

Black & Gold

The Bombay Gymkhana Magazine

January 2026 Volume 15 Issue 9



Stamp of
LEGACY



Message to our Members



Dear Members

Warm greetings and best wishes to the entire BG family for a very Happy 2026!

At the outset, I would like to mention two subcommittees whose names were inadvertently omitted in the previous issue of the magazine.

Legal Panel Committee: Haresh Jagtiani (Convenor), Dhira Kaul Deshmukh, Maitri Deshmukh Desai and Zubin Morris.

Bridge Section: Rajeev Khandelwal (Convenor), Kishen Narsi (Co-convenor), Asha Sah, Asha Sood and Haresh Melwani.

One of the proudest moments in our sesquicentennial year was the release of the 150th Anniversary Commemorative Postage Stamp and First Day Cover by the Indian postal authorities, celebrating Bombay Gymkhana's rich sporting legacy from 1875 to 2025. The stamp was released by Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister of Communications, in the presence of Shri Milind Deora, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), and Smt Suchita Joshi, Postmaster General, Navi Mumbai Region. This national recognition is a milestone that generations of members will cherish.

I am also pleased to announce that the BG Fitness Centre (BGFC) has now been commissioned. This modern, upgraded facility marks a significant step forward in promoting health, wellbeing and community engagement within BG. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, BGFC offers a safe and motivating environment for members of all ages and fitness levels. I commend the past and present Managing Committees, the Premises Section, Engineering Department and concerned sub-committees for their dedication in bringing this project to completion.

The year ended on a festive high with enthusiastic participation in our Christmas celebrations, followed by a lively and memorable New Year's Eve.

As our 150-year celebrations continue, several special events await in the months ahead. We look forward to your continued participation and support.

With warm regards



Sanjiv Saran Mehra
President, Bombay Gymkhana

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



THE Micro Way

Why smaller, smarter resolutions may be the secret to real change, writes **Kaveri Shah**

New Year's resolutions have long been more aspirational than actionable; a familiar life cycle – born in January, abandoned by February and remembered only as a vague sense of guilt by March. Enter micro-resolutions: 30-day, low-pressure habits Gen Z and millennials are embracing, not because they sound impressive, but because they actually work.

Blame the brain. Neuroscience tells us that our minds are wired to resist sudden, dramatic change. Large goals trigger the brain's threat response, spiking stress and decision fatigue. Small goals, on the other hand, slip past our internal alarm system. Each completed micro-habit delivers a tiny hit of dopamine, the brain's 'reward' chemical, making us more likely to repeat the behaviour. Momentum does the heavy lifting, not motivation.

There's also the magic of the 30-day

window. Psychologists call these 'temporal landmarks', fresh starts that feel meaningful and manageable. A month is long enough to build familiarity and short enough to avoid the panic of life-long commitment. This is why tried and tested resolutions, like journaling, stretching before bed, or spending five minutes organising your phone, feel surprisingly easy to sustain. They create quick wins that quietly rewire routine.

So, instead of making big commitments, everything gets downsized. A 10-minute walk after work. Read five pages a night. A minute of deep breathing before checking phones.

Micro-resolutions aren't about thinking smaller, but about thinking smarter. No dramatic reinventions, no pressure to be perfect. In a world obsessed with going big, consistency has become the ultimate flex. **BG**



Shri Milind Deora, Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, and BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra hold up the commemorative postage stamp

STAMP OF LEGACY

Highlights from the release of the commemorative postage stamp marking Bombay Gymkhana's landmark 150th anniversary. **Malika D'Cunha** brings details

Bombay Gymkhana marked a historic high in its distinguished journey with the release of a commemorative postage stamp celebrating 150 years of its legacy. The ceremony, held on 13 December 2025, at the club's Badminton court, brought together members, dignitaries and representatives from India's sporting and cultural fraternity to honour an institution deeply woven into the nation's history. The event began with the arrival of

the Chief Guest, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister of Communications and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, alongside Guest of Honour Milind Deora, Member of Parliament. They were joined by Suchita Joshi, Postmaster General, Navi Mumbai Region, and Sanjiv Saran Mehra, President of Bombay Gymkhana. Several senior officials and distinguished guests were present, with extensive media



The august gathering on stage against the backdrop of the newly unveiled Bombay Gymkhana commemorative postage stamp



Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister of Communications & Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, addresses the gathering

coverage underscoring the importance of the occasion.

The programme was elegantly hosted by Anushka Jagtiani, host of Buzz by the Bay, who welcomed the gathering and introduced the dignitaries. Following the formal felicitation, the commemorative postage stamp was officially released — a moment that marked the national recognition of Bombay Gymkhana's contribution to sport, community and culture over a century and a half.

In his address, Mr Mehra spoke of the sustained efforts that led to the stamp's release, acknowledging the crucial support of Shri Deora in bringing the initiative to fruition. He reflected on Bombay Gymkhana's historic role as a pioneering sports club, from hosting India's first Cricket Test match at home in 1933 to its enduring mission of promoting athletic excellence since its founding. He also highlighted the club's commitment to community engagement, noting how its facilities have consistently been opened to NGOs, educational institutions and sporting bodies.

Speaking as both a public representative and a longtime member, Shri Deora shared fond personal memories of the club — from visits to the ice-cream counter to time spent on the Squash courts and interactions with staff across departments. He credited the club's legacy to its strong sense of fraternity,

Milestone Marked



A moment of pride for all who attended

describing BG as “the best gymkhana in the world”. The commemorative stamp, he noted, was an honour belonging to the institution and its members, whose patronage has sustained it across generations.

Chief Guest Shri Scindia, himself a proud member of Bombay Gymkhana, recalled his own sporting experiences at the club. He spoke of BG's extraordinary history, closely intertwined with that of Mumbai, Maharashtra and India. From CK Nayudu's iconic innings to the introduction of Rugby in India and Cricket's evolution into a symbol of national pride, he described the club as a witness to defining moments in Indian sport. Institutions like Bombay Gymkhana, he remarked, have the power to shape lives by celebrating the past while inspiring the future.

A special highlight was a recorded message from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Eknath Shinde, congratulating Bombay Gymkhana on its 150-year milestone.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by club Vice President Dinesh Advani, who acknowledged the President, Managing Committee, CEO, staff and members for their unwavering support. The morning ended on a note of pride and celebration. **BG**

Thrills GALORE



The BARA Men's team lifts the championship trophy

All the action as Bombay Gymkhana kicked off its 150th-year celebrations with the inaugural International Rugby 10s, uniting teams and fans over two thrilling days

In late October 2025, the usually sedate lawns of Bombay Gymkhana resonated with a different kind of energy. A mix of history, family and international connection captured the spirit of the first Bombay Gymkhana International Rugby 10s tournament, conceived to mark the club's 150th anniversary.

"Bombay Gymkhana has been the home of Indian Rugby for over a century and we're proud to continue that legacy by hosting the International Rugby 10s tournament, a celebration of skill, sportsmanship, and community," said club President Sanjiv Saran Mehra in the run-up to the event.



Unveiling of the prestigious Bombay Gymkhana International Rugby 10s trophy



A thrilling women's match moment

A Legacy Reimagined

The rugby section had long championed a concise, festival-style format that would attract overseas clubs, local school teams and veterans alike. They drew inspiration from the Bangkok 10s, a tournament Bombay Gymkhana has been participating in for nearly 17 years. Rugby's long-time associate Jai Makhijani stepped in, helping secure title sponsorship from Tudor, the official sponsors of the All Blacks from New Zealand.

The 10-a-side format is Rugby at its most accessible: ten-minute halves, more space per player than the traditional 15s, and a pace that encourages quick hands and open running.

An International Line-up

The club invited nine men's teams and five women's sides from across India and the UK. Familiar domestic names such as Bombay Gymkhana, Calcutta Cricket & Football Club (CC&FC), Delhi Hurricanes, Bangalore RFC and the Magicians, a Colaba-based club that

works with children from Mumbai's communities, were joined by two UK outfits: BARA, representing a diaspora of British Asian players, and Wooden Spoon, the charity team whose players fund projects for disadvantaged children. The women's tournament featured Future Hope (Kolkata), Bombay Gymkhana, Delhi Hurricanes, the Magicians and Wooden Spoon. Former India captain Nasser Hussain called the women's 10s "a major step forward from the existing 7s format," while Future Hope captain Sandhya Rai predicted it would be "fun and a great two days for players' bonding."



The BG team & BARA team battle through the mud

Bombay Gymkhana Rugby 10s

Rain, Rivalries & Results

The tournament's festival atmosphere was as carefully planned as the fixtures. Around the pitch, food counters served some of Bombay Gymkhana's best crafted burgers and club favourites, alongside merchandise stalls where supporters picked up tournament jerseys and memorabilia.

Rain showers could not dampen the opening day's drama. Hosts Bombay Gymkhana looked every inch the pre-tournament favourites, having won the All India & South Asia Rugby Championship just weeks earlier. They swept through their pool, beating Bangalore RFC 34-0 and shutting out Wooden Spoon 24-0.

Future Hope mirrored their dominance in the women's pool, winning all three of their group games. BARA displayed slick handling and fitness en route to topping their men's group.

The semifinals delivered tighter contests. BARA edged Delhi Hurricanes 10-7 after surviving a late rally, while Bombay Gymkhana squeezed past Future Hope by the same

score, scoring a last-minute try down the left touchline. In the women's draw, Bombay Gymkhana booked their ticket to the final with three round-robin victories, setting up a clash with an unbeaten Future Hope.

Beyond the Final Whistle

Final's day under the lights turned into a demonstration of clinical Rugby. Having saved their sharpest performance for the end, BARA overwhelmed Bombay Gymkhana 57-12, running in five unanswered tries in the first half and never letting the hosts settle.

Earlier in the afternoon, the women's final delivered its own narrative. Future Hope completed their unbeaten run, defeating Bombay Gymkhana 17-5 with Rai directing play.

Beyond the medals and try counts, the presence of Wooden Spoon and the Magicians underscored Rugby's potential as a force for social change. Wooden Spoon, a UK charity founded in 1983, funds projects for children and young people with disabilities or disadvantages.

"The welcome we received, the friendships made, and the passion for Rugby we witnessed were incredible. We were proud to represent Wooden Spoon and the power of Rugby to bring people together and create opportunities for others," said a team representative.

As the last fireworks fizzled above the Gymkhana clubhouse and teams posed with their medals, Mehra reminded everyone that this was "just the beginning." Plans are already underway for a larger edition next year, with more international invitations and a stronger developmental component for Indian youth teams. **BG**



The Future Hope Womens team - Winners at Bombay Gymkhana International Rugby 10s

Poolside Progress

Bombay Gymkhana's young swimmers made a splash across multiple meets

Khar Gymkhana – Lower Age Group:

Samara Naik and Jimmy Davar competed in the U-9 category across freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke. Samara clinched a bronze medal in the 50m freestyle with a personal-best time of 41 seconds, while Jimmy finished a close fourth in the same event, recording a personal best. Both swimmers gained valuable experience in the remaining races.

MSSA Meet: Samara, Jimmy, Tanish Shah and Anaita Kudtarkar participated in the two-day MSSA Gala, a milestone event marking their first competition in a 50m pool with electronic touch pads. Despite a long day and tough competition, the swimmers showed remarkable determination. Samara finished sixth in freestyle and backstroke with a personal best, Tanish matched his best time in breaststroke, Anaita narrowly missed a medal in butterfly, and Jimmy confidently contested multiple events.

The Brothers Divecha: Padel Power!

When members play a padel tournament as far away as Ontario, Canada, and still proudly wear their BG shirts, you can be sure where their loyalties lie — and always will. Brothers Dinshaw Divecha and Armand Divecha emerged winners of the Open Fall Tournament at the North Padel Club in Toronto. Padel reminds us that every wall can be an opportunity, not a barrier! **BG**



Giving it their best: Anaita Kudtarkar, Samara Naik, Jimmy Davar and Tanish Shah (inset)

VIVA Vibgyor Meet: This meet proved especially rewarding for Samara, who won three silver medals in freestyle, backstroke and her first-ever individual edley. Jimmy also had a strong outing, earning two silver medals as part of the freestyle and medley relay teams.

GMAAA Meet: Jimmy showcased his versatility by competing in all U-9 events, while Samara finished fourth in a closely contested backstroke race.

YMCA Meet: Anaita and Jimmy rounded off the season with strong performances across all four strokes, achieving personal bests and valuable race experience.

Overall, the meets reflected steady improvement and a promising season ahead. **BG**



WAVE OF VICTORIES

Going beyond local meets, Bombay Gymkhana's swim team made its mark at state, national and international championships, delivering podium finishes and standout performances across age groups

Maharashtra State Masters Aquatic Championship | Pune

Three members of the Bombay Gymkhana swim team—Dinshaw Pardiwala, Baman Mehta and team captain Karan Rai—represented the club at the Maharashtra State Masters Aquatic Championship in Pune, with each swimmer returning home with a podium finish.

Competing in the 55–59 years category, Pardiwala led the medal tally with an impressive all-round showing. He opened with a bronze in the 100m breaststroke, followed by silver medals in the 50m freestyle and 50m breaststroke, before finishing on a high with a gold in the 100m freestyle.

Mehta, also swimming in the 55–59 years category, secured a bronze in the demanding 50m butterfly—one of the toughest races in the masters line-up.

Team captain Karan Rai, competing in the 40–44 years category, added to the club's medal haul with silver medals in both the 50m freestyle and the 50m backstroke.

National Masters Swimming Championship | Hyderabad

Bombay Gymkhana was represented by Dinshaw Pardiwala and Mimo Shirazi at the National Masters Swimming Championship in Hyderabad, where both swimmers delivered podium finishes against strong national



Podium finish for Karan Rai, Dinshaw Pardiwala and Baman Mehta at the state championship



Dinshaw Pardiwala secures bronze at the Nationals

competition. Pardiwala, continuing in the 55–59 years category, narrowly missed the podium in three events with fourth-place finishes, but capped his campaign with his first national medal—a bronze in the 50m breaststroke.

The standout performer, however, was Shirazi (50–54 years), who dominated his category with gold medals in all six events he entered: the 100m butterfly, 200m individual medley, 50m freestyle, 50m butterfly, along with two relay events. His golden run earned him a new nickname within the team—Midas Touch Mimo.

World Aquatics Masters Championships | Singapore

Mimo Shirazi also carried Bombay Gymkhana's colours onto the global stage, competing at the World Aquatics Masters Championships in Singapore—his third world meet following appearances in Japan (2023) and Doha (2024).

Swimming in the 50–54 years category, Shirazi clocked 28.15 seconds in the 50m butterfly to place 14th, improving on his timings from previous world championships and reaffirming his steady progress at the international level.

Across state, national and international competitions, Bombay Gymkhana's swimmers delivered a commendable showing beyond the local circuit—setting benchmarks for performance, inspiring fellow members, and building momentum as the team looks ahead to the coming seasons. **BG**



Moeen (Mimo) Shirazi with one of his many golds at the Nationals



Moeen (Mimo) Shirazi at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore

SMASHES & SMILES

A friendly Badminton exchange at Bombay Gymkhana brought together players from Malabar Hill Club for a morning of spirited matches, sportsmanship and camaraderie



The Bombay Gymkhana and Malabar Hill Club contingents just before kickoff

A cool Sunday morning set the tone as the Malabar Hill Club contingent arrived at Bombay Gymkhana for a friendly yet spirited Badminton exchange. Scheduled for a 9.00 am start, the morning promised competitive play alongside an opportunity to strengthen ties between two sporting communities. Malabar Hill Club fielded a team of 12 enthusiastic players: Tilak Kanungo, Neville Katila, Nilay Choksey, Ronit Kapadia, Rohinton Contractor, Bhairav Sheth, Miten Khatau, Jahnvi Shah, Nayomi Mehta, Riddima Zaveri, Jigar Patel and Ajit Kumar Sontakke. The presence of Bhairav Sheth, Sports Head at Malabar Hill Club, added leadership and representation to the visiting side. Bombay Gymkhana responded with an equally energetic squad comprising Ayaz Bilawala, Gautam Ashra, Amol Shah, Ramya Venkat, Michelle Anklesaria, Jehan Daboo, Rustom

Mody, Kunal Rao, Piroz Katrak, Raj Naik, Faisal Siddiqui and Shailesh Daga, Honorary Secretary of Badminton. His involvement underscored the exchange's organisation and purpose.

Matches were contested across Men's Singles, Men's Doubles, Mixed Doubles and Women's Doubles, all played in a 30-point format. The extended games encouraged tactical rallies, resulting in engaging encounters that kept players and spectators absorbed.

Adding to the atmosphere was the presence of Bombay Gymkhana's young coaching group, who paused to watch the concluding matches with keen interest. After play, both teams came together over coffee and refreshments, sharing conversation and photographs. While Bombay Gymkhana finished with a 14–2 scoreline, the morning's true success lay in the camaraderie, sportsmanship and shared love for the game. **BG**

EPIC December

The month proved unforgettable for Bombay Gymkhana's young footballers, marked by tournaments, titles and a rare international training experience, notes **Khözema Hirani**

After a painfully long monsoon that delayed the football season until late November, the BG Football Academy returned in December with energy, excitement and impressive results.

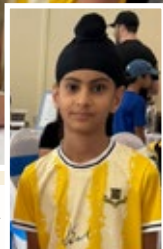
The season kicked off with a well-organised tournament for international schools, co-hosted by DSB (The German School). Teams from the French School, Cathedral and John Connon School, Edubridge, BIS and Bombay Gymkhana competed in a highly engaging event. BG's U-16 Boys (Panthers) and U-16 Girls (Wildcats) both put in spirited performances to secure third place in their respective categories, earning deserved applause.

The momentum continued the following week with U-17 and U-12 tournaments held on 1 and 3 December in association with Cathedral. Schools including Hill Spring, ABWA, DAIS, JBCN, JB Petit and Ascend took part. Once again, BG teams rose to the occasion. The U-12 Boys, the BG Lions, lifted the title in their age group after defeating several strong opponents, while the U-16 Boys, the Panthers, finished as runners-up. Three cheers indeed.

Yet the highlight of December was still to come. Thanks to the support of President Sanjiv Saran Mehra and



BG Lions getting their jersey autographed by Liverpool FC legend, Robbie Fowler



BG Panthers are runners up



BG Wildcats come third in the DSB BG Cup

Football Secretary Vineet Gangwani, boys aged five to 12 were given a rare opportunity to train with Liverpool FC legend Robbie Fowler and the Liverpool Football Academy. Following an assessment by visiting Liverpool scouts, 16 young players were selected for a special camp in Mumbai, conducted by academy coaches from England and led by the legendary Fowler himself. December marked a truly epic start for BG's young footballers. **BG**



Fitness Reimagined

The newly commissioned Bombay Gymkhana Fitness Centre marks a major upgrade in the club's commitment to health, well-being and community

The Bombay Gymkhana Fitness Centre (BGFC) was formally inaugurated by the club President, Sanjiv Saran Mehra. This upgraded and modernised facility represents a significant step forward in promoting health, wellbeing, and community engagement within BG.

Equipped with the latest fitness technology and state-of-the-art machines, the centre now offers a safer, more effective, and inspiring

environment for users of all ages and fitness levels. Enhanced layouts and improved ventilation further support diverse training needs—from strength and cardio to rehabilitation.

The reopening not only restores access to a vital health resource but also underscores BG's strong commitment to encouraging active lifestyles and fostering a healthier, more connected BG family. **BG**



Against the Tide

Bombay Gymkhana lifeguard **Jash Apradh** speaks to **Kaveri Shah** about his 17 km open-water swim from Atal Setu to the Gateway of India, completed in 2 hours 34 minutes

What motivated you to take on this 17 km open-water swim from Atal Setu to Gateway of India?

I have always been interested in endurance swimming events. Ever since I was in school, I had dreamt of taking part in long-distance swims like this. Completing this swim has been very special for me and has motivated me to aim for many more such challenges in the future.

Before becoming a lifeguard at the Bombay Gymkhana, I worked in housekeeping duties. Because of my strong interest in swimming, I was given the opportunity to shift into lifeguarding. This has made this achievement even more meaningful.

How did you train for it?

This was my first open-water swim. The swim had to be completed in 3 hours, so my training mainly focused on continuous swimming for at least 2 hours every day for nearly a month and a half. I completed the swim in 2 hours and 34 minutes.

I am grateful to my colleagues and seniors, especially Ravi Sir, who helped improve my stroke and breathing, Raven Sir and the rest of the staff who motivated me. Snehal Ma'am guided me on my diet leading up to the swim. The steadfast and continuous support from the Gymkhana in general and



Jash Apradh flashes a victorious smile

the swimming community in particular was a constant source of encouragement. The club also provided full financial support needed to participate in the open-water swim.

I am planning my next longer swim between Atal Setu and Karanja. I have already begun training for it and am aiming to complete it within the allotted hours.

What was the most challenging moment during the swim? How did you overcome it?

There were several challenges during the swim. Strong currents made breathing very difficult at times, but my training helped me stay calm and focused. An unexpected challenge was encountering biting fish in the water!

What kept me going was determination and my family on the support boat beside me. I knew I had to complete the swim and that helped me push through every difficulty.

What message would you like to share with BG's swimming community?

I want to encourage everyone, young and old, to try an open-water swim at least once. It is a completely different and enriching experience. For our members who genuinely enjoy swimming, it can be an exciting challenge to grow as swimmers. **BG**

Coaching Across Eras

Bombay Gymkhana marked a historic cricketing milestone with a thought-provoking discussion on how coaching philosophies have evolved across generations

A special Cricket talk show was hosted by Bombay Gymkhana at its historic lawns to commemorate the 92nd anniversary of the first Test match played in India at the venue in 1933. The evening reflected on Cricket's rich legacy while engaging with a contemporary question: should modern cricketers be coached the same way as players of earlier generations?

Moderated by Dr Aadil Chagla, Cricket Secretary of Bombay Gymkhana, the panel featured Amol Muzumdar, who guided the Indian women's team to their maiden World Cup triumph, senior journalist Ayaz Memon, veteran journalist Rajdeep Sardesai and former India cricketer Yajurvindra Singh.

The discussion explored the balance between traditional fundamentals and modern, data-driven coaching methods. Memon highlighted how coaching itself is a relatively recent concept in Indian cricket,

pointing out that India's victorious teams in the 1983 World Cup and 1985 Benson & Hedges World Championship had no formal coaches, only team managers.

Reflecting on the World Cup campaign, Muzumdar spoke about accountability, team culture and decision-making under pressure, emphasising trust and clarity as cornerstones of effective leadership. He also shared candid insights into coaching women's cricket, praising the team's discipline, cohesion and work ethic.

Paying tribute to his mentor Ramakant Achrekar, Muzumdar acknowledged the lasting influence of classical coaching values, while recognising the need to adapt to modern realities. Blending history with forward-looking dialogue, the well-received session reinforced Bombay Gymkhana's enduring role as a cradle of cricketing thought and tradition. **BG**



Indian women's national Cricket coach Amol Muzumdar (third from left) with club President Sanjiv Saran Mehra



Moderator Dr Aadil Chagla with Yajurvindra Singh, Rajdeep Sardesai and Amol Muzumdar

ON THE SAME PAGE

Anam Bachooali reports on BG Reads, a quiet yet engaging community reading experience at the Gymkhana

The club hosted one of its most distinctive Library events on 7 December, as book lovers gathered for a silent reading hour. On a warm morning, readers of all ages came together to read in shared silence and solidarity.

Children explored a specially curated selection in the Kids' Corner, while teenagers dipped into highlights from the Young Adult section. Adults settled comfortably alongside younger readers, many choosing to linger well beyond the hour.

Join us for the next BG Reads Silent Reading Hour on 26 January, following



the flag hoisting. With thoughtfully selected books for all ages and stages of life, the Library promises another quietly rewarding experience. **BG**

BOOKS OF THE YEAR

Shaila Mallik reports on the BG Library Book Club's final meeting of the year and its wide-ranging reading list

Bombay Gymkhana Library's Book Club met on 8 December, for its final gathering of the year. The session invited readers to reflect on a standout read from 2025, resulting in a lively exchange across genres.

Books discussed included *The Elsewhereans* by Jeet Thayil, *The Fertile Earth* by Ruthvika Rao and *The Living Mountain* by Amitav Ghosh, alongside *The Art of Spending Money* by Morgan Housel and the memoir *Greenlights* by Matthew McConaughey. Fiction and mystery featured through *A Death in Diamonds* by S J Bennett, *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans,



and crime novels *Troubled Blood* and *Lethal White* by Robert Galbraith. Also mentioned was *Listening Is an Act of Love* by Dave Isay.

The club looks forward to welcoming more members and conversations in the year ahead. **BG**

Meet the Author

Between IDEALS

Architect and poet **Neena Nehru** discusses her debut novel *Revolutionaries*, a work of fiction deeply informed by lived experience and political awakening, reports **Shaila Mallik**

A keenly engaged audience gathered to hear visiting author Neena Nehru in conversation with poet and art critic Ranjit Hoskote on Friday, 5 December. Their discussion around *Revolutionaries* offered a revealing glimpse into the emotional and intellectual journey behind a novel poised between fiction and memoir.

During the conversation, Nehru reflected on the process of writing a story loosely inspired by her own life and that of her husband, as the two returned to India after studying in London. While firmly a work of fiction, the novel draws upon personal experiences to explore questions of belonging, ideology and political commitment.

The book traces the journey of a young couple who become involved with a working-class movement in England, engaging closely with a group of Sikh workers. Their return to Chandigarh



Neena Nehru reads from her debut novel, during her conversation with Ranjit Hoskote

during the Emergency marks a turning point, as they begin to encounter the realities faced by marginalised and disenfranchised communities, forcing them to confront and reassess their own privilege.

As the narrative moves to Bihar, the couple's growing involvement with the Maoist movement exposes them to harsher truths. Through these experiences, the novel grapples with themes of caste, power, revolution and corruption, presenting an unvarnished look at idealism colliding with complex social realities.

Trained as an architect and previously the author of a book of poetry, Nehru's debut novel reflects a keen observational eye and a deep engagement with history and politics. The evening offered readers not just a glimpse into the making of *Revolutionaries*, but also into the moral questions and lived experiences that shape its pages. **BG**



STRAIT TALK



Nikhil Raghavan and Gautam Patel share swim insights with Reena Agrawal

Bombay Gymkhana's **Gautam Patel** and **Nikhil Raghavan** share the thrill, challenge and camaraderie of a rare cross-continental swim. **Agastya Shah** reports

On 16 December, Bombay Gymkhana members and avid swimmers Gautam Patel and Nikhil Raghavan reflected on their experience of swimming across the Bosphorus Strait, Türkiye, in an engaging conversation moderated by Reena Agrawal. The duo represented India at the 37th Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim, a renowned open-water event with a legacy spanning over three decades.



Gautam Patel and Nikhil Raghavan hold their treasured caps

On race day, swimmers were ferried by barges to the starting point, diving off a jetty onto timing mats that activated ankle-mounted trackers. Once in the water, only safety boats accompanied them. Both swimmers agreed that navigation, rather than distance, posed the greatest challenge, with strong and sometimes reverse currents capable of disrupting even experienced swimmers.

The 6½ km race, held in the heart of Istanbul, is unique for straddling two continents — Asia and Europe. With over 3,000 participants from across the world, it ranks among the most prestigious events on the open-water swimming calendar.

Raghavan spoke of moments of isolation caused by depth and limited visibility, while Patel recalled following fellow swimmers to escape difficult current pockets. Both completed the course comfortably within the time limit, drawing on their BG-honed swimming skills and calm under pressure.

Speaking about their motivation, Patel described the swim as adding a “fun challenge” to their athletic pursuits. For Raghavan, a keen runner and cyclist, the event offered a fresh goal after an injury ruled him out of the Mumbai Marathon.

During the Q&A, they noted that swimming the English Channel was far colder and more demanding. On training, they stressed endurance-building through long-distance swims such as Mumbai's Sunk Rock Swim. The session concluded on an inspiring note, encouraging members to push boundaries and embrace adventure sports. **BG**



Craft in a CUP

Bombay Gymkhana recently hosted an engaging coffee tasting and brewing session curated by Bean Bay Coffee, offering members a deeper appreciation of coffee beyond the everyday cup. Designed for both beginners and enthusiasts, the session traced coffee's journey from origin to cup, led by Ajay Mankame and his team from Barista Café Academy. Members sampled beans from different regions, learning how soil, climate and altitude shape flavour profiles. A guided tasting session explored aroma, acidity and body, followed by a live demonstration of home brewing methods. Participants experimented with grind size, ratios and techniques before concluding with an interactive Q&A, making the session both educational and enjoyable. **BG**



BG President Sanjiv Saran Mehra with the team from Bean Bay Coffee and Barista Cafe Academy



Members improve their coffee quotient

The much-awaited return of the club's Members' Singing Nite after several years made for a delightful and spirited evening. Talented BG members presented an engaging mix of musical genres that ranged from timeless classics to contemporary favourites. The warmth and enthusiasm in the room said it all, with one audience member summing it up perfectly: "BG surely has talent!" Members who shared their talent included Anushka Jagtiani, Archana Jain, Arish Dastur, Deven Shah, Haresh Jagtiani, Genevive D'Cunha, Sumehra Vahanvaty, Zameer Vahanvaty and Sanjay D'Cunha. **BG**

Singalong!



Club members after a successful show. The age of contestants ranged from 19 to 80



Aazaman setting the stage on fire with his rendition of Bill Withers' Use Me

Music & Magic

Lights, Music, **Action**

Bombay Gymkhana's latest Bar Nite on 12 December was a spectacular success, featuring the supremely talented A26 live performing "Night at the Movies." Members and guests were on their feet, singing along to their favourite film-themed tunes as the energy in the room soared.

The evening highlighted the club's commitment to delivering exceptional entertainment experiences. A26's captivating performance—a perfectly synchronised set of movie-based theme songs—was performed for the first time in Mumbai and left members enthralled. The audience's enthusiasm was clear, with calls to invite the band back every month! **BG**



POOLSIDE **Sparkle**

Bombay Gymkhana's Grill Nite at the Swimming Pool Lawns on the eve of 20 December unfolded as a relaxed and memorable evening. Vikas Tandon's acoustic melodies set the perfect tone as members gathered to savour an array of flavourful grilled fare, complemented by refreshing drinks and a warm, convivial ambience. With music drifting through the lawns and easy conversations flowing, the night struck a fine balance between good food, soulful tunes and great company. Cheers to many more such evenings at BG. **BG**



Celebrating Christmas

Cherished TRADITIONS

A Christmas Affair came alive on Christmas Eve as the beautifully decorated lawns and Dining Hall transformed into a sparkling festive setting for members and their guests. DJ Gavin kept the energy high, drawing guests to the dance floor with a lively mix, as laughter and camaraderie filled the winter air. Adding to the celebration were specially crafted Don Julio cocktails, complemented by a generous Christmas-themed culinary spread, all thoroughly enjoyed by those present. **BG**



Bombay Gymkhana continued its much-loved tradition of hosting the Christmas Lunch on 25 December, bringing members and their families together for a joyous festive celebration. The Dining Hall, Palm Court, 1875, and The Pavilion were beautifully adorned with seasonal décor, setting a warm and cheerful ambience. Guests enjoyed a lavish Christmas spread featuring roasted stuffed turkey, smoked honey-glazed ham, and an array of classic festive desserts. Live music added to the cheer, with performances by Raul D'Mello, Marie Paul and saxophonist Jai Fernandes keeping spirits high. **BG**



Rocking Around...

Ushering in the season with warmth and community cheer, the club hosted two much-loved celebrations — the Christmas Bazaar and the Children's Christmas Party on 13 December. Together, the events transformed Bombay Gymkhana into a joyful hub, drawing members, families and guests into a shared celebration of creativity, laughter and the timeless spirit of Christmas.



Christmas Bazaar

The Christmas Bazaar celebrated creativity and enterprise through 35 curated stalls offering festive, ethnic and contemporary clothing, jewellery, handcrafted products, artworks and gourmet food. Strong participation by member entrepreneurs stood out, while the gracious visit of Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia and Shri Milind Deora added distinction and warmth.



Children's Christmas Party

The Children's Christmas Party delighted young members with games, interactive activities and a toddler play zone. Santa Claus' grand arrival and performances by a magician, juggler, unicyclist and dove show enchanted the audience, while the Enchanted Winterland theme and festive treats created a magical atmosphere. [B&G](#)



New YEAR, New ENERGY

The New Year's Eve bash at the club was nothing short of spectacular! The evening unfolded as a sensory celebration, with Harpal's culinary creations stealing the spotlight — from gourmet bites to indulgent desserts. The A Class Apart band drew everyone from children to grandparents onto the dance floor. As the night progressed, celebrations flowed onto the front lawns. Members rang in 2026 surrounded by friends, family and fantastic company. The celebrations continued indoors as DJ Herman took over at the dining hall, keeping the momentum alive into the wee hours, as the Gym's Inn Bar ensured spirits stayed high. A night of music, merriment and memorable moments, all the way! **BG**



NYE Celebrations



NYE Celebrations







Simone Tata (1930-2025)

Blending Beauty, **BRAINS & BUSINESS**

French by heritage, Swiss by passport and Indian by belonging, Simone Tata built a lasting legacy of elegance and enterprise

"I travelled alone across the country by plane, train and bus. I met many Indians of all types ... [they were] very curious to find a young European woman travelling alone, more so since most foreigners had long since left India and the age of the backpackers and hippies was still a long way off."

This recollection by a "fascinated" Simone Tata of her first encounter with India in 1953 reveals a young woman open to the experience of being a stranger in an unfamiliar land. It was an openness that would shape her life — leading her to make India her home, build an enterprise in a nascent

industry, and assimilate so completely that the label of “foreigner” seemed beside the point.

Impactful Journey

Ms Tata, who passed away in Mumbai on 5 December at the age of 95, was French by heritage, Swiss by nationality, and Indian by belonging, family and friendships. That maiden journey was followed by her marriage to Naval Tata, a stalwart of the Tata family, the birth of their son Noel in 1956, and her entry — almost accidentally — into the world of cosmetics. The business was Lakmé, then a struggling beauty-products subsidiary of the now-defunct Tata Oil Mills.

The “accident” occurred in 1961, when she was asked to join Lakmé’s board. Three years later, she was “sounded out” for the role of managing director. “My husband’s reaction was a ‘no, no, no,’” she later recalled. “I asked Naval how he could make such a decision on my behalf. Besides, Lakmé was so broke it could not pay the salary of [a managing director].”

Viable Enterprise

With her husband’s support and the backing of the Tata group, Ms Tata set about creating a viable enterprise with characteristic care and discipline. She brought to the task a European upbringing, a sharp understanding of how cosmetics could be marketed to Indian women, and an instinctive awareness of grooming and presentation. Gradually, Lakmé found its footing. Over the next 25 years, Simone Tata would journey from pioneer to matriarch of India’s beauty business, shaping an industry where none had existed before.

Born Simone Dunoyer in Geneva in 1930, she grew up in a privileged but grounded household. Her father, François Ernest Dunoyer, ran a prosperous chemicals business, while her mother, Alice, managed a large home that was, as Ms Tata recalled, “always filled with people”. Her French heritage and international exposure were defining influences, and she began learning English at 14. A brief spell in London in 1948 sharpened her awareness of the British colonial legacy, of Mohandas Gandhi, and of India’s struggle for independence.

After graduating from the University of Geneva, Ms Tata worked briefly with Air India in Geneva. It was there that she met Naval Tata during an International Labour Organisation conclave. A visit to India followed soon after — one she insisted on undertaking alone.

A Life Rooted in India

Ms Tata returned to India in 1954 and married Naval Tata a year later in a quiet civil ceremony, far removed from the pageantry of a traditional Indian wedding. Over time, she would build not just a business, but a life rooted deeply in her adopted country.

The admiration Ms Tata evokes among those who knew her in business and in life is heartfelt. Ms Tata’s son, Noel, recalls the perfectionist in his mother. “Whether it was the merchandise or its display, everything had to be flawless.” That was par for the course Ms Tata set in a life lived on her terms. “Being a woman, a Tata, and a foreigner is quite intimidating,” she once said. Simone Tata —full of grace and sophistication — never was. **BG**

Community POWER

Led by two Bombay Gymkhana members, Mumbai Ekatra shows how neighbourhood-led action can make the city greener, kinder and more liveable

In a city as layered and complex as Mumbai, meaningful change often begins close to home — in housing societies, schools and shared public spaces. For the past four years, Bombay Gymkhana members Pereena Lamba and Swati Apte have been at the helm of Mumbai Ekatra, an initiative that encourages citizens to take ownership of the issues in their own neighbourhoods and work collectively to solve them.

Spirit of Solidarity

The idea was born during the Covid pandemic, when ordinary Mumbaikars stepped up to support neighbours with food, medicines, care and companionship as formal systems struggled to reach everyone. Inspired by this spirit of solidarity, the Kshirsagar-Apte Foundation (KAF) launched Mumbai Ekatra seed grants to support citizens who had ideas and initiative but lacked resources. “Mumbai Ekatra came from the belief that when citizens come together around a shared concern, they don’t just solve problems — they build stronger communities,” says Swati Apte, Director, KAF.

True to its name—Ekatra, meaning together—the programme prioritises collaboration and community ownership over top-down solutions. Over multiple seasons, it has supported citizen-led initiatives across diverse neighbourhoods, helping individuals and grassroots groups translate local concerns into actionable projects.



Swati Apte



Pereena Lamba



Going Green

The year's theme, 'Going Green', focuses on Mumbai's growing environmental challenges, from waste and pollution to shrinking green spaces and climate resilience. Partnering with the Blue Ribbon Movement, Mumbai Ekatra has expanded its reach to engage young people across the city. Finalists are selected through a rigorous process of proposals and interviews with expert panellists, many encountering structured funding and mentorship for the first time.

Past grantee Bhatu Sawant, a journalist, began with a simple idea: helping waste-picker women secure safer livelihoods by obtaining formal driving licences. With Mumbai Ekatra's support, the initiative expanded to create new income opportunities and strengthen decentralised waste management systems across nearly 200,000 families in Thane, Panvel and Navi Mumbai — restoring dignity while building long-term sustainability.

Lessons of Responsibility

Another project saw teacher Nikita Dholakia mentor grade 7 students to repurpose plastic bottles into stools for their school's pre-primary section, turning waste into functional furniture while reinforcing lessons of

responsibility and circular thinking.

For the year, nine groups have received grants for creative, hands-on environmental projects. These range from a smart waste segregation dustbin using IoT and machine learning to segregate waste at source, to 'Songs from My Dabba', a participatory music project that uses children's tiffins to spark conversations around food, sustainability and culture.

Investing in Citizens

Across seasons, grantees describe Mumbai Ekatra as more than financial support. It offers mentorship, peer learning, legitimacy and confidence. "It wasn't just about the money — it was about knowing someone believed in our idea," shared a past participant.

For Pereena Lamba, a core team member, the programme is about long-term learning. "Even if a project doesn't go exactly as planned, the learning stays and strengthens future work," she says.

By investing in citizens rather than only institutions, Mumbai Ekatra continues to foster neighbourhood-level problem-solving and a culture of care — reminding Mumbai that urban progress can be inclusive, incremental and deeply human. **BG**

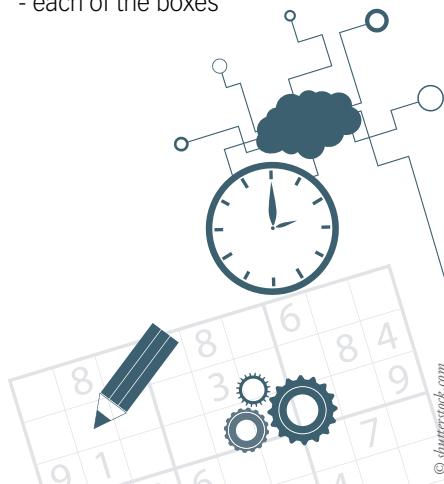
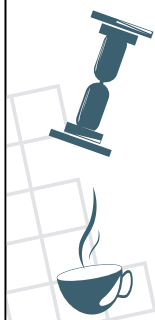


SUDOKU

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

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

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



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.



- Empty of liquid
- Visible burning of gas
- Throw out
- Requirements
- Tasty
- Theme
- Three-dimensional
- First performance
- Leg bone
- Venomous snake

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:

_____ is the only crime for which an editor ought to be hung. - **Josephus Daniels** (8) **BG**

OUSEL
BHULS
HITYLN
HORSU


			*	*
	*		*	
			*	*
			*	*

(All solutions on page 35)

 **Bombay Gymkhana** 

FILM NIGHT

DEATH ON THE NILE



Director: John Guillermin

Cast: Peter Ustinov, Bette Davis, Mia Farrow, Angela Lansbury, Maggie Smith, Simon MacCorkindale and David Niven

As Hercule Poirot enjoys a luxurious cruise down the Nile, a newlywed heiress is found murdered on board. Can Poirot identify the killer before the ship reaches the end of its journey?

Friday | 30th January 2026 | 5:00 pm onwards

Venue: 1875

Register : library@bombaygymkhana.com / Tel- 43223420

- CRISS WORD -



Answer: Dullness is the only crime for which an editor ought to be hung. - Josephus Daniels

Words: Louse, bluish, thinly, shroud

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In Memoriam

The Bombay Gymkhana deeply
regrets the sad demise of:

Kusum I Sangani
15 August 2025

Ranjeet Salvi
4 October 2025

Back to Ink

Sunita Rajwade revisits the beauty—and the challenges—of writing by hand

December is over, the fatted goose is eaten. We've sung *Auld Lang Syne* yet again. And it is time to begin living by the resolutions made for the New Year. It is hard to really stick by one's resolutions. Normally, by week two of the New Year, we already begin to find them tedious. That's why I've given the resolutions a go-by. Actually, by the end of the month, I even forget what my resolutions were! Largely, that's because I've forgotten to write them down.

Ever since I've been communicating via email, WhatsApp, etc., I find writing by hand quite tiresome. Very soon, penmanship will become a lost art. Gone are the days of writing patterns and writing workbooks that help develop stylish cursive. If you see the handwriting of young children today, it looks like a scrawl. And that is despite teaching pre-schoolers to write with a pencil holder to hold the pencil the right way. I often feel like using one myself because I often find writing with a proper ink pen difficult.

Yet, I miss the joy of seeing the letters appear as you put your pen to paper. Seeing a word come to life with each stroke written with a nib specific only to you. Often, the colour of ink conveyed a subtle message beyond the mere word. Royal blue or blue-black ink was the everyday, quotidian ink used by all and



sundry. At the same time, black ink was used in official documents and legalese. Green ink was used to sign off on a final approval of a document that had been reviewed by many eyes. And red ink was used to highlight mistakes.

Alas, with the keyboard, writing has become more 'mechanical'. You can choose your font, the size of the font, the colour of the ink and even the content you want to write with the help of AI! Thanks to built-in features like auto-correct, you don't need to see red lines in your writing. And even if you do, there's always an app like Grammarly to alert you, as well as the cut-and-paste option to get the perfect content.

So, why would one go back to writing by hand? **BG**