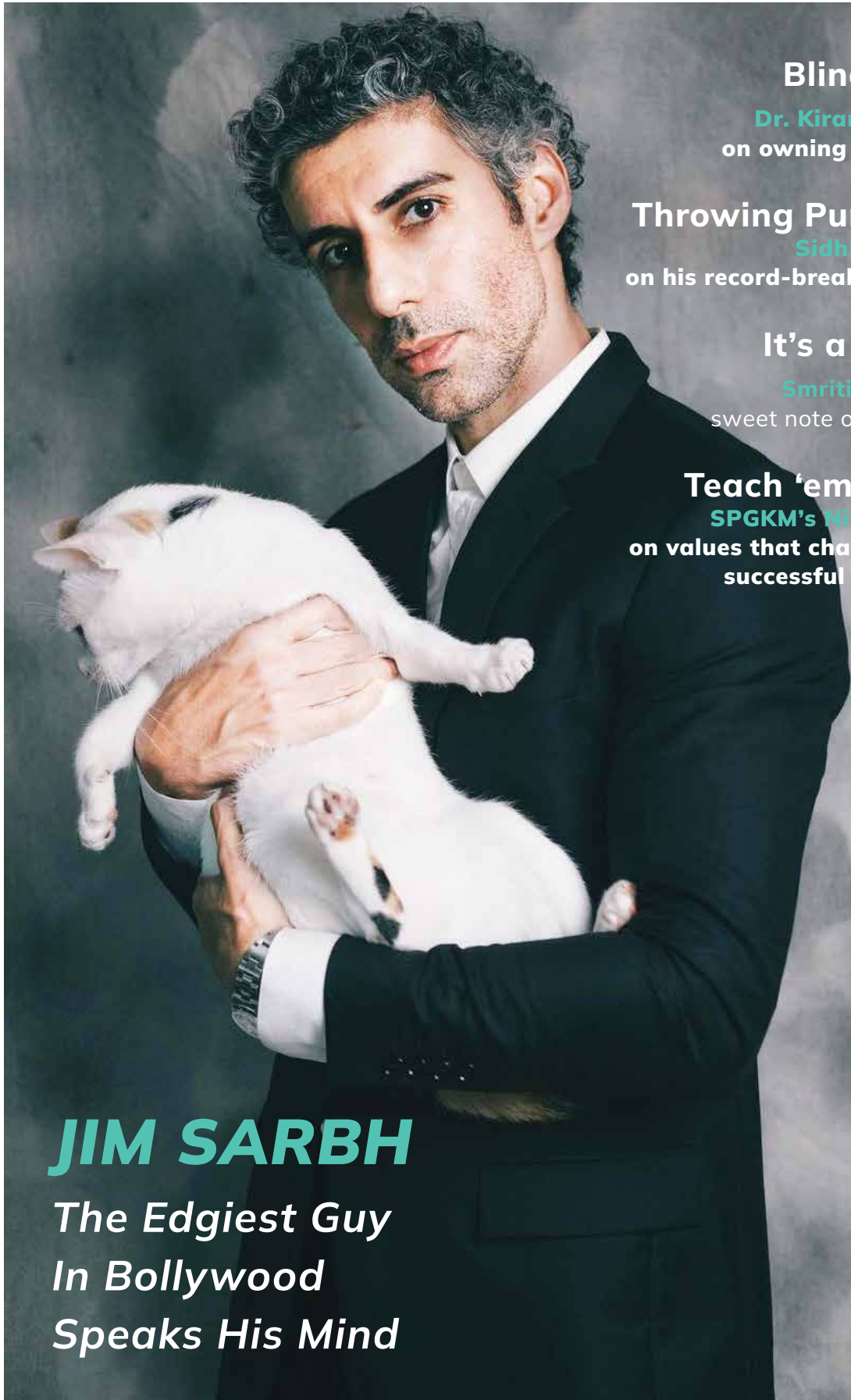


# WE CONNECT

RAZOR SHARP



## **JIM SARBH**

*The Edgiest Guy  
In Bollywood  
Speaks His Mind*

### **Blindsight**

**Dr. Kiran Kumari**  
on owning the dark

### **Throwing Punches!**

**Sidhu Kshetri**  
on his record-breaking jabs

### **It's a Treat!**

**Smriti Bhatia's**  
sweet note of success

### **Teach 'em right!**

**SPGKM's Nitin Desai**  
on values that characterise  
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## *A Path Less Trodden*



*You may not control  
all the events that  
happen to you, but  
you can decide not to  
be reduced by them.”*

— *Maya Angelou,*  
*American*  
*memoirist and poet*

If life is all about making choices. After all, the decisions we make impacts us as well as those in our orbit. At the end, it all boils down to that leap of faith as you step off the cliff not knowing if you are going to stay on terra firma or freefall into an abyss.

Cliffhangers and freefalls remind me of the suave and stupendously talented actor Jim Sarbh who is a master storyteller. Our associate copy editor, Priyanka Chandani didn't have to twist my arm when she pitched the actor who marches to his own drummer as our November Man. I thought it was a capital idea. Come November 19th, and 80 countries around the world will celebrate International Men's Day (IMD) — a day reserved to honour the contributions and achievements of men while addressing important issues affecting their health, wellbeing, and gender equality.

Who better than Sarbh to talk about his definition of masculinity, pushing boundaries and what being an evolved man entails while never letting go of his humanity? Turn the page as he holds court.

So chuffed was the team that they pulled out all stops gathering luminaries to add sparkle to our Diwali edition. Is it any wonder that *We Connect* looks like it has been lit up with a million tealights?

But before I join the party, from our home to yours, Happy Diwali!

**Corina B Manuel**

**Editor-in-Chief**

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**We Educate**  
Tejas Gujarathi

# On the **Threshold** of a **Century**



As the Peshwa City prepares to celebrate the centennial of the Shree Poona Gujarati Kelvani Mandal, **Tejas Gujarathi** takes note of the immense contributions of the Gujarati community to education in Maharashtra. Established in 1926, the institution's legacy extends far beyond its roots, leaving an indelible mark of educational excellence and social commitment

## WE CONNECT

**F**or those who are just catching up into the history of the Oxford of the East, the story of Shree Poona Gujarati Kelvani Mandal has a special tome of its own. It all began on August 13, 1926, when a group of visionary leaders from the Gujarati community in Pune came together to create educational opportunities for their children. Steered by leaders such as stalwarts like Rao Bahadur Lallubhai Shah, Diwan Bahadur Dadu Bhai K. Desai, and others, they laid the foundation for an institution that would grow to shape thousands of young minds and become an indelible piece of Pune's history.

### A stepping stone to making history

Come 1928, just two years after the Mandal's inception, the Sheth Shri Nathu Bhai Hukamchand Gujarati Primary School was inaugurated, marking the beginning of a journey driven by a relentless pursuit of educational excellence. This was followed by the establishment of the Anglo-Gujarati Vernacular High School in 1937, under the dynamic leadership of Acharya Dhansukhlal Dadawala, who transformed the Mandal into a centre of learning excellence.



*“As we approach our centennial milestone, we are not just celebrating the past, but reaffirming our commitment to education, community service, and social responsibility.”*

**— Nitin Desai,**  
Chief Trustee and President,  
Shree Poona Gujarati Kelvani Mandal



*“As we move into the future, I am confident that we will continue to foster academic excellence and produce students who will make a lasting impact in their fields and in society.”*

**— Dr. Rajendra G. Gurao,**  
Principal, HV Desai College

### A strong patronage

Generous patrons like Chunnilal Brijbhushan Mehta supported the Mandal's progress, contributing funds to purchase land for the high school in Kasba Peth. In recognition, the school was named Ratanben Chunnilal Mehta Gujarati High School (RCM). This school soon became a respected educational brand, shaping the futures of many students.

### Winds of change

As the Mandal continued to grow, it adapted to the changing needs of the community. In 1941, the Sheth Hukamchand Ishwardas Gujarati Bal Mandir was established for younger students, and in 1944, the Sheth Motiram Laxmidas Commercial Institute was launched to offer vocational training. By 1960, the Mandal introduced technical education at RCM, anticipating the growing demand for skilled professionals.

### Of milestones and markers

In 1975, the Mandal achieved another milestone with the establishment of the Acharya Shri D.B. Dadawala Junior College, providing higher education to students in Pune. This was a tribute to Acharya Dadawala's tireless efforts to expand educational opportunities in the region. By 1984, the Mandal's vision for further expansion led to the creation of the Shree Poona Gujarati Kelvani Mandal Senior College, which was initially housed within the high school.



With support from Sheth Ravjibhai Desai, the Mandal acquired land behind Shaniwarwada for the new college premises, which was named H.V. Desai Senior College of Arts, Commerce, and Science.

## Tomorrow is here...

Today, the Mandal has expanded its offerings significantly. It now operates institutions such as the Smt. Sulochanaben Dhansukhlal Dadawala Technical School, the Smt. S.S.H. Bhagat Institute of Computer Technology, and English medium schools. Additionally, the Mandal offers postgraduate courses, autonomous journalism programs, heritage walks, Modi script training, competitive exam study centres, and Ph.D. programs. Preparations for its centennial celebration in 2026 are already underway.



*“Our strength lies in our ability to adapt to changing times while staying true to our roots.”*

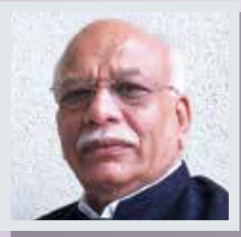
**— Rajesh Shah,**  
Chairman, PGKM

## Cultivating future leaders

Over the past 98 years, the Mandal has produced a remarkable number of doctors, professors, chartered accountants, government officials, politicians, and entrepreneurs. Many alumni have returned to contribute to the institution's growth, nurturing the next generation. The Mandal's mission remains clear: to cultivate responsible citizens with clean hands, strong shoulders, and sharp minds.

## Profound legacy

Nitin Desai, Chief Trustee and President, Shree Poona Gujarati Kelvani Mandal, reflects on the institution's profound legacy, “As we approach our centennial milestone, we are not just celebrating the past, but reaffirming our commitment to education, community service, and social responsibility. Our institution has always strived to create a strong foundation for future generations, ensuring that our students excel academically and contribute meaningfully to society.”



*“We believe in inclusivity, offering equal opportunities for all students to grow.”*

**— Hemant C. Maniar,**  
Secretary, PGKM

## Change is inevitable

Rajesh Shah, Chairman, PGKM, highlights the importance of innovation. “Our strength lies in our ability to adapt to changing times while staying true to our roots. As we look forward to the next hundred years, we aim to provide students with a blend of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge, equipping them with the skills they need to excel in a fast-changing global landscape.”

## Lasting impression

Concurs Hemant C. Maniar, Secretary, PGKM, and emphasizes the institution's inclusivity and growth. “Over the decades, our institution has grown in both size and its ability to reach students from all walks of

life. We believe in inclusivity, offering equal opportunities for all students to grow. This openness, combined with our commitment to excellence, has made us a pillar of education in the community,” he adds.

## Future perfect

As we head out of the corridors of time and into the future, Dr. Rajendra G. Gurao, Principal, HV Desai college, shares his vision for academic excellence. “Our mission is to nurture students holistically developing their intellectual capabilities, leadership skills, and moral values. As we move into the future, I am confident that we will continue to foster academic excellence and produce students who will make a lasting impact in their fields and in society.” □