

Observed on the first Thursday of May, World Password Day serves as a crucial reminder of the role strong passwords play in protecting our digital lives. In an era of rising cyber threats, using complex, unique passwords for each account, and enabling two-factor authentication, is no longer optional. Whether it's safeguarding bank details, personal chats, or work data, a secure password is your first line of defense. Today, take a moment to update your credentials, ditch '123456', and embrace smarter security habits. Because in the digital world, a strong password is your strongest shield.

## #LABOUR DAY

# Saluting the Hands That Build the Nation

In India, Labour Day was first observed in Chennai (then Madras) on May 1, 1923, spearheaded by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan. Since then, the day has carried deep significance, especially in a country where over 90% of the workforce is in the unorganised sector.



Every year on May 1st, the world pauses to honour the tireless efforts of workers who form the backbone of every economy. International Workers' Day, popularly known as Labour Day or May Day, is not just a date on the calendar, it is a tribute to the grit, sweat, and perseverance of the global workforce.

The origins of Labour Day trace back to the labour union movement in the 19th century, particularly the eight-hour day movement in the United States, where workers demanded 'eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for what we will.' What began as a fierce struggle for basic rights has now evolved into a global reminder of workers' rights, dignity, and socio-economic contributions.

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This year's theme, 'Ensuring Safety and Social Protection for All Workers,' resonates deeply in the wake of growing concerns about job security, fair wages, and workplace safety. The pandemic years highlighted the vulnerabilities of workers across industries, especially daily wage earners and migrant

labourers, many of whom had to walk hundreds of kilometres home amid lockdowns.

Beyond numbers and policies, Labour Day is also about recognition and respect. The delivery executive braving the summer sun, the sanitation worker keeping our surroundings clean, the nurse working round-the-clock, these are the real heroes who keep society functioning seamlessly.

Yet, challenges remain. Wage disparity, lack of benefits, unsafe working conditions, and gender inequality continue to plague various sectors. While government schemes like MGNREGA and labour codes are steps in the right direction, implementation gaps still leave many workers in limbo.

But hope shines through grassroots movements, non-profits, and worker cooperatives empowering labourers with skills, rights awareness, and collective bargaining. Stories of transformation, like that of a woman construction worker becoming a site supervisor or a migrant worker starting his own trade business, are redefining the narrative around blue-collar jobs.

On this Labour Day, as flags are hoisted and speeches made, let's remember that real celebration lies in action: by supporting fair trade, encouraging ethical hiring, and acknowledging the people behind the products and services we consume daily.

Labour is not just an economic term, it's a story of human effort, pride, and progress. And this May 1st, let us all pledge to not just thank the hands that build, cook, clean, care, transport, and serve, but also uplift and stand beside them.



Babur receives Uzbek and Rajput envoys, Baburnama, 1590.



The great age of Mughal art lasted from about 1580 to 1650 and spanned the reigns of three emperors: Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Hindu and Muslim artists and craftsmen from the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent worked with Iranian masters in the masculine environment of the royal workshops. Their very different traditions were combined to produce a radically new, and rapidly evolving style of art for the court.

The Mughal dynasty was founded in 1526 when Babur, a Central Asian Muslim prince, followed the example of his ancestor Timur (d.1405) and invaded the land he knew as Hindustan (the Indian subcontinent). He seized the Delhi Sultanate from its ruler, Ibrahim Lodi, and laid the foundations of what would become one of the world's great empires. Through his mother's line, Babur was also descended from the Mongol ruler Genghis Khan (about 1162-1227), and the dynasty would become known by the Persian word for Mongol.

This exhibition will last till May 05, 2025 in Kensington Victoria and Albert museum, London.

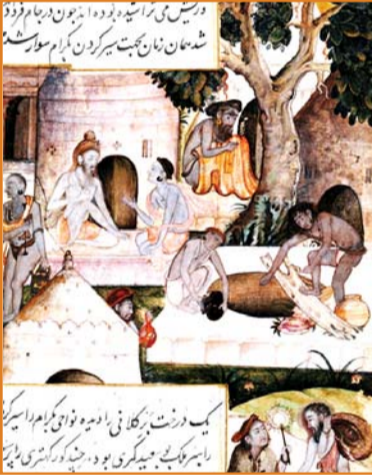


Bracker red sandstone.

Under the guidance of one of Humayun's close confidants, the aristocratic Iranian Bayram Khan, the young ruler began to expand his territories. Some independent kingdoms were conquered; other rulers signed treaties and entered imperial service. Over the next 49 years, Akbar extended Mughal rule over most of the north of the subcontinent, stretching from Gujarat in the west to Bengal in the east, and from Kabul and Kashmir in the north to the borders of the independent Deccan sultanates in the south. As new kingdoms were conquered, artists and craftsmen from many different regions entered the royal workshops. They brought their own distinctive styles to the monuments, paintings and artefacts being created for Akbar. The population of the empire was predominantly Hindu, with a significant Muslim minority, and Hindus reached the highest levels of the administrative hierarchy. Akbar married some of the daughters of Hindu Rajput rulers. In the royal House of Books (Ketab khana), which housed the library as well as being the place where manuscripts were created, Hindustani artists were directed by two Iranian masters, formerly in the service of his father, to produce a new style of book painting. Many of the calligraphers, bookbinders and illuminators, who worked with them, were also Iranian.

## About the Mughals

Babur's languages were Turki, in which he wrote his memoirs, and Persian, the language of culture across Iran and Central Asia. His reign lasted only four years, but during that time, he constructed new buildings and laid out gardens in the geometric Iranian style. None have survived. At his death in 1530, his kingdom incorporated the major cities of Kabul, Lahore, Agra and Delhi, but his control remained fragile. Babur was succeeded by his son, Humayun, who lacked his father's determination and military brilliance.



Hindu ascetics at a shrine.

Within ten years, Humayun was forced out of Hindustan by the Afghan Sher Shah Suri, who took over Mughal territory and ruled from Delhi. His kingdom was short-lived, but he instituted an extremely effective administrative system that was his lasting legacy. Humayun fled with a small band of followers to take refuge in Iran at the court of Shah Tahmasp. With the Shah's help, he was able to return to Kabul, from where he eventually launched a successful attack on Delhi. Humayun regained his former territories after nearly 17 years, but died only months later after falling down the stone steps of his library at night. He was succeeded in 1556 by his remarkable 13-year-old son, Akbar.

## Akbar

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## The Baburnama

By the late 16th century, few at court were able to understand Turki, the language in which Babur had written. The Persian translation, the *Baburnama* (Book of Babur), introduced to a wide Mughal audience the account of his turbulent life before and after invading Hindustan. He gave detailed descriptions of the unfamiliar flora and fauna he came across, and recorded in forthright terms how much he disliked many aspects of the land, notably its climate and architecture. He also described many of the new gardens he laid out in the Iranian manner, and the plants he introduced from Central Asia. The translation of Babur's memoirs from Turki to Persian was supervised by one of the great intellectuals of the age, Akbar's friend, Abd al-Rahim, who also held the highest office in the empire. The translation was finished in 1589, and several illustrated copies were made. One manuscript dating to about 1590 reached the Western art market in the early 20th century, and its paintings were sold off separately in 1913: 20 folios were bought that year by the V&A, and at least 50 others are known in collections across the world.



## #THE ARTS

The giant Zamrud Shah falls into a well and is beaten by gardeners, Hamzanama, 1562-77.



The murder of Hamza's son while he sleeps.



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Hamza's spy, Basu, beheads an enemy and gains entry to the Castle of Acre, Hamzanama, 1562-77.

Krishna kills demon Nikumbha, Harivamsa, 1590.

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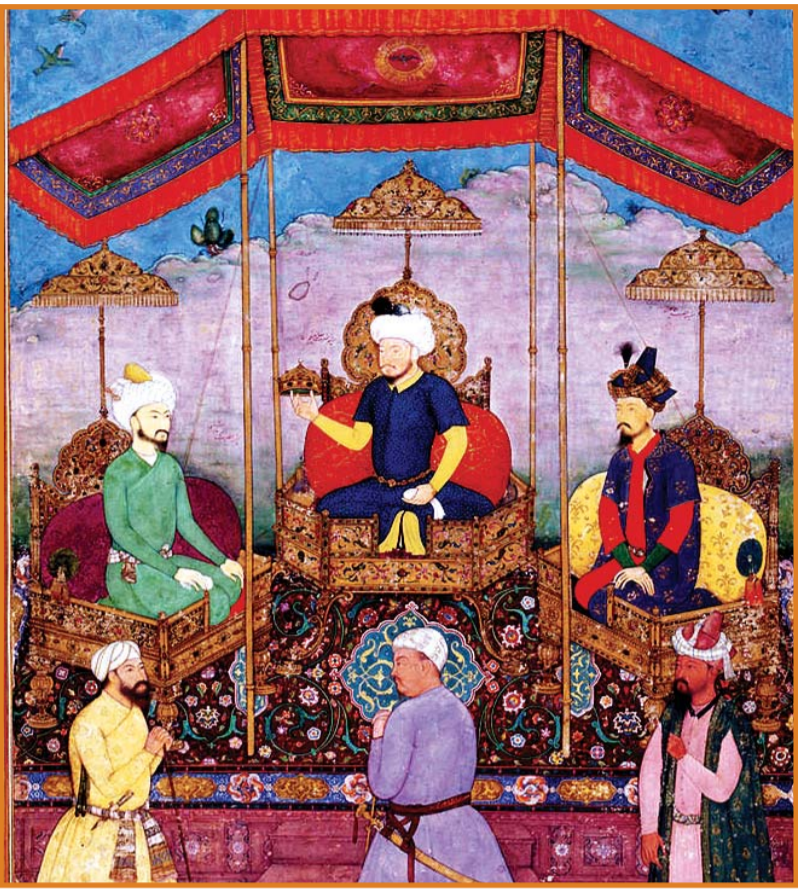
Hamza kills a tiger, Hamzanama, 1562-77.

## The Hamzanama

Their first major undertaking was the creation of the multiple, illustrated volumes of the Hamzanama, or 'Book of Hamza.' These popular tales of the Muslim hero Hamza and his band of followers fighting against unbelievers, witches and demons, and supernatural or magical forces, were traditionally performed, rather than written down and read. However, Akbar ordered one of the court's most accomplished prose writers, another Iranian from the large city of Qazvin, to produce a written version that was then copied by calligraphers for this imperial volume.



Akbar receives the Iranian Ambassador Sayyid Beg in 1562.



Timur handing the crown to Babur in the presence of Humayun, by Govardhan, 1628.



Akbar's reign was shaped by his curiosity regarding religions other than his own Muslim faith on the one hand, and his desire for religious tolerance on the other. Acutely aware of tensions between his Hindu and Muslim subjects, he wanted the major Sanskrit texts to be translated into Persian so that they could be widely read by non-Hindus.



Akbar supervising the laying out of the garden of fidelity in Kabul, by Ramdas, 1590.

Some were rescued from the windows of the shop, where they had been used to block out the winter frosts of the previous season. Their condition, inevitably, is poor: some have been damaged by fire or rain, and the colours on all the pages have faded significantly. In addition, at some stage in their history, probably in the 19th century, zealots have rubbed out the faces of all the living beings depicted. The paintings now in the MAK are considerably better preserved, and give a better idea of the vibrancy of the original colours.



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81 when Caspar Purdon Clarke was sent to India on a purchasing trip to make acquisitions for what was then the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). The main purpose of the architect, who was the first Keeper of the Indian Section and would go on to become Director of the V&A, was to buy contemporary objects of a kind not represented in the museum.

When in Kashmir, he wandered into a curiosity shop in the capital city of Srinagar, and noticed some large paintings which he immediately bought. Some were rescued from the windows of the shop,



where they had been used to block out the winter frosts of the previous season. Their condition, inevitably, is poor: some have been damaged by fire or rain, and the colours on all the pages have faded significantly. In addition, at some stage in their history, probably in the 19th century, zealots have rubbed out the faces of all the living beings depicted. The paintings now in the MAK are considerably better preserved, and give a better idea of the vibrancy of the original colours.

The Hamzanama paintings demonstrate the beginning of a distinctively Mughal style that would become more refined as Akbar's reign progressed. Parallel trends

simultaneously took place in architecture, and in the production of artefacts for the court.

The vertical format of the Hamzanama paintings, high viewpoint and meticulous details of the surface ornamentation of some weapons and textiles, all derive from Iranian conventions, but are combined with a naturalism in the depiction of animals and birds that belong to Hindustani traditions.

Though never realistic, the paintings nevertheless occasionally provide glimpses of contemporary life in even the most fantastic settings, a feature that would endure in Mughal painting.

Many of the buildings depicted appear to be of red sandstone, the material used in the construction of Akbar's monuments in the royal cities of Delhi and Agra, and in his new city, Fatehpur Sikri.

The ascent of Mughal style continued to evolve over the next decades as the artists were exposed to new influences, or new recruits joined them. Iranian artists sought employment at Akbar's court, bringing with them an enhanced attention to detail and sophisticated use of colour. They were vastly outnumbered by the calligraphers, craftsmen, architects, poets and scholars who also came from Iran, able to move easily into this Persian-speaking milieu.

In 1578, Persian, already the language of the cultivated elite, was officially adopted as the administrative language of the empire. This allowed reports to be collected in the central Record Office of the court from every province, each of which had many local languages.

A few years earlier, in 1574, a Translation Bureau (Maktab khana) had been established as one of the major court institutions. It produced Persian translations of key texts, the most important of which were then illustrated. The memoirs of Akbar's grandfather, Babur, was one of these.

## The Harivamsa

may refrain from doing so and may seek after the truth. The Translation Bureau was therefore given the task of producing Persian versions of fundamental texts such as the Ramayana (Ramzanama, or Book of War) and the Harivamsa, considered to be an appendix to the Mahabharata, detailing the life of Krishna.

The translation of the Sanskrit text of the Harivamsa

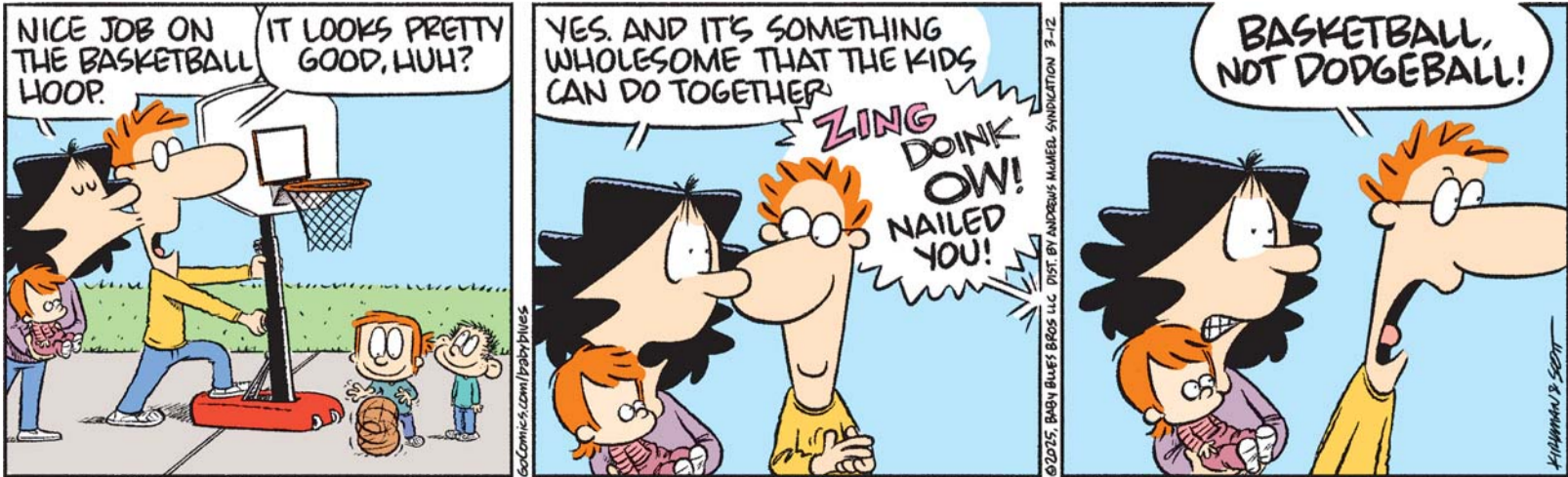
into Persian was finished by about 1590 and paintings were added. One imperial copy had its paintings removed in the early 1920s when stray pages appeared on the Western art market. The six folios in the V&A were part of this group, but were not acquired until 1970 when they were bequeathed by Dame Ada Macnaghten. To be continued...

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## THE WALL

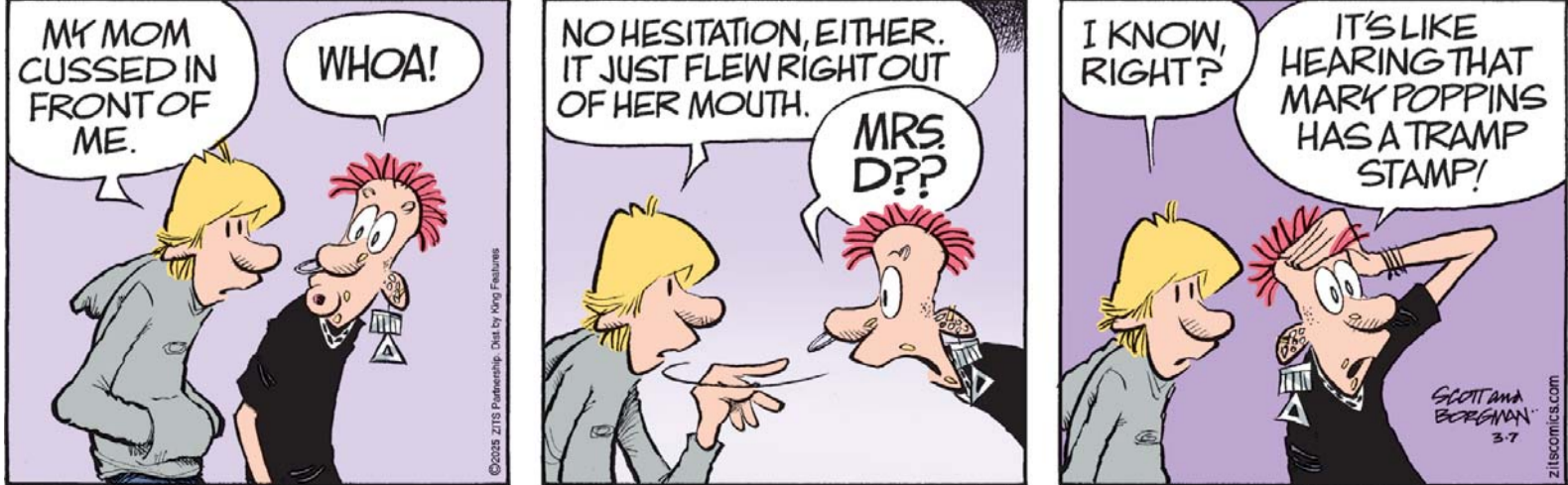


## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman