to change her clothes and get

Sixty years later, I still remem-

nostalgia for that unadulterated gush of childhood innocence. How

loved that assertion, "Aami jani,

aami cheente pari, inee khoob

bhalo lok" (I know. I can make out

that he is a very fine person), she

that he is a very fine person!"

asserted. "I know. I can make out

In the mid-sixties, I moved to

Udaipur city which had a sizable

my eleven years in Calcutta and

my fluency in Bengali, I mingled

easily with the city's Bengali community. I was gainfully employed

and time sped by. And then, one

ion. Who was the bride? My Dear

in Udaipur to a local Bengali boy.

Delicatus! She was to be married

There she was, at the reception

day, I received a wedding invita-

Bengali population. Because of

ready for lunch.

राष्ट्रदुत

**#CAREER** 

## The Future of Freelancing: Mastering the Art of Independence

Navigating the Freelance Economy in a transforming world



n an era of unprecedented technological advancement and economic shifts, freelancing is no native to traditional cated, dynamic, and highly lucrative career path. As the digital economy continues to evolve, freelancers must stay ahead of the curve, mastering emerging skills, embracing technological tools, and building resilient professional networks to ensure long-term

The freelance marketplace has undergone a profound transformation. With remote work becoming the norm and ousinesses increasingly rely ing on independent professionals, the demand for specialized skills has never been higher. From AI-driven content creation to cybersecurity consulting and blockchain development, niche expertise is becoming the key differentiator in a competitive digital landscape. Professionals who continuously upskill through platforms like Coursera, and LinkedIn Learning position themselves as indispensable assets in a

rapidly shifting job market. Beyond technical expertise, a freelancer's personal brand serves as their most valuable currency. A meticulously curated online pres ence, spanning from profes sional portfolios to insightful industry commentary, can enhance credibility and visibility. Social media platforms, particularly LinkedIn and Twitter, offer powerful avenues to engage with potential clients, establish thought leadership, and cultivate meaningful professional relationships.

Technology is not just reshaping industries, it is redefining the very nature of freelance work. AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT for content generation, Jasper for marketing, and automation software for financial management allow freelancers to streamline their operations, maximize productivity, and deliver unparalleled quality. The integration of these innovations into daily workflows is no longer optional, it is essential for those aiming to stay competitive.

strategic risk management.

Relying on a single revenue stream can be precarious, making income diversification a critical strategy Whether through consulting, digital product creation, courses, or affiliate marketing, freelancers, who multiple income sources, create a financial safety net, ensuring stability

even in fluctuating economic

Long-term sustainability n freelancing hinges on the ability to foster enduring relationships Professionals who prioritize transparent communication. timely delivery, and a proactive approach to client needs often enjoy repeat business and referrals. By offering added value, such as postproject consultations or personalized insights, freelancers can solidify their reputation as trusted, indispen-

The true power of free lancing lies in its global potential. Geographic limitations are increasingly irrelevant, as platforms like Upwork, Toptal, and Fiverr connect skilled professionals with international clientele nuances and global pricing strategies enables freelancers to tap into higher-paying markets, expanding their career horizons beyond local

opportunities. Financial acumen is as crucial as professional expertise. Managing earnings effectively, through strategic investments, retirement planning, and tax optimization, ensures long-term financial security. Leveraging financial management tools such as QuickBooks or FreshBooks can provide freelancers with greater control over their income, allowing them to focus on their craft without the burden of financial

uncertainty. As we step into 2025, free lancing stands as a pillar of the modern economy, offering unmatched flexibility, autono my, and earning potential. Those who embrace innova tion, adapt to change, and cul tivate a forward-thinking approach will not only survive but thrive. The future belongs to those who view freelancing not as a temporary pursuit, but as a refined. strategic, and highly rewarding profession in an increas-

ingly interconnected world.

However, the volatility of freelancing necessitates

# Kintu inee to khoob bhalo lok-Innocent Conflict

Dr. S.G. Kabra

alcutta 1955. I had passed my intermediate examination with a first class which, in those days, was rare and thus an achieve ment. I came from a traditional trader family to whom science, and thus biolo gy, were unusual subjects. All my brothers had graduated in commerce and had begun to work soon after. As if to assert my individual identity, I chose to study medicine. In an era where there were no competitive examinations, selection into an MBBS course was on the basis of the candidate's intermediate examination marks. With my first class, I had felt I had a fair chance of securing admission in one of the four medical colleges in Calcutta. One of these was a government college while the others were private. To play it safe, I applied to all four. Apart from a few seats reserved for candidates from the state of Bengal and, in the private colleges, for donors

I did not get shortlisted for the government medical college but was by all three private colleges and soon appeared for an interview before the selection panel of the first of the three. After checking my papers, the chairman of the interviewing panel asked me "Do you know Bengali?" answered in the negative and noticed that he put a cross against my name, which meant that I was not selected. A few days later, I learnt that in order to be able to interact with Bengali patients, a candidate was expected to speak

(the donation seats), there were no

reserved seats. Fortunately, since I

had studied and passed my inter-

mediate examinations in Bengal, I

was considered a domicile of the



Theme song of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, centenary

"Bangla jano?" Wiser now, I cautiously replied, "Ektu ektu jani."

One of the panel members went through my application. "Tumar anko chhilo na?" (You did not study mathematics?) Now, I did not know that "anko" meant mathematics. I thought he was asking for my domicile certificate. So, I replied, "It is there, sir." "What is there?" the member asked, puzzled.

"My domicile certificate, sir." There was laughter all around. Naturally, I was not selected. In the third of the private colleges, it was the same opening question, "Bangla jano?"

This time, I was even more prepared. "Janis sir. Boojte pari. Kintu aamar practice nei, bhalo kore bolte pari na." (I know and understand it, sir, but I don't speak it too well because I lack practice.) "Tumi to khub bhalo bol chho Banglaye utter davo," (You are speaking it very well. Answer in Bengali!) commanded a member. I was beginning to feel my game was up. Another member asked, "Tumaar anko chhilo na?" (You

' his time, I was even more prepared. "Janis sir. Boojte pari. Kintu aamar practice nei, bhalo kore bolte pari na." (I know and understand it, sir, but I don't speak it too well because I lack practice.) "Tumi to khub bhalo bol chho. Banglaye utter dayo," (You are speaking it very well. Answer in Bengali!) commanded a member

should have

did not have mathematics?)

"Na sir" (No sir), I replied conric Bareilly thike korle, tar aage kothai chhile?" (You passed your

matriculation from Bareilly. Where were you before that?) "Rajasthan, sir."

> The member laughed sarcastically. "Besh! Rajasthaner bahadur loge'r naam bol to." (Good! Name some brave individuals from With gusto, "Prithviraj Chauhan, Raja Man Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji..."

with a little bit more pride than I

of being a Marwari. Achha bolo to

Rajasthan kise'r jonya famous?"

(Tell us, what is Rajasthan famous

that, for some strange reason, I

was being harassed and I resented

it. Reflexively, clenching my fist, I

said, "For bravery, for valour!"

It was now fairly obvious to me

"You appear to be pretty proud

"Are you a... Marwari?"

"Yes sir!" I answered, perhaps with a little bit more pride than I should

"You appear to be pretty proud of

us, what is Rajasthan famous for?)

It was now fairly obvious to me that,

being a Marwari. Achha bolo to Rajasthan kise'r jonya famous?" (Tell

for some strange reason, I was being harassed and I resented it. Reflexively, clenching my fist, I said,

The member laughed sarcastically.

"Besh! Rajasthaner bahadur loge'r

naam bol to." (Good! Name some

brave individuals from Rajasthan.)

With gusto, I started, "Prithviraj

Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati

Chauhan, Raja Man Singh,

"For bravery, for valour!"

"Shiyaji? I realized my mistake. "I am sorry, sir. He was a Maratha. but he is so very famous in Raiasthan that we accept him as our own.' Some of the members nodded n approval but the member (I learnt later that he was from the communist party) persisted. "Why didn't you say Rajasthan is famous

The crude and derisory allusion to wealthy Marwaris was

obvious and it was too much for me. Seething within, I answered with controlled fury, "Sir, excuse

**#BONG-MARWARI** 

Given my precarious situation, it was an inappropriate answer, but, before I could apologize, the member with the Gandhi cap interjected, "Besh bole chho!"

colleges of their own. There were

many foreigners too. It was a

happy mix. Perhaps, because I was

freed from the uncertainty of the

selection process and eager to set-

tle into my new role. I found that I

had no difficulty in learning

Bengali. As with students every-

where, I started with cuss words.

Bengali cinema's heroines greatly

helped, and I was a regular movie-

goer. I realized that as I grew more

comfortable with the language, I

began to feel more at home as well.

Till I and my fellow non-Bengalis

could manage a reasonable level of

fluency, we experienced a sense of

me, but do you think if you

become rich tomorrow. Bengal

will become famous because of

tility from the Bengalis. With the passage of time, this feeling The interview meandered on diminished as we gained greater and, at the end of it, I was, to put it acceptance. But, to my dismay, I mildly, apprehensive. Like in the found an undercurrent of resenttwo earlier colleges, I expected to ment against Marwaris among the general public, no doubt encourbe shown the door here as well. aged by the Communist party con-But surprise surprise my name was in the list of selected candistantly harping on how economic dates. I had actually been admit imbalances in the polity were ted to the prestigious R. G. Kar detrimental to social progress Medical College, the oldest private While I may have gained my first college in the country! There were professional qualification in a large number of students from Calcutta, it was a city where I learnt these and other life-lessons. all parts of India, especially from states that did not have medical They left an indelible mark on my

> Other life lessons? There were some wonderful ones too. Let me share one with you.

There is no chocolate in your hand.)

alienation, the 'us and them' hos-

I had a Bengali friend, at whose house I was a frequent visitor I was readily welcomed and accepted by his family, and partic ularly so, by my friend's 8-year-old sister who was my favourite. called her Dear Delicatus or 'DD' for short because she was so fragile and fair, with an unbelievably angelic smile. I would tell her stories, demonstrate magic tricks One day, I was visiting my friend of childhood My friend turned red with embarrassment but recovered quickly. He teased her, "Keno

Marwari?)

vou ask?

lowly, the signs of recognition appeared, followed by the smile that

good people?)

classmate, told me.)

chocolate ene debe" (Ask Kabra da

to bring chocolates for her too).

said my friend, firmly ending the

conversation and packing her off

Finally, with a hopelessly implausible air of detachment, she said, "Ki

kore cheenbo, hathe je chocolate nai." (How could I recognize you?

tomake chocolate deya se jonai he bhalo lok?" (Is he a nice person just because he brings chocolates for you?) "Na! inee khoob bhalo lok" (No, he is a very fine person), she

when she returned from school.

She dropped her school bag and

rushed to me to collect a hug and,

munching it, she suddenly asked

her brother, "Dada, Kabra da ki

Marwari?" (Dada, is Kabra da a

friend answered, "Yes, but why do

lok" (But he is a very fine person),

she said, with all the serious logic

Somewhat taken aback, my

"Kintu inee to khoob bhalo

said emphatically.
"Ki kore jan'li?" (How do you know?) "Aami jani, aami cheente pari, inee khoob bhalo lok" (I know. I can make out that he is a very fine person), she asserted as if that was reason enough. My

friend was troubled. "Tuma ke ke bol'lo Marwari bhalo lok hoy na?"

Ithe years had refused to change. She looked me straight in the eye. She narrowed her eyes and peered at me. Slowly, the signs of recognition appeared, followed by the smile that the years had refused to change. She looked me (Who told you Marwaris are not straight in the eye. Finally, with a nopelessly implausible air of "Class teacher're mey aamar detachment, she said, "Ki kore songe podhe, shay ee." (My classcheenbo, hathe je chocolate nai. teacher's daughter, who is my (How could I recognize you? There is no chocolate in your hand.) "Kabra da ke bolo'r joney o Perhaps, my DD will read

these lines. Wherever you are, may God be with you!

**#EVENT** 

## A Celebration of Timeless Elegance

Whether it's the thrill of speed, the marvel of engineering, or the sheer beauty of timeless designs, car enthusiasts across the world share a deep, unwavering passion for these mechanical masterpieces.



modern supercars to the nostalgic charm of vintage classics, automobiles have always held a special place in people's hearts. Whether it's the thrill of speed, the marvel of engineering, or

the sheer beauty of timeless designs, car enthusiasts across the world share a deep, unwavering passion for these mechanical master pieces. Nowhere was this passion more evident than at the 21 Gun Salute Concours d'Elegance 2025, where aficionados, collectors, and industry experts gathered to revel in the glory of automotive heritage. The 21 Gun Salute Concours d'Elegance 2025 once again captivated the world with a breathtaking

resplendent in bridal finery, sari, bangles, mangal sutra, sindhoor showcase of vintage and classic automobiles. Held from February 21 and all. Yet, to me, she was still the ovely, fragile and innocent little to February 23 at the prestigious girl, I knew in Calcutta, years ago. Golf Club in New Delhi, the event As I moved with the line of visdrew collectors, historians, and itors waiting to congratulate the connoisseurs of automotive excelence from across the globe. As oung couple, I wondered whether she would remember me. When, at Asia's premier heritage car event, ast, I stood before her, I asked softthis concours embodied the pinnalv. "Ki re. Marwari dada mone cle of craftsmanship, innovation, aachhe? Cheente paachhish?" (Do and historical significance, setting vou remember Marwari dada? Are an unparalleled standard of grandeur and participation. you able to recognize him?) Marking its 11th edition, the event

> tionally acclaimed classic car show-A Legacy of Automotive **Excellence:** Since its inception, the 21 Gun Salute Concours d'Elegance has epitomized India's rich motoring heritage. Established over a decade ago, the event has consistently drawn some of the world's rarest and most historically significant automobiles, some dating back to the early 20th century. The 2025 edition was no exception, presenting a meticulously curated collection of restored masterpieces, each bearing a storied past and an air of

timeless elegance The 2025 Edition: A Spectacle of Splendor: This year's event boasted an awe-inspiring lineup of over 150 vintage and classic automobiles, featuring legendary marques such as Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Bugatti,

reaffirmed its stature as an interna-



ed attendees with rare insights into

the automotive world. A captivating

enriched the experience, displaying

rare archival images that chronicled

India's motoring history. Among the

most prestigious accolades of the

event, the coveted 'Best of Show'

award was presented to an exquisite

1938 Bugatti Type 57C, lauded for its

flawless restoration and historical sig-

nificance. A striking 1912 Hispano

Suiza, pristingly maintained in its

original grandeur, also won hearts

with its enduring charm and mechan-

The 2025 edition was graced by an

illustrious roster of dignitaries.

including prominent Indian industri-

alists, renowned global automobile

A Gathering of Luminaries:

photography exhibition further

in bolstering heritage tourism and and Packard. Among the most capti advocating for automobile conserva vating entries were regal automotion on a national scale. biles, once owned by Indian royalty, a A Catalyst for Economic and tribute to the country's illustrious Cultural Renaissance: Beyond its motoring legacy. A special segment, grandeur, the 21 Gun Salute Concours dedicated to Indian-manufactured l'Elegance 2025 significantly impact classics, saw vintage Hindustan d India's economy, injecting million Ambassadors and Contessas take the nto the hospitality tourism, and lux spotlight, celebrating the nation's ury goods' industries. With global automotive evolution. The exhibiattendees flocking to the event, luxution also introduced an exclusive ry hotels, fine-dining establishments, and local businesses flourished, benepavilion where esteemed automobile fiting from the influx of high-net nistorians and restoration experts delved into the art of preserving worth individuals and passionate col lectors, eager to immerse themselves motoring heritage. Discussions on vintage craftsmanship, intricate in India's cultural and automotive restoration techniques, and the evolution of automobile design provid-

Additionally, the event solidified India's status as a burgeoning hub for classic car restoration, drawing international investment into specialized restoration workshops and skilled craftsmanship. This growth, in turn, stimulated employment opportunities and paved the way for a new generation of artisans dedicated to preserv ing automotive history. The concours also served as an inspiration for young enthusiasts, igniting their passion for classic car conservation and fueling a renaissance in vintage automobile appreciation.

lies with deep-rooted automotive legacies. Distinguished guests included

representatives from esteemed inter

national car museums and revered

classic car collectors from Europe

and the United States. Indian govern-

ment officials also lent their presence

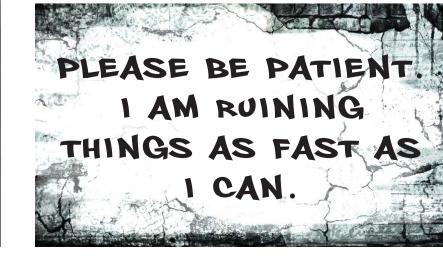
inderlining the event's growing role

A Triumph of Heritage and Prestige: With yet another resoundingly successful edition, the 21 Gun Salute Concours d'Elegance reat firmed its place as a crown jewel in the global classic car calendar. The harmonious blend of history, luxury, and artistic restoration ensured that this year's spectacle was truly unfor gettable. As India embraces its motor ing legacy with renewed vigor, antici nation is already building for the grandeur that the 2026 edition prom ises to unveil. Far more than a mere exhibition, the 21 Gun Salute Concours d'Elegance 2025 stood as a testament to the enduring allure of classic automobiles, a beacon of heritage, elegance, and engineering

#### rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



### THE WALL



#### **BABY BLUES**



#### NOTHING EXCEPT PLAY WITH THE BAJILLION TOYS



#### By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



### ZITS



## By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



