

XXCE

Thursday  
13 March 2025

The Telegraph

SRIJIT MUKHERJI &  
KOUSHANI MUKHERJEE

PICTURE: B HALDER

# TWO FOR JOY

P6

PAOLI  
DAM

PICTURE: PABITRA DAS

P6

## WIDE OPEN SPACES



# HOLIVIBES

P11,14-15



- B'DAY, WATCHIT, ON THE ANVIL 2 ● TECH, WHATSUP 4,5
- PARTY, VOICES THAT MATTER 7,8,9,10



NIMRAT KAUR, WILLIAM H. MACY, EMILE HIRSCH



This year, you need to be careful with money and avoid high-risk investments and overspending. You may be experiencing a big upswing in your positive energy by interacting with others on a spiritual path. During the year someone from your past might come back into your life. Do not be judgemental when it comes to taking important decisions.

— Nita Chhotalal

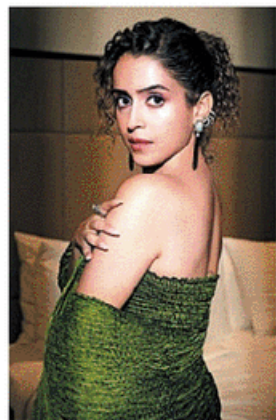
ALSO: ADAM CLAYTON

Instagram



## ETHNIC ELEGANCE:

Nothing like white kurtas and some khussas/kohlapuris. Uploaded by @mahirakhan (Mahira Khan)



## IN THE MOOD FOR GREEN:

Serving matcha energy. Uploaded by @sanyamalhotra\_ (Sanya Malhotra)

## TODAY'S TIPS by Nita Chhotalal



## ARIES

**DO** be receptive to the messages your spirit guides are trying to send  
**DON'T** get dragged into other people's problems  
**EXPECT** to stay calm and centred



## TAURUS

**DO** handle every change with confidence and you will see positive results  
**DON'T** be egoistic  
**EXPECT** multiple opportunities to come up to prove the professional prowess



## GEMINI

**DO** come up with innovative ideas at meetings  
**DON'T** have a laid-back attitude  
**EXPECT** to put in additional effort to obtain the best results in your career



## CANCER

**DO** settle financial issues without delay  
**DON'T** trust people blindly  
**EXPECT** to get money from previous investments



## LEO

**DO** spend more time with your partner today  
**DON'T** hesitate to express your feelings  
**EXPECT** to have a sit-down session with your partner and politely discuss what is bothering you



## VIRGO

**DO** give opinions only when asked  
**DON'T** get into arguments  
**EXPECT** to avoid controversies at office



## LIBRA

**DO** ensure that you maintain a good rapport with your co-workers  
**DON'T** interfere in others' work  
**EXPECT** to stay away from unwanted arguments at the workplace



## SCORPIO

**DO** keep office life straight and simple  
**DON'T** be egoistic  
**EXPECT** to have minor issues with authorities that need immediate solutions



## SAGITTARIUS

**DO** avoid digging up the past  
**DON'T** allow others to control you  
**EXPECT** to resolve confusion and move on with dignity



## CAPRICORN

**DO** ensure that you finish the assigned tasks on time  
**DON'T** be impulsive  
**EXPECT** to stay away from office politics and ego clashes



## AQUARIUS

**DO** focus more on productivity  
**DON'T** be lazy  
**EXPECT** to take on extra responsibilities for future growth



## PISCES

**DO** handle all financial issues effectively  
**DON'T** fail to clear all dues today  
**EXPECT** some old investments to bring in good returns

Nita Chhotalal is on



@Divine Grace - Nita Chhotalal



@mysticalguidancebynita

## WATCHIT!



Targeted for death by a vicious Mexican druglord (Kate del Castillo) and her seemingly unstoppable son, Miami police department cop Mike Lowrey (Will Smith) teams up with his old partner Marcus Burnett (Martin Lawrence) for one last time on an epic hunt to bring them down.

Bad Boys for Life; &amp;flix, 6.35pm

## ENGLISH

## MOVIES OF THE DAY

White House Down: Sony Pix, 2.25pm  
 No Good Deed: &Prime HD, 2.25pm  
 Ghostbusters: &flix, 2.40pm  
 The Thirteenth Floor: &Prime HD, 3.40pm  
 It Chapter Two: Sony Pix, 4.40pm  
 Blumhouse's Fantasy Island: &Prime HD, 5.15pm  
 Bad Boys for Life: &flix, 6.35pm  
 Vacancy 2, The First Cut: &Prime HD, 7pm  
 65: Sony Pix, 7.25pm  
 Wonder Woman: Sony Pix, 9pm  
 Madame Web: &Prime HD, 9pm  
 Passengers: &Prime HD, 10.50pm  
 Starship Troopers 3, Marauder: &flix, 10.50pm  
 Spider-Man, Far From Home: Sony Pix, 11.30pm

## SHOWSTOPPERS

Succession: Colors Infinity, 6pm  
 The Goldbergs: Zee Cafe, 6pm

The White Lotus: Colors Infinity, 7pm  
 People Just Do Nothing: Comedy Central, 7pm  
 Pinocchio: Zee Cafe, 7pm  
 Game of Thrones: Colors Infinity, 8pm  
 Celebrity Wheel of Fortune: Zee Cafe, 8pm  
 The Sopranos: Colors Infinity, 9pm  
 Lucky Hank: Comedy Central, 9pm  
 Unforgettable: Zee Cafe, 9pm  
 True Detective: Colors Infinity, 10pm  
 S.W.A.T.: Zee Cafe, 10pm  
 House of Cards: Zee Cafe, 11pm

## HINDI

## SHOWSTOPPERS

Dil Ko Tumse Pyaar Hua: STAR Plus, 6pm  
 Suman Indori: Colors, 6.30pm  
 Pocket Mein Aasmaan: STAR Plus, 6.30pm  
 Megha Barsenge: Colors, 7pm  
 Iss Ishq Ka... Rabb Rakha: STAR Plus, 7pm  
 Bas Itna Sa Khwab Hai: Zee TV, 7pm

Maati Se Bandhi Dor: STAR Plus, 7.30pm  
 Kaise Mujhe Tum Mil Gaye: Zee TV, 7.30pm  
 Bhagya Lakshmi: Zee TV, 8pm  
 Ram Bhavan: Colors, 8.30pm  
 Advocate Anjali Awasthi: STAR Plus, 8.30pm

## BENGALI

## MOVIES OF THE DAY

Yuddha: Colors Bangla Cinema, 1pm  
 Kelor Kirti: Jalsha Movies, 1.30pm  
 Baro Bou: Colors Bangla, 2pm  
 Sathihara: Zee Bangla Cinema, 2.30pm  
 Goonda: Aakash Aath, 3.05pm  
 Khoka 420: Colors Bangla Cinema, 4pm  
 Loveria: Jalsha Movies, 4.30pm  
 Kamalar Banabas: Zee Bangla Cinema, 5.30pm  
 Borbaad: Jalsha Movies, 7.30pm  
 Sneher Protidan: Colors Bangla Cinema, 7.30pm  
 Bandie: Zee Bangla Cinema, 10pm  
 Golondaa: Jalsha Movies, 10.15pm  
 Love Marriage: Colors Bangla Cinema, 10.30pm

## SPORT

BWF, Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships - live: STAR Sports 2 & 2 HD, 3.30pm  
 Tata Women's Premier League, Mumbai Indians vs Gujarat Giants - live: STAR Sports 1 & 1 HD, 7.20pm  
 UEFA Europa League, Lazio vs Viktoria Plzen - live: Sony TEN 1 & 1 HD, 11.15pm  
 UEFA Europa League, Athletic Club vs Roma - live: Sony TEN 5 & 5 HD, 11.15pm  
 UEFA Europa League, Eintracht Frankfurt vs Ajax - live: Sony TEN 2, 11.15pm  
 UEFA Europa League, Tottenham Hotspur vs AZ Alkmaar - live: Sony TEN 1 & 1 HD, 1.15am  
 UEFA Europa League, Manchester United vs Real Sociedad - live: Sony TEN 2, 1.15am

## COMING UP



What: Holi Hungama 6.0 in association with t2  
 Where: The poolside lawn at Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri  
 When: March 14  
 Time: Noon to 5.30pm  
 Expect: Get ready for a huge Holi celebration, featuring electrifying music, high-energy entertainment and a lively festive atmosphere. With a lavish spread of festive delicacies, pulsating beats from top DJs, and an unforgettable poolside party, this celebration is designed to keep the Holi spirit alive in full swing. There will be a Holi-themed buffet at Siliguri Kitchen, live veg and non-veg counters, DJ performances, access to the pool, one complimentary drink from a selection of premium brands and Holi-themed stalls.  
 Organiser speak: "We are

thrilled to bring back Holi Hungama 6.0 in association with t2 at Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri, marking six incredible years of this grand celebration! This year promises to be even bigger and better, featuring electrifying DJ performances, a lavish Holi-themed buffet, and an unforgettable poolside party. With Bollywood and techno DJ, live food counters, and vibrant festive decor, it's the ultimate Holi experience for families, couples, and friends," said Sanjeev Kumar, manager, Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri.  
 Pocket pinch: ₹2000-plus per person and ₹999-plus for kids.

Picture courtesy Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri



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# Rang मस्ती

## 2025

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Usually, when you think of light laptops, the first thing that comes to mind is a relatively heavy, thick plastic-bodied laptop with a dim screen and it probably makes a number of sacrifices. It may have a CPU architecture that might have launched two-three years ago.

Asus has been making the right moves when it comes to light laptops, which are perfect for most users. We tried the Vivobook S14 with Intel Core Ultra 7 processor and the experience combined superb battery life with fast performance, a spacious OLED screen, and a quality keyboard and trackpad, all in a thin-and-light body.



## ASUS VIVOBOK S14 HAS THE DNA OF A PREMIUM LAPTOP WHILE MANAGING TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN DESIGN AND PORTABILITY

### HIGHLY PORTABLE

Weighing only 1.3kg, the laptop is 13.9mm thin and the aluminium alloy chassis gives it a sleek look. It is compact and light enough for you to take on a plane or to a coffee shop, and thanks to its excellent battery life, it will last through a full day of work or classes and then some.

Let's get into connectivity. Compared to much of Dell's XPS lineup, the laptop offers good connectivity options. There's a pair of Thunderbolt 4 ports, a full-size HDMI port, a micro SD card reader and a 3.5mm combo jack on one side. But what sets the machine apart are the two USB 3.2 Type A Gen 1 ports whereas most of the competition has one. I wish Asus had put one USB-C port on each side. And all of this is packed into a compact chassis. Asus has managed to strike a balance between port selection and portability.

Usually, the problem with thin and light laptops is battery life. We often find 50-60Wh battery on such laptops. On the other hand, Asus has gone with a 75Wh battery supporting USB-C charging and when you combine that with the

Intel processor, the results are spiffing.

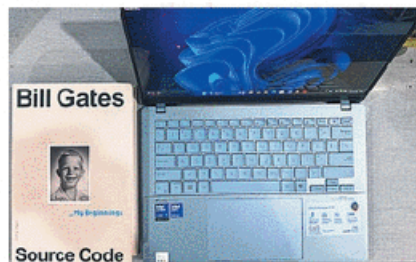
In the last few weeks, I have been getting about 15 hours or more, which is higher than most Windows-based laptops. Apple silicon matches the result and even beats it from time to time but for a Windows PC, this is quite good, especially when you consider that less than a year ago we were struggling to hit over 12 hours with Intel processors.

Further, don't forget that the laptop rocks an OLED screen, which technically consumes more power than LCD panels.

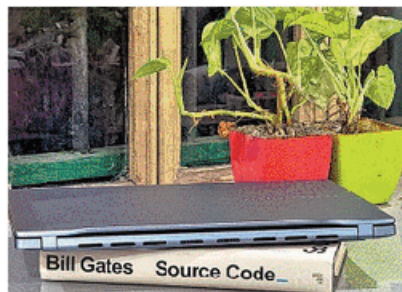
### DISPLAY AND KEYBOARD

One of the pain points for most Windows laptops is the screen — you have to pay more to get a decent display. What Asus has done is go with a respectable quality OLED display.

The 14-inch Asus Lumina OLED display delivers 600 nits peak brightness, 100 per cent DCI-P3 colour accuracy, and VESA DisplayHDR 600 True Black certification. These figures ensure vivid visuals and



The single-zone RGB backlight is a fun element but I stuck to neutral almost all the time. There is a dedicated Copilot key, which is turning out to be useful



Being light and compact, the laptop is a good option for students as well as professionals

← Asus Vivobook S14 weighs only 1.3kgs, which is almost the same as MacBook Air M1.

Pictures: Mathures Paul

comfortable viewing with reduced blue light emissions.

In our tests, it nailed colour reproduction though there is a slight shifting into oversaturated reds. On the brightness front, colours pop and its high contrast ratio gives every piece of content a punch that many look for.

It's also important to look at build quality. It's a massive step up from plastic-y budget laptops. The screen hinge is particularly strong and doesn't have any wobble. There is no flexing in the keyboard area and everything feels well put together.

One of the key elements to look at while buying a laptop is the keyboard. You get a customisable RGB backlit ErgoSense keyboard and a large Smart Gesture touchpad. Asus advertises 1.7mm of key travel, which is there. Did I enjoy typing for long hours? I

enjoyed the experience but it doesn't match the feel of MacBook Air. Working in favour of Asus is the backlighting. I usually keep it simple but you can use RGB backlighting, which I am not a fan of.

The trackpad is functional and of decent size. Asus also incorporates a few additional gestures into it, like tapping in the upper

right-hand corner to bring up the settings, sliding your finger left and

### AT A GLANCE

Device: Asus Vivobook S14 (S5406SA)

Price: ₹99,990

### HIGH NOTES

- Premium finish
- Bright OLED screen
- Good set of port selection
- Smooth processor; doesn't heat up too much
- Ample battery life

### MUFFLED NOTE

- Audio doesn't have enough bass

right at the top edge to advance or rewind media playback while the left and right edges can be used to control volume and brightness.

Security is enhanced with an FHD IR camera with Windows Hello, a privacy shutter and the Microsoft Pluton chip for data protection.

### PROCESSING POWER

The way Asus manages performance on the machine is interesting. If you think a slim laptop is a pushover when it comes to performance... think again.

It is powered by Intel Core Ultra 7 256V processor and features Intel Arc Graphics, AI Boost NPU (47 TOPS), and 16GB LPDDR5X RAM (8533 MHz) for multitasking and AI-powered efficiency.

Storage is fast and reliable PCIe 4.0 SSD, while Wi-Fi 7 and Bluetooth 5.4 offer next-level connectivity.

You can change performance levels on this slim laptop, which is usually not the case. Yet, it runs cool and that translates to low laptop skin temperatures even with heavy workloads since there's simply less heat to disperse. Asus has also worked hard to ensure the few "hot spots" that do pop up are outside of areas that will typically make contact with your hands or lap.

Such a laptop will be used for general tasks, like office productivity and that now involves a fair bit of artificial intelligence play. Benchmarks show that it is in line with most thin and light laptops. For everyday computing, you won't be able to tell the difference between something like the Asus laptop and, say, Zenbook S14. Even for gaming, you will get competitive scores. Baldur's Gate 3 anyone?

### MAKE THE CALL

At a time when many brands promoting thin-and-light laptops are making several compromises, Asus delivers a great combination of display, CPU and connectivity. Asus Vivobook S14 is a breath of fresh air and has the DNA of a premium laptop.

Mathures Paul

After Apple introduced its MacBook Air (M4), it's time for launches from Samsung. The company has unveiled its latest AI-powered PC lineup — Galaxy Book5 Pro, Galaxy Book5 Pro 360 and Galaxy Book5 360. All of the laptops take into account the power needed to drive artificial intelligence features and put Galaxy AI with Microsoft's Copilot+ PC experience left, right and centre.

### POWER OF AI AND PERFORMANCE

Galaxy Book5 series comes with AI for the first time. The new series features a neural processing unit (NPU) for AI computing along with Galaxy AI features such as AI Select and Photo Remaster. AI Select, a feature similar to Circle to Search with Google on Galaxy smartphones, enables instant search and extraction of information with a single click. Photo Remaster



Samsung Galaxy Book5 series is powered by Intel Core Ultra processors

enhances images with AI-powered clarity and sharpness.

Galaxy Book5 series is powered by Intel

## MORE POWER, BETTER BATTERY LIFE WITH SAMSUNG GALAXY BOOK5 SERIES

Core Ultra processors (Series 2), featuring powerful NPUs up to 47 TOPS, a 17 per cent increase in GPU for improved graphics performance and a 16 per cent increase in CPU single-core performance. Lunar Lake's redesigned CPU-GPU setup, upgraded NPU and next-gen Battlemage GPU deliver a 3x boost in AI compute power and result in 40 per cent lower SoC power consumption compared to previous generations, enabling smarter workflows, seamless multitasking, and extended battery life.

Combine with this abundant battery life — up to 25 hours with super-fast charging. Galaxy Book5 Pro is capable of reaching 41 per cent charge in 30 minutes.

### PRICING AND AVAILABILITY

Display is one of the highlights of the machines. Galaxy Book5 series features Dynamic AMOLED 2X displays on Pro models, offering 3K resolution, a 120Hz adaptive refresh rate, and Vision Booster technology. For an immersive experience, Quad Speakers with Dolby Atmos deliver rich sound.

Further, multi-device connectivity integrates features like Phone Link, Quick Share, Multi-Control, and Second Screen, allowing users to work across their Galaxy smartphones and tablets.

Galaxy Book5 Pro with Intel Core Ultra starts at ₹14,900, which is ₹15,000 less as compared to the previous generation.

Mathures Paul



## WHAT SUP

## LSG LOOKS AT HOW CLIMATE WHIPLASH IS MAKING US CONFRONT A NEW REALITY



(L-R) Speaker Pinaki Roy, LSG president Minnie Juneja, Preeti Goenka, speakers Mugdha Kalra and Sanjukta Mukherjee at the event, held at ITC Sonar's Pala Banquets



Mugdha Kalra



Pinaki Roy



Sanjukta Mukherjee



Students of The Heritage School and Modern High School for Girls posed with the speakers and LSG members

Ladies Study Group's recent event, 'Small Steps. Big Impact', spearheaded by LSG president Minnie Juneja, was an attempt to address the issue of climate change with experts on the subject. Attended by many LSG members of the Calcutta chapter, the event featured climate activist Mugdha Kalra, in conversation with climate change advocates Sanjukta Mukherjee and Pinaki Roy.

The panel emphasised how climate change is no longer an issue that one can turn a blind eye to, thinking that it is something that is happening to others. Kalra explained how it affects each one of us, irrespective of social status or demography, leaving no one insulated from its impact.

References were drawn from the alarming LA fires in California as well as the after-effects of Covid to substantiate the points. The activist also shared a handy pamphlet with each attendee, enumerating the practical tips on climate awareness and change.

Pinaki Roy spoke about natural disasters and how "they are called natural disasters whereas they are mostly human-made disasters". He explained how in the agrarian economy, these disasters create a huge impact on women and children, more than men. "There are men who go out of villages to work. The women and children are not only trafficked but if there's a disaster they are the last ones to get out. Kerala is called an advanced state but there also it happened. These disasters impact women and

children much more," explained Roy. Talking further about the issue, he stated that most of the climate initiatives are actually business-oriented and no one is attempting to find alternative ways.

Kalra and Sanjukta Mukherjee continued the talk on the gender aspect of climate change. Kalra summarised the discussion for the audience in easy pointers for their better understanding on the subject. "Climate anxiety is very real. We need to take the steps slowly and prioritise. The idea is to take one step at a time," said Kalra. Both Mukherjee and Kalra also spoke about the concept of amplification. "Choose a subject when we talk about climate change. Find people you can align your goals with," said Kalra. Mukherjee added: "Collaboration with education institutions and schools are essential. Students need to be introduced to this thought process."

Besides LSG members, the

audience comprised students from The Heritage school and Modern High School for Girls. The young audience showed much interest in the talk and actively engaged in the event by interacting with the speakers post event.

The panel concluded the session with Pinaki Roy's comments on his personal experience of working in the Sunderbans. He spoke about how the frequency of emergencies have been increasing in the Sunderbans area and also showed a docu-feature to the audience showing the impact of climate change in the region on its agriculture community. Talking about the event, LSG president Minnie Juneja said: "Whilst one afternoon can never be enough to cover the vast and complex issues of climate change, the session was an important one for its global significance and climate change consequences."

Priyanka A. Roy

Pictures: Pabitra Das

## প্রকাশিত

## সাক্ষাৎ:

সিধু ● নন্দিতা দাস

তানিকা বসু ● মিশমি দাস

## কভার ড্রাইভ ২

স্ট্রেফ ব্যবসা বাড়ানোর জন্য

ইতিহাস নির্ভর ছবিতে তথ্য বিকৃতি!

## সফরনামা:

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ড্রমণের আকর্ষণীয় গল্প ও ছবি

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সংস্থা, তাই নিয়েই যত ঝামেলা!

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অস্কার ২০১৫-এর

অন্দরের খবর

## 'ছাওয়া'র অবিশ্বাস্য

সাফল্যের পর রাতারাতি

'অভিনেতা' থেকে 'স্টার'

হয়ে উঠেছেন

ভিকি কৌশল। তাঁর স্টার

হয়ে ওঠার নেপথ্যে কি

রয়েছেন স্ত্রী ক্যাটরিনা

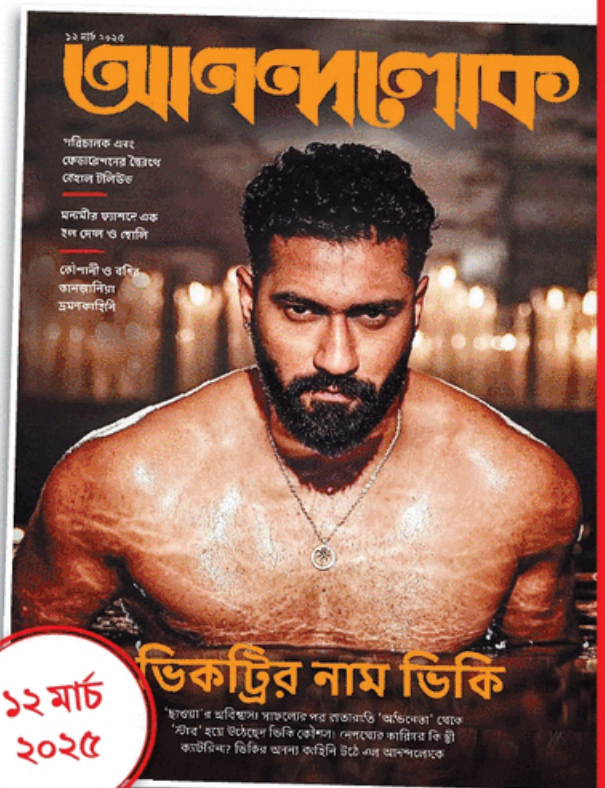
কাইফ? শুধু তাই নয়,

বর্তমানে গেরুয়া শিবিরেরও

পছন্দের নায়ক নাকি তিনি!

কোন জাদুমন্ত্রে এই স্বপ্নপূরণ

করলেন তিনি?



১২ মার্চ  
২০২৫

আনন্দলোফ



## TRUTH AND DESTINY COLLIDE IN SRIJIT MUKHERJI'S UPCOMING FILM *KILLBILL SOCIETY*. HERE'S THE FIRST LOOK



Koushani Mukherjee



Parambrata Chattopadhyay

**S**rijit Mukherji's *Killbill Society* unravels the enigmatic return of Ananda Kar (Parambrata Chattopadhyay) as he embarks on a mind-bending journey where truth and destiny collide. What unfolds is an emotional journey — one that explores healing, love, and an unexpected twist that challenges our understanding of purpose and existence.

The nostalgia of Hemlock Society lingers, but the warmth is replaced with an unsettling chill. What made Ananda Kar switch sides? Ananda Kar, the enigmatic mind behind Hemlock Society, was a curator of last chances, a guide for the hopeless. The man who understood the anatomy of death better than most yet chose to teach the art of survival. But time has its way of reshaping destinies.

Now, the idealist is gone. In his place stands a man reborn — bald, colder, sharper. The compassionate instructor who once stopped people from stepping off the edge has now crossed over himself. He doesn't run Hemlock Society anymore. He runs Killbill Society. This isn't just a return — it's a reckoning.

Poorna Aich never lived by the rules. Labels, opinions, and consequences never held any weight for her. She did what she wanted, when she wanted, without seeking approval. The world saw her as bold — perhaps even reckless — but to her, this was simply living. In



Srijit Mukherji

*Killbill Society*, Srijit Mukherji presents Poorna, portrayed by Koushani Mukherjee, in a deeply layered role — a woman who once feared nothing, until she did. What shattered her fearless spirit? More importantly, can she find her way back, or has her decision already been made?

Apart from the two main protagonists, *Killbill Society*, which releases in theatres on Poila Boishakh, also features Biswanath Basu, Sandipta Sen, and Anindya Chatterjee in pivotal roles. The video teaser of the film drops on March 15 on social media.

Do you have questions for Srijit Mukherji about *Killbill Society*?  
Tell t2@abp.in



Sandipta Sen



Biswanath Basu



Anindya Chatterjee

## THE FILM *CHHAAD* IS A POIGNANT REFLECTION ON PERSONAL FREEDOM, SPACE AND SELF-REALISATION

**F**ollowing its international festival run, *Chhaad* premiered at PVR-INOX (South City), with lead actress Paoli Dam and director Indrani Chakrabarti gracing the occasion. The film boasts a stellar cast, including Rahul Banerjee, Rajnandini, among others. The film tells the story of Mitra, a young schoolteacher whose passion for writing and sketching is deeply intertwined with the open space of her shared terrace. When the terrace is suddenly locked, she finds herself creatively and emotionally stifled, unable to complete her much-anticipated piece for a prestigious magazine. As summer holidays confine her to a suffocating home and an unfeeling husband, the loss of the terrace becomes a metaphor for a deeper existential crisis — her inability to free herself from both physical and emotional constraints.

Looking beautiful in a golden silk sari, Paoli said, "*Chhaad* has released in Calcutta on the occasion of International Women's Day and we are glad that the film is back to its roots. The movie explores the importance of a *chhad*, this terrace, an open area to breathe and be yourself in a woman's life. It is always expected out of the woman to leave her home and go to the husband's house. In a patriarchal world, the film enunciates the need for an open space for everyone."

Indrani Chakrabarti has an extensive background in television production and independent filmmaking. *Chhaad* was first showcased at the Cannes Market before making its world premiere at the International Film Festival of South Asia in Toronto. It later won the Best Jury Award at the Kolkata International Film Festival 2022 and was screened at the Dhaka International Film Festival in 2023.

Chakrabarti's earlier work includes the National Award-winning documentary *Ladakh Chale Rickshawala*, along with several acclaimed short films and documentaries. Her storytelling delves into nuanced human experiences, as is evident in *Chhaad* — a poignant reflection on personal freedom, space, and self-realisation.



Paoli

At the premiere, Indrani Chakrabarti, looking elegant in a black Benarasi sari, reflected on the long journey of *Chhaad*, from its inception to its global screenings, and now, its homecoming.

"I actually wrote the first draft of this script back in 2005. You won't believe it, but I've been planning to make this film since then. I grew up in a house with a terrace — it still has one, actually. My connection with terraces goes back to my childhood," she said. As we wrapped up our conversation, it became clear that *Chhaad* was more than just a film for Indrani — it was a deeply personal story, one that had finally come full circle with its homecoming in Calcutta.

**Sanjali Brahma**  
Pictures:  
Pabitra Das



Indrani



# WHATSUP

## WHEN LOVE FOUND AN ADDRESS AT DESTINATION 16

**D**estination 16, a vibrant pub inside Celica Park, on the fourth floor of Park Centre Building on Park Street, recently hosted a pre-Valentine's Day bash

in the presence of Tollywood actor Sohini Sarkar as special guest. With heady cocktails, yum food and a happy vibe, the first pre-Valentine's Day party was memorable. Snapshots.



The pre-Valentine's Day bash attracted guests across age groups. Everyone danced to Bolly tunes of DJ Harsh Bhutani from Mumbai



Tolly star Sohini Sarkar looked party-ready in a LBD



"Every visit to Destination 16 is an opportunity to create new memories. Our goal is to offer customers an exceptional experience by fusing fine drinks, delicious food, warm service and a fun setting. Located in the Park Street neighbourhood, Destination 16 wants to be the go-to place for anybody looking for an exciting and unforgettable night out. Our pub's large space, cosy seating and modern decor create a warm and lively environment for families, friends and co-workers to come and relax. We are committed to providing an excellent experience at a reasonable price," said Biswajit Ghosh, owner of Destination 16 (left) seen with DJ Harsh Bhutani (centre) and Ankan Ray, director of Destination 16.



### LIPSTICK LAB:

Park Street SOCIAL recently hosted an interactive lip gloss making workshop, curated by Zuhur Luxury Selfcare. The event provided attendees an opportunity to explore the art of crafting customised, flavoured lip glosses, with Taniya Adhikary offering step-by-step guidance on ingredients, techniques and personalisation.

The workshop welcomed 20-plus participants, including a diverse mix of women and men, who embraced the hands-on experience. The innovative concept of creating personalised lip gloss shades captivated attendees, sparking their creativity and leaving them inspired.

"I wanted to create a space where everyone could tap into their creative side and make something uniquely their own," said Taniya Adhikary, founder of Zuhur Luxury Selfcare.

"At SOCIAL, we're always looking for ways to bring people together through innovative and engaging experiences. This workshop was a perfect example of how creativity can be an inclusive, fun and meaningful activity for everyone," said Divya Aggarwal, chief growth officer at Impresario, which owns SOCIAL.

The event highlighted SOCIAL's commitment to curating fresh, inclusive activities that foster creativity and learning, leaving attendees eager for more hands-on workshops in the future.

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**T**heir combined accolades make for staggering records, and their journeys of grit and glory for compelling reads. Together, they made for a power-packed panel at ABP Network Ideas of India, in association with t2, held in Mumbai. In what was a fitting finale to two days of brainstorming on a diverse range of topics, Prakash Padukone, Geet Sethi, Leander Paes, and Viswanathan Anand shared stories of passion, blood, sweat and tears to deafening applause and moments of absolute goosebumps. Inspirations for generations, the quartet was in conversation with Shashi Tharoor and Chetan Bhagat at the Grand Hyatt. Excerpts.

### THE MAKING OF THE CHAMPIONS...

**Shashi Tharoor:** Prakash, what sparked your interest? How did you become a badminton player and a world champion? **Prakash Padukone:** I think before I proceed, I think you need to know a little bit history about how popular the sport was when I took up, way back in the 1960s. I started in 1962, when badminton was not very popular, especially in the southern part of India. It was played mainly in the north, east and west. There was another sport called ball badminton, which was very popular in the south and played only in India. It's almost extinct now. So that was very popular in all the southern states. So in fact, if you went to any of the southern states and said you played badminton, it meant ball badminton. So you had to specifically say that you play shuttle. And in those days, in the whole of Bengaluru, there were only five badminton courts and out of those, three were wedding halls! So, six months in a year, it used to be booked for weddings. When there were no weddings, you played badminton. My father was living in Mumbai, moved to Bengaluru, and then started the state association. He was more of an administrator, so I used to go along with him. And so that's how I got interested in the sport. Initially, (I had) absolutely no idea whether I would even play for the district or the state. I enjoyed playing the sport, so that's how I started playing. My father was the initial coach. Later on, (I) just picked up on my own, watching other players, because there was no other way of learning. I started when I was seven, and I was about 15-16, when I won the national championship. That's when I thought of taking it up professionally.

**Tharoor:** So, till then, you were

just a casual player?

**Padukone:** Absolutely. So I think the main thing was we didn't have too many options in those days. For everybody in the '60s, there were only two options: either you take the option which you have, which is to play for six months, or not play at all. So there was no third option of going to another club, another city, another academy. So either you take what you had, or you sit at home.

**Tharoor (to Geet Sethi):** If badminton wasn't a popular mass sport, billiards certainly isn't even today. What brought you to billiards, and how did you become so good at it?

**Geet Sethi:** So I started in '70s. There was a Wilson Jones and a Michael Ferreira in the periphery of my vision, but I used to play all sports... table tennis, badminton. I was a fairly good badminton player. I would play cricket, basketball, and then I got the chance to play billiards. And you know, billiards in those days, in the '70s, you were not allowed into the billiard room if you were not 18 years old. And it was always next to the bar in a club. Very interestingly, the sports ministry sent a circular to The Billiards and Snooker Federation of India, saying that to really get good quality players, we need junior championships. And if you don't have juniors playing at the grassroots level, how are you going to have a junior championship? Our federation sent out the circulars to every club across the country, saying, please relax your age limit from 18 to 12. And I was 12-and-a-half or 13 at the time. And it's a beautiful sight, a billiard room, for a child. First of all, you are not allowed inside. And there was a small little six-by-six window. It's a dark place with bright lights, beautiful, coloured balls, and this green baize, and I would always

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And when I got the chance, I just went and started playing. I was tall enough, and I just took to it like fish to water. I used to actually swim as a junior. I was a state-level swimmer and represented Gujarat at the junior swimming championships. But at the age of 13, within a year, I had stopped playing every other sport. There was a junior national championship that was held for the first time in Jamshedpur in 1976. So as a 15-year-old, I went and I won the first ever junior championship. Then you get some confidence, and you start taking the sport seriously. But my dad, you know, he was an air traffic controller, and he got transferred to Ahmedabad. I started playing like five, six hours a day and I was 15-16. My dad said you could play as much as you wanted, but you must get a first division. He said, for your 10th and 12th, you have to get 60 per cent. I'd put my cue aside for two months just before the board exam, and I did 60.01 per cent, 60.02 per cent, and he said, no problem, continue to play. And I continued to play. I graduated in economics honours, and then I did the MBA as well. But it really became a profession when I was in my first year of my MBA. I got D's in about six subjects, but I was playing billiards at a very high level. I defeated Michael Ferreira, and that's when it really became professional.

**Tharoor (to Viswanathan Anand):** Vishy, when I was growing up, we never had a grandmaster. In fact, I think when somebody made it to International Master, that was news. What brought you to chess?

**Viswanathan Anand:** I am the youngest in my family. One day, when I was six years old, I walked into a room, and my elder brother

and sister were playing chess. So I went and pestered my mother to teach me. I was lucky that my mother was a good chess player. She came from a family where they all played chess. She taught me how to play.

Then, I guess they waited for a couple of months, and they must have noticed that I kept going back to the chessboard and trying to apply what she had taught me. Then they thought, well, maybe he's interested.

Near my sister's college, there was a chess club, and she happened to see it one day when she was passing by. So then the idea came, well, why not take Anand there and put him in the chess club? It turned out this was India's strongest chess club. It was in the Soviet Cultural Centre in Chennai. All of India's International Masters were regular visitors. I mean, it was a small chess community, but a very passionate one.... So, I joined that chess club.

I would describe it as a set of lucky coincidences. Sometimes you need luck even on the board, but I needed it off as well. So, the first thing was that I had a family member who knew how to play chess. Thirty-40 years ago, that was 90 per cent of the requirement for you to become a chess player because you couldn't look it up. You couldn't just find a book somewhere. You'd have to go to a specialised library and find a place where maybe they had it, and then you could look up the rules. The second one was, of course, that my sister happened to stumble on the strongest chess club. Then my dad got an assignment in the Philippines and, so we moved there, and this was when I was nine years old. The Philippines was having a kind of chess boom there. So again, a lucky coincidence.

My mother knew that Asia's first grandmaster was a man called Eugene Torre. She literally took out

the phone book and went 'Torre' and started calling each one. Luckily, I think within the first three, we stumbled on Eugene Torre. But the man listened to her patiently and said, actually, I'm his elder brother, but I know a good chess club which your son can join. More importantly, the Philippines actually had a daily chess show on TV where they would show a game that had been played somewhere on the globe. So this was fantastic, because you didn't have access to these games, but they would find a

game played somewhere on the globe, they would show it to the audience with explanations. And, at the end of the show, they would give a puzzle. You had to solve it and mail in your answer. At the end of the next show, they would put all the correct answers that they had received into a box. They'd pull one envelope out, and that person was called to the show after that.

The show was always at two or three in the afternoon when I was in school. My mother would watch the programme. She would write

down everything they said about that game, and then she would note down the puzzle. And when I came back after I finished my homework, she would show it to me. So both my parents were very supportive, but it was hard to emphasise just how much my mother (did)... accompanying me everywhere, taking me to all sorts of tournaments, so a very crucial part.

The prize was always a chess book, which was very, very valuable. So I think after I won several attempts, they invited me to the back of the studio where they had their library, and they said, help yourself to all the books you want, but please don't send any more answers!

When I got back from the Philippines, I went back to the same chess club and continued. I then made a strong junior, one of the strong juniors in Tamil Nadu, for a couple of years, (but) with no real sign of breaking away. Then, in 1983, during the summer holidays, I played a tournament in the chess club, and then I went to the national team championship. I started winning everything. And I still don't know why exactly, suddenly my level jumped. So I won this tournament.... I got a chance to go for the national level, and I qualified. So within the space of three months, I went from becoming a decent junior to being able to represent India everywhere... in sub junior, junior and men's events, a really magical period where doors opened and suddenly I got to play at a very high level.

A similar thing happened in '87 when I finished my school exams. So I had to stop chess for three months to catch up. I wrote my exams, and then I started to play chess again. A few months later, I won the world junior championship, the first Asian to do that. At the end of that year, I became a grandmaster. So, in chess terms, that was another big breakthrough year for me.

I think I probably decided to become a chess player at the age of six, and I was dreading the moment when I would find a good reason that I should not continue, but it never came.

**Tharoor (to Leander Paes):** How did you get into tennis?

**Leander Paes:** I was born to a Bengali mother who was five-foot nothing in height, and she captained the Indian basketball team. My dad (Vece Paes), on the other hand, was Portuguese, Goan descent, 6'3", (a part of) the Indian 1972 Munich Olympics (hockey) team. I was born on June 17, 1973. Being born to a Bengali mother and Goan dad, I was born with these legs. Football was my passion, and in class, I'd always get punished because I had a football at the end of my feet. Football was always around me, everywhere I went. When I was 11 years old, New York brought a football team called New York Cosmos. They came to Calcutta and played at the big stadium, and Pele came with them. I was a ball boy for that match. At the end of the second half, I got a little bored, you know, so when the ball came out on my side, I collected it on my chest, juggled it for about 16-17 times, and headed it back to Mr. Pele. He looked at me and said after match, I see you. I thought I was in trouble. And after the match, Mr. Pele came over and we did a little tiki-taka for about 15 minutes, and then they selected me for a junior European football team.

I went over to Europe. You can just imagine every Calcutta kid's dream where you play gully cricket, gully football, barefoot, right? And, then you're suddenly going off to Europe, where they give you boots and you can play with proper gear and on fields that have grass on them.

After about six weeks, the Barcelona scouts came, and two days later, I was shipped off to Barcelona to the junior programme. I lived there for seven months, and after seven months, they confirmed that I was going to be in the playing XI of the Barcelona under-17 football team. I was 11 years old at the time, but they had only one criteria, and that was I had to give up my Indian passport, to which I asked, why. The coach said, if we are going to pump in million dollars into your training, coaching, diet, fitness, mental training, then we can't have you play for another country. You have to play for



**"Don't get too carried away when you are on the top, you achieve something, because we know that when you retire, you will not get the same kind of attention, you will not get the same kind of feedback.... It is tough, but I think a lot depends on each individual sportsperson" — Prakash Padukone, All England Open Badminton Championships winner**

Spain, Barcelona. So, like a good Indian boy, I told him I have to go home and ask my mommy and daddy! Well, the next morning, at 5.30am when I was leaving the academy, the coach came over to bid me farewell and said he knew I was not coming back.

So I came back to Calcutta, and I remember sitting at my parent's dining table, and my father was ridiculing me a bit. He was like, you've given up your dream, and you're so talented at football, and what are you going to do now? I looked over beyond my dad's right shoulder, and in the living room was my uncle's picture. He was wearing a Fred Perry sweater and had three tennis rackets in his hand. I said I'd play tennis. And my dad laughed at me for about six minutes. I said to him, find me the best tennis academy, give me 52 weeks, and I will let you know if I

can do this. So then, on May 12, 1986, I was shipped off to Madras, and I lived in Madras with the Britannia Amritraj Tennis Academy. There were eight other kids there who were all the best in Asia. They were all tennis players for like, eight years, nine years, 10 years. And I felt so out of place the first year because those kids wore collared shirts. My football shirts had a V-neck. They wore short sleeves. I had no sleeves. They wore long shorts. I had short shorts, and they wore short tennis socks. I was wearing long football stockings. So, I was a complete outcast. And every day they would beat me 6-0, 6-0 in practice.

When my dad dropped me to Madras, he gave me 100-page letter, and he was writing that letter for six weeks before I went there, and the first paragraph and the last paragraph of that letter read the same, but the rest of the 99 pages was about how my mother and my father were separating and going their own ways.

I didn't know how to make myself a sandwich at that young age, but every morning, we'd wake up at 4.30am in the morning, practice would start at five o'clock, go on till eight o'clock. From eight to nine in the morning, we had an hour for breakfast and a shower. From 9am to 3.30pm, we studied. Four o'clock back on the court again and play till 7.30pm, and then we'd come back and an hour for dinner. Between 9.30pm and 10.30pm, the famous Indian thing, homework. And then at 10.30pm when the boys would go to sleep, I would put candles in front of a full-length mirror that I had requested for, lock the door of my bedroom, and do 10,000 skips, 300 push-ups and 3,500 sit-ups every night. And that took one hour, and the second hour, I'd shadow practice my forehand down the line, backhand crosscourt, topspin forehand, slice backhand, quick volleys, long volleys, and then smashes. And then after I'd finished that, after two hours, I'd sit up and read my parent's letter, and I would not sleep much that first year, I cried myself to bed for 365 days, until I realised that tennis was the only vehicle I had to become a man. And that's what that first paragraph and the last paragraph of the letter said. My dad said tennis is your vehicle to become a man.

I blamed myself as a young boy for my parents' separation. I held myself very responsible for the hardships that my two sisters were going through and my parents were going through... after five years of this hard work, I won at Wimbledon for the first time.



**"If we can as a nation, look at sports science, testing DNA, genome testing and looking at a child's potential height, bone density, muscle density, and by the age of eight or nine, putting them into disciplines that fit their geographical genetics.... I think that's how champions can be made in our country — Leander Paes, Olympic bronze medallist in tennis**



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### THE MAKING OF THE CHAMPIONS...

**Shashi Tharoor:** Prakash, what sparked your interest? How did you become a badminton player and a world champion? **Prakash Padukone:** I think before I proceed, I think you need to know a little bit history about how popular the sport was when I took up, way back in the 1960s. I started in 1962, when badminton was not very popular, especially in the southern part of India. It was played mainly in the north, east and west. There was another sport called ball badminton, which was very popular in the south and played only in India. It's almost extinct now. So that was very popular in all the southern states. So in fact, if you went to any of the southern states and said you played badminton, it meant ball badminton. So you had to specifically say that you play shuttle. And in those days, in the whole of Bengaluru, there were only five badminton courts and out of those, three were wedding halls! So, six months in a year, it used to be booked for weddings. When there were no weddings, you played badminton. My father was living in Mumbai, moved to Bengaluru, and then started the state association. He was more of an administrator, so I used to go along with him. And so that's how I got interested in the sport. Initially, (I had) absolutely no idea whether I would even play for the district or the state. I enjoyed playing the sport, so that's how I started playing. My father was the initial coach. Later on, (I) just picked up on my own, watching other players, because there was no other way of learning. I started when I was seven, and I was about 15-16, when I won the national championship. That's when I thought of taking it up professionally.

**Tharoor:** So, till then, you were

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**Padukone:** Absolutely. So I think the main thing was we didn't have too many options in those days. For everybody in the '60s, there were only two options: either you take the option which you have, which is to play for six months, or not play at all. So there was no third option of going to another club, another city, another academy. So either you take what you had, or you sit at home.

**Tharoor (to Geet Sethi):** If badminton wasn't a popular mass sport, billiards certainly isn't even today. What brought you to billiards, and how did you become so good at it?

**Geet Sethi:** So I started in '70s. There was a Wilson Jones and a Michael Ferreira in the periphery of my vision, but I used to play all sports... table tennis, badminton. I was a fairly good badminton player. I would play cricket, basketball, and then I got the chance to play billiards. And you know, billiards in those days, in the '70s, you were not allowed into the billiard room if you were not 18 years old. And it was always next to the bar in a club. Very interestingly, the sports ministry sent a circular to The Billiards and Snooker Federation of India, saying that to really get good quality players, we need junior championships. And if you don't have juniors playing at the grassroots level, how are you going to have a junior championship? Our federation sent out the circulars to every club across the country, saying, please relax your age limit from 18 to 12. And I was 12-and-a-half or 13 at the time. And it's a beautiful sight, a billiard room, for a child. First of all, you are not allowed inside. And there was a small little six-by-six window. It's a dark place with bright lights, beautiful, coloured balls, and this green baize, and I would always

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**Viswanathan Anand:** I am the youngest in my family. One day, when I was six years old, I walked into a room, and my elder brother

and sister were playing chess. So I went and pestered my mother to teach me. I was lucky that my mother was a good chess player. She came from a family where they all played chess. She taught me how to play.

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I would describe it as a set of lucky coincidences. Sometimes you need luck even on the board, but I needed it off as well. So, the first thing was that I had a family member who knew how to play chess. Thirty-40 years ago, that was 90 per cent of the requirement for you to become a chess player because you couldn't look it up. You couldn't just find a book somewhere. You'd have to go to a specialised library and find a place where maybe they had it, and then you could look up the rules. The second one was, of course, that my sister happened to stumble on the strongest chess club. Then my dad got an assignment in the Philippines and, so we moved there, and this was when I was nine years old. The Philippines was having a kind of chess boom there. So again, a lucky coincidence.

My mother knew that Asia's first grandmaster was a man called Eugene Torre. She literally took out

the phone book and went 'Torre' and started calling each one. Luckily, I think within the first three, we stumbled on Eugene Torre. But the man listened to her patiently and said, actually, I'm his elder brother, but I know a good chess club which your son can join. More importantly, the Philippines actually had a daily chess show on TV where they would show a game that had been played somewhere on the globe. So this was fantastic, because you didn't have access to these games, but they would find a

game played somewhere on the globe, they would show it to the audience with explanations. And, at the end of the show, they would give a puzzle. You had to solve it and mail in your answer. At the end of the next show, they would put all the correct answers that they had received into a box. They'd pull one envelope out, and that person was called to the show after that.

The show was always at two or three in the afternoon when I was in school. My mother would watch the programme. She would write

down everything they said about that game, and then she would note down the puzzle. And when I came back after I finished my homework, she would show it to me. So both my parents were very supportive, but it was hard to emphasise just how much my mother (did)... accompanying me everywhere, taking me to all sorts of tournaments, so a very crucial part.

The prize was always a chess book, which was very, very valuable. So I think after I won several attempts, they invited me to the back of the studio where they had their library, and they said, help yourself to all the books you want, but please don't send any more answers!

When I got back from the Philippines, I went back to the same chess club and continued. I then made a strong junior, one of the strong juniors in Tamil Nadu, for a couple of years, (but) with no real sign of breaking away. Then, in 1983, during the summer holidays, I played a tournament in the chess club, and then I went to the national team championship. I started winning everything. And I still don't know why exactly, suddenly my level jumped. So I won this tournament.... I got a chance to go for the national level, and I qualified. So within the space of three months, I went from becoming a decent junior to being able to represent India everywhere... in sub junior, junior and men's events, a really magical period where doors opened and suddenly I got to play at a very high level.

A similar thing happened in '87 when I finished my school exams. So I had to stop chess for three months to catch up. I wrote my exams, and then I started to play chess again. A few months later, I won the world junior championship, the first Asian to do that. At the end of that year, I became a grandmaster. So, in chess terms, that was another big breakthrough year for me.

I think I probably decided to become a chess player at the age of six, and I was dreading the moment when I would find a good reason that I should not continue, but it never came.

**Tharoor (to Leander Paes):** How did you get into tennis?

**Leander Paes:** I was born to a Bengali mother who was five-foot nothing in height, and she captained the Indian basketball team. My dad (Vece Paes), on the other hand, was Portuguese, Goan descent, 6'3", (a part of) the Indian 1972 Munich Olympics (hockey) team. I was born on June 17, 1973. Being born to a Bengali mother and Goan dad, I was born with these legs. Football was my passion, and in class, I'd always get punished because I had a football at the end of my feet. Football was always around me, everywhere I went. When I was 11 years old, New York brought a football team called New York Cosmos. They came to Calcutta and played at the big stadium, and Pele came with them. I was a ball boy for that match. At the end of the second half, I got a little bored, you know, so when the ball came out on my side, I collected it on my chest, juggled it for about 16-17 times, and headed it back to Mr. Pele. He looked at me and said after match, I see you. I thought I was in trouble. And after the match, Mr. Pele came over and we did a little tiki-taka for about 15 minutes, and then they selected me for a junior European football team.

I went over to Europe. You can just imagine every Calcutta kid's dream where you play gully cricket, gully football, barefoot, right? And, then you're suddenly going off to Europe, where they give you boots and you can play with proper gear and on fields that have grass on them.

After about six weeks, the Barcelona scouts came, and two days later, I was shipped off to Barcelona to the junior programme. I lived there for seven months, and after seven months, they confirmed that I was going to be in the playing XI of the Barcelona under-17 football team. I was 11 years old at the time, but they had only one criteria, and that was I had to give up my Indian passport, to which I asked, why. The coach said, if we are going to pump in million dollars into your training, coaching, diet, fitness, mental training, then we can't have you play for another country. You have to play for



**"Don't get too carried away when you are on the top, you achieve something, because we know that when you retire, you will not get the same kind of attention, you will not get the same kind of feedback.... It is tough, but I think a lot depends on each individual sportsperson" — Prakash Padukone, All England Open Badminton Championships winner**

Spain, Barcelona. So, like a good Indian boy, I told him I have to go home and ask my mommy and daddy! Well, the next morning, at 5.30am when I was leaving the academy, the coach came over to bid me farewell and said he knew I was not coming back.

So I came back to Calcutta, and I remember sitting at my parent's dining table, and my father was ridiculing me a bit. He was like, you've given up your dream, and you're so talented at football, and what are you going to do now? I looked over beyond my dad's right shoulder, and in the living room was my uncle's picture. He was wearing a Fred Perry sweater and had three tennis rackets in his hand. I said I'd play tennis. And my dad laughed at me for about six minutes. I said to him, find me the best tennis academy, give me 52 weeks, and I will let you know if I

can do this. So then, on May 12, 1986, I was shipped off to Madras, and I lived in Madras with the Britannia Amritraj Tennis Academy. There were eight other kids there who were all the best in Asia. They were all tennis players for like, eight years, nine years, 10 years. And I felt so out of place the first year because those kids wore collared shirts. My football shirts had a V-neck. They wore short sleeves. I had no sleeves. They wore long shorts. I had short shorts, and they wore short tennis socks. I was wearing long football stockings. So, I was a complete outcast. And every day they would beat me 6-0, 6-0 in practice.

When my dad dropped me to Madras, he gave me 100-page letter, and he was writing that letter for six weeks before I went there, and the first paragraph and the last paragraph of that letter read the same, but the rest of the 99 pages was about how my mother and my father were separating and going their own ways.

I didn't know how to make myself a sandwich at that young age, but every morning, we'd wake up at 4.30am in the morning, practice would start at five o'clock, go on till eight o'clock. From eight to nine in the morning, we had an hour for breakfast and a shower. From 9am to 3.30pm, we studied. Four o'clock back on the court again and play till 7.30pm, and then we'd come back and an hour for dinner. Between 9.30pm and 10.30pm, the famous Indian thing, homework. And then at 10.30pm when the boys would go to sleep, I would put candles in front of a full-length mirror that I had requested for, lock the door of my bedroom, and do 10,000 skips, 300 push-ups and 3,500 sit-ups every night. And that took one hour, and the second hour, I'd shadow practice my forehand down the line, backhand crosscourt, topspin forehand, slice backhand, quick volleys, long volleys, and then smashes. And then after I'd finished that, after two hours, I'd sit up and read my parent's letter, and I would not sleep much that first year, I cried myself to bed for 365 days, until I realised that tennis was the only vehicle I had to become a man. And that's what that first paragraph and the last paragraph of the letter said. My dad said tennis is your vehicle to become a man.

I blamed myself as a young boy for my parents' separation. I held myself very responsible for the hardships that my two sisters were going through and my parents were going through... after five years of this hard work, I won at Wimbledon for the first time.



**"If we can as a nation, look at sports science, testing DNA, genome testing and looking at a child's potential height, bone density, muscle density, and by the age of eight or nine, putting them into disciplines that fit their geographical genetics.... I think that's how champions can be made in our country — Leander Paes, Olympic bronze medallist in tennis**



FROM PAGE 9

## INDIA AT THE OLYMPICS...

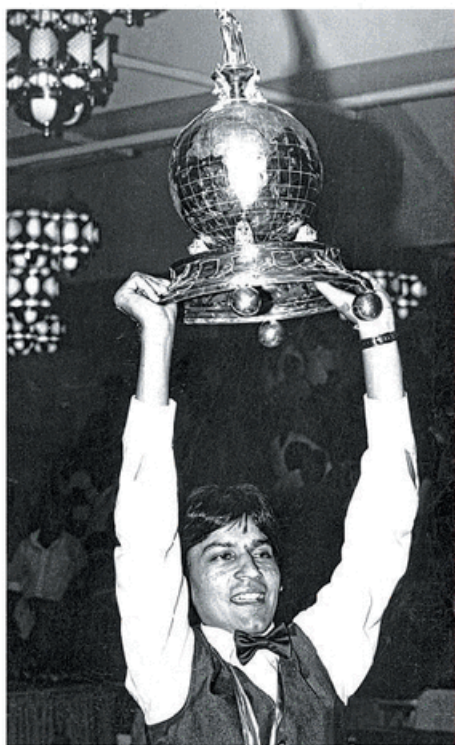
**Chetan:** How do you feel about India's overall Olympic performances?

**Leander:** My thought process on winning medals comes to geographical genetics. I believe India has tremendous potential in sport and I believe that India can be a powerhouse as a nation by using sport to empower the youth, using sport to empower quality of life... if we can as a nation, look at sports science, testing DNA, genome testing and looking at a child's potential height, bone density, muscle density, and by the age of eight or nine, putting them into disciplines that fit their geographical genetics.... I think that's how champions can be made in our country.

**Anand:** There are two ways to look at this. One is a highly specialised model where there exist institutions that first identify talent and then funnel them in the proper direction. But actually, I believe a more natural model is a country where people passionately, enthusiastically engage in sport. Ninety-nine per cent of them are not trying to win medals. It is just playing sports and enjoying sports is seen as a healthy part of growing up. And if you work backwards, then that also means that such a country will have some sporting facilities in every village and so on. The affection for the sport, the passion for the sport, will be passed on. It will pass down culturally. And that's enough. This eventually, if you pick a pyramid model, then at the top, you will get some fantastic excellence. Now in India, it's complicated story, because, frankly, a country with lots and lots of needs, the area I'm working on, being part of Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) is at the top, where we try to identify talent and then see, how do we support them to, you know, do the best they can.

The aim is to take a small group of very talented athletes and ensure that they have the best resources, that they're not handicapped in any way in terms of what's available to them, and, you know, get them all the resources they need and help them compete. But I think even this should fit into the longer goal, which is, if we then win medals, you inspire more people to take part, you inspire the sport to become a part of society. Ultimately, when I want someone to play chess, I want them to enjoy chess, I want them to gain the mental habits that you will get from chess. The sporting success is really accidental. And as a country, when sports becomes a mass movement, that's when it will happen.

But I took my experience (being) on the board of OGQ and when I started my own academy, I followed a similar model. I tried to identify the most promising juniors and give them the support I thought I needed. I tried to imagine myself at their age, and what it is I would want to tell them. And one final point. Even though we're not getting as many medals as I think is our due, for a country of our size, it's clear to me that now we are competitive in many, many more



**"We are at a beautiful stage in the evolutionary part of our sporting journey, as far as our country goes....**

**Today the athletes who go for the Olympics, there is no despair in any of the eyes. And to top it off, each one of them is not happy if they win a bronze. They are not happy if they come fourth. They want to win the gold and that itself... is quite transformational"**  
— Geet Sethi, world billiards champion

sports. We are missing narrowly, and people are not satisfied with missing them, and that's the most important spirit or attitude we have to follow. The rest, I think will follow.

**Sethi:** What Leander said about geographical genetics, I believe, is a fairly important part of the reason why we are not producing calibre performances at the Olympic sporting environment. There is a very strong co-relationship between money, that means, how rich a country is, and their sporting performance. Even if there's a good athlete who's very talented, there's no resources for that talent to be nurtured.... I have a concept called subconscious self-belief. So it will take another 10 to 20 years where the socio-economic kicks in, genetics... we can't do anything about but the socio-economics, you know, India is progressing. The GDP is going up. We will have money. We will have OGQs and lots of other foundations pumping in the money. The government will pump in the infrastructure, and we will slowly start getting performances, as we have started in the last five or 10 years, the last two or three Olympics. And then there will be one medal winner, and there'll be this concept called subconscious self-belief. Ah, he did it. I am from his village, and I wrestle in the same akhara. And that subconscious self-belief is extremely important.

We are at a beautiful stage in the evolutionary part of our sporting journey, as far as our country goes.... Today the athletes who go for the Olympics, there is no despair in any of the eyes. And to top it off, each one of them is not happy if they win a bronze. They are not happy if they come fourth. They want to win the gold and that itself, I think, is quite transformational.

**Padukone:** We need to address the administration of the sports federations, because sports is controlled by the federations. For any sport to improve, the sports federations have to be professionalised. We need professional people running the

sport. Talent is not the problem, funds are not the problem. If the federations become more professional, like in some of the countries abroad, especially in Europe and in the US, I feel we definitely have a lot more potential to win more medals.... But, you know, like Geet said, it will take a little more time, but we certainly have the talent, and there is every reason to be positive. We may not be growing at the pace we like. The moment the sports federations become more active, they start employing professionals, and if they are run like corporates, I see no reason why we cannot do well at the Olympics.

## NURTURING CHAMPIONS...

**Tharoor:** How do we identify, tap and develop talent?

**Sethi:** So we did a kind of study, and for India, we identified boxing, badminton, archery and shooting as the four priority sports India should focus on. If you take shooting, boxing, archery and wrestling, they're very technical sports. The genetic part doesn't really come in. You don't require huge muscles, even though wrestling, you need great body and all, but it's a lot of technique, including boxing. And we said, let's

focus all our energies on these four sports and see what happens.... Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore won a silver (men's double trap shooting) at the Olympics in Athens... Abhinav Bindra got his gold in Beijing, 2008 (in men's 10m air rifle), and then suddenly there was a bit of a lull. We expected seven, eight, 10, medals in shooting. Now in France, Paris, we have got three medals in shooting. But that is the route to take for our country.

We've done a very deep study. We have no chance in athletics. And that's the brutal truth because genetics come in. There is no historical tradition, there is no hero. You need to be right up there, a gold medal winner, to really inspire the youth.

**Leander:** I feel that in tradition, everyone looked at cricket. Cricket got a lot of sponsorship, a lot of television, a lot of limelight, but as an athlete, I believe we should learn from the BCCI, we should learn from IPL. We should learn from the cricket governing bodies that actually took the stalwarts of the game and made them administrators, gave them academies. You must compliment Khelo India. And I believe that before we start dreaming about winning medals, we've got to create a system. And one of the things I'm concerned about is that if you look at tennis, in India, we've won 52 Grand Slam titles, we've played seven Olympics, we've got the world record in Davis Cup. In India today, we sit with the Hall of Fame as the first Asian male. But there is no system in tennis, and that is something I think is imperative and really important, to actually come in and create a system....

**Anand:** So, one of the obvious comparisons is China, a similar population... but I believe the cultural factors are much more important. I mean, I'm no expert, but from the outside, I feel that Indians are much more individualistic than Chinese people. So if you see, even as a country, they have a track record of centrally-planned-executed-all-the-way-down projects.... I don't think for India the central planning method would work, but we need to accommodate much more spontaneity. Federations will have to reform a little bit and be more flexible... we've seen it in chess. The federation has been helpful in some ways, but a lot of former chess players started academies of their own. A lot of spontaneous initiatives were allowed to flourish,

and chess started to do very well. The main thing is to encourage participation and have a flexible structure.

**Sethi:** I'm taking up from what Anand was saying, when sport becomes an entertainment industry rather than a sporting industry, I think we will then be on our way. It's just a different thought that I just wanted to get in. We need to make sport into entertainment.

## LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT...

**Chetan:** It's been such a big part of your life, your identity, your every waking moment, is about that. Is it hard when it's gone? Is it difficult? And how does one get back to a new life?

**Padukone:** I think if you're mentally prepared, you know that someday you have to retire.... The only thing is that in sports, it happens very early. Don't get too carried away when you are on the top, you achieve something because we know that when you retire, you will not get the same kind of attention, you will not get the same kind of feedback.... It is tough, but I think a lot depends on each individual sportsperson.

**Sethi:** When you do something with so much intensity, with so much obsession, and in a sport like mine, I retired finally at the age of 53, so I've been playing for 40 years with a huge intensity... you've just had enough. I don't want to see a billiards table, and I don't go back to the club. So, in my case, it's beautiful. I used to never cry when I used to play because, you know, I used to suppress my emotions. Today, I cry while watching a movie. So it's beautiful. I'm experiencing life, you know, other than the blinkered life of an athlete. There's no more madness.

**Anand:** A very big part of my life was being a sportsperson, but that transition when you switch from one to the other is going to be always tricky. I think the problem is, in order to keep competing, you have to have 100 per cent belief in yourself. But it's hard to do that when you're also thinking it's time to stop, and how I'm going to stop, and that's the tricky phase. But for the rest, yes, I think I will get to a point when I will be a human being again.

**Leander:** You know, my father kept on preparing me for Olympic after Olympic. It was like changing shirts. He forgot that the Olympics was only every four years....

Martina Navratilova... kept me going by teaching me the tricks of longevity, both in recovery, diet, spirituality, and with Martina Hingis, we won four Grand Slams in 16 months.

The last 10 years on the tour were really hard. It was really lonely. I am very grateful to Covid for having a global pandemic to finally get me to turn my rackets in. My mom locked them up, and I haven't seen them since. I have taken the last three-and-a-half years off. I have a complete flatline in a heartbeat when I see a tennis court. I only play when I do exhibitions at Wimbledon or, I play with my daughter, who is now wanting to be the third-generation Olympic athlete in our family.

Saionee Chakraborty



**"When I want someone to play chess, I want them to enjoy chess, I want them to gain the mental habits that you will get from chess. The sporting success is really accidental. And as a country, when sports becomes a mass movement, that's when it will happen"** — Viswanathan Anand, five-time world chess champion



## DECOR

# SUNITA KANORIA SHARES FLORAL DECOR IDEAS FOR HOLI TO CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF FRESHNESS AND RENEWAL OF THE FESTIVAL



Holi Ke Rang: A Floral Symphony

Rangotsav

**H**oli isn't just a festival of colours, it's a celebration of life itself, deeply intertwined with nature's rhythm. As spring arrives, the world around us bursts into bloom, just like the vibrant hues of Holi. Flowers, an essential part of Holi, don't just add beauty — they carry meaning. Marigolds symbolise prosperity and positivity. Roses, deep and rich in colour, speak of love and joy, just like the laughter and playful splashes of colour that define Holi. These blossoms aren't just for decoration. They're woven into garlands, used in rituals and even turned into natural powders, making them an intrinsic part of the celebration. Here are five Holi-themed flower arrangements that can liven up your celebrations.

## HOLI KE RANG: A FLORAL SYMPHONY

Jute wood has been used to craft the buckets in this artistic floral display, symbolising the vibrant essence of Holi. Jute wood holds deep cultural and religious significance in Holi celebrations, particularly during Holika Dahan, a ritual performed on the eve of Holi. In this sacred ceremony, people gather to light a bonfire, symbolising the victory of good over evil, as it commemorates the burning of the demoness Holika. Jute wood is often used in this pyre as it burns efficiently and represents purification, marking the beginning of the festivities that follow. The buckets, made from jute wood, have been painted white to enhance their aesthetic appeal, creating a striking contrast with the colourful floral arrangement. Flowing from these buckets, yellow and orange marigolds, along with delicate yellow and purple gypsophila (gypsies), are arranged to resemble a cascade of colours being poured out, capturing the lively and playful spirit of Holi.

Each flower used in this installation carries a special meaning in the festival of colours. Marigolds, in their bright yellow and orange hues, symbolise prosperity, positivity, and the triumph of light over darkness. These flowers are often used in Holi celebrations, adorning temples, homes, and festive gatherings. Their fragrance is also believed to purify the surroundings. Gypsophila, with its delicate yellow and purple blooms, adds a whimsical charm, representing the joyous and carefree nature of Holi.

At the base of the installation, a vibrant floral rangoli is created using rose petals, marigold petals, and fresh green leaves. Roses, with their deep red colour, symbolise love and celebration, while marigold petals enhance

the festive aura with their warm golden tones. The addition of green leaves balances the composition, signifying renewal and harmony.

## RANGOTSAV

This stunning Holi-themed installation beautifully captures the essence of the festival, blending traditional elements with artistic craftsmanship. The structure is supported by two iron tools at the back, forming a sturdy canvas. A central iron rod, wrapped in vibrant pink silk cloth, adds a bold, eye-catching contrast to the greenery. Fresh green leaves have been intricately arranged to create a lush and natural backdrop, symbolising renewal and the arrival of spring. Jute baskets, filled with bright Holi colours, are placed to bring an authentic festive feel. These baskets, woven from natural fibre, emphasise the eco-friendly essence of Holi while enhancing the aesthetic appeal. Handcrafted *pichkari*s (sprinklers)

are strategically positioned. The use of tassels in shades of red, orange, and green adds a decorative touch, swaying gently and bringing movement to the design.

## THE FLORAL COLOUR PALETTE

This vibrant floral canvas beautifully embodies the festive spirit of colours and nature. The backdrop is made of green leaves, creating a fresh and lively base that highlights the vivid floral arrangement. The word 'HOLI' is prominently spelt out in red roses, symbolising love, joy, and the exuberance of the festival. Surrounding the text, chrysanthemums in shades of deep maroon and soft lilac are arranged gracefully, adding depth and texture to the composition. To enhance the festive charm, clusters of yellow and pink gypsophila (gypsies) are delicately placed across the canvas, bringing a delicate contrast and a soft, dreamy

The Floral Colour Palette

effect to the overall design. Small, bright button flowers add further pops of yellow, complementing the other floral hues and mirroring the vibrant colour palette of Holi. The arrangement is set on a wooden easel.

## BLOOMING SPLASH

This Holi installation is a perfect blend of nature, artistry, and tradition, beautifully capturing the essence of the festival. At the heart of this display is a handcrafted *pichkari*, meticulously made out of raffia, a natural fibre known for its rustic and eco-friendly appeal. The *pichkari* is positioned in a way that gives the illusion of splashing colours, adding a sense of movement and liveliness to the design. The raffia strands are carefully arranged to give it a structured yet handcrafted feel. Emerging from the *pichkari* is a magnificent arch of flowers. The floral arrangement is a harmonious mix of different flowers, thoughtfully chosen for their vibrancy and texture. The arch is adorned with chrysanthemums in shades of deep burgundy and soft pink, creating a striking contrast. Alongside them, bright yellow

button flowers are interwoven, adding warmth and a sense of festivity. The floral cascade gracefully curves, enhancing the illusion that colours are being sprayed from the *pichkari*, making the entire arrangement feel dynamic and alive.

At the base of the display, packets of Holi colours in bright pink, yellow, blue, and green are carefully placed, reinforcing the theme of the festival. Surrounding them are lush green leaves, which provide a fresh and natural contrast to the bold hues of the flowers and colours. The inclusion of these elements ties together the traditional and modern aspects of Holi, reminding viewers of both its natural beauty and playful spirit.

## UDAAN: THE FLIGHT OF COLOURS

This arrangement is a harmonious blend of tradition, artistry, and nature, set in a beautifully curated space. The installation is centred around delicate handcrafted birds made from silk in soft shades of pink and yellow. These fabric birds, carefully folded and shaped, add a whimsical and artistic touch to the display, symbolising freedom, celebration and the arrival of spring. The birds are perched elegantly on slender sticks, appearing as if they are fluttering above the floral arrangements, creating a dynamic and graceful visual effect.

Adding depth and texture to the arrangement is the areca palm, which has been coloured in shades of blue and lilac. The bold and striking hues of the palm leaves contrast beautifully with the softer tones of the silk birds, making them stand out. These leaves are carefully arranged and supported by bamboo, ensuring a strong yet natural framework that enhances the verticality of the design. The palm leaves cascade gracefully, creating movement and fluidity, almost resembling a flowing ribbon of colours.

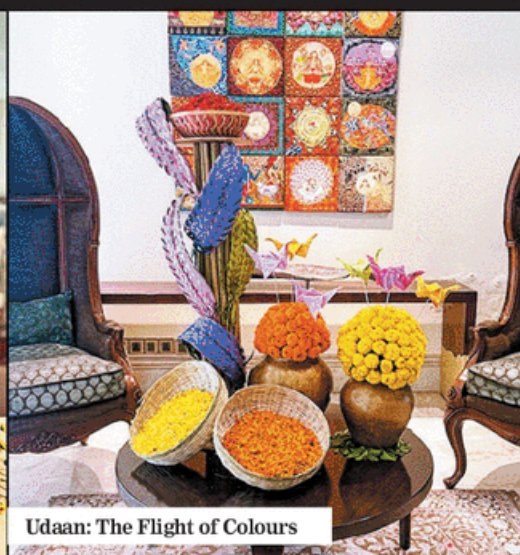
At the base of the arrangement, a rich and vibrant floral display brings warmth and festivity to the setting. Large, rounded clusters of yellow and orange marigolds are placed in traditional brass pots. Complementing these floral elements, two baskets filled with marigold petals in bright yellow and deep orange rest on the table, adding an extra layer of vibrancy. The scattered petals evoke the playful essence of Holi, where colours are tossed in the air in celebration.

The setting itself is elegantly framed by classic wooden chairs with plush cushions, enhancing the regal and festive ambience of the space. A beautifully detailed wall tapestry featuring traditional Indian motifs in bold red, blue, and gold serves as a stunning backdrop.

Sunita Kanoria trained at Pushpa Bitan and is a judge for national-level flower arrangement contests. She currently utilises her time and talent as a floral decor demonstrator at various forums



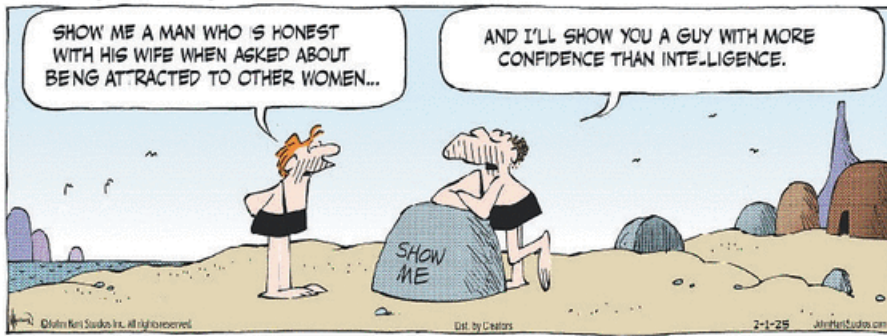
Blooming Splash



Udaan: The Flight of Colours



## B.C. by Johnny Hart



## Luann by Greg Evans



## Peanuts by Charles Schulz



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



## Flash Gordon by Dan Schkade



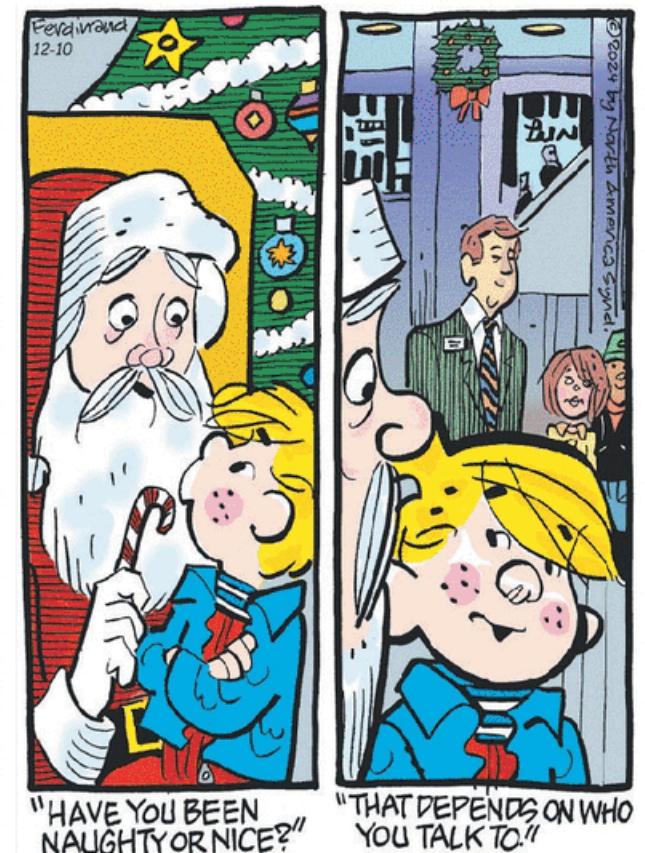
## Hagar the Horrible by Chris Browne



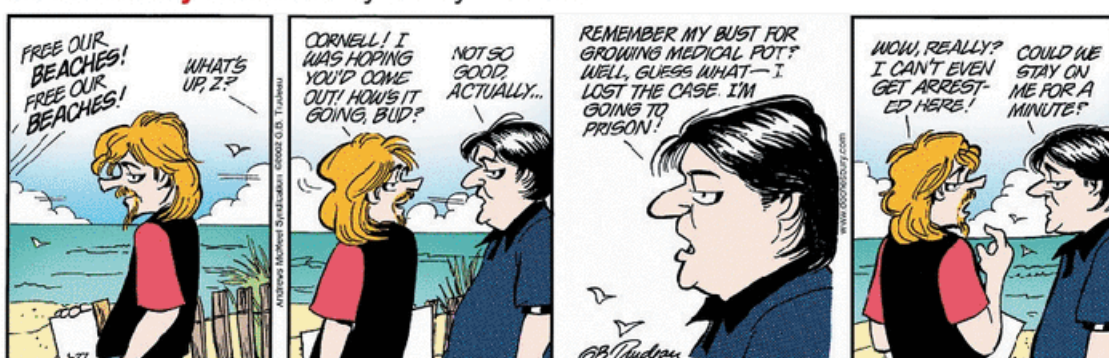
## Blondie by Dean Young



## Dennis the Menace



## Doonesbury Classics by Garry Trudeau





## PUZZLE

11536

## SUDOKU MODERATE

			4	5	2			
6		2						
5			8	9			7	
						1		7
7				2				3
2		5						4
	4				1			8
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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 11534 is on the right

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

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11537

## SUDOKU GENTLE

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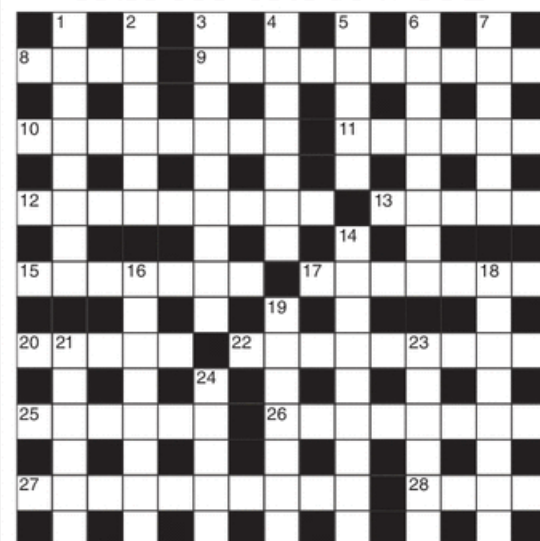
Fill in the 9x9 square grid with the numbers one to nine. The numbers should be arranged in such a way that each row, column and mini-grid contains one of each number. Solution to Sudoku 11535 is on the right

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

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14625

## CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 8 Card game is nowhere near over (4)  
 9 Senseless trial with on air broadcast (10)  
 10 Precipitation almost cold during autumn? (8)  
 11 Some prefer video to get passionate (6)  
 12 Obstacle about to block pub outing (9)  
 13 Group of women hurt embracing sweetheart (5)  
 15 Shrinking in action being seduced (7)  
 17 Dressing declared forbidden before date (7)  
 20 Hospital department admitting stroke is severe (5)  
 22 Old boy with hearing thing (9)

- 25 Car shortly carrying a learner driver (6)  
 26 Blasting birds finally making owl noises (8)  
 27 He's nastier, unhinged, showing strength? (10)  
 28 Young woman left halfwit (4)

## DOWN

- 1 Beetle has one motor at speed (8)  
 2 Catch Queen following sentimental stuff (6)  
 3 Banker, say, busier pocketing single note (9)  
 4 Puritan accepting heartless evil is beginning (7)  
 5 Somewhat tight, in fact firm, initially (5)  
 6 In eating, our man devours pig (8)  
 7 Local putting green round tee (6)  
 14 Nag perhaps, and chores are undone (9)  
 16 Stood our ground in the open (8)  
 18 My lord purchases old cape (8)  
 19 Adult hammered and confused (7)  
 21 Gossip about the French holiday home (6)  
 23 Bench is put in order (6)  
 24 Opposed to criminal's first caper (5)

## Yesterday's solution

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

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.

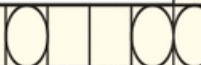
GANAI



ABGYB



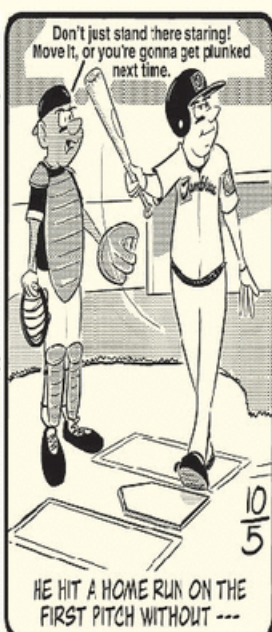
LFITEL



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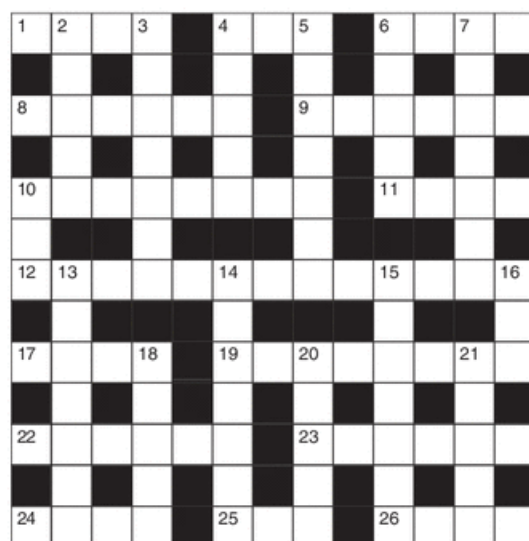
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ALIAS WEIGH GAZEBO INFAMY  
 Answer: At the last minute, Godzilla decided to not destroy the tiny town, which — WAS BIG OF HIM

14277

## QUICK CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 1 Majority (4)  
 4 Mongrel (3)  
 6 Onslaught (4)  
 8 Find (6)  
 9 Mood (6)  
 10 Trust (8)  
 11 Spoken (4)  
 12 Forecast (13)  
 17 Heal (4)

## DOWN

- 19 Astonish (8)  
 22 Elementary (6)  
 23 Tumbler (6)  
 24 Hades (4)  
 25 Finish (3)  
 26 Spot (4)  
 2 Domicile (5)  
 3 Thrifty (7)  
 4 Washed (5)  
 5 Withdraw (7)

## 6 Casanova (5)

- 7 Imprecise (7)  
 10 Tear (3)  
 13 Humdrum (7)  
 14 Indecent (7)  
 15 Slaughter (7)  
 16 Before (3)  
 18 Eject (5)  
 20 Fanatical (5)  
 21 Slumber (5)

## Yesterday's solution

Across: 3 Abut; 7 Earn; 8 Gust; 9 Hello; 10 Gala; 11 Packet; 13 Ambition; 15 Redo; 16 Diva; 17 Audience; 18 Hostel; 21 Busy; 23 Abode; 24 Leap; 25 Exam; 26 Shoe.  
 Down: 1 Cava; 2 Inhabitant; 3 Ally; 4 Unopened; 5 Luck; 6 Stationery; 10 Grandchild; 12 Corned beef; 14 In a flash; 19 Snap; 20 Robe; 22 Sham.

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## DURRI BHALLA HAS RECIPES TO MAKE YOUR HOLI PARTY A DELICIOUS AFFAIR



**R**ang barse... Holi hai! Holi is one of the most joyful and colorful festivals of India. There is a lot of dancing, playing with colours, and sharing of sweets and festive dishes with friends and family. There are special foods that people enjoy during Holi like *gujiya*, *thandai*, *dahi vadas*, *jalebis*, *malpuas*, and many more. Here I have given six Holi favourites that are easy to make at home. Happy Holi to all the t2 readers!



Khasta Kachori With Aloo Sabzi (Potato Curry)

### KHASTA KACHORI WITH ALOO SABZI (POTATO CURRY)

It is believed that the Marwari community of India can be credited for inventing this delicious *kachori*, which was primarily served to businessmen who travelled far and wide because the *kachoris* can stay fresh for long periods. If had with *aloo sabzi*, it makes for a hearty breakfast. This humble stuffed *kachori*, even as we transcend generations, is an inexpensive snack that has the power to bring generations together. Each state has its own variant of this *kachori*. *Raj kachori* all over North India, *lilva kachori* of Gujarat, *hinger kachori* of West Bengal, *Multani moth kachori* of Delhi, and so on.

#### INGREDIENTS

##### #For the dough

- 2 cups refined flour
- ½ tsp *ajwain*
- ½ cup ghee
- Salt to taste

##### #For the filling

- 1 cup *urad dal* soaked
- 3tbsp coriander seeds
- 2tsp cumin seeds
- 2tsp fennel seeds
- 1tsp black pepper
- 1tsp garam masala

#### powder

- 1tsp black salt
- 2tsp *amchoor* powder (mango powder)
- 4tbsp oil
- 1tbsp ginger paste
- 2tsp finely chopped green chilli
- 1tsp baking powder
- Salt to taste

##### #For the aloo sabzi

- 600g potatoes, boiled till just cooked but not very soft, chopped into small pieces
- 3 tomatoes finely chopped
- 3 green chillies finely chopped
- 1tsp ginger paste
- ½ tsp *hing*

##### #For the khada masala

- 2 cardamoms
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1tsp cumin seeds
- 1tbsp coriander seeds

#### METHOD

##### #For the dough

- Mix all the ingredients till it looks like bread crumbs. Add sufficient water to make a smooth dough and let rest for 20 minutes.

##### #For the filling

- Drain the soaked dal and grind to a coarse paste.
- Roast the coriander

seeds, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, black peppercorns, lightly in a pan. When cool grind to a coarse powder.

- In a *kadhai* heat oil and add *hing* (asafoetida) followed by dal. Roast the dal till it changes colour.

- Now add half the ground spices. Then add powdered spices (chilli powder, turmeric powder, garam masala powder, black salt and salt to taste).

- Add ginger and green chillies. Sauté the dal till totally dry.

- Now add *amchoor* and baking soda. Mix everything well. Remove and let it cool.

##### #To make the kachoris

- Divide the dough into small roundels. The size depends on you.

- Make each round smooth and with the palm of your hand make a *katori*. Put 1tbsp of the stuffing. Cover with the dough and make the dough very smooth and round (there should be no cracks). Then on the palm itself flatten the dough to make a *puri* shape (neither too thin, nor too thick).

- Heat oil in a *kadhai* for deep frying. The temperature of the oil should be medium hot. Gently lower the *puris*. Fry till golden brown. It will also puff up nicely. Remove and place on a wire rack.

##### #For the aloo sabzi

- In a *kadhai*, heat 2tbsp oil. Then add *khada masala*. Sauté till fragrant on medium flame. Then add ginger paste and green chillies. Add *hing*.

- Now add tomatoes and cook on high flame first, add salt, then on medium flame cook for 5 minutes.

- Now add ½ tsp turmeric powder, 1tsp Kashmiri *lal mirch* powder, 1tsp *dhania* powder, ½ tsp cumin powder, 1tbsp Kasuri *methi* crushed, and ½ tsp garam masala powder. Mix well with tomatoes and cook well till oil comes out.

- Now add the potatoes and sauté for 2 minutes.

- Now add 3 cups hot water, put gas on high and cook till gravy is slightly thick. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves.

- Serve with Khasta Kachoris.

### PAKODA WALI KADHI

*Kadhi* is believed to have originated in the arid landscapes of Rajasthan, where cooks incorporated dairy products to compensate for the limited availability of vegetables. From Rajasthan it spread to Gujarat and Sindh regions. It was traditionally concocted when households had surplus milk, which was churned into butter, leaving behind buttermilk (*chaas*) to be used in preparing *kadhi* to avoid wastage.

Each state has its own variation of *kadhi*. Gujarati *kadhi* is sweetened with jaggery, Punjabi *kadhi* is usually with onions. In Maharashtra they use *kokum* and it is called Sol *Kadhi*. They also make with raw mango and that is called *aabyachi kadhi*. The Haryana version is Haryanvi *hara chhole kadhi*. In Arunachal and Bihar they call it *kadhi badi* (made with small *badis*). The name *kadhi* is derived from Indo-Aryan languages and means to take out. That means the longer the *kadhi* cooks the better it tastes. *Kadhi* is also served as *prasad* in Gurdwaras in their *langar*.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3tbsp oil
- ¼ tsp fenugreek seeds (*methi dana*)
- 1tsp cumin seeds
- ½ cup onions finely chopped
- Few green chillies finely chopped (according to taste)
- 3 cups curd
- ½ cup *besan*
- 2tbsp garlic paste
- 1tbsp coriander powder
- 1tsp red chilli powder
- 1tsp turmeric powder
- 6 plus 1 cup water
- Salt to taste

##### #For the tadka

- 3tbsp oil or ghee
- A pinch of *hing* (asafoetida)
- 1tsp cumin seeds
- A handful of curry leaves
- 2 dry red chillies broken into halves
- ¼ tsp red chilli powder

#### METHOD

##### #To make kadhi

- In a bowl put 1 cup curd and *besan* and mix well.
- Add garlic paste, coriander powder, red chilli powder, turmeric powder and mix well.
- Now add the 2 cups of curd and whisk well. It should be very smooth.
- Now add 6 cups of water and whisk well. Keep aside.
- In a large pot heat oil. Add mustard seeds and cumin seeds and let it crackle. Then add onions and chillies and sauté till onions are translucent.
- Now add the curd mixture into the pot. Add 1 more cup of water and keep stirring slowly till the first boil.
- Now on medium heat cook for 30 minutes. The *kadhi* should not be thick, nor too watery. Now add salt.
- Now take a small pan. Add 3tbsp ghee or oil and heat it. Add *hing*, curry leaves, cumin seeds and dry red chillies. Lift the *tadka* pan from the fire and then add chilli powder and pour the contents into the *kadhi*.

##### #For the pakoras

- In a bowl, put 1 cup *besan*, add ¼ tsp baking powder, 1tsp fenugreek seeds, 1tsp red chilli flakes, 1tsp coriander powder, 1tsp turmeric, 1tsp salt, 1tsp crushed ginger.
- Now add ½ cup chopped onions, 2 green chillies very finely chopped, a handful of very finely chopped coriander leaves and 1 cup finely chopped spinach leaves. Mix everything well.
- Add water to make a dough.
- Heat oil in a *kadhai* for deep frying. Then put small amount of the dough like 1tbsp, and put in the oil.
- Fry the pakoras on medium heat till golden. Remove and keep in a wire basket.

##### #To serve

- Just before serving put the pakoras in the *kadhi*. Let them soak for about 5 minutes and then serve.

**NOTE:** The pakoras soak the *kadhi* and will tend to thicken the *kadhi*.



Pakoda Wali Kadhi



## FOOD

**BAKED GUJIYA  
(A HEALTHY VERSION)**

The earliest mention of *gujiya* is in the 13th century, when it was a sun-dried snack made of wheat flour, honey and jaggery. Then, during the Mughal era, *gujiya* was refined into a delicacy by adding ingredients like *khoya* and shaping and decorating it. *Gujiya* became a star in Braj, an area around Mathura and Vrindavan, where it was flavoured with cardamom. When it comes to Indian sweets, *gujiya* holds a special place in people's hearts. Its presence is felt in almost all the pious Indian occasions and wedding



Baked Gujiya

feasts. *Gujiya* was the favourite food of Lord Krishna and, since Holi is a celebration of the divine and eternal love of Radha and Krishna, it is also offered as *prasad* to Lord Krishna.

**INGREDIENTS****#For the dough**

- ½ refined flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 3tsp melted ghee and little salt. Water as required to make the dough
- Mix all the ingredients and make a soft dough. Then cover with a damp cloth and let rest for 30 minutes

**#For the filling**

- 150g *khoya* (*mava*)
- 1/3 cup caster sugar

- ¼ cup desiccated coconut
- 2tbsp almonds chopped
- Raisins according to taste
- A pinch of cardamom powder

**METHOD**

• Heat a frying pan and put the crumbled *khoya* and cook till it is soft and comes together. Cool the *khoya* at room temperature.

• Now add desiccated coconut, sugar, almonds, cashews and cardamom powder and mix everything well.

**#To assemble the gujiyas**

- Divide the dough into 6 to 7 portions. It depends on the size you prefer.
- Grease the surface before rolling the dough. Then roll to make a

round *puri* shape. Wet the edges of the rolled dough.

- Put a portion of the filling on one half of the *puri*. Lift the other half over the filling and seal the edges to make sure there are no air bubbles. The shape will be like an empanada. Pinch the edges of the *puri* with your thumb to give a decorative pattern for the *gujiya*.
- Grease a baking dish and place the *gujiyas*. Brush the top with melted ghee and bake in a pre-heated oven at 200°C for 15-20 minutes until they turn a nice golden.
- Decorate with some crushed dry fruits and silver *wark*. This is optional.



Dahi Bhalla (Dahi Wad)

**DAHI BHALLA  
(DAHI VADA)**

A recipe of *dahi bhalla* (*Kshiravatat*) is mentioned in *Manasollasa*, a 12th century Sanskrit encyclopedia, compiled by Someshvara III, who ruled from present day Karnataka. Today, *dahi vada* is prepared on festivals such as Holi and is a popular chaat. In the 18th century, the Mughal *khansamas* prepared this delight in their kitchens using curd, herbs and spices to improve the digestion of their Kings.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 250g *urad* dal
- 50g *moong* dal
- 1tsp green chillies chopped fine
- 1tsp ginger paste
- Salt to taste
- 1tsp cumin seeds
- 500 ml oil for deep frying
- 300 ml curd whisked
- A handful of chopped coriander leaves
- 2tsp sugar powder
- Mint chutney
- Tamarind and date chutney
- Roasted cumin powder
- 1tsp crushed ginger

**METHOD**

- Soak *urad* and *moong* dal in 2 cups of water for at least 4 hours.
- Drain the dals, blend them using little of the water they were soaked in. The batter should not be thin.
- Remove the dal to a big bowl.

Whisk the dal with your hand so that the batter swells. Whisk only from one side.

- Now add chopped coriander, chillies and cumin. Add salt to taste. Then add crushed ginger.
- Now mix all the ingredients and start whisking the same direction you whisked the dals. Let it rest for 10 minutes.
- Now heat oil for deep-frying in a *kadhai*.
- With wet hands take little batter and try to make it round and drop it into the hot oil. Now keep the temperature low. It does not matter if it is not round when you put the batter in the oil. It will automatically become round when it starts cooking.
- Keep shaking the *vadas* from time to time gently and let it cook for at least 6-7 minutes on low temperature. Then remove to a container.
- In a bowl put lukewarm water with a little salt. And ½ tsp *hing*.
- Put the *vadas* in the water and let soak for 15 minutes. Then gently squeeze the water from the *vadas* and keep aside. See that you don't break the *vadas*.
- Put curd in a bowl. Add sugar and salt to taste. Mix very well.

**#For the assembly**

- In a serving bowl put the *vadas*. Then pour the curd over them. Then put little mint chutney and tamarind chutney. Sprinkle chopped coriander leaves. You can sprinkle some chaat masala too.

**REFRESHING  
PAAN SHOTS**

Paan shots are made with betel leaves which have been used in India right from 400BC. The practice of having betel leaves after meals became common between 75AD and 300AD. The paan shots are especially enjoyed during the festival of Holi where you greet your guests with this drink in shot glasses. Betel leaves are beneficial for treating diabetes, healing wounds, oral hygiene, constipation, as an antioxidant, for asthma, cholesterol, and many other ailments.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 4 betel leaves (you can put more if you like a stronger flavour)
- ¼ tsp fennel seeds
- ¼ tsp cardamom powder
- Few drops of green food colour
- 1tbsp *gulkand*
- 4 ice cubes
- Blend all the above ingredients to a paste
- ½ cup chilled milk
- 2 scoops of vanilla ice-cream
- 3-4 cubes of ice

**METHOD**

- In a blender jar put 4tbsp of the betel paste, milk, ice-cream and ice cubes. Blend and pour into shot glasses. You can add a little sugar if you like.



Refreshing Paan Shots



Ragda Chaat

**RAGDA CHAAT**

The most significant ingredient in chaat is the masala, and also the numbers of layers of complex flavours (sweet, fiery, tart and savoury) pressed in one dish gives chaat its actual significance. Every state of India has its own composition of chaat. Here I have shown a chaat dish which is dear to Maharashtra and West Bengal.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 cup white peas soaked overnight
- 4 large potatoes peeled and kept whole
- 2 cups water
- 1tsp salt
- Pressure-cook the above ingredients for 1 whistle and then for 10 minutes more. Remove the aloo and cut into small pieces. Keep aside. Do not throw the water

**#For the chaat**

- 2tsp oil
- A pinch of *hing* (asafoetida)
- 1 finely chopped onion
- 1tbsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1tsp cumin seeds
- 1 chopped green chilli
- 1tsp turmeric
- 1tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- 1tbsp *amchoor* powder
- 1tsp Kashmiri *lal mirch*
- 1tsp *garam* masala powder
- 2 grated tomatoes
- 2tbsp curd
- Green mint and coriander chutney
- Tamarind and date chutney
- Finely chopped onions for garnish
- Finely chopped tomatoes for garnish
- Chaat masala for sprinkling
- Chilli powder for sprinkling
- Fine *sev* (*bhujia*)
- Chopped coriander leaves

**METHOD**

- In a *kadhai* heat oil. Put *hing* and cumin seeds. Once it crackles add onions and cook till translucent.
- Now add ginger-garlic paste and green chilli. Saute for a minute.
- Now add turmeric, coriander powder, cumin powder, Kashmiri *lal mirch* powder and *garam masala* powder. Cook the masalas well.
- Now add tomatoes and cook for 1 minute till the masalas and tomatoes are well combined.
- Now add the peas with its water and the potatoes. Mix well and cook for 5 minutes till some water evaporates. Do not make the mixture very hard.
- Now add the coriander leaves and mix well. Take it off the flame.

**#For the assembly**

- In a serving bowl first put the *ragda* mixture. Then drizzle little curd over it. Then put some green chutney. On top of that some tamarind sweet chutney.
- Now sprinkle some onions, tomatoes, chaat masala, red chilli powder and *sev*.
- Lastly sprinkle finely chopped coriander leaves.

Pictures: Pabitra Das

*Durri Bhalla is a cookery expert and author of Indian Bohra Cuisine and Inner Truth To Good Health And Weight Loss. You can find her @durribhallaakitchen on Instagram, @Durribhallaakitchen on Facebook and Durri Bhalla on YouTube*





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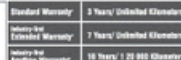
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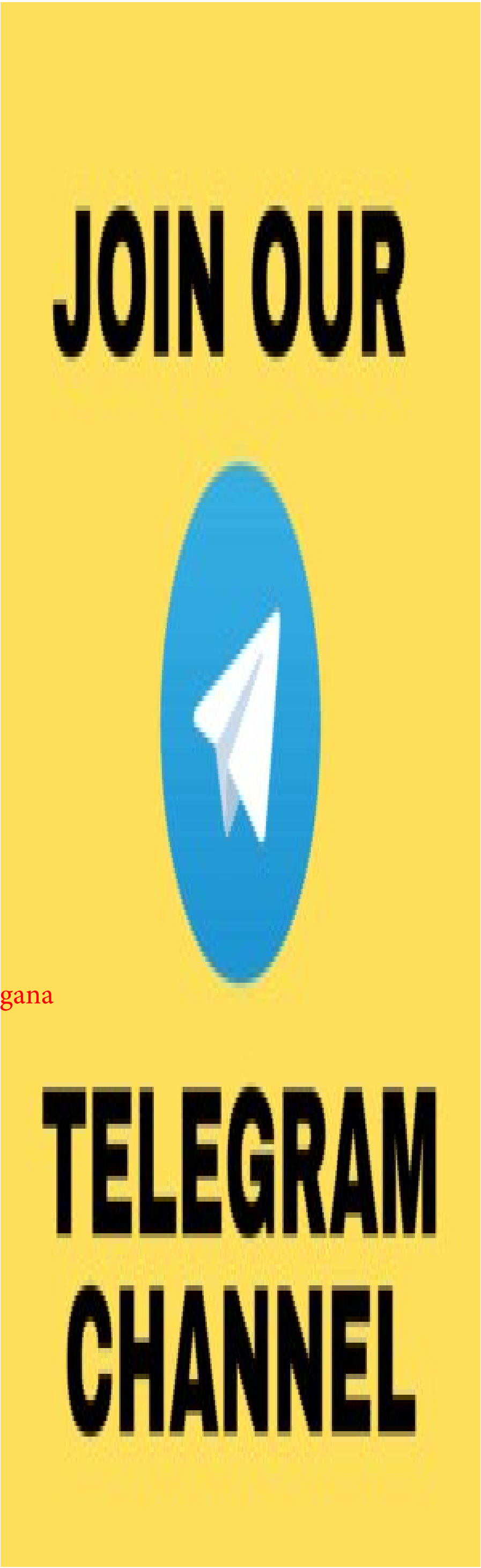
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