

Hashtag

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September 2021

EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW
**HOME
GARDENING**

SUSTAINABLE

serveware &
fashion brands

**NRI IN THE
SPOTLIGHT:**
DANCER &
ENTREPRENEUR
TANVI CHANDNA

**“YOGA HELPS
REVERSING AGE”**
**SHILPA SHETTY
KUNDRA**

**“STARDOM
COMES WITH
RESPONSIBILITY”**

Kriti Sanon

**GANESHA
TEMPLES TRAIL**
in Coastal Karnataka

BUNDI
A LITTLE-KNOWN
HERITAGE



REVIEWS
WELLNESS
FASHION
& MORE

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The hot and the svelte Kriti Sanon has once again proven her mettle in the industry. *Mimi* has been making waves since its release and Kriti's performance was highly commendable. In an exclusive interview with Hashtag Magazine, she talks about the ever-transforming industry and her journey so far. "Sometimes failure teaches you more than success can ever do," she shares.

START UP INC

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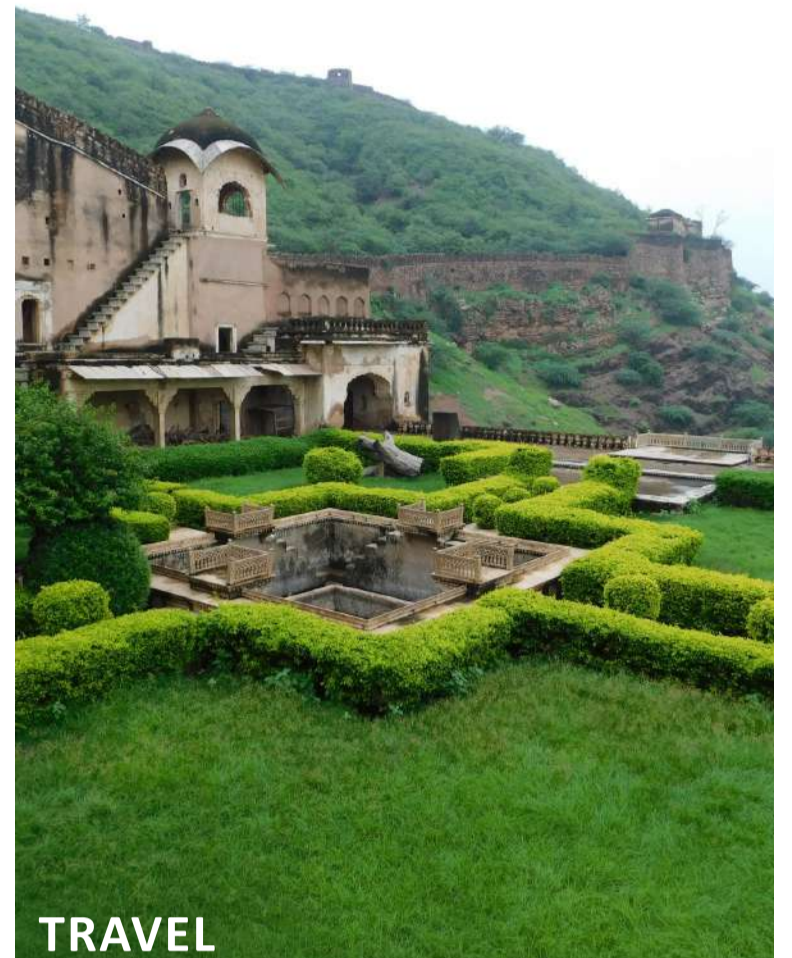
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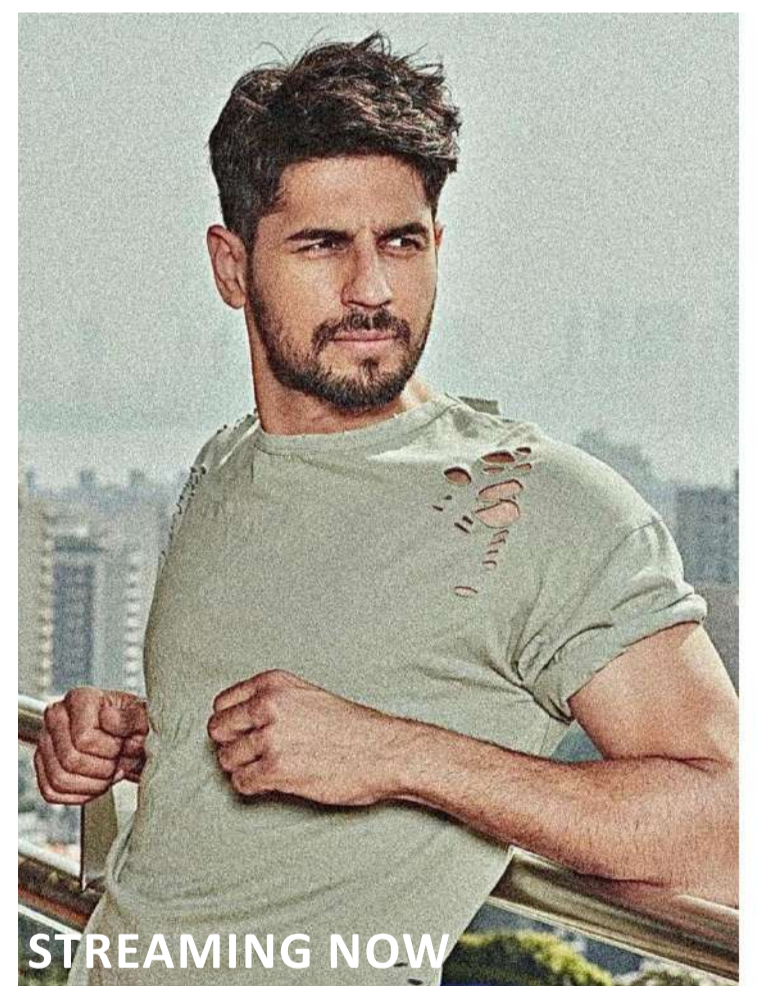
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Hashtag Magazine rounds up the temples of the South Canara belt and their different styles of celebration. Straight from the travellers' mouth – a trip to Ganga Beach Café and the royal charms of Bundi, hidden in the opulent state of Rajasthan.

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From the latest in books and music to exclusive interviews with the biggest names in Bollywood – Ajay Devgn, Sidharth Malhotra and more, it's all in here.

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From the Editor

WHAT'S RIGHT WHAT'S WRONG?



This editorial is very special because I write this sitting here in the middle of nowhere - Spiti Valley with fascinating valleys, windswept landscapes, pristine fast-flowing rivers and the never-ending beauty of nature. As I sit here amidst all this bliss away from the everyday madness, I realised how we spend half our life worrying about what is right and what is wrong. Is this the right job? Am I dating the right guy? Biryani or pizza?

Choices, choices, choices. In between all this decision making, we forget to enjoy the small wonders. Who cares what's right and wrong? Go ahead and do what makes you happy, because at the end of the day, that is all that matters. Besides, there is no right or wrong – just a bunch of perspectives and points of view. Even if you make some bad choices, it's alright. When you look back at life, you will have something to laugh at and know you have lived a life without regret!

Having given my little mountain *gyan* (and more importantly before I lose my signal) let's move on to this issue. The Hashtag team is happy to feature Kriti Sanon, who encompasses all that I have said. A brave go-getter, she has been making great career choices, churning out one unique film after another. In her exclusive, she reveals her motto, one that rings true with this issue – "Sometimes failure teaches you

more than success can ever do."

In this issue, we have featured a lot of people who have chosen to make a difference. We begin with married couple Moulya Amar Nath and Shraavanth Donthi, who launched the app Tankerwala to help you book water tankers on-demand. There's also Sumon and Sanyati, founders of Dorji Shantiniketan and Avipsha Thakur, founder of Bunavat – all who specialise in sustainable and environmentally friendly fashion. Truly, we have a myriad of interviews that are sure to inspire our readers.

With the festive season around the corner, do check out our chef special festive recipes – with a twist and browse through our travel pick on the famous Ganesha temples in Coastal Karnataka, as an ode to the forthcoming Ganesh Chaturthi.

We are also heavy on the glam quotient this September... from gardening hacks to tech picks, yoga and fitness tips from the hot and svelte Shilpa Shetty to exclusive interviews with Siddharth Malhotra and Ajay Devgn, it's all in here. Do enjoy reading our issue and enjoy a safe and happy festival!

SINDURI VUPPALA



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**THE
HAPPINESS
CO**



**DELICIOUS
AND
CRUNCHY**

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2021

Sunburn Festival

Sunburn is well-known as the go-to spot for EDM lovers in the country. The music and dance beachfront concert is considered Asia's largest music festival. The annual event celebrates with amazing music, entertaining performances, lip-smacking cuisine, and other fun amenities. Be a part of this ground-breaking festival and revel in the world of music!

Date: 18 September 2021

Venue: Oxford Golf Resort, Pune

18

Sep 2021



Asia Wedding Fair

29-30
Sep 2021

Explore the elite wedding, clothing & lifestyle event, a one-stop destination for all your wedding retail requirements. Savour in the latest masterpieces made by fashion houses from all over India. Be the first to get your hands on the hottest merchandise.

Date: 29 – 30 September 2021

Venue: Surat Marriot Hotel, Surat, Gujarat

Time: 10 am onwards

Decoupage Art

This art workshop is a comprehensive online class on decoupage techniques. Expert-conducted, the class will show how to make decoupage in real-time, while discussing every single aspect of it as well as offering some tips and techniques to execute it smoothly and effectively. It will be a step-by-step tutorial for transforming a plain paper plate into a lovely bit of interior decorations.

Date: 1 September 2021

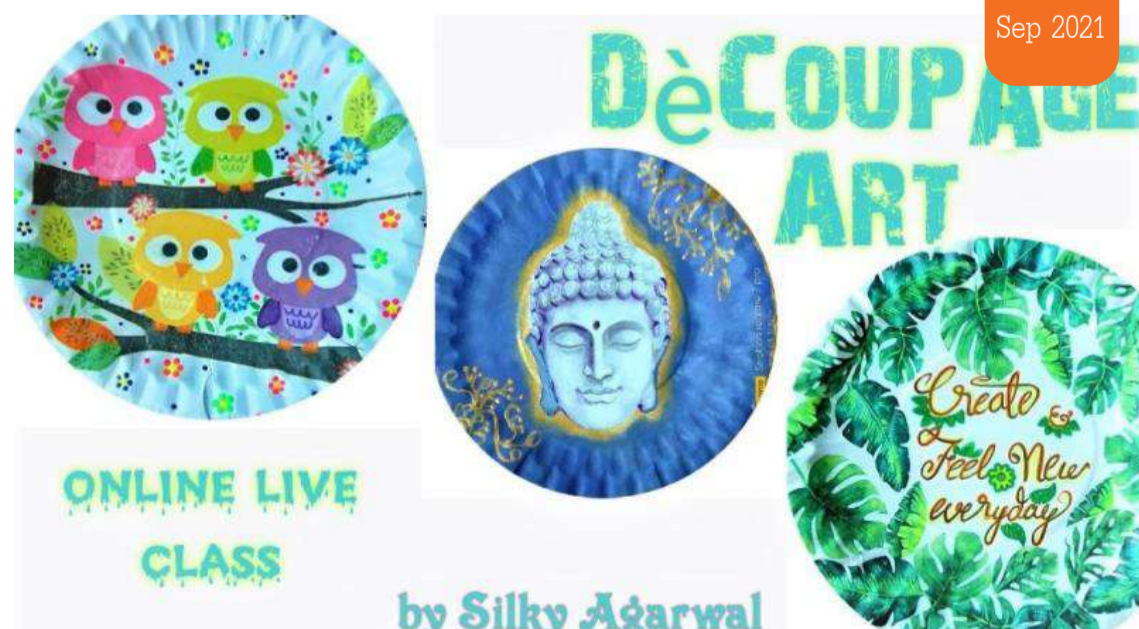
Time: 4 pm

Mode: Online

Fee: 250/-

1

Sep 2021



Aranmula Boat Race



25

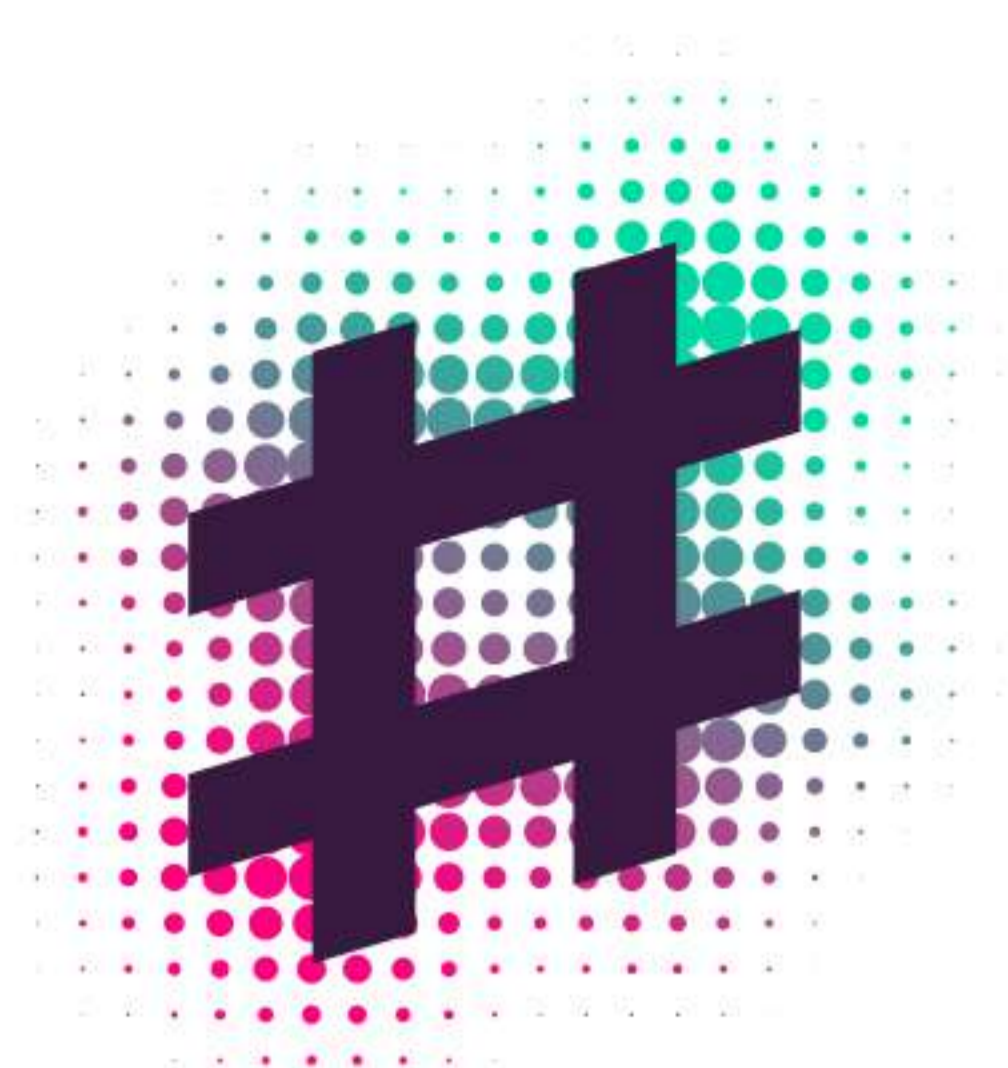
Sep 2021

The Aranmula Temple, located 130 kilometres from Trivandrum, organises the most popular and prominent boat race of marvellous palliyodams. At the event, colourful hardwood sailboats with lengths ranging from 100 to 140 feet may be observed. They are embellished and accessorised attractively with golden lacing at the crown, elaborate banners, and ornate umbrellas in the middle. The race is a visual feast for the eyes.

Date: 25 September 2021

Venue: Pathanamthitta, Kerala

To get your events featured mail us at contact@hashtagmagazine.in



h a s h t a g

TRENDING NOW

TRENDING
NOW

“Sometimes failure teaches you
more than success can ever do”

Kriti Sanon

Mimi has been making waves since its release. The film sets out to stir a conversation within the Indian audience on the still taboo topic of surrogacy. To this extent, KRITI SANON aka Mimi performs with great aplomb. She speaks to LIPIKA VARMA on the challenges of the role and gives us an insight into the ever-transforming industry.



With an early release on Jio Cinema and Netflix, *Mimi* has opened the audience to a much-awaited discourse on often hushed topics such as abortion, surrogacy, and the ethics of parenthood. The film, directed by Laxman Utekar and produced by Dinesh Vijan under his banner Maddock Films, classifies as a comedy-drama owing to how it chooses to approach the topics at hand. The film, which is a remake of the National Award-winning Marathi film *Mala Aai Vhhaychy!*, has led to being dubbed as Kriti Sanon's best performance to date. Learn more about the film and its process in her own words.

On *MIMI*

We see you play the role of a surrogate mother in *Mimi*. What kinds of preparation did this role require of you?

There was a lot of mental as well as physical preparation involved. I had to gain 15 kilos to look the part. Laxman Sir was clear about what he wanted the closeups to look like. I have thankfully been blessed with a strong metabolism, so it's not easy to gain so much weight so quickly. Once I did however, other problems arose. I was not allowed to do yoga or exercise, and the lifestyle change took a toll on me. The character also has a strong emotional journey. To truly get into the spirit of a girl who does not want to be a mother and has extenuating circumstances, I chewed my director's brains for everything, from how she would speak, react, and respond to certain situations. The role made me explore aspects I have never done before. The film is multifaceted; one of the most interesting 'shades' of my character was how she gets angry since I am very different when angry myself. I think by the time we neared the end of filming I had completely leaned into Mimi.

***Mimi* brings up quite a few pertinent questions, especially surrounding the topic of abortion. Why do you think this is so contested?**

The movie is inspired by the Marathi film *Mala Aai Vhhaychay!* and is based on a true incident. About 12 years ago, a foreign couple had come to India to find a surrogate and then left soon after she got pregnant. After that, the laws for surrogacy became much more stringent, and only recently have been revised. The laws should be strict on both the parties where a surrogate mother should not be left mid-way and after the birth, the surrogate mother should also not refuse to hand over her baby. It is a beautiful thing to do, where you hand over your surrogate baby to a couple who cannot have a child of their own, but it is also complicated! Both the parties interested should be protected. I think *Mimi* has a beautiful message to give out. I hope, once people watch the film and go through the character's journey, they understand why she did what she did and end up saying "Oh, she did the right thing!"



I think by the time we neared the end of filming I had completely leaned into Mimi.



**TRENDING
NOW**



With the success of *Luka Chuppi*, you gained recognition as an exuberant comedy actor. *Mimi* also falls within comedy-drama. Do you find yourself establishing a stronger foothold through such roles? What does comedy mean to you?

My favourite genre is a situational comedy. I love how people's reactions change based on the situation. In our everyday situations, there is so much comedy. I love when an intensely emotional situation is shown comically. One moment you're laughing and in the next moment there's a lump in your throat and then with the next scene, you burst into tears. There's so much stress in our lives! So if I can make someone laugh or smile then that's a big thing for me. For me, situational comedy is my favourite! Whether it is *Bareilly Ki Barfi* or *Luka Chuppi*, I feel like there should be humour in some way or another.

How do you look at the success that is fluctuating in an industry like Bollywood where one film does well and another subsequently tanks?

For me, it is very temporary. There's a quote that I abide by: 'Never let the success go into your brain and never let the failure go into your heart'. Success and failure are part of your journey and a part of your life. The one thing you should be consistent about is whether you are growing and evolving from the situation or not. Sometimes failure teaches you more than success can ever do. I want to constantly evolve and grow. I always want to evolve as a better actor and become a better person. With every experience I have gone through, I have learnt something valuable from them.

THE PERILS OF STARDOM

Since you have entered the industry, you have taken your strides carefully. How do you look at stardom and fame?

It means a lot. Since the time I have entered the industry, I have craved for both! First, for people to recognize the work I do. I want to be known as a good actor. I want people to come and tell me that I made them cry or I made them laugh in a particular scene. When you can generate emotions with your work that is the most satisfying thing ever. I want stardom and fame to come along. People love my work, and appreciation in whatever form uplifts me. I feel I have a lot more potential than what has been explored and I will continue to feel that way. I am very ambitious. I am glad, I am in a great phase of my life because I am getting to these diverse roles for which I have always craved. Stardom also comes with a lot of responsibility; you have a lot of power to inspire people and you have a voice where you can motivate people to do better.



***There's a quote that I abide by:
'Never let the success go into your
brain and never let the failure go
into your heart'.***





All the films that I am doing are very different and I feel lucky that I took up all these diverse projects.



Adipurush is a Hindi/Telugu film. Your debut was with Sukumar's Telugu psychological thriller *Nenokkadine*. Will we see you speak in Telegu again?

Yes! I did that film long back. I will be speaking in Telugu in *Adipurush* since it is a bilingual film.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Tell us a little something about your upcoming projects. Where can we see you next?

All the films that I am doing are very different and I feel lucky that I took up all these diverse projects. *Hum Do Hamare Do* is based on a very different concept, a kind of adoption completely contradictory to what is shown in *Mimi*. It is going to be a very warm film, a complete family entertainer. *Bachchan Pandey* is packed in a comedy-drama. The chemistry between Akshay Sir and I is working well for such a meaty role and an interesting script. *Bhediya* will be my first horror-comedy; my look in the film is very different from what people have seen before. Working with Varun after such a long time since *Dilwale* (2015) was fun. I loved working with director Amar Kaushik as well; I love his energy and enthusiasm on the set, and I think he has very young-positive energy on the set which is very infectious.

Adipurush is yet again a unique story and comes with a lot of responsibility. Director Om Raut is technically very sound; he is also an engineer, from what I have got to know! He is very clear with what he wants, his research is on point and his vision is what makes the film stand apart. I have shot for some portions of the film, and it is something shaping to be larger than life. We shot it on Croma with a different world that was created. *Adipurush* is an expensive film. I am working with Prabhas and Saif [Ali Khan]. I will follow up on the upcoming schedules in the coming months.



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THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT



Seva Ahaar



**FREE LUNCH
AT YOUR
DOORSTEP**



Contact us for lunch if you are
COVID positive and in isolation.

WhatsApp



77996 16163

HOW TO ORDER?

SEND YOUR REQUEST ON
THE MENTIONED WHATSAPP
NUMBER WITH THESE DETAILS:

NAME:

LOCATION:

CONTACT NUMBER:

DATE OF ISOLATION/
TESTED POSITIVE:

NO OF PEOPLE:

NUMBER OF DAYS REQUIRED:



TIMING & DETAILS

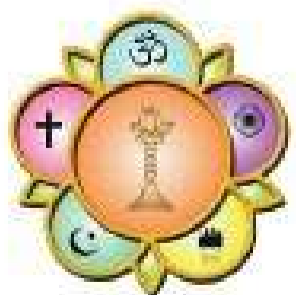
- ONLY LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED
- PLACE YOUR REQUEST BEFORE 7 AM
- REQUESTS RECEIVED AFTER 7 AM SHALL BE CONSIDERED AS NEXT DAY ORDER



Senior citizens and children
in isolation are a priority


**NUTRITION
ADVICE**

**CONCERN
UNLIMITED,
NOT QUANTITY**



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
Telangana

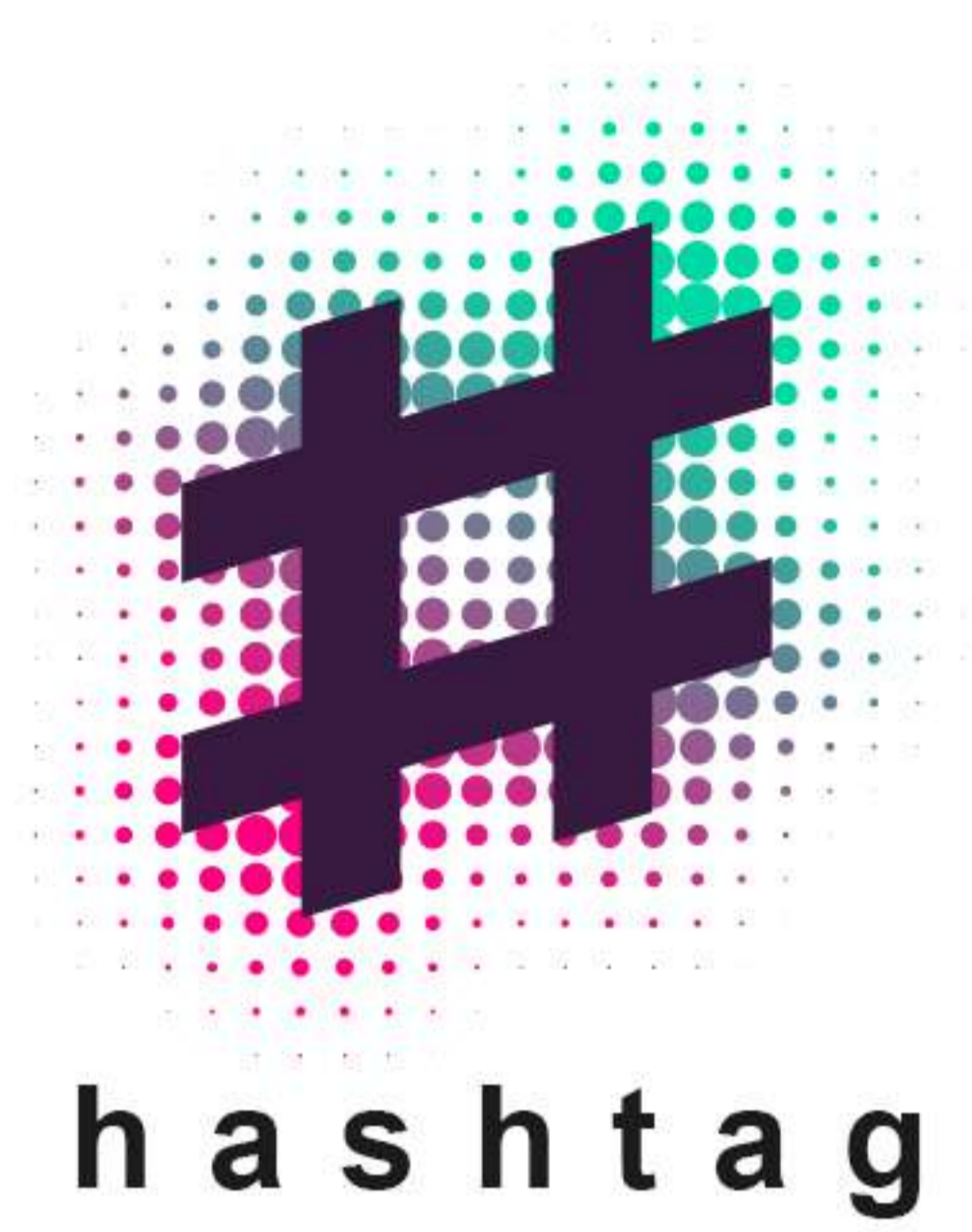


LEAD LIFE
FOUNDATION



HOPE TEAM





START UPS



Global Education Goes Local: Uni2Go

Study abroad programs usually leave us in a tizzy with all their details. Father-daughter duo **NISHIDHAR BORRA** and **RITHIKA REDDY** chose to tackle this through their start-up University2Go. **DIVYA VALLABHANENI** gives us a brief.

With the rise of the capitalist crunch, everyone is eagerly looking for one-stop destinations for most of their interests. One of the hot topics to discuss in these times is the future of students, especially those who wish to study abroad. Understanding the need for and importance of having everything curated on the same platform, one father-daughter duo from Hyderabad decided to launch an app called University2Go that helps students with their admission and university needs.

This app, which is currently in its beta stages, was launched by Nishidhar Borra and Rithika Reddy with the aim of providing all reliable information in one place, helping students who are planning their further education abroad. Nishidhar has been an educational consultant since 2001. Armed with that expertise, he soon began helping his daughter's friends with choosing and counselling on what universities or courses are well suited to them.

Key Features:

- 13000+ courses
- 200+ global universities and institutes
- Application and admission
- Scholarship search and eligibility check
- Counselling support by experts
- Student visa guidance
- Predeparture support

Soon after, Rithika came up with the idea of starting an app for easier communication and clarification, giving birth to the venture that is now University2Go. "One day my daughter suggested that we develop an app that will help students search for any content using different parameters and an app that is trustworthy and most reliable. That's when we started the Uni2Go, a one-stop destination for global education," Nishidhar explained.

Students can search universities, college fees, languages and explore various other queries using the multiple parameters on which the app is designed. They can compare the universities, chat with experienced counsellors, attend mock tests and webinars and various other online events that will help with their process of studying abroad. "We want this platform to be simple and trustworthy. We wanted to help and guide students in the right way. We designed the app to be the easiest platform for them to choose from and go abroad," Nishidhar added, explaining the features and guidelines on which the app is designed.

Out of the many applications, University2Go was selected for the Lab 32 programme at T-Hub and works closely with universities at providing all the information at one's fingertips, sitting at the comfort of one's home. The app also facilitates support for visa applications and allows downloading of a university's prospectus.



Nishidhar Borra and Rithika Reddy

Most innovatively, the app provides sample tests along with their counselling services so students can see which course and university is the right fit for them, especially taking into consideration the student's interest and results. Students can also compare the fees, eligibility and course requirements and make an informed choice based on their interest and advantages. "We want to guide students on which university suits them based on their profiles and be very transparent with this process," Nishidhar elaborates.

Students can also download the applications from the app directly. The duo is aiming for a minimum of 1000+ downloads within the next two months. "We aim to simplify the student application process," Nishidhar concluded.

With Uni2Go you can:

- Compare course and university comparison
- Check eligibility for admissions
- Shortlist for courses
- Connect with university/college counsellor
- Avail video and text chat for support



'Earthware' to the Weary Earth's Rescue



You wish to go on a small trip for a day or two and pack some home-cooked meals. Would you rather pack the meal in a Tupperware and go through the strain of washing it later, or in a disposable single-use plastic container that would harm the environment? If your answer stands is 'neither', Visfortec's 'Earthware' is your saviour!

Founded by Samanvi Bhograj, Visfortec Pvt. Ltd.'s brand Earthware is South India's first and only manufacturer of biodegradable and compostable tableware. Established in 2011, the brand aimed at making single-use biodegradable replacements for plastics using corn-extracts. Developments with research and technology led the company to discovering bagasse and other plant fibres, which they now use to manufacture their tableware. Made of 100% agricultural fibres and raw materials, Earthware products make for the perfect companion in our fight against plastics and environmental degradation. to strike a balance.



With an alarming increase in plastic consumption and environmental degradation, Earthware by Visfortec Pvt. Ltd. is working towards producing renewable and environment-friendly tableware and packaging products. **SAMANVI BHOGRAJ**, in a conversation with **GAURI HUKKERI**, explains her cause and rationale behind the venture.



Samanvi Bhograj

“Having been born and brought up in Bengaluru, I've witnessed the city drastically change from a 'garden city' to 'garbage city'.”

“Over the last 10-15 years, the use of single-use plastics has grown drastically, and it is concerning. Our target was to find a biodegradable and sustainable alternative for these plastics. That is when we came across bagasse and decided to make environment-friendly single-use disposable products,” says Samanvi.

What was born as a biodegradable tableware venture has now progressed to include industrial packaging, such as automotive packaging and electronic pulp packaging. Playing an important role in helping various industries, Earthware uses a mix of agricultural pulps in its packaging to replace the harmful styrofoam substances used in most industrial packaging. The product starts degrading in 60-90 days and decomposes completely by 120 days, thereby increasing renewability.

What led Samanvi to start her business?

Samanvi comes from an industrial background; her grandfather started a steel and automotive business in 1963. Her exposure to this industry led her to question the ways in which waste management is approached in the country.

“Having been born and brought up in Bengaluru, I’ve witnessed the city drastically change from a ‘garden city’ to ‘garbage city’. All of this indirectly leads to climate change and environmental degradation on a broader perspective. That’s when I thought of starting with one industry and targeted the food industry. We have now spread to other industries to help them reduce the use of plastics and other non-biodegradable substances in their packaging,” she explains.

Goods like food and electronic items cannot be delivered without packaging, which is why these industries were identified and targeted first. Earthware also manufactures eco-friendly bags made of jute, cotton and paper, catering to all industries. During these times, when food delivery apps are at their highest peak of business, the use of plastic containers has reinstated the use of one-time plastics. Why not replace them with eco-friendly containers that can be disposed of without any harm to the environment?



“Over the last 10-15 years, the use of single-use plastics has grown drastically.”



Perhaps their most successful innovation to date is the manufacture of single-use tableware like plates, cups, cutlery, bowls, containers for takeaways, straws, and clamshells, all of which are made of plant fibre. In case of industrial packaging Earthware goes a step further and provides customized products to meet the client’s needs.

According to National Geographic, about eight million tons of plastic escapes into the ocean from the coastal nations, every year. That’s the equivalent of setting five garbage bags full of trash on every foot of every coastline around the world.

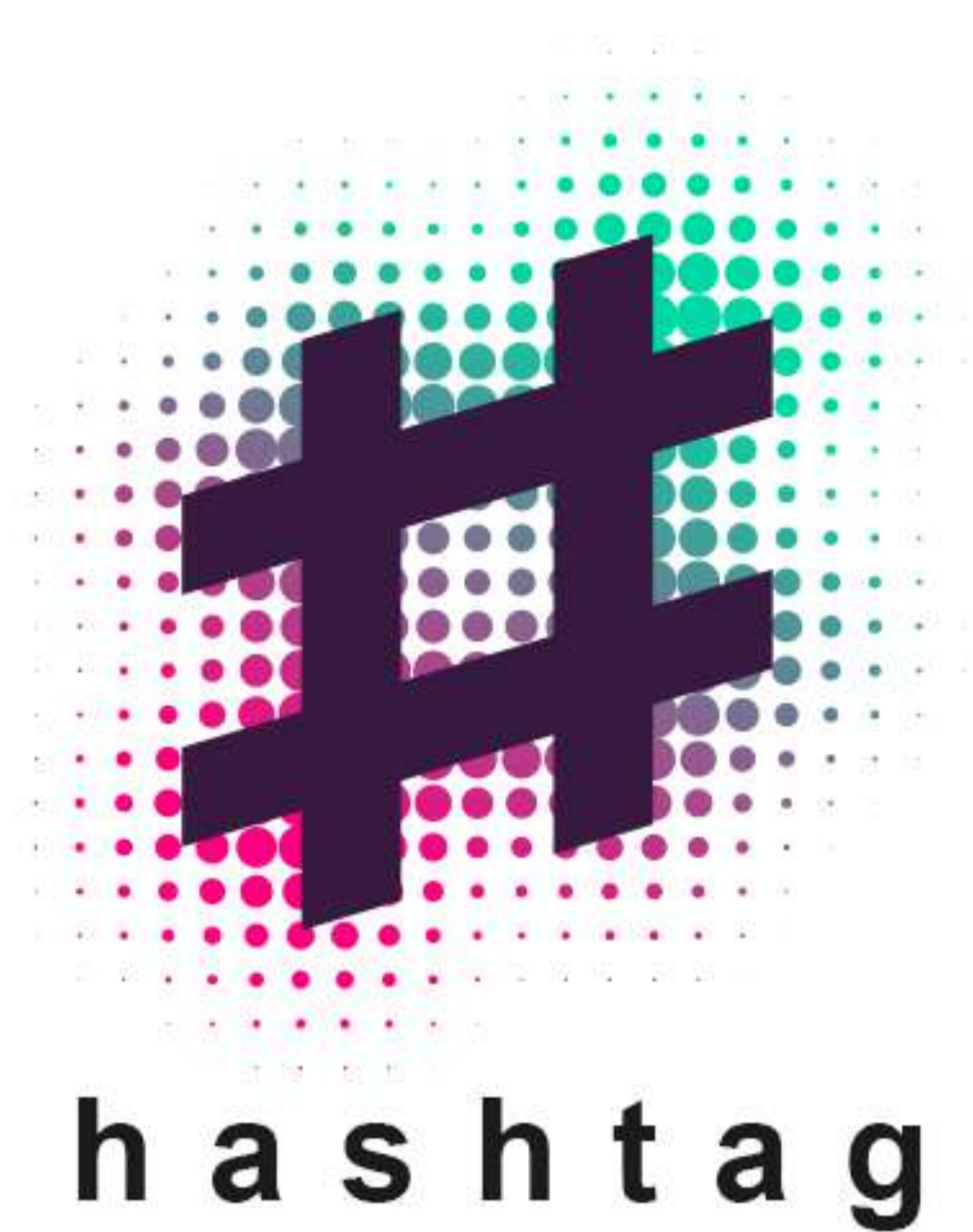
In an era of widespread plastic pollution that’s affecting wildlife, wildlife habitat and humans, it’s important that we do our bit to help save the planet for the coming generations. Visfortec’s Earthware is one among the fewest ventures to work towards turning this realisation into reality.

Instagram: @earthware_products

Shop: <https://www.visfortec.com/products/>

Info: info@earthwareproducts.com





CHANGEMAKERS

Water Wise:

How a Bangalore-based couple is fighting the rising water crisis



Cognizant of the rising crisis of water in Bangalore, husband-wife duo MOULYA AMAR NATH and SHRAVANTH DONTI began Tankerwala to tackle the problem. BINDU GOPAL RAO talks to the couple and brings to us their refreshing perspective.



Moulya Amar Nath and Shраван्थ Donthi

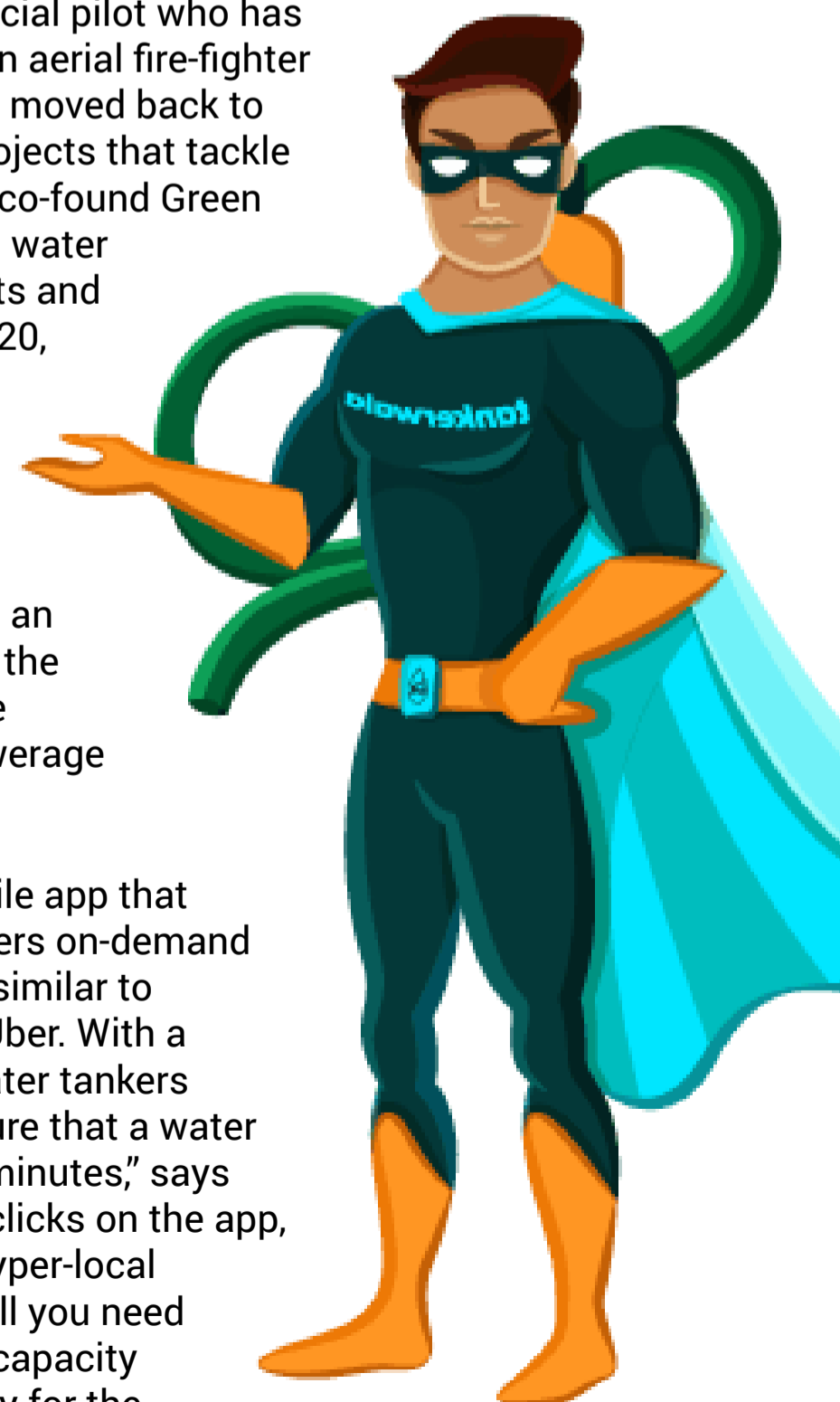
When Moulya Amar Nath and Shраван्थ Donthi were expecting their child, they moved to Moulya's parent's home in Banashankari in South Bangalore. This was an apartment complex with eight flats. The municipality water was not enough for all, leading them to order water from tankers frequently.

This is when they realized that things were not as expected. "We were very upset with the service of getting water on tankers and paranoid about the quality of water we used to bathe our baby. We realized this problem was very evident and widespread across the country. So, we decided to address these problems by starting Tankerwala in December 2020," explained the couple.

"The couple began Tankerwala in December 2020, hoping to create an impact in conserving water."

Moulya Amar Nath holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, following which she began to work on community projects that created a better impact on our society. Her husband Shраван्थ Donthi is a commercial pilot who has worked as a flight instructor, an aerial fire-fighter and a charter pilot. In 2014, he moved back to Bangalore, India to work on projects that tackle water scarcity and went on to co-found Green Lantern Engineering to recycle water using Sewage Treatment Plants and convert waste-to-energy. In 2020, the couple came together to co-found Tankerwala, joining their skills for a better future for all. The company's mentor is Dr Ravi Shankar, who comes with an experience of over 40 years to the board and has been part of the Bangalore Water Supply & Sewerage Board for over 29 years.

Tankerwala is currently a mobile app that allows you to book water tankers on-demand across the city. "It works very similar to cab aggregators like Ola and Uber. With a network of more than 1300 water tankers across Bangalore, we will ensure that a water tanker reaches you within 60 minutes," says Shраван्थ. With three simple clicks on the app, you can place an order for a hyper-local delivery of water on tankers. All you need is to choose location, choose capacity and delivery slot and finally pay for the delivery.



Convenient at your fingertips.

STEP 1
Download the app

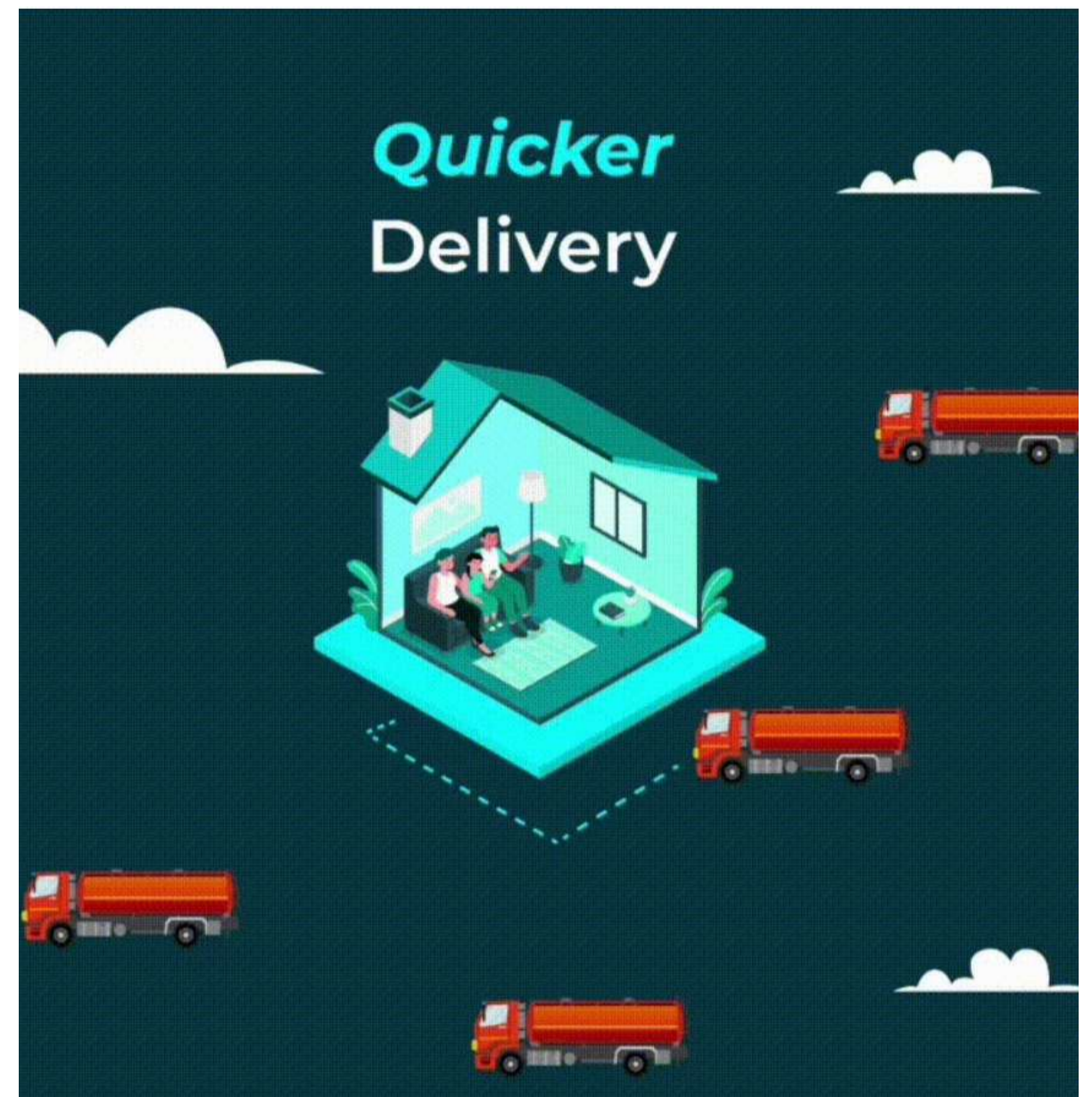
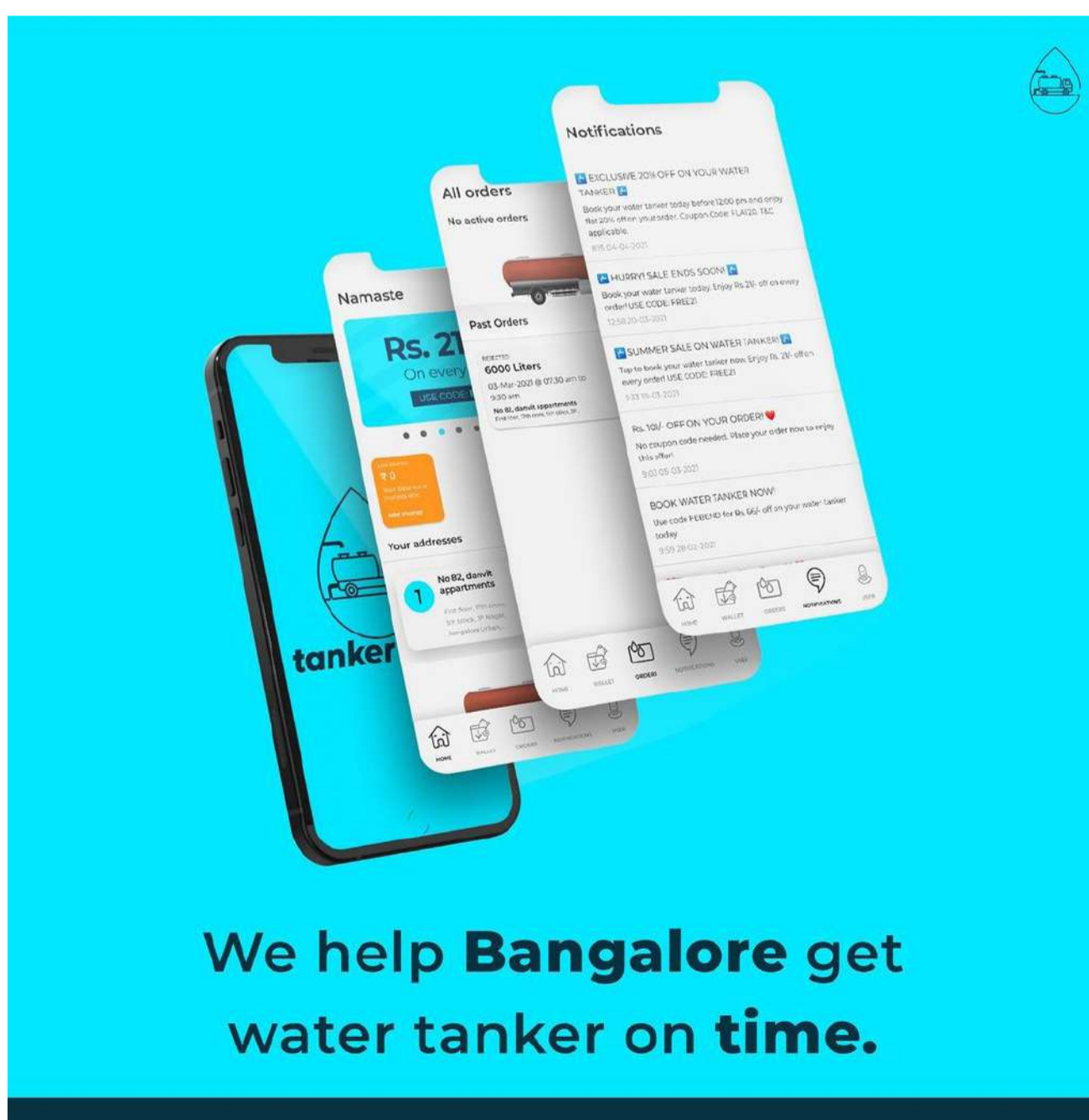
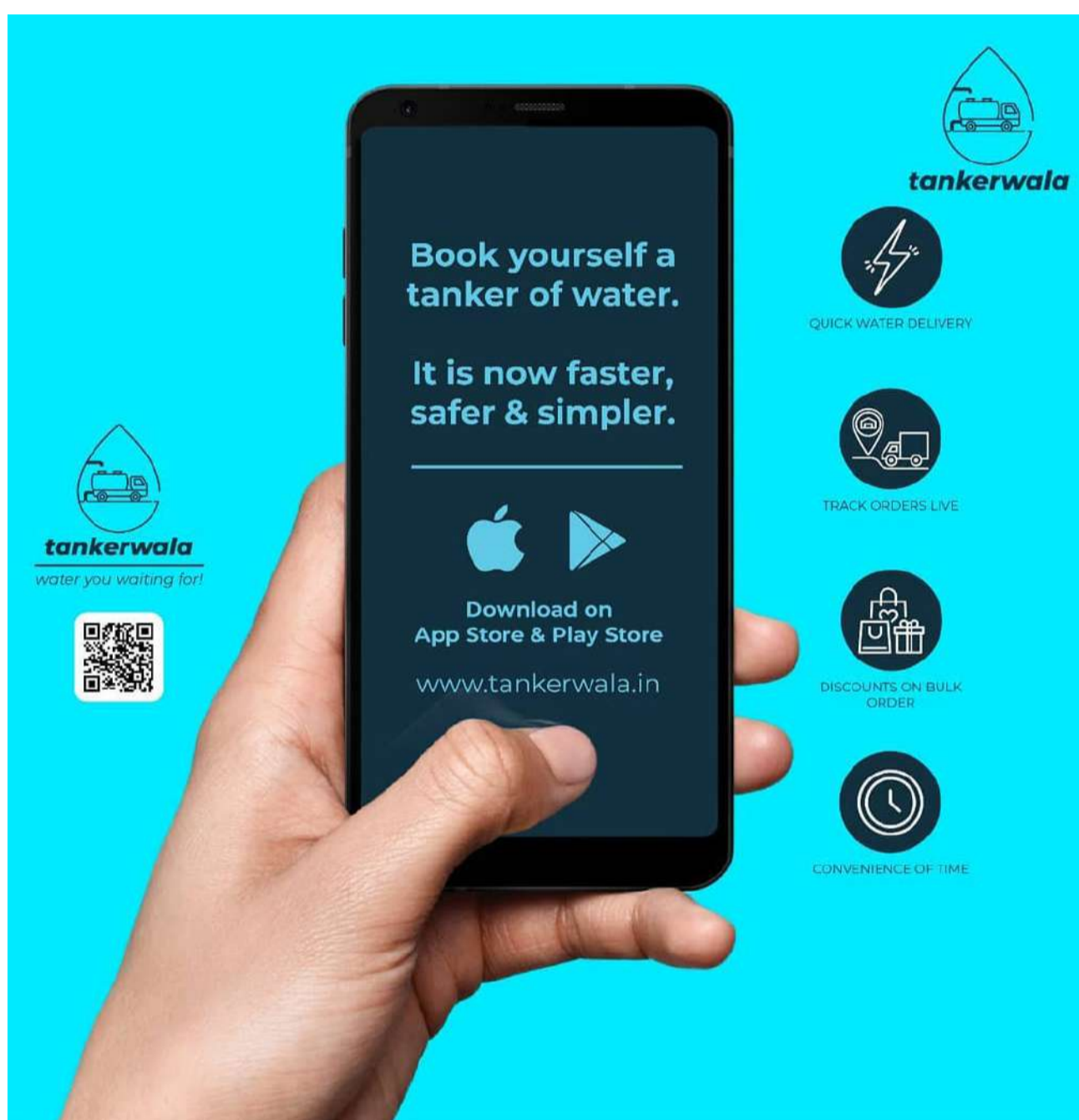
STEP 2
Place an order

STEP 3
You are now sorted!

Keeping in mind the urgent need to reform the water crisis, Tankerwala has also branched out into a second wing of operations, delving into water recycling. “The company has licensed technology for sewage treatment/water reclamation – BioHYBRID™. The company engages in setting up and operating such plants across the country, be it in apartments, offices, schools, hotels and hospitals. The BioHYBRID™ technology is a highly advanced and indigenously developed process with many advantages over the conventional systems in the current market,” says Moulya.

The company currently has access to over 55 million litres of treated water every day and is aiming to transport this water for secondary applications like irrigation and construction using the strong network of water tankers

“The company has licensed technology for sewage treatment/water reclamation – BioHYBRID™.”



Tankerwala is aiming to create a great experience around ordering a water tanker. The mobile app has a live tracking feature to inform the user about the order status. With India’s largest network of tankers, the team maintains quality control by having verified suppliers and periodic water quality testing. Pricing is regulated through geofenced localities/region, maintaining a uniformity in price. They also have a 24x7 customer and supplier support line that ensures there is someone available for any help at any time.

Commenting on their success, Shравanth says, “Moulya and I, both are continuously identifying problems within our environment and trying to make a better way of life. We both read a wide range of books, ranging from *Bhagavad Gita* to *Sapiens* and business focused books like *The Hard Thing About Hard Things*. We derive motivation and inspiration from each other every day and consciously try to be better versions of ourselves.”

“Moulya and I, both are continuously identifying problems within our environment and trying to make a better way of life.”

Tankerwala has plans to expand operations in Chennai, Coimbatore, Mysore, Delhi and Hyderabad in the upcoming years. Tankerwala will soon be delivering recyclable treated water across the city for secondary applications like irrigation and construction. Charting out their future plans, the duo let us know, “This will enable a user to not only buy fresh water, but also have a choice to buy recyclable water. This will create a significant impact in conserving water.”

While water is an important aspect for the environment, here is a start-up that is not just ensuring safe water but is also doing its bit to recycle water and make that accessible.

For details and bookings check out: <https://tankerwala.in/>

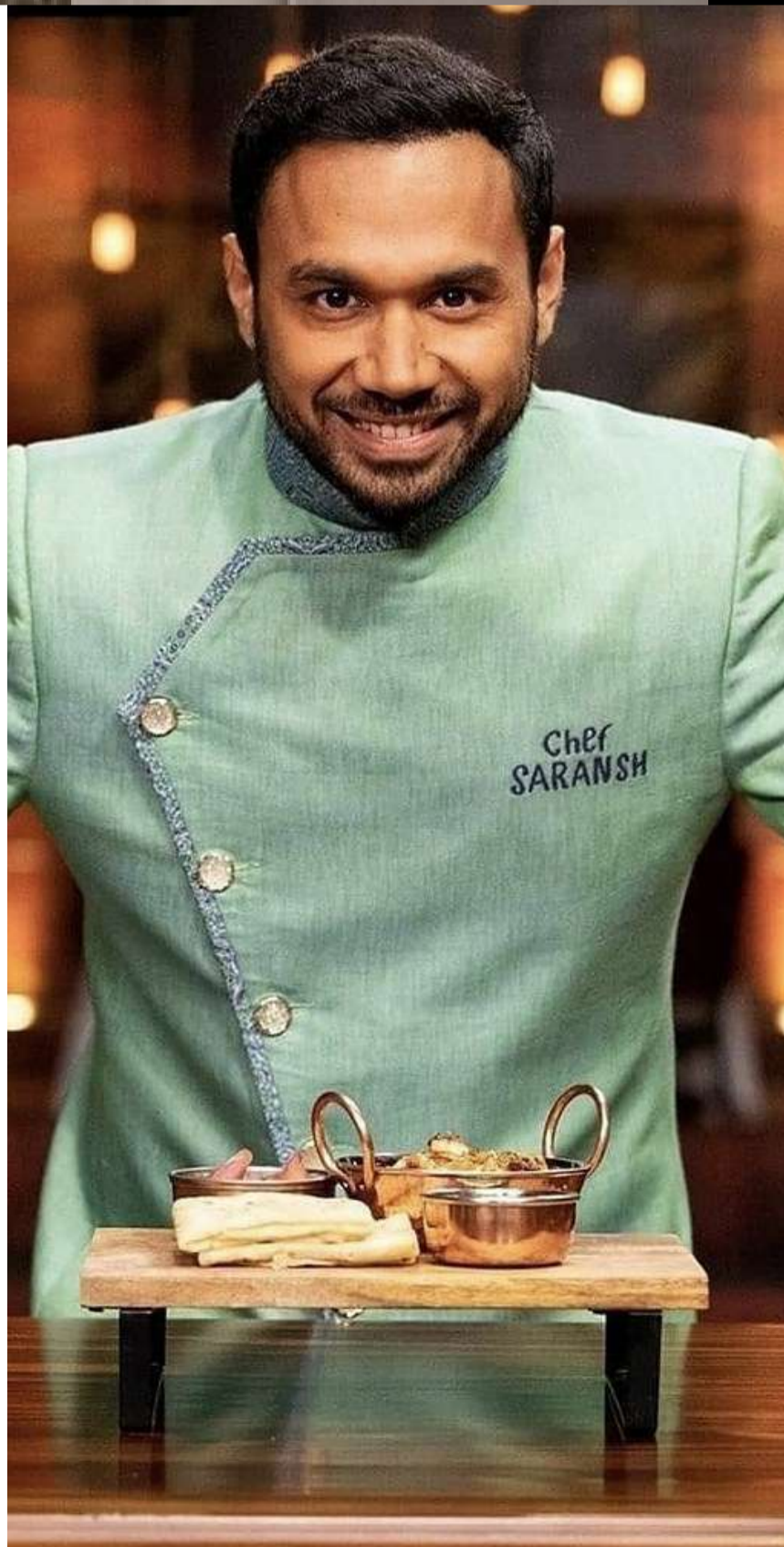


Saransh Goila

Health: home-cooked, home-delivered



Aiming to feed the isolated and quarantined nutritious and healthy food during the second wave of the pandemic, celebrity chef Saransh Goila launched his maiden non-profit venture COVID Meals for India. ADITI PAUL provides a brief.



Register As Service Provider



NEW!



CovidMealsforIndia is enabling verified food NGOs to get donations where you can directly donate them on their websites.

GO TO DONATIONS

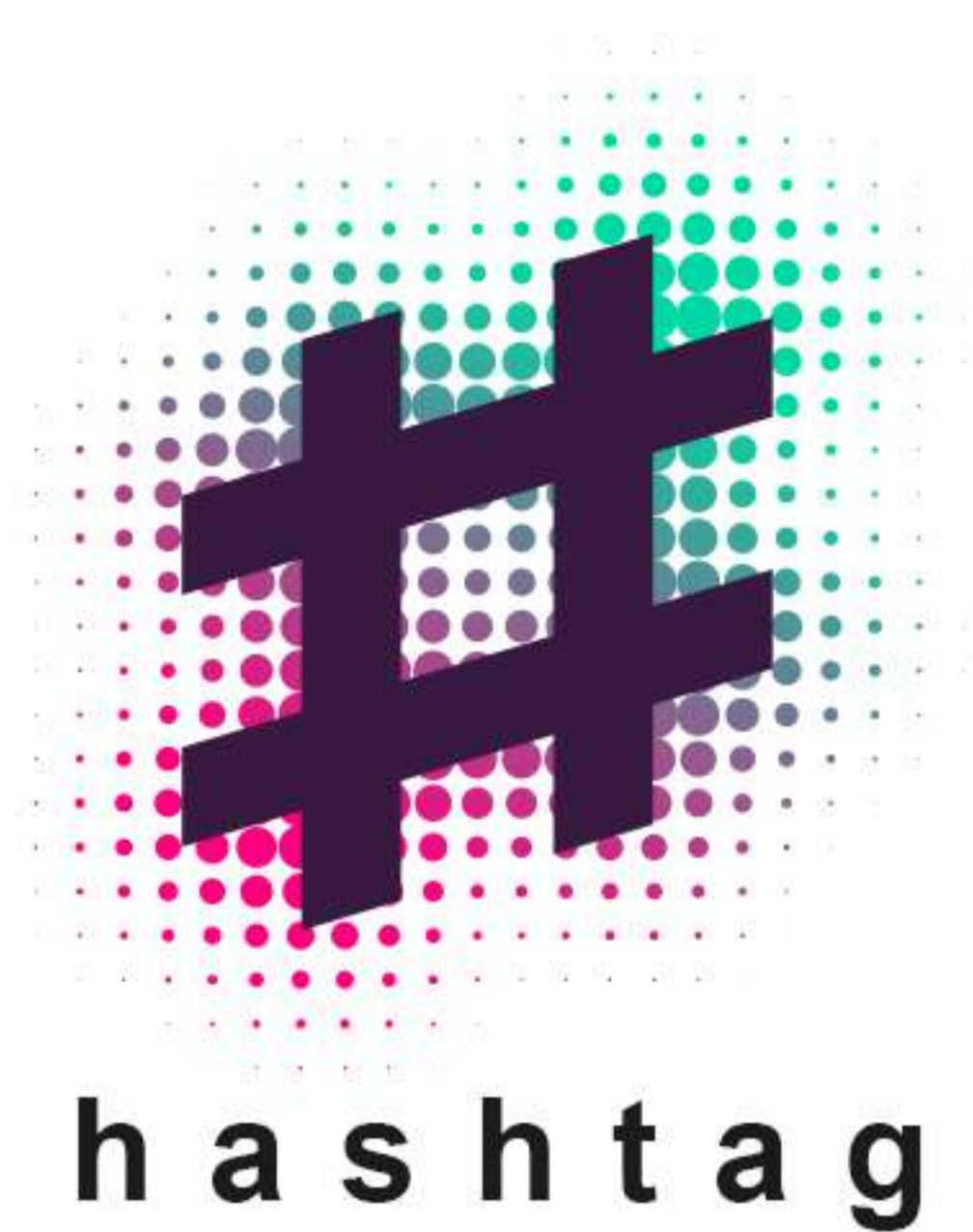
FIND FOOD

Website: <https://covidmealsforindia.com/>

WhatsApp chat: 8882891316

Chef Saransh Goila, known to Indian audiences as the host of the popular show *Roti Rasta aur India*, has recently launched a new venture as part of his COVID relief work. The site, called Covid Meals for India (CMFI), connects over 3000 volunteer home cooks and low-cost catering services with frontline workers and patients. Started in April, the non-profit venture provides easy solutions for healthy, home-cooked meals.

Along with location details, you can also see the days a provider is available for delivery, their contact information, and the delivery agent – whether third-party or direct. You can also elect for free charity food as well as register as a provider yourself. CMFI also has its own WhatsApp chatbot for easier communication. CMFI currently covers 7 union territories, and 25 states, thereby panning across 400 cities in the country. For those looking to help, the site enables remote donations to verified food NGOs working for COVID relief.



NRI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

One Hat, Many Feathers:

The Multifarious Life of Tanvi Chandna

A chartered accountant, an entrepreneur with her own dance studio, an actor, and a model, TANVI CHANDNA wears many hats with elan. In a chat with MALLIK THATIPALLI, the 26-year-old outlines her dreams, plans for the future and much more...



Dancing to her own tune

Having worked with renowned companies like General Electric and KPMG Canada, 26-year-old Tanvi Chandna quit her corporate job last year to pursue her passion for dance and acting. Born and brought up in New Delhi, she moved to Canada in 2013 and has always been a firm believer in following her heart.

From CA to dancer and entrepreneur

"I think it was a dancer who decided to become a CA in order to become a successful entrepreneur," laughs Tanvi and adds, "I started dancing when I was 7 years old and have always wanted to open my own dance school one day. However, I also wanted to study accounting in under-graduation. I strongly believe that education doesn't always have to be directly linked to the profession you end up choosing and I say that because education provides you with a lot more than just a degree that gets you the job."

Having realized her passion for dance, the youngster started her dance school ViDance Studio, a global studio that is travelling across the world, spreading happiness through dance. With her own name making up the studio's title – Vi comes from the last letters of her name – the studio echoes her own spirit, aiming to be a safe space that enables each dancer to truly celebrate their emotions and express themselves through easy and simple steps.



ee

Like any other art form, dance is an expression of oneself.

oo

The founder explains, "Dance is rarely about the steps. Like any other art form, dance is an expression of oneself. Personally, dancing has helped me celebrate my brightest days and survive my darkest ones. Hence, when the pandemic hit, I resorted to dancing to calm down my anxiety."

Thus, the idea behind ViDance was born. During a time when the world seemed to be at its lowest, Tanvi started a movement that would bring people together and spread happiness through dance. With the power of technology, she started a virtual dance school and a year later, she has 500+ students across 12 countries.

She has also created a platform for instructors to come and teach their dance forms to the existing customer base, hence empowering them to be the leaders they always wanted to be. She explains, "ViDance is not just a dance school, it is a community where we empower, educate and celebrate each other."



A desi at heart

Most of the current generation of Indians abroad have no problem in juggling different cultures and the young entrepreneur is no different. She laughs, "You can take Tanvi out of India, but you can definitely not take India out of Tanvi! While Canada has given me a tremendous number of opportunities, I am truly who I am because of where I come from, and I never forget that. From celebrating every festival, to watching the latest movies to creating a Bollywood dance studio, I do it all to make sure I don't lose touch with my roots."



***You can take Tanvi out of India,
but you can definitely not take
India out of Tanvi!***



From India to Canada

Moving to a different country and starting life from scratch is never easy but Tanvi says that Canada has been extremely welcoming from the day she landed. "It is such an inclusive and diverse country that I have never really felt like an immigrant here."

As someone who manages multiple professions, Tanvi explains that "Juggling multiple hats gets easier when you learn how to strategically interlink them." Tanvi shares that she does not separate her learnings and challenges between her professions. Rather, she uses them to her advantage. "Multiple professions give [me] more opportunities to use existing skills and learn new ones. There have been multiple instances where I have used my CPA hat, i.e., my analytical skills, in my acting auditions. At numerous occasions, I have applied my learnings from my acting career, i.e., patience and resilience, in my entrepreneurial journey with ViDance," she states.



Juggling multiple hats gets easier when you learn how to strategically interlink them.



An actor, script writer and director

Tanvi started training as an actor three years ago with Brad Milne in Toronto, Canada. As an actor, she has done multiple commercials with brands like AirMiles, DoorDash and Subaru. "I believe as an actor, it is your responsibility to holistically explore this industry. There is so much that happens before and after you audition for a role, and it really helps to learn how the script is written or why a director wants a certain scene to be shot a certain way," she shares.

Last year she motivated herself to take up script writing and consequently wrote, shot, and directed two short films with actor Sparsh Rana, which were released on her YouTube channel Spartan. While *Pehli Baar* is a romantic comedy, that talks about two individuals discovering true love over a Zoom call, *Rooh* is a horror-comedy.



Creativity as a forte

How does someone so creatively gifted wind down? Tanvi confesses that art helps her to express herself. "It gives me a platform where I can truly be in touch with myself. It helps me talk and write about things that I wouldn't be able to otherwise. It helps me create a reality that feels like a dream," she shares.

For someone who is starting out into her journey as a multi-faceted performer, the sky is the limit for Tanvi. This is aptly illustrated in her future plans which includes working on a new educational training program for dancers who plan to start their own dance studio. On the acting front, she is currently filming for a feature film and is also writing a script that she is planning to pitch to OTT platforms by the end of 2022.



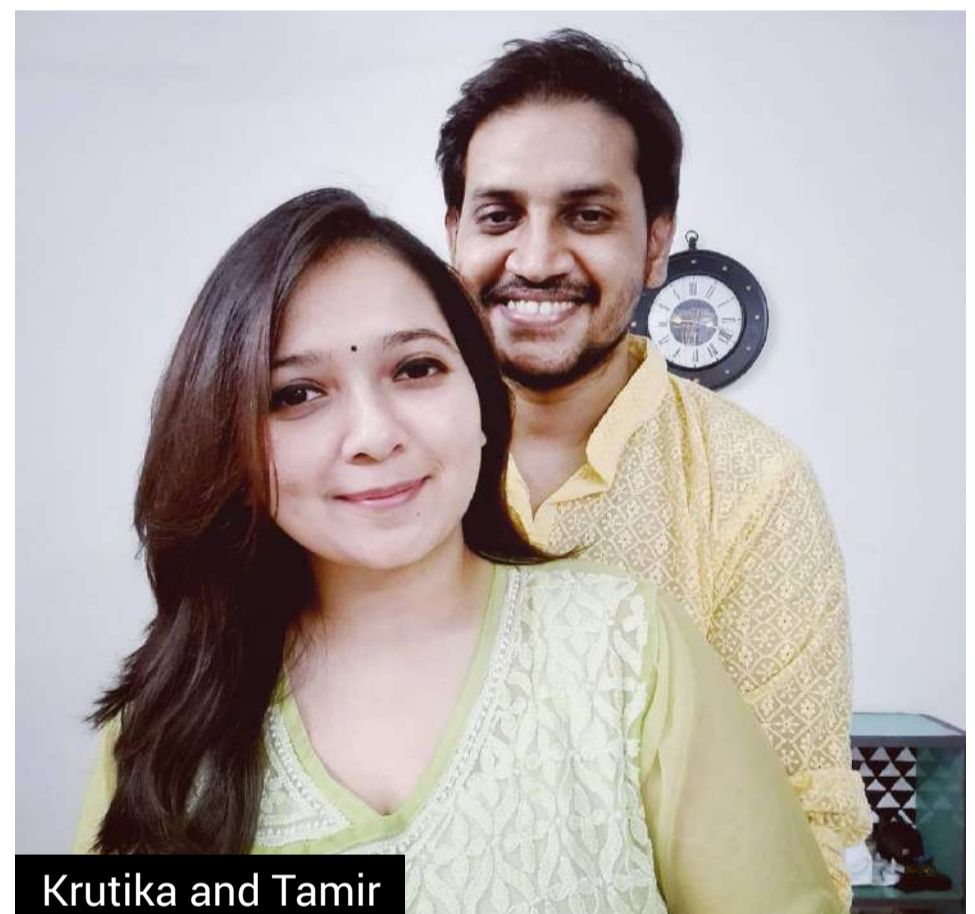
DUSK TO DAWN

Singing ACROSS BOUNDARIES

She is a trained classical musician. He is self-taught. Their love story made national headlines only because they practise different religions. She is the yin to his yang. MALLIK THATIPALLI catches up with KRUTIKA and TAMIR of the band Interfaith to understand their love story and music...

Krutika Lele and her husband Tamir Khan are the quintessential modern-day couple. Talk to them for twenty minutes and you feel that you know them forever. Like most people in the country who opt for a love marriage, they had an uphill task convincing their parents but, in their case, it was because they hailed from two different religions and not two different communities.

India of today is stuck in the same rigmarole of religion and that the youngsters are hailed as a poster couple for interfaith marriages shows how far the country has been polarised. They have been hounded on social media and criticised at every stage but once you speak to the couple, you realise that they are just like two different halves of a circle, each completing the other.



Krutika and Tamir

Jab they met



The couple met in 2015 when a common friend introduced them owing to both their interest in music. Krutika recalls, "I just started my account on Instagram and wasn't very proficient on it. I used to message Tamir and used to call him 'sir'. Tamir being Tamir put me at ease and insisted on me calling him by his name. I'm very camera shy and used to put up my videos with no visuals. He encouraged me to put a face to my music."

As they started conversing, they realised that they shared common interests and started dating soon after. Tamir adds, "Our conversation was very easy going and we built on our love for music. It just seemed right." His partner adds that within two days of their speaking she knew that he was the right person for her.

The couple were based in Pune and used to meet frequently for breakfast, as it was the only time they could take out for themselves owing to their careers. Krutika shares, "I'm not even a breakfast person but there we were day after day, me having coffee and him with his eggs. We have been on the same page since we met."

ee

Our conversation was very easy going and we built on our love for music. It just seemed right.

oo

Getting hitched



After almost four years of dating, the couple got hitched in 2018. The biggest challenge was to convince Krutika's parents who were initially opposed to the marriage. While Tamir's parents took to Krutika the instant they met her, it took a while for her parents to get onboard.

Tamir reminisces, "It took a lot of time. My family met Krutika and were fine and happy. Her parents didn't meet me and there were a lot of differences,

religion being a major one. It took us over a year of calling them each day and convincing them."

Krutika adds that back then she didn't think of anything else except the fact that the parents didn't agree, and the guy had to convince them. Now in hindsight she adds, "I just feel very bad that he needed to justify that he was a good person just because he was from a different religion. It was very unfair, but we did what we had to do to get married."

ee

I just feel very bad that he needed to justify that he was a good person just because he was from a different religion. It was very unfair, but we did what we had to do to get married.

oo



The fight for love



As the idea of love jihad raises its ugly head and even love is politicised, where couples are arrested for marrying out of faith, was it a difficult thing to do? Tamir says that they didn't take it so seriously and explains, "You cannot get into the political reasons behind concepts like

love jihad. I don't take it too seriously. If the family is standing with you, then it doesn't matter. In the hinterland I agree it might take on a different connotation. However, if the girl's family is not convinced and ten other people

join them, it becomes very difficult. However, we were clear that we wanted to convince our families and only then go ahead."

Krutika admits that it was a difficult time. "You read the news and see how these things are blown out of proportion. I feel blessed that my family has come around. I feel disgusted though that in 2021, we are facing the same issue as fifty years back. Love is love and marriage is marriage for everyone," she states

A big support was that Tamir's parents were onboard and had no qualms for the marriage. He recalls his mother asking them to be thankful as they had only one set of parents to convince! "The only thing she asked me was not to embarrass them in any way. She advised us to focus on the similarity of our middle-class backgrounds and interests while having an open conversation with Krutika's parents."

Like any other two people the duo have their own differences. She is a vegetarian and he loves non-vegetarian food. They celebrate all festivals together (including Christmas) and though not very religious, they keep their faith personal as it should be.

Working together



Along with being a married couple, they are musicians who sing together. While Krutika has been a passionate and trained Hindustani musician, music was a late entrant in Tamir's life (in college) but became a mainstay very soon. Krutika who works with MTV says that it was during the lockdown last year that they realised that music was going to be their focus which led to Tamir quitting his job so that he can pursue music full time.

The name of their band Interfaith, pays homage to their beliefs and was proposed by Tamir in the middle of a traffic jam in Mumbai. Krutika laughs, "When he told me that he found a killer name and shared it, I was like, people have only just stopped harassing us on social media, do we need this?"



When he told me that he found a killer name and shared it, I was like, people have only just stopped harassing us on social media, do we need this?



Tamir says that the name was always in his mind: as it was a reflection of their journeys. "I felt that the name had become a taboo and wanted to break free of it," he states and adds, "She is from the *kirana gharana* and I learnt music on my own. Our music meets midway just like our marriage, so it felt apt."

The couple whose tastes are different but sing as one, focus on a wide repertoire. From originals to covers they sing across genres, and their current focus is to work more on their original songs and release them soon!



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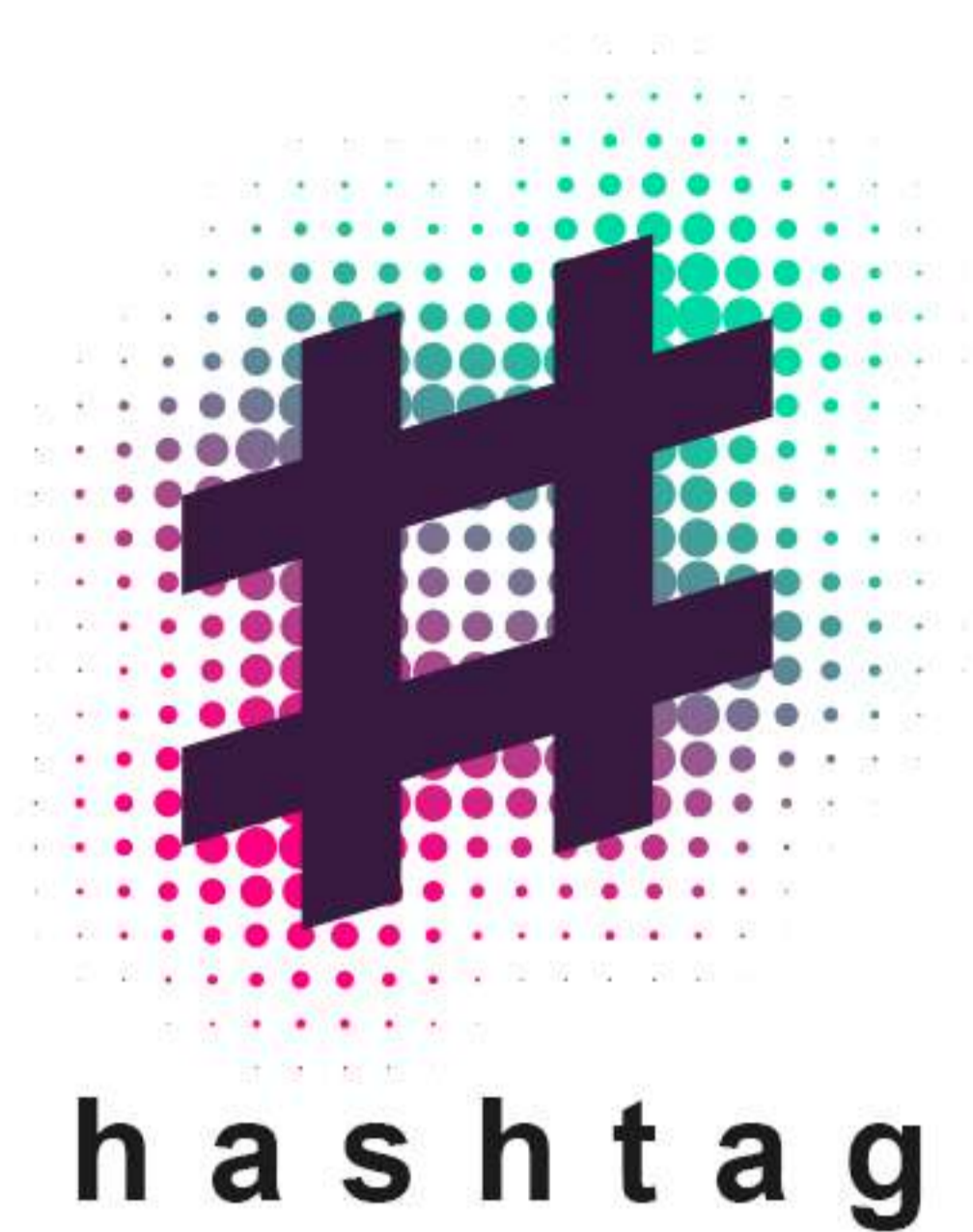
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RETAIL THERAPY



The use of traditionally made baskets has long since left modern Indian kitchens, now populated with silicone and plastic products. Poonam Sheth's brand Daroonjinish is working hard to keep this craft from slipping through the cracks. Ketki Gadre finds out more.

Reviving Ancient Crafts: Basket Weaving

On one of her trips to rural West Bengal, Poonam Sheth came across a community who were busy preparing mats and baskets. A heart-to-heart conversation later, she knew she had to help the artisans market their products better. While the craft of basket weaving has existed throughout the Indian subcontinent as a form of livelihood for the ethnic communities for generations, there have been few takers over the years. Daroonjinish aims to reform the products to suit the taste of modern customers while keeping the vitality of the craft alive. The brand's name is actually a Bengali term for 'wonderful things', which describes perfectly the qualities of their products – sustainable, cruelty-free and vegan.

How Are They Made

Quietly growing in the forest fringes of West Bengal, the Sabai grass is now part of a global artisanal revolution. This humble grass serves as the raw material for the vast range of products by Daroonjinish. The process is a long yet fruitful one. The grass is harvested in the months of September and October, then sun-dried and stored in bundles. These bundles are then dyed and sun-dried again. The dyed grass is now used to make ropes by twisting the stalks in patterns. Artisans hand-braid the grass to make different patterns and the products start taking a shape here. A vast variety of products such as baskets, mats, table runners, planters and coasters are made.



Benefits of Sabai products

- Sabai grass made baskets and mats are good for serving dry food, such as fruit and roti.
- Mats and table runners are good insulators for hot vessels or plates and even serve as the base of planters and candles.
- Bags, purses, and totes can store electronics well, allowing a good flow of air.
- All products are recyclable and chemical-friendly, making for great gift options.

Brand Impact and Edge

The team at Daroonjinish understands and acknowledges the knowledge local craftsmen and artisans have in relation to the raw materials used. As such, products are designed as a collaborative endeavour with the artisans in question. With their help, the Sabai grass is well utilised, and products are designed keeping in mind utility as well as style fit for the modern consumer. Ultimately, the team at Daroonjinish aims to make this craft diverse while giving it an edge over traditional designs. Prices for products are settled to ensure fair pay to all artisans and craftsmen, without a hike in selling price for the customer. The brand is able to build a loyal base of workers and customers through their ethical practices. This can be seen in the impact the brand has had in various parts of West Bengal, participating in boosting in the overall economy and by incorporating women in their workforce. The products have been hailed internationally, with Daroonjinish now shipping to Australia and Germany alongside India.

Shop at: - <https://www.daroonjinish.shop/>

For queries: contact@daroonjinish.shop.

Ode to ORGANIC

Wildermart, a brand-new startup is changing the narrative around organic and clean living by providing a platform for green products. **Bindu Gopal Rao** discovers more



Wildermart may seem like a simple online grocery store where you browse products, pick what you like, pay and checkout. Having launched in April 2021 during this pandemic, they provide same day delivery. However, all the products they list are not found in the marketplace and not every brand who wants to list will find a spot, as they are specifically curated.

Juggling different roles

Shweta Thakur, co-founder and CEO grew up in Patna and completed her higher education in Statistics at LSR, Delhi and an MBA in Marketing and Strategy at XLRI Jamshedpur. "After that I worked in corporate banking at HSBC in Mumbai from 2007 - 11. When I moved to Bengaluru in 2011, I decided to quit my corporate job to set up a creative agency. I have been the creative director and co-founder there till now," says Thakur. It was around 6-7 years back when Shweta started becoming increasingly conscious of her environmental footprint. "I went vegan four and a half years back and have been continuously figuring out how I can personally consume less, and consume consciously," says Thakur.



Shweta Thakur & Swaroop Mohan

Wilderfest was the first vegan fest in Bengaluru and the first multi-city vegan fest in India in 2017, running on the model of a flea market taking conscious products to consumers. "However, we realised that the impact and scale isn't up to the mark. Hence, we started contemplating the idea of a store. That underwent many iterations right from January 2020. And it just so happened that when we finally decided to launch, it happened in the middle of the second wave of COVID-19," says Swaroop Mohan, co-founder.

"Change happens when we choose to spend our money on products and businesses which are more responsible."





Vegan Vibes

What makes the platform different is that any product must be 100% vegan to be listed. For organic staples, vegetables and fruits, the platform has only certified organic farmers whose organic certification is checked, along with the quality before they come on board. "Personal and home care products have to be natural and chemical-free. For packaged foods, products need to be clean and preservative-free. We read the labels and ingredients before listing the products. We also have a list of banned ingredients. Our aim is to get to an 80% local sourcing model. We are close enough right now. Most importantly, our curation has two pegs—is this product good for our health and is this product good for the environment. Only products which qualify those criteria go through to our taste and sampling tests," says Thakur.

Clean Business

Other than the health and sustainability angle, what sets Wildermart apart as a business is their supply chain and business practices. "We aim to be a clean business. We are slowly putting in measures to ensure our own footprint is less, our business practices are fair to all stakeholders. We are determined to change the ecosystem for good," says Mohan. And while one of the biggest roadblocks has been about the carbon footprint of delivery and plastic packaging, they have made a conscious effort to mitigate this issue. "We chose to do bamboo paper-based packaging for all our staples. This paper is then lined with a food-grade lining for safety. The entire bag is 100% compostable and does not depend on wood. We do not use any plastic in our veggies also barring the cling film for which we are finding a solution. Our veggies come to you in one cloth bag - just like how you would go and shop yourself. We are also intending to work with our vendors to see where and how we can reduce plastic and carbon footprint in the supply chain," says Thakur. The delivery happens on e-vehicles and electric delivery vans.

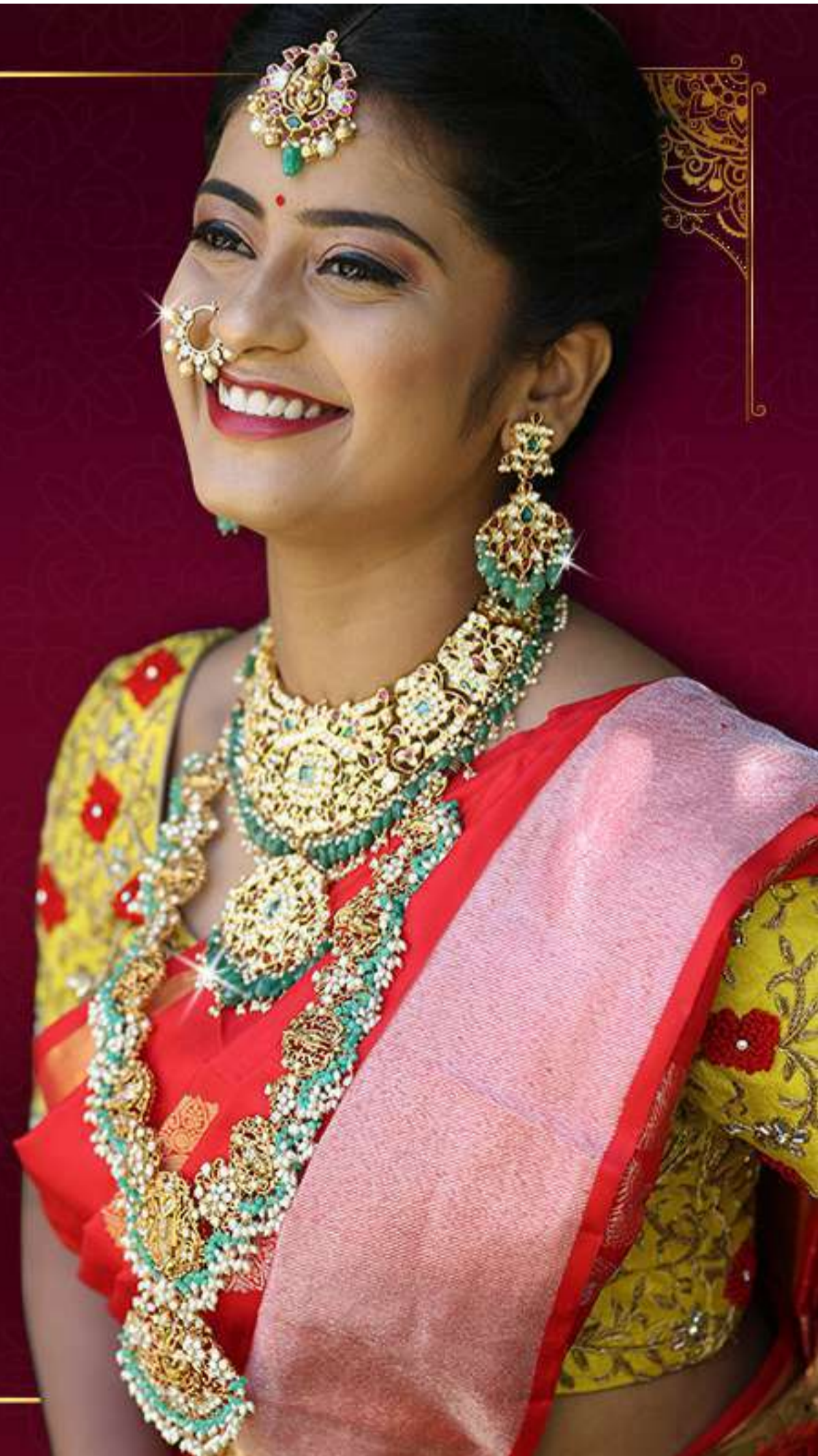
Entrepreneurial Talk

For both co-founders and the core team, the desire to leave a positive impact in their lifetimes is what motivates them. "We want to be able to make a difference with our time here. Climate change is one of the biggest problems facing our planet and if we can be the problem, can some of us be the solution? We want scale. The economics of this change motivates us," say the duo. Currently the team is focused on reaching groceries safely to consumers who are locked in at home. Looking ahead, they are innovating on the tech and operations front to make things cleaner and more efficient.



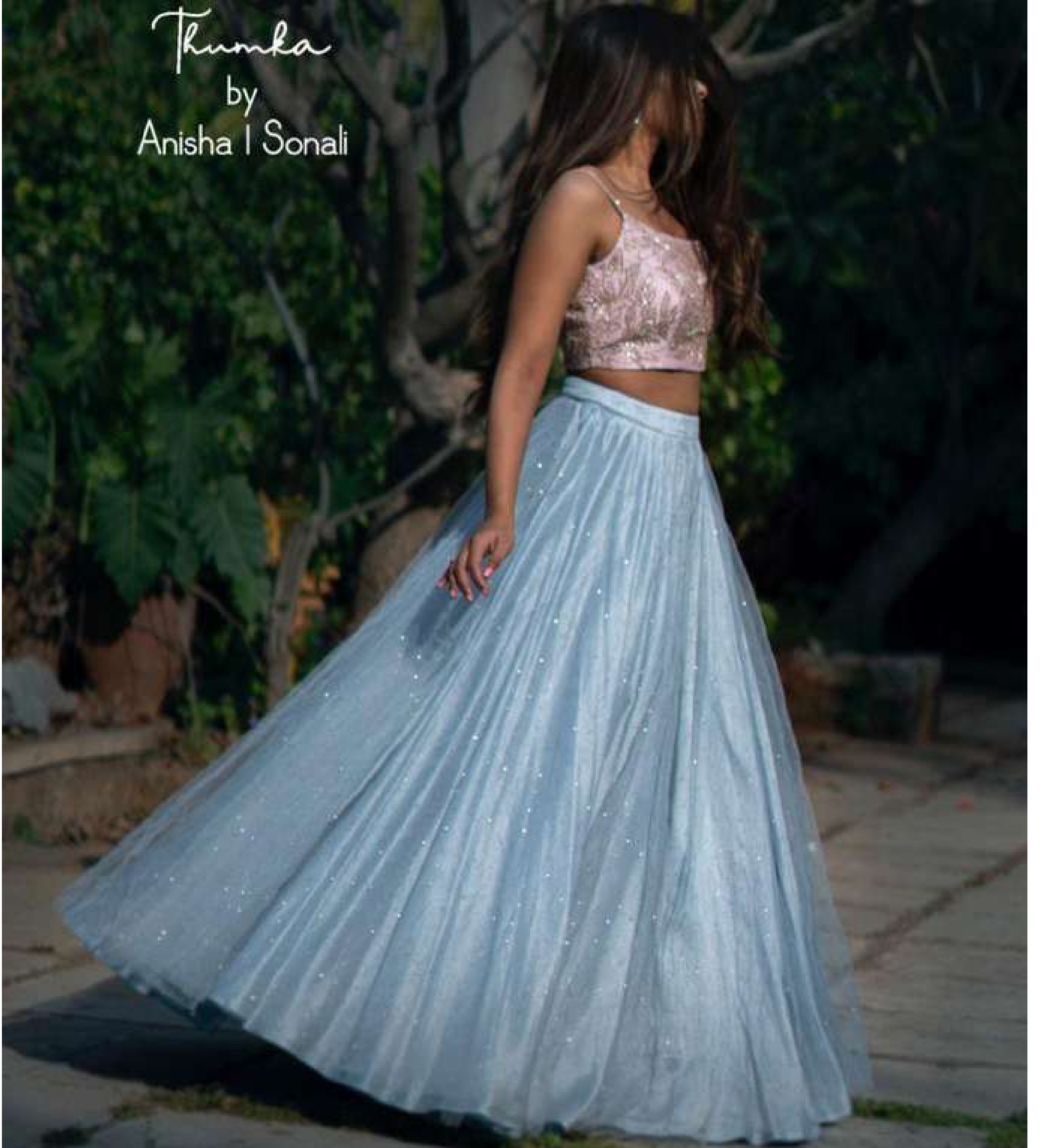
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FASHION FORWARD

SUSTAINABILITY AND FASHION, AN ODE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Priyasmita Dutta in conversation with sustainable fashion brands **Bunavat** and **Dorji Shantiniketan**, who curate garments that are consciously produced, woven by remote weavers and artisans, altogether ensuring authentic products with minimum waste.

India has had a rich history of textiles and weaving that can be traced back to Vedas. With the onset of globalisation, there has been a boost in technological advancement and global investment for major sectors of the industry. The subsequent influx of power looms led to a massive change in the handloom industry.

In conjunction is the fast fashion industry, which thrives on underpaid workers and leaves a huge trail of ecological dump that can no longer be overlooked. However, there still exists a ray of hope. The rise of sustainable fashion has led to an active discourse around conscious clothing. For many, it is a lifestyle to empower homegrown products and not engage in overconsumption to help maintain an ecological balance. We learn more from Sumon and Sanyati, founders of **Dorji Shantiniketan** and Avipsha Thakur, founder of **Bunavat**, about how such labels make a difference.

DORJI SHANTINIKETAN

Why was it essential to open conversations about sustainable clothing?

In India the consumption of fabric is high. We gift fabrics as part of our culture. The higher the production, the greater the waste chemical colours that are poured into our lands and rivers. Textiles also use a lot of water for production. It is important now more than ever to talk about how clothes shopping is directly affecting the environment.

Do you see sustainable fashion having a scope for growth in India?

Most of our customers buy our stuff not only because of their trendy looks and prettiness but also because of our stand for the environment. Often, we show them our process; some environmental influencers share our stories not because we pay them, but because they support our cause, and this process makes us friends too. So yes, it's growing big in India.

What are the ways to increase the reach of remote artisans and weavers both financially and creatively?

There was a gap between the maker and the consumer in the classical system, where people buy from sellers, not makers. In today's world, it's not very difficult to show your artists to people. It makes the process very transparent and encourages the artists as well as opens new avenues for them. At Dorji Shantiniketan, we don't hide our artists. They are independent and work with clients apart from us. We find this practice as boosting confidence and trust and it doesn't affect our business graph.





Sumon and Sanyati

Founders: Sumon and Sanyati

Where: Shantinektan. West Bengal

Aims: Gender Equality, Organic Work, Exquisite Designs

Highlights: Natural Dyeing Studio and Upcycling initiative @dorjiupcycle

IG: @dorji.shantiniketan

Website: <https://dorjishantiniketan.business.site/>

What are your favourite pattern(s) to work with?

We are from Bengal, and we are mostly exploring our traditional patterns and philosophy. Tagore introduced Batik in Bengal which he saw in the Indonesian subcontinent. There is also “jamdani”. India had a very rich tradition of weaving and Bengal has many patterns to offer. We also delve into Southeast Asian and Japanese designs for inspiration – there are a lot of similarities in culture and textile. Our patterns range from Bengal right to the far East!



**We collect
colours from
nature and
dye yarns with it.**

Organic ingredients for natural dyes

BUNAVAT

Do the consumers interested in sustainable clothing fully understand the nuances of something so intricately curated?

The aspects of sustainability from farm to produce are still not fully understood by most. Sometimes even the difference between handwoven and handcrafted is not clear. This is true for both consumers and sellers. There is a lot of misinformation online. However, owing to the rise of the Fashion Revolution many are now trying to ask the right questions to brands and want more information to make mindful purchases. Recycling and upcycling are also gaining fast attention. While there is still a long way to go, the journey has surely begun for many.

Remote weavers often don't have enough financial resources. How do organizations like Bunavat empower them?

At Bunavat our efforts have always been on telling the story of the weaver and the community that makes the products so that customers can connect better and take more pride in handmade clothing. The supply chain in the case of most handwoven/handcrafted products is extremely long – in between the weavers/artisans and the end consumers there are master weavers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers and sometimes even resellers. The amount that usually reaches the individual weaver/artisan is thus often meagre. Many organizations today are cutting out the middlemen and directly bridging the gap between the weaver/artisan and consumer, including Bunavat. We have a travelogue on our website, called 'Kathik' that gives a peek into our weaving communities. We also try to get our weavers/artisans on live sessions where they share their journeys.





What are the methods that you have incorporated to increase their reach both financially and creatively?

The pandemic has resulted in cancelled orders and stalled exhibitions, with weavers and artisans now having loads of unsold inventory and no access to the market. With markets (both B2C and B2B) moving online, weavers and artisans must have a digital presence to reach retailers online who can procure their products. At Bunavat, we conducted a digital skilling and photography training program with young weavers of Maheshwar in February 2020 and realised the success of the program during the pandemic when these weavers continued to sell their products successfully online. In April 2021 we deployed another program with the same set of weavers through online mediums helping them with the next steps like creating lookbooks, creative posters, international shipments, etc. and this has helped them increase sales by at least 15%. Further, for elderly weavers in Maheshwar, we have conducted programs on colour inspiration and motivation to help them excel in their work. We are committed to our communities and their holistic development is at the core of our work. We hope to replicate this across our other communities soon



Founder Avipsha Thakur

What are some of your favourite patterns or weaves?

As a team, we started our journey with the Ajrakh block print cluster in 2018 and hence Ajrakh remains a forever favourite craft form for us. Ajrakh has a shared cultural heritage owing to its presence in Kutch, Gujarat and Sindh, Pakistan and is a testimony to the fact that art transcends all boundaries and unites us across geographies.



Founder: Avipsha Thakur
 Where: Haryana
 Aims: Digital Education Programmes for Weavers/Artisans, Traditional Weave Revival
 Highlight: *Kathik*, the weaver focused travel blog
 IG: @bunavat.weaves
 Website: <https://bunavat.com/>

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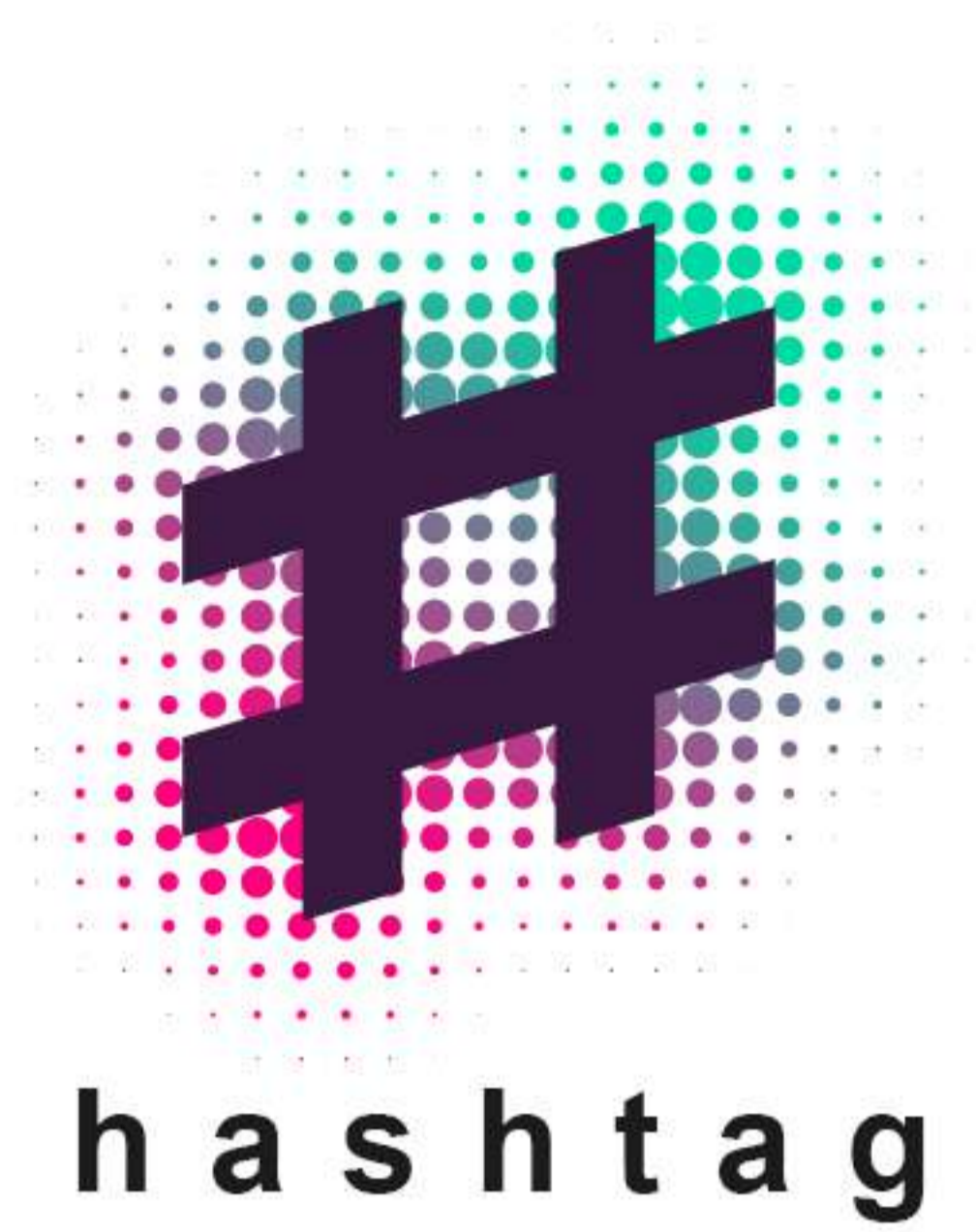
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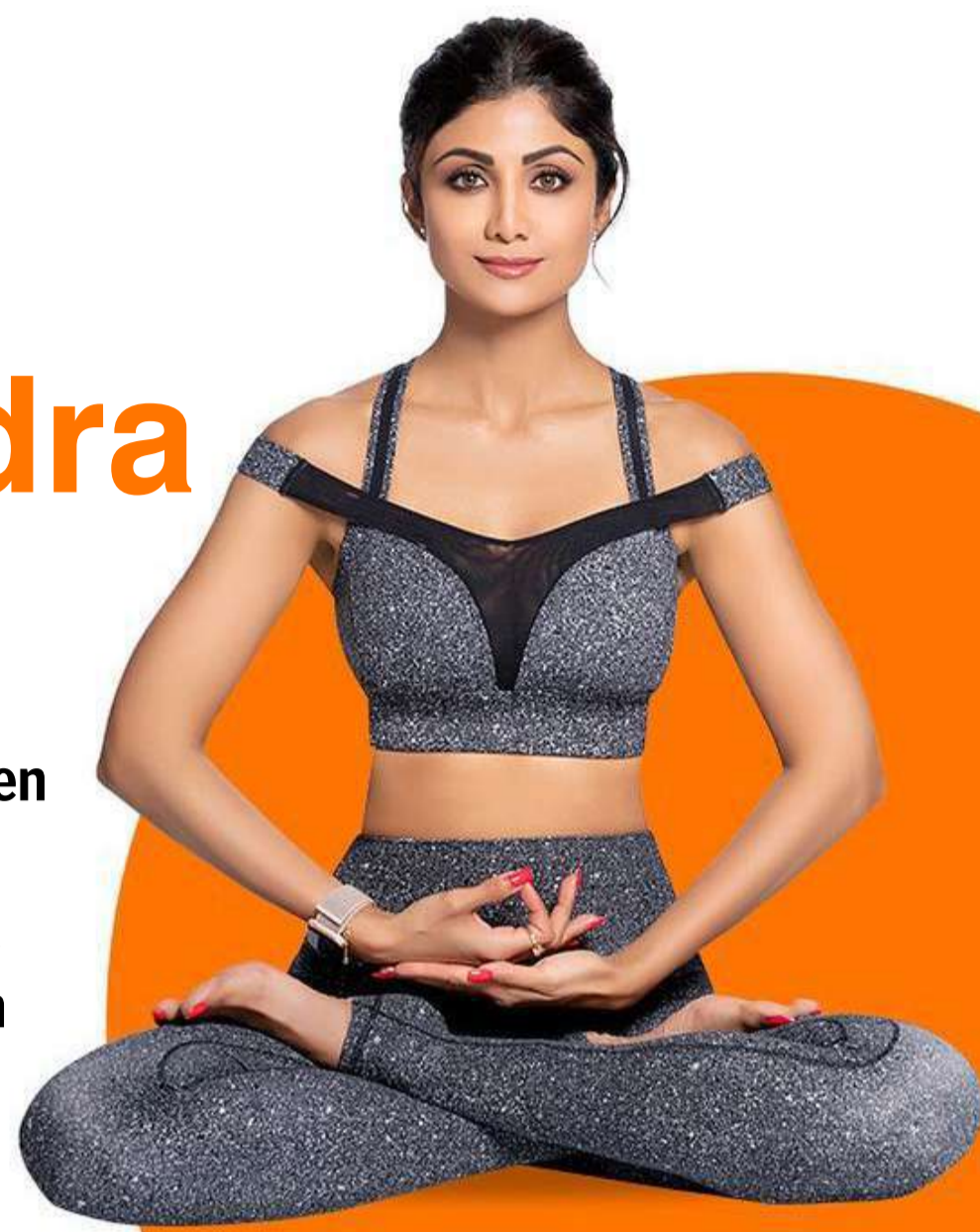
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HEALTH & WELLNESS

“Yoga belongs to India”: Shilpa Shetty Kundra

Fit as a fiddle, SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRRA has long been a staunch advocate for yoga as a means to good health. In a conversation with LIPIKA VARMA, the evergreen femme fatale gets candid about health management.



How did you get interested in this ancient exercise? What has the process been like?

My introduction to yoga wasn't planned. I suffered from cervical spondylitis; my physiotherapist advised me to do *bhujangasana* thrice a day to help strengthen my spine. Over the years it has gone from a casual practice to a lifestyle. When I attended *Big Brother*, I used to do a lot of breathing exercises and people came to know. When you do yoga, your perception changes. I saw the changes in me happen over 2 years. Yoga belongs to India, but it has picked up more internationally. I wanted to be the catalyst to help people benefit from it in India. There is no one from our country to represent yoga. I started making DVDs for this reason, which are now pretty popular.

Talk us through the process of yoga and its benefits. Any specific asanas that are your favourites?

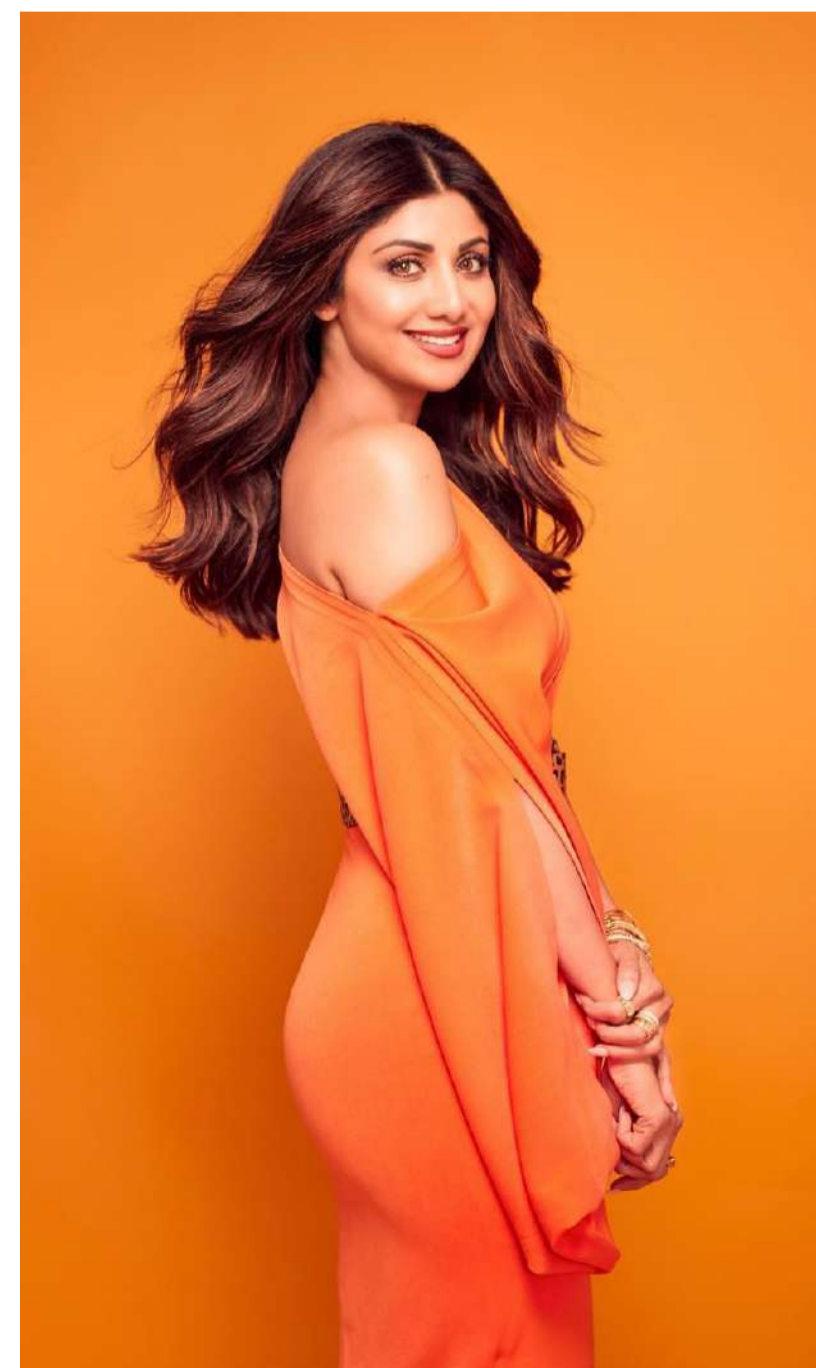
With yoga, there is always the scope for change in you. You can reinvent yourself. Yoga helps alignment of mind, body, and soul. It is a process; you need to be disciplined and follow through. Yoga also helps control the emotional faculties. I try to bring in a better version of myself through its practice. My favourite *asana* is *Surya Namaskar*. It helps in stretching your body and warms up your body as well. With *Surya Namaskar* you will feel like your blood is rushing through your veins; you are refreshed and energized.



When you do yoga, your perception changes.



This is the time to enhance our immunity and mental health which will further help us cope with these difficult times.





Does practising yoga help with managing mental health during tough times such as the pandemic?

I believe we are going through a difficult time. The pandemic is more like a disaster; we need to go into disaster management mode. All of us are putting up a brave front. Luckily, the practice of yoga has helped people deal with the unprecedented issues the pandemic has brought to us. Many have lost near and dear ones, unable to even perform the last rites. So many are suffering from anxiety and depression but don't know it. *Pranayama* can help with keeping our mental health in check. Yoga not only helps keep you physically fit but also maintains and strengthens mental health. Yoga also helps to reverse ageing and increase our quality of life. This is the time to enhance our immunity and mental health which will further help us cope with these difficult times.



I try to bring in a better version of myself through its practice.



Any dietary tips to follow along with yoga practice?

My tip is to keep it simple. I don't depend on the diet, nor do I follow the practice of eating six or seven times, I simply eat whenever I feel hungry. We need to have a heavy breakfast, followed by a good lunch. Ingesting enough carbs is very essential as well, as carbs energize your body. Also include protein, to repair your muscles, and fibre to cleanse your intestines. Having enough water is very important to stay hydrated. Your dinner has to be smaller. Some people don't eat for the entire day but then eat too much for dinner. After eating they go straight to bed. They also have late dinners as well. As far as possible you need to allow your body to digest your food before you go to sleep. Finishing our food three hours before one sleeps is the best for your health.



MONSOON HAIR & SKINCARE

Monsoons call for special care for your skin and hair. **RASHMI GOPAL RAO** speaks to experts on how to tackle some common issues during this season.

While rains are a welcome change from the sweltering summers and monsoon is a season that is much looked forward to, it is also a season that takes a toll on your skin and hair. A sudden change in temperature and humidity leads to issues like dull and listless skin, excessive hair fall and dandruff. The skin becomes prone to dryness, leading to acne breakouts and fungal infections. Fret not, for below are some expert tips for a comprehensive hair and skincare routine that not only takes care of these problems but also help you enjoy the true essence of the joyous monsoons.

For Those Luscious Locks

Have a Nourishing Hair Care Regime

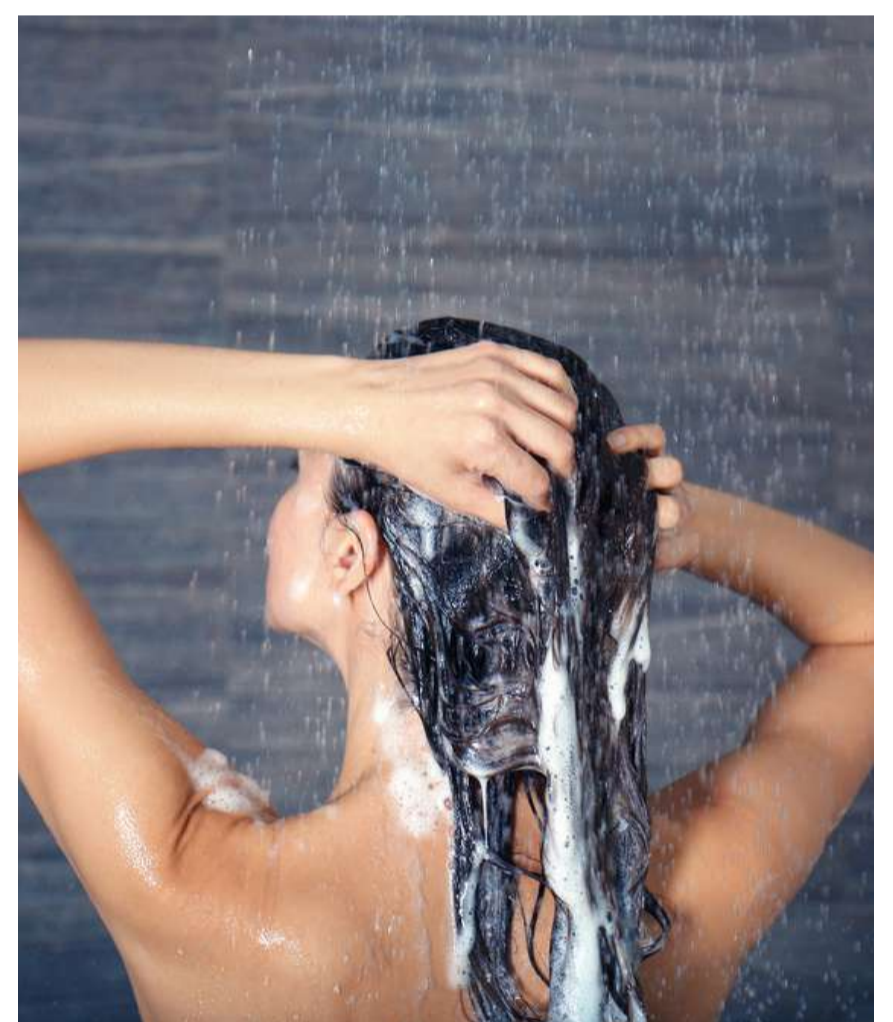
Monsoon hair care is all about rejuvenating your scalp and providing it with the right amount of moisture and conditioning. Hair masking with nutrition and moisture-rich

ingredients helps in soothing the scalp, thereby improving hair growth and scalp health. "A gentle massage with warm oil is the best way to kickstart your monsoon hair care as it prevents your scalp and hair from drying out. Make sure to apply warm oil twice a week as it gets absorbed easily into the hair and provides nourishment to the scalp," advises Saurav Patnaik, COO and co-founder of Anveya Living.

"Monsoons are those times when the humidity level increases which means sweat accumulates in your hair roots. It leads to frizziness or drying of the hair and increased hair fall. Providing nutrition to our scalp should be our top focus as it helps in strengthening our roots. A well-balanced diet, regular cleansing of the scalp, conditioning and oiling coupled with hair packs and good sleep are some of the most important aspects of hair care during the rainy season," said Pooja Karegoudar and Tanushree Ishani D, co-founders of BodyCafe.

Hair Care Essentials!

- *Coconut oil, olive oil, and almond oil* work wonders for the skin. They are rich in vitamins and minerals and work magically to strengthen the hair and stimulate the scalp for better hair growth while reducing hair breakage and hair loss.
- *Effective natural hair masks:* Try a curd and banana hair mask or even one of aloe vera and hibiscus. Virgin coconut oil infused with fenugreek, onion and curry leaves is great to reduce hair fall while a mask of yoghurt and fenugreek is effective for nourishing the scalp and controlling itchiness.



The Importance of Washing Your Hair

It is key to note that you need to wash your hair at least twice a week during the rains to keep it clean of any impurities. "Use the right shampoo; one that is free from harsh chemicals and sulphates. Conditioning helps moisturise your hair and keeps them frizz-free. Always remember to gently dry your hair with soft towels. You can use hair serums for extra protection and nourishment," says Zeal Shah, founder of Bare Body Essentials.

Maintain a Balanced Diet

A well-balanced diet nourishes your hair from within. "Food rich in Vitamin E, D and Zinc are especially good in keeping hair and the scalp healthy. Also, remember to be gentle with your hair. Mild combing, not combing wet or oiled hair, not tying it too much up are some ways to take care of hair during monsoons," comments Amritha Gaddam, founder of The Tribe Concepts.



Saurav Patnaik - COO, Co-founder, Anveya Living

Avoid Excessive Styling Treatments

Another key point to note is to avoid exposure to heat and styling treatments. "Try and minimise the usage of harsh chemicals such as hair colours or excessive heat via hair dryers or curling tongs very frequently as that could aggravate the problem of hair breakage and might weaken hair roots" add Pooja Karegoudar and Tanushree Ishani D.



Pooja Karegoudar & Tanushree Ishani D - Co-founders of BodyCafe

For That Glowing Skin

Monsoon Skin Love

During monsoons, a fool-proof skincare regime for the face and body would be gentle cleansing, periodical exfoliating, daily moisturising, and toning. Oils like sandalwood and coconut oil can be used to improve skin elasticity and give the skin a glow. Using good sunscreen is a habit one must cultivate as it protects the skin against any damage. "Over layering your skin with excessive beauty products during monsoons leads to acne breakouts and clogging of pores. So, opt for a simple makeup routine and remove the same before sleeping," adds Saurav Patnaik.



Founder Amritha Gaddam- The Tribe Concepts

Amritha Gaddam recommends: Body scrubs and homemade cleansing mixes.

- A paste of besan, turmeric and curd acts as a great face cleanser while a mixture of almond meal and honey is an effective face exfoliator.
- Coconut oil and brown sugar work well as a body scrub.



The Science of Skincare during Monsoons

Expert tips by Amritha Gaddam

1. **Humidity** attracts a lot of dirt, and this causes bacterial infections on the skin. Hence it is important to clean your skin at least twice a day preferably with natural powder-based cleansers.
2. **Exfoliating** is important as it helps remove dead skin keeping it healthy and refreshed.
3. **Hydrate well:** The most important step for healthy skin is having an adequate amount of water. Drinking at least 3-4 litres of water a day is extremely essential.
4. Food rich in **Vitamin C** help nourish skin from the inside.



DIY masks for radiant, healthy skin!

Pooja Karegoudar and Tanushree Ishani D recommend: Homemade packs to nourish the skin from within and regain its PH balance.

1. Mix 2 tablespoons of turmeric, lemon juice, honey and curd and applying it to the face and body.
2. Another *Ubtan* hack would be applying a paste of lemon juice, ripe papaya, and a spoonful of milk powder.
3. Coffee is a good exfoliator too.
4. Packs ideally must be kept on for at least 20-25 minutes and rinsed off with cold water.



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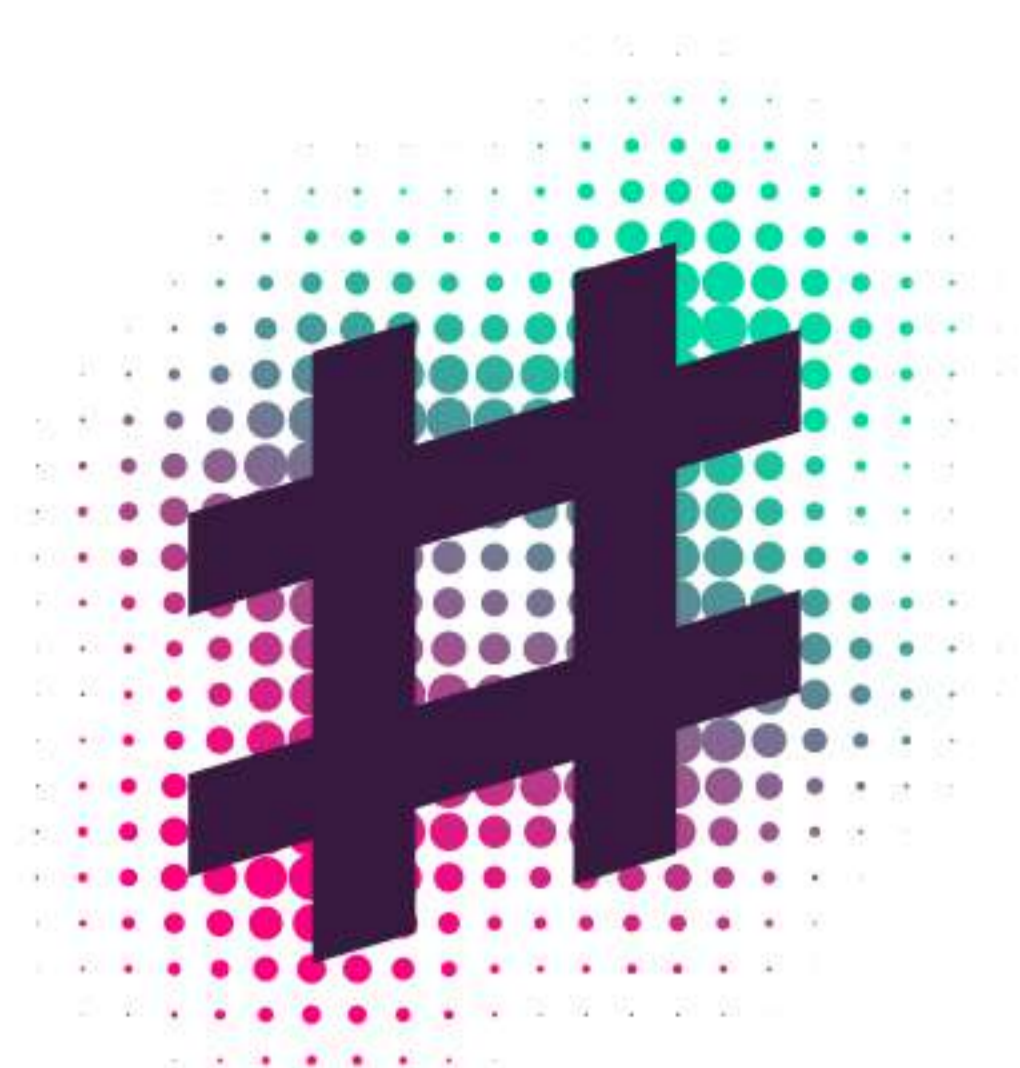
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FOOD INC'



Remixed Sweets: 2021 FESTIVE EDITION

Arushi Dusaj speaks to three chefs from across the country to bring to you some new-age recipes to tickle your sweet tooth!

The festive season is just around the corner! Be it Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussehra or Diwali, we are all gearing up to indulge in our favourite Indian desserts in the spirit of celebration. With homemade innovations on the rise, we have curated three easy to make yet scrumptious sweet dishes that you can try out from the comfort of your home.

Ellu Urundai

Nandheetha Varadaraj, Lead Chef at Soklet, Coimbatore

To be honest, this is not your traditional version of the famous Coimbatore sweet dish. However, Manipal University graduate and Le Cordon Bleu alumni Nandheetha Varadaraj brings a chocolatey twist to this classic. By pairing her special love for chocolates and plated desserts with tradition, she aims to evoke a sense of nostalgia, tinged with a welcome surprise. This recipe makes for 20 to 25 pieces.

For the Coconut Ganache

Ingredients

- Milk Chocolate
- Cream
- Desiccated Coconut

Steps

1. Heat the cream and pour partially over the melted chocolate.
2. Mix thoroughly and then add in the desiccated coconut.

For the Sesame Mix

Ingredients

- Sesame, white
- Sesame, black
- Jaggery

Steps

1. Toast the sesame seeds until they pop and turn light brown.
2. Grind them along with the jaggery to make a coarse powder.
3. Spread half of the mixture in a thin layer on a small pan or tray, making sure to pack it tightly.
4. Put the remaining sesame mix on top, again making sure to pack it tight.
5. Let it set thoroughly, cutting small squares.





Cupcake Barfis

Sarah Zia, @fluffinacup on Instagram

This Kerala based home baker is well-known for her fusion sweet recipes. Armed with the knowledge of how to make over sixty different types of cupcake flavours, she teaches us how to refashion the good old *barfi* and gives it a completely new look. This dish is eggless.

For the Eggless Cupcake

Ingredients

- Butter – 115g
- Sugar – 200gms
- Vanilla – 1Tsp
- Baking Powder – 2Tsp
- Flour – 280gms
- Milk – 1 Cup
- Vinegar – 1 Tbsp
- Cardamom Powder – ½ Tsp
- Pistachios, crushed – 60 gms

Steps

1. Start by beating sugar & butter.
2. Mix milk and vinegar together and keep aside.
3. Mix the dry ingredients and keep them aside.
4. Add vanilla to the butter mixture. Then gradually alternate between milk mixture and dry ingredients and make a smooth batter. Add cardamom in the end and fold in the pistachios.
5. Fill in 3/4th of the liner. Eggless cupcakes crack sometimes but don't worry about it.



For the Barfi Buttercream

Ingredients

- Butter, unsalted – 100 gms
- Icing sugar (not powdered sugar) – 200 gms
- Cardamom Powder – ½ Tsp
- Milk Powder – 3-4 Tbsp

Steps

1. Make sure your butter is not melted and your icing sugar is well sieved.
2. Start by creaming the butter and gradually adding sugar to it until you get a good thick consistency for frosting.
3. Add in the milk powder and cardamom in the end.

Puran Poli Modak

Girish Nayak, Chief Mithaiwala at Bombay Sweet Shop, Mumbai

"People usually eat various types of modaks during Ganesh Chaturthi. Apart from that, the signature sweets include *mawa modak*, *ukadiche modak*, *karanji*, *puran poli*, and *motichoor ladoos*," says the seasoned confectioner. His recipe combines two traditional sweet treats for the price of one.

Ingredients

- *Malai peda* – 200g
- Saffron - ¼ Tsp
- Bengal Gram *Dal* – 75g
- Black Jaggery – 1
- Cardamom Powder – ¼ Tsp
- Pepper powder – ½ Tsp

Steps

1. Wash the Bengal gram *dal*. Boil it in water till soft. Decant the water on top.
2. Add the jaggery to the cooked dal. Heat again, turn over constantly till it forms a lump.
3. Let this cool for a bit and grind

them to a smooth paste without adding water. Add cardamom powder and pepper powder to it. *Puran* is ready.

4. Make small balls of this and keep them aside in the fridge.
5. Powder the saffron using the mortar and pestle. Add this to the *malai peda* base and mix well.
6. Now, put some of the saffron *peda* into the *modak* mould. Create a cavity in the bottom of the mould and fill it with a *puran*. Close the cavity with some *peda* mix. Then demould.
7. Make more and serve it at room temperature to your loved ones.



Hope you enjoy these amazing recipes!



AUTO & TECH



SMARTPHONE

from the Future

ANIKET PANDE from BlazeTechnica reviews some upcoming smartphone releases.

iPhone 13 Series

Come September, Apple will launch the next in its iPhone series as has been tradition. There is already a lot of chatter around the upcoming iPhone 12 series, expected to launch in mid-September. Just like last year's iPhone 12 series, the iPhone 13 series is also expected to have four models, namely: iPhone 13 mini, iPhone 13, iPhone 13 Pro and the iPhone 13 Pro Max. The design and sizes of all these models will be identical to iPhone 12 series. However, rumours say that there are differences in the camera modules. While 12 and 12 mini have vertical bases, 13 and 13 mini are touted to have a diagonal camera arrangement. Apple is also expected to use larger camera sensors for better ultrawide shots.

The iPhone 13 Pro is upgraded to get the sensor-shift image stabilisation, previously available only on iPhone 12 Pro Max. Some rumours say that the notch on iPhone 13 series will get slightly smaller. iPhones will continue to rely on their Face ID mechanism for security. There is no confirmation about the addition of an In-Display Fingerprint Scanner. Display on the iPhone 13 Pro and 13 Pro Max is expected to get a big upgrade – the 120Hz ProMotion display, which has a higher refresh rate. 13 and 13 mini will get a normal 60Hz display. When it comes to performance, all the new iPhones will be powered by Apple's A15 Bionic processor. The battery capacity on iPhone 13 series will also be increased by 10-20% compared to the 12 series. Pricing is expected to be similar to the 12 series but we will only know more after the official launch.



Source: Forbes



Source: OPPO

OPPO X 2021

In the last few years smartphones with a foldable display like Samsung's Galaxy Fold series, Motorola's new Razer and Huawei's Mate X have been making all the right trends. OPPO'S November 2020 concept launch, however, has caught our eye. The OPPO X 2021 smartphone boasts a rollable display, which is a pleasant surprise. While the 6.7-inch display leads us to consider it as a normal smartphone at first glance, the display rolls over and converts into a 7.4-inch square form factor which can then be used as a mini-tablet. This screen expansion is easy: just swipe up and down on the power button or just press the button twice.

OPPO claims the smartphone can withstand 100,000 expansions and retractions. The UI and apps also automatically adjust themselves according to the expanded display. OPPO calls their display a variable OLED, owing to how they use a Quad HD+ AMOLED with a refresh rate of 120 Hz. The processor used on the OPPO X 2021 is Qualcomm Snapdragon 865, and it is powered by a 4000 mAh battery. The phone lacks a front camera. OPPO X 2021 is still a concept smartphone and is not available for purchase but gives us a thrilling insight into how smartphones of the future will look.



VIBRANT 

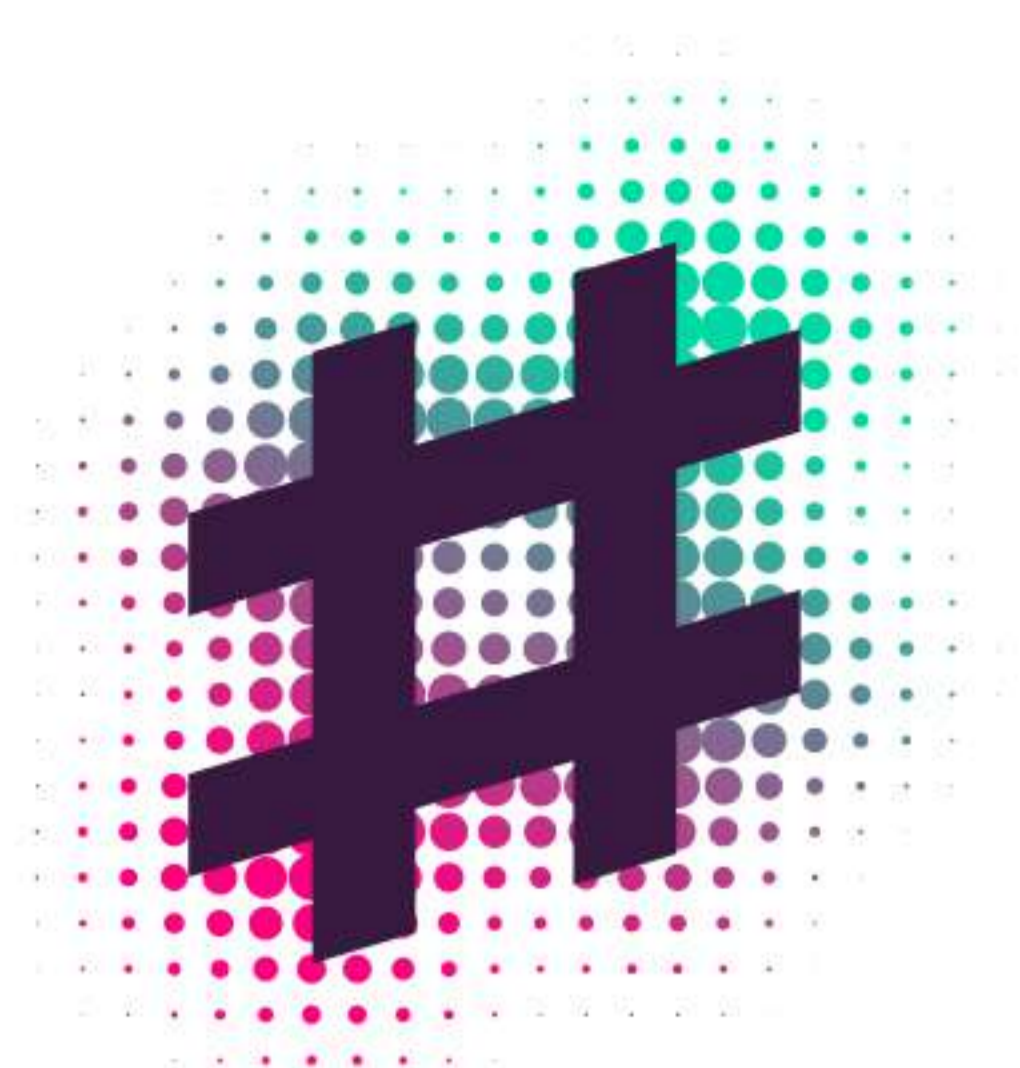


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TRAVEL



With GANESH CHATURTHI right around the corner, the country is gearing up to welcome our beloved elephant god. RASHMI GOPAL RAO rounds up the temples of the South Canara belt and their different styles of celebration.

The Coastline

TEMPLES OF KARNATAKA

Come September and it is time for Ganesh Chaturthi. One of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar is an ode to the birth of Ganapati, the lord of beginnings. Celebrated on the fourth day (*Chaturthi*) of the Hindu month of Bhadrapada, the festival usually falls in August or September; this year's date is 10th September.

Lord Ganesha is especially revered as the epitome of knowledge in South India, with several temples dedicated to him dotting the South Canara region of Karnataka. These sacred temples see devotees flock to them, eager to learn of the unique customs and legends associated with the deity here. Here's a look at some of these places of worship.

Anegudde Sri Vinayaka Temple, Kumbashi

Located in the Udupi district, this renowned temple is about 9 km from Kundapur and 85 km from Mangalore. Anegudde comes from 'aane' which means elephant and 'gudde' which means hillock. The temple is on a slight elevation, and this hillock is known as the abode of Ganesha. Khumbashi comes from the legend of the demon Khumbhasura. It is said that Sage Agastya performed penance to appease the rain God, Lord Varuna, during a period of drought. The demon Khumbhasura tried to create trouble for the sages but was killed by Bheema of the Pandavas here. It is said that Bheema had taken the blessings of

Lord Ganesha for himself and his weapon before destroying the demon. Hence, this place is known as one of the Mukthi-Sthalas (place of salvation) in Karnataka.



Quick take: There are several *poojas* conducted here that are religiously significant. Of these is the special *puja* done every Sankashta Chaturthi as well as the car festival (Rathostava) of the temple, held every year during the first week of December. The offering of the "mudde akki kadabu" – savoury dumplings of rice and *urad dal* steamed in pine screw leaves – is done with great devotion and considered to be sacred.





Entrance to Siddhivinayaka temple, Hattiangadi

Kallu Ganapathi Temple, Shiriyara

Overlooking lush green paddy fields, this temple of Lord Ganesha is located within a cave and is about 27 km from Udupi. The temple houses the idols of not just Lord Ganesha, but also of his parents Lord Shiva and the Goddess Parvati. The ambience is peaceful with the whole area surrounded by caves replete with thick vegetation. Sunlight penetrating between the cracks of the cave makes for a lovely picture. One needs to tread along the tiny pathways within the cave to reach the shrine that is beautifully decorated with flowers.

Quick take: A climb up the caves leads to some panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

Shri Siddhi Vinayaka Temple, Hattiangadi

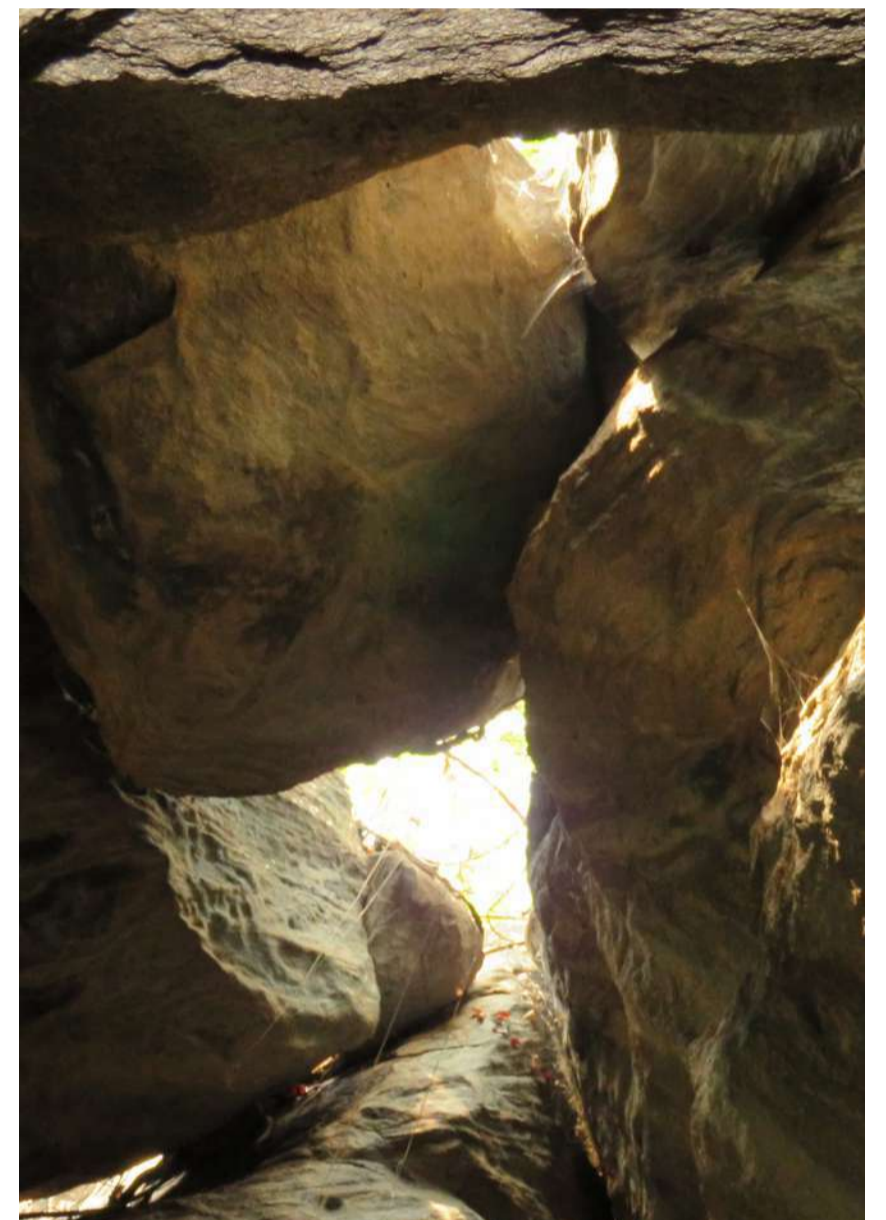
Within 15 km of Kundapur, a stone's throw from the Anegudde temple lies yet another place of devotion for Lord Ganesha. This region was once ruled by the Alupa kings and Hattiangadi is believed to have been their capital. The temple is on the banks of the river Varahi and the idol is of Bala Ganesha, in a standing pose. The idol is unique, with curly hair, and has been conferred the title of 'siddhi' since locals believe in the god's power of wish fulfilment here.

Quick take: The highlight of the temple's rituals is the *Sahasra Narikela Ganayaga*, a special *puja* conducted with the offering of 1008 coconuts. The offering of the local inflorescence of the areca nut palm is considered extremely sacred to this temple.

Guddattu Shri Vinayaka Temple, Yedadi Matyadi

The idol this temple hosts is believed to have been self-manifested, resting on a granite rock. The deity is visible only through a small opening from outside and is in a sitting posture. Most of the idol is always submerged underwater. It is believed that Lord Ganesha once consumed excess honey which created a burning sensation in his body. Lord Shiva then asked his son to stay in the waters to cool himself down. Just like at the Anegudde temple, the offering of the "mudde akki kadabu" is also very popular here.

Quick take: Even today the ritual of bathing the idol with one thousand pots of water drawn from the well in the temple complex is considered sacred and done regularly.



Kallu Ganapathi temple, Shiriyara

Sowthadka Sri Maha Ganapathi Temple, Kikkada

This temple is in Belthangadi Taluk, 20 km from the pilgrimage site of Dharmasthala. The temple complex is unique, decorated with bells of different shapes and sizes and hung from all available surfaces, be it railings, trees or even enclosures. These bells are offered by the devotees as part of the fulfilment of their wishes. This 800-year-old temple derives its name from the nearby fields of cucumber. In Tulu, 'sowthe' refers to cucumber and 'adka' to field. These tender cucumbers have been traditionally offered to the deity as part of the naivedhya ritual.

Quick take: The temple complex is an open field, as opposed to the conventional structures.



Guddattu Vinayaka Temple entrance



Bundi Fort Palace - PHOTO BY DINODIA

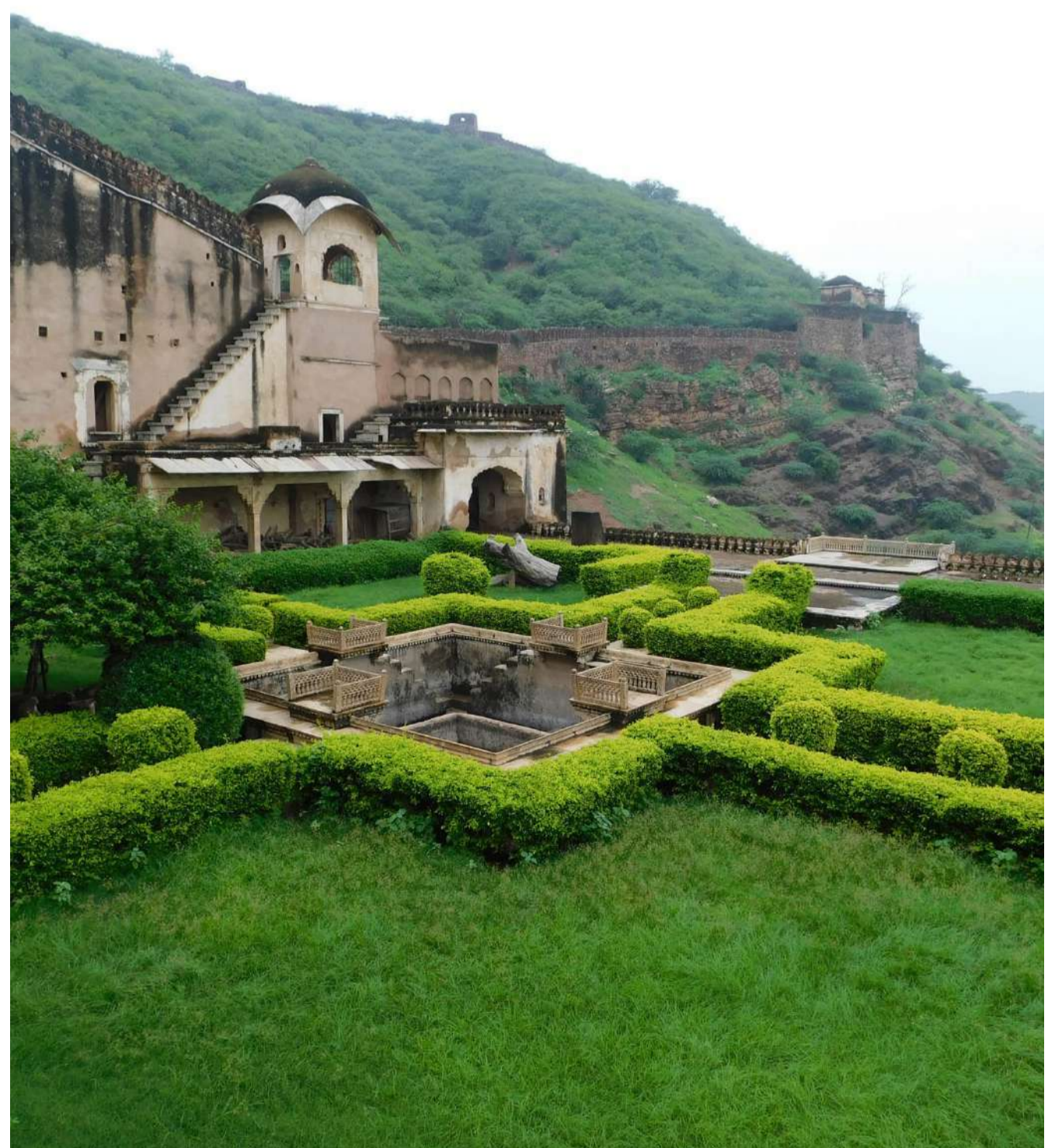
The royal charms of **BUNDI**

Hidden in the opulent state of **Rajasthan** lies **Bundi**, a little-known heritage. A site of architectural wonder, Bundi remains an un-spoilt paradise with few tourists visiting it every year. **MD Masarrath Ali Khan** gives us the lowdown on the historical significance of structures in and around Bundi...

Ever thought of travelling back in time and losing yourselves in an 'out-of-a-fairy tale' destination where you can ramble, relax and soak in the beauty of culture at your own pace? How about chiselling the image of a magnificent fort in your heart, while the sun paints it with gold? If this idea resonates with you, then Bundi is the place for you! The queen of Hadoti in Rajasthan, Bundi is immensely rich in art, culture, heritage, and natural beauty. Here are the must-visit places in Bundi...

Taragarh Fort

The star attraction of Bundi, this fort crowns the crest of a steep hill overlooking region. Its mighty presence dominates the landscape for miles around. Rao Deva commissioned the fort in 1298 AD and Rao Raja Bar Singh built it in 1354 AD at a height of 1,426 feet. The oldest fort was built on the top of the hill, perhaps by Rao Narpal sometime in the mid-14th century. It was later modified, and further additions were done by Maharao Anirudh Singh and Maharao Vishnu Singh. The fort ranks amongst the most impregnable and well-preserved structures of the Rajput legacy, with massive battlements and ramparts. Faujdar Dalil, of Jaipur, constructed the outer fort wall. Many of the buildings inside the fort complex are in a state of disrepair. There are four reservoirs atop the fort for collecting rainwater.

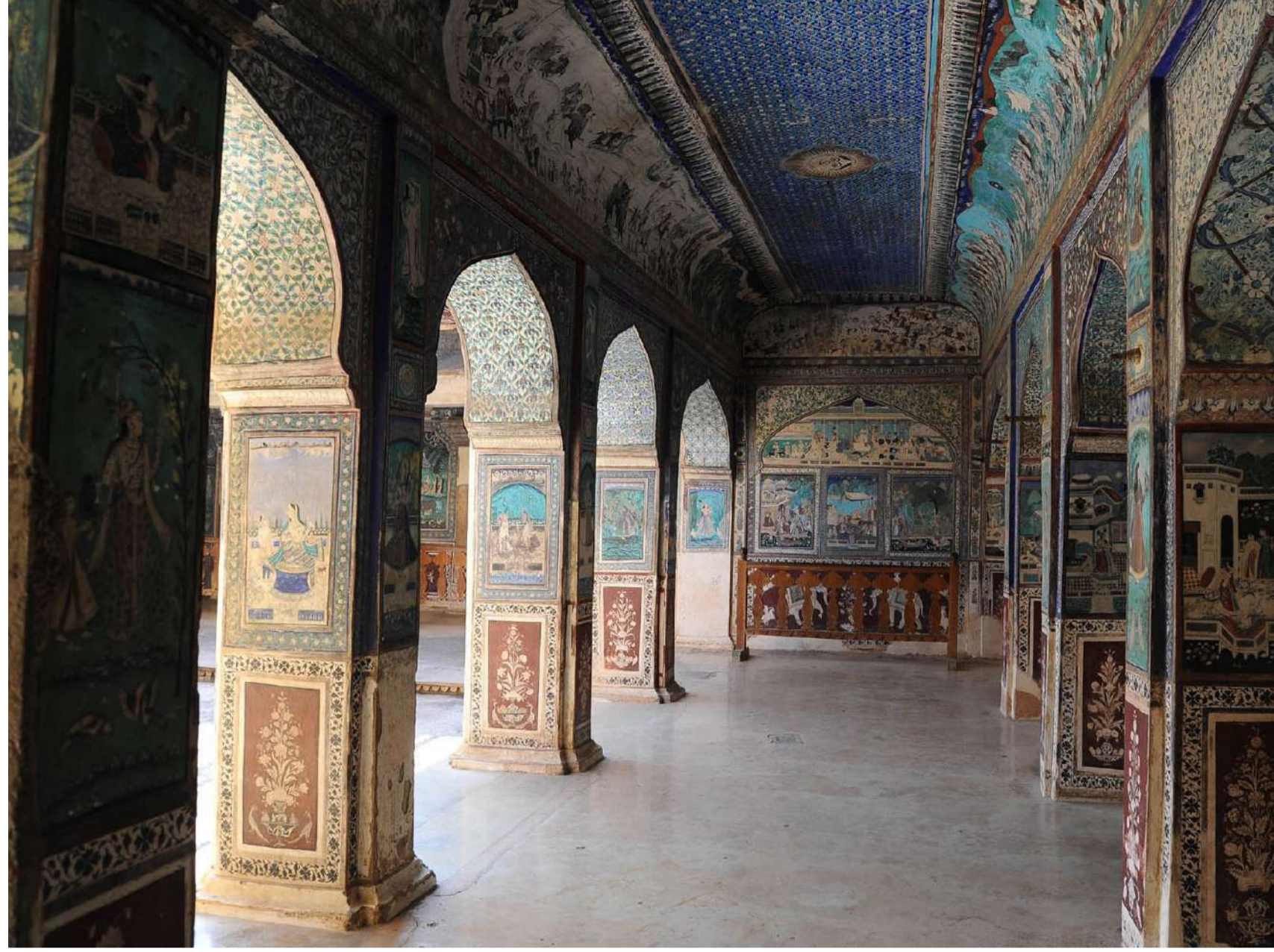


A little history...

This region was home to some of India's ancient tribes. The Hada Rajput king Rao Deva wrested this territory from them and established control over the city of Bundi in 1241 AD. The name Bundi is derived from the tribe chieftain's name Bunda Meena. The successive Hada kings beautified the city with a glittering series of monuments, palaces, hunting lodges and stepwells.

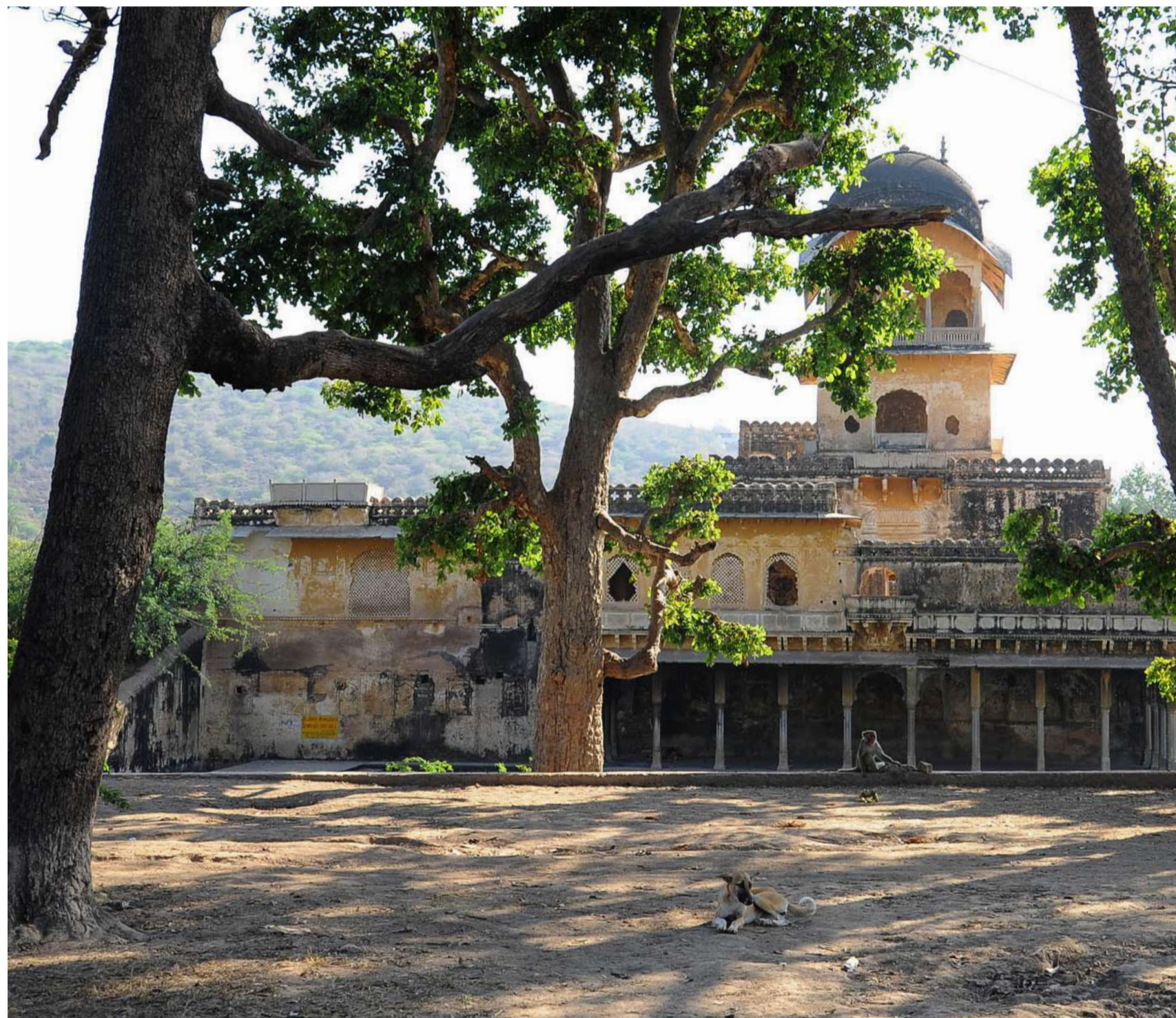
Garh Palace

The Garh Palace complex sits at the foot of the fort and spills picturesquely down the hillside towards the town. It is adorned with intricately carved pillars, panels, impressively projecting balconies, latticed windows, elegant doors, and marvellous arches, and ranks amongst the finest architectural compositions of the medieval period.



The Garh Palace is an amazing integration of a cluster of several palaces built over a period of time. The Phool Mahal and Badal Mahal were built by Rao Bhoj Singh while Ratan Daulat (*Diwan-i-Am*) and Hathi Pol were built by Rao Ratan Singh. The Chhatar Mahal was built by Rao Chhathrasal while the *Chitrashala*, *Rang Vilas* and *Anirudh Mahal* were built by Rao Raja Anirudh Singh. Rao Raja Umed Singh built the final Hazari Pol and Hathi Pol.

A steep ramp takes you to the Hathi Pol (elephant gate), the main entrance into the palace complex. Here, the Ratan Daulat Palace has fine arrangements for keeping torches in its walls. There is also a marble throne of the Hada kings. A small door from Ratan Daulat takes you into the Chhatar Mahal, where you can visit the Hathiya Sal Palace adorned with elephant-capitalized columns. At the Zenana Mahal one can see paintings showing Krishna's birth, a king sitting on a lion seat (*simhasana*) and a princess being bedecked. Similarly, the Badal Mahal has lavishly drawn frescoes and murals depicting Krishna's legends, court scenes, procession scenes and hunting episodes.

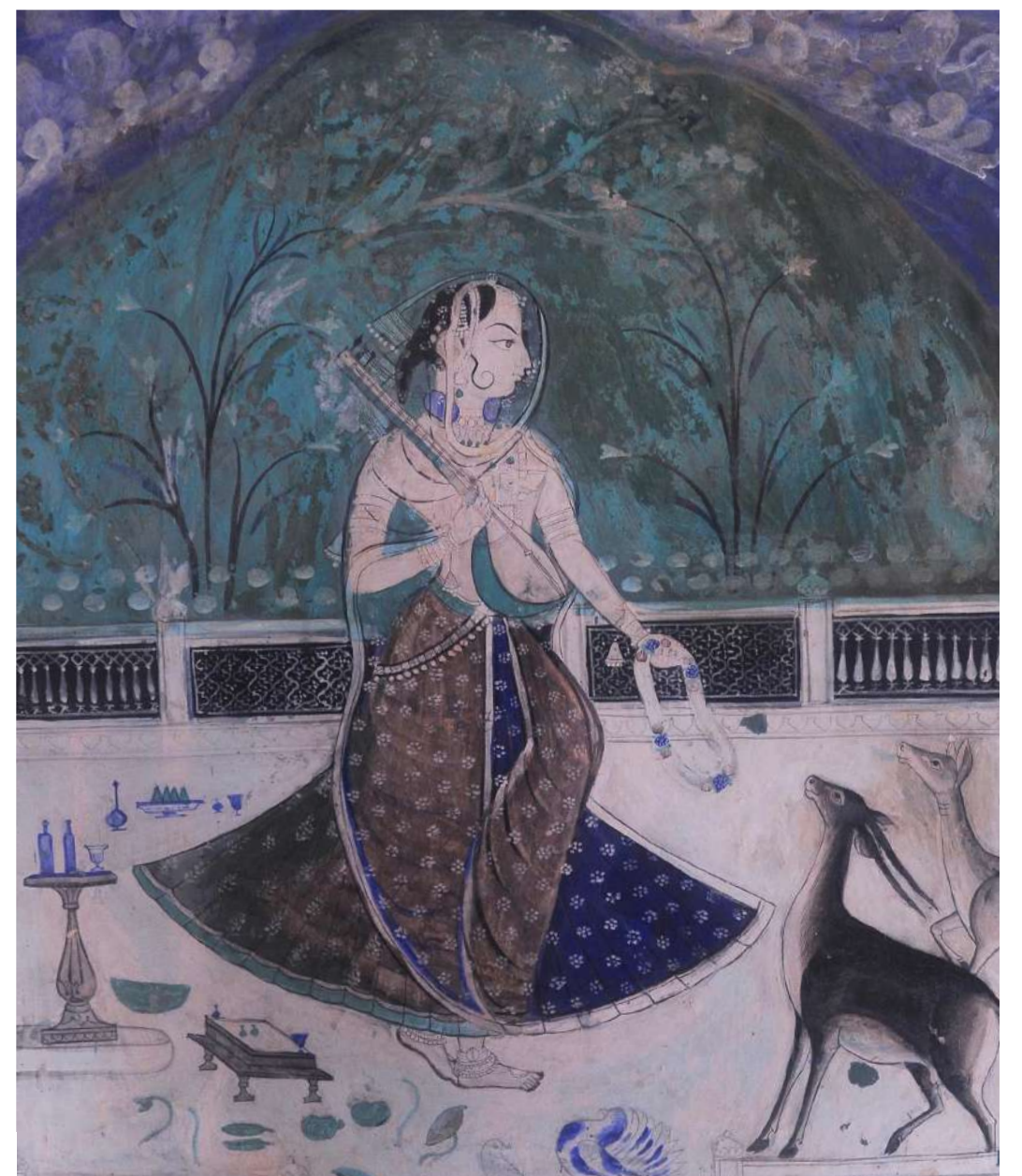


Chitrashala

The most lavish display of Bundi murals is found in the art gallery of paintings – the *Chitrashala* in Umed Mahal. Influenced by the Mughal and Mewar schools, they depict a variety of themes like the *ragamala* paintings, love stories and court processions. The colours have a scheme: green for backgrounds, white for human bodies and red, blue, black and yellow for traditional dresses. While a dazzling damsel attired in Mughal dress comes alive on one wall, you can see a princess on horseback being attended by many women on the other. One can see here paintings showing *Dhola* waiting for his spouse under the shade of a tree; *Rasamandala* (the great cosmic dance) being enacted on the banks of Yamuna; Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan and a depiction of *Cheerahan* (Krishna stealing the clothes of gopies).

Chaurasi Khambon ki Chhatri

Situated at Devpura, towards the south of the town is this famed 84-pillared cenotaph. It was built by Rao Anirudh Singh in 1683 AD in memory of Deva, the son of his wet nurse. It is a two-storied cenotaph, with a temple in yellow sandstone, and is built on a high podium in a symmetrical square plan. According to historians, the number 84 refers to the 84 erotic postures described in the *Kamasutra* or the 84 cycles of rebirths that one must pass through for attaining salvation.



Water bodies of Bundi: Kunds (reservoirs) and Baoris (stepwells)

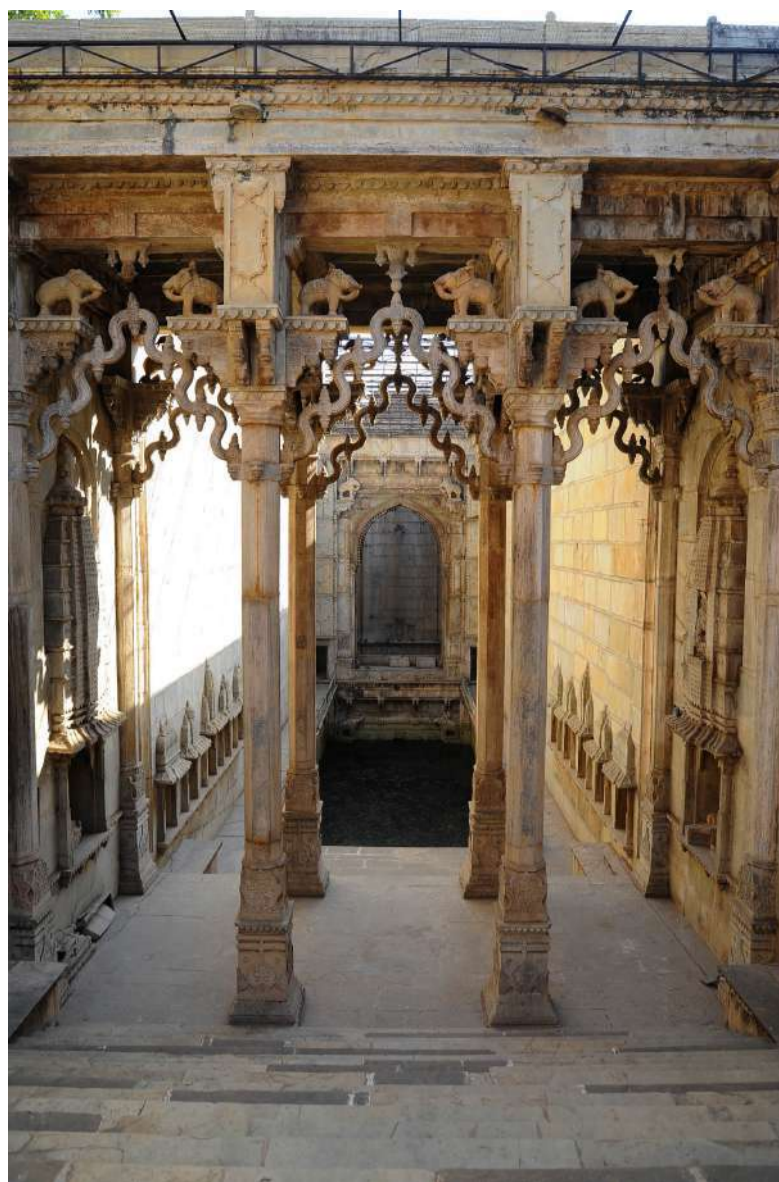
Kunds and *baoris* (stepwells) are water bodies unique to Bundi. The Hada kings were quite aware of the need for conserving water; as such, they built the water bodies for religious as well as utilitarian purposes. Rani Nathavatji (queen to Rao Raja Anirudh Singh) is said to have built 21 *baoris* in the town. There are nearly 40 *baoris* (wells) in Bundi, known as the city of stepwells.

Some famous *baoris* of Bundi are Naval Sagar Ki Baori, Dadhimati Maheswari ki Baori, Shree Abhaynath Mahadev Ki Baori, Sisodiaji Ki Baori, Purushottam Ki Baori, Sukhi Baori, Manoharji Ki Baori, Hiralalji Ki Baori, Nahar Doos Ki Baori and Bhawalde Ki Baori.

The best known and most visited stepwell is Raniji Ki Baori outside the Chaugan Gate. Rani Nathavatji (queen to Rao Raja Anirudh Singh) built it in 1699 AD, during the reign of her son Maharao Raja Budh Singh. Raniji Ki Baori is 40 feet wide (at the top) and 165 feet deep. With 200 steps descending into the water, it is a fine specimen of craftsmanship and is known for its architectural beauty. You can see here sculptures of standing *Bhairava*, *Ganesha*, *Saraswathi* and *Gajendra* along with 10 incarnations like *Matsya*, *Varaha*, and *Narasingh*. An inscription of 31 lines at the entrance describes the genealogy of the Hada rulers of Bundi.

Of the *kunds*, Dhabhai Ka Kund is another beautiful *kund* in Bundi. This 150 feet x 180 feet stepped tank is about 173 feet deep and is adorned with two beautiful *chhatris* (elevated dome-shaped pavilion). Nagar Kund and Sagar Kund are a pair of matching *baoris* (stepwells) outside Chaugan Gate. These stepwells were built by Maharani Chandrabhanu Kumari in 1871-75 AD, during the reign of Maharao Raja Ram Singh.

Nawal Sagar is a large rectangular artificial lake measuring approximately 820 feet x 574 feet, and is located close to Garh Mahal. A temple dedicated to Varuna, the Aryan god of water, stands half-submerged in the centre of the lake.



Shikar Burj

This is the royal hunting lodge built by Maharaja Umed Singh in 1770 A.D. Surrounded by a thick forest cover, wild animals are said to have frequently visited this place in ancient times. The exterior wall of this edifice is pierced with a series of holes, in which the muzzle of the gun was placed, and animals were shot at.

Sukh Mahal

Rao Raja Vishnu Singh built a palace on the banks of the Jait Sagar Lake, under the supervision of his *Diwan* Sukhram, in 1773 AD. So came to be the palace known as Sukh Mahal. Rudyard Kipling, writer of *The Jungle Book* and the 1907 Noble Prize Winner of Literature, lived in the Sukh Palace for some time. He is said to have derived inspiration for his famous novel *Kim* (1901) from the scenes that he saw here. The palace houses a small museum.

Kajari Teej Festival of Bundi

The Kajari Teej Festival of Bundi is an important annual festival that is celebrated in Bhadra month, on the 3rd day after the full moon in the Krishna Paksha. This year it falls on 24th or 25th August, depending on the moon's cycles. Bundi's Kajari Teej is one of those rare Hindu festivals which falls during the phase of the waning moon.

The legend of Kajari Teej:

Thakur Balwant Singh of Gothda once set out to steal the idol of teej from the festivities in Jaipur for his own village. The journey back must have taken 5 to 10 days, as Balwant Singh then took out a teej procession in his village on the 3rd day after the full moon in the month of Bhadra (15 days after the *Teej* celebrations in Jaipur). After the death of Thakur Balwant Singh in a battle, Rao Raja Ram Singh brought the idol to Bundi and continued the tradition started by his predecessor by celebrating teej in the month of *Bhadra*, 15 days after it is celebrated in Jaipur.

Kajari Teej sees the entire Bundi town illuminated in colourful lighting. Women and children in their finest attires assemble outside their home from early afternoon to catch a glimpse of their favourite goddess. The teej procession starts from Naval Sagar after dusk and winds its way through the narrow lanes of Bundi. Gorgeously decorated elephants, camels and horses accompany the procession. Traditional folk artists sing and dance along the path of teej. Carried in a decorated palanquin, the deity is halted along the way to enable the waiting groups to offer prayers. Though the main function of Bundi, teej is only on two days the celebrations continue till Janmashthami.





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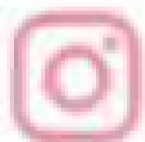
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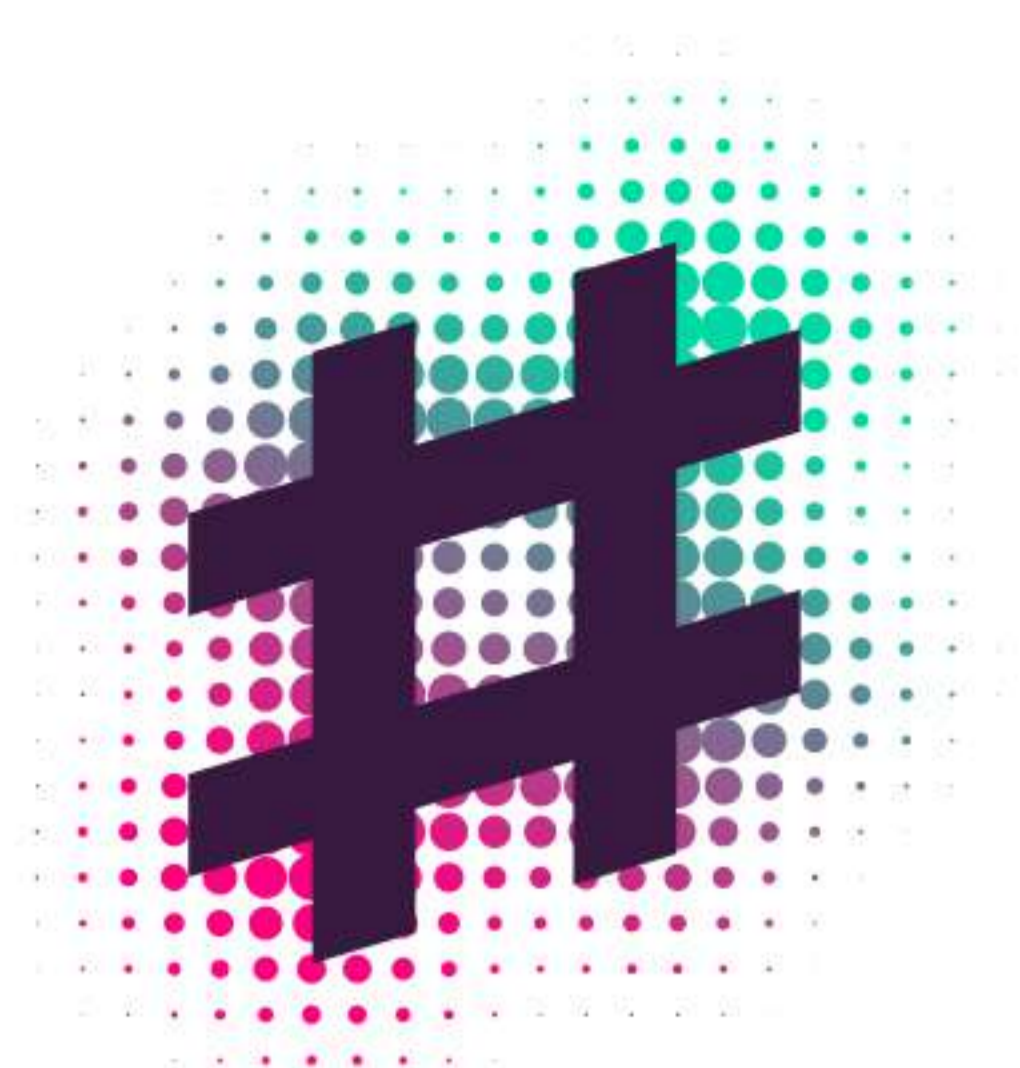


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h a s h t a g

INTERIORS



Everything you need to know ABOUT GARDENING

Being locked up in our houses in this pandemic a lot of us were longing for new hobbies and activities. In conversation with AVANTHIKA REDDY, experts from the gardening community share some basics of gardening that could get you started with your new hobby.

DECODING GARDENING WITH MAKE ME GARDEN

Instagram: @makemegarden

Make Me Garden is a Hyderabad-based gardening company that helps you set up your very own kitchen garden. Make Me Garden believes that gardening is a deep hidden skill with every individual who is curious to unravel a new skill that eventually becomes a part of their lifestyle. Here are some basic recommendations from the experts:

1. START SMALL GROW BIG

Always have a small garden first, keep exploring different plants on a lower scale, try your hand at it and once you are totally convinced, roll it out grand.

2. NEVER OVER DO YOU GARDEN

Keep your garden simple and beautiful, do not overdo it with unnecessary fillings that do not support the plants. Instead go with products that aren't just beautiful but also provide benefits to your plants.

3. DO NOT TRUST ALL THE PRODUCTS THAT COME YOUR WAY

Sometimes products that have manipulative marketing strategies might not be helpful for your plants instead they can be extremely harmful. Be cautious while choosing products for your plants.



ACCESSORISE YOUR GARDEN WITH GARDENLY

Instagram: @the.gardenly

Gardenly, a garden accessory company shares with us an insight about their brand and how they ace it in the gardening businesses.

Inspiration behind the project:

"We have loved craftworks since our childhood and made varieties of scrapbooks, greetings cards with much care and creativity. Such stuff was not available to buy anywhere, especially that would recreate our memories like we wanted to. In addition, we loved gardening right from when we were kids. We thought why not incorporate gardening with crafts and make a beautiful product out of it. That very thought led us to experiment on multiple ideas and create the product line we currently have.



Price Range

The price range starts from as low as INR 300 and can go up to INR 12000, including a variety of plants, customised themes, miniatures, and other gift hampers.

Bestsellers

We sell custom made terrariums, miniature gardens and macrame holders for plant pots. We often collaborate with a few local brands for hampers, which are gifted to celebrities, social media collaborators or delivered just as an order to our clients. We offer landscaping - from office spaces, homes to a mere patio or a balcony.

Top 3 Flowers

1. Marigold
2. Begonias
3. Moss rose

Top 3 Fruits

1. Strawberries
2. Apple berry
3. Lemon

Top 3 Veggies

1. Tomato
2. coriander
3. spinach

Brand USP

"We have created a gifting brand that aims to deliver to people positive emotions that can create or recreate most memorable moments of their lives. We offer the experience through our customised products. The core part of all our gifts are plants and customised miniature figurines that our. We use plants such as succulents and cacti, which are easy to maintain. The miniatures could be a replica of *paneer tikka*, a beer mug, a camera or an entire setup of date night a lovely couple had! The variety of themes are limitless.



HOW TO START A BASIC GARDEN?

Setting up a basic garden could be very easy. For your initial step you can try doing it with things in and around your house.

1. First thing you'll have to do is look for an old container/bowl which does not absorb water, add small drain holes in the bottom of the container. Make sure the holes aren't really big if not they will let out the soil too.
2. Add some red soil/ potting mix which is readily available .
3. Try finding seeds from vegetable leftovers like tomato seeds, pumpkin seeds, cucumber seeds, dry basil seeds etc.
4. Sprinkle water proportional to the size of the container till the saplings grow 4 inches long.
5. Herbs/leafy vegetables can be continued in smaller containers and vegetables can be shifted to bigger containers or to the ground directly.

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On screen's next-gen military man:

SIDHARTH MALHOTRA

With the recent release of *Shershaah*, Sidharth Malhotra is back on our screens in yet another awe-inspiring role. In a conversation with Lipika Varma, he speaks of the film, the importance of freedom and how it was working alongside Kiara Advani.

From starting as an Assistant Director for Dharma Production's *My Name Is Khan* to debuting as the doe-eyed Abhimanyu Singh in *Student of the Year*, Sidharth Malhotra has been the one to look out for. His latest work has brought his life full circle. *Shershaah*, produced by Dharma Productions, has Malhotra once again working with mentor Karan Johar. Essaying the role of Captain Vikram Batra, Malhotra will trace the life and times of the Param Vir Chakra awardee opposite Kiara Advani as his on-screen girlfriend Dimple Cheema. The film, which can be seen on Amazon Prime Video, is the directorial debut of Vishnuvardhan.

You have now played the role of an officer in three films - *Aiyaary*, the upcoming *Mission Majnu* and now *Shershaah*. How different have they been from each other?

They have a lot of differences from each other. Otherwise, I wouldn't be doing it. With *Aiyaary*, it was a pinch of politics in the Army. *Shershaah* is a biopic of Captain Vikram Batra set in the 1999 Kargil War. *Mission Majnu* is inspired by true events of a RAW mission between India and Pakistan in 1970. Altogether, they are completely different films and roles. For me, preparing for *Shershaah* has been a very long journey based on so many aspects. To prepare for his persona, I spoke with his parents and the comrades he served with. He was a good-hearted man, loving and enduring while being a focused leader of the Indian Army. I would say these qualities made him such a fierce soldier. I accomplished so much by getting his personality to the core. Getting to the technical side of being a soldier is a difficult role. I hope people get the essence of what Captain Batra stood for and the sacrifices he made for our country.



“I hope people get the essence of what Captain Batra stood for and the sacrifices he made for our country.”



On the relationship between Captain Batra and Dimple Cheema: : **“Yeh ek pyaari love story hai.”**

How much will the audience get to see of the love story of Captain Vikram Batra and Dimple Cheema?

Their love story is genuine, and romance is inspirational; it will make one believe in that old school of romance. The most important aspect of their romantic tale is that Dimpleji believed that whatever she got was enough for her to live with for the rest of her life. She never got married. She is living with those little moments that she shared with him. I have never met her, but we gathered as much by meeting their acquaintances. They did not get married, yet she is living in his name, which is proof enough of their classic love story and their relationship. We could have made a love story movie for 2 hours, but it is more about Capt Vikram Batra's Army life, and it is on the Indian Army Martyr we have focused on. However, the essence of their love story is there, and it is an inspirational love story. *Yeh ek pyaari love story hai*. In today's times such love stories are not found, I do agree.

Freedom, you will agree, is priceless. What was your moment of getting the feel of independence?

During my early Mumbai days, when I had just landed, I was 21. I was supposed to do a project, but it did not happen. This phase of mine in Mumbai was making me feel like an alien. I was struggling to find a strong foothold. This is the time I realised my independence as I was making all the decisions. Trying to strike a balance financially, paying my bills and locating a house to rent – this was a freedom in life but not in the most liberated way. You are liable to all decisions taken by you. Having gone through struggling days, some good while others worse, I have come to cherish it all.

With the film having been released on 15th August, we have to ask: what is your take on freedom?

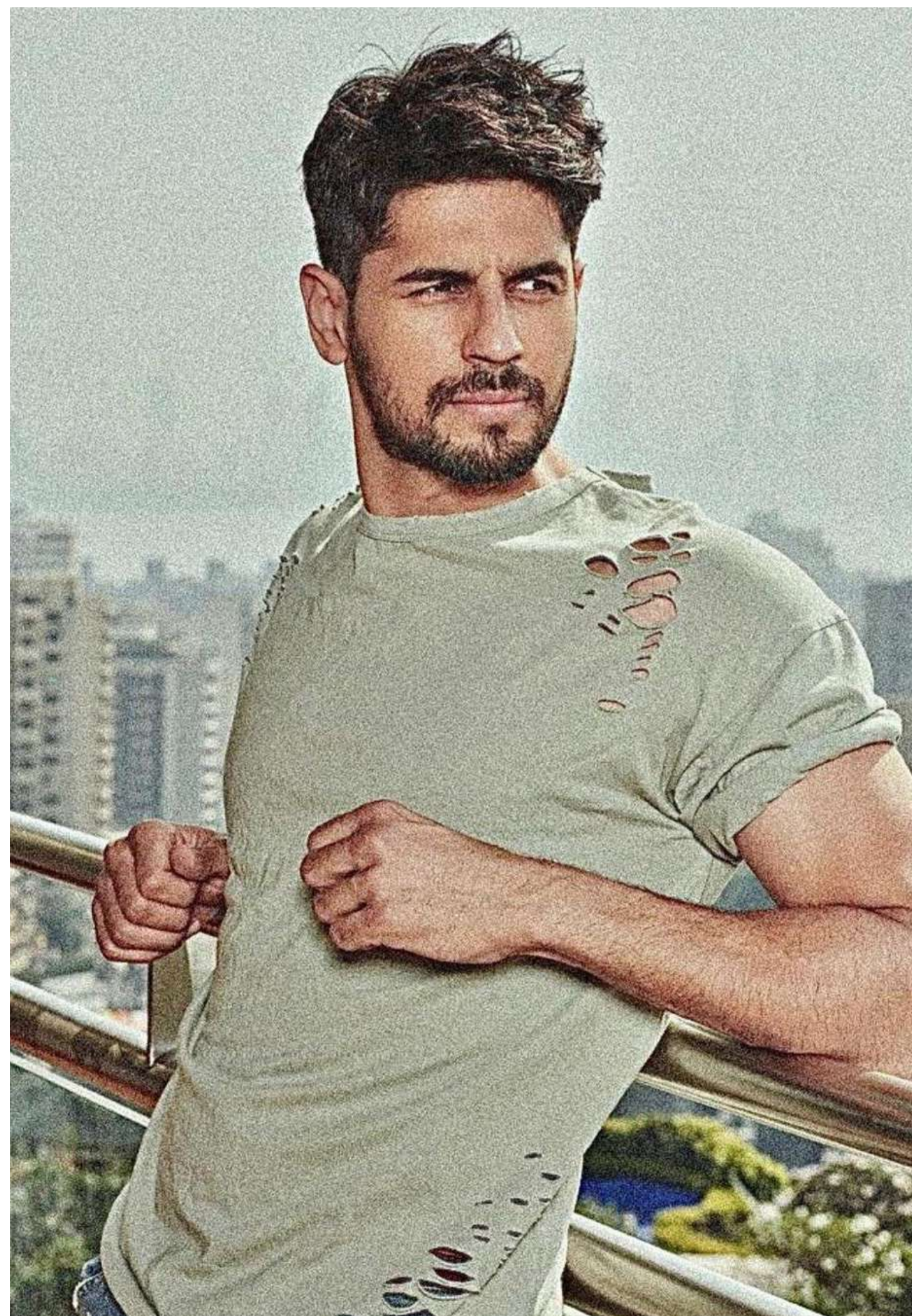
This 15th August is more special to me. The public should watch the film and extend their love and respect. People may keep saying we are not able to enjoy our independence, but we are the largest democratic nation in the world. It's not easy to make everyone happy. There will be a lot of politics and complications. When we go out of our country, we note it's very difficult for us to raise our voice as freely as we do here. Officially, we are free and should be proud to be the biggest democratic country. Our Armed forces have faced everything, and we should thank them manifold. I hope viewers gain increased inspiration from *Shershaah* and remember the importance of the independence we celebrate.

Tell us a little about the shooting schedule for *Shershaah*.

For the Kargil schedule, we were out there for 46 days. We did extensive physical preparation and gun training. We lived there as a unit, and we all did gym training together. The last scene was difficult. At such a time, your thought process is 'How do I do my version as an actor?' You feel the last emotions strongly – what he must have felt while he was counting down to his last breath. You get loads of inspiration. It's not easy to shoot in Kargil with the wind speed that is so fast. There is no grass and trees. Needless to say, a sense of gratitude is instilled, and the importance of Army personnel is realised.

How was it working with Kiara Advani?

Three years before the finalisation was done, Kiara's *Lust Stories* was screening. It is then we felt she has that genuine and earnest quality with which she performs every character of hers. Since the time the trailer and song have been released our *jodi* has been liked by the audiences. While not Punjabi herself, Kiara has carried the accent off very well. Kiara is an instinctive actor while I prefer rehearsing a few times. She of course rehearsed with me; her personal style is instinctive and with the flow. We are waiting to see how the audiences like this new *jodi* after the release of our film.



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“People need to know of our history, which has not been depicted a lot.”

Ajay Devgn

Lipika Varma, in conversation with Ajay Devgn, on *Bhuj*, the rise of OTT, and how he believes films are apt mediums to impart historical knowledge.

Actor, film director and producer Ajay Devgn has to his credit over one hundred films alongside not just one, but two National Awards to his name. His last theatrical release, *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior*, was a successful biographical film. It comes as no surprise to his viewers then that, with his next release, Devgn continues to push the envelope. *Bhuj: The Pride of India* is set during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. The film charts the life of Squadron Leader Vijay Karnik, then in charge of Bhuj airport. As has been seen with other films over the past year, *Bhuj* is now streaming on the OTT platform Disney+Hotstar.



On *Bhuj*, biopics, and historical lineage

After your last film *Tanhaji*, you seem to be doing another biopic with *Bhuj*. Is it a conscious decision? How realistic is this one?

Be real to the character; don't make it too *filmy*. Whatever you have seen, it's very real. When any person is fighting for his country, he is not showing off. It comes naturally from within. So, a film needs to be made true to its craft and should be based on reality. We have shown it to Army and Air Force personnel, and they are happy about it.



***Bhuj* was slated for theatrical release but is now an OTT venture. What do you think of the tussle between theatrical release and the OTT platform?**

There is no certainty that the third wave will not happen. While we have been facing losses as theatres have been shut, they will be made up for. Whenever theatres open, even across the world, people will go to watch films. We recently saw our film on the big screen for colour corrections. It was altogether a different experience. OTT is a very good chance for the industry. Most filmmakers from the industry keep arguing for theatre. Theatres will open and we producers will strike a good balance as films will still be seen in theatres. Many films can still be watched on OTT. *Bhuj* will be seen on OTT; it is a growth for the industry.

How important is it for the recent generation to know about India's unsung heroes and more of our history?

People need to know of our history, which has not been depicted a lot. The British tried to push our history under the carpet so that the sacrifices of our true heroes wouldn't come to the forefront. There is not much written about the unsung heroes in the school textbooks either. *Tanhaji's* bravery had a mention of half a page when we went to school, and this has disappeared now. We should talk about it. This generation does not know of all who fought and sacrificed their lives to get us freedom from the clutches of the British. When you understand the difficulty that has gone to achieve independence, you will come together. Real people have worked selflessly, and their sacrifices need to be remembered.

“Be real to the character; don't make it too *filmy*.”

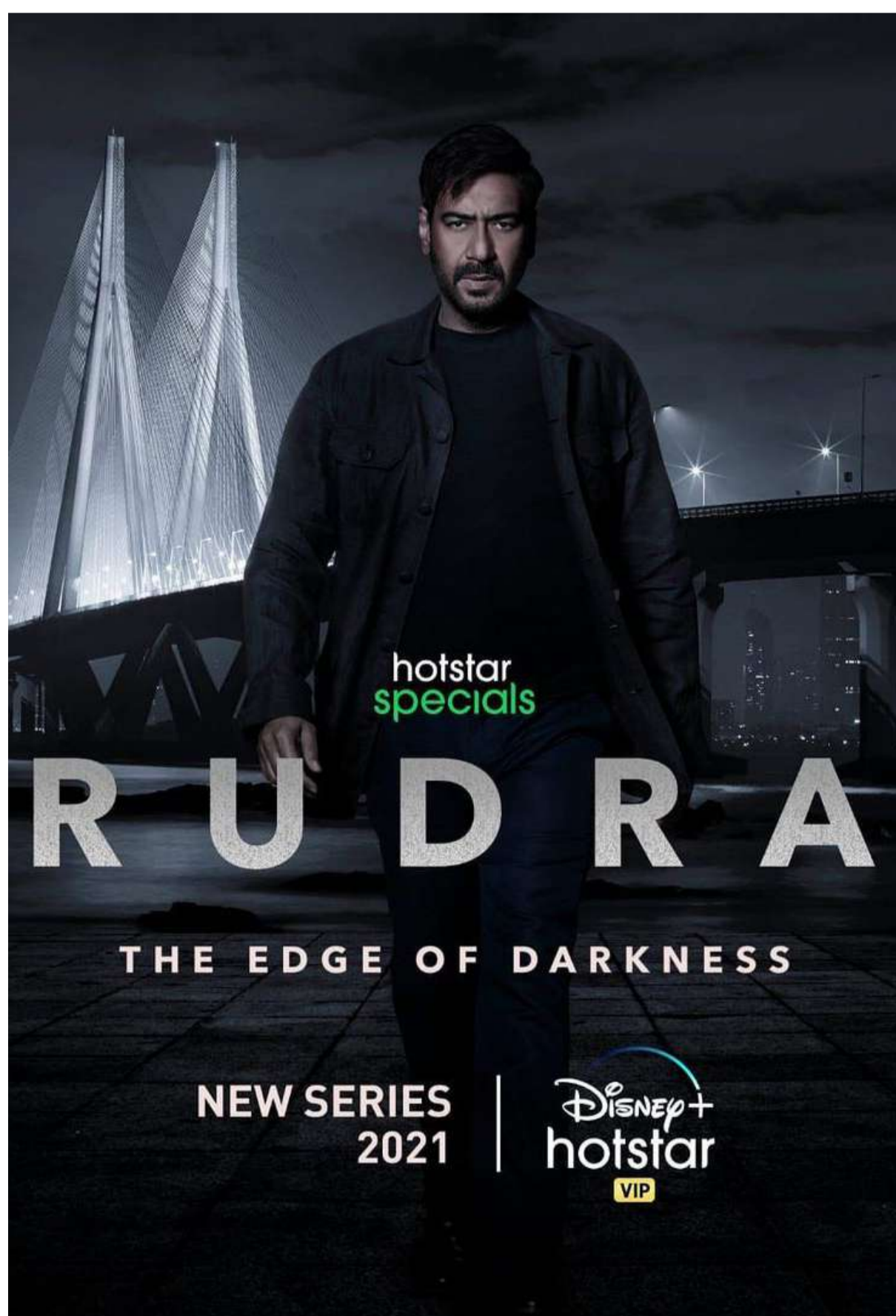
An Insider's Insight on the Industry

Do you agree that a big producer's muscle power will fetch him more theatres?

It's not that we are trying to create a loss for others, but we are trying to get maximum theatres to be able to show our product to many more people. There is nothing wrong with it. *Woh ladaayi toh chalti rahegi* [That fight will go on]. Many people are involved in the filmmaking process and so much money is spent. You will try your best that the product reaches the right place. Whether you are at loss, or the others are at loss...this happens in all the industries. We have no choice. Theatres are less compared to the number of films made every year, so this fight will continue.

You have debuted on OTT with *Rudra*. What difference did you find? What are do your future plans look like?

We are currently working on an OTT project and are planning a film. The idea of telling historical and biographical stories is merely for people to know about their sacrifices. We have completed *May Day* with just 4-5 days' work remaining. I debuted with *Rudra* on the OTT platform and realised working for OTT platforms is the same. Filming on OTT takes a lesser number of days in comparison to films. Also, we have to up our sleeves in terms of filmmaking and its storytelling. If it's not up to the mark, children also shun it within a minute and say, "Yeh kya bakwas hai."



“Whenever theatres open, even across the world, people will go to watch films.”



Many stars are shifting to working on OTT now. What do you make of this shift?

What do actors want? They want to be seen to the maximum. So, with the advent of platforms, it strikes a good balance between theatres and OTT. We can show our work on both OTT and films. This will enable the filmmakers to show their work to people all over.

Besting Social Media

Many say social media has become the deciding factor for how well films fare depending on reviews. How do you look at it?

The deciding factor is the film ultimately. Regarding the meter gauge of the film on OTT, that is there, we don't come to know exactly about it. But can make out knowing how well the film has been received and this helps you know about the success of the film. We cannot do anything as everyone has become the media by putting their own comments. The best part is to be away from it. I'm not much on Twitter or any other platform. I only use it whenever I feel like conveying something.

So how do you handle trolls?

Honestly, speaking on my phone, I am not operational on any social media platform be it Twitter or Instagram. The best way is not to keep updated. Whenever I wish to say something, I do go on it and write it on my social media platform. Most of the time we see cuss words written on it. There is no credibility about what is written. How do we know what is right and what is wrong? Only our trusted people's judgment makes sense. Most of the time I remain disconnected.



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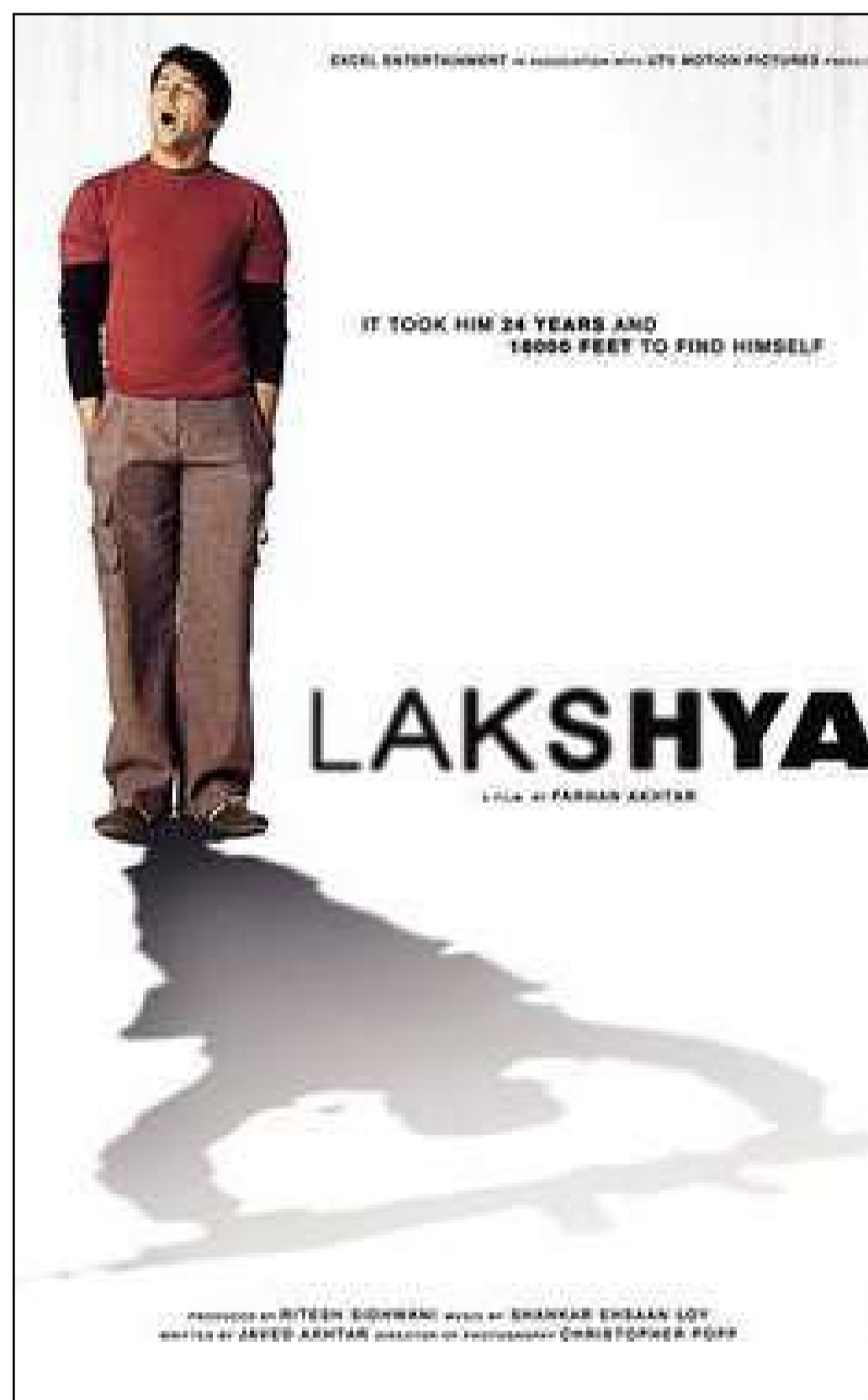
5 MOVIES TO GET YOU UP AND GOING THIS MONTH!

Being surrounded by uncertainty and unforeseen pauses in life, it is hard to motivate oneself to keep going. This is when, with a heroic entry, comes Cinema! As an art form, cinema has the power to move and ignite. GAURI HAKKERI compiles a list of FIVE MOVIES from DIFFERENT LANGUAGES that are guaranteed to fuel your spirits.



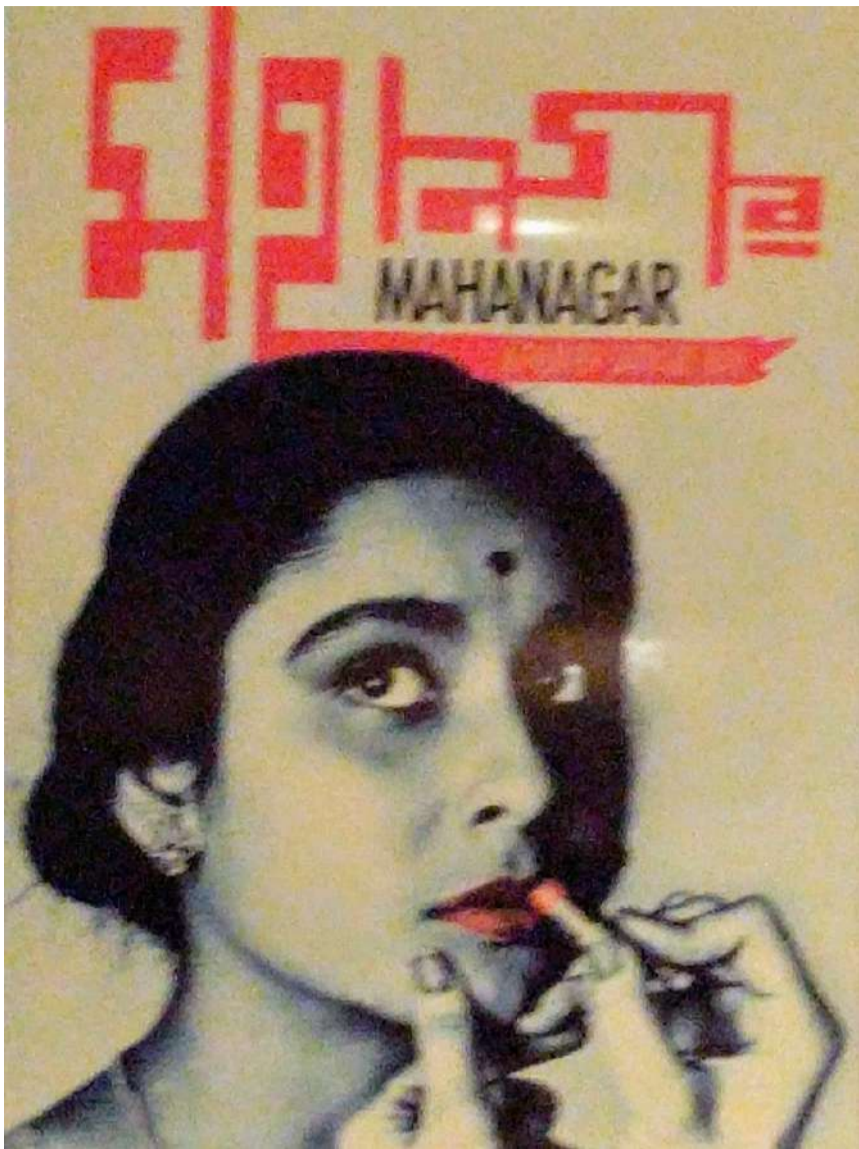
1. Lakshya (2004) *Hindi*

This is an old classic. Karan Shergill (Hrithik Roshan), a careless young man who has no plans or goals for his future, has to quit the Indian Military Academy due to his attitude. To prove himself to his family and his love interest (Preity Zinta), Karan returns to the military, works hard, and leads a victorious battalion in the Kargil War. The film ends with a moment of pride and pays respect to the martyrs of Operation Vijay.



2. Jersey (2019) *Telugu*

A beautiful blend of emotions, this sports drama is guaranteed to bring tears, joy, inspiration, and a ray of hope to every viewer. The story revolves around Arjun (Nani), a stellar Ranji cricketer who quits playing after repeated rejections into the national team due to selection politics. After losing his government job to wrongful accusations of bribery, Arjun is left with next to nothing to support his son and wife. His life begins an upward flight when his son asks for an Indian jersey, and he works hard to get one for him. Despite his old age for cricket, Arjun gets selected for the Hyderabad Ranji team and leads his team to victory. We won't spoil much for you, but there is a hidden plot that adds a twist you will never see coming!



3. Mahanagar (1963)
Bengali

Written and directed by the phenomenal Satyajit Ray, Mahanagar kindles the feelings of independence and righteousness. Arati (Madhabi Mukherjee), a homemaker, begins her job as a door-to-door saleswoman to help her family's financial crisis, despite constant disapproval from her conservative and orthodox in-laws and husband. With her newly developed sense of financial and psychological independence, Arati begins to prosper in her job. She however impulsively quits her job as a sign of protest when her manager unjustly fires another colleague. Apart from women's empowerment, this movie teaches us to overcome societal restrictions, fight injustice, and have the courage to follow one's passion and dreams.

4. Ardaas (2016)
Punjabi

Ardaas means 'to pray' or 'to request' to the supreme power. This Punjabi masterpiece showcases how Gurmukh Singh (Gurpreet Ghuggi), a teacher at a city school, solves people's problems in a village that he shifts to. Directed by Gippy Grewal, Ardaas portrays how every experience in life has some learning attached to it, and how those experiences can guide us towards success and peace of mind.



5. The Pursuit of Happyness (2006)
English

To discuss motivation and not bring up this movie's name would make this list incomplete. The Pursuit of Happyness is a biographical drama based on the life of Chris Gardner, an American businessman and a motivational speaker. Gardner (Will Smith) begins as a salesman selling portable bone-density scanners, who falls into the depth of a financial crisis, all while single-handedly raising his son when his wife leaves him. The story focuses on his determination and hard work towards a brokerage internship and acing a competitive exam to earn a brokerage license while struggling with eviction, homelessness and raising his young son. The movie ends with Chris securing a career as a broker and running to embrace his son. This movie assures us that with every down in life, there is a greater rise.

WATERMARKED A TO Z

Mallik Thatipalli, in an exclusive interview with **RATI MALAIYA**, author of the recent release *A-Z of Indian Cities*.

Tell us the story behind the book. How and when did you decide to write it?

My travels have always included a visit to local bookstores. Over the years, I came to notice that there were beautifully illustrated children's books dedicated to countries and cities from all over the world, but I never found such a resource for India. Almost as if it were destiny, my son Advait had to make a poster on Indian cities during the Independence week activities. I immediately turned to Google to help him make it. After that he always wanted me to "Ask Google" everything. This came as a huge reality check for me, and it was then that I decided to create this book.

How difficult is it to write for children? Can you tell us about the process behind it?

It's very difficult! I think everyone has his or her own process. This was my first attempt at writing, and I really did not have a process. I just had an idea and I wanted to see it on paper. *A-Z of Indian Cities* is an information treasure trove. This required me to do tonnes of research. Since it is for kids, the illustrations had to be eye-catching and engaging. For me, the key challenge was to bring myself to a child's level of reading and understanding. My kids turned out to be great guinea pigs to test out the content!

Any interesting story or anecdote that you can share about the book...

When the book came out, my kids would proudly show it off to all visitors with a special emphasis on the author's bio, because their names were mentioned there! Another incident that comes to mind is when we were reading about Hyderabad, the boys were very upset with me for not having shown them the Charminar! They made me write a promise note to make them see all of Hyderabad's beautiful monuments on their next visit to *Nani's* house.



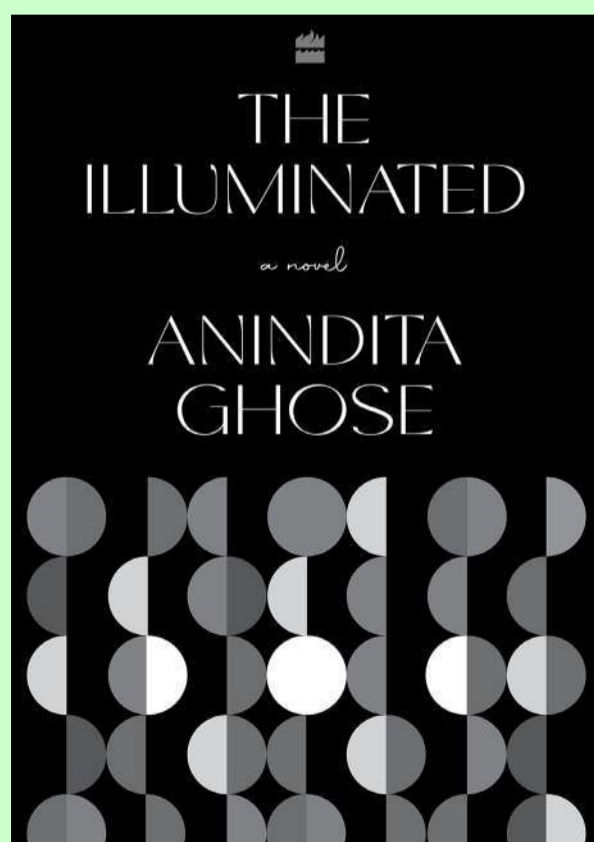
Rati Malaiya

How can we encourage kids to read?

I believe that kids emulate what they see. The only way to raise readers is to be one!

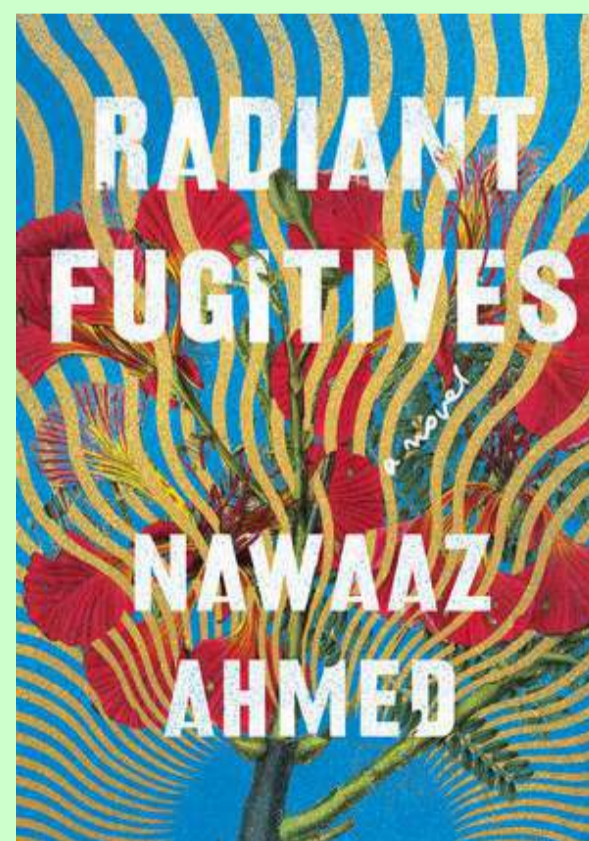
- Include reading as part of their bedtime routine
- Make a special reading corner
- Have bookshelves in their room
- Take trips to the local library
- Read yourself!

HOT ON THE STANDS!



The Illuminated
by Anindita Ghose

An extraordinary first novel, this superbly nuanced, intricately detailed tale is a study of two women, a mother, and a daughter, who drift apart and reconnect even as their lives unravel in the wake of a family tragedy and the all-too-righteous world around them becomes increasingly intrusive.



Radiant Fugitives
by Nawaaz Ahmed

A decade in the making, this debut novel takes place in Obama-era California, where Seema, who was exiled by her father after coming out, now works as a consultant for Kamala Harris' attorney general campaign. Now pregnant, she reconnects with her mother and devoutly religious sister in this complex novel about three generations of a Muslim Indian family – all told from the point of view of her child at birth.

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