

GUTSHOT

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**IS RUMMY
THE NEW
POKER?**

**BANDOOKBAAZ:
GUNNING FOR
GLORY**

**POKER
MILESTONES
OF 2020**

**SEEN
AND RAISED:**
Celebrating the
Indomitable
Spirit of the Gaming
Industry in 2020

**LIVING, LEARNING
AND THRIVING IN 2020**
**AN INTERVIEW WITH AIG CEO,
ROLAND LANDERS**



14-31 JAN

28CR
GTD

WHERE WINNING BECOMES A HABIT

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IOPC SCHEDULE

	TIME	TOURNAMENT	GTD	VIP POINTS	BUY-IN		TIME	TOURNAMENT	GTD	VIP POINTS	BUY-IN
14 JAN	12:00 PM	IOPC #1	800K	110	550	23 JAN	12:00 PM	IOPC #62	400K	110	550
	02:00 PM	IOPC #2	800K	330	1,650		02:00 PM	IOPC #63 - (K0)	500K	220	1,100
	04:00 PM	IOPC #3 - MONSTER STACK	650K	176	880		04:00 PM	IOPC #64 - MONSTER STACK	575K	176	880
	06:00 PM	IOPC #4	425K	220	1,100		06:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE LEGENDS DAY 1A	-	5,500	27,500
	08:00 PM	IOPC #5 - ULTRON	35L	880	4,400		08:00 PM	IOPC #65 - TITAN STACK	25L	880	4,400
	09:30 PM	IOPC #6	16.5L	660	3,300		09:30 PM	IOPC #66 - HOUSE PARTY	13L	440	2,200
	11:00 PM	IOPC #7 - DEEPSTACK	875K	330	1,650		11:00 PM	IOPC #67	800K	220	1,100
15 JAN	12:00 PM	IOPC #8 - (R+A)	400K	88	440	24 JAN	12:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE LEGENDS DAY 1B	-	5,500	27,500
	02:00 PM	IOPC #9	750K	220	1,100		02:00 PM	IOPC #68	675K	440	2,200
	04:00 PM	IOPC #10 - MONSTER STACK	675K	198	990		03:30 PM	IOPC #69 - MONSTER STACK	575K	176	880
	06:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE UNITED DAY 1A	-	1,540	7,700		04:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE LEGENDS DAY 1C	-	5,500	27,500
	08:00 PM	IOPC #11 - TGIF	18L	330	1,650		06:00 PM	IOPC #70	250K	110	550
	09:30 PM	IOPC #12 - THE ELITE	50L	2,200	11,000		08:00 PM	IOPC #71 - SUNDAY SUPERSTACK	60L	1,100	5,500
	11:00 PM	IOPC #13 - MONSTER STACK	950K	440	2,200		09:30 PM	IOPC #72	13L	660	3,300
16 JAN	12:00 PM	IOPC #14	350K	88	440	25 JAN	10:00 PM	IOPC #73 - THE MILLIONAIRE LEGENDS DAY 2	1.75CR	5,500	27,500
	02:00 PM	IOPC #15	650K	220	1,100		11:00 PM	IOPC #74	975K	220	1,100
	04:00 PM	IOPC #16 - DEEPSTACK	800K	176	880		12:00 PM	IOPC #75 - (R+A)	300K	88	440
	06:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE UNITED DAY 1B	-	1,540	7,700		02:00 PM	IOPC #76	550K	330	1,650
	08:00 PM	IOPC #17 - TITAN STACK	25L	880	4,400		04:00 PM	IOPC #77 - MONSTER STACK	500K	176	880
	09:30 PM	IOPC #18 - HOUSE PARTY	13L	440	2,200		06:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1A	-	2,200	11,000
	11:00 PM	IOPC #19	750K	330	1,650		08:00 PM	IOPC #78 - RECHARGE	22L	440	2,200
17 JAN	12:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE UNITED DAY 1C	-	1,540	7,700	26 JAN	09:30 PM	IOPC #79	675K	660	3,300
	02:00 PM	IOPC #20	675K	440	2,200		11:00 PM	IOPC #80 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200
	03:30 PM	IOPC #21 - MONSTER STACK	475K	154	770		12:00 PM	IOPC #81	475K	132	660
	04:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE UNITED DAY 1D	-	1,540	7,700		02:00 PM	IOPC #82	625K	440	2,200
	06:00 PM	THE MILLIONAIRE UNITED DAY 1E - TURBO	-	1,540	7,700		04:00 PM	IOPC #83 - (DEEPSTACK - BOOST)	450K	154	770
	08:00 PM	IOPC #22 - SUNDAY SUPERSTACK	50L	1,100	5,500		06:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1B	-	2,200	11,000
	09:30 PM	IOPC #23	15L	660	3,300		08:00 PM	IOPC #84 - MEGA SATCK	35L	660	3,300
18 JAN	10:00 PM	IOPC #24 - THE MILLIONAIRE UNITED DAY 2	1.5CR	-	-	27 JAN	09:30 PM	IOPC #85	13L	330	1,650
	11:00 PM	IOPC #25	800K	198	990		11:00 PM	IOPC #86 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200
	12:00 PM	IOPC #26 - (R+A)	250K	88	440		12:00 PM	IOPC #87	525K	154	770
	02:00 PM	IOPC #27	650K	330	1,650		02:00 PM	IOPC #88	600K	330	1,650
	04:00 PM	IOPC #28	525K	154	770		04:00 PM	IOPC #89 - MONSTER STACK	600K	198	990
	06:00 PM	IOPC #29 - (PK0)	300K	198	990		06:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1C	-	2,200	11,000
	08:00 PM	IOPC #30 - RECHARGE	22L	440	2,200		08:00 PM	IOPC #90 - DESTINY	50L	1,100	5,500
19 JAN	09:30 PM	IOPC #31 - (FO)	700K	660	3,300	28 JAN	09:30 PM	IOPC #91	11L	330	1,650
	11:00 PM	IOPC #32 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200		11:00 PM	IOPC #92 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200
	12:00 PM	IOPC #33	500K	132	660		12:00 PM	IOPC #93	350K	110	550
	02:00 PM	IOPC #34	700K	330	1,650		02:00 PM	IOPC #94	575K	220	1,100
	04:00 PM	IOPC #35	650K	198	990		04:00 PM	IOPC #95 - DEEPSTACK	500K	176	880
	06:00 PM	IOPC #36	400K	220	1,100		06:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1D	-	2,200	11,000
	08:00 PM	IOPC #37 - MEGA SATCK	35L	660	3,300		08:00 PM	IOPC #96 - ULTRON	40L	880	4,400
20 JAN	09:30 PM	IOPC #38	13L	330	1,650	29 JAN	09:00 PM	IOPC #97 - SUPER HIGH ROLLER	1.25CR	21,000	105,000
	11:00 PM	IOPC #39 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200		09:30 PM	IOPC #98	16.5L	660	3,300
	12:00 PM	IOPC #40 - (R+A)	300K	110	550		11:00 PM	IOPC #99 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200
	02:00 PM	IOPC #41	650K	440	2,200		12:00 PM	IOPC #100	450K	132	660
	04:00 PM	IOPC #42 - DEEPSTACK	575K	176	880		02:00 PM	IOPC #101	625K	440	2,200
	06:00 PM	IOPC #43 - (PK0)	350K	220	1,100		04:00 PM	IOPC #102	575K	198	990
	08:00 PM	IOPC #44 - DESTINY	50L	1,100	5,500		06:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1E	-	2,200	11,000
21 JAN	09:30 PM	IOPC #45	11L	330	1,650	30 JAN	08:00 PM	IOPC #103 - TGIF	18L	330	1,650
	11:00 PM	IOPC #46 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200		09:30 PM	IOPC #104 - THE ELITE	60L	2,200	11,000
	12:00 PM	IOPC #47	575K	154	770		11:00 PM	IOPC #105 - DESTINY IOPC	10L	440	2,200
	02:00 PM	IOPC #48	625K	330	1,650		12:00 PM	IOPC #106	525K	154	770
	04:00 PM	IOPC #49 - MONSTER STACK (BOOST)	500K	154	770		02:00 PM	IOPC #107	600K	330	1,650
	06:00 PM	IOPC #50	675K	330	1,650		04:00 PM	IOPC #108 - MONSTER STACK	525K	176	880
	08:00 PM	IOPC #51 - ULTRON	40L	880	4,400		06:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1F	-	2,200	11,000
22 JAN	09:00 PM	IOPC #52 - HIGH ROLLER	1CR	11,000	55,000	31 JAN	08:00 PM	IOPC #109 - TITAN STACK	25L	880	4,400
	09:30 PM	IOPC #53	16.5L	660	3,300		09:00 PM	IOPC #110 - PLO HIGH ROLLER	50L	5,500	27,500
	11:00 PM	IOPC #54 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200		09:30 PM	IOPC #111 - HOUSE PARTY	13L	440	2,200
	12:00 PM	IOPC #55	475K	132	660		11:00 PM	IOPC #112	900K	220	1,100
	02:00 PM	IOPC #56	625K	330	1,650		12:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1G	-	2,200	11,000
	04:00 PM	IOPC #57 - DEEPSTACK	525K	198	990		02:00 PM	IOPC #113	650K	440	2,200
	06:00 PM	IOPC #58	350K	220	1,100		03:30 PM	IOPC #114 - MONSTER STACK	525K	198	990
	08:00 PM	IOPC #59 - TGIF	18L	330	1,650		05:00 PM	MAIN EVENT DAY 1H	-	2,200	11,000
	09:30 PM	IOPC #60 - THE ELITE	60L	2,200	11,000		08:00 PM	IOPC #115 - SUNDAY SUPERSTACK	60L	1,100	5,500
	11:00 PM	IOPC #61 - DESTINY IOPC EDITION	10L	440	2,200		09:00 PM	DESTINY - IOPC SNG	500K	-	-
							09:30 PM	IOPC #116	325K	660	3,300
							10:00 PM	IOPC #117 - MAIN EVENT DAY 2	3.5CR	2,200	11,000
							11:00 PM	IOPC #118	15L	440	2,200

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the year ending edition of Gutshot and in case you were under a rock somewhere, nothing much has changed with regard to the pandemic. Although recent news of a vaccine by a pharmaceutical major has brought some amount of much needed cheer.

Our cover this time around features Roland Landers, the top gun of the All India Gaming Federation (AIGF). A key figure in the Indian gaming landscape, he and the AIGF have been taking many proactive steps to promote the burgeoning gaming industry in the country. We speak with him about his views on how far the industry has come along and his thoughts looking ahead at the future of the industry as a whole.

With the year end coming up, we do our customary wrap of the big news stories of the year. That is accompanied by a number of special features and profile pieces on people who are part of the gaming industry who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Some glam factor in this issue with actor/DJ Siddhanth Kapoor sharing his thoughts about the game they love and we've got articles on games like rummy and esports as well rounding off the issue.

This year has been a forgettable one and all we can do is look onward and upward. On behalf of the entire team here at Gutshot, here's wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Till next time, stay safe and keep crushing!

Peter Abraham

PETER ABRAHAM
Editor-In-Chief





ANNIE DUKE GIVES A TALK FOR MOTILAL OSWAL ON DECISION MAKING

World renowned poker pro, a decision strategist, an author, and a performance coach, [Annie Duke](#), gave an insightful talk on decision making to viewers as part of Motilal Oswal's investment series. Duke covered points such as 're-sulting', knowledge tracking, and hindsight bias. She also emphasized the three Ps of decision-making: Preferences, Payoffs and Probabilities.

The webinar was a huge hit with prominent names in the industry such as Muskan Sethi in attendance.



JOE BIDEN GETS ELECTED AS US PRESIDENT, POKER INDUSTRY MAY FLOURISH

Donald Trump's administration had reinstated the [Wire Act](#), which sought to criminalize certain forms of interstate gaming, including online poker. The Biden administration, however, has assured US citizens that he will reverse the Wire Act implying that the gaming industry will be allowed to operate without any unnecessary restrictions.



INDIA POKER CHAMPIONSHIP CONDUCTS ONE OF THE BIGGEST POKER TOURNAMENTS THIS YEAR!

The prestigious online poker event, [Final Table Series](#) (FTS) by India Poker Championship boasted of a massive prize pool of INR 8+ Crore GTD, one of the biggest prize pools for an online gaming event in India. Held between 16 – 23 November, 2020, it was one of the most sought after events this year.

Like icing on cake, the FTS also had five international and Indian commentators taking viewers through the action, namely Maria Ho, Sam Razavi, Ramesh Thotapalli, Kevin Macphee and Radhika Shankar.



A NEW LOOK FOR THE RUMMY FEDERATION

The Rummy Federation (TRF), changed their corporate name to The Online Rummy Federation (TORF) earlier this year. The decision had been made to keep up with the game's rising online popularity. They also changed their seal and logo in line with the new name. The organization continues to be a self-regulatory body for the online rummy industry. Their objectives are to develop and promote online rummy, while also ensuring that online rummy operators are following the standards and guidelines that will promote a healthy environment for gaming.

TAMIL NADU BANS ONLINE RUMMY AND OTHER GAMBLING GAMES

The Tamil Nadu government banned all online betting and gambling games in the state last month. The decision was made by the AIADMK government, headed by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami. Petitions for the ban were made after reports of gambling related suicides, deaths, and cheating began to increase. The ban includes on-line poker, rummy and other on-line gambling apps. This move puts Tamil Nadu in the growing list of Indian states banning all forms of gambling and is a major setback to the rummy industry. The Online Rummy Federation (TORF) were in favour of the game's regulation but are against its outright ban.

RUMMYCIRCLE ANNOUNCES EXCITING CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

RummyCircle announced a Rumble 2020 tournament which will run from 25 December, 2020 to 1 January, 2021. Players will be able to win from a prize pool of INR 75,000 every Rumble Hour. A player with an unbeaten high score by the end of the event will win first place and a prize of INR 5 Lakh. Along with this RummyCircle will also be hosting a Christmas Tournament for all rummy

lovers from 23 - 28 December. There will be three finales through the week, each with a prize pool of INR 20 Lakh. Players who don't qualify for the first finale can still qualify for the remaining two.





NRG ESPORTS UNVEILS A \$10 MILLION GAMING FANTASY FACTORY!

NRG Esports, an American professional esports organization based out of Los Angeles, California, has revealed a \$10 million worth massive “NRG Gaming Castle” on 18 November, 2020. It is a 20,000 square foot gaming studio that mirrors Rob Dyrdek’s Fantasy Factory or Willy Wonka’s Chocolate Factory, specifically for

creation of over-the-top gaming content and esports competitions. It lies in the heart of Los Angeles. It is a multi-level spot with a unique design in the world of gaming. Executive producer Grady says, “You can technically play every video game ever created on this giant movie screen,” placed inside of the castle.



LOL AND TFT TOURNAMENTS TO PAY FOR YOUR EDUCATION?

Personal Finance app SoFi has decided to partner with N3rd Street Gamers and Riot Games for a series of collegiate League of Legends and Teamfight Tactics tournaments introducing Meta Melee to students’ lives. The prize pool will be \$50k which can only be utilized to pay for school fees and investment in shares and other securities. The students will be expected to open up a free account on SoFi Active Invest and to have some serious LoL & TFT skills to convert their winning prize money into investment options. To qualify, players have to be above 18 years of age and be enrolled in a four-year college or university programme.

SAY GOODBYE TO LEAGUE OF LEGENDS’ PRESTIGE POINTS AT THE END OF 2020!

Riot Games announced that LoL fans will soon be saying goodbye to the prestige points or at least the way they used to work. The organization is making some significant changes to the Prestige system for the upcoming year. With patch 10.25, a new Dianna skin will be released as the Last Event prestige of the year.



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Poker Milestones of 2020

WORDS BY **DONNA AMO**

The poker community experienced major changes in 2020. Many popular live events scheduled this year had to be moved online or cancelled due to the pandemic. But amidst this unfortunate situation the poker industry saw a huge growth, owing to the digital format that was being adopted everywhere. There was an influx of players getting into the poker scene, slowly bringing the industry into the limelight. But this wasn't the only good news for poker this year. So, let us

look at amazing poker moments of 2020 that even COVID-19 could not stop from happening.

Rubin Labroo crowned India Poker Champion 2020

Starting the year on a good note, Rubin Labroo took the India Poker Championship by storm when he was crowned 'India Poker Champion' 2020. The 31-year-old from Delhi, won the 50K Main Event after getting past an enormous field of 693 entries and finally

defeating Siddharth Mundada at the final table. Labroo won a whopping INR 61.8 Lakh along with an INR 20 Lakh sponsorship from [Spartan Poker](#) and INR 6.6 Lakh worth MS Dhoni limited edition Panerai watch. With this win Labroo has officially made his place in India's poker hall of fame.

M.S Dhoni becomes PokerStars India Brand Ambassador

The year saw many sportsmen in India take

continued on page 12



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an interest in poker. MS Dhoni, one of the biggest players in the Indian cricket scene, was signed by [PokerStars India](#) as a brand ambassador. Suresh Raina was another cricketer who was signed as the brand ambassador for online poker platform [9stacks](#).

Nikita Luther signed as Spartan Poker Pro

Nikita Luther is the second player and the only Indian woman to win a World Series of Poker (WSOP) bracelet. She is one of the top poker players in India and among the top 10 in

Asia. With all these titles under her belt, it didn't come as a surprise when [Spartan Poker](#) brought her onboard as a Spartan Poker Pro in June this year. Aptly nicknamed the 'Superwoman of Poker,' Luther managed to create a mark in the poker world which is dominated by men. Her role as a Spartan Poker Pro will be to represent the brand at all major tournaments as an expert poker player.

Mandovi wins India's fourth WSOP Bracelet

August of this year saw India welcoming its fourth WSOP bracelet when poker player 'Mandovi' won the 2020 World Series of Poker (WSOP) Online. 'Mandovi' defeated Russia's Konstantin Maslak and bagged a massive win of USD 234,433 (INR 1.75

Crore) and his first bracelet. From entering the table with the smallest stack to being crowned champion, this was definitely a memorable win for him and the country.



BLITZPOKER launches in India

Poker's bad boy and king of Instagram, Dan Bilzerian is not one to shy away from the spotlight. Known for his outrageous lifestyle and colourful personality, his fans expected nothing less from the poker star when he announced the launch of his own poker platform: [BLITZPOKER](#) in India. With 'Bigger, Better, Ballsier,' as its tagline, the platform perfectly captured Bilzerian's larger than life persona. Joining the QuadNet network which also has Spartan Poker on it, BLITZPOKER was welcomed into the Indian poker scene with much enthusiasm as its launch would help the growth of the poker industry. Recently, Bilzerian was roped



in by GGPoker as brand ambassador (read below).

WSOP goes Online in 2020

For the first time in its 51-year history, the World Series of Poker (WSOP) held its entire tournament series online. It was Bulgaria's Stoyan Madanzhiev who entered the history books when he won the WSOP \$5K Main Event this September, bagging a record \$3.90 million in prize money. But with the WSOP recently announcing another main event with the traditional freeze-out format, one question remains: [Will Madanzhiev continue to hold the title of WSOP Champion 2020?](#)

GGpoker Breaks the Guinness World Record

When [GGPoker](#) announced the World Series of Poker Online Tournament, they didn't do it with the intention of breaking a world record, but that's exactly what happened. The success of the event raised the initial prize pool of \$25 million to \$27,559,500, breaking the Guinness World Record for the

largest prize pool for an online poker tournament. The record prize pool was shared among the top 728 players in the tournament with each prize winner earning a minimum payout of \$11,834. The previous record was \$21,780,000 and was set by partypoker MILLIONS in 2018.

New Tourney Formats Being Used in India for the First Time

The lockdown pushed many poker platforms to adopt new and innovative ways to engage their users. New tourney formats were introduced to the Indian poker scene promoting the game further. One of the formats introduced was the [first Heads Up Challenge by 9stacks](#) in which players faced each other in a one-on-one game. [Prakash 'pinnug' Gupta was declared the winner](#) of this event and he took home a prize of INR 200K and a winner's trophy. [India Poker Championship \(IPC\) held the Final Table Series](#) which was the first online event in India where all the featured final tables were streamed live across social media. With notable guests like Maria

Ho, Kevin Mac and more commenting on the livestream. The event ended with [Arjun Pasricha being crowned as the FTS Main Event winner](#) and took home a massive prize of INR 40,01,584 with an 18K Gold and Diamond studded Medallion and an INR 10 Lakh sponsorship by IPC.

GGPoker Signs Several Big Pros as Ambassadors

The year 2020 was a good one for GGPoker as they welcomed several big industry pros as brand ambassadors. Poker players like the 27-year-old poker coach [Fedor Holz](#), French player [Bertrand' ElkY' Grospellier](#), Felipe Ramos, and recently Instagram King [Dan Bilzerian](#) joined the GGPoker family. With so much talent on board, we can expect a spectacular year ahead for this poker giant.

To sum it up, the poker industry did not have it easy, but despite the unexpected situation and rollercoaster of a ride, the industry has not only managed to survive but thrive as well. So, here's to an eventful 2020 and hopefully an even better 2021.

SIDDHANTH: HITTING THE BULLZEYE IN POKER

WORDS BY DWAYNE FERNANDES

Some of us know him as a techno disk jockey. Some of us know him as an assistant director. Even more know him as an actor, having played vital roles in films like *Shootout At Wadala*, *Haseena Parkar* and more. However, he's best known as one of the most enthusiastic, caring and fun-loving members of our growing Indian poker community!

We're talking about Siddhanth Kapoor aka 'Bullzeye' who is a frequent at live poker events and almost a daily online grinder, with several deep runs to his name. If there's a Highroller taking place in Goa, you're sure to see him buying into the tournament. But in recent months he's been restricted, like millions of others, thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Photographer: Sheldon Santos

Siddhanth is a good friend of Gutshot and he decided to speak to us about his poker play, his time during the pandemic and of course, a major online title he won recently. When asked about how he manages to fit poker into his daily schedule, he said, "I actually manage to find time for poker solely because I love the game so much. I just find the time somehow. I need 5-6 hours and that's enough to get in a couple of tournaments on a daily basis. I'm not a cash games person; I like my tournaments only."

Talking about tournaments, he's recently been grinding across platforms including [Adda52](#) where the World Poker Tour (WPT) India Online recently ended. He waded through a field of 307 players in WPT India Classic 5 Lakh GTD to take home his maiden WPT title and Rs.1.25L in prize money. Impressive, yeah?

"It feels amazing to be a WPT title holder and I honestly feel it's just the beginning of a lot more to come," he said about the win. Playing as 'bullseye-power' on Adda52, he beat a number of known pros to emerge victorious in the 6+

hour grind.

"Poker just boomed for me ever since the Covid pandemic. It was a good time and actually still is. Yes, a lot of online training and playing took place ever since the pandemic happened, and that's probably some of the reasons I now own a WPT title."

Prior to this tournament win, Siddhanth won a few online poker titles and plenty of deep runs in daily features as well. However, he admits that nothing beats the excitement of being at the mecca of poker—World Series of Poker (WSOP) in Las Vegas. He recounted making Day 2 of the WSOP Main Event as his favourite moment in poker till date!

You would see this friendly face in live events in Goa (pre-Covid) and I remember last bumping into him at the India Poker Championship (IPC) in January 2020, where he came in to play the Highroller and if I'm not wrong, the Main Event as well. He bricked that series but is waiting to get back to the physical felts once again, especially after claiming to have improved his game since the start of the pandemic.



"I'm itching, literally itching to get back. Can't wait. I just hope everyone takes the required safety measures and we can get back out there. Yeah, poker's amazing," he said about wanting to be at yet another live series in Goa and maybe even abroad, as he was even spotted at the European Poker Tour (EPT) stop in Barcelona once. His love for the game is evident and we hope to see much more of Bullseye in online and live tournaments to come. Don't forget to stay tuned to Gutshot because he may feature in one of our exclusive tournaments in the near future where we're sure to place a special bounty on his head!



Photographer: Vishwas Gulati

**ROLAND
LANDERS:**

**LIVING,
LEARNING
AND
THRIVING
IN
2020**

WORDS BY **SHRIYA GHATE**

What would you say are the biggest trends in 2020 as far as the industry is concerned? Do you see a shift towards esports more than online skill gaming or the other way around?

The year 2020 has been an exciting year for the Indian gaming market. WFH resulted in more people participating in online gaming. The game-play increased three folds on the online platform and many online skill gaming platforms reported three times more user engagement and 30% higher traffic in mobile gaming. Time spent on gaming has been on the increase with EY FICCI Frames 2020 report stating that 662 million hours were spent on gaming. Esports is one of the emerging sectors in India but is still at a nascent stage, whereas the Online Skill Gaming sector is now almost a decade old—both sectors will witness significant growth in the future.

What was the biggest challenge for you as the CEO of AIGF?

The biggest challenge was getting the online skill gaming stakeholders

to work together for the common cause of the industry, and changing the negative perception around online skill gaming, educating and highlighting the menace of illegal offshore betting and gambling businesses in India. In addition to this, most of the State Gaming Acts are archaic and were brought into effect much before the era of the internet. Moreover, differing state interpretations of online skill games make it difficult to build scale for businesses.

At the time the acts were put up, there was absolutely no digital presence.

Other than these, there are certain analogies that can be presented, let us take the banks: Horse racing and betting on horse racing has been

specifically not mentioned in any of the ordinances passed till date. Would this mean online horse racing would be permitted in those states where wagering and betting online is covered under the ordinance?

At the time the acts were put up, there was absolutely no digital presence. All these have changed for many industries. People's way of communication has changed. Look at the stock market, which is regulated and well managed. From the initial model of brick and mortar brokers/traders/agents, it has completely been transformed online.

Currently, the Industry is self-regulated, governed by comprehensive charters and audits. Relevant regulators should strengthen the self-regulation mechanism of the sector by backing and endorsing it. States should view online gaming from the perspective of how it can contribute economically, job creation etc., and understand the difference between online skill gaming, Indian registered companies who follow all



Photographer: Vishwas Gulati

the laws, including direct and indirect taxation and the illegal offshore betting, and gambling websites which should be banned.

How did you overcome this challenge?

AIGF was set up in 2016 with a prerequisite to the existing challenges. Our main objective was bringing recognition to the on-line skill gaming industry, through representations with the relevant state and central government ministries and stakeholders to highlight the economic benefits of this sunrise sector, which is a direct

beneficiary of the massively successful digital India initiative.

Over the years, we also developed a detailed strategy, considering wide scale media outreach and started working at the forefront with various stakeholders, conducting events, press conferences, and educating people about the industry and its socio-economic benefits.

Furthermore, due to the lack of central regulation, AIGF has been at the forefront ensuring global best practices for its stakeholders through self-regulation. The Skill Games Charter which was released in 2018 is based on the foundations of integrity, legality, global best practices, and good governance. The Charter focuses entirely on player protection, responsible gaming including guidelines for advertising in this space.

The skill games charter has been prepared by India's leading law firms and has been vetted by the AIGF advisory panel

members comprising of Justice Vikramajit Sen, former Supreme Court Judge, Prof Deepak Dayanidhi, IIM Kozikode, and other eminent domain experts from diverse backgrounds like academics, finance, education, and mental health.

Which aspects of your personality and experience did you rely on in order to overcome these challenges?

In an industry as dynamic as ours, patience, and perseverance have helped me the most in overcoming these challenges.

Who or what would you say was your biggest support system this year?

My colleagues, member stakeholders and the industry have been the biggest support system working together from home during these unprecedented times. Earlier this year, AIGF had boarded eminent experts from the diverse backgrounds like Justice Vikramajit Sen, a former Judge of the Supreme Court & former Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, Ms. Fatema

Agarkar, leading educationist & Founder of the Agarkar Centre of Excellence (ACE) combining sports and education, Ms. Jhulan Goswami, Indian, International Cricketer and the former captain of the Indian National women's cricket team and Ms. Ishita Pateria, Counselling Psychologist & Psychotherapist to offer their expert guidance and support.

Do you feel like the lack of understanding regarding gaming is more this year, given that more people than ever before are playing online in 2020?

Some states are taking a negative view towards online skill gaming due to a lack of understanding the differentiation between Skill Gaming vis-à-vis betting and gambling –Courts and legislatures across the country have recognized games of skill as separate from betting/gambling.

I sincerely believe that it is in all stakeholder's interest to regulate/support the self-regulation practices like the one followed by AIGF rather than impose bans.

The gaming industry has had an unprecedented year business-wise. What are the changes you would suggest in our education/legal/systems that would help boost the growth of the gaming industry in India?

There are some critical policies that each government should consider implementing, similar to the AVGC in Karnataka. Poker is being used effectively in the curriculum in IIM Kozhikode to help the students in their various faculties.

Many online learning systems should also develop course content with gaming in a perspective that will help many in their local and global pursuits. Companies have used it for enhanced sales revenues and customer retention as well, effectively. This will provide a lot of investment opportunities to the state as well. We have seen in the past, progress is made in leaps and bounds and we are also as nimble to go back on what has been implemented, with equal aplomb. This confuses everyone and the



business continuity is always suspect. It has to be completely clear with proper regulation and policies should be implemented with guidance from AIGF.

By banning, we are inadvertently paving the way for all the illegal online gaming operators to make hay. They are also not paying taxes. This does not help the government in any way whatsoever. People continue to gamble illegally and the suicide rates also do not fall. The first step always should be to see if the illegal online gambling industry is completely curtailed by these states, before they go about banning

digital skill games. The digital skill gaming industry in such cases would only look to build a base elsewhere where everything is clear and above board.

Also, the media presents a lot of noise in data which cannot be ascribed to digital skill gaming. Interpretations from that lead many to consider actions immediately without looking at each and every case with merit.

All these will need to be addressed and controlled by a regulating body empaneled with necessary ministries. AIGF has always been at the forefront here to provide any help to institutions who demand the same.

Any chances of a collaboration with any other gaming federations in India?

The Online Skill Gaming Industry stakeholders have begun working together for the common cause of the sector.

What are your aspirations for 2021?

It has become very im-

portant now that the industry's self-regulation be recognized and endorsed by the relevant government ministries so that it encourages more and more investments leading to technological advancements as well as generation of increased revenue and employment in the country.

What is your message to all the people who are working in this industry?

The online gaming industry is one of the sunrise sectors in India that beat the economic downturn. The sector can become one of the potential sources of employment in India alongside being a major contributor to the exchequer through taxation. To sum it up the online gaming industry has a lot to offer to the business ecosystem in the upcoming future and is a focus area for investors in this sector.

Gutshot salutes and celebrates the industry's indomitable spirit, and wishes Mr Landers an even better 2021!

THE BIGGEST INDUSTRY TRENDS IN 2020:

- Gaming is becoming more interactive, immersive, and social
- Gaming technologies are becoming more affordable
- Emphasis has shifted to localized themes and games. Many indigenous game developers are building titles in multiple local languages for customized content.
- Introduction of cloud gaming services Arcade and Stadia
- Advancement in augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)
- Smartphone penetration with affordable & faster data
- Growth of Digital ecosystem for payments
- Growing investments in the sector
- Increased recognition and growing popularity amongst the youth as a valuable career option

CARDS SPEAK: MAKING POKER CONTENT IN 2020

WORDS BY MANTHRA KOLIYER

A recreational poker player, commentator, production wizard and content creator, Aditya Wadhwani is all of this and much more. We caught up with Wadhwani to get his perspective about the changing times in our industry. Here's what he said:

The online poker industry has surged to a great extent during the pandemic. What is your perspective on this?

I think an upswing in activity has always been around the corner. The pandemic was a catalyst of sorts for online poker, especially during the early days of the lockdown. However, the reach is still little compared to other sports. That is a pretty strong indicator that poker in India still exists in a relative bubble.

How important is it to create content that reaches the masses



and not just this niche audience?

Mass marketing, while a juicy proposition, will never be as efficient as targeting existing players. More focus needs to be put on converting the already pro poker players in the metros into viewers. This is because poker is not the easiest game for recreational players to learn, and more importantly, make any money from. Legally speaking,

companies have to put up the message that poker is a skill game.

The current mass messaging is some twisted version of "It's like rummy or teen patti but different". This sends a mixed message to newbies. So they come, get cleaned out eventually by the regulars and pros. Then they never return. Those who get lucky early on and win a little, get that classic



false sense of security or winning tilt and proceed to lose whatever they won citing “bad luck or rigged RNG” as their problem. There are other contributors to new player dissatisfaction in the community, too. One is the classic know-it-all keyboard warrior and troll who sees posts from new players about bad beats and proceed to belittle these people instead of helping. Side note, I love those players personally because they are the easiest money—the overconfident bad regular! Milking this player is a million times easier than the crazy new fish. Without a good entry point, mass marketing for poker is only going to get you so far, at least while the messaging has such double standards.

However, there are

some content creators like **9stacks**’ who are trying to pull in the masses. For example, their recent Heads Up Championship is a great fun format which could be like the T20 of poker. The point, as always, is to put out quality content and volume consistently.

Tell us about other content ideas that you have apart from live streams.

I am working on more YouTube based content focusing on uploading videos and their re-watching ability. Until you grow your following outside of the current poker network your growth is going to be limited. Live streams are going to become increasingly tiring to stream and to watch. The only time you get a good boost is when it is late at night, which also conflicts with

the play time of half your audience.

Content is needed and is in demand but it’s not quite engaging enough. Especially for what is being spent by some productions.

The recent WPT, IPC and PSL events with cards up has been a great step forward for content innovation, but it’s still the same 200 folk watching it. For operators this must be frustrating because they’re spending a lot of money on operations for major events and inviting international celebrities, etc. But, they are getting out done by individuals on organic performance metrics.

How do you even justify that to your investors?

For my own brand and poker’s visibility, it will be about shareable, relatable content that will hopefully engage people who are already playing and want a fun window into our world. So stay tuned everyone and support the growth of this content!

Wadhvani has been a consistent contributor to the poker community. His effort to bring visibility to poker must be applauded and celebrated. We wish him more successes in



SEEN AND RAISED: **DEEPANSHI TOMAR**

*Well known poker player and GM Marketing at Baazi Games, **Deepanshi Tomar**, had quite an eventful year, even by 2020 standards! She spoke to **Shriya Ghate** about how she used this year to study the game.*





What were your biggest challenges in 2020?

At the beginning of the year, I did very well at the Baazi Poker Tour and IPC. I found myself at the final table a lot in January 2020, and to celebrate, I booked a trip to Leh. Unfortunately, I broke my knee while climbing an ice waterfall there. Following this, my movement got very restricted. Obviously, it wasn't the greatest thing to happen to me but there were some upsides.

I got to spend some time with my family without knowing that the lockdown would eventually give family time to everyone! With ample time at hand post lockdown, I decided to read about poker as a subject.

I didn't want to play the game as much, but to study it. I went through a few books, online material, and tried to study the minds of a few poker buddies by observing their game style. Initially my efforts were quite scattered but now I am able to place all the pieces in the right places.

How did you overcome these challenges?

As I said earlier, I have put in a lot of time in 2020 to know the game better. At the moment, I am also practising yoga and meditation in the Himalayan foothills. It's helping me get back on my feet, both physically and mentally. I will be ready for beasting soon!



I have put in a lot of time in 2020 to know the game better. At the moment, I am also practising yoga and meditation in the Himalayan foothills.

Who was your biggest support in the workplace and personally?

I have been associated with Baazi Games as GM Marketing for some



time. For the community it is the most trusted site, but for me it is home. I want to mention Varun Ganjoo in particular who has been an extraordinary support to me at work and Navkiran Singh, who asked after me, both about my game and other aspects of my life.

Personally, my family has always been my greatest support. They have taken really good care of me and in 2020, somehow, we have found ourselves together.

Does being a player help in the way that you market the game?

It's always great for a restaurant to know the

taste customers prefer. In this case, I am the restaurant and the customer too! Poker players are constantly looking to sell. Marketing requires the same skills. Being in touch with poker helps me understand the market's demand. Like it is often said, if you've done your homework correctly, you and the person you are negotiating with are both there to play the game with the hope of walking away satisfied.

What is your message to people within and outside industry?

Poker is good, it's exciting, challenging, creative, energetic, gives freedom, glory, and much more.

It is also a skill-based game that has been developed by great players since its inception. In India, the industry is going to grow and thus will generate enormous opportunities for anyone who is willing to put in the work from now.

In the West, poker has been seen as pure skill. And I am not just talking about the government but the people, the players. They go deeper into it using various tools like books, online material,



Poker is good, it's exciting, challenging, creative, energetic, gives freedom, glory, and much more.

software, and most importantly, their own intelligence and intention. I see this lacking in our country since the majority of the population is punting. Still, there are some great players in our country to look up to. There is a lot to learn from them. I hope they all grow and take the game to new heights. Good luck and

Deepanshi Tomar's

positive attitude, not just towards the game but also to life, is nothing short of inspiring. We wish her the best in 2021!



PANDEMIC AND POKER:

PSL'S UNSURPASSABLE SUCCESS

WORDS BY **MANTHRA KOLIYER**

Poker Sports League is India's first poker league, and their captain is Pranav Bagai. As CEO and Co-Founder of PSL, Bagai has successfully hosted a charity event and several virtual tournaments during the pandemic.

Manthra Koliyer caught up with Bagai to find out more about PSL's progress and his insights about the years to come.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT PSL'S PROGRESS DURING THE PANDEMIC.

When the pandemic first hit us, it was a really big blow.

Our PSL and production business were entirely live. Our immediate thought was, what are we going to do? What was interesting about the pandemic was that it gave us a lot of time to sit back, think and pivot.

We are a really strong team and we were not ready to give up. We started to think about the things we did live and how we could do it online and still remain pioneers in those spaces.

Switching from live to online has had plenty of advantages. Normally for a finale, we would fly people down, pay heavy venue costs, and our event would only last for five days, but now we have a five week finale. Team owners have also started to show greater interest, that has eventually been a bonus. I would also like to mention Sidharth Mishra, Co-Founder of PSL and his team for the production and stream aspect of the business. All of this wouldn't have been possible without his constant

support.

PSL HOSTED THE FIRST CHARITY POKER EVENT IN INDIA. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE PIONEER?

I won't say we are the pioneer philanthropists, but I will say that Virtual Poker League (VPL), the charity event that we conducted, was super successful. It was the first time that top poker players across India were able to come and be a part of something bigger. For them to play for charity was a good experience. It was a great concept and VPL is definitely a property we will be investing heavily into. We are planning to have

at least one VPL every year keeping it as a charity event and also seeing how we could involve other companies and eventually make this into a global event. This will help with the negative perception of poker that exists in India and some parts of the world.

The VPL that took place this year only had a budget of INR 10 Lakhs, but in the future we aim for bigger. The virtual poker scene is not completely in the past, casinos are opening up and people are getting in touch with us to host livestream tables.

AS A BRAND THAT CONDUCTED LIVE POKER TOURNAMENTS IN THE PAST AND ARE NOW MOVING TO A DIGITAL SPACE, DO YOU THINK ONLINE POKER WILL TAKE OVER LIVE TOURNAMENTS IN THE FUTURE ?

The live tournament is not completely in the past. One of the most interesting things that happened during the pandemic, was that there were significant cultural and habit changes. Earlier on if I asked people to go online and play such games, it was something people were uncomfortable with. The pandemic forced us to do things virtually.

So I think the overall effect on the game has been mostly positive in some ways as a lot more people are comfortable playing virtually than in a live environment. Online poker tournaments are something that'll just keep growing, like the recent Spartan Final Table Series that went live online.

We are still in awe of PSL's suave approach to a crisis. Expectations just keep building and we're sure PSL will fulfill each of them!



WHAT IS A SET? WHAT IS A SEQUENCE? WHAT IS A LIFE SEQUENCE?

Do you want to play rummy online and make some moolah?

Here, we demystify these rummy basics

so you understand the game really well and cash in!

Universally, rummy is played with two decks of cards which contain two Joker cards. Amidst all the cards you are dealt, you will need to pick the valid declaration which will make you a winner!

You can make a valid declaration by picking and discarding cards from the piles of cards in front of you. Easy peasy! There will be two piles of cards in front of you—one is closed and the other is open. You cannot view the card you pick from the closed deck. The open deck consists of the cards that the players discard while playing the game.

Once the game runs its rounds, you will only win at rummy when you group the cards in valid sequences and sets! Let's understand what these winning horses, i.e. Set, Sequence and Pure Sequence are.

Ground rules:

- When you are dealt with 13 cards in total, you can win the game with a minimum of two sequences in hand.
- One has to be a pure sequence and the others can be any valid sequence



or sets.

- At any cost, a pure sequence is a must for a rummy declaration. Before we get into the details, here is a little know-how.
- In this game, the cards in each suit start with Ace and end with King, ranking low to high – Ace, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen and King.
- Ace, Jack, Queen and King will win you 10 points each.
- The value of the rest of the cards is simply its face value. For instance, card 8 gives you 8 points and so on.

How to form sequences?

If you have a group of three or more consecutive cards of the same suit, you have a sequence in hand. But there are two types of sequences, Pure and Impure.

Pure Sequence

You can form a pure sequence by placing a group of three or more cards of the same suit in consecutive order. Here you must remember that a joker or wild card will be invalid.

Example:

- 5♠ 6♠ 7♠ (No joker is used here. Just a pure sequence with three cards in consecutive order)
- 3♠ 4♠ 5♠ 6♠ (A pure sequence of four cards sans the use of any wild or joker card)

Impure Sequence

You make an impure sequence by inserting one or more joker cards in a group of three or more cards of the same suit.

Example:

- 6♦ 7♦ Q♠ 9♦ (Q♠ is the Wild Joker here and it replaced 8♦ to form an impure sequence)
- 5♠ Q♥ 7♠ 8♠ PJ (Q♥ is wild joker here replacing 6♠ and the Printed Joker is replacing 9♠)

What is a life sequence?

If you have a minimum of two sequences, one being a pure at least, then that marks your 'First Life'.

The other sequence can be pure or impure. This

one will be your 'Second Life'.

In any case, one of these sequences must have four or more cards. And voila! You can now make a valid declaration! At this point, the scores of the rest of the players are counted.

So there you have it—the basics of rummy! What are you waiting for, go ahead and make your first set, sequence and life sequence!



IS RUMMY THE NEW POKER?

WORDS BY **DONNA AMO**

Card games have played a significant role in Indian culture. Crucial in social gatherings as a form of entertainment, their presence has always been welcomed. Out of these, rummy has been the most popular and recognizable. Its easy-to-understand rules and enjoyable gameplay have made it a favourite card game among Indians.

There are different variations of rummy like Gin rummy which is mostly played abroad and Canasta rummy which originated in Uruguay. Indian rummy is the most popular in the country, especially in the south.

In the past decade, rummy has found a footing in the online gaming space. Many sites have cropped up to offer players an online version of the classic card game. Its recognition as a game of skill by the Indian government has made it legal to play rummy in the country. Rummy's rising popularity in India is rooted in its familiarity which has paved a way for many people to engage in online rummy.

Although rummy is popular among Indians, poker's worldwide popularity has in some way overshadowed its reach in India. However, over the years rum-

my has been catching up to poker with many more rummy players joining the online gaming scene.

Popular sites like [Adda52 Rummy](#), [Rummy Circle](#) and [Rummy Baazi](#) have seen an incredible growth in their online players especially during the coronavirus lockdown. They have kept players coming back for more with tournaments like daily and weekend freerolls, loyalty programs, and bonus offers. Going online has truly helped the industry grow with more users joining everyday.



Rummy, unlike poker, is a card game which is familiar to most Indians, which gives the industry an added advantage. With a rise in popularity there is also a need to regulate the industry's

activities, paving the way for organizations like The Online Rummy Federation (TORF) to ensure a healthy environment for gaming.

Although still in its infancy, the online gaming sector in India is the perfect space for rummy to make its mark. Rummy lovers can expect this beloved game to grow tremendously over the coming years, possibly dethroning poker in popularity.

SEEN AND RAISED: SESHU PRATAP

*Due to the economic downturn in 2020, **Seshu Pratap** lost his job at an MNC at the beginning of the year. But thanks to his expertise and networking skills, he is now a Solution Architect and Producer at DX Minds. Seshu spoke to **Shriya Ghate** about what it takes to survive in the gaming industry on the software side.*



What were your biggest challenges in 2020?

At the beginning of the pandemic, I lost my job with a MNC. While the pandemic was hurting people physiologically, it was also hurting us economically and I was one of the people that was affected. Luckily, due to my skills and my network, I survived. I started training sessions for anyone from 4th std children to professionals. I did a lot of freelance AR (augmented reality) projects, I supervised projects for OTT mobile ap-

plications and gave them support and solutions.

I think the main challenge for anyone this year was holding on to their job. I believe that everyone should always have a back up plan. Every 4-5 years there is a crisis in the software industry when a new technology arrives and a lot of people are laid off. It's important that people in this field are technically strong and open to adopting new technology. You must always be one step ahead.

How did you overcome these challenges?

I am a self learner of new technologies, and when I take up something I dig as deep as I can. Once I do that, I know each and every key point. And because of this, I am able to explain it to others as well. This is very helpful, especially from the training perspective for the team I am leading. I have real-time experience which can help the team. I think these qualities really helped me get through these challenges.



What were some learnings that got reinforced in 2020?

The important thing is, don't stick to one solution. Whenever you create a game, for example, there may be some challenges. And often we get trapped by thinking that our solution is the best one. But we need to see through all the other ways. We should be ready to listen to elders and to youngsters. Don't degrade anyone. Give people in your team two or three chances to come up and match others. That's the way you can be a good leader.

Who was your biggest support in the workplace and personally?

My workplace connections over the last 12 years in the industry have really helped me to survive. They asked for my support in their projects, and I was able to provide it as well. Because of this I was able to do some international projects too. Whenever there is a situation like this, you can either go on a strike path or get a reference through the network. Regardless, you have to prove yourself. Communication skills and a good attitude also go a

long way.

2020 experienced unprecedented growth in terms of users because of the pandemic. What are your thoughts on this?

In the pandemic, people not only wanted entertainment but also knowledge and time-pass. Travel time was of course gone, but also, there was no judgement from people at work. No one was watching or blaming you! This is why I feel there was an increase in the membership. What most people don't understand about games is that they can be educational as well. Look at PUBG, for example. You learn how to strategize, you improve your logic, and you also learn to play as a team.

How can you prepare for a wave of new users from an architecture or software point of view?

Whenever there is a user pile up, you have to make sure that the customer experience is good or you will stop receiving financials and user acquisitions. You must regularly change themes and improve functionality. Communication to the

users is also important, especially when you're introducing something new so that their interest is retained and they keep coming back.

What is your message to people outside the industry?

My main message is that games are not going to ruin people. In fact, games will help them increase their concentration levels and make them empowered. The level of immersion games offer is actually good, because when a person plays they can forget everything else and focus on the game. This is why games are being used to educate. Different genres give different skill improvements.

Constant innovation and learning new skills seems to be the theme for 2020 and indeed many more years to come. Seshu's story is a testament to this fact. We wish him many more successes in 2021!

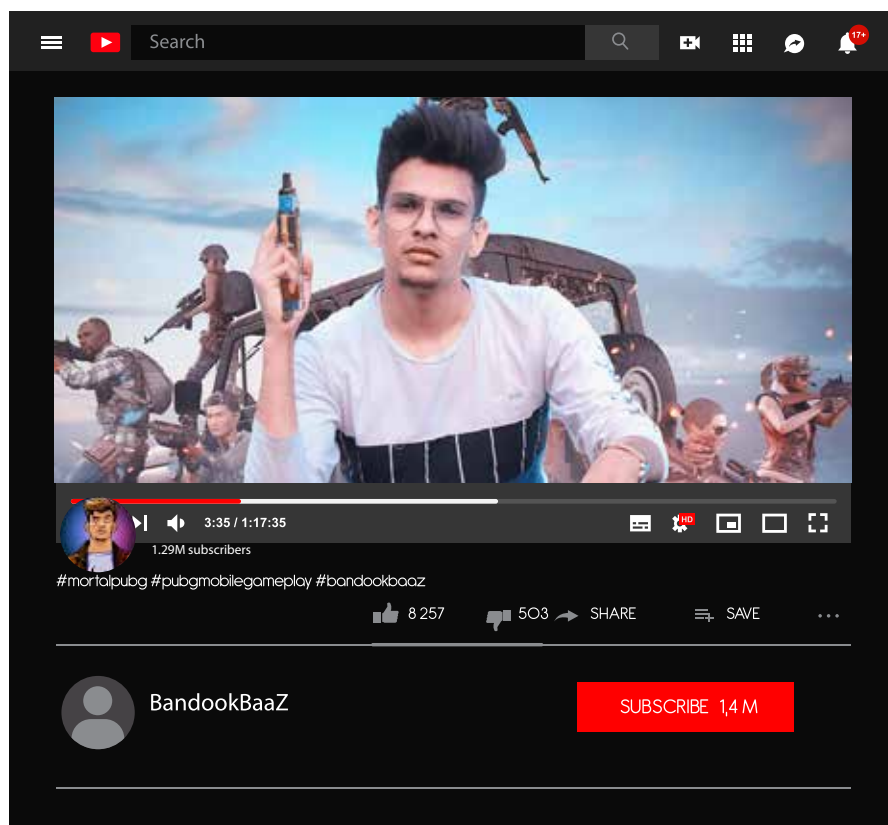
SHOOTING FOR FAME: INDRAJIT SINGH

WORDS BY **MANTHRA KOLIYER**

Indrajit Singh runs four YouTube channels, is a master at editing and a top notch gamer. The phrase, 'humble beginnings' fits perfectly for the character of Indrajit and his rise to fame. We, at Gutshot, had a chat with Indrajit Singh, an esports content creator from Mathura.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

I was born and raised in Mathura. I moved from the interiors of Mathura to Delhi because everything I wanted to do required better technology, including the internet, and I found Delhi was better for that. I am a 22 year old full time YouTuber and I own four channels. My first channel, known as 'Ritesh Creation', that I began in 2017, was about photo editing with the help of a mobile.



After completing 12th grade, I was preparing to clear entrance tests for the Indian Air Force. This was the time when I started photo editing. My family members were initially skeptical about the path I was taking but when I was paid INR 45,000 from You-

Tube in nine months, they started believing in me.

I purchased a laptop with the money I earned and started my journey.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A CONTENT CREATOR?

I started with editing pic-

tures and have now become a content creator who does gaming. The same friends who encouraged me to edit photos also installed the first game I played. As a fan of YouTubers Poorgamer and Dynamo, I loved watching their game.

But I wanted to do something different than streaming. So I started making videos that would help people play PUBG in a better way. I started a YouTube channel called '[Bandoobbaaz](#)' where I used to make videos about tips and tricks. With the help of that channel, I hit a record of 100K subscribers in a day.

HOW HAS THE PUBG BAN AFFECTED YOU?

At first it was intimidating. Later, the ban also forced us to explore other games. Now, in one of my channels called 'Baazi Gaming', I stream PC based games.

ANY ADVICE THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO GIVE POTENTIAL STREAMERS?

Thumbnails: Very important as the first impression is the last impression.

Content quality: Tone, sound/voice quality, back-

ground etc., should be very neat.

Upgrading content: You need to upgrade yourself according to changing trends.

➤ *"When criticism comes your way, take it, because people that criticise you only help you grow"* ◀

Predominantly, people get greedy when they think about YouTube and begin a channel mainly to earn, but that should not be the case. You need to invest time in creating content for your channel to even get recognized by YouTube. Until you take it seriously, it does not take you seriously.

Each individual that wants to become a potential YouTuber needs to know what content they wish to upload. If you clutter the channel with everything, then it also confuses the audience.

THERE HAVE BEEN RUMOURS THAT PUBG WILL BE

BROUGHT BACK. WHAT CAN INDIANS EXPECT?

The logo could have some Indian reference. PUBG has given people a huge dream that esports could also be a career for many. So much so, people have also reached various levels of tournaments, etc. It will come back better than before.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS? HOW HAS YOUR LIFESTYLE CHANGED AFTER BECOMING A CONTENT CREATOR?

I have been able to live in the capital city by myself with the money I earn by creating content. That itself is a very big deal. I have started to take all the criticism that comes my way. I have started to believe in myself and my craft a lot more. Many of my relatives have also started following my footsteps.

Indrajit began with just one channel and now has more than a million subscribers. This surely is a tale of success we can all look upto!

CLASH OF CLANS: STILL GOING STRONG

WORDS BY **SAMEER BAIG**



The mobile gaming industry is worth \$68.5 billion, so it wouldn't make sense if we didn't look at some of the top grossing

games that keep players glued to their mobile phones & tablets. The one that caught our attention was Clash of Clans by Supercell, popularly

known as COC. The average lifespan of any mobile game is not more than three months (which is true only for 10% of the games. Most games

drop within three days of their launch). We picked this game specifically because of its eight year legacy and how it still continues to dominate the mobile gaming market as one of the top preferred and played games online.

GAMEPLAY

Inspired by World of Warcraft and Travian & Gauntlet, COC is a premium strategy multiplayer online game. Every player has their own village which they work on for years to build using four major resources:

- a. Gold** - for upgrading some of the buildings, storages, defenses, and traps of their villages.
- b. Elixir** - for training & upgrading of some of the troops for battle and upgrading buildings and storages of their villages.
- c. Dark Elixir** - for training & upgrading of the dark troops and the 4 heroes who assist the troops in attacks and defenses of the villages.
- d. Gems** - targeting the impatience of the players for faster upgrades and better performance where the player puts in their real money to make the game

premium and gain advantage over other players.

CASHING IN CLASH

An article by Casey Johnston for The New Yorker, "Clash of Clans proves that our impatience is worth billions" gives a gist of how organizations like Supercell can set up a business worth USD722 million by targeting the impatience and spirit of gamers.

Games like Clash of Clans are designed to keep their audience engaged for the long run. Being a multiplayer game, it ignites the spirit of competition among its players. It keeps them hooked by sharing constant in-game updates and short character animation films on YouTube.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

Launched in 2012, the game hasn't only been doing well but has grown rapidly over the years. Listed on the Pro ESL gaming tournament, the Clash of Clans World Championship currently features six months of action packed competitions and a brand new

5v5 format based on the Clan War Leagues, plus \$1 Million in prize money.

In addition to these, you can see players like Sumit 007 who stream attack strategies on YouTube with a subscriber count of 10.5 lakh which speaks volumes about the popularity of COC in India.

DID YOU KNOW?

As per the App Download & Usage statistics of 2020, Business of Apps reported that there are over 1.85 million different applications that are available on the IOS platform and approximately 2.56 million apps on the Android platform for users to download. Sensor Tower in a report stated that there were more than 42.1 billion mobile game downloads in 2019 and 28.5 billion mobile game downloads in H1 2020 from App Store and Play Store combined.



ALVINA ROY JOESPH

*Alvina Roy Joseph, AVP Marketing at Spartan Poker, spoke to **Shriya Ghate** about what made her tick in 2020.*



What were your biggest challenges in 2020?

I think the biggest challenge was not having my team in front of me. Pre-pandemic, we would find a way to sit together in large board rooms to discuss the upcoming campaigns, to coordinate, and to brainstorm. But all of that was obviously gone. Something that took half the time earlier, took that much longer. Vendor calls doubled up and coordination became extremely time consuming. Apart from this, fitting into domestic life and finding a work-life balance was also a challenge.

How did you overcome these challenges?

At first it was incredibly difficult to deal with the fact that we were going to be at home for six months with nowhere to go. But I think



once the realization sank in, we all started to adapt to the new lifestyle.

What were some of the qualities that helped you overcome these challenges?

I had to be very accommodating and patient. I had to take in everybody's perspective. Working and living with flat mates during the pandemic was difficult as everyone had their commitments and priorities, but we all had to make it work. Patience is definitely the virtue that helped me pull it off. I also had to be mentally stable and tolerant. You wanted to go out but you couldn't, and all you could do is hope that things were

Patience is definitely the virtue that helped me pull it off. I also had to be mentally stable and tolerant.

going to work out!

Who was your biggest support in the workplace and personally, who helped you overcome the challenges?

I think I am very lucky to have not only good mentors but aggressive ones! Anuj Barasia and Amin Rozani have pushed me to go above and beyond what I thought I was capable of, and pull off projects without a set up. They gave me the opportunity to execute things and I am very grateful for it. Despite the fact that we were not in the same office space, they were very patient and encouraged me throughout. Nasir Patel, a friend and colleague, is one person who has been an important part in driving me forward and has been very supportive, especially when it comes to cross-departmental functioning.

Apart from these individuals, I think my team has been extraordinarily supportive. They have really gone beyond working hours. Despite the big number jumps, they have pulled through successfully. We had many phases of

sleepless nights, especially while planning the biggest tournament, IOPC. But my team has been dedicated, ambitious and aggressive at every step. Yesha, Aishwarya, Anushka, Anvay, and the creative team need special mention here. Also, the customer support team, which had the maximum challenge of speaking to the players and solving their issues while working from home.

What is your message to people outside the industry?

Real money gaming is only growing. Eventually it's going to have several routes for success. I think we have all done some great work, despite the challenges of WFH! I think with 2020, we have pulled off the worst year in the history of living. 2021 is definitely going to be much, much better than this!

We wish Alvina the best of luck for 2020! May she go from strength to strength!

LAWNSKY: STREAMING ON A PHONE NEAR YOU

WORDS BY MANTHRA KOLIYER

How long does it take to get famous if you're an Esports streamer? Six months or Nine months? Here's Akash Deep Singh Mehra a.k.a LawNSky, a newbie in the field of esports but a pro streamer on YouTube. With more than 20,000 subscribers on YouTube, Mehra's breakthrough within six months of streaming is outstanding. Let's take a look at what this esports enthusiast has to say:



“Consistency is the key!”

video. I take every comment and feedback very seriously.

Can a person be an esports player full time? Any advice you would want to give potential streamers?

If you would have asked me this question an year or two ago I would have said no, but in the last two years the gaming scene in India has shown

a drastic uptick. If you want to be a esports player full time, you must know what you are best at and then give your best shot. Overnight success takes a long time!.

How did you start streaming PUBG? What do you think about PUBG's comeback in India?

I started streaming PUBG on 6 May, 2020. It's been almost six months as a streamer, but in reality I have been doing this for much longer. One day I finally decided to do it for real and I also got very good feedback from the live audience. Let's expect a good beginning of year 2021 with PUBG back in full swing! “It's better late than never!”

Your content looks different. Tell us why.

I do a self evaluation of my content just before and after I upload any of my videos or live streams so I can make improvements and patches in my next

Tell us about your association with Noble Esports. What are you expecting from their first Bootcamp in Mumbai ?

I recently became associated with Noble Esports. I am glad that they found me worthy of representing them and I feel proud of being a part of such an esteemed international organization. All I expect from our bootcamp is a healthy environment where we can have team synergy and I am very excited to be there and share the space.

Did you know?

1) The first attempt at video games was in 1947 and 1958, with the moderately recognizable game, Tennis for Two. On 19 October 1972, the first video game competition took place at Stanford University. Over 10,000 players attended the event.

To know more, [Click Here!](#)

2) Initially, poker was played for gold nuggets, gold coins and even gold dust. There was a need for a standard unit and that's when gaming houses came up with the idea of poker chips. Poker chips used to be made of ivory, bone, clay, and wood back in the day.

To know more, [Click Here!](#)

3) Ha-ha Lung and Christopher Prowant's book, '*Mental Dominance*', talks about Las Vegas Hilton floral scents influencing guests to spend 50% more playing time. In addition, the number of people visiting the casinos were greater when the concentration of the odorant was higher.

To know more, [Click Here!](#)

Quiz Time!

Answer the following questions and two lucky winners stand a chance to win a customized swag bag from Gutshot!

Hint: The answers to these questions are on our website and magazine!

1. When was the first WSOP bracelet given and who was the first champion to bag the prize?
2. Which Bollywood actress joined hands with a gaming platform in 2020?
3. What is the Scottish English slang word for slot machines?
4. In a movie, who runs Baadshah Detective Agency and is asked to procure diamonds from a dealer in a casino?

Rummy Word Search winner

Congratulations!!!

The winner of the Rummy Wordsearch is **Mr. Devvrat Singh**.

Please email us your contact details in order to avail your prizes.



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