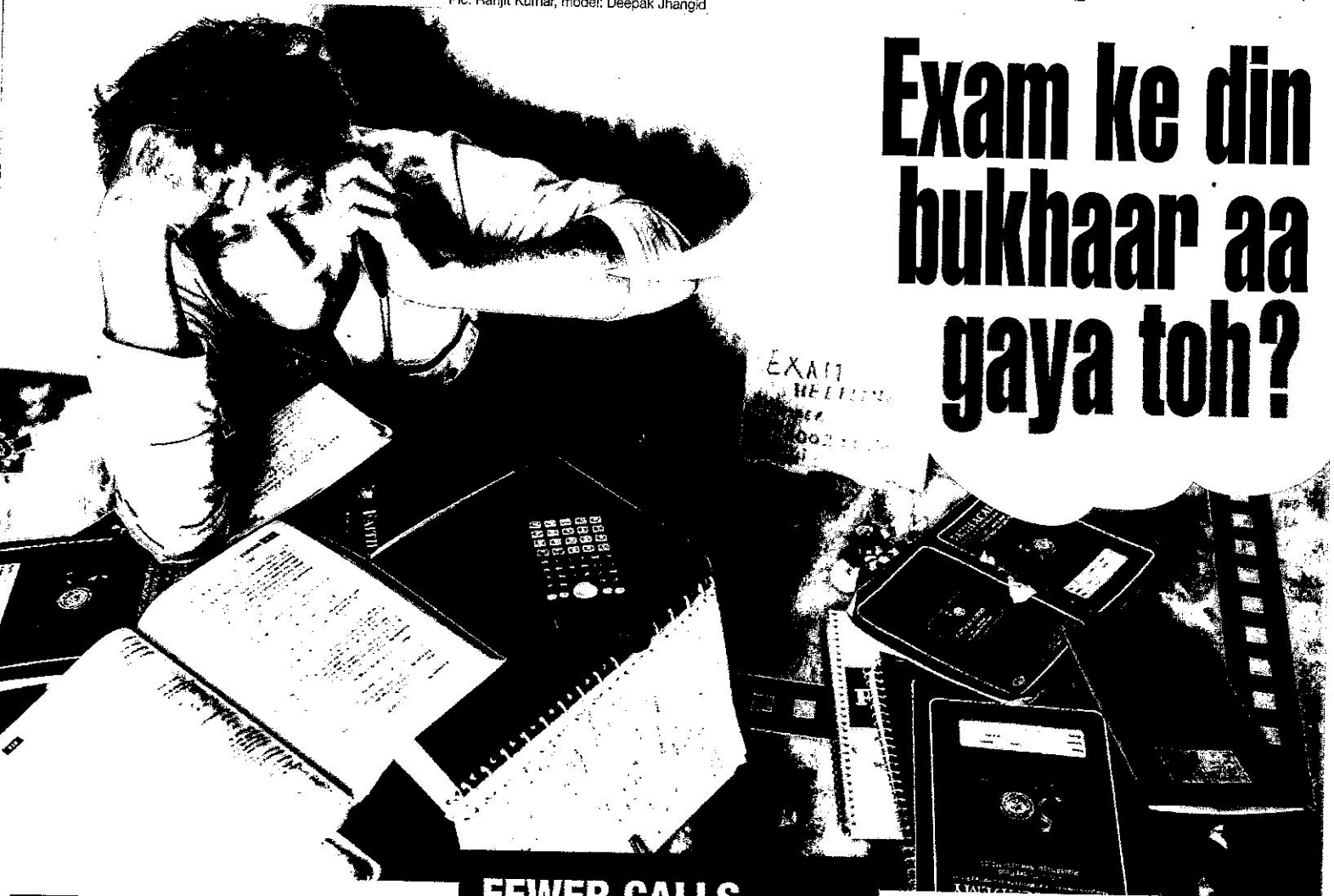


Helplines for board exams abuzz with unusual queries:

Pic: Ranjit Kumar, model: Deepak Jhangid

Exam ke din bukhaar aa gaya toh?



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FEWER CALLS ON WEEKENDS

Though 100-250 calls are received by all these helpline numbers per day, Abdul told us that they have noticed a pattern in the past few years. He said, "Though we receive almost 50-100 calls each day on weekdays, we have seen that we get very few calls on weekends. On weekends, parents are mostly at home so students usually do not call us then."

THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO COME WITH UNUSUAL DEMANDS SUCH AS, 'CAN YOU HYPNOTIZE OUR CHILD?', 'CAN YOU DO SOMETHING SO THAT HE CAN HAVE A FANTASTIC MEMORY?'. THEY THINK IT WORKS LIKE MAGIC — THEY THINK WE CAN MAKE ALL THEIR PROBLEMS VANISH'

— Deepak Raheja, psychologist

they do the same damage because all they are talking and keeping a track of is marks. But there are some people who also come with unusual demands such as, 'Can you hypnotize our child?', 'Can you do something so that he can have a fantastic memory?'. They think it works like magic — they think we can make all their problems vanish," he said.

Abdul added, "When they contact us, they think that counsellors are magicians who can solve all their problems. They think that we might have a magic wand!"

'I AM FINE BUT MY PARENTS ARE STRESSED'

While students have their own share of exam stress, parents are equally worried about marks during this time. Students suffer from the fear of not being able to perform or achieve their goals, or live up to their parents' expectations. Fortis Healthcare, Gurgaon, has also launched a helpline number (+91-8376804102) for students who are suffering from exam stress and anxiety. Samir Parikh, the director of department of Mental Health and Behavioural Sciences told us that they receive 50-150 calls each day from students. "The stress is the fear of not being able to achieve the goals and objectives. They call us and say, 'I can't sleep', 'I am not doing well', 'What if I don't do well, I don't seem to be concentrating enough'. And then, there are unusual queries like, 'I am fine but my parents are more stressed'. They tend to not sleep, and I think the problem arises when they are not able to reach out for help," he says. — Riya.Sharma@timesgroup.com

"We receive 100-250 calls each day. The general queries that we get from students include, 'I am trying to concentrate but I am not being able to', 'I am yet to finish my whole syllabus, how will I do it?', 'I don't think that I have prepared enough'. We tell them that whatever time is left, you need to make the right use of that time," said Rama Sharma, CBSE PRO.

Abdul Mabood, director of a Delhi-based NGO, Snehi, which also runs a pre-exam helpline number (011-65978181), added, "They haven't appeared for the exams yet but they keep worrying about the results. 'Agar humein exam ke din bukhaar aa gaya toh? Main bhool gaya toh kya hoga?' They also ask us, 'Padhne mein man nahi lag raha, kya karun?' 'Aap exams ke question papers dila denge kya?' 'Aap CBSE wale ho, aapko toh pata hi hai kitni problem hoti hai sab yaad rakhne mein, toh question paper dila do'. 'Aap humein subject padha do'. They call us with certain expectations, so we can't even say anything to them," he added.

'CAN YOU DO SOMETHING SO THAT MY CHILD CAN HAVE FANTASTIC MEMORY?'

Remembering everything in the syllabus is not easy, some topic or the other stays pending till the last moment. Deepak Raheja, a city based psychologist sees a lot of students visiting his clinic with parents for counselling sessions. "The cases that I have seen are those in which the parents create an unrealistic situation, where they are either too stressed or too chilled out. When they start saying that marks don't matter,