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August 2022

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SOCIALLY
CONSCIOUS
BRANDS

**FASHION
ALERT**
Do's and
Don'ts this
2022

NAAZ JOSHI

India's first
Transgender Model

K-Pop Korean
theme restaurants
you must visit!

India's popular
Ganesh Pandals

Mysteries *of*
Mahakaleshwar

TAAPSEE PANNU

**"I HAVE SIGNED 6 FILMS,
WHERE IS THE TIME FOR MARRIAGE?"**

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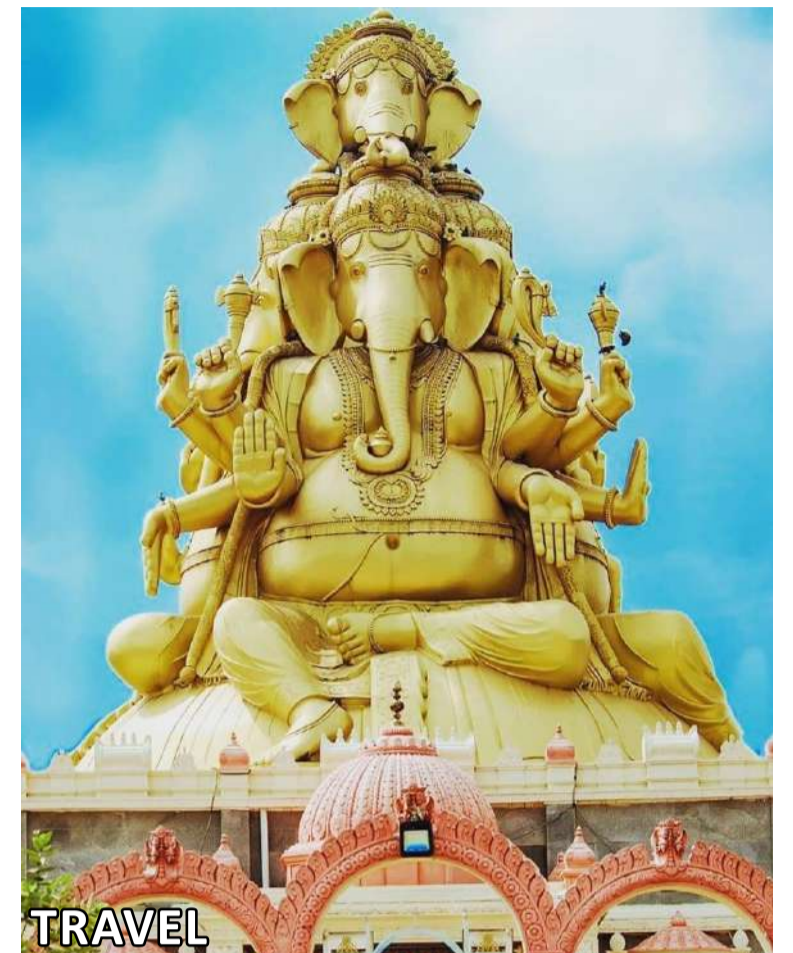
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From the **E**EDITOR

When life throws you lemons...



Life is definitely not easy, but it is also not as difficult as we make it out to be. It is entirely within our power to emote or react to any given situation. We cannot control fate, but we can certainly control how we respond to all of life's curveballs. You can spend a lifetime whining and crying about it, or you can simply accept it! In this issue, we have Taapsee Pannu as our cover girl, who plays Mithali Raj, captain of the women's Indian cricket team, in her biopic Shabaash Mithu. She discusses how women in general, as well as women's cricket, exist in the shadow of men. The society we live in may be patriarchal, but that doesn't deter her determination. "It can't happen overnight, it's going to happen over decades. But, if I or my contemporaries give up on this struggle, the next generation will definitely not be able to see the change," she assures.

Naaz Joshi's story and journey as India's first transgender model is equally inspiring! The Joshi family from Delhi were blessed with their first child, a boy. Little did they know, their joy would turn into sorrow, as he turned out to be a transgender. From being abused as a child to dancing in a bar to finally undergoing hormone therapy and winning pageants, Naaz has always chosen to look beyond the situations and challenges that life has thrown at her.

We have a lot more inspiring stories in this issue; Chennai-based NRI Meghana Reddy pursued her career in animation in a foreign land, while Noopur Porwal and Akash Devaraju ventured into the uncharted territory of probiotic products with their start-up. Saba Poonawalla is a versatile animal trainer, dog cognitive developer, and behaviourist. Her dedication and focus enabled her to pursue her passion, which has since provided her with happiness.



None of these people were handed life on a silver platter, but they were all resilient. As humans, we have the unique ability to choose how we respond to any set of circumstances. Throw in some humour, and you'll be able to cope with difficulties, weather disappointment, and recover from adversity and loss. So, when life gives you lemons, don't just settle for lemonade; but make sure you throw in some mojitos too!



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Hash#ag INDIA

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**THE
HAPPINESS
CO**





**DELICIOUS
AND
CRUNCHY**



UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 2022

DANCE UNITED XCLUSIVES FEATURING NUCLEYA

Nucleya, the undeniably important and powerful musician, is solely responsible for creating sound and developing an Indian bass music language. As an Indian Dance Music Producer, he has been ecstatic to open for global touring bands and authentic bass artists. Bangalore, it's finally time to see the most spectacular and exciting show. Do not let this opportunity pass you by!

Date: 13 August 2022

Time: 6:00 pm

Fee: 999/- onwards

Venue: The Lalit Ashok Bangalore, Bengaluru



Tarnetar Fair

The Gujarati festival, held in Thangadh village, is well-known for its songs, colour, art, and fun. The celebration is held in honour of unmarried indigenous men and women who've been looking for prospective partners. This carnival includes traditional dance, singing, artisan vendors, carnival rides, magic performances, and other activities. For the past 250 years, this event has been held at the temple grounds of Triniteshwar Mahadev Temple.

Date: 29 – 31 August 2022

Venue: Gujrat



Punchliners Comedy Show Ft Sai Kiran



Stand-up comedy events are the most popular among millennials. Furthermore, they are now considered a fad. What could be more amazing than seeing this show live? Punchliners in association with Sai Kiran is ready to amuse all Hyderabadis who enjoy stand-up comedy. Make a reservation to tease your quirky side!

Date: 21 August 2022

Time: 07:00 pm

Fee: 399/-

Venue: Hard Rock Cafe, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad

Athachamayam Festival

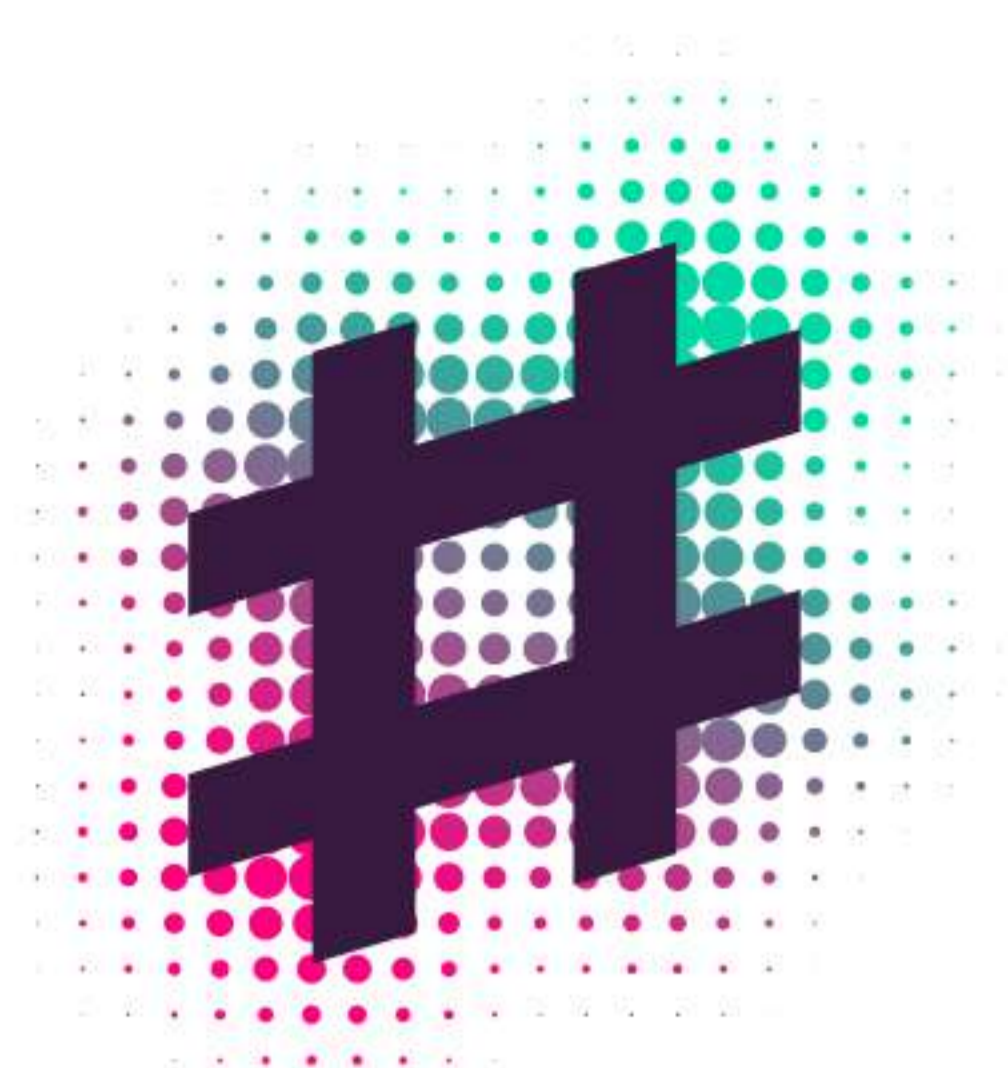


The Athachamayam Festival celebrates the commencement of the Onam festival. This celebration is organized in Thripunithura. A spectacular parade is held wherein the idol of King Mahabali is carried across the city followed by elephants, a vocal band, decorations, and performers. This parade draws a large crowd, and you can experience the region's vibrant native musical and dancing traditions.

Date: 30 August 2022

Venue: Thripunithura, Kerala

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



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TRENDING NOW

WHERE IS THE TIME FOR MARRIAGE?

Taapsee Panna

Taapsee Pannu who gained notice for her performances in the Hindi spy film *Baby* (2015) and the courtroom drama *Pink* (2016), both of which were critical and commercial successes is happy in both her professional and personal sphere. Her latest film *Shabaash Mithu*, directed by Srijit Mukherjee is a biopic of woman cricketer, Mithali Raj who struggled to get recognition for women cricketers. With other projects lined up, Taapsee will be heading out of the country to shoot *Dunki*, directed by Raju Hirani, starring Shahrukh Khan. In conversation with **Lipika Varma**, she talks about her films, the industry and more...



Professional Trade/films-

How does it feel to have your film *Shabaash Mithu*, releasing in theatres, any pressure?

We waited for a theatre release for so long and every actor has that pressure about his/her film releasing in theatres. One who has the interest of shouldering the release on his/her self that individual will have to deal with this responsibility. It depends on the pressure. It's like a gamble. Nobody knows how many people will enter the theatres. If anyone assures you about the number of people entering the cinema halls then those calculations and formulas prove wrong.

When playing the role of a female underdog cricketer's struggle, what similarities did you find in your journey?

Cricket and films in our country are considered as religions, those are the similarities! People are mad for films and cricket, but people would rather watch men's cricket, or films with famous male leads, and say they are cricket lovers or movie lovers. I feel people should not differentiate by looking at who is holding the bat or who is taking the film on their shoulders. When a female-led film is released, people wait for the review, but, advance book tickets when a male-led film is released. These gender biases should not come in.



"CRICKET AND FILMS IN OUR COUNTRY ARE CONSIDERED AS RELIGIONS, THOSE ARE THE SIMILARITIES"

Do you feel your struggle has now come to an end?

My struggle still continues! My pictures should now have a good budget, because female-driven budgets are never large. And even if it is successful, the film will struggle to find a large number of screens. Women driven films also don't get good shows.

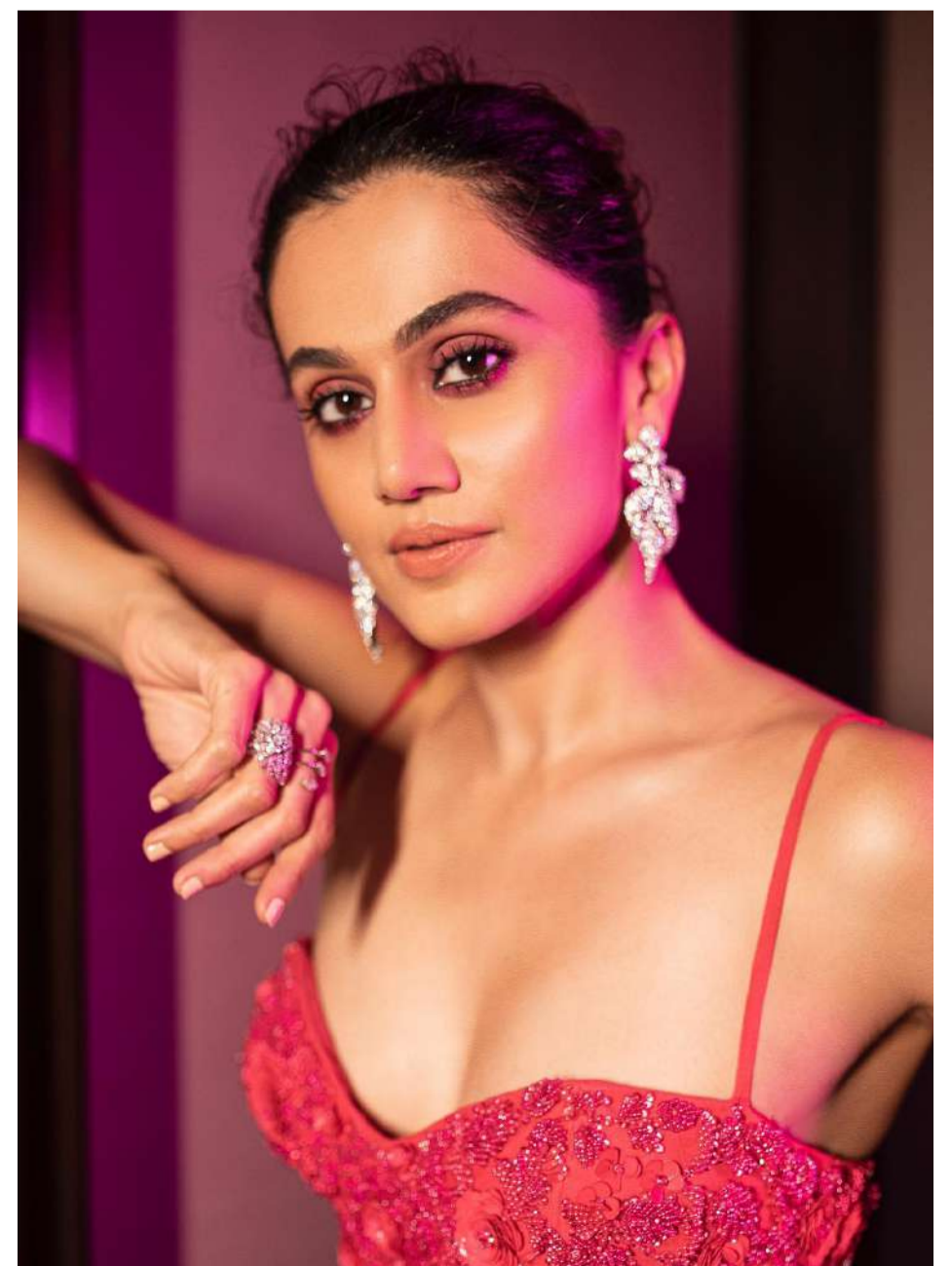


How was it working with director Srijit Mukherje?

I felt relaxed and confident working with him because he was a cricket lover. I knew this biopic is in the right hands and he would do it well.

What is your take on all Bollywood films have been sinking at the box office, in recent times?

When were all of the Bollywood films successful? A few were successful in each period. How do you know films are not recovering? Big films used to fail earlier too! We earn revenue in other ways, it makes no difference if a film releases on OTT after having been released in theatres a month later. It's about your business, you decide and earn on your product. It all depends on where you feel you will find your audiences the most and you are confident where the show will run, be it OTT or theatres, and I make the deal accordingly. There are no two films that will have the same deal, I learned trade business before starting productions.



"WHEN A FEMALE-LED FILM IS RELEASED, PEOPLE WAIT FOR THE REVIEW, BUT, ADVANCE BOOK TICKETS WHEN A MALE-LED FILM IS RELEASED."

Personal life-

When are you planning to get married?

I have three films that are ready for release and I have signed 5 to 6 films which have to be shot and released. Where is the time for marriage?

What do you have to say about long distance relationships?

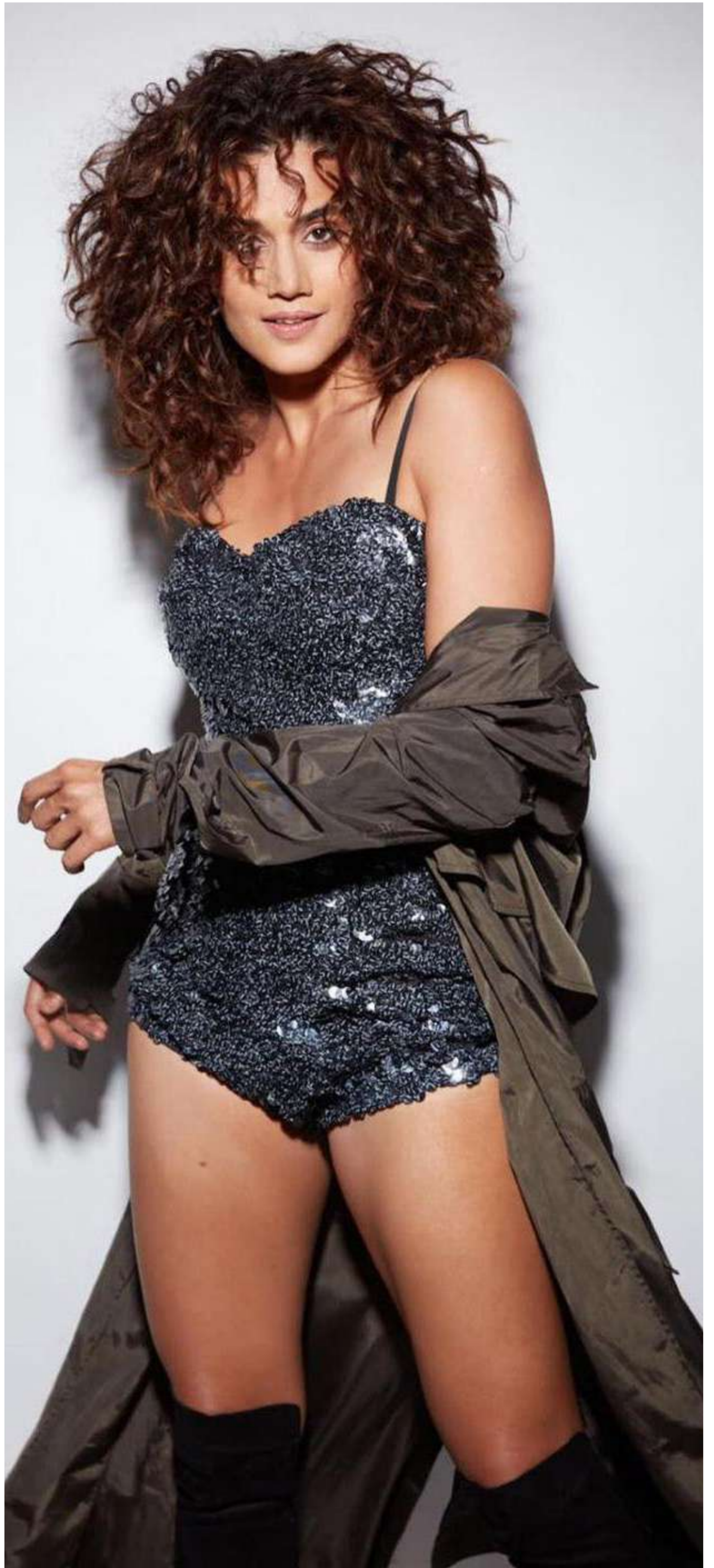
I have been in a long distance relationship for the past 10 years and nobody knew about it, but now my value seems to have risen so people want to know about my long distance relationship!

Is it because you're in love that your face is glowing and we can see the blossom on your face?

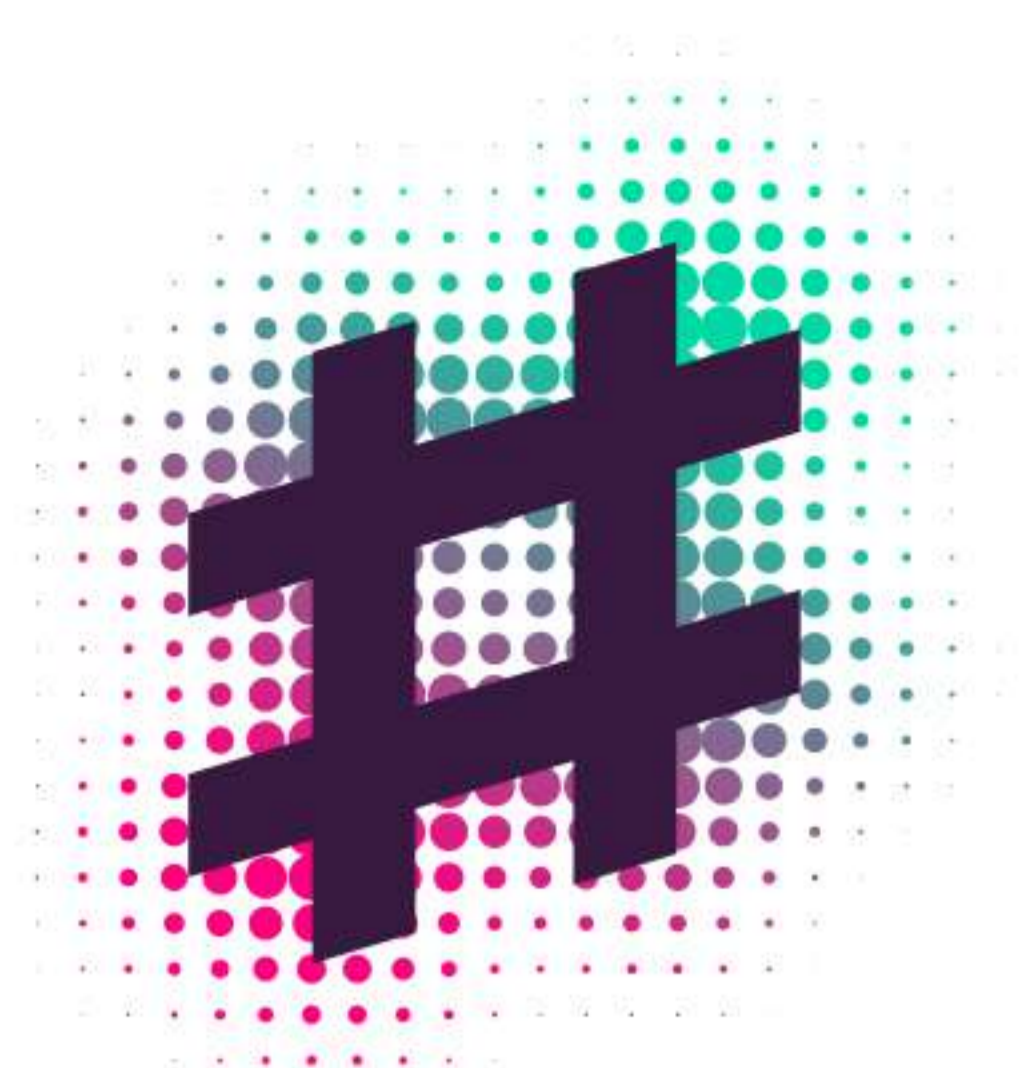
(Laughs) No blossom because of anyone, please, the credit and hard work to look fresh is mine... let me take that credit!

What are your beauty and fitness mantras?

I'm just like wine, getting better with age!



"I'M JUST LIKE WINE, GETTING BETTER WITH AGE!"



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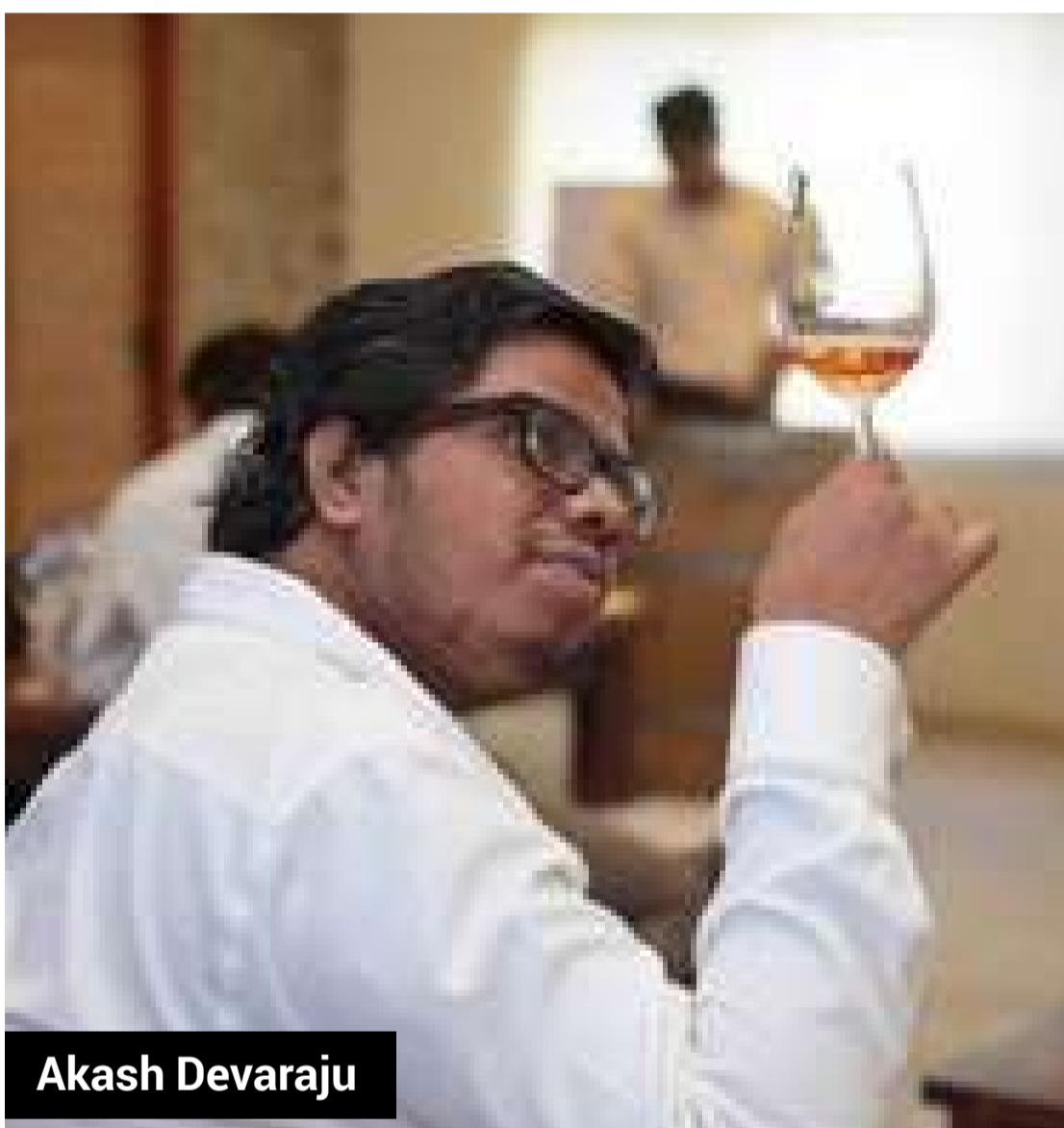
START UPS

Quirky entrepreneurs redefining the

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

SECTOR

Joining in with a candid conversation **Noopur Porwal** and **Akash Devaraju**, the founders of Local Ferment and Co share their road to success with **P Manisha**. Beginning from the uncharted idea of probiotic products, here's an anecdote from their lives as entrepreneurs with a peep into their personality and motivations that have shaped the company as it is today.



Akash Devaraju

Local Ferment and Co -- Brainchild of these entrepreneurial partners.

Noopur and Akash acquaint us with Local Ferment and Co with pride as a microbrewery and kitchen, manufacturing things pro-biotic with resources secured from locally available fruits, spices, and herbs.

The company's diverse repertoire includes The Bakery, The Bar, and The Beverages. From mouth-melting freshly baked and long-fermented bakes & viennoiserie in the bakery to traditional Kombucha, Jun and cocktails, Noopur and Akash are transforming the way the beverages are made and consumed.

Probiotics are a significant attribute of Local Ferment and Co. "We don't just promote Local Ferment and Co as a probiotic gourmet company, but a 'Better for You' beverage company with probiotic products that are better in taste, made with honest ingredients, and appealing to the eyes," relay the duo.

When asked where they operate, they smile and say that though headquartered in Bangalore, they are a Pan-India company with substantial market and activity in Delhi, Goa, Jaipur, Bangalore, Calcutta, and Hyderabad.



Noopur Porwal



The beginning of their journey with Local Ferment and Co.

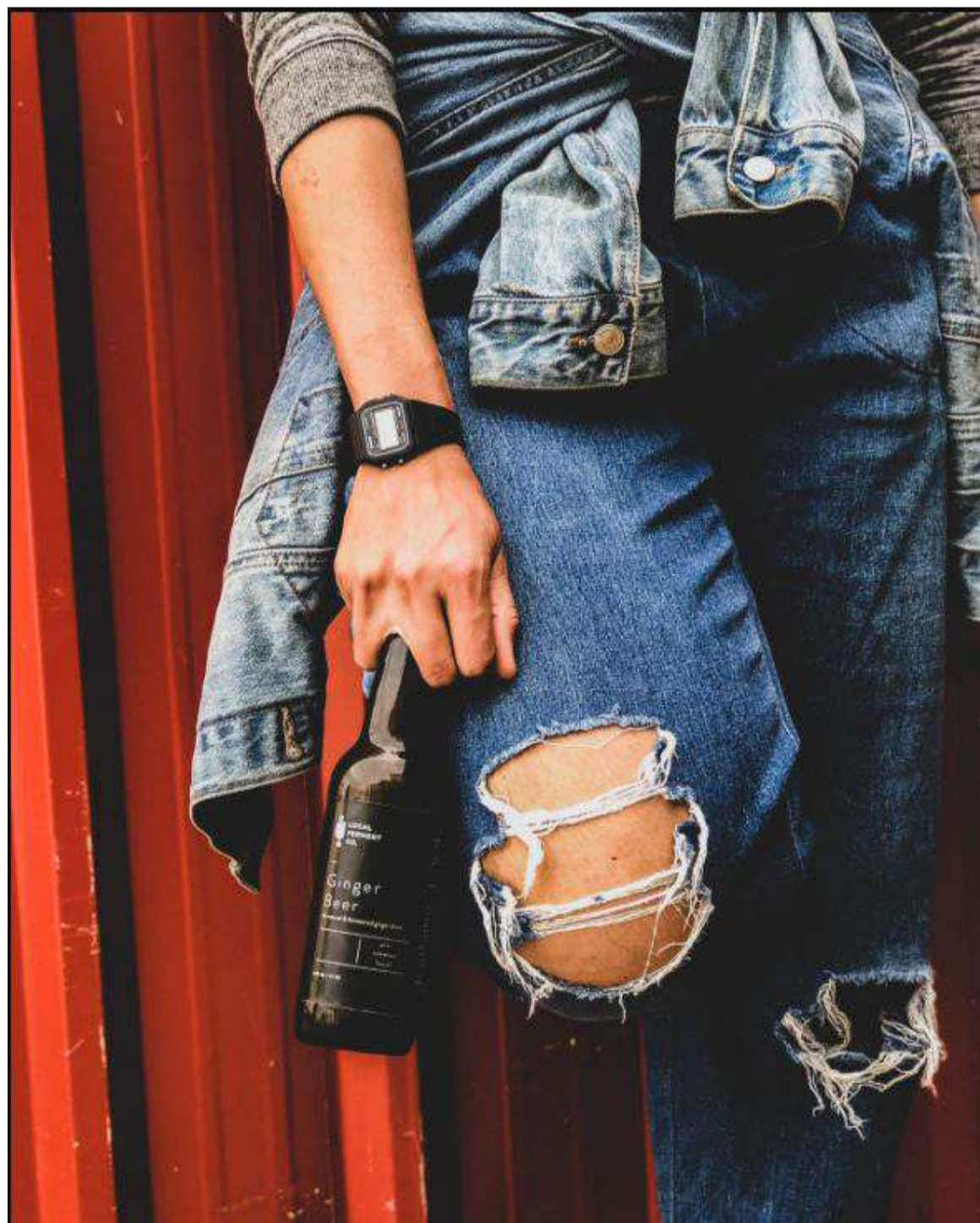
Both Noopur and Akash are engineers by profession and entrepreneurs by passion. In our conversation, we discussed how the shift from technical grounding to the culinary high has been quite natural and seamless. The transition from an experienced technical engineer to a novice in the gourmet scenario was rooted in the passion they have for cooking, enhanced by the satisfaction they get from cooking for others.

In a display of incredible foresight, Akash responds, "At the height of my tech career I realized my passion for cooking and if I face any glitches I can always go back to it (technical career)."

Akash started by collaborating with cafés and restaurants as a house-run business to bring the pro-biotic products closer to bon vivants of India. Noopur proceeded to pitch in during the transition to a professional business and has been a business partner ever since.

The dream of Local Ferment and Co took shape as an execution in the celebrated city of Jaipur in June 2019 and finally emerged as a full-fledged company in October 2020 in Bangalore. Noopur and Akash currently run their business from Wilson Garden Bangalore.

"Our customers are always welcome to come catch a glimpse of our working base," they invite.



When asked how they handle these multiple hats, Noopur simply says, "Good organization and planned logistics."

Having a technical background, Noopur, and Akash design and build their equipment. According to the founders, their recent pasteurizing machine is a great fit within their startup's financial and spatial constraints, which they intend to convey to their business counterparts through video content. Venturing into a new arena of product development is one of the entrepreneurial duo's not-so-secret ambitions.

"Food company is also a tech business and a design business," says Akash, a belief they live by.

During the pandemic and post-pandemic periods, the cloud business, which the founders adopted early on, has proven to be their biggest asset.

Further plans and aspirations

Akash and Noopur plan to explore and experiment with the probiotic part of their products. Food and beverages that are probiotic but taste and look better than the existing probiotic products are the goals to achieve shortly. Noopur discloses, "We aim to become a NextGen Beverage Company in the long run."

A physical space for consumers to dine in is also on their agenda for the future. Plans to permanently establish and launch their merchandise in Pan-India markets including Hyderabad are already set to go. "Very soon the Hyderabadis are in for a healthy and tasty treat," said the entrepreneurial buddies.

Akash and Noopur --Not just chefs but competent entrepreneurs

With a close-knit team of about four people, Noopur and Akash handle all the aspects of business, from defining their beverages, dwelling on the probiotic facet, marketing, and packaging. Quirkiness in the process and essence is a brand personality of the founders that bled into the Local Ferment and Co.

Quirky bits

Beverages appetite

Look out for -

Must Try's -

For wine connoisseurs -

Kombucha, Jun

Sunday Randoms, Subscriptions, Customized Gifting.

Cherry Cola's, Shrubs, and sandwiches

Shrubs, Zero-proof Cocktail kit



NRI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Making her Mark

—Meghana Reddy

From doodling on notebooks during class to working on animated films, Meghana Reddy has come a long way. Currently the Lead Concept Artist at Amplify Education, where she collaborates with authors and creates illustrations for children's books for schools all across North and South America she has been the 2D/ 3D artist for animated films like Elf Pets: Santa's Reindeer Rescue, Elf Pets: Fox Cub's Christmas Tale. The Chennai-born artist talks about her journey and how she started her career in animation.

Mallik Thatipalli catches up with artist **Meghana Reddy** who talks about her inspirations, how she chased her dream in a foreign land and more...

CHASING HER DREAMS

At the age of six, Meghana began painting using watercolours, acrylics, and oils. Even as a child she enjoyed creating and letting her imagination run free on a canvas. No wonder she worked for the award-winning animation company Primal Screen and carved a niche for herself.

"Even in high school, I was the kid who would scribble in my notebooks during class," recalls the 29-year-old, "I chose to take up art lessons after school because there weren't many design or arts-related subjects offered where I studied. At the time, it was the only creative outlet I had, and it helped to shape what I do now."



"I chose to take up art lessons after school because there weren't many design or arts-related subjects offered where I studied. At the time, it was the only creative outlet I had, and it helped to shape what I do now."

PURSUING HER DREAMS

After a couple of years, the youngster began studying design foundation and gained knowledge about everything, from the history of animation to fine arts, design, packaging, printing, and filmmaking. The Chennai-born artist moved to the US in 2016 and admits that she was a tad nervous as it was the first time she was leaving home.

"I wasn't entirely sure what to expect but, I was excited to meet a bunch of creative folks and explore the city of Savannah and the culture. What I loved about Savannah the most, was the diversity of people. There were so many people I met from all over the world and of course from Chennai as well, that instantly made me feel at home. I learnt so much from meeting some amazing people and understanding all their different cultures and backgrounds and got to explore more, travel more, and eat a ton of great food." she recalls.



“I think when you have a big idea or a goal that you want to work towards, it is going to be a bumpy ride. There are going to be many challenges along the way, especially in the creative field.”

Being in the US taught her to be responsible and more independent. It also bought her closer to her dream of animation. Ask her what is it about animation that gets her excited and the youngster rattles off, “I love storytelling, and to pair that with the creation of exaggerated characters who could bring that story to life is something I always found exciting. Also, I do have to say that my dad played a tiny role in contributing to my passion. He had the most insatiable curiosity for art, especially when it came to filmmaking and special effects.”

Meghana recalls how her father would always watch a film from an artist’s perspective and get inquisitive about the making. She smiles, “He was all about the detail. His obsession fuelled my pursuit of art and design. We watched every animated film we could, and I slowly started to wonder about every question he had, as I grew older.”

After graduating from Savannah College of Art and Design, Meghana moved to Atlanta, Georgia, to work with the award-winning animation company Primal Screen. At Primal Screen, she worked as a 2D/ 3D Artist on two animated films called ‘Elf Pets: Santa’s Reindeer Rescue’ and ‘Elf Pets: Fox Cub’s Christmas Tale.’

These films are currently streaming on Netflix and have been featured in some popular publications, such as Variety, Hollywood Reporter, Deadline, The New York Post, The Guardian, and Washington Post amongst others. “The best part about working on these films was the team I worked with. Since this was my first production, I learnt so much from them and they’re a quirky and hilarious bunch of people,” she shares.



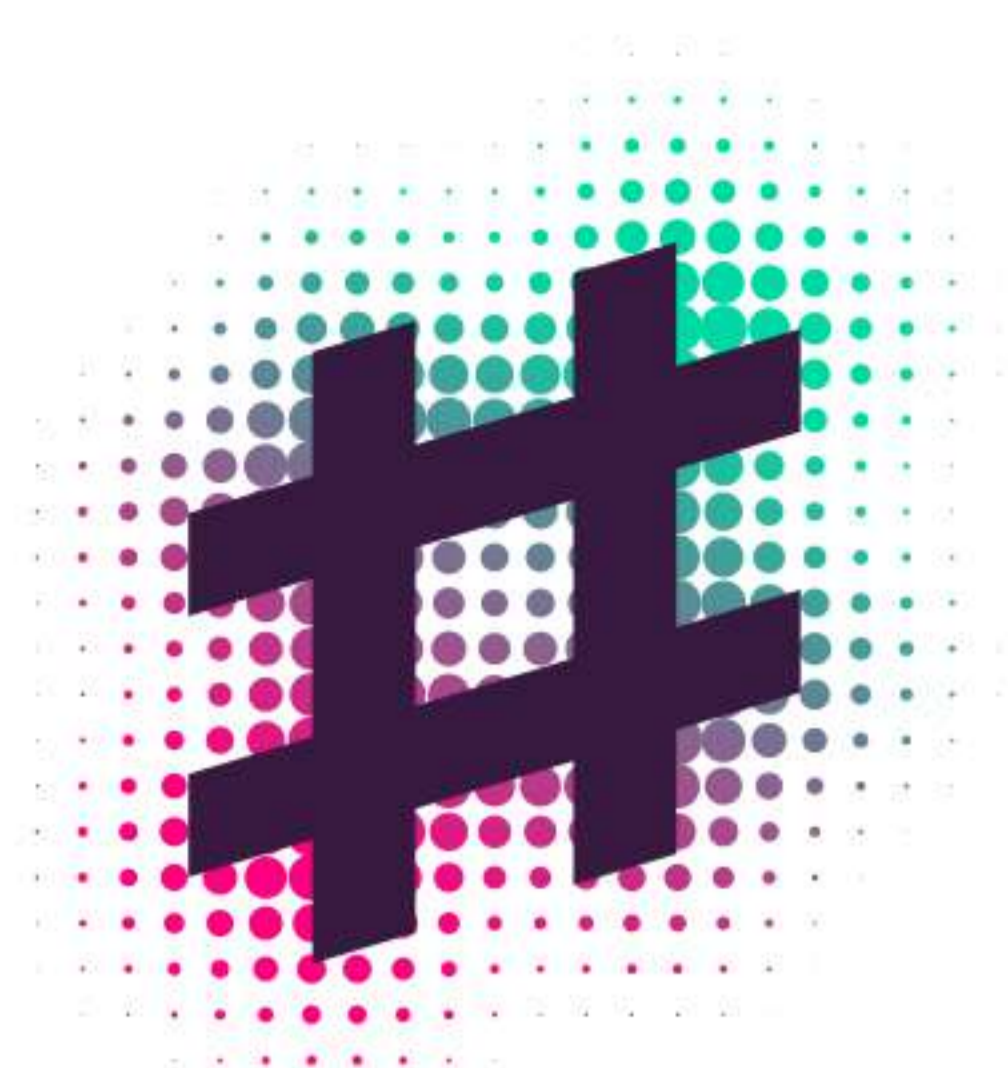
THE JOURNEY AND THE FUTURE

The youngster had to face her share of challenges on the way. “I think when you have a big idea or a goal that you want to work towards, it is going to be a bumpy ride. There are going to be many challenges along the way, especially in the creative field. For me, it was a struggle in achieving a work-life balance. I would dedicate all my time to working and very little to my lifestyle, which I have fixed over the last couple of months,” she states.

As an Indian in America, she stays connected to her roots, the constant tradition she decided to maintain is celebrating all the Indian festivals. “We invite some of our non-Indian friends to experience and share our culture with them. And of course, they all love our Indian food.” she chuckles.

Being in the field for over 5 years has made Meghana challenge herself to learn new things and branch out. “There is a huge buzz and increase in technology that is ascending with an infinite number of possibilities and creativity has no end in sight. I want to navigate my career by combining my skills as a 2D/3D Artist with User Interface and User Experience Design and take up meaningful projects that positively impact the day-to-day lives of people,” she signs off.

Follow Meghana at [@meg_reddy](https://www.instagram.com/meg_reddy)



h a s h t a g

FOR A CAUSE

NAAZ JOSHI – INDIA'S FIRST TRANSGENDER MODEL WINS HEARTS AROUND THE WORLD

Naaz Joshi is one of the most unique transgenders who bares it all when she speaks about the ordeals of her life. You can hear her zest for life in her voice. She opens her heart out to **Canta Dadlaney**; from being a transgender, a sex worker, an award-winning beauty queen (the first Indian transgender) and now a mother!

On the eve of 1985, the Joshi's (Delhi) were blessed with their first child, a boy. Little did they know, their joy would turn into sorrow, as he turned out to be a transgender. Born to a Punjabi father and a Muslim mother, Naaz (her chosen name), even as a child, was cognizant of the fact that she felt discomfort with the anatomy of a male.

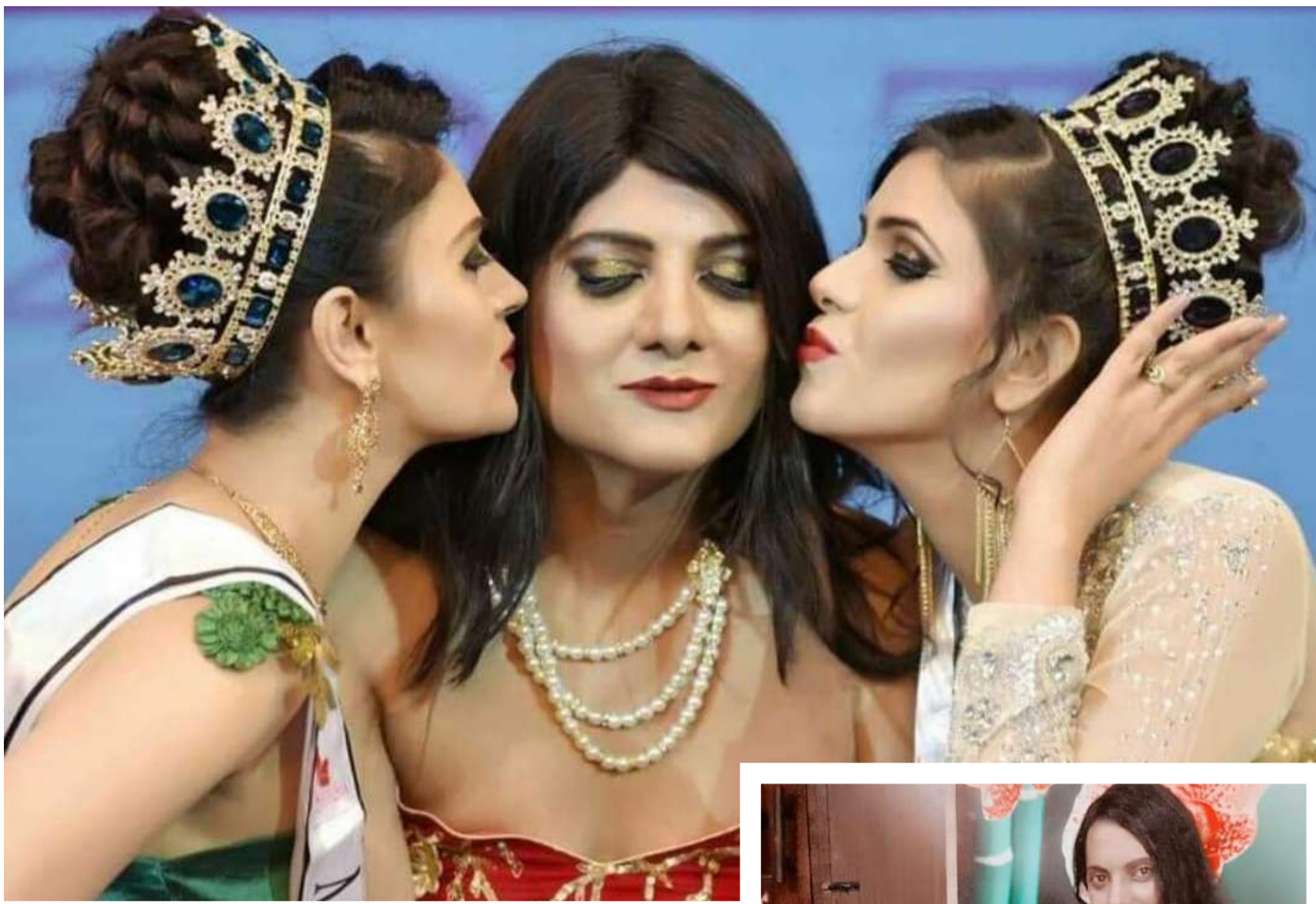
Her two siblings, brother and sister are 'normal beings' as her mom would put it. "She may have guessed that I was different and she hated me." That maternal hatred made Naaz more determined to make her life meaningful. You can discuss anything under the sun with Naaz -from Nazia Hassan, the singer after whom she changed her original name to Naaz, to Caitlyn Jenner (earlier, William Bruce Jenner). Her natural fashion design skills enabled her to work with the likes of Ritu Beri. She has walked



the ramp, represented India on a global platform and her head has adorned many glittering crowns but the journey so far had its fair share of difficulties.

The 5' 10" Naaz is intelligent, and beautiful and is India's first international Trans Model. From being the Ambassador to Miss United Nations in 2016 to winning Miss Universe Diversity (2017-2018 and 2019-2020) in 2020, Naaz has been awarded a string of impressive awards. From Dubai and Jamaica to Mauritius, Singapore and New York, she has been acknowledged and was even awarded in Lesotho, in South Africa. In 2018, Naaz adopted a girl child albeit under her parents' family name as per the requirements of the law. "It was one of the most fulfilling and beautiful moments of my life."

**She may have
guessed that
I was
different and
she hated
me.**



Though her brother and his wife are lawyers and her sister and brother-in-law are doctors, Naaz has made her presence felt in numerous ways. There isn't a day, perhaps, when she is not approached to preside over a beauty contest or give a motivational talk.

Naaz states, "My journey has just begun. I want to work toward society respecting the transgender community. They need to be educated, provided with jobs and allowed to live with respect, as part of everyday society."

At what age did you start feeling you were not meant to be a boy?

From a very early age. I loved playing with dolls, dancing like a typical damsel, applying lipsticks and wearing dupattas instead of wearing shorts and suspenders. If I would accompany my mom somewhere, the neighbourhood kids would pass rude comments and it was my mom who became the butt of jokes. By the time my younger brother was born, my mom, fed up with these wisecracks, decided to send me to her cousin in Mumbai. My parents gave him a lot of money for my upbringing and to at least complete my 12th standard. In retrospect, they didn't want to expose me in Delhi, or perhaps they were ashamed of me, I think it was the latter.

How were the years growing up in Mumbai?

In Mumbai, I lived in a compact place, with six other kids. My mom's cousin enrolled me in a school but I decided, even then, to earn some money for myself. My uncle allowed me to work at a *Dhaba* next to Film City. I would work for half the day there and the other half, attend school. I was a happy, 11-year-old kid even if I was far away from home. I remember meeting all the big stars of the Hindi film industry and they all treated me well.



Were you abused and confused during those years?

Yes, I was abused at a tender age. It's all fuzzy now but I do have some memories. One day, after I returned home from school, my cousins were entertaining some of their friends. They asked me to join them. I refused and started doing my homework. They forced me to drink with them, telling me '*Mard ho jaoage*' (you will become a man)! I recall it was a very cold drink and I woke up in a hospital! I immediately knew that something had gone wrong but couldn't put a finger on it. I was given a lot of glucose, and my uncle told me I would have to stay there for a few days and left. Four days later, the ward nurse told me I was good to leave. I stared at her in disbelief because where was I to go?

From a very early age, I loved playing with dolls, dancing like a typical damsel, applying lipsticks and wearing dupattas.

Indeed, you could have gone back to your uncle's place?

As I stared at the nurse, I found two men who were receiving treatment in the same ward listening to me attentively. They were from the Hijra Samoday (Kinnar community). They assured me they would look after me, and they did treat me well. They trained me how to beg at traffic signals by clapping in the traditional hijra way and beg for money. I found that utterly derogatory and they sensed that. Their Guru-maa (Head of the community) told me not to get dismayed for if I worked dedicatedly, I would earn a lakh of rupees a month, by the time I reached her age, but I refused! They were kind enough to find me a job in a nearby dance bar. The owner was a Yajman (host) of the Kinnar community and respected transgender people immensely. I poured my heart to him. I had already lost a year of academic studies. He put me back on the education track – something I can never forget!

You also started dancing in his dance bar, is that right?

Yes. I didn't want to depend on his kindness. I wanted to earn money though he was adamant as I was very young. But with the help of the other individuals from the Kinnar community who used to dance there, I set foot into this new phase of my life. They taught me the art of applying make-up and the latest dance moves as well. Things then changed for me. These dancers then asked me to indulge in sex work.





And you did! Why?

I was a dance bar girl! I had to have cosmetics. I remember, it was the era of Shanaz Husain and L'Oréal and I was determined to buy their products but didn't have money. But honestly, I was very keen to complete my education and I needed money for my Class 11. I had my first sexual contact at the age of 14!

Is it true Orkut change your destiny?

In 1999, I bought my first Nokia phone and then came Orkut. Orkut was an instant hit with everyone. One day in 2002, I came across an image of Viveka Babajee (who later became a well-known model) and myself! It was a childhood photo but I recognized myself. I connected with her through Orkut and we met in Bandra, where she was living. She was very hospitable and allowed me to stay with her. That was a turning point in my life. Once, she had to go to a party organized by Rocky S and I designed a gown for her, from my past design sketches (scrapbook). When she realized I had that natural gift she encouraged me to become a fashion designer. After her passing away, I decided to carry forward her dream of becoming a famous model.



Was that on your agenda? Walking the ramp?

I applied to NIFT and passed with flying colours. I worked for a month in the design department and the Director mentioned an opportunity in Delhi to enhance my skills. I discussed this with Viveka, and she assured me that my course and hostel fees would be managed by her, which I will always cherish. However, to finance the projects, I started work at Wimpy. At NIFT, Delhi, I felt at home, as I met so many others who were just like me, especially after Gauri (originally Gaurav) started taking me to LGBT parties. For the final examinations, I managed to get Swarovski to sponsor my collection of lehengas and cholis, with 10,000 Swarovski crystals! Noyonika Chatterjee and Laxmi Rana were some of the many famous models of that time!

Walking the ramp was a passion but after her NIFT success, Naaz obtained campus placement to work with none other than Ritu Kumar. However, most of the tailors and their seniors were homophobic at heart. They mocked her and often told her they disliked taking orders from hijras. This treatment was meted out to her during her employment with Ritu Kumar and her tenure with the Femina Miss World team. Once, at a party, she met Edna, a transgender who counselled her and asked her to go to NIMHANS and that led to hormone therapy.

Hormone therapy is an expensive process? How did you manage that?

It is! But I was fed up with being ridiculed and was determined to achieve the obvious, I indulged in sex work again. It was at one such SPA, where I met Taneja who was doing a series of images for an exhibition abroad. It involved some extremely bold images but I did it for my hormone therapy. By 2010, I experienced the feminine changes in my features and was thrilled. Real modelling started from there. After that, I was involved in various modelling assignments for Monte Carlo, and Odini and in 2013, I walked the ramp! With the money I made from modelling, I finally got my surgery done.

In 2015, you appeared on the cover of Tehelka and got interviewed for a (documentary). What was that like?

My dad was heartbroken seeing the documentary but my mom wasn't! She was angry upon my return, no sympathy, nothing! Dad gave me a fully-furnished room and was furious to hear about my uncle's treatment of me but I told him it wasn't worth it. My siblings welcomed me well and I felt relaxed except for my mom's behaviour. The domestic help of the house sympathized with me and we often had long chats. They urged me to start something like 'Mrs. India homemakers.' I started the Mrs. Universe pageant (Homemakers), I groomed the participants and helped them participate in pageants abroad. In 2014, I started 'Fashion Gurukool'. Through this school, I started teaching everything related to modeling. I had 5-6 students and would make about 25-30k a month.





SADHANA FOREST

Sadhana Forest is a vegan community and a non-profit centre for reforestation, water conservation, and food wastage management centre in **Auroville**. **Nikita Biswas** and **Abhishek Dubey** share their experience.

Nikita Biswas & Abhishek Dubey

A community history

Travelling across India has introduced us to many different cultures and communities; however, Sadhana Forest is more than just a community. It is a place where we learnt to unleash minimal living standards and accept eco-friendly ways of life. This is a way to co-live with wild animals surrounded by forests on all sides.

Sadhana was started by Aviram Rozin and Yorit Rozin from Israel 18 years ago, on 19th December 2003. They started their journey in India as they believed that this place was their calling and they participated in many volunteer opportunities in Rishikesh and Auroville.

While they were working through these volunteer opportunities, they weren't happy with the values and principles that others had. This led them to build Sadhana Forest as this was where they could follow the values they resonated with and could relate to. Auroville offered land of 70 acres to Aviram and Yorit Rozin to build this place. However, this land was a little far from the main centre of Auroville and many others had already rejected the land in the past as it was a dry and barren piece of land. This family connected to this piece of land and did not want to reject it like others. On the other hand, their purpose of growing or regenerating a forest was a lost cause.





With time they worked on various water conservation projects and got help from many other people thus leading to a beautiful forest, that's now termed Sadhana Forest. Their first sapling was planted 18 years ago and many volunteers came across to help them through this process of planting and building the forest from nothing to a green lustrous forest now. The restricted plantation here forced them to only build a forest with indigenous trees which are native to this place thus enabling the microorganisms and animals to not get confused with a new type of plantation. The basic idea of growing a forest is to stick to the indigenous trees to ensure a better space for animals and organisms.

Now the forest is thriving from being a barren land to a fertile land housing more than 2 lakh plants. The research that was conducted in the year 2020, found more than 91 species of birds living in the Sadhana Forest.

Sadhana Forest is all about reforestation, water conservation, and low-impact living and they have not just done this in Auroville but also in Kenya and Haiti alongside India.



The forest has been accommodating volunteers from across the globe who happen to co-live with the microorganisms and animals inside the forest. This lifestyle is also popularly known as minimal or low-impact living. The volunteers come here and perform various tasks to lead a minimal living standard. They have a set regular schedule including making all three meals for the day at different hours, taking care of the rescued cows in the cow shelter, cleaning the area, and taking care of the daily washroom compost. One of their major works is the exclusive design of their restroom. This is built to ensure the usage of the waste as compost and this includes waste from the washroom, kitchen, and other areas of the forest.

Sadhana Forest also organises events every Friday that include a forest tour, and an eco-film, followed by a beautiful vegan dinner absolutely free for their visitors. They even have a free bus service from Auroville, Solar Kitchen that takes you to the forest and drops you back. We were mesmerized by the dedication and hard work of these individuals, that has kept the place safe and green. They have no doors or windows at Sadhana Forest as they live in huts made of bamboo. Be it their amazing organic vegan breakfast to their segregation of waste, Sadhana Forest has been doing a great job in making this concept a success.



Our Experience at Sadhana Forest-

We joined them for a morning stretch where they happen to do some early 5:45 am exercise session standing in a circle and ending the session with happy hugs and smiling faces to start the day.

We spoke to Piyush who has been volunteering in Sadhana Forest for over six months. He was handed the task of taking care of the cows and their food on the morning we visited Sadhana Forest. He rightly quoted that being a vegan community, Sadhana Forest does not believe in milking cows. Piyush also mentioned that the cows are all rescued from unfavourable conditions created by the prior owners. Many of these cows are sent to the slaughterhouses when not in use and Sadhana



Forest saves them from such situations. He also mentioned that Sadhana is a community with a noble idea of living a sustainable life. The idea of covering the earth with more forest area and making the land more fertile is something that he wishes to see in the future. Alongside he wanted to enjoy the time of living together as a community sharing food, space, and lots of laughter which is somehow lost in today's time.

Arvind is a volunteer leading the Kitchen area and had a lot to share. He has been volunteering for over 2.5 years starting with just the idea to help develop the forest; however, with time he took charge of the kitchen and managed it. His typical morning starts at 6 am managing breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He likes the fact that the community kitchen is a major practice here as it saves a lot of time and everyone gets to eat the same meal together. He also mentioned that they believe in keeping things healthy which means not allowing refined or processed food to be a part of the community. The kitchen is also vegan and cruelty-free leaving them to live a much healthier life.

Next time when you visit Auroville, think about doing something different at Sadhana Forest, contributing to mother earth.

Connect With Sadhana Forest –

Address - 1, Sadhana Forest Rd, Auroville, Tamil Nadu 605101

Website - <https://sadhanaforest.org/>

Volunteer - <https://sadhanaforest.org/india/get-involved-india/getting-involved/>

How to Reach –

One can take a train or flight either directly to Pondicherry or Chennai. If arrival is in Chennai, you can take a government/private bus or hire a cab directly to Sadhana Forest. A typical government bus charge is Rs. 200 and private service is anything between Rs. 1000 to 1500. A hired taxi can charge up to Rs. 2500. If you plan to visit Auroville, it's best to avail of their Friday event bus service from the Solar Kitchen absolutely free of cost.

Suggestion – It is a better choice to connect with them beforehand if you are planning to volunteer!

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RETAIL THERAPY

CREATIVE HANDMADE RAKHIS



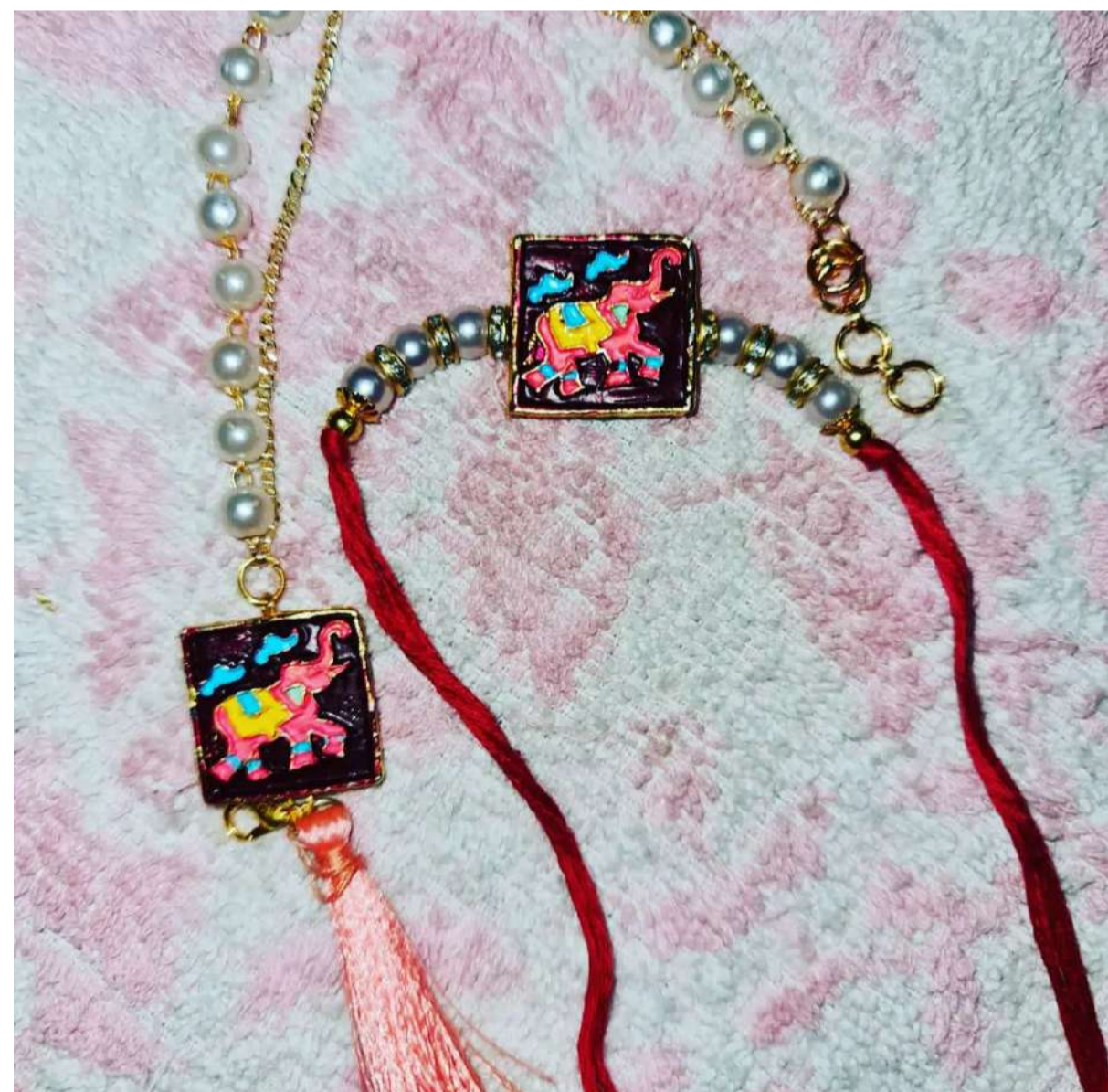
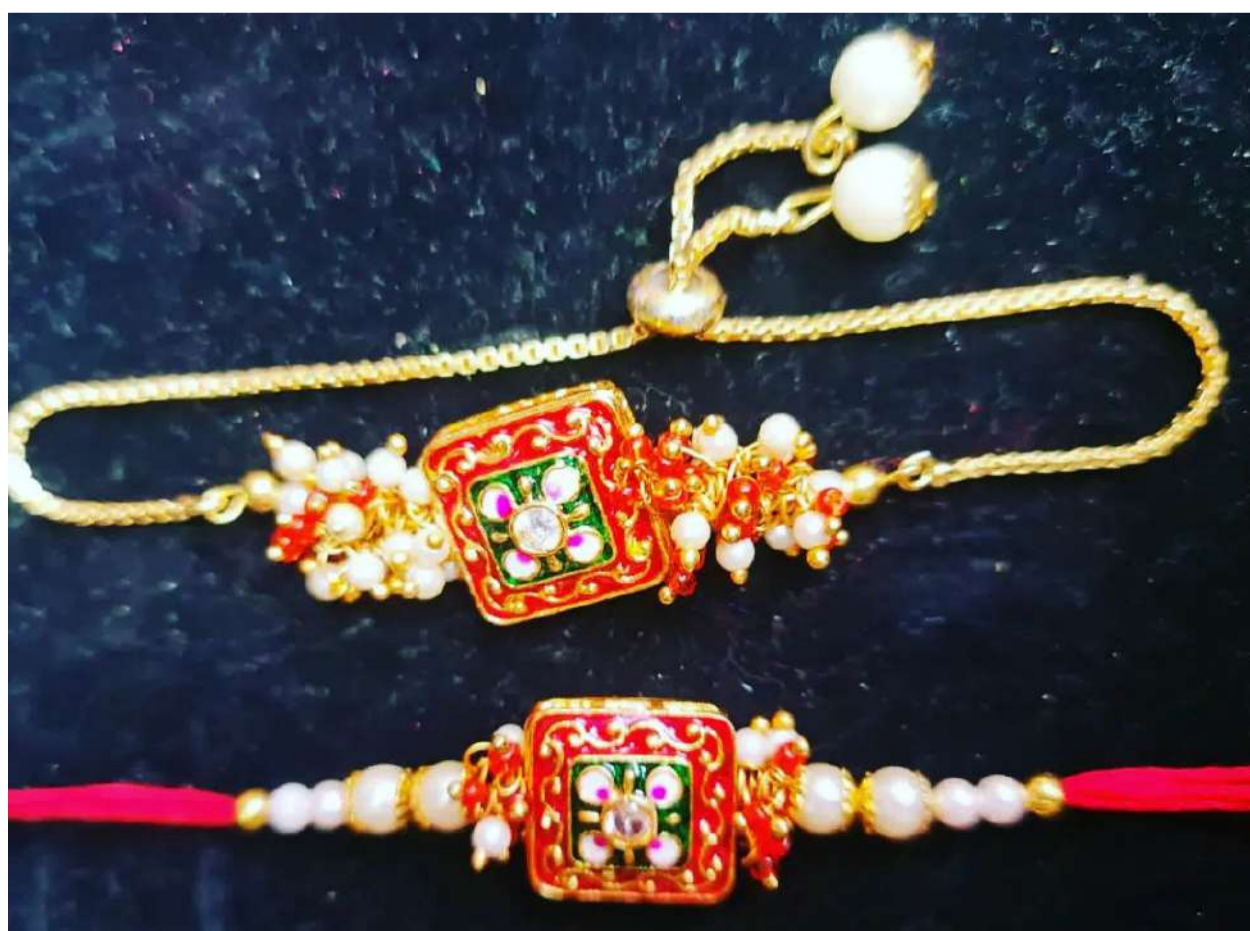
One of the most revered festivals in India that symbolizes the unconditional love between a brother and sister is *Raksha Bandhan*. A festival without fanfare and elaboration involves tying a thread around a brother's wrist, a thread that serves to seal the unconditional and eternal bond between brothers and sisters. Over the years, the simple red and yellow threads tied have become more creative, commercial, and customized. **Kalpana Dheeraj Gangar, Neetu Soni, and Ashlesha Bhadoria** are three dynamic '*Rakhi makers*' who *Canta Dadlaney* chanced upon while shopping for *Rakhis*.

Vamakshi's Rakhi by Kalpana D Gangar

Kalpana is your age-defying mother-in-law who started marketing her aunt's homemade, customized *Rakhis* in 2010. She is your modern-day, street-smart entrepreneur who knows what sells. What drives her are the satiated expressions of her clients whose numbers have been increasing in the past decade.

How did your business venture begin?

I used to carry my aunt's homemade *Rakhis* in a small bag and sell them among the entire community. The inspiration was my aunt, of course. We moved from the Santa Cruz suburb to Thane. I founded this venture, which is backed strongly by my daughter-in-law Vamakshi, after whom this venture is named. In 2010, I displayed the varieties of *Rakhis* across 10 tables arranged in one of my rooms. We started with 100 designs which included *Rakhis* for kids, brothers, and sisters-in-law. We continued on a small scale until 2018 when we set up our first exhibition in a proper commercial outlet.



Whats your collection this 2022?

We ensure that our *Rakhis* cater to the diverse tastes of all. We introduced Silver and Gold *Rakhis* as well. The silver and gold varieties are for domestic sales only. The basic ones cost between Rs 2 and Rs 10. The silver ones cost between Rs 250 and Rs 3500. We have even sold a gold *Rakhi* for Rs 5,000 but this is rare.

How do you customize your Rakhis?

We have clients who ask us to increase e.g., the amount of silver and incorporate a tiny photo of their brother, or a brother-sister photo. We also have some sisters requesting their brother's name as a centerpiece of the *Rakhi*. The customization varies and we are happy to serve everyone. People are not worried about the costs as they feel this is one festival to indulge their brothers and we try our best to incorporate changes according to their wishes.

GlamIn by Neetu Soni

Homemaker, Neetu Soni, a mother of two teenagers, was motivated by her husband to create appealing Rakhis. This entrepreneur stepped into the world of handmade Rakhis in 2019. From selling Chinese-made Rakhis to creating her designs, Neetu is a versatile person who wears many hats!



My husband noticed my marketing and sale skills in locally produced *Rakhis* every year. He suggested I focus my energies on my handmade products and set up a small-scale unit. The thought of creating my designs had always fascinated me, I love experimenting with different-coloured threads and beads and creating the ultimate Rakhi that personifies the love of a brother and sister. I had created about 12-15 designs which ranged between Rs 40 and Rs 150 and I was taken aback by the response I received. Since it was the first launch, I did promote some readymade ones as well. However, once I started marketing them on Facebook and Instagram, I was overjoyed to see the increasing demand for my handmade *Rakhis*.



Parchaii – Eco-friendly Rakhis by Ashlesha Bhadoria and Srishti Kar

The duo behind brand *Parchaii*, a clothing line launched last year also ventured into handcrafted *Rakhis* at the same time. Ashlesha Bhadoria and Srishti Kar of *Parchaii*, concerned about the wastage of fabrics (from their clothing business), made a foray into sustainable, handmade *Rakhis*. What sets *Parchaii* apart is the fact that every single *Rakhi* is handmade with leftover fabrics and other paraphernalia.



When was *Parchaii* launched?

The clothing line was launched on June 1, 2021, and the handcrafted *Rakhi* business was launched in July 2021, about 28 days before the *Rakhi* festival.

How many *Rakhis* did you make for the initial launch?

We made a total of 60 *Rakhis*, as we wanted to understand how well our handcrafted and eco-friendly *Rakhis* would be received by the public at large. From cut-out fabrics, left-over ribbons, and beads, we interplay the product with contrasting colours to give the *Rakhis* a very aesthetic touch.

Tell us about your collection...

We implement zero-waste practices and will continue to do so in the future as well which makes the activity more time-intensive. The *Rakhis* are accompanied by 'Roli' and 'chawal' (rice) which form an inherent part of the festival's celebration. Moreover, we offer equally creative packaging instead of envelopes. We craft fabric pouches which can accommodate the *Rakhis* and the other elements comfortably. The prices range between Rs. 199 and Rs. 249 and we offer a discount of Rs. 50. on an order of three *Rakhis*.

Conclusion: These are a few women from different cultural backgrounds who believe in the expression of thought and creativity. Quite different from the run-of-the-mill, they spend hours crafting sustainable *Rakhis* which can create memorable moments for families across the globe! Get them while they are still available...

A Happy Raksha Bandhan to All the brothers & sisters. Keep the love growing!

Socially conscious brands that give the best of both Worlds; Quality and Satisfaction.

What if you can make this society a better place simply by buying a skin cream or dining at certain eateries? Colloquially, the term given to such initiatives is Social Responsibility and when socially conscious brands undertake such actions, it is known as Corporate Social Responsibility. Join P. Manisha, in exploring diverse industrial verticals where you can make a difference!

5 Socially Conscious Brands

1. No nasties – The Fashion Brand

A well-known brand in the fashion industry, No Nasties is a sustainable clothing company that drives 'PlanetPositiveClothing.' Backed by statistics of 29,810,323 litres of water saved, 166,518 kg co2e carbon offset, and 59,228 trees planted, this brand intends to give back to nature whatever it has utilized.

To all those that hope to enjoy fashion without compromising the resources, No Nasties is the go-to fashion house. Revamp your wardrobe with their 100% organic cotton clothes; made and shipped to reduce the carbon footprint.

Even a part of your payment is going in as investments to planet positive projects like solar power, wind energy, and reforestation and for every product you buy, the company plants three trees. So, make a direct contribution in providing better fashion and better planet for the future generations.



2. Pahadi Local – The Beauty Brand

Ever wondered about the purpose of beauty pageants? The popular Miss World Competition is a quest to find 'A Beauty with a Purpose.' Bringing this essence into skin and hair care products, the company, Pahadi Local is enabling everyone to personify this purpose.

Supported by the pillars of 'Empower, Preserve and Love,' Pahadi Local takes up initiatives like creating employment, preserving environment, and community efforts like cervical cancer check-up drives for 213 women in Leh, and an annual distribution of warm clothes and school books in winter for less fortunate children in the mountains.

The products of this brand range over wide varieties that include face wash, anti-acne cream, skin oil, face mist, hair oil and more.



3. Conscious Food

A perfect name to a perfectly planet conscious and health conscious brand, that is Conscious Food. With every product we buy from the brand, we are providing a better and sustainable planet to the next generation.

All the ingredients used in the products are sourced directly from the farmers, grown and nurtured in the most sustainable ways without affecting the soil quality or the ingredient quality.

The products featured, cover a wide range of merchandise from honey and turmeric to dry fruits.



Source: consciousfood.com



Dining spaces at Jayanagar Restaurant

Source: gonative.in

4. Go Native Restaurant

With multiple stores, the Go Native provides more than a dining experience. The restaurant follows the philosophy of the farm-to-table concept, with ingredients sourced from farms within 500 km range from the restaurant.

Various stationary, clothing and décor are also displayed and open to purchase at these planet and environmentally friendly eateries. The restaurant is run on renewable energy, like solar power and contribute their share to the nature by rain water harvesting.

The must – try dishes of this place are Vanilla Pudding, Sweet Yogurt, whole-wheat pizza and vegan ice-cream. You can also find cuisines suitable to every taste from vegan to gluten-free, Jain-friendly, keto-specific, and low/high protein.

5. Oorjaa Home Décor

Dedicated to paper craft, this eco-friendly studio was established with the philosophy of 'By Hand, with Heart.' Featuring a wide variety of products, specializing in lamps, that are both sophisticated and environmentally friendly.

Committed to the value of sustainability, this home décor brand provides employment to artisans who work by hand and in one of Bangalore's first green buildings. Their products include a great range of lamps from wall lamps, ceiling lamps, floor lamps, pendent lamps and more.



Source: consciousfood.com

These are few brands that help in making the world a better place to live in with their contributions to mother nature. Let's continue to support and encourage such socially conscious brands, to help sustain the world we live in!

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FASHION FORWARD



FASHION DOS AND DONTS IN 2022

Fashion is most definitely tricky, but what's amusing is that even an expected trend can result in a disastrous outcome. One moment an outfit is trending all over magazine covers, and selling like hotcakes, the next moment, it is being mocked on fashion websites, that's how quickly fashion changes. Buzzworthy pieces get ridiculed like a piece of rag in no time.

We are halfway through 2022 and somewhere in between at-home lounging robes and in-toto party zone. While struggling with new variants of COVID-19, let's not ruin our year and make it any less voguish. Refresh your wardrobe with these latest trends. It's never too late to imbibe these fashion trends in 2022.

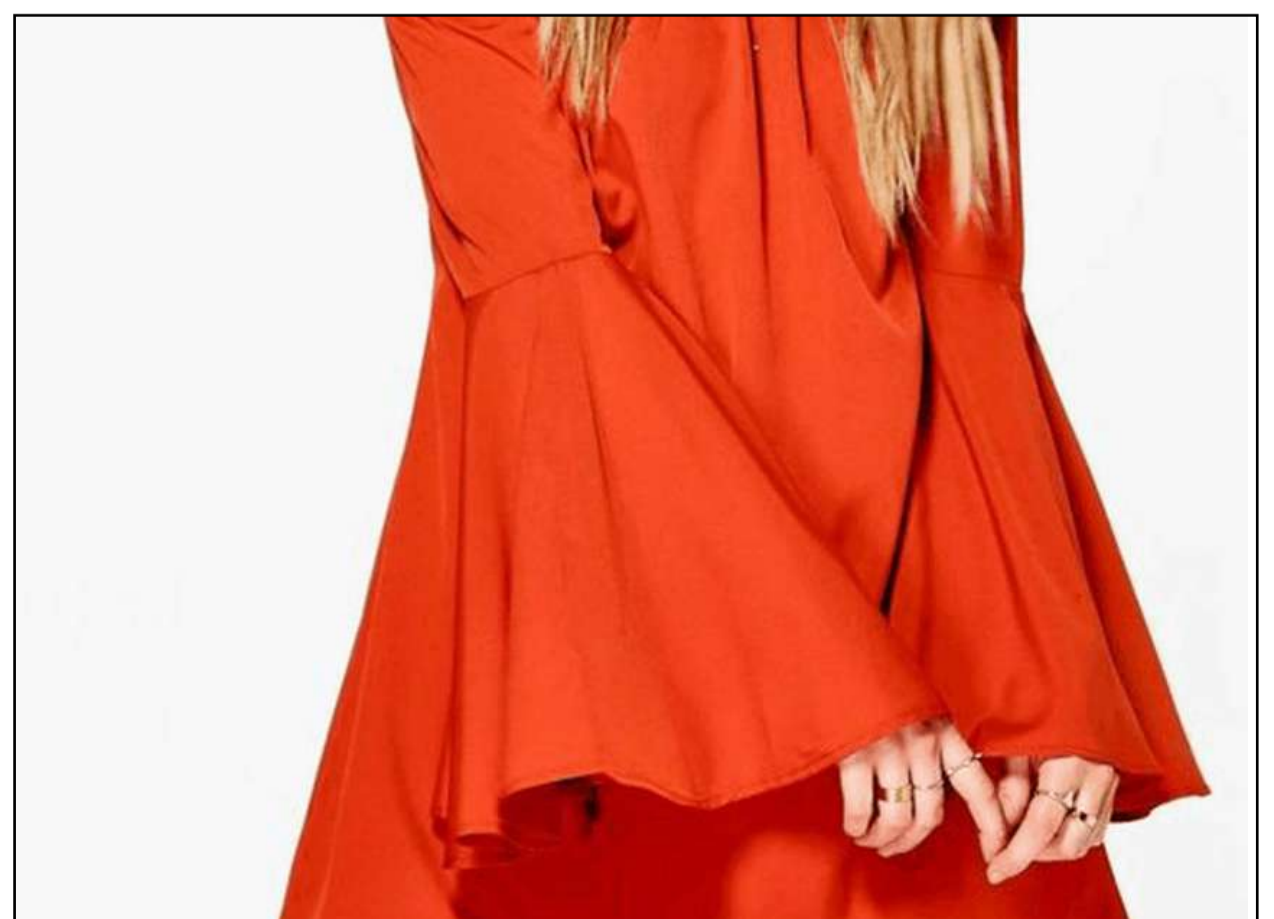
Fashion DOs and DONTs bet you didn't know!

DO: Oversized Clothing

Voluminous is in vogue! It's time to ditch the tailored garment and go big. Ever since Rihanna and Hailey Bieber were spotted wearing colossal clothing, there is no looking back. The who's who of the fashion realm is flaunting oversized t-shirts or bomber jackets. We are not asking you to slip into frumpy outfits, one size up is trendy.

DON'T: Bell Sleeves

Turn up the volume, but at the right places. We call them the leg-of-mutton sleeves. Don't let them in your wardrobe anymore! The 70s-inspired sleeves returned with a bang last year, and everyone was drooling over them. But 2022 says a big NO for puff/bell sleeves!



DO: Monochrome

When in doubt, monochrome will be your saviour! Go bold, go neutral, however you like it. Uni-colours is trending, whether it's an all-white or barbie pink, wear the same colour head-to-toe and you will be looking like a fashionista.



DON'T: Prints

Ditch the prints, that style is last season! Sorry to say, but that frilly dress with an edgy print is a fashion faux pas! Have fun with colours, but don't go overboard on prints, although small prints won't hurt!



DO: Shimmer

Shimmer, sparkles, and sequins are not just meant for Christmas and New Year's, they delve into every occasion. A sparkly dress with mismatched shoes will only make you look sassy.



DON'T: Super tall heels

You can look ultra-glamorous even without high heels. Wearing anything uncomfortable is monstrous. Embrace your style to feel homely and comfortable. Don't dress just to impress, a woman is sexier when she's in her comfort zone.



DO: Windbreaker pants

The last time windbreaker pants made waves was when Isabel Marant released a luxurious collection with some free-spirited colour blocking. The semi-reflective pants are not just running pants but a street-style subculture. All eyes are on the windbreaker pants, they are already the biggest trend. A little bit of tweaking and accessories is enough for you to rock this look.



DON'T: Skinny jeans

To most, this might come as a shocker, but skinny jeans have made it to this list. It's going to be hard, but it's time to say goodbye to the chic skinny jeans you were so in love with. Leave them behind in 2021, it's time for a new Instagram pant fad.

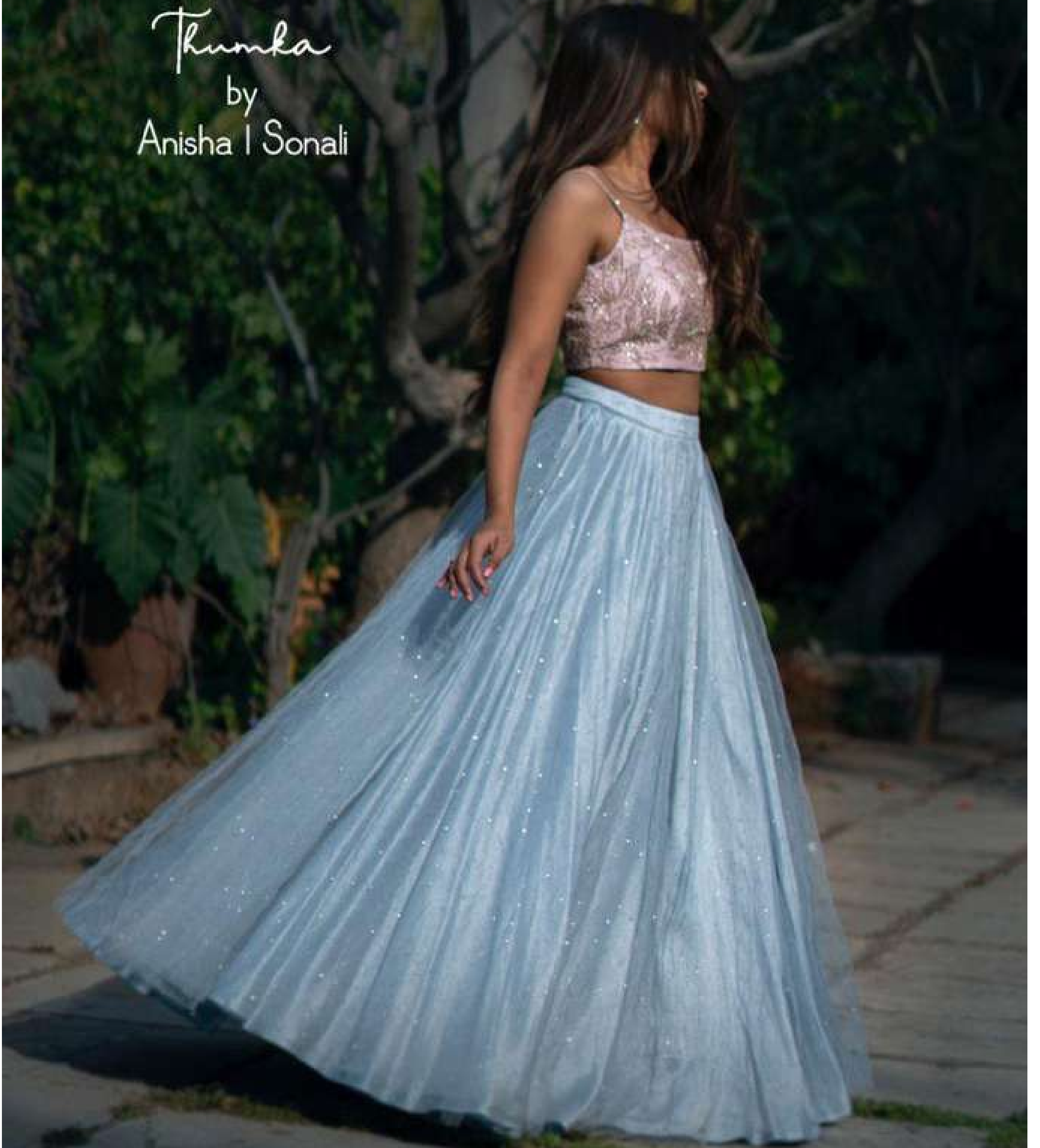


One Last Thought:

Although it is difficult to keep up with trends and shopping out of desperation will only result in overspending and poor decisions. Keep these dos and don'ts in mind, while trying to build your wardrobe this season!



Thumka
by
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HEALTH & WELLNESS



COW GHEE vs BUFFALO GHEE: WHICH IS HEALTHIER?

India is currently the world's largest producer and consumer of ghee, buffalo and cow milk. What's healthy and what's not, **Sakshi Singh**, Clinical Nutritionist gives us a lowdown...

What is Ghee?

Ghee, also known as "fat," may be used as a synonym for clarified butter, with one difference. Ghee is a fatty substance made from cows, buffalo, or other milk. Ghee can also be made from goat and sheep milk, as they are rare and difficult to find, it is not widely made. Ghee is made by first combining milk and then butter. The nutrients present in the clarified butter are beneficial for physical health. It provides the healthy fats needed to keep the liver and immune system healthy. Homemade ghee is much better than the readymade ghee available in the market.

In the traditional French style, the natural butterfat is strained straight away and utilised in its light golden state; the Indian technique takes the method a step further, by caramelising the milk solids earlier, then straining the butterfat to offer the ensuing ghee a nutty taste and a deeper colour. A stick of butter has an excessive percentage of butterfat, extra water and impurities, while ghee is pure, 100% unadulterated butterfat. Ghee helps in weight loss. It doesn't increase bad LDL cholesterol, rather it improves good HDL cholesterol.

What is Clarified Butter?

Clarified butter, sometimes known as liquid gold, is simply butter with the milk solids and water removed. To clarify is to form clear, and that's exactly what drawn butter is. Clarified butter is very popular in French cuisine, whereas, another form of it is buttermilk, an Indian staple. When butter is barely melted, it's yellow and fairly opaque, which is called drawn butter. The opacity comes from everything within the butter that isn't pure butter fat.



Butter is a minimum of 80% fat, which leaves up to 20% of the "other parts." The other parts are water and milk solids: proteins and sugars, which are the components that turn brown when making brown butter. When butter is clarified, it melts first, then it separates into the water portion and lastly the fat portion. As it heats up, the water boils and turns to vapour, the proteins and sugars collapse and sink to the underside of the pot and what's left on top is the pure clarified butter.

Homemade ghee is much better than the readymade ghee available in the market





made from cows is the only source of A2 protein. Numerous amounts of protein, minerals, calcium, and vitamins can be found in cow ghee. Cow ghee enhances the sufficient blood cholesterol level, lowers dangerous blood cholesterol levels, and supports healthy heart function.

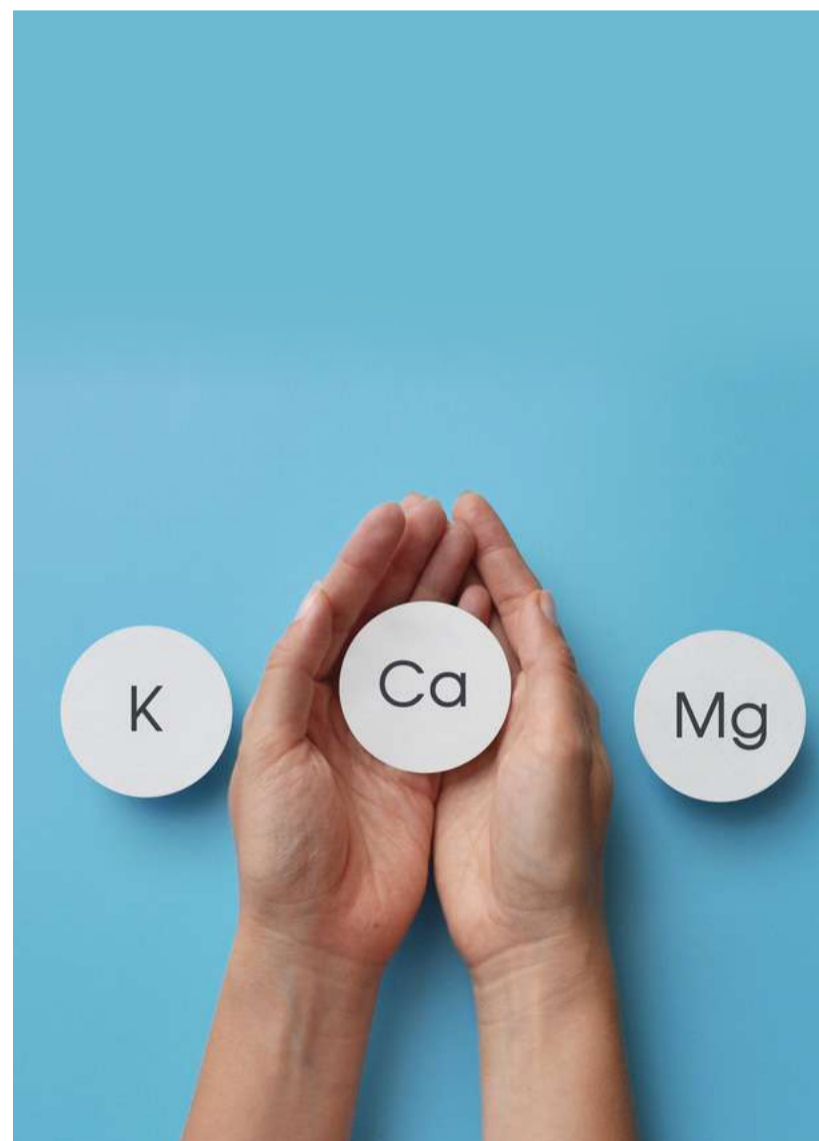


The chemistry between Cow Ghee and Buffalo Ghee

Ghee is extremely beneficial for our health due to its rich amount of nutrients. It also helps with the production and nutrition of beneficial bacteria present in your intestines. As we now know that ghee is manufactured from both cow and buffalo milk, we should also be aware of the distinctions between the two forms of ghee made from various kinds of milk. You cannot fully profit from utilising ghee in your daily life if you are unaware of the advantages of both.

The following are the main distinctions between cow and buffalo ghee:

- Compared to cow milk, the texture of buffalo milk is more creamy.
- Compared to buffalo ghee, cow ghee offers more positive health effects.



Buffalo Ghee

White ghee contains less fat than yellow ghee and can be kept for a very long time as it contains a high percentage of fat. It aids in bone preservation, weight gain, and increased cardiovascular muscle activity. Essential nutrients such as magnesium, calcium, and phosphorus are present in buffalo ghee.

Cow Ghee

Cow ghee is a powerhouse in nutrition. Cow ghee is easy to digest, beneficial for weight loss, and reduces adult and paediatric obesity. Buffalo milk lacks the A2 protein, but cow milk does. Ghee

Which is Better?

Cow ghee is superior because it contains vitamin A carotene, which is healthy for the eyes and the brain. It is beneficial for digestion and contains antioxidant, antibacterial, and antifungal effects. When compared to cow ghee, buffalo ghee contains more fats and calories. Additionally, it aids in retaining the joints, colds, coughs, and phlegm, as well as having anti-ageing properties.



Consuming either ghee has benefits of its own in the end. You can consume them based on their health benefits. Some people can use it to lose weight, while others can use it to gain weight and deal with heart-related difficulties. Therefore, including ghee in your diet regularly may be good for both your health and the growth of your body.





SUN CHARGED WATER: IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS

Water is a key source of nourishment for the human body. How you consume water and the quality of water you intake affects your body's physical and mental health. An online store for local Indian 'super-foods' **Homegrown Platter** shares information on sun-charged water's benefits and its Ayurvedic importance.

Gone are the days when we had the availability of freshwater directly from rivers and lakes. Today, a majority of drinking water sources have been polluted. Water is stored in plastic tanks and passed through rusted pipes which as a result ends up becoming what is known as 'dead water' according to Ayurveda. The easy solution is Sun Charged Water. Sun is the source of life, and it is believed that sunlight contains more than 70 elements and powerful waves. When mixed with water the water is charged while also making it anti-viral, antifungal, and antibacterial.

What is sun-charged water?

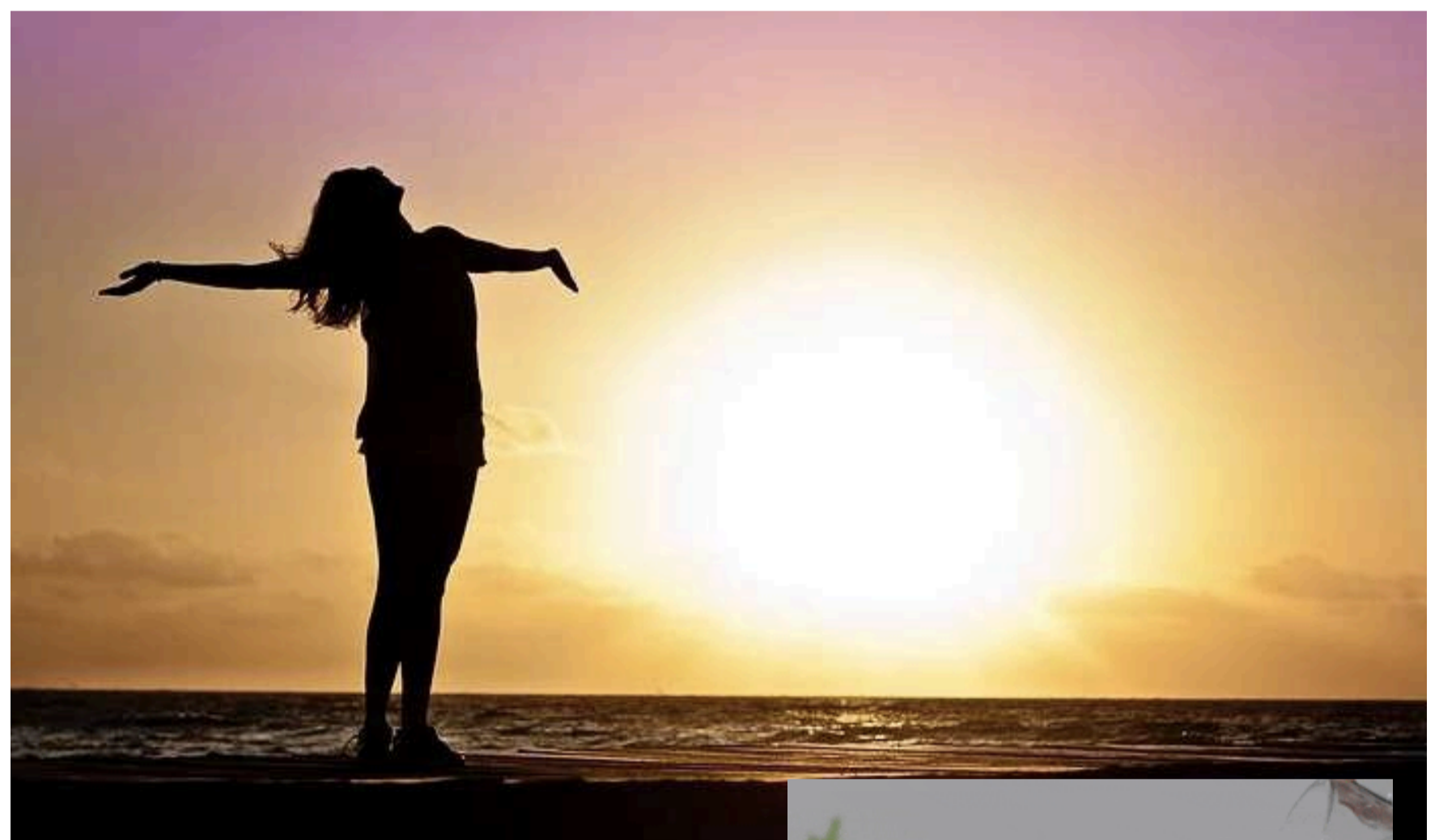
Sun-charged water is natural water infused with minerals from the sun

How to make sun-charged water?

Procedure:

Pour clean drinking water into a shallow earthen pot or a clear glass container. Place it outside in direct sunlight (do not place it on grass).

Cover it using a thin muslin cloth or



cork (in the case of glass bottles). Allow it to charge for a good 5-7 hours, preferably in the morning around 7-9 am. Later, collect it in your water dispenser and drink it within 24 hours (do not refrigerate).

Uses:

Great for cooking food and bathing regularly for its natural potency, and hair and skin benefits.

-Beneficial for pets and plants.



What are the benefits of sun-charged water?

It has a lot of Ayurvedic importance and benefits. This solarized water is also known as sun-treatment or *Surya Chikitsa/ Suryang Santaptam* in Ayurveda. It is considered to be the purest water, which is highly effective due to the light and heat that oxidises the water, changing its molecular structure and making it more alive by infusing it with natural benefits.



Natural benefits of sun-charged water

Its healing property addresses skin concerns and helps it glow naturally.

- Speeds up the healing process and improves skin condition through cell and tissue rejuvenation.
- An excellent natural source of Vitamin D. Solarized water contains a fantastic amount of natural sunshine that can give us around 10,000 IU of vitamin D. It is strong enough to help provide our bodies with Vitamin D, which is crucial for regulating your immune system.
- Helps get rid of diseases, eliminating the root cause of internal diseases and improves the health of internal organs.
- Maintains a healthy body by removing toxins.
- Removes heavy metals, radiation, and toxins from digestive systems as well as blood circulation systems that might cause congestion or other types of problems in the colon.
- During hotter months it can help change the PH level of the body to alkaline, thereby eliminating body heat and also decreasing the chances of getting sick with chronic diseases.
- Increased energy levels as it also helps with insomnia, depression, mental instability, and anxiety.
- Enhances memory, brain functioning and body's energy retention power.
- Cleans brain cells from harmful ingredients and balances the quantum of the sun's energy in the body.

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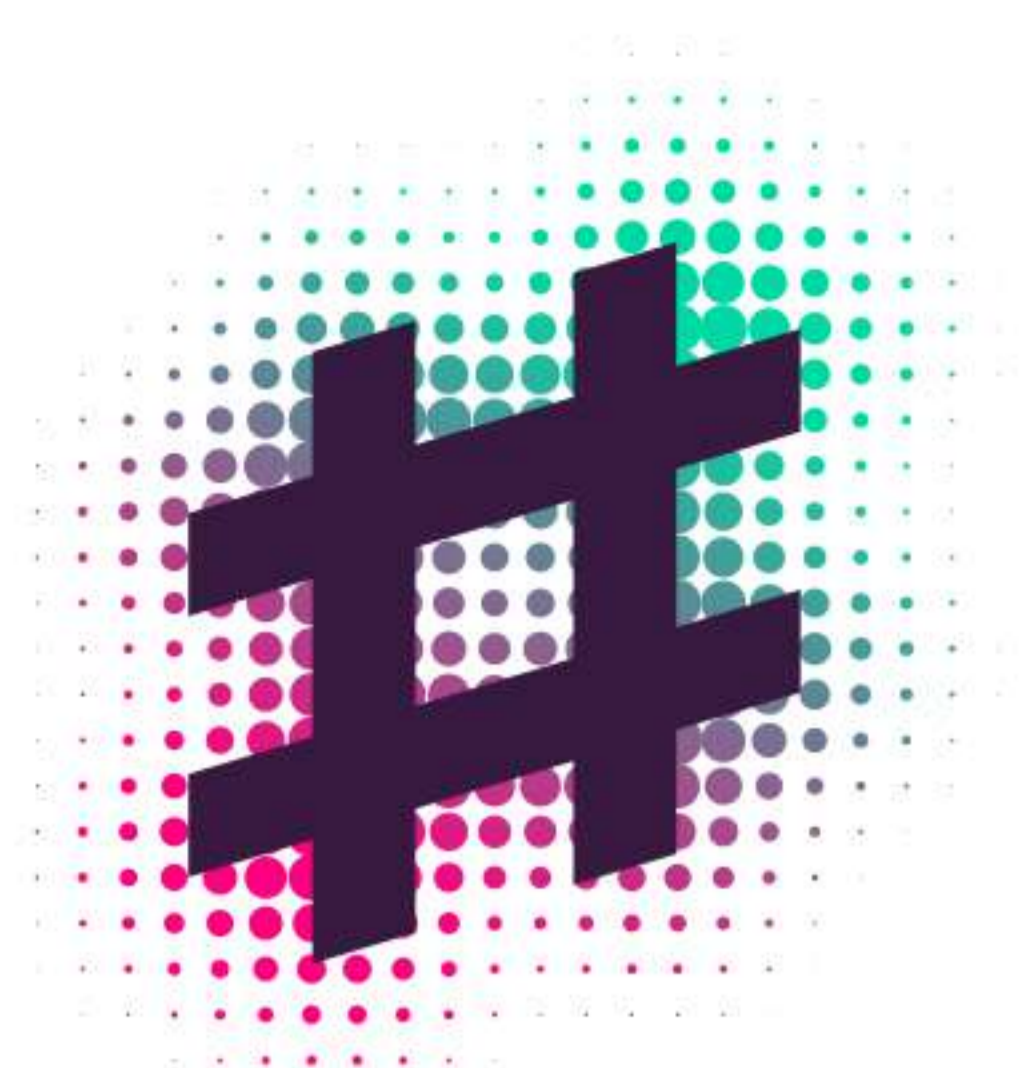
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FOOD INC'

CAFÉS FOR K-POP FANS IN INDIA

The craze for Korean dramas and pop music has increased widely in India, with almost everyone being a fan of K-dramas and K-pop bands like BTS. India has always been a land of globalisation and cosmopolitan approach and the GenZ are upholding these values, traditions and culture with the acceptance and enthusiasm they are showing to the Hallyu music and dramas. P. Manisha lists a few popular K-pop-themed cafes for all the K-pop stans.

1. I Purple You café

A BTS-themed café in the alleys of Siliguri in West Bengal, I Purple You Café is an obvious choice for not only the ARMY's of India but also for all K-pop fans. Reaching out to one of the founders of the café, they described the commendable origin of the café along with their cousin Ravi Chettri. Inaugurated on the 4th of July 2021, this café was begun seeing the influence and enthusiasm of BTS and K-pop among kids and teens.

The founders had always intended to open a cafe but were brainstorming for an out-of-the-box concept for their cafe



because the neighbourhood already had other cafes. The idea of a BTS-themed cafe appealing to the country's ARMYs struck them. The atmosphere of the cafe is incredible, with BTS songs playing, posters and paintings of the band on the walls, and the most popular feature for all ARMYs visiting the cafe, the selfie spot.

I Purple You, meaning I Love You in Korean is the catchphrase of BTS encompassed by the café owners to depict their love for K-pop and make it their brand identity. The café spreads tremendous joy among the ARMYs by providing them with an exclusive space to showcase their love for the band, groove to their songs, take pictures, make posts and reels, deliver messages on sticky notes, sing, dance, and spread positivity in the same way that their favourite band inspires them to follow the lead through their socially responsible and impactful songs.

Wish to be a part of the hustle and bustle of this café, get ready and head to Hill Cart Rd, Dagapur, Bara Gharia, West Bengal. You can be a part of the special events organized on the birthdays of the band members, or support them in socially conscious efforts and programs they conduct teaming with the ARMYs.

The food surely complements the ambience of the café serving Italian, Chinese and Korean dishes to suit the multinational and diverse palette of the K-pop fans visiting this gem of a café.

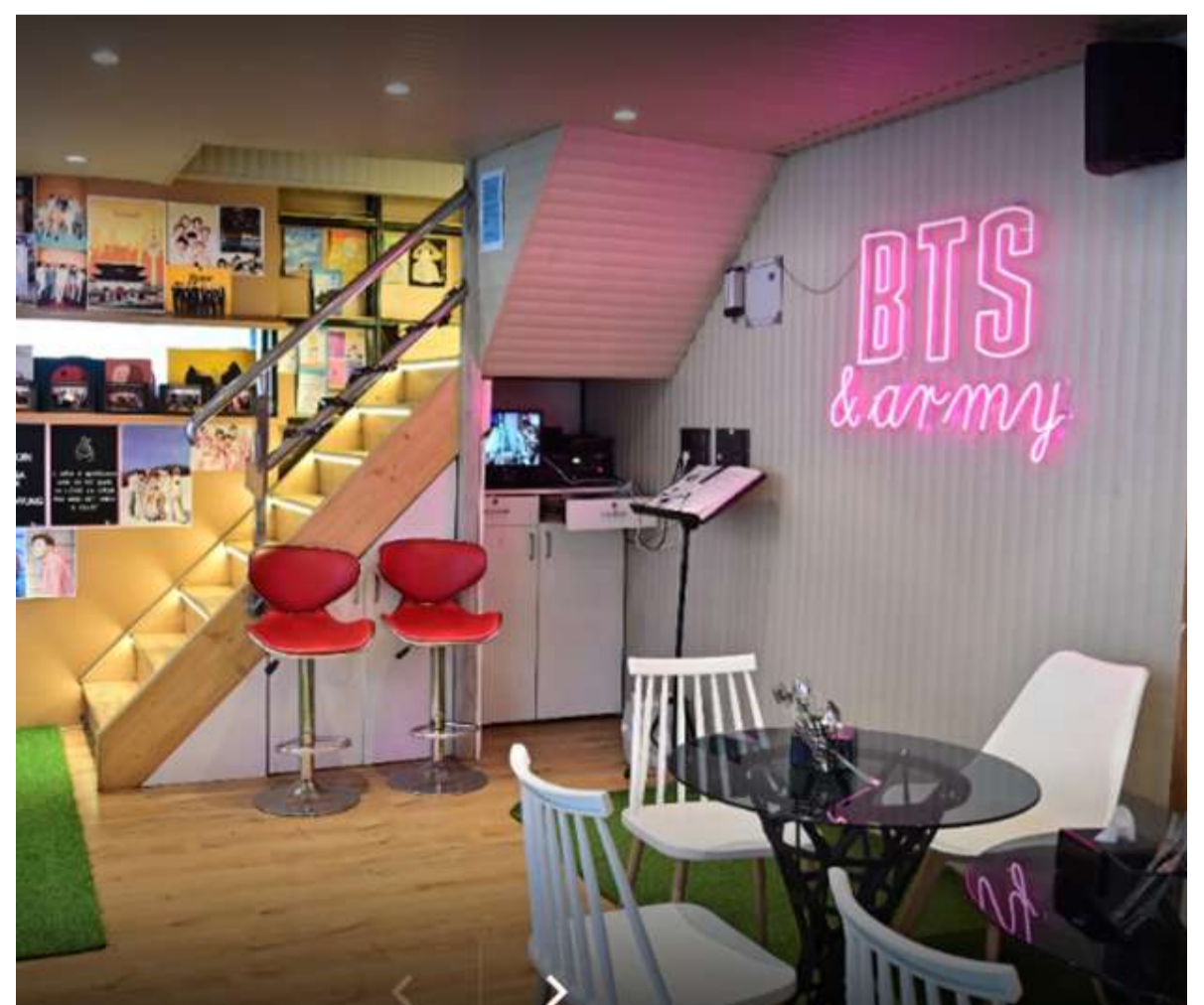
Check out their social media: [i_purple_u_cafe](https://www.instagram.com/i_purple_u_cafe).

2. Bang Tan Shefs

A cozy place in Mumbai, this café-restaurant personifies its idols even in its name. It is not hard to guess that Bang Tan Shefs has the same acronym as their idols, BTS. Established by Riya and her partner Vivek in the process of supporting her sister in her passion for BTS, these co-founders have realized the potential of their café-restaurant as a safe haven for all the ARMYs to let their passion out.

The success of the restaurant is clear from the dedication and affection they receive from the BTS ARMYs of Mumbai, where they call it a second home. The founders aspire to take this reverence to different parts of India like the K-pop high seizing the hearts of the Indians today.

And of course, though BTS may remain their first love, the café-restaurant also caters to the other stans of K-pop like Shinee, Twice, Hwasa, and Enhypen by playing their songs and celebrating their special moments.





3. *Kalita café*

A popular spot in Guwahati, the Kalita café is a revered destination for all K-pop fans. This is the first Korean-themed café in the Northeast, studded with enthusiastic K-pop decor and exotic Korean cuisine. The café caters to all idol fans but BTS fans have a special place in their hearts and the same adoration is upheld by the regulars of the café who are BTS stans.

Even the café's menu is an ode to the K-pop industry with Big Bang's feast, which has sausages, salami, onion, roasted garlic, olive oil, cheese, and Tae-tea for BTS fans. The ambience of the place is inducted through BTS cushions and walls of idol pictures, and K-pop songs.

If you are a novice to the K-pop world, worry not, for the café has something for everyone. Learn more about the Hallyu world sensations while munching on smoothies, juices, pizzas, sandwiches and more that the café offers.

Also, ARMYs do not forget to grab the BTS postcard they give out once you've had a meal here!

4. *Bite that spoon*

The name of the café itself indicates the bias of the cafe, BTS. It is a BTS-themed café in Kolkata serving delicious Korean cuisine. Situated in Santoshpur, the café has posters, pictures, frames, and the albums of the famous boy band, BTS.

Accompanying the awesome ambience is the rich Korean-style food giving an exceptional experience. Bite that spoon seamlessly integrates Indian and Korean cultures which are reflected in the dishes they offer like Korean ramen with veggies and mushrooms in a mildly spicy broth mixed and Indian spices, The Pork Bulgogi Cheese Steak Burger served with crisps, their signature drink Boy Meets Evil, a mixture of lemon, chilli flakes and sugar syrup, Choco lava cake and more.

Give them a visit for a full-fledged BTS-themed food treat.



5. *Map of Seoul*

Any ARMY would realize the correlation of the café's name with the BTS album. A one-of-a-kind café in the Pink City, Jaipur, experience Seoul city and K-pop fever with the café's interiors inspired by BTS, K-dramas and South Korea's capital city.

Coming to the cuisine, the restaurant offers *yachae hotteok*, *dongji patjuk*, *tteokbokki*, *mandu*, *pat kalguksu*, *kimchi guk*, and *hobak jeon* as popular dishes. Apart from the predominant Korean dishes, one can also find Italian, Mexican and Chinese options for those that desire a change in cuisine but not in the theme, a hard-core K-pop fan.

ARMYs would definitely have a field day, both with the food and with the ambience with a wall dedicated for them to take pictures. Sate your hunger and enjoy the choice of music with this unique café.



These are a few popular Korean-themed restaurants, visit these places with fellow stans and have a fun time!



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ARTS AND THEATRE

Social Communities that share your passion

Hyderabad is a hustling and bustling city that has a space for every enthusiast. P. Manisha takes you on a tour of social communities that you can indulge in for your passion and hobby. Break the shackles of stress and rediscover yourself through these social clubs of Hyderabad.



Sia Photography: Weekend photowalks and Tours

Started by a photo-enthusiast Saurabh Chatterjee, this social club is equally perceptive and fun to the needs of both beginners and professionals. Share your interests, tips and ideas with like-minded people and sometimes with experts in the field, in workshops, tours and photowalks organized by the club.

Connect with them:

[Sia Photography_Meetup](#)

[Sia Photography_Facebook](#)

Hyderabad Board Gamers Club

Does the word 'striker' remind you of carrom board instead of cricket, then you are definitely an indoor games kind of person. The Hyderabad Board Gamers Club is the place for all those that wish to play and learn great board games to their heart's content.

Connect with them:

[Hyderabad Board Gamers Club_Meetup](#)

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Hyderabad United Bikers

For all those that love long drives and like the feeling of the wind on their faces, this social community is the answer to your quest. On top of this, you can rest with the satisfaction of contributing to the betterment of society through this social club's activities that ride for a cause. Anti-drug campaigns and road safety are some of the topics they have educated the public on.

Connect with them:

[hyderabadunitedbikers_instagram](#)

Twin Cities Poetry Club

This club was formed to promote and appreciate poetry as an art form. With members both from India and abroad, anybody can recite their original work or a favourite poet with no limitations on language, religion and content.

Connect with them:

[twincitypoets_meetup](https://www.meetup.com/twincitypoets)



Great Hyderabad Adventure Club

This is a great community for those looking for an awesome adventure. Associated with the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, this club is a non-profit community, organizing activities on Trekking, Hiking, Camping, Rock Climbing, Mountaineering, Bouldering, Rock climbing and Rappelling.

Connect with them:

[ghac_instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ghac)

[ghac_meetup](https://www.meetup.com/ghac)

Urban Sketchers

A community trying to bring art outside of the studios, Urban Sketchers organizes weekend meetups where artists can share their tips, paint in their own medium of choice and enjoy the process of bringing an object to life through their work. Fund-raising events and workshops are also a part of this group's activities.

Connect with them:

[uskhyderabad_instagram](https://www.instagram.com/uskhyderabad)



Human Library Hyderabad

Every fiction contains an ounce of truth. Then imagine enlightening conversations conceived from the experiences of people, this is the synopsis of Human Library. In recent times, this club has been conducting events twice a month and is a base for important and altering conversations on a variety of life experiences. The library is now known as the 'Library of Diversity.'

Connect with them:

[human_library_facebook](https://www.facebook.com/humanlibrary)



Tale Tellers Troupe

This community is a haven for all those people who enjoy storytelling. Adding a personal touch, with this platform one can share their personal experiences with a tinge of drama and theatricals apt to storytelling. Members of this community enjoy their time knowing people, overcoming their fear of the stage and getting constructive feedback to improve their art of storytelling.

Connect with them:

[TTTI_instagram](#)

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Tangy Sessions

Tangy sessions is a predominantly music community where one can enjoy upcoming and popular artists' original compositions as well as well-known music pieces. The club's USP is their unconventional music collaborations with artists spread all around the world bringing a learning experience to the participants and bliss to the listeners.

Connect with them:

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Hyderabad Book Club

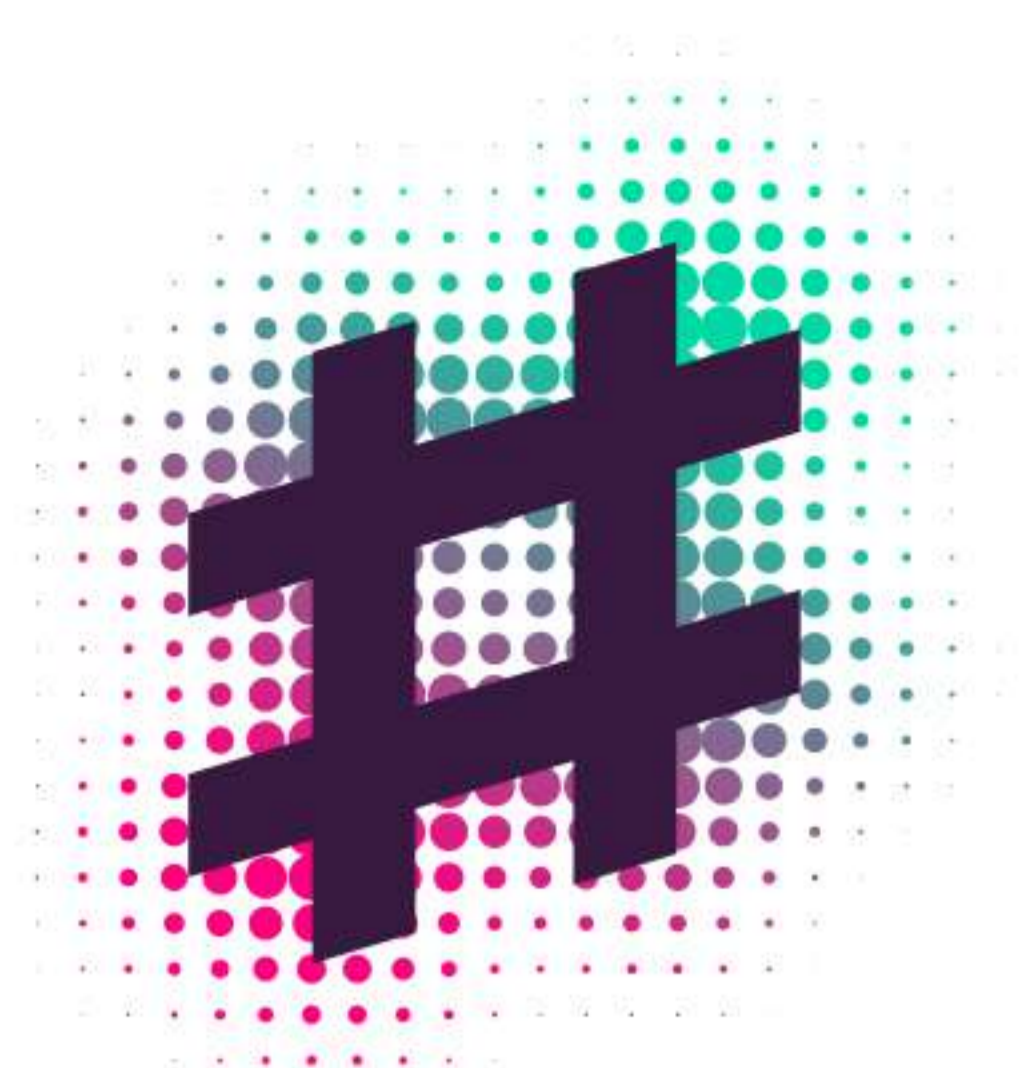
This community is for and by book lovers. In every meet-up session, the members discuss books, authors and genres and also conduct book exchanges to share and exemplify the joy of reading. One might not know how a 2-hour session has passed in holding and learning profound conversations.

Connect with them:

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h a s h t a g

TRAVEL



Ganesh Chaturthi is a festival that is celebrated for 11 days with amazing ambience, drumbeats, and the chants of Lord Ganapati everywhere. Many groups in India are known for making the best *pandals* and idols of Lord Ganesh for many years. In this article, we list the top famous places to visit during Ganesh Chaturthi in India.

POPULAR GANESH PANDALS IN INDIA

Khairtabad, Hyderabad:

Khairtabad Ganesh is one of the world's largest Ganesh idols installed during the festival. In 1954, a 1-foot-high idol of the Ganesh was established at the locality. It was started by Singari Shankaraiah who was inspired by Bal Gangadhar Tilak's call to celebrate the festival as a mark of unity. Since that year, the height of the idol increased by one foot every year. Thousands of devotees from across the state visit this magnificent idol every year. In 2022, the committee has announced their 70-foot eco-friendly Ganesh idol made out of clay which will be immersed at the site itself.



Lalbagcha Raja, Mumbai:

Lalbagcha Raja is one of the most visited Ganesh idols in Mumbai. The idol of Lalbagcha Raja is designed wonderfully and is patent protected. People believe that Lalbagcha Raja will fulfil their wishes that is why it takes almost 20 hours to get a glimpse of this beautiful idol. Many popular celebrities and politicians visit this *pandal* every year. The *Mandal* was founded in the year 1934 and has grown gradually.



Balapur Ganesha, Rangareddy:

Balapur Ganesha is known for its *Laddu* auction. The auctioning was first held in 1994 when the *laddu* was brought for Rs 450, and since then the *laddu* auction rates have been increasing every year. Bidders from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh participate in the bidding, as it is believed that the *laddu* brings luck and prosperity. In 2021, the Balapur *laddu* was auctioned for a whopping rate of Rs 18.90 lakhs.



Ganesh Galli Mumbaicha Raja, Mumbai:

Ganesh *Galli* is located only a couple of lanes away from the Lalbaugha Raja. The *Mandal* was formed for the benefit of the mill workers in the year 1928 making it one of the oldest and most popular *pandals* in India. The *pandal* is known for the novel new themes every year and they often replicate famous places of India.

GSB Seva Mandal Ganapati, Mumbai:

GSB *Seva Mandal* Ganapati is considered one of the richest *mandals* (administrative divisions) in Mumbai. Every year the Ganesh idol is adorned with gold and silver ornaments. Thousands of devotees from across the state visit it every year to seek the blessings of the lord. This is the only *pandal* in Mumbai where the rituals are performed round the clock.



Andhericha Raja, Mumbai:

Andhericha Raja was founded in 1966 by Tata Special Steel and Excel Industries Limited. Every year, a huge crowd of devotees, Bollywood celebrities, and politicians come here for *darshan*. The immersion process is routed throughout the entire Andheri village, and it begins at 5 in the evening and reaches the seashore the next day morning.

Tulshi Baug Ganpati, Pune:

Tulshi Baug Ganpati is the largest Ganesh idol in Pune. Established in 1901, the idol stands at a height of 15 feet and the *Mandal* brings new themes every year. The idol does not move to another location and the lord is worshipped throughout the year. It is believed that the shopkeepers of Tulshi Baug businesses flourish because of the blessings of the Lord Ganesha.



Panchamuki Heramba Ganesha Temple, Bengaluru:

Panchamukhi Heramba Ganesha Temple in Bengaluru is one of the popular places where Vinayaka Chaturthi is celebrated with great fanfare in the city. Here the lord is seen as *Pancha Mukha* which means five faces along with five bodies. Every year special *pujas* are conducted during the festival times and thousands of devotees from the state and the neighbouring states visit this amazing temple.



Kanipakam, Andhra Pradesh:

Kanipakam village is in Andhra Pradesh. It is believed that the Vinayaka idol here is said to be growing in size over time. Chola king, Kulothunga Chola built the temple in the 11th century. The annual festival is held for 21 days, beginning on the day of *Vinayaka Chavithi*. The festival idol is taken out in procession on all days, and it is colourfully decked.



Khetwadicha Ganraj, Mumbai:

The Khetwadicha Ganraj is considered to be one of the most spectacular Ganesh idols in Mumbai. The *Mandal* was established in 1959 and the year 2000, the idol was decked with real gold jewellery and diamonds. The best time to visit Khetwadi Ganraj is during the daytime because the peak time starts in the evening and there are different Ganesh idols in every lane, so it would take some time to visit all the *pandals* around the area.

These are the popular Ganesh *pandals* in India. Every year the festival is celebrated grandly in these places. From this year, the ban on poP idols has been implemented and the height of community idols should be as low as possible. We must bring awareness amongst the people to celebrate the festival in an eco-friendly manner and protect our environment.



Mahakaleshwar Shiv Mandir located on the banks of lake Rudra Sagar in Ujjain, is one of the most powerful consecrated places in India. This Shiva temple in Ujjain was built by Lord Brahma for the Mahakal - the fierce form of lord Shiva. Mahakaleshwar translates to the god of time. This is the only Shiva temple in India where the main deity, Lord Shiva, is facing the South direction, which is considered as the direction of death, thus depicting the Lord as the master of death.

Mahakaleshwara Temple in Ujjain

The present structure was built by Maratha General Ranoji Shinde in the 18th century. The temple's architecture is a blend of Maratha and Chalukya styles. The main attractions of the temple are the idols of Mahakaleshwar on the ground floor, Nagachandresvara on the top floor - which is opened only on Nag Panchami, and the Omkaresvara lingam on the second floor. The idols of Lord Ganesh, Parvathi, and Karthikeya are near the large Kunda made in the compound.

What is special about Mahakaleshwar Temple?

The important tradition at this temple is the Basma *aarti* or the ash ritual, which happens every day at 4 am. Earlier, the Basma *aarti* was done by using fresh ashes from the cremated grounds. Now, because of some backlash by an activist, they are using cow dung that is covered in cloth. This ritual is symbolic for washing off sins, and connecting with the lord. Witnessing this Basma *aarti* is a once in a lifetime experience.

If you are aspiring for salvation and want to feel beyond your physical nature, then the Mahakaleshwar temple is a powerful place that will shake the roots of your physical existence.





What is the story behind Mahakaleshwar Temple?

The Story behind the Mahakaleshwar temple has many versions. It is said that the King of Ujjain, Chandrasena, was a devotee of Lord Shiva. A young boy, Shrikhar, was passing by and heard that the king was praying in the palace. He wished to pray along with him, but he was not allowed into the premises and was sent away to the outskirts of Ujjain.

There he overheard King Ripudamana and Singhaditya plotting to attack Ujjain with the help of Dushanan, who was a demon blessed by Lord Brahma to be invisible. Shrikhar started praying to Lord Shiva to protect the city. Vridhi, a priest, listened to this young boy and joined him in prayer to the Lord.

The enemy kings attacked Ujjain and they almost conquered everything but Lord Shiva appeared in his fierce form and saved them. From that day on, Lord Shiva lives in the Ujjain temple in the form of a self-originated linga that derives power on its own.



Timings:

The temple remains open from 3 AM-11 PM.

Thousands of devotees visit this temple every year. October to March is the best time to visit this divine place. Mahashivaratri is celebrated grandly here and it would be the perfect experience for a devotee.

This is all about Mahakaleshwar Temple. It is one of the popular tourist places in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. If you want to connect with the divine then Mahakaleshwar Temple is the perfect place for you.





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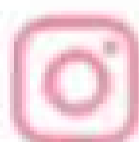



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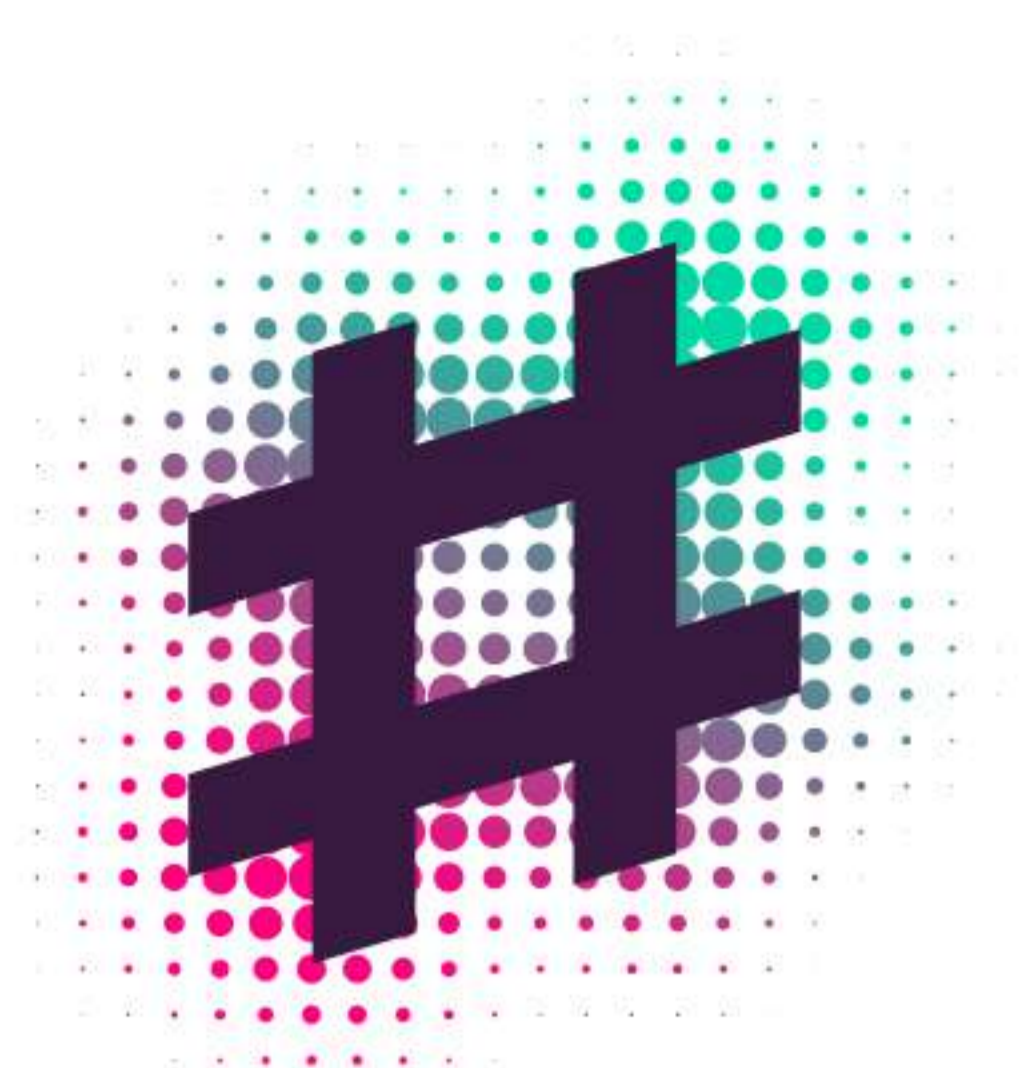
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HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DOG NOT TO BITE: SOME BENEFICIAL ADVICE

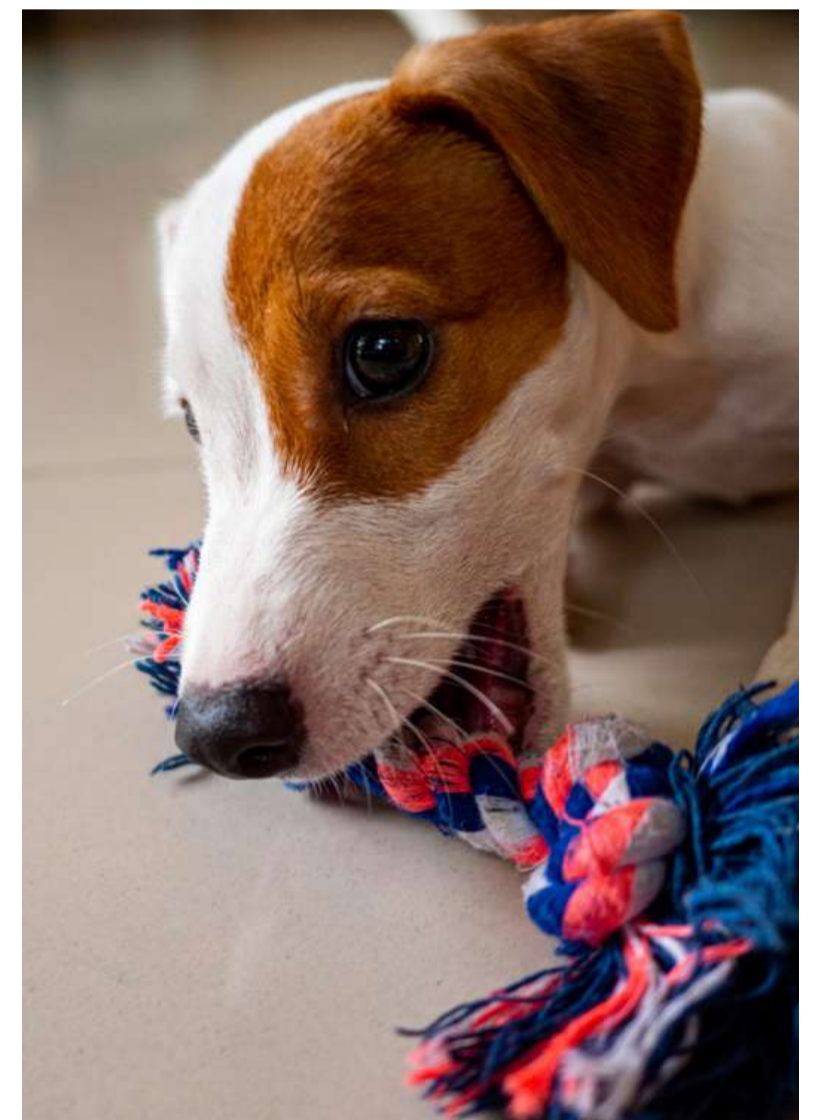
A huge step in anyone's life is bringing a dog home. They become a part of you and make dreary days happier. And while the puppy stage is unquestionably the cutest, it also involves a lot of biting and nipping. **Unnati Hunjan**, Founding team and Training Lead of Supertails lists how to train your dog to manage this energy and prevent incidents of biting.

It is important to note that nipping and biting is normal puppy behaviour. They are in the process of teething and are just learning to use their teeth. Interestingly, dogs have a lot of nerve endings in and around their mouth. Hence using them to nip, chew, or hold objects/toys of different textures helps stimulate this region. This stimulation can be gratifying for them, be it for pleasure or as a coping mechanism when stressed.

That being said, puppy nipping needs to be corrected before it turns into a biting habit. The first-time puppies are taught not to bite too hard is by their littermates and mother. While playing or while nursing, if the puppy bites too

hard, the mother and littermates growl/squeal or move away to end that contact. This informs the puppy that the biting is hurting them. However, many puppies are separated too early from their littermates, hence replicating this behaviour will help teach them that biting hurts.

To mimic this, as soon as the puppy starts to nip, make an 'Ow' or 'Ouch' sound to get their attention. Immediately divert their attention to a toy/chew stick or any other acceptable object. It is important to note that just an interrupter (the sound you make) in isolation is not enough. Diverting the attention after the sound is made is crucial for the puppy to learn an acceptable way to deal with their urges. Also,



make sure to have a few options for teething toys. Different dogs show preferences for different types of toys and providing a variety will help you understand which one works best for your pup.

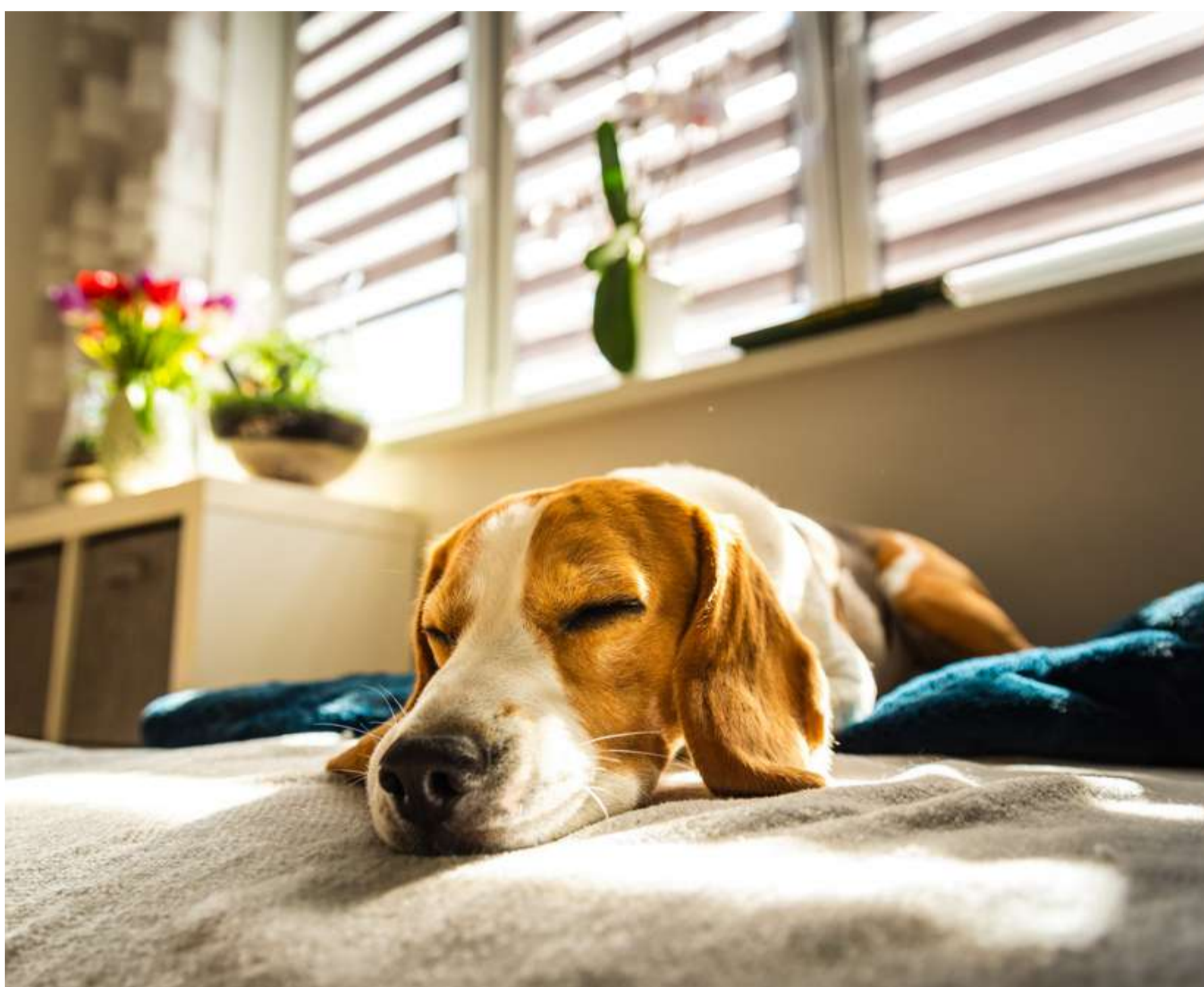
To ensure your pup's emotional and mental well-being, do not use any kind of punishment while training them. If your puppy is being difficult, and is barking or biting constantly, do not yell at them or hit them. This only generates fear and frustration, leading them to lash out further. Instead, keep communication clear and guide them towards appropriate behaviours and outlets. Puppies are often attracted to anything that moves, which makes your ankles and arms interesting enough



for them to chase and nip on. At these times, when you make the interrupting sound and show them their toy, ensure to make the toy interesting for them. To do this you can wave the toy around and move it around for the puppy to get attracted. Once they hold the toy in their mouth, continue to move it around and play to build their interest in the toy and show them how fun it can be. Once they start playing with the toy, remember to praise them profusely for a job well done! Positive reinforcement goes a long way!

In cases where the puppies are overstimulated and over-excited, just like little kids, they can get cranky and lash out instead of resting. In such situations, ending play is important. Help the puppy calm down and take them to their crate (if applicable) or their sleep area to let them rest and nap. Remember, puppies need a lot of sleep ranging between 15-20 hours per day. So, keep playtime short and give them plenty of opportunities to rest. Though training begins at home, it does not end there. Socialization is important for all young puppies. Exposing them to a variety of environments, objects and stimulations ensure that they do not grow up to be fearful of them. Hence reducing the chances of fear-based biting.

Always keep an eye out for their body language. Dogs communicate but we often fail to listen. Do not stop them from growling, do not shout at them when they bark or seem upset. Instead, look around for what may be triggering them. Identify these triggers and train your pup to be comfortable around them. Silencing them will increase the likelihood of them reacting poorly at a later time.



Lastly, proofing behaviour is especially important. You may be able to train your dog perfectly at home and they may be the best little training buddy who is obedient. However, this behaviour might not sustain outside. Proofing the behaviour includes practising and repeating the behaviours learnt at home, in different environments with more distractions. If your puppy can follow your commands at home, move to a slightly more distracting area- like the lobby or street right outside your house. Once the behaviour is followed there, move to a higher distraction level. Keep doing this till you can hold your dog's attention and they listen to you even in public spaces with high distractions.

Follow these tips, reinforce good behaviour and you will raise a puppy who is as gentle as it can get!



The versatile Saba Poonawalla

Love knows no boundaries in the world of animals

From leading a team at a Chennai-based bird census in the recent past to having a marvel of a dog which paints its own portrait, Saba Poonawalla, a animal trainer, dog cognitive developer and behaviourist has one message for all: “Treat the mute with love and they shall cherish you forever.” *Canta Dadlaney* gets into a delightful and engrossing conversation with on her journey with pets and more...

For those who feel a 24-hour day isn't enough, think again! Saba is a certified animal trainer, dog cognitive developer and behaviourist and an avid lover of nature. She has studied dog training under the aegis of India's renowned gold medallist, Ragnath Tamboli with whom she worked for three years. She has also successfully completed a course on the rescue and rehabilitation of snakes from the Kalinga Centre for Rainforest Ecology (KCRE). Her love for animals can be traced to her childhood when she discovered her oneness with them at the tender age of eight, whether it was dogs, cats, birds, or even reptiles. She kept them close to her heart as a child, and she continues to do so now. Her dedication and focus allowed her to pursue her passion, which has since been the source of her happiness.



Saba Poonawalla



As young as eight years old were distracted by animals...

Yes! I started camping at that age and that's how my tryst with the animal kingdom began. Animals infused a sense of belonging within nature, and in me. The feeling is indescribable, I always felt comfortable and experienced a sense of calmness and peace in the company of nature. This affinity towards nature and animals further strengthened through my teenage years, by then, I was determined to pursue my passion to the hilt.

Snakes, dogs, birds, and more... did you lose friends or gain friends?

The latter (she smiles). When the ones who had all kinds of animal phobias realized how sublime wildlife is, my bandwagon of animal lovers grew in size.

Most parents would object to your preferred choice of a career. How did your parents accede to it?

Call it sheer coincidence, but my parents and my in-laws have been very supportive. My parents have always revelled in the peace and beauty of nature, and they have been extremely supportive. I never faced any pressure to pursue an academic career of their choice.



You are one of the few Indians who employs positive reinforcement methods with dogs. What exactly is that?

The training methods adopted in India are still quite archaic. You don't have to use a baton or shout orders at a dog to perform a task. Positive reinforcement methods are reward-based play techniques which enable dogs to obey you. I resort to them when it comes to my own pet dogs. And believe me, they work wonders.

Can you share an incident or two to understand this better?

A four-year-old mixed breed dog was adopted by a loving family. Unfortunately, the dog had a history of abuse, which made it react when taken outdoors. The couple resorted to a shock collar which enabled them to distract her, whenever she became reactive. When I was asked to assist them, I used the necessary positive reinforcement techniques. Things worked out perfectly and the family dispensed off the undesirable shock collar. As a trainer and behaviourist, this was one of the most rewarding experiences for me.



How did you start working with Ragnath Tamboli?

I had taught my dog Theodore to open a storage unit and get me a bottle of water. I have always believed that animals are extremely intelligent. A lot of love and patience can make them do wonders. Ragnath Tamboli sensed this in me and let me accompany him. I did, for 3 years, and those were wonderful years for me. He is an incredible tutor, exemplary by all standards. He played a vital role in nurturing my passion for animals. For the first function of my wedding, he and I were engrossed in one of many such training sessions for the first half of the day! A big day in my life but I was quite nonchalant as my dog training took precedence.





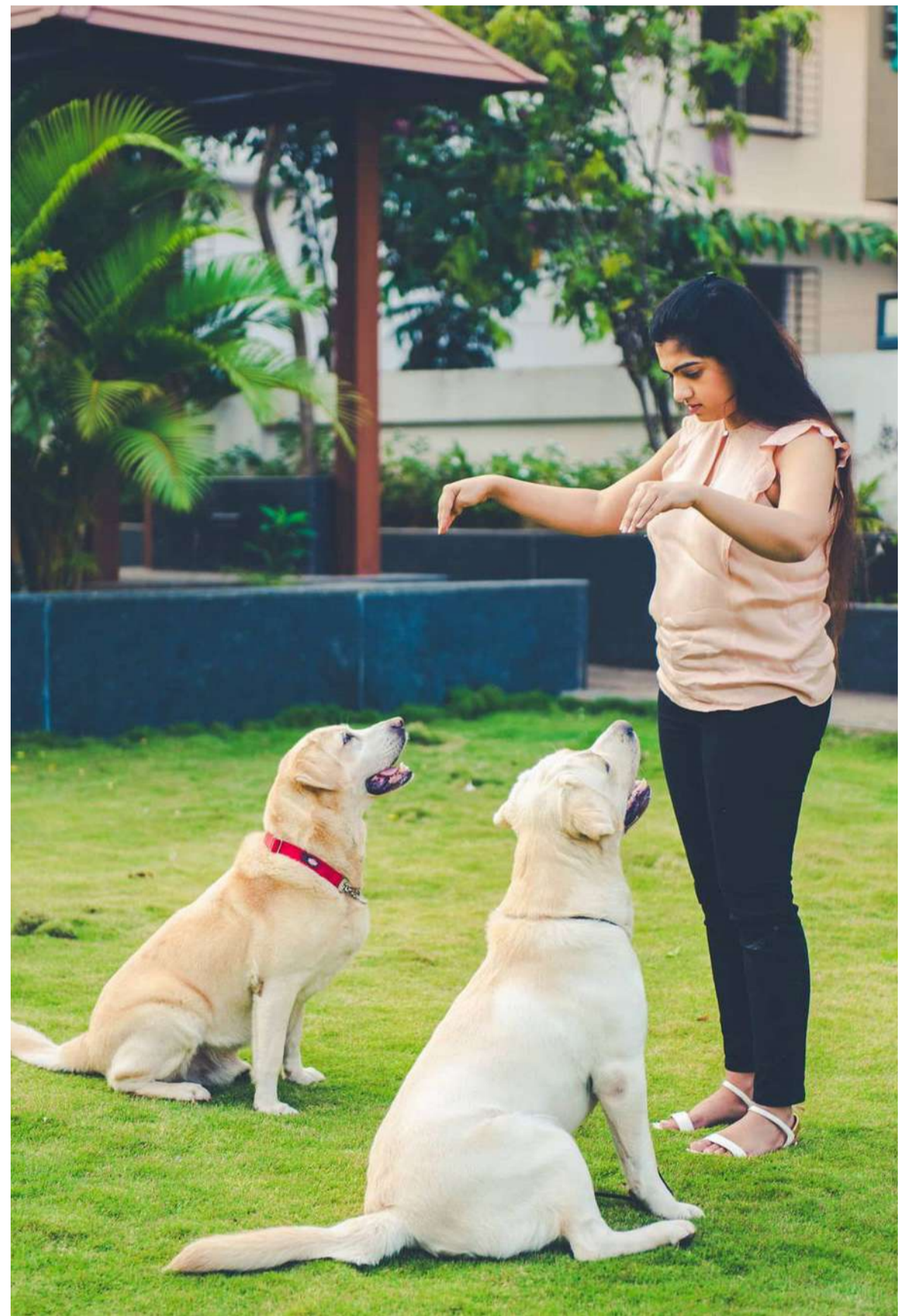
- Saba's dog obeys 45 commands and is perhaps the first dog in India that can paint its portrait.
- She also indulges in herpetology because of her love for snakes. While others consider them creepy crawlies, Saba finds it imperative to promote the co-existence of human beings and reptiles. *"They need to be rescued and rehabilitated with the correct methods and not brutally killed."*

Have you ever felt emotionally drained by such incidents, especially the ill-treatment meted out to animals? How do you cope with it?

I do, in fact, I struggle with it consistently! Just because animals are mute and can't cry out for help does not give anyone the right to abuse them. Look at the manner in which materialism continues to deplete the natural resources of the earth. The imbalance between the animal kingdom and human beings keeps increasing. Their natural habitat is being harmed mercilessly. I try not to get affected and endeavour to save as many of these wonderful creatures.

Has animal cruelty ever made you re-think your decision about caring for them?

It has strengthened my resolve to work for them even more. In the recent bush fires which occurred in Australia, I made special pouches and sent them to the care givers/volunteers, to help baby kangaroos (Joeys), Wombats and Koalas. Whenever possible, I feed almost 200 animals.



Rapid-fire:

Retirement plan: I would love to set up a shelter for all animals- dogs, cats, snakes, hyenas, crocodiles, elephants, leopards, and even tigers.

Name a few favourites:

Birds: Paradise flycatcher, Crows, Indian Pitta, Vigor's sunbird, Malabar pied hornbill, Vultures, as many as I see...

Dogs: Indies, Labrador, Retriever, Jack Russell Terrier, Weimaraners, Belgian Malinois.

The road: To recreate forests and sustainable environments for animals. I want to walk in the footsteps of my mentor.

Role models: Ragnath Tamboli, Steve Irwin

CLUB NAME



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9618969696



10 Little Fingers

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First

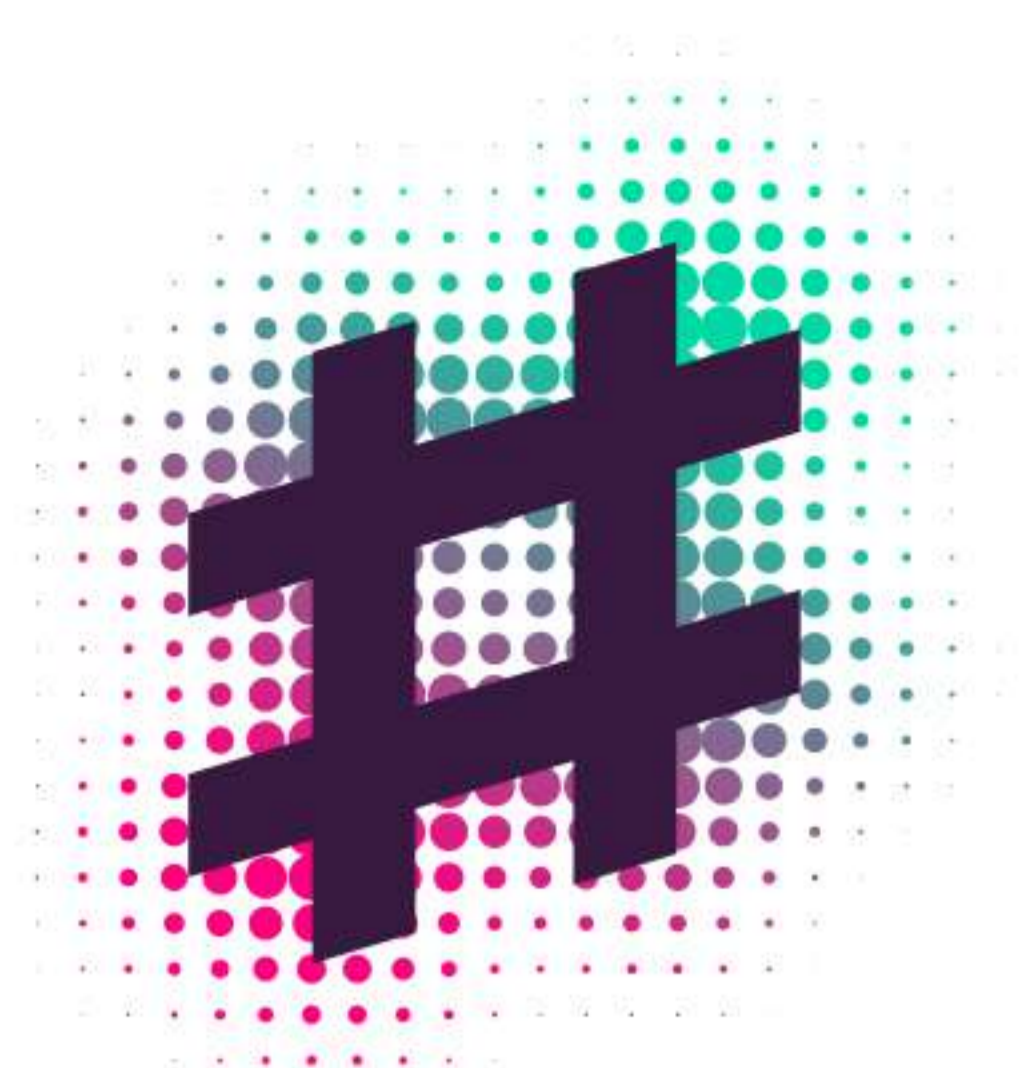


DIY Brand



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INTERIORS



IKIRIYA

Crafted with PASSION!

Shrey Maheshwari was a 15-year-old commerce student when he started helping his dad in Ikiriya furniture, an organization that creates aesthetically crafted Jaipur furniture like benches, pouffes, book stands, and stools. Each piece of furniture carries the trademark colourful nuances of Jaipur. A lot has happened in 12 years. A qualified CA now, Shrey Maheshwari speaks to **Canta Dadlaney** about expanding his dad's venture and taking it to innovative digital heights.

The origin of the name Ikiriya - "Well, the name of our parent company is Shakun Handicrafts, named after my late grandmother, Shakuntala Devi. I had decided on the same brand name for the furniture as well but it was not available. So, we prepared a list of 10-12 unique brand names. I was keen on a name that would evoke instant brand value. After a little brainstorming and consulting with both family & friends, Ikiriya was born in 2016."

Ikiriya's journey and how it all started-

Talking about how his dad ventured into this business, he says, "In 2010, my dad, who worked as a manager in a mid-sized export organization in Jaipur was approached with a partnership offer from an ex-employee of the same organisation, for a handicrafts export business. My dad had always nurtured a dream

of starting his venture but a dearth of funds had been the biggest hurdle. He accepted the partnership offer which took off successfully within a few months. However, the partnership turned sour and within 16 months, he found himself in limbo. There was no going back to his job."

Adept at production, Maheshwari, Shrey's dad, threw caution to the wind and started his own business. Shrey, an 11th-standard student then dived deep into helping his dad. "In the past, my father with his best friend had invested in a plot of land on the outskirts of Jaipur for investment purposes. The tin shed, stock & machinery which we received from the partnership business was used here to initiate the production. He held complete rights over the product catalogues and asked me to email them to exporters."



The sincerity of the father-son duo paid off and they received their first order from across the seas. It was from the USA! The clients already had an upcoming trip to India and stated they would visit Maheshwari. The factory, with its lock, stock and barrel still stood tall, and based on a prior understanding with his ex-partner, Maheshwari displayed all the product designs. The US-based team visited the factory in the afternoon but left abruptly after about 30 minutes of scrutinizing the details. They had a schedule to follow and stated they would return.

By dusk, both Shrey and his dad had lost hope and thought they had missed the bus. But destiny had something good in store for them. They received a call late in the evening, at about 8 pm. The US team told them, that they would arrive after dinner. And they kept their word. They arrived at 9.30 and finalized the order by 11 pm.

"This is how we got our first order and that too a big one!" says a beaming Shrey, reminiscing about the same. With the few funds at their disposal, his dad managed to construct a very basic structure on that land to start production. What started then as 2 rooms with a demarcation of sorts has today turned into a three-storeyed building.



“The initial excitement soon waned. We thought the orders would just come pouring in but it doesn’t work like that, right?” continues Shrey. “With the exception of a few small export orders, things came to a standstill. Digitisation was just coming to the fore and we were far away from it. My dad decided to turn his focus on the local Jaipur market. We associated with various furniture showrooms but invariably faced payment issues. This went on for 3 long years. In 2014, we got associated with OLX. It was how we presented our products that brought us a good response.”

Even as you wonder what a small-town boy and his dad could do to crack it on OLX, Shrey states, “We used simple descriptors stating our aesthetic furniture was available on sale at the most nominal prices,” what followed was a string of orders for their sofas even if, at a slow pace.

Their business roles

Talking about his role and how he helped his dad, he says, “I have been with him from the first day that he stepped into it but from the communication aspect. I managed the emails and online interaction with clients and dealers. I was studying for my chartered



accountancy and had to devote time to that as well. I also was a part of the purchase of raw materials and other odd jobs.”

Even though he was pursuing a serious career in CA, he moved naturally into the business, and adds, “I moved with the tide for the initial 2-3 years but I was very keen to obtain my CA degree. I had nurtured goals of starting my own CA business and assisting my dad on a parallel platform. But something drew me towards this business. I also started learning the ropes in detail and began to enjoy the journey. I do have a knack for designing furniture and enjoy interacting with clients. Today, I am involved in it all and I am very happy to be completely immersed in it. My dad manages all the purchases and production. That’s his forte. I manage the online platforms, orders, customers, new designs, as well as new associations, and initiatives, while he continues to guide me whenever required. I do take a keen interest in the production process as well.”



The online venture

The online shopping concept was fairly new and intriguing to his dad. He further adds on how they first conceptualised on it, “A friend of mine who used to sell mobile covers online apprised me of the idea of selling furniture online. I immediately started researching the variety of furniture being sold online. I collated data and realised that there were only 8-10 reputed brands. I took inspiration from some of the designs and along with my dad’s designs showcased them online. Digital sales were completely alien to me. Moreover, I was very young but decided to test the virtual waters. My constant research educated me in a big way. I listed our products on Flipkart and Paytm. On the 13th of January, 2015, we received an order of Rs. 2400-2500 from Flipkart. My dad was taken aback. He couldn’t believe that people placed orders online for furniture!”

Eventually, their business flourished on online platforms, and their perspectives too evolved. He says, “The Diwali season of 2016 was a highly rewarding one for us. We received many orders from various online platforms. All earlier doubts about online sales took a backseat and we realised the potential of digital sales.”



Ikiriya Living & Bedroom Stool
Brown, Pre-assembled



Ikiriya Hamilton Solid Wood Maachi Foot
Stool Glean Bro...



Ikiriya Living & Bedroom Stool
Brown, Pre-assembled

Shrey talks about how they tried to advertise and associate with other brands, "From Flipkart and Paytm in 2015 to Amazon in 2016, we moved on and approached Urban Ladder and Pepperfry in 2018. I communicated with them via email over a timeframe of 2-3 months, sharing details of our existing catalogue as well as new products but to no avail. After quite some time Urban Ladder did revert stating they would like to visit our factory to get an insight into our infrastructure. When they did, they stated our factory was not in sync with their infrastructure standards. And they rejected us, which was quite a let-down. Pepperfry reverted after 18 long months of persistent emailing. They evinced a lot of interest in our range of products which got listed within 30 days! Then, out of the blue, after almost more than 2 years, Urban Ladder got in touch with us offering to list our products. Of course, we agreed but were happy that this time, they were doing the chasing."

Their reach is quite broad, even with only a little digital advertising, with orders coming in from all over the country. When asked about which cities they receive the most orders from, he says, "At the start, 90% of our orders arrived from metro cities. Almost 50% of those orders were from Bengaluru. Today, we receive orders from almost every corner of India."



Further plans and aspirations-

When asked if they would ever consider selling globally, he answers, "Global markets are diverse and everyone has specific tastes. We understand that if we need to scale this business we have to work on unique designs, participate in trade fairs and develop our factory infrastructure. So, after all these years, we want to try our hand at exports once again but we want to do it perfectly. Currently, our factory construction work is going on, and once completed we will have a more concrete infrastructure, as well as ample space to showcase our products in our showroom. Perhaps, after Diwali, this year, we will focus on exports. We are keen to see our range of products on the US and European digital platforms. I plan to complete all formalities to get associated with their digital platforms after Diwali. We are currently focusing on Diwali sales following the Covid phase."

Although opening showrooms might not be in their future, as they are an expensive affair, he says, "If our goodwill spreads far and wide, we don't have to resort to showrooms. We will continue to innovate to please one and all." Talking more about their plans, he adds, "We want to grow the brand and promote our website first, and then slowly increase our product range. Our vision is to offer customers superior quality products and services. I do have a plan on how to do things in a very unique and competitive way. Moreover, we do have eco-friendly furniture on our agenda. It may take some time but we are getting into that. I believe if your quality and price are competitive, they speak for your brand."

Young Shrey appears to have a lot of knowledge, but he's certainly street smart. This young man, who holds a CA degree, is all set to redefine attractive furnishings. The Maheshwari family is doing incredible things for a family with no furniture background other than one man's production skills, i.e., Shrey's dad. A classic illustration of self-belief and determination.

For all inquiries, you can visit the Ikiriya website and connect with them. Shrey is sure to answer all your concerns.

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



STREAMING NOW

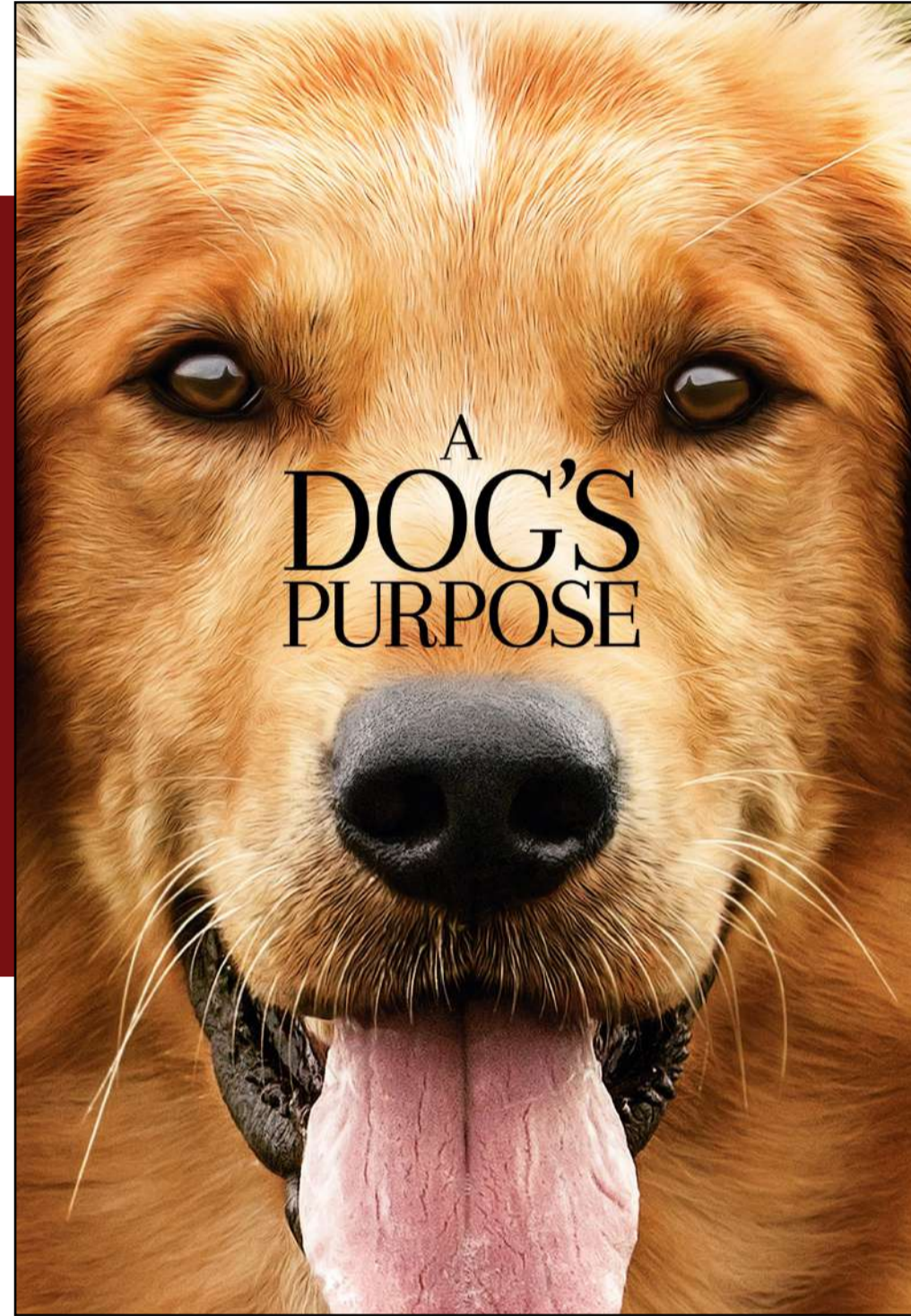


Popular Pet Movies to watch

Pets have this wonderful ability to entertain us, captivate our hearts with their cuteness, and love us unconditionally. There are only a few movies where pets take the centre stage. So whether you need an emotional movie for a family movie night, or an animated adventurous movie to watch with kids featuring pets, here are some of the best movies about pets, and their love and loyalty.

A Dog's Purpose

A Dog's Purpose movie is based on the novel written by W. Bruce Cameron. This movie will bring you to tears. The movie revolves around a dog that goes through four lifetimes with different owners. During this amazing journey, the dog understands the real purpose of living. It is a very emotional movie and makes you think about the role of dogs in our lives.



Hachi: A Dog's Tale

Hachiko is a wonderful movie that will take you on an emotional ride. The movie is about a professor who finds an abandoned dog, and over time a beautiful unbreakable bond forms between them. The movie is based on a true story and there is a statue of Hachiko that stands outside Shibuya station in Tokyo.

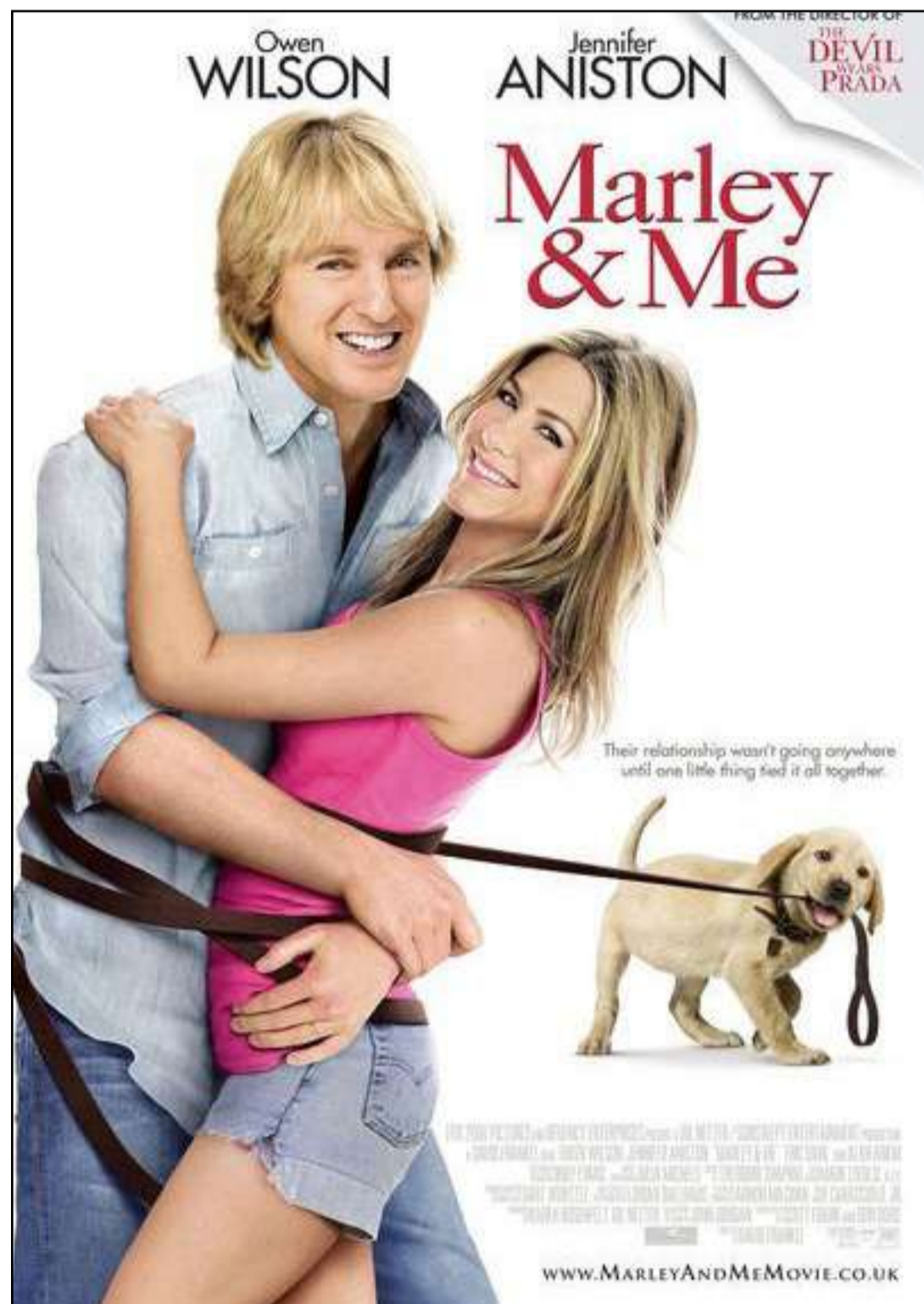
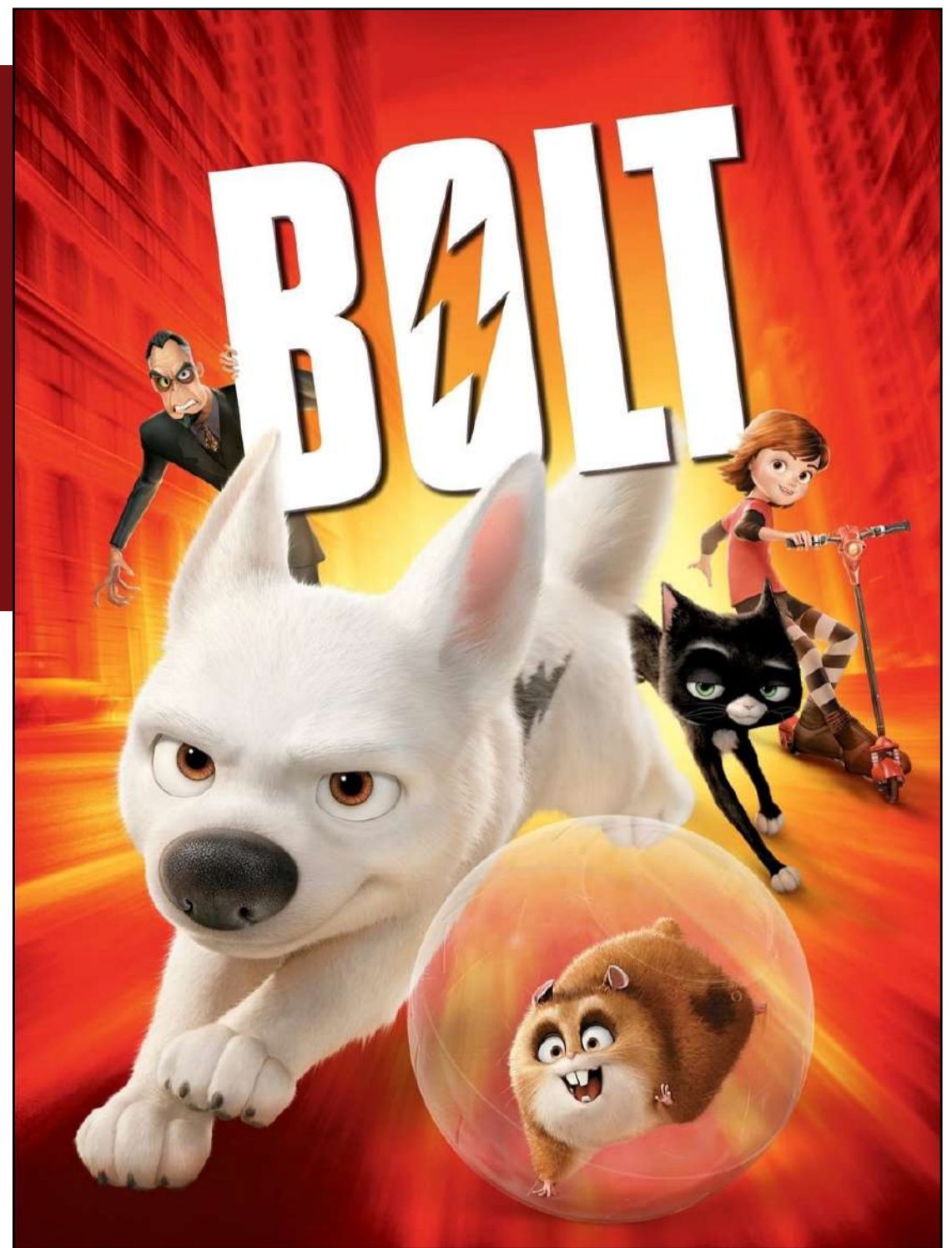
777 Charlie

777 Charlie is a wonderful movie that will prove that a dog is man's best friend. Whether you are a pet lover or not, this movie transforms your thinking toward pets and their unconditional love for their owners. The movie revolves around Charlie, a small Labrador dog, and its companionship with Dharma to help him find his purpose in life and make him a better human.



Bolt

Bolt is an animated adventure movie about a dog that stars in a fictional Sci-Fi movie. Bolt believes that his powers are real and takes off on an amazing journey with a cat and a hamster to save his co-star Penny from a threat. Bolt is a thrilling and entertaining movie that delivers a message about finding your inner hero and the movie beautifully portrays the friendship between Bolt and Penny.



Marley & Me.

Marley & Me is based on the autobiography book by John Grogan. The movie is about a happily married couple who adopt a free-spirited pup named Marley, who manages to have some great adventures with his family and teaches them important life lessons along with a heartbreaking end which all the pet lovers are familiar with.

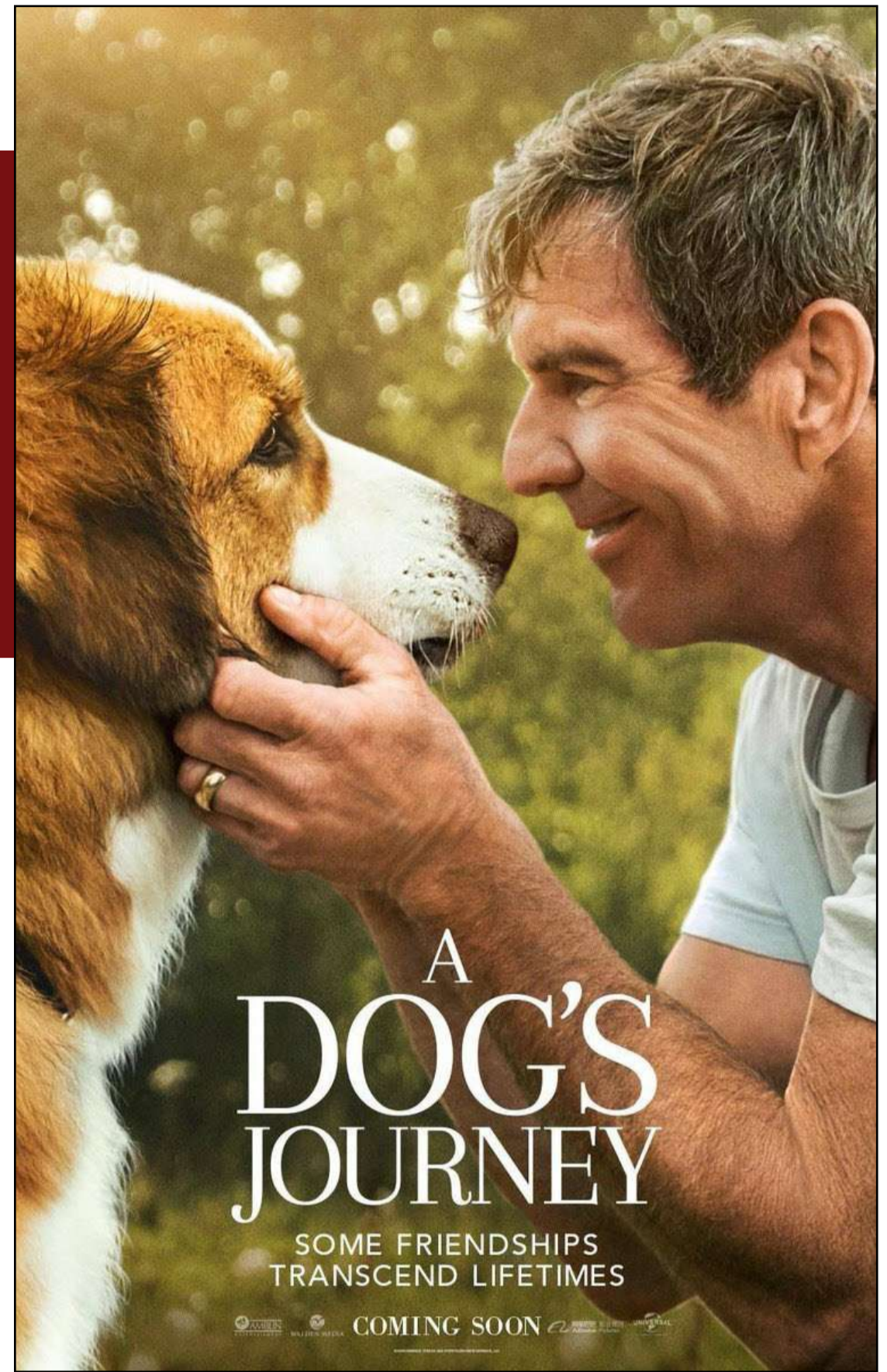
The Secret Life of Pets

Have you ever thought about what your pets do while you leave them at home? This amazing animation movie explores this wonderful idea that you don't want to miss at all. The movie is about two pet dogs, Max and Duke, and the initial differences between them. But they keep their differences aside after they find out that their owner is in danger. It is a perfect movie to watch with kids because the storyline, animation, and comedic and dramatic scenes are fantastic to watch.



A Dog's Journey

The sequel to Dog's Purpose is an amazing movie that will tug at your heartstrings. After Bailey finds its purpose, it prepares for the next adventure as he promises his owner something really beautiful which proves again that dogs live to love us. The movie is filled with friendship, love, and adventures of Bailey through many lives.



101 Dalmatians

The 1996 classical movie 101 Dalmatians is one of the most successful pet movies to watch. The movie is about Anita, and Roger, who have to rescue their puppies from Cruella who wants to use the Dalmatian's fur to make a fashionable fur coat. The movie will keep you in suspense and will also make you laugh.

Togo

Togo is an incredible true story of Leonhard Seppala and his Siberian husky Togo which is considered to be weak, but Leonhard trains him. The movie is about how a weak dog Togo becomes a hero for Alaska when Togo and the owner embarked on a journey to transport medicine during the diphtheria epidemic.



These are some of the best pet movies to watch. Other movies like The Call of the Wild, Eight Below, Because of Winn-Dixie, Turner & Hooch and All dogs go to heaven, although not mentioned on this list, are a must-watch. All these movies are entertaining and emotional as well and they will hold a special place in your heart.

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