

LITERATURE | INTERVIEW

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

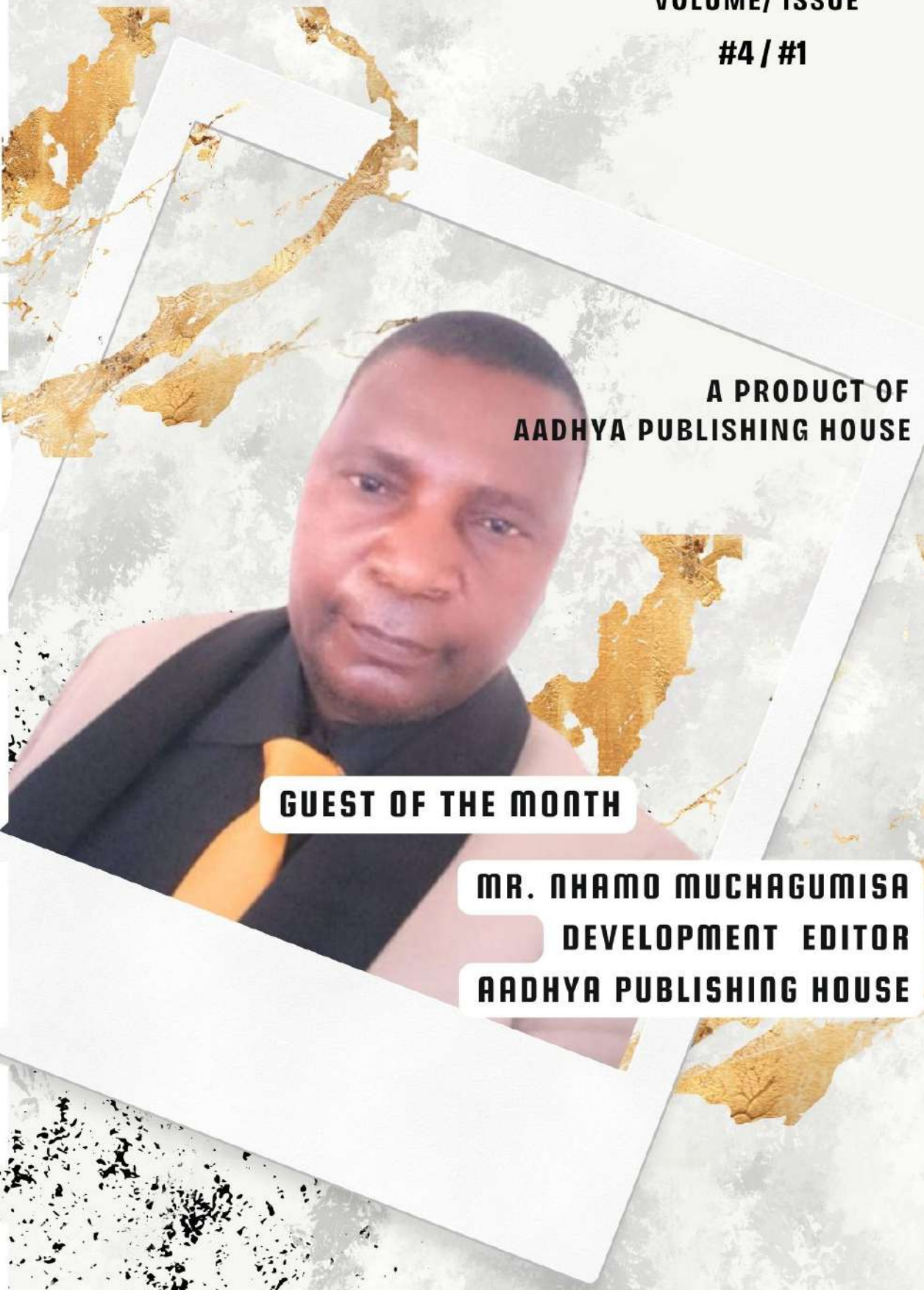


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#4 / #1

PANACHE



A PRODUCT OF
AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE

GUEST OF THE MONTH

MR. NHAMO MUCHAGUMISA
DEVELOPMENT EDITOR
AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE

CHIEF EDITOR:
AKANKSHA SHRIVASTAVA
AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE

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Preface

"Panache" is not just a name. It is a basic value of our "Aadhya Publishing House" as we believe talent should never die. Rather it should always stand out like the feathered plume on a helmet to attract the world and that is what Panache means. We, as the Publisher, believe in encouraging new talent in the field of literature. We want each and every poet to get the opportunity to express themselves and get the proper acknowledge that they deserve. They should be known by the world for their views and we hope very soon we shall be able to achieve this.

Panache is a monthly international magazine in the English Language, that is released on digital platforms for literature lovers.

However, our work does not end here. I, Akanksha Shrivastava, Publisher and Chief Editor of Aadhya Publishing house, am trying to put a smile on the faces of poor children by providing them with food on behalf of our publishing house. By taking this small initiative, it is our wish to fulfill this basic need of food so that we help the children to survive in a better way.



AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE

PRESENTS

PANACHE International Magazine

January 2025

**Publisher &
Chief Editor**

Akanksha Shrivastava
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Designed by:

Lalit Kishore Gaur
LKG Telefilms
lkgaur76@gmail.com

Panache is a monthly magazine which is published by **AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE**. In this magazine we encourage new poets and writers by publishing their writings. Every month we offer a competition in which poets and writers can take part by registering themselves. The registered participants send their writings along with their name , photograph and phone number. The magazine will be launched on our facebook page on 1st day of every month. After the launch of magazine every registered writer will get the pdf of the magazine. Out of all the registered participants we ask every writer for their top 5 choices. And then we promote our writers on our social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter . This “**Panache**” will definitely be the attraction of literature and also the rise of every poet...



Akanksha Shrivastava
Publisher & Chief Editor

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PANACHE

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

January 2025

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Issue 1, Volume 4

Nhamo Muchagumisa is a Zimbabwean High School Teacher specialising in English Language, Literature in English and History. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in English and Communication Studies. Nhamo Muchagumisa has served in conventional schools as well as private colleges in Zimbabwe, amassing a wealth of experience in the process. Nhamo is also a writer of fiction stories and poems and has published his work on many different platforms, the Panache claiming the largest share. His collection of short stories, *The Baby Angel* is available on Amazon Kindle, edited by Akanksha Shrivasta, founding editor of Aadhya Publishing House. As a teacher for Literature in English, Nhamo's passions are in Drama and Poetry, and as a writer, his passions are in Prose and Poetry.

Nhamo Muchagumisa
Development Editor
Aadhya Publishing House
Teacher
Zimbabwe



**CELEBRATING THE EXCELLENCE AND HARDWORK
WITH HONORABLE **MR. NHAMO MUCHAGUMISA**
(DEVELOPMENT EDITOR, AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE)**

1) What is your opinion about the role of a teacher in society?

It is something taken for granted, yet unwittingly appreciated. In my country, teaching is not considered as a noble profession anymore, but if a person does something that reveals lack of wisdom, they are said to be uneducated, meaning they missed the services of a teacher.

2) What do you think is your greatest achievement as a teacher?

Helping less gifted students and second chance students achieve their intellectual goals. In the conventional school system I taught in rural day secondary schools where enrollment was by right, not by merit. In such schools most learners are less intellectually gifted, but even those that are intellectually gifted have their prospects compromised by social background. Those are the students I helped to maximise their potential. Then from 2011 to 2017, I largely dealt with second chance students some of whom had been written off by the conventional system, but a lot of those who passed through my hands made the grade.

3) What do you think is the effect of social dynamics on your role as a teacher?

Social dynamics make me a perennial learner. The empowerment of women made me teach a lot of adult female students, especially between 2011 and 2017, a lot of them career women seeking to enhance their career prospects, some of them mothers seeking to improve their intellectual prospects. From 2018 to date, I have been teaching teenagers whose exposure to the social media and awareness of children's rights has affected their behaviour both positively and negatively. Patience is the foremost quality a teacher must possess when dealing with twenty-first century teenagers.

4) What are the challenges of being a teacher in Zimbabwe?

The biggest challenge is how society now looks down on the once noble profession. The remuneration, especially in the conventional system is not that encouraging, but the real problem is the contempt with which members of the teaching profession may be regarded with.

5) What keeps you going as a writer?

The realisation that it is an extension of my duty as a teacher. Through poetry, I teach people about emotional and social literacy, self validation and national pride. Through prose, I articulate their experiences in a subtle and entertaining manner so that they identify with the characters I create and confront themselves heart and soul where their shortcomings manifest through fictional characters.

6) Did you find yourself writing because Literature in English is part of your specialty?

The reverse ought to be the truth. I teach Literature in English most likely because I'm a writer. I started composing poems and short stories for school magazines when I was in High School, when in actual fact I thought I would pursue law after high school.

7) What is your favourite piece of writing.

My favourite piece of writing is still to come, at the moment I see equal value in the work I have written so far.

8) Who are your favourite writers from Zimbabwe and from the rest of the world?

From Zimbabwe, the late Charles Mungoshi, Shimmer Chinodya, the late Dambudzo Marechera, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Musaemura Zimunya. From Nigeria, the late Chinua Achebe and Buchi Emecheta. From outside Africa, William Wordsworth, William Butler Yeats, William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Sujata Bhatt, Danielle Steel, Ken Folette and Sidney Sheldon.

9) What is your greatest challenge as a writer?

Getting the attention of a serious audience. In my country, the reading culture is now almost non-existent. The social media has become a serious distraction.

10) What is your word of advice to upcoming writers.

Writing demands the whole of you, body, mind and soul. Resilience is an indispensable quality.



@AADHYA_PUBLISHING

CELEBRITY CORNER

MR. PIYUSH GOEL



"WE ARE HONORED TO WELCOME THE MULTIFACETED AND VISIONARY MR. PIYUSH GOEL TO THE PANACHE FAMILY AS A COLUMNIST. RENOWNED AS THE 'MIRROR IMAGE MAN OF INDIA,' MR. GOEL IS A CELEBRATED AUTHOR, POET, AND INNOVATOR, KNOWN FOR HIS EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TO WRITE BOOKS IN MIRROR IMAGE STYLE—A TESTAMENT TO HIS CREATIVE BRILLIANCE. WITH A RICH REPERTOIRE OF LITERARY AND ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS, HE INSPIRES MINDS ACROSS THE GLOBE. HIS INSIGHTS AND EXPERTISE PROMISE TO BRING FRESH PERSPECTIVES AND UNPARALLELED WISDOM TO OUR READERS."

Hello Folks!

About Our Columnists

"It is with immense pride and joy that I, Akanksha Shrivastava, Publisher of Panache magazine, introduce a truly exceptional personality, Mr. Piyush Kumar Goel, as a distinguished contributor to our publication. Born on February 10, 1967, in Dadri to the illustrious parents Dr. Devendra Kumar Goel and Smt. Ravi Kanta Goel, Mr. Goel is a mechanical engineer with nearly three decades of professional experience across various companies.




Beyond his technical expertise, his passion for innovation and creativity has shaped him into a celebrated cartoonist, author, and motivator. Mr. Goel is globally acclaimed as the 'Mirror Image Man of India' for his extraordinary literary achievements, including writing 18 books in mirror image style.

His remarkable works include the mirror-image rendition of all 700 shlokas of the Shri Bhagavad Gita in Hindi and English, the world's first handwritten needle book Madhushala by Harivansh Rai Bachchan, and Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali, written using a mehendi cone. Additionally, he has created masterpieces like Vishnu Sharma's Panchatantra using carbon paper, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Meri Ekyavan Kavitayein on magic sheets with a wooden pen, and his original work Piyush Vani crafted with fabric cone liners.

With 18 authored books, 10 of which are published, his contributions to literature are unparalleled. He has been honored with numerous awards, including the Limca Book of Records (twice), Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Award, Hind Shiromani Samman, and many more.

Mr. Piyush Goel's journey of relentless dedication and innovative pursuits continues to inspire countless individuals, and his association with Panache is a testament to our commitment to excellence and creativity. Welcome, Mr. Piyush Goel!"


Akanksha Shrivastava
Your Publisher

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Note :- We always demand the original write-ups from our writers. If any article, short story or poem is found to be a copy of any other article, short story or poem respectively, then the writer would only be responsible for it.

1. Unpredictable Journey



**Mr. Adesoga Jubril
Asiwaju
Educator and
Writer
Ogun
Nigeria**

Yesteryear, a man appeared in front of my house and begged me to follow him to his own home. At that moment, I was lying mixed up with grass, stones, and dry leaves. I agreed to follow him, and he separated me from the grass, stones, and dry leaves. When we arrived at his house, I expected a friendly welcome as his guest. Unfortunately, he offered me some water to drink, but I refused. Annoyed, he poured it on me. Before I could say anything, he began to trample me under his feet. I started seeing him as a messenger of death. Then, he picked me up in both hands, patted me on my back, and I thought it was a sign of apology. However, he dribbled me, turned me here and there, up and down, until I was molded into a pot—a pot with a big belly.

The suffering continued as he placed me in the scorching sun. I endured the heat until I began to enjoy the sunshine, especially after my body became stronger, harder, and smoother. I was happy and wanted to thank him heartily, but before I could do so, he placed me on red-hot coals—the replica of hellfire. It was unbearable, and I fainted. When I regained consciousness, I was surprised to see the toughness of my form, which the man had created. I had become fireproof. He told me that I was free and placed me outside to feel the cool breeze.

The following day, a beautiful woman returning from the market took a fancy to me. She said, "A beautiful pot deserves to be in the hands of a beautiful lady in her beautiful home." I was thrilled at the change of my habitation as the woman purchased me from the potter. When she got home, she filled my belly with water and placed me in a corner of her house. She covered me after putting a small container inside me. I became famous, as people would bow before taking water from me.

This went on for years until the greatest calamity befell me. One day, a quarrel erupted between my mistress and her husband. They exchanged words and blows. Unfortunately, the man pushed his wife, and

she fell on me, breaking my body into pieces. Here I lie now, half-alive and half-dead. My mistress has abandoned me to my fate. I am now awaiting my end—the day I shall return to the dust from where I was gathered. Sooner or later, death will lay its icy hands on me, and I shall be free.

Human beings are merciless and ungrateful.

By Adesoga Jubril Asiwaju



2. The Tyrant's Feast



In the land of Azura, where shadows play,
Two siblings dwelled, night and day.
Wealth, the elder, with gold and gems adorned,
Feasted on delicacies, in a mansion born.

Poverty, the younger, with a tattered cloak and worn,
Scratched and scavenged, with a heart forlorn.
Wealth's tables groaned with viands fine and rare,
While Poverty's bowl was empty, with no crumbs to spare.

Wealth, the tyrant, with a heart of stone,
Laughed at Poverty's plight, and made it his own.
He stole the land, the resources, and the might,
Leaving Poverty to suffer through the dark of night.

But Poverty, the resilient, with a spirit unbroken,
Vowed to rise against Wealth's oppression, unspoken.
With every scratch, every scrape, every struggle, every fall,
Poverty gathered strength to stand tall.

One day, the winds of change, with a gentle whisper, blew,
And Poverty's voice, with a mighty roar, broke through.
Wealth's strongholds shook, his towers trembled and fell,
As Poverty's army, with a united yell, rose to compel.

The tyrant Wealth, with a heart now turned to ash,
Fled from the land, leaving a trail of shattered glass.
Poverty, the victorious, with a spirit now aglow,
Rebuilt the land, with a new dawn, and a future to bestow.

**Mr. Aladodo Yasir
Ibnhalal
Student, Freelancer,
Poet And
Photographer
Kwara state
Nigeria**

Allegorical Interpretation

In this poem, Wealth and Poverty are allegorical figures representing the extremes of socioeconomic disparity.

Wealth symbolizes the privileged elite, who accumulate riches and power at the expense of others.

Poverty symbolizes the marginalized and oppressed, who struggle to survive within an unjust system.

The poem explores themes of economic inequality, social injustice, and the resilience of the oppressed. It reflects on the eventual uprising of the downtrodden to overthrow tyranny and build a fairer society. The allegory provides a powerful and symbolic lens to address these critical issues.

By Aladodo Yasir Ibnhalal

3. Not here

How can destiny and fate be so unfair to me?
Just so many questions, for me, not for anyone.
Am I the chosen one, perhaps a loyal priesthood?

Who knows the tunes, for me to see, even the flower,
Gone by the currents of the air, see, my good friends
are gone.

What should I say for me? I'm not ready to give,
To fate and destiny, a little game for me at all.
Better to plan well, tunes with me today.

All lost in the cycle of fate, yet it's me who can change,
To make new tunes, to create a new flower.



**Mr. Albert
Nyangaresi
Poet and writer
Narok
Kenya**

4. Silence screams



Mr. Alvin Fredericks
Author, musician,
pastor and poet
Johannesburg
South africa

Silence screams,
As silent echoes reverberate
And bounce off walls of resistance,
In the midst of injustice.

For justice is violated,
Her purity and innocence ravaged by the inglorious,
Tarnished by the self-seeking.
Her scales,
Imbalanced through entitlement,
In need of recalibration.

Is justice muted
In those hallowed marble chambers?
An almost token bronze figurine on display,
Blindfolded,
Or blindsided—
Impartial,
Or misguided—
Compromised through abuse.
For justice seeks what justice speaks.

But her voice—
Her voice is silenced by the cacophony of carefully constructed confusion,
An infusion of deceit;
Misdirection by a simple wave of the wand of power,
A sceptre or spectre,
Entrenched in personalities in the theatre of the absurd.

And justice,
She lowers her head
And sees her bloody bed of shame.

But her heart beats with the same silent resilience,
Hopeful that she will prevail,
That she will travail through the haze of uncertainty.
For she cannot escape her destiny.

Justice disowns the enthroned,
And penetrates those caustic and corrosive conversations,
Behind bigoted closed doors
That hang on rusty hinges.

The oil of justice lubricates,
Extricates,
And liberates
Beyond the shackles of elitism.

She will continue her silent scream
Of radical redemption,
With conviction beyond suppression.

By Alvin Fredericks

5. Wish You a Happy New Year!

At the end of the year,
After celebrating Christmas,
The festival is near—
Wish you a Happy New Year!

With a lot of joy and care,
Happiness will arrive,
With a bond of love to share—
Wish you a Happy New Year!

We celebrate it,
And forget our tears,
Without any tension or fears—
Wish you a Happy New Year!

In the lightness,
In the brightness,
The darkness of night has gone,
And the festival of happiness has come.
A new era is here—
Wish you a Happy New Year!

We all are happy,
We gather in the streets,
To celebrate the festival
With cheer and delight.
Finally, we say goodbye
To the last year...
Wish you a Happy New Year!



**Mr. Anmol
Shrivastava
Student
Vaishali
Bihar**

6. O my poor old eyes are blurred with tears



Mr. Ashok Manikoth
Writer
Dubai
UAE

Oh, my poor old eyes blur with tears,
As memories kindle a feeling of regret.

Grandmothers, who could point at a crow
And make the child in their lap gobble up his meal—
They are missing, or their voices silenced
By modern apps playing reels, shorts, and videos
To coax children into eating.

Parenting was once as natural as childbirth;
All mammals, including our species, instinctively knew
how.
Today, we are taught how to walk,
How to talk to our own children.

The word "bored" never existed in our vocabulary.
Yet today, it's often the first word a child learns to utter.

Is this progress?
Or, like pollution and climate change,
Are we slowly imploding?

7. Sunrise

Above the mountains and clear skies,
I witnessed the perfect blend of colors.
From emerald red to sapphire blue,
Countless hues I wish I could capture!

In the hours before a day begins afresh,
I saw birds passing through the colorful mesh.
I thought it was a dream I wished to be true—
The golden hour, viewed from my window.

Oh, my beautiful nature, mother of all,
I am so lucky to witness you from afar.
Blessings through sunrays, I received from you—
I wish to behold this as my regular view.

It feels like heaven, so pure and divine;
My eyes are blessed to bask in this shine.
It's the best sunrise I've ever seen—
A wonder beyond my ability to explain.



**Ms. Ayushi
Khawade
Student
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh**

8. Journey To The Karate National Championship 2024:

A Journey Of Triumph And Bonding



Ms. Christy Sam
Student
Kollam
Kerala

The journey to the National Karate Championship 2024 was more than just a trip—it was an adventure that tested our determination, strength, and teamwork. With unforgettable experiences and unexpected moments of joy, the trip proved to be a powerful reminder of the value of perseverance and the importance of family and friendship. From celebrating victories to overcoming challenges, every moment made this journey unique and memorable.

Introduction

The journey begins on November 16, 2024, as we embark on an exciting adventure from Kollam, Kerala, to Delhi, to participate in the prestigious KIO 1st Federation Cup Premier League & Youth League Karate Championship 2024. The objective of this journey was not only to compete but to experience the rich cultural diversity of India, meet new people, and witness the grandeur of historical landmarks like the Taj Mahal and Rashtrapati Bhavan.

From the vibrant streets of Delhi, the majestic monuments, the intense competition at Talkatora Stadium, to the memorable train ride back through multiple states, the journey was filled with moments of pride, joy, learning, and camaraderie. It culminated in the arrival back in Kayankulam, Kerala, on November 26, 2024, where we were greeted by our family and celebrated the success of our trip.

November 16, 2024: The Beginning of the Journey

Our journey began on November 16, 2024, at 4:00 PM, as we boarded the Himasagar Express from Kayankulam. Originally scheduled for November 15, an emergency caused a delay, which in retrospect, turned out to be fortuitous, as the train initially scheduled for that day was delayed by 24 hours. The train ride itself was filled with memorable moments. Tea vendors called out “Chai, garam chai!” and we enjoyed a delicious treat of samosas at Ramagundam Station. Warangal greeted us with spicy mirchi bajjis, and as we moved forward, we marveled at the changing landscapes of India. The camaraderie of the group helped to keep the spirits high despite the long hours of travel. Each day felt like a new adventure, and the excitement for the competition was growing with each passing mile.

November 18, 2024: Arrival in Bhopal

After two nights on the train, we arrived in Bhopal at 9:00 AM. Known as the "City of Lakes," Bhopal welcomed us with its fresh air and calm beauty. We stayed at my mother's friend's house, a cozy home surrounded by gardens and a playful dog. The day was spent resting, exchanging stories, and enjoying the company of the dog, which kept us entertained with its antics. It was a peaceful interlude before the next phase of our journey. The tranquility of Bhopal was a welcome change from the hustle and bustle of the journey, and we used this time to prepare mentally for the events ahead. The support from my team, especially from my family and the presence of my coach, Master John, helped me stay focused on the goal.

November 19, 2024: Journey to Delhi

After a restful day in Bhopal, the night of November 19 marked the next leg of our exciting journey: traveling to Delhi, the capital of India. It was not just another stop—it was the gateway to the National Karate Championship and a city brimming with history, culture, and energy.

Late-Night Departure from Bhopal

Our journey began at 2:00 AM when we boarded the Durgam Express from Rani Kamalapati Railway Station. Known for its speed and efficiency, the train provided a smooth and comfortable ride, allowing us to relax and enjoy the journey. Some of us caught up on much-needed sleep.

Arrival at Hazrat Nizamuddin Station

After approximately nine hours, we arrived at Hazrat Nizamuddin Station in Delhi at 11:00 AM. As we stepped out into the bustling station, we were greeted by the sights and sounds of Delhi—a mix of lively crowds, honking rickshaws, and the aroma of street food.

At the station, we were warmly welcomed by our family friend, Subash Uncle, who had come all the way from Chennai to Delhi for an official meeting. Uncle, a government official, provided us with a unique experience—it was my first time traveling in a registered government vehicle, which felt both exciting and special.

VISIT TO THE STADIUM

From the station, Subash Uncle drove us directly to the Talkatora Indoor Stadium, where the championship was taking place. The journey to the stadium was smooth, and along the way, we enjoyed catching up with Uncle, who shared his experiences and stories.

At the stadium, we met with our group and other participants. The atmosphere was buzzing with energy as athletes from across the country prepared for the upcoming competitions. Meeting everyone, sharing smiles, and exchanging words of encouragement created a sense of camaraderie and belonging.

Talkatora Stadium, located in the heart of Delhi, is a prominent indoor sports arena with a rich history and a significant role in India's sports landscape. Here's a detailed description:

History and Inauguration

Talkatora Stadium was inaugurated on October 4, 1961, by Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. Initially, it was built as a multipurpose indoor venue to host a variety of sports events. The stadium has undergone several renovations and upgrades, especially before the 2010 Commonwealth Games, when it was transformed into a world-class venue, particularly for boxing competitions.

Location and Design

The stadium is situated in the heart of Delhi, near the India Gate and Connaught Place, making it easily accessible. The venue is designed to host various indoor sports such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, and boxing. It has a seating capacity of around 4,500 spectators and features modern facilities, including spacious seating, VIP areas, and media zones.

Inauguration of Renovations (2010)

Prior to the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the stadium was extensively renovated to accommodate modern sporting needs. The changes included state-of-the-art lighting, improved acoustics, and better seating arrangements. The renovations helped Talkatora Stadium become one of the most recognized indoor venues in India.

Functionality and Events

Talkatora Stadium has hosted several prestigious events over the years. It was the venue for the 2010 Commonwealth Games boxing events, making it a crucial part of India's sporting history. Besides boxing, the stadium has also been used for wrestling, gymnastics, badminton, and basketball competitions.

Additionally, the stadium hosts cultural events and conferences. Its versatility makes it a preferred location for various national and international events.

Architecture and Features

The stadium's architecture features a unique blend of functionality and aesthetics. It has a spacious central arena that can be modified for different types of sports events. It also has high-tech lighting and sound systems to enhance the spectator experience during events.

The marble entrance, which features the word "Inauguration" inscribed in it, stands as a reminder of its historical significance. The grand entrance leads into the main arena, where events take place.

Notable Features of the Stadium:

1. Indoor Sports Arena – A versatile space for different sporting events.
2. Seating Capacity – Accommodates around 4,500 spectators.

3. Renovations for Commonwealth Games – In 2010, the stadium received significant upgrades.
4. Location – Situated centrally in Delhi, offering easy access to spectators.
5. VIP and Media Zones – Designed for high-profile events, with special areas for officials and media.

Talkatora Stadium is an iconic indoor venue in Delhi, representing both India's sports legacy and modern advancements. Whether it's for sports competitions, cultural events, or official gatherings, Talkatora Stadium continues to be a key hub for events in the capital city.

A Memorable Outing with Subash Uncle

After spending some time at the stadium, Chris, my brother, Subash Uncle, and I decided to step out for a quick break. Uncle treated us to KFC, which was a delightful surprise. Enjoying crispy fried chicken and refreshing drinks in the midst of all the excitement felt like a mini celebration.

This outing with Uncle was one of the highlights of the day. His warmth, guidance, and stories made the experience even more memorable. It wasn't just about the food—it was about the bond we shared and the simple joy of spending time together.

Return to the Hotel

After our outing, Uncle dropped us off at Shree Lodge in Paharganj, where we were staying. The bustling streets of Paharganj, with their vibrant markets and lively energy, felt welcoming. At the hotel, we rested, unpacked, and began preparing for the big day ahead. The excitement was palpable as we prepared for the upcoming competition, and despite the exhaustion of travel, the energy of the city kept us all invigorated. We were all united in our anticipation, knowing that the competition was just around the corner.

Reflection

November 19, 2024, was a day filled with new experiences and unforgettable moments. From the excitement of arriving in Delhi to the privilege of traveling in a government vehicle with Subash Uncle, every moment added to the richness of our journey.

Uncle's kindness and the special treat at KFC made the day even more memorable, reminding us of the importance of family friends and the bonds that carry us through life's adventures. The visit to the stadium, meeting our team, and preparing for the championship set the stage for the thrilling days ahead.

This day was not just about reaching Delhi—it was about the connections, experiences, and memories that would stay with us forever.

NOVEMBER 20, 2024: EXPLORING DELHI

In Delhi, we had the privilege of visiting Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official residence of the President of India. The grandeur of the building was awe-inspiring, and walking

through rooms like the Durbar Hall and Ashok Mandap, filled with historical significance, was a surreal experience. Later, we visited Akshardham Mandir, where the intricate carvings and the Light and Sound Fountain Show left us speechless, creating a magical atmosphere. This sightseeing gave us a much-needed break from the intense focus on the competition, and it was a perfect way to bond as a team, sharing our thoughts and impressions of the rich cultural history of India.

Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan:

The grandeur of ceremonies at Rashtrapati Bhavan is unparalleled, blending Indian traditions with modern protocols. Whether it's the swearing-in ceremony, state visits, or cultural events, the setup, lighting, and seating arrangements are meticulously planned to highlight the prestige and historical significance of the occasion.

1. Buddha's Statue and Its Placement

The Durbar Hall, the central venue for major ceremonies in Rashtrapati Bhavan, prominently features a grand statue of Buddha:

Location: The Buddha statue is placed on the eastern wall, directly behind the President's chair, overlooking the hall.

Symbolism: The serene posture of Buddha reflects peace, wisdom, and spirituality, reinforcing the values of the Indian Constitution and governance.

Design: The statue, carved from black stone, is illuminated with soft lighting to create an aura of tranquility and reverence.

During ceremonies, the presence of the Buddha statue adds a spiritual dimension to the event, grounding the grandeur in India's cultural heritage.

2. Lighting Setup

The lighting at Rashtrapati Bhavan ceremonies is designed to enhance the architectural beauty and create a solemn yet majestic ambiance:

Main Lighting:

Chandeliers made of Belgian glass hang from the ceiling, providing warm, diffused light.

Focus lights illuminate key areas, such as the President's seat, the stage, and any speakers or performers.

Ambient Lighting:

Soft, golden lighting along the walls accentuates the intricate carvings and architectural details of the Durbar Hall.

The Buddha statue is highlighted with dedicated spotlights, ensuring it remains a focal point throughout the ceremony.

Special Effects:

For evening ceremonies, dim lighting is paired with candles or diyas to add an ethereal

glow.

During significant national events, the colors of the Indian flag (saffron, white, and green) are projected subtly within the hall.

3. Seating Arrangements

The seating arrangements during a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan are strictly governed by protocol, ensuring that dignitaries are seated based on their rank and importance:

President's Seat

The President is seated at the center of the stage, beneath the grand dome and directly in front of the Buddha statue.

The chair is elevated slightly on a platform to symbolize authority and respect.

Right of the President

The Prime Minister sits to the immediate right of the President, symbolizing the close relationship between the executive branch of governance.

Other high-ranking officials, such as the Vice President, Cabinet Ministers, and Chief Justice of India, are seated further along the right side in descending order of precedence.

Left of the President

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha occupies the seat to the immediate left of the President, representing the legislative branch.

Distinguished international guests, diplomats, and other dignitaries, depending on the event, are seated along the left-hand side.

Audience Arrangement

Rows are divided into sections for specific groups:

Front Rows: Reserved for foreign diplomats, state governors, and senior government officials.

Middle Rows: Include Members of Parliament, military officials, and judiciary representatives.

Rear Rows: Reserved for journalists, cultural performers, and other invitees.

4. Dining Arrangements for State Banquets

After the formal ceremonies, banquets are held in the Ashok Hall. The dining tables are set according to protocol, with the President and the most honored guests at the central table.

Servers follow a meticulous pattern, ensuring each guest is served simultaneously to maintain decorum.

Every aspect of a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, from the Buddha statue to the seating and lighting, is a testament to the institution's dignity and India's rich cultural heritage. The flawless execution of these events showcases the country's commitment

to tradition, governance, and hospitality.

The current ruling government has taken several initiatives to rename the historic areas and sections of Rashtrapati Bhavan to reflect India's rich cultural heritage and independence from colonial influences. These changes are part of the broader efforts to decolonize spaces and make them more aligned with India's identity.

Renamed Areas in Rashtrapati Bhavan:

The current ruling government has taken several initiatives to rename historic areas and sections of Rashtrapati Bhavan to reflect India's rich cultural heritage and independence from colonial influences. These changes are part of the broader efforts to decolonize spaces and make them more aligned with India's identity. Below are the renamed areas in Rashtrapati Bhavan, along with the dates of the changes and their significance:

The Tribal Rooms in Rashtrapati Bhavan are dedicated to showcasing the rich cultural heritage of India's indigenous tribal communities. Located within the Museum Complex, these rooms display traditional tribal art, crafts, clothing, and artifacts, offering a glimpse into the daily life, customs, and artistic expressions of various tribal groups. The rooms serve to preserve and promote the diversity of India's tribal cultures, highlighting their contributions to the nation's heritage. This initiative emphasizes the importance of cultural preservation and educates visitors about the unique traditions of India's indigenous populations.

Renamed Areas in Rashtrapati Bhavan:

1. Viceroy's House → Rashtrapati Bhavan

Date of Change: 1950 (After India became a Republic)

Significance: This was the most significant change, marking the shift from British colonial rule to Indian self-governance. The change of name symbolizes the establishment of a new democratic India, with the President as the head of the state, replacing the British Viceroy.

2. Ballroom → Ashoka Hall

Date of Change: 2020

Significance: Renamed to honor Emperor Ashoka, one of India's most revered historical figures, and to reflect the country's ancient legacy. Ashoka Hall is now used for ceremonial functions, including important state events and gatherings.

3. Viceroy's Study → President's Study

Date of Change: 2020

Significance: This name change signifies the role of Rashtrapati Bhavan as the official residence of the President of India, replacing the British colonial-era association with the Viceroy. The President's Study now serves as a working space for the head of state.

4. Viceroy's Dining Room → Banquet Hall

Date of Change: 2020

Significance: The Banquet Hall is used for hosting state banquets and welcoming international dignitaries. The name change reflects a shift away from colonial symbols to a modern India, focused on hosting dignitaries in a setting befitting a sovereign republic.

5. Mughal Gardens → Amrit Udyan

Date of Change: 2023

Significance: Renamed to celebrate India's independence and to honor its heritage. "Amrit" means nectar, and "Udyan" means garden, symbolizing the flourishing of India's cultural identity post-independence. This change also marks the 75th anniversary of India's independence, aligning with the government's vision of "Amrit Kaal."

6. Durbar Hall → Gantantra Mandap

Date of Change: 2020

Significance: The name was changed to emphasize India's republic status and its democratic traditions. Gantantra Mandap is now symbolic of the Republic of India and is used for the swearing-in of the President and other key national functions, representing the core values of the Indian Constitution and democratic principles.

These changes are part of the government's effort to revive national pride, ensuring that these spaces reflect the ethos of an independent and culturally vibrant India. The renaming process signifies a break from colonial legacies and fosters a sense of ownership and pride among citizens, aligning national institutions with India's rich historical, cultural, and democratic traditions.

These changes are part of the government's effort to revive national pride, ensuring that these spaces reflect the ethos of an independent and culturally vibrant India.

A DETAILED GUIDE TO AKSHARDHAM TEMPLE

The Akshardham Temple, located in Delhi, is a magnificent spiritual and cultural complex that showcases India's rich heritage and devotion. It is one of the largest Hindu temples in the world and attracts millions of visitors every year. Built with intricate craftsmanship, the temple combines spirituality, art, and culture, offering an unforgettable experience for visitors.

History and Inception

Inauguration: The Akshardham Temple was inaugurated on November 6, 2005, by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the spiritual leader of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS).

Purpose: The temple was built to honor Lord Swaminarayan and to preserve India's ancient values, culture, and spirituality.

Construction: The temple was completed in just five years, thanks to the dedication of over 11,000 artisans and volunteers.

OUR VISIT TO AKSHARDHAM

We visited the temple on November 20, 2024, from 4:30 PM to 8:00 PM. The atmosphere was serene yet vibrant, with the beautifully lit temple glowing under the evening sky. As we entered, we were immediately captivated by the intricate carvings on the temple's walls and pillars, which depicted stories and motifs from Hindu scriptures.

Architectural Highlights

Main Temple:

Built entirely using pink sandstone and white marble, symbolizing purity and eternal devotion.

The temple features 234 intricately carved pillars, 20,000 statues, and 9 ornate domes, depicting deities, saints, and cultural motifs from Indian scriptures.

The central idol of Lord Swaminarayan is crafted from gold and sits beneath the central dome, surrounded by other deities.

Intricate Carvings: The temple's walls and ceilings are adorned with carvings that narrate stories from Hindu scriptures like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas.

Gardens: The sprawling gardens, including the Yagnapurush Kund (a stepwell with a musical fountain) and Bharat Upavan (Garden of India), add to the serene atmosphere of the temple.

Exhibitions and Activities

During our visit, we experienced the key highlights of Akshardham:

1. Sahaj Anand Water Show:

We witnessed the musical fountain and light show, which began after sunset. The combination of water, lights, videos, and music created a magical atmosphere. The show narrates a story from the Kena Upanishad about selfless devotion and humility. The synchronization of water jets, vibrant colors, and soothing music was mesmerizing, leaving us in awe of the creativity and devotion behind this display.

2. Exhibition Halls:

Sanskriti Vihar: A boat ride that takes visitors through 10,000 years of Indian history, featuring ancient achievements in science, medicine, and art.

Neelkanth Darshan: A giant IMAX-style theater screening the inspiring journey of Neelkanth Varni, the young yogi who later became Swaminarayan.

Sahaj Anand Hall: Animatronic presentations and dioramas that teach timeless lessons from Indian scriptures.

3. Aarti and Devotion:

A grand Aarti ceremony takes place at sunset, with hundreds of lamps lit in devotion.

DINING EXPERIENCE

After exploring the temple, we had a delicious meal at the Premvati Food Court, located within the complex. The food court serves a variety of pure vegetarian dishes inspired by Indian cuisine. We enjoyed masala dosa paired with refreshing soda lime juice. The flavors were delightful, and the meal provided much-needed energy for the rest of our visit. The food court, designed like a traditional village marketplace, added a unique charm to the dining experience.

Notable Features

1. Lotus Garden:

Shaped like a lotus, this garden features inspiring quotes from world leaders, saints, and philosophers engraved on stones.

2. Yagnapurush Kund:

Known as the largest stepwell in the world, this is also home to the spectacular musical fountain.

Visiting Tips

1. Timing:

The temple is open from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM, with the last entry at 6:30 PM. The water show is held in the evening, typically after sunset.

2. Security:

Strict security measures are in place, and visitors are not allowed to bring mobile phones, cameras, or electronic items inside.

3. Clothing:

Modest attire is recommended to respect the sanctity of the temple.

At Akshardham, we had the pleasure of meeting another family friend, Jayan Uncle, who is a close friend of my mother. He was the former Chief Security Officer of the President of India, and it was a delightful surprise to see him there. Jayan Uncle warmly greeted us, and in his generous spirit, he offered us chocolates and his heartfelt blessings. His presence added a personal touch to our visit and made the experience even more memorable.

Significance

Akshardham is more than just a temple; it is a symbol of India's spiritual and cultural wealth. It provides a unique opportunity to experience the timeless wisdom of Hinduism while marveling at its architectural grandeur.

Visiting Akshardham was a journey into India's heart, blending devotion, culture, and art into one extraordinary experience. The temple's beauty, combined with the soulful water show and delicious food, made our visit truly memorable.

NOVEMBER 21, 2024: SAFWAN IKKA'S COMPETITION & TAJ MAHAL VISIT
November 21, 2024, began with mixed emotions. Our instructor, John Sir, and Mr.

Safwan did not accompany us on our journey to Agra for the Taj Mahal visit, as Safwan Ikka had his competition that day. We were all eagerly waiting to hear the results, and to our delight, Safwan won the Bronze Medal! This was an incredibly proud moment for our entire group, as it marked the first medal won by someone from our team at the National Karate Championship. His achievement inspired us all, making the day even more special.

After hearing the exciting news, we continued our journey towards Agra. On the way, we decided to stop at a South Indian restaurant for brunch. The restaurant, though a little pricier than expected, served us a delicious South Indian thali. The meal was quite tasty, and despite the unexpected cost, we made the most of the situation, enjoying the food and each other's company.

With our appetites satisfied, we proceeded to the Taj Mahal, one of the most iconic symbols of love and beauty in the world. As we approached the Taj Mahal, the sight of the towering white marble structure left us speechless. Its majestic presence, framed by lush gardens and a reflecting pool, was a sight to behold. We walked through the gardens, each step bringing us closer to the grand monument.

Upon entering the Taj Mahal, we made our way to the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal, the beautiful queen for whom the monument was built. Mumtaz Mahal's tomb, along with that of Shah Jahan, stands as a testament to their eternal love. The calm and serene atmosphere around the tombs made us feel a profound connection to the history and the emotions that led to the creation of this incredible monument.

As we stood near the tomb, something extraordinary happened. Two pigeons appeared and perched on the tomb, adding a peaceful and almost mystical aura to the moment. It felt like the spirits of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal were present, watching over the monument and us. It was a reminder of the love that transcended time and space, a love that is immortalized in the Taj Mahal's beauty.

We spent a considerable amount of time taking photos, both inside and outside the Taj Mahal. Every angle of the monument provided a perfect frame, whether it was the intricate marble carvings, the symmetrical beauty of the tomb, or the serene garden surrounding it. Each photo captured not just the monument but also the emotions we felt in that moment.

The grandeur of the Taj Mahal inspired reflection. It was a reminder that true success in life, like the Taj Mahal, requires dedication, love, and perseverance. The story behind its construction, the love of Shah Jahan for Mumtaz Mahal, resonated deeply with us, making the visit more than just a sightseeing tour—it became a moment of introspection and awe.

As the day progressed, we returned to Agra Cantt Station, where we relaxed with some kulhad tea, patties, chips, and moong dal. We shared stories, talked about the

competition, and reflected on the memorable visit to the Taj Mahal. The waiting period allowed us to connect with each other, discussing everything from our experiences at the Taj Mahal to the anticipation of the upcoming competition.

Our visit to the Taj Mahal was an unforgettable experience. It wasn't just about the beauty of the monument; it was about the deep historical significance and the emotional connection we felt. The moment we spent inside the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan, the pigeons perched above, and the peacefulness of the surroundings, all left an indelible mark on our hearts. As we left the Taj Mahal, we couldn't help but feel that we had witnessed not just a masterpiece of architecture, but a powerful symbol of love, loss, and perseverance that will remain in our hearts forever.

NOVEMBER 22, 2024: A DAY OF CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE AT THE KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP

The morning of November 22, 2024 began with a minor setback when we stepped out for breakfast at a local eatery. We ordered poori, expecting it to resemble the delicious chole bhature, but unfortunately, it didn't quite meet our expectations. The taste was off, and it was disappointing to start the day on such a note. However, we didn't let this discourage us.

After breakfast, we set off to Talkatora Stadium for the competition. We hired four autos to reach the venue, but things quickly took an unexpected turn. One of the drivers informed Binu Uncle that only females were allowed in his vehicle. We were puzzled by this restriction and decided to hire other autos instead. However, this quickly turned into a bigger challenge—no driver was willing to take us to the stadium. After some time, we finally found one who agreed, but his reckless driving was another surprise. He was crossing signals, ignoring traffic rules, and driving dangerously, making our journey to the stadium quite an adrenaline rush!

When we finally reached Talkatora Stadium, we were greeted by the sound of the National Anthem playing. The atmosphere was electric, and our excitement was palpable as we rushed inside. However, we were met with disappointment as our Master scolded us for our tardiness. Unfortunately, because of our delay, Aadhish missed his opportunity to participate in the Kata competition. It was a tough moment for the team, as Aadhish had prepared hard for this event.

Though it was a disappointing start, the incident served as a valuable lesson for all of us in the importance of planning and time management. We quickly learned that the journey to success is often filled with obstacles, and it was crucial for us to remain focused and adaptable in the face of challenges. Despite the setbacks, we kept our spirits high and stayed united as a team.

The day wasn't without its bright moments, as Chris Mathew Sam, Mohammad Nayif, Rizwan Rafeek, Ashiq S., and Mohammad Tippu Sultan participated in the Kata and

Kumite events. The competition was fierce, but all of them showed great courage and perseverance. Here's a breakdown of the results:

Chris Mathew Sam participated in the Sub-Junior (6 Years Kata) category and earned a Bronze Medal for his impressive performance.

Mohammad Nayif, in the Sub-Junior (11 Years Male Kata & Kumite) category, showcased skill and resilience, earning a Bronze Medal in Kata.

Rizwan Rafeek competed in the Sub-Junior (10 Years Male Kata & Kumite) category, securing a Bronze Medal in Kumite.

Ashiq S. also participated in the Sub-Junior (10 Years Male Kata & Kumite) category and earned a Bronze Medal in Kata.

Adish S.V. participated in the Sub-Junior (8 Years Male Kata & Kumite) category. While he didn't win a medal in Kata, he made a strong comeback in Kumite, securing a Bronze Medal.

Mohammad Tippu Sultan participated in the Sub-Junior (7 Years Male Kata & Kumite) category, earning a Bronze Medal for his Kata performance.

Overall, the day was a mix of highs and lows. While Aadhis's missed opportunity in Kata was a setback, the rest of the team's accomplishments helped keep our spirits high. Bronze Medals were won by several participants, showcasing their talent, dedication, and the excellent training provided by Mr. Renshi John Master.

Despite the challenges, the team remained determined, knowing that each experience contributed to their growth and preparation for future successes. The day ended on a positive note, as we reflected on the lessons learned and the importance of teamwork and perseverance.

NOVEMBER 23, 2024: THE NATIONAL KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP - MY FINAL COMPETITION

The final day of the National Karate Championship 2024 arrived, bringing a mix of excitement, nervousness, and gratitude. On November 23, I, along with Hanana and Aadhithya, participated in the competition at Talkatora Stadium, Delhi. The atmosphere was filled with energy as athletes from across the country gathered to showcase their skills, and I was determined to give my best.

We all wore our track suits, a symbol of our unity and hard work, and gathered for a group photo before the competition began. It was a special moment, knowing that this was our last day at the championship. The team spirit was high, and we were all ready to face the challenges ahead.

As I prepared for my events, I felt a deep sense of support from my teammates and mentors. Nayif, Aadhis, and others provided valuable encouragement, especially before my Kumite match. Their help in practicing moves and sparring together strengthened my resolve and made me feel ready to compete. Their belief in me, even

when I doubted myself, was a huge source of strength.

During my Kata performance, I felt a surge of energy as I saw Master John Sir standing right in front of me. His presence was a constant source of motivation, reminding me to stay focused and perform with precision. His guidance and support throughout my training were the foundation of my success, and in that moment, I knew I was giving everything I had.

The journey towards my Gold Medal was not just mine. I received countless blessings and well-wishes from those around me, especially about my win. Safwan Ikka, Binu Uncle, Noushad Uncle, Tipu's Father, and Sharanya Aunty were there to guide and support me, especially in the finer details of preparation like dressing and belting. Their care and attention ensured that I was always focused and ready.

The Gold Medal I won that day was a symbol of not just my hard work, but of the collective effort of everyone who helped me along the way. I knew that it wasn't only my victory, but a shared achievement with all those who believed in me, supported me, and prayed for my success. The strength of my elders, the love and blessings from my parents and grandparents, the teachings of my teachers, and the continuous prayers from my friends and mentors made all the difference.

Reflecting on the day, I realized that everything I achieved was a result of the power of community, teamwork, and faith. The Gold Medal wasn't just a testament to my skill but a reflection of the unity, dedication, and love that brought me to this moment. This victory was not only personal—it was for everyone who had been there to guide me, cheer me on, and push me to be the best version of myself.

As the event came to a close, we had the honor of taking photographs with the KIO President. This final moment of the championship was special, as we stood together, not just as winners, but as a team united by a shared purpose and dedication. The photograph captured more than just our achievement; it encapsulated the bond we shared, the journey we undertook, and the pride of representing our schools, families, and state at such a prestigious event.

This was more than a championship; it was a celebration of the journey we all shared together. The competition, the struggles, and the triumphs were all part of the path we walked as a team, and it was this journey that made the victory truly meaningful.

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2024: THE JOURNEY BACK HOME

With the competition behind us, we started our return journey on November 24 aboard the Mangala Lakshadweep Express. Although the excitement of the championship was still fresh in our minds, the journey back had its own set of challenges and experiences. Unfortunately, my younger brother Chris fell ill during the trip, but my mother, a nurse, handled the situation with calm expertise. Her care and the support of our family kept us going as we made our way south.

As we traveled through different states, the beauty of India unfolded before us. From the vast fields of Uttar Pradesh, the bustling streets of Mumbai, the coastal beauty of Goa, to the lush landscapes of Kerala, the sights were breathtaking. The journey felt like an exploration of India's diverse landscapes and culture. The rivers, mountains, and tunnels we passed through made the experience even more memorable.

During the journey, we met Ms. Roufat Razeeb, a YouTuber, who was filming her travels for a video. She took the time to interview us and asked about our experiences at the National Karate Championship. It was exciting to share our journey with her, and she promised to feature us in her video, which added a sense of camaraderie and fun to our trip.

As we moved closer to Kerala, the beauty of the backwaters and coconut trees filled us with a sense of homecoming. The vibrant green landscape and the peaceful waters reminded us of the tranquility of our homeland. The train journey had been long, but the warmth of Kerala was just what we needed.

Finally, on November 26, we arrived at Ernakulam Junction, where my grandmother and uncle were waiting to welcome us. Their smiles and warm hugs made the long journey worthwhile. It felt like the perfect ending to an unforgettable adventure.

The journey back home was a blend of excitement, reflection, and gratitude. The sights, the people we met, and the moments shared with my family made it a truly memorable trip.

CONCLUSION: A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER

The journey to the National Karate Championship 2024 was more than just a trip—it was an adventure filled with laughter, challenges, and valuable lessons. Every step of the way, we grew stronger as individuals and as a team. From the thrill of winning the Gold Medal to the camaraderie with our fellow competitors, every experience contributed to making this journey one we will never forget. It taught us the importance of teamwork, determination, and embracing every moment with an open heart.

This journey was not just about medals and achievements; it was about the bond we shared, the memories we created, and the lessons we learned along the way. The victory at the National Karate Championship was a proud moment, but the journey itself, with its ups and downs, was the real triumph.

A special thanks to all who supported me throughout this journey—my mother, grandparents, family, teachers, Master John, my school, friends, and everyone who was part of this experience, known and unknown

By Christy Sam

9. Myriad Of Challenges

I'm tired in my constrained world,
Broken into pieces by the fading memories of my
graduation,
Partly convinced it was a "do-it-yourself
commemoration."
Did I sow the seeds of this anger and frustration?

Round one is over,
Its preparations crumbled before dawn.
My solemn self watched in awe and dissatisfaction.
But now, guaranteed a second chance, this time, I'll be
STRONG.

Even though life remains a blend of charm and
mystery,
My achievements seem sealed for the year.
Sadly, born to live for others before we live for ourselves—
Hopefully, the new year will bring triumph
Over this painful isolation.



Mr. Denis Ogola
Graduate
Nairobi
Kenya

10. Fire Inside Me



Until your enduring presence enters my realm, I am holding my breath to calm the storms within me. I cannot allow my wounds to disturb others or cast a shadow over their lives. Do not attempt to delve into my soul, for my fire might scorch you mercilessly.

Leave me to confront my own flames, as I am not ready to reconcile with the weather of the cosmos. Let the skies remain radiant for the wildlife in the dark nights, enhancing the beauty of life. I am diminishing myself for the greater good of creation because I no longer carry sweetness within me.

I might shatter your dreams of finding solace in my presence. Therefore, I retreat from this world to my own space, enduringly and silently. I implore you not to follow me, as I am no longer the person you once knew—I have become a different era altogether.

Ms. Donika Sharma
HR
Noida
Uttar Pradesh

11. Echoes Of You



**Ms. Esha Fatima
(MindScribe)
Student, Writer,
Social Worker
Sargodha
Pakistan**

It's a strange, magnetic pull—how a single person can occupy every corner of your thoughts. From the moment I open my eyes, their presence weaves itself into the fabric of my day. Their name, their smile, their laughter—it's all there, uninvited yet welcomed, painting a backdrop to my routine.

When I'm lost in work or surrounded by chatter, they slip in quietly, reminding me of their hold. It's as if they've rented space in my mind and decided to stay. The way they make me feel—calm yet restless, grounded yet soaring—is something I can't quite articulate.

Every mundane moment becomes more vivid with them in my head. The coffee tastes warmer, the silence feels less empty, and even the ticking of the clock seems to align with my racing heart.

It's not about obsession; it's about connection—a connection so deep it defies distance, time, or logic. I don't know if they'll ever understand their impact on my day, but for now, I carry them with me like a secret I'm not ready to share.

They're my solace, my chaos, my gentle distraction. And for now, I'm okay with having one person in my head all day.

12. Living Differently



Mrs. Gargi Saha
Teacher
Varanasi
Uttar Pradesh

Two words of love,
Two words of mercy,
Two words of kindness,
Two words of sympathy,
Two promises to keep,
Blessings to shower,
Helps the emaciated prosper,
And makes the world
A better place to live in.

So much different it would be
If there were no hatred,
No hostility, enmity, or revenge,
No wars, bloodshed, or deaths.
Let there be peace here and above.
I pray for Heaven on Earth.

13. Happiness

If you think positive, you will be happy.
If you forget the bitter past, you will be happier.
If you live in the present, you will be the happiest.

If you focus on your future, positive vibes will welcome you.

Happiness follows a simple formula:
Learn to extract joy even from the odds.

Happiness and sorrow are two sides of the same coin in life.

Don't regret your failures—
Success finds its path through your efforts.

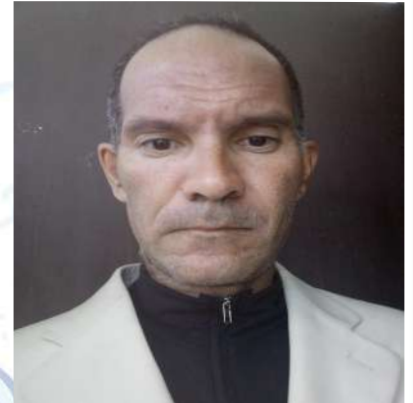
Don't surrender to defeats; they are only temporary.
Stay focused on your goals,
And victory will emerge through your determination.

Avail the most of the opportunities that come your way.



**Mr. Girish Chandra
Upadhyay
Advocate Allahabad
High Court,
Allahabad
Prayag Raj
Uttar Pradesh**

14. Barking from the Hidden



**Dr. HC Jose Luis
Lopez
Writer
San Juan
Puerto Rico**

Inviting me to sneak deep inside—
This goblin, eager to discover
What lies within a mysterious bush.

I know there were visitors before,
But none managed to return.
I wondered, what could that place hold
To keep others from coming back?

This character embarks on the mission,
Climbing, climbing, climbing that mysterious bush.
And suddenly, a moan of unspeakable barking is heard far
away.
What happened there? Why has no one returned from their adventure?

It is only known that it's indescribable,
What happens there remains confidential.
So, every angle is investigated thoroughly,
And this peculiar task begins—
To shed light on why the visitors disappeared.

Barking from the Hidden
Maybe it's a very dangerous world,
Maybe a secret dimension.
No signs reveal the truth.

Barking from the Hidden
Whatever happened there,
There it will die.

As for the goblin, it rests in tranquility,
Carrying its stigma into posterity.

15. New year resolutions



“Life is just a struggle between dreams and reality,” Rusty said with a heavy sigh.

“I feel life hasn’t been easy for you... is that right, Rusty?” Rossy asked, taking a bite of roasted meat from the platter.

“When harsh reality slaps you in the face, you feel ashamed even of your dreams,” Rusty replied grimly.

Rossy couldn’t find the words to respond. The atmosphere grew tense until Hoppy decided to break the uncomfortable silence.

“I think one shouldn’t be too realistic. Leaning towards the ‘hope for the best’ mindset can help settle things down,” she offered with a comforting tone.

“But... some of the people closest to us can’t stand to see us grow, even under the banner of hope,” Rusty said, her voice carrying the weight of her catharsis.

“Closest people? How?” Rossy asked, her curiosity piqued.

“I think everyone on this earth has good relations with you... Wow,” Rusty replied mockingly.

“And you have bad relations with everyone? Ridiculous,” Rossy retorted, making hand gestures and laughing sarcastically to provoke her.

“Guys, please stop... stop this nonsense!” Hoppy yelled, breaking the rising tension. “We’re here to celebrate New Year’s Eve, not to argue over opinions.” She reminded them of the gathering’s purpose.

“No one enjoys life for free. Everyone has to pay back in some way for what

**Ms. Humaira
Noreen
Writer, Analyst**

they receive,” Melbury, who had been quiet until now, finally spoke. “To handle life’s challenges wisely, we need to be mentally strong.”

“Everyone faces ups and downs—that’s life,” Melbury continued. “But it doesn’t mean we should sit and lament over them.”

“I agree with you, Melbury,” Rossy chimed in. “And I want to make this my note for the New Year: ‘We should learn to move on for the sake of our mental and physical health.’”

Hoppy clapped with joy. “I’m going to write that in my diary as my New Year’s resolution. I love it, Rossy!”

Rusty seemed more at ease now, reflecting on her friends’ perspectives on life.

“Guys, I feel like I’ve been focusing too much on my problems instead of their solutions. Now I realize that I should live my life, not just exist in it,” Rusty said, her tone lighter and more hopeful.

Everyone noticed the shift in her demeanor but chose to stay silent, allowing the moment to settle.

She picked up a cup of coffee and smiled. “That’s my New Year’s resolution.”

A peaceful and joyful smile spread across the faces of everyone at the table. The setting sun of the old year bore witness to their newfound hope and camaraderie.

By Humaira Noreen

16. New Year

Heralds fun-filled festivity,
Buoyant spirits and mirth,
Fresh new beginnings,
A cheery goodbye to the past,
Happiness to unearth.

Each New Year beckons,
Escalating brilliant hopes,
New widening horizons,
Devoid of gloomy woes.

One looks forward to change,
Not wanting to repeat
Bygone months and throes,
The past leaves a trailing gloom,
The future invited in full bloom.

One lets go of the needless,
Invites the fresh breeze of hope,
Doesn't pine for what is lost,
Welcomes the light of a new dawn.



**Dr. Jailaxmi R
Vinayak**
Poet, singer,
teacher, Research
guide
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh

17. Love Our Greatest Weapon



**Ms. Lucy Victoria
David
Writer, Motivational
Speaker
Durban
South Africa**

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (NIV)

Love is a universal language, understood by every person on our beautiful planet! Our educators taught us that a verb is a doing word—it signifies action.

Love is also an emotion that can soften stubborn hearts and bring peace to otherwise volatile situations. Growing up in a middle-class family, we didn't have much in terms of material riches, but we had plenty of love to bind us together.

I remember my big sister, Flo, hand-stitching the most beautiful summer dress just for me. She took strips of colorful cotton fabric from garments she had already sewn. As a dress designer and maker, she often had fabric remnants that were destined for disposal.

As I recall, there were about seven colors, all bright and cheerful. Side by side, the colors seemed to radiate happiness as if they were holding hands and basking in the warm sunlight. Each stitch was deliberate, carefully placed by her skilled hands. To me, it was the world's most beautiful dress.

I wore it proudly, and it always made me feel so special—partly because it was crafted with so much love and partly because no other five-year-old girl had an original like mine. It wasn't a limited edition; it was the only edition!

Let love be the crown you wear today as you reach out to bring joy and much-needed happiness to someone through your selfless expressions.

Have a love-filled day!

18. A Drop of Vermillion and Two Pieces of Bangles



**MS. Manorama
Sahoo
PGT English
Bhubaneswar
Odisha**

Both are symbols of 'Suhag' for an Indian woman,
Where love, dedication, affection, passion,
And above all, emotions are deeply hidden.

A mature girl dreams of wearing them,
To become a 'Bohu' in someone's family.
When marriage knots are tied,
These two things are essential,
To give new life to a girl,
Filled with so many hopes and desires.

Though customs differ from culture to culture,
They still hold great significance for all girls.
The girl, after wearing them,
Stands between two families,
With a new designation in her in-law's home.

They have a beautiful effect on both heart and mind,
Marking the emergence of a new life.
They symbolize the binding of two hearts,
Forever and ever.

19. O MY LOVE ©

Best for Utility in Movies/Album

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan

Am away from you
Can't reach you
Can't meet you
Nor you reach me

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan

Happiness from Peace
Sorrow-ness from Gun
Beautifulness from Nature
Loveliness from Universe

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan

Thinking about you
Am memorizing thoughts
My Love for you
Happy to hear from you

Earlier days different
Gone days never come
Past love changed to affection
See the golden days now

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan

My heart is empty
My breathe is heavy
My mind is blocked



**Mr. Mantri Pragada
Markandeyulu
Author and Writer
Hyderabad
Telangana**

Am for you

You're in my dreams and breathe
You're in my heart and nerves

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan

O My Love
Love is blank
No Life minus you
Uneasy without you

How do I know?
What you've in heart
How do I assess
Day is not far
I express feeling in person

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan

You're there
Am here
My thinking for you
Need your love
Days rolling
One day favour you
Can't write in Air
Can't sing in Space

Love Love Love
Tanta Tanta Dan
Ha ha ha
Hu hu hu
Tanta Tanta Dan

By Mantri Pragada Markandeyulu

20. Don't you dare scream!



**Mr. Michael
Ngirigacha
Writer
Nairobi
Kenya**

It was the last day at school, and time seemed to be moving very slowly. Ali could really feel the grind of the arms of the wall clock as they struggled to make their clockwise rotation. His mind wandered to all the activities he could be doing during the holidays. He salivated at the thought. He looked at his friends, Ann and Kim, who were also busy daydreaming.

Ali glanced at the clock again. It was fifteen minutes to twelve. At least some time had passed. The school would release them at half past twelve. Ali wished he could move the clock's hands with his bare arms. During all this, he remembered that his parents would be out for the weekend. Splendid! That meant he could invite his friends for a fun-filled weekend. Definitely a good start to the holidays. He imagined all the activities they would do. His heart melted with joy.

Just then, the ringing of the electric bell, punctuated by the shrieks of joyous children, brought him back to reality. Wow! The moment had arrived. It was almost a commotion as students rushed to the doorway, making it very crowded. Ali went over to his friends, and they hugged passionately. The three of them.

They waited for the crowd to clear before walking to the school's assembly point. The scouts performed their usual shenanigans, and then they sang the national anthem. It was a real moment as all the young minds showed their patriotism, whether it was forced or genuine. The Principal's address was the usual blabber about staying safe and going straight home, but it was worthwhile since some students got too excited and found themselves in trouble.

Finally, they were heading toward the school gate, the air of sudden freedom penetrating their souls. It felt sublime. Three months on the academic radar had felt like prison with all the rules to follow. The short walk home was uneventful, with Ali's friends by his side.

They said their muffled goodbyes at Ali's gate and promised to be at his house in a few hours for the weekend sleepover. Ali was so happy; his joy knew no bounds. His parents being away was a big plus. No adult supervision, huh. He picked a good outfit to wear and then searched through the tapes for some good movies. He found one that caught his eye.

In no time, his friends arrived, and they started by watching the movie. By now, the sun had dipped below the horizon, and the shadows grew long and hard. Darkness began to engulf the land like a blanket, and with it, a sense of creepiness started to sink in. The nearby chirping of crickets was still audible. By now, the movie's storyline had become so interesting. Everyone's attention had been sucked into the movie like a vortex. It was so infectious; it made them smile occasionally or grin from ear to ear.

Soon enough, their attention was interrupted by a surge of wind that made the eucalyptus trees sway from side to side. In the midst of all that, a soul-shattering growl erupted in the nearby woods. Their hearts almost stopped for a moment, and the proceedings of the film became incoherent. A second growl brought their hearts straight to their mouths. Then, it was all quiet—quieter than a smooth-flowing stream in the valley. They listened for a while, but nothing stirred the air.

The crackle of twigs followed by heavy footsteps interrupted them out of their reverie. Shivers ran down their spines, and their hairs stood on end. The shuffle of leaves and a humongous silhouette appeared through the view of the window pane.

They all let out eerie screams, but no sound came out. Their teeth gnashing in fear, they sat frozen, expecting the worst, expecting the creature to step into the light and show itself. The heavy thuds of its approaching footsteps rent the air. Still, they couldn't find their voices.

Just as the creature was about to step into the light, it came to a standstill, and then it vanished. Phew! What a close call!

The fear that had gripped them kept them from doing anything more. They went straight to bed, but even there, they couldn't close their eyes. They just stared at the ceiling, reliving the terrifying phenomenon.

It was rather late when slumber finally came calling and took them captive.

Saturday Morning

Saturday mornings are beautiful. The feeling of conquering a whole week and having to choose between lazy Saturday, chores Saturday, and fun-filled Saturday is unparalleled. Not to mention the fresh, daisy-like aura that filled Ali's humble abode, most likely from the dense vegetation that surrounded it.

Ali and his friends were far from being beggars; they were ecstatic about the fun-filled Saturday that would help erase the memory of the night before. They decided to go zip lining at a nearby forest park.

Zip lining is fun, but your heart can jump to your mouth real fast. None of them had ever tried it before, and Ali had a fear of heights! Ali's friends, Kim and Ann, played it cool until the last minute. Now, at the hour of calling, they were shaking like leaves in a whirlwind.

It took Ali conquering his own fears to step up and volunteer as the first one. The feeling of fear and excitement rocked him as the zip line slid through to the other side. Woe unto anyone who got caught in the middle of the zip line; they had to rely on their core strength to guide them to the finish line.

Ali's zip lining turn was as neat as a pin—excellent, to say the least. Kim followed and didn't do too badly either. Bravo! Ann's turn came next. Her butterflies were all too visible. She was terrified. Ali wondered if she'd make it through all five zip lines. Oh my! True to his fears, she was shaken and wanted to quit right then and there. But they couldn't let her miss out on the experience.

The second one went a little better, though Ann kept her eyes shut tightly. What you don't see won't hurt you, right? They made do with that. As for Ali and Kim,

they had become stuntmen, trying out new tricks like circus clowns. By now, Ann was improving, even with her eyes closed.

The last zip line was the cherry on top of the cake. Everyone was excited for one final round of fun.

By now, it was evening. How time flies! They headed home to prepare for the Sabbath and the last day of their "Home Alone" weekend.

Back Home

When they got home, it was already dark. They remembered the horrifying events of the previous night and decided to bolt all the doors. They planned to be in bed by eight. They ordered dinner and ate hurriedly. They were almost done when a gust of wind blew noisily through the night. The bathroom door opened and closed repeatedly, making squeaking sounds. Then the lights flickered. But it was just Kim playing with their minds. Phew! They sighed with relief.

“Don’t get too comfortable!” came a deep voice from the background.

This is the moment when you cling tightly to whoever is close to you. And if no one is near, you cling to a pillow. But be careful, you may cling too tightly and draw blood—or leave the other person breathless.

They listened intently, only hearing the sound of crickets. Then, a sudden movement—just a flying squirrel. There were no stranger noises or voices, but they were so shaken that they slept cuddled together on the couch.

Sunday

Sunday came, a day to rejoice and be glad in the Lord. The three friends were in their Sunday best and went to church. It was an uplifting sermon, and afterward, they decided to go for a walk and tour the beautiful land. It was a good day to heal their emotionally fragile minds. Out of sight, out of mind.

They also joined in some sports activities to kill time and have more fun. They played basketball and soccer. What a combination! At around 4 pm, they headed home, bated breath, dreading the arrival of darkness. They felt as if the world should part and swallow them whole to save them from their predicament, or bury their heads in the sand. But they stayed strong.

They decided on a movie marathon. Ali had a good collection of movies, and they watched and watched. By 10 pm, they were feeling happy and relieved. They hadn't been disturbed, and the feeling of normality had returned.

But then, the ticking of the wall clock brought them back to reality. Ali looked at the time—one minute to midnight. All was quiet, but then a heavy wind blew, carrying debris. Their fragile hearts raced. They gazed at the window, watching for any abnormality. There it was—a white floating sheet in the moonlight. It moved dangerously close to the window, and they had to jump for cover. Then, another gust of wind blew, making the window latch loose. They heard an irritating scratch on the door. The scratch was long, followed by three more. The door opened! They were too afraid to look but couldn't look away either. From the doorway, a thick mist began to move inside the room. Out of the mist, a green hand with large claws extended toward them. They were about to scream when a rough, husky voice warned, "Don't you dare scream!"

By Michael Ngirigacha

21. Dawn of Renewal

I am ready to unlock the window of fresh possibilities.
The past is haunted by memories,
Yet the future is eager to embrace promise.
Hands are trembling with fear, eyes are glittering with hope.
My mind is weaving a tapestry of hope, and my heart learns to let it go.
I have decided to rid myself of the weight of sorrows.
I'll adorn myself with acceptance.
I'll light up the flames of fire,
Burn out all the dying moments and blow the ashes with the warmth of the new dawn.
I'll fearlessly throw all the vibrant colors on the canvas and paint it with self-renewal and hope.
With a smile, I'll get a glimpse of a silver lining somewhere...



Ms. Nafja Fatima
Teacher
Islamabad
Pakistan

22. Chaos Within My Heart



**Mr. Nhamo
Muchagumisa
Teacher
Mutare
Zimbabwe**

There was chaos in my heart,
And I never longed to return to order
For a moment, I thought something within
Was searching for a way out,
But my possessive instinct
Blocked its path until it was subdued.

A word formed on my lips
As I stood face to face with Chipu,
So gentle in her manner, like the caress
Of a rose freshly out of bud
Yet her gentle presence was the source
Of the chaos within my heart.

The word disappeared from my lips,
But the surges in my heart would not subside
The word was "love"—so small a word,
Yet every attempt to speak it
Would bounce from my lips
And be blown away by the wind.

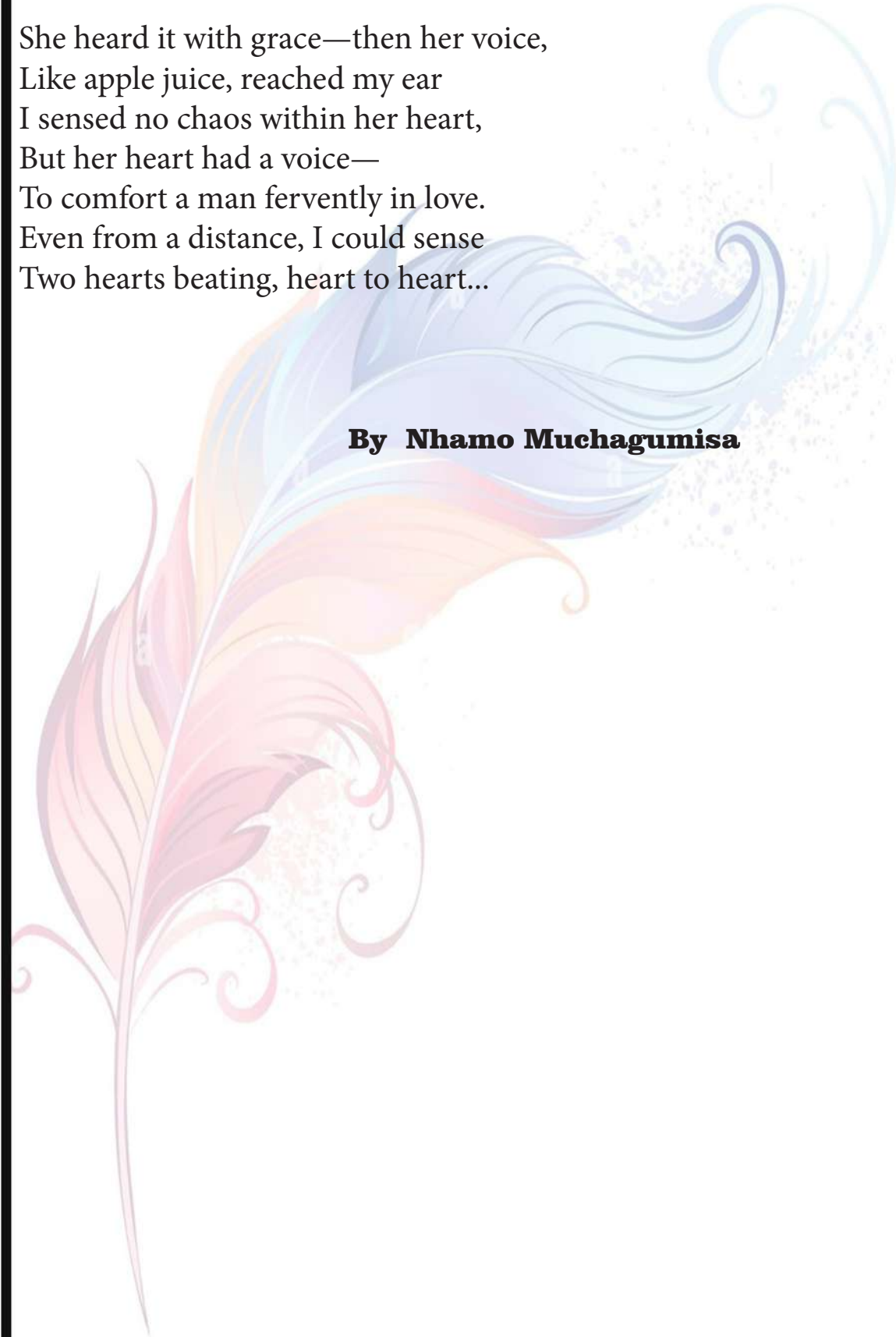
I knew the word I held back
Would find a place in her heart
Yet I needed a surgeon to extract
The word from its nest within me
Yes, we parted, yet I sensed her hand
Searching the confines of my heart.

Inbox chats brightened our day the following morning,
My thumb at ease on the keys,
Punching the word countless times
Yet I couldn't feel my breath in it
Next, from my mouthpiece

To her earpiece, the word flew.

She heard it with grace—then her voice,
Like apple juice, reached my ear
I sensed no chaos within her heart,
But her heart had a voice—
To comfort a man fervently in love.
Even from a distance, I could sense
Two hearts beating, heart to heart...

By Nhamo Muchagumisa



23. New Year's Day



**Mr. Oliver Norman
Teacher
Gasparillo
Trinidad & Tobago**

The bell tolls, the dawn of Twenty-Twenty-Five...
A golden sun ascends the sky...
Casting light on dreams revived...
Shadows of the past float on by...

Out of the ashes of a weary year...
Pain and struggle carved our way...
From the smoke, we rise anew, with sincere hearts...
Embracing the promise of the new day come...

Gone are the trials that once confined us...
The weight of sorrows, heavy, stark...
Whispers of the wind...
Ignite hope with a vibrant spark...

Moments stretch, the canvas wide...
Blessings yet to bloom and grow...
Every breath, our fears subside...
Courage fuels our hearts' bright afterglow...

Echoes of yesterday softly fade...
Memories treasured, lessons learned, bridges burned and truth told...
In the tapestry of life, we wade...
Every step, our spirits turn...

In the gardens of tomorrow's grace...
New friendships blossom, love takes flight...
Together, we shall weave a warm embrace...
Through starry midnights and morning light...

Twenty-Twenty-Five, your song we sing...
With laughter ringing, joy unbound...
Every heartbeat, hope takes wing...

Every corner, beauty found...

Dance beneath the stars, embrace under the moonlight...

Chase the dreams that wait ahead...

All that's lost, and all that's ours...

In this new year, our spirits fed...

Gratitude in our attitude, we greet the dawn...

Opening hearts, we shall journey far...

Every day a chance reborn...

Guided by our steadfast star...

Raise your glasses, let voices cheer...

To the fleeting moments of Twenty-Twenty-Four, sweet and bright...

In Twenty-Twenty-Five, we hold dear new life...

The dawn of hope, our guiding light...

By Oliver Norman

24. Captivating Meadows



**Mrs. Promila Punnu
Bhardwaj
Retd. General
Manager,
Industries
Department,
Himachal Pradesh**

Marvelous meadows mystically mesmerize me,
When walking amid them, wondrous wildflowers I see
As if heavens have descended gracefully on earth,
Enwrapping me all around, filling me with mirth.
Every pore of inner self merges with their beauty,
Capturing my soul in a bewitching, magical net so
truly
As much as inviting mountains or hills attract,
Quietly calling me closer, like a magnet intact,
They pull me with an unseen force unconsciously,
Gradually enslaving my mind mysteriously.
I am left wonderstruck by their serene tranquility,
Overpowering, my body and mind rest entirely,
Dipping my soul into an ocean of soothing serenity.
Waving trees seem to adore me like caring parents,
The dance of their branches, like playful siblings, enchants.
The adjoining trees and their branches intertwine—
Like family and friends whose company feels divine.
In their embrace, I find peace in nature's lap, secure and pure.
The ever-flowing rivers, like a teacher, inspire me to endure,
To move ahead with purpose, slowly and steadily,
While softly blowing breezes play melodious tunes magically.
Chirping birds and cuckoos sing songs of joy,
Thrills my heart like a child on seeing new toy.

25. Dismay and Horror



Mr. Shakil Ahmed
Assistant Professor
A. L. C. College
Hailakandi,
Assam

Let me leap into the buoyant world of rapture,
Obliterating the timeless and enduring melancholy of
tedious and terrestrial life.

I long for a jocund company to pass my time upright and
angelic,
Like the melodious nightingale of the innocent and
pristine forest.

The more I yearn for the jubilation of life, the more I
immerse into the fathomless
World of dismal melancholy.

I strive to tinge life with the color of bliss and the triumph
of humanity.

Nowhere do I find life decorated with tints of glee and rejoicing.

I discern people combating for a life devoid of melancholy and distress,
Yet men are not exultant or upbeat, burdened by the quirks of malignant destiny,
Relentlessly weaving a tapestry of fancy to keep themselves thrilled and elated.

We urge for a life in accord with whim and impulse, replete with triumph and
victory,

Yet the ominous rhythm of time offers us a life full of shambles and debacles.

Life is a season of eternal tragedy, where tides and tempos of joy appear occasionally,
Only to prepare us for lasting defeat and setback in the guise of death.

Terror, dismay, and horror always follow us like phantoms of a dreary night.
Since the beginning, we have been constantly searching for the blessed light.

Badarpur, 7th December 2024

26. Broken Heart

Beneath the boughs where shadows weave,
And quiet sighs the autumn eve,
There stirs within a melancholy strain,
A voice of loss, a whispered pain.

Oh, gentle streams that softly glide,
Bear not my sorrow to the tide.
For deep within my bosom's core,
A storm rages evermore.

The meadows fair, the skies so blue,
Once mirrored joy I thought was true.
Yet now their light, though sweet and kind,
Brings but the ache no peace can bind.

What once was love is now wrought as woe,
Doth bloom as thorns where roses grow.
The voice within, though fraught with cries,
Speaks of rebirth where hope yet lies.

For hearts that break, though torn apart,
Shall forge anew their tender art.
And from this wound, so raw, so deep,
Will rise a strength the soul shall keep.

So let the wind its story tell,
And ring the mournful evening bell.
For in the echoes, soft and clear,
My heart's voice I'll learn to hear.



**Mr. Shashi Dhar
Kumar
IT Consultant &
Author
Gautam Buddha
Nagar
Uttar Pradesh**

27. O! Funny Fog



**Mr. Shraddhanand
Srivastava
Lecturer
Jaunpur
Uttar Pradesh**

O! Funny fog that
Pervades the sphere
Bedims even the lamp of heaven;
Yes the sun struggle to steer through
Almost benumbed and the funny fog grins:
The trees stand dumb
With leaves deeply drench,
The birds with their beak
Buried in their wings;
The men stuck to their bed
Well wrapped up in the warming quilt:
The poor grandma with her
Crying grandson twists herself within
An icy cold sheet;
The shivering old man
Just shrunken in the rags
Along with his son, picks up
Something out of garbage;
The puffy small puppies
Screeching vociferously
Seeks the warmth from a sickly bitch;
O the funny fog
Stop grinning at
Let the sun come out
And the men out of their quilt;
Let coughing hag be at ease
And the small babe smile;
Away, away go away o funny fog!
Veer towards the castles
Rub your nozzle on the window pane
Sneer at the men wearing the furry coat
And feel
How it is to be scoffed at;

O the funny fog
Now hark the cry of penury
And cease to be.

28. Racing All The Time



**Mrs. Sindhu
Rana Writer, poet,
voice over artist,
former convent
teacher, writer for
documentaries
Jalandhar
Punjab**

Life has a pace of its own.
sometimes we outdo this pace.
because being grown- ups we
are expected to be running a
race all the time.

adding to it, we are parents , professionals...and what
not--
so racing at a faster rhythm is just the next obvious
thing.

from morning to dusk I run
in my own track ,
you in your own.
and it's been a long- long
time -- I mean this Run.
my feet are tired now ,
what about you?

can't we kind of slow down
or pause or even stop ?
or you join my track
or pull me into yours ?

together, then at some point
we can stop or pause ; smile or hold hands or argue and make up
--- before it is too late and
the time has actually run out !

29. How Does It Feel. ..

How does it feel
To sweep away all the live memories,
Hiding in the corners,
Under a threadbare rug?

How does it feel to watch your hands bleeding,
Trying to gather the splinters
Of a broken mirror
That rejected your reflection?

How does it feel to hold out
Your hands from your lonesome window,
To capture a dream moon
Through the aching nights?

How does it feel to discover the
Faces of the strangers you have worn
All through as your own,
Drop off,
Leaving behind their shadows
That loiter in the grey corridors of time?
One moment at your reach,
Melting into the vague walls between
Here and nowhere in the next,
To reappear like bubbles surfacing on the waters of a bottomless well?

How does it feel to watch all dreams dreamt
In the nights of fragrant rains
Become sands blown away in a dry storm,
And then scatter to make a desert?

How does it feel
To paint a living picture
Of death on the frozen canvas of time
And name it Life?



**Dr. Snehaprava
Das, Prof. of
English(former)
is an eminent
fictionist, poet and
translator
Odissa**

30. The Winter Wanderlust



Mrs. Usha Krishnan
Educationist, Life
Coach & NLP Coach
New Delhi

The air is blustery all around,
The treetops are in their greyish tone, reaching their
ultimatum,
Adorning themselves with icy droplets freshly
bloomed.
My avian friends are cozying up in their feathery coats,
The squeaking squirrels have worn their snowshoes
mirthfully.
There is an eerie silence
In the downhills far and beyond,
I feel a little snoozy in these late dawns!
Languorous is my pace through this snow-laden path.
But still, the wanderlust in me drives me forward,
To embrace these frosted vistas
And inhale their majestic stillness.
What can I name this invincible urge within me?
Am I hearing the muffled sounds
Of the winter wanderlust in me?
Am I going to take a solitary walk with my inner compass?
Do I envision the glimmering sign
Of a distant peace within me?
When these moments of solstice here
Are eloquent with their serenity and stillness!
Oh, how heavenly it is
To chase the horizons of my thoughts,
When the crispy air is feathered with hoarfrost
In these wintry wee hours!
Oh, how elevated I feel,
When the flickering embers from the hearth
Are reassuring me to be in soulful communion
With the winter wanderlust in me!!!

31. Heart of the Family: A Poem For My Nana

Strong as the oak, yet gentle as rain,
A life filled with purpose, touched by fame.
Nana, you walk with grace in each step,
Holding a world in your heart, where memories are kept.

A spark in your laughter, a warmth in your gaze,
You turn every moment into golden days.
With stories that dance like firelight bright,
You carry our family's torch through the night.

Hands that have weathered both sorrow and cheer,
Softly reach out to those who come near.
They've built, they've mended, they've held and let go,
In a world ever-changing, you're the constant I know.

With eyes that have seen both the dark and the light,
You've shown us how to stand up and fight.
Yet in your embrace, there's a calmness and ease,
An ocean of love that flows without cease.

So here's to you, Nana—our roots and our wings,
The heart of our family, a soul that sings.
May your strength and kindness forever remain,
In the lives you've touched, like a soft, gentle rain.



**Ms. Vaishnavi
Shrivastava
Student
Vaishali
Bihar**

**“Panache”
Aadhya Publishing
House**



PUBLISHER-CHIEF EDITOR

Name : Akanksha Shrivastava

Dob: 29-August

Place: Bhopal

Education: B.E(computer science)
M.A(English Literature)

Achievements: Director “De telephone”
(Short Movie)

**Editor (Premakriti, Vihangam,
Sunhari yaadein, Akshraang, Viraaj,
Navoday ki yaadein, Bits Of My Heart
Kalam ka rahi, corona kaal ka
sangharsh, Safar Farsh se Arsh tak,
Yaad-E-Maazi, The Journey to Success)**

Email.id: aadhyapublishinghouse@gmail.com

Phone No.: 9424002558



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House**



Designer

Name : **Lalit Kishore Gaur**

Dob: **21-July**

Place: **Bhopal**

Education: **LLB(Bachelor of Law)
MCA(Master of Computer
Applications)**

Achievements: **Producer “De telephone”
(Short Movie) <http://surl.li/bwosk>**


**Educationist, Photographer,
Founder of LKg Telefilms,
Film Maker, Writer, Poet,
Social Worker, Environmentalist**

Email.id: **lkgaur76@gmail.com**

Phone No.: **8109246305**



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Aadhya Publishing House
Vardhman City

Raisen Road Bhopal

Mobile: 9424002558

aadhyapublishinghouse@gmail.com

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