

ਰਾਣ ਵਾਰੀ

AN I.I.M.U.N. INITIATIVE
CREATING LEADERS WITHOUT NOISE



youth renaissance

12 ICONS OF IMPACT

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FRONTLINE

From hard-hitting global Op-Eds to viral trends and 'Tweets from Around the World,' we explore the stories and ideas that matter today.

SEMESTER IN STANZA

A poetic chronicle of the last six months: National, International, and Sporting triumphs woven into rhyme.

UNDERSTAND. UNRAVEL. UNITE

CONTENTS

Whats Inside

“Stories that inform,
ideas that inspire,
perspectives that
matter.”

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----|
| INTRODUCTION |   | EDITOR'S NOTE | |
| FEATURES |  | FROM THE SCENE ITSELF (INTERVIEWS) | 01 |
| |  | SEMESTER IN STANZA | 59 |
| |  | ARTICLES | 91 |
| WORLD & OPINION |  | OP-EDs | 118 |
| |  | PLAN FOR A BETTER TOMORROW | 129 |
| CULTURE & MEDIA |  | ENTERTAINMENT | 142 |
| |  | TWEETS FROM AROUND THE WORLD | 150 |
| PAST |  | I.I.M.U.N IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS | 64 |
| FUN |  | FUN SECTION | 153 |



EDITORS NOTE

Dear Readers,

It is with immense pleasure that we bring you the summer edition of I.I.M.U.N. 's "One World" Magazine. One World is a title that we at the Substance department resonate with to the highest possible extent. This title reflects our hope for the future of this country and this world, as not only a place where intellectual minds can come together in harmony, but also a place where dialogue, discourse, and understanding can take shape. The theme of this edition – Youth Renaissance, reflects this exact feeling that we want to share with you all. As we stand at the cusp of a new era, we as a species face new challenges every day, and as the youth, we feel like it is our utmost responsibility to ensure that the world we will fall heir to shortly is one where all of us can look each other in the eye and walk forward with our hands entwined with each other. A world which truly incarnates the ancient Indian ideals of वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्.

Bringing this edition to life, after a long hiatus, was certainly not a walk in the park; there were moments of doubt, difficulties, and dilemmas. There were late-night Google meets and unhealthy amounts of caffeine involved. There were countless revisions, redrafts, and conversations that have shaped the One World which you hold in your hands right now. Through grit and perseverance of our entire team, we, as the Leadership of the Substance Department, are proud to bring this edition to you.

This edition brings together professionals from various walks of life to help the youth pilot this renaissance. From Nobel Laureate Mr. Kailash Satyarthi to Booker Prize winner Ms. Geetanjali Shree, from renowned biophysicist Mr. Samir Brahmachari to cinema professional Ms. Anuparna Roy – this magazine brings together perspectives that inform, challenge, and inspire. Alongside these interviews and insights, we have student-written articles which capture and steer the conversation on topics of peculiar interests to this renaissance. But to not make everything too intellectually stimulating, we did not forget to add a fun section, filled with riddles, quizzes, and new suggestions from our end.

At the onset of this note, we, the Substance Department of I.I.M.U.N., have made this magazine, with love, purpose, and a desire to push further. We hope, with this edition, to light within you a fire of change, a fire of resonance, a fire of enlightenment, and a spirit of love and oneness towards all. As we begin this new journey, we're genuinely grateful to each and every person who has contributed to the making of this magazine. It is only that with the likes of people like you all – the young students, writers, leaders, & change makers – that we were able to put it all together. We foresee that with this edition, we will galvanize more and more of you to come and contribute to this project.

At the end of the day, feedback is what makes a good project into a great one – so, should you have any feedback for us, please don't be hesitant to write to us at: @drafting.iimun@gmail.com.

With love,
Brijesh, Anandi & Harsh

FOUNDERS NOTE

A Note from the Founder:

The Youth Renaissance

As I.I.M.U.N. marks fifteen years, I often find myself reflecting on a journey that began with little more than youthful conviction.

What started as a modest Indianised Model United Nations conference initiated by a teenager has today grown into a global youth movement spanning 275 cities across India and 40 countries. Yet the most remarkable aspect of this journey has never been the scale of the organisation, but the spirit of the young people who have carried the idea forward with sincerity, dedication and hope.

Over the past decade and a half, more than 30,000 students have worked with I.I.M.U.N., building one of the world's largest youth-run non-profit initiatives. Many of them first walked into our spaces as uncertain teenagers or curious interns. Today, they serve society as elected representatives, authors, lawyers, civil servants, entrepreneurs, artists and leaders across disciplines. Their journeys reaffirm a belief that has always guided this movement: when young people are trusted with responsibility early, they often rise to it with remarkable courage.

This magazine is another such expedition, this time by the Substance department of the organisation led by two bright young minds - Brijesh & Anandi. In a world of rampant polarisation and little place for healthy exchange of opposing ideas, these young explorers are endeavoring to create a safe space for intellectual discourse!

Across the world today, young people are quietly reshaping the cultural, political and technological imagination of our times. They are building companies right out of college, mobilising communities through digital platforms, challenging outdated institutions and reinterpreting identity in ways previous generations could scarcely have imagined. In many ways, the defining transformations of our century are being driven not by established hierarchies, but by the bodacious audacity of youth.

FOUNDERS NOTE

At I.I.M.U.N., we see this every day. The organisation continues to remain largely driven by individuals below the age of twenty two. Their optimism, curiosity and willingness to imagine possibilities beyond convention give the institution a sense of authenticity that cannot be manufactured. What they lack in experience they often compensate for with sincerity of purpose and a willingness to attempt the impossible.

Yet this renaissance must be guided by deeper reflection.

In a world increasingly shaped by algorithms, rapid information and narratives wars, young leaders must also cultivate intellectual humility, empathy and a sense of responsibility toward society. Progress without values can easily become noise. True leadership requires the ability to listen, to question and to seek solutions that serve not merely personal ambition but collective well-being.

India's civilisational wisdom offers an important compass in this regard. Our traditions of dialogue, from purva paksha to philosophical debate, remind us that disagreement need not create division. In a world searching for balance, India's ethos of coexistence, inquiry and reflection offers an alternative imagination for global leadership.

My hope for this magazine is that it becomes more than a publication. I hope it becomes a space where young voices engage with ideas, where curiosity is encouraged and where the next generation of leaders learns to think deeply about the world they are shaping.

If the past fifteen years have taught me anything, it is that movements grow not through institutions alone, but through people who believe that the future can be better than the present. And nowhere is that belief more alive than in the minds of young people.

Rishabh Shah

Founder, India's International Movement to Unite Nations (I.I.M.U.N.)



FROM
THE
SCENE
ITSELF

INTERVIEW WITH SHRI KAILASH SATYARTHI

-INTERVIEW BY BRIJESH JOSHI

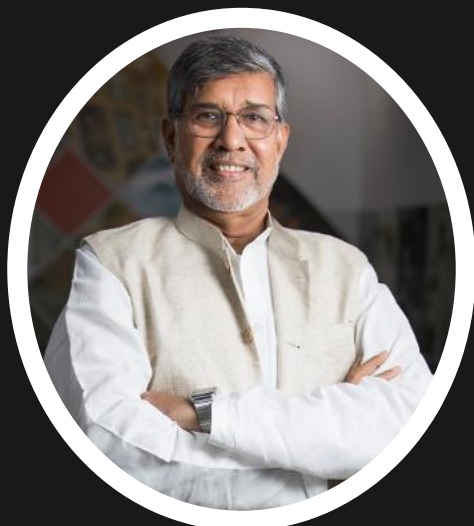
Q: Sir, your journey began with a simple childhood question about inequality—how can young people today turn such moments of awareness into a lifelong commitment to justice?

As a child growing up in the small town of Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh, India, I encountered a moment that would shape the course of my life. On my very first day of school, I noticed a boy my own age sitting outside the gates, polishing shoes instead of entering the classroom. The question that arose in my mind, “Why is he not in school like me?” was met with complacency and indifference by the adults around me.

I often reflect that this was not just a passing curiosity; it was morally disturbing. That unanswered question stayed with me, deepened over time, and eventually transformed into a lifelong commitment to ending child labour and ensuring every child’s right to education.

For young people today, I draw a clear lesson: moments of discomfort are not interruptions - they are invitations. The instinct is often to move on, to accept inequality as “normal.” But real change begins when one refuses to normalise injustice.

I believe that commitment to justice is not born out of grand decisions, but from consistently choosing to engage with these questions, thinking about them, speaking about them, and acting on them in whatever way possible. Over time, this quiet persistence evolves into purpose.



Mr. Kailash Satyarthi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for his decades-long struggle against child slavery, trafficking, and exploitation, and for advancing every child’s right to freedom, dignity, safety, and education. Over more than four decades, movements led by him have contributed to the rescue of over 135,000 children from exploitation and helped shape major global frameworks on child rights, education, and ethical labour practices. Through initiatives such as Bachpan Bachao Andolan™ and the Global March Against Child Labour, he has inspired young people, governments, and civil society across the world to stand up for justice and human dignity.

Today, Mr. Satyarthi’s work has expanded into addressing a deeper crisis facing humanity itself. Through the Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion (SMGC), he is advancing a global vision that places Compassion at the centre of leadership, governance, education, business, and social transformation. He defines compassion as the force born from feeling the suffering of others as one’s own, that drives mindful action to end that suffering. In his latest book, *Karuna – The Power of Compassion*, this understanding is reflected in the Satyarthi Compassion Quotient™ (SCQ), a framework built on the pillars of Awareness, Connectedness, Feeling, and Action.

Q: The idea of a Youth Renaissance celebrates empowered youth, yet millions of children remain deprived—how can we redefine this renaissance to make it truly inclusive?

I caution that what is often described as a Youth Renaissance carries a quiet danger — the danger of exclusion. While the rise of young leaders, innovators, and changemakers is celebrated, I urge us to ask a more fundamental question: which youth are truly being represented in this narrative?

Drawing from my experiences across villages, factories, conflict zones, and marginalised communities, I have observed two contrasting realities. In one, young people are accessing education, opportunity, and leadership. In the other, millions remain trapped in child labour, denied schooling, and constrained by poverty, conflict, displacement, and systemic injustice. A meaningful renaissance cannot be built on selective progress; it must be judged by its ability to reach those who have historically been left behind.

This is precisely why initiatives such as the Satyarthi Summer School and The Satyarthi Fellowship are important. The Satyarthi Summer School brings together young leaders from across countries, cultures, and disciplines for immersive engagement with grassroots realities, systems thinking, and Compassionate Action. It challenges privileged understandings of leadership by exposing youth directly to lived experiences of inequality, child labour, exclusion, and resilience. Similarly, The Satyarthi Fellowship seeks to nurture a new generation of compassionate leaders across fields such as law, technology, education, business, governance, and healthcare, equipping them not merely to succeed individually, but to drive systemic transformation rooted in justice, equality, peace, and sustainability. These initiatives recognise that the future cannot be shaped only in boardrooms or elite institutions; it must also be shaped in communities that have historically remained unheard and unseen.

I therefore call for confronting difficult but necessary questions: Is the last child free? Is every family able to live with dignity? Are the most marginalized included in our vision of progress? If not, what we term a renaissance remains incomplete.

Q: Having rescued over 100,000 children, how do you reconcile the contrast between global youth empowerment narratives and the harsh realities many children still face?

I do not view this as a contradiction to be reconciled, but as a truth that must be confronted with honesty and urgency.

Over the years, having witnessed the liberation of more than 135,000 children from slavery, trafficking, and exploitation, I have also seen something deeper—the persistence of systems that continue to produce vulnerability. For every child rescued, many more remain unseen—not only children, but entire families and communities living at the margins, excluded from protection, opportunity, and voice.

I observe that global narratives of youth empowerment often emerge from spaces of visibility — institutions, platforms, and policy circles; while the lived realities of the most marginalised rarely enter these spaces. The child working in a remote field, the adolescent migrant navigating an unfamiliar city, the displaced family without identity or access to services; these realities do not contradict dominant narratives; they reveal their incompleteness.

I caution against measuring success in isolation. Progress that does not reach the most excluded remains fragile and unfinished. The real task is to ensure that empowerment is extended deliberately and systematically to those who have long remained outside its reach.

Only then can we speak of progress with true integrity.

Q: Leaving a stable engineering career for activism takes courage—how can students balance financial security with the pursuit of meaningful social impact?

Before becoming a full-time activist, I was trained as an electrical engineer and had a stable professional path ahead of me. My decision to leave that path was not impulsive, but deeply rooted in a growing conviction that I could not ignore the injustice I had witnessed since childhood.

I do not see this as a simple choice between security and purpose. Instead, I frame it as a question of alignment: does your work reflect your values?

I often advise young people to avoid false binaries. Financial stability is important, but it should not come at the cost of one's conscience. Meaningful impact does not always require abandoning conventional careers rather it requires integrating purpose into whatever path one chooses.

Q: Through campaigns like 100 Million for 100 Million, what makes youth uniquely powerful in driving large-scale social change, and how can they maximise this potential?

I believe that youth derive their power not merely from their numbers, but from their capacity to feel and to act. I have consistently observed that when young people truly connect with the suffering of others, they do not remain passive - they become problem-solvers.

For me, the story of the hummingbird is not just a metaphor, but a reflection of a deeper truth: every small act, when driven by compassion, holds the potential for transformation. Compassion is not a feeling alone, it is action, responsibility, and courage.

What makes youth uniquely powerful, I believe, is their ability to convert compassion into collective action. When they move from individual concern to shared responsibility; by organising, collaborating, and sustaining their efforts, they begin to address not only immediate issues but also the systemic roots of injustice.

To fully realise this potential, I emphasise the need to nurture this inner force of compassion and channel it into consistent, collective action so that small, individual efforts can grow into a force capable of transforming even the most entrenched challenges.

Q: What key skills should students consciously develop today to effectively contribute to fields like human rights, public policy, and grassroots activism?

I emphasise that students must first cultivate the ability to feel, to genuinely connect with the suffering and realities of others. Without this, knowledge and skills risk becoming detached from purpose. For me, compassion is not merely an emotion, but a force that compels individuals to act and solve problems.

I further underscore the importance of developing a problem-solving mindset. Meaningful change requires an understanding of root causes social, economic, and political and a commitment to practical, sustained solutions rather than short-term responses. When compassion is translated into action, it becomes mindful and strategic problem-solving.

I also highlight the necessity of collective action. No individual, however committed, can transform systems alone. Students must learn to organise, collaborate across differences, and build inclusive and resilient movements.

Finally, I stress the importance of moral courage, the willingness to question injustice, to persist despite resistance, and to stand with the most marginalized, even when it is difficult.

These are not merely skills, but enduring commitments - ones that shape us not only to understand the world, but to transform it.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. SANJAYA BARU

-INTERVIEW BY BRIJESH JOSHI

Q: How does the intersection of economic systems and human history define modern power, and how has this synergy shaped your own development?

I don't know what kind of combinations universities are offering these days. When I was a student, in my undergraduate program, I took economics and politics. Those are the two subjects. And, I had an interest in both economics and politics. But in those days, you could also do economics only with mathematics, economics and statistics. Now, in India, different institutions offer different combinations, but they tend to be a bit rigid. For example, I know young people in the US who have taken combinations like robotics, law, and philosophy. You cannot imagine in India that kind of a combination between computer science and philosophy. So, the American system has been very flexible in allowing you to take courses across disciplines. Now, given the constraint that we have in India, that these programs are quite rigid—social sciences or humanities or physical sciences, etc.—I think one way of dealing with it is to do the course in the subject of your interest, but at the same time, take interest in other courses which you may not be writing an exam, but, you attend lectures, you read books. In fact, we used to do that. When I was an M.A. student in economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, I used to attend lectures in the history department and the political science department. Though I was doing my M.A. in economics, I used to just attend those classes and listen to the lectures because of my interest in history and politics. And the lecturers would suggest some books and try to read some books. That doesn't mean you write an exam or get a degree; your degree will only be in economics. But these are ways in which students try to widen their horizon, take an interest in it. It can be literature, it can be poetry, it can be science, it can be anything. These days, new fields are developing, like artificial intelligence. So, you could do a course in one area but actually have the opportunity, if you're in a good institution, to listen to lectures in other areas.



Sanjaya Baru is a political commentator and policy analyst. He served as Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) until his resignation in April 2018. Before this, he was Director for Geo-Economics and Strategy at the International Institute of Strategic Studies. He was Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Chief media advisor and chief spokesperson (PMO) from May 2004 until August 2008. He has been Editor, Business Standard and The Financial Express; Editorial Page Editor, The Times of India and Associate Editor, The Economic Times. He has written many books, the most famous of which is his tell-all memoir "The Accidental Prime Minister".

Q: How can we overcome bureaucratic rigidity to redefine education as a lifelong skill for acquiring knowledge rather than just a means to passing exams?

Exactly, because a lot of institutions, colleges, and universities will try to resist this. They're very bureaucratic in their approach to education in our country. You need a much more liberal attitude because education is not just about writing an exam. *Education is about learning and not learning a subject, but learning how to acquire knowledge.* It's basically a training in understanding how you acquire knowledge. You read books, you read newspapers, you watch movies. There are different ways in which you can acquire knowledge. And then you decide what interests you. But since all of us require a degree at the end of the day, we have to end up writing an exam and getting a qualification, getting good marks, etc. But that is not the end of education. *Education is a never-ending process.*

Q: Why is the practical functioning of the state kept hidden from Indian youth beyond basic textbooks, and who gains the most from this widespread civic illiteracy?

I think the bureaucracy benefits the most. The bureaucracy tends to be very, very secretive. And it's a new caste system that, unless you get into the government, you don't get the privileges of understanding how government works. We have actually become increasingly non-transparent in the way our governments function. I think about 30 years ago, I went to Sweden for a conference. I was walking on the road, and suddenly, in front of me, I found the Swedish parliament. So I wanted to see the building. I went to the entrance, and there was a security guard there, and I asked him whether I could enter. He said of course, you can enter. You're free to go. I was a tourist. And I freely entered the Swedish parliament. And then I discovered that I could actually enter the hall where the parliament session was happening. And I just walked into the visitor section, sat there, and watched the Swedish parliament proceeding. In India, we have made access to governmental institutions increasingly difficult. Partly because of security reasons. When I began as a journalist in 1991, we could enter any government office in Delhi without a security pass, without anything on earth. We just say I'm from the media, and I could just walk in. And, of course, you needed an appointment with an officer to meet him, but anybody you wanted to meet would meet you. So there was a certain element of ease of access as well as a willingness on the part of those in government to talk to us in the media. Today, it's become virtually impossible. Entering even the parliament has become difficult for journalists. And entering government offices is almost impossible. So we have increasingly become a more and more secretive state, which is not accessible to the ordinary citizen. And, to some extent, the media is still able to get some access, but even the media is not able to get the kind of access that we used to get 20-30 years ago. This is really a concerning point, for a country which is known as the largest democracy in the world, and people making it into a secretive part.

That is why the Manmohan Singh government brought in the Right to Information. But Right to Information also requires a certain amount of knowledge on how to apply, how to submit a question, and how to get information. And now that the Right to Information is being diluted. But I think there is a need in a democracy for people to understand what the process is. Let's say I apply for an Aadhaar card. Can the person sitting on the other side of the table say no? Or does he have the right to refuse to give me? What are my rights? Can I demand information? If I go to a municipality and take my bill for water or electricity and ask them why this amount is this much, is the other person there willing to answer? Or will he say it's not my job to explain to you, get away. So that kind of transparency in the day-to-day functioning of government is not enough in our country.

Q: What is the most dangerous illusion about power that young Indians must unlearn to engage with the system honestly?

I think the most important thing we need to understand about power is that it is transitory. Meaning somebody has power today, he may not have it tomorrow. That these are all people, birds of passage. They come in, they go out. You may be an MLA, you may be an MP, you may be a minister, you may be the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister, the Secretary to the government, whatever it is. You are there today, you are not going to be there tomorrow. A citizen should understand that there are citizens' rights and that they are not the only heroes in our society. Our heroes range from the teacher in my classroom to a favourite singer, my favourite classical singer, or my favourite actor. These are all our heroes. And people in government are not our heroes. We learn from philosophers, scientists, teachers, and artists. They are our heroes when we are young. The government is there in order to take certain decisions and run the system. But the government cannot become our hero. But unfortunately, what is happening in India, particularly in the media, since I'm from the media, I can say that we are making heroes out of non-heroes. The local MLA is not a hero. The principal of your local school should be the hero because he's teaching something, and you're learning something. But we have now made politicians into heroes. And every day you open any newspaper, half the news is about politics. Why? 'What is this fellow saying about that fellow? What is that fellow saying about this fellow?' All this is completely irrelevant as far as my day-to-day life is concerned. So I think there is a need for us to question the way in which we are projecting power and exercising power. Because ultimately, at the end of the day, power is transitory. Somebody is influencing today, exercising power; tomorrow, he may not be exercising power. Now, who are the people who exercise power over a long lifetime? It is intellectuals, scientists, and philosophers, because their ideas live after them. Somebody who's a minister today in government, the minute he goes, he's no longer relevant. Nobody even bothers. But if you have a distinguished scientist writing something, people read, and whatever they read is there, even if the person is retired or dead, his intellectual output is still there for society to benefit from.

Q: Does the state's role in hero-worshipping political power prevent us from seeing scientists and professionals as the true heroes of our society?

We are essentially a feudal society. Our mindset is still shaped by feudal values, which is that anybody who's in power, who's above you, you bow your head to that person. In Hindi, they say, 'Maibaap ka sarkar,' that the state is your father and mother, and you have to respect the state. I started working in 1980, and we are now in 2026. So in these 46 years, I only worked in government for four years. The rest of my life has been in academia, in a university, and then in the media. Now, for a brief period, I was Secretary General of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), and all the letters that we were writing from the FICCI as an organisation to all the ministers in the government, they would all say 'Honourable Minister'. And whenever somebody came, we'd address them as 'Honourable Minister'. Even now, you see a lot of people referring to 'Honourable Minister', 'Honourable Prime Minister'. So I asked my colleagues, I said, " Look, you don't call a professor 'Honourable Professor'. You don't call a scientist 'Honourable Scientist'. You don't call an economist 'Honourable Economist'. You don't call a teacher 'Honourable Teacher'. Why are you calling a minister 'Honourable Minister'? Why do we put the prefix 'Honourable' only for people in political power? Why are we not treating other, you know, professionals with equal respect? That is because in our mindset, we don't value whether it's a scientist or a teacher or a professor or a painter or an artist; we don't value them as much as we think we value people in government and who exercise power. It's a very feudal mindset. So I passed an order in my organisation saying you remove the word 'Honourable'. And if I write a letter to any minister, I will write it as 'Dear Minister'. That's it. No 'Honourable'. But all the businessmen who are members of FICCI objected. They said, 'Oh, the ministers will get angry with us, and we have work to do with them. We, you know, we can't do this!' And they objected to this. So that is the kind of society we have become, where we are bending, bending, bending all the time to people in power, instead of asking the question, why are we bending to those people who are today in power and tomorrow will not be in power?

Q: In India, the power elite reproduce themselves across generations. So has this digital access and social media meaningfully disrupted this elite network, or merely changed the language through which entry is negotiated?

It has certainly changed the language through which entry is negotiated. But I think at the end of the day, when we say elite, there are different types of elite. In fact, in my book *Power Elite*, I have analysed different types of elite. After all, political power is one form of power, so you have a political elite. You have a bureaucratic elite. You have an intellectual elite. You have a cultural elite. So there are different forms that elites come in different sectors of society, and they are regarded as elites because the rest of society kind of looks up to them or recognises that they have some status. Now, with social media, what has happened, particularly with mobile phones becoming so cheap that almost a crore of Indians now have a mobile phone in their hand, you have access to social media. And therefore, ordinary people feel empowered that they can say what they like and feel empowered by just being able to say what they like. The anonymity of social media allows you to say things without fear. If you're, let's say, a worker in a household, and you are angry with your Malik, you're not going to say nasty things to your Malik because he will dismiss you. But if you can put on social media without naming anybody and say what you like, nobody will know who you are, nobody will know whom you're against, but at least you get it out of your system. So in fact, social media is like the valve of a pressure cooker; when social pressure builds up, it escapes through social media. But it does not change the basic relationship. It does not make the poor any less poor. It does not make the poor any more powerful simply because you've got a phone and you've got access to Twitter, and you can say what you like on that. It doesn't change the power equations. The power equations ultimately are determined, as I've said in my book, and many people have written, either by the economic conditions—wealth, income, property—or political power, which is also a form of capital, or intellectual power. I have a PhD. You don't have a PhD I know more than you. So, automatically, qualifications give you power. Similarly, money gives you power; a political office or a governmental office gives you power and authority. If you're a policeman, you have power as long as you're wearing your uniform, and you exercise power over others. So there are different forms of power taken. And that basic relationship does not change merely because there is social media, where you have entry into a wider social kind of discourse, where you know what others are saying, you can say what you feel, but that doesn't change the position.

Q: In today's youth, many youngsters want to change the system. Whatever the system is currently doing, whether it's the BJP NDA government or the INDIA Alliance, people want to change that. So, from your experience, is reform in India more effective within the institution or through sustained pressure from outside? And if you have to choose one today, which matters more? Within the government or the pressure that we create outside?

I think the important thing to understand is that the change that happens within the government does not happen easily without pressure from outside. Pressure from outside actually plays an important role in moving governments. It forces governments to respond. If that pressure from outside is not there, then there is basic inertia in any bureaucracy. In any bureaucracy, the rule is: if things are going all right, don't change anything. That's the basic rule of any organisation. Not just the government, but also the private sector. If you're making money by selling something that is second-rate, why make it first-rate? Because you're making your money, right? So even if a company is not forced to improve the quality of the product, if it is making enough money by selling a low-quality product, it will not improve the quality of the product. But the minute there is customer pressure, market pressure, a competitor comes, or customers say we are not going to buy this product because it was not good, then the company is forced to improve the quality of the product. The same law operates in government. If there's an opposition party or a student movement or any other movement, social movement, they have the same effect of ensuring that those who are in government are forced to improve governance, are forced to respond to the demands of the people. So I think it's very important in a free society, in a democracy, that you need to have these social movements, whether it's a student's movement or a farmer's movement or a worker's movement or all these social civil society activities.

Civil society plays an important role as a check on the state. Because in a democracy, freedom is not only about election day, but also the right to vote. It's not the once in five years you have the right to vote, and then after that you have no other right. No, every day you have a right to demand better governance from my government. But how do I ensure it? One way of ensuring it is to have an MLA, an MP, or a Sarpanch, whoever is receptive to you. But if you feel they are not receptive, then how do you make them receptive? It's only through mobilisation of sections of society, whether they are students or housewives, or workers or farmers. These are all important sections of society that can mobilise themselves and demand better governance.

Q: How does P.V. Narasimha Rao's quiet, substantive leadership challenge the modern preference for theatrical politics, and what does India lose when we forget the reformers who work behind the scenes?

The simple point I make is the Indian economy performed much better between 1991 and 2011, those 20 years, under three coalition governments. You had the coalition government of Narasimha Rao, the coalition government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the coalition government of Manmohan Singh. And during this period, of course, in between, you had briefly again two coalition governments of Deve Gowda and Gujral, but they were only for one year. But these two entire decades from 1991 to 2011 were the best-performing years of the Indian economy. Poverty rates came down, employment went up, our foreign exchange reserves went up, our share of world exports went up, we became a more competitive economy, and employment went up. So it was a period of great success. Before that, when you had a powerful Prime Minister like Indira Gandhi or even Rajiv Gandhi, who had 400 MPs in parliament, the economy didn't do that well. And after Manmohan Singh, when again you have a powerful Prime Minister, the economy is not doing that well. So what is the lesson I draw from this experience? You take Indira Gandhi on one side, Narendra Modi on one side, and in between these three gentlemen, Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee, and Manmohan. The lesson is that the style of coalition politics, consensual politics, where you're forced to take everybody along. You cannot say, 'My way is the highway.' You cannot say, 'I will tell what to do, and everybody should do what I tell you to do.' That was not the style. Their style was to take everybody along. Narasimha Rao had to work with people who did not like to work with him, like Arjun Singh, who never liked Narasimha Rao. Sharad Pawar always wanted to succeed Narasimha Rao. He had other senior members in the government who were very difficult. Similarly, Mr Vajpayee had to deal with someone like Mr Advani, who was always hoping to replace him. And then you had other difficult colleagues like Sushma Swaraj and so on. But he succeeded because he reached out to everybody. And again, it's the same with Manmohan Singh. He had to work with the left parties, he had to work with Mulayam Singh, he had to work with people in his own party who did not like him, like Pranab Mukherjee, who wanted to become Prime Minister. So when you are forced to work with different people, you become a more consensual political leader, which means you try and take everybody along, which in a democracy gives you more success than simply an authoritarian rule where you say, 'I am the boss, I have all the power in me, and I will order you and you do what I tell you to do.' That has not worked in India. It didn't work with Indira Gandhi; it is not working with Narendra Modi.

Q: When we look today, emphasis is on Atmanirbhar Bharat. Where do you see strategic self-reliance done right, and where do you worry India may be slipping back into old economic anxiety under a new slogan?

I think we are still not a developed economy. Our per capita income is 3,000 dollars per year. China's per capita income is 17,000 dollars. America's per capita income is 90,000 dollars. Look at where they are, look at where we are. We are still a developing country. We need to have some protection for our economy for it to grow. This is what Jawaharlal Nehru viewed in the 50s, and this is now again the view of the current government. Now, you can decide that the entire economy does not require protection, but some sectors require protection. So we have these production-linked incentives, and there are policies that encourage some industries. But I think the difference between the Indian model and the model that we have seen in China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia is that, in all those countries, people were forced to export so that they had to become competitive. All the companies got protection, but were told that within 10 years, they should start selling internationally. That pressure to make them internationally competitive made their economies competitive. Unfortunately, in our country, we have not put enough pressure on Indian businesses to become globally competitive. There are very few companies, like for example Reliance Industries, whose petrochemical business is very competitive, globally competitive, but there are very few Indian companies that are really globally competitive and very few that have global brands. So, I'm all in favour of giving some protection to the Indian industry, but at the same time, I think it's important to put pressure on them to scale up, to sell internationally, and if they fail, they should be forced to shut down. You cannot go on protecting companies that are failing to sell outside. If you're not in a position to sell even in your own neighbourhood, then you have no right to exist, and the company should be asked to shut down.

Q: If a young reader were to approach your books not as political commentary but as a guide to civic adulthood, what single habit of thinking would you most hope they develop before seeking to change the system?

I think first of all, it's important to understand the system to be able to change the system. That's one. But second, it's important to ask questions. Whatever you confront, even about my own books. If you're reading my book, question me. Ask questions. Challenge people who are saying whatever they are saying, whether it's your teacher, whether it's your minister, whoever it is. So that ability to question is the starting point of securing learning. And I think it's very important if my books encourage readers to question things. For example, my latest book, which is called Secession of the Successful. I wrote that book because I found that in the last 20 years, as a country, we have begun to accept that it is quite normal for Indians to leave India. Millions of Indians are leaving India; they're going to America, England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Dubai, Singapore, all over the world. And we said, 'Han yeh toh hota hai.' We are accepting it as normal that people are leaving. And especially, I come from South India, in South India, it's even more—in Bangalore, Hyderabad, etc., more and more people are leaving. And nobody in the last few years has been questioning this. In fact, our political leadership, when they go abroad, are so happy to meet Indians overseas. 'Oh, Indians are doing so well,' you know, 'all over the world.' I ask the question: Why are Indians doing so well outside? Why are they not doing so well inside? So, I wrote this book because the question that I had in my mind was: why are Indians leaving? When the data is showing that more and more and more and more Indians are leaving India, why is nobody asking, why are we simply saying 'great, great, you're getting jobs, so many Indians are CEOs of American multinationals,' 'Oh, they're all doing so well overseas.' Why are we not asking why it is that the same people cannot deliver in India? Why are so many people leaving? So that 'why' question is the starting point of securing knowledge. And I think all of us should be asking 'why' all the time to be able to understand what is happening around us. In physics, also, when Newton saw an apple fall, he said why did the apple fall? So it becomes the 'why' question that science begins. And even in social sciences, it's the 'why' question that is important.

Q: Manmohan Singh was always said to be a silent Prime Minister. You also mentioned in your book, 'The Accidental Prime Minister'. And today we have a Prime Minister who is louder and bolder. So what is the difference that you saw in both of them, and who is much better?

First of all, I don't call Manmohan Singh a silent Prime Minister in my book. That is what people were calling him in the second half of the second term. My book is on the first term, UPA 1, not about UPA 2. But if you see Dr Singh's tenure from 2004 till 2012, which is eight years, he was not a silent Prime Minister. He was addressing press conferences and travelling around the country. Actually, in the period I was working with him, I made sure that he addressed a press conference in every single capital of the country, every single state capital across the country. Including in Port Blair. From Srinagar in Kashmir to Port Blair in Andaman, Manmohan Singh addressed a press conference in every single state capital, and I would call the entire local media in each state. And then in Delhi, we had the national press conference. So he was a very, very communicative Prime Minister, especially in his first term. Even in his second term, initially, he was. Then he became silent. And the reasons for that are: one, I think in his second term, he did not have the same freedom that he had in his first term. Secondly, all the crises—the 2G scandal, Pakistan relations, etc.—all became controversial issues where he did not get enough support from his own party, which is what I've been saying, which is why they didn't like my book when I published it. I make the point in my book that in 2009, Manmohan Singh was the architect of the victory of the UPA. He's the only Prime Minister who came back to power after a full five-year term for another five years, after Jawaharlal Nehru. Even Indira Gandhi had a shorter term, came back to power, then lost power, and then came back again. But Nehru was the only Prime Minister who had a full five-year term after a full five-year term. And after him it was Manmohan Singh. So why did he get that five-year term in 2009? It was because people were happy with his performance in the UPA 1. But what was his biggest mistake? He did not contest for the Lok Sabha. And I think that is the reason why his second term became a failure. Now, compared to him, I think Prime Minister Modi, I don't like his style. First of all, I don't see any reason why he does not communicate with the media. After all, he has an unquestionable majority in parliament from day one, from 2014. And even though in 2024 he lost the majority, he has been able to keep allies with himself, and therefore they are in power. So there is no threat to his power. Then why is he scared of the media? Why does he not meet journalists freely, not just journalists who will ask him, 'What did you eat for breakfast?', 'What did you do to relax?' Those sorts of stupid questions that they ask in these interviews are not serious questions. So why does he not meet serious journalists and answer serious questions convincingly? I think he should do that. I don't understand why not, because he has had very successful two election victories and a third one, not that successful, but still, he's the Prime Minister. So I think his style is something that I don't approve of. I think in a democracy, the leaders have to be answerable to the people. And the fact that you're not willing to be answerable and you think just because you have numbers in parliament you can do what you like, you can say what you like, I don't think this is good for the country.

INTERVIEW WITH JUSTICE V RAMASUBRAMANIAN

-INTERVIEW BY ANANDI BELAGALI

Q: We are living in a time where the language of national interest often competes with individual interest, so as the chairperson of NHRC, where do you see the balance tilting today?

The problem is this. In a pendulum, if you take the pendulum to one extreme, it will naturally go to the other extreme before it comes to the centre place, so what happened was, for thousands of years, culturally our society prioritised societal interest more than individual interest. Now the pendulum has come to the other extreme, so they think that individual interest is more important than societal interest. They don't put it that way; they say that individual interest can't be subjugated to communal interest because what is communal interest becomes a debatable point. Suppose there is a water problem it is not difficult to identify a communal interest because everyone should get water, but suppose there is a linguistic problem communal interest doesn't denote the language spoken by all it is possible to leave a few countries where there is only 1 language but in a country like India, India has a population of 1.4 billion and the country occupies the landmass of 2.4% of earth surface we have people practicing and professing 8 major religions reverbed, for instance at least half of them were borned here Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism then we have religions who have come from other parts of globe like Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam so there are competing interests then we have people who speak about 22 official languages and 1640 plus languages and dialects we have people who are divided by caste there are roughly 3800+ castes in India so in a diverse society such as this what is communal interest? What is the community's interest? That becomes a huge challenge, so academicians themselves, intellectuals themselves are divided based upon this side of the spectrum as to whether it is the individual's right which should take priority or the community's interests which should take priority.



Justice V. Ramasubramanian is the incumbent and current chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of India and a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. He is a former chief justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court and a former judge of Madras High Court and Telangana High Court. Over the course of his Supreme Court tenure, Justice Ramasubramanian wrote 102 judgments. Justice Ramasubramanian was a member of benches that heard arguments concerning the 2016 Demonetization policy and the validity of circumstantial evidence in bribery cases.

Q: Young citizens like us today take to the streets, the state invokes law and order, where, in your view, legitimate dissent ends, and disruption to the country's law and order procedure begins.

What happens is if people stop with recording dissent or if people go a little more in propagating what they think is appropriate, there is no problem. When they start mobilising, it becomes a problem. Because when you mobilise people under the banner of a particular ideology or a particular principle, you have now no control over the people whom you mobilise. When you have no control over people whom you mobilise, there is a possibility for disruption. Therefore, unfortunately, today we don't have a person like Mahatma Gandhi. The moment he called for Satyagraha, and then in some parts of the country, violence broke out, he withdrew the call for Satyagraha. He was in a position to withdraw the call for Satyagraha, and the society at that time was in a position to listen to him. Today we don't have a person like Mahatma Gandhi who can withdraw and a population like those days who will obey the orders of the leader.

Q: Despite constitutional guarantees, we can see that today, custodial deaths and prison overcrowding remain a recurring concern. Do you think that this structural safeguard repeatedly fails in our country, and how can the youth come to counter this and bring a change?

To tell you precisely, let us get into some statistics. Under the mandate of the NHRC, all custodial death cases should be reported within 34 hours to the NHRC. I am happy to tell you that this mandate is followed by all jail authorities and police authorities 100% today. They may say that the death was natural, but they don't fail to report. So there are two aspects, one reporting a custodial death, and the second investigating into the cause. We have succeeded in making all state authorities 100% compliant on the question of reporting. Today, NHRC is receiving about 2100 and odd informations about custodial deaths from prison authorities and police authorities; these deaths may not necessarily be a result of custodial violence. Take, for instance, a person aged about 82 years suffering from chronic liver disease dying in prison; his death is also reported to us. What we do is we have an investigation division which independently investigates into the cause of death, and if we find a human rights violation, we direct the respective state governments to take disciplinary action, criminal action against the officers responsible and also award compensation to the victim's family. On the question of how to improve the situation, that is one of the most difficult questions; it is like all parents are able to enforce discipline upon all the children at home, because 24-hour monitoring is not possible. Today, can your parents see what you do on your mobile phone? They can't see what you do in your college, what you do in your hostel. Only after you commit a restricted mistake, it come to light. So, the law enforcement mechanism is also like our parents; they don't suspect us, so only when we get caught, they discipline us. Unfortunately, the value system in society is falling very fast. We have never heard about 50-60 years ago a mother killing a son or a son killing a mother. Today, we are hearing about it. Do you think any police or any state can prevent this from happening? It's not possible, same page, it is not possible to make all citizens to comply with the rule of law, that is the reason, enforcement to a great extent is not happening 100%.

Q: In today's world the government has an unprecedented technological capacity. Are the frameworks equipped for invisible forms of control by the state?

In fact, there is a fundamental flaw in your question. The flaw is this. You have started with the presumption that it is the state which controls your data. It is not the state. It is the private players like WhatsApp, Google, Facebook, Twitter, X, who control your data. Whenever they want, they pass it on to the government. Whenever they don't want to, they take an umbrella under their right, fundamental right, freedoms. So the data is controlled, misused, marketed, and profited by big tech giants. Not by the state, primarily. This is also because of the people's failure. I will ask you a simple question. Suppose you are asked to submit a thesis on a particular topic. Now tell me what you do? Do you go to a library? You just Google the topic, you just type the topic on the Google free page, and some results are thrown. When those results are thrown, the first thing that happens is that your interest in a particular field is made known to Google. They exploit that information to send you advertisements on the same thing. Suppose you want to know if there is a good formal footwear shop nearby, you Google it. Immediately, you get a lot of advertisements. Has the state government or the central government done that? No. It is Google which does that. It is because you make your interest known to them by attempting to make use of their services. That is why the first lesson to be taught to youngsters is that *whenever somebody is offering you a service free of cost, you must know that somebody is offering you free of cost to somebody else*. We don't realise that. This is a first-stage problem. Second stage problem, I will tell you. Okay, you want to do a research on artificial intelligence. You type artificial intelligence in Google. It throws up a lot of results. Some of the results are in the form of research articles, which are accessible only to subscribers and published in journals. What do you do? Either we catch hold of a friend who has subscribed and get it free of cost. So the common man has no qualms about stealing somebody's data. Therefore, tech giants have no qualms about stealing your data. This is a reflection of the fall in ethical values. How many of us have copied whatever other people have said to score marks or advance our own careers? Is it ethically right? There was a case before the Delhi High Court filed by Oxford University Press, taking objection to the students taking xerox copies of the books published by Oxford University Press. If you buy the book published by Oxford University Press, you pay for the services rendered by them. But if out of one book you take 50 copies by xerox machine, are you doing the right thing ethically or the wrong thing? So, as a society, we have started compromising on our values. Why do you show or why do you share your data on Google, Facebook, or X? Why do you do that? Because we want something, we want to enjoy something free of cost, we don't mind sharing. They ask you for your email ID. You share it. Because you want something free of cost. If you are determined not to take anything free of cost, nobody will be able to steal your data. What we want is no, no, no, I should be allowed, but he should not be allowed.

Q: The "One World" concept relies heavily on interconnected democracies and shared values; how does legal literacy globally strengthen democratic resilience?

Literacy in general is one thing, and legal literacy is another thing. Unless people have literacy in general, it is not possible to have legal literacy. So first of all, the level of literacy in the country should go up. That is the reason why, in Mohini Jain's case, the Supreme Court wanted the right to free education to be a fundamental right. Therefore, Article 21A came, and subsequently, an act was enacted. It is like whether the chicken came out first or the egg came out first. Because, to know of their legal rights, people should have education. But the right to education itself is a right. How do people know about the right to education unless they are literate? So I mean, things are not as easy as they appear to be. Legal literacy is very important for people to know what kind of system they are living in. There are a variety of democracies in the world. You know the presidential form of government, the parliamentary system of government, the Westminster model is the model on which we are based. That is why the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, under which the National Human Rights Commission was established, has a mandate to have outreach programs to make more and more people become aware of their fundamental rights and human rights. So these constitutional rights or fundamental rights are a little different from human rights. Many people mix up constitutional rights, human rights, and fundamental rights. All human rights are not recognised as fundamental rights. All constitutional rights are not recognised as fundamental rights. For instance, there is a right to property under Article 300A. The Supreme Court has recognised this right to property as a constitutional right and a human right. But it is not a fundamental right. So, unless people understand such nuances, it is not possible to seek enforcement of their rights. Only when you know that you have a right, you will seek to enforce it. And somebody else will, you know, agree to comply with your right. Honour your right. That is why legal literacy is more important. *Equality can be achieved only in a society where everybody is able to freely enjoy their rights, and the concept of one world is based upon this equality.* Happiness, equality. For instance, the only motto, the only prayer that the Indians used to offer about 3000 years ago, 5000 years ago was "Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu." Loka means the whole world. Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu. Somebody gave a small twist. They said why do you talk about one world? There may be other worlds. Therefore, let us say "Samasta Loka Sukhino Bhavantu." Let all worlds enjoy peace, prosperity and happiness. How do you enjoy peace, prosperity and happiness? Only when the rights are affirmed and honoured.

Q: Marital rape continues to be a highly debated topic; given the difficulty of proof versus the violation of human rights, what are your views on this issue?

There are two questions. One is, is it today prohibited by law? If it is criminalised today, then the right is conferred. The enforcement of any right is based upon a guarantee given by something. Is there a guarantee given by what is the fight for? The fight is for criminalising marital rape. If it is already a human right, it can be enforced. They want it to be criminalised because there is no guarantee today. This is question number one, this is problem number one. Problem number two is, if the most fundamental unit of a society is the family, the argument is, should we have laws that will disintegrate families? In a country like India, the elderly people even today depend only upon their family members for support in their last days of life, therefore family constitutes the most fundamental and essential unit of society. If this family is disintegrated, who will take care of the people? Number one. Number two, in order to preserve the rights of women in matrimony, to ensure that the rights of women are not subjugated to the interests of merely family, several laws were enacted. Dowry Prohibition Act, Cruelty Section 498A IPC, all that came. Now, in a few judgments, the courts themselves have found that in some cases these laws are being misused. So now tell me, do we have one more law which can also be misused? How do you prove that it was a rape and not consensual? And who is to prove it? It is a word of mouth by one against the word of mouth by the other. How will you prove? What will you prove? So it's all. See, the problem is that high-sounding terminologies attract youngsters these days. We are so much attracted by the names, jargons, signboards without knowing what the core of the issue is. Therefore, unless a right is guaranteed by a municipal law or by an international law, the question of the enforcement of that right does not arise. Today, for instance, nobody can file a complaint of a human rights violation in NHRC, saying that my husband or wife subjected me to rape without my consent, my human rights are violated, please take action. I cannot take action. Because there is no law. Should there be a law is a larger question. In an Indian context, I don't know how far such a law can be really promulgated. I think the Delhi High Court gave a split verdict, and then it was transferred to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has not decided. The matter is sub judice.

Q: Is India's current legal system more rule-based or power-based?

In fact, when you talk about the legal system, the power structure is what rules every family, every institution, every society. Power need not necessarily flow from the higher to the lower or the superior to the inferior; it can flow in the reverse direction. I'll tell you what. If you ever had the experience of going and meeting any higher official in government, or even a judge, you always set an appointment with the secretary. You don't directly call the judge or the official for the appointment. So, what happens is, you ask for an appointment, and you can interact with people in power only by securing an appointment through their secretaries. Now, if you go by normal logic, power should flow from the officer to the secretary. But it is not so. My secretary decides, without my knowledge, to whom he'll give an appointment. Many times, I don't even come to know. In my office, one officer told me I have been trying to meet you, but your secretary tells me every time that you are busy. Now, is it my secretary having power, or I am wielding power? This is the situation. Once you understand this problem, you translate it, you enlarge it, to an institution. Take, for instance, you are asking whether the judiciary goes by power structure, see whether it is rural or urban. Power structures remain the same. I ultimately decide, sitting in the court as a judge, who wins the case. But when the case is listed, it is determined by the posting clerk in the section. He can indefinitely postpone the listing of the case without my knowledge until the lawyer comes and complains, or the client complains that the case is not being listed. So, all of you just see the visible power; you don't see the invisible power.

Q: We covered topics from custodial deaths to law, marital rape. One thing I feel that we need more of is youth participation. Since our magazine also carries the theme of 'Youth Renaissance'. How can the young people help in making all of these changes? Such bodies that are large bodies, like the Supreme Court, NHRC, all of them are very distant and not accessible for young people. It is very difficult for us to get access to these places and even bring up our problems. So what kind of reforms we, as young people or the government, must bring to have young people be more of a part of these solutions on how we can bring an end to so many problems that we are facing right now?

First of all, insofar as courts are concerned, yes, you may feel distance, but that is also not true to a great extent today because a lot of law students come and intern with a lot of judges. Law graduates come and clerk with a lot of judges. So today, law students have umpteen opportunities to work under different judges at different points of time as interns and then as clerks. I have found law students walking in my chambers in Chennai asking me to take them as interns for two months, etc. Without even asking their names, I have admitted many of them. So, the mindset that the institutions are distant is not correct; youth should remove that mindset. In fact, I'll tell you, one Osmania University law student walked into my chamber in Hyderabad and said, 'Sir, I want to intern'. I said 'join'. He was shocked because I didn't even ask his age. Today he is a lawyer, and he has published two books for which I have written forewords. So, access is available for the brave and the bold. *Access is not available for those who are not brave and bold. Even if you got to their doorsteps.* Now, as far as the NHRC is concerned, do you know that we have a dedicated website? If you have seen the website, you may know that every year, we conduct six online internship programmes and two offline internship programmes, one summer and one winter. Do you know that nearly 2000 students across the country apply for such internships every time? Since we have the capacity to take only about 80, we select people based on gender, regional representation, language, religion, etc., so that we become all-inclusive. So, if we can conduct six online and two offline programmes each year and train 80 people every time, this is the outreach that we have. Apart from these regular, structured programmes, we also allow students to come for one week or two weeks whenever they want to come and learn with us. So access is provided, just as youngsters access OTT platforms, OTT platforms don't come to you; you go to OTT platforms. So, you should come to NHRC, of course. Today, the problem is, I feel, that making everything readily available to youngsters online has become a deterrent for them to do hard work. During our days, we used to go to libraries, and to find out one paragraph relevant to us, we had to search through ten books. Now, Google does everything for us. So, the dedication, you have to churn a lot of curd to make one small cup of butter, but when the Amul butter is available, why should I take the trouble? That attitude should go away in youngsters; that is the only thing which will help them. *We have all forgotten that character is the foundation of everything in life. If the individual character is enhanced, the societal character, national character will go up. Come what may, I will suffer, but I will never compromise on my character or value system. This is something that should be spread among youngsters. If values fade, character fades, society will never progress; you can never improve on criminal rights. You'll need more and more police.*

INTERVIEW WITH GEETANJALI SHREE

-INTERVIEW BY KAVY JAIN

Q: Across novels like *Mai*, *Khali Jagah*, and *Tomb of Sand*, your writing returns repeatedly to inner lives rather than dramatic events. What draws you to quiet transformations over visible revolutions?

Quiet transformations, as opposed to visible revolutions, draw me because they are real. Revolutions are a myth. They are little more than manifestations of a range of changes that keep happening slowly and imperceptibly. Almost entirely subterraneously. In fact, even when these long-brewing subterranean changes erupt as revolutions, there is no rupture. Think of the French Revolution. It promised liberty, equality and fraternity. And produced the Reign of Terror, Emperor Napoleon, return of the Bourbons, Napoleon III. Liberty, equality and fraternity are still being realised. The French Revolution is paradigmatic.

I don't think my writing returns to inner lives. It is about inner lives. Events, dramatic or routine, are mere props. The real thing is the inner human experience.

Q: Many of your characters live at the edges of family, language, or history. Do you begin with marginality as a political choice, or does it emerge naturally from the stories you want to tell?

Marginality is innate to literature. Writers tell tales that are not obvious and loud and super visible. They pull centrestage stories simmering behind the wings, in the shadows, half forgotten, fully forgotten, taken for granted and therefore invisible even when visible. I don't have to make a conscious choice to do that.



Geetanjali Shree is a renowned Indian Hindi-language writer celebrated for her innovative storytelling and exploration of themes such as partition, identity, memory, and gender. She gained global recognition for her novel *Tomb of Sand* (*Ret Samadhi*), which won the International Booker Prize in 2022, making her the first Indian author to receive this prestigious honour. Among her other notable works are *Mai* and *Our City That Year*, which have established her as a leading voice in contemporary Indian literature.

Q: Silence, pauses, and what remains unsaid carry as much weight in your work as dialogue. How important is listening to people, memory, or language itself, in your writing process?

The unsaid is as integral a part of language and communication as is the said. It is a simplification to think everything needs to be said explicitly in words. In art and literature and indeed in human communication the unsaid or things like a gesture, a look, a form, are all various silent indicators making meaning. Communication and expression, particularly in the arts, has as its basic ideal the amalgamation of all arts in any art. Spoken, unspoken, dance/gesture, music/cadence/form/architecture, all these and more together create that artistic energy which enlivens expression.

Listening to people with their myriad articulations, excavating memory – individual as much as collective – to plumb the subterranean levels of consciousness, and language with its endless mystery, they are indeed the warp and weft of literature.

Q: You have written across genres and forms, resisting easy categorisation. For young readers trained to label and classify, what does literature lose when it is boxed too neatly?

All genres are forever changing forms. Defining them – setting their boundaries – may be a common academic pastime, even a need. But practitioners of those genres, certainly the more sensitive and creative among them, have no use for formal definitions. They charter their own paths, transcending existing boundaries, evolving new forms and devices. As for categorisation, every art aspires to be all arts. What a travesty would literature be if it stopped drawing upon music, dance, theatre, cinema, architecture, and so on? The whole thrust of literature is to open up and impel and excite you to explore further rather than to box neatly and effect closures.

Q: Your fiction often unsettles familiar ideas of home, without romanticising exile or belonging. What does it mean, today, to imagine home as something fluid rather than fixed?

Defamiliarization is endemic to literature. Indeed, to Art as such. It has a knack of looking for what lies behind the appearance of things. What lies behind is always very different from what appears on the surface. And more often than not very unsettling. If my fiction unsettles familiar ideas of home without romanticizing exile or belonging, it is so because the reality of exile and of belonging, too, is no less unsettling.

The home in today's world can only be fluid. One does not have to imagine it to be that.

Q: You have spent years writing outside the spotlight before wider recognition arrived. How should young writers think about patience, failure, and time in a culture obsessed with immediacy?

Yes, I did. And it was a very productive and fulfilling life.

Can this, or how can this, be done in a culture obsessed with immediacy? That's a tricky question. Diametrically opposite views are possible. My own view is that, whatever the demands and pressures of the outside, the life one chooses to live is primarily a function of one's intent. Of what one's idea of a life worth living is. Bhavabhuti, the great Sanskrit poet, not receiving the recognition he believed his work deserved, famously wrote: 'The Earth is vast and time limitless.' Gifts one is born with are never sufficient. There is little excellence without persistent practice, learning, honing, and readiness to keep going even in the absence of recognition.

Q: Indian-language literature is being read more widely than ever, yet often through translation. What responsibilities, creative or ethical, do writers and readers carry at this moment?

In this moment of expanding readership and increasing translations, the most urgent responsibility of both writers and readers is to resist the insidious lure and pressures of the Market. The more a writer is translated, and sells, the higher goes her stock. And there is a temptation to cater to what are believed to be international tastes and fashions. By the same token, rather than exercise their own discretion and decide what is worth what, readers are also swayed by the international buzz. Literature is thus doubly threatened by extra-literary factors.



INTERVIEW WITH DR. SHOVARANA NARAYAN

INTERVIEW BY KAVY JAIN AND NAMRATA GUNJKAR

Q: You sustained two demanding worlds – civil service and classical dance – without allowing one to eclipse the other. Looking back, was this balance a conscious philosophy or a practical negotiation? What structural choices enabled it?

Well, right since childhood, I've been in both fields. At the age of two and a half or three, I was introduced to dance, and I found that my life, my heart, my soul was in it. I could express myself best through dance, and I also loved my studies. So, I was also extremely ambitious in the way that I always do well in class. Therefore, since childhood, I was into both. Later on, I took up Physics. I was doing Physics Honours in BSc, MSc Physics, then I got the research fellowship from CSIR, I was doing my PhD in Physics, and then I went into Civil Service. So for me, it was a very natural transition because both were part of my life. It was like you just flip the coin; I'm that coin, this side or that side.

I'll tell you a small incident which struck me much later: I was about seven or eight years old in Bombay, studying for my exams, and I thought I was studying. My mother suddenly found me, closed my books, and said, "Get lost, I don't want to see you like this." I said, "But I've got my exams," and she said, "If you had your exams, what exams? Because your mind has been wandering." "You're sitting with your eyes open looking into the book, but your mind has been wandering, and if I were to ask you anything, you wouldn't be able to answer me." I think that day, that evening, sort of indirectly inculcated within me the fundamentals of time management: that you know, whatever you do, take it up, but do it well. Do it concentratedly, do it with dedication, do it with sincerity, honesty, and with depth—not skimming on the surface so it stayed with me throughout my life and till now I am like that



One of the most prominent Kathak dancers of India and a cultural icon, Shovana Narayan is a dancer of the Lucknow Gharana of Kathak and trained under Birju Maharaj. Dr Shovana Narayan was honoured with the fourth-highest civilian award of India, Padma Shri, in 1992 for her contribution in the field of Art and Culture, and she was conferred with India's highest national honour in performing arts, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, in the year 2001. She also founded the 19 Kathak Villages across India. Famous for her international collaborations, Dr Shovana Narayan is the first dancer to have conceived, conceptualised and brought out a dance video on the philosophy and legend of the immortal Khajuraho temples entitled 'Dance of the Temples'.

Q: In today's culture of visibility and instant recognition, artistic growth is often conflated with publicity. How should young artists distinguish between craft and visibility? Is quiet excellence still viable?

Well, I would say that look, the question is, what do you want to be? Do you want to be an artist or do you want to be a craftsman? To be an artist, you have to be steeped in it; then publicity and visibility are a secondary thing. The first thing is your sincerity and depth to the art itself. And once you are, obviously, if you're very good, then automatically there are also these other things, but those should not be the guiding factor. If that becomes the motivating factor, then you're just a mere craftsman, and you'll never find peace within yourself or outside yourself. You'll always be in a very disturbed state of mind. Yes, other things also are important; that will come, that happens in due course, and you have to be part of the world, but that is not the main motivating factor. Main motivating factor is your immersion, your depth in your art, and then you'll find a different kind of joy.

So the choice is yours, whether you want shortcuts to money, name, fame, and therefore publicity. I always say, there are a lot of people with thousands of fans following on social media, and they do fantastically well, but a lot of them will not be able to do a good performance for a full two hours. They are good for those five minutes or ten minutes, but to be an artist, you have to be there two hours, three hours on stage. You have to not only go deep into your art, the depths of your art, but also hold the attention of the audience. That is different.

Q: Many young Indians consume global culture more fluently than their own classical traditions. Does this concern you? How can classical arts speak meaningfully to a generation shaped by global aesthetics?

I don't blame the young generation because most of them are not exposed to classical arts at home. If you are, you will imbibe it automatically. When I was growing up, I knew Elvis Presley, Beatles, etc., Joan Baez, Cliff Richard, I knew them, but I was steeped in Hindustani classical music, our Sanskrit literature, Hindi literature, and my Kathak. So everything was happening simultaneously. When you're having a puja at home, you're wearing traditional clothes, you don't wear shorts. Everything falls into place, but if you don't have the grounding at home, then obviously the other things are much more alluring.

And incidentally, when you say global, they are looking at the lighter part of the global culture; they're not looking into their classical culture. Western classical music and Western classical dance are as rigorous as our Kathak or Hindustani classical music. It's as rigorous and has as much depth. You're looking at the lighter, lighter elements of this thing and comparing something very serious with the lighter. So apples cannot be compared with oranges. Another thing I would like to just add is that the child has to make up their mind: do you want to be a firecracker, a phuljhari, which lights up and sparkles and just dazzles you, but when it finishes, it finishes within seconds, and then what is left is acrid smoke. Or do you want to be like the incense stick? It burns slowly, but the incense and fragrance are there for hours, making the whole atmosphere fragrant. So it's your choice, how you want to develop your personality. Every child has to decide for themselves.

Q: Your international collaborations revealed both shared rhythm vocabularies and big philosophical differences. In an increasingly polarised world, what can artistic collaboration teach us about dialogue without dilution?

Absolutely, that is what collaborations are about. You learn to respect each other; you learn to respect each other's art. There's a Rigvedic verse, "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti"—one truth, but the paths to it are many. And that is it; since I've done so many collaborations, there are many movements which are similar in Kathak, Ballet Flamenco and other forms of dance. Same movement, but the approach is different. These are all universal movements and universal emotions. You, as an Indian, are getting angry, you are in a pleasant mood, you are in a sorrowful mood, you are in a fearful mood—but so are the others in different cultures of the world, and in different parts of the world, so where is the difference? It is how you understand each other, and the arts, the performing arts are a beautiful dialogue which helps you, it is a collaboration that helps you to understand and respect every artist, every dance form, every music form.

Nowadays, in the highly polarised world, art is the only thing which can connect us across borders. We don't fight with guns, we don't do bloodshed, there is no bloodshed among artists. Art is the only thing which can truly make this world "One World". *We fight, we are ready to do bloodshed. But when you require blood and a blood transfusion, do you ever ask if it has come from a high caste or a low caste? From this religion or that religion? From this country or that? Blood is just blood. Life is life.*

I would also like to throw your mind back during the lockdown period: many people were disturbed, they went through mental trauma, health, economic hardships, etc. But a lot of people from different walks of life, you saw them getting so overwhelmed by it that many of them took their lives, or they were mentally affected. How many classical artists were there? Because they had their own different release, a release of your emotions because you had the art, the classical art, which allows you to express yourself, everything. So there is a beauty in the classical performing arts.

Q: You have discovered and researched the 19 Kathak villages, and you are the first dancer to make a documentary on the philosophy of the immortal Khajuraho temples, titled "Dance of the Temples", so what motivated you to do that?

In 2002 or 2003, I was dancing at the Bodh Gaya Festival in Bodh Gaya, when a journalist asked me, "Will you go to a Kathak village?" Till then, I had never heard of the name Kathak village, and then that sparked off my curiosity, and then I started the research work and found, to begin with, three villages, then eight villages, and incidentally, all those eight are in the 2011 Census of India. And then later on, when I started going from village to village, wanting to know why they are known as Kathak villages, then I came to know that the Kathaks were there, this whole Kathak community, the ones who danced in the temples. Then, of course, the whole sociological thing about how, why, what, etc. And it seems that the whole thing goes back to more than 2,500 years; the Kathaks are mentioned, this community is mentioned in the Mahabharata and also in the Prakrit inscription of the Maurya period. So that tradition still continues till today.

On the Khajuraho, everybody goes to Khajuraho and looks at a certain band of sculptures and are excited by it, but they forget to look at it in totality. And if you look at all the sculptures in totality, it's showing you the philosophy of life: base is the 'brahmacharya avastha', and then you have the 'grihastha ashrama', then you have the 'vanaprastha ashrama', then you have the 'sanyas', and finally leading up to 'moksha'. So the four ashramas of life have been depicted in the whole sculptures; nobody looks at the base sculptures, they are only looking at the grihastha ashrama sculptures, they don't look at the vanaprastha, the advisory one. So if you see, you see the change in the expressions. In brahmacharya, you'll find a guru teaching the children warfare; it's a gurukul. So there are many such things. So that is what led me to make this short movie on the Khajuraho, the philosophy of Khajuraho called the "Dance of the Temples".

Q: As a scholar, you have challenged simplified narratives about Kathak's origins. What responsibility do artists carry in preserving historical accuracy? Should performers also be researchers?

It depends on the performer and on the individual. I do have research, I ask questions within myself, otherwise I wouldn't have been doing Physics. Many people are content doing whatever has been done. So it depends on the performer, but a performer should be aware. It's not necessary that they should be researchers, but they should be aware of what they're talking about, because that gives them a bit of content and gravitas about their own personality while performing.

Every dance form has all the aspects—the rhythmic aspect and the abhinaya aspect—, so it becomes the responsibility of every performer to see that a production, their performance, is very beautifully balanced between the rhythmic part and the abhinaya part. It's like life: you are there, you are running, walking, everything, but you also have your emotions. You will laugh, you will sit, you will chat, you would like your parents to show their warmth towards you—that gives you a kind of solace, a sense of belonging. So every person wants that in real life or expresses it in real life, so the same thing is on stage. Now it becomes a responsibility of the performer to present it properly and then, if he or she—the public perception which arises from this thing—some might say "oh, this particular performance means... this dance form means only this." Now that is his accountability. Your conduct, the way you perform, the way you act, either glorifies it or otherwise.

Q: The economics of classical performance have changed dramatically – from patronage to festivals, digital platforms, and branding. How must young dancers rethink sustainability in the arts today?

In a classical performing arts medium, the economic return is there, but it's slow. Recognition is there, but it's slow. In certain popular arts, there is instant recognition, but it's not guaranteed. How many people in the field of popular arts have sunk without a trace? You only know of the few names which have made a success, but behind that one success, you have thousands and thousands and thousands or maybe millions, who have sunk without a trace.

So that goes for any field. But economically, you can sustain yourself, but how you do it at what level depends on the artist, the kind of artist you are. Yes, classical performing arts, the returns are there; it's slow, but it's there, and also global recognition—you're a global citizen by even being steeped in classical performing arts. Look at Pandit Ravi Shankar, look at Ustad Zakir Hussain; they were brilliant artists, they were steeped in their tradition, and yet they were global citizens. So, everybody today, youngsters aspire to be global citizens. It's not necessary that only if you copy, ape the West, you're good, you become global. If you're somebody within your culture that arouses people's respect and interest, you're global.

Q: You have experienced profound personal and physical setbacks. Did those moments alter your relationship with performance – not as a profession, but as an inner necessity?

I think I learned a lot from these setbacks, from these obstacles, I would rephrase it as challenges, not setbacks. Such challenges help you develop further. When I was 26, I lost my father suddenly in a train accident and I went around saw the mangled remains in the train, search for his body got the postmortem done, brought the body alone, gave the agni and 2 days later my sister took the ashes to Haridwar and I went to Mathura to dance in the festival, my father had been dead only 2 days, so the life goes and I was crying because I've seen my father's body' Ive located his body but life goes on. That taught me something about the transiency of life, that each one of us is there this moment, and the next moment we are gone. It helped me to suddenly mature in a very different way. Similarly, I was on stage, and suddenly my legs got immobile. I couldn't move, I finished that performance, but my knees were in wreck, I was laid up in hospital, and they said you are going to be in cripple, but here I am still. So there are so many issues that come in your life, but you take them as something that you are going to sit at home or cry about. Why should I cry about it? I can't see half the time because I had a brain stroke, I've lost my right peripheral vision in both eyes, yet I am there and so on and so on. Life goes on; it's your own attitude to life. If you want to make a small mole hill into a big mountain, then it's your own problem, but if you can make a mountain in a mole hill and say Hell, I'm going to cross it, you will do it. But without compromising your values and ethics, and do not compromise respect for others, do not compromise your sense of gratitude. Every person, small or big, has done something good; be grateful for it. never lose that sense of gratitude, respect and sensitivity.

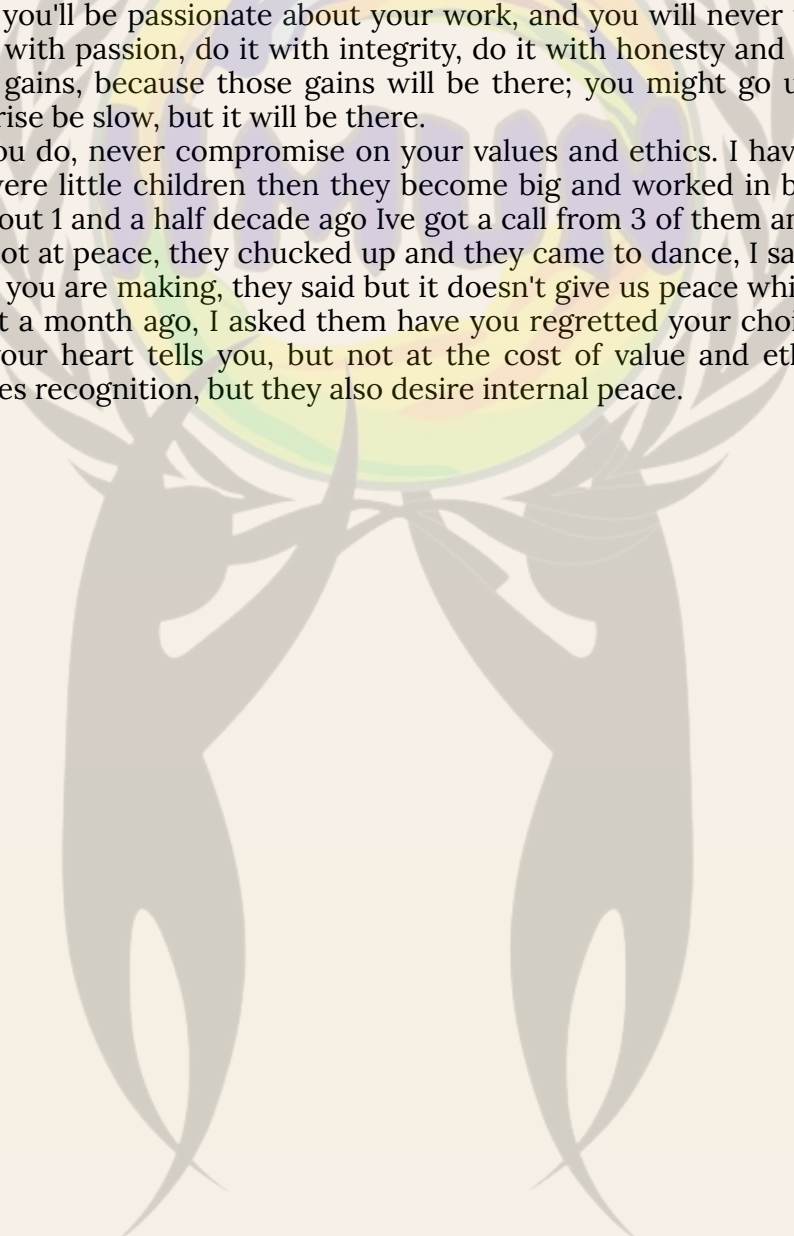
Q: With AI, short-form content, and shrinking attention spans redefining engagement, what risks and opportunities do you foresee for classical dance in the next two decades?

I see things have changed. I was born in 1950, and I've seen everything changing. The shrinking attention—it's already shrunk. Those days, we used to dance for two and a half to three hours on stage; now nobody's there to see us for two and a half to three hours on stage. Earlier, you know, when all of us, we laugh, we say when we were young, each one of us was walking talking telephone directories. We could remember everything, including numbers, names, faces and addresses; now everybody looks at the mobile. So things are going to happen; it has happened a lot, things have changed in the last seven and a half decades of my life, and I am almost 76. And with AI coming in, it will change. The question is how you utilise AI—AI can be advantageous, but utilise it intelligently. But you should not become a slave to it. If you become a slave to it, that means you have handed over the keys of your mind and critical thinking to AI. It is like a knife; a knife was a beautiful invention when it happened thousands and thousands of years ago. It's a beauty—to cut vegetables, to cut fruit, but the misuse is if you cut somebody's throat or you murder someone. So don't do that. So AI has to be utilised very intelligently; you should not become a slave to AI.

Q: If you were to advise a 20-year-old today – not necessarily a dancer, but someone searching for direction – what principles would you urge them to internalise early?

Whatever you do, choose a profession that you actually want to. Choose a profession that your heart desires, not a profession that people want you to do, but then if your heart desires, I want to murder everyone, please no. But choose a profession which is for the benefit of mankind, not at the cost of mankind. Choose a profession that your heart desires, not because it is the "done thing". If you do that, your heart will be in it, you'll be passionate about your work, and you will never face stress because you love what you do. Do it with passion, do it with integrity, do it with honesty and sincerity. Don't look for shortcuts, for shortcut gains, because those gains will be there; you might go up, but you'll also come down very fast. Let the rise be slow, but it will be there.

Most of all, whatever you do, never compromise on your values and ethics. I have many students whom I've taught when they were little children then they become big and worked in big companies and were making good money, about 1 and a half decade ago I've got a call from 3 of them and they said we've made everything but we are not at peace, they chucked up and they came to dance, I said dance can't make you that kind of money that you are making, they said but it doesn't give us peace which dance gives us. Even 15 years later, just about a month ago, I asked them have you regretted your choice, they said no we are loving it. So do what your heart tells you, but not at the cost of value and ethics. Everybody desires money, everybody desires recognition, but they also desire internal peace.



INTERVIEW WITH DR. SAMIR BRAHMACHARI

-INTERVIEW BY BRIJESH JOSHI

Q: When we look back at your journey, did you ever imagine that you would help India shape the genomic revolution, and what would you tell your 20-year-old version of yourself today

When I was young, one thing was very clear my parents made me very nationalist my mother was very clear that if I do science in India then only it is worth it otherwise if I do it somewhere else doesn't make sense and she wanted 2 doctorate not one so I went to IISC to do my PhD after Calcutta and I was very clear, it was 1972 and I was studying BSc and 3 friends of ours in Calcutta were discussing what should we do, so one person said I want to have an imported car driving in India, one person said nothing will happen in India, I will go to abroad and buy a house with a swimming pool and all of us were staying in a 3 bedroom government flat and I said that I want to do science in India and I want to fetch the highest award, in those days that was the Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar award and I won it before the age of 45 so that was my dream at 20.

Q: How does one distinguish between healthy questioning and intellectual arrogance?

Healthy questioning is humble where you want to learn, intellectual arrogance is where you show off, you don't want to learn you are actually showing off, so it is with humbleness you want to learn, you can learn from any person, I learn from younger people, I learn from students, I didn't know how to use AI I learnt it from my younger students. I met many people in my life with intellectual arrogance, but I also met many people with true intelligence. Take William Haseltine, for example, he writes to me every day, he is one of the richest scientists at Harvard, and he is 5 to 6 years older than me. I am amazed by his ability and interest in learning. Charles Cantor, 83 years old continuously thinking differently. So I was lucky that I met such people when I was young.

Dr. Samir Kumar Brahmachari is an Indian biophysicist and Former Director General of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and Former Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Government of India. He is the Founder Director of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), New Delhi and the Chief Mentor of the Open Source for Drug Discovery (OSDD) Project. He is the recipient of the J.C. Bose Fellowship Award, Shantiswaroop Bhatnagar Award which is the highest award of India in the field of Science, Dr. Brahmachari received the Life Time Achievement award in Genomics from Human Genome Organisation, He was conferred the Banga Bibhushan Title, the highest state civilian award by the Government of West Bengal, and He has been selected as one of the Fierce's Top 10 Biotech Techies for his outstanding contribution to the field of genomics and open source drug discovery. Science has hailed him as "Open-source guru" (2012), considering his exceptional contribution in conceptualising and mentoring India's first crowd sourcing initiative – Open Source Drug Discovery. In addition, he is one of the featured researchers in the India Cancer Research Database developed by the Institute of Bioinformatics (IOB), Bangalore, with support from the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.



Q: Sir, how does this genomic revolution fit into your picture

I came to IISc to do PhD and I got a faculty position, and I did not study abroad. I went to France for a year just to experience myself with modern molecular biology because I did PhD in molecular biophysics. In summer of 1985, I was a lecturer in IISc department of molecular biophysics and my wife was also a PhD in microbiology and she went for a international department of biotechnology post doctoral fellowship to USA but she has never lived abroad and we had a small baby so I had an offer from Columbia University to come and I accepted to go to Columbia in summer of 1985. I was interested in studying DNA structures and all losing enzymes. I had only 3 enzymes in India, but they had dozens, so they said, You come, Professor Charles Cantor, so I went. When I was there, that was the time in US Charles Delisi called me in Washington DC and was discussing about Human Genome project so I was the first person in the world beyond that small group who met in Washington DC that day, that evening Charles came back with his freinds, and said we'll discuss something different, so I was exposed to genomics on day zero. So I realised people are dreaming of things that are impossible to do. We are talking about 200 nucleotide sequencing in a week; we were doing it in a day. I was doing there in Columbia University, they are talking about billion, so what I learnt, *dream big, dream very big, don't have any hesitation in dreaming big*. I was lucky that I did my PhD in GN Ramachandran's laboratory, who was also a big dreamer, so I was lucky. So I was the first to get exposed, I realised this is the future, but I couldn't convince people. In 1987, I had a workshop; I brought Charles Cantor to Bangalore, everybody participated, but nobody believed that this was going to be the future. In 1989, the Human Genome Organisation was founded, and I was elected as the first Asian to be a member of the fellowship in 1990. By 1988, India signed an agreement with the Soviet Union on a long-term science and technology policy, so I visited the Soviet Union in 1988, and there I met Andrei Mirzabekov, and I saw he is trying to make a DNA chip. This is crazy, he said we'll do genome sequencing. I went to England and met in Oxford Edwin Southern, who is printing oligonucleotides on a glass slide and said, we'll make DNA sequencing, I understood this is the future. Right in 1990, I wrote to the Department of Biotechnology secretary. I was a very good boy, young man doing science, publishing papers in India, getting recognised globally, so he helped me, called Charles Cantor, he wrote to 32 laboratories in India asking about their views on whether India should participate in genomics, unfortunately 90% said no, I was disappointed. I was offered at Lawrence Berkeley laboratory, faculty position in the, department of genetics by Charles Cantor, I thought maybe I should go so I planned I'll leave, 1991, I agreed that I'll go in summers I'll finish my 10 years of service I'll get benefits whichever I'll take, but 1990 end I was given Shantiswaroop Bhatnagar award, that was my 20 year dream, so 20 years dream made me believe that my children & grandchildren they will say you knew genomics is important, its the future, so I told Charles Cantor I am not coming, I'll get the money from the grant of the country and the country gave me small amount of money and I dreamt and began and began.

You have to dream, you have to dream big, that's what I learnt in GN Ramachandran laboratory, how to think which doesn't exist, how to dream big.

I moved to Delhi, leaving IISc Bangalore, a beautiful palace, beautiful weather. Me and my wife, two faculty positions moving to hostile weather in Delhi and built the Institute of Genomics from scratch, then I was made the director of CSIR. I began the thought for an affordable drug for the future, so that's how I came up with OSDD. So the point is, through every event, what I learned is dream big.

Q: You started your journey with biophysics and then shifted to genomics when you saw the future in it, so how can students today identify where the next big shift is?

The most important thing for young students is to go beyond their own expertise, read various things, listen to lectures, meet knowledgeable people, as many knowledgeable people as you can. That's it. Today, ChatGPT has all the knowledge, so meet knowledgeable people for wisdom, meet them to learn how to imagine and how to ask the right question, because if you can't ask the right question, ChatGPT can't give the right answer. So your question is something which you'll imagine. So what students should learn is how to imagine. When you read the paper, you read the paper? No-no-no, you don't read the paper anymore, you read the title and imagine what is in the paper, then reconstruct the abstract in your mind, then you read the abstract and see whether it matches or not, then you see the abstract, okay, what experiments they have done, this is the way to learn. You are learning to imagine. When you look at the title, you imagine, and 99% time it will be wrong, but slowly you will see it will become 80% wrong, then 60%, then 90% correct, and you will learn how to imagine

Q: The idea of junk DNA was once widely accepted, but when you chose to question it, did you face resistance from your peers and institutions?

Of course, when I met Charles Cantor in 1979 and I wanted to work on repetitive DNA, he refused. He said it will have no function and by 1980 Francis Crick published a paper stepping their say that junk DNA has no function and any attempt to do function will be intellectually sterile and futile exercise so I knew that there will be no funding in America for that so I have a surreal advantage. Secondly, I was very convene that structural involvement in biology has to happen, so repetitive DNA, because that's the structure that gets repeated, so you have to amplify an effect, repetitive DNA would play a role, so I started working in the 80s. I couldn't publish many papers, you see my journals published somewhere here and there, all my ideas, but so what, they are cited today, that's why HGO gave me the Lifetime Achievement Award, because you thought about it ahead of time, so all is thinking ahead of time.

Q: Building a leading genomic institution in India requires funding, navigating realities, bureaucracy, and scientific ambition, so in your experience, what breaks first, people or patience

First is people, you have to get the right people in the bus, then only you'll go. Second is courage, you know the lion is not the strongest animal, but he is the king because the lion has more courage than everyone else. It was an enormously courageous decision to leave Bangalore IISc, moving to a small institute and making it a leading genomic institute. I asked an inventor what gave you the courage to leave NIH when they didn't agree on your model of sequencing, and you studied tiger. Everybody was talking about cutting the DNA, cutting the big size, then subcloning, then sequencing, and you are talking about cutting it into 35 nucleotides, random sequencing and then align? He said I learnt it from your country, I said my country? He said did Gandhi, with a stick, threw away 12k British soldiers? So it's courage, when your cause is big, people gather, so you have a big cause, the people will gather, so that gave me the courage to start Open Source Drug Discovery. If the cause is big, people gather.

Q: Open Source Drug Discovery is a patent-driven model of science, and usually, companies focus on diseases that are for the rich, so did it succeed, or did it expose the limits of idealism in scientific collaboration?

It established a Science 3.0 model, where you can cloud source, several people come in, and do the project. It created an awareness that TB is important, and then NIH opened up for the cause. The world today has embraced open source, NIH supports open source, WHO has taken OSDD as a model for collaborative research between academics and the industry put together, so what I call many things you start, the people who started human genome sequencing did not finish it, somebody else finished it. Of course, I faced a lot of scepticism, resistance, and a lot of negativism, but it doesn't matter; your conviction has to be larger than anything else.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. ROHIT NANDAN

-INTERVIEW BY BRIJESH JOSHI

Q: How did your journey start? How did you become an IAS officer, and what were the challenges? What is the less glamorous part of the IAS service that people don't see?

I was born and brought up in Allahabad. My entire education was in Allahabad, and after completing my post-graduation, I joined the Allahabad University as a teacher. I taught in the university for a couple of years, and that was a time when I was in a dilemma whether I should continue to be an academic or join the services. I was not very keen to join the services; I wanted to continue in academics. I was very academically oriented; I had done well as a student, so I was happy as a teacher. But then certain things happened. My father wanted me to join the IAS, and before my results could be announced, he passed away. I had made a promise to him. There was an agreement between me and my father that I would prove that I can come into the IAS, I can qualify for the IAS, and then the decision of joining or not joining will rest with me. But since my father died, so I thought it was better to honour his last wish, and I continued in the IAS. I joined the IAS, and I'm quite happy that I joined the IAS. It has its own challenges. Initially, I joined as a Sub-divisional Magistrate. After completing my training, I became a Joint Magistrate, then a Sub-divisional Magistrate, then a Collector, and then I went into the Secretariat. So when you are talking about what is the glorious part and what is the less glamorous part of the IAS—yes, the job of the Collector is very powerful and secondly a very glamorous one in the sense that you can do a lot of things for the common people. You are directly related to the people, and whatever you do, you are able to see its repercussions and its results. But then, most of the time in the IAS, we remain in the Secretariat. We are doing jobs where you are not visible at all; you are in policy-making. And that is not an easy job, because you can make mistakes, you can also, at many times realize how insignificant you are in the entire system, because there you work with politicians and with other policy-makers. And there you realise that your role is basically that of a file pusher. It's not a very glamorous position. But yes, the satisfaction is there that you are contributing to the policy of the country. You are operating on a very high level, especially as you grow higher in life, as you grow higher in service, and since I retired as a secretary to the government of India, I had the satisfaction of being not only the CMD of Air India but also the National Director of the Skill India mission. and that was a very satisfying job so visibility and glamour is there but nearly 4/5th of your job, you are in the position where you are not visible to the common man at all you might be contributing more significantly in the sense that you are making policy, but you are not visible so its a set off, you gain something, you lose something, you gain the experience but you lose in the sense that you are not visible. So that's what a career of an IAS officer looks like



Rohit Nandan is a distinguished Indian bureaucrat (Retd.) and a senior officer of the Indian Administrative Service, known for his impactful roles in public administration and governance. Over his career, he held several key positions, including Principal Secretary to the Govt of UP, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and later Chairman and Managing Director of Air India. He also served as Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture, where he contributed to policy formulation and institutional development. He also served as the National Mission Director of the prestigious India Skills Mission and Chairman of the National Skill Development Authority, among various roles over a career spanning more than 4 decades. Among his notable achievements, Rohit Nandan played a crucial role in managing and attempting to revive Air India during a financially challenging period, focusing on operational efficiency and restructuring. He was also associated with heritage preservation and tourism promotion initiatives during his tenure in the culture and tourism ministries. He also drafted the UDAN Scheme. Known for his administrative acumen and leadership, he made significant contributions to strengthening governance frameworks and public sector management in India.

Q: How much influence or pressure does a politician actually put on an IAS officer?

We have to work with politicians. It is a democratic system, and there is no reason why a bureaucrat must feel that he is more important than any other part of the government. A politician has a very significant role to play; they are elected by the people, they have a responsibility towards the people, and ultimately, they are the ones who are answerable to the people. So if a bureaucrat feels that if a politician is asking them to do something, it is pressure on them, that is not a very correct way of looking at things. When we are very young, we feel that we are very powerful and we should not consider anybody else's opinion as important. So any request coming from a politician is treated as political pressure, which is not so. If a politician comes and says that you build a school here, or you install a hand pump in this place, or you do this or do that, it should not be considered to be pressure; it is a feedback system. And the two—the politician and the bureaucrat—have got to work in tandem. If either of the two starts believing that he is more important and has a right to dominate over the other, then in that case, we are doing damage to the system. So we have to look at it from that angle. Most of the younger officers do feel that everytime a politician ask them for anything its a political pressure I think that as we grow in life we tend to realise that this is not so, a politician got a very significant role to play in this democracy and they have a right to be heard and all of the officers have a responsibility to listen to them so its not a question of political pressure it is how you look at things ultimately in the long run. I don't think it's political pressure; it's basically an interactive system. Sometimes we tend to be more successful, sometimes they are able to dominate us, they are able to bide us so its a zero-sum game.

Q: Regarding the recent turbulence in India's aviation sector, specifically with airlines like IndiGo, would you categorise this as a structural or a managerial crisis?

What happened last year with IndiGo was basically a structural issue. Suddenly, there was a change in the rules. IndiGo was one of the best-managed airlines. It was providing excellent service, at least in terms of taking you from X place to Y place. That IndiGo was doing excellently. But suddenly there was a change in the rules, and that change also took place in a way that was very inconvenient. IndiGo was under the belief that it is so powerful, it is so big, that it would be able to influence the government as well as the DGCA to modify the rules a bit and to defer it for some time so that the airline has adequate time in order to comply with the new rules of rest that were being formulated. The FDTL rules, which basically prescribe the maximum time limit that a pilot can fly. To prescribe, to change the rules at a time when it was peak tourism time, it was winters with longer nights, and thirdly there was a possibility of fog in the late part of December and January, so to introduce new rules and very major changes was, I personally feel, a mistake and when Indigo asked for some deferment of rules and some relaxation, they were not very on the mark. Then ultimately you must realise this, all the airlines are commercial organisations their profits are very important to them, they won't be able to operate if they don't make profits, all the airlines work on very thin margin of profits and suddenly if you increase the amount of money which has to be spent on the pilots, which is a huge resource, nearly 20-30% of the revenue of an airline goes to the salary of the pilots, and if suddenly that happens then in that case the airline has to completely reorient itself and this is what exactly happened. I think Indigo was under the impression that they would actually be able to convince the government to defer it for some time and to modify the new aviation rules to a bit to suit the airlines, which failed, and it failed because the government was under pressure from the High Court. The Delhi HC has mandated that this rule has to be implemented in the year 2025 not later and as a result, though the summers we were able to cross but before the winters could set in, the court insisted that the rules have to be implemented therefore there was the court, the government, the DGCA and then there was the airlines which was left with no margin but to comply with the rules, and that actually led to the big crisis. The definition was changed, the rest rules were changed, everything was changed, it was a very major change that took place in the avitorial rules. And now the pilot associations are asking for these changes every 4-5 years. The major rules were made in the year 2008 by the DGCA, and they were very well appreciated, but the pilots are always unhappy with this because they want more rest, and therefore every 4-5 years they ask for the rest period to be increased, and airlines find it very, very difficult. Having been in the airlines, I understand that change in aviation rules means a complete change in the orientation airlines operate. It was also a company issue, after all all airlines are basically commercial entities, they have to make profits to survive, an entity like Air India survived without making profits because it was finance by the government, but all of the airlines ultimately have to survive on the money they earn, if they don't earn money and don't make profits then there is no reason for them to be in existence.

Q: When you took over as CMD of Air India, the debt was staggering; what were the first critical decisions you made to change the airline's trajectory?

One of the first decisions that I took when I joined the airline, in consultation with the experts and the experienced people in the airline, was to hybridise the operations of Air India. The biggest problem that Air India faced was the arrival of the low-cost airlines. By the time I took over in the year 2011, 65% of the total market of aviation in India had been taken over by the low-cost airlines. And Jet Air, Air India, and Kingfisher were squeezed into 35% from a 100% market share. It was a very difficult situation to operate in such an environment. We decided that we would hybridise Air India; we would make it partly low-cost and partly full-service airline. Now the biggest issue is the cost of operations. A low-cost airline normally has about 185 seats in a plane. A full-service airline will have about 145 seats. Therefore, the cost per seat became very high. In the case of Air India, we had 145 seats in our plane, Indigo has 188 seats, so the cost per seat was very high in Air India in comparison to Indigo. We could not survive with that sort of cost, so we decided that we would hybridise and we will increase the number of seats that there are in the planes. It was not an easy decision; it actually meant a structural change, and we increased the seats from 145 to 168 in about 30% of our total fleet. Now it took about a year to do so, but it brought down the cost. The second important thing that we had to do was to expedite the arrival of 787s, that is, the Dreamliners. The biggest problem that Air India had faced was the late arrival of 787s. In 2004, when the order of the new planes was placed, at that time it was expected that the 787 would come in 2008, and if Had it come in the year 2008, the history of Air India would have been completely different. 787s were comparatively easier to fly, they were far more economical, consumed less fuel and were definitely better planes. We were not able to get them in year 2008 which was a crucial year, that was the year when the financial crisis taken place and the oil prices has gone upto \$140 per barrel, and the entire planning for Air India was that the fuel will be available to Air India at about \$35 and suddenly the oil went upto \$140, Air India was in no position to face that, Air India and Jet faced a huge crisis because of this and it was never possible for us to recover from that, had the 787 come to us in time then in that case we would have been able to handle this crisis far better. So the second decision was to expedite, I became CMD in 2011 and i moved heaven and earth to convince the Boeing to give us 787s, we were supposed to be the first airline in the world to get the 787s but we were not able to do so, ultimately Boeing agreed to give it to us in 2012 but that was a major change and the fate of Air India started taking a turn once the 787s came. We started operating to Europe and to whole of East Asia on 787 instead of 777 which were very expensive planes to fly so these two were the major decision which I took when I joined and third was of course to join the Star alliance, Star alliance was very reluctant to take the Air India but as a matter of fact just a week before I joined, they had decided to suspend the membership of Air India, it was a very crucial thing for Air India but Boeing decided that Air India was not in good condition and therefore they refused to take us in and even to consider our membership claim, I pressed very hard with them and ultimately in 2013 we succeeded in getting admission to the Star Alliance and that was again a very crucial thing because a responsibility that came to Air India was to increase its prestige worldwide after getting admission to the Star Alliance. It was a very, very difficult time. Nobody was ready to take over that post, even I was very reluctant, and as a matter of fact, I was pushed against my wishes; the order that was issued appointing me as CMD made this very clear that I was being appointed mandatorily and against my wishes.

Q: Do you believe the Tata Group is managing Air India better today, and are they in a better position in the aviation sector, or are they struggling?

It's very difficult to say, I haven't travelled with Air India for the past 1 year, so I cannot say what exactly the position is, but I personally feel they are still struggling and they are trying to pass it off as a legacy problem, but I think there's been 4 years and now there can be no excuses. But Tatas are in a better position to manage Air India because there's no dearth of money. Our problem in Air India was finances; the government did not have money and especially year 2011 and 2012, they were very bad years for the Indian economy, not only in terms of the government not being able to provide us money, but also the fuel prices. The average price of petrol during my tenure was \$95 per barrel, as against the originally planned \$35, we were actually working against our plan, now the fuel prices have come down to about \$35-40 which is very manageable and then Tatas have got deep pockets but they don't have any aviation experience and that is the big problem with them. Tatas were partners in Vistara, but it was being managed by Singapore Airlines largely, and now Singapore Airlines is just a 25% shareholder of Air India, so they are not in the management as much as they were in Vistara.

Q: How can an airline regain public trust following a major accident such as the Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner crash in Ahmedabad in 2025?

The problem with this generation is that this is the social media generation so everything comes from the social media I remember that when the crash took place I was also hooked on to see what was being said on social media and everyone was talking about what could have gone wrong, in India, abroad, people were giving bizzare theories, people who know nothing about aviation they were making guesses as to what went wrong and I think that created a lot of suspicion in the mind of people of what actually went wrong. Secondly, the way the enquiry is being done is completely opaque, nobody even knows who is doing the enquiry, there is the committee but who are the members of that committee is not known to the people and this is a very bad way of dealing with crises of these types. This is the time when there should be open communication, people should be told who is enquiring, what are his qualifications. There is suspicion in the mind of people that Boeing is being defended, or the engine makers are being defended but this can only go away by way of open communication between the airline and the people who are flying. The government is also very very opaque in this matter, its been almost 9 months since the crash and yet the report is not out, the preliminary report came out and that was also too preliminary to reach any conclusion which led to all sorts of theories about pilot committing suicide. So there are two things, one is open communication, the most important thing is that there should have been international audit of Air India at that time in order to gain faith. It is important that there should have been a external third party enquiry instead of an internal enquiry into what went wrong and audit into the safety of Air India, this Air India did not do. If I would have been the CMD I would have invited either the FAA or or the IKO or perhaps some well known agency in the world to come and do the audit of the safety aspects of Air India once they give a clearance that this is the airline you can trust, then in that case people would have been far more confident in Air India this is something Air India didn't do and that was a very major mistake. There is no communication of what the crash was like, what the enquiry is leading to, who is enquiring and no audit after that. The DGCA has been punishing Air India every month nearly and I think that Air India should take better care of this. Actually, the Tatas are more or less accustomed to handling organisations like FMCG organisations or technology organisations, but I personally feel that aviation is a totally different one, and it should have been treated differently. Air India and TATA still have to get into that mentality.

Q: What are the glamorous and non-glamorous parts of the Indian aviation industry?

The common man will look at any industry as to what is the visible part, the invisible part will always remain under the surface now the invisible part is the engineering part, the commercial part, the ground handling part, they are the people who are not seen so there will always be a part of any industry which you will never be able to see and that is the non glamorous part. The amount of public anger which the airport managers have to face is something that you have to go through to understand what they actually face. The ground staff, when the flight gets delayed, and the people start to shout, is something which I would never like to face. Actually, I had to introduce a course on crowd and anger management for all my staff because dealing with consumers is not an easy job, and Indian consumers and passengers are the most difficult to handle. It is said in the aviation industry that Indian and Chinese consumers are the most difficult because they get angry about everything. In India, if a flight gets delayed by half an hour, the entire airport is in arms, the managers have to face hell, the wrath of people is terrible, so that is the non-glamorous part. If you ask a manager or ground handler what they feel about their job, they will be very unhappy. The air hostesses have to face a lot of frustration and a lot of anger from the people. I remember that the first day I joined Air India, I was travelling from Delhi to Bombay, and there was a lady in the business class who was shouting at the air hostess for not being able to serve her the non-vegetarian dish, which had finished. That lady was shouting at her as if she was shouting at a domestic servant, and I felt very bad, and I actually did not want to introduce myself as CMD because I thought that lady is going to beat me also if she gets an opportunity, so I also realised that the life of a CMD is not really very glamorous. So all jobs are not always glamorous. Imagine the pilots who have to fly after this accident, imagine the amount of fear they have in their minds, so as a common man and a passenger, you can always be sure to be kind to the staff. Even the life of politicians is not easy; the amount of anger they have to face, the amount of hard work they have to put in, the amount of hard work a pilot has to face, their life is hell. The amount of fatigue the air hostess has to face.

Q: In the tier 3 or tier 4 towns and in rural areas, schools and colleges still focus on rote learning instead of skill development, and the students won't be ready for the constantly changing job market, so what can be the solution?

There is a dilemma, there are two types of skills, one is the basic skills of an electrician, of a plumber, of a TV repairer, of a mechanic. And then there are high-level skills. So the basic skills can be taught to a person at a lower educational level but if you want to go for higher glamorous skills, then atleast you need to have some sort of education, the problem is only this, people in rural areas may be trained to perhaps become a data analyst but where can they get a job of data analyst in that place? So you have to basically get trained in the job available in your vicinity. If you can travel to Delhi or any other city, then in that case, there is no problem, but in smaller places, you have to think in terms of skills that suit that area, and today, there is an online system available for all sorts of skills.

Q: What is the core philosophy behind the development of functional, low-cost airports as proposed in the original UDAN policy framework?

The UDAN policy was initiated by me when I was Joint Secretary in the government so I wrote that policy of regional connectivity as to what should be done in order to connect more places in the country and that time I had suggested that we should have a policy of subsidizing airlines to fly to airports, to all those places which don't have a very thick, heavy traffic so the airlines have to begin some incentive in order to subsidise or provided what is called viability gap funding so UDAN scheme came into existence as a result of that, I submitted the report in 2010, it took 3-4 years before it matured into a policy which is now known as UDAN scheme. Airports are one of the most important components of aviation and not airports can be as fancy as Delhi, Mumbai or Bangalore airport and that's what I wrote in that policy, that there was a time when American general aviation was developing, there was a concept called gymnasium type airports, the airports were small, functional, it is something like low-cost airline, they were low-cost airports. Not all airports need to be as big or as fanciful airports of the country. There is a balance that has to be maintained between viability and functionality. Delhi airport has a carpet of 1 lakh 40 thousand square feet. It was a huge expense, many people also questioned at that time the necessity of having a carpet; maintaining and replacing the carpet is a huge cost. The type of decor in the Bangalore airport is something that's not necessary; these airports should not be vanity projects. The more money that is spent on the airport for embellishing it, ultimately, it comes out of the pockets of the common people. The User Developmental Fee has to be paid by the passenger, so all the airports that are being developed are actually vanity projects now. I've been a very strong proponent of the opinion that at a time when an airport is planned, the government must see to it that unnecessary ornamentation should not be allowed. The airports should be functional, they must adhere to the international standards, but they should not be a vanity project, and that is unfortunately most of the airports have become, and therefore the ticket prices are increasing after all, nearly 1/3rd of the total ticket cost is airport cost. Privatisation of airports, I am always in favour of that because the government does not have the money to do this. If an airport is economically viable then in that case it should be financed by the private sector and as part of this report that I submitted at that time, The regional connectivity plan, In that I've said that the money that is collected by the way of subsidy should also be used for the development of airports and the airports should be simple and functional and that I think is the third wave of reforms that has to take place as far as the aviation is concerned. We cannot have very big airports, we cannot have very glamorous airports, we must have functional airports.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. SUNJOY JOSHI

-INTERVIEW BY HARSH NAGDA

Q: Is the youth-led tech renaissance generating new power, or simply redistributing old power into the hands of young people?

That tussle is going to be perpetual. It is not that this is going to be resolved in a matter of a few years. This is something that will go through this generation and possibly go into the next one also. Big tech, small tech, the battle between oligarchies and small and medium enterprises has always been there. And there are times when one has gained strength. In fact, the entire idea of democracy was that the middle class would rise to the top. The middle classes were really the ones who led democracy, which led to very, very strong institution building, and they are the ones who basically removed feudal hierarchies from the systems; they brought an end to the monarchies, and this all happened by the way again with the printing press. When it came about, the Gutenberg printing press. That feudal hierarchies disappeared, monarchies became challenged, you had the Magna Carta, and out of that post-Renaissance period, with the rise of the middle class, you had a different kind of governance system coming into operation. So things change, and things change over time, things change over generations. Today, with technology, the pace of change has become much faster. So I don't think people should become impatient. There is much more power in your hands. There are, and something which is happening today is that the very fundamentals of the shape and structure of how you're going to be educated. The pedagogy which is going to come into the new world has to rapidly transform. Sometimes it is not catching up, it is not fast enough. Entrepreneurship models. Entrepreneurship templates. The idea of what a corporate is, what does a corporate mean, that, those whole, all those ideas are going to be challenged in the next few years. And will you see corporates functioning in the same manner, with the same kinds of organisation structures, the large corporates? Will they be able to withstand what is coming? I do not know. Because there is so much talent, there's so much entrepreneurship which is being thrown out. It is in many ways the democratisation of knowledge, the democratisation of ability, which is coming about. It is no longer a question what is AI, using AI as a tool. AI is not just a tool. AI is a partner you are working with all the time. It is constantly with you, and everyone's abilities are going to be strengthened on the basis of the tools which you have in your hand. So there is a major transformation coming which did not exist in previous generations. Don't be impatient, wait for the changes, they will happen.



Mr. Sunjoy Joshi is the current chairman of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India's largest Thinktank. He began his career with the government in India as a member of the Indian Administrative Service in 1983, serving in various capacities for twenty-five years. He has handled oil and gas exploration as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and was the Government nominated Director on the Boards of ONGC, OVL, OIL and MRPL. Mr. Sunjoy Joshi headed the Madhya Pradesh Energy Development Agency as its Managing Director and served as Chairman of M.P. Windfarms. He has been Visiting Associate at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London as well as Distinguished Visitor to the Programme on Energy and Sustainable Development, University of Stanford, USA.

Q: How much of the youth renaissance we see today is real, and how much is merely aspirational?

How much of what you see in the world around you is real and how much is virtual? What is real, what is true, what is factual? What is a political narrative without any meaning in it, which turns out to be hollow the very next week or the next month? So there is a huge conflict between what is real, what is non-real, and what is virtual. So that is the age we are living in. And when I start framing where the youth of today are, I look at it rather differently. Some of you definitely would be Generation Alpha, which is beyond Gen Z, the generation actually born after 2005 or actually 2010, I would say. And there is something different about this generation. What was different? This was a generation that, through its formative years, lived life through screens during COVID. They grew up as disaggregated digital natives. They did not choose this. It was forced upon them. It gave them certain strengths also. The strength it gave them was that once you got dissociated from normal socialisation processes, you actually began to socialise on your screens in a much wider format, across generations, across continents, across geographies, all over the world. And at the same time, something else was happening in the world of technology. Artificial intelligence was coming into its own. So the constraints that were placed on many of your predecessors, on the Gen Z and even the millennials, did not constrain you. The difference which these technologies have made is that today it does not matter which; those language barriers have disappeared. You were communicating across languages because, you know, with AI in your hands, you're actually listening to voices coming out of Palestine, you're listening to voices coming out, in Persian, in Arabic, in French, in German, it doesn't matter. As long as Google, ChatGPT were translating, Twitter were translating, you had access to very, very different kinds of opinions. So you were exposed to an extremely difficult and a different kind of world which generations before you have not witnessed. Now that is a big change we are seeing. You have actually understood reality differently. You are engaged on many different platforms. And I would go ahead and say that when we start looking at our generation, we are victims of the WhatsApp universities. We believe everything we see on screen. This generation today is far more prepared to handle. When the printing press came up, the Gutenberg printing press, the first reaction was, 'Oh, there's going to be so much information dissemination, people will start printing all kinds of pamphlets, and there will be revolutions all over. And therefore, the printing press should be banned.' You still hear these voices; these voices keep on arising. But people are looking at it from their older perspectives. The new perspective is, I think, the new generation is far more equipped to handle the technologies which are coming into this world than we ever were. So that is a big difference. And that is going to make a difference, it's already making a difference, it has made a difference in certain countries as to how opinions are being shaped, how opinions are being understood, and how the large debates, which were at one time very peripheral to our daily lives—debates about what is happening to the climate, what is happening to the environment, what is happening to the SDGs—take on far more vibrant force because you are linking with organizations across the world, linking with young people across the world who feel very passionately about these issues. So this is the world you are inheriting.

Q: In a time when institutions are filing FIRs against their own students instead of protecting them, how can the youth remain patient and trust the process?

Eventually, institutions have to retain credibility, otherwise they do not exist as institutions. Then you enter a stage of institutional collapse. To prevent that, ultimately, they will have to be aligned with the major movements that are shaping the ideas of today. And now what those ideas are, I do not know. There is going to be a contest of ideas in this space, too. And these contests will never stop. These contests are going to keep on continuing and going on and on. Now, how do institutions handle those contests, that becomes important. Now, how do they ultimately guide them and be guided by them? That creates further progress and evolution in society. That becomes important. So that is how transitions happen, that is how changes happen. And that is how democracies move. That is the strong point of democracies. Otherwise, in autocracies, the only answer is to come out to the streets, revolt, create mayhem for some time. That is not the right way to go about it. The right way is that, yes, the institutions will adapt, have to adapt to the rising voices which amplify and go on and on and on. And we see that happening. You often see that, okay, there may be one step, two steps in one direction, then you see a pullback. Why does a pullback happen? Why did Sonam Wangchuk have to be released and he went back to Ladakh, and they say the tiger has come back? So it is not that institutions do not respond. Institutions are ultimately based upon the foundations of society. To remain, they have to actually understand the larger movements, the larger shifts which take place. What those shifts are, we do not know. In which direction those shifts will go, we cannot predict today. But yes, they have to adapt. And the strength of democracies is that adaptation in democracies is much faster, ultimately much faster, than it is in autocracies.

Q: What kinds of jobs will actually exist for our generation in this new AI-driven landscape?

We need to start rethinking what career paths and what jobs are going to be like. For example, the job of auditing AI is becoming extremely important. For example, ChatGPT can use Python to make any app or program you want to know. And it can churn out in minutes what used to take a substantive amount of time. So that ability is there. But then you need people, you need engineers who can question, contextualise, and take responsibility for what is actually happening in that black box. Because much of the work being done out there is basically copy and paste of the code. Now, when that happens, and it happens repeatedly, which has been found time and time again, that AI fails. And it fails in ways constantly which we cannot predict unless we do a proper auditing of what it is, what nonsense has that AI been fed on. So these aren't AI prompt engineers. That is already a commodity. You see kind of advertisements for them everywhere, learn prompting, learn prompting, learn prompting. These are people with such deep foundational knowledge that they can spot when the machine's perfect-looking answer is actually nonsense. So, you're going to need more and more and more of them. Then you have the bridgers. The bridgers are basically the people who can work across domains. The arts, humanities, they'll be part humanists, part technologists, part strategists. They will have their leg in everything. It's a new kind of Renaissance man. The Renaissance man was someone who had knowledge of everything. Leonardo da Vinci. A great innovator across disciplines, across philosophy, across maths, across physics, chemistry, everything. So you need those kinds of minds to come up with AI as your partner. So AI excels at narrow tasks, excellent at it. But it fails catastrophically at understanding context, ethics, human motivation, and the messy contradictions of real life. Because real life is not perfect. We do not live in a perfect world. And if you can bridge this world, and the bridgers are going to be required for any enterprise to succeed. So that is the next skill set. Then you have creativity, but creating uncommonly. Not content creators. The internet is already drowning in AI-generated content. You don't need more of it. You can churn out content as much as you want, but people who can produce genuinely novel ideas, products, or experiences that couldn't be predicted or generated by recombining existing patterns. So pattern recognition learning is extremely important. And getting the human back into pattern recognition, because the human ability of serendipity is not something which AI can replicate. That is a uniquely human talent. People keep on saying you're reaching the moment where you'll have sentient computers. We're far away from that. I don't think we'll ever have sentient computers. Because we have not really understood the human brain, how it works. We do not even know how memory works today. So you know, there are lots of things which AI, which modern cybernetics does not really know, we haven't reached the edge yet. We're still a long way off from that. So there's still deep expertise and creative courage required out there, and only humans can have it.

Q: With AI breaking down the traditional "conveyor belt" of jobs, does this chronic instability suppress sustained thinking, or does it create conditions for a true Renaissance?

The biggest strength that the youth of today need to have is intellectual strength. In our time, it would have been different, but I would say the biggest strength they need to have today is intellectual agility. I started with English literature, I taught English literature for some time in college, then moved on to civil service, then gave up the civil service and moved in a different direction. I think we understood, and some of us understood that the only way in this changing world, and it is becoming even more true now, that there are no barriers to what you can do. *Disciplines are not barriers. Knowledge does not exist in silos. Knowledge exists everywhere.* And that is precisely what AI is doing. AI is giving you one simple answer; one simple statement is being made there. That nothing is rocket science. Even rocket science is not rocket science. There is no barrier to what you can do. And in fact, the strength today, when I talk of intellectual agility, is that it is possible, and one has to, as you grow into this new world, because the challenges are going to be much larger than we faced, because there are no clear ladders, clear ladders like the ones we climbed. That you could get onto one ladder, then get onto the other. The traditional path was you start at the bottom, do the grunt work, slowly gain enterprise, and rise to leadership. That conveyor belt has broken down, and that is actually one of the adverse impacts of AI. There are positive impacts and negative impacts. That is the negative impact that the conveyor belt has broken down. The pipeline by which you nurtured talent in, for example, the interns who came in or who came into lawyers' chambers to learn the basics of law, the basics of drafting, the basics of research, the document review, the data cleaning, all that work is now going to be done by AI. So somewhere in this race, the large corporations, their intent is basically how do we cut costs? How do we have better next quarterly results? Sack a few people, let AI and agents do all the work, which was being done by all these people who are very difficult to handle. So the problem is these weren't just entry-level tasks. These were actually the gymnasium where your brain learned pattern recognition, developed judgment through repetition, and built the mental muscle memory that creates expertise. Now, somewhere in our pedagogy, in our systems as we move forward, that work has to be now brought down to the level of schooling of apprenticeship, at lower levels. That work has to be done there because the rest can all be done by AI. Much of the schooling which we do now, in fact, most of the students going to school today don't really pay much attention to the lectures given because they can get everything else from ChatGPT or somewhere else. But the fundamental foundational expertise, the mind training, the mental training, the ability to be able to learn pattern recognition, because AI only works on the data it has been fed. When you need to break the mould, do something really innovative, get out of structures, you need humans, and we need to prepare our humans to be able to step into that stage where it is not just a matter of having the best prompts and learning just to prompt AI. That is not the end-all and be-all of it. To move beyond that stage, to get AI, use AI to get better levels of productivity, to do innovation at one step higher, two steps higher than what AI is capable of, that is what humans are there for. And it is great for efficiency, it is, it is great for ultimate progress, even productivity going ahead. So if we get the structure right, there are possibilities. The point is, how are we going to do it? That is the real answer. That will also give the answer to what kind of jobs will exist when you enter the workforce.

Q: Having sat across from global leaders, diplomats, and heads of state, what has been the most surprising factor about how the world actually works?

I think the biggest surprise when you sit across them is that you realise that they are as flawed as you are. That they are as weak, they are as flawed as you are. They are human. And yes, they hold positions of power, but that does not change the fact that the things which are motivating them are some of the same things which motivate you. They're not really very different. So first of all, lose your awe of people. Lose your awe of people because of the positions they hold. And in today's world, I think it's a good thing which is happening, the younger generation is getting over that awe. It is not that you are in awe of someone just because of the positions he holds. Ultimately, you are in awe of a person for what he has achieved, what he manages to do. So that is what makes the difference. And as you interact more and more with people in real life, yes, you find the same things. So I think that is something which comes as a surprise at times, but it is a fact.

Q: Do you still believe that think tanks can shape policy changes and drive outcomes globally today, considering the fast pace of the world?

Probably, probably better than what they did in the past. Institutions are in many ways changing. And institutions will have to change. If they don't change, if they don't adapt, they will cease to exist. Now, the big difference which I think technology has made is that institutions are no longer brick and mortar. Institutions can exist out there; they can exist without even an office. And much of the work of thinking, which used to happen in closed walls, is actually happening across national and international boundaries. So you're getting much more cross-fertilisation of ideas, much more collaboration happening in the work of think tanks than used to exist much earlier. Today, you have not just think tanks, you have global movements. For example, I would say IIMUN is also in many ways a global movement. And you don't have to have a brick-and-mortar structure to make that possible. Today, it is very much possible to do it in the virtual world. Similarly, the whole debate about climate. Where does it take place? When people, the Fridays for Future takes off, young people from various countries join. How do they communicate? How do they get together? That institution very much exists without being a formal institution. So the shape of institutions is changing. And the same thing is going to be happening to the world of commerce, too. So there is a very tense relationship in all this between how power operates. Power operates through hierarchies, power operates through rigid institutions, through structures, through modes of law. And the informal structure of institutions, as it spreads across boundaries, spreads across borders, and it creates and shapes change in societies from below, from the bottom up. Now, there are times when these are going to come into conflict with each other. And we are seeing that happen in many places. Now that momentum, no matter how much you try, as technology moves, that momentum actually becomes unstoppable, and it keeps on moving. So that is what is going to be shaping the world which you people are actually growing up in, which will be changing, I think, in the next few years. You're seeing signs of that change already happening. Young people speak about the disorder in the world; they speak about the kind of society, the very brutal geopolitics of the world we're living in at the moment. But I would say these are all the groundwork for the bigger shifts which take place beyond this point. Because this kind of model cannot exist. Because down this road is perfidy, it is the end of the road. So to move beyond this, you will need to get back into maybe better evolved structures, better evolved organisations. What is their shape going to be? It is difficult to say today.

Q: With so much pressure on Gen Z to build personal brands and defined missions, what is the most honest advice you'd give to a young person navigating this non-linear world?

There are all these memes these days about Gen Z at work, a lot of fun memes as to how it's impossible to get any work out of them, and they have their own me time, and they have their own, the chill factor is very important. They keep taking reels and photos and all of that, to basically recenter themselves. So that has always been important. Your work is not 100% of what you do. In fact, your work is shaped by what you do outside it. So my advice to young people is: work is not 100% of who you are. There is so much outside, which, yes, people are very much interested in. We can see them travel, we can see them do all kinds of things, join causes, participate in movements. They're doing it all, and they're doing it all the time. So it is extremely important for organisations and institutions to understand and learn that there is far more to life than just work. When we speak of work-life balance, it is because one actually supports, impregnates, and makes the other grow. Therefore, it is important. So keep that spark alive in your life. And don't think that a career and work are the end-all and be-all. Do have other interests outside, because those are the interests which actually get you to break out of the mould. And do something very different when the time comes. You are living in a time where change is going to be very rapid. You may today be doing something, working in one particular domain, but after six months, you realise this is not worth it, and you need to move out. Now, where have you built up your strengths? All those strengths you built up in your spare time, when you are outside that work area. So please keep it up. So that constant learning is extremely important; constantly being engaged in new things becomes even more important today than it was in our time.

INTERVIEW WITH ANUPARNA ROY

-INTERVIEW BY HARSH NAGDA

Q: You come from a small town and went to the cinema without any institutional training, so do you feel that your journey represents a larger generational shift in who gets to tell stories nowadays?

Yes, I absolutely believe that, because I feel that not only my journey but the journey of other contemporaries reflects the breaking of old cultural gate-keeping, where stories no longer need any elite approval to exist. And I feel Self-taught paths are reclaiming cinema and emerging to the centre. If the person is really ready to follow their heart, I feel they can achieve it. I'm not exaggerating my success, but I'll tell you that there will be people who will stop you from doing it. The village where I come from had a patriarchal hierarchy that was unavoidable, even if you wanted to avoid it. But today, whenever I look back at myself, I am really proud of myself when I think about the decisions I took and what if I didn't take them. I would really like to tell the youth to take their own decisions and know what they want to do because this generation can really shift everything they want.

Q: Do you ever feel pressured that you need to fit in a certain idea of what a filmmaker should be?

Yeah, definitely in the initial days, I faced a lot of suggestions where I was told that you should make films looking at the commercial perspective, and something which would talk about something that was not relevant to me as a filmmaker and as an artist. So that was one thing I didn't do - despite all the suggestions I got. The idea of cinema, of making the film for me, was always to centre migrant women in the film. That was a deliberate act of cultural reclamation. Because I don't represent myself as anything except my gender. I really reclaim this, and sometimes I don't feel like an appropriate citizen of this country, or I am the appropriate religious, or in that sense, you can consider I don't like to represent myself in any way but my gender. I try to stand by it because I have seen the degradation women feel when they are in a country like India. So, for me, it was definitely a very deliberate act of cultural reclamation, bringing visibility to lives erased by the dominant cinematic narratives. But I feel that I would have failed this responsibility on my own; it was never imposed by me. I had amazing mentors who were seeking answers, the same answers I was seeking. So, for me, all the mentors guided me throughout this; they also wanted to make something about women in cinema. And everything. So I found my way through them and the people who misguided me with all the commercial aspects of the film. I don't mind making a commercial film, but things have to be true. It cannot be like I am making it for the sake of some subscription. That won't be possible for me. I'm ready to work two to three jobs and produce my film. It's fine for me to be mediocre, but I won't be able to do something that I have never experienced, and I have never seen.



Anuparna Roy is an Indian filmmaker and screenwriter known for her socially conscious storytelling and emotionally layered cinema. Hailing from West Bengal, she gained international recognition after winning the Best Director award in the Orizzonti section at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival for her debut feature, *Songs of Forgotten Trees*. Her work highlights themes of womanhood, migration, identity, and resilience, establishing her as a promising new voice in contemporary Indian cinema.

Q: What drew you to tell a story centred on women's intimacy and love in your film "The Songs of Forgotten Tress", and how much of that choice was personal versus a conscious statement against mainstream cinema?

Ans- as a student of cinema, this was always in the back of my mind that I would not make something I don't want to. Besides that, the story was very personal; it was like I always felt like one of these characters. So I was compelled to make such kind of film where I am showcasing some of me, some of my experiences or some of my known people's experiences. So I sort of prioritised that rather than it being a fight for me to show the mainstream cinema that I can make this, we can make this. For me, it was a very personal choice to make something which is more personal, and the truth has to be there. I won't be able to portray something that is not true. So for me, that was there, the decision-making point where I decided to make something which talked about women, their intimacy and how they fall in love with each other. Because these things are legalised in our society, but the patriarchy thrives in suppressing one's sexual choices. For me, it was made on that, that I am gonna talk about this. Because I have felt like this before, I have gone through something similar. I've seen my grandmother raising a whole family with her stepdaughter, who were both the same age, and they became friends to raise the family, and I felt that it was amazing for me to see two women running a family. So for me, it was very personal. I didn't see the industry aspect, but it was definitely there in the back of my mind that whenever I make my first film or whenever I make a film, it will be about the third world, it will be about marginalised people, it will be something I have seen or experienced. Talking about the youth renaissance, for me, it is about restoring the dignity to these silences, and allowing forgotten voices to speak on their own terms, which was definitely there in my mind.

Q: Do you think technology has truly democratised the cinema for creative young people, or has it simply replaced old gatekeepers with new ones in a form of platforms, algorithms and new problems along with that?

I have a very different perspective about this (technology) because I'm not really a lover of technology. I have not reached that point where I can surrender myself to technology and just depend on it. For me, definitely, technology has opened doors by removing institutional barriers, but it hasn't erased the power yet. In fact, it has reshaped it. While the digital access democratises, tools and algorithms have become new gatekeepers for me, deciding visibility, value and silence in a subtler way. For example, I don't really like AI because it is slowly and steadily taking away creative jobs, and it's pathetic for me as a director and as a creator to think that way. And in my case, while making the film, I was not alone. I had an amazing team, a team of 7 male producers who helped me out with everything and anything I required back then. I consider myself a little lucky as someone who got all the support from those who were also fighting against these stereotypes in cinema.

Q: When you spoke about Palestine in Venice, you framed it not as a statement but as a responsibility. What advice would you give to young artists navigating the pressure to seek validation while staying true to their own creative vision?

Not as an artist, but I would love to demonstrate humanity more than anything else. If I had to prioritise my work, I would always prioritise humanity over my work. Because I felt that it is a responsibility to talk about something that is a very miserable happening around the world, and we cannot be blind and not pick up the topic and not discuss about it, criticise it or do nothing about it. So, as a young filmmaker, I felt I had to talk about all of it. But the kind of backlash I've been facing from the so-called authorities, or the kind of discrimination and criticism for the sake of talking about something which is nothing but merely a stance for humanity, it is really pitiful for me to see myself in a position where I'm being questioned on my own nationality, my own citizenship and everything. But I will never stop because when I made my first film, which was a short film, I was in Russia. Russia is a very big country, P5, and there also, I talked about Palestine, so nothing was like that. I got a chance and I talked about it once. I've been talking about it for so long, when I was not even that known or that famous. So for me, it is a responsibility to talk about something that is miserable rather than all the so-called good things happening in the country, which I don't get to see, all of it. And for me, it is definitely a responsibility to talk and demonstrate humanity. Artist is my secondary identity. If you're not human, I don't think you can have the perspective of seeing the world in a very optimistic way. I feel that I have been talking about this for so long as a young filmmaker, and I also went through a lot of struggles and obstacles in both the city and the village. It's not that the village had more obstacles, and the city doesn't have them at all. It's not like that. As a young artist, you have to stick to your own art, whatever you want to do. You have to have faith in that. Like Blind faith in your own art and your own creation. And as an artist, one should not expect or wait for validation. For you, that validation should come from within you. You like it, you're making it. That's it. It doesn't have to resonate with 5000 other people, for them, it might be very abstract, for them it might be vulgar, but what do you think about it, It has to be clear about the idea of your own, that you are making something and you stand by it, the way I am standing by my film. People of my village might not like it because they don't know about women and their relationships, so I won't be able to go and teach them that this is this, this is that. If you just navigate your life with your choices, your inner peace and inner honesty, only then can you create something that will get validated, but validation is a secondary byproduct.

Q: Can restraint and silence be as powerful a form of activism as loud, direct protest – especially in filmmaking?

Yes, the restraint becomes its own form of activism. Creating space for reflection rather than reaction. Listening is also a political act. Silence and slowness can be radical in a culture addicted to noise and speed. Talking about my film, it definitely shows that while contexts are local, emotions of loss, labour and displacement and resilience are deeply universal. So this is one thing I was sort of trying to bring into the play because for me, when showing the story to 2000 foreigners who don't know the language of the film, but they resonate with the emotions, they see the film beyond culture, beyond borders and beyond language. So, for me, this was something I wanted to bring into the play and insist that listening is also a very political act.

Q: How did your own experience of displacement and nostalgia shape the emotional core of *Songs of the Forgotten Tree*, and why do you think all of us feel such a strong pull towards the past while we are also trying to build a better future for everyone?

talking about the film, it deals with a lot of memories because it shows the kind of personality I have. I am also acquired as a corporate migrant here in Bombay. Most of the time, I'm in a position where I'm retrieving my own childhood, I'm retrieving my own memories associated with my mother and father, and the culture I was in earlier. That was the idea to proceed with something that is going to talk about the memories, the loss of emotions and displacement. That was the idea. Talking about the future, the future feels unstable. This generation looks back to understand what was broken, erased and unfinished. The one thing that is constant. So, engaging with memory and loss becomes a way of reclaiming identity and meaning in a world that is moving too fast to remember. That's how this became a core idea to me, to reclaim the memory that I felt the insecure part of me felt that I won't be able to hold onto forever, so let's make a film on a memory that I won't be able to hold onto forever. That was the situation with me personally.

Q: If the time we are living in currently will be considered revolutionary in some time in history, what role do you hope cinema and your own work will play in the world's cultural imagination?

I think it's a very big question, and I hesitate to answer this because, you know, the moral things, and you know how society works, and what are the justices and the injustices for that matter. All I can hope is that cinema acts as a quiet witness, preserving the truths that power tries to erase. This is all I can say. I am saying it is not my responsibility to change society, it is not. I am just a filmmaker making films on my own personal experiences. I don't know if I can make another film, I'm not sure. But in any case, this film, *Songs of the Forgotten Trees*, if it reshapes anything, then I want it to expand the cultural imagination towards resistance and collective memory. That would be the precise answer.

Q: What role do you hope the youth to play in this cultural imagination or revolutionary history of the world?

The expectation is definitely high because I know this generation is not dumb at all. We are far more active than the last generations, and I will never deny it. because this is what it is. The expectations are definitely high, and the role I leave to the generation itself, I know that whatever they will do, they will do better than their ancestors. Or the way it is said that their ancestors did a lot according to societal norms, but I doubt it a lot. I know this generation will come as the most powerful one; they're gonna follow their heart, they're gonna do whatever they want to do. They're gonna talk about something that will make society uncomfortable. I know this, and this is what we need to thrive on.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. HIMANSHU PRABHA RAY

-INTERVIEW BY KAVY JAIN

Q: Every journey has a starting point. What first drew you toward history and archaeology, and when did you realise this would become your life's calling?

After completing an MA in Sanskrit and a Diploma in German language, I joined the Diploma course in Archaeology conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi. The course included not only lectures on different themes related to archaeology but also practical training in excavations and an all-India tour to visit the monuments and archaeological sites of the country. This introduction to archaeology proved to be a turning point and started a lifelong engagement with studying the material remains of the past.

Q: Many students feel pressured to pursue "mainstream" careers. What gave you the confidence to pursue academia and research, and what would you say to students afraid of choosing passion over predictability?

Like young people everywhere, I also faced the same pressures to pursue 'financial security' in the choice of a career and joined a Public Sector Undertaking for two years. However, I decided to quit the job, take a pay cut, and return to research in archaeology. Life was not easy, and there were many challenges to face, including financial instability. But having decided there was no going back, sticking to one's choice of career is the hardest part of it. This requires commitment, hard work and passion for the subject. Life also opens doors when all others are shut, and for me, this was the offer of a Commonwealth Fellowship to pursue an MPhil in Archaeology at the University of Cambridge. After that, there was no looking back.

Q: You have been both a university professor and Chairperson of the National Monuments Authority. How did these roles change you as a leader and as a person?

Teaching is a commitment to one's students and the subject, but working at the National Monuments Authority (NMA) taught me to relate to the ground realities and the impact that many academic decisions, such as archaeology, have on the lives of the people. One of the regulations promulgated by the Government that NMA had to put into practice was the protection of monuments and archaeological sites from urban expansion. This is not always easy, given the fact that a city like Delhi has 174 Nationally Protected Monuments, and the pressures on land and on construction activity are enormous.



Dr. Himanshu Prabha Ray is a prominent Indian historian and archaeologist known for her work on ancient Indian maritime networks, cultural interactions, and the spread of Buddhism. She has authored influential books such as *The Winds of Change* and *The Archaeology of Seafaring in Ancient South Asia*, which explore trade, religion, and connectivity across the Indian Ocean. She has been associated with Jawaharlal Nehru University and has served as the founding Chairperson of the National Monument Authority of India. Among her notable achievements she is a recipient of the prestigious Anneliese Maier research award. She is widely recognised for advancing the study of India's maritime history and heritage.

Q: While leading the National Monuments Authority, you balanced preservation and development. What did this experience teach you about responsibility and public service?

Two major lessons that I learnt during my tenure at NMA were: one, the need to listen to hardships faced by the public and to find solutions; and second, the importance of communicating and discussing the legal requirements laid down by the Government with the public and those impacted.

Q: After spending decades studying maritime history and archaeology, how has this field changed the way you personally see the world?

My work on maritime history started as a Homi Bhabha Fellow, which provided me an opportunity to visit the archaeological sites in Southeast Asia and to interact with archaeologists and historians in the region. This visit was an eye-opener since there was so little known or written about India's maritime history in the 1990s. No doubt stalwarts of the Greater India Society had worked on inscriptions and texts relating to Southeast Asia prior to Indian independence in 1947, but for various reasons, that scholarship had been termed 'nationalist' and disregarded after 1950. Thus, re-engaging with the past of our neighbours across the Bay of Bengal helped me move beyond the theoretical framework generally used to study ancient Indian history.

Q: Your work on the Maritime History of the Indian Ocean shows that India has always been globally connected. How can this understanding reshape how young Indians think about identity and global citizenship?

One of the lacunae of our education system in History is the inordinate focus on studying India's past with little or no engagement with the history of other countries, let alone that of our neighbours. Hopefully, an appreciation of maritime history will get young Indians to think outside the straitjacket approach that has been a hallmark of the writing of Indian History.

Q: Ancient seafaring communities depended on cooperation, adaptability, and trust. What leadership lessons from maritime history are most relevant for today's youth?

Sailing a boat perhaps provides the best lesson in meeting challenges, finding solutions and working as a team in the face of dangers encountered at sea.

Q: Winning the Anneliese Maier Research Award and working in Munich connected you to global scholarship. How important is international exposure for young researchers today, and how can students prepare for it?

One of the unique features of the Anneliese Maier Research Award was its emphasis on collaboration and on mentoring young researchers. Under the scheme, two Indian post-doctoral researchers were able to spend time in Germany and participate in teaching and research, while one German researcher helped coordinate an international conference and edit the papers which subsequently appeared as an edited volume.

Q: In times when history is often debated or politicised, how can young people learn to think critically and responsibly about the past?

Young people today are exposed to much more information about the world around them. My suggestion to them would be to think out of the box.

Q: For students interested in history, archaeology, or heritage policy, what practical skills should they begin developing today?

Disciplinary training in history and archaeology is essential. Heritage studies is as yet a newly emerging field in India with fewer options. This is gradually changing as interest in heritage studies increases.

Q: If you could speak to your younger self or to a 20-year-old student reading this magazine what advice would you give?

Dream big and work hard. There are no shortcuts in life.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. ASHWIN RAGHURAMAN

-INTERVIEW BY BRIJESH JOSHI

Q: Should young people have absolute clarity about their career paths, or is it okay to figure it out as they go?

There are two models. One is that you may be fully clear. And you say, “Hey, I want to become an aeronautical engineer, I’ll do my master’s, let’s say, in space or aero sciences. I’ll do my PhD, and I’ll become a deep expert in one area, and I’ll create something new there.” That’s one path. And there’s nothing wrong with that path. That’s a very good path to have with clarity. The second path is also not wrong. Back in the day, there used to be a site called StumbleUpon. Now today in a search engine or even in your ChatGPT and all of that, you go and ask for something. In StumbleUpon, you used to go to this StumbleUpon, like Google, it will have a bar, and then there will be something which will you don’t search, you just click and say stumble upon. Pretty much like you click a search button, you click stumble upon. That website will take you randomly to some website. You don’t know out of all the millions and billions of websites, which one it will go to. If you like it, you stay on it. And you read what it’s about. If not, you click again, stumble upon. So it’s a discovery. And so even in careers, there is nothing wrong with choosing a model of StumbleUpon. Which is to say, “hey, this is what makes sense to me. I don’t know what I’m going to do five years later. I don’t know what I’m going to do one year later. I don’t know what I’m going to do two years later. Today, at this point in time, this is what I feel like doing. My gut, my mind, my body, my everything tells me this is what I’ll be happy doing at this point in time”. And you do it. Doesn’t matter what the clarity is. Then, the next step, the clarity that will come, will emerge later. So my education was purposefully chosen to be able to do these. In my engineering, which was mechanical engineering, I could switch to almost anything as a mechanical engineer. It’s the most generic engineering topic in a sense. Of course, engineering by itself is generic. And then the second thing is, when I did my MBA, I chose to do finance. I did a master’s, and I specialised in finance. Saying again that if I do HR, I’m stuck in HR. If I do marketing, I’m stuck in marketing. But a finance guy can be used everywhere without doing finance. I’m not really doing finance. My investment has very little finance in it. But a finance guy will be far more broad in terms of what the options lie in front. So in my mind, I was very clear. Let’s go step by step; it doesn’t matter. You don’t need to decide upfront. And I think as a person, if you’re very clear, it’s good. If you’re not clear, don’t worry. Think about what I want to do in the next two years. Don’t worry about what will happen after 50 years or 20 years. That’s worrying. Two things that I feel the readers should get are the biggest issues that face us today, which are, of course, greed, but more than greed are fear, anxiety, and insecurity. And the older you get, the worse it becomes. So you shouldn’t have it when you’re 20. You should have very little because the natural progression keeps increasing little by little. Don’t think that just because you have savings or you have a big salary and you’re successful, that changes. *The more success there is, the more insecure people are*, I can give it to you in writing for 99.99% of the people. Go to the Bollywood stars and celebrities, you’ll hear this. You wonder why this guy is one of the biggest heroes, or this woman is one of the biggest heroes. But they are insecure, many of them are insecure. And you’ll read about this, not that I’ve interacted with them, but you keep reading about it, and then when you see them and their interactions, you see that as well.



Ashwin Raghuraman is an Indian entrepreneur and investor known for his work in impact investing and social innovation. He is the cofounder and partner of Bharat Innovation Fund, where he focuses on supporting startups that create scalable solutions to address social and developmental challenges.

Among his achievements, he has played a key role in promoting technology-driven innovation for the public good and has contributed to building an ecosystem that encourages sustainable and inclusive growth. His work bridges the gap between entrepreneurship and social impact, making him a notable figure in India’s innovation and investment landscape.

Q: How does a 20-year-old student know when it is the right time to leave their safe harbour and explore new career fields?

I think you should always leave your safe harbour at any point, at any age. But the best is to do it early in life. As you age, you become less risk-taking. When you're younger, you normally take risks; you can take more risks because you can bounce back, you can change course, and there's a lot of time ahead of you. I graduated in 98. 98 was pre-Y2K. Y2K was this big thing that everybody there was a big sense of fear that because the clocks will become zero zero zero or one one zero zero the last two digits after 99 it will become zero zero that the whole world will end almost that was the thought process, that all systems will fail and now we are so dependent on IT and there is so much fear mongering now about AI, there was a similar amount of fear mongering about this Y2K as a problem. So, guys like TCS, guys like Infosys, guys like Wipro, who were the creme de la creme of employers in those days, today they may or may not be, but back then, they were considered to be the best recruiters. People have a lot more exposure and a lot more opportunities. So, in this pre-Apple era, if you can think about it, Apple becoming as big as it has become, pre-Elon Musk and Tesla era, this was. TCS must have come and recruited a bunch of people from my campus. A bunch of others came as well. And I also got into another company, but I refused it. I just got it to give myself confidence. And then I didn't go for the final HR round. And then I went to Bombay to say I'm going to go and do the rounds of every shipping company with a one-page resume that had nothing. And I would show up for a cold call. The reason I wanted to do this because I wanted to leave my safe harbour. The exposure that I got in my first three to four years of working life was a thousand times what my batchmates got. Because a lot of these guys were going as trainee engineers, sitting and learning and working in corporates. I trained in Singapore for six months before I could become a marine engineer. I had to do a course. So that's the first thing. I'm straight out of college a few of my batchmates went and studied abroad. But this was on-the-job training abroad, and then my first job was on an oil tanker, a very large crude carrier. So imagine, instead of driving to your office or taking a bus to an office, I had to take a boat, and I was dropped off at a ship which was about two miles offshore as my first experience. So the varied experience of going suddenly being out there in a different environment, problem-solving. I think just for the exposure. My first boss was a New Zealander. I could not even understand his English. he spoke very good English, but his accent was so thick I found it hard. And he was the chief engineer. And then after a while, once I got used to it, we became very good close friends because I was one of the few who could actually understand him. So these are the sort of things when I say exposure. We had a Filipino crew, we had a New Zealander, and we had a Britisher as a captain. So very early, I went and got into this multi-cultural ecosystem where I learned from not learned, I got exposed to different people. That's one. Second, we used to go, and we used to take oil from the Middle East, sometimes from the Gulf; we've gone to and dropped it in China, Japan, and Korea. I've gone to the Western hemisphere as well, Europe. South Africa. So you start meeting people of different types, and you suddenly get a lot more exposure, right to whatever is there. And then the third is the nature of the job. I'm a mechanical engineer, and then after that, I came back and did my MBA. But I learned about mechanical engineering truly when I joined this company, Maersk, which is a shipping company. And that's when I really learned what mechanical engineering is. We used to read about boilers. I used to have to control a boiler, and if I made a mistake, people would die. That's how it is. You can make such heavy mistakes in an oil tanker; the whole thing will explode. So I think the long and short of it is I chased exposure early. I chased differentiation early. I think at that point in time, we were also much better paid than my peers because I had a dollar salary. Of course, that was part of it. I can't deny that. But all put together, I wanted to be out there and get out. And I think there's no bad point in time to do that. But the earlier you do it in life, the more risk-taking appetite you'll have at that point in time. Today, when you think about entrepreneurship, it's exactly the same thing. Especially people working in large companies, you're letting go of a safe harbour, and you're setting up a startup. Without knowing, maybe you know some things, all of that, but you're out there on your own.

Q: Does a founder from a tier-two or tier-three city have equal startup funding opportunities compared to someone from an IIT or a tier-one city?

Let's talk about funding and startups specifically. The short answer is no. There is no equal opportunity. Hopefully, we will get there; the government is taking steps. At the end of the day, you can't suppress merit beyond a point. Today, people play it safe; there is fear. I am an IIT graduate. I have done my degree, spent five years in consulting with some BCG McKinsey, and I joined a VC fund. And I need to invest. The approach is 'hey, what is the safe answer?', to invest in another IIT grad or to invest in somebody from the engineering college in Jammu and Kashmir. So people take safe options. Especially people who are successful, and that comes from the fear I was talking about. A few of them are able to break that fear and say, 'Hey, I see something over here.' So I think the biggest issue I find, and I may be saying something which is politically incorrect, when you sit and slog your backside off for three years, five years, 10 years to get into an IIT, you've done it because you have placed it on that pedestal, saying this is something great. And then you crack it, and you're like everybody's celebrating, and you think you've achieved the moon, and life is like mad, and then you go there, and then you study. Already, your mindset as a person is that you've reached the pinnacle. So when you judge others, and when you gauge others, you obviously have that predisposition that this is the one, and therefore this guy is great. So the long story short is a lot of VCs come from some of these reputed institutions, and we are also, as a race, as human beings, we like to identify with "hey, you are from Bangalore, wow." Or "I am from Uttaranchal." If you come outside to Bombay, and another Uttaranchali will be your good friend over there, just because he's Uttaranchal, and you look at him differently than a Maharashtrian. And that is our nature as a race. I have two IIT fellows as partners. I have one Wharton person as a partner. I have an IIM Ahmedabad grad as a partner, and I am none of these. For me, the easy thing to say is there's no real difference in the thought process." Thought process is the wrong word. There's no difference in the ability to invest, which is what we are all doing, and to evaluate startups. The difference is that somebody else gives you a better option. The difference is that if you fail as a startup founder, it's easier to get a job because your degree is very, very high quality. So the safety net is better. So coming back to the question more directly, I think the answer is that it's not yet there, there is this clubbiness, there is this in the ecosystem where folks are preferred, and that's where you need more and more trendsetters and role models. So now it is very fashionable in the US, or in Silicon Valley, to say I'm a dropout. Why? Because the first two dropouts went and built some great companies. Then two more went, and then two more, and then two more, and then there have been a lot of cases. So once you have demonstrated it, then that becomes the fashion. Not that you got a degree. Similarly, over here, when more and more people come from rural areas or tier two and tier three cities and are successful, create unicorns, create big companies, I'm not saying there aren't, there already are, there's a guy called Khadim Batti who comes from Bhavnagar in Gujarat. Runs a company called Whatfix, which is almost a billion dollars. So I think that there are more examples. *You do two things: you prove that there is an exception to the rule. Then the first set of guys inspires the next set of guys. And then you reach a critical mass where the exception becomes the rule.* Or maybe more glamorous than the rule. Like school dropouts or college dropouts in general. There was a point in time when people would say listen you can run only one business, how can you do many. Look at Elon Musk. Look at our guy who's done Big Basket, see how many startups he's done now, five or six of them. So, all in parallel. So there are rules, there's breaking of the rules, and I think the rules apply to the majority and at some point in time, there is enough critical mass to say, okay, the majority is still in a certain rule, but there's enough to say now there's an alternate rule as well. And it's just not an exception. If you follow the rules and follow them extremely well, you will be very, very successful. Because the rules are set, there is a system that has been made. You perfect that system, part of that system, and let's talk about college admissions. If you perfect an IIT JEE system, you'll get into an IIT. Then from there, you're automatically propelled to a good company, on placements, if you are able to do well at IITs and get a good CGPA. And then so on. You'll do well. If you break the rule, you can do something exceptional. *Following these rules will only get you to do extremely well. You want to do exceptionally, you have to break the rules because you're creating a new rule.* You're creating a new system. So, guys like Elon Musk, and even in India, the early entrepreneurs, maybe Narayana Murthy was one example, along with the others. Maybe it was Sachin Bansal. But a few of them broke through the rule that existed on that day. Even some of our sportspeople, such as Sania Mirza or even Saina Nehwal. There was no rule that badminton and tennis were doing well; maybe it was Leander Paes. But the first few, they broke through. Now, today, if you become a badminton champ, the system is already geared to helping you because there were other pioneers. Like today, we are facing with football, there isn't really anyone, there is a league, we've tried Baichung Bhutia, and all of that is okay, but we've never got there. Maybe we will.

Q: How do you view AI—is it an existential crisis for today's youth, or a tool to elevate human capabilities?

I think the real answer is that it has the power to change things drastically. Now that power has to be channelised. It's not just enough concept; it has to be channelised and appropriately handled. So the power exists today to change the way you and I live. Then Elon Musk said there may not be any jobs in 10-15 years. I think there are many people who are asking two questions. Is he talking nonsense? I think he's not talking nonsense; there's a potential of that happening. Is it a good thing? I'd love it if I didn't have to work. But it will not be a good thing because there will be too much control in the hands of too few people. Because AI, as a concept, will exist with a few large corporations. It will be a little distributed, and a few of them will have control there. And then if you are relying on that for your monthly food, or whatever it is, because that's what he's talking about, a very utopian type of situation where there's so much abundance that we don't need to work for our living. So, as long as it is distributed and democratised, it's fine; it may not be. AI specifically, I think there are three things that are there. Positive benefits are definitely there. There's no doubt about it, you won't see more and more, we are already seeing it. The negative influences and what is now today we are calling responsible AI, misuse of AI is going to happen because humans are humans. And humans still control AI. And like anything else, this will be misused. So, how do we establish the rules and guidelines to be able to keep this in check? And my answer is you don't do it by going and framing a policy. My answer over there is that you keep technology under guardrails by using better technology. So technology holds the technology together. You can't write some rules, and you're talking about government policy and some questions on that, but I think that policy has to flow into some technological restrictions, which will not restrict so much that its benefit is not unleashed. So that balance has to be put. And then the third part is, this is going to make you and me and everybody else redundant, and we don't have jobs, or it's going to take over everything we do for our living? I think the answer is no. It's a little bit of fear-mongering. I think AI will become ubiquitous, you and I will learn how to use it, we'll learn how to use it well, for 'our' more than 'I'. Because I think people who are graduating at this point in time have the ability to adopt something new is easier; you don't have the baggage of the past, so it's easier. You're not forgetting something and learning something new; you're just learning something new. Some of us have to forget as well, and there's only so much space in one person's head. So it's going to be easier for the newer people who are emerging now in school and colleges to be able to adopt this. But I think it's something that they should adopt. And the other thing with AI is it's changing so rapidly that you can't say I'm done. I was speaking at IIT Bombay to a bunch of educationists from various universities across India. And in that session, the one thought I left them with is listen, you have a big issue now as educationists. Because you're not going to just be teaching, your student has to learn, it has to be a very continuous learning process where the content matter itself is changing so dynamically. I studied in my MBA Philip Kotler, Guru of marketing. That guy is still around. But some of those concepts have changed. So those are changed. But it is still changing in discrete steps. E-commerce is a new concept. So it changed 50 years back. That pace of change is going to be now every week now. Maybe every two months. I don't know, I'm just giving you an extreme example. And as a result, your learning has to now be what should you be taught? You should be taught how to learn. You should not be taught content. You should be taught how to learn and keep upgrading yourself every two weeks. So the education has to teach you how you learn, how do you learn rapidly, and then you go, and you do the learning through your own channels, and there will be some content matter and topics, but I think that's what is going to become important in the world of AI.

Q: How can India utilise its resources to compete at a global stage instead of hiding behind basic "jugaad"?

I think some of the things, jugaad is better hidden. We have the ability to build world-class innovations. Let me take an example. If you think of Land Rover, if you think of UPI. I'll go back a bit in time. I set up my first fund in 2010. It was called the India Innovation Fund; now it has become Bharat. That's all. India became Bharat. No difference. We invest in cutting-edge technology startups that are built for global markets. Now I, as an investor, can think, hey, I'm building a product for a global market. But when I re-evaluate these startups, I can think slightly differently. Which of these is solving a truly global problem? *When you think of a market, it's like how will I capture market share, how will I make money, how will I scale my business? When you think of solving a problem, you're creating a different type of impact.* Of course, B will lead to A. If you solve a big enough problem, you will make money. So that's how we look at it. What is the scale of impact that the startup can have? Can it really, truly change life?. The way Zepto has changed your life. Or the way Uber changed our lives. The way Swiggy has changed my life. Today, somebody in my family was ill elsewhere, about 20 minutes away. And I could place a Swiggy order for them and say, " Okay, you know you can't cook today, but here's the order. And that just got delivered now. Could I have done this 10 years back? 15 years back? No. So the way we live, our lives have changed. And it's changed because of technology and disruptions. And problems have been solved. I truly believe there are two types of people and startups. Some that play at the cutting edge. Push the boundaries of humanity. So Elon Musk is a good example. He tried an EV when nobody else was doing it. He's trying space, he's trying neuro, and there are many others. They're at the cutting edge. They're trying to push humanity's boundaries and find new things. There's another bunch of people who are saying, okay, these are the boundaries, but the masses don't have access to these things. Everybody doesn't have access. So I'll help using tech, or otherwise, I'll help bring the other masses to that boundary. It's like F1. In Formula 1, you push the boundaries of that vehicle. You try to make it do something the vehicle has never done before, ever. So you try a lot of engineering stuff, materials, gearbox combinations, everything is tried in that experimental thing where they put an expert to take it round the track and give us entertainment. There are billions of dollars spent on that. Over time, what has started over there is what you see in our automobiles of today, which we drive. What we drive on the roads, we are using something that got tested there first. 20 years later, what is getting tested today, maybe 10 years, 20 years later, these things will come. The amount of electronics in a car that is there today compared to what it was earlier. It all happened over there. The braking systems. Now you have that ABS braking, it all started from Formula 1, Formula 3, all of that. So again, just going back to the concept as a fund, as a fund, there is cutting-edge tech, pushing the boundaries, and we like to invest in startups that are pushing those boundaries. AI is one of the boundaries that people are pushing, but there are many other areas like materials, biotech and all of that.

Q: What are the most essential qualities or traits that you believe make a truly successful founder?

This is a very hard question, it has so many dimensions, so many layers to it, a lot of in, this has to be learned through experience, and I am still learning. Let me answer in two parts one is you have to love what you do it, you have to be love in tech, lets say its an R&D deep tech business, you got to really love it that you are trying to find out so much more and more and more and trying to push and trying trying trying, you are failing and failing and failing but still you are trying. The second is I think is a quality of resilience, which is as a founder you keep encountering failure you will keep trying again and again, you will have some very dark days that tonight you are losing sleep because you dont know tomorrow morning you are not able to pay your employees, you don't have money in the bank, what do you do? It's like your family is counting on you to feed them. Some founders just have a natural thick skin, which is good and bad and there are founders who care and are able to do with this pressure so resilience is the second thing, saying I see a night like this I am not able to sleep for days and then I will comeback and do this or I fail in 3 startups and Iam able to make 4th one, many people succeeded in their 3rd or fourth startup, so that nature of resilience and therefore how you learn from your previous experiences. The third thing, which I think is very, very important, is that founders psychologically have two different people in their persona. There are some people who are big dreamers and visionaries, and then there are some people who are very good at execution, the doers. Normally, every human being will either be A or B, or they will have 80% of either of them. Good founders have both in equal measure; they have vision, they have a dream, and they are able to transmit their dream. So, the best founders have both these psychological traits in equal measure, being a dreamer and a doer in equal measure and then changing, you should be dreaming at one moment and then executing the next moment.

Q: Could you elaborate on how Indians can elevate their traditional knowledge and innovation to match global standards?

So with the India Innovation Fund, the mission was to try and be able to do that in 2010. There was so little of that happening. Cutting-edge R&D out of India. Very few startups are doing that. At one point of time, people said will you even find two startups to invest in? So we did find startups. I can tell you with a lot of pride that I invested in a company in 2011, a Company called Sedemac. We invested when they were doing about 70 lakhs in annual revenue; now they are doing about 800 crores now in annual revenue. Their product goes into every two-wheeler, so they're on 40 million, 45 million out of two wheelers in India. If you own a two-wheeler, there's a good chance that Sedemac's product is inside. They have two types of products, one is a fuel efficiency product which uses some sensors, electronics and hardware to be able to improve fuel efficiency, and then the second is the product that where bikes when you stop, the engine goes off, you just press the throttle, you don't need to kick, it comes on. They brought that into bikes. It's a product that is in cars, but in bikes, you had to really bring down the cost, and they brought it through innovation and innovative technologies. But the reason I'm saying all of this is that at that point in time, people didn't know that you could have these out of India. Today, deep tech is such a buzz, there's policy, there's a lakh crore over the next five years, the government is putting in for deep tech startups. Through managers, through funds. How much is even the prime minister talking about deep tech and all of these things in India. Are we there? The answer is no. How far are we? The answer is very far. What is the pace at which we are moving? Earlier, we were not moving at all; now we are moving at a solid pace. So when there is something which is big and moving or advanced and moving slower, you move fast, you will catch up. And I think we will catch up, and many of my companies are now selling their solutions in global markets. In fact, one of the companies I invested in a bunch of students, we invested in a company called Detect. We are on the board as investors; they've always had this Chennai-based company, they've always had their board meetings here. Their next board meeting, for the first time ever, will be in the US. And I'm travelling for the board meeting. Why? Because most of their implementations are there, the founders have gone there. They are in some of the best companies, their product is in Shell, their product is in a big company called ENI, Exxon. So they are global. Where did they build, in India? It's an AI product for safety in industrial settings. So it's already happening. I think the pace, you should never be satisfied. Once our prime minister had said that, "I'm being a Gujarati, I'm never a satisfied guy. Now I'm not a Gujarati, but I'm still very unsatisfied as well." *The minute you get satisfied with your achievements, you're unlikely to try a little bit harder.* And so am I satisfied with where our ecosystem and innovation side is today? I think the answer is no. Is it in the right direction? The answer is yes. How much time will it take? It will take time. We should not get ahead of ourselves and say we are there. We should just believe that the talent exists and the talent is not jugadu talent. The talent is of a really high quality talent where engineers from India have gone to NASA. Engineers from India are leading the CEO of Microsoft. Google. IBM. How many more names do you want to take? Sun Microsystems was founded by an Indian. These are all Indian guys who studied here and went. So now the problem is they created value for an entity which was non-Indian. Now, can they create an entity which is Indian? Yes.

Q: What do you believe are the biggest global problems that, if solved, could address most of the world's other challenges?

I think I'll give 3, I think the biggest global issue, and I don't know how that can be solved through technology, is there is a lot of mental stress and friction that exists in the world today and it leads to illnesses, diseases, conflicts, there are many things of which the root cause is somebody's mental imbalance. In some cases, it can be so extreme that somebody goes into depression, somebody kills 20 people, or some guy wants to become president of Greenland, so it manifests differently. I think it requires a spiritual renaissance, either through tech or non-tech, or through fulfilling people's basic needs; it could be a mix of solutions, but that's a very big bucket. The second very big bucket, I think, is far more concrete in terms of things that we are looking at or things that we need to really solve, is the some amount of inequity which exists between people who have and people who don't have. The third is, I think, basic resources, clean air, clean water, clean environment, clean food, basically all of that, which is restoration of what was available a while back. Most of the problems can be solved by solving these 3 problems; they are the root problems.

Q: Why is it important to focus on getting patents and owning intellectual property rather than just writing code?

I must tell you one thing about Sedemac. Sedemac is a company in the small engine space. I went and met this guy when I first went and met him at IIT Bombay, he was still there, as in he was building his startup there, he's also a professor there. He spoke about engines. Now go back to my time as a Shippi. No, I said when he described everything they were doing, he spoke some very technical things they were doing on their product for small engines. He used a terminology, let's say, for example, called top dead centre. You will not understand what top dead center means related to an engine. He spoke about fuel injection. He spoke about all of these things. Do a Google and watch the commencement speech of Steve Jobs, his Commencement speech at Stanford University. So one of the things he says is "connect the dots. But you will not be able to connect the dots going forward. Only backwards, after it's over, you'll be able to connect the dots." Now, for me, in terms of my Shippi days, I was working with engines, in engines, with boilers, in boilers, when I say 'in', I was sitting inside an engine sometimes, and figuring out stuff. So when I left my job with Maersk, I said this is done because I was going to do an MBA after that, and I said this part of my life is done. I can forget about it. Because now you're moving to something very different. I came here, and when I met this prof, he was only talking about engines. Why could I understand? I could understand because of that. Another investor would not have been able to understand. And this company in that fund, India Innovation Fund I, ran from 2010 to 2017, this company did the best in my portfolio. There are three deep tech companies, two have done IPO, and this is the third one. So, they have done extremely well, deeptech has progressed but what I want to comeback is, connect the dots, I never knew that my first job would help me make an investment decision in the company which is doing so well and I understood because of that what was my history so everything is a learning, think of everything as a learning and you don't think hey I moved here, I moved there, why did I do this, why did I waste time that's a very narrow minded view of how you go through life.

Q: In the age of Generative AI, why must we pivot from being a 'Service Nation' of coders to a 'Product Nation' of creators?

I don't think service nation or product nation is relevant much more; I'll classify it as being tech innovators. The product or services don't matter how they go out; you are innovating on tech. So in today's balance, I've coined a phrase with AI, which is "moving from being a coder to being a creator", because then you are creating a solution. I think what Gen AI has done it has made easier to code, and therefore, the solution mindset is what I want India to have. In a service mindset, you are just delivering what somebody else is telling, asking and demanding. I actually love what Steve Jobs did. Everybody told him to listen to your customers and build according to your customers. Steve Jobs said they don't know what they want. I'll do it. It takes arrogance, it takes cockiness, it takes boldness, it takes that dreamer quality, and then it takes very strong execution skills, but then he's done. So I think the ability to create something new requires boldness. In 2010, when I started everybody said what's the need, do something which is current but now the time of deeptech has come, so you have to look forward do not just follow the herd into standard software jobs simply because they seem secure, that has been my mantra and that habit comes from the decisions you make at an early age suppose a Marwadi in his 20's spent 100 rupees in a business so at 40, he will want to do business his mind won't be in the job so *build the resilience to take risks, create genuine value, and own the intellectual property of the solutions you bring to the world.*

INTERVIEW WITH SHREYA PUNJ

-INTERVIEW BY HARSH NAGDA

Q: The idea of a 'Youth Renaissance' often implies young people redefining success on their own terms. Your journey from traditional publishing to building an independent digital voice reflects this shift. How do you think young professionals today are redefining a meaningful career in media and publishing?

I think the one great thing younger millennials and Gen Z have done is understand that they deserve better. They deserve better working conditions. They deserve work that feels meaningful and actually is also meaningful to their personal goals. And that they're unwilling to accept the status quo just because it has always existed. Whether that means taking their leaves as assigned by the company, whether that is working during working hours and not giving in, self-created pressure, or whether that is giving their 100% in cause-based meaning-making exercises, that is one aspect that this younger generation has definitely done and done so well. And older millennials/boomers/ anybody higher up in the hierarchy who got to the positions they are by not being able to do any of this will obviously critique it. But I don't think the younger ones should listen to that because those things never worked. The other aspect of that is how to redefine what success means to you. I think it comes from all of this because younger folks now have had better exposure right from a younger age about what they should want and what they shouldn't. And also seeing through the false promises that capitalism gives us. Success could look something as simple as just being in complete ownership of your time. Maybe you only do freelance. Maybe you only want to work in a corporation that supports your personal goals as well. Maybe you don't want to work in overly exploitative companies. So, being able to see the privilege one has and then using it for their own good is how I personally think younger people are redefining what success means to them. My own brother, for example, left two very high-paying jobs and is now a freelancer. And now, because his number one success metric in life is to have complete ownership of his time, which one can only do if they're a freelancer. So that's what he's chosen to do.



Shreya Punj is an Indian media and publishing professional known for her role as the e-commerce head at HarperCollins India. In this position, she has contributed to expanding the publisher's digital sales strategies, strengthening online distribution channels, and enhancing reader engagement in the evolving book market. She also runs @TheEditorRecommends (142K+ followers). My 'India, Pick Up the Book' series has reached over 5 million viewers, with 262K shares and 5,000+ comments.

Among her achievements, she is recognised for driving innovative e-commerce initiatives within the publishing industry and adapting traditional book retail to the digital landscape. Her work has played a key role in improving accessibility and reach for books in India, making her a significant figure in contemporary publishing and digital commerce.

Q: Many young people still face pressure to choose safe, conventional careers due to societal and financial expectations. What advice would you give students to move beyond this and pursue paths they truly feel passionate about?

The safety of a career and the choices you make do not work in a silo. If you are the first college graduate from your family, if you don't have the kind of privilege people around you have, you will be forced by life to make safer choices, to get yourself out of the zone you are in right now. And that game then has to be played. Similarly, I genuinely think it's a graph between privilege and the freedom of choice. So till the time you don't achieve a certain level of financial freedom, savings, making sure that your parents have health insurance, whatever it is that is needed in your home. So I think that balance is for everybody to calibrate for themselves. I am no one to speak on that because everybody's situation is very different. However, what I have found amongst all classes of privilege is that if you have a personal voice, whether it's a sub-stack, whether it's a great profile on x.com, whether it is thoughtful pieces on LinkedIn, whether it is the kind of networking you can do via any of these social media apps or network apps, that is what can set you apart and help you cut through the post hierarchies that exist in any capitalistic culture. Because when you are visible, and you're known for good work, even if it is just a good work of putting your thoughts out on current events, it could be something as simple as being the best at sending out cold DMs. You will be able to move faster despite the roadblocks set in place for you, which were not of your making. You were born into them. So that particular formula that you have to make for yourself has to come from acknowledging both the privilege you have and the disadvantages that exist for you.

Q: With young readers and creators on platforms like Instagram becoming active curators, critics, and trendsetters, how do you see this youth-driven book culture reshaping the publishing industry in India and globally?

I love it. If the young people can dictate or articulate what they want to read, whether that's fun stuff or whether it is by yet another version of Dostoevsky's *White Nights*, I'm here for it, as long as they're reading, as long as they're consuming art that makes them happy. Now, as far as how it affects the total publishing industry across the globe, the impact that Bookstagram and Booktalk have had on defining trends, they've only been able to produce, maybe say, five meaningful trends. The other thing that we see happen far more often is that somebody influential in this space will discover an older book, will discover something that was published 15 years ago, and bring that back to life, or bring that back into the larger public conscience. For example, there's this book called *I Who Have Never Known Men*. That became an Amazon bestseller across the globe because everybody on Booktalk was like, oh my god, this is the book to read, to the point where I could not escape it on my feed anywhere. And that unification of taste is something I find delightful. So those spikes that we observe when a book has been found or curated or championed by an internet critic or curator, those sometimes cause issues like, oh, we're out of stock for that book. We did not anticipate that demand. There's a sense of joy that, oh, something really great written for a previous generation is finding resonance even now. And that's a really affirmative thing for book publishers who are often told by all media that books are dying. So when a younger person picks up an old book and says, Hey, this could change your life, it renews our sense of optimism as well. So yes, we cater to the trends. That does take slightly more time. Anybody could become an author, and that's great. For traditional publishers like us, that still takes slightly more time because we are bound by the duty we have toward readers to produce books that can stay on your shelf and remain problem-free for at least half a decade. So that's the only difference that there is. But we are very clued into the trends that come and go. And I think you will not find a single publisher who is not excited about what you think will pop up in the next couple of years.

Q: With online communities like Bookstagram, BookTok, and Reddit reshaping reading culture and breaking traditional gatekeeping, how do you think this democratisation has changed whose voices are amplified and how publishing evolves?

I love the democratisation of any art form. However, the effects that we see online, one also has to be very careful about the fact that bubbles exist very quickly on the internet. There is a subtle form of elitism that still exists on the internet. Sometimes I worry about people who only read into a certain genre. Because no genre can offer you a complete food pyramid, you need a bit of everything in it for complete mental development, or even pleasure. So that does sometimes concern me. Because if somebody starts bashing a book, then everybody's bashing it. If somebody starts loving a book, then everybody's loving it to the point where there is no room for nuance or critique. Authors often get caught up in these types of conversations; you wouldn't want that. You want authors to continue doing what they're doing, without fear of sudden backlash, which they cannot anticipate or control. But yes, democratisation, where readers help other readers in upping their game, that's what it's all about. That is beautiful. Its impact on publishing can be observed from about a decade ago, when publishing houses started publishing content creators. So you have someone like Shivesh Bhatia from India, who, when he had about 150k followers, wrote his first book, and Harper Collins published him. Now he's a mega star. But that was one of the first books that focused on baking for aesthetics. Not a lot of people did that. And to be able to speak to an Instagram generation that sometimes posts food things just because they look pretty. And that's absolutely okay. That was a breakthrough moment. Then you had a lot of these cardinal creators who are professionals in their field, doctors, TAs, stock brokers, talking about their knowledge. And finding an audience who was willing to maybe buy their first book because they follow this person is a great change that we have observed. So content creators becoming authors, and creating first-time readers, has been one of the most positive things we've observed in the last decade, ever since the internet blew open the way we find things to consume.

Q: With the rise of niche online communities and a culture of gatekeeping—especially on platforms like Instagram—how do you think this is affecting young audiences today, particularly as reading habits appear to be declining?

Shreya Punj: So that's all true. In India, reading is increasing by almost 25% year on year. at the minimum, 21%. The number of books being bought by Gen Z is fairly high. Gen Z consumes 37% physical books, which means that they're buying paperbacks or hardbacks. So that is one aspect that I'm not worried about. As far as gatekeeping is concerned, it's absolutely fine. I also have three sets of recommendation lists where I sometimes don't want to share what I have loved immediately with someone because I'm not sure whether they'll value it. So gatekeeping is an innate part of any niche, and you can't take that away. But there is enough content out there for you not to feel like something is being hidden away from you. There is a selfishness there in gatekeeping because it takes time to also find things worth gatekeeping, and it is that effort that people are actually protecting. So I think it will always exist, and it's something we should be okay with.

Q: With AI rapidly transforming writing, editing, and content discovery—sometimes as a tool and sometimes as competition—how do you think it can be responsibly integrated into creative fields like publishing and storytelling without overshadowing human creativity?

Shreya Punj: I think if you come down to one, it's the individual integrity of it, which is, do you value the uphill task of actually writing a book? Do you value the fact that writing is inherently a meaning-making exercise? If you're OK outsourcing the meaning-making aspect of your life to a chatbot, then maybe don't write. Maybe you're not going to be able to articulate what other people also feel, because you're using this very generic, large language model. After all, we don't have actual artificial intelligence yet, at least not in the way that we're consuming it right now. Now, as far as companies are concerned, specifically publishers, overall, the consensus amongst the publishing industry is to use AI only for processes where we could use some level of automation, whether that is marketing, because programmatic ads don't require excessive human intervention now, whether it is doing a quick sweep of what is trending, what is not, just basic data analysis. Those are things that AI is being used for. I don't foresee a future where traditional publishers, at least, will want to publish only AI-written books. The value will always be in the human craft, and that, I think, is what will be taken forward. Assistance with AI, using AI for research, and other tertiary functions, which otherwise were very, very expensive. Those going to a chatbot slash model, I think that will help level the playing field and offer a lot of access to other people to maybe attempt to write a book when you have this gentle coach who's not going to shame you for not having completed 100 words a day. That could work.

Q: How do you see these big institutions of universities preparing young people for tech-enabled creative futures?

I'm not sure how they will, because the tech is evolving too fast. So the only way that they can keep up with it is by having the fundamentals right. Somebody who can use AI well to deliver on their vision will succeed more than somebody who says that they're a purist. That is one way of looking at it. But then you also have companies like Apple, which just created their entire logo animation by hand. So we will see the world split into yet another set of tools. And both will flourish in their own ways. Some will just flourish faster, because AI is a new goal thing. But the advent of the internet didn't make analogue things uncool. For a brief period of time, we saw Facebook groups do better than physical groups. But now you can see how Discord and other apps are making sure that Gen Z, who are looking for offline experiences, get those. Tops are being renamed experimental experience centres. So often, human beings revert to their default, which is that we are social animals who like touch. And we will want offline experiences. We may find AI very cool. Some people will use it very coolly, just like you have people who do iPhone photography really well. Those are also artists, but then there are people who still use the old film cameras, who also create art. It's just that it comes down to personal preference. Right now, we're just seeing that boom, where everybody seems to be talking about it. But the on-ground reality, once there's normalisation, will go back to pretty much the same thing, where the only jobs AI will take are the ones that never really required human humanity to exist there.

Q: today's youth are globally connected yet deeply rooted in local realities. How can publishing reflect this dual identity—being global in reach while staying grounded in regional and youth-centric narratives?

Shreya Punj: We do that by publishing young debut authors. So, for example, Avni Doshi from India was published here, went on to get shortlisted for the Booker Prize, thereby representing Indian reality on an international stage. You have somebody like Banu Mushtaq, whose book *Heartlamp* reflects the reality of the South Asian continent in a manner that clearly resonated with an international audience as well, because she won the International Booker Prize. Back in the 90s, you had Arundhati Roy do the same thing with her book. So there are plenty of debut authors, and in fact, not just debut, but also authors with a lot of backlist on their shoulders, who represent our local realities really well for the global stage. And that will always exist. So these are books that reflect Indian reality. The other interesting thing that's happening in publishing is now local language publishing, where you have books like, say, *Ram C/O Anandhi*, originally published in Malayalam, a new bestseller that's now being translated to English and can be consumed by everybody in India who can read English. Similarly, other translated works from Indian languages, which represent hyperlocal realities, are being translated into English for consumption by the global stage, including the rest of India. So the language is not a barrier anymore. Those are things that publishing does to ensure that stories from across the land, if chosen by the reader, are read by them.

Q: If this period is remembered as a youth renaissance in the future, what role do you hope reading, storytelling, and publishing will have played in shaping a more thoughtful and informed generation?

The role reading plays in the development of any generation. Reading is almost as old as humans themselves, and it allows us to understand what life is without necessarily having to go through every single hardship ourselves. Sometimes you read a book, and you understand that breaking a bone is very painful. And so you go through life without wanting to break a bone. Sometimes you read about a financial fraud and the duplicity that men can show. And you are more aware of the fact that people can harm you actively for their own good. Sometimes you read a love story that makes you cry, and it helps you realise that maybe the current relationship you're in is not all that good, and you deserve better because the relationship on paper seems to have certain qualities which don't seem like they're too good to be true. And sometimes, especially in India, I have found that reading a good book, reading good fiction, can help you forgive your parents for not knowing how to raise you the best way possible. It helps you understand that too many people are going through the same thing. It helps you humanise your parents and be more graceful about the fact that their life was also very tough, and they tried the best they could in the society they were raised in. So you become slightly more forgiving of them while becoming far more protective of your own peace. So that's what books help do. They will always help give us meaning and warn us of what could happen if we start reading.



SEMESTER IN STANZA

Let's start with September,
In New York's big halls,
Leaders gathered, and speeches soared.
Files so thick, promises rose high,
Solving the world,
Well, at least they try.

A global declaration, clear and wide,
To fight disease on every side.
"Less tobacco!" the nations cried,

Mental health support will expand its reach,
Bringing care within everyone's reach.
Then arose the climate issues
Planets coughed, "You're running late."
"Cut emissions! Act right now!"
Leaders replied the same as always, "We
vow!"

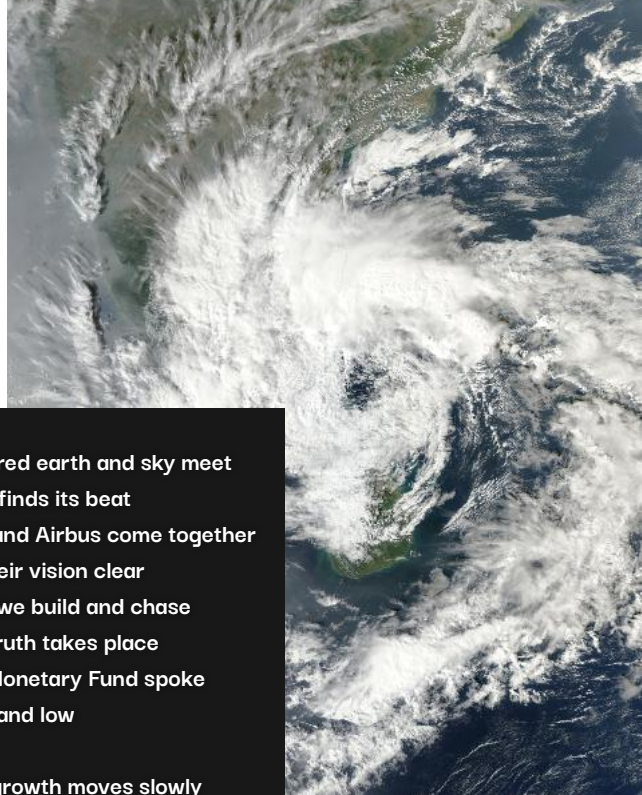
Nearly 100 countries took their stand,
With stronger targets finally planned.

China nodded, Nigeria too,
"Big goals? Sure, we'll follow through!"
Clean energy! They all agreed
(While flying back home, not so green).

Then came the G20 with science flair.
Truth and facts must lead the way,
And maybe less fake news each day.
So the world spins on, with hope and cheer.
Big promises are made every year.
If half comes true, we'll celebrate loud and
proud,

If not, same hall, same hopeful crowd.
In October's silent cold night
Nations moved with silent might
So silent, not even news could fight
In Kabul's heart, a door opens
From a small mission to an embassy strong
And showing its place where it belongs
Two nations finding something
To keep the region calm and wise
Not rushed like tweets that come and go
Where the future quietly rises





In Karnataka, where red earth and sky meet
Innovation finds its beat
The mighty Tata group and Airbus come together
And make their vision clear
Beyond the skies we build and chase
But a quieter truth takes place
The International Monetary Fund spoke
Calm and low

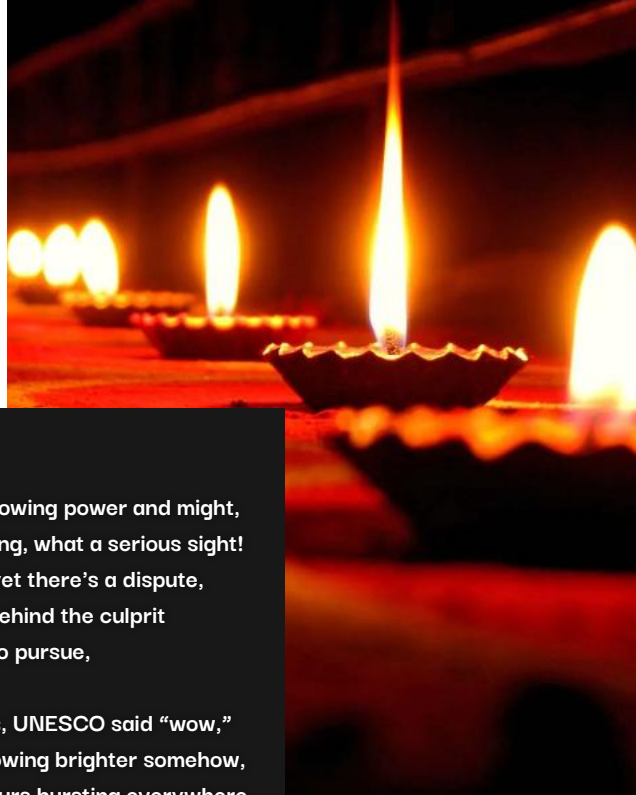
In a world where growth moves slowly
Then came November and
Doha decided to host a congress,
A movement towards growth in Asia's west
Even though the world was invited,
The rich countries weren't too excited.
Eradicating hunger, unemployment, and poverty,
They desired to pursue
But why make promises,
When you have commitment issues?
But all promises aren't meant to be broken,
They elevated youth rights
and their voices that were stolen.

Cyclone Dityah,
A cyclone so destructive,
It destroyed the roads and the hills,
All while drowning out the screams,
Of the people who were killed.
Thousands lost their homes,
And hundreds need to be found.
So, India sent financial aid,
Using the opportunity to rebound.

A regional effort,
To make people addicted
And the drug offenders?
They were never convicted.
Trafficked 1 tonne of cocaine,
Tried to stuff it in their nose,
US, Bahamas, Jamaica
They were all exposed

Come December,
Parliament passed SHANTI, saying "no need to
fear,"
Everything is perfect, all safety is here,
Finally, a law that respects workers' lives,
But can the government really compensate for its
people's demise?





China did big drills, showing power and might,
 Ships and planes moving, what a serious sight!
 All of these talks, yet there's a dispute,
 While worlds behind the culprit
 trying to pursue,

Deepavali got famous, UNESCO said "wow,"
 Now every street is glowing brighter somehow,
 Diyas, sweets, and colours bursting everywhere,
 Even darkness ran away "I can't compete, I swear!"

January brought surprising heat,
 While Iran refused to accept defeat
 US deployed arms and troops,
 Right after Venezuela had a coup.

On Republic Day,
 India and Europe joined hands,
 Agreements of friendship
 And cooperation, signed between
 The two great lands

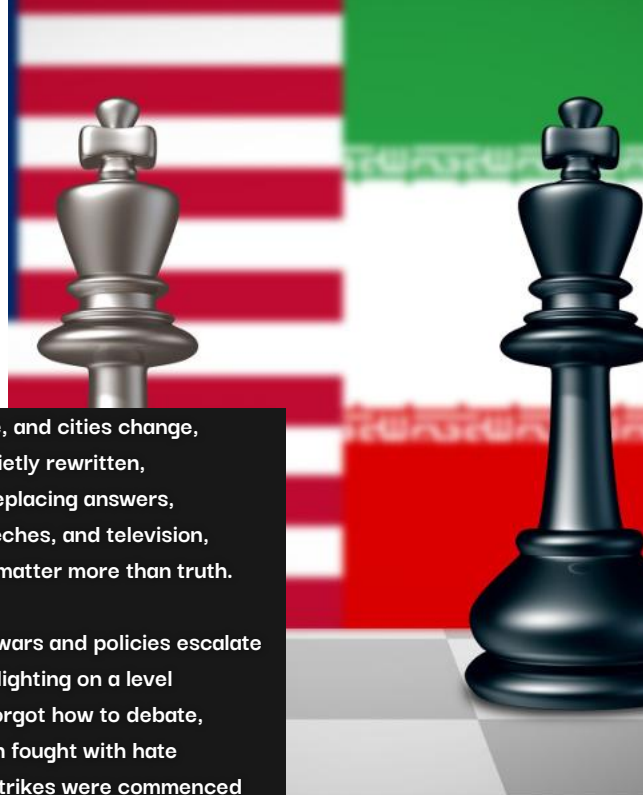
In February, the world comes in bullet points,
 Between shampoo ads and market charts,
 Another summit, another speech,
 Another leader says peace is near,
 While missiles wait just out of reach.

Trump signs tariffs left and right,
 Depending on his mood that day,
 Diplomats sit in Geneva halls,
 Saying plenty, meaning little,
 Then flying comfortably away.

The climate keeps on breaking down,
 Floods take roads and homes apart,
 Heatwaves spread through crowded cities,
 And glaciers melt into the sea,
 Like the planet losing heart.

India hosts grand summits proudly,
 With bright chandeliers overhead,
 While protesters are pushed outside,
 And billionaires preach AI's future,
 As algorithms decide who stays employed instead.





Textbooks change, and cities change,
 History is quietly rewritten,
 Slogans keep replacing answers,
 On billboards, speeches, and television,
 Where appearances matter more than truth.

In the month of March, wars and policies escalate
 Tactics and gaslighting on a level
 where the world forgot how to debate,
 The US and Iran fought with hate
 Massive and long air strikes were commenced
 The situation around the globe became tense
 A major US airstrike on Tehran,
 Everyone in Oman
 and around the world was left hairan
 Mojtaba Khamenei became the new supreme leader
 with a sudden rise, in retaliation,
 The Strait of Hormuz was closed,
 And disastrous was the oil price hike
 All the flight routes were suspended over the region
 Both parties confirmed massive damage in their
 legion.

On the other side of the world,
 Indonesia did things for the youth
 The policy in effect had to act as an inspirational tool
 The policy banned social media
 for children under sixteen
 To stop the children from spending too much time
 to the media and memes

In the cricket world,
 India created a massive history in our very soil
 Their efforts and results were a masterclass,
 We lifted the T20 World Cup
 and emerged as the winners with victory spoils
 The whole tournament, we remained undefeated.

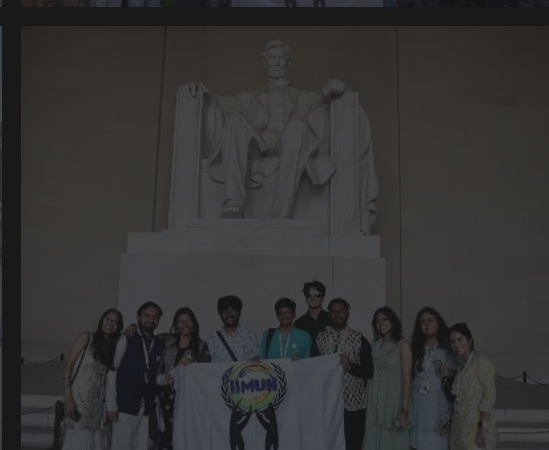
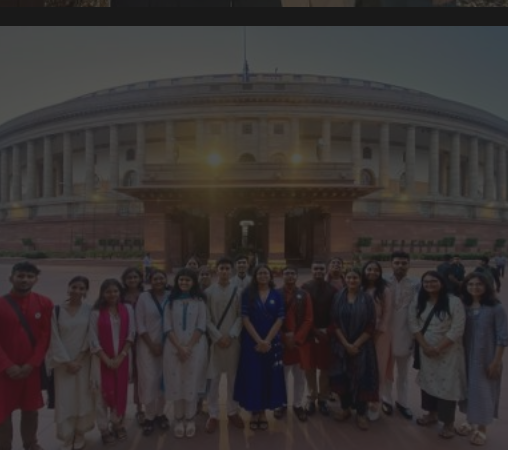
India created history by defending
 and lifting the trophy for 2 times in a row
 Every Indian rose, celebrated and bowed
 It was not just a victory but a statement
 A silent voice, sports is also a type of religion,
 not just entertainment

The Indian government introduced the Transgender
 Bill

But had a lot of loopholes that needed to be filled
 The bill amended the right to self-identification
 And received loud protests upon its introduction
 Despite the backlash, the bill was passed
 Leading public anger is rising with a blast



I.I.M.U.N. IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS



I.I.M.U.N. IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS



MONTH-WISE REPORTS

GLIMPSE OF I.I.M.U.N IN PAST
6 MONTHS





BUILDING GLOCAL CITIZENS



BUILDING GLOCAL CITIZENS



I.I.M.U.N. organizes a three-day educational extravaganza designed to cultivate "glocal" citizenship among adolescents by blending modern diplomacy with traditional Indian values. The experience begins with a grand inaugural ceremony where eminent speakers—ranging from Union Ministers and Chief Ministers to cinema icons and ambassadors—inspire students through a program interspersed with Indian traditional music and dance. The subsequent days focus on holistic development and rigorous simulation; students participate in Yoga and Ayurveda before being divided into committees to role-play leaders. In these sessions, they tackle pressing geopolitical, environmental, and cultural challenges through an Indian lens. Managed entirely by a dynamic team of 15 to 22-year-olds, the movement has scaled from four cities to over 220. In the 2025–26 cycle alone, the organization is bringing this transformative experience to 108+ select cities, impacting lakhs of students and requiring only the partnership of local premises to execute.

On the global stage, I.I.M.U.N. operates on the Gandhian philosophy of speaking "peace to power and consensus to conflict," an approach that remains central to its programs overseas. Since launching its international division in 2015 with its maiden conference in Bangladesh, the organization has expanded to over 35 countries across all continents, including Uruguay, Turkey, Japan, and Egypt. By introducing the "Movement to Unite Nations"—an evolved version of the Model United Nations—I.I.M.U.N. seeks to address the shortcomings of the UN by integrating Indian committees and global problem-solving through an indigenous perspective. These international programs have attracted a prestigious roster of speakers, including Heads of State, UN Secretary Generals, and Nobel Laureates. This expansion allows the organization to export Indian thought and culture while empowering youth worldwide to find consensus in an increasingly fractured geopolitical landscape.

BUILDING GLOCAL CITIZENS



IIMUN RAJKOT 5-7TH
SEPTEMBER 2025



IIMUN KASHMIR
18th-21st
SEPTEMBER 2025



IIMUN VELLORE
19th - 21st
SEPTEMBER, 2025



IIMUN BHOPAL
10th - 12th
OCTOBER, 2025



IIMUN
PONDICHERRY
10th - 12th
OCTOBER, 2025



IIMUN TRICHY 10th
- 12th OCTOBER,
2025



IIMUN JODHPUR
11th - 12th
OCTOBER 2025



IIMUN PORT BLAIR
11th - 12th
OCTOBER 2025



IIMUN BAREILY
29th - 31st
OCTOBER 2025
One World



IIMUN MEERUT
25th - 27th
OCTOBER 2025



IIMUN JALANDHAR
6th - 8th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN
AURANGABAD 7th -
9th NOVEMBER,
2025

BUILDING GLOCAL CITIZENS



IIMUN WEST
GODAVARI 7th -
9th NOVEMBER,
2025



IIMUN MADURAI
7th - 9th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN UJJAIN 7th -
9th NOVEMBER,
2025



IIMUN JHARSUGDA
7th - 9th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN
SAHARANPUR 8th
& 9th NOVEMBER,
2025



IIMUN HYDERABAD
14th-16th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN MUMBAI
14th-16th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN PANIPAT
14th-16th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN BILASPUR
14th-16th
NOVEMBER, 2025

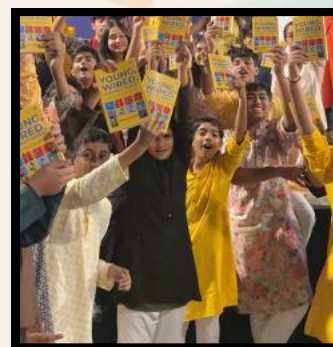
One World



IIMUN GORAKHPUR
21st-23rd
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN SIRSA 21st-
23rd NOVEMBER,
2025



IIMUN
AHMEDABAD 21st-
23rd NOVEMBER,
2025

BUILDING GLOBAL CITIZENS



IIMUN ERODE 21st-
23rd NOVEMBER,
2025



IIMUN DIMAPUR
27th-29th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN
KANYAKUMARI
27th-29th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN
ANKLESHWAR
28th- 30th
NOVEMBER, 2025



IIMUN BARODA 5th
- 7th DECEMBER,
2025



IIMUN ROHTAK
15th & 16th
DECEMBER, 2025



IIMUN MANDI 12th
to 14th DECEMBER,
2025



IIMUN BELGAUM
9th-11th JANUARY,
2026



IIMUN KOCHI 9th-
11th JANUARY,
2026

One World



IIMUN VIJAYWADA
9th-11th JANUARY,
2026



IIMUN KORBA 30th
Jan - 1st
FEBRUARY, 2026



IIMUN BARGARH
17th to 19th APRIL,
2026

BUILDING GLOCAL CITIZENS



IIMUN INDORE 17th to 19th APRIL, 2026



IIMUN KOLKATA 24th - 26th APRIL, 2026



IIMUN ERODE 24th - 26th APRIL, 2026



IIMUN SURAT 24th - 26th APRIL, 2026



IIMUN RANCHI 24th - 26th APRIL, 2026



IIMUN AMRITSAR 1st to 3rd MAY, 2026

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES



Kuwait

One World

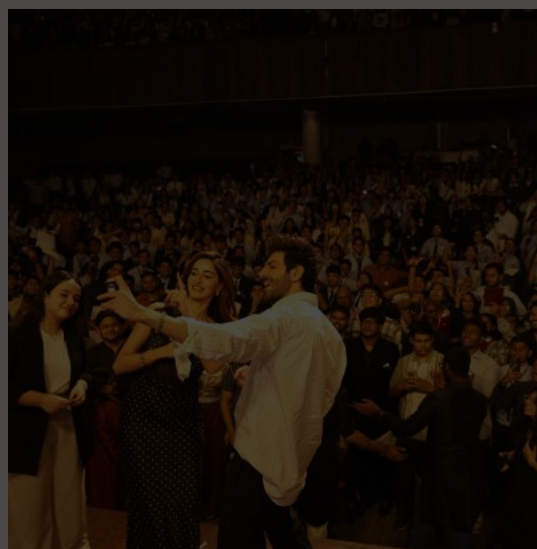
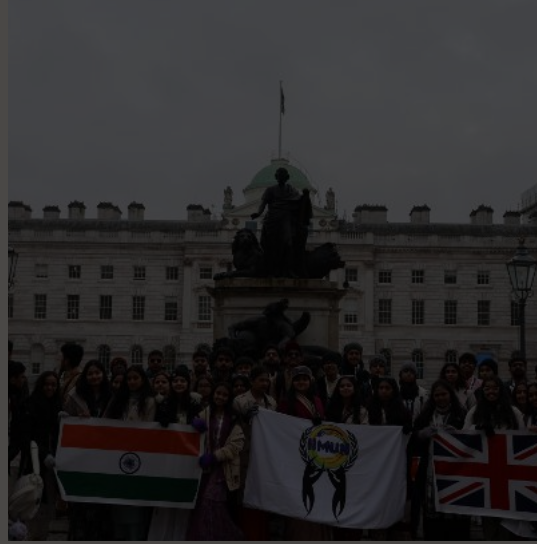


Japan

BUILDING GLOCAL CITIZENS



On our journey of building a Movement to Unite Nations, we are pleased to offer K-12 institutions an opportunity to establish an I.I.M.U.N. Club in their school for free. I.I.M.U.N. will guide you in replacing/setting up a MUN club with an I.I.M.U.N. Club and provide free yearly resources to teach students. Since the inception of this initiative in 2023, we have already set up clubs in 10,000+ schools across India and the world. The club is divided into two parts for Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12, focusing on communication skills, leadership, Indian politics, current affairs, and international studies. It is led by a teacher who will receive the necessary materials and regular training sessions. If the school so desires, I.I.M.U.N. can recommend faculty who can teach at the school as well. Teacher Coordinators and Club Presidents enjoy perks at I.I.M.U.N. conferences, and participating schools receive exclusive invitations to various I.I.M.U.N. events. Regular reports from Teacher Coordinators and Club Presidents ensure quality education within the club, which functions to kindle Indian thought in all students, while building glocal leaders



ROLE MODEL SERIES



In a day and age where everything is about instant gratification and changing definitions of role models, the idea is to have school children exposed to those who inspire not just because of their distinguished and hardworking careers but also because of the way they conduct themselves. The series focuses on the lives of these Role Models who are living embodiments of age-old Indian values such as simplicity and humility. Started during the pandemic as an online series, we have moved I.I.M.U.N.'s Role Model Series into an interactive platform for students to meet and learn from the life stories of their role models. Hosted in one central location and open to school students from across that city, we currently organise this in Mumbai and Srinagar. The program aims to have students interact with luminaries from various walks of life, learn, be inspired, and follow in the footsteps of these role models. A pro-bono effort by I.I.M.U.N., the offline in-person series has brought the likes of Dia Mirza, Javed Akhtar, Harsh Mariwala, Anu Aga, S Somnath and many others together

TOURS



Leadership tours serve as a bridge between the existing educational curriculum and the 21st-century life skills needed in the workplace. Primarily created for 20-30 high school and college students, these immersive real-life experiences offer selected students from across India the chance to meet industry leaders and study their setups. Typically conducted as 5-day programs, these tours involve 12-15 interactions at the Headquarters or residences of these luminaries, providing students with a unique opportunity for in-depth conversations and a deeper understanding of various industries. I.I.M.U.N. currently conducts leadership tours in the below mentioned 8 fields.

TOURS



Tech & AI Tour



Economics and Finance Tour



Design Tour



Business Tour



Shri Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
(71th Custodian of the House of Mewar)

Hospitality Tour



Law Tour

TOURS



Delhi Leadership Tour



Mumbai Leadership Tour



Hyderabad Leadership Tour



Civil Services Tour



Armed Forces Tour

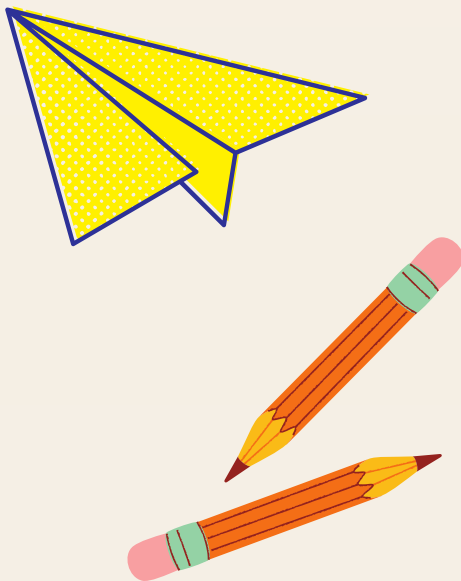


RECIPES FOR SUCCESS



An ongoing Instagram Live series in association with the Culinary Arts Academy, Switzerland. This series features conversations with globally renowned Chefs where they spill ingredients of success as they share life lessons from their journey.

BACK TO SCHOOL



An initiative that connects schools across India and the world via video conferencing, enabling today's leaders to share leadership and life lessons with 50,000–500,000 students in a single session. These rare interactions have featured notable guests like Karan Johar and the late former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee

YOUTHCONNECT WITH DEVABHAU

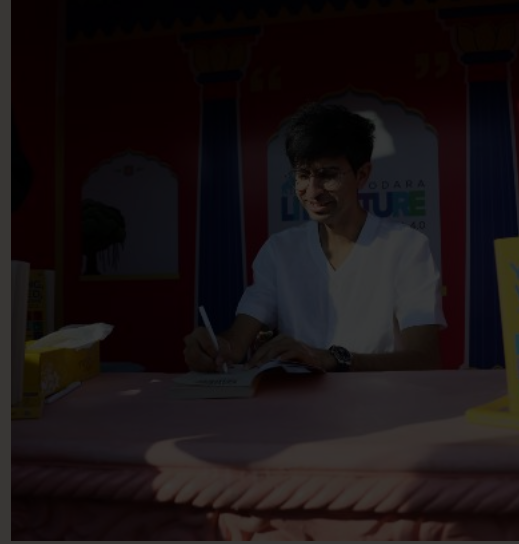
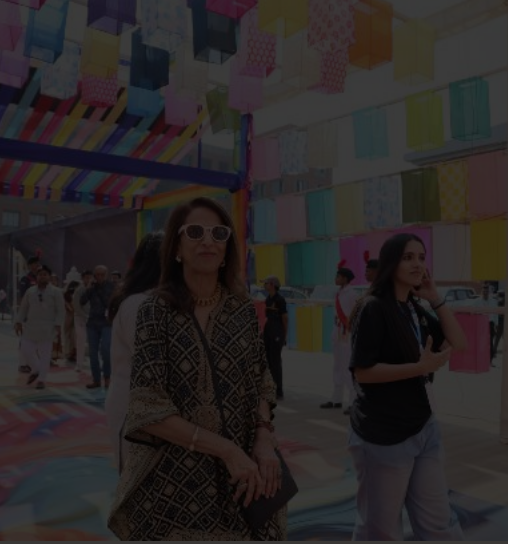


At I.I.M.U.N.'s Youth Connect in Mumbai, over 6,000 leaders of tomorrow representing 175+ educational institutions came together for an engaging and insightful interaction with Maharashtra's Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis. Blending politics with humour and even a touch of Gen Z slang, the session created a unique space where governance became accessible, relatable, and inspiring for young minds.

Addressing a packed audience at the iconic NSCI dome, the Chief Minister spoke extensively about Maharashtra's rapidly evolving infrastructure landscape and the long-term vision shaping Mumbai's future. He highlighted key projects including the Thane-Borivali and Mulund-Goregaon tunnel corridors, the extension of the Coastal Road up to Bhayandar, and a series of new connectors designed to significantly improve east-west connectivity across the city. He further shared that the proposed tunnel connecting Atal Setu to Girgaon Chowpatty through the Eastern Express Highway is expected to be completed within the next three years, marking another major step towards transforming urban mobility.



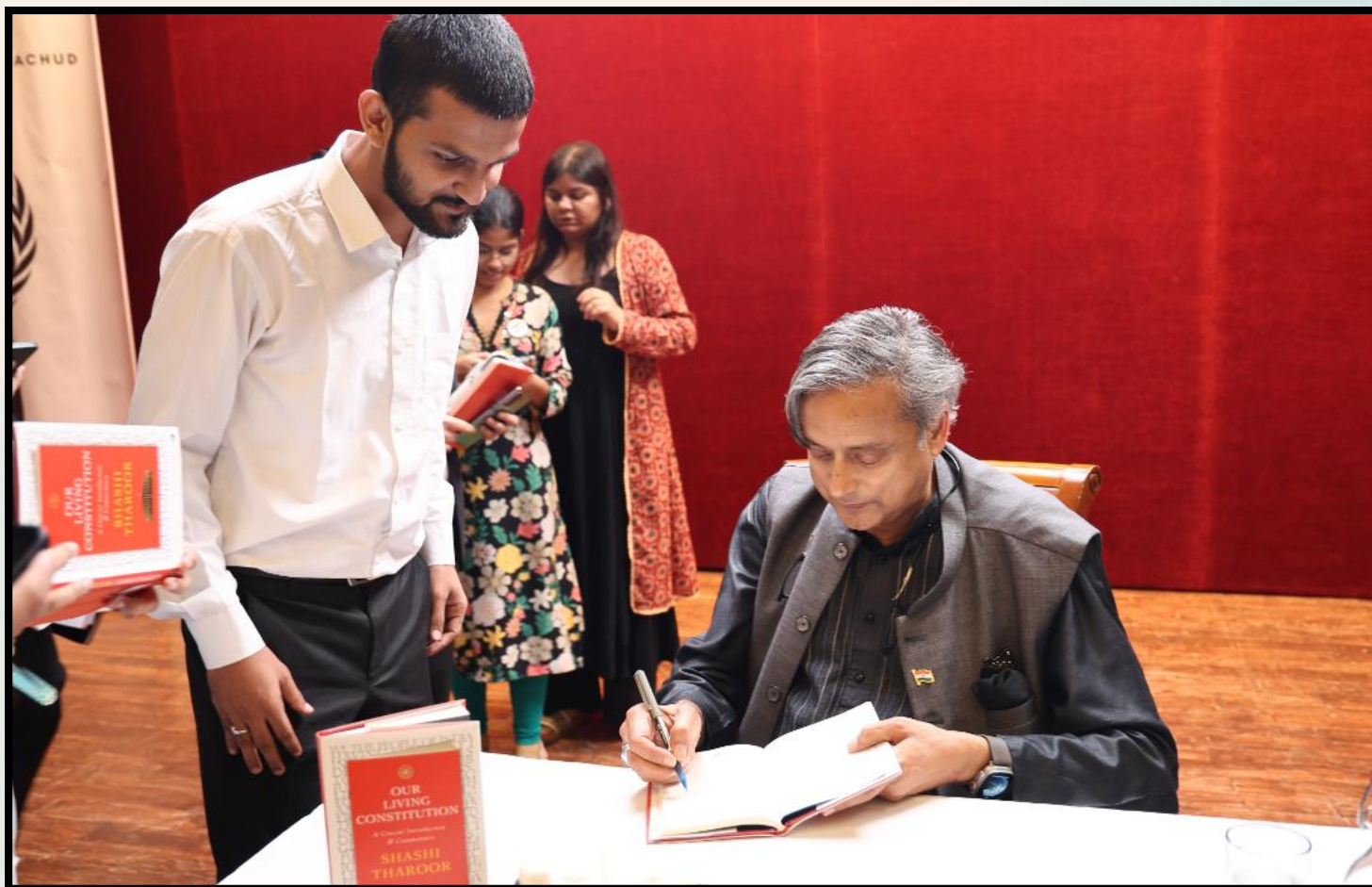
The conversation also focused on innovation in public transport with the launch of the Mumbai One app, aimed at creating seamless travel through integrated ticketing across Metro, suburban rail, and BEST services. Reassuring commuters, he emphasised that second-class suburban fares would remain unchanged even as Mumbai gradually transitions towards fully air-conditioned public transport systems. The session reflected I.I.M.U.N.'s commitment to connecting young leaders with policymakers and creating meaningful conversations that shape the future of India.



PROMOTING LITERATURE



AUTHOR SERIES



The I.I.M.U.N. Author Series is an initiative aimed at fostering a love for reading among students by connecting them with renowned authors. In this series, I.I.M.U.N. Founder Rishabh Shah engages in conversations with a diverse range of literary figures, from international bestsellers like Jeffrey Archer to prominent Indian authors, discussing their works, inspirations, and the transformative power of literature. These dialogues are designed to inspire young minds, making literature more accessible and engaging, especially in regions where such interactions are rare.

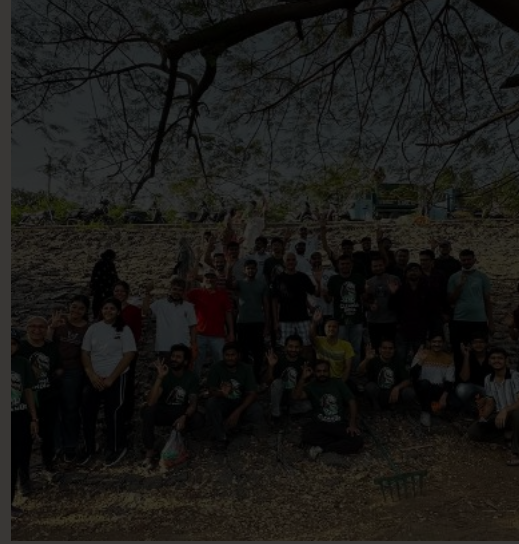
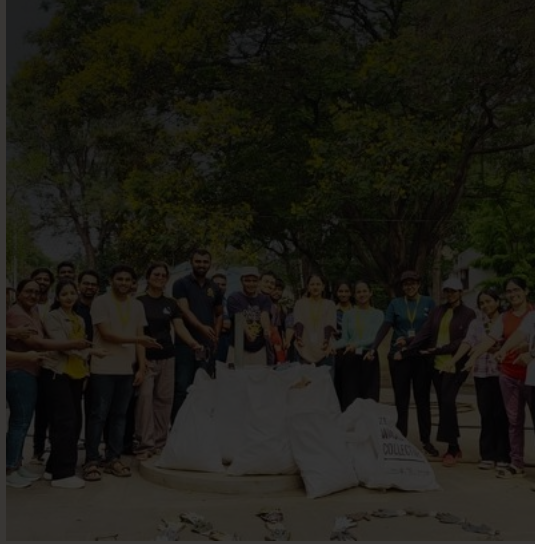


VADODARA LITERATURE FESTIVAL

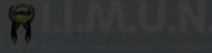


I.I.M.U.N. organises exclusive author tours for a diverse range of distinguished luminaries, with the primary aim of fostering a nationwide appreciation for the transformative power of reading. Through these carefully curated events, we seek to engage students across the country, inspire a love for literature, and elevate the cultural significance of books and storytelling in our society. The I.I.M.U.N. Author Series is an initiative aimed at fostering a love for reading among students by connecting them with renowned authors. In this series, I.I.M.U.N. Founder Rishabh Shah engages in conversations with a diverse range of literary figures, from international bestsellers like Jeffrey Archer to prominent Indian authors, discussing their works, inspirations, and the transformative power of literature. These dialogues are designed to inspire young minds, making literature more accessible and engaging, especially in regions where such interactions are rare.





PATNA
पटना काशी डीएम फंड
डीएम, गार्डिअन - लाईन



SOCIAL IMPACT



I.M.U.N. CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BY
CONDUCTING SELF-DEFENCE WORKSHOPS ACROSS 50+ CITIES



SOCIAL IMPACT

Meaningful change often stems from individual action, community, and service



September

Founder's day
celebration and
National Wildlife Day



November

Children's Day

October

World Mental Health Day



December

Christmas



SOCIAL IMPACT



January

Republic Day

February

Valentine's Day in Old Age Homes



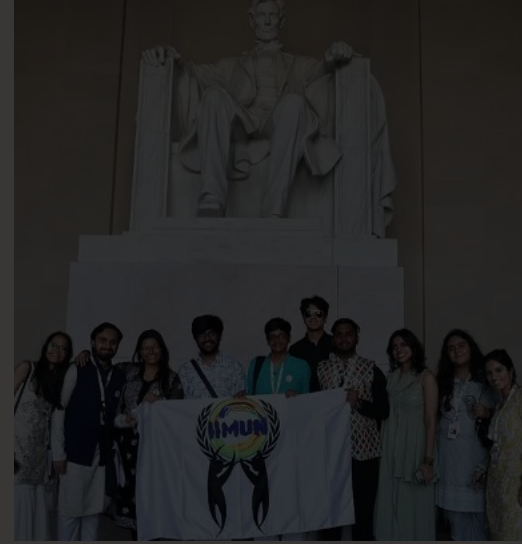
March

Women's Day and Dr. Tharoor's 70th b'day

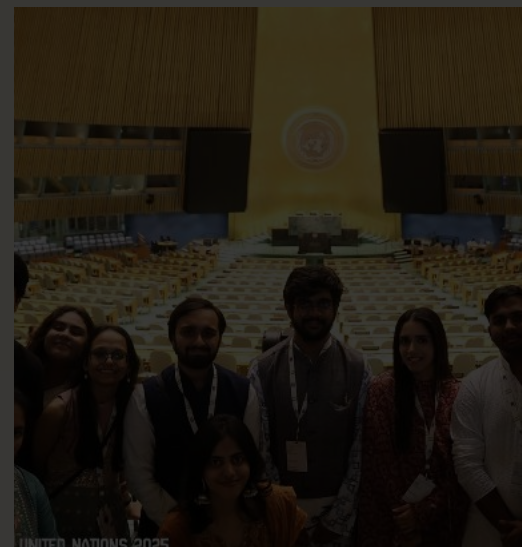
April

Swachh Sagar with Indian Navy





ICONIC PLACES



USA TOUR



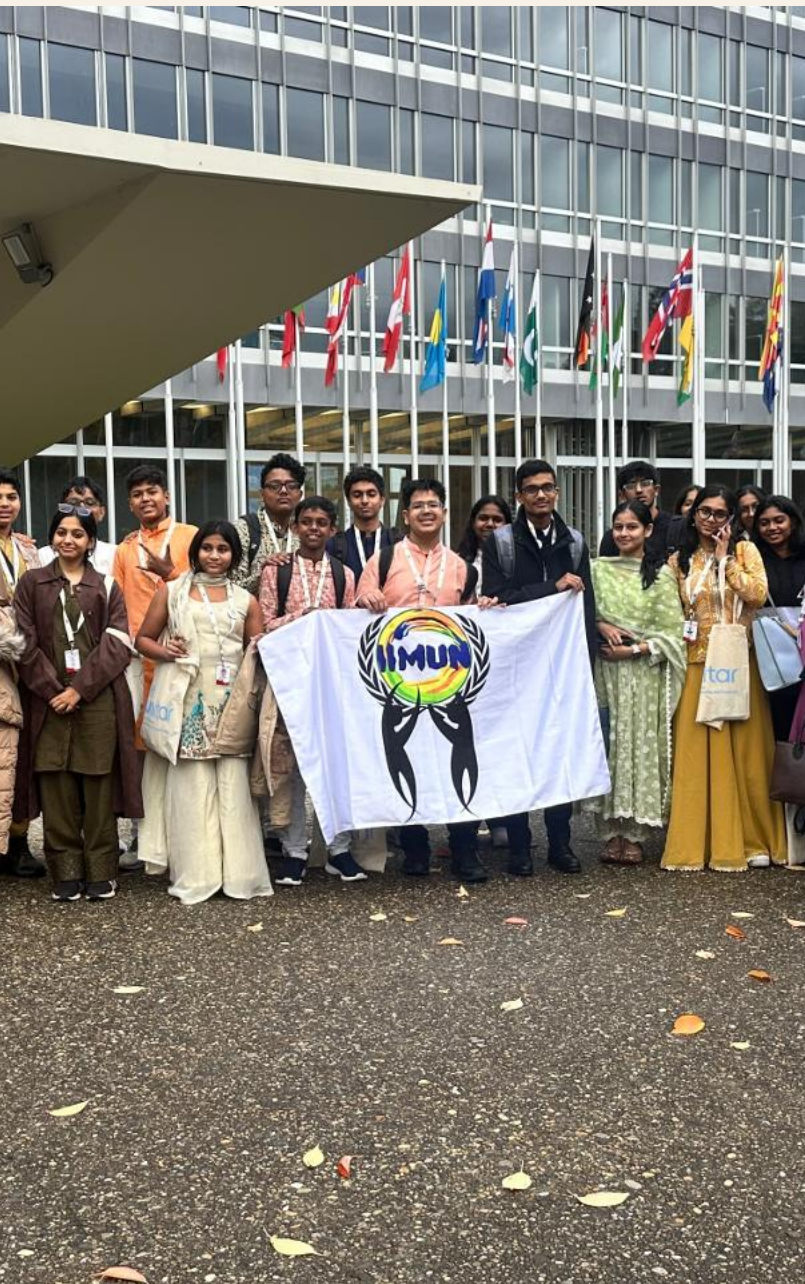
In the month of September, IIMUN took 20 students from India and flew to the United States of America for a global learning experience which spanned 16 days across 5 cities. Starting with Seattle, we met with distinguished leaders in their headquarters to get the real world knowledge which goes beyond textbooks. The 3 days in the city included conversations with Microsoft, Amazon, Starbucks and many more. Next was Washington DC where we had the honour of being in conversation with the Second Lady of the USA, Usha Vance. We visited the IMF, World Bank, Supreme Court, and other significant institutions for a deeper understanding of global governance and economic systems. Our next city, San Francisco, consisted of dialogues surrounding entrepreneurship and innovation with Google, Cisco, Uber along with an academic engagement with Stanford University. Coming to Boston for a rich academic and cultural experience, we had the privilege of visiting Harvard University, when it had its doors closed to the world. We interacted with MIT, Tufts University, Museum of Fine Arts, to name a few. The tour ended in New York which had the most number of engagements with leading financial and consulting groups which included Bank of America, United Nations, Boston Consulting Group, Blackstone, Citibank and a cultural visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, along with an unexpected visit to the Bungalow restaurant.

UK TOUR



The third edition of I.I.M.U.N.'s UK Study Tour kicked off on a proud note as the delegation joined the Republic Day celebrations at the High Commission of India in London. This symbolic start perfectly set the tone for a journey focused on diplomacy and global engagement. Following the celebrations, the students embarked on an intensive academic tour of the UK's finest institutions. At King's College London, they discussed higher education, student life, and interdisciplinary learning. Next, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) highlighted the global impact of public policy, economics, and international relations. The journey continued with an immersive experience at the historic University of Oxford, exposing students to centuries of academic tradition. Shifting the focus to innovation, the delegation visited Imperial College London for an academic session and campus tour centered on science, engineering, and technology. A major milestone of the trip was an exclusive interaction at the UK Parliament with Lord Bob Blackman and Lord Karan Bilimoria. This rare session provided the delegation with deep insights into the British democratic system, the responsibilities of elected officials, and complex legislative processes. The academic exploration then moved to the University of Cambridge, featuring a guided tour and engaging discussions within its renowned collegiate ecosystem. The tour's intellectual core culminated at the India Gymkhana in London. Here, students engaged in a full-day debate and leadership program, tackling contemporary global issues, which concluded with a formal certificate distribution ceremony. Balanced with curated sightseeing across London's cultural landmarks, the 2026 I.I.M.U.N. United Kingdom Study Tour successfully exposed young minds to premier British governance and education through an Indian lens, fostering leadership, active dialogue, and cross-cultural understanding for the leaders of tomorrow.

SWITZERLAND



Some journeys leave an indelible mark on young minds, and the I.I.M.U.N. Switzerland Study Tour was undeniably one of them, offering students a profound opportunity to experience global institutions and cultures firsthand. The adventure began in Zurich with an enriching city history tour, followed by an immersive visit to the Lindt Chocolate Factory, where students watched the chocolate-making process unfold and enjoyed an unlimited tasting session. The academic core of the trip then ignited at the World Health Organization headquarters. During a prestigious opening ceremony, prominent leaders—including Former Moldovan Prime Minister Chiril Gaburici and diplomats from WIPO, Switzerland, and Australia—shared vital insights on leadership and multilateralism. Acting as the UN General Assembly, the students then debated the complex agenda of United Nations reforms, an experience made incredibly realistic by taking place inside a specialized UN agency. The following day shifted from diplomacy to science with a tour of CERN, the world's largest particle physics lab, featuring an inspiring interaction with Senior Physicist Dr. Archana Sharma. On October 24th, fittingly United Nations Day, the delegation visited the Palace of Nations. Sitting in the iconic UN Assembly Hall offered students a quiet but powerful realization of global scale and civic responsibility. The final leg of the journey focused on practical skill-building through expert-led workshops at the WMO and UNHRC headquarters, covering negotiation techniques, the Sustainable Development Goals, and UN career paths, before concluding with a peaceful Lake Geneva cruise. Ultimately, what made this tour extraordinary was the students' vibrant curiosity. The journey proved that when young Indians receive genuine global exposure, they do not just observe the world—they confidently begin to imagine their own place within it.



RSS HQ



In this auspicious year we the Centenary Year of the Sangh, we were blessed with the opportunity to be in the presence of Param Pujya Sarsanghchalak Shri Mohan Ji Bhagwat, the head of the world's largest organization. Despite leading such a vast and powerful movement across the nation and the world, his simplicity and warmth made us feel no sense of distance. It never felt as though he was separate from us, rather, it felt as if we all belonged to one family. During the meal, the way he gently asked us to take more food was exactly like the affectionate insistence of an elder at home. At no moment did it feel like we were away from our own home. Visiting the Samadhi Sthal of Pujya Dr. Sahab and Pujya Shri Guruji deeply stirred my heart. The room in Dr. Sahab's home where the seed of this great Kalpavraksha was first sown felt no less than a sacred pilgrimage site. We were also fortunate to spend meaningful time with the Kshetra Pracharak, Shri Sumant Ji, which in itself was a deeply enriching experience.

IIMUN HQ



The opening of the new I.I.M.U.N. Headquarters marks far more than the inauguration of a new space; it stands as a defining milestone in the organisation's journey of shaping tomorrow's leaders and spreading the idea of India across generations. Inspired by all 28 states and 8 union territories, the headquarters has been thoughtfully designed so that every corner reflects a fragment of India's identity, celebrating the diversity, culture, values, and stories that bind the nation together. More than architecture, this space embodies a vision of unity in diversity and serves as a reminder that meaningful change begins with conversation and understanding. Built to be sustainable and eco conscious, the headquarters has been envisioned not as an office, but as a dynamic space for ideas to flourish, perspectives to meet, debates to unfold, and communities to grow. It is designed to encourage curiosity, collaboration, and the kind of youthful energy that refuses to remain contained within four walls. For an organisation rooted in leadership, nation building, and meaningful dialogue, there could have been no more fitting person to inaugurate this new beginning than General Upendra Dwivedi Sir and Mr Deepak Parekh Sir. Making the occasion even more memorable, he also engaged in an interaction with 100 select heads of schools from across the country, inspiring discussions on leadership, education, responsibility, and the collective role of young people in shaping India's future.



ARTICLES



PLAYING ON A PLANET ON FIRE: HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS QUIETLY REWRITING THE FUTURE OF SPORT

-Vishal Bhardwaj



Sports is the word that connects every age of Human beings on this planet; it is humanity's way of celebrating creativity, experience, and sharing joy. From the Cricket stadium in Mumbai to a local Football ground in England, games link people across borders and generations. Yet, these are the same places with Pure air, open skies, and snow in some regions, where people come to enjoy the scenery. However, it has become increasingly complex to play any sports due to the restrictions on when, where, and even how to play in these conditions.

The impact of climate change extends to human health, particularly for young athletes. As climate conditions worsen, it becomes increasingly challenging for young people to participate in sports safely. For example, a recent survey in the United States reported that approximately 9,000 high school athletes are treated for heat-related issues each year. This trend is not isolated; sports that require more physical exertion see even greater risks, and a study in Japan warns that by 2060, summer sports for children may need to be entirely curtailed during the peak summer months to ensure the safety of the people.

The climate is amplifying the disparity among the people even more because sports are one of the things which are enjoyed and played regardless of the disparity, but in the situation, it is only the wealthy foundations now who can afford to build indoor stadiums and indoor training centres. At the same time, the minor associations struggle to make ends meet. This difference is evident not only between nations, but also within them. We can see:

- 1) Many coaching institutions and playgrounds in many countries are either dry or underwater, as this damages infrastructure and destroys the playing field
- 2) Due to the unpredictable climate changes, forest fires are increasing day by day, which are causing wildfires and industrial emissions, which can compromise the health of the people, especially in the long run.

As sports are not merely entertainment for developing countries, they act as a tool for primary economic stability, and most major sports depend on outdoor tournaments. Most vulnerable nations contribute less to pollution emissions, but they are the ones who suffer the most from climate-driven disruptions.

The Global sports are a trillion-dollar industries which is growing more with the increase in the interest of people in regards to sports but the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that the losses due to the weather related problems are increasing more and this is costing the sports industry billions annually because when a tournament is planned in a place everyone in that place the host city, small vendors and the broadcasters all gain employment. However, due to the cancellation of the Event, everyone is affected economically.

Usually it's the poor people who have suffered due to the climate effects but with the increasing in pollution even the internationals matches played all over the are postponed or the match is called off due to adverse climate, recently a Cricket Match between India and South Africa has been called off due to pollution contents in the air due to which the visibility has been negligible to the human eye and in many tournaments its not only the players who are getting suffered but its also the viewers who come from far to cheer for their respective team suffer due to the climate.

To address these challenges and preserve the vital role of sports, athletes and youth ambassadors are advocating for sustainability. Stadiums now incorporate features such as solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and natural ventilation to minimise their environmental impact. Initiatives such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic medals made from recycled electronics demonstrate a commitment to the circular economy. In India, teenage cricketers are spreading awareness among people regarding the rising temperature. Grassroots efforts, such as beach cleaning programs and tree-planting rewards for winners, also promote environmental responsibility. In Kenya, football academics are using a solar irrigation system to reduce their dependency on natural resources. These collective actions can help ensure that future generations enjoy sports within a healthier environment because, on the evening of every day, a young child with a hope in his heart, still believing in the magic of the game, ties their laces and enters the field, continuing to play despite the odds of a better climate because we do not know what will be the situation in 2060 but the spirit to play the sport will ensure the humans to adopt because its the nature of humanity, mainly the youth with their determination for a better, innovative change in the future they will take charge in transforming the world as they all stand by the line

The future of sports is uncertain, but irrespective of the circumstances, as long as we play, there is hope for a better tomorrow

YOU ARE NOT DUMB, YOU ARE NOT DUMB ENOUGH

-Vasundhara Shekhawat



The room thunders with applause as the ghazal maestro finishes the antra, and of all the people present there - one student was more inspired than the others by the performance. Awkward and curious, he went up to the singer on the stage as he wanted to meet the person who just moved him with their voice and talent. As he was speaking with the singer, drawn in by the depth of their music and the quiet impact it carried, the student, almost hesitantly, asked if this ghazal guru might be willing to take him on as his student.

After being called a lost case by his professors in music school and being “the worst among his peers” he was determined to prove this hypothesis wrong. The singer, slightly amused, gently declined him, explaining that they did not usually take on students. And following the proverb “Closed mouths don’t get fed”, the student was persistent in his request and convinced the singer to be his guru.

Days went on and months passed but the student was not up to the mark according to his guru. He again faced this harsh feedback that he was the worst among all the students. Disheartened but still determined, he again went to his guru and asked him “Guruji, what must I do to become a good singer? I am willing to do anything.” to that his guru replied “No, no. Perhaps you should pursue a different instrument; I don’t think you’ll be able to devote yourself fully to this”. Still firm in his belief he asked his guru to train him strictly which led to rigorous training of hours and hours of riyaz.

Cut to the D-Day, he had been a part of a competition. There were hundreds of participants, 1100 in total and he went on stage and sang. After qualifying among 500, then 100, then 50, and then at last five, he was among the top contestants. There all the competing participants were given a task of singing a composition in a random raag provided by the judges. Thanks to his intense but gratifying training he went on and composed on the spot and sang with sincerity. And now this curious yet obstinate student is titled “Junior Jagjit Singh”.

After this story I was sitting in awe and inspiration and I developed this thought that in order to turn your dreams into reality you need to be audacious enough to ask, tenacious enough to keep going, and dumb enough to believe in your dreams. On that day I took more than just a “riyaaz karte rehna” back home.

Audacity - lately this has become a favourite word for me. This quality is not only admirable but necessary to achieve your dreams. Some people have a tunnel vision and they only see their goals and means to achieve them. The number one thing on their mind is not other people's expectations or how brash they are looking to the world but this desire to achieve their vision. This attribute from the outside sometimes looks like delusion and maybe that might be the case in the beginning but through consistent work this delusion turns into reality and the same people concur with your vision because audacity is usually met with acceptance when it is backed by delivery.

One of the world's most renowned visionary, Steve Jobs during his acceptance speech at Stanford University mentioned how he dropped out of college following his curiosity and intuition because he could not see value in college at that point of time. This led to him taking calligraphy classes at campus which later on helped him make a computer with beautiful typography and possibly that is why we have computers with varied typographies. This brings the core question that why are people so afraid to take risks? The answer usually comes down to a single word “unpredictability”. Humans are afraid of the unknown. They shrink from stepping onto a path whose end lies hidden from sight. When you set a goal and decide to walk on an unconventional path you sign yourself up for uncertainty. You don't see the full picture yet but only the step in front of you. However you need to have the gall to be uncertain and clueless to become competent because the journey itself prepares you for the path ahead.

“No matter how isolated you are and how lonely you feel, if you do your work truly and conscientiously, unknown allies will come and seek you”, this quote from Jung rings the same message that in the beginning you may come to believe that what you want is somehow beyond you, that your sense of it reaches farther than you do, and this distance for a time leaves you lonely. But you keep your head down and work with unrelenting sincerity because along the way you will find someone who is as dumb as you and dares to think this big.

This reminds me of an acceptance speech made by Greta Gerwig for the Barbie movie. While talking about a song of the film she said “I cannot imagine the movie without this song and I can't believe that I started shooting this film without knowing that I'd get it but that's the magic of movies, the faith that the perfect people will come along and give you back what you didn't even know you needed”.

This idea extends into life too. When you begin something like a business or any project, you do so without knowing if the right resources will appear, or if the right people will find their way to you. And yet, it is precisely in this uncertainty that something like magic resides; because, after time and a quiet accumulation of effort, it all comes together and you realise that everything was working in your favour. Returning to the Steve Jobs story, he said “you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.”

All things considered, it seems safe to say that there is nothing inherently foolish in being a little unreasonable about your goals or as I say being dumb for your dreams. And be cautious, that careful instinct to play it safe, has a way of turning quietly counterproductive for those who are meant to want more. That said, I will leave you here, at the close by urging you to trust the process, fail forward, and dream foolishly as the fortune favours the dumb.

2026 IS THE NEW 2016: HOW GEN Z'S OBSESSION WITH THE PAST SHAPES OUR POLITICAL FUTURE

-Nishka Tomar



Old Arcade Games, Journaling, Polaroid Photos, Vinyls, Mixtapes and Y2K fashion. What do all these things have in common? At the very first glance, it's clear that they are remnants of a bygone past, elements of a world that existed not so long ago and yet feels almost obsolete today. But what stands out most about these is that they are hobbies and trends co-opted by Generation Z. A Generation that barely lived through and experienced most of these trends itself.

Today's world, if summed up in a few words, can be best described as a perpetual state of fast-paced, miscellaneous events clouded by feelings of confusion, uncertainty, and grim hopelessness. When the world was hit by a global pandemic in 2020, a majority of young people globally in middle school, high school, and early years of university were forced into social isolation, disconnection from their peers and physical human interactions in the most formative years of their lives. Simultaneously and perhaps as a direct consequence, the 2020s emerged as a time of rising political dissatisfaction and economic instability. To top it all off, the hyper-connected online world made it easier than ever before for people to get the latest news, facts and figures about the millions of deaths happening every day, which often included their own family and friends.

This background needs to be kept in mind when we evaluate how the world as we knew it changed forever in 2020, and it has never been the same since. Fundamental changes such as this are just as disruptive as they are inevitable, especially when they take place too fast to be properly comprehended.

Historically, humans have relied on social connections and community engagements to cope with the inescapable misfortunes of life, and that has been one of the most essential elements of human survival. This cardinal need for human connection takes a different shape in a world that exists more on the internet than in real life.

When the value of human life is degraded to the point a genocide feels normalised, when the news cycle changes almost every hour, when the reel you post goes viral within a matter of minutes is forgotten about the next day, when everything is digitised and entire parts of human history can be deleted forever from websites within seconds, when every online interaction you have makes you wonder if something is real or AI, you learn to internalise a desperate need for holding onto what felt like a better time. The Dead Internet Theory proposed the idea that since 2016, large parts of the internet have been steadily replaced by bots, automated content farms, and now Artificial Intelligence. While still an unproven conspiracy, for most of us, today's internet atmosphere makes it clear that Dead Internet is at the very least a growing possibility every day, if it has not already materialised.

Therefore, it is this desperation that allows today's Gen Z to feel a longing for the past, whether that be our childhood in 2016 or the times much beyond, times that we never really experienced in the first place. It is important to understand that the 2016 trend is not just a throwback trend that looks back at the past nostalgically, but it is, in fact, the reflection of a much larger sentiment growing online.

While first coined in 1993, the term 'Hauntological' refers to 'a range of ideas referring to the return or persistence of elements from the social or cultural past, as if to haunt the present.' This somewhat dated term sums up today's scenario in a surprisingly apt way.

The growing rise in the popularity of Stranger Things perhaps represents this sentiment best, and not just because the show first came out in mid 2016. The storyline follows a group of young kids living in the 1980's who navigate life together while forming deep friendships along the way, giving us the iconic "Friends don't lie" phrase. The show almost perfectly captures the essence of Gen Z's Hauntological worldview, combining the urge for genuine offline social connections with nostalgia for a time we never really knew.

While this trend appears to be clearer than ever before now in TV, movies, music and pop culture, its political implications remain largely undiscussed. When we put our past on a pedestal, how far back do we look to find a perfect world?

Globally, conservative trends are steadily rising amongst young people. The Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement came to the political forefront in 2016, relying largely on America's longing for a bygone past, where the US appeared to be at its best. Trump's victory in the 2024 election further proves that this growing nostalgia affects politics just as much as everything else.

While young men are pulled into conservatism through traditional ideas of masculinity that largely lean in their benefit, one of the trends rising online in recent years is the ‘Tradwife’ movement, which consists of young girls choosing to give up professional careers in exchange for traditional feminine roles of being a wife and mother, with her sole purpose being fulfilled by caring for her family. This trend, as all others, started innocently enough, inspired by the ‘Cottage Core’ aesthetic of the late 2010s. But it has long since transformed from the goal of stepping away from real-world stress and enjoying the simple joys of life to women voluntarily giving up their rights and financial independence.

Today, it is indeed easy to be drawn into a longing for the past world, but that is why it becomes all the more critical that we recognise, despite the world being as bad as it is, it could be worse. While rapid changes are easy to get upset about when they’re taking place, we must remember that humanity has largely progressed in a net positive direction. Holding onto the past through retro trends shouldn’t make it impossible for us to look at the future in a positive light. It is essential that we do not forget how history has changed for the better, and we must continue to drive that change for the better. I remain hopeful that when we look back at the world of 2026, ten years from now, we will be able to look back at the changes we brought while honouring our past, bridging the gap between progress, traditions, modernity, and human society as a whole.

GEN Z AND GLOBAL CONFLICTS: WHY WARS FEEL PERSONAL EVEN FROM FAR AWAY?

-Noor Aqudas



So, you're saying Gen-Z are social media spoiled brats?

The same Gen-z has led mass protests against unsupervised government propagandas.

The same gen-z has created awareness on social media.

The same gen-z delineates complex geopolitics in under a 1 minute and knows the difference between sharing context and sharing outrage.

The same gen-z do not get spoon-fed narratives rather they question the cause. Where people only consume information, they interrogate it.

Look beyond social media, the student protest and campus discussion. Who shows up?

What does the poster say? Gen-Z doesn't show up for visibility.

But to be heard before the silence becomes the policy.

Adults ask which side benefits? While gen-z asks, "Who is suffering, and why are we silent?"

Gen-Z knows distance doesn't mean detachment.

It means digital proximity. You wake up and see videos from bombing sites. You first read a post that some are hiding for shelter of your age.

You saw children begging for food and crying for their loved ones.

The chain of silence should be broken.

And to break the silence they'll show up again and again, to remind you that when someone suffers across the globe, it is not just their suffering, but the test of humanity.

Genocides of the 20th century:

Back on 24 February 2022, when Russia launched a full invasion of Ukraine. It shocked the world but escalated tension among Gen-z. As someone who always saw war as a part of a textbook to witnessing it in real life.

The biggest red hand in all these geopolitical tragedies was Social Media. It showed all the real life lived experiences of people. The damages faced, the families destroyed, the lost lives of loved ones, the lifetime trauma for children who survived. These all created a situation where we can only sense it and feel helpless. It numbed us even after being informed, it sensitized us, it emotionally exhausted us, it made us feel how bad of a generation we are that even after knowing the situation we are of no help.

When the Israel-Palestine war began it did no justice to humanity. How can there be debate about which country is evil? While the suffering was on the plates of common people and large-scale hunger around the country. Children suffered for the crimes they did not even commit. Females faced humiliation for their basic necessities. The genocide is etched with the blood of innocent lives in the human history of digital renaissance. The caps of this era are calling us unworthy of activism when we are the ones actually doing it. Henceforth, it's easier said than done. Recently Sudan was bleeding and dying of hunger which literally gave us one more reason for how humanity is buried beneath the antics of the wealthy. The mass killing, execution of children, families being tortured, people hanging from trees, it was so horrible.

Notions of Gen Z's:

The consequences no one talks about enough that normal people paid the highest price. Students stopped going to school, Teenagers grew up under sirens, Parents sent children abroad alone for safety, ordinary jobs vanished overnight. Young people were forced into military service, Journalists silenced, Protesters jailed, Families cut off from the global economy. Survivors carry fear even in safe places. Kids normalize violence because it's constant. Grief becomes routine, not exceptional. This kind of damage lasts decades. Gen Z didn't learn about this war from textbooks. But they experienced it live, online, unfiltered. Bombings posted in real times, soldiers documenting their life. Memes made from tragedy. War became content. This changed how Gen Z processes violence. They saw propaganda from both sides. They wake up everyday seeing violence as content, AI generated images, fake narratives, algorithm driven outrage finding it difficult to figure out right and wrong. Manipulation and paid narratives were all over social media over-powering the truth. Where the world is facing social and economical instability in the governments. The gen-z's are questioning the status quo, calling for the solution over deals. How long can a government run if it follows a path loved by its citizens ? The answer would be forever but a system without critics is just like a road without potholes. No road, no potholes and so did, no reforms. But that doesn't mean you can misuse your power and trouble the common people. And there comes Gen-z, a generation who truly have the power to question and bring change. We are the first digital generation to wrestle with global instability like no other generations. Still choosing to embrace it and thriving to make the world a better place to live. Although, we live in a system so broken that we're expected to bring reforms. A generation of boomers who are not just confined to ballot boxes and healthy debates, which is not so healthy. Whereas, they are fiery, passionate and action-driven who believe in activism unlike millennials who are skeptical.

We have seen our screens bleed with innocent faces, bombings which were our atrocious nightmares that became someone's lived experience. Imagine if cinema makes you cry like hell over a fake emotion. Think about those who actually suffered and were part of those nasty environments. The blatant role was played by shrewd governments as if scrutinizing the hell out of common people was a sacred job to their wicked souls. From mass killing of people over resources to funding it on a large scale by those who also believe that god is merciful. How can your belief in death be blown over a worldly desire which makes no sense to your faith. Oh! my bad, money has the power to fund 50 shades of men without a trial. The current situation of Iran where again the Gen-Z's are the ones gonna face the challenges. The hyperinflation, strikes by bazaar merchants and shopkeepers in Tehran, triggered by a deepening economic crisis marked by rising food prices, and the rapid devaluation of the Iranian rial. Tarlan, a 17-year-old protester from eastern Tehran, wrote, "I'm willing to be the next one, if it means I'll be the last." This left me in awe of how our generation is leading and burning their desire at the same time. I hope the upcoming generation is not forced by their circumstances to face another Tarlan writing this on their bedroom mirror. The world will rise again, some will face defeat and some victory of their thoughts. But a leader in power can never define victory in return of mass killing and slavery.

CODING LIFE

-Adhisha Sharma



Life has always followed a code. For centuries, humans observed it, classified it and tried to understand its mysteries. Today for the first time in history, we are not just reading life's code but writing it. This shift marks the arrival of the new era : The era of Coding Life.

This transformation can be carried out by the convergence of biology with Technology which is popularly known as Biotechnology. The Field where biology meets data, computation and engineering. DNA which was just thought of as a static blueprint is now considered as a dynamic, programmable language.

DNA is considered as nature's Original Code and is also often referred to as "THE INFORMATION MOLECULE " due to its ability to pass genetic information from one cell to another. As Computational biologist Nick Goldman explains, DNA data density surpasses any man made storage medium with about 700 terabytes of data stored in a single gram of DNA. If this technology is scaled properly scientists also expect to fit all of the information of the entire world including videos, photos, scientific papers and even the internet into a single van.

In many ways, DNA functions as a biological hard drive which unlike any other electronic hard drives doesn't need to rely on electricity to store information. Making it one of the most energy efficient data systems that is known to science. Long before humans built computers, nature had already perfected data storage.

Understanding Dna has naturally taken us to the very next step: Gene Editing

GENE EDITING is the ability to make highly specific changes into the DNA of an organism. The primary goal of this technique was to Identify harmful genes and modify them so that the children do not inherit serious genetic disorders from their parents,or so that mutations can be corrected before they develop into severe diseases.

One of the most promising and talked about methods of gene editing is CRISPR. It allows scientists to identify exactly where the DNA needs to be cut and then modify it with unprecedented accuracy, which makes gene editing faster,cheaper and more accessible than ever before.

Today much of the gene editing research is focused on healthcare. Instead of treating its symptoms the scientists are working on curing its root cause. One of the most remarkable examples would be Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, a devastating condition that affects one in every 3500 boys which often leads to early deaths. Successful animal trials using gene editing have given scientists hope that similar treatments can one day be available for humans.

Gene therapy also holds the potential in reshaping everyday life beyond medicines.

It may help remove specific allergens that cause food allergies. Researchers at Wageningen University are also working on removing gluten-related antigens from wheat that will make it digestible for people with gluten intolerance. Such developments could significantly improve safety and overall quality of life.

The impact of gene editing extends beyond human health,agriculture or sustainability. Crops are constantly threatened by pests,stress and diseases. Scientists can enhance natural resistance and improve yields,reducing reliance on chemical pesticides.

Coding life is not just a scientific revolution but a cultural revolution. Biology is no longer confined to microscopes and textbooks. It now intersects with data science, codes, entrepreneurship and policy.

Young people today are uniquely positioned to shape the future not merely as observers but as creators.

The challenge is not if we are able to code life but it is how responsibly we choose to do so. Life is not a software that can be endlessly rewritten without consequence, The code we write today will alter the next generations.

In the process of writing the language of life, humanity is also being asked to redefine its ethics and innovations. For the youth of this generation,coding life is not not about the future of science but about the future of a civilization.

INDIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM: PROGRESS, PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

-Kavy Jain



Swami Vivekanand once said, “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. It is the very soul of a nation.” Today, his words echo like a lament across India, for when the soul is wounded, the body of the nation cannot remain healthy. In India, the education system is riddled with faults, loopholes, and deep-rooted disparities—economic disparity, gender disparity, and the most lethal of all, caste disparity. India’s education system primarily lacks two things: proper education and a proper system; essentially, our education system lacks both education and system. India spends approximately 4–5% of its GDP on education, lower than the global standard of 6%. Although NEP 2020 aims to reach this benchmark, real progress remains largely invisible. In a country like India, where education should be the first priority of our leaders, sadly, it is their last. In 78 years of independence, India has made some progress, our literacy rate has increased from approximately 18% in 1951 to 77% in 2026, but this progress is far from sufficient. There is a grave difference between education and literacy: literacy means the ability to read and write, whereas education refers to holistic development. However, in India, especially in schools of rural and suburban areas, the culture of rote learning acts like a termite eating away at our education system. The majority of teachers in government schools of rural and suburban areas (it is rare to find a teacher actually teaching in government schools) are not provided with proper training. They lack an understanding of pedagogy, do not go beyond textbooks, and often fail to teach even textbook content properly. Activities are frequently skipped, considered unnecessary, and as a result, students find studying boring and reduce learning to mere mark-scoring. Education, schools, and teachers should aim for the holistic development of students, including personality development, communication skills, and critical thinking.

The motive of teaching should be to make students learn, not memorize. Teachers should be properly trained, and recruitment should involve mock classes, not just written examinations, because possessing knowledge does not automatically make someone a good teacher.

Another major problem is the shortage of teachers and crumbling infrastructure. Government schools often suffer from an acute lack of staff. In many schools, a single teacher is forced to teach all subjects while also handling administrative work. On top of this, already overburdened teachers are assigned election duties and other government tasks. Despite the availability of jobs and job seekers, vacancies remain unfilled due to a lack of transparency in recruitment processes, frequent scams in recruitment examinations—which have become disturbingly normal and corruption, the root of this and many other problems. Infrastructure decay also traces back to corruption. India boasts world-class institutions like IITs, AIIMS, NLU, Navodaya Vidyalayas, and Kendriya Vidyalayas, but the real crisis lies in rural and suburban schools. Governments construct buildings, leaders cut ribbons and pose for photographs, and then maintenance is forgotten. Every broken classroom, every broken and unhygienic toilet, every crumbling school is a black spot on our education system. Leaders who fail to use education funds responsibly are not leaders; they are businessmen who sell many futures for some money, and every compromised future is a crack in the very foundation of our country.

Another major issue within the education system is disparity: economic, gender-based, and caste-based. Children from economically privileged backgrounds enjoy better facilities, access to technology, and quality education. Gender disparity, though old, refuses to fade. In many rural areas, girls are still deprived of education. Even those who attend school are often married early and forced to discontinue their studies. In backward rural schools, some teachers themselves believe that girls are not “worthy” of education. In a government school near my town, I witnessed a teacher instructing female students to do his household chores; 5–6-year-old girls were sweeping and cleaning. This discrimination is gravely dangerous for our society and for our country because, due to this discrimination, many bright minds are lost who could have changed the destiny of this country.

Even worse than gender discrimination is caste-based discrimination. In India, dropout rates remain alarmingly high, particularly among students from so-called “lower castes.” Children from so-called “upper castes” are often prevented from studying alongside Dalit children, while Dalit students face harassment from both peers and teachers. Most Dalit families are economically weak and cannot afford private education, leaving students with no option but to abandon their dreams. After 78 years of independence, it seems that our country is going backwards regarding caste; caste hatred should have ended by now, but instead it is increasing. We blame reservations without acknowledging the struggles faced by marginalized communities or recognizing the privileges we enjoy. I can write this article, and you can read this article, which is a huge privilege in itself that many Dalits are stripped of. So whenever someone claims caste is no longer a major issue, one only needs to visit a rural village to realize that caste is still very much a reality.

Coming back to the education system, it appears that Article 14 and Article 21A can't go hand in hand. We have discussed only a few drops of an ocean of problems. In conclusion, India is the land of Nalanda, sages, and wisdom itself. We should take pride in our rich intellectual heritage and work to ensure that our present and future education systems are worthy of that legacy. From the Kothari Commission to the NEP 2020, we have come a long way, but the road ahead is longer. NEP 2020, despite its flaws and controversies, is a positive step because it emphasizes holistic development. From the mid-day meal scheme to making education a fundamental right, we have corrected many faults—but many still remain. Problems are many, the road is long, but every positive step, whether an individual acts against casteism and gender discrimination or a governmental reform, is a step toward saving and securing countless futures.

ON THE PRODUCTION OF PRODUCERS: THEORETICAL REVELATIONS OF THE INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS AND MORAL IRRATIONALITY OF THE GLOBAL TRADE SYSTEM

-Abhishek Vaidyan



The post-colonial world might - for nations, for us - seem like a world of opportunities, with globalisation not only emancipating capital and goods from international immobility, but also the flow of people and information. Of course, the term "neo-colonialism" is familiar to us all, but the traditional theories and understanding fall short of grasping the transformation of the "goods" in question and the depth of exploitation. Present day trade dynamics can be irrefutably described by Raul Prebisch's discernment of the "Centre" from the "Periphery". This careful distinction underscores the terms of trade between two nations which are for "legal" purposes equally sovereign, wherein, the periphery is an exporter of primary goods to the centre, where these goods are necessarily processed (undergo the process of "manufacturing") into industrial products. The centre withholds technological assistance to the periphery in order to sustain dependency of the latter on the former. Subsequently a deteriorative process is triggered, that which is explained by the Singer - Prebisch hypothesis. The hypothesis held to be true for most developing nations until perhaps, most nations except the African ones, diversified their economies as a result of limited industrialisation. The hypothesis claims that the prices of primary commodities fall, while that of manufactured commodities rise, owing to their differential price flexibility with respect to demand. In effect, then, a primary goods exporting country over time exports twice the amount of commodities in order to purchase the same amount of manufactured goods, as before! That is, the price of manufactured goods, soon rise two folds with respect to the primary. Like, how A. Gunder Frank puts it, "The development of the centre produces the underdevelopment of the periphery". But the very concern of this article is to, present the new forms of centre - periphery relations, in that they have gone farther than the state to state formal exchange of material goods to the sale of the products of poverty and consequent lawlessness, and to a great extent, grievingly, humans themselves.

Never have we seen a generation, where people have been more enslaved, than, today. Innocuous Extraction The advancement of capitalism and its adoption of new, seemingly benign mechanisms of expropriation have cultivated a perception of economic hopefulness and opportunity. Yet beneath this optimism lies a structural shift: the producer has, in many ways, become the object of production. The rapid expansion of the service sector, particularly in India, has indeed generated employment and contributed to rising GDP. However, the underlying pattern of value extraction from the periphery to the centre has remained largely intact. Material transfers have gradually been replaced by the outsourcing of invisible labour – cognitive, technical, and affective – embedded within global production chains. What is striking is that the centre continues to retain technological knowledge while actively limiting its meaningful transfer. The periphery, meanwhile, carries out the routine processes of production, sustained by the expectation of upward mobility and developmental convergence. Yet many nations of the third world have struggled to establish a viable capital goods industry, weakening their ability to reinforce domestic production structures. Consumption-driven growth, though labour-intensive and politically promising, often produces only ephemeral gains. Automation gradually replaces labour, and the import of automated systems itself becomes a further drain on national capital. Thus emerges a large and rapidly expanding tertiary sector – most visibly in information technology – while other segments of the service economy generate limited long-term value.

The periphery remains compelled to export technologically inferior goods and services, often at the cost of domestic capital formation, sustained by the illusion that rising employment alone signals genuine development. The Cost of Underdevelopment The price of an economic practice as diminishing as this is not only paid in credit but also with the loss of dignity and the deprivation of human freedoms. The centre is not necessarily the Global North as the point of reference, and the periphery does not evenly denote the Global South. The nations of the Global South are indeed situated on different rungs in the scale of development or perhaps underdevelopment. And for that matter, even domestically, the cities assume the position of the central forces, leaving rurality at the periphery. Cities, domestically and advanced nations in the international arena may be seen as post-materialist entities subsisting on peripheral produce. The backwardness of the periphery produces conditions of statelessness and want, which further give impetus to the trafficking of humans and the production of narcotics. The centre happens to be the chief consumer of such goods. And if we are to look at Venezuela and the abduction of its former President, then it might be revealed to us, that the nation's role in the global market as a petro-state with no viable industries, or even refineries for that matter, has made it a primary goods exporter which produces limited employment and international criminals. In such instances, as is the case with most of Northern Latin America, the society is governed by non-state actors or other informal forces, who are likely to be engaged in one or the other illicit enterprises. Despite being conscious of their role in the production of backwardness, the DEA finds it convenient to dismantle cartels whilst violating every definition of sovereignty and national self determination, in an alien nation which services the lowly needs of the youth in the US than making more arrests in the US itself for such consumption or simply aid the underdeveloped nations to build industries of its own. What is disturbing, however, is that we Indians do not differ in principle, from the ones being trafficked, as all relations of production have achieved near or total commodification. And so, I would like to congratulate ourselves for having successfully transformed into an object of production and subsequent consumption. This particularly is true of the Service Sector, which so forms the backbone of our economy. Capital produces the self and the self is now for sale.

CENTRAL BANK DIGITAL CURRENCIES VS PRIVATE CRYPTOCURRENCIES: A BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE OF MONEY

-Tanay Mitruka



Who should control the money of the future: citizens or governments? As digital transactions cross borders in seconds and cash fades away, two main models are competing for control. Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) are electronic currencies issued by governments and backed by national reserves, like China's e-CNY. They offer stability and central control. On the other hand, private cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum are decentralised digital assets that use blockchain technology to give people more financial freedom and encourage innovation. Bitcoin is known for its limited supply, while Ethereum allows for programmable financial systems. This debate is not just about technology—it raises important questions about who should control money and value. This essay will show how the competition between CBDCs and cryptocurrencies will shape the future of money, with each option offering different benefits and risks for economic stability, personal freedom, and society as a whole.

CBDCs constitute the digital evolution of sovereign currency, issued by central banks as legal tender on secure distributed ledgers. Fully backed by national reserves, they replicate the functions of physical cash while enabling instantaneous and traceable payments. Imagine Maria, an unbanked worker in the Bahamas, who previously had to wait weeks for her paycheck to clear. With the advent of the Sand Dollar, she now receives her wages instantly, directly into her digital wallet, transforming her ability to manage everyday expenses. Global pilot programs, including India's e-Rupee, illustrate their primary objectives: creating efficient and inclusive monetary systems under centralised oversight.

Private cryptocurrencies leverage the innovative potential of blockchain technology. Bitcoin, introduced in Satoshi Nakamoto's 2008 whitepaper, employs a mechanism called proof-of-work consensus. This process involves solving complex mathematical problems to validate transactions, ensuring a trustless transfer of value. As of 2023, Bitcoin's settlement volume exceeded \$12 trillion, underscoring its substantial role in global transactions. Ethereum expands upon this foundation through the use of smart contracts, which are self-executing agreements with the terms directly written into code, facilitating the emergence of decentralised finance (DeFi). As of the same year, this sector has a total value locked (TVL) surpassing \$75 billion. TVL represents the total value of assets committed within DeFi protocols. Unpegged from fiat currencies, these assets exemplify market-driven characteristics: volatility, innovation, and borderless operation.

| Battlefield | CBDCs | Private Cryptocurrencies |
|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Authority | Central banks (centralised) | Global networks (decentralised) |
| Value Anchor | Fiat reserve, stable | Supply/demand, volatile |
| Core Strength | Regulation, inclusion | Innovation, censorship resistance |
| Privacy Tradeoff | Traceable for security | Pseudonymous, evading surveillance |
| Scalability | High (governmental infrastructure) | Improving (Layer 2s, sharding) |

This dichotomy highlights the divide: CBDCs function as fortified institutions, while cryptocurrencies operate as agile, decentralised alternatives.

CBDCs offer significant advantages. They reduce cross-border fees, with remittances dropping from 6.5% via traditional channels to nearly zero, enhancing financial inclusion for 1.4 billion unbanked individuals. For instance, the Bank of Jamaica's Jam-Dex pilot demonstrated that digital currency payments facilitated faster and cheaper transaction processes compared to traditional systems. Programmable features can automatically distribute welfare payments directly into digital wallets, allowing for money to expire to prevent hoarding. However, the benefit of seamless welfare distribution comes with the risk of spending censorship. Imagine a scenario where a government uses CBDCs to restrict purchases from certain vendors, as seen in the People's Bank of China's pilot program, to control public behaviour. Central banks regain power from private payment giants like Visa, using real-time data for precise inflation targeting. This newfound control, however, could potentially infringe on civil liberties, raising questions about who decides how these freedoms are balanced.

In crises, CBDCs shine. During COVID-19 analogues, digital wallets could helicopter-drop stimulus sans banks. Offline modes ensure resilience in remote areas. As of 2026, 130+ countries pilot them; China's e-CNY boasts 260 million users, processing billions in transactions.

Yet shadows lurk. Privacy yields to surveillance, with every coffee purchase logged eternally. A separate layer of concern involves security risks, as breaches could potentially drain national vaults. Critics decry "financial authoritarianism," where central banks' programmable money can stifle dissent through spending controls.

Cryptos counter with raw liberty. Bitcoin's 21 million cap defies inflationary printing presses, a hedge for savers in eroding economies like Venezuela or Argentina. Ethereum's DeFi—lending, trading sans intermediaries—has locked \$100B+ in value, empowering users over institutions.

Anonymity aids the oppressed: dissidents evade frozen assets, remittances flow sans SWIFT's gaze. Lightning-fast, cheap transfers redefine global trade. Institutional embrace surges—ETFs hold billions, El Salvador mines volcanoes for Bitcoin—signalling maturity.

Flaws expose flanks. Volatility ravages: Bitcoin's 2022 crash erased trillions. Scams siphon billions yearly; energy use rivals nations. While regulations like the EU's MiCA and India's 30% tax aim to impose order in the crypto space, their effects are complex. MiCA seeks to enhance transparency and consumer protection, potentially fostering a safer market environment and encouraging institutional investment. However, its stringent compliance requirements might stifle smaller players, reducing innovation. India's taxation has cooled speculative investment, bringing a more cautious approach among traders. Yet, it risks pushing parts of the crypto economy underground, away from regulated channels, which could affect overall market stability.

The war rages across continents. BRICS nations forge CBDC alliances to dent dollar supremacy, with Russia's digital ruble live and Brazil testing. Europe's digital euro eyes 2028 rollout, prioritising privacy tiers. The U.S. drags, wary of disintermediating banks, but stablecoins like USDT process \$10T yearly, blurring lines.

Crypto fights back: Solana's speed rivals Visa; stablecoins pegged to fiat mimic CBDCs sans central chokeholds. U.S. clarity post-2024 elections fuels adoption, while Nigeria's e-Naira coexists uneasily with P2P Bitcoin trades.

Tipping points emerge. Interoperability protocols—CBDC bridges to blockchains—hint at truce. Yet tensions mount: governments label crypto "speculative poison," accelerating CBDC pushes.

Victory eludes both. CBDCs may conquer retail, being programmable and as ubiquitous as today's apps, while cryptos dominate in DeFi, NFTs, and as a store-of-value. Stablecoins, often called the crypto cousins of CBDCs, could play a mediating role by blending stability with decentralisation. Unlike CBDCs, which are issued and backed by government national reserves and are subject to centralised governance, stablecoins are generally pegged to fiat currencies and backed by reserves held by private issuers. This distinction makes stablecoins more susceptible to market-driven risks, such as issues of reserve transparency and regulatory scrutiny. Their private governance model can create efficiencies and accessibility, but may introduce volatility if not properly regulated.

The public will decide. Privacy zealots flock to crypto; stability seekers to CBDCs. By 2030, expect a dual system: state money for compliance, private for rebellion. Regulation will referee—overreach kills innovation; laissez-faire invites chaos.

This battle forges money's next epoch. Governments guard monopolies; innovators shatter them. In this forge, the future gleams—stable yet free, centralised yet sovereign. Choose wisely: the wallet you wield shapes the world.

HOW FASHION CAN BE DEADLY FOR OUR PLANET

-Priyanshi Shahi



Climate change is a phenomenon that is being noticed by everybody. It is not something that the government can try to hide or manipulate - at least not successfully. It has reached a point where even a person who rarely leaves their house can feel its effects. The weather is getting warmer and warmer each year, especially in cities like Mumbai. The melting of glaciers, loss of biodiversity and rising sea levels are just some concerns out of many when it comes to climate change. The human body experiences the effects of these changes through direct measures such as cardiovascular illnesses due to pollution, extreme heat and through indirect measures such as poor quality of food and water. We have many industries to point at for contributing significantly to these changes, the fashion industry being one of them.

Today's fashion industry sells us a new dream every few weeks. Different styles and designs become trendy for a short time, it sells out and within a few days a new style comes around. The process of buying and discarding clothes has become faster than ever, also called fast fashion. Mindless buying of apparel, so that one does not 'miss out' on the trend, and then forgetting about it has led to mass consumption. This mass consumption is followed by mass production. This means not only do the designers rip off other designers for their designs but also the process of making and discarding clothes is not environmentally friendly. It takes about 20,000 litres of water to make 1 kg of cotton, much of the clothes made from it end up in landfills or are incinerated. Fast fashion has found a way to meet and potentially increase their demand but it has failed to take the environment into consideration. Many companies still use non renewable resources to produce and distribute clothes which aren't used for even a year.

Another concern is the emission of the methane gas. It is 86 times more potent and traps more heat than carbon dioxide. Animal fabrics such as wool and leather make up about 3.8% of the textiles which are used but their production accounts for about 75% of all methane emissions. To customers, these fabrics last longer and are more durable but they are not aware of the true cost. But there is so much a customer can do when it comes to ethical and sustainable production of these fabrics. Wool and cashmere could be made from recycled fabrics as they do not have many alternatives that the industry can work with. Cashmere. Fortunately for Tapestry, which owns brands such as Coach and Kate Spade, has recently invested into recycled leather from Generation Phoenix. It breaks down scraps of leather which would otherwise end up in landfills.

However, recycling is not as easy as we might think it is. Current technologies made for this purpose can only process single fabric clothes, while many of the textiles are multi fabric. There is also the practical hurdle of removing buttons and zippers. Needless to say, the textile industry needs more research and development in this area.

Much of the change that the textile companies have done in these recent times can be attributed to the protesters of the harmful practices they engage in. Significant change can arise when the industry and its customers work together for the same cause. As long as there is demand for unethically made products, there will always be supply - legally or illegally. The demand can be brought down if customers start to thrift and only buy pieces they know they will use for a long time. Sustainable brands often come with a higher price tag. Investing in them can be beneficial for shoppers as they will be contributing in saving their planet and encouraging other brands to go sustainable to increase their revenue. Furthermore, the government can mandate transparency in these companies and ask to release their carbon footprint report, stricter regulation of wastewater and chemical use to hold the companies accountable. Fashion pieces can be iconic without being deadly.

NEW WORLD ORDER: A GLOBAL SOUTH PERSPECTIVE

-Shaurya Singh Rathore



Every generation thinks it is living through a historic shift. Most of the time that is just optimism mixed with drama. But this time, it feels different. The world doesn't feel anchored anymore. Power feels dynamic. Old certainties are slipping and new ones haven't settled yet. This is why the phrase "New World Order" keeps resurfacing, sometimes confidently, sometimes fearfully and often without clarity. For countries like India and for much of the Global South, this moment isn't just about watching history change. It's about finally being part of the authorship.

When the old world was designed without us. Let's be honest, the global order in the last two centuries wasn't designed by us, institutions that govern trade, finance, security and diplomacy were built after World War II, at a time when much of Asia, Africa and Latin America was colonized, recovering or simply absent from the table. Decisions were made for us, not with us.

India gained independence but the global rules remained largely inherited. We just learned to navigate them, sometimes benefit from them, often question them but rarely shape them. That is changing now. Something has shifted quietly. Power Is Moving and this time it is moving Southward. India is no longer spoken of as a future possibility. It's a present force, economically resilient - we successfully withstood Trump's tariff, demographically most youngest, diplomatically active. The same is true in different ways for Indonesia, Brazil, Vietnam and others. This isn't about replacing one dominant power with another. It's about countering and diluting dominance itself. The New World Order from a Global South perspective, isn't about conquest. It's about corrections.

Strategic Autonomy: India's Quiet Statement:

India's approach to this transition is revealing. Rather than choosing any sides, India speaks the language of strategic autonomy. It engages with the West, continues its good relationship with Russia, competes with China and collaborates with the Global South, sometimes all at once. To outsiders, this looks confusing but India knows what it means to be pulled into other people's power games. The New World Order gives India space to decide its interests itself.

The New Unelected Power Brokers and India's Dilemma:

Here's the part we don't talk about enough. While nations negotiate and institutions reform, another group is shaping the New World Order quietly and efficiently, that is big corporations and billionaires who operate beyond borders but influence them deeply. Today, some companies have revenues larger than the GDP of entire countries. A handful of individuals control platforms that decide what billions of people see, buy, believe and even argue about. They don't need armies. They own infrastructures- digital, financial, informational. When corporations control data, supply chains, energy routes, food systems and communication networks, they gain a kind of power that doesn't require public accountability.

Decisions taken in boardrooms in Silicon Valley or financial hubs ripple into villages in India, factories in Bangladesh and farms in Africa. I'll not say this is a conspiracy rather it's a structural reality. 'Profit before people' for the Global South feels uncomfortably familiar. We've seen extractive systems before resources flowing outward and risks staying local.

Today it's not just minerals or labor. It's data, attention, markets, even policy influence. Billionaires speak about solving global problems yet often benefit from weak regulations, tax cuts and cheap labor. Corporations promote sustainability while outsourcing environmental damage. Technology promises empowerment but concentrates control. One clear example lies in global agriculture. Bill Gates, through various investment vehicles and foundations has become one of the largest private farmland owners in the United States and a major backer of genetically modified seeds, agri-tech firms and synthetic food alternatives. His foundation has heavily funded agricultural programs in Africa and South Asia, often promoting high-yield, GM or hybrid seeds as solutions to hunger. The concern raised by Global South scholars isn't intent but dependency. When seeds are patented, farmers can't save or reuse them. They must return to the same corporations every season. Food security quietly shifts from public institutions and farmers to intellectual property holders. For countries like India, where agriculture sustains livelihoods, not just GDP this raises a deeper question: who controls the seed controls the food and who controls the food controls stability. India's resistance to fully embracing GM food crops is often framed as "anti-science." In reality, it reflects a fear of corporate capture of food sovereignty, something the Global South has experienced before under colonial cash-crop systems.

India sits at a critical intersection here. It needs investment, innovation and global integration. But it also understands the cost of surrendering regulatory control. The challenge isn't rejecting corporations but it's preventing capture. Digital sovereignty, data protection, competition laws and public digital infrastructure are not bureaucratic details. They are tools of independence in a world where private power rivals state power. The New World Order risks becoming less about nations competing and more about states negotiating with corporations stronger than them.

The U.S., Resources and the Return of Hard Power:

Another visible shift in the New World Order is the changing posture of the United States. Once the loudest defender of a “rules-based order,” U.S. foreign policy today appears increasingly resource-centric and transactional, even when it strains international law and national sovereignty. From the Middle East to Africa, U.S. strategic engagement often aligns with oil reserves, gas corridors, rare-earth minerals and critical shipping routes. The 2003 Iraq War, justified on security grounds, unfolded in one of the world’s most oil-rich regions. Continued U.S. military presence in energy-dense zones and sanctions regimes shaped around resource flows, reinforce the perception that strategic resources often outweigh sovereignty. This shift is closely tied to the influence of big energy corporations. Companies like ExxonMobil, Chevron, Halliburton and ConocoPhillips exert enormous influence through lobbying, campaign financing and revolving-door appointments between government and industry. U.S. energy policy at home and abroad, frequently reflects corporate priorities, from protecting oil infrastructure to pressuring allies on production levels. Even climate commitments reveal contradictions. While Washington speaks of green transitions, it continues approving new oil and gas projects and shields fossil-fuel interests globally. Sustainability rhetoric coexists with extraction realities.

For the Global South, this feels familiar. International law appears firm for the weak and flexible for the powerful. Sovereignty is respected in principle, but negotiated in practice. This erosion of credibility explains why countries like India avoid rigid alignments. Strategic autonomy is not hesitation, it is protection. In a world where rules bend around resources, neutrality becomes a form of self-defence. The Global South is pushing back quietly but what’s interesting is that resistance isn’t loud. Countries are building alternatives. Regional payment systems, public tech platforms, South to South trade agreements, local manufacturing ecosystems. Not perfectly, not uniformly, but intentionally. It’s anti-imbalance. The message is subtle but clear, economic participation should not mean political surrender. Security means survival, not supremacy. When countries in the Global South talk about security, they often mean something different. Security isn’t just borders and weapons. It’s food availability. Energy access. Climate resilience. Jobs for young populations. Stability without repression. Climate change, pandemics and market shocks hurt poorer nations first and hardest. Yet decisions about these crises are often shaped by those who themselves are the major cause behind it and are least affected by their consequences. The New World Order will only be legitimate if it listens to those on the front lines, not just those at the top. Right now the moment is fragile, but full of possibilities. Although let’s not romanticize this transition, power shifts are rarely smooth, competition is intensifying. Inequality is widening. Institutions are struggling to keep up with private influence.

But for India and the Global South, this is still a rare opening. An opening to demand fair rules. To insist that growth includes dignity. To ensure technology serves people, not the other way around. India’s role here is crucial not as a dominant power, but as a balancing one.

History books will eventually label this period. They always do. But for now, we’re living inside the rewrite, watching nations renegotiate power, corporations test limits and societies push back in small but meaningful ways.

The New World Order isn’t being announced. It’s being negotiated every day. And for the first time in a long time, the Global South isn’t just reacting, It’s responding.



OP-EDS



REVISITING THE ANTI-DEFECTION LAW AND IDENTIFYING THE SCOPE FOR AMENDMENTS

“Aaya Ram Gaya Ram”, this phrase was jokingly quoted by the senior politician from Haryana, Rao Birender Singh, during the 1960s and 1970s, after the Gaya Lal incident, as it completely captured the chaos in Indian politics at that time in a line. Gaya Lal was an MLA from Haryana in 1967. He did something shocking that year. He changed his political party three times in a single day. He was originally in the Congress Party, then he switched to the United Front (also referred to as the Janta Party), and he came back to the Congress Party, but then again defected to the United Front all in a single day. This rapid switching was not based on ideology or public interest, but it was mainly due to reasons like political pressure, lure for power deals, position and personal gains. The Gaya Lal case exposed a huge problem. It exposed the political instability in the government. Governments were falling because MLAs kept switching sides and political parties. They switched their parties because of monetary benefits, ministerial positions, and power. This caused a loss of public trust because the voters voted for a party, but the leader switched their political party after winning the elections. This incident led to nationwide concern about the political ethics and one’s loyalty to the political party. It sparked discussions on controlling these defections, which were causing the unstable and weak governments. There was a need to bring a law that can stop this kind of party switching and protect democracy, and also protect the trust of the voters from being disturbed by the immediate switching of parties by the leaders. So, in 1985, the government introduced the Anti-Defection Law under the 52nd constitutional amendment and added the Tenth Schedule in the Constitution of India. The main motive of this law was to stop elected members like the MPs and MLAs from changing their political parties after winning the elections. Because earlier, the leaders were winning from one party, but then after winning, they were switching to another party for personal gains like money, position, minister posts and power. This is not good for democracy because people were voting for the party they wanted to govern them, but their representative was going to another party after winning. So the Anti-Defection Law states that if a member voluntarily gives up his party membership or votes against the party whip, then he/she can be disqualified from his position. Independent members cannot join any party after winning the elections, but even after this law, there are still some problems that exist. This law gives too much power to the party leaders, as a result of which now MLAs and MPs cannot express their own opinion freely, and they have to follow party instructions even if they disagree with the decision. Also, the Speaker who decides disqualification cases sometimes delays decisions or acts in a biased way. This creates another problem in the system. Also, many times, politicians find loopholes in the law, like resigning from their post and then joining another party, which gives them the same post. This still creates instability in politics. Looking upon these loopholes and lack of strong laws, there is a requirement for a reconsideration and some revision to it so that it can operate with greater efficiency in today’s political landscape of India. Presently, the functioning of MPs and MLAs is directed by their party leadership on every vote and every stand, regardless of their personal beliefs. Thus, they cannot independently express their views.

Therefore, the anti-defection law should not apply universally, rather, it should apply only to significant places, such as those involving a motion of no confidence or money bills, where the viability of the government is at risk. Consequently, the Members will have the opportunity to engage freely in discussion, while preserving the viability of the government, when necessary. It is also important that leaders have the power to represent their constituents, rather than just follow the direction of their party without any degree of independent thought or decision-making ability. Thus, when a leader believes something is wrong, they should be allowed to voice their opinion or act in accordance with their conscience rather than always doing what the party instructs. The second significant amendment is with respect to the authority of the Speaker. Currently, the power of disqualification is with the Speaker. He/She has the right to issue an order, which can sometimes lead to delays or biased outcomes because the Speaker is also a member of a political party. Thus, the authority to decide on the disqualification should be placed with an independent body such as the Election Commission or the judiciary to ensure that determinations are expedited and equitable. Also, fixed timelines should also be established to make decisions. Another problem that needs to be addressed is the process of exploiting resignations as a loophole. Many MPs and MLAs will resign their seats, change political parties, then be voted back into office without any clear reason for changing parties, or be re-elected into positions of power. This practice makes the Anti-Defection Law ineffective. Therefore, tougher rules should be put into place to prohibit this practice. The Anti-Defection law needs to be amended so that it supports the balance between stability in politics and freedom of speech and expression in democracy, only then can the Anti-Defection law will be able to fulfil its purpose and help in strengthening democracy.

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BEYOND LAWS: REBUILDING TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

India is a country which do have laws regarding gender based violence, which are quite strong on paper, but the reality is a completely different story, as we can see news related to gender based violence nearly every day in our newspapers, social media and all. Nearly one in three women in India has experienced domestic abuse at some point in her life. So, the problem is not that there are no laws governing all these issues, but that the enforcement of these laws is done very weakly.

For many of the survivors, the process of finding justice is more frightening than the crime itself. While filing a complaint, one can face an insensitive police response, with investigations often being delayed, court cases stretching out for years at a time, and hospitals that lack proper forensic support, which weakens cases before they even begin. These failures are part of a system that struggles to respond with urgency and care for the justice of the victims.

This creates a lot of mistrust among the masses towards the government and the governmental institutions. Women from marginalised communities face even greater barriers, with them facing more gender based violence, and their cases having low conviction rates.

The nature of the crime has changed at present, and it is evolving as we speak, which leads law enforcement to have a lot of catching up to do to protect the people of the country from the heinous crime of gender based violence, and it is not just constrained to homes or public spaces and have gone to online platforms. Online platforms have become spaces where abuse is encouraged, shared, and sometimes even organised. This proves the system's struggle to keep up with modern times.

One thing that India lacks right are laws for marital rape, which ignores the plea of the married woman and completely ignores these acts. We can forget about justice, which can only happen after acknowledgement. A lot of cases occur within marriages or close relationships, where victims are expected to stay silent, and where social attitudes often downplay such violence, making it harder for survivors to speak out. With society downplaying this crisis, the governmental institutions have become even more ineffective.

The impact on survivors is not just physical but also emotional and psychological damage, with many facing long-term mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and trauma. But societally, this kind of harm is downplayed and ignored, where victims are judged or even denied help, which adds another layer of pain and difficulty in healing for the victims.

India has taken steps to address these issues, with things like Helplines, shelter homes, and empowerment programs being introduced to support survivors. But the gap between policy and implementation remains wide.

Laws may create a framework, but institutions decide whether justice is actually delivered to the victims who are wronged. When survivors do not trust the system, they choose silence over justice. Rebuilding trust among the citizens is the most important action needed, right now, which requires consistent action, accountability, and a system that supports victims at every stage without judging them or without any kind of prejudice, which can be done by making sure faster investigations, fair trials, sensitive policing, and accessible healthcare and counselling services happen for the victims. Without trust, even the strongest laws lose their meaning.

Our country needs a complete mindset change, both within institutions and society. Survivors must be believed and not questioned, supported and not blamed. The system and the government must not only respond to violence but also prevent it by addressing its root causes, including social attitudes and a lack of awareness. As we need to create an India where everyone can live freely, happily and without any kind of fear.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S SAFETY MECHANISMS IN TIER-2 AND TIER-3 CITIES

The past decade has seen the exponential rise of tier-2 and tier-3 cities in India as villages become towns and towns become cities. These cities have grown to emerge as crucial contributors to the Indian economy. It remains undebated that cities like Kochi, Indore and Lucknow are the hubs of decentralised growth. This transformation is fueled by a new generation of women from rural India and the countryside, who are migrating to these centres to claim their share of the Indian dream. However, as the trend grows, a foundational crack is becoming impossible to ignore. It is the bitter reality that even in today's day and age, the infrastructure of women's safety is failing miserably to keep pace with economic expansion. We are building cities that are economically ambitious but socially precarious, creating an urban experience where a woman's professional ascent is constantly checked by the physical reality of the streets she must traverse.

Isolated industrial zones, unsafe public transportation, and the lack of reliable last-mile connectivity create a landscape of exclusion. The cause of this insecurity is rooted in a fundamental disconnect: we have modernised our commerce but remained stagnant in our urban design and sociological outlook. The deep-rooted patriarchal mindset often translates into a hostile public sphere where a woman's presence after dark is viewed with suspicion or entitlement, and where the lack of anonymity in smaller cities makes the social stigma of reporting harassment a formidable barrier to justice.

Addressing this structural vulnerability requires a demonstration of political will that transcends seasonal electoral rhetoric. People need to realise that for real action to take place, public outrage should last more than a few days and must ask crucial questions beyond symbolic actions like candle marches. For too long, women's safety has been treated as a peripheral issue, addressed through populist slogans or protectionist policies that seek to guard women by restricting their mobility instead of fixing the problem from a grassroots level approach. True political will is found in institutional accountability, in the mandatory allocation of municipal budgets for gender-sensitive lighting and the insistence that local administrations be measured by the safety of their public squares. While the central government has introduced flagship initiatives like the Nirbhaya Fund and the Safe City Project, their implementation in smaller cities often hits a wall of bureaucratic apathy or a lack of technical expertise. The political class must recognise that a city's smart status is a hollow victory if half its population operates under a self-imposed curfew.

The tension between rapid urban development and a stagnant patriarchal mindset creates a volatile friction in India's emerging cities. While the physical landscape of Tier-2 and Tier-3 centres is being redrawn with glass-fronted offices and high-speed transit, the psychological landscape often remains anchored in a protectionist framework that views women's presence in public spaces as a deviation rather than a right. This cognitive dissonance manifests as social resistance to the very economic progress these cities strive for, creating an environment in which a woman's professional agency is constantly at odds with deeply rooted cultural expectations.

Government initiatives, ranging from AI-enabled CCTV networks to the deployment of Pink Patrols and women-only police outposts, represent a necessary first step toward institutionalising safety. These tools aim to bridge the surveillance gap and provide a visible deterrent to crime in rapidly expanding urban zones. However, the effectiveness of these measures is often hamstrung by a systemic reliance on optics over substance. A thousand cameras are only as good as the rapid-response team behind them. In many emerging cities, the police force lacks the digital literacy and gender-sensitivity training required to turn surveillance into real-time safety.

To move beyond reactive policing, we must look toward a more integrated philosophy of urbanism. One possible solution lies in prioritising mixed-use developments where commercial and residential spaces coexist to ensure that streets are never truly deserted. A radical overhaul of public transport is equally critical. Buses and para-transit should be frequent, well-lit, and reliable, so that women are empowered to navigate the city on their own terms.

Ultimately, the safety of women in India's rising cities is the ultimate test of our national progress. We cannot claim to be a modern nation if our secondary cities remain trapped in primary-level prejudices. Strengthening safety mechanisms is not about building higher walls or more prisons, it is about building a culture of belonging. As these cities continue to grow, our objective must be clear: to ensure that the women who are building the new India do not have to look over their shoulders while they do it.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM CYBERBULLYING ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMING PLATFORMS

In today's hyperconnected world, childhood is increasingly shaped by digital spaces. Social media platforms and online gaming environments have created opportunities for learning, creativity, and global interaction. However, these same platforms have also given rise to a deeply concerning challenge: cyberbullying. For millions of children worldwide, the internet is no longer just a place of entertainment but also a space where harassment, intimidation, and psychological harm can occur with alarming ease and persistence.

Cyberbullying differs from traditional forms of bullying in both scale and impact. It transcends physical boundaries, operates around the clock, and often allows perpetrators to remain anonymous. A single harmful post, message, or image can be shared instantly with a vast audience, amplifying its emotional consequences. For children, who are still developing their sense of identity and self worth, such experiences can lead to anxiety, depression, academic decline, and in extreme cases, long term trauma.

Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving governments, technology companies, educational institutions, parents, and young users themselves. At the policy level, governments must establish clear legal frameworks that define and penalize cyberbullying while safeguarding freedom of expression. Laws should mandate platforms to implement robust reporting and redressal mechanisms, ensuring that harmful content is addressed swiftly and effectively. At the same time, policies must be adaptable to keep pace with rapidly evolving digital technologies.

Technology companies bear a significant responsibility in creating safer online environments. Platforms must invest in advanced moderation tools powered by artificial intelligence to detect and remove abusive content proactively. However, technology alone is insufficient. Transparent community guidelines, accessible reporting systems, and timely human review processes are essential to build trust among users. Gaming platforms, in particular, must address toxic behavior in multiplayer environments by implementing stricter codes of conduct and meaningful consequences for violations.

Education plays a pivotal role in prevention. Schools must integrate digital literacy and online ethics into their curricula, equipping children with the knowledge to navigate online spaces responsibly. Teaching empathy, respect, and the consequences of harmful online behavior can foster a culture of accountability. Furthermore, children should be encouraged to speak up when they encounter or experience cyberbullying, reducing the stigma associated with seeking help.

Parents and guardians also play a crucial role. Open communication between children and adults can create a supportive environment where issues are identified early. Rather than imposing restrictive measures alone, parents should guide children in understanding the risks and responsibilities of digital engagement. Familiarity with the platforms children use allows adults to provide more relevant and effective guidance.

Equally important is empowering children themselves. Young users should be equipped with tools and strategies to protect their digital well being, such as blocking abusive users, reporting harmful content, and managing privacy settings. Peer support systems can also be highly effective, as children are often more likely to confide in friends than in authority figures. Encouraging positive online communities can counteract the negativity that often fuels cyberbullying.

International cooperation is another critical dimension of this issue. Cyberbullying often crosses national boundaries, making it difficult for any single country to address it in isolation. Multilateral frameworks and agreements can facilitate information sharing, harmonize regulations, and promote best practices. Global organizations and forums must prioritize child safety in digital spaces as a key component of their agendas.

Ultimately, protecting children from cyberbullying is not about restricting access to technology but about shaping a digital environment that is safe, inclusive, and conducive to healthy development. It requires balancing innovation with responsibility, freedom with accountability, and connectivity with care. The stakes are high, as the well being of the next generation depends on the choices made today.

If the international community commits to a holistic and sustained effort, it can transform digital platforms from spaces of risk into environments of opportunity. Children deserve to explore, learn, and connect without fear. Ensuring their safety online is not just a policy imperative but a moral obligation that must guide the future of our digital world.

**IIMUN/2025/MUMBAI/PMSS/OE/0001
PORTFOLIO: DR.VIRENDRA KUMAR****DISCUSSING THE PROGRESS
TOWARDS VIKSIT BHARAT**

By 2047, which is the hundredth anniversary of India's independence, the aim is for the country to be a fully developed nation. This vision is enclosed in 'Viksit Bharat 2047,' and it is more than just about simple economic growth; it is about creating a nation where its growth is accompanied by better education, better healthcare, technology improvements, environmental sustainability, and equal opportunity for all its citizens.

India's journey to become a developed nation has already begun, and with strong economic performance, plus large-scale rapid digitisation, in addition to extensive infrastructure development that has occurred over the last decade. While the possibilities to accomplish the vision are bright. There are, of course, challenges that make the path to 2047 ambitious, promising, yet still uncertain.

Economically speaking, India has made significant steps forward; it now ranks among the world's largest economies and is projected to be the fourth largest as of now if predictions hold. Government programs such as 'Make in India,' plus 'Startup India,' and also 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', they have accelerated manufacturing, entrepreneurship, also of course, domestic production, which is a boost. India's developing startup scene is now actually one of the largest globally, which really highlights the country's growing capacity for innovation.

Digitisation has further lifted India's progress forward. Platforms just like UPI have transformed the nature of financial transactions, making them much more accessible to the average person. Aadhaar, digital banking, including online services, that have enhanced transparency and efficiency in public service delivery programs, for example. All of these initiatives show technology's potential as a tool that can enable a truly national breakthrough overall.

Infrastructure development has also been a notable success, with projects like PM Gati Shakti improving national connectivity through highways, railway upgrades, metros, airports, and logistics corridors. Improved infrastructure not only supports economic growth but also expands access to education, healthcare, and employment.

India's scientific and technological abilities are something to see, most recently with the Chandrayaan-3 mission; it is like a demonstration of what the nation is capable of in the sciences. These successes are not just things to be proud of, but they also show that India is getting stronger in research and coming up with new ideas.

But a developed country is about more than just how much it produces economically.

Human development is just as important. While people are living longer, literacy rates are up, and more children are in school, and with programs such as Ayushman Bharat and the National Education Policy 2020, which are trying to improve healthcare and education, there are still problems. India's Human Development Index is still lower than that of many other developed and developing countries, and getting good healthcare and education is still not equal for everyone, especially in rural areas.

To really achieve Viksit Bharat, investing in people needs to increase a lot. And then there's also the matter of creating jobs, which is another big issue. India has a lot of young people, which could be a great advantage, but it is important to make sure they get the right education, training, and job opportunities. Unemployment and not enough employment are big worries, and it will be essential to close the gap between what people learn in school and what industries need.

Social equality is also important. A nation can only be termed 'developed' if its development is for all sections of society. Inclusion of gender and regional inequalities and the income gap are continuing to harm millions. Women's involvement in the labour force is still below the global level, and rural communities have a poor experience.

Environmental sustainability is another key consideration. India's economy must grow with sustainability in mind as it develops further. For sustainable growth, investment in renewable energy, electric mobility, better waste management, and sustainable agriculture practices will be necessary. India has progressed in solar energy and in meeting climate commitments, but this is not enough. The Viksit Bharat 2047 programme will finally depend on policies made, production made, as well as contributions of educationists and people. The youth will take the lead by innovating, promoting entrepreneurship, and responsible leadership.

India is at a crucial juncture. The real challenge is being inclusive, balanced and sustainable, while the groundwork for growth has been laid. Viksit Bharat 2047 is a target not just of the Government, but of the Nation. The vision of a powerful, fair, technologically advanced and respected India on the global stage. If equal emphasis is placed on human progress as on economic growth, this vision can be realised. The upcoming twenty years will shape India's future. The choices made today will decide if India becomes bigger or better.



IIMUN/2026/KOCHI/UNODC/RES/0001

COMBATting ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OF DRUG CARTELS WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO CHILD ABUSE

Introductory clause 1 : Deeply concerned that transnational drug cartels continue to exploit children for trafficking, logistics and other illicit activities undermining child rights and international security,

Introductory clause 2 : Guided by United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and its protocols including the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons,

Introductory clause 3 : Recalling the mandate of the UNODC to promote international cooperation, intelligence sharing and victim centered responses,

Introductory clause 4 : Recognizing that fragmented intelligence systems, weak cross-border coordination and inconsistent legal framework enable cartel network to evade accountability,

Introductory clause 5: Fully aware that children involved in cartel related activities are often victims of coercion, abuse and exploitation rather than perpetrators of crime,

Introductory clause 6 : Acknowledging the rules of UNODC, INTERPOL and the International Narcotics Control Board, in facilitating cooperational intelligence exchange,

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

1. Calls upon member states to strengthen secure, structured and purpose-based intelligence sharing mechanisms to identify and dismantle recruiters, financiers and facilitators of drug cartels;
2. Encourages enhanced financial intelligence cooperation, including asset tracing and anti-money laundering measures to disrupt cartel funding networks;
3. Reaffirms that children exploited by drug cartels must be treated as victims;
4. Requests member states to adopt Non-Criminalization and child centered justice approach;

5. Supports the expansion of access to education, trauma informed rehabilitation and safe reintegration programmes for affected children, with assistance from UNODC and relevant UN agencies;
6. Further recommends community based prevention strategies, victim centered policing and legal harmonization to prevent recruitment and ensure long term protection of children;
7. Encourages UNODC, in cooperation with member states to develop standardised public and private partnership mechanisms with social media platforms for the early detection of cartel recruitment;
8. Encourage Member States to adopt community-based drug prevention and monitoring frameworks that integrate local leadership and civil society participation;
9. Supports to strengthen border control and law enforcement cooperation through advanced technology and interagency coordination to disrupt trafficking networks in line with UNODC organised crime guidelines;
10. Requests member states to support health-centered approaches treating drug dependence as a public health issue, expanding rehabilitation and reintegration services instead of punitive incarceration;
11. Further invites to promote cross-border intelligence sharing and regional collaboration to address synthetic drug supply chains and emerging drug trends;
12. Proclaims to expand evidence-based research and policy development on stimulant (e.g : methamphetamine) use disorders;
13. Has resolved to advance harm reduction strategies and reduce stigma to improve access to health services for people who use drugs, consistent with UNODC health-oriented mandates.

IIMUN/2026/SURAT/DISEC/RES/7989

REGULATING AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS AND LETHAL AI IN ARMED CONFLICTS

1. Introductory Clauses

1. Recalling the principles established under the Geneva Conventions;
2. Reaffirming the Martens Clause, ensuring that even in the absence of explicit law, warfare remains governed by humanity and public conscience;
3. Recognizing the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence in military applications and its implications on global security;
4. Deeply concerned by the erosion of accountability and sovereignty due to autonomous weapon systems;
5. Acknowledging the need to balance technological innovation with ethical responsibility;

The Disarmament and International Security Committee,

2. Actionable Clauses

1. Defines Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) as systems capable of independently identifying, selecting, and engaging targets without meaningful human control over lethal decision-making processes;
2. Further distinguishes between:
 - a. Automated systems;
 - b. Human-in-the-loop systems;
 - c. Fully autonomous systems;

Human Control Framework

3. Affirms that all lethal force must remain under meaningful human control;
4. Calls upon all Member States to implement mandatory human confirmation at both target selection and engagement stages;

Prohibition Measures

5. Calls for the prohibition of fully autonomous weapon systems operating without human authorization;

Legal Compliance

6. Urges all Member States to conduct Article 36 reviews under Additional Protocol I prior to deployment of AI-enabled weapons;

7. Recommends such reviews include:

- a. Cybersecurity and anti-seizure safeguards;
- b. Compliance with international humanitarian law;
- c. Verification of human oversight mechanisms;

Transparency and Accountability

8. Encourages Member States to establish voluntary reporting mechanisms on AI-enabled weapons;

9. Calls for increased international cooperation in sharing technological safeguards and best practices;

Future Framework

10. Decides to establish an open-ended working group by 2027 to develop a legally binding international framework on LAWS;

11. Further recommends inclusion of compliance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms within this framework;

Conclusion

12. Emphasizes that technological advancement must remain aligned with human responsibility, accountability, and global security.

IIMUN/2025/MADURAI/UNCSW/RES/9089

COMBATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Alarmed by the continuing existence of gender-based violence (GBV) in both public and private spheres, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking, early and forced marriage, and online harassment which remain as a significant barrier to achieve gender equality and sustainable development goals;

Aware of that One in three women (736 million) still face gender-based violence, physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime;

Emphasizing the principles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR);

Reaffirming the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), notably Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions, which highlight sexual violence as a weapon of war and call for women's increased participation in peace processes;

Further reaffirms Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as a framework for women's empowerment;

Recalling the need for survivor-centred rehabilitation approaches that prioritize dignity, justice, gender inequality and empowerment by implementing multi-sectorial strategies to combat GBV; *Taking into account* that combating gender-based violence requires the need for international cooperation, and involvement of governments, civil society, youth, and men and boys as partners in promoting equality;

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Encourages all Member States to adopt, implement, and enforce thorough national laws criminalizing all kinds of gender-based violence so that survivors receive justice and protection;

Recommends national laws harmonize with international human rights standards;

Further recommends for the strengthening of legal protection for gender-based violence;

Emphasizes the need for defining clear legal penalties for perpetrators and ensuring non-discriminatory access to justice for survivors;

Further emphasizes the need for Creating fast-track judicial mechanisms and gender-sensitive courts to handle GBV cases;

Encourages the creation and strengthening of support services for survivors of gender-based violence, including medical, psychological, and legal aid, especially in underserved areas, by;

Further emphasises the need for comprehensive crisis centres in hospitals and community health facilities that offer medical, psychological, legal, and social services all in one location;

Affirms the need for expanding outreach programs and mobile service units to rural and conflict-affected regions where formal support structures remain limited;

Encourages training healthcare professionals, social workers, and legal personnel in trauma-informed and survivor-centred approaches to ensure compassionate and effective service delivery;

Encourages the empowerment of women and girls as a long-term solution to GBV;

Emphasizes the need for International organizations to enhance civil society and women-led groups locally, acknowledging them as vital allies and primary responders, by offering substantial financial assistance;

Challenges and change prevailing patriarchal systems, harmful social norms, and gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and violence.;

Encourages initiatives that involve men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality and challenging violence supportive behaviours;

Encourages the inclusion of gender quality and respect based in school curricula from an early age;

Calls on government to collaborate with UN agencies and NGO's to share data for effective policy making;

Encourage cross co-operation to combat trafficking and provide justice for victims of transnational violence;

IIMUN/2026/INDORE/UNICEF/RES/1111

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM CYBERBULLYING ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMING PLATFORMS

Introductory Clauses

1. Recognises the lack of proper accountability in online spaces due to anonymity and fake accounts, which enable offenders to evade responsibility;
2. Notes with concern the normalisation of toxic gaming culture, where abuse and harassment are widely accepted;
3. Acknowledges weak platform action, slow response times, and the continued presence of harmful content online;
4. Further acknowledges the lack of a universal legal definition of cyberbullying, leading to weak enforcement across countries;
5. Expresses concern over insufficient mental health support systems and low awareness among children and parents, resulting in underreporting and inability to cope;
6. Highlights that over 3.42 billion people engage in gaming globally, making it one of the largest digital environments where cyberbullying occurs;
7. Recognises that cyberbullying has increased due to anonymity, rapid content sharing, hacking, impersonation, and misuse of personal information;
8. Notes that fear and low self-confidence often prevent victims from reporting cyberbullying incidents;

Actionable Clauses

9. Encourages the development of interactive, age-appropriate, and engaging digital platforms to improve cyber awareness and digital literacy among children and older adults;
10. Proposes the establishment of a multilingual, globally coordinated support framework, including accessible helplines staffed by trained specialists, to assist victims of cyberbullying, online harassment, and exploitation, including:
 - (a) immediate psychological support and counselling;
 - (b) trauma-informed care and rehabilitation;
 - (c) cross-border cooperation among experts;
 - (d) accessible reporting and guidance systems;

Plan For A Better
Tomorrow

11. Recommends the implementation of identity verification systems where users are required to verify their identity through secure means, while allowing controlled anonymity, ensuring that authorities and relevant organisations can identify individuals when necessary;
12. Further recommends the use of voice recognition systems to assist in identifying individuals during voice-based interactions;
13. Encourages schools to establish confidential counselling and reporting systems for students affected by online abuse;
14. Urges UNICEF to establish a 24/7 global cyberbullying reporting and response network connecting national cybercrime units, child protection agencies, and platform safety teams to ensure faster response and rehabilitation;
15. Recommends the creation of “Gamer Safe Zones” within gaming platforms, including:
 - (a) verified child-only gaming lobbies;
 - (b) AI moderation of voice chat detecting harmful or grooming language;
 - (c) mandatory panic or emergency reporting buttons for minors;
16. Calls upon platforms generating significant revenue to contribute to child safety initiatives through funding mechanisms directed toward digital child protection programs;
17. Encourages the implementation of a universal one-click reporting system across all platforms, ensuring that reports are automatically escalated to both platform moderators and relevant national authorities;
18. Further calls upon platforms to enforce strict response timelines for reported cases to ensure timely action;
19. Recommends the development of automated systems to identify and block repeat offenders across platforms based on multiple verified reports;
21. Calls upon technology companies to ensure algorithmic accountability by reviewing and regulating recommendation systems to prevent the amplification of harmful or abusive content directed toward minors;
22. Recommends the implementation of real-time moderation mechanisms, particularly within gaming platforms and voice-based interactions, to enable immediate detection and response to abusive behaviour;
23. Further recommends the development of systems to identify and restrict repeat offenders across multiple platforms, while ensuring compliance with data protection and privacy standards;

24. Encourages platforms to strengthen and expand parental control tools, enabling guardians to monitor and manage children's online activities effectively;
25. Urges the adoption of a “child safety by design” framework, ensuring that protective measures are integrated into the core architecture of digital platforms by default;
26. Calls for limitations on the virality and mass dissemination of harmful content, including restrictions on rapid forwarding and sharing mechanisms;
27. Encourages Member States to provide specialised training for law enforcement agencies to effectively address cyberbullying and online exploitation cases;
28. Recommends the integration of mandatory digital literacy and online safety education within national school curricular;
29. Calls upon technology companies to ensure that artificial intelligence systems are trained across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, enabling more effective detection of harmful content globally;
30. Proposes the establishment of a Child Safety Levy applicable to digital platforms generating significant annual revenue, the proceeds of which shall be directed toward international child protection initiatives, including programmes coordinated by UNICEF, while encouraging Member States to consider appropriate regulatory measures in cases of non-compliance;
31. Further recommends the implementation of cross-platform identification systems to restrict access for repeat offenders following multiple verified reports, while ensuring due process and adherence to data protection and privacy standards;
32. The Clause Should Read: “Requires that any content flagged through the universal one-click system that meets a high-confidence threshold for ‘Cyber Violence’ be automatically hidden from public view within 15 minutes, pending formal review within 12 hours
33. Recommends the implementation of a dual-layer content moderation system, wherein:
- (a) initial detection and flagging of harmful or abusive content is conducted through artificial intelligence-based moderation tools;
 - (b) such flagged content is subsequently reviewed by trained young individuals, including adolescents and young adults, to ensure contextual accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and reduction of algorithmic bias;
 - (c) encourages the establishment of structured internship programmes under the guidance of international organisations, including UNICEF, to engage youth in content moderation, digital safety monitoring, and reporting systems;

(d) further recommends that such programmes provide formal training, mentorship, and skill development opportunities in areas including digital governance, cyber safety, and ethical technology use;

(e) calls for the provision of recognised certification upon completion of internships, thereby enhancing employability and encouraging youth participation in global digital safety initiatives;

(f) emphasises that all such systems must operate in compliance with child protection standards, mental health safeguards, and data privacy regulations, ensuring that young moderators are not exposed to harmful psychological impacts without adequate support;

RESERVATION IN INDIA

The Joint Parliamentary Committee,

Recognizing the historic role of the reservation policy in addressing systemic inequalities and ensuring representation for historically marginalized communities,

Acknowledging that Articles 15(4), 16(4), and 46 of the Constitution of India empower the State to take special measures for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes,

Recalling the long-standing constitutional commitment to social justice as enshrined in the Preamble of India,

Appreciating the progress achieved through reservation in education, public employment, and political representation over the past decades,

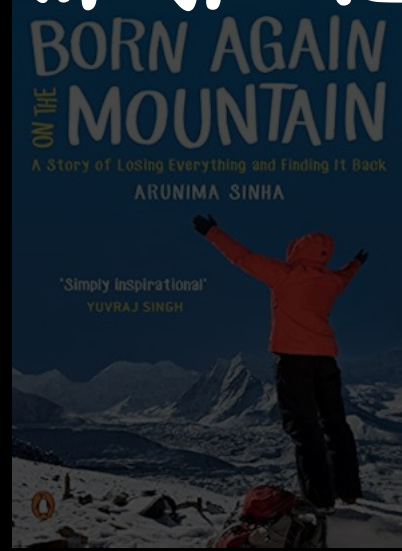
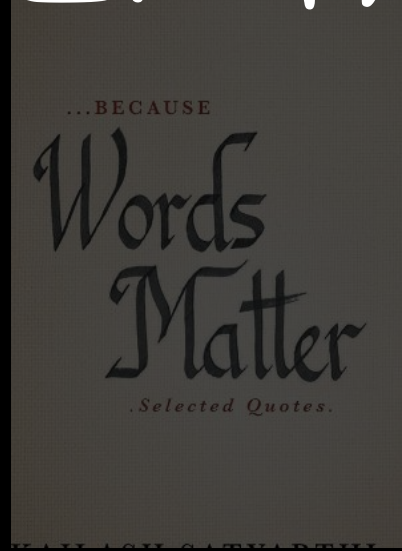
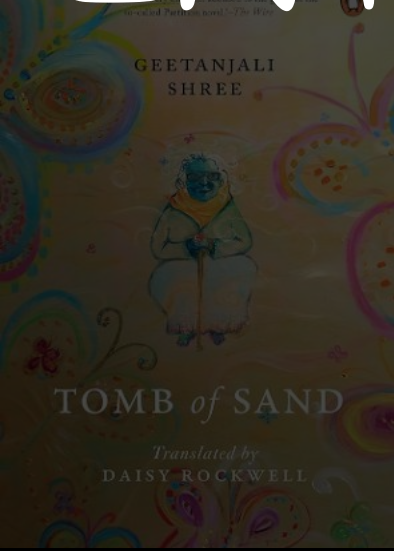
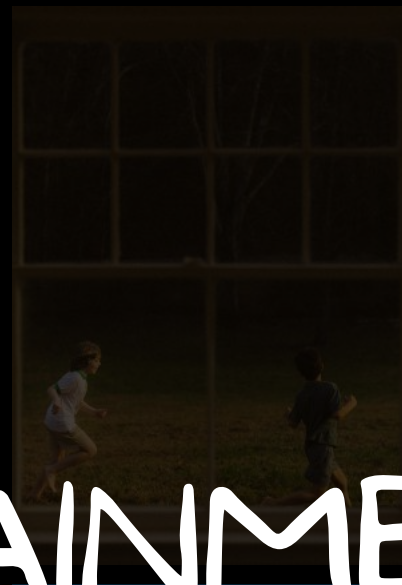
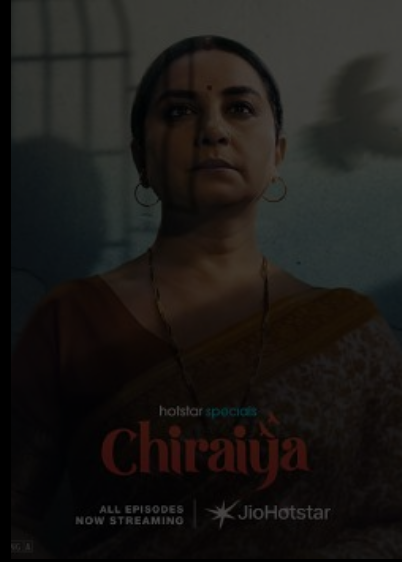
Concerned that economic disparities and social exclusion still persist in various sections of society despite existing affirmative action,

Observing the growing demand for reform in the reservation structure to balance equity with efficiency,

Affirming that reforms, if undertaken, must uphold the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution while fostering social harmony and unity,

1. Reaffirms the constitutional validity of the reservation system as a legitimate tool to promote social and economic justice;
2. Proposes the establishment of a National Commission on Social Equity and Empowerment (NCSEE) to conduct comprehensive, data-driven reviews of reservation outcomes;
3. Encourages a decennial review of reservation policies to assess their continued relevance and effectiveness in uplifting disadvantaged communities;
4. Recommends a gradual inclusion of socio-economic criteria in determining eligibility for reservation, thereby expanding benefits to economically weaker sections irrespective of caste;
5. Calls for enhanced government investment in education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship programs to empower marginalized communities beyond reservation quotas;

6. Supports the transparent and periodic release of data from the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) to inform equitable policymaking;
7. Urges state and central governments to hold broad-based consultations with experts, social groups, and community leaders before initiating any changes to the reservation framework;
8. Emphasizes that reservation should remain a transitional and corrective measure, intended to achieve equality rather than perpetuate division;
9. Requests Parliament to constitute a Special Joint Committee to review existing provisions and recommend balanced, inclusive, and merit-based reforms;
10. Reaffirms India's steadfast commitment to the ideals of equality, justice, and fraternity as enshrined in the Constitution of India.



ENTERTAINMENT

MOVIES



Released in 2024, **All We Imagine as Light** follows the lives of two nurses in Mumbai as they navigate loneliness, relationships, and personal struggles in a fast moving city. The film explores themes of emotional isolation, friendship, hope, and the search for human connection while portraying the quiet realities of everyday urban life.

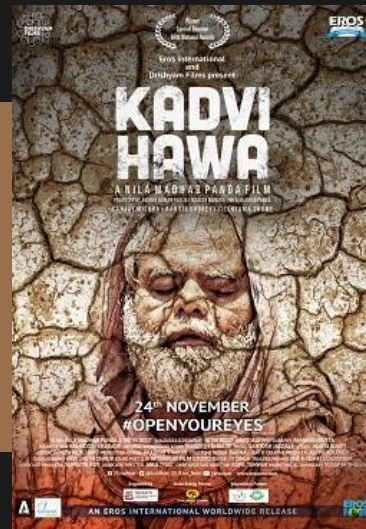
Released in 2024, **The Seed of the Sacred Fig** follows a government investigator whose growing paranoia during political unrest damages his relationship with his family after his assigned gun disappears. The film explores themes of authoritarianism, fear, truth, personal freedom, and the emotional impact of state control.



Released in 2026, **Minotaure** follows a wealthy businessman in provincial Russia whose personal life collapses after discovering his wife's affair while political pressures force him into cruel moral decisions. The film explores authoritarianism, corruption, fear, masculinity, and how state power slowly destroys personal relationships and human morality.



Released in 2026, **Boong** follows a young boy from Manipur who travels across the Indo-Myanmar border searching for his missing father after hearing rumors of his return. As he faces prejudice, poverty, and uncertainty, the film explores themes of identity, migration, racial discrimination, family separation, and the emotional struggles experienced by marginalized communities in Northeast India.



Kadvi Hawa, released in 2017, tells the story of a blind farmer in drought stricken rural India and a debt collector caught in the same harsh cycle of poverty and survival. As climate change devastates livelihoods, their lives become deeply intertwined, revealing fear, desperation, and moral conflict. Through a stark, slow burning narrative, the film powerfully highlights the human cost of environmental crisis and economic vulnerability in marginalized communities



Released in 2026, **Chiraiya** follows a newly married woman whose life becomes emotionally suffocating inside a conservative household where her consent, freedom, and dignity are repeatedly ignored. As another woman in the family gradually supports her resistance, the series explores patriarchy, marital abuse, victim blaming, emotional trauma, and the silence surrounding women's rights within traditional social and family structures in India.



Released in 2024, **Flow** follows a solitary black cat trying to survive after a devastating flood destroys its home. While traveling across submerged landscapes, the cat joins other animals aboard a small boat and slowly learns trust and cooperation. Told entirely without dialogue, the film explores survival, friendship, environmental destruction, resilience, and the importance of unity during times of crisis through visually stunning animation and emotional storytelling.

MUSIC



The Great Divide by Noah Kahan explores identity, distance, and relationships through raw, folk driven storytelling, capturing nostalgia, vulnerability, and the emotional weight of drifting apart while holding onto shared memories

Late Night Frappe by Frappe Ash is a mellow, vibe driven album blending lo-fi, indie, and chill pop sounds, capturing quiet late night moods while exploring solitude, fleeting relationships, and introspection through soft melodies, atmospheric production, and an overall calm, immersive emotional experience



Kiss All the Time by Harry Styles is a vibrant, genre blending project mixing disco, indie pop, and late night vibes, exploring fleeting romance, youth, and emotional highs and lows, while balancing carefree spontaneity with quiet introspection and bittersweet nostalgia



The Mountain by Gorillaz is a deeply conceptual and emotionally rich album that blends synth pop, psychedelia, and world influences, especially Indian classical sounds. It explores themes of death, grief, and the afterlife, inspired by personal loss, while weaving global collaborations, multilingual lyrics, and atmospheric production into a cohesive, spiritual listening experience that balances sorrow with beauty and reflection



Rise by Anoushka Shankar is a genre blending album that fuses Indian classical music with electronic and global influences. It explores themes of transformation, identity, and artistic evolution, combining intricate sitar melodies with modern production. Moving between meditative passages and energetic rhythms, the album reflects a journey of self discovery and creative growth, while staying rooted in tradition through rich, expressive, and immersive soundscapes

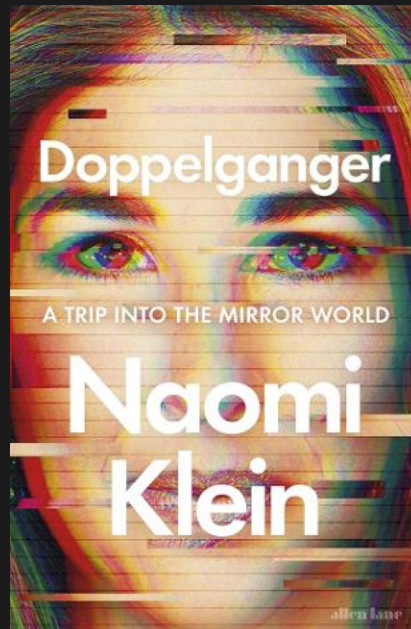


Teesri Manzil, composed by R. D. Burman, is a landmark Bollywood album that revolutionized Hindi film music with its energetic fusion of rock and roll, jazz, and Indian melodies. Featuring iconic vocals by Mohammed Rafi and Asha Bhosle, it delivers vibrant rhythms, catchy tunes, and youthful energy, redefining the sound of the 1960s while remaining timeless and influential in Indian cinema music history (In loving memory of Asha Bhosle ji)



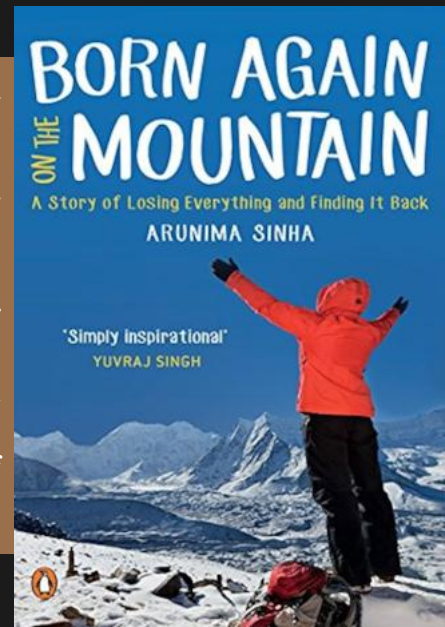
Sounds of Kumbha by Siddhant Bhatia is an immersive, concept driven album inspired by the spiritual and cultural energy of the Kumbh Mela. Blending electronic, ambient, and Indian influences, it captures the chaos, devotion, and transcendence of the gathering. Through layered soundscapes and evolving rhythms, the album explores faith, identity, and collective experience, creating a meditative yet dynamic journey that reflects the intersection of tradition, modernity, and inner transformation

BOOKS

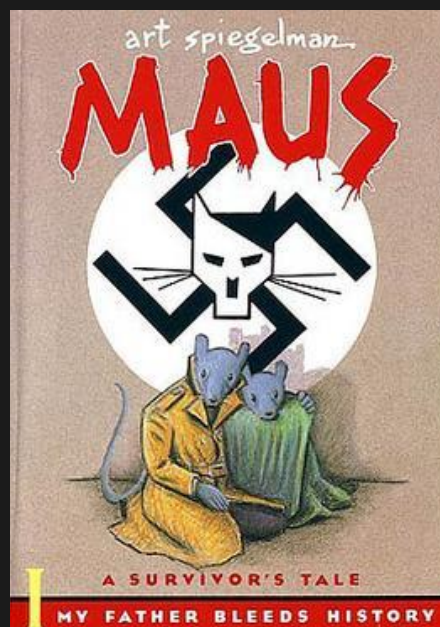


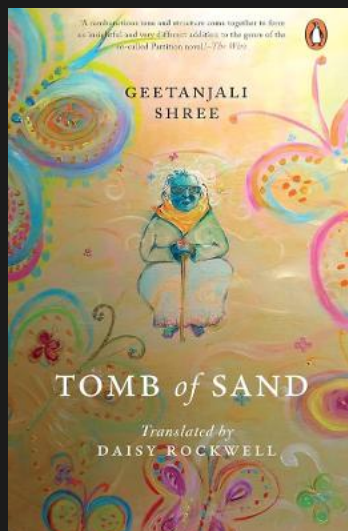
Doppelganger: A Trip into the Mirror World is a memoir and political exploration by Naomi Klein, where she reflects on rising political polarization and conspiracy culture by contrasting her own views with those of Naomi Wolf, with whom she is frequently mistaken

Born Again on the Mountain: A Story of Losing Everything and Finding It Back by Arunima Sinha is an inspirational memoir that recounts her journey after a devastating accident that led to the loss of her leg, highlighting resilience, determination, and her historic ascent of Mount Everest, symbolizing courage, hope, and the power of perseverance against all odds



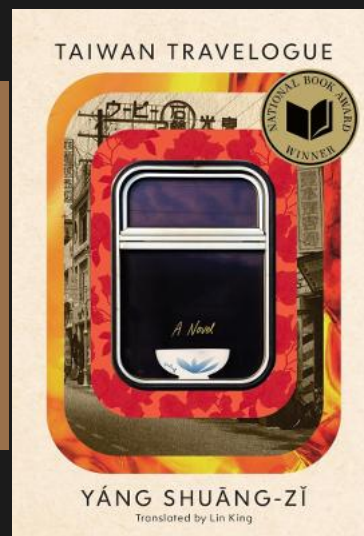
Maus by Art Spiegelman is a powerful graphic memoir depicting the Holocaust through his father's experiences as a Polish Jew and Auschwitz survivor. Using anthropomorphic characters, it explores trauma, memory, and a strained father-son relationship, blending past and present to reveal the lasting psychological impact of genocide



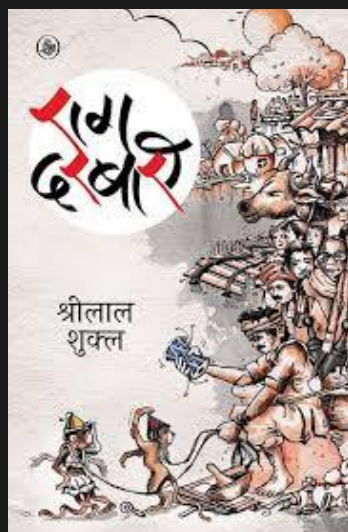


Tomb of Sand by Geetanjali Shree is a lyrical, experimental novel that follows an elderly woman who, after her husband's death, embarks on a journey of self discovery and defiance. Crossing borders into Pakistan, her story intertwines with memories of Partition of India, exploring identity, gender, trauma, and healing through playful language, shifting perspectives, and a deeply human narrative that challenges conventions and celebrates resilience

Taiwan Travelogue is the 2026 Booker Prize winning novel by the Taiwanese author Yáng Shuāng-zǐ, and is the first Chinese-translated novel to win the prize. This is a richly layered, genre-blurring novel that traces a young woman's journey through colonial-era Taiwan, weaving together food, memory, and identity. As she navigates relationships, language, and the shifting cultural landscape under Japanese rule, her story unfolds through sensory detail and reflective prose, exploring themes of belonging, power, and selfhood



Raag Darbari by Shrilal Shukla is a satirical Hindi novel portraying corruption, hypocrisy, and the decay of rural institutions in post-independence India. Through the experiences of Rangnath in the village of Shivpalganj, the novel exposes political manipulation, social inequality, and bureaucratic inefficiency. With sharp humour and realistic characters, it critiques the failure of idealism and governance in Indian society.



Kagaz Te Canvas by Amrita Pritam is a deeply emotional collection of Punjabi poems exploring love, loneliness, womanhood, creativity, and human relationships. Through powerful imagery and lyrical expression, Amrita reflects on personal pain, freedom, and identity. The work also captures memories of Partition and emotional longing. Its sensitive and progressive voice made it one of her most celebrated works, earning her the prestigious Jnanpith Award. (en.wikipedia.org)



Scan Now! *For The Better Use of* *Your Time*



TWEETS AROUND THE WORLD




1 Donald J. Trump

 **Donald J. Trump**  
@realDonaldTrump






A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will. However, now that we have Complete and Total Regime Change, where different, smarter, and less radicalized minds prevail, maybe something revolutionarily wonderful can happen, WHO KNOWS? We will find out tonight, one of the most important moments in the long and complex history of the World. 47 years of extortion, corruption, and death, will finally end. God Bless the Great People of Iran!

14.7k ReTruths 61.6k Likes Apr 07, 2026, 5:36 PM





2 Elon Musk


← Post



 **Elon Musk**  
@elonmusk  




Next I'm buying Coca-Cola to put the cocaine back in

6:26 AM · Apr 28, 2022


168K  751K  4.2M  21K 

Relevant  View quotes >

 Post your reply 

 **Pranay Pathole**  @PPathole · Apr 28, 2022 

This is the first publicly sold bottle of Coca-Cola in 1894 which contained 3.5 grams of cocaine. Bring it back.



3 Dhruv Rathee

 **Dhruv Rathee** 
@dhruv_rathee 

What's the joy in winning when half the population knows it's a fraud?

3:27 PM · Nov 14, 2025 · 4.5M Views

14K  10K  54K  825 

Relevant  View quotes >

 Post your reply 

 **Pranav Mahajan**  @pranavmahajan · Nov 14, 2025 

What's the joy in writing a post when the entire population knows it's paid?

222  1.1K  19K  249K 

 **The Wular**  @theWular · Nov 14, 2025 

I am a Muslim Kashmiri and against BJP ideology, but you guys are living in a fool's paradise. Accept defeat and try to work for the welfare of People. Your entire campaign runs on caste reservation and other nonsense. Even I wouldn't vote for you because of your pathetic

[Show more](#)



4 Rahul Gandhi

Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi

Show translation

आज युवा कांग्रेस के बब्बर शेर साथियों से मुलाकात की जो अपने शांतिपूर्ण प्रदर्शन के लिए गिरफ्तार कर लिए गए थे।

शांतिपूर्ण विरोध हर नागरिक का संवैधानिक अधिकार है। और, खासकर तब और ज़रूरी हो जाता है - जब देश का PM compromised हो।

मुझे और कांग्रेस पार्टी को अपने बब्बर शेरों के साहस और देशभक्ति पर गर्व है।



5 Virat Kohli

← Post

Virat Kohli @imVkohli

The only time you truly fail, is when you decide to give up.

10:00 AM · Oct 16, 2025 · 296.9K Views

2.5K 6.1K 25K 874

6 Narendra Modi

Narendra Modi @narendramodi

Delighted to welcome my friend, President Putin to India. Looking forward to our interactions later this evening and tomorrow. India-Russia friendship is a time tested one that has greatly benefitted our people.

@KremlinRussia_E



7 Met Gala (as usual the jokes were better than most of the outfits)

derek guy @dieworkwear

how it feels to live through one trump news cycle



8 Sounds cool


parks 
@parkersity_9 · [Follow](#)

don't understand why electricians aren't called power rangers but okay


5:34 PM · Feb 10, 2026

 25.2K  Reply  Copy link [boredpanda.com](#)


9 POPE LEO XIV (Pope declaring that artificial intelligence must be "disarmed" is so cool)

Pope Leo XIV  @Pontifex · May 25

In the era of [#ArtificialIntelligence](#), when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us and revealed in its fullness in Christ, the splendor of which no machine can ever replace. [#MagnificaHumanitas](#)

 [vatican.va](#)
Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Leo XIV Magnifica ...
ENCYCLICAL LETTER MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV ON SAFEGUARDING ...

10 Salman Khan (Forget the date, because this is evergreen)

Salman Khan 
@BeingSalmanKhan [Follow](#)

Thought for the day . Hmmmmmmmm
ahhhhhhhhhh , jaane do aaj kuch mat
soocho .

8:17 AM - 29 Jun 2014

4,094 Retweets 5,147 Likes

 2.0K  4.1K  5.1K





FUN SECTION

MEMES



If a MUN resolution was actually implemented in the UN



Me convincing the quiet delegates to vote for my resolution

Him trying to play PUBG in unmod



When I use a personal pronoun by mistake during an important debate
Presiding officer:



The guy that worked hard on his resolution

Me who used selective plagiarism from Best delegate.com



When you havnt starting writing Working Paper or resolutions and the due date is in 3 hours

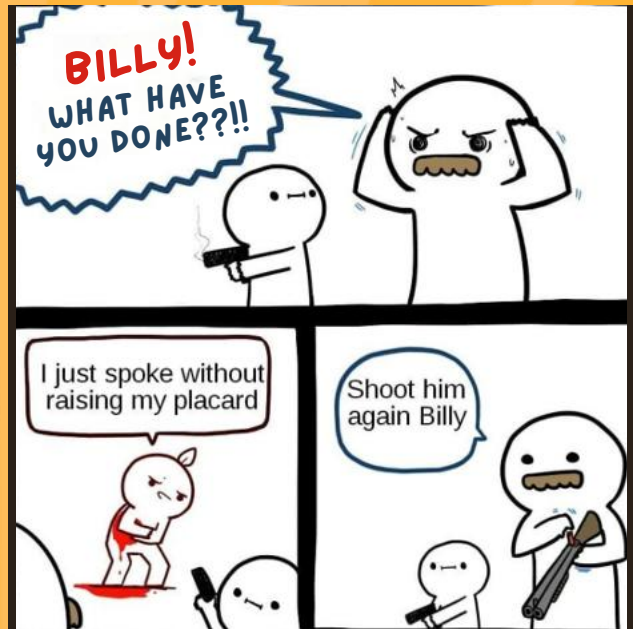




WHEN YOU'RE BOTH SUPPOSED TO BE RUNNING A COMMITTEE BUT GOSSIP COMES FIRST

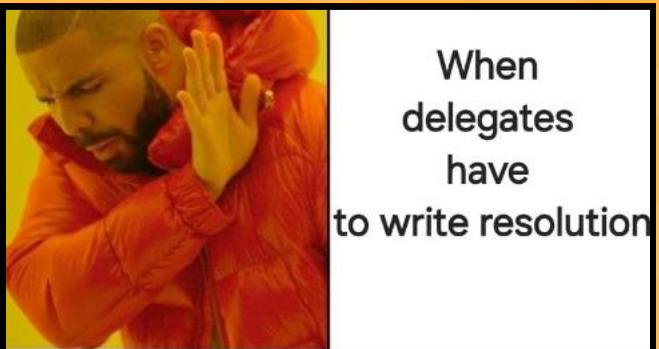


THAT MOMENT WHEN LOGIC PACKS ITS BAGS AND LEAVES.



JOINED MUN

TIME TO MAKE MUMMA PROUD



When delegates have to write resolution



When the time is for socials



WAITING FOR

AWARDS TO START

QUOTES



Some quotes make you laugh.
Some make you think. These
do both.



**"Before you criticize someone,
walk a mile in their shoes.
That way, you'll be a mile from
them, and you'll have their
shoes." — Jack Handey**



**"Two things are infinite: the
universe and human stupidity;
and I'm not sure about the
universe."
— Albert Einstein**

**"When I die, I want to die like
my grandfather who died
peacefully in his sleep. Not
screaming like all the
passengers in his car."
— Will Rogers**

**"Sometimes I wish I had a
terrible childhood, so that at
least I'd have an excuse."
— Jimmy Fallon**

**"Life would be tragic
if it weren't funny."
— Stephen Hawking**

**"People say nothing is
impossible, but I do nothing
every day."
— A. A. Milne**



FACTS NOBODY ASKED FOR, BUT NOW YOU CAN'T FORGET.

THE ENTIRE COUNTRY OF NORWAY RAN OUT OF BUTTER IN 2011

THE NATIONAL ANIMAL OF SCOTLAND IS UNICORN

THERE WAS A PAINT CALLED 'MUMMY BROWN' USED FROM 16TH TO THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY WHICH WAS MADE BY GRINDING EGYPTIAN MUMMIES

THE PRIMAL OF BLOOD AND BONE IS A 2025 NOVEL THAT WAS PRINTED IN A SPECIAL EDITION WITH GARLIC SCENTED INK, AS GARLIC REPELS THE VAMPIRES IN THE STORY.

THE LIGHTER WAS INVENTED THREE YEARS BEFORE THE MATCH.

JOHAN DE WITT WAS A DUTCH PRIME MINISTER IN 1672, WHO WAS LYNCHED AND EATEN BY ANGRY CROWDS AFTER RESIGNING FROM THE GOVERNMENT DUE TO A POLITICAL CRISIS.

NEW ZEALAND HAD A STARS RECOGNISED WIZARD TILL 2021. HE PERFORMED "ACTS OF WIZARDRY" FOR THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY

CROSSWORD

A crossword puzzle grid with 28 numbered starting points for words. The grid consists of empty squares for letters, with some squares being blacked out to form the crossword pattern. The numbers are as follows:

- 1: Down, top square
- 2: Down, 2nd square from top
- 3: Across, 1st square
- 4: Across, 2nd square
- 5: Across, 5th square
- 6: Down, 1st square
- 7: Across, 1st square
- 8: Down, 1st square
- 9: Across, 1st square
- 10: Across, 1st square
- 11: Across, 11th square
- 12: Across, 1st square
- 13: Across, 1st square
- 14: Across, 1st square
- 15: Across, 15th square
- 16: Across, 1st square
- 17: Across, 1st square
- 18: Down, 1st square
- 19: Across, 1st square
- 20: Across, 20th square
- 21: Across, 21st square
- 22: Down, 22nd square
- 23: Across, 23rd square
- 24: Across, 24th square
- 25: Down, 25th square
- 26: Across, 26th square
- 27: Across, 27th square
- 28: Down, 28th square

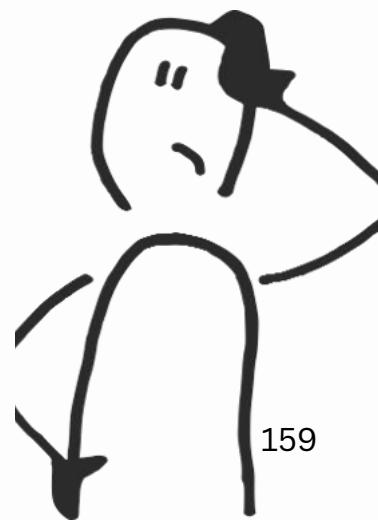


ACROSS

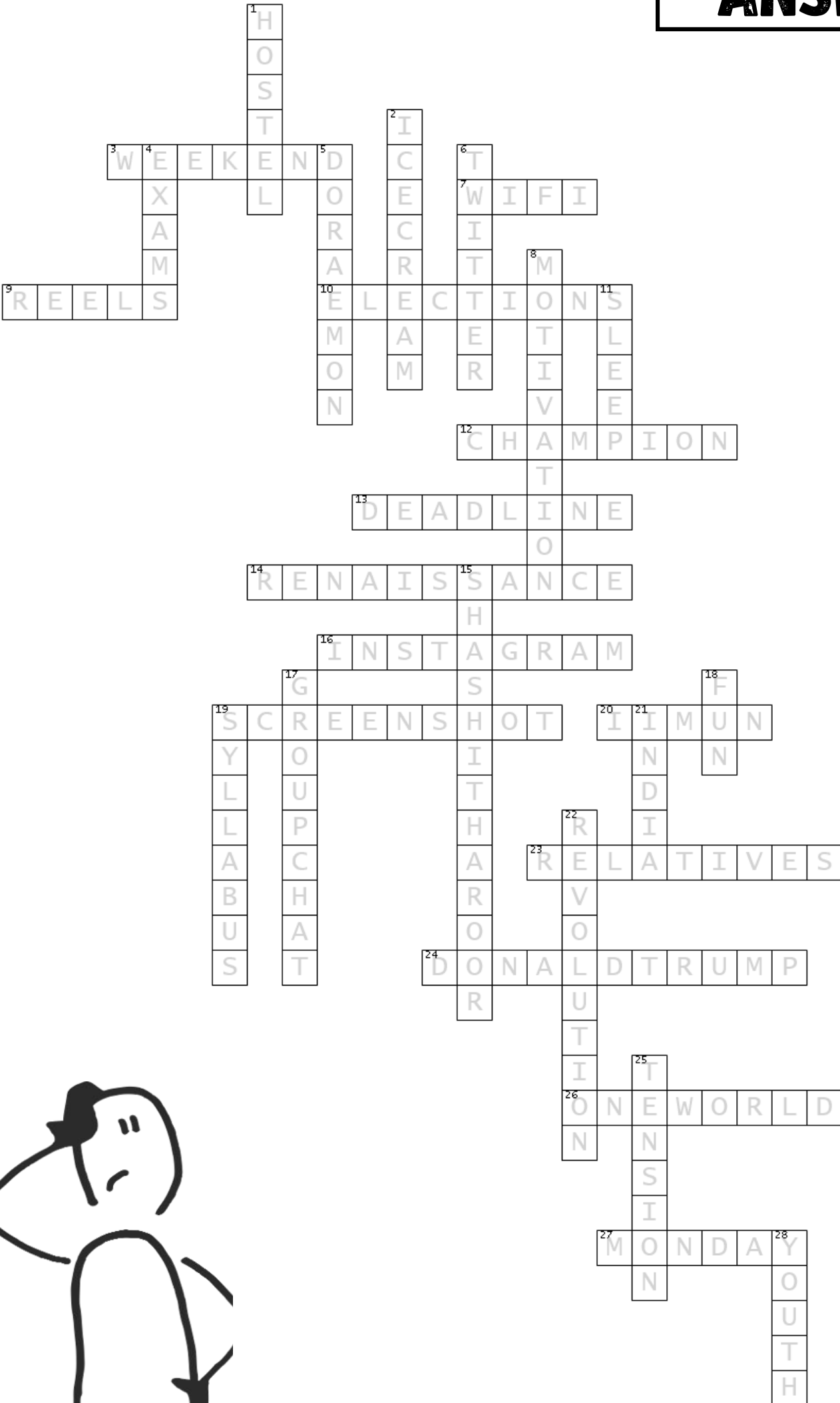
3. Two beautiful days destroyed by Monday thoughts.
7. Invisible force controlling human happiness.
9. Five-second videos stealing entire evenings.
10. National season of promises, rallies, and nonstop TV debates.
12. Person who wins and reminds everyone about it forever.
13. Motivational speaker in disguise.
14. Rebirth
16. Competition of who looks happiest.
19. Modern evidence collection method.
20. World's largest youth run organisation
23. People asking career questions at weddings.
24. Man who can create breaking news by posting one sentence online.
26. Title
27. The villain of every weekend story

DOWN

1. Place where sleep schedules go to die.
2. Dessert that melts faster than patience.
4. Annual reminder that panic is real.
5. he has a solution and a gadget for your every problem
6. Place where everyone fights professionally.
8. Feeling that disappears after 2 days.
11. Thing everyone loves but sacrifices.
15. Politician responsible for increasing India's dictionary sales.
17. Place where 200 messages appear in 5 minutes.
18. Everybody wants to have it
19. Giant document nobody finishes on time.
21. Unity in Diversity
22. When people decide "we're not doing this anymore."
25. Free gift before results day.
28. Harbinger of Change



ANSWERS



GUESS THE PERSONALITY

Takes the hints and guess the person we're talking about

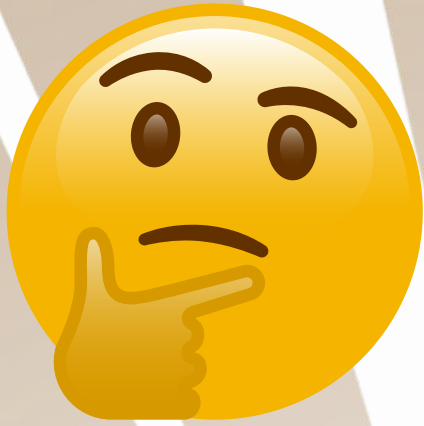
1 Hint Card

- This person treats ICC trophies like limited edition Pokémon cards — gotta catch 'em all.
- His pull shot has sent more balls into the crowd than people send "good morning" messages in family WhatsApp groups.
- Bowlers see him walking out to bat and suddenly remember they left the stove on at home.
- He can look half asleep, eat three vada pavs, and still score a century before your Wi-Fi reconnects.
- This captain's batting strategy is simple: survive 10 balls... then make the bowler question his career choices.

2 Hint Card

- This person appears on TV so often that some people think he's part of the news channel subscription.
- His cough has more screen time than some Bollywood side actors.
- Every interview turns into "who can interrupt whom first" challenge mode.
- This person files complaints with the dedication of a student emailing teachers at 11:59 PM about marks.
- The only politician who made a muffler look like mandatory winter uniform for politics.





3

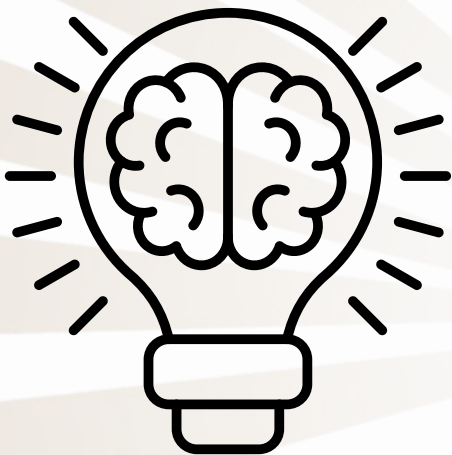
Hint Card

- This person looks like he permanently knows your exam result before you do.
- His facial expression has only two modes: 😐 and slightly more 😏.
- The only politician who gives “strict principal calling your parents” energy without saying a word.
- Reporters ask one question and immediately regret volunteering for the job.
- This person probably organizes spice boxes at home constituency-wise and alphabetically.

4

Hint Card

- This person says one line slowly and everyone nearby suddenly starts talking in a deeper voice for no reason.
- This person’s glasses, suits, and calm expressions together have more consistency than most people’s study schedules.
- Every impression artist in India has tried copying this person at least once in their life.
- This person has done so many advertisements that even the products probably know him personally.
- Watching this person host a quiz show has become part of India’s unofficial nighttime routine.



5

Hint Card

- This person can turn a 10-minute speech into 47 headlines before lunch.
- The internet refreshes itself automatically every time this person posts something.
- The only man who argues with journalists like it’s a live multiplayer game.
- This person speaks with the confidence of someone who has never lost an argument inside their own head.
- Half the world opens social media to see news, the other half opens it to see what this person said today.

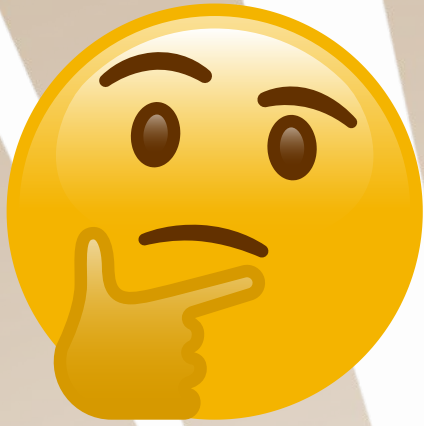
ANSWERS

1 ROHIT SHARMA



2 ARVIND KEJRIWAL





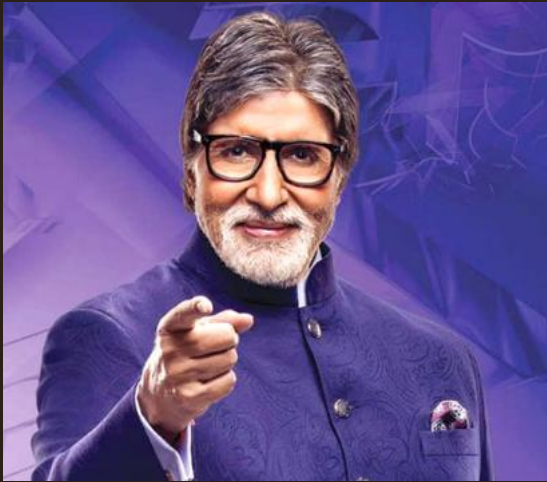
3

AMIT SHAH



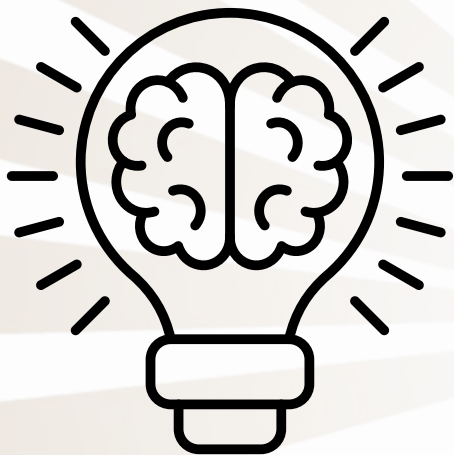
4

AMITABH BACHCHAN



5

DONALD TRUMP



Dear Readers,

If you have an article, short story, poem, artwork, photograph, or any creative piece related to the theme of Youth Renaissance, we warmly invite you to share your work with us. Your ideas, creativity, and perspectives have the power to inspire change and spark meaningful conversations among young minds.

To submit your entry, simply scan the QR code provided. Selected works will be featured in the upcoming edition of One World Magazine, giving talented contributors an opportunity to showcase their voices and creativity to a wider audience.

We are looking forward to seeing your creativity!



This edition does not end here!

We have a fun game for you.

If you thought this was the end of this edition of the One World Magazine, we have something exciting in store for you. Every Wednesday, a trivia quiz will be posted on the Instagram page of Glocal by I.I.M.U.N., through which you will obtain clues and codes. By solving these clues and codes, you will have to form a sentence.

The top performers will be featured on the leaderboard in the next edition of the One World Magazine, and we will also have a surprise gift for our top performers.

If you want to receive some extra and special clues and codes, they will be hidden in the captions of our news pieces. To access them, follow the Instagram page of Glocal by I.I.M.U.N. or scan this QR code.



ढलद ढरररवे



अडं नररु: डरर वेतर गणनर लघुचेतसरडु।
उदररकरतरनरं तु वसुधैव कुटुडुडकडु॥

"This is mine, and that is yours" is the calculation of narrow-minded people.
For those of noble conduct and a generous heart, the entire world is one
single family.



India's International
Movement to Unite Nations



drafting.iimun@gmail.com