

INDEPENDENCE DAY ISSUE
FREEDOM FROM THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Outlook

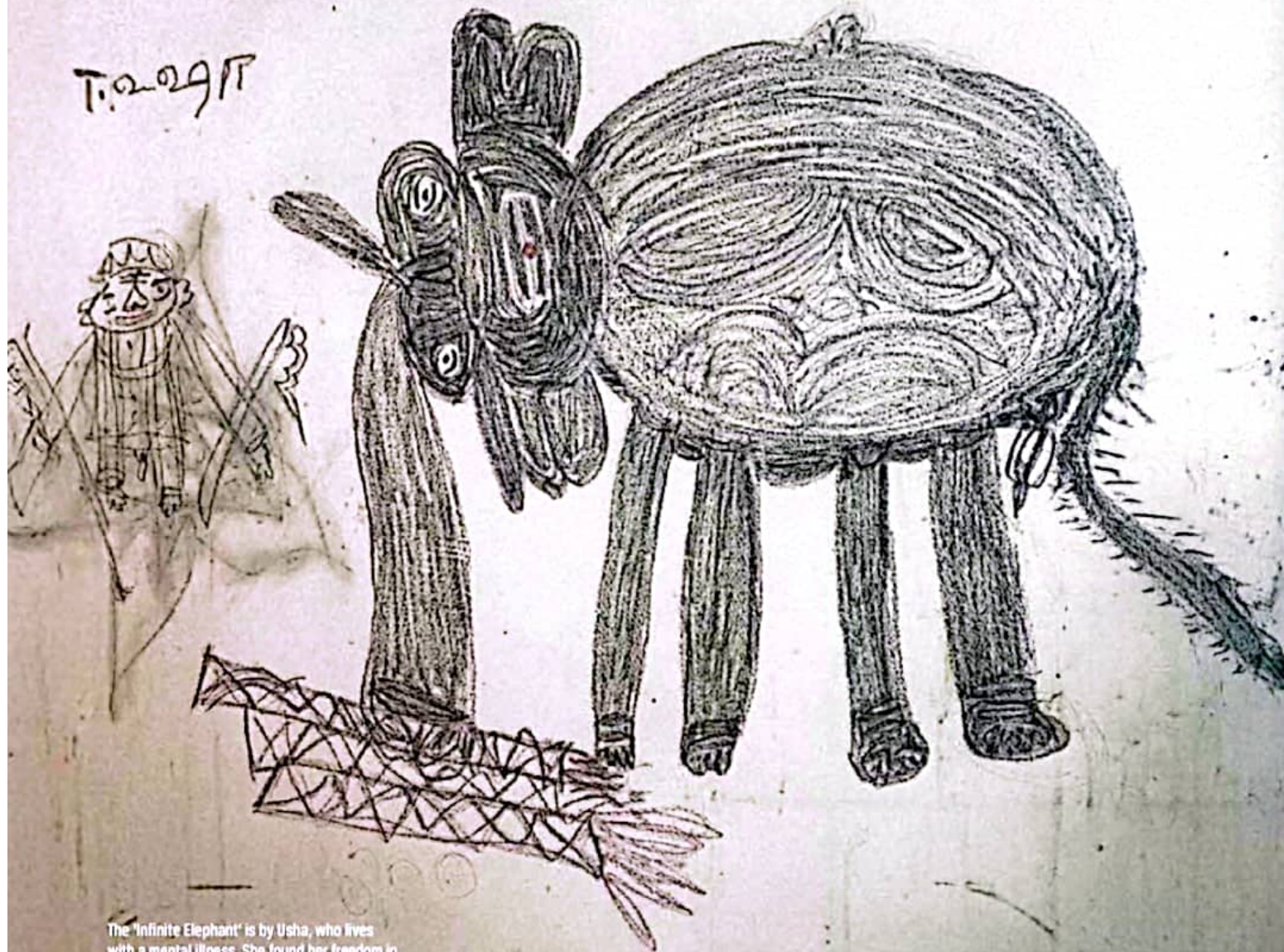
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Everyday I pray for Love



The 'Infinite Elephant' is by Usha, who lives with a mental illness. She found her freedom in love. The elephant, she says, represents hope and freedom. The cover headline, *Everyday I Pray For Love*, is the title of a book by the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama who lives in a mental health facility, and paints her visions

RNI NO. 7044/1961



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Outlook issue
August 11, 2025

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Printed and published by Indranil Roy on
behalf of Outlook Publishing (India) Pvt. Ltd.,
Editor: Chinki Sinha. Printed at MP Printers
(A Unit of DB Corp Ltd) B-220, Phase-II,
Noida 201305, Gautam Budh Nagar (UP)
and published from AB-10, S.J. Enclave,
New Delhi-110 029

Published for the period of
August 12-21, 2025

Released on August 11, 2025
Total number of pages 212 including covers



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GUEST EDITORS



VANDANA GOPIKUMAR is the co-founder of The Banyan, that offers comprehensive mental health and social care services for the homeless and low-income populations. Her areas of study include mental health services, especially the development of nurturing care ecologies, the role of hope and faith in mental health journeys and the intersections of homelessness and mental illness. She was member of the first Indian mental health policy group.



LAKSHMI NARASIMHAN is a mental health researcher and practitioner with a PhD from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, currently Director, Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health and Director—Research, The Banyan. Her work focuses on social inclusion and the quality of life-gains for people with mental illness, particularly those who are homeless.



VAISHNAVI JAYAKUMAR dropped out of her MBA course to co-found The Banyan in 1993. During this period, Vaishnavi shouldered the responsibilities of administration and finance. Though frequently terming herself 'retired', she has since gone on to work in the disability sector as Member, Disability Rights Alliance, facilitating and participating in a cross-disability discourse.



SANJEEV JAIN is a clinician and a teacher, and researches the genetic correlates of psychiatric and neurological diseases. He is Professor Emeritus, NIMHANS. He is a member of the committee for the Mental Health Policy for India. He is also an advisor at the National Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Bengaluru.

ABOUT THE COVER

Mayadevi aka Usha, a beneficiary at The Banyan at its Thoothukudi centre, drew the elephant and Murugan on a wall. She said she derived a sense of love and a sense of hope from both. "My faith helps me move and move past, and look beyond my sufferings that takes me from one day to another," she said.

Usha is not just living with a mental health issue, she is also a part of the unrepresented segment of those who we refer to as people with lived experience and represent the suffering and the freedom of hope.

COVER IMAGE COURTESY: The Banyan



PLACING INDIA ON THE GLOBAL HEALTHCARE MAP

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