

The Country's Largest Cleft-focused NGO, Smile Train India, Presents "Every Smile Belongs"

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The world's largest cleft-focused NGO, Smile Train, launched "Every Smile Belongs" – a powerful photo exhibition and immersive tribute to inclusion, dignity, and hope with Kiran Nader Museum of Art as its venue partner. Captured by internationally acclaimed photographer Komal Bedi Sohal, the exhibition showcases unfiltered portraits of children with clefts. These striking images transcend aesthetics; each frame captures a pivotal moment in a child's journey, unfiltered emotions and expressions, aiming to shift public perception from sympathy to empathy, and from stigma to strength. The

event was inaugurated by Dr. Sujata Chaudhary, Additional Director General of Health Services (Addl. DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, who appreciated the initiative for bringing cleft awareness into mainstream public discourse through the lens of art and empathy.



“Every Smile Belongs” – a photo exhibition by Smile Train India at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, celebrating smiles and stories of hope

Mamta Carroll, Smile Train’s Senior Vice President and Regional Director for Asia, Smile Train, shared, “The exhibition marks Smile Train India’s 25-year milestone, celebrating our journey of supporting over 750,000 cleft surgeries across the country. Through this exhibition, we aim to foster greater understanding around clefts and advocate for timely, inclusive treatment, ensuring that every child can live with dignity and confidence. We are grateful to the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and Komal Bedi Sohal for bringing their vision and partnership to this impactful initiative.”

This collaboration with the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) as venue partner marks a powerful step toward using art as a catalyst for social transformation. By placing children with clefts at the heart of a respected cultural space, the exhibition affirms their visibility, celebrates their existence, and reinforces their rightful sense of belonging.

Komal Bedi Sohal put great thought and care into taking these portraits, showing the unique beauty in every smile and emotion. Through her lens, the exhibition becomes a powerful reminder that behind every cleft is a story of strength, identity, and belonging.

Komal Bedi Sohal, the photographer behind the lens, said, *“We live in a world obsessed with perfection. But these children showed me what real beauty looks like: raw, unfiltered, and full of expression and aspiration. This exhibition is about honoring the resilience of these cleft warriors and creating meaningful connections. I want people to pause and appreciate their presence, just as they are.”*

Every year, over 35,000 children in India are born with clefts, yet many go untreated, facing physical challenges and social isolation due to a lack of awareness and access to care. This collaboration between Smile Train and KNMA aims to shine a powerful spotlight on this issue, fostering greater understanding and driving meaningful conversations to ensure every child receives the support they deserve.

