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COVER
STORY

Not Ozempic, it's Hara Hachi Bu

Cuttack-born Rajat Mishra—acclaimed keyboardist and music director—has channeled Odisha’s spirit into his 150+ devotional and 100+ genre-spanning album numbers. He has achieved the phenomenal feat while collaborating with who’s who of the Odia music industry. His notable works include ‘Jay Shree Ram’, ‘Hatia Kanhu Laudi Khele’, ‘Hasa Tora Luha Mora’, ‘He Bewafaa’, and ‘Khasada Prema Bata’. Mishra, who now looks forward to the release of his upcoming film ‘Andhaputuli’, loves to explore his painting skills when he gets a break



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Not Ozempic, it's Hara Hachi Bu

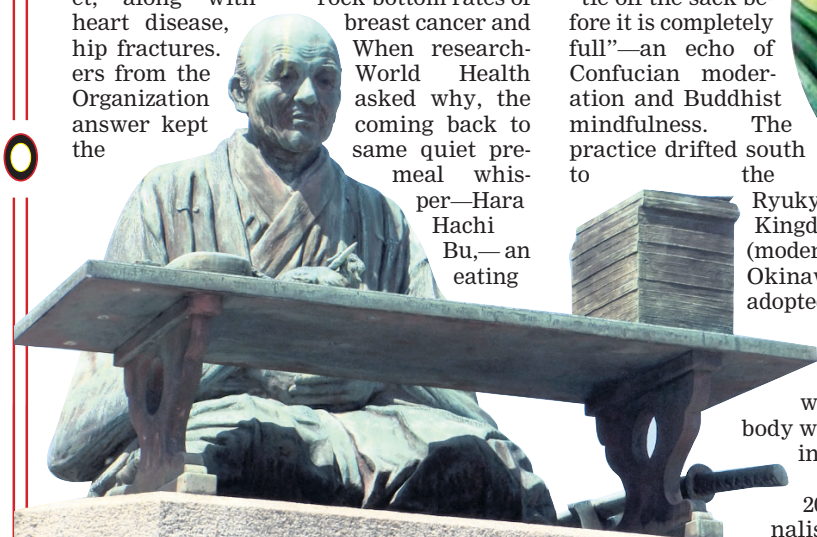
OP DESK

Centuries-old Japanese eating philosophy Hara Hachi Bu is not a diet plan with special foods or strict rules; it is simply a reminder to stop before you feel stuffed. The idea is to leave the table still a little bit hungry, trusting that the body will feel satisfied a few minutes later

Every evening in the small Okinawan village of Ogimi, Japan, diners clap their hands once, bow slightly and murmur three syllables before chopsticks ever touch porcelain: “Hara Hachi Bu.” Translated literally, the phrase means “stomach eight parts (out of ten).” In everyday language it is a gentle reminder: Stop when you are 80 % full. No calorie-tracking apps, macro ratios or forbidden foods—just a 300-year-old sentence that may be one of the most powerful longevity tools on earth.

Okinawa once boasted more centenarians per capita than anywhere on the planet, along with rock-bottom rates of heart disease, breast cancer and hip fractures. When researchers from the World Health Organization answer kept the

When researchers from the World Health Organization asked why, the coming back to same quiet pre-meal whisper—Hara Hachi Bu,—an eating



Bronze statue of Kaibara Ekken at his gravesite (Kinryū-Temple, Fukuoka-City, Japan)

philosophy rooted in moderation. This practice comes from a Japanese Confucian teaching which instructs people to only eat until they’re around 80 per cent full.

The origin

The first written record appears in 1713, in the samurai physician Ekiken Kaibara’s Yojokun (“Lessons on Nurturing Life”). Kaibara, alarmed that prosperous merchants were dropping dead from “over-abundance,” advised readers to “tie off the sack before it is completely full”—an echo of Confucian moderation and Buddhist mindfulness. The practice drifted south to

the Ryukyu Kingdom (modern-day Okinawa), where farmers adopted it as both spiritual discipline and economic necessity: food was precious; wasting it inside your body was as sinful as wasting it on the plate.

Fast-forward to 2004. Explorer-journalist Dan Buettner teams up with National Geographic and demographers

to map the planet’s five “Blue Zones”—hot spots where people reach 100 at ten times the average rate. Okinawa headlines the list, and Hara Hachi Bu becomes a sound-bite star.

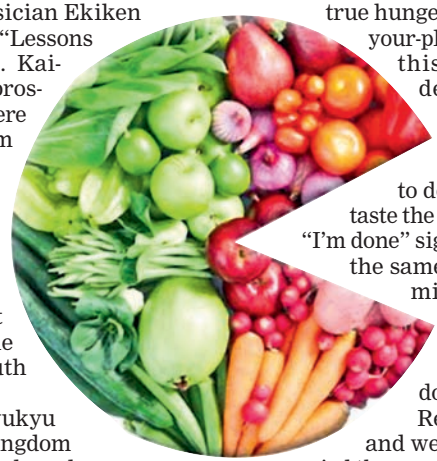
Ignoring old clean-your-plate habit

Hara Hachi Bu is an old Japanese saying that tells people to “eat until you are 80 % full.” It is not a diet plan with special foods or strict rules; it is simply a reminder to stop before you feel stuffed. The idea is to leave the table still a little bit hungry, trusting that the body will feel satisfied a few minutes later.

In practice it looks like: eating slowly, putting the fork down when you no longer feel true hunger, and ignoring the old “clean-your-plate” habit. Modern life makes this hard: phones, TV, work desks and huge restaurant portions push us to eat fast and past the point of comfort. Hara Hachi Bu asks us to do the opposite—pay attention, taste the food, and let the body’s natural “I’m done” signal be the guide. It is basically the same thing nutritionists now call mindful or intuitive eating: notice hunger, notice fullness, and choose food on purpose instead of from stress or boredom.

Reason it seems to help health and weight Scientists have not studied the exact “80 % rule” by itself, but they have looked at people who normally eat this way. The clearest finding is that these people take in fewer total calories each day without counting anything.

Over months and years this small daily gap adds up: less weight gain and lower average body-mass index (BMI). Men in the studies also picked more vegetables and fewer refined grains once they began listening to fullness cues, so diet quality improved. Because no foods are banned, the style feels gentle; people keep doing it, unlike strict diets that often end in rebound overeating.





Eating slowly and stopping early may also aid digestion and reduce bloating or heart-burn for some. Another plus: when you focus on the meal instead of a screen you usually feel calmer afterwards, and research links mindful meals to lower emotional eating and fewer binge episodes.

In short, Hara Hachi Bu is not a magic trick; it is just an easy way to



nudge calorie balance in the right direction while making meals more pleasant.

Who should (and shouldn't) try it, plus easy ways to start
Healthy adults who want a

simple, low-stress way to stay at a comfortable weight are the best match.

It is not meant for people who need to gain weight, such as young children, frail older adults, or patients recovering from illness.

Athletes in heavy training, pregnant women, and anyone with a history of eating disorders should talk to a doctor or dietitian first, because they may need full meals or structured plans.

For everyone else the risk is low; at worst you get a little hungry and need a planned snack later.

Remember, the goal is moderation, not restriction.

If Hara Hachi Bu turns into “eat as little as possible,” it can back-fire the same way crash diets do.

Treat it as a gentle experiment: learn where your 80 % point is, enjoy your food more, and let your body

The last bite

We live in an era that equates indulgence with freedom and restraint with deprivation. Hara Hachi Bu whispers the opposite: stopping early is not leaving the party early; it is staying lucid enough to enjoy the whole night. Every meal becomes a quiet act of rebellion against a system that profits when we overfill. And in that small space—between satisfied and stuffed—lies not just a longer life, but a wider one, roomy enough for flavours, conversations and the surprising lightness of being 80 % full.

So set down the fork while the stomach still hums, not shouts. Listen for the soft click. The century can wait; the next bite doesn't have to.

Trying Hara Hachi Bu

For those who might want to give Hara Hachi Bu or taking a more mindful and intuitive approach to improve their relationship with food, here are a few tips to try:

Check in with your body before eating

Ask yourself: Am I truly hungry? And if so, what kind of hunger is it — physical, emotional, or just habitual? If you're physically hungry, denying yourself may only lead to stronger cravings or overeating later. But if you're feeling bored, tired, or stressed, take a moment to pause. Giving yourself space to reflect can help prevent food from becoming a default coping mechanism.

Eat without distractions

Step away from screens and give your meal your full attention. Screens often serve as a distraction from our fullness cues, which can contribute to overeating.

Slow down and savour each bite

Eating should be a sensory and satisfying experience. Slowing down allows us to know when we're satiated and should stop eating.

Aim to feel comfortably full, not stuffed

If we think of being hungry as a one and being so full you need to lie down as a ten, then eating until you're around “80 per cent full” means you should feel comfortably satisfied rather than stuffed. Eating slowly and being attuned to your body's signals will help you achieve this.

Share meals when you can

Connection and conversation are part of what makes food meaningful. Connection at meal times is uniquely human and a key to longevity.

Aim for nourishment

Ensure your meals are rich in vitamins, minerals, fibre and energy.

Practice self-compassion

There's no need to eat “perfectly”. The point of Hara Hachi Bu is about being aware of your body – not about feeling guilty over what you're eating.





World AIDS Day- December 1

Rethink, rebuild & rise

The theme this year - Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response - calls for rebuilding HIV services and demands that governments, global partners, and societies stand together to reinforce the structures that protect the most vulnerable

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

World AIDS Day is celebrated on December 1 to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, honor those who have died from the virus, and show support for people living with HIV. But unfortunately, the HIV response today is challenged not just by viruses or medical complexities, but by funding cuts, fractured services, and the persistent weight of stigma; factors that quietly derail progress and make access to care uneven and uncertain. No wonder, the theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response".

The theme acknowledges that shrinking of funds has disrupted essential HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services.

Talking about transforming the response, it is a call to action to change how the AIDS response is handled by focusing on long-term financial strength, integrating services, and implementing evidence-based, people-centered strategies.

The theme calls for rebuilding HIV services and demands that governments, global partners, and societies stand together to reinforce the structures that protect the most vulnerable.

'Technology and innovation keys to face current challenges'

Asisha Behera, Advocacy Officer at The Humsafar Trust, Mumbai, highlights that the path to ending AIDS by 2030 will depend on how effectively systems adapt and evolve in the face of crises. She notes that disruptions; whether financial, logistical, or health-related tend to hit the most marginalised communities the hardest. "When funding slows down or emergencies interrupt services, the people who rely most on prevention, testing, and treatment are the first to feel the impact," she explains.



For Behera, the way forward lies in strengthening systems so they do not collapse under pressure. "We need HIV services that remain steady even when the world around us is unstable," she says. She emphasises the potential of technology and innovation: digital appointment systems, tele-counselling, mobile clinics, and community-led delivery models that bring services directly to those who need them.

She also underscores the importance of renewed investment. "Government support, CSR funding, and global partnerships must come together to build a response that is resilient, inclusive, and sustainable," she adds.

On solutions, Behera is clear and pragmatic: enforce anti-discrimination policies across all healthcare spaces, secure robust supply chains for ART, PrEP, PEP, and testing kits, and create emergency protocols to safeguard uninterrupted treatment during crises. "If we can fortify our systems and ensure equity at every level, we can push past disruptions and move confidently toward a future free from AIDS," she asserts.

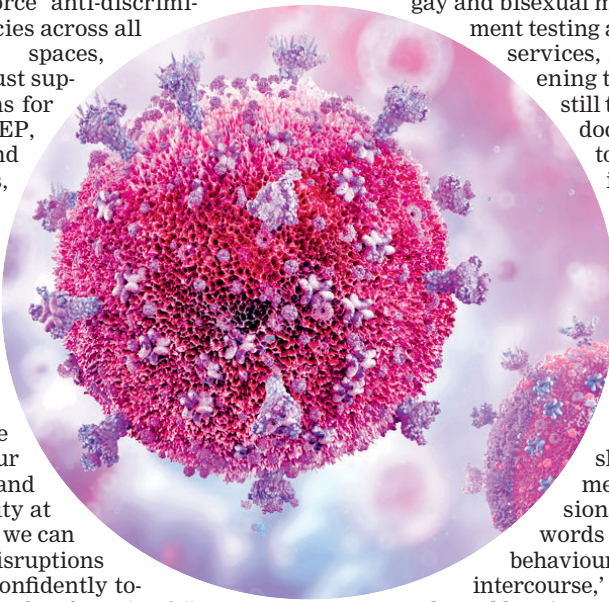
'Deeper empathy more important than funding'

Reflecting on the World AIDS Day theme, Amit Prasad Bisoi, Regional Programme Specialist at SAATHII, acknowledges that the journey toward ending AIDS by 2030 faces both structural and human challenges. He says despite years of advocacy for LGBTQIA++ rights and the rights of people living with HIV, stigma continues to infiltrate even the healthcare system.



"As someone who has referred many gay and bisexual men to government testing and treatment services, it is disheartening that prejudice still thrives among doctors trained to provide ART in Odisha. Even after WHO removed homosexuality from its list of disorders in 1990 and India decriminalised it in 2018, it is shocking that medical professionals still use words like 'illegal behaviours,' 'unnatural intercourse,' and 'disorder' when addressing gay and bisexual men seeking care."

Talking about disruptions such as funding cuts, resource shortages, and periodic crises slowing down progress, Bisoi said, "Despite such setbacks, there are ways to make India's HIV response more client-centred; changes that do not demand higher budgets, only deeper empathy." He believes that innovation, respect for human rights, and strong community-led interventions can bridge gaps, restore trust, and keep the nation firmly on the path toward ending AIDS by 2030.



Tales of resource exploitation

AKANKSHYA

The documentary unfolds with the arrival of conquistadors in 1492; Columbus lands in America, confusing it to be India and thus begins the domination. At this point, we can view the “explorers” as agents of a specific worldview imposing themselves by virtue of their technology of war and the origin of a Christian gunboat diplomacy.

Early in the film, a Masai comments that two kinds of Europeans came to their land, “One with guns to kill and steal the land, and ones with bible to deceive”. From this beginning of European Imperialism, we see how land and labour were robbed across continents, creating the poverty we witness today. The documentary spans back and forth across poor neighbourhoods of Africa and Latin America, showing families in decrepit homes, people toiling to receive a minimum wage. We witness how 32% of global wealth is being hoarded by wealthy 1% of the world while billions are living in slums - a statistic that gets worse every year. The current Oxfam analysis reveals that world’s top

1% own more wealth than 95% of humanity put together.

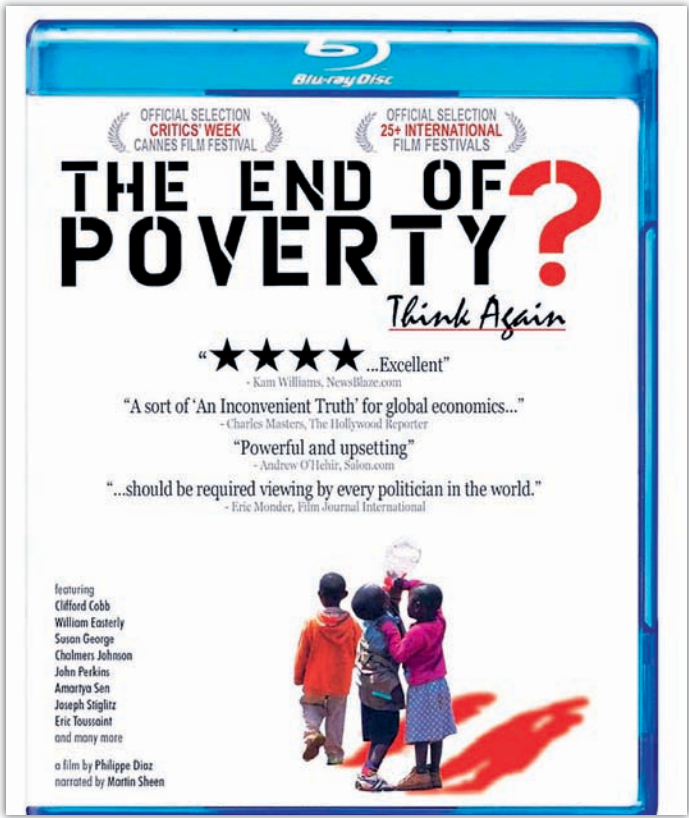
As we meet Nobel Laureates, experts and historians such as Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, John Perkins, Susan George and others, the sharp contours of poverty falls into place. Shortages are not the result of accident or indolence, but of deliberate policies that seized commodities—gold and rubber in the Congo, silver in Bolivia, sugar in Haiti, intellectual property in Indonesia and India—generating fam-



FILM REVIEW

ine, ecological exhaustion and the destruction of autonomous economies and cultures. It is no coincidence that IMF and WTO sit next to each other in Washington, dominating economic policies worldwide. *The Washington Consensus* is the rationale for world domination after the fall of USSR in 1989. Any country needing capital needs to follow the diktats of Washington – simply put bow to American companies.

The sharp commentary on



inequality narrated by actor-activist Martin Sheen feels like a retrieval of history. A sobering weave of events explain the

deeply entrenched hierarchies formed as a result of a five-century long colonial domination—where healthcare, sanitation,

Title – The End of Poverty
Year of release – 2008
Direction - Philippe Diaz
Duration – 104 minutes

food, education – is beyond the reach of people after privatisation of utilities.

The film’s central question is stark: what kind of society does the “free market” produce?

The answer—violent, short-sighted and comfortable with death—unfolds on screen.

My own question follows: how can we practise democracy when our institutions are economically compromised?

Perhaps we need a conversation about the double consciousness bequeathed by centuries of subjugation—a conversation that transcends every social boundary and forges solidarity across class, caste, ethnicity, race, gender and nation-state.

The writer, with a Master's degree in Biotechnology, is a member of Film Society of Bhubaneswar and the article is part of Orissa POST Youth Writing Programme

Bhumi on her toughest role

The 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) witnessed a powerful moment as Prime Video unveiled the first look of *Daldal*, its upcoming psychological crime thriller. But it was Bhumi Satish Pednekar's reflection on portraying DCP Rita Ferreira that truly stood out. Adapted from Vish Dhamija's *Bhendi Bazaar*, the series plunges viewers into the grim world of a woman navigating Mumbai's darkest crimes while battling her own buried wounds. During the festival's fireside chat, “Beyond the Stereotype: Redefining Women and Power in Modern Storytelling,” Bhumi revealed why Rita became one of the most challenging roles of her career. “Power doesn't always roar,” she said. “Sometimes it's quiet, questioning, relentless, the kind I grew up watching in the women around me.” Unlike many of her previous characters, Rita demanded Bhumi to communicate almost entirely through micro-gestures and physical tension rather than dialogue or expressive eyes. “I had to speak through the tightness of her neck, the stiffness in her shoulders, the way her body absorbs guilt or anger. It was exhausting, consuming, and months of preparation went into it.” She added that the team's willingness to write a flawed, layered, almost anti-hero female lead pushed her into uncomfortable but creatively thrilling territory. “Characters like these aren't written often for women,” Bhumi noted, “and that's exactly why she demanded everything from me.”

AGENCIES



Reason Suniel rejects offers from South

Suniel Shetty, one of Bollywood's most admired stars, has entertained audiences for decades with hits ranging from action blockbusters like *Mohra* and *Border* to timeless comedies such as *Hera Pheri* and *Awara Paagal Deewana*. Despite his strong South Indian roots, the actor recently revealed why he rarely accepts offers from South film industries.

In a recent interview, Suniel said that most roles he receives from the South are villain characters, a pattern he finds unappealing. He explained that Bollywood actors are often cast as antagonists to elevate the local hero's on-screen power, a trend he doesn't enjoy repeating. The only exception he made was for Rajinikanth's *Darbar*, which he signed purely out of admiration for the superstar.



star and to fulfil a long-held dream of working with him.

Suniel remains deeply connected to his cultural roots, recently doing a cameo in the Tulu film *Jai* to support regional cinema. The film went on to become one of the most widely screened Tulu releases.

Reflecting on the evolving industry, he said language barriers no longer exist, strong content now drives audiences everywhere. In 2025, he appeared in *Kesari Veer* and *Nadaaniyan*, and will next be seen in *Welcome To The Jungle* and the highly anticipated *Hera Pheri 3*.

AGENCIES



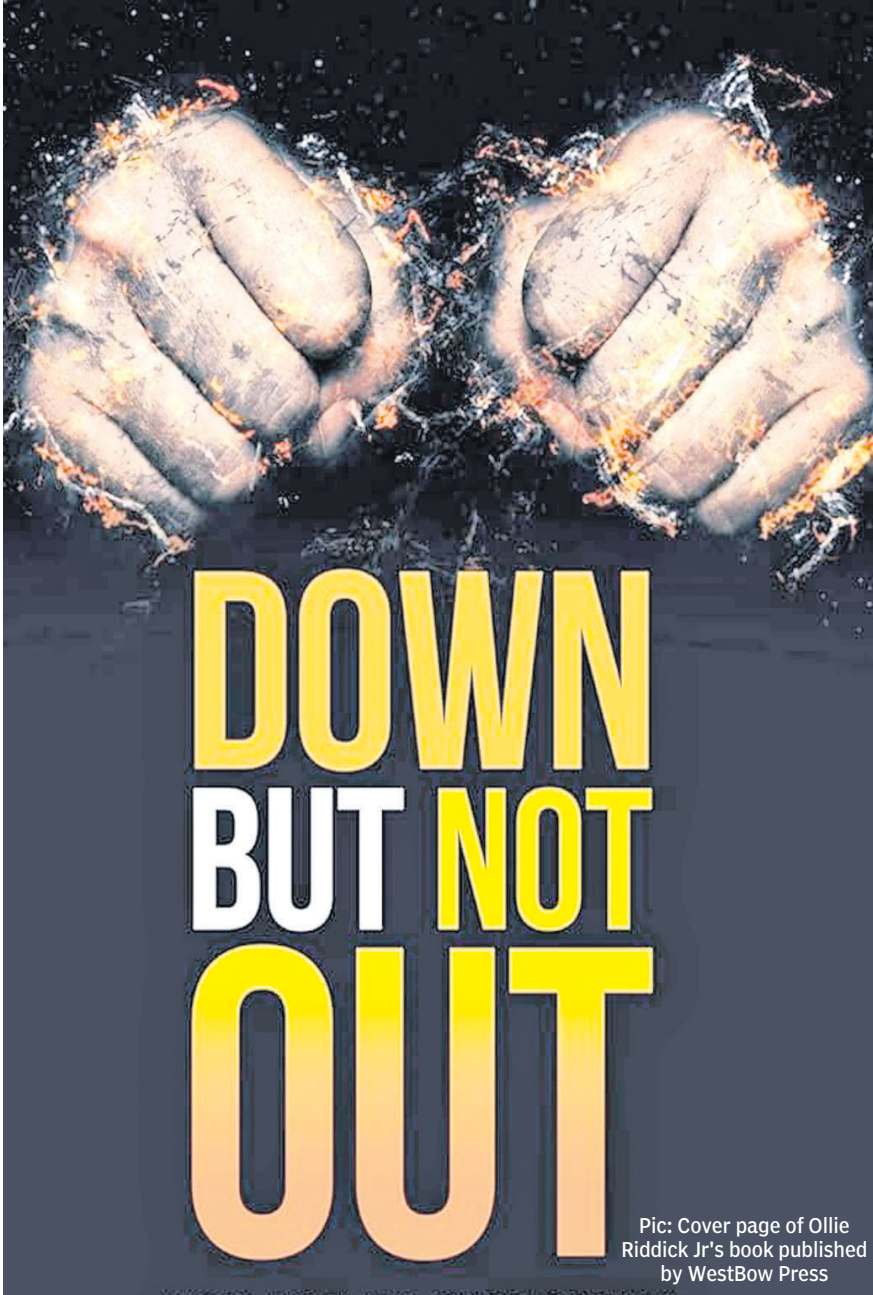
Shivaji Mohinta

When life knocks you down, when honest efforts aren't rewarded, when timely recognition is missing, when appearance becomes a hurdle, or when disabilities are a disadvantage, these stories reflect the spirit of not giving up

Life often throws curveballs when least expected. The dreams we nurture, the hours we invest, sometimes all seem in vain, leaving us frustrated and hopeless, questioning destiny and its script. But as darkness threatens, some refuse to bow—choosing instead to walk on, defying all odds. Four Remarkable Lives that teach us to rise again. The modern inspirations who define the spirit of “Down but Not Out”—and remind us how setbacks can often be the next stepping stones.

Amol Mazumdar: The overlooked champion

Amol Mazumdar’s cricketing career is one of silent heroism—scoring over 11,000 runs in the domestic circuit, yet never earning a place on the national team. Instead of retreating, he scripted history as a celebrated coach, transforming the destinies of others. The historic ODI World Cup victory



of Indian women’s national cricket team has made him a celebrated figure, often referred to as Indian cricket’s “real-life Kabir Khan” in a comparison to the film Chak De! India. “Sometimes, success is not in the spotlight but in the silent persistence to keep improving despite being overlooked.” Mazumdar’s story celebrates silent grit—the refusal to be defined by cir-

cumstances or denied by selection committees. Temba Bavuma: Size does not matter Often ridiculed for physical appearance, South African cricket captain, Temba Bavuma faced critics with resilience and dignity. He proved that true champions are measured by character, not looks.

“I don’t let others’ judgments define me; my performance and character speak louder than appearances,” he says. Bavuma is the first black African cricketer to make a Test century for South Africa and the first to captain the side. Significantly, he not only led his country to become ICC World Test Champion in 2025, but also his team recently white-washed India at home in a Test series after 25 years. Bavuma’s ascent is proof that courage and inner strength can defy stereotypes and inspire nations.

Prashant Kishor: The relentless reformist

After his Jan Suraj Party (JSP) faced a crushing defeat in the Bihar elections, Prashant Kishor declared: “You are not defeated until you quit.” Despite criticism and disappointment, PK chose reflection over resignation, reaffirming his commitment to transform Bihar. His journey is a lesson in perseverance refusing to let electoral setbacks extinguish his fire & dream for change.

Srikanth Bolla: The visionary

Blind since birth, Srikanth Bolla refused to be limited by disability. After topping his class in school, he had to file and win a court case to be allowed to study science as a blind student in Andhra Pradesh. He also became the first visually impaired international student to be admitted to MIT Sloan. He then founded Bollant Industries, which produces eco-friendly, bio-degradable products in Hyderabad. He has provided inclusive opportunities to hundreds of differently-abled persons, proving that determination can break any barrier. His Co’s tag line “Everyone Counts” is an ample proof of this. “Do not let your limitations define you. Instead, let your determination and dreams break every barrier.” Srikanth’s journey is a beacon for anyone who feels life has dealt them unfairly. When life knocks you down, when honest efforts aren’t rewarded, when timely recognition is missing, when appearance becomes a hurdle, or when disabilities are a disadvantage, these stories reflect the spirit of not giving up. Their deeds stand tall amongst the heartbreaking challenges with the bold script: DOWN BUT NOT OUT. A brighter tomorrow awaits those who persist, Your story isn’t over till you decide. The author is a Business Consultant & a Certified Life Coach



Temba Bavuma (I) with team member Marco Jansen



Amol Mazumdar



Prashant Kishor



Srikanth Bolla

■ *The Hanging Gardens of Babylon is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World whose exact location is unclear. However, a prominent modern theory, championed by Oxford researcher Dr. Stephanie Dalley, posits that the gardens did exist, but were located in the Assyrian city of Nineveh, the present-day Mosul in Iraq, 300 miles north of erstwhile Babylon*

Hanging Gardens of Babylon _© Ferdinand Knab, painted in 1886

Myth, mystery, or misplaced wonder

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon have held a place in human imagination for millennia — listed among the fabled Seven Wonders of the Ancient World as a lush terrace garden rising from the desert, a testament to a king's love and ancient engineering might. Yet today, historians and archaeologists remain deeply divided over whether the Gardens ever truly existed — or if so, where exactly.

Ancient accounts

According to classical Greek and Roman writers, such as Strabo, Diodorus Siculus and others, the Hanging Gardens were a spectacular arrangement of vaulted terraces planted with trees and flowers, irrigated by an ingenious water-lifting system from the Euphrates, and supported by stone columns.

Legend has it that the gardens were built by Nebuchadnezzar II (reigned c. 605–561 BCE) to comfort his wife Amytis of Media, who longed for the green hills of her homeland. This romantic origin story helped enshrine the Gardens in ancient lore, making them symbols of love, nature and royal grandeur.

Silence of Babylonian archaeology

Despite the vivid imagery handed down by ancient chroniclers, a striking problem remains: no contemporary Babylonian documents — including building inscriptions by Nebuchadnezzar — mention the Hanging Gardens. Scholars regard this silence as deeply suspicious, especially since records survive detailing other grand projects.

Archaeological excavations, most famously those led by German archaeologist Robert Koldewey between 1899 and 1917, uncovered vaulted chambers and wells in the northeast corner of the Babylonian “Southern Palace,” which early on were suspected as the foundation of the gardens. But those rooms later turned out to be storerooms rather than part of a grand hanging garden, and no definitive structural remains — terraces, terraces filled with large trees, or irrigation installations — have ever been found.

Even more telling: no botanical remains, no soil layers, no sign of raised terracing are clearly linked to the famed gardens. Given these facts, many historians now consider the possibility that the Hanging Gardens may never have existed in Babylon at all.

An alternative: The gardens of Nineveh?

In the early 21st century, a compelling alternative emerged. Stephanie Dalley, an Oxford scholar of ancient Near Eastern languages, argued that the legendary gardens were actually located in Nineveh — the Assyrian capital nearly 300 miles north of Babylon. According to her research, these gardens were built by Assyrian ruler Sennacherib around the early 7th century BCE.

Dalley pointed to inscriptions praising an

“unrivalled palace” and a “wonder for all peoples,” coupled with evidence of a sophisticated aqueduct and water-raising systems — possibly even an early version of the screw pump — designed to irrigate elevated terraces.

Excavations near modern-day Mosul (near ancient Nineveh) have uncovered traces of extensive canals and aqueducts, suggesting that this northern city indeed had large, irrigated royal gardens — more consistent with the mechanics described in classical accounts than anything found at Babylon.

If true, this would mean that the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon” were never in Babylon — but rather a poetic misnomer, born out of ancient confusion or cultural mixing.

Myth, memory and the power of storytelling

So why did the legend gravitate toward Babylon? Partly because Babylon was legendary in its own right — famed for its walls, palaces, and spectacular wealth. Ancient writers perhaps found it easier to ascribe wonders to Babylon rather than war-ravaged Nineveh.

Furthermore, the Greek and Roman descriptions of the gardens arrived centuries after the supposed time of Nebuchadnezzar II, often based on oral stories and second-hand accounts. Over time, features may have been exaggerated or confused, creating a vivid—but possibly fictional—portrait of an eastern paradise.

Thus, for many scholars today, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon stand less as a proven marvel of ancient engineering, and more as a symbol of how myths can grow — blending fragments of real history, memory, ambition, and imagination into stories that outlast empires.

Conclusion: A wonder still waiting for proof

After more than a century of archaeological investigation and modern scholarship, the fate of the Hanging Gardens remains unresolved. No definitive evidence links them to Babylon. No contemporary texts confirm their construction. The only plausible physical trace may lie far north, in the ruins of Nineveh — though even that remains circumstantial.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon may therefore exist today more vividly in human imagination than in history. Whether as a misremembered Assyrian garden, a poetic invention, or somewhere in between, the mystery endures. And perhaps that is part of their enduring power: a testament not just to ancient engineering, but to the human capacity for longing, mythmaking and wonder.



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