

MEET THE

CITY

Pune - Vol. II / October-November 2014

CHANGE

IS GOOD

Meet Kelly Hoppen MBE as she makes her presence felt in Pune, with the ultra luxurious project yoo Villas, being developed by Panchshil Realty.

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An architectural rendering of two tall, modern skyscrapers with glass facades, illuminated from within, set against a dramatic, cloudy sky at dusk. The buildings are situated in an urban environment with other city lights visible in the background. The foreground shows some greenery and a lower-level structure with columns.

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Kelly Hoppen MBE, Britain's most influential style guru now comes to Pune and brings an exclusive and tasteful line of interiors for yoo villas.

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FOREWORD

2014 has proved to be a turning point for India. With the world's largest youth population and a new government at the helm, we're looking at a more investor-friendly India who is fast-shedding her bureaucratic sloth.

In our first issue welcoming 2015, we're putting the spotlight on a changing and rising India. Happy New Year to our dear friends and patrons. And a Shining New Year to India.

THE ONLY WAY
TO MAKE SENSE OUT OF
CHANGE
IS TO PLUNGE INTO IT,
MOVE WITH IT,
AND JOIN THE DANCE.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

ATUL CHORDIA

“



“We're not hibernating this year.
Too much cultural change to keep up with.”

”

寿司

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Japanese proverb



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DOUBLETREE
BY HILTON
PUNE - CHINCHWAD

A NEW INDIA ORDER

The wheels of change are churning in India, imperceptibly at first, but now with a steady momentum. India has suffered a few setbacks in the recent past, its forward thrust of progress hindered by corrupt governance. But young India has arrived - and she is impatient for growth and positive change.

Rashmi Alevoor takes a stab at profiling the New Indian.

Today's Millennial Generation are socially conscious and civic-minded as individuals and consumers. Also referred to as Generation Y and Echo Boomers, they are pragmatic and, thanks in large part to the Internet, are much more aware of the world than their predecessors.

Born in a digital age, they are able to deftly navigate the 21st century world where fast change is the norm. The new Indian is fire-in-the-belly ambitious and self-assured, with a willingness to chart new territories.

65% of India's population of 1.25 billion people is 35 years of age or under. A latest UN report titled, "The Power of 1.8 Billion," declared India to be the possessor of the world's largest youth population with 356 million 10-24 year-olds.

"Never before have there been so many young people. Never again is there likely to be such potential for economic and social progress. How we meet the needs and aspirations of young people will define our common future," the report said.

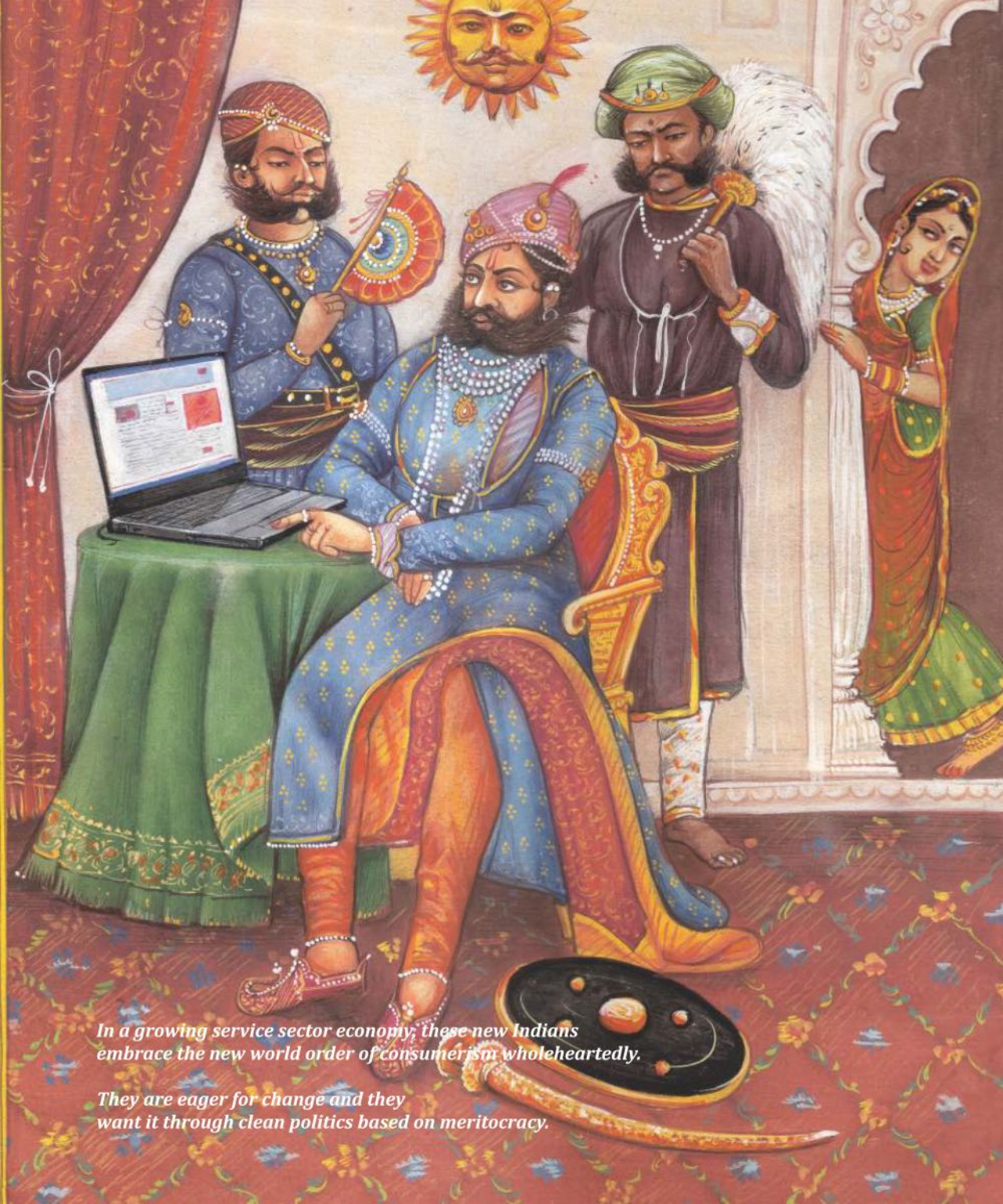
In India, aspirational youth from rural areas are increasingly migrating to urban developments in search of employment and better standards of living. The rural population in India has decreased from 82.1% in 1960 to 69.9% in 2010 during which time, urban areas has increased from 17.9% of the population to 30.1%.

In a growing service sector economy, these new Indians embrace the new world order of consumerism wholeheartedly. They are eager for change and they want it through clean politics based on meritocracy. This is the reason why the polarising but pro-business leader Narendra Modi struck a chord with young voters in the 2014 Indian General Elections. The well thought-out and well executed PR campaign of the BJP had Modi reaching out to the youth across various social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, and through youth-targeted gatherings like his speech at the Shri Ram College of Commerce in New Delhi. The minister's aggression and confidence appealed to this go-getting generation and he became their symbol of hope and change. A post-poll analysis by political research agency, Lokniti, suggests that first-time voters between the ages of 18 and 23 voted overwhelmingly in support of Narendra Modi with over 36% choosing him as their prime minister.

Seemingly contradictory to their appetite for consumerism, is their appreciation and awareness of the natural environment. The young (urban) Indian is increasingly choosing fair trade and organic products. They are trying to reduce their personal impact on the environment. And they are taking matters into their own hands - case in point, The Ugly Indian. The Ugly Indians are a group of anonymous young Indians who feel strongly about the permeating filth in their cities and are actively going about making a difference. Their simple, no-nonsense motto - *Kaam chalu mooh bandh*. Stop Talking, Start Doing.

It is clear that the force that is moving the grudging wheels of change in India is young. The youth of India seem to have about them a feisty air of participation. They have a strong voice and are intent on being heard. Here's hoping that the Millennial Age marks a new chapter in India's growth story.

Here's to an even more incredible India!



In a growing service sector economy, these new Indians embrace the new world order of consumerism wholeheartedly.

They are eager for change and they want it through clean politics based on meritocracy.



sussanne khan for yoopune



Shot on location.

With unique and plush interiors by the acclaimed designer Sussanne Khan, yoopune brings to the city of Pune a retreat of inspired living. Tucked away in the posh neighbourhood of Koregaon Park, the property stretches out for over 17 acres. At the heart of it all - a 5 acre thick rainforest.

Inspired by the world-renowned designer Philippe Starck, its 228 extraordinary apartments, ranging from 5,100 - 6,900 sq. ft., are unique, well-appointed and inspirational. The multiple award-winning yoopune enjoys the best of both worlds - the wealth and serenity of nature and every conceivable modern comfort.

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yoopune
by Philippe Starck

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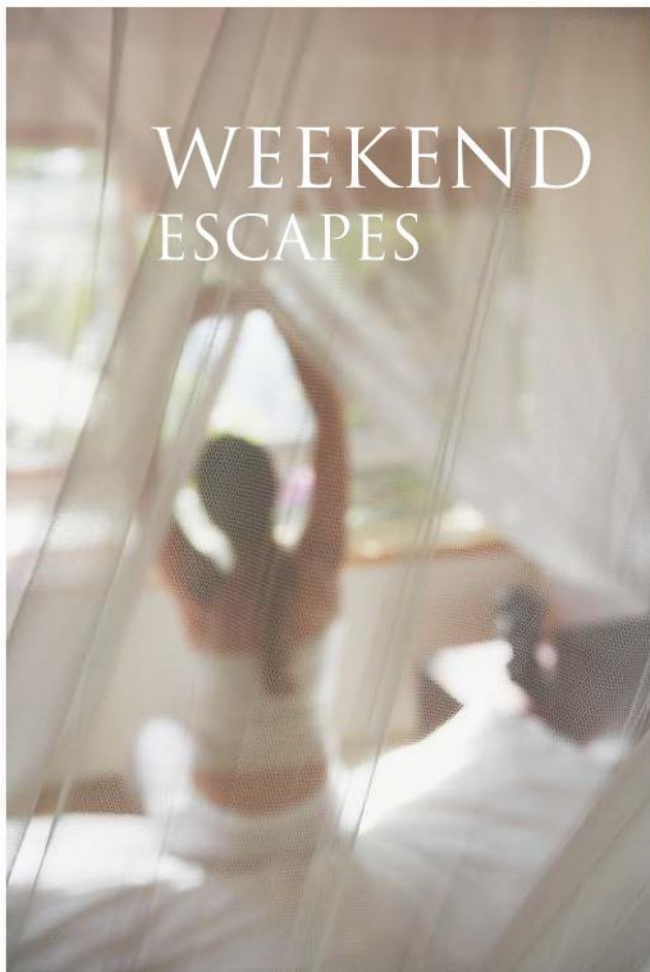
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CHANGE

MEET THE CITY
VOL. III / JANUARY 2015

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COVER STORY



KELLY OF ALL DESIGNS

Learn more about the celebrated design guru as for the first time in India, Kelly Hoppen makes her presence felt in Pune, with the ultra luxurious project yoo Villas, being developed by Panchshil Realty.

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Take a look at the emerging sustainable fashion market in India and meet two prominent designers who are doing it right.

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TRAVEL ANOTHER INDIA POSITIVE FOOTPRINTS

Meet two guardians of responsible tourism and discover a far more rewarding form of travel...

IN STORE

THE MUD HOUSE

All things eclectic and beautiful

FITNESS

MULTIFIT - THE GAME CHANGERS

YOGA AND CHANGE BY TRISHA MAHARAJ SINGH

SPECIAL FOCUS

WOMAN'S RUGBY TEAM

Not just a Man's game

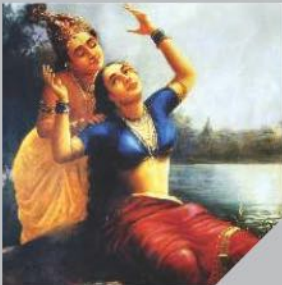
CURTAIN RAISER

PUNE BIENNALE

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

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ART



PRINCE AMONG PAINTERS. PAINTER AMONG PRINCES.

Meet India's most celebrated and controversial painter who captivated the world with his beautiful art over a career spanning 30 years - Raja Ravi Varma

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MUSIC



A MUSIC FEST FIT FOR THE GODS

Take a look into two of Pune's very prominent festivals; diverse in their genres, and yet their music equally soul stirring - the master of all Indian classical music festivals, the Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahotsav and the newer and younger NH7, showcasing extremely talented Independent, international and folk musicians.

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READER'S CORNER



THE LONE CHANGERS

Meet the city, pays tribute to four lone changers who have, with their quiet conviction, made the world a better place.



KELLY OF ALL DESIGNS!

KELLY HOPPEN

WHERE EAST MEETS WEST



Designer, Entrepreneur, Author and Educator; Kelly Hoppen (MBE) successfully dons many hats, but is best known as the interior designer whose calm, elegant aesthetic has permeated our consciousness and achieved an iconic and much imitated status.

And now, for the first time in India, Kelly Hoppen makes her presence felt in Pune, with the ultra luxurious project yoo Villas by Kelly Hoppen, being developed by Panchshil Realty.

Chaitra Patel learns more about the celebrated design guru and takes you on an opulent journey of design and luxury...





Acknowledged as one of Britain's most influential style gurus, Kelly's style is ever-evolving, underpinned by a palette of clean lines and neutral tones, blended with charming warmth and sumptuous opulence.

The "Kelly Hoppen look" today, is one that is recognised worldwide and often adapted and used when developing home interiors.

Born to Jewish parents of Irish descent in Johannesburg, Kelly grew up spending time at her grandmother's home in South Africa. While penning her famous book, *Kelly Hoppen Home: From Concept to Reality*, Kelly realised how much her growing years at her grandmother's had influenced her style. "I realised her house was a home that was created over the years, with love. It wasn't what I call an "instant home," with a ready-made lifestyle that doesn't take collections and belongings into consideration."

Over the years, Kelly has developed a style of using what one already owns and using these possessions to create a personal space, blending it with the new, thereby creating a unique mix of old and new. "A home should be where you feel joy and happiness. It should feel like your own space, reflective of the spirit, life and loves of the people who live there" asserts Kelly.

Known for her individualistic style and persistent zeal and passion for design, Kelly first tasted success as a sixteen year old when she was given the opportunity to design a family friend's kitchen. And then there was no looking back; the world witnessed the rise of a young entrepreneur and also one of the most feted and impressive careers in design history.



As a celebrated designer, Kelly's commissions have taken her across the globe - from Manhattan to London, Barbados to Beirut and France to Southeast Asia, encompassing the world between China and Japan.

In between all that, Kelly has designed homes, yachts and jets for the rich and the famous, as well as several hotels, restaurants, and offices.





*"It's your place, it's where you live,
it's where you want to feel the best that you can .
You need to create something in your
home that feels good."*

- Kelly Hoppen MBE





Through her thirty seven years in the design industry, Kelly has travelled far and wide, from West to East. In one of her pursuits for aesthetics and excellence, Kelly chanced upon a Chinese trunk at Portobello Road, London. The trunk fascinated her tremendously and Kelly soon found herself obsessively researching Chinese designs and books, and subsequently Vietnamese, Thai, Korean and Japanese design too.

The "less is more" designs of the Eastern cultures fascinated her, and Kelly soon sought to recreate Zen-like tranquil and harmonious interiors, thereby developing her much celebrated "East-meets-West" design concept. As she explains, "My philosophy has always remained the same. It's about creating calm balanced environments based on Eastern cultures i.e. order and creation of harmony. How people feel in a space is as important as the way it looks, one can't be without the other to succeed."

Structure, according to Kelly can be very liberating and creates harmony. "Japan is a country with a good infrastructure, including highly structured roads and transit lines. That very structure calms and creates harmony, which is liberating," says Kelly. "I am convinced that a calm, quiet and harmonious interior can be as beneficial to health as a sensible diet and regular exercise." And to that end, Kelly's designs are highly planned, clean, and efficient, creating room for fun elements and textures.

Known for her neutral colour palette, Kelly uses four distinct and what are now immensely famous themes for interiors:

The Urban palette which involves a lot of straight lines combined with timeless elegant luxury, comprising of off-whites, creams and taupe for paints and textiles, grounded by dark stained-wood finishes to create balanced and harmonious interiors.

The Sea Breezes palette which is a cool fresh and light palette combining blue-toned whites, stone, taupe and sand colours mixed with chrome, glass mother-of-pearl and metallic; and recalls the simplicity of a special holiday home.

The Vintage palette which incorporates a classic and opulent design style with a modern twist and sumptuous colours to reveal a feel of true decadence, a reminder of Kelly's visit to the Buckingham Palace to receive her MBE.

The Green palette with a country-style interior not normally associated with Kelly, brings natural country warmth and cosiness to a living space and is created with a 'shabby-chic' concept in mind, marrying a fresh lime colour with neutrals, such as ecru, bone, taupe and coffee.

Inspired by her travels across the world, Kelly has left her distinct imprint everywhere around the globe, the current destination being India. With a couple of projects waiting to be unveiled in India, time will stand witness to Kelly's master strokes in some of our celebrated Indian homes.

"Learn to look not just with your eyes but with your heart. Find the things that connect with you. How else will you know how to design your home?"

KELLY'S STYLE RULES

- Don't overcrowd the room with large furniture. Play with scale
- Listen to your instincts. Plan to the very last details. Plans might sound boring but they are essential for avoiding costly mistakes
- Kitchens need bright task lighting. It's more pleasant to cook an evening meal in a relaxing atmosphere. Use a range of sculptural soft lights and candles to create mood and interesting shadows
- Light colours create space. Dark colours can create a dynamic atmosphere and when teamed with contrasting fabrics, a sense of indulgence
- Display your favourite objects. Choose the best, store the rest
- Upgrade when you can. Save for what you really want
- Don't fuss with detailing. Use bands and buttons on cushions to freshen up the look of a room. They are an ideal way to unify contrasting colours and textures
- White is the essential neutral. The perfect neutral is taupe. Taupe loves white, natural linens, shades of stone, metal and dark stained wood
- A sofa should be an elegant statement. A sofa also needs to be incredibly comfortable, fit your practical needs and enhance your room. Using L- or U-shaped seating configurations works well and can direct the eye to a focal point such as a fireplace

Source: Interiors by yoo





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SEW IT FORWARD

The terms "eco-friendly", "organic", and "sustainable" get bandied around a lot these days. In recent years, the words have gained some traction in the world of fashion, too.

With global warming being a real and serious cause for concern, this shift in mindset is a good thing, except that most consumers (and some "green" companies even) are not entirely clear as to what goes into making a sustainable product.

Rashmi Alevoor looks at the emerging sustainable fashion market in India and highlights two prominent designers who are doing it right.

Fashion Evolution



FASHION RECYCLED



KA SHA
BY KARISHMA SHAHANI



who made n. your clothes.

Slow Design vs. Fast Fashion

The term Sustainability refers to the use of resources in a manner that does not impoverish the planet for the coming generations. In stark contrast, fashion thrives on novelty and excessive consumption. And so at the onset of eco fashion in the 1990s, what was being paraded around as sustainable design was largely window-dressing - shabby, natural-fibre clothing that made its wearers look like hippies.

Only now is sustainability being introduced right at the product's inception through the use of environmentally friendly materials as well as socially responsible methods of production.

Slow Design is the countermovement to "Fast Fashion", a term that refers to the inherent nature of the industry that is wedded to fast turnover, consumerism and constant trends.

Today, sustainable and slow design promotes not only the use of organic materials, but also principles of fair trade, use of recycled and upcycled materials, and sustainable methods of production.

According to Earth Pledge, a non-profit organisation committed to promoting and supporting sustainable development, "At least 8,000 chemicals are used to turn raw materials into textiles and 25% of the world's pesticides are used to grow non-organic cotton. This causes irreversible damage to people and the environment, and still two thirds of a garment's carbon footprint will occur after it is purchased."

Clothing also uses more water than any other industry besides agriculture. While fashion has a remarkable ability to foster creativity and economic activity, it still remains heavily reliant on our natural resources. And so it is vital for the industry to understand and embrace the sustainable use of our degrading and fragile ecosystems.

Awareness and demand for ethical fashion seems to be picking up in India, these days.

"Consumers are even willing to pay extra if they know that products are ethically sourced. So more than demand, it's consumer preparedness that is already there in India," Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Director of global sustainability advocacy firm, Solidaridad was reported to have said.

The market for social and environment-friendly products is more than \$6 billion each year, as estimated by experts, and India is catching up on the trend quite rapidly.

"We have found out that over 70% of Indian consumers will buy environment products over other branded merchandise if quality is maintained," Seth Petchers, chief executive officer at Shop For Change - Fair Trade told the Economic Times. "The opportunity is huge and products are being accepted as consumers are made aware on where these products are available," he said.

Ethical is the New Black

Ethical fashion represents an approach to the design, sourcing, and production of clothing which maximizes benefits to communities while minimising impact to the environment.

With an estimated 200 million workers engaged in craft pursuits, artisan handicrafts is the second largest source of employment in India. It is one of the few countries where traditional techniques of dyeing, weaving, stitching, and embroidery are still culturally relevant. According to a United Nations report (2013), India has lost 30% of its artisans over the past 30 years, largely due to a lack of demand for their craft. There is a huge need to reverse this trend and to preserve India's rich heritage of arts and crafts by bringing ethical fashion to the forefront.

On that note, there is a growing number of designers and brands that offer ethical and sustainable fashion products which reflects a changing mindset and suggests that the concept of ethical and eco fashion is heading towards the mainstream.

Here's looking at two such successful eco designers who have chosen to portray India through two very disparate approaches; while one decided to turn convention on its head by choosing a cool and sophisticated palette along with minimalistic Indian symbolism, the other wholeheartedly celebrates the colour and chaos that is India.

Eco-fashion clothes:

- Are made using organic raw materials
- Don't involve the use of harmful chemicals or bleach to colour fabrics
- Are often made from recycled or reused textiles
- Are made to last, so people use them longer
- Come from fair trade

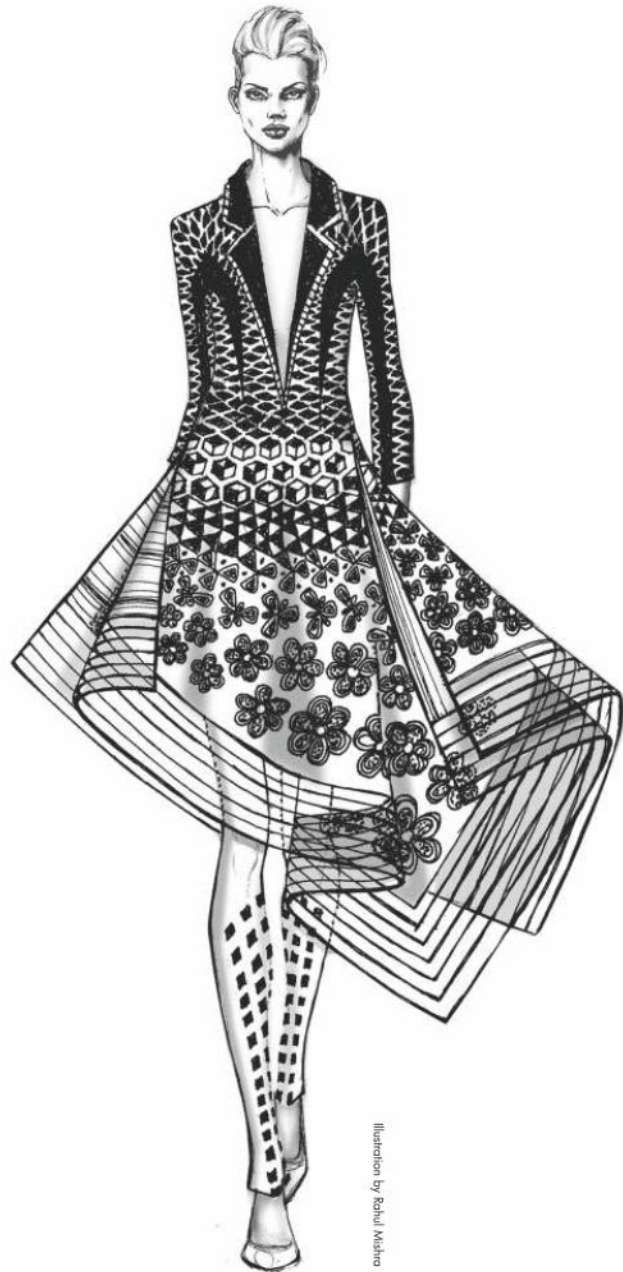


Illustration by Rahul Mishra



Illustration by Rahul Mishra

RAHUL MISHRA

The poster boy of Sustainable Fashion in India today, Rahul Mishra is keen to preserve and promote the traditional skills of India's local artisans.

His work is celebrated worldwide for both his smart use of sustainable fibres as well as his ingenuity of design.

MALHAUSI TO MILAN

Originally from Malhausi, a small village in Uttar Pradesh, Mishra has proved to be a big fish in an every-sized pond. He won The Best Student Designer of The Year when he graduated from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad in 2005.

He made his debut in the fashion industry, the following year at the Lakmé Fashion Week with an inspired collection using cotton handloom from Kerala - the off-white coloured fabric with golden border of a traditional Kerala *mundu*. In 2009, he reemployed the *mundu* fabric, in addition to Banarasi silk to make reversible dresses, woven by traditional craftsmen. In the same year, Mishra became the first non-European designer to win a scholarship to Milan's prestigious Instituto Marangoni.

In Milan, Mishra was surrounded by the big guns of fashion, the likes of Prada, Gucci, and Dior. On his daily walk from his hostel to the institute, Mishra stopped outside Japanese designer Issey Miyake's store, and found himself admiring the label's ability to be universally appealing whilst still reflecting Japanese aesthetics. It was then that the penny dropped, "I understood why he had made it big. It was because he was very rooted in Japanese culture. I had found my answer - I had to be rooted in Indian ideology and create something very universal."

Since then, Mishra has become known world-over for incorporating traditional Indian textiles and handmade artisanship to his work.



"I want to employ a million craftspeople
under the Rahul Mishra label.

That's where I want to be."

-Rahul Mishra, Designer





"When Rahul won the Woolmark Prize with such resounding success, I realised he had won hearts all over the world.

Not just for his creative and technical skills, but for the conviction with which he believed that fashion can be a powerful catalyst for social change, especially in his own country," said Bandana Tewari, Fashion Features Editor of Vogue India.

Scientific Fashion

In 2014, he won the 2014 Woolmark Prize at the Milan Fashion Week. The award has been previously won by designers like Karl Lagerfeld and Giorgio Armani with Mishra being the only Indian to have won it. His award-winning collection, "The Lotus Effect" was influenced by the monochromatic work of Dutch-graphic artist Maurits Cornelis Escher and was inspired by the eight-petal white lotus, "found in the heart of the womb of the world." For it, Mishra created a new fabric that was 85 per cent merino wool and 15 per cent silk. The result was a wonderfully wispy, translucent material on which he embroidered lotus and tree motifs.

The fashion critic Tim Blanks, who judged the competition along with Gucci's Frida Giannini and Italian Vogue's Franca Sozzani, called Mishra's collection "Scientific Fashion" and said that its seamless marriage of art and science brought tears to his eyes.

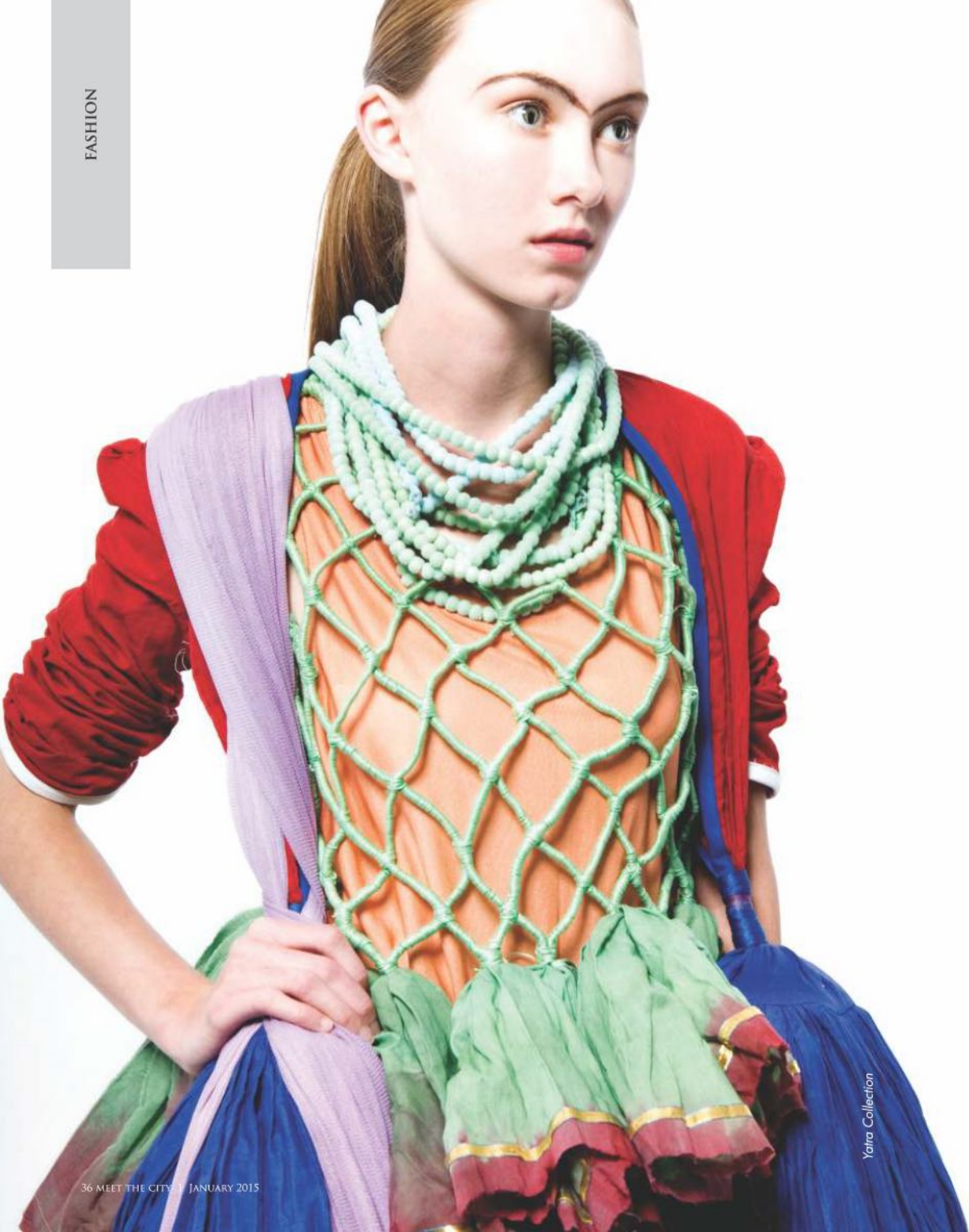
Though keen to continue his experiments with natural fibres, the young designer told the Australian Vogue that he will not do so at the expense of the product's wearability. "If it's too futuristic, it may not work. If a design is too traditional, it still may not work... fashion is something where past and future melt together, because fashion is for the present."

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Going Local

At the heart of it all, is Mishra's dedication to paying it forward. The designer works with craft communities in the villages of Gujarat, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. Mishra trains more than 1000 craftsmen who are in his employ to innovate and to advance their skill set. "I don't want them to come to the cities. I take my work there, develop and safeguard their craft. After all, fashion is the greatest enemy of craft. It's not about supporting them for one collection, it's about teaching them everything I know," he tells a Webzine.

When asked about the future, he says, "I want to employ a million craftspeople under the Rahul Mishra label. That's where I want to be."



KARISHMA SHAHANI

Ka Sha

Karishma Shahani's creations can only be described as an ardent expression of love for India. Her collections reject the notion that sustainable fashion needs be dull and drab and instead embraces the diversity of the country through use of punchy colours and hand-woven fabrics.

A 2010 graduate from the prestigious London School of Fashion, Karishma has always drawn inspiration from the wealth of contradiction that India represents. As she puts it, a mystical place where "splendour and rags, palaces and hovels, genies and giants," coexist in harmony.

Her label Ka Sha was set up in 2011 and aims to reinterpret and revisualise Indian fabrics and crafts. Her versatile use of fabric as well as upcycled and recycled material is a homage to the Indian ingenuity of making do with what one has and using it to the fullest.



A WHOLE LOT OF HEART

"Ever since I was a student, I have been involved with various NGOs and artisans. I periodically work with women from Jhoole, an NGO in Madhya Pradesh. We train them in pattern cutting and embroidery. It's not a profit-sharing collaboration, it's our way of giving back."

- Karishma Shahani

Karishma's Heart to Haat project is a sustainability-driven initiative wherein her team takes on used clothes from customers and transforms them into heirlooms that are wearable and modern whilst still retaining their original sentiment and charm. "We tell people to get their used clothes, like a heavy sari that they don't wear anymore. We [then] repair and customise them into garments which are more usable in today's context. It is basically an endeavour to be as creative as we can, with the least amount of material and waste," she says.

At its core, Ka Sha attempts to do good by benefitting the lives of the artisans through fair trade practices and ensuring the revival and longevity of the art itself.

With use of 100% natural fibres, age-old Indian crafts and fabrics, and new-age vision, Ka Sha is a unique dichotomy between the old and the new. It's a joyous symmetry of localisation and globalisation.

And with sustainability being the need of the hour, Ka Sha represents a vividly colourful future for Indian fashion.

In 1967, International Year of the Tourist, the United Nations recognised that tourism is "a basic and most desirable human activity, deserving the praise and encouragement of all peoples and all governments". We couldn't agree more.

With the opportunity to travel, however, comes a responsibility for all travellers to assess their impact on the environment and local cultures and economies and act in a way to make their impact as positive as possible.

Rashmi Alevoor and Chaitra Patel look at two guardians of responsible tourism and discover a far more rewarding form of travel.

POSITIVE FOOTPRINTS



"The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land". - GK Chesterton

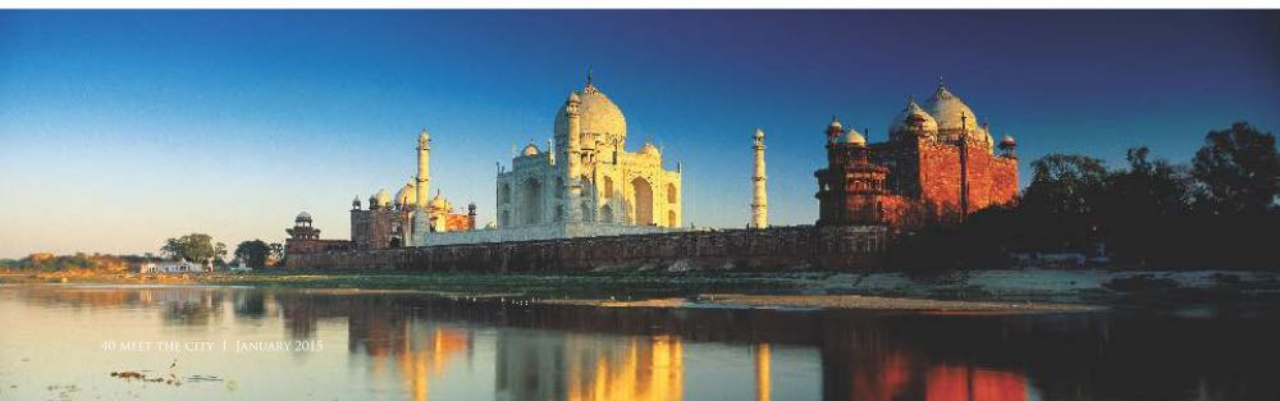
TRAVEL ANOTHER INDIA

Urban India is changing; everything is different now about the way we consume our food, the clothes we wear, the language we speak, the cars we drive, the phones we use, and the destinations we travel to. With a high disposable income, internet access and a huge appetite for travel and adventure, Indians are only second to China when it comes to travelling for pleasure.

A family holiday is no longer restricted to being a once a year affair - little getaways over the weekend, travelling to a new destination at least twice a year, and exploring new places each time are slowly catching the fancy of Indian travellers. So much of travel and cultural exposure has also slowly made way for an emerging group of Indian travellers who are conscious of global issues around them, and therefore choose to travel 'responsibly'.

These are the travellers who seek comfort, safety and hygiene on their holidays, and yet at the same time choose not to achieve these at the high cost of the environment or the local communities.

'Responsible Travel' is certainly coming of age in India, and tour operators choose to cater to this burgeoning group of travellers. 'Travel Another India', is one such organisation that aspires to set up inclusive destinations and experiences, by partnering with rural communities, and offer to the traveller an experience of a lifetime; unique and yet responsible at the same time.



About Travel Another India

Inspired by her travels across India brought about due to her work with social development within village communities, Gouthami in 2009, along with two other friends Meera Menon and Vijay Raj, founded Travel Another India (TAI).

While on her final assignment in Kutch to work with the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, an organisation that boasts of a 12,000 strong women force working on a range of issues from savings to legal rights, health to governance and livelihoods through craft and agriculture, Gouthami also came across a tourism project the organisation was implementing, that was supported by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and the Ministry of Tourism. Working alongside the villagers of beautiful Hodka in the midst of the Kutch desert, to set up the 'community owned and managed' village resort of Shaam-e-Sarhad was a life changing experience for Gouthami. "While travelling around India as part of my work, I was able to see the most beautiful parts of the country and experience the hospitality that comes naturally to most people. I had always felt that here was a resource that rural people could use to generate a good income. And finally in Kutch I had the opportunity to test this theory". says Gouthami.

TAI necessarily works in partnership with local organisations such as NGOs, and peoples' organisations. Interestingly, TAI does not quite have a physical office, and that allows them to take advantage of the variety of talent available in India; everyone works from home and travels to the communities with whom they work. The team members of TAI are varied and live across the length and breadth of India, in Chennai, Bangalore, Pranpur, Delhi and Goa. Together, the various team members bring an interesting mix of skill sets to the table, related to hospitality, travel trade and social development, that ensure the success of the venture.

TAI identifies tour operators, travel agents and guides who believe in and understand the concept of responsible tourism, that is based on a mutual respect between the host community and the guests, with minimalistic damage to the environment. As Gouthami elaborates "The host community needs to benefit monetarily from tourism. However, the guest needs to be treated fairly too with complete transparency, whether it is for a product or a service. Fortunately there are enough such agencies and individuals to work with". Gouthami also believes that responsible tourism as a concept is a matter of 'deep principles' - it's not something that can be forced upon anybody, but it needs to be guided by one's own conscience. Hence, TAI chooses to work only with a set of tour operators and organisations that comply with this belief.

Today, to their credit, TAI works with various organisations and helps travellers plan wonderful soul-satisfying holidays to offbeat and rural destinations such as Pranpur in Madhya Pradesh, Hodka in Kutch, Aldona, Curtorim and Olaulim in Goa, Spiti and Sonapani in the Himalayas, and every other destination as remote, rural and exciting as it can get.



Why 'Responsible Tourism'?

"We have lived for many decades now with no thought of the consequences of our actions. However, in our lifetimes, we are going to see the deadly impacts of those actions." articulates Gouthami. For a place to thrive and visitors to come, it's vital to help preserve the uniqueness of the place, and tourism plans need to be drawn up keeping in mind the future - the effects of our carbon footprints and our callous behaviour. If garbage is allowed to pile up, traffic snarls are the order of the day and mindless deforestation makes way for unregulated construction and mining activity, not only does the destination cease to be attractive to visitors, it also minimises the rights to a honest livelihood for the local communities, which is indispensable for their self-sustenance. And above all, this pollution will go onto ruin the water we drink and the air we breathe, making it increasingly difficult for the local community to live a healthy life. As a domino effect, if the locals do not benefit from tourism, or feel cheated, they would become untrusting of outsiders, which would further prevent any form of tourism in their region.

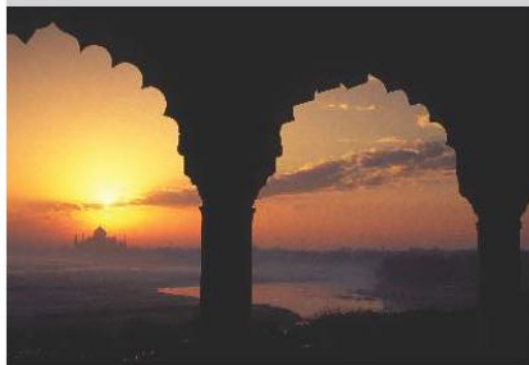
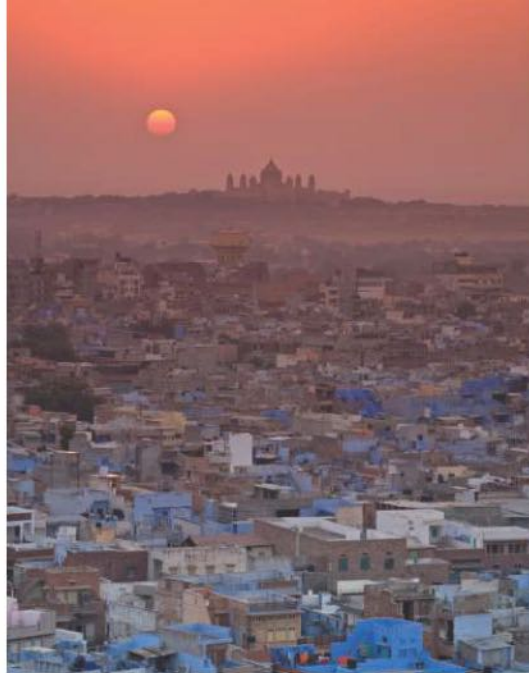
Journeys Without Barriers

One of the principles of responsible tourism is to ensure that destinations are accessible to all, regardless of ability. Soon after TAI was established, Gouthami was approached by a group of people with disabilities from Ladakh, called People's Action Group for Inclusion and Rights - PAGIR. Given that the economy of Leh-Ladakh thrives on tourism, PAGIR wished to be a part of the tourism economy too. This led to the creation of 'Himalaya on Wheels', a holiday package that includes activities for guests using wheelchairs. The response to this package convinced TAI that more such inclusive holiday packages were the need of the hour. 'Journeys without Barriers' was born out of this thought, the brainchild of Vidhya Kalyani who was with PAGIR for several years in Leh, with suitable advice and inputs provided by Shivani Gupta of AccessAbility who carried out the access audit in Ladakh for the same.

What Next?

Gouthami believes that niche travel segments such as hers, will continue to do very well in the near future, given the spurt of travel and the changing patterns of travel by Indians. However, irrespective of the kind of travel, it is important to keep in mind that future generations too have the right to enjoy a similar experience with their children. As responsible citizens, it's imperative for us to leave behind a clean and green planet! Greater awareness amongst tourists and travellers about responsible travel is very important so that it encourages stakeholders of the travel trade to adopt the principles of Responsible Tourism

On its part, the Government in India has begun taking steps in the right direction to encourage responsible tourism, such as providing infrastructure, training and administration to implement the Rural Tourism Scheme, which encourages village level tourism ventures. There is also a Government Order passed that ensures all 4 & 5-star hotels should have at least one room that is completely accessible for guests with disabilities.



So the next time you plan a holiday, think of something different. Take the road less travelled, soak in the rich heritage and meet the people who made that difference.

AWARDS

Outlook Traveller Awards
Manthan Award 2011
Cartier Women's Initiative Awards 2010
Sankalp Award for emerging companies in rural innovations 2009

Travel Another India can help you plan your next holiday:

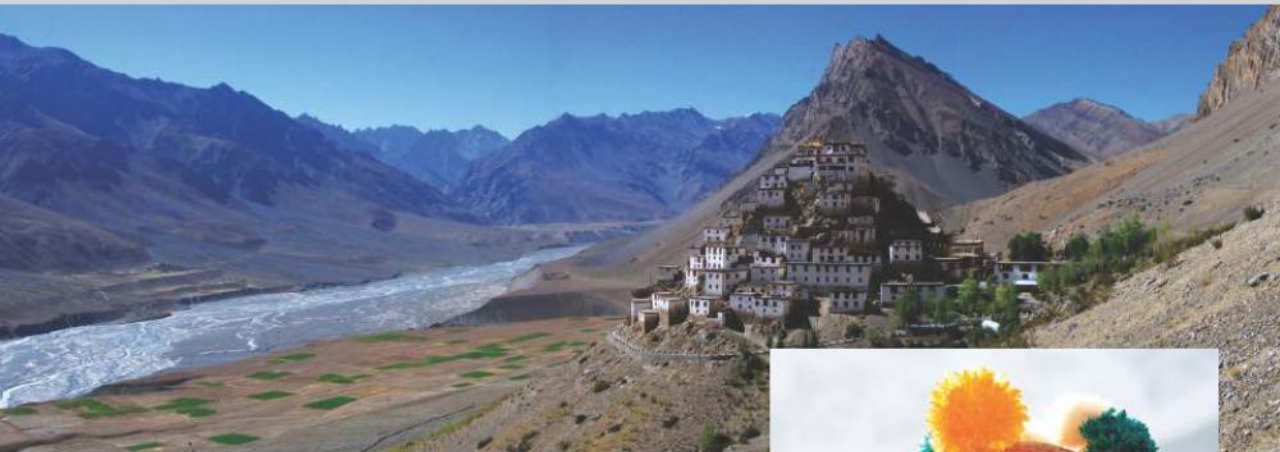
Visit: www.travelanotherindia.com

Email: gou@travelanotherindia.com / book@travelanotherindia.com

Tel: +91 9940 559 513 | +91 9923 407 110

ECOSPHERE

Started by Ishita Khanna, Sunil Chauhan and Sonam Angdui, better known as Nono (the title for the king of Spiti), Ecosphere is an extraordinary, award-winning social enterprise with a focus on conservation and responsible tourism in the Spiti Valley.



A World Within a World

Spiti bears many cultural similarities with its neighbours, Tibet in the east and Ladakh in the north, and stands at an average altitude of 3,600 metres.

The region spreads out for over 8000 sq. km. and is home to a cosy 10,000-member Buddhist society belonging to the Mahayana sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Rudyard Kipling had once, rightly, described Spiti as "a world within a world." And it is this very unique and mystical world that Ishita Khanna, Sunil Chauhan, and their associates are trying to preserve.

Their eco travel packages promote Spitian culture through traditional homestays, local cuisine, cultural performances, Yak safaris, nature trails, mountain biking - all of which serve to support community livelihoods. This not only provides the community with a sustainable source of income but also serves as an incentive for the locals to conserve their unique natural and cultural heritage.





The Many Ways to Get to Know Spiti

Ecosphere's varied offerings fulfil the needs of a diverse set of travellers.

For travelling philanthropists, Ecosphere allows for authentic and enriching volunteering experiences where one can make a difference in the lives of the local communities whilst being privy to their exotic and colourful traditions.

Spiti's high altitude and extreme 6-month-long winter climate result in sparse vegetation which means that the region is devoid of green vegetables. The supply of vegetables comes from the neighbouring cities of Shimla and Manali which takes 2 days to transport which makes the produce both expensive as well as leads to an increase in their carbon footprint. During winters, access to Spiti is completely cut off and with that so is the availability of vegetables.

Volunteers at Spiti, help in constructing greenhouses that enable locals to cultivate vegetables not only in the summers but also during winters at temperatures as low as -25 degrees centigrade. These greenhouses provide the locals with an opportunity to be self-sufficient while also contributing to their better health and providing them with an additional source of income and also benefitting the environment.

The challenging geological conditions of the region also leads to a scarcity of wood that locals use as fuel.

The wood, like the vegetables, must be transported into the valley which results in high emissions of greenhouse gases. But the amount of sunlight in the valley offers many possibilities, says Sunil, cofounder of Ecosphere. "We saw how this extremely cold valley has an abundance of sunny days, almost 250 days a year. Sun was the most natural resource we could use. The usage of solar passive technology has proved to be a boon here."

Apart from renewable energy, Ecosphere works in the areas of eco-travel, health and organics, and local handicrafts. Running through each initiative is a common focus towards conservation, livelihoods, and sustainable development in the valley.

Ecosphere invites spiritual seekers on a mystical journey with an opportunity to meet the minstrel lamas of Spiti - the Bhuchens. The Bhuchens are a rare sect of Tibetan Buddhist theatrical artists that preach religious, social and ecological morals to the locals through a set of Tantric performances.

The organisation introduces wildlife enthusiasts to Spiti by guiding them on trails of the elusive Snow Leopard and the Himalayan Wolf locally known as "Shanku" which is the oldest surviving species of wolves in the world, dating back to more than 8,00,000 years. Visitors are also educated about the biological richness of the region on these trails. With more than 500 million years of geological history, Spiti is an archaeological wonder - unique and rare fossils of marine life dot the landscape, among others, Ammonites and

Trilobites. Some of the earliest legged creatures, relatives of crabs, centipedes and spiders of the Paleozoic Era are found here.

It is also home to more than 450 species of rare and endangered medicinal and aromatic plants. Spiti is a dream destination for the adrenalin junkie and Ecosphere caters to this set of travellers with jeep safaris, mountain biking expeditions, and white-water rafting adventures.

Revenues generated by Ecosphere, through responsible travel, adventure holidays and volunteering, are ploughed back for the welfare and development of the Spiti valley region.

Revival and Conservation

As part of their conservation efforts, Ecosphere markets local organic produce under the brand 'Tsering' which, in Spiti, means 'blessings for a long life'. The beverages are made from seabuckthorn berries that are a wild harvest in the area and the wild herbs and foods that are sold are all natural and sourced on a fair trade principle.

The products are also made in an environmentally responsible manner, using reusable and recyclable packaging. Furthermore, the earnings made from the sale of Tsering products are put into carbon offsetting, conservation, and development programs in the Himalayas.



The organisation also provides a platform to the vibrant and beautiful arts and crafts of the region, thereby conserving them and encouraging younger generations of the local communities to learn these declining skills. Some of Spiti's beautiful handicrafts are *thangkas* (paintings on silken canvas), *choksays* (wooden carved tables), *mane stones* (carving on stones), *zama* (Mud craft), and *lingzay* (traditional shawls).

Ecosphere now intends to scale its work to other areas in the Himalayas. Their work in renewable energy is being implemented in Lahaul, Kinnaur, along with other new initiatives that address current issues of water availability and distribution, and wildlife protection.

Awards

Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards 2010 for Best in a mountain environment
CNN IBN Real Heroes Award, awarded to Ishita Khanna, Founder of Ecosphere
The Sierra Club 'Green Energy and Green Livelihoods Achievement Award' 2009
Wild Asia Responsible Tourism Award 2008.
Founder Ishita Khanna was elected to the Ashoka Fellowship in 2008

How to get there: Spiti can be reached via Delhi-Manali-Kaza. Flights are available from Delhi to Bhuntar (Kullu) after which one can reach Manali by taxi (2 hrs). If travelling by rail, the nearest station is Chandigarh and Manali is 8 hrs away by taxi. From Manali, one can avail a jeep or taxi to Spiti (10-11 hrs).

When: The months from May to October are the ideal time to visit Spiti.

Visit: www.spitiecosphere.com

Email: info@spitiecosphere.com

Mobile: +91 94188 60099

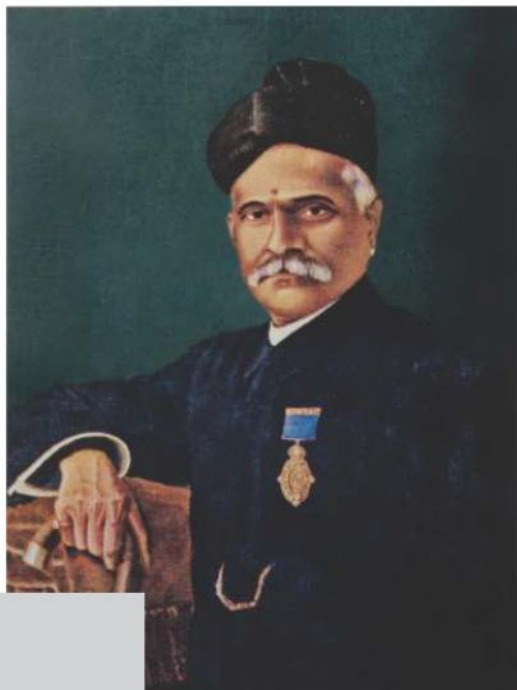






*Pablo Picasso, the father of modern art made **Les Femmes d'Alger** in 1907. With its explosion of sex and bold colours, Picasso changed the grammar of art as it were.*

This came a year after the death of India's celebrated and controversial painter who gave painted beauties and pure captivation over a career spanning 30 years—Raja Ravi Varma. Chaitanya Deshpande looks into the life and genius of one of the greatest painters in the history of Indian art.



PRINCE AMONG PAINTERS. PAINTER AMONG PRINCES.

RAJA RAVI VARMA

It's easy to come across a Raja Ravi Varma painting. Most of us are familiar with his works either as calendar art, oleographs in our grandparents' homes or as posters and labels that carry his work. A lucky few would recognise them from museums in Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Baroda, Mysore, and Delhi to mention a few.

This prolific artist of 19th century India furnished beautiful impressions of gods, especially goddesses, as we know them. His imagery defined the popular aesthetic of an entire generation and of an India shifting from socialist ideologies to economic liberalisation.

To say that Raja Ravi Varma was a great artiste is an understatement; his greatness though can be fiercely debated and the man himself as well as his works were not without controversy. He lived in an age where artistic expression was being explored in diverse ways. And yet, here was Varma resuscitating portraits the likes of which were losing Europe's patronage.

Now, more than a hundred and fifty years after Raja Ravi Varma's birth on April 29, 1848, his paintings have, to a great extent, lost their attraction for the modern connoisseur; although affluent collectors continue to show a great interest in acquiring his original works.

The Life and Times of Raja Ravi Varma

The last decades of the 19th century saw the birth of the modern art era in India. For chronology's sake, 1857, the year of the First War of Independence, is considered the beginning. A quarter of a century later, Raja Ravi Varma was crown-prince of India's art scene.

Born in Killimannur, in Kerala, in the family of Koil Thampurans—local chieftains, young Ravi Varma was destined for a life of royalty and splendour. The oldest of four children, Ravi Varma displayed a natural flair for painting. Encouraged by his uncle, a Tanjore artist of high calibre himself, Ravi Varma was taken under the patronage of the Maharajah of Travancore, where he studied water colour painting under the tutelage of the palace painter Rama Swamy Naidu.



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He lived in an age where artistic expression was being explored in diverse ways. And yet, here was Varma resuscitating portraits the likes of which were losing Europe's patronage.



Under Jensen's training, Ravi Varma acquired new materials and techniques. Smitten by the medium's power and flexibility, through self-instruction, Ravi Varma learned to mix colours and he experimented heavily with both portraits and landscapes and reinvented the grammar of Indian art.

In 1863, British artist Theodore Jensen who was introduced to the Maharaja by the Viceroy John Lawrence was invited by the Maharajah to paint a few portraits. The realism of oil painting caught Ravi Varma's fantasy and he knew that the European occult of oil and colours on canvas was his calling. After several rejections, Ravi Varma finally succeeded in being his apprentice and quickly picked up the medium of oil from Jensen. Some historians rue this development and claim Indian art was tainted and regressed because of Jensen's profound effect on the talented Ravi. But this was only the beginning of a long, celebrated and equally controversial career of Raja Ravi Varma. He taught himself, often experimenting with his base and the effect light would have on his works. He excelled at portraits; the skin, contours, and shadows delighted under his young, confident brushstrokes.

In 1866, Ravi Varma was wedded to the Maharajah's youngest sister to become an even more important member of the Maharaja's court. His exploration with oil and portraits continued and soon the demand for his paintings soared.

By the 1890s, Ravi Varma was a leading artist in India; and so famous that the Kilimanor Palace was compelled to open a post office to receive the innumerable painting requests that arrived from all over India!

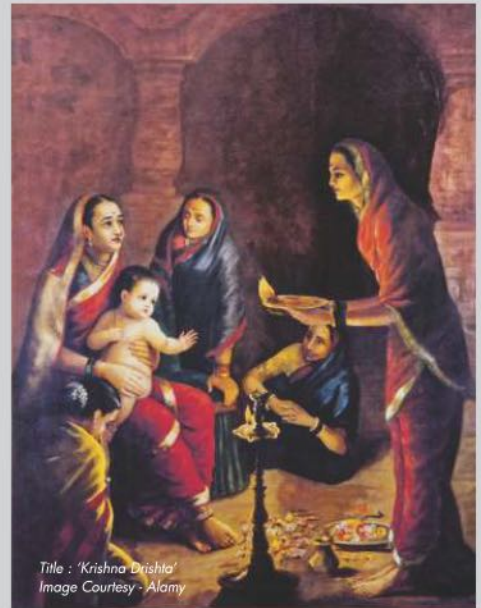
With the help of the then Dewan of Baroda, Sir Madhav Rao, Raja Ravi Varma set up an oleographic press in Bombay and started reproducing copies of his works. This was the first time in the history of Indian art that the general public could access and buy works of art.

But time for Ravi Varma was running out. By 1894 he was caught in state affairs as the guardian of the Maharajah of Travancore. In 1905, his beloved uncle and guru died, leaving a vacuum in Raja Ravi's life. This tragedy proved a great shock to him and on October 5, 1906, Raja Ravi Varma died, in the town of Attingal in Kerala.

Transforming India's Art

Under Jensen's training, Ravi Varma acquired new materials and techniques. Smitten by the medium's power and flexibility, through self-instruction, Ravi Varma learned to mix colours and he experimented heavily with both portraits and landscapes and reinvented the grammar of Indian art. His paintings were heavy in perspective; his use of canvas nuanced and his play with colours brought to life a never-seen-before Indian context.

Raja Ravi Varma in his oleic crucible fused Indian mythology with European Academic realism. Divine grace, it seems, helped him master his art and bring it to the public at large. After he won the prestigious Vienna Art Exhibition, a deluge of European commissions came his way with other awards. So much was Raja Ravi Varma's fame, that he denounced taking part in more exhibitions and competitions just so that other artists had a chance at winning.



Oil and Varma

Western influence gave him the visual language that reflected the academic landscape paintings from the Renaissance and other movements. Subsequently, whilst painting in the open, his stylistics and mannerisms developed *en plein air*.

Ravi Varma's oeuvre comes to light in his lavish visuals of the Ramayana, and Shakuntala in particular. His Lakshmi and Saraswati, painted in 1896, are not only iconic but also endearing. Through his many travels across the landscape, Ravi Varma absorbed the oral tradition of mythical stories, flavours of the land and interpretations of religious texts in his medium. His Hindu pantheon devoid of multiple arms or heads, looked like real people.

Ravi Varma gave a new meaning to gods and goddesses and changed mythological imagery: his Shiva instead of a full beard was clean shaven and smart. His choice to paint a resplendent Lakshmi standing on a lotus pedestal, poised and rising above elephants is an imagery aesthetic and culturally iconic. The style of her sari, the radiating colours, and the upright Lakshmi was a powerful message to a nation with cultural differences, yet bound by the string of divinity.



*"In my childhood,
when Ravi Varma's age arrived in Bengal,
reproductions of European paintings
on the walls were promptly
replaced with oleographs of his works".
-Rabindranath Tagore*

Legacy

For over a century now, his modern vision in publishing his own oleographs has created a pan-national visual tapestry that finds its roots in colonial India. Palaces of many Indian princely states house precious paintings of Ravi Varma.

The rendition of Shakuntala writing to Dushyanta and his non-mythological Poverty are considered to be heralds of his works. His audience was astounded by the truth and emotive genius on the faces of their favourite heroes and heroines from the great Indian epics.

His lithographic press in Bombay was a game-changer for Indian art. Never before was any artist able to reach the vast populace of India through his work in this way. Thousands of postcards and copies were sold. Bombay was chosen for its location—for importing press machines and to set up a distribution network.

Influential friends like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Justice Ranade introduced him to esteemed patrons, including Bombay's pre-eminent businessman Goverdhandas Khatau Makhani who would eventually be his business partner in the press. The press bought him a place amongst the Indian elite. In touch with the finest thinkers, Raja Ravi Varma through his art left a lasting impression, and influence, on our national awakening.

Ravi Varma's success in enterprise may not have reached the heights of his painting skills, but it certainly left behind a cultural legacy, the ripples of which can be felt even today. His oleographs were based on his paintings featuring mythological subjects, divine figures and women in secular settings. His renditions of Lakshmi and Saraswati became the new iconographical types of Indian goddesses.

Yet, today, the context of Raja Ravi Varma's oils has been, to a greater extent, lost to the modern connoisseur. This, despite still attracting handsome sums from collectors.

His talent is indisputable; his work a great national treasure. World art in his time was undergoing a whale of a change. In Japan, the austere Hokussai prints, in the simplicity of their selective line and colour, were revealing the formal beauty of an authentic art; while in Europe, the Impressionists were orchestrating optical effect of light on colour and shifting physical appearances. And in India, their contemporary, Raja Ravi Varma, aided by wealth and talent, a rare combination in an artist, resuscitated portrait painting which Europe had begun to discard.

As a popular artist, he was a great success and probably more oleograph copies of his paintings have been sold than those of any other artist, dead or alive. But this was also largely due to the devotional content of the paintings, combined with their beauty, rather than for their artistic value alone. As an example, critics point out that very few oleograph copies of non-mythological paintings have been sold, and his best work of art, titled Poverty, is not as well-known as some of the mythological paintings.



Title : 'Lady with swarbat'
Image Courtesy - Alamy

Art Heritage

There is much that we owe to Raja Ravi Varma. His pan-Indian iconography, the use of depth and light, his tenacity in taking extensive commissions by the courts were the stimuli that stirred a movement that led to the rise of Indian modernism.

His canvases—extremely hard to come by now—have a very high covenant among collectors. The unfortunate criticisms have moved beyond the grammar of his art and the propensity of print to debase its value. On interpretation, Raja Ravi Varma's figures reveal the roots that nurtured his talents. Through myth-making, heroic visualisation, and subverted sexuality, he re-imagined the epics in myriad styles - from minimal to excessively ornate. There was also deep nationalism involved; and kitsch, in no small measure, since his oleographs helped popularise bazaar prints.

For nearly 25 years, he held sway as the leading luminary of Indian art, riding on the crest of public acclaim. But in that ecstasy, art in India could not keep up with the progress that art worldwide was making. Debate will continue to rage on about the manner in which Raja Ravi Varma influenced Indian art. But of his unequalled success as a great artist, there can be no doubt.

सवाई गंधर्व भिमसेन महोत्सव

THE SAWAI GANDHARVA BHIMSEN
MAHOTSAV

A MUSIC FEST FIT FOR THE

GODS

Ustad Shahid Parvez
Photo Courtesy : Milind Date



*As the year draws to a close,
Pune reverberates to the sounds of scintillating
music and the jingle of dancers' bells.
Famous for a number of dance and music
performances, festivals, and theatre,
Pune turns into a cultural Mecca for aficionados,
both young and the young at heart.*

*Chaitra Patel and Rashmi Alevoor take you
through two of Pune's very prominent festivals;
diverse in their genres,
and yet the music equally soul stirring -
the master of all Indian classical music festivals,
the Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahotsav and the
newer and younger NH7, showcasing extremely
talented Independent, international and folk
musicians.*

*"I try to give to my music the spiritual quality, very deep in the soul,
which does something even if you are not realizing it or analyzing it -
that's the duty of the music." - Pandit Ravi Shankar.*

Such is the power of music, Indian or Western, that it has always mesmerised artists and patrons alike, around the world. Hindustani classical music specifically has been immensely popular not only in the Indian subcontinent, but also across the seven seas. But Hindustani music did not always have the privilege to be patronised by the masses, at least not until after Indian independence. Pre-independent India, even dating back as early as the Mughal era told a different story of Hindustani classical music, patronised by monarchs, where musicians performed in the courts of the various princely states.



The political division of the country into India and Pakistan culturally alienated many Hindustani musicians, and put an end to their royal patronage, compelling many of them to come up with the means of sustaining themselves and preserving their art. Musicians now started performing for the masses, at small gatherings and *baithaks*. And thus grew the popularity of Hindustani classical music.

The few several decades following independence, witnessed the rise of a great number of music festivals and conferences that were organised in order to provide Hindustani classical music a suitable and respectable platform. The now iconic 'Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahotsav', earlier known as the 'Sawai Gandharva Sangeet Mahotsav', played a key role in bringing Hindustani classical music closer to the common man, by establishing a regional audience for the art form.

Incepted in 1953, the Sawai Gandharva Sangeet Mahotsav is inarguably one of India's largest, most popular and finest music festivals dedicated to Indian Classical music and dance. Hosted today by the Arya Sangeet Prasarak Mandal (ASPM), founded by the late Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, the festival was initiated by the legend himself, as a memorial music conference to commemorate the life and work of his guru, Pandit Sawai Gandharva alias Rambhau Kundgolkar, the acclaimed vocalist of the Kirana Gharana.

The festival was started on a small scale, and Panditji was instrumental in inviting artists from diverse backgrounds to perform and present their *gharana* styles. This was in complete contrast to other music festivals of the time that promoted *gharana*-specific music. By the late 1970s, the festival boasted of an impressive representation of artists from across India, catering to the Indian classical musical tastes of the people of the country. Since its inception, this spectacular music festival has been a much revered platform for younger generations of musicians, to announce their 'arrival' and showcase young and emerging talent.

In India, the *shehnai*, a double reed oboe made of wood, traditionally is played on celebratory occasions, to maintain a sense of auspiciousness and sanctity, much like South India's *nadaswaram*.

It's not surprising then, that the opening act of the Sawai Gandharva festival has always been a *shehnai* recital. During his lifetime, the great maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan would open the



Shrinivas Joshi
Photo Courtesy : Milind Date



Pt. Vijay Ghate
Photo Courtesy : Milind Date



festival, serenading the audiences year after year with his soulful and moving recitals. The festival would eventually conclude with the most captivating, almost all-night performance by Pandit Bhimsen Joshi himself, which would usually begin in the wee hours of the morning and conclude not before 9:00 am.

A lot has changed though for the Sawai Gandharva Sangeet Mahotsav in the last decade. The festival that traditionally used to be an all-night affair, with the strains of beautiful ragas resonating through the chilling winds of Pune's winter nights, now takes place during the day; commencing in the morning, and concluding each day at 10:00 pm, in accordance to a ruling passed by the local civic administration that disallows performances and events beyond the official deadline. This change has not been without its share of criticism from music aficionados and artists.

Following Pandit Bhimsen Joshi's passing in 2011, the festival has been renamed and is today known as the Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahotsav, honouring both the teacher and his disciple. The festival has also witnessed a change of guard, now being managed by his youngest son Shrinivas Joshi.

There is little doubt however, that the Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahotsav, now in its 62nd year, continues to draw connoisseurs of Indian classical music and dance in hoards, not only from across Pune, but from across the world as well. To watch the maestros perform and interact with the audiences, in one's lifetime, on a revered platform such as this, is indeed a matter of great fortune!



Photo Credits : Hundred Percent PR







In its fifth year in 2014, the NH7 Weekender continues to be India's most popular indie music festival. The festival was first held in the city of Pune as a musical kickback for people who enjoy different genres of music. Its sole aim, to promote and support independent artists.

The 3-day festival offers audiences a variety of music from world musicians to home-grown indie artists. The last four years of the Weekender have seen the likes of London-based rap/electronic band Asian Dub Foundation, English singer-songwriter Imogen Heap, American thrash-metal band Megadeth, Anoushka Shankar, and many more, along with the best of Indian bands like Pentagram and Scribe, and folk-band Swarathma.

Photo Credit : NH7

This year marked a colossal shift for the indie festival. It showcased close to 100 artists on four stages. It also saw its largest audience for a single performance with 10,000 people gathering to watch Bollywood singer-songwriter, Amit Trivedi's performance.

During Trivedi's set, festival co-founder Vijay Nair addressed the crowd, "I see rock fans, I see electronica fans, I see folk music fans," he said and then declared Trivedi to be "the only one who can bring them together". Nair added that Trivedi's appearance at the festival was "not a Bollywood musician coming to an indie festival" as the artist was "the man who took independent music to Bollywood".

The festival also welcomed US pop-rock band Goldspot, fronted by Indian-American singer Siddhartha Khosla, who told the audience that he learned how to sing by listening to the songs of acclaimed singers, Mohammed Rafi and Kishore Kumar.

This year showcased the most number of newcomers that the Weekender has ever hosted with 80% of the acts being first-time performers.

The standout act of the festival, however, was The Manganiyar Classroom, a musical theatre performance by a Rajasthan folk music ensemble. The Manganiyar Classroom revolves around a group of plucky school children, 40 boys, aged between nine and fourteen, who stage a high-octane rebellion against their teacher.

This year's international acts included Malian rock band Songhoy Blues, Danish electronic dance band Alo Wala, and alternative rock groups Motopony from the U.S. and the English band Dinosaur Pile-Up.

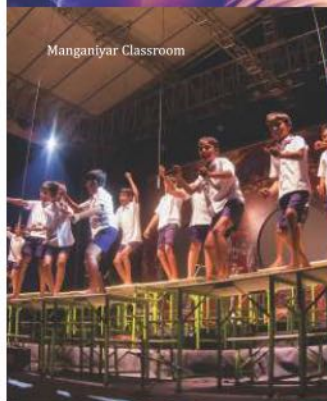
Delhi-based heavy electronic and bass artist Nucleya drew a packed crowd but headliners The Vaccines, an English indie rock band set a new record for the festival, drawing 15,000 people.

Apart from the music, the festival hosted innovative art installations by a number of artists. Bangalore-based artist, Shilo Shiv Suleman's Pulse & Bloom beautified the grounds with lotus flowers made from steel and Rowlux film. The interactive art installation has pulse sensors mounted on the stems of the flowers, which upon touch, light up to the beat of the participants' hearts.

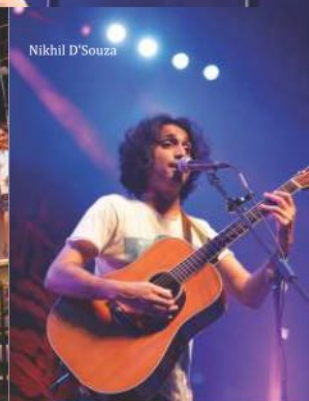
The festival also had a vibrant flea market along with a Ferris wheel that added to the carefree atmosphere of India's "Happiest" Music Festival.



Amit Trivedi



Manganiyar Classroom



Nikhil D'Souza



Photo Credit : NH7

INSPIRED BY



Architectural Rendition

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Elite

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INSPIRED BY
PANCHSHIL

Architectural Rendition



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THE LONE CHANGERS

Helen Keller once stated "The world is moved not only by the mighty shoves of the heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker".

The world has witnessed many a hero come and go; some celebrated, and some not so. Some heroes prefer to hide their light under the bushel and work tirelessly towards their cause.

Chaitra Patel and Rashmi Alevoor pay tribute to four such individuals who have, with their quiet conviction, made the world a better place.



डॉ. प्रकाश
बाबा
आमटे

A DOCTOR TO
A HUMANITARIAN

**"Try not to become a man of success,
but rather try to become a man of value" - Albert Einstein.**

These wise words hold true to a man whose immense contribution to society has been immeasurable, a man who has selflessly dedicated his life to the cause of tribals and animals; both mute spectators of the mindless human intervention and destruction around them.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DR. PRAKASH AMTE

When you are the son of a legend such as Magsaysay awardee, Baba Amte, working towards the cause of the less privileged becomes almost second nature, and Prakash Amte has proven just that, and more. A surgeon and an anaesthetist respectively by qualification and profession, Dr. Prakash Amte and his wife Dr. Mandakini Amte have worked relentlessly for the cause of the Madia Gonds, a tribe native to the Dandakaranya forests of Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra.

But, life did not always begin on such an idealistic note for Prakash Amte - soon after he completed his MBBS, like every other youngster, Prakash Amte too was unaware of the path he wanted to tread on for the rest of his life. Today, however Prakash Amte's life and work is an inspiration to millions, an epitome of self-actualisation. Soon after his medical education, a visit to Hemalkasa along with his father Baba Amte, proved to be a turning point in the young man's life. Once an almost obscure village, Hemalkasa in the Bhamragad taluka of Gadchiroli district, today boasts of an almost 40 bed hospital (*Davakhana*), a residential school (*Ashram Shala*) for tribal children and an animal orphanage for the orphaned young ones of wild animals.

The Madia Gonds of Hemalkasa lived in appalling and inhumane conditions - they were cut off from mainstream civilisation with hardly any roads to speak of, their lot was plagued with dreaded diseases such as malnutrition, malaria, tuberculosis, and leprosy; education and medical care being completely unheard of. Taken aback by the brutal living conditions here, Baba Amte on a visit in 1973, set up the Lok Biradri Prkalp - a social project with the sole intention of integrated development of the Madia Gonds. In 1974, Prakash and Mandakini Amte volunteered to work amongst the tribals here. They constructed a small hut for themselves and another, a slightly bigger one, where they could treat the tribals, on a piece of land that was given to them by the Government of Maharashtra in 1973. The land,



just like the rest of Hemalkasa, was cut off from every possible form of civilisation. This was the modest start to the Hemalkasa cottage hospital, which today caters to almost 45,000 patients (tribals) annually.

Times were never easy for the Amtes - they were after all 'outsiders' at Hemalkasa - outsiders who could not be trusted and could not speak the local dialect. The good doctors however persisted, and learnt the Madia language. Their compassion towards the locals did not go unnoticed, and they soon earned the trust of the tribals, and a reputation for serving them selflessly. The region continued to be backward with almost no electricity; but the dedicated couple never gave up - broken bones were set right without any modern equipment, and complex surgeries were performed under the light of kerosene lamps, in the most primitive conditions.

Almost four decades on, Hemalkasa today stands tall to tell an inspiring and moving tale of great grit and determination to overcome all odds. At the hospital, in addition to the 40 beds, the medical equipment and laboratory facilities have been upgraded and modernised, and more space has been created to examine patients. A team of doctors from Nagpur city visit the hospital each year to perform complex surgeries at the annual medical camp that the hospital organises.



Mandakini and Prakash Amte

The Amtes have however not restricted their love and dedication only to humans - Hemalkasa is also home to Amte's Animal Ark - the first animal orphanage in India. On one of his wanderings in the jungles, Prakash Amte came across a group of tribals returning from a hunt - their prized catch, two Bonnet Macaques hanging dead on a rod. Amte happened to notice a little baby Macaque hanging onto its dead mother. Moved by the sight, he convinced the tribals to hand over the baby to him.

Over the next two days, Prakash Amte bottle fed the baby and nurtured it just like a mother would to her offspring, and named her Babli. Babli went on to becoming the first official inmate of the animal orphanage at Hemalkasa. From here on, each time the tribals would encounter an abandoned animal baby in the jungles, they would bring it back to Amte; and thus grew the orphanage.

With absolutely no expertise in rearing animals, but only love and affection to offer, Prakash Amte and the members at Lok Biradri Prkalp have carried on relentlessly and sheltered many animal orphans. Today, the orphanage boasts of an inexhaustible list of animals such as leopards, barking deer, mouse deer, chameleons, wild boars, hyenas, snakes, owls, eagles, civet cats, crocodiles, Nilgai, and monkeys.

Very early on, Prakash and Mandakini Amte realised that the only way for the tribals to rise above their wretched conditions and misery was to be informed about their rights, and avoid exploitation - that meant providing them with a sound education. An education implied setting up a school for the tribal children. In 1976, a residential school was set up, and the volunteers at Lok Biradri Prkalp went door to door persuading the tribals to send their children to school. But, the Madias, who by now had come to trust the Amtes and their work, were suspicious of education - it was a novel concept to them.

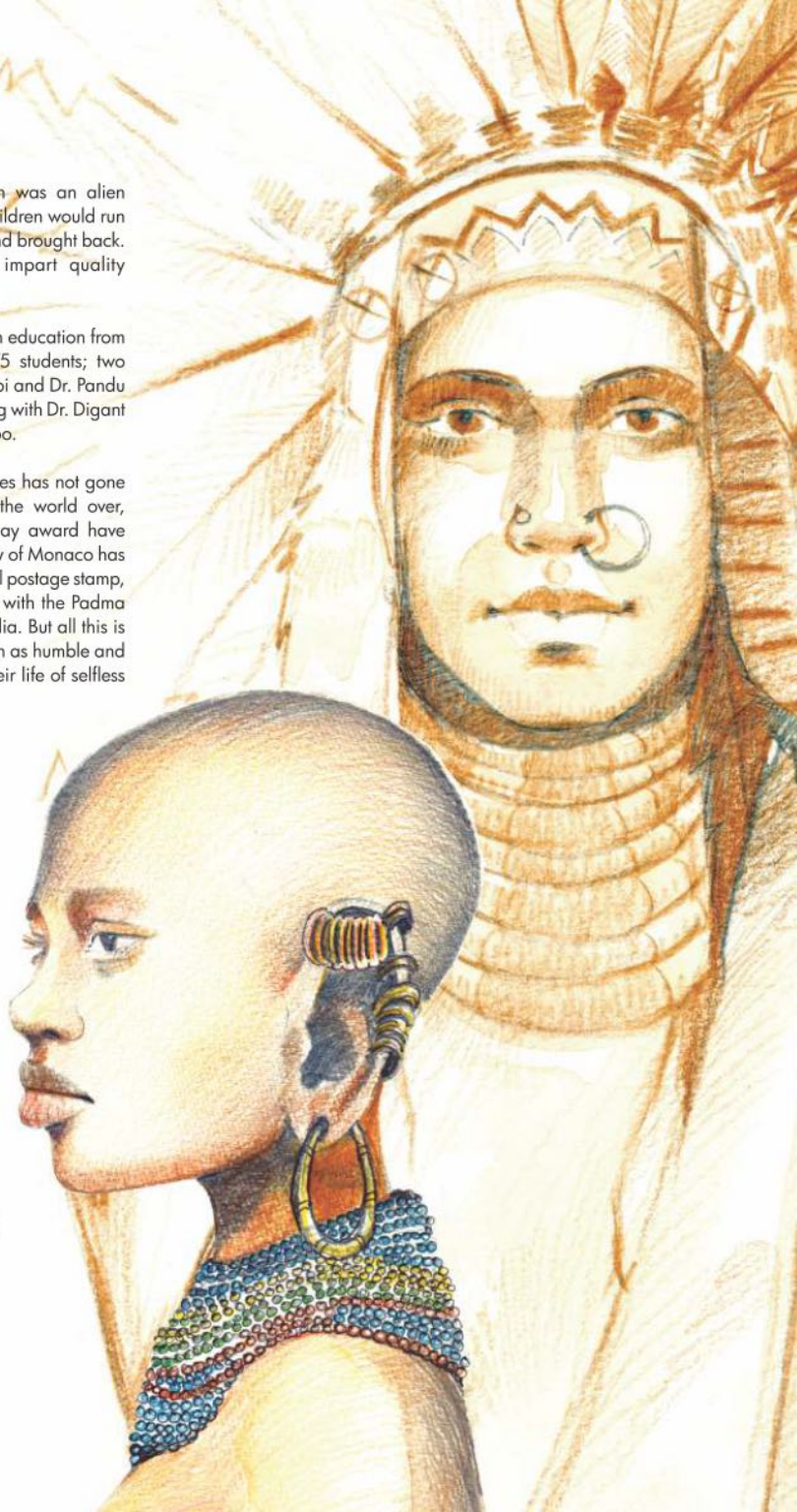
While some initially resisted, others eventually did send their children to school; but only because they were assured that their children would be given meals at school. The noble task of dispensing an education to the tribal children was not an easy one - the official

textbooks were printed in Marathi, which was an alien language to the Madias. Sometimes, the children would run away from school, and had to be chased and brought back. But, nevertheless the determination to impart quality education never died out.

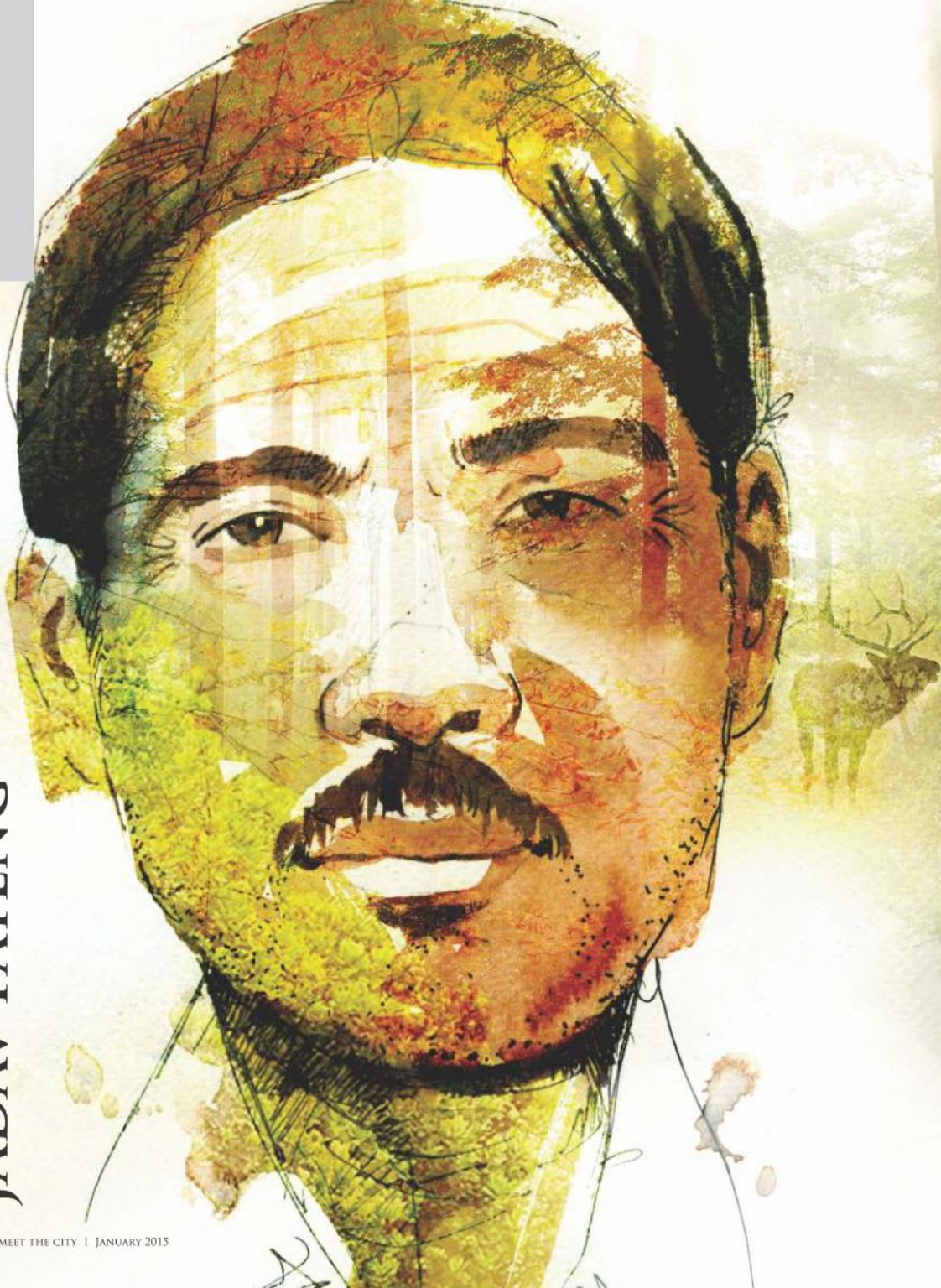
Today, the *Ashram Shala* which provides an education from Class One to Class Twelve, boasts of 575 students; two notable amongst them being Dr. Kanna Dobi and Dr. Pandu Pungati, both ethnic Mardia tribals who along with Dr. Digant (The Amtes' son) ably manage the hospital too.

Four decades of selfless service by the Amtes has not gone unnoticed. Recognition and laurels from the world over, including the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay award have come knocking at their door. The Principality of Monaco has honoured the illustrious couple with a special postage stamp, and back home, they have been awarded with the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India. But all this is only the tip of the iceberg - the Amtes remain as humble and dedicated as always, and carry on with their life of selfless care and nurture.

***Their compassion towards
the locals did not go unnoticed,
and they soon earned
the trust of the tribals,
and a reputation for serving
them selflessly.***



JADAV PAYENG





Mājuli, the world's largest river island (452 sq. km.) is surrounded by the mighty Brahmaputra river in Assam, India. It is also the location of Molai forest, justly named after the extraordinary forestry worker Jadav Payeng who single-handedly planted and cultivated it.

THE FOREST MAN

In 1979, a 16-year-old Payeng of the Mising tribe of Northeast India, the second largest ethnic group in Assam after the Bodos, came across a great number of dead snakes washed against the sandbar.

"The snakes died in the heat, without any tree cover. I sat down and wept over their lifeless forms," Payeng was reported to have said. "It was carnage. I alerted the forest department and asked them if they could grow trees there. They said nothing would grow there. Instead, they asked me to try growing bamboo. It was painful, but I did it. There was nobody to help me."

His mission started in 1980 when, as part of the social forestry division of Golaghat district, Payeng was sent to work on a tree plantation scheme over 200 hectares of land at Aruna Chapori, roughly 5 km from Kokilamikh in Jorhat district. The project was completed in 5 years but Payeng chose to stay back and continued to plant trees on his own.

Now, the once-barren sandbar is a sprawling 1,360 acre forest, home to several thousands of varieties of trees and an astounding diversity of wildlife - including birds, deer, apes, rhinoceroses, elephants and even tigers.

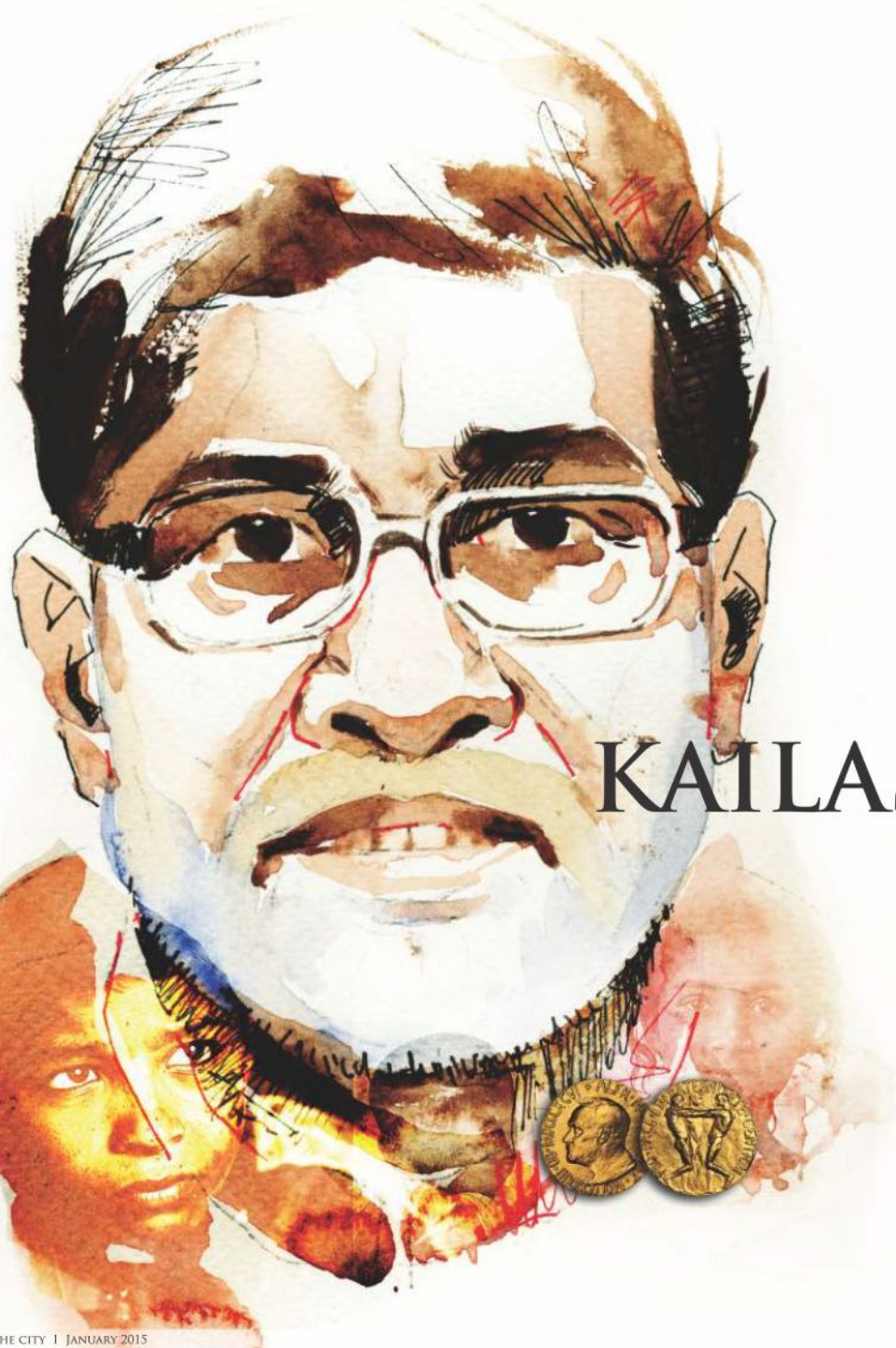
Payeng has dedicated his life to the upkeep and growth of the forest - his single-minded goal, to protect the forest and the wildlife within it.

He uses seeds plucked from existing trees to plant more of the same variety. Lately, he has started investing in seeds from outside, like two varieties of orchids which he ties to branches of trees. "I will never stop, that is the only way Mājuli will survive," he says.

His efforts have only recently been recognised, as late as 2008, when forest department officials discovered the forest by a chance encounter. His work was later reported in the Assamese daily, Dainik Janmabhoomi in 2009 by Jitu Kalita who went on to produce a documentary on the subject in 2012, titled, "The Molai Forest."

In 2013, two more documentaries had been made to celebrate the life and work of Jadav Molai Payeng, one of which, "Forest Man" directed by William Douglas McMaster, won many accolades including the Best Documentary award at the Emerging Filmmaker Showcase at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival. In India, Payeng has been honoured for his remarkable achievement by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) where he was titled "Forest Man of India". He has also been honoured by the Indian Institute of Forest Management during their annual event, Coalescence, in 2013.

Despite all of the worldwide recognition and appreciation, Molai is not prepared to rest on his laurels. He plans to continue his efforts in other parts of Assam. His current goal is to spread the Molai forest to another sandbar inside the almighty Brahmaputra.



KAILASH

The tireless, unlikely and accessible Nobel peace prize winner.

"I think of it all as a test. This is a moral examination that one has to pass ... to stand up against such social evils."



WHO IS SATYARTHI?

60-year-old Kailash Satyarthi and 17-year-old Malala Yousafzai were honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize for 2014 for their work in promoting children's rights in the subcontinent. The Nobel Committee said it "regards it as an important point for a Hindu and a Muslim, an Indian and a Pakistani, to join in a common struggle for education and against extremism."

Up until now, Satyarthi, who runs the NGO, Bachpan Bachao Aandolan (Save Child Movement), was a relatively unknown figure in India where he quietly worked towards eliminating child labour.

In contrast, the world was abuzz with talk of Malala, the courageous girl who had survived a Taliban attack and continued to campaign for girls' education.

The second Indian after Mother Teresa to be named for the peace prize, Satyarthi was born in Vidisha, in Madhya

Pradesh. The son of a police officer, he studied electrical engineering at a government college.

Satyarthi's commitment to the cause dates back to when he was a 6-year-old boy and he noticed a small boy cleaning shoes on the steps of his school. Even as a child, he was bowled over by the stark inequality and apathy that was allowed to exist in the world.

"I think of it all as a test. This is a moral examination that one has to pass ... to stand up against such social evils," he said in 2010.

One of his first battles against social evils involved the building of a football club. He used the membership fees of the club to pay for underprivileged children's school fees. He also started a couple of book banks in his hometown.

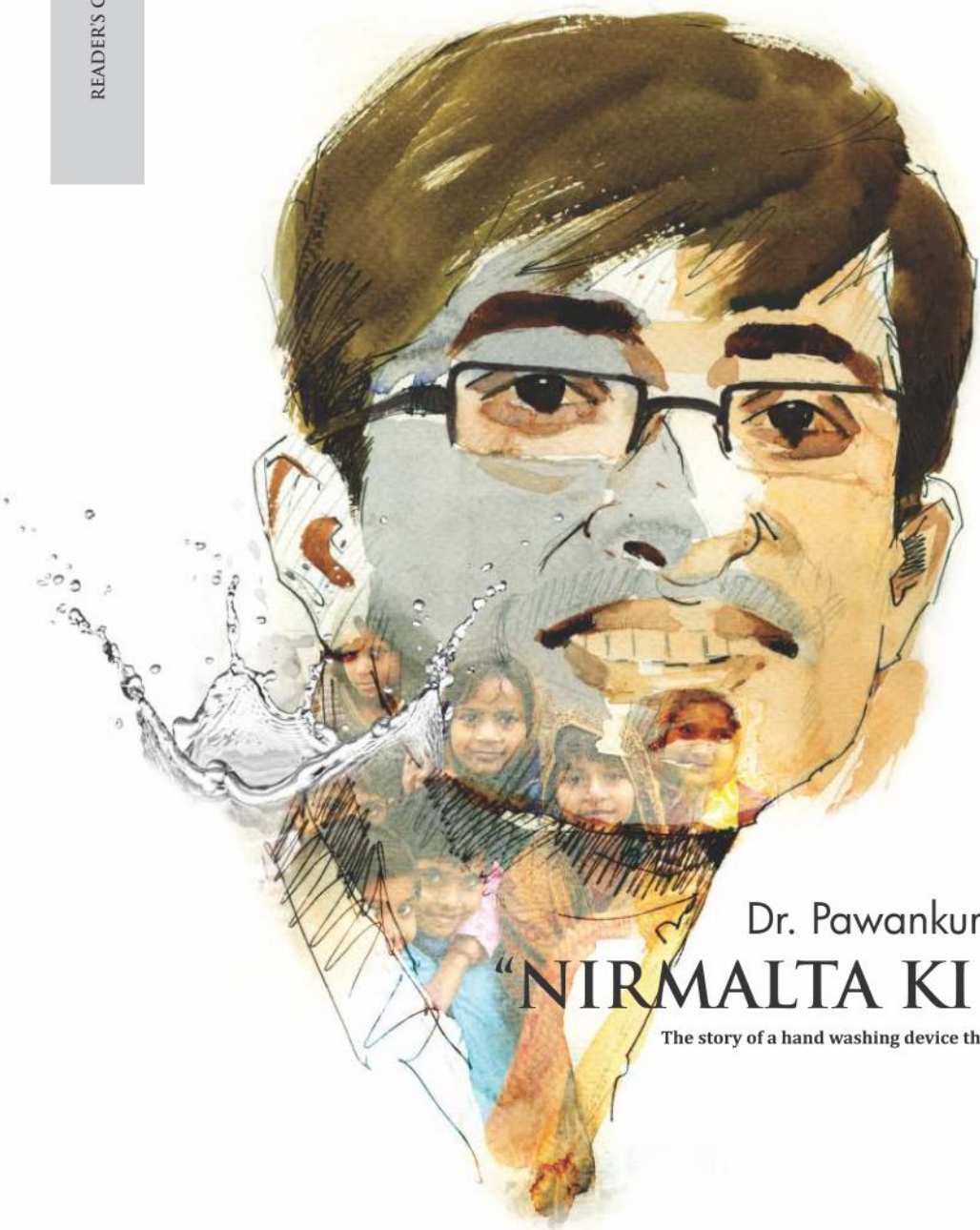
In 1980, soon after founding the Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Satyarthi took to raiding factories, brick kilns, and carpet-making workshops where children and their indebted parents were illegally made to pledge themselves to work for many long years in return for a short-term loan. The earnings from these jobs were so meagre that it would take a lifetime to repay those loans.

In the late 1990s, Satyarthi organised the Global March Against Child Labour that aimed at raising awareness about the millions of children that were abused all over the world in the form of modern-day slavery.

He also founded RugMark, a certification trademark that assures buyers and importers that carpets bearing that label have been manufactured by a company that has joined the fight against child labour and does not employ children illegally - a practice that is otherwise rampant in the carpet-making industry.

His work recently, involved rescuing girls that are sold into abusive forced marriages. These teenagers are then sent into rehabilitation centres that Satyarthi's organisation has set up in many villages.

Kailash Satyarthi is a gentle man, the 8th Nobel laureate of India, and a man who has truly upheld Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and tradition. Above all else, he's a determined crusader who fights for his ideals and brings hope to the millions that are voiceless.



Dr. Pawankumar Patil

"NIRMALTA KI JAY"

The story of a hand washing device that changed lives!



Diarrhoea kills more number of children in India than AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined. Recent studies reveal that India has the highest number of deaths caused by diarrhoea across the African and South Asian countries. And yet, when it comes to personal hygiene and hand-washing, India seems to score the lowest!

While on a two-year fellowship programme at Nirman's SEARCH (Society for Education, Action & Research in Community Health) in 2008, at Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, young Dr. Pawankumar Patil chose to work for the local community in the health sector, in the village of Dhundeshivani. Here, his project required him to identify a public health problem and come up with a solution for the same. Working closely with the local community, Pawan realised just how important clean and potable water is to help prevent diseases such as diarrhoea, malnutrition, UTI, and infant mortality that plagued the region; followed by general cleanliness, especially the washing of one's hands. He carried out a study on the sixty-four families that lived in the village, and discovered that only an appalling number of six families actually used soap whilst washing their hands. Ironically, it was never an issue about money for the villagers - soap to them was about 'beauty' and never about 'cleanliness'.

Pawan had recently heard about the Tippy Tap concept that had been introduced in New Zealand. Tippy Tap is a low-cost, innovative concept of washing hands, especially suitable for rural areas which suffer from a scarcity of running water. The Tippy Tap technology is very simple and easy to re-create - the mechanism is operated by a foot lever, considerably reducing the possibility of bacteria transmission. It is known to use only 40 millilitres of water for a single hand wash, as against 500 millilitres consumed when using a mug, and the waste water from the hand wash is then recycled and goes back to the plants.

Pawan's pursuit of trying to build a suitable device for washing hands was not without its challenges. In his first attempt at installing the device, he realised that the soap posed to be a very attractive prop to inquisitive grazing goats who would try eating it. Birds would litter around the soap, and the soap itself would disintegrate, by rubbing against the string. The evenings of the next few months were spent in trying to resolve these design issues; and very soon Pawan had built a robust, and indigenous hand-washing device - 'Nirmal'.

'Nirmal' was built at a modest cost of Rs. 35/-. But, Pawan had bigger challenges ahead - getting the villagers to accept the device and wash their hands regularly. In one of his interviews to a publication, he is reported to have said, "If you tell them their clean-looking hands actually have germs in them and that the research on diarrhoea shows that it could be prevented by hand-washing, they won't bother. So instead of using the typical health communication model, I thought why not give them something they can relate to." So, he took Nirmal to the local primary school. He noticed here that each child had a unique way of washing hands - some children partially wet their hands while others used soap only on their palms and not the back of their hands. Pawan decided that a uniform hand-washing system was essential, and he decided to implement the WHO prescribed hand-washing steps, accepted world-wide. Pawan also discovered that children relate to song and action, and so he created a hand-washing song in *marathi* that the children could culturally relate to, using mnemonics that the children could memorise while using Nirmal.

Once the children were part of the Nirmal scheme of things, Pawan's next task was to get the adults involved. For this he set up a ritual; at every celebration in the village, he would invite the oldest woman in the gathering to come forward and perform a puja on the Nirmal device, thereby ensuring the device became a part of their cultural milieu and was revered. Pawan next turned his focus on "troublesome" tobacco consuming children; he created a game of Frisbee for the children to play, on the simple condition that they would not consume any tobacco while playing. This game of Frisbee gave the children a new-found pride and something they 'belonged' too, gradually reducing their dependency on the vice.

Today, Dr. Pawan has successfully set up 83 Nirmal devices in 16 villages across Maharashtra. He went on to complete his higher education in the United States and is now back in India, working at Community Empowerment Lab in Lucknow; researching maternal and infant mortality. But, his lessons will long be remembered and his songs sung by dozens everywhere.

IN STORE

THE MUD HOUSE

ALL THINGS ECLECTIC AND BEAUTIFUL

"It is important for us to make sure that the work is not only unique and beautiful but also well crafted"

- Dipti Chillal (The Mud House)

The Mud House certainly lives up to this, and much more. An inspiring and creative product and furniture line up that is handmade, unique, one of a kind, eclectic and bizarre all at once, The Mud House is the new kid on the block to welcome into your homes, as the curtains come down on 2014.

Chaitra Patel spent a dreamy mid-morning exploring the wonderful collection at the store..

Tucked away in the quiet locales of Koregaon Park, under a green canopy of beautiful trees, The Mud House is the brain child of siblings Dipti Chillal Shah and Amit Chillal. True to its name, The Mud House exudes tremendous warmth and a familiar sense of cosiness. "A mud house takes you back to your roots – it radiates with smiling faces. And that's what we seek to do at our Mud House too – bring a smile onto our customers' faces" says Dipti.

The interiors of The Mud House are exquisitely designed, to say the very least. An interior designer by profession herself, Dipti has ensured that The Mud House is illuminated with plenty of natural light; and the green view from the glass facades does not disappoint. Tall and mighty trees that envelope the pretty bungalow that houses The Mud House are a sight for sore eyes.

The Mud House was born out of a sheer passion for all things beautiful and eclectic, which often led Amit to venture out and explore fascinating flea markets across the world. Almost every curio or piece of furniture that he brought back from his adventures was a conversation piece amongst friends and

visitors at home. This prompted Amit to convert his passion into a business, and he set up two stores, called Chillal, in Singapore. On a visit to Singapore, Dipti was thrilled to see the flourishing stores set up by Amit and prodded him to start one back home in Pune. And so was born the third store – The Mud House, a beautiful partnership between the brother-sister duo.

What leaves a visitor at the store spellbound is the uniqueness of each item on display. As Dipti explains, "we have travelled the length and breadth of India to acquire the products for our store and these are not manufactured in factories".

Dipti and Amit source and hand-pick each product personally from the artisans, in order to maintain an optimal level of pricing without compromising on the quality. And their fascination for the quirky is certainly well illustrated through the collection – the table lamp built out of a truck headlamp is a perfect example. "Every home must have a unique corner – a corner that stands out just by adding one single curio or accessory to the rest of the display" emphasises Dipti.



The Mud House has a little of something for everybody and to suit every pocket. Exquisite leather and wooden furniture for the home, curios and tea light stands, lamps, aromatherapy, furnishings including digitally printed cushion covers, and exquisite artefacts created by artisans from across India. A wooden jar made out of a single section of wood from the Rohida tree, a self propagating tree native to Rajasthan is a fascinating piece of workmanship. Impeccably crafted and astoundingly thin and featherweight, it's easy to mistake this jar to be made of brass.

Sourcing these incredible pieces of art is however not always an easy task - it takes a lot of patience and persuasive skills to convince the artisans to part with their precious creations.

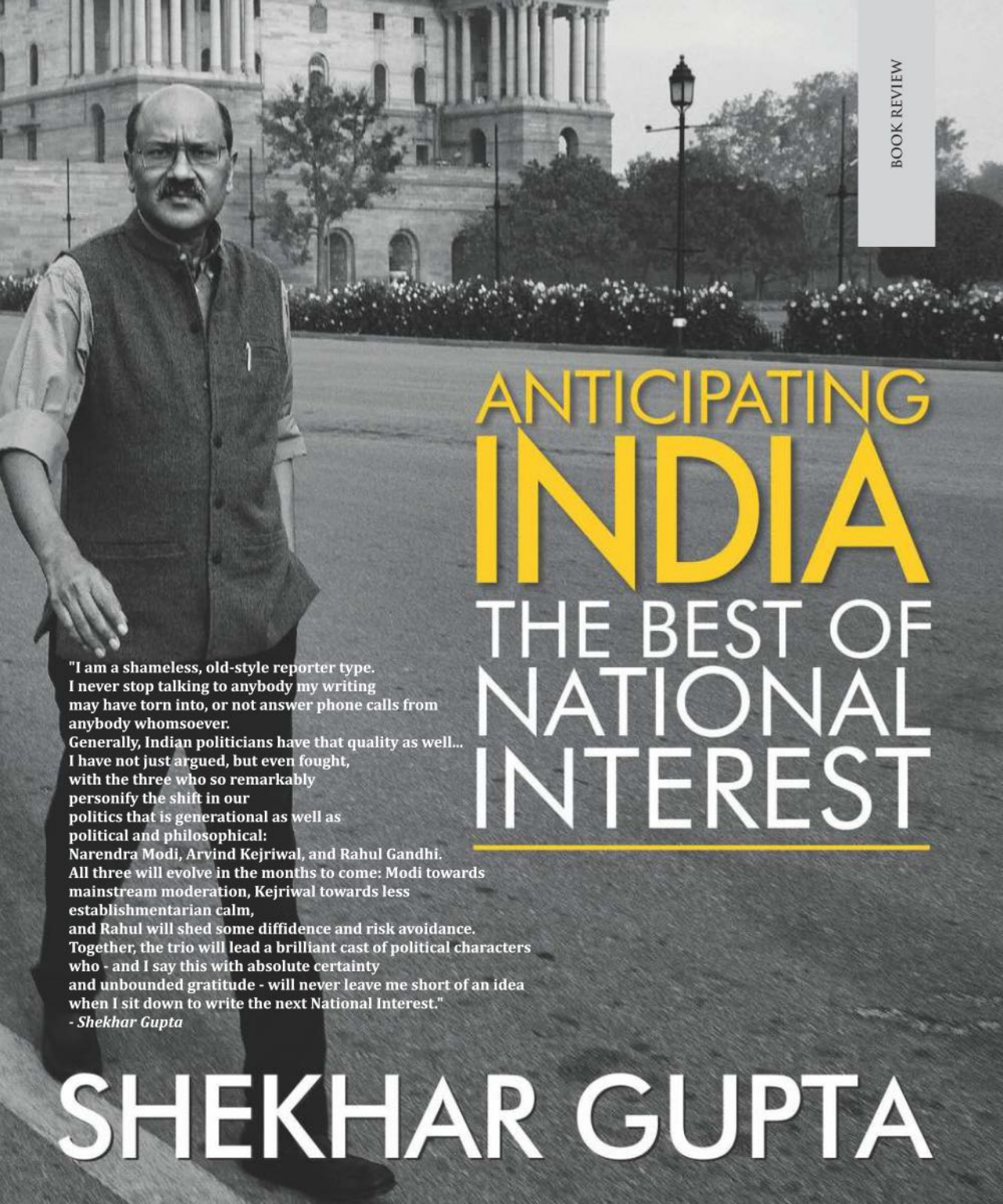


"Every home must have a unique corner - a corner that stands out just by adding one single curio or accessory to the rest of the display"



"Artisans in India are very creative, but sadly are never given their due" says Dipti. "The wares produced by these artisans and craftsmen often adorn shop windows of furniture stores across Europe, being passed off as indigenous to those countries. We want to change this, and would like to give our artisans a respectable platform to showcase their products here, in India itself" articulates Dipti.

While Pune does in fact boast of similar concept stores, what makes The Mud House stand out in the crowd is the uniqueness of their product line and the zeal to keep upgrading in order to ensure a wonderful variety. The end result brought to the table is nothing short of curatorial passion!



ANTICIPATING INDIA

THE BEST OF NATIONAL INTEREST

"I am a shameless, old-style reporter type. I never stop talking to anybody my writing may have torn into, or not answer phone calls from anybody whomsoever.

Generally, Indian politicians have that quality as well... I have not just argued, but even fought, with the three who so remarkably personify the shift in our politics that is generational as well as political and philosophical:

Narendra Modi, Arvind Kejriwal, and Rahul Gandhi.

All three will evolve in the months to come: Modi towards mainstream moderation, Kejriwal towards less establishmentarian calm, and Rahul will shed some diffidence and risk avoidance. Together, the trio will lead a brilliant cast of political characters who - and I say this with absolute certainty and unbounded gratitude - will never leave me short of an idea when I sit down to write the next National Interest."

- Shekhar Gupta

SHEKHAR GUPTA

ANTICIPATING INDIA THE BEST OF NATIONAL INTEREST

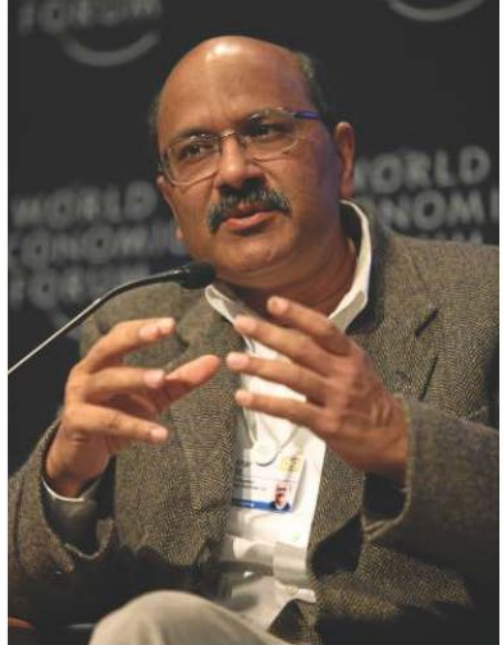
As reviewed by Chaitanya Deshpande.

If the pen is mightier than the sword, then Shekhar Gupta is as prolific a swordsman as they come. *Anticipating India – The Best of National Interest* is the most eagerly awaited news and current affairs book in Indian journalism. Informed by three decades of formidable reporting, it gives a credible insight into the power corridors of the country. In this collection of columns written for the “National Interest” column, Shekhar reflects upon things that were. He wields his sword with much flair; hacking arrogance, pretence and deceptions with much élan; he’s a hero for those he likes and is close to. His proximity and access to higher offices is legendary, and what emerges from these columns is an insider’s view never seen before!

Anticipating India interprets everything from the triumphs and imperfections of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh to the ascension of Rahul Gandhi, Narendra Modi and Arvind Kejriwal. Divided in six parts, the book includes columns published during the days of the NDA, two UPAs, the emergence of Narendra Modi and the days of Anna – Aam Aadmi protests. But more than anything else, it digs deep into the forces that have hollowed out Indian federalism and constitutionalism and delves on volatile public sentiment that reins in political excesses.

The column, *National Interest*, began in 1997 where Shekhar begun by taking pot-shots at Sitaram Kesri and his ambitions. Now, compiled as a book, it is a rich narrative and fierce commentary on the state of the nation, its leaders, and the society. Shekhar, in particular, is unequivocal in criticising the upper crust’s involvement in Anna’s movement as “the most retrograde environmental and jholawala movements in the history of mankind”. Contrast this to his unapologetic bias towards the business community and resultant attacks on environmentalists and NGOs for obstructing entrepreneurial progress to complete the spectrum.

Shekhar vociferously defends the Ambanis, and rides forth as the champion of politicians scorned by their peers for their low-caste, like Giani Zail Singh for example. Shekhar venerates former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao for the highs of the 90’s wave of liberalisation, and takes the Congress by the scruff of its neck for its sabotage of Rao’s legacy because it deviated from the Nehru-Gandhi ideology! He is acutely dismissive of Morarji Desai — a man who brought India back on track after the troubled Emergency; and to say that Mr. Desai “failed to make any mark on politics...or history” is undoubtedly unjustified.



The column, National Interest, began in 1997 where Shekhar begun by taking pot-shots at Sitaram Kesri and his ambitions. Now, compiled as a book, it is a rich narrative and fierce commentary on the state of the nation...

At the other end is Shekhar’s unbridled appreciation of those whom he likes. Parkash Singh Badal, for one: not many would agree with Shekhar on Badal being “...Akali giant (who) stood tall and unwavering at the risk of death”. There are views, and then there are Shekhar’s views.

Editors and publishers rely on captivating readers by promoting controversy, voicing biased opinions, and singularly targeting one or many public figures. However, balance is central to journalistic success, and addressing all contradictions and contrasts is necessary. Yet Shekhar’s columns resonate a voice of tenacious one-dimensional opinion and blinkered vision. Journalists, particularly columnists, may be allowed to be opinionated; yet overlooking the obvious, the truth is that Shekhar’s columns are significant in understanding the commotions that shaped India’s modern history. Every chapter raises a question on politics and power. Every sentiment echoes ideas of India beyond stereotypes, conventional wisdom and ultimately seeks to identify who or what the real India is. It is indeed a “riveting first draft of modern Indian history”.



GAME CHANGERS

Ludmila and Dr. Crispin Lamont, Founding partners, Multifit Elite Fitness Club.



Tai Moscovich, Director, Multifit Elite Fitness Club.

While Indians are getting increasingly health and fitness conscious, the dropout rate among gym-goers continues to remain high. The reason is a lack of motivation. People need incentives to incorporate activity into their daily schedule.

For many, going to the gym is akin to drudgery. Rashmi Alevoor visits Multifit, a club that aims to give fitness a much-needed facelift.

Community Matters

"It's like a rotary club, a social get-together. We make sure that members enjoy coming to the gym each day. Because fitness should be fun," says Dr. Crispin Lamont, founder and Managing Director of Multifit Elite Fitness Club.

He says that approaching fitness as a purely physical science is a fallacy because there is a strong psychological component to it as well. Lamont, who has opened 44 fitness clubs across 11 countries, says that the single most important factor to creating long-term health and fitness success is having a support system. Exercise partners provide a powerful combination of support, motivation, accountability and, in some cases, healthy competition.

The community atmosphere at Multifit is palpable. Members walk in greeting each other and there is great camaraderie between members and trainers.

"It's a lot of fun! It's like a playground where you can run, jump, throw stuff around while getting fit at the same time! It's a place where everybody can train like professional athletes," says Ketaki Khare, national rugby player and Multifit trainer.

An ex-officer of the British infantry himself, Lamont is proud of his versatile team of fitness experts. The team boasts of a national rugby player, a national cyclist, a medal-winning shot-putter, and an ex-member of a task force.

"It is the future of fitness and it's a fairly new concept in India. All our workouts are customised so that you can become the best version of yourself," says Tai Moscovich, the very young but by no means inexperienced Director of Multifit. The 22-year-old served in the Israeli Defence Forces and has been practicing Krav Maga for the past 16 years.

Looking Forward

The look of the club is futuristic, too. Dressed up in uplifting colours of yellow and blue, Multifit doesn't hold any of the regular machines one is accustomed to seeing at a gym. In its place you will find climbing ropes, resistance bands, kettlebells, workout sandbags, and plyo boxes. Another point of difference is the lack of T.V.s at the gym. "The focus needs to be solely on fitness. They need to be fully engaged, fully involved, and having fun," says Tai.

One of the innovative forms of training that the club promotes is a different form of High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) called Tabata which involves four minutes of intense interval training/circuit training. This form of exercise, discovered by Japanese scientist Dr. Izumi Tabata, has more impact on both the aerobic (cardiovascular) and anaerobic (muscle) systems which allows for a faster shedding of fat along with building of lean muscle. In line with the central theme of Multifit, this form of training promotes a sense of community and a feeling of "we're all in this together," as members perform these exercises in groups.

Another benefit of this form of circuit training is that it prevents muscle injury. The harder you train your body for just one activity, the more stress you put on those set of muscles and the greater the risk of injury. Tabata training accommodates many activities that require the use of different muscles of the body making the trainee more "functionally fit". The variety of exercises also prevents boredom and burnout.

Multifitter (a term used to describe members) Annavi Khot says, "With variations every day, the workouts are never boring. The instructors here offer personalised attention even if you haven't enrolled for personalised training. I also like that they promote getting fit through weight training which is different from all of the other fitness clubs in India that stress on cardio (for women)."

With happy customers, rave reviews, and 6 new clubs in the pipeline, Multifit Elite Fitness Club seems to be the bright future of fitness that everyone has been looking towards.



Dhruv Chaudhary, Trainer



Ketaki Khare, Trainer



Spin Class



Team Multifit

YOGA AND CHANGE

by Trisha Maharaj Singh

Trisha Maharaj Singh is a Certified and celebrated yoga instructor since 2004.

Change is inevitable in life. Positive change however, is a choice. Real change therefore, can only come from within. In an ever changing world, where man has peaked with technological and scientific discoveries, where we even know how many light years away the closest galaxy to ours is, all of mankind is discovering that the real need for change is within our limitless consciousness.

Beneath the fluctuations of our mind, there is a terrain of peace and serenity. In order to reach there, we need to attain silence and stillness which lies in a layer below the fluctuations of the human mind.

Unfortunately we all operate from our external reactive selves rather than the inner being, that only experiences life as it occurs. There is a beautiful state between the

stimulus and the reaction and this state is called *Sakshi*. It is in this state that time is infinite and there is nothing but gratitude and peace as we experience the present moment as it is. It is this timeless and non-resistant state that allows us to flow with the order of life and allow change, thereby invoking one's evolution and progress.

I believe we are in a time of human evolution where everyone is seeking and trying to dig a little deeper. This is probably why depression is one of the biggest diseases man suffers from today. Having everything the three dimensional external world can offer, has now proved not good enough and there is a growing consciousness among human beings that there is more, there is something else, deeper within.

Being a Yoga teacher, I focus on creating changes in consciousness by practising *asanas*, balance, alignment and breath concentration.

The practice of Yoga is simple and even though ancient, it is still so relevant today! I believe true practice is not just in the physical, but most importantly in the way we live our lives, in the way we treat others and the way we care for our own selves.

Asanas help to stimulate and rejuvenate the body's main systems (cardiovascular system, nervous system, immune system, skeletal muscular system, digestive system, reproductive system) in creating better nerve impulses, and helping us make better choices in our day to day lives. It is not just the muscular body that gets stretched and contracted with the practice of Yoga, but also a very subtle yet powerful change in one's inner being that drives one forward in life.

We can make a new start every day. So my advice to all is, allow the changes of life to flow through you. Let your body be an instrument that you fine tune to the notes of acceptance and allowing rather than the flickering whims of the resistance and ego. The final result will be a beautiful symphony that unfolds, no matter how rough the external winds of change may seem.

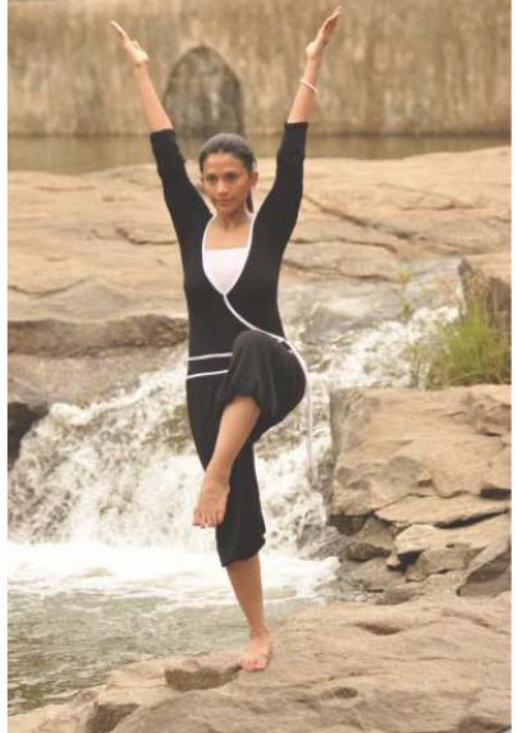
A daily Yoga routine:

Adhomukha virasan: This asan helps to stretch the spine gently and creates good circulation in the arms, neck and shoulder joints which in turn helps circulate energy through the body, thus relieving one's dull energy.

Vrkshasan: The tree pose, helps one attain balance, physically as well as by balancing the brain fluids in the left and right brain. This creates an inner calm and alertness.

Navasan: By strengthening the abdominal muscles, this refreshing *asana* also helps the lumbar spine to stay firm and healthy.

Marichyasana: Twisting *asanas* help to detox the body and mind. They eliminate excess acids, release fluids from the organs and



therefore rejuvenate one's energy. Twisting *asanas* also nourish the spine, releasing any extreme stretching or contraction that the spine may have been subjected to.

Anulom Vilom pranayama: *Anulom Vilom pranayama* literally means blocking the order to create order, creating chaos to create stillness. Even the nerves within us know that peace always follows, after the storm has passed! Practicing this form of *pranayama* is therefore like a tonic to the nerves.

Om chanting: During meditation, when we chant *Om*, we create within ourselves a vibration that attunes with the cosmic vibration and we start thinking universally. The silence between each chant creates peace and freedom from mental impulses. *Om*, pronounced as *Aum* has three sounds A-U-M. "A" signifies the conscious state based on our 5 senses. "U" signifies the subconscious state or dream world state which reflects in our patterns and beliefs. "M" signifies the super conscious state of stillness and timelessness. It is in this state of timelessness, ironically change is a constant, as energy can never be still, no matter how much one tries to trap it.

Sirshasan: It is true that when a child is born, it's head first enters the world, so being inverted in the head stand is similar to the experience of birth! While inverted in *Sirshasan*, truly one should try to experience seeing the world from a different perspective!

NOT JUST A MAN'S GAME

Pain, grit, and plenty of fun; this is what the game of rugby is about and as Chaitanya Deshpande finds out Rugby India and its ladies are just about that. A whole lot of tenacity, hard work, and most importantly, fun.



Rugby is as close a contact sport as any. It is physically exhaustive and emotionally draining. Taking up this challenge is RFS Pune, the first women's rugby squad in India. Well, let's face it, rugby is not very Indian and "Indian girls aren't brought up that way".

So what makes this team of girls rally together to form India's top rugby team (many of them now star in the Indian national team)? The answer isn't simple, if there is one apart from the love of the game.

Go deeper and you realise that there's a cultural conflict between the nature of rugby and the way Indian women are raised. Players here find themselves stuck between the traditional cornerstone that dictates that girls should 'play nice,' and the game's physical demand to 'play hard'. It's a cultural conundrum that the girls strive to fight, through a veneer of smiles and sweat.

The problem is not with the girls of Indian Rugby alone. There are deeper, more global issues that these girls are fighting. Principal among these are the incidence of sexual abuse, the bias and presentation of sexuality in sports, and eating disorders.

But beyond the obvious gender stereotypes, rugby in itself is a

far poorer sport in India. Although many young girls, and boys are now interested to take up the sport, there simply isn't enough rugby exposure in India! So much so that in India, women's game are still restricted to the shorter seven-a-side version - the Rugby 7s.

There are few like the RFS Pune and Khare's Football and Rugby Academy (Kfandra) founded by brothers Surhud and Swapneel that are dedicated to the sport. In fact, many of India's national team players come from Kfandra including three team captains! Incidentally, theirs is also probably the first girls' team involved in full-contact rugby!

There are a few homegrown stars here; icons in their own rights. Take Ketaki Khare, first woman rugby referee from India, and the first Indian woman to pursue rugby as a profession. What began as an interest at the age of fifteen has turned into Ketaki's life purpose today. Recently, Ketaki became the first foreign player to have been offered a three-month part-scholarship in New Zealand to play rugby with the Bay of Plenty rugby team.

The truth is that rugby is not yet a feasible career. Girls who play do it because they are passionate about the sport. For these athletes, this is a serious sport. There are ambitions and injuries, medals and championships. There is glory and pride to be had for the nation, too. Yet, as it goes, the Sports Ministry this year canceled the rugby women's team from the contingent for the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China. But the women of the

The current Indian Women's Rugby Squad is:

Ketaki Khare
Annapurna Bothate
Sai Bhonge
Saloni Prachande
Surabhi Date
Vahbiz Bharucha
Neha Pardeshi
Swati Umamaheshwaran
Nikita Bhatia
Sharva Mangaonkar
Asha Badrinath

Indian Rugby team are upbeat about their chances in the future and won't let this break their spirit.

The silver lining they're holding on to is that the Rugby 7s will debut in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, and with it the hopes of a nation, and some twenty-odd girls will soar.

Beyond the sport, RFS Pune is a colourful collection of narratives from the pitch. Honour, teamwork, and respect - this is also what the game is about.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand resting on a white plate. On the plate is a small glass containing a white substance, likely yogurt, topped with a layer of red jam. The background is blurred, showing the person's torso and another hand. The overall mood is warm and domestic.

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INTERIORS



PUNE BIENNALE AND ITS FUTURE

BY JOHNYML

JohnnyML is an independent art critic and curator. He is the Project Director of Pune Biennale 2015.

Biennales are international art expos held once in two years. Though these avenues are meant to be the showcasing platforms of the world's greatest art of any given contemporary time, beyond the aesthetical premises there is also an economic interest in and around them. Thanks to the opulence of aesthetical visibility, often the general public fail to see these economic implications. Biennales, unlike art fairs, refrain from directly addressing the economic value of the works of art presented in them. However, by showcasing the best aesthetical innovations of the time, they create an abstract value not only for the works of art but also for the venue itself.

This abstract value thus created seeps down to the other venues of art production and distribution, thereby creating a thriving art market all over the world. Seen against this backdrop, we could say that biennales are the interfaces where the national cultural capital meets the international economic capital. Together they make a cultural discourse which is simultaneously translated into economic discourse.

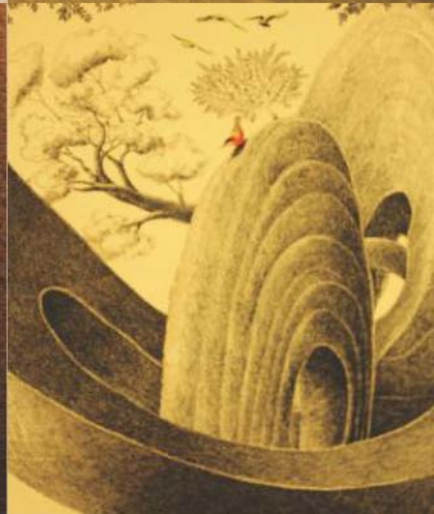
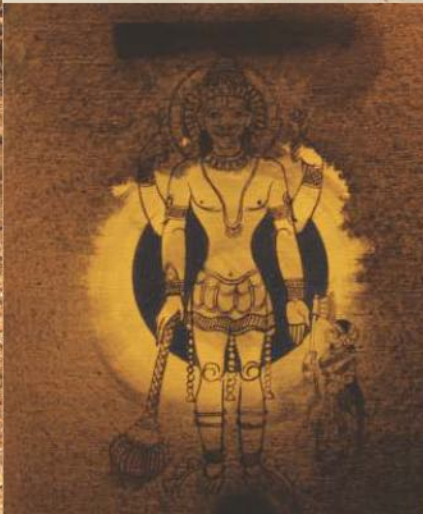
Right from the Venice Biennale to the latest Kochi Muziris Biennale, these bi-annual art expos enhance the cultural and economic capital of the places where they take place by activating the agencies involved in art distribution and collection, and other collateral avenues.

There is a fundamental difference between an international biennale and a regional biennale. As mentioned before international biennales operate with the help of national as well as transnational funding. Whereas the regional biennales work with smaller funds, often helped by local sponsoring agencies as well as the local administration, it becomes difficult for these biennales



to be really 'international' in its scope and reach. Though fund crunch cannot be cited as a reason for presenting lack lustre works of art and shabby presentations, what regional biennales do is depending on a strategy that would help them present the best works within their means.

Though site specific works, impermanent, semi-permanent, and completely permanent works of art could happen in regional biennales too depending on the kind of sponsorship they get, at times they fail to achieve the spectacular character that the works of art in international biennales generate in their mood and presentation. But this should not be taken as a 'shortcoming' by the regional biennales for the simple reason that by bringing together the local cultural capital with the national cultural capital and the economic capital, it could and should, in the long run assume





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Pune Biennale is one such exploration of regional ideas which could become defining points in the future international cultural discourse.

international status. As most of the biennales are city specific and are grown from cities of their origin as their respective names suggest, we could deduce that all these biennales, at the time of their inception began with regional ambitions rather than international ambitions. This automatically suggests that today's international biennales were in fact regional ones at the beginning, which have grown in status over a period of time.

Pune Biennale too has such ambitions. Initiated in 2013 by Dr. Kiran Shinde, an eminent architect and Principal of Bharatiya Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, Pune, it has entered its second edition. Though ambitious within the means of sponsorship and participation, it has its own limitations, as of now, being in a city that is not perceived as an 'A' grade city. Famous for its role in shaping up modern Indian history as well as for its contributions to the education sector, Pune is blessed with natural and economic wealth. The first edition of Pune Biennale was an attempt to bring these two wealths together as it made Hills and Forests its central theme. In the second edition Pune Biennale is all set to celebrate the theme of Heritage by bringing the historical and contemporary art and architectural discourses into focus. Spread out around the central theme, Pune Biennale has devised a set of multi-disciplinary art forms including site specific installations and performance art with the help of an efficient team of experts. Moving from the first edition to the second edition, Pune Biennale has already

started showing the signs of becoming an international Biennale with its own distinct character. Without competing with the existing models of biennales both in India and abroad, Pune Biennale is an attempt to trace out another model of alternative biennales, which is region specific, yet national and international.

As the Project Director of the second edition of Pune Biennale, I have tried to push the parameters set up by the experts in the previous edition, by incorporating contemporary socio-cultural issues in its frame of reference. 'Go Tell it on the Mountain' is a huge national exhibition created as a part of Pune Biennale, which would showcase both the nationally acclaimed artists and the artists based in Pune. A series of graffiti art is also planned in order to generate awareness amongst the public. Some of the site specific installations are meant as a meeting point between art and literature. Apart from the contemporary architectural discourses both through interactive models and site specific installations and documentations, there will be certain exhibitions that are meant to bring the traditional artistic skills and contemporary takes on them on the same platform. Regional aesthetics could define the future of the international aesthetics; examples of such transformations are always abundant in art history. Pune Biennale is one such exploration of regional ideas which could become defining points in the future international cultural discourse.



SWEET CRAVINGS

THE HOLIDAYS JUST GOT SWEETER

Christmas season is cake season! It's that jolly time when you have cakes and confections on your mind.

Chaitanya Deshpande reviews some of the best places in Pune for the times when you find yourself dreaming about cake!



TARTA
DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON



TARTA, DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON

As Chef Japvir at Tarta states, "Christmas is about family time". What more reason would you want, to join in the festive fun? Tarta promises some mouth-watering Christmas delicacies for both the young and old. The large Pune expat community will be heading to Tarta too to celebrate Christmas.

Nothing shouts traditional louder than plum puddings and stuffed turkey! Keeping it simple at Tarta is a host of Christmas goodies along with Santa making his appearance of the season from 20th of December onwards.

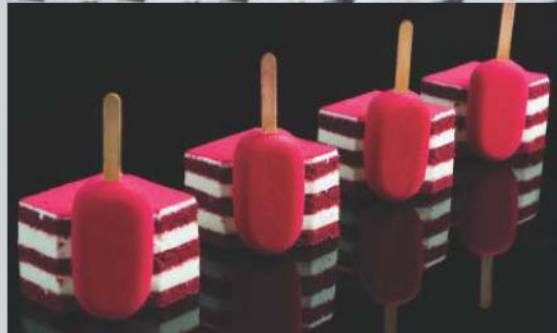
The soaking of the fruits for the cakes has already begun and these will remain soaked until the cakes and puddings are made, closer to Christmas.

Try Tarta's signature cake, the Oreo Red Velvet cake. A delicious red velvet sponge cake layered with sinful Oreo truffle, a mixture of Oreo cookies, cream and chocolate truffle, this sinful treat is a Christmas must have! Also opt for the fresh butter Madeleine cake, the almond powder cake, crunchy biscotti and assorted chocolates bathed in delicious gooey chocolate truffle. The festive special hazelnut chocolates and almond drops at Tarta are a must-have for any chocoholic and are wonderful gifting options.

Call For More Details: +91 8554982538



PUNE BAKING COMPANY
JW MARRIOTT



PUNE BAKING COMPANY, JW MARRIOTT

After July's Fruit Mixing, the festive season kicks in with carol singers and the installation of a life-size ginger bread house in the hotel lobby at JW Marriott! This year's theme is 'Santa's Town' and thus designer gingerbread houses made in different shapes will be up for sale at PBC.

PBC's season line-up is overwhelming to say the least! From Marshmallow Tree, Chocolate Tree, Strawberry Tree to Traditional Santa Shaped Chocolate Goodies and other Designer Chocolate Creations, PBC also has the classic cookies, traditional Stollen, and the veritable Christmas pudding!

Don't miss the Christmas Eve Special at Spice Kitchen, Alto Vino, and Shakahari and Paasha.

For Christmas lunch on the 25th, the Brunner (a combination of Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner) has been planned. Soak in a casual eating experience with traditional Christmas fare like turkey, roast chicken, winter vegetables and salads, cold cuts, loads of fresh berries, large dessert selections, accompanied with an assortment of fine wines!

Call For More Details: +91 +20 6683 3333



THE PATIO



THE PATIO, AUNDH

For a store seven years old, The Patio still rings in the same freshness, when it first began. Christmas at The Patio has always been a traditional and elegant affair, with rich plum cakes, traditional steamed puddings, Yule logs, frosted cupcakes, Christmas cookies, and all things sinful. Popular with the kids are the gingerbread man cookies and the gingerbread house, while adults may revel in aromatic coffee, ginger bread lattes, and hot chocolates! The Patio also bakes some delectable Christmas themed hard icing cakes which are a super hit with customers.

For the festive season, The Patio plans to have a variety of hampers, containing a little bit of everything from the festive offerings - these are great for gifting. Warm and cosy, The Patio is done up aptly for Christmas, with festive Christmas music playing in the background.

Founded and managed by Jai Patel, The Patio also specialises in a variety of customised and theme cakes, party foods like baked casseroles, chicken roasts, Quiche, Vol-Au-Vents, and bite-sized pizzas, specialty coffees, desserts and sandwiches, which are great options to plan that perfect Christmas home lunch.

Call For More Details: +91 9822792051





HAPPENINGS





Paris Hilton & Venky



Arpita Khan & Aayush Sharma



Zulfi Syed & Sheena Varma

It was a star-studded evening on the 8th of December, 2014 as Venky's co-owner Balaji Rao celebrated his birthday at his very famous Venkateshwara Farmhouse in Pune. His parties are legendary, invitations to which are extremely sought-after.

Bala's Birthday Bash this year was attended by the who's who of India with guest appearances by American socialite, Paris Hilton and Bollywood actor, Salman Khan. Guests enjoyed international musical acts along with a performance by Mika Singh.



Salman Khan, Paris Hilton & Balaji Rao



BALA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY



Mika Singh



Jaggi Rao with Jackie Shroff



Paris Hilton, Uttara & Anuradha Desai



Shawar Ali



Yohan Poonawalla, Atul Chordia, Sagar Chordia & Abhay Chordia



Performance by Explosion

The Poonawallas recently played gracious hosts to the crème de la crème of Pune at their palatial residence in Koregaon Park.

The resplendent and glittery party was hosted by Zavaray Poonawalla, in honour of the members of the Pune RWITC Club.

The guests were spotted enjoying the elegant evening, in tune with the live international music, performed by the band, Explosion.



Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla & Dr. Parvez Grant



Sabina Sanghvi & Madhur Bajaj



Geoffrey B Nagpal, Vivek Jain, Zavaray Poonawalla, Champaklal Zaveri & Gulam Vahanvati



Zavaray Poonawalla with Mystical

THE POONAWALLA PARTY



Michelle & Yohan Poonawalla



Meeta Jain, Charonne Nagpal & Bindu



Shribala & Sagar Chordia



Manjeet & Bindiya Thakkar



Manisha Jettha, Alpna Kirloskar & Diksha Kalyani

THE LITTLE DOOR LAUNCH PARTY



Ritika Narang Tikku & Rohit Tikku

Mumbai's much sought after bar, The Little Door opened its little door for business, at Kalyani Nagar on November 14th.

The brother-sister duo, owners Tanu Narang Moghe and Bhuvan Narang along with city partners Ashutosh Joshi and Chef Mayur Gadkari, welcomed Pune's party people to this much awaited launch party.

Guests at the event were seen enjoying the electric ambience, great music and the choicest selection of wine, beer, and cocktails, accompanied by the bar's trademark Mediterranean fare of starters and food.



Arun Nathani & Chetan Wakalkar



Pooja Bhale with friend



Nadita Kalmadi & Ritu Nathani



Prakash Chhabria with friends



FARM TO TABLE BRUNNER BY JW MARRIOTT

The Farm to Table Brunner is a weekly event dedicated to sourcing fresh produce from local farms and dairies at the JW Marriott, Pune. The Brunner takes place at the hotel's Italian restaurant, Alto Vino, the vegetarian Pan-Asian restaurant, Shakahari and at the Pune Baking Company's outdoor walkway.

There are live-cooking Indian, continental, and Asian counters, a spread of cheeses and cold meats, rotisserie grilled chicken, fresh juice counters, chilled cocktails, freshly baked breads, sumptuous desserts, and the star of the event - farm fresh produce.



NEELAM AND ANIL SOLEKAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY



Supriya Mohite, Neelam Solekar & Gauri Rhosale

Neelam and Anil Solekar recently celebrated 33 years of marital bliss at Oxford Golf and Country Club.

The event saw the who's-who of Pune in complete attendance at the do.



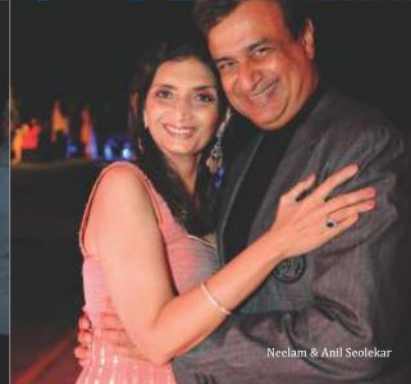
Suhas Sinhas, Jackie Shroff & Neelam Solekar



Anil Solekar, Meera & Suresh Kalmadi



Seema Malhotra & Neelam Solekar



Neelam & Anil Solekar



Pune Jazz Club and Phoenix Market City presented the "Pune Jazz Utsav 2014" on November 1st, 2014.

As in the past, the festival was funded by Phoenix Mall and the embassies of Spain, Italy and Poland.

The bands that were featured were Francisco Cafiso Duo (Italy), High Definition Quartet (Poland), and The Diego Amador Quartet (Spain).



JAZZ FESTIVAL AT PHOENIX MARKET CITY





SHISHA CAFE JAZZ FESTIVAL'14



The Indo-Iranian restaurant, Shisha Café, came alive during their International Jazz Fest this year.

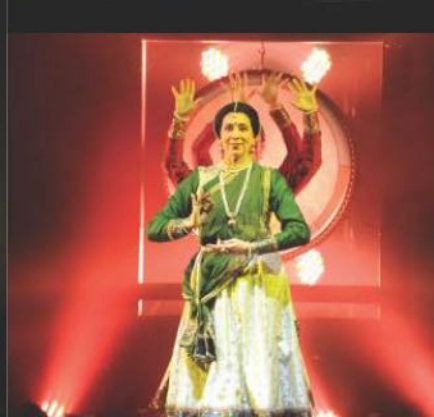
The festival saw some of the greatest living jazz legends come together, the likes of James Carter, Helen Sung and John Di Martino from the US, Yuri Honing from Holland, Doris Lavin from Cuba, and Carlos Bica from Portugal.

Besides the annual 3-day jazz festival, Shisha Café hosts stand alone concerts through the year in their efforts to bring to India the finest in mainstream, funk, Afro and Latin jazz.





INDO-JAPANESE CULTURAL FESTIVAL



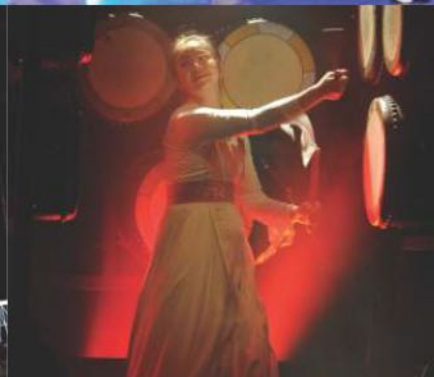


Kathak danseuse Maneesha Sathe and Japanese musician Yasuhito Takimoto came together to present a resplendent Indo-Japanese Cultural festival on the 8th and 9th of November in Pune.

This landmark event was organised to commemorate forty years of the Maneesha Nrityalaya, a kathak dance institute set up by the dancer herself.

While Sathe's and Takimoto's association dates back to 1991, this was the fourth collaborative performance in Pune by the two groups, all part of an initiative over the years to create a great cultural bond between India and Japan.

A dazzling fusion of Indian dance and Japanese music, the event was conceptualised and choreographed by Maneesha Sathe, to music provided by Yasuhito Takimoto. Japanese dance forms such as the dragon dance and the fan dance left the audience spellbound, in addition to the highlight of the event; a fusion dance between Kathak and the Japanese dance Hotsuma, to the beats of the Taiko drums.





ART @ CARAVAN

Art at Caravan - The Indian craft store at Phonenix Market city, attempts to bridge the gap between the rich reservoir of traditional Indian craftsmanship and the evolving needs of contemporary living.

The store recently organised an art series to celebrate evolved Indian crafts, aptly called 'Evolved Living', by the finest exponent of Kalamkari in India, J. Niranjan. On display, were also beautiful watercolour renditions by artist Mohan Vijay Raghavan.

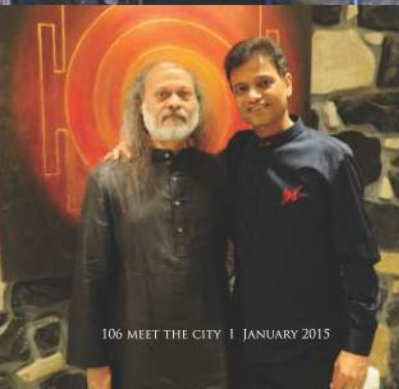


SUFI SPLENDOUR



'Sufi Splendour' presented a soulful evening comprising of Rumi presented by the likes of Zia Khan, Tom Alter, and a fusion musical performance by Prem Joshua and Band.

Leading Carnatic music vocalist Mahesh Vinayakram too was the guest artist at the event. Manta Art Gallery also organised a painting exhibition. The event was organised by Ruchira Shah at a bungalow in Koregaon Park, and was well attended by the cultural soiree of Pune.



106 MEET THE CITY | JANUARY 2015



Deepak Shah with friend





BLAME IT ON YASHRAJ
A PLAY BY ASHWIN GIDWANI PRODUCTIONS



JW Marriott recently hosted the popular play 'Blame it on Yashraj', written and directed by Bharat Dabholkar.

The play was staged as part of a fund raising activity organised by the Rotary Club of Poona Airport.

Laced in satire, the play takes a look at the idiosyncrasies of different Indian cultures in a humorous manner, especially the big, fat Indian weddings that are largely influenced by Bollywood.



Anant Mahadevan

Pune played host to the third edition of the Premier Tennis League, India's first and biggest national level tennis league between November 28 and December 3.

The League, organised by Amanora Education Foundation and authorised by Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) featured 5 franchise teams competing for top honours with each team boasting of iconic Indian players, the legendary Leander Paes included.

To commemorate the finale of the PTL, 'Learnings with Leander' an evening with Leander Paes, was organised at the Taj Vivanta, attended by some of the best names in tennis such as Nandan Bal, Kaustubh Radkar, Oksana Kalashnikova and others



Leander Paes



Leander Paes, Nandan Bal, Annirudh Deshpande

LEARNINGS WITH LEANDER



Aditya & Harshitaa Deshpande



Dhawal Shah & Siddhart Mayur

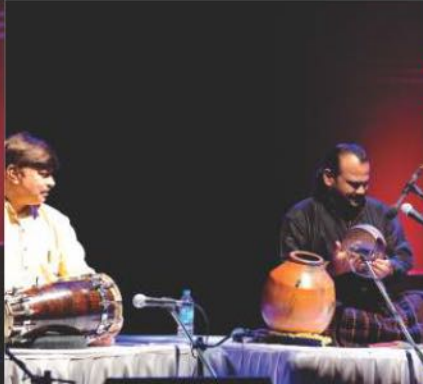


MASTER OF PERCUSSION CONCERT



When tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain and sarangi genius Dilshad Khan performed together on December 7 at the Ganesh Kala Krida Manch, the city reverberated to the magic of strings and percussion!

The Masters of Percussion show, featuring stalwarts such as Ustad Zakir Hussain, V. Selvaganesh on the kanjira and ghatam, Steve Smith on drums, sitarist Niladri Kumar, Dilshad Khan, Vijay S Chavan and Deepak Bhatt on the dholki, and dhol respectively, cast a magical spell on the audience, where different Indian taals blended with western music.





THE GOOD ARTISTS OF PUNE



Spearheaded by Pune artist Shradhdha Borawake, The Good Artists of Pune is a grassroots open networking platform and movement for the arts in Pune, to encourage interaction between local artists and to promote the arts within communities.

The GAP held its first full fledged 3 day art exchange, the GAP Co[Lab]-1, where established, mid-career and emerging artists, as well as members of all ages from the public participated in experimental arts practices at The Talera Institute of Fine and Applied Arts (TIFA).

The organisations is now gearing up for The KHOJ workshop which is a high-profile artists' initiative, where acclaimed international artists reside and work together with artists from various parts of India over two-weeks.

The KHOJ workshop has been held annually in India since 1997. The workshop was held in Delhi, Mysore, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, Srinagar, Patna, Dharamshala, and now will be held in Pune in February-March 2015.



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