

# Hashtag

MEDIA

April 2021

**10**  
Iconic Cabins  
of Kolkata

Recognise  
& Overcome  
**EMOTIONAL  
HUNGER**

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND  
THE TERM DE-GLAM"

**JANHVI  
KAPOOR**

**8**  
SUSTAINABLE  
FASHION

standout collections

**LFW '21**

ON A  
DIGITAL SPREE

**PRATEIK BABBAR**

# CONTENTS

## EVENTS IN TOWN

**PAGE: 05-06**

April is the month of celebrations and festivals, and from movies, to food, to jewelry, India seems to be celebrating everything. Get a low-down on the most happening spots from our events calendar



**TRENDING NOW**

**PAGES: 08-09**

Janhvi Kapoor lights up our cover this edition, and speaks on her time as India's darling *Gunjan Saxena*, hopping genres this 2021, and what she thinks of "glam" roles in the industry.

## START UP INC

**PAGES: 11-12**

Read up on two start-ups aiming to provide natural and holistic solutions salvaged from traditional Indian remedies to modern day issues plaguing us all.

## CHANGE MAKERS

**PAGES: 13-15**

A charitable trust in Hyderabad is striving to get rid of the digital divide in the school system of the country that reared its ugly head during the lockdown. Also read on the inspiring Ria Sharma's journey traversing the lines of gender and sexuality with the Jimme Foundation, and how Telangana set up the first desk for transgenders at the Cyberabad Police Station

## DUSK TO DAWN

**PAGES: 16**

Discover what happens behind the scenes of the glitzy turntables as Hashtag gets in conversation with DJ TBOM

## RETAIL THERAPY

**PAGE: 18-23**

From luxury soaps to zero waste stores, Hashtag brings you some innovative entrepreneurs and products.

## FASHION FORWARD

**PAGES: 25-33**

The Lakme Fashion Week had a sustainability reboot this year, and with its "phygital" edition, managed to make space for awe inspiring designs and presentations. Hashtag compiles the best collections that wowed at the event!

## HEALTH & FITNESS

**PAGES: 35-37**

Emotional eating is a thing, and it has been taking an increasing toll on the fast paced lives today. Hashtag reveals how you can come to terms with it, and also breaks down the hype behind proteins for sports professionals.

## WELLNESS

**PAGES: 39-44**

From a well-established trend such as intermittent fasting, to a unique therapy that is fast catching up, Hashtag has got you covered if you're looking to recover and heal from stressful times.

## BEAUTY & SKINCARE

**PAGES: 45**

Read up on this magic ingredient that has been hiding in our kitchen spice racks all this time, and how it can provide solutions to some pesky healthy issues

## FOOD INC

**PAGES: 46-49**

Kolkata's iconic cosy food cabins have survived the test of time. Hashtags brings you up close and personal with a few of these, and also unearths what's driving the dhabas craze in Mumbai.

## AUTO & TECH

**PAGES: 50-51**

Tech-guru Aniket Pandey demystifies some common errors that one might make while buying a smartphone. Also read up on why Electric Vehicles truly are the future.

## ARTS AND THEATRE

**PAGE: 53-55**

Walk through an ancient monument in Hyderabad, saved from the teeth of oblivion and immortalised in the pages of a book by Willaim Darymple. Learn also about a studio in Rajasthan that is working to keep art alive.

## TRAVEL

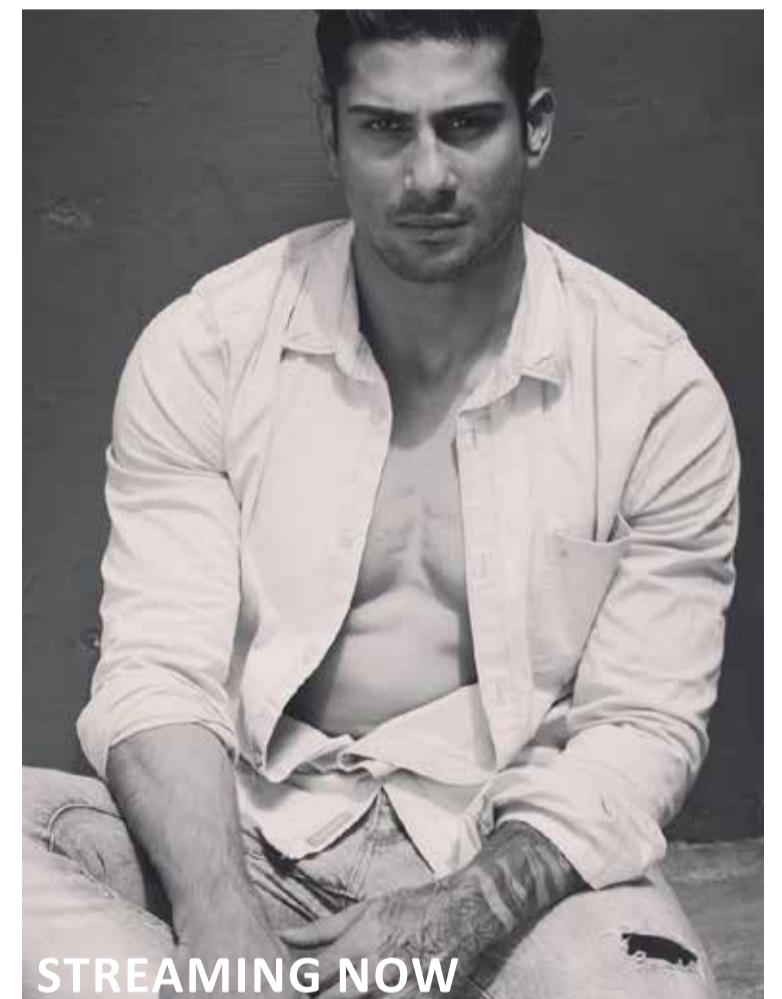
**PAGES: 57-61**

Hashtag also gets you an account of the ruins of the Krimchi Temples in Kashmir, and takes you on a tour of the iconic palace of Udaipur. Also take a trip to the natural dye farm in Hyderabad.

## INTERIORS

**PAGES: 64**

Find out how a lego-themed bedroom might be a great fit for your kid!



**STREAMING NOW**

**PAGES: 69**

From death on the streets of *Kashi* to the traditional *tiffins* that bring people together, discover what should go on your reading list this summer. Also catch Prateek Babbar in conversation about his upcoming OTT projects.

## NRI - IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**PAGES: 66**

Navigating identity and finding love hasn't been easy for NRI couple Ishaan and Sindu. Read up on their cosy love story, and how they're striving to create home in a foreign land.

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**Hashtag India Magazine  
is published and promoted by  
Nirvana Media House  
Hyderabad**

# From the **E**ditor

## I AM NOT IMPORTANT AND IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD...



views you receive. Don't get so lost in that game that someone needs to give you lessons on loving yourself. It's okay to take photos and videos (something I'm guilty off too) but don't capture solely for the approval of the others. Be present, enjoy the moment!

Here's one more thing though, as I've entered my wise thirties (I am no spiritual baba, but nevertheless) I have come to realise that what people need is to tone-down on all this self love drama. It's okay to be ordinary and ordinary can be fun and happy too.

**H**ow many of you wake up each morning with "love yourself" quotes and messages spamming your phones? I wake to at least a dozen. The annoying good morning messages apart, I get gyan on self love and self importance on multiple family groups apart from individual gyan from my Isha group, Iscon group and Brahma Kumari group. No, I am not spiritual, I am just a journalist/editor trying to keep up!

Are we really in a world filled with unhappy people? I guess we really are. Because today, people are living for the likes, rather than liking to live! The need for intangible satisfaction has become endless. It seems like every action needs a validation. I know friends who cannot eat a bite of food before posting it on Insta. Celebrations and weddings are performed more for the camera/likes/ posts and filters, rather than the occasion itself.

Some can't even seem to go to bed without posting a picture of themselves in their new hot pink pyjamas... Really??? The likes, the thumbs up and odd emojis may lift your spirits until your next post, but really how long can you go on this mad chase for gratification.

You get 100 likes for your post, so you suddenly think you're important. And for the next post anything less than a 100 comments, depresses you. Social media encourages us to self-market our lives, but let's not get caught in this web of self-obsession. From the shoes you wear, to the brands you carry, to the colour of your toes everything need not be defined by the impression you are making on others, or the

In this crazy universe and the grand scheme of affairs, we are actually just inconsequential! My dad would always tell me, "the graveyard is full of people who once thought they were invincible," and it's true. The world does not revolve around us! The second we embrace the idea that we are unimportant; life becomes so much more effortless. It's easier to shrug things off, to let bygones be bygones and not dwell on regrets. So the next time you feel overwhelmed or feel like you are getting stuck in your own importance, simply tell yourself- **"I am not important and it's not the end of the world."**

Here's to fool-proof life, beginning this April.

**SINDURI VUPPALA**



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**THE  
HAPPINESS  
CO**



**DELICIOUS  
AND  
CRUNCHY**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## APRIL 2021

### The Label Bazaar

The most awaited designer exhibition is back with its 14th season. Be a part of the trendy and cool shopping experience from versatile designers. The event has stayed successful over many years now, and having made shopping a breeze, there is really no wonder why.

**Date:** 10 April 2021

**Venue:** Park Hyatt, Hyderabad

**Date:** 10:00 am – 10:00pm

10  
April 2021



### Thrissur Pooram



One of the extravagant festivals commemorated in Kerala is the Pooram Festival. It is a procession of around 30 elephants beautifully decorated in all their lustre and glory with a combo of 250 musicians. The festival is a huge event that happens through the night. Other attractions include drum concerts, ornamental parasol displays and fireworks.

**Venue:** Vadakkumnatham temple, Thrissur, Kerala

**Date:** 23 April 2021

### Tulip Festival



Experience the pristine beauty of nature at the Tulip Festival. Tulips bloom only for a period of 2 weeks, making it a mandatory visit to the festival. A wide range of flowers in a variety of colours like crimson, gold, striped, purple, red, orange and many others are a feast to the heart and soul. The fragrance all over the place is spellbinding.

**Venue:** Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, Srinagar

**Date:** 4- 10 April 2021

### DadaSaheb Phalke Film Festival

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the father of Indian Cinema, Duniya Govind Saheb Phalke, the excellence of the silver screen stars is celebrated. Running with a mission to encourage the work of aspiring, young, independent and professional film makers, the film festival began in the year 2011, and has since been one of the more prestigious awards ceremonies in the country.

**Venue:** Delhi

**Date:** 30 April 2021

30  
April 2021



## Navi Mumbai Food Truck Festival

Food lovers, be prepared for one of the biggest food truck festivals happening in Mumbai. The food trucks will serve 100+ dishes with lots of entertainment and some live performances by known artists. So why shilly shally – hop on and have a food-coma inducing weekend.

**Venue:** Tandel Grounds, Seawood Grand Central, Mumbai

**Date:** 25 April 2021

25  
April 2021



## Indian International Jewellery Show

An exhibition showcasing the best jewellery collections by India's leading manufacturers, the exhibits are collections of highest, most exquisite standards, from a plethora of talented designers. Be a part of the 14th edition of IIJS and encounter the uniqueness of the show.

**Venue:** Nesco Central Hall, Gurugaon, Mumbai.

**Date:** 7-12 April 2021



To get your events featured mail us at [contact@hashtagmagazine.in](mailto:contact@hashtagmagazine.in)



# FRESH AND ORGANIC DELIVERY

PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLE THROUGH  
AVANT GARDE GROCERIES



Janhvi

## SET TO EXPLORE GENRES IN '21

**Janhvi Kapoor** became India's darling with her work in *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* last year. Janhvi has an array of films lined up for this year as she attempts to reinforce her versatility as an actor. Her March release *Roohi* falls under the comedy-horror genre and is already catching steam as an enthralling watch. Working alongside Varun Sharma and Rajkumar Rao on the project, Janhvi speaks to **Lipika Varma** on how she took the leap into comedy, and why she thinks the "glam" era can be passe...





### **How was your experience working with Rajkumar Rao?**

Rajkumar is an actor with a lot of finesse. He has garnered acclaim for the kind of work that he has done. I also believe he is extremely versatile. This was my first comedy film, and although I don't do too much of the comedy, it was interesting to observe Rajkumar and Varun deliver some charming banter with great comic timing.

### **You have a few films in the pipeline. How are they shaping up?**

The two I am working on right now are *Dostana 2* and *Good Luck Jerry*. *Dostana 2* is a proper comedy showdown, and I am extremely excited about it because that is a whole new world for me. It is, as they say, the complete opposite of de glam (*chuckles*). *Good Luck Jerry* on the other hand is an action movie, and I thoroughly enjoyed pulling off some exciting scenes. Lara Croft is my favourite action star, and they made me feel quite heroic. I would love to do a good action role in the future too.

### **You worked with your cousin Shanaya on the sets of *Gunjan*, and now she is set to make her debut on the silver screen. Do you have any words of wisdom as the older sister?**

Shanaya is set to make her debut, and I have all the faith in her. I actually believe my sisters are way cooler than I am. Shanaya assisted with *Gunjan* and she was extremely professional, putting in all the hours. Even as a kid, she was a master of all trades, be it diction classes, belly dancing, kathak, or acting classes, she nailed all of them. I believe she is ready to make a splash on the screen now.

### **You are coming off the rousing success of *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*. What did you take away from that experience?**

I look at *Gunjan* with fond memories and a lot of love and affection. Those were some big shoes to fill as an actor, and I am glad audiences across the country warmed up to our portrayal of a national hero. It is a film experience that I will always cherish.

### ***Dhadak* brought you onto the big screen back in 2018. How has the journey been since then?**

I can't look at my journey from the perspective of a third person. I am enjoying it. I want to get better at my work. I hope to find roles which will be memorable. When I say memorable roles I mean cherishing roles that have the ability to make a lasting impression on people.

### **Your role in *Roohi* is quite "de-glam." How was that like for you? Do you believe this genre of characters is here to stay?**

There is nothing glamorous about *Roohi*. I actually don't understand the term "de-glam" anymore. Emphasis should be on how real or otherwise characters are. What happens to *Roohi* might be unreal, but we still tried to portray her with as much reality as possible.



# Hash#ag INDIA



**RANA DAGGUBATI**

**EPISODE 3**

*Unfiltered*

**LOG ON FOR FULL EPISODE**

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# Beat Diabetes

Lifestyle disorders and conditions such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cholesterol imbalances and fatty liver are more commonplace than ever before. A Bengaluru-based provider of holistic solutions is attempting to control and reverse these issues. **Bindu Gopal Rao** discovers how *LiveAltlife*, a Bengaluru based provider of holistic solutions enables people to reverse their diabetes and other lifestyle conditions.



**Vivek Subramanyam**

## The Specifics

Started by Vivek Subramanyam, CEO and co-founder, LiveAltlife helps people fight and overcome their condition through a one-stop solution that includes therapeutic food delivery, curated fitness routines, mindful stress management, predictive medical diagnostics and expert consultations powered by a smart high-tech ecosystem. LiveAltlife's has a Health Restore 90 program that focuses on holistic wellness over a 90-day period.



## Research and Development

"We realised that medicines and other interventions are primarily focused on managing the symptoms. Hence, it would never lead to actual improvement. We understood the root causes to be imbalanced metabolism, unhealthy cells that are not functioning to their potential, and weakening of the body's immunity and other defense mechanisms," explains Subramanyam. Based on their hypothesis, they did a pilot study with around 15 people and saw extraordinary outcomes, with diabetics not showing underlying signs at the end of the program and who have been able to lose weight and stop medication.

## Holistic Solutions

LiveAltlife's unique triangular approach to health is built around the three pillars of food and nutrition, mind and body fitness and smart diagnostics and advisory. They have a 90 days flagship program that takes care of all solution vectors. They are currently focused on Type 2 Diabetes, Excess Weight, an PCOS and will very soon be launching solutions for Hypertension, Cardiovascular Risk and Fatty Liver. Their multi-vector solutions have benefitted more than 150 clients, and they witnessed a significant positive change in their health parameters. "One of our clients reduced his HbA1c by 50% and fasting blood sugar by 65%, and he is off medicines completely. Another client lost around 17 kgs in 3 months and all this safely, naturally, and conveniently," says Subramanyam.

## Food Tales

Food and nutrition are a key component of the program. This is where science meets art. While the goal is to drive 100+ rules that lead to precision nutrition that helps the core of our body become healthier, the outcome ensures variety, taste and a delightful culinary experience. "We ensure the right macronutrient and micronutrient availability driven by our NutriSmart AI. In addition, we ensure we use only the best of nature's ingredients and we avoid usage of any processed food. We only use chemical free, organic produce sourced directly from the farmers. Our condiments and masalas are prepared in-house. We avoid pro-inflammatory PUFAs. We primarily use free-range and natural-fed poultry. Seafood is sourced from the deep-sea range – lower in the food chain," says Subramanyam.

# AU MATORA



**The Tribe Concepts** founded by **Amritha Gaddam** combines her father's Ayurvedic expertise and her mother's homemade recipes. **Bindu Gopal Rao** in conversation with the entrepreneur who's working to bring Ayurvedic solutions to your personal spa time...

**A**mritha Gaddam had flawless skin and hair growing up in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh. After the move to Hyderabad for higher studies, that equation changed drastically. Dr. Kamalanjali, Amritha's mother, suggested that her worsening skin and hair issues, and an alarming development of PCOS was probably due to the use of chemical cosmetics and binging on junk food.

"That struck a chord with me, and I asked my mom to send me the homemade powders we used as kids," shares Amritha. Not surprisingly, she remarks, the results on her skin and body were great. In Bengaluru for her MBA, she discovered that her friends at the hostel also raved about these homegrown recipes. And although she was running through the mill of a corporate job, she also started working on cracking the best formulae for skin and hair products concocted from natural ingredients. She found support in her father, Dr. Madhu Babu Gaddam, who happened to be an Ayurvedic specialist.



Amritha Gaddam

## Entrepreneurial Cues

Incidentally, she admits she always had the entrepreneurial spirit in her. "I had the passion to do some business right from my childhood and I still remember how enthusiastically I used to sell pretty souvenirs on ebay while I was in high school. It was in me all the time, the passion, the spirit to start something on my own, to be the task owner and to execute work on my own platform. In fact, I worked with my friend Nitya Mohan on various startup ideas during our MBA days," she shares.

## Labour of Love

In May 2019, she finally started 'The Tribe Concepts', her organic hair and skin care brand with Apuroopa Gaddam, Kamalanjali, Nitya Mohan and Vamshi Krishna (all of whom are her friends and family). "Our first flagship product, the 90-day miracle oil, a unique and very well-researched formula enhanced with the right ingredients and right combinations became a huge hit and helped us start our journey on natural, organic, and sustainable products," says the entrepreneur.

While the manufacturing unit is in Rajahmundry, the business operations are headquartered in Bengaluru. "Both my mom and my dad possess the right subject knowledge to develop these natural recipes for skin and hair care. Our products may look very easy, in fact, we mention all our ingredients, but the magic lies in the right combination of the right ingredients. For instance, *shikakai* can make your hair rough and if you add other ingredients like hibiscus or fenugreek, they do not make the hair clean or even remove oil," Amritha explains. This is where expertise, research, and testing come into the picture, and products such as the powder hair cleanser are born, which is not only convenient to use, also removes excess oil and makes hair manageable.

## Product Profile

The current product portfolio has a range of skin and hair care products. "Our hair-grow kit and face brightening kit are our flagship products. Our 24K *kumkumadi tailam* is one of our best sellers as a great facial oil serum for everyday skincare. The powder cleansers include hair cleansers, body ubtan and face brightening cleansers, all replacement for soaps and shampoos," Amritha shares.

Interestingly all their products are sourced from rural forests where the land itself is pesticide and toxicant-free and naturally organic. "The majority of ingredients we use are forest-based, raw, and mostly forgotten Indian ingredients mentioned in Ayurveda books. Our products are all either in the powder or oil form and have no added chemicals, preservatives, colour or perfume. It is just the raw dried powder or pressed oil," says Amritha of the process.

## Life Lessons

Amritha's mother is a huge inspiration in her life. "She has always been the epitome of clean living right from her food choices to her everyday living. She has always chosen simplicity and sustainability along with catching up with the modern world," she says.

An avid traveler, Amritha loves exploring heritage, mountains and beaches. "Cooking is my passion and I enjoy putting together recipes with healthy ingredients. Looking ahead we want to expand our portfolio and introduce more clean and natural products. We are also looking to start our offline presence in major cities and are looking to expand globally in the next two years," she signs off.

## *Journey to the Self:*

# *A young gender-fluid individual is contributing to the growing conversations about gender and sexuality in India*

In a chance encounter on a local train in Mumbai, **Canta Dadlaney** found herself drawn into conversation with **Ria Sharma**, a vibrant 21-year-old, who has been traversing the deep, deep waters of gender and sexuality from a young age, trying to glean a true sense of self. Ria speaks about establishing the **Jimme Foundation**, and struggles with a rigidly heteronormative society...

### **When was the first time you heard about gender fluidity? What sort of an impact did it have on you?**

Like others, I had also defined gender from a point of view of the society we live in – rigid compartments of woman and man, and I thought gender and sex were synonyms.

I was 16 when I became aware of the fact that the gender-binary is just a social construct. It was eye-opening to find that my gender could be different from the one assigned to me at birth. I read up and understood the concept of gender fluidity, and in some way, I felt a sense of relief. I had always been bothered by labels, and knowing that that concern was valid made me feel liberated.

### **When did you first open up about your gender identity and sexual orientation to family and friends? What was the response like?**

My cousin Prateek Ali was the first person I talked about it to. He was extremely supportive, and that gave me the courage to properly come out to my extended family. When I confided in them, their key concerns revolved around the difficulties I would face as a gender fluid lesbian, and of course, if I would ever be able to find a partner. My parents accepted me from the very start, and in fact, started learning more about me even as I continued to learn about myself.

The reaction from my first group of friends was ambiguous and disheartening. College, however, opened up a whole new world where I was reassured that I would be accepted for who I am. Some, in fact, took the initiative to conduct sensitisation sessions for juniors. This type of support was encouraging and comforting. Coming out also helped me discover others on the LGBTQ spectrum, and made room for conversations about our issues that gave me the database I needed to establish the Foundation.

“

I had always craved an ‘identity’; one with which I could relate. In retrospect, I consciously ran away from it because of the stigma that surrounded any conversation about the LGBTQ+ community in India. ”



### **Tell us about the early days of the Jimme Foundation.**

I established the foundation with my father as co-founder in 2019 with the aim to sensitise people about gender and sexuality. We were swamped with crisis calls from the start. I am one of the extremely few lucky ones who has a support system of family and friends. Most of us stay scared in the closet or deal with all sorts of inhumane situations throughout our lives. We dealt with a host of issues that ranged from fluidity of gender, sex, sexuality, expression, laws, child sexual abuse and mental health issues. My own experiences have revealed that people are curious and want to know more about the dynamics of gender, sex, and sexuality, but the deep-rooted conditioning persists. This does not stop me from being optimistic. We are doing our best to reach out to more people.

## There is a lot of talk about legalising marriage for the LGBTQ community. What is your take on the issue, and what is your view of marriage?

We all have different notions about love and marriage. I do wish to marry someday. For me it would be more spiritual than 'marriage in the conventional sense'. I wish to find a partner who has a similar spiritual wavelength as I have, and I would love to openly marry them. There has been much debate on marital rights for the queer community which I find totally irrational. Our country is known for its diversity and acceptance and I hope the situation changes for our community as well. People need to understand the basics of respect, love and privacy. Until then, our struggle to live as couples will persist.

## Once you came out of the closet, did you feel any animosity or indifference in the behaviour of others towards you?

Fortunate as I am, my friends and family are more sensitive to my identity in the sense that they are conscious about certain things. From being gender neutral about what they say to using the right pronouns for me. I think that has been the only change amongst my close group. Being an openly queer human rights activist, people are sometimes hostile towards me which sometimes also includes sending unsupportive, threatening or discouraging messages.

“

After my talk at TedX, I was also featured in 'Josh Talks', the Hindi version and my email ID was erroneously made public. While many acknowledged my inner strength, the threats I received ranged from gross to bizarre. I had someone mail me that if he found out where I lived, he would kill me. ”



## Navigating terms and identities:

“

The word, 'lesbian' is more sexualised than the words, 'queer' and 'gay' and with that background of conditioning, it has come to create disgust in people. I prefer being called queer, not because of the term lesbian but because queer defines me better as a person. ”



## Plans for the future?

I am studying Psychology right now, and I am also finding new scopes of activism and social work every day. I have been associated with the organization 'Kranti' for a year now. Kranti empowers girls from the red-light areas to become agents of social change. My dream of becoming a social worker is empowered with the idea that I shall someday be able to provide mental health support to the marginalised communities of our society.

## How did TEDx happen?

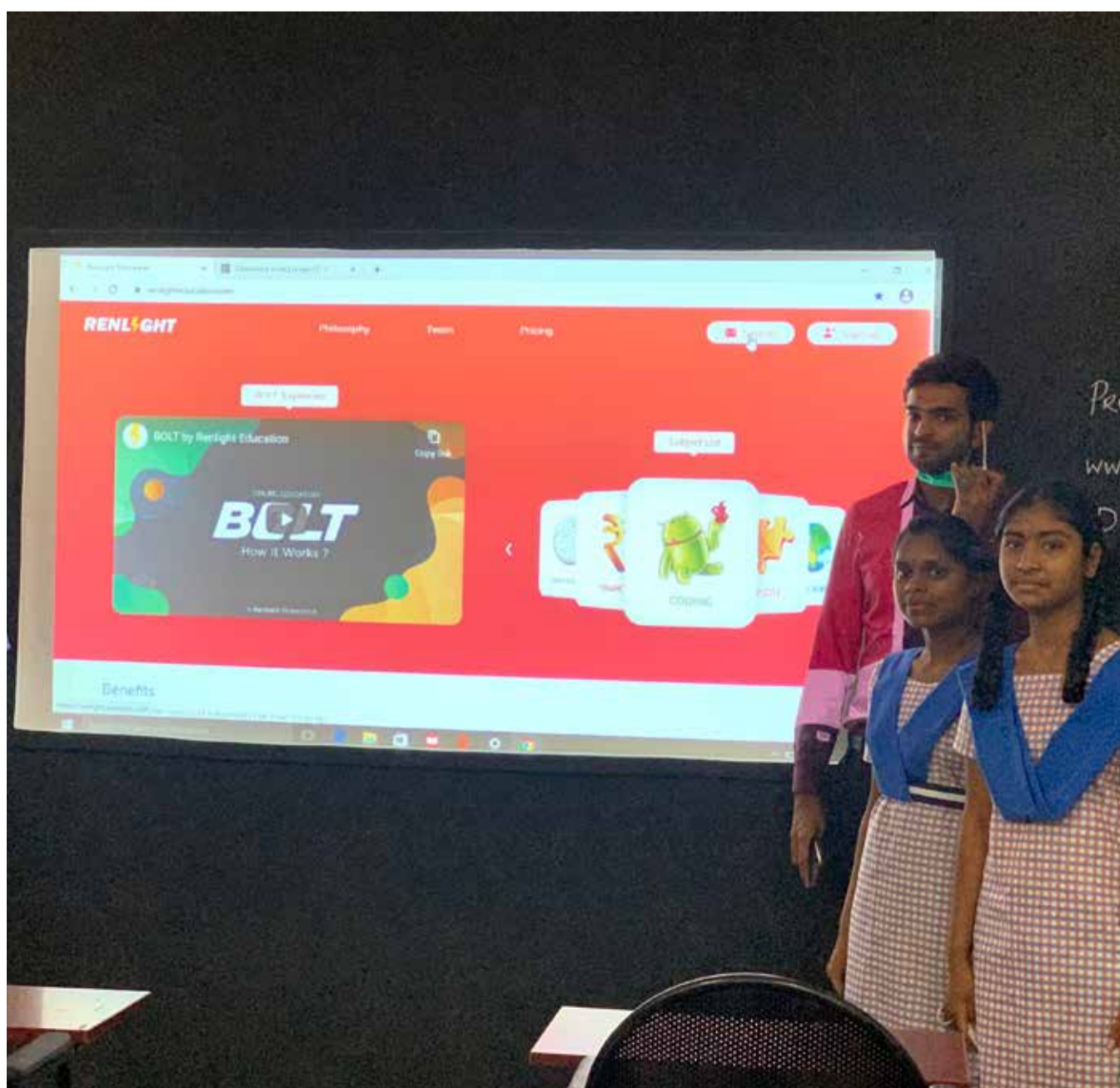
Even as a 12-year-old I found TEDx talks extremely inspirational. I always nurtured a dream of being a part of them some day. In a way, the talks helped me accept myself as I am. Addressing audiences in college was second nature to me. Harish Iyer, a human rights activist and a queer himself, recommended me to TEDx and I am grateful for that opportunity, even today. It wasn't so much about being on TEDx than the response it elicited. That was immensely gratifying.

# Erasing the Digital Divide, One Classroom at a Time

For Project 511, sky's the limit with digital learning. Converting government school classrooms into sophisticated digital learning spaces, the team works to provide an equal opportunity to students of the public education system to learn and compete. **Juveria Tabassum** explores how the project is reducing the digital divide without replacing teachers...

"The problem with government schools," says Maneck Debara, the Chairman of Project 511's governing council, "is that the students don't have the resources or the context to understand the curriculum." In 2003, the Freedom Through Education (FTE) programme, run by the Hyderabad Round Table charitable trust built schools for the underprivileged communities. However, they soon realised that they were only constructing buildings. The team went back to the drawing board, and after a bunch of surveys decided that there is no dignity for a student if the school doesn't provide basic facilities such as blackboards, benches, teaching learning material, and washrooms. Thus the charitable trust set up Project 511 which brought these initiatives to government school buildings, aiming to bridge the gap between public and private education.

The project initially adopted schools, and provided them with any amenities that the management might require, right from compound walls to science labs. The mission covered 1217 schools in 11 districts of Telangana impacting 2.5 lakh students every year. In 2019, they decided to reimagine education, and work towards digitizing government school education. Maneck says that the Digital Learning Programme (DLP) converts a regular classroom into a digital space that allows teachers to use aids such as videos, slides, online quizzes and articles to supplement teaching.



## Contribute:

- Project 511 aims to have at least one digital classroom in each of the 2700 government schools they currently work with. One digital classroom costs rupees two lakh seventy-five thousand (Rs. 2,75,000). You can contribute to the cause by donating via wire transfer at <https://www.project511.org/donate>

"Each classroom gets an internet connection, a projector, a whiteboard, speakers, a laptop for the teacher, and power back up," shares Maneck. The team is currently working towards providing these facilities to 2700 government schools. The project has also tied up with online education platforms such as Bolt and Khan Academy which help teach state curriculum. The project also lays emphasis on teacher-training programmes, enabling teachers to better use technology for efficient teaching. "One teacher impacts about 50-100 students at any given time. The holiday period will allow us to help remove the fear of technology that some teachers still have and enable them to adapt to digital teaching," says the Chairman.

Maneck, who is not a fan of online classes, believes that they will never replace the need for teachers. "People confuse the two (online classes and digital learning). Indians need teachers, not facilitators. The digital medium can be used to enhance teaching. For example, if a government school doesn't have a science lab, experiments can be shown via videos. Excellent teachers and speakers can be made available to a larger audience. Project 511 aims to have at least one digital classroom in each of the 2700 government schools we currently work with," he sums up.

DUSK TO  
DAWN

# KEEPING IT SMOOTH DJ TBOM

Under psychedelic lights and bass that thumps inside your chest, we let the best music of our time wash away stress and jam us up with adrenaline. As a veteran DJ, **Krish Mulchandani** believes that his job is to master the art of mixing two songs together without people realising he's mixed them. In conversation with **Juveria Tabassum**, he talks about what lured him behind the turntables, and how he has seen India lend its ears to different genres over the years...

**W**hen he is manning the turntables, Krish Mulchandani wants to ensure he is as happy as the person breaking a limb to his beats in front of him. Happiness was the mantra that kept him going as a part-time DJ as a student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, regardless of whether he was playing for 2 people, or 200. A student of Economics and Finance, Krish says he has always been driven by music. "I always found solitude in music," says the DJ who goes by the moniker, The Book of Music (TBOM).

Now playing popular venues across the country, Krish was always a bit of a music prodigy, releasing remixes and covers on SoundCloud which attracted a decent following, and had hits in 150 countries. When he returned to Mumbai, however, music took a backseat as he joined IndusInd Bank. Work was exhausting, and it made him wonder if he was, after all, missing his true calling. "I wanted to experiment whether I had a market in India. I realised I did when I finally played a gig and 500 people showed up without marketing it," Krish shares. The heart wants what it wants, and it didn't take long before Krish convinced his parents to let him take the leap, and in 2016, he finally started working the records full-time.

While acknowledging that music can be a tough, volatile career, Krish now plays 15 to 20 gigs a month, and believes that a major reason for his success is creating and using a good network. And though he has a soft spot for his hometown, Mumbai, Krish believes cities such as Hyderabad have greater energy on the dance floor. "Appreciation for music and reaction on the dance floor in Hyderabad is something you don't see in Mumbai. Tier II cities coming up in the wave are a lot more knowledgeable when it comes to music. They show up on time and stay late. They know how to dance and make the artist feel special," he says.

DJing for Krish is the art of catching the rhythm and reading the crowd he is playing for. While he spends three to four hours before a gig compiling and mixing playlists, he strives to stay in the zone while he is playing, ensuring that he gets the maximum reaction for the tracks he is spinning. In the business for almost 10 years now, Krish says he has observed



a significant shift in India's music culture. While EDM was all the rage when he began, underground music and an appreciation for hip hop, R&B, deep house, lounge and techno, has led a smooth transition into an audience that now values good production. "Hip hop also evolved from stories about their lives, to stories about their lifestyles. That, along with places like Goa, with its many music festivals that provide a scene for foreign artists to explore, have created a better culture of music in India today," Krish stresses.

- **Song for the Summer:** "People want sunshine, happy vibes around. So a song that'll stay on the dance floor this season is the Purple Disco Machine remix of On My Mind.
- **Favourite All Time Track:** Snow by Red Hot Chilli Peppers.
- **Track You Can't Go Wrong With:** California Love by Tupac.
- **Three tracks you currently can't get enough of:**
  - **On my mind** - Purple Disco Machine Remix
  - **For a Feeling** - Camelphat and Artbat,
  - **Dance With My Ghost** - Camelphat





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# A *pro soap-maker* brings your skin some *healthy pampering*

**Anita Murgai** is a multi-talented woman whose journey into entrepreneurship could inspire Gen Z. This luxury-soap enthusiast channels her profits into social service, finds **Canta Dadlaney** in conversation with Anita Murgai, the Founder of Meraki luxury soaps...

## A life with many career options

This Mumbai-born, national-level basketball player could have easily become a successful sports person, a painter or could have even continued managing her parents' business of trading footwear. But Anita Murgai's passion lay elsewhere, turning her into an entrepreneur with a foray into making luxury and fragrant soaps that entail healing qualities.

## What made you choose soap-making?

Soap-making was always a hobby close to my heart. I did take up a short course in the same and was deeply impressed by the beauty and colours of nature that reflect through soaps. I then delved deeper into it, researched and studied the processes in detail. I started creating trial batches and would offer the soaps for usage only after much critique and analysis.

## When did you roll-out the first set of your soaps and to whom?

Initially I would gift them to friends and family who used to request me to sell these soaps to them as it had improved the condition of their skin remarkably. I then started creating these luxury handmade soaps with special attention to different types of skin textures and conditions. This approach led to repeat purchases in a maximum number of cases. I converted one of the rooms in my home into an art studio and that gave rise to this one-man show.

The funds raised from the sale of these soaps are used for cardiac surgeries of Adivasi children and increasing water supply to remote villages.

## What goes into making them creative?

The same creativity that attracted me to design my house, export selected artefacts and painting, led me to meticulously craft these soaps. I would pay unequivocal attention to using natural and quality ingredients, such as rose petals. My fragrances and essential oils would be directly purchased from certified, branded manufacturers (with COA certification), while I would make the dry ingredients myself, such as orange peel, lemon peel and almond powder. Depending on the soaps, I use different techniques that maximize their advantages.

The 'melt and pour' process involves melting the pre-made base and crafting it with requisite fragrances, colours, anti-allergy and skin-nourishing ingredients.



**Anita Murgai**

## What is your product's USP?

These luxury handcrafted soaps go beyond cleansing. They pay attention to seasons, allergies, skin types, acne and a lot more while also appealing to the eye. They are priced on the higher side. Every single soap is made by me and I practically nurture them. I also interact with clients, make suggestions as per their skin texture on what types of soaps would suit their skin best for them to make the correct purchase.

## Do you cater to a specific audience?

We aim to provide these soaps to anyone who bathes (*laughs*). But, on a serious note we cater to those who appreciate beauty, quality and luxury. We are widening our consumer horizons currently by making our products available on more sources, including Instagram. In the past, we have presented our products at 5 successful exhibitions. A steady expansion attracted bulk orders for festivals and occasions but I see it more as a mental satisfaction than stress. While there is greater scope in the market, I would like to deliver these soaps only throughout India as they are designed according to the target market here. I have also received requests for workshops and plan on conducting them soon.

**Hashtag Picks:** Sandalwood, Rich Almond.

**For Orders:** @merakibyanita

# Care from Love P, Organics

A piqued dreamer and believer, a qualified computer science engineer and an entrepreneur, **Pranitha Movva** has made her mark creating customised skin and hair care products. **Mahati Salike** speaks to the entrepreneur about what makes her products stand apart from the growing crowd of organic retail...



**Pranitha Movva**

**P**ranitha Movva believes pampering should be fun and it should work. After four years of rigorous research on skin and hair care, she successfully launched 'Love P, Organics' in 2020. Based out of Hyderabad, Love P, Organics makes toxin and chemical free products that are completely suitable for all skin types, including sensitive skin. All the ingredients and powders incorporated in the composition are made in her farm with other essential oils imported from Africa to meet the standards of purity.

Think organic products and you picture pale greens and browns. However, Love P, packages their offerings in funky shades of orange, pink and wine, adding that extra bit of quirk. Samples are formulated and tested in-house, and every client's requirements are personally taken into consideration in order to deliver the ideal product. Pranitha says that her biggest driving force has been positive reviews from clients. "I used to only cater to friends and family earlier. To get positive feedback from actual customers is extremely encouraging," says the entrepreneur.



## Recommendations:

- **Glue Glow Mask** – A refreshing gel mask for soft, supple and plump glow.
- **Rainbow Scrub** – Soft powdered concoction that exfoliates to reveal subtly vivacious and bright skin.
- **Glowry** – A fast absorbing essential oil for restoring moisture and radiance of the skin.
- **Facial cleanser** – A bestseller, it is formulated with a superfood blend and helps in retaining fresh and dewy skin.



**Price Range** : ₹600 - ₹1500  
**For orders** : @loveporganics  
**Tel** : 8896799999



# Designs from Delhi: Medha Bansal on her love for all things bold and beautiful



Medha Bansal

A graduate from NIFT Delhi, **Medha Bansal** has always been passionate about creating eccentric pieces of work with fabrics and colours; thus evolved her clothing line **medha**. **Mahati Salike** sits for a tete-a-tete with Medha Bansal.

**W**ith interest in art and design since school, the designer began her brand, medha, in 2017 in Delhi. She took the plunge with a workshop that laid the foundation for her own brand. Three years later, her team has grown in number with hand embroiderers and crafters, who do the finishing, work with kathan fabrics (among others) and masterjis and tailors. The work on garments is hand intensive and most importantly made with love, she adds.

Speaking about the progression of her aesthetic, Medha says, "My aesthetic evolved over time. When I was in fashion school, we visited a craft cluster in Rajasthan where artisans create block prints, embroidery and weaving. I have always been fascinated by colours and embroideries." She adds that on her visit to Kutch exploring 14 different villages, she was inspired by the bold and rich use of colours.

The brand participates in a lot of exhibits and that's usually where they garner attention, and customers. The speciality of the collection is the use of Indian techniques in a contemporary manner. They do not usually use the same colours, instead incorporating patch works, kathans, contrast and detailing on the garments. One can explore a variety of work from casuals to formals and party wear in vivacious styles. Customisation is on the cards, and in some good news post-lockdown, the store is set to be reopened in the month of June.

**Price Range** : 7000/- to 1 lakh  
**Duration** : 2 – 3 weeks  
**For orders** : @medha  
**Contact** : 9971530616



# HOW A ZERO WASTE SHOP IS HELPING RETAIL

## GO GREEN IN INDIA

**Kamayani Tiwari**, the founder of **Bioroots**, is an enthusiastic minimalist and ardent nature lover. With her zero-waste shop, she is in a bid to put a check on the circulation of single use plastic in India, and make conscious living a daily habit. **Surela Chakraborty** gets chatting with the entrepreneur...

**Z**ero waste stores are fast gaining traction in India as a viable option that provides eco-friendly alternatives to plastic in items of daily use. What makes them really different from retail outlets and e-commerce stores is how they meticulously package their products attractively in non-plastic alternatives. Their catalogues are only lined up with chemical free, organically sourced items, be it food grains or cosmetics. A zero waste store is not only about promoting minimalist conscious lifestyle but ethical business practices. This implies collaborations are only made with organisations that do not exploit their labour force and natural resources during production, follow fair trade practices and contribute towards the betterment of society.

While reducing carbon footprint is the aim of such stores, they also directly help small businesses thrive. The concept of zero waste shops was initially popular in Europe, and with the rest of the world now catching up, entrepreneurs such as Kamayani are leading this charge in India.

In a candid interview, Kamayani reveals what inspired her to take a leap of faith and how she plans to make zero waste store the future of the retail scene in India one step at a time...



**Kamayani Tiwari**



**How did you come up with the idea of starting an online zero waste store?**

**KT:** I have been silently following minimalism for more than one and a half years, but I never forced people to do it. A point came when I thought it was important after reading up on what is harming animal life and speeding up global warming. The penny really dropped when days after ganpati visarjan I saw statues just lying around roads and waterbodies. They were made of non-biodegradable POP. A lot of other factors contributed too, and I wanted to simply write a registrar or a blog on sustainable products. It was only after rigorous research that I discovered there was no one place for all of them. So, I simply created one.

**Online-only stores is a concept that is slowly picking up in India. How challenging was that process for you?**

Though the idea is picking up and physical stores are simply amazing, not everyone has access to zero waste stores nearby, with our [zerowasteshop.in](http://zerowasteshop.in) we reached corners of India, including small towns with simply no waste generated.



**“IT IS PRETTY SIMPLE, IF YOU ARE ALIGNED TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY, WE ARE HERE FOR YOU, NO MATTER HOW SMALL OR BIG YOU ARE”**

**How do you come up with ideas to curate products both for daily use and luxury items which are organic and chemical free? What are your criteria to choose such partners or sellers who make these products?**

We believe in ethical business; we are not a money-driven business. While Zerowasteshop India has big brands, we also have small brands which are new and emerging. We want to provide products for all kinds of budgets and hence we have products such as soaps ranging from Rs. 80 to Rs. 300. We must check most products in our store ourselves. We help our brands or sellers with packaging, and even with R&D on plastic free packaging, if they are curious. We support small NGOs who work with specially-abled people and local artists and most of it is not profit-based work.

**This pandemic has been especially tough on small businesses, and since you started up just last year, how has the traffic been on your website?**

March-April was quite harsh, and then with the complete lockdown, we hardly got any orders and we had to cancel them due to lockdown and people were not willing to wait. I was lucky enough to be able to sustain and be patient during this time.

**With many zero waste stores coming up, do you think there has been a steady increase in awareness amongst people to opt for a more environment-friendly product?**

When we started, there were manufacturers, but there were no zero waste stores online. That has changed in the last few months, and it is quite heartening. It only means that people are now shifting and accepting a lifestyle once considered too complex to live. There is still a stigma around eco-friendly products being too costly, but that is not true. We have products which are the same as the cost of a plastic alternative like our coir scrub pads, face wash, shampoo bar, skincare, among others.



**As a young start up how are you planning to expand your product line in the years to come, as you have mentioned the focus is more on creating a better planet than just profit?**

Money is important, but like I said before, we do green business, and the planet always comes first. For instance, for every order shipped, we spend an amount based on the CO2 emissions and donate to our carbon offsetting partner, pachama.com. That cost isn't put on the customer, but is directly paid by us.

We educate and encourage today's youth towards waste segregation. Providing tools to schools and organisations is our upcoming project.

**As a team you make a conscious decision to choose eco-friendly packaging for your products, can you elaborate on how to try to choose plastic-free packaging?**

We do a lot of research. Initially, some of our brands were not into the idea of plastic-free packaging, but we were able to encourage them with viable alternatives.

We do a lot of R&D with minimal packaging. We send only digital invoices, our packaging is all newspaper and waste paper out of some other packaging, compostable packaging, twigs, jute strings, paper tapes and envelopes.

**It is such a wrong perception that eco-friendly products are costly. I switched to all reusables and ditched single use products which I would throw away after every use. I use a shampoo bar and conditioner which lasts more than a month and costs only Rs. 270 and a face wash that puts me back only by Rs. 130. A minimal lifestyle saves a lot of money.**

# NATURAL DYE FARM GETAWAY

Have open spaces become all the more enticing after the lockdown and pandemic? **Mallik Thatipalli** drops into **Creative Bee's** lush farm just an hour's drive from Hyderabad and spends the day amidst trees and weaves...



## A day at the farm

Creative Bee is a popular design studio in Hyderabad which is known for its sustainable and signature textiles. For almost two decades, their designs were processed at their natural dye farm, an hour's distance from the city. Set amidst a three and half acre mango orchard, it provides the perfect foil for artisans to get their creative juices flowing.

It was during the lockdown, when the retail business was badly hit that the founder of Creative Bee, Bina Rao hit upon the idea of visits to the farm, not only to get away from the monotony of working from home but also to spend time in open spaces while understanding and appreciating the intricate process of weaving. Rao, an alumnus from National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad says, "We started doing this for additional modes of revenue as we didn't lay off any employees and the pandemic resulted in a dip in our sales. The idea was to understand the process behind the clothes we wear, and I must say that the response has been beyond terrific."

While earlier the farm was only open to international textile students who enroll for short courses to learn the know-how of natural dyes, block printing and weaving, now with people allowed, a wide range of visitors have been thronging the premises – from a recent visit by IKEA's management to handloom aficionados.

From batik work to wooden block printing and pottery, the visitors can choose one activity to take part in. The farm is home to three families of skilled artisans and the visitors are guided by them as they put their creativity to good use. The textiles are produced with no electricity and no pollution to water, air, or ground.

Creative Bee incorporates both Indian and international techniques, from Batik work which is popular in Indonesia to the Japanese artform of Shibori (via which textiles can be treated in 15 different ways), it is an opportunity to understand and explore these rich crafts. One can create a stole using the shibori tie and dye technique, dabble in wood block printing on fabric or understand how the ancient craft of Ikat works. There is a potter's wheel too, for those who want to get their hands dirty, literally!

Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, a day spent at this farm transports you to a different world, one where bird song and the weaving machines are the only sounds you can hear. For those looking for an eclectic outing, it doesn't get any better than this.



Presently the farm is open for visits only on Saturdays and visitors need to book three days in advance.

The experience visit starts from 11 am and ends at 5 pm

11 am to 11.30 am: Brief introduction and Tea/Coffee

12 pm to 1.30 pm: Demo of any one craft chosen by you (Pottery, Ikat, Block Print, Shibori or Batik)

1.30 pm to 2.15 pm: Simple, home-cooked vegetarian lunch

2.30 pm to 4 pm: You can indulge in the hands-on experience of any technique chosen by you, followed by evening tea

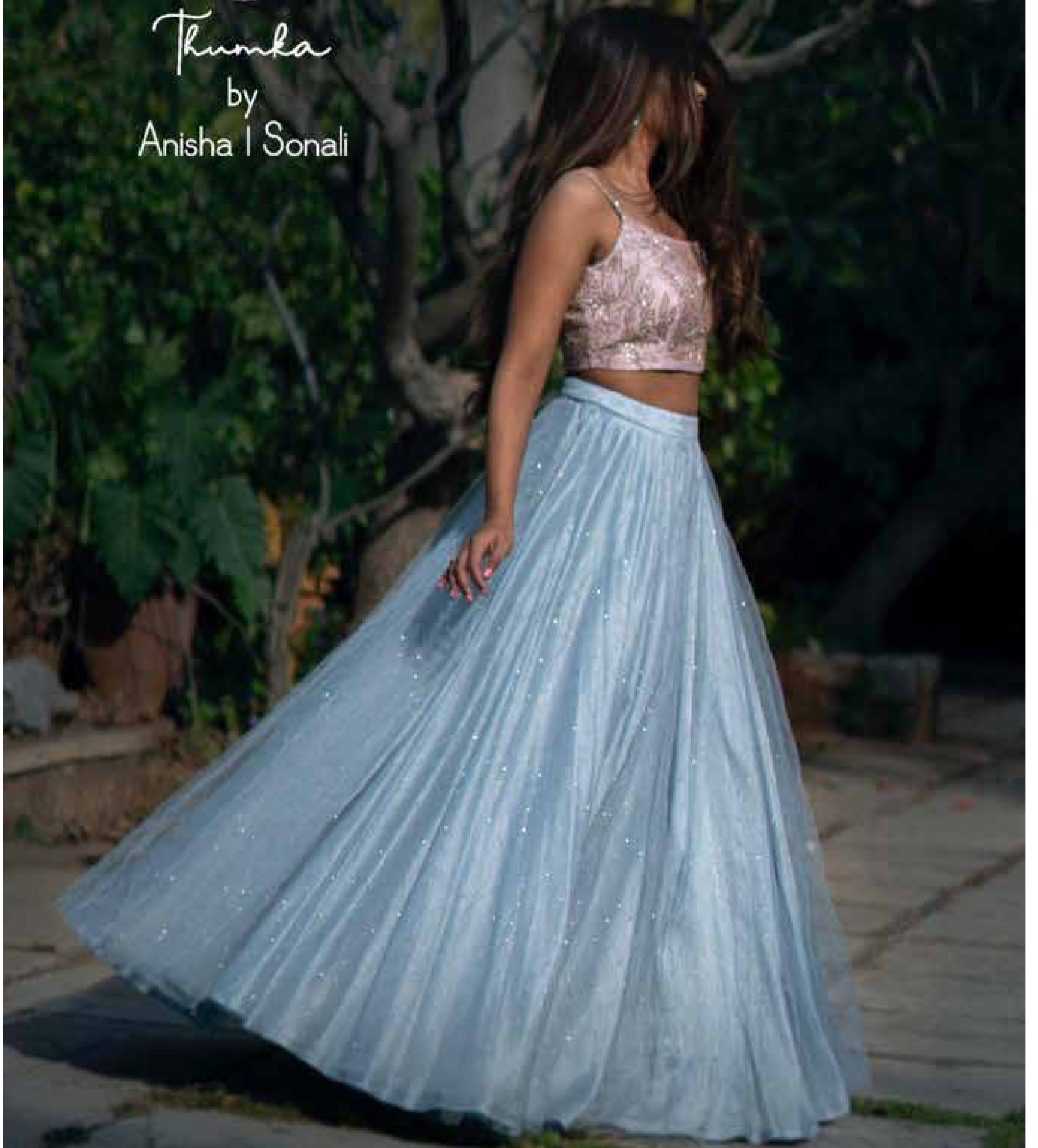
**Location:** Near Ghatkesar

**Tel:** 90638 04035

**Price:** Rs 1770 inclusive of taxes, per person.



Thumka  
by  
Anisha | Sonali



8-2-547/R, Road no 7  
Banjara hills, Hyderabad



@thumkaofficial

thumkaofficial@gmail.com



Lakme Fashion Week 2021 was all about hailing new beginnings after the upheavals of last year, with an eye towards sustainability. From a brilliant mix of the green horns and the established, the designers lit up the event with their creations that often swung between opulent and eclectic. The event, backed by Lakme India in partnership with the Fashion Development Council of India, was a “phygital” gathering of craft, innovation and workability. Designers participated from all around the country via spectacular visual art films and live walks.

**Juveria Tabassum** picks eight of the best collections on show through the five days.



# LFM GOES *Sustainable!*



**Designer :** Akshat Bansal  
**Collection :** Bloni  
**Label :** Bloni  
**Hashtag USP :** Local artisanal techniques on marine plastic waste textiles



Akshat Bansal

Delhi-based Bloni's Akshat Bansal's creations were the perfect celebration of the theme, for the event. The designs were showcased as part of the Emerging Talent Category. Fabrics sourced from marine waste and generated through technology were adorned with the age old tie-and-dye craft. Furthermore, the collection, termed *Bloni*, was gender neutral, which gave them an added edge. Crochet and knitting made an appearance and the designs left an impact with its tasteful use of neon green and shimmery silvers between blacks, whites and greys on eco-friendly, hybrid textiles. The film deployed futuristic elements and was striking in itself, with models standing knee-deep in waters.



**Designer :** Shantanu and Nikhil  
**Collection :** #SNSafari  
**Label :** S&N  
**Hashtag USP :** Safari chic that can well become the new-age celebration wear.



Shantanu & Nikhil

The designer duo has become a vintage name in the industry with their new-age celebration wear which is transforming what we wear at festivities. Their Safari collection was driven by the idea of "celebration on the move," paying a tribute to the ceaseless lives of today's youth. The designs were a smooth mix of casual chic and traditional cuts, satisfying the fashion stipulations of the youth. The collection experimented with cuts and silhouettes in kurtis and jackets for women and shirts and sherwanis for men. Also on the roster were some classic tees and sneakers which lifted some rather conventional garments to a ubiquitous contemporary appeal. The designers said the idea behind the collection was "delineating the belief of celebrating oneself, the journey and the destination."



**Designer :** Rahul Dasgupta  
**Collection :** Crafts in the Forefront  
**Label :** Label Rahul Dasgupta  
**Hashtag USP :** Shibori on sherwanis could well become a staple



Rahul Dasgupta

Presenting as part of the GenNext show by INIFD, young designer Rahul Dasgupta, who launched his label in August 2020, sparkled with his stylish collection for men at the Lakme Fashion Week. Sherwanis, kurtas and jackets infused in Shibori and occasionally splashed with bundi made for a *cool* collection which might well find a place in many a man's wardrobe this festive season. Created with organza and cotton, the garments dabbled in blues and grays and delivered a final stunner in red. The mix of Shibori and selvedge of fabric was cut and dyed, then detangled and later stitched together to create a great masculine look. Another stunner was the cotton dori dyed in Shibori, for the jacket that was lined elegantly with Shibori and worn with a silk organza bagalbandi style kurta.



**Designer :** Ritu Kumar  
**Collection :** Spring/Summer '21 - Ritu Kumar x TRESemme  
**Label :** Ritu Kumar Label  
**Hashtag USP :** Soya fabric sarees that embrace the classic and the contemporary



**Ritu Kumar**

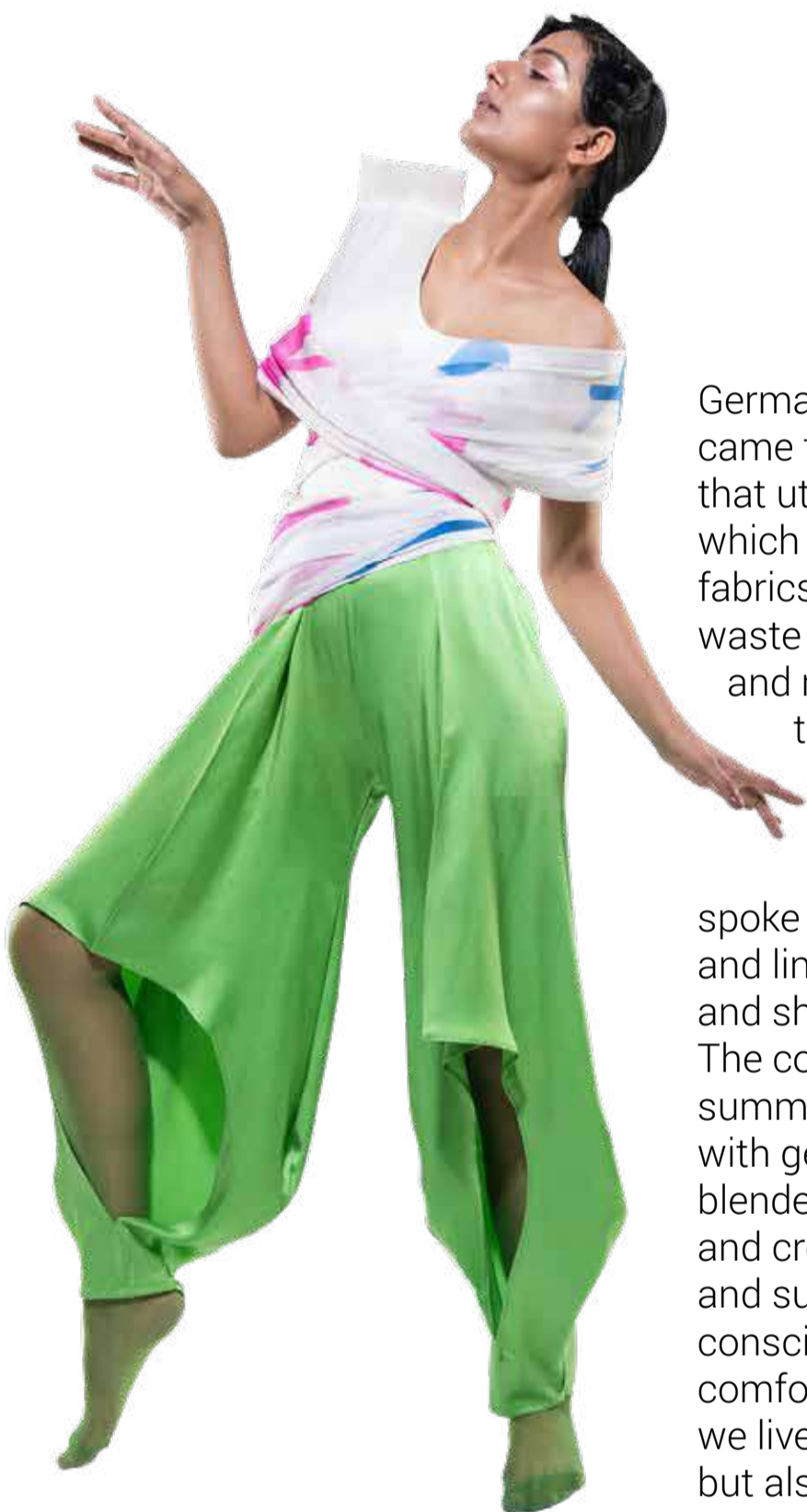
Designer Ritu Kumar was supported by haircare brand TRESemme in this edition of the Lakme Fashion Week. Boho and minimalism went hand in hand with his collection as he blended floral prints and patchwork with a spread of yarn dyes, laces and geometric designs. The collection embraced both the classic and the contemporary feminine as it swung between suits and drapes and dresses. The soya fabric saris created a stir when they appeared in the most unconventional and unique styles with a colourful fantasy of colour and prints. Ritu Kumar kept the hemline at the midi level to allow the fluid silhouettes to swirl around the models. The scarf was the prime accessory in prints, plain or tasselled and appeared around the neck or the waist in a variety of styles. Participating via a film, the collection used natural fibres and incorporated a plethora of contemporary everyday styles donned by the modern woman.



**Designer :** Chandra Prakash Jha and Georg  
**Collection :** Purn Vritt  
**Label :** Coccon  
**Hashtag USP :** Peace organic silks that employ zero waste techniques and conscious Sericulture



**Chandra Prakash Jha**



German-based designers Chandra Prakash Jha and Georg came together in 2012 to form a luxury fashion label that utilises peace organic silk. The Purn Vritt collection, which marked their first outing on Indian shores, featured fabrics created with strict organic methods employing zero waste techniques. The designs on show were futuristic and made from biodegradable materials which deployed the principle of “Ahimsa” or peace silk where the silkworm is allowed to complete its life cycle. For the presentation, the collection resembled the indigenous performing art of Jharkhand, which spoke about conflict between circular (Jeevan Chakra) and linear (Jeevan Rekha) lifestyle. Voluminous sleeves and shoulders added a spectacular oomph to the cuts. The colours were vibrant and the drapes ranged from summer dresses, sarees to draped lungis, embellished with geometric block prints on bright hues. The collection blended in well with the theme of the event, Mismatched, and created quite an impact with its geometric patterns and summer block prints on these environmentally-conscious garments. The interesting silhouettes appeared comfortable. It says quite something about the times that we live in that “luxury peace silk” not only sounds inviting, but also looks pretty damn gorgeous.



**Designer :** Gauri and Nainika  
**Collection :** Marie Claire in Collaboration with Gauri and Nainika :  
Fall 2021  
**Label :** Bata India  
**Hashtag USP :** Florals never looked more elegant

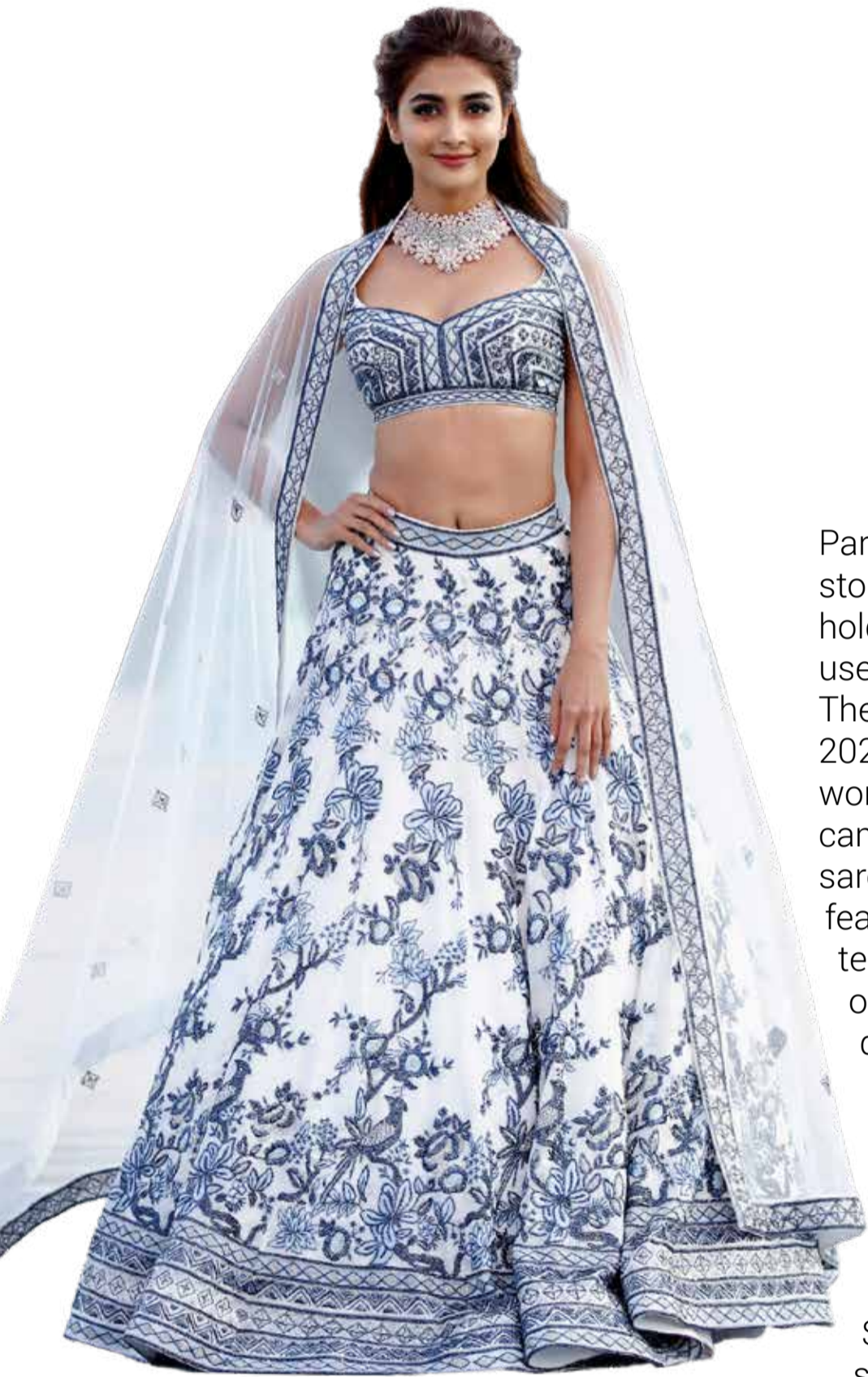


Gauri & Nainika

Bata India managed to make a mark at the Lakme Fashion Week with Marie Claire, a women-centric fashion footwear brand that falls under their umbrella. In collaboration with designer duo Gauri & Nainika. The designs play with floral prints inspired by greys, greens and blues—the shades of the earth. Frock dresses, gowns in chiffon set alight by trendy necklines gave a serene illusion to the collection. The leg-of-mutton, long-sleeved, ruffled, collared dress was captivating in its voluminous troughs and crests which were set off beautifully by the Marie Claire kitten heels. The designers stuck to organza and chiffon which maintained the refreshing, floaty, flowery feel of the film. A black, printed addition with a high neckline was a great contrast against the pretty pastels of the collection.



**Designer :** Varun Chakillam  
**Collection :** Art Nouveau  
**Label :** 6Degree  
**Hashtag USP :** Reimagined traditional festive wear



**Varun Chakillam**

Part of an ensemble by online multi designer store 6Degree, Varun Chakillam managed to hold his own and stun with his reimagined use of classic festive-wear colours and styles. The "Art Nouveau" line for Spring/Summer 2021 aimed at the sensuous, mysterious woman. Sequins and intricate embroidery came splattered on maxi skirts, pre-stitched sarees and trendy kurtis. The colour card featured dainty pinks, greens, mustards and teal set off by hand embroidered garments of voluminous skirts, gowns and other drapes. The collection, stimulated by 18th century art brought finesse and elegance to traditional Indian festive wear. An embroidered kurti over draped lungi and the ruffled dupatta teamed with corset style choli and lehenga brought innovation and elegance to an age-old combination. Showstopper Pooja Hegde looked scintillating in a white embellished lehenga. Her stylishly cut choli set off the look brilliantly.





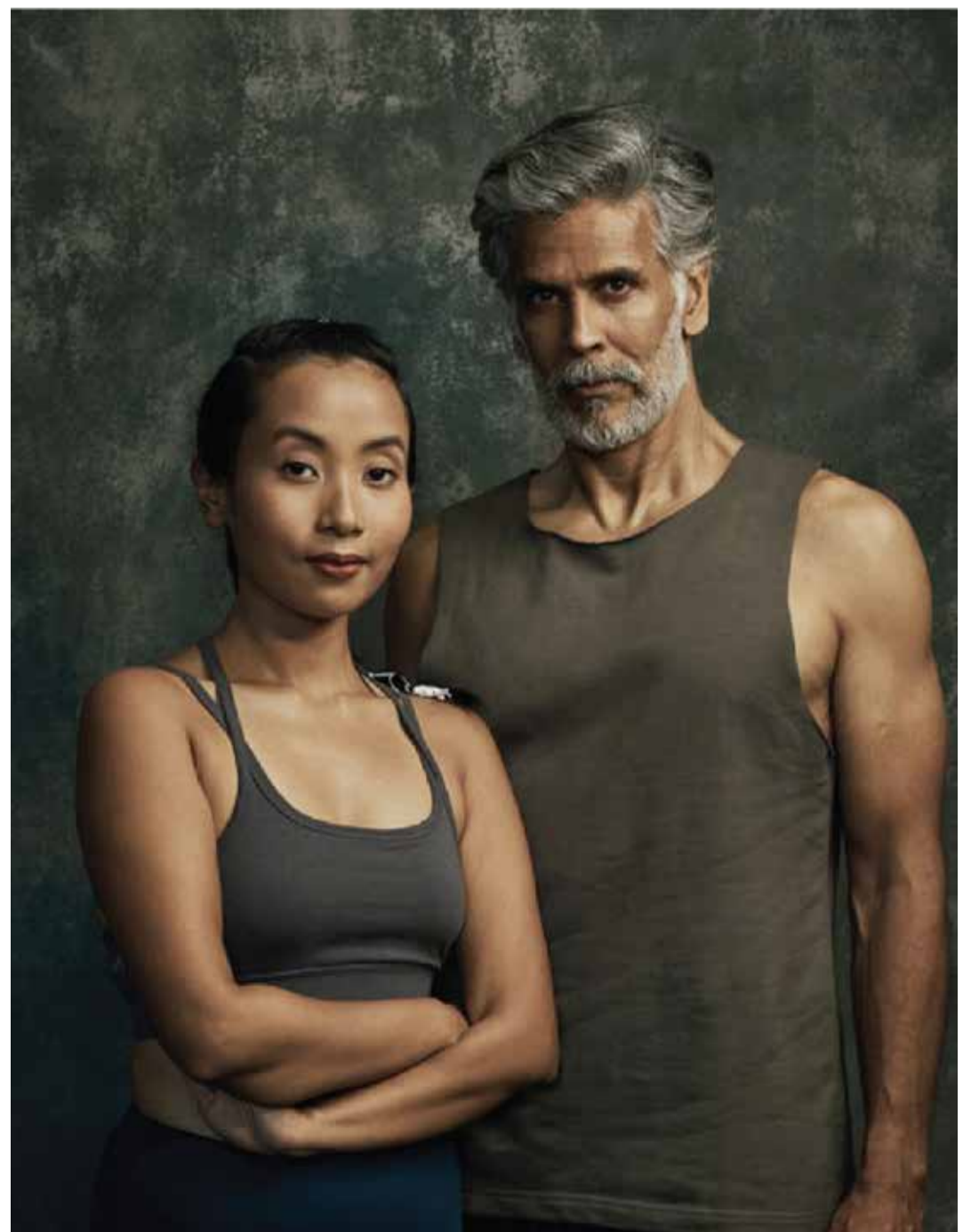
***PETA makes a mark on Sustainable Fashion Day at the Lakme Fashion Week with exquisite, cruelty-free outfits for couple Milind Soman and Ankita Konwar:***

**Collection :** Look Book of Conscious Leather Free Creations by PETA India

**Hashtag USP :** Cruelty-free fashion that ticks all the boxes



Day 2 was Sustainable Fashion Day and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India presented a Look Book of conscious leather-free creations that were curated from numerous top brands. PETA ambassadors Milind Soman and Ankita Konwar donned the creations which ranged from office wear to date night looks. The couple looked gorgeous in the staggering film which was directed by Ravi Shanker and shot at Sofitel Mumbai BKC. Ankita's red, halter, trapeze-style mini dress was especially striking. The suits, trousers, jackets, and a gamut of dresses were Vegan—all created without fur, leather, wool, exotic skins, cashmere, mohair or silk. Coconut leather was used as an alternative option to conventional leather, and Brands featured included Proyog, Daisy Days, Urvashi Kaur, Outhouse, Papa Don't Preach by Shubhika, Countrymade and many more.



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Certified sports nutritionist and fitness consultant **N Gnana Raju** decodes the hype behind protein-rich diets for sportspersons. **Hashtag Magazine** gets you a low-down from the expert on the facts behind the trend, as an increasing number of fitness enthusiasts opt for protein supplements.

# Protein for Sports Healthy or Hype?

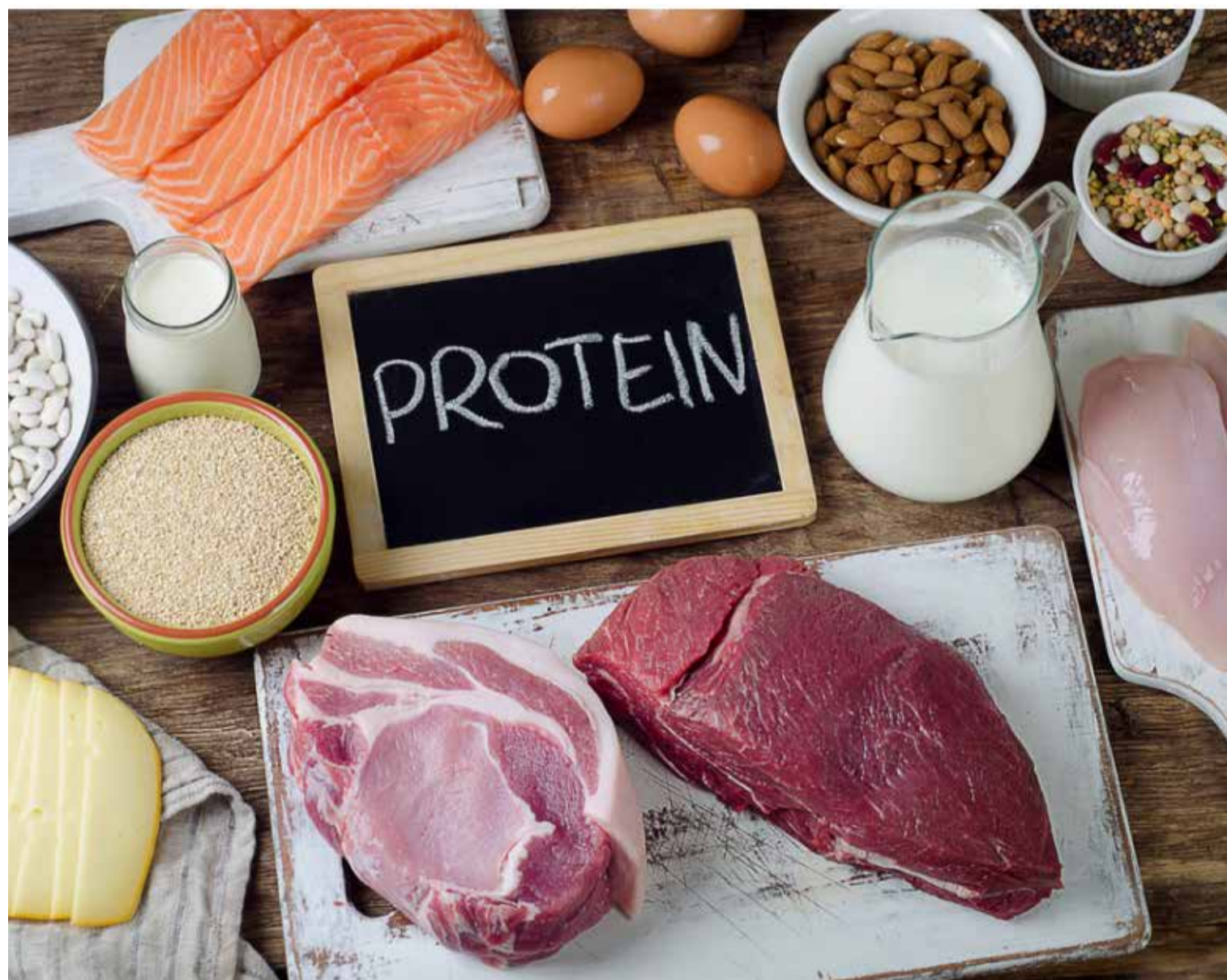
## What is protein?

Protein is an important building block of bones, muscle, skin, nails and hair. Protein is also used by the body to make enzymes and hormones to support metabolic activities. It helps maintain fluid-electrolyte balance, acid-base balance and provides energy.

## Why should you take protein?

Body can't make its own protein, which is why you need to ingest a required amount regularly. For strength/resistance exercises and muscle growth, the rate of protein synthesis must exceed that of breakdown (anabolism). Exercise causes elevated levels of protein in the urine (proteinuria). The greater the intensity and the duration, the greater the loss due to a decreased reabsorption by the kidneys during exercise. Aerobic exercise training tends to increase the formation of more mitochondria and oxidative enzymes.

Many official surveys conducted by ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research), NIN (National Institute of Nutrition) and IDA (Indian Dietetics Association) revealed that Indians are deficient in protein consumption. The quantity and quality of protein is declining in our foods.



## When and how much

Quantity varies based on exercise intensity, carbohydrate availability, energy intake, gender, training level, and age. The International Society of Sports Nutrition (ISSN) recommends 1.4 to 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight a day for most people who are exercising with the goal of building and maintaining muscle mass and strength, within two hours after your workout to maximize Muscle Protein Synthesis (MPS). Small, multiple meals throughout the day with adequate protein helps. Wrestlers, gymnasts, young athletes, and ultra endurance athletes may require more protein due to greater potential muscle damage.

## Types

There are a total 20 amino acids that make up a protein food, among which 9 are essential and 11 are non-essential. Complete protein sources are better than incomplete protein sources as they have all 20 amino acids. The best proteins have the best Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS) or Digestible Indispensable Amino Acid Score (DIAAS). That's why one should look for nutrition density, protein density, satiety, absorption, effect on digestion, timing, protein quality and the protein quantity.



# HOW TO RECOGNISE AND OVERCOME EMOTIONAL HUNGER



Stress, fatigue and emotions sometimes cause us to compulsively eat without being really hungry. But how do you distinguish real hunger from that linked to emotions? **Shivani Sikri**, Chief Nutritionist at Nutri4Verve, lets us in on some secrets of emotional hunger.

**Y**ou fall for the cake, pastry or the rasogulla that has been eyeing you for a few hours. By hunger or by impulse do you think? It's not easy to distinguish between hunger and emotional need. It has been proven that emotions such as stress and fatigue often play tricks on us, at the risk of flirting with unwanted weight gain.

To thwart the spiral of food crises or "cuddly food", it is necessary to redefine various hunger pangs. "With physiological hunger, the body sends signals to tell whether one is hungry or not. These are recognisable by sensations of the tummy including tugging or gurgling, which are easy to detect. Physiological hunger meets the nutritional needs of the body," states nutritionist, Shivani Sikri, Chief Nutritionist & Co founder of Nutri4Verve, an Online Weight Management Diet Clinic.



In principle, the body is a sufficiently well-oiled machine to regulate itself against these physiological hunger pangs. But sometimes the internal regulatory mechanism is seized up by emotions. In this case, the "signals from the belly" are scrambled by those from the head. "Stress, for example, falsifies the messages sent by the brain, and disrupts the internal regulator," shares Shivani, adding, "We no longer listen to our body and we eat out of habit without listening to needs."

## Social and emotional nutrition

Food can also take on a social and emotional dimension. We can eat without hunger for conviviality when we have a meal with friends or eat without hunger during a professional lunch. "In this case, we eat more over a meal but the body will naturally regulate itself the following meal, without upsetting the metabolism, so without risk of weight gain," observes the expert. When we consciously separate real hunger from otherwise, the body manages it without problem.

## Self-analysis of your hunger pangs

Listening to gurgling sensations and recognising your hunger seems easy on the surface. "Concretely, when hunger arrives, we must ask ourselves the right questions: Do I want to eat this chocolate? Is this desire linked to emotions or to a physiological need? Do I eat this food to satisfy my hunger or to appease myself," suggests the dietician.

This self-contemplation can be done by penning down each meal or snack you eat. It's a task that people should do over several weeks and accordingly they must indicate whether they are acknowledging physiological hunger (belly hunger) or a desire (head hunger). This distancing exercise sets up a progressive reflection intended to distinguish between hunger pangs.

People who are in control of their diet may also find it difficult to trust their feelings, exposing themselves to the yoyo effect and weight gain. "The excess of control confuses their internal regulator," says Shivani

## EMOTIONAL HUNGER

Once emotional hunger has been identified, it is a matter of observing its frequency. When this hunger occurs occasionally, it would be wrong to suppress it. "If you are attracted to chocolate, eat it consciously by removing from this experience what you are looking for in this food— the need to appease yourself. Eat it without guilt, and the body regulates itself. You will be less hungry at the next meal and the compensation process takes place naturally without weighing on the scales.

On the other hand, if the ratio of physiological hunger to emotional hunger is too unbalanced by negative emotions, food is seen as a refuge. "There the body can no longer regulate itself. The imbalance is too important, the work at the level of the plate even alongside a dietician may not be enough and require working on these emotions. Turning to a psychotherapist may be indicated," advises the expert.

The fact remains that in food as in other aspects of life, it is not a question of repressing one's emotions but rather of accepting them, of listening to oneself. "You should not deny your emotions but trust yourself. Many people no longer have confidence in their feelings," observes the specialist who recommends a return to intuitive diet based on the senses.

# IS LACK OF SLEEP DISRUPTING YOUR FERTILITY?



Getting enough high quality sleep isn't just good for your general health; it's also great for your fertility. While getting enough sleep can be difficult for couples trying to achieve a pregnancy, getting in those eight hours a night can help improve your chances of conceiving and building the family of your dreams. Hashtag India, with inputs from **Dr Anubha Singh**, Medical Director, Gynecologist and IVF from Shantah Fertility Centre, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi, tells you why sleep is so crucial to getting pregnant, and how you can make sure you get that peaceful slumber...

**A**ccording to the findings of Philips annual global survey, lack of sleep is something over 30 percent of Indians ail from. There is a certain age group whose sleep hours are often given over to late nights at work, binge watching on TV and smartphones. But for couples trying to get pregnant, a lack of sleep could be sabotaging their efforts. Take for instance Harish Atthotra, a Gurugram-based professional; he didn't smoke, was not overweight and did not suffer from diabetes. He walked every day, and even ran a half-marathon. But he slept late usually at 1am, or even later. Once he got back home from work, he usually spent time watching Netflix's latest or his favorite series. He and his wife Dimple (31) have been trying for a long time for a baby, without any success. Forced into seeking medical help one January morning, he discovered that there was a significant disruption in his hormones, which had been making it difficult for them to conceive. Your health, mood, hormones, and fertility are all affected by how much, and how well, you sleep.

## Sleep Deprivation is a Fertility Killer

Not getting enough sleep doesn't just influence your mood and productivity; it also influences the hormones secreted throughout a menstrual cycle. Studies have shown that getting enough quality sleep has a positive effect on the reproductive hormones a woman produces, including progesterone, estrogen, Leptin, and Follicle-Stimulating Hormones (FSH).

Getting enough quality sleep is even more important for women hoping to get pregnant via IVF. According to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine's study, women with low quality sleep had lower rates of fertility than those getting adequate rest.

## Smartphones and TVs creating hindrances in conceiving

Even if you're getting your eight hours of sleep every night, other factors, like light pollution from electronics, can also affect the quality of your sleep and your eggs. The blue light emitted from phones, computers, and other electronics can interfere with your sleep-wake cycle, meaning the quality of your sleep is not where it should be.

But your gadgets aren't just keeping you from sleeping well, they can also be hindering your efforts to conceive. The blue light from your electronics suppresses melatonin, a key hormone that both helps you sleep and protects your eggs when they are close to ovulation. Without appropriate melatonin production, your eggs will not be guarded from the free-radicals, which reduces their viability.

## Pulling late hours at night can reduce your chances of conceiving

Do you work the night shift? If so, you may find that you'll have a harder time getting



pregnant. Working the night shift can impact your circadian rhythm, resulting in hormonal imbalances, lower estrogen levels, and irregular menstrual cycles. These factors can all make it more difficult to both achieve a pregnancy, and carry a pregnancy to term. It also creates the issue of low sperm count in men.

## What You Can Do

While most women will find that hold at least one of these sleep-damaging habits, most are relatively easy to fix. In order to improve sleep quality and increase their chances of getting pregnant, you can try making these things a practise:

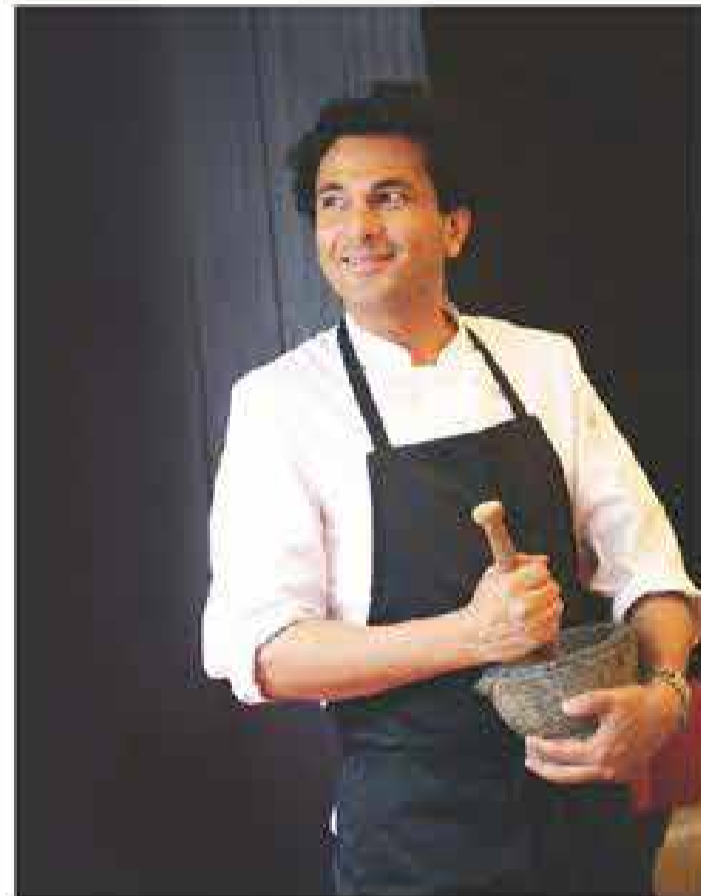
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep every night. Too few or too many hours can negatively affect fertility.
- Unplug before bed. Put away computers, phones, tablets, and other electronics at least an hour before bedtime.
- If you work swing shifts or night shifts, speak with your employer about changing your schedule. If this isn't possible, ask your employer if it would be possible to adjust the lighting accordingly.

# Hash#ag INDIA

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Ever heard of Gong masters and all-night gong baths? The former are as terrestrial as all of us while the latter, ethereal as they may sound, are very effective, healing sounds that can help you cleanse and rejuvenate. Taking us through what could well be the new in-thing in wellness, sound therapist **Sunithi Ramesh** shares with **Canta Dadlaney** the magical effects of sound therapy and how it provides physical and mental succor.

# Healing through Sound Therapy

A chance introduction to sound therapy introduced Sunithi Ramesh to the world of therapeutic sounds, still alien to many. In a chat with **Hashtag Magazine**, she shares the intricacies of this form of healing, which is gaining good ground in India.

## What is sound therapy and how did you get introduced to it?

Sound Therapy is an ancient science and art used as a complementary therapy for physical, mental and emotional disorders. Almost five years ago (2015), a friend introduced me to sound therapy at a workshop in Chennai. The session by Master Satya Brat, founder of Academy of Sound Healing left a mark on me, and I started exploring it on my own.

**All-night Gong baths:** An all-night gong bath involves setting up eight gongs in a “rotunda” or a cage. The Gong Master stands inside this cage and plays the gongs. The gongs are played for 8 hours continuously, with the players taking turns. The ambience is set with the right temperature, aroma, crystals. The lights are dimmed and the participants are eased into a comfortable sleep after an invocation and a setting of intentions. The participants wake up rejuvenated after this session and drop a lot of pain and emotional baggage.

## What about sound therapy fascinated you the most?

I was a pure techie until 2015. Some of our verticals in IT are very sensitive businesses and I had accumulated a lot of stress during this period. That stress resulted in the development of a couple of tumors which had to be excised but they recurred. I was exploring energy healing modalities and got drawn into sound therapy. When my health started taking an upturn, I knew I was on the right track.



## What impact does sound therapy have?

Stress causes the organs to slip out of their natural frequencies. The energy generated during a sound therapy session can help them come to their original frequencies due to the principle of resonance. The bowls are handmade with a specific range of frequencies and they bring harmony in the body. We become mindful because of the sounds. And the mind gets decluttered. I integrate the use of crystals and aromas in my sessions.

## What happens during a sound bath?

During a therapy or a sound bath immersion, the person goes into a deep trance-like state called the Theta state with brainwaves getting entrained. In this state, the body's inner healing mechanism also gets triggered, and a healing happens at the root level. A sound bath immersion is a guided visualisation journey, a mental travel to different places, to the accompaniment of the bowls and gongs. While the vibrations heal, the journey to places like beaches, mountains, and serene landscapes are equally relaxing. Participants are able to transport themselves mentally with the voice guiding them on the journey and experience it virtually. One of my signature sessions is 'Kailash Parikrama' – a virtual journey around Mount Kailash, which comes alive with the sounds created by the bowls and the gongs.

## How are gongs used in sound therapy?

A gong is a deeply resonant instrument and helps get into a relaxed state. The powerful vibrations during a gong bath can help in emotional cleansing. There are planetary gongs with their respective frequencies. There also are sound creation gongs, symphonic gong and others which have a wide range of frequencies and create wonderful overtones. Gongs are used more for group healing and gong concerts are very enjoyable.

## How is the quality of instruments verified and ensured?

Sound therapy uses bowls of specific musical notes, and not ornamental bowls which are used for space healing. Most of my bowls are from Academy of Sound Healing. The gongs are from Paiste, a German company which specialises in making gongs.

A facilitator for Gong concerts conducted across the key cities of India between 2018 and 2020, Sunithi has been using sound therapy as complementary healing for chronic ailments. A 2018 concert in Chennai saw an attendance of 1000 people.



## As a complementary therapy, how are the success rates measured?

Therapy sessions depend on the person's ailment and receptivity and vary from 30 to 90 minutes and may last for a few sessions depending upon the intensity of the problem. There have been cases where even the best medical treatment didn't lead to improvement in a patient's conditions, because their mental makeup was stressed out and disintegrated. There was a corporate leader diagnosed with cancer, who also had speech issues, skin rashes, joint pains and the inability to walk. We worked with him for six months, and gradually, his mental and emotional well-being has healed. His will to live and live healthy has been restored. Sound therapy helped him manage the side-effects of chemotherapy. I am keen on collecting more clinical evidence from clients to make this therapy a recognised modality by governments.





# Taking a holistic approach to intermittent fasting

Fasting is an ancient practice where an individual avoids taking food and it's been a part of religious practices by people all over the globe. A healthy lifestyle trumps fad diets any day if you wish to lose weight comprehensively. Our bodies were never designed to eat the amount of food we actually eat today. Overeating often leads to sickness, more so when the quality of food is steadily declining. **Swati Dhingra Chawla**, certified Alternate Medicine Practitioner, clinical dietician and founder of Nutrition Garage talks about the ins and outs of intermittent fasting, and why it is the most viable solution to your health and weight issues.

In recent times fasting has come to be recognised as a scientific method to lose weight and get healthy. Intermittent fasting or dry fasting has become quite the trend. Fasting leaves your mornings with free time to stretch, do yoga, meditate, and plan your day. The prerequisite however, is to get weight loss out of your minds. Aim for good health instead.

Every human body goes through an elimination phase and a building phase. Eating in the elimination phase does not help with weight, immunity or health, because that is when the body is detoxifying and repairing. Cells are receptive to nutrition—vitamins and minerals, if you eat in the building phase.

**Fasting Windows :** A good fasting window is anywhere between 14-18 hours. If you are extremely fit and healthy, even 12 hours of intermittent fast is enough. If your body is carrying more toxins, then the fasting window may last for 16-18 hours. If you are not hungry, do not eat because your body is still eliminating. We need to rule out the old myth that breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Intermittent diets have always existed because years and years ago, people ate their last meal as the sunset because after that there was hardly any light. The next meal was taken after sunrise. Our bodies automatically respect the elimination phase and move into fasting at night. A majority of us refrain from observing an intermittent fast because it doesn't allow us to enjoy late night meals, parties or socializing. However, that's a mental block. It's necessary to understand that when our body undergoes an undisturbed elimination, every function in our body works perfectly.



## Rest and Digest

If we constantly snack throughout the day, we don't give our digestive systems a break. Our digestive system uses a lot of energy, the same energy that can be used for healing and repair. Diets like fruitarian (a fruits-only vegan diet) can be very dangerous. They may help you lose weight but deep-down millions and trillions of cells in your body are deprived of digestive enzymes, raw fiber, and trace minerals.

It's best to explore what suits you best for the first three days of an intermittent fast. For diabetics, it is advisable to do under supervision to prevent hypoglycemia. People who are acidic, don't give up. On day 1 you will feel a bit more acidic, on day 2, your acid levels will gradually start to settle down and by day 3, you will feel a lot better.

During the fasting period you can have plain water and nothing else, not even tea, coffee, green tea, or lemon water. Try to keep the water at room temperature or lukewarm. When you break your fast, start with some lemon water, followed by fruits, and dates which will kick off your building phase in half an hour. During your building phase, you eat what your body needs keeping your health goal in mind. Do not overeat or starve, else you will cripple your metabolism. Get your macros and micros, vitamins and minerals. Fasting is not starvation.

Don't compare your fasting time with others. Treat your meal times as sacred times, just you and your food. This is important. The eating pattern is all about self-control. You are likely to feel hungry, tired and irritated in the beginning. This fasting pattern can lead to overeating and may increase cravings. Listen to our body and try to get at least 5 out of 7 days right in a week. Developing self-discipline around your fasting is everything



## Benefits of Intermittent and dry fasting

- Your immune system is pumped up. A good quality sleep coupled with fasting is a solid dose for your immune system.
- Skin and hair develop a natural glow.
- Fat loss
- High energy levels
- Decrease in appetite and sugar (improved insulin sensitivity) and caffeine cravings
- Improved focus and concentration
- Improved HDL cholesterol levels
- Reduction in inflammation, pain, swellings
- Better muscle definition
- Testosterone boost
- Natural detox of cells and organs
- DNA repair
- Gut repair
- Better digestion

So, start making this lifestyle change right now and observe how your health change for good. Less is more. Everyone doesn't have to fast. Do it if it suits you and don't do it if it doesn't suit you. Keep it simple but always remember, fasting is the magic drug to stimulate your body to heal, rejuvenate, repair, grow and look after you. Use it well. Don't abuse it. Most importantly!!

## Absolute Dry Fasting:

A hard dry fast pertains to total abstinence from water, where even brushing, bathing or washing your face isn't allowed. In this state, the body is deprived of food or water and it starts to make use of everything available for generating energy at cellular level. It also leads to autophagy which is the body's natural way of recycling old and worn out cells to produce energy. Besides these, new cells are generated and wards off bad ones, thereby only strong cells thrive.





Most people believe an affair is a deal-breaker, but infidelity can be a wake-up call, and surprisingly, it can be a catalyst for a better marriage. **Hashtag India** offers some tips to help you decide!

# After Infidelity- Stay or Go?

**W**hen you get the devastating news that your spouse has had an affair, how do you decide whether to stay or go? Because you feel betrayed, your first impulse is usually anger, and wanting to leave-fight or flight. But, after you calm down, you realize there's a lot you'll lose, and you may have children to consider. Don't make an instant decision you may regret later, after the damage is done. Yes, it's possible to find extraordinary love after divorcing late in life, but the potential partners out there are no better than the ones you left.

We don't think you should stay and suffer if nothing's working, but in many cases there are often couples who do the work, take up some counseling and wind up happier than before. The affair may have happened after long-standing problems in the marriage, which can actually be corrected to the satisfaction of both partners. Often dissatisfaction grows from resentment, and the root causes can be fixed with the help of counseling. If both partners are willing to change what's not working, a marriage can be improved and can be turned into a satisfying life of enjoyable companionship.



Working these issues out together will either repair and improve the relationship you have, or teach you skills and attitudes you need to know to make any relationship great.

## Top 5 reasons to stay :

- Your spouse truly recognizes they have a problem, and are willing to get help to fix it, and to be accountable for rebuilding trust.
- You two are going to counseling, and understanding why the affair happened, and how to fix the problems.
- You're getting your own sex life back on track, if it was off track.
- You have a long, shared history, joint finances, and family ties that make it worth keeping the marriage together.
- You still love each other, and it's clearly mutual.

## Top 5 reasons to go :

- Your spouse is in denial, makes excuses, and blames you. This means they are invested in the cheating behavior, and not ready to change.
- You have had it, no longer feel connected, and are not willing to work on it. Be sure this isn't just temporary anger.
- You are prepared to be on your own.
- You either have no children, they're grown, or you're certain a divorce will be better for them than what's going on.
- Your spouse refuses to give up the other relationship, or infidelity in general.

# HOW TO BE SAFE ON MATRIMONIAL WEBSITES

Marriage is a commitment for a lifetime. One can never be too cautious while taking a decision in the matter. And regardless of what the fairytales try to sell us, finding the perfect life partner is easier said than done. Over the last few years, there has been a steady increase in the number of matrimonial sites going live on the internet. Like with everything else on the vast, vast web, these sites make us believe that the world is our oyster, and we can waltz through an unending list of options and eventually match with The One. And while that may prove to be true for some, there are also some grave perils to your security as you traverse these sites. **Hashtag Magazine** lists some ways you can ensure you stay safe on matrimonial sites, and still end up with that perfect June wedding.

**Go For The Verified Profiles:** One of the easiest ways to keep yourself safe on the matrimonial website is by choosing the verified profiles that ensure you are meeting the right person. It'll minimize your risk of falling into a fake trap. It's a lifetime affair, thus, digging deep and going the extra mile is not a problem at all.

**Don't Overwrite:** While creating your profile on a matrimonial site, you have to be honest with the information you share about yourself. Don't share extremely personal details publicly, and ensure that details such as address and phone number can only be accessed by people whom you'd want to show interest in your profile. This will ensure that you match with like-minded people, and stay away from a crowd you'd rather avoid.



**Check For Recent Photographs:** Make sure the photo you may see on the profile is recent, and not an earlier version of the person. While you'd be hard pressed to be sure about this at any given time, reading details such as age, education and interests might help you gauge if the photo shared is authentic or not.

**Verify Details:** Some well-intentioned social media stalking doesn't hurt if you are interested in a profile, and would like to cross-check the details you see. Log in to Facebook or Instagram and see if the details shared on your potential beau's profile tally with his social media records. This might also help you find their friend circle, and check additional useful details.

**Be Very Careful Before Going For The Date:** Once you match and get talking, and after many happy coincidences, get to the stage where you are convinced that this might be the right one, it is only fair that you would want to meet the person in person. However, this step is as dangerous as it may seem romantic. Take all precautions necessary. Make sure you meet at a public space, at a reasonable time. Share your location with a trusted friend or family member. Have an SOS option ready in case things go wrong.



# Fenugreek *the* Magic Spice

Our kitchen is our first medical centre. Loading our kitchen pantry with all spices makes a person treat his illness in an effective way. Among the spices, **fenugreek** holds a special place as it plays a significant role in our human system. Dietitian **B. Vaishnavi Satheesh** tells us why...

**F**enugreek is a flavor filled fragrant herb of pea family with its dried and flavorful seeds. Fenugreek is primarily cultivated in the southern Europe and the Mediterranean region. It is also been found in the western Asia, India and North Africa.

India is the leading producer of fenugreek seeds followed by Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In ancient times, around during 4000BC, it was mainly used to treat burns and induce childbirth. The people of those days started using it in their cuisine, making it available to treat minute discomforts that the body faces.

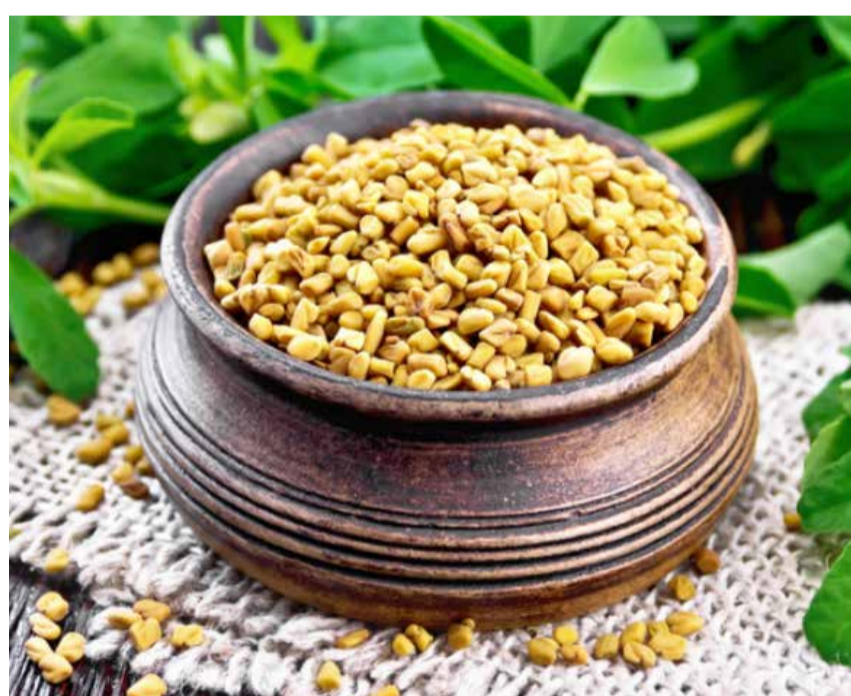
## FENUGREEK IN INDIAN CUISINE

Fenugreek seeds are one of most important spices in Indian cuisine. Every region of India uses fenugreek in one or the other forms to impart flavor and taste to the foods. In India, it is commonly known as *methi*. It tastes bitter when eaten raw, but when combined with other aromatic spices, it transforms to give a nutty, sweet flavor with a depth to saucy dishes.

## MEDICINAL SIGNIFICANCE

Health benefits of this magical spice are endless. From womb till grave, fenugreek serves an important contribution in everyone's life. Fenugreek seeds are anti-inflammatory and thus can be used as paste in curing wounds and acne. They can be too used in clearing the dandruff. In India, fenugreek has been used as a natural hair conditioner on its own or when combined with other herbs, gives excellent results.

Loaded with incredible medicinal properties, fenugreek seeds have become an unavoidable spice in our kitchen pantry. Though it holds a lot of significant qualities, it is very important to consume in safe amounts to avoid overdose toxicity. Dosage depends on the health disorder that a person has. It is important to consult a qualified person to get correct dosage.



### Fenugreek seeds and brain function:

Studies have shown that frequent use of methi seeds helps in reducing the risk of neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer and Parkinson's disease. These disorders of the nervous system are common among the elders, and using the spice would aid in the improvement of cognitive function. The enzyme inside the fenugreek proves to enhance the function of the brain neurotransmitter, thus preserving the brain function.

### Fenugreek seeds and heart:

The cholesterol level that may damage your heart is controlled by incorporating fenugreek seeds in your meal plan. In that order, the

## RECIPES WITH FENUGREEK SEEDS

### METHI DAL

*Methi dal* is Indian pulses stew seasoned with *chilies*, cumin, *toor dhal*, turmeric and *garam masala* and sautéed with fenugreek leaves. This serves to be a best combo for *naans*, *rotis* and *rice*.

### METHI CHUTNEY

This Indian *chutney* is made with fenugreek leaves, garlic, tamarind, jaggery, red chilies and other spices. The bitterness of the seeds is balanced by sweet, sour and spicy ingredients that are added to the dish. It is a best side dish for *parathas*, *roti* and *dosa*.

### SPROUTED FENUGREEK SALAD

This salad is a combination of nutrients like vitamin Bs, vitamin A and C and also minerals such as potassium, copper, selenium and zinc. Though sprouted fenugreek is bitter, it is crunchy and of course a healthy treat. Try topping off your salad with those nutrient packed sprouts.

### LACTATION SPECIAL HERBAL TEA:

This caffeine free tea offers a soothing and relaxed moment for nursing mothers. Blended with fenugreek, cinnamon, fennel, dandelion, red raspberry leaf and nettle leaf, this popular herbal tea supports the production of milk in the breast feeding mothers.



heart being the prime organ for the living body, is protected from the disorders or disease, by including fenugreek seeds in our daily menu. It can significantly lower the bad cholesterol without disturbing the HDL cholesterol.

### Fenugreek and Diabetes:

Fenugreek seeds are proven to reduce the blood glucose levels with the help of the fiber present in it. These seeds contain fiber and other chemicals that slow down the digestion and delay the absorption of carbohydrates and sugars in the foods. This phenomenon results in the reduction of blood glucose levels of the diabetic. Consuming fenugreek seeds regularly would keep your sugar level at bay. Dose of 5gm of seeds would help.

### Fenugreek and reproductive system:

Fenugreek seeds are believed to induce childbirth and as a remedy for other gynecological problems like pain during menstruation and other uterine disorders. These seeds are galactagogue that help in the production of breast milk supply to the young mothers and also help in increasing the breast size. Early research suggests that fenugreek seed oil drops by mouth for 4 months would improve the male sperm count.



While taking a stroll at the old dinghy lanes of North Kolkata, **Madhurima Chakraborty** discovers several dilapidated eating joints, which, despite the primordial look, remit an inexplicable aroma of fried breadcrumbs, fish and meat...

## The Classic Cabin Restaurants of Kolkata: Timeless Eating Joints of the Old Metropolis

The cabin restaurants of Kolkata were the ubiquitous meeting point of lovers in the early twentieth century. Anjan Dutt's iconic lyrics of the song *Bela Bose* evokes unfathomable nostalgia in every Kolkatan's mind. He reminds his lover of the promises made during the adventurous cabin visits, and that life is transient. This phase of separation would eventually give way to a small home in the suburb made with love, as soon as the man secures employment!

The giant real estate sharks of north Kolkata have been lurking to gulp down the prized location of the long-standing restaurants. However, the owners have resisted, and how! Traditionally the old-school cabins featured small cubicles parted with wooden barricades and were guarded with velvet curtains in matte ruby hue. Inside, it is warm and cosy and dainty, but more than anything, it creates an illusion of the much-coveted privacy! A dash of Kasundi, a mustard relish is served on the side of fish or meat, with a handful of sliced onions and cucumbers, adding to the zing. On a good day, you can even stumble upon a basket full of duck eggs. The chef will prepare an egg devil by wrapping those duck eggs with a spicy mix of mutton keema.



With surges in carnal emotion, along came revolutionary ideas. All of these cabin restaurants date back to the era of British Raj, albeit the last lag of it. In the dwindling political environment, defiance and resistance brewed. The Kolkata cabins paved the way for political debates storming over countless cups of tea and progressive ideas. Much of the ideas would continue to shape the politics of Indian subcontinent in the tumultuous days leading to independence and partition.

Their loyal clientele has not been deterred by the menacing pandemic. Whether it is the phenomenal quality of food, or the deeply ingrained cultural identity of Kolkata's *Bhadralok* community, the cabins remain relevant even in 2021, amid the otherwise nonchalant crowd of the world wide web, Instagram-worthy cafes, relentless branding, buffets and more flukes. Our homecoming remains incomplete without an egg devil from Niranjana Agar or a pure Calcutta bhetki fry from Chittoda's at Decker's Lane!

### Mitra Cafe, Shovabazar

47, Jatindra Avenue, Shobha Bazar, Kolkata  
Hours: 3 PM to 10 PM  
Meal for two: Rs 400

Running at a glorious 101 years, Mitra Cafe of Shovabazar has no contender when it comes to the famed brain chops. The unique item is prepared with goat brain, spiced up with ginger-garlic paste and kebabchini. Ample amount of black pepper goes into the heirloom recipe, adding to the spice. Further, it is breadcrumbed and deep fried.

The tiny eatery serves freshly baked bread toast smeared with butter and milky tea with a thick layer of cream during early hours. As the day progresses, Mitra Cafe's kitchen serves some of the tastiest cutlets in town. With changing times, Chinese items have been incorporated into the menu. The likes of Soumita Chatterjee and Anjun Dutt from Tollywood had been regulars at Mitra Cafe.

Country chicken cooked in fiery hot red curry, chicken *pakoras* infused with the aroma of *Gandhoraj* lime, fish *munia* (an abbreviation of the legendary fish *meunier*), fish *Afghani* are some of the best things to eat at Mitra Cafe.





### Allen Kitchen, Shovabazar

Allen Kitchen dates back 125 years. A Britisher named Allen used to run this eating house. He packed his bags and left for England, as did many Englishmen after 1947. However, he willed his shop to a loyal employee, whose successors have inherited Allen Kitchen. They have been running the show with elan and have not changed the name of the shop in memory of the generous sahib.

Allen Kitchen sells a plethora of items, mostly cutlets and fries. However, it is blasphemous for a gourmand to visit Allen Kitchen and not taste the incredible prawn cutlets! Tiger prawns are shaped into butterflies and breadcrumbed and then deep fried in desi ghee. Each of the items sold at Allen Kitchen is prepared using desi ghee. Hence the distinct aroma has become a part of the restaurant's USP.

40/1, Jatindra Mohan Avenue, Shobha Bazar, Kolkata  
Hours: 4:30 PM to 9:30 PM  
Meal for two: Rs 300

### Bholanath Cabin, Bagbazar

While walking towards the Bagbazar Sarbojonin Puja Pandal by the banks of Hoogly river from Shyambazar, you will come across this tiny cafe on your left hand side, on the same lane as KC Dass, the birthplace of the *rosogolla*. Bholanath Cabin is otherwise unremarkable by appearance. However, before sundown, an endless queue forms in front of the shop. The food lovers of the immediate *para*, as well as distant neighbourhoods, come flocking in front of Bholanath cabin to taste the legendary fish *kabiraji*.

To make things easier, Bholanath Cabin has kept prices on the menu well within the reach of common man even in the face of steep inflation. However the portion sizes are small. Once you are done savouring the fish *kabiraji*, order a chicken cutlet, followed by a paneer chop.

If you are an early riser, Bholanath Cabin would be happy to serve you a sumptuous breakfast as well. Bread butter toast, omelette, *ghugni* and piping hot tea at the oldest food joint of Bagbazar can kick start your day as early as 7 am.

11/1A, Girish Avenue, Near Girish Mancha Xing, Bagbazar, Shyam Bazar, Kolkata  
Hours: 7 am to 10 am & 4 pm to 9 pm  
Meal for two: Rs 200

### Niranjan Agar, Girish Park

Eating at Niranjan Agar is a timeless experience. Chicken cutlet is still spelt here as fowl cutlet, as they did in the olden days. Eminent singer Manna Dey had been a regular visitor at Niranjan Agar during his stint at his hometown.

Niranjan Agar has been lauded for the exquisite egg devil for decades. So much so that you may have to return empty handed if you do not make it by 7 pm. By 8, they close the shop. You can also trust the liver curry, breast cutlet and mutton kofta to steal your heart! On Thursdays, a special and limited menu is served, devoid of goat meat items.

239/A, Chittaranjan Ave, near Girish Park, Station, Kolkata, West Bengal 700006  
Hours: 7 am to 10 am & 4 pm to 9 pm  
Meal for two: Rs 300



### Basanta Cabin, College Street

Like most of the old cabin restaurants in North Kolkata, Basanta Cabin had the honour of hosting Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Swami Vivekananda in its heyday, having been in business since 1931. Later, it made a permanent mark in Bengali households with Uttam Kumar's patronage. It is famous for fish *kabiraji* and Mughlai *parota*, which comes with a small portion of *aloo dom* and some salad and makes for a delightfully heavy meal.

53, College St, near Medical College, Lalbajar, College Square, Kolkata, West Bengal 700073  
Hours: 9 am to 9 pm  
Meal for two: Rs 300



### Dilkhusha Cabin, College Street

College Street of Kolkata is a beautiful cacophony that words fail to describe. Home to the first flame of Indian renaissance, College Street is dotted with many institutes of repute and the largest book market of Asia. Finding your way through this wealth of knowledge, pausing to appreciate the quintessential heritage buildings, you deserve a tea break. This is when Dilkhusha cabin will welcome you with open arms.

Coping with changing times, Dilkhusha now serves mixed fried rice and chilli chicken with their proverbial fish *kabiraji* and chicken cutlets. For a robust luncheon, you can trust the handmade *roti* and mutton *kosha* served at this dated eatery. Dilkhusha Cabin mostly caters to students, and hence the price point is surprisingly affordable.

College St, College Square West, College Square, Kolkata, West Bengal 700007  
Hours: 9 am to 9 pm  
Meal for two: Rs 300

### Favourite Cabin, College Street

A tea house serving homemade heart-shaped *paan* cake as a side to steaming hot lemon tea or milk tea for more than 100 years, Favourite Cabin tells the tale of an era gone by. Its marble-top tables and rickety wooden chairs were once used by the Illuminati of Bengali literature, like Nazrul Islam, Shibram Chakraborty, Sunil Gangopadhyay and many others from the Kallol period.

The founder, Nutan Chandra Barua moved to Calcutta from Chhatagram in 1918 and started the cabin. Inspired by the Swadeshi movement, he ensured that Favourite Cabin remained a safe haven for the freedom fighters of India under British Raj. Numerous legends related to Master da Surja Sen and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose are associated with this eatery from the early days. The legacy of political debate and an intellectual air hovers around the place to date.

69B, Surya Sen St, College Square, Kolkata, West Bengal 700009  
Hours: 9 am to 10 pm  
Meal for two: Rs 200



# UNIQUE NATIVE DINING EXPERIENCE AT 5 OFFBEAT DHABAS OF MUMBAI

Bustling Mumbai is busy losing its marbles over the good ol' *dhabas* these days. Apart from being a total treat for your taste buds, the food here is made fresh in front of you—right from choosing the poultry or veggies to cooking it in their unique masala. The relaxing cots (*charpayee*) and lots of attractions for kids in an open air ambience makes them all the more fabulous. Saba Ladha takes a quick peep at the reasons why 5 *dhabas* of Mumbai are so popular amongst the locals and getting so much paparazzi lately.



## 1. The Dilli Darbar Dhaba

Looking for a hearty traditional Indian meal in an open restaurant? Then the Dilli Darbar Dhaba at Bhiwandi is the destination you should head to. The large spacious area with cots for you to relax while you enjoy a lavish meal and the exciting games to keep you busy makes your time spent here all the more amazing. The first thing that they always serve is crisp fried kabuli chana and fried garlic. Apart from this, do try their scrumptious mutton chaap soup, chicken banjara and fish reshmi kebab.

- **Address** — Sawandhe, Bhiwandi, Maharashtra-421302.
- **Telephone** — 07757991800
- **Timings** —4:00 pm — 3:30 am
- **Price** —2,000-3000 INR
- **Our pick** — Mutton *chaap* soup, fish *tandoori*, chicken *handi* and *daal khichdi*.

## 2. Rajdhani Dhaba

A large lush garden, open seatings and eager to serve locals at your service, Rajdhani Dhaba near the Mumbai-Nasik Highway is certainly a refreshing location to head with your foodie group. Famous for its fried *chana lahsun* and full baby goat tandoori, the Rajdhani *Dhaba* has a distinct way of welcoming its guests. And if you want more reasons to hit this place, then the attractive lighting and décor of this *dhaba* is surely a magnificent pointer to consider.

- **Address** — Mumbai - Nasik Expressway, Near Shangrila Resort, Kukse, Borivali Tarf Sonale, Maharashtra 421302
- **Telephone** — 097672 62717
- **Timings** —4 pm — 4 am
- **Price** —1500-3000 INR
- **Our pick** — chicken *pahadi kebab*, *raan* rice, baby *tandoori* goat and cutting *chai*.







### 3. Karizma Dhaba

From the lighted ambience of the place to the vast area and comfortable seatings, everything at this Bhiwandi *dhaba* is super inviting. Especially recommended for group gatherings and parties, this *dhaba* has a special segment dedicated for kid's play too. What's more, there are enticing offerings of *chana lahsun*, *dabang* chicken, *khebsa* rice, and *sholay kebab*. Pro tip - don't forget to click attractive images in their luscious garden.

- **Address** — Mumbai Nasik, National Highway No. 3, Near Police Station, Vadape, Bypass, Thane, Maharashtra 421302
- **Telephone** — 090961 09885
- **Timings** — 9 am — 3 pm
- **Price** — 2000-3000 INR
- **Our pick** — *kulhad chai*, *sitaphal cream*, chicken *sholay*, mutton *biryani*.

### 4. Kinara Village Dhaba

The Kinara Village Dhaba that you cross while you head or return back from Lonavala brings a distinct feeling and charm of a village setting. From camel ride to lighted ambience, live ghazals, fish spa, carts to pose on, rich flowered garden to freshen you up, you'll love the enticing ambience of this *dhaba*. For your tastebuds, do enjoy their relishing veg crispy, chicken *tikka* masala, prawns *tandoori* and *jalebi* with *rabdi*.

- **Address** — Toll Plaza Old Mumbai - Pune Highway , Vaksai Naka, Varsoli, Lonavla, Maharashtra 410401
- **Telephone** — 086986 39639
- **Timings** — 11 am — 1:00 am
- **Price** — 2000-3000 INR
- **Our pick** — veg platter, *matka kulfi*, chicken 65, prawns *biryani* and *jalebi* with *rabdi*.



### 5. Shanaya Dhaba

Cute cottages are definitely awesome to spend your time in. And what about enjoying a yummy meal in these cottages? If this idea looks enticing to you, then Shanaya Dhaba near the Mumbai – Agra National Highway should be your pick. From super comfortable and private seating arrangements to delicious meals fit for the royals, everything is absolutely enchanting at Shanaya Dhaba. Do try their excellent paneer *bhurji*, chicken and paneer *tandoori* and *dal khichdi* for a rich taste that stays on your senses for long.

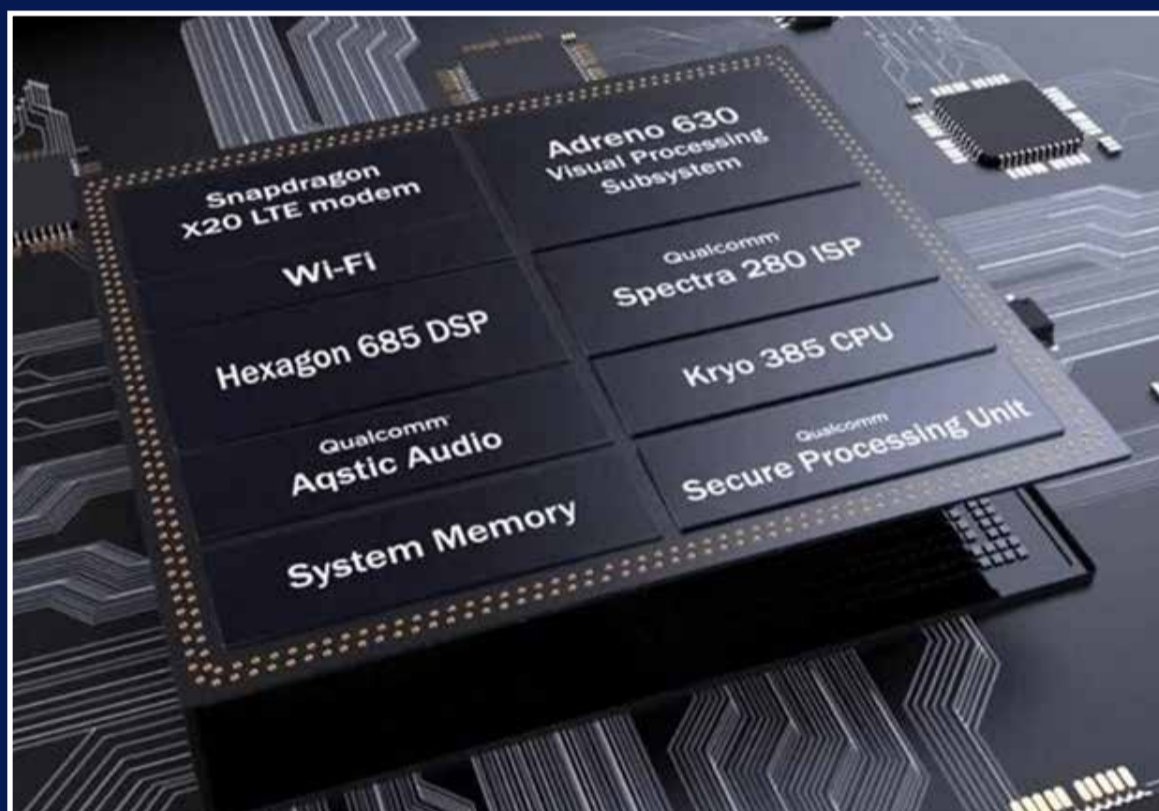
- **Address** — Mumbai - Agra National Hwy, Maharashtra 421302
- **Telephone** — 09769494683
- **Timings** — 11 am — 3 pm
- **Price** — 2000-3000 INR
- **Our pick** — chicken cheese garlic, *mastani falooda* and *sitaphal* cream.

# 3 common mistakes to avoid while buying a smartphone

From the endless range of smartphones launching every month it gets very confusing for a buyer to put their finger on the right fit for them. Oftentimes prospective consumers commit some banal mistakes which make all the difference in acquiring a device perfect for your needs. Tech guru **Ankit Pande** decodes these mistakes and how you can avoid them...

## Myth: Higher the RAM and Storage capacity, better the Performance

**Fact:** Retail partner chains and local stores often propagate this common misconception. RAM capacity is not the only factor that contributes to performance, and one must be cautious in terms of capacity and price of the device. If you are buying a smartphone in the price bracket of Rs 15-35,000, make sure the RAM is at least type LPDDR4 or LPDDR4x. A flagship smartphone must have a LPDDR5 RAM. These are the types of RAM which usually operate on higher clock frequencies, enhancing your multitasking experience. Buying a smartphone on the basis of just capacity like 64 GB or 128 GB should be avoided. The storage type is equally important as it provides faster read/write speeds and supports faster app loading. Most smartphones under Rs 10,000 come with an eMMC based storage which is quite slow but acceptable in that segment. However, anything above that price range requires at least a UFS 2.1 based storage.



Source: reliancedigital.in

## Myth: Higher Core=Better Processor

**Fact:** While buying a smartphone checking its processor or SOC (System on chip) is extremely important. A processor shouldn't only be considered if you play a lot of mobile games. The SOC of a smartphone consists of multiple components which includes the main CPU which helps in performing day to day tasks efficiently, GPU (Graphic Processing Unit) which helps in graphic intensive tasks like gaming, and MODEM which gives you network functionalities like 4G and 5G. Even the download and upload speeds of your smartphone depends on the same. A DSP (Digital Signal Processor) and NPU (Neural Processing Unit) are used for AI operations. A GHz Deca-core Processor isn't necessarily better than a 1.8 GHz Octa-core if factors such as the CPU's architecture (ARM cortex A76, A77, A78, A55) and the Manufacturing/Fabrication processes are not considered. Software optimization on a smartphone is equally important for a processor to run on its full potential.

## Myth: Higher Megapixels=Better Camera Performance

**Fact:** Smartphone cameras have evolved over the years, and the current generation smartphones in our pockets are capable of clicking some incredible pictures. A lot of hype has been created by smartphone brands about megapixels and with 64 MP and 108 MP cameras being launched recently. The hype, however, is extremely misplaced. I have personally tested smartphones with 48 MP, 64 MP and even 108 MP cameras and all a higher megapixel count does is capture more details in the picture. Features of the camera's sensor also play a huge role in helping you capture flawless pictures. Aperture controls light in a camera, and a sensor with a higher aperture of f/1.7 allows better low light photos. The ISP (Image Signal Processor) of your smartphone which processes raw data from the camera sensor and produces the final image. The ISP plays a crucial role in the overall camera performance and that's the reason even a 12 MP camera of an iPhone or a Google Pixel device clicks a lot better pictures compared to a 108 MP camera smartphone.



Source: ibtimes.sg

# Opt for EVs



The popularity of electric vehicles has been rising steadily over the years. With an increasing number of drivers choosing to make the switch, the costs of owning one are coming down rapidly. EVs have a lot to offer in terms of savings on tax, fuel, and maintenance costs, just to name a few. **Hashtag Magazine** takes a look at some common benefits of an EV.

## Cost of Electric Cars

EVs provide excellent value for money over the long term. If you are looking for a cheaper but more efficient way of traveling, EVs are your best bet. Based on the model you want to opt for, the cost of this purchase varies, but you will most likely find a model within your budget limits.



## Quick Charging

You can charge your EV at your home, at your convenience, as long as you have a charging unit installed. Most EVs can be charged in just 8 to 12 hours. With rapid chargers, the charging time can be reduced to under an hour. High-end models can provide a driving experience of up to 500 miles after the unit has been fully charged.



## Better for the Environment

Electric cars have no tailpipe emissions, which makes them better for the environment than traditional vehicles. A plug-in hybrid vehicle has an electric motor and a small battery that can allow you to travel for 30 miles. The advancement in technology helps make vehicles that are more eco-friendly, quieter and efficient.

## A Quieter Driving Experience

When you start an electric car, one of the major things that you will experience is the quietness of the car. Since there will be no vibrations, you can enjoy a relaxing, comfortable driving experience. All EVs feature instant torque. You will get a quick response from the car the moment you will hit the accelerator. So, these vehicles are an ideal choice if you drive mostly in the city.

## Cheaper Maintenance

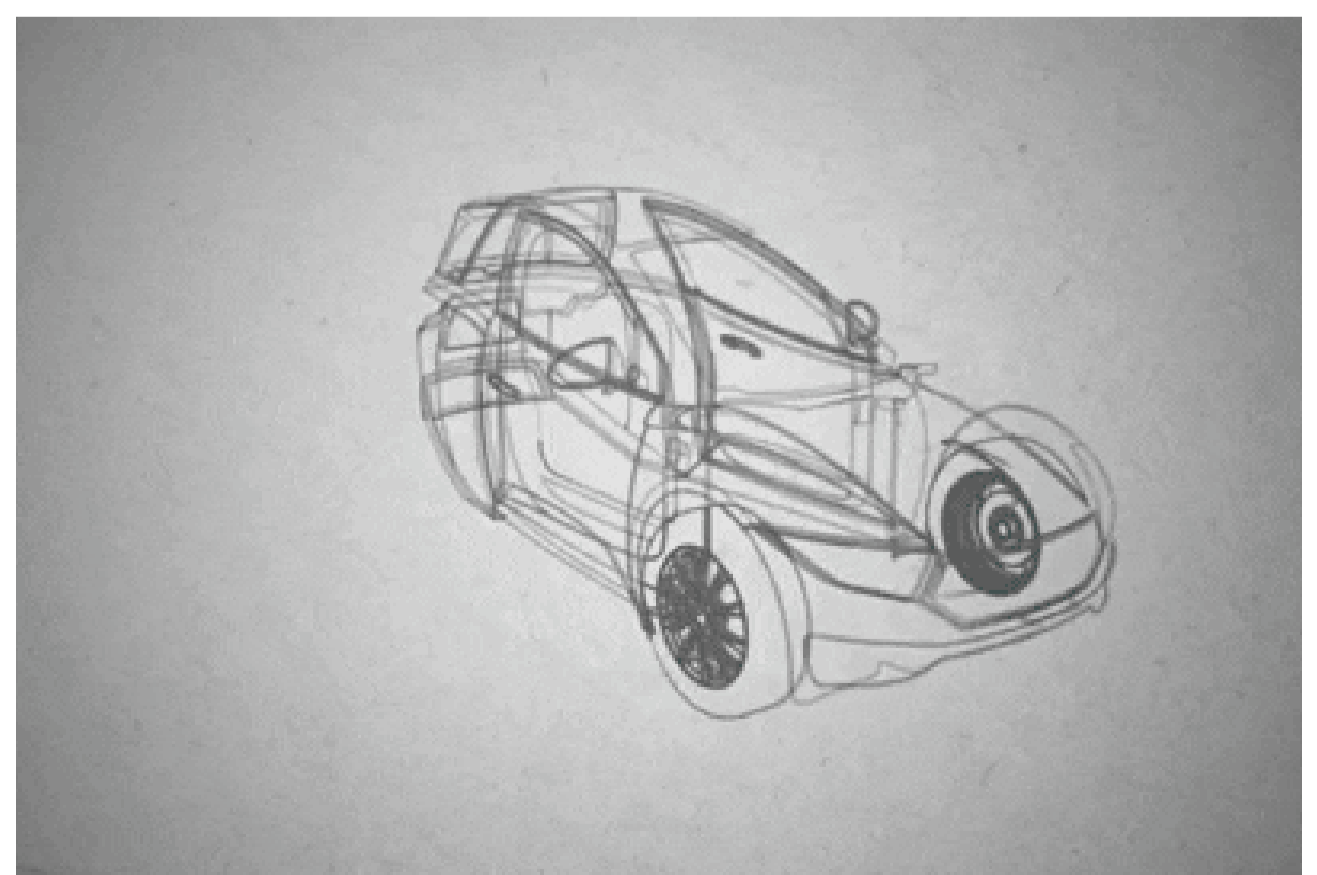
Although the prices of electric vehicles are similar to diesel or petrol cars, they don't cost as much to keep them running. They come with tax incentives, government grants, better fuel efficiency, and reduced maintenance costs.

Typically, these cars have three primary parts: motor, inverter and the on-board charger, and so, the car doesn't go through a lot of wear and tear.



## The Future of Vehicles

Since EVs offer numerous advantages over traditional vehicles, they will replace the conventional vehicles down the road. With the passage of time, the charging time will be reduced to minutes and the range will be extended significantly, and people might end up buying only electric cars.





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# RAJASTHAN STUDIO: *Synergy of Indian Art, Craft and Technology*



Given that India is one of the most ethnically diverse nations, every region of the country is blessed with unique art forms that reflect the native culture and traditions of the place. No mention of Indian craft is complete without Rajasthan which is arguably one of the richest states in terms of art and cultural heritage. Whether it is pottery, textiles, painting, metal work, furniture, leather work or jewellery, the lively colours and distinctive designs of the state's handicrafts are a treat for the eyes. **Rashmi Gopal Rao** discovers **Rajasthan Studio**, an organisation striving to keep this legacy alive.

## Platform for online and offline art experiences

It is often said that art transcends geographical boundaries and given the times we live in, the importance of using technology to promote art and craft can hardly be overemphasised. Founded in 2019, Jaipur based Rajasthan Studio has been doing just that and has connected more than ten thousand artists and art lovers while taking care of the curation, technology and execution of the art workshops. "The state of Rajasthan is brimming with several art forms and the craft culture of Rajasthan dates back to the Indus Valley Civilisation. Many forms like leather *jutti* making, blue pottery, *meenakari* and *kathputli* making were patronised by the Mughals and rulers like Maharaja Sawai Man Singh. Since then, Rajasthan is synonymous with being a cultural hub with its streets and by lanes filled with artists, each of whom has a story to tell. However, in today's era of digitalisation many talented master artists have the skills but not the right platform to showcase their art. Hence many art forms are on the verge of dying unless they are preserved," says founder and CEO Kartik Gaggar about the inspiration behind Rajasthan Studio.

Prior to mid-March 2020, Rajasthan Studio was conducting their activities such as the masterclass workshops and The Circle experiences offline. Masterclass workshops are sessions where art lovers and travellers from across the world connect with award winning artists at their workstations in Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur to learn about the native art forms of Rajasthan. The Circle on the other hand, refers to sessions conducted by art professionals for art enthusiasts and art lovers. Ever since the lockdown, all of Rajasthan studio's circle experiences are being conducted virtually.

## Myriad art forms

Through the masterclass workshops, Rajasthan Studio offers as many as 27 art forms—15 in Jaipur, 5 in Udaipur and 7 in Jodhpur. Apart from forms like *Phad* painting, Fresco Paintings (*Arayash*), lac work, wooden block printing, *Pichwai* painting, rice and gemstone carving, Rajasthan Studio promotes several rare art forms that are in need of urgent preservation. "Few of the rare art forms that we promote are currently being practiced by only one family such as Sea Foam carving by Harsh Chhajed who is a self-taught artist who discovered this art with sea froth. He is the only artist practicing this art form. Another one is the engraving on Dhal and Talwar (war sword and shield) without using any machinery which is being practiced by a father-son duo in Jodhpur," adds Gaggar.

The online art experiences are not limited to Rajasthan but also includes folk paintings of India like *Madhubani*, *Phattachitra*, *Gond* art, Kerala murals and much more.

## A curated experience

While the masterclass workshops can be booked through their website, the other online experiences can also be booked through partner websites such as BookMyShow, PayTM Insider or Google apart from their own website. Masterclass art experiences involve a two to five-hour-long personalised session with an artist of repute who will take the participants through the intricacies like the historical background and cultural legacy of each art form. The online art experiences are curated based on the unique requirements of customers and take anywhere between one and three hours. The starting range of these workshops is INR 1500 to INR 6500.



# A walk through the past

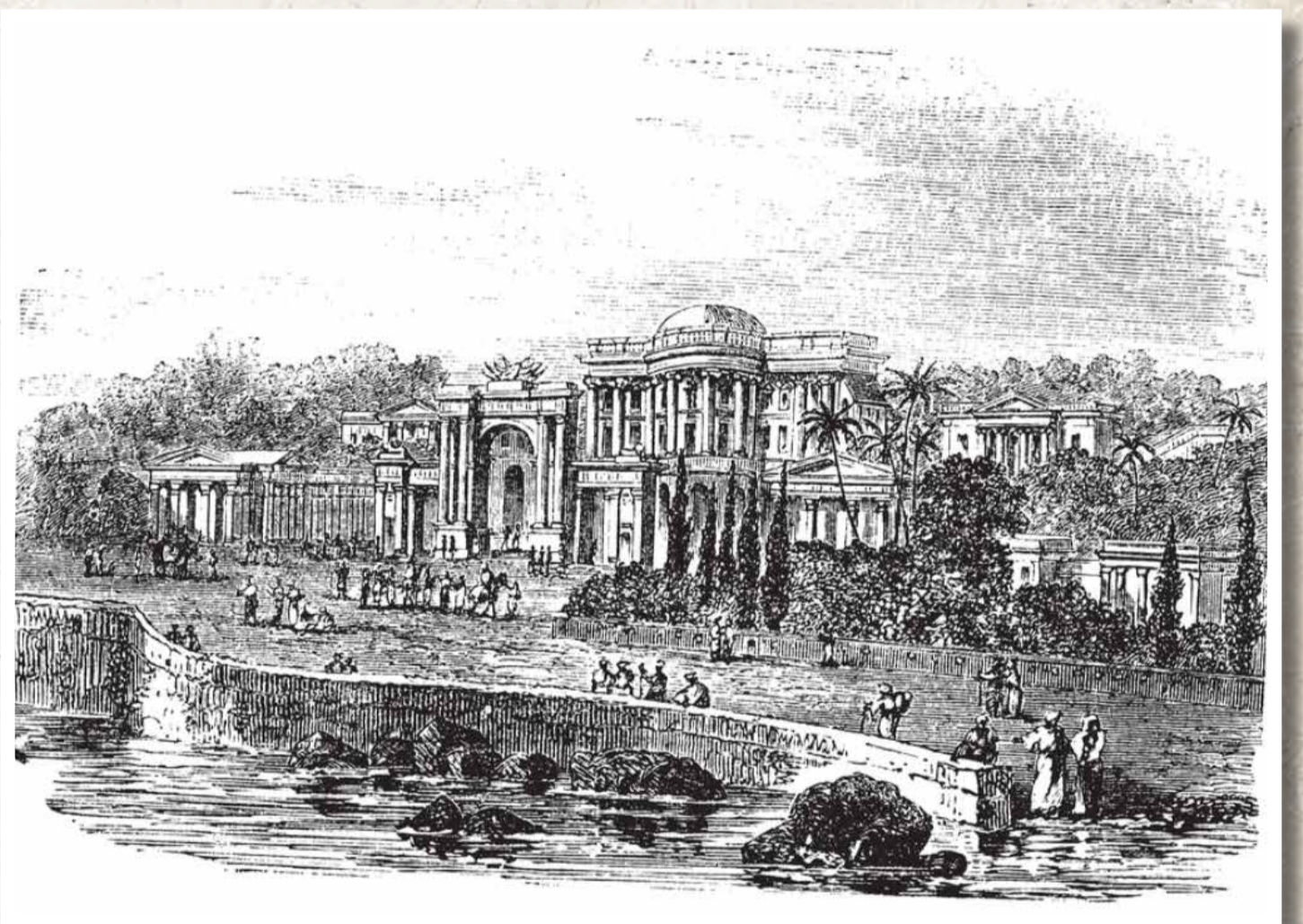
Hyderabad has monuments other than the Charminar and Falaknuma Palace. **Mallik Thatipalli** details the doomed love story behind one of the best British Era structures in India, **The Residency building...**

**W**hile Taj Mahal is famously referred to as the greatest testament of love (justifiably so), Indian history is littered with mammoth complexes which were built on the edifice of love. The British Residency Building in Hyderabad has a riveting story to share, which has all the makings of a bestseller – a majestic mansion built to house a doomed tale of love and its lapse into ruin only to be resurrected by painstaking restoration.

Built in 1805 as a symbol of opulence, the British Residency building was literally hidden away in the premises of the Koti Women's college till a novel (*The White Mughals* by William Dalrymple) which detailed the love story at the heart of the building brought it back into the limelight in 2002. Few, including the students who study there, know the full extent of the rich story their premises store in its lavish staircases and luxurious galleries.

While Hyderabad is no stranger to opulent mansions, the Residency Building stands out even in the exacting completion it faces. Designed by Lieutenant Samuel Russell of Madras Engineers, it was built to impress and induce awe even amongst its grand visitors which included the then Nizam of Hyderabad, one of the richest men in the world.

Built in the neoclassical architectural style popular at the time, it's massive scale (originally 60 acres, now reduced to 42 acres) combined with the fact that its location was on the banks of the River Musi ensured that it was the most sought after setting for social events. Garden parties, soirees and music *mehfils* by the stalwart artists of the day were held in its landscaped garden overseen by the *memsahibs* of the house.



## The love story which inspired the building

Colonel James Achilles Kirkpatrick was the British Resident or Ambassador at the Indian court of Hyderabad between 1797 and 1805. Kirkpatrick had come to India full of ambition, intent on making his name in the subjugation of a nation; but instead it was he who was conquered, not by an army but by a Hyderabad noblewoman called Khair-un-Nissa.

An exceptionally good-looking man (his portrait was recently discovered in the store room of Salar Jung museum) his courtship of Kahir-un-Nissa was frowned upon both by his countrymen and the Hyderabad aristocracy. Braving opposition the couple married in 1800 and Kirkpatrick not only adopted Mughal clothes and ways of living, but had actually converted to Islam, wrote Urdu poetry and became a double agent working against the East India Company and for the Hyderabadis.

Besotted by his wife, he started building an opulent mansion for her which even included a separate zenana quarters. Within the compound is a miniature model of the building and many believe that this was so Kirkpatrick's wife, who remained in purdah, could see the entire mansion, including the front.

While the couple lived happily during the short duration of their marriage, their turbulent love story came to an end very soon owing to their early deaths. Since Kirkpatrick's death, their erstwhile home was designated as the official residence of the British Residents to Hyderabad.

### **The opulence of the building**

A vast villa surrounded by ancient trees, it attracts attention at first glance with an imposing edifice which boast of massive Corinthian pillars 40 feet in height. Sprawled at either ends are a posse of two lions at 60 feet space of 21 marble stairs.

As a former British Residency, it weaved its own magic with galleried halls and drawing rooms, a Durbar Hall of astounding proportions with chandeliers from King William IV's Palace, painted ceilings, parquet floors of inlaid wood flanked by giant mirrors. It boasted of dungeons in the basement and oval ball rooms signifying the luxury and opulence the British Residents in India were accustomed to.

Generally recognized as one of the important British era buildings, others being the one in Calcutta and Fort George of Madras, it is a perfect Palladian building, and not many know that it is extremely similar in design to the White House in Washington DC.



## **Housing the incredible love story of a British Ambassador and a Hyderabadi noblewoman, the magnificent building has lived through years of pomp, ruin and restoration.**

### **The Story of its decay**

When the British left Hyderabad in 1949, the Koti residency was converted into a women's college, established in 1924. It is interesting to note that till the handover, the premises were maintained by the Nizam's government. Between 1949 and 1952, the Residency buildings were modified and modernized for the use of Women's college.

Neglect, coupled with the passage of time, proved detrimental to the very foundations of the centuries-old building. Due to World War-II and the ensuing Independence struggle, regular repair works which were the norm were ignored, and once it was converted into a college, regulations were thrown out of the window and buildings in the complex were modified as per need with no regard to the structural requirements.

The Residency complex further shrunk over the years and poor maintenance led to the collapse of structures – the sociology block and the Principal's lodge were pulled down and replaced with new buildings. Newer buildings that did not complement the complex's heritage status cropped up with blatant disregard of any norms.

It was ironic that the erstwhile British Residency needed a British citizen in author William Dalrymple to attract attention. The author embarked on a five year research which resulted in his influential bestseller, *The White Mughals*, which traced the doomed love story of Kirkpatrick and Khair-un-Nissa and brought the spotlight back on the gorgeous building tucked away in the folds of the fortress-like walls of the women's college.

### **Restoration efforts**

The path to conservation began from a White Mughals fan – an anonymous British donor who wrote a cheque for £1 million soon after the book was released. In 2001, the Residency was put on the 2002 and 2004 World Monuments Watch List as 'Osmania Women's College'. Soon after, thanks to the donation and the attention it received from Dalrymple's work, a new story of conservation began.

It took 12 long years mired in red tape and activism for the restoration process to finally begin in 2013. Under the aegis of Government of Telangana and World Monuments Fund, the first phase of restoration was completed. The original structure underwent a lot of changes – dummy windows were added on elevations and the roof needed reinforcements. The first phase was an endeavor to safeguard the foundation so that further work could be carried on.

The first phase took four years of painstaking work and has made a world of difference to the structure. The work concentrated on restoring the ground floor which had a grand staircase flanked by oval rooms on both sides. The dungeons or treasury (the use of the rooms in the basement is unclear) apart from the oval rooms and ballroom in the first level were also meticulously restored, peeling away centuries of damage.

The restoration work wasn't an easy task considering the scale and size of the project. A massive piece of wooden beam in the roof (weighing a couple of tonnes) was unstable and needed to be carefully modified, a mammoth task, considering the narrow openings. Each and every corner has similar stories to tell.

## ***The White Mughals* by William Dalrymple brought the limelight back onto the monument after years of gradual decay**



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## Into the Woods for the Perfect Workation - Greenlust Camps and Resorts

Hunting for a perfect workation spot, **Nikita Biswas** and **Abhishek Dubey** stumble upon a veritable paradise nestled in the Himalayas. 30 minutes from the city of Nainital, Greenlust Camps in Jeolikote appears to be the ideal spot to mix of work and vacation with an ambience that soothes and enables you to work while the night views and music instills liveliness for a chill celebration.

**A**s full time travellers and freelance writers we have been setting out to find locations that make work from home just a little breezier. We zeroed in on a place away from the city's hustle, nestled in the lap of greenery with a panoramic view of the Himalayas. Greenlust Camps and Resorts in Jeolikote, near Nainital is an ideal getaway for people who wish to work from mountains. We took a bus from Birla Ghat, Haridwar at about 11:30pm for Kathgodam. The bus dropped us at our stop early morning around 4.35 am in Kathgodam. We took a cab from the Kathgodam Bus stop (we were glad that cabs were still running early that morning) and kick started our adventurous journey towards our workcation. We called Maryam Ilyas Khan, the owner of the resort, and were pleased to find that though the place is located in the heart of the woods, the GPRS works perfectly.

Exhausted after the long journey, we were escorted to our designated Swiss tent. The strains of the pandemic still pull at us, and we washed up thoroughly once we arrived, and went to bed. We woke up to hypnotising ASMR-esque sounds of rain pattering down on the roof of our tent.



The place has 13 tents and a cafe as well. Five of these are Swiss camps and the rest are Alpine camps, all double layered. The beds are comfy and the sheets and blankets are enough in number to keep you cozy and warm. The panoramic 360 degree mountainous view is sure to take your breath away. Maryam is a young entrepreneur whose strong will, an acumen for hospitality and love for her village, Bhuyali, made this feat possible. The lady is a bundle of joy, whose welcoming presence made us extend our stay. She has the supervision of the place down to a science.



The food was a delicious spread of vegetarian and non-vegetarian items. The view, the serene location, the soothing climate, the fairy lights from the Nainital mountains and the bonfire at night added endless charm to the place. The ambience adds to the wild vibe as there are loads of mannequins of superheroes including Superman, Hulk, Batman, Motu, Patlu and Bheem. The dart game, the lighting, the dummy guns and the rustic decor goes the distance in making a stay here quite the fete.

### In conversation with Maryam Ilyas Khan – The owner of Greenlust Camp & Resorts

I was born in a conservative family after two brothers, and was always asked to prioritize marriage over career. It was a challenge to leave my hometown for studies. I went to Delhi and started an adventure trip firm where I used to organise tours to the mountains; I enjoyed that and found myself more alive. Now that I knew a bit about the field, I thought of building a place that offers comfortable camping with good food to mountain travelers and tourists. In 2018, I came back to Haldwani, and started looking for the right piece of land and funds. Greenlust Camps and Resorts took two years to finish.

### How to reach –

You can either choose to travel through flight, train or bus

**Flight** – You can take a direct flight to Pantnagar Airport and take a cab from Pantnagar directly for Jeolikote or you can choose to take a bus till Kathgodam and take a private cab to reach the location.

**Bus** – All buses drop you to Kathgodam bus stop from where you can take a cab to Jeolikote directly leading you to the property

**Train** – The train shall drop you at Kathgodam railway station from where you can take a cab directly to the location.

Nearest Attraction – Nainital Mall Road is just a 30 minutes drive. You can also choose to hike for an hour to see the downhill beauty early morning. Experience the local life and people.



**Address:** Greenlust Camps & Resorts and Sukoon Café, Jeolikote, Nainital

**Timings:** 8.00am to 11.00pm

### Cost for two:

- Café - Rs. 400(approx.) food
- Swiss Camp – Rs 2500 including food
- Alpine Camp – Rs 1800 including food



Emperor Jehangir's "Paradise on Earth" is rich in valleys, rivers, lakes and enchanting snow-capped mountains. Few are aware, however, that the grandeur of Kashmir goes far beyond its beautiful landscapes. Endowed with numerous temples such as the Sankara-Gauresvara, Pandrethan, Shiva Bhutesa and Goverdhanadhara, Kashmir is a crucible of ancient heritage across religions and some breathtaking natural beauty. Perhaps one of the most intriguing edifice you'll come across in the valley is the complex of the **Krimchi temples**. **Canta Dadlaney** takes you through the ruins of Krimchi temples that transport you to a bygone history marked with riches and royalty

## Remnants of an Era:

# THE KRIMCHI TEMPLES OF KASHMIR

**K**ashmir was once imbued with Hinduism and spirituality, deeply influenced by Kashmiri Shaivism, a non-dualistic tradition that dates back to 850 CE. Swami Lakshman Joo, a Kashmiri Hindu, was instrumental in reviving Kashmiri Shaivism. The ruins of the Krimchi Temples are captivating structures situated at a distance of about 14 km from the city of Udhampur in southwestern Jammu and Kashmir. These temples are considered to be the oldest in the State of Jammu, dating back to the period between the 8th and the 9th centuries. While no written information exists today to validate their history, the stories behind the construction of these temples are numerous. Some say they were built by King Kichak of the Mahabharata, (the ancient historic war fought between the Pandavas and the Kauravas) while others state that they were built by the Pandavas, who after being sent into exile, spent a lot of their time in this region. This accounts for these temples popularly referred to as the 'Pandava Temples'.

### Destination Krimchi

A 30-minute drive by road from Udhampur city brings you to this complex which includes a total of seven temples, four large ones facing the east and three small ones facing the west. Built on the banks of a stream, the temples are surrounded with lush foliage and a vast range of colourful flowers. The main temple stands at a towering height of 50 ft and is dedicated to Hindu deities such as Lord Shiva, his

consort Goddess Parvati, their child, Lord Ganesha, and Lord Vishnu.

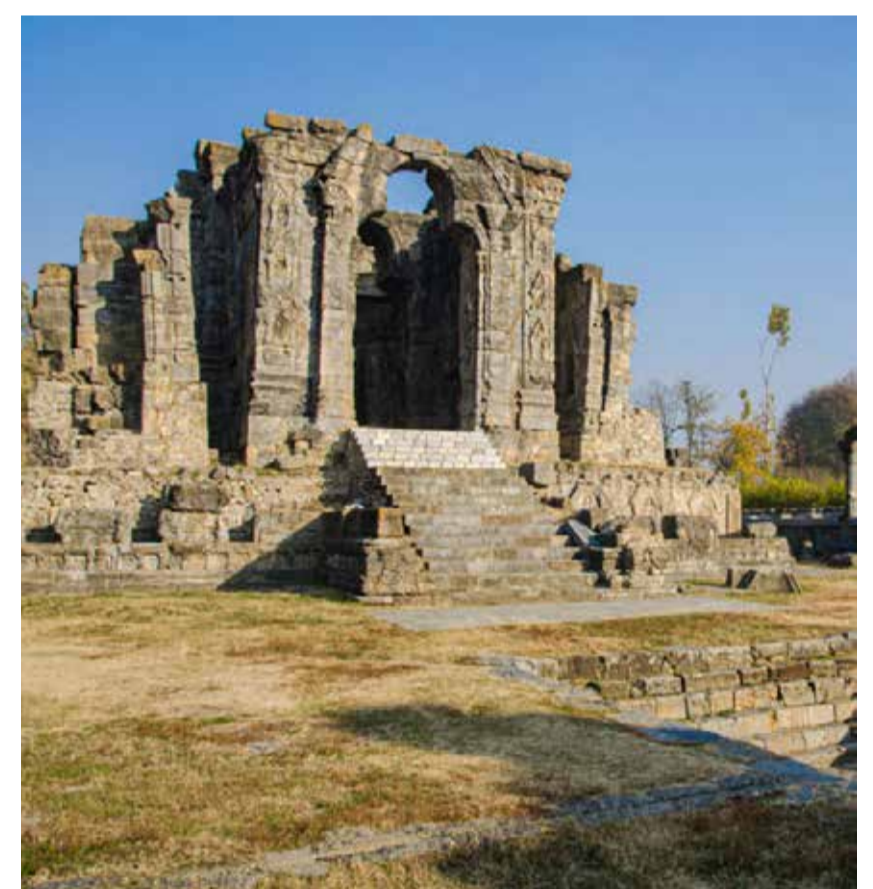
### A history of grandiose

Krimchi was the brain-child of King Kichak, a contemporary of the Pandavas who defeated and killed him. The lineage of royals who ruled Krimchi is lengthy, with some of the notable rulers being King Dayakaran (the son of King Puran Karan), King Bahadur Singh and King Himmat Singh.

### Temple architecture

For the convenience of visitors and tourists, the temples have been marked from one to seven. Temple number 3 is the oldest and temple number 1 appears as the most decorated one. A lot of information has been concisely detailed throughout the temples to give an insight into the background of this sacred place. Many attribute the architecture of these temples to Greek influences, though some local folk state that the architecture is influenced by the Nagra style of North India. Some believe that they were built by the Pandavas while others affirm that they were built by the Dev dynasty of Jammu.

The eroded walls depict faded abstract impressions and the structures appear very similar to other Indian temples at Chamba, Bhubaneswar and Bharmour. The pillars bear discrete foliage motifs which speak volumes for the creativity of that time.



In the past, archaeologists and researchers, in the course of excavations, discovered stone idols, iron arrowheads, earthen pots and other ancient paraphernalia which are exhibited for all to see. The excavations have now been stopped to retain the historical importance of these monuments which have a unique story of their own.

Walking amongst these ancient ruins transports one to a mystical era of a past, deeply mired in spirituality and engulfs one in an unknown serenity and calm. These ancient temple ruins make for a very popular tourist attraction and are a must-visit for curious minds and solace-seekers. Many a request has been put forth for this temple complex to be deemed as a World Heritage site, but to no avail.

**Timings:** 6.00 am – 6.00 pm.

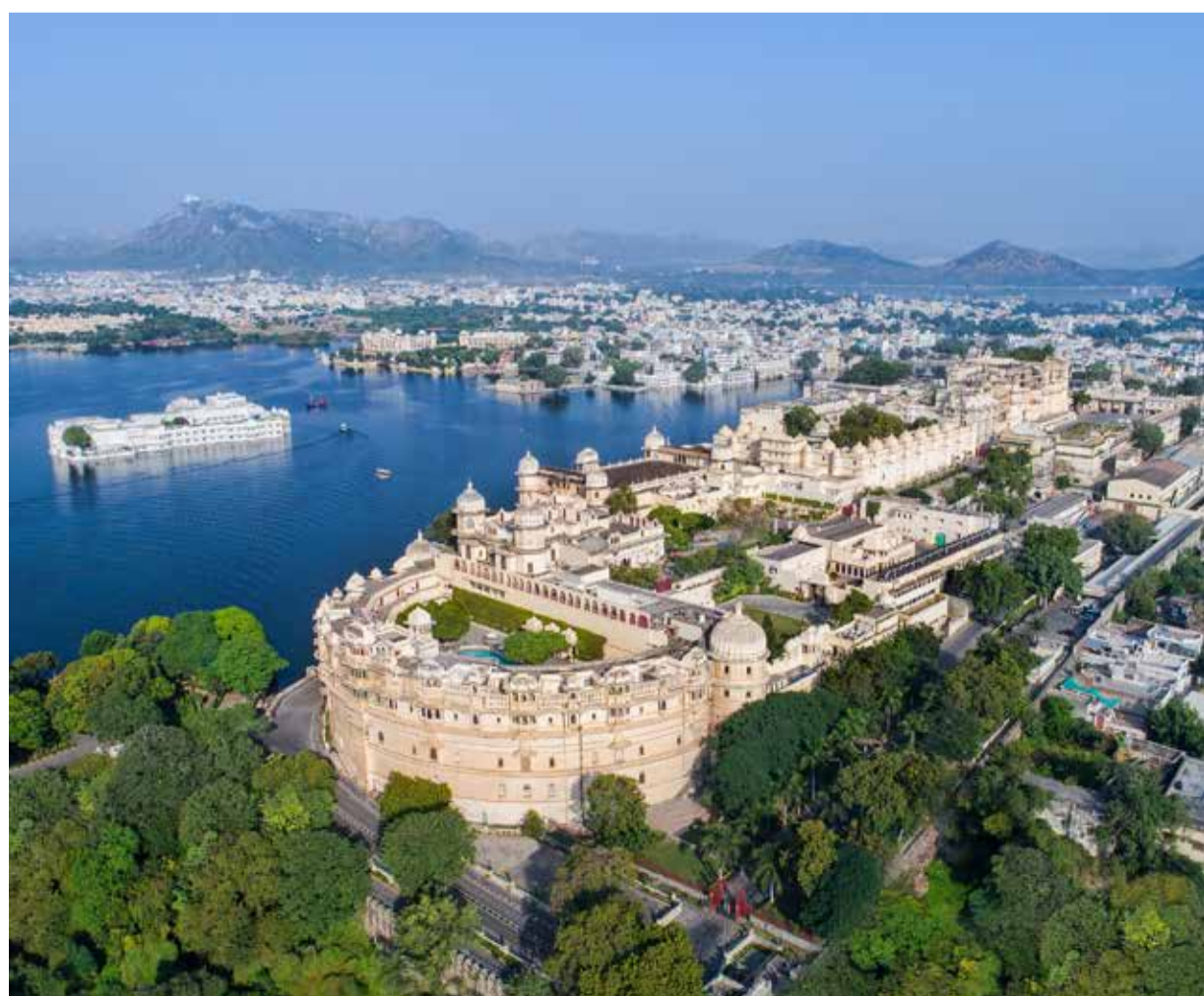


# Udaipur: Spilling Opulence

Its famed precincts have served as a setting for movies as varied as *Octopussy* and *Yeh Jawani Hai Diwani*. Its picturesque setting dotting the magnificent Lake Pichola has ensured that it remains India's best destination wedding. **Mallik Thatipalli** takes a walk down the majestic **City Palace** in Udaipur and details the wonder that is the **City Palace Museum**...

The brown façade of the City Palace can be viewed the minute one enters Udaipur. The city of lakes has long been a favoured destination for many a traveller since time immemorial and the City Palace is its crowning glory.

Built in the year 1569 by Maharana Udai Singh II, and home to 42 rulers from the House of Mewar for over 400 years, the complex consists of 11 palaces built over centuries. Each ruler brought their taste, resulting in an eclectic melange of styles ranging from Rajasthani and Mughal to Oriental and European. Today, the City Palace is divided into three parts: The City Palace Museums, the heritage hotels and the private residences of the Mewar Royals.



## The Museum

Once you enter the gates of the majestic Badi Pol, a triple arched structure beckons you inside. It is where victorious Ranas and armies were welcomed back from their battles and even today, as tourists jostle to take selfies, one notices its regal aura.

The City Palace Museum was open to the public in 1969. Spread across 20,000 square metres, it is a literal walk-through the rich history of the House of Mewar. Immaculately maintained, it is interconnected via a labyrinthine maze of corridors and centuries-old staircases.

On an annual average, the museum receives more than 10,00,000 visitors.

It provides direct employment to over 500 staff-members; indirect employment to 200,000 of Udaipur's residents. Apart from the many galleries, the museum is known for the Maharana Mewar special library, established in 1999-2000 in the underground vaults of The City Palace and spread over 2000 square metres.

The extension of the library also houses the Maharana Mewar Research Institute which was established in 1985 and is today acknowledged as a unique research institute of Rajasthan.

► The royal family of Mewar and its mighty kingdom are believed to have descended from the Sun, **Suryavanshis** as they are called, tracing its lineage from Lord Rama through his elder son Lav.

## The Majestic City Museum

With its sprawling courtyards and *jharokha* offering panoramic views, each area offers a speciality which shows the grandeur of India royals at the zenith of their power and influence.

The many collections the museum offers can rival the best museums in Europe and come showcasing the full might of Indian culture.

### ► Sculpture collection

The collection represents an unbroken tradition of stone carving from the 7th to 20th century including fine specimens from the Gurjara-Pratihara period; predominantly of serpentine and marble with limited examples of limestone and sandstone.

All of the 308 sculptures in the collection were once part of thriving temples in and around Shree Eklingnath Ji Temple, Kailashpuri. Hinduism and Jainism being two faiths flourishing in Rajasthan and surrounding regions, the collection is composed of Brahmanical and Jain icons or sculptural motifs.

It includes Gods, Goddesses, *Surasundaris*, animal motifs, architectural elements, narrative and decorative panels, and memorial stones. There are no Buddhist images in the collection. Each of the items provides an insight into the religious beliefs, faith and cultural traditions of the regions concerned.

### ► Photographs Gallery

It always begins with spinning of the cotton. The cotton fibres are converted into rope-like loose strands and the slivers of cotton fibre are converted into yarn. The Mangalgiri fabric is produced with the help of pit looms by warp and woof interlacing. After the reeling, it is rinsed and made appropriate for the dyeing process. During traditional dyeing, the white sarees are bleached and others are coloured. The dyeing process is followed by the warping process. While combing yarns from different cones, it is important to preserve the yarn elongation and maintain it at uniform level.

### ► Paintings Gallery

There are around 1800 paintings in the collection, the oldest of which dates to the late 1500s. The painting belongs to the Mewar School and makes use of rich, vibrant colours. Gold and silver were also used to highlight important elements in the painting.

Several aspects of the life in Mewar and the involvements of the local folk are captured in this medium of paint. The Maharanas at times commissioned portraits of themselves. They also patronized works which illustrated royal processions, celebrations and rituals, visits to religious places or shrines, extravagant hunting scenes, animal fights and wrestling scenes. They serve as excellent visual narratives of the past.



### ► The Silver Gallery

The museum also boasts of a vast collection of silver items, previously under the custodianship of several generations of the Mewar family. Much of these are on display in the Silver Gallery; the first of its kind in all of Asia. Some of the items were hitherto rarely glimpsed by even residents of the Palace or visitors to Udaipur but are now open to the public.

Being a living heritage, some of the items find their way out of the gallery during certain parts of the year for rituals. The Ram Rewari, a portable shrine, is an example which transcends from a museum object into a sacred one for the *Jal-Zoolni Ekadashi* festival.

**The museum can be visited by the public anytime between 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM. The entry fee of the museum is Rs 250/- per person and different fares apply for carrying cameras and video recorders inside the museum.**



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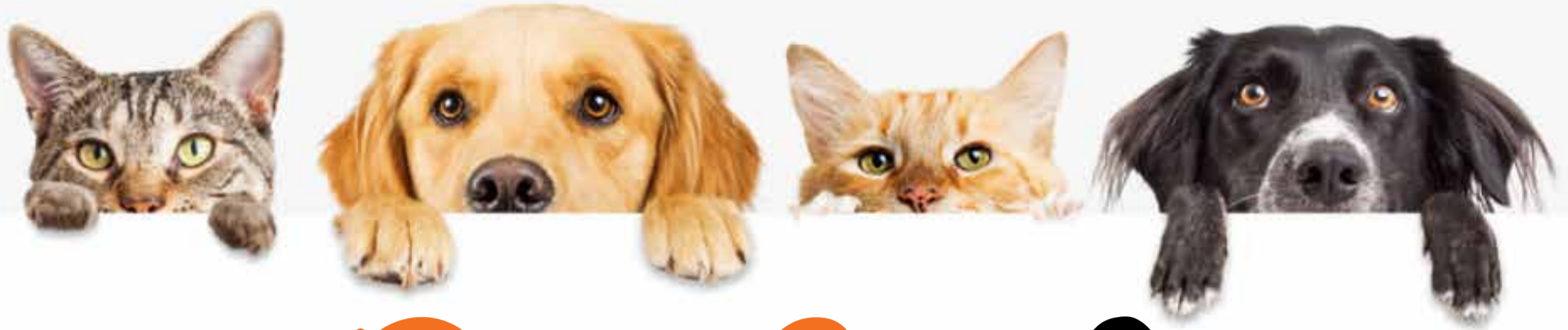
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# Pet Cafe

wave Makes Its Way to India

Animal lovers seem to have an unending list of demands from the burgeoning pet industry in India. Pet cafes are as yet a nascent concept in India, unlike countries such as South Korea who seem to have a dog or cat cafe peppered across their cities. However, it is a concept that is fast catching up. For an animal lover, a cosy cafe with the chance to pet and cuddle with a cute cat or puppy to their heart's content is a dream come true. And for those who wish to adopt a pet of their own, but find themselves unable to, the chance to visit such a cafe would be a sheer slice of heaven. **Juveria Tabassum** locates a few sweet pet cafes from across the country where you can spend some time relaxing between a cuppa' and a kitty!



## The Love Room, Kolkata:

Aptly called, this pet cafe is the first of its kind in Kolkata. With a whole bunch of in-house cats and dogs to keep your pets company, The Love Room welcomes your entire family to its premises in the true sense. Along with a special menu for your pets, the cafe also serves what they call "dog beer," and we suggest you stick to your cappuccino and definitely let your pooch discover the joys of that particular drink.

**Address:**

36 Tollygunge Circular Road, above Bank of Baroda, near Mahabirtalla, Kolkata

**Call:** 90380 63365



## Cat Cafe Studio, Mumbai

In 2010, funded by independent creative agency, Zcyppher, Cat Cafe Studio was a small cat rescue centre. Over the years, with the involvement of the local community and dedicated volunteers, it has grown into a full-fledged cafe that doubles up as an adopted centre for rescued felines. It also has the distinction of being India's first cat cafe. Saved from the savage streets, these cats and kittens become the perfect hosts for a cosy time at the cafe, and if you fall in love with a particularly squishy little baby, you can even take them home with you.

**Address:**

Harminder Singh Road, Aram Nagar, Versova, Andheri (W), Mumbai

**Call:** 6518 8883



## Cafe de Loco, Hyderabad:

Dog-parents can never be satisfied with the amount of pampering their babies receive. And Hyderabad's Cafe de Loco has all hands on the deck trying to cater to just that. Their special line-up of gourmet foods for pooches is set to leave them all drooling. From chicken crisps to sesame seed treats, munchies have variety abound. Also on the cards is their baked goods menu with custom-made cakes and cookies. With a cosy little play area, and Pedigree Biryani on the menu, your furry-baby is sure to have a treat of a lifetime.

**Address:**

Plot.No.315, Diamond Hills, Gachibowli, Hyderabad

**Call:** 75693 63392

# Get your kid's room choc-a-block with Legos

They say the ambience surrounding your child grooms their personality. As a parent, the best gift you could give your child is a nice, perfect bedroom that both inspires your little one and represents your kid's personality. And this is exactly what crossed the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Kathlalwala from *Saifee Park*, Mumbai when they called a renowned interior designer *Ms. Sakina Sabuwala* from *Delightful Homes* to design an ideal bedroom for their bundle of joy. **Saba Ladha** gets you the story...



## Designer Speak:

Sakina, an interior designer from Mumbai started her career around 11 years ago as a junior executive in a furniture firm and later joined Interarch and worked there for 7 years. It was finally in 2017 that she gained the confidence to go solo and start her brand, *Delightful Homes* and since then, there was no looking back.

Designing is Sakina's passion and she mostly loves adding a distinct decoration to children's rooms. With a long trail of happy customers and commendable projects, the Lego-themed bedroom adds just another feather in the cap of her creativity.

## The concept of a Lego-themed bedroom

Colours are crucial in influencing your child's imagination. When presented with a captivating shade, children tend to grab at it immediately. That was the inspiration behind the Lego themed concept. Legos have captivated people regardless of their age thanks to the creativity and interest that this game stimulates. When blocks of this game are used in various parts of a room to create a perfectly magnificent space, it can bring out the best of your child's imagination and creativity. Additionally, the bright colours can have a positive effect on your child's mood. A multi-coloured room, it also doesn't invite any pesky gender-restrictive questions from sticklers of blues-for-boys and pinks-for-girls either.

The idea sprang into Sakina's mind when she found an old Lego game lying in her client's house. The theme formulated in her head, and she presented it to the parents who were more than ready to incorporate a happening concept into their kid's bedroom.

"The little one was just a toddler then, so we thought to chuck the idea of a bed and left an open space for the kid to explore and play," says Sakina. She used commercial plywood and blended it smoothly with coloured laminations to create the most enticing furniture with the perfect smooth finishing. Further, the Lego shaped blocks were placed wisely on different sides of the room as well. They also made use of these shapes for wardrobe handles, shutters and hooks installed in this space. The kaleidoscope of colours and blocks added the perfect touch to this room.

The parents of little Kathlalwala were genuinely clueless about how they could design a personal room for him which he would love when he grew up and relate to positively. They just had 130 square feet of space in their house which they wanted to convert into a fabulous room for the one-and-a-half year old. Enter interior designer Sakina Sabuwala, and the parents let her have a free hand in designing an amazing space for the little one.





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# 10 Little Fingers

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Engage your child creatively...

For **Ishaan Dalapati** and **Sindu Vellanki**, fate seems to have guided their paths towards each other. Now settled in Philadelphia, the couple speaks to Juveria Tabassum on life as an immigrant and what it is like to fall in love in a foreign land...



# Of Creating Home in a Foreign Land

**S**indu Vellanki, now a board certified paediatrician, moved to the US as a nine year old. As she learned to traverse a foreign landscape, Sindu says she has always put in conscious effort to assimilate into her adopted home while retaining her Indian roots. Her high school class of 400 only had two Indians, and in her home in the mid-West, there weren't too many people of Indian origin around either. Sindu attended Saint Louis University School of Medicine, and completed her residency at Stanford University, California.

All this while, Ishaan Dalapathi was following a similar path to life in the United States. Born in Hyderabad, Ishaan moved to Chicago at 11 years of age, and settled in the Windy City among family and friends. "People from my hometown had a close influence on me, and that helped shape my personality as a first generation Indian American," says Ishaan. He moved to California within two months of Sindu in June 2015. Ishaan's meeting with Sindu was a pure stroke of good luck. Ishaan managed to swipe right on Sindu's profile on Dilmil, a dating app for desis (people of South Asian origin living in the US) merely a couple of hours before Sindu had made her mind up to delete it. The duo connected over the next six months, and when they finally met in January 2016, they had fallen head over heels.

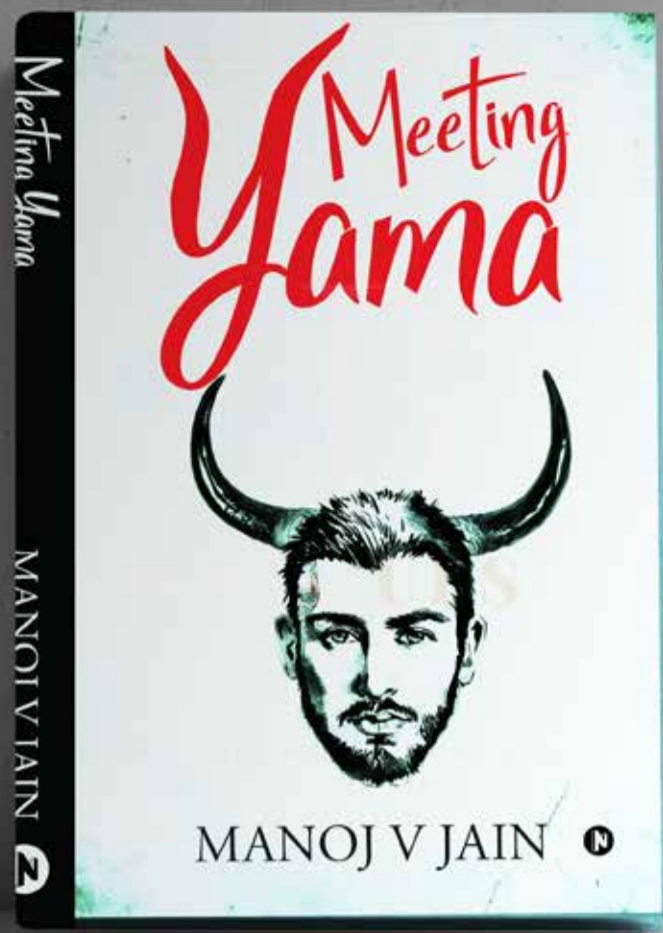


The couple has lived for 20 years in the US now, a place they have called home ever since they were kids. However, Sindu and Ishaan both maintain that they are striving hard to maintain their Indian identity. "We keep in touch with what's happening in India in terms of the socio-political scenario, such as the on-going farmers' protests, but we are careful not to form strict opinions about anything. But we have managed to retain our culture in our day-to-day lives, right from staying on top of Bollywood, to cricket, to all the various Telugu festivals, which we celebrate with much gusto," shares Sindu, who wears a bindi even now, and says she feels much pride in donning it.

The duo currently reside in Philadelphia, where Ishaan is an Associate VP at an IT consulting company, and Sindu is pursuing a sub-speciality in paediatric gastroenterology at the Children's Hospital of Philly. Ishaan started pursuing an executive MBA during the lockdown. "In the last ten years of work I've had to wear different hats, and adapt to new challenges. The personality of the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear to me that I need to keep developing new skills," says Ishaan, who, along with his partner Sindu, has imbibed adaptation as a way of life.

This section is dedicated to Indians across the globe. We believe that it takes a lot of determination and effort to achieve success. Every achievement, whether big or small, deserves to be celebrated and by sharing your story you inspire others to follow in your footsteps. To share your story mail us at [editorial@hashtagmagazine.in](mailto:editorial@hashtagmagazine.in)

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# MEETING YAMA: Life in the Lanes of Kashi

Author **Manoj V Jain's** seventh book dives into the tales and the mysteries that rest in the holy city of Varanasi, and attempts to bring us closer to embracing the concept of death. **Juveria Tabassum** reviews...

**S**pirituality and soul-searching have been frequent themes in author Manoj V Jain's writings. While previous books explored the lives of troubled souls through a rather hopeful lens, *Meeting Yama* dives into the depths of the holy city of Varanasi (Kashi as it is colloquially known), and paints the tale of three young men in the colours of recovering from loss of loved ones, and the impending feeling of death all around.

The book attempts to normalise conversation and inferences people draw from death, and succeeds in the sense that it allows the readers to see death as subtext in every page, and still not get overwhelmed by it. The three protagonists, Amrit, Surya, and Rajat converge at Kashi to make peace with their individual demons, and as they take a tour of the city, escorted by the rather unnerving local guide, Dharam, they encounter revelations from their own past and present in the ancient mythological tales that rest in the narrow lanes, imposing temples and sprawling *ghats* of the city.

*Meeting Yama* tends to fall into the trap of swinging between being priggish and vague at times, and the internal monologues and flashbacks of the three leads seem drawn out at most places, but Manoj has managed to sprinkle some life into the mystifying city of Varanasi, and has sustained the matter of death as incessantly recondite, ensuring that you keep turning the pages.

**Title:** Meeting Yama  
**Author:** Manoj V Jain  
**Publisher:** Notion Press  
**Price:** Rs 399



For orders contact +917893565262



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## "My roles pick me" Nanda Yadav

Known for her work in *The Letters* and *Why Cheat India*, **Nanda Yadav** has been taking steady steps into mainstream Bollywood on the back of some interesting movie picks. Speaking with **Hashtag India**, the actor discusses acting, dance, her YouTube channel, and upcoming projects...

**From debuting with *The Letters* to now launching a YouTube series, *Wo Bindi Wali*, tell us a little about your journey from Varanasi**

When I first moved from Delhi to Bombay, I had no connections. I started doing theatre and that opened a lot of television work for me. I landed William Reads' *Letters* based on Mother Teresa and her letters. *Hexing* directed by Christopher Lenoir, and a short film for the United Nations called *Banno* followed, and that led to my break with *Why Cheat India* directed by Soumik Sen. 2020 was slow but I utilised the time and started my YouTube channel *Wo Bindi Wali*. 2021 is lined up for a bunch of releases including *Majjima* which is on MX Player.

**Between *Hexing* and *Banno* you have made some offbeat choices during your career. How do you pick your roles?**

My roles are always challenging ones, and in a way, my roles choose me. During the story narration I love when directors have a bold vision for my character, and confidence in my ability as an actor. These roles are very close to life and that encourages me to deliver them better.

**You are a trained classical dancer, what led you to a career in acting?**

Training in Bharatnatyam was only a step towards acting. I loved dancing and wanted to be polished in our classical form. The training in dance doesn't restrict you; it actually helps you express yourself better physically and emotionally. It laid the foundation for acting.



**Tell us a little about your forthcoming projects**

All these projects are really different from each other and they all have some message hidden within which we as society don't acknowledge enough. We want to put it on the table and see how the audience reacts. It's *Abuse Only* is about two struggling souls who find solace in each other's company not knowing whether it will make their woes better or worse. *Sharir* talks about one's own insecurities, and *Kalabai* from *Byculla* gives an answer to one's insecurities. I am quite excited for their release.

STREAMING  
NOW

# “I wish to work with *Rajni* sir again”

2021 is a busy year for actor **Prateik Babbar**. His latest show, *Chakravyuh*, a crime thriller, premiered on MX Player on March 12. *Mumbai Saga*, a film where he will be seen playing younger brother to John Abraham and Bachchan Pandey where he plays a goon in Akshay Kumar's gang are also lined up, along with another web series which is yet to be announced. In conversation with **Lipika Varma**, Prateik explains his cop outing, what 2021 has in store for him, and details the joy of working with Rajnikanth...

***Chakravyuh* is in the limelight for its interesting concept and gripping scenes. Could you tell us a little about your character, and what you've taken from acting in a crime thriller?**

The web series is titled *Chakravyuh-An Inspector Virkar Crime Thriller*. Playing Inspector Virkar was a challenging job. The series is about the exploitation of the dark web which is taking innocent lives. The story is tight and the concept will probably open the eyes of many to the dark side of social media and crypto currency.

**How was it keeping busy during what was a difficult 2020 for everyone?**

I'm extremely blessed to have the opportunity to be working in the pandemic, also have a chance to indulge in my creativity and craft and showcase my capability and talent as an actor. This year the shooting situation was difficult with the bio bubbles, but I consider myself fortunate that I could continue working and strive harder at my craft.



**How do you look at your journey in the industry so far?**

It's been a journey of ups downs; I do regret a few things but these things are lessons. I've looked at my work like a man on a mission—as someone who has to carry forward the legacy of my mother (late Smita Patil), who made her place in this world as a great actor. I wish to be remembered as a good actor who played meaningful characters.

**You tied the knot with writer Sanya Sagar in 2019. How has married life been so far?**

Sanya is a fabulous writer, and she has just made some interesting music videos for a couple of friends of mine. She is a brilliant woman, and she inspires me. Married life is a job, honestly. You have to work at it. Both of us need to progress individually and as a couple. These first few years are crucial and we are sincerely working towards our marriage.

**Will you take up projects in the South again after your work in the Tamil industry at the start of your career?**

I am absolutely keen on working in films down south. I'm open to doing everything—films, theatre, OTT, or short films as long as the story and the character resonate with me. It has always been a healthy working atmosphere, and I believe I am working with good people who add value to my life. As long as I have that, I wouldn't mind working in any language.

**You were seen in *Darbar* with Rajnikanth. How was that like?**

I have not signed any films presently with Rajni sir, but I am hopeful about working with him in the near future again. That man is really something. There is an aura and energy when he is around shooting on the sets. He always exudes positive energy. Rajni sir is the most disciplined actor; he works with full dedication and warmth. I wish to work with him again, *Inshallah!*

# Product Picks

## Hashtag's picks of the month

### ***Kraft Seeds Garden Toll Set***

**Price: Rs 299**

This gardening kit is a perfect gift for home gardeners. The five-piece tool set comes with a trowel, cultivator, fork, weeder and a khurpi, and is ideal for operating on small plants and branches. This is also a great way to introduce kids to the basics of gardening.



### ***Chicco Goody stroller***

**Price: 19,990**

For a new parent, finding the right stroller is a massive challenge. Now with Chicco Goody stroller's innovative and extraordinary folding system, your little one can accompany you, with just the touch of a button. The stroller offers an innovative convenient one-button press fold system that saves parents from the cumbersome process of folding strollers while balancing the baby. With a wide and comfortable seat, you can use this for babies from birth to 22kgs. Especially if you're amongst those who enjoy traveling, this auto folding feature is super handy. Apart from looking chic and modern, Goody stands up on its own and gets so compact that it can fit in the tightest of spaces to reduce storage hassle.



### ***Liveonce Bamboo Feeder***

**Price: RS 289**

Have you ever thought of birds and animals who struggle to quench their thirst during summer? A simple way to help is by placing water bowls in balconies or in the garden and these bamboo water bowls and feeders are a great way to make some chirpy friends this season.

### ***Petvogue dog puzzle and dispenser***

**Price: Rs 464**

A toy-cum-feeder for your pet, Petvogue is a puzzle where the pets obtain treats by toggling the pieces on the plate. This helps the pets become smarter and also helps them enjoy some game time. This is also ideal for obese pets, as it reduces the feeding speed and helps them stay in shape.



For product features and reviews mail us at [contact@hashtagmagazine.in](mailto:contact@hashtagmagazine.in)