

#ICONS

The Amul Girl India's Sassiest Storyteller with a Butterly Twist!



In a country where brands come and go with fleeting trends, one little girl in a red polka-dotted frock has stood the test of time, not just

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

A Baby, A Brand, A Beginning

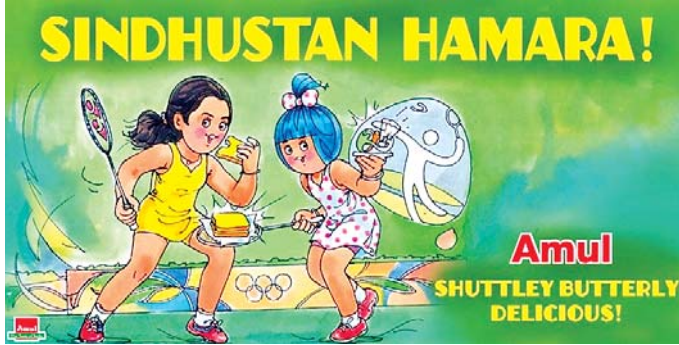
It all began in 1966, when ten-month-old Shobha Tharoor, baby sister of author and politician Dr. Shashi Tharoor, became the face of a campaign for Amul Spray, a popular milk powder product. Her cherubic, impish face, captured for the camera, struck a chord with early Indian consumers, unknowingly giving 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 now-iconic 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

It was a simple pun that 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 humorous, topical, and deeply local. The Amul

Girl became the face of public opinion, offering witty, timely commentary 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

From 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

'Stay Home, Stay Safe, Eat Butter.' Her commentary is uniquely Indian, often 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.

More Than Butter

What 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.



A Home In 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 jalebhi wala. But my true addiction was boondi laddoo 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.



Pushpendra Bhargava

My grandfather's house 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 shakkarpata 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



Pushpendra Wing Commander R N bhargava Sandeep at Jaipurinn in its formative years.

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 a chronicle of time: its number began as a simple 197, then 77197, 68197, 368197, and finally, 2368197, as if each added digit marked Jaipur's growing footprint.

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 authority.

This was not just a house. It was a living memory palace. Every object had a place, and every place held a story. Time here didn't just pass, it was arranged, labeled, and quietly preserved.



1974 Fiat. A prized possession in the driveway of the family home. The spotlight at a family wedding.

#THE HISTORIAN OF EMOTIONS



Grandparents with the family.

The Houses Lived In Within The City



Newly wedded Nephew, his wife and Reetika.

My 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 introduced in Jaipur by the Maharaja Jaipur 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 house, visible from the street bordering the Raj Mahal palace premises which belongs to Maharaj Jai Singh.

In those days, the garden fed us. The streets introduced us to pleasure and pattern. Jaipur itself seemed like an extension of our home: edible, walkable, knowable. And somehow, despite everything that has changed, part of it still feels that way.

People Who Passed Through

In 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 a memory for names.

Nearly a hundred members of our extended family were rooted in its rooms. It hosted ten weddings, countless cups of tea, and conversations that flowed without formality.

Among the many who passed through were figures who shaped the state's early years: Mr. Chandan Mal Baid, Rajasthan's for-

mer Finance Minister; Mr. Mathuradas Mathur, who served as Health and Education Minister in Marwar's first government; Mr. Kali Charan, whose family produced generations of doctors; and Mrs. and Mr. Katju, relatives of Indira Gandhi.

My grandfather often drove to New Colony near Panch Batti in his gleaming Fiat car, for bridge games with Mr. Shankar Sahay and friends. Jaipur's civic life played itself out not in offices, but over four suits and one shared table.

The iconic 'Neemi wale

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 House on Ashok Marg, and the Durlabhi house and family nearby. These weren't just professionals 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.

Beach Vibes and Eco Pride

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

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

In 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 professional. With a shop on MI

Road, that made him a heavyweight in Jaipur, who did not easily concede to visit homes. But he came for my grandfather.

At his daughter's wedding at Golecha House, I saw him seated near the entrance, squatting quietly, biddi 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 announce itself. It needed to return.

Festivals, Coins, and the Value of Belonging

If 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

If my grandfather preserved memory through ritual, my father extended it through hospitality. Wing Commander R. N. Bhargava returned from the British 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 returned. A Dutch woman requested the same bed every year. An Israeli couple stayed through the monsoon. On one Christmas Eve, people from five continents dined on the rooftop under string lights. My father stood quietly at the edge, reaffirming hospitality. In the late 70s, Tony and Maurice, just about con-

ceiving the Lonely Planet, were guest at Jaipur Inn as well as a couple of times again over the following decades. The travellers' grape wine and Lonely Planet were to shape the future of Jaipur Inn. The British High Commissioner's son checking in very late in the night and staying just as other young travellers of the time. The LVMH office in Delhi calling 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, arriving 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 a boost to our family morale.

He raised Sandeep and me not with instructions, but with example. Jaipur Inn was his ritual. The guestbook his register. The teacups his offering. Even today, when the light hits the stairwell just right, I feel him there, caring, waiting, welcoming.

The Historian of Emotions

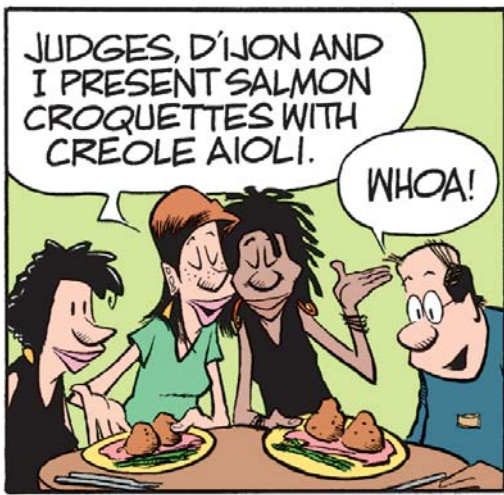
I've come to see myself as a historian, but not of wars or time-lines. A historian of emotions. Of how a Rs. 5 note became an act of recognition. Of how a guestbook I sat quietly on the roof of Jaipur Inn, I feel the past return, not in nostalgia, but in recognition. These memories aren't just sweet. They are durable. And in remembering them, I do not retreat. I offer them forward.

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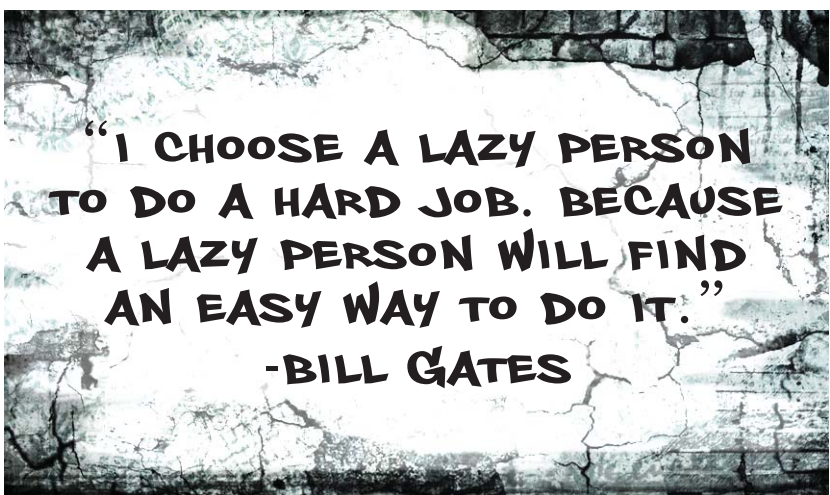
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ZITS



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THE WALL



BABY BLUES

