

#EVENT @ FICCI FLO

THE EPIC INSIGHTS OF WARIKOO

Internet Entrepreneur and one of India's top content creators and bestselling authors, Ankur Warikoo was in the Pink City recently. In a session of FICCI Ladies Organization, Jaipur, he shared his insights on a multitude of topics including education, parenting, fitness, entrepreneurship, among others. He was in conversation with the FLO Jaipur, Chairperson, Raghushree Poddar.



Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer and city blogger

In a recent gathering hosted by the FICCI Ladies Organization in Jaipur, Ankur Warikoo, the acclaimed internet entrepreneur, bestselling author, and leading content creator, captivated the audience with his profound insights on a diverse range of topics. From education to parenting, fitness to entrepreneurship, Warikoo's words resonated with clarity and authenticity, offering an insightful glimpse into the mind of a man who has made a mark in India's digital landscape. Below are some key takeaways from his session!

Be Yourself
In response to the question of what defines Ankur Warikoo as Ankur Warikoo, he replied with conviction, "The greatest decision that I've made in my life is to never pretend to be anyone but 'myself.' No masks, no pretensions." Reflecting on his relationship with himself, Warikoo reveals, "The one thing that I love about myself is I am my best friend. I don't need anyone in my life. I can spend a lot of time with myself. I don't get bored."

Exposure over Education
In discussing the value of education, Ankur Warikoo underscores the pivotal role of one's academic environment and the individuals encountered therein. "It's the environment and the people you encounter that truly open your mind," he asserts. Warikoo advises against settling for just any college, emphasizing the importance of attending top-tier institutions. He contends that such establishments not only boast renowned professors but also

A Bengali flower in Jaipur

She is a Bengali by birth but she loves Jaipur. She sings *Rabindra Sangeet*, enjoys *Durga Puja* but is equally at home with the customs of Rajasthan and the urbanity of Delhi. She is an avid traveller and has visited almost all continents of the world. Author, critic and poet Malashri Lal's life journey has been a symphony of change and she has revelled in all the challenges that have come her way.



Shailaza Singh
Published author, poet and a YouTuber

● **When you moved from Jaipur to Delhi, what was the change like?**

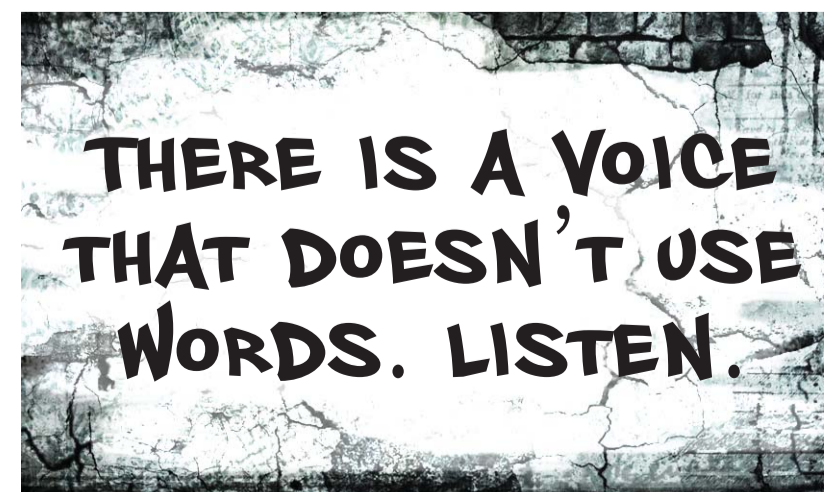
The first thing I noticed about Delhi was that it was very impersonal space. When I moved to Delhi after my marriage, we were living with my in-laws. So, there was no sense of loneliness or non-belongingness at home but the city didn't seem like a friendly place. I didn't know my way around in Delhi. Since I was keen to teach, I started looking at jobs in Delhi. This was early 70s, so there were jobs aplenty. All the colleges were advertising, now of course, I know them by name, but at the time, I didn't know any of these colleges. So, to find my way to a place in old Delhi from where we were, (my father-in-law was Air Chief Marshal P. C. Lal, so we were staying at the air house) seems like such a scary thing to do, unknown roads, unknown people, rough language on the roads, auto drivers, who drove rashly, I came from a protected environment at home and a very affectionate social environment of Jaipur. So, the contrast of this impersonal, immigrant city, where survival seemed to be the most important ambition in anyone's life, seemed very strange indeed. So, I did go around, I had to deal with it. I was very lucky that I got a job offer from Jesus and Mary College, the day I went there for an interview. I found JMC a remarkably hospitable and warm place. I still remember it was a hot summer afternoon. I had no idea

● **You studied in Jaipur, then you went to Delhi. What was your experience like?**

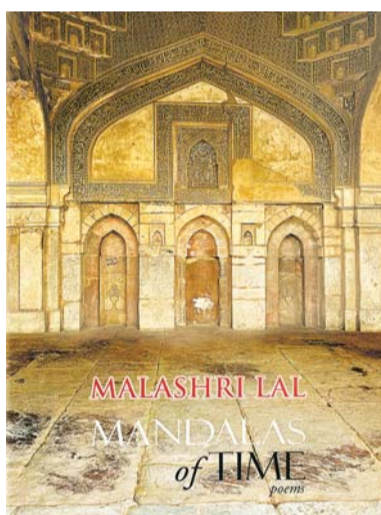
I continue to believe that my home is in Jaipur. Though, my blood lineage is Bengali but I identify Jaipur as my home. I have been here since childhood. Even though Delhi has been a happy relocation for personal reasons and work, Jaipur still retains as much of a loved plumb, almost like a *Maika* (parent's home), despite my parents not having been there for years. The city, the friends, the people, all of them, being very special for me.



THE WALL



#BOOKS



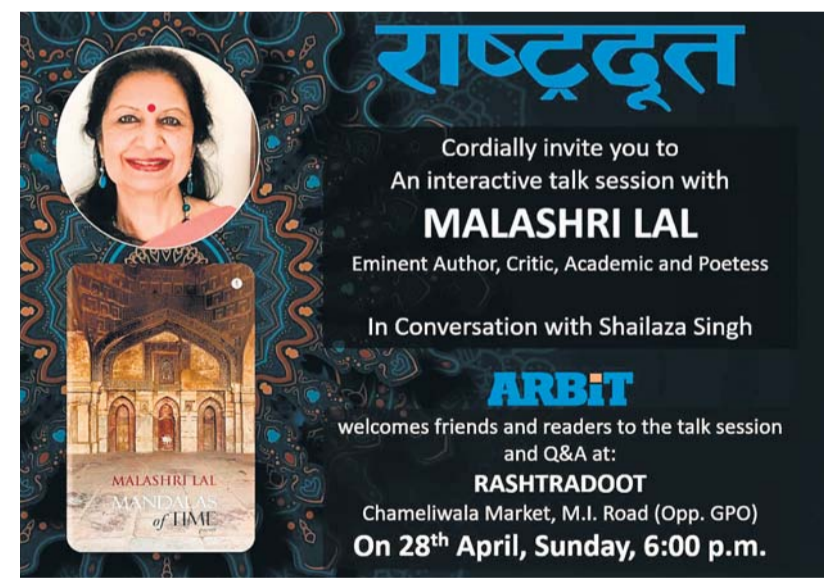
where JMC was (it was in the middle of Chanakypuri). The auto rickshaw driver also had no idea where JMC was. When I got there, I was late for the interview and I thought I had already ruined it. It was a beautiful building with a lovely garden. I walked up the steps and there was this old nun, dressed in white, standing there with a smile. She said, "Welcome, my dear." I apologized and said, "Sorry sister. I am late." She said, "It doesn't matter. You are not late. You are here and that is what matters." She brought me a glass of water. She sat me down and told me to not get tensed about anything. So, I sat there for half an hour till I was called for the interview and enjoyed the sense of warmth and affection even though I didn't know the people there.

And when I went in for the interview, everyone was courteous and gentle. I came out of there, saying, praying and promising to myself that if they offered me a job, I would take it. Some well-known colleges of Delhi University (I don't want to name them) offered me a job and those offers came later also but the day JMC called me that evening or the next morning, and asked me if I would be willing to work for them, I said 'yes.' I stayed there for twelve years and I was very happy there. And JMC was a cocoon. Some of my best friends are from JMC even now, though I just spent 12 years out of

my 45 years of teaching. Then, I moved to the main department of English in the post-graduate wing. But the contrast was the affectionate, warm, personalized world, in which I had grown up in Jaipur, and the rather rough, impersonal and, I would even say, brash world of Delhi.

● **You have seen Jaipur and Delhi changing over the years. How do you find the change in both these cities?**

I don't think Delhi has changed very much. It has just become bigger, more impersonal, more brash, more materialistic. I don't think that it has changed at all. It is a city of immigrants and I have understood it better. There are no affections and I believe there is a sense of suspicion of the stranger. So, whether you live in an apartment building or a neighbourhood, people are not friendly because they have no idea who you are and where you come from. Jaipur, on the other hand, has



BABY BLUES



ZITS

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not to come back to the family fold in Kolkata. She taught me what has become the 'core of my feminism' that you don't have to fight obvious battles or be aggressive. She wore *white than* (length), a crisp white sari, as Bengali widows do. Though, she was a very good-looking woman, she never wore any make up or jewellery. My grandmother and father migrated from Burma to Delhi after the war and bombing of Rangoon (my aunt had already married and moved away by then). They stayed with some relatives in Delhi. My father, who was not married by then, worked with Delhi Cloth Mills for a couple of years. He then appeared for the Indian Civil Services Examinations (those days there weren't any written examinations, only interviews) and was instantly selected since he was a brilliant history student. When he was asked if he was okay with being posted in Rajasthan, he said that it didn't make any difference to him because he didn't know India at all as he had grown up in Burma. So, in the year 1950 or so, he along with his two Bengali friends and one Sindhi friend, were selected in the first batch of IAS and posted to Rajasthan.

I was a superbly good student as a result of the foundation provided by my grandmother, who taught me all subjects. I was not even fifteen when I graduated from school and was awarded a gold medal. I wasn't a naughty student at all. I loved all the subjects except the sports period. In

WALLS



fact, the joke was that I would run away from the sports field in the sports period! The head of the school was an Englishwoman named Ms. Luter, who had migrated from Burma. She and her secretary Ms. Emma were very fond of my parents. Ms. Emma would occasionally cook *Burmese* delicacies with my father. They were just very good friends.

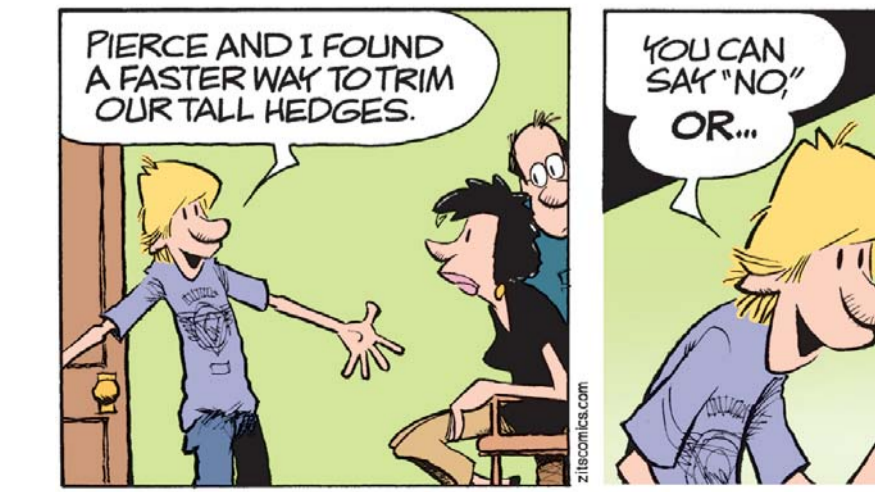
● **Who was your favourite teacher in school?**

I loved my geography teacher, Ms. Meenakshi. She would sit with the globe and show us countries and their photographs. It was then that I developed my love for travel. Fortunately, I married a man, who was equally interested in travelling. We have large cupboard, which houses souvenir teaspoons from each country that we have visited. There is a strict rule in the family that you can only put a souvenir spoon in the cupboard, if you have visited the country personally. Now over the years, my son also started collecting teaspoons and now the cupboard has 400 teaspoons from different cities, which are catalogued extensively. We have travelled to Alaska, most of Europe, Canada, lots of Australia and America, Africa and New Zealand. Except for South America, which we have not visited, we have been to every other continent.

...To be Continued



WALLS



#AWARENESS

World Penguin Day

Penguins are some of the most adorable, lovable and impressive creatures in the animal kingdom, so why not dedicate a day to these flightless birds?



World Penguin Day is a celebratory and educational initiative that encourages people to learn more about penguins and their environment, how important they are to our ecosystems and the threats they face. Interested in learning more about this day? Then, let's dive in!

The Particulars of Penguins

These distinctive black and white birds are highly adapted to aquatic life, their wings have evolved into flippers and their excellent swimming abilities allow most species to dive around 200 m deep, with emperor penguins even reaching depths of 500 m! They're camouflaged to protect against predators from above and below, and their glossy feathers trap air to both, keep them warm and help them stay afloat. Penguins vary quite significantly in size, from the large emperor penguin, reaching heights of over 1 m, to the little blue penguin, coming in at just over 30 cm tall. In ancient times, there were even giant species of penguin, that grew almost 2 m high and weighed 80 kg!

History of World Penguin Day

World Penguin Day takes place during the annual northern migration of *Adelie* penguins, a species of penguin that is native to Antarctica. Adelie penguins migrate north to have better access to food during the winter months, when the sea ice expands and then, during the summer, return to the coastal beaches of Antarctica to build their nests. This annual celebration of penguins was created at McMurdo Station, an American research center on the Ross Island. Researchers noticed that the Adelie penguins began their migration around this day each year, so they founded World Penguin Day as a way to mark the occasion and raise awareness of these creatures. Of the 17 or so species around today, sadly, 10 of them have been deemed endangered. Penguins spend up to three quarters of their lives out at sea and are reliant on the oceans for food. Overfishing and pollution such as plastic and oil spills therefore pose a real threat to these birds and have contributed to decreasing populations, which, in turn, has a knock-on effect on the wider ecosystem. And for those species based in the Antarctic, climate change is shrinking the sea ice, which not only impinges on their habitat but can also impact chick hatching times and the availability of food. World Penguin Day encourages people to appreciate these amazing animals and take note of the plights that they face. Penguin lovers may choose to help make a difference by working to protect the ocean, prevent pollution and tackle climate change, for example, by advocating against the burning of fossil fuels.



A view of the full house audience at the event.