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CITADEL

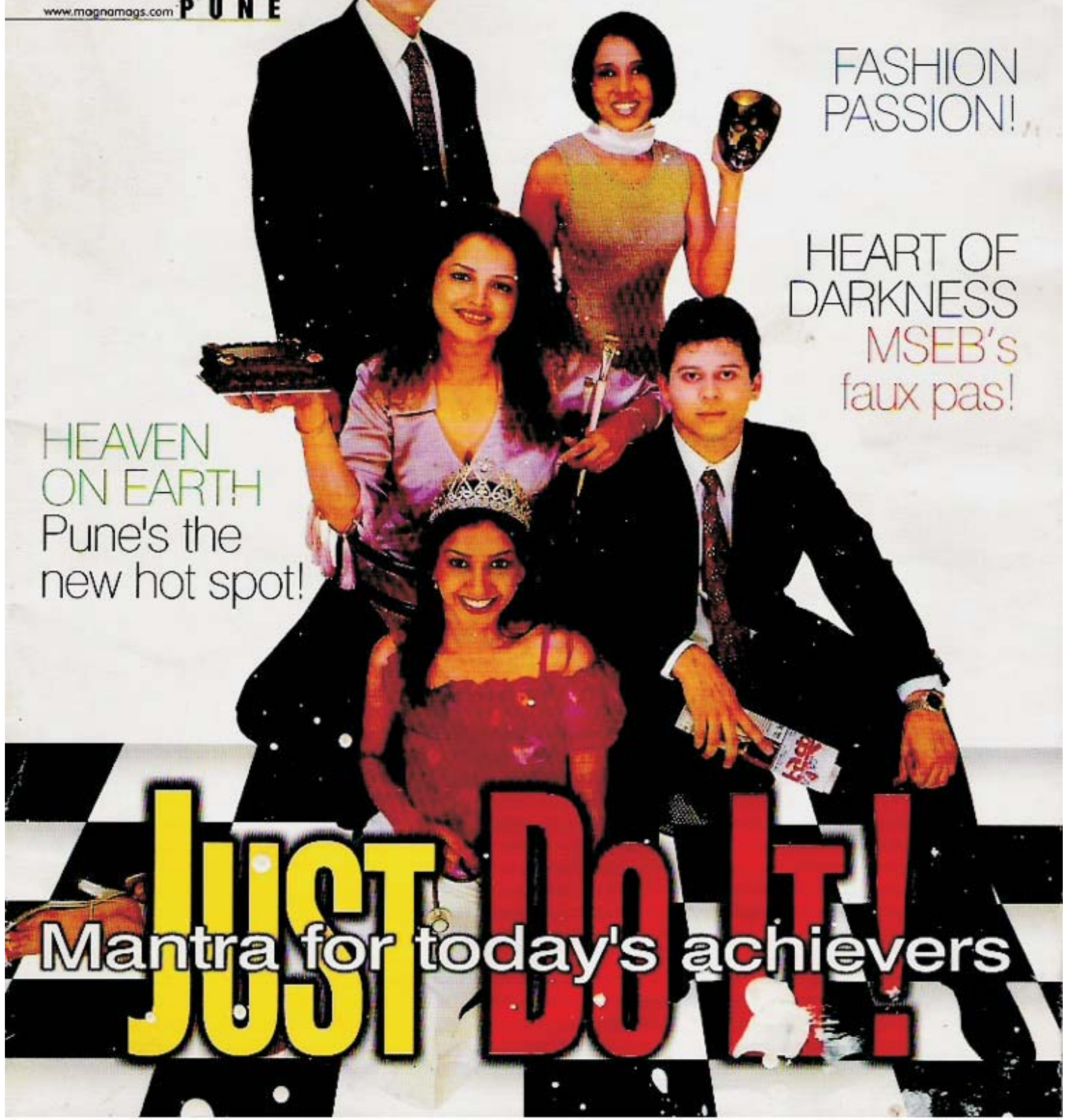
FASHION
PASSION!

HEART OF
DARKNESS
MSEB's
faux pas!

HEAVEN
ON EARTH!
Pune's the
new hot spot!

Mantra for today's achievers

JUST DO IT!



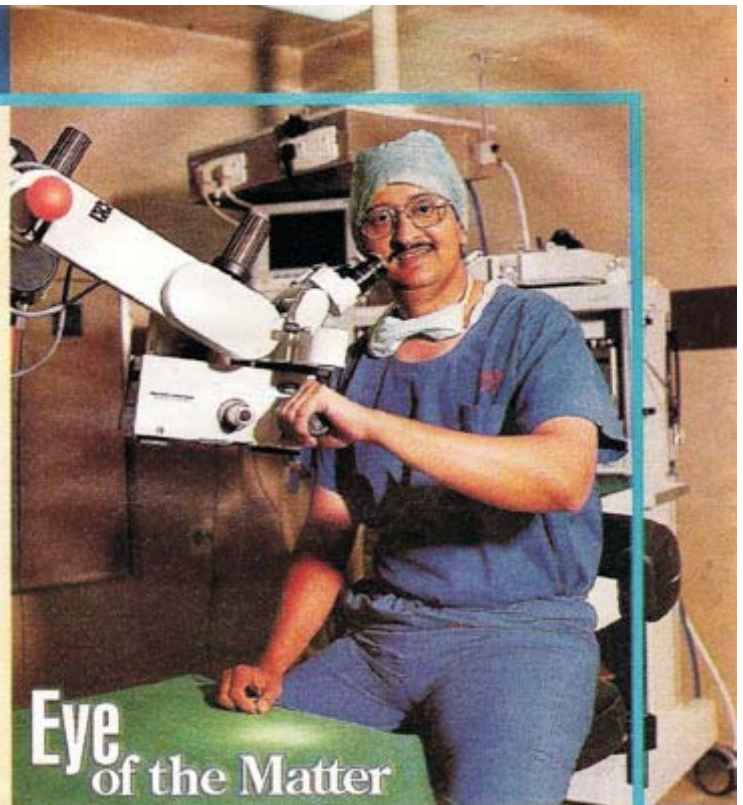
For someone who has a phobia of medicos, he is quite unlike any medicine man you have ever met. Perhaps, it helps he's almost in your age group, so it's easy to relate to him. Even if it wasn't that, you cannot help but like the youngest head of department (ophthalmology) to walk down the corridors of the Apollo Jehangir Hospital. Dr Salil Gadkari is one heck of an affable sort.

Articulate. Composed. Earnest. His patients must like his bedside manner! He is a first generation doctor amongst a family of businessmen. "I probably had had a good experience of doctors as a child," jokes the eye-doctor, who always knew his calling was the world of science "right from childhood." An avid follower of all that's technically new in his field, the doctor prefers dealing with humans rather than with unsurprising machines. "I like people – even if they are completely unpredictable most of the time!" he declares solemnly and then bursts out laughing, "My world is of an inexact science, but for the joy of dealing with people. I mean, where else can you heal people, achieve a Demi-God status and then get paid for it?" says Dr. Salil Gadkari.

Where, indeed! Jokes aside, says the doc who gets a real high after performing miracles with a particularly difficult case, "This is one profession where you are empowered to do something good – and get blessed for it too. Nothing's more important than the gratitude shown by the patients," smiles the nice guy, who chose Ophthalmology because it "was a branch with explosive developments taking place since the mid-'80s. And a hotly contested one too. Think numbers: from amongst 160 medical students, there were just two seats in this specialty. Having made the grade wasn't enough for the guy who loves challenges; he then branched out into an uncharted terrain of the extremely high-tech line of Vitreoretinal surgery that's akin to Neurosurgery (as matter of fact, they share the same OT).

But the good doctor is walking down *Citadel's* Hall of fame today for a simple reason: he is perhaps one of the five of the 17 ophthalmologists to practice his kind of surgery in the city. After undertaking vitreoretina training in UK and Germany, he returned home with his high-tech specialty to tackle a series of eye problems. Beginning with *Diabetic Retinopathy* and helps restore vision in a significant number of patients with advanced diabetic eye disease (in layman's terms, it's the major cause for adult blindness in the industrialised world. Particularly risky for patients with diabetes of over four-five years duration! Early detection of diabetic retinopathy can be treated with retinal laser treatment to prevent blindness.

The problem tackled by him is the *Age Related Macular Degeneration* (ARMD - a major problem with the large geriatric population in our country. It manifests after the age of 50 years, resulting in loss of vision required for



reading and recognising finer details with a myriad treatment options at Jehangir hospital including the rapidly progressive photodynamic therapy - PDT). And of course, the popular and progressive *Excimer laser therapy* (that helps gets rid of spectacles with the excimer laser has rapidly gained popularity. God-sent for people with myopia who have to undergo a thorough retina examination prior to this procedure as they can have stretched out retinas with peripheral retinal holes or tears. These have to be treated with retinal laser prior to undergoing excimer treatment). *Phew!* Sounds heavy!

It is, he agrees, but the future in the field of vitreoretina "is bright with newer modalities of treatment being introduced every year," believes Dr Gadkari, "Particularly, as it enables treat conditions, which were considered untreatable only yesterday." What makes it even better is the fact that vitreoretina surgeons "in our country have been in a position to assimilate and deliver the latest treatment modalities." In the long run, he predicts, "Western countries will begin to see India as a health care destination. They are increasingly realising that our medical graduates and specialists are some of the best in the world. Further today world-class operation theatres like at Jehangir And in other Apollo group hospitals should further dispel any doubts. The crux of the issue is surgery done in a world-class hospital in India, with the best-imported equipment and a surgeon with adequate local and overseas experience costs as much in rupees as the same in dollars in the US." An issue he obviously feels very strongly about.

Rah! Rah!