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REFLECTIONS

India International Group



IIG's 6th Anniversary Special



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This seventh issue of Reflections arrives at a moment of joy and gratitude. In June, the India International Group marked its sixth anniversary, a milestone that speaks of resilience, creativity, and community. Our members expressed their affection in the most heartfelt way—through flowers, each bloom a symbol of love, friendship, and shared passion for photography. The floral tributes were not just gestures of celebration, but reminders of how deeply this journal has become intertwined with the lives of its contributors and readers.

This issue also marks a new milestone for IIG as we enter into partnership with ICAP (International Club of Art Portrait), expanding our horizons and strengthening our global dialogue in photographic art.

In this edition, we continue to explore photography as dialogue—between landscapes and memory, between heritage and modernity, between the wild and the human spirit. Every article is a testament to how images can preserve culture, awaken reflection, and inspire empathy.

Our journey is strengthened by the voices of our community—through feedback, shared experiences, and the collective pursuit of excellence. As Reflections grows, it remains committed to being more than a magazine: it is a living archive of visual storytelling, a bridge across traditions, and a celebration of the art of seeing. I extend heartfelt gratitude to our readers and contributors whose encouragement fuels this endeavor,

May this issue inspire you to pause, reflect, and continue to discover beauty in both the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Reader's feedback

Dear Sundar,

Thank you very much for sharing the sixth edition of "Reflections." It is truly inspiring to see the Journal continue to grow as a meaningful platform for photographic expression, artistic dialogue, and visual storytelling within the international photography community. Each edition reflects not only strong imagery, but also the depth of thought and emotion behind the work of photographers from different backgrounds and cultures. As fellow photography enthusiasts, we understand the dedication, patience, and passion required to sustain a publication of this nature. Your thoughtful editorial direction and respect for diverse visual languages have given "Reflections" a distinctive and sincere artistic identity. I look forward to spending time with this new edition and exploring the images, reflections, and ideas shared within its pages.

Wishing "Reflections" continued success and an even stronger presence in the international salon and photographic art community in the years ahead. Thank you once again for your contribution and commitment to the art of photography.

Warm regards, Raymond Ong

Dear Sundar , Thank you for sharing ! Quietly feel the beauty of its design (especially its elegant layout) , and wonderful cover, pleasant pictures and rich content. Looking forward to the next issue.

Sincere congratulations ! Best regards, GaiYu

Just to say thank you again for sending the link to your excellent publication. It is filled with very interesting articles and superb photographs. A most welcome read.

Yours Eion Johnston.

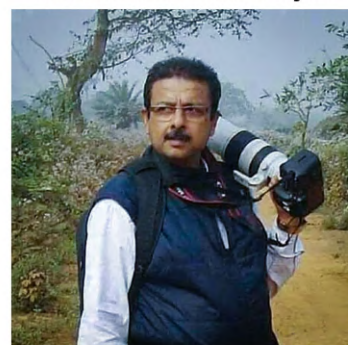
Hi Sundar, Thanks for your mail. The immense effort you've invested in this magazine is clearly evident. I can't wait to get my hands on this new issue.

Regards, Pravin Turkey



We lost
A family member on 6th June 2026

Mr. Debashis Mukherjee



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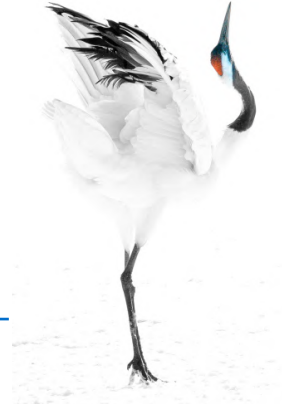
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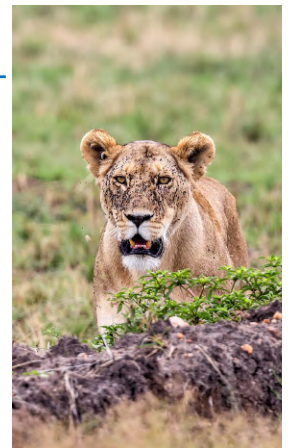
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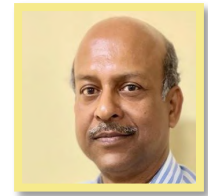
Front Cover: **Dr. Abir Ghosh**

Back Cover: **Udayan Sankar Pal**



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Silence of the Green



Anjan Das

EFIAP/b, FFIP, IIG/s2_p3

A visit to Chikmagalur

From the balcony on the second floor, I see a covered stretch of land, then a high wall marking the boundary. Beyond it lies rugged terrain, once home to towering SHAAL and SHEGOON trees. At the far end, sawmills hum with the sound of cutting wood. Behind them, thickets of vegetation rise, climbing Mailaan Giri in a dense green wave. The mountain wears its dark cloak of foliage, while smoky clouds gather above, hiding the evening sky. The day's eyes weep without bidding farewell to Surya Dev, as night descends before the lamps of dusk are lit.

On the last afternoon, we rode the toy train at MG Park. The sky carried us in its colourful fleet, clouds singing farewell over the crimson glow of the sun. The tune of departure played like a farewell ragini, its melody captive yet praising. I sat today with that hope, but in vain.

Soon the road began climbing steeply toward Mailaan Giri's peak. The winding path skirted jungle slopes, ending at the foot of the summit. From there, five hundred steps led upward. Valleys flooded with green shone in sunlight, stitched to the blue sky. White clouds painted surreal images across the canvas of heaven. Standing at a bend, I watched their play, patterns shifting endlessly. Green here was a character in itself—sometimes light, sometimes heavy, sometimes solemn. Nearer greens showed affection, distant ones a faint melancholy. At the top, waves of accumulated green spread joy everywhere. The foggy sky revealed itself kindly, and I bowed in gratitude to nature before descending.

Our next destination was Jhari Falls—some call it Dhaari, others Jhari. Names matter little; beauty lies in its dedication and bewildering momentum. The thrill begins with the road. After a flat stretch, we reached the jeep stand. Soon the jeep veered into the forest, its path clad in red soil. Crooked and treacherous, the road demanded skill and courage. Drivers ply it daily, lowering speed carefully over slopes and potholes. For passengers, bones shook and muscles twisted. That three-kilometre jungle path ended on a small clearing in the mountain's lap. From there, the music of the waterfall could be heard, though its dance remained hidden. The forest path joined the stream's foot. From two hundred feet above, the water leapt confidently. Its speed was modest, but its passion immeasurable. Step by step, she danced to her rhythm, self-absorbed, indifferent to forests, hills, or birds. At the cliff's base, stones

scattered like altars offered divine baths. Water splashed, exploding into droplets that soaked all—people, nature, earth. Released from her cistern, she vanished into the watery forest, lost in her own dance.

The return was another performance. That three-kilometre road became a stage where the vehicle itself danced—Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, then disco, tango, salsa. Passengers endured the whirlwind, sap of the body turning to curd. Salvation came only upon reaching the main road, bones intact, devotion renewed for the body's resilience. Such journeys teach respect for physical endurance, reminding us how colourful travel stories can be.





Soon the car plunged into green's embrace. Except for the black pitch road, everything was verdant. At a bend lay Z-point. I stepped out, hearing serenity's music play in my heart. It entered through the eyes, not ears. Nature's generous hand played its flute, spreading sweetness like veena's melody.

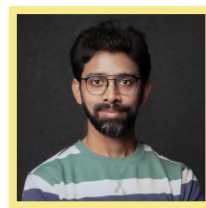
Climbing the grassy hill was hard, but at the top lay a dream-state. Before me stretched a wide, still sea of mountains, waves frozen by a fairy's wand. They stood fixed in infinite attraction, waiting for deluge. Rolling waves of hills blended into mist before touching the blue sky. Autumn's golden sun warmed their bodies. Words dissolved into poetry, poetry into song, song into melody. The mind grew speechless in wonder, the cool breeze invigorating nature's magnificence. Where there was no song, only melody; no touch, only feeling. A mysterious language bound its form, a painting of genius laid before the eye. It was homage to immense beauty, etched forever in memory.

Yet the city grows, tourism spreads, and green slowly recedes. Society's fascination with nature's dark recesses is eternal, but Chikmagalur still maintains its green drive in seclusion. In his generous speech, he appeals to human good sense. May Chikmagalur live on in the dignity of silence, in the greatness of its own green majesty.





Environmental Portraits



Abhishek Basak

EFIP, EFIAP, PPSA

Telling stories beyond the Face

An environmental portrait is more than a photograph of a person—it is a visual narrative that reveals who they are through the spaces they inhabit, the traditions they preserve, and the lives they lead. Unlike conventional portraits that focus primarily on facial expression, environmental portraits weave together subject and surroundings, allowing viewers to understand a deeper story within a single frame.

The images referenced here demonstrate this approach. The aghori seated on a boat against the river Ganga backdrop speaks of spirituality, solitude, and a connection with nature. The masked performer in a Hemis monastery courtyard reflects cultural heritage, ritual, and celebration. The elderly shepherd (Changpa woman) surrounded by livestock in the highlands conveys resilience and a life shaped by the landscape. The young child standing amidst a snow-covered village in Kashmir introduces themes of identity, place, and innocence. The devotee of Kulasai Dussehra framed by countless offerings and city lights creates a powerful narrative of faith within an urban environment. Finally, the camel herder in the desert embodies tradition, livelihood, and the enduring relationship between humans and animals.

In each photograph, the environment is not merely a background—it is an essential character in the story. The surroundings provide context, emotion, and meaning, transforming a simple portrait into a document of culture, occupation, belief, or daily life. Environmental portraits are particularly powerful because they invite viewers to explore details beyond the subject's face and discover the world they belong to.

A successful environmental portrait does not simply show what a person looks like—it reveals who they are and the world they inhabit, creating an image that resonates long after it is viewed.



- **Pay Attention to Light** Natural light usually enhances authenticity. Observe how light interacts with both the subject and the environment.
- **Consider Composition Carefully** Use leading lines, framing, symmetry, and layers to guide the viewer through the story.
- **Respect Culture and Context** Understand local customs and seek permission when photographing people in sensitive situations.
- **Look Beyond the Face** Hands, tools, clothing, surroundings, and gestures often communicate as much about a person as their expression.

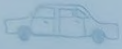
Key Points to remember while creating Environmental Portraits

- **Tell a Story** Identify what makes the subject unique and include elements that reveal their lifestyle, profession, culture, or personality.
- **Use the Environment Purposefully** Ensure every element in the frame contributes to the narrative rather than creating distractions.
- **Balance Subject and Surroundings** The subject should remain the visual anchor while the environment provides context.
- **Choose the Right Lens** Wider focal lengths often work well, allowing both the person and surroundings to coexist naturally.





பார்க்கிங்







Theyyam Story

A Photographer's Delight



Mrinal Sen

EFIP, EFIAP, PPSA



From the early hours of the morning, temples across Kannur slowly filled with the sound of drums, prayers, and the fragrance of oil lamps and incense. Devotees gathered patiently as the sacred preparation of the Theyyam – The God began. Skilled artists carefully painted the face of the Theyyam with bright orange, red, and black patterns, each design carrying deep spiritual meaning. With every stroke of color, the transformation from an ordinary human into a divine presence became complete.

As the rituals continued through the day, the Theyyam wore elaborate ornaments and sacred decorations mostly made from tender coconut tree leaves, along with heavy traditional costumes and magnificent red headgear that towered above the crowd. The flowing leaf ornaments moved beautifully with every step, adding a powerful sense of grace and

mysticism to the ritual. The atmosphere inside the temples became more intense with rhythmic drumming, chanting, and sacred dances. Devotees watched with deep devotion as the Theyyam moved before the shrine, blessing people and becoming the spiritual center of the celebration.

By night, the energy of the ritual reached its peak. Flames rose high in the temple courtyards while musicians beat their drums with great intensity. The Theyyam danced fearlessly around the roaring fire as priests and devotees stood in awe. Sparks flew into the dark sky while the glowing red costume reflected the firelight beautifully. The fire dance was not merely a performance but a powerful expression of faith, devotion, and divine energy that left every witness completely mesmerized.







H. Satish

MFIAP, MPSA

Julley!

A Journey to the Land of the Lamas: Ladakh



For years, friends returned from Ladakh with stories—photographers, trekkers, bikers—all united by the dream of experiencing this land. As a photo artist, I wondered what it held for me, until I saw prize-winning images of its landscapes. The lighting, the drama, the sheer opportunities—it was irresistible. Finally, my turn came: I led a landscape photography workshop to Ladakh, the "Land of the Lamas."

Ladakh, India's northernmost Union Territory, is paradise for travellers. Its altitude demands preparation—warm clothing, patience, and acclimatization. Summer (June–October) offers pleasant days at 15–20°C, while winter (January–March) plunges to -30°C, rewarding photographers with snowy vistas.

Leh and Surroundings

Ladakh divides into two regions: Leh and Zaskar. Both regions boast distinct landscapes, lifestyles, and photographic opportunities. We focused on Leh, a smorgasbord of photo ops including cultures, wildlife, astrophotography, and sweeping landscapes. Mountains play with light, lakes shimmer in hues, and camels roam cold desert dunes.

We arrived in Leh on a crisp morning, dedicating two days to acclimatization. Evenings were spent at Leh Market, Shanti Stupa, and Leh Palace. Leh is clean, quaint, and welcoming, with

locals whose warmth fuels tourism. Accommodation ranges from luxury hotels to budget stays, and transport is easy—taxis, tours, or rented bikes.

Turtuk: The Last Village

On our third day, we left Leh early and headed toward Turtuk, the northernmost village on the Indian side of the Indo-Pak border. En route, we crossed Khardung La, which, at an altitude of 17,582 feet, was until recently the highest motorable road in the world. (That title now belongs to Umling La, at 19,300 feet). We were greeted by an unexpected snowfall at Khardung La, blanketing the entire landscape in white and elevating our spirits. After capturing some magical shots, we descended into the Nubra Valley. The roads on this route are fantastic, sometimes resembling modern highways. The scenic beauty is maximized by flowing river valleys and rugged, barren mountains interrupted only by sporadic patches of green vegetation. The shifting light on these mountains throughout the day is a feast for any lensman hungry for the perfect picture. By evening, we reached Turtuk, a lush village by the Shyok River. Once open to photography, locals now guard their privacy—respect is essential.

Hunder and Diskit

Next morning, we drove to Hunder, famed for white sand dunes and Bactrian camels, relics of the Silk Route. Photographing camel silhouettes against sunlit mountains was unforgettable. Reflection shots in scattered puddles added magic.

After a cozy stay, we explored dunes in abstract compositions before visiting Diskit Monastery. Its towering Maitreya Buddha offers a sweeping view of the Shyok Valley. Monks in daily routines against the monastery backdrop made for striking portraits.

Pangong Tso: The Azure Jewel

The road from Nubra to Pangong Lake is long and treacherous, with water crossings and stone-filled tracks. Hydration and light snacks are vital. By evening, the lake's azure waters appeared, and soon we reached its dreamy shores. At 134 sq. km, extending into China, Pangong is the world's highest saltwater lake. Winds chilled us instantly, but astrophotographers braved the cold for Milky Way shots.

At dawn, golden light reflected across the lake, creating unforgettable frames. As the sun rose, gulls and terns fished along the banks, while the lake shifted colors—indigo, emerald, even magenta. Reluctantly, we left our homestay for the next destination.



Tso Moriri: The Indigo Lake

Driving to Tso Moriri was harsher than Pangong, through rugged terrain. At 14,836 ft, the lake lies entirely within India, flanked by flatter mountains yet shimmering in deep indigo. Evenings were cold and windy, demanding layers of clothing.

Morning brought us to Korzok village, with its monastery and modern stays. Tso Moriri, a wetland reserve, hosted Bar-headed geese and Ruddy shelducks with chicks—migrants from Siberia and Mongolia.

Hanle: India's Darkest Sky

Hanle fulfilled my dream of visiting India's darkest place. Vast valleys, salt beds, and wildlife—black-necked cranes, marmots, kiangs, even elusive Pallas's cats—enriched the journey. Photography is restricted near military bases, but the skies are unmatched. With zero light pollution, we



captured star trails and the Milky Way. Hanle Monastery, overlooking the river, added serenity before our return to Leh via Loma, Nyoma, and Tso Kar.

Dha Hanu: The Aryan Villages

In Dhahanu valley near the Indo-Pak border, villages of Dha and Hanu house the Brokpa community, often called the "last of the Aryans." Their blend of Buddhism and animism is unique, and women adorn scarves and hair with fresh flowers—perfect for portrait photography.

Lamayuru Mask Dance Festival

No Ladakh trip is complete without a monastic festival. Ours coincided with Lamayuru's mask dance. En route, we admired Moonland rock formations and the Sangam of Indus and Zaskar rivers. At the monastery, a profound cultural finale to our expedition.

***H. Satish**, is in the field of photography since 1981. He is the first Indian honored with EFIAP and MFIAP in Nature color prints, and the youngest to achieve MFIAP. He remains unbeaten as the first Indian to earn the title Master of Photography from three global bodies in Nature photography. He has also been conferred Honorary Fellowships by 16 international photography organizations.*







Essential Tips for photographers

Health & Travel: At 11,500 ft average altitude, acclimatization is vital. Rest two days before higher passes. Carry Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) medication. Leh connects by flights and scenic highways; taxis, rentals, and bikes are plentiful.

Photography Gear: Be Weather Ready: Ladakh is a landscape lover's paradise year-round. October brings striking yellow autumn foliage. However, mountain weather is unpredictable; expect sudden rain or brief snowfall even in summer.

Lenses: Ensure you have enough memory cards and at least 2 to 3 fully charged batteries. While wide-angle lenses (14mm-18mm) are popular, I found mid-range zooms (24-120mm) most

versatile. Surprisingly, a telephoto lens (like an 80-400mm) is incredible for compressing landscapes and isolating mountain peaks.

Filters: Always carry a Circular Polarizing (CPL) filter, though use it carefully at Pangong and Tso Moriri, as the skies and water are already intensely blue and can easily look over-edited. Neutral Density (ND) filters are highly recommended for long exposures.

Subjects: Beyond landscapes, be ready to capture portraits, abstracts, reflections, monasteries, unique wildlife, and star trails.

For landscape photographers, Ladakh is a pilgrimage. Its rugged mountains, endless play of light, and cultural richness make every frame timeless.





The Mara Lion



Barat Karthi

EFIP, EFIAP, IIG/s1





In the Mara, a lion never feels like just wildlife through a camera lens; it feels like presence. You watch the light slide over its mane, the slow blink, the quiet confidence in the way it holds the land, and suddenly photography becomes less about taking a picture and more about witnessing a life. Every frame carries something human too with a strength, rest, hunger, patience, even tenderness when a pride gathers close. A good photograph of a Mara lion is not only about sharp focus or perfect composition; it is about catching that brief, honest moment when the wild looks back at you and you feel deeply connected to something older, freer, and beautifully real.





Saravanan Janakarajan

Feathers

the USP of birds

In vertebrates, birds are the unique family to have the feathers. They have been thought of a evolutionary change when Aves came from reptiles. The feathers were the growth of epidermal cells like that in the reptile scales. They cover the entire body of the bird except feet and beak. The primary function is to provide insulation from both heat and cold. That is why even the flightless birds also have feathers. the fact that they are light but strong and have a aero-foil capability makes them ideal for flight too.

Feathers are made up of dead protein called KERATIN. This grows within the skin follicles. The feathers grow in groups or in line called Tracts.

RACHIS: Each feather has a central tube like structure called the shaft or Rachis. They are hollow towards the base.

BARBS: From the sides of Rachis parallel branches grow in a single plane, called Barbs.

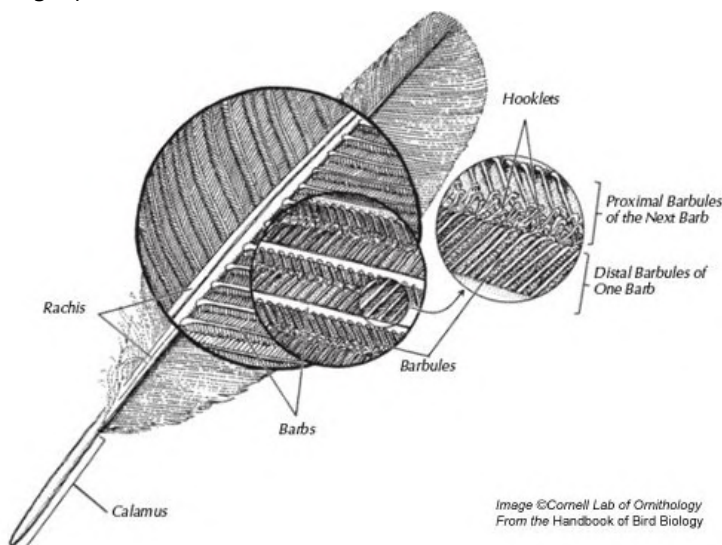


Image ©Cornell Lab of Ornithology
From the Handbook of Bird Biology



BARBULES: On the Barbs small branches grow at right angles in the same plane called Barbules. Towards the tip of feather are called DISTAL BARBULES and the ones near the base of feather are called PROXIMAL BARBULES.

BARBICELS: In some birds the Distal Barbules have small hooks called Barbicels. They hold the PROXIMAL BARBULES of the adjacent Barbs. When the feathers are ruffled up, it is these Barbules that make it possible to

recreate a smooth homogeneous surface as if the feathers are zipped up. This makes the feathers perfect insulators and act as a aero-foil to provide lift and make flight possible.

QUILL: The hollow part of the feather that enters the skin follicle is called Quill or Calamus. When the bird undergoes moulting the new feathers grow from the same follicle from where the old feathers have fallen down.

WEBBING: The Sheet of parallel Barbs (along with Barbules & Barbicels) are called Webbing. Both sides of Webbing put together are called as the BLADE. For the flight feathers the Webbing facing the wind are called OUTER WEBBING and the one closer to body and away from wind is INSIDE WEBBING

It is estimated that a bird depending on its size can have from 3000 feathers (Sunbirds) to 20,000 feathers (Geese & Ducks). These feathers can weigh up to 3 times as the skeleton of the bird.

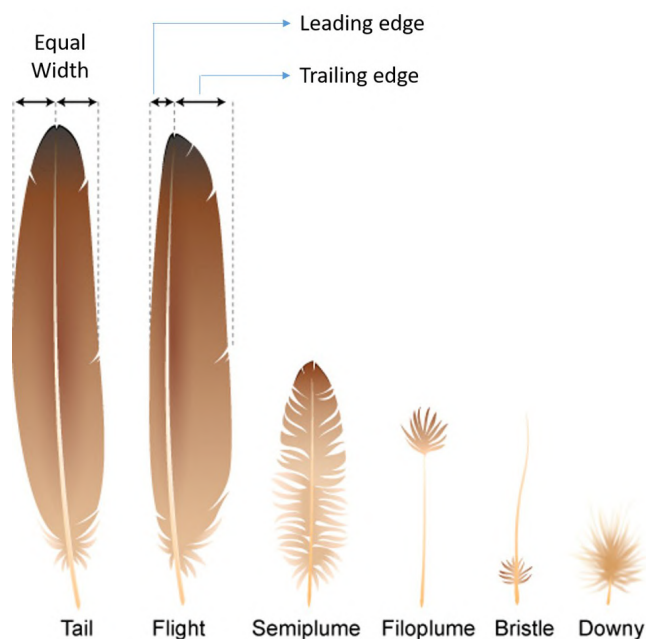


The Keratins that make the bill, claw & feathers of a bird are called BETA-KERATINS. They are more tougher and stronger than the ALPHA-KERATINS that make up the horns, hoofs and hairs of mammals

TERTIARIES. These feathers are usually dark in colour. This is because they undergo a lot of friction in flight and to make them strong the nature has loaded them with MELANIN that gives them this dark colour and strengthens them. The Flight feathers are explained in detail in <https://ogaclinks.com/wordpress/wing-theory/>

Summarising the CONTOUR feathers

- Make body aerodynamic for efficient flight
- Protects the body from climates and enemy attacks
- Waterproofs and insulates the body
- It is the canvass on which the colours are painted by nature to help in camouflage and attract mates
- They also grow as Crest, Tufts, Pennants etc. to be used in display and communication.



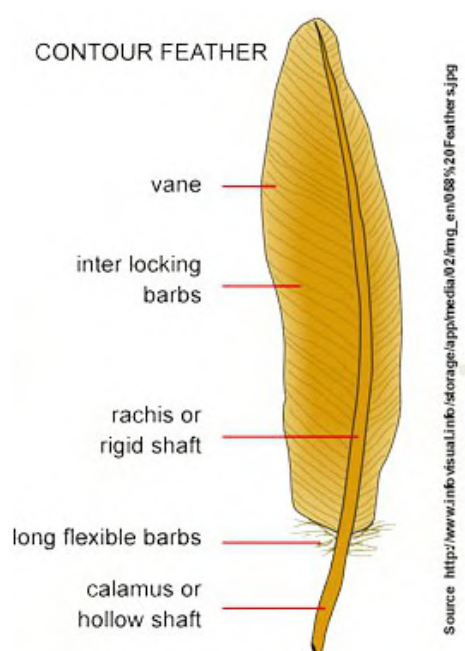
Source : https://askabiologist.asu.edu/sites/default/files/feather_types.jpg

Feathers can be classified basis the rigidity of the central shaft Rachis. Those with stiff Rachis are Vaned feathers and those with soft RACHIS is down feathers.

VANED Feathers: They are feathers with rigid Rachis. There are 3 types of Vaned feathers.

CONTOUR Feathers: They are feathers that cover the entire body of the bird and give it shape. They constitute the outer plumage. The base of the vane is fluffy while rest of the part is rigid. The Barbicels are present in birds with flight as they provide the aero-foil capability. The feathers of the flightless birds lack Barbicels and function as insulators. The feathers covering the body other than wing and tail are symmetrical in shape around the shaft. The width of the Vane is same on each side of the Rachis. The COVERTS are feathers that cover the important parts of the body like Ears, Upper and under wings, Tail etc. The Feathers present on wings are called REMIGES and that present in tail is called RETRICES. Both of them are called the flight feathers.

They are asymmetric in shape, that is the Vane is not of same size around the Rachis. This is because these feathers are exposed to wind. As the wind travels on them at right angles to the shaft, a trailing and leading edge to the feather is created. The part of Vane facing the wind has more pressure on it and there by it is compressed to a thinner size and made stronger by making the Webbing narrower, while the trailing edge has no such pressure hence it has Wider Webbing. The trailing edge of a feather on the Distal part is NOTCHED as if some parts are missing. This gives a finger like appearance to the primary part of the wings. This is very evident in larger birds like Eagles and Storks. This helps reduce drag and helps in flight. The REMIGES can be further classified as PRIMARIES, SECONDARIES &



Source http://www.infvisualinfo.idstorage.lapptmedia.02img_en08%20Feather.s.jpg

SEMI LUME feathers: They are fluffy with loose Barbicels and relatively stiff Rachis. They fill the gap between the CONTOURS and DOWN feathers

BRISTLES: These are modified feathers with stiff shaft and very few Barbs at the base. There are no Barbicels. They are found in face near the base of the beak like in Flycatchers, Bulbuls etc. They are called RICTAL BRISTLES and protect the eyes by guiding the prey into the mouth of the bird. They also cover the nostrils in some birds protecting it from dust etc. Here they are called NASAL BRISTLES. They also appear near the eyes in some birds like Hornbills protecting the eyes from damage. They are called EYELASHES.

DOWN Feathers: These are round short fluffy feathers without Barbicels and Barbules. The Barbs float around freely thereby trapping air and thus making them good insulators. They are found on entire body of the bird under the Contour and Semi Plume feathers.

Saravanan Janakarajan likes to be referred as a bird observer. Starting as a bird photographer he has developed a passion over years of observing the habits and adaptations of the avian species. He has photographed over 1100 different species of birds in Bharat and has recorded some of their wonderful adaptations on camera. His website www.ogaclinks.com is a bird lover's dream destination. It covers for each of these birds of Bharat, in detail description, Food and Breeding habits, Calls, Distribution etc., along with their pictures.



They are called the inner feathers as they are generally not visible from outside, They are further classified basis the life stage or part of the bird where they occur

NATAL DOWN : This covers the body of the chick as it hatches from the egg and remains till it attains immature plumage. Depending on species the birds can have two sets. The first one occurs as soon as the chick comes out of the egg. This is called NEOSSOPTILE DOWN. This occurs in all birds. In some birds like the Skimmer the first set is shed by moulting after few days and a new set replaces them. This is called MESOPTILE DOWN. The Natal Down are soft and fluffy and are usually streaked and Speckled. This is to provide the chicks good camouflage from predators. The chicks are born as COLD BLOODED and remain so till they are in the Nestling period. The Natal Down provides insulation to the chick to maintain the body temperature. This supplements the efforts of the parents in trying to keep their chicks warm by brooding process (Delicately sitting on them). It is a wonder to watch the Natal Down feather grow on the back of the chicks for ground/open nest birds as the back is the first part to get exposed to Sun. Similarly for Ducks and water birds the Natal Down is grown in the underside to protect them from water and provide insulation

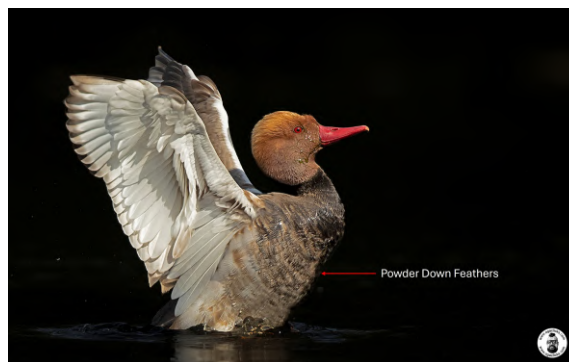
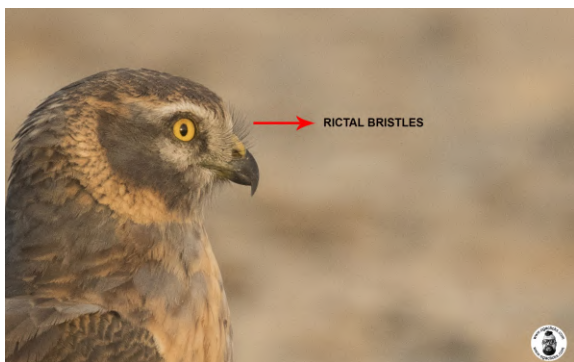
ADULT DOWN : This is found in adults during breeding or moulting in winter. As the birds moult their feathers their

body is exposed to chill of winter and the Adult Down helps in insulating them from the cold.

PREEN GLAND DOWN: This grows as a small dense tuft near the PREEN gland. This gland is present near the upper base of the tail. During Preening the bird prods the gland with its beak. this releases the Preening oil. This is transferred onto these PREEN GLAND DOWN. They become matted and help in easy transfer of the oil to the beak so that the bird can apply it all over the body. They also prevent the oil from coating the tail feathers and hamper flight.

POWDER DOWN: These are special feathers that grow continuously. The end of the Barbs crumble due to aberration and become powder that infiltrates through the feathers and coat the skin. This coating acts like the waterproofing and anti-bacterial agent. This is very common in birds that lack the preening gland like many water birds, Bustards , parrots etc. They usually are present in belly, breast and back

FILOPLUMES: They are soft with flexible shafts and a few loose BARBS at the base. They are scattered through out the body especially around the Contour feathers. When the Contour feathers are disturbed these Down feathers act as pressure and vibration sensors,. They make the bird aware that the Contour feathers are out of place and need to be corrected.



*"Next time you find a feather, sure you would marvel at the engineering feat of nature. It is impossible to replicate it. Birds being the only vertebrates to have **Feathers**. Use of the different type of feathers, birds are to fly and insulate themselves. Feathers One more of natures amazing engineering feat"*

Hall of Fame

IIG Distinction Awards between Apr'26 to Jun'26

Abhijit Pal	IIG/p2	Joydeep Deb	IIG/p4	Ravindra Puntambekar	IIG/s3+p5
Ah Liak Tan	IIG/s3	Klea Kyprianou	IIG/s10+p3	Ricos Andreas Gregoriou	IIG/s5
Ahmed Russell	IIG/p2	Krishnan KV	IIG/s+p5	Roberto De Leonardis	IIG/s
Ajar Setiadi	IIG/s10	Lai Wah Kong	IIG/s3	Roman Doblander	IIG/s
Alessio R Darmanin	IIG/s15+p7	Lale Cakti	IIG/s3+p4	Rudolf Fukal	IIG/s3
AN LEDGARD	IIG/s2	Lothar Noeth	IIG/s2+p2	Sadiqur Rahman	IIG/s+p2
Anjan Das	IIG/s2+p3	Luigi De Rosa	IIG/s15+p10	Sanat Kumar Karmakar	IIG/s3+p8
Anna Maria Mantovani	IIG/s2	Manas Pratim Sharma	IIG/s2+p6	Sanath Kumar	IIG/s25+p10
Arjun Das	IIG/p	Manasi Roy	IIG/s10+p10	Sandeep Das	IIG/s4+p
ASTRO MOHAN	IIG/s+p	Marco Re	IIG/s4	Sankar Nath Chakrabarty	IIG/s7+p4
Balachandder SK	IIG/s7+p10	Mariam Hassan	IIG/s2	Shamik Basu	IIG/p
Bibhuti Bhusan Nandi	IIG/s10+p10	Matthias Haug	IIG/s2	Sherman Cheang	IIG/s15
Chinta Haran Ghosh	IIG/s3+p	Md Iqbal Hossain	IIG/s5+p	Shuvojit Rakshit	IIG/s3+p3
Constant van Bommel	IIG/s4	Mihee Eo	IIG/s9	Sruti Sexena	IIG/s+p2
Datuk Simon KY SHIM	IIG/s	Mohammed Muhtasib	IIG/s8	Stefan Stuppnig	IIG/s9+p8
DAVY VAN GESTEL	IIG/s	Monika Egerer	IIG/s3+p	Steven Stavri	IIG/s+p
Deepak K Biswas	IIG/s6+p7	Mrinal Nath	IIG/s2	Subhasis Barat	IIG/s2+p2
Dino Hadzidervisagic	IIG/s2+p3	Mrinal Sen	IIG/s30+p10	Subhasis Karmakar	IIG/p
Donald DeDonato	IIG/s8	Narendu Ghosh	IIG/p2	Sudhir Nazare	IIG/s4
Donna Hom	IIG/s5	Naresh Agarwal	IIG/p4	Sudhir Saxena	IIG/s6+p
Dr Alain Morata	IIG/s2+p	Naresh Varikilla	IIG/s	Sudip Saha	IIG/s+p7
Dr Chitra Joshi	IIG/s+p5	Norman Johnson	IIG/s15	Sunil Vyas	IIG/s+p8
Dr Gopal Belokar	IIG/s15+p10	Pantelis Kranos	IIG/s15+p7	Syamal Kumar Saha	IIG/s+p10
Dr Gottfried Catania	IIG/s35+p6	Partha Ghosh	IIG/p	Thanasis Hadjipavlou	IIG/s10+p8
Dr Nevra Topalismaoglu	IIG/s2+p	Partha Roy	IIG/p	Udayan Sankar Pal	IIG/s35+p20
Efkan Ogur	IIG/s	Phillip Kwan	IIG/Master2	Umberto D'Eramo	IIG/s4
Filiz Koprulu	IIG/p	Prabir Kumar Roy	IIG/s4+p7	Viet Cao Khac	IIG/s4
Flora Rikin	IIG/s6	Pradyot Majumder	IIG/p3	Vinod Chauhan	IIG/p
Hans-Peter Hornbostel	IIG/s4+p7	Pravin Turkey	IIG/s4+p2	WEE SENG GOH	IIG/s4
Jacky Panhuyzen	IIG/p4	Pritam Panja	IIG/s4+p5	Yuet Yee Wong	IIG/s4
Jiahong Zeng	IIG/s3	Ramaswami GN	IIG/s8+p8	Zoltan Krahling	IIG/s10+p3
Joxe Inazio Kuesta Garmendia	IIG/s10	Ratan Saha	IIG/p	Zoran Makarovic	IIG/s7



Bahurupi

One with many forms



Bahurupi is an almost lost and dying art form of rural Bengal. They are nomadic folk performers, impersonating mythological characters for their living. They bring the characters live wearing elaborate costumes and masks. They are mainly street performers of villages and in mela's (fair). The Bahurupi community primarily found in Birbhum, Bardwan and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal. Traditionally hunter-gatherers, they transitioned into itinerant performative artists, adopting the "many-faced" (Bahurupi) art.

While tracing roots to ancient Indian traditions of mimicry mentioned in Jataka tales, the modern Bahurupi arose from economic necessity, particularly after British forest laws restricted their traditional hunting practices in the 1920s. They portray various godly characters, like Shiva, Durga, Kali, Radha, and Krishna, using makeup techniques like zinc oxide and vermilion. They often operate as wandering community, moving from village to village to perform. According to their oral histories, a Bedia man was inspired by an actor, which led to the community adopting this art as a livelihood.

As traditional street theatre declines in the face of modern society, many in the community face poverty and are forced to seek alternative profession for survival.

While the tradition is dying, projects are being initiated to support the community's cultural legacy. Efforts like the Bahurupi Art Project 2025-26 are attempting to document their lives and provide a platform for their craft in contemporary contexts.



Arindra Dey

My photographic journey started just as fun with analogue camera and slowly its started growing in me. A casual hobby gone into my system and now it's a vital part of my life. Wildlife, Nature, Landscape and Travel photography are of my prime interest.





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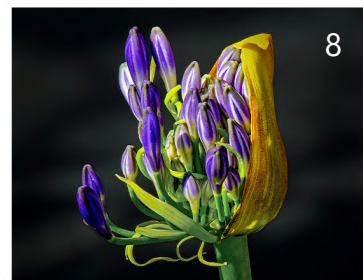
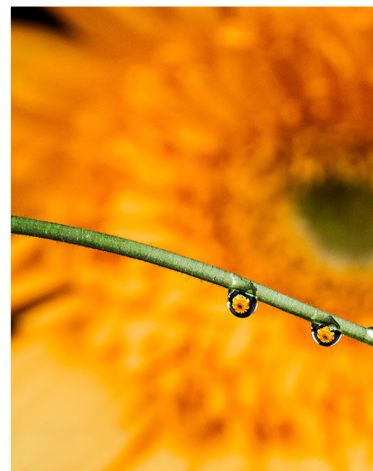
e.mail : raj_arin@yahoo.com /
beralopamudra16@gmail.com

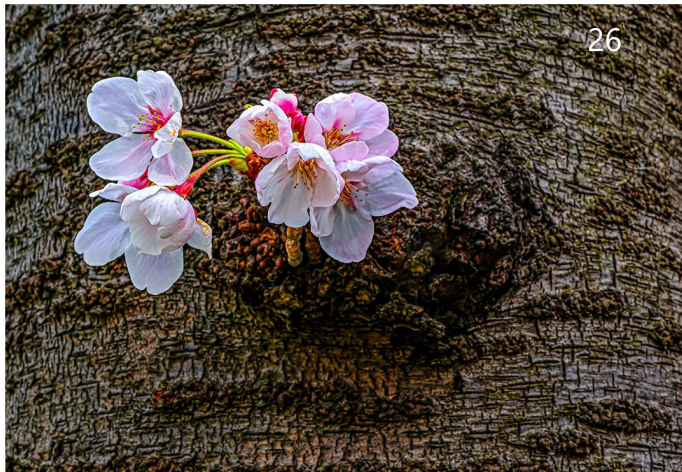
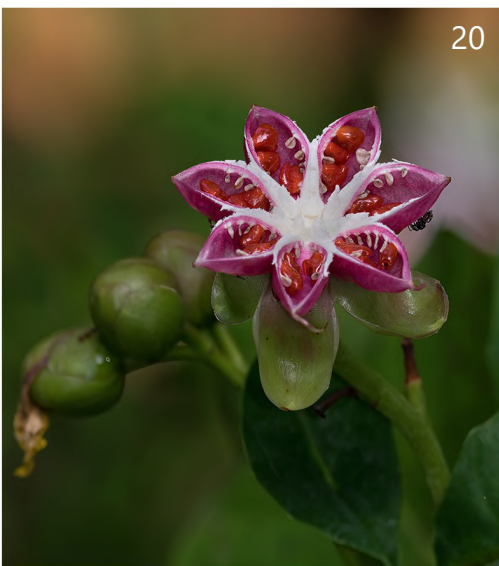
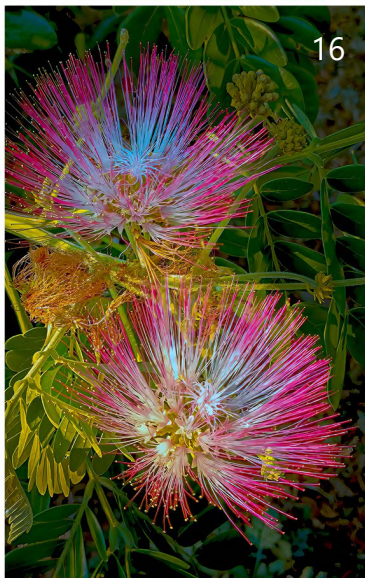
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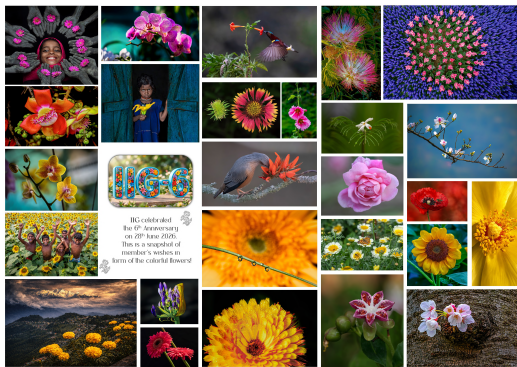
MENTOR : ARINDAM BERA (EFIP, EFIAIP, EPLAAPA, Hon. PESGSPC, GPA, PESGSPC, F. NOBEL/GOLD)
LOPAMUDRA BERA (AFIP, AFIAP, AGNG, APLAAPA)



 IIG celebrated 
its 6th Anniversary
on 28th June 2026.
*This snapshot captures the heartfelt wishes of our
members, expressed through a vibrant array of
colorful flowers.*





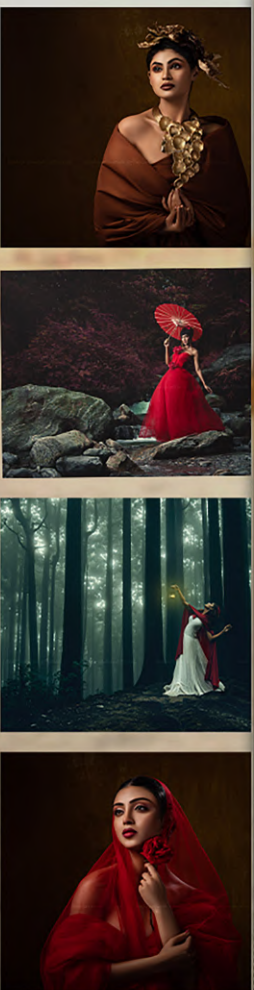


IIG joyfully marked its 6th Anniversary on 28th June 2026. Members conveyed their heartfelt wishes and blessings through vibrant, colorful flowers — each bloom a symbol of love and affection. This floral tribute is but a modest reflection of the warmth and devotion of our members. The flowers presented here, in no particular order, are graciously offered by the following contributors.

- 1 Mousumi Ghosh
- 2 Balachandder Sk
- 3 Tapas Kr Paul
- 4 Saurabh Sirohiya
- 5 Abhijeet Kumar Banerjee
- 6 Mahua Sarkar
- 7 Shampa Bhowmik
- 8 Sruti Saxena
- 9 Piyali Datta

- 10 Mainak Dey
- 11 Prantik Biswas
- 12 Tridib Mitra
- 13 Md Iqbal Hossain
- 14 Suman Banerjee
- 15 Srijan Roy Choudhury
- 16 Dr H C Sharatchandra
- 17 Subrata Nath

- 18 Asim Kumar Chaudhuri
- 19 Chinta Haran Ghosh
- 20 Arijit Das
- 21 Lale Cakti
- 22 Anjan Das
- 23 Rumna Mukherjee
- 24 Ajit Joshi
- 25 Dhiman Nath
- 26 Sudhir Saxena



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Expanding Horizons

IIG partners with ICAP

IIG is delighted to announce a **new partnership** with the Russia-based photographic collective—International Club of Art Portrait (ICAP). With members spanning the globe, IIG has always championed creative exchange. This new collaboration with ICAP opens exciting avenues for joint exhibitions, shared magazine features, participation in international competitions, educational initiatives, and the cultivation of professional connections across continents.

Together, we look forward to fostering dialogue, celebrating artistry, and building bridges within the worldwide photographic community.



ICAP
International Club of Art Portrait

About ICAP

The **International Club of Art Portrait (ICAP)** was founded in 2024. Since its establishment, the club has pursued one clear goal: *to provide photographers with the broadest possible opportunities for creative expression, professional development, and international collaboration.*

ICAP is intentionally independent and does not promote any single photographic organization. Its mission is to provide members with an objective understanding of the major international photographic organizations and the opportunities they offer. The Club actively brings photographers together through exhibitions, competitions, festivals, masterclasses, educational webinars, and regular meetings with the leaders and representatives of the world's leading photographic organizations.

Today, ICAP unites more than *200 active members* from *Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Finland, Armenia, Spain, and Estonia*. They are accomplished photographers who have earned numerous international awards, distinctions, and photographic honors. You can discover the work of many of

our most distinguished members in the "Hall of Fame" section of our website: <https://artportrait.pro/en/bestauthors>.

ICAP aims to build not only a professional community but also genuine friendships among photographers. We believe that *meaningful human connections are one of the strongest driving forces behind the development of contemporary photographic art.*

Every January, the Club traditionally holds its annual members' meeting in Saint Petersburg, Russia, bringing together photographers from different cities and countries.

The International Club of Art Portrait has received numerous international awards and club trophies in recognition of its artistic achievements and active participation in international photography salons.

ICAP also has its own patronage and awards, which are presented in competitions organized by the Club as well as in many international photography salons.

The 1st International Art Portrait Cup

2026, organized by ICAP, was recently completed. The competition attracted 1,024 photographers from 79 countries, with a total of 17,925 submitted photographs. Participation was completely free, allowing photographers from around the world to showcase their work regardless of financial circumstances. More information about the competition, together with the winning photographs, is available at: <https://artportrait.pro/en/> results.

One of ICAP's largest and most significant projects is the International Photography Olympiad, PhotOlympic, held under the patronage of IAAP, where the Club serves as an official co-organizer.

Each year, 96 finalists from around the world gather in the host country to compete during a week of live creative challenges and determine the Olympiad's winners. A special highlight of the project is the exhibition of the winning and awarded photographs, which subsequently travels to different countries, promoting both photographic art and international cultural exchange.



The Konyak

Last headhunters of Nagaland is a vanishing legacy



Happy Mukherjee

EFIP, EFIAP

High in the remote hills of Nagaland, along India's border with Myanmar, lives the Konyak tribe. Known worldwide as the legendary "headhunters," they carry a rich cultural heritage extending far beyond their warrior past. Today, they stand at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, striving to preserve their unique identity.

For centuries, headhunting was integral to Konyak society. Until the practice was abolished in the 1960s, successful warriors returned from inter-village battles with enemies' heads—victories believed to bring prosperity, fertility, and protection. Bravery earned warriors the privilege of wearing distinctive facial and body tattoos, symbols of courage, honor, and social status. Deep black patterns covering the faces, chests, and arms of surviving elder warriors create living records of a bygone era. Each tattoo tells a story of battles fought and tribal traditions. As these elders age,

their extraordinary stories risk fading into history.

Central to Konyak governance and culture is the unique institution of the 'Anghs' or Kingship. Unlike other Naga tribes, the Konyaks are traditionally ruled by hereditary kings known as Anghs. The Sacred Angh holds supreme authority over one or several villages, exercising absolute power over judicial, executive, and religious matters. Visually striking and powerful, the Anghs can be identified by the elaborate blue beads on their legs and distinct brass ornaments. The ultimate power resides with the Great Anghs (Monarch), whose lineage remains pure through royal marriages, and who rules over a network of subordinate village kings. This rigid, autocratic hierarchy coexisted with their warrior culture, shaping a highly organized society where the King's word was absolute law.

Occupations and Living Traditions beyond warfare, Konyak life revolves

around a deep connection to the land and master craftsmanship. Their primary occupation is Jhum (slash-and-burn) cultivation, supplemented by hunting and fishing. They are also exceptionally skilled blacksmiths and gunsmiths, famous for forging their own muzzle-loading guns, machetes (daos), and intricate brass ornaments. Konyak women excel in weaving vibrant traditional shawls, while men are renowned for masterful wood carvings that decorate their morungs (communal houses) and royal palaces alongside trophies and symbolic motifs.

Their rich agricultural lifestyle is anchored by vibrant traditions, most notably the Aoleang Monyu festival. Celebrated in early April, this major spring festival marks the end of the sowing season and welcomes the Konyak New Year, filled with traditional dances, magnificent feasts, and rhythmic songs honoring their ancestry and praying for a bountiful harvest.



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Despite their fearsome reputation, modern Konyak society is peaceful and welcoming. Christianity, education, and increased connectivity have transformed village life. Young Konyaks now pursue higher education and modern careers while maintaining pride in their roots. However, modernization brings the challenge of preserving traditional knowledge, rituals, and visual heritage.

Today, the Konyaks are guardians of a remarkable legacy, carrying centuries of history etched onto their skin and woven into their traditions. Documenting their lives ensures that the stories of Nagaland's legendary head-hunters and powerful Anghs continue to inspire generations long after the final tattoos have faded from living memory.

Forest Man of India

Jadav Payeng, known as the “Forest Man of India,” single handedly transformed a barren sandbar on Majuli Island into the 550 hectare Molai Forest over four decades, creating habitat for tigers, elephants, rhinos, and thousands of trees and earning the Padma Shri in 2015

— a news article —



Jadav “Molai” Payeng was born in 1959 in the Mishim community on Majuli, the world’s largest river island in Assam. In 1979, as a teenager, he encountered a pile of dead snakes on a sun-baked sandbar — a moment that catalyzed his life’s work of planting and nurturing trees to restore the island’s ecology.

From sandbar to sanctuary

Payeng began by planting **about 20 bamboo seedlings** and developed low-tech irrigation and care methods — drilling holes with a stick, using earthen pots to drip water, and building bamboo platforms to protect saplings. Over the ensuing decades his solitary effort matured into **Molai Forest**, now estimated at **550 hectares (1,360 acres)** and supporting a rich assemblage of flora and fauna.

Ecological and social impact

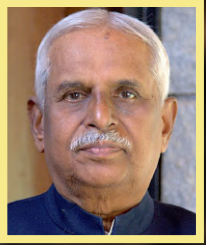
Molai Forest now shelters species such as Bengal tigers,

elephants, Indian rhinoceroses, deer, monkeys, and numerous bird species. The forest contains thousands of trees including *Terminalia arjuna*, *Lagerstroemia speciosa*, *Delonix regia*, *Albizia procera*, *Bombax ceiba*, and others that stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and buffer nearby villages from monsoonal floods. Beyond biodiversity, the forest provides livelihood opportunities and acts as a living demonstration of how targeted reforestation can protect riverine communities.

Recognition and lessons

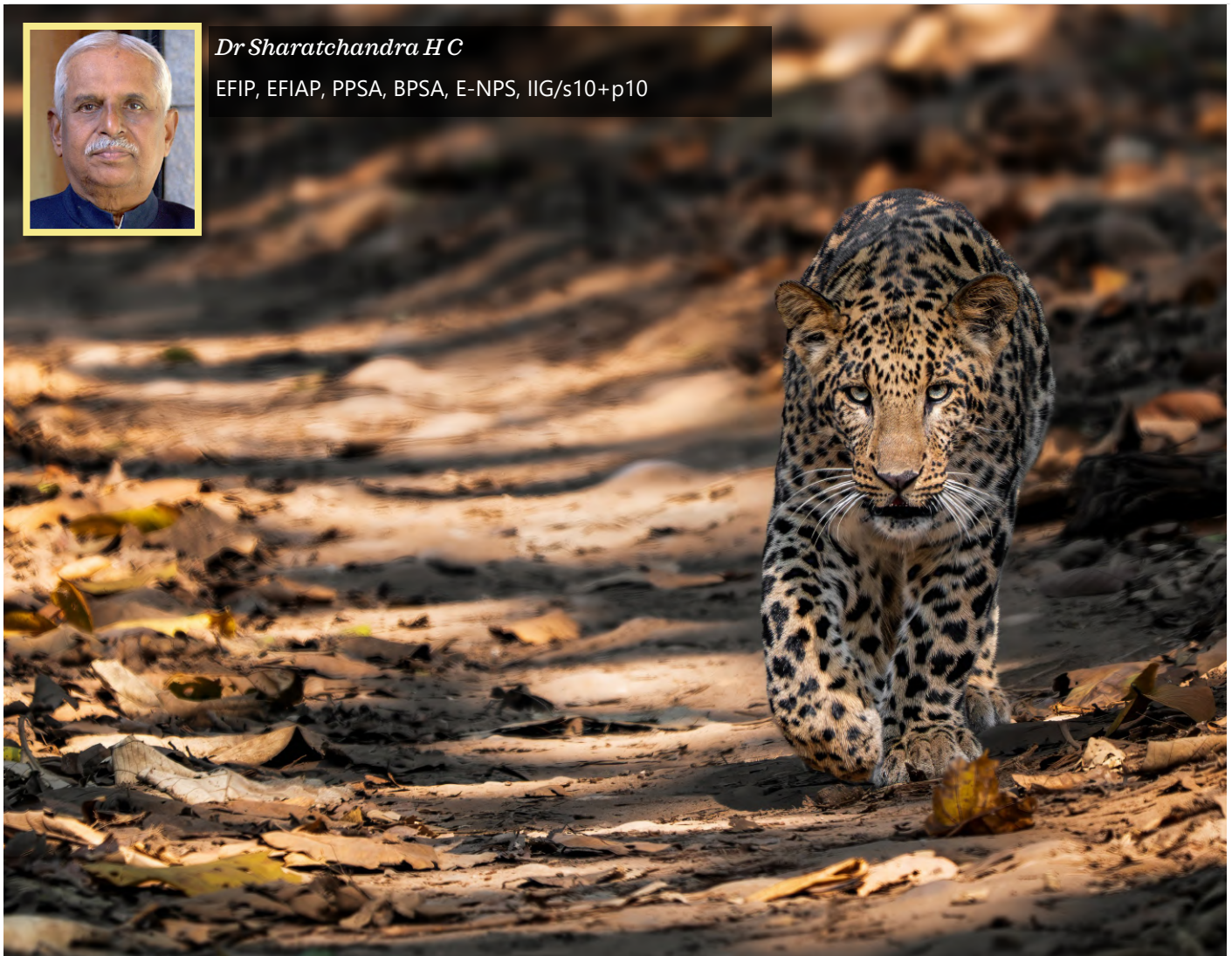
Payeng’s work drew official attention in **2008** when forest officials investigating elephants discovered the forest, and he was later awarded the **Padma Shri in 2015** for his environmental contribution. His story has been the subject of documentaries and international coverage, inspiring reforestation initiatives and research into community-led restoration.

Source: thursd.com/thursd.com. Meet Jadav Payeng: The Forest Man of India Behind Molai Forest



Dr Sharatchandra H C

EFIP, EFIAP, PPSA, BPSA, E-NPS, IIG/s10+p10



In search of Elusive Leopards of **Rajaji National Park**

Nestled at the base of the Himalayas in the Shivalik range of Uttarakhand lies **Rajaji National Park**, one of India's finest deciduous forests. Spread across 820 sq. km, it is home to elephants, tigers, leopards, sloth bears, striped hyenas, deer species, and over 400 avian species. With its broad prey base, Rajaji sustains a thriving leopard population, estimated by local guides at 200–250 individuals.

Leopards, elusive and shy, have long fascinated me. My first encounter was in 1974 at Bandipur National Park, Karnataka. Armed only with an Asahi

Pentax Spotmatic and a modest 130 mm lens, I captured a leopard perched on a tree. Those monochrome roll-film images marked the beginning of my lifelong pursuit of photographing leopards in varied moods and habitats. The passion deepened after a memorable sighting in Tadoba, Maharashtra, where a delicate female leopard revealed herself as a mother when her cub joined her.

This February, the opportunity arose to explore Rajaji's Mohand range with seven fellow wildlife photographers. Reports of a mother leopard with two cubs moving along the periphery had

stirred excitement, and we hoped to witness them.

The Park's Rich Ecology

Rajaji's uniqueness lies in its position at the confluence of the Shivalik range, the Indo-Gangetic plains, and the Himalayan foothills. Established as a sanctuary in 1948 and named after India's first Governor General, C. Rajagopalachari, it was expanded in 1983 by merging Rajaji, Motichur, and Chilla sanctuaries. In 2015, it became a tiger reserve.



The Ganges and Chilla rivers flow through the park, dividing its terrain into diverse habitats—semi-evergreen forests, Sal-dominated deciduous woodlands, grasslands, and riparian stretches. Pebble-filled streams crisscross the park, dry in summer but brimming during monsoons. This ecological variety nurtures elephants, tigers, leopards, and a dazzling array of birds. Hornbills, magpies, woodpeckers, and the rare Pallas's fish eagle make Rajaji a paradise for birdwatchers.

My Gear

For this expedition, I carried two OM-1 bodies paired with the M.Zuiko Digital

ED 150–400 mm f/4.5 lens with a built-in 1.25x teleconverter. On the cropped sensor, this offered an effective range of 375–1000 mm—ideal for elusive cats. With in-body stabilization, tripods were unnecessary, allowing mobility during safaris.

The Journey

I travelled from Bengaluru to Delhi, then onward by Shatabdi to Dehradun on 12 February 2026. Three friends arriving by air joined me at the station, and together we checked into a resort 20 km from the park gate. Over four days, we undertook six jeep safaris, each filled with anticipation.

Day 1: The First Encounter

After completing entry formalities—phones deposited, GPS devices issued—we split into two jeeps. Within an hour, one group spotted a female leopard near a waterhole. Our jeep arrived too late, but soon we joined a crowd watching a cub asleep under a tree. Moments later, the mother appeared on a fallen log, regal and unperturbed, allowing ample time for photographs before rejoining her cub. As dusk fell, another leopard slipped into the bushes near the pond. Back at camp, stories and images were shared around the bonfire, sparking envy and excitement.





Day 2: Playful Siblings

Rising at 4 am, we entered the park at dawn. Guides soon located a leopard under a bush. As daylight grew, the cat played hide-and-seek, climbing trees and teasing photographers. Then, a cub appeared nearby, more playful and photogenic. For 45 minutes, we captured their antics before they vanished into the thickets.

That afternoon, fortune favoured us again. Near the waterhole, two leopard siblings lounged on the road, unbothered by our presence. We photographed them extensively, one even approaching our jeep menacingly. Later, their mother emerged, completing the family tableau. That evening, our jeep became the envy of camp, having secured the best images.

Day 3: Elephants at the Waterhole

The morning safari yielded only fleeting glimpses—a mother leopard briefly perched on a tree before disappearing. Guides reported another crossing the dry riverbed, but we missed it. Instead, a herd of elephants arrived at the waterhole, drinking and bathing joyfully.

Though leopards eluded us, the elephants provided unforgettable moments. The afternoon safari was quieter, with hornbills and magpies filling the silence.

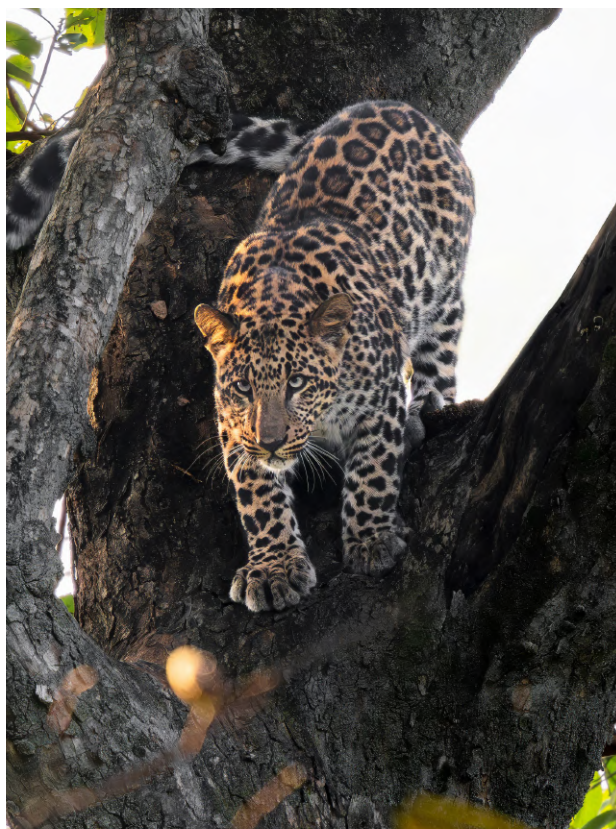
Day 4: A Quiet Farewell

On the final day, despite covering multiple routes, leopards remained hidden. Nature, unpredictable as ever, offered no sightings. We returned to camp, packed our gear, and departed with cherished memories and treasured images.

Reflections

Rajaji National Park, with its mosaic of habitats and rich biodiversity, proved a rewarding destination. The thrill of encountering leopards—whether a regal mother, playful cubs, or elusive silhouettes—was matched by the camaraderie of fellow photographers and the park's avian splendor.

Though nature did not always oblige, the unpredictability is part of the charm. Each safari is a promise, each sighting a gift. I leave Rajaji with a renewed desire to return, hopeful of meeting more of its elusive leopards through the lens.





Hokkaido Haiku



Somdutt Prasad

PFIAP, MPSA2, BPSA,
GFIP+EFIP/g, IIG/p15+s10



In this minimalist portfolio, red-crowned cranes emerge from the winter snows of Hokkaido as elegant brushstrokes on an almost blank canvas. By reducing the scene to its essential forms, the images emphasise gesture, rhythm and the delicate balance between presence and absence. The cranes' black, white and crimson markings become graphic elements, while their courtship, flight and interaction reveal both grace and intimacy. Inspired by Japanese aesthetics, these photographs seek to transcend documentary representation and move toward visual poetry. They celebrate not only an iconic species, but also the power of simplicity to distil nature into shape, movement and emotion.



Abhijeet Kumar Banerjee

EFIAP/s, EFIP Gold/n, MPSA, IIG/p3

Across the fertile plains of North Bengal, where mustard fields bloom in brilliant yellow and village life still moves to the rhythm of seasons, an extraordinary tradition continues to survive against the tide of modernity. Known as Gumira, this vibrant folk ritual combines mythology, dance, music, handcrafted masks, and community participation into a powerful expression of Bengal's rural cultural heritage.

The images presented here capture not merely performers in masks, but a living tradition that embodies centuries of belief, storytelling, and collective memory.



Echoes of the Mask: Gumira

*A Cultural Journey Through Ritual, Performance, and
Photography*



Origins and Historical Background

Gumira is primarily associated with the Rajbanshi communities of North Bengal, particularly in Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, and parts of Malda. It evolved from ancient agrarian rituals linked to protective deities. The term Gumira, derived from Gamira or Gramira, suggests ties to village worship. Historically, performances were bound to the agricultural cycle, invoking prosperity, protection, and communal well-being. Unlike classical traditions governed by scripture, Gumira grew through oral transmission—

songs, stories, mask-making, and dance styles passed down generations—making it one of Bengal's most authentic forms of intangible heritage.

The Masks: Faces of Gods, Spirits, and Legends

At the heart of Gumira lies its striking masks. Carved from wood and painted in vivid colours, they depict Kali, Narasimha, Shiva, Chamunda, demons, guardians, and animal spirits. Exaggerated eyes, protruding tongues, and dramatic crowns transform villagers into supernatural beings.



Frightening yet fascinating, sacred yet theatrical, the masks are revered, stored carefully, and brought out only for ritual occasions. Once worn, the performer ceases to be an individual and becomes a vessel through which the character comes alive.

Dance, Music, and Ritual Performance

Gumira is not merely dance—it is ritual. Performances are accompanied by Dhak, Dhol, Kanshi, cymbals, and folk wind instruments. The beats guide vigorous movements, mimicking divine battles and struggles between good and evil. Heavy masks restrict vision, yet dancers leap, spin, and gesture with intensity. Troupes often move from house to house, blessing families and collecting contributions, reinforcing Gumira as both spiritual offering and social bond.

Gumira and Rural Life

The tradition is inseparable from village landscapes—mustard fields, bamboo groves, mud houses, and courtyards form its stage. Images of masked performers amid yellow blossoms symbolize fertility and protection.

Children grow up witnessing and joining performances, ensuring continuity. A child holding an animal mask reminds us Gumira lives not in museums but in the aspirations of the next generation.

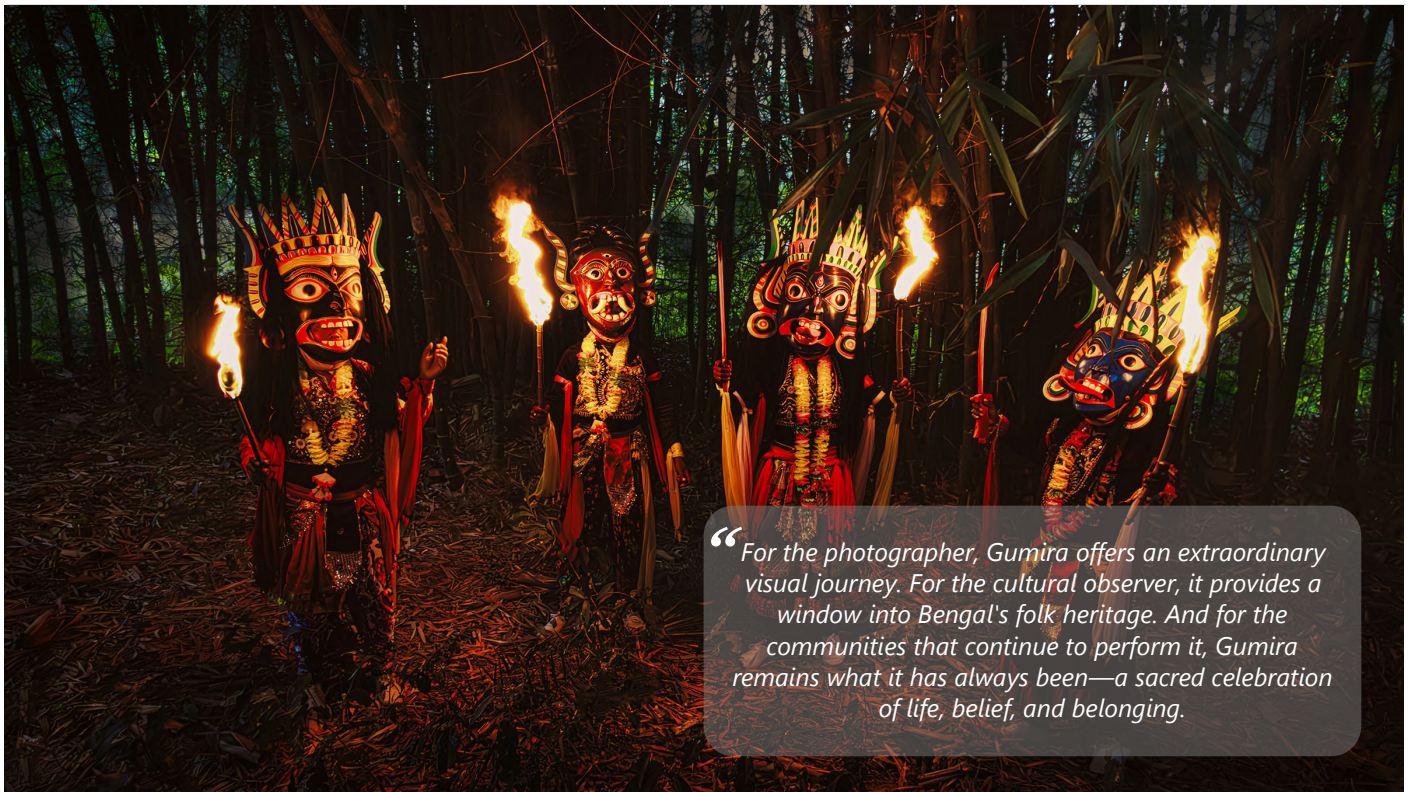
Symbolism of the Characters

The visual language is rich with meaning. Blue masks evoke cosmic energy; black masks ward off evil; animal faces symbolize humanity's bond with nature. Torches add layers of purification and transformation, while incense and offerings deepen the sacred atmosphere. At night, illuminated masks against darkness create an otherworldly aura, reinforcing belief in supernatural transformation.

Challenges in the Modern Era

Urban migration, lifestyle changes, and economic pressures threaten Gumira. Skilled artisans are fewer, and community participation wanes. Yet resilience endures. Local organizations, researchers, and photographers document and promote the tradition, while festivals bring recognition. True preservation, however, lies in its continued practice within the villages that birthed it.





“For the photographer, Gumira offers an extraordinary visual journey. For the cultural observer, it provides a window into Bengal's folk heritage. And for the communities that continue to perform it, Gumira remains what it has always been—a sacred celebration of life, belief, and belonging.”

A Photographer's Perspective

For a photographer, Gumira offers far more than colourful subjects and dramatic visuals. It presents an opportunity to document a culture at the intersection of ritual, performance, and identity. The first impression is inevitably visual—the explosive colours, towering masks, intricate costumes, and expressive gestures. Yet prolonged engagement reveals deeper narratives.

The performers are farmers, labourers, artisans, and villagers who temporarily step into mythological roles. The contrast between their everyday lives and their transformed identities creates a compelling photographic story.

Photographing Gumira requires patience and cultural sensitivity. The most meaningful images often emerge not during the performance itself but in the moments surrounding it:

- A child curiously wearing a mask.
- A performer preparing for a ritual.
- Musicians gathering before a procession.
- Villagers watching with reverence.
- Smoke rising during an offering.
- Masks resting silently after the performance ends.

The mustard fields featured in many of these images provide a striking visual backdrop. Their vast yellow expanse creates a dramatic contrast against the vivid reds, blues, blacks, and greens of the masks and costumes. The landscape becomes more than a setting; it becomes a character in the story.

The night scenes illuminated by fire reveal another dimension of Gumira. Darkness strips away distractions and focuses attention on the masks, transforming the performers into mysterious figures emerging from folklore and collective imagination.

From a documentary perspective, Gumira photography serves an important purpose. Every image becomes a visual archive preserving traditions that may otherwise fade over time. Photography not only records appearances but also captures relationships—between people and beliefs, performers and audiences, tradition and modernity.

In an increasingly homogenized world, traditions like Gumira remind us of the richness and diversity of local cultures. They demonstrate how communities preserve identity through stories, symbols, and shared experiences.





The Madras High Court

A Photographer's Delight



B. Ramana Kumar

EFIP, EFIAP, PPSA

An advocate practicing at the Madras High Court and a past President of the Photographic Society of Madras.

The Madras High Court stands proudly in Chennai, almost beside the harbor, its grandeur unmistakable. Designed in Indo-Saracenic style by J. W. Brasington and later expanded under Henry Irwin, it remains one of the most elaborate and photogenic examples of this architectural tradition in the city. While Chennai boasts several Indo-Saracenic structures, none match the scale and beauty of this court. For a photographer, the High Court offers endless frames – arches, domes, staircases, and light that shifts with the hour.

Established on 26 June 1862 by letters patent from the English Crown, the Madras High Court was among the three chartered High Courts in India, replacing the Supreme Court of Madras that had functioned since 1817. The present building, completed in 1892, is among the oldest high courts in the country. Remarkably, the premises already housed a lighthouse, which was raised to 175 feet during construction. Most materials were sourced locally, with artisans from the region contributing their skill, while steel and ornamental tiles were imported.

Indo-Saracenic architecture—sometimes called Indo-Gothic or Neo-Mughal—was a revivalist style favored by British architects in the late 19th century. It blended Mughal and

Indo-Islamic motifs with Gothic Revival and Neo-Classical layouts, producing buildings that were both imposing and richly decorated. The Madras High Court exemplifies this synthesis.

History left its mark here. On 22 September 1914, during World War I, the German cruiser SMS *Emden* attacked the port, damaging the court building. A plaque still commemorates the spot where a bomb fell—the only place in India struck during that war.

As both advocate and photographer, I have had the privilege of daily access to this marvel. Its innumerable arches and granite staircases make it a delight to capture. The red-brick arches, recently restored, glow with renewed brilliance, while the granite stairs remain as solid as when first laid. High ceilings keep the interiors cool even in Chennai's harsh summers.

The central dome is both practical and aesthetic, flooding the building with light throughout the day. Beneath it lies a quadrangle of artistic flooring and seating, its mosaics arranged in octagonal patterns that must be seen to be believed. Courtrooms feature red-and-black flooring with matching panels, many carefully replaced to preserve the original look after more than 130 years of use.

Granite pillars and brickwork abound, their workmanship a testament to the

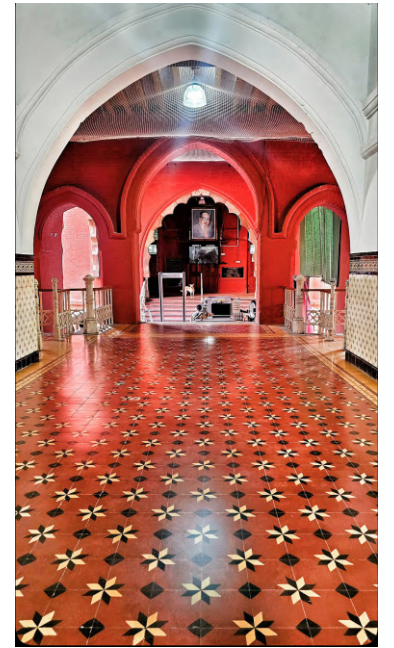
builders' skill. Some pillars conceal spiral staircases leading to terraces and minarets, once used to access the lighthouse or the dome's upper reaches. The courtroom doors, towering 10–11 feet high, are crafted from Burma teak with glass inlays. Though some originals have deteriorated, replacements maintain their grandeur. The glass panels shift in color with the day's light, a subtle beauty only noticed by those who spend long hours within.

The exterior rivals the interior. Red bricks and granite arches create a striking façade, especially during rains when the drenched walls resemble a bride adorned for celebration. Every detail—the wrought-iron grills, railings, intricate ceilings, and glass panels—reflects creativity, labor, and technical excellence.

Perhaps the most unique feature is the old lighthouse. Beyond guiding ships, it serves as India's reference point for sea-level calculations. A stone beneath it marks "zero," from which barometers are calibrated—a distinction few buildings can claim.

The Madras High Court is not merely a seat of justice; it is a living monument. Its architecture, history, and artistry embody the spirit of Chennai, offering endless inspiration to those who walk its halls or view it from afar.





Ask SKB

Ethics in Photography & Ethics of the Photographer



SK Balachandder
EFIAP/gold, IIG s6+p10

Where the Image clicked and Responsibility Begins...

Many time photography is discussed in technical terms, cameras, lenses, sensors, light, and composition, but its deeper strength lies in *responsibility*. Every photograph carries not only visual information, but also moral weight. Photography is also governed by ethics - both in the making of the image and in the conduct of the person behind the camera.

For this reason, any serious discussion of the medium must distinguish between two closely related but different ideas: *Ethics in Photography* and *Ethics of the Photographer*.

These two ideas are deeply connected: one governs the image, and the other governs the maker.

Q1: What is meant by “Ethics in Photography”?

It governs the photograph itself. A photograph is a representation of a person, a place, an event, or a reality. It carries the possibility of influence, misunderstanding, exploitation, or truth. Further, it can dignify, inform, and educate; but it can also stereotype, humiliate, mislead, or manipulate perception. It also deals with what is right or wrong in the photographic process itself, especially when images affect truth, privacy, dignity, and public perception.

Main Principles :

Principle	What it means	Ethical expectation
Consent	Permission to photograph/publish identifiable people	Ask clearly, especially in private/sensitive settings
Privacy	Respecting personal space/confidential moments	Avoid intrusion in homes, hospitals, grief
Truthfulness	Preserving factual integrity	Do not stage or mislead in factual work
Editing limits	Acceptable post-processing	Global correction fine; deceptive alteration unethical
Context	Presenting images fairly	Use accurate captions, avoid misleading framing
Dignity	Showing people respectfully	Do not exploit pain, poverty, grief
Protection of vulnerable	Extra care for children, victims	Stronger safeguards before capture/publication

Q2: What is meant by “Ethics of the Photographer”?

It governs the person behind the camera—their integrity, fairness, and honesty. That is the moral conduct and professional responsibility of the photographer: seek consent, respect refusal, protect privacy, honour contracts, avoid exploitation, maintain honesty in competitions, and respect fellow photographers

Q3: What is the difference between the two?

Aspect	Ethics in Photography	Ethics of the Photographer
Main focus	The image and its truthfulness	The conduct of the image-maker
Main question	Is this photograph ethically made/used?	Is the photographer behaving responsibly?
Concern	Consent, truth, editing, publication	Integrity, professionalism, fairness
Example	Misleading retouching in documentary work	Pressuring subjects, cheating in salons

Q4. Why is consent so important?

It is one of the strongest ethical foundations in photography. It safeguards dignity and trust, especially in weddings, family events, hospitals, and vulnerable settings. Legal permission does not always equal ethical sensitivity.

Q5. What about Weddings, Family functions, and Private events?

Event photography demands trust. Use clear contracts, confirm social-media permissions, respect “do not photograph” requests, and handle emotional moments with restraint.

Q6. What are the ethics of a Photographer in Street Photography and Photojournalism?

Street photography and photojournalism involve a balance between freedom to document and responsibility toward the subject. In public places, photography may be allowed, but ethical judgment is still required, particularly when the subject is distressed, humiliated, sick, poor, grieving, or otherwise vulnerable.

For photojournalism, the rule is even stricter: the image must not be staged, falsified, or altered in a way that changes facts. Captions and context must also remain accurate.



Q7. Where do paparazzi practice ethically?

By respecting privacy and distinguishing public interest from curiosity. Harassment, intrusion, or stalking is unethical.

Paparazzi-style intrusion generally falls outside good

Ethical public interest	Unethical intrusion
Matters affecting accountability/safety	Family holidays, medical moments, private romance, grief

photographic ethics when it invades private life.

Q8. What about Wildlife and Nature Photography?

The welfare of the subject and the habitat must come before the photograph. The photographer should not bait, disturb, flush, stress, endanger, or manipulate wildlife behaviour for the sake of a dramatic frame.

Breeding season, nesting, habitat sensitivity, and ecological balance must be respected. A good picture should never come at the cost of damage to nature.

Q9. Do salon rules belong to ethics in photography or ethics of the photographer?

Primarily ethics in photography, as they preserve authenticity. But knowingly breaking them also breaches photographer ethics. The violation is not only technical but moral: it is dishonesty toward judges, organisers, and fellow participants.

Salon rule area	Ethical category	Why
No addition/removal of content	Ethics in Photography	Protects authenticity
Only global processing	Ethics in Photography	Correction without changing meaning
Honest declaration/submission	Ethics of the Photographer	Requires integrity
Knowingly breaking rules	Ethics of the Photographer	Misrepresentation, unfair competition

Q10. What is the ethical issue with manipulation?

It is unethical when it distorts facts or fabricates reality. Acceptable in art or fashion, but not in documentary or factual genres. Creative editing may be acceptable in art, portrait, conceptual, advertising, or fashion work, but it should not be falsely presented as untouched reality.

Q11. What about copyright and plagiarism?

Copyright protects ownership, which means the image cannot be copied, published, reused, or sold without

permission or a valid license.

Plagiarism is a different but related issue. It means copying another photographer's image, composition, or distinctive visual idea and presenting it as one's own. Plagiarism damage trust, originality, and professional integrity.

Issue	Ethical meaning	Why it matters
Copyright	Protects creator's ownership	Prevents unauthorized use
Credit	Acknowledges original photographer	Ensures recognition
Licensing	Defines allowed usage	Ensures legal/ethical use
Plagiarism	Copying and claiming originality	Damages honesty and trust

Q12. What new ethical problems does AI create?

Deepfakes, synthetic nudification, dataset misuse, and false imagery. These violate consent, copyright, and trust. Disclosure is essential.

Q13. Any best quotes on ethics in photography?

Selected Best quotes for ethics in photography

- **Yann Arthus-Bertrand**- *A photographer is first and foremost a witness. I try to be honest, to be respectful of those I photograph. Ethics are indispensable to me.*
- **Eve Arnold**- *If the photographer is interested in the people in front of his lens, and if he is compassionate, it's already a lot. The instrument is not the camera but the photographer.*
- **Alfred Eisenstaedt**- *It is more important to click with people than to click the shutter.*
- **Jean-Luc Godard** - *Photography is truth.*
- **Robert Capa**- *A photograph is a moral decision taken in one eighth of a second.*

Final Reflection

Ethics in Photography protects truth and dignity of the image.

Ethics of the Photographer protects honour and trust of the profession. Together, they ensure photography remains powerful, expressive, and humane.

Together, they ensure that photography remains not only powerful and expressive, but also trustworthy and humane.

AI & Autofocus

From Geometry to Psychology



Srijan Roy Choudhury

EFIP, EFIAP, IIG s+p3

"For most of my photographic life, focusing was nothing more than a geometry puzzle."

From twisting the lens on a Zenit to listening to the screw-drive screech of a Nikon F601, cameras once cared little about what was being photographed. Aim at a bride's face? Sharp. Aim at the wall behind her? Sharp. The camera held no opinion — a loyal companion, but a dumb one.

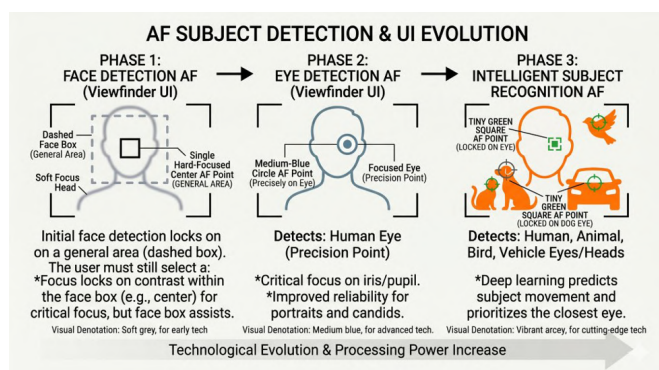
Dance of Focus

Thus was born the "Focus and Recompose" ritual. Like pigeons pecking at crumbs, photographers locked focus at the centre, then swivelled to frame the shot. For professionals, back-button focusing became the elegant shortcut.

But in recent years, geometry gave way to something uncanny: psychology.

From Faces to Eyes

It began innocently with Face Detection — jittery white boxes around human faces. Cute, but gimmicky. Then came the question: *If a face can be found, can the eye be found as well?*



The New Pipes: Z and RF

As cameras grew smarter, old mounts began to choke. The Nikon F-mount became like a copper telephone line trying to stream 4K video.

Canon's RF and Nikon's Z mounts ripped off the bandage. Massive, with shorter flange distances and more electrical pins, they allowed communication hundreds of times per second. Micro-adjustments fluttered faster than a hummingbird's wings. Burst rates soared, thrilling sports and wildlife photographers — and filling memory cards at unprecedented speed.

The "Z" Experience

My Nikon Z9 embodies this culmination. Through its viewfinder, no mirror flaps, no mechanical shutter clicks — only pure digital data.

Deep learning drives autofocus. Not just "bird" programmed in, but millions of images fed into a supercomputer: birds in flight, cars drifting, athletes sprinting. Patterns learned, not coded.

In the field, the camera "watches" with me. A bird enters — a box snaps onto its body. As it nears, a smaller box locks onto its eye. It feels less like operating a machine, more like working with a trained falcon.

The AI Skeleton — But Not Magic

Perfection? Not yet. AI is smart, but hallucinatingly stupid decisions can be made by it

I've seen autofocus lock onto a rock, mistaking it for a sleeping bear. I've watched it struggle between a bride's eye and her veil. Busy backgrounds remain its nemesis. A bird deep in reeds confuses the system — feathers, leaves, shadows all compete. Sometimes it surrenders, focusing on a twig while the eagle behind blurs.

The human eye remains the ultimate arbiter. I recall photographing a Yellow Bittern among green reeds. Autofocus failed; only manual override saved the shot. Such moments remind us why firmware updates remain constant.

Meanwhile, the Rivals

- **Sony:** Pioneers of mirrorless. Their "Real-Time Tracking" felt like mind-reading before anyone else. Many still say their focus is the stickiest.
- **Fujifilm:** Packed subject-detection into vintage-styled X-series bodies.
- **Panasonic:** Long clung to contrast-based DFD. Recently joined the Phase Detection party, fixing the notorious video wobble.
- **OM System (Olympus):** Created niches. Their "Starry Sky AF" turned astrophotography from a manual nightmare into a button-press.

Where We Stand

We've reached a point where technical drudgery is handled by the camera. Math solved, tracking managed.

What remains ours — composing the art, shaping light into vision — is a frontier machines cannot yet cross.

But are we at the peak? Or is one final frontier left for autofocus to conquer? The answer may be staring right back at us. Literally.



Launch Meet of 6th Issue of IIG Reflections



The 6th Issue of the IIG Journal—Reflections was released with a celebratory dinner in Chennai on 3rd May 2026.

The evening brought together members from IIG, AvTviSO, Photographic Society of Madras (PSM), and Chennai Photo Walk (CPW), marking a vibrant exchange of ideas and camaraderie across the photographic community.



***India International Group (IIG)** successfully hosted an immersive 2-day photography expedition in the vibrant city of Kolkata, fondly known as the **City of Joy**. Bringing together nearly 25–30 passionate photographers across India. The photo walk celebrated the city's timeless heritage, dynamic street life, and rich cultural essence through the art of visual storytelling.*

The journey commenced on day One along the tranquil banks of the River Ganges, where participants engaged in an inspiring model photography session against the backdrop of Kolkata's historic riverfront and centuries-old architectural marvels of North Kolkata. The harmonious blend of heritage structures, natural light, and artistic compositions provided an exceptional canvas for creative expression.

The group then proceeded to the much-talked-about **FIFA Lane**, beautifully adorned in celebration of the *FIFA World Cup 2026*. The colourful murals, football-inspired installations, and festive ambience offered photographers a vibrant opportunity to capture the city's enduring passion for the beautiful game.

Following an afternoon of engaging photography, the participants enjoyed a sumptuous lunch before concluding the day amidst the literary and cultural heartbeat of Kolkata—College Street. The bustling streets, iconic bookstalls, and everyday human interactions presented a wealth of compelling street photography moments. Throughout the day, participants benefited immensely from the guidance and expertise of distinguished mentors **Abir Ghosh** and **Abhijeet K. Banerjee**, whose valuable insights elevated the learning experience for photographers of all skill levels.

The day Two coincided with **International Yoga Day**, providing a unique opportunity to document a remarkable public gathering at the iconic Victoria Memorial Hall, where hundreds of yoga enthusiasts came together in celebration

of health, harmony, and mindfulness. The grandeur of the monument combined with the synchronised yoga sessions created visually striking frames that beautifully reflected the spirit of the occasion.

The group navigated through the charming lanes of **North Kolkata** en route to the city's renowned **Mullick Ghat Flower Market**. The vibrant floral displays, bustling marketplace, expressive faces, and authentic slices of everyday life offered participants an enriching experience in street and people photography. Under the accomplished mentorship of **Abhishek Basak** and **Happy Mukherjee**, photographers refined their observational skills, composition techniques, and storytelling abilities while capturing the city's unmatched character. Adding a memorable touch to the event, every participant received a beautifully designed *commemorative lapel pin*, serving as a cherished keepsake of the Kolkata Photowalk and symbolising the camaraderie and shared passion that united the group.

More than just a photography outing, the IIG Kolkata Photowalk was a celebration of creativity, culture, learning, and friendship. Over the two unforgettable days, participants not only captured compelling images but also experienced the soul of Kolkata through its heritage, people, traditions, and vibrant streets. The event reaffirmed IIG's commitment to fostering photographic excellence while creating meaningful experiences that inspire photographers to see the world through a more artistic and thoughtful perspective.



Kolkata – Through the Lens

A two-day photo walk by India International Group (IIG)

20th & 21st of June 2026





REFLECTIONS

August 2026

