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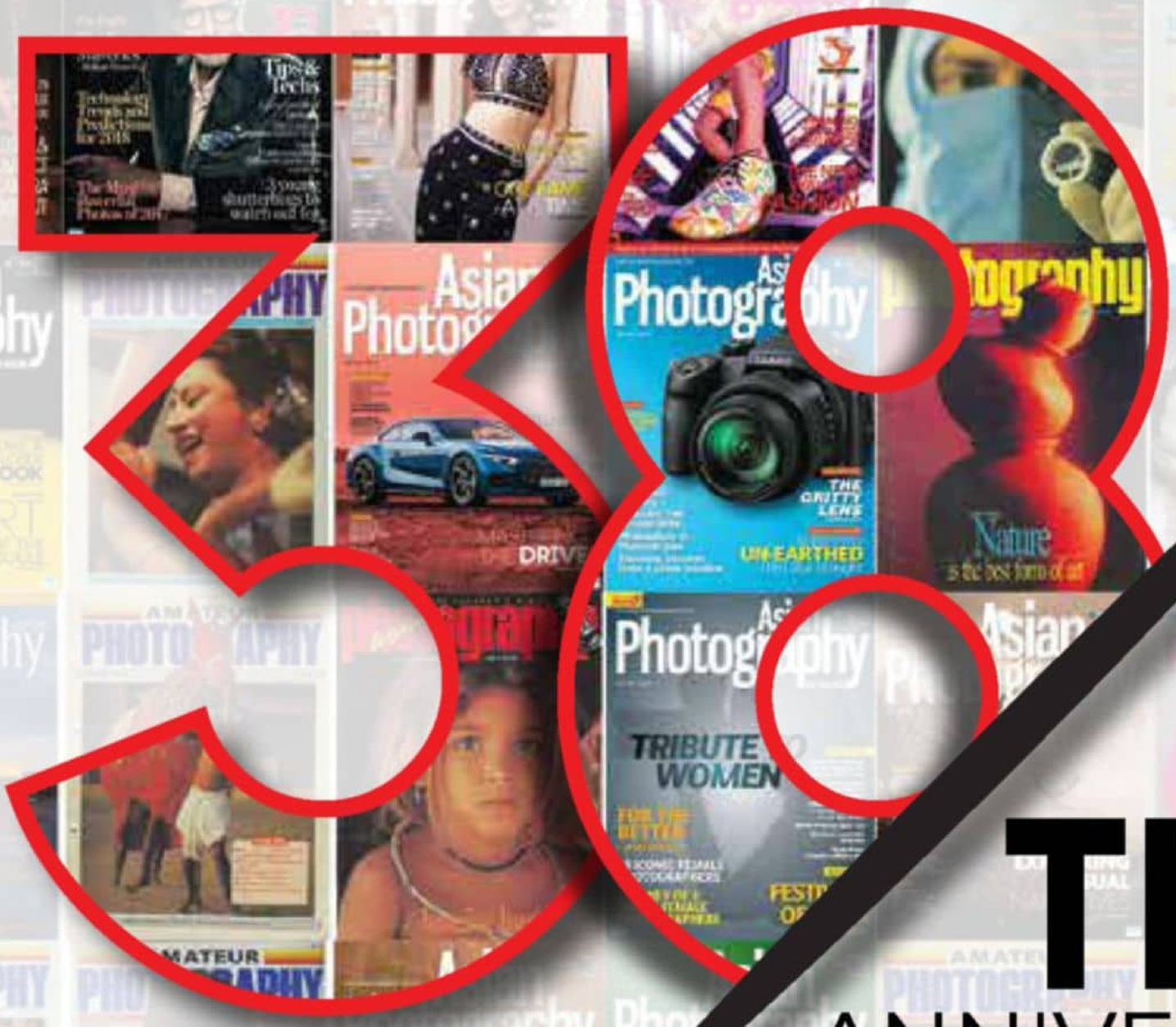
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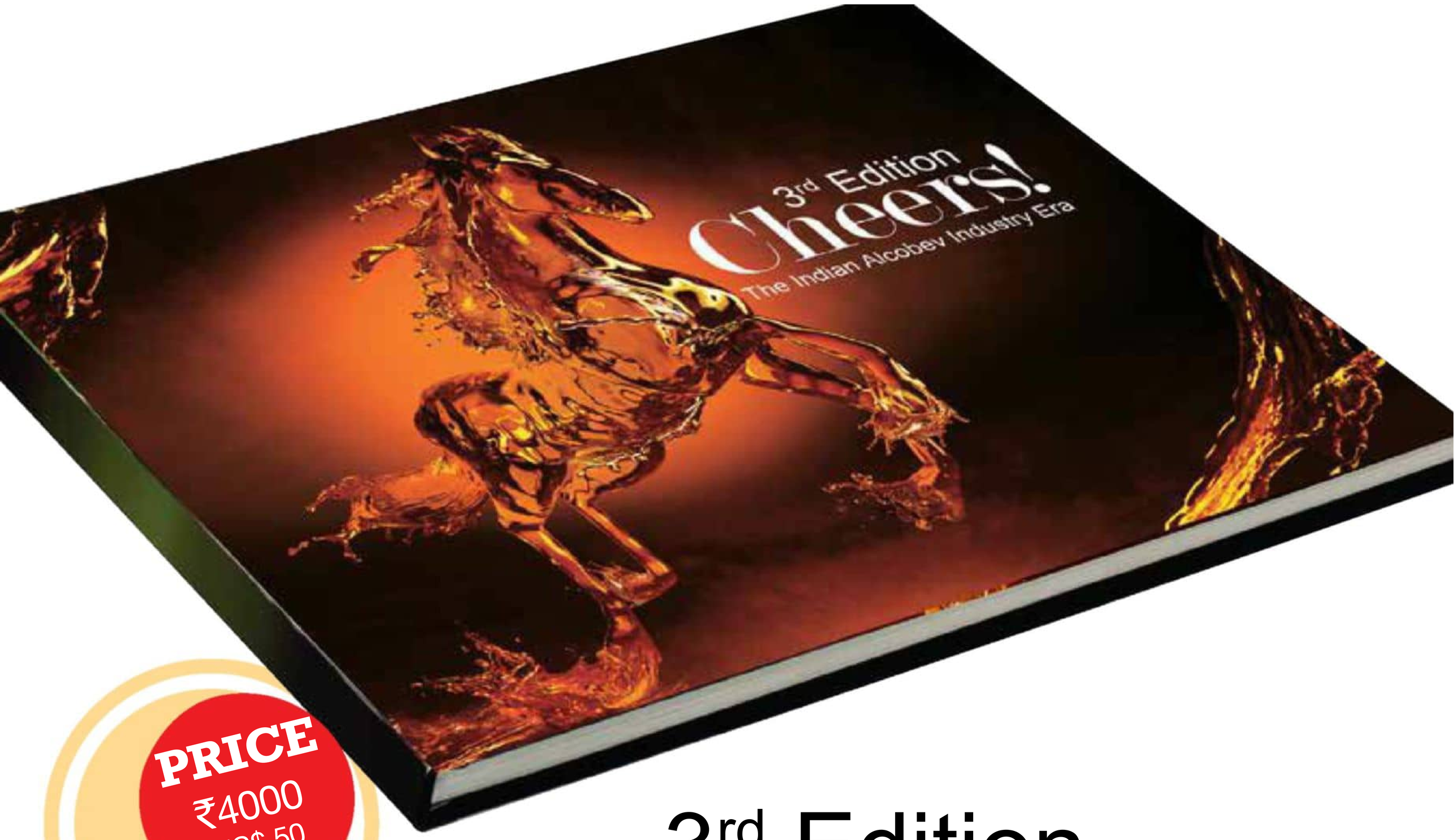
Vol. 38 - No. 1



38TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

PROFILES ● 38 COVERS OF ASIAN PHOTOGRAPHY ● BEST CAMERAS OF 2025 ● BEST CAMERA PHONES OF 2025 ● PHOTOGRAPHY TRENDS IN 2026 ● MOST POWERFUL IMAGES OF 2025 ● PHOTOGRAPHY TRENDS IN 2026

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38 Years. Millions of Frames. One Enduring Legacy.

Thirty-eight years ago, when this magazine first went to print, photography was a far more deliberate craft. Film rolls were precious, deadlines were slower and every published image carried the weight of intention. What began as a modest platform for photographers has, over nearly four decades, evolved into a living archive of the industry itself—documenting its shifts, shaping its conversations and often, quietly, influencing its future.

This Anniversary is not just about longevity. It is about **legacy, heritage and responsibility.**

Over the last 38 years, the magazine has mirrored the journey of photography in India and beyond—from darkrooms to digital, from DSLRs to mirrorless, from prints to pixels, and now from images to immersive visual storytelling. We have chronicled not just technology, but the people behind the cameras—the artists, technicians, editors, educators, and entrepreneurs who built this industry brick by brick.

Our pages have carried those **defining moments.**

We have published landmark cover stories that captured turning points in visual culture, reported on industry-defining technologies before they became mainstream, and debated trends long before they turned into hashtags. From wedding photography's transformation into a global business to wildlife photography's growing role in conservation; from photojournalism's ethical challenges to the rise of creator-led visual economies—this magazine has never merely observed change, it has engaged with it.

And to celebrate that we've featured a Special article on our Best Covers of *Asian Photography*. These archival issues document our and India's history in its pages and what better way to celebrate an Anniversary issue by featuring global legends such as Rick Smolan and Mark Smith.

As Editors and Publishers, we've believed that a magazine's role goes beyond reporting—it must **archive truth, provoke thought and inspire progress.** That belief has guided us through industry disruptions, economic cycles and seismic technological change. Even today, as algorithms compete with authorship and speed often overtakes substance, our commitment remains unchanged: to value credibility over virality, depth over noise and craft over convenience.

None of this—absolutely none—would have been possible without **YOU.**

To our readers, who trusted us month after month.To photographers, who shared their work, their stories, and their vulnerabilities.To advertisers and partners, who believed in the power of a serious, credible platform.To editors, writers, designers, and contributors—past and present—who poured their thinking into every issue.And to the industry itself, which grew alongside us and allowed us to be both witness and participant in its evolution.

As we celebrate 38 years, we do so with gratitude, humility and renewed purpose. The future of photography will look very different from its past—but if there's one lesson our journey has taught us, it's this: **tools may change, but vision, integrity, and storytelling endure.**

Here's to the legacy we've built.Here's to the industry we've helped grow.And here's to the many frames, stories, and decades still to come.

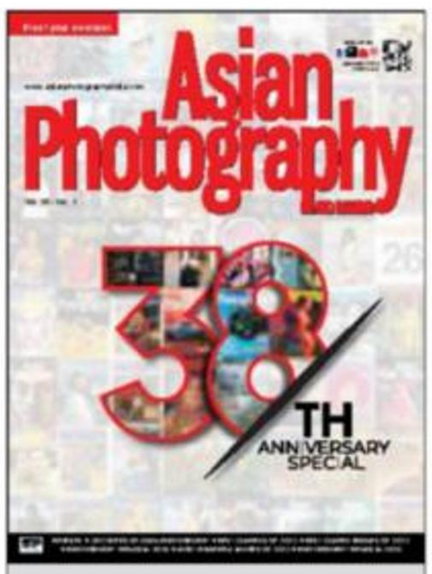


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Cover Design: Rajendra Gaikwad

Published by TRILOK DESAI on behalf of Special Audience Publications Pvt. Ltd., 509 & 511, Dilkap Chambers, Fun Republic Street, Off Veera Desai Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai - 400 053. INDIA
Printed by TRILOK DESAI on behalf of Special Audience Publications Pvt. Ltd., 509 & 511, Dilkap Chambers, Fun Republic Street, Off Veera Desai Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai - 400 053. INDIA
Printed at HARIOM PRINTERS D-80, Akurli Ind. Estate, Akurli Road, Kandivali (E), Mumbai - 400 101. **Published at** 509 & 511, Dilkap Chambers, Fun Republic Street, Off Veera Desai Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai - 400 053. INDIA
Editor - TRILOK DESAI.
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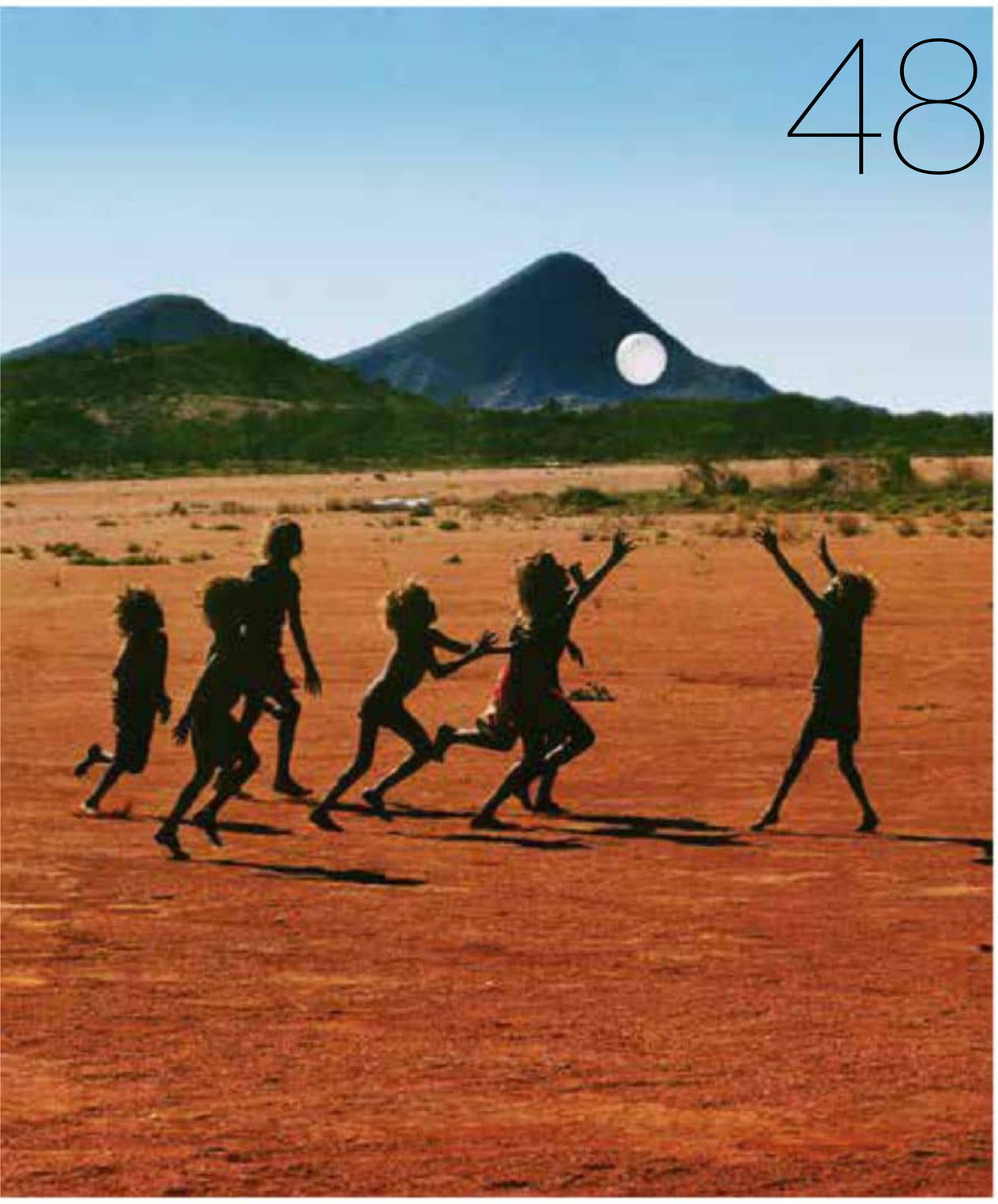


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PHOTOGRAPHY
TRENDS IN 2026

I've been writing the annual trends article for the magazine for well over a decade now, and I honestly can't remember a time when my thoughts felt this unsettled. The last time I found myself in a similar predicament was at the turn of the millennium—around 2000—when analogue photography was clearly on its way out. Digital technology was knocking hard on the doors and no one quite knew what to expect from it, or whether it could truly replace what we had known for decades. Interestingly, I find myself in a very similar place today while writing this article. I'm not always sure what's real anymore, what's manipulated, what's AI-generated, or even where the line between the two truly lies. More importantly, I'm still unsure how much of this is a passing phase—and how much of it is here to stay. It's been a while since photography has made even seasoned practitioners pause and recalibrate their thinking this way. And yet, after careful consideration, observation, and a fair bit of internal debate, here is my list of **Trends in Photography for 2026.**

By Dhanya Desai

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MOST POWERFUL IMAGES OF 2025

2025 was no stranger to human experiences of turmoil, despair, salvation and hope. And through these months, just like every year, photographers have told stories through their photographs that left a lasting impression. This list is a curation of pictures from different genres, showcasing different themes, and in no particular order like always, is also celebrating the work of photographers in capturing key moments of time. Here's to hoping 2026 is filled with more fruition for all even in the face of growing threats.

Pahalgam Attack

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BEST CAMERAS OF 2025

Competition doesn't sleep, and 2025 was no exception for the quote. The imaging industry went through a makeover of sorts, as we saw a shift of priority from companies, which led to them making cameras which were more hybrid in nature. This year we saw the Nikon-RED merger further fruitioning into a compact, competitive cinema camera and Canon releasing one in a similar form factor but with different capabilities and priority. In the roundup, we list the cameras that brought something new to the table. Just like last year, we aren't including lenses, drones or action cameras or cinema cameras even though they've got so much in common with their mirrorless cousins.

CANON EOS R6 MARK III

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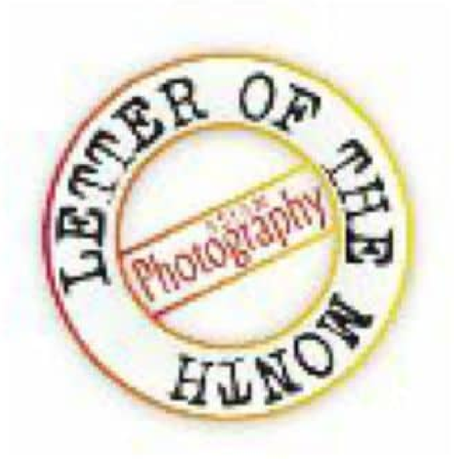


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LETTERS TO EDITOR

Readers' Comments and Suggestions...

Send your letters at apindia.feedback@gmail.com



The Letter of the month will receive **1 Year subscription (12 E-Issues)**

Dear Sir,

I've been reading the articles and watching the videos that you feature on the website and channel. I wanted to ask what equipment that AP is using to click pics and do the videos?



Regs,
Aman Choudhary

Dear Aman,

We use a combination of cameras to shoot the content that is featured in the magazine, website and on our social channels. For instance, all the videos are shot on Sony equipment we are partnered with them for the same. For the magazine—every review that is conducted, naturally the sample images and videos are shot from that camera itself.

So, it is difficult for us to pin down one specific camera since we use a variety of products to shoot with.

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BORN CINEMATIC

Image courtesy: Shubhadeep Das



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NIKON ZR
PRODUCT PAGE

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Readers' Comments and Suggestions...

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Hi,

I am looking for a wildlife lens which gives me good bokeh affect. I'm looking for a camera and lens, and I don't have a big budget. Please suggest.

Regs,
Extreme Engineer

Dear Extreme,

The equipment used for Wildlife photography is an expensive affair unfortunately.

And if you are looking for good quality that will deliver great bokeh and depth (subject separation), you need long focal lengths (300-600mm+) and fast apertures (f/2.8, f/4, f/5.6), with prime lenses (like 400mm f/2.8 or 600mm f/4). But none of these lenses are cheap due to the high focal range and aperture.

So unfortunately, there is no right answer for this. But what would help is if you let me know the budget that you are looking for. Would be easier to suggest then.





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AP NEWS

USA Bans DJI Drones

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has announced that foreign-made drones and key components—including those from DJ —will be added to its "*Covered List*", effectively banning future imports into the United States. The move builds on President Trump's recent executive orders and the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act, citing national security concerns around foreign unmanned aircraft systems.

According to the FCC, drones can be exploited by "criminals, hostile foreign actors, and terrorists", and an interagency national security review concluded that foreign-made drones pose "unacceptable risks" to U.S. safety. Products placed on the Covered List cannot be legally imported unless specifically cleared by the Department of Defense or Department of Homeland Security.

DJI strongly criticised the decision, noting that mandated security audits were never conducted despite repeated



requests. The company maintains that its products are secure and says the move reflects protectionism rather than evidence-based concerns. Importantly, existing DJI drones already in the U.S. remain legal to own and operate.

As reported by *PetaPixel,* DJI says it remains committed to the U.S. market and hopes some future products may still receive exemptions.

Nikon India launches 24-105 F/4-7.1 Lens

Nikon India has announced the NIKKOR Z 24–105mm f/4–7.1, a compact zoom lens designed for a wide range of everyday photography needs. Covering focal lengths from 24mm wide-angle to 105mm medium telephoto, the lens is suited for landscapes, travel, close-ups, and portraits.

Weighing approximately 350g, the lens is designed for portability, making it practical for extended shoots and travel. It offers a minimum focus distance of 0.2m at 24mm and 0.28m at 105mm, enabling close-up shooting with a maximum reproduction ratio of 0.5× between 70mm and 105mm.

The lens uses a stepping motor (STM) for fast and quiet autofocus, supporting both stills and video recording. It also features a customisable control ring that can be assigned to functions such as focus, aperture, ISO, or exposure compensation. The lens comes with dust and drip resistant construction.

The NIKKOR Z 24–105mm f/4–7.1 will be available in India from mid-January 2026, priced at ₹49,995.



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Novachips introduces 4TB CFexpress Cards with VPG 800 Rating

South Korea–based memory manufacturer Novachips has announced two new CFexpress Type B memory card lines, the Extreme CX4B and Express CX4B, including the industry's first 4TB card to receive VPG 800 certification.

The new cards are designed for professional photography and video workflows that require sustained high write speeds for high-bitrate and long-duration recording. Both product lines support CFexpress 4.0 and have received VPG 800 verification, which guarantees a minimum sustained write speed of 800 MB/s.

The Extreme CX4B series is available in 600GB and 1TB capacities and uses SLC-mode flash memory with added internal over-provisioning for consistent performance under heavy loads. These cards are also verified to deliver VPG 400 performance when used with CFexpress 2.0-compatible cameras and readers.

The Express CX4B series, offered in 2TB and 4TB capacities, is focused specifically on VPG 800 performance and does not guarantee VPG 400 speeds in backward-compatible scenarios. With this launch, Novachips became the first manufacturer to offer VPG 800-certified CFexpress cards beyond 1TB.



Pricing and regional availability have not yet been announced.

GoPro and ASUS launch a Laptop Together



Asus and GoPro have introduced a special edition ProArt PX13 GoPro Edition laptop, extending their collaboration beyond software and into hardware. Priced from $2,400 and launching in Q1 2026, the device targets content creators working with action and 360-degree video.

The laptop is largely identical to the 2026 ProArt PX13 in specifications, featuring an AMD Ryzen AI MAX+ 395 processor, AMD Radeon graphics, up to 128GB LPDDR5X RAM, and a 1TB SSD. It is designed to handle demanding workflows such as editing 8K 360-degree footage from GoPro's MAX2 camera. An AMD XDNA NPU provides up to 50 TOPS of AI performance, supporting AI-based features in GoPro's StoryCube app.

Visually, the GoPro Edition stands apart with a redesigned chassis inspired by GoPro cameras and a custom teal keyboard backlight. It includes a 13.3-inch 3K OLED touchscreen with 100% DCI-P3 coverage and Pantone validation, along with an Asus Pen.

Buyers also receive 12 months of GoPro Cloud Plus Premium. While the collaboration adds branding and bundled services, the hardware itself remains largely unchanged from the standard ProArt PX13.

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SmallRig launches $89 Wireless Mic

SmallRig has expanded its audio lineup with the S70 wireless microphone, a compact system aimed at content creators, streamers, and professionals who need high-quality audio in a portable form factor. Priced at $90 (approx ₹8025), the S70 is positioned against competitors such as the DJI Mic Mini and Insta360 Mic Air.

The S70 is tuned by Grammy Award–winning engineer Luca Bignardi and features nine built-in EQ presets designed for vocals, instruments, and general content creation. It records 48 kHz/24-bit audio, supports 360-degree sound capture, handles sound pressure levels up to 120 dB, and offers a 70 dB signal-to-noise ratio. Automatic limiting and three levels of noise reduction help reduce clipping and background noise in challenging environments.

The system includes two transmitters, camera and USB-C receivers, windscreens, cables, a carry case, and a charging case. Each transmitter features a slim 8.8 mm mic head and a metal body, with a total system weight of 162 g. Physical controls allow quick access to gain, noise reduction, and recording, while additional settings can be adjusted via the SmallGoGo app.

The S70 supports mono, stereo, and safety track recording, with the latter capturing a -6 dB backup track. Battery life is rated up to 40 hours, and wireless range extends up to 300 metres in open environments.

The SmallRig S70 is available now through SmallRig and authorised retailers.



France to celebrate 200 Years of Photography in 2026

France will mark the 200th anniversary of photography in 2026 with a nationwide Bicentennial of Photography, featuring exhibitions, festivals, fairs, lectures, and public programmes running through 2026 and 2027. The initiative commemorates the creation of the world's oldest surviving photograph by Nicéphore Niépce.

The celebrations begin with a free public event at Paris's Grand Palais titled *"200 Years of History, Paper, Ink and Debate",* which will explore photographic archives, techniques, and landmark images. Additional events are planned across the country, with more announcements expected, including programmes at the Nicéphore Niépce Museum.



Led by France's Ministry of Culture and coordinated by the Centre national des arts plastiques, the bicentennial will include a nationwide call for projects that re-examine and reinvent photography. Selected projects will receive official recognition and financial support. Events will be listed on an interactive map to help the public explore photography from the 19th century to the present.

The anniversary marks Niépce's *View from the Window at Le Gras,* created in 1826 or 1827, widely regarded as the earliest permanently fixed photograph.

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Fujifilm Announces Super-8 Inspired Instant Video Camera



Fujifilm Japan has announced the Instax Mini Evo Cinema, a new addition to the Evo series that combines instant printing with short-form video capture. Unlike previous Evo models focused primarily on still images, the Mini Evo Cinema allows users to record video clips alongside photos.

The camera can record up to 15-second video clips, which can be converted into Instax prints featuring a still frame from the video and an embedded QR code. Scanning the QR code links to a webpage where the full video can be viewed, allowing users to share both a physical print and its corresponding video.

Designed with video use in mind, the camera features a vertical grip inspired by the 1965 Fujica Single-8. It also includes an “Eras Dial” that applies era-inspired visual effects to both video and stills, with 10 adjustable levels per effect.

Like other Evo models, the Mini Evo Cinema functions as a smartphone printer and connects to a dedicated app that enables clip editing, effect application, and combining videos up to 30 seconds.

The package includes the camera, viewfinder, grip attachment, and case. The Instax Mini Evo Cinema goes on sale in Japan on January 30, 2026, with pricing and global availability yet to be announced.

Sony Expands Camera Authenticity System to Combat AI



Sony has expanded its Camera Authenticity Solution to include video verification, extending its content integrity tools beyond still images as concerns over AI-generated media continue to grow. The updated system allows news organisations to confirm that video footage was captured by a physical camera rather than generated or digitally altered.

The technology relies on proprietary metadata, including 3D depth information, to verify real-world scenes. A new trim function enables authentication of selected video segments without breaking the original authenticity signature, making the process more practical for newsroom workflows. The system also supports the C2PA standard, aligning Sony’s approach with industry-wide efforts to establish transparent and traceable content provenance.

The PXW-Z300 is the first Sony camera designed specifically for video authenticity, with additional support now extended to the A1 II, A9 III, FX3, and FX30, all of which embed authenticity data directly into video files. Sony has confirmed that the A7R V, A7 IV, A1, and A7S III will gain compatibility through updates in 2026.

Integration with Sony’s Ci Media Cloud allows verified footage to display digital signature information. The system was developed in collaboration with the BBC’s R&D department.

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Dell Introduces World's First 52-inch 6K Ultrawide Display

Dell has introduced the UltraSharp 52 Thunderbolt Hub Monitor, the world's first 52-inch curved ultrawide display with a 6K resolution. Announced at CES 2026, the monitor is designed to replace multi-monitor setups with a single, continuous workspace aimed at high-density professional workflows.

The 52-inch display features a 21:9 aspect ratio with a 6144 × 2560 resolution and a curved IPS Black panel, offering a contrast ratio of around 2000:1 and support for 99% DCI-P3 and Display P3 color spaces. Dell rates color accuracy at Delta E below 1.5, positioning the monitor for editing, design, and post-production rather than final color mastering.

Using picture-by-picture and internal multi-stream transport, the screen can function as multiple independent displays, allowing up to four systems to share the panel simultaneously without external splitters or bezels. An integrated Thunderbolt 4 hub delivers up to 140W of power, along with USB, Ethernet, video inputs, and built-in KVM support.



The monitor supports refresh rates up to 120Hz, includes an ambient light sensor, and meets high-tier TÜV Rheinland low blue light certification for extended work sessions.

The Dell UltraSharp 52 is available now, priced at $2,899 (approx ₹2,61,650)

Atomos Upgrades Ninja TX GO

Atomos has announced the Ninja TX GO, a compact HDMI monitor-recorder designed to bring the capabilities of its flagship Ninja TX to a wider range of content creators. Built for HDMI-based cameras, the device features a 5-inch HDR touchscreen with 1500 nits of brightness for clear outdoor visibility.

The Ninja TX GO includes AtomOS and offers professional monitoring tools such as waveform, vectorscope, zebras, focus peaking, and false colour. It supports 6Kp30 RAW recording over HDMI and can capture footage in Apple ProRes, ProRes RAW, Avid DNx, or H.265/H.264 formats. Media can be recorded directly to CFexpress Type B cards or external USB-C SSDs.



Integrated camera control is a key feature, allowing users to adjust settings like aperture, shutter speed, and ISO directly from the touchscreen. This functionality will be delivered via a free over-the-air update and will support cameras from Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon, Panasonic, Sony, Z CAM, and others.

Connectivity options include built-in Wi-Fi 6E and 20GB of free cloud storage, enabling direct uploads to platforms such as Frame.io, Dropbox, and NDI 6/HX3 for streaming and remote workflows.

The Atomos Ninja TX GO is available now for £599, with camera control arriving soon via a free update.

Godox

AD800Pro

All-in-One Outdoor Flash

OFFICIAL WARRANTY 2 YEAR TRUSTED SINCE 2004

Finance Available:
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NEW



Key Features

- **800Ws output:** up to 300 full-power flashes per battery; recycle time 0.01–1.5 s.
- **2.4GHz Godox X wireless system:** one-touch sync with X3Pro/X3; also includes a 3.5 mm sync port and via USB-C, compatibility with external 433 MHz receivers for multiple triggering options.
- **40W bi-color modeling lamp:** adjustable brightness and color temperature.
- **16-color group indicator lights:** easy group identification and management for multi-light or long-distance setups.
- **Fine power control:** from 1/512 to 1/1, adjustable in 0.1-stop increments.
- **Rich professional modes:** Freeze mode delivers flash duration of 1/35710 s (t0.1). When stable color-temperature mode is enabled, color drift across the power range is about +100 K.
- **Easy operation & portability:** Color screen, smooth rotary dial, and a modular body design that allows separated storage/ removal of the flash tube and battery.
- **Extensive accessories:** Bowens mount; supports a wide range of light-shaping modifiers.

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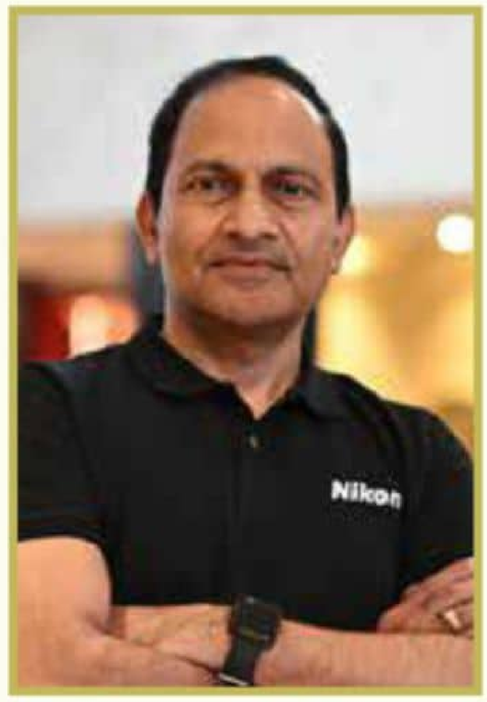
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38TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

Congratulatory Messages

Many congratulations and its big achievement reaching 38 years in ever evolving imaging industry. *Asian Photography* has not only witnessed this transformation, but has helped brands and professionals to engage with it, by encouraging curiosity, craft and informed conversations around the medium. On behalf of Nikon India, once again I congratulate the entire team of *Asian Photography* for building a publication that has remained relevant, credible and deeply connected to the photography community over the decades. As imaging industry continues to evolve, platforms like *Asian Photography* play a vital role in nurturing talent and pushing creative boundaries, values that strongly resonate with Nikon's own commitment to innovation and visual storytelling.



Sajjan Kumar,
Managing Director, Nikon India



Congratulations to *Asian Photography* on completing 38 years of excellence. *Asian Photography* has played a vital role in documenting the ever-evolving world of photography and imaging, and we value our long-standing association built on a shared passion for creativity and innovation. Wishing the team continued success as you inspire photographers and visual storytellers across generations.

Mukesh Srivastava,
Head of Imaging business, Sony India

Congratulations to *Asian Photography* magazine on 38 remarkable years in the imaging industry. Despite many ups and downs, you have stood firm, consistently delivering outstanding articles and industry insights. Keep up the great work.



Nitin Geol,
President & CEO, Tamron India

As someone closely associated with the imaging industry, we at Canon India, have followed *Asian Photography's* journey and editorial work with great admiration. The publication has played an instrumental role in bringing imaging technologies, including Canon's intuitive and future-ready innovations closer to consumers, and has been at the forefront of translating these complex advancements into real-world creative experiences. *Asian Photography* has been capturing the evolving world of photography with clarity and insight. We would like to congratulate the entire team on 38 remarkable years, and we look forward to many more stellar stories and industry-defining work in the years ahead.



Toshiaki Nomura,
President & CEO, Canon India



Congratulations to *Asian Photography* on completing 38 remarkable years. The magazine has been instrumental in documenting the evolution of imaging technology and inspiring professionals across the country. At Epson, we truly value your role in driving conversations around innovation, creativity and the future of imaging. Wishing the entire *Asian Photography* team continued success in the years ahead.

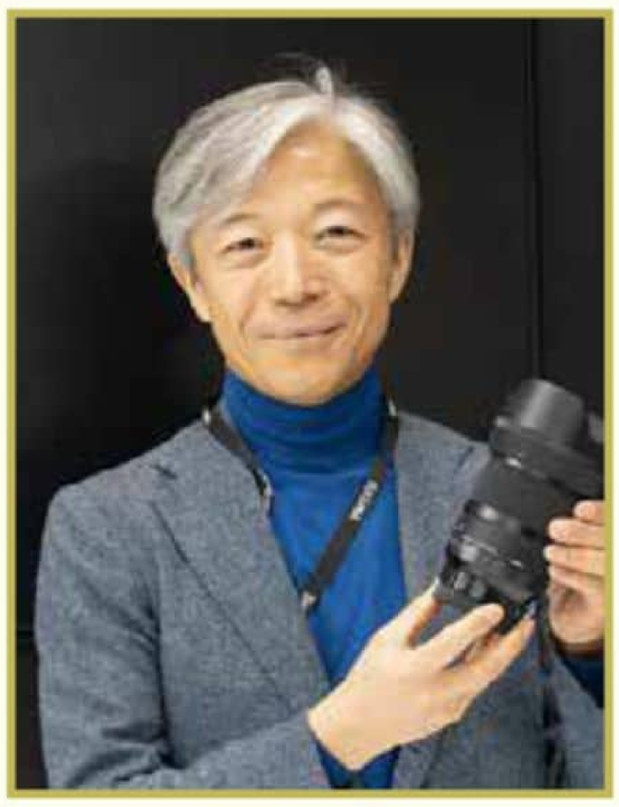
Samba Moorthy,
President, Epson India Pvt. Ltd

Sincere congratulations on the 38th anniversary of the founding of *Asian Photography.*

Over the years, you have made immense contributions to the development of the Indian photography industry across all fields, including technical, cultural, and artistic sectors. During this time, we have seen significant changes not only in photographic technology, but also in the role that photos and images play in our daily lives. Your work has guided these changes in a positive direction and contributed to building the world-leading Indian photography culture we see today.

I wish your magazine continued success and even greater prosperity in the years to come.

Kazuto Yamaki,
CEO, SIGMA Corporation Japan

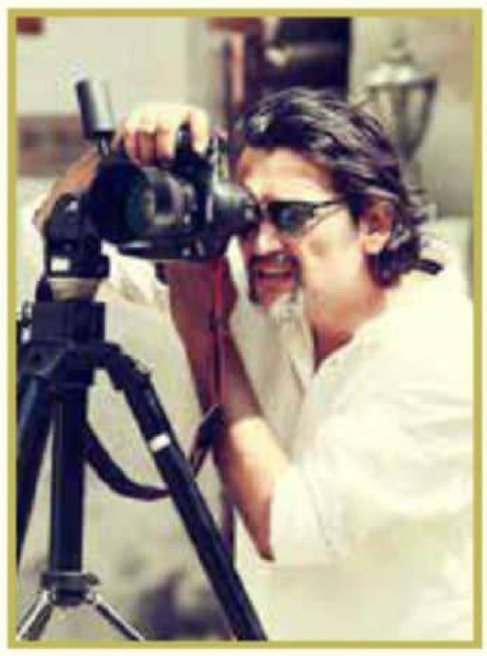


Heartiest congratulations to the entire team at *Asian Photography* on completing 38 remarkable years in the industry. It's truly inspiring to see how the magazine has consistently evolved while maintaining such high editorial and visual standards. Every issue is a pleasure to read—beautifully curated articles, thoughtfully told stories, and images that are always delightful and impactful.

A special mention to Bhavya Desai for his dedication and hard work in bringing the magazine together so seamlessly. The passion and attention to detail are evident on every page. *Asian Photography* continues to stand tall as one of the most celebrated photography magazines in India, and this milestone is a testament to the incredible work and commitment of the entire team. Wishing you many more years of excellence and inspiration.



Aarzoo Khurana
Noted Wildlife Photographer and
First female to cover All Tiger Reserves in India



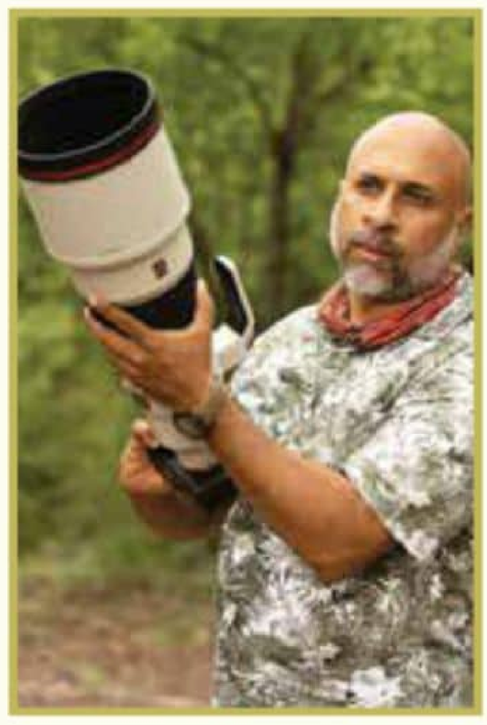
The 38th anniversary is a landmark milestone for *Asian Photography* with its endeavour to promote and support the photographic art forms. It would be impossible for creative enthusiasts to have survived without their support and recognitions. Here's wishing them all the very best and many more to come.

Jatin Kampani,
Famous Fashion & Commercial Photographer

Congratulations to *Asian Photography* on completing 38 incredible years. I remember discovering *Asian photography* early in my photography journey and it was one of those few platforms that not only celebrated photographers, but also images.

Over the years being featured, and recognising by the magazine has been deeply motivating and what I truly admire is that the magazine has evolved in his journey with me over the years, embracing new technology, while still remaining rooted in strong, visual storytelling.

Here is wishing the entire *Asian Photography* many more years of shaping the future of imaging in India and beyond. Once again!



Sudhir Shivaram,
Noted Wildlife Photographer



Congratulations to *Asian Photography* on completing remarkable 38 years. This is one of the magazines that I grew up seeing and it played a big role in shaping how I looked at photography early on. When my images were first published here, it was a truly joyous moment. In today's world of rapid digitation and AI, a print magazine that genuinely cares about photography and photographers feel incredibly special and *Asian Photography* has always done that with depth and integrity.

Many congratulations to the entire team of *Asian Photography* for carrying this legacy forward so beautifully and continuing to inspire generations of image makers.

Anikta Asthana
Noted Wedding Photographer and Co-Founder, Wedding Nama



Heartfelt congratulations to you and the entire *Asian Photography* team on completing 38 years. It's a remarkable milestone, built through consistency, passion and a deep commitment to this craft. As someone who has read the magazine for many years, I've always admired the way you've championed photographers, ideas and evolving imaging technology. Being featured on the cover and in the Pro Profile was a moment I hold very close to my heart. Thank you for the work you continue to do for our community, and for inspiring so many of us along the way. Wishing *Asian Photography* many more years of impactful storytelling and leadership.

Ratish Nair
Noted Winning Wildlife Photographer

I want to wish Bhavya and the whole team at Asian Photography congratulations on the 38 years of the magazine. Always been a huge fan of the magazine, the amazing articles & photographs. I've always been a photography buff myself and I've loved making & seeing beautiful pictures and Asian Photography is really the Mecca for photography connoisseurs, a delight. All the very best for the next 38 years!

Parveen Dabas
Actor, Director and Photographer





BEST COVERS OF Asian Photography AND IMAGING

Every legacy has humble beginnings, and as *Asian Photography* turns 38, it feels only right to pause and look back at the covers that quietly, consistently documented the journey of photography in India. What began as a modest publication—priced at just ₹7 in its infancy—has over nearly four decades grown into a living archive of an industry in constant motion.

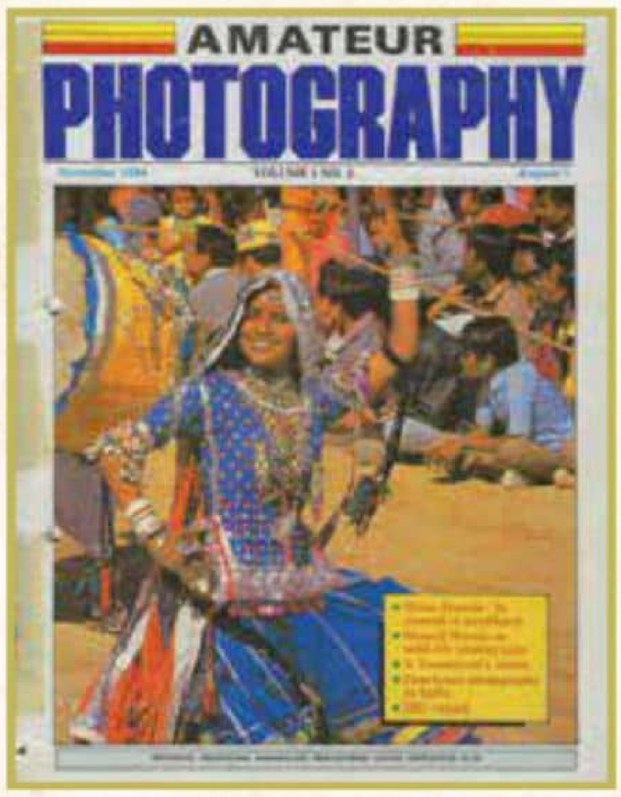
These covers are iconic not merely because they belong to a brand we have built and nurtured, but because they chronicle photography itself: its technologies, its aesthetics, its debates, and its people. From the early days of film and darkrooms, through the turbulence of analogue versus digital, to the modern marvels of mirrorless systems and AI-led imaging, *Asian Photography* has watched, questioned, celebrated, and sometimes challenged the industry as it evolved. Very few publications can claim to have documented the journey of Indian photography in both words and pictures the way *Asian Photography* has over the last 38 years. These covers are not just visual markers—they are timestamps of ambition, experimentation, and belief in the power of the image. Sit back and enjoy the ride as

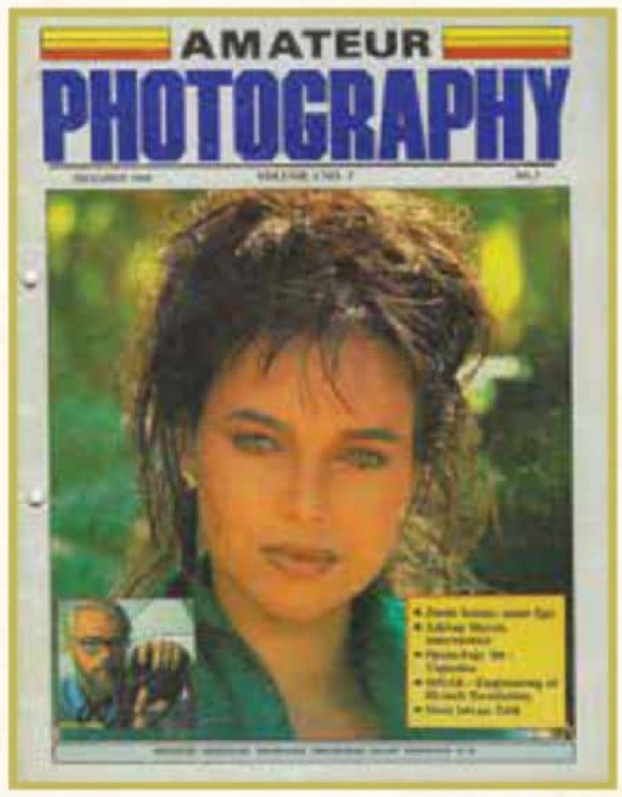
Bhavya Desai takes you through a curated walk through some of those moments.

November & December 1989

These were the 2nd and 3rd issues of the magazine—then known as *Amateur Photography,* long before it evolved into *Asian Photography.* Priced at a modest ₹7, the magazine was still finding its voice, its audience, and its place in the ecosystem.

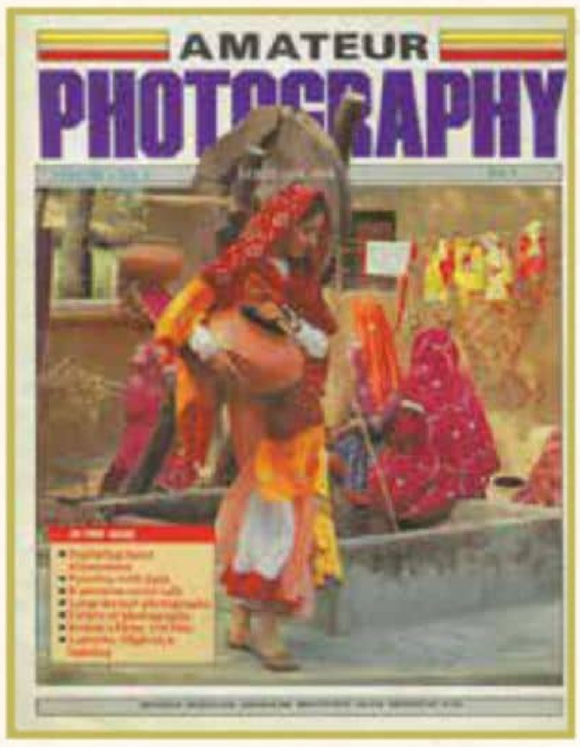
This issue featured an interview with Adrian Steven, a well-known photographer of the time, along with highlights from Photofair 1989—an event that would later evolve into CEIF. In hindsight, these pages feel foundational. They capture a time when photography in India was driven by passion more than profession, and when the seeds of an industry were just being sown.



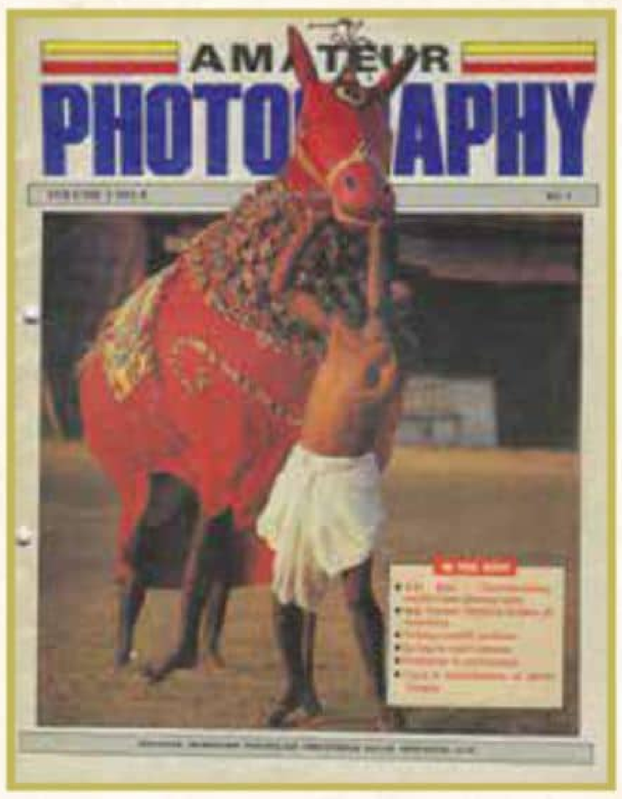


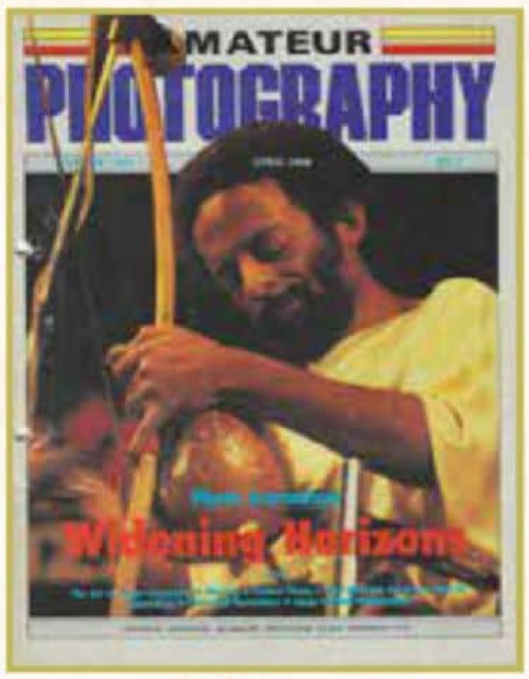
February 1990
This era was dominated by large-format printers, film giants like Kodak and an unquestioned belief in chemical photography. Few could have imagined that many of these iconic companies would eventually shut shop or reinvent themselves entirely.

Looking back, this cover stands as a reminder of how permanent the present often feels—until it isn't.



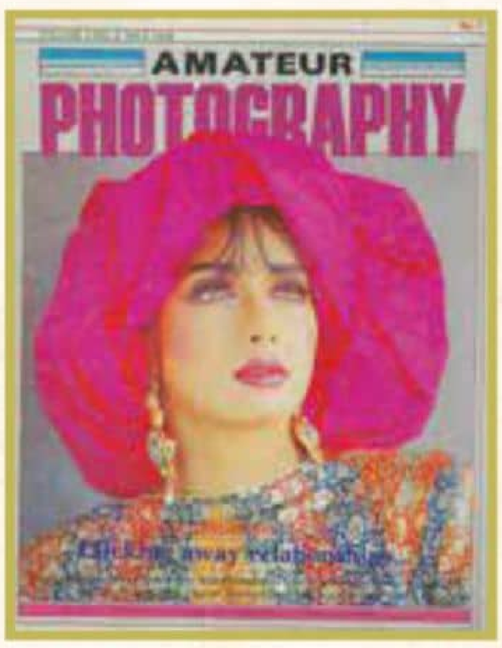
March 1990
This issue represents continuity in the magazine's formative phase, reflecting a period when *Asian Photography* was steadily finding its editorial footing and visual language. The striking red of the horse matching the text colour on the cover—displays our editorial footing for the years to come.





April 1990
Barely Vol. 1, No. 7, yet this issue marked an important editorial milestone—it was the magazine's first focused foray into photojournalism. Still early in its journey, the magazine made a decisive editorial move—turning its lens toward photojournalism. This issue marked an important shift: Photography was no longer just about form and technique, but about relevance, reportage, and responsibility.

It was an early sign of the magazine's willingness to look beyond aesthetics and engage with the real world.

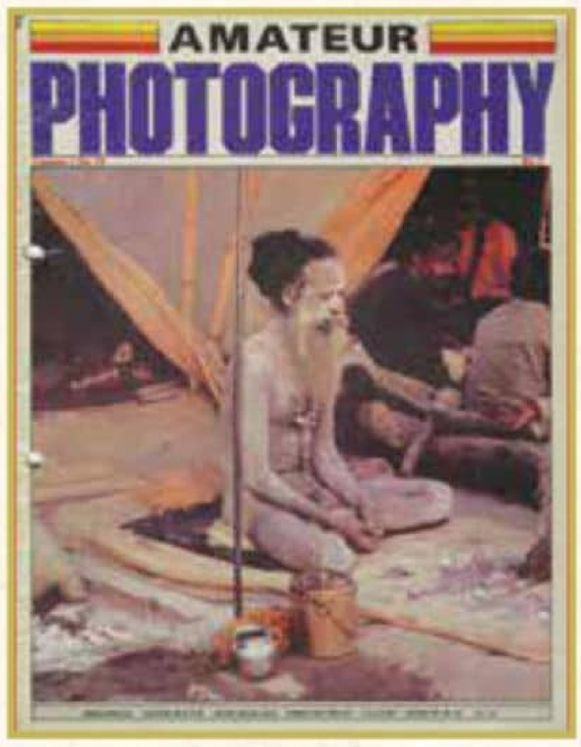


May 1990
A landmark moment. This issue featured the magazine's first-ever Bollywood actress on the cover, photographed by the legendary Gautam Rajadhyaksha. Featuring the late, iconic Sridevi, the cover signalled a new confidence—both editorially and visually.

It wasn't just about featuring a celebrity; it was about acknowledging photography's growing role in shaping popular culture. And it certainly wouldn't be the last time cinema and photography intersected on our cover.

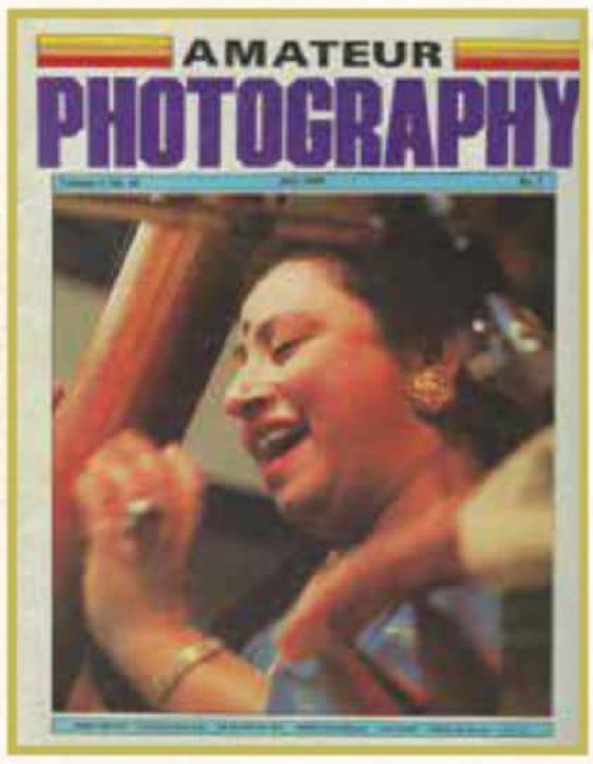
June 1990
This cover is remembered as much for its charm as for its errors. Missing both the month and the correct issue number, it stands as a reminder of the realities of publishing in a pre-digital era.

In those days, covers were assembled physically—positives pasted by hand. Reprinting was neither quick, nor economical. The mistake stayed, and over time, became part of the magazine's folklore.



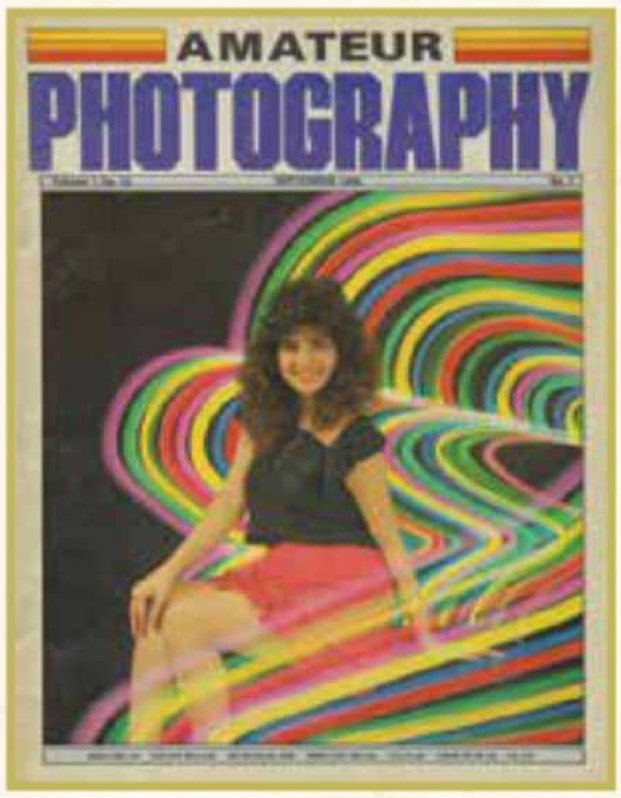
July 1990
This was the corrected Vol. 10, earning its rightful place in history. Shot by Sateesh Paknikar and featuring the legendary classical singer Begum Praveen Sultana, the cover was also notable for its bold experimentation—it carried no cover text at all.

An audacious move for its time, it reflected a growing editorial confidence in letting the image speak for itself—letting photography take centre-stage.

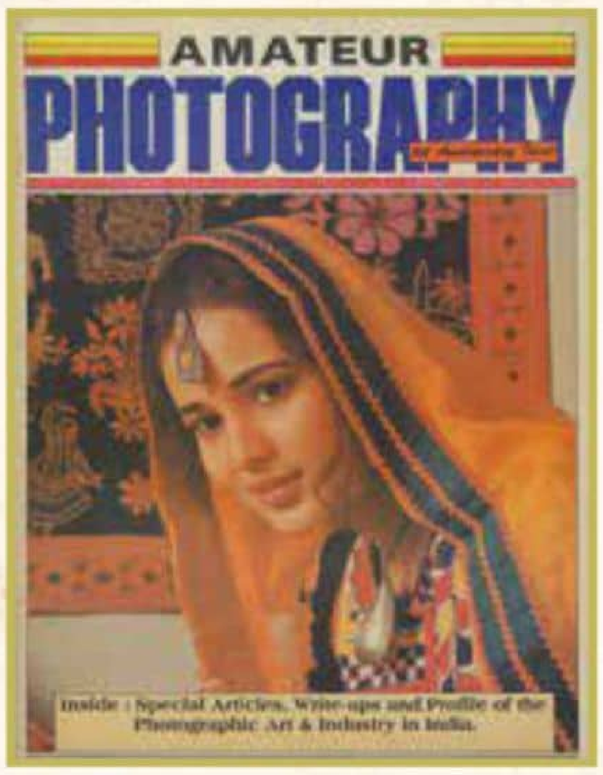


September 1990
A truly special cover. Upon release, the magazine was flooded with reader queries asking how the image was created. Today, rainbow hues and colour effects are a click away. Back then, such imagery required painstaking manual work using gelatin walls and papers.

So impactful was the curiosity that the following issue (1st Anniversary) carried a detailed illustration explaining how the image—shot by Dayaram Chawde—was created. Education has always been central to *Asian Photography*'s DNA.

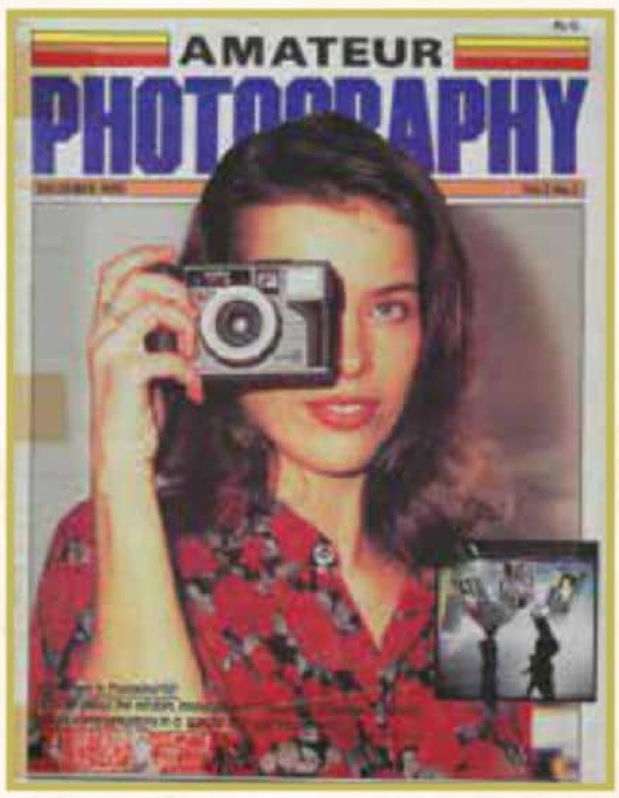


October 1990 (1st Anniversary Issue)
Our first anniversary issue quietly planted the seeds of what *Asian Photography* would eventually become. While modest in appearance, it symbolised survival, intent and the belief that photography in India deserved a dedicated, serious platform.





November 1990
Pure nostalgia. The 14th issue embodied the visual language of the 90s—dramatic, stylised and unmistakably influenced by Bollywood aesthetics. It feels like a still from a Hindi film song sequence and today stands as a time capsule of an era.

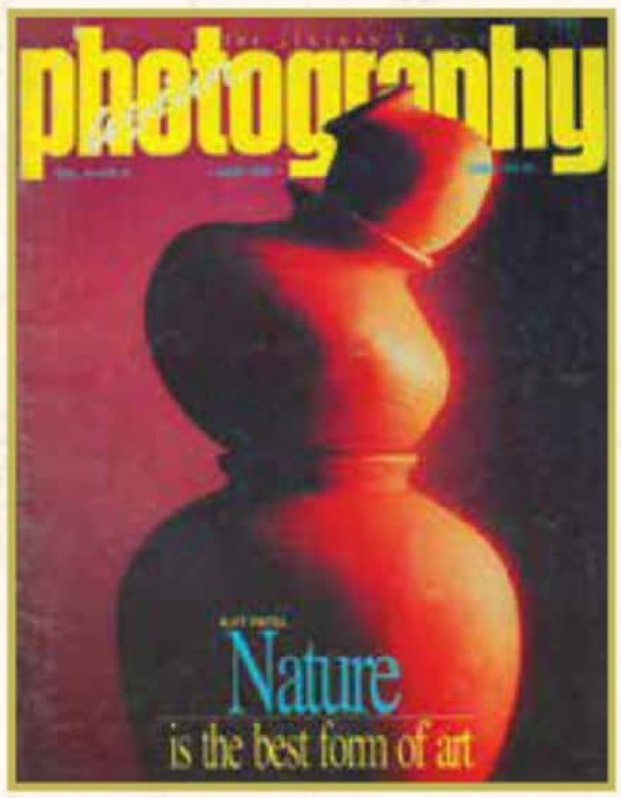


December 1990
This cover earns its place for two reasons. First, it closed out the magazine's formative year. Second—and more importantly—it marked the first time a camera appeared on the cover.

The issue also featured a special article on Photokina 1990, one of the world's largest photography fairs, in those days—where *Asian Photography* would later go on to publish a *Show Daily*—further cementing its international footprint.

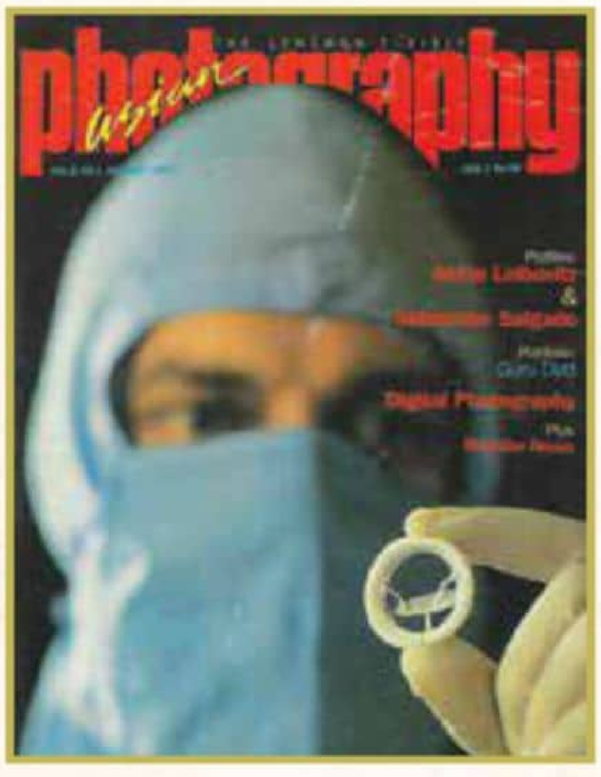
June 1996
Due to the devastating Mumbai floods of 2005, several archival issues were lost, making it difficult to pinpoint exactly when *Amateur Photography* became *Asian Photography*. However, this cover is among the first to feature the new masthead—and a change at that—lowercase, distinctive and modern.

Featuring the work of Ajit Patel, this nature-focused cover also marked a visual evolution in how the magazine presented photography.



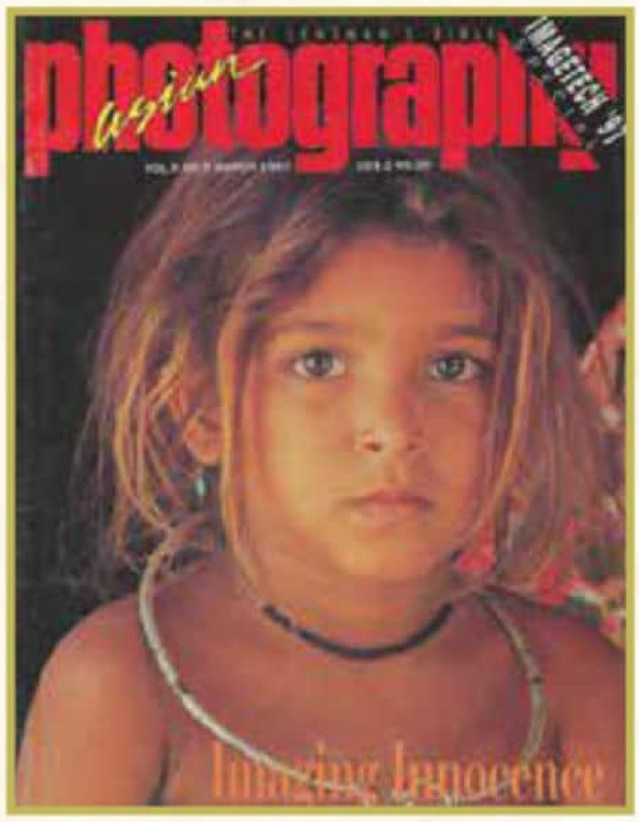
January 1997
An extraordinary issue featuring interviews with two legends—Annie Leibovitz and Sebastião Salgado. From Hollywood portraiture to deeply human documentary work in Mumbai, this issue represented the global breadth photography could achieve.

And also cemented our access to global photographers.



March 1997
The late 90s marked structural change. The magazine's price increased from ₹7 to ₹30, reflecting both rising costs and a maturing readership.

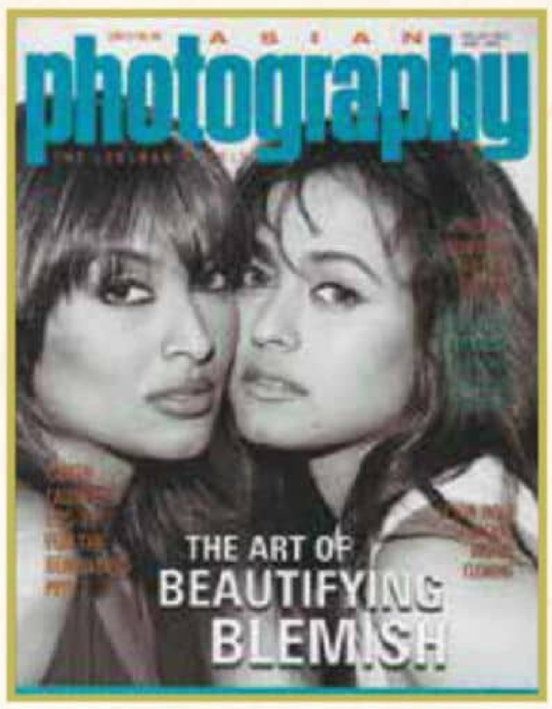
This issue also featured coverage of ImageTech 1997—an immensely popular exhibition organised by *Asian Photography* itself—demonstrating the brand's growing role beyond print.



July 1997
A significant visual shift. This issue introduced the first version of the masthead resembling today's logo. The earlier design had not resonated with readers and the change reflected the magazine's willingness to listen, adapt and evolve.

And as we would find out later—this became the iconic look of the magazine for years to come.

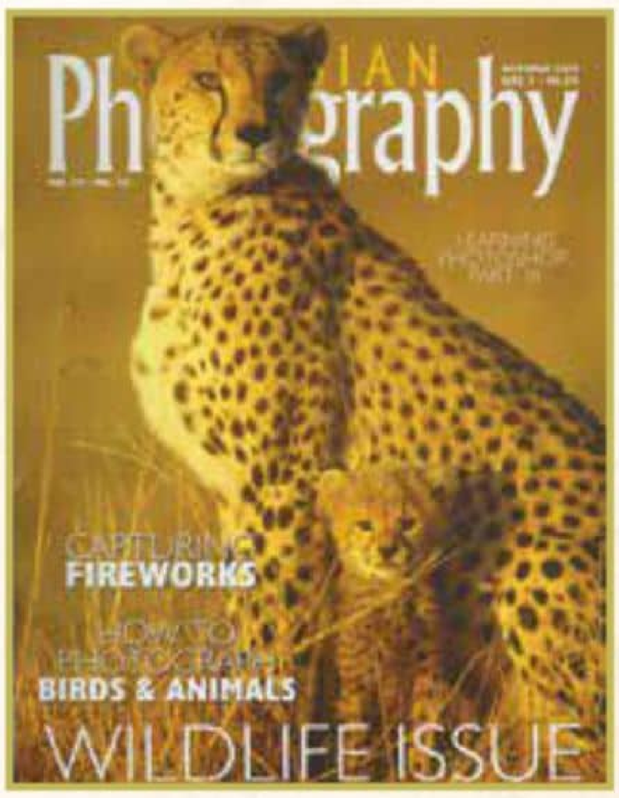




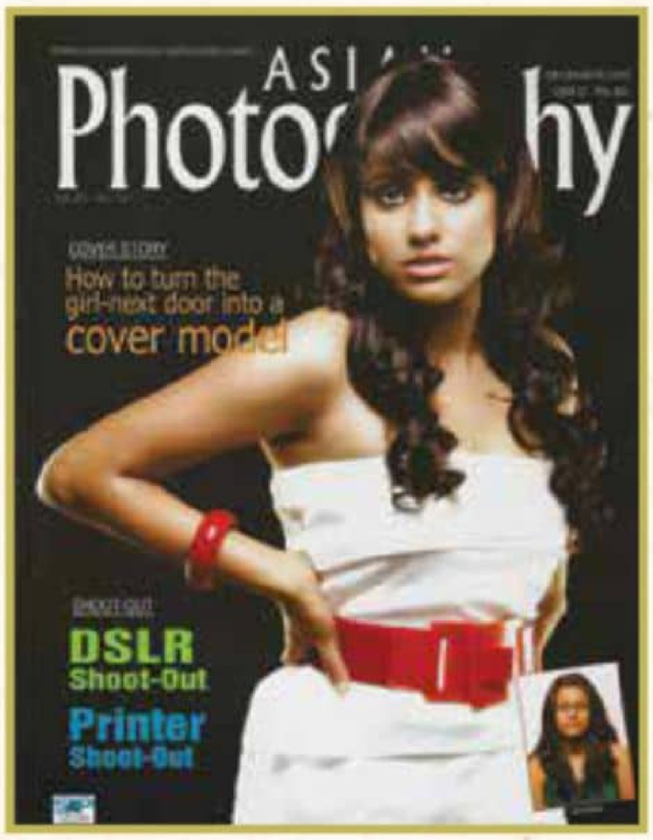
June 2000 & February 2001
Few debates in photography have been as polarising as analogue versus digital—and *Asian Photography* documented it in real time.

The February 2001 cover famously placed an SLR and a digital camera side by side. The digital camera was the Olympus E-10, boasting a then-impressive 4MP sensor. These covers now read like historical documents from the brink of a technological revolution.

But issues between 2000 and 2001 covered this topic immensely, highlighting the industry reservations and early adopters.



October 2005
By this time, the Wildlife Special had become a recognisable feature. But this cover—featuring a Cheetah and her cub staring straight into the lens—transcended the category. Shot by celebrated photographer Daniel Cox, the image felt intimate, powerful and unforgettable.



December 2008
Nostalgia defines this cover. Featuring one of the magazine's own writers, Sanya Sundar, the issue carried a step-by-step guide titled How a Girl Next Door Can Be Turned into a Cover Model.

Today, the innocence and simplicity of the concept feel almost radical in hindsight. And also, an intent to bring some of these ideas back may be?

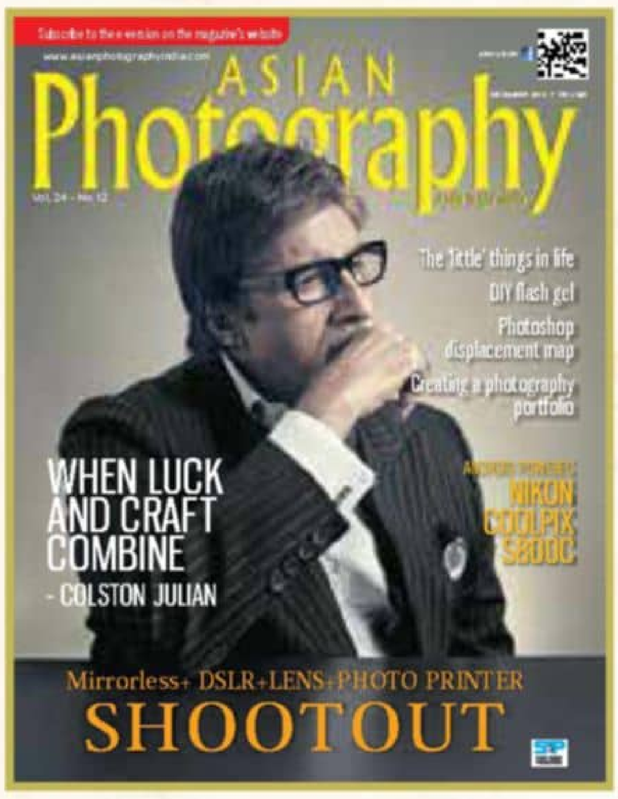
January 2010
A turning point. This wasn't just about bolder covers—but a year *Asian Photography* took the photography industry to television through the *Asian Photography* Awards 2010.

It marked a moment when photography stepped into the mainstream spotlight—and the first time that it was featured on CNBC.



December 2012
A defining digital-era cover. Shot by Colston Julian and featuring Amitabh Bachchan, the image went viral on Facebook—long before the word ‘viral’ became industry jargon.

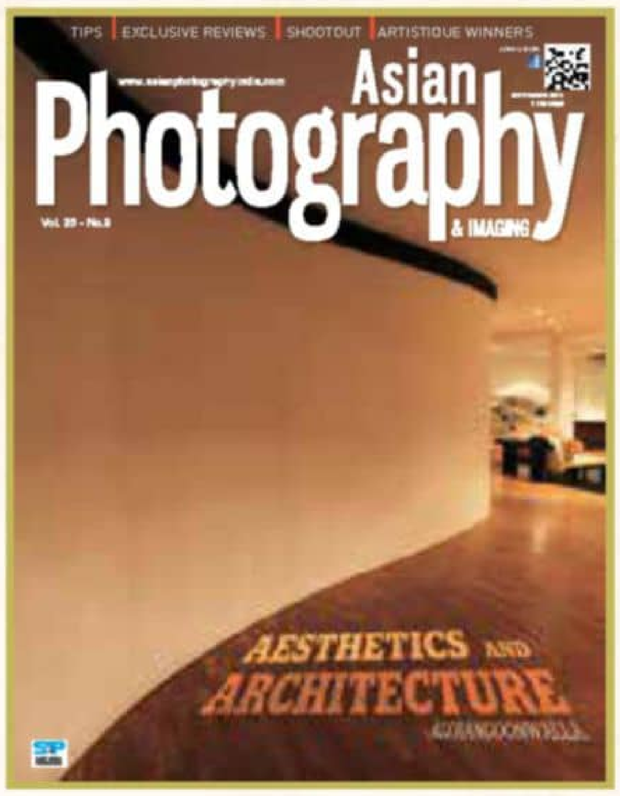
Analytics showed a 60% growth between 2012–2013, probably making this one of the most impactful covers in the magazine’s digital history.



January 2013
The 25th Anniversary—the Silver Jubilee. Featuring Penélope Cruz, this issue also marked a major brand milestone: the penultimate change to the masthead.

A special story titled The Journey of Our Logo accompanied it. The article is still available on digital for reading. The year itself was visually ambitious, including a Paris-shot cover in July, making 2013 a standout chapter.





September 2013
An architectural photography special with a cover by Ali Rangoonwala, this issue embraced radical minimalism.

No cover lines. No distractions. Just the image. A risk—one that paid off, even if it may have been the last time such restraint was attempted.

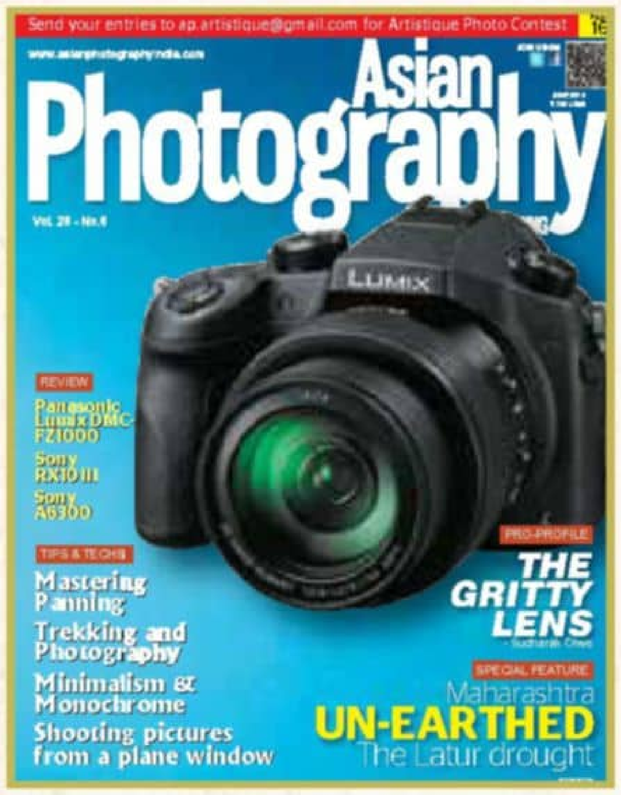


January 2014
The 26th Anniversary Special featured a striking visual: the number “26” created entirely from past covers.

Initially attempted using software, the design was ultimately crafted manually by the team—an irony not lost on anyone in an increasingly digital world.

The Year of 2016
This was the year products became heroes. A conscious editorial decision led to product-centric covers from June through October.

Cameras, lenses and gear finally took centre stage—and mind you looked spectacular doing so.



May 2017
A defining moment in representation. While *Asian Photography* had celebrated women photographers before, this issue cemented the Tribute to Women cover as a recurring, meaningful feature.

Recognition, visibility and respect were long overdue—and this issue helped push that conversation forward.



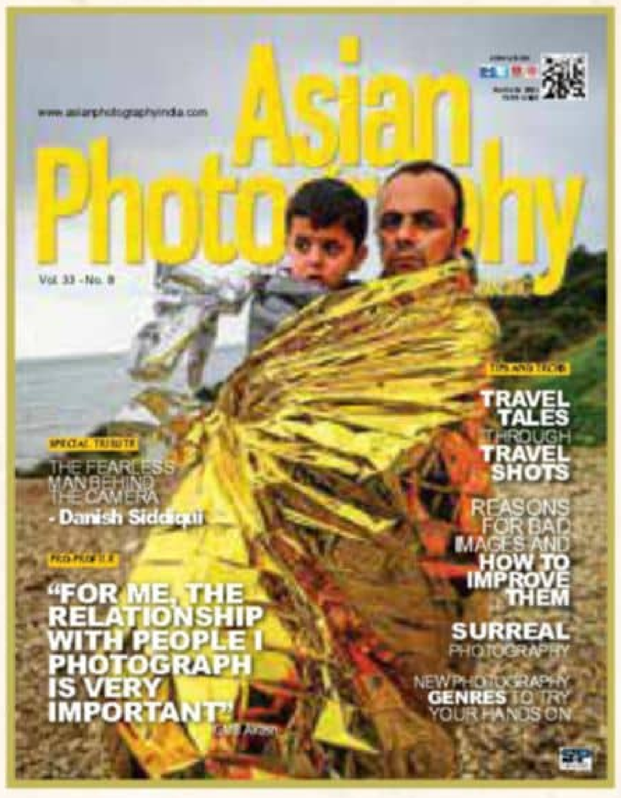
January 2018
A return of a familiar face. Amitabh Bachchan appeared again—six years after the 2012 cover—this time photographed by Rohan Shrestha.

Few subjects have spanned generations the way he has, making this cover especially symbolic.



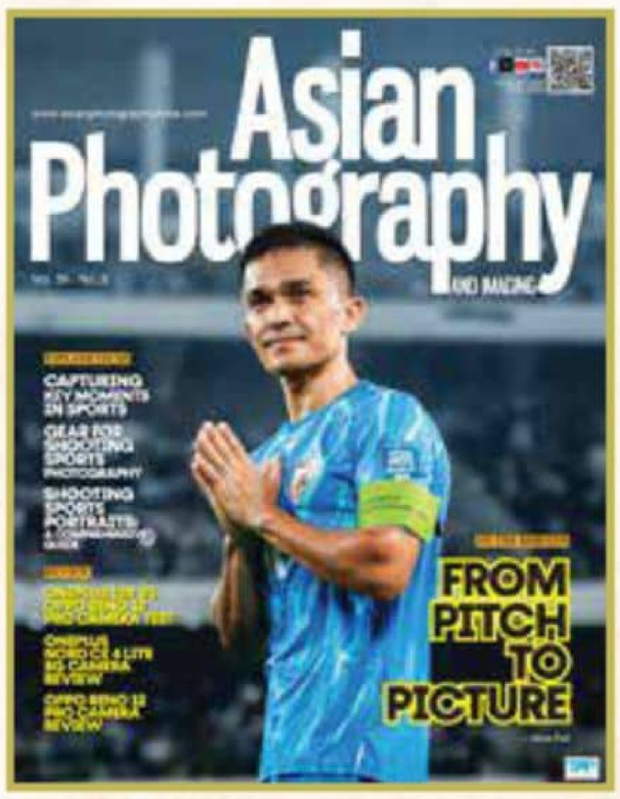
August 2021
A deeply moving issue. Amid the global refugee crisis, the cover paid tribute to Pulitzer Prize–winning photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who lost his life covering the Afghan war.

It also featured the work of GMB Akash, including his haunting image of a father and son wrapped in a space blanket during the Greek crisis. This cover reminded readers of photography's moral responsibility.



February 2022
Among the many first in 38 years—this one was special—a pet as the cover star. Shot by Kaylee Greer, the image was impossible to ignore.

Those soulful, droopy eyes proved that emotional connection transcends genre.



August 2024
While Lionel Messi's India visit dominated headlines, *Asian Photography* featured India's own GOAT—Sunil Chhetri on its cover.

Shot by Sunil Patil for the Sports Special, this image became Chhetri's most iconic retirement photograph, going viral across platforms and closing this chapter on a powerful note.

Closing Note

As *Asian Photography* completes 38 years, these covers stand as more than visual milestones. They are reflections of an industry finding its voice, a publication evolving with integrity, and a belief that photography—whether film, digital, or AI-driven—matters.

The covers may change. The technology certainly will. But the commitment to documenting, questioning and celebrating photography remains unwavering.

And that, perhaps, is OUR TRUE LEGACY.

IMAGES OF 2025

2025 was no stranger to human experiences of turmoil, despair, salvation and hope. And through these months, just like every year, photographers have told stories through their photographs that left a lasting impression. This list is a curation of pictures from different genres, showcasing different themes, and in no particular order like always, is also celebrating the work of photographers in capturing key moments of time. Here's to hoping 2026 is filled with more fruition for all even in the face of growing threats.

AI 171

On the 12th of June, an Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner plane codename AI 171 carrying 242 souls on board crashed immediately after takeoff in Ahmedabad on a medical college building, leaving only one survivor. An additional 19 people died on the ground—mostly students of the college—and 67 more were left seriously injured.

The news devastated the nation, and this photograph shows India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the crash site taking stock of the situation, underscoring the gravity of the disaster. The image captures both the scale of destruction and the intense official scrutiny as investigators work to understand what went wrong.



Pahalgam Attack

A photograph from the Pahalgam attack captures the gut-wrenching moment as a newly-wed woman sits on the ground beside her deceased husband, an expression marked by shock, emptiness, disbelief and grief. The image reflects the human cost of the violence, away from headlines and official statements. Adding to the horror—the scene is set against a stark, open and beautiful landscape, underscoring the vulnerability of those caught in it. Sourced through *Press Trust of India,* we were unable to identify the photographer, but the image seems to be shot on a phone. India responded in kind by targeting and neutralising terrorist depots with *Operation Sindoor*, an ode to the Vermillion erased and spilled, and the post operation briefing righteously led by women officers.



Source: PTI

Gen Z-led Revolutions in Nepal and Bangladesh, Governments Overthrown

South Asia has recently been reshaped by a wave of youth-led uprisings, first in Bangladesh in 2024 and then in Nepal in September 2025. The provided image illustrates the height of the Bangladesh revolution on August 5, 2024, where a sea of jubilant protesters swarmed the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka, waving flags and climbing the parliament's walls to celebrate the ouster of Sheikh Hasina. This momentum echoed through the region, inspiring Nepal's Gen Z to launch their own "anti-corruption movement" in 2025 following a controversial social media ban. Mirroring the scenes in Dhaka, thousands of Nepali students and young professionals marched on the Federal Parliament in Kathmandu, eventually forcing the resignation of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and the appointment of Sushila Karki as the country's first female Prime Minister. Together, these movements mark a historic era where the region's youth have successfully dismantled long-standing political establishments to demand digital freedom and governmental accountability.



Image: K M Asad / Agence France-Presse / Getty Images

Donald Trump's Presidential Portrait

What about a United States Presidential portrait makes it powerful enough to make it to the list? Well, in this case, everything. The mood, the tone, and overall, what geopolitical implications could the new President of the United States bring to the world. Shot by Chief White House Photographer Daniel Torok, the usually well-lit background is plunged into a darkened state, with the president's face being lit from underneath adding might to his grim expression, foreshadowing an uncompromising regime.



Image: Daniel Torok

Modi-Putin-Xi Meet

In a striking display of diplomatic choreography at the 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, Prime Minister Narendra Modi acted as a central bridge between two of the world's most powerful figures. As the leaders gathered for the official group photograph, Modi—known for his tactile and personal style of diplomacy—reached out to grasp President Vladimir Putin's hand with a warm, firm gesture. With a practiced ease that cut through the rigid atmosphere of international protocol, he guided the Russian leader toward President Xi Jinping for a high-profile greeting. This orchestrated moment of connection, punctuated by Modi's characteristic smile, served as a potent visual metaphor for India's unique position in the global order: a confident *Vishwa Mitra* (friend to the world) capable of navigating the complex friction between Moscow and Beijing while ensuring all parties remain at the table.



Image: Mikhail Svetlov / Getty Images

Indian Astronaut Back in Space

In a historic leap that ended a 41-year hiatus, Indian Air Force test pilot Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla became the face of India's triumphant return to human spaceflight during the Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) in mid-2025. Serving as the mission pilot, Shukla launched from the Kennedy Space Center aboard a SpaceX Dragon capsule, making history as the first Indian to ever board the International Space Station (ISS). While orbiting 400 kilometres above Earth, he conducted critical microgravity experiments ranging from cancer research to life-support studies on cyanobacteria that bridge the gap between India's legendary past and its future. This mission serves as a vital operational rehearsal for ISRO's indigenous *Gaganyaan* programme, signalling to the world that India is no longer just a satellite launcher, but a premier space faring nation ready to establish its own permanent presence among the stars.



Source: Axiom Crew



Image: AP

Ethiopian Volcano Erupts, Causing Flight Disruptions Around The World

In November 2025, the long-dormant Hayli Gubbi volcano in Ethiopia's Afar region erupted for the first time in nearly 12,000 years, sending a massive plume of ash approximately 14 kilometres (45,000 feet) into the atmosphere. The eruption triggered widespread disruption to international aviation as high-altitude winds carried the abrasive ash cloud across the Red Sea, the Arabian Peninsula, and eventually into the airspace of Pakistan and Northern India. Major carriers, including Air India, Akasa Air, and IndiGo, were forced to cancel or reroute dozens of flights to avoid engine damage, with particular impact on routes between India and the Middle East. While the ash remained in the upper troposphere and did not significantly affect ground-level air quality, the event served as a stark reminder of how a remote geological event can paralyse global transport corridors within hours. This eruption was not an isolated event in a year of intense geological activity; Mount Etna in Italy also dominated headlines with a series of spectacular eruptions throughout 2025.

Indian Women Winning WC

In a historic "*1983 moment*" for the women's game, the Indian women's cricket team clinched their maiden ICC Women's Cricket World Cup title on November 2, 2025, defeating South Africa by 52 runs in a high-octane final at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. Under the seasoned leadership of Harmanpreet Kaur, the "*Women in Blue*" posted a formidable 298/7, powered by a brilliant 87 from Shafali Verma and a steady 58 from Deepti Sharma. Despite a heroic century by captain Laura Wolvaardt, India's bowling attack proved relentless; Deepti Sharma capped off a legendary tournament with a 5-wicket haul, securing her title as the 'Player of the Tournament'. The victory not only shattered the "final hurdle" jinx after heartbreaks in 2005 and 2017, but also ignited a nationwide celebration, marking India's arrival as a dominant, world-beating force in women's international cricket. This wasn't just a win for the cricket team, but for women all over India.



Image: Rafiq Maqbool



Zohran Mamdani Wins NYC Mayoral Election

In a historic shift for New York City politics, Zohran Kwame Mamdani secured a landmark victory in the New York City mayoral election, becoming the first South Asian and socialist leader to helm the city. Born in Uganda and son of acclaimed Indian filmmaker Mira Nair, Mamdani's grassroots, working-class agenda won over the hearts of NYC residents, giving him the democratic nominee over Eric Adamsn and Andrew Cuomo. His victory speech was followed by the Hindi song "Dhoom machale", as he greeted the crowd alongside his wife, creating a viral moment. Before his inauguration, he also met POTUS Trump which was described as "surprisingly friendly" where they spoke about working together and making NYC better.

Historic: Japan Elects First Female PM

In a landmark shift for one of the world's most traditional democracies, Sanae Takaichi made history on October 21, 2025, by becoming Japan's first female Prime Minister. A self-proclaimed admirer of Margaret Thatcher and a protégé of the late Shinzo Abe, the 64-year-old "*Iron Lady*" of Japan secured the premiership after winning a fierce Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership race and forging a crucial coalition with the Japan Innovation Party. While her election shattered a decades-old glass ceiling in a nation often ranked low for gender equality, Takaichi's platform is rooted in "*Abenomics*" and staunchly conservative values—including a hawkish stance on national security and a commitment to maintaining male-only imperial succession. Her ascent marks a new, more assertive era for Tokyo as she navigates a fragile majority and a complex geopolitical landscape involving China and the United States.



Image: REUTERS

RIP Pope Francis

The Catholic world underwent a profound transition in 2025 following the passing of Pope Francis, who died on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, at the age of 88. After a twelve-year papacy defined by his "culture of encounter" and advocacy for the marginalised, his funeral on April 26 drew millions of pilgrims to Rome, marking the end of a transformative era for the Church. On May 8, 2025, the College of Cardinals elected Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the 267th Bishop of Rome. Taking the name Pope Leo XIV, the Chicago-born Augustinian missionary made history as the first-ever Pope from the United States. Since his election, Pope Leo XIV has signalled a commitment to continuing the synodal reforms of his predecessor while placing a renewed emphasis on Catholic social teaching and navigating the ethical challenges of the burgeoning artificial intelligence revolution.



Image: AP

Monumental: Private Company Moon Landing

In a historic milestone for commercial space exploration, Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost Mission 1 successfully touched down on the Moon on March 2, 2025, at 08:34 UTC. Landing in the Mare Crisium basin near the volcanic feature Mons Latreille, Blue Ghost became the first private spacecraft to achieve a 100% successful soft landing and upright operation on the lunar surface. Part of NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) initiative, the lander delivered ten scientific instruments that conducted groundbreaking research during its 14-day mission. Highlights included tracking GPS signals on the Moon for the first time, robotically drilling into the regolith, and capturing a stunning "diamond ring" photo of a solar eclipse from the lunar perspective on March 14. The mission concluded on March 16, 2025, as the lunar sunset drained the lander's solar batteries, leaving behind a wealth of data—approximately 119 GB—that will pave the way for future Artemis human missions.



Source: Firefly Aerospace

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PHOTOGRAPHY TRENDS IN 2026

I've been writing the annual trends article for the magazine for well over a decade now, and I honestly can't remember a time when my thoughts felt this unsettled. The last time I found myself in a similar predicament was at the turn of the millennium—around 2000—when analogue photography was clearly on its way out. Digital technology was knocking hard on the door, and no one quite knew what to expect from it, or whether it could truly replace what we had known for decades. Interestingly, I find myself in a very similar place today while writing this article. I'm not always sure what's real anymore, what's manipulated, what's AI-generated, or even where the line between the two truly lies. More importantly, I'm still unsure how much of this is a passing phase—and how much of it is here to stay. It's been a while since photography has made even seasoned practitioners pause and recalibrate their thinking this way. And yet, after careful consideration, observation, and a fair bit of internal debate, here is my list of **Trends in Photography for 2026.**

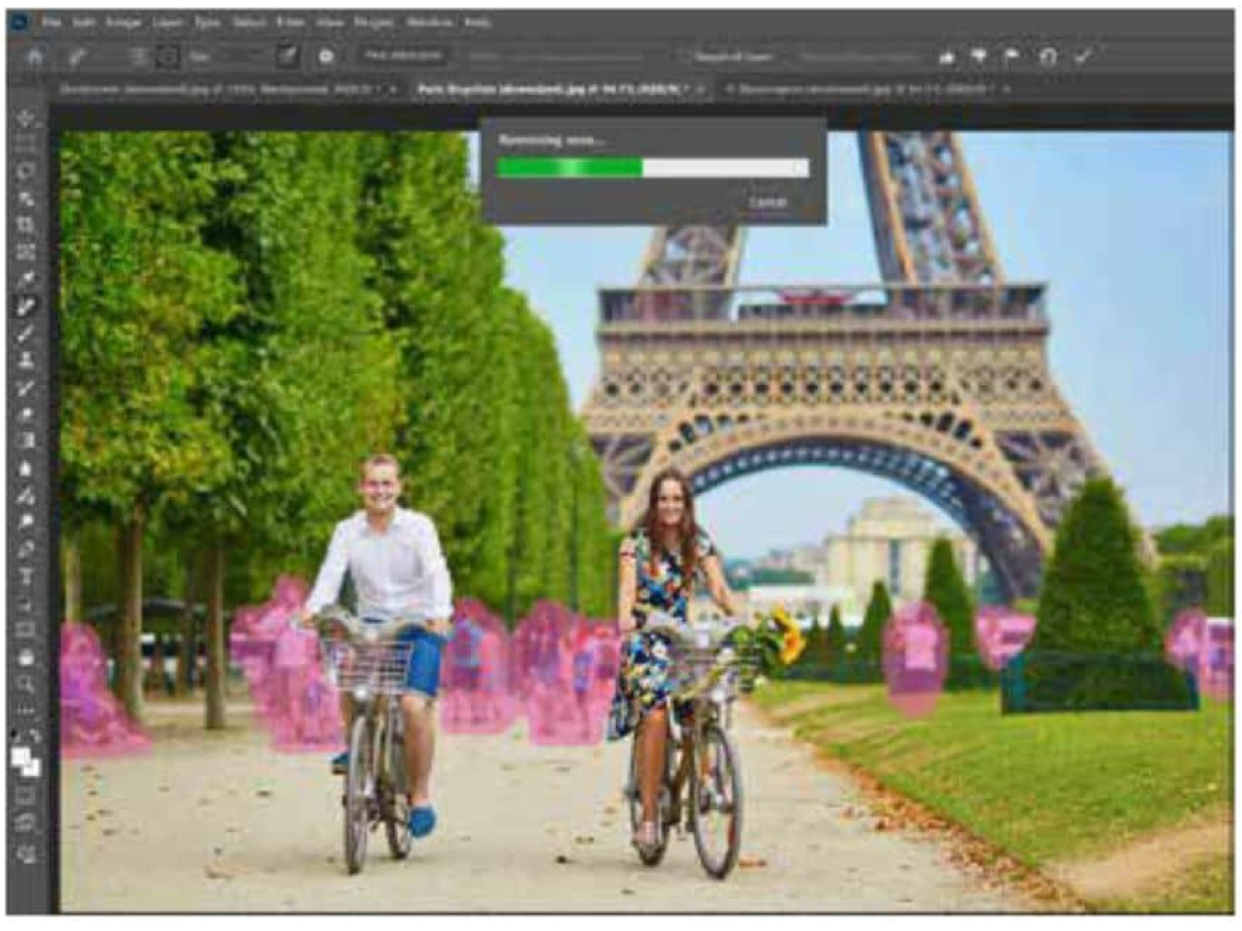
- By Bhavya Desai

The Dominance of AI in Image Creation & Editing

While AI may feel like a recent disruptor, it has been part of photography for much longer than we realise—earlier disguised as algorithms working quietly behind the scenes. That said, there's no denying that AI's dominance in image editing, subject removal, scene expansion and enhancement tools has now reached a tipping point.

AI has firmly embedded itself into the everyday workflow of photographers. Used judiciously, it can be an asset like no other—saving time, enabling creative experimentation and removing technical barriers. From removing unwanted elements to intelligently expanding frames, AI now plays a pivotal role in modern photography.

The sheer level of computing power we now carry in our pockets is staggering—and clearly here to stay. And this is coming from someone who firmly believes in keeping images as untouched as possible. Yet even I find myself regularly using remove tools on devices today. And this is only the beginning. From image generation to increasingly complex creative tasks, AI is rapidly moving towards doing almost everything—whether we're fully comfortable with it yet or not.





On-Camera Generative AI and Assisted Shooting

Still in its early stages, on-camera generative assistance is another trend that will quietly but surely gain momentum. It's only a matter of time before photographers—both professionals and casual users—start accepting a certain degree of AI 'hand-holding' at the point of capture itself.

This goes beyond simple automation and enters the realm of generative assistance—helping users achieve more with minimal effort. Features such as Google Pixel's ability to add the photographer into a group photo, or cameras offering intelligent framing suggestions, style recommendations and profile selections, are early indicators of where things are headed. In 2026, expect cameras to become more collaborative tools rather than passive recording devices.

The Return to Authentic Photography

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction—and photography is no exception. As AI-generated and AI-assisted imagery becomes more widespread, the demand for authenticity will grow just as strongly.

In 2026, authentic photography will trend precisely because of AI's rise. While photographers will continue to push boundaries using technology, there will also be an increasing need for images that feel real—unfiltered moments, honest expressions and unmanufactured realities. As humans, we are inherently wired to recognise and respond to authenticity.

A clear parallel can be drawn from recent years: aggressive skin-smoothing once dominated portrait photography, only to be replaced by far more subtle and natural rendering by 2025. In the same way, I expect 2026 to see a conscious move toward imagery that embraces imperfections and truth.



Climate, Weather & Environmental Photography

As humanity moves into a new technological reality, the planet itself seems to be undergoing dramatic shifts. Few things illustrate this more starkly than the changing climate around us. Winters are colder, summers are hotter, and extreme weather events are becoming increasingly frequent.

Whether termed climate change or global warming, the effects are undeniable. As these realities intensify, climate and environmental photography will play a far more critical role in 2026. From documenting protests and ecological damage to capturing natural disasters and disappearing landscapes, this genre will become both a visual record and a call to action.





Photojournalism in an Unstable World

While climate documentation will be vital, the broader global landscape remains deeply fractured. Conflicts, political unrest, and social disparities continue to rise across regions.

As a result, photojournalism—particularly editorial and conflict/war photography—will see renewed relevance in 2026. There will be an increasing need to document these realities, whether through professional photographers on the ground or user-generated content emerging from conflict zones. In an age of misinformation, visual evidence will continue to hold immense power and responsibility.

Rising Flash and Memory Costs

The technology industry now faces a fresh challenge. After navigating microprocessor shortages in recent years, attention has shifted to constraints within the flash memory sector.

While this may spell concern for consumers, the flash memory industry itself is witnessing an overdue resurgence. Supply pressures and increased demand are likely to push up prices for flash storage and RAM—components essential to nearly every modern device today, from cameras and smartphones to computers and printers. While quantities may vary, their importance does not.





Photography Beyond the Algorithm

A quieter but meaningful shift is underway. For years, photographers and platforms alike were obsessed with pleasing algorithmic gods. Today, there's a subtle but growing return to focusing on the medium itself rather than chasing visibility alone.

Photography is increasingly being created for personal satisfaction, long-term relevance and deeper storytelling—not just for instant uploads and fleeting engagement. That said, vertical images are undeniably here to stay. Formats may evolve, but intent is clearly changing.

The Quiet Rise of Pocket Printers

Including printers in annual trend lists is becoming harder each year—but pocket printers deserve attention. Once limited to instant-print ecosystems like Instax, compact printers have now become more versatile and accessible.

Users are rediscovering the joy of physical prints, using pocket printers to bring digital images into the real world. As technology improves and consumable costs decrease, this segment is poised for further growth—quietly reinforcing the timeless appeal of printed photographs.



Problems like WedMeGood and more

While technology has streamlined wedding photography discovery, it has also opened doors to exploitation. The rise of aggregator platforms has unfortunately led to an increase in challenges/scams—going alone by what we have seen in the industry in 2025—this year more such stories will be unearthed.

In 2026, awareness around these practices will grow, forcing both photographers and clients to become more vigilant. Transparency, direct engagement and trust will become key differentiators in the wedding photography ecosystem.

Photography in 2026 stands at a fascinating crossroads—caught between unprecedented technological power and an equally strong yearning for authenticity. AI will undoubtedly continue to reshape how images are created, edited and consumed. But at the same time, the value of truth, intention and human perspective has never been higher.

Closing Note

Perhaps the real trend for 2026 isn't a tool, a format, or a platform—but a recalibration. A reminder that while technology may change the way we create images, the reason we create them remains timeless: to document, **to communicate and to connect.**

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BEST READERS IMAGE OF 2025

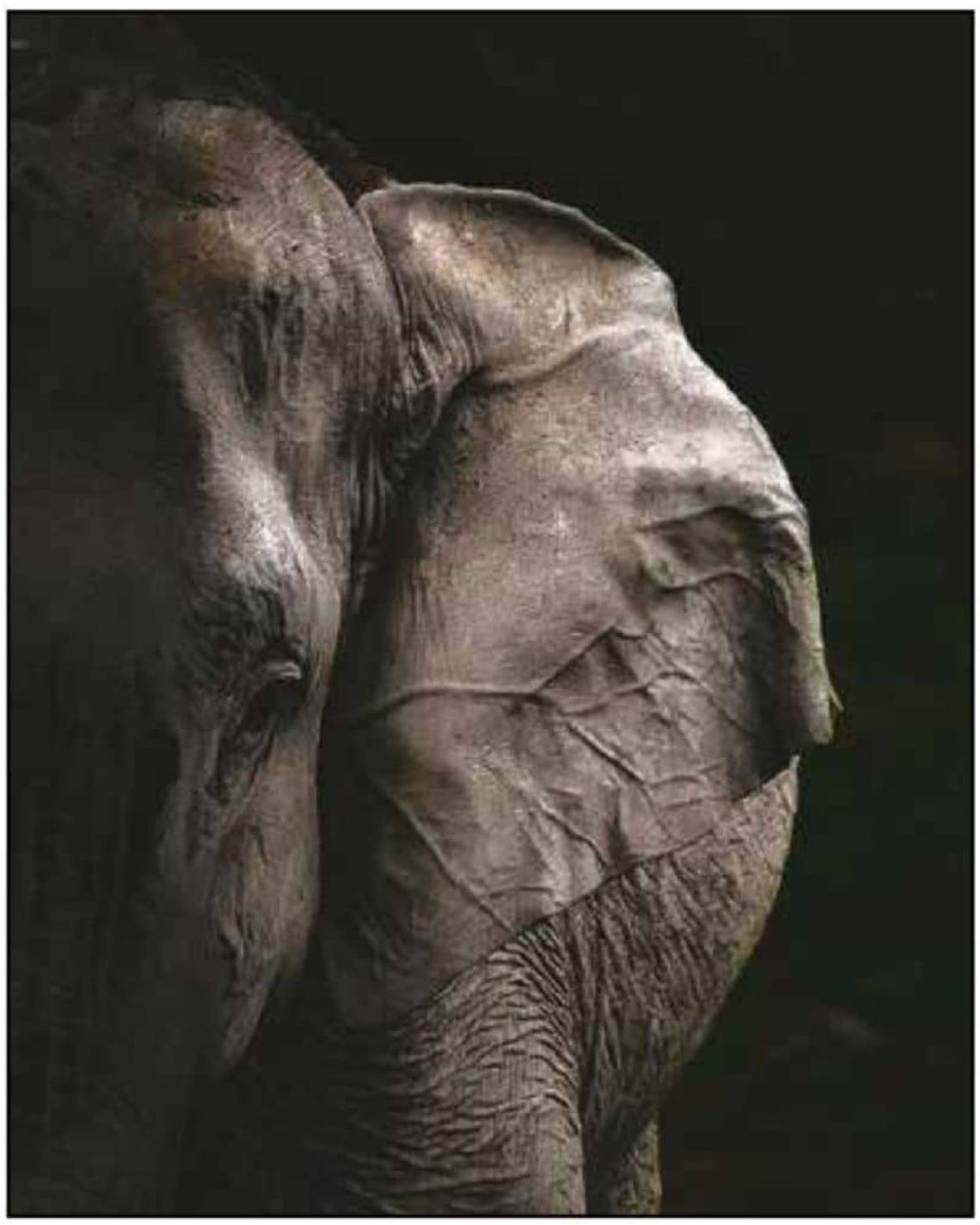
Every year, *Asian Photography* Magazine readers show us how much the world can hold when you really look. The images submitted through 2025 came from all aspects of life, from busy streets and quiet rooms, from mountain paths, coastlines, villages, and cities that never sleep. They were made by people with different levels of experience, different cameras, and different reasons for pressing the shutter. What they share is attention. Each photograph slows time just enough to say, "This mattered to me." This collection brings together the strongest reader images of 2025, chosen for their clarity, feeling, and sense of place. Some frames are dramatic, others understated. A few catch a fleeting moment; others reveal patience built over hours or days. Together, they form a portrait of how our readers see the world. Not as a single story, but as many honest ones, told one image at a time. Thank you for your submissions, and Happy Shooting!



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Uroš Fink



Dr. Kaustav Bhowmik



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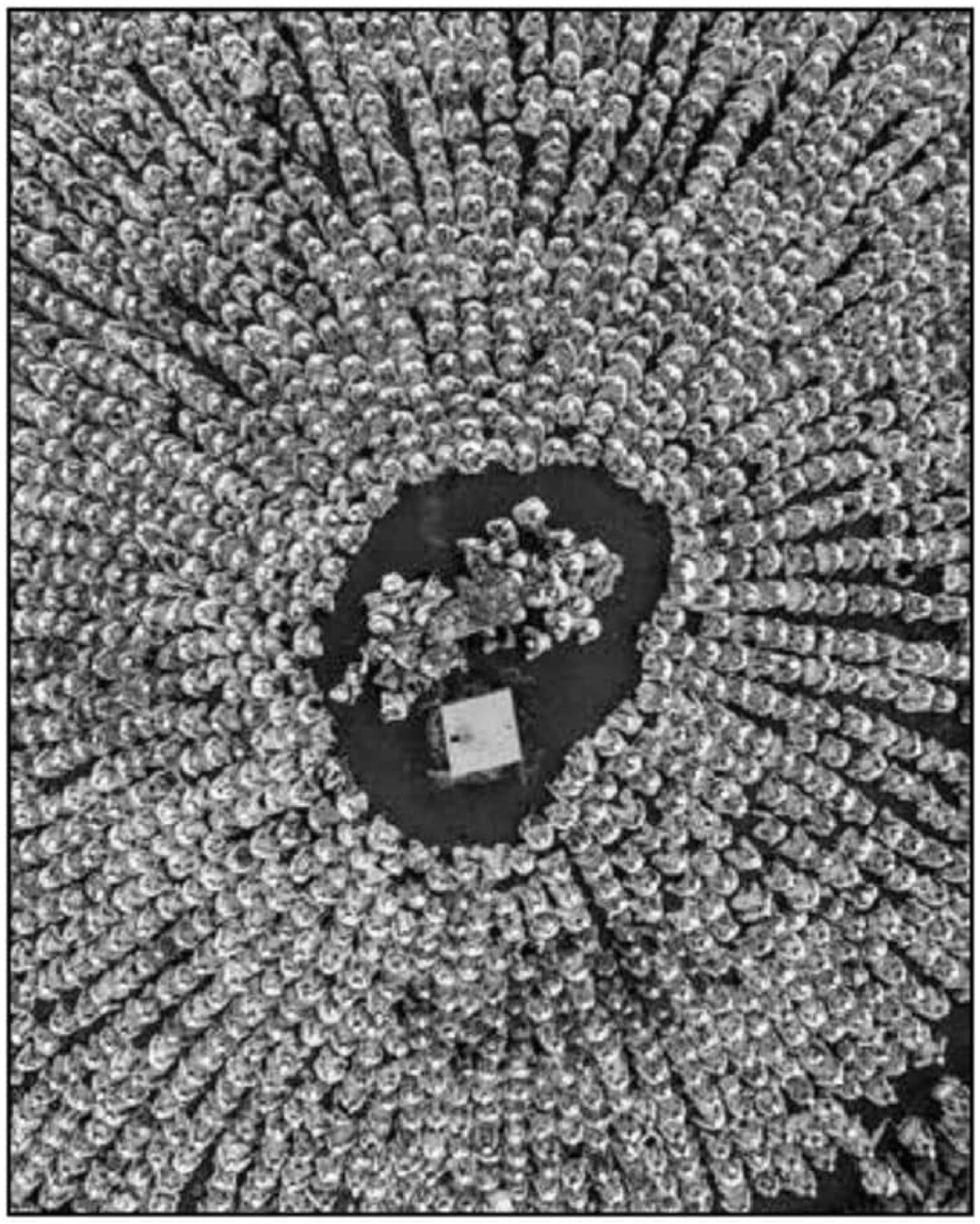
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Vidisha Choudhury



Rick Smolan

Few photographers have shaped not just how we see the world, but how the world collaborates to see itself. **Rick Smolan** belongs to that rare breed of visual storytellers who refused to accept the limits of the medium as it was handed to them. From redefining photojournalism to creating one of the most successful collaborative publishing models in history, Smolan's career has been driven by a restless belief—and what is that belief—that stories are always bigger than a single frame, a single photographer, or a single point of view.

In this conversation with **Bhavya Desai,** Smolan reflects on photography's shifting ground—from the analogue era to AI, from editors with fixed ideas to photographers demanding agency and from solitary image-making to global visual orchestration. What emerges is not nostalgia, but clarity: a reminder that technology changes, markets collapse and reappear, but the core responsibility of a photographer—to observe, to persist, and to tell meaningful stories—remains unchanged. Excerpts:

38TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

A LIFE FRAMED BY **CURIOSITY**



To call Smolan anything less than a legend would be unreal. He has always seen photographs and words not as rivals, but as partners. Early in his career, he admits, he felt the same insecurity many photographers do—the desire for images to dominate the page, to speak louder than text. But experience, and eventually publishing, taught him otherwise. Some things, he realised, photographs do better—for all other things—there are words. And when they work together, they amplify each other.

Though he still thinks of himself first and foremost as a photographer, over time he learned how to write, how to edit writers, how to guide narratives—a skillset he developed long before artificial intelligence entered creative conversations and largely without its help.

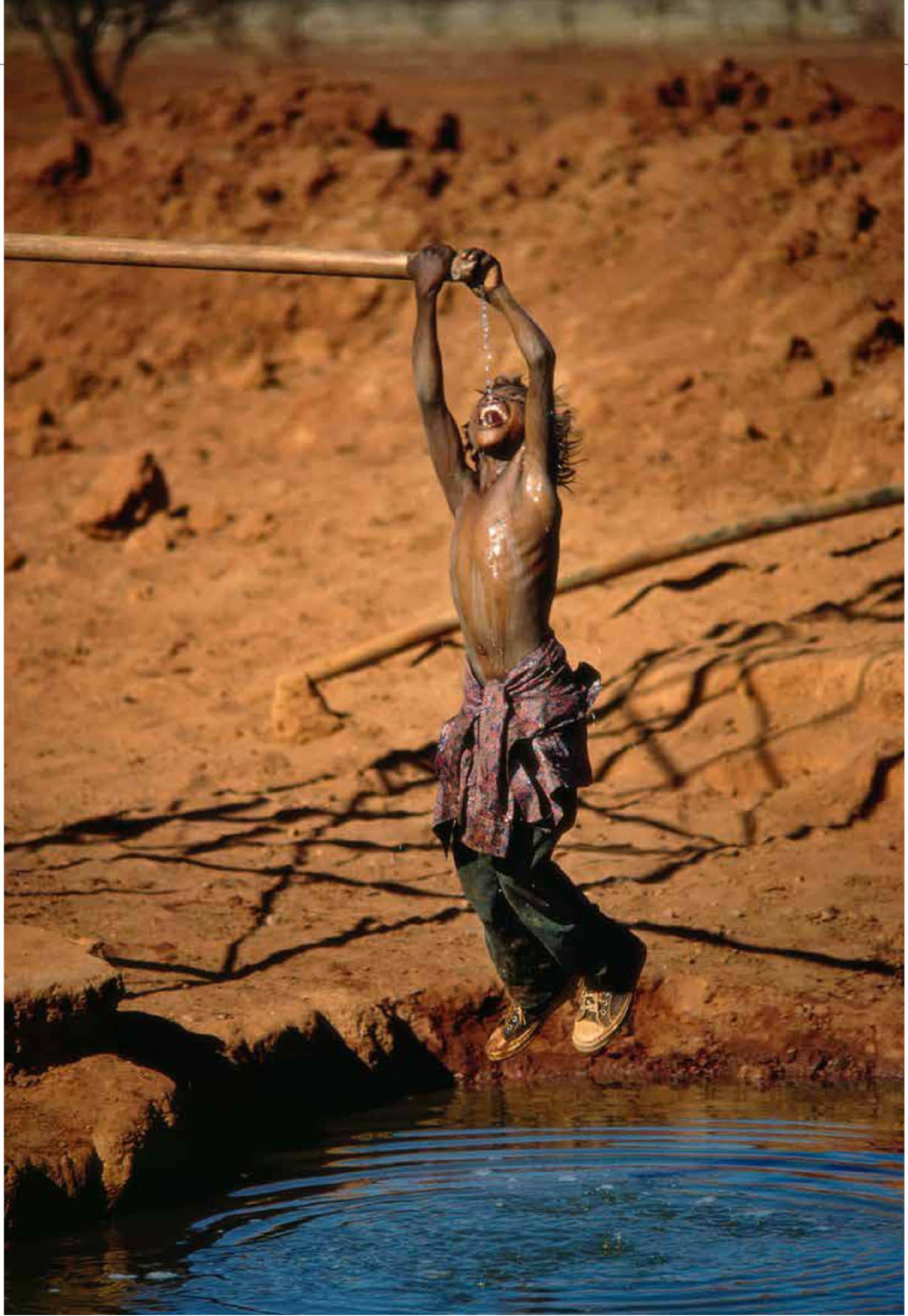
That instinct for synthesis would later define some of his most ambitious projects. Perhaps one of my favourites of his work is—The idea for *The Human Face of Big Data*. The idea of creating a face for an inanimate object, something you can only see and not feel seems fascinating to me—and that's where my question to him also stems from.

And as he asserts that this idea emerged not from technology, but from conversation. For nearly 25 years, Smolan attended TED, and during one of those visits he found himself speaking to Marissa Mayer, then CEO of Yahoo!. When she asked what he planned to do next, he admitted he wasn't sure. Her response was simple: look at big data.

At first, Smolan didn't even know what the term meant. Mayer described a world where the devices we carry have effectively given the planet a nervous system—where each person has become a sensor, a node in a vast, invisible network collecting information about movement, habits, relationships and choices.

That metaphor unlocked everything. Big data, Smolan realised, was not about technology itself, but about what technology reveals—like a new kind of microscope, exposing patterns that had always existed but were previously invisible. Photographing big data was, of course, nearly impossible in literal terms. But photographing its impact on civilisation, on daily life, on human behaviour—that was the real story. The project resonated globally, was distributed to 10,000 influential people in a single day, landed on the cover of *Fortune,* and in hindsight proved prophetic. Big data, Smolan notes, was the necessary bridge to AI—microprocessors led to computers, computers to networks, networks to data, and data to artificial intelligence.

When he looks back across decades of work, the impact that gives

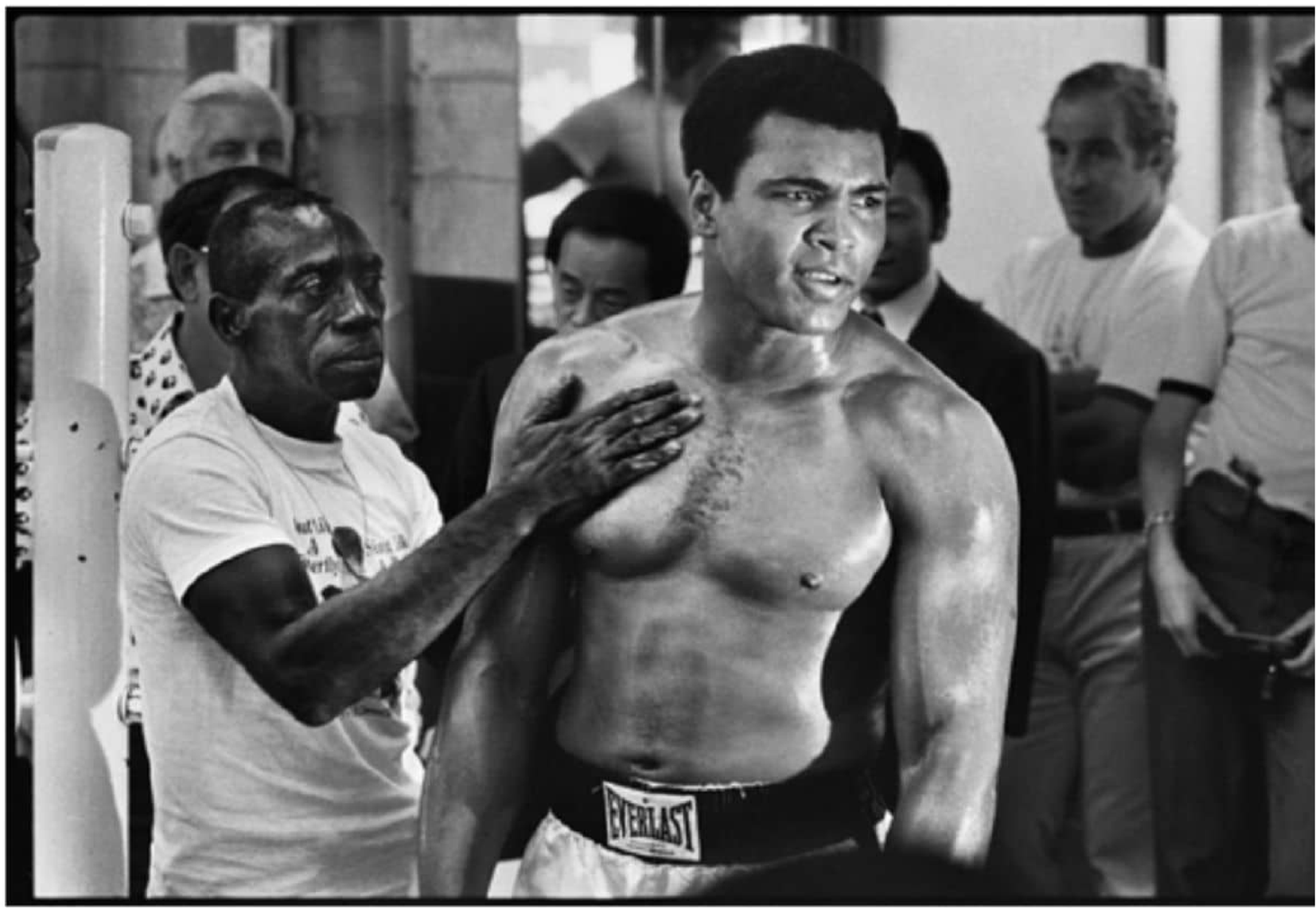






him the most pride isn't a single image or book, but the community his projects unintentionally created. The *Day in the Life* series didn't just document moments—it brought together a global family of photographers who might otherwise have spent their careers competing. In doing so, the projects elevated photojournalism, helped create the mass market for coffee-table photography books, and delivered a particularly sweet irony: concepts rejected by 35 publishers went on to become the best-selling photography series in publishing history.

Smolan's perspective on photography before and after 2000 is both candid and bittersweet. In the analogue era, there were fewer photographers and becoming good was harder. That difficulty created standards—and respect. Today, photography has become more commodified, even disposable. Images are made endlessly, consumed quickly, and forgotten just as fast. If you don't



look at a photo on your phone within a day or two, he notes, you probably never will. There was a time when family histories were carefully curated in albums and scrapbooks, often by mothers who acted as informal archivists of memory. That physical relationship with photographs has largely disappeared.

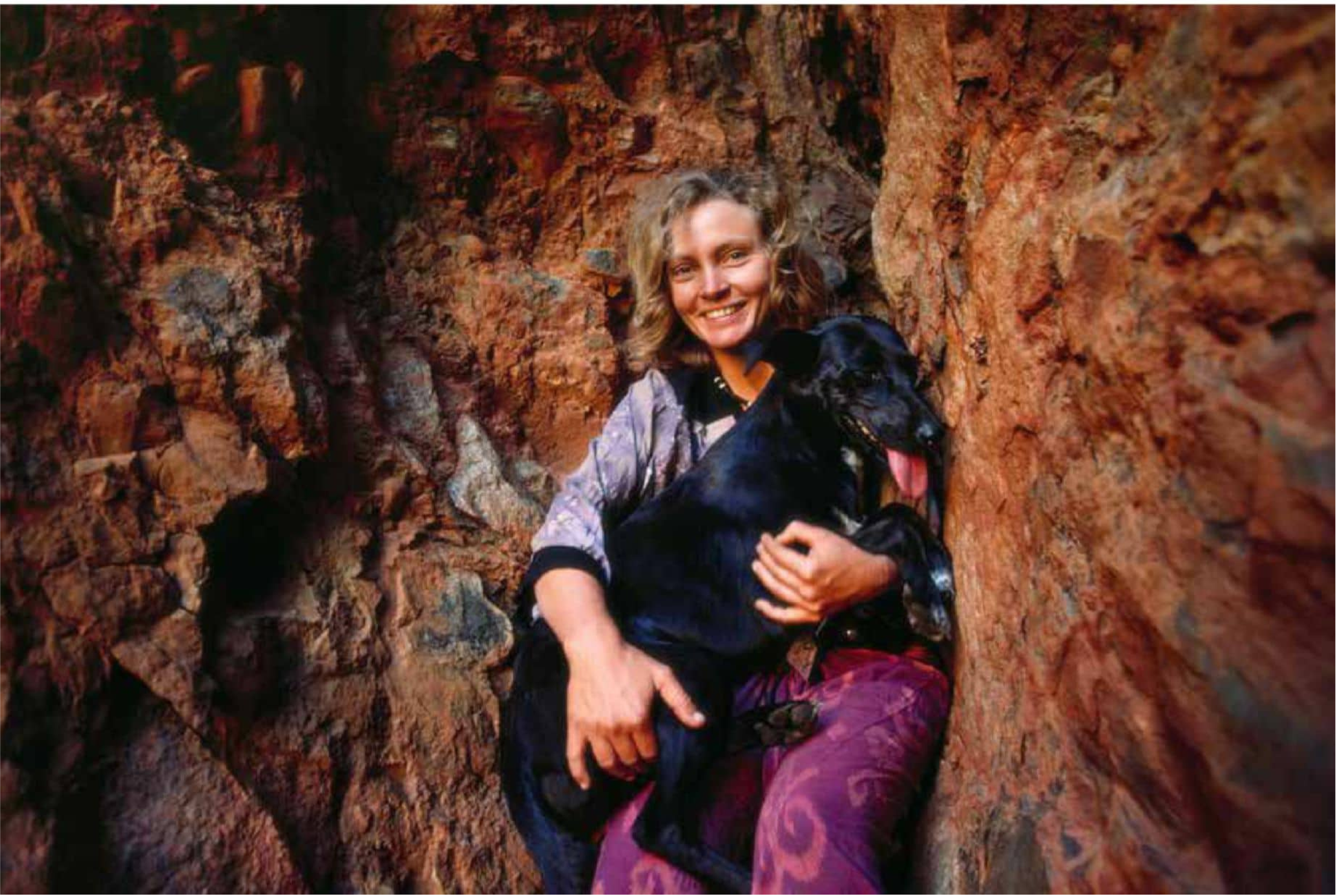
Asked whether social media would have amplified his reach or diluted his impact, Smolan sees both sides. Digital tools have democratised participation, and spontaneity can yield images no editor would ever plan for. But a camera in your pocket doesn't make you a photographer any more than a pencil makes you a writer. Craft still matters. Vision still matters.

That insistence on agency—on letting photographers tell the story as it actually exists—was what pushed Smolan away from traditional photojournalism toward large-scale, conceptual collaborations. Early

We were in a golden age of photography and didn't realise it until it ended. Now we're drowning in images, but no single photograph stands out anymore—and that makes me sad

success with *Time, National Geographic* and *Fortune* came with a frustration familiar to many photographers: editors often sent him out with preconceived narratives. On the ground, reality rarely matched those assumptions. Yet back in the office, editors would search the images for validation rather than truth. Smolan wanted a project without that filter.

Day in the Life was born from that frustration—and from rejection. Publishers dismissed the idea as impractical, expensive and commercially unviable. They doubted anyone would care about an entire country in a single day. They doubted photographers would participate without pay. Some even suggested faking it with stock images. Unable to find support, Smolan took an unconventional route, approaching the Prime Minister of Australia, who helped broker sponsorships instead. The result was a self-published book with





unprecedented marketing muscle and creative control. Free from publisher constraints, Smolan could prioritise quality over margins—six-colour printing, better paper, stronger covers. Rejection, he realised, was the greatest gift. It forced him to become a publisher.

The books themselves were edited collectively—a safeguard against ego. Multiple editors, diverse sensibilities, votes, filters. The final selection was less about individual brilliance and more about how images spoke to each other. The sequencing mattered. Sometimes two photographs side by side told a stronger story than either could alone.

On the craft itself, Smolan's advice is deceptively simple: get close, and make technology invisible. The camera should feel like an extension of your arm, not something you're thinking about. In the film days, every roll imposed restraint—36 frames, constant interruptions, missed moments. Today's abundance removes that limitation, but it also removes discipline.

But was photography once more respected as a true art? Smolan believes golden ages are only recognised in hindsight. No one expects them to end. If *Life* and *Time* could disappear or shrink beyond recognition, so could entire ecosystems of photography. The mass market for coffee-table books—something his projects helped create—has largely collapsed under the weight of digital distraction. Physical photographs, once treasured objects, now live unseen on hard drives and phones. What worries him most isn't nostalgia, but memory itself: a collective history drowning in images no one revisits.

For young photographers, his advice is pragmatic and unsentimental. You must be a storyteller across mediums—stills, video, sound. You must work faster, travel lighter, and accept shorter assignments. Budgets are smaller, patience thinner. That often means weaker pictures, because relationships take time. Still, persistence matters. Not loud persistence, not passive waiting—but quiet determination. In the end, Smolan says, most of a photographer's job isn't pressing the shutter. It's charming your way past the palace guard. The photograph comes later.

And perhaps that, more than anything, explains his legacy. Rick Smolan didn't just document the world. He learned how to enter it—patiently, persuasively and with enough curiosity to bring others along.



Mark Smith

EACH DIVE A **BATTLE**, EACH ASCENT **A QUIET VICTORY:**

When **Mark Smith** speaks about birds, he doesn't talk like a photographer chasing the perfect frame. He speaks like a witness—someone who has spent years observing, listening and quietly learning from the natural world. Winning the HIPA Award this year may have brought his work global recognition, but for Smith, the moment still feels unreal. **Bhavya Desai** spoke to him about his love for birds and more. Excerpts:

"It's overwhelming," he says, almost thoughtfully. "I'm still trying to absorb it. It doesn't feel real yet." The award ceremony in Dubai marked his first real experience of the city—beyond airport layovers—and the setting only amplified the sense of disbelief. Yet, recognition was never the destination. It was simply a by-product of a journey that began decades earlier.

Smith's introduction to photography was deeply personal. As a child, following his parents' divorce, weekends spent outdoors with his father became formative. His father handed him a Minolta camera and a roll of film, and gave him complete freedom. There were no instructions, no expectations—just plain old curiosity. Those early days in the wild planted a seed that would later grow into a lifelong fascination with animals and storytelling.

What sets Smith apart is his belief that photography is not about images—it's about understanding. Long before 'visual storytelling' became a buzzword, he was already trying to see the world from an animal's perspective. "I was always excited to learn about them," he explains. "And I wanted others to feel that same fascination."

That philosophy is most evident in his enduring relationship with the osprey—a bird that dominates much of his work. For Smith, the osprey is more than a subject; it's a symbol. He





speaks of its relentless determination, its refusal to give up even when injured, exhausted or robbed of its prey. “They just keep going,” he says. “Over and over again.” Watching an osprey rise from the water again and again reminded him of the mythical phoenix—where each dive seems like a battle, and each ascent a quiet victory.

Understanding such behaviour, Smith believes, is the cornerstone of wildlife photography. Knowing how fast a bird moves, how it hunts, and even how it communicates distress determines whether a photographer captures something meaningful or merely intrusive. “Some birds make a very specific sound when you’re too close,” he explains. “If you don’t recognise that, you’ve already crossed a line.”

Smith’s approach to photography changed dramatically during a pivotal period in his life, when he and his wife sold everything, they owned and travelled across the United States in a caravan. Their journey eventually led them to Colorado, where the landscapes and wildlife transformed the way, he saw the world. It was there that photography shifted from interest into an obsession—and later, to purpose.



The more you understand an animal, the more you realise they struggle just like we do—and that changes everything











Although Smith initially returned to photography through video, slow motion became an unexpected teacher. By stretching time, he began to see details invisible to the naked eye—minute decisions, subtle body movements, and split-second reactions. Ospreys, which hit the water at nearly 50 miles an hour, suddenly revealed their intent frame by frame. “It taught me more than I ever expected,” he says. Not just about birds—but about his own technique, his mistakes, and how to correct them.

Yet for all the technical mastery his work reflects, Smith insists that equipment is secondary. Yes, good lenses matter. Yes, high-quality glass reveals extraordinary detail. But none of it replaces time spent in the field, observing and learning. “If you don’t enjoy being out there, people can see it in your work,” he says. Passion, he believes, is non-negotiable.

Some of Smith’s most memorable moments have nothing to do with awards or accolades. One of his most powerful images—an osprey carrying a fish with a crab still clinging to it—was technically flawed, harshly backlit, and full of blown highlights. Yet it became one of his most popular photographs. “Story comes first,” he says simply.

Not all stories end beautifully though. One of his most difficult experiences involved an injured osprey struck by a car. Attempting to save the bird, Smith wrapped it in a blanket and carried it to safety. In that moment, as the bird looked at him, he felt what he describes as a “cosmic slap” —a flood of emotion, understanding and shared vulnerability. The bird died minutes later in his son’s arms and that still remains one of the most humbling moments of his life.

“That connection,” Smith reflects, “is why this matters.” Wildlife photography, for him, is not about domination or control—it’s about empathy. About recognising that animals, like people, are navigating survival, fear, and resilience every day.

For young photographers eager to enter the world of bird photography, Smith’s advice is deceptively simple: learn the bird before you learn the camera. Understand its food, its migration, its habits. Start small. Be patient. And above all, enjoy the process.

Because in the end, the most powerful images aren’t captured—they’re earned, through time, respect, and the willingness to truly see.

BEST CAMERAS OF 2025

Competition doesn't sleep, and 2025 was no exception for the quote. The imaging industry went through a makeover of sorts, as we saw a shift of priority from companies, which led to them making cameras which were more hybrid in nature. This year we saw the Nikon-RED merger further fruitioning into a compact, competitive cinema camera and Canon releasing one in a similar form factor but with different capabilities and priority. In this round up, we list the cameras that brought something new to the table. Just like last year, we aren't including lenses, drones or action cameras or cinema cameras even though they've got so much in common with their mirrorless cousins.

CANON EOS R6 MARK III

The definitive enthusiast hybrid, now featuring a 32.5MP sensor and the revolutionary "Face Registration" AF found in the flagship R1. It stands out by introducing an asymmetrical card setup (CFexpress Type B + SD), enabling professional burst speeds and 7K open gate and oversampled 4K video at an enthusiast price point.



FUJIFILM GFX 100RF

The world's first 100MP fixed-lens medium format camera, designed with a sleek, rangefinder-style body. Its standout feature is the physical "Aspect Ratio Dial" on the top plate, allowing photographers to instantly switch between nine legendary film formats, including the iconic 65:24 panoramic mode.



FUJIFILM X-E5

The long-awaited return of the minimalist rangefinder, finally updated with a 40MP sensor, capable of 6.2K video and 7 stops of In-Body Image Stabilization (IBIS). It is the only camera in its class to feature a dedicated “Film Simulation Dial”, giving users tactile, analogue-style control over Fujifilm’s colour science without digging into menus.



LEICA M EV1

The first M-series camera in history to replace the traditional optical rangefinder with a built-in, high-resolution Electronic Viewfinder. This allows M-mount purists to use ultra-fast lenses or telephotos with the accuracy of focus peaking and real-time exposure preview for the first time.



HASSELBLAD X2D II

An evolution of the medium format flagship X2D featuring a 100MP sensor and a 1TB internal SSD, that adds “LiDAR-assisted” autofocus for nearly instantaneous locking in pitch-black conditions. It is the first Hasselblad to support a true end-to-end HDR workflow, capturing a massive 15.3 stops of dynamic range that maps directly to HDR displays.



LEICA SL3S

The video-focused, 24MP sibling of the SL3, optimised for high-speed readouts and superior low-light performance. It is unique for its direct-to-SSD recording via USB-C and native “Frame.io Camera to Cloud” integration, allowing editors to begin working on footage while the shooter is still on set.



LUMIX S1 II/S1R II

Panasonic's flagship duo featuring the "Phase Hybrid AF" system and "DR Boost" technology for 15+ stops of dynamic range. The S1R II stands out as the first Lumix to record 8K video, while both models feature a "Real-Time LUT" button to bake professional colour grades directly into the footage.



NIKON Z5 II

A massive "value" hit of 2025, this budget full-frame king that redefines entry-level by also incorporating the flagship EXPEED 7 processor and a class-leading 3,000-nit EVF. Its uniqueness lies in being the first—and till now, only—camera in its price bracket to support internal 12-bit N-RAW recording and AI-driven subject detection that can lock onto targets in near-total darkness.



SIGMA BF

Famed as "the camera if Apple made it", this L-mount camera features a minimalist, single-block aluminum chassis with only three buttons. It stands out for its gesture-based interface and *"Beautifully Foolish"* philosophy, focusing on the joy of photography over technical spec-chasing.



SONY A7 V

The fifth generation of the "industry standard" all-rounder, now featuring a dedicated AI processing chip for human pose estimation. Its uniqueness is the "4-Axis Multi-Angle" LCD screen that combines a tilt-screen and a flip-out screen, solving the long-standing debate between photographers and videographers. Combine that with the new semi-stacked 33MP sensor, this camera can shoot at higher burst rates and with faster readout speeds.



SONY RX1R III

The long-awaited return of the full-frame compact rangefinder, now packing a 61MP sensor into a body that fits in a jacket pocket. It is the only camera of its size to feature a "Variable Optical Low-Pass Filter", allowing users to choose between maximum sharpness or moiré control for every shot.



TEXT: ANIRUDH IYER

BEST CAMERA PHONES OF 2025

The smartphone industry has entered a decisive new chapter. 2026 marks a moment where flagship devices are no longer defined by incremental upgrades, but by clear philosophies—cinematography over casual photography, intelligence over raw specs, endurance over compromise, and productivity over novelty. From Apple's push toward mobile cinema and Google's AI-first vision, to Oppo, Vivo, Xiaomi, OnePlus, and Samsung redefining optical engineering, battery science, and performance ceilings, the modern flagship has evolved into a true professional tool. This article explores the most advanced smartphones of 2025. Devices designed not merely to be used, but to be relied upon. Each represents a distinct approach to the same goal: replacing traditional cameras, workstations, and creative tools with a single, powerful device that fits in your pocket. These are not just the best phones of the year—they are statements of intent, shaping the future of mobile technology and digital storytelling.

Apple iPhone 17 Pro Max

Apple has redesigned the iPhone 17 Pro Max with a heat-forged aluminium unibody, improving heat dissipation to meet the demands of the A19 Pro chip and Apple Intelligence. All three rear cameras now use 48MP sensors, delivering consistent detail from the 13mm ultra-wide to the new 8x tetraprism telephoto lens. The new 18MP front camera adds practical value for vloggers with intelligent subject tracking, while the redesigned build gives the phone a more balanced in-hand feel. Combined with a 3,000 nit display and up to 35 hours of battery life, the iPhone 17 Pro Max stands out as a refined and capable smartphone whose ₹1,49,900 price reflects its top-tier performance and features.





Google Pixel 10 Pro XL

The Pixel 10 Pro XL represents Google's boldest step yet, powered by the fully custom 3nm Tensor G5 chip designed around Gemini 2.0 and advanced on-device AI. Its refined triple-camera system combines a 50MP main sensor, 48MP ultra-wide with macro, and a 48MP periscope lens offering 5× optical and AI-enhanced 30× zoom, while the 42MP front camera supports sharp 4K60 video. A 6.8-inch 120Hz Actua Display, 5,100mAh battery with 45W fast charging, and refreshed Floating Island design complete a polished AI-first flagship priced at ₹1,24,999.

Oppo Find X9 Pro

Oppo raises the bar for flagship smartphones with the Find X9 Pro, powered by the 3nm MediaTek Dimensity 9500 chip and a massive 7,500mAh silicon-carbon battery designed for sustained, AI-heavy workloads. The Hasselblad-tuned triple-camera system includes a 50MP main sensor with exceptional low-light performance, a 50MP ultra-wide lens, and a standout 200MP periscope camera offering 3× optical and up to 120× AI-assisted zoom, complemented by a 50MP front camera with 4K60 video. A 6.78-inch 120Hz AMOLED display peaking at 3,600 nits, IP69 durability, and ultra-fast 80W wired and 50W wireless charging complete a premium, endurance-focused flagship starting at ₹1,09,999.





Vivo X300 Pro

Vivo reinforces its leadership in mobile imaging with the X300 Pro, powered by the 3nm MediaTek Dimensity 9500 and Vivo's V3+ Imaging Chip for advanced AI-driven video and photography. Its ZEISS-tuned camera system features a 50MP gimbal-stabilised main sensor, a 50MP ultra-wide with macro capabilities, and a standout 200MP APO periscope lens offering 3.5× optical and up to 100× zoom, alongside a 50MP autofocus front camera optimised for 4K vlogging. A 6.78-inch LTPO AMOLED display peaking at 4,500 nits, robust vapour chamber cooling, IP68/IP69 durability, and a 6,510mAh battery with 90W fast charging round out a camera-centric flagship priced at ₹1,09,999.

Xiaomi 15 Ultra

Xiaomi elevates mobile photography with the 15 Ultra, a camera-first flagship powered by the 3nm Snapdragon 8 Elite chip and sustained by an advanced dual-loop vapour chamber for intensive imaging and AI workloads. Its Leica Summilux quad-camera system is led by a 50MP 1-inch main sensor with a variable aperture, supported by a 50MP ultra-wide and a dual-telephoto setup combining a 50MP portrait lens with a 200MP periscope camera capable of up to 120× AI-enhanced zoom. A 6.73-inch 2K LTPO AMOLED display peaking at 3,200 nits, premium build options, and a 5,400mAh battery with 90W wired and 80W wireless charging complete a pro-grade imaging flagship priced at ₹1,19,999.



OnePlus 15

OnePlus leans back into its flagship-killer identity with the OnePlus 15, focusing on uncompromising speed and sustained performance powered by the 3nm Snapdragon 8 Elite chip and its largest-ever vapour chamber cooling system. The 4th-gen Hasselblad camera setup delivers consistent 50MP output across the main, ultra-wide, and 3.5× telephoto lenses, backed by refined colour science and fast shutter response, while a 32MP front camera handles high-quality vlogging. A 6.82-inch BOE X2 120Hz display reaching 4,500 nits, a massive 6,000mAh battery with 100W wired and 50W wireless charging, and OxygenOS 15's fluid AI optimisations make the OnePlus 15 a performance-focused flagship that delivers exceptional value at ₹69,999.





Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra

Samsung refined the Ultra formula with the Galaxy S25 Ultra, combining a more ergonomic Grade 5 titanium design with the custom Snapdragon 8 Elite for Galaxy chip to power its most advanced Galaxy AI features yet. The pro-grade quad-camera system is led by a 200MP main sensor, joined by a 50MP ultra-wide and dual telephoto lenses that deliver sharp, optical-quality zoom across the range, while AI enhancements improve low-light capture and real-time processing. A 6.9-inch Dynamic AMOLED 2X display reaching 3,100 nits, Gorilla Armor 2 protection, reliable all-day battery life, and the integrated S Pen complete a premium, productivity-focused flagship starting at ₹1,29,999.

TEXT: RAJAN GUPTA

Canon EOS R6 Mark III Review

It's time to dig out the Canon-Nikon rivalry from the DSLR era! Last year when we reviewed Nikon's Z6 III, we concluded that it's a solid buy with no real competition in the space. Well, that has certainly changed with the launch of the new Canon EOS R6 III. Priced at ₹2.44L puts it above its entry-level sibling – the R8 and below the flagship R5, R3 & R1 bodies. It also squarely sits in the same price bracket as the Nikon Z6 III which is interesting for the competition!

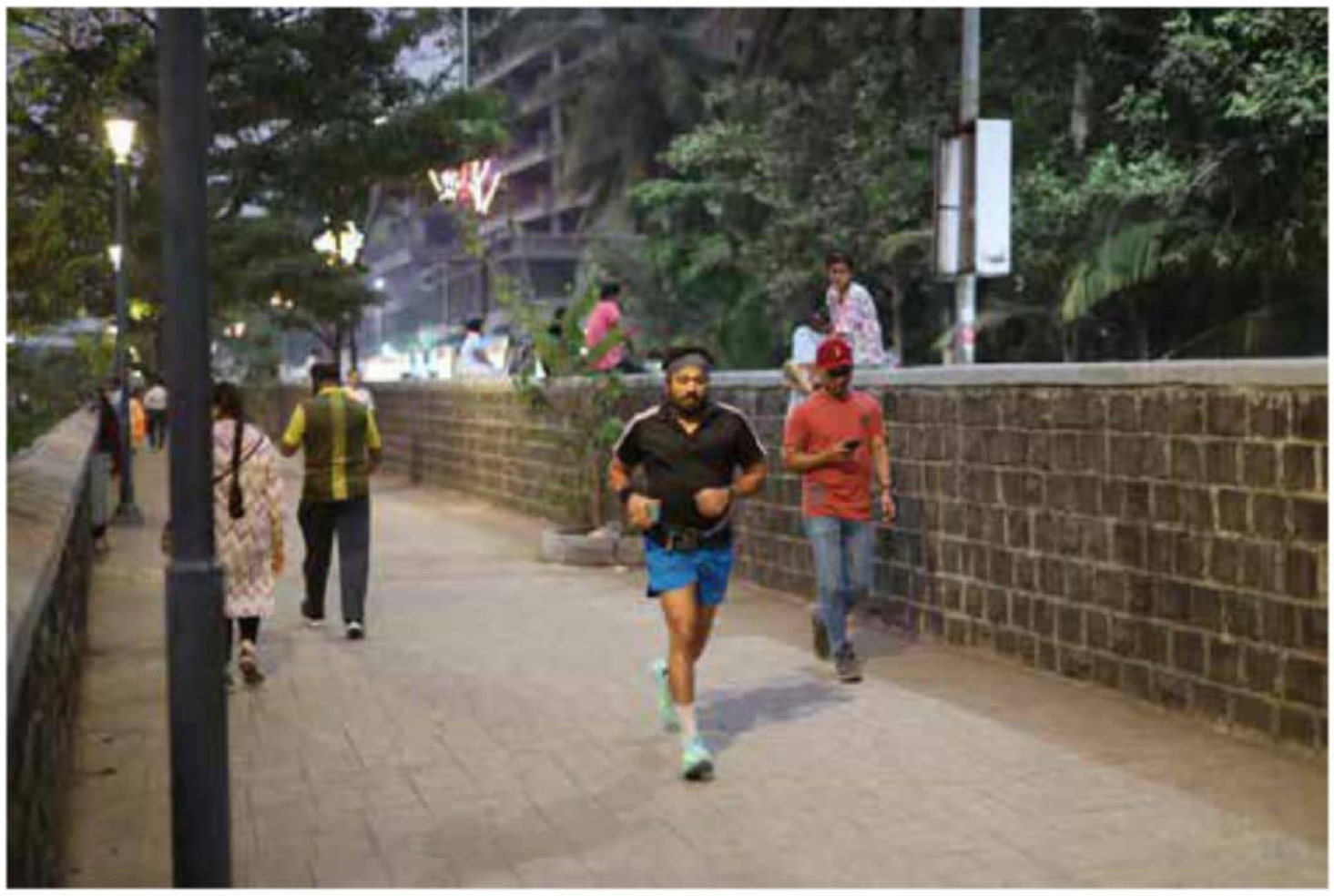


Look, Body, Feel

The Canon EOS R6 Mark III has gained a little bit of weight, sitting at 699 grams, 29 more than Mark II, and feels solid in the hands. The construction is similar to the previous model and the button layout is also identical. The grip is deep and comfortable.

On top of the camera, on the left is the photo-video mode switch and on the right is an assortment of buttons including the record button, multifunction button (Mfn), on off button, the PASM dial and two control rings. In the PASM dial, you now have a dedicated Slow & Fast mode (written as S&F) — making slow motion & hyperlapse creation easy — a feature Sony cameras have had for a while.

But there are several quality-of-life upgrades that have come to this camera – for starters, you now have a CF Express card slot on the right alongside a UHS-II SD card slot. That's required for the features this camera has, which we'll discuss in just a moment. On the left, you have an assortment of I/O ports, but this now comes with a full size HDMI port instead of the micro HDMI like last year – a welcome improvement.



Daylight

The 3.69M dots 120Hz EVF & 3-inch 1.62M-dot rear screen haven't changed from the last time, but the Mark III comes with a tally light to indicate video shooting.

Sensor & Features

The sensor is where the Canon EOS R6 Mark III makes its most dramatic departure from its predecessor. Canon has moved away from the 24MP standard that defined the R6 series, opting instead for a brand-new 32.5MP CMOS sensor. This is the same sensor found in the EOS C50 cinema camera, bringing a blend of high resolution and speed that moves the R6 series closer to "flagship" territory by a small bit.

The Mark III does not feature a stacked sensor like the flagships or semi-stacked sensors, like in the Nikon Z6 III or the new Sony A7V. But Canon has engineered this with their DIGIC X processor, significantly increasing readout speeds, which according to them is around 13.5ms – not bad at all for a sensor of this resolution!

The Canon EOS R6 Mark III comes with photo burst speeds of 12 frames per second mechanically, and 40 frames per second with electronic shutter, with up to 150 pictures in the buffer and 20 frames of pre capture. But the buffer shouldn't be an issue if you use a CF Express card.

The Mark III is powered by the new LP-E6P battery that's found in the R5II & C50, giving it an endurance of up to 620 shots – which is up from the up to 450 shots of Mark II. The Mark III also comes with a new hotshoe capable of supporting new wireless mics that don't need cables & flashes.

Autofocus

The new sensor & Digic X processor make up for a pretty robust AF system, and if you're familiar with previous Canon R bodies, you'll feel right at home with the options. However, for newbies we'd recommend reading the manual or looking up a video explaining how the AF works.

We shot all our test images with the new RF 45mm F/1.2 lens, and the subject detection worked remarkably well – but it took a little bit for the actual lens to catch up due to its limitations.

The camera identified faces and eyes really well even in dimly lit conditions and the AF worked well with animals as well. After detecting faces, you've an option to switch eyes using the joystick in the back when dealing with multiple subjects. But it's not all good news as we had near-misses as well, and sometimes had to shoot multiple shots to get the shot.

However, one thing we noted is that when using EVF, we couldn't use the screen to shift the AF point, which was available in previous bodies and is while using the screen to shoot. The option is called "Touch & Drag" and we couldn't find it in the menu.

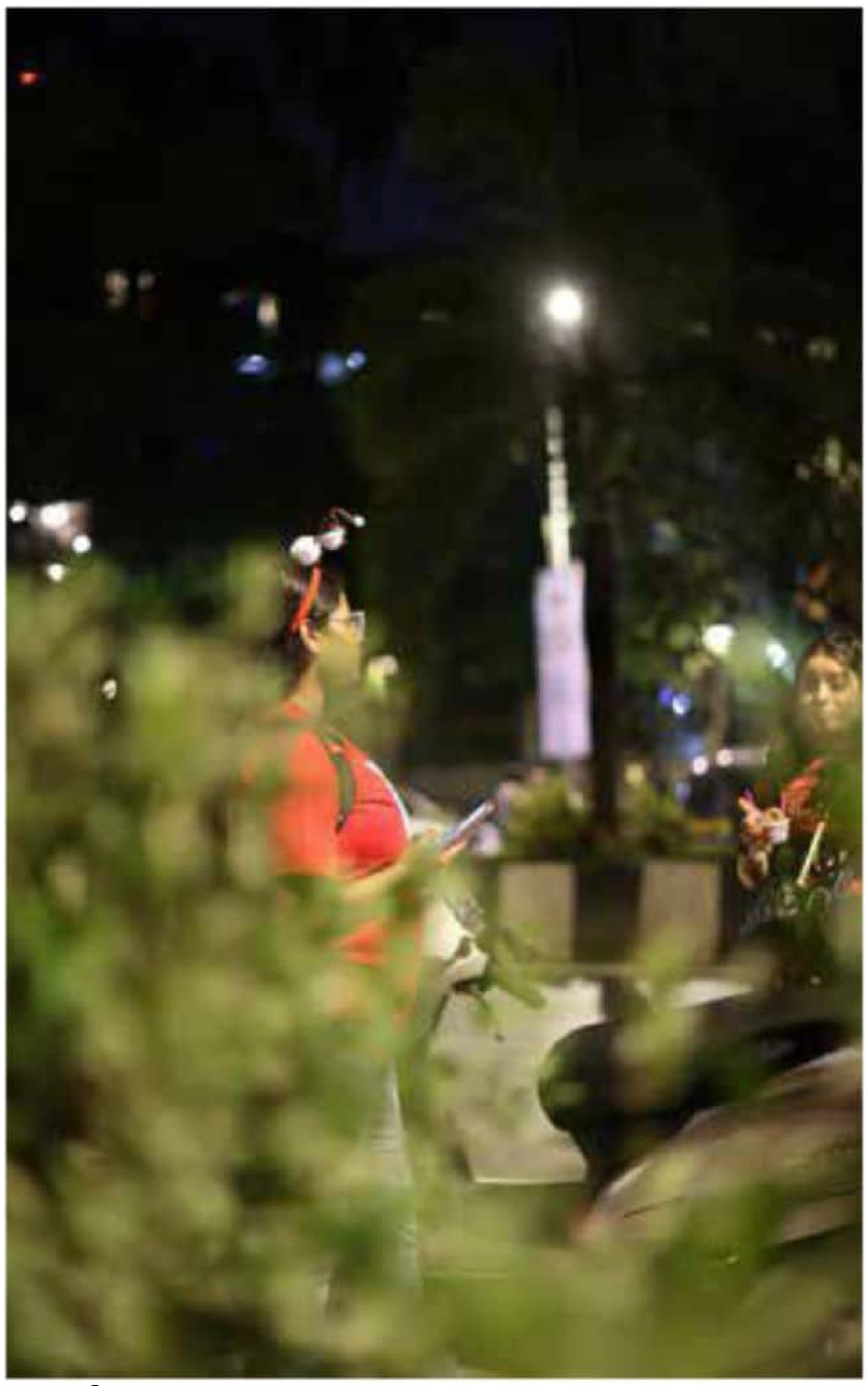
AF is consistent but very slightly lags behind the flagships – still a good value for the money. The people face register priority especially is a game-changer in this segment of cameras, as it allows you to prioritize whom to keep in focus when there are multiple people in the frame.



High ISO - ISO 10000

Image Quality / ISO Performance

As expected from a 32MP sensor, the images are well-detailed and the dynamic range is very good even for the JPEGs straight off the camera.



Autofocus

Up to ISO 3200, the camera delivers clean images with lots of detail. At ISO 6400 and beyond, you can see visible noise but the image is still sharp. Even at a high setting like ISO 12800, the noise pattern isn't visible to the naked eye and you'll need to zoom in to observe it, as it's so minute, and it can be removed easily with software. So with this camera body, you can comfortably push limits by increasing shutter speed & not worry about noise anymore.

Video Quality

The Canon EOS R6 Mark III is no slouch when it comes to video, capable of shooting 4K up to 120fps full-width, i.e. without cropping into the image. One thing to note is this is not just regular UHD 4K, but also DCI 4K, which is a little bit wider. The 4K (up to 60fps) video is also oversampled from 7K, giving you more clarity & sharpness.

Interestingly, you can also shoot at 2K, which beginners might prefer as it's not as heavy as 4K but still gives you a higher resolution than 1080p for processing. Dropping the resolution to 2K or 1080p also gives you an option to shoot at 180 fps.

Videos carry the classic Canon colours but enough dynamic range for everyday use but Canon also allows you to shoot in C Log 2 and C Log 3 - depending on which workflow you prefer if you want more dynamic range and control over colour in post. The R6 III allows you to load custom LUTs as well, but doesn't allow you to only shoot in Log while previewing them – the LUT is baked into the video.

The R6 Mark III's flagship feature is the ability to shoot RAW video at 7K up to 30 fps and compressed RAW at 7K up to 60fps. Currently there's no option to shoot at a lower



Lowlight



resolution like 4K which might have been more helpful, as full-width RAW shooting comes with a bitrate penalty, i.e. it'll chew through your memory, and not to mention, battery. The biggest advantage this has however, is that it can shoot Open Gate, to give you video in 7K resolution in an aspect ratio of 3:2 up to 30 fps. Since this is shooting in 7K, you again have the bitrate and battery penalty.

It also has IBIS which has improved claims at up to 8.5 stops with a compatible lens, but the classic "canon wobble" hasn't completely disappeared. With the lens we used, we couldn't observe much due to the focal length, but you may with wider lenses. Overall, an improvement from previous years.

As for rolling shutter, even with a big sensor, we don't observe much of it due to its fast readout speed, but it's more observable compared to cameras with semi-stacked sensors. Overall, images shot on electronic shutter & videos with motion involved are more than usable.

Is This For You? Verdict

Like we specified in the intro, the Canon EOS R6 Mark III sits between its entry-level and flagship professional siblings. With that identity, it can be used by a wide variety of people, starting from amateurs looking for an upgrade to their first ever professional-level camera; or a professional photographer looking for an uncompromising backup camera. The pre-capture & high burst rate combined with a big buffer are especially game changers for people wanting to get into sports & wildlife photography without spending twice as much or more on a body capable of that.

If you're sporting a DSLR like the 5D Mark IV or an entry-level Canon R camera from the yesteryears, this might be a plausible upgrade for you. But Canon does need to iron out a few kinks – especially with the touch and drag focus – because that's a big deal and in the video section, allow LUT preview while the video is recorded in LOG. And please, add an option of shooting RAW at a lower resolution!

At a price of ₹2.44L we believe this is fairly priced for its features & the value it provides surely sets it apart from the competition while establishing its position as an enthusiast-grade camera.



TEXT AND IMAGES: ANIRUDH IYER

iPhone 17 Pro vs Vivo X300 Pro: A Flagship Camera Face-Off

Two flagship smartphones, two very different imaging philosophies. Apple's iPhone 17 Pro and Vivo's X300 Pro sit firmly at the premium end of the market, both priced north of the ₹1 lakh mark and both promising class-leading camera performance. With powerful processors, advanced imaging pipelines and multi-camera systems, the question is not whether they are capable—but which one does it better. This comparison focuses purely on camera performance across real-world shooting scenarios, from daylight photography to low light, portraits, macro and video.



Pricing and Positioning

The iPhone 17 Pro starts at ₹1.35 lakh, placing it firmly in the ultra-premium bracket. The Vivo X300 Pro undercuts it at around ₹1.10 lakh, though street pricing and offers can narrow this gap. Both phones target serious users who expect top-tier performance, particularly from their cameras.

Daylight Main Camera

In daylight, the difference in philosophy becomes immediately apparent. The iPhone captures images at 24MP, while the Vivo defaults to a lower-resolution output. In practice, the iPhone produces slightly sharper images, particularly noticeable when zooming in. Vivo's recent software updates have improved natural rendering, but images still tend to be marginally underexposed, affecting shadow detail and highlight recovery. Vivo images are more saturated, while the iPhone leans towards neutral, accurate colours. At 2× zoom, both

Camera Hardware

Vivo X300 Pro

- Vivo X300 Pro Triple 50 MP camera setup
- New custom 200MP telephoto sensor by Samsung, Mediatek & Vivo (14.3MP output with 50 & 200MP options available)
- 50MP Front camera (Samsung JN1 - 14.2MP output)
- 50MP hi-res photo option available on all sensors
- Powered by Mediatek Dimensity 9500 processor and V3+ imaging chip
- Video capability bumped up to 8K at 30fps and 4K at up to 120fps, with LOG—which is only available in 4K

iPhone 17 Pro

- Triple 48 MP Fusion cameras on the back
- 18 MP front camera with a square sensor and Center Stage
- Updated Photonic Engine for better low light and colour accuracy
- Powered by the A19 Pro chip with 12 GB RAM (up from 8 GB)
- Video: 4K up to 120 fps, ProRes RAW, and GenLock support



Daylight Main

phones show a dip in quality, but the iPhone maintains a slight edge. Vivo's high-resolution shooting modes can recover detail at the cost of storage space, while Apple counters with its own high-resolution options.

Daylight Ultra-Wide

In daylight, the difference in philosophy becomes immediately apparent. The iPhone's 48MP Sony IMX903 sensor outputs 24MP images by default, while the Vivo's 50MP Sony LYT-828 sensor produces 14.3MP images. In theory, the iPhone's higher output resolution should translate into sharper images—and in practice, it does as well.

On zooming in, the iPhone images retain finer detail. Vivo's recent software updates have improved natural rendering, but images still tend to be marginally underexposed, affecting shadow detail and highlight recovery. Vivo's colour tuning leans towards saturation, while the iPhone remains more neutral and truer to life.

At 2× zoom, both phones show a drop in quality, but the iPhone maintains a marginal edge. Vivo does counter this with its 50MP high-resolution mode on the main sensor, though this comes at the cost of increased storage usage, while Apple offers a similar high-resolution option on its main camera.

Daylight Ultra-Wide

The trend continues with the ultra-wide cameras. The iPhone's 48MP Sony IMX972 sensor delivers better sharpness, superior distortion correction and more reliable dynamic range compared to Vivo's 50MP Samsung JN1 sensor. Vivo's ultra-wide images again appear slightly underexposed, with punchier colours but compromised shadow detail.

While Vivo offers a 50MP high-resolution mode on the ultra-wide camera, the iPhone's default 24MP output feels more refined, balanced and dependable, especially in challenging lighting.

Telephoto Performance

Telephoto performance is a strong point for both devices, but they take very different routes to get there. The iPhone's 48MP Sony IMX973 telephoto camera offers optical zoom up to 4× and digital zoom up to 40×. Vivo's custom 200MP telephoto sensor, on the other hand, offers optical zoom up to 3.5× and digital zoom reaching 100×.

Up to 4×, the iPhone produces sharper and cleaner images. Beyond that, Vivo quickly catches up and then overtakes. At 10× zoom, both phones deliver comparable results, though Vivo's brighter output makes images appear more appealing at first glance.



Daylight Wide



Daylight Telephoto



Lowlight Main

At extreme zoom levels, the Vivo's higher-resolution sensor gives it a clear advantage, delivering noticeably sharper images despite visible processing. For users who rely heavily on long-range photography, Vivo clearly holds the upper hand once digital zoom becomes the primary factor.

Low-Light Performance

Low-light photography is more evenly matched than expected. Using the main cameras, the Vivo's Sony LYT-828 sensor delivers stronger contrast, producing more dramatic images, though it sometimes over-brightens scenes and introduces colour shifts due to aggressive processing.

The iPhone's Sony IMX903 sensor produces more restrained and consistent results, even if the images lack some visual punch. On the ultra-wide cameras, Vivo again shows better sharpness and contrast from the Samsung JN1 sensor, while the iPhone's IMX972 maintains superior colour accuracy.

Telephoto performance follows the daylight trend, with both phones performing well at optical zoom levels, but Vivo dominating once digital zoom comes into play, albeit with heavier computational processing.

Portrait Mode

Portrait photography highlights the philosophical divide between the two brands. The iPhone allows portrait shooting across all three rear cameras and produces more natural-looking images with accurate skin tones and consistent colour reproduction.

Vivo offers a wider range of portrait focal lengths, made possible by its multi-sensor setup, but applies noticeable skin smoothing and occasionally inconsistent colour tuning. Edge detection and background separation are strong on both, but Apple's portraits feel closer to reality, while Vivo's lean towards a more stylised aesthetic.

Macro Photography

Macro photography delivers an unexpected result. Despite Vivo's super macro advantage, the iPhone produces sharper images with better detail and more accurate colours. Vivo does allow users to get as close as approximately 10cm to the subject, offering greater flexibility, but it also tends to alter colours from the original scene, particularly in natural textures like bark and foliage.



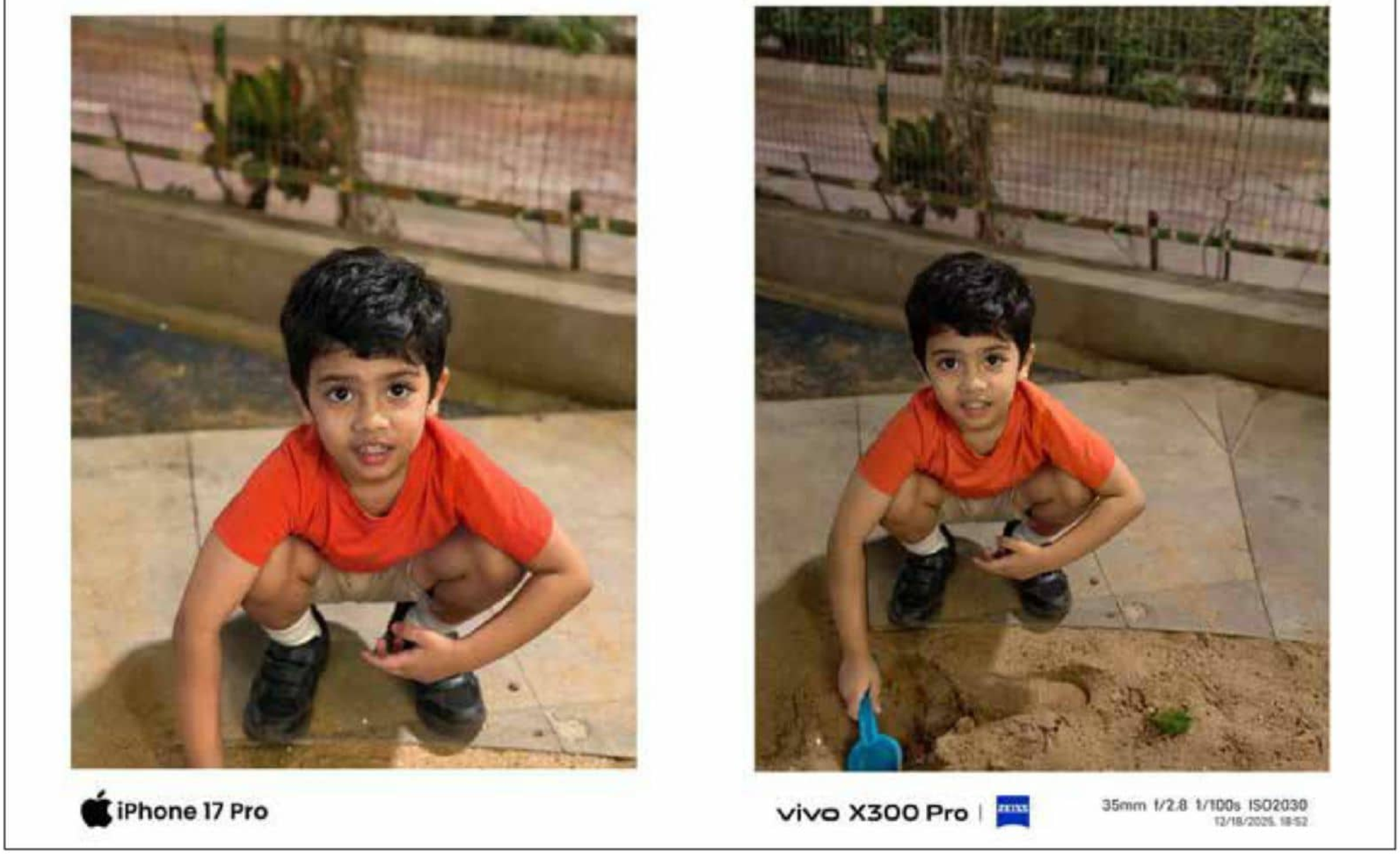
Lowlight Wide

Front Camera Performance

On the front, Vivo's upgraded 50MP Samsung JN1 sensor delivers higher detail, particularly when zooming in. The iPhone's 18MP square sensor produces warmer, more saturated images but clearly Vivo has an edge when it comes to this one.

Video Performance

Video remains Apple's strongest suit. While Vivo's hardware enables 8K recording, the iPhone's output at 4K—driven by the A19 Pro chip and Apple's image processing—remains more balanced, better stabilised and far more consistent in colour and exposure. ProRes RAW support, GenLock and dependable autofocus make the iPhone the more serious tool

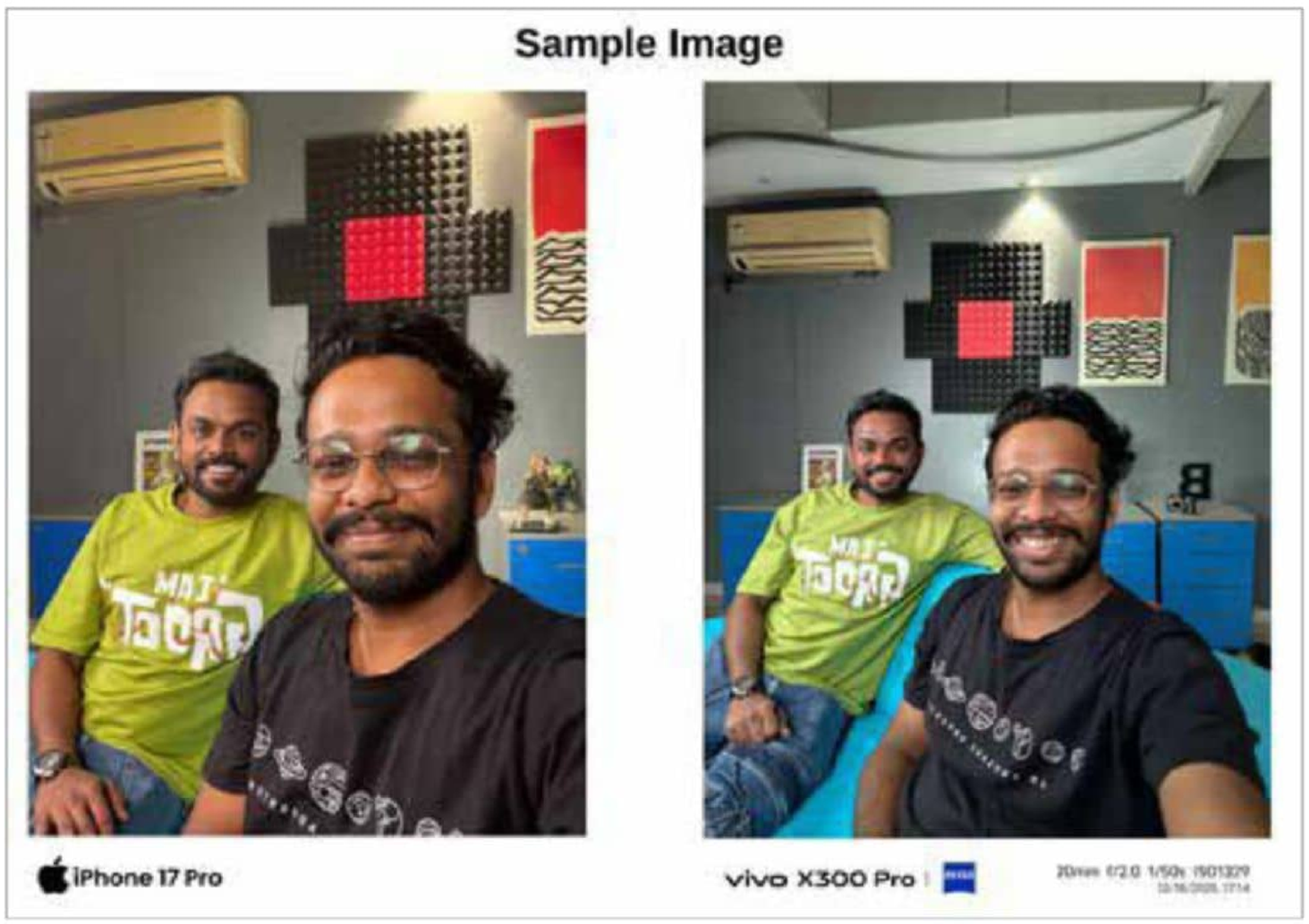


Lowlight Portrait

for content creators and professional videographers.

Battery & Thermals

Battery life clearly favours the Vivo thanks to its massive 6500mAh capacity, often stretching to a day and a half of use. The iPhone, however, manages heat more effectively and remains stable during extended shooting sessions, except when recording ProRes RAW video.



.**Front Camera**

Final Verdict

This is not a clear-cut win. The Vivo X300 Pro excels in telephoto photography, low-light contrast, front camera detail and battery life, largely thanks to its ambitious sensor choices. The iPhone 17 Pro counters with superior consistency, more natural portraits, stronger macro performance and industry-leading video capabilities driven by its tightly integrated sensor and processing pipeline.

For users who value experimentation, extreme zoom and computational flair, Vivo offers remarkable value. For those who prioritise reliability, colour accuracy and professional-grade video, the iPhone remains the safer choice. Despite Vivo's impressive hardware advantages, the iPhone 17 Pro's overall balance and predictability give it the edge as the better all-round camera phone, albeit at a higher price.

TEXT AND IMAGES: BHAVYA DESAI

OPPO Find X9 Review - The Benchmark

When we reviewed the OPPO Find X8 Pro last year, with many users feeling that it punched well above its weight. This year, Oppo sent over its younger sibling, the OPPO Find X9, placing it in a competitive mid-range flagship segment. Like its predecessor, the Find X9's cameras are co-engineered with Hasselblad, setting expectations high, especially on the camera front. Here's our detailed look at what the OPPO Find X9 cameras bring to the table.



PRICE
₹75,000

Camera & Hardware Overview

The OPPO Find X9 comes with a familiar triple-camera setup featuring a:

- 50MP main camera (14MP output)
- 50MP ultra-wide camera (14MP output)
- 50MP telephoto camera (14MP output)
- 32MP front camera (12MP output)
- Powered by MediaTek Dimensity 9500 processor
- Backed up by a 7025mAh battery

One thing that's peculiar about this phone is that it enables you to get 25-50 MP photos without enabling a high-res mode, depending on the amount of light in the scene. But just to be clear, there is a separate "Hasselblad Hi-res" mode available that works on all three cameras on the optical lenses only (0.6x, 1x and 3x).

There's also the Hasselblad Xpan mode which has an updated UI and allows you to shoot in the Xpan ratio—photographers will know exactly what this is.

Look, Body & Feel

The design of the OPPO Find X9 is a noticeable departure from the Find X8. It now looks more in line with other smartphones in this segment. The camera bump resembles older iPhone designs and features the Hasselblad logo at the center of the flash module. The biggest visual differentiator is the camera layout itself, with the ultrawide lens sporting a pill-shaped design.

The phone features a 6.59-inch "ProXDR" display and weighs 203 grams. In daily use, it feels compact and manageable, something users with smaller hands will appreciate. On the left side, there's a programmable action button that can be assigned to various tasks, including launching the camera. Within the camera app, this button can also be used to capture photos.

Daylight Performance

Main Camera

The main camera uses a 50MP Sony LYT-808 sensor with a default 12MP output. It supports shooting at 1x, 1.3x, 1.5x, and 2x zoom levels.

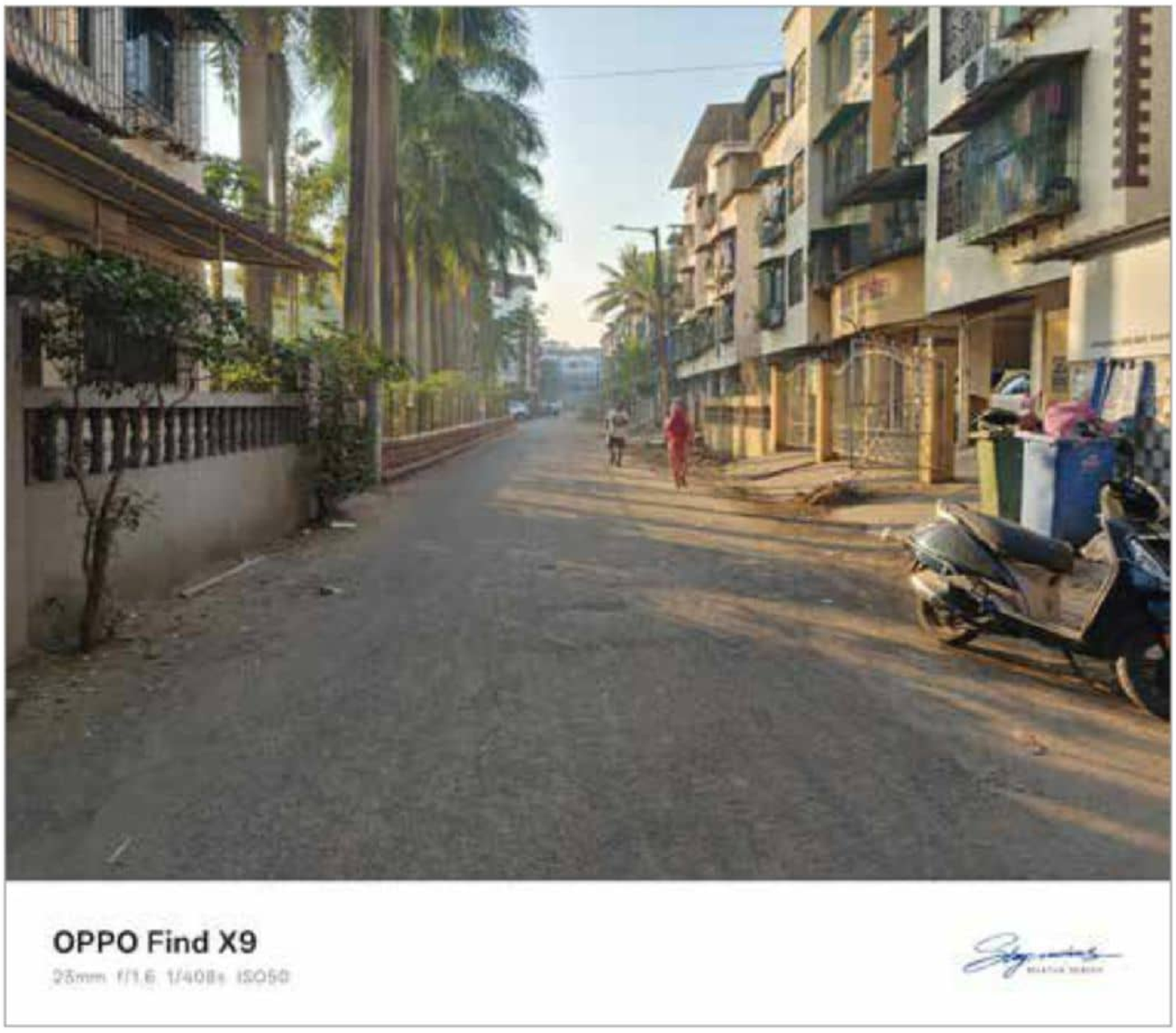
Images are sharp, crisp, and detailed, especially when zooming in. However, they tend to look oversaturated and overly vibrant, which some users may enjoy. Dynamic range is good, with decent highlight and shadow handling.

That said, in several shots, human subjects appeared slightly underexposed despite adequate lighting. This feels like something that could potentially be addressed through a software update.

Ultra-Wide Camera

The ultra-wide camera uses a Samsung JN5 sensor with a 12MP output and performs impressively. In fact, it's better than many ultra-wide cameras we've seen in this category.

Compared to the main camera, images from the ultra-wide tend to be brighter than the actual scene. While the main camera sometimes underexposes, the wide camera compensates by lifting brightness. Images remain sharp and detailed



Daylight Main

but share the same vibrant, slightly oversaturated look, often pushing skin tones toward a reddish hue.

Highlights and shadows are handled reasonably well, though occasional flaring and aggressive processing are visible. Overall, it's a solid ultra-wide shooter.



Daylight Telephoto

Telephoto Camera

The telephoto setup uses a 50MP Sony LYT-600 periscope sensor, offering 3x optical and 6x lossless quality options with a maximum digital zoom of 120x.

Results here are mixed. In some cases, images appear underexposed, while in others they're slightly overexposed. Sharpness and detail are generally good, especially up to 6x.

Visible processing is present, and some shots show a reddish colour tone. However, colour consistency at higher zoom levels is commendable, with very little colour shifting, something many zoom cameras struggle with. At extreme zoom levels, colour fringing becomes noticeable.

Low-Light Performance

In low light, the OPPO Find X9 delivers vibrant, well-saturated images. In fact, saturation sometimes feels excessive. Heavy processing is evident across all cameras, though many users may still like the end result.

Detail loss becomes visible when zooming in, which is expected. The ultra-wide camera stays relatively true to the scene, but ghosting and halo effects appear around strong light sources.

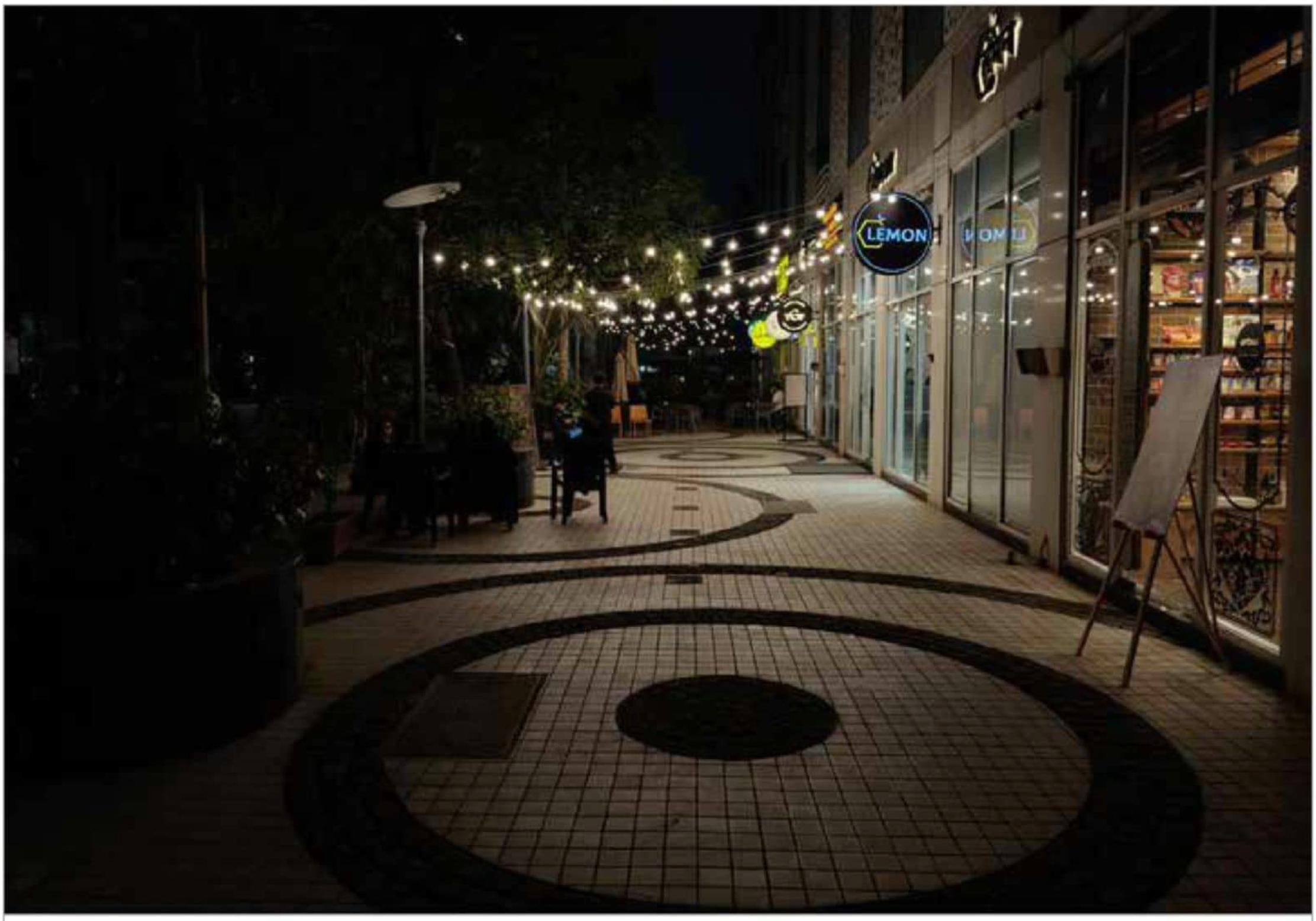
Telephoto images in low light are softer and show noticeable processing, along with some flaring and ghosting. On the positive side, colour shifting is minimal. High zoom in low light, however, isn't recommended.

Front Camera

The front camera uses a 32MP sensor with a default 14MP output. Like the rear cameras, it supports automatic high-resolution capture, delivering full 32MP images when lighting allows.

There are two focal options: 0.8x and 1x. In practice, the 0.8x option feels more useful, making the 1x option somewhat redundant.

Image quality is strong, with natural skin tones and good detail retention. Front camera portraits benefit from the auto high-resolution feature as well, producing detailed images. Edge detection is good, but subject separation can look inconsistent on



Lowlight Main

close inspection, especially around complex areas.

Skin smoothing is minimal, which is welcome, but some images show uneven processing where certain areas appear discoloured. This doesn't happen consistently, but it's noticeable when it does.

The front camera supports 4K video recording at up to 60fps using both focal options. Front camera video is one of the best performing cameras we've seen so far, with colour rendition very true to the scene and close to reality. Skin tones are preserved well and the image is very well-exposed.

Portrait Mode

Portraits can be shot using three focal lengths. The results are generally pleasing, with good sharpness, accurate edge detection, and natural-looking bokeh.

Skin smoothing is minimal, but the phone tends to slightly brighten skin tones, particularly in low light, where a reddish tint becomes more pronounced.

Video Performance

The OPPO Find X9 supports 4K video recording at up to 120fps, an upgrade over last year's 4K 60fps limit. At 120fps, only the 1x, 2x, and 3x lenses are available. Shooting at 4K 60fps unlocks the 0.8x and 6x lenses as well.

Optical image stabilisation is available on two of the three cameras, excluding the ultra-wide, which is typical. Video quality is good and consistent with last year's performance. Colours are slightly punchy, stabilisation



Macro

works well, and autofocus is reliable.

The camera app remains largely unchanged and is easy to navigate. For advanced users, LOG recording is available in the Pro video mode providing wider dynamic range and post-production flexibility.

Macro Mode

The super macro mode returns with a minimum focussing distance of approximately 10cm. Results are mixed but improved compared to last year. Some shots show impressive detail and convincing background blur, mimicking a dedicated macro lens.

What We Liked

Battery:

The 7025mAh battery is a major upgrade over last generation's 5900mAh in the pro unit. It easily lasts up to two days with balanced use and offers excellent standby time. Fast charging support includes 80W wired and 50W wireless charging, making this a strong selling point.

Display:

The Find X9 features a 6.3-inch 120Hz LTPS AMOLED display with peak local brightness of 3600 nits and 1800 nits in high brightness mode. Visibility outdoors is excellent, and HDR content looks great.

UI:

The phone came with ColorOS 16 out of the box and has received multiple updates since launch, including camera improvements. The UI remains smooth and functional, borrowing minimalist elements from OnePlus. Whether users like it or not will come down to personal preference, but is a definite plus point in terms of usability.

What We Didn't Like

Camera Preview Accuracy:

The biggest issue is the camera preview. Images often look overexposed and blown out on the preview screen, even though the final photo turns out fine. In some cases, when the phone detects people in the frame, it overexposes the preview entirely. Despite multiple software updates, this issue hasn't been fixed and can be misleading while shooting.



Lowlight Portrait

Verdict

So, how do the cameras on the OPPO Find X9 hold up?

Overall, the answer is yes, with some caveats. The cameras deliver sharp, detailed images, and the automatic high-resolution mode is a no-brainer, with everyday images retaining more detail out of the box.

However, low-light telephoto performance could be better, and the aggressive processing needs to be toned down. At a price of ₹75,000, the OPPO Find X9 is a solid buy, especially with card offers taken into account. With a few refinements and software improvements, this could easily become an even stronger contender in its segment.

TEXT AND IMAGES: ANIRUDH IYER

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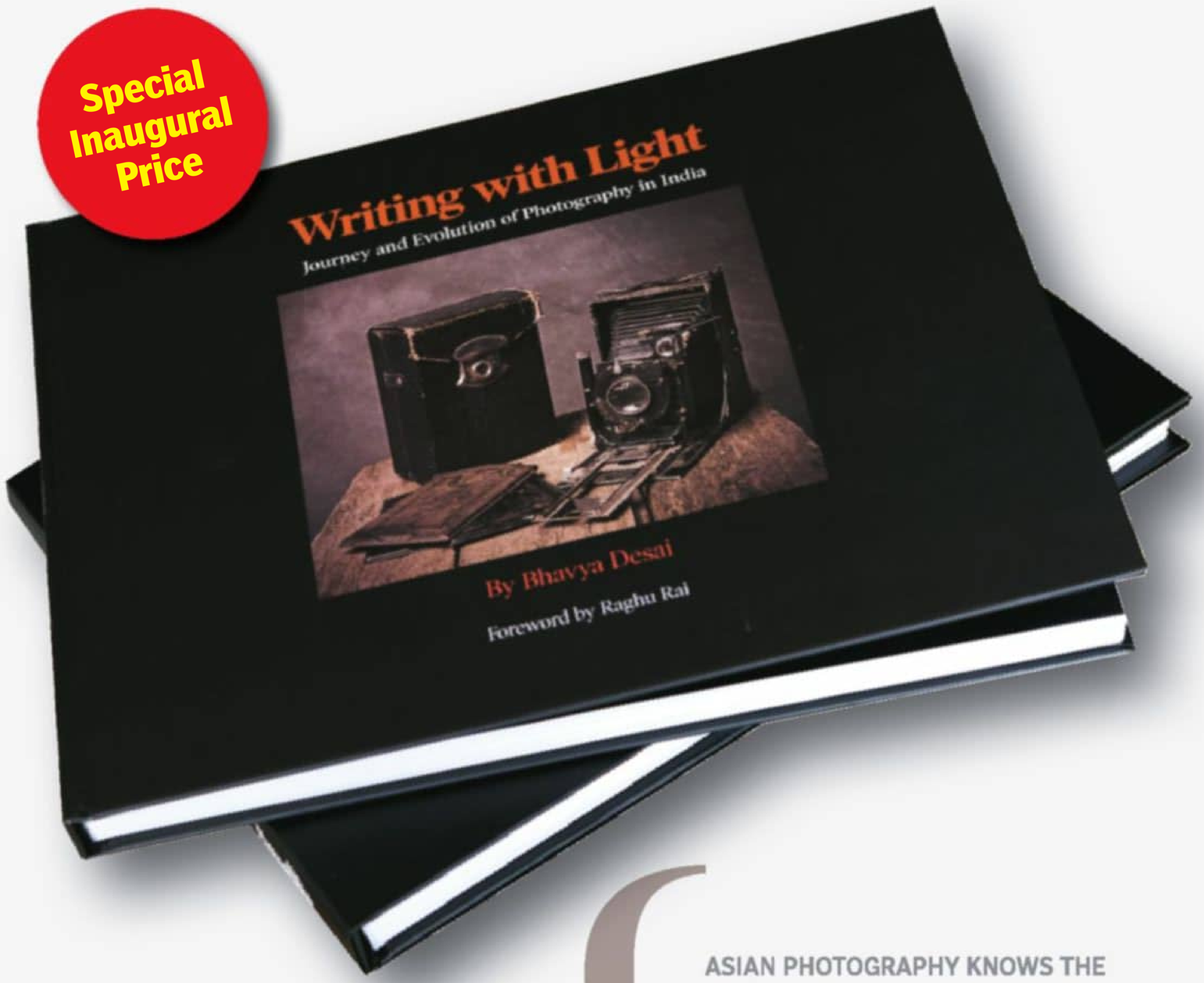
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