

Wednesday  
5 June 2024

The Telegraph

t2

FASHION FOOTPRINT

SONAM  
KAPOOR IN  
BHAANE

P15

PICTURE: RASBEHARI DAS

PROSENJIT &  
RITUPARNA SENGUPTA

P11

FIFTY &  
FABULOUSCANDID  
COOL

P6

PICTURE: PABITRA DAS

- B'DAY, WATCHIT, COMING UP 2 • TEAM t2 IS, TECH TOOLS 3,4
- TRAVEL, FILM ON FOLKLORE 7,10 • ON THE BALL, ROLLING STONES TRIBUTE 12
- SHUTTLE STORY, PRIDE ON THE RUNWAY 13,16 • GM SPEAK, UEFA CHAMPS 17,18,19

MASABA GUPTA





ALSO: KENNY G, AYESHA SHROFF, VIJU SHAH, KEN FOLLETT AND AMIT SADH

MARK WAHLBERG, RICK RIORDAN, TROYE SIVAN

This year, if you stay focused, keep your composure and are confident in your abilities, you will be successful. Pay attention to your dreams and the signs and symbols the universe is sending you. Don't dwell on the past and heal yourself. Your financial issues will get sorted and you will have financial stability this year.

— Nita Chhotlall

## TODAY'S TIPS by Nita Chhotlall



### ARIES

**DO** conquer inner worries  
**DON'T** let fear of failure or looking foolish hold you back from realising your potential  
**EXPECT** to make your lifestyle healthier



### TAURUS

**DO** stay patient and take advice from your seniors  
**DON'T** give up hope; the situation will improve  
**EXPECT** good fortune and support



### GEMINI

**DO** be receptive to new creative beginnings  
**DON'T** get frustrated  
**EXPECT** travel plans to get delayed



### CANCER

**DO** prioritise what matters  
**DON'T** take financial risks  
**EXPECT** to be a master juggler to cope with the demands on your time and money



### LEO

**DO** handle others with strength and compassion  
**DON'T** be dominating  
**EXPECT** to have emotional maturity



### VIRGO

**DO** make time for your own ongoing spiritual journey  
**DON'T** let success go to your head  
**EXPECT** successful campaigns; to win battles



### LIBRA

**DO** reassure yourself that rifts will be healed  
**DON'T** have fears about losing everything you have  
**EXPECT** financial issues to get sorted



### SCORPIO

**DO** relax and be grounded  
**DON'T** miss out on new opportunities  
**EXPECT** to solve problems and move on



### SAGITTARIUS

**DO** work hard for what you want and finish what you start  
**DON'T** get disconnected from reality  
**EXPECT** a renewed sense of strength



### CAPRICORN

**DO** grab opportunities with both hands  
**DON'T** procrastinate; go after what you want  
**EXPECT** good news



### AQUARIUS

**DO** focus on your goals  
**DON'T** be hasty; avoid risky investments, overspending  
**EXPECT** a new venture to take off much sooner than you thought it would



### PISCES

**DO** accept the situation and make peace  
**DON'T** be depressed  
**EXPECT** to recover from health issues

Nita Chhotlall is on [f @Divine Grace - Nita Chhotlall](#) [@mysticalguidancebynita](#)



## GORGEOUS GIRLS



Uploaded by @dishapatani (Disha Patani)



Can you tell how hot it was from the photos? Stickaaaay Uploaded by @mahirakhan (Mahira Khan)



@ysl summer 24 shot by @graysorrenti @anthonyvaccarello  
Uploaded by @haileybieber (Hailey Bieber)



Special mention to my grandmother's benarasi shawl. Uploaded by @pamomittra (Parno Mittra)

## COMING UP



**What:** World Environment Day with Storyteller Bookstore  
**Where:** Storyteller Bookstore, Flat 3C, Vrindavan Apartments, 3rd Floor, Ballygunge Circular Road  
**When:** June 5, 11am to noon  
**What to Expect:** On World Environment Day, Storyteller Bookstore Ballygunge will collaborate with Pan Macmillan India and Creative Caterpillar to host a storytelling session of *Too Much Stuff* by Emily Gravett. The tale, which is quite literally

about having 'too much stuff', provides an important theme to mull over, especially regarding environmental issues.

**Organiser Speak:** "The story explores property and having things just for the sake of having them. We will also engage in some fun DIY craft activities like making bird feeders. This is our way of showing children that minimalism is a great way to learn about recycling," said Mayura Misra, founder, Storyteller Bookstore.

## BIG SCREEN

### ENGLISH

**FAST CHARLIE (A):** Inox Quest (11\*, 8.45\*), Inox South City (10.45\*, 8.50), PVR Mani Square (8.50pm)

**FURIOSA: A MAD MAX SAGA (A):** Inox Quest (7.45pm\*), Inox South City (3.05\*, 10.40\*), Inox Forum (11.35am), Inox Salt Lake (11am), Inox Rajarhat (1.05), Inox Hind (9.50pm), Inox Hiland (noon), PVR Mani Square (1.20), RDB Cinemas (1pm)

**THE GARFIRD MOVIE 3D (U):** Inox Quest (1.05), Inox South City (11.45am), Inox Forum (2.45), Inox Salt Lake (2pm), PVR Mani Square (2.10)

**GODZILLA X KONG: THE NEW EMPIRE 3D (U/A):** PVR Mani Square (11.30am)

**THE STRANGERS: CHAPTER 1 (A):** Inox Quest (10.50, 6.55\*, 10.30), Inox South City (2.05, 9.45), Inox Rajarhat (10.50, 8), PVR Mani Square (6.35, 11)

### JAPANESE

**HAIKYU! THE DUMPSTER BATTLE (U):** Inox Quest (11, 3.30, 5.30), Inox South City (10.50\*, 1\*, 6.20\*, 8.30\*), Inox Forum (9.30, 1.45, 7.50), Inox Salt Lake (11.55, 7.45), PVR Avani (11, 4.05), PVR Mani Square (9.25, 2.35, 4.30), PVR Diamond Plaza (10.15, 3.30, 5.35)

### HINDI

**BHAIYYA JI (U/A):** Inox Quest (10.05pm), Inox Rajarhat (10.20pm), Inox Metro (1.55), Inox Swabhum (12.05), PVR Avani (4.50), PVR Uniworld Downtown (noon), Nazrultirtha (5.30, 8)

**CHHOTA BHEEM AND THE CURSE OF DAMYAAN (U):** Inox Quest (1.50, 4.10), Inox South City (11, 4.50), Inox Forum (10.45, 6.40), Inox Salt Lake (11, 4.20), Inox Rajarhat (11, 4.50), PVR Avani (1.20, 7.20), PVR Mani Square (10.10, 7.20), PVR Diamond Plaza (12.20, 6.20), RDB Cinemas (5.35)

**FURIOSA: A MAD MAX SAGA (A):** Inox Swabhum (noon), PVR Avani (1.35), PVR Diamond Plaza (9.30pm)

**GODZILLA X KONG: THE NEW EMPIRE 3D (U/A):** PVR Avani (11am), PVR Diamond Plaza (12.55)

**LAAPATAA LADIES (U/A):** Inox Quest



MR. & MRS. MAHI

(3pm\*), Inox South City (7.55pm), Inox Forum (5.05), Inox Salt Lake (7.50), Inox Rajarhat (7.35pm), PVR Avani (7.50pm), PVR Mani Square (4.35), PVR Diamond Plaza (5.15)

**MADGAON EXPRESS (U/A):** Inox Swabhum (6.05)

**MAIDAAN (U/A):** PVR Uniworld Downtown (5.50)

**MR & MRS MAHI (U):** Inox Quest (10.40\*, 1.45\*, 4.50\*, 5.45\*, 7.55\*, 9.20\*, 11\*), Inox South City (10.25\*, 1.30\*, 4.35\*, 6.45\*, 7.40\*, 9.50\*, 10.45\*), Inox Forum (9.30, 12.30, 3.35, 4.40, 6.40, 9.45, 10.45), Inox Salt Lake (10.45, 1.45, 4.50, 7.55, 10, 11), Inox Rajarhat (10.25, 1.30, 4.35, 7.40, 9.45, 10.45), Inox Metro (10.45, 1.45, 4.45, 7.45, 10.45), Inox Hind (9.35, 12.40, 3.45, 6.50, 9.55), Inox Hiland (10.10, 1.15, 3.15, 4.20, 7.25, 9, 10.30), Inox Swabhum (10, 1.05, 3.05, 4.10, 7.15, 9, 10.20), PVR Avani (10.10, 1.15, 4.20, 7.25, 9.10, 10.30), PVR Mani Square (10.30, 1.35, 4.40, 7.45, 10.50), PVR Diamond Plaza (9.25, 10.35, 12.30, 3.35, 6.40, 9.45, 11), PVR Uniworld Downtown (10.10, 1.15, 4.20, 7.25, 10.30), RDB Cinemas (10.15, 11.55, 1.15, 4, 6.45, 9.30)

**SAVI (U/A):** Inox Quest (11, 1.10\*, 5, 10.55\*), Inox South City (9, 12.25, 4\*, 11), Inox Forum (11, 3.50, 9.55), Inox Salt Lake (9.10, 4.55, 10.40), Inox Rajarhat (11, 4.50, 10.20), Inox Metro (4.55, 10.45), Inox Hind (1.10, 7), Inox Hiland (1.10, 7, 9.45), Inox

Swabhum (9.45, 3.15, 6.10, 9.15), PVR Avani (10.30, 4.30, 10.30), PVR Mani Square (11.45, 7.40, 10.30), PVR Diamond Plaza (10.10, 2.25, 8, 10.15), PVR Uniworld Downtown (11.40, 3, 9.35), RDB Cinemas (10.45, 3, 6.35)

**SRIKANTH (U):** Inox Quest (noon\*, 4\*, 7.10, 10.55), Inox South City (9.30, 1\*, 5.55, 10.45), Inox Forum (1.45, 7.45, 9.45), Inox Salt Lake (4.55, 9.55), Inox Rajarhat (1.50, 6.50), Inox Metro (11, 7.45), Inox Hind (10.10, 4), Inox Hiland (10.10, 1, 4, 9.50), Inox Swabhum (12.30, 3.30, 6.30, 9.30), PVR Avani (1.05, 6.10, 10.35), PVR Mani Square (4.40, 10.30), PVR Diamond Plaza (2.25, 8.05, 10.50), PVR Uniworld Downtown (2.30, 8.45), RDB Cinemas (3.50, 9.15)

### BENGALI

**ALAAP (U/A):** Inox South City (2pm)

**DABARU (U):** Inox South City (6.55), Inox Salt Lake (2.05), Inox Hiland (4pm), PVR Diamond Plaza (3.30), Nazrultirtha (6.30)

**ETA AMADER GOLPO (U):** Inox South City (3.10), Inox Salt Lake (2.10), Inox Rajarhat (2.05), Inox Hiland (6.50), PVR Diamond Plaza (5.20), Nazrultirtha (7.15pm)

**NAYAN RAHASYA (U):** Inox South City (4.20), Inox Salt Lake (7.25), Inox Rajarhat (4.15), Inox Hiland (6.20), PVR Diamond Plaza (7.40), Nazrultirtha (5pm)

**TAHADER KATHA (U/A):** Nazrultirtha (4.30)



**MESMERISED BY...**

The full moon which shone upon the City of Joy on Buddha Purnima. This t2 girl spotted this beauty while on a bike ride to Baruiapur for some delectable Asma Biryani.

**STUNNED...**

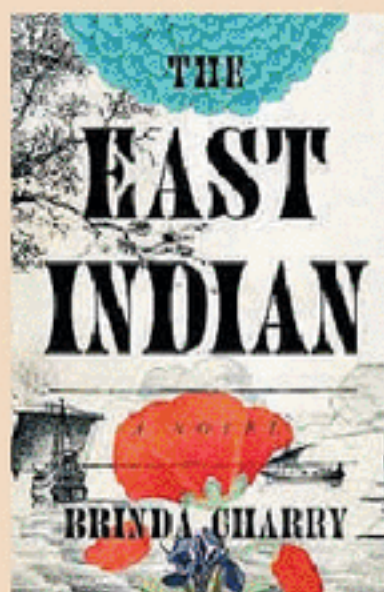
To see, on this t2 girl's debut visit to Kashmir, vendors selling hookah with kesar flavours on the shikaras! For anyone who enjoys shisha, the snowcapped backdrop would be so cool!

**SOAKING IN NATURE...**

At Beri Baor in Panchpota, just 1.5 hours from Calcutta, near the India-Bangladesh border. Could be this t2 girl's next weekend getaway once again!

**READING...**

*The East Indian* by Brinda Charry, a gripping historical novel that traces the journey of an Indian boy who is sold into servitude in 17th-century Virginia. The story explores themes of identity, survival, and cultural intersection in early colonial America. A sharp read for anyone interested in colonial politics.

**ENJOYING...**

Midnight dessert cravings at 1 in the morning, come rain or shine! This t2 girl is currently obsessing over delicious mint-chocolate ice cream and ending up having one almost every night.

**INDULGING IN...**

A healthy bowl for breakfast with oats, bananas, and mangoes, topped with nuts. This t2 girl hopes to continue the healthy breakfast option to keep some extra pounds off!

**EXPERIMENTING IN THE KITCHEN...**

And trying to make butter chicken for the first time. This t2 girl is no expert when it comes to the culinary arts, but she does her best... psst: the chicken ended up quite delish, too! #nomnom

**LEARNING ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY...**

In ever-changing Gurugram, one can't help but visit (and revisit) Museo Camera, Centre for the Photographic Arts. Living in an image-saturated world, the museum dedicated to cameras teaches a thing or two about the history of photography, like why is it that in Victorian images people are not laughing or smiling? It's a must-visit place for children getting introduced to the power of images.

**MISSING...**

The chilly climes of Gangtok as the Calcutta heat and humidity rage on unabated.

**CURRENTLY WATCHING...**

*Derry Girls*, a hilarious sitcom that follows the lives of five teenagers navigating adolescence in 1990s Northern Ireland amidst the troubles. The show blends humour and historical context seamlessly. This t2 girl can't decide which main character she likes best!

**TT Connect Initiative**

## On World Environment Day, choose goodness that is kind to the planet

*Environmental changes have become critical issues affecting our ecosystems, largely driven by harmful pesticides and excessive chemical fertilizers.*

Conventional farming practices frequently depend on pesticides and chemical fertilizers, contributing to soil degradation, water pollution, and biodiversity loss. These chemicals contaminate water sources and diminish soil fertility. This hinders the cultivation of nutritious crops. When it rains, the soil washes the fertilizers and toxic pesticides used on crops into nearby creeks and streams, leading to decreased oxygen levels essential for marine life survival.

**Organic farming**

It's easy to overlook, but farming has the potential to significantly shape our environmental future. The alarming pace of climate change is largely driven by human choices including how we live and how we farm. However, conventional farming can be transformed

through organic farming. Organic products are grown with an environmentally and socially responsible approach, without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Additionally, organic farming results in food products that boast higher nutritional content with enhanced flavours and tastes.

**Amul Organic**

At Amul Organic, we recognize the impact of these practices which contribute to rising chronic diseases and pollution of soil and water. Our mission is to nurture our planet back to health and provide safe, healthy food for present and

future generations on a sustainable basis. We are dedicated to creating a pesticide-free India. Our commitment is to produce the purest, most natural products. Stringent quality control measures ensure that our products remain free from over 225 chemicals and pesticides. With 75 years of trust and NPOP certification, we are dedicated to providing sustainable, nutrient-rich food.

This World Environment Day, join us in celebrating the transformative power of organic produce to build a sustainable future for generations to come. Visit [shop.amul.com](http://shop.amul.com) to explore and purchase Amul Organic products.







## WHAT MAKES PHILIPS 5000 SERIES INDOOR 360-DEGREE CAMERA A SENSIBLE OPTION FOR MOST INDOOR SPACES

Philips 5000 Series Indoor 360-degree Camera offers pan, tilt and zoom features. Picture: The Telegraph

What's the price one can put on peace of mind? Having an indoor security camera allows you to keep tabs on the things at home, be it your kids, your pets, or aged parents. Recently, we had an opportunity to use Philips 5000 Series Indoor 360° Camera. As the name suggests, it's a plug-and-play camera but what it offers is plenty of bang for the buck.

The camera captures top-notch video day and night, has a good 360-degree field of view

### AT A GLANCE

**Device:** Philips 5000 Series Indoor 360-degree Camera  
**Price:** Rs 8,995

### HIGH NOTES

► Easy to install

► Good pan and tilt movement  
► Easy-to-use app

### MUFFLED NOTE

► Siren sound need to be louder for larger spaces



There is a light indicator on the top to inform the user about the status of the security camera and there is space for a micro SD card. Picture: The Telegraph

and captures movements well. You get 3MP 2K (1,296p) resolution, which is good enough for homes as well as small shops. And there is enhanced night vision, offering you crisp and clear video recording, ensuring a good degree of details when you playback videos. You also gain a clear view in low-light conditions with IR visibility up to 10 metres.

Setting it up took hardly five minutes. All I had to do is plug in the device, download Philips Home Safety app and add the device. There is a SIM ejector-like pin in



A sample frame captured on Philips 5000 Series Indoor 360-degree Camera. Picture: The Telegraph

the box which you need to use to manually reset the camera before installation and you need to have your phone connected to the home Wi-Fi. It took me less time to get this one going than the Xiaomi Mi wireless home security camera.

The first thing that I enjoyed about the device is the field of view. It's 360 degrees, complete with pan, tilt and zoom features. These are particularly helpful if your camera has been installed on the wall and you want to get a view of what's happening below lens level. Working in favour of the Philips camera is the pan-and-tilt options. I have had several indoor security cameras that get stuck in the middle of a rotation. Over the few weeks I used the security camera, there were no such issues with the Philips device.

Second, there is a physical privacy shutter which is usually missing on a wireless home security camera.

Third, movement detection is easily picked up by the camera. You can customise movement sensitivity on the app between high, medium and low (I kept it at medium) and sound sensitivity to high and low. Sound sensitivity helps set up custom alerts based on detection of people, pet, sound or even a child crying.

The two-way audio set-up is also worth a mention and the built-in siren is not too bad for an apartment or a shop.

Where am I using the camera? I have it installed in my home office. The best part of this camera is it also offers offline recording. Motion detection is reliable and I can track everything through the app.

You can have the device installed even in a small shop or a cloud kitchen setup. Having a couple of these cameras ensures a wide coverage of the home and, of course, it offers mental peace.

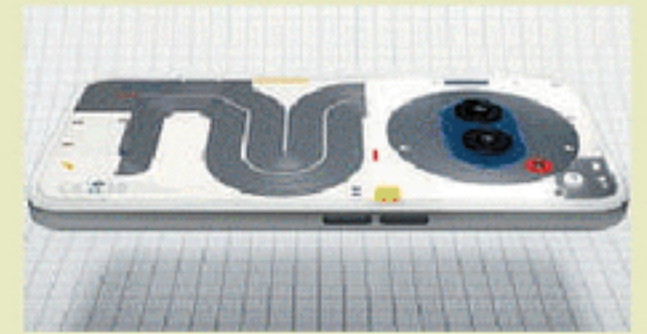
Sure, there are options for 4K in the market but for most people the 2K option works well.

Despite what I tell my highly-active daughter during her summer vacation, I don't have eyes in the back of my head. The Wi-Fi security camera and the smartphone app help me keep track of the house and also of my pet cat. Outdoor cameras can withstand the elements but may need an electrical outlet or periodic battery recharges. But indoor cameras can keep an eye on things in your home, which is exactly what most people need.

Philips 5000 Series Indoor 360° Camera is a sensible option for most houses and small businesses. And it can be installed without any hassle.

Mathures Paul

## NOTHING HAS A SPECIAL EDITION OF PHONE (2A)



Nothing Phone (2a) Special Edition

Nothing, the London-based tech company, has a special edition of Phone (2a), and it presents a striking hardware design that's representation of the "inside out" philosophy that has characterised the brand from day one.

This is the first time Nothing is using red, blue and yellow on the same device, which is priced at Rs 27,999. The third phone from Carl Pei's company remains true to its core philosophy of keeping technology in the background while devices connect people. The transparent design returns and so does the Glyph Interface that allows you to have a fair idea about notifications through a clever usage of lights.

The phone itself is quite big. It has a 6.7-inch AMOLED display, which also means there is enough space for a big battery. And it's a bright 120Hz (adaptive refresh rate) panel that hits 1,300 nits of peak brightness. You get HDR10+ certification, 240Hz touch sampling rate and all that razzmatazz. Some phone brands are trying to show off crazy numbers in terms of screen brightness but those don't matter. Before I forget, there is 2,160Hz PWM dimming.

The display segues into battery life. It's a massive 5,000mAh battery that supports 45W fast-charging. The software is extremely well tuned to keep the phone running for a couple of days and the MediaTek Dimensity 7200 Pro chipset helps.

Mathures Paul

## RASPBERRY PI HAS PARTNERED WITH HALIO TO OFFER AI PROWESS

Raspberry Pi, a series of small single-board computers, that empower youngsters to learn about computers globally, is jumping on the artificial intelligence trend with a new kit built with AI chipmaker Hailo. The bundle, unveiled at the Computex trade show, presents AI to the Raspberry Pi 5.

The partnership will empower enthusiast creators to take their projects to a new level when it comes to home automation, security, robotics and beyond. "We are thrilled to support Raspberry Pi and empower its vibrant community of professional engineers and creative makers with cutting-edge AI capabilities. Our partnership with the world's leading single-board computer provider will inspire a new era of computing, enhanced by our high-performance AI processing capacity," said Hailo CEO

Orr Danon.

Raspberry Pi's AI Kit includes Raspberry Pi M.2 HAT+, and the Hailo-8L M.2 AI acceleration module with up to 13 TOPS of inferencing performance.

The kit also comes with a thermal pad to aid in cooling the Hailo device, a 16mm stacking general-purpose input/output (GPIO) header, and the necessary mounting hardware to connect the Raspberry Pi M.2 HAT+ to a Raspberry Pi 5 (which must be purchased separately).

Though the level of AI performance is lower than AMD's upcoming AI 300 chips, which hit 50 TOPS, it's enough for DIY computing. These are entry-level devices, and the cost of ownership is very little compared to the newer AI chips.

Mathures Paul



File picture of a Raspberry Pi unit. Picture: Raspberry Pi Foundation

## PUZZLE ALERT: THERE IS A NEW WORD GAME CALLED STRANDS

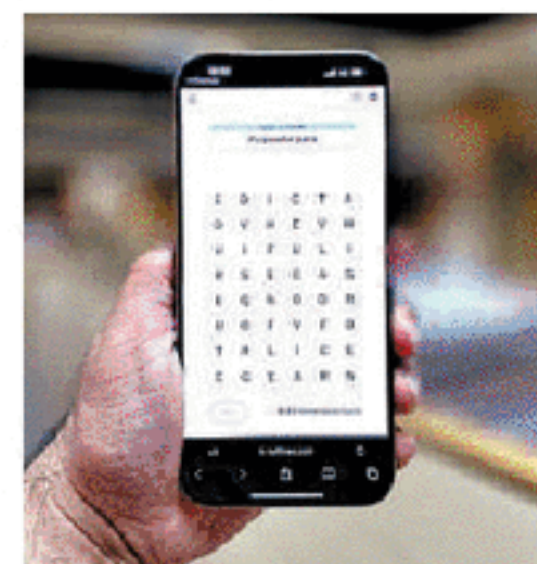
The New York Times has boosted its selection of puzzles with the addition of a new title — Strands, which joins crossword, Wordle, Connections and Spelling Bee. Available online, it's a word game that will keep you busy for 30-odd minutes.

### WHAT IS STRANDS?

Players are greeted with a matrix of alphabets and on top the "day's theme" is mentioned. It begins with a six by eight array of letters and a clue. For example, a recent Strands had the theme "better with age" and one had to look for answers.

### HOW TO PLAY STRANDS?

Begin with finding words. Look for words that fit into the day's theme, like for "better with age" there were plenty of four-/five-letter words and uncovering them gets the hint counter ticking. The theme is itself one of the words



Available to play online, the goal of Strands is to find words that fit into that day's designated theme. Picture: The Telegraph

hidden in the grid. To find words, click and drag the letters in order to spell out said word. When you find a word that fits the theme, the correctly guessed word will light up

in blue. Players also need to find a special word called a "spangram". It highlights the theme and will light up in yellow when found. The spangram can be two words and will always touch two opposite sides of the board.

### FINDING HINTS

At its heart, it's a word game and Strands rewards you for spotting them. In fact, if you spot three words, you will be given a hint, clicking which a few letters will get highlighted on the board. These are the letters of one of the game's theme words, but you have to decode it.

### SHOW THE WORLD

There are many people who still keep posting their Wordle score on X. So why not do the same for Strands?! Half the fun in winning a word puzzle is telling your friends and family members. There is a share option to let the world know online or through personal messages.

Mathures Paul



# Ethnic Sarees with Creative Designs



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## 'SOMETIMES IT IS OKAY TO GIVE UP,' SAYS MASABA GUPTA IN A CANDID CONVERSATION AT A YFLO KOLKATA SESSION

**U**ber cool and calmly candid, with a subtle sense of humour that's unmissable — that was Masaba Gupta while talking about love, life and work at YFLO Calcutta's inaugural event for the session 2024-25, held recently, at Taj Bengal's Crystal hall. In the event, titled 'Secrets and Splendor with Masaba', would-be mom Masaba shared her journey of wearing many hats and her mantras in life that help her lead a life in the superwoman style that she does. Excerpts:

### GROWING-UP YEARS AND INSPIRATION

My mother (Neena Gupta) played the role of both a mother and a father to me. I think I got the best of what a single parent could possibly give a child. She was working and was also trying to make sure that I had good friends, had the comforts of life and travelled. I think it is the best of what she could do. Women are multitaskers by nature and give more love and care. I have always seen that she did her best as a working mother and I hope I can do justice to her legacy. People keep asking me how I am the way I am, I think it comes from inherently spending time with a mother like that. I have seen her go to work, return, and spend post-school hours with me. I have seen her be an actor, producer and director on the sets, and my mother. So, it automatically showed me what life could be and that I have to be prepared for it. People see the worst in it but I see the best.

### THE MEN IN HER LIFE

I look 80 per cent like my biological father (Viv Richards). I have his temper, to begin with, but I also have his strive and ability to put on blinders and go forward. My relationship with him has evolved into so many different things over the years. When I was younger, I was very scared of him because he has this legendary personality, and wherever we went, there was this enigma around him. Then he was a mentor in my life and now we share a very close bond. As one grows older, they become softer but I have become even more aggressive. So, he was wondering what he did wrong! But apart from that I have a very special relationship with my stepfather (Vivek Mehra), too.

Nobody in my family is actually into business. My mother is like 'We don't know where we have picked you up from and from where you get the drive to run a business and have business acumen. You could do something in arts or creative.' It is because she thinks I get too stressed out. I get that from my stepfather. He was an ex-partner in PWC and has been a huge force in guiding my entrepreneurial journey. He is always on my speed dial. My husband Satyadeep (Mishra) is a different creature altogether.



YFLO chairperson Varsha Wadhwa Chirimar in conversation with Masaba Gupta at Taj Bengal

He was a lawyer in Delhi for 10 years and then decided to become an actor, quitting everything. He rides his motorcycle now, that's his passion. When he is free, he acts! He is mostly chilling.

### ON NEPOTISM

It would probably apply to me if I wanted to be an actor first. But since I became a designer first, I am self-made. I did not choose either of my parents' professions. But I would like to say something about nepotism. If you are a lawyer and your child is a lawyer then you would do the best for them so that the child gets the best opportunities. It is just the basic principle. We have seen business families running for generations, you will not give it to a neighbour! In Bollywood, it is possible to get one film but talent takes you far and then the audience decides whether they want to see you or not. The king's son won't be the king. He will be the king who deserves it.

### ON THE FASHION INDUSTRY

I think the fashion industry now is contributing to the realism that was missing when I used to see

fashion shows as a kid. Brands have social media now to use their voice. Nobody has beautiful glass-like skin all the time and perfect bodies. And that is what we should all campaign. We are doing it through Lovechild and House of Masaba. When I did my bridal last year, I was thinking whom I could use as a face and all I could think of was Kareena Kapoor Khan. Everyone was telling me not to do it. She is a mother of two, she is in her 40s. I don't think anyone could do in that campaign what Kareena did because she was so herself.

In bridal fashion, I felt that gap in realism. I think there's still a gap among the friends and family of the bride who want something more accessible and comfortable. The young brides today want pieces where they feel like themselves. If you look at the bridal images from way back, the *ghunghat* and earrings. I was like where is the person? Where's the bride in all of these? Today the bride is saying I want to wear less jewellery or I want to repurpose my mom's jewellery or I want to wear a lehnga with some accessories attached. People have become a lot more smart. They are looking for

jewellery not just to pass on but something that they can wear, too. But we are not the masses, we are point one per cent. But we hope what we are starting passes down to the masses. The masses still believe that what you are earning all your life needs to be spent to get your daughter married. But we are slowly getting there. If you see bridal pictures today, earlier they used to look down and now they are all posing. It is a great change.

### ON MENTAL HEALTH

It can be so damaging to feel all the time that the grass is greener on the other side. For starters, get off social media. I think you have to keep that filter between yourself and your social media. It can be so damaging to mental health to think that someone has better hair, a better day or a better husband! But nobody has it that way. Mental health to me is a very internal journey. I have been to therapists but I haven't found something that has helped me so much. I can't apply what they are telling me because it is like an outsider telling me what to do without really knowing where I come from. For me, it is important to take time off from everything that I am doing.

Bombay as a city can be very claustrophobic. You are stuck in a jam in between running somewhere; you don't have outdoors, no access to culture. It is like going to work and coming back home. For me, it is about spending more time outdoors and being vocal about who I am. I think therapy happens when you share it with the world. Share like-minded stories with like-minded people. If I am going through a rough patch at work, I talk to my mentors or someone who has been in a position that I have. Most days my mother is my therapy session. Sometimes it is nice and they truly have your best interest at heart. I talk to my friends, mum's friends and the girls at work. When you talk to them you

realise you have so much better. Then you become grateful. I do a lot of self-talk, too. My father used to do that as a cricketer.

### ON BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR

If you have family by your side, you are the luckiest person to run a business. Speak less, work more. Let action do the talking. Share less. Sometimes it is okay to give up. If something is not working, give it up and try something else. We get so stuck in our heads. It takes some level of self-awareness and being self-critical and say I am not good at this. I am going to give something else a shot or I am going to get someone to do it for me. I think this attitude of never say die or never give up. Sometimes people don't have what it takes and

sometimes you have to give up. You have to be realistic.

It was 2015, I wondered if I could just marry commerce with the creative. It would be great for my own business. The balance of creativity and commerce is very important. However, if you are not like that it is always great to do a tie-up with a corporate. With me, when I tied up in 2022, it was that

much more fast-paced with so many people helping. If you don't have an appetite, it can be very suffocating.

### ON ACTING

It is totally genetic. My first scene on the first day of *Masaba Masaba* was with mum and I was dying. I asked her if I could rehearse the lines with her. She said 'No, do your own thing. I am not your acting coach.' Then she messaged me in the morning asking if I would want lunch on set. The whole scene was without dialogue. And she was like, 'What are you doing, get a coach.' It is not just genetic but also my love for being on camera because I wanted to be on the camera for so long. The fact that I got the opportunity... I am so glad.

### LIFE'S MANTRA

Put your blinkers on and go for it. Be extremely self-aware. There are 10 more things that I can do today but I want to take a step back. Don't do things only for an interesting dinner-table conversation. Let the action do the job. I think cutting the emotional chord with the outside world is very important. I think we attach a lot of emotions with everything... place the emotion with close friends and family only. It is so important for us to just cut that chord. Nobody cares.

Priyanka A. Roy  
Pictures: Pabitra Das



Masaba turned up elegant in a simple and comfy white dress, keeping in mind the Calcutta summers



Every YFLO member was given a Lovechild goody bag and had the opportunity to get a personalised name card



## TRAVEL

## GLOBETROTTERS TO EMBARK ON DRIVE OF DREAMS, AN INTER-COUNTRY JOURNEY SPANNING 23 COUNTRIES AND 18,000 KILOMETRES

A journey by road that commences from the river Hooghly and ends at Thames. What a dream! A dream that has been conceived by renowned globetrotters and couple Kaushik Roy and Dr Debanjali Ray. The Drive Of Dreams, an apt name indeed, will take off on August 24 and last till October 25. This inter-country drive will accommodate 15 avid travellers and take the enthusiasts through Nepal, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Czechia, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France and culminate at the United Kingdom.

To cover 23 countries in a span of 63 days and travel around 18,000 kilometres is a dream come true for any travel aficionado. Moreover, Dr Ray and Roy, are well-travelled people themselves and have personally prepared the itinerary. Over years of passionate travelling the couple has built a community of travellers who shall accompany them on Drive of Dreams. The entire exploration has been made safe with preparations of convoy control, a doctor and a mechanic so that participants can take in the epic adventure. The duo moved to Australia a couple of years back after surprising their four-year-old daughter's school by taking a leave for over a year for travelling.

Kaushik said: "I feel travelling is in my genes. When I was younger, my grandfather was a doctor in Rajasthan and during every summer vacation, we would go to Rajasthan from Calcutta in an Ambassador car. In those days, the roads were different and Google Maps was not a thing. In 2018 when my wife, Debanjali was a doctor at North Bengal Medical College we wanted to travel beyond borders but the only borders we could cross over were to Nepal or Bhutan. We realised that we wanted to travel more. Our daughter was four and we told the school authorities that we are taking her out now and she would get admitted to the school again next year. They were obviously surprised (laughs). But we believed that at her age, travelling is an excellent mode of education in itself. In Australia, for instance, there is no educational pressure and they say that it is scientifically proven that until children are 10 years of age, that kind of pressure of studies is not required." "Anyway, at that time we had travelled over 32 countries and covered 42,000 kilometres. Everybody who knew us told us it was a risky affair and that we should drop the plan. In fact we also had to go to Delhi multiple times for several permissions regarding inter-country travel. By now we have covered almost 50 countries just by road," he continued.

The duo is also planning to travel for six months which is expected to break records next year. There were also multiple challenges that they faced when they were planning the Drive of



Kaushik and Debanjali relax in the Sahara Desert

Dreams. Kaushik said: "Earlier we planned on going via Russia but due to the international tension we had to change the whole route. Then we decided on going via Iran but then Israel and Iran had issues which attracted international attention again. So, these countries continue to be beautiful but a ton of challenges await us. It is the sheer want to travel that keeps us going. Additionally, we have now made friends in every country and they open our eyes to the rampant spread of misinformation too."

Out of all the countries, Kaushik could not choose a favourite but he holds a soft corner

for residents of Iran. "I met a guy in Tehran. He literally took our luggage from the hotel and said that we were his guests so we had to stay at his place. We stayed there for seven days! I don't recall staying at a relative's place for more than a day! (laughs)" Debanjali added, "The destination that brings the most peace is subjective, but to me, it is always about being surrounded by nature and serene landscapes. Sometimes it is just by seeing kids playing in a quiet village."

The youngest person who will be on the Drive of Dreams is a 26-year-old man from Jamshedpur and the oldest traveller is a 68-year-



Picture of the Aurora Borealis taken by the couple when they were somewhere in the Arctic Circle



A snap of Kaushik and Debanjali when they drove from Vladivostok to St Petersburg in their trans-Siberia drive in 2022

old man from Calcutta. "I feel the journey can be more enjoyable than the destination. It's all about excitement and to experience something new. This kind of trip offers ample time for introspection and self-reflection. The solitude of the open road allows you to disconnect from the stresses of daily life, gain perspective on your goals and priorities, and return home with a renewed sense of clarity and purpose. It also instils friendship across the borders," said Debanjali.

Sanjali Brahma

Pictures: Kaushik and Debanjali



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## Announcing the 2024 edition of Bizquiz

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Eight finalist teams (of 2) will compete for the Winner's Prize

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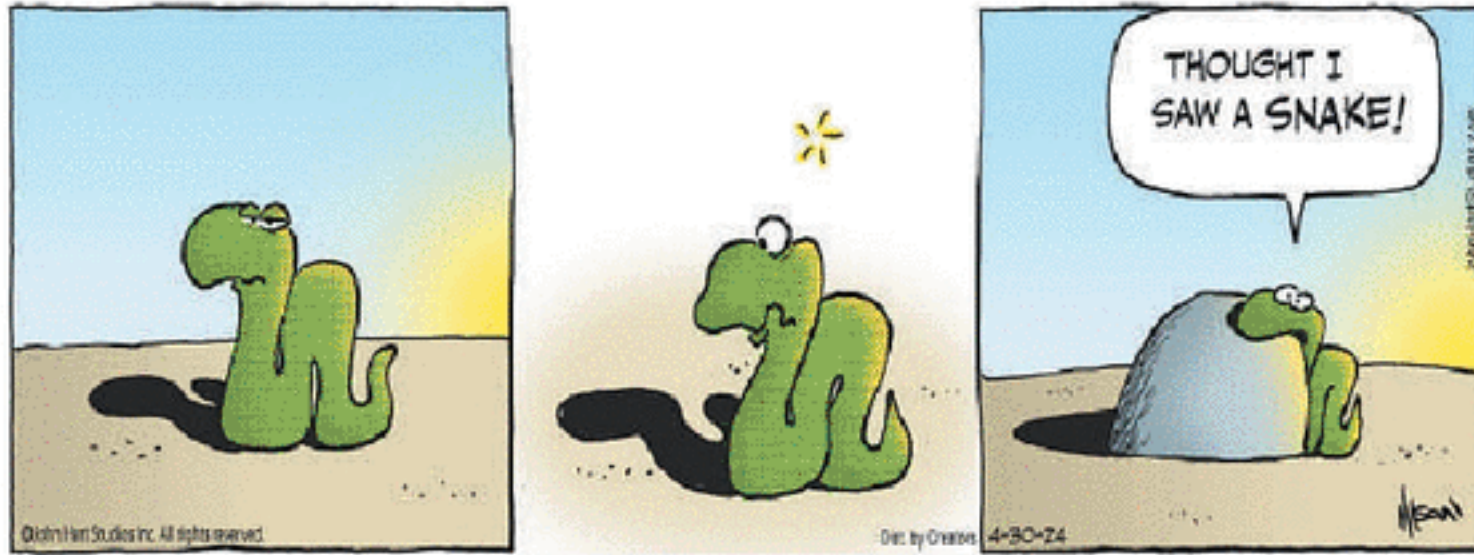
Quiz Masters: Gautam Ghosh and Subrata Dass

Registration from 3pm, prelims from 3.30pm

Date: 9 June 2024, Afternoon  
Venue: Calcutta Club AC Pavilion



## B.C. by Johny Hart



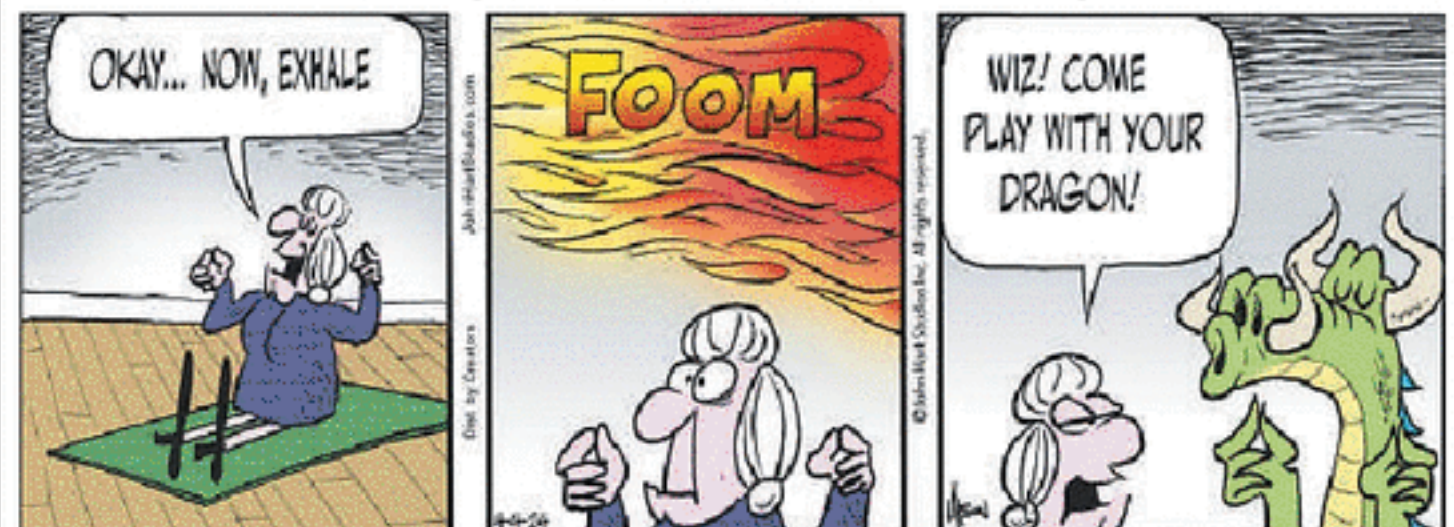
## Luann by Greg Evans



## Peanuts by Charles Schulz



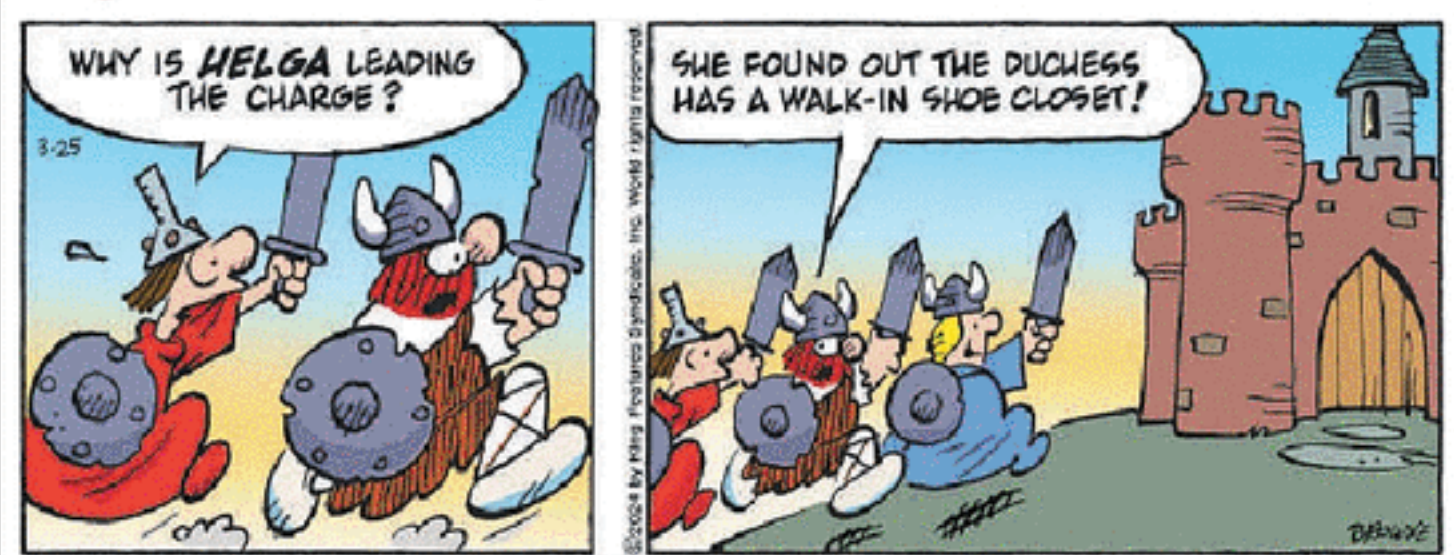
## The Wizard of Id by Brant Parker and Johnny Hart



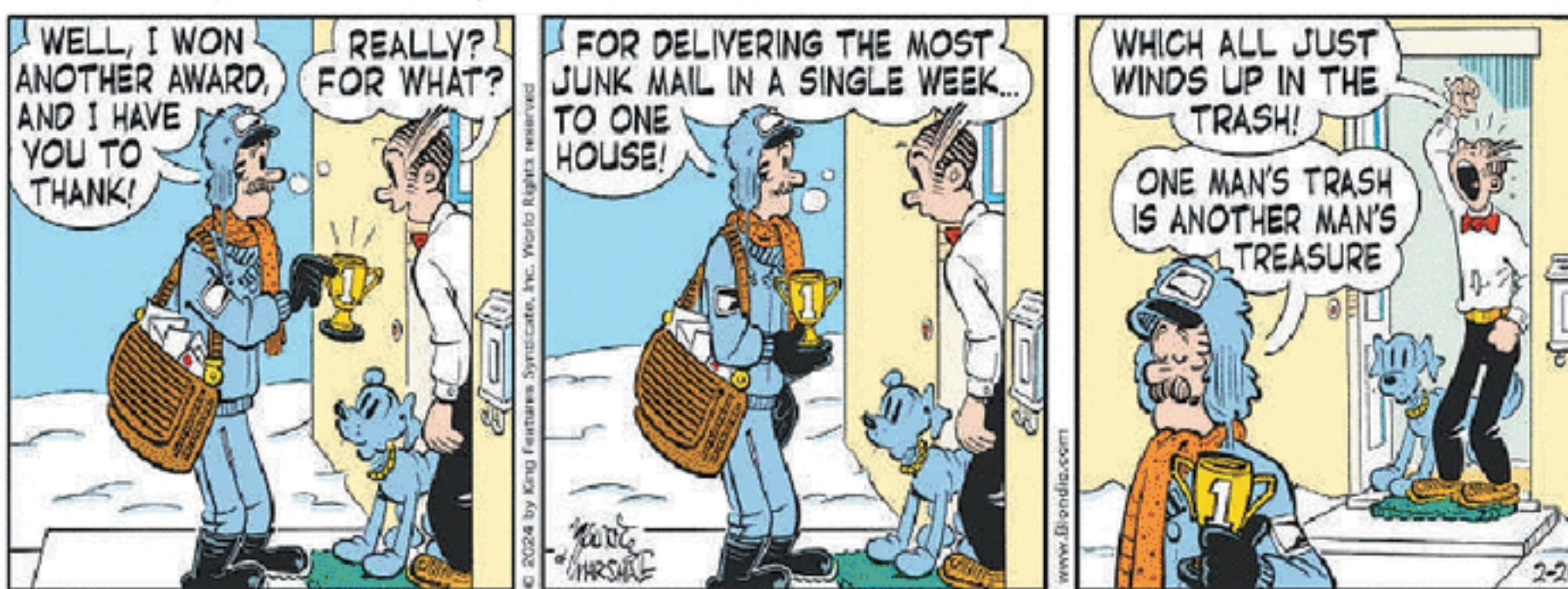
## Flash Gordon by Dan Schkade



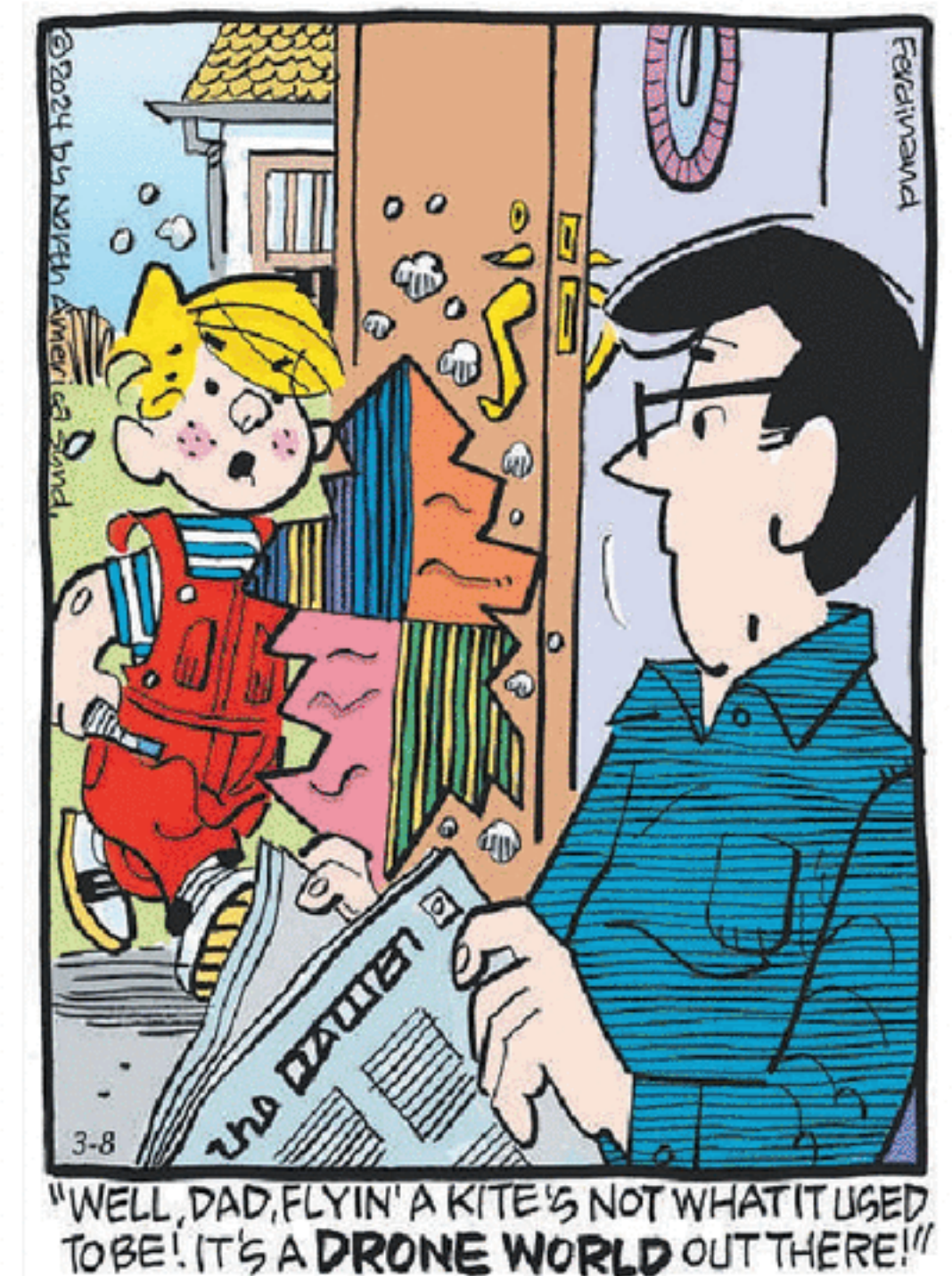
## Hagar the Horrible by Chris Browne



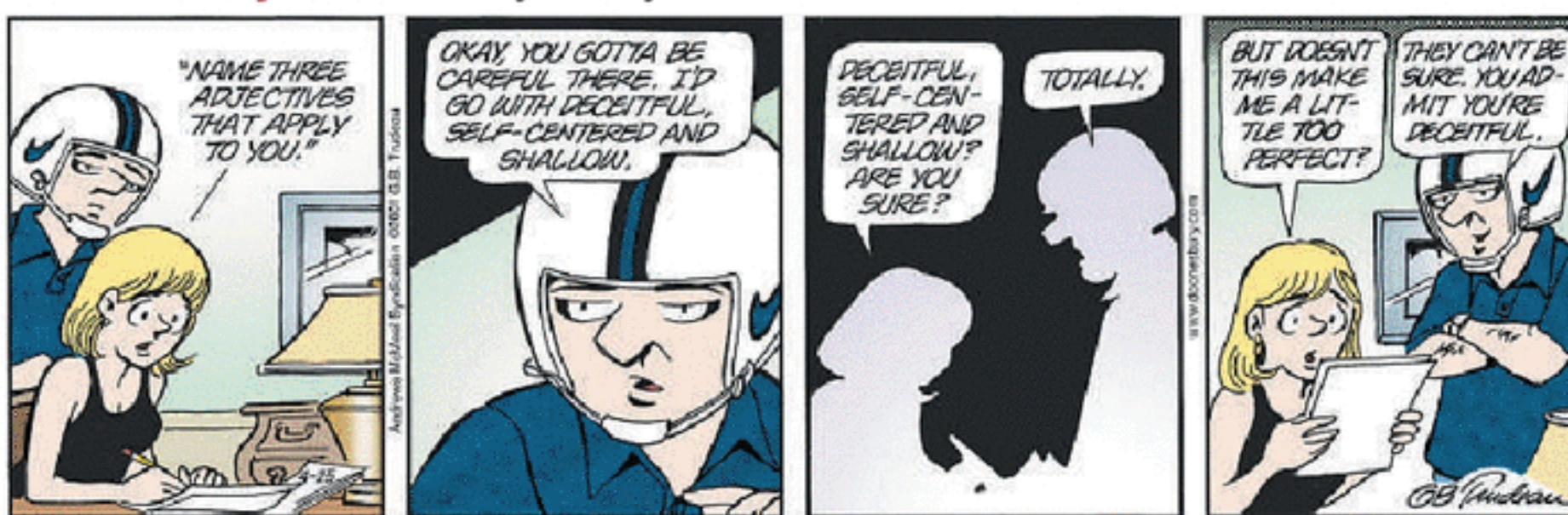
## Blondie by Dean Young



## Dennis the Menace



## Doonesbury Classics by Garry Trudeau





10986

## SUDOKU MODERATE

		2			7			
			4	9			7	
		3		1			9	
7			9					1
	9						6	
8					4			5
				7		5	3	
			6	3	8			
			2			8		

Fill in the 9x9 square grid with the numbers one to nine. The numbers should be arranged in such a way that each row, column and mini-grid contains one of each number. Solution to Sudoku 10984 is on the right

4	6	3	7	5	1	2	8	9
2	9	8	4	3	6	1	7	5
5	1	7	9	2	8	6	4	3
7	8	5	6	4	9	3	1	2
6	3	2	1	7	5	4	9	8
1	4	9	2	8	3	5	6	7
3	5	1	8	6	7	9	2	4
8	2	6	5	9	4	7	3	1
9	7	4	3	1	2	8	5	6

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10987

## SUDOKU DIABOLICAL

		5				1		
8	7			4	1			
2						6		8
			5		2			9
		6				5		
1			8		7			
6		2			3			1
			7	9			2	6
						8		

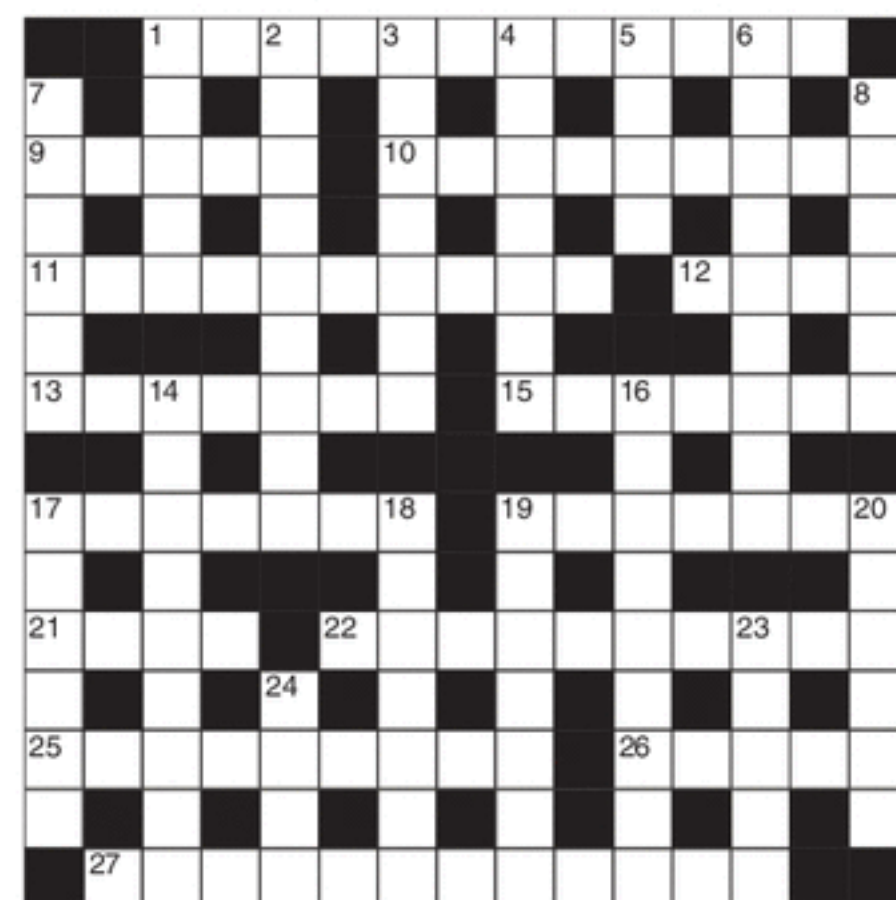
Fill in the 9x9 square grid with the numbers one to nine. The numbers should be arranged in such a way that each row, column and mini-grid contains one of each number. Solution to Sudoku 10985 is on the right

6	1	5	4	9	8	3	2	7
4	8	3	5	2	7	6	9	1
2	7	9	6	3	1	8	4	5
5	2	8	7	4	6	1	3	9
9	4	6	1	8	3	5	7	2
7	3	1	2	5	9	4	6	8
3	6	7	9	1	5	2	8	4
8	5	4	3	7	2	9	1	6
1	9	2	8	6	4	7	5	3

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14350

## CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 1 Usual partner turning abnormal (12)  
 9 Regret gripping Left facing Republican leader (5)  
 10 Drink describing exploit with English yeoman (9)  
 11 Grand adult events including Queen conventions (10)  
 12 Naughty sweetheart proposed (4)  
 13 Campaigns admitting Labour's leader talks nonsense (7)  
 15 Lives concerned with borders (7)  
 17 Pines, perhaps, losing one's presents (7)  
 19 Coerce ends of pregnancies with these? (7)  
 21 Noah's first vessel getting wind up (4)  
 22 Tories lure out undecided

## (10)

- 25 Consider old American is graceless (9)  
 26 Awfully degenerate, usually lewdly titillating, initially (5)  
 27 Altered lie by misbehaving on purpose (12)

## DOWN

- 1 Crack opening round top of pitcher (5)  
 2 Trooper's ever eager taking soldier on (9)  
 3 Religious leader talks vacantly and waffles (7)  
 4 Punisher with fury about empty violence (7)  
 5 Old and unsteady, occasionally (4)  
 6 On a seat grasping Trigger's flanks? (9)  
 7 Tip of finger stiff and frozen (6)  
 8 Some underwear revealing outlines (6)  
 14 Stupidity is one caring stupidly (9)  
 16 Representative from US got rare upset (9)  
 17 Counterfeit purchasing a new cover (6)  
 18 Declared salary, say, upset miser (7)  
 19 Unties best raised plant (7)  
 20 Perspires as posterior's carrying weight (6)  
 23 Taking uncommon interest? (5)  
 24 Fabulous creature still found on island (4)

By arrangement with The Daily Telegraph

## Yesterday's solution

A	P	P	L	I	C	A	T	I	O	N
P	A	N	M	D	I					
G	A	P	E	S		G	R	O	W	I
R	L	T	E	U	O	H	A			
E	A	E	I							
N	O	N	O	S		O	L	F	A	C
K	C					U	O			
E	X	E	R	C	I	S	E	R		
E						E	H	R	O	
P	I	L	G	R	I	M				
E	I	D	O			A	M			
R	E	D	G	I	A	N	T	S		
O	A	E	T			O	E			
S	P	L	I	T		S	E	C	O	N

## Jumble

David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

## JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BUTDO



CCEYL



NAUNLA



LAWHET



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Print answer here:

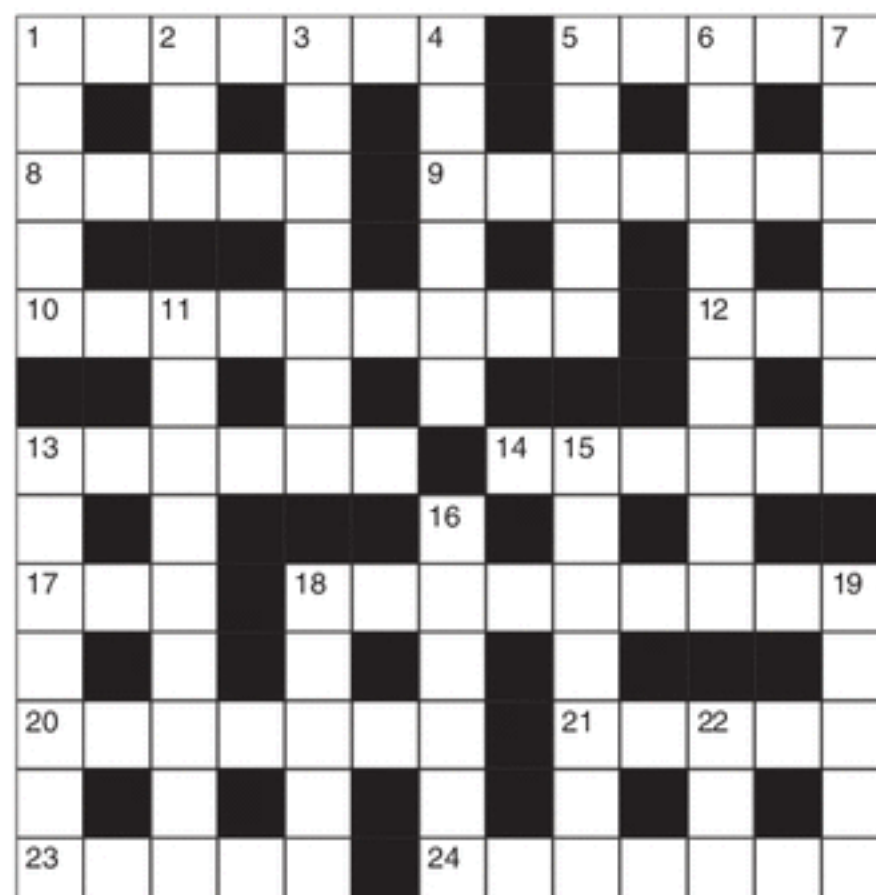


(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: PATIO FRONT COFFEE BLURRY  
 Answer: When Mark Trail stopped the poacher in the forest, he found out Mark was a — FORCE OF NATURE

14002

## QUICK CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 1 Justify (7)  
 5 Fragment (5)  
 8 Surplus (5)  
 9 Changeable (7)  
 10 Entitlement (9)  
 12 Crackpot (3)  
 13 Holy (6)  
 14 Diverse (6)  
 17 Excavate (3)

## 18 Innumerable (9)

- 20 Building (7)  
 21 Around (5)  
 23 Beamed (5)  
 24 Phantom (7)

## DOWN

- 1 Puppy (5)  
 2 Decay (3)  
 3 Greed (7)  
 4 Wobble (6)

## 5 Cleanse (5)

- 6 Widespread (9)  
 7 Thrilled (7)  
 11 Disguised (9)  
 13 Sorrow (7)  
 15 Object (7)  
 16 Pressure (6)  
 18 Offence (5)  
 19 Frighten (5)  
 22 Furrow (3)

## Yesterday's solution

Across: 1 Wreck; 4 Tiff; 8 Eye; 9 Stationer; 10 Link; 11 Lamppost; 12 Gig; 13 Errant; 14 Farrow; 16 May; 17 Slipshod; 18 Agree; 20 Fabricate; 21 Bud; 22 Ogle; 23 Fiery.  
 Down: 1 Wheelie; 2 Eleanor Rigby; 3 Kiss; 4 Teabag; 5 Fair play; 6 Incurable; 7 Grit; 11 Lit; 12 Gnashing; 14 Fad; 15 Weekday; 16 Morale; 17 Sofa; 19 Serf.

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## WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE READ THIS WEEK?

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‘WE HAVE SEEN A LOT OF CGI FILMS BUT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN THE PROTAGONIST BEING CGI IN A FILM’ — DIRECTOR ADITYA SARPOTDAR ON FRIDAY FILM *MUNJYA*

This Friday, *Munjya* — based on the supernatural creature of the same name common in Maharashtra folklore — swings into theatres. A part of the *Stree-Bhediya* horror-comedy universe, *Munjya* stars Sharvari, Abhay Verma, Mona Singh and Sathyaraj and is helmed by Aditya Sarpotdar, who has earned his stripes in Marathi cinema. A t2 chat.

In a market where films are largely not working at the box office, *Munjya* seems to be a clutter breaker...

Yes. Every response that we have got till now says that the film appears to be a clutter breaker, whether it is the trailer or the songs. It looks different, it sounds different and seems to be a different kind of narrative.

We always intended the film to be a big-screen experience. Getting people to the theatres nowadays has become a difficult task. You need to promise them something out of the box. So far, things have landed right for us. Everyone is saying that *Munjya* appears to be a fresh film and promises something unique.

**How did *Munjya* happen?** I have been making Marathi films for the last 14 years. I was looking at making a transition into cinema that would have a wider audience reach. Hindi cinema gives a bigger platform and a bigger audience. My last Marathi film *Zombivli* is a horror-comedy that was received well. It released after the pandemic and a lot of non-Marathi people took notice of the film because the genre is very different. It is a unique zombie film made as a comedy, which I don't think has been attempted after *Go Goa Gone*.

That got me a lot of inquiries from the Hindi film industry because even Bollywood is looking for subjects that fit into the horror-comedy genre. But again, I feel that there has been a lot of saturation in this genre in the last few years with films that haven't had great stories to tell.

I was jamming in that space with the Maddock (Films, the producers of *Munjya*) team and I happened to tell them that my hometown is in the Konkan region of Maharashtra and during my childhood, I had heard a lot of horror legends about Munjya, which, according to folklore, are the spirits of young boys who reside in peepul trees.

Maddock Films was pretty excited because they had a work-in-progress script in that same space written by Yogesh Chandekar. They asked me to team up with him and get it into a screenplay format. If it worked, then we could make a film. Yogesh wrote a banger of a script and we started setting up the project.

**What are the key things that need to be kept in mind while**



*Munjya*, starring Sharvari and Abhay Verma, will be in theatres this Friday

**Horror comes from the space of the unknown. It is the fear of the unknown. But the world that you are setting the fear of the unknown in has to be one that you understand and relate to and which you also find unique**

**It is going to remind people of Gollum (from *The Lord of the Rings*) for sure because there are a lot of parallels to Gollum in terms of what *Munjya* is. When we were thinking about *Munjya*, Gollum did come up in a lot of our conversations. They both share a madness to seize what they love. *Munjya* is going for his girl in the same way as Gollum went for the ring**

**writing a horror comedy?**

The most important thing is the relatability of the film. People have to understand and relate to it. Horror comes from the space of the unknown. It is the fear of the unknown. But the world that you are setting the fear of the unknown in has to be one that you understand and relate to and which you also find unique.

Films like *Stree* and *Kantara* have worked because they got that right, even as they weaved in folklore. There is a Malayalam film called *Romancham* which is a very exciting horror comedy. All these films have been set up in their own regions and have stories that come from their own

purely because of the story of Munjya. If there was no element of Munjya in it and it was just a generic horror comedy, I wouldn't have even done it.

**Being a part of the *Stree-Bhediya* horror-comedy universe must have its advantages but does it also put the pressure of expectations on you?**

The pressure comes a lot more from the audience expectations than from the maker. People want to tie up every film now because Maddock has announced that it is a franchise. It is these fan theories that are creating that pressure.

*Munjya* was never intended to be a follow-up or a prequel to *Stree*.

That kind of narrative never works. I also believe that for a film to work in a franchise, it has to work as a standalone film in the first place. There is no point in people coming to watch a bad film just because it is part of a franchise. *Munjya* has a little bit of a connection to that universe but we were primarily going for a standalone narrative of Munjya, of what it is.

We were clear that we wanted to avoid crossover casting. We didn't want to confuse the audience by casting characters from *Bhediya* and *Stree*. The idea was to create a film that stands at the same quality as *Stree* and *Bhediya*.

**What would you count as the toughest bit to pull off in making *Munjya*?** That would be creating Munjya. When you are creating a ghost or a creature, you need to convince the audience what they have heard of but not seen. If you see any good horror film, you always fear what you don't see, you fear what you imagine and are not shown. Even in *Stree*, one gets to see 'Stree' only in the last scene.

But *Munjya* is going to be seen throughout the film. You will stop fearing him the more you see him because you get more used to him. For me, the challenge was to keep that fear alive, to make him scary enough and to build him as a character that came across as exciting yet scary.

We decided to take the CGI route because we wanted him to physically do things that humans can't do. Creating a VFX CGI character that talks and emotes around live actors and who is a protagonist in a film has never been done before in Indian cinema. We have seen a lot of CGI films but

of what Munjya is. Folklore goes that Munjya is always tied to peepul trees and we felt that Munjya needed to have an excellent body that was kind of tree-like because he has to merge into that world. He is a Brahmin boy and he had to have a small braid. He is essentially a kid and had to be small in size. Even Gollum is a tiny frail thing. We had to make Munjya mysterious and lovable and that is also what Gollum is. But when you watch the film, you will see that there is no reference or connection to the fact that we have tried to recreate Gollum.

When we were thinking about Munjya, Gollum did come up in a lot of our conversations. They both share a madness to seize what they love. *Munjya* is going for his girl in the same way as Gollum went for the ring. But the story and the world are very different in *Munjya*.



Director Aditya Sarpotdar

**This year, Bollywood has taken a beating in many ways but regional cinema has taken over the box office. How have you seen Marathi cinema evolve over the last few years?**

Marathi cinema started evolving from 2005. This revolution happened because young, new filmmakers started to move towards Marathi cinema. Usually, the young filmmakers from Maharashtra would assist Hindi filmmakers and aspire to make a film in Hindi. But that started changing because they found their own voice and a way to tell great stories in Marathi.

In Marathi cinema, the budgets are in control and hence they can take risks in telling stories that are unique. Also, there has never been any pressure for Marathi films to have star power. The star of the film is the script and then the director. That gives a great platform for good cinema to be made. What you see happening in Malayalam cinema is similar.

Marathi filmmakers understood that the audience is never going to come to theatres to watch an actor. They are going to come to the theatre to watch the film and the actor will do well if the film does well. *Sairat*, the biggest hit in Marathi, has two newcomers as leads. We don't compete with Hindi cinema. We want to stand out and look different.

Post *Sairat*, the corporates coming into the Marathi industry gave a good structure to how films were made and distributed. What Marathi cinema still struggles with is the marketing and distribution of films. Even today, we compete with the same campaign rates — be it hoardings or newspaper ads — that Hindi cinema does. We share the same space and operate on the same level as big Hindi films because we are based in Mumbai. Unlike us, the cost of promoting and distributing a film in Kerala is very low. We directly compete with the marketing and distribution cost of Hindi films. That is where the struggle is very real.

**Priyanka Roy**  
*Which supernatural story/ character from Indian folklore would you want to see on screen? Tell t2 @abp.in*

**PROSENJIT AND RITUPARNA SENGUPTA TALK ABOUT THEIR 'MAGICAL' SCREEN JOURNEY THAT LED TO AJOGYO, THEIR 50TH FILM TOGETHER**



Their on-screen chemistry is the stuff of legends. Off-screen, they charm their way through a conversation. Often they complete each other's sentences or listen with rapt attention as the other speaks. An anecdote brings back memories while an observation creates a space for discussion. One of the most successful lead pairs of Bengali cinema, Prosenjit and Rituparna Sengupta are set to rock the screen once again with the film *Ajogyo* (directed by Kaushik Ganguly), which releases on June 7. The story revolves around Raktim Majumdar, once an ordinary banker, who is now a broken stay-at-home dad, desperately seeking work. Raktim's wife, Parna, is forced to step out in this crisis and lands a job at an investment firm. All is well until one day Raktim's confidante Prosen walks into their lives. A t2 chat with the two superstars...

**Ajogyo will be your 50th film together. When you started doing films in the 1990s, did you ever imagine that one day you'd be talking about your 50th film?**

**Prosenjit:** It was destined to happen. Earlier, we didn't have a system in place to keep a count of our films. Of course, we had no clue that one day we would be talking about our 50th film. Coming back after 14 years with the super-successful *Praktan* was a record in itself. Around that time we became aware that we were approaching our 50th film. We decided that we would take it slow and steady... we would do a film in three years... we became very choosy. We have reached this landmark with the blessings and love of our audience.

**Rituparna:** It has been an amazing journey... and we have gone from strength to strength. In that gap of 14 years, so much had changed... from the films, the content, and new directors to the changing viewing patterns of audiences. The audience was

waiting for our comeback film, which turned out to be a blockbuster. It is magical... one cannot define our chemistry and camaraderie.

**There is enough material here to make a biopic...**

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**And we are certain that both of you will play yourselves in the film...**

**Prosenjit:** (*Laughs out loud*) Maybe Mishuk (Prosenjit's son) and her daughter (Rishona) will play the roles.

**Do you remember the first time you met?**

**Prosenjit:** It was on the sets of *Nag Panchami* in Chennai. I was already a star at that point of time. I saw her dressed as a bride for the film and our screen journey started off with a *phool sojya* sequence (*laughs out loud*).

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**Prosenjit:** It is a story of and for everyone.

**Did you discover anything new about each other while working on *Ajogyo*?**

**Prosenjit:** Ritu memorised all her lines! Maybe she did it because it was our 50th film or it was Kaushik Ganguly's film. **Rituparna:** He was much more organised and disciplined. He was reading the script on his tablet.

**When will you do your 100th film together?**

**Prosenjit:** Only God knows!  
**Rituparna:** (*Laughs out loud*)

**Arindam Chatterjee**

Picture: Rashbehari Das  
Location: Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences

Stylists: Siza and Tanumita



‘WE HAVE SEEN A LOT OF CGI FILMS BUT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN THE PROTAGONIST BEING CGI IN A FILM’ — DIRECTOR ADITYA SARPOTDAR ON FRIDAY FILM *MUNJYA*

This Friday, *Munjya* — based on the supernatural creature of the same name common in Maharashtra folklore — swings into theatres. A part of the *Stree-Bhediya* horror-comedy universe, *Munjya* stars Sharvari, Abhay Verma, Mona Singh and Sathyaraj and is helmed by Aditya Sarpotdar, who has earned his stripes in Marathi cinema. A t2 chat.

In a market where films are largely not working at the box office, *Munjya* seems to be a clutter breaker...

Yes. Every response that we have got till now says that the film appears to be a clutter breaker, whether it is the trailer or the songs. It looks different, it sounds different and seems to be a different kind of narrative.

We always intended the film to be a big-screen experience. Getting people to the theatres nowadays has become a difficult task. You need to promise them something out of the box. So far, things have landed right for us. Everyone is saying that *Munjya* appears to be a fresh film and promises something unique.

**How did *Munjya* happen?** I have been making Marathi films for the last 14 years. I was looking at making a transition into cinema that would have a wider audience reach. Hindi cinema gives a bigger platform and a bigger audience. My last Marathi film *Zombivili* is a horror-comedy that was received well. It released after the pandemic and a lot of non-Marathi people took notice of the film because the genre is very different. It is a unique zombie film made as a comedy, which I don't think has been attempted after *Go Goa Gone*.

That got me a lot of inquiries from the Hindi film industry because even Bollywood is looking for subjects that fit into the horror-comedy genre. But again, I feel that there has been a lot of saturation in this genre in the last few years with films that haven't had great stories to tell.

I was jamming in that space with the Maddock (Films, the producers of *Munjya*) team and I happened to tell them that my hometown is in the Konkan region of Maharashtra and during my childhood, I had heard a lot of horror legends about Munjya, which, according to folklore, are the spirits of young boys who reside in peepul trees.

Maddock Films was pretty excited because they had a work-in-progress script in that same space written by Yogesh Chandekar. They asked me to team up with him and get it into a screenplay format. If it worked, then we could make a film. Yogesh wrote a banger of a script and we started setting up the project.

**What are the key things that need to be kept in mind while**



*Munjya*, starring Sharvari and Abhay Verma, will be in theatres this Friday

**Horror comes from the space of the unknown. It is the fear of the unknown. But the world that you are setting the fear of the unknown in has to be one that you understand and relate to and which you also find unique**

**It is going to remind people of Gollum (from *The Lord of the Rings*) for sure because there are a lot of parallels to Gollum in terms of what *Munjya* is. When we were thinking about *Munjya*, Gollum did come up in a lot of our conversations. They both share a madness to seize what they love. *Munjya* is going for his girl in the same way as Gollum went for the ring**

**writing a horror comedy?**

The most important thing is the relatability of the film. People have to understand and relate to it. Horror comes from the space of the unknown. It is the fear of the unknown. But the world that you are setting the fear of the unknown in has to be one that you understand and relate to and which you also find unique.

Films like *Stree* and *Kantara* have worked because they got that right, even as they weaved in folklore. There is a Malayalam film called *Romancham* which is a very exciting horror comedy. All these films have been set up in their own regions and have stories that come from their own

purely because of the story of Munjya. If there was no element of Munjya in it and it was just a generic horror comedy, I wouldn't have even done it.

**Being a part of the *Stree-Bhediya* horror-comedy universe must have its advantages but does it also put the pressure of expectations on you?**

The pressure comes a lot more from the audience expectations than from the maker. People want to tie up every film now because Maddock has announced that it is a franchise. It is these fan theories that are creating that pressure.

*Munjya* was never intended to be a follow-up or a prequel to *Stree*.

That kind of narrative never works. I also believe that for a film to work in a franchise, it has to work as a standalone film in the first place. There is no point in people coming to watch a bad film just because it is part of a franchise. *Munjya* has a little bit of a connection to that universe but we were primarily going for a standalone narrative of Munjya, of what it is.

We were clear that we wanted to avoid crossover casting. We didn't want to confuse the audience by casting characters from *Bhediya* and *Stree*. The idea was to create a film that stands at the same quality as *Stree* and *Bhediya*.

**What would you count as the toughest bit to pull off in making *Munjya*?** That would be creating Munjya. When you are creating a ghost or a creature, you need to convince the audience what they have heard of but not seen. If you see any good horror film, you always fear what you don't see, you fear what you imagine and are not shown. Even in *Stree*, one gets to see 'Stree' only in the last scene.

But *Munjya* is going to be seen throughout the film. You will stop fearing him the more you see him because you get more used to him. For me, the challenge was to keep that fear alive, to make him scary enough and to build him as a character that came across as exciting yet scary.

We decided to take the CGI route because we wanted him to physically do things that humans can't do. Creating a VFX CGI character that talks and emotes around live actors and who is a protagonist in a film has never been done before in Indian cinema. We have seen a lot of CGI films but

of what Munjya is. Folklore goes that Munjya is always tied to peepul trees and we felt that Munjya needed to have an excellent body that was kind of tree-like because he has to merge into that world. He is a Brahmin boy and he had to have a small braid. He is essentially a kid and had to be small in size. Even Gollum is a tiny frail thing. We had to make Munjya mysterious and lovable and that is also what Gollum is. But when you watch the film, you will see that there is no reference or connection to the fact that we have tried to recreate Gollum.

When we were thinking about Munjya, Gollum did come up in a lot of our conversations. They both share a madness to seize what they love. *Munjya* is going for his girl in the same way as Gollum went for the ring. But the story and the world are very different in *Munjya*.

**This year, Bollywood has taken a beating in many ways but regional cinema has taken over the box office. How have you seen Marathi cinema evolve over the last few years?**

Marathi cinema started evolving from 2005. This revolution happened because young, new filmmakers started to move towards Marathi cinema. Usually, the young filmmakers from Maharashtra would assist Hindi filmmakers and aspire to make a film in Hindi. But that started changing because they found their own voice and a way to tell great stories in Marathi.

In Marathi cinema, the budgets are in control and hence they can take risks in telling stories that are unique. Also, there has never been any pressure for Marathi films to have star power. The star of the film is the script and then the director. That gives a great platform for good cinema to be made. What you see happening in Malayalam cinema is similar.

Marathi filmmakers understood that the audience is never going to come to theatres to watch an actor. They are going to come to the theatre to watch the film and the actor will do well if the film does well. *Sairat*, the biggest hit in Marathi, has two newcomers as leads. We don't compete with Hindi cinema. We want to stand out and look different.

Post *Sairat*, the corporates coming into the Marathi industry gave a good structure to how films were made and distributed. What Marathi cinema still struggles with is the marketing and distribution of films. Even today, we compete with the same campaign rates — be it hoardings or newspaper ads — that Hindi cinema does. We share the same space and operate on the same level as big Hindi films because we are based in Mumbai. Unlike us, the cost of promoting and distributing a film in Kerala is very low. We directly compete with the marketing and distribution cost of Hindi films. That is where the struggle is very real.

**Priyanka Roy**  
*Which supernatural story/ character from Indian folklore would you want to see on screen? Tell t2 @abp.in*

**PROSENJIT AND RITUPARNA SENGUPTA TALK ABOUT THEIR 'MAGICAL' SCREEN JOURNEY THAT LED TO AJOGYO, THEIR 50TH FILM TOGETHER**



Their on-screen chemistry is the stuff of legends. Off-screen, they charm their way through a conversation. Often they complete each other's sentences or listen with rapt attention as the other speaks. An anecdote brings back memories while an observation creates a space for discussion. One of the most successful lead pairs of Bengali cinema, Prosenjit and Rituparna Sengupta are set to rock the screen once again with the film *Ajogyo* (directed by Kaushik Ganguly), which releases on June 7. The story revolves around Raktim Majumdar, once an ordinary banker, who is now a broken stay-at-home dad, desperately seeking work. Raktim's wife, Parna, is forced to step out in this crisis and lands a job at an investment firm. All is well until one day Raktim's confidante Prosen walks into their lives. A t2 chat with the two superstars...

***Ajogyo* will be your 50th film together. When you started doing films in the 1990s, did you ever imagine that one day you'd be talking about your 50th film?**

**Prosenjit:** It was destined to happen. Earlier, we didn't have a system in place to keep a count of our films. Of course, we had no clue that one day we would be talking about our 50th film. Coming back after 14 years with the super-successful *Praktan* was a record in itself. Around that time we became aware that we were approaching our 50th film. We decided that we would take it slow and steady... we would do a film in three years... we became very choosy. We have reached this landmark with the blessings and love of our audience.

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waiting for our comeback film, which turned out to be a blockbuster. It is magical... one cannot define our chemistry and camaraderie.

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**And we are certain that both of you will play yourselves in the film...**

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**Do you remember the first time you met?**

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**Rituparna:** It was a romantic scene. It was my first film with Prosenjit Chatterjee, who was already a huge star by then... and I had goosebumps. Right after that, we did a song by the beach.

**Prosenjit:** It was a difficult song to shoot and I did guide Ritu. It was a new style for her... it was done in slow motion but we had to emote it in a rapid way.

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**When did you become aware of Rituparna's talent?**

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**Talking about commercial cinema, can we see a resurgence once again?**

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**How did you decide on *Ajogyo* as the 50th film? Other directors must have approached you...**

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**Did you discover anything new about each other while working on *Ajogyo*?**

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**When will you do your 100th film together?**

**Prosenjit:** Only God knows!

**Rituparna:** (*Laughs out loud*)

**Arindam Chatterjee**

Picture: Rashbehari Das  
Location: Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences

Stylists: Siza and Tanumita



## CROWNED NATIONAL CHAMPIONS OF RED BULL FOUR 2 SCORE 2024, DELHI'S AVENGERS WILL REPRESENT INDIA IN GERMANY



Mahip Adhikari (left) of Delhi's Avengers in action in the grand finale against Goa's Lincoln FC



Delhi's Avengers won Red Bull Four 2 Score 2024 India Final. The team is all smiles to represent our country at the World Final in Germany this August



Teams in action at the Red Bull Four 2 Score 2024 India Finals

**T**en winners from 10 city qualifiers competed at the Red Bull Four 2 Score India Finals at St. Paul's Cathedral in Calcutta a few days back and Delhi's Avengers emerged as the clear winners in the grand finale against Goa's Lincoln FC in a one-on-one tie-breaker after a 0-0 score. Avengers is all set to represent the country at the Red Bull Four 2 Score World Final in Leipzig Germany in August this year. The event held in a stunning location saw 10 city qualifiers — Wall Attack (Calcutta), Tenacious 5 (Pune), Avengers (Delhi), Blue Diamond Ernakulam (Kochi), Lincoln FC (Goa), PJP FA FC (Guwahati), Friend's United (Bengaluru), FC Cecilians (Bhubaneswar), 404 Not Found (Lucknow) and BYB FC (Indore) who battled it out in Red Bull's flagship 4v4 football tournament.



A shot from the teams in action at St. Paul's Cathedral

Avengers, who qualified for the India Finals after beating the stiff competition in Red Bull Four 2 Score 2024's Delhi Qualifiers, are a tight-knitted group of friends represented by Sameer Lal (28, captain), Gaurav Lal (25), Aman Sharma (24), Mahip Adhikari (25) and Ayush Saini (24). After a win and three draws in Group A at the India Finals, the Avengers finished group runners-up and set up a semifinal clash against Indore's BYB FC. After the regulation 10 minutes ended 0-0, the game was to be decided by a tiebreaker contested by one player from each team who would try to win a dropped ball, beat his opponent and score the winning goal. After a hard-fought tiebreaker, Avengers snatched the winning goal and set up a final clash against Group A toppers — Goa's Lincoln FC — who beat

Bhubaneswar's FC Cecilians 1-0.

"We're a group of friends who've been playing together for over seven years now — in parks and sometimes in local Delhi-based tournaments. Over the years, we kept working hard and kept getting better. Our journey started in Delhi and now we're here. Playing in the World Finals is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us and it's all because of football. It will be an amazing experience to play against teams from top countries like Spain, Brazil and of course, Germany. We started as an amateur team and we never imagined that we would be representing India one day. We could not have asked for more," said Sameer Lal, the captain of Delhi's Avengers.

**Sramana Ray**

Pictures: Red Bull India

## MUSIC

### PALINDROME HIT THE RIGHT NOTES AT THE ROLLING STONES TRIBUTE GIG AT AMPM KOLKATA

**I**t was a night of infectious energy at The Rolling Stones tribute night at AMPM Kolkata as Palindrome, a Calcutta-based rock band took the stage. The crowd enjoyed the setlist comprising iconic rock numbers

by the legendary rock band, featuring tracks such as *Beast of Burden*, *Ruby Tuesday*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Angry*, *Miss You*, *Let it Bleed*, and *Paint It Black*. The crowd roared, applauded and danced to the foot-tapping music. Snapshots...



Band members Hiten Mukherjee (guitarist), Sayan Ghosh (bassist), Shrestha Das (vocalist), Surajit Basu Mallick (drummer), Debdip Roy (on keys) and featured guest artiste Bukka Ganguly (guitarist) rocked the tribute night called Let It Bleed. Their energy was infectious and the crowd jammed along with them. "Rolling Stones marked a distinct break from any music that came before them. I enjoy their raw guitar riffs with the groove and playing a tribute was a one-of-a-kind experience, where I felt the energy flow through my body," said Hiten. "Thanks to AMPM for giving us the stage and it was really fun to play tracks by the legendary band," added Sayan. "I have always been a huge fan of unabashed songwriting and didn't want to miss the opportunity to represent the legendary Mick Jagger and lose control. It's been an experience as sweet as freedom," said Shrestha. "To me, The Rolling Stones is the best band in the world that represents some of the finest interpretations of the blues. It was a great experience playing at AMPM," added Bukka. Surajit went on to say, "The Rolling Stones really jammed it out during their live performances and I love Charlie Watts and the way he conversed with the band." "Performing a tribute gig for The Rolling Stones was an incredible experience, channelling the energy and iconic spirit of one of rock's greatest bands. The crowd's enthusiasm was really cool," said Debdip.



"It was my first time watching Palindrome and I really enjoyed their set. The Stones' vibe was on point, the sound mix was good, the venue's acoustics have been thoughtfully done and overall, I had a great time," said guitarist Allan Ao.

Audio engineer Sourav Bagchi and guitarist Arinjoy Sarkar (right) were all smiles.



"Palindrome sounded really good. They played some classic RS songs along with some of the not-so-usual tracks. They had good energy onstage," said drummer Chiradeep Lahiri (left) who dropped by with his friend Rishi Chanda (singer/guitarist).



"The energy was electric, with Shrestha's unmistakable Mick Jagger-esque strut and swagger setting the tone for the night," said vocalist Mishie who dropped by with her boyfriend Arnab.



Utsha Saha and Rubesh Sircar (musician and founder of Boshow)



Rajiv Mitra, the lead vocalist of Bangla band Lakkhichhara dropped by



Pradyumna Singh Manot aka Paddy (pianist and the music director at AMPM) is the man behind all the great gigs at the venue.

**Sramana Ray**

Pictures: B Halder



## SUPRIYA DEVGUN OF BADMINTON GURUKUL PARTNERS WITH CALCUTTA SWIMMING CLUB TO TRAIN YOUNG BADMINTON ENTHUSIASTS



Supriya Devgun indulged in an energetic game at CSC's badminton court with the club members.



**S**upriya Devgun, a former badminton player and the founder and managing director of Badminton Gurukul, an initiative by Pullela Gopichand, has recently collaborated with the Calcutta Swimming Club to train young badminton enthusiasts in eastern India. This initiative marks a significant milestone as it is the first of its kind in the region. Supported by the renowned Star Badminton Academy in Calcutta, the program aims to provide top-notch training and nurture young talent. Supriya Devgun's expertise and dedication to the sport are expected to play a crucial role in the development of these aspiring players. Additionally, Supriya engaged in a t2 chat, where she shared insights about her journey, the importance of grassroots development in badminton and her vision for the future of the sport in India.

### Can you share the inspiration behind founding Badminton Gurukul?

So everybody knows that Pullela Gopichand is the face of sport in the country, a legendary name for Indian badminton and the badminton group was really formed to spread his learnings to all parts of the country. But he can't be everywhere. However, his learnings can be translated through the right coaching and the right training to the coaches who can be positioned in the various centres. And that intention is what made us start Badminton Gurukul, also to promote physical literacy. We saw a big gap in people going to school, learning ABCD, learning 1, 2, 3, and 4, but what's missing is physical literacy. The concept of sport being important in life and for life is what we wanted to propagate, to make a cultural change.

### How do you feel about joining hands with CSC for this initiative?

This is our first time in Eastern India. Siddharth (Jhunjhunwala), Rahul (Singhi) and a lot of people at Calcutta Swimming Club have been friends from the fraternity and the fact that we are able to do something to touch the lives of the kids in Calcutta Swimming Club, I would think it's a very happy moment for us.

**How has Badminton Gurukul evolved since its inception, and what milestones are you most proud of?**  
It's a manpower-driven initiative.



Siddharth Jhunjhunwala, president of the Calcutta Swimming Club, said, "Badminton is one sport which is very close to my heart and I have been playing right from the age of six and it is an irony that our club did not have a badminton court. Finally, the court came up in 2022 and that's when we decided to get the best coaching facility available in India for our members at the grassroots level. This led to the tie-up with the Badminton Gurukul, the first in Eastern India, an initiative of the master of his game Pullela Gopichand, supported by the Star Badminton Academy. We would like to thank Supriya Devgun, founder and managing director of Badminton Gurukul, for coming down to Calcutta to forge this tie-up."

So we actually test-run it with just one or two centres. We have different verticals in the company. We're doing events, we're doing sports infrastructure and academies. Today we are at about 50 academies across 22 cities. Some of them were operationally running, and some of them were technically collaborated with. So for me, success is going to be measured by the number of lives we touch.

### What strategies or programs have been effective in developing world-class badminton champions at Badminton Gurukul?

What we are trying to say is that today a child who just begins to learn, begins to play a sport, would not even dream of training with a coach who's been trained by Pullela Gopichand, would not even dream of meeting the legendary coach. And Badminton Gurukul makes that possible. So that's the first starting point and then we create pathways. So if a child does show a spark and wants to move to the next step, we definitely create all the pathways all the way up to excellence.

### What role do you believe sports, particularly badminton, can play in the empowerment of youngsters in India?

Like I said, the pathway. We have epicentres across the country, including one in Calcutta itself. Suppose they show promise, they're being taken to the national centre at Hyderabad to train. So, Badminton Gurukul is also finding talent across its courses. It's a beautiful way of nurturing and finding new talent that will emerge for the country.

**Can you share any memorable experiences from your time as a badminton player?**



In an interactive press conference at CSC, Supriya Devgun spoke passionately about Badminton Gurukul's role in nurturing young badminton enthusiasts. Attended by (l-r) Sekhar C Biswas, honorary general secretary of the West Bengal Badminton Association, CSC president Siddharth Jhunjhunwala and Rahul Singhi, sports chairman of CSC, the session allowed parents to engage directly with Devgun. Devgun also addressed issues like handling failure, advising parents to teach resilience and view setbacks as learning opportunities.



The CSC Badminton team posed with Supriya Devgun (l-r) Karish Hirjee, Utsav Surana, Adhiraj Agarwal, Ashish Jhunjhunwala, Supriya Devgun, Siddharth Jhunjhunwala, Rajat Mintri-badminton captain, Manoj Modi and Rahul Singhi.

**Patriarchy!** As a woman, trying to make a difference in sport can be a challenging journey at some point. I've had Gopi who's been a friend, philosopher, guy, mentor, and fabulous human being. There has been an instance where I've been in tears because I just didn't know why I was being pulled down for the good work I was doing. And that's when he just said one line to me, "Supriya, the story is on your side. It's not on the other side."

### What are your future goals for Badminton Gurukul and how do you plan to continue innovating in badminton coaching?

Trying to build a curriculum. We cannot standardise sport but we can sort of standardise the way it's taught. We are trying to build a coach development workshop. So we are basically trying to create an ecosystem for the sports environment and also we see a second-win career for a lot of players who will not then be able to go play. Once their playing career is over they can find themselves an opportunity within the ecosystem of Badminton Gurukul.

### How do you think Gopichand changed the face of Indian badminton?

I don't think that needs an answer (laughs). The world's No.1 doubles to innumerable world champions waving the Indian flag on the world stage. Earlier India wanted to learn from the Chinese, now the Chinese want to learn from India. That's how Gopichand has changed the face of the sport for the country.

**Rohini Chakraborty**  
Pictures: Rashbehari Das



## ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY TODAY, t2 EXPLORES HOW HIGH FASHION IS GOING GREEN WITH A MULTIFACETED APPROACH



**F**ashion is not just about looking good anymore; it is also about feeling good about one's choices. As consumers become more environmentally conscious, the demand for sustainable fashion is growing at an unprecedented rate. High fashion brands are catching on, and the industry is undergoing a green revolution. This shift is not just a fleeting trend; it is more of a movement towards a more responsible and ethical fashion future. From innovative materials to eco-friendly practices, luxury fashion is redefining what it means to be chic.

Sustainable fashion is crucial for mitigating environmental harm caused by the clothing industry. It promotes ethical production methods, reduces carbon emissions, and minimises waste. Moreover, it fosters a conscious consumer mindset, inspiring individuals to make informed choices that support a healthier planet and ensure a more equitable future for all.

On this World Environment Day, t2 explores how by incorporating sustainable practices into their collections, luxury brands are leading the way towards a more eco-friendly fashion industry.

**SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS**

Luxury fashion brands are leading the charge with innovative sustainable fabrics. Gone are the days when eco-friendly meant drab and dull. Today, designers are experimenting with materials like organic cotton, bamboo, hemp, and even pineapple leaves (yes, you read that right!). These fabrics not only look and feel luxurious but also have a significantly lower environmental impact. Stella McCartney is a pioneer, who is known for her commitment to cruelty-free fashion. McCartney uses organic cotton, recycled nylon, and even vegan leather made from mushrooms. Her collections are a testament to how sustainability and style can go hand-in-hand.

**RECYCLED MATERIALS**

Upcycling and zero waste are becoming buzzwords in the high-fashion world. High-fashion brands are incorporating recycled materials into their collections, giving new life to old products. Brands are increasingly re-purposing old materials to create new, stylish pieces, thereby reducing waste and conserving resources. The Adidas x Parley collaboration is a fantastic example. Their line of shoes made from ocean plastic has not only raised awareness about marine pollution but also set a new standard for sustainable fashion.

**ETHICAL PRODUCTION PRACTICES**

Sustainability is not just about the materials used; it is also about how something is made. High-fashion brands are adopting ethical production practices to ensure that their clothes are made in a way that is kind to the planet. From using organic fabrics to implementing

transparent supply chains, high fashion is setting new standards in responsible production, proving that style and sustainability can coexist harmoniously. This movement reflects a broader commitment to crafting with a conscience. Gucci has made significant strides in this area with their 'Gucci Equilibrium' initiative. This program focuses on reducing the brand's environmental footprint, improving the welfare of its workers, and supporting local communities.

**CARBON-NEUTRAL COLLECTIONS**

Designers are pioneering techniques to offset carbon emissions, ensuring that their creations leave no lasting footprint. By integrating renewable energy, recycling, and sustainable sourcing, fashion houses are setting new standards in the industry. These collections showcase how luxury and responsibility can coexist, transforming runway spectacles into tangible actions against climate change. This green

revolution in fashion not only redefines style but also paves the way for a more sustainable future. Burberry has become carbon-neutral across all its operations globally since 2022. Their strategy includes using renewable energy in their stores, offices, and supply chain, as well as investing in projects that offset their remaining emissions. Moreover, they are committed to cutting emissions across their extended supply chain by 46 per cent by 2030, and becoming climate positive by 2040.

**INNOVATIVE PACKAGING**

Sustainability in fashion extends beyond the clothes, to even the packaging they come in. High-fashion brands are rethinking their packaging strategies to reduce waste and promote recycling. These initiatives not only meet the growing consumer demand for sustainable products but also showcase the industry's commitment to environmental stewardship. By merging style with sustainability, high fashion is leading the way in eco-conscious innovation, proving that luxury and ecological responsibility can coexist beautifully. Louis Vuitton has introduced eco-friendly packaging made from sustainably sourced materials. Their iconic orange boxes are now designed to be reusable and recyclable, adding another layer of luxury to their brand.

**TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY**

Consumers today want to know where their clothes come from and how they are made. High fashion brands are responding by increasing transparency and traceability in their supply chains. Traceability Alliance for Sustainable Cosmetics (TRASCE), initiated by Chanel and uniting beauty brands, aims to respond to three fundamental challenges facing the cosmetics industry: improve knowledge of supply chains, assess their associated social and environmental risks, and determine the actions required to support supply chains in their transition.

**UPCYCLING AND REWORKING**

Upcycling and reworking old garments into new designs is becoming a popular trend in high fashion. This approach not only reduces waste but also creates unique, one-of-a-kind pieces. Marine Serre, known for her distinctive crescent moon motif and avant-garde aesthetic, has made sustainability a core pillar of her brand. Through her Regenerated line, Serre incorporates recycled materials, such as vintage scarves, discarded denim, and surplus fabrics, into her collections. By reimagining these materials in unexpected ways, Serre not only reduces the need for virgin resources but also imbues her designs with a sense of history and uniqueness.

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- 1 Plant-based Mirum leather is used to produce the Falabella and Frayme bags by Stella McCartney
- 2 Innovative footwear made from sustainable materials, a concept by Adidas and Parley for the Oceans
- 3 A poster with the logo of the Equilibrium initiative by Gucci
- 4 A Burberry store in London
- 5 Ralph Lauren has worked with WWF to develop action plans that support their commitment to safeguarding and preserving water resources in the communities where they source and manufacture
- 6 The use of raw cotton and a flat-pack collapsible design reflects Louis Vuitton's longstanding commitment to sustainability
- 7 Beauty giants, including Chanel, L'Oréal, Estée Lauder, and Groupe Clarins, have formed a new consortium, 'TRASCE', to improve traceability in key ingredient and packaging supply chains across the cosmetics industry
- 8 "Fashion is a way to talk without words" — Marine Serre on building a brand that stays relevant through the changing times



## FASHION



**9** Models wear clothes with slogans berating politicians during Vivienne Westwood's 'Homo Loquax' show at London Fashion Week

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Many high-fashion brands are partnering with environmental organisations to support sustainability initiatives and raise awareness about environmental issues. Ralph Lauren has partnered with the World Wildlife Fund to support their efforts in conserving natural habitats. Through this partnership, Ralph Lauren has pledged support to the WWF's initiatives aimed at conserving critical habitats and preserving biodiversity. By aligning with such reputable environmental organisations, high-fashion brands like Ralph Lauren are not only raising awareness about conservation issues but also actively contributing to positive change. This collaboration highlights the growing importance of corporate responsibility within the fashion industry and sets a precedent for other luxury labels to follow suit.

### EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Education and advocacy play integral roles in this green revolution, as fashion brands collaborate with environmental organisations and engage in a transparent dialogue with consumers. By raising awareness about the ecological ramifications of fashion consumption and promoting sustainable alternatives, the industry is fostering a collective responsibility toward a greener future. Vivienne Westwood is an icon who is known for popularising modern punk, bringing them from the underground subcultures into the mainstream spotlight. Apart from this she is also known for her activism. She used her fashion shows and public appearances to speak out about climate change and other environmental issues, encouraging others to make more sustainable choices. Moreover, she voiced concerns regarding the impacts of climate change and excessive consumption, thereby rallying global awareness towards environmental activism.

Urmimala Dev (t2 intern)  
Pictures: Pinterest

## t2 SPOTLIGHTS SEVEN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES TO CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE PUTTING A FASHIONABLE SPIN ON YOUR WARDROBE

### CHOOSE YOUR STAPLES WISELY

If you want to stock up on staples in your closet, then shop them wisely. Look for staples that are timeless and apt for the weather, and most importantly, judge whether you can wear these pieces a few years from the time of purchase. Understand whether these staples can be worn with other pieces of clothing, and are timeless pieces regardless of ongoing trends. In such cases, a versatile piece in your wardrobe, such as a simple white/black full-sleeve crop tee, or a pair of jeans which is perfect for you, will automatically last much longer and will be a constant in your fashion rotation, thus reducing the amount of textile waste that is generated! Celebs like Anushka Sharma are often seen wearing basic staples, which are indeed versatile pieces to have.

### EFFECTIVE STYLING

If you often feel that you don't have any more wearable clothes in your closet, then look at your clothes in a different way. Instead of investing in a new set of clothes, re-imagine the way you wear certain pieces and try to style them in an out-of-the-box manner! Say you have an old shirt, which doesn't fit you quite right anymore, no worries, style it into an effective piece which can be layered over a crop top or a tank top. Maybe you have an old scarf, which might have a slight tear, instead of throwing the fabric out, maybe you can cleverly tie it along the handle of your handbag to give it a bit more dimension, and a pop of colour! Alia Bhatt can be seen styling an oversized cotton shirt as a cover-up over her swimsuit, which is an example of clever styling!



Kalki Koechlin is often seen in outfits made of sustainable materials like organic cotton and linen. Picture: Fotocorp



Anushka Sharma is often seen wearing staples like black or white tees



Alia Bhatt can be seen styling an oversized cotton shirt as a cover-up over her swimsuit



Bella Hadid often posts pictures of shopping from thrift shops

### SHOP INDIE BRANDS

When you are buying clothes, try and purchase pieces from indie or home-grown brands. Most of the time, these brands have a limited inventory of pieces, as they mostly avoid having excess stock. Fast-fashion brands, in comparison, have a vast inventory and when pieces are not purchased by consumers, often these pieces of clothing end up in landfills. Thus, investing in these one-of-a-kind pieces over something available in a fast-fashion store brings you one step closer to preserving the Earth. Also, the purchase of these pieces often goes towards helping local artisans and workers. Sonam Kapoor's brand Bhaane is an effective example of an indie brand which is prioritising its sustainability goals.

### DONATING OLD CLOTHES

Instead of throwing away clothes that you don't want or have outgrown, consider giving those pieces to either charitable organisations or to thrift stores. Instead of ending up in a landfill, your clothes can have a second life in another person's closet, which will surely be a good step on your part for the betterment of the environment.

### SHOP PRE-LOVED

If you want a cool statement piece, then there is nowhere better to shop than a thrift store! Vintage shopping is regarded as one

Sonam Kapoor's brand Bhaane is an effective example of an indie brand which is prioritising its sustainability goals

of the best up-and-coming fashion trends, with fashionistas often opting for pre-loved, one-of-a-kind pieces to showcase their unique fashion taste. With pre-loved garments, it is important to buy from reputable outlets where you are sure that you are getting the real deal. Thrifting is one of the trendiest summer activities, with celebs and models often promoting this healthy form of consumerism to their fans. With models like Bella Hadid and Emma Chamberlain often showcasing their thrifting habits on their social media, many young fans have followed suit, either exploring new and unique thrifting sites, or setting up their own thrift stores.

### OPT FOR ORGANIC FABRICS

Instead of synthetic fabrics like polyester, nylon and so on, opt for outfits made of sustainable materials, like recycled or organic cotton, or even linen. Not only do these materials keep you cool in the harsh summers, but the manufacturing of such fabrics results in low carbon emission and limited inventory, ensuring that such materials are not over-consumed. These pieces made from such organic materials are more often than not handmade, which makes them more detailed and precise in nature. Celebs like Kalki Koechlin and Vidya Balan are often seen wearing outfits made with sustainable material, inspiring their fans to do the same as well.

### GIVE YOUR OLD CLOTHES A NEW LIFE

If you no longer love the colour or the cut of your old pieces, then give it a new lease of life! Be it doing a bit of tailoring yourself or dyeing the piece in a new colour, such practices not only give new life to these pieces but also make you fall in love with them. Be it a tie-dye print on a simple white tee, or a grunge-like cut or adding a bow on your old jeans (if you are a coquette girlie), these simple yet absolutely worth-it practices will genuinely make you want to re-wear these pieces again and again!

Archisha Mukherjee (t2 intern)  
Pictures: Instagram handles of the celebs



**H**e was the first South Asian designer to open for New York Pride 2023 with the launch of his first luxury pret collection, Aikya. And, Mayyur Girotra is back in New York this year too with his Ride to Pride, which will be showcased at New York Pride on June 5. Mayyur shared with t2 what to expect.

**Can you tell us about your showcase, Ride to Pride?**

Ride to Pride is an exuberant celebration of diversity and inclusivity, manifested through a vibrant collection that fuses traditional Indian textiles and embroidery with contemporary fashion. This collection is a tribute to the fluidity of gender, designed to break boundaries and redefine norms. Each piece is a story of colour, culture, and craftsmanship, embodying the ethos of my brand.

**How excited are you about returning to New York Pride?**

I am absolutely thrilled to be returning to New York Pride. It's an honour to be part of such a dynamic and empowering event that celebrates love, diversity, and acceptance. The energy, the people, and the spirit of Pride are truly inspiring, and I can't wait to share my latest collection with such a vibrant and appreciative audience.

**What are your fondest memories of New York Pride from last year?**

One of my fondest memories from last year is the overwhelming support and enthusiasm from the crowd. The moment when my collection first hit the runway and seeing the expressions of joy and appreciation from the audience was incredibly rewarding. It was also wonderful to connect with so many inspiring individuals and hear their stories and during the course of that year a lot of things unfolded and so many of them from LGBTQIA+ contacted me from small cities in India to talk and share their challenges. I spoke to so many parents and educated them, made them meet the therapists and understand more.

**MAYYUR GIROTRA'S 'RIDE TO PRIDE' WILL BE SHOWCASED AT NEW YORK PRIDE TODAY. HERE'S A SNEAK PEEK**

**What was your biggest takeaway?**

The biggest takeaway from last year was the profound impact that fashion can have in promoting inclusivity and acceptance. It reinforced my belief in the power of art and design to challenge stereotypes and foster a sense of belonging. The positive feedback and heartfelt messages from the LGBTQIA+ community were incredibly validating.

has taught me the importance of representation and visibility. It has deepened my understanding of the unique challenges and experiences faced by the community and the need for genuine allyship. It has also emphasised the significance of creating spaces where everyone feels seen and celebrated.

**What more do you think needs to be done for the community?**

There is still much work to be done in terms of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for the LGBTQIA+ community. Advocacy and education are crucial in combating discrimination and prejudice. Additionally, there needs to be more inclusive policies and

**What have been some of the major learnings from your interaction with the LGBTQIA+ community?**

Interacting with the LGBTQIA+ community



Mayyur Girotra



corner is bustling with life and inspiration. The spirit of resilience and the embrace of individuality make New York a perfect backdrop for Pride celebrations.

**What are your favourite things to do in the city?**

I love exploring the city's vibrant neighbourhoods, visiting art galleries and museums, and experiencing the eclectic food scene. Central Park is a favourite spot for a moment of tranquillity amidst the hustle and bustle, and of course, shopping in SoHo and the fashion districts is always a delight.

**What are you expecting from this year's New York Pride?**

This year, I am expecting an even more vibrant and joyous celebration of diversity and inclusion. I am looking forward to showcasing my new collection and witnessing the incredible creativity and expression from all the participants. Most importantly, I hope to contribute to an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and unity, and to continue building connections within the LGBTQIA+ community.

**Saionee Chakraborty**

Pictures courtesy: Mayyur Girotra



support systems in place, both within the fashion industry and society at large, to create a truly equitable environment.

**Do you have queer icons?**

Yes, there are many queer icons who inspire me, such as RuPaul for his trailblazing presence in the entertainment industry, Laverne Cox for her advocacy and representation of transgender individuals, and designers like Jean Paul Gaultier who have consistently pushed the boundaries of gender norms in fashion.

**Coming back to New York, what do you think is the pulse of the city?**

The pulse of New York is one of relentless energy and creativity. It's a city that thrives on diversity and innovation, where every

**SNAPSHOTS FROM A BEAUTY BASH**



Tina Mukherjee looked lovely at a M.A.C. party that was held at the make-up brand's Forum outlet recently. She hosted a #maximal silky matte lipstick experience for her friends. "M.A.C. has been my favourite lipstick brand forever, from its first showroom in Forum. I remember my friends and I were almost addicted to M.A.C. lipsticks. Since then a lot of international brands have been made available to us, but M.A.C. lipsticks and their Studio Fix will be a staple in my make-up pouch forever," smiled Tina.



Make-up pro Abhijit Paul rocked his summer prints



(L-R) Make-up and hair pros Pritam Das, Kaju Guha and Aamrapali posed together



Aishwarya Biswas of skincare and wellness brand Auli dropped by



## FROM BUILDING BONDS WITH PEOPLE TO ENHANCING REVENUE STREAMS — MANOJ JANGID, GENERAL MANAGER OF FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT KOLKATA, CHATS WITH t2

**M**umbai-born and bred Manoj Jangid, who joined Fairfield by Marriott Kolkata in 2022 as the hotel manager has now advanced to the position of general manager. t2 caught up with the super energetic, humorous and positive GM on his new post and plans for the hotel. Excerpts...

**From hotel manager to general manager, congratulations! How do you feel?**

Optimistic at every opportunity. I feel on top of the world to lead a ship full of rock stars to support our company's vision! As a person, I love to explore whichever opportunity comes my way and nurture a team to make a difference. I am helming the hotel as the general manager with a team that is ready to achieve every milestone together.

**What was your impression when you took over?**

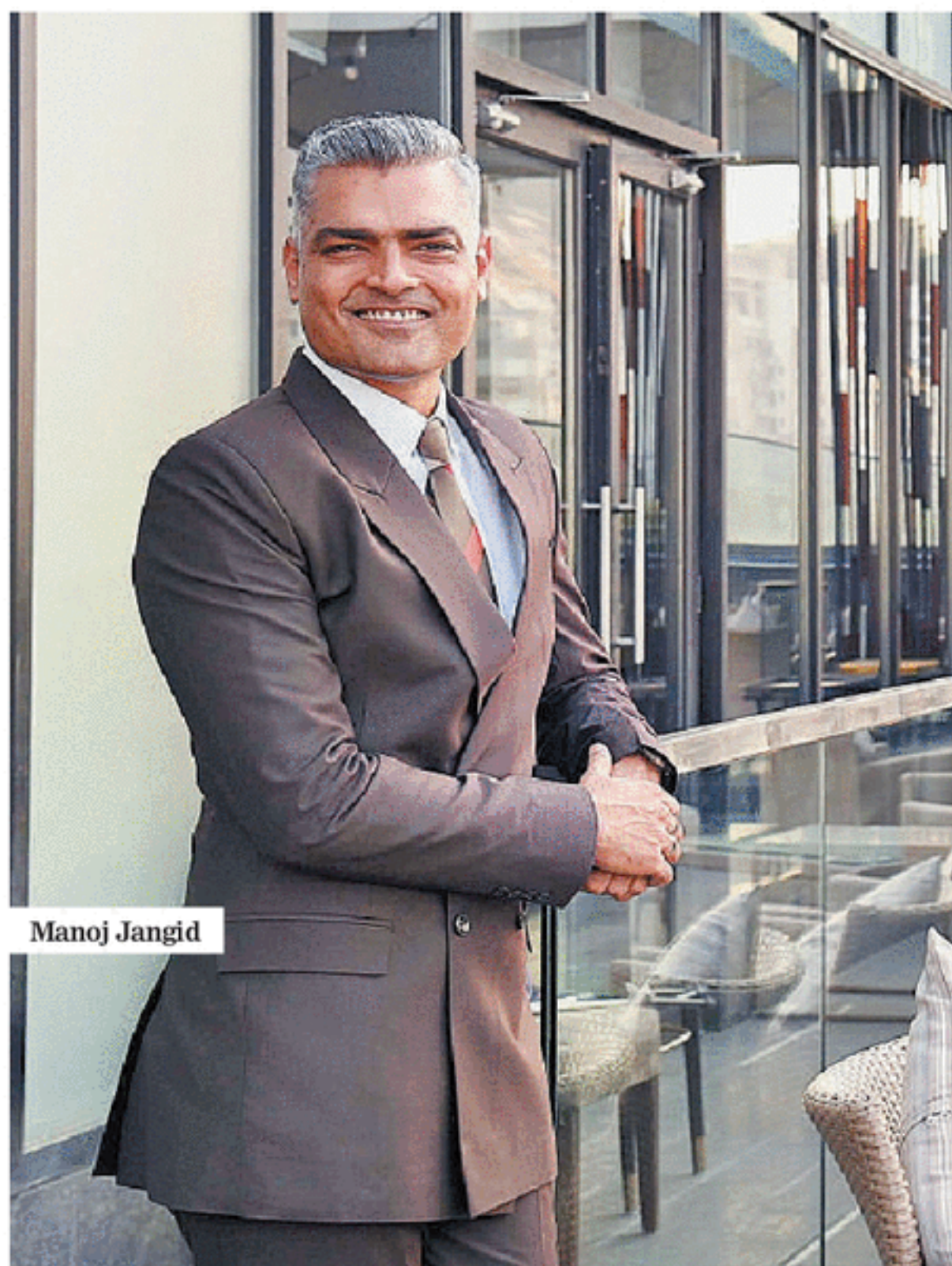
The property opened in 2019 and then the pandemic happened so the property has seen initial operation for four months only. In February 2022 we saw things settling down and when I took over in November, the property was in operation for 14 months in total. I felt I had got an opportunity to manage a hotel which was almost brand new. I am a very people's person and believe in putting people first. Initially, I got a culture shock because I come from a city where things get done in the blink of an eye. So I realised I had to push people to get them to be productive. So that was a little different.

**What do you love about Calcutta?**

One thing I love about the city is that it is very social. Everyone has time for everyone, the city is very warm and welcoming. I fell in love with the city in the first few months itself. People tell me to give the city time as it grows on you. I tell them love happened in the first few months only!

**How do you ensure the hotel's operational efficiency?**

Ensuring the hotel's operational efficiency involves a combination of strategic planning, real-time monitoring and a proactive approach. As a leader, I align my team with the above and together we ensure that all the processes that we have set for ourselves run smoothly. As a team, we strongly believe that regular staff training, adopting best practices, and continuously reviewing and refining operational workflows are the



Manoj Jangid

keys to our success as a hotel. We also encourage feedback from both guests and associates that is taken on a regular basis to identify areas for opportunities.

**Can you describe a typical day for you as the general manager?**

A typical day for me starts early with a walkthrough of the hotel, meeting the rockstar team who are the reason for our success and ensuring everything is set for a fruitful day. There is enough and more positive energy in the team to create experiences for our internal as well as external guests. I then review the previous day's performance metrics and meet with department heads, to discuss the day's priorities and any guest feedback. My afternoons often involve strategic planning, financial review, and attending to any high-profile guest needs. I

make it a point to interact with guests and staff regularly, encouraging a sense of community and open communication and care for each other.

**How do you measure and improve guest satisfaction?**

Guest satisfaction is my top priority, being in the service industry. In simple words, that's our bread and butter. For measuring guest sentiments we have multiple channels, including guest Guest Voice, which is a Marriott online tool, plus other tools like Tripadvisor and several online reviewing tools. I also am a strong believer of taking direct feedback. We utilise a comprehensive feedback management system to track and analyse this data. To improve satisfaction, we address issues promptly, implement regular

**Motivating and managing the team involves clear communication, recognising achievements, and encouraging a happy culture and environment within the workplace. As a team, we believe in strengthening the process. Results come automatically and Marriott strongly believes in empowering associates by providing additional responsibilities and cross-exposure opportunities, allowing them to grow and take initiatives — Manoj Jangid**



### MANOJ'S FAVE:

**Fave corner in the hotel:** Vertex outdoors, particularly during evenings. It's where I can be at peace and put my thoughts together and focus on the idea that's most essential as a leader of the hotel. It's a dynamic space that reflects my background as a F&B professional and now a GM.

**One dish to try:** I would say the Bengali cuisine is excellent. Fish fry to Chicken Dakbanglow.

**One cocktail to try:** Negroni! Our negroni is delicious and has a twist of *gondhoraj*.

associate training and introduce personalised services to enhance the guest experience.

**How do you motivate and manage your team to deliver exceptional service?**

Motivating and managing the team involves clear communication, recognising achievements, and encouraging a happy culture and environment within the workplace. As a team, we believe in strengthening the process. Results come automatically and Marriott strongly believes in empowering associates by providing additional responsibilities and cross-exposure

opportunities, allowing them to grow and take initiative. Regular team meetings, training sessions and also unwind sessions sipping on a few cocktails are a must. We have also implemented a strong recognition program to ensure that everyone is aligned and motivated to deliver exceptional experiences.

**What recent trends in the hospitality industry have you noticed, and how are you adapting to them?**

Recent trends in the hospitality industry include a focus on sustainability, personalised guest experiences, and technology integration and we at Marriott are aligned with it. We are adapting by implementing eco-friendly practices, using data analytics to tailor guest experiences, and integrating smart technologies to streamline operations and enhance service.

**What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?**

It includes seeing guests leave happy and planning their next stay, watching team members grow and excel in their roles, and achieving financial targets that reflect the hard work and dedication of the entire team, including me as a leader.

**How do you stay competitive in the market?**

To stay competitive, we continuously monitor market trends and competitor activities. We invest in marketing, enhance our digital presence, and offer unique experiences that set us apart. Additionally, we focus on building strong relationships with our guests. As you know, the pulse of the city lies in your relationship and bonding with the people. Also encouraging loyalty and positive word-of-mouth are aspects that set us apart in the competitive market.

**Finally, what plan do you have for the hotel in this financial year?**

For this financial year, our plan includes not just meeting but exceeding our budgeted targets across all parameters. We aim to enhance our revenue streams through strategic partnerships and innovative service offerings. As a team, we have set our own ambitious targets, and we are committed to achieving them through collaboration, dedication and leveraging our collective strengths. Empowering the team with the right tools and support, we are poised to make this year our most successful one yet and I am sure we will achieve this as a team.

**Pramita Ghosh**

Pictures: Rashbehari Das



**R**eal Madrid clinched their 15th UEFA Champions League title in an unforgettable 2023-24 campaign, reinforcing their dominance in European football. Their triumph capped a season filled with spectacular performances and memorable moments. As the dust settles on another thrilling edition of the competition, it's time to recognise the standout players who left an indelible mark on the tournament.

The Champions League Team of the Season for 2023-24 showcases the creme de la creme of European football, featuring stars who consistently delivered exceptional performances, demonstrating skill, resilience, and brilliance on the grandest stage. This elite squad includes players who not only shone for Real Madrid but also those from other clubs who displayed remarkable talent and contributed significantly to the drama and excitement of the tournament.

As we celebrate Real Madrid's unparalleled achievement, we also honor the players who made the 2023-24 season truly extraordinary.

#### GOALKEEPER: GREGOR KOBEL - BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund's journey to the Champions League final was built on a foundation

## EUROPE'S FINEST: LOOKING BACK AT THE BEST OF THE JUST-CONCLUDED CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



Real Madrid's  
Dani Carvajal



Borussia Dortmund's  
Ian Maatsen



Manchester  
City's Rodri



Borussia Dortmund's  
Mats Hummels



Real Madrid's  
Antonio Rudiger



Real Madrid's  
Jude Bellingham



Real Madrid's  
Vinicius Junior

of defensive solidity, with Gregor Kobel standing tall as their last line of defence. The Swiss goalkeeper emerged as a key figure throughout the campaign, leading the competition in clean sheets with six shutouts. His commanding presence and shot-stopping ability were pivotal, especially in high-pressure moments. Despite ending up on the losing side in the final, Kobel's performance at Wembley was nothing short of heroic, with several spectacular saves that highlighted his season-long brilliance. His contributions were essential in Dortmund's remarkable run, and he has cemented his reputation as one of Europe's top goalkeepers.

A special mention is due to Andriy Lunin, who began the season as the third-choice goalkeeper at Real Madrid. Lunin stepped up significantly during the campaign, playing a crucial part in Real Madrid's success. Despite his unfortunate omission from the final, his performances throughout the season were commendable and pivotal to the team's journey to the title.

#### RIGHT BACK: DANI CARVAJAL - REAL MADRID

Dani Carvajal has been a linchpin in Real Madrid's defence and an unsung hero in their recent dominance of the Champions League. His experience and tenacity were on full display throughout the campaign, particularly in critical moments of the tournament. Carvajal's defensive solidity and ability to push forward effectively made him an invaluable asset. His goal in the final not only turned the tide of the match but also underscored his ability to rise to the occasion when it mattered most. Carvajal's leadership and determination have been

pivotal in Real Madrid's success, and his contributions have been integral to their record-extending 15th European crown. What a remarkable career he has had.

#### CENTRE BACK: MATS HUMMELS - BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Mats Hummels turned back the clock with an outstanding campaign, showcasing the experience and defensive prowess that have defined his career. The veteran defender led the tournament in several defensive metrics, including clearances (69), interceptions (25), and

tackles (53), demonstrating his invaluable presence at the heart of Dortmund's defence. Despite his exceptional performances, his omission from Germany's Euro 2024 squad remains a mystery to many. Hummels' campaign has been a masterclass in defensive play, and his efforts were central to Dortmund's success in reaching the final. His experience and leadership have been vital, making him one of the standout performers of the season.

#### CENTRE BACK: ANTONIO RUDIGER - REAL MADRID

Antonio Rudiger has been a cornerstone of Real Madrid's defense in a season marked by significant injuries to key players. The German defender's resilience and consistency have been crucial for Carlo Ancelotti's side. Known for his physicality and robust defending, Rudiger relishes one-on-one battles against the world's best forwards and often comes out on top. Rudiger's ability to stay calm under pressure and deliver when it counts has been instrumental in Real Madrid's successful campaign. His performances have exemplified leadership and defensive excellence, making him an indispensable part of Real Madrid's record-extending 15th Champions League title.

#### LEFT BACK: IAN MAATSEN - BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Ian Maatsen's rise this season has been nothing short of meteoric. Just a year ago, he was plying his trade in the Championship with Burnley, and now he has played a pivotal role in Borussia Dortmund's run to the Champions League final. Maatsen's journey from a loan spell at Burnley to becoming a key player for Dortmund has been remarkable. Arriving on loan from Chelsea in January, he quickly adapted to the demands of top-tier European football, providing solidity at the back and adding depth to Dortmund's attacking plays. His growth and performances suggest that Chelsea could benefit from integrating him into their first team next season. Maatsen's campaign has been a testament to his talent and potential.

#### MIDFIELD: RODRI - MANCHESTER CITY

Rodri's contributions to Manchester City's midfield have been nothing short of phenomenal, even as their title defence ended in the quarter-finals. The Spanish midfielder has been a model of consistency and excellence, providing the backbone for City's dynamic play. His ability to dictate the tempo and control the game has been crucial, leading the Champions League in progressive passes by a significant margin. Trailing only Toni Kroos in passes into the final third, Rodri's influence was evident throughout the tournament.

Borussia Dortmund's  
Gregor Kobel



## SPORTSPACE

His status as the best in the world at his role remains undisputed, and his performances this season have only solidified this reputation.

### MIDFIELD: TONI KROOS – REAL MADRID

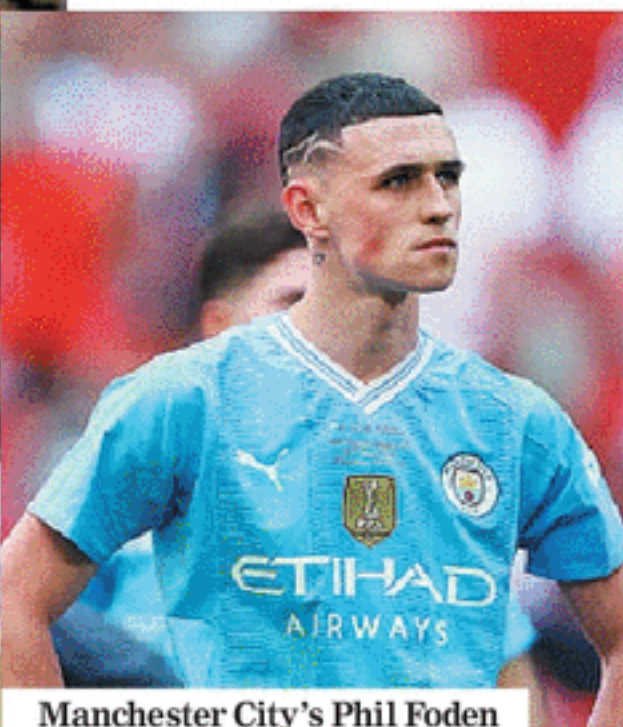
Toni Kroos has ended his illustrious club career in the perfect fashion, celebrating a sixth Champions League triumph at Wembley. The German midfielder has been a model of consistency, elegance, and precision throughout his career, and this season was no different. Kroos's performances this season have been a fitting swansong, as he played a crucial role in Real Madrid's journey to their 15th European crown. His leadership, experience, and technical prowess will be sorely missed, not just by Real Madrid but by the football world. Kroos has left an indelible mark on the sport, and his final season was a reminder of his enduring class and quality.

### MIDFIELD: JUDE BELLINGHAM – REAL MADRID

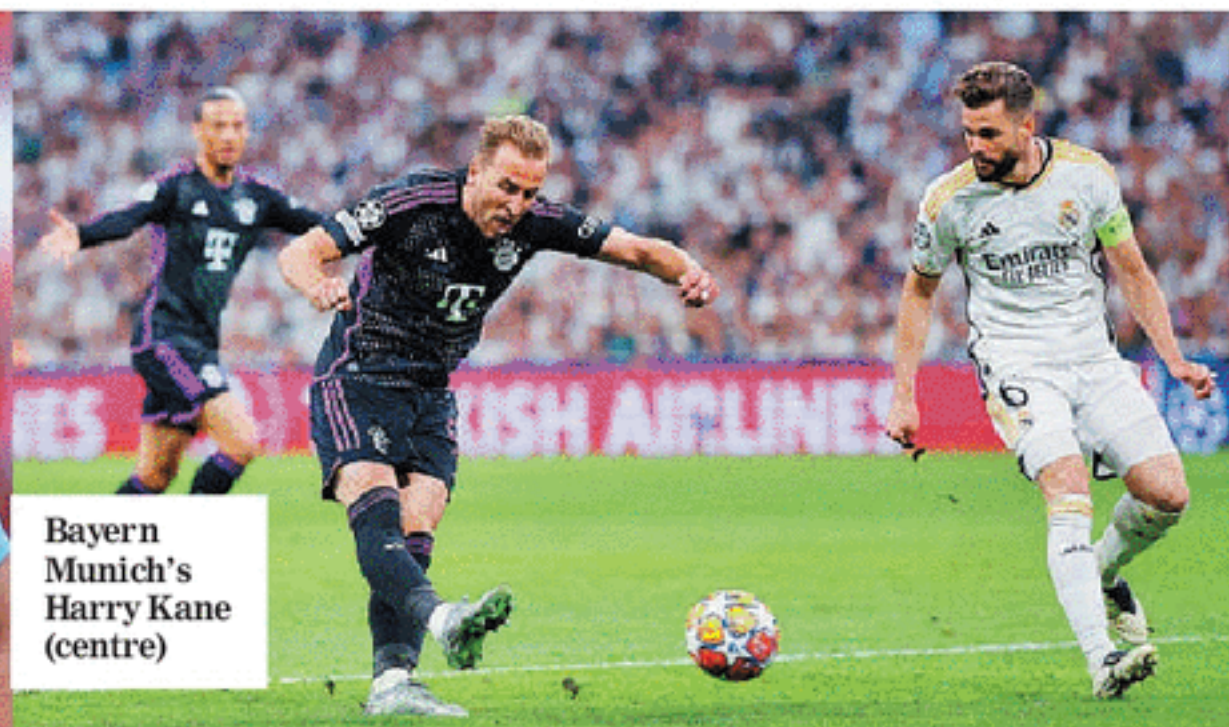
Jude Bellingham's debut season at Real Madrid has been nothing short of extraordinary. The 20-year-old Englishman joined the Spanish giants and immediately made an impact, contributing significantly to their domestic and European successes. Bellingham started the Champions League campaign on fire, with four goals and three assists during the group stages, showcasing his ability to perform on the biggest stage. His selfless performance as a focal point at Manchester City was particularly



Real Madrid's Toni Kroos



Manchester City's Phil Foden



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane (centre)

noteworthy, as it helped relieve pressure and allowed his team to maintain control. Adding assists against RB Leipzig and in the final win over his former side Dortmund, Bellingham finished as the top assist provider (5) in the Champions League this season. His dream debut season at Real Madrid, capped with La Liga and Champions League winner's medals, has firmly established him as one of the brightest young talents in world football.

### RIGHT WING: PHIL FODEN – MANCHESTER CITY

Phil Foden's stellar season at Manchester City has catapulted him into the upper echelons of football. At just 23, Foden was named Premier League Player of the Season for 2023-24, a testament to his remarkable consistency

and influence on the pitch. In the Champions League, Foden was instrumental in City's run to the quarter-finals, proving himself as a pivotal player in Pep Guardiola's squad. Leading the competition in shot-creating actions, Foden showcased his creativity and attacking prowess, contributing five goals and three assists. His performances in the group stage were particularly outstanding, highlighted by a stunning goal at the Bernabeu against Real Madrid.

### LEFT WING: VINICIUS JUNIOR – REAL MADRID

Vinicius Junior is quickly becoming one of the most decisive players in world football. The Brazilian winger's explosive pace and dazzling footwork have made him a nightmare for defenders, and his impact in the

Champions League has been profound. This season, Vinicius was once again crucial in Real Madrid's triumphant campaign, contributing six goals and five assists. His ability to come alive in crucial moments, particularly in the knockout stages, has made him indispensable to Real Madrid's success. Vinicius's performance in the final, where he scored yet again, marked him as only the second player after Lionel Messi to score in two Champions League finals before turning 24. With the Copa America on the horizon, a strong campaign could bolster his contention for the Ballon d'Or, cementing his status as one of the best players in the world.

### FORWARD: HARRY KANE – BAYERN MUNICH

Harry Kane led Bayern Munich's

charge to the Champions League semi-finals, showcasing his lethal finishing and all-around forward play. The English striker ended the 2023-24 Champions League as the joint leading scorer, tied with Kylian Mbappe, each boasting an impressive tally of goals. Kane's 12 goal involvements, comprising goals and assists, were the highest in the competition, highlighting his dual threat as both a scorer and a creator. This season, Kane has solidified his reputation as the best out-and-out forward in the game, demonstrating his clinical nature in front of goal and his ability to link play effectively.

Ishayu Gupta  
(t2 intern)  
Pictures: Reuters

Session 2024-25



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