

PRAVASI INDIANS

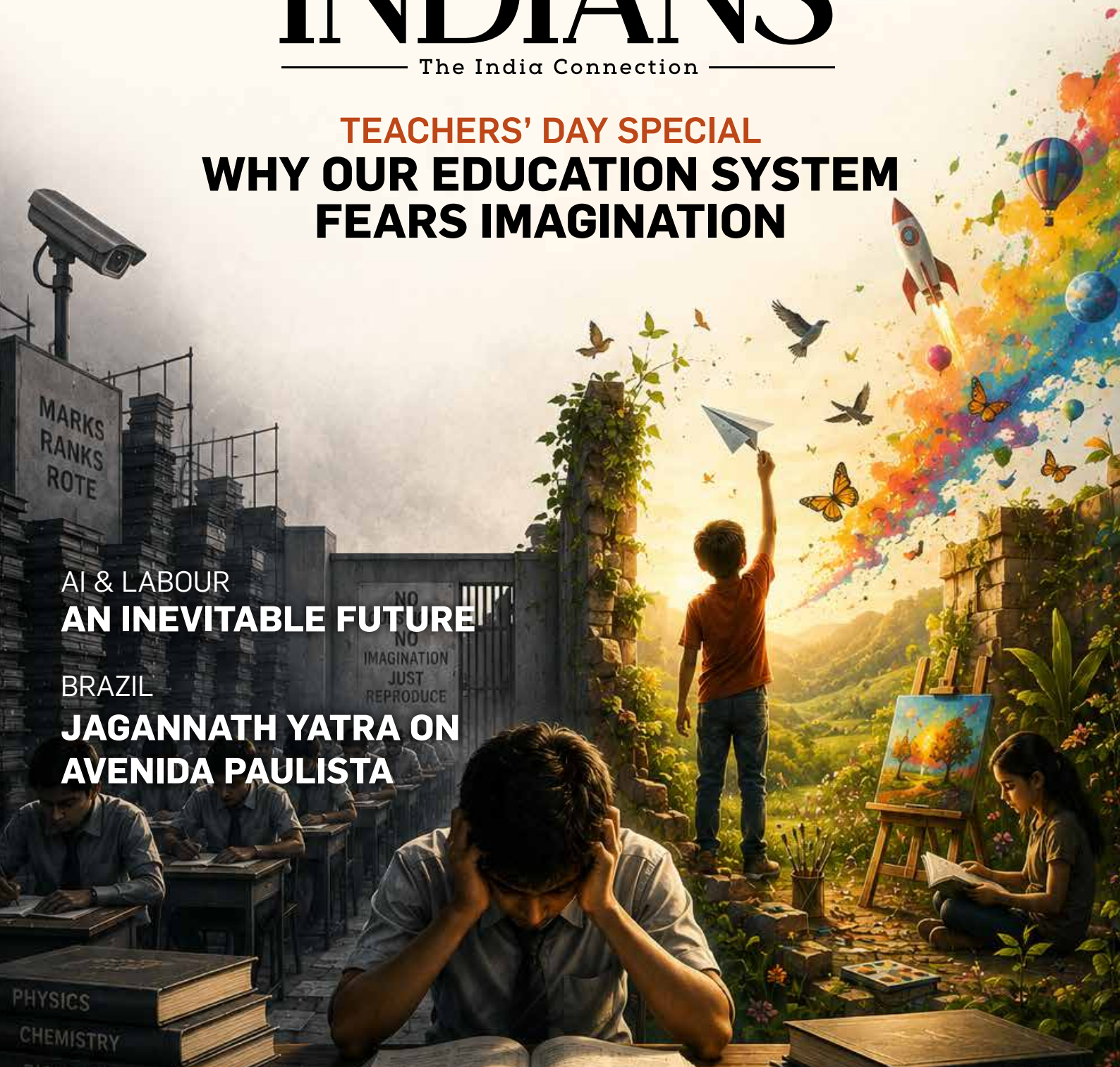
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The India Connection

TEACHERS' DAY SPECIAL WHY OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM FEARS IMAGINATION

AI & LABOUR
AN INEVITABLE FUTURE

BRAZIL
**JAGANNATH YATRA ON
AVENIDA PAULISTA**



BOOK REVIEW

THE HUSH OF THE UNCARING SEA

A RIVER REMEMBERS

यादों की पोटली से आती सोधी सी महक

VANDE MATARAM

SAARE JAHAN SE ACCHA

हास्य व्यंग्य

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Living Legacies, Shaping Futures

From Education and AI to Rafi's Voice and Jagannath Rath Yatra in Brazil

Dear Readers,

The September 2026 edition of *PRAVASI INDIANS* arrives at a moment when questions of imagination, tradition, and transformation converge. Across eleven stories, we explore how societies confront crises, celebrate heritage, and embrace change.

We begin with the Cover Story by **DR. SURYA BHUSHAN**, who asks the timeless question: *What is education for?* His reflection on the NEETUG scandal reveals a system reduced to marks and rankings, where imagination is feared and corruption corrodes trust. It is a call to rethink education not as rote training but as cultivation of judgment and moral reasoning.

From classrooms to workplaces, Artificial Intelligence is redefining labour. **UDAY KUMAR VERMA** reminds us that this revolution is inevitable. The challenge is not to resist it but to ensure workers share in its benefits rather than bear its burdens. His essay situates AI as both promise and peril, urging vigilance in how societies adapt.

Heritage finds voice in our **MADHU SEN's** Interview of Pt. Rishi Shankar Upadhyay, who describes the Pakhawaj as "a heartbeat of tradition, a voice of devotion, and a bridge between centuries." His mission is to inspire future generations to embrace this ancient percussion, reminding us that culture lives through continuity.

Economic caution is explored by **SATISH SINGH** in Economy, where the RBI's pause at 5.25% is framed not as inertia but as strategy. Stability today, he argues, preserves credibility tomorrow, balancing inflation risks against growth resilience.

Literature deepens our reflection. **DR. VED MITRA SHUKLA's** Book Review of Upamanyu Chatterjee's *The Hush of the Uncaring Sea* highlights irony, humour, and human frailty. Meanwhile, the Hindi novel review BY **व्यालोक** of Zeyaur Rahman's *A River Remembers* interprets identity as a flowing river — never fixed, always searching. Together, these works remind us that storytelling is both mirror and compass.

Faith and devotion shine in Brazil piece, where São Paulo's Avenida Paulista hosted Lord Jagannath's Rath Yatra, uniting cultures in joy. Penned jointly by **PREMA BHAKTI DAS**, **CAITANYA DAS**, and **VANA MADURYAM** recount the grand festival which reflects decades of dedication to Pure Bhakti and cultural friendship between India and Brazil.

Music lovers will cherish **DR. VENKATESH GANAPATHY's** portrait of Mohammed Rafi — a phenomenon whose voice became the soul of Indian cinema, adaptable yet timeless.

Dance and devotion converge in *Vande Mataram*, where Odissi, Bharatanatyam, and Kathak celebrated India's living traditions. From patriotic strains to mythic tales, the festival affirmed that heritage is not a relic but a living force.

Humour lightens the edition with **DR. NILAY RANJAN SINGH's** हास्य व्यंग्य, where banking, media, and patriotism collide in satire. And finally, **रशिफल** by **ACHARYA DINAIK** returns us to the skies, showing how astrology continues to guide reflection, balance, and resilience.

Together, these stories form a mosaic of crisis and creativity, devotion and humour, tradition and transformation. They remind us that imagination is not a luxury but a necessity — in education, in work, in culture, and in life itself.

Happy reading *PRAVASI INDIANS*!

Rashmi
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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PRAVASI INDIANS

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Head Office
M/s Template Media LLP,
#302, 2nd Floor, Yuvraj Sadan,
B-537, Vasant Kunj Enclave,
New Delhi-110070

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COVER STORY

DR. SURYA BHUSHAN, PhD from JNU and Professor at DMI Patna, reminds us that every civilization faces a timeless question: *What is education for?* Is it merely to produce obedient workers, or to cultivate wise human beings capable of judgment, imagination, and moral reasoning?

India’s system, he argues, has been reduced to marks, rankings, and rote precision. The brutal clarity of this malaise surfaced on May 3, 2026, when the NEET-UG paper leak shook the nation. Confidential questions were sold through coaching networks, lakhs of students were betrayed, and at least 12 young lives were lost to suicide. The scandal was not just a breach of security but a symptom of corruption and a system that fears imagination.



13-15

MOHAMMED RAFI

DR. VENKATESH GANAPATHY of ICFAI Business School writes that Mohammed Rafi was more than a singer — he was a phenomenon who reshaped Hindi cinema’s sound-scape.

From disciplined collaborations with Naushad to adapting his voice to Dilip Kumar’s gravitas, Dev Anand’s breezy charm, or Shammi Kapoor’s exuberance, Rafi embodied versatility with humility. His songs were living performances, carrying the emotions of an entire generation. His voice became the soul of Indian cinema — timeless, adaptable, unforgettable.

16-18

VANDE MATARAM

The *PRAVASI INDIANS BUREAU* witnessed the 21st edition of *Saare Jahan Se Accha* at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Presented by Utsav Educational & Cultural Society under Padma Shri Guru Ranjana Gauhar, the festival unfolded across two evenings, 10–11 August 2026.

Audiences journeyed from patriotic strains of *Vande Mataram* to the mythic tale of *Chitrangada*, from devotional invocations to the emotional universe of *Navarasa*, culminating in the joyous finale of *Aanand Utsav*. The festival reminded us that India’s cultural legacy is not a relic but a living tradition.

19-21

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

UDAY KUMAR VERMA, Harvard-educated bureaucrat with four decades of public service at the highest levels of government, writes that Artificial Intelligence is no longer confined to labs or fiction. It now analyses, designs, diagnoses, predicts, and even decides — faster than any previous revolution.

Every transformation, from the steam engine to the internet, eliminated some jobs, created others, and reshaped many more. Between fears of machines replacing workers and hopes of liberation lies the truth: a turbulent transition where work itself is redefined. The challenge, Verma insists, is not whether this future can be stopped — it is inevitable — but how workers share in AI’s benefits rather than bear its brunt.

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INTERVIEW

Senior journalist **MADHU SEN** on behalf of *PRAVASI INDIANS* interviewed Pt. Rishi Shankar Upadhyay, recipient of the Ustad Bismillah Khan Puraskar, who reflects on the 500-year legacy of rhythm and devotion embodied in the Pakhawaj.

“The Pakhawaj is more than an instrument — it is a heartbeat of tradition, a voice of devotion, and a bridge between centuries of heritage and the present,” he says. His mission is to inspire future generations to embrace this ancient percussion tradition.

26-27

GLOBAL DEVOTION / BRAZIL



PREMA BHAKTI DAS and others recount the grand Rath Yatra procession on São Paulo’s Avenida Paulista. More than 5,000 people joined as Lord Jagannath’s richly adorned chariot rolled through the city’s heart — the largest festival of its kind outside India.

Guided by Srila Gurudeva Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Vana Gosvami Maharaja, the event reflected nearly three decades of dedication to Pure Bhakti seva and cultural friendship between India and Brazil.

28-29

BOOK REVIEW

DR. VED MITRA SHUKLA of Rajdhani College reviews Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *The Hush of the Uncaring Sea* (2025). Across four novellas, Chatterjee blends realism, humour, and psychological depth.

From the maritime ordeal of Abani to the courtroom satire *The Revenge of the Nonvegetarian*, from detective intrigue in *The Stink of Red Herring* to colonial ironies in *The Hapless Prince*, the collection probes human frailty and the absurdities of power. It reaffirms Chatterjee as one of India’s most incisive storytellers, entertaining while compelling reflection on justice, empathy, and the human condition.

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ECONOMY

Banking commentator **SATISH SINGH** notes that the Reserve Bank of India’s August review left the repo rate unchanged at 5.25%. Yet this pause carries weight. The RBI has chosen caution over complacency, acknowledging persistent food and fuel price pressures, uneven growth across sectors, and global volatility.

Stability today, Singh argues, is a strategy to preserve credibility and flexibility tomorrow. The central bank is steering policy with vigilance, balancing inflation risks against growth resilience in a shifting landscape.

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हास्य व्यंग्य

डॉ. निलय रंजन सिंह, 22 वर्षों के बैंकिंग अनुभव और वर्तमान में दुबई के डीआईएफसी में स्टेट बैंक ऑफ इंडिया के सीईओ, अपने हास्य व्यंग्य में समाज की विडंबनाओं पर चुटकी लेते हैं।

वो बताते हैं कि एन.आर.आई., बैंकिंग और मीडिया की दुनिया में जब डॉलर, डिप्लोमेसी और देशभक्ति एक साथ मिल जाएँ तो होता है शुद्ध व्यंग्य। काल्पनिक पात्रों और अतिरंजित स्थितियों के ज़रिए लेखक दिखाते हैं कि कैसे लेवरेज लोन, मीडिया की दूहा और विशेषज्ञों की नकली पहचान मिलकर हास्यास्पद दृश्य रचते हैं।

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HOROSCOPE / राशिफल

आचार्य दिनायक कहते हैं कि सभ्यता की शुरुआत से ही इंसान मार्गदर्शन के लिए आसमान की ओर देखता आया है। ज्योतिष ने आकाशीय गतिक्रम और मानव अनुभव के बीच संबंध को समझने का प्रयास किया।

इसके केंद्र में जन्म कुंडली होती है, जो जन्म के समय ग्रहों की स्थिति को दर्शाती है। किस्मत को पूर्वनिर्धारित न मानते हुए, ज्योतिष जीवन के अवसरों और चुनौतियों को पहचानने में मदद करता है। ध्यान, मंत्र, दान, व्रत और रत्न जैसी परंपराएँ संतुलन, सहनशीलता और सकारात्मक जीवन के लिए मार्ग सुझाती हैं।

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उपन्यास समीक्षा

वरिष्ठ पलकार **व्यालोक ज़ेयाउर रहमान** के पहले अंग्रेजी उपन्यास *A River Remembers* की हिन्दी समीक्षा में स्मृति, प्रवासन और पहचान की जटिलताओं को गहराई से समझाया गया है। समीक्षक बताते हैं कि यह यात्रा सिमरिया से यूरोप तक केवल भौगोलिक नहीं बल्कि आत्मअन्वेषण की प्रक्रिया है।

‘नदी’ को रूपक बनाकर रहमान दिखाते हैं कि पहचान कोई स्थिर परिभाषा नहीं, बल्कि निरंतर बहती हुई धारा है। यही कारण है कि यह कृति व्यक्तिगत अनुभवों को सामूहिक चेतना में बदल देती है और पाठक को जीवन की धड़कन से जोड़ देती है।

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कविता

विजेयता, अपनी कविता ‘तो मैं किसे बताती?’ में आत्मस्वीकृति और अनकहे दर्द का बयां करती है और उन क्षणों को शब्द देती हैं जब मन भीतर ही भीतर टूटता है, पर बाहर कोई सुनने वाला नहीं होता। रिश्तों, स्मृतियों और मिट्टी की सौंधी खुशबू में छिपे प्रतीकों के माध्यम से यह रचना बताती है कि छुपना, मिट जाना या रो लेना भी कभी कभी संवाद का रूप होता है। यह कविता पाठक को आत्मचिंतन की ओर ले जाती है — कि जब कोई समझ ही न पाए, तो हम किसे बताएं?

TEACHERS' DAY SPECIAL

WHY OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM FEARS IMAGINATION

Every civilization faces a timeless question: *What is education for?* Is it to produce obedient workers who reproduce information with precision? Or is it to cultivate wise human beings capable of judgment, imagination, and moral reasoning? Much against philosophers' warnings, education in India has been reduced to marks, rankings, and rote precision — exiling imagination and integrity. This became brutally clear on May 3, 2026, when the NEET UG paper leak shook the nation, with lakhs of students discovering that confidential questions had been sold through coaching networks, and at least 12 young lives were lost to suicide. The NEET scandal was not just a breach of security; it was the symptom of a deeper malaise — a system that fears imagination and collapses under corruption.



BY DR. SURYA BHUSHAN

A PhD from JNU having experience in consultancy & policy research with specialization in development management and livelihoods, the author is a Professor at DMI, Patna.

The Question We Avoid

Every civilization faces a timeless question: *What is education for?* Is it to produce obedient workers who reproduce information with precision? Or is it to cultivate wise human beings capable of judgment, imagination, and moral reasoning?

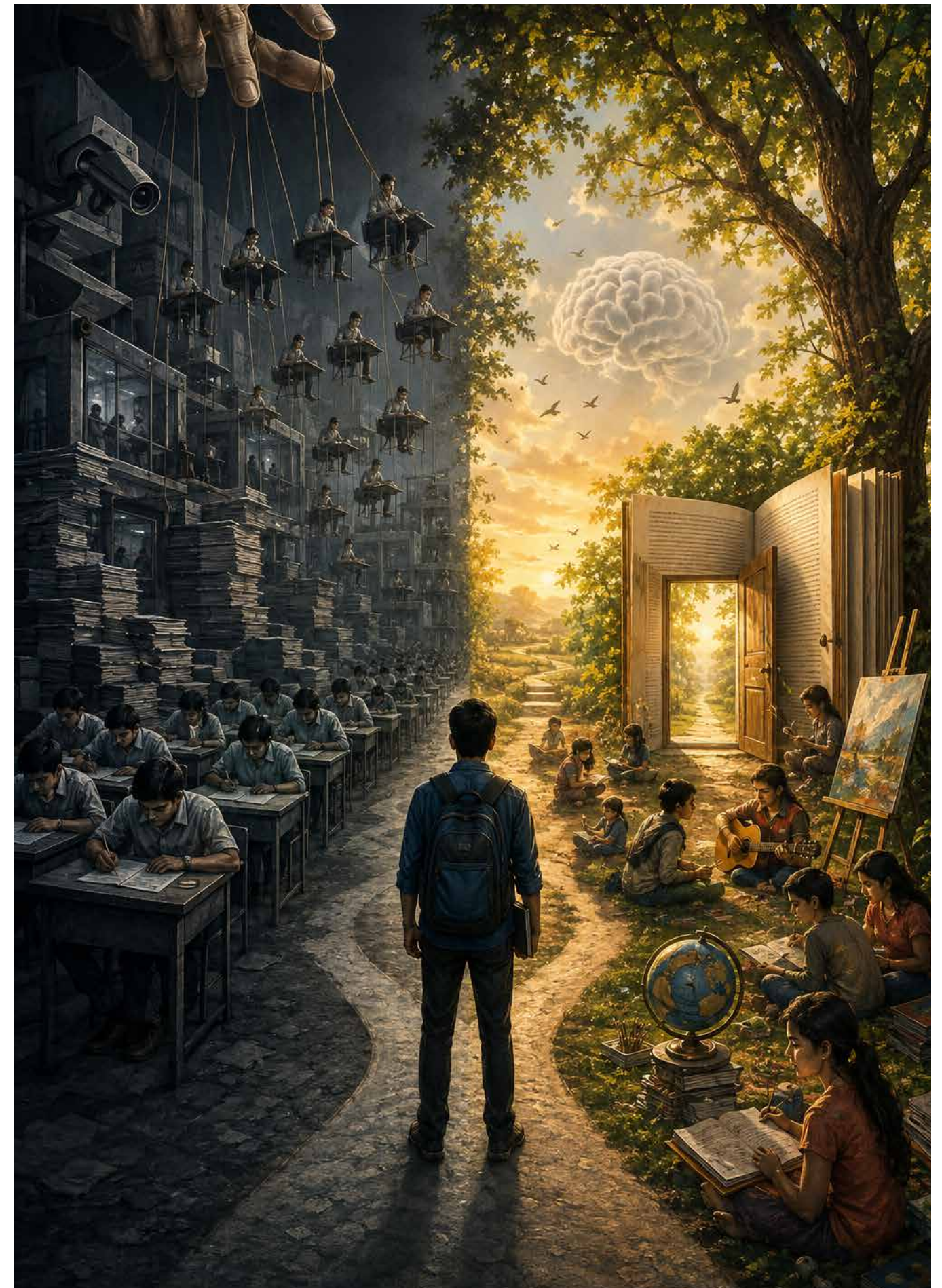
In India, this question is not abstract. It is urgent. Our classrooms, coaching centres, and examination halls are battlegrounds where two visions of edu-

cation collide. On one side lies the instrumental purpose — education as a tool for jobs, income, and productivity. On the other side lies the intrinsic purpose — education as a path to wisdom, imagination, and selfrealization.

The tragedy of modern India is that the instrumental purpose has swallowed the intrinsic. Schools have become factories, students have become clerks in training, and imagination has been exiled.

Intrinsic vs. Instrumental Purposes

Education has always carried these two purposes. The intrinsic purpose sees education as valuable in itself. It shapes intellect, nurtures curiosity, cultivates moral consciousness, and guides the search for meaning. In India's knowledge tradition, education was precisely this: a path toward selfrealization and wisdom.





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**Respect is earned
 by reciting a
 theorem without
 error; imagination
 is punished as
 distraction.**
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Gandhi's Alternative: Nai Talim

Seeing the inherent danger on rote culture, Mahatma Gandhi proposed an alternative Nai Talim, thereby the education of the Three H's — Hand, Heart, Head.

- Hand: Learning by doing, skill, and craft.
- Heart: Learning with empathy, moral consciousness, and compassion.
- Head: Learning with critical thinking, imagination, and intel-

lect.

This was a holistic vision where skill, empathy, and imagination worked in harmony. It was education for life, not just for ledger books.

In contrast, Macaulay's vision produced just clerks while Gandhi's vision propounded to produce creators. Yet in practice, India chose the colonial path, the Macaulay's prescription.

Civilizational Wisdom: Shastrartha and Viveka

The irony is that our ancestors knew the value of imagination well. From ancient India's tradition of *shastrartha* (a scholarly, disciplined debate/philosophical debate or discussion aimed at finding the true meaning of sacred texts (*shastras*)) to Aryabhatta's empirical estimations, our knowledge tradition was not based on rote memory, but on *pramana* (proof/valid knowledge) and *viveka* (discernment).

Intelligence meant integrating the skill of the hands, the empathy of the heart, and the logic of the mind. The teaching methodology of the Upanishads was rooted in questioning. In the Gurukul system, observation, dialogue, and experience were valued. Knowledge was seen not as a collection of facts, but as a path toward wisdom.

This civilizational wisdom stands in stark contrast to the colonial clerk mindset. Yet, it is the clerk mindset that dominates our classrooms today.

Transition to Present Crisis

This historical imbalance explains why imagination is feared. But history alone does not explain the urgency of today. The crisis has reached a breaking point, visible in scandals like the NEETUG 2026 paper leak,

The instrumental purpose, by contrast, views education as a tool — for jobs, income, productivity, and economic growth. Modern nation-states emphasize this side, often at the cost of the intrinsic purpose.

The crisis begins when the instrumental swallows the intrinsic. Then schools become coaching factories, students stop asking *What am I understanding?* and only ask *What will come in the exam?* Knowledge degrades into information, and imagination disappears.

This imbalance is not new. It has been growing for decades. But its consequences are now visible everywhere: in the anxiety of students, in the corruption of

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**Schools have become
 factories, students
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 and imagination has
 been exiled.**
 ● ●

examinations, and in the erosion of trust in education itself.

Colonial Legacy: The Clerk Mindset

To understand why imagination is feared, we must revisit the colonial roots of our system. In 1835, Lord Macaulay presented his famous Minute, arguing for an education system that would create 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in

morals, and in intellect'.

What did this mean in practice? It meant producing clerks. Men who would obey orders, copy text, and make no errors in calculation. Men who would

not question, imagine, or create.

This vision was enforced through the Three R's: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic. Precision was celebrated; imagination was punished. A student who recited a paragraph verbatim was considered brilliant. A student who asked, *Is this answer suitable for the real world?* was dismissed as a distraction.

The misfortune is that we have internalized this clerk mindset so deeply that we get carried away even without realising that we are getting into clerk mindset. Walk into any coaching institute today, and the colonial mindset is alive. Respect is earned by reciting a theorem without error. Teachers and examiners in India want that students reproduce textbook content wordbyword, down to the exact paragraph and page number. Students panic if they cannot calculate $1000 \div 198$ exactly, even though real life often

where corruption and rote obsession collided to produce tragedy.

Let us explore how the NEET scandal exposed the fragility of our system, and why reclaiming imagination is not just a philosophical choice but a civilizational need.

The NEETUG 2026 Scandal: A System Exposed

If the colonial legacy explains why imagination is feared, the NEETUG 2026 paper leak shows how this fear/problem has escalated into corruption and tragedy in new areas, often in a destructive way and escalated into corruption and tragedy.

On May 3, 2026, lakhs of students sat for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEETUG), the gateway to medical education in India. Days later, whispers that paper had been leaked began. Investigations confirmed the worst. Confidential questions had been circulated through coaching networks in Rajasthan and Maharashtra, and matched wordforword with the actual exam paper.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a 20,000page chargesheet naming 13 accused — insiders, middlemen, and coaching operators. The scandal was not a minor breach; Subject experts associated with the National Testing Agency (NTA) were implicated. Coaching centres had become conduits of corruption.

The fallout was devastating:

- The May 3 exam was cancelled, forcing lakhs of students to retake the test in June.
- Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan was forced to quit post public outrage.
- At least 12 students, unable to bear the pressure of retaking the exam, died by committing suicide.

Professional bodies like FAIMA demanded stricter penalties for insiders and questioned why earlier reform recommendations — including those inspired by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan — were never fully implemented.

The NEET scandal was not just about corruption. It exposed the system's fragility and nexus obsessed with marks and rankings, where imagination and integrity are secondary.

Teachers' Day Context: Remembering Radhakrishnan

On September 5, India celebrates Teachers' Day, marking the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan — philosopher, teacher, and former President. His vision of education was rooted in wisdom, imagination, and moral leadership.

Radhakrishnan believed that education was not about clerical precision but about cultivating reflec-

tive citizens. He warned against reducing learning to rote memorization. He argued that true education must awaken curiosity, nurture imagination, and inspire ethical responsibility.

Contrast this with today's reality: leaked papers, coaching factories, suicides, and a system that rewards rote over imagination. Honouring Radhakrishnan requires more than ceremonies. It requires reclaiming imagination as the soul of education.

At least 12 young lives were lost, victims of a system that values marks over meaning.



Classroom Realities: The Clerk Mindset Lives On

Step into any coaching institute today, one will find the colonial mindset vivid and alive. Respect is earned by reciting a theorem without error. Students panic if they cannot reproduce a formula or definition exactly, even though real life often rewards approximation and flexible thinking. It says how our examcentric system conditions students' mind and they fear approximation.

This obsession with exactness is not intelligence; it is conditioning of minds. It produces clerks who follow orders, not creators who imagine new possibilities.

Parents too are trapped. They spend lakhs on coaching, believing success lies in cracking exams, not in nurturing curiosity. Teachers, under pressure to deliver ranks, suppress imagination or any kind of disruption. Sandwiched between expectations and competition, students lose the joy of learning.

The NEET scandal revealed the human cost of this rote culture. Students who had prepared for years found their efforts nullified by corruption. The sui-

Weeks later, he was no more.

Such stories are not rare. They are silent symptoms of a system that fears imagination. A system that tells students: *Do not question. Do not imagine. Do not create. Just reproduce.*

Transition to Global Lessons

The NEET scandal and classroom realities show why imagination is feared — and why this fear is destructive. Every modern education system faces this challenge of balancing imagination and precision. The difference lies in how countries respond: while nations like Finland, Japan, and Singapore have consciously nurtured creativity alongside discipline, India has allowed rote culture to dominate by clinging to colonial exam traditions.

Now, we will examine global lessons — from Finland's creativitybased model to Japan's discipline-based system — and explore how India can reclaim imagination as the soul of education.

- **Finland:** Often cited as the world's most creative education system, Finland minimizes standardized testing. Students learn through play, projects, and dialogue. Teachers are trusted professionals, empowered to design curricula that nurture curiosity. The result is not just high literacy but a culture of imagination.
- **Japan:** Japan blends discipline with moral education. Alongside mathematics and science, students are taught empathy, responsibility, and respect. Creativity is not sacrificed; it is channelled through collective projects and cultural traditions.

- **Singapore:** Singapore balances rigor with innovation. Its education system emphasizes problemsolving, entrepreneurship, and adaptability. Students are encouraged to think critically, not just reproduce answers.

These models show that imagination can coexist with discipline and rigor. In contrast, India remains trapped in a colonial exam culture, where marks matter more than meaning.

The NEET paper leak was not just a breach of security — it was the symptom of a deeper malaise.

cides that followed were not isolated tragedies; they were the inevitable outcome of a system that values marks over meaning, precision over imagination, obedience over creativity, order over disruption.

The Human Cost of Rote Obsession

Consider the story of a student in Kota, Rajasthan — India's coaching hub. He had studied 14 hours a day for two years, memorizing formulas, reciting definitions, and practising multiplechoice questions. When the NEET paper was leaked, his faith collapsed. *What was the point of all this?* he asked.

Reform Agenda

If India is to reclaim its future, reforms must go beyond superficial fixes. The NEET scandal showed that corruption thrives in education structure which appears to be solid on the surface but are actually fragile, rigid, and prone to breaking under stress. The solution is not just tighter security but a reimagining of education itself.

1. **Need to restructure exam:** We need to do away from singlepaper format which is vulnerable to leaks; and introduce continuous assessment, pro-



jectbased evaluation, and openbook exams that reward understanding over rote memory.

2. Need to empower teacher: We need to train teachers to nurture imagination, not just to inculcate rote culture; and provide autonomy, resources, and respect to teachers who can inspire students and inculcate in them that curiosity is more valuable than mere memorisation of paragraphs and page numbers verbatim.

3. Need to redesign curriculum: We need to evolve a system wherein creativity, estimation, and problemsolving become core; and students are encouraged to ask *Does it make sense?* rather than *Is this the exact answer?*

4. Need to teach technology with integrity: We need to use AI and digital tools to personalize learning, but guard against their misuse; technology enables imagination, not reinforces rote culture.

5. Need to revive traditions of questioning: We need to revive traditions of questioning, debate, and experiential learning; and bring back civilizational values like Shastrartha, Upanishadic dialogue, Aryabhata's estimations and sensitise students that imagination is not a luxury but a civilizational need.

Teachers' Day resolution: Honouring Radhakrishnan

Every year on September 5, 2026, we celebrate Teachers' Day which marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarve-

palli Radhakrishnan, who believed education was about wisdom, imagination, and moral leadership. His vision stands in sharp contrast to today's reality of rote culture, leaked papers, coaching factories, and suicides.

Honouring Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan requires more than ceremonies. It requires reclaiming imagination as the soul of education. It requires asking students to understand meaning, not memorize page numbers. It requires trusting teachers to inspire, not just to enforce rote culture.

True education must
awaken curiosity,
nurture imagination,
and inspire ethical
responsibility.

Conclusion: The Courage to Imagine

The NEET scandal is a wakeup call which suggests when education's instrumental purpose swallows the intrinsic, schools cease to be temples of knowledge; they become factories to generate employment.

Civilizations do not thrive because they have all the answers. They advance because they produce

people who value moral reasoning and imagination, and dare to imagine new possibilities. The Wright brothers imagined flight. Aryabhata imagined the earth rotating. Gandhi imagined freedom through nonviolence.

If India is to reclaim its future, it must reclaim imagination. The next time a student replies to teachers *Don't ask for the page number*, instead ask *Does this make sense to you?* This little attitudinal change may augur first signal of awakening imagination — and the first step toward restoring trust in India's education system. ■

MOHAMMED RAFI

VOICE OF MANY FACES

Mohammed Rafi was more than a singer — he was a phenomenon who reshaped the soundscape of Hindi cinema. From his disciplined collaborations with Naushad to his uncanny ability to adapt his voice to Dilip Kumar's gravitas, Dev Anand's breezy charm, or Shammi Kapoor's exuberance, Rafi embodied versatility with humility. His songs were not just melodies but living performances, carrying the emotions of an entire generation. This story traces how Rafi's voice became the soul of Indian cinema — timeless, adaptable, and unforgettable.



BY DR. VENKATESH GANAPATHY

Author is a Faculty Member, ICFAI Business School, Bengaluru.

Hindi cinema has witnessed many memorable composer-singer partnerships: Shankar-Jaikishan with Mukesh, S.D. Burman with Kishore Kumar, R.D. Burman with Asha Bhosle, and O.P. Nayyar with Geeta Dutt. Yet few collaborations matched the artistic brilliance and enduring influence of Mohammed Rafi and Naushad. Their association was more than professional convenience; it was a meeting of two perfectionists bound by an uncompromising commitment to musical excellence.

Naushad was among the first music directors to recognise that Rafi's voice possessed extraordinary elasticity. It could glide from the serenity of a devotional hymn to the exuberance of a romantic duet, from the grandeur of a classical composition to the earthy flavour of a folk melody. More importantly, Rafi approached every composition with complete surrender to the



composer's vision. He never attempted to overpower a melody with vocal acrobatics. Instead, he treated every note as part of a larger musical canvas.

Behind many of Naushad's finest compositions stood another giant of Hindi cinema — lyricist Shakeel Badayuni. Together, the trio of Naushad,

Shakeel, and Rafi created songs that remain benchmarks of musical and poetic excellence. Naushad composed with the discipline of a classical maestro, Shakeel clothed the melodies in elegant Urdu verse, and Rafi breathed life into every word with astonishing emotional depth.

The partnership produced a succession of classics. *Baiju Bawra* announced Rafi's arrival as a formidable classical singer with masterpieces such as *Man Tarpat Hari Darshan Ko Aaj* and *O Duniya Ke Rakhwale*. In *Dulari*, *Suhani Raat Dhal Chuki* became one of the most haunting expressions of longing ever recorded. Years later, *Kohinoor* showcased another dimension of Rafi's artistry through the semiclassical gem *Madhuban Mein Radhika Naache Re*, a composition that continues to challenge even accomplished vocalists.

Naushad was renowned for demanding perfection. Rehearsals were exhaustive, orchestras meticulously prepared, and singers expected to arrive fully committed. Rafi thrived in this environment. Colleagues often recalled his willingness to rehearse difficult passages repeatedly without complaint until Naushad was satisfied. There was never a hint of impatience or ego. The recording studio became a place of disciplined collaboration rather than individual display.

Their success reshaped the sound of Hindi film music. Until then, playback singing had often been associated with a handful of established voices. Rafi's versatility expanded the possibilities of the medium. Under Naushad's guidance, he demonstrated that a playback singer could convincingly interpret devotional music, romantic ballads, patriotic songs, qawwalis, ghazals, folk-inspired melodies, and demanding classical compositions — all with equal authenticity.

By the end of the 1950s, Rafi had become Naushad's preferred male voice for many leading actors, particularly Dilip Kumar. Together, they produced nearly 150 songs, creating a musical legacy that continues to inspire singers, composers, and listeners alike.

Looking back, it is difficult to separate one man's success from the others. Naushad discovered not merely a gifted singer but an artist capable of transforming complex compositions into timeless classics. Rafi, in turn, found in Naushad a mentor who challenged him to realise the full extent of his extraordinary abilities. Their partnership stands as one of the defin-



From Dilip Kumar's quiet anguish to Shammi Kapoor's exuberance, Rafi's voice became the soul behind every screen persona.

ing creative alliances in Indian cinema — a reminder that true greatness often emerges when exceptional talent meets unwavering trust.

One Voice, Many Faces

One of Mohammed Rafi's greatest gifts was not simply his remarkable vocal range but his extraordinary ability to

become invisible. Unlike many singers whose voices remained instantly recognisable regardless of the actor on screen, Rafi possessed an uncanny talent for adapting his singing to suit the personality, mannerisms, and emotional temperament of each star. He did not merely sing songs; he performed them.

For audiences, the illusion was complete. Whether the hero was romantic, rebellious, tragic, or comic, Rafi's voice seemed to belong naturally to the character. This rare ability made him the preferred playback singer for an astonishingly diverse generation of leading men.

If Dilip Kumar represented restrained intensity, Rafi responded with dignity and emotional depth. His songs for the "Tragedy King" carried quiet sophistica-

tion, allowing the actor's subtle expressions to shine. The combination reached memorable heights in films such as *Kohinoor*, where Rafi's classically inspired renditions perfectly complemented Dilip Kumar's refined screen presence.

With Dev Anand, the challenge was entirely different. Dev's breezy charm, effortless dialogue delivery, and youthful energy demanded a lighter vocal touch. Rafi instinctively adjusted his phrasing, producing songs that matched the actor's distinctive style without ever sounding forced. The result was a series of unforgettable melodies that became synonymous with Dev Anand's golden years.

Then came Shammi Kapoor, whose



electrifying performances transformed Hindi cinema in the late 1950s and 1960s. No playback singer had previously been asked to match such explosive energy. Rafi rose brilliantly to the occasion. His vibrant, high-voltage singing became the perfect counterpart to Shammi's exuberant dance movements and boundless enthusiasm. Kapoor himself often acknowledged that Rafi's voice was integral to his success, famously remarking that while audiences saw him dancing on screen, it was Rafi who supplied the soul of those performances.

Rafi's versatility extended beyond romantic heroes. For the gifted comedian Johnny Walker, he adopted playful inflections and impeccable comic timing, turning songs into miniature theatrical performances. His ability to shift effort-

lessly from humour to pathos, from devotion to romance, demonstrated why composers trusted him with virtually every musical situation imaginable.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to Rafi's artistry came from the actors

Rafi never overpowered a melody — instead, he surrendered to the composer's vision and turned songs into timeless classics.

themselves. Many admitted that his voice enhanced their screen image in ways dialogue alone never could. Rather than competing for attention, Rafi understood that playback singing was an act of collaboration. His objective was not to remind audiences of the singer behind the microphone but to strengthen the illusion unfolding on screen.

Music directors valued this rare quality immensely. They knew that casting Mohammed Rafi meant engaging an artist capable of understanding character, emotion, and cinematic storytelling. Every recording session became an exercise in interpretation. Rafi carefully observed the actor's style, the dramatic situation, and the composer's vision before stepping up to the microphone.

This adaptability explains why Rafi remained relevant across changing generations of stars. Few playback singers have successfully become the voice of so many different personalities without losing their own musical identity. It was a balancing act that demanded not only technical brilliance but also humility — the willingness to let the actor, the story, and the song take centre stage.

In an era blessed with magnificent voices, Mohammed Rafi possessed a rare ability to make audiences forget the singer altogether. They heard Dilip Kumar's quiet anguish, Dev Anand's carefree charm, Shammi Kapoor's exuberance, or Johnny Walker's comic sparkle. That was perhaps Rafi's greatest triumph: he transformed playback singing into an art of complete emotional identification.

Conclusion

Mohammed Rafi's journey through the 1950s and 1960s reveals not just a singer of extraordinary range but an artist of profound empathy. With Naushad, he discovered the discipline of classical perfection. With actors from Dilip Kumar to Shammi Kapoor, he revealed his gift for emotional identification. His voice was not a signature imposed on songs but a medium through which characters breathed, stories unfolded, and cinema itself found resonance.

Rafi's legacy lies in this rare combination of versatility and humility. He could be devotional or romantic, tragic or comic, classical or folk — yet always believable, always authentic. His collaborations remind us that true artistry is not about dominance but about surrender: surrender to the composer's vision, to the actor's persona, and to the audience's emotions.

That is why Mohammed Rafi remains timeless. He was not merely the voice of an era; he was the voice of many faces, many moods, and many generations. His songs continue to echo not just in recordings but in the collective memory of a nation that found its emotions expressed through his voice. ■

TO BE CONTINUED...

VANDE MATARAM

SAARE JAHAN SE ACCHA



When dance becomes devotion and rhythm turns into remembrance, heritage finds its truest expression. The 21st edition of *Saare Jahan Se Accha* unfolded at the Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on 10–11 August 2026, under the artistic vision of Padma Shri and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee Guru Ranjana Gauhar. Presented by Utsav – Educational & Cultural Society, the festival celebrated India's living traditions through Odissi, Bharatanatyam and Kathak, while placing the timeless Guru–Shishya Parampara at its heart. Over two evenings, audiences witnessed a journey that moved from the patriotic strains of *Vande Mataram* to the mythic tale of *Chitrangada*, from devotional invocations to the emotional universe of *Navarasa*, culminating in the joyous finale of *Aanand Utsav*. More than a festival, it was a vibrant reminder that India's cultural legacy is not a relic of the past, but a living, breathing force renewed on stage with every performance.

PRAVASI INDIANS BUREAU (PIB)

The 21st edition of *Saare Jahan Se Accha* unfolded over two memorable evenings on August 10–11, 2026 at the Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Presented by Utsav – Educational & Cultural Society under the artistic leadership of Padma Shri & Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee Guru Ranjana Gauhar, the festival brought together India's finest classical dancers, musicians, gurus and disciples on one platform.

Across two evenings, the auditorium resonated with Odissi, Bharatanatyam and Kathak, celebrating India's rich artistic heritage while placing the timeless Guru–Shishya Parampara at the heart of the festival.

Inaugural Evening happened on 10th August

The festival opened with the auspicious lamp-lighting ceremony graced by eminent personalities: Shovana Narayan, Kathak exponent; Geeta Mahalik, Odissi exponent; Ambassador Shashi Tripathi; S. Raghunathan, former Chief Secretary; writer Sudhamahi Raghunathan; Santosh Nair, Chhau & Contemporary exponent; and Guru

Ranjana Gauhar herself.

This year's Utsav Samman Awards honoured:

- Darshana Jhaveri, Manipuri exponent
- Rashmi Vaidialingam, lawyer, actress & Kuchipudi exponent
- Ratikant Mohapatra, Odissi guru

Other distinguished personalities felicitated include Leela Venkataraman, senior art critic; Chetan Joshi, renowned flautist; Manisha Gawade, art connoisseur; Kavita Dwivedi, Odissi exponent; and Kavita Thakur, Kathak exponent.

The evening's highlight was *Chitrangada – The Warrior Princess* conceived, scripted and choreographed by

The 21st edition of *Saare Jahan Se Accha* celebrated India's living traditions through Odissi, Bharatanatyam and Kathak, placing the timeless Guru–Shishya Parampara at its heart.

Guru Ranjana Gauhar. Inspired by the *Mahabharata* and Tagore's *Chitra*, the production explored the idea of the complete woman — embodying love, courage, dignity and freedom. The stirring Odissi performance, with music by Saroj Mohanty and voice-overs by Avery Chaurey, Sangeeta Bahadur and Punendu, moved audiences deeply and concluded with a standing ovation.

The 11th August Evening

The festival began on a patriotic note with the National Anthem, followed by Vande Mataram in Odissi, choreographed by Guru Ranjana Gauhar and performed by her disciples. Set to A.R. Rahman's music with inputs from Saroj Mohanty, the piece transformed the national song into a powerful dance offering.

Hon'ble Shri Jual Oram, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, and Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh, who graced the festival, were felicitated by Ranjana Gauhar.

- The evening's sequence included
- Shantakaram: Vishnu Vandana, choreographed by Guru Ratikant Mohapatra, set in *Raag Gurjari Todi* and *Tripata Taal*.
 - Ardhanareeswara: Originally cho-





reographed by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, it portrayed the divine union of Shiva and Shakti.

- Navarasa - Expressions of Life: Conceived by Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, exploring the nine rasas through Bharatanatyam.
- Aanand Utsav: A joyous Kathak finale by disciples of Guru Rajendra Gangani, accompanied by Samiullah Khan (vocal & harmonium), Yogesh Gangani (tabla), Nasir Khan (sarangi), Atul Shankar (flute) and Anshika Pandey (vocal).

Each presentation received thunderous applause and standing ovations, reflecting the festival's spirit of devotion and joy.

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From Chitrangada to Vande Mataram, from Navarasa to Aanand Utsav — the festival travelled through the many colours of India's classical arts, reminding audiences that heritage is vibrant, living and continually renewed.
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Conclusion

From the stirring strains of Vande Mataram to the timeless story of Chitrangada, from the devotion of Shantakaram and the symbolism of Ardhanareeswara to the emotional universe of Navarasa and the exuberance of Aanand Utsav, the festival travelled through the many colours of India's classical arts.

The 21st edition of *Saare Jahan Se Accha* celebrated India's heritage not as something past, but as something vibrant, living and continually renewed. Above all, it embodied the spirit of Vande Mataram as Bharat Ki Virasat, Bharat Ka Gaurav. ■

AI & LABOUR

AN INEVITABLE FUTURE

Artificial Intelligence is no longer confined to science fiction or research labs; it is entering every domain of human cognition — analysing, writing, designing, diagnosing, predicting, and even making decisions — at a speed faster than any previous revolution. History shows that every transformation, from the steam engine to the internet, eliminated some jobs, created others, and reshaped many more, but AI is different: it changes not just how we work, but what it means to work. Between fears of machines replacing workers and hopes of machines liberating them lies the truth of a turbulent transition where jobs vanish, transform, and emerge anew. The challenge is not whether this future can be stopped — it is inevitable — but how we prepare, protect, and leverage AI so workers share its benefits rather than bear its brunt.

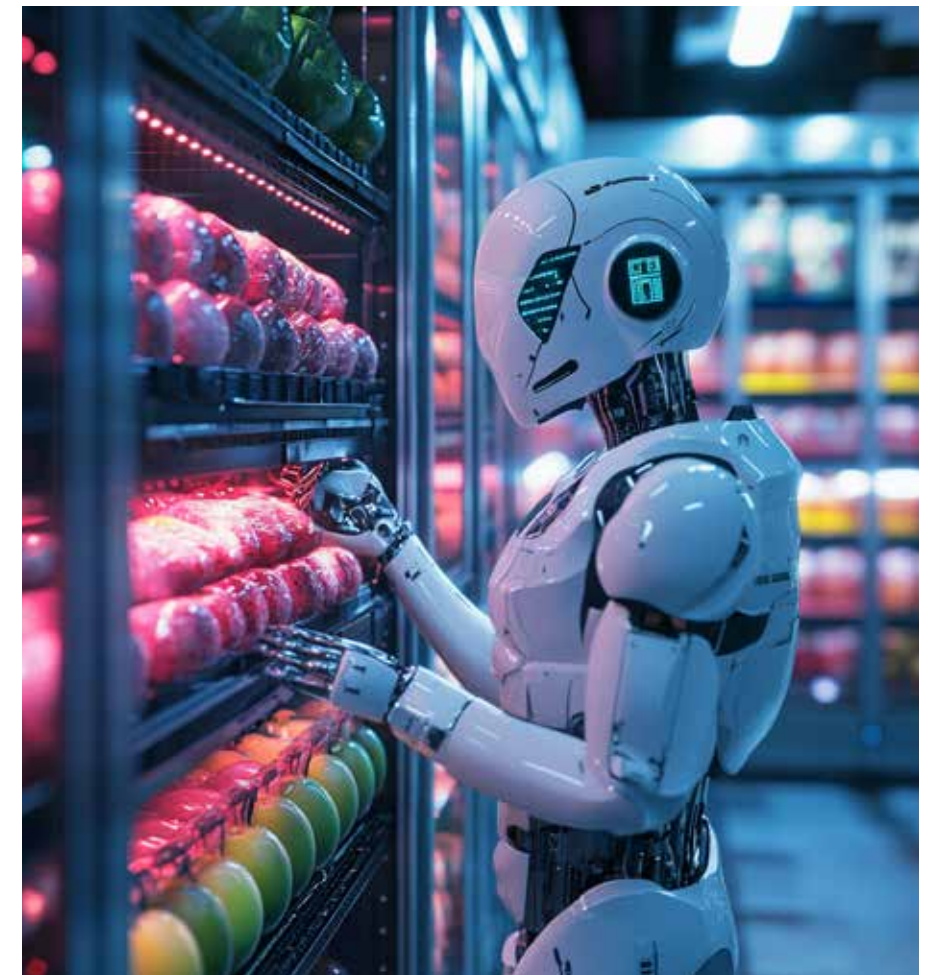


BY : UDAY K VERMA

Author, a Harvard-educated civil servant with forty years of public service at the highest levels of government, has extensive knowledge, experience and expertise in the fields of media and entertainment, corporate affairs, administrative law and industrial and labour reforms.

The question echoes everywhere today: *Will AI take away our jobs?* It is understandable, but perhaps not the best place to begin. Every major technological transformation — the steam engine, electricity, computers, the internet — eliminated some occupations, created others, and transformed many more. AI is different in one crucial respect: it is entering the domain of human cognition. It analyses, writes, translates, designs, diagnoses, predicts, and makes decisions — and it does so at extraordinary speed.

The anxiety is real. A recent paper by Boston University and Wharton re-



searchers, *The AI Layoff Trap*, warns of a dystopian spiral where firms automate excessively, weakening the very purchasing power on which the economy depends. At the other extreme, Elon Musk imagines a future where AI and robots make employment optional, creating a world of abundance.

Between these extremes lies the reality governments must confront: a transition where some jobs disappear, many are transformed, and new ones emerge. The question is not whether this transformation can be stopped. It is how we prepare for it, protect people from its consequences, and leverage its possibilities for their benefit.

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The real challenge is not whether jobs will vanish, but how they will change — and whether workers are prepared, protected, and empowered to share the benefits.

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The Job May Survive — But Change

The most visible concern is job loss. Some occupations will vanish. But equally important is that many jobs will survive while the work within them changes dramatically.

A lawyer may spend less time researching; a doctor may work alongside intelligent diagnostic systems; a factory worker may supervise autonomous machinery. The International Labour Organization suggests that AI is more likely to transform or augment work than eliminate entire occupations.

The worker's greatest vulnerability, therefore, may not be unemployment but the obsolescence of skills (a person's knowledge or abilities become outdated or less useful due to technological change, shifting industry demands, or new professional standards.). Education can no longer be confined to youth. Workers will need



to learn, unlearn, and relearn multiple times during their careers. The State must prepare for this reality.

When the Boss Becomes an Algorithm

Another less visible change is the rise of algorithmic management. Recruitment, allocation of work, performance assessment, and scheduling can now be decided by Algorithms. A worker may receive assignments from an app, be continuously assessed by algorithms, or even find retention or layoff decisions by machine logic with no human intervention.

This raises an uncomfortable ques-

tion: *If a machine makes a decision about me, who do I appeal to?*

Workers will need new rights in the AI age — the right to know when an algorithm has influenced an important decision, the right to an explanation and human review, and protection against discriminatory or intrusive systems. Technology can assist management, but it must not make management unaccountable.

Social Security Must Follow the Worker

AI also exposes weaknesses in traditional socialsecurity arrangements. To-

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If a machine makes a decision about me, who do I appeal to?

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morrow's worker may move between regular employment, gig work, selfemployment, unemployment, and retraining. If benefits remain tied to a single employer, workers will repeatedly fall through the cracks.

Social security must therefore fol-

low the worker, not the job. India has begun laying foundations through eShram and recognition of gig and platform workers. The next step is portable, lifecycle protection covering pension, provident fund, health, disability, maternity, accident protection, and assistance during transitions.

AI itself can make such systems more responsive. Instead of expecting workers to navigate complex entitlements, technology could identify eligibility and guide them through the process.

The principle is simple: *The worker*

should not have to discover the welfare system; the welfare system should discover the worker.

Prepare. Protect. Leverage.

The State's response to AI and Labour can be reduced to three words: **Prepare. Protect. Leverage.**

- **Prepare:** Anticipate which occupations and skills will change. Provide opportunities for continuous learning and retraining. A disrupted worker should not be told merely to 'adapt' and left alone.
- **Protect:** Establish Alera labour rights addressing algorithmic decisionmaking, work-place surveillance, discrimination, and data use. Consider an AI Labour Impact Assessment for major technological changes, examining employment effects, skill requirements, retraining needs, occupational safety, and socialsecurity implications.
- **Leverage:** Use AI itself for labour's benefit. It can help inspectors identify likely violations, detect patterns preceding work-place accidents, identify workers entitled to benefits, and simplify grievance redressal. Imagine a worker asking in his own language: *What are my rights? What benefits can I claim? Where do I complain?* That is not AI replacing labour — it is AI working for labour.

A Future We Can Shape

We cannot — and should not — stop technological progress. But workers must not be left alone to absorb its costs. The gains from higher productivity must not accrue only to those who own the technology while the risks are borne by those who depend on their labour.

The real challenge is not to decide whether we are for or against AI. It is to ensure that as machines acquire greater capacity to make decisions, human beings do not surrender their capacity to make the important decisions about machines.

We may not be able to determine how intelligent machines will become. But we can still determine what role we allow them to play in the lives of working people. ■

PAKHAWAJ

ECHOES OF A 500-YEAR LEGACY

In conversation with *Pravasi Indians'* **MADHU SEN**, young maestro and living legend **PT. RISHI SHANKAR UPADHYAY**— torchbearer of the *Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay Pakhawaj Parampara* of Gaya, Bihar — reflects on a 500 year legacy of rhythm, devotion and unbroken tradition. Recipient of the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar (2023), he speaks about his journey, the grandeur of the Pakhawaj, and his mission to inspire the audiences and next generations to embrace this ancient percussion tradition. The Pakhawaj is more than an instrument — it is a heartbeat of tradition, a voice of devotion, and a bridge between centuries of heritage and the present. Excerpts...

Could you share about your family background and its influence on your journey as a Pakhawaj artist?

I belong to the illustrious *Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay Pakhawaj Parampara* of Gaya, Bihar, a lineage that has preserved the Pakhawaj tradition for over five centuries. My ancestors migrated from Rajasthan at the request of the Bihta state Raja and were conferred the title *Upadhyay* in recognition of their artistry. My great grandfather was a Mridanga maestro, while Pt. Basudev Upadhyay was an exceptional Pakhawaj player and Dhrupad singer, giving our gharana its name. I trained for 15 years under my grandfather Pandit Ramji Upadhyay and my father Pandit Ravi Shankar Upadhyay. Their discipline and devotion shaped not only my music but also my character. Growing up in such an environment taught me that mastering the Pakhawaj is about humility, patience, and complete surrender to the art.



What is the younger generation missing out on due to ignorance about Indian classical music?

Music today is global, and exploring different traditions is valuable. But Indian classical music is more than entertainment — it is our heritage, carrying centuries of wisdom and spirituality. Without awareness, young people miss the depth of rhythm, the science of *tala*, the creativity of improvisation, and the emotional bond between artist and instrument. Classical traditions teach patience, sharpen concentration, and nurture discipline. If ignored, we risk losing a priceless cultural identity.

Percussion is often seen as accompaniment. How does it enhance a performance and showcase a percussionist's talent?

Rhythm is the foundation of any performance. A skilled percussionist adds life, energy, and emotional depth. The Pakhawaj is unique — not only an accompanying instrument but also a complete solo voice with its own language. Tradition links it to Lord Shiva's *Damru*, giving it spiritual significance. Through *tala*, *layakari*, and improvisation, a percussionist creates dialogue with the main artist, enhancing mood and expression while also showcasing creativity and technical mastery.

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The Pakhawaj is not just rhythm — it is humility, patience and complete surrender to the art.
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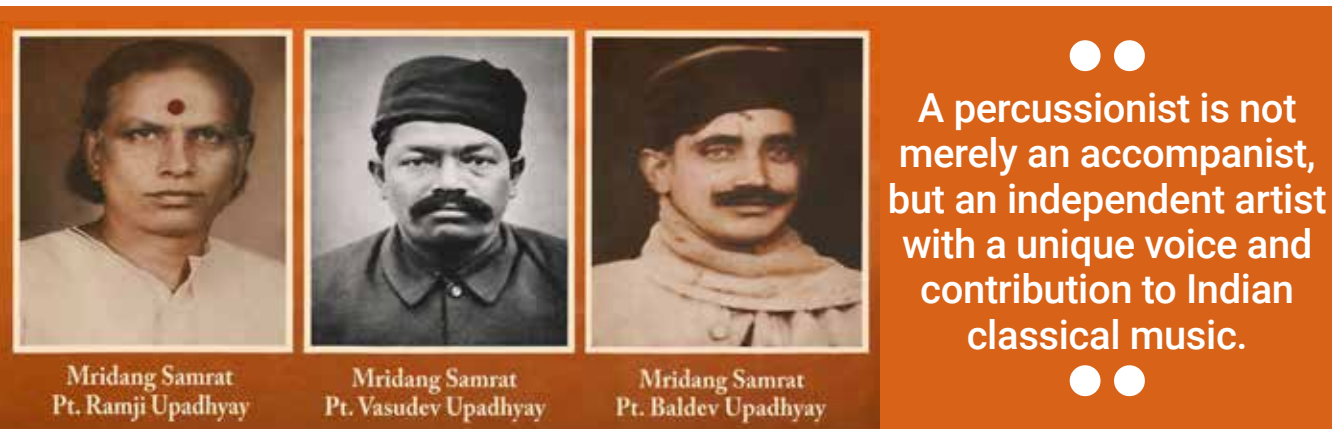
You have accompanied stalwarts in classical concerts. How have those experiences shaped you overall?

Performing with legends like Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Pt. Bhajan Sopori, Pt. Tarun Bhattacharya, Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar, and my father has been invaluable. Their dedication and creativity inspired me deeply. Each performance taught me sensitivity, imagination, and the importance of rhythm. Accompaniment is not about following — it is about understanding the mood and enhancing it. These experiences honed my skills and deepened my respect for tradition.

What changes have the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar brought in you?

It was a humbling milestone, recognising not just me but the tradition. Being honoured as one of the youngest Top-class Artists by AIR and Door Darshan and receiving the title of Pandit also reinforced in me a responsibility. Such a recognition makes me feel that a percussionist is not merely an accompanist but an independent artist with a unique voice and contribution to Indian classical music.





What efforts are you making to popularise the Pakhawaj among youngsters?

My mission is to create awareness about the Pakhawaj as both tradition and vocation. Through teaching, workshops, and performances across India and abroad — in Singapore, China, America, Europe, Dubai, and Russia — I introduce students to its depth and dis-

cipline. When they experience its power and spiritual resonance, they develop respect and interest. With support from gurus, institutions, and audiences, I aim to ensure this glorious tradition reaches future generations.

As an artist, what's your dream?

My commitment to the Pakhawaj is lifelong. Recognition is secondary; con-

tinuous growth and devotion are my goals. Every day of practice reveals new depths of creativity and expression. I wish to explore new possibilities while staying rooted in tradition, learn from great masters, and present the Pakhawaj's grandeur to its audiences worldwide. My vision is to inspire youth to embrace this art and ensure it flourishes for generations to come. ■

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JAGANNATH ON AVENIDA PAULISTA

For one unforgettable day, São Paulo's iconic Avenida Paulista belonged to Lord Jagannath. With more than 5,000 people joining the grand Rath Yatra Brazil procession, the richly adorned chariot of Lord Jagannath, rolled through the city's heart, the largest festival of its kind outside India — uniting cultures, families and communities in a celebration of spiritual joy. Guided by Srila Gurudeva Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Vana Gosvami Maharaja, the event reflected nearly three decades of complete dedication for Pure Bhakti seva and cultural friendship between India and Brazil.



BY PREMA BHAKTI
DAS AND OTHERS

A Festival of Divine Love: Devotion and Unity in motion

At least 5,000 people thronged Avenida Paulista for Rath Yatra Brazil, joining a magnificent celebration of devotion, music, dance, colour, spiritual unity and extasis. Organisers described it as the largest Rath Yatra ever held outside India — a historic milestone in the festival's journey across Brazil.

Above the joyful crowd rose a grand chariot carrying the richly decorated form of Lord Jagannath. Adorned with flowers, ornaments and garments, the Lord gave darshan to thousands as the chariot rolled down one of Latin America's most iconic avenues. Devotees and visitors pulled the ropes, sang the holy names and danced as kirtan filled the streets of São Paulo.

The Guiding Hand of Srila Gurudeva
The celebration was held under the



guidance of Srila Gurudeva Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Vana Gosvami Maharaja Ji, whose life has been dedicated to carrying the message of bhakti across the world.

For 29 years, Gurudeva has travelled tirelessly, completing more than 60 major international tours across Europe, Asia, North and South America, and Oceania. His followers regard him as the most widely travelled Vaishnava Saint of the modern era. Brazil has become the most cherished part of this mission, with Gurudeva returning twice a year, year after year to guide devotees, encourage seva, and participate in worship and kirtan. His relationship with the country spans nearly three decades, including 15 years of Rath Yatra seva all around Brazilian cities and more than a decade of celebrations on Avenida Paulista.

Brazil's Cultural Embraces

Over the years, Rath Yatra in Brazil has grown from a devotional gathering into a major cultural festival. This transformation has been possible through Gurudeva's guidance, the tireless service of Brazilian devotees, and the mercy of Lord Jagannath.

The presence of the Consul General of India in São Paulo, Mr Hansraj Singh Verma, for the second consecutive year added diplomatic significance, reflecting the cultural friendship between India and Brazil. Indian spiritual heritage was presented not as distant, but as a living tradition embraced by Brazilian families, youth and visitors from diverse backgrounds.

Traditional Odissi dance by ICCR performers brought elegance and classical beauty, while musicians and devotees led powerful kirtan. The atmosphere turned even more vibrant during the Holi colours celebration, as clouds of brilliant hues rose above the avenue and thousands danced together in joy.

Service Behind the Celebration

Behind the spectacle lay an equally remarkable service effort. Volunteers worked tirelessly to prepare and dis-



Over 5,000 devotees and visitors filled São Paulo's Avenida Paulista, making it Brazil's biggest celebration of Lord Jagannath.

With 29 years of tireless travel, Srila Gurudeva has brought the message of pure bhakti to continents worldwide — and nurtured Brazil's Rath Yatra for over a decade.

tribute free vegetarian prasada to thousands. Every plate was offered without distinction, embodying the universal spirit of Rath Yatra: no one is excluded from the mercy of Lord Jagannath.

Rath Yatra is the festival where the Lord leaves the temple and comes into the streets to meet everyone. On Avenida Paulista, that timeless message unfolded on an extraordinary scale.

India and Brazil Bhai Bhai

As the chariot moved forward, India and Brazil seemed to move together — united through devotion, culture, music, service and joy. What began years ago as a dedicated offering has flourished into a historic gathering, carrying Srila Gurudeva's worldwide mission of love and peace into the heart of Brazil. ■

THE HUSH OF IRONY

In *The Hush of the Uncaring Sea* (2025), Upamanyu Chatterjee gathers four novellas that traverse tragedy, crime, satire and history — each probing the frailties of human existence and the absurdities of power. From the maritime ordeal of young Abani to the courtroom satire of *The Revenge of the Non vegetarian*, from the detective intrigue of *The Stink of Red Herring* to the colonial ironies of *The Hapless Prince*, Chatterjee blends social realism with biting humour and psychological depth. The collection reaffirms his place as one of India's most incisive story-tellers, entertaining readers while compelling them to reflect on justice, empathy and the human condition.



BY DR. VED MITRA SHUKLA

Though the reviewer is an Associate Professor of English at Rajdhani College, University of Delhi, he is equally proficient in Hindi too.

Introduction

Upamanyu Chatterjee, best known for his cult classic *English, August: An Indian Story* (1988), occupies a distinctive place in Indian English fiction. His writing blends postcolonial social realism with biting satire, exposing the absurdities of bureaucracy, institutional authority, and social hierarchies. Yet his work is not confined to these categories. Chatterjee continually experiments with narrative form, tone, and theme, producing fiction that entertains while provoking reflection.

His latest collection, *The Hush of the Uncaring Sea* (2025), brings together four novellas written between 2018 and 2025: *The Hush of the Uncaring Sea*, *The Revenge of the Non-vegetarian*, *The Stink of Red Herring*, and *The Hapless Prince*. Each novella explores a different facet of human experience — tragedy, crime, satire, and history — yet all are united by Chatter-

jee's sharp eye for irony and his deep humanitarian concerns.

The Hush of the Uncaring Sea

The title novella, adapted from Beeshok Chatterjee's short story *The Piano Man*, is a haunting tale of youthful vulnerability. Its protagonist, Abani, embodies the helplessness of ordinary individuals caught in the machinery of authority.

Abani's visit to the Kolkata seaport with his relative Bishnu Palit turns into a nightmare when he accidentally locks himself in a ship's linen room. Discovered as a stowaway, he becomes a problem for Captain Tomic, who refuses to bear the legal and financial burden of returning him safely. The captain orders that Abani be abandoned at sea on a makeshift wooden boat.

The novella charts Abani's solitary struggle against despair. His fleeting hopes of rescue dissolve into memories of his mother and prayers to God. Chatterjee transforms this maritime tragedy into an allegory of institutional cruelty versus human empathy. The story compels readers to ask whether rules and formalities should outweigh compassion. Its answer is clear: civilisation is measured not by its laws but by its capacity for empathy.

The Revenge of the Nonvegetarian

The second novella shifts from sea to courtroom, weaving satire into a grim tale of crime and punishment. Basant Kumar Bal, a domestic servant in the Dalvi household, is accused of murdering six family members by setting their home ablaze. His supposed motive: revenge for being insulted over his love for nonvegetarian food.

From the outset, Basant's guilt is not in doubt. The intrigue lies in the judicial

● ●
In *The Hush of the Uncaring Sea*, Chatterjee shows that civilisation is measured not by its laws but by its compassion.
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process — how evidence is marshalled, how red tape entangles, and how verdicts reflect deeper social prejudices. The novella becomes a commentary on food culture and identity, exposing the intersections of class, religion, and justice.

Chatterjee's satire bites hardest in the portrayal of the legal system. The

judgment condemns Basant, but the narrative nudges readers to question whether justice is merely procedural or whether it must grapple with ethical and social dimensions. The novella interrogates revenge, guilt, and punishment while mocking the absurdities of bureaucracy.

The Stink of Red Herring

The third novella adopts the conventions of detective fiction, only to subvert them with psychological depth. Based on a real incident from 1961, it introduces Prem Kumar, a private detective who unravels a labyrinthine conspiracy.

At first glance, the case appears to be a kidnapping. Yet, as Prem Kumar peels away layers of deception, he exposes a far more sinister plot. The criminals deploy "red herrings" — false clues designed to mislead. The novella's title underscores its central metaphor: the stink of false evidence must be confronted to uncover truth.

Prem Kumar's meticulous investigation culminates in justice, and the epilogue sees him establish the Globe Detective Agency in Delhi. Beyond its detective thrills, the novella meditates on human nature, deception, and the resilience of truth. It affirms that while loss is irreparable, honest inquiry ensures that crime cannot conceal itself forever.

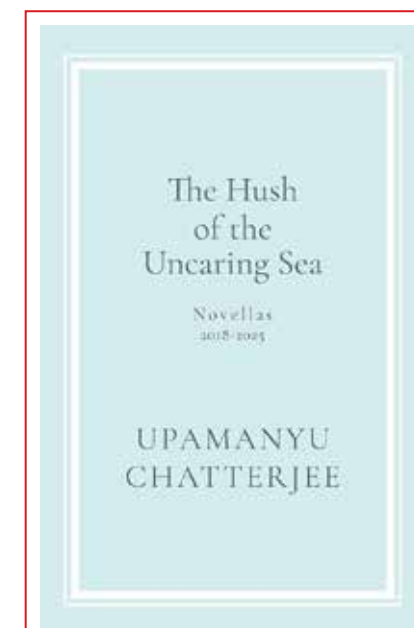
The Hapless Prince

The final novella, *The Hapless Prince*, blends historical fiction with political satire. Set during British colonial rule, it follows King Hariram of Bhawanipur — educated, sensitive, and progressive, yet shackled by imperial constraints.

Hariram dreams of introducing modern education, administrative reform, and cultural renaissance. Inspired by Sri Aurobindo's nationalist ideas, he seeks to liberate his state from stagnation. But the British system allows only limited autonomy, reducing Indian princes to ornamental rulers.

The novella portrays Hariram's crown as a symbol of bondage. His plight mirrors that of many princely states — rich in prestige but poor in freedom. Through satire, Chatterjee critiques colonial power politics while

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From courtroom drama to colonial irony, his novellas expose the absurdities of power while probing the human condition.
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THE HUSH OF THE UNCARING SEA



Author: Upamanyu Chatterjee

Language: English

Publisher: Speaking Tiger Books

Year of Publication: 10th April, 2025

Pages: 350 pages

Price: Price- 699/- (Hardbound)

Category: Fiction

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evoking the tragedy of an honest king trapped in history's ironies. The title aptly captures Hariram's fate: a prince with authority but without liberty.

Literary Style and Technique

What makes Chatterjee's novellas compelling is not just their subject matter but their craft. His prose is

marked by:

- Subtle humour that undercuts solemnity.
- Multilayered plots that blend fact and fiction.
- Sharp psychological insight into human motives and dilemmas.
- Satirical edge that exposes hypocrisy in institutions and individuals alike.

The title metaphor, "the hush of the uncaring sea," resonates across the collection. It symbolises contemporary insensitivity, existential loneliness, and the silence of institutions when faced with human suffering.

Place in Indian English Fiction

Chatterjee's work situates him among the most incisive Indian English writers of his generation. While contemporaries like Amitav Ghosh or Vikram Seth explored history and epic narrative, Chatterjee carved a niche in satirical realism, dissecting the absurdities of bureaucracy and social life. His fiction bridges the personal and the political, the comic and the tragic, the mundane and the profound.

The Hush of the Uncaring Sea extends this trajectory. It demonstrates his ability to move across genres — tragedy, courtroom drama, detective fiction, historical satire — while maintaining thematic coherence. The collection underscores his versatility and his enduring commitment to probing the human condition.

Conclusion

The Hush of the Uncaring Sea is not merely a collection of four novellas; it is a tapestry of human ironies, mysteries, and moral dilemmas. Chatterjee moves effortlessly from courtroom satire to maritime tragedy, from detective intrigue to historical allegory. His fiction entertains, but more importantly, it unsettles — forcing readers to confront uncomfortable truths about society, justice, and power.

With this work, Upamanyu Chatterjee reaffirms his place among India's most incisive storytellers. His narratives remind us that literature is not only about telling stories but about holding a mirror to civilisation itself ■



BALANCING ACT

RBI'S AUGUST PAUSE



BY SATISH SINGH

A Mumbai-based columnist, the author currently serves as an Assistant General Manager with SBI.

The Reserve Bank of India's August review may have left the repo rate unchanged at 5.25%, but the decision carries weight far beyond a simple pause. By holding its neutral stance, the RBI has chosen caution over complacency — acknowledging the persistence of food and fuel price pressures, the unevenness of growth across sectors, and the volatility of global markets. The message is clear: stability today is a strategy to preserve credibility and flexibility tomorrow. Rather than chasing market expectations, the central bank is steering policy with vigilance, balancing inflation risks against growth resilience in a shifting economic landscape.

Introduction

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) August review decision to retain the repo rate at 5.25% and maintain a neutral monetary policy stance was widely anticipated. Yet to dismiss it as "no change" would be misleading. The central bank is no longer balancing a simple tradeoff between inflation control and growth support. Its challenge is more complex: to recognise how risks are evolving, preserve credibility, and keep policy flexible enough to respond when circumstances demand. In this context, the pause is not inaction but a deliberate strategy of waiting, assessing, and keeping options open.

Inflation: A Shifting Challenge

The most difficult part of the current policy calculus is the changing character of inflation. The RBI projects consumer price inflation to average 5% in 202627. But the quarterly trajectory is less reassuring: rising from 4.7% in Q2 to 5.9% in Q3, before easing only marginally to 5.5% in Q4. The annual average conceals the risk of renewed price pressure in the second half.

When inflation repeatedly threatens to move above target rather than settle around it, premature easing could unsettle expectations and force sharper corrective action later. Much of the present pressure stems from supply-sensitive items such as food and fuel. Higher interest rates cannot increase vegetable arrivals, improve harvests, or moderate global crude oil prices. Yet monetary policy remains relevant. Persistently expensive food can feed into wages, transport costs, and services prices, turning a temporary shock into generalised inflation. The RBI's task is not to prevent the firstround rise in prices but to contain secondround effects and keep expectations anchored. Moderation in core inflation is reassuring, but not sufficient to justify complacency.

Growth Outlook: Room for Patience

On growth, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has some breathing space. The forecast for real GDP



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The RBI's August decision is not inaction but a strategy of caution, keeping options open while inflation risks remain.
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growth has been raised from 6.6% to 6.7%. Projected growth of 7% in Q1 and between 6.4% and 6.8% in subsequent quarters suggests the economy is not headed for an abrupt slowdown. Resilient services, improving private consumption, public capital expenditure, and infrastructure activity continue to support demand.

When growth appears reasonably durable, there is little justification for making money cheaper merely to sat-

isfy financialmarket expectations. The more pertinent questions are whether the expansion is broadbased and whether private investment and employment are advancing at a comparable pace.

Unevenness Beneath the Aggregate

Strong aggregate GDP growth does not mean every segment of the economy is equally robust. Rural demand, the cost of credit for small enterprises, the qual-

ity of employment, and private capital expenditure may remain uneven. With the repo rate unchanged, the burden on fiscal and structural policy becomes greater.

Food inflation requires better storage, efficient supply chains, calibrated trade management, and higher agricultural productivity. Durable growth needs stronger skills, employment, manufacturing, and private investment. Asking monetary policy to re-

solve every difficulty exceeds both its capacity and mandate.

Liquidity and Transmission

It is essential to distinguish the policy rate from the availability of funds. The repo rate indicates the price of central bank money, while system liquidity influences the ease with which funds are available at that price. By keeping the standing deposit facility at 5% and the marginal standing facility and Bank Rate at 5.5%, the RBI preserves the policy corridor.

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By holding rates steady, the central bank seeks to guide inflation without damaging growth, preserving stability amid global uncertainty.
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At the same time, its willingness to use open market operations and other instruments signals that it will not allow a systemic shortage of cash to unnecessarily brake growth. Adequate liquidity, however, is not the same as a permanent surplus. Excess cash can dilute the antiinflation signal, while persistent scarcity can push market rates needlessly above the policy rate. The appropriate test is whether overnight rates remain orderly around the policy rate and productive credit is not constrained.

For banks, the balance is not easy. Demand for credit remains firm, but the cost of mobilising deposits, the differing pace at which loan and deposit rates are repriced, and pressure on net interest margins shape lending decisions. Adequate system liquidity does not mean every borrower receives funds on identical terms. Banks are likely to attach greater importance to asset quality and riskbased pricing. Pol-



icy success should therefore be judged not only by the quantity of liquidity but also by how efficiently credit reaches productive sectors, small businesses, and viable investment projects.

Global Setting: Case for Caution

The international environment strengthens the case for caution. Geopolitical tensions, volatility in crude oil and commodity prices, the policy direction of major central banks, and trade uncertainties can affect domestic inflation, the exchange rate, and capital flows. India's dependence on imported energy means a sharp rise in oil prices could strain both domestic prices and the external balance. Unexpected changes in global interest rates could similarly influence capital movements and the rupee.

In such an environment, the value of a neutral stance lies in its flexibility. The MPC can respond to incoming data without committing itself in advance to a particular course.

Impact on Households and Industry

For households and industry, the immediate message is stability, not relief. Equated monthly instalments on floating-rate loans are unlikely to change substantially merely because the poli-

A neutral stance gives the RBI room to respond to shifting global shocks, from oil prices to capital flows, without locking into a rigid path.

cy rate has been held. Borrowing costs will depend on banks' funding costs, the borrower's risk profile, and the transmission of earlier policy actions.

Term deposit rates will likewise not be determined by the repo rate alone. Industry may benefit from continued system liquidity, yet investment decisions will also hinge on final demand, capacity utilisation, and global uncertainty. A policy pause should not be interpreted as a promise of universally cheaper credit or a guaranteed market rally.

The Real Merit of the August Review

The real merit of the August review lies not in dramatic intervention but in keeping policy options open. By raising its growth forecast, the RBI has ex-

pressed confidence in the economy's resilience. By refraining from premature easing, it has acknowledged the risk of renewed inflation.

Future action will depend on food prices, core inflation, the monsoon and supply conditions, credit and deposit trends, and global financial developments. If price pressures ease durably and expectations remain anchored, space for accommodation could emerge. If inflation becomes broad-based, caution may persist longer.

Conclusion

Monetary policy credibility is tested most severely when no easy option is available. The present decision is an answer to precisely that challenge: guiding inflation towards target without damaging growth, and maintaining liquidity without weakening discipline. This balance is not a fixed point but a continuing process of adjustment.

In the months ahead, the RBI's success will be judged less by whether it changes the policy rate than by whether its response to changing data is timely, transparent, and proportionate. The August pause is therefore not a retreat but a statement of intent: stability today, flexibility tomorrow, and credibility always. ■

डॉलर, डिप्लोमेसी और देशभक्ति

एन.आर.आई., बैंकिंग और मीडिया की दुनिया में जब डॉलर, डिप्लोमेसी और देशभक्ति एक साथ मिल जाएँ तो नतीजा होता है शुद्ध व्यंग्य। इस नाटक में काल्पनिक पात्रों और अतिरंजित स्थितियों के ज़रिए दिखाया गया है कि कैसे लेवरेज लोन, मीडिया की हू हा और विशेषज्ञों की नकली पहचान मिलकर हास्यास्पद दृश्य रचते हैं। उद्देश्य सिर्फ मनोरंजन है — और व्यंग्य के माध्यम से समाज की विडंबनाओं पर हल्की फुल्की चोट करना।



BY DR NILAY RANJAN SINGH

With 22 years of experience in banking, the author currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of State Bank of India, DIFC, Dubai. He has authored a collection of Hindi poems titled *Kaner Ke Phool* and contributed to a management book and *World Encyclopaedia on UN SDGs*. He has also received several international accolades, including the recent 'CEO of the Year' award in the Middle East.

(याद रखें: इस नाटक की पटकथा और सभी पात्र काल्पनिक हैं और इसका उद्देश्य व्यंग्यपरक शुद्ध मनोरंजन है।)

इसका किसी भी वास्तविक घटना से कोई लेना-देना नहीं है और न ही इसका उद्देश्य किसी पर कोई लांछन लगाना या किसी की प्रतिष्ठा को हानि पहुंचाना है। अगर कोई पात्र या नाम किसी से मिलते-जुलते हैं, तो यह मात्र संयोग है। एन.आर.आई. का भारत के लिए योगदान अमूल्य है और वह विदेशों में देश के संदेशवाहक हैं जो भारत का नाम ऊँचा कर रहे हैं और भारतीय बैंकों ने इनको भारत से जुड़े रहने तथा निवेश करने में महती भूमिका निभाई है।

भारत का एक खास तरह का समृद्ध वर्ग और असमृद्ध वर्ग जो विदेशों में रहता है, जिसे हम और आप एन.आर.आई. के नाम से जानते हैं, आजकल एक ही शब्द जान रहा है लेवरेज लोन। लेवरेज लोन जो एवरेज भारतीय को मिलता नहीं है और असमृद्ध एन.आर.आई. अर्थात ब्लू कॉलर वर्कर के लिए सपने जैसा है। एन.आर.आई. (देसी भाषा में जिसे लोग 'नॉन रिलाएबल इंडियन' कहते हैं) अब रिलाएबल इंडियन बन गया है और लेवरेज लोन से देशभक्ति और डिप्लोमेसी दोनों को साध रहा है, डॉलर ड्रीम पूरा करते हुए। जब बात एन.आर.आई. की हो तो मीडिया और बैंकिंग कैसे उससे अछूते रह सकते हैं। आइए हम इस व्यंग्य नाटक के माध्यम से एन.आर.आई., बैंकिंग और मीडिया की हू-हा में डॉलर डिप्लोमेसी से देशभक्ति का प्रदर्शन देखते हैं।

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बात-बात में ऐक्टिंग करता है और डायलॉग मारता है

14. अन्य ग्राहक

दृश्य 1

“बैंक में ग्राहक सेवा”

(अठन्नी बैंक के रिसेप्शन पर रिसेप्शनिस्ट बैठी है और उसके सामने कुछ ग्राहक बैठे हैं, एक तरफ स्टाफ मीटिंग चल रही है जिसमें बैंक मैनेजर और दो कर्मचारी बैठे हैं)

रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा रील बनाने के लिए अलग-अलग तरीके से सेल्फी ले रही है और वीडियो बनाने की कोशिश कर रही है। ऐसे में परेशान होकर ग्राहक बार-बार उसे घूर-घूर कर देख रहे हैं। एक ग्राहक जो एक्टर भी है उसे रील बनाने के टिप्स दे रहा है।

ग्राहक (टिल्लू कानपुरिया): मैडम जी रील ऐसे ही नहीं बनाते, कुछ डायलॉग बोली।



रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा: ज्यादा पर्सनल मत हो। क्या डायलॉग बोलू, “मेलोडी खाओ, खुद जान जाओ”?

एक ग्राहक: मैडम जी मेरा के.वाई.सी. कब होगा?

रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा: “मेलोडी खाओ, खुद जान जाओ”।

(वह अभी भी रील बनाने में लगी है)

(ग्राहक बार-बार जा रहे हैं उसके पास)

रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा ने टिल्लू कानपुरिया को अपने पास बुलाया और बोला: मेरा एक काम करोगे मैं अभी आती हूँ रील बना के, तुम तब तक रिसेप्शन पर बैठ जाओ मेरे बदले।

ग्राहक (टिल्लू कानपुरिया): मैडम जी, मैं क्या करूंगा, मैं तो खुद अपना काम करने आया हूँ, लेवरेज डिपोजिट के बारे में पूछने।

रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा: तुम्हें जानना है न लेवरेज डिपॉजिट के बारे में, तो मेरा काम करो पहले।

ग्राहक (टिल्लू कानपुरिया): ठीक है मैडम! लेकिन मुझे करना क्या है? ग्राहक आएंगे तो उन्हें क्या बताऊंगा?

रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा: तू दो मिनट यहाँ बैठ पहले और जो भी कॉल आए उसका फ़ोन जरूर उठा लेना। सिर्फ सिंपल सवाल होंगे, उसका जवाब आए तो दे देना, नहीं तो कह देना “मेलोडी खाओ,

ग्राहक: लेकिन...

रिसेप्शनिस्ट (टिल्लू कानपुरिया): कोई लेकिन वेकिन नहीं, “मेलोडी खाओ, खुद जान जाओ”।

दूसरा ग्राहक: अरे हटो, पहले स्ट्रेट ऑफ होरमुज खुलवाओ, तभी तो ओ.टी.पी. आ पाएगा। एक महीने हो गए हैं मेरा खाता नहीं खुला है?

रिसेप्शनिस्ट (टिल्लू कानपुरिया): भगवान के यहाँ देर है पर अंधेर नहीं, उसके यहाँ तुम्हारा खाता भी जरूर खुलेगा।

ग्राहक (झल्लाकर): अरे मैं अपना ऊपर जाने का खाता नहीं कह रहा हूँ, बैंक का खाता खुलवाना है।

कब खुलेगा बताओ?

टिल्लू कानपुरिया: “मेलोडी खाओ, खुद जान जाओ”।

एक और ग्राहक: मेरे के.वाई.सी. का क्या हुआ?

टिल्लू कानपुरिया: के.वाई.सी. का मतलब है काट यहाँ चक्कर, इसलिए अगली बार हो जायेगा, तब तक “मेलोडी खाओ, खुद जान जाओ”।

एक और ग्राहक: मुझे लोन का डॉक्यूमेंट साइन करना है?

टिल्लू कानपुरिया: जाओ पहले उस आदमी

टिल्लू कानपुरिया: कुछ नहीं, सब ठीक रहा। सबको अलग-अलग टेस्ट का मेलोडी खिला दिया।

दृश्य 2

“बैंक की मीटिंग: लेवरेज लोन का टारगेट”
दलदल दाधीच: लॉगिन पांडे जी आपको पता है ना लेवरेज लोन करना है।

लॉगिन पांडे: हाँ पता है सर, सारे एन.आर. आई. को पकड़-पकड़ कर पैसे भिजवाने हैं उनके इंडिया।

मैनेजर पांडे: लेकिन सर लोग ज्यादा लेवरेज मांग रहे हैं?

दलदल दाधीच: दे दो। खास लोगों को ज्यादा लेवरेज बाकी लोगों को एवरेज।

(तभी मूर्खिका हिमाकत कैमरा मेन गुल्लू के साथ इसको कवर करने बैंक आती है)

मूर्खिका: गुल्लू पूरे बैंक को कवर कर लो, जो लेवरेज लोन ले उसे देशभक्त बताना है और जो बिना लेवरेज लोन के डिपॉजिट करे उसको देशद्रोही... या जो हमें समझ आएगा, बाद में एडिट कर लेंगे।

लॉगिन पांडे: अरे मैडम ये क्या बक रही हो, जो लोन नहीं ले रहा है उसका देशभक्ति से क्या लेना देना है? उलटे उससे तो बैंकों को भी फायदा



खुद जान जाओ”। मैं दस मिनट तक तो आ ही जाउंगी। तू तो एक्टर है ना, कर लेगा।

रेखा चली जाती है और टिल्लू कानपुरिया रिसेप्शन पर बैठ जाता है।

एक ग्राहक: सर, मेरा ओ.टी.पी. नहीं आ रहा है?

रिसेप्शनिस्ट (टिल्लू कानपुरिया): अरे यार बिजली नहीं आ रही है, स्ट्रेट ऑफ होरमुज बंद है और तुम्हें ओ.टी.पी. की पड़ी है, ओ.टी.पी. कहाँ से आएगा? न्यूज नहीं देखते क्या?

का साइन लेकर आओ जिसने तुम्हें लोन लेने की सलाह दी थी, फिर उस आदमी का साइन लेकर आओ जिसने तुम्हें यहाँ भेजा था, फिर उस आदमी का साइन लेकर आओ...

ग्राहक: बस-बस भाई...

टिल्लू कानपुरिया: अरे लास्ट तक तो सुनते जाओ...

ग्राहक: मुझे माफ़ करो...

तभी रिसेप्शनिस्ट रेखा वापस आ जाती है और पूछती है: क्या हुआ?

हो सकता है, डिपॉजिट करना जरूरी है।

मूर्खिका: हमें बैंक से क्या मतलब है?

मैनेजर पांडे: लेकिन सच्चाई से तो है।

गुल्लू: सच बनाते हैं हम, दिखाते नहीं।

रेखा: मैडम, मैडम मेरा बाइट ले लो। मैं आपकी बड़ी फैन हूँ, आपके जैसी हिंडिबा हंसी की मैं प्रैक्टिस कर रही हूँ।

मूर्खिका: अरे हटो। राक्षसी हंसी पर तो मेरा कॉपीराइट है। गुल्लू चल।

(दोनों चले जाते हैं)

दलदल दाधीच: सारे एन.आर.आई. को बता दो, डॉलर में देशभक्ति दिखाने का यही मौका है।

मैनेजर पांडे: और डॉलर से जबरदस्त कमाई करने के लिए मारना लेवरेज लोन का चौका है।

लॉगिन पांडे: डॉलर डिप्लोमेसी से देशभक्ति दिखाइए, ब्याज भी कमाइए और टैक्स भी बचाइए।

दृश्य 3

“पैनल डिस्कशन की तैयारियाँ: मीडिया हाउस”

डाइरेक्टर: सर डिप्लोमेसी के पैनल के लिए कोई अमेरिकन चाहिए।

प्रोड्यूसर: अरे किसी सब्जी वाले फेरीवाले को पकड़ लो देखते नहीं, पाकिस्तान में ट्रंप कुल्फी वाला कितना फेमस है। कोई गौरा चिट्ठा आदमी दिखे उसको बिठा दो, कोई भी विदेशी नाम रख देना, और उसको बता देना एक्सपर्ट, डिप्लोमेसी एक्सपर्ट।

(प्रोड्यूसर कुल्फी वाले ट्रम्प का वीडियो चला देता है)



डाइरेक्टर: सर एक अरबी भी चाहिए।

प्रोड्यूसर: अरे किसी को भी कंदुरा पहना दो, सब अरबी दिखते हैं।

डाइरेक्टर: सर अर्थशास्त्री कहाँ से लाएंगे?

प्रोड्यूसर: तुम भाड़ ही झोंकते रहे हो क्या? किसी को भी बिठा दो अर्थशास्त्री हो जायेगा। किसी भी अकाउंटेंट को बिठा दो।

डाइरेक्टर: सर बैंक वाला अकाउन्टेन्ट चलेगा?

प्रोड्यूसर: दौड़ेगा, बस लंच ब्रेक पर मत जाने देना, भले ही हम आधे-एक घंटे का कर्मशियल ब्रेक ले लें।

(रिपोर्टर फील्ड में विशेषज्ञों को ढूँढने के लिए)

रिपोर्टर: अरे भाई सब्जीवाले तुम्हारा नाम क्या है?

सब्जी वाला: साहब मेरा नाम तो पप्पू है।

रिपोर्टर: सही है तुम्हारा नाम आज से पीटर होगा, तुम बनोगे विदेश नीति के जानकार, विशेषज्ञ।

सब्जी वाला: साहब विशेषज्ञ क्या होता है?

रिपोर्टर: तो तुम हमपर छोड़ दो, तुम्हें जानने

की जरूरत नहीं है, तुम्हें सिर्फ इतना बोलना है यस यस इंडिया इंडिया माइ फ्रेंड माइ फ्रेंड अमेरिका इंडिया फ्रेंड फ्रेंड।

रिपोर्टर (सोचते हुए): अब अरबी कहाँ से लाऊं?

रिपोर्टर: ऐ भाई केले वाले तुम अरबी बनोगे?

केला वाला: साहब पैसे मिलेंगे?

रिपोर्टर: हाँ लेकिन तुम्हें ज्यादा बोलना नहीं है, सिर्फ किसी भी बात पर हबीबी, वल्लाह माशाअल्लाह बोलना।

दृश्य 4

“बैपैनल डिस्कशन: ईरान की हिमाकत अमेरिकी विदेश नीति की नजाकत”

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): आज ब्लैक ही ब्लैक, मैं हम चर्चा आरंभ करते हैं, ईरान अमेरिका युद्ध में ईरान की हिमाकत और अमेरिका की नजाकत। इसके लिए चर्चा में शामिल हो रहे हैं, अमेरिका से हमारे इस खास कार्यक्रम में शामिल होने के लिए विदेशी मामलों के विशेषज्ञ पीटर पर्सनल, और मिडल ईस्ट से शेख नकली बिन असली अल साफ़ा। तो चलिए चर्चा आरंभ करते हैं।

बेईमान दारुवाला: रुको-रुको, मेरा नाम तो लिया ही नहीं।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): माफ कीजिएगा, हमारे साथ हैं अर्थशास्त्री बेईमान दारुवाला, जो कभी कभार होश में रहते हैं तो अर्थशास्त्र की भी बात करते हैं।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): तो चलिए चर्चा शुरू करते हैं, पीटर पर्सनल से, मिस्टर पीटर पर्सनल, आप को क्या लगता है अमेरिका क्यों झुक रहा है?

पीटर पर्सनल: हू सेड इट.. कौन बोला, कौन कहा अमेरिका झुका है, यस नौ.. अमेरिका इंडिया फ्रेंड फ्रेंड।

पीटर पर्सनल (धीरे से फुसफुसाते हुए): साहब शो के बाद तो सब्जी खरीद लोगे ना, धनिया प्री में दे दूंगा।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): दिमाग खराब हो गया है क्या तेरा?

पीटर पर्सनल: डॉन्ट बी पर्सनल।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): बेईमान जी आपको क्यों लगता है कि एन.आर.आई. को ज्यादा ब्याज देना चाहिए, पैसे अपने ही देश में

भिजवाने के लिए?

बेईमान दारुवाला: अरे लोन दिलाओ, ब्याज बढ़ाओ तभी पैसे आएंगे इतने ज्यादा। वह पैसे भिजवाएगा तो ज्यादा ब्याज तो मांगेगा ही, तेरे जैसा एंकर भी तो ज्यादा पैसे माँगता है।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): तो क्या जो रेजिडेंट फ़ॉरेन करेंसी एकाउंट में डॉलर रखते हैं उन को ज्यादा ब्याज नहीं मिलना चाहिए?

बेईमान दारुवाला: अरे वे देशी हैं, देशी को तो बस वोट देने का अधिकार दे दो इससे ज्यादा उन्हें क्या चाहिए, उनको इंटेरेस्ट नहीं, टैक्स दे दो, वो खुश हो जाएंगे।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): कैसी बहकी-बहकी बातें कर रहे हैं?

बेईमान दारुवाला: अरे अभी मेरा टाइम नहीं हुआ है बहकने का, वो तो मैं होश में ही बोल रहा हूँ?

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल): चलिए चर्चा आगे बढ़ाते हैं, शेख.. आपको क्या कहना है?

शेख नकली बिन असली अल साफ़ा: हबीबी... वल्लाह... माशाअल्लाह।

एंकर (तिहाड़ी बेअकल) असिस्टेंट से: सबसे पहले ये बताओ, किस चिड़िया घर से पकड़ के लेकर आए हो इनको?

बेईमान दारुवाला: किसको बोला चिड़िया घर से पकड़ा है... पता है, मैं कौन हूँ?

पीटर पर्सनल: मुझे पता है, तू नुक्कड़ वाले ठेके पर आता है न...

बेईमान दारुवाला: अरे तू सब्जीवाला पप्पू, वहाँ ठेला लगाता है, वही है न...

पीटर पर्सनल और बेईमान दारुवाला (दोनों एक साथ): ये शेख कौन है... पहचाना सा लगता है... अरे...

शेख नकली बिन असली अल साफ़ा: अरे भाई मैं केले वाला सन्तु, मुझे पहचाना नहीं? इन लोगों ने मुझे शेख बना दिया... बोला पैसे देंगे।

(स्टुडियो में अफरा-तफरी का माहौल)

कोई कह रहा है सब्जी ले लो, कोई केले ले लो .. कोई कह रहा है...बोतल कहाँ गई मेरी?

(एंकर कुर्सी पर चढ़ा हुआ है... और हट-हट कर रहा है)

“डॉलर, डिप्लोमेसी और देशभक्ति का यही असली नाटक है।” ■

THE COSMIC COMPASS

Humanity has looked at the heavens for guidance since the dawn of civilisation. Across cultures and centuries, astrology has evolved into a discipline that interprets the subtle interplay between celestial movements and human experience. At its core lies the Janam Kundli, or birth chart, mapping the planetary positions at the exact moment of birth. Far from portraying destiny as rigid or predetermined, astrology seeks to illuminate life's opportunities and challenges, encouraging deeper self understanding. It also prescribes time honoured practices — meditation, mantra, charity, fasting, and gemstones — to foster balance, resilience, and positive living.



BY ACHARYA DINAIAK

Astrology Science Dk can be contacted on
+91-9779027873

With over fifteen years of dedicated practice in astrology, the author brings a deep engagement with classical astrological principles, offering interpretations that are thoughtful, grounded, and insightful.

सितंबर-2026 मासिक राशिफल

मेष (Aries)



करियर: सितंबर में रुके हुए काम आगे बढ़ सकता है। नौकरी में जिम्मेदारी बढ़ेगी और नई भूमिका या अवसर मिल सकता है। जल्दबाजी में निर्णय लेने से बचें।

वित्त: आय के नए रास्ते बन सकते हैं। पुराने भुगतान मिलने की संभावना है, लेकिन अनावश्यक खर्च भी बढ़ सकता है।
प्रेम: रिश्तों में स्पष्ट बातचीत जरूरी रहेगी। विवाहित लोगों को छोटी बातों को विवाद न बनाने की सलाह है।

स्वास्थ्य: थकान और तनाव पर ध्यान दें। नींद और दिनचर्या व्यवस्थित रखें।

वृषभ (Taurus)



करियर: मेहनत का परिणाम मिलने वाला महीना है। वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों का सहयोग मिल सकता है। व्यवसाय में नया संपर्क लाभदायक रहेगा।
वित्त: आर्थिक स्थिति मजबूत होगी। निवेश में सोच-समझकर कदम उठाएं और बड़े जोखिम से बचें।

प्रेम: प्रेम संबंधों में स्थिरता आएगी। अविवाहित लोगों को कोई अच्छा प्रस्ताव मिल सकता है।
स्वास्थ्य: पेट और गले से संबंधित छोटी परेशानियों को नजरअंदाज न करें।

मिथुन (Gemini)



करियर: काम का दबाव बढ़ सकता है, लेकिन आपकी क्षमता भी सामने आएगी। नौकरी बदलने की सोच रहे हैं तो अवसर मिल सकता है।

वित्त: आय ठीक रहेगी, लेकिन खर्च नियंत्रण में रखना जरूरी होगा। उधार देने से बचें।
प्रेम: पुराने मतभेद बातचीत से दूर हो सकते हैं। रिश्ते में पारदर्शिता रखें।

स्वास्थ्य: मानसिक तनाव और अनियमित नींद परेशानी दे सकती है।

कर्क (Cancer)



करियर: सितंबर आपके लिए प्रगति वाला महीना हो सकता है। पद, प्रतिष्ठा या जिम्मेदारी में वृद्धि के योग हैं।

वित्त: आर्थिक लाभ के अवसर मिलेंगे। संपत्ति या लंबे समय के निवेश से फायदा संभव है।

प्रेम: परिवार का सहयोग मिलेगा। दांपत्य जीवन में भावनात्मक नजदीकी बढ़ेगी।

स्वास्थ्य: तनाव कम रखें और पर्याप्त आराम करें।

सिंह (Leo)



करियर: नेतृत्व क्षमता मजबूत होगी। अधिकारियों और प्रभावशाली लोगों से संपर्क करियर में फायदा दे सकता है।

वित्त: धन प्राप्ति के अच्छे अवसर हैं, लेकिन दिखावे पर खर्च करने से बचें।

प्रेम: रिश्तों में आकर्षण और रोमांस बढ़ेगा। पुराने रिश्ते में सुधार संभव है।

स्वास्थ्य: ऊर्जा अच्छी रहेगी, लेकिन अत्यधिक काम से बचें।

कन्या (Virgo)



करियर: मेहनत और अनुशासन से सफलता मिलेगी। नई नौकरी या व्यवसाय शुरू करने वालों के लिए समय सकारात्मक है।

वित्त: आर्थिक स्थिति धीरे-धीरे बेहतर होगी। बचत पर ध्यान देना लाभदायक रहेगा।

प्रेम: रिश्तों में छोटी गलतफहमियां हो सकती हैं। शक और आलोचना से बचें।

स्वास्थ्य: पाचन और तनाव से जुड़ी समस्याओं पर ध्यान दें।

तुला (Libra)



करियर: कार्यक्षेत्र में नए अवसर मिलेंगे। साझेदारी या टीमवर्क से अच्छा परिणाम मिल सकता है।

वित्त: धन संबंधी स्थिति संतुलित रहेगी। अचानक कोई अतिरिक्त खर्च आ सकता है।

प्रेम: प्रेम जीवन में सकारात्मक बदलाव आएगा।

विवाहित लोगों के लिए संबंध मजबूत करने का समय है।

स्वास्थ्य: खान-पान और आराम की अनदेखी न करें।

वृश्चिक (Scorpio)



करियर: सितंबर आपके लिए महत्वपूर्ण साबित हो सकता है। रुका हुआ करियर आगे बढ़ सकता है और प्रभावशाली लोगों से मदद मिलेगी।

वित्त: आय में सुधार संभव है। संपत्ति, निवेश या पुराने आर्थिक मामलों में लाभ मिल सकता है।

प्रेम: भावनाएं तीव्र रहेंगी। रिश्ते में अधिकार जताने की बजाय समझदारी रखें।

स्वास्थ्य: तनाव कम करें और नियमित व्यायाम करें।

धनु (Sagittarius)



करियर: नई जिम्मेदारी या नई जगह काम करने का अवसर मिल सकता है। विदेश से जुड़े कार्यों में भी प्रगति संभव है।

वित्त: धन की स्थिति अच्छी रहेगी, लेकिन यात्रा और अन्य खर्च बढ़ सकते हैं।

प्रेम: अविवाहित लोगों के लिए नया रिश्ता बन सकता है। दांपत्य जीवन में मधुरता रहेगी।

स्वास्थ्य: यात्रा के दौरान खान-पान का ध्यान रखें।

मकर (Capricorn)



करियर: धीरे-धीरे लेकिन मजबूत प्रगति होगी। वरिष्ठों के साथ संबंध अच्छे रखें। व्यवसायियों को नया प्रोजेक्ट मिल सकता है।

वित्त: आर्थिक लाभ के योग हैं। पुराना निवेश फायदा दे सकता है।

प्रेम: रिश्तों में गंभीरता बढ़ेगी। पुराने विवाद समाप्त करने का अच्छा समय है।

स्वास्थ्य: हड्डियों, जोड़ों और थकान पर ध्यान दें।

कुंभ (Aquarius)



करियर: नए विचार और नई दिशा आपके लिए लाभकारी रहेगी। नौकरी में परिवर्तन की संभावना बन सकती है।

वित्त: आय अच्छी हो सकती है लेकिन धन टिकाने के लिए बजट जरूरी है।

प्रेम: भावनात्मक दूरी कम होगी। अविवाहित लोगों की किसी विशेष व्यक्ति से मुलाकात संभव है।

स्वास्थ्य: मानसिक शांति के लिए ध्यान और नियमित दिनचर्या लाभदायक होगी।

मीन (Pisces)



करियर: सितंबर में भाग्य का सहयोग मिलेगा। रुके हुए कार्य पूरे हो सकते हैं और नई उपलब्धि मिल सकती है।

वित्त: आर्थिक स्थिति में सुधार होगा। अचानक लाभ मिलने की संभावना है, लेकिन भावनाओं में आकर निवेश न करें।

प्रेम: प्रेम और वैवाहिक जीवन में मधुरता बढ़ेगी।

परिवार से जुड़ा कोई शुभ समाचार मिल सकता है।

स्वास्थ्य: कमजोरी और थकान महसूस हो सकती है।

पर्याप्त नींद और पानी लें।

परिवार और रिश्तों में संवाद बहुत जरूरी रहेगा

ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स

यादों की पोटली से आती सोंधी सी महक

ज़ेयाउर रहमान का पहला उपन्यास *ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स* स्मृति, प्रवासन और पहचान की जटिलताओं को गहराई से छूता है। सिमरिया से यूरोप तक फैली यह यात्रा केवल भौगोलिक नहीं, बल्कि आत्म अन्वेषण की प्रक्रिया है। लेखक ने नदी को रूपक बनाकर यह दिखाया है कि पहचान कोई स्थिर परिभाषा नहीं, बल्कि निरंतर बहती हुई धारा है। यही कारण है कि यह कृति व्यक्तिगत अनुभवों को सामूहिक चेतना में बदल देती है और पाठक को जीवन की धड़कन से जोड़ देती है।



व्यालोक

लेखक एक वरिष्ठ पत्रकार हैं जिन्होंने अब तक 2 पुस्तकें वे 47 दिन और बोहेमियन कलंबद्ध कर चुके हैं; कई किताबों, खासकर परकाला प्रभाकर की नए भारत की दीमक लगी शहरीरों का अनुवाद कर चुके हैं और अटलबिहारी वाजपेयी की जीवनी का अनुवाद और रोहित डे की पीपल्स कांस्टीट्यूशन का अनुवाद आना शेष है और विभिन्न मीडिया संस्थानों में दो दशक से ज्यादा कार्य किया है।

ज़ेयाउर रहमान का *ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स* अपने पाठक को जिस तरह बहा ले जाता है, वह केवल कथा का प्रवाह नहीं, बल्कि जीवन की धड़कन का रूपक है। यह उपन्यास स्मृति, पहचान और प्रवासन की जटिलताओं को उस गहराई से छूता है जहाँ व्यक्तिगत अनुभव सामूहिक चेतना में बदल जाता है। सिमरिया से शुरू होकर यूरोप तक फैली यात्रा अंततः फिर सिमरिया लौटती है, पर यह लौटना वही पुराना ठिकाना नहीं, बल्कि एक नए बोध के साथ है। लेखक मानो कह रहे हों कि घर कोई स्थिर स्थान नहीं, बल्कि भीतर निर्मित अपनत्व है — और यही अपनत्व मनुष्य की असली पहचान है।

रोशन, उपन्यास का नायक, बहुस्तरीय पहचान का प्रतिनिधि है। वह बिहार का युवक है, विश्वविद्यालय का छात्र है, और अंततः प्रवासी। उसकी यात्रा आत्म-अन्वेषण की,

संस्थान से बाहर समाज, प्रेम, विफलताओं और यात्राओं से सीखने की है। वह समझता है कि तटस्थता पर्याप्त नहीं; संवेदना कर्म की मांग करती है। पूर्वोत्तर भारत के चित्रण में

दिल्ली और मुंबई जैसे महानगरों में गाजीपुर, ओखला और देवनार स्थल पर कचरे के विशाल ढेर शहरीकरण की भयावह तस्वीर पेश करते हैं।

वह रूढ़ धारणाओं से परे जाकर उसकी स्वतंत्र सांस्कृतिक दुनिया को देखने का प्रयास करता है। यही उसे भारतीय समाज की जटिलताओं का रूपक बना देता है।

रहमान की भाषा आत्मीय और बौद्धिक दोनों है। नदी का रूपक पूरे उपन्यास में पहचान की प्रक्रिया को समझने का सबसे सशक्त प्रतीक बनता है। गालिब की पंक्ति सहज ही याद आती है—

“हज़ारों ख्वाहिशें ऐसी कि हर ख्वाहिश पै दम निकले,

बहुत निकले मेरे अरमान लेकिन फिर भी कम निकले।”

रोशन की यात्रा भी ऐसी ही है — हर पड़ाव पर नई पहचान की तलाश, और हर तलाश अधूरी।

मीर का दर्द भी इस उपन्यास की आत्मा को छूता है —

“इक बार जी में आया कि इस दिल को तोड़ दें,

देखें तो क्या गुजरे है इस पर खराबी।”

रोशन का आत्ममंथन इसी टूटन और पुनर्निर्माण की प्रक्रिया है।

कथानक में स्मृति, विस्थापन, विश्वविद्यालयी जीवन, अस्तित्वगत अकेलापन और पहचान की खोज जैसे विविध प्रश्न एक ही प्रवाह में गुंथे हुए हैं। प्रवासन को लेखक केवल भौगोलिक विस्थापन नहीं, बल्कि आत्म-अन्वेषण की प्रक्रिया मानते हैं। पहचान को स्थिर परिभाषा नहीं, बल्कि नदी की तरह निरंतर बहने वाली प्रक्रिया बताया गया है।

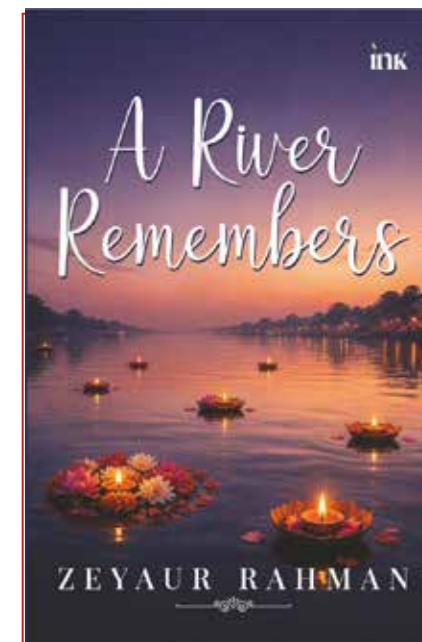
इस उपन्यास का सबसे बड़ा आकर्षण यह है कि इसमें भूगोल और समय दोनों ही सक्रिय पात्रों की तरह काम करते हैं। गंगातट की स्मृतियाँ, दिल्ली और हैदराबाद का शहरी जीवन, पूर्वोत्तर भारत की सांस्कृतिक विविधता और यूरोप का प्रवासी अनुभव — सब मिलकर एक ऐसी कथा रचते हैं जो व्यक्तिगत होते हुए भी सामूहिक बन जाती है।

रहमान ने अपने पात्रों के माध्यम से यह दिखाया है कि पहचान कभी स्थिर नहीं होती, बल्कि जीवन भर बदलती रहती है। यही कारण है कि *ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स* केवल एक विकास-गाथा नहीं, बल्कि एक सांस्कृतिक दस्तावेज़ भी है। यह विश्वविद्यालयीय संस्कृति की बहस-परंपरा को दर्ज करता है, प्रवासी जीवन की विडंबनाओं को उजागर करता है और घर की बदलती अवधारणा को संवेदनशीलता से प्रस्तुत करता है।

इस उपन्यास को पढ़ते हुए लगता है कि रहमान ने अपने पहले ही प्रयास में वह गहराई और विस्तार रचा है जो किसी लेखक को साहित्यिक परंपरा में स्थायी स्थान दिला सकता है। यह कृति पाठक को स्मृति और विस्थापन के बीच उस सूक्ष्म बिंदु तक ले जाती है जहाँ घर केवल एक स्थान नहीं, बल्कि भीतर निर्मित अपनत्व होता है।

ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स निश्चय ही आने वाले वर्षों में भारतीय कथा-साहित्य की चर्चित और संदर्भित कृतियों में गिना जाएगा—क्योंकि यह हमें याद दिलाता है कि पहचान कोई स्थिर अवस्था नहीं, बल्कि नदी की तरह निरंतर बहती हुई प्रक्रिया है। रहमान ने अपने पहले ही उपन्यास में यह सिद्ध कर दिया है कि साहित्य केवल कहानी नहीं, बल्कि जीवन की धड़कन है, और *ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स* उसी धड़कन को शब्दों में बदलने की कला है। ज़ेयाउर रहमान का *ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स* केवल विषय-वस्तु और कथानक के कारण महत्वपूर्ण नहीं है, बल्कि उसकी शैली, शिल्प और नैरेशन इसे समकालीन भारतीय उपन्यासों में विशिष्ट बनाते हैं। इस उपन्यास की सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धि यह है कि यह अपने कथ्य को जिस ढंग से प्रस्तुत करता है, वह पाठक को एक साथ आत्मीय और बौद्धिक अनुभव देता है।

रहमान की शैली में एक प्रकार की लयात्मकता है। वाक्य लंबे हैं, पर उनमें प्रवाह है — जैसे नदी का बहाव। कहीं भाषा आत्मीय हो जाती है, कहीं विश्लेषणात्मक। यही द्वंद्व इसे



A RIVER REMEMBERS



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दिल्ली और मुंबई जैसे महानगरों में गाजीपुर, ओखला और देवनार स्थल पर कचरे के विशाल ढेर शहरीकरण की भयावह तस्वीर पेश करते हैं।

प्लास्टिक पैक वस्तुओं की अंधाधुंध खरीद और पुनः उपयोग की परंपरा से दूरी ने भारत को कचरे के संकट में धकेल दिया है।

मौलिक बनाता है। पाठक को लगता है कि वह केवल कथा नहीं पढ़ रहा, बल्कि एक विचार-प्रवाह में शामिल हो रहा है। इस शैली में स्मृति और अनुभव का ऐसा संयोजन है कि हर प्रसंग व्यक्तिगत होते हुए भी सामूहिक बन जाता है।

शिल्प की दृष्टि से उपन्यास में समय और स्थान को केवल पृष्ठभूमि नहीं, बल्कि सक्रिय पात्र बनाया गया है। गंगातट, विश्वविद्यालय, पूर्वोत्तर भारत और यूरोप — ये सब केवल दृश्य नहीं, बल्कि कथा के भीतर जीवित इकाइयाँ हैं। लेखक ने भूगोल को कथा का हिस्सा बना दिया है। यही कारण है कि उपन्यास का शिल्प वृत्ताकार होते हुए भी नदी की तरह दीर्घवृत्ताकार और बदलता हुआ है।

नैरेशन में रहमान ने बहुस्तरीय दृष्टि अपनाई है। कहीं आत्मकथात्मक स्वर है, कहीं विश्लेषणात्मक, कहीं स्मृति का भावुक स्पर्श। यह नैरेशन पाठक को एक साथ कई स्तरों पर ले जाता है। उदाहरण के लिए, जब रोशन विश्वविद्यालयी जीवन का वर्णन करता है, तो वह केवल व्यक्तिगत स्मृति नहीं, बल्कि विश्वविद्यालयीय संस्कृति की बहस-परंपरा का दस्तावेज़ भी बन जाता है। इसी तरह प्रवासी जीवन का वर्णन केवल व्यक्तिगत विडंबना नहीं, बल्कि सामूहिक अनुभव का रूप ले लेता है।

इस नैरेशन की एक विशेषता यह भी है कि इसमें संवाद और आत्ममंथन बराबर चलते हैं। रोशन का आत्ममंथन उसे बार-बार तोड़ता है और फिर बनाता है। यही प्रक्रिया उसे बहुस्तरीय पहचान देती है। इस आत्ममंथन को रहमान ने भाषा की संवेदनशीलता से रचा है। कहीं गालिब की बेचैनी झलकती है, कहीं मीर का दर्द। यही उपन्यास की आत्मा को गहराई देते हैं।

शैली और शिल्प का यह संयोजन उपन्यास को केवल कथा नहीं रहने देता, बल्कि उसे एक सांस्कृतिक दस्तावेज़ बना देता है। इसमें स्मृति और विस्थापन का चित्रण केवल व्यक्तिगत नहीं, बल्कि सामूहिक है। यही कारण है कि पाठक को लगता है कि वह अपनी ही स्मृतियों और पहचान की खोज पढ़ रहा है।

रहमान ने नैरेशन में लय और कटाव दोनों को बराबर महत्व दिया है। कहीं भाषा धीमी और आत्मीय है, कहीं तीव्र और विश्लेषणात्मक। यही विरोधाभास इसे जीवंत बनाता है। उपन्यास का प्रवाह कभी कविता जैसा लगता है, कभी निबंध जैसा। यही वह कमाल की शैली है, जहाँ कथा, विचार और संवेदना एक साथ बहते हैं।

अंततः, *ए रिवर रिमेम्बर्स* की सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धि यही है कि यह अपने शिल्प और नैरेशन से पाठक को यह अनुभव कराता है कि पहचान कोई स्थिर परिभाषा नहीं, बल्कि निरंतर बहने वाली प्रक्रिया है। रहमान ने अपने पहले ही उपन्यास में यह सिद्ध कर दिया है कि साहित्य केवल कहानी नहीं, बल्कि जीवन की धड़कन है। ■



विजेता

कवयित्री, जिनका कार्य समकालीन कला, प्रदर्शनी निर्माण और कला संग्रह प्रबंधन पर केंद्रित रहा है, अपनी कविता 'तो मैं किसे बताती?' में आत्मस्वीकृति और अनकहे दर्द का बयां करती है। कवयित्री उन क्षणों को शब्द देती हैं जब मन भीतर ही भीतर टूटता है, पर बाहर कोई सुनने वाला नहीं होता। रिश्तों, स्मृतियों और मिट्टी की सौंधी खुशबू में छिपे प्रतीकों के माध्यम से यह रचना बताती है कि छुपना, मिट जाना या रो लेना भी कभी कभी संवाद का रूप होता है। यह कविता पाठक को आत्मचिंतन की ओर ले जाती है — कि जब कोई समझ ही न पाए, तो हम किसे बताएं?

तो मैं किसे बताती?

अगर मैं लिख पाती,
तो खुद को स्याही में घोलकर छिपा लेती,
जब कोई समझ ही न पाता,
तो मैं किसे बताती?
अगर आता मुझे,
तो हर रिश्ता थामे रखती,
यूँ बेवजह हर दर्द को खुद ही समझ जाती।
अगर आता छुप जाना,
तो खुद को कंगन की छनक में छुपा लेती,
यूँ खामखाह अकेली न रोती, न टूट जाती।
अगर आता मिट जाना,
तो मिट्टी की सौंधी खुशबू बन जाती,
यूँ हर बार अपनी ही फ़सल न जलाती।
जब कोई समझ ही न पाता,
तो मैं किसे बताती?

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02 HANUWANTIYA: Water Sports & Sacred Trails

In October, Hanuwantiya Jal Mahotsav set against the vast Indira Sagar reservoir. Running through March, this vibrant 100-plus luxury Tent City offers thrilling water sports alongside aerial adventures like paramotoring and hot-air ballooning. On land, enjoy scenic nature walks and trekking, before unwinding with stunning sunset views or taking a spiritual day trip to the sacred Jyotirlinga island of Omkareshwar.

03 CHANDERI: Medieval Heritage & Master Weaves

Explore the medieval charm of Chanderi on foot, stepping out from the Tent City to wander past historic gateways, bustling bazaars, ancient stepwells, and iconic monuments like the hilltop Chanderi Fort, Badal Mahal, and Koshak Mahal. Experience the town's living heritage by visiting local weaving communities, watching master artisans craft legendary Chanderi fabrics on their looms, and taking home an authentic, hand-woven piece directly from its source.



04 KUNO: Cheetah Safaris & Stargazing

From October to March, the Kuno Forest Retreat places you at the center of a landmark global conservation story: the return of the cheetahs. Beyond thrilling wildlife safaris, connect with the indigenous Sahariya tribal communities to experience their rich crafts and traditions, then wrap up your evening stargazing beneath brilliant, unpolluted night skies.

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