

CONTEMPLATE. CREATE. LIVE.

SEP 2015

₹40

BREW

ENTERTAINMENT

OLD WORLDLY CHARM

Re-constructing
Chennai with
Laurie Baker

THE ANUJA FACTOR

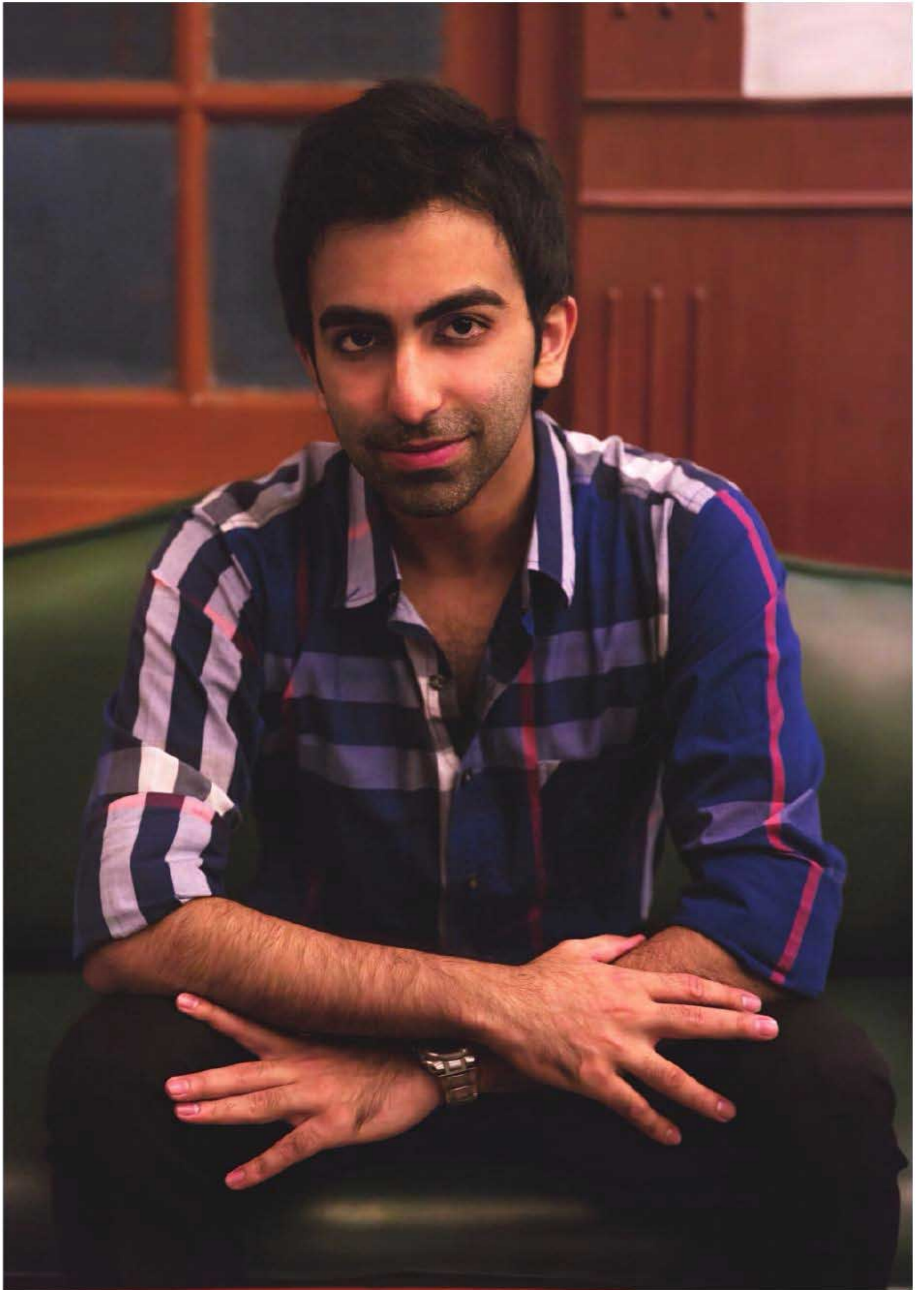
The quirks of
writer Anuja
Chauhan

EAT. BREATHE. LOVE.

Let yoga take
you around the
world

PANKAJ ADVANI

QUIPS
ABOUT HIS
GAME, LIFE &
PASSION



ON HIS CUE

His demeanour is quite the contrast to his fervent spirit on the table. With shots on point and the angles being acute, Pankaj Advani is eons ahead of his competitors and is making a significant mark in Indian sports. By Sanjana Ganesh

Photography by Kiran Koushik

“Don’t do anything for the awards or the money. Keep your head in the game and everything will follow”

Pankaj Advani is a crowd pleaser. His honest and quick-witted speech at the Madras Cricket Club garnered attention, applause and selfie requests. He is a crowd pleaser, without a doubt. That and India’s most successful sportsman in terms of international titles. His fecundity and admirable nature to retain his cool through his game has been commended by several parties involved in the sporting arena. What makes him tick? What has led to this explosive growth? Pankaj Advani answers these questions as he makes himself comfortable.

TO NEW **BEGINNINGS**

His journey into the world of snooker and billiards was a long and winding one. It took him by storm when he had just turned double digits. “It was at the age of 10 when I followed my elder brother Shree to a snooker parlour in Bangalore at our place. After three weeks of intensely watching, I asked him if I could try a shot. I observed the technique, the rules and everything about the game. After thinking through, I played my first shot and it went in”. Post the success of his first shot, many more followed. He went on to win his thirteenth world title recently with the same ease, excitement and attention to detail as he had in the beginning. Dabbling about with different sports such as tennis, cricket, badminton and basketball was not uncommon during times when children played on the road and lounged their Sundays unwilling to return home. Things began to make a drastic move for Pankaj when this dabbling turned into fancy and fancy to obsession. “When I began playing billiards and snooker, I got hooked on to it. I didn’t think it was possible to make a career in this arena. After much thought and apprehension, I went ahead with it. In a matter of months, I won my first world title. That changed a lot of things. I went about doing what felt right and didn’t laze around” says the sporting icon. The choice to slack was non-existent. It was not until a significant point in time that Pankaj felt that he could sink his feet deep into the sands of this game. With Cricket, Football and Wrestling still ruling the roost on the Indian Sports viewership statistic board, solace and incubation was crucial. “I belonged to a school that supported me and that was great. Initially my mother was a bit apprehensive because she felt that my grades would suffer. However, she came around. Family support was immense after a point. I never dreamt that I would achieve so much in the world of cue sport” says Pankaj, looking grateful. Having been blessed with the ability to make conscious choices, he made use of the right opportunities and worked towards his goal.

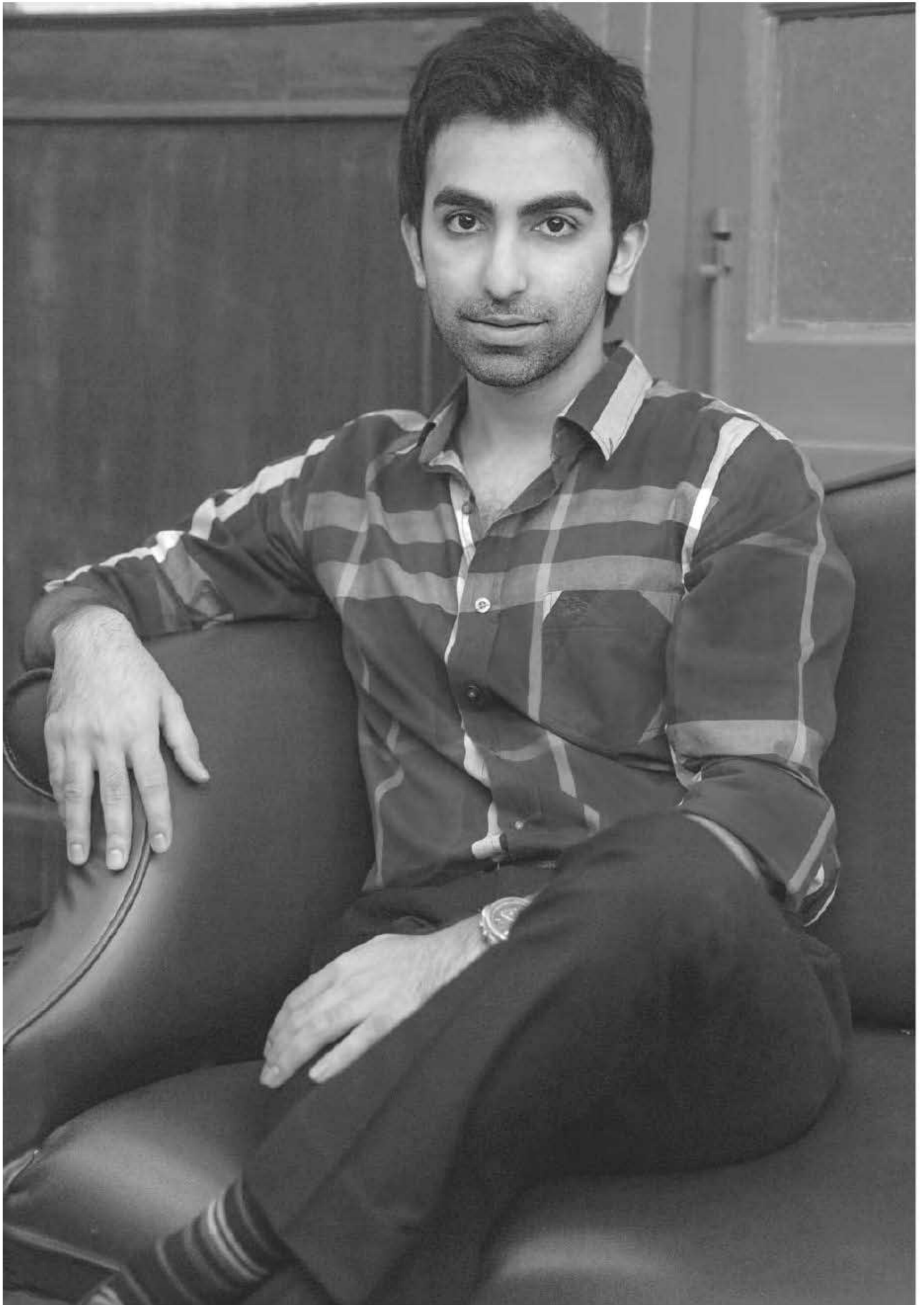
AT WORK, **AT PLAY**

When philosophers like Socrates and Faustus regretted their inability to learn even after death, people smirked. Teaching and grasping knowledge took precedence over time. Now, it revolutionizes the way we perceive the world.

*“It isn’t all
about money
and titles”*



*“After thinking
through, I played
my first shot and
it went in”*



Updating oneself is a necessity. This is what Pankaj Advani feels as well. His greatest motivation lies in the fact that there is so much more left to learn. It pushes him every day. "It isn't all about money and titles. Of course it feels great as you can walk with your head held high. I think it has more to do with continuously being a student of the game and learning every single day. That's the most exciting part. I partake in a challenge where I play snooker and billiards. People normally specialize in just one of these two". The ability to handle two challenging forms of the game has come with years of renewed practise and concentration. Pankaj Advani claims that he feels more like an artist than a sportsman. His life dwells around the four corners of the table. The six pockets determine his triumphs and losses. There is intense competition that challenges him to push beyond his abilities. There are some other times when he wants to unwind. "There are days when I'm all geared up to play but there are other times when I do not like touching the board. On those days, I play for about an hour. I go back and watch a movie, catch up with friends and meet family. I do anything that takes my mind off the game. I think it is important to maintain a balance. Too much of anything will result in an overload". Sounds like the perfect concoction for success, doesn't it?

DENOUEMENT

Pankaj Advani is confident about today's youth. He believes that they have more clarity about matters of importance. There is also a significant rise in the number of distractions. For someone who swears by loving work, Pankaj seems to have an indecisive mind about this in the beginning. "The youth is extremely sorted as they know what they want. They tap the right opportunities. But there are a lot of distractions in today's world. If your career requires focus, do not be afraid to put everything aside. Work towards your singular goal. I did the same earlier on in my career. I did all the things that college kids would do and had my fair share of social fun but I knew when to take it all in and become serious about my career (Though it was fun!). Don't do anything for the awards or the money. Keep your head in the game and everything will follow". This Bangalorian who grew up perfecting his skills has always worked on practise mode. He strongly advises parents against looking for lucrative platforms for sportsmen. It is all about the heart. With a note of hope, perseverance and inspiration by showing youngsters a whole new line in the field of sports, Pankaj Advani's life bears fruit to Michael Jordan's quote "You have to expect things from yourself before you can win".

"The youth is extremely sorted as they know what they want. They tap the right opportunities. But there are a lot of distractions in today's world"
