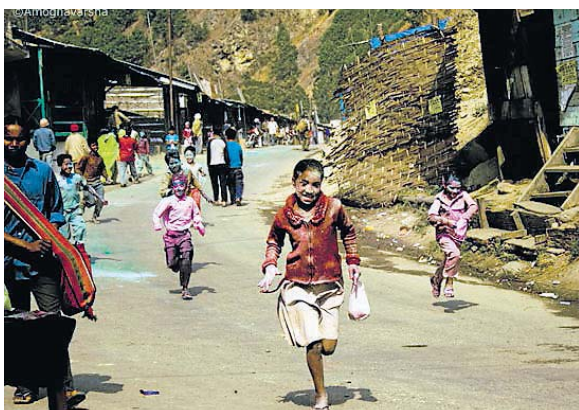


PHOTO FINISH



COMING ALIVE Top and above: Photographs by Amoghavarsha titled, *Water* and *Bliss* respectively.

New kids on the blog!

The blogosphere has begun to resemble the bedlam. Texts and images are elbowing for space. Amidst the chaos, you see snapshots of almost-extinct animal species, landscapes of countries not on the map and families smiling ear-to-ear while on holiday jaunts! Pictures are speaking more than ever and photoblogging has become easier than saying 'cheese'.

Professional and amateur photographers are blogging hard. But who isn't? The arrival of digicams and paraphernalia have made it easier to capture a moment and let the world relish it too. Thankfully, not everything is about silly poses, niche topics are immensely popular too.

Amoghavarsha, a wildlife and travel photographer, has been blogging for seven years now. He looks at photoblogging as a means to expose his work. "The advantage of images is that they send out subtle messages as opposed to heavy texts." Animal behaviour, fascinating locales and myriad emotions find pride of place on his blog.

Suffice to say that verbal jugglery has taken a backseat. There is an honesty in pictures that words fall short of, argue die-hard photobloggers. In essence, these blogs are channels of information, provide a connect to the world, help share interests, hone skills and document works for the future.

Photoblogs help those like Joy Dutta to be in constant touch with photography and to form a style of their own. Dutta, whose interests centres around travel, streets and people, says, "Photographs have an edge over textblogging amidst today's information explosion. People hardly have time to read anything longer than a short message at a time. Conventional blogs are now conveniently pushed behind. A photoblog makes a good impression not only due to a nifty title and message but also because they can be displayed in bigger size than most run-of-the-mill photo-sharing sites," he says.

The photobloggers have turned into visual communicators taking the visitor from one place to another while some have been elevating mundane pictures to sublime. Alistair D'souza, who works with a start-up venture, has been photoblogging for four to five years. "I blog abstract as I'm not particularly interested in anything specific. I've noticed that a lot of people appreciate abstract works as there is a sense of randomness about it. Pictures in their own way tell a story. I like to have a story be-



Joy Dutta



Alistair



Amoghavarsha

hind every photo that I blog and I leave it open for the visitor to understand the thought," D'souza adds.

Since the rules for photoblogs are far and few, plenty of junk is being uploaded. "There are many cliché photographs and snaps hanging around but interesting photos are always recognisable by how long it keeps the viewer engaged," informs Dutta.

Amoghavarsha attributes the popularity of photoblogs to its simplicity and its ability to remain in public domain. "Yet, there is a lot of junk that is being uploaded," he agrees.

Photoblogs talk money as well, as many who pursue this hobby see it as good business too. Alistair, in fact, says, "Right now, I'm trying to see if I can get any financial gain out of this hobby," while Dutta calls it a catch-22 subject. "I know that if I make photography my primary job, I will lose interest in this stress-relieving hobby. If photography generates a side income once in a while, it would be fine. If one has no other skills to earn from, then a great quality consistent photoblog might help build a fan base, leading to commissioned work," he informs.

Anupama Ramakrishnan