

EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

GALAXIA QUEST

Leisurely Yours

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JULY 2026
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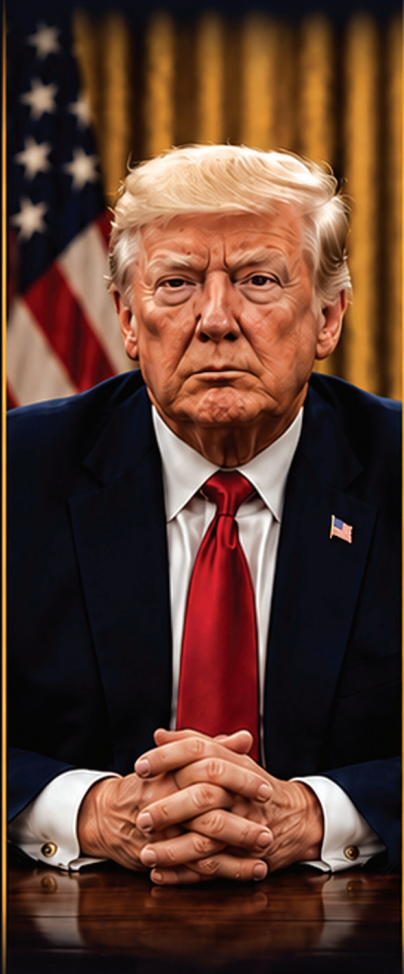
POLITICS
TRUMP
THE MAN WHO
WIRED THE
GLOBAL ORDER



CRICKET
VRAT DHOLI
A NEW OBSESSION
CREATED
HEALTHINESS



BOLLYWOOD
ANVEER SINGH
HOLLYWOOD'S
PERPETUAL
ENTERTAINMENT MACHINE



THE DISRUPTORS

HOW THREE ICONS CHANGED THEIR WORLDS



SRI LANKA

PARADISE
REIMAGINED



NEW EXPERIENCES.
TIMELESS BEAUTY.



YATRA INDIA

MOST TRANSFORMATIVE
SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS



PLACES THAT HEAL.
EXPERIENCES THAT STAY.



OBESITY

THE PANDEMIC NOBODY
WANTS TO TALK ABOUT



WHAT'S DRIVING IT.
HOW TO STOP IT.



PLAYBACK

VOICES BEHIND
THE MAGIC

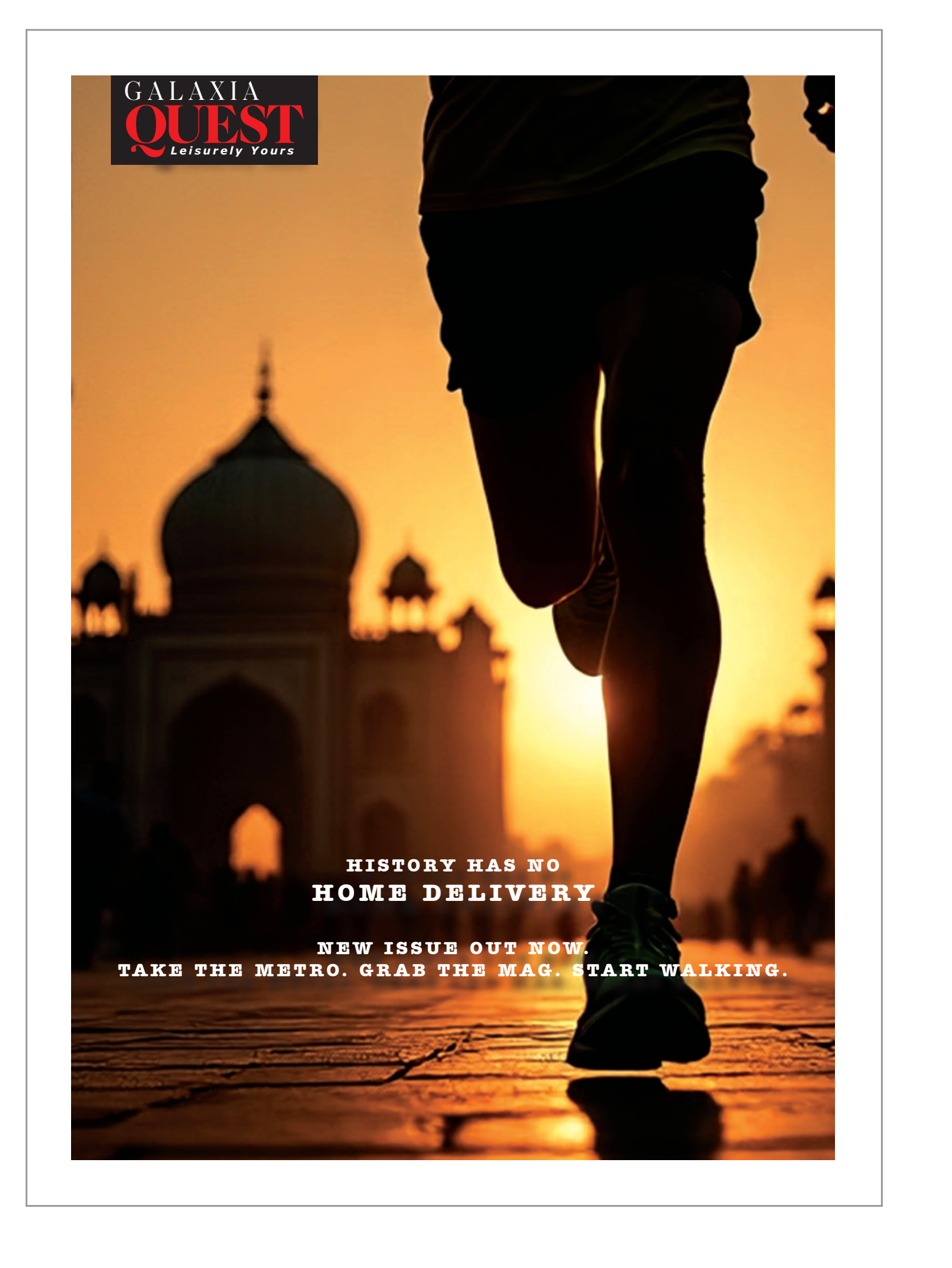


LEGENDS. STORIES.
UNFORGETTABLE HITS.

WELLNESS. TRAVEL. SPIRITUALITY. CULTURE. PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE.

GALAXIA
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COUNTLESS TRADITIONS. ONE LIVING
CIVILISATION. THIS IS INDIA

A full-page photograph of a person running, shown from the waist down in silhouette. The runner is in mid-stride, with one leg forward. The background is a warm, golden sunset sky. In the distance, the iconic domes and arches of the Taj Mahal are visible, slightly out of focus. The ground is a reflective surface, possibly water or wet pavement, showing a clear reflection of the runner and the building.

**GALAXIA
QUEST**
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**HISTORY HAS NO
HOME DELIVERY**

**NEW ISSUE OUT NOW.
TAKE THE METRO. GRAB THE MAG. START WALKING.**

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Photo Courtesy: Meta AI generated, Unsplash

DISRUPT. DOMINATE. DELIVER.

Our cover story reflects what we stand for at Galaxia Quest — disruptors. The three personalities featured on our cover have each changed the way we view life through different lenses: cinema, politics and sport.

The adrenaline in our system finds its perfect rhythm when we watch Virat Kohli take the field. Few sights in modern sport are more compelling than a Kohli in full flow. Similarly, Donald Trump is busy dismantling every conventional way in which we once viewed international politics. His critics argue that he has introduced a “pay-to-play” approach to geopolitics. But is that necessarily a bad thing for an America that still seeks to lead the world?

And then there is Ranveer Singh. The *Dhurandhar* star has never been one to embrace conventional roles. From *Gully Boy* to *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, and now *Dhurandhar*, he has undoubtedly achieved stardom. Yet why does he continue to struggle for acceptance from sections of his own fraternity?

FROM THE EDITOR



A quirky take on Rakhi Sawant awaits you in these pages as we explore what makes her tick. Was Aishwarya Rai subjected to body shaming at Cannes? We bring you an exclusive on the subject.

So turn the pages and immerse yourself in the Galaxia Quest way of life.

Quote of the Month

"It's July. For the rest of the year, let's make the most of what remains. Let us celebrate not only what lies ahead, but also everything we already have."

Happy reading

The **GALAXIA QUEST** way

Bhupendra Chaubey

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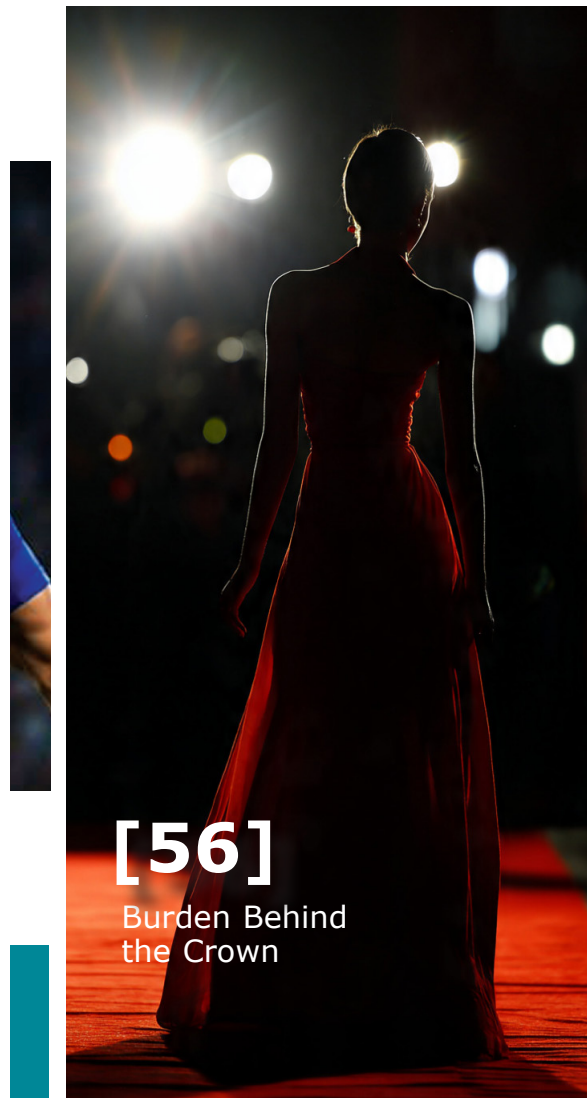
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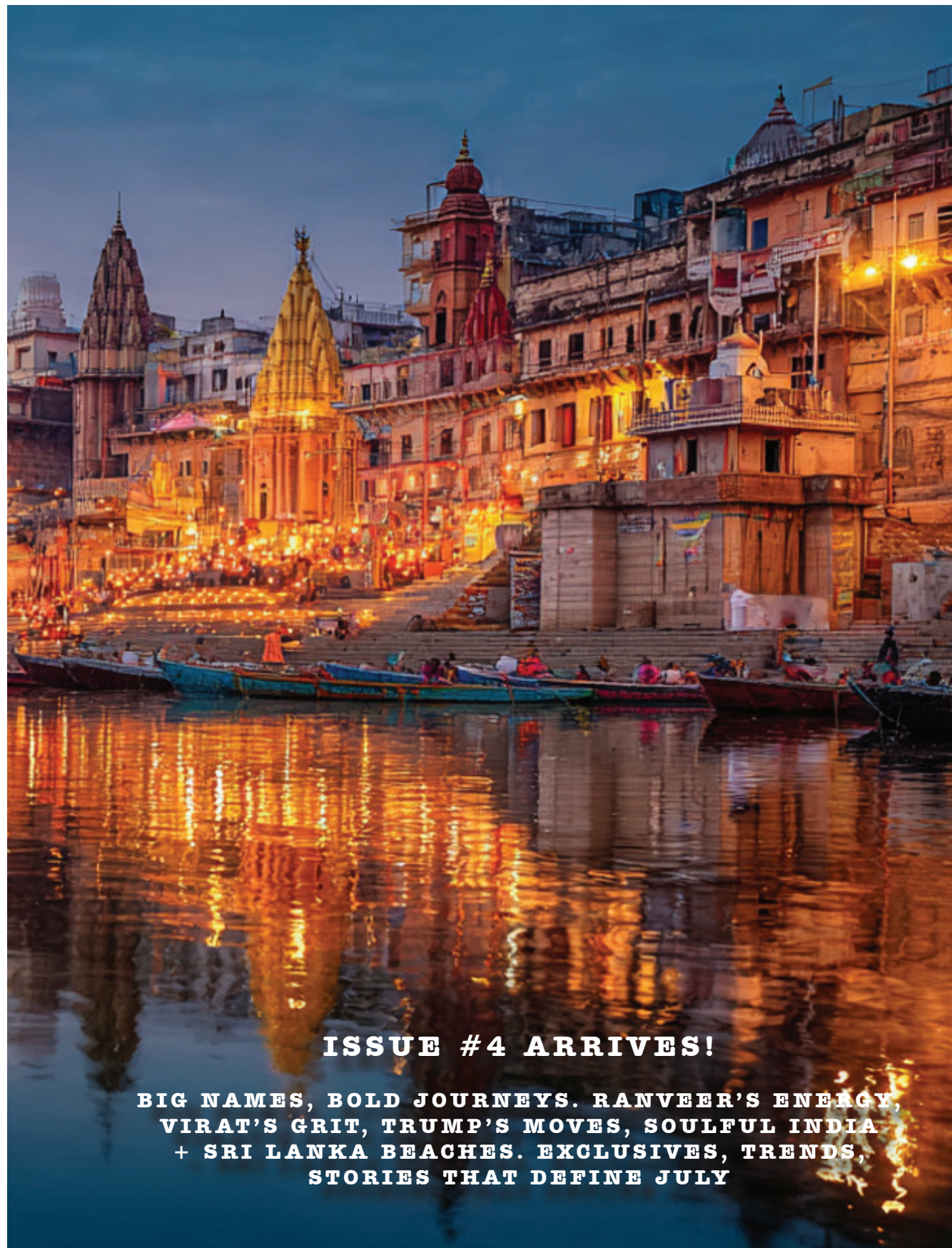
Sun, Skin &
The Truth About
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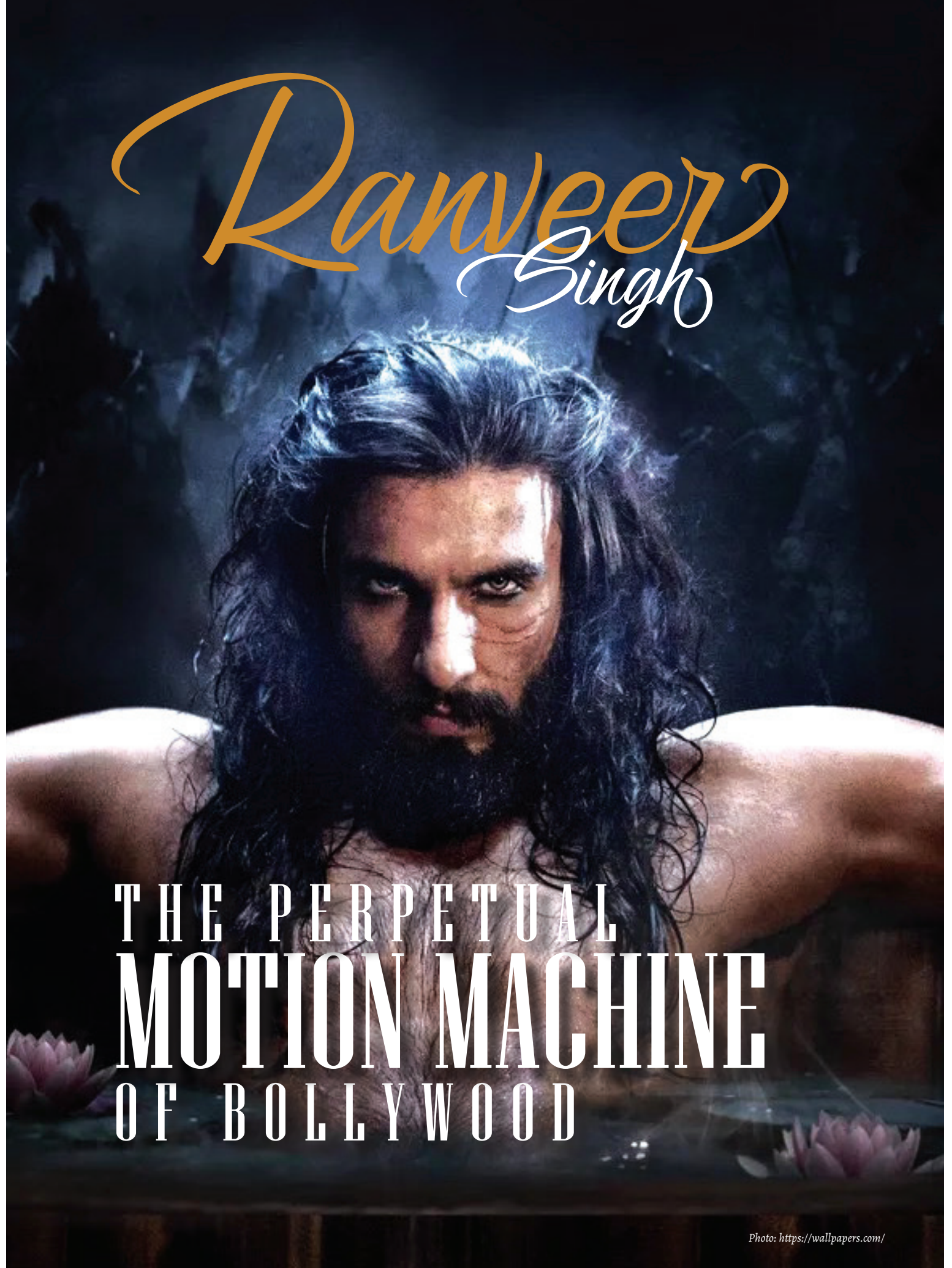
Leisurely Yours





ISSUE #4 ARRIVES!

**BIG NAMES, BOLD JOURNEYS. RANVEER'S ENERGY,
VIRAT'S GRIT, TRUMP'S MOVES, SOULFUL INDIA
+ SRI LANKA BEACHES. EXCLUSIVES, TRENDS,
STORIES THAT DEFINE JULY**



Ranveer
Singh

THE PERPETUAL
MOTION MACHINE
OF BOLLYWOOD

BY TEAM GALAXIA QUEST

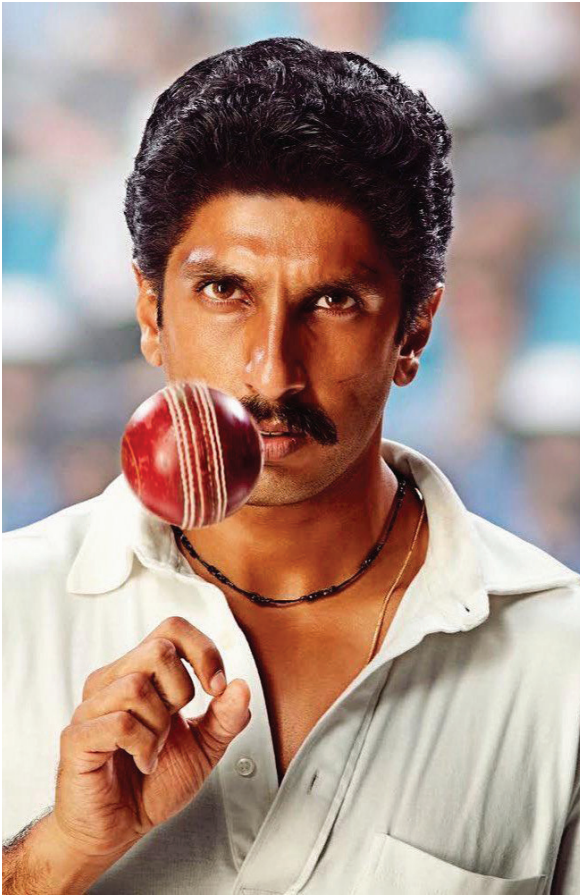
Ranveer Singh is Bollywood's unstoppable spark. Since 2010 he's blended fearless acting, boundless energy, and infectious charm—turning every role and room into something unforgettable, electric, and alive

There are movie stars, and then there are phenomena. The distinction matters. A movie star is a person. A phenomenon is a condition—something that happens to the atmosphere around it, something that changes the temperature of whatever room it enters. Ranveer Singh has spent more than a decade being the latter, and it has cost him a great deal while giving him even more. He arrived in 2010 with *Band Baaja Baaraat* at a moment when Bollywood's leading man was still largely a managed proposition. The industry had its preferred mythology: controlled charisma, careful distance, and the manufactured suggestion of depth. Ranveer ignored all of it. His early performances felt unscripted in the best sense, as though he were responding to a scene rather than executing it. His interviews felt unguarded. His enthusiasm, which could border on overwhelming, felt real. Where other actors cultivated mystique through absence,

FROM LOOTERA TO GULLY BOY AND 83, RANVEER SINGH DELIVERS FEARLESS PERFORMANCES INFUSED WITH HONESTY, HEART, AND JOY. HIS GENEROSITY ON SCREEN AND DEVOTION TO THE CRAFT KEEP AUDIENCES CAPTIVATED, INSPIRED, AND SMILING—FRAME AFTER FRAME.



Photo: <https://wallpapers.com/>



Ranveer cultivated connection through sheer presence. What followed was a body of work that steadily and seriously accumulated. *Lootera* showed he could embody stillness as effectively as energy. *Bajirao Mastani* gave him the scale of a historical epic, and he filled it.

Padmaavat remains one of the most genuinely unsettling villain performances in recent Hindi cinema. Alauddin Khilji is rendered not as pantomime evil but as something hungrier and stranger. *Gully Boy* demanded an entirely different register—something interior and raw—and he found it. In 83, he disappeared so completely into Kapil Dev that the disappearance itself became the performance. Taken together, these films represent a range that most actors spend an entire career pursuing. Yet the actor was always sharing space with the celebrity, and the celebrity had ambitions of his own. Long before personal branding became an industry unto itself, Ranveer understood something about the economics of



WHERE OTHER ACTORS CULTIVATED MYSTIQUE THROUGH ABSENCE, RANVEER CULTIVATED CONNECTION THROUGH SHEER PRESENCE. WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A BODY OF WORK THAT STEADILY AND SERIOUSLY ACCUMULATED. LOOTERA SHOWED HE COULD EMBODY STILLNESS AS EFFECTIVELY AS ENERGY.

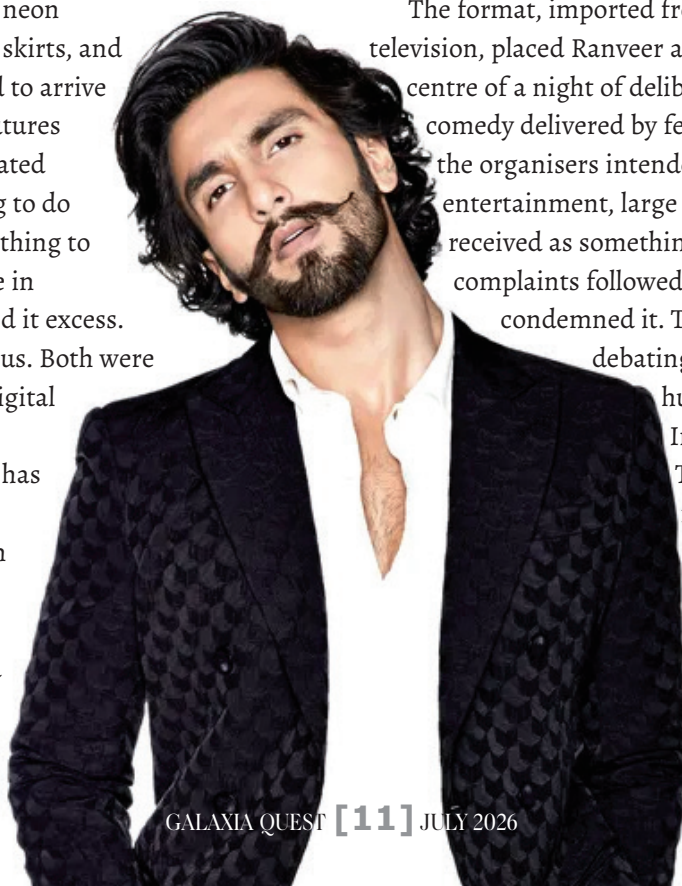


modern fame: sustained attention is a form of capital. Every airport appearance was an event.

Every fashion choice was a provocation. The wardrobe alone—those neon silhouettes, floral suits, skirts, and accessories that seemed to arrive from several possible futures simultaneously—generated debate that had nothing to do with any film and everything to do with keeping a name in circulation. Critics called it excess. Marketers called it genius. Both were probably right. In the digital age, visibility drives relevance, and Ranveer has remained more consistently visible than almost any of his contemporaries. Visibility, of course, is a

double-edged instrument. The first serious firestorm came in 2015 through the AIB Knockout Roast.

The format, imported from American television, placed Ranveer and Arjun Kapoor at the centre of a night of deliberately offensive comedy delivered by fellow celebrities. What the organisers intended as edgy entertainment, large sections of the public received as something else entirely. Police complaints followed. Politicians condemned it. Television spent days debating whether this kind of humour belonged in Indian public life at all. The controversy settled nothing and changed everything because it established a pattern that would repeat: Ranveer at the centre



**THIS IS THE PARTICULAR TRAP
OF A PERSONALITY BUILT ON
SPONTANEITY: THE ARCHIVES ARE
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IN ANOTHER, AND THE INTERNET
IS PATIENT IN WAYS THAT PUBLIC
FIGURES ARE NOT ALWAYS
PREPARED FOR**

of debates far larger than whatever had initially sparked them. Several older interviews and television appearances have since resurfaced online at various points, prompting fresh rounds of criticism.

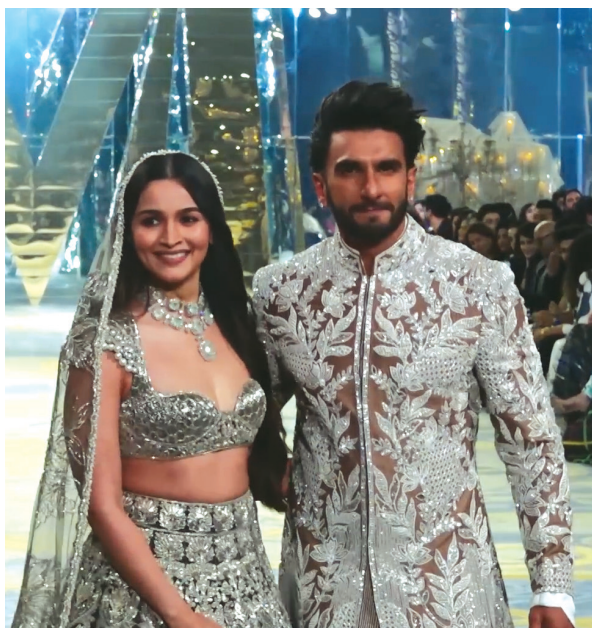
This is the particular trap of a personality built on spontaneity: the archives are permanent, but the context is not. What is said in one cultural moment can be interpreted very differently in another, and the internet is patient in ways that public figures are not always prepared for. In 2022, the nude photoshoot for *Paper* magazine arrived and generated the kind of heat that only India can produce at full volume. The photographs were artistic by intention, referencing classic Hollywood imagery, and their reception was immediate and divided. Supporters celebrated them as bold. Critics filed police complaints.

Television gave the story extensive coverage. Yet what made the episode genuinely interesting was the conversation it forced open around its edges: questions about masculinity, double standards, and why a male celebrity presenting vulnerability might provoke a different reaction from a female celebrity doing something similar. Whether the images moved, disturbed, or offended, they functioned as a Rorschach test for cultural anxieties that India had not yet fully found a language for. The controversy surrounding his recreation of a *Daiva*-inspired sequence from *Kantara* followed a different logic. What appeared



to be a tribute landed, for parts of the Kannadiga community, as something closer to appropriation. The backlash arrived quickly.

Ranveer apologised and clarified that no offence was intended, and that clarification was probably genuine. Yet the episode illustrated a truth about performing in a country as culturally layered as India: symbols carry weight that good



intentions alone cannot lighten. The most consequential dispute of recent years, however, concerns *Don 3*. When Ranveer was announced as the new face of the franchise, stepping into a role that Shah Rukh Khan had made his own across two films, the reactions were understandably intense. Iconic roles attract fierce loyalties. The deeper trouble came later, when reports surfaced that Ranveer had exited the project after significant pre-production work had already been completed. Producers spoke of substantial financial losses.

FWICE ISSUED A NON-COOPERATION DIRECTIVE AGAINST THE ACTOR, A MOVE THAT HEADLINES DESCRIBED AS A BAN, THOUGH FWICE SUBSEQUENTLY CLARIFIED THAT IT WAS A RECOMMENDATION RATHER THAN A LEGAL PROHIBITION

FWICE issued a non-cooperation directive against the actor, a move that headlines described as a ban, though FWICE subsequently clarified that it was a recommendation rather than a legal prohibition. The distinction was real, but the damage to the narrative had already been done. What the *Don 3* situation exposed was less about one actor's decisions than about a Bollywood in transition—an industry increasingly concerned with contracts and professional accountability, where the old informal arrangements between stars and studios are being tested against harder structures. Ranveer found himself at the centre of that transition as well. That is, in a way, the Ranveer Singh story in miniature. He has a particular gift for finding himself at the centre of things, for being present at moments when culture is arguing with itself. This is not entirely accidental. It is, in part, the consequence of a personality that refuses to compress itself into safe dimensions. The same qualities that make him magnetic—his spontaneity, his scale, and his apparent inability to be anything less than fully himself in public—are precisely the qualities that generate friction.

What prevents the controversies from defining him is the work. Without performances that hold up, the spectacle would long ago have consumed the actor. Instead, the films remain, and they are good, and audiences remember them. He is disciplined and chaotic, calculated and impulsive, commercial and experimental. He carries contradiction the way most people carry a phone: constantly, and as though it were the most natural thing in the world. In an age when relevance is perhaps the scarcest and most coveted resource in entertainment, Ranveer Singh remains—stubbornly, fascinatingly, and exhaustingly—relevant. That may be the achievement that outlasts all the noise. ▀



VIRAT KOHLI

THE MADNESS THAT MADE HIM A CRICKET GIANT



Long before the world witnessed Virat Kohli's aggressive celebrations, animated on-field persona, and unmatched consistency, those close to him had already seen the obsession that separated him from everyone else, writes senior cricket journalist **INDRANIL BASU**

When Virat Kohli was barely nine years old, he walked up to his first childhood coach, Suresh Batra, after a brief batting session at the newly launched West Delhi Cricket Academy and said he couldn't stand idle. He sought permission to keep knocking the ball around in one of the empty spaces inside the facility.

Watching the youngster's hunger and relentless energy, everyone present that day sensed they were witnessing someone special — a boy

destined to rule world cricket one day. And that is exactly how it turned out.

This wasn't a one-off incident that predicted Kohli's bright future. There are countless stories of him playing endless matches and going through multiple net sessions that set him apart from the rest of the group.

Another of Kohli's childhood coaches, Raj Kumar Sharma, still remembers one rainy afternoon when training had virtually come to a halt. While most boys stayed away, Kohli gathered



a few teammates and began a knocking practice session on his own. Watching his obsession with batting, his batchmates would often laugh and say, “*Pagal hai.*”

In the end, it was precisely that “*pagalpan*” — the relentless madness to improve — that made Kohli stand apart and shaped him into the fierce competitor and aggressor the cricket world came to admire.

Now that Kohli is in the final phase of his cricketing journey and still displaying the same



relentless hunger to stay ahead of the opposition, his former India coach and business partner, Ravi Shastri, dismisses the perception that Kohli is “arrogant, a spoiled brat, over the top, or constantly on edge” on the field.

In many ways, however, these are precisely the traits that made Kohli mentally tougher than the rest. His aggression, intensity, and refusal to settle for mediocrity were never

weaknesses — they were the qualities that forged him into one of the fiercest competitors modern cricket has ever seen.

It is this constant desire to hunt for more, achieve more, and dominate more that has kept Kohli going for nearly two decades at the highest level. Even when critics — including India head coach Gautam Gambhir — questioned whether Kohli was batting for personal milestones rather than for the team, the “West Delhi boy” never altered the way he looked at the game.

ANOTHER OF KOHLI’S CHILDHOOD COACHES, RAJ KUMAR SHARMA, STILL REMEMBERS ONE RAINY AFTERNOON WHEN TRAINING HAD VIRTUALLY COME TO A HALT. WHILE MOST BOYS STAYED AWAY, KOHLI GATHERED A FEW TEAMMATES AND BEGAN A KNOCKING PRACTICE SESSION ON HIS OWN. WATCHING HIS OBSESSION WITH BATTING, HIS BATCHMATES WOULD OFTEN LAUGH AND SAY, “PAGAL HAI.”



If Kohli felt his journey in T20s and Test cricket had reached its natural end, he was prepared to walk away on his own terms. And if he still believes he can contribute significantly with the bat in the ODI setup, he is unlikely to be bothered too much by outside opinions — even those coming from within Indian cricket.

That has always been Kohli's way. He plays because he believes he can still deliver for the country. The hunger, the ego, the aggression, and the self-belief are all intertwined. Strip him of those qualities, and you probably take away the very essence of what made him Kohli.



IF KOHLI FELT HIS JOURNEY IN T20s AND TEST CRICKET HAD REACHED ITS NATURAL END, HE WAS PREPARED TO WALK AWAY ON HIS OWN TERMS. AND IF HE STILL BELIEVES HE CAN CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY WITH THE BAT IN THE ODI SETUP, HE IS UNLIKELY TO BE BOTHERED TOO MUCH BY OUTSIDE OPINIONS — EVEN THOSE COMING FROM WITHIN INDIAN CRICKET



Even the recent spat with Australian cricketer Travis Head once again showed that if anyone chooses to mess with Kohli, they should be prepared to get it right back. Kohli has never been the kind of cricketer to stay silent, especially against the Australians. He gives it back in the same tone, with the same intensity, and often with even greater conviction.

So heated was the exchange that Kohli completely ignored Travis Head during the post-match handshake. It was almost as if Kohli had decided to cut him off entirely — a clear message that if you provoke him, you should also be ready to face the consequences. In Kohli's world, what you sow is what you reap.





That is precisely why many Australian players think twice before engaging in verbal battles with him. And when Kohli is on the field, sledging an Indian cricketer rarely goes unanswered. He takes it personally, almost as a matter of pride, and responds with equal aggression.

Kohli's energy is infectious, but so is his presence. He dominates the atmosphere of a contest mentally as much as skillfully. More than the fear of backlash or criticism, players know that taking "*panga*" with Kohli can quickly turn into a battle of ego and intimidation — one he rarely backs away from.

And perhaps that is what truly defines him. Kohli is not someone who easily apologises or retreats from confrontation. More often than not, it is others who eventually walk up to him to settle matters. That is the aura, authority, and sheer force

AT A TIME WHEN
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THE PLACID PITCHES USED
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LIKE THE IPL, CHARACTERS
LIKE KOHLI HAVE MADE THE
GAME FAR MORE ENGAGING
AND VIEWER-FRIENDLY



of personality that make Virat Kohli such a towering figure in modern cricket.

At a time when batting is increasingly becoming less challenging because of the placid pitches used in marquee tournaments like the IPL, characters like Kohli have made the game far more engaging and viewer-friendly. It is not just his aggression that makes him special; it is also his ability to constantly evolve and improve whenever fresh challenges are thrown at him in demanding conditions. Be it improving his strike rate in T20 cricket or mastering the art of playing the out-swinging ball in England, Kohli has always been ready to conquer it all.

Time and again, Kohli has responded to criticism not through words, but through adaptation. Whether it was handling short-pitched bowling overseas, refining his strike rotation in



white-ball cricket, or adjusting his game according to age and fitness, he has consistently shown the hunger to reinvent himself without losing his core identity.

That is what separates Kohli from many modern greats. He is not merely a run-machine or a superstar brand — he is an emotion, an attitude, and the face of Indian cricket's competitive spirit. In every sense, Virat Kohli remains Indian cricket's truest brand ambassador. ▀



DONALD TRUMP
THE MAN
WHO CHANGED THE
RULES

Donald Trump, the ultimate disruptor. From defying inspectors and mob pressure to weaponizing media and branding, he rewrote business, celebrity, and politics by refusing to fold.

BY TEAM GALAXIA QUEST

Trump described his strategy of refusing to pay the property violations he received from inspectors until they disappeared or forgot about them.

“From day one, I said f&%k them,” Trump said of the inspectors.

“When I was in Brooklyn, inspectors would come around and they’d give me a violation on buildings that were absolutely perfect,” Trump recalled. “I’d say, ‘f&%k you! And they’d give me more violations. And more. And for one month it was miserable.

“I had more violations—and they were unfounded violations. But they give it because what they wanted was if you ever paid ‘em off they’d always come back. So what happened to me, in one month they just said, ‘f&%k this guy, he’s a piece of shit? And they’d go to somebody else.

“The point is if you fold it causes you much more trouble than it’s worth,” Trump said.

“You can say the same thing with the mob. If you agree to do business with them, they’ll always come back. If you tell ‘em to go f&%k themselves-- in that case, perhaps in a nicer way. “But if you tell them” ‘forget it man, forget it, “nothing’s worth it”, they might try and put pressure on you at the beginning but in the end “they’re going to find” an easier mark because it’s too tough for them. Inspectors. Mobs. Unions. Okay?”

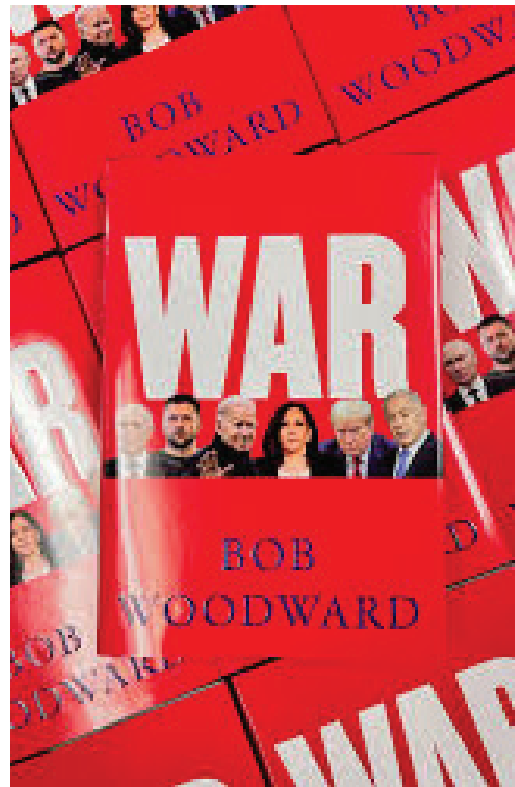
THIS WAS TRUMP’S BASIC PHILOSOPHY

Of the 435-page book *War*, written by renowned Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward, this one excerpt describes Trump as at best – and his worst. Aggressive, combative, willing to take on authority when it is against him, willing to over-exert authority when it is with him. As a man, a businessman, as a politician and finally, as the most powerful man in the world, the President of the United States.

Admire him or admonish him, there’s one label that even many of Donald Trump’s critics would grudgingly accept: DISRUPTOR.



journalist Bob Woodward/Wikipedia





**DONALD TRUMP'S MONEY-MAKER
IN THIS ATTENTION ECONOMY WAS
DONALD TRUMP. HE WAS ONE OF
THOSE REAL ESTATE MOGULS AND
BUILDERS WHO LET THEIR
STRUCTURES TALK
FOR THEM**

The term gets thrown around a lot these days. Every startup founder with a pitch deck wants to be one. Every CEO wants to claim they're changing the game. But long before Silicon Valley made "disruption" fashionable, Donald Trump was busy rewriting the rules of celebrity, business, media and, eventually, politics.

In the case of Trump, his disruption began much before his jump into politics. In 2015, he famously came down a golden escalator, descending to the 'swamp' of Washington politics, with the promise to drain it of its legacy politics and the men and women who he blamed as the gatekeepers, the elite ruling class. And he did it as a representative of exactly the people who he was asking to "f&%k off" when asked to pay his dues and who voted him in not once but twice.

FORWARD THINKING

In many ways, Trump was the first to understand and exploit what is today commonplace on social media – the attention

economy. He understood that attention is in itself a business. He was never just a real estate developer either. Trump's real innovation was to see that far ahead. Today, that sounds obvious.

Influencers make fortunes from it.

YouTubers build empires around it. Tech founders cultivate massive social media followings. But in the 1980s and 1990s, this way of thinking was revolutionary.

Donald Trump's money-maker in this attention economy was Donald Trump. He was one of those real estate moguls and builders who let their structures talk for them. Trump chose to be front and centre. He made himself the story. His name wasn't simply attached to his buildings; it became the product. The giant gold letters on skyscrapers, hotels and casinos weren't just signs. They were an extension of his personality. In many ways, Trump was among the first major American businessmen to realise that personal branding could be more valuable than the business itself.



ENTIRE BUSINESSES RISE AND FALL ON THE REPUTATION OF THEIR FOUNDERS. CONSUMERS OFTEN BUY INTO PERSONALITIES AS MUCH AS PRODUCTS. DONALD TRUMP UNDERSTOOD THIS DECADES BEFORE SOCIAL MEDIA EVEN EXISTED



Long before LinkedIn thought leaders and Instagram entrepreneurs, Trump was cultivating a public persona that extended well beyond his industry. He appeared regularly in newspapers, gossip columns and television interviews. He understood something many executives didn't: people understand and relate to characters rather than spread-sheet scaffolded companies.

TRUMP'S MAIN CHARACTER AURA

Then came television. If New York real estate made Trump rich, reality TV made him famous. The Apprentice debuted in 2004 – a decade before he ran for president – and transformed Trump from a famous and extravagant businessman into a national celebrity. Millions of viewers tuned in every week to watch him judge contestants, dispense advice and deliver the now-iconic phrase: “You’re fired.” Subconsciously, the show created an image of Trump that he has continued to front in his political career. A carefully curated image of Trump as a decisive, ultra-successful business titan. Whether that image fully reflected reality became almost irrelevant. What mattered was that audiences believed it. The programme also pioneered something that has since become commonplace: the merging of entertainment and personal branding. Trump wasn’t merely appearing on television; he was using television to strengthen an identity.



In today’s hyper social media environment, The Apprentice looks almost like a blueprint for the influencer era. Now, founders such as Elon Musk can command global attention with a single social media post. Entire businesses rise and fall based on the reputation of a founder. Consumers often buy into personalities as much as products. Trump was doing a version of this decades before social media existed.

FLIPPING THE EQUATION

Business leaders were once expected to be serious, reserved figures, working to maximise profits, dividends, keep shareholders happy. Their



company's annual reports mattered more than their kids' annual reports. Trump flipped that equation. His divorces, friendships, feuds and opinions frequently generated more headlines than his business deals. He married three times and filed for bankruptcy twice as many times. But it is his maverick lifestyle that made news.

Trump, the textbook disruptor. In your face, impossible to ignore. "It made his enemies rankle with irritation and fear his unpredictability". It made him the darling of his supporters who believe that he says it like it is, without thinking about who it will hurt or benefit. That's why separating "business Trump" from "political Trump" is very tough. The two identities are the yin and yang of

his being. The "Art of the Deal" is not about just real estate but realpolitik. Trump's strong belief that he can get himself and his country the better of any arrangement, any pact, any treaty by being the disruptor, the maverick has driven his

presidency as well. He simply walks in and asks everyone to agree or, as he did with the building inspectors, "to f&%k off".

Does that work? So far, it hasn't really gone his way except in a couple of situations like Venezuela. Dealing with Iran or Europe with bluster hasn't really worked out well.

But it will be his lasting legacy. Not by inventing or creating anything. But by understanding how to ride trends and recognise a gap that only he can fill.

Donald Trump: the ultimate disruptor of norms, of business, of politics and of the international order. ▀

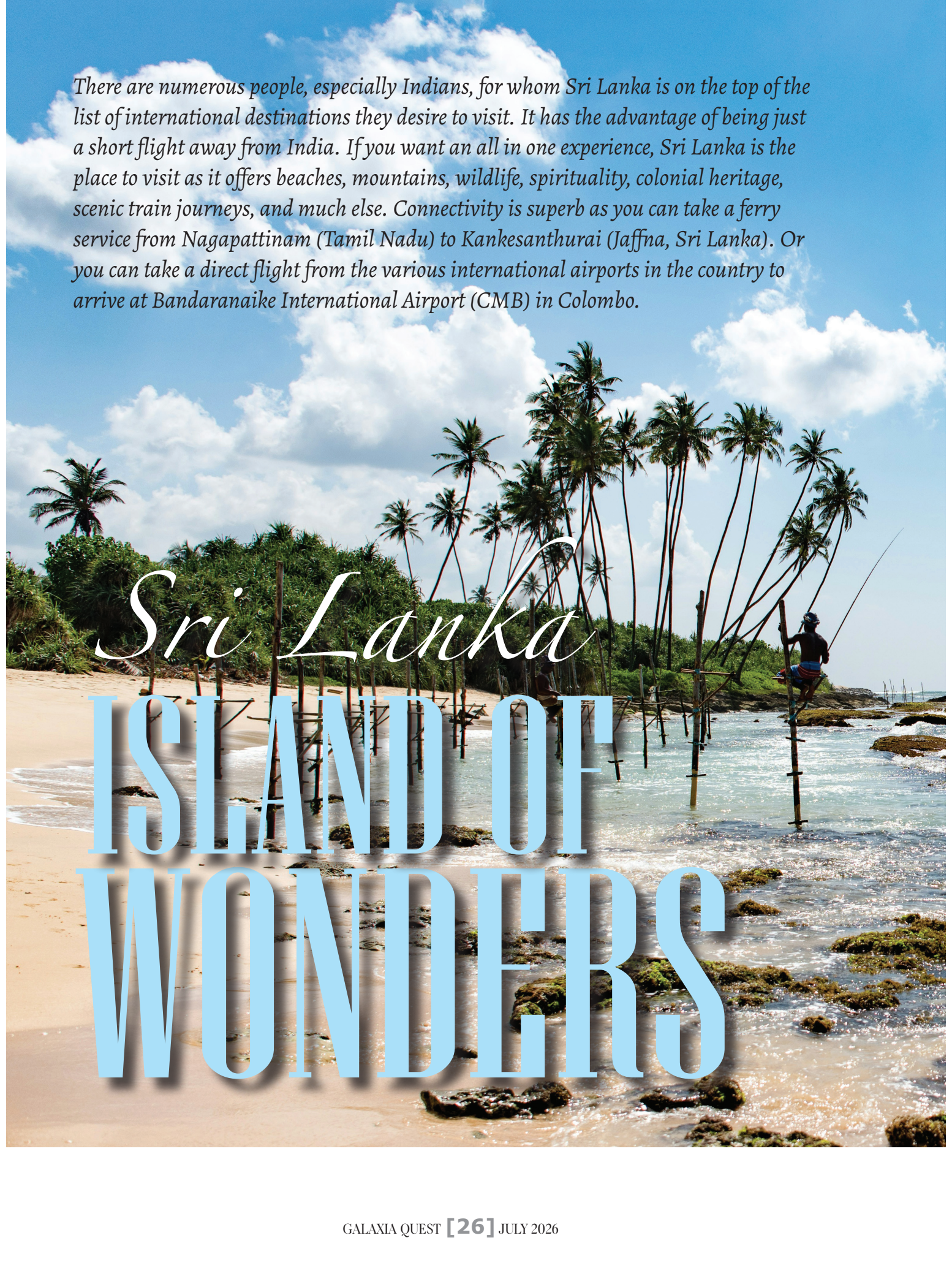
TRUMP, THE TEXTBOOK DISRUPTOR. IN YOUR FACE, IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE. HE MADE HIS ENEMIES SEETHE WITH IRRITATION AND FEAR HIS UNPREDICTABILITY. HE BECAME THE DARLING OF HIS SUPPORTERS WHO BELIEVE THAT HE SAYS IT LIKE IT IS, WITHOUT CALCULATING WHO IT WILL HURT OR BENEFIT. THAT IS WHY SEPARATING "BUSINESS TRUMP" FROM "POLITICAL TRUMP" IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT

GALAXIA
QUEST
LEISURELY YOURS

**EXPLORE
BEYOND ORDINARY**



There are numerous people, especially Indians, for whom Sri Lanka is on the top of the list of international destinations they desire to visit. It has the advantage of being just a short flight away from India. If you want an all in one experience, Sri Lanka is the place to visit as it offers beaches, mountains, wildlife, spirituality, colonial heritage, scenic train journeys, and much else. Connectivity is superb as you can take a ferry service from Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu) to Kankesanthurai (Jaffna, Sri Lanka). Or you can take a direct flight from the various international airports in the country to arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport (CMB) in Colombo.



Sri Lanka ISLAND OF WONDERS

COLOMBO COMBINES MODERN URBAN LIFE WITH COLONIAL CHARM

When you land in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, you are struck by a sensory overload given the striking contrast between the old world (colonial) and the modern, which is immediately discernible. In a way, Colombo is a tourist's paradise. If architecture is your thing, you get to choose from visiting a restored 17th-century Dutch colonial complex, which is now called the Dutch Hospital Shopping Precinct, and the 21st century 350-meter Lotus Tower (one of the tallest buildings in South East Asia) or other glass high-rises. The devout and those who enjoy temple architecture can visit the Buddhist Gangaramaya Temple which is an eclectic mix of modern and traditional architecture. It also features a museum, and an outdoor courtyard. However, don't confuse it with the National Museum of Colombo, which houses the regalia of the Kandyan monarchy and ancient art collections. Built in 1909, the

Jami Ul-Alfar Mosque (Red Mosque) is a stunning architectural masterpiece located in the heart of the Pettah market. It is distinguished by its candy-cane-striped red and white exterior.

SOOTHE YOURSELF WITH NATURAL GREENERY

The Galle Face Green is the place to be if you desire an evening stroll along the promenade to view the Indian Ocean crashing into the beach. Adding to the experience are the locals flying kites, families strolling, and street food vendors cooking fresh crab patties and kottu for you to taste them fresh off the fire. For foodies, that is an experience to savor. The Viharamahadevi Park, right in the middle of the city, is a lush green oasis with abundant tropical foliage, and massive banyan trees.

COLOMBO IS A SHOPPER'S PARADISE

If you want to go shopping, try the Pettah floating market on Beira Lake which is noted

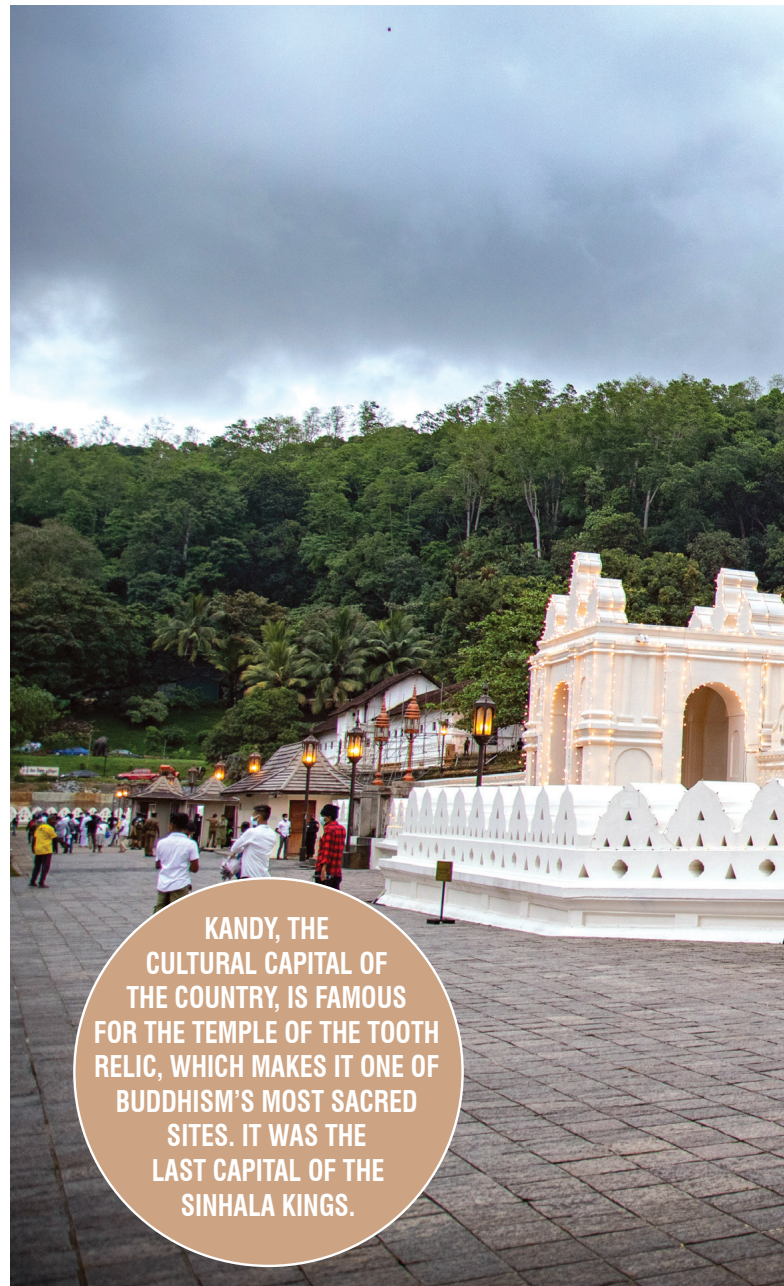




for its wooden walkways and stalls selling handicrafts, clothing, and fresh produce. Just outside the financial district of Colombo is the Pettah Market with its vibrant chaos. Go there to search for aromatic spices, high-tech products, textiles, and gold ornaments. Whether you want to haggle with local street vendors, or purchase from wholesalers and retailers is your choice.

ENTERTAINMENT APLENTY

For those who enjoy a round of gambling, or watching people gamble, there are glitzy casinos. Places like Bellagio Colombo and Bally's offer 24/7 entertainment, gaming, and complimentary dining. You can dine in, or buy takeaways at variety of high end and budget-friendly eateries in Colombo like *Ministry of Crab* or *The Warehouse* respectively. Enjoy snacks and various kinds of beverages at any of the various vibrant cafés.



KANDY, THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF THE COUNTRY, IS FAMOUS FOR THE TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH RELIC, WHICH MAKES IT ONE OF BUDDHISM'S MOST SACRED SITES. IT WAS THE LAST CAPITAL OF THE SINHALA KINGS.

KANDY: THE PERFECT DESTINATION FOR HISTORY BUFFS, CULTURAL TRAVELLERS, AND NATURE LOVERS

Easy connectivity ensures that tourists can explore the rest of the country easily from Colombo, as there is an excellent network of trains, highways, and taxis. Kandy, the cultural capital of the country, is famous for the Temple of the Tooth Relic, which makes it one of Buddhism's most sacred sites. It was the last capital of the Sinhala kings. Though it is set on a plateau, it seems to



nestle amid mountains which are home to tea plantations, and biodiverse forests. It remains one of the most celebrated destinations in Sri Lanka. You can witness traditional Kandyan dance performances, mesmerizing fire walking displays, or visit the Royal Botanical Gardens. You could also enjoy a leisurely stroll around the scenic Kandy Lake, or the panoramic view from Arthur's Seat. Take the famous train ride to Ella from here, which is scenic as it winds through misty mountains and emerald-green tea estates.



PLAN A CALMING GETAWAY TO ELLA

Ella is famous for the iconic Nine Arch Bridge, lush tea plantations and cloud forests which provide breathtaking greenery, which attracts nature lovers. Located in the hill country, it is known for the multi-tiered Ravana waterfalls, cooler climate, and relaxed atmosphere, which makes it a perfect getaway from the hustle bustle of city life, and the heat of the seaside. If outdoor adventure is your scene, you can take a hike to Ella Rock, or to Little Adam's Peak for panoramic views.

SEASIDE PLEASURES TO BE SAVOURED

However, if you are into beaches, Galle with world-class beaches like Unawatuna or Jungle Beach is just a 15–20-minute drive away from Colombo. Most Indians know of Galle for its cricket stadium. However, it offers much more by way of the Dutch era Galle Fort, and the Galle Lighthouse, which is still active. Bentota and Mirissa offer memorable experiences by way of surfing and swimming. Bentota is famous for its golden sand beaches, luxury resorts, river safaris and water sports. The Bentota Beach stretches north, where it becomes a sandy strip known as Paradise Island, parallel to the Bentota Lagoon. Mirissa is renowned for its golden sand beaches where you indulge in whale watching, and enjoy a lively beachside nightlife.

INDULGE YOUR ADVENTUROUS SIDE

Sri Lanka's "Little England", Nuwara Eliya is notable for its cool weather, a refreshing contrast to the tropical climate of coastal Sri Lanka; colonial architecture, tea estates, and picturesque lakes.

Sigiriya, home to the iconic Lion Rock Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a popular destination for adventure and heritage enthusiasts. Climbing the ancient rock fortress rewards visitors with panoramic views.

Wildlife tourism is another major attraction in Sri Lanka. Yala National Park is renowned for

leopard safaris, elephants, crocodiles, and diverse kinds of birds.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Transport within Sri Lanka will be the least of your worries as taxis are relatively affordable, while providing flexibility and comfort for families and senior travelers. Trains are economical and scenic, and public transport by way of buses form the backbone of its transit system. In terms of excellent accommodation, food, and transportation, Sri Lanka offers value for money for international travellers.

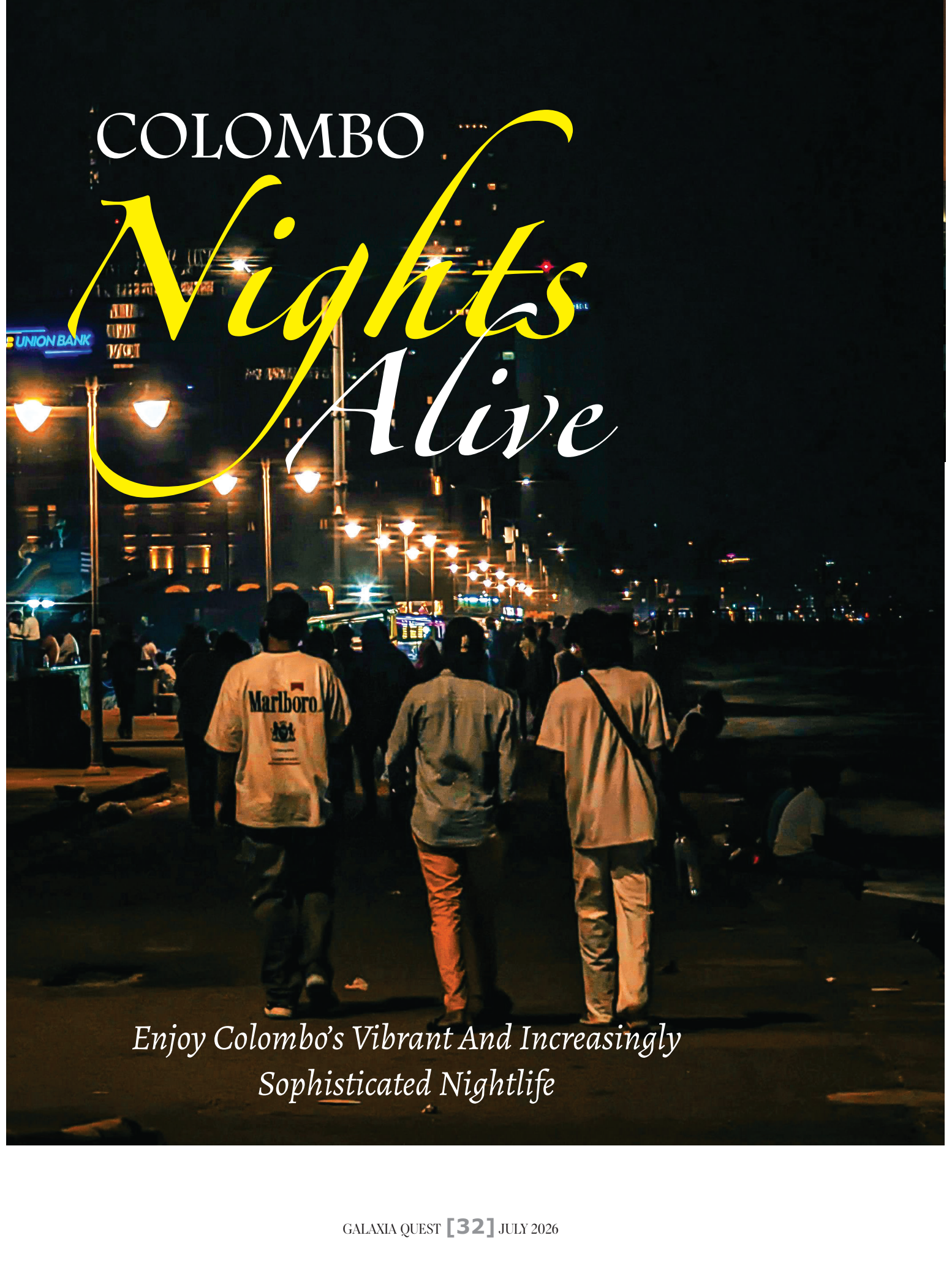
The best time to visit: December to April is generally considered the best time to visit Sri Lanka as it is normally dry and pleasant with clear skies and calm seas. ▀



TAKEAWAY

Sri Lanka is one of the finest holiday destinations for Indian travellers given the combination of cultural richness, affordability, natural beauty, and hospitality.

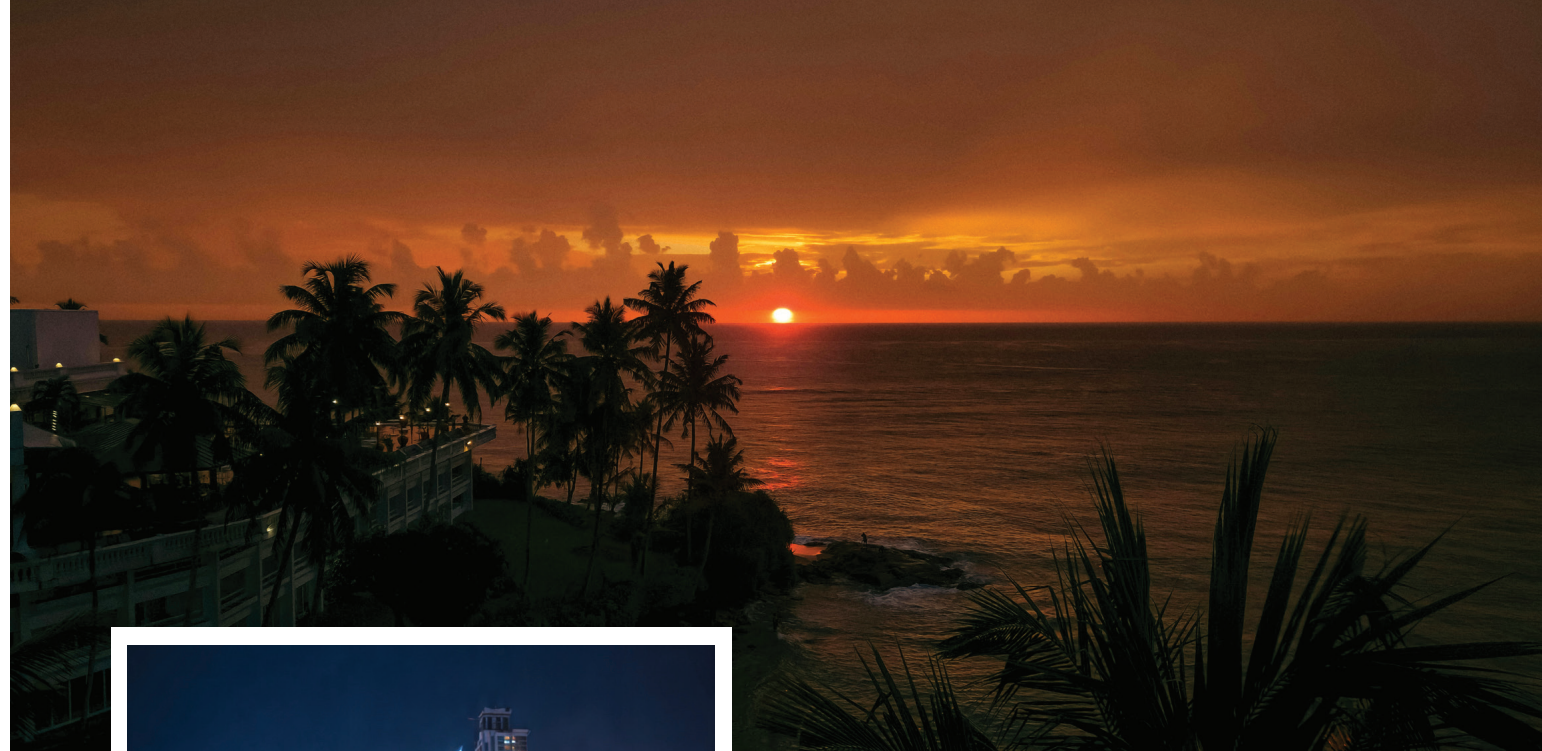




COLOMBO

Nights Alive

*Enjoy Colombo's Vibrant And Increasingly
Sophisticated Nightlife*



THE BULK OF TRENDY BARS, ROOFTOP RESTAURANTS, AND LUXURY HOTELS ARE TO BE FOUND IN AND AROUND AREAS LIKE COLOMBO 1, COLOMBO 3, COLOMBO 5, AND COLOMBO 7. OF THESE, THE MOST POPULAR IS THE ROOFTOP RESTAURANT AND BAR CALLED *HEADQUARTERS BY W15*, WHICH IS POPULAR AS MUCH FOR THE MUSIC, COCKTAILS, AND PANORAMIC CITY VIEWS AS THE PRESENTATION OF THE FOOD, HAPPY HOUR MEALS, AND VEGAN OPTIONS.

BY TEAM GALAXIA QUEST

The British called Sri Lanka, Ceylon. It was also called Serendip, from which comes the word serendipity, meaning pleasant surprise. Its official name is the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The capital city of Colombo is a bustling city as it is also the country's commercial hub. Visits to iconic cultural heritage sites, and trips to the beaches always form part of any visitor's itinerary here. However, what few people talk about is the city's vibrant nightlife. After sunset, Colombo comes as a pleasant surprise for most first-time visitors. Colombo's nightlife scene synthesizes rooftop luxury with beachside lounges which offer live music, casinos to try your luck, pubs to liven up the evening, and spirited nightclubs. Unlike Bangkok or Dubai, Colombo's nightlife is less frenetic and reflects the typical laid back Sri Lankan persona.

GET A PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

The city's rooftop culture emanates partly from the fact that as an island, Sri Lanka can offer some of the finest views of the ocean, especially when you are in Colombo. When a nightclub or bar is



situated on the top of a high-rise building, it offers the patrons a breathtaking view of the ocean and the city skyline itself. The bulk of trendy bars, rooftop restaurants, and luxury hotels are to be found in and around areas like Colombo 1, Colombo 3, Colombo 5, and Colombo 7. Of these, the most popular is the rooftop restaurant and bar called *Headquarters by W15*, which is popular as much for the music, cocktails, and panoramic city views as the presentation of the food, happy hour meals, and vegan options. The pricing of the meals is reasonable. It is generally open till midnight.

ROOFTOP ENTERTAINMENT AND FOOD

Tourists and young professionals also favour *Sky Yard* in Maradha Colombo, which overlooks the ocean, and combines fine dining with exotic dishes, live music, and cocktails while enjoying the sunset. The open-air setting of the bar and lounge creates a relaxed environment. It usually operates till around



midnight. *Virticle by Jetwing* literally takes rooftop fine dining to new heights as it is perched on the 30th floor. The private dining room boasts an elegant setting complemented by the soft, cozy lighting, and skyline views. However, it is slightly on the pricier side. Among terrace and rooftop restaurants which are popular for evening dinners, cocktails, and social gatherings are the *Vistas Rooftop Bar* of Mövenpick Hotel, and the *RoofTop Restaurant & Lounge* in Area 56. There is the *ON14 Rooftop Lounge* on the 14th floor at the *OZO Colombo*, which features a trendy pool bar, great DJ music played by resident DJs, and an excellent atmosphere for sunset drinks while taking in the panoramic view.

LIVING IT UP, OR SIMPLY WINDING DOWN?

There is nothing like visiting a good nightclub to live it up, or wind down during weekends, especially Thursday to Saturday nights. The *Love Bar* at Flamingo House on Park Street is famous for DJs, cocktails, themed events, and a fashionable crowd, making it one of the trendiest nightlife destinations in Colombo. *Club Nuovo* is stylish club popular for its great mix of commercial and electronic music, themed parties, and large dance floor. If live music, dancing, and great cocktails are your scene, then *Rhythm and Blues (R&B)* is the place to be. It remains one of Colombo's classic nightlife

IF YOU JUST WANT TO DOWN SOME DRINKS WITH LIVE MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND, VISIT IN ON THE GREEN, AT THE GALLE FACE HOTEL, WHICH IS A CLASSIC BRITISH-STYLE PUB

IF LIVE MUSIC, DANCING, AND GREAT COCKTAILS ARE YOUR SCENE, THEN *RHYTHM AND BLUES (R&B)* IS THE PLACE TO BE. IT REMAINS ONE OF COLOMBO'S CLASSIC NIGHTLIFE ESTABLISHMENTS. *THE CHILLER ROOM* IS ANOTHER ROOFTOP NIGHT CLUB WITH OUTDOOR SEATING WHERE YOU CAN INDULGE IN ENERGETIC DANCE AND ENJOY LIVE DJ PERFORMANCES

establishments. *The Chiller Room* is another rooftop nightclub with outdoor seating where you can indulge in energetic dance and enjoy live DJ performances. It remains open till 5 AM on Fridays and Saturdays. *Jazzebel* on Park Street in Colombo is notable for its more sophisticated atmosphere. It describes itself as a love letter to live jazz music, and old-world glamour with excellent food.

PUBS TO RELAX IN

On the other hand, if you just want to down some drinks with live music in the background, Visit *In On The Green*, at the Galle Face Hotel, which is a classic British-style pub. *The Station in Mount Lavinia* offers a laid-back beachside vibe where you can smoke some shisha, enjoy drinks, and sea breezes to relax properly. Pubs such as *Cheers*, *Dutch Pub Colombo*, and *Coaches' Club* offer a relaxed atmosphere with food, drinks, sports screenings, and conversations.





WHILE AWAY THE EVENING BY THE BEACHSIDE OR AT THE CASINO

Both beachside nightlife and casino culture are gaining popularity in Colombo. Choose from the *Honey Beach Club* at The Kingsbury Hotel with its rooftop pool, beach views, cocktails, and music, and *Beach Wadiya* which is a legendary no-frills shack serving up giant seafood platters and hot butter calamari. *Breeze Barracuda* near Crow Island is perfect for sizzling platters and spicy local seafood right by the crashing waves. Several luxury hotels host casinos that remain active late into the night, attracting both tourists and locals. Of these, the more popular are Bally's Casino, which is one of the largest and most glamorous casinos in the city, and Bellagio Colombo, known for busy gaming tables and a sophisticated atmosphere. Other casinos you could try are Sporting Times, Majestic Pride Lanka, City of Dreams, and Bally's Breeze.

PLAY IT SAFE

Though Colombo nightlife is generally considered safe for tourists, it would be better to use only registered taxis late at night, and to avoid isolated

areas - precautions that would be necessary in any major city in the world. You can also use the more common ride sharing apps to hire transport. Dress codes at upscale clubs and rooftop venues are usually business casual or smart casual, while for weekends typically they tend to be casual. Forget about wearing tank tops, flip flops, or shorts. ▼

TAKEAWAY

It might come as a surprise to many, but Sri Lanka's capital has something special to offer after dark. Colombo's nightlife experience is exhilarating, stylish, and offers a delectable array of food and beverage experiences to savour for a long time. Compared to many global capitals it is relatively affordable, while affording you a scenic backdrop in most cases. Take your pick from rooftop fine dining, beach lounges, live music, dance clubs, relaxed pubs, and swinging casinos to try your luck. Whether you are on a holiday, or are visiting for work, make sure it is a memorable trip for all the right reasons.



WHY SRI LANKA FEELS LIKE HOME

BY **TEAM GALAXIA QUEST**

The strong sense of cultural familiarity that Indians experience when they visit Sri Lanka makes it one of the friendliest destinations for them. The courtesy that Sri Lankans exhibit added to their warmth makes them appear truly welcoming at all times. A major factor is their shared historical and cultural

connections. From the days of Samrat Ashok Piyadassi, who sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to spread the word about Buddhism more than two centuries before the common era, religion has been a unifying element between the two countries. In fact, Buddhism is the dominant religion of Sri Lanka even now, with



Christianity and Hinduism coming a distant second and third.

CRICKET, THE GREATEST UNIFIER

Other threads of commonality between the two nations are cinema, food habits, family values, and above all cricket. While all tours of Sri Lanka by the Indian cricket team are followed avidly, and both nations compete seriously; there is none of the acrimony so common to any India-Pakistan match. The players respect each other as do the spectators. Many Sri Lankan cricketers, especially their bowlers from Muthiah Muralidharan and Lasith Malinga to Mathisha Pathirana, Wanindu Hasaranga, and Maheesh Theekshana have played a significant role in the victories of their respective IPL teams. Other legendary players like Kumara Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, and Mahela Jayawardene have lit up various stadiums with their exploits on the cricket field, especially during World Cup campaigns, and during the IPL.





LOVE FOR INDIAN FILMS AND MUSIC

Nothing symbolized how much the Lankans love Indian films, not just Hindi films, as when Hasaranga repeatedly made the “Pushpa jhukega nahin” gesture everytime he captured a wicket during the IPL in 2024/25. The popularity of Indian films and music in Sri Lanka, and the love they have for Indian celebrities enable a strong connection between the people of both nations. Many Sri Lankans understand basic Hindi phrases thanks to Bollywood films and television serials and reality shows.

LANGUAGE IS NO BARRIER

The official languages of Sri Lanka are Sinhalese and Tamil. However, the British colonial legacy has ensured that English is spoken commonly in hotels, restaurants, tourist areas, and transport services. This makes communication relatively easy for Indian travelers. The advantage for tourists who speak and understand Tamil is that it is widely spoken in many parts of Sri Lanka, especially in the north and east. Though Hindi is not commonly spoken, most people understand basic phrases, and you can make yourself understood if you supplement your query or appreciation with gestures.





TOURISM PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY WITH THE TEA INDUSTRY MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION. VISITING HERITAGE TEA ESTATES IS OFTEN A HIGH POINT FOR TOURISTS, INCLUDING INDIANS. IT IS VITAL TO NOTE THE VOLUME OF INDIAN TOURISTS MAKES THEM AMONG THE LARGEST GROUPS OF INTERNATIONAL VISITORS THERE



IMPACT OF TOURISM ON SRI LANKAN ECONOMY

Tourism plays a critical role in Sri Lanka's economy with the tea industry making a significant contribution. Visiting heritage tea estates is often a high point for tourists, including Indians. It is vital to note the volume of Indian tourists makes them among the largest groups of international visitors there. Consequently, hotel staff, taxi operators, tour guides, and personnel in restaurant generally pay close heed to the needs and demands of Indian guests. The calm and relaxed atmosphere of Sri Lanka provide a major contrast to the bustle and congestion of larger Indian cities for the Indian tourists. Therefore, Sri Lanka feels cleaner, quieter, and less stressful. The country feels safe for families, senior citizens, honeymooners, and women who might be traveling alone.

REMAIN WARY OF TOUTS AND OTHER MISCREANTS

Despite the fact that Sri Lankans are courteous as a rule, and trustworthy; it doesn't mean you forget to maintain simple safety measures like keeping your smartphone with the location on;

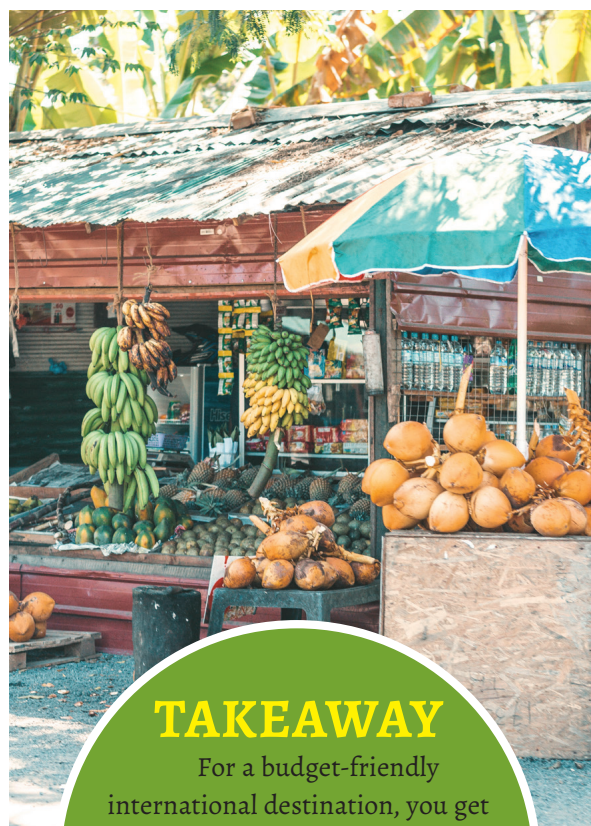
verifying charges for destinations beforehand; and keeping your money secure. Overcharging by a few taxi drivers and aggressive touts in packed places happens everywhere in the world. Do not make the mistake of imagining that it is directed specifically toward Indians.

BE RESPECTFUL AND HONOUR LOCAL CUSTOMS

It is unfortunate that modern visitors need to be reminded to display polite and respectful behaviour when they go sightseeing. Tourists should dress modestly at religious sites, and remove footwear before entering temples to enjoy positive interactions with the locals. Keep in mind that Buddhism is the dominant religion of Sri Lanka. Therefore, refrain from posing in a disrespectful manner near Buddhist statues. Also, sensitive political discussions — especially concerning civil war history or ethnic tensions — should be avoided as courteously as possible, though Sri Lankans are usually open and friendly.

EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY

Sri Lanka remains a favored to favoured for Indian travellers as it offers them a unique balance of the comfortably familiar with experiences that are distinctively Lankan. Their warmth and accessibility is reflected in their cuisine which will seem familiar to people who have tasted South Indian food. Their street food is delicious as is the food served in restaurants which uses rich aromatic spices, rice, fresh vegetables, freshly caught seafood, tropical fruits, and generous dollops of coconut. ▼



TAKEAWAY

For a budget-friendly international destination, you get your money's worth when you visit Sri Lanka. Since it is closer to the Equator than the Tropic of Cancer, be prepared for extreme heat, and heavy showers when you least expect it.

COMPARISON OF SRI LANKA WITH OTHER POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATIONS FOR INDIANS

A comparative overview of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Maldives, and Dubai from the perspective of Indian tourists, focusing on airfare, local transport, hotel stays, shopping, and food.

Aspect	Sri Lanka	Thailand	Maldives	Dubai
Airfare from India	18k–35k return	22k–45k return	25k–50k return	22k–45k return
Taxi / Local Transport	Moderate to cheap	Cheap & efficient	Expensive resort transfers	Comfortable but expensive
Metro / Public Transport	Limited metro; trains cheap	Excellent BTS/MRT	Minimal	Excellent Metro
Hotel Stays	Excellent value luxury	Wide range & affordable	Luxury but expensive	Premium pricing
Shopping for Clothes	Moderate	Excellent street & mall shopping	Limited	Excellent branded shopping
Food / Eateries	Affordable & Indian-friendly	Fantastic street food	Resort dining costly	Global cuisine but pricey
Best For	Families, nature, relaxed holidays	Shopping, nightlife, food	Luxury honeymoon	Luxury city experience
Overall Budget Friendliness	Very high	Very high	Low	Medium

CONCLUSION: Sri Lanka offers one of the best balances of affordability, comfort, scenic beauty, and cultural familiarity for Indian travellers. Thailand is ideal for shopping and nightlife, Maldives for ultra-luxury honeymoons, and Dubai for premium urban experiences.





INSIDE SRI LANKA'S NEW ERA

BY **TEAM GALAXIA QUEST**

Two factors have dominated Sri Lanka's politics in the past century – conflict and family-based political leadership. First, it was the struggle for freedom with Ceylon acquiring Dominion status within the British Commonwealth of Nations on February 4, 1948, and D. S. Senanayake becoming the first Prime

Minister. On May 22, 1972, Ceylon officially became Sri Lanka as the country adopted a new republican constitution to become the Free, Sovereign, and Independent Republic of Sri Lanka. The name was further modified in 1978 to become the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka under a new constitution. Disenfranchisement of the Tamil



LTTE leaders training at Sirumalai camp in India in 1984. (Wikimedia)

plantation workers, and the imposition of Sinhala as the only official language created further areas of conflict within the newly formed nation.

CONFLICT AND POLITICAL DYNASTIES

Political and even military style guerrilla conflicts with protesters, the severest being the prolonged separatist agitation for a Tamil Eelam, have caused major governmental upheavals in Sri Lanka for more than half a century. Some political dynasties like the Senanayakes, Bandaranaiques, and the Rajapaksas have dominated the Sri Lankan political scene. In case of the Bandaranaiques, the assassination of Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1959 led to the unexpected rise of the world's first elected woman Prime Minister Shrimati Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She changed Sri Lanka's politics and economy through her three non-consecutive terms as Prime Minister. Her son Anura Bandaranaike failed to create any waves. However, her daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga went on to become President. It must have been the first time in world history that there was an elected pair of mother and daughter Prime Minister and President serving simultaneously.



ASSASSINATIONS AND AFTER

To support Sri Lanka in its effort to overcome separatist elements, the then Prime Minister of India, Shri Rajiv Gandhi sent an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to the country. While it certainly brought peace to the beleaguered nation; the separatists made the then President Junius Jayawardene and Rajiv Gandhi the target of their ire. The two national leaders eventually fell to successful assassination attempts. Eventually, the 26-year civil war ended with the defeat of the LTTE. Total casualties were well over a lakh. On May 19, 2009, President Mahinda Rajapaksa addressed the parliament to signal victory.



THE SUDDEN SWITCH TO ORGANIC FARMING AS A NATIONAL POLICY TRIGGERED UNPRECEDENTED INFLATION. ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT, FOREIGN DEBT PRESSURES, INFLATION LEADING TO RISING PRICES, SEVERE POWER CUTS, AND DECLINING FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES LED TO PUBLIC FRUSTRATION WHICH FOUND EXPRESSION IN MASSIVE NATIONWIDE PROTESTS KNOWN AS THE “ARAGALAYA” MOVEMENT.



THE ARAGALAYA OF 2022, AND ITS FALLOUT

With the LTTE's defeat, the Tamil National Alliance dropped the demand for a separate, independent state as it realized it was not a feasible proposition, and settled for a federal solution. There was a temporary economic boom in the country following the peace, and Sri Lanka made it into the high category of the Human Development Index. Happy days were not meant to last. Growing dissatisfaction with the rampant thuggery in the country, charges of embezzlement, nepotism, drug cartels, crimes, and corruption spurred one of the severest economic and political crises in Sri Lanka's modern history during 2022. This led to widespread protests, and economic hardship caused by severe shortages of fuel, medicine, and food was compounded by runaway inflation. The series of outbursts in various parts of the country came to be called Aragalaya, which literally means struggle.

MAJOR SHIFT IN THE PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION

The sudden switch to organic farming as a national policy triggered unprecedented inflation. Economic mismanagement, foreign debt



pressures, inflation leading to rising prices, severe power cuts, and declining foreign exchange reserves led to public frustration which found expression in massive nationwide protests known as the “Aragalaya” movement. Eventually, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was compelled to resign in May 2022, while President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had to flee the country after resigning in July 2022. The manner in which the youth (Gen Z) spearheaded the movement served as an inspiration to the youth in Bangladesh and Nepal to subsequently form governments better aligned to the vision and needs of the people.



STRONG PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS FOR REFORM AND BETTER GOVERNANCE

Sri Lanka has slowly calmed over these last four years. Economic confidence has been restored through debt restructuring efforts, savvy reforms, and international financial assistance. Tourism has recovered strongly with the return of stability. While dynastic political power centres have disappeared; new leadership dynamics have evolved. However, Sri Lankans are concerned about corruption, rising taxes, unemployment, and the cost of living. The adverse impact of the global economic downturn post-pandemic, and the food shortage caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine further aggravated the situation. This makes national politics emotionally charged.

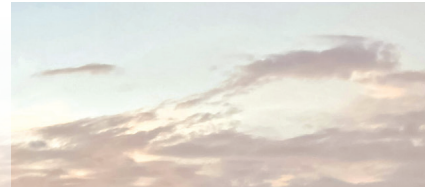
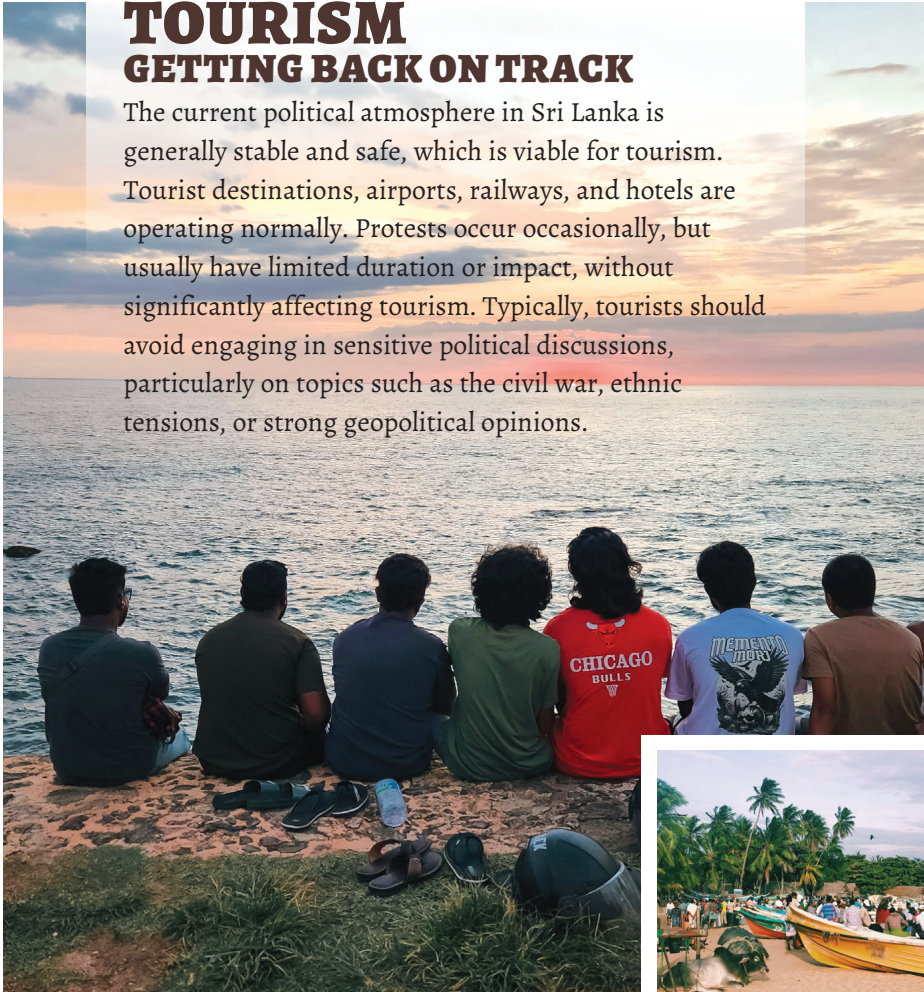


GEOPOLITICS IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN SRI LANKA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. BOTH INDIA AND CHINA PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. INDIA PROVIDED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, FUEL, MEDICINES, AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING SRI LANKA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS TO EARN CONSIDERABLE GOODWILL. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY SRI LANKANS TODAY VIEW INDIA AS AN IMPORTANT REGIONAL PARTNER AND NEIGHBOR.



TOURISM GETTING BACK ON TRACK

The current political atmosphere in Sri Lanka is generally stable and safe, which is viable for tourism. Tourist destinations, airports, railways, and hotels are operating normally. Protests occur occasionally, but usually have limited duration or impact, without significantly affecting tourism. Typically, tourists should avoid engaging in sensitive political discussions, particularly on topics such as the civil war, ethnic tensions, or strong geopolitical opinions.



SRI LANKA'S STRATEGIC LOCATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN COMPLICATES THE MATTER

Geopolitics is a critical factor in Sri Lanka's political landscape. Both India and China play significant roles in the country's economy and infrastructure development. India provided emergency assistance, fuel, medicines, and financial support during Sri Lanka's economic crisis to earn considerable goodwill. Consequently, many Sri Lankans today view India as an

important "regional partner and neighbour". China has subsidised major infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka, such as ports, highways, and Colombo Port City. Despite these projects having contributed heavily to the country's development; people within Sri Lanka are seriously concerned about the growing debt burden and foreign influence. Sri Lankan governments are wary of being seen as tilted towards either country. They are trying to strike a careful balance between them, while protecting national interests. ▀

TAKEAWAY

Sri Lanka continues to captivate its visitors despite being a nation recovering from crisis. It is striving to rebuild economic stability and public trust. Do not allow the politics or economic difficulties of the island country detract from its natural beauty, hospitality, and resilient spirit.

GALAXIA
QUEST
Leisurely Yours



READ. FEEL. LIVE

**FRESH LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE INSIGHTS—OUR
MAGAZINE INSPIRES, INFORMS, AND DELIGHTS
WITH ENGAGING STORIES AND TRENDS.**

BUILDING HER OWN POLITICAL IDENTITY

Chamindranee Kiriella on leadership, reform, women's empowerment and the future of Sri Lanka

Coming from one of Sri Lanka's most distinguished political families, Chamindranee Kiriella represents a new generation of leadership shaped by both heritage and professional experience. Trained in international business law and seasoned by more than a decade in the private sector, she entered public life with a desire to translate policy into tangible change. In this conversation, she reflects on her political journey, the lessons of Sri Lanka's recent economic crisis, the need for greater female participation in politics, and her vision for the country's future in an increasingly complex region.

Coming from a prominent political family, what inspired you to enter active politics?

My inspiration came first and foremost from my father, Lakshman Kiriella, who was member of Sri Lankan Parliament for 36 years. Growing up, I witnessed how public service could transform lives. After spending 12 years in the private sector and later serving as my father's

private secretary, I realised that politics offered a unique opportunity to create meaningful change on a larger scale.

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LIVES.

How much of your political thinking has been shaped by your father?

His influence was significant at the beginning of my political journey. However, as a parliamentarian in my own right, I have developed perspectives shaped by my own experiences, convictions, and interactions with constituents.

What are the three biggest lessons from Sri Lanka's recent crisis?

First, citizens must choose their leaders wisely. Second, Sri Lanka must attract greater foreign investment to support sustainable growth. Third, we must invest in and empower women, as stronger female participation creates healthier families and stronger economies.

How do you assess the current state of rule of law and institutional independence?

Sri Lanka has strong constitutional provisions and independent institutions. However,



their effectiveness has varied over time depending on constitutional reforms, political culture, and the degree of executive influence.

What reforms are needed to increase women's representation in politics?

Women make up the majority of Sri Lanka's population but remain underrepresented in Parliament. Extending quotas, encouraging female leadership within parties, and reducing financial barriers for women candidates are important steps.

How can mainstream parties reconnect with young people?

Political parties must modernise. Young people respond to meritocracy, performance, transparency, and genuine opportunities for leadership.

What economic reforms would attract foreign investment?

Improving the ease of doing business through a streamlined one-stop system for investors would be a major priority.

How can Sri Lanka strengthen tourism?

A strong international marketing campaign is essential to rebuild confidence and attract high-value tourism.

How do you see India–Sri Lanka relations evolving?

I believe the relationship will become more interconnected, pragmatic, and strategically important, driven by trade, infrastructure, culture, and regional cooperation.

What role can Sri Lanka play in the Indian Ocean region?

By maintaining strategic neutrality, strengthening governance, and pursuing sound economic policies, Sri Lanka can become one of the most influential small states in the region.



Has social media strengthened democracy?

It has expanded participation and accountability while also creating challenges such as misinformation and polarisation.

How do you maintain work-life balance?

Family comes first. I consciously organise my time to ensure politics does not consume every aspect of my life.

What has public scrutiny taught you?

It has reinforced the importance of resilience. Long-term leadership requires focus, adaptability, and the ability to withstand criticism.

What transformative law would you introduce tomorrow?

I would introduce state-funded maternity pay to encourage greater female workforce participation and reduce barriers to employment.

What legacy would you like to leave behind?

I would like to be remembered not for the power I held, but for the lives I improved and the contribution I made toward a more united, fair, and prosperous Sri Lanka. ▀

Mukesh was the voice of sorrow without melodrama. He carried natural ache in songs like Umar Qaid, Teesri Kasam, Parvarish, and became nostalgia itself with Mera Naam Joker. No harkats, no flourishes, just restraint. He didn't express pain, he revealed it, long enough to hurt, writes **MANOJ K ARORA**

July is the birth anniversary month of Mukesh Chand Mathur or simply Mukesh. He was not one of the most technically flamboyant singers of his era, nor did he possess the classical virtuosity of Manna Dey, the elastic range of Mohammed Rafi, or the silken romanticism of Talat Mahmood. Yet Mukesh became one of the most unforgettable voices of Indian cinema because he had something rarer: an almost naked emotional honesty. His singing often sounded less like performance and more like confession.

Mukesh

THE VOICE THAT BROKE HEARTS



IF RAJ KAPOOR WAS THE HINDI CINEMA'S ETERNAL TRAMP, DREAMER AND COMMON MAN, MUKESH BECAME THE INNER VOICE OF THAT MAN. *AWARA HUUN* (AWARA, 1951) BECAME A GLOBAL ANTHEM OF THE WANDERING UNDERDOG. *AAJA RE AB MERA DIL PUKARA* (AAH, 1953), *MEERA JOOTA HAI JAPANI* (SHREE 420, 1955), *KISI KI MUSKURAHTON PE* (ANARI, 1959) WERE ICONIC SONGS EXEMPLIFYING THE GREATNESS OF THE PAIRED DUO.



Mukesh was discovered by actor Motilal and he got him to start as an actor-singer, like K. L. Saigal. In fact, among his initial songs was the major hit *Dil Jalta Hai To Jalne De* (*Pehli Nazar*, 1945) which people still mistake for Saigal. It was composer Naushad Ali who helped Mukesh discover his own style. *Gaye Ja Geet Milan Ke* (*Mela*, 1948), *Jhoom Jhoom Ke Nacho Aaj* (*Andaaz*, 1949) brought out his true voice.

And then Raj Kapoor and Mukesh discovered each other with *Chhod Gaye Balam* (*Barsaat*, 1949). Soon they became a pair. If Raj Kapoor was the Hindi cinema's eternal tramp, dreamer and common man, Mukesh became the inner voice of that man. *Awara Huun* (*Awara*, 1951) became a global anthem of the wandering underdog. *Aaja Re Ab Mera Dil Pukara* (*Aah*, 1953), *Mera joota Hai Japani* (*Shree 420*, 1955), *Kisi Ki Muskurahton Pe* (*Anari*, 1959) were iconic songs exemplifying the greatness of the paired duo.

Mukesh was especially effective in songs of sorrow, longing and loneliness. His voice carried a natural ache. With *Mujhe Raat Din Ye Khayal* (*Umar Qaid*, 1961), *Sajanawa Bairi Ho Gaye* (*Teesri Kasam*, 1966), *Aansu Bhari Hain* (*Parvarish* 1958) he conveyed betrayal without melodrama instinctively maintaining the line between grief and dignity. And with *Jaane*





Kahan Gaye Wo Din (Mera Naam Joker, 1970), he became the voice of nostalgia itself, looking back at lost applause, lost love and lost youth. Few singers could make sadness sound so intimate. He did not express pain; he revealed it.

His music style was also marked by simplicity of expression. Mukesh rarely used excessive harkats, taans or ornamental flourishes. His singing was usually straight, clear and emotionally cantered. *Chal Ri Sajni* (Bambai Ka Babu, 1960), *Main Toh Ik Khwab Huun* (Himalaya Ki Gode Mein, 1965), *Humne Tujhse Pyar Kiya Hai Jitna* (Dulha Dulhan, 1964) show his skill of using restraint rather than outburst to bring out the core emotion of the song. He simply knew how to hold a note just long enough for it to hurt.

And a few of my all-time favourite songs. A song filled with joy of newly discovered love, *Ye Din Kya Aaye* (Chhoti Si Baat, 1976), a song of besotted restraint, *Kayi Baar Yuun Bhi Dekha Hai* (Rajnigandha,

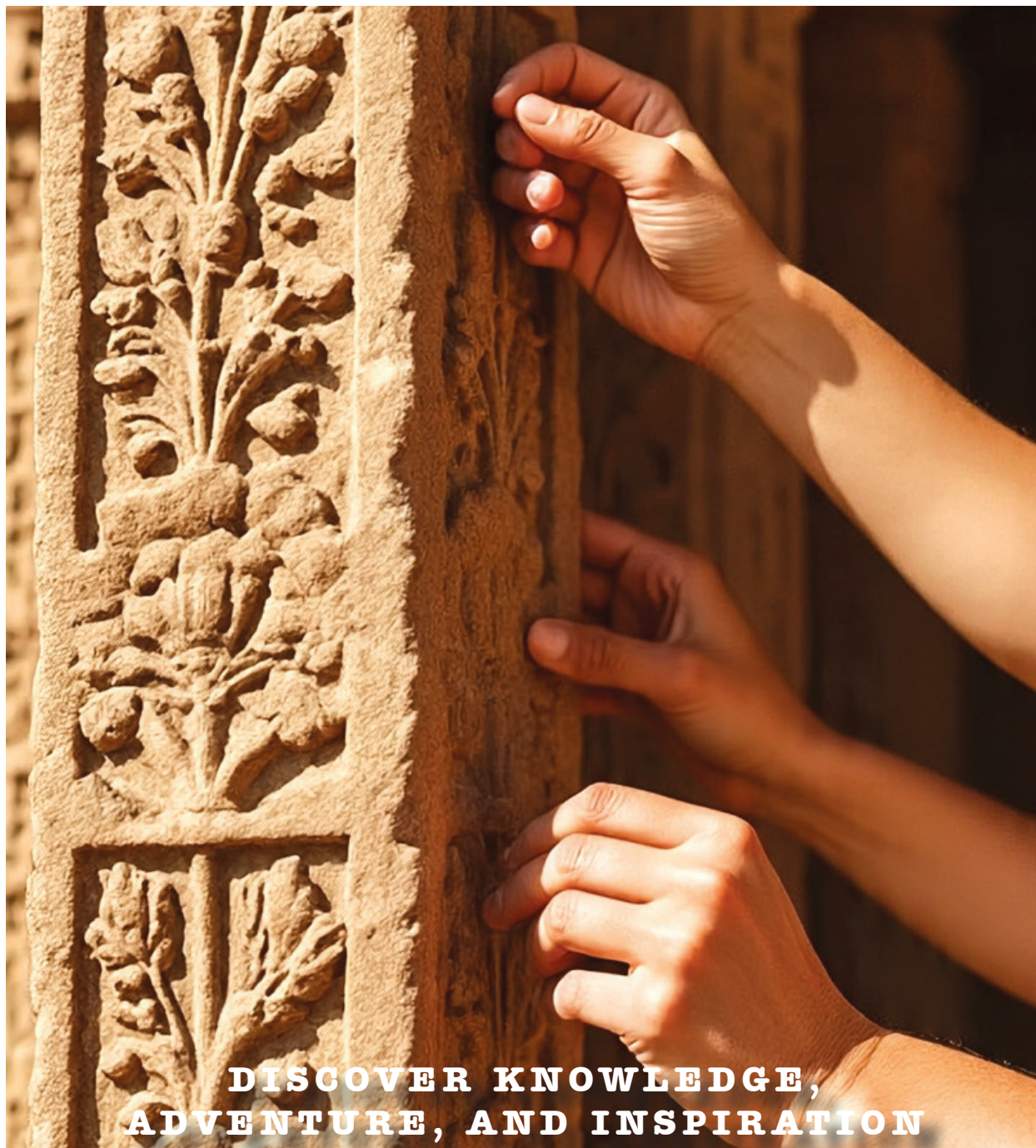
1974), a son floating between resignation and hope, *Zindagi Kaisi Hai Paheli* (Anand, 1971). And of course, Mukesh's finest song *Kahin Dur Jab Din* (Anand, 1976), a deeply poetic song which Mukesh brilliantly kept conversational.

Mukesh's contribution to Hindi film music lies not only in the number of hits he gave, but in the emotional vocabulary he created. He brought vulnerability. He represented the ordinary Indian man: hopeful, disappointed, honest, sometimes defeated, yet never cynical. His music does not dazzle like fireworks; it glows like a lamp in a lonely room. That is why, decades after his passing, his voice still feels close—as though it is not

coming from a screen or a record, but from somewhere inside us. That makes even his technically simple songs are difficult to imitate convincingly. Many can reproduce the tune, but very few can reproduce the truthfulness. ▀

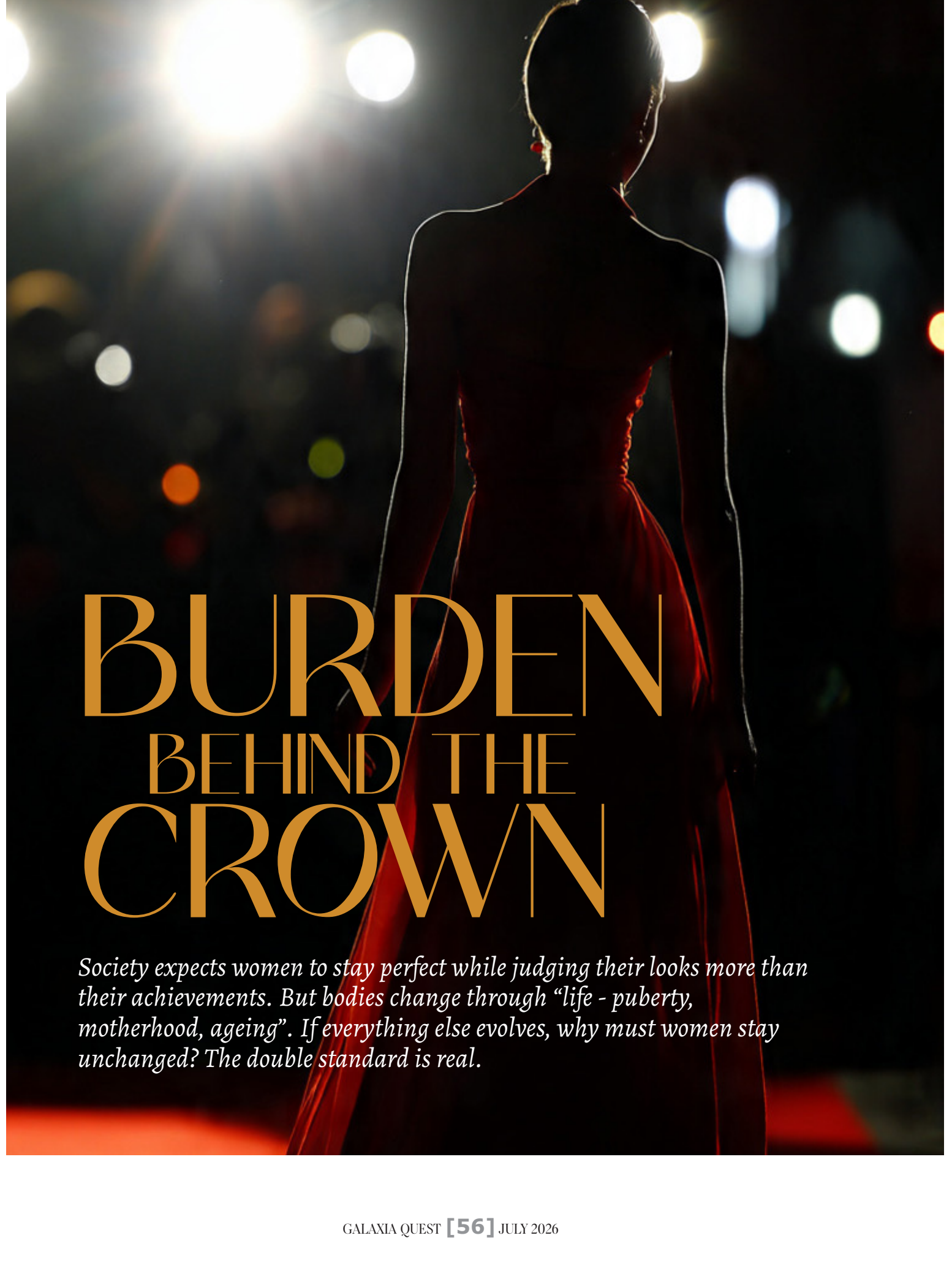
MUKESH'S CONTRIBUTION TO HINDI FILM MUSIC LIES NOT ONLY IN THE NUMBER OF HITS HE GAVE, BUT IN THE EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY HE CREATED. HE BROUGHT VULNERABILITY. HE REPRESENTED THE ORDINARY INDIAN MAN: HOPEFUL, DISAPPOINTED, HONEST, SOMETIMES DEFEATED, YET NEVER CYNICAL

GALAXIA **QUEST** Leisurely Yours



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A woman in a red dress is seen from behind, walking on a red carpet. The background is dark with several bright, out-of-focus lights, creating a bokeh effect. The woman's hair is pulled back, and she is wearing a red dress with a low back.

BURDEN BEHIND THE CROWN

Society expects women to stay perfect while judging their looks more than their achievements. But bodies change through “life - puberty, motherhood, ageing”. If everything else evolves, why must women stay unchanged? The double standard is real.

More than the mirror reflects for centuries, the female body has been a subject of public conversation.

How does she look?

How does she dress?

Has she gained weight?

How does she still look so young?

Somewhere between societal expectations and impossible beauty standards, women continue to carry the burden of looking perfect.

The recent online trolling and body shaming directed at Aishwarya Rai Bachchan once again exposed an uncomfortable truth: a woman's appearance is often judged more harshly than her accomplishments, intelligence, resilience, or individuality. Here is a woman who has represented India on global platforms for decades with grace and distinction, yet conversations around her frequently return to ageing, weight fluctuations, or physical changes.

But perhaps the more important question is this: why are women expected to remain unchanged when life itself is constantly changing them?

A woman's body undergoes profound transformations throughout her life. Puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum recovery, hormonal fluctuations, menopause, stress, caregiving responsibilities, and ageing are not cosmetic inconveniences. They are deeply human experiences that leave visible and invisible marks.

Motherhood alone can reshape a woman's physical, emotional, and mental landscape in ways society rarely acknowledges with empathy. Yet women are expected to "bounce back," maintain youthful appearances, build careers, raise families, manage households, and remain the emotional anchors for everyone around them.

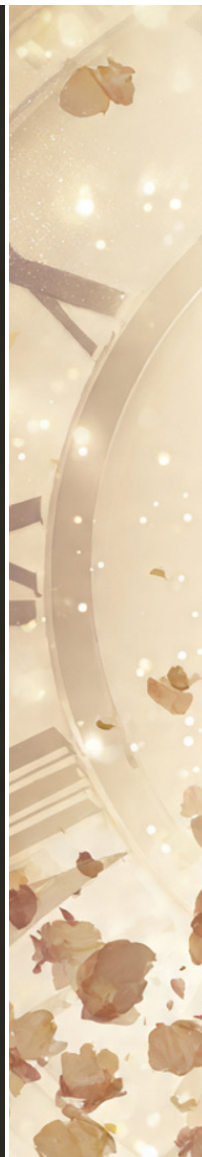


THE RECENT ONLINE TROLLING AND BODY SHAMING DIRECTED AT AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN ONCE AGAIN EXPOSED AN UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH: A WOMAN'S APPEARANCE IS OFTEN JUDGED MORE HARSHLY THAN HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS, INTELLIGENCE, RESILIENCE, OR INDIVIDUALITY





WHAT MAKES THIS EXPECTATION EVEN MORE TROUBLING IS THE DOUBLE STANDARD ATTACHED TO AGEING. IN MEN, AGE IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCE, AUTHORITY, AND CHARISMA



What makes this expectation even more troubling is the double standard attached to ageing. In men, age is often associated with experience, authority, and charisma. In women, it is too often treated as decline. The message is subtle but persistent: a man's value grows with time, while a woman's value diminishes if her appearance changes.

IT IS WORTH ASKING OURSELVES:

- **Why must women continually prove their worth through their appearance?**
- **Why is natural ageing accepted in men but scrutinized in women?**

- **Why are women denied the dignity of simply existing without commentary on how they look?**
- **Women do not owe the world eternal youth.**
- **They do not owe perfection.**
- **They do not owe beauty standards an apology for ageing naturally.**
- **What they deserve is respect.**
- **What they deserve is dignity.**
- **What they deserve is freedom from constant judgment.**

Body shaming is often dismissed as humour, casual banter, or harmless criticism. In reality, it can be deeply damaging. It affects confidence,



**FIGURES SUCH AS
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self-worth, mental well-being, and the way individuals perceive themselves. Millions of women grow up under the weight of unrealistic beauty ideals, constantly feeling pressured to improve, shrink, alter, or reinvent themselves in pursuit of approval.

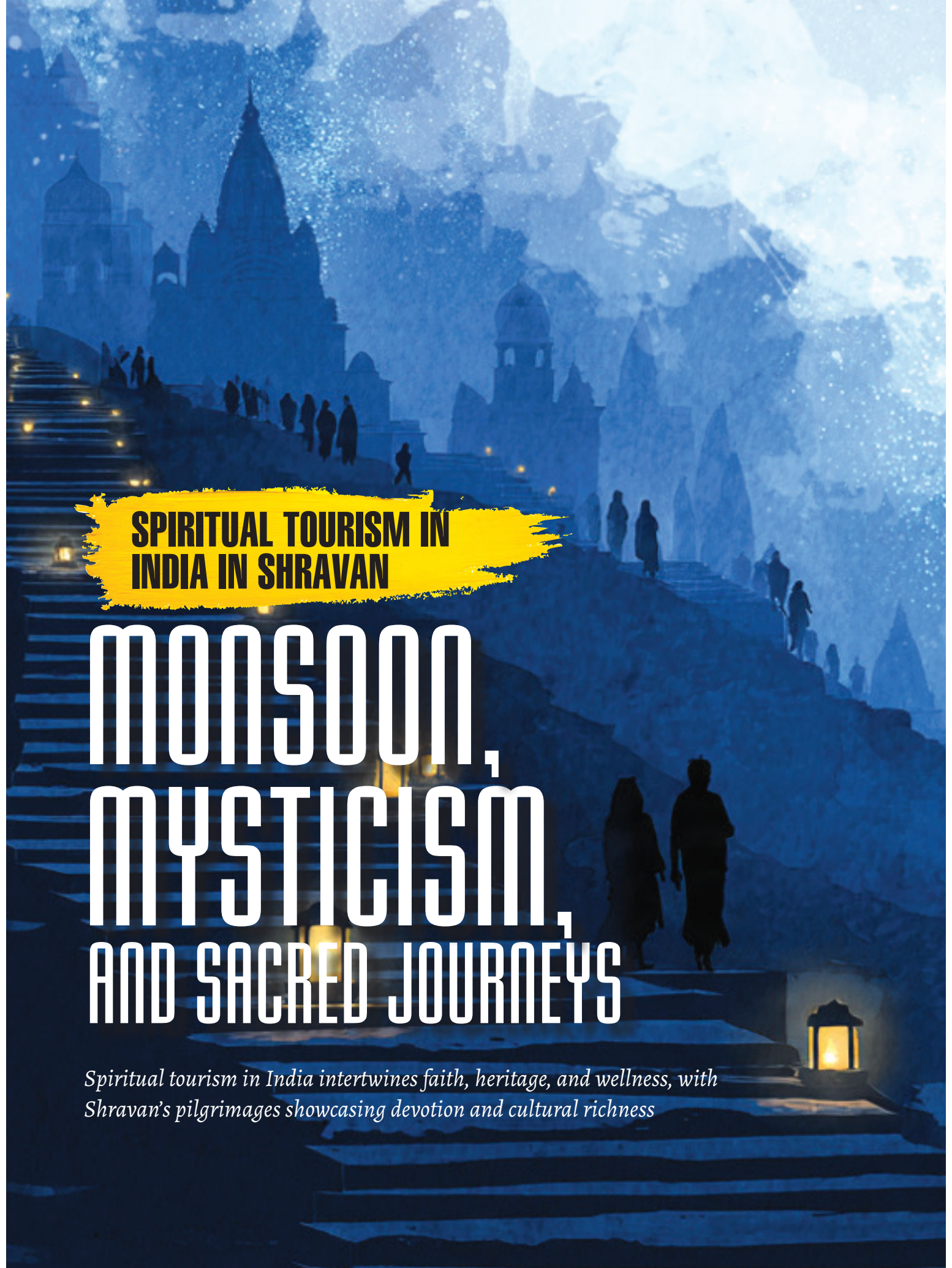
In an age where social media amplifies both visibility and scrutiny, the need for sensitivity and compassion has never been greater. Conversations around women's bodies must move beyond criticism and towards understanding.

This is where public figures can play an important role. Across the world, especially in smaller towns and cities, countless young women

look up to celebrities as role models. When women in the public eye embrace life's natural changes with confidence and grace, they challenge narrow definitions of beauty and create space for healthier conversations.

Figures such as Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who continue to carry themselves with poise despite relentless public scrutiny, remind us that beauty is not the absence of change. It is the confidence to embrace it.

Perhaps true empowerment will begin the day society stops measuring women by their appearance and starts valuing them for their humanity. ▶



**SPIRITUAL TOURISM IN
INDIA IN SHRAVAN**

MONSOON, MYSTICISM, AND SACRED JOURNEYS

*Spiritual tourism in India intertwines faith, heritage, and wellness, with
Shravan's pilgrimages showcasing devotion and cultural richness*

BY TEAM GALAXIA QUEST

IN **ASHADA** (MID-JUNE TO MID-JULY), PILGRIMAGE ROUTES COME ALIVE WITH MILLIONS OF DEVOTEES HEADING TOWARDS PURI IN ODISHA FOR THE ANNUAL RATH YATRA (ALSO CALLED THE CHARIOT FESTIVAL) AND **ULTORATH**, WHEN THE PRESIDING DEITIES OF THE JAGANNATH TEMPLE — JAGANNATH, SUBHADRA, AND BALBHADRA (BALRAM) HEAD TO THEIR AUNT'S HOME TO RECUPERATE, AND RETURN HOME AFTER NINE DAYS

SPIRITUAL TOURISM IN INDIA IS MULTIFACETED

India is more than monuments, beaches, mountains, and diverse kinds of delectable cuisines. For a civilization deeply rooted in spirituality, there is a unique spiritual energy in every season, but *Shravan* holds a special significance. In *Ashada* (mid-June to mid-July), pilgrimage routes come alive with millions of devotees heading towards Puri in Odisha for the annual Rath Yatra (also called the Chariot Festival) and *Ultrath*, when the presiding deities of the Jagannath temple — Jagannath, Subhadra, and Balbhadra (Balram) head to their aunt's home to recuperate, and return home after nine days. Note that there are four *tithis* (dates) in the *panchang* when you can begin any auspicious work — Akshay Tritiya, Rath Yatra, Ganesh Chaturthi, and Vijay Dashami. It is considered one of India's most spectacular spiritual events, and is one of Hinduism's oldest and grandest religious processions, which the British mistook for some medieval display of power. This misapprehension led to the creation of the word "juggernaut" to imply something unstoppable. Devotees from India and abroad throng the festival by the millions.



QUAINT TRADITION OF THE JAGANNATH RATH YATRA

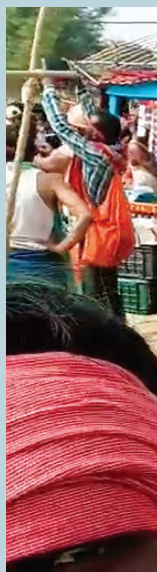
The gargantuan wooden chariots are decorated beautifully every year before the festival. They are used to carry the deities to the other side of the city. There is a quaint tradition by which a descendant of the former ruling family sweeps the road in front of the Rath with a golden broom. Subsequently, the chariots are pulled through the

streets of Puri by devotees chanting prayers and hymns. It is believed that participating in or even witnessing the Rath Yatra brings immense spiritual blessings. Add to this, this festival offers visitors a chance to witness Odisha's rich cultural heritage, temple traditions, local cuisine, handicrafts, and coastal beauty. Several people use it as a springboard from where they visit other famous tourist spots in Odisha. ▼



HEIGHTENED SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY IN *SHRAVAN*

Shravan (*Sawan*), on the other hand, is primarily dedicated to Lord Shiva. Spiritual journeys (*yatras*) during *Shravan* are a remarkable blend of devotion, tradition, cultural activities, while meditating on natural beauty. Not just yoga enthusiasts and international travellers, but the devout are drawn towards the various shrines and temples from the Himalayas to the manifold temples dedicated to Shiva, and even forms of *Ma Durga* dotting Bengal and Bihar. The monsoons change the landscape of India through lush forests, mist-covered ghats, and rain-washed temple towns. In *Shravan*, Lord



VARANASI: THE ETERNAL SPIRITUAL CAPITAL

Believed to be among the oldest continuously inhabited cities on earth, Varanasi becomes especially enchanting during *Shravan*, when it exudes a matchless spiritual intensity. It is a city closely linked with *Shiv bhakti*, though many associate the city with rich, brocade laden sarees. The evening *Ganga Aarti* at Dashashwamedh Ghat is one of the most soul stirring experiences, when you feel the sound of bells, incense smoke, and devotional hymns uplifting your soul. If deep devotion had a face, listening to Vedic hymns on Assi Ghat, or witnessing daily prayers at Kashi Vishwanath Temple, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, would probably be it. Taking a holy dip in the Ganga to cleanse sins and liberate the soul has a special significance in *Shravan*. Varanasi is also a major center of Indian classical dance and music, and the artists consider their art a medium to achieve oneness with the Almighty. Just attending one of their recitals is a mystic experience. ▼



Shiva devotees offer holy water, milk, and prayers in temples across the country. Religious *yatras* in which the devotees carry water drawn from a sacred source such as Garhganga, or Kalighat to pour on the Shivalinga in Tarakeshwar, or Haridwar. The idea is to soothe the burning throat of Shivji, who had swallowed the *halahal* (poison) which had emerged during the *Amrit Manthan*. These beliefs have transformed spiritual tourism into one of the largest forms of travel in India. Spiritual tourism focuses on generating a profound connection with faith and heritage to enjoy emotional fulfilment, and inner peace. ▼



HARIDWAR AND RISHIKESH: WHERE SPIRITUALITY MEETS WELLNESS

Haridwar and Rishikesh are located along the banks of the Ganga in Uttarakhand, of which Haridwar is considered one of Hinduism's holiest cities. It is here that thousands of devotees walk barefoot for the *Kanwar Yatra* during *Shravan*, carrying Ganga water to offer at Shiva temples. Attend the evening *aarti* conducted by devotees on the city's famous Har Ki Pauri Ghat. On the other hand, Rishikesh is called the "Yoga Capital of the World," and offers a different spiritual experience. Nestled amidst green Himalayan foothills, the river Ganga is at its cleanest here before it enters the plains. Yoga practitioners, those who would unencumber themselves through meditation, and wellness tourists from around the globe come here to calm their souls. There are ashrams in Rishikesh offering yoga retreats, spiritual discourses,

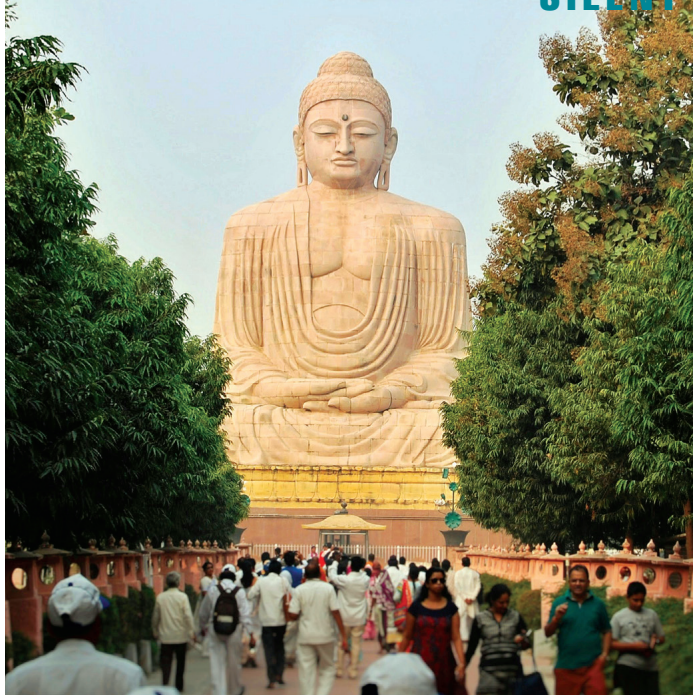


Ayurvedic therapies, and meditation programs for those looking for mental peace and physical health. The serene beauty of the region makes it ideal for introspection and healing. ▀



AMARNATH YATRA: THE HIMALAYAN PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH

Pilgrims to the Amarnath *Yatra* in Jammu and Kashmir need to be hardy, more than devout, as the *yatra* is an arduous trek through rugged Himalayan terrain to the sacred Amarnath Cave, after traversing snow-covered mountains, narrow valleys, and unpredictable weather conditions. It is properly accessible only during July and August. Within the cave is a naturally formed ice Shivling, which is worshipped as a manifestation of Lord Shiva. The journey is deeply spiritual and transformative. ▀



BODH GAYA: THE LAND OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Bodh Gaya is intrinsically connected with Buddhism in the popular mind as most people have grown up on stories of how Siddhartha Gautam of the Shakya clan became enlightened when he was meditating under the sacred Bodhi tree over 2,500 years ago. Visiting it is a profoundly peaceful experience. Visit the brick Mahabodhi Temple complex a UNESCO World Heritage Site to make the most of the calm atmosphere which helps create an environment ideal for mindfulness and introspection. The congregation of monks, scholars, and spiritual tourists from across the world conduct meditation sessions amid sonorous chants. Monsoonal rains make the temple surroundings lush and tranquil. ▼

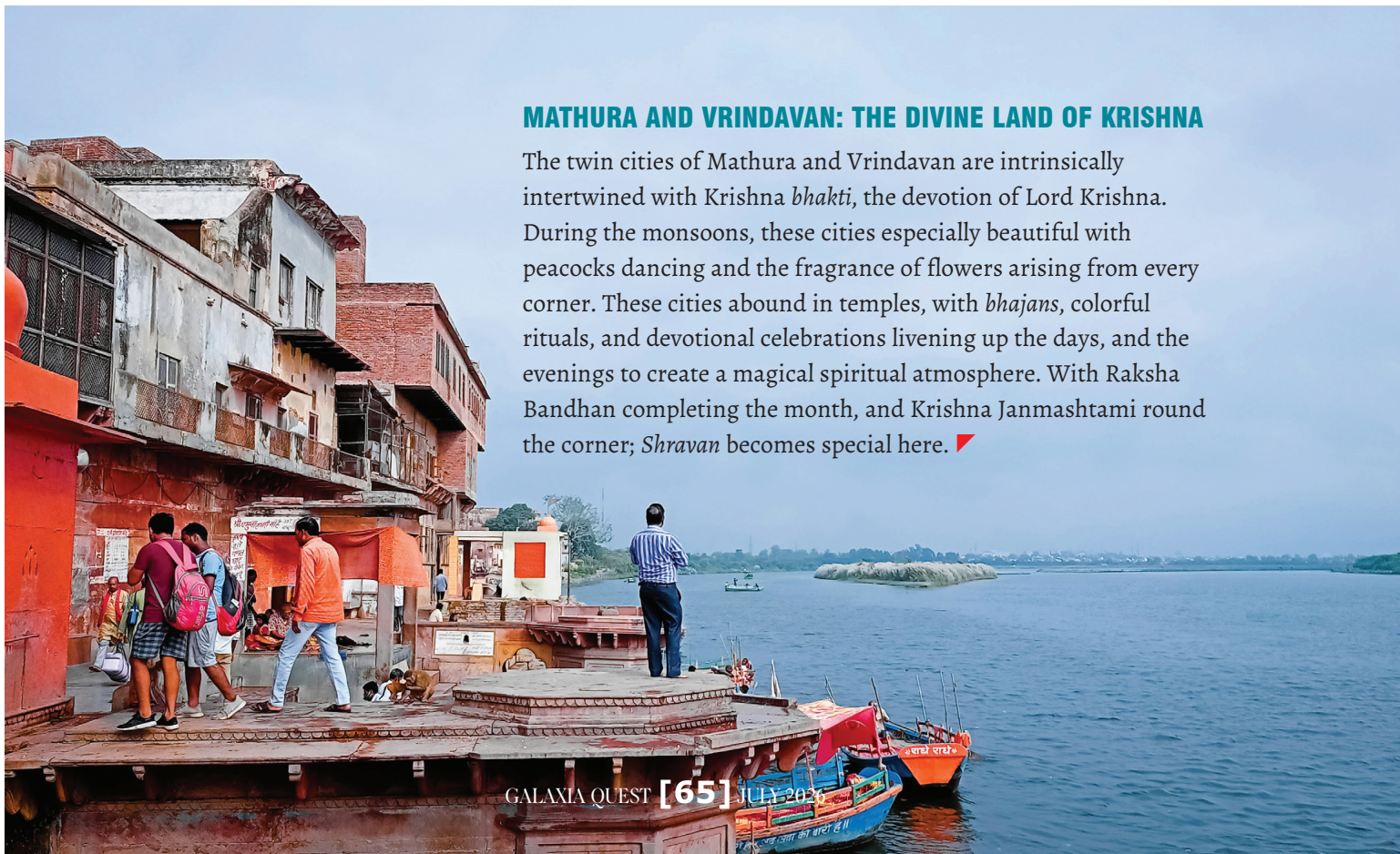
SHIRDI: FAITH BEYOND RELIGION

Shirdi is inextricably associated with Sai Baba. The faithful flock there in lakhs more than a century since his passing. Millions continue to be motivated by Sai Baba's teachings of charity, compassion, humility, and communal harmony. The Sai Baba Samadhi Mandir draws devotees from all religions, making Shirdi a unique example of inclusive spirituality. ▼



MATHURA AND VRINDAVAN: THE DIVINE LAND OF KRISHNA

The twin cities of Mathura and Vrindavan are intrinsically intertwined with Krishna *bhakti*, the devotion of Lord Krishna. During the monsoons, these cities especially beautiful with peacocks dancing and the fragrance of flowers arising from every corner. These cities abound in temples, with *bhajans*, colorful rituals, and devotional celebrations livening up the days, and the evenings to create a magical spiritual atmosphere. With Raksha Bandhan completing the month, and Krishna Janmashtami round the corner; *Shravan* becomes special here. ▼





THE RISE OF TEERTH YATRAS IN INDIA

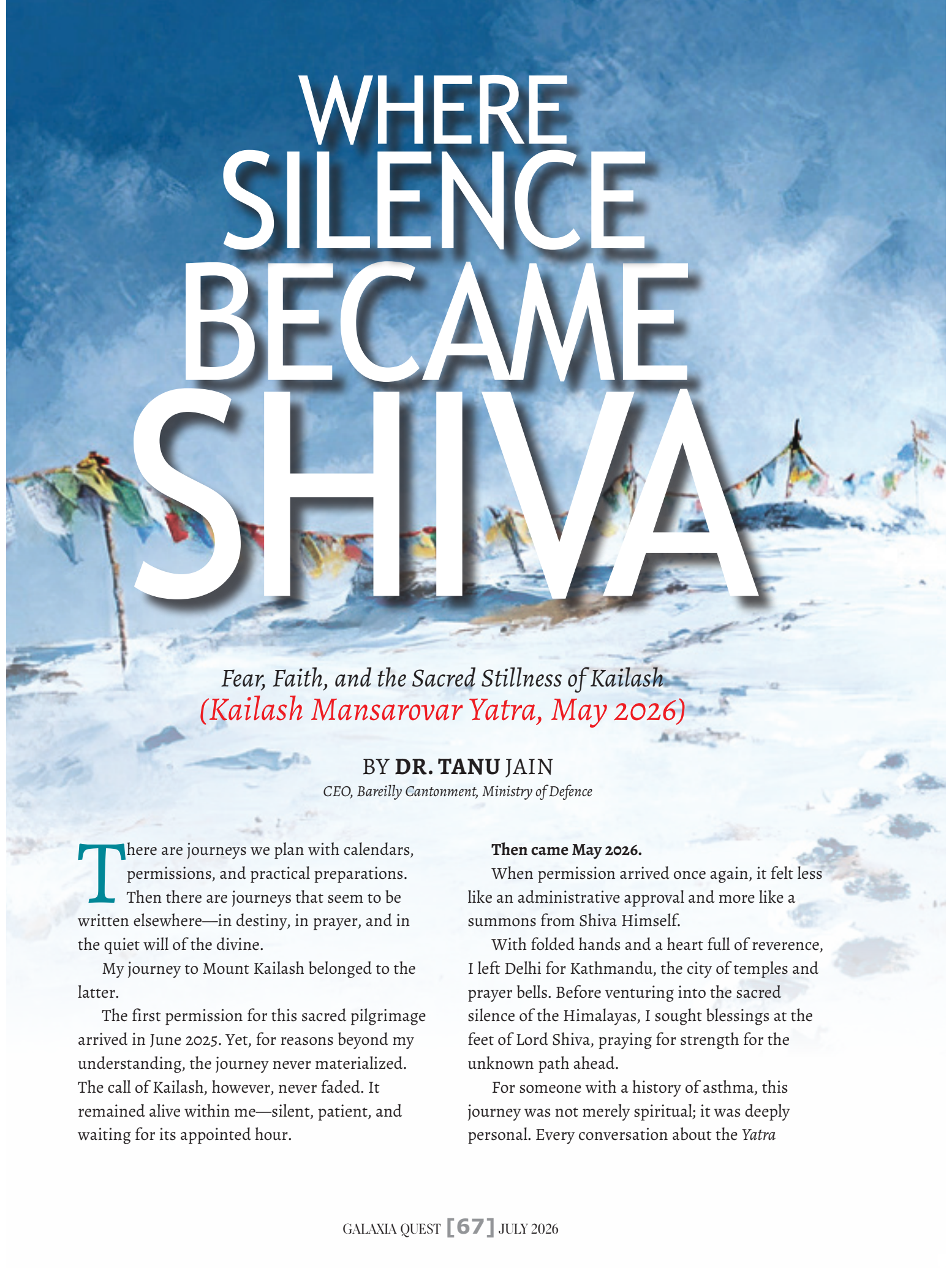
Teerth yatra, going on pilgrimages has always been a part of the Indian ethos, and way of life. However, in recent years, India's spiritual tourism sector has witnessed a boom feeding off improved highways, increased number of airports, greater railway connectivity, and the rise of digital bookings. The government too has introduced initiatives to make pilgrimage travel better organized and more accessible to more people across a wider

geographical area. Increased interest in wellness, yoga, meditation, and spiritual retreats has arisen out of stress filled modern lifestyles in which anxiety, and digital overload have played a major role. Now, even international tourists are increasingly visiting India not just for sightseeing, but also to participate in transformative experiences like yoga retreats, Ayurveda healing, temple stays, pilgrimages, Buddhist learning, and ashram experiences. ▼



SPIRITUAL TOURISM IN INDIA HAS ACQUIRED NEWER DIMENSIONS

Spiritual tourism in the sacred monsoon month of *Shravan* is far more than travelling from one temple to another. Experience faith in its living form — chants echoing on riverbanks, pilgrims walking barefoot in the rain, monks meditating in silence, temple bells ringing through ancient streets — to understand that devotion has not vanished in the 21st century. It has merely changed form, and the youngsters are rediscovering the grandeur of the Jagannath Rath Yatra in Puri; the calmness gained from meditating under the Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya; witnessing Ganga *Aarti* in Varanasi; gaining fine health by practicing yoga in Rishikesh; and trekking to the Amarnath Caves. In India, spirituality is not confined to places of worship. It flows through rivers, mountains, music, rituals, festivals, and everyday life. ▼



WHERE SILENCE BECAME SHIVA

*Fear, Faith, and the Sacred Stillness of Kailash
(Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, May 2026)*

BY **DR. TANU JAIN**

CEO, Bareilly Cantonment, Ministry of Defence

There are journeys we plan with calendars, permissions, and practical preparations. Then there are journeys that seem to be written elsewhere—in destiny, in prayer, and in the quiet will of the divine.

My journey to Mount Kailash belonged to the latter.

The first permission for this sacred pilgrimage arrived in June 2025. Yet, for reasons beyond my understanding, the journey never materialized. The call of Kailash, however, never faded. It remained alive within me—silent, patient, and waiting for its appointed hour.

Then came May 2026.

When permission arrived once again, it felt less like an administrative approval and more like a summons from Shiva Himself.

With folded hands and a heart full of reverence, I left Delhi for Kathmandu, the city of temples and prayer bells. Before venturing into the sacred silence of the Himalayas, I sought blessings at the feet of Lord Shiva, praying for strength for the unknown path ahead.

For someone with a history of asthma, this journey was not merely spiritual; it was deeply personal. Every conversation about the *Yatra*



FROM LHASA, OUR JOURNEY STRETCHED
ACROSS VAST BARREN ROADS TOWARD
NGARI—THE SILENT FRONTIER. HOUR
AFTER HOUR, WE TRAVELLED THROUGH
LANDSCAPES STRIPPED OF DISTRACTION.
NO CROWDS. NO MARKETS. NO NOISE.
ONLY ENDLESS MOUNTAINS BENEATH AN
IMPOSSIBLY BLUE SKY

carried warnings—of thinning oxygen, altitude sickness, dizziness, nausea, and exhaustion. Yet beneath every precaution, one mantra echoed within me: Remain calm. Surrender. Trust Shiva.

From Kathmandu, we flew into Lhasa, Tibet's mystical capital. The majestic monasteries, fluttering prayer flags, and timeless grandeur of the Potala Palace felt surreal. Yet the altitude introduced itself immediately. My head spun. Nausea arrived in relentless waves. Breathing became effortful and unfamiliar.

It was here that Tibet taught its first lesson: panic worsens the mountain; calmness befriends it.

From Lhasa, our journey stretched across vast barren roads toward Ngari—the silent frontier. Hour after hour, we travelled through landscapes stripped of distraction. No crowds. No markets. No noise. Only endless mountains beneath an impossibly blue sky.

And then, suddenly, it appeared. Mount Kailash.

Not as a photograph. Not as imagination. But as living reality.

Its distant white summit rose with an authority words cannot contain. It simply stood there—still, eternal, commanding everything around it into silence.

Soon we reached the shores of holy Mansarovar. Nothing can prepare the soul for that first sight.

The lake appeared like liquid sky—still, luminous, and impossibly pure. Standing at its edge, I felt as though time itself had stopped. Though a full ritual dip was not permitted, I stepped gently into the icy waters.

The cold pierced every layer of my body, yet what I felt within was not shock—it was stillness.

From Mansarovar, we moved to Darchen, the base camp of the sacred *parikrama*. Harsh winds lashed against our tents. Temperatures dropped sharply. The mountain looked fierce, testing every pilgrim's resolve.

The next morning, we began from Yam Dwar—the symbolic gateway between the world one leaves behind and the path of surrender one enters.

As we walked, oxygen levels dipped alarmingly. Every step felt heavier than the last. Fear occasionally rose like an unwelcome shadow. Yet something stronger walked beside me. Faith.

The trek to Derapuk was exhausting beyond description, but when I finally stood facing the magnificent north face of Kailash, all discomfort dissolved.



FROM LHASA, OUR JOURNEY STRETCHED ACROSS VAST BARREN ROADS TOWARD NGARI—THE SILENT FRONTIER. HOUR AFTER HOUR, WE TRAVELLED THROUGH LANDSCAPES STRIPPED OF DISTRACTION. NO CROWDS. NO MARKETS. NO NOISE. ONLY ENDLESS MOUNTAINS BENEATH AN IMPOSSIBLY BLUE SKY

I could not speak.

I could only weep.

The next day brought the greatest test: the ascent to Dolma Pass, nearly 19,000 feet above sea level.

That climb was a confrontation—with weakness, fear, exhaustion, and self-doubt. The body screamed to stop. The lungs burned. The icy winds cut through every layer of protection.

And yet, somewhere amid that unbearable silence, I felt Shiva. Not as form. Not as vision. But as presence.

At Dolma Pass, standing breathless between earth and sky, I understood that surrender is not defeat.

It is liberation.

When we finally returned to India, it felt as though I had returned physically—but a part of me remained there, in that eternal stillness.

Kailash does not merely allow you to visit. It transforms you.

I had left Delhi carrying fear in my lungs and uncertainty in my heart. I returned carrying something far more enduring—silence.

Not the absence of sound, but the presence of peace.

And in that profound stillness, I discovered Shiva—not merely on a mountain in Tibet, but within myself.

Because somewhere between the icy waters of Mansarovar, the windswept plains of Darchen, the arduous climb to Dolma Pass, and the endless Himalayan sky, I realised that Kailash is not simply a destination.

It is an awakening.

And there, in the highest silence I have ever known, silence itself became Shiva. ▀

OBESITY: THE PANDEMIC NOBODY WANTS TO TALK ABOUT



Dr. YUVRAAJ SINGH

*MD Internal Medicine / Critical Care
Advanced Training in Hormonal, Metabolic
and Regenerative Medicine (A4M, USA)*



ANIMALS LIVE IN ALIGNMENT WITH BIOLOGICAL SIGNALS THAT HAVE BEEN REFINED OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS THROUGH EVOLUTION. THEY MOVE WHEN MOVEMENT IS NECESSARY, THEY REST WHEN REST IS REQUIRED, AND THEY EAT WHEN FOOD IS AVAILABLE



PRECISION HEALTH

For the first time in human history, we have more information about health than ever before. Technological advancements are happening at breakneck speed.

We have smartwatches tracking our heart rates and various other vital parameters, apps counting our calories, continuous glucose monitors measuring blood sugar in real time, artificial intelligence generating personalized diets, and social media overflowing with health experts, fitness influencers, and biohacking gurus.

Yet, despite all this progress, humanity is becoming a burden unto itself—heavier, weaker, more fatigued, more metabolically dysfunctional, and more dependent on medication and gadgets than ever before.

Something is clearly not working.

Obesity is often portrayed as a problem of willpower—a failure of discipline, a simple imbalance between calories consumed and calories burned.

The reality is far more complex.

Obesity is a biological, hormonal, metabolic, environmental, psychological, and societal disease that has quietly become one of the greatest threats to modern-day health.

To begin with, the human body was never designed for the environment we have now created around us.

Nature offers a powerful lesson. No species in the wild suffers from obesity at the scale we see in humans today.

A tiger does not need a diet coach, a wolf does not count calories, and a deer does not download a fitness app.

Animals live in alignment with biological signals that have been refined over millions of years through evolution. They move when movement is necessary, they rest when rest is required, and they eat when food is available.

They do not consume highly processed substances engineered to override satiety signals.

Human beings, however, have become increasingly disconnected from those biological rhythms.

We evolved in a world of scarcity. Today, we live in a world of abundance.

Food is available twenty-four hours a day. Highly processed products are designed by teams of scientists to maximize cravings rather than nutrition.

Artificial lighting extends our days, screens disrupt our sleep, and convenience has replaced movement.

The very technologies designed to make life easier are making physiology harder.

Nature also teaches us another lesson.

A tree does not become weak because one leaf turns yellow. The yellow leaf is merely a signal that something deeper may be occurring within the roots, soil, water supply, or surrounding environment.

Similarly, excess body weight is rarely the disease itself. It is often

the visible manifestation of deeper dysfunction occurring beneath the surface.

The scale is the leaf; the roots are hormonal, metabolic, inflammatory, and behavioral.

When insulin resistance develops, the body becomes increasingly efficient at storing energy and increasingly inefficient at accessing it.

When sleep deteriorates, cortisol rises, and with chronically elevated cortisol, appetite regulation changes.

When muscle mass declines, resting metabolic rate falls; when inflammation persists, metabolic flexibility decreases.

The weight gain that appears on the scale may occur years after the biological processes that created it began.

An increasingly common statement I hear in daily practice is: "Doctor, I barely eat anything and still gain weight." Others insist they exercise regularly but cannot lose body fat.

While these statements are not always accurate, they often reflect a deeper physiological reality.

The body is a biochemical ecosystem, and ecosystems do not fail because of one isolated event. They fail because multiple systems gradually drift out of balance.

And now, in the middle of this epidemic, we have witnessed the explosive rise of GLP-1 medications.

These drugs have undoubtedly changed the landscape of obesity





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treatment and represent one of the most important pharmaceutical advances in metabolic medicine in recent decades. However, they are not a substitute for physiology, muscle development, sleep, or movement. Nor are they a substitute for understanding why a patient became metabolically unhealthy in the first place.

Unfortunately, we are increasingly seeing these medications prescribed in isolation—without comprehensive assessment, body composition analysis, nutritional evaluation, hormonal investigation, resistance-training programs, or long-term follow-up.

Weight loss is celebrated, while muscle loss is often ignored. Nutritional deficiencies go unnoticed, and underlying metabolic drivers remain unaddressed.

A lighter patient is not necessarily a healthier patient.

Nature never rewards shortcuts.

A farmer cannot accelerate the growth of a crop simply by caressing the leaves. The roots must be nourished, the soil must be healthy, and the environment must support growth.

Likewise, lasting metabolic health cannot be injected into existence. It must be built—through restoration of sleep, preservation of muscle,



improvement in nutrition, correction of hormonal dysfunction, management of stress, and long-term alignment with human biology.

Technology will continue to evolve. Artificial intelligence will become more powerful, diagnostics will become more sophisticated, and medications will become more effective.

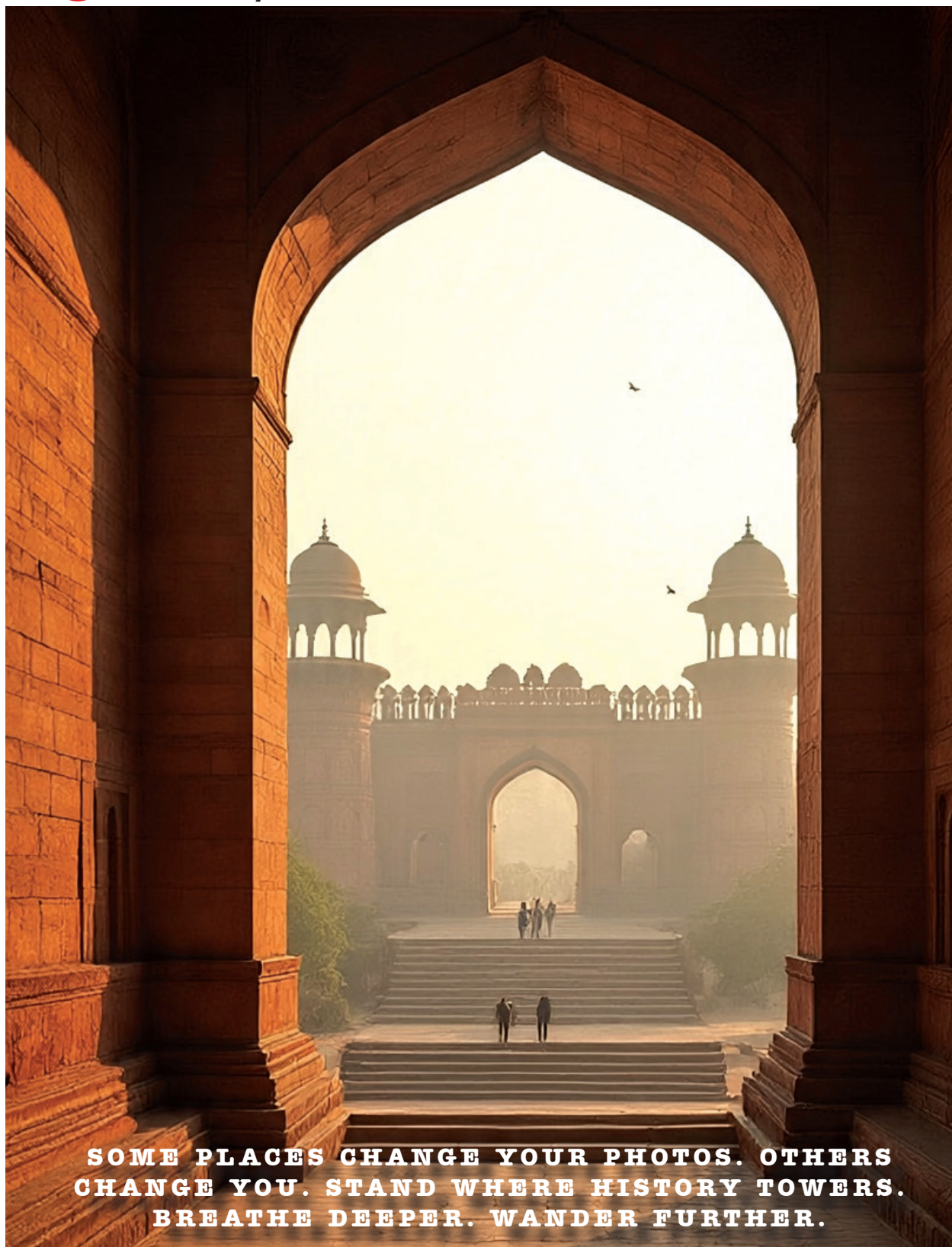
But none of these advances can replace the biological fundamentals upon which human health is built.

The obesity pandemic is not fundamentally a crisis of body weight. It is a crisis of modern physiology.

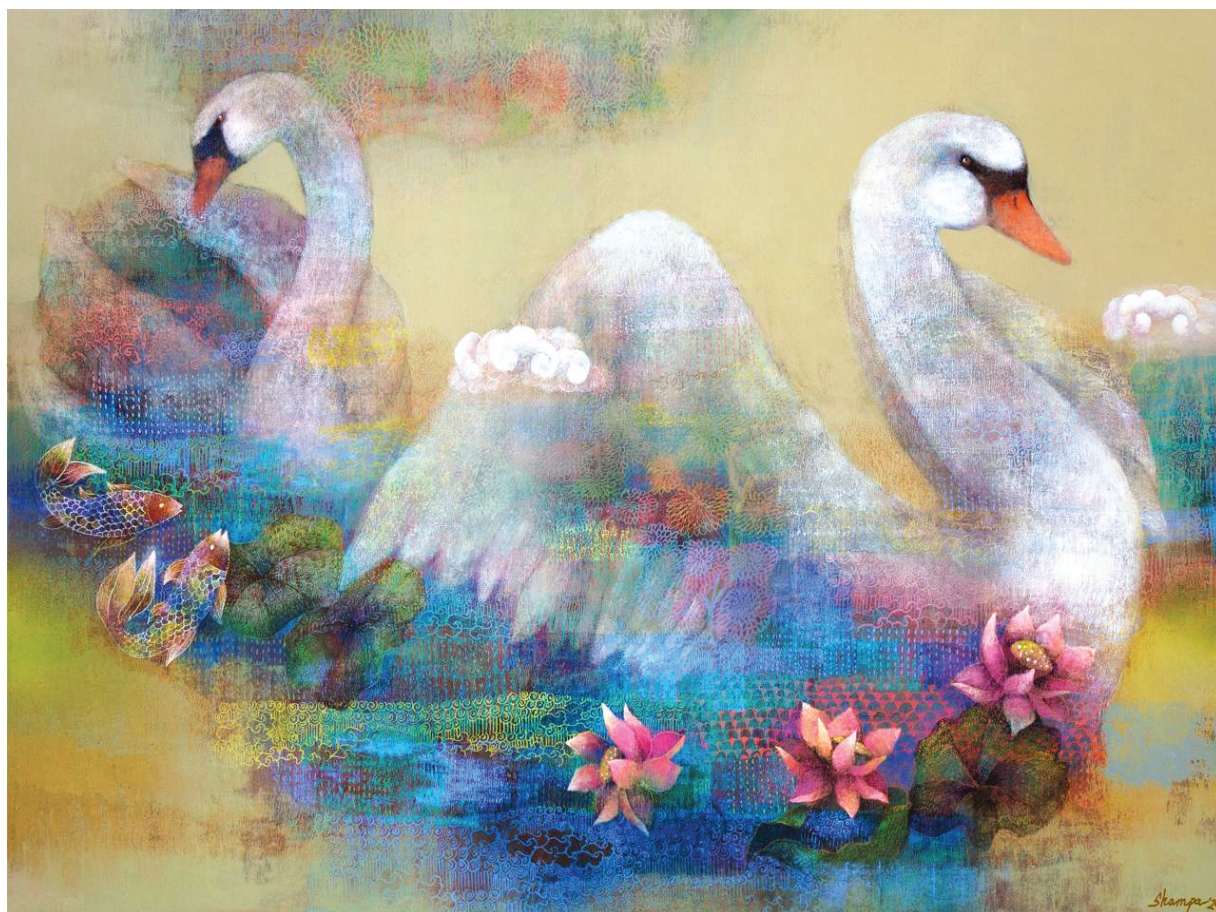
And until we address the biological systems driving it, we will continue treating symptoms while the underlying epidemic grows larger with every passing year. ▼

GALAXIA QUEST

Leisurely Yours



**SOME PLACES CHANGE YOUR PHOTOS. OTHERS
CHANGE YOU. STAND WHERE HISTORY TOWERS.
BREATHE DEEPER. WANDER FURTHER.**



LAYERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

THE TRANSCENDENT VISUAL LANGUAGE
OF SHAMPA SIRCAR DAS



Shampa Sircar Das creates meditative paintings rooted in memory, silence, and Indian spiritual philosophy. Through luminous layers, dreamlike forms, and symbolic imagery, her works evoke stillness, introspection, and emotional depth, offering a contemplative vision of contemporary Indian art.

Writes **RITIKA LALL CHAKRAVARTTY**



Shampa Sircar Das



**ACROSS CENTURIES,
THROUGH TEMPLE
ARCHITECTURE,
SCULPTURE, MINIATURE
PAINTING, CLASSICAL
DANCE, AND MODERN
ABSTRACTION, ARTISTIC
PRACTICE IN INDIA HAS
REMAINED INSEPARABLE
FROM CONTEMPLATION AND
INNER INQUIRY**

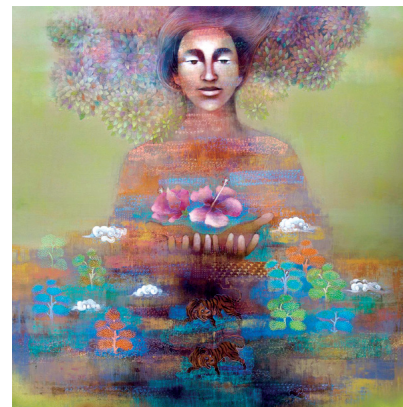
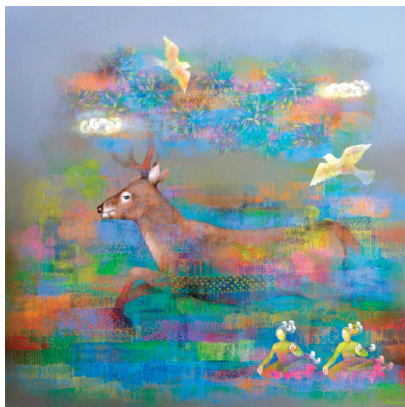
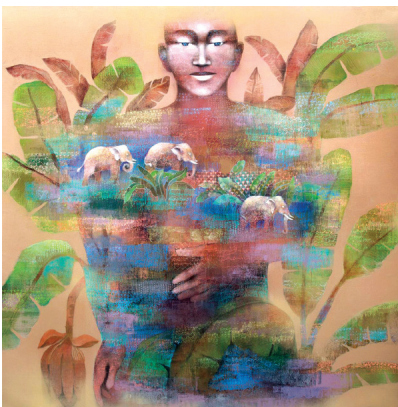


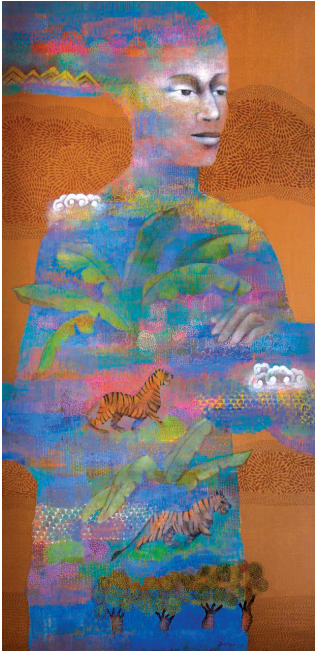
In the vast continuum of Indian art, creativity has never existed merely as visual expression; it has always been deeply intertwined with philosophy, spirituality, and the pursuit of higher consciousness. Rooted in the ideals of Satyam (truth), Shivam (the divine), and Sundaram (beauty), Indian aesthetics historically positioned art as a bridge between the material and the metaphysical. Across centuries, through temple architecture, sculpture, miniature painting, classical dance, and modern abstraction, artistic practice in India has remained inseparable from contemplation and inner inquiry.

It is within this enduring philosophical lineage that the works of Shampa Sircar Das find their profound resonance.

Her artistic journey reflects an intimate engagement with Indian philosophy and its continued relevance within contemporary visual culture. Rather than functioning as conventional images, her paintings emerge as meditative spaces, contemplative environments where rhythm, silence, memory, and emotional consciousness unfold gradually. Drawing deeply from India's spiritual and cultural fabric, Das transforms visual language into an experience of introspection, inviting viewers to pause, absorb, and reconnect with subtler dimensions of awareness.

Throughout Indian artistic history, philosophy has shaped both form and meaning. In Shampa Sircar Das's works, these philosophical undercurrents manifest through flowing compositions, layered textures, and intuitive





AT FIRST ENCOUNTER, THE VIEWER IS DRAWN INTO LUMINOUS SURFACES LAYERED WITH TRANSLUCENT BLUES, MUTED OCHRES, DIFFUSED GREENS, AND SOFT VIOLETS.

spatial arrangements that echo the cyclical nature of existence and the cosmic rhythms celebrated in Indian thought. Much like the symbolic dance of Shiva Nataraja, where creation and dissolution exist simultaneously, her paintings embody movement, continuity, and transformation.

Her sensibility aligns closely with the concept of Advaita, or non-duality, where the distinction between self and universe begins to dissolve. Through abstraction, symbolism, and atmospheric layering, she constructs visual narratives that transcend direct interpretation. Her canvases do not seek to impose meaning; instead, they cultivate an experiential dialogue in which emotion, stillness, and transcendence coexist.

Equally present is the essence of rasa, the emotional and spiritual experience central to Indian aesthetics. Each composition carries a contemplative energy that allows viewers to engage with the work on deeply personal terms. In this way, her practice becomes a meeting point

between heritage and contemporary expression, where ancient philosophical ideas are reinterpreted through a distinctly modern visual language. Yet what makes Shampa

Sircar Das particularly significant within today's contemporary art

landscape is the quiet intensity of her work. At a moment when much contemporary art is shaped by spectacle, immediacy, and visual excess, her paintings unfold slowly. They resist instant consumption, rewarding sustained engagement rather than immediate interpretation. This meditative quality is precisely what makes her oeuvre increasingly compelling for discerning collectors and serious followers of contemporary Indian art.

At first encounter, the viewer is drawn into luminous surfaces layered with translucent blues, muted ochres, diffused greens, and soft violets. Ethereal figures emerge and dissolve within dreamlike terrains where lotus flowers bloom across psychological landscapes, birds drift through silence, and animals move fluidly through

human space. The imagery feels both intimate and archetypal, suspended somewhere between memory and myth.

But the emotional power of these works lies not only in their imagery; it resides equally in the extraordinary discipline of their construction.

Das approaches painting as an act of meditation. Her canvases are built gradually through accumulations of pigment, texture, delicate markings, and repeated interventions that reveal themselves slowly over time. Fine ornamental structures, script-like gestures, and subtle surface patterns appear embedded within the paintings like fragments of memory or traces of an ancient visual language. The influence of Indian miniature traditions, textile motifs, tantric geometry, and sacred symbolism is deeply felt, though never overtly illustrative. Instead, these

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references dissolve into atmosphere, allowing the works to remain emotionally open and psychologically fluid.

This layered process gives her paintings remarkable depth and material richness, qualities increasingly valued within contemporary collecting practices. Each work carries the presence of time within its surface. Nothing feels hurried or mechanically resolved. The paintings breathe through accumulation, erasure, and refinement, revealing new dimensions with prolonged viewing.

For collectors, this becomes especially significant: the works continue to evolve emotionally over years of ownership. Their



meanings are never fixed. Symbols shift, relationships emerge unexpectedly, and hidden narratives surface gradually through repeated encounters.

The female figure recurs throughout her visual language, though never as conventional portraiture. These women function less as identifiable subjects and more as metaphysical presences, embodiments of intuition, silence, memory, and ecological interconnectedness. Forests move through bodies, clouds settle across skin, and animals inhabit human space with symbolic fluidity. The dissolution between the human and natural worlds reflects both Indian philosophical thought and an urgent contemporary

THESE ARE NOT PAINTINGS THAT CAN BE REPLICATED QUICKLY OR PRODUCED IN VOLUME. THEIR LAYERED EXECUTION, INTRICATE DETAILING, AND MEDITATIVE CONSTRUCTION DEMAND PATIENCE, CONCENTRATION, AND PROLONGED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SURFACE



ecological consciousness, positioning her practice within larger global conversations surrounding spirituality, identity, and environment.

Equally compelling is her command of colour and surface. Rather than relying on sharp contrast or decorative excess, Das allows colour to emerge through transparency and diffusion. Pigments appear suspended within the canvas, creating luminous atmospheres that feel almost weightless. Her chromatic restraint generates emotional quietude, a rare achievement in contemporary painting. The surfaces possess luminosity without theatricality, spirituality without ornamentation.

For collectors and institutions alike, the significance of Shampa Sircar Das lies in the clarity and consistency of her artistic language. In an international art market increasingly drawn

toward authenticity, craftsmanship, and conceptual depth, her practice offers a mature and unmistakably individual visual vocabulary. Her works resist trends and instead cultivate timelessness, an essential quality for long-term collectability.

Importantly, the nature of her process naturally limits production. These are not paintings that can be replicated quickly or produced in volume. Their layered execution, intricate detailing, and meditative construction demand patience, concentration, and prolonged engagement with the surface. Such rarity further enhances the value of the oeuvre within contemporary collecting circles, where scarcity and artistic integrity remain deeply prized.

Ultimately, what distinguishes Shampa Sircar Das is the emotional longevity of her work. Her paintings do not exhaust themselves through a single viewing; they deepen over time. They invite return, reflection, and renewed discovery. In an increasingly accelerated world, they offer something profoundly rare: stillness.

In many ways, Shampa Sircar Das represents a significant voice within contemporary Indian art, one that successfully bridges spiritual inheritance with contemporary visual language. Her paintings preserve the contemplative depth of Indian aesthetic traditions while speaking powerfully to the emotional and psychological complexities of the present moment.

For collectors, they offer far more than visual beauty. They offer permanence, introspection, and a deeply human experience of transcendence. ▼

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WELLNESS GUIDES, NUTRITION ADVICE, AND EXPERT
DOCTOR INSIGHTS THAT IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

A silhouette of a woman in a long, flowing cape stands against a large, glowing sun in a golden-orange sky. The sun is positioned behind her, creating a halo effect. The overall mood is warm and dramatic.

SUN, SKIN

& THE TRUTH ABOUT TANNING



Summer means tanning panic and patchy skin. Healthy skin isn't fairness — it's tone and balance. Sun causes unevenness. Protect, hydrate, stay consistent. Great skin looks healthy, rested, balanced, not lighter.

— BY **NILOFAR CURRIMBHOY**

Summer has arrived in full force — and with it comes the annual panic around tanning, dullness, patchy skin and that unmistakable “summer fatigue” your face starts showing by June.

But here's the thing: healthy skin isn't really

about fairness. It's about tone.

You can have any complexion in the world, but the moment your skin starts looking uneven, tired or blotchy, it shows instantly. Good skin has always come down to three things: tone, texture and



SUNSCREEN IS NON-NEGOTIABLE. SCARVES, CAPS, SUNGLASSES, UMBRELLAS — USE WHATEVER WORKS FOR YOU. PREVENTION IS HALF THE SKINCARE BATTLE WON.



strength. And among the three, tone is what people notice first. So if your skin feels sun-stressed or uneven this season, the goal isn't to fight your skin — it's to restore balance.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: PROTECTION

Most uneven skin tone begins with damage. And in Indian summers, the biggest culprit is obvious: the sun. Before masks, serums or home remedies, start with protection. Sunscreen is non-negotiable. Scarves, caps, sunglasses, umbrellas — use whatever works for you. Prevention is half the skincare battle won. And consistency matters more than expensive products ever will.

Apply sunscreen 20–30 minutes before stepping out, reapply during long hours outdoors, and don't skip it just because it's cloudy. UV rays don't take a day off. Think of sunscreen less as skincare and more as hygiene — like brushing your teeth.

WHAT A TAN ACTUALLY MEANS

That tan you see after a holiday or a few harsh afternoons outside? Your skin isn't "misbehaving." It's protecting you.

When exposed to sunlight, your body produces more melanin — the pigment that acts as a natural

A SIMPLE OVERNIGHT PASTE OF HALDI, RAW MILK AND A FEW DROPS OF LEMON JUICE HELPS SOOTHE THE SKIN AND SLOWLY REDUCE TANNING OVER TIME.

shield against UV rays. That increase in melanin is what darkens the skin.

In moderation, tanning fades naturally. But repeated exposure can leave skin looking dull, uneven and rough. Over time, it may even affect elasticity and accelerate signs of ageing.

Sunlight is important. Excess isn't.

SIMPLE THINGS THAT ACTUALLY HELP THE COOLING SKIN MIST

A quick blend of cucumber juice, glycerine and rose water works beautifully during summer.

It hydrates, cools and calms skin that's been exposed to heat all day. No, it doesn't replace sunscreen — but it helps your skin recover from environmental stress.

OIL & ROSE WATER THERAPY

An old-school mix of olive oil, a touch of mustard oil and rose water can help restore moisture and improve skin balance over time.

Simple remedies survive generations for a reason.

ORANGE PEEL MASK

Orange peels are surprisingly rich in Vitamin C — even more than the fruit itself.

Dry them, powder them, and mix with yoghurt into a paste. It helps brighten skin, improve texture and gradually reduce pigmentation.

LEMON & HONEY — CAREFULLY



This remains one of the most trusted kitchen remedies.

Lemon naturally brightens darker areas while honey prevents dryness and irritation. But lemon should always be diluted and patch-tested first. Skincare should never sting.

THE RETURN OF HALDI

Turmeric remains one of the most timeless Indian skincare ingredients.

A simple overnight paste of haldi, raw milk and a few drops of lemon juice helps soothe the skin



and slowly reduce tanning over time.
Not instantly. Naturally.
And that distinction matters.

SANDALWOOD: THE ULTIMATE SUMMER CALM

If your skin feels heated, irritated or simply exhausted after sun exposure, sandalwood is still one of the best remedies around.

Mixed with rose water and a pinch of turmeric, it cools the skin, reduces redness and supports repair.

Sometimes your skin doesn't need correction. It needs calming.

SKIP THE OBSESSION WITH "INSTANT FAIRNESS"

The biggest mistake people make after tanning is trying to erase it aggressively.

Harsh bleaches and strong chemical treatments on already sun-exposed skin often do more damage than the tan itself.

Gentler ingredients — cucumber, tomato, sandalwood, yoghurt, honey — may work slower, but they work with your skin instead of against it.

And in skincare, slow is usually smarter.

DRESS SMARTER, NOT SMALLER

Summer fashion often means more exposed skin — which also means more tanning.

Instead of piling on products later, reduce exposure earlier. Lightweight cottons, linens and



airy full-sleeve silhouettes offer protection without trapping heat.

Sometimes skincare begins with your wardrobe.

THE REAL SECRET? CONSISTENCY

Healthy skin isn't built overnight — and neither is an even skin tone.

You don't need ten-step routines or miracle products. You need a few thoughtful habits done consistently:

- Protect your skin
- Keep it hydrated
- Avoid harsh treatments
- Be patient with the process

Because the truth is, great skin isn't about becoming lighter.

It's about looking healthy, rested and balanced — in every season. ▶

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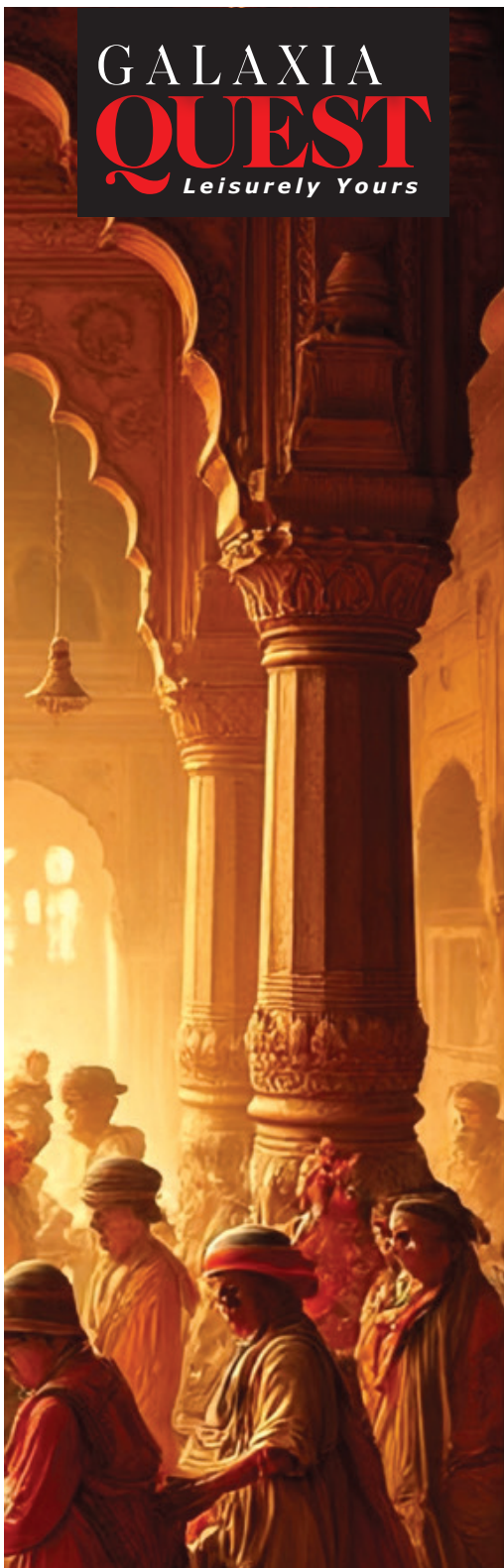
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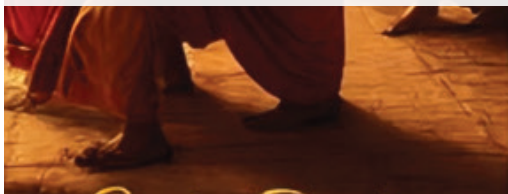


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**FROM RED FORT TO THALI. ROTI, DAAL, JALEBI, GARAM
MASALA. EVERY BITE HOLDS CENTURIES. THIS IS
INDIAN CULTURE, ONE SPICE AT A TIME.**



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THE ENDLESS JOURNEY OF CURIOSITY

