

seniors **TODAY**

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Life & Times



Seniors under Siege

The Rising Threat of Cybercrime

Harsh Goenka

Softly Powering Our Way to Becoming Global Influencers

Vickram Sethi

Going Solo, Not Alone: A New Way to Age

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Clint Eastwood @ 95: 'Don't let the old man in'

Clint Eastwood turned 95 on May 31, 2025. He's not just a star, he's a legend and one of the last great figures from the golden age of Hollywood. Eastwood has done it all over more than sixty years: actor, director, composer, producer and even mayor.

His films have captured the changing face of not just American cinema, but also its culture and politics. He's brought us dusty Westerns, gritty thrillers, patriotic dramas, and quiet, thoughtful stories that stay with you long after the credits roll.

He's also, without question, one of my all-time favourite Hollywood stars.

Eastwood has always been a man of few words on screen. But somehow, those long silences said more than any speech could. Tall, lean and striking, he started his career in the 1950s with small roles before becoming a familiar face on the TV series *Rawhide*. Playing Rowdy Yates turned him into a household name, and paved the way for the genre that would define his career — the Western.

His big breakthrough came with Sergio Leone's 'Dollars' trilogy: *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. These so-called 'Spaghetti Westerns' were a world away from the polite, clean-cut cowboy stories of the past. They were rough, stylish, and full of grey areas. Eastwood's character, the 'Man with No Name', barely spoke — but when he did, you listened. He didn't smile much, he didn't explain himself, and yet, you couldn't look away.

Then came *Dirty Harry*, where Eastwood played Inspector Harry Callahan — a tough, straight-talking cop who didn't wait around for rules or

red tape. It was the role that gave him the title of Hollywood's 'angry young man', and you could argue that it planted the seeds for Bollywood's own angry young hero.

But Eastwood didn't stop there. His first film as a director, *Play Misty for Me*, showed he could do more than act. It was a tense thriller that proved he had real storytelling flair. And as the years went on, he kept surprising us — taking on softer, sadder roles, and directing films that were quieter, deeper, and full of heart.

Off screen, Eastwood is just as interesting. He's a jazz lover, a thoughtful soul and someone who has never let fame or age define him. One of his most quoted lines — "I don't let the old man in" — has become something of a motto for him, and it says a lot about how he sees life.

Even now, at 95, he's not just resting on past glory. He's still working, still creating, still doing things his own way. Whether it's as a gunslinger, a cop, a father, a filmmaker or even as the mayor of a small Californian town, he's always followed his own path — quietly and with conviction.

In an industry that often moves fast and forgets its elders, Clint Eastwood is a rare reminder that longevity, grace and quiet strength still matter. He's shown us that you don't need to raise your voice to make an impact... sometimes, just showing up and staying true is more than enough.

Nickram Sethi

Vickram Sethi

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

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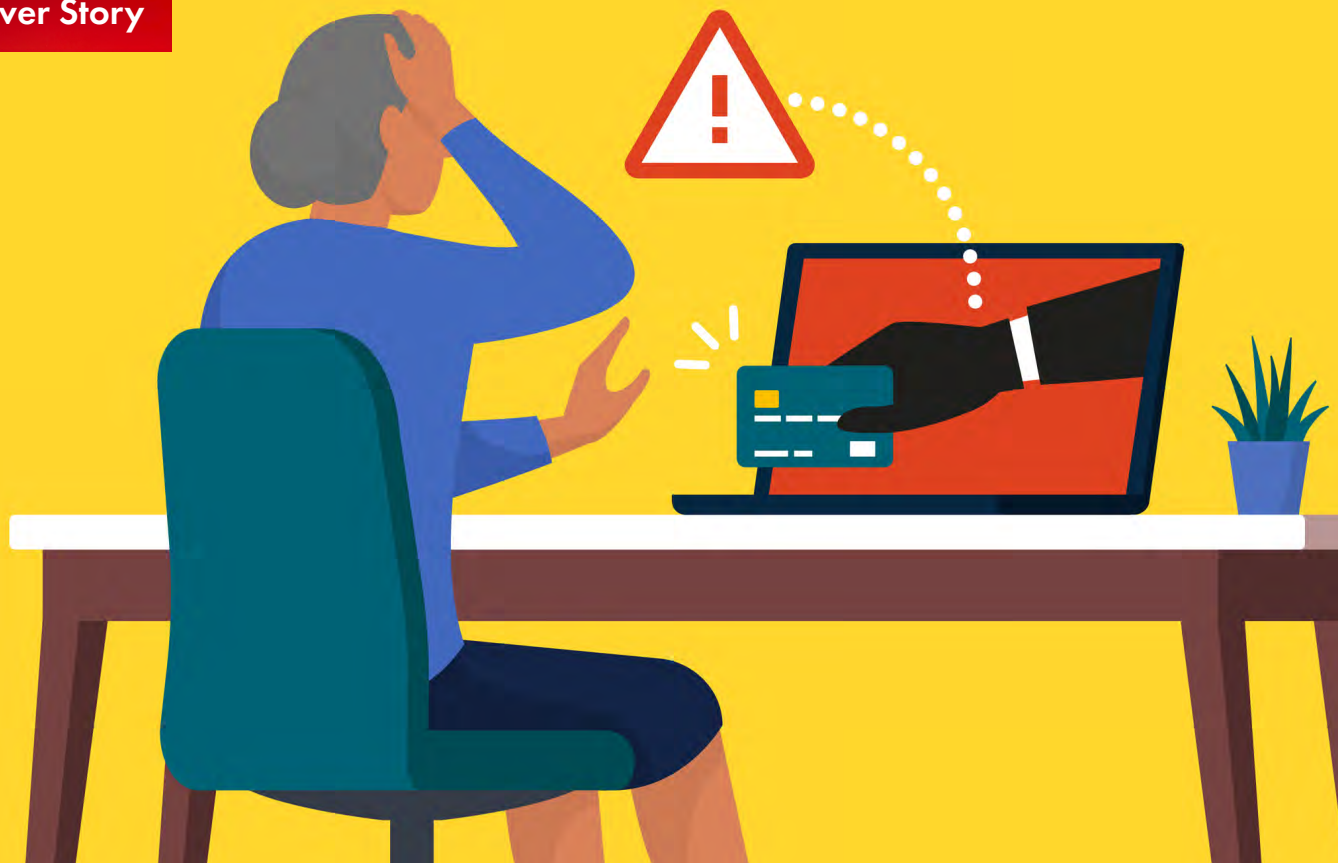


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Cybercrime and Senior Citizens: A Growing Concern

By staying informed and vigilant, seniors can confidently navigate the digital world without falling prey to cybercriminals, writes Sanjay Shintre, IPS

As India's elderly population increasingly embraces digital platforms, they are becoming prime targets for cybercriminals. The rise in online scams, phishing attacks, and financial frauds has made senior citizens particularly vulnerable due to their limited familiarity with digital security measures. Cybercriminals exploit their trust and lack of technical awareness, leading to significant financial and emotional distress.

Common Tactics Used by Fraudsters

Cybercriminals employ various deceptive tactics to exploit senior citizens, including:

- Phishing Scams – Fraudsters send emails or messages pretending to be from banks or government agencies, tricking seniors into revealing sensitive information.
- Telemarketing Fraud – Scammers use high-pressure sales tactics to convince seniors to purchase fake products or services.
- Fake Insurance & Medical Schemes – Fraudsters lure seniors with low-cost medical treatments or fake insurance policies.
- Digital Arrest Scams – Criminals impersonate law enforcement officials,

falsely accusing seniors of crimes and coercing them into transferring money.

Real-Life Case Studies

1. Bengaluru Scam – A 77-year-old woman lost ₹1.2 crore after scammers posing as telecom officials and crime branch officers falsely accused her of money laundering.

2. Chandigarh Fraud – An elderly woman was tricked into transferring ₹72 lakh after being threatened with a fake digital arrest warrant.

3. Mumbai Shopping Scam – A senior citizen lost ₹20,000 after clicking a fraudulent refund link for an online purchase.

Statistics on Cybercrime Involving Senior Citizens

Recent reports indicate a sharp increase in cybercrimes targeting senior citizens. According to a study:

- Cybercrimes against seniors surged by 86% between 2020 and 2022.
- The Reserve Bank of India reported that bank fraud cases involving seniors amounted to ₹41,000 crores in 2021-22.
- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) highlighted that crimes against senior citizens rose by 9.3% in 2022, with a significant portion related to fraud and financial scams.

Preventive Measures for Seniors and Families



To safeguard against cyber fraud, seniors and their families should adopt the following measures:

Verify Calls & Messages – Always confirm unsolicited calls or emails by contacting the official organisation directly.

Avoid Sharing Sensitive Information – Never disclose OTPs, passwords, or banking details over the phone or internet.

Enable Multi-Factor Authentication – Strengthen security by activating two-step verification for banking and social media accounts.

Stay Educated – Participate in digital literacy programs to understand online threats and safe practices.

Report Suspicious Activity – Use official platforms such as the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) to file complaints.



Cybercrime Cell Initiatives for Senior Citizens

To support and educate senior citizens, various initiatives have been launched:

- HelpAge India Digital Literacy Programmes – Conducts workshops to teach seniors how to navigate the digital world safely.
- Cybercrime Reporting Portal – Provides resources for reporting cyber fraud and identifying scam tactics.
- Community Awareness Campaigns – Law enforcement collaborates with senior citizen associations to spread awareness and assist victims.



How to Report Cyber Fraud

Senior citizens and their families should promptly report any cybercrime incidents to the relevant authorities. Here are the official helplines and portals to seek assistance:

Cyber Crime Helpline: Dial 1930 for immediate support on financial cyber frauds.

Police Helpline: Dial 1945 for cybercrime-related assistance from law enforcement.

National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal: Visit <https://www.cybercrime.gov.in> to report frauds and access resources.

Maharashtra Cyber Crime Portal: Visit <https://www.mhcyber.gov.in> for state-

specific cybercrime assistance.

Timely reporting can help prevent further losses and aid authorities in tracking scammers efficiently.

Conclusion

With cyber threats evolving rapidly, senior citizens must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves online. Families, communities, and law enforcement agencies must work together to ensure a safer digital environment for the elderly. By staying informed and vigilant, seniors can confidently navigate the digital world without falling prey to cybercriminals.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
Government of India

Digital India
Power To Empower

Want to report a cybercrime?

Log on to
National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal
www.cybercrime.gov.in
or
Call Helpline 155260

 **Sanjay Dhotre**
Minister of State for Education,
Electronics & IT, & Communications,
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Checklist

Cyberproofing the Golden Years

A practical checklist and toolkit for children, caregivers, and housing societies to protect elders online

As senior citizens across India embrace the digital world, connecting with family over WhatsApp, paying bills through UPI, or simply watching devotional videos on YouTube, they are also inadvertently stepping into a space that can be unfamiliar and, at times, unsafe. The growing menace of cybercrime has made it increasingly important for families to not only introduce their elders to technology but also to guide them on how to stay safe.

Here is a practical, easy-to-follow guide

for families, caregivers and housing societies/ associations to help safeguard the digital lives of senior citizens. Because when it comes to cyber fraud, it is always better to prevent than to regret.

Step #1: Equip the devices, not just the people

Before we teach new habits, we must first ensure that the tools themselves are secure. This means checking that phones, tablets and computers used by senior citizens are updated and protected.

Start by installing reliable antivirus software. Make sure that system and app updates happen automatically, so that security loopholes are closed in time. Use a strong lock screen code—ideally a six-

digit PIN, or enable fingerprint or facial recognition if available. Make it a point to download apps only from official sources such as the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, and restrict app permissions to only what is necessary.

Step #2: Talk about it—without fear

When it comes to cybercrime, awareness makes all the difference. But it's important to have these conversations with sensitivity. Seniors should feel informed, not frightened.

Explain some common scams in simple terms—fake calls from bank representatives, fraudsters posing as policemen, messages promising lottery wins or refunds. Encourage them to be sceptical of anything that sounds too urgent or too good to be true. Make it a family norm to say, "I'll check with my son or daughter first." That one line can save thousands of rupees.

Role-playing situations—such as someone asking for their OTP or claiming that their account has been frozen—can be especially helpful. Repetition reinforces learning.

Step #3: Create a digital safety kit

Just as we keep a medical first-aid box handy, we need a digital first-aid kit for seniors.

This should include a simple list of emergency numbers: the national cybercrime helpline (1930), the local police number, and a trusted family member's contact. It's useful to have a laminated card with these details placed near the landline or charging point.

Encourage keeping a small notebook to log digital activity—like online purchases or phone calls that seemed suspicious. Passwords, if written down, should be stored carefully. If they are open to it, a password manager could be introduced,

though only if they are confident with technology.

Step #4: Family and caregiver involvement

Even if a parent or grandparent is digitally savvy, cyber safety must be a shared effort.

Make it a habit to check in once a month—review messages, look through their email inbox, check bank notifications, and uninstall unnecessary apps. Talk about any unusual activity they might have noticed.

Set a few clear house rules. For example, no sharing of OTPs, passwords, or clicking on refund links without checking first. Two-factor authentication should be enabled for online banking and social media wherever possible.

And above all, be patient. Learning to be cautious online takes time, especially for those who didn't grow up with technology. Avoid mockery. Reassure, guide, repeat.



Step #5: Engage the housing society/ association

Senior citizens living in communities or retirement complexes are best protected when the housing society also plays a part.

Consider organising quarterly sessions with a cybercrime officer or NGO that specialises in digital literacy. Print out simple Do's and Don'ts in local languages and display them in lifts or notice boards.

It also helps to set up a WhatsApp group among residents or their family members to share verified warnings or scam alerts. Societies could even identify a few “tech-savvy seniors” who act as go-to helpers for others.

A few red flags worth highlighting
Help your elders recognise some of the most common signs of trouble. For instance, a sudden message from someone claiming to be from a bank, a caller pressuring them to act immediately, or an SMS with a suspicious-looking link. If something feels urgent, threatening, or too generous, it’s best to pause, verify, and only then proceed.

To summarise, cybercriminals are constantly finding new ways to trick people—but with a bit of awareness, preparation, and family involvement, our elders can be better protected.

Helping them stay cyber-safe is not just about technology. It’s about peace of mind. It’s about enabling them to enjoy the conveniences of the digital world without anxiety or risk. And more than anything, it’s about showing them that they’re not alone on this journey.

Because the golden years deserve to be safe, secure, and full of dignity—online and off.

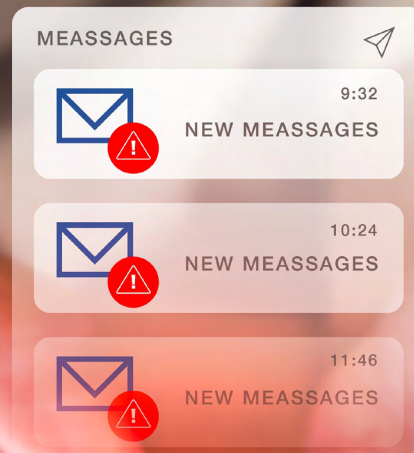


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Scam Spotting: A Quiz for Seniors & their Families

Helping elders stay alert in a digital world

The digital world is full of conveniences, but it's also a minefield of misleading messages, fake phone calls and online traps. For senior citizens who didn't grow up with smartphones and email, it's not always easy to tell what's genuine and what's a scam.

This short quiz offers real-life situations and the answers to which should help seniors know what is the right thing to do.

Let's begin. Read each situation and see if you can tell what's real and what's a scam.

1: The urgent courier call

You receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from a courier company. They say a package addressed to you contains suspicious items and that the

police are on their way unless you confirm your Aadhaar and bank details.

What should you do?

- A. Stay calm and disconnect/ hang up
- B. Give your details to avoid police trouble
- C. Call the number back to check if it's real

Correct answer: A

This is a classic scare tactic. No courier or police department will ask for personal details over the phone. Hang up and block the number.

2: The lucky lottery email

An email arrives saying you've won Rs 1 million in an international lottery. You've never entered one, but all they need is your full name, address and a small processing fee of ₹499 to release your winnings.

Do you:

- A. Pay the amount and reply with your details
- B. Delete the email immediately
- C. Forward the email to someone in your

family for checking

Correct answer: B (or C, if you're unsure)

If you didn't enter a lottery, you didn't win one. This is a phishing scam. No genuine prize requires payment upfront.

3: The refund link

After returning a mixer you bought online, you get a WhatsApp message claiming to be from the retailer, saying a refund is being processed. They ask you to click a link and fill in your bank details.

Do you:

- A. Click the link and enter your information
- B. Check your account first to see if the refund has come through
- C. Call the retailer's customer care directly using a number from their website

Correct answer: C

Refund scams are common. Never click on random links or enter bank details via messaging apps. Always go directly to the official website or helpline.

4: The family emergency call

You receive a call from someone claiming to be your niece's friend. They say she's had an accident and needs money urgently. They ask you to transfer ₹25,000 to a UPI ID.

Do you:

- A. Transfer the money quickly to help
- B. Ask for your niece's full name and hospital details
- C. Hang up and call your niece or her parents directly

Correct answer: C

Scammers use panic to push quick action. Never transfer money based on a stranger's claim. Always verify with family.

5: The bank message

A message appears saying: "Dear customer, your SBI account will be suspended today unless you update your PAN details. Click here to update."

Do you:

- A. Click the link and update your details
- B. Ignore it, you don't have an SBI account
- C. Call SBI customer care to confirm

Correct answer: B (or C if you're a customer)

These are phishing attempts. Banks never send such links via SMS or WhatsApp. Always use official banking apps or websites.

6: The free Covid booster call

A caller claims to be from a government health agency. They say you're due for a free Covid booster, and they need your Aadhaar and one-time password (OTP) to confirm your appointment.

Do you:

- A. Share your Aadhaar and OTP to book the slot
- B. Hang up and report the call
- C. Ask them to send a written message first

Correct answer: B

No government agency will ask for your OTP. These are OTP-theft scams used to take over your mobile wallet or banking account.

7: The fake pension update

You receive an SMS saying your pension account needs to be re-verified urgently to avoid disruption. The message includes a link that asks for your Aadhaar number, pension ID, and date of birth.

Do you:

- A. Click the link and update your information
- B. Visit the pension office or contact your pension provider directly

C. Forward the message to your neighbour for advice

Correct answer: B

Never trust unsolicited links for official work. Always visit or contact your pension office using known numbers or websites.

8: The electricity bill scare

A man calls claiming to be from the electricity board. He says your bill hasn't been paid, and power will be disconnected in 30 minutes unless you pay ₹2,500 immediately via Google Pay.

Do you:

- A. Transfer the money quickly to avoid a blackout
- B. Ask for his name and ID number
- C. Hang up and call the official electricity board number to check your bill status

Correct answer: C

This is a pressure tactic. Disconnection notices are never given over the phone at such short notice. Always verify from the official website or helpline.

9: The unknown UPI request

You receive a request on your UPI app from someone called 'XYZ Services' asking you to approve a payment of ₹4,999. You don't recall signing up for anything.

Do you:

- A. Approve the request just in case it's something important
- B. Reject it and block the sender
- C. Screenshot it and send to your bank to check

Correct answer: B (and also C for good measure)

Unknown UPI requests should always be declined. Never approve payments unless you are absolutely sure of the sender. Reporting to your bank is a good follow-up.

10: The tech support pop-up

While using your computer, a pop-up appears saying your system is infected with viruses. It gives a toll-free number and asks you to call immediately. The person on the line then asks to remotely access your computer.

Do you:

- A. Call the number and follow instructions
- B. Close the window and run your antivirus software
- C. Ask someone in the family to have a look

Correct answer: B (or C, if you're unsure)

This is a common scam. Never allow remote access to anyone unless you're absolutely sure of their identity. Tech support never contacts users in this manner.

Scam scorecard

7-10 correct: You're alert and cautious—well done. Keep guiding others.

4-6 correct: You're on the right track. Talk to family and double-check before acting.

0-3 correct: It's time to become more cautious. Don't worry—awareness begins now.

PS:

Encourage elders to pause and check before clicking, answering or paying. A simple rule of thumb: if something sounds urgent, too good to be true or makes you anxious—stop and talk to someone you trust. Also, don't scold them or discourage from using online services... some education will go a long way. Regularly practising such quizzes and scenarios helps keep digital instincts sharp. And remember: it's never foolish to ask... it's wise.

Handling Cyber Crime As A Senior Citizen

It is extremely essential for you to acquire cybersecurity skills and awareness to mitigate the threats and dangers lurking in the online world, cautions *Dr Monika M. Dass*

The ‘Morris Worm’:

In 1988, a Harvard University graduate and postgraduate student, released a worm that infected thousands of computers, causing significant disruption and highlighting the potential of cyber-attacks. Robert Morris’ motive was “to demonstrate the inadequacies of current security measures on computer networks by exploiting the security defects that Morris had discovered’. He was sentenced to 3 years of probation and 400 hours of community service. He became the first person ever to be convicted under the then-new Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. On his release, he joined MIT as a faculty member.

BharatPay Data Breach:

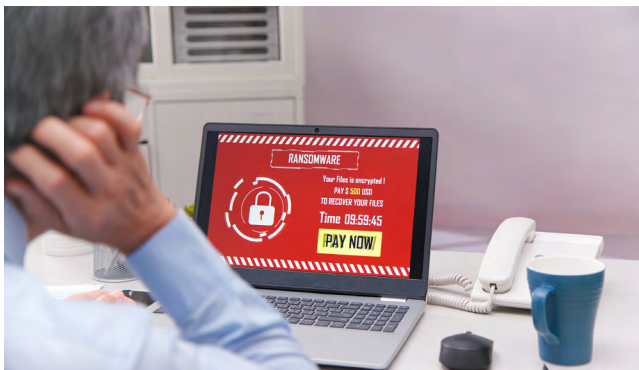
Personal data, transaction details of 37,000 users was leaked online. On August 13, CloudSEK’s threat intelligence arm, XVigil, found that BharatPay’s backend database containing customers’ personal information, bank balance, and transaction data from February 2018 to August 2022 was leaked on a cybercrime forum.

The leaked data includes callback response logs, which contains information about the transacting entity’s phone number, transaction ID, and the bank balance amount – all of which are sensitive pieces of information.

Transaction records are a vital piece of evidence for any financial dealing between two entities. Leaked data puts users at the risk of being targeted by spear-phishing or smishing, and social engineering-driven exploits.

Furthermore, researchers tell us that “the exposed data could equip threat actors with information required to launch sophisticated ransomware attacks, data exfiltration, and maintaining persistence. This information can be aggregated to further be sold as leads on cybercrime forums”.

The cause of the breach appears to have been an outdated software version!



Psychological Effects:

Cybercrime can have significant psychological effects on individuals, ranging from immediate emotional distress to long-term mental health challenges. Victims may experience anxiety, depression, fear and even PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), depression, acting out violently, trust issues with family and friends, and low self-esteem.... particularly when dealing with identity theft, online harassment, or even cyber bullying. These can manifest as difficulty in sleeping, changes in appetite, social withdrawal, and a general sense of

vulnerability and distrust.

It is crucial for victims to seek support and help from trusted individuals or professionals. Report such cybercrimes on www.cybercrime.gov.in... Or telephone 1930.

The four Ps of cybersecurity for senior citizens involve: PLANNING, PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND PRIVACY. These principles are crucial for protecting seniors from cyber threats like phishing, scams and identity theft.

Falling prey to cybercrimes can happen to any one of us. Unknown links are sent regularly; Threatening emails are sent supposedly from some senior police officer or a senior lawyer; Airtel emails enticing one to fill in details as the company wants to give us Rs. 3000/-... these are just some examples of what I have been sent! And, let me tell you, the emails are convincing up to a point. But also, let me tell you... if you look closer to the sender’s email address... that’s the tell-tale sign! It does not make sense!!

JUST DO NOT FALL PREY....

Please do not become a soft and easy target for the online scamsters and fraudsters for exploitation. It is extremely essential for you to acquire cybersecurity skills and awareness to mitigate the threats and dangers lurking in the online world to protect yourself and your hard-earned money in your retiring years.





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Seniors Today was born a little over 6 years back, and has grown to be India's #1 Destination for Seniors Today. We started with a monthly e-magazine and later a daily newsletter, both of which are available for everyone to read without any payment.

Our content is now available in English and Hindi.

We offer a comprehensive understanding of issues pertaining to seniors— health, wellness, happiness, travel and even talent. With Health Live @ Seniors Today, we have a weekly consultation with a top-notch doctor. Then there's Seniors Have Talent, a singing competition for seniors, and The Seniors Kitchen, where you could share your popular recipes with the rest of the world.

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Softly Powering Our Way to Becoming Global Influencers

Our moment isn't coming. It's already here, writes *Harsh Goenka*

India is making the world sit up and take notice. From global diplomacy to diaspora gatherings, from boardrooms to big stages—we're being seen, heard, and increasingly respected. Our economic growth has laid a strong foundation, but what will truly shape our long-term global influence is something more subtle, yet far-reaching—soft power. There's tremendous opportunity here. We have the story, the substance, and the soul. Now, we need to scale it—and do so in a way that reflects modern India: rooted in heritage, yet forward-facing. From the extravagant Ambani festivities to sold-out concerts by Ed Sheeran and Coldplay, India is now the world's cultural and intellectual magnet. Diplomatically, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has positioned India as a nation

that leads, not follows. Technologically, we are no longer just the back office of the world but the architects of cutting-edge innovation. Our food, films, sports, and spirituality are no longer just for us; they belong to the world.

So, is this a passing phase? Or is India in the midst of a historic shift where our influence is shaped not by tanks and missiles, but by the strength of our people, ideas, and heritage?

The New Playbook of Influence

Joseph Nye, the father of the term soft power, described it as the ability to shape global narratives not through coercion, but through attraction. The United States mastered it with Hollywood, Harvard, and Silicon Valley. South Korea did it with K-pop, K-dramas, and Samsung. China poured billions into its Belt and Road Initiative.

And India? India's influence isn't built through a government-crafted strategy, it is an organic, people-driven movement. It isn't forced; it flows. Our ideas, traditions, and innovations are shaping global culture in ways that even the biggest PR budgets could not manufacture.

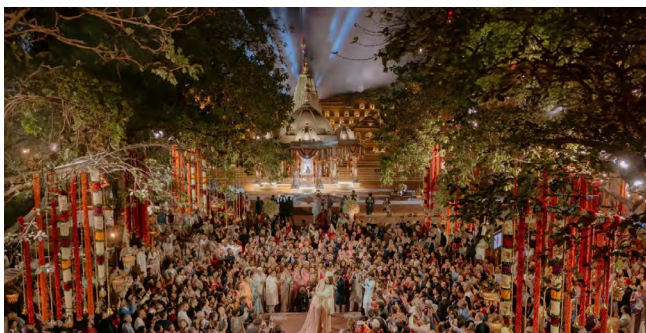


Image courtesy: Architectural Digest

Cinema: From Masala to Meaningful

Let's begin with what is arguably our most colourful and expressive ambassador—Bollywood. With its high energy, elaborate song-and-dance routines, and deeply emotional storytelling, Bollywood commands a massive audience across South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and increasingly in Western countries. But we are still telling stories largely for ourselves. The themes are often insular—based on familiar family tropes or predictable melodramas.

If we want to wield cinema as a true cultural export, we must broaden our canvas. Global storylines, international talent, co-productions with foreign studios, and participation in major global film festivals are crucial steps forward. The recent success of RRR on global streaming platforms proves that there is a huge appetite for Indian cinema—provided we invest in quality, storytelling, and universal appeal.

Let's also think beyond Bollywood. Regional cinema—be it Malayalam, Tamil, or Marathi—offers some of the finest storytelling today. Supporting

subtitled releases, nurturing independent filmmakers, and making space for nuanced, globally relevant narratives can help India claim its rightful place in the global cinematic landscape.

Music: Our Universal Soundtrack

Music transcends language and culture. The Beatles once famously travelled to India seeking spiritual and creative inspiration. Ravi Shankar and Zakir Hussain introduced millions to the magic of Indian classical music. A.R. Rahman's Oscar wins showed that Indian soundtracks could stir global audiences. And yet, the world has barely scratched the surface of our musical landscape.

From Carnatic and Hindustani traditions to folk, indie, and experimental fusion, India has an extraordinary diversity of sound. What's missing is the infrastructure to take it global. A Korean wave of K-pop didn't just happen—it was engineered with government support, private investment, artist training academies, and aggressive digital strategy.

India needs a similar ecosystem for its music. Why not create a National Music Innovation Hub or an "IIT of Music" that mentors young talent, helps them blend traditional and global sounds, and provides them access to the world stage through platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and international collaborations?



Image courtesy: thetalentedindian.com

Food: Beyond Butter Chicken

Walk into any Indian restaurant abroad and you'll likely be served a familiar spread: naan, butter chicken, and biryani. Tasty, yes—but hardly representative of our vast culinary landscape. India has arguably one of the most diverse and flavourful food cultures in the world, with regional cuisines that vary every 100 kilometres. Yet, this depth is underrepresented globally. The last decade has seen a new wave of Indian chefs experimenting with molecular gastronomy, regional recipes, and cross-cultural pairings. These culinary innovators need global platforms—Michelin-level recognition, food festivals, and even pop-ups in international cities. Our food must travel in style.

To truly globalise Indian cuisine, we also need to adapt our packaging, portioning, and presentation. Whether it's in high-end restaurants or fast-casual chains, we must appeal to modern, health-conscious, international consumers. Think dosa wraps, millet bowls, and Ayurvedic beverages—food that tastes like home but fits the pace and palate of today's world.

Tourism & Wellness: Our Living Heritage

India has been blessed with extraordinary natural beauty, spiritual depth, and historical legacy. But all this potential will remain untapped unless we make tourism frictionless, clean, and welcoming. Cleanliness, safety, and visitor-friendly infrastructure must become non-negotiable. From well-managed toilets at tourist sites to multilingual signage and accessible transport, the basics matter deeply. We've made some progress—thanks to initiatives like Swachh Bharat

and Incredible India—but we still have a long way to go.

Wellness, meanwhile, is India's great soft power story in the making. Yoga has already won hearts globally. But Ayurveda remains underleveraged. In an era where people are moving away from synthetic drugs and seeking holistic well-being, India can lead the charge. We must establish globally accredited wellness centres that combine authenticity with scientific rigour, ranging from affordable retreats to luxury resorts.

Imagine a foreign tourist arriving in Kerala for Panchakarma therapy, or heading to Rishikesh not just for yoga but for integrated spiritual and mental wellness experiences. We have the ingredients. Now we need to package them right.

Brands: The Missing Trophy

Ask someone in Europe or the US to name five iconic Indian brands. Most would struggle beyond Tatas or Taj. That's not for lack of talent or innovation—it's because we haven't built the global brand presence we should have. For a nation of entrepreneurs, technologists, and craftsmen, this is an opportunity waiting to be seized. Whether it's handloom textiles, vegan beauty products, digital apps, or electric vehicles—India needs to tell its brand stories boldly.

To succeed globally, Indian companies must focus on consistent quality, emotionally resonant branding, and global standards. Strategic international partnerships, flagship stores in cultural capitals, and sustainability-focused narratives can all help position our brands not just as products, but as symbols of a new Indian identity.

Grand Spectacles: The New Cultural Diplomacy

Anant Ambani's wedding was not just a family affair, it was a global event—a reminder that India is the ultimate luxury and cultural destination. The world's biggest names, business moguls, Hollywood stars, and royalty gathered in Jamnagar, reinforcing the idea that India is where the world comes to celebrate.

On the diplomatic front, the G20 Summit in India was not just about policy—it was a showcase of our ability to lead the world stage with grace, efficiency, and grandeur. India is no longer just attending global summits; we are shaping them.



Image courtesy: Livemint.com

Digital Diplomacy: The New Frontier

In today's world, perception is shaped online. YouTube, Instagram, and now even short-form content platforms are our most powerful embassies. The narrative of India being a land of snake charmers or slums is thankfully fading—but the newer, truer India still needs a voice. We must use digital storytelling to showcase our achievements and diversity. Virtual tours of UNESCO heritage sites, mini-documentaries on Indian innovation, explainer videos on Ayurveda and festivals—these are all low-cost, high-impact ways to shift global perception. Let's also empower young Indian content creators who can tell our stories to the

world, in formats that resonate with a digital-first generation.

Sports: More Than Cricket

Cricket is India's beating heart. But if we want to emerge as a sporting superpower, we need to broaden our portfolio. Chess, badminton, tennis, golf, and even track and field events are areas where Indian athletes are beginning to shine.

We need to invest not just in training facilities, but in storytelling—bringing our athletes into the public imagination, like Virat Kohli or Neeraj Chopra. Hosting international tournaments, building state-of-the-art sports infrastructure, and partnering with global sporting bodies can go a long way in cementing India's reputation as a sporting nation.

Our vision to host the Olympics in the not too distant future will not only unite the country in pride but also showcase our capability on the global stage.

A Vishwaguru With a Modern Soul

A decade ago, Prime Minister Modi envisioned India as a Vishwaguru—a moral and spiritual guide to the world. But leadership today is less about doctrine and more about influence. And influence, in the 21st century, is earned through trust, creativity, and consistent engagement. India stands at a unique crossroads. We are a civilisation of ancient wisdom and youthful ambition. We are equally at home in Silicon Valley and Sarnath, in music festivals and meditation halls. What we need now is quiet confidence. Not the kind that boasts, but the kind that builds. Not through assertion, but through attraction. Our moment isn't coming. It's already here.

The world is listening. Let's make sure the story we tell is one of progress, inclusivity and enduring influence.



Going Solo, Not Alone: A New Way to Age

Sometimes, the ones walking alone are the ones lighting the way, writes *Vickram Sethi*

There was a time in India when growing older meant growing together. Ageing was woven into the fabric of the family — shared meals, familiar rituals, grandchildren's laughter in the next room, and a strong sense of being needed. But slowly, and almost silently, that picture is changing.

Today, a small, but rising number of older adults are stepping into their later years without a spouse, without children nearby, and at times, without any close family at all. And yet — and this is vital — they are not receding into the shadows. They are not diminished or feel lesser or deprived. If anything, they are redefining what it means to age.

Call them solo agers. Not lonely, not lost. Just living differently. And with quiet,

steady dignity.

Across cities and towns — in flats, gated communities and old bungalows — lives are unfolding in ways our social imagination hadn't fully prepared for. Some never married. Others are widowed or divorced. Some have children who've moved to America, Australia or just another city. Others have simply chosen a different rhythm.

Whatever the reason, the reality is this: more and more Indians are ageing on their own. But far from withdrawing, they're finding new ways to belong.

In many such stories, friends have stepped in where family once stood. These are not just companions for brunch or temple visits. They are the ones who arrive when knees ache, when the ECG report worries, or when the silence of the house grows too loud. These friendships are lifelines — part confidant, part caregiver, part chosen family.

Because the truth is, being alone is not the same as being isolated. And connection doesn't always come from shared genes. It can come from shared journeys, trust, and quiet loyalty.



Of course, ageing solo also demands preparation. The 'what ifs' aren't abstract. Who will decide for you if you're unwell? Who has access to your papers, your passwords, your wishes? These are uncomfortable conversations — but they are necessary, and increasingly, more people are having them early. Friends, neighbours, even retired colleagues can be part of this trusted circle — if expectations are clear and consent is mutual.

Living arrangements too are evolving. Co-living spaces for seniors, retirement enclaves with shared gardens and dining areas, even residential societies where residents keep a friendly eye out if someone's balcony door hasn't opened by mid-morning — these are the small but significant shifts making ageing feel a little more secure, and a little less lonely.

And friendships — even new ones — are not out of reach. From laughter yoga groups in Mumbai's Shivaji Park to book clubs in Bengaluru, from seniors' meet-ups in Delhi to addas in Kolkata or neighbourhood chai-and-chat circles in Pune or Hyderabad — connections are just a conversation away. The key is to keep showing up.



Image courtesy: Bandra Buzz

Technology too is a quiet hero. A WhatsApp group of school friends. A weekly video call with your cousin in Connecticut. Online bridge, bhajan sessions, even a shared recipe exchange. They're not just distractions. They're digital threads stitching people across time zones and emotional distances.

Of course, there are hard days. Grief, change, uncertainty — they don't spare anyone. But many solo agers find they've developed an inner steadiness over time. A resilience that doesn't shout but holds fast. A second wind that brings with it a slower, deeper joy.

And, yes, freedom. The freedom to explore passions long parked. Want to pick up the tabla again? Write your memoirs? Travel to Sikkim alone? No permission needed. After years of fulfilling duties, there's something profoundly freeing about doing something just for yourself.



Sometimes, the unexpected offers joy — like mentoring a young entrepreneur, helping your domestic helper’s child with career guidance, or simply chatting with the teenager next door. When life experience meets youthful curiosity, magic happens.

It’s time we stop imagining that those who age alone are to be pitied. In many ways, they are lighting a path for the rest of us. With thoughtfulness. With courage. And with a quiet kind of joy.

Ageing solo doesn’t mean being forgotten. It means having the space — and the

strength — to write your own script. With clarity. With dignity. And with a touch of wonder.

After all, life in India was never meant to be a one-size-fits-all story. Why should the final chapter be any different?

Chal akela chal akela

Chal akela

Tera mela pichhe chhuta rahi

Chal akela chal akela

- *Sambandh (1968)*

Because sometimes, the ones walking alone are the ones lighting the way.



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Experience 67, Nescient 33

There is some transcendent symbolism to the number 100, muses Nagesh Alai

There is some transcendent symbolism to the number 100. Be it the lettered, the unlettered, the religious, the atheist, the agnostic, the philosopher, the scientist, the naïve, the experienced, they all see it as representing some form of completeness or fullness or perfection or understanding about life and universe. Unlike the differentiated divinity of some numbers like 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 108, 786 and 1008 which hold different significance under different religions, the number 100 has a universal appeal of wholesomeness and achievement. The development of zero, arithmetic and mathematics apart, the exclamation of 100% communicates a sense of achievement. 'Shata ayush bhavaha' or 'May you live a hundred years' convey a blessing of 100 years of

good health, wellbeing, happiness and prosperity, denoting that humans could have a longevity of 100 years to experience life in all its splendour and glory, full of knowledge and wisdom, laughter and tears, fights and peace, dance and play, singing and mourning, shared experiences and selfish interests and what have you. Little wonder that anyone who crosses 100 is venerated.

In this background, if I were to randomly share 67 of my key experiences, or rather my limited understanding of life, over the last 67 years of my existence, they would be the following:

- You need to cry to be heard
- Never clutch at empty straws
- You need to turn over, crawl and stand up before you can walk and run
- Parents' love and concern is selfless and you will miss them when they are gone
- Siblings are meant to make you share and give care

- You are most transparent when you are most innocent
- School and college are fun times with books and mates that make for memories
- Homework is best done immediately and not on the eve of exams
- Teachers don't merely teach; they give you a foundation for life
- Acquired knowledge could be a drudge, discovered learning could be fun
- If you don't play in life, you will never know the joy of a win or the pain of a loss
- If you are in a team, be a sport; if you are solo, be competitive
- Wounds and bruises teach you to heal
- Life is not about competition, but collaboration
- Love at first sight could be a mirage
- Play to your strengths, not to others weaknesses
- You enrich others when you take up a job
- You grow when you work for yourself
- You cannot be anyone else; neither can anyone else be you
- The more you accumulate, the more you weigh
- Clutter will overwhelm you
- There is no such thing as true loyalty, everything is expediency
- There never is a free lunch; we have to pay our way through
- What goes around comes around
- You will be a victim or a victor of your behaviour
- Nothing in life is black or white; its grey
- There is no right or wrong in life
- You are not the last word on anything
- Get your math right
- Earn your pay, live your way
- Save before you spend
- Never ignore the under privileged; be generous
- Never withdraw from your retiral funds before retiring
- There is no limit to spending as there is no limit to saving
- Secure your roof; one is enough, two is too many
- Everyone cannot be a leader; nor can everyone be a follower
- We wear different hats at different times
- Travel is not a luxury, but a necessity
- Know your country and culture first
- Don't lose your mother tongue
- Your identity is your own
- Peak is a state of mind; you can climb higher
- Criticize only if you can do better
- Acknowledge others contributions in your life
- Emulate the worthy, not the monied
- Know the good, the bad and the ugly
- Lift someone up; don't forget that you have been uplifted by someone
- Love and marriage may fuse or diffuse
- Someone or the other will need you; read the signal
- Experienced living is the best
- Don't take life too seriously, you are meant to be happy
- Only you can take care of your health and ailments
- Sense the difference between lip sympathy and empathy
- Surround your self with people better than you
- It's a mistake to assume that humans are the best specie
- You can learn as much from animals and birds
- Life will be as simple or as complex as you make it out to be
- Your needs can be fulfilled, but not your greed
- What you do not know will always be much more than what you know

- There are smarter people around; glean and learn from them
- Knowledge is information, wisdom is harnessing it
- A failure is not a deterrence, but a cause for introspection
- A success is not a validation, but a conviction
- You are relevant as long as you occupy the chair
- Once you say your bye, don't look back
- Get used to solitude; you may exist alone and will exit alone
- Cosmos is your cocoon; believe in the Supreme

As was observed nothing is ever 100% in the exam of life, the reason why 100 is seen as an aspirational number and an opportunity to attain completeness. With an expectation of living for 100 years and experiencing or learning what I have not thus far in the past 67 years, here is the list of 33 that I would want to cover over the next 33 years of my life:

- Visit the remainder of states and heritage sites in India that were missed
- Learn at least two or three more Indian languages and one foreign language
- Go beyond writing articles; write a book, a long-cherished dream
- Get back to voracity of reading, pull back from edacious digital world
- Learn the art of staying silent
- Learn the art of doing nothing
- The fear of the unknown is imaginary, stop dreading
- Be detached, let go
- You may love, but do not expect to be loved
- Minimize, not maximize your life style
- Your relevance has a shelf life
- You may not be anyone's last resort

- Your children have a mind of their own; advise only if asked
- Never tire of any activity, you need the flexibility of body and mind
- Don't bother if not invited
- Learn dancing, it will keep you rocking
- Know your roots and culture in-depth
- Forgive or forgo relationships
- Stay away from toxicity of any kind
- People younger to you will go farther than you did, cheer them
- Renew connects and network without any agenda
- Iron out wrinkles and crinkles in relationships, don't take them for granted
- Socialise with the unknown, you may end up striking new friendships
- Resist the temptation to outperform markets and indices
- Conserve capital, scrimp on returns
- No one can be fully independent or dependent; get real
- You are better off being in your home rather than an old age home
- Short breaks are far more rejuvenating than annual holidays
- Join some satsang or a book club, the group energy will be stimulating
- Give your time freely, give your money carefully
- A stable roof and liquid cash make for a great comfort
- Make a wish, make a will
- Stop trying to please everyone; be happy, don't worry

I do not recall scoring 100% in any subject or tests on my education front, notwithstanding my myriad qualifications. But I am hoping that at least in the exam of life, I score a 100 and achieve some completeness and fulfilment before I breathe my last. After all, 100 is not just a number, but a way of life.

50 Smart Dental Care Tips

Dr Rajeev Narvekar shares easy tips to keep your teeth, gums, and mouth healthy

As we age, our oral health requires more attention. Receding gums, dry mouth, sensitive teeth, and dental wear are common concerns after 50 – but the good news is, with the right habits, you can keep your smile strong and sparkling for years to come.

Here are **50 effective, easy-to-follow tips** to keep your teeth, gums, and entire mouth in great shape – especially after 50.

Brushing Basics

- 1. Brush at least twice daily** – once in the morning, once before bed.
- 2. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush** – gentler on gums and enamel.
- 3. Change your toothbrush every 3**

months – or sooner if bristles are frayed.

- 4. Use fluoride toothpaste** – helps strengthen enamel and prevent cavities.
- 5. Brush for a full two minutes** – don't rush the process.
- 6. Use gentle, circular motions** – don't scrub harshly.
- 7. Don't forget your tongue** – it harbors bacteria and can cause bad breath.
- 8. Brush the gumline carefully** – plaque loves to hide there.



Flossing and Cleaning Between Teeth

9. **Floss daily** – it's the only way to clean between teeth.
10. **Use waxed floss if your gums are sensitive** – easier and more comfortable.
11. **Try floss picks or interdental brushes** – great alternatives for arthritis sufferers.
12. **Use a water flosser** – effective and gentle on gums.
13. **Be gentle when flossing** – don't snap the floss into the gums.



Keeping Gums Healthy

14. **Check for bleeding gums** – it is an early sign of gum disease.
15. **Massage your gums** – improves blood flow and gum strength.
16. **Avoid smoking** – a major cause of gum disease and oral cancer.
17. **Control diabetes** – it affects gum health significantly.
18. **Use an antimicrobial mouthwash** – helps reduce bacteria.
19. **Hydrate frequently** – less water intake can cause more dental issues.
20. **Get regular cleanings** – professional care helps prevent gum recession.

Dry Mouth Prevention

21. **Drink water regularly** – keeps the mouth clean and moist.
22. **Avoid alcohol-based mouthwashes** – they can worsen dryness.
23. **Chew sugar-free gum** – stimulates

saliva production.

24. **Suck on sugar-free lozenges** – helps keep the mouth moist.
25. **Avoid caffeine and alcohol** – both can dehydrate your mouth.

Eating and Drinking Wisely

26. **Control sugary foods and drinks** – they feed harmful bacteria.
27. **Consume fresh fruits and vegetables** – like apples and carrots, which naturally clean teeth.
28. **Including dairy** – calcium strengthens teeth.
29. **Drink fluoridated water** – helps maintain enamel.
30. **Reduce sticky snacks** – they stay on teeth and can cause decay.
31. **Rinse your mouth after acidic foods** – protects enamel.
32. **Cut back on soda** – a leading cause of erosion and cavities.



Habits That Harm Oral Health

33. **Don't use your teeth as tools** – opening packages can cause chips.
34. **Avoid chewing ice** – it can crack your teeth.
35. **Be cautious with very hard foods** – like nuts or sweets.
36. **Address tooth grinding** – talk to your dentist if you clench your jaw.
37. **Limit snacking between meals** – gives bacteria less fuel.
38. **Don't ignore tooth pain** – a sign something's wrong.



Denture and Bridge Care (if applicable)

39. Clean dentures daily – use a soft brush and soak overnight.

40. Remove dentures at night – gives your gums a break.

41. Don't use hot water on dentures – it can warp them.

42. Visit the dentist regularly for fit adjustments – poorly fitting dentures can cause sores.

43. Brushing your gums and tongue even with dentures – keeps your mouth clean and fresh.

Regular Checkups Matter

44. See your dentist every 6 months – even if you have no symptoms.

45. Get annual oral cancer screenings – early detection saves lives.

46. Tell your dentist about any medication changes – some drugs affect

oral health.

47. Discuss any new sensitivities – they could signal a problem.

48. Bring a list of concerns to your appointment – so nothing gets overlooked.

General Health = Oral Health

49. Keep chronic conditions in check – heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis all impact oral health.

50. Don't underestimate your smile – it reflects your confidence, health, and well-being.

Final Thoughts

Oral health isn't just about preventing cavities — it's about protecting your overall health and maintaining quality of life. A healthy mouth can:

- Help you eat comfortably
- Keep your speech clear
- Boost your confidence in social settings
- Lower your risk of heart disease and infections

And the best part? Most of these tips take just a few minutes a day. So don't wait for a toothache to act. Start today — because a healthy smile at 60, 70, or 80 is one of life's best assets.



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Japan Beckons

All photos by Malti Gaekwad

Renown as a technically advanced nation, Japan is leaving no stone unturned to market itself as one of the hottest holiday destinations, writes Malti Gaekwad

At one time Japan was considered a faraway country, out of bounds for most people except for business or trade. For most Indians Japan was what Bollywood brought forth with “Love in Tokyo”, Le gayi dil gudiya Japan ki and Syonara Syonara: (that’s one Japanese word every Indian knows!)

Today things are different.

Japan, which is of course known to be a technically advanced nation, is leaving no stone unturned to market itself as one of the hottest holiday destinations. Inviting the world to see its cherry blossoms in March

and April..... As if it’s the only place on the planet to have them. Many countries have these flowering trees and our very own Kashmir, actually boasts of the real Cherry trees blossoming magnificently year after year - but Japan was a totally different experience.

Globetrotting Indians are opting for Japan as their latest holiday destination. Friends and family groups do their own research and planning - but my experience tells me it’s better for senior citizens to select an organised tour operator of their choice, which is suitable and convenient in terms of package, pocket and number of days one would like to travel. Travel companies regularly advertise various packages on social media and newspapers.

For senior citizens there are many advantages to booking a group tour. Let me list a few for you:-

*Your program is set. You don't have to bother about anything once you book yourself. Hotels and their bookings are taken care of. Itinerary is well planned and tested.

*You don't have to stand in long queues for booking or buying tickets to museums, rides, parks, trains, cruise, cultural shows etc.

*You have a general clarity about the kind of food you will get. (A warning for vegetarians....food of your choice can be difficult to get. There is hardly anything available which doesn't contain egg.)

When one goes to Japan to see the cherry blossoms (in season), Mt. Fuji, Hiroshima, and the much hyped Shibuya Crossing as well as the statue of Huchiko the faithful dog, are the normal things apart from shopping. And riding on the bullet train. But there is so much more to see and learn and unusual places one must go to depending on your interests.

Around Tokyo: **Umihataro Aqua line**, which is a four lane bridge and tunnel that extends across Tokyo Bay. It was the first underwater long pass, considered a marvel when it was constructed in the 1990s.

Tokyo Railway Station which is the oldest and the busiest in Japan. The heritage building makes for a pretty picture and is worth a visit.



Tokyo Railway Station



Bullet Train merchandise

Team Lab Planets is a tech museum with interesting, enjoyable, engagements, compositions and games which give you an opportunity to have fun with all the senses in unique and unexpected ways. It also has a garden where you become one with exotic flowers. Some super seniors may not be comfortable with all the installations, though kids and youngsters will love the experience. (Note - On advice, certain activity rooms can be avoided)



Team Planet Lab

Tokyo Sky Tree is a major landmark of the Tokyo Skyline. It is a television broadcasting tower with a height of 634

M. When made, it was the second tallest in the world after Burj Khalifa. Lifts and escalators take you up to the viewing gallery to get a 360 degree panoramic view of the entire Tokyo city which is supposed to be the largest city in the world.



Tokyo Sky Tree

Chidorigafuchi cherry blossom park is a spectacular place within the city around the moat of the Imperial Palace. The rows of cherry blossom trees are illuminated in the evening ... While you can enjoy boating in the moat, it is a very pleasurable and relaxing pastime.

In and around Osaka: A visit to the Osaka Castle is much hyped because you can't go anywhere near it unless you have special

permission. The abundant cherry blossom trees in the vicinity are a pleasant site. The hour-long cruise ride on the inner moat of the castle is interesting. Here again with both the sides flanked with cherry blossoms and neatly curated sitting areas and walkways made, before the tall buildings rise up to the sky further away looks beautiful.

One can take day trips to Hakone, Nara, Kyoto, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and other important nearby places. At Nara, which is an erstwhile Royal stronghold, is located the famous Todaiji temple. It is a Buddhist temple complex that was once the seat of power. The ancient 13th century temple houses the world's largest bronze statue of a seated Buddha. Other huge wooden statues are also very impressive.



Bronze Buddha

Other temples and shrines worth visiting are ITSUKUSHIMA and the famous floating TORI gate on MIYAJIMA Island. Here you will see lots of deer too.

ASUKUSA TEMPLE in the heart of Tokyo, it is the oldest and most visited.



Ancient Temple

KINKAKUJI TEMPLE, also known as Golden Pavilion, is the most impressive sight in Kyoto. It is a Zen temple and the top two stories are completely covered with gold foil.



Golden Pavilion

FUSHIMI INARI TAISHA is a Shinto Shrine also in Kyoto, is known for its 1000 plus vermilion TORI gates.

When you visit Japan, wearing a Kimono to take photographs is no less than a ritual. Seems to be everyone's favourite. To attend a tea ceremony can be a memorable experience too, provided you can sit in that position of vajrasan!



Torii Gates

Other places worth visiting:-

Your trip to Japan can be worthless if you can't see Mt. Fuji, which often remains hidden by clouds near the summit. It is a good idea to visit **Lake Kawaguchiko**, from where the chances of spotting the elusive mountain are better.



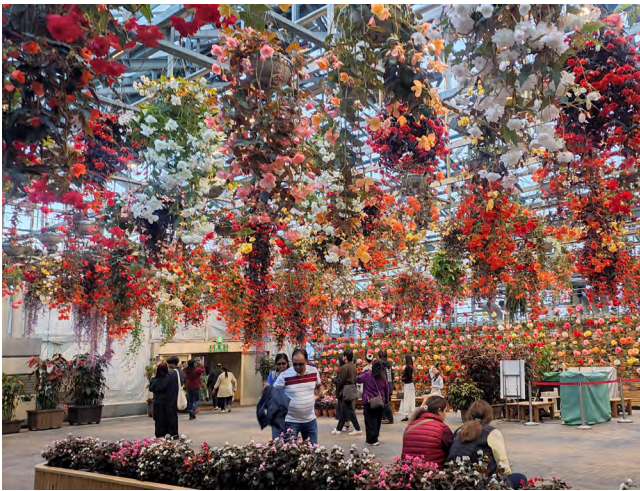
Famous Black Egg near sulphur springs

Oshino Hakkai is a small, beautiful village. There are eight springs with ponds. The aquifer water from Mount Fuji comes out to the ground to form these little ponds. This is obviously in the vicinity not far from Mt. Fuji in the Hakone region.

Lake Ashinoko, also in Hakone region, is a pretty lake on which you can take a leisurely cruise and absorb the awesome landscapes around. This lake was formed 3000 years ago after the last volcanic eruption of Mt. Hakone.

Drive or use the ropeway to go up and down Owakudani, a volcanic valley which has hot sulphur springs. Here you can even taste the famous black egg and increase your life span by a couple of years.

Nabana No Sato at Kuwana city, near Nagoya is a huge theme and amusement park. The sound and light program is well made and flower display sections are mesmerising to see, while you inhale an intoxicating floral fragrance.



Flower Park

In Nagoya which is largely an industrially rich and active area one could plan to visit the SC Maglev Railway Museum and the Toyota Car Museums to get an insight into Japanese technical design and engineering expertise.

TIP: Language/ communication and food can be difficult for us in Japan.

- Download GOOGLE TRANSLATOR on your phone and learn to use it. It will be very helpful.

- If you are choosy about food and don't even eat eggs, please carry some food or pre-cooked food packets.

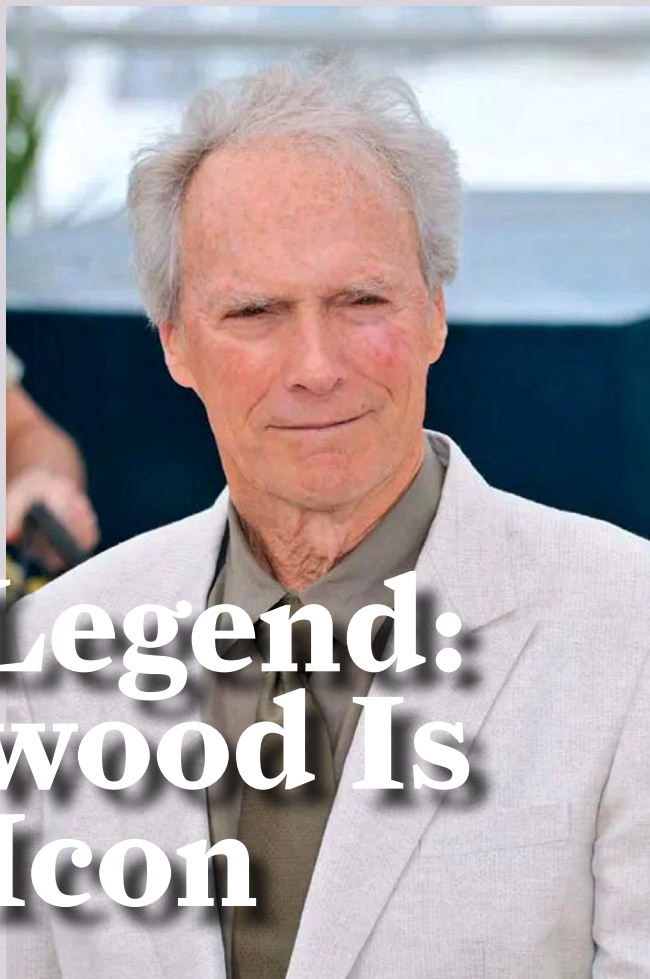


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Beyond a Legend: Clint Eastwood Is The True Icon



His dedication to his craft and his willingness to take creative risks have made him a true Hollywood icon, writes Deepa Gahlot

One of the oldest and most enduring stars of Hollywood completed 95 in May this year, and is, from all accounts, busy directing a new film, as his latest *Juror #2*, awaits release.

Born on May 31, 1930, in San Francisco, California, Clint Eastwood grew up with a passion for music and film. After serving in the Korean War, he began his acting career, landing small roles in films and TV shows. The rugged actor, who made his early reputation playing a cowboy named Rowdy Yates in a TV series *Rawhide* (1959-65), became an international star in Sergio Leone spaghetti Westerns-- the famous

Dollars Trilogy— *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966).

Discussing the trilogy in an interview with *Feature Story*, quoted in a profile by Brent Furdyk in the site *nikkiswift.com*, “Clint Eastwood confirmed a rumour that he wore the same poncho in all three movies — and that it had never been washed. “If you washed it, it would fall apart,” Eastwood said with a laugh. “Yeah, I still have that poncho.”



The famous - Dollars Trilogy

“Asked if he’d ever had the poncho laundered, he admitted he had not. “No. It was folded up after *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* and it hasn’t been unfolded yet.”

The actor with those enviable chiselled looks, was once rejected by a Hollywood studio because of a prominent Adam’s apple, which he refused to fix. Leone’s films helped create the on-screen legend of the stoic hero, who became an archetype for the movie cowboy, and Eastwood appeared in dozens of Westerns, most of them hits, which also typecast him as the taciturn, macho hero, with a sullen glare and a cigar between his lips. Leone is said to have commented that Eastwood had “only two facial expressions: with the hat and without the hat.” Clintwood said of the Man With No Name character he helped create in *A Fistful of Dollars*. “I wanted to play it with an economy of words and create this whole feeling through attitude and movement. It was just the kind of character I had envisioned for a long time, keep to the mystery and allude to what happened in the past. It came about after the frustration of doing *Rawhide* for so long. I felt the less he said, the stronger he became and the more he grew in the imagination of the audience.”

Using money earned from the Dollars trilogy, Eastwood’s advisor Irving Leonard helped establish Eastwood’s own production company, Malpaso Productions named after Malpaso Creek, on Eastwood’s California property. 1971 was a major turning point in Eastwood’s career, the year when he played another iconic character, the cop in *Dirty Harry*, who uttered the immortal line, “Go ahead, and make my day.” The role was originally meant for Frank Sinatra, who was allegedly replaced, because he could

not hold a gun! The same year, Eastwood turned to direction, with *Play Misty For Me* The film about a jazz disc jockey named Dave (Eastwood), who has a casual affair with a listener called Evelyn, who turns into a crazed, murderous stalker, when he breaks up with her. The film was praised by critics and Walter was nominated for a Golden Globe Best Actress Award (Drama), for her performance in the film.



The unforgettable cop in Dirty Harry

Once Eastwood started directing, he just never stopped, even when age caught with him. If his output as an actor is prodigious (73 films), his work as a director (45 films) is enviably diverse and totally unpredictable. Joe Queenan, in a profile of Eastwood in *The Guardian*, wrote, “A true child of the Depression, Eastwood understood that the only unforgivable crime was to stop working. So he never did. He made all kinds of movies and he made them fast. He didn’t waste much money on co-stars and he didn’t spend much money on special effects. He brought his films in under budget and on time. If a film flopped he’d make another one, and if that flopped, he’d try something different. Then, if his career as a director stalled, he’d hire himself out as an actor. Unlike (Warren) Beatty and (Orson) Welles, he does not seem to have been terribly afraid of failure, and nor does one get the impression that he ever cared much what the critics thought of his work. His biggest-grossing films – the stupid ones with the orangutan (Every

Which Way But Loose in 1978, and two sequels) – are among his greatest box-office coups. So there.”



One of Eastwood's most forgettable films

What went behind Eastwood's almost unbreakable chain of success? Queenan analyses, "Eastwood resembles the great directors who preceded him, such as Hitchcock and John Huston and Don Siegel, in that he never stopped punching the clock. Unlike sensitive auteurs, who will take a few years off to contemplate their next project, Eastwood has not stopped making films since his debut in 1971. Working with the same collaborators, he has made arty films such as *Bird* and *White Hunter*, *Black Heart*, creepy films such as *Play Misty for Me*, offbeat comedies such as *Bronco Billy* and *Space Cowboys*, sentimental films such as *Honkytonk Man* and *Invictus*, and epics like *Flags of Our Fathers*. He has taken a great book and made a great movie (*Mystic River*), but more impressively he has taken a terrible book and made a great movie (*The Bridges of Madison County*). Eastwood went through a few stretches where it seemed he might be washed up, but he always found a way to drag himself up off the canvas. *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, *True Crimes* and *Bloodwork* appeared in rapid succession. They were all duds. Then came *Mystic River* and *Million-Dollar Baby*, which were not. The number of truly bad films Eastwood either starred

in or directed is surprisingly small. This is mostly because he avoided comedies: cop movies can only be so bad, but with comedies, the sky's the limit.”



An Oscar-winning performance - *Million Dollar Baby*

Unforgiven (1992) and *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), won him directing Oscars, and a rather late acting Oscar for *Million Dollar Baby*, in which he played a boxing coach, who takes on the job of training a woman (Hilary Swank) into a professional. In 2008, came *Gran Torino*, in which he directed himself in the role of an old, cantankerous, recently widowed war veteran.

The stories may be different, but there is a Clint Eastwood stamp on all his films. In an *Esquire* profile, Tom Junod asked and answered the question. "Exactly what constitutes a Clint Movie turns out to have an easy answer: A Clint Movie is a movie shot by Clint Eastwood's crew. He gives them more freedom than most other filmmakers give their crews, and they give him greater constancy. He waits on line with them at the catering truck instead of eating lunch in his trailer; he moves equipment with them; he generally starts the workday after nine and ends it before five so that they can have breakfast and dinner with their families. He readily admits that his method of making movies depends almost entirely on their experience and skill, and so in return, "They would jump into traffic for him,"

says Matt Damon.

In the same piece, co-star in *The Bridges Of Madison County*, Meryl Streep tries to figure out what makes Clint Eastwood tick. ““He banked an enormous amount of credit with the male audience in the early part of his career, when they were eager to imagine themselves as whatever character he was playing. And then he sort of brought them into material that they never would have gone to. Starting with maybe *Unforgiven*, he started bringing them along on a left-hand turn, where violence wasn’t the thing you got your rocks off with. It was something horrible. And only he could bring them there.”



Clint@95!

To which Eastwood responded, “I like Meryl. She’s a smart woman and a pleasure to act with. But I don’t know if I’m that aware. I’m not that self-examining. I’ve always felt that if I examine myself too much, I’ll find out what I know and don’t know, and I’ll burst the bubble. I’ve gotten so lucky relying on my animal instincts, I’d rather keep a little bit of the animal alive.”

He reportedly turned down roles of James

Bond, Superman, Rambo and films like *Apocalypse Now*, *Die Hard*, *Blade Runner* and *Men in Black*. Had he starred in them the course of Hollywood history would have been altered.



Two marriages, several affairs and scandals

A man so good-looking and talented—he is also a musician—was bound to have a colourful personal life that could be the subject of a book by itself. He has been married twice, first to Maggie Johnson from 1953 to 1984, and then to Dina Ruiz from 1996 to 2014 and has had multiple relationships, from which he has fathered eight children he acknowledges and others, allegedly illegitimate.

Eastwood’s legacy extends beyond his films. He has influenced generations of filmmakers, including Quentin Tarantino, James Mangold, and many others. His dedication to his craft and his willingness to take creative risks have made him a true Hollywood icon.




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