

Black & Gold

The Bombay Gymkhana Magazine

December 2024 Volume 14 Issue 8

Wrapping up 2024

1875 - A Timeless Banquet Space
Padel now at BG



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Message to our members



Dear Members,

As we approach the year-end, I'm thrilled to share exciting updates across various fronts.

SPORTS NEWS

PADEL introduced at BOMBAY GYMKHANA

I am delighted to announce a thrilling new addition to our sports offerings at Bombay Gymkhana: Padel, the world's fastest-growing sport! A long pending decision, the sport has now been enthusiastically launched at the Club. This long-awaited addition reinforces our commitment to offering modern and diverse sports facilities.

FOOTBALL

Congratulations to our members Anoushka Gangwani and Aanya Vora, who will represent ISSO at the upcoming U-17 Nationals in Jammu & Kashmir.

SNOOKER

Our very own Vijay Swaminathan has been crowned the Snooker 6 Reds Maharashtra State Champion. Hearty congratulations and wishing him all the best!!

SWIMMING

Our young Swimmers put up an impressive show at the recently concluded CCI Swimming Gala, winning 12 medals and continuing their excellent performance.

1875 – THE NEWLY REFURBISHED BANQUET FACILITY

Bombay Gymkhana is delighted to unveil 1875, our newly refurbished banquet space on the first floor, offering a blend of modern elegance and timeless charm that will take you back to the era when it all began. Overlooking the iconic Gymkhana lawns, this venue is a much-needed addition at the Club for hosting mid-sized gatherings in a scenic and sophisticated setting.

ELECTRICITY SAVINGS AND SUSTAINABILITY

We have achieved notable electricity savings of ₹19,98,162 compared to last year, reflecting our ongoing commitment to energy efficiency. Since October 2023, we have successfully reduced our carbon emissions by 71 tons through our power-saving efforts.

Additionally, as part of our commitment to sustainability, our wet waste composting initiative has yielded approximately 1,400 kg of nutrient-rich compost, now available for sale to members.

These efforts highlight our commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS

We're ringing in 2025, Bombay Gymkhana's 150th year, with a special New Year's Eve celebration. Enjoy exquisite food by Harpal's Food and music by the renowned band A26.

LAUNCH OF BOMBAY GYMKHANA 150TH FOUNDERS' DAY CELEBRATIONS

The year 2025 marks a historic milestone—Bombay Gymkhana's 150th year. To kick-off celebrations, a special event for members and their families is planned for on Friday, 10th January 2025. More details will be shared soon.

Wishing all members and their families a joyful holiday season.



Sanjiv Saran Mehra
President

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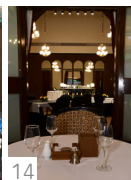
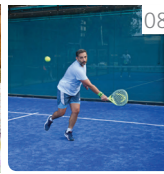
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All contributions to *Black & Gold* should be original and accompanied by your name, membership number and contact details. Material submitted is liable to be edited as may be determined by the Editorial Board.

RUGBY TRIUMPHS IN KOLKATA

Dominating the field with skill and sportsmanship, the BG team clinched second spot at the 89th All India and South Asia Rugby Championship.



▲ Most of the team with Rugby Sevens Legend and current India coach Waisale Serevi



▲ Entire travelling party

The Bombay Gym Rugby team travelled to Kolkata to participate in the 89th All India and South Asia Rugby Championship, held from 22nd to 29th September.

With impressive victories in the early stages—50-0 against Kerala Warriors (23rd September) and 26-0 against Future Hope Harlequins (25th September)—the team fought hard in the final but narrowly missed the top spot, losing 10-14 to Delhi Hurricanes on 28th September. The team's remarkable skill and sportsmanship earned them a well-deserved second place in this prestigious championship.



▲ Recent 9(2) members through rugby (L to R): Tushaar Carvalho, Feryuz Patel, Rohit Godiwala, Rayomand Unwala (not a 9(2) member), Ammar Faizullahbhoj and Anand Godiwala

A special thanks to our affiliate clubs: The Calcutta Cricket and Football Club for their warm hospitality and for hosting an outstanding tournament and The Tollygunge Club for providing top-class accommodation for our team. **BG**

♣ Prime National Ranking ♠ ♥ Bridge Tournament at BG ♦

Bridging excellence by celebrating India's rise in the world of Bridge.



▲ From Right: Vasanti Shah, Aparna Sain, Dr Rajul Dalal, and (extreme left) Sadhana Gupta—the winning team Harmony

Bridge is a complex mind sport that tests your analytical and logical skills like chess, but unlike chess it is more difficult and complex as it is a partnership game. **Bridge is unique in its capacity to connect people and bring out the best in each of us, demanding strategy, communication and trust in ways few other games can match. Bridge is a test of patience, wits and occasionally your partner's ability to read your mind.** Bridge is evolving and growing in India in recent years and with it we are tasting international success.

The Indian senior's team were placed second in the World championships held in Argentina in October 2024. Of late, there has been a significant growth in the number of lady players taking part in Bridge tournaments. Sponsorship from companies like Prime Securities has been key for encouraging and building diversity in Bridge.

The Prime championships held in Mumbai, co-hosted by Bombay Gymkhana, is a keenly awaited yearly tourney that encourages women players by hosting Ladies Pair, Mixed Teams and Mixed Pairs. It's a unique event in India's Bridge calendar and has become one of the most sought-after events.

The Ladies Pairs Event brought in 35 pairs from all over the country and that has been the highest number of pairs participating in any Ladies Ranking Tournament in India.



▲ From Right: Jesal Dabriwala, Sandeep Karmarkar and Marianne Karmarkar—winners in the mixed pairs event

The Mixed Teams event is the only one of its kind tournament held in India and holds a special place within the Bridge community, embodying a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect. Here, men and women come together as equals on the same teams, working in harmony to showcase the skills, insight and subtle intuition that are the hallmarks of great Bridge. This tournament is an opportunity to demonstrate not only the excellence of each player but also the power of cooperation, highlighting the diverse strengths that each participant brings to the table.

This year, there were 23 teams in contention. We also had a record 79 pairs participating in the Mixed Pairs Event, which was far higher than what was anticipated. The six-day event started on 11th November and ended with the mixed pairs on 17th November in which we also managed to get some good coverage in the newspapers, which would be encouraging for the sport.

The Ladies pairs event was won by Asha Sharma

and Puja Batra, both of whom have represented India internationally multiple times and have always been one of the most consistent performers. The Mixed Teams Event was won by Team Harmony comprising Vasanti Shah, Satyabrata Mukherjee, Sadhna Gupta, Subir Majumdar, Aparna Sain and Rajul Dalal who defeated the hotly favoured defending champions Sarlafibers comprising Vrinda Jhunjunwala, Marianne and Sandeep Karmarkar and Himani and Rajeev Khandelwal.

The mixed crown was taken by the ever-consistent real life couple Marianne and Sandeep Karmarkar. The Runners-up were our members Himani and Rajeev Khandelwal who just represented India in the Mixed Teams World Championships in Argentina. Marianne Karmarkar was crowned the "queen" of the tournament as she obtained a rank in all three events.

In spite of such a large participation, the event went off very smoothly without any hiccups. This was possible only due to the efforts put in by our Sports Staff, Housekeeping Staff and by Sanjay the Bridge Helper. The F&B team deserves a special mention. Not only was the food outstanding, the service provided by the ever-smiling catering team was also as good as one can get anywhere. **BG**



▲ From Right: Jesal Dabriwala and Marianne Karmarkar—Players of the Tournament



▲ From Right: Jesal Dabriwala, Himani Khandelwal and Rajeev Khandelwal—Runners-up in the mixed pairs event

Introducing Padel at Bombay Gym

Unleashing a new era of sport as Padel joins the Bombay Gym experience.



▲ BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra and BG VP Dinesh Advani open the new Padel Court at BG



▲ Vivek Wadhwa trying his skills



▲ Neville Wadia serves up

PADEL IS HERE! Yes, Bombay Gym has launched its Padel facility.

Our commitment to enhancing the Club experience through diverse and modern sports facilities continues to be a priority. Padel not only brings a fresh, dynamic challenge to our sports repertoire but it also enriches the family-friendly atmosphere of our Club.

Members of all ages (Boys, Girls, Men and Women) have embraced this new facility as has been experienced from the heavy bookings being made by members. High usage would result in enhanced sporting activities in the Gymkhana.

The Tennis-Padel sub-committee is working on plans to ideate on various programs which includes coaching as well as competitions. **BG**



▲ Hon Secy Tennis & Padel on the court



▲ The sound of racquets and laughter fills the air! Everyone enjoyed the new Padel facility.

Smashing Success: Rohit Sundaram's Badminton Triumph in the Midwest

From Baddy courts in the city to U.S. collegiate glory, BG junior member **Rohit Sundaram** stays undefeated and unstoppable.

From Baddy courts in the city to U.S. collegiate glory, BG junior member Rohit Sundaram stays undefeated and unstoppable.

Rohit Sundaram, a junior member of our Club and a third-year engineering student at Purdue University, recently won a Midwest collegiate Badminton tournament, representing Purdue. His team lost only two out of 35 matches, while Rohit remained undefeated throughout. This was his second time representing Purdue in the regional collegiate conference, where he plays as a regular team member.

Rohit has been playing Badminton for around eight years, initially training at CCI in Bombay and joining Bombay Gym in 2023. He prepares for matches by training with his doubles partner, relaxing with music, and spending time with teammates. Competing abroad has allowed him to meet interesting people, gain unique experiences and play against internationally experienced opponents. **BG**



▲ Rohit Sundaram (fifth from left, back row) with his college Badminton team

BG Shines at CCI's 77th Annual Swimming Gala

BG Swimmers came together for multi-generational display of talent, team spirit and triumph, writes Swim Team Member **Samir Kothari**.



▲ Mens Open Dream Team

The Bombay Gymkhana Swim Team delivered an extraordinary performance at CCI's 77th Annual Swimming Gala, achieving phenomenal results. Over two days, 24 swimmers—ranging from ages 7 to 70—competed fiercely in 11 events, including relays, showcasing their skills and embodying the true spirit of intergenerational participation.

Our biggest turnout was in the U-10 category while our youngest swimmers—Samara Naik, Jimmy Davar and Tanish Shah—competed in the U-7 category.



▲ U-9 Boys team



▲ U-9 Girls team

Following their podium performance in October's Khar Swim Meet, the U-9 Girls Freestyle relay team, featuring Anaita Kudtarkar, Aashka Patel, Samara Naik and Daniela Nagpal, secured second place with a phenomenal time of 3:21.28. The remaining youngsters Yanik Engineer, Ananya Desai, Narios Poonawalla, Arnav Agrawal, Zayd and Zoe Kamath also performed admirably in their respective categories as well.

In the 15–17 age group, Agastya Shah secured a Bronze in his first time competing in the 50M Breaststroke while Avni Arlekar picked up two certificates of merit for Back and Breaststroke.

The Masters category saw remarkable accomplishments. Vivek Mehta and Karan Rai each secured bronze medals for themselves in 50M Freestyle while Neel Kamath picked up a certificate of merit. Mehta further went on to double his haul in the 50M Breaststroke.

First-time participant Yamini Namjoshi amazed every one with back-to-back medal-winning



▲ Masters

performances—a silver in Breaststroke and a bronze in Freestyle.

Our senior master group as usual had notable performances, with Moeen Shirazi, fresh from a perfect 6 for 6 Gold at the AINM in Bhopal, taking Gold in the 50M Freestyle Men’s 51-60 with his signature fly in an astonishing 28.02 seconds and Dinshaw Pardiwala coming in third, almost leading to a Bombay Gym clean sweep for the event. Dinshaw then went on to claim the Gold in the Breaststroke event.

In the Men’s category, Cyrus Commissariat and Samir Kothari achieved personal bests and later teamed up with Dinshaw and former Asian Games and national record holder Ranajoy Punja for a relay performance that was a pleasure to watch.

Finally, in the 70+ category, Jayant Bakshi triumphed with a hard-fought first place win while Dr Gurdeep Sengupta secured second in



▲ BG Masters and Girls U-9 celebrating their wins



▲ Mens Open

a closely contested battle.

Amongst the competitors could be heard the cheers from spectating BG parents and teammates who, at this point, may be getting a reputation for being the loudest in the field.

In all, BG secured 12 medals across 48 events (amassing a grand total of 53:14 swimming minutes). A big thank you to all the parents who came out to support the team and doubled as camera operators to catch each and every race, to coach Vispy Besania for all manner of pointers which continue to improve every swimmer’s performance, and BG Team Captain Karan Rai for organising the team and coordinating with so many people!

Upon the conclusion of the event, it was truly extraordinary to see the BG team spirit as everyone donned their Black and Gold jerseys and made the Club proud. **BG**



▲ Agastya Shah comes third in the 50M Breaststroke



▲ Dinshaw clinches Gold in the Breaststroke event

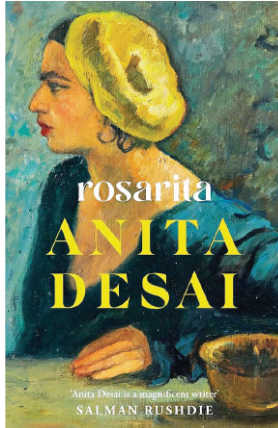
Rediscovering Anita Desai's novels

BG member **Vispi Balaporja** on revisiting Anita Desai's works in the November Book Club.

Although Anita Desai has been writing since the 1980s, it was the arrival of her latest book *Rosarita* that rekindled the interest in her novels, prompting our Book Club to host a discussion encompassing all her novels. The session brought together several readers, some regulars, others newly joined, to speak about their favourite Anita Desai book. Those who were not familiar with her writing sought to understand her popularity.

Shefali Shah remarked that *Rosarita* stood apart from Desai's earlier style of writing, particularly due to its intricate narrative technique, making it a more complex novel. The group collectively agreed that one could not place Desai's narrative approach within a fixed framework, as each novel was shaped by the unique demands of its story.

Vispi Balaporja chose to speak on Desai's widely acclaimed novel *Baumgartner's Bombay*. The novel traces the life of Baumgartner, beginning with his happy childhood in Berlin, Germany. Baumgartner's



▲ *Rosarita* by Anita Desai

father ran a flourishing business, and his mother was an efficient housewife. Despite his mother being very devoted to him, Baumgartner enjoyed his father's company more. But life changed for this Jewish family in Hitler's Germany, leading to the collapse of the father's business and his subsequent suicide. Baumgartner's life then becomes that of a wandering Jew, leading him eventually to Bombay. But Baumgartner does not succeed in persuading his mother to accompany him, eventually losing all contact

with her. Not knowing what became of her haunts him, and he falls back on reading and rereading the few letters he had received from her. The novel takes us through the ups and downs of his life in Bombay, creating a character that continues to live with the reader long after completing the novel.

It is easy to relate to Anita Desai's novels. As a result, the discussion veered towards personal observations and anecdotes, resulting in a continuation of animated discussion. **BG**



▲ Members discuss stories and share anecdotes





Kind-er kinds

World Kindness Day proved to be an inspiring celebration of compassion, creativity, and connection for kids

Can we learn kindness from animals?

The children of Bombay Gymkhana were in for a heartwarming treat as they celebrated World Kindness Day with two delightful stories about animals carrying out acts of kindness and spreading affection and joy.

They listened with rapt attention as Anam Bahooali read aloud 'The Lamb Who Came to Dinner' and 'The Sheep Who Hatched an Egg' to them. The children spent an enjoyable morning in the Dining Hall, feeling warm and cozy as they shared their own episodes of kindness and made their own kindness 'eggs' to take home. Imaginations soared as they decorated their eggs in the shape of bumblebees, strawberries,



country flags, kind 'monsters', rainbows and more. **BG**

Got Milk? Get Adventures!

BG member **Priya Aga** gets kids to imagine with Neil Gaiman's whimsical fairy tale.



▲ On a storytelling journey

Fortunately, the Milk by master storyteller Neil Gaiman is a fairy tale of adventure with fantastical creatures like Professor Steg, the Galactic Police dinosaurs, a volcano God, 'wumpires', time travel, breakfast cereal and it all began with a carton of milk!

Our discussion began with a round

of introductions, along with a game of finding the lie—each sharing a truth and a lie about themselves. The others had to guess the lie. The children who attended were enthused by the twists and turns of the story. Those who had not read looked forward to getting the book, and it was immediately borrowed. **BG**

1875

THE NEWLY REFURBISHED BANQUET FACILITY

Bombay Gymkhana is proud to introduce 1875, its renovated banquet facility, that is certain to be a treat for everyone's taste buds and take them on a trip down memory lane.

Bombay Gymkhana is delighted to unveil 1875, our newly refurbished banquet facility, blending modern elegance with a timeless charm that takes you back to the era when it all began. Nestled on the first floor and offering a panoramic view of the iconic Gymkhana lawns, 1875 is a much-needed addition for hosting mid-sized gatherings in a scenic and sophisticated setting. For larger celebrations, combining 1875, (a name coined by BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra signifying our year of foundation) with the Palm Court transforms the space into an expansive and uniquely charming venue, perfect for creating unforgettable memories. Adding to its allure is a diverse and delectable menu, offering a wide range of cuisines to suit every taste.

✓ Spacious open seating plan



➤ Cozy nooks



▲ The elegance of 1875



◀ BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra inaugurates 1875—the banquet facility



▲ The magnificent bar



▲ (L-R): Siddharth Puri, BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra and Monika Doshi



▲ (L-R) Samir Saraiya, Raghav Daga, Monika Doshi and BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra



▲ All-decked up Palm Court



➤ BG President catches up with BG members

Since its launch, 1875 has received an overwhelming appreciation from members. This splendid new facility is designed to provide a truly pleasurable experience, whether for intimate celebrations or grander occasions. We warmly invite our esteemed members to explore 1875 and relive the essence of Bombay Gymkhana's heritage, making your events not only special but also extraordinary. **BG**



Welcome 2025 at Bombay Gymkhana!



Bombay Gymkhana is thrilled to invite its members to ring in 2025 with a New Year's bash at our venue.

What's in Store

The fun-filled evening will be highlighted by a musical act, 'A-26', featuring sumptuous delicacies by Harpal's Food. Join us as we welcome the New Year and help us make the last day of 2024 a memorable one. **BG**

Transition to RFID Membership Cards

Bombay Gymkhana is transitioning to RFID membership cards. Please submit soft copies of photographs in (JPEG format) of yourself and your dependents via email to rfid@bombaygymkhana.com.

Upon activation of your RFID card, your current magnetic strip card will be deactivated. The new RFID cards will be available for collection at the Membership Department.

For any issues, please contact rfid@bombaygymkhana.com.

All un-exchanged magnetic strip cards will stand deactivated by 28th February, 2025. **BG**



A Man of Unwavering Principles

The late **Bhalu Sule** served the Bombay Gymkhana as President from 1982 to 1985. His daughter, **Nandana Sule Maariwala** recalls his legacy and sportsmanship.

Mrs Rajwade's request to me to write an article on my father Bhalu Sule, an ex-president of the Bombay Gymkhana, brought back a flood of memories about his tenure as well as my younger days at this wonderful establishment.

Bombay Gymkhana played a significant role in my father's daily routine. There was not a day that went by without him being at the Club for his Tennis game; something that I think contributed to him becoming a President.

I remember him taking great pride in his role and being popular among members and staff. He was known to be a very fair and just man and upheld the principles he believed in. If I recall correctly, during his tenure, there was a labour issue that he had to tackle, and he made sure that the deserving got a fair deal without creating too many ripples among the Club members.

Throughout his lifetime, he was popular at the Club and supported its activities in all possible ways. In fact, my brother and I, as kids, were not given any choices when it came to birthday parties, which were always held at the Club poolside. I must admit that these were great fun.

The fact that, despite his being an ex-President, I, as a woman, could not get membership without him going to court, hurt him. He, however, found a way that allowed all women married before 1983 to become members, even though it was several years later. Today, I am honoured to be a member of Bombay Gymkhana, and I would like to conclude by mentioning that when my Dad handed us the membership acceptance letter, he told my husband,

"Finally, here is your dowry!"

Memories from Friends and Peers

Sandeep Dhume

"My father shared a close bond with Mr Sule, who, like him, was an avid Badminton and Tennis enthusiast. They often played Badminton Doubles together, with other partners like Sanjay Sharma and Madhur Bezbora. On the Tennis courts, Mr Sule regularly teamed up with players such as Ghulam Ghouse and Yajurvendra Singh."



▲ Bhalu Sule with BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra

Vaman Apte

"I don't know much about his presidency, except to say that as a family friend, Bhau Sule was a fine gentleman who steered clear of controversy. He was a regular presence on the Tennis courts, playing evening matches."

Anant Amonkar

"Mr Sule was a calm, cooperative and amicable leader who had an excellent rapport with people. Known for conducting meetings smoothly, he was also an exceptional sportsman with his own dedicated Tennis group." **BG**

DANCING THROUGH TIME AND STORIES

BG member **Devpriya Bihani** is redefining children's learning and engagement through her company **One of a Kind India**, which curates neighbourhood walks and activities for kids.



Devpriya Bihani

Devpriya Bihani is not your average entrepreneur. Sure, she's a curator, storyteller and founder of One of a Kind India, but at the heart of her journey lies a passion as old as her childhood: Odissi dance. From her early days of pirouetting through school to weaving intricate tales with her graceful movements

today, Devpriya's story is as mesmerising as the performances she creates.

From hobby to lifelong passion

For Devpriya, Odissi wasn't always the centrepiece of her life. Like many kids, it began as a school activity, but her bond with this classical Indian dance deepened over time. "I've been learning and performing for 25 to 30 years now," she shares, lighting up at the memory of her first steps in the art form.

With the foundation laid in her formative years and an inspiring guru, Smt. Daksha Mashruwala,

guiding her, Odissi became a medium of storytelling that bridged the ancient and the modern.



"It's such a strenuous and intricate dance form, but it's also deeply rooted in history and culture," she explains. This love for history and mythology soon became more than just an inspiration—it turned into a mission.



▲ Bringing sculptures to life through dance

A New Way to Tell Stories

Devpriya's talent for storytelling took a creative turn during her collaboration with the Children's Museum at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS). Asked to bring sculptures to life for children through her dance, Devpriya found herself blending Odissi with narration and visual aids. "I brought out the stories of sculptures through *abhinaya* (expressions), music and storytelling," she recalls.

This novel approach resonated with her



▲ Making history and dance accessible to children

audience—especially children, who were captivated by her performances. “The idea was to make history and classical dance accessible, engaging and fun—not something overly serious or intimidating,” she says.

Where Fun Meets Learning

The success of her storytelling sessions inspired Devpriya to launch One of a Kind India after the pandemic. The idea? To offer children meaningful weekend activities beyond the usual malls and play areas. “I wanted to curate experiences that connected kids to history, culture and the city they live in,” she says.

Her programmes include city walks, museum tours and workshops on everything from heritage to art. But these aren’t your average tours. Devpriya incorporates scavenger hunts, dance performances and even interactive book readings to keep young minds engaged. “For instance, when we cover the caves of Mumbai and Maharashtra, I use visual

presentations, Odissi dance, and storytelling to bring their history to life,” she explains.

Gateway of India’s Celebration

A prime example of her ingenuity is her upcoming city walk to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Gateway of India. “We’ve curated a scavenger hunt where children solve clues and explore historic landmarks,” Devpriya shares. This hands-on approach ensures that learning becomes an adventure for both kids and their parents.

Memorable Moments

One of Devpriya’s most cherished memories comes from working with kids from NGOs and municipal schools. “Their enthusiasm was infectious,” she recalls. “I even taught them *mudras* from Odissi—they were so excited to learn something new!”

Her aim is to show children that classical



▲ Heritage hunt with clues and map

dance, history and heritage aren't boring. It's about finding the right way to connect with them. It's rewarding when you see their eyes light up with curiosity and joy.

The Art of Curating Experiences

Creating these experiences isn't easy. Each walk or workshop takes at least two weeks of research, planning and coordination. From securing permissions at galleries to crafting interactive activities, Devpriya leaves no stone unturned. "I'm no historian. I collaborate with experts in the field like Anita Yewale who works for Maritime Mumbai Museum Society," she explains.

Her dedication is evident in the variety of places she has explored with children—Mazgaon Dock Gallery, Navy and Heritage Museum, and even the Western Railway Transport Gallery. Each visit offers a chance to discover hidden treasures of Mumbai's past.

Balancing Tradition & Creativity

Despite her entrepreneurial success, Devpriya remains deeply connected to her roots in Odissi. "I never compromise on my dance," she says firmly. Whether it's performing the Dashavatara (10 avatars of Vishnu) or blending classical music with visual storytelling, she upholds the rigour and discipline of her training.

For Devpriya, dance and storytelling aren't just art forms—they're tools to inspire, educate and create unforgettable experiences. As she continues to dance through the pages of history, her journey reminds us that passion, when combined with purpose, can truly create



▲ A visit to the ancient Banganga Tank in Malabar Hill

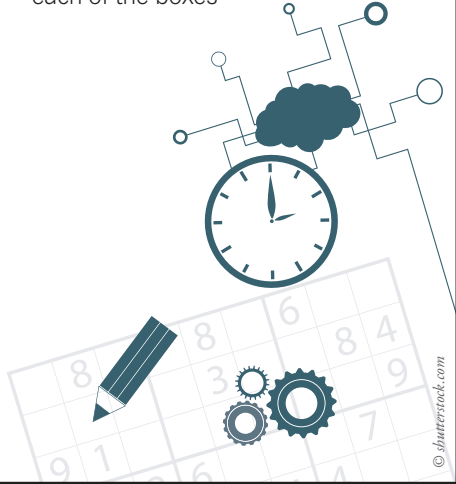
something extraordinary. So, the next time you hear about a city walk or storytelling session by Devpriya Bihani, be sure to join in. It's bound to be one of a kind. Follow [oneofakind_india](#) on Instagram, for more updates. **BG**

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit must appear once in:

SUDOKU

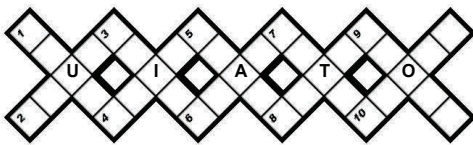
				8	3	
	8					6
			6	1		7
6			4		7	5
4	2					9
3		5		8		
	6		9	2		
1						2
	4	3				

- each of the vertical columns
- each of the horizontal rows
- each of the boxes



CRISS WORD

Ten five-letter words cross and interlock to complete these criss words. Some of the letters have already been filled in. Can you fill in the rest? Clues are given.



- Putters, wedges, etc.
- Threw or hurled?
- Departing
- Taking to court
- Hold firmly
- Chart
- Excited (3,2)
- Capital of Bihar
- Eschew
- Lying flat

SCRAMBLE

Solve the four anagrams and move one letter to each square to form four ordinary words

Now arrange the letters marked with an asterisk (*) to form the answer to the riddle or to fill in the missing words as indicated:

LMEEE	*	*	*	
ATYST	*	*		
OPSSMU			*	*
AMMYHW	*	*		

We can't take any credit for our talents.
It's how _____ that counts. – Madeleine L'Engle (2,3,4) **BG**

(all solutions on page 31)

10 Gen Z slang you should know

BG member Malika D’Cunha helps us decipher Gen Z slang.

Is your teen using Gen Z slang and you always seem blank?

These are words that make no sense to you and seem like a different language, almost alien yet so common in today’s day and age.

‘Yeah no cap, the concert was legit so sik. My fam and I, got W seats in the front, though the sudden change of weather was L, nonetheless

the experience was Dank and Coldplay as usual GOAT, I’m a real Stan. Life just hit different’

Puzzled? The line is filled with words that seem normal to our younger generation. A gentle warning to Grammer Nazi’s, Gen Z vocabulary ignores some crucial punctuation.

Well here is the code to decipher the mystery.

STAN

A die hard fan. This is mostly used in relation to a celebrity or influencer or someone you are strongly passionate about.

CAP

Often used as, ‘yeah, no cap’. Cap means lies, so no cap indicates truthfulness and authenticity. Next time there is an argument to eat veggies simply reply, ‘yeah no cap, they are good for you.’

FAM

Close friends. Yes, indeed our friends are like our family; however, for GenZ, fam is their friends.

LEGIT

Literally, ‘I am so tired, I could legit sleep for 12 hours continuously.’

HITS DIFFERENT

Unique, different from usual. This can have an emotional meaning and could mean an emotional bond with an event or experience. ‘Listening to music while stargazing on New Year’s Eve just hits different.’

W

Simply put, a Win. ‘I worked really hard for the exam, I scored quite well, it was a W.’

GOAT

Greatest of All Time. A perfect example would be BG, which is GOAT.

L

Quite opposite to ‘W’, ‘L’ is a loss. ‘The sudden change in weather made everything L.’

SIK

If you thought ill, well, this is just the opposite. ‘Sik’ means amazing, awesome and cool. ‘The party was sik, we had a great time though I feel a little sick (ill) today.’

DANK

Excellent, brilliant. Similar to ‘W’, ‘Dank’ is a win; however, it is used in relation to a particular incident or experience.



TRENDS & HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

B&G's youngest editorial team member Malika D'Cunha recaps some eye-grabbing moments and trends of 2024.



< APPLE TREND

The "Apple" dance trend is a choreographed routine set to Charli XCX's song "Apple" from her album *Brat*. The dance was created by TikToker Kelley Heyer in June 2024. The dance steps matches the lyrics "I think the apple's rotten right to the core", making the dance memorable and visually engaging.

> APT TREND

It's all over your Instagram feed and it's probably hijacked your YouTube shorts, no points for guessing but it is the Apt trend. A drinking game in South Korea, the song and game is trending thanks to the recent popular song of the same name by Bruno Mars and K-pop artist Rosé.



< PARIS OLYMPICS

Held from 26th July to 11th August, the 2024 Olympics was one of the most-awaited sports events of the year. Indian athletes did exceptionally well, with a total of 5 bronze and 1 silver. Each round ended with a nail-biting finish, making every Indian beam with pride. We hope our young BG members aspire to get there one day.

> OSCAR NOMINATION

India's official entry for the 2025 Academy Awards (Oscars) for Best Foreign Language Film is *Laapataa Ladies*, directed by Kiran Rao. Two newly wedded brides are mistakenly exchanged at a railway station on their way to their 'sasural'. The film proceeds to show the underlying motifs displayed by one and a genuine and pure love and trust by another. A truly hilarious film!



> RAT RACE FOR COLDPLAY CONCERT TICKETS

Fastest finger first or speediest Internet wins the race? This perfectly encapsulates the rat race for Coldplay concert tickets. Mumbai and Ahmedabad are looking forward to hosting the famous Brit rock band in January 2025. Recently, the Instagram trend of posting your position in the long queue, with lakhs ahead of you, was a bonding for those who were unable to get tickets. (For those who did get tickets, you're in for a treat and an amazing experience, or should I say an 'Adventure of a Lifetime'.) **BG**



2024's Culinary Scene

Top 5 food trends dominating Mumbai's culinary scene in 2024.

1. Japanese cuisine: Japanese cuisine has established a strong foothold in Mumbai, with the opening and thriving of many Japanese-cuisine-only restaurants. From fine dining to chain restaurants serving everything from authentic flavours to contemporary preparations to streetfood favourites, there is something for everyone.



2. Sustainability and Conscious Eating: Indian consumers are prioritising sustainability, with a shift towards farm-to-table dining, reduced food waste and eco-friendly practices. This also includes increased demand for plant-based, organic and minimally processed ingredients.



3. Millets and Traditional Grains: Building on the UN-designated International Year of Millets 2023, these nutritious grains are gaining prominence in both traditional and modern dishes, thanks to their health benefits and versatility.



4. Health-focused Desserts and Beverages: The market is seeing a rise in low-sugar, nutrient-rich desserts, along with beverages like probiotic teas, mushroom coffee and exotic fruit smoothies. This trend caters to wellness-conscious consumers seeking indulgence with health benefits.



5. DIY Korean Cooking at Home: Thanks to the availability of packaged Korean ingredients like instant noodles, sauces and spices on online marketplaces, more people are trying their hand at making dishes like *kimchi* fried rice or *gimbap* at home. Ingredients like *gochujang* and fermented soy are also becoming more accessible. **BG**





TUNE IN

Five top podcasts available in India in 2024, spanning a variety of genres and interests.



1. CYRUS SAYS

Host: Cyrus Broacha

Theme: A lighthearted podcast featuring unscripted humour, candid celebrity interviews and discussions on trending topics, often with a quirky, comedic twist.

Platforms: Spotify, Apple Podcasts and others

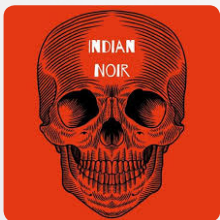


3. THE MUSAFIR STORIES

Hosts: Saif Omar and Faiza Khan

Theme: Focused on Indian travel experiences, this podcast explores hidden gems, travel hacks and personal tales from seasoned travellers.

Platforms: Spotify and other platforms



5. INDIAN NOIR

Host: Nikesh Murali

Theme: A gripping podcast combining crime, horror and dark fantasy, presented through dramatised short stories with immersive sound effects.

Platforms: Spotify

2. THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

Host: Amit Varma

Theme: A long-form podcast diving deep into Indian culture, politics, economics and history. Topics range from the unintended consequences of public policies to in-depth interviews with notable experts.

Platforms: Available on all major platforms



4. FIGURING OUT WITH RAJ SHAMANI

Host: Raj Shamani

Theme: Centred on entrepreneurship and personal growth, the podcast covers business strategies, challenges and life lessons from the host's journey and guest speakers.

Platforms: Major streaming platforms



BONUS:

Thriller Factory on Audible is a must-mention. Directed by Anurag Kashyap, this 10-episode Hindi anthology, released in the lockdown period of 2020, brings classic pulp fiction by Ved Prakash Sharma to life. Each episode, featuring stars like Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Tabu, is crafted with immersive soundscapes inspired by '80s Bollywood. The podcast dives deep into India's underbelly with tales of crime, suspense and unexpected twists, making it a gripping experience for fans of thrillers.



Each of these podcasts is a fantastic gateway to different worlds, from entrepreneurial insights and cultural explorations to thrilling storytelling. Which one are you planning to listen to first? **BG**

PUSH TO THE SUMMIT

BG member **Farhan Dubash** on achieving the seemingly impossible—scaling Africa’s highest mountain, Mt. Kilimanjaro.



▲ On top of the world

It was Saturday, 2nd November 2024. Our summit push began at 11:00 p.m. from Camp Kosovo. The air was frigid, biting into every layer we had on. To make things harder, the wind howled ferociously, rattling my tent from side to side as I lay inside, attempting to sleep after dinner at 6:00 p.m. But sleep was elusive, overshadowed by the anticipation of what lay ahead.

When we gathered in the dining tent at 10:30 p.m. for a quick cup of tea, we were already layered up in preparation for the icy climb. I wore two woollen socks, four layers of pants, and eight layers on top, including my *sadra*. I pulled on my woollen hat, ear muffs, and the neck warmer my mum had knitted for me. My hands were encased in three layers of gloves, and my head

torch was ready for what lay ahead. We were a team of ten, but within just two hours, we were down to eight, as two members turned back, unable to face the relentless conditions!

This was a night I’ll never forget.

As we climbed, we were the first souls on the mountain. Darkness engulfed us, not even a sliver of moonlight broke through. The temperature hovered between -5 and -8 degrees Celsius, but what made the conditions brutal was the wind, blowing at speeds of at least 30 to 40 kmph. We were accompanied by eight guides or “Kili Fighters” (as we referred to them), whose quiet strength became our anchor through this enervating night.

Seven hours of climbing opened a floodgate of thoughts and



▲ Within view of the top

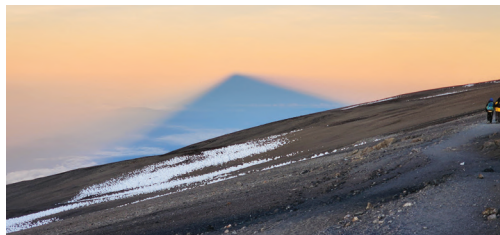


▲ Africa's last glacier

memories of my childhood days including those at school and college. I also reminisced about my scouting days which had triggered my love and passion for trekking and the mountains. I thought of my wife and daughters whilst recalling cherished trips with them and my parents/brother. My mind also drifted to my career in law and my dreams for the future. All these thoughts became my silent companions as I moved on, pausing to pray and centre myself in the silence of the climb.

It was so cold, none of us spoke. Silence replaced the camaraderie that had marked our week-long journey to Camp Kosovo. I questioned myself countless times—what had drawn me here? I longed for a fast-forward button to take me to sunrise and the summit. But turning back was never an option. I hadn't allowed myself one. My mantra has always been, "Don't be afraid to fail—Be afraid not to try". I even found myself thanking my grandmother who had only recently celebrated her milestone Centennial

birthday in September before leaving us for her heavenly abode, a month later; had she been unwell, or if her passing had happened later, I don't know if I would have been here.



▲ Breathtaking views: Icing on the top

At some point, fatigue took over, and I found myself drifting off while walking. I don't know if it was the sheer exhaustion or the altitude. Time seemed to move so slowly tonight—seconds seemed like minutes, which in turn seemed like hours. I tried playing music on my phone to stay awake, to distract myself from the bone-chilling cold and drowsiness.

Our guides were incredible—continuously urging us forward, singing, gently patting my back, reminding me (and others who struggled) to stay alert. They would intermittently shout, "Don't sleep—Don't sleep" and gently nudge us to keep moving at a consistent pace. Their mantra was "polé-polé",



▲ Campsite

Travel

Swahili for “slowly, slowly”. Earlier that night, our lead guide had looked straight into my eyes and told me, “TRUST ME, I will get you to the summit.” I had immediately placed my full trust and faith in him and followed him blindly on the mountain.

At this altitude, breathing was a struggle; each breath seemed to require three or four to draw in the oxygen we took for granted at sea level.

After the first two hours, the water in our water bladders froze, as we’d been warned it would. Thankfully, we each carried a thermos with some water that remained drinkable. Our guides, our saviours, also carried a large thermos of hot water, which kept us going. Without them, none of us would have reached the top.

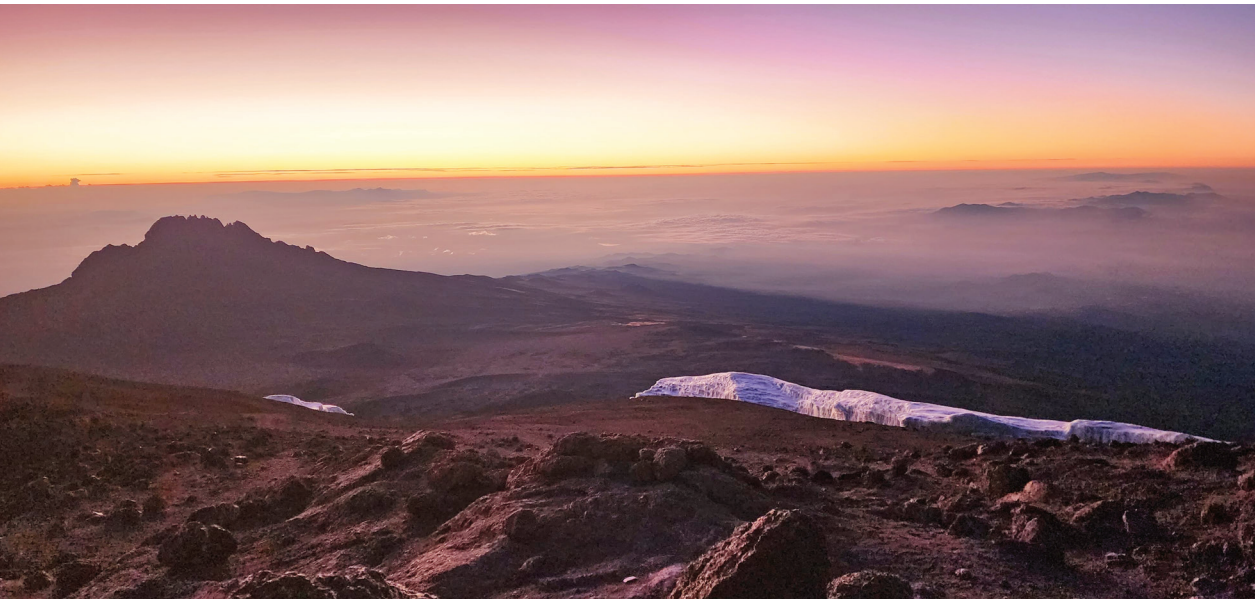
Finally, around 5:00 a.m., we arrived at Stella Point (5,756 metres/18,885 feet), near the summit. This point alone is considered a summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro, and we were thrilled to reach it. We paused for photos, sharing a brief moment of victory. Three members chose to turn back, deciding not to make the final 45-minute push to the Uhuru Peak, the true summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro at

5,895 metres/19,341 feet.

As luck would have it, I urgently needed a “long message”, as we called it on the trek. When I sheepishly informed the lead guide, he instructed one of his fellow guides to take me to a spot where I could take care of my business. Unzipping four layers of pants and removing my gloves in those freezing, windy conditions was no easy feat—but, as they say, “when you gotta go, you gotta go”.

The remaining five of us continued around the crater at the summit. We saw Kilimanjaro’s ancient glaciers, still sheets of frozen ice. The past five days from below, they had looked like they crowned the mountain, but now we saw they lay on its side as we ascended towards the final summit.

As the pre-dawn lights crept over the horizon, shades of purple, mauve, pink, orange and cyan began to colour the sky, illuminating the now, dim lights of the nearby Moshi town, which had glistened the landscape the past few hours. Beneath us, clouds blanketed the landscape, making us feel as though we truly stood on the “Roof of Africa”. Each



▲ Breaking dawn



▲ Final stretch

photo I took to capture the moment was worth removing my gloves, despite the cold biting at my fingers. It is a common saying in mountaineering—“The summit is what drives us, but it’s the climb itself that matters.”

Then, the sun rose, and it was nothing short of magical. To see the sun rise from below us, casting hues of fiery orange, crimson and red, was an experience unlike any other. As we reached Mt. Uhuru, I felt tears slipping down my cheeks—tears of happiness and accomplishment. I had set my mind to this, and now I was here. I messaged my wife, my pillar of strength, with the news. To my surprise, the network was good enough for a call, and I shared the joy of this moment with her. The photos I took would forever serve as a reminder of this incredible journey, each image holding a wealth of memories.

Due to the harsh conditions, no one in their right mind stays at the summit for long. We, too, began our descent soon after. What had taken nearly seven hours to climb took less than three to descend.

When we returned to Camp Kosovo, everyone was waiting, cheering. We were exhausted. Shedding our layers, we collapsed into our tents, resting for a few hours before continuing on to Camp Millennium, about five kilometres away, in the early afternoon.

This day was the most gruelling, the most challenging, I’ve ever experienced. But I loved every bit of it. I truly believe that during such journeys, it is not the mountain that we conquer, but rather, ourselves. It’s experiences like this that shape who you really are and what you’re really made of, and I now look forward to the next one. **BG**



▲ Conquering the summit

REMEMBERING MARSHALL: A BELOVED PART OF THE BG FAMILY



Marshall Fernandes, former BG Asst. Manager Reception, left for his heavenly abode in November 2024. During his 34 years of service, he left an indelible mark on everyone who encountered him. BG member and staff remember him...

Nandini Sardesai – BG member

I've known Marshall since the early 1970s when I became a member of the Bombay Gymkhana. He was one of the most affable and approachable people I've ever met, recognising everyone by name—even the children as they grew up. Unlike many impersonable receptionists, he brought a personal touch to his role, making every interaction warm and welcoming.

Marshall endured a personal tragedy when he lost his only child, a loss that must have been deeply painful. Despite this, he remained committed to his work and stayed connected with people. He was originally from Goa, which created a special bond with my husband, the first Goa-born cricketer to play for India. They often spoke in Konkani and shared stories about Goa. Even after his retirement, Marshall would send me daily morning greetings.

In his later years, Marshall was on dialysis, an expensive and challenging process, yet he maintained his warmth and diligence. When his messages stopped, I reached out and learned about his declining health. His dedication to helping others, even in his difficult times, was inspiring. He was truly a treasure to everyone who knew him.

BG Staffers Namita Padbidri

When I joined the Club in 2008, Marshall was the first person I interacted with. His vast experience and deep understanding of the Club's operations made him an invaluable mentor. Alongside Nasir, he was the backbone of the reception, knowing every member's name and membership number by heart.

Marshall's efficiency was legendary. For New

Year's events, where seating arrangements were made for 3,000 people, he managed everything seamlessly. His warmth extended beyond the professional sphere—he was affectionately known as "Marshall Uncle" to many members and their families.

Even after retiring, Marshall stayed connected by sending daily messages to many of us. When he was hospitalised, his messages stopped coming in, but he remembered to tell his wife to drop a message to everyone that he was unwell. He was so diligent!

His legacy as the "foundation of the Gymkhana" lives on, as does the affection he inspired among members and staff alike.

Mahesh Shetty

Marshall was a very gentle and caring person, always positive and never angry. Even after retiring four to five years ago, he stayed in touch with everyone through WhatsApp. He was incredibly popular and respected for his kindness and positivity. Marshall treated the Club staff as family and ensured there was no discord. He was truly a rare individual, missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

Nasir Ali

I worked with Marshall for 25 years, during which he was the Reception Manager. He was not only excellent at his job but also a mentor to all of us. He taught us how to interact with members, address their concerns and uphold the Club's values.

Marshall believed in teamwork and treated everyone like family. He often reminded us that as part of the Club, we should always work with unity and understanding. His guidance, kindness and wisdom left a lasting impact on all of us. We miss him deeply. **BG**

In Memoriam

The Bombay Gymkhana deeply regrets the sad demise of:

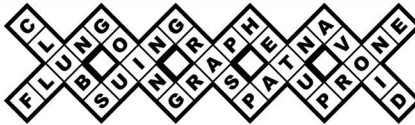
Sumeet Kumar Das
(September 22, 2024)

SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU

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

CRISS WORD




SCRAMBLE

Words: Melee, tasty, possum, whammy

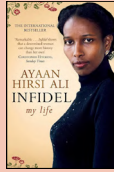
Answer: We can't take any credit for our talents. It's how **we use them** that counts – Madeleine L'Engle

(puzzles on page 21)



BOOK CLUB

INFIDEL: MY LIFE
by
AYAAN HIRSI ALI



Hirsi Ali's story tells her astonishing life story, from her traditional Muslim childhood in Somalia to her intellectual awakening in the Netherlands, to her life under armed guard in the West.

Monday, 9th December 2024, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm, Library

INTRODUCING OUR NEW COO



Gerald Mathew has joined us as Chief Operating Officer (COO) from 13th November 2024.

Gerald comes with a rich experience of more than two decades in Hospitality and Retail Real Estate, primarily heading the functions of

Marketing, Event Management, Facility Management, Leasing & Business Development, etc. across multiple cities in India. He has worked with renowned business organisations such as K. Raheja Constructions, GVK group, Grauer & Weil (India) Ltd, etc.

Gerald did his graduation in Commerce from Mumbai University and also did his Post Graduation in Business Management with a specialisation in Marketing & Human Resources from Institute of Management Bhubaneswar.

As a Chief Operating Officer, Gerald will be heading the Sports, Engineering, F&B and Custodian departments.

He likes playing Badminton and his hobbies include reading and exploring new places.

On behalf of the members, we extend a warm welcome to him. He will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our team.

ADD SOME BG COLOUR TO YOUR INBOX!

Black & Gold is available via email.

To receive the electronic version of Bombay Gymkhana's monthly magazine, simply send an email to relations@bombaygymkhana.com. You can also download it from the BG App. So, check out the latest BG happenings on the 'go'.



THE YEAR THAT WAS

BG member **Sunita Rajwade** sums up 2024.

I can't believe we've come to the end of the year already!

This has been quite an extraordinary year for many reasons. For me, personally, it has been really very hectic and stressful and I'm glad to see the end of it.

As far as the rest of the world goes, it has been a strange year because of the large number of elections held the world over. There wasn't a month when the people weren't electing some government. Our own country went to the polls as did Italy, France, Great Britain and the United States of America. Several African, Asian and American countries also elected new governments. Elections mean that democracy is alive and well but what is annoying is the racket that precedes it. Campaigning, predicting results, exit polls, political analysts and psephologists outshouting each other over every news station and in every language. In my opinion, all this noise was much ado about nothing. In most cases, the electorate was faced with Hobson's choice. The candidates seemed more intent on mud-slinging and character assassination, focusing on their rivals' failures than their agenda. So I'm glad this year is finally over, and we can go back to watching normal news about normal things.

The year was not completely lost: some good things happened too. The opening of the Trans Harbour link, with a name almost as long as the distance it covers, was good news for South Mumbaiers driving to the mainland. Equally traffic-defining was the Coastal Road which has made Bandra so much closer to Bombay Gym than before.

I am now waiting for the Metro to start so that the rest of the roads in the city return to normal once more and we don't have to guess which road is open and which one is not.

Several new trends emerged this year – millets, Mah Jong, Padel and Hashimoto's, (especially with women). Bridge was slowly replaced with clickety-clacking Mah Jong tiles and stubborn belly fat was put down to Hashimoto's. Padel catered to Squash and Tennis lovers and younger players who thrive on anything new. And for foodies, a completely new world of millets opened up a healthy eating option.

And so the year passed with old wine in new bottles, more cars turning electric, all of us getting a year older and the climate turning increasingly erratic. I wonder what new things the New Year will bring.

Good wishes to all of you for 2025. **BG**





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- Noise Insulation
- Keeps out Rain*
- Thermal Insulation

Fenesta

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*T&C Apply.



FLANNEL SHIRT



100% PREMIUM LINEN SHIRT

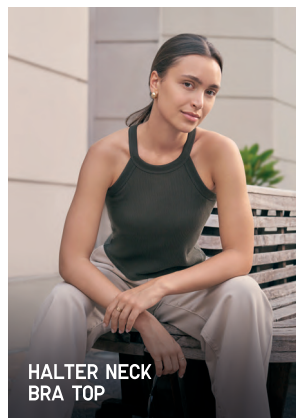
GLOBAL BRAND AMBASSADOR
Roger Federer



UNIQLO NOW OPEN AT PHOENIX PALLADIUM



AIRISM COTTON OVERSIZED T-SHIRT



HALTER NECK BRA TOP



GEARED PANTS



ULTRA LIGHT DOWN JACKET