

# INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 33 | Issue 03 | 2019



## GIRISH KARNAD

The public intellectual  
India will miss

## INDIAN BY DESIGN

The aesthetics of  
minimalism

## FLAVOURS OF AMDAVAD

The Gujarati food trail

# YOGA DAY

Wellness celebrated across the world

# POTPOURRI



# 3

AUGUST, 2019

## TEEJ

Dedicated to the goddess Parvati, the festival is celebrated during the months of monsoon and celebrates the rainy season along with the marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati

**WHERE:** Across India



# 11

TO 12 AUGUST,  
2019

## EID-AL-ADHA

One of the biggest celebrations in the Islamic calendars, Eid-al-Adha celebrates the spirit of sacrifice and benevolence. The festival also involves distributing sweets and meals amongst friends and family

**WHERE:** Worldwide

AUGUST **15**, 2019

## LA DARCHA FESTIVAL

This festival has been celebrated since 1980 as a display of the unique and vibrant culture of the Himalayan districts. Started to strengthen the trade relations between the border regions, the festival has now become a reason to promote friendship and social comprehension among the people living in Himalayan area.

**WHERE:** Kaza, Himachal Pradesh





AUGUST **15** 2019

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

Celebrated with fervour and enthusiasm across the country, the day marks India's independence from British rule after the UK Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in 1947.

**WHERE:** Across India

**15** AUGUST, 2019

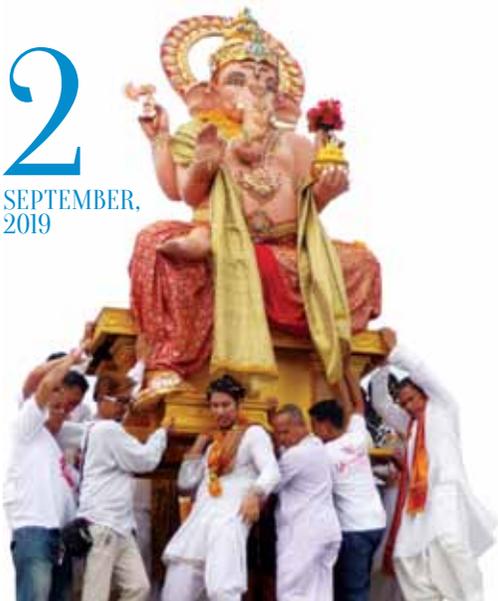
**RAKSHABANDHAN**

The popular festival is celebrated across many states throughout India and involves sisters symbolically reinforcing the bond of care, protection and responsibility with their brothers.

**WHERE:** Across north India



**2** SEPTEMBER, 2019



**GANESH CHATURTHI**

The festival is celebrated to commemorate the birth of Lord Ganesha. Idols of the god are placed in homes and the ten-day festival ends with the idols being immersed in a body of water.

**WHERE:** Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka



SEPTEMBER **1** TO 13, 2019

**ONAM**

Originally started as a harvest festival, Onam is one of the biggest events in southern India. The highlights include Vallam Kali (snake-boat races), Pulikali (tiger dances) and Pookkalam (flower arrangement).

**WHERE:** Across Kerala

# INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 33 | Issue 03 | 2019

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*India Perspectives* is published in Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Pashto, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Tamil, Chinese and Japanese.

The digital *India Perspectives* is published by Raveesh Kumar, Joint Secretary (XP) and Official Spokesperson, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Room No. 152, 'A' Wing, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi - 110001, India. It is published on behalf of the MEA by Maxposure Media Group India Pvt. Ltd. (MMGIPL), #TheAddress, Plot No 62, Okhla Phase-3, New Delhi-110020, India. The digital *India Perspectives* is published six times a year. All rights reserved. The writing, artwork and/or photography contained herein may be used or reproduced with an acknowledgement to *India Perspectives*. MEA and MMGIPL does not assume responsibility for loss or damage of unsolicited products, manuscripts, photographs, artwork, transparencies or other materials. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the MEA or MMGIPL.

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# FOREWORD

As millions of Indians came out as one to cast their votes in what has been rightly called, one of the biggest festivals of democracy, we look at what the defining results of this massive mandate might mean for stable and transparent governance. We then travel to Osaka in Japan, the venue for the 2019 G20 summit, to understand the resolute stand and innovative approach that presents India's new and improved image to the global diplomatic community. We also analyse how the country's foreign policy has managed to adapt in a rapidly changing multi-lateral diplomatic scenario in the 21st century.

India's association with art stems from an artistic heritage going back many centuries, a heritage that has been almost perfectly preserved as it was carefully passed on from one generation to next. A heritage that has managed to capture global attention as it is expertly curated and showcased at the Indian Pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale. We then journey home to experience the beautiful cultural ancestry of Kolkata; the *Lucknawi* heritage of the Bengali capital is a testament to Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of Awadh and we let the nawab's great-great grandson, Shehenshah Mirza guide us through Kolkata's mini-Lucknow.

We revisit the various theatrical and cinematic performances that made late Girish Karnad, an actor, writer and playwright, the people's champion and then travel to New York for the annual Indian Film Festival that showcased India's cinematic brilliance to the world.

For our photo section, we take a short trip around the world on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga and experience the many hues of its global observance. We then accompany celebrity chef Sarah Todd as she allows delicious food to take over and guide her through a delectable tour of the beautiful and vibrant city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. With trekking becoming one of the most sought-after modes of adventure-travel, we speak with the organisations that are leading the fight to keep our beautiful and majestic Himalayas clean, green and litter-free for the generations to come.

We retrace the journey of a traditional fabric called mashru, which has, over the years been rediscovered as a graceful textile encompassing the comfort of cotton and the elegance of silk. We then look at the recent advancements and achievements of Indian youth at the global shooting arena with Olympic bronze medal winner, Gagan Narang.

Finally, we talk to some of the biggest achievers who have fueled India's economic growth by their visionary ideals and unquenchable ambition. We also understand how the design mentality of every Indian is different and yet so similar, as one of the oldest civilisations, we try and grasp how centuries worth of intellectual advances have defined 'Indian designs'.



Raveesh Kumar



## PARTNERSHIP



# INDIA AT OSAKA: Strong and balanced

From digital trade and anti-corruption regulations, and environmental policies to economic advancements, India took a strong stand at the Osaka G20 Summit. Former ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee highlights a few key points

Conceived as an international mechanism for governance of the global economy, the G20, which includes all the major economies, has, over time, evolved into one of the most powerful economic and financial groupings. Formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy” and representing more than 80 per cent of global GDP, the G20 has made continuous efforts toward achieving robust global economic growth. At the recent summit, held in Osaka, Japan, the focus shifted to include a wide range of global issues, including climate change and energy, health, counter-terrorism and migration.



### PERFECT BALANCE

The G20 Summit held on June 28 and 29, 2019, in Osaka, was the first one to be hosted by Japan under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Eight themes had been selected for discussion including “Global Economy”, “Trade and Investment”, “Innovation”, “Environment and Energy”, “Employment”, “Women’s empowerment”, “Development” and “Health”. While the summit was overshadowed by the US–China trade war, for India, it marked strong diplomatic successes. From standing his ground in face of pressure from the US, resisting changes in digital trade supported by over 50

nations and highlighting the issue of corruption, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emerged as a strong voice. What was also notable was his perfect balancing act when it came to bilateral engagements with major superpowers. PM Modi held a series of meetings with world leaders, individually and in groups, on the sidelines of the summit. The PM held meetings with the Presidents of China and Russia, and with US President Donald Trump and Japanese premier Shinzo Abe.

Heads of state at the G20 Summit 2019 Member nations in Osaka, Japan

**The G20 Summit in 2022, to be hosted by India, will mark India’s emergence as an important global power**

## PARTNERSHIP

### Increasing outreach

By the end of G20 Osaka summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had more than 20 engagements. These included nine bilaterals (Australia, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United States), two trilaterals (Japan, India, USA as well as Russia, India, China) and also an informal meeting of BRICS leaders.

**Below (left to right):**  
US President Donald Trump with Japan's PM, Shinzo Abe, and India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, during a trilateral meeting; Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi prior to their meeting

### INDIA'S FOCUS

India's perspectives were highlighted by India's "sherpa" to the G20, the then Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu, in his media interaction after the summit. A "sherpa" refers to a personal representative of a head of state who prepares ground for him or her at international meets.

India's concerns included the importance of quality infrastructure and in global finance to a commitment in applying recently-amended Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards for virtual assets. Anti-corruption measures at a global level were underlined. On climate change, India addressed the issue of mitigation as well as adaptation. Migration, which is a human challenge, was extensively discussed. Finally, PM Modi highlighted the role of India's new innovation ("*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas*")

into making changes in a manner that benefits all.

The Osaka Communiqué largely meets these key concerns, including the tricky issue of climate change. A separate paragraph was inserted in the Osaka Declaration to bring the US on board. It states inter alia: "The United States reiterates its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement because it disadvantages American workers and taxpayers."

### DIGITAL TRADE STANDOFF

Another contentious issue was the initiative by Japan to circulate a "take-it-or-leave it" text on digital trade to all the G20 countries seeking approval of the Osaka Track for promoting plurilateral negotiations among 50 countries on digital trade. The intention was to introduce sweeping rules to facilitate





## An important takeaway for India was G20 approval of India's suggestion that the “fight against corruption should be done at all levels by all G20 countries”

removal of data flows, removal of prohibitions on data localisation and cloud computing among others. These negotiations on digital trade were never approved by the World Trade Organization (WTO). India, along with South Africa and Indonesia, boycotted the Osaka Track. These emerging economies felt that Osaka Track would fundamentally undermine the core WTO principles for arriving at consensus-based decisions.

Instead, a compromise text was put forward by India and South Africa. G20 leaders agreed on a Declaration on “Innovation: Digitization, Data Free Flow with Trust”. This ensured that the G20 would incorporate the

demands of India and South Africa for “achieving an inclusive, sustainable, safe, trustworthy and innovative society through digitalisation and promoting the application of emerging technologies”.

India and a large majority of developing countries insisted on inserting language on “critical role played by effective use of data, as an enabler of economic growth, development and social well-being”. The developing countries expressed their fears that they will be denied “policy space” for their digital-industrialisation through the proposed plurilateral agreement on digital trade.

The strong stand taken by India and other developing nations ensured that

**Above (left to right):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, on the sidelines of G20 Summit; Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping pose for a group photo

## PARTNERSHIP

### PM Modi held a series of meetings with world leaders, individually and in groups, on the sidelines of the summit

in the final declaration of the summit, the approved language noted: “We affirm our support for the necessary reform of WTO to improve its functions”.

#### 5G CHALLENGE

Another issue in focus was related to 5G technology, in the background of the demand by the US that countries ban Chinese telecom major Huawei’s 5G network. At the official media briefing, it was stated that India and the US would

leverage “India’s capacity in technological development in start-up and design and Silicon Valley, and its role in developing 5G technology for mutual benefit”. After a

bilateral discussion between Presidents Trump and Xi Jinping, a breakthrough appeared to have emerged on an imminent trade war between the US and China, along with the easing of the US ban on Huawei. Whether it would lead to a final deal between USA and China would be clear by the next G20 Summit. Meanwhile, a brief meeting was held on the sidelines of the summit between the US President Donald Trump and PM Modi. The post-meet briefing by the Indian foreign

**Below:** (From left) Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa shake hands as they pose during a BRICS summit meeting at the G20 summit in Osaka





Prime Minister Narendra Modi is welcomed by the members of the Indian diaspora in Osaka during his visit to Japan for the 2019 G20 Summit

## India addressed the issues of climate change (mitigation and adaptation) and migration as a human challenge

secretary Vijay Gokhale gave an impression that the Indian Prime Minister stood his ground. India didn't commit to Trump administration's call for a ban on Huawei's plan to rollout 5G in the country. India said its decision will be taken considering the nation's business and security interests.

Suggesting that corruption be weeded out of society, the Indian delegation said, "fight against corruption should be done at all levels by all G20 countries by combating and ensuring that each G20 country has a law to enforce it".

The Osaka Declaration, thus incorporates India's concerns on all major issues. It highlights that India's new hyper-energetic diplomacy is resulting in an

ever-greater global footprint for the country. This transition, apparent in Osaka, is not merely an expression of India's greater self-assurance but also driven by an ambition to be a rule-maker, not merely a rule-taker.

While India's new confidence in taking a stand in international matters was first seen at the 2018 G20 summit held in Buenos Aires, in Argentina, this year, that position was strengthened. The G20 Summit in 2022, to be hosted by India, will complete this transition and mark India's emergence as an important global power.



*Bhaswati Mukherjee was the Ambassador of India to the Netherlands from 2010 to 2013. She was also the Permanent Delegate of India to UNESCO from 2004 to 2010. She lectures at the Foreign Service Institute and in different universities on issues ranging from foreign policy, disarmament and strategic affairs.*

# INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 21st century

As the world order changes, the country is charting a new inclusive course in its diplomatic relations, says former ambassador Anil Wadhwa

India's foreign policy in the 21st century has been dominated by the quest for creating an enabling environment in its neighbourhood and the world, which allows its economy to grow, its society to develop and its soft power to flourish - as this country of 1.3 billion people seeks its rightful place in the comity of nations. After almost three decades of reforms and opening up to the outside world, India faces new challenges to its security and the requirement of an increased flow of capital, technology, ideas and innovation for its accelerated transformation.

Increased levels of trade, flow of labour and technology, in an increasingly interconnected world has ensured that India needs to secure its energy supplies, acquire vital natural resources for development, maintain open sea lanes of communication, seek trade and investment opportunities overseas while opening up itself to the outside world, and work through multilateral institutions to secure a rules based order and liberalised trade and investment regime.

The last decade has seen the world change its character - the dominance of the sole super power -





上海合作组织成员国元首理事会会议  
(2019年6月13-14日, 比什凯克)

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF HEADS OF STATE OF THE  
SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION  
(13-14 June 2019, Bishkek)



the United States has been challenged by a new distribution of power in the international system, and China has risen as a challenger to the US dominance. The new areas of conflict are based on technology dominance and the ability to develop exponentially on the powers of artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, machine learning and robotics even as climate change, food insecurity and terrorism threaten to disrupt the progress of mankind.

India has always concentrated on its immediate neighbourhood and periphery to secure a stable

environment for its growth. South Asia, in particular, has a special place in India's foreign policy. India is working towards building stronger relations with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Maldives and Pakistan. India is also trying to maintain a balance in its ties with China. On the bilateral front, the Doklam stand-off with China has been set aside following the summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi (front row third from left) with other heads of state at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Bishkek, in June 2019

**India, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea along with the ASEAN are engaged in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Partnership**

## PARTNERSHIP

meeting between the two leaderships last year, and the process of finding cooperative adjustments with China is likely to continue.

The last few years have seen renewed ties with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), concentration on connectivity projects – physical, digital and cultural. India's defence ties with Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines have seen notable progress. The concept of Indo-Pacific has gained currency and the Quad has arisen as an informal grouping of USA, Japan, Australia

and India – like-minded democracies that wish to maintain the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflights, and peace and stability in the region. India's concept of the Indo-Pacific coincides with that of the ASEAN – that the Indo-Pacific is an inclusive concept, it does not seek to isolate any country against anyone's interest, that ASEAN remains central to the concept and that it seeks cooperative arrangements for the development and prosperity of all in the region. India's ties with ASEAN have progressed steadily and India has managed to tie together a string of

**Below:** Prime Minister Modi departs from Colombo after the successful completion of his one-day visit to Sri Lanka in June, 2019





## India has always concentrated on its immediate neighbourhood and periphery to secure a stable environment for overall growth

**Top:** Attendees at the 21st ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), which was held in April 2019 in New Delhi

arrangements in the field of maritime domain awareness. India along with ASEAN, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea is also currently engaged in negotiating the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Partnership (RCEP) Agreement which, if successfully concluded, will be a far-reaching development in the region.

The India-Africa partnership is on track to achieve greater heights, based on the 10 guiding principles delineated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In its extended neighbourhood to

the West, India has enormous stakes of energy supplies, seven million diaspora who live and work there, and trade, investment and security ties with the region, which have all seen an upsurge. India has a vital stake in the stability of the region, and is therefore, wary of an escalation of conflict between USA and Iran, which directly affects its energy security and connectivity with Central Asian states.

Beyond India's periphery, the country has also expanded its circles of engagement starting with Central Asia, where it is now an active

## PARTNERSHIP



participant in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and is working towards an economic arrangement with the Eurasian Community; Europe, where it has forged close ties with countries like Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the UK etc; and Latin America, with whom trade and investments have flourished and natural resources have become a new area of collaboration. Russia continues to be a reliable and long standing defence partner but both sides are exploring new avenues of reinvigorating the economic partnership, following a summit meeting last year in Sochi between the two leaderships. Relationships with Israel, South Korea and Australia have also seen expansion. India's relationship with the United States has assumed a



**Top:** Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh, Vice President of Vietnam hold delegation level talks at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi, Vietnam

**Left:** PM Narendra Modi arrives in Bishkek on his two-day visit to Kyrgyz Republic to attend the SCO Summit 2019



## The last few years have seen renewed ties with ASEAN, concentration on connectivity projects – physical, digital and cultural

**Top (Right to left):** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of UAE in New Delhi; President Ram Nath Kovind meets Patrice Talon, President of Benin

multi-vectoral character. Defence, science and technology, people to people contacts as well as trade and investment have all become important pillars of this relationship.

In the multilateral arena, India will strive to gain permanent membership of the UN Security Council, which it deserves on the basis of its contribution to peacekeeping operations, its record of support for international peace and security and due to its large population. India has emerged as a champion of climate change, clean energy and spearheads the international solar

alliance. It is working with regional organisations like IORA (the Indian Ocean Rim Association) to develop blue economy in the region, and has always advocated a comprehensive convention on combating terrorism, at the international level. It has taken the lead in reform in global governance – be it the UN, international financial institutions, or the G20 and is all set to chair the G20 in 2022.

In the final analysis, India's foreign policy is being shaped on the requirements of its domestic constituencies, its programmes for development and its desire to bring in technology and capital for its economic and scientific progress.



*Ambassador Anil Wadhwa has served as Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and as the Indian Ambassador to Poland, Oman, Thailand and Italy. He has also been posted to Indian missions in Hong Kong, China and Switzerland and worked for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague.*



# The Mandate

With 900 million registered voters, a pan-India election process is most definitely a Herculean task. A resounding victory points to the confidence displayed by the electorate in the government's vision for a new India

BY PATANJALI PUNDIT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and members of his newly formed cabinet with the President Ram Nath Kovind and the Vice President Venkaiah Naidu during their swearing-in ceremony, at Rashtrapati Bhavan



**M**ay 2019 will no doubt be remembered as a watershed moment in the saga of Indian politics. In India's electoral history, it is only the third time that a political party has succeeded in winning two consecutive terms with full majority. This also makes Prime Minister Narendra Modi the first and only PM born after India's independence to win two consecutive terms in office. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister led from the front, talking about his government's vision, achievements and its policies. The campaign focussed on an aggressive policy stance towards terrorism, a

clean and hard working image, and a narrative vision for India as a strong and rising superpower that resonated with a youthful and aspirational job seeking India cutting across divisions of caste, gender and religion.

But these are just dry facts. What it means for the man on the street is better governance, a buoyant economy and a better future.

Today, spearheaded by a strong leader, who is backed by a majority government, India is poised to embark on a new journey. With a stable government, a fast-growing economy and a younger demography (15 million voters who participated in the general elections to form the 17th Lok Sabha were between the age of



**Left:** S Jaishankar, a former foreign secretary who has been sworn-in as the new Minister for External Affairs of India at the fifth International Yoga Day conference

**Above:** Nirmala Sitharaman (left), Minister for Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs with Smriti Irani, Minister for Women and Child Development and Minister for Textiles in the newly formed cabinet

18-19 years), “new India” is on the threshold of sprinting forward.

### **STABILITY AND ECONOMY**

Even as India was going to polls in the recently-concluded general elections, financial policy experts were praying for a strong one-party government. A single-party government, as proven before, makes the country’s policymaking process faster. From administrative changes, to infrastructure projects and from defence to finance, a strong leadership makes decision-making process across sectors simpler.

While PM Modi’s spectacular win may not be an overnight panacea to India’s economic challenges, but experts say it will certainly plug the holes that have been forcing the country’s economy to slow down. The results have already started showing. Within a month of the new government being sworn in, several international companies and investors who were holding their horses, have initiated the

process of investment in the country. The rupee is gaining strength, fuelled by the stable policies being mooted, churning greater economic activity and in turn creating more opportunities for employment. As we saw in the Union Budget, presented by Union Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman, stronger economic policies have been mooted, keeping in mind the conducive environment for a smooth rollout of reforms.

The Budget makes clear the government’s intent to adhere to fiscal discipline, cleanse the system of corruption while eschewing decisions fanning populist mentality, thus continue with its sustainable and inclusive growth plan.

Focussing on critical areas like infrastructure — roads, electricity, water supply etc — the Budget also puts a lot of thrust on core sectors such as education, entrepreneurship, online infrastructure and technology, digital payments and ease of business, among others.



**Top:** Nusrat Jahan and Mimi Chakraborty, the newly elected MPs from West Bengal, arrive for their first session at the Parliament, representing the next generation of India; **Bottom:** Former cricketer and first-time MP from New Delhi (East), Gautam Gambhir arrives to attend his first session at the Parliament.



portfolios in PM Modi's government are being headed by women leaders: Nirmala Sitharaman as the Finance Minister, Smriti Irani as the Minister for Textiles and Women and Child Development, and Harsimrat Kaur Badal in the Food Processing Ministry.

**EMPOWERING BELIEF**

During PM Modi's previous term in 2014, the schemes launched by his government played a crucial role in reinstating him as the Prime Minister in 2019. Landmark social uplift programmes such as Swachh Bharat Mission and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao directed towards instigating a behavioral change in people's thinking, received massive support from all corners of the Indian landmass. From Ayushman Bharat (a healthcare scheme) to the PM-AWAS (a general housing scheme) yojana and the PM-KISAN (economic support to small scale farmers) yojana, the schemes targetted every section of society and managed to form a consolidated and positive image of the government. Insurance schemes for the weaker economic sections of the society at almost non-existent premiums, drove home the government's motto "Sabka Vikas (Growth for all)".

In fact, the government's flagship scheme, the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, which promises income

**THE RISE OF WOMEN POWER**

The new government is also representative of PM Modi's vision of a gender neutral society, focussing on equal status for all. With 78 women parliamentarians from 716 women nominations - the highest ever in the Lok Sabha - women empowerment, will, without doubt, be central to policies under the newly elected government. The Prime Minister himself confirmed this in his victory speech at the Central Hall of Parliament, when he said: "Women, in this election, have performed equally well, if not better." The Indian PM further extolled woman-power as a "raksha kawach" (protective armour). Several important

Led by a strong leader, who is backed by a majority government, India is poised to embark on a new journey with a stable government





**(Left to right):** PM of Bhutan Lotay Tshering, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov, President of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid, President of India Ram Nath Kovind, PM Narendra Modi, President of Myanmar Win Myint, PM of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli and Special envoy from Thailand Grisada Boonrach at the swearing-in ceremony

years by raising per capita income, boosting consumption and increasing productivity, sceptics raised eyebrows. But as he explained, with determination and hardwork, it is not impossible.

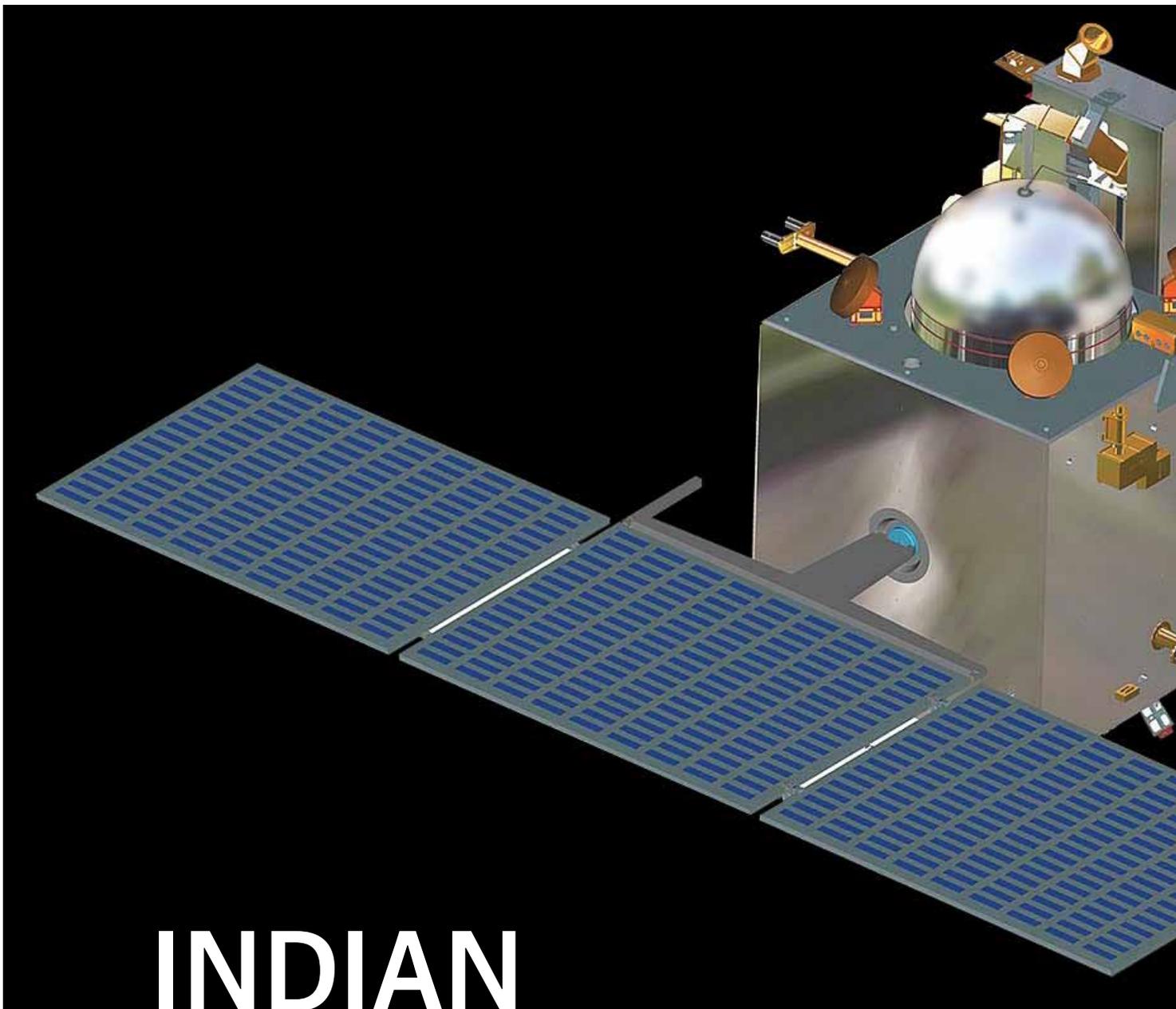
The government's vision will, no doubt, require considerable reforms as it will have to brave and overcome the strong headwinds in the foreseeable economic future. The government plans to take concrete steps to address the growing Non-Performing Assets in the banking sector, raising exports, tackling any form of an agrarian crisis and increasing public investment in infrastructure development without sacrificing fiscal prudence. This will require streamlining the tax structure to improve ease-of-business and ensuring a wider tax-net, plans for which have already been set in motion with the now approved GST (Good and Services tax) bill.

With one million polling stations, 2.33

million ballot units, 1.63 million control units, 1.74 million VVPATs (voter verifiable paper audit trails), and 11 million polling staff and almost 729 million women voters, the 2019 Indian general elections can be termed as the world's largest election exercise ever to be conducted. An era defining mandate has been awarded to Prime Minister Modi. But the financial and welfare policies announced recently coupled with India's positive international diplomatic stance at the Osaka G20 meet reveal that the government is already on the right path as the country seeks to create a new India as the country approaches 75 years of independence.



Patanjali Pundit is a graduate from Columbia University and London School of Economics. He currently works in the defence and infrastructure industries, and regularly contributes to various publications.



# INDIAN by Design

Several studies have shown how customisability is a strong requirement for the Indian consumer, and even international players have realised the need for a design approach that incorporates 'All Things Indian'

BY PRABHU RAJAGOPAL



**Left:** A graphic representing India's Mars orbiter mission

**Bottom:** Tata Nano is a representation of Indian minimalism

As one of the world's most ancient civilisations, India has a long history of cultural accomplishments and excellence in arts as well as the sciences. The exquisite sculptures, paintings and artifacts housed amongst ancient temple complexes are marvels of human imagination, planning and practical execution.

Indian literature too talks of advances made in ancient times in fields such as mathematics, linguistics, musical theory and astronomy. For example, the contributions of Panini, the great Indian linguist, who wrote a treatise on Sanskrit grammar in the 6th to 5th century BC, on language have strongly influenced modern linguistics across the world, as acknowledged by Johan Frederik Staal or Frits Staal, one of the modern legends of Asian languages and culture, and American linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, among others.

There are several other examples of ancient Indian achievements like advances in science and engineering as recorded, for example, in *Samarangana Sutradhara*, an encyclopedic work on classical Indian architecture written by



The Indian approach views all objects as lying within the ambit of a unitary consciousness



Scale models of Indian Launch Vehicles are displayed by the Indian Space and Research Organisation (ISRO) at a Tech fest held at IIT Mumbai

Paramara king, Bhoja dated 1000 AD. This includes a chapter on Mechanical Automata, which refers to mechanisms that can mimic human motor action, which were a precursor to modern robots. However, the invention of the steam engine and the subsequent Industrial Revolution in Europe seems to have overwhelmed traditional Indian engineering and crafts, and European goods and design have since reigned over the markets. As noted

**“Make in India” can be described as an expression of the quest of India to find self-reliance in an era of globalisation**

widely now, Indian contribution to the world’s GDP dropped from as much as 24 per cent in the 18th century, down to as low as 3 per cent in 1947. It is only in the last few decades, that a re-invigorated Indian economy has slowly begun to rediscover its zest for engineering, arts and crafts, as well as new endeavors across various fields.

Today, buses, tractors, motorcycles and even cars made by Indian firms find major markets in emerging countries across the world, especially in Africa and East Asia. ‘Made in India’ artillery tanks, rifles and even railway coaches are set to debut across the world,



**(Top to bottom)**  
Technicians assemble an electric vehicle created by IIT Madras startup Ather; A section of the drivetrain (a system in a motor vehicle which connects the transmission to the drive axles) of an electric vehicle

establishing the acceptance of the Indian design theory.

### SWADESHI, OR THE INDIAN WELTANSCHAUUNG

The Indian weltanschauung (worldview) since ancient times converges into the ideals of a unitary consciousness or fundamental state underlying all phenomena. And even today, the Indian design philosophy doesn't believe in technology that is closed, imported or transplanted from elsewhere. We crave for freedom of ideas, search our own answers to global challenges, and *swadeshi* (made in India) continues to thrive and even drive even many next generation innovations in India.

Thus, "Make in India" can be described as an expression of this quest of India to find self-reliance in an era of globalisation.

*Swadeshi* drives us to source materials locally, look for indigenous

technologies, and also importantly, solve problems of critical national importance. For example, the Indian Space Research Organisation is among the few in the world whose major focus is actually using space research for the improvement of the livelihood of people through prediction of weather and also for telecommunications and disaster management.

### THEORY OF MINIMALISM

Indian design theory favours extreme minimalism and utilitarian or what is colloquially known as "*jugaad*", aptly defined by the Oxford dictionary as "flexible approach to problem-solving that uses limited resources in an innovative way". Which, in simple terms, means that at minimised costs, the benefits of a product are maximised. *Jugaad* is often praised as the ultimate Indian survival instinct, reflecting the Indian design theory



(L-R) Design experts Nilesh Walke, Arvind Sahu and Vinay V. display “Purak”, the wearable upper limb prosthesis designed and developed by them during “Ripples 2018” at the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru

of minimalism, our expression of Frugalism, even Brutalism - maximising function (benefit rationalised to cost).

This minimalism manifests itself in everything – from Khaitan fans and Tata Nano car to more recent examples such as the S450 electric bike and the Beluga underwater ROV (remotely operated vehicle) made by IIT-Madras Startups Ather and Planys respectively. Minimalism is seen in Indian space and nuclear programmes as well. Many Western commentators were awed how Mangalyaan, the Indian mission to Mars, cost less than the budget of a typical Hollywood blockbuster movie,

and yet was successful in its very first attempted launch.

### INDIAN AESTHETICS

The Indian theory of aesthetics has one radical departure from Western aesthetics: the Indian theory holds that “beauty lies in the state of mind” and there are *nava rasas* or nine recognised emotional states. The Indian approach views all objects as lying within the ambit of a unitary consciousness (or by negation, nothingness) – and hence the objects must ‘sync’ with our state of mind, and creations must seamlessly flow from within-out. This is the reason behind the exuberant use of colours in India -- perhaps modern Indian products have disconnected from this aspect, but where tradition

*The ideals of swadeshi, jugaad and rasa, have laid the seeds of an Indian design revolution, which is set to storm the world*



**Left and top:** The Beluga underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) by IIT Madras startup Planys

still has a sway, such as textile, crafts and temple art - we find the brilliant use of colour that can match every state of mind and thus appeal to every person.

### THE NEW ERA

The ideals of *swadeshi*, *jugaad* and *rasa*, have laid the seeds of an Indian design revolution that is set to storm the world. The philosophical settings of Gandhianism and *swadeshi* also have wider implications in a zeal for minimising wastage and promoting recycling, while also supporting environmentally friendly materials, technologies and processes. The Indian customer has often been found to value ease of use and durability in products, while also yielding maximum returns for a given investment.



Dr Prabhu Rajgopal is a professor at the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation of the Mechanical Engineering Department at IIT Madras. He is an expert on remote structural inspections. A recipient of the National Design Award (2016)

# A WEAVE Revived

Perched on the brink of extinction, the luxurious *mashru* fabric, was almost forgotten, till it was discovered by leading fashion labels

BY ISHITA GOEL

A 500-year-old living tradition that tells the tale of the ingenuity of the weavers of yore. A luxurious yardage that hides in every warp and weft stories of kings and communities, of battles fought and kingdoms lost. That's the heritage of *mashru*, a vibrant handwoven traditional textile that once flourished in Gujarat. A specialised mix of silk and cotton yarns, *mashru*, at one time, was the favourite of the royalty and the elite of the region.

Offering the lustre of silk on the outside, *mashru* has cotton on the inside, making the wearer feel comfortable. Known for its jewel colours and bold stripes, *mashru* was a popular fabric for clothing in its heydays.

It finds a stronghold in the state of Gujarat, where it was widely woven in areas around Patan and Mandavi. Used to create *kurtas*, *sarees* and *lehengas*,

*mashru* has a golden history that faded over time. However, today, the simple yet elegant textile is being brought back into the limelight, revived by the efforts of a few fashion designers.

## A GLORIOUS PAST

During the 16th century, the mighty Ottoman empire, which was spread across the Middle East, traded extensively with merchants in Gujarat. Along with spices, grains and sundry wares, the most prized commodity that was exchanged was silk. Its mesmerising sheen made it popular among the Islamic nobility of the empire. However, many of them believed that silk should not touch

Woven in a wide range of brilliant colours like green, red, yellow and indigo, *mashru* was once a symbol of luxury



A model, draped in a *mashru* saree walks the ramp for designer Sanjay Garg's show at the Amazon India Fashion Week in 2016



**Left:** A weaver attaching new warp to the old one; **Above:** A weaver joining the broken yarns

their skin. Also, it was an uncomfortable fabric to wear in the heat of their arid land. Crafting a solution to this challenge, the ingenious weavers created *mashru*, a fabric that enabled people to honour their beliefs and feel comfortable, while being dressed in the sheen of silk.

*Mashru* uses silk yarn in its warp (vertical threads) and cotton in the weft (horizontal threads). The name *mashru*, derived from Persian, means allowed or permitted. Some say, it's derived from the Sanskrit word *mishru*, meaning mixed. Woven in a wide range of brilliant colours like green, red, yellow and indigo, *mashru* eventually became a symbol of luxury.

As the opulent dynasties of that era

crumbled to dust, their arts and crafts were also lost in time. In between, the weavers started weaving plain *mashru* fabrics for local tribal women, who used to stitch them into *chaniya-cholis* (skirt with a blouse). But that too declined, as cheaper man-made fabrics became popular. Today, the weaving of *mashru* on pit-based handloom is practiced by very few families living in Patan, Gujarat. Hasan Kaka is one of the few artisans who are still weaving *mashru* on a handloom.

## STRANDS OF COLOUR

Inside Hasan Kaka's dimly lit workshop, work starts at dawn every day. He is helped by his three sons, all of whom have a target to weave at least 3 m of fabric in one day. "There are several types of *mashru* weaves. While *kataria mashru* has coloured stripes obtained by using different warp threads, *danedar* is a dotted pattern

Offering the lustre of silk on the outside,  
*mashru* has cotton on the inside,  
making the wearer feel comfortable

in which four extra shafts are added to the loom,” explains Muhammad Zubain, Kaka’s son.

“It takes about one and a half months to complete a stretch of fabric,” says 72-year-old Hasan, adding that a saree can take up to three months to be ready! “The work is tedious and the money we get is very little,” he says, a reason why he is reluctant to let his sons pursue the craft.

Compared to today’s scenario, when there are hardly 25-30 weavers left in Patan, the picture of a few decades ago when almost 400 weavers worked in rhythm to produce colourful fabrics in the stark desert, seems hard to believe. Yunus bhai is the owner of Gamthivala, a small colourful shop set right in front of Rani-no-Hajiro, a popular tourist site in Patan. “During my grandfather’s time, our family made its fortune by selling *mashru*. From one tiny shop, we expanded to three plush stores, all thanks to the demand of the fabric. However, today, no one asks for it. But I am afraid that if the scenario doesn’t improve, in a few years, *mashru* will only be seen in museums.”

### A RAY OF HOPE

However, all is not lost as customers, especially in urban India, are slowly recognising *mashru*’s magic. A



**Facing Page (top and bottom):** A *mashru* weaver at work in Patan; a close-up of the fabric on the loom

PHOTOGRAPH: Shalini Shreya



PHOTOGRAPH: Gandhinagar Resource Centre

**“THE INTEREST IN MASHRU HAS BEEN GROWING OVER THE LAST DECADE. RAW MANGO’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MASHRU IS DEEPLY LAYERED, OUR RE-INTERPRETATION INTRODUCED A NEW DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEXTILE IN BANARAS, INCLUDING A RENEWED INTEREST AMONGST THE WEAVING COMMUNITY AS WELL AS THE INDUSTRY**

Sanjay Garg  
Designer

While the patterns and the tones of *mashru* draw heavily from the weave's heritage, the cuts and structures are contemporary

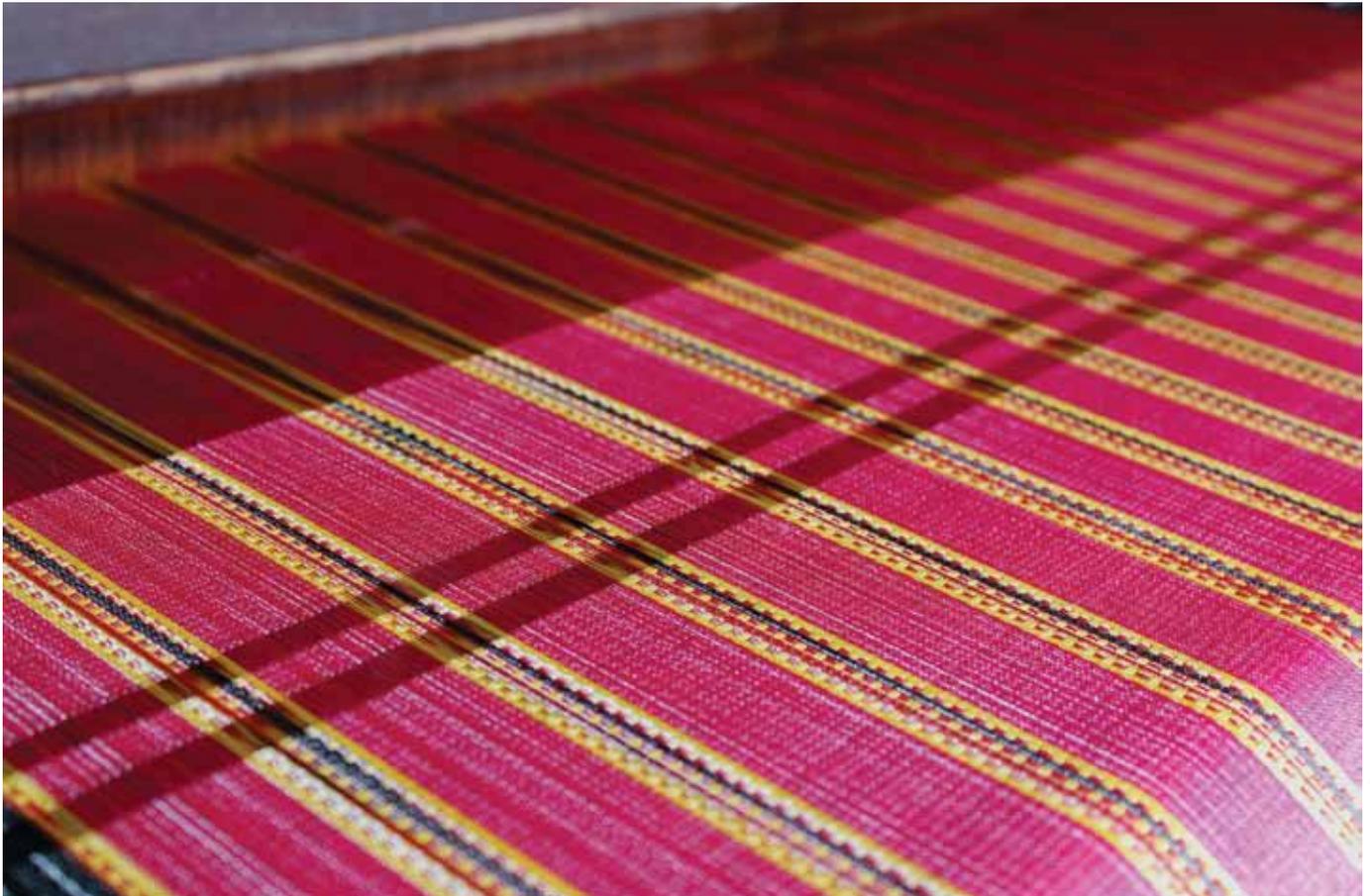
few local designers have started experimenting with designs and colours and are also complementing the base fabric with tie and dye and block printing designs that are much appreciated in local markets.

One of the more popular designers experimenting with *mashru* is Sanjay Garg, of the label Raw Mango. His work with “the most luxurious fabric in the world that was worn by the royals” has endeared it to many buyers and is bringing this heritage gem into the limelight.

In Delhi, fashion connoisseurs sat up and took notice when Garg showcased *mashru kurtas*, *lehengas* and even contemporary pants at the Amazon India Fashion Week's Spring Summer 2016 edition. Exemplifying what the modern Indian woman wants, his models walked down the runway draped in gorgeous attires that had the grace of tradition but were eased down so as not to make them fussy. The fact that cotton made the fabric more wearable did not go unnoticed by the awed audience. Mashru scored with the Indian buyer on three major counts – ease of wearability, simplification of busy designs and its gorgeous fluidity.



A model wearing a *mashru* dress from Raw Mango's collection



PHOTOGRAPH: Gandhinagar Resource Centre

A close-up of  
*mashru* fabric

Speaking about the future of *mashru*, Garg says, “The future of *mashru* lies in the interest among the weavers’ communities, and it has been growing over the past decade. Out of all my collections, *mashru* is the closest to my personal DNA, especially the Abha kurta that I revisit from time to time for inspiration.”

Garg has drawn the patterns and the tones heavily from the weaver’s heritage while giving contemporary cuts and structures, making the *mashru* pieces rare and more attractive.

Craftroots, Gujarat, a unique platform that creates *mashru* home furnishings, started its journey with the fabric in 2001. “Our sarees, home decor items and men’s garments

are sold all over India and even to foreign countries,” says Raju Thakor, a spokesperson. “*Mashru* is a very rich fabric. It takes seven intricate steps to produce a perfectly glistening piece and even if one of them is missed you can’t get the best quality. The making of *mashru* is as mesmerising a process as the final product.” As *mashru* pieces fly off the shelf, it seems that this heritage weave is on a rise once again.



Ishita Goel is a New Delhi-based journalist. After a brief stint with the *Indian Express*, she has been actively writing on disciplines across Indian heritage and current affairs

## HERITAGE



The Sibtainabad  
Imambara  
entrance gate  
captured from  
inside

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# THE NAWAB'S Kolkata

When Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh, was exiled to Bengal by the British, he created a mini-Lucknow in the City of Joy. His great great-grandson Shahenshah Mirza recalls the glory of the bygone days

BY AYANDRALI DUTTA  
PHOTOGRAPHS SANTANU CHAKRABORTY

Four decades ago, when Oscar award winning director Satyajit Ray homed in on the imambara at Metiabruz on the outskirts of Kolkata, to shoot extensively for his iconic film *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* (which was released in 1977), it was probably not a random choice. The imambara at Metiabruz in southwest Kolkata was where Wajid Ali Shah, Awadh's 10th and last nawab, deposed by the British, lived in exile. It was a perfect location for the film, which subtly depicted the decline of the rule of this nawab and his kingdom. Today, all that remains to show of the 31 years that Wajid Ali Shah spent here in 1856, is the sprawling imambara, the Shah Masjid, a splendid mosque that he built almost a decade after his exile began, and memories of his great great-grandson Shahenshah Mirza.

While banishing the nawab from Lucknow the British had taken away not only his comfort but also confiscated his land and treasury. But the resilient king was not to be

defeated. He built a replica of his favourite city in Metiabruz -- he brought Lucknow to erstwhile Calcutta. He built a zoo, introduced kite flying, Lucknawi cuisine, Lucknawi *gharana* of music and dance, and Lucknow's embroidery *chikankari*. Elite Bengalis were impressed by the king's cultural splendour and thus began Bengal's association with Lucknow's royal heritage.

## THE BUNGALOW

In Kolkata, he made Bungalow 11 at Metiaburz his residence. It was once the residence of the then Supreme Court chief justice, Sir Lawrence Peel. When the nawab moved into the house, he renamed it Sultan Khana and the transformation of the locality began into a "*duniyabi jannat*" or heaven on earth. Today, the bungalow is called BNR House and is the residence of the general manager of the South Eastern Railway. Entry to the building is restricted, but tours can be organised with permission from the South Eastern Railway.

## HERITAGE



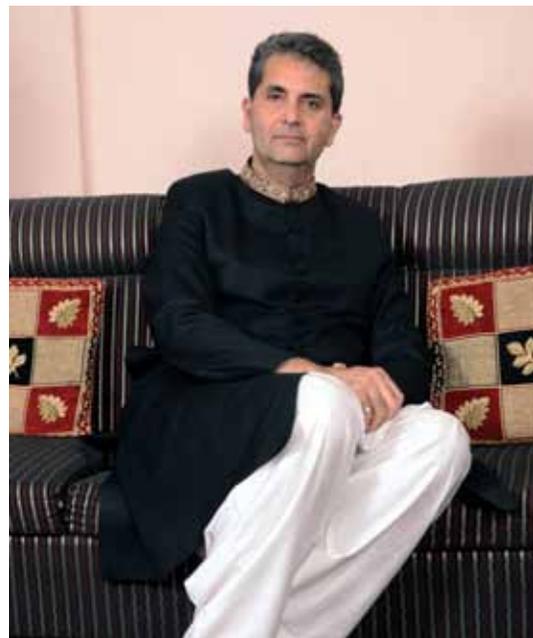
**Above:** The BNR House, the first residence of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. It now serves as the residence of the general manager of the South Eastern Railway

### LITTLE LUCKNOW

During the nawab's time, members of his household and court who had accompanied the royal entourage and settled down in Metiaburz spread the use of chaste Urdu, ensembles like *sherwanis*, *churidar*, *salwar kameez*, *sharara-gharara*, sports like cock-fighting, kite flying, wrestling, and organised *mushairas* (poetry symposiums) just like they would in their hometown. The rulers of Awadh were great connoisseurs of food and the same passion was reflected in Metiabruz. "The royal tradition of *kabootarbaazi* (pigeon fighting) came into existence during this time, with

the nawab himself owning around 24,000 pigeons. Such mouthwatering and exotic dishes as *murg mussalam*, *biryani*, *bater* (partridge), *nargisi koftas*, *mutanjan*, *sheermal* and *zarda* were prepared in the royal kitchen by the chefs of Awadh, who had followed the nawab to Bengal. Elite guests from Kolkata were treated to lavish feasts," says Shahenshah Mirza.

However, with the death of the nawab, the glorious phase too faded. At the time of his death, Wajid Ali Shah's estate included 257 *bighas* (an old method of measuring land) with around 20 buildings. Today, only the mosques remain.



Above: Shahenshah Mirza; Left: The Shahi Masjid or Royal Mosque

## SHAHI MASJID – IRON GATE ROAD

As the name suggests, the gate at Iron Gate Road is made of iron. It marked the entrance to the king's estate. On this road stands the Shahi Masjid or Royal Mosque, which was built around 1856-57. It was probably the first structure the nawab constructed for his personal use. The story goes that he invited anyone who had not missed even one of the five daily prayers to come forward and lay the foundation stone. When no one came forward, he did it himself. The structure has no domes or minarets and has a fountain. It is now used for

“IT'S TAKING A LOT OF MONEY AND EFFORT TO RESTORE KOLKATA'S HERITAGE BUT IT FEELS GOOD. I SUPPORT ANY SUCH PROJECT, LIKE THE METIABRUZ FESTIVAL, THAT CELEBRATES THE CUISINE THE NAWAB BROUGHT TO THE CITY

Shahenshah Mirza

wazu (cleansing before the prayer).

## BAIT-UN-NIJAT IMAMBARA

Bait-un-Nijat Imambara (house of relief) is on Garden Reach Road, near Kamal Talkies. It is also called Hussainia, Ashurkhana or Imambara, and is a congregation hall for religious ceremonies. In fact, the nawab had built it in 1863 to commemorate Muharram with his family. This single-storey building has scalloped arches, green-shuttered doors and cast iron railings.

## SIBTAINABAD IMAMBARA

Traces of the nawab's love for opulence can be seen at Sibtainabad Imambara that houses his tomb. A replica of Lucknow's Bada Imambara, though on a much smaller scale, it was built in 1864. Its opulence is visible in its polished marble floors, Belgian glass lamps and ornate textiles brought all the way from Lucknow by the nawab. Over the main entrance is the Awadh

## HERITAGE



A panoramic view of Garden Reach area with the Vidyasagar Setu and the Howrah Bridge over the river Hooghly in the backdrop. Garden Reach is where the nawab had set up his mini-Lucknow

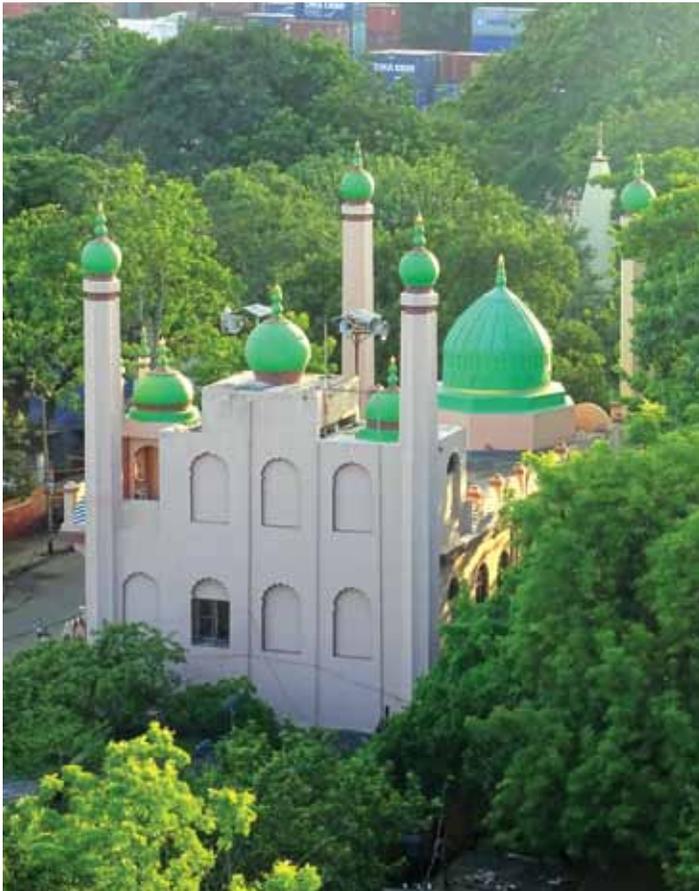
### Oh Calcutta!

“During my growing up years, I saw this city boasting of Chinese, Armenians, Jews, Anglo-Indians, Afghans, Iranians and Zoroastrians. It has always been a perfect example of a multi-cultural amalgamation. We grew up travelling in trams, which moved at a gentle pace, and hand-pulled rickshaws, which assumed great importance during monsoon. The city of Ambassador cars, Fiats and a few Jeeps had its unique gait. Taxi drivers were mostly trustworthy Sikhs. Our days were filled with watching cricket at the Eden Gardens, relishing the most flavourful rolls at Nizam’s (a restaurant) and watching films at Lighthouse, Elite, New Empire and Globe theatres.”

*Shahenshah Mirza*



The beautiful and airy interiors of the iconic Sabtainabad Imambara



**Above (left to right):** A picturesque mosque in the Garden Reach area; the ornate interiors of the Sabtainabad Imambara; Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's coat of arms

**Bottom:** An ornamental chair that used to serve as his throne while he was living in Kolkata

coat of arms and over it an open palm, called “*hamsa hand*”, a symbol referring to the five most sacred people in Islam. The walls are adorned with verses from the nawab’s poetry and images from Islamic lore. A display case contains a variety of memorabilia including a Quran said to have been copied by the nawab himself.

nawab’s Lucknow remains, most pieces of royalty were either destroyed, stolen or is showcased in some museum. “After his death the famous estate of the nawab was dismantled and things started taking a different shape,” Mirza says. However, hope survives. “Kolkata has come a long way. A lot of restoration work is happening in most heritage buildings in the city and maybe the nawab’s glory will also be brought to life,” he adds.

### BEGUM UMDA MAHAL IMAMBARA

The Imambara of Begum Umda Mahal was built for one of the nawab’s wives from Bengal. Located to the west of the Sibtainabad Imambara, the exterior of this imambara is in disrepair. The interiors, though deteriorated, are surprisingly beautiful.

Though, barely anything of the



*A wanderess by passion, wordsmith by profession, a home-chef by choice – exploring newer terrains, books, tea and adda pretty much sums Ayandrali up. Her inquisitiveness for things is what keeps her going and exploring.*

# Yes, we all can

Intrapreneurs are creating new opportunities and fuelling India's economic growth. We trace the success stories of three such personalities: Pawan Goenka, Nitin Paranjpe and Amitabh Kant

BY RASHMI BANSAL



India is a land of bold thinkers. I am amazed by the ambition and aspiration visible in even the tiniest hamlet of the country. There is hope and optimism, despite hardships. Much of it is fuelled by new vistas opened by the government's policies and programmes. However, the most important source of inspiration are the business leaders,

the icons, who understand the heart and mind of Indians. I call these leaders intrapreneurs: the resilient and resourceful men and women creating transformation within the organisations they work for. An entrepreneur has the vision; an intrapreneur is one who translates the vision of the entrepreneur into reality.



Pawan Goenka  
President of President  
of the Automotive  
and Farm Equipment  
Sectors of Mahindra &  
Mahindra

### **MOTOR MAN**

“Mahindra raises investment guidance for next 3 year cycle by INR 3,000 crore,” a prominent business daily reported in May this year. Many would dismiss this as a very routine piece of news but it caught my eye for a reason. In May 2019, right after the general elections, the pink papers had been full of reports about falling sales of automobiles. And the “sad state” of the Indian economy. Why then was Mahindra auto going all out to expand its capacity?

To understand this, we must go back to 1993, when Dr Pawan Goenka, an alumnus of IIT Kanpur and Cornell University, left General Motors in Detroit, to join the modest R&D division of Mahindra & Mahindra, a five-decade-old family owned company. Anand Mahindra had just taken

over and the young Harvard graduate had a vision to boldly go where few Indian companies had gone before.

Dr Pawan Goenka put together the team that went on to achieve the impossible - roll out a “Made in India” SUV called the Scorpio, in a timeframe of four years and a budget of INR 550 crore (a modest sum for the magnitude of the project). The car won big with its strong style statement, powerful engine (the first to cross 100hp in India) and great pricing. “I feel there was one more factor that worked for Scorpio. Which was a pride amongst Indians, that an Indian company has done this....” says Goenka. In 2009, Mahindra launched an SUV called the Xylo, which failed to achieve its sales targets. The company posted a loss in the 4th quarter of that year. However, it was at this time that Dr Goenka took a bold proposal to the board - to invest INR 5,000 crore into a state-of-the-art new plant near Pune. To meet demand that will come 10, 20, 30 years down the

**Intrapreneurs is an important group for anyone who wishes to invest in the India growth story and reap rich results**



### An entrepreneur has the vision; an intrapreneur is the one who translates that vision into reality

Amitabh Kant, the CEO of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog and author of *Branding India – An Incredible Story*

road. It was risk well taken and explains why Mahindra continues to invest, regardless of what may be a slowdown in the present moment. “The CEO’s job is not to create stars, nor to become a star, but to take an ordinary team and achieve extraordinary results. And that will happen if the CEO doesn’t act as if he knows it all,” Goenka explains.

#### **THINK-TANK**

Intrapreneurs can be found in the government sector as well. Bureaucrats are changing in the new India, where employees of the state must display

dynamism, foresight and problem-solving ability. Amitabh Kant is a fine example of an officer whose career has been extremely impactful, for precisely those reasons. In the late ‘80s, as the district collector of Calicut, Kant initiated a community-led effort to fund Calicut international airport. Calicut became the first airport in the country to levy a User Development Fee (UDF), a model later replicated across the country. As secretary, Kerala Tourism, Kant was able to boost arrivals to the state significantly, during his tenure through public-private partnership. He brought the same innovative thinking to the national level with the Incredible India campaign, which showcased the tourism potential of the country, like never before.

Kant took over as joint secretary,

Nitin Paranjpe,  
managing director  
and chief executive  
officer of Hindustan  
Unilever Limited,  
the Indian subsidiary  
of the London- and  
Rotterdam-based  
company

Ministry of Tourism in 2001, just before the September 11 terror attacks in the US. Tourism got affected across the world. The attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 further scared away tourists. Yet, it was at this very time that the Incredible India campaign was launched. By the end of the first year, the impact was visible, with a 16 per cent rise in tourist footfalls in the country. Kant now heads NITI Aayog, the government think-tank that charts the direction and pace of change for India. Kant defines his mantra: “Because you will face a lot of opposition... you must be able to build counter-pressure in favour of change. That is the only way you can succeed.”



## BY HEART

The same strategy was employed by Nitin Paranjpe, who took over as CEO of Hindustan Unilever (HUL) in 2008. Faced with a global economic crisis, he could have just put his hands up and said “circumstances are beyond my control”. Instead, he used the slowdown as an opportunity to lay the foundations for future growth. At the time HUL had around 1 million points of sale across the country, adding 10-15,000 outlets a year. In 2009, Paranjpe set a target of adding 500,000 retail outlets in the next year. At first, people were in shock, but then, there was a jolt of excitement. Followed by out-of-the-box thinking, and innovation.

“Most of us negotiate for lower targets because of one reason: fear of failure,” says Paranjpe. If, somehow, that fear can be eliminated, the power of human potential can be unleashed. In the next two years HUL added one million new retail outlets and as the economy recovered, sales soared. “What I asked for them (team) to do is keep the rationale mind aside and embrace the goal from the heart. Because the mind will use its logic and reason to hold you back,” he says.

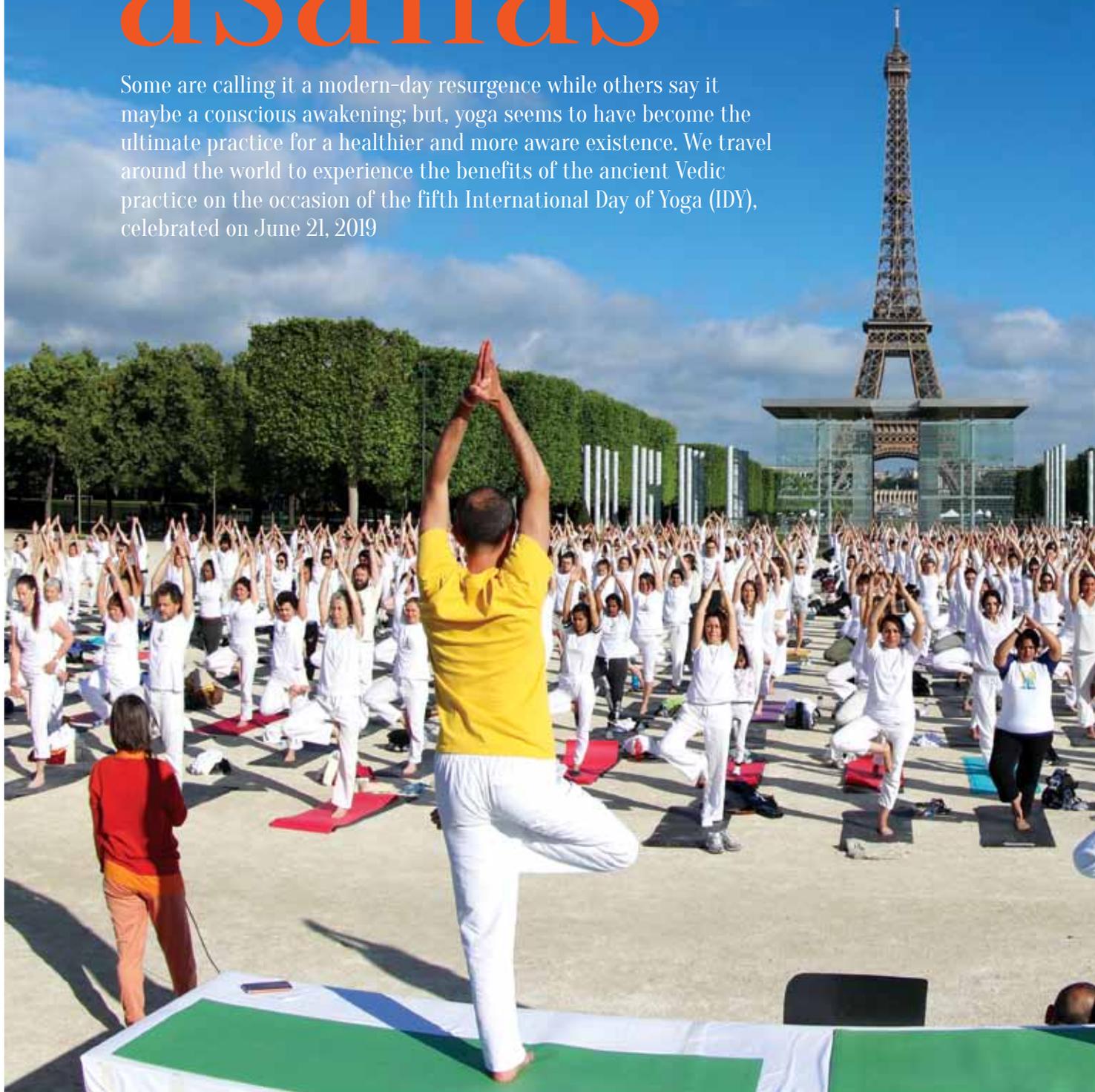
The bottom line is that not everyone can be an entrepreneur, but each of us can think and act like one. And become an agent of change, within the ambit of a job. It is the need of the hour. Our duty to the nation, and the world.

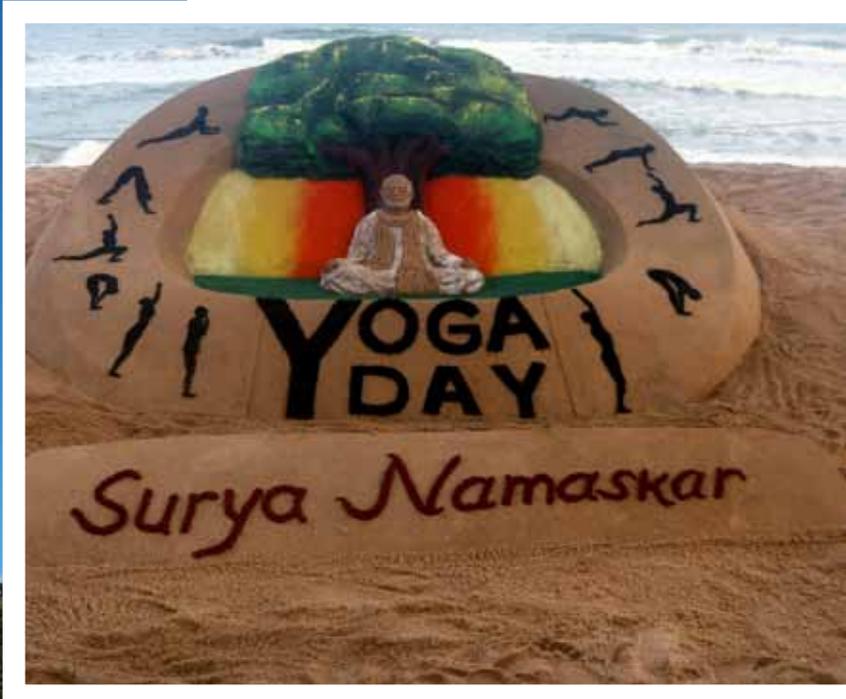


*Rashmi Bansal is an Indian non-fiction writer, entrepreneur and a youth expert. An alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, she first worked as a brand manager for the Times of India.*

# QUINTESSENTIAL asanas

Some are calling it a modern-day resurgence while others say it maybe a conscious awakening; but, yoga seems to have become the ultimate practice for a healthier and more aware existence. We travel around the world to experience the benefits of the ancient Vedic practice on the occasion of the fifth International Day of Yoga (IDY), celebrated on June 21, 2019





**Facing Page:** Hundreds performing the iconic *Surya Namaskar* near the Eiffel Tower in Paris

**Top:** A sand sculpture created by sand artist Sudarshan Pattnaik on the International Yoga Day at Puri, Odisha

# SNAPSHOTS



The “Yoga Sutra,” a 2,000-year-old treatise on yogic philosophy by Indian sage Patanjali, is a guidebook on how to master the mind, control the emotions and grow spiritually

**Bottom:** Enthusiasts at a Yoga Day camp organised in Abu Dhabi, UAE

**Facing Page Top:** Participants practising different *asanas* in Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Facing Page Bottom:** Pedestrians watch as enthusiasts celebrate IDY in Kyiv, Ukraine



## SNAPSHOTS

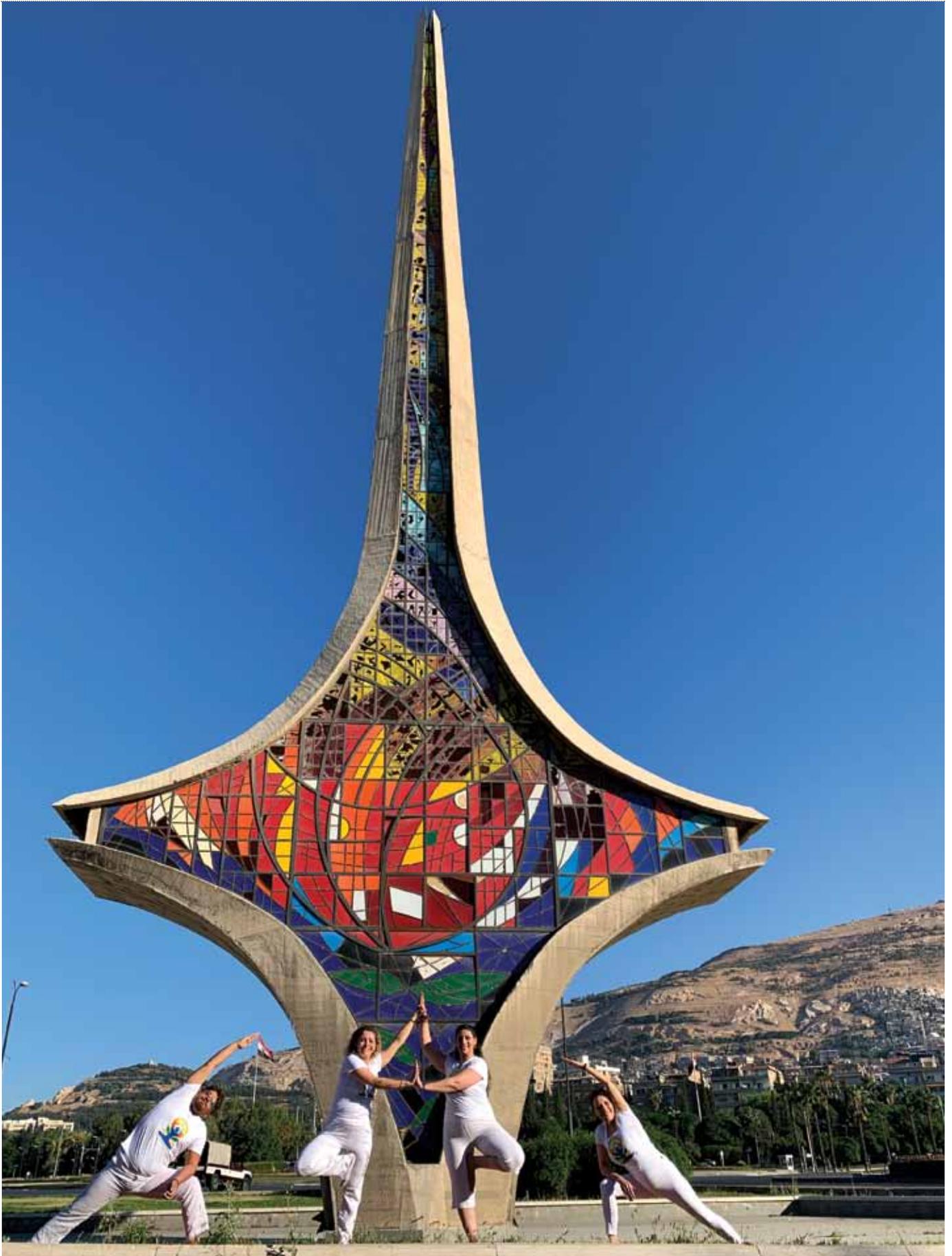


**Facing Page:** Participants at the celebration of the International Yoga day in Damascus, Syria

**Top:** Mountaineers warming up with yoga at the Everest Base camp in Nepal

**Bottom:** Residents join in the celebrations of IDY in Beijing, China





## SNAPSHOTS

**Right:** A yoga camp organised to celebrate the International Yoga day in Singapore

**Bottom:** Hundreds join in the celebrations for the yoga day at the city centre in the Hague, Netherlands



There are six widely accepted forms of yoga, which can be practiced depending on the need, they are : Hatha yoga, Raja yoga, Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Jnana yoga and Tantra yoga



**Above:** A glimpse from the yoga camp organised in the beautiful city of Sofia in Bulgaria

## SNAPSHOTS





**Facing Page:** Yoga day celebrations organised in Brasilia

**Top:** 5th International Yoga Day 2019 celebrations in Hanoi, Vietnam

**Bottom:** The 5th International Day of Yoga celebrations in Thimphu





# HUNGER Games



Indian shooters Anjum Moudgil (L) and Ravi Kumar (R) participate in the mixed 10m Air Rifle qualifiers at ISSF World Cup

Young Indian shooters shone bright at the prestigious International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup, proving that the time has come for the young guns of the country to reach for the sky and more

BY GAGAN NARANG

The recent advancements in the sporting arena has presented India with talented individuals who strive for success and will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup (held early this year) can be observed as a prime example of young Indians settling into their own. The Indian contingent, contesting to retain the top spot for the second year running, bagged a total of four medals: three golds and a silver, securing five quotas in shooting for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The Indian team comprised majorly of athletes who had only just graduated to the first team (Seniors). But more often than not, fresh blood brings with it a new hunger for achievements, a disregard to previously set records and an astounding perseverance to give it their all. This was proven again at the ISSF Junior World Cup held in July 2019 in Suhi, Germany, where Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar gave a stellar performance on his way to winning the gold. The Indian shooting team finished the championship winning 10 golds! Interestingly, India will be hosting next year's ISSF Combined World Cup in New Delhi from March 15-26. The Combined World Cup involves events in rifle, pistol and shotgun.

## Shooting is one of the fastest growing sports in India and is growing at a faster rate than in any other country in the world



**Top:** Indian shooters Manu Bhaker (R) and Saurabh Chaudhary (L) won the gold in the final of mixed 10m Air Pistol at ISSF World Cup; **Bottom:** Gagan Narang with the young performers at the ISSF World Cup in China



### AMONGST THE STARS

The World Cup was introduced by the ISSF in 1986 to establish a definitive system for qualification to the Olympic shooting competitions. The event comprises of four competitions annually for all shooting categories. The top performers from these categories then compete in the finals to secure an Olympic berth. A staggering 919 athletes from 98 countries, assembled in Munich to compete for 17 places available for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, besides the coveted ISSF world cup medal. For the 2019 finals, India fielded a 35-member contingent. The selectors had placed their trust in the

likes of Saurabh Chaudhary, Mehuli Ghosh, Elavenil Valerivan, Abhishek Verma, Shazar Rizwi, Manu Bhaker and Rahi Sarnobat amongst seasoned campaigners like Heena Sidhu, Anjum Moudgil and Apurvi Chandela. One name that came forward during the tournament was Divyansh Singh Panwar, who, just a day after winning his first international senior medal in the mixed team event in the men's 10m air rifle managed to secure a Tokyo 2020 Olympic quota place. Teen stars Bhaker and Chaudhary also won their second consecutive gold in 10m air pistol mixed team after topping the podium in New Delhi. Each shooter holds possibilities of winning big in Japan – while some have got the quota, others are striving.

### CATCH THEM YOUNG

One of the factors that has dramatically altered India's performance at the global stage is the massive investment at the junior level. This development has come from the constant perseverance to make shooting an inclusive sport in the country. Two decades ago, access to equipment and a scientific approach towards the sport was not easy to come by. Only when one became a really good shooter was there a chance to get world-class equipment. We want to equip kids with technology right at the start, a reason why I started Gun For Glory (GFG), a Pune-based shooting academy that aims to provide a holistic development



**Top:** The stars of the young batch at the Guns for Glory shooting academy in Pune;

**Bottom:** Spectators seen cheering during the mens 10m Air Rifle final at the 2019 ISSF World Cup

programme to young and aspiring shooters from India. What is also helping youngsters is how society looks at a career in sports. Earlier, it was only cricket, but now after Indian shooters, sprinters, tennis players and others have been winning gold at international tournaments, including the Olympics, the focus is shifting to these sports as well. Parents are opening up to the idea of their children playing sports as a career proposition. An institutional boost has come from the Union government's 'Khelo India' initiative

to encourage sports among the youth. Under the programme, 1,000 athletes are being identified across sports to be given annual scholarships of INR 5 lakh each for eight years.

### SIGHTS ON THE PRIZE

With the advancements in training technology, dreams of several budding shooters are now turning into reality. Talent across the country now has the means to achieve the maximum at the global stage. While I take my academy across India, others are coming up. Local authorities have been able to get to ground zero, conduct talent hunt and help unearth real talent. Shooting is one of the fastest growing sports in India, it is growing at a faster rate than in any other country and the recent success at the global stage is a testament to the efforts of all concerned authorities across the country.



*Gagan Narang is an Olympic bronze Medallist (Men's 10-metre Air Rifle) from the 2012 London Olympics. He was also the first Indian to qualify for the event. He is the founder of Guns for Glory, a world class shooting academy started to help young shooters from across the country.*

# FLAVOURS OF Amdavad

India's first UNESCO World Heritage city and Gujarat's largest, Ahmedabad, is a paradise for tourists. With its elegant monuments, vibrant markets and an eclectic culinary scene, it offers unforgettable experiences

BY SARAH TODD

I can hear the waters of the Sabarmati river gurgling as it flows in the distance. Above me, on a high branch two birds break into a song as a gust of wind sweeps over, bearing the promise of rains. I am standing in the serene green grounds of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and I have never been more at peace. Here, I do not hear the cacophony of the city, neither am I surrounded by the cloud of frantic activity that I have grown accustomed to in my kitchen. Instead, I walk through the exhibits of the museum that document the life, time and philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi. His humble living quarters, immaculately preserved here, gives me a glimpse

of the ideals he believed in. It is easy to spend a few hours at the ashram, located on the west bank of the river. From 1917 to 1930, during the struggle for India's independence, the ashram served as Gandhi's headquarters.

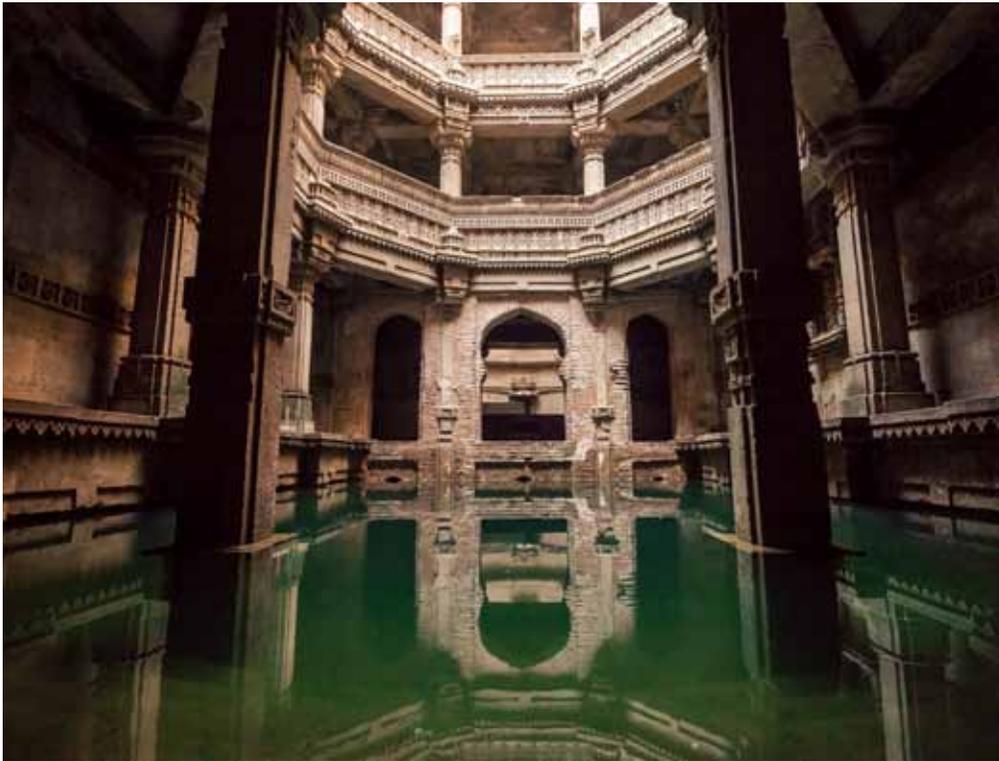
Sabarmati Ashram is one of the first landmarks in Ahmedabad or Amdavad as it's locally known, that I visit, and by the time I leave, it's almost time for lunch. Cities in India can be identified by their food. South India by *idlis*, *dosas* and *appams*, and north India by *stuffed parathas*, *matar paneer* and *choley kulchey*. Although you can taste all these fares anywhere in the country, Ahmedabad is one city where all these and more are savoured best. From melt-in-mouth *dhoklas* and tantalising

A trip to Ahmedabad is incomplete without a round of shopping. Don't miss out on the breathtaking bandhni fabrics, created using traditional techniques



The beautiful arcade  
In a temple situated  
in Ahmedabad's  
historical city centre





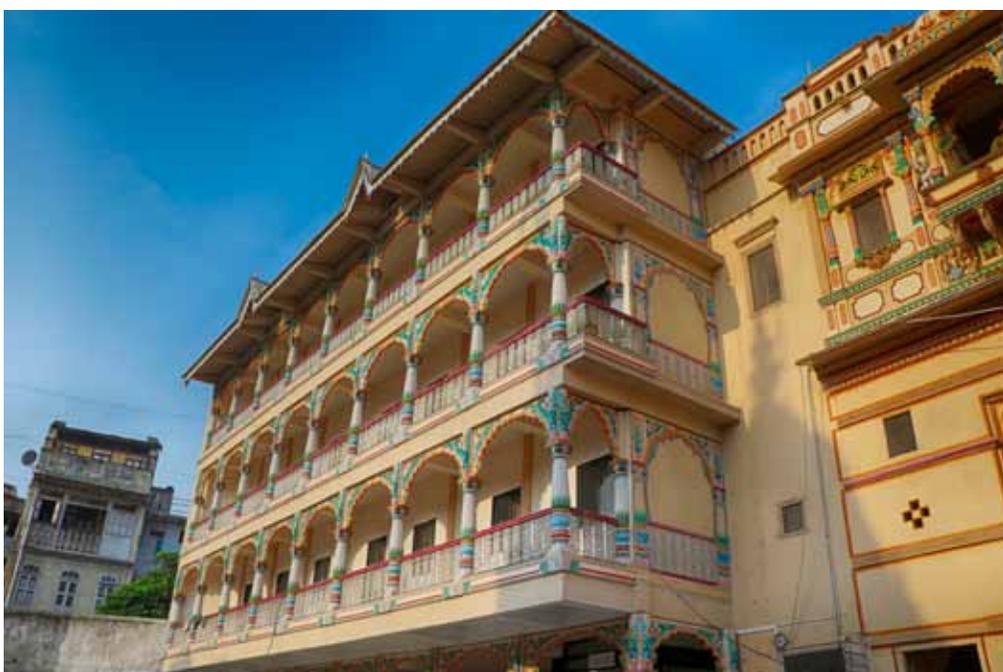
With contrasting textures and flavours, the Gujarati *thali* will leave you intrigued on so many levels and craving for more

Gujarati *kadhi* to syrupy *jalebis* – I am spoilt for choice.

I settle for an elaborate Gujarati *thali* (spread) the traditional way, in *pital* (brass) utensils. Before food is served I am offered a small bowl to wash my hands in, with water poured from a metal pot which, I am told, is an age-old custom. Slowly, my plate is filled with tiny portions of local delectables starting with an assortment of pickles and chutneys such as *dhaniya* (coriander) and *pundina* (mint) chutney, and *gajar mirch achaar* (carrot and chilli pickle). These are served on a leaf that is placed on the plate. “The leaf is to make sure that the *khatta* (sour) of the pickle does not react

with the brass,” the waiter explains. Then the main dishes roll in – *ringana batata nu shak* (eggplant cooked with potato), *chora nu shak* (an aromatic black-eyed beans gravy), Gujarati *khatti mithi daal* (sweet and sour lentil soup), *undhiyu* (mixed vegetable prepared with spinach paste), *bhindi sambhariya* (ladyfingers curry), Gujarati *kadhi* (a sweet thin gravy prepared with yoghurt and gram flour), rice and *khichdi* (an Indian dish consisting chiefly of rice and split pulses) along with such an assortment of breads as *bajri* and *makai no rotlo* (roti or flatbread made with the flour of the bajra millet and corn) and *puran poli* (a sweetened bread). I relish every bite, and every now and

**Clockwise from left:** The Architectural features of Adalaj Stepwell, located in Ahmedabad; Ruins of Kamani Masjid at the Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park; Architecture of the historical buildings around Ahmedabad



## Must-Dos



### Bun Maska and Masala Tea

The perfect evening snack, Bun *Maska* (butter toasted sweet-bread) and *masala* tea is a staple snack around the streets of Ahmedabad.



### Daandiya

Raas or Dandiya Raas is the traditional folk dance form of Gujarat. It is the iconic form of celebration during the various festivals of Navratri and Holi. It is performed as a dance form with brightly-coloured batons.



### Shop for handicrafts

The city is famous for the brightly coloured and kaleidoscopic patterns that line the many vibrant bazaars around the Ahmedabad.



I actually created a version of a vegan khakra using baked carrot, pickled cauliflower and chilly dipped tofu aioli

then am offered culinary advice on how to savour a Gujarati *thali* the right way. The bowl of sweet *halwa*, for example, is to be had with the meal and not as dessert! With contrasting textures and flavours, it leaves me intrigued on so many levels.

Hunger satiated, I visit the Adalaj Vav. Nestled in the quaint village of Adalaj, located approximately 18 km from the city centre, this magnificent 15th century five-storey octagonal vav (stepwell) takes my breath away. It is said that this vav was built not just as a cultural and utilitarian space but also as a spiritual refuge that villagers would visit daily and offer prayers to

the deities carved into its walls. And it is cool inside. I see no devotees around but meet with many visitors here – some local, some tourists. I am mesmerised by its intricate architecture that boasts Indo-Islamic influences, and observe with wide-eyed-wonder the harmonious play of intricate Islamic patterns seamlessly fusing into Hindu and Jain symbolism. I take in as much as I can of this charming place before bidding adieu and heading back to the city.

Evening calls for tea and snacks and the streets of Ahmedabad invite you with delectable aromas of steaming *chai* (sweet tea made with milk), streetside vendors frying *dal pakora* (fritters made from lentil paste) and several other mouthwatering treats. I



The complete Gujarati spread with *Khaman*, *Khandavi*, *Dahi-Bhalla*, *Jalebi* and *Besan Papri*



The beautiful Sun Temple near Mehsana, beautifully lit up during the night

opt for the city specialties – *chai*, *maska bun* (fluffy buns toasted with oodles of butter) and *dalvada* (lentil paste fritters). Ahmedabad knows how to cater to the taste buds of those who crave Gujarati food – like me. In fact, I love the cuisine so much that I have actually created my version of a vegan *khakra* (a traditional Gujarati cracker-like snack made with wheat flour and oil) using baked carrot, pickled cauliflower and chilly dipped tofu aioli. Anyone familiar with my work knows that I love creating vegetarian foods which go beyond ingredients like mushroom and *paneer* (cottage cheese). I like giving local foods a twist and to make them my own. However, I enjoy such signature Gujarati delicacies as *dhokla*, *handvo*, buttermilk, *fafda*, *sev usal*, *dhebhra*, *thepla*, *mohan thaal* among others which reinstates, time and again, that Gujarati food is a perfectly

balanced combination of sweet, salty and spicy flavours.

A trip to Ahmedabad is incomplete without a round of shopping, and I could not resist picking up some breathtaking *bandhni* fabrics that are created using the ancient tie and dye techniques. Needless to say it's indigenous to this state and holds quite a special place in the rich Indian textile industry. As much as I want to stroll around the city, taking in its sights, sounds and smell, my adventure is cut short by work. But I don't leave before I make a mental note of my return.



Sarah Todd began her career as a model in England before she appeared in *Masterchef Australia*. Her culinary journey began with several travel-cum-cooking shows across India. Author of *The Healthy Model Cookbook*, she is now a successful restaurateur with three thriving restaurants in Mumbai, Goa and New Delhi.



# SEEDS OF wellness

These tiny packages of nutrition and taste have been used in Indian cuisine since ages. Today, they are being rediscovered as a superfood. Seasoned chefs share their insight

BY MADHULIKA DASH



Chicken curry garnished with Hemp seeds with *Gobindbhog* rice from the restaurant Lavaash By Saby

**A** scoop of pumpkin seed paste in a curry. A sprinkle of basil seed on a lemonade. A touch of poppy seed powder in pasta. A dash of *kalaunji* (nigella) seeds in bread... the list can be endless. Roasted, grounded or soaked in water, indigenous seeds have been an integral part of Indian cuisine since the ancient times. Now chefs and nutritionists are delving further into their usage and health benefits. Celebrity chef Sabyasachi Gorai (culinary director, Grid), who has been working with seeds for more than a decade, calls them the “master tastemakers”. Nutritionist Kavita Devgan calls them nutrition boosters. “Common seeds found in India are great sources of nutrition, including fibre and minerals. They also contain healthy monounsaturated fats and vitamins. They are easy to procure and consume, and make a flavourful addition to a diet,” Devgan explains.

### VARIETY AND VERSATILITY

Chef Sharad Dewan of the Park hotel in Kolkata, who has been working towards bringing seeds to the fore of experimental Indian cuisine, says, “The beauty of seeds lies in the versatility of

their taste and texture. By that, I not only mean the texture and taste that has made them such an integral part of our culinary repertoire, but also in terms of nutrition.” He explains that seeds need not only be used as a garnish or puree but can be an exciting alternative to work with for both old and new dishes. Nutrition therapist Sveta Bhasin says that seeds are, in fact, the quintessential needed fat and protein pack that works far more effectively than any processed supplement. Little wonder then that most ancient Indian recipes had a good amount of seeds added to them at various stages. *Til ke laddoo* (sweet balls of sesame seeds) are a good example. This age-old dessert is had in winter to keep the body warm and the gut fit enough to fight seasonal ailments. Traditionally, *ajwain* (carom) and nigella seeds were added to make *rotis* (baked Indian flatbread) crunchier and keep the gut healthy. The practice of adding *chaar magaz* (a mixture of pumpkin seed, musk melon seed, water melon seed and cucumber seed) to a curry also harks back to this thought.

“Seeds can be used to replicate all elements of taste. Nigella, for instance, gives a bitter taste, fennel is on the sweeter side, sesame is rich in oil, and mustard’s pungent. Coriander

The fact that seeds have been a part of Indian cuisine heritage makes it easier for contemporary chefs to adapt them

### Health Benefits

**Watermelon:** Low in calories and high in nutrients, fatty acids, vital proteins and lots of minerals, these seeds are also superb sources of Vitamin B. They are packed with magnesium, iron and folate and are good for the heart and immunity. They can make bones stronger, control diabetes, boost metabolism, make hair and skin glow. They can be dry roasted as a snack or can be powdered for curries.

**Cucumber:** Packed with fibres and minerals, cucumber seeds can be consumed to control digestion-related problems and for gaining healthy skin and hair.

**Pumpkin:** Packed with a wide variety of nutrients ranging from magnesium and manganese to copper, protein and zinc, pumpkin seeds are nutritional powerhouses. They also contain plant compounds known as phytosterols and free-radical scavenging antioxidants, which can give your health an added boost.

**Poppy:** Extremely nutritious and with a nutty flavour, these seeds can prevent common ailments like dry cough and sleeplessness. But these, in controlled portions, like any other ingredient, should be added to a diet after consultation with a medical practitioner. They can be used in a vegetable curry, a soup or a pasta. Crushed poppy seeds can be added as a thickener.

**Sabja or sweet basil seeds:** These are black and tear-shaped and are often confused with chia. Rich in antioxidants, fibre, proteins, carbohydrate and good fats, they are very effective for weight-loss. Nutritionist Dr Shefali Gurung, says: “*Sabja* can help in controlling diabetes and on regular use can improve skin and hair quality.” These seeds are hard to chew and it's best to soak them in water.



can be used both as a sweet and savoury and goes beautifully with layered sole breads like *taftan*,” says Akshraj Jodha, executive chef at ITC Windsor Bengaluru. The same is the case with *alsi* or *teesi* (flaxseed), which can add both crunch and a bitter-sweet taste.

Another example of how wonderfully seeds work is Bengaluru-based chef Vikas Seth's beetroot tacos served with *amaranth* seeds. “Introducing seeds into a dish isn't just about creating a contrast in appearance and taste, but also enhancing the flavour,” says Seth.

*Meetha Achar* spare ribs with sun-dried mango and toasted onion seeds from the restaurant Indian Accent

### NUTRITION DELIVERED

The tradition of adding seeds to a dish, explains Jodha, wasn't only to make it richer. “It is a fallacy that *chaar magaz* was a poor man's alternative to cashew paste. These seeds absorb minerals and vitamins, and pack in healthy fats,” says Jodha. Chef Shantanu Mehrotra of Indian Accent restaurant favours the use of seeds in everyday cooking. “Take the case of carom. Since it aids digestion and adds a unique flavour, it's still used,” says Mehrotra.



## Seeds are the quintessential needed fat and protein pack that works far more effectively than any processed supplement

### RIGHT USAGE

Chef Balpreet Singh Chadha, director of Culinary Operations, at AnnaMaya in Delhi, says that in most culinary cultures, including India, seeds are usually consumed raw, lightly toasted or at best in the form of a light sauce. Chef Jodha says seeds should be added in the end and simmered just enough so that the heat can release the flavour and activate the nutrition. An excellent example of this is a recipe of *safed maas*, a mutton dish, in which he adds the *chaar magaz* paste at the end to give it a rich flavour. The paste, says the chef, is made by first soaking *chaar magaz* in water and grinding it into a coarse paste. It is the same technique that is followed by straight *Chadha*, to give a distinct sesame flavour to *suji ka halwa* (semolina pudding) or by Sharad, when he makes his popular pumpkin seed *raita* (curd dish) for his pumpkin *haleem* (a mutton dish).

**Top (left to right):** Ragi tacos with fried beans and char-grilled baby pumpkin with *amaranth*; Spicy crumbly rice served with seeds of pumpkin

The fact that seeds have been a part of Indian cuisine heritage makes it easier for contemporary chefs to adapt them. Chef Megha Kohli of the restaurant

Lavaash By Saby, says, “I was introduced to cooking with seed as a child and loved using it as a garnish without realising how it added to a dish. It was the familiarisation with seeds that enabled me to use them to create an interesting palate play. At the restaurant, we use seeds to not only give richness to our dishes, but also accentuate a dish’s theatrics like *Matnakash* Claypot bread (soft rustic flavoured bread), which is made with *chironji* (almondette) seeds.”

As chefs discover the benefits of delving deeper into the roots of Indian cuisine, discovering unique health benefits of ingredients, native Indian seeds are being seen as the new heroes of natural flavours and wellbeing!



Madhulika Dash is a celebrated food and hospitality writer, and food columnist. She has contributed to various publications including Yahoo, Sify, Swarajya, Hotelier India, Way2Hotel, Indian Express and Forbes Life.

# ALL THE WORLD'S a stage

Braving social scepticism and rising above financial constraints, these dance groups from the bylanes of Mumbai are taking stages across the world by storm

BY PROMITA MUKHERJEE





Kings United performing at *World of Dance* competition in Los Angeles, California

**C**all it Mayanagri, the city of dreams or Mumbai – the charm of India’s entertainment capital does not fade. Every day, hundreds of aspiring artistes, with big hopes of making it to the limelight, arrive in the city to pursue their dreams. While it harbours the ambitions of thousands, it is the proud home of a few contemporary dance groups – big and small – which have not only garnered international adulation, titles and accolades but have also carved a niche for India on the global dance stage.

Take Kings United for example. Popularly known as ‘The Kings’, the hip-hop group, led by its founder Suresh Mukund, first tasted success when it went home with the *Boogie Woogie* (an Indian dance reality show) trophy in 2009. And that was just the beginning. In the years that followed they clinched first positions in such shows as *Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega* (2010) and *India’s Got Talent* (2011). They hit the proverbial nail in the coffin when they beat some of the world’s best contemporary dance crews to win the third season of the American reality show *World of Dance* in 2019.

But the success story of this dance group that Mukund co-founded with Parth Vyas has been anything but a bed of roses. The troupe members faced not only scepticism about their ambitions but had to work their way through financial constraints as well. “Dance was the only source of escape for many members of our group who hailed from not so financially well-to-do families. We did shows and the stipends we got helped us serve our families,” says Mukund. For Kings United, life has completely changed post international success. “It has opened to us innumerable opportunities, and we are constantly travelling for multiple events in different countries. We just did our first international workshop across the US and are planning to tour Canada and Europe soon. We recently did our first international movie shoot in The Philippines too. This is just the start; we have a long way to go,” says Mukund whose journey inspired Bollywood dancer-choreographer Remo D’Souza’s movie *Any Body Can Dance* in 2015. And the latest feather on Mukund’s cap? A nomination for an Emmy in the ‘Choreography for Variety or Reality Program’ category!

**While Elvis bagged a gold in the solo men’s category, Namrata became second runner-up in the freestyle category at the 2018 World Salsa Summit in Miami**

## DANCE



**Right:** Elvis Mascarenhas and Namrata Wittike, who represented India at the World Salsa Summit in 2018

**Facing Page:** Suresh Mukund of the Kings United dance group

Mukund and his passionate group of dancers are not the only ones who braved adversities to kiss success. B.E.A.ST (Born Ethical Abilities on Streets) Mode Crew cuts a close second. From b-boying and house to dougie, and from popping and locking to litefeet, and then some – there are very few ‘street dances’ that this talented bunch do not hold expertise in. The factors that led to the formation of B.E.A.ST Mode in 2013 is an interesting story, much like its journey so far. “We [dancers Ninja, Mik 62 and Sonic] were returning to Mumbai from Bengaluru when

we got robbed of all our belongings. We survived thanks to each other’s company and somehow made it home. We realised then that if we could make it through this situation together, we can make it through anything. And that led to the formation of this crew that boasts not just b-boys but also b-girls, hip-hop and street dancers,” says Sonic from the group. However, the road was long and riddled with uncertainties but nothing deterred the team’s pursuit of perfection. “We did not have a studio, so we did rehearsals outside a shop in Nagardas Road in Andheri East.

The shop closed at 8 pm, and by 8.30 pm we would come together and start rehearsing. We braved several challenges in the form of heavy rains, neighbours who objected, and more,” adds Sonic.

But as they say, ‘pursue something with unflinching passion and it will take you to heights you never imagined you’d be able to scale’ - this crew has not only carved a name for themselves in the domestic and international dance circuit but is mentioned in the Limca book of records for b-boying! But the event that cemented the members’ talent and expertise was the Keep on Dancing (KOD) Street Dance World Cup title, that they brought home in 2017. For the uninitiated, KOD is to street dance and hip-hop, what the World Cup is to cricket. B.E.A.ST Mode not only won the India qualifiers of this world-renowned competition that began in Beijing in 2004, but went on to represent the country in the competition finals in South Korea and further on to win it too! In fact, in 2020, they are participating as the defending champions.

Salsa duo Elvis Mascarenhas and Namrata Wittke are not far behind either. In 2018, they travelled from the lanes of Mumbai all the way to Miami,



**“DANCE WAS THE ONLY SOURCE OF ESCAPE FOR MANY MEMBERS OF OUR GROUP WHO HAILED FROM NOT SO FINANCIALLY WELL-TO-DO FAMILIES. WE DID SHOWS TO SUSTAIN OUR FAMILIES**

**Suresh Mukund**  
Co-founder, Kings United, winner of World of Dance 2019

## DANCE



**Right:** Members of the B.E.A.ST dance group

**Facing Page:** Kings United giving a performance in *World of Dance* competition in Los Angeles, California



## Kings United created history when they went on to take part in the World Hip Hop Dance Championship in Las Vegas in 2019, and finally win

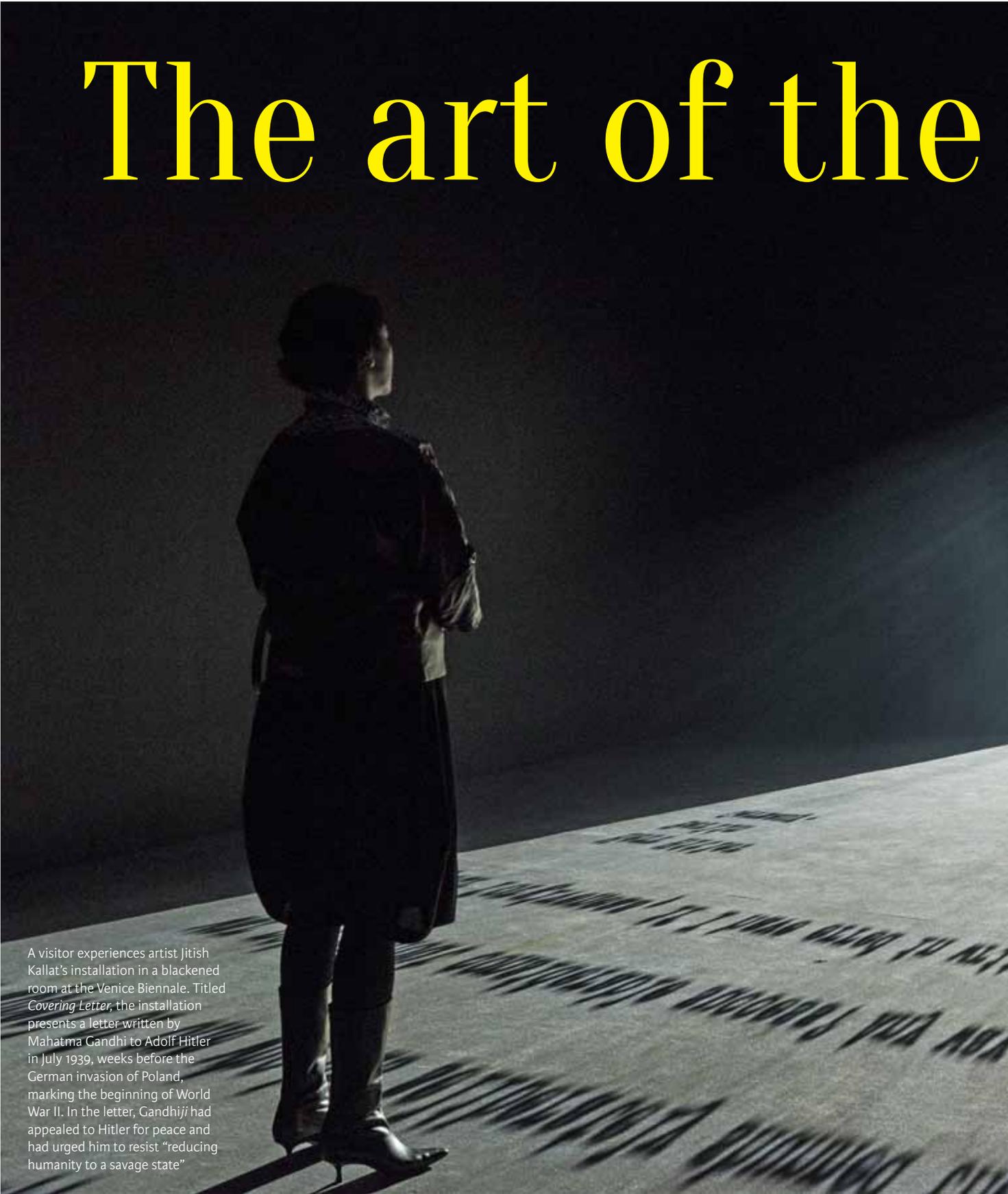
the US, to represent India at the World Salsa Summit. The trip cost them approximately INR 8 lakh but they didn't think twice before pooling in everything they had. In fact, Namrata, who quit her job as a television producer to pursue her passion for dance, broke her fixed deposits and dipped into her other savings to get there. Elvis, too, spent the last of his savings to fund his ticket to New York. Their hard work and sacrifice bore fruit. While Elvis bagged a gold in the solo men's category called Rising Star, Namrata became the second runner-up in the freestyle category. "Finance was one of the major struggles. Travelling to represent

the country with your own money is not easy. Dance as a career, is not consistent in India. We have to spend money in training and there isn't much support in the form of sponsorships either. But travelling to an international stage, solely on the wings of dance is something that every dancer aspires to do. It is quite humbling to be recognised globally and to have my style appreciated," says Elvis, who is inspired by the likes of Prabhu Deva, Michael Jackson and Tight Eyez, among others.



*Promita Mukherjee is a senior journalist who has worked as a lifestyle editor for various newspapers and written on various subjects ranging from food and fashion to travel for several national publications including numerous travel, lifestyle and fashion magazines.*

# The art of the

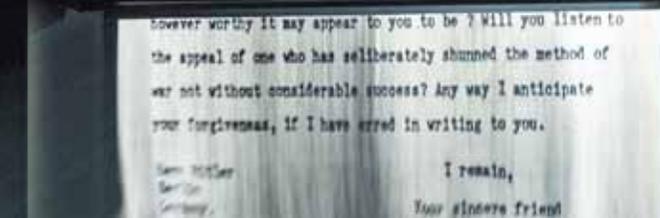


A visitor experiences artist Jitish Kallat's installation in a blackened room at the Venice Biennale. Titled *Covering Letter*, the installation presents a letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Adolf Hitler in July 1939, weeks before the German invasion of Poland, marking the beginning of World War II. In the letter, Gandhi had appealed to Hitler for peace and had urged him to resist "reducing humanity to a savage state"

# matter

The Indian pavillion at the 58th Venice Biennale has been adjudged among the top 10, reinforcing the country as an international force to reckon with in the field of contemporary creativity

BY GEORGINA MADDOX



However worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has seliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.

I remain,  
Your sincere friend  
M.K. Gandhi

**M**ahatma Gandhi never travelled to Venice. Not until 2019, when Indian artists journeyed to the eternally romantic Italian city with works inspired by Gandhi's philosophy of peace and non-violence. This year, after a hiatus of eight years, India's representation at the Venice Biennale, the world's largest and most reputed art extravaganza, is being hailed not just for creative thoughts but for it being themed on Gandhian philosophy. The fact that it has been listed among the top 10 country pavilions from a total of 90 by the *Financial Times* and leading art website artsy.net, alongside the US, Switzerland, Poland and debut country Ghana, speaks a lot about our creativity backed by Gandhi's thoughts.

There are eight Indian artists, such as Nandalal Bose, MF Husain, Jitish Kallat and Atul Dodiya showcasing at the official India Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale (on till November 24). Other than them, contemporary artists like Gauri Gill, Shilpa Gupta and Soham Gupta, who have won global critical acclaim with their work are represented as part of the main exhibition of the Biennale curated by Ralph Rugoff, an American curator and the man behind the 2019 edition of the event. India debuted at the biennale, with a national pavilion in 2011,

## India artists at the biennale

This year, India is showcasing seven art pieces, including Nandalal Bose's Haripura Panel (1938) that was commissioned by Gandhiji himself. It depicts India's rural population. An untitled work by Shakuntala Kulkarni (2010-12) comprises two cane sculptures, seven photographs and accessories from the project 'of Bodies, cages and armours'. This work ties in with Gandhiji's bamboo stage platforms, from which he addressed the people of the nation. Kulkarni also shows the material as an armour for several women in India, who earn a living making bamboo crafts. Untitled (2019) by Ashim Purkayastha, acrylic on canvas with stone sculpture, talks about the stone as a tool of violence and protection and Gandhi's path of peace.

nearly 116 years after the event first started! In 1931, Gandhiji had visited Rome and in a letter to a friend he wrote that he found Mussolini (Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini) a riddle. Gandhiji also wrote a letter about Adolf Hitler. It is this piece of history that artist Jitish Kallat brings to life in his immersive installation *Covering Letter*, one of the key displays of the Indian pavillion at the Venice Biennale. The letter unfolds, projected upon a smoky screen where Gandhiji's words and signature are scrawled, making the viewer a witness in history.

The India Pavilion has been the result of the joint efforts of the National Gallery of Modern Art, acting as commissioner, and the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) as partners. It has been

curated by Roobina Karode, the chief curator of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA). "I didn't conceive the exhibition as a literal representation of Gandhiji in a documentary-like format, or by resurrecting him from the archives," says Karode. Adding, "Gandhiji's image/presence is not fixed in time and space. He keeps returning to public conscience in periods of crisis or despair. He is not a subject that rests only in sentiment or nostalgia. Rather he is the subject of contemporary reflection. I was more inclined to look at aspects of his practice. And also the idea of craft, dignity of labour and emphasis on self-reliance."

India's participation in the Biennale this year comes as a welcome relief and will work as an impetus to the Indian art fraternity, that has for long lamented India's sporadic presence at



GR Iranna poses with his artwork featuring hundreds of *padukas* or holy slippers. *Padukas* are worn by monks and other holy acolytes, and reflect the principle of peace and non-violence

“MY INSTALLATION IS TITLED NAAVU, A KANNADA WORD THAT STANDS FOR HUM, OR IN ENGLISH, TOGETHER. IT IS SYMBOLIC OF WHEN WE ARE ALL UNITED AND STAND IN SOLIDITY FOR A CAUSE

GR Iranna

Atul Dodiya's installation *Broken Branches*, inspired by cabinets at Mahatma Gandhi's house in Porbandar



global art events. “It is an exciting time for India, which is being represented at international museums like the MET Breuer in New York, *documenta*, an exhibition of contemporary art which takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany, and now the Venice Biennale,” observes Shanay Jhaveri, who is the assistant curator of the South Asian Art section at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET). Jhaveri has been promoting Indian artists and the MET hosted a retrospective of late Indian artist Nasreen Mohamedi and is currently hosting a solo show of sculptor Mrinalini Mukherjee.

Since India Pavilion happened only once before, the curatorial team deliberated a substantial

representation of eight Indian artists in a 530 sq mt area. “We have opted for the space to be fluid, evoking resonances through the works displayed, keeping the temperament of the pavilion meditative to pause and reflect. I chose not to have a symmetrical design of the space, wishing for more odd edges and unusual encounters,” says Karode.

Jitish Kallat reveals the story behind his work *Covering Letter*. “Every visitor brings in different personal, social and historical experiences to the work, in a way altering its meaning,” says Kallat. *Covering Letter*, much like his three Public Notice works, reflects on an utterance from history that might be repurposed to re-think the present. He tells us that the work is a piece of



**“ I FEEL IT’S AN APT THEME FOR INDIA TO PRESENT TO THE WORLD AND ITS VIEWERS — GANDHI AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE AND NON-VIOLENCE STILL MATTERS TO INDIAN ARTISTS IN TODAY’S INTOLERANT AND VIOLENT WORLD**

Atul Dodiya



“IT SHOULD NOT BE A PREROGATIVE OF A FEW INTELLECTUALS TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE RELEVANCE OF GANDHI’S PRINCIPLES

Ashim Purkayastha

historical correspondence beamed onto a curtain of traversable dry-fog; a brief letter written by Gandhiji to Adolf Hitler in 1939 urging the German leader to reconsider his violent means. “There is a sense of perplexity in the way that Gandhiji words his address; as the principal proponent of peace from a historical moment,” muses Kallat. “Like many of Gandhiji’s gestures and his life experiments, this piece of correspondence seems like an open letter destined to travel beyond its delivery date and intended recipient – a letter written to anyone, anytime, anywhere,” he explains.

Karode and her curatorial team chose artist Atul Dodiya’s *Broken Branches* because it struck a “universal chord” and revolves around the

dialogue of violence. “What is perhaps sad is that this work of mine is still relevant today, and the violence continues,” observes Dodiya. The installation consists of nine wooden cabinets with hand-coloured framed photographs, prosthetic limbs, tools, found objects and other memorabilia.

In a similar vein, artist GR Iranna revisits his 2010 work featuring *padukas* or holy slippers. “The installation is titled *Naavu*, a Kannada word that stands for *hum*, or in English, together. It is symbolic of when we are all united and stand in solidity for a cause,” says Iranna. The work features hundreds of *padukas*, displayed in a heap, and also tacked to the wall as if people were walking across the walls and ceiling together. In India, *padukas*



In the series *Gandhi/ Man Without Specs*, artist Ashim Purkayastha has recreated revenue stamps with Mahatma Gandhi’s portraits but without the spectacles



A visitor takes pictures of artist Shakuntala Kulkarni's installation at the Venice Biennale. The untitled work comprises two cane sculptures, seven photographs and accessories from the project 'Of Bodies, cages and armours'. This work ties in with Gandhi's bamboo stage platforms, from which he addressed the people of the nation



**“THE ARMOURS  
RESONATE WITH  
GANDHI'S RESISTANCE.  
MY ARMOURS ARE  
RESISTANCE AGAINST  
THE ATROCITIES ON  
THE FEMALE BODY  
AND MY WORK HAS NO  
NATIONALITY**

**Shakuntala Kulkarni**

are worn by monks and other holy acolytes, and reflects the principle of peace and non-violence. Attached to each of the footwear is a little object that indicates a profession or religion, like a pair of scissors. “This stands for their individuality and indicates that while we are together we continue to retain our unique identity,” says Iranna. Grains of sand attached to the *padukas* indicate that the footwear is worn by people walking near the sea and this alludes to Gandhiji's march to Dandi to protest a draconian rule enforced in British-India.

The late Rummana Hussain is represented by one of her most significant works: *Fragments*. It consists of a broken pot or “tomb”, and it speaks of loss, of silence; laid bare on mirrors. While another Husain by Maqbool Fida Husain, is represented

through his painting, *Zameen*. A historic work that brings together ruminations on India's syncretic nature of India's past.

The pavillion becomes even more relevant as India celebrates Gandhiji's 150 birth anniversary and the relevance of his philosophies ring true in today's violent world. “The exhibition attempts to evaluate the relevance of Gandhian values in the contemporary world,” says Karode, adding, “it's unfortunate but true that even today, we need his experiments with truth to guide us!”



Georgina Maddox is a senior art writer and curator who remains involved in various visual art projects. She is currently working with *The Indian Express* as Senior Assistant Editor.

# Indian Cinema's AMERICAN SUMMER

In its 19th year now, the New York Indian Film Festival has been celebrating independent, art house and alternate films from the Indian subcontinent

BY KARAN KAUSHIK

**T**hirty-two movie screenings in six days! Among which were seven world premieres, five USA premieres and the rest being New York premieres, and films in languages like Assamese, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Kannada, Ladakhi, Punjabi, and Haryanvi! But the regulars at the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) won't bat an eyelid at these facts. Because NYIFF, the oldest and most prestigious Indian film festival in America is known for celebrating thought-provoking movies made by people from the Indian subcontinent residing in various parts of the globe. Interestingly, the stories these films tell are not always about India or Indians, but have some link to the country!

In its 19th year, the festival mesmerised New York City with a deluge of movies that defied geographical and political boundaries, and pushed the envelope to focus on new thoughts and dialogues. The festival, held

between May 7 and 12 at the Village East Cinemas in Manhattan, New York, truly encapsulated the power of the India diaspora who, though settled across the globe, hold their motherland's spirit close to their heart.

## UNTOLD STORIES

Other than variety, what also made headlines at this year's NYIFF were four blockbusters, which hadn't even screened in India: Gurinder Chadha's *Blinded by the Light*; Rohena Gera's *Sir*; Ritesh Batra's *Photograph* and *The Last Color* by Vikas Khanna. The first, coming from the English filmmaker of Indian origin, talks about an Asian-British teenager from the '80s, who finds solace in the music of Bruce Springsteen. The film is said to have been inspired by the true story of journalist Sarfraz Manzoor.

Gera's *Sir*, which was screened at the Cannes Film Festival last year and picked up two awards at the NYIFF – Best Film and Best Actress (Tillotama Shome) – captures the

# Sir

The poster for the movie 'Sir' features a large, semi-transparent profile of a man's face in the background, looking towards the right. In the foreground, a woman is shown from the waist up, wearing a vibrant, multi-colored floral patterned top and a red skirt with white polka dots. She is looking back over her shoulder towards the left. The background is a blurred cityscape at night with bokeh light effects.

The poster of Rohena Gera's movie *Sir* starring Tillotomma Shome and Vivek Gomber



story of Ratna, a widowed domestic worker. Bollywood filmmaker (director of *The Lunchbox*) Ritesh Batra's new-age romance, *Photograph*, starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sanya Malhotra, won him the Best Director's prize at the festival. The film follows the story of a street photographer in Mumbai who seeks the help of a college girl when his grandmother pressures him to get married. Celebrity chef Vikas Khanna's debut film, *The Last Color* — based on the 2012 Supreme Court verdict allowing widows to play Holi in Vrindavan — closed the festival to much acclaim. The limelight was also shared by 19 regional films in Bengali, Assamese, Marathi, Tamil and other languages.

According to festival director Aseem Chhabra, there was a strong representation of regional cinema from India including a Ladakhi-Kashmiri children's film. "We are proud to share a wonderful collection of new films from India. This selection of exceptional titles showcases the beauty, power and glory of film storytelling at its best," said he. Agreeing, Rakesh Kaul, vice-chairman of Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC), the organising body of NYIFF, said, "Regional cinema brings out India's true essence, and audiences in New York got to see India's magnificence through the festival."

**THE MAKERS**

The festival was founded by New Yorker Aroon Shivdasani, who successfully ran it for 20 years before retiring last year. His successors are now taking the

**“OUR AIM IS TO HIGHLIGHT THE LESSER KNOWN MOVIES MADE BY INDEPENDENT AND EXPERIMENTAL DIRECTORS COMING FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THE IDEA IS TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE FILMMAKERS WHO ARE DOING GREAT WORK IN THEIR REGIONS BY TELLING COMPELLING STORIES**

**Aseem Chhabra**  
NYIFF director



**Top:** *The Last Color* by celebrity chef Vikas Khanna is based on the 2012 Supreme Court verdict allowing widows to play Holi in Vrindavan, **Bottom:** Rohena Gera (left), director of *Sir*, with Tillottoma Shome, the leading lady of the film



**Clockwise from top:** Director Gurinder Chadha with actor Amer Chadha-Patel who starred in her movie *Blinded by the Light*; Filmmaker Ritesh Batra was awarded the Best Director's prize at the NYIFF for his movie *Photograph*; Batra (extreme right) with Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sanya Malhotra, the lead actors of his film *Photograph*

festival to the next level with new partnerships. Sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan is the latest addition to the IAAC board along with celebrity chef Vikas Khanna, who has also been appointed as the brand ambassador of IAAC.

Khanna, whose movie, starring Neena Gupta, revolves around poignant relationships, said, "My movie is about symbolisms, social taboos and most importantly, about those whom the society considers to be outcasts. I have always wanted to tell this story and needed the right audience for it. This festival gave me the perfect platform." Another much-talked about documentary showcased at NYIFF

was celebrity hair stylist Sapna Bhavnani's *Sindhustan*, which talks about Sindhi culture. Talking about her film and NYIFF, Bhavnani said: "NYIFF was an excellent backdrop for the world premiere of my debut film. The audience was excited and supportive, and the screening was spectacular."

However, the festival not only focussed on alternate films. Madhumitha, whose Tamil film *KD*, was also a part of the line-up, said, "Usually there is a misconception among the Indian audience that when a film does rounds of film festivals, it is meant only for a niche audience. On the contrary, film festivals usually mix and match both kinds of film."

While Bollywood, the gigantic Hindi film industry in India, boasts hundreds of mega budget movie releases annually, filmmakers across the country work tirelessly to bring to life unique stories under more restrained conditions. And festivals like NYIFF offer these creative minds an international platform, just as the festival's director Aseem Chhabra summed it up, "The festival is aimed at promoting films which otherwise would not have reached New York or a global audience. We try to make every story being told, heard!"



Karan Kaushik is a Delhi-based journalist. An alumnus of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Kaushik likes to travel and document his experiences across the country.

# Girish Karnad

## THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL INDIA WILL MISS

Acclaimed actor and playwright Girish Karnad breathed his last on June 10. From being an integral part of the parallel cinema movement during the late 1970s to being an active public intellectual, Karnad's contribution to Indian society has been immense

BY MK RAINA

In 1966, the National School of Drama (NSD) performed an Urdu translation of a never-heard-of Kannada play *Tughlaq*, written by Girish Karnad. It was the first ever production of the play, in a language it wasn't even written in, and was performed on the ramparts of the Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi. Directed by Om Shivpuri, who also played the titular role of Tughlaq, and designed by the then NSD director of the National School of Drama, Ebrahim Alkazi, it became a path-breaking theatrical production in contemporary Indian theatre. News of its success reached far and wide. Everyone wanted to know more about Karnad.

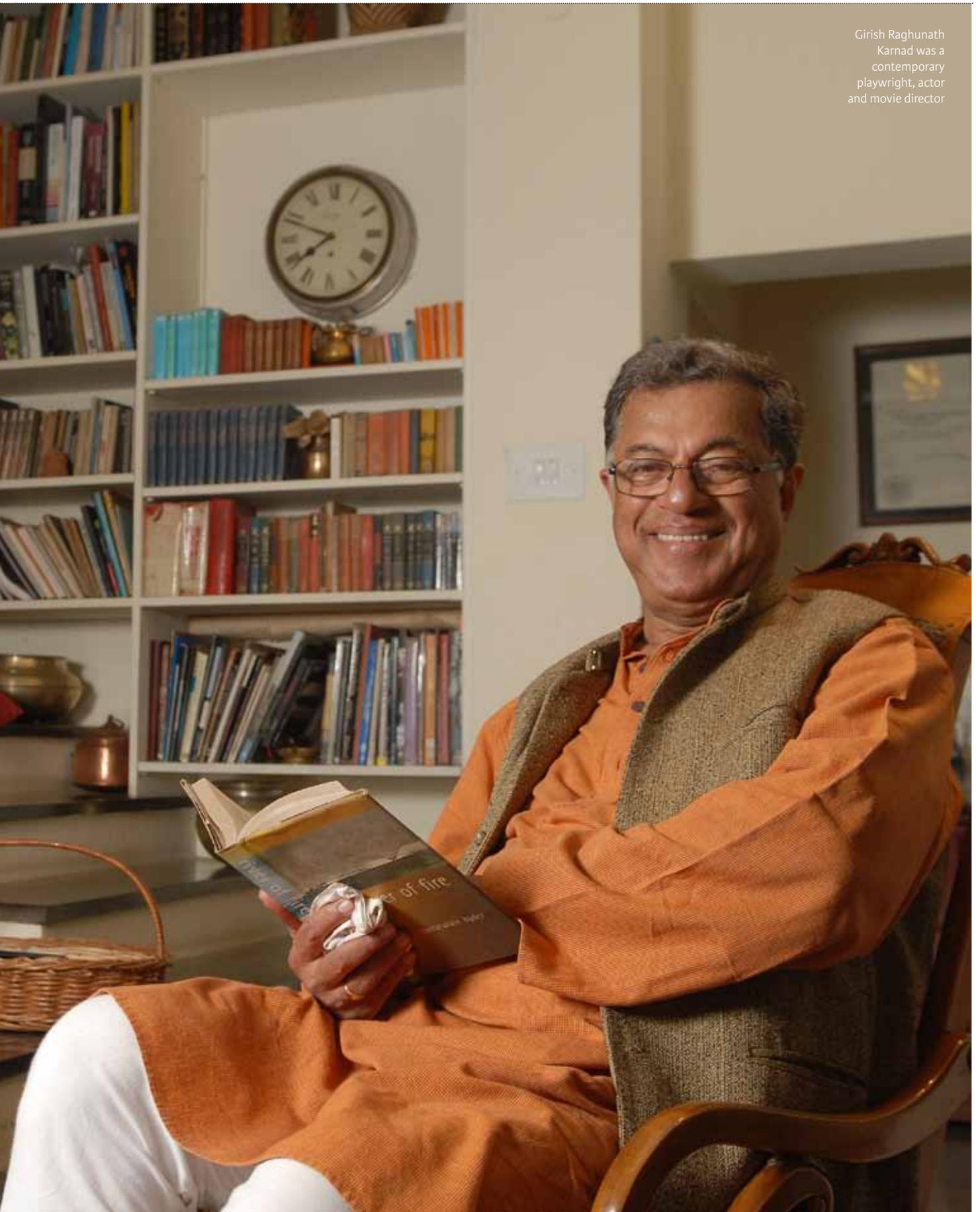
Karnad was not even 30 years old when he wrote this play. He had just returned from the UK where he was a Rhodes scholar. He was hardly known even in the literary circles of his own mother tongue Kannada, but *Tughlaq* changed everything. He was now

celebrated through several regional languages theatre productions of the play – Marathi, Bengali, Hindi and in English. Following this success, NSD produced another play of Karnad's, called *Bali*. It was a diploma production by Prerna Karanth. Karnad soon became a well-known name in the Indian playwriting scene.

The late 1960s and 1970s were the most fervent years of India's creative community. All over, there was an ambience of free thinking and questioning. After centuries of colonial rule, Indian theatre was raising questions about our own cultural identity, and how it was different from western theatre. To examine this polarity, many experiments were carried out. There were innovative local theatrical productions being done like *tamasha* in Maharashtra and *nautanki* in North India. With these performances in the indigenous folk theatre, new possibilities opened up.



Girish Raghunath  
Karnad was a  
contemporary  
playwright, actor  
and movie director



### Honouring the Genius

- Padma Shree
- Jnanpith Award
- Padma Bhushan
- National Film Award (NFA) for best Feature Film
- NFA for best Direction
- NFA for best Screenplay
- NFA for best Non-Feature Film



It encouraged theatre directors to use complex ideas and themes in their plays. It seemed possible to convey contemporary ideas through these traditional theatre forms. This realisation gave the Indian theatre community a sense of liberation and confidence to pursue modern ideas.

It was during this period that four outstanding playwrights - Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad - appeared on the Indian national theatre scene. It was a pan-Indian celebration of their works, removing the language barriers. All these writers were exploring their own understanding of the world, which connected them with the Indian reality in a post-Independent India.

From his first play, *Bali*, Karnad examined the present through epics, myth and history. Like Sanskrit playwrights, he sourced material for his plays from epics and scriptures and then, like a master craftsman, structured the narrative of his plays through poetic metaphors



and symbols. Being an actor and director himself, Karnad was always in command of chiselling out his characters, which are complex, subtle and even self-contradicting. This quality of characterisation made actors employ all their physical and intellectual energies to achieve the impossible. From *Tughluq* and *Hayavadana* to *Rakta Kalyan* and *Bikre Bimb*, the interplay between form and content is always changing in his plays.

In the 1960s and 1970s, filmmakers like Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak

**Top:** Australian writer, Richard Flanagan and Girish Karnad in a conversation at the Jaipur Literature Festival

**Bottom:** A glimpse from the play *Tughluq* which was written by Karnad



**(Left to right):** Former Indian President Pratibha Patil presenting the Ganga Sharan Singh Award to Girish Karnad; a vintage photograph of the actor-director during his early years in Indian theatre

## In the later part of his career, with his historical plays, Karnad gradually transformed himself into a public individual and participated in national struggles

were making films in Bengali, which got them international recognition. Later, in the late 1970s, with the support of National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), several avant garde films were made and recognised at prestigious international film festivals. This triggered the release of a new creative energy in Indian cinema. It was now possible to make a cinematic work with limited budget. Some of the filmmakers who dominated the parallel cinema scene included Mrinal Sen, Mani Kaul, Awtar Kaul, Kumar Shahani, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, BV Karanth, Shyam Benegal and Girish Karnad.

Karnad acted in and directed

several movies which were, and still are, considered milestones in India's parallel cinema movement. Some of them include *Samskara*, *Manthan*, *Kadu*, *Ankur*, *Nishant*, *Swami* and *Godhuli* among others. Karnad's cinematic climax came with *Utsav* (1984) based on Shudrakha's classic Sanskrit play *Mrichchhakatika*.

There were times when actors and directors from regional theatre crossed over to Hindi cinema and yet retained their involvement with their respective regional theatres. Karnad, who contributed majorly in this enterprise on a multi-disciplinary level, was always at the forefront with his creative ideas. He believed

in contributing by leading from the front – whether it was direction, acting or writing.

What was fascinating was that while he churned out one masterpiece after another, he stayed in touch with the mundane world. His participation in democratic and secular movements, continued till the end of his life. He worked with the elite, the intellectual world and the struggling masses. His passing away is an irreplaceable loss not only for Indian theatre and cinema, but also for the society. He was the one public intellectual that India will always miss. In his death, India has lost a cultural ambassador.



Maharaj Krishna Raina is an alumnus of the NSD and has been associated with theatre both as an actor as well as a director. He has associated himself with a number of groups across the world and has acted in more than a 100 plays.



## TRENDSETTERS

- India is credited with the earliest book on dance and music. *Natya Shastra* written by sage Bharata Muni between 200 BCE and 200 CE, containing 5,569 *shlokas* over 37 chapters is believed to be the basis of Indian classical dance and music.
- Visva Bharati in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, founded in 1901 by Rabindranath Tagore was one of the first Indian schools to include dance in its curriculum.
- Compared to the global average of five per cent, 13 per cent of the pilots in India are women. This means that for every eight flights in India, one is flown by a woman.

# IMPRESSIVE INDIA

Know your country a little more with these interesting facts



## DOUBLE TROUBLE!

The Kodhini village in the coastal state of Kerala is known for its twins! Yes, you heard it right, compared to global average of nine pairs of twins for every 1,000 babies born, Kodhini posts a staggering figure of 45 pairs of twins for every 1,000 births. At present there are almost 400 pairs of twins in the village and as a result the village is now locally known as the Twin Town. Moreover, several schemes have been introduced for twins along with a dedicated Twin association of Kodhini.

## MEDIA CORNER

The first newspaper to be published in India was started on June 29, 1780, and called the *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*. The paper was launched by James Augustus Hicks and is arguably one of the first newspapers to be printed in Asia.



There is uniqueness in every nook and cranny of our vast country. Take for example the daily evening newspaper called *The Musalman*. This newspaper is handwritten by four calligraphers or *katibs* before being mass produced by a press. Published in Chennai since 1927, the newspaper has 25,000 subscribers and has never missed a day's publication.

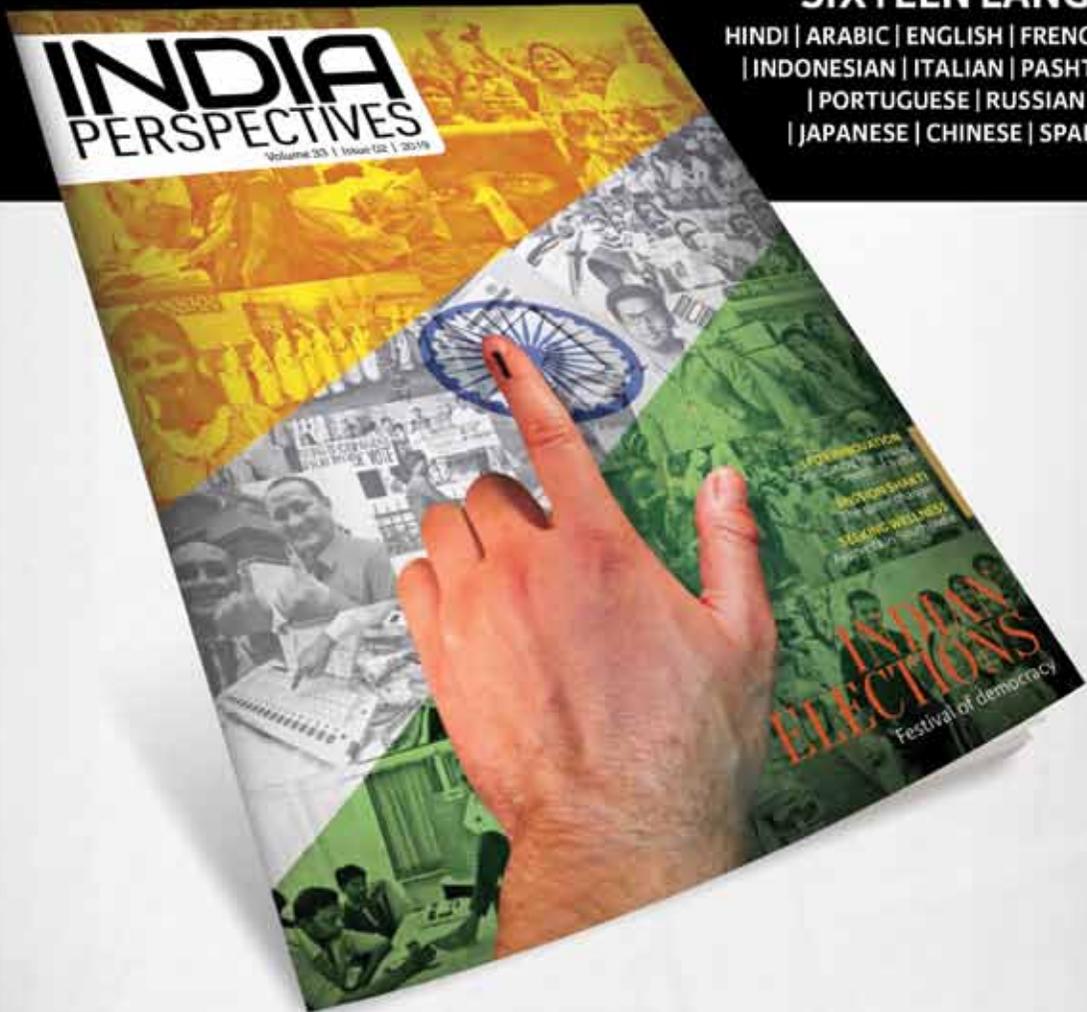
The Leh station of the All India Radio in Jammu & Kashmir, located at an altitude of 11,800 ft above mean sea level is the highest radio station in the world. The station broadcasts in several languages including Tibetan, Balti, Hindi, Urdu and Ladakhi





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