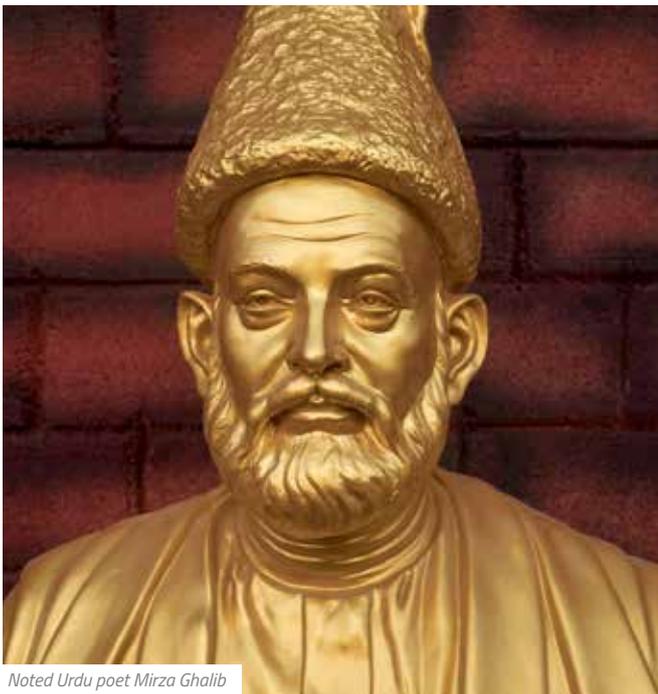
Since Urdu serves as a link among different groups of people across India and even among expatriates living around the globe, it should not be associated with any narrow religious or regional identity. From filmdom to poetry gatherings or *mushairas*, music to mythology, patriotic literature to religious texts of almost all Indian religious groups, from translations of the *Gita*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to the Quran, the Guru Granth Sahib and Sufi Bhakti literature, the songs and slogans of the freedom fighters of 1857 to the revolutionary nationalists including Bhagat Singh, Pt. Chakbast, Lala Lajpat Rai, Ram Prasad Bismil, Iqbal, Josh Malihabadi, Faiz and Majaz, it is unmistakably clear that Urdu has been possibly the most cosmopolitan in character and content.

Urdu is one of the most beautiful languages of India and unique to the Indian sub-continent, and deeply and inseparably entwined with many local dialects like Khariboli, Dakhini, Awadhi and the like as well as the Hindi language. The popular slogan, '*Inquilab Zindabad*', was coined by Urdu poet Hasrat Mohani in 1921, which great revolutionary freedom fighters such as Bhagat Singh voiced with pride. Similarly, the famous couplet of Bismil Azimabadi, "*Sarfaroshi ki tamanna ab hamarey dil mein hai*", was disseminated by Ramprasad Bismil among the revolutionaries.

During the post-globalisation era, when a variety of websites, social media forums and groups, and online portals became an inseparable part of contemporary life, Urdu too attuned itself well to the new possibilities and challenges. Besides, it also gained many new philanthropists and patrons for virtual programmes and events such as Urdu Ghar, Ghalib Institute, Rekhta and, similarly, different online forums like London Urdu Voice, Jawaid Danish, World Urdu Forum, Halqa-e-Ahbab-e-Zauq, the Indo-Asia Foundation and Amroha Foundation around the globe also provided platforms for Urdu enthusiasts to connect.

Recent years have witnessed a waning tendency to indulge and celebrate the composite culture of India as exemplified by Urdu language and literature. It is time this beautiful shared heritage along with all its wit, beauty, romance, and passion for love and humanity is revived. Let Urdu not be ghettoised in the name of identities, religions, regions, and so on. ■

The writer is a poet, author and professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi



Noted Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib



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