

#ACCOMPLISHMENT

JAIPUR'S JEWELLERY SHINES BRIGHT

House of *Sunita Shekhawat's Padmapriya collection* takes center stage, uniting tradition with modern elegance, in the illustrious celebration of love at the 'Lagan Lakhvanu' ceremony of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant.



Tusharika Singh
Freelancer writer and city blogger

For centuries, Jaipur has been synonymous with exquisite *jewellery*, a legacy passed down through generations of skilled artisans and revered craftsmen. From ornate *Kundan* and *Polki* sets to intricately carved *gemstones*, *Jaipur's jewellery* reflects a timeless elegance that transcends fleeting trends. Jewellery shopping in Jaipur is a quintessential experience, whether indulging in exquisite silver trinkets or selecting the perfect pieces for a wedding ensemble.

One of the most anticipated weddings, the union of Radhika Merchant and Anant Ambani is around the corner. The couple recently had their 'Lagan Lakhvanu' ceremony, which has been creating waves on the internet. The groom's mother, Nita Mukesh Ambani and bride-to-be, Radhika Merchant were seen adorning jewellery from Jaipur's renowned jewellery brand, *House of Sunita Shekhawat*.

Nita Mukesh Ambani adorned the exquisite *Padmapriya Collection*. This bespoke collection, a beautiful symphony of the lotus flower and parrots, holds deep symbolism reflecting the founder's profound love for *Goddess Laxmi*. Crafted with meticulous precision, the *Padmapriya Collection* features *champlevé* and intricate of *Gulabi meenakari* on 22 karat gold, enriched with *Zambian emeralds*, *polkis*, and south sea pearls. Custom-made, specifically for Mrs. Nita Mukesh Ambani, the *Padmapriya Collection* played a significant role in the pre-wedding festivities.

Behind the mesmerizing allure of the *Padmapriya Collection* lies an extraordinary dedication to craftsmanship. Sharing details about the collection, the designer, *Sunita Shekhawat* shared, "The pieces required a copious 550 man-hours to bring each detail to life. To impart a personal touch to the collection, I met Mrs. Ambani personally. Detailed discussion



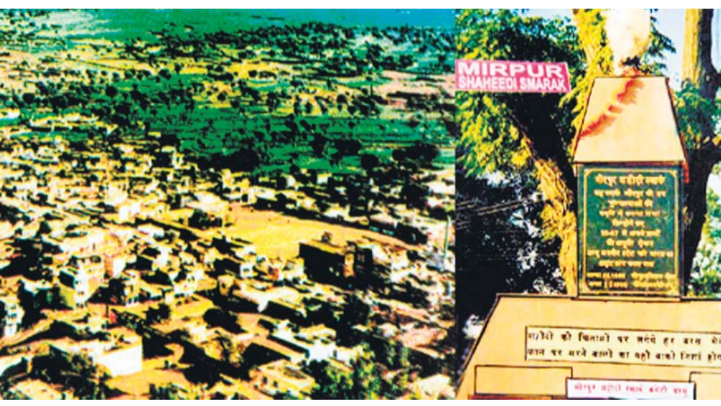
I realised that *Mirpur* was different than anything else, I had heard about before, and perhaps, I wasn't equipped to understand it. On the second night, well, past midnight, I reached out to the only other person I knew, who had worked with *Mirpuri families*. I met *Prakhar Joshi*, the following week. An engineer, he was one of the first *Story Scholars of the 1947 Partition Archive*, who recorded stories of families that migrated from *Jammu and Kashmir* in 1947. He had a particular interest in border villages. "I haven't recorded anything since 2016, but this was my first assignment with the archive, and I really had no idea what I was getting into," said *Joshi*. "There was so much silence about *Mirpur*, and because of the sheer degree of violence, families had distanced themselves from what had happened. Ultimately, I managed to record over 60 stories."

Anjali Sharma
Senior journalist & wildlife enthusiast

November 25, 1947 *Mirpur massacre*: An ill-fated day that reminds us of injustice and infringement, brutality and bloodshed. "1947" is remembered as the 'year of our Independence' and the year that witnessed 'India-Pakistan partition.' The dreadful year is also remembered for the most horrible massacre of Indian history. Around 35,000 Hindu and Sikh refugees in *Mirpur* of today's *J&K* were mercilessly slaughtered and women were raped. The conspirators were armed *Pakistani tribals* and soldiers who carried out the first *Kashmir war* ever, that occurred on and around *November 25*, remembered as the *Mirpur Day*.

In 1947, during the partition of *India and Pakistan*, when thousands of *Hindus* from *Pakistan* had migrated to *Mirpur* from *Punjab* and *Muslims* from *Mirpur* were migrating to *Pakistan*. *Mirpur* was part of the erstwhile princely state of *Kashmir*, then. As the offer of accession by *Maharaja* was accepted by *Govt. of India* on 26th of *Oct. 1947*, little did *Hindu and Sikh minorities*, living in *Muslim-majority western areas* of *Jammu region* and in *Kashmir valley*, know what awaited them.

The *Pakistan Army* conceived a military plan to invade



Jammu and Kashmir, under the guise of military campaign. They code-named their conspiracy as 'Operation *Gulmarg*'. The strategists planned to execute with the assistance and guidance of *British rulers* only, it is widely known.

A major attack was carried out by the enemy on 23rd of *Nov 1947*, from the main eastern gate and was repulsed by the death squads of *Mirpuri youths* in hand-to-hand fight. *Youths of Mirpur* withstood the soldiers on the defence posts for days, but with lack of local support, faced with weapons and growing number of *Pakistani armed men*, they embraced ill fortune. The only wireless equipment with the state forces broke down and the fresh stronger attack by the enemy forces, on 24th morning, frightened the state forces, who left the battle scene with the information to the civil population 'to move to safer places.' On the gruesome morning of *November 25*, *Pakistan army* and *tribesmen* entered the city and set several parts of the city on fire, causing chaos and turmoil across the city. Large-scale rioting took place.

The residents of *Mirpur* had pledged to not let *Pakistani invaders* enter the city and hence, fought the invaders to their last breath, but by then, thousands of killings had happened. The 'dance of death' continued till afternoon and at the end of day, 18,000 people were slaughtered in *Mirpur* town, causing the non-Muslim population to increase to 25,000. *Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan*, the then president of *Azad Kashmir*, who visited the place during the event, had painfully confirmed that *Hindus* were 'disposed of' in *Mirpur* in *November 1947*, though, he didn't mention any figures. Currently, *Mirpur* is in *Pakistan* but there is no sign of the old *Mirpur*. *Pakistan* has submerged the old *Mirpur* by making *Mangla Dam* on the *Jhelum River*.

In *March 1948*, the *ICRC*, *International Committee of the Red Cross*, rescued 1,600 of the survivors from *Alibeg*, who were resettled in *Jammu* and other areas of *India*. By 1951, only 790 non-Muslims remained in *area*

Seventy-Seven Years On, Partition Still Traumatizes



#TEARS



Collection of memories

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Joshi talks about a group, imprisoned in a cave in the mountains, where people were being segregated on the basis of gender and religion. At the time, seeing that it was only *Sikh males* who were being killed, a *Sikh father* chopped off his son's hair. Another

pleaded to the perpetrator, to be allowed to sit with his dying daughter until she succumbed, an ordeal that lasted 48 hours, before he, too, was mercilessly killed. *Joshi* recounted the story of a woman who, after fleeing from *Mirpur*, found refuge in a *gurdwara* in *Jammu*, where she used her long hair to sweep the floor, and in this way, fed her family. He spoke about a father and an elder son, who severed off the mother's head, as the younger son watched, because they were fearful of the worse things that could happen, if she were caught by the 'other.'

Joshi admits that it was only on his return to *Delhi* that he realised something had happened to him during his time in *Jammu and Kashmir*. He became quieter and barely responded to emotion. The accumulation of 'traumas' had made him a receptacle of 'violent memory.' Since, he no longer works with the *1947 Partition Archive*, does he still think of these families? "It's difficult to forget them," he said. "I live in *Lajpat Nagar*, a refugee colony, and each time, I see a name plate for a *Mahajan* or *Gupta* or *Ahija* (common last names from *Mirpur*), they take me back."

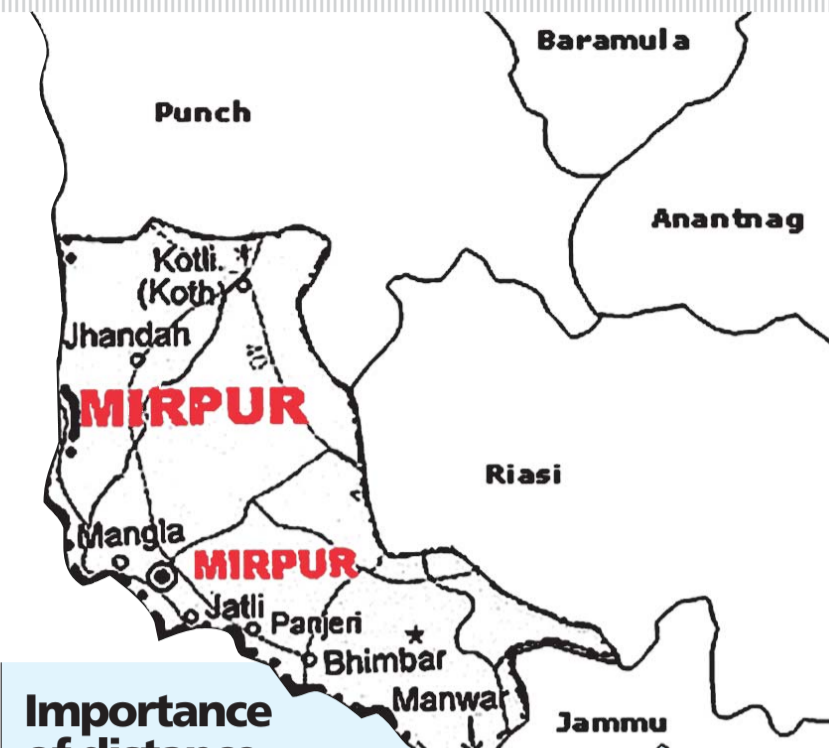
that came to comprise *Azad Kashmir*, down from a previous population of 1,14,000 which used to live there. Survivors of *Hindus* and *Sikhs* from *Muzaffarabad* and *Mirpur* became displaced within *Jammu and Kashmir*,

despite being on the land of their own ancestors. Unlike the refugees of *Indian Punjab* and *Bengal*, whose cases of compensation and land allotment were settled amicably by *India and Pakistan*, the *PoK* refugees still are labelled as

World Bartender Day



The bartender might be just about everyone's favourite person on a night out! Bartenders are able to keep people well-supplied, with tasty beverages, most likely those of an alcoholic variety, at any bar or pub they happen to visit. More than just serving drinks, though, bartenders often offer a listening ear, a bit of information, or even some advice. Some people even consider a bartender to be their 'unofficial therapist'! It's time to celebrate those men and women who work behind the bar. It's time for *World Bartender Day!*



Importance of distance

Feminist writer and publisher of *Zubaan Books*, *Urvashi Butalia*, in her seminal work, *'The Other Side of Silence'* writes about being 'emotionally entangled' with her research material. Did it matter to the people I was speaking to, that the memory of 'Partition' not be lost? That the history of 'Partition' had ignored their experiences and stories, and mine was a part of an exercise, tentatively begun, to restore these stories to history? That remembering, to me, was an essential part of forgetting. I had no 'easy answers' to these questions.

'The Other Side of Silence'

She continues this section of her book by talking about how the burden of 'stories of trauma' often felt, as though it had 'shifted' onto her during the course of the conversation. How, once people began to emerge out of their initial reluctance, they spoke for long and cathartically, making her the 'listener,' the 'bearer of the burden.'

Ritu Menon, publisher at *Women Unlimited* and co-author of *'Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition'* also recalls the voices that remain. "In *Borders and Boundaries*, there is the story of *B*, who, at 16-17 years, is the eldest of seven sisters. Somehow, the caravan, exiting *Lahore*, leaves behind *B* and her father. Eventually, he is killed and she is left at a camp in the care of a local *tehsildar*. When two years pass and no one comes looking for *B*, the *tehsildar*, who has, indeed, taken care of her, decides to get *B* and his son married. The couple is happy, *B* is not forced to convert, she has learnt *Urdu* and over the years, gives birth to three children. But little does she know that her brother has come to *Pakistan*, several times, to look for her. Finally, she is retrieved against her will in 1957-'58, and pressured by her brother, sister and two brothers had been abducted and taken to the concentration camp at *Alibeg*, in an old *gurdwara*, a few kilometres from the new *Pakistani* border. She described how people, no longer able to carry their young children, had buried them alive, and how she and her husband had licked mud to feel some wetness on their lips. When she gave birth to her daughter, cutting off the umbilical cord with a sword because she still possesses, the first instinct' was to abandon the child in the forest and move on so that at least the couple could survive (they eventually carried the child). When she was reunited with her abducted family, she barely recognised them since they had become skeleton-like, their hair and bodies infested with lice.

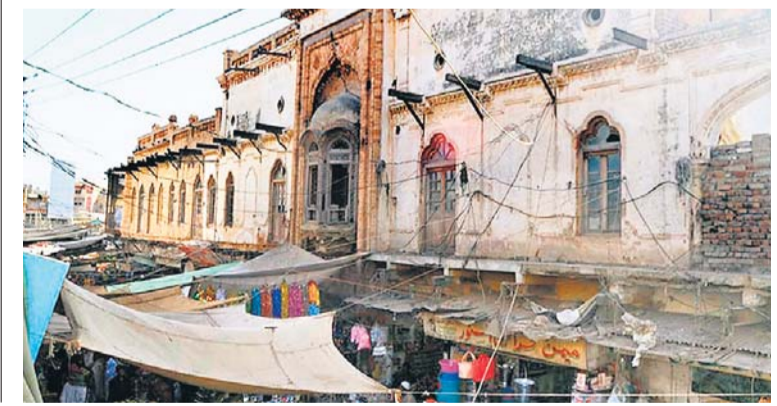
Even after I returned to *Delhi*, the story still consumed me. I barely slept. I was haunted by images of children buried alive and bullets raining down. I tried to listen to the recordings of the conversation the next day and that night again, I was unable to sleep. A few years ago, when I was consecutively recording several stories a week, images of those stories would amalgamate into one while I slept. I would wake up frantically in the middle of the night.

So, what are the words we use

to describe trauma, talk about division, render emotional and physical loss, and encapsulate belonging or lament? "The relation between 'Partition and language' is a complicated one," author and translator, *Rita Kothari*, wrote in a piece titled, *'Speaking about Partition'* from 2017. "Were languages capable of bearing the burden of words that could capture the enormity of 'Partition'? Words such as *bantwara* or *vibhajan* (both connoting division in Hindi), *ladpalayan* (migration and exodus) or *virbhago* (separation in Sindhi) appear too quotidian to fully capture the 'trauma' of this experience. Do we have words, for instance, to articulate the *minoritisation of Urdu* in *India* as well as the *hegemony of Hindi*?" she asked poignantly. Clearly, the burden is not just of memory, but also of articulating it.

Why is it that people chose to remain quiet? Why did they normalise this 'traumatic displacement'? They didn't talk, cry out, describe or feel. On the contrary, they suffocated traumatic memory, depressed it lower into their bodies, allowed it to fester and perhaps, even lead to prejudice among subsequent generations. What happens when a crisis is no longer an active crisis, but a latent, lingering one? Does its memory not require and demand exploration? Should its 'first-hand accounts' be dismissed on the basis on being 'inherently unreliable' because they cannot be corroborated or proven? As *Butalia* writes in *Partition: The Long Shadow*, "The exploration of memory is not something that is or can be finite. Every historical moment that offers us the possibility of looking at it, through the prism of memory, demonstrates that the more you search, the more there is that opens up."

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#SKINCARE

Should you use 'dates' as a face scrub?

Soak the dates in milk overnight. Mix it with *malai* or cream and make a smooth paste in the grinder. Add the lemon juice and apply it evenly on your face, while massaging it in a circular motion. It's a great face scrub and pack.



Many of us resort to simple, herbal ingredients for many of our skin issues. While using potato, turmeric, sandalwood, and many such ingredients are commonplace, not many may have used 'date paste' for the skin. Some nutritionists recommend using 'soaked dates in milk' as a scrub and a pack for skin. Let's try to understand if it truly works.

Soak the dates in milk overnight. Mix it with *malai* or cream and make a smooth paste in the grinder. Add the lemon juice and apply it evenly on your face, while massaging it in a circular motion. It's a great face scrub and pack.

While the described face pack made from dates, milk, *malai* (cream), and lemon juice may provide a soothing and potentially nourishing experience for the skin, it's important to approach such homemade remedies with a balanced perspective.

Dates are rich in vitamins and minerals that could offer hydration and nourishment to the skin. The *milk and cream* components may contribute additional moisturising properties. However, the effectiveness of these ingredients on the skin can vary from person to person.

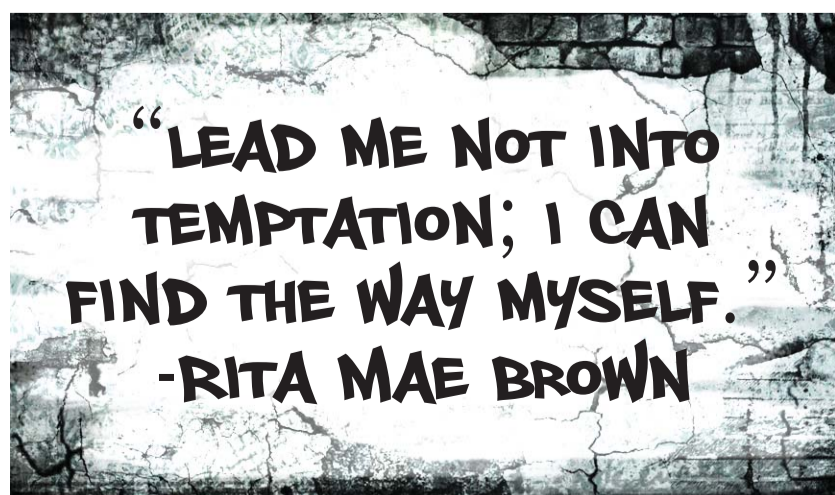
The *circular massaging motion* during application, coupled with the granular texture of dates, can act as a 'gentle exfoliant.' Exfoliation can help remove dead skin cells and promote a smoother complexion. However, individuals with sensitive skin should be cautious, as over-exfoliation can lead to irritation.

Dates contain *antioxidants* that may help combat free radicals, potentially providing anti-ageing benefits. Additionally, lemon juice is a source of *vitamin C*, known for its antioxidant and brightening properties. These components might contribute to a healthier-looking complexion and help reduce inflammation.

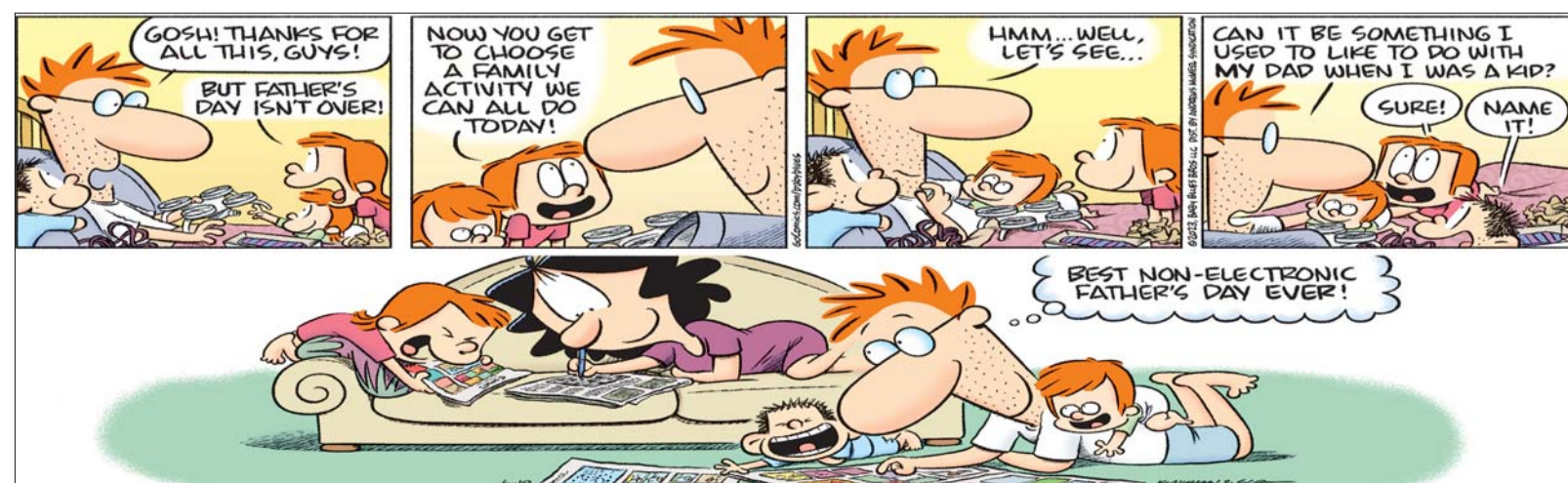
Different skin types have distinct needs. While this face pack might work well for some, it may not be suitable for others. A dermatologist can provide personalised advice based on an individual's skin type, concerns, and any pre-existing skin conditions. Consulting with a dermatologist ensures a *personalised skincare approach*, tailored to individual needs, and helps avoid any adverse reactions or unintended consequences.



THE WALL

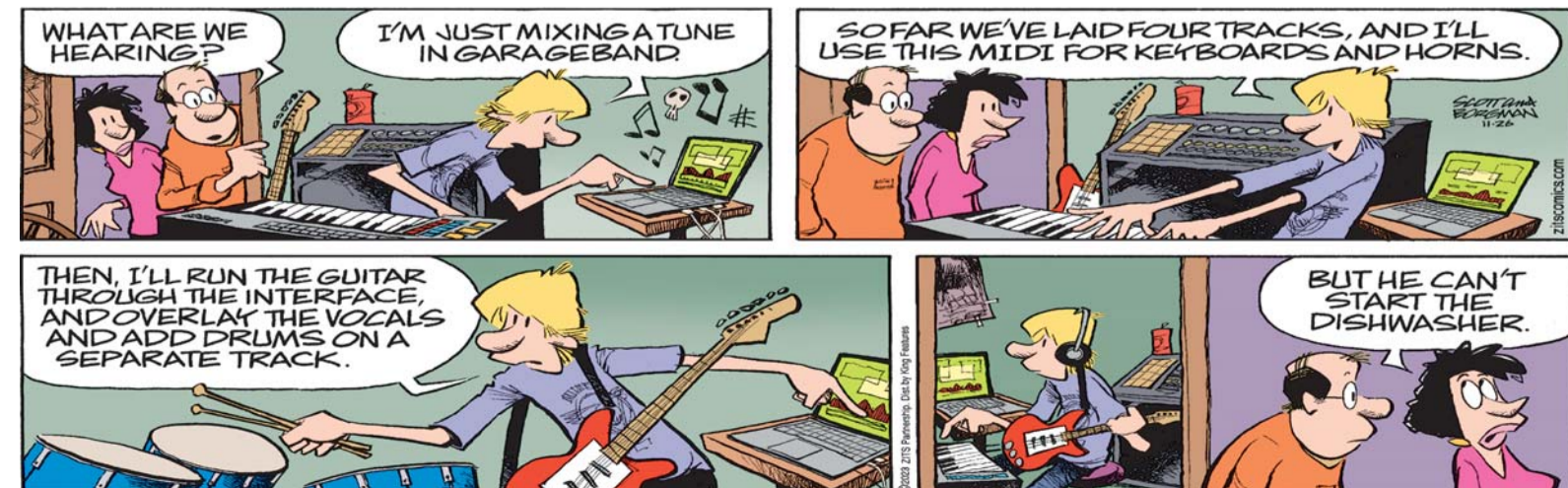


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman