

JPC MAGAZINE

www.jpc.rocks

Vol 3, Issue 6, February 2026

Beating Bortle 8

Apni Toh Paathshala

By Nilesh Solanki

Spot Light

Rajesh Dhar

Photographer's
Profile

Puranjit Gangopadhyay

**Best Cameras
For Photography
in 2026**

When *Creation* Becomes Control

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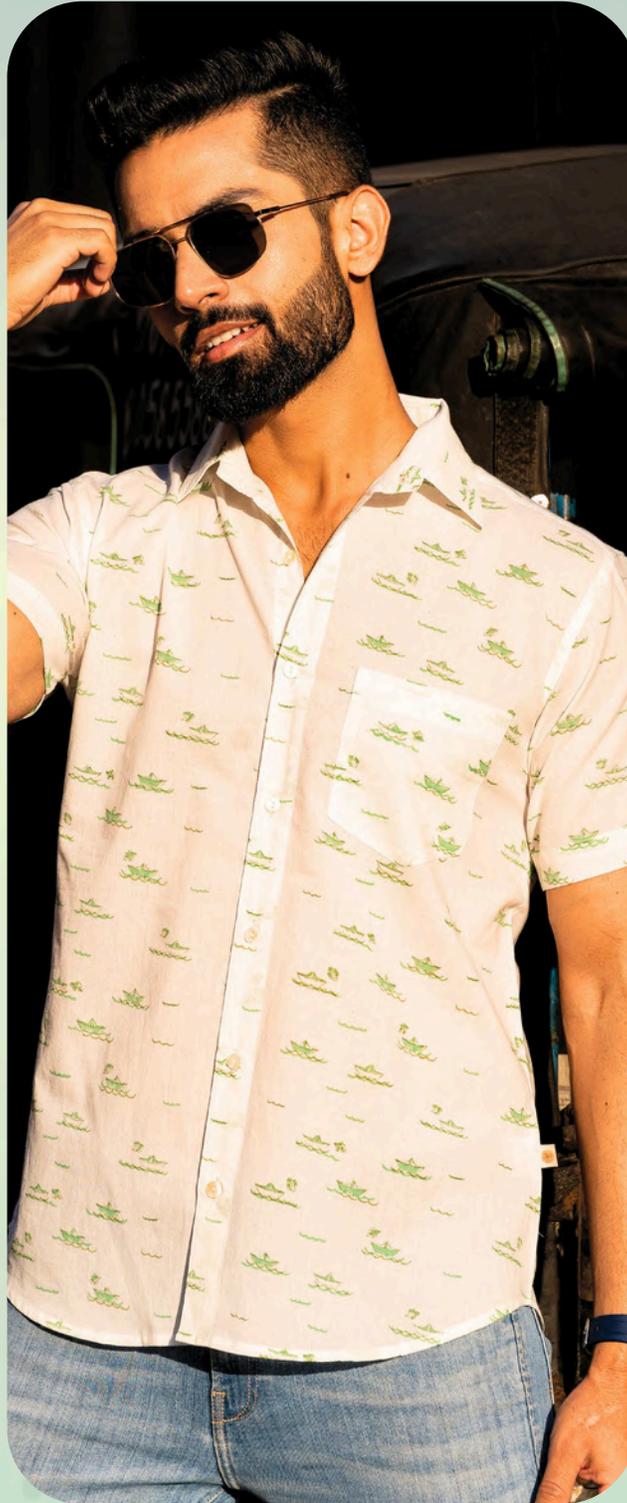
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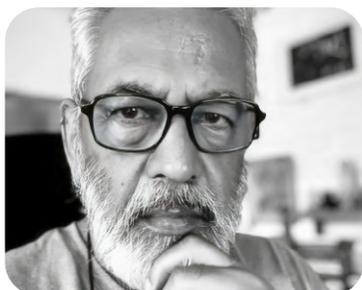
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Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

“Photography is an austere and blazing poetry of the real,” wrote Ansel Adams. As photography continues to evolve, its true foundation remains unchanged. The essence of careful observation, perfect timing, and meaningful storytelling stays timeless, reminding us that beyond equipment and technique, photography will always be about vision, emotion, and authentic human connection.

Old school photography was built on patience, discipline, and deep understanding of light, composition, and moment. Film limitations demanded precision and intention. As Henri Cartier-Bresson believed in the “decisive moment,” photographers waited, observed, and responded. Craft, darkroom skill, and visual patience defined mastery, shaping generations who valued storytelling through restraint, technical knowledge, and strong photographic ethics.

New school photography thrives on accessibility, experimentation, and speed. Mirrorless systems, computational imaging, and AI-assisted tools are expanding creative boundaries. Yet, as Elliott Erwitt noted, “The whole point of taking pictures is so that you do not have to explain things with words.” Technology may evolve, but vision, emotion, and authenticity will always distinguish meaningful photographs from mere images.

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ANIL KHUBANI
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JPC Magazine is published & promoted by VOILA, Jaipur

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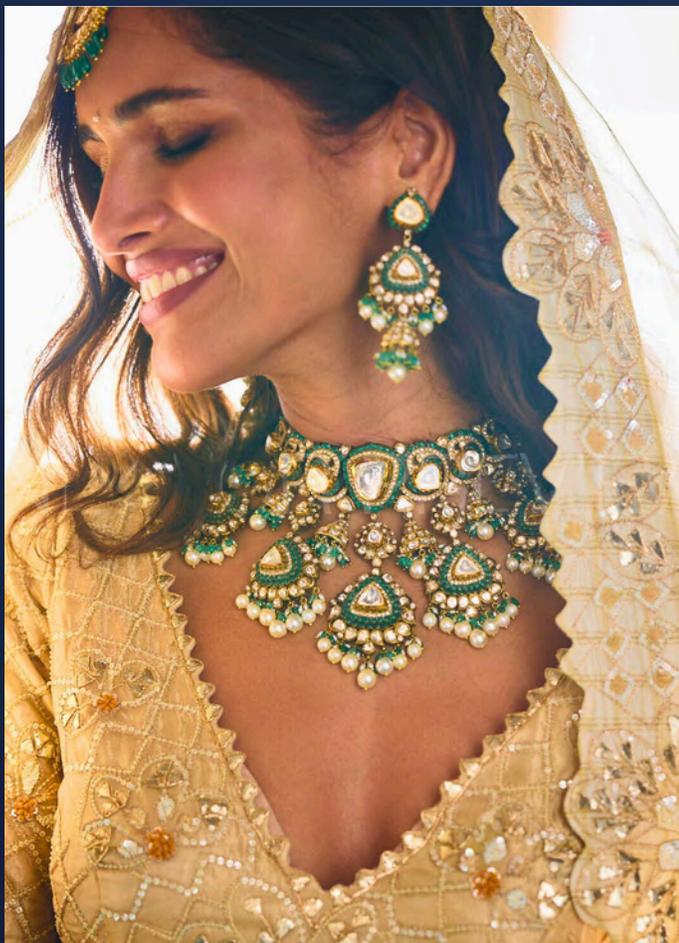
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APNI TOH PAATHSHALA

Beating Bortle 8

Imaging the Moon and Orion Nebula from Urban Skies

How to capture stunning astrophotography from the light pollute cityscapes

By: Nilesh Solanki



Stacking is not just software, it is data strategy.
More usable frames = more detail = cleaner final output.

Harvesting Lunar Data in Urban Conditions

Astrophotography from a city like Jaipur is often considered an exercise in compromise. Between atmospheric instability and Bortle 8 light pollution, extracting celestial detail can feel nearly impossible.

Yet, modern smart telescopes combined with disciplined stacking workflows are redefining what is achievable from urban environments.

During the **2026 Snow Moon**, using the **Seestar S50** from a residential terrace, multiple short RAW video captures were used instead of one continuous recording. This small shift dramatically improved final image sharpness and processing efficiency.



“Urban astrophotography is not about escaping light pollution. It is about outsmarting it.”

Instead of recording one long video, four separate one minute clips were captured.

Why Short Burst Capture Works

Field Rotation Control

The Seestar S50 uses an Alt-Azimuth mount. During longer captures, "field rotation" can occur, causing the Moon to appear to rotate slightly in the frame.

Software Processing Efficiency

Short files improve alignment and derotation accuracy.

Atmospheric Stability Advantage

Higher chance of capturing stable seeing moments.

By stacking only the sharpest 20% of 2,500 frames, atmospheric shimmer was effectively removed.

Urban Lunar Rule

Always prioritise
frame quality over
frame quantity.

Lunar Workflow

From RAW Video to Final Image

1

Data Preparation PIPP

Purpose: Align, centre, and organise RAW video frames before stacking.

- ✓ Load multiple short video clips (recommended: 1-minute bursts)
- ✓ Select Solar/Lunar Full Disc mode
- ✓ Keep Convert to Monochrome OFF (if colour/mineral processing planned)
- ✓ Export centred TIFF sequence

Why It Matters: Removes drift and prepares frames for accurate stacking.

2

Frame Selection & Stacking AutoStakkert!

Purpose: Stack only the sharpest atmospheric moments.

- ✓ Click Analyze → Generates frame quality graph
- ✓ Click Place AP Grid → Tracks lunar features
- ✓ Stack best 20% frames (≈ 500 / 2,500 frames)
- ✓ Export stacked TIFF

Pro Insight: Fewer high-quality frames always beat stacking everything.

3

Detail Enhancement RegiStax

Purpose: Reveal micro lunar surface detail using Wavelets.

- ✓ Increase Layer 1 & 2 gradually
- ✓ Use Denoise to control shadow noise
- ✓ Avoid aggressive sharpening (prevents halos)

4

Final Finish: Lightroom + Photoshop

Purpose: Tonal shaping and visual polish.

- ✓ Lightroom → Texture, Clarity, Black levels
- ✓ Photoshop → Spot clean + subtle colour refinement

DEEP SKY WORKFLOW ORION NEBULA

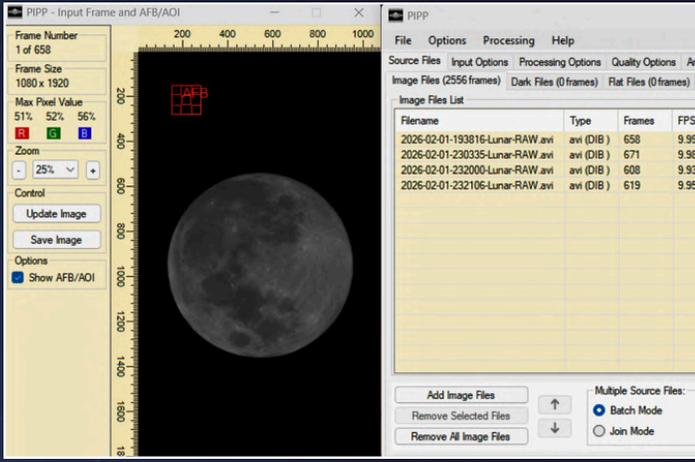
- ✓ 600+ Sub Frames
- ✓ 10 sec Exposure Each
- ✓ Target Integration: ~1.5-2 Hours
- ✓ Use Light Pollution Filter (if available)

Mobile-First Workflow (Fast & Field Friendly)

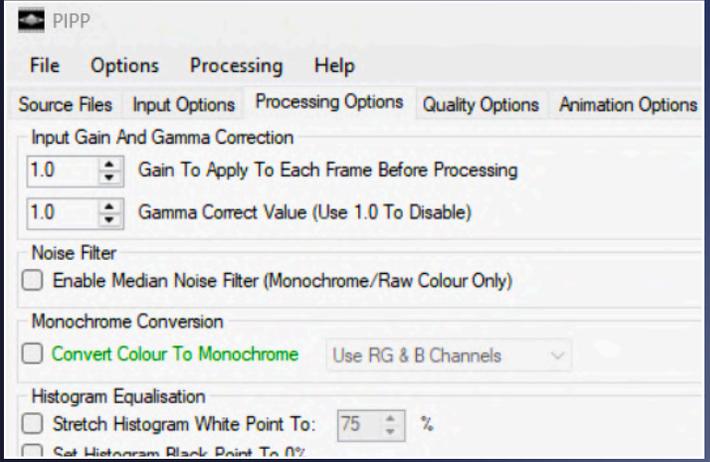
- Seestar Live Stack
- App Denoise
- Siril (Plate Solve + Green Noise Removal)
- Lightroom Final Colour & Contrast

Advanced Workflow (Maximum Quality Output)

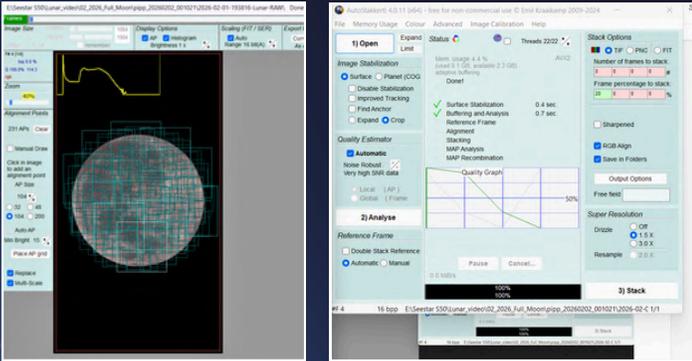
- DeepSkyStacker (Full RAW Stack)
- GraXpert (Gradient Removal)
- Siril (Stretch + Colour + Plate Solve)
- Lightroom Final Polish



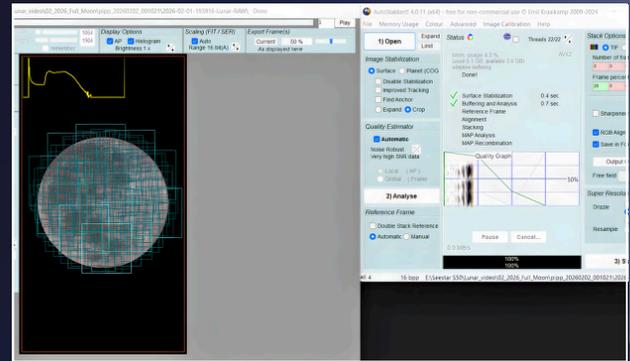
Step 1A: Data Preparation PIPP



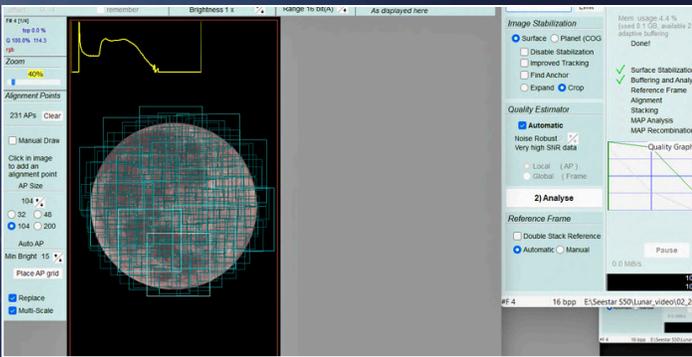
Step 1C: Keep Convert to Monochrome OFF (if colour/mineral processing planned)



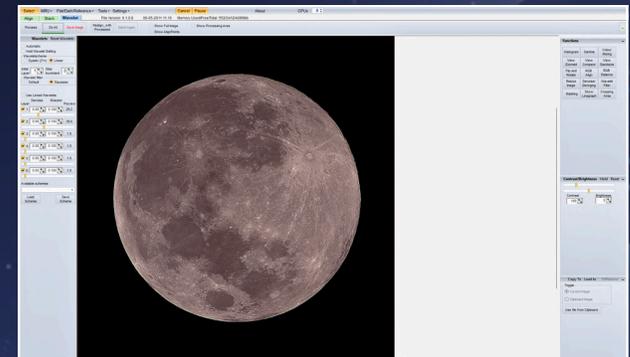
Step 2A: Frame Selection & Stacking AutoStakkert!



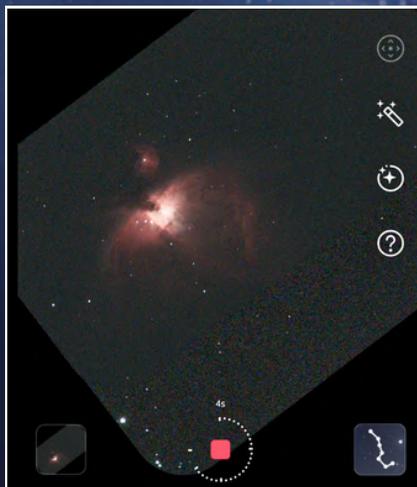
Step 2A: Place AP Grid



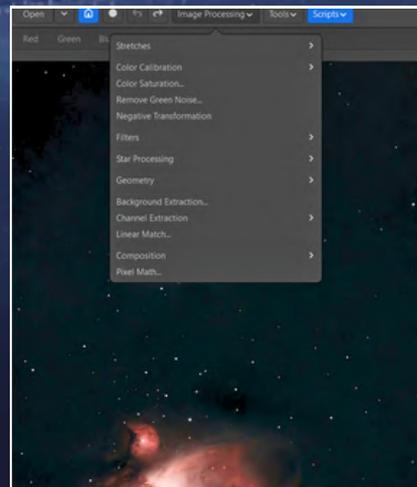
Step 2C: Stack best 20% frames (~ 500 / 2,500 frames)



Step 3A: Detail Enhancement RegiStax



Orion Nebula Step 1: Seestar app's Mosaic Mode



Orion Nebula Step 2: Denoise

URBAN ASTRO GOLDEN RULES

- ✓ Total Integration Time > Single Exposure Length
- ✓ Stack Quality Matters More Than Quantity
- ✓ Short Capture Bursts Improve Lunar Sharpness
- ✓ Gradient Removal is Essential in Bortle 8 Skies
- ✓ Natural Detail Always Beats Over-Sharpended Detail

CORE SOFTWARE STACK

Lunar Processing

PIPP → AutoStakkert → RegiStax

Deep Sky Processing

DeepSkyStacker → GraXpert → Siril Final

Finishing

Lightroom → Photoshop



ZWO Seestar S50

“The sky does not change for us.
We change how we see it.”

Urban astrophotography is no longer about limitations. It is about methodology.

With intelligent capture planning, disciplined stacking, and careful processing, even heavy light pollution zones can produce exhibition-quality astronomical imagery.

This is where modern astrophotography aligns perfectly with a larger creative philosophy, constant improvement through technique, patience, and self-competition.

Applications Used

PIPP (Planetary Imaging Pre-Processor)

AutoStakkert! | Download From: [AutoStakkert! Official Site](#)

RegiStax 6 | Download From: [RegiStax Official Site](#)

Siril | Download From: [Siril Official Site](#)

Adobe Lightroom & Adobe Photoshop



SPOTLIGHT

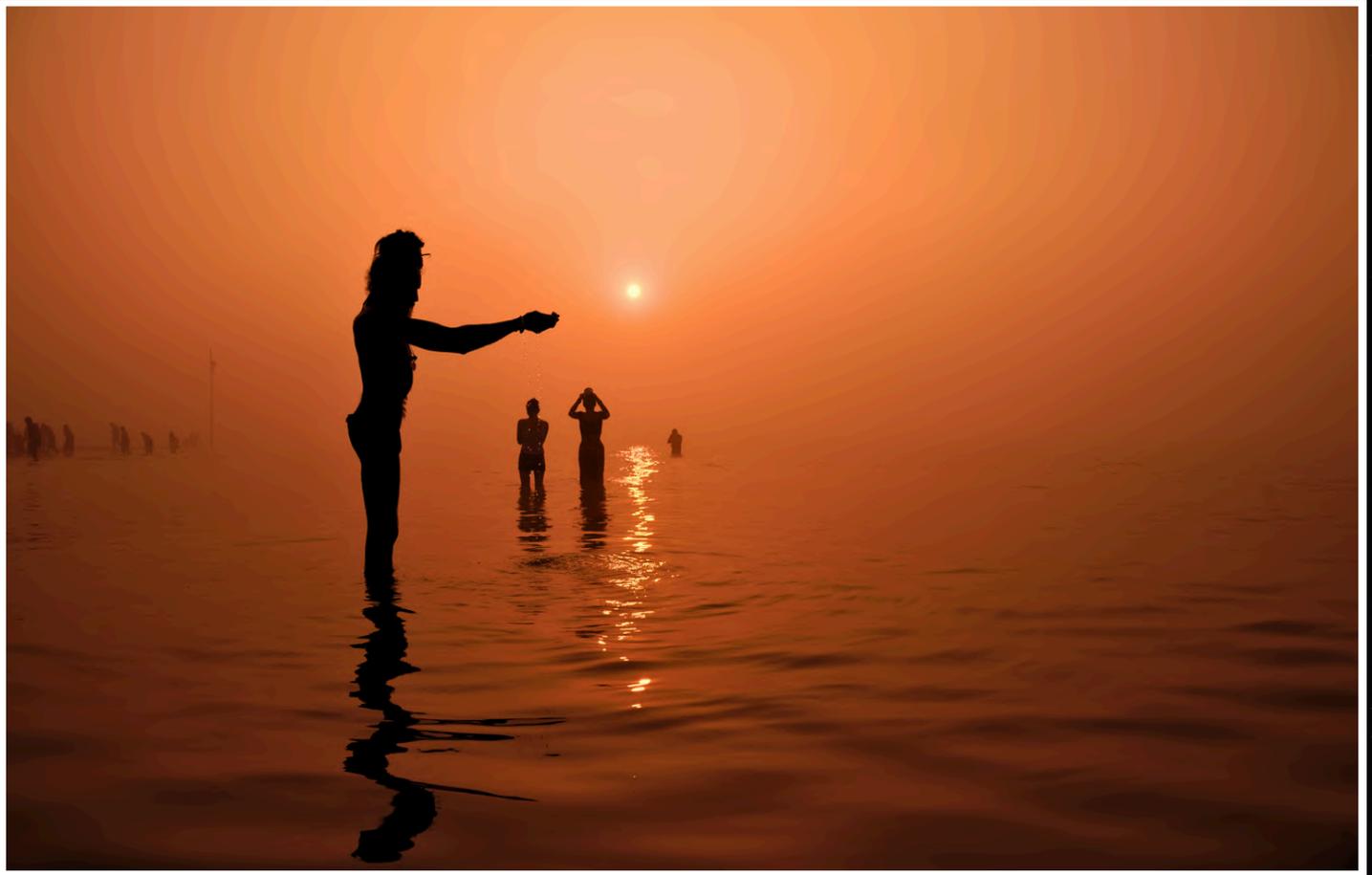


Rajesh Dhar

A Bachelor of Visual Arts from the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata, Rajesh Dhar brings a designer's precision and a photographer's instinct to his visual practice. Trained as a graphic designer, he approaches photography as an act of observation, drawn to India's rural festivals, religious gatherings, and moments where collective emotion takes centre stage.

He is deeply interested in how crowds function as living, breathing entities: how colour, movement, faith, and human vulnerability collide within shared spaces. His images do not merely celebrate culture; they examine it closely, revealing both its vitality and its imperfections through layered, immersive frames.

His work has received widespread national and international recognition, including awards at the Indian Sports Photography Awards (Para Sports category), the Mangrove Photography Awards (Landscape B/W), Fokus International Photo Awards, Albania, and the My Indian Link Photo Contest, Australia, among others.







BEST CAMERAS

FOR PHOTOGRAPHY IN 2026

Exploring the Best Cameras for Landscape, Wildlife, Travel, and Street Photography in 2026

Photography is a journey, and the right camera can make all the difference. Whether you are capturing the vastness of a landscape, the elusive movements of wildlife, the essence of travel, or the candid moments of street life, having the appropriate gear is essential. Here is a guide to some of the top cameras in 2026 for these genres.

Landscape Photography: Capturing Nature's Grandeur



Sony a7R V | Photo Credit: Sony

Top Pick: Sony a7R V

The Sony a7R V stands out with its 61-megapixel full-frame sensor, delivering exceptional detail and dynamic range. Features like AI-powered autofocus and Pixel Shift mode enhance image clarity, making it ideal for landscape enthusiasts.

Alternatives:

Fujifilm GFX 100S: A medium-format camera boasting a 102MP sensor, offering unparalleled image quality for those prioritizing resolution.

Nikon Z7 II: A more affordable option with a 45.7MP sensor, known for its compact design and excellent image quality.

Canon EOS 5DS R: A DSLR with a 50.6MP sensor, suitable for those seeking high resolution on a budget.



Fujifilm GFX 100S | Photo Credit: Fujifilm

Wildlife Photography: Freezing the Action



Sony Alpha 1 | Photo Credit: Sony

Top Pick: Sony Alpha 1

The Sony Alpha 1 combines speed and resolution, offering 50MP images at up to 30 frames per second. Its advanced autofocus system ensures sharp shots of fast-moving subjects, making it a favorite among wildlife photographers.

Alternatives:

Nikon Z8/Z9: Both models provide high-speed shooting and robust build quality, suitable for challenging environments.

Canon EOS R7: An APS-C mirrorless camera offering a balance between speed, resolution, and affordability.

Travel Photography: Documenting Journeys

Top Pick: Canon EOS R6 Mark II

The Canon EOS R6 Mark II offers a 24.2MP full-frame sensor, in-body image stabilization, and fast autofocus, making it versatile for various travel scenarios.

Alternatives:

Sony Alpha 7C II: A compact full frame mirrorless camera, perfect for travelers.

Fujifilm X100VI: A stylish compact camera with a fixed 23mm f/2 lens, known for its film simulation modes and portability.



Canon EOS R6 Mark II | Photo Credit: Canon

Street Photography: Capturing Urban Life

Top Pick: Fujifilm X100VI

The Fujifilm X100VI combines a classic design with modern features, including a 40MP APS-C sensor and a fixed 23mm f/2 lens. Its compact size and discreet appearance make it ideal for street photography.

Ricoh GR IIIx: A pocket-sized camera with a 26.1MP APS-C sensor and a 40mm equivalent lens, favored for its simplicity and image quality.

Fujifilm X-T5: Offers a 40MP sensor, providing flexibility for various shooting styles.

Sony RX100 VII: A compact camera with a versatile zoom lens, suitable for those wanting both wide-angle and telephoto capabilities in a small package.



Ricoh GR IIIx | Photo Credit: Ricoh



POSTCARD
From: Arctic Circle



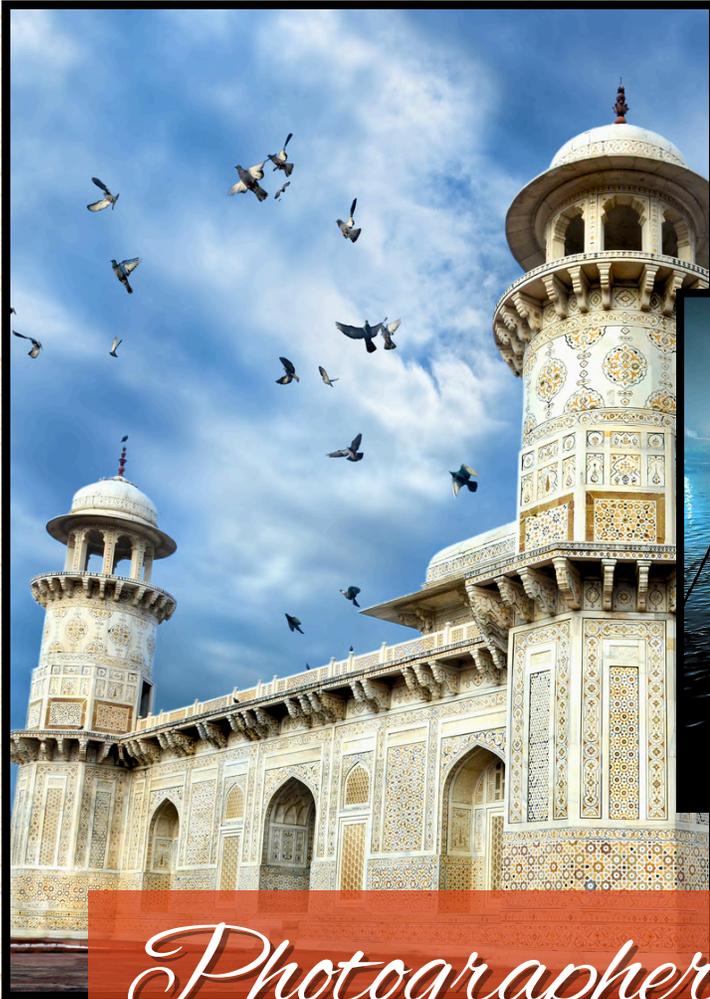
From: Suchandra Rakshit
 Sweden



Santa Claus Village is a year-round Christmas-themed amusement park located right on the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, Finland. Considered the "official home" of Santa Claus, it offers visitors the chance to meet Santa, cross the Arctic Circle, and enjoy various Arctic activities such as reindeer and husky rides.

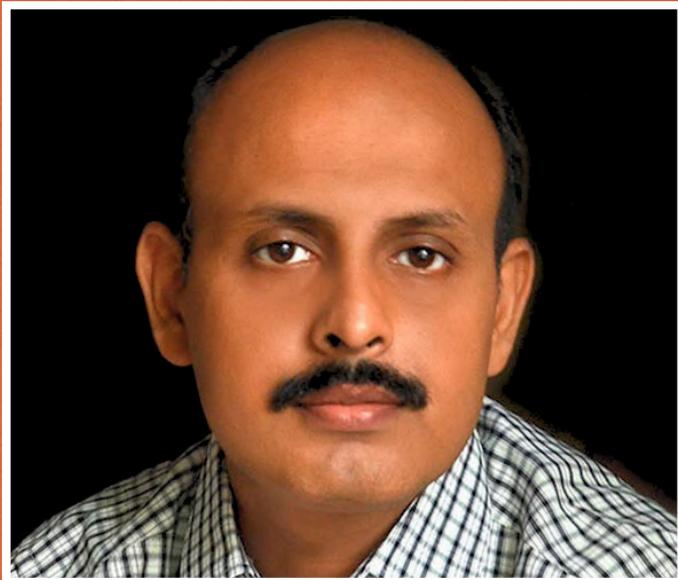
ARCTIC
CROWN
MELT





Photographer's PROFILE

Puranjit Gangopadhyay



A Diploma in Engineering may define his formal training, but photography defines how Puranjit Gangopadhyay observes the world. Introduced to the medium in childhood through his father's Zeiss Ikon camera, gifted when he was ten, his engagement with photography began early and evolved from documenting family life into a sustained visual practice.

His work is driven by a strong emphasis on composition, technical precision, and visual balance. With a disciplined understanding of the exposure triangle, colour harmony, tone, and form, he transforms elements from everyday surroundings and nature into carefully structured frames, where primary and secondary subjects exist in deliberate dialogue.

Human emotion remains central to his photography. By working unobtrusively, he allows moments to unfold naturally, preserving both the authenticity of the subject and its environment. His photographs have been exhibited in India and internationally, reflecting a consistent commitment to photography as a thoughtful and evolving form of visual art.



Life in Diverse Realms



Echoes Within...





Stories in Motion



Open Letter

When Creation Becomes Control

February, 2026

Photography today stands at an interesting crossroads. With advanced cameras, powerful editing software, and artificial intelligence tools, creating a perfect frame has never been easier. Yet, this raises an important question **“Are we creating photographs, or are we discovering them”?**

Created frames are carefully designed. Lighting is controlled. Subjects are placed precisely. Backgrounds are selected thoughtfully. There is skill and effort in this process, and it often produces visually stunning results. Commercial photography, fashion, and conceptual photography rely heavily on this approach, and rightly so.

However, natural frames hold a different kind of magic. They are found, not built. They exist in fleeting expressions, unexpected light, and unplanned moments. Street photography, wildlife photography, and documentary work often depend on patience and observation rather than control. Natural frames carry honesty. They tell stories exactly as they happened.

The challenge today is that social media often rewards perfection over truth. This can push photographers towards over-creation. When every shadow is adjusted and every colour is perfected, sometimes the emotion of the moment gets lost.

This is not about choosing one over the other. Both created and natural frames have value. The real question is intent. **Why are you making the photograph? What do you want the viewer to feel?**

Photography is at its strongest when skill meets honesty. When creation supports reality, not replaces it. Let us not forget sometimes the best frame is the one that already exists.



Yours Sincerely,

Anil Khubani

Anil Khubani

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