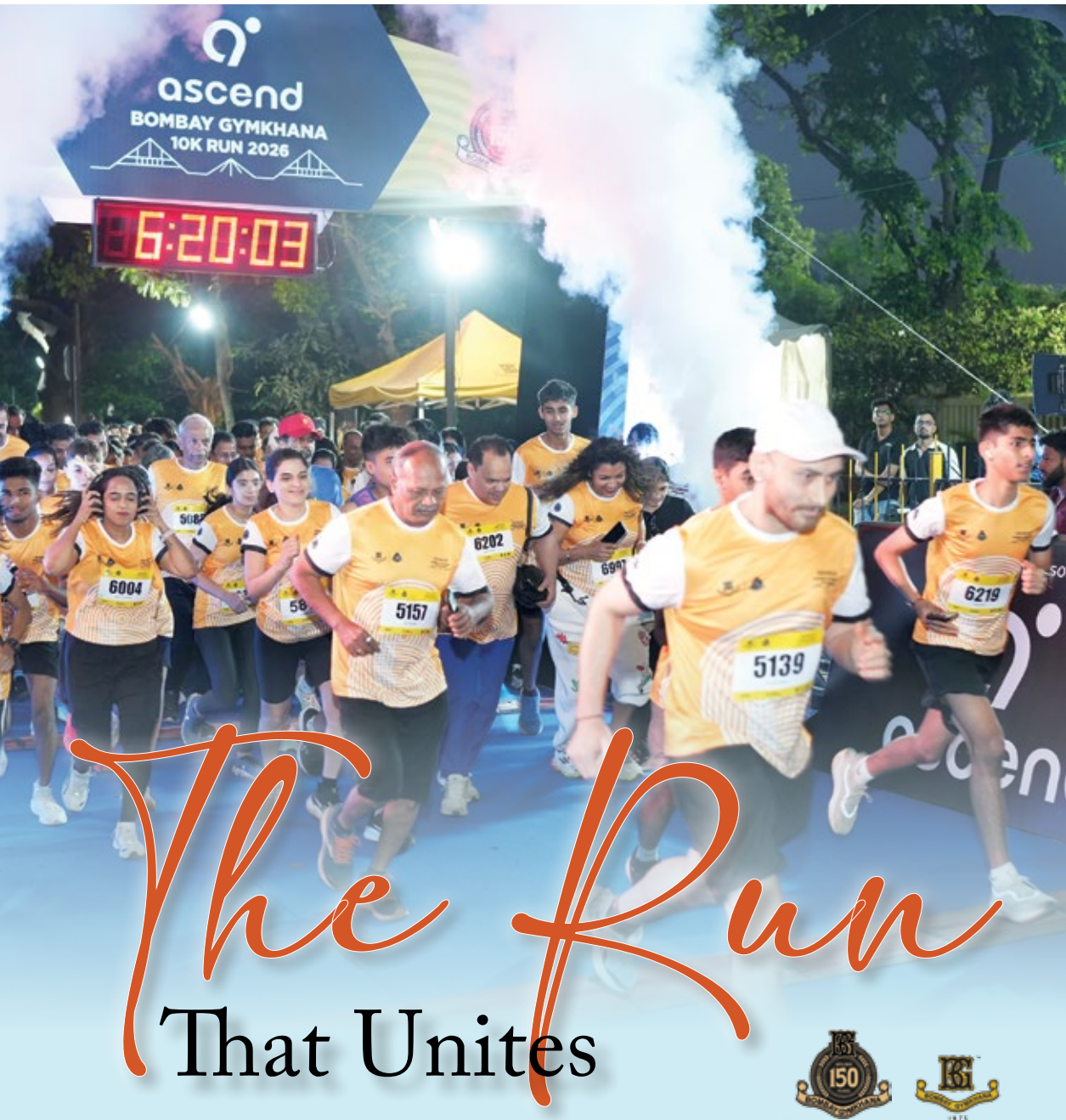


Black & Gold

The Bombay Gymkhana Magazine

May 2026 Volume 16 Issue 1



The Run
That Unites



Message to our Members



Dear Members,

April has been an especially vibrant and action-packed month at the Bombay Gymkhana, with a rich calendar of sporting activity bringing together members across age groups and disciplines. It has been heartening to see such enthusiastic participation and spirited competition throughout.

SPORTS NEWS

The month witnessed a host of well-attended and keenly contested events, including:

- The Annual Bombay Gymkhana Padel and Tennis League 2026, which saw enthusiastic participation from over 150 members across all age groups.
- The 32nd GD Birla Veterans Masters Badminton Tournament 2026 (Annual Inter-Club Badminton Tournament), powered by Bombay Gymkhana, which received an overwhelming response and featured high-quality play.
- The BG 9-A-Side League 2026, with both men's and women's Football leagues showcasing competitive spirit and camaraderie.
- The Annual Ashok Kapoor Memorial Bridge Championship 2026, which brought together some of the finest Bridge players for a closely fought contest.
- The 47th RFS Talyarkhan Memorial Invitational Cricket Tournament 2026, conceived and presented by Bombay Gymkhana—one of Mumbai's marquee inter-club Cricket events, providing a platform for leading clubs to compete at a high level.

Looking ahead, we are excited to host the third Bombay Gymkhana Arena Polo Championship 2026 on 10 May. This promises to be a highlight on our sporting calendar, and we look forward to your presence and support.

We also hope to see many of you at the wide array of events planned in the coming weeks.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sanjiv Saran Mehra', written in a cursive style.

Sanjiv Saran Mehra

President

Contents

Black & Gold

May 2026 Volume 16 Issue 1

- 05 **Golden Smash** Veterans Shine at Yonex Sunrise
- 06 **Rugby in Action** BG Runners-up at National Rugby 15s
- 09 **Tee Time** Friendly Golfing Action



- 13 **Poolside Cheer** A Spirited Performance by Team BG
- 14 **BG Runs** All the Action from the Annual BG 10k Run
- 22 **BG Conversations** Exploring Psychedelics
- 23 **Meet the Authors** Thought-provoking Perspectives
- 26 **Special Feature** Celebrating Shakespeare
- 28 **Bar Nites** Throwback Beats & Cool Sets
- 30 **BG Cares** An Inclusive Evening of Music & Movement
- 31 **Fruit Fest** Mango Madness Returns!
- 32 **Travel Files** Same Mood, Different Map
- 34 **Leisure Time** It's Puzzle Time, Folks!
- 36 **Cheeky Chikki** Chilling in the City

Bombay Gymkhana

PRESIDENT

Sanjiv Saran Mehra

CEO

Cmde. K N Bhagat, VSM (Retd)

EDITORIAL

Roger C B Pereira - Convenor

Reena Agrawal

Sunita Rajwade

Kaveri Shah

Malika D'Cunha

Aarti Kelshikar

ADMINISTRATION

Namita Padbidri

Spenta Multimedia Pvt Ltd

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

Maneck Davar

EDITORIAL

Nichola Pais

DESIGN

Dilip Vishwakarma

Black & Gold is the monthly magazine of Bombay Gymkhana Limited.

Black & Gold is published and printed by Spenta Multimedia Pvt Ltd, 5th floor, Industry House, 159, Churchgate Reclamation, Mumbai- 400020

Tel: +91-22-6734 1010

www.spentamultimedia.com

ho@spentamultimedia.com

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed or implied in *Black & Gold* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Bombay Gymkhana or Spenta Multimedia Pvt Ltd. Unsolicited articles and transparencies are sent in at the owner's risk and the publisher accepts no liability for loss or damage. Material in this publication may not be reproduced, whether in part or whole, without the written consent of the Bombay Gymkhana and Spenta Multimedia Pvt Ltd.



M.G. Road, Fort, Mumbai 400001

Tel: +91-22-4322 3400

www.bombaygymkhana.com

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.

Veterans Shine!

Bombay Gymkhana's veteran shuttlers impressed at the 48th Yonex Sunrise Badminton Championship in Goa

The veteran contingent of Bombay Gymkhana delivered an impressive performance at the 48th Yonex Sunrise Badminton Championship, held in Goa from 18 to 25 March 2026. Competing against some of the finest players from across the country, the club's representatives showcased skill, resilience, and competitive spirit, bringing home well-earned accolades.

In the men's doubles 55+ category, Maharashtra state champions and the experienced, well-known duo of Shailesh Daga and Ayaz Bilawala put up a commendable display of coordination and tactical play. Their consistent performance throughout the tournament earned them a bronze medal,



Shailesh Daga and Ayaz Bilawala, bronze medallists in the 55+ men's doubles

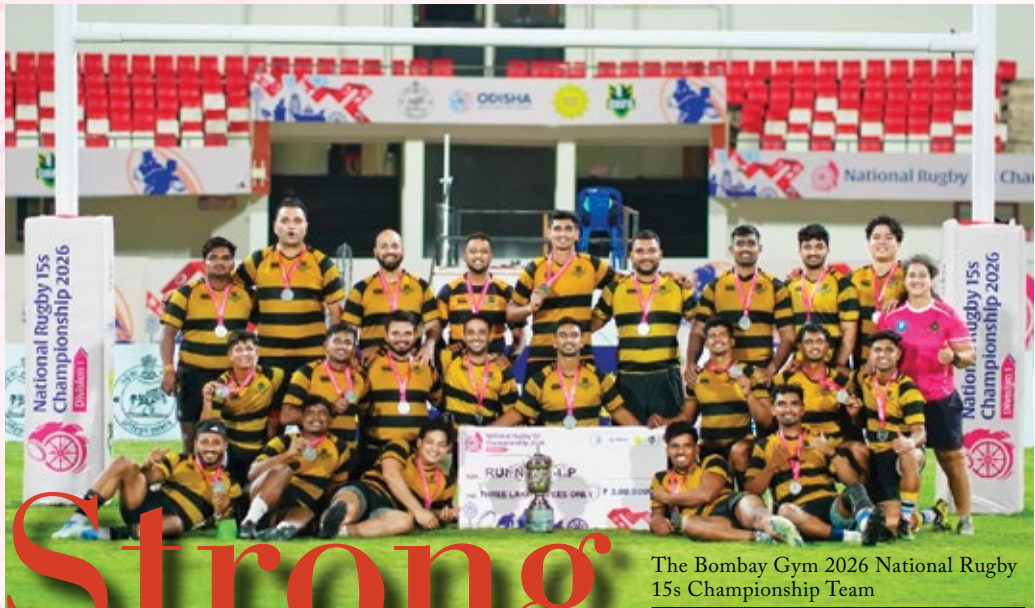
reflecting their enduring form and deep understanding of the game.

Adding to the medal tally, Gautam Ashra, partnering with Mahesh Aras (the present Maharashtra state champion), also secured a bronze medal in the men's doubles 65+ category. Ashra also partnered Dr Padma Desai in the mixed doubles category, where they exited in the quarter-finals against a pair from Kerala. Ashra's achievement is particularly noteworthy, highlighting not only his technical prowess but also his dedication to maintaining high standards of fitness and competitiveness.

The championship proved to be a successful outing for Bombay Gymkhana's Badminton veterans. Their achievements underscore the club's strong sporting culture and commitment to excellence across age groups. **BG**



Gautam Ashra and Mahesh Aras, bronze medallists in the 65+ men's doubles



Strong Finish!

The Bombay Gym 2026 National Rugby 15s Championship Team

Bombay Gymkhana's strong runners-up finish marks the club's return to the national Rugby spotlight

Back on the National Stage

For Bombay Gymkhana, the 2026 National Rugby 15s Championship (Division 1), held in Bhubaneswar from 7–13 March, represented an opportunity to restore the club's standing at the forefront of Indian men's Rugby after a disappointing sixth-place finish in the previous edition.

Hosted by Rugby India, the National Rugby 15s Championship is a relatively new addition to the domestic calendar, bringing together the country's best men's and women's teams for a week of competition at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.



The core team with the runners-up trophy and prize money

Young and Determined Squad

Bombay Gym travelled with a youthful, diverse squad that blended the club's core players with standout talent from across Maharashtra. Anand Godiwala captained the side, with Shane Dhondy serving as vice-captain. With performances at the tournament carrying weight in national



Scrum vs. Delhi Hurricanes

team selection discussions, several players arrived in Bhubaneswar with a clear point to prove.

Commanding Start

That intent was evident from the outset. Bombay Gymkhana opened its campaign with an emphatic 41-0 quarter-final win over Calcutta Cricket & Football Club, a rematch of last October's All India & South Asia Rugby final. It was a commanding performance from the first whistle: the forwards controlled the set-piece, while the backs combined speed, sharp handling, and aggressive defence to shut CC&FC out completely.



Tushaar "Mexico" Carvalho tracking down a Future Hope Harlequin



Shane Dhondy fending off Delhi Hurricanes

Holding Their Nerve

The semi-final brought another familiar contest, as Bombay Gym faced Future Hope Harlequins in a repeat of their All-India semi-final. The Harlequins arrived in Bhubaneswar with a full-strength squad, including India fly-half Akash Balmiki, fresh from a professional stint in England. The match was a tightly fought affair, with Bombay Gymkhana relying on the power of their forwards and their superiority at the set-piece. A maul try, coupled with two penalty kicks from Rayomand Unwala, proved enough to edge them into the final.

Rugby in Action



Twin Towers: Bombay Gym winning a lineout vs. Future Hope



Rayomand Unwala kicking for goal vs. CC&FC with a patella strap

Strong Finish

In the finals, Bombay Gym met familiar rivals and defending champions Delhi Hurricanes. Delhi had surged through the tournament with ruthless efficiency, scoring more than 120 points without conceding a single one on the way to the title match. They also had their own motivation, looking to make amends for a premature semi-final exit in last year's All-India tournament. Bombay Gym fought with spirit, but the Hurricanes were clinical in attack and dominant in

possession, eventually claiming the title with a 45–12 victory.

Despite the defeat, the campaign produced several positives. Bombay Gym returned home with the runners-up trophy, a cash prize of ₹3 lakh for the club, and the knowledge that several of their players have now entered the conversation for national team selection.

Building Momentum

Special credit is also due behind the scenes—to the Bombay Gymkhana ground staff, who ensured the team's kit and equipment were prepared before departure, and to Vahbiz Bharucha, former India captain, who travelled with the squad as physiotherapist throughout the tournament.

There is, by the team's own admission, still work to be done. But there is also a growing sense of confidence within the setup. With a promising foundation now in place, the team will turn its attention to the coming monsoon season and, beyond that, to the 91st All India & South Asia Rugby Tournament in October, to be hosted by old rivals Calcutta Cricket & Football Club. **BG**



Anand Godiwala shares a moment with a CC&FC player

Greens & Glory

Friendly tees, deadly greens, and a whole lot of fun at the Annual Friendship Golf Tournament 2026



Capt Vijay Shivdasani and Akshay Kilachand, the two Golf Convenors

Just a few months ago, the Bombay Gymkhana Sports Department noted that 75 golfers were eager to represent Bombay Gymkhana. A follow-up survey revealed over 80 members with valid handicaps, all keen to play—perhaps a testament to the enduring appeal of Golf.

The much-awaited annual friendship match against Willingdon Sports Club finally took place on 3 April, with 50 golfers taking to the course. BG players, in their traditional colours, teed off in a staggered start from 11:30 am. Despite

the heat, they moved steadily across the fairways, navigating bunkers and bushes, aided by gentle land and sea breezes as they worked their way to the greens.

As tradition dictates, the first nine holes led away from the clubhouse, with the back nine bringing players home. Scorecards were submitted and quickly tallied to determine the winners.



Waseem Khan - prize for Straightest Drive



Shiva Chopra



Gaurav Saigal - Closest to pin Hole No 6

While Willingdon edged ahead on points, Bombay Gymkhana matched them in prize wins.

The prize distribution took place at the beautifully decorated Cabbage Patch, where this year's host, Sanjiv Saran Mehra, President, Bombay Gymkhana, presented the awards amid cheers and camaraderie. **BG**



Best pair, Bombay Gymkhana: Pradhymn Tripathi and Samir Sanghavi



Surprise Pairings

Participants pose together with President Sanjiv Saran Mehra and Badminton Secretary Shailesh Daga



Smiles & Smashes

A spirited Jumbled Doubles Badminton Tournament brought members together for sport and camaraderie

The Badminton courts came alive on the bright morning of Sunday, 29 March, as members gathered for a spirited and enjoyable Jumbled Doubles Badminton Tournament. Held between 9:00 am and 11:30 am, the event brought together players of all ages and skill levels for a refreshing mix of sport, camaraderie, and light-hearted competition.

Community Spirit

A total of 34 participants took part, forming 17 doubles pairs through a random chit selection process. This format added an element of surprise and excitement, encouraging players to quickly adapt to new partners and playing styles. It was particularly heartening to see seasoned players sharing the court with younger enthusiasts, embodying the true spirit of community sport.

Game On

All three Badminton courts were fully occupied throughout the morning,

buzzing with energy and enthusiasm. The tournament began with round-robin matches across three groups, ensuring that each pair had ample opportunity to play and engage. The format worked wonderfully, allowing for competitive yet friendly encounters, and setting the stage for an exciting knockout phase.

From the group stages, four pairs advanced to the semi-finals. Among them was Bombay Gymkhana President, Sanjiv Saran Mehra, who partnered with



Runners-up Nigel D'Sa and Advait Chand



Semi-finalists Jehan Daboo and President Sanjiv Saran Mehra

Jehan Daboo. Their impressive run to the semi-finals was met with cheers and encouragement from fellow members, reflecting the strong sense of unity and support within the club. It was inspiring to see leadership not just off the court, but in action during play as well.

Young Energy

A standout feature of the morning was the enthusiastic participation of our coaching students, ranging in age from 7 to 18 years. Their presence brought a vibrant and youthful energy to the event. Many of them displayed remarkable skill and sportsmanship, while others simply relished the joy of being part of such a lively gathering. Adding to their excitement, each child received a freshly designed Bombay Gym Badminton T-shirt, which could be seen proudly worn throughout the courts and in the event photographs.

In addition, all participants were presented with a shoulder bag, a thoughtful token that added to the overall experience and ensured everyone went home with a memento of the day.

Final Rally

As the tournament progressed, the competition grew more intense, culminating in a thrilling final match. Emerging victorious were Avni Arlekar and Kabir Bannerjee, who displayed excellent

Surprise Pairings

coordination and composure under pressure. The runners-up, Nigel D'Sa and Advait Chand, also put up a commendable performance, making the final a closely contested and entertaining affair.

Courtside Camaraderie

Beyond the matches and results, what truly defined the event was its warm and inclusive atmosphere. The tournament served as a wonderful platform for members to connect, unwind, and enjoy the sport in a relaxed setting. Between games, players and spectators gathered over snacks, sharing laughs and recounting memorable moments from the court.

Events like these reinforce the essence of the club—bringing members together through sport, fostering friendships, and creating lasting memories.

The success of the Jumbled Doubles Tournament is a testament to enthusiastic participation and thoughtful organisation, with continued support from the club's leadership helping make such engaging events possible. We look forward to many more mornings filled with energy, laughter, and the unmistakable sound of shuttlecocks in play. **BG**



Winners Avni Arlekar and Kabir Bannerjee

Well PLAYED!

Bombay Gymkhana celebrates Tennis marker **Naresh More**'s impressive title win

The Tennis fraternity at Bombay Gymkhana has yet another reason to celebrate. Marker Naresh More delivered an outstanding performance to clinch the men's 45+ singles title at the recently concluded Khar Gymkhana Pendharkar GSTA Tournament.

Known for its competitive edge, this prize-money event attracts a strong field of both professional and amateur players from across the country. Rising above such a high-calibre line-up is no small feat, making More's victory all the more commendable. Displaying consistency, focus and experience on court, he played with remarkable composure through the rounds to secure the title.

In recognition of his achievement, More was felicitated by the club during the Bombay Gymkhana Tennis and Padel League—a proud moment that reflected both his dedication to the sport and the institution's enduring legacy of excellence. His win was met with warm appreciation from fellow members and players, adding to the celebratory spirit within the Tennis community.

Beyond the trophy, his success stands as an inspiration to aspiring players



at the club, reaffirming the value of perseverance and passion. It also reinforces Bombay Gymkhana's reputation as a nurturing ground for sporting talent across age groups, where commitment and sportsmanship continue to thrive. **BG**

OTTERS Potters

Bombay Gymkhana's Swim team turned in a spirited performance at the 39th Otters Club Swimming Championship

Bright and (a bit too) early on Saturday, 18 April, 11 members of the Bombay Gymkhana Swim team, supported by their Coach Vispi, braved the heat and humidity to take part in the 39th Otters Club Swimming Championship.

The Junior team consisted of Ananya Desai, Samara Naik, Miya Chib, Jimmy Davar, Tanish Shah, Zayd Kamath, and new comer Yuvaan Maratkar.

The Masters squad had Anushree Kudtarker, Mimo Shirazi, Irfan Pabaney and Team Captain Karan Rai.

The Juniors put up a good showing, with multiple personal bests being achieved and more than a few Certificates of Merit. Our Masters secured a strong tally of medals, with golds for Anushree, Mimo and Irfan in freestyle and silver for Irfan in breaststroke.

An exhausting day for all under the hot sun, but with the team supporting one another, they made it through in good cheer and high spirits. **BG**



Anushree Kudtarker wins gold 50m freestyle



Irfan Pabaney wins gold 50m freestyle



The BG Junior Swim team



Striding Strong

The Bombay Gymkhana 10K Run returned for its third edition, bringing together runners across generations for a spirited morning on the city's streets

Running the Bombay Gymkhana 10K Run has quickly become a tradition—one that's hard to miss. Now in its third edition, the race continues to draw enthusiastic participation year after year.

On Sunday, 22 March, runners gathered on the Gymkhana grounds at 5:30 am, warming up under unexpectedly kind skies. The weather gods delivered a rare gift—a cool breeze and manageable humidity—setting the tone for the morning. By 6 am, anticipation was palpable. Participants across age groups assembled at the start line,

a testament to the run's growing popularity across generations.

The countdown began, and the flag-off was led by BG President Sanjiv



The route maps

Saran Mehra, whose vision brought this event to life in 2024. What followed was a run through the historic heart of the city—an experience as evocative as it was invigorating.

The route wound past the Oval Maidan, with the Rajabai Tower and Bombay High Court standing illuminated against the early morning sky. Runners surged past Churchgate station and onto Marine Lines, the roads clear and supported with hydration points that kept the momentum going.

As the race approached the halfway mark at the Opera House U-turn, runners moved in packs, sharing an unspoken rhythm. There was a spirit of breaking stride together when needed, and then pushing forward again—encouraging one another along the way.

Gradually, the sky softened into shades of blue, hinting at sunrise, as the route curved back past the Oval Maidan and towards the final stretch.



BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra flags off the race

Crossing the finishing line brought with it a sense of accomplishment—and relief—followed by medals, a cool-down session, and the shared joy of cheering on the winners.

Familiar faces, spirited camaraderie, and the unmistakable buzz of a well-run event made for a fitting close to the BG Run 2026. Here's hoping this becomes an enduring tradition for members and runners alike.

- Nandini Somaya Sampat



Pre-race warming up



Fast Fact:

- The event drew around 2,000 participants across categories, including competitive athletes, recreational runners, families, and school groups

Congratulations!

10K Run – Men’s Winners

Taronish Irani (35:45)
Shubham Shrivastav (37:43)
Vijay Thakkar (39:03)

5K Run – Men’s Winners

Viraj Jamdar (18:16)
Brijlal Shivshankar Bind (18:45)
Raghav Ramchandran (20:14)

10K Run – Women’s Winners

Tanvi Lad (42:56) [BG member]
Kranti Salvi (51:22)
Sapna Bhardwaj (52:42)

5K Run – Women’s Winners

Piyusha Lohar (22:59)
Jidnyasa Sachin Gaikwad (23:47)
Aeva Parekh (24:56) [BG member]

Winners Speak



“Grateful to Bombay Gym for always being such an incredible space to train, compete, and grow. Winning the 10K here makes it even more special. Always a pleasure!”
– **Tanvi Lad, 10K Run, winner**



“I got third place in the 5K marathon, which honestly felt really good because I made it to the podium. I was super happy about that. But at the same time, I was a little disappointed because last year I came first, and I really wanted to win again. Also, I’m just 13 and I was running in the open category, so that made it feel even more special (and a bit tougher too!) The thing is, I didn’t even train properly for this run. I’m a

National Circuit Squash player, so I’m already quite fit, and I think that helped me a lot. But running a marathon is different, and I kind of just went for it without any specific training. Next year, I really want to take it more seriously. I’m going to train properly and give it my best shot.”

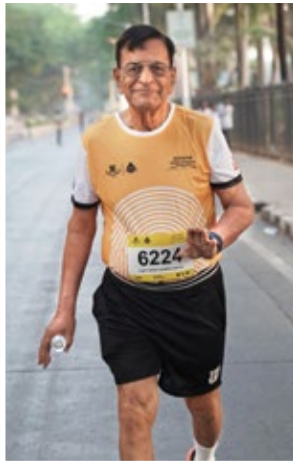
– **Aeva Parekh, 5K Run, third place**

Miles & Moments



“The Bombay Gymkhana Marathon was the first race I’ve ever attempted as I just turned 12. I loved the experience, the vibe was great and everyone was so encouraging. I completed my 5k race in 34 minutes and I’m already looking forward to the next one!”

– **Arnav Aggarwal**
(youngest participant)



“The 5K run of our club was extremely well-planned and true to the high standards of our club. I ran leisurely and truly enjoyed my time on the track. I have, to date, run 10

Mumbai marathons (TMM), 10 Delhi marathons and one New York marathon but now have come to 10K or 5K as available. I have switched to our club’s Aqua class and Tennis each thrice a week with Sunday devoted as recovery day!”

– **Captain Vinod Saigal**
(senior-most participant)

“The morning began at the Bombay Gymkhana grounds with great energy—music playing, people warming up, and that familiar pre-run

buzz in the air. As part of the Managing Committee, it was genuinely satisfying to see everything come together



so smoothly. The route—around Oval Maidan, past Churchgate, and down to Marine Lines—still feels special every time. This was my third 5K, but with a knee issue, I took it slower and walked parts of it. It didn’t matter—the atmosphere carried me through. Everything was well organised, from hydration to medical support, and in the end, just finishing felt good. A small reminder that showing up, even at a different pace, still counts.”

— **Dinesh Advani**
VP, Bombay Gymkhana

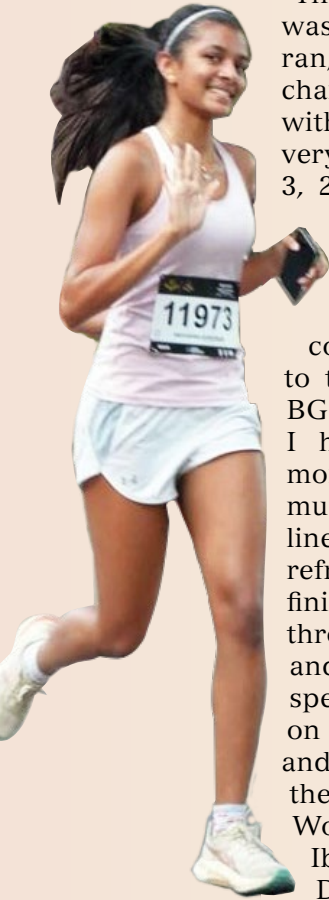


“My first marathon ever, and I’m so glad it was at the Bombay Gymkhana! The comfort of being on familiar ground added to the high-octane infectiousness of those committed to fitness as yourself

BG Runs

- always faster/ higher/ stronger - what absolute joy to be up, before the sun, at BG and... run!!"

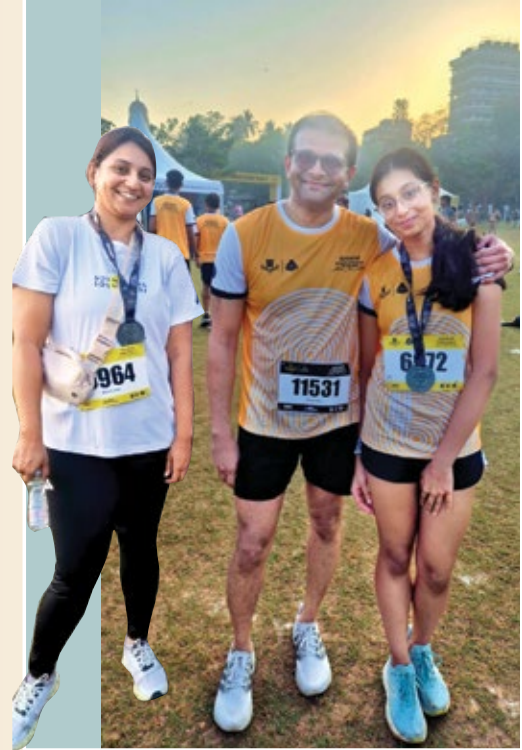
- **Gauri Singh**



"The BG Marathon was the first race I ever ran, and it completely changed my relationship with running. From my very first 3K on March 3, 2024, I had a feeling this was something I wanted to hold on to—a tradition that reflects my connection and loyalty to the club. This year's BG 10K was everything I had hoped for and more, from the lively music at the start line to the delicious refreshments at the finish. The atmosphere throughout was vibrant, and it felt even more special to be cheered on by the organisers and my teammates from the Bombay Gymkhana Women's Football team, Ibreez Tyabji and Deniese Pereira. For me, the run was more than just a race—it was joyful, supportive, and something I will always associate with the moment I truly fell in love with running."

— **Anoushka Gangwani**

"The marathon was a really fun experience. I got to enjoy running around paths of Mumbai while working on my fitness, truly making it a memorable moment." - **Trisha**



Shah. "This was my first marathon and being a BG run made it even more memorable. My husband has been a seasoned runner and running alongside him and my daughter and my bootcamp buddies was exciting and motivating. - **Nirmee Shah.** "The BG run is special, familiar faces and great camaraderie amongst the participants makes it fun. This serves as a warm up for more to come in the year ahead. Running with my wife and daughter is always motivating! Missed our 9-year-old though who was also very eager!"

— **Nimish Shah**

"As the COO of a sports-oriented organisation, advocating an active lifestyle is a value I strive to embody. Having been a dedicated Badminton player, this marked a return to a mindset of discipline, endurance, and self-care. Crossing the finish line was immensely fulfilling—the medal



symbolised more than completion; it was a personal victory. The event was executed with remarkable precision, and I now look forward

to the BG fourth edition 5K Run and many more races ahead.”

— **Gerald Mathew**

Chief Operating Officer, BG 5K Run, BG

“There comes a point when you realise your last sporting achievement was probably a school race—and somehow, that still feels recent!



Being part of the organising team meant I was always around the action, but this

year, I swapped the clipboard for running shoes. What followed was less a run and more a reunion with long-forgotten muscles! Between the start-line excitement and the determined finish, it became a nostalgic trip back to simpler times. Crossing the finish line felt like a small but deeply satisfying victory. And then came the aftermath—the unforgettable ‘duck walk’ phase... but worth every waddling step!”

— **Namita J Padbidri**

Asst. GM – Member Relations, BG

“Balancing responsibility and passion isn’t easy, but the BG 10K showed

how rewarding it can be. As part of the organising team, the days leading up to the event were filled with planning and coordination. While being behind the scenes was a proud moment, stepping onto the track as a participant made it truly special. On race day, I joined a sea of runners, united by a shared purpose. Running through Mumbai’s vibrant, historic streets was both inspiring and humbling. Crossing the finish line brought a deep sense of accomplishment, and the thoughtful post-race arrangements reflected the care behind the event. I look forward to returning next year.”

— **Pushpam Nair**

Sr. Executive Events & Social Media



“Over the past three years, I’ve had the privilege of participating in the BG Marathon, year after year. For me, it’s more than just a sporting event—it’s an energising experience that brings a deep sense of purpose and enthusiasm. What makes it even more meaningful is the way Bombay Gymkhana encourages its staff to



take part. It not only promotes fitness but also fosters team spirit, boosts morale, and creates a genuine sense of unity and belonging. Being part of this journey fills me with immense pride, and I look forward to continuing this tradition in the years to come.”

— **Siddhesh Kharat**

Executive, Interior Maintenance

“Participating in the 10K run organised by Bombay Gymkhana was a truly energising experience. It brought together colleagues across departments, united by a shared focus on fitness and well-being. The atmosphere was vibrant, and running alongside colleagues made it both enjoyable and motivating. The well-organised route, supportive staff, and

Fast Fact:

- Commemorative medals were presented to all finishers, while winners received crystal trophies

constant encouragement kept the energy high throughout. Completing the run was challenging yet deeply



satisfying, leaving a strong sense of accomplishment. Initiatives like these promote healthy living while strengthening workplace bonds.”

— **Sagar Pujare**

Custodian, Bombay Gymkhana **BG**

Future Pathways

Dr (h.c.) Tejas Shyam
unpacked the India-versus-
abroad decision for students



Dr (h.c.) Tejas Shyam delivered an engaging talk on “STEM Roadmap: India or Abroad after Grade 10?” at Bombay Gymkhana on 22 April. He explored diverse academic pathways, comparing opportunities in India and overseas, while highlighting key decision factors such as interests, finances, and long term goals. Emphasis was placed on early profile building and the role of competitive exams beginning as early as grade 9, along with guidance on which exams matter most. The session drew students, parents, and grandparents alike, and concluded with an energetic, insightful Q&A that reflected the audience’s curiosity and enthusiasm throughout the event. **BG**

BY THE NUMBERS: STEM CHOICES TODAY

India’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) pipeline remains both vast and intensely competitive. According to media reports, engineering entrance exams alone draw upwards of 14.5 lakh applicants annually, underscoring the scale of domestic demand. At the same time, global ambitions continue to shape student decisions—over 7.6 lakh Indian students went abroad for higher studies in 2024, according to government data. Of those choosing international education, nearly 70% opt for STEM fields, reflecting strong, career-driven preferences.

EXPLORING PSYCHEDELICS

Shaila Mallik reports on a session exploring mind-altering substances led by **Vidita Vaidya**



April's BG Conversations featured an engaging session with leading scientist Vidita Vaidya, who unpacked the complex world of serotonergic psychedelics, leaving the audience both enlightened and intrigued.

She began by distinguishing between psychoactive substances—such as coffee, tea, alcohol, and even cheese—that influence mood or behaviour, and psychedelics, which profoundly alter perception and consciousness. Tracing their origins, Vaidya pointed to evidence of their use as far back as 10,000 BC in South America, where hallucinatory cave art suggests their role in ancient rituals, healing, and shamanistic practices.

Today, psychedelics are re-emerging in scientific research as potential treatments for anxiety and

depression. Vaidya noted that similarly transformative experiences may also be accessed through deep meditation and the study of Vedanta, particularly the idea that the self is an illusion and all beings are interconnected—an outlook believed to ease stress and anxiety.

The session also touched on fascinating historical links, from theories connecting psychedelics to the Salem Witch Trials to their association with anti-Vietnam War protests. A highlight was Bicycle Day, observed on 19 April, marking Swiss scientist Albert Hofmann's first recorded LSD experience in 1943 during a bicycle ride home from Sandoz Laboratories.

During the Q&A, a question on whether widespread LSD use could lead to world peace sparked discussion. Vaidya noted its potential to reduce ego and enhance empathy, while emphasising the need for caution and medical supervision. BG Conversations are held monthly at the BG Library—do join the next one. **BG**

Across Borders

Reena Agrawal captures a thought-provoking conversation on Indo-China perspectives with **R Gopalakrishnan**, **Nirmala Isaac** and **Jamal Mecklai**



R Gopalakrishnan is among Bombay Gymkhana's most prolific writers on business, and his recent collaborations with academicians have resulted in some engaging work.

The April Meet the Author event, hosted by the BG Library, featured a discussion on his latest book, *Chanakya and Sun Tzu: A Business Lens on Trade, Thought and Travel*, with co-author Nirmala Isaac and financial expert Jamal Mecklai. Speaking despite a sore throat, RG delved into the much-discussed Indo-China relationship. The conversation touched on shared civilisational philosophies and how the Chinese presence in the Indian narrative is often viewed through a largely North Indian lens—through trade goods and border tensions. It also drew attention to lesser-known connections in South India, including a Chinese shoe factory in Nellore, instances of



Chinese children being raised within Tamil traditions in India and Malaysia, early maritime trade links, the spread of religions, and political ties between the Pallavas and the Tang dynasty.

Isaac referred to traveller accounts that offer insights into both business and political strategies that have stood the test of time, noting that India and China have more in common than is acknowledged.

A key theme that emerged was that India's strength has traditionally lain in the creative space of ideas, while China has excelled in the systematic execution of those ideas.

The moderator raised questions on whether India underestimates China's creativity, what it has learned from its neighbour, and whether the two nations should move towards a more amicable relationship. The panellists suggested that a friendlier approach may be worth considering, though not without caution—echoing Arun Bewoor's measured reminder to remain vigilant.

The BG Library continues to host events every week. Do drop in for the next one. **BG**

TRACING THE SCENT

Nive Raitz von Frenzt shares highlights from the Meet the Author session with *The Scent Of Fallen Stars* author **Aishwarya Jha**



A post-rain, monsoon walk—the ambience dreamy, glistening. Mesmerised, she watched as a figure approached, humming softly. Another person happened to be watching the scene, transfixed. “The story came to me; it was a lightning bolt moment of inspiration,” shared Delhi-based author, poet and entrepreneur Aishwarya Jha of the opening scene of her debut novel *The Scent of Fallen Stars*.

At the Meet the Author session at the Book Club on 23 March 2026, she recounted this moment that sparked her novel. Colloquially called *bakul*, the title is a play on the fragrant maulsari flowers strewn on the path, for all the world looking like stars come to rest.

From that jumping-off point, the dual timeline narrative serves to reveal protagonists’—Will and his daughter,

Aria’s—stories and the effect Delhi has on them and their relationship. Jha evokes the city of her birth with a tenderness that moulds it into a well-defined character in its own right. How Delhi itself changed is also poignantly shown, the pace of the city undergoing a transformation. Where they had been more accommodating in the past, there seemed to be a shift in people’s attitudes.

Noticeable by her physical absence, Leela is the link between Will and Aria. A strong force and compelling personality through the thread of the story, readers learn about her from several perspectives before the dots can be joined.

Exploring themes of abandonment and spirituality, Jha was quite unapologetic that the ending should be uplifting, twinkling that her next book is a Gothic genre novel set in a fictitious Himalayan mountain town. **BG**





Bard No.1

Nive Raitz von Frenzt distils **Shefali Balsari Shah's** take on Shakespeare's enduring resonance

"The way to read Shakespeare is through your ears," said Shefali Balsari Shah, as she recalled her lifelong relationship with the playwright. It was at Elphinstone College that "Shakespeare started making sense and I discovered how to appreciate him while doing my PhD," she shared, completing her dissertation on *Taming of the Shrew*.

Held to mark World Book Day and Shakespeare's birth anniversary, the session of the Bombay Gymkhana Book Club on 20 April drew a large audience.

Focusing on the universality of Shakespeare's work, Balsari Shah highlighted how interpretations have moved beyond rigid adherence to text and "correct" accents, evolving instead through diverse cultural adaptations. From Nana Patekar's rendering of the iconic soliloquy "To be or not to be" in the Marathi film *Natsamrat*, to the Gujarati play *Shakespeare Maro Jamai*, where characters accuse him of "stealing our stories", his works have found resonance across languages and regions. Even performances of Hamlet in Mizoram reflect local values, with family honour taking centre stage. While some critics draw parallels

between Shakespeare's life and his plays—*Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* marking different phases, and *The Tempest* serving as a farewell—his enduring appeal lies in weaving universal human experiences into compelling narratives. Such is the power of his words that *Love's Labour's Lost* was staged in Kabul in 2005, crossing even conflict zones.

From its first performance in Bombay in 1770 to its role in political protest worldwide, Shakespeare continues to speak to the times. The session concluded with a poignant poem by Gazan playwright Ali Abu Yassin, imagining a world where humanity lives as "brothers under the blue sky"—a reminder of the Bard's timeless relevance. **BG**



Forever BARD

Aarti Kelshikar, in conversation with Shakespeare scholar **Shefali Balsari Shah**, explores the bard's timeless insights



Many leadership lessons today come from business books, frameworks and case studies. But some of the most enduring insights on power, ambition, and human behaviour originate from a playwright who lived over 500 years ago.

“Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/ Her infinite variety.” These lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* could just as easily apply to Shakespeare himself. Even today, his work continues to feel relevant. In *Julius Caesar*, his words are a testament to his prescience when he writes, “How many ages hence/ Shall this our lofty scene be acted o’er/ In states unborn and accents yet unknown!”

“Universality” may feel like a loaded term today, but in many ways, Shakespeare’s appeal transcends the bounds of both history and geography.

Complex Themes

His work encompasses complex themes like gender, race and power structures. In many of his comedies, roles are fluid and women often emerge as strong, central figures. Shakespeare addresses race through the sympathetic portrayal of Shylock the Jew as a victim in *The Merchant of Venice* and Othello the Moor, shown as both heroic and vulnerable. He explores power, responsibility, and leadership in plays like *King Lear*. Shakespeare touches on colonial and postcolonial realities when in *The Tempest*, Caliban the savage says, “You taught me language, and my profit on’t/ Is I know how to curse.”

His use of powerful poetic language adds depth and nuance to morally ambivalent situations. For instance, in *Macbeth*, after committing murder, the

focus shifts from the act itself to his inner turmoil: “This my hand will rather/ The multitudinous seas incarnadine/ Making the green one red.” The poetry draws attention to his anguish rather than just the violence.

His characters are complex and layered, not just “good” or “bad”. They provide an understanding of human flaws and awareness of inner conflict.

Shakespeare’s writing is also deeply intertwined with love. Romance comes alive in sentences such as “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” and “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other name would smell as sweet” and other lines in *Romeo and Juliet*. Even today, “Let me not to the marriage of true minds” is one of the most commonly used readings at weddings.

Leadership Lessons

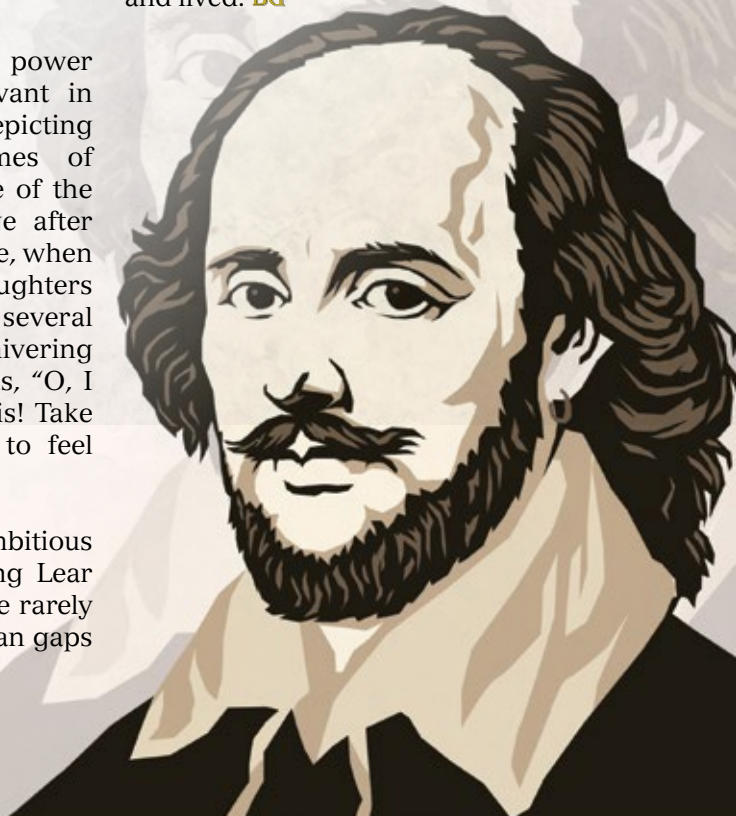
Shakespeare’s exploration of power structures is particularly relevant in today’s business context, depicting how leaders behave in times of stability as well as crisis. Some of the most powerful insights emerge after reversals of fortune. For example, when King Lear is cast out by his daughters and is caught in a storm, he sees several poor people soaked and shivering without any shelter and mourns, “O, I have ta’en/ Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp. Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.”

like ego, poor communication, lack of self-awareness, and misplaced trust.

There are also reflections on time and its use. In *Richard II*, after losing his throne and being imprisoned, he reflects thoughtfully, “I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.” It is a simple but powerful reminder of how we use- and lose time.

Conclusion

Young people today may not always read Shakespeare’s work in its original form, but they are constantly engaging with the world he created. His themes of love, ambition, identity and conflict show up everywhere, from modern films to series and on social media. Whether it’s the tragic intensity of *Romeo and Juliet* or the ambition and downfall of *Macbeth*, his narratives continue to shape how stories are told, understood and lived. **BG**



© Shutterstock.com His characters from the ambitious Macbeth to the misjudging King Lear show that leadership failures are rarely about capability, but about human gaps

Raising the Bar



Throwback beats and smooth sax notes defined the 10 April Bar Nite at Bombay Gymkhana, as Tanique Fossa and DJ Herman delivered a seamless musical experience. A nostalgic set of late '90s hits brought back memories and energised the crowd, their synergy keeping the atmosphere lively as members enjoyed the music, conversation, and camaraderie. **BG**



Vocal Vibes



A smooth jazz mood set the tone for the 27 March Bar Nite at Bombay Gymkhana, as Analogue James led into Jazz Nite featuring Anoushka Maskey. Her evocative voice held the audience's attention and drew warm appreciation. Moving through a well-curated set, Maskey brought depth and character to each track, with members responding enthusiastically as the evening unfolded. **BG**

All ABOARD!

Gopika Kapoor captures a joyful evening where music, movement and inclusion took centre stage

There's no doubt about the fact that the Bombay Gymkhana has a heart, as was evidenced on the evening of Tuesday, 21 April. Under its BG Cares initiative, the club hosted an inclusive, accessible dance party for over 60 people with disabilities and their caregivers, in collaboration with Buddy Up Network, a social app for people with disabilities and Special Hangout, a social space for Neurodivergent children and adults. The Dining Hall was buzzing with music provided pro bono by Tryps, Mumbai's youngest female DJ, while dancers replenished themselves with an array of delicious snacks provided by the F&B department.

Due to the lack of inclusive, accessible social spaces accompanied by social



stigma, people with disabilities have limited opportunities to attend such social events. For all the participants, it was a wonderful opportunity to have an evening out, socialise with their community, and just let their hair down and have some fun! **BG**

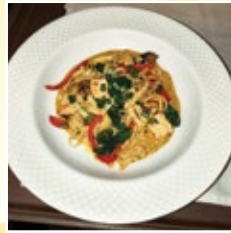
GOMANGO!

Savour the king of fruits across the club's dining venues

It's that time of year when mangoes take centre stage, and Bombay Gymkhana's Mango Mania festival is a full-fledged ode to the season's most loved fruit.

Sip on your favourite fruit via inventive beverages such as the Mango & Jalapeño Crusher, alongside comforting classics like the Mango Milkshake and Mango Lassi. For those who prefer their mango in familiar, nostalgic forms, there's Freshly Cut Alphonso Mango, Aamras with Puri, and a decadent Mango Delight Waffle. Desserts are where the festival truly shines. From cooling favourites like Mango Kulfi and Mango Ice Cream to indulgent creations such as Fresh Mango Cheesecake, Mango Coconut Chia Pudding, Mango Tiramisu, and Alphonso Mango paired with Fresh Cream or Vanilla Ice Cream, there's no shortage of ways to hit the sweet spot.

At The Pavilion, the fruit is reimagined across a more expansive menu. Expect a Chilled Mango Gazpacho, vibrant salads, and mains that weave in both ripe and raw mango—think Spicy Sticky Fried Rice with Pickled Raw Mango, Fettuccine in a Thai Mango Curry Sauce, Grilled Herbed Chicken with Raw Mango Salsa, and King Prawns in a Curry Leaf-tempered Mango Sauce.



Desserts here carry a tropical twist, with Mango Malibu Tiramisu and Vanilla Ice Cream topped with Fresh Mango rounding off the experience. **BG**

When: 16 April – 31 May

Where: The Gym's Inn Bar, Dining Hall, The Café, Verandah, Palm Court, and Swimming Pool; and The Pavilion

Same Mood Different Map!

As global plans waver, **Kaveri Shah** finds India stepping in—effortlessly

This summer, we're adjusting altitude. Domestically.

Because for a country that offers mountains, beaches, vineyards, deserts, and enough culture to humble your Euro itinerary, we've been oddly committed to leaving it. And now, with the faintest global nudge, everyone's rediscovering India like it's a new launch.

Next door, Nashik has leaned all the way into its vineyard persona. The drive is half the appeal now, thanks to the Samruddhi Expressway. Smooth and clean roads, open stretches, it gets you out of the city before you've had time to overthink it. There's something deeply entertaining

about sipping wine here while debating whether Europe is "worth it this year." The grapes local, the opinions, however, remain aggressively global.

BG member Urvi Desai says her idea of a holiday isn't rushed itineraries; it's slower. Hills, rivers, books. The kind of days when time stretches just enough. As her daughter, Ananya, wrapped up school in late April, the shift was immediate! She jokes their summer anthem will be "The hills are alive with the sighs of relief!" as her family takes the long-awaited trip to Coorg. Afternoons by the Kabini River with a lemonade in hand, alternating between doing absolutely nothing and doing everything, from birdwatching and spice shopping to tasting local chocolates. And, of course, carrying more books than realistically possible, just in case. Mumbai's heat, she quipped, waits patiently in the background, inevitable but slightly more tolerable after a week away.

For BG member Arya Timblo, the season unfolds with the same spirit. Goa, for her family, is more about the people. She recounts days when her boys hover in the



Nashik Vineyards



kitchen as their grandmother cooks Goan delicacies, more focused on memory-making than the food! Conversations stretching over cups of chai and slow, home-cooked meals, unhurried time, a sense of ease. There is a quiet richness in this kind of togetherness.

Upon the north side, Ladakh isn't a holiday so much as a personality adjustment. Stark, cinematic, slightly humbling. You go, you reset, you come back with better pictures and a temporary phase of saying things like "you don't realise how small we are."

While I'm at it, for those of you who haven't yet booked your winter plans,



Ladakh: Pangong Lake

Rann of Kutch deserves serious attention. The Rann Utsav has quietly built itself into a full experience. White desert under a full moon, tents that redefine "temporary," local crafts, music, food, the works. It's immersive without trying too hard.



And the stretch people dramatically call the "Road to Heaven"? The exaggeration holds up! Endless white salt flats, sky blending into land, and a stillness that makes you pause mid-conversation. Not for content. But because it's stunning. One of the few places where 'white space' isn't a metaphor for policy gaps... What's interesting this summer isn't that plans are changing. It's how easily they are. Because while the world recalibrates in very serious tones, we've done what we do best: adapted. **B&G**

SUDOKU

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

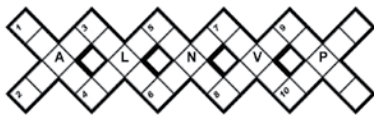
- each of the vertical columns
- each of the horizontal rows
- each of the boxes

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



CRISSWORD

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



- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Graph | 6 One-twelfth of a year |
| 2 Grim | 7 Privileged group |
| 3 Ex-President APJ Abdul ____ | 8 <i>Bolero</i> composer |
| 4 Highway charges? | 9 Fall out of date |
| 5 More rational | 10 Palatable |

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:

- FNSII
- ACILL
- AIPVGN
- EIKNDW

	*		*	
*		*		
			*	*
*				

The more one works, the more ____ one is to work. - Philip Stanhope (7) **BG**

(All solutions on page 35)



Bombay Gymkhana Library

MAY
26

UPCOMING EVENTS

<p>FRI 8 8 pm onwards</p>	<p>LIBRARY NIGHTS LITERARY TRIVIA QUIZ</p>
<p>SAT 9 11 am - 12 pm Ages 5 - 8 & 9+</p> 	<p>HAPPY BIRTHDAY ROBIKAKA We celebrate a legendary Indian poet, writer, musician & artist</p>
<p>MON 11 5.30 - 6.30 pm</p>	<p>BOOK CLUB THE ONLY CITY Anindita Ghose</p>
<p>TUE 19 6 - 7 PM</p>	<p>BG CONVERSATIONS SO...WE BOUGHT A FARM with Arti Dwarkadas</p>
<p>FRI 29 5.30 pm onwards</p>	<p>MOVIE NIGHT FANTASTIC VOYAGE A film by Richard Fleischer</p>

FOR MORE INFORMATION LOOK OUT FOR OUR DETAILED POSTERS OR CALL/VISIT THE LIBRARY

In Memoriam

The Bombay Gymkhana deeply regrets the sad demise of:

- John Palkhivala
26 March 2026
- Vijay Mohan Crishna
3 March 2026
- Devendra Kothari
24 February 2026
- Capt. Raman Kumar Suri
23 February 2026
- Pankaj Inderchand Jain
12 March 2026
- Avinash Datta
6 January 2026

SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU

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

CRISS WORD



SCRAMBLE

Stanhope
The more one is to work - Phillip
Winked

Answer

Finis, Illac, paving/vaping,
Words

GET YOUR DIGITAL COPY!

To receive the electronic version of *Black & Gold*, send an email to agm.relationships@bombaygymkhana.com. You can also download it from the BG App.



HOT!

Sunita Rajwade makes a case for discovering the quieter pleasures of a near-deserted Mumbai

Plop! A drop of sweat falls at my feet as I work out in the gym. It's too hot to go for a walk down the promenade along the Coastal Road, or even Marine Drive, so I have to make do with a walk on the treadmill in air-conditioned bliss.

It's sad but true: Mumbai's once legendary all-year-round pleasant weather has morphed into hot and hotter, with only a spell of torrential rain breaking the monotony. And with the Met Department predicting that this May, India could be among the hottest places on earth, it may well turn out to be the hottest May yet.

Despite this, Mumbai remains my favourite place to be in May—because most Mumbaikars dash off elsewhere. With schools closed for the long summer break, families head out on exotic overseas vacations. They go to sandy beaches, cool mountains, or even to their family homes in what is commonly known as their “native place.”

'Native place', a linguistic relic of the Raj, refers to the place of one's birth. This is particularly true for people of Mumbai, a city originally made up of immigrants. I remember a court clerk who thought we were being facetious when we said that

our daughter's native place was Bombay (as it was called then), and was even more annoyed when we added that the father's native place was Bombay too!

But Bombay is, in fact, our native place—even though it has become Mumbai. So that's where we go for our annual holiday!

Even though it is hot—and promises to get hotter—Mumbai isn't all that bad. There are many ways of staying cool, the most obvious being to remain indoors. However, in the early mornings or around sunset, one can venture out for a lazy stroll down the few shady roads, without the fear of being run over by a school bus. Or enjoy the rare thrill of driving your own car on semi-deserted streets, with fewer vehicles and delivery boys darting through traffic. It may even be the perfect time to visit restaurants that usually have mile-long queues.

But best of all, it's the ideal time to sit in the club's air-conditioned library, flick through glossy magazines, and then slip into the swimming pool. Finally, one can cool off on one of the long verandahs with the club's legendary fresh lime soda—and a hot dog that is neither hot nor a dog. **BG**