राष्ट्रदुत

The Amul Girl

India's Sassiest Storyteller with a Butterly Twist!



with fleeting trends one little girl in a polka-dotted frock has stood the

as a mascot, but as a cultural icon. The Amul Girl, with her wide-eyed charm and razorsharp wit, is far more than a marketing gimmick, she is arguably India's sassiest and most consistent storyteller.

A Baby, A Brand, A Beginning

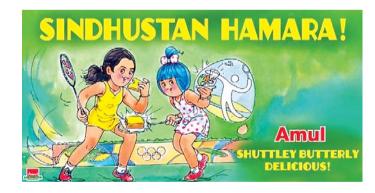
rt all began in 1966, when Shobha Tharoor, baby sister of author and politician Dr. Shashi Tharoor, became the face of a campaign for Amul Spray, a popular milk powder product. Her cherubic, impish face, captured for the camera, struck a chord with early Indian consumers, unknowingly giving birth to a character that would become one of

the most enduring icons in Indian advertising. What started as a one-off baby shoot evolved into a phenomenon. The character soon morphed into the nowiconic cartoon girl with blue hair, a red polka-dot dress, and a witty tongue that speaks to the pulse of the nation. Over the decades, she has grown, not in age, but in cultural relevance.

'Butterly' Brilliant Branding

became marketing gold: Utterly Butterly Delicious. Quirky, playful, and instantly memorable, the phrase became synonymous with Amul's dairy products, and paved the way for a new kind of advertising in India: one that was humourous, topical. and deeply local. The Amul

Girl became the face of public opinion, offering wry, timely mentary on everything from politics and cricket to Bollywood blockbusters and global events. With each new hoarding, she poked fun at scandals, paid tribute to legends, and captured the nation's sentiment, all in a few witty lines and a spoonful of satire.



A Mirror to the Nation

rom poking fun at power outages and petrol hikes to honouring heroes like M.S. Dhoni and Lata Mangeshkar, the Amul Girl doesn't miss a beat. She's been there during elections. Olympic wins, movie releases, and even during the pandemic, reminding people to

Butter.' Her commentary is uniquely Indian, ofter bilingual filled with puns and always topical. She has spoken up without speaking down, using humour to bring attention to serious issues without ever sounding preachy.

'Stay Home, Stay Safe, Eat

More Than Butter

W hat makes the Amul Girl exceptional isn't just her marketing brilliance. It's that she's woven into the emotional fabric of Indian society. She's been in our lives longer than most influencers or politicians. For many seeing her weekly billboard is a nostalgic ritual, like opening the newspaper or sipping morning chai

In an ever-changing digital world, where attention spans are shrinking and ads are skipped in seconds, the Amul Girl stands tall, painted by hand, published in print, and celebrated online. Because she doesn't just sell butter, she sells wit, warmth. nostalgia, and a sense of belonging. She tells India's story, one pun at a time.





On Sunday mornings, I'd accompany Janardhan, our gentle and watchful household helper, on a walk past Bagadiya Bhawan, a landmark haveli on Prithviraj Road. The destination was always the same: the jalebi wala. But my true addiction was boondi ladoo from Rashtriya Misthan Bhandar in Kishanpole Bazar. The biscuits from Bhartiya Bakery, behind Ajayab Ghar in Kishanpole Bazaar, faintly salty, faintly sweet, remain undefeated in taste and time.



was a world shaped by ritual, care, and quiet precision, a house that held time. On the right, adjacent to the French wooden door, just past the curved verandah with its mosaic cement pillars, stood his period chair, easy, upright, immovable.

Beside it, a sleek writing table and a leather-upholstered chair, placed with intention, formed the command center of his daily rhythm. In the far-left corner stood the sliding wardrobe, its doors gliding open to reveal white shirts and tailored trousers, always arranged in disciplined order. From a cupboard nearby, what we secretly called

Aladdin's storehouse, came the daily treats: mouth-watering shakkarpara or rich, ghee-soaked laddoos, served like clockwork after meals of garden-fresh vegetables. Books and homeopathy bottles lined a glass-paneled cupboard, each tiny vial labeled in a script I learned before I could read. The four-poster bed wasn't just for rest, it was designed for the nightly ritual of raising the masari (mosquito net), an act as precise as a military drill. All the wood was polished Sagwan (teak), gleaming like the heritage it held. The black rotary dial phone sat on a wooden box in which many secrets rested, covered a chronicle of time: its number

Beside the chair, the thick, fat Indian Telephone Directory stood like a book of spells. Above the writing table hung a white round-dial electric clock, wired on the board with the 'khatke,' those heavy ceramic switches, clicking with

quietly preserved.



Pushpendra Wing Commander R N bhargava Sandeep at JaipurInn in its

with the same blue cloth, year after year. Its black-cloth-wrapped wire plugged into the wall was sacred, never to be touched. A loose connection was sacrilege. That phone was began as a simple 197, then 77197, 68197, 368197, and finally, 2368197, as if each added digit marked Jaipur's growing footprint.

This was not just a house. It was

living memory palace. Every object had a place, and every place held a story. Time here didn't just





Grandparents with the family.

feels that way.

Garden, Gate, and the City Beyond

■ n the Jaipur of the early 1970s. bushes and trees, plucking what I our home's open layout mirrored a slower, gentler city. The low boundary walls were just high enough to separate privacy from passerby, lined with fruit-bearing creepers and flowering vines. Nothing was ornamental.

Everything had a purpose At the front stood my grandfather's rose garden, his private kingdom. He tended it with the same precision he applied to his shirts and books. Each rose responded to his attention, and none of us dared pluck a bloom. Even a bent stem didn't escape his notice. I often ate lunch on my feet, moving between walk past Bagadiya Bhawan, a land-

mark haveli on Prithviraj Road. The could with a child's mix of curiosity destination was always the same: and stealth. The carrots, especially, the jalebi wala. But my true addicwere suspect. I'd pull one and glance tion was boondi ladoo from around, unsure if it had been count-Rashtriya Misthan Bhandar in ed. Even theft had its ethics. Kishanpole Bazar. The biscuits from Then, there was the well-capped Bhartiya Bakery, behind Ajayab Ghar in Kishanpole Bazaar, faintly with a grill of iron bars. I would

salty, faintly sweet, remain unde peer in and see not just water, but a version of myself suspended below, feated in taste and time. flickering and still. The mystery of In those days, the garden fed us. that well, its perfect symmetry, its The streets introduced us to pleassilent gaze, it was a kind of mirror I ure and pattern. Jaipur itself seemed like an extension of our still carry in my mind. home, edible walkable knowable On Sunday mornings, I'd accompany Janardhan, our gentle and And somehow, despite everything watchful household helper, on a that has changed, part of it still

The Houses Lived In Within The City



Newly wedded Nephew, his wife and

mer Finance Minister; Mr.

Mathuradas Mathur, who served as

Health and Education Minister in

Marwar's first government; Mr.

Kali Charan, whose family pro-

duced generations of doctors: and

Mrs. and Mr. Katju, relatives of

My grandfather often drove to

New Colony near Panch Batti in

games with Mr. Shankar Sahay and

friends. Jaipur's civic life played

itself out not in offices, but over

The iconic 'Neemi wale

four suits and one shared table.

his gleaming Fiat car, for bridge

Indira Gandhi.

M any houses inhabited before settling into O-17 Malviya Marg, Ashok Nagar, C-Scheme, namely on hospital road where Dr. S R Mehta lived before he eventually moved into 5 Hospital Road. Near the Power House adjacent to Ram Mandir from where the first bout of electricity was ntroduced in Jaipur by the Maharaja aipur and Sir Mirza Ismail as the State electricity board. The Laxmi Vilas was the Royal Horses Stables before it turned to the State Motor Garage, and finally, now the Gandhi Museum. The beautiful art deco home visible from the street bordering the

Raj Mahal palace premises which belongs to Maharaj Jai Singh.

Dangtar,' Dr. Anurag Govil's family

Dr. Rameshwar Sharma, who later

principled the Medical College,

and Dr. Kotia who doctored my

grandmother, Mr. Kamta Prasad's

home IAS and family, the Green

These weren't just profession

House on Ashok Marg, and the

Durlabii house and family nearby.

als or politicians. They were part

of the city's collective breath, men

and women who moved between

homes and hospitals, havelis and

halls, without ceremony. Our house

was one such room. And memory, I

think, is its lingering guest.

Rituals of Care - The Barber, the Mirror, and the Morning

your sunscreen, gather your friends, and head to the nearest beach to celebrate responsibly!

elebrated every year on August 30, National Beach Day is a tribute to the natural beauty and serenity of our

coastlines. It's a day to soak up the sun, enjoy the waves, and reflect on the importance of keeping beaches clean and protected. Whether it's building sandcastles, taking a long walk on the shore, or participating in beach cleanups, the day encourages everyone to appreciate these vital ecosystems and preserve them for future generations. So, grab

my grandfather.

Road, that made him a heavyweight

in Jaipur, who did not easily con-

cede to visit homes. But he came for

Golecha House, I saw him seated

near the entrance, squatting quietly,

bidi in hand, watching 5,000 guests

pass by. It wasn't grandeur that

stayed with me, it was his presence.

In Jaipur, dignity traveled quietly

often across caste and class lines, in

gestures too subtle for history

books. My grandfather's care rituals

were never explained. They were

performed. In their repetition, I

learned that grace didn't need to

drawer and distribute a crisp Rs. 5

note. It was always fresh, folded

once, passed with quiet formality.

We gueued not for the amount, bu

for what it meant: you are seen.

Nothing embodied continuity like

the Jhadshahi silver coins, ten

grams each, embossed with

Empress Victoria's likeness. He

received 445 coins every month as

part of his state pension. They were

never spent. They were polished and

brought out each Lakshmi Puja,

glowing beneath the oil lamps like

an offering of time itself. These rit-

uals weren't about currency. They

were about care. About anchoring a

family, not through inheritance, but

through rhythm. Even today, some

families send money on Paytm, or

gift cards, or envelopes at Diwali.

But the gesture remains: to mark

ceiving the Lonely Planet, were

guest at Jaipur Inn as well as a cou-

ple of times again over the following

decades. The travellers' grape wine

and Lonely Planet was to shape the

future of Jaipur Inn. The British

in very late in the night and staying

ust as other young travellers of the

time. The LVMH office in Delhi call-

ing about Mr. Bernard Arnault

wishing to relive his nostalgia for

Jaipur Inn and his travels in India

as a student and young traveller

with his growing up children, arriv

ing in his personal aircraft to Jaipur

and being driven to Jaipur Inn for a

couple of days stay was an highlight

of a lifetime. Though, called off the

India remastered trip then but gave

with instructions, but with exam-

ple. Jaipur Inn was his ritual. The

guestbook his register. The

teacups his offering. Even today,

when the light hits the stairwell

iust right, I feel him there, caring,

waiting, welcoming,

ZITS

He raised Sandeep and me not

a boost to our family morale.

presence with presence.

At his daughter's wedding at

n a house where everything had its place, even self-care was ceremonial. My grandfather's mornings began with a splash of hot water. Vividh Bharati on the radio, and the glint of polished metal

His shaving ritual was deliberate. A heavy-duty electric kettle stood beside the standing mirror. His razor twisted open from the neck like a trick box. Forhan's toothpaste came in a squeezed tin. Brylcreem waited in a glass jar. And in a cup of water, his dentures, always placed just so.

And then came Chautmal, our 'Nai.' His presence was more than announce itself. It needed to return. professional. With a shop on MI

Festivals, Coins, and the Value of Belonging

f my grandfather's mornings were quiet rituals of personal care, the festivals he led were expansive rituals of familial and social belonging. Diwali, Holi, and Makar Sankranti weren't events, they were affirmations. Each year, we waited for the moment he would open his



My parents Wing Commander R N Bhargava and Mrs Pushpa Bhargava.

Jaipur Inn - My Father's Legacy

my grandfather preserved memory through ritual, my father extended it through hospital Wing Commander R. N. Bhargava returned from the Indian Air Force, where he served with distinction, including as Aide-de-Camp to President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He brought no grandeur into the house. Only discipline, stillness, and warmth. In the 1970s, Jaipur became part

of the overland trail. Backpackers arrived dusty, hopeful, sometimes lost. My father welcomed them, first at home, then in what became Jaipur Inn. Tents were pitched in the garden. Dorms were opened. Clean beds and chai followed. Guests didn't just stay. They

eturned. A Dutch woman requested the same bed every year. An Israeli couple stayed through the ionsoon. On one Christmas Eve. people from five continents dined on he rooftop under string lights. My father stood quietly at the edge, reaffirming hospitality. In the late 70's. Tony and Maurice, just about con-

The Historian of Emotions

've come to see myself as a historian, but not of wars or timelines. A historian of emotions. Of how a Rs. 5 note became an act of recognition. Of how a guestbook became a register of trust. Of how biscuits, rituals, and silence formed the grammar of care. My grandfather taught me that love could be strict. My father taught me that love could be silent. One handed coins. The other handed life. Both handed memory. Some of these gestures have faded. The black rotary phone

is gone. The number is longer Chautmal no longer visits. But the silver coins come out for Lakshmi Puja. Bhartiya Bakery's biscuits still exist. And sometimes, when I sit quietly on the roof of Jaipur Inn, I feel the past return, not in nostalgia, but in recognition.

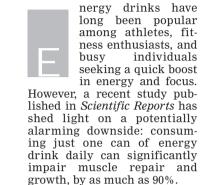
These memories aren't just sweet. They are durable. And in remembering them. I do not retreat. I offer them forward.

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#HEALTH

Energy Drinks! No!

Energy Drinks may drastically impair Muscle Repair and Growth.





How Energy Drinks Affect Muscle Regeneration

eral ways energy drinks interfere with the body's natural muscle recovery processes. At the cellular level, energy drinks were found to suppress muscle regeneration and inhibit myoblast differentiation, the essential process by which precursor cells develop into mature muscle fibers. This

he study highlights sev-

der the body's ability to repair damaged muscles and build new muscle tissue after exercise or injury Moreover, energy drinks were shown to reduce the expression of critical growth factors, proteins necessary to stimulate muscle development and recovery over the long term.

disruption can severely hin-

The Role of Caffeine and Cortisol

O ne key factor behind these effects is the high caffeine content typical of many energy drinks. While moderate caffeine intake can improve alertness and athletic performance, excessive caffeine can raise levels of cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone. Elevated cortisol

tein synthesis, the biological process vital for muscle repair and growth. This means that instead of helping muscles recover, energy drinks may actually prolong recovery times and diminish strength gains.

Sugar, Inflammation, and Insulin Sensitivity

M ost energy drinks also contain large amounts of sugar, which can exacerbate the problem by promoting inflammation. Chronic inflammation not only slows healing but also impairs the delivery of nutrients to muscle cells.

Furthermore, excessive sugar intake can lead to reduced insulin sensitivity, making it harder for the body to use insulin effectively to shuttle glucose and amino acids, essential building blocks for muscle repair, into muscle tissue.

The Impact of Artificial Additives

Sugar, many energy drinks contain artificial additives, preservatives, and flavorings. Although the

study did not isolate their effects, these substances may further contribute to impaired muscle recovery and overall health issues.



G iven these findings, athletes and fitness enthusiasts should reconsider their reliance on energy drinks as a performance aid or recovery tool. While they may provide a temporary boost in energy, the long-term consequences on muscle health and recovery could outweigh the short-term benefits.

What This Means for

Athletes and Fitness

Enthusiasts



Healthier Alternatives to Energy Drinks nstead of energy drinks,

Lexperts recommend turning

to natural alternatives that sup-

eyond caffeine and



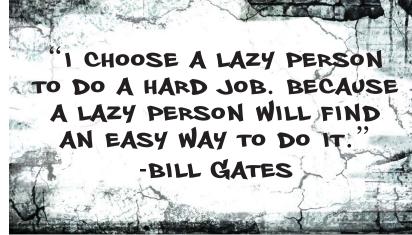
port muscle repair and sustained energy, such as: Hydrating with water or electrolyte-rich beverages.

rich in protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates. Incorporating natural sources of caffeine like green tea or coffee in moder-

management to optimize hormonal balance. The new study serves as a

wake-up call to anyone who frequently consumes energy drinks. While they might seem like a convenient pick-me-up. these beverages could be seri ously undermining your body's ability to recover and grow stronger. For those committed to fitness and health, exploring safer, more natural options is a smarter choice for long-term muscle health and

THE WALL



Grandfather with the President Dr S Radhakrishnan at my parents wedding

reception which was held at the Rastrapati Bhawan.

BABY BLUES

People Who Passed Through

n those years, Jaipur didn't feel

like a city, it felt like a large,

extended household. Our home

mirrored that rhythm: a house

with open doors, ready chairs, and

our extended family were rooted in

its rooms. It hosted ten weddings,

countless cups of tea, and conver-

sations that flowed without formal-

through were figures who shaped

Chandan Mal Baid, Rajasthan's for-

Among the many who passed

Nearly a hundred members of

a memory for names.





PIERCE AND I MADE A STUNNING PRINGLES SALAD WITH HOT DOG MEDALLIONS





By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott