

AUSTRALIAN HINDI INDIAN ASSOCIATION (AHIA)

-the Association that cares



Sandesh सन्देश

incorporating

Seniors Newsletter

Established 1994: Volume 25 Issue 11 November 2025

President: Mohinder Kumar Secretary : Vivek Bhatnagar Editors: Sant Bajaj/Raj Batra

AHIA Diwali on 11th October, 2025



Photos by Anil Sharma & Raj Batra

Dear Friends,

Despite Sydney's unpredictable spring weather, nature's beauty continues to shine.

Our Diwali Dinner Celebration on Saturday, 11th October at Pioneer Hall, Castle Hill was a resounding success, with over 200 attendees enjoying vibrant performances, music, and a festive feast.

Recognised Donors and Supporters

- **Vice President Meeta Sharma:** Inspired spontaneous donations and pledges during the event, including:
- Sponsorships for AHIA's monthly seniors' meet.
- An impromptu auction of tickets donated by Mr Pawan Luthra, The Indian Link Group, to the Australia vs India cricket match in Sydney.
- **Ram Chabbhra, CVF Group (Travel Agents):** A long-time supporter of AHIA.
- **Esha Oberoi, founder of Leora Health Care (formerly Afea):** A long-time supporter of AHIA, recognised for her steadfast commitment to community and cultural celebration.
- **Harmet Singh, The New India Assurance Company Limited:** A long-time supporter of AHIA.
- **Lindt Chocolates - Mrs Neera Kaur Mann:** A long-time supporter of AHIA.

Additional Mentions

Several **community members** who have historically supported AHIA contributed again this year, reflecting a strong spirit of generosity.

- We deeply appreciate the generous do-

nations made during the event by Mr Ajit Seth and Mrs Urvashi Seth, Mr Dhruv Bajaj, Mr Jatin Mukhi, Mr Hitesh Gupta, Mr Balwinder Saini and Mr Udit Sharma



- Mrs. Daxa Chauhan, thank you so much for singing beautiful songs and adding real glamour and excitement to the Diwali function. Your lively performance encouraged everyone to dance and made the celebration truly memorable!
- Special thanks to Mr Anthony Segart, Parramatta Bureau Chief of The Sydney Morning Herald, for his insightful piece on the global significance of Diwali, which included a special mention of the Australian Hindi Indian Association (AHIA) and Mrs Rajni Luthra and Mr Pawan Luthra of the Indian Link Group for their wonderful article on our Diwali function.

As previously advised, our Annual Geeral Meeting (AGM) will be held during the monthly meeting on Saturday, 13th December 2025. A formal notice of the meeting will be sent out shortly.

Anurag Thukral sponsored the refreshments for a senior's meeting in the next year.

Thank you for your continued support and active participation in AHIA—your involvement is what makes our community thrive.

Warm regards

**Mohinder Kumar
President, AHIA**

Dear Friends,

I hope this message finds you well and enjoying the beauty of Sydney's Spring—even with its unpredictable weather! Just as we packed away our winter clothes, the chill returned, but hopefully the vibrant greenery and blooming flowers have brightened your days.

Our Diwali Dinner Celebration on Saturday, 11th October at Pioneer Hall, Castle Hill, was a tremendous success. Over 200 tickets were sold, and the evening featured captivating dance performances, lively music, and a delicious feast. We were also heartened by the spontaneous generosity of attendees who contributed donations during the event—thank you for your support.

Looking ahead, our Annual General Meet-

ing (AGM) will be held during our monthly meeting on Saturday, 13th December. Several members of the current Executive Committee, including myself, will be completing their two-year term, and a new committee will be elected. We encourage all members to consider nominating. Details were shared in my earlier email.

Thank you once again for your continued support and active participation in AHIA. Your involvement is what makes our community stronger and more vibrant.

With warmest regards,

**Vivek Bhatnagar
Secretary, AHIA**



'Sandesh' is AHIA's Newsletter and is published every month.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

** The Cartoons/pictures are courtesy various Newspapers.

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** The Health information is given in good faith and readers are advised to consult their own Doctor. AHIA does not accept any responsibility whatsoever.

कहानी कानों की --- करे कोई भरे कोई! ...

आप में से शायद ही कोई ऐसा होगा जिस के बचपन में कान नहीं खिचे या बड़े होने पर दूसरों के कान खींचने का मौका नहीं मिला। घर में हों या स्कूल में, छोटी मोटी शरारतों पर अक्सर कान पकड़ कर एक हल्का सा मरोड़ा दिया जाता था या फिर आप को ही अपने दोनों कान अपने हाथों से पकड़ कर माफी मांगने के लिए कहा जाता था। दोनों कान पकड़, ऊठक बैठक कराई जाती थी। जरा बड़ा अपराध हो तो मुर्गा बना कर दोनों कान पकड़वाये जाते थे। यह सब से बड़ा कठिन होता था, जो अक्सर स्कूलों में या पुलिस स्टेशनों में अपराधियों को सज़ा के तौर पर प्रयोग किया जाता था। ऐसी सज़ा स्कूलों और गुरुकुलों में आम थी और लोग इसे बिना प्रोटेस्ट के अनुशासन का एक हिस्सा समझते थे। परन्तु आजकल इस का इस्तेमाल बहुत कम हो गया है। बल्कि बंद ही हो गया है। ऐसा शारीरिक दण्ड, निर्दयता और बेदर्दी की निशानी है। इस से बच्चों पर बहुत बुरा असर पड़ता है।

हाँ भारत के कुछ हिस्सों में ट्रैफिक के नियम पालन न करने वालों को पुलिस कुछ ऐसे 'ऊठक बैठक' ज़रूर करवाती है।



अब
देखा
जाए
तो

भगवान् ने कान इस मतलब के लिए तो नहीं बनाए थे कि उन्हें पकड़ कर चाहे जैसे मरोड़ो, दबाओ। उस ने तो जो भी अंग बनाये, उन की खास इयूटी है, जिसे वे निभाते हैं; एक भी गड़बड़ी करे तो सारे सिस्टम में खराबी आ जायेगी, और हमारा जीना ही मुश्किल हो जाएगा। अब यदि कान की बात की जाए तो, भगवान् ने एक नहीं दो दिए हैं ताकि चारों ओर से सुन सकें। इधर उधर की सुनते हैं और दिमाग तक पहुंचाते हैं, अर्थात् ये दिमाग का एन्टीना (antenna) हैं। तरह तरह की ध्वनि को पहचानने में भी मदद करते हैं। वैसे सुनने के अतिरिक्त एक और बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं कान ! हर जीव के शरीर को संतुलित बनाये रखते हैं। दिमाग को कानों के द्वारा जो सुनने को मिलता है, उसी प्रकार से वह आगे काम करता है। कान दिल और दिमाग की तरह हर समय काम करते रहते हैं, यहाँ तक कि रात को भी जब आँख बंद होती है, हाथ और पाँव आराम कर रहे होते हैं, कान अचानक सी आहट पर भी उठ खड़े होते हैं। कहते हैं, जब बच्चा माँ के पेट में होता है, उस की पोजीशन बिल्कुल कान की तरह होती है।

चलिए, यहाँ तक तो था कि कानों को चश्मा लगाने के लिए इस्तेमाल में ले जाया जाए, क्योंकि इस से ये शरीर के दूसरे अंग-आँख की सहायता कर रहे हैं। इस बात का भी बुरा नहीं मनाते कि इन में छेद

कर औरतें बालियाँ, झुमके आदि लटका सकें, हालांकि इस में भी कुछ इलाकों, जैसे राजस्थान या नागालैंड की औरतें तो पूरे कान को छेद कर बालियों से भर देती हैं कि बेचारे कान तो पीड़ा से तिलमिला उठते हैं, परन्तु फिर भी चुप रहते हैं क्योंकि ऐसा करने से उन महिलाओं की खूबसूरती बढ़ती है, सारे शरीर का मान बढ़ता है।

परन्तु यह कहाँ तक ठीक है कि हर एक गलत काम करने वाले अंग की सज़ा कान को भुगतनी पड़े? जैसे पहले कह चुके हैं, स्कूलों में अध्यापक लोग बच्चों को प्रश्नों का ठीक उत्तर न देने पर या शरारत करने पर कान की खिंचाई करते हैं या कान के नीचे जोर का झापड़ जड़ देते हैं। कहने का मतलब है कि दूसरे अंगों की गलतियों



की सज़ा बेचारे कानों को क्यों दी जाती है? कानों की शिकायत तो पूरी तरह से जायज है कि, "करे कोई और भरे कोई, चोरी हाथ करें, सज़ा कान को, झूठ ज़बान बोले, सज़ा कान को।"

मैं खाहमुखाह कानों की बातें सुना कर आप के 'कान खा' नहीं रहा हूँ। अब यह आप पर निर्भर है कि आप मेरी बात 'कान लगा कर' सुनते हैं या फिर 'एक कान से सुनते हैं और दूसरे से निकाल देते हैं'। हालांकि कान केवल सुनने का काम करते हैं, निकालने का नहीं।

कुछ वर्ष पहले जब 'कोविड-19 (करोना)' का आतंक फैला था, कानों का काम बहुत बढ़ गया था। मुँह और नाक द्वारा घुसने वाले वायरस को रोकने के लिए हर समय मास्क 'mask'- पहनने पड़ते थे, जिन्हें बाँधने के लिए फिर कान ही काम आते हैं। पहनने वाला भूल जाए तो सज़ा में भारत में पुलिस (खास तौर पर पंजाब पुलिस) सड़क पर रोक कर उन से कान पकड़ कर 'ऊठक बैठक' कराती थी, यानी मुसीबत फिर कानों की।

हमारे जीवन में कानों के महत्व का पता तो जीवन के आखिरी पलों में चलता है, जब दूसरे अंगों की तरह कान भी ढीले पड़ जाते हैं और 'ऊँचा सुनते' हैं और जब पत्नी की झाड़ पड़ती है, "क्या बहरे हो गये हो, जवाब क्यों नहीं देते। मैं कब से बोले जा रही हूँ, क्यों तुम्हारे कानों पर जूँ नहीं रेंगती।"

कुछ समय पहले एक अमेरिकन विशेषज्ञ ने कान मरोड़ने को याददाश्त के साथ जोड़ते हुए कहा था कि ऐसा करने से भूली हुई बातें याद आ जाती हैं।

चलो कुछ तो ढंग की बात सुनने को मिली!!

संतराम बजाज

The Freecycle Network

The Freecycle Network (TFN) is a private, nonprofit organization registered in Arizona, US and is a charity in the United Kingdom. TFN coordinates a worldwide network of "gifting" groups to divert reusable goods from landfills. The network provides a worldwide online registry, organizing the creation of local groups and forums for individuals and nonprofits to offer (or request) free items for reuse or recycling and to promote a gift economy. In contrast, although flea markets and swap meets also contribute to the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), they involve mainly buying and selling or bartering rather than gifting.



History

TFN first began when its founder, Deron Beal, collaborated with RISE, a small nonprofit corporation that offers recycling services in the downtown area of Tucson, Arizona, US. The team worked together to find local nonprofits that could potentially use their products, but it was not too successful. Hence, Beal created the first Freecycle email that enabled online users to interact with recycling. In February 2005, TFN accepted \$130,000 from Waste Management to help build out the website and the network.

Over time, the concept has spread to over 110 countries with thousands of local groups and millions of members.



The organization began as a collection of Yahoo!

Groups linked from freecycle.org. It has become a web-community platform on freecycle.org for all groups, which are run by local volunteers. TFN encourages the formation of new groups, subject to approval by regional new-group approvers. Groups approved by TFN are listed on the website, can use the TFN name and logo, and are subject to rules which are enforced by a network of global and regional group outreach assistance. As of March 2009, all new groups had to join freecycle.org's new-group system, which provides Freecycle-specific tools for local volunteer moderators and gives TFN oversight of individual groups. As of 2015, all local groups are listed on freecycle.org.

Membership

Membership is completely free to all members, and everything posted on the website must be completely free, legal, and appropriate for everyone regardless of their age. Today, TFN is a global organization with over 4,000 local chapters. They passed two-million-member in February 2006. By February 2014, TFN had 6,880,991 members across 5,120 groups worldwide. In December 2023, TFN had 11,022,137 members across 5,355 groups worldwide.

Compiled by राज बत्रा

दिया और बाती

दिपावली की तैयारियाँ बड़ी जोरों शोरों से चल रही थी। बाजार मिठाईयाँ, फूलों और दियों से सुशोभित थे। घर-परिवार सभी बाजार जा कर कुछ न कुछ खरीदना चाहते थे। मेरे मन में भी दिवाली पर कुछ खरीदने का विचार आया। भारतीय मान्यता एवं संस्कृति के अनुसार दिवाली के त्यौहार पर सबसे प्रथम दिए खरीदना शुभ माना जाता है। यद्यपि आजकल लोग हर वस्तु का सुन्दरता की दृष्टि से ही आकलन करते हैं। जैसे बिजली के दिए, प्लास्टिक के दिए एवं चित्रकारी और अन्य अनेक रंगों से सजे हुए दिए पर भारतीय संस्कृति एवं धार्मिक मान्यताओं के अनुसार मिट्टी के दिए ही शुभ माने जाते हैं जिन्हें हम घर के मुख्य द्वार,

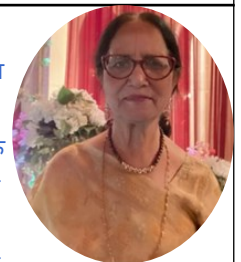
तुलसी के पास एवं जल प्रदान करने वाले नल के पास भी रखा जाता है।

लेकिन अचानक मेरे मस्तिष्क में विचार आया कि दिया अपने आप तो जलेगा नहीं उसके लिए बाती की भी आवश्यकता है तो फिर बाती भी खरीदी गई तो अब बाती मुझसे कहती है कि मैं अपने आप तो जलूंगी नहीं मुझे तेल पिलाना पड़ेगा। लो जी दिया तेल और बाती के साथ सुसज्जित हो गया मगर यह रोशनी तो फिर भी नहीं कर रहा। अब इसे प्रज्वलित करने के लिए माचिस खरीदी गई और माचिस बोली कि मेरे बिना तुम्हारी कोई अहमियत नहीं। अब इन सब के गठित होते ही दीवाली की रोशनी उजागर हो गई।

दोस्तों इस छोटी सी कहानी के माध्यम से

आपको यह संदेश देना चाहती हूँ कि हर व्यक्ति को अपने जीवन में दूसरों का साथ आवश्यक होता है। भले ही अपनी अहं भावना से हम यह सोचते हैं कि नहीं मैं तो सब काम स्वयं कर लेती हूँ/ लेता हूँ। परन्तु वास्तविकता यह नहीं है। जीवन के किसी न किसी मोड़ पर हमें दूसरों की सहायता अवश्य पड़ती है।

मुझे आशा है कि आप मेरी इस छोटी सी रचना को पसंद करोगे और इस विषय पर विचार करोगे।



दर्शन बहल

हर एक संकट का हल होगा

कर्म तुम्हारा कल होगा,
और कर्म अगर सच्चाई है,
तो कर्म कहाँ निष्फल होगा।
हर एक संकट का हल होगा,
वो आज नहीं तो कल होगा।
लोहा जितना तपता है,

उतनी ही ताकत भरता है।
सोने को जितनी आग लगे,
वो उतना प्रखर निकलता है।
हीरे पर जितनी धार लगे,
वो उतना खूब चमकता है।
मिट्टी का बर्तन पकता है,
तभी वो खूब खनकता है।



सूरज जैसा बनना है तो,
सूरज जैसा जलना होगा।
नदियों सा आदर पाना है तो,
पर्वत छोड़ निकलना होगा।
हर एक संकट का हल होगा,
वो आज नहीं तो कल होगा।।

कमलेश चौबे

Understand the Invisible Stickers

I was driving one day, stuck in traffic.
Frustrated, I honked at the slow car ahead, thinking,
"If you can't drive properly, why even bring the car out?"
But then...
I saw a small sticker on the back of that car.

"A differently-abled person is in the car. Please be patient."

In that moment — everything changed.
My anger faded. My heart softened.
I slowed down... and something inside me shifted.
I didn't want to cause them any discomfort.
I just wanted to make things easier for them.
That one simple sticker changed how I thought.
It calmed me.
It made me more compassionate, more patient.
And then it hit me...
What if everyone is carrying a sticker?
But unlike the one I saw,
Most people wear invisible stickers —



"Lost a loved one"



"Fighting illness"



"Struggling financially"



"Battling depression"



"Feeling hopeless but still smiling"

We just don't see them.
We cross paths with so many people every day —
And we have no idea what battles they're fighting inside.



What if we treated everyone
like they're carrying something heavy we can't see?
What if we chose kindness over judgment?

Patience over anger?
Empathy over ego?
Because the truth is:
We're all fighting invisible battles.



So here's your reminder today:
Be gentle.
Be patient.
Be kind.
Be understanding.
You never know what someone's going through —
But you can always choose to be the reason they feel seen, not
judged.
Let's learn to recognize those invisible stickers —

And respond with compassion.

डॉ सुमन अग्रवाल

Mobile Library

Every month, Mr Mrityunjay Singh of South Asian Hindi School, Kogarah is kind enough to bring a mobile library of Hindi/English books to our meeting for members to borrow without any charge or fee. He will be doing this in every meeting in future. AHIA thanks Mr Singh for his selfless services and generosity.



*****Please bring the borrowed books for Return/Renewal in the meeting***

One of our members Mr. Satpal Saini has offered his services to help members who need a 'Life Certificate' for their Pensions etc in India. He will do it online during our Seniors Meeting this Saturday, the 8th Nov. Please bring the necessary document to support.

Who Am I?

After retirement,
with no job,
no routine,
and a quiet house echoing with silence...
I finally began to discover my true self.

I built bungalows,
raised farmhouses,
invested in ventures big and small,
yet now,
I find myself bound within four simple walls.

From bicycle to moped,
bike to car,
I chased speed and style –
but now, I walk slowly,
alone, inside my room.

Nature smiled and asked,
“Who are you, dear friend?”
And I replied,
“I am... just me.”

I've seen states, countries, continents,
but today,
my journeys stretch
only from the drawing room to the kitchen.

I learned about cultures and traditions,
but now,
I simply long to understand
my own family.

Nature smiled again,
“Who are you, dear friend?”
And I said,
“I am... just me.”

Once I celebrated birthdays, engagements, weddings in grand style –
but today, look forward to having
slept well and feel hungry

Nature asked once more,
“Who are you, dear friend?”
And I answered,
“I am... just me.”

Gold, silver, diamonds, pearls –
sleep quietly in lockers.

Suits and blazers –
hang untouched in wardrobes.

But now,
I live in soft cotton,
simple and free.

I once mastered English, French, Hindi –
but now, I find comfort
in talking in my mother tongue.

I travelled endlessly for work,
and now,
I reflect on those profits and losses –
measured in memories.

I ran businesses,
nurtured a family,
built many connections,
but now,

my dearest companion
is the kind neighbour next door.

I once followed every rule,
strived in education –
but now I finally see
what truly matters.

After all of life's highs and lows,
in a quiet moment,
my soul whispered back to me.

Enough now...
Get ready,
Traveller...
It's time to prepare for the final journey...

Nature smiled gently,
“Who are you, dear friend?”
And I replied:

“O Nature,
You are me...
And I am you.
Once I soared in the skies,
Now I touch the earth with grace.
Forgive me...
Give me one more chance to live...
Not as a money-making machine,
But as a true human being –
With values,
With family,
With love.”

To all 'Seniors' out there; wishing you
love, strength, and peace.

शशि बिजोरिया

नारी लक्ष्मी दुर्गा काली का रूप है तू माँ सरस्वती का अवतार है तू घर की लक्ष्मी और शोभा है तू फिर क्यों इतने अत्याचार सहे तू ? माँ बाप के लाड़ों की पली नाजूक सी फूल की कली जहाँ खिलती बगिया को महका जाती फिर किसने तहस नहस कर डाला तुझे ? माँ बहिन बेटियां आंसू पीकर चुपचाप सहती हैं समाज के आघात भाई पिता चाचा दोस्त बनाते अपनी हवस का शिकार समाज के यह ठेकेदार अपना आंचल बचाते तुझ पर

मानसिक व शारीरिक चोट पहुंचाते भेड़ियों के भेष में घूमते हैं और तू सहमी दरी हुई सी समाज का कलंक बन जीती है क्या नारी को अपनी तरह जीने का अधिकार नहीं है ? छोटे बड़े सपने संजोने का हक नहीं है ? सपने तो काभी फर्क नहीं किया करते फिर ऐसा अन्याय क्यों ? देश में एक नहीं अनेक “ निर्भया ” रोज़ प्रताड़ित की जाती हैं और हम चुपचाप खड़े देखते हैं पर न कुछ करते हैं न कहते हैं क्या यही परिभाषा है प्रगतिशील देश की ?

जो अपने देश की नारियों की रक्षा नहीं कर पाता कहाँ गए वो संस्कार वो सभ्यता जो विश्व भर में सराही जाती थी ? धिक्कार है ऐसे समाज का जिसके हम सदस्य हैं मौन और पंगु और डरे हुए से !



इन्दु सूद



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बुढ़ापा अनलिमिटेड डेटा प्लान

सुबह-सुबह उषा ने अपने फोन को घूरते हुए कहा –

“अरे ये फिर बोल रहा है ‘Steps less than yesterday!’ – अरे भाई, कल तो पूरे घर की सफाई की थी! अब आज आराम का दिन है।”

रमेश अखबार से नज़र उठाकर बोले,

“थोड़ा घूम लिया करो, उषा। सेहत के लिए अच्छा है।”

उषा बोलीं,

“घूमती तो हूँ रोज़ – रसोई से बालकनी, बालकनी से अलमारी, और फिर तुम्हारे चश्मे के चक्कर में आधा मोहल्ला!”

थोड़ी देर बाद उषा ने चाय की चुस्की ली और मुस्कराई –

“अब fitness tracker नहीं चाहिए, tea tracker चाहिए।

सुबह की चाय, दोपहर की चाय, शाम की चाय...

दिन में दस कप हो जाएँ तो समझो दिल और आत्मा दोनों active हैं!”

रमेश ने सिर हिलाया,

“तुम्हें तो बस चाय का बहाना चाहिए।”

“और तुम्हें बस टोकने का!” उषा हँस पड़ीं।

दोपहर को मोहल्ले की गुड़िया आई – बोली,

“Aunty, आपके ज़माने में भी WiFi होता था?”

उषा ने आँखों में चमक लिए कहा,

“बेटा, हमारे ज़माने में wife होती थी – वही Fi भी थी और वही network provider भी!”

Signal strong, connection lifelong!”

गुड़िया ठहाके लगाकर भागी –

रमेश ने अखबार नीचे रखा और बोले,

“क्या ज़रूरत थी बच्चे को ये सब समझाने की?”

उषा बोलीं,

“प्रेक्टिकल knowledge है, स्कूल में नहीं मिलेगी!

शाम को दोनों बालकनी में बैठे थे।

रमेश फोन में व्यस्त थे – ‘senior yoga for beginners’ खोज रहे थे।

उषा मुस्कराई –

“अब हमारी ज़िन्दगी fast forward से slow

motion में आ गई है,

पर मज़ा ज़्यादा इसी में है।

देखो रमेश, ये झुर्रियाँ, सफ़ेद बाल – सब किस्से हैं, badges of honour!”

रमेश बोले,

“तुम्हें तो हर चीज़ में philosophy दिखती है।”

उषा बोलीं,

“क्यों नहीं? हम दोनों unlimited data plan हैं –

जितनी यादें डाउनलोड कर लो, कभी खत्म नहीं होतीं!”

बालकनी में दोनों की हँसी देर तक गूँजती रही।

मोरल:

बुढ़ापा तब आता है जब हँसना बंद हो जाए। बाक़ी तो उम्र सिर्फ़ एक चाय के कप की तरह है – जितना घूंट भरो, उतनी गर्माहट बढ़ती है।

सुमन माथुर

Some inspirational sayings by Swami Vivekananda

- In a conflict between the heart and the brain, follow your heart.
- Strength is the sign of vigor, the sign of life, the sign of hope, the sign of health, and the sign of everything that is good.
- Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.
- The greatest sin is to think yourself weak.

The membership expired on 30th June, 2025 for all the annual members

Next Senior Meeting on 13th Dec. 2025 @ 2 Lane Street. Wentworthville. from 1 to 4 PM

Women's World Cup 2025 Final: India Lift Women's ODI World Cup After Dominant 52-Run Victory Over South Africa

IN LOVING MEMORY OF NEERJA BADHWAR (NEENA)



(7 April 1952-17 Oct. 2025)

Neena Badhwar, a cultural icon of the Australian- Indian community for four decades, passed away peacefully in the early hours of 17 October 2025. Owing to sickness, she was, for some time, away from the hectic Sydney scene, missed by art lovers, writers, and many close friends.

Coming from a literary family settled in Norway - father Harcharan Chawla a famous Urdu story writer and mother Purnima a poet - Neena (Neerja) could not be content being a housewife. She came to Australia to join her engineer husband in 1976, days when the Indian community was small, times when audio tapes were exchanged to listen to Indian songs, only landlines for phones and no computers. There was only Keens Curry Powder at supermarkets, but for a single faraway Indian spice shop all the way to Bondi.

The family at home were political ideologues, proud Indians who could not accept second-ratism, and there were always heated discussions why, if there was news about India, that was mostly negative. Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to Australia in

1978 was reported mostly for his 'urine therapy'; PM Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Australia in 1986 was relegated to inside page two.

There swirled the idea in Neena's head to start her own Indian newspaper. There was no journalism experience she ever had, no finances, no resources. But there was will, a very strong will. The husband could dare not be a hinderance; a friend Sumitra joined her initially, and they started sounding the idea around. A journalist with SMH Cyprian Fernandes and a cricket enthusiast Kersi Meher-Homji agreed to participate in the effort, albeit to watch the tamasha, but the Indian officials posted in Sydney - Consul-General VB Soni, Tea Board Director DR Karthikeyan, Air-India manager Brij Mehra, Tourist Office Director Hemant Gupte and IC Khanna, all welcomed an Indian voice emerging.

Not long after, lo and behold, Australian Senate President Kerry Sibra launched the first addition of The Indian Down Under (if nothing else, everyone liked the name) in June 1987. Immediately, the community lapped the paper as its own, proud, looking forward to the future copies at spice shops and complaining profusely if they didn't receive the paper in the mail.

Neena was a fighter and hard worker. With no computers, the publishing was via an IBM golf-ball typewriter, in association with a Vietnamese newspaper, Viet Luan, whose typists knew no English. The nights were spent with a paper knife in hand, sticking bromides on cardboard sheets and after printing, starting a run at Indian spice shops leaving Indian Down Under bundles.

This was Neena taking up cudgels for the community - be it the issue of

Indian students being robbed at stations, jewellery thefts at Indian homes, taking up discrimination matters at ministerial levels, being part of committees that mattered for Indian community, doing surveys of what most successful Indian marriages constituted, celebrating HSC high achievers, music and cultural programmes that the growing Indian community was involved in.

Multiculturalism is a buzz word now taken for granted. But, in earlier years, the various ethnic communities in Australia had to fight for their rightful place in Australian society. The Indian Down Under inception was timely as it represented the Indian community throughout Australia, in all major cities including Darwin and Hobart, even as far as New Zealand.

Neena Badhwar taught Hindi at community school and at Sydney University, wrote short stories, poems and plays that were popular at 'Short and Sweet' but, above all, nurtured a young team of writers, gave them ideas and was a source of inspiration for many.

She could even justifiably lay claim that her 35 years in publishing initiated a trend in Indian newspaper publishing in Australia.

She dedicated a full page for Hindi literature in her otherwise all English newspaper. This column became a regular feature of the paper and was appreciated by Indian readers.

In the end, health issues took their toll. She no longer was the Aries 'Ram' she was known to be.

Neena leaves behind a loving family - husband, daughter with two lovely grandchildren and two sons.

We miss you Neena and will always.

May your soul rest in Peace!

LET'S TALK ABOUT HOME CARE PACKAGES



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A Home Care Package or HCP is a form of care support provided through My Aged Care. With HCP, you can live in your own home for as long as possible, rather than go to an aged care facility.

Am I eligible for HCP?

Generally, you must be 65 years or older and need services to remain at home.

Your eligibility will be determined in a meeting between you and your assessor from the My Aged Care Assessment team.

How do I use my HCP budget?

You choose a service provider approved to provide Home Care Package services, like Afea. We've been in operations since 2008 and have the expertise to assist you!

You can use your HCP budget to pay for a variety of services or products. Examples include: a carer to help with household chores, a physiotherapist to assist with exercises or paying for a wheelchair.

How much funding can I receive?

PACKAGE LEVEL	ANNUAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION
Level 1 – Basic Care Needs	\$10,271.10
Level 2 – Low Level Care Needs	\$18,063.85
Level 3 – Intermediate Care Needs	\$39,310.50
Level 4 – High Level Care Needs	\$59,593.55

*As at July 2023

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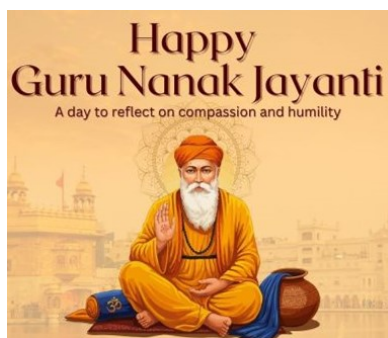
Happy Birthdays

Jatinder Ahuja	Sushil Anand
Sandeep Bansal	Somnath Bhasin
Vivek Bhatnagar	Kuldip Chhabra
Kali Gupta	Vidya Kanal
Rocky Meeru	Man Mohan Mehta
Madan Lal Narang	Jagtar Sangha
Anita Sangha	Vajinder Singh
Narinder Singh	Rith Nath Malik
Indu Bajaj	Usha Chaudhry

Happy Wedding Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Ambrish & Saroj Attrey
Mr. & Mrs. Charanjit Singh & Gurharwant Sandhu
Mr. & Mrs. Charan & Gurdeep Sekhon
Mr. & Mrs. Kewal & Nalina Sajdeh
Mr. & Mrs. Kuldip & Kiran Chhabra
Mr. & Mrs. Braham & Sharda Sharma
Mr. & Mrs. Tilak & Bindu Kalra
Mr. & Mrs. Rakesh & Sarita Sachdev
Mr. & Mrs. Somnath & Chanchal Rani Bhasin
Mr. & Mrs. Pavan & Pooja Kalra
Mr. & Mrs. Onkar & Usha Goyal
Mr. & Mrs. Harish & Indu Bajaj
Mr. Anand Prakash & Mrs. Asha Sharma
Mr. Madan Lal Narang & Mrs. Kiran Mathur
Mr. Madan Lal Mathur & Mrs. Kiran Narang

Guru Nanak Jayanti in 2025 was celebrated on Wednesday, November 5. This day marks the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism, and is commemorated by Sikhs worldwide with prayers, kirtan and community meals in Gurudwaras.

**Membership Renewal**

Please renew your membership at the Seniors meeting

Seniors Meetings @ 2 Lane Street. Wentworthville from 1 to 4 PM every second Saturday of the month



AHIA celebrated Diwali on 11th October, 2025



AHIA celebrated Diwali on 11th October, 2025

All the photos for this meeting can be seen on the website under the link "Seniors"



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