

Thursday  
12 December 2024

The Telegraph  
**t2**

# PURSUIT OF TRUTH

P9

DESPATCH

## LEGACY DRAPES

P12

- B'DAY, APPS OF 2024 2,4,6
- WHATSUP, COMING UP 12,13,15
- ANNIVERSARY BASH, XMAS CHEER 14



PICTURE: RASHBEHARI DAS

MARCO  
LEONARDI

INFORMATION  
GO

PICTURE: B HALDER

## BEYOND BORDERS

P8

Our  
**Strapless bra:** Never Falls



fittedbras  
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SWATI GAUTAM

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YUVRAJ SINGH, RAJINIKANTH, BILL NIGHY



This year, you need to look for opportunities to lift yourself out of the situation you are not comfortable with. Financially, things should be balanced and sorted. Your hard work and perseverance are about to pay off handsomely this year. You will soon be reaping the rewards of your harvest. You will be finding balance and harmony on your spiritual path.

— Nita Chhotatal

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## TODAY'S TIPS by Nita Chhotatal



## ARIES

**DO** welcome new opportunities, success and growth  
**DON'T** get frustrated by life's challenges  
**EXPECT** to stay resilient during difficult times as things will eventually improve



## TAURUS

**DO** take pride in your achievements and stay focused  
**DON'T** be lazy  
**EXPECT** to cultivate expertise that will contribute to your prosperity



## GEMINI

**DO** keep in mind that taking action is not always the best solution  
**DON'T** control people and situations  
**EXPECT** to be patient and consider all your options carefully



## CANCER

**DO** make sure you have a plan and stay committed to your goals  
**DON'T** take unnecessary risks  
**EXPECT** to explore uncharted territories or take up a new project



## LEO

**DO** reach out to those who have helped you and express gratitude  
**DON'T** get into arguments  
**EXPECT** to celebrate both your strengths and weaknesses



## VIRGO

**DO** pursue your goals methodically and strategically  
**DON'T** be dominating  
**EXPECT** to be put in charge of an organisation that needs discipline and order



## LIBRA

**DO** address all the issues which are giving you sleepless nights and find a solution for them  
**DON'T** get depressed  
**EXPECT** to come out of a stressful situation and move on



## SCORPIO

**DO** be careful of wishful thinking and be alert about the choices you make  
**DON'T** be tempted to rush into a situation  
**EXPECT** to evaluate the pros and cons of each option so as to make the best choice



## SAGITTARIUS

**DO** make sure you make the most of the new beginnings  
**DON'T** let new opportunities slip through your fingers  
**EXPECT** to take a meticulous approach and make sure every detail is carried out



## CAPRICORN

**DO** radiate happy and positive energy to all those around you  
**DON'T** neglect a family reunion  
**EXPECT** to focus on family life and love your family unconditionally



## AQUARIUS

**DO** trust your gut feeling even if your head is telling you otherwise  
**DON'T** disregard your emotions  
**EXPECT** to empathise with others and defend those who cannot defend themselves



## PISCES

**DO** keep your heart chakra open to receive the love the universe is sending you  
**DON'T** get anxious  
**EXPECT** things to start moving efficiently and effectively

Nita Chhotatal is on @Divine Grace - Nita Chhotatal @mysticalguidancebynita



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## THE 2024 APP STORE AWARDS CELEBRATES 17 APPS AND GAMES THAT HIGHLIGHT CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**W**hen Apple introduced the App Store on July 10, 2008 with 500 apps, it kicked off a new chapter in the creative space, engaging developers. It immediately became a social and economic phenomenon that changed how people work, play, meet and travel. Every year,

Apple celebrates some of the apps that inspire developers to mull over fresh ideas. The Cupertino-HQ'd tech giant has revealed the 2024 App Store Awards winners, celebrating 17 apps and games that helped users achieve new milestones and cherish everyday moments with family and friends.

From solo entrepreneurs to multinational teams, these App Store Award winners were chosen

from 45 finalists by App Store editors for demonstrating the highest levels of user experience, design, and innovation.

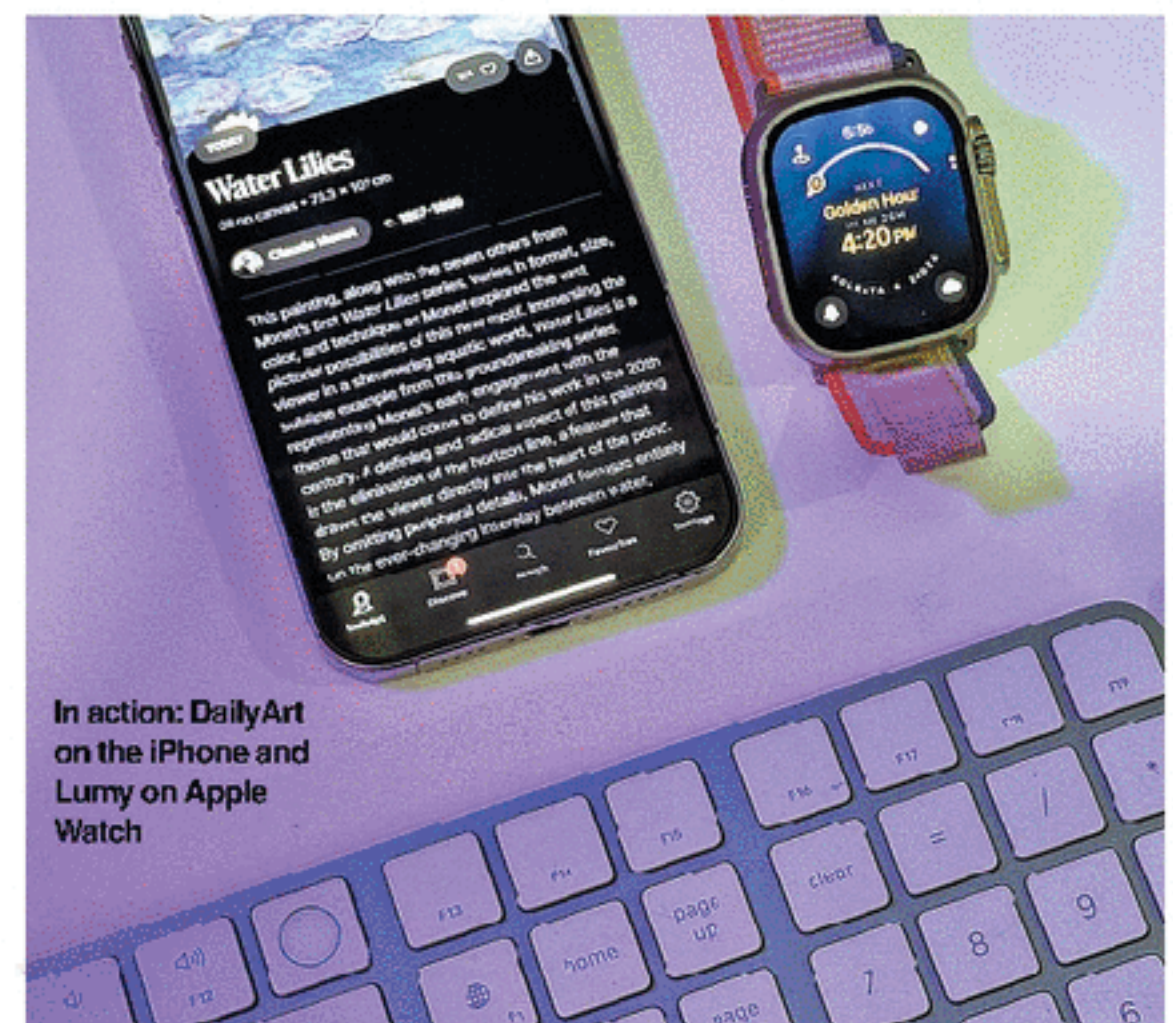
"The remarkable achievements of this year's winners demonstrate the incredible ingenuity that can be unlocked through apps," said Tim Cook, Apple's CEO.

t2 spoke to three winners whose lives have changed thanks to their apps.



**THE GAME WILL MAKE YOU THINK OF YOUR LIFE, YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND HOW YOU INTERACT WITH LOVED ONES. IT'S SOME KIND OF A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE. THAT'S THE CATHARSIS. YOU START THINKING ABOUT YOUR LIFE' — Florent Maurin, The Wreck**

(Clockwise from top) **DailyArt, The Wreck and Lumy**



In action: **DailyArt** on the iPhone and **Lumy** on Apple Watch

of her life. She has been called by the hospital because her mother is in critical condition. She goes to the hospital at the beginning of the game," says Maurin.

She faces the doctor who tells her that she has to decide what to do with her mother. There is too much pressure on her shoulders, so she decides to leave and what happens when she leaves the hospital? She gets into a car accident. Surprisingly, everything turns into slow motion and items start flying around in the car and those items become doors to memories. By looking at the objects you will enter those memories, looking for clues to better understand Junon's past. The idea is to help her move forward by understanding her life."

As a player, you can dig deep into her thoughts to unlock new narrative possibilities. The memories you "enter" are important. These define Junon's life. Each time you understand something new, you access new narrative paths and "say things to people who are important. As you move forward, you will hopefully help Junon become a stronger person".

"It may sound a little depressing but it's not the case. What we wanted to do was talk about

### THE WRECK: FINDING MEANING IN LIFE

Loss is a part of life but can you bring meaning to life? Call it a game or a visual novel in the form of a game, *The Wreck* from *The Pixel Hunt* depicts the mind's inner struggles when facing crises.

One of the Cultural Impact Winners of the 2024 App Store Award, *The Wreck* is a mature 3D visual novel/narrative adventure game about sisterhood, motherhood, grief and survival.

In it, you'll follow Junon as she attempts to make it through the most pivotal day in her life. "Sisterhood, motherhood, grief and survival are topics typically not talked about in video games. We do because we pride ourselves in doing what we call reality-inspired cases," Florent Maurin, founder of *The Pixel Hunt*, tells us over a video call.

The former journalist keeps it as real as possible in the game. "The young girl is having the worst day

difficult topics in a very hopeful way. All the stories at *Pixel Hunt* try to find stories anchored in the real world and that's the case here," says Alexandre Grilletta, also of *The Pixel Hunt*.

The inception of the game was a real-life car accident involving Florent and his daughter. "I was coming back from daycare with my daughter in the back of the car. I took a turn and suddenly I was facing an accident and I couldn't avoid it. We crashed. Suddenly I leaped through something that I thought was only possible in movies. I saw things move in slow motion. It seemed to me that it took a long time to happen and memories filled my mind. I saw my life flash before my eyes as they show in movies. Your brain parses through memories to find something urgent. It's a weird feeling. The first thing I did was see if everybody was okay. Thankfully,

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**

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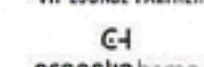
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## FROM PAGE 4

nobody was hurt," says Maurin.

The Wreck is also a short game. You can see it to the end in a few hours. It's designed to be playable by anybody and more specifically by those who are not typically video game players. "We aim to appeal to people who don't play games regularly. Perhaps they indirectly find things here that they don't find in other video games," says Florent. The game will make you think of your life, your relationships and how you interact with loved ones. "It's some kind of a transformative experience. That's the catharsis. You start thinking about your life."

"Also, it's not a game that's going to put you down. I tried to put in a lot of colours. There is humour. The idea is to make something mature. When you read a book or see a movie, you expect something mature. That has not always been the case in video games," says Alexandre.

**LUMY: SUN, MOON AND STARS IN YOUR LIFE**

Perhaps one of the best-kept secrets many "know about" is Lumy. The app is used around the world and behind it is our very own Indian developer, Raja V.

He is a mechanical engineer by degree but everything changed when he got his first iPhone.

"Like many others, I fell in love with its simplicity. The apps I discovered on the App Store were different from what I saw earlier. They were beautifully crafted. I could literally see them change my day-to-day activities. When I looked up how these apps are made, I came to know about these independent developers around the world, making these apps through the Apple Developer programme. Anybody could join the programme and then start distributing apps to 100-plus countries. There are no pre-requirements. You don't need to have a college degree, no prior experience... nothing," says Raja, who is clearly in love with coding and what's possible through the App Store.

Lumy on Apple Watch helps users embrace the patterns of the sun and find the magic in each day. It is also the Apple Watch App of the Year. "I taught myself to code and since then I have been making apps for Apple platforms."

Helping him is his wife, who is a photographer and a "creative partner". "We create apps for ourselves. Once we are satisfied, we put them on the App Store, hoping to connect with people who share our design aesthetics and find value in what we create," says the young developer.

Lumy was born out of their personal needs when the couple were exploring photography. It started with the simple act of finding the golden hour. Then came feedback and suggestions until it developed into a feature-rich app.

"Today, people around the world use it to track sunlight for their daily routines, wellness practices and creative projects. The app offers a variety of complications in various sizes, allowing users to add them to any workspace. The idea is to provide the needed information without having to check the iPhone all the time. That's why these complications are presented to be highly customisable. Users can

**I CAME INTO THIS (APP DEVELOPMENT) BECAUSE I LOVE APPLE'S DESIGN PHILOSOPHY. EACH YEAR THESE GUYS PRESENT A LOT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, GIVING ME SCOPE TO IMPROVE. IT HAS OPENED A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES — Raja V, Lumy**

design their own experience to fit their specific needs and users can create several watch spaces to help them with their daily routines."

Of course, the app can be helpful to photographers, offering a countdown to the golden hour when pictures become memorable.

"Lumy is not just about sun tracking; it also has moon information. All the experiences are personalised. A person who meditates at sunrise can pin the moment or a hiker who wants to finish his journey can pin the moment of 'last' light."

The interface draws inspiration from nature. "It changes with the time of day to create an experience that syncs with the real world. It also integrates with Apple Weather to plan outdoor activities." If a user wants to venture out to take a photograph of the sunset, they can quickly check the cloud cover.

This year the app added a number of features, like Smart Stack support, double tap and so on. Each year, the developer works on new features to keep the app relevant.

"Lumy has paid users in over 100 countries and it's heartening to see the value in what we have created, whether it's photographers in Japan or runners in Germany. They trust Lumy to deliver."

Raja V is an example of what's possible when a person has an iPhone, a MacBook and, of course, good ideas. "I am grateful to the App Store and what it has helped me achieve."

The developer also has other apps, like Calzy and Currenzy. Calzy won Apple Design Awards in 2018 while Currenzy is a beautiful currency converter app.

"I came into this because I love Apple's design philosophy. Each

year these guys present a lot of new technologies, giving me scope to improve. It has opened a world of opportunities.... I want to bring sun tracking to VisionOS and Apple Vision Pro. That's my plan."

**DAILYART: ART OF THE MATTER**

Zuzanna Stanska is the woman behind the DailyArt app and she believes art can make us better people in a world that is experiencing moments of extreme tension in which fear and anger are high and false narratives have taken over the collective consciousness, culture and the arts have an instrumental role in changing those narratives.

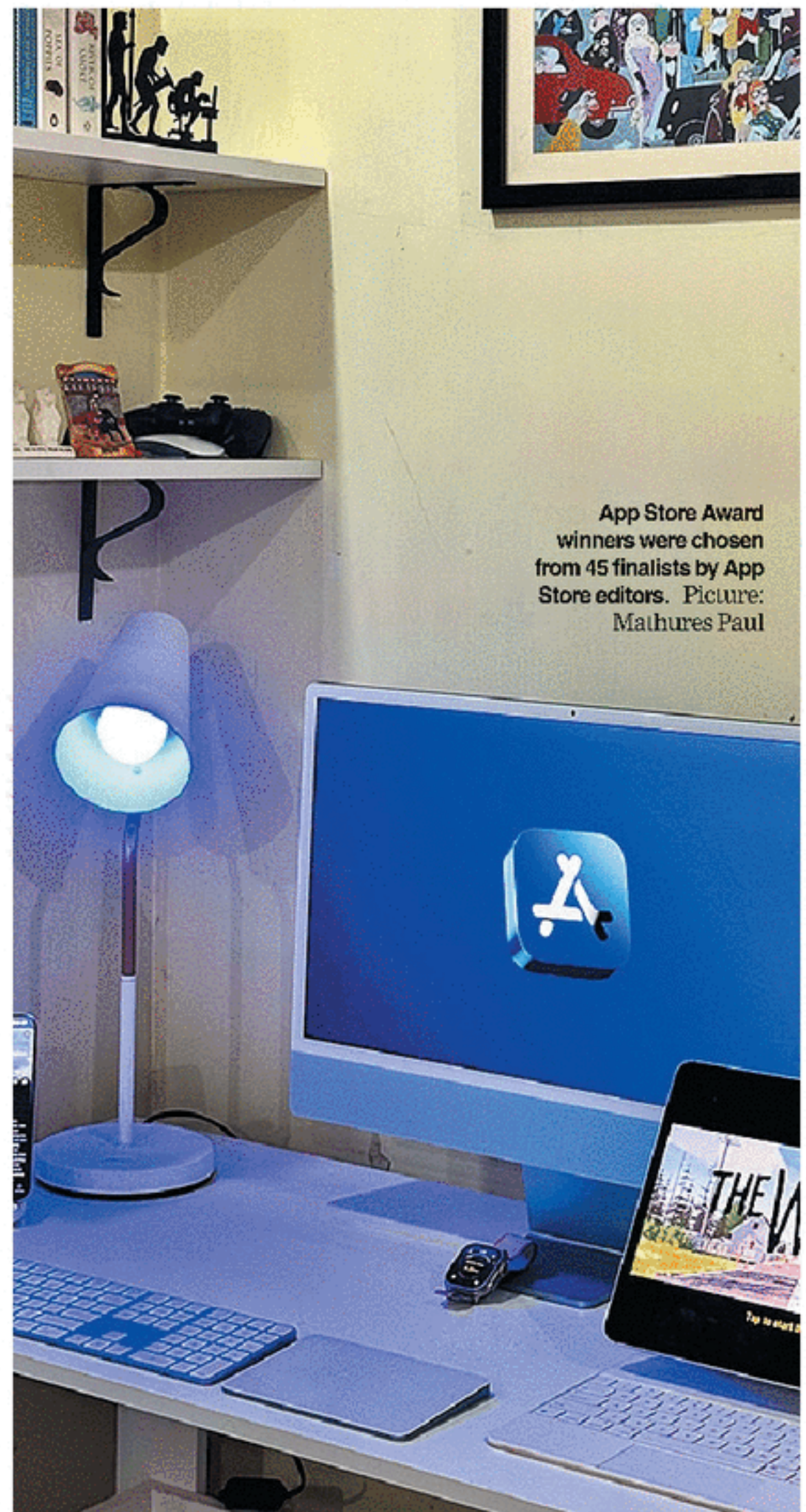
What the app does is simple: Every day you stumble upon a piece of fine art with a short story about it.

To her, the self-portrait of Marie-Gabrielle Capet is important. Her name appeared as one of the 21 women who displayed works in the Salon of 1791, soon after the French Revolution. In a self-portrait, Capet is shown holding drawing chalk clasped in a holder as she faces the easel. This was the time when the art world felt a momentum.

"Despite all the success, when she died, her name slipped into obscurity for many years. Looking at the painting, you can see a story," says Zuzanna.

DailyArt is one of the Cultural Impact Winners. By connecting users to exceptional artwork across centuries and movements, the app fuels intellectual curiosity.

She created the app some years ago and now there are 800,000 unique monthly users. The app can



App Store Award winners were chosen from 45 finalists by App Store editors. Picture: Mathures Paul

**2024 APP STORE AWARD WINNERS****APPS**

- **iPhone App of the Year:** Kino, from Lux Optics Inc.
- **iPad App of the Year:** Moises, from Moises Systems Inc.
- **Mac App of the Year:** Adobe Lightroom, from Adobe Inc.
- **Apple Vision Pro App of the Year:** What If...? An Immersive Story, from Disney
- **Apple Watch App of the Year:** Lumy, from Raja V
- **AppleTV App of the Year:** F1 TV, from Formula One Digital Media Limited

**GAMES**

- **iPhone Game of the Year:** AFK Journey, from Farlight Games
- **iPad Game of the Year:** Squad Busters, from Supercell
- **Mac Game of the Year:** Thank Goodness You're Here!, from Panic, Inc
- **Apple Vision Pro Game of the Year:** THRASHER: Arcade Odyssey, from Puddle, LLC
- **Apple Arcade Game of the**



The winning apps and games of the 2024 App Store Awards highlight the endless opportunities across the App Store and the Apple ecosystem

Year: Balatro+, from Playstack

**CULTURAL IMPACT WINNERS**

The awards also recognise the lasting impact of a few apps and games have made in users' lives and communities

- **Oko from AYES BV:** Oko combines innovation and simplicity to help users who are blind or have low vision navigate city streets with confidence
- **EF Hello from Signum International AG:** Powered by AI, EF Hello integrates a systematic learning approach to support

language learners of all levels, helping them enhance their communication and better engage with the world around them

- **DailyArt from Zuzanna Stanska:** By connecting users to exceptional artwork across centuries and movements, DailyArt fuels the intellectual curiosity and wonder of users
- **NYT Games from The New York Times Company:** Offering a great start to the day, NYT Games connects family and friends across generations with a variety of fun and simple daily games
- **The Wreck from The Pixel Hunt:** Featuring cinematic scenes and an interactive narrative, The Wreck depicts the mind's inner struggles when facing a crisis
- **Do You Really Want to Know? 2 from Gamtropy Co.:** Do You Really Want to Know? 2 explores the nuances of living with HIV, offering users local resources and educational materials to navigate conversations with family and friends

be accessed in several languages. What is interesting is that her team comprises art historians.

"If you travel and like to have that additional art history layer while sightseeing, you can do just that." For example, if you are in Amsterdam, you can see what's hanging in Rijksmuseum.

"We know there are parents who read DailyArt to children during breakfast. We know of couples who are discussing masterpieces after seeing it on the app."

Zuzanna is a historian and 12 years ago she realised that art is not being taught enough at schools. Museums and galleries can be boring for some people, so she set out to make art more accessible. "There is interest in art. People are waiting hours to see the *Mona Lisa*."

So what is the importance of art history at a time when AI-generated art is taking over? "In our busy and disturbing times, art remains important. It can help calm down people and make everyone realise talent is everywhere. It makes us realise how important culture is."

What we want to see more on the app are chapters dedicated to Indian art, be it Jamini Roy or M.F. Husain.

Mathures Paul





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## FILMMAKER GOUTAM GHOSE PRESENTED HIS INDO-ITALIAN PRODUCTION *PARIKRAMA* AT KIFF



Goutam Ghose speaks on *Parikrama* a day after the screening at the Kolkata International Film Festival in Nandan as producer Sergio Scapagnini and Aryan Badkul look on. Picture: B Halder

A film that is being touted as the first Indo-Italian co-production brought its Italian producer, lead actor and its Indian producer and director to the same table at Nandan last Sunday.

*Parikrama*, which has been screened at the festival the day before, uses the Narmada *parikrama* as a narrative framework to tell a story of destiny, development politics and displacement. The religious trek typically starts at the river's source in Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh,

and continues along the southern bank to Bharuch, Gujarat, where the river meets the Arabian Sea.

Introducing his directorial venture, Goutam Ghose, also the chairman of the festival in its 30th edition, expressed his happiness at being able to hold the Asia premiere of his film in his hometown.

The germ of the film was in a short novel, titled *The Story of Lala*, that his Italian friend and producer Sergio Scapagnini wrote about his encounter in Bombay with a young street vendor.

The tri-lingual film, Ghose

explained, had an Italian part added to the book's plot as he had brought in the figure of an Italian filmmaker Alessandro, who specialises in documenting environmental displacement. Alessandro, played by Marco Leonardi, wanted to make a film on the circumambulation of the mighty river, now dammed by human interference. A single father, he had to leave behind at home a school-going boy, who was recently rendered motherless.

"We had shot the Italian part in January 2020 when Covid struck. Italy was the second country to



Goutam Ghose directs a shot on the location of *Parikrama*



Chitrangda Singh and Aryan Badkul in a scene from *Parikrama*

be affected and we escaped their lockdown by just a week," Ghosh said, pointing to his Indian co-producer Sukalyan Roy and himself.

The pandemic put a spanner in the works, stalling the film for two and a half years. "That meant the teenage boys we had auditioned in 2019 for the part of Lala had all grown up. So we had to audition again in Indore," he said.

Though Aryan was low on the casting team's preference list,

Ghose picked Aryan Badkul for the role of "a little big man" thrust into experience from the age of innocence by what he calls "hamara naseeb".

"He was the shiest of the lot but I interacted at length with him, treating him as an equal, till he was comfortable. He had never acted, not even on stage. But I had found my Lala," Ghose said, smiling at the youngster with expressive eyes, seated next to him who had played a street vendor displaced by development as the dam caused village after village on the riverbanks to be flooded.

"The river has suffered a lot as has the boy. It is a challenge for the pilgrims as they can't walk along the riverbank anymore," said Ghose adding that he used the Italian subplot to create a metaphor. Alessandro's son is motherless just as Lala has lost his motherland. "It is a cinematic journey in cinematic time and space where one's past can easily enter the present experience. Cinema can manipulate time," Ghose pointed out, explaining why he does not want to be a storyteller. "I tell cinema. That has its own language. A serious audience can read cinema like a reader reads a novel," Ghose, a prominent figure in India's parallel cinema movement, reasoned.

The 114-minute film, in English, Hindi and Italian, also starring Chitrangda Singh in a major role, is expected to release in India in early 2025.

Sudeshna Banerjee

## 'THIS FILM MADE ME A BETTER PERSON'—ACTOR MARCO LEONARDI TALKS ABOUT GOUTAM GHOSE'S FILM *PARIKRAMA*



Marco Leonardi

Goutam Ghose's film *Parikrama*, an Indo-Italian production, is a visual experience in the theatre that also tugs at the heartstrings. It is a collage of moments, with a blend of narrative styles, telling a heart-touching story of a young boy named Lala, an Italian writer-filmmaker called Alessandro making a film on the Narmada *parikrama* pilgrimage, his motherless son Francesco and the emotions associated when one is displaced. The stories of the motherless and the one without the motherland seamlessly blend, giving Alessandro's perspective as a filmmaker a turning point. Ghose uses his master stroke as a director to highlight relevant issues while narrating this human story. t2 caught up with actor Marco Leonardi, who plays the role of Alessandro, at KIFF...

**How did you come on board for this film?**

First, I met Sergio Scapagnini, the writer of the book *The Story of Lala*, who is also the producer of this film. He has researched so much on India. I got to hear all the stories from him. That made me feel a kind of passion for this beautiful story he wrote on Lala. The writer mentioned

me to Goutam (Ghose) and we started to work on the story together. It was such a pleasure for me to work with him. Goutam is a great director. The movie is very important for the environmental issues in India and for the world to see too... to save the planet and do better things for the world. It is also about love and human beings. There are a lot of feelings in this movie.

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Priyanka A. Roy  
Picture: B Halder

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Shahana Goswami, along with co-stars Manoj Bajpayee and Archita Agarwal and director Kanu Behl, was in Goa recently for a screening of *Despatch* at the 55th International Film Festival of India. On the sidelines of IFFI, t2 chatted with Shahana.

**Your role in *Despatch* is brief but significant. What drew you to it?** For me, the thrill of being an actor lies in the collaborative experience. Even if a film of mine doesn't release, I remain unfazed because my experience of working with people, trying to get into the head of the director, get their vision out, bring out a part of yourself that you don't yet know... that is the exciting part. Kanu (Behl) is a very collaborative director, someone who loves his story, his actors, his characters... he wants to bring out the best in you and he trusts you to do it. He doesn't direct actors, he facilitates performances.

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**That means a lot of responsibility for the actor also, right?** Yes, of course. But that comes from

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My craft is constantly shifting and changing but there are phases that mark things very distinctly in my life. There was a phase when I moved away from India and was in Paris for four years. That allowed me to expand my soul at the cost of stepping away from work to some extent. I had another phase of growth and self-exploration which started in 2020 and is ongoing. It is constantly shaping my choices, the way I am and the way I show up to people. Which is why the greatest preparation for me as an actor is to be able to make myself emotionally and physically present in the moment. When you start doing that, you can bring a certain magic to the acting process. But it is tough because we most often end up doing the same scene over and over again.



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### THOUGH FLAWED, *DESPATCH* TELLS AN IMPORTANT STORY OF OUR TIMES



Manoj Bajpayee in *Despatch*, streaming on Zee5 from December 13

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According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists, more than 1,600 journalists have been killed since 1993. Earlier this year, UNESCO director-general Audrey Azoulay broke it down bluntly, stating that in 85 per cent of such killings, the perpetrator has gone unpunished.

"In 2022 and 2023, a journalist was killed every four days simply for doing their vital job to pursue truth. For the vast majority of these cases, no one will ever be held to account. I call upon all our Member States to do more to ensure that these crimes never go unpunished. Prosecuting and convicting the perpetrators is a major lever to prevent future attacks on journalists," were the exact words from Azoulay.

'Reporters without Borders' states that over the last decade, more than half of the slain journalists in India were covering environment-related stories, with many linked to exposing the sand mafia. The media, much maligned, is perhaps also the most hunted today.

*Despatch* has one such man as its fulcrum. Joy Bag (played by Manoj Bajpayee) is part of the old

guard of print journalism, a foot soldier working in a newsroom on the brink of digitisation. Director Kanu Behl's earlier films, *Tili* and *Agra*, have established him as a filmmaker who has succinctly explored the underbelly and told the harsh truths of the marginalised, touching upon themes like patriarchy and repressed sexuality. In *Despatch*, streaming on Zee5 from December 13, he attempts to lay bare the rot in a system that will stop at nothing, not even murder, to shush down a whistleblower.

Joy Bag is the face of Gauri Lankesh, of Daniel Pearl, of Danish Siddiqui and of countless other members of the fourth estate whose voices have been silenced. In terms of scenario and setting, he is unmistakably based on J. Dey, the intrepid crime reporter whose investigation of the oil mafia and of the Mumbai underworld led to his murder in broad daylight in 2011. Last year, the TV series *Scoop*, directed by Hansal Mehta, told that story very effectively.

*Despatch*, however, is a different beast. It is far from sensationalist. It doesn't strive to entertain. But it can really test your patience. There

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is also no attempt to whitewash its protagonist. Joy has a messy marriage (Shahana Goswami as the estranged wife makes a brief appearance), is having an affair with a subordinate (Archita Agarwal makes an impression) and his means to get to what he wants may not always be pleasant.

Battling to stay relevant in a world where click-bait journalism is just a click away, Joy stumbles onto a high-profile, high-stakes scam while pursuing another story. That opens a can of worms, and though he is told to stay away—in both genial and odious ways—he gets sucked deeper into matters so murky that he finds his life on the line.

In *Despatch*, Behl brings in the moods and moments that have become his trademark to paint a bleak if realistic picture of the world as it is today. Aided by a superlative Bajpayee, he slowly peels off the layers. As Joy discovers the macabre truth, we in the audience are exposed to the loss of humanity as it were.

Siddharth Diwan's cinematography of the dark alleys of Mumbai is perfectly juxtaposed with Joy's journey through the muddy waters of the case he is investigating. Aiding him in his quest is another fearless reporter, with Rii Sen bringing grit and earthiness to her character, named Noorie.

Led by Bajpayee, *Despatch*—named after the paper Joy works at—hits a home run with its performances and a few moments. However, predictability is its bane and Behl choosing to pepper his narrative with Joy's sexual encounters, is most often unnecessary. What is necessary, however, is that a story like this be told.

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## FILMMAKER GOUTAM GHOSE PRESENTED HIS INDO-ITALIAN PRODUCTION *PARIKRAMA* AT KIFF



Goutam Ghose speaks on *Parikrama* a day after the screening at the Kolkata International Film Festival in Nandan as producer Sergio Scapagnini and Aryan Badkul look on. Picture: B Halder

A film that is being touted as the first Indo-Italian co-production brought its Italian producer, lead actor and its Indian producer and director to the same table at Nandan last Sunday.

*Parikrama*, which has been screened at the festival the day before, uses the Narmada *parikrama* as a narrative framework to tell a story of destiny, development politics and displacement. The religious trek typically starts at the river's source in Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh,

and continues along the southern bank to Bharuch, Gujarat, where the river meets the Arabian Sea.

Introducing his directorial venture, Goutam Ghose, also the chairman of the festival in its 30th edition, expressed his happiness at being able to hold the Asia premiere of his film in his hometown.

The germ of the film was in a short novel, titled *The Story of Lala*, that his Italian friend and producer Sergio Scapagnini wrote about his encounter in Bombay with a young street vendor.

The tri-lingual film, Ghose

explained, had an Italian part added to the book's plot as he had brought in the figure of an Italian filmmaker Alessandro, who specialises in documenting environmental displacement. Alessandro, played by Marco Leonardi, wanted to make a film on the circumambulation of the mighty river, now dammed by human interference. A single father, he had to leave behind at home a school-going boy, who was recently rendered motherless.

"We had shot the Italian part in January 2020 when Covid struck. Italy was the second country to



Goutam Ghose directs a shot on the location of *Parikrama*



Chitrangda Singh and Aryan Badkul in a scene from *Parikrama*

be affected and we escaped their lockdown by just a week," Ghosh said, pointing to his Indian co-producer Sukalyan Roy and himself.

The pandemic put a spanner in the works, stalling the film for two and a half years. "That meant the teenage boys we had auditioned in 2019 for the part of Lala had all grown up. So we had to audition again in Indore," he said.

Though Aryan was low on the casting team's preference list,

Ghose picked Aryan Badkul for the role of "a little big man" thrust into experience from the age of innocence by what he calls "hamara naseeb".

"He was the shiest of the lot but I interacted at length with him, treating him as an equal, till he was comfortable. He had never acted, not even on stage. But I had found my Lala," Ghose said, smiling at the youngster with expressive eyes, seated next to him who had played a street vendor displaced by development as the dam caused village after village on the riverbanks to be flooded.

"The river has suffered a lot as has the boy. It is a challenge for the pilgrims as they can't walk along the riverbank anymore," said Ghose adding that he used the Italian subplot to create a metaphor. Alessandro's son is motherless just as Lala has lost his motherland. "It is a cinematic journey in cinematic time and space where one's past can easily enter the present experience. Cinema can manipulate time," Ghose pointed out, explaining why he does not want to be a storyteller. "I tell cinema. That has its own language. A serious audience can read cinema like a reader reads a novel," Ghose, a prominent figure in India's parallel cinema movement, reasoned.

The 114-minute film, in English, Hindi and Italian, also starring Chitrangda Singh in a major role, is expected to release in India in early 2025.

Sudeshna Banerjee

## 'THIS FILM MADE ME A BETTER PERSON'—ACTOR MARCO LEONARDI TALKS ABOUT GOUTAM GHOSE'S FILM *PARIKRAMA*



Marco Leonardi

Goutam Ghose's film *Parikrama*, an Indo-Italian production, is a visual experience in the theatre that also tugs at the heartstrings. It is a collage of moments, with a blend of narrative styles, telling a heart-touching story of a young boy named Lala, an Italian writer-filmmaker called Alessandro making a film on the Narmada *parikrama* pilgrimage, his motherless son Francesco and the emotions associated when one is displaced. The stories of the motherless and the one without the motherland seamlessly blend, giving Alessandro's perspective as a filmmaker a turning point. Ghose uses his master stroke as a director to highlight relevant issues while narrating this human story. t2 caught up with actor Marco Leonardi, who plays the role of Alessandro, at KIFF...

**How did you come on board for this film?**

First, I met Sergio Scapagnini, the writer of the book *The Story of Lala*, who is also the producer of this film. He has researched so much on India. I got to hear all the stories from him. That made me feel a kind of passion for this beautiful story he wrote on Lala. The writer mentioned

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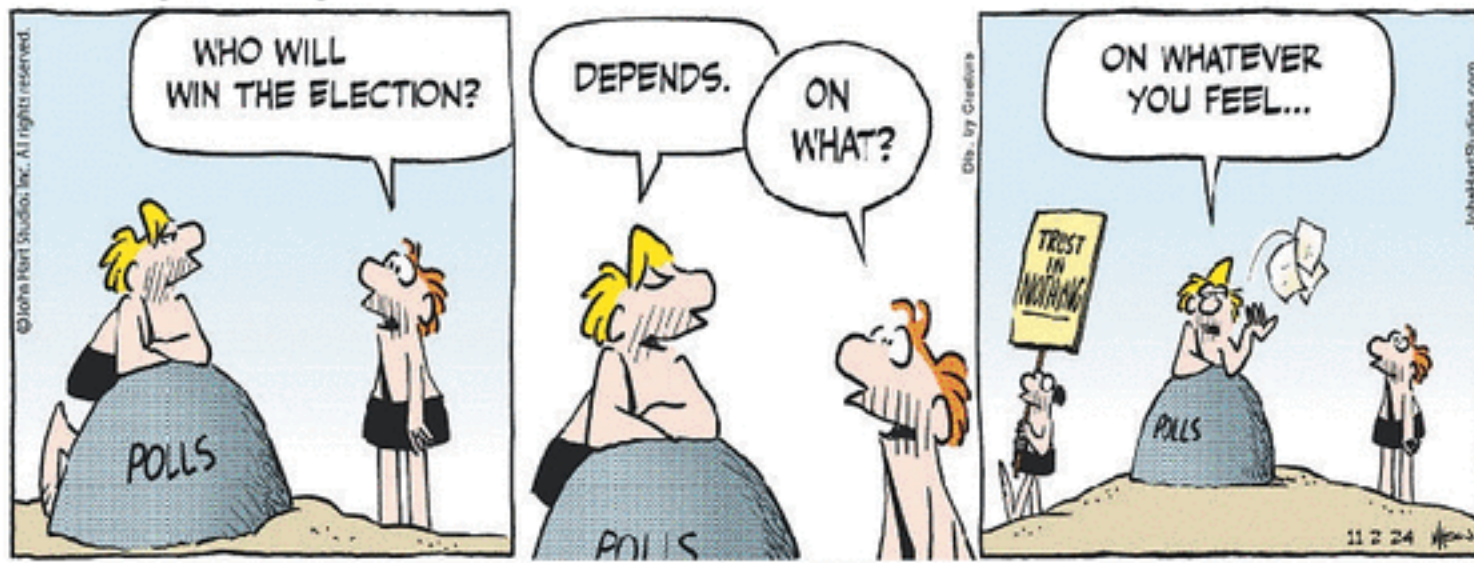
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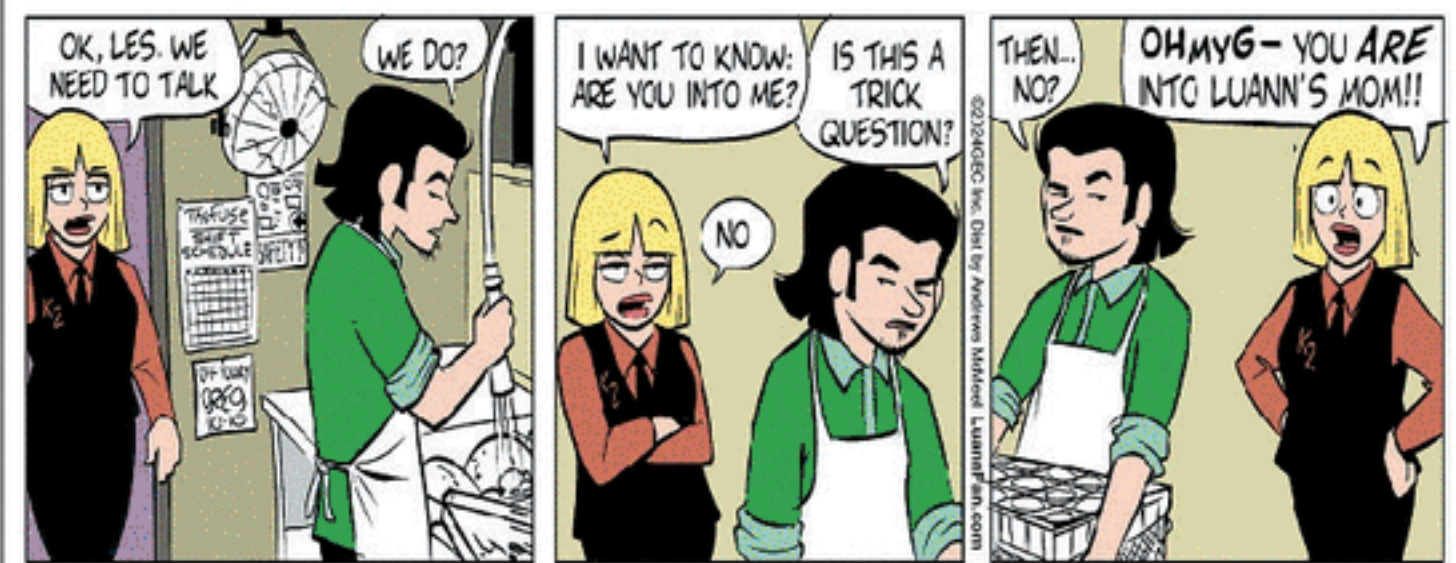
Priyanka Roy



## B.C. by Johny Hart



## Luann by Greg Evans



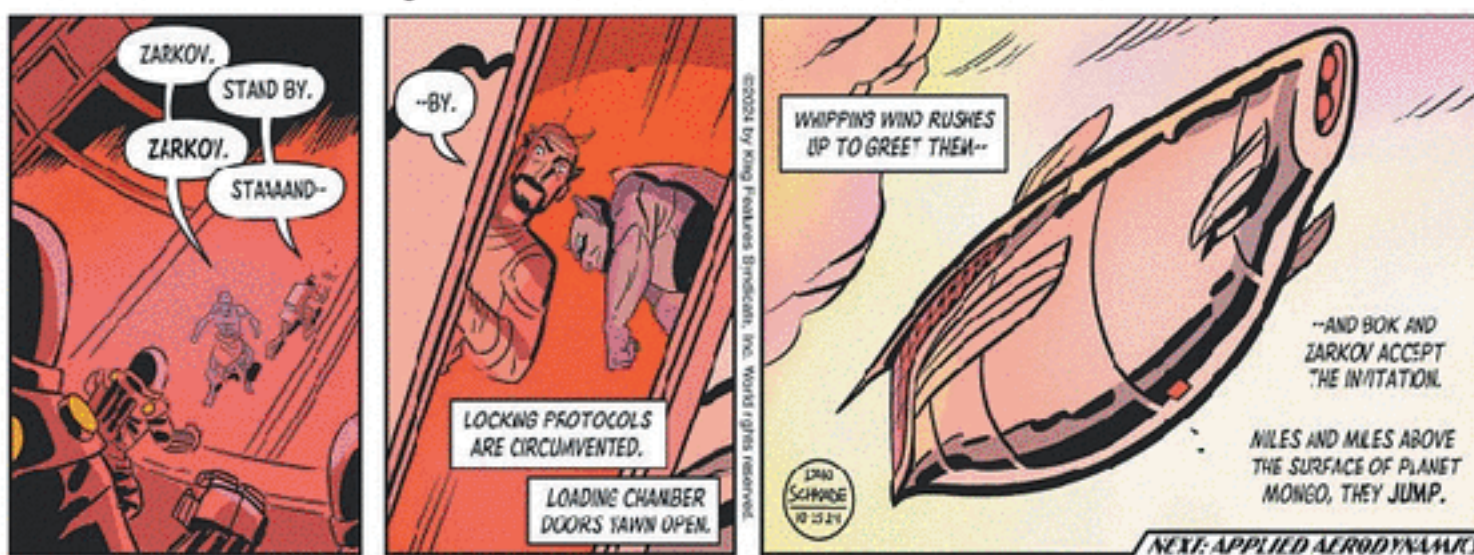
## Peanuts by Charles Schulz



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



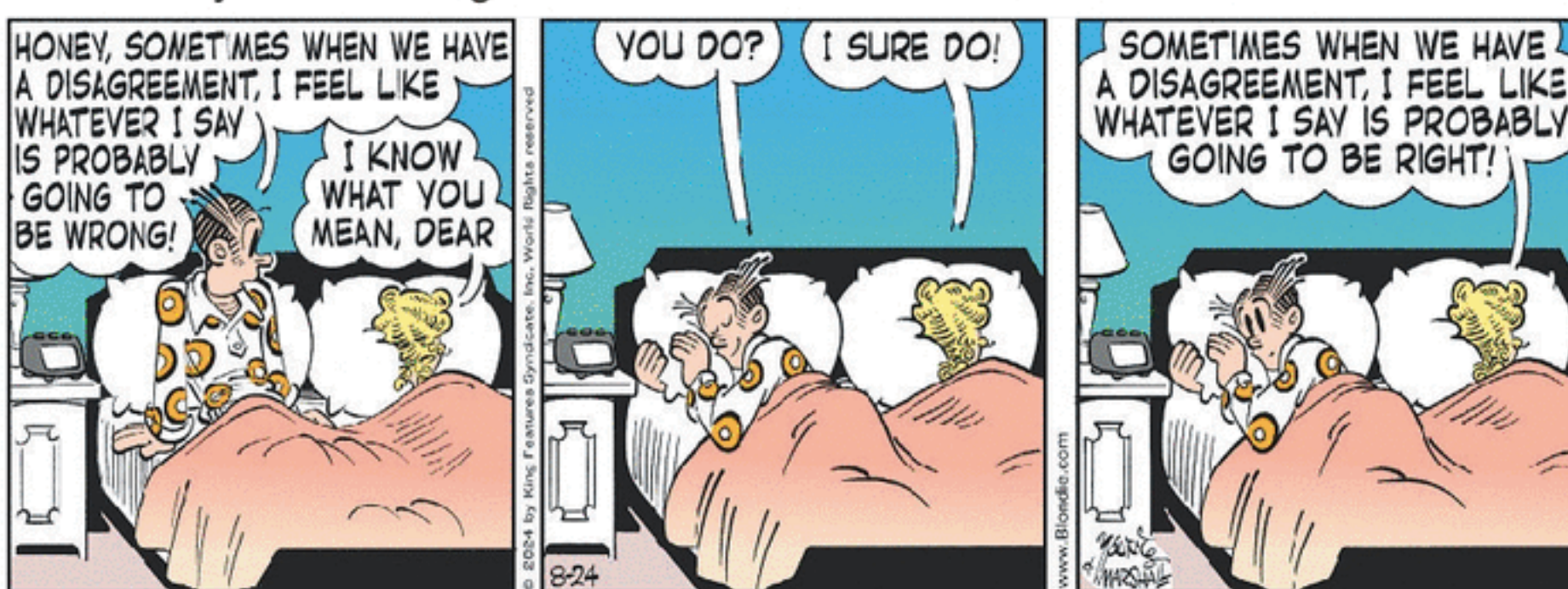
## Flash Gordon by Dan Schkade



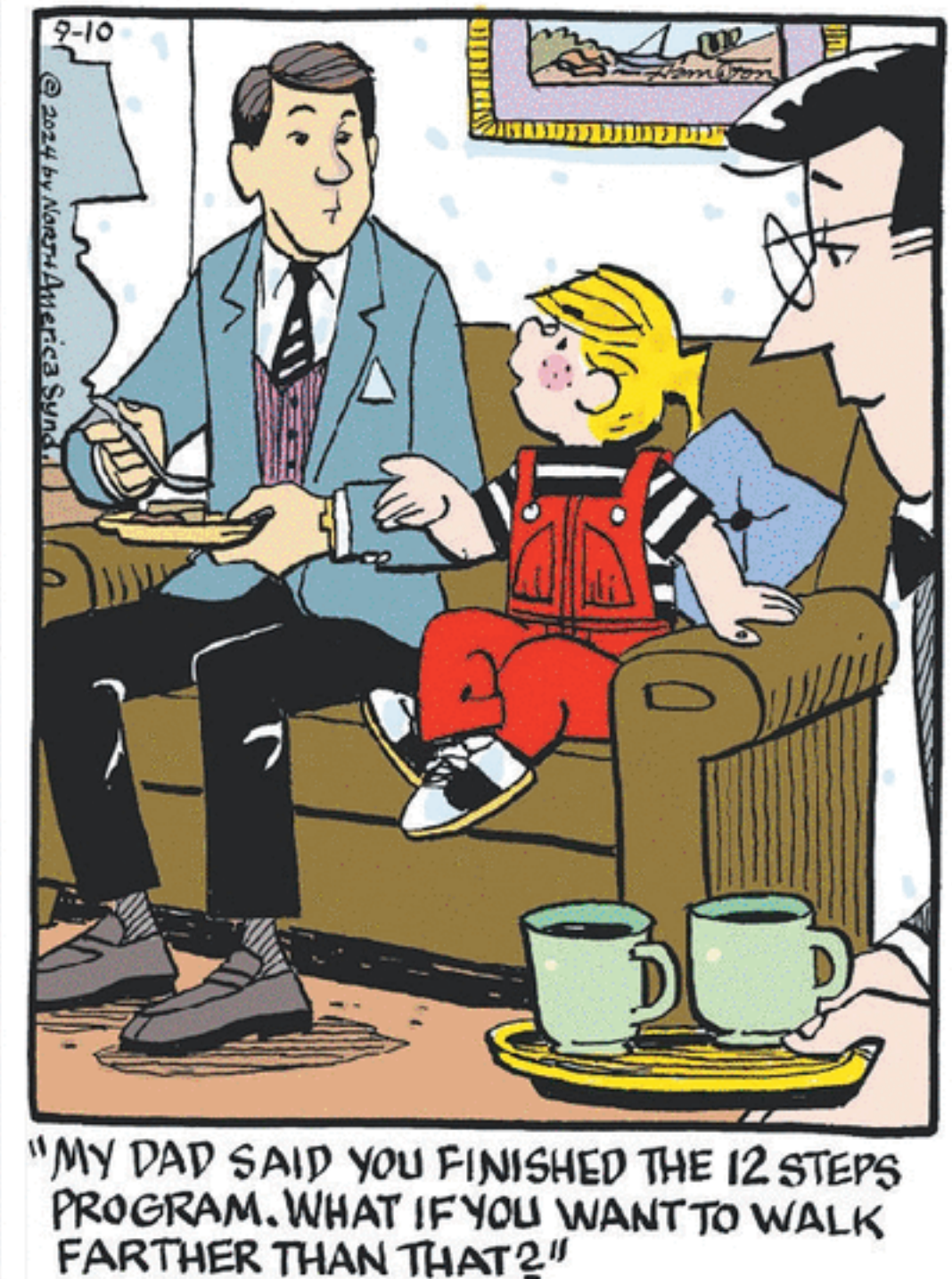
## Hagar the Horrible by Chris Browne



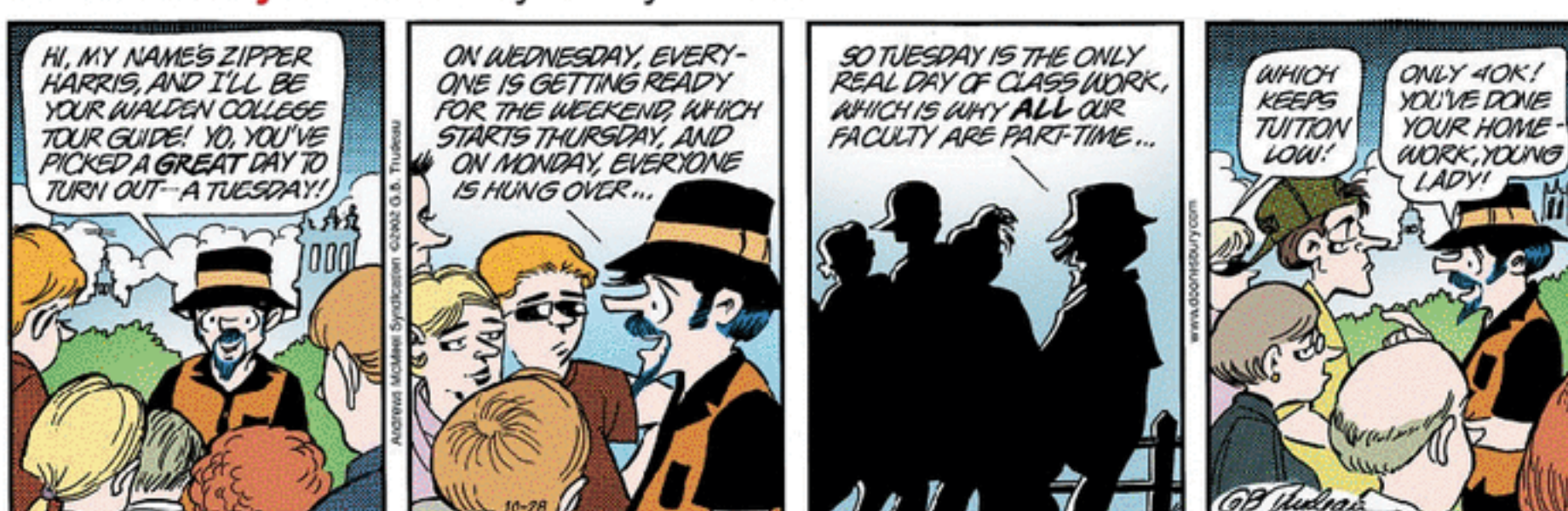
## Blondie by Dean Young



## Dennis the Menace



## Doonesbury Classics by Garry Trudeau





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## ACROSS

**UP**

- 1 Plato's ideas newly converted Republican put in book (8,4)
- 9 This person goes to spread out (9)
- 10 Fight supporter with tip of lance (5)
- 11 Madagascan with thin fingers peeling two layers (3-3)
- 12 Poor Elon Musk, endlessly receiving international wall-to-wall coverage? (8)
- 13 Backing champion at Fakenham in possession of fine coat (6)
- 15 A way to make eggs get to Lancaster ASAP? (8)
- 18 How to avoid a bouncer that comes from Huey or Dewey? (4,4)
- 19 Year in Madrid art museum? Be my guest (4,2)
- 21 Terrible backlog, with backside of employee

**DOWN**

- 23 Field ball (6)
- 26 One night in Paris for Greenlander, perhaps (5)
- 27 Rugby team that's needed to score 147? (3,6)
- 28 Wandering eyes pry and ogle captivating Southern exotic dancer (5,4,3)
- 1 City address to motivate players? (3,4)
- 2 Pleat ecru cheongsam skirts (5)
- 3 Girl who might milk her job for all it's worth? (9)
- 4 Japanese wine sparkles occasionally (4)
- 5 Pretentious bloke beating drum in Strand (4,4)
- 6 Female fortune-teller is upset over Times line (5)
- 7 Mariner caught sailor wearing navigational aid, we hear (5,3)
- 8 Look good with weapon (6)

### Yesterday's solution

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- 16 Unusually prosaic about ordinary large rock in Athens (9)
- 17 Personal targets which no-one likes to admit? (3,5)
- 18 Rubbish teacher (and his qualification) sent up (6)
- 20 Manage piece of poetry in ode, oddly (7)
- 22 Tiddles in pool? (5)
- 24 Outperform, say, forty (5)
- 25 Smear Britpop band (4)

By arrangement with The Daily Telegraph

## 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.

LERED

○			○	
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FISFN

[illegible]

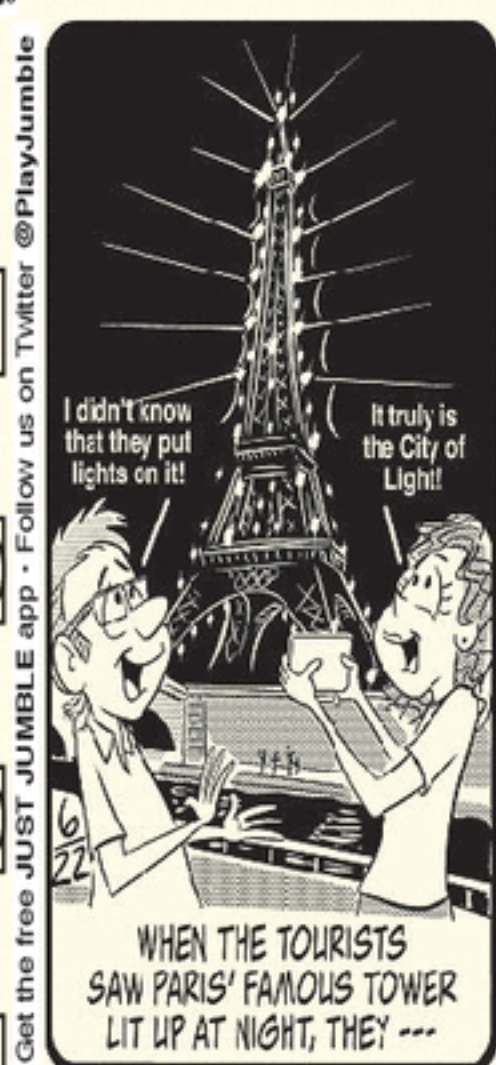
GULRAF

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ATOTOT

[illegible]

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SWEET HENCE ROTARY PIRACY  
 Answer: He was caught trying to break out of prison  
 because he wasn't able to – ESCAPE NOTICE

**ACROSS**

1 Part of the foot (3)	17 South American people (4)	3 Scurry (7)
3 Indicator of a maiden name (3)	19 Middle-Eastern citizen (7)	4 Scrape by (3,3,1,6)
5 Harsh noise (5)	20 Worked for a secret service (5)	5 Anniversary (8)
8 Pilsner, e.g. (5)	21 Run off (5)	6 Dramatic player (5)
9 Unpredictable (7)	22 Wildebeest (3)	7 Reference work (13)
10 Scottish vale (4)	23 Indian state (3)	12 Beautiful young cupbearer (8)
11 Deliriously happy (8)	<b>DOWN</b>	14 Sounding like a pig (7)
13 Definitely lifeless (2,4,2,1,4)	1 Weigh rare pelt (anag) (9,4)	16 Overs (anag) (5)
15 Temper tantrum (5,3)	2 Brainbox (7)	18 Hairy chap in Genesis? (4)

### Yesterday's solution

Across: 1 For; 3 Wed; 5 Roles; 8 Backs; 9 Suppose; 10 Envy; 11 Greatest;  
13 Afraid; 14 Helper; 17 Altitude; 19 Urge; 22 Immense; 23 Upset; 24 Goose;  
25 Try; 26 Sin.

Down: 1 Fable; 2 Recover; 3 Wise; 4 Desert; 5 Replaces; 6 Loose; 7 Shelter;  
12 Distance; 13 Amazing; 15 Phrases; 16 Advent; 18 Tempo; 20 Eaten;  
21 Burv.

By arrangement with The Daily Telegraph



## WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE READ THIS WEEK?

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## 'CELEBRATING MS ANANDA' WAS AS MUCH AN ODE TO SARIS AS IT WAS ABOUT GRATITUDE AND GIVING BACK. AN ALBUM FROM THE EVENING

Calcutta winters have a strange sense of comfort. Synonymous with homecoming, it has the essence of an embrace and a certain gratitude. The cosy evening at Ananda (Queens Mansion) on 13 Russel Street, last week (December 4), mirrored this exact mood. The iconic design den that turned 50 this year, has remained contemporary at the core, blending modern and heritage,

working with weavers from Benaras, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and more, that have rendered their 'signature printed' saris, besides their gorgeous silks and comfortable cotton drapes, among others, a timeless appeal. The Ananda Doll is synonymous with the brand as much as their 'kalkas, polka dots, scrolls'.

From Suchitra Sen and Supriya Devi to Rekha, Hema Malini and Madhuri Dixit,

all these leading ladies have draped an Ananda design at some point in their lives. As have Amitabh Bachchan and Uttam Kumar. Or, in more recent times, Shahid Kapoor. In classy-cool 'hand-embroidered kurtas and dhakka-par dhutis'. The appeal cuts across generations, with Ananda reinventing itself to become more of an emotion.

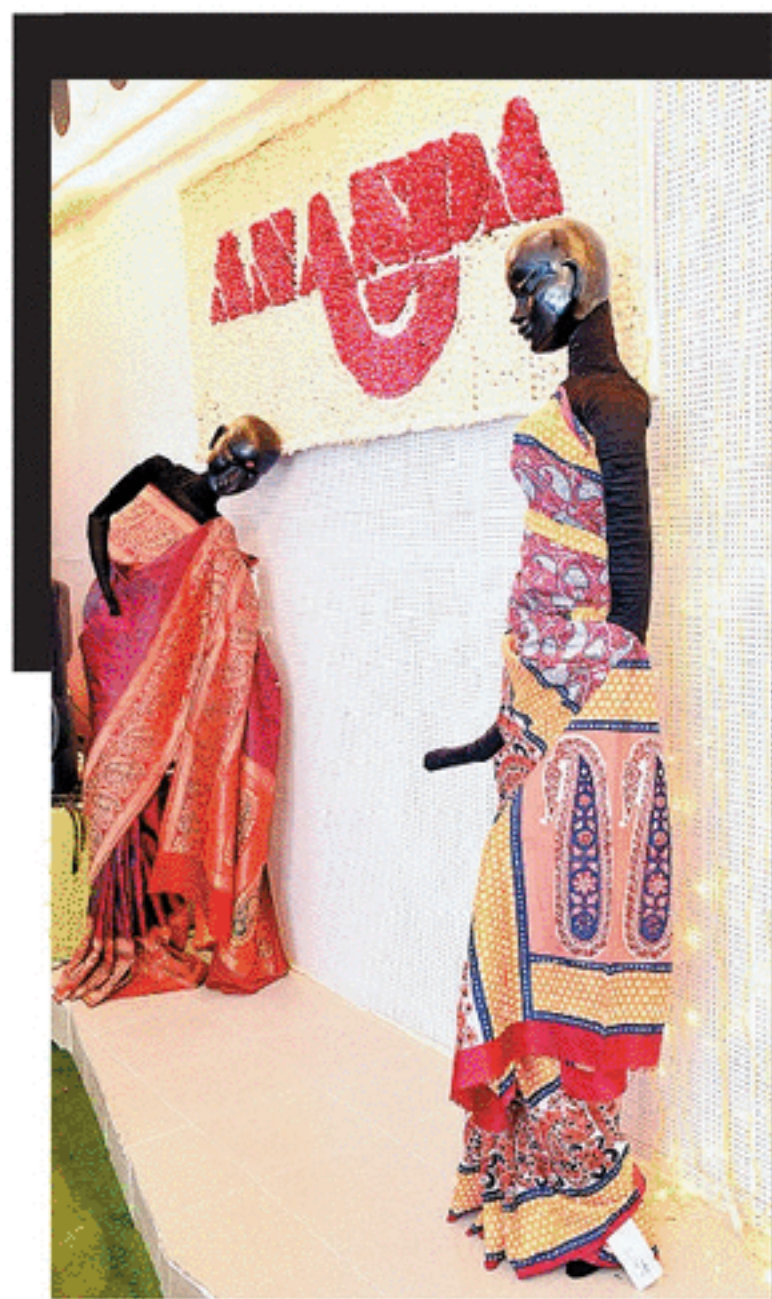
Ananda, to whom Gosto Kumar lent his

aesthetics in the initial years, celebrated their golden jubilee at The Oberoi Grand on August 10 with a glittering fashion show. And, Ms Ananda was essentially an extension of their remembrance of the 50-year journey, "a celebration of beautiful people from different walks of life who agreed to be the face of our brand on social media and win hearts".

An album from the evening.



Participants of Ms Ananda, all ardent fans of the brand, clicked one for memories



A touch of soothing florals for the special evening

Debolina Banerjee from Siliguri came with sister Indrani Sengupta, who stays in Jamshedpur. "Each sari for me is a gem to treasure. I am particular about my saris. I come to Calcutta to buy saris from Ananda. Saris mean emotions," smiled the entrepreneur.



The celebrations began with Shrestha Chakraborty's rendition of *Ananda dhara*. The Class VI student of The BSS School, who learns music and is a Shreya Ghoshal and Arijit Singh fan, got a round of applause

Nilanjana Dasgupta, a businesswoman from Triangular Park, has been an Ananda patron for years. She came in a sari that she had bought 10 years ago, one with "the regal charm of a Benarasi and also the typical Ananda prints". "I prefer only wearing Ananda for the colours, quality and prints," she said.



collection. "They are innovative, sophisticated and easy to drape," said the Lake Town resident.

Amrita Ganguly looked radiant in her "handwoven" Ananda Benarasi. "This is a recent buy. I bought it last year. It's so colourful and suits my personality and the base colour of navy blue is one of my favourites. It's lightweight as well and the artisans have done a remarkable job of weaving the sari. It's a remarkable piece of art," said Amrita, a doctor. She said she was an Ananda fan with more than 50 saris in her

Arundhati Sarkar, from Calcutta, who now lives in Michigan, "only" wears saris from Ananda. "I got this one from Ananda last year. I love the colour combination... something new. Saris are very precious to me. We do not wear saris every day and it's for special occasions only, but I cherish those (moments). Whenever I am wearing it, everyone is like 'wow!'" she said.



### THE 'FACES' OF MS ANANDA CONTEST...

- Debolina Banerjee (Early-bird prize winner)
- Mitali Adhikari (Behrampur)
- Swastika Bose
- Anuradha Chatterjee
- Nilanjana Dasgupta (Cherished Customer)
- Amrita Ganguly
- Nandini Ghosh
- Aparajita Mukherjee
- Diptakshi Pal
- Moushumi Ray
- Mitali Ray and Anwesha Ray
- Arundhati Sarkar
- Kalyani Talukder (Bangalore)

### SPECIAL MENTIONS

- Runa Ghosh Auddy
- Nandini Dutta
- Sanchita Chatterjee
- Atashi Banerjee



Mitali Ray passed on her love for saris and Ananda to daughter Anwesha Ray. "I have been buying Ananda for the last 20 years. I love their blocks on silk," said senior Ray, a former schoolteacher. Anwesha loves her chiffons and georgettes. "They are very easy to drape," she smiled.

Nandini Dutta was on the list of 'special mentions'. "I have been buying since 1986 and 90 per cent of my saris are from Ananda. I love their colours and motifs and their printed pure silks are my favourites," said Dutta, a sari lover.



Anuradha Chatterjee, from Salt Lake, who runs a school called Pearls of God (Hindmotor), said she loved Ananda's colour

combinations and quality. She chose a pink-and-yellow drape for the special evening. "I bought this just before the Pujas," she smiled.

Saionee Chakraborty  
Pictures: Rashbehari Das

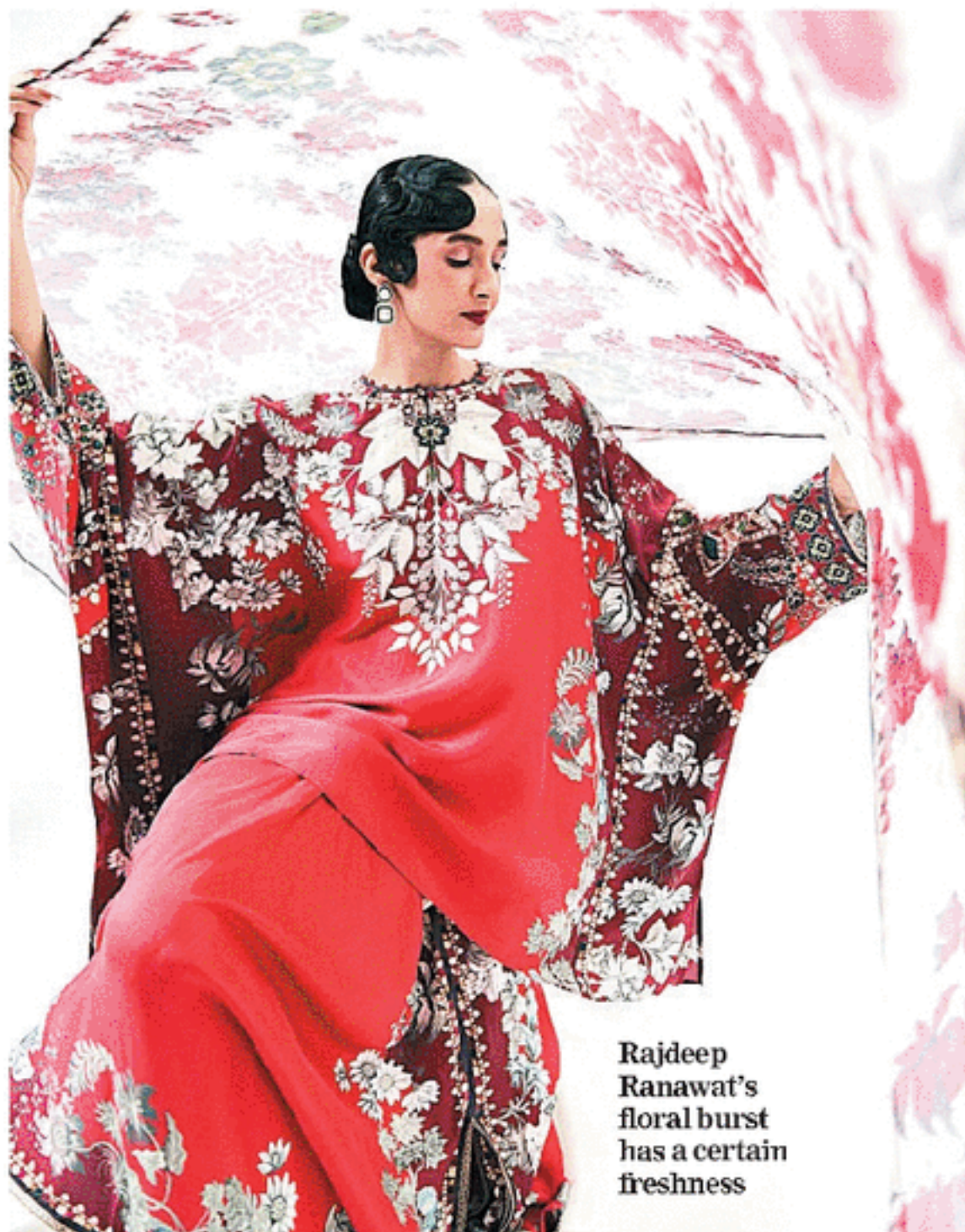


Aparajita Mukherjee, a Prince Anwar Shah Road resident, looked lovely in her black-and-white Ananda sari. "I think I bought this three-four years back. I love Ananda prints. This is my signature. The quality of their silks is very good. I have been buying from Ananda for the last 20 years," smiled the amateur photographer and writer.



# WHATSUP

## WINTER WOW @85 LANSDOWNE



Rajdeep  
Ranawat's  
floral burst  
has a certain  
freshness

**What:** Getaway Glam @85  
Lansdowne

**Where:** 85B, Sarat Bose Road

**When:** December 12 and 13, 11am-7.30pm

**Expect:** Winter-gorgeous ensembles, just right for the season of wedding, parties and togetherness. The participating labels include Amrich, Ashutosh Joshi, Eeksha, SVA, Rajdeep Ranawat, Peachoo, and more.

**Organiser speak:** "Winter is the time to look fabulous. We are excited to showcase a curated glamorous season of warmth, elegance and boldness. Effortlessly chic. Sprinkle of sequins. Vibrant and modern. Ah, and make sure to wear your attitude on your sleeves," says Shalini Nopany, director, 85 Lansdowne.



This vibrant look from Eeksha is great for Christmas eve



Peachoo's muted glam is sophisticated chic



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**THAT PLACE'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY BASH, WITH t2, WAS A NIGHT OF ENTERTAINMENT. GLIMPSES...**

It's been a year since That Place on Shakespeare Sarani had added fun to the party experience. The sports lounge with bowling as one of the main attractions turned one recently with guest DJ Akbar Sami from Mumbai on console duty. The DJ churned out remixes and latest Bolly hits that kept the dance floor busy.



1 The mixologists at That Place showed off flambe skills at the bar.

"The anniversary celebration was truly magical — a celebration of music, memories, and our incredible journey together! DJ Akbar Sami had set the stage on fire. The energy from our guests was unmatched, and we couldn't have asked for a better way to celebrate our first anniversary. Here's to the unforgettable moments we shared and to the even bigger, bolder adventures that lie ahead. Thank you everyone who made this milestone celebration so special — you are the heartbeat of That Place," said Suman Chakraborty, culinary director and general manager, That Place Bowl & Bar.



The birthday cake!



(L-R) Rahul Khanna, Hardeep Singh and Gunjan Modi, owners, That Place Bowl & Bar.



We spotted fashion designer Vasavi Daga Shah in the bowling alley with her husband Kaushal Shah. "This is the perfect place to get a break from the same party places. That Place combines games and a super chill ambience, making every visit fun and interesting," said Vasavi.



"We absolutely love the vibe at That Place. We are regulars here since day one and have always had a great time with our friends and family. It's amazing to see how this place has become one of the favourite spots for everyone in the city," said Deepika Modi and Sumedha Khemani, who twinned in blue and denims.



Priyanka Chopra and Alka Mehdiratta had their OOTN on point. "One year already? Feels like That Place has been our hangout spot forever! From bowling strikes to sipping on those tasty cocktails, this place just gets what chilling in style means. The vibe, the music, the food — it's all on point. Cheers to an amazing one year," said the duo.



"It's amazing to see how this spot has become the favourite place to hang out in just a year. The funky design, cool vibes, and the way they nail everything from games to grub. Cheers to the first anniversary, and here's to many more nights of fun!" said Parul Seghal Gulati.



A regular at That Place, Aditya Agarwal was joined by his wife Richa Baid Agarwal.



We spotted former cricketer Ashok Dinda with wife Sreyasi Rudra Dinda.

**Pramita Ghosh**

Pictures: Rashbehari Das

**WHAT'S UP****TAJ BENGAL RINGS IN THE YULETIDE SPIRIT WITH FULL FERVOUR**

Come December and the Yuletide vibe is palpable in the city. With cheery Christmas feels all around us, Taj Bengal, the property that turned 35 this year, also did its part in ringing in the festive season with special decor, a photo corner, as well as a range of special baked goodies. Snapshots...



1 The lobby is adorned with a mighty Christmas tree that isn't short of any ornamentation and is surrounded by gift boxes as well.

The Gingerbread House installation exemplifies the culinary mastery of the team at Taj Bengal and is a major photo attraction for guests.



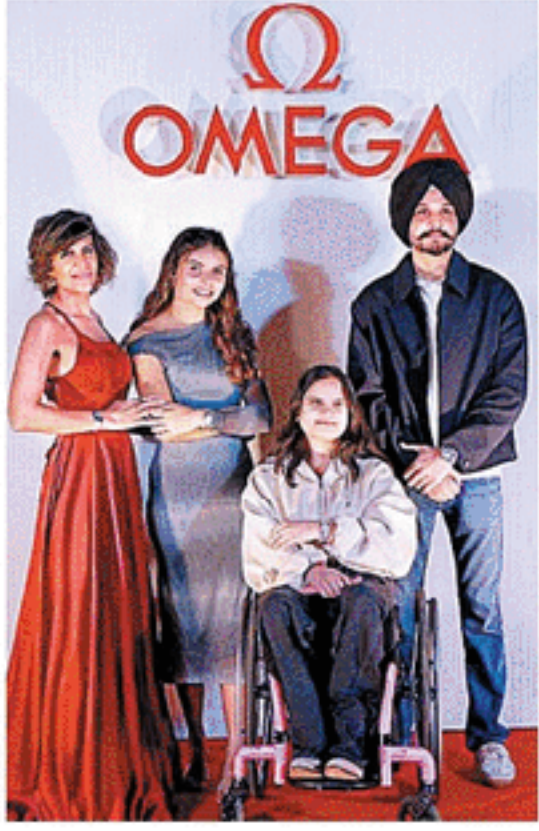
2 From fruit cake to almond vanilla cakes, shortbread cookies and more, a wide range of Xmas special baked goods are available for sale and make for great gifting options.

Pictures:  
Taj Bengal



## WHATSUP

## MOMENTS FROM THE THIRD EDITION OF OMEGA TROPHY GOLF TOURNAMENT



(L-R) Mandira Bedi, Simran Sharma, Avani Lekhara and Sarabjot Singh

**S**wiss watchmaker OMEGA celebrated excellence in sports by hosting the third edition of the OMEGA Trophy Golf Tournament at DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurugram on November 22. Bringing together seasoned golfers and enthusiasts, the occasion was a

perfect opportunity to enjoy some quality time on the course while showcasing OMEGA's strength in precision and performance.

Joining the event, and representing India's inspiring achievements on the global sporting stage, was Avani Lekhara, a double gold medalist in the 10m rifle event at both the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, as well as Simran Sharma, a bronze medalist in the women's Paralympic 200m T12 event. Olympic bronze medalist Sarabjot Singh, who made his debut in shooting at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, also joined in the celebration.

The charismatic Mandira Bedi emceed the festivities. As part of the pre-event activities, attendees were treated to a curated Golf Clinic designed to engage both amateurs and experts in an immersive golf experience. As the day transitioned into an elegant evening gala, guests enjoyed a networking dinner amidst the scenic club setting. Esteemed personalities, including former cricketers Murali Kartik, and music man Nikhil Chopra, joined in the celebration, adding to the grandeur of the occasion.



Omega Trophy 2024 winners with Loic Voumard, head of sports marketing, Omega; Sumit K Sharma, brand head OMEGA India; and Mandira Bedi



A golfer in action on the course

Pictures courtesy: OMEGA

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## প্রকাশিত

‘দাদাজি’র জীবনের অজানা গল্প  
বললেন নাতি **রণবীর কপূর**

মায়ের সঙ্গে **নগ্ন হয়ে স্নান!** রাজ পেলেন  
জীবন ও সিনেমার শিক্ষা

**নার্গিসকে ব্যবহার করেছেন** নিজের  
প্রযোজনা সংস্থার উন্নতির জন্য?

পিতা **পৃথ্বীরাজের সঙ্গে** প্রবল বিরোধ...  
ছাপ পড়ল সিনেমায়

পরিবারের মধ্যে থেকেও একা? কেমন  
ছিল **কপূর বাড়ি?**

**বিশ্বজিৎ এবং বৈজয়ন্তীমালার**  
স্মৃতিচারণে উঠে এল অন্য রাজ কপূরের গল্প

সাক্ষাৎ

■ **টোটা রায়চৌধুরী**

■ **সুজিত সরকার** ■ **পায়েল কপাড়িয়া**

‘লার্জার দ্যান লাইফ’ জীবন  
বাঁচতে পছন্দ করতেন তিনি।

চাইতেন শত সমস্যাতেও  
কপূর পরিবার যেন ভেঙে না

যায়। বিতর্কে বিদ্ধ হয়েছেন।  
কিন্তু সেসবের মধ্যে দিয়েও

নিজের ইমেজ তৈরি  
করেছেন **রাজ কপূর!**

জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে ফিরে  
দেখা হল তাঁর জীবন,

প্রেম, স্টারডম...

জন্মশতবর্ষ

স্বর্ণযুগের প্রায় সিংহভাগ বাংলা গানের গীতিকার  
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১২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪

**আনন্দলোক**

**শতবর্ষে রাজ কপূর**

কমলজিতের ‘দাদাজি’, মুক্তিযুদ্ধের দাদা রণবীর কপূর  
সেই ছিল রাজ কপূর, তারপরে বৈজয়ন্তীমালার  
অদ্বৈত ও ঐতিহ্যবাহিনীর নৃসিংহের  
কবিতার জীবন অল্প ১২ ডিসেম্বর জন্মের দিনে  
তার জীবন সিনেমা-এরই শোভাযাত্রা হয়েছিল, গল্পে শ্রদ্ধা

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