

January 2014

**Two police officers killed in Karachi terror attack
Butterfly holidays in Dubai**

UFE, SUCH fun I'm having in Dubai. I'm staying in a fab hotel on Jumeirah Beach. I think so, it must be having about a thousand rooms spread out over the grounds like a super-posh mohallah. For the decoration, they've done full copy of Venice but with a nice sa Arabian touch. It has gondolas and canals (all clean and blue and lined with turquoise cement, not brown and smelly like the ones in Venice). And also statues of golden camels and men going about dressed like extras in Lawrence of Arabia, but, thanks God, bathed in cologne instead of sweat. I think so, we must be the only desis staying here. Baaki sub, they are goras. All day they lie flat on their backs in their swimsuits by the pool, gleaming with oils as if they're waiting to be put on the barbecue. You know me, I tau never make personal comments, but some of the men, particularly the thin bald ones in their tiny chuddis, are as wrinkly as dried-up old dates, and some of them are the colour of carrot halwa. Nothing personal, vaisay.

But life here, na, it's just tabahi. Na koi dust and na koi

poors and na koi smells and na koi flies and na koi in-laws and na koi daakoos and na koi bombs and na koi gutters and na koi pot holes and na koi beggars. Everything is saaf suthra and so peaceful, and there are no trees, so there are no leaves to sweep and no birds to sit in them and do potty on your car. There are no parks, but who needs parks when you have nice gated compounds? The servants, they are all smiley and polite and grateful. All of them are English-speaking and, best of all, they have no families and therefore no chirh-chirh about job for my brother and jahez for my sister and college for my son. All my friends live in big, big houses with Filipinas and swimming pools and twenty-four-hour bijli, and they have no armed guards and no razor wire and no high, high walls even. And the malls! And the restaurants! And the clubs! Uff, total jannat, I tell you.

Janoo says the people of Dubai have no freedom and that I should try doing a protest jaloos here and see what happens to me. And I said, 'Bhai what is there to protest about, haan? Am I crack that I would want to do a jaloos in jannat?' And then he said, 'You know also that they don't have elections?' And I said, 'Tau hum ko itni elections kar kay kya mil gya hai, tell? Still every day the fundos are killing us while our elected guvmunt is trying to do make up with them.' Honestly, sometimes I think so Janoo's Oxen education is totally wasted on him. I should have gone to Brazen Nose College...

February 2014

**Giggles and chaos at Lahore Literary Festival
Butterfly impressed by Shobha De**

YOU CAN'T imagine keh mein nay recently kitna culture take kiya hai. I went to Lahore Litfest every day and listened to so many talks shalks keh mera sur chakraa gya. But guess what? I've got a new heroine. Shobha Day! I swear she's respired me so much. You should have seen her. Long glossy black hairs, smooth skin, figure all tight shite. Doesn't look a day older than thirty-nine. But kehtay hain she is at least twenty years older and has six children on top. You remember my bestie Mulloo, na? Just between you, me and the four walls, sometimes she's my bestie and sometimes not. Well, Mulloo says Shobha must be doing Botox and all but I think so Mulloo's jay- oho baba, jealous. Shobha's just got good jeans. I know, because I'm having them also, from Mummy's side but. Daddy tau, poor thing, looks like Tutan Khanum.

Anyways, so many people came to this festival kay don't even ask. Aik tau there was Vikram Seth, who wrote that fat book, *Unsuitable Boy*. Janoo and I went to listen to him because Janoo's a fan and he's read everything Vikram's written,

except his emails. Vaisay, between you, me and the four walls, he was a little bit bore, talking of bore, dry things like Chinese poetry— bhai, ub who reads Chinese in this day and age? Then Mira Noir also came. She makes films, but from books only. Like *Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid and *The Namesake* by Jumper Lahiri and *Vanity Fair* by some other desi writer whose name I'm forgetting now. But her top film is *Monsoon Wedding*. It's the only film that both Janoo and I like. And Shahzia Sikander also came. She's that artist, na, who invented the miniature. Lives in New York only and is collected by khaata peetas like Bill Gate.

Before Lahore Litfest, I went to the Karachi wallah also. And there I heard Tina Sani and Zeb and Ali Sethi sing, and I tell you I had so much fun, so much fun kay don't even ask. And I also went to Mohatta Palace to see Rashid Rana ki exhibition. Janoo says Rashid Rana, he thinks big. I think so he means his pictures, they are very big na. 'Hai, too big for our lounge,' I sighed. 'And my wallet,' muttered Janoo. 'Tau bus dekh lo, what all I've done. Books I've done, music I've done and art shart also. Now with clear conscious I can go back to my fave Turkish TV drama, *Mera Sultan*...

March 2014

**Malaysia Airlines Flight disappears with 200 people aboard
Butterfly wonders if it landed on the moon**

VAISAY, EVERYONE can say what they like, but if you ask me, this Malaysian Airways ka plane, it is not lying on the bottom of the sea. Bhai, if it was, then why haven't they been able to find it, haan? Find it tau leave to one side, they haven't even been able to give us so much as a photo? When they can give us photos of rocks on Mars, then why they can't give pictures of one plane sitting on top of sea bed? Suspicious, no?

Janoo, as usual, is trying to make excuses for everyone and saying that the sea is very deep where the plane is supposed to have crashed. I think so it was somewhere near Australia. Bhai, they filmed Finding Nemo just over there also, around the sea flowing all around Australia, and in that film tau they managed to go right to the bottom of the sea. So if Disney camera wallahs can go, why can't Chinese and Australian sumbarines, haan? They don't go because it's not there, that's why. If you ask me tau that plane, it quietly slipped into outer space. I told my shweetoo one and only baby Kulchoo, who is a teenager and has lots of teenagery type issues like bad skin

and opinions, and he looked at me as if I was a crack.

‘Bhai, why?’ I asked. ‘Full five years– sorry, sorry, I mean ten years, uff, aik tau too much of news is making me lose my memories– full ten years before I was born the Americans sent people to the moon, so why can’t a plane go now into outer space so many years later?’

‘Because,’ said Kulchoo, ‘the Americans were astronauts who went in a rocket. Not passengers in a Malaysian Airways commercial flight, with their bags of duty-free shopping and thirty kilos of luggage apiece.’

‘Oho Kulchoo,’ I said, ‘aik tau you also take off baal ki khaal. Plane, rocket what’s the difference? It’s all same to same. Both go up and then they come down. Except this one, which only went up and up and away.’

April 2014

**Journalist Hamid Mir injured in gun attack in Karachi
Butterfly worries about Voldemort**

JUST LOOK at these poor journos Raza Roomy and Hamid Mir. Both attacked by God-Knows-Who. Honestly, I'm so glad that Janoo doesn't come on TV and say the things that he does at home, otherwise he would also be straight away in hospital raddled with bullet holes. And also I'm so relieved that he doesn't name names publicly and show photos of Those Who Can't Be Named. My shweetoo, one and only baby Kulchoo na, when he was little, he used to read fat, fat story books about a boy called Hairy Potter and in those books there was a baddie named He Who Can't Be Named. I asked Kulchoo the other day, I said phir aakhir who was He Who Can't Be Named?

'Oh,' he laughed, 'you mean the Dark Lord, Voldermort?'

'Hai, Kulchoo,' I said, 'please don't take his name. Zamana is very bad. Sensitive agencies are very sensitive at being named. Kuch pata nahin kal ko kya ho jaye.'

'There were also the Dementors,' he said, 'in case you're interested. They were the servants of the Dark Lord. Their job

was to spread fear and mayhem...’

‘Uff Allah, Kulch, bus chup bhi karo.’

But Kulchoo won’t stay chup because he is very angry. He says YouTube tau in any case has already been shut down. Now they are also trying to chup karao TV channels like Geo. And then after that, it will be the turn of Facebook and then Twitter, because who knows when someone will accidentally say something to offend the sensitivities of such sensitive people? And after that, he says, we will become North Korya, with no contact with anyone. He says we will go into a black hole.

‘Shut down Geo? Haw,’ I said, ‘tau how I will watch Mera Sultan? And my fave talent shows, baba? What will become of me?’

‘Bilawal Bhutto is right,’ he said. ‘This is not Pakistan, it is Banistan. Anything you disagree with? Anything you don’t like? Ban it immediately! Ban new year parties, ban basant, ban YouTube, ban Geo, ban Malala’s book. Tomorrow they will ban mangoes because they give too much pleasure to people.’

We were sitting outside in the garden and he was shouting by this time at the top of his lungs. And there was this electrician I had called who was fixing the garden lights outside. The electrician had a big bushy beard and his shalwar was hitched up to his ankles. I saw him giving us suspicious looks as he stood on his ladder.

‘Kulch,’ I whispered, ‘please be more careful. You can’t say whatever you want. I keep telling you, zamana is very bad. Please keep your mouth under lock and key.’

‘That’s right,’ he said, pushing back his chair and jumping to his feet. ‘The only way to survive in Banistan is to shut your mouth and close your eyes and cover your ears.’

Crack.

May 2014

**Narendra Modi's landslide victory shatters
Congress's grip on India
Butterfly's NRI friends overjoyed**

HAW HAI, what's happened to Imran? Every day new tamasha, every day new stunt. Kabhi dharna against drones, tau kabhi jalsa against election. One day abuses to this journalist and next day insults to that newspaper. On Monday accusing someone of being dollar khor and on Tuesday calling someone else Westoxified and on Wednesday jetting off to London to attend parties in Anna Bells. Bhai, you have won the whole province of KP, where bombs are bursting every day and new, new scandals against guvmunt are coming up every hour, go and chhalao that instead of marching around like Forest Bump. I said this to my friend Baby. In case you are forgetting, Baby is my friend, with whom I've been friends since we were both at Little Scholars Nursery School when we were both actually babies. I grew up and she remained Baby. So she said, 'Hai bechara, what else can Imran do? Na koi family hai yahan na kuch. Ub you have to do time pass somehow.'

'So why can't he go and do some work in KP?' I asked.

‘Bhai, running guvmunts is so bore. Paper work and policy and planning shanning. What a yawn. Naturally, he’d rather stand in front of an adoring crowd of thousands, with flowers kay haar around his neck.’

And udhar say Moody has won lamplside victory in India. My rich Indian friends in London, they are so happy, so happy kay they are even thinking of spending four months in Mumbai instead of their usual three winter ones. They are feeling suddenly so much Indian. They say Moody is a real doer. He’ll give everyone a big danda.

‘Really? You want danda?’ I asked my friend Sharmeela, whose husband Anand has a big business in Nigeria. She lives in a six-bedroom house in Chelsee and has five servants even in London. Poor poor Biharis and Bengalis vaghera.

‘No, no, yaar,’ she said. ‘Not for us obviously but for all these poor, lazy types who don’t do any work. They don’t understand anything but danda. Sorry to say.’

Vaisay, I tau feel very sorry for Rahul Gandhi na. So cute with his dimples and his designer stubble and his fair si skin. Honestly, he’s so much more photographic than Moody. Only for that Indians should have voted for him. Par chalo, even if he didn’t sweep away the full election, at least he kept his own seat of Methi.

And Janoo says Afghanistan has also had elections, and someone called Abdullah Abdullah looks like he’s going to be PM.

‘I heard you first time only,’ I said to Janoo. ‘You don’t have to repeat his name, okay?’

Honestly, just because Janoo is deaf himself, he thinks everyone else is also.

Yesterday we were having coffee party at my old friend, Sunny’s. She is in my kitty group and also my coffee party set and she copies me in everything but pretends that she

doesn't. Her niece Tara is getting married in August. She's from American School and is doing love marriage. So she was there also and she asked Sunny, 'Aunty what is marriage like? I mean, like, really?' Sunny gave crooked sa smile and said, 'Tara, it's a walk in the park.'

'Yes,' I said, 'Jurassic Park.'