

Hashtag

INDIA

March 2021 www.hashtagmagazine.in

7 OTT GAME CHANGERS

REDEFINING STARDOM

HAPPY HEAD

India's first

IV clinic

KONDAPALLI:
THE TOY VILLAGE
OF **ANDHRA**

LACE TO MAKE HIS HEART RACE

Tantalising
Lingerie Picks



Wine
for your
PAPADUM
Food pairing tips
Mixologist
RON RAMIREZ

Young Forever **5**

PROCEDURES TO TAKE THE YEARS OFF YOU

ON TOP OF THE GAME

SHRIYA

PILGAONKAR

+ Nightlife,
Fashion,
Arts & more

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EVENTS IN TOWN

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Spring is here, and from Holi to yoga and street food to craft beer, March has loads in store for everyone. Take a look at our events calendar, and book your dates.



TRENDING NOW

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Hashtag Magazine gets you up close and personal with the modern day superstars who kept us all entertained during the pandemic. Read about the crème de la crème of India's OTT scene, and find out why they believe the web reinvented acting and storytelling as we know it.

START UP INC

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How much cheese is too much cheese? Apparently not enough until you can create a veritable empire out of it, if you ask entrepreneur Manasi Jasani. Read about the cheesemonger, and find out what's new in the scene of organic farming and delivery.

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Check out the incredible work being done by a modern-day humanitarian, Villy Doctor, who chooses to keep a low profile while toiling to empower the underprivileged.

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Globetrotting mixologist Ron Ramirez has been mixing up magic, and grooming young talent in the industry for 15 years now. In India for a project with The Finch, he gets talking to Hashtag Magazine on the culture of bartending, and lets us in on his mixes of Indian cuisine and alcohol.

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We get an expert to decode attires for men this wedding season, and if you're looking to replenish your lingerie collection, we list some of the best picks for you.

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Innovations in the smartphone arena go through paradigm shifts every other year. Tech-guru Aniket Pandey shortlists a few that are sure to stand the test of time.

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Read about a painter who is busy bringing doors to life.

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STREAMING NOW

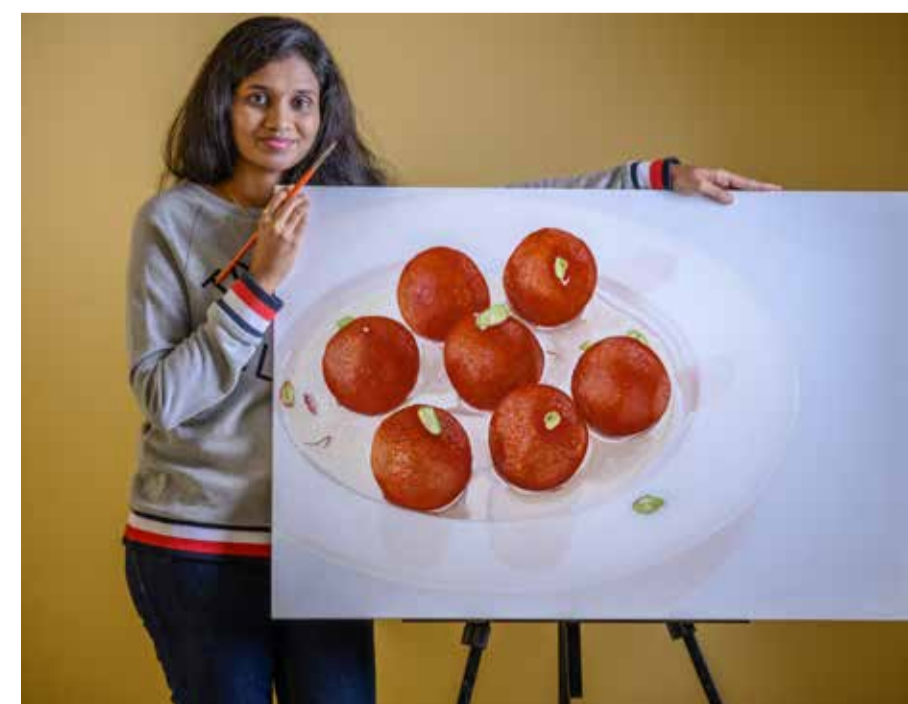
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OTT is the buzzword this edition, and we get you our top 5 picks of Tamil movies streaming on the web this year.

NRI - IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Read about an Indian artist based in the US who is detailing the magnificence of Indian cuisine on her canvas with her impossibly intricate brush.



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From the Editor

LET'S BREAK THE STEREOTYPES...



Happy International Women's Day! Enter March and I'm literally scared to watch the news or even read a newspaper. Along with the overdose of heat we are also fed with an overdose of feminism. Newspapers are laden with pictures of women, social media is buzzing about womanpower, even WhatsApp is spammed with moms and dads sending us empowerment quotes. Oh yes, we must absolutely celebrate womanhood and women in general, but hey all this vagueness does not appeal to me. Feminism is not an annual event but a daily practise. Do we need to celebrate ourselves? Sure! Anytime, but to pretend this is some great feminist victory feels misrepresented.

Especially in a male dominated country like India, such celebrations are premature. How many men/daddies wake up in the morning to cook or send their kids off to a class? It's taken for granted to be a woman's job. This holds true for everybody--the highly educated, poor and uneducated alike. Take for example working couples. Both earn, both make money, both hold respectable positions but who does the cooking in the morning? The lady of the house of course!

It is fascinating to see how even the most progressive educated women with international degrees and exposure, do not insist on an unequivocal division of household work. This could be the result of myriad reasons, like our society, general conditioning or simply compromise to keep the peace of the house. But this in turn reinforces the same stereotypes, leading to a ripple effect.

No doubt, we are slowly changing, and if there is one industry that is taking the right steps towards this pivotal evolution, it is the digital entertainment world or the OTT Platform. You will no longer see women dancing behind the trees or play damsel in distress while the hero single-handedly fights off hundreds of goons. In an industry that was absolutely hero centric, OTT has come in as a breath of fresh air. With new scripts and women centric content, actors today are redefining and reinventing their characters on screen. In our cover story this issue we have captured the journey of stars like Shriya Pilgaonkar, Ritwik Bhowmik, Shreya Dhanwanthary, Sarah Jane Dias, Harshita Gaur and others, who have been appreciated for their performance and have been a part of some of the amazing stories.

Yes, Hashtag may not have dedicated an entire issue for women, but we salute them in every section of our magazine. From Start-ups to NGOs, to fashion to my everyday team of journalists, we celebrate the fairer sex, everyday! After all, women's standing in the world isn't just for the month of March; it's for a lifetime.

It's time we take a day off from feminism and instead come together as one and focus on where the real problems lie! Together, let's break the stereotypes!

SINDURI VUPPALA



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**THE
HAPPINESS
CO**



**DELICIOUS
AND
CRUNCHY**

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2021

The Dineout SteppinOut Night Market

Our favourite shopping extravaganza is back. It is India's unique exhibition of fashion, food and entertainment. Hyderabadis should prepare themselves for the most exquisite shopping collection from top designers, finger licking food from across the country, fun and enjoyment all day long with free flowing bar!

Venue: Taj Krishna, Hyderabad
Date: 6 March 2021

6
Mar 2021



Holi Moo! Festival



7
Mar 2021

Experience the traditional festival of colours with a modern twist. It is that time of the year when we play with colours, enjoy the music and dwell in the festive atmosphere with friends and family. Add colour to your day and drive back home with lots of fun and laughter. Do not miss it!

Venue: Jhankar lawns, New Delhi
Date: 7 March 2021

Mewar Festival



27-29
Mar 2021

Rajasthan is all about culture and tradition. The Mewar Festival is celebrated to commemorate the arrival of the spring season. A number of tourists from across the globe visit to see this festival. The major attraction of the festival is the tradition, procession and the rituals they perform. The festivities are also associated with Rajasthani folk music, dance and drama and not to forget, the food!

Venue: Udaipur, Rajasthan
Date: 27 – 29 March 2021

International Yoga Festival

Yoga lovers gear up for the international yoga fest that is to be witnessed by 2000+ participants from 80 different countries. Yoga sessions from world class trainers, evening discussions with leading spiritual leaders, vegetarian cooking classes, and classical dance workshops are the highlights of the festival.

Venue: Parmarth Nikethan Ashram, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
Date: 7 – 13 March 2021



7-13
Mar 2021

Elephant festival

Be a part of the Elephant Festival to experience the uniqueness of India. As a part of the festival, elephants are designed with glitters of gold. Witness the ancient culture and beautifully decorated elephants. They dance, play, compete and guarantee entertainment.

Venue: Jaipur
Date: 28 March 2021



28
Mar 2021



The Pranic Festival

The Pranic Festival gives insights on nutrition and body nourishment, body awareness, conscious sexuality and much more. The festivities include sharing of knowledge and experiences from epicomic speakers and teachers who have mastered meditation, Chi Kung and other techniques for prana circulation. The festival is designed with the coordinates of Giza one and has resonance.

Venue: Pyramid Valley International, Hobli, Karnataka.
Date: 3 - 8 March 2021

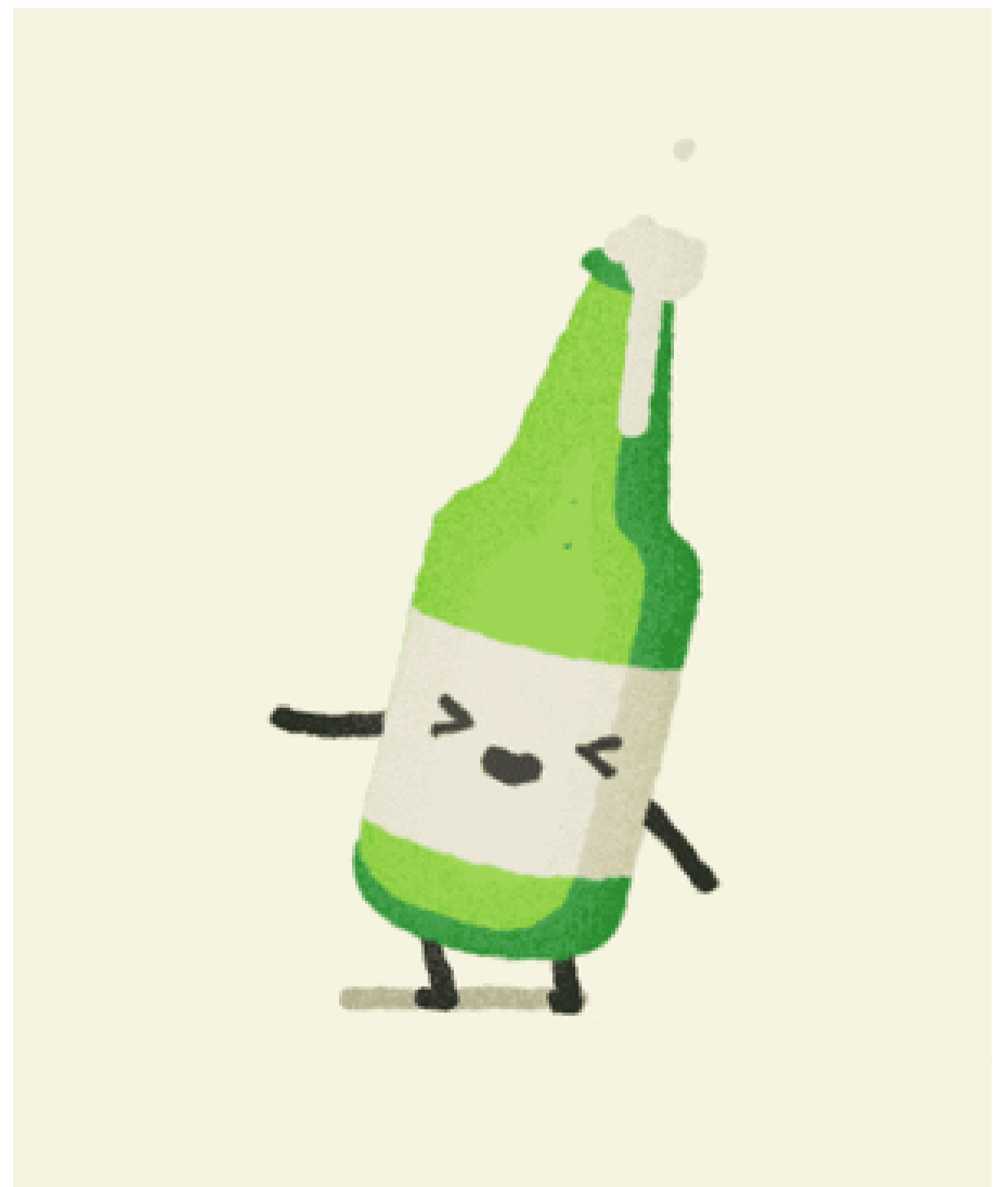


7
Mar 2021

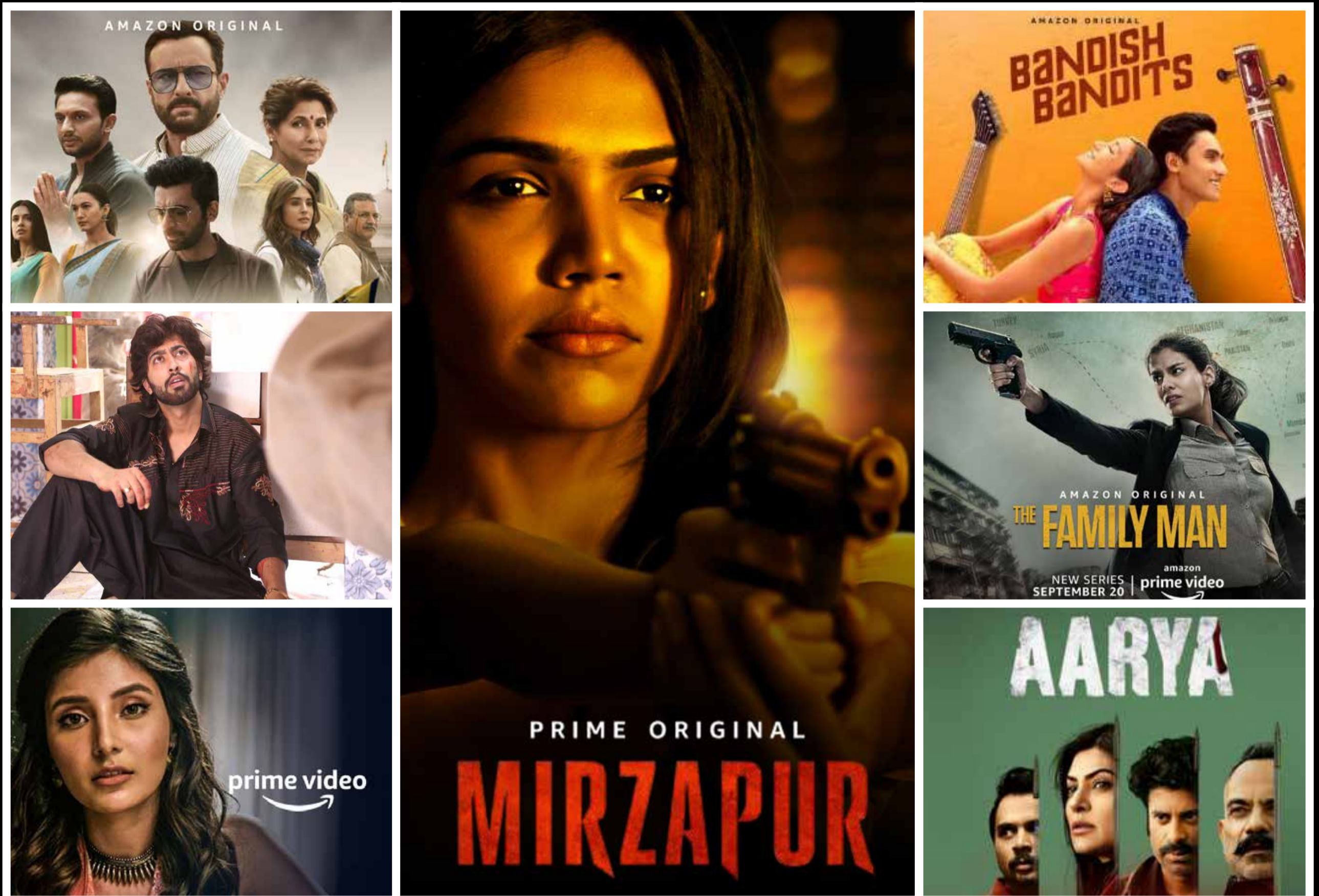
The Gourmet Craft Beer and Food Fest

The Gourmet fest is back with its 6th edition that includes more fun and folly. So hop along and get ready yummy food, live music and lots and lots of drinks. It is a perfect weekend getaway to divert all the stress of the week.

Venue: Mahalakshmi Race Course, Mumbai
Date: 7 March 2021



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



A YEAR DEDICATED TO OTT

The month of March marks a year of lockdown where everyone, willingly or unwillingly, had to stay home for the greater good. While it was a tough time all over, one of the primary sources of entertainment left to us were digital platforms, and it was indeed a year of Over the Top(OTT) streaming some engaging and enticing content. Through *Bandish Bandits*, *Aarya*, *Mirzapur 2*, *Scam 1992*, *A Suitable Boy* or the January release *Tandav* not only has a new wave of storytelling been introduced, but cinema lovers also got to witness some impressive performances by actors that have been around for a while and some surprising new talents.

Shriya Pilgaonkar, **Ritwik Bhowmik**, **Shreya Dhanwanthary**, **Namit Das**, **Sarah Jane Dias**, **Harshita Gaur** and **Ankur Bhatia** are a few of the names from the list of actors who have been appreciated for their performance and were part of some of the amazing stories streamed on various digital platforms. In conversation with **Sweta Pendyala**, the actors talk about their experience of portraying roles that received so much love from the audience and how they feel about being a part of the OTT wave.

The aim is to play parts different from my personality: SHRIYA PILGAONKAR

Famously known as Sweetie Gupta from *Mirzapur*, Shriya Pilgaonkar has been continuously choosing parts that are different from one another. Post *Mirzapur 2*, one of the biggest releases on OTT in 2020, she was seen in *Crackdown*, doing some power-packed action, in a first for her. The actor who is sitting on multiple releases this year on OTT and a film opposite Rana Daggubati, talks about her OTT journey.



With OTT bringing content-driven stories and offering meaty characters to the artists, is it also slowly curbing the problem of typecasting?

It is really up to the artist to make the conscious decision to seek out different projects and work towards diverse characters to not be stereotyped. Of course it doesn't always work out and you sometimes end up doing similar kind of roles, but with the advent of the digital space there are so many different kinds of parts that are written and it being a writer's medium there's so much scope to do a variety of roles where talent is given its due more than anything else. I believe that in the OTT space people do have a chance to prove their versatility.



Looking back, what do you think of your evolution as an actor?

I think I really now focus on bettering my craft as opposed to attaching expectations to the result of the project. As actors we are often in our own bubble but an important lesson I've learnt is to live life with a certain balance, and not let rejection or failure shake us, and instead take them in our stride. I've realised that of the things that come our way, some work and some don't, but I do not want to compromise on my peace of mind and the way I live my life. And, I do not want to approach my love for acting with any sort of stress or anxiety as I believe at the end of the day keeping your mental health in balance is the most important thing. I have really understood what I stand for, what my values are, what kind of roles I want to do, what kind of people I want to work with, where I am willing to put my foot down and what risks I am willing to take. I feel after becoming an actor you become a stronger human being that is why I love my job and it is an ever-evolving process.

You have worked in *Beecham House*, a British historical drama and have also worked in quite a few web-series in India. Have you observed any difference in terms of the approach towards the process, technicalities and other aspects?

The passion towards filmmaking and the commitment of the crew and actors are universal. I have been fortunate enough to work with good productions in India as well, so, there is no difference in that sense. But, I was shooting at Ealing Studios and the structure and discipline with which they function is different from here as we follow what we call the "Indian Standard Timings." (chuckles)

Your parents(Supriya and Sachin Pilgaonkar) are such accomplished artists. What impact do they have on you as far as art is concerned?

I have looked up to my parents as artists whose works I have utmost respect for and they've led by example. There is dignity and grace in their approach towards their craft and in the way they carry themselves. They have always tried to inculcate in me a broader understanding of life and taught me not to be in a bubble. They have always told me to embrace my uniqueness and not compare myself to anybody. I was told to not look at any work as big or small and to really understand that the nature of the business is the combination of talent, luck and opportunity. Their focus has been on evolving as individuals, and not stress themselves out. The biggest lesson I received from them is the importance of having a strong emotional quotient to survive in this industry.

Directorial Ventures on OTT:

I have always loved the process of filmmaking and I would love to direct in the future. But, I do not make decisions based on the medium even as an actor. If the story excites me and I resonate with it then the medium will depend on what kind of story it is. I would do it whether it is a one-minute film or a three-hour one. I am not very rigid about the way I view my work or life.



How have you explored the actor in you during lockdown?

Art always finds a way to survive and people have found unique ways to showcase their art and to keep themselves creatively engaged. In the lockdown I did an online play and I also shot a web series where all actors shot from their respective homes. I was my own makeup artist and stylist. I was being directed on video calls and was doing art continuity and production. It was a holistic experience for me as an actor where I sort of took charge of my space and created something. It taught me we have to find ways within the norms to keep working. Also, our industry employs so many people and so many people were in dire straits and at that point to just have work and to know that you don't have to worry about whether you are going to get work next is something that made me feel very grateful.

Are you conscious of what kind of roles you pick or are you going with the flow?

I am very instinctive with picking my part and a lot of times I feel the characters I play end up picking me. Luckily, I have been able to play different parts whether it's been Sweetie from *Mirzapur*, Chanchal from *Beecham House*, Suhani from *The Gone Game* or Divya in *Crackdown* where I am doing action scenes. The aim is always to surprise the audience and do things different from your personality and that is the way to show your versatility. I always want to keep doing different roles through which I can prove that I am capable of pulling off different characters.

On the calendar:

There is a show coming up and I think it is the most exciting thing I have done thus far. I am also looking forward to my Tamil and Telugu debut in *Haathi Mere Saathi*. It was incredible working with Rana Daggubati. I am playing a journalist who chooses the right path and helps Rana's character Baldev fight for justice. I want to keep a balance of films and web series as this is what excites me.



What was exciting about the character Divya in the series *Crackdown* when you read the script? What went into preparing for this role?

I always wanted to explore action as I love action films. I really enjoyed my part in *Crackdown* and had a great time working with Saqib, Apoorva and the whole team. I trained for a month and I realised that there's a ton of scope for improvement. It was fun, I challenged and surprised myself, as well as portrayed myself in a different light which I always wanted to.

As OTT stories are more about character not just leads, how do you see it helping you with opportunities?

It's wonderful that the whole notion of the hero and heroine is slowly changing and characters are being loved. My aim has been to do parts that are memorable and people will love. Having said that, I also know that I want to headline a project and that is what I am working towards but at the same time I do not judge the characters I play. Pankaj Tripathi has done all kinds of characters and yet he is a star. It is never about the length of the character; what one needs to chase is good writing for a character.



Favourite series of 2020

Paatal Lok

Favourite performance of 2020

Jaideep Ahlawat in *Paatal Lok*

A role you always wanted to play

There are quite a few but a sports biopic will be exciting

Which character of yours you can relate to the most in real life?

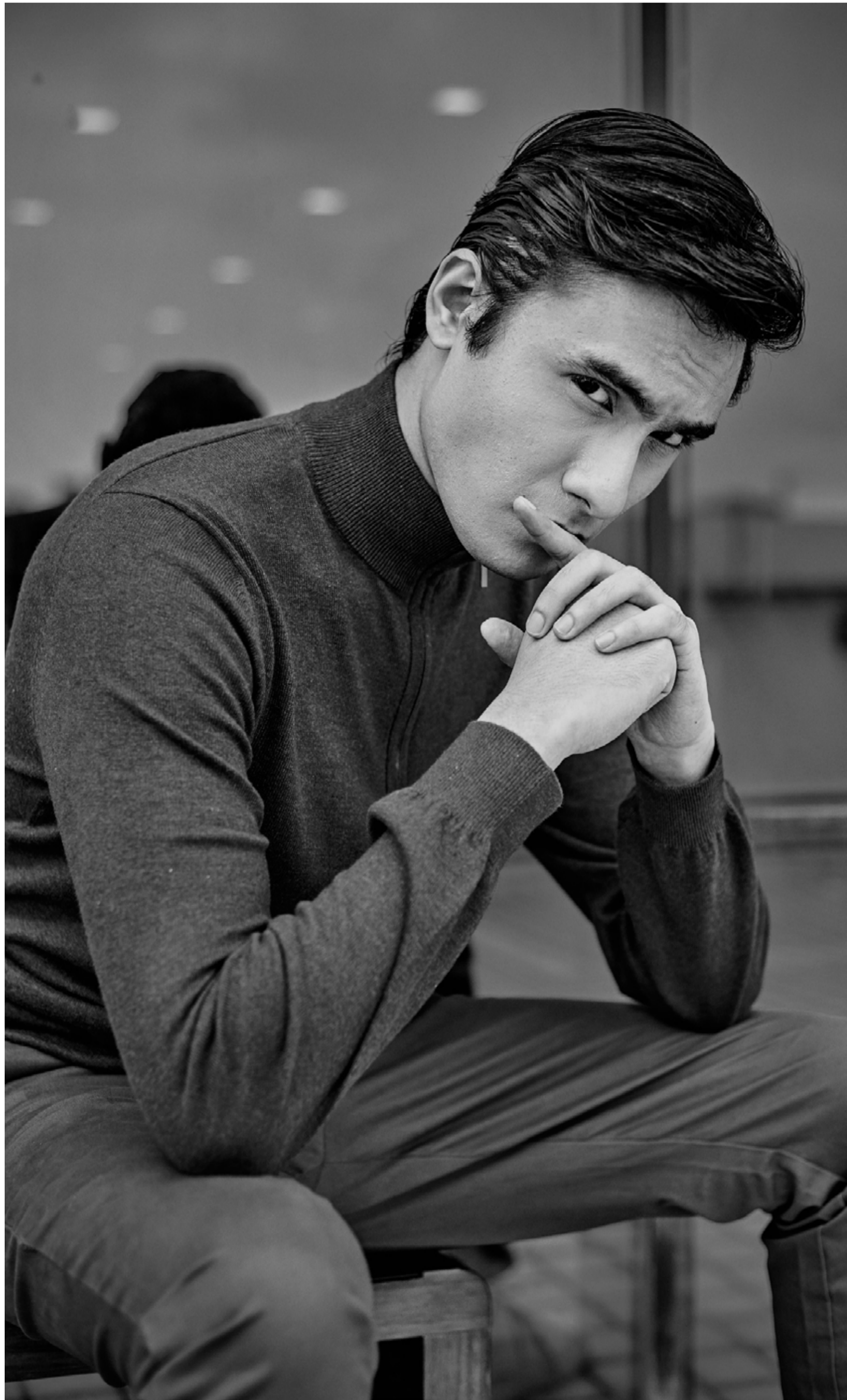
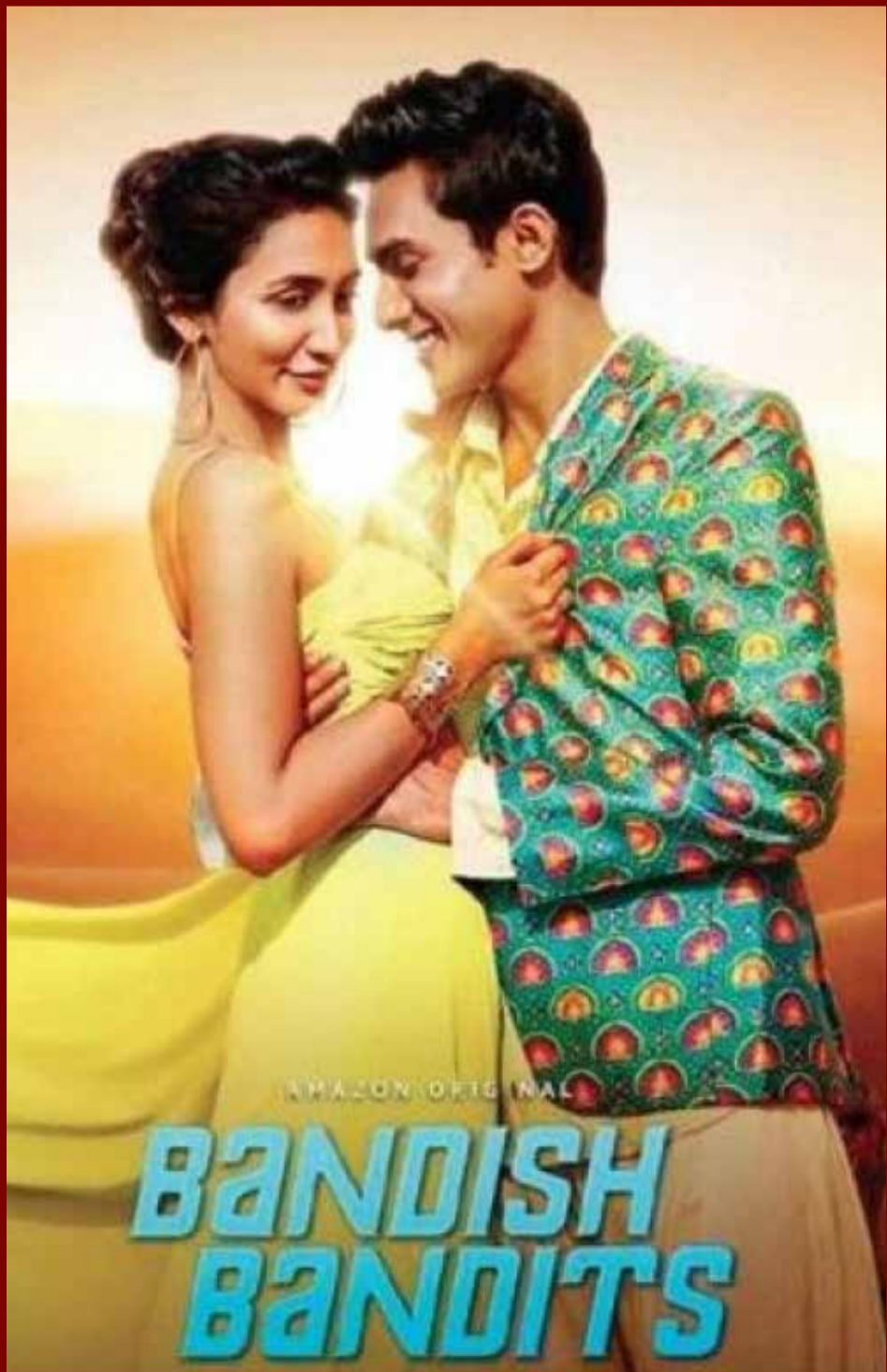
Every character has some amount of Shriya in it and I have some amount of them in me. All my characters have a common trait that they stand up for themselves.

One series you saw and felt "how I wish I was a part of".

I would love to do a show which will let me travel.

Choosing scripts from audience PoV: **RITWIK BHOWMIK**

As Radhe in the Amazon Prime series *Bandish Bandits*, **Ritwik Bhowmik** delivered a highly convincing performance as a classical singer. The actor who has been receiving immense love and appreciation for his brilliant work on screen, talks about his unplanned career, point of view as an audience, connection with music and how the internet contributed to his acting career which led to him doing the lead role in one of the major web series of 2020.



What was the biggest factor that allowed you to connect with your character in *Bandish Bandits*

I grew up listening to all sorts of music as my parents are huge fans; from Rabindra Sangeet to Ghazals, film music to Michael Jackson. I cannot go a day without music; I constantly look for new music. I studied music in Bengaluru where the student culture celebrates all genres. My parents integrated music in me at a young age and all that culminated into *Bandish Bandits* for me.

Talk about your transition from making YouTube videos to becoming one of the more sought-after actors in this era.

The internet played an important role in making my career. The whole journey has stitched itself together. I remember when I did my first *Filter Copy* video I didn't even know what I was doing. What I knew was there is a script, I have a part to play and I just went there and acted. When the video came people told me it was really good. For me, it was similar to theatre. I had to rehearse and perform but then I realised the audience is vast and they are consuming content. Then I became a little bit regular with working on videos for the internet.

In that process, I did a show called *Gabru* by Still and Still Media Collective where I first met Anand Tiwari and then a few months later I auditioned for *Bandish Bandits* and ended up doing the show. So, I feel if I hadn't done *Filter Copy* or Dice Media videos I wouldn't have been good enough to be in *Gabru* and then bag a role in *Bandish Bandits*. The best part about all this is that everything was unplanned. I went with the flow and destiny played its part while I was working on myself.



The web format seems to be taking many an actor's career for a ride. How has it changed yours?

As an actor I am blessed that I started my career in an era which is a transition period. In the entire entertainment industry there is so much scope for actors, writers, directors, musicians, and producers as screens aren't limited. You don't have to wait for your chance. If not theatres, one can go for streaming platforms. Everybody has the opportunity to make something, deliver it to people and each audience has the chance to choose whatever they want to watch from the variety of content. As an actor I no longer have to think "when am I going to be a part of a project like this or this genre?" There are already certain projects happening for me to do. There is constant work for everyone on a daily basis that digital platforms are offering.

What's on your mind as you choose a script?

When a script excites me as an audience I will end up doing it. I believe I am a better audience than an actor and also very accepting. Everyone wants to be a part of a commercially viable film or a show to be seen across the globe and that is very enticing. Having said that, I haven't planned anything as such and I do not think I can plan anything like this. Be it small scale or large scale everything happens on its own. I want to act because I am the happiest when I am acting and I want to make sure that people are entertained by me and looking to see more work from me. I am open to do everything as far as I am satisfied as an audience.

Feels nicer when people put faith in you:

SHREYA DHANWANTHARY

As the fierce journalist Sucheta Dalal in *Scam 1992*, **Shreya Dhanwanthary** came into the spotlight with her phenomenal acting skills. The actor made her debut in the entertainment industry with the Telugu movie *Josh* and later moved to Mumbai, was seen in many web series including *The Family Man*. Shreya who will also be seen in *The Family Man 2* talks about her choices and the experience of working in the country's two biggest web series.



***Scam 1992* was arguably the biggest release of 2020. What was the experience like for you?**

I auditioned at Mukesh Chhabra's office in 2019. I have always been a fan of Hansal Mehta. It has become monster success and it broke stereotypes that you need to have certain names, or a platform, or stick to edgy thrillers. The great part was the audience talked about us and they became our marketing. They told their colleagues, friends and family about us. It is very rare what happened with *Scam 1992* and I really do not know if I will be able to experience this again.

"The belief is that the small screen with its bigger playground carries a greater risk than traditional cinema because the audience isn't ready. But that's not true anymore. The transition is happening and more risks are taken everywhere."

You've been traversing between industries and genres right from your debut. How have you managed to hold your own?

Before I moved to Mumbai, I did Telugu films. I worked in *Why Cheat India* and, was a part of some web series but it has never been a conscious choice to get somewhere. It's always been about the opportunity and content I like to be associated with, be it a film, short film, web series or an advertisement. And, with the advent of web series and OTT, it is vast. There are so many stories in different languages and people are watching with subtitles. The belief is that the small screen with its bigger playground carries a greater risk than traditional cinema because the audience isn't ready. But that's not true anymore. The transition is happening and more risks are taken everywhere.

What has been the internet's greatest blessing on the industry?

There are opportunities galore for cinematographers, writers, directors and editors. It used to be small once and only a certain number of people were able to have access to such work but now it has grown and is such a nice space to be in.

Has OTT made any intrinsic changes to how stories are told in the industry?

Sometimes the stories you want to see are not being told and sometimes people who you want to hire for those stories are not being hired and that is when you might think of creating those things yourself. For example, Sumukhi Suresh created *Pushpavalli* and Biswa Kalyan Rath created *Laakhon Mein Ek* which was great to watch. I might also start writing in case I wish to tell certain stories or I end up needing employment (*laughs*).

On the calendar:

I have watched *Soorarai Pottru* and *Paava Kadhaigal* and they were amazing. I would love to be part of in Tamil, Telugu or in any language even if I cannot speak it. I am open to opportunities.

You've worked with big names right from the start of your career. What was it like to have the backing of people like Yash Raj Films and Hansal Mehta?

When the web started opening up, it was only TVF, Yash Raj Films and a few others who were making web series. My first break in a web series was in *Ladies Room* by Yash Raj Films which was the nicest thing that happened and I am eternally grateful to the web. It is very liberating when someone puts faith in you. It was incredible for Hansal Mehta to trust me as it was a massive series. It feels nicer, you don't feel stressed and get to concentrate on your acting.

What was it like playing Padma Shri awardee Sucheta Dalal?

Sucheta Dalal is a highly accomplished person and an award winning journalist. She chased the job and did it fantastically well, especially in a field which was dominated by men at that time. She is an amazing person who worked towards bringing truth to the public, not just in Harshad Mehta's case but also Ketan Parekh, Rajan Pillai and many other scams. To prepare for the character, we did the basic hygiene of going through all the articles, interviews, archival records and footage. Apart from that, credit goes to writer Sumit Purohit, Saurav Dey, Vaibhav Vishal, Karan Vyas as well as the director Hansal Mehta and co-director Jai Mehta. They gave us the playground and I feel art, costumes, makeup did a great job. I just had to say my dialogues and not mess that up. (*laughs*)

Raj and DK, and Manoj Bajpayee are modern day legends. What was it like to work with them in *The Family Man*?

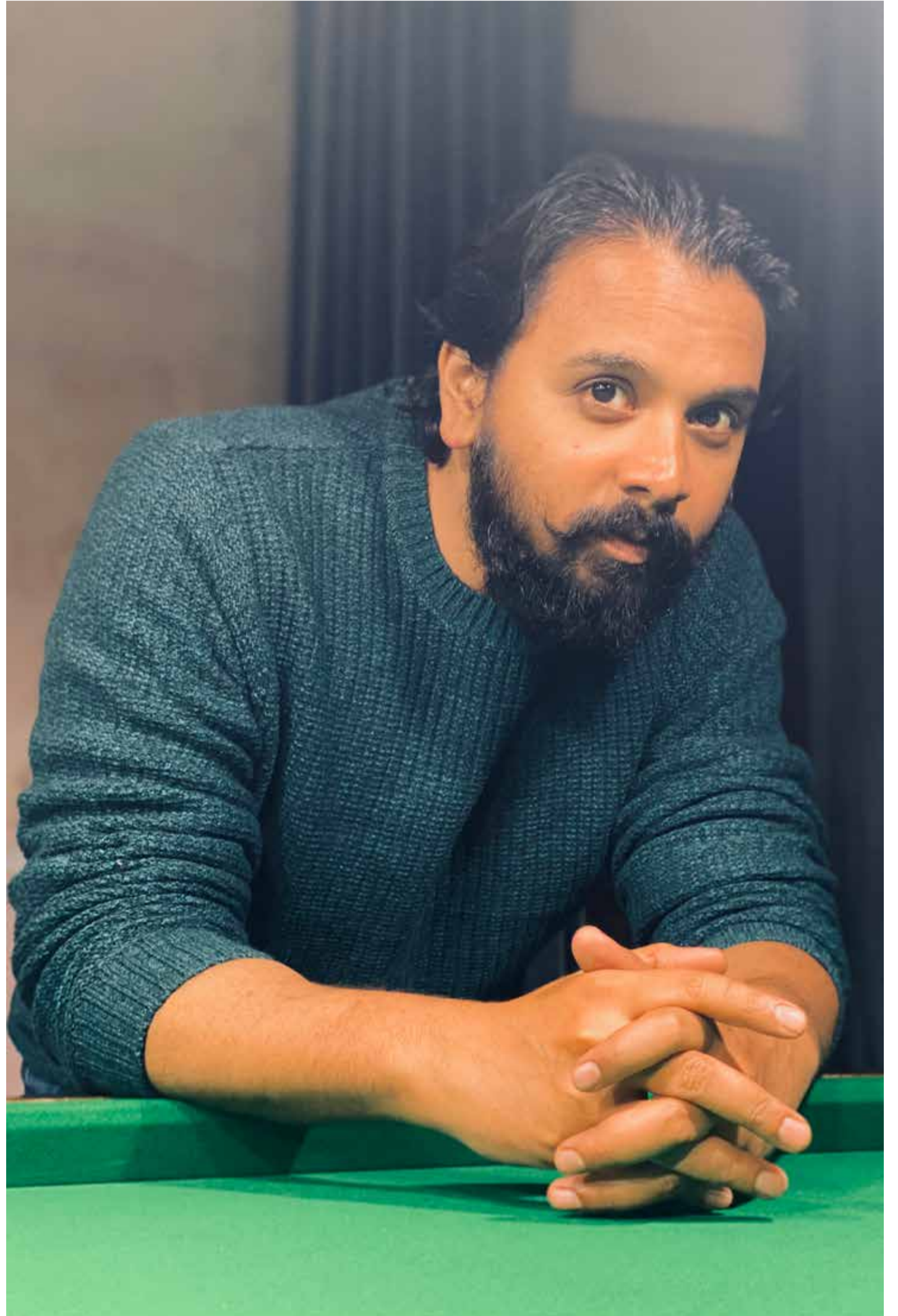
I actually blackmailed my way onto that project as I am a huge fan of their work. When I knew they were making a series, I just had to be a part of it. Raj and DK are unbelievable creators and people. They are smart, kind, witty and warm. It's been an honour working with them and hopefully I get to repeat that process. Manoj Bajpayee is a legend and I cannot praise him enough. All the amazing things you will tell about a person will be ascribed to him as well. Apart from being supremely talented, he is so kind and I don't think he is aware of how amazing he is. He makes everyone around him feel comfortable. Meals on *The Family Man's* set used to be a big deal, we all used to sit together with him in his van or he used to make sure that a space was organised outside for us all to sit together for a meal and share stories of our lives. Not everyone does that.



NAMIT DAS

is all game for meaty roles

Known for playing likeable characters in TV and movies over the years, **Namit Das** has been seen playing challenging parts of late. The actor who was seen in a grey shade in the series *Aarya* and a cobbler who is a quintessential nice guy *A Suitable Boy*, talks about how he is open playing all kinds of roles that can leave an impact on the story. He also shares the difficulty he faces to break away from the guy next door image and the changes he observed in the web world in the last few years.



What impact did 2020 leave on you as an artist?

OTT has helped me immensely because it made me part of some very interesting stories and has given me opportunities which I had no idea I could get. People keep saying that they could never imagine me in a negative or a grey character but it happened in the series *Aarya*, and that change will reflect in many other series that are going to come out soon. It has really made my image as an artist come alive and made it wholesome. Most of the shows that I am part of are truly ensemble pieces and the parts put me in a very interesting space. It widens my zone as an actor as well as nurtures me as an artist. *A Suitable Boy* and *Aarya* were contrasting roles that nurtured my artistic skills.

Until *Aarya*, you were seen playing "nice" roles. How important was it to break away from that image?

An actor wishes for variety and digital platforms are offering me the kind of roles I was always longing to do. I always wanted to explore negative and dark characters. I was looked at as 'guy next door'. To convince people I could be more than that was very difficult for me. Opportunities come now and people turn around and say you are good in these things as well and my answer is I am the same performer but now I am performing different things and that's why you are able to see me in a different light.

But you still played another "nice" character in *A Suitable Boy* around that time. How did that work out?

I started shooting for *Aarya* right after finishing *A Suitable Boy* and both were shot in the years 2019 and early 2020. As far as Jawahar in *Aarya* is concerned, the fact that I was getting to do something different and getting to play someone who is no way close to me in real life attracted me. My wife says I am more close to Haresh in *A Suitable Boy* who is disciplined, a go-getter, nice to talk to and is quintessentially a good man. Both shows releasing in the same year proved really good for me because people who saw me in such contrasting characters thought he can do 'this' and 'that' as well.

On the calendar:

A film titled *Aafat-E-Ishq* is going to be released on Zee 5 soon. We shot it in Nashik at the height of the pandemic when we were coming out of lockdown in September. Director Indrajit Nattoji whom I fondly call an artist, painted each frame beautifully. It's a film about love, magic, drama and lots of comedy. I am playing a fan of legendary singer Kishore Kumar. The film also casts Neha Sharma, Ila Arun, Amit Syal and Deepak Dobriyal. I am currently shooting for a show in which we are going back in time to the 1960s set against the backdrop of Chambal and dacoits and I play an edgy character in this.



The tide has been changing towards web over the years. What changes have you observed?

Scripts are getting better and creators are thinking differently. They are not seeing it as a show they want to put out and move on to another show. They are treating it as a property they are building which they will live with. In that case, there is scope for more discipline and perfection. I see lesser loopholes in the scripts now and the characters are getting edgier and they especially focus on the story. Initially, most content on the web got the spotlight due to sensationalism. Certain elements were shown that the audience were not exposed to and had a shock value. But now, we have gotten over it and are back to basic essentials – story and characters.

What do you factor in while picking a script?

I look at the bigger picture of how a story is going to turn out. I feel Jawahar came into the limelight because *Aarya* was a great show. For me who is telling the story and what they want to say is important. When I am reading a script I concentrate on what I have to communicate via the show runner and the director. It is not about a small or a big role but about whether you are driving the story at some point and leaving your mark in that story.

Take-away from the series *A Suitable Boy*?

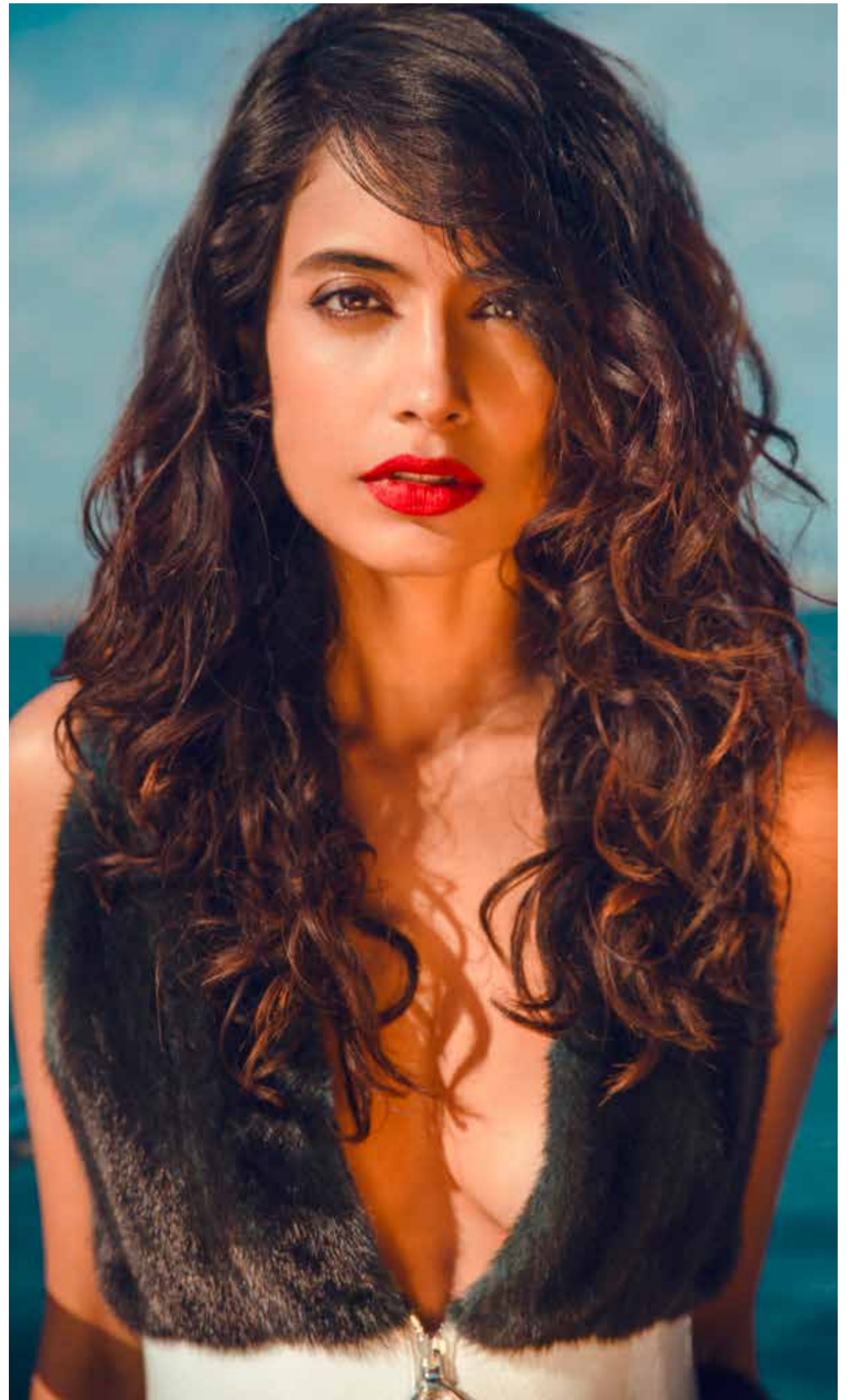
The character of Haresh is someone I identify with. I identify with his discipline and with the man's need to be dignified always. He is hardworking and someone who is from the roots and wants to grow to the sky. His characteristics are my takeaway which is to be grounded always and yet wish to touch the stars.



SARAH JANE DIAS

finds a better connect with audience through web

The immensely talented **Sarah Jane Dias** who was recently seen playing the character of a very sharp and smart woman Ayesha opposite Saif Ali Khan, talks about how OTT is giving everyone umpteen opportunities to showcase their talent and tell stories and introduce characters that form a connection with the audience.



What are your conclusions on how web series have changed the industry?

There has been an increase of opportunity with OTT. For the first time in my life I see actors, writers, directors all working on something. Web to me, is an opportunity to connect with a larger audience.

Ayesha in Tandav is unlike me as a person

Ayesha is very meticulous and a reserved person and doesn't trust anybody easily. Whereas I am quite animated. It was very difficult to read what is going on in her mind and I am very transparent. I made lists of the characteristics of Ayesha. I imagined her to be very reserved, manipulative when she needs to be, and most of all a woman who is very much in love with her husband and will do anything for his dreams to come true.

What was the biggest factor in choosing *Tandav*?

I actually said yes based on the scene I auditioned with. I loved it. I hadn't read the whole script yet when I said yes to it. When I found out Ali Abbas Zafar is directing it and the role is opposite Saif Ali Khan I was very keen to be a part of it.

Are we finally starting to look beyond leads?

OTT platforms give opportunity to develop each character on the show, especially in an ensemble cast. One has nine or more episodes to play with and it gives immense space and time to develop a character, tell their story, and thus develop a connection with the audience. This is something very different about OTT as compared to a two-hour film where you barely have enough to make a connection with anybody besides the lead cast.



What encouraged you to take the leap into OTT?

I was open to this new platform and new ideas to see where it will go as I am usually someone who goes with the flow. At the time when I made my debut with *Inside Edge* in 2017, I used to have conversations with my friends wondering how it is going to evolve. But, we all knew that television was going to be obsolete and the web is the new way to go.

It has become a lot more efficient compared to initial years when it was a new platform as people were still trying to figure it out. Now, storytelling has become a little crisp and I do not see any hesitancy in creating stories that people want to tell.



ANKUR BHATIA

on doing roles that have scope for performance

Being around in the entertainment industry for years and seen portraying negative as well as likeable characters, **Ankur Bhatia** shot to fame with *Aarya*, one of the major web series of the year 2020, which also marked the comeback of Sushmita Sen. The actor who has had a good journey in films and has started to explore the web world with his fine performance talks about the freedom and exposure that streaming platforms bring.



How have you challenged yourself as an actor in these times?

I feel lucky and blessed to have worked in the web series *Aarya* and *Crackdown*. Both gave me the opportunity to play two very different kinds of roles. The beauty of these series on OTT platforms is that they have a lot of characters but every primary character's graph is carved carefully to make it interesting. I have been doing solely films for the past few years and post *Aarya* and *Crackdown* I am looking forward to being part of more interesting subjects.

How do you see things moving forward this year after the long long lockdowns of 2020?

There will be a lot of opportunities for so many actors as there was not much happening in the lockdown but people were sitting at home writing scripts and planning around content. There was so much pre-production happening and now with shoots being resumed lots of new work is coming along. It's a great scenario for actors.

What was it like playing Sangram

It was indeed challenging to play the character Sangram in *Aarya* as I am nowhere close to him. I am very focused, educated and career driven. I keep my cool and Sangram is hot tempered and acts before he thinks. I have done ample workshops to carve the character by spending time with the directors Ram Madhvani, Sandeep Modi and Vinod Rawat. We discussed why Sangram is the way he is and why he should be unpredictable. He is a flimsy character and I had to play it in such a way that the audience is always confused whether a certain thing is done by him or not. I had to do the part earnestly as a slight here and there would have made him look villain or give him away. Giving limited information through the act was challenging but very fruitful. My directors gave all the information, set the background and explained the character but while shooting they left the playground to let me figure out Sangram on my own. Also I will always remember that Ram Madhvani has said Sangram's journey is to find the truth and our intention should be the same.

On the calendar:

I am starting to shoot two web series. One will go on the floor in March and the other one in May.



How do you manage to pick suitable roles?

I am a tad bit conscious because I do not want to keep playing the same kind of roles. I started my career with playing the negative part in *Zanjeer* and I did Aishwarya Rai's husband's role in *Sarabjit* and again played husband to Shraddha Kapoor in *Haseena Parkar*, although both roles were different. And I have done other films which are yet to release then in *Aarya* and *Crackdown* the roles were distinct. I do want to keep working but at the same time I am very conscious of the work I do.

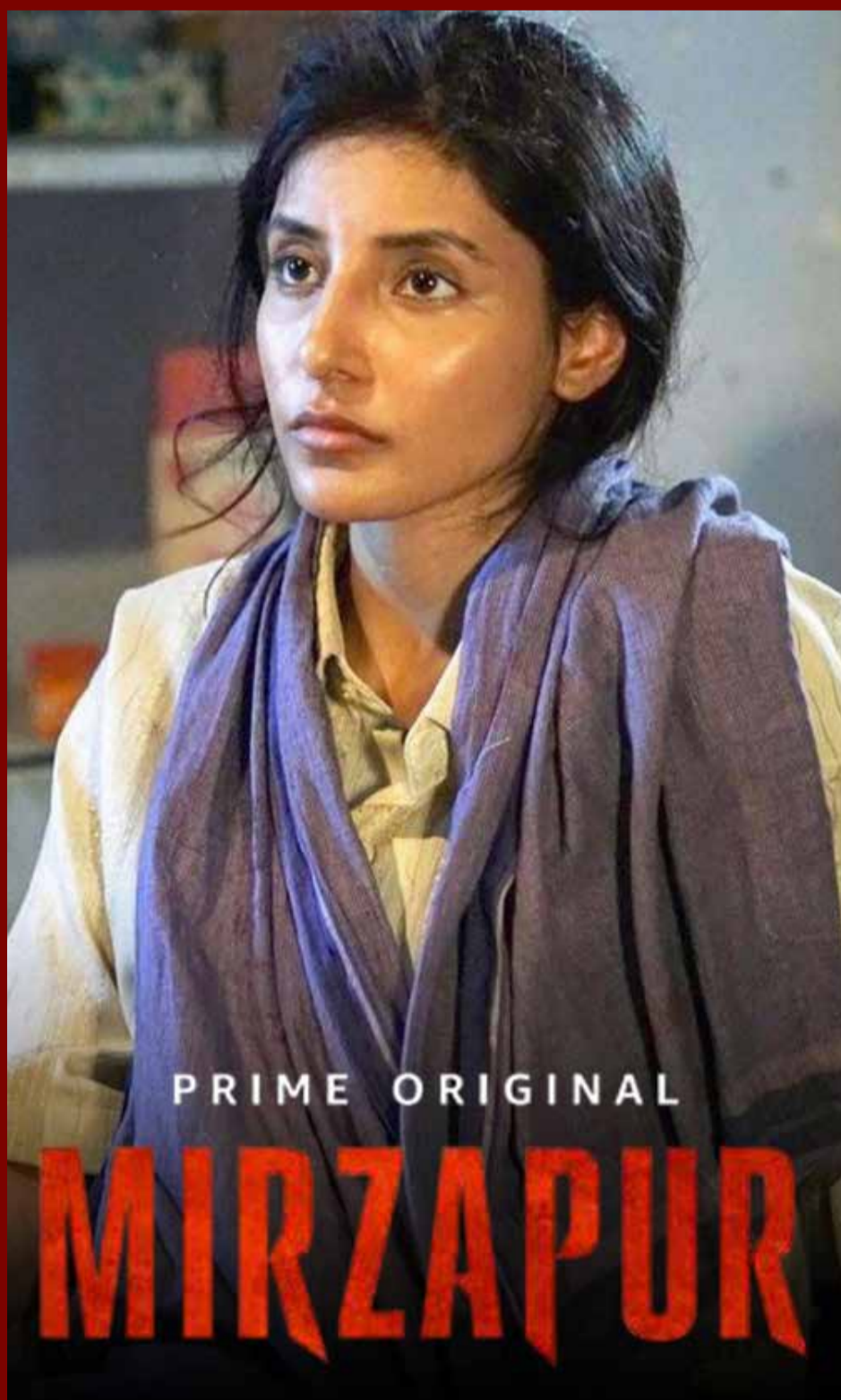
What has been the biggest boon of OTT for you?

I agree to the fact that OTT stories are more about characters and just not the lead. It has helped me because both the characters I played in *Aarya* and *Crackdown* have suddenly gotten me into the eyes of casting directors and they now consider for the roles that were not coming my way after doing certain films. For example, after playing husband to Aishwarya and Shraddha, I was only being considered for those kinds of roles for quite some time. Through *Aarya* and *Crackdown*, people got to see a wide range of my skills and not just see me as an actor who fits in a certain bill. In my case, it has really helped establish myself as a performer. I also do not want to negate the contribution of films in my career as it has not only contributed to my experience but has set my foundation and this is where I got to work with actors like Priyanka Chopra, Sanjat Dutt, Ram Charan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Shraddha Kapoor.

Dimpy Pandit changed my view of picking a character:

HARSHITA GAUR

Started her career with *Sadda Haq* on Channel V and went on to do web shows, such as *Mirzapur*, *Sacred Games 2*, *Puncch Beat* and *Happily Ever After*, **Harshita Gaur** talks about how content-driven shows changed her perception towards roles, the process of character building and how she is patient about the kind of roles she wants to pick.



What was it like performing for the most awaited series of 2020?

When I signed for *Mirzapur*, the web was not that big. I came from a television background and I only knew 'you are important if you are the sole protagonist of the show.' I did *Mirzapur* because I wanted to change my course. We started in early 2017 when there were not many shows out and we had no idea where it would go. I did it because I wanted to be associated with Excel Entertainment and also it was a matter of trying. But, after receiving the response not only for the show but for my character, I understood that if you are a part of something that people love and watch, it makes a lot of difference. The whole experience of working in a show like *Mirzapur* has been liberating.

How did playing Dimpy Pandit change in season 2?

Playing Dimpy Pandit changed my view of picking a character and to be involved in something. Preparing for a role is never one person's job and I am glad that my writer and director were available whenever I needed their help. It's a cumulative effect you see on screen. In the season 2, the character grew and I was aware that there will be certain growth to the graph when I was told about the role but how, where and to what extent kept changing which usually happens in any show during the process.



For me 2020 has been a fabulous year personally and professionally. I feel it is very important to have other sources of entertainment for you when you are not working. One needs to constantly work on skillset and I want to get back to dancing in 2021 which I was away from because of my knee injury. In terms of work I have become very patient about the kind of work I want to do.

How important is screentime to you as an actor?

I have learnt that one needs to see the project in its totality. How and which character will people like and how will they relate to the character is a completely different thing. I may not have the same screen time as many others but how my character has been received is a huge understanding for me to go further in life about projects.

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Cheesy

as it gets with Cheesemonger, Mansi Jasani

Mansi Jasani is the perfect example of following one's passion so hard that it never feels like you're working. Utter the word cheese, and her face breaks into a smile. A true turophile, she has a nose for any and can deep-dive into every conversation that revolves around cheese. **Canta Dadlany** converses with this dynamic cheese connoisseur, and discovers the nuances of making scrumptious cheese...



Mansi Jasani is no ordinary entrepreneur. A woman with drive, passion and confidence, her journey with cheese began with an affinage internship at Murray's Cheese in New York. Ever since, she has been constantly learning about cheese and, as she puts it, mongering through her experiences at cheese conferences and festivals in the US, Italy and France. From hosting cheese workshops to a co-authored chapter on India for *The Oxford Companion to Cheese*, Mansi is all about the cheese and the ideas as well as the ingredients that go with it. What she loves the most is to share the story of cheese and find the next unique pairing.

In a chat with **Hashtag Magazine**, she opens up about her beginnings, what makes the perfect cheese, and how she believes India has taken to the cheese phenomenon.

Why cheese? How did the interest arise? Did you ever think you would make a successful career out of it?

I realised it was the one ingredient that made me extremely happy! I was willing to do what it takes to make cheese and share other curated cheese with a curious audience. The turning point was in 2011 when I did a 3-day cheese bootcamp of trying more than 65 varieties of cheese at Murray's Cheese in New York and after that people around me were 'cheesed out' but I could still go on. A moment in time for me for I knew instantly that this was it.



How did your family react to you being the first ever, to opt for such a career?

I am the first amongst jewellers and architects who has been so ridiculously passionate about this one ingredient but they were and have been very supportive. I guess they were glad to see a maverick, and today, they love having a cheesemonger a phone-call away!

"CHEESE IS UNIVERSAL AND MUST BE BOUGHT AND ENJOYED IN SMALL QUANTITIES. BUYING IT IN BULK AND FREEZING IT IS A COMPLETE 'NO-NO'. CHEESE SHOULD BE BOUGHT FRESH, JUST LIKE FRESH BREAD AND VEGETABLES."



When you returned from New York, did you, at that point, feel that India was ready for your 'cheese offerings'?

Honestly, no. Not in 2012 when I returned but there's been a slow but marked shift in the habits of gastronomes and today, we have a large number of cheesemakers and cheese lovers. Infact, even special occasions like a Raksha Bandhan or Diwali which are all about traditional Indian sweets now indulge in appetizing cheese plates and cheese baskets to celebrate the occasions. So, yes, the tide has changed (*smiles*).

How many varieties of cheese do you work with? Is your cheese more expensive beyond the everyday varieties in stores?

We make cream cheese and goat cheese in plain and different flavours. Artisanal cheese is an expensive affair. We don't use any preservatives. Artisanal cheese, whether Indian or imported, carry a long-time tradition, so yes, they are more expensive than the everyday cheese in stores. Dairy has been a big part of the Indian diet, but apart from a few indigenous varieties of cheese, condiments such as paneer, kalari and bandel have always taken centrestage.

Do you believe cheese has any health benefits?

Good milk makes good cheese. It's crucial to have good clean milk. One may have the best cheese recipe but if the milk is bad or not the right kind then it is impossible for the cheese to turn out right. All the goodness of good milk is captured in artisanal and natural cheese and rest assured, it has all the benefits of milk.

How do you plan on furthering this journey with cheese?

It's been a little more than a decade in the world of cheese but, I am nowhere near satiated. There's still a lot to learn. We do have cheese 101 and cheese pairing experiences, and if the person is passionate enough then we'd do it for free. We have done cheese tastings at college festivals and schools, and it is a good way to introduce people to a new, improved cheese experience.

A LOT OF EFFORT AND CARE IS INVOLVED IN THE MAKING OF THIS CHEESE, AND YOU ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER THE AGEING PROCESS. IT'S AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF WORK AND TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS.

How does a cheesemonger unwind?

There's always a lot on our plate. We ourselves are our best competition. We make and curate from the heart and that's what sets us apart. We want to stick to those standards. But I also do find time to break free from it all now and then. I am passionate about traditional Indian cuisine, and seed preservation. I indulge in immersive travelling and love all things South Korean and history as well.



HOW TO SET UP A CHEESE BOARD AT HOME

- Choose your board/platter (wood, glass, ceramic, slate, marble)
- Choose the cheese (keep in mind a variety of taste, milk and texture)
- Dried fruits & nuts
- Seasonal fruits and berries
- Preserves, jams and honey
- Crackers and breads (plain crackers and a baguette are good options)
- Flowers and herbs for decoration

Organic Takes the Town:

How a Delhi-based startup is rehashing the rules of organic shopping

A Delhi-based startup is delivering a delicious mix of organic and exotic products to your doorstep. With a promise to bring produce straight from the farms onto your plates, founders **Keshav Jain** and **Nikitha Bhandari** trace their vision and journey with **Juveria Tabassum**.



Detox coffee isn't an oxymoron or a fancy hallucination anymore, thanks to entrepreneurs Keshav Jain and Nikitha Bhandari. Their startup, Fresh and Organic Delivery, offers a wide range of brands and groceries, with the drive to connect consumers directly with the farmers. Functional since September 2020, this startup also wishes to set itself apart by providing products from lesser known brands that offer authentic, organic goods.

For Delhiites Keshav and Nikitha, farm-fresh and organic are more than just buzzwords in this era. Health legitimately became wealth, thanks to the pandemic, and for those looking to safeguard their well-being by eating what's said to be right, there is no dearth of websites online selling produce designed to supplement your health. A B.Tech graduate, Keshav was drawn towards the F&B industry, and he first set up a physical store in Delhi called Food and More. Realising that an online portal and door to door delivery was the more feasible option in these times, Keshav and Nikitha spent the lockdown ideating and experimenting with different ingredients and brands, and launched Fresh and Organic Delivery once the restrictions were lifted. "There are no stakeholders apart from the two of us right now, and we do not plan on going for funding over the next two years because we're good on equity right now," shares Keshav.

Unlike other sites that home-deliver groceries, Fresh and Organic offers a wider range of lesser-known brands. "Sites bigger than ours, who have been around for a while, list brands that are already familiar in the market and available at every grocery store. We want to move past these brands and promote brands that provide organic products on a wider range, such as Home Blend or Country Beans, both of which have a wide variety of coffee," says Keshav.

In the works is an app that will allow people to book tables at cafes and pubs, or place an order for the recipe and have the ingredients provided via their grocery store. There are no plans for an offline store, and the entrepreneurs believe that consumers are happy as long as they have the convenience of ordering fresh, certified organic products from a wide range of choices.

The site also offers drinks and products which are concocted in-house, and according to Keshav, these are selling like hot cakes right now. Their detox coffee, which might aid in weight loss, he claims, smells, tastes, and looks like coffee, but is actually an elixir of dry mulethi, dry pungent amla, dalchini, nuts and Arabica or Robusta seeds.

Also on the charts is their Raw Kaadha, which consists of organic and doesn't consist of any powders, and is secured from and packaged by farmers directly. Kaadha Green Tea which is a blend of ingredients essential for immunity such as cinnamon, dry haldi, dry ginger, and different types of leaves.

The startup conducts deliveries on their own in Delhi, and have collaborated with three vendors for deliveries in the rest of the country. With a team of around 50 people, including professionals for experimenting with their in-house drinks, and verifying organic certification of their products, the startup strives to ensure the quality is maintained across the board for their products by conducting thorough testing. Going organic takes a leap of faith for consumers, and many are still cynical because of the lack of authentic players in the market. "Our driving force behind this venture is to gain people's trust, because eventually, good quality and good range is what guarantees happiness," believes Keshav.

www.freshandorganicdelivery.com



LIGHT OF LIFE TRUST

- Illuminating lives in rural India

Light of Life Trust is more than just a noble initiative. It is a manifesto aimed at educating and serving, and the earnestness to make a difference to the lives of the less privileged. **Canta Dadlaney** interacts with a modern-day humanitarian who chooses to keep a low profile while toiling for the upliftment of the underprivileged!

Meet Ms. Villy Doctor

Serenity is the second name of Villy Doctor, a psychologist, educationist and a humanitarian par excellence. With a Master's degree in Psychology, 23-year-old Villy Doctor became the youngest ever to head the department of Psychology at Sophia College in Mumbai. Her doctoral work on psychological changes through meditation and her innate interest in human nature led her to the rural regions of Karjat district (halfway between Mumbai & Pune); 'a calling', as she says, to help the deprived.



The Inception

Even as a child, Villy Doctor had been deeply inspired by her mother. "My mother always told me that the first thing you should do is to take care of the poor in life; educate them because it is through education that they will be able to break through the shackles of poverty," she shares.

Rural India is replete with families struggling to keep the fires in their homes burning. An impoverished lot, these families invariably make their kids abandon their education and engage them in daily-wage and even menial jobs to supplement the household income.

"I wanted to end this vicious generational poverty cycle, well-aware that education was the only solution. Of course, this meant a lot of counselling, first to the parents and then the children. I never considered it as a challenge but an opportunity to change their circumstances and thus established a non-profit organization, 'Light of Life', in 2002," says Doctor.

The trust revolves around social improvement through two prominent projects, Anando and Jagruti, which aim at providing natural and holistic solutions.

Project Anando

Of Project Anando, the social worker says, “We started Project Anando in 2005 with 25 students and one centre. Today, we have reached out to more than 3000 students every year, across 72 centres.”

Aimed at the education and holistic development of children, Anando includes special ‘personality development programmes’ conducted by 150 trained social workers who work conscientiously. The personality modules take place every weekend and cater to students who have completed their 7th standard of schooling. This, because India has the largest number of school dropouts, and the drop-out ratio increases by 70% in the case of students between 11-18 years.

“We aimed at empowering these adolescents and encouraging them to complete their education, equipping them with skills to make them self-sufficient,” she elaborates.

Project Anando has a unique ‘student-friendly supplementary education programme’ that addresses critical educational needs of the students. These needs include books, school bags, stationery, uniforms and shoes. Says Villy, “Two uniforms really do not suffice throughout the year and it is distressing to see some of them still manage with that, uncomplaining and always cheerful.” Additionally, this project conducts school empowerment training programmes for teachers to make the syllabus more lucid and interesting.



The path less taken

Villy overcame the constraints of ‘it’s a man’s job’ and set foot in education— a territory where women initiatives were an anathema. “It is indeed extremely challenging to change the mind-sets of rural families. The counselling itself is a laborious process and to make them realize the importance of education has been a daunting task. However, every challenge strengthened our resolve further and today, we have parents approaching us, requesting us to enrol their children and nurture their skills for a bright future,” says a beaming Villy Doctor.



The journey so far

Project Anando has thousands of success stories of children who are now professionals, entrepreneurs and earning handsome salaries. The lives of these individuals have come a full circle and have positively impacted their families as well.

From the trained social workers to the team members who belong to local communities, they all share the same, common vision. What is remarkable is the fact that all the students who have graduated continue their association with LOLT, either as volunteers (part of the trained social workers programme) or as full-time employees. LOLT has now ventured into Odisha, the Pench district of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and even the Naxalite territory of Nandurbagh in Gujarat where many an NGO tried to reach out to the people but met with little success.

The LOLT Cycle:

LOLT organises training programmes for their social workers every quarter to enhance their existing skills and acquire new ones to face emerging challenges. The all-embracing programs boost the morale of the social workers who gain more confidence in spreading the message of education to the village folk.

“It is a chain reaction. The love with which you impart knowledge to all, reaps joyous results and that is what LOLT is all about,” says Villy Doctor.



The Road ahead

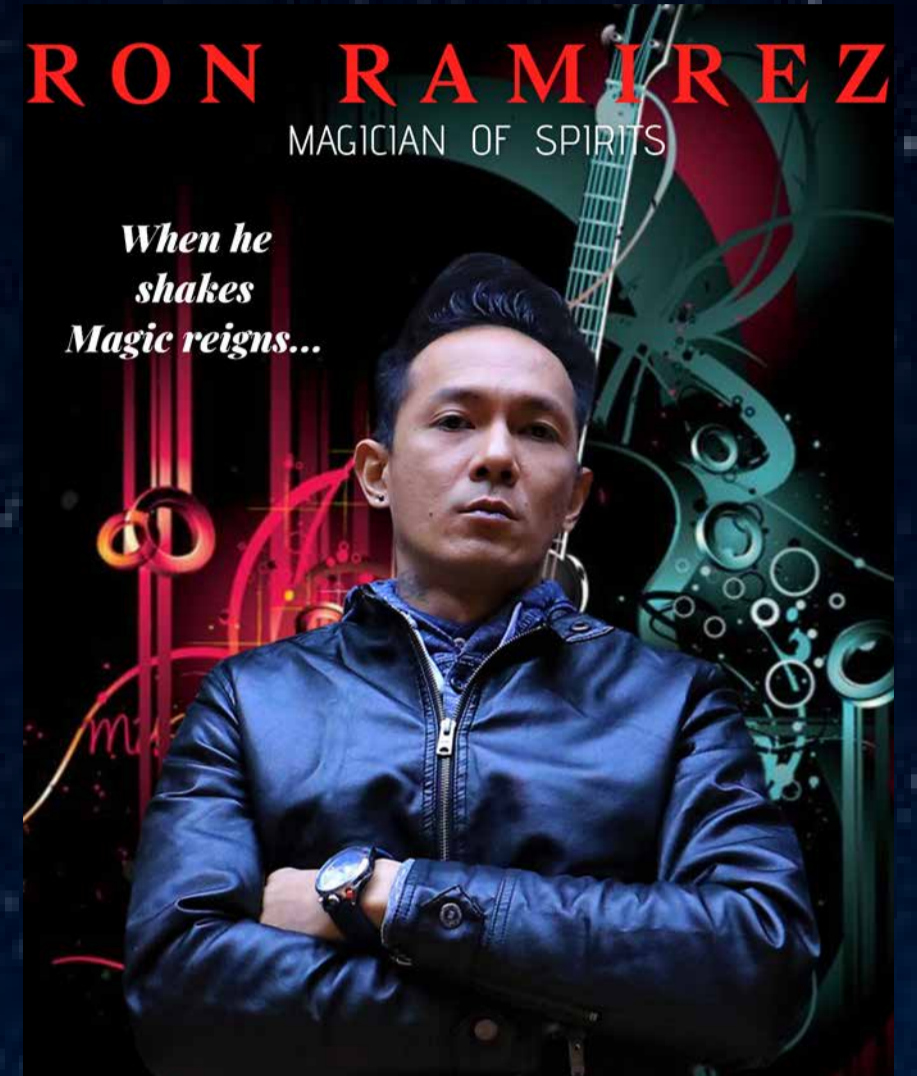
For Villy Doctor, the road is long and there’s much to do. A contingency like the COVID-19 pandemic paved the way for innovation in the form of virtual classes. “We had to organise tablets, relevant content in sync with digital coaching and had to get accustomed to the fact that the tide had changed but we managed and emerged stronger. Thanks to technology, the world has become a smaller place and connecting with people is a mere ‘zoom’ away,” she believes.

THE MAKING OF A MIXOLOGIST

Bartending is a way of life for globe-trotter **Ron Ramirez**. Now in India for a stint with Finch Bar and Restaurant in Mumbai and Chandigarh, the master mixologist speaks to **Juveria Tabassum** on his dedication to the art of hospitality, the culture of bartending, and tells us what fancy drink goes best with the humble *papadams*.

Ron Ramirez was supposed to be a pilot. While studying aeronautics at Emirates University in Dubai, he began supporting himself as a bartender, and was, in his own words, lured into the hospitality industry. "I was bitten by the bug in a way," he laughs, adding that he decided to do a bachelors degree in hospitality, and then moved to Milan, Italy to practise bartending. There, the prestigious Armani club recognised him as a mixologist, making Ron a celebrity in Italy in no time. Ron also studied hospitality further in Germany and tried his hands at interiors in the F&B industry in Thailand.

Recognition only drove Ron to explore the market and mixology further, and he now has an impressive list of titles to his name. The seasoned bartender and trainer, who is part-Thai, and part-Filipino German, calls Bangkok his home. Having traversed the globe on a career that has spanned across 15 years and 13 countries, including his latest expedition in India, mixology has now become a stage name for Ron who says he loves conducting training and developing talent. "I feel happy when I see a person who nourishes themselves in their chosen career. Some of the talent that I have groomed have become quite famous. This is the greatest joy that I can get," he shares.



Ron Ramirez's Perfect Mixes for Indian Cuisine:

Chicken *tikka* masala + classic old Magroni

Why: Italian national cocktail, Magroni is as strong as chicken *tikka* masala in terms of flavour. Italian mixology and Indian cuisine is a good mix, since they're both strong and don't overpower each other.

Butter chicken + Old Passion

Why: The British whiskey-based drink is strong and bold and highlights the chicken.

Papadams + Champagne and white wine

Why: It is a unique combination for a unique dish. Goes well in a social environment.

Kashmiri lamb curry + Vodka Martini

Why: I had the curry recently and completely fell in love with it. Vodka clears palate lets you appreciate the flavour of the lamb.

Samosa + Mojito

Why: It is just the perfect combination for a lazy evening snack on a weekend.



Plans for Finch

After having worked at Michelin star restaurants and earned the title of the youngest general manager in the industry in Thailand at Anantara Resort, Ron took up the task of working on an independent restaurant in India, developing and launching Finch Mumbai during the lockdown, and throwing

open the branch at Chandigarh once restrictions were lifted. Ron is on a committee called World's Best Bars, which identifies bars across the world, and positions them in the market as the best bars under different criteria. He works as a corporate director for bars, and is a strategic advisor for Finch, rebranding it in Chandigarh and Mumbai, with one due to open soon in Bangkok.

The menu is changed quarterly according to the demands and trends, and the chain has already developed its own mixology culture, and is being positioned among the world's top 50 bars. "At Finch," says Ron, "we like to draw from and flirt with classics. Drinks are derived from classics and we incorporate our mixology in a fusion."

India in the Mix

Ron believes that India once had a good crop of seasoned bartenders and mixologists who were driving a progressive industry, but have since migrated to greener pastures in the last few years. "My staff in Dubai, Hong Kong and Germany was led by Indians," says Ron, ruing the fact that the scene was quite meek when he landed in India in February last year. However, the pandemic has seen many of these professionals move back home, and that, Ron believes, gives India a chance to deliver its own identity in the mixology arena.

I feel happy when I see a person who nourishes themselves in their chosen career. Some of the talent that I have groomed have become quite famous.

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SUPERFOODS ON YOUR SKIN

With shoutouts on Instagram from stars such as Tapsee Pannu and Malaika Arora, **Pulp Cosmetics** has garnered enough support for its vegan, cruelty-free and superfood-based skincare offerings. A start-up that first made a mark on the market in 2020, it is funded by Rana Daggubatti and Rakul Preet Singh. **Juveria Tabassum** chats with co-founder **Deepti Alapati** for more...

Deepti Alapati believes that consumers today are super conscious about what goes into their food, and onto their skin. Particular about criteria such as sustainable and environment-friendly, shoppers today read labels for more than just the numbers that are going to burn their pockets. "People look for brands that share their ethos. They are aware of the concept of veganism, and of being cruelty and chemical-free. They look for brands that can tick these boxes," shares Deepti, who is the co-founder of Pulp Cosmetics, a skincare brand that is based on superfoods, clean testing, and sustainable veganism.

Targeting Millennial and Gen-Z customers, Pulp began R&D in 2018, looking to cater to an audience they believed was in with the times. With co-founder Goutham Uppaluri formulating products that make use of superfoods such as green gram, spinach and turmeric, the brand officially made a mark on the market in 2020 with masks and scrubs tailored to nourish and refresh skin.



Based out of Hyderabad and boosted by investments from stars such as Rana Daggubatti and Rakul Preet Singh, Pulp, says Deepti is rooted in the ethos of inclusivity and sustainability. Passing up on the usual serums and moisturisers, Pulp constructs products that revolve around the lifestyle of their customers. Their rose and kombucha face pack, customised for date nights when you'd want to look at your sparkling, replenished best are a hot seller. Kombucha has taken the younger crowd on social media by storm as a popular superfood drink, and Pulp made the decision to incorporate it into their skincare products.

"Superfoods don't always have to be exotic plants," explains Deepti, adding that the company, which currently only makes sales online, experiments with various combinations of the simplest of superfoods, to create solutions for those mulish acne marks and dark circles, and add glow and hydration to the skin. Another popular pick is the cocoa and coffee scrub to exfoliate the skin, and detoxify it with a dash of Kaolin clay. Plans are in place for introducing about a dozen more products this year, including a natural make-up line.

Turning the Tables on Beauty:

- **Inclusivity:** "All skin types and shades deserve the best of care"
- **Gender-fluidity:** "Skincare is a human thing. We encourage men to reach out to us with questions and concerns about their skin."
- **Transparency:** "Customers are now vigilant about the source and science behind the products, and we work on making our labels as honest as possible."

Address: [Pulp Cosmetics: Vegan Superfood Skincare](#)

Price Range: ₹800 - ₹1200





No Child's Play: The Art of Making Kondapalli Toys

Do you know about the iconic wooden toy-craft of Andhra? Known for their special light-weight wood and precision of artistry, Kondapalli toys make for exquisite art pieces. **Manjulika Pramod** travels to Kondapalli to discover facts about softwood, the gorgeous toys, their uniqueness, the colours used, GI Tag and the legacy of the artisans...

Kondapalli toys are the heartthrobs of Andhra. These life-like thematic sculptures convey many stories and sentiments. They are predominated with a bright colour scheme and their reflection of the native rural life is absolutely adorable. In their vibrant painted form, these earthy and rustic wooden toys lend the perfect blend of aesthetics and colour to any dull room. In addition, the outstanding detail and precision in their build make them a winner anywhere and everywhere. Big or small, each toy is a gem and speaks to the artistic legacy of the Kondapalli village, which once thrived under the powerful influence of the Sultans of Golkonda.

Where is Kondapalli?

In the Krishna district of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, Kondapalli is a humble town where these gorgeous toys are created. Alternatively, it may also be termed the industrial suburb of the city of Vijayawada. One of the most beautiful green belts of Andhra exists in their vicinity and there is also a marvellous 14th-century fort in the heart of the region.

Though Kondapalli has stood through testing times, the village still retains its world-famous toy-craft. The villagers have been practising wood carving and toy-making generation after generation for many decades. In the year 2006-07, they were recognized for Geographical Indication tag.



What is so special about these toys?

Tella poniki (botanical name: *Juotia Rotteri Fromis*) is the lifeline of the Kondapalli toys. This one-of-its-kind softwood is found only in Kondapalli forest reserves, and has no alternative. Once abundant, it is fast becoming scarce by the day.

The Kondapalli toy-making process is elaborate and calls for detailing. The wood is soft and thus can be chiselled to perfection into numerous objects to narrate many stories of the Andhra region and its people. The rough surfaces are then painted with tamarind, wood and sawdust to serve as a base. Once the paste dries up, it is painted in many vibrant colours. Another noticeable feature of these toys is that these colours are eco-friendly and hence perfect for children. The naturally-sourced materials such as marigold, pomegranate, palm leaves and indigo are used to create yellow, red, green and blue colours. Vegetable dyes are used to create other hues. This process ensures perfectly biodegradable, nature-friendly toys.

Kondapalli Toy Makers

The story goes that the artisans who make these toys have a mention in *Brahmanda Purana*. Colloquially, the toy-makers are referred to as *Aryakhastriyas* and are believed to have migrated from Rajasthan. Some also believe that

they are descendants of a sage, Muktharishi who was adept in art and craft due to the blessings of Lord Shiva.

For years, the artisans have been doing this to make ends meet. To ensure it becomes a secure and a sustaining business, middlemen were eradicated and many local schemes were launched. For all major functions, these toys are used as memorabilia. The area has already won a GI tag to recognize the passion, the legacy of the handicraft and to popularize the art. A concept of a wood bank is also being worked upon to help the artisans with a continuous supply of the soft wood.

Despite these efforts, there has been a downslope. The artisans deserve more. They need more orders and job opportunities. The easy accessibility and low price of plastic toys pose pressing competition to this dying craft. Certain propositions need to be put into effect to attract and encourage the younger generation to take up the craft and keep the art of Kondapalli toy-making going in the future as well. Local love and global exposure are the need of the hour.

Pro Tip

The Killa road has a stretch of 8-10 shops where one may buy these handcrafted toys. Once you are in and around Kondapalli, do visit the fort as well.



- The one-of-its-kind softwood used to carve these toys is found only in Kondapalli forest reserves, and has no alternative. Once abundant, it is fast becoming scarce by the day.
- Colours used are eco-friendly and hence perfect for children. Hues of yellow, red, green and blue colours are derived naturally from marigold, pomegranate, palm leaves and indigo.



How Green Is My Salad

Farm-fresh greens are now accessible and affordable, thanks to hydroponics farming, finds **Swati Sucharita**

Farm-fresh, green and exotic salads on the table are no longer a rarity today. Just a year or so ago, however, sourcing your lettuce, kale, watercress and arugula was possible, unless you grew your own greens or sourced them from high-end stores at exorbitant prices, (and not in mint-fresh condition, either) or if you got lucky, spotted them on the salads counter (fortified from wilting on ice beds) at fine-dining restaurants. Now, thanks to a couple of successful start-ups in hydroponics and precision farming, like Urban Kisaan and Simply Fresh, it is not much of a challenge to rustle up a healthy, delicious Caesars salad or make fresh pesto for your pasta or even make that exotic baked chicken dish, using hitherto rare-to-find fresh herbs, like rosemary or thyme, right at home.

You can now source all the healthy and fresh leafy greens you want like kale, collard, asparagus, bokchoy, lettuce (Romaine, butterhead, Lollo Rosso, iceberg, you name it!), herbs (rosemary, thyme, parsley, marjoram, oregano, sage, lemongrass, etc) and exotic vegetables like snacky peppers, avocado, zucchini, and broccoli (now not so exotic, of course). This is besides the local variants of greens such as amaranth, spinach, gongura, coriander, and mint.



BBQ PROTIEN BOWL



GUACAMOLE BOWL

Urban Kisaan operates in the format of both online cloud kitchens and offline physical stores, which sell a wide array of produce, ranging from leafy greens, herbs, vegetables, fruits. Since September last, their farm bowls come in options of hearty salads, bowls with healthy carbs like millets and brown rice and also vegan options, and sides. Their bestseller Guacamole Bowl, for example, comes with boiled rajma, brown rice, salsa, sour cream, fajita veggies, pumpkin seeds and capsicum. Vegan options like the Plant Protein Bowl are also doing very well, which uses mock meat protein made out of peas, flaxseeds, oats, quinoa and soya granules.

The start-up also promotes self-reliant hydroponic farming amongst consumers by selling home kits, which have food-grade NFT channels, coco peat pots and seedlings (of different crop cycles) which you can operate with minimal fuss, where mobile app updates about when your plants need watering next help you along the way. With Tollywood actor Samantha Akkineni as both investor and brand ambassador, Urban Kisaan is now trending, with its finger firmly on the pulse of the youth and the health-conscious Hyderabad.

So, what is hydroponics farming, really? Hydroponics or soilless farming as it is also known, is the method of growing plants by using, instead of soil, mineral nutrient solutions in an aqueous solvent, like coco peat pots. This alternative to traditional farming has caught on in a world besieged with water and arable land scarcity, especially so in populous countries like India, as it uses nearly 95 percent less water than traditional methods.

Founded in 2017 by scientist Sairam Palicherla, (who started off by growing leafy veggies with the farm kit he had devised on his home balcony) and former CA Vihari Kanukolla, along with entrepreneur Srinivas Chaganti, Urban Kisaan is the market leader where hydroponic produce retail is concerned.



“The raw material derived through our cutting-edge farm technology has almost 5 to 10 times more alkaloid content, compared to traditional farming methods.”

- Sachin Darbarwar, Co-Founder, Simply Fresh

“At present, we have 5 physical stores in Hyderabad, with another 15 cloud kitchens across similar locations in the city and the figure of physical stores is scheduled to go up to 30 by end of this year,” shares Narsi Reddy, who heads R&D at Urban Kisaan.

While Urban Kisaan is wooing the urban consumer with an eye on healthy diet choices, Simply Fresh Pvt Ltd, which came in much earlier in 2013, is reckoned not just domestically but globally, in the B2B and exports segment of hydroponics, catering to the nutraceuticals industry by supplying medicinal and aromatic plants like turmeric, ashwagandha, ginger, baby spinach, amaranthus and basil.



“Urban Kisaan follows three models of growing—growback in greenhouse farms, urban farms with NFT channels on terraces, and a bit of soil farming, solely for the process of R&D, and for eliminating choices for hydroponics farming,”

-Narsi Reddy, R&D at Urban Kisaan



Recently, Simply Fresh Pvt Ltd was in the news for launching South East Asia’s largest plant factory, a 140-acre state-of-the-art farm at Arjunpatla, Siddipet. This is in addition to the ten-acre hydroponics farm they had started earlier at Shamirpet.

Founded by Sachin and Shweta Darbarwar in 2013, the objective of Simply Fresh was to promote healthy eating. The couple had worked in Australia as software engineers with a group of botanists and were inspired by hydroponic farming widely practised there, and were struck by the idea of starting their own agro-tech venture to grow food, which was “nutrient-dense, chemical-free and safe”.

“We follow our proprietary software called Farm in a box, which integrates artificial intelligence (AI), AI assisted technology and analytics to monitor a plant’s life cycle right from seeding to harvest. With the help of our AI platform, climate sensors and high-pressure fogging system, we are able to control light, humidity and temperature to grow the perfect plants throughout the year,” shares CEO and co-founder Sachin. He distinguishes the advanced technology they follow as precision farming, which is followed in larger set-ups like his, from the smaller hydroponics farms which can be grown vertically in urban spaces.

So, the curcumin ratio of the turmeric grown on a Simply Fresh farm is much higher than most extractions, and at a ratio of 7 to 8 percent is comparable with the purest-known Lakadong turmeric grown in Meghalaya.

Whether its called hydroponics or precision farming, new-age farming has a lot to be said for its eco-sustainability, considering that both methods use one tenth of water resources as compared with traditional farming methods (and conventional farmers are also adopting this method, if Urban Kisaan is to be believed) which is again put to recycling. There is no doubt that the way farming is going to be looked at in India is slated to change, and for hopefully the better.





COME-HITHER:

Brands that have Lingerie and Lust Down to a 'T'

Lingerie is more than just clothing. It helps exude an aura of elegance and self-assured sensuality. It's never the wrong time to refresh your collection of lingerie. And the search for sultry lingerie can never be satisfactory unless you check out a good list of brands.

Qudsiya Raies walks you through some tantalising picks...

If there's one piece of clothing that will always be a staple in a lady's wardrobe, it's got to be exquisite lingerie. While your lifestyle is seductive enough, it doesn't hurt to don something that can spice up your glamour any day. Whether it's a valentines night for the ages, an anniversary evening, or just a random day when you feel like getting down, carrying your sleekly lace camisole or surprising your loved one with a lace push-up bra sounds plenty hypnotising. Throw in some healthy teasing with thongs and cheekies that amplify your buttocks. Hip Huggers and briefs keep you covered and compact, adding a delicious perky feel.

Between the spectrum of bold, sexy, and wrapped in black and red lace, and the demure damsel feel of lacy pink and white, choices are aplenty. Here's our selection of brands that are dishing out the most inviting options

Agent Provocateur:

If you're someone who doesn't let up on the act of seduction until your victim is breathless, then this brand is for you. Founded in 1994 in the UK, it celebrates luxury designs and stunning styles for every occasion. Find one for yourself from a diverse collection.

Versace Lingerie:

Take your sensuality to new levels in fine silk underwear with Baroque embellishment. Look good and feel at ease in Versace fashion lingerie. Founded in 1978 in Milan, Gianni Versace S.r.l is one of the leading international fashion design houses and a symbol of Italian luxury world-wide. Versace represents its heritage through its strong and fearless designs, while addressing a new global audience.

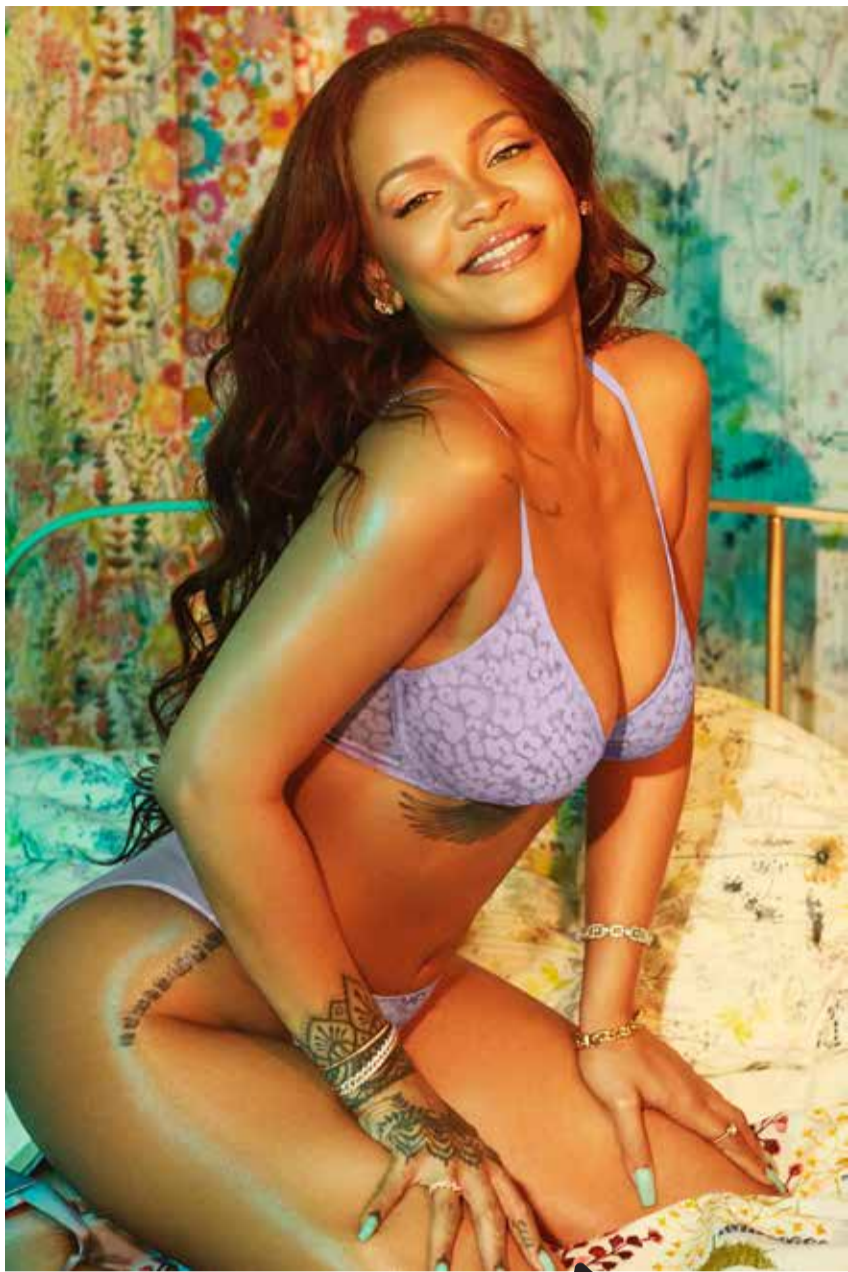


Calvin Klein:

CK offers a minimalist aesthetic style with maximum power. From high waist briefs to seductive lace, there's a lot for you. The striking designs can thrill and inspire your audience in equal measure.

La Perla:

If intricacy is your thing, and you're in search of beautifully tailored lingerie, then La Perla is the brand for you. An Italian company started in 1954, it has helped rewind garments for modern women. La Perla also delivers some of the most detail-oriented encompassing corsets.



I.D. Sarrieri:

From bewitching to erotic, the lingerie from I.D. Sarrieri is stunning in every aspect. They provide firm fitting silhouettes and slinky lace bodysuits which will leave you feeling sexier than ever. If you want to feel like the hottest person in the room, shop from their online store for amazing colours and designs.

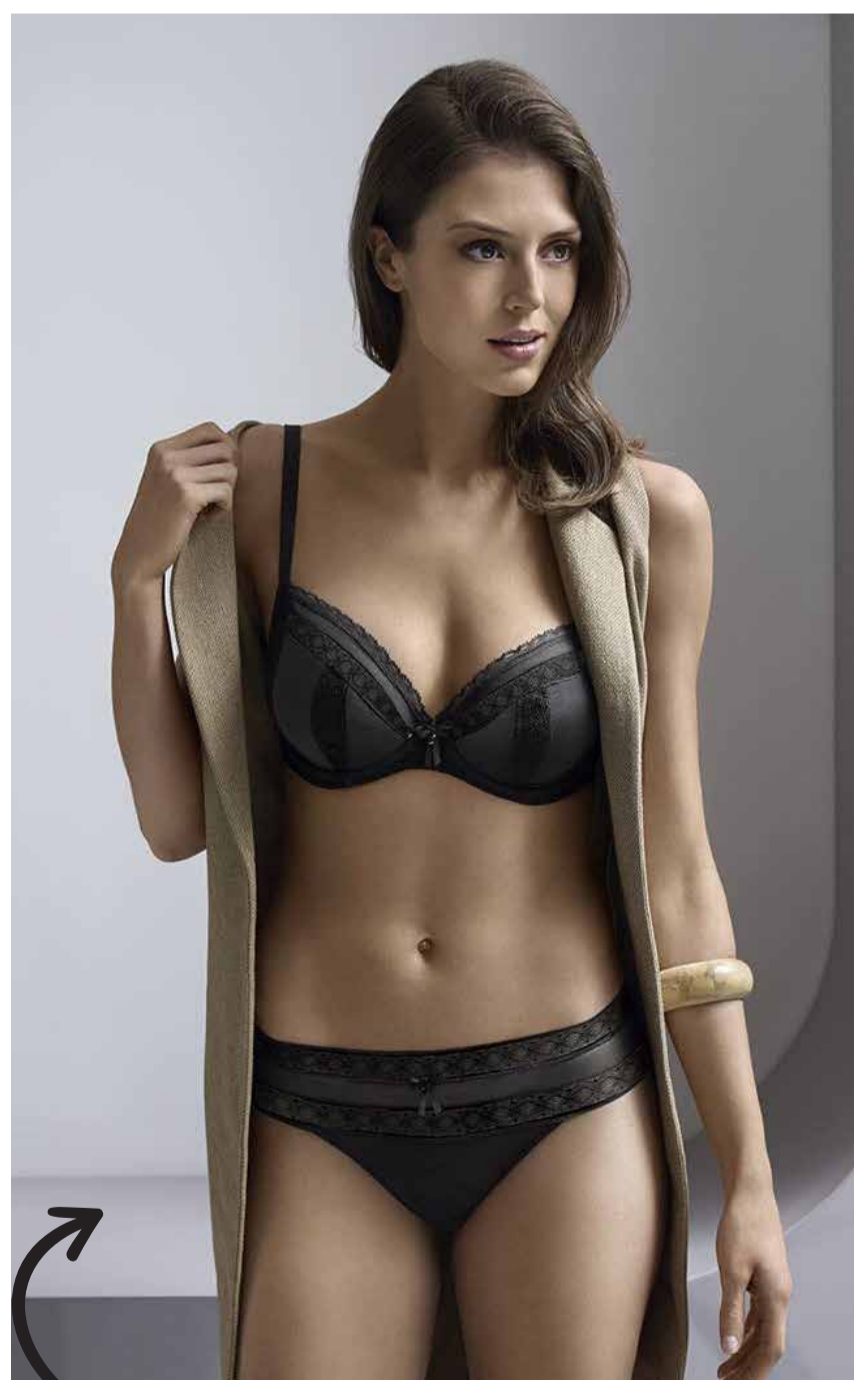


Savage x Fenty:

Savage x Fenty celebrates fearlessness, confidence and inclusivity. In pop icon Rihanna's own words, Savage X means making your own rules and expressing your mood, character and style for you—not for someone else. With lingerie as enticing as RiRi herself, Fenty brings you allure with some detailed artwork.

Skims:

Kim Kardashian's latest venture is one of the best inspired searches for great underwear and shapewear. Voluptuous lingerie comes at you in an impressive range of colors and sizes. It is an inclusive brand, and ladies will not only feel good in this shapewear but notice the difference it makes to their outfits.



ThirdLove:

We all know the struggle of finding a sensually perfect bra. ThirdLove is the go-to brand! Twelve. That was the number of bras in Co-Founder Heidi Zak's drawer in 2012. Zero among them actually fit. Frustrated by lousy bras and bad fits, Heidi decided to build her own damn bra. This brand features gorgeous designs for everyday wear, and will make sure you won't look anywhere else.



Chantelle:

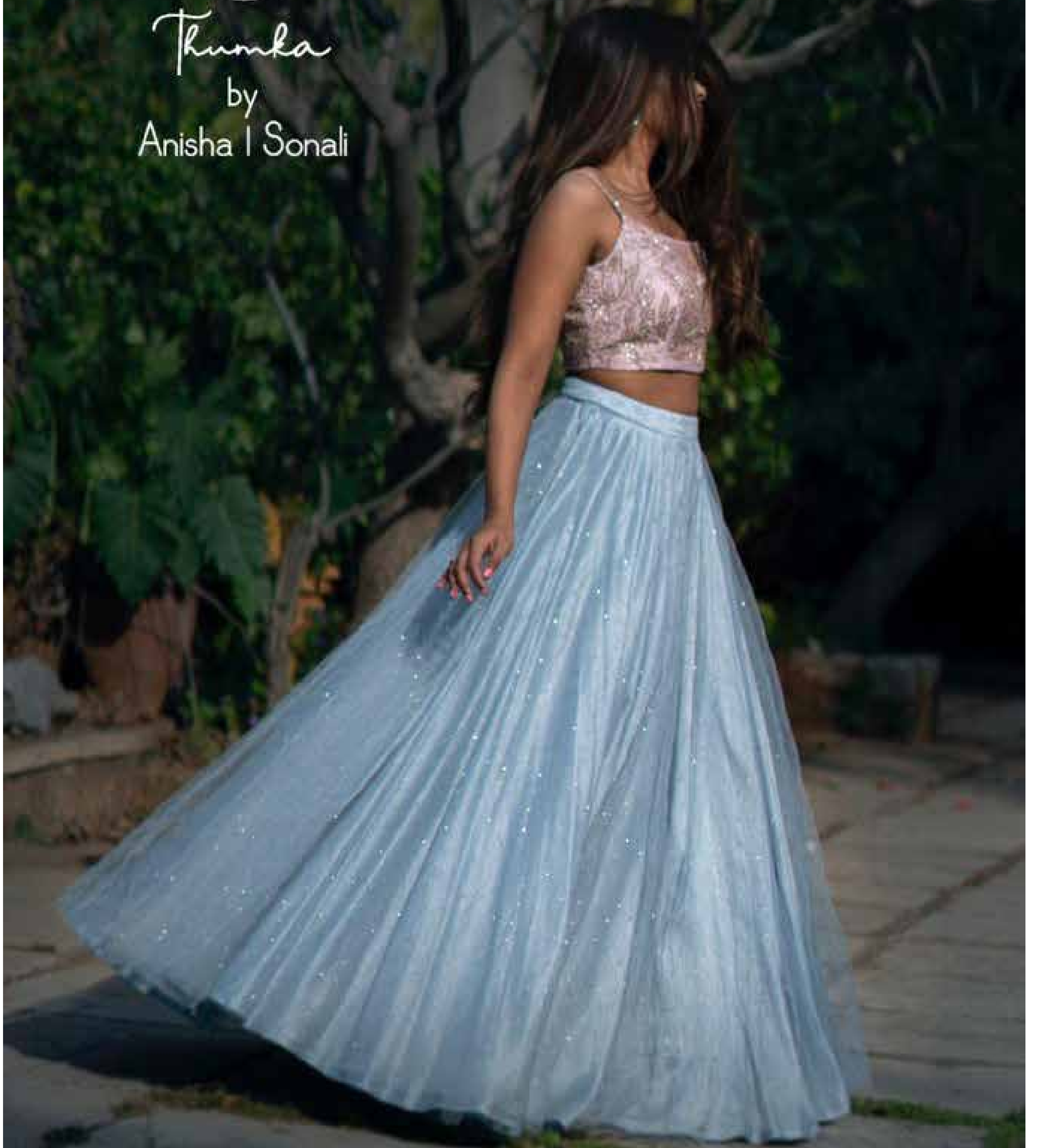
A brand has been designing and styling lingerie for about a 100 years understands best the pros of having good undergarments. Find garments that have perfect cuts for every body shape from their collection.

Coco de Mer:

Exude romance and elegance with CDM, crafted with captivating silks and lace. Found by Harry Gordon Selfridge, the designs at CDM are flawless, fiercely feminine, and for each one. With pieces for every event, you'll find yourself feeling hot and confident any day.



Thumka
by
Anisha | Sonali

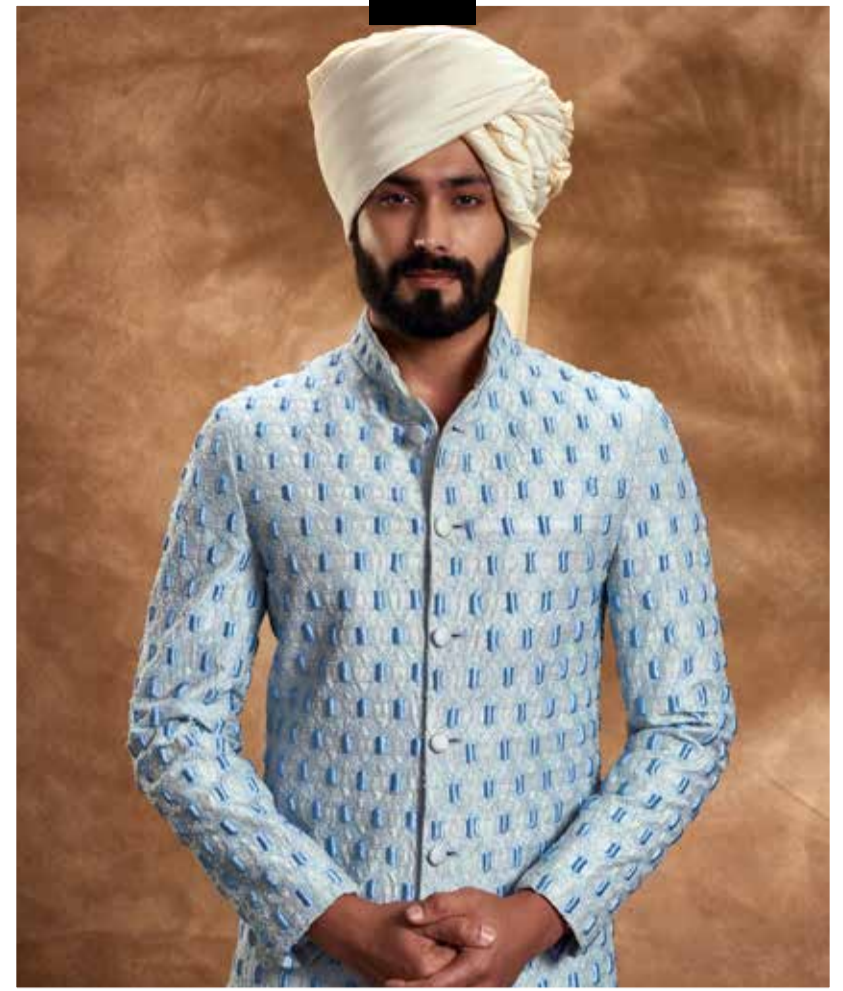
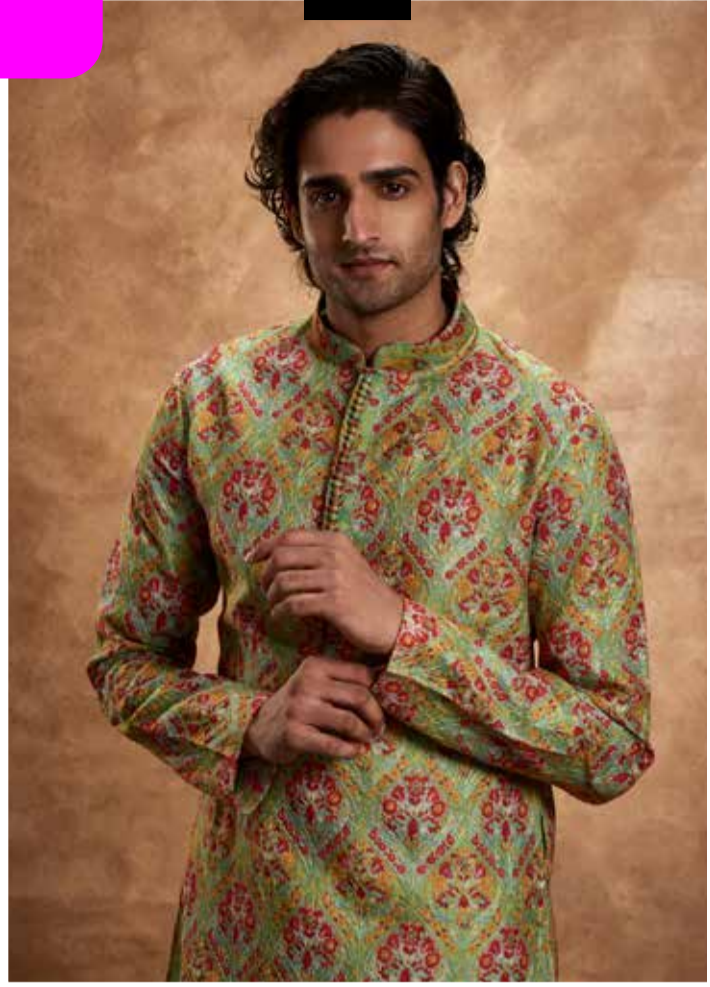


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MEN'S WEDDINGS TRENDS TO WATCH OUT FOR



Known for his men's label offering seamless integration of rich Indian heritage with modern sensibilities **Arjun Kilachand** shares with **Hashtag Magazine**, wedding trends to watch out for this season.



The defining fashion trend for wedding wear in 2021 is going to be minimalism and versatility. With weddings getting more intimate and smaller, grooms are likely to move from heavier, ostentatious pieces to statement, timeless pieces that are comfortable, light yet elegant. Grooms are looking to experiment with new colours and modern silhouettes.

Here is a breakdown of the new year trends:

Mehendi:

Move over bright, colourful themes, pastels are here! Brides and grooms are opting for softer palettes for their *Mehendi*. Frozen blue, mint green are the colours that grooms can opt for. Lightweight *kurtas* or *bundi* sets with tonal, minimal embroidery will be in the limelight.

Sangeet:

Easy silhouettes with shimmery highlights to stand out will continue to be in trend this year as well. *Salli* work is garnering interest. Go for vivacious colours like cherry red, deep blue and olive green that are eye-catching. A deconstructed *bundi* set offers loads of flexibility and is perfect for a *Sangeet* night. If one does not wish to experiment much, a classic *bandhgala* in deeper hues such as purple or indigo is a great pick.



Wedding / Pheras:

Classic pieces are back in demand. *Chikan* hand embroidered *achkans* with tonal detailing are great since they are timeless and easy to carry. Minimal embroidery is another trend that is catching up. Indian aesthetics are a personal favourite, and the glamour that hand embroidery brings to a groom's outfit is impeccable. It is heartening to see more men requesting for hand embroidered details interspersed in their wedding *sherwanis*.

Accessories:

Embroidered *juttis*, sandals or *mojris* are perfect to team up with an Indian outfit. Go for colours that are in sync with the whole look.

Footwear:

Watch out for custom-made footwear in 2021 like brogues, oxfords and loafers, made from finest quality leather.

To conclude, I would encourage grooms to wear something that accentuates their personality and does not bog them down through a day of festivities. Try picking an outfit that is in vogue but make sure you feel comfortable in what you wear.

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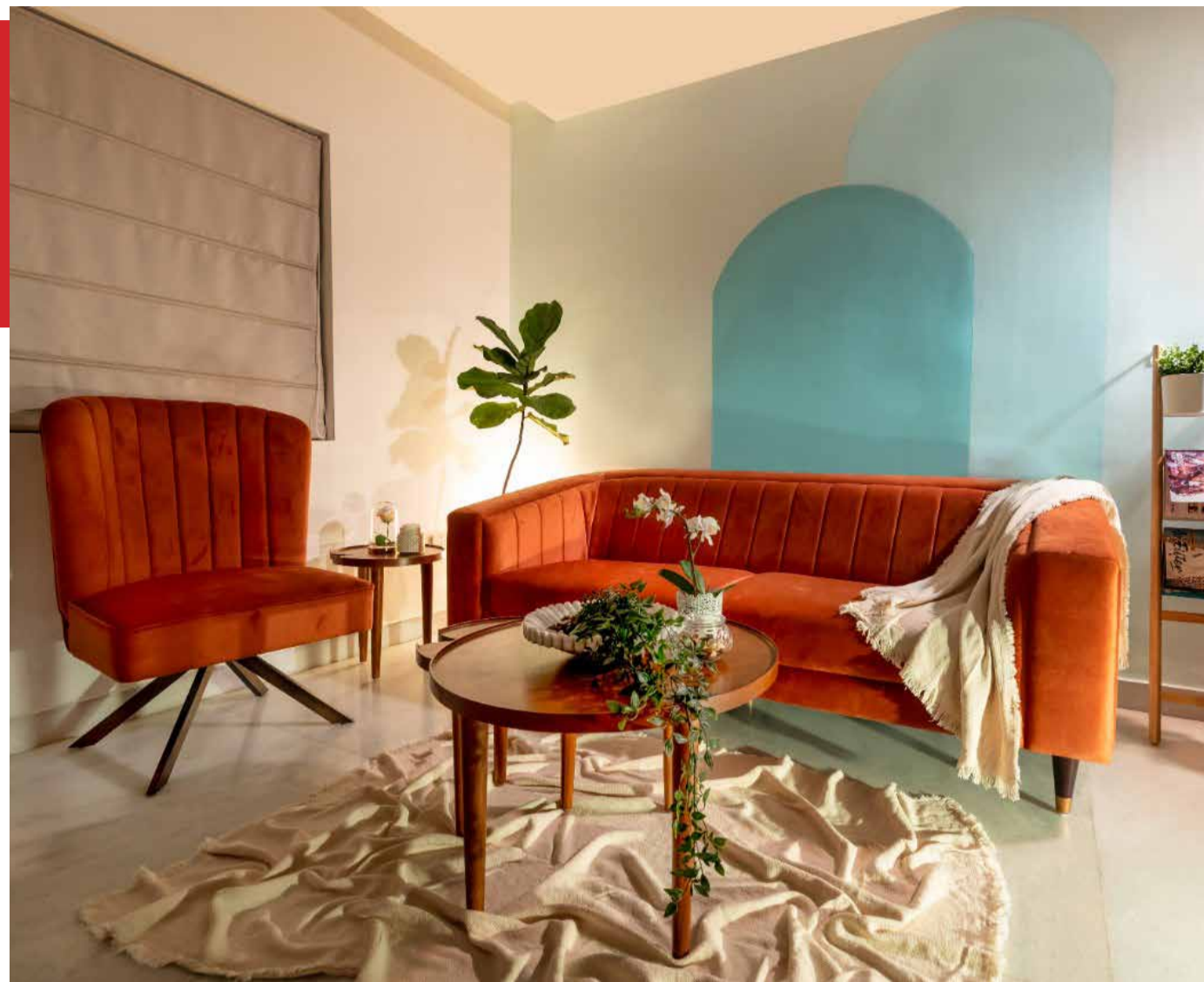
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INTRAVENOUS HEALING COMES TO INDIA

With Rana Dagubatti on board as an ambassador, India's first exclusive IV clinic, **Happy Head**, opened its doors to the public this year. Set up by four doctors who believe in wellness as a way of life, the clinic offers quick solutions to issues right from PMS and vitamin deficiency to jetlag and hangovers. **Juveria Tabassum** pays a visit to learn more...

What happens when four doctors get talking at a party in the middle of a pandemic? According to gynaecologist Dr Snehalatha, they discuss the concept of overall wellness, and how it can be dished out to people living life in the fast lane. The result? Well, three months on, and Hyderabad is home to Happy Head, India's first exclusive wellness and IV clinic.

"We decided to provide intravenous(IV) drugs instead of the usual oral supplements because IV has a faster absorption rate. Unlike oral drugs that go through the process of metabolism and traverse your digestive tract before reaching your bloodstream, IV drugs have an immediate 100% absorption rate. They are easy,



convenient and effective," believes Dr Sri Sai Nivya, a general physician, and one of the four co-founders of the clinic, along with Dr Sneha, Dr Venkaya, and Dr Mounica. The clinic offers drips for boosting immunity and vitamin levels, something that should interest the crowd given the current times.

Also on the roster is a glow drip that claims to rejuvenate your skin with antioxidants such as glutathione which helps release stress and deal with environmental factors that may be harming your skin. The clinic also offers a mineral substitute drip for vegans, and a recovery drip for extreme athletes to help recover from strenuous activity. For people fraught with PMS and menstrual cramps, there is an IV solution to be taken immediately after ovulation, or right before your period. Jetlag and hangover drips are offered to help provide quick recovery from these tedious states.

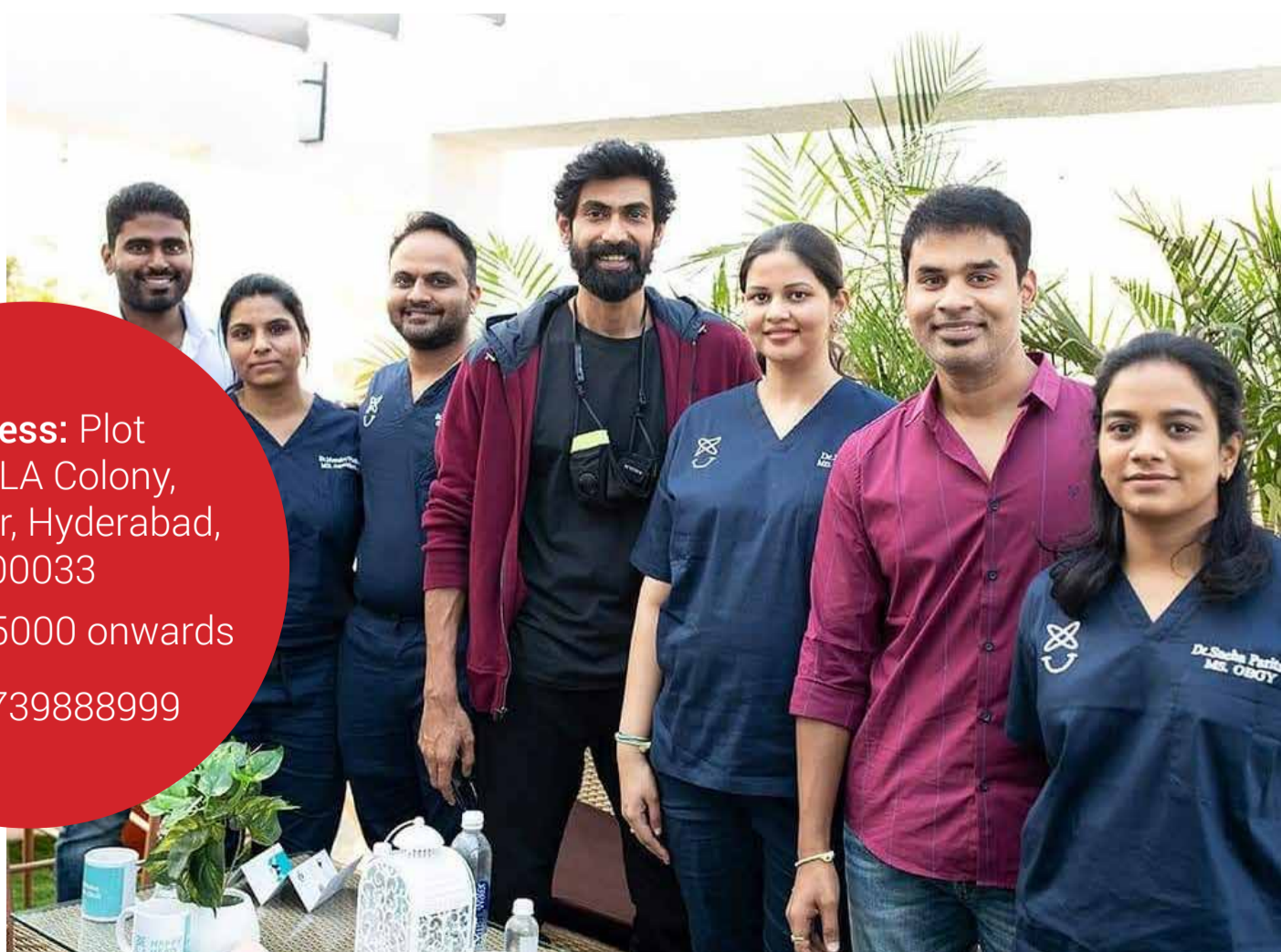
Dr Nivya shares that the clinic also provides vaccinations for diseases such as Hepatitis, which are highly contagious, along with shots for the flu. Diagnostic testing and on-board psychiatric help is also offered. Rana Daggubati, who is the brand ambassador for the clinic was spotted trying oxygen therapy at the clinic. Coming in flavours such as lemongrass, the "Oxy-bar" as it is called provides pure oxygen, which, according to Dr Nivya is important in times when we wear masks constantly and possibly re-inhale toxic carbon dioxide. She shares that pure oxygen is necessary for cell regeneration, and building overall immunity.

The doctors traveled to Dubai to try the drips for themselves as part of the research that went behind setting up the IV clinic. They believe that the stigma around needles has kept India away from the phenomenon of an IV clinic, although the trend has seen a steady growth worldwide.

Address: Plot 550, MLA Colony, Filmnagar, Hyderabad, 500033

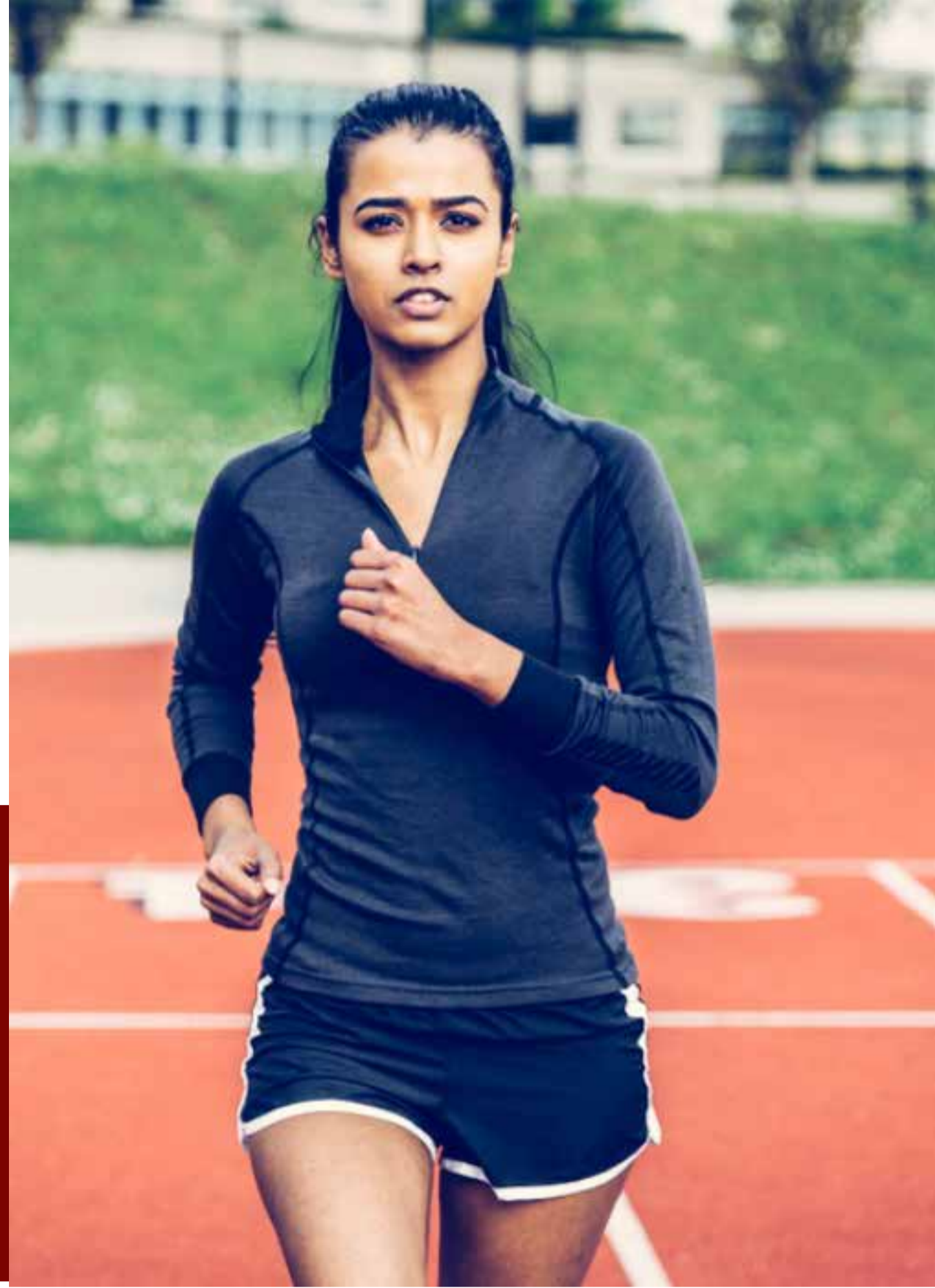
Price: Rs 5000 onwards

Call: 8739888999



IDEAL PRE-RUN AND POST-RUN FOODS

The benefits of running are diversified and numerous. However, if you have a certain goal in mind to achieve, then perhaps running alone would not help. An adequate, balanced diet is necessary for an effective performance, quick recovery, and increased total health and fitness. Pre-run foods help in maintaining blood sugar level, while a good post-run meal can replenish and reinforce your system with necessary nutrients. Nutritionist and author **Dr Vijaya Goyal** lists some meal and snack ideas that can bookend your daily runs to perfection...



A short and candy run is not tiring and taxing. If you are running less than 60-90 minutes, a pre-run meal becomes less important. It needs no or little pre-run meals. In fact, for an clean easy run(30 minutes or less at a relaxed, comfortable and snug pace), a pitcher of water or a mild snack (a fruit/a piece of toast with jam, 1/2 of energy bar may be a terrific choice) or a healthy, energy-rich, dinner at night time would be all you want before you head out because most of the energy comes from glycogen.



Pre-Run Nutrition

The main purpose of a pre-run meal is to keep you from feeling hungry before and during your long run, and the other is to maintain optimal levels of blood sugar for your exercising muscles.

The ideal meal should be high in complex carbs, moderate in protein and low in nutrients that slow digestion, mainly fat and fiber. Generally 300 to 400 calories should be consumed around two hours before you hit the road. Foods higher in carbohydrate content are best, because carbs break down into glucose, the body's main source of energy during a run. Glucose can be used for immediate energy, or it gets stored as readily accessible glycogen in the muscles and liver. A little bit of protein and fat can provide some lasting power, but the majority of your pre-run fuel should be carbs. Opt for real foods when possible, rather than sticking to bars and energy gels, and make sure to drink 150-300 ml of water with your pre-run meal to keep you adequately hydrated.

Here are some of the foods and snacks you can choose before your runs to help you keep energized without weighing you down.

- Banana or apple with raw nut butter
- Two whole eggs with peppers, low-fat cheese, and onions
- Yogurt with berries or a fruit
- Oatmeal with fruit and low-fat milk/whey protein
- Apple with a serving of walnuts
- Steamed Sweet potato
- Banana/ Apple with almond butter
- Multi-grain crackers with hummus
- Multi-grain/ whole grain bread with raw peanut/ almond butter.
- Protein shake with oats, one scoop of protein powder and a banana.
- Dark chocolate
- Yogurt and raisins
- Energy gel or energy bar.
- Carrots and cheese
- Veggies and hummus
- Yogurt and almonds
- Trail mix of dried fruit and nuts
- Crackers and cottage cheese

DOCTOR'S PICK: CHOCOLATE MILK AS IT HAS THE RIGHT BLEND OF CARBOHYDRATES AND PROTEINS. GOOD OPTION FOR REPLENISHING ELECTROLYTES LOST THROUGH SWEAT AND RESPIRATION. THIS DRINK IS HIGH IN MINERALS, INCLUDING CALCIUM—KEY FOR HEALTHY BONES AND ENERGY METABOLISM, MAKING IT AN IDEAL POST-RUN DRINK.



Post-Run Nutrition

Downplaying the significance of post-run eating can only lead to lethargy, mediocre performance, and sugar cravings later in the day, and slows down the recovery, since you are not offering your body with the building blocks of the recovery process. Think of post-workout eating as a continuation of the recovery and healing process.

Good post-run alternatives include snacks or light meals that replenish fluids, carbohydrates, and protein. If you don't have time for a meal, protein shake or energy bars can provide a good ratio of carbs to protein (aim for a 3:1 or 4:1 ratio), and consuming them within 30 to 45 minutes post-exercise is optimal.

THE DON'TS: SKIP HIGH-FAT, OR GREASY FOODS THAT ARE HIGH IN CALORIES BUT LOW IN NUTRITIONAL VALUE. YOU MIGHT FEEL STARVED, BUT LOADING UP ON HIGH-CALORIE FAST FOOD CAN UNDO ALL THE BENEFITS OF YOUR RUN. SUGARY SODAS ARE ALSO A POOR CHOICE.

Here are more easily digested post-run meals and snacks to experiment with:

- Grilled chicken with roasted veggies
- Smoothie made with low-fat milk and fruit
- Oatmeal with banana and almond butter
- Cereal and skim milk
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Almonds and a piece of fruit
- Whole grain toast and almond butter
- Sweet potato with cottage cheese
- Low-fat chocolate milk
- Yogurt with berries
- Whole-grain bread with eggs whites
- Pasta with chicken, eggplant, and broccoli
- Egg white and spinach omelet
- Vegetables and hummus
- Whole grain cereals with banana and milk
- Protein sports bars
- Oatmeal, whey protein, almond, and banana
- Apple with almond or peanut butter.
- A handful of raisin and nuts.

Endurance/Performance nutrition is a very complicated topic, and requires special attention to pre- and post-run nutrition. It's important to experiment with different foods and beverages during training runs to see what fueling strategy works best for you.



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PERFECTING THE WORK FROM HOME ROUTINE



Kids photobombing your meetings, the homely sounds of the grinder in the kitchen, intermittent internet connectivity or the lack of it, and the innovative home/office dress code have become part of our new living normal. The boundaries between home and office are disappearing. **Divya Soman** breaks down the art of balancing work and personal life in this new normal...

Ever since the first lockdown was announced in March 2020, people have been working from home. Most companies have seen a marked improvement in productivity and a huge decline in employee leave of absence. Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella pointed out that this trend can have far-reaching consequences. He went on to add that the long working hours could lead to excessive emotional burnout and impact the mental wellness of the employees over a longer period.



By working from home, we may just be moving from one dogma to another. But let us not paint a gloomy picture here. Here are some steps we can take to maintain a good work and life balance.

Define the boundaries

During the regular office days, one would arrive and leave office at a stipulated time. This is missing when you work from home. Be disciplined, and ensure you have a routine while logging in and logging out. This gives your mind the time to assimilate the opening and closing of work. Once you log off from work, shut down your laptop, clear the desk and walk around the room or better take a walk outside. Do not think about work again till the next day. Don't get worked up, avoid slogging unless it is a very urgent task.

Prioritise your work

There is only so much that you can achieve. Just because you are working from home does not mean you need to toil hard the entire day or complete everything. Prioritise your work. Choose things that need more attention. Planning is very important for work. It not only helps you achieve more but also gives you the much-needed breathing space. Before you start the workday, plan the things you would like to complete. Be realistic and then stick to these goals. Don't overload yourself. Understand your potential and then plan based on that.

Avoid being a perfectionist

While it is good to seek perfection in everything you do, let it not become a cause of worry. At home, you may not have access to everything you had in the office. Nothing wrong. Learn to live with it gracefully. If you don't have access to a printer, write it out. If your kid needs to talk to you in the middle of an official discussion, excuse yourself for a minute. It doesn't hurt to give your family that little slice of your time, even on a busy work day.

Do not ignore your health

Long hours of sitting without the proper ergonomic support, untimely food intake, reduced water intake, reduced physical activity can be detrimental to your health. Many companies are supporting their employees in setting up a home office. If your company is not one of them, spend the money out of your pocket. This is the least you can do for your health.

Interact with your team and friends

There are no two ways about the fact that the most missed part of office during this pandemic has been the interaction with people, colleagues and friends. While Zoom and WebEx meetings may not be able to give you the same feel, they are still your best chance of staying connected. Utilise them well. Have virtual breaks, casual meetings, and gupshup sessions just to chill out. Organising online games and competitions is also an option you can explore.

HOW GUA SHA HAS CHANGED PERSONAL CARE



Gua sha (pronounced *gwahshah*) is an ancient Chinese medicinal treatment which, with the aid of natural crystals and tools, helps in spa-like pampering of your mind and body. Apart from facelifting, it has several health benefits. Some describe Gua Sha as almost meditative that can melt all anxiety and stress away. And since Zen-like relaxation is the need of the hour these days, **Surela Chakraborty** gets you up to date with this fascinating ancient treatment. Doesn't hurt that it can also make you look like a million bucks!

Gua Sha is a Chinese word, which literally translates to 'scraping redness/illness.' An ancient healing technique from China, the process involves scraping portions of skin with a tool in order to get rid of inflammation. Interestingly, Gua Sha was used to revive people who suffered from heat strokes, exhaustion and seasonal ailments like the common cold. In ancient China, Gua Sha was administered by coin, animal bone, spoon and horn. These days, Gua Sha tools have become more sophisticated and designed for efficient performance.

Crystals like rose quartz and jade are usually used to make Gua Sha tools which come in different shapes. While rollers have become popular, the flat tools with curves on both sides and teeth on one end have different functional purposes to provide complete relaxation. The biggest advantage of Gua Sha tools, especially rollers is that one can use it at home by referring to easy tutorials available online. One can also opt for a Gua Sha facial done by an expert to feel pampered.

The colour of the crystals also makes a big difference as it is directly linked to its functional properties. Red and orange crystals are stimulating and invigorating to the physical body, yellows vitalize and accelerate mental activities, greens and pinks are calming and soothing to the nervous system, blues and indigo are inspirational with a spiritual tone and purples accelerate all processes of body, mind and spirit.

Vanita Naval, a therapist and holistic healer and an expert in crystals, is also the founder of **Samatva Sutra**, a wellness therapy center. Explaining the use of crystals as Gua Sha tools, she says, "Crystals have a solid body and geometric shape, and were created as Earth formed and have metamorphosed since containing the Earth's DNA and the memory of all events that shaped Earth as of today. Since they come from the Earth, they contain the same unconditional love and universal healing energy that earth has. The crystals are alive, radiating and vibrating at different rates. They create strong energy fields which enable us to stay charged. The stone emits the magnetic power of the ray of light contained within. Using the crystal near our body benefits our aura and brings harmony and healing."



While everyone loves precious gemstones for their startling beauty, semi-precious stones not only look stunning but have amazing healing powers. They are considered sacred in many ancient cultures. Vanita elaborates, "Crystal therapy practiced using semi-precious healing stones is an alternative medicine technique and has been practiced since time immemorial. This ancient art and practice has been designed to balance the chakras, transform energy properties of the body and clear the blocks which prevent free flow of energy. This natural way of healing is often used today to relieve stress and relax."

The Gua Sha tools or rollers come in different textures and are usually made of rose quartz and jade. What is so special about these two semi-precious stones? Vanita points out, "Rose quartz is a strong healer of the heart, promoting feelings of goodwill and harmony. It's a stone of unconditional love and peace. It purifies and opens the heart at all levels and is calming and reassuring. It's especially useful to release the stress of day-to-day living. It gently draws away negative energy and replaces it with loving vibes. It strengthens the physical heart and circulatory system and releases impurities from body fluids. Similarly, the Jade is a symbol of purity and serenity. It is also associated with heart chakra and increases love and nurturing. It is believed to attract good luck and friendships. It releases negative thoughts and soothes the mind and aids emotional release. It helps release toxins from kidneys, rebinds cellular systems and balances the fluids in the body."

Why Should One Practice it?

Gua Sha is not just for toning your face muscle to get a sculpted look, it has therapeutic value. This ancient Chinese medicinal treatment involves using a tool to apply pressure and scrape the skin to relieve pain and tension. The energy also known as *Qi* or *Chi* runs on meridians closer to the muscular and nervous systems. When there is an obstruction in the flow of energy or *Chi* it leads to tension or stress in muscles and joints, which causes stiffness. Gua Sha tools are applied during physiotherapy, especially for instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilisation (IASTM). Sometimes, Gua Sha is applied along with other exercises to ensure faster recovery.

When pressure is applied or scraping is done with this tool it can cause tiny bruises or microtrauma. This is because small capillaries near the skin breaks and that leads to bruises. Scraping also helps break connective tissue and reduce pain caused due to fibrosis and other musculoskeletal disorders. Not to worry, this is natural and will heal soon! However, if the bruise hurts one can use a cold pack or pain-relieving medicine.

According to some studies women suffering from perimenopause symptoms such sweating, insomnia, hot flashes, irregular periods, fatigue, anxiety and headaches were benefited after practicing Gua Sha. The treatment has also been known to bring some relief to people ailing from Hepatitis B, acute headaches, breast engorgement, and Tourette's Syndrome. And if you want to get rid of an insolent double chin and get that perfect jawline, then this can be the solution for you. It has also provided relief to people who complain of pain and soreness in muscles from sitting sedentary and under stress in front of laptops all day. It has also shown results on back pain issues, and is reported to have developed stronger immune systems in people suffering from fever, cold and lung ailments.

Another research conducted in 2017 proved that Gua Sha helps in muscle recovery faster. Weightlifters who have undergone this treatment observed that it took lesser effort to lift weights. The Gua sha treatment aids in blood circulation and lymphatic drainage. Rubbing the skin's surface with long and short strokes reduces inflammation, increases blood flow and speeds up healing. Gua Sha can be used to treat ailments like fibromyalgia, arthritis and those which trigger muscle and joint pain.

In fact, Gua Sha treatment not only reduces pain but increases flexibility by improving mobility in the muscles and tissues.

The tools are rollers, flat stones, and wands. They're made of rose quartz, Jade, amethyst, obsidian, black tourmaline, green aventurine, selenite, carnelian, garnet, turquoise and clear quarters with their different benefits. Kansa or brass and shankh or conch shell face wands are also used. This gives the face a flawless and relaxed look.

Precautions:

One must understand that Gua Sha is not everybody. Especially those who already have medical conditions that affect skin or veins like deep vein thrombosis, or those who tend to bleed easily or have clotting disorders and take blood thinners as part of their medication. People who suffer from tumours, infections or raw wounds should also avoid the treatment. Some Gua Sha techniques are not suitable for pregnant women, and a physician must be consulted in these cases.

Also, those who have oily and acne prone skin or already have acne should be careful while using Gua Sha tools on the face as it may aggravate the condition. An expert should not break



the skin during treatment and if it should happen, treatment should be paused until the skin heals completely. Broken skin is a breeding ground for infection and bloodborne diseases so care should be taken to sterilize tools in between treatments. Visit a certified Gua Sha expert who can guide you with the crystals and technique.

The treatment should be avoided just after surgery of any kind, and if you have an implant like a pacemaker or internal defibrillator, then you should not practice Gua Sha.

How to Use

Knowing the right technique to use the crystals makes all the difference. Vanita informs, "Wash the rollers with plain running water. Dry it with a soft cloth. Lie down and set an intention that this crystal is being used for the highest healing possible to anyone who uses it. Then either you can give a face massage to others or yourself by gently rolling it on forehead, temples, cheeks and cheekbones, around the ear, mouth and neck. The massage should be done not more than 10 minutes." The treatment is usually administered on the back, buttocks and limbs, as in a spa. It is also used on the face as regular routines to help rejuvenate your skin.

If you are performing it on your face, then it is important to wash your face first, and then apply a face oil or serum to reduce the chances of getting bruising caused during stretching it on the skin. Use a curved tool flat against your face and begin with your forehead. Scrape upwards from eyebrows to the hairline. Proceed to the cheeks and scrape upwards starting from the crease of the nose to the ear. Move to the jawline with the end of the tool which has two curves. Start from the chin and move towards the ear. Massage the Gua Sha tool into the ear to release tension. The area around the eye is very sensitive so be gentle while applying pressure. Start from the inner corner of the eye and move towards the temple. One can opt for a relaxing Gua Sha face massage or use it over a sheet mask at home to get an instant glow.

TAKE THE YEARS YOU.. off



Dr Priti Shukla, Plastic Surgeon, Ambrosia Clinic Hyderabad Shares top 5 procedures currently dominating the cosmetic and dermatology industry. **Hashtag Magazine** gives you a lowdown...



Collagen stimulating procedures:

Our skin produces collagen which makes our face look supple and plump. These are the signs of young skin. As we age, our skin starts losing its elasticity or collagen build up and starts to sag. This is where the technology of collagen-producing procedures is applied. Therapies such as Ultherapy, Thermo Arch and RF Microneedling are well known. These work on the inflammation, acne scars and wrinkle concerns of the skin and produce a naturally youthful look, by tightening the skin. These benefits come with zero downtime or surgery.

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP):

In this procedure, the client's own blood platelets are used to rejuvenate the skin. PRP is versatile, and it is used not just in cosmetics and dermatology, but also for hair growth, healing the musculoskeletal issues as well in dentistry. The client's own healing system comes to the rescue and this procedure is one of the safest anti-ageing treatments.

Laser, Peels and Ultrasound therapies:

Various laser and peel procedures are available to resurface the skin, diminish the fine lines, and fade acne or pigmentation marks on the skin. These procedures are directed towards the superficial concerns of the skin.

Hyaluronic acid fillers:

Hyaluronic acid or hyaluron is a naturally occurring substance present in our skin, eyes and connective tissue. Its principal property is to retain the skin's moisture so that the tissues stay well lubricated and hydrated. Due to its versatile benefits, it is one of the most famous and most recommended anti-ageing treatments. The effects of hyaluronic acid injections are evident quite soon. This treatment effectively reduces dark hollows around the eyes and provides immediate hydration.

Botox:

The most famous of all anti-ageing treatments is Botox. Made famous by celebrities, this cosmetic therapy works very well to reduce fine lines, sculpt the face, and even add a glowy-freshness. Botox or Botulinum toxin is a neurotoxin protein produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*, which when injected in micro ml doses can reduce signs of ageing like wrinkles. The effect of this treatment lasts for 3 to 12 months.

Pro-tip: Beauty is skin deep so eat a well-balanced diet before relying on cosmetic procedures alone.

Right age to get them done:

It is safe to start anti-ageing treatment at any age, but the health of our skin matters the most. Think of it like this, if you start anti-ageing treatment at 50 years, the range of product doses increases, directly influencing the cost. If you start maintaining your skin's health early on, then your skin ages slowly and you won't need high dose treatments later on. Also, if you start late, the results may considerably vary.

COMMON MYTHS & FACTS:

Myth: People think that anti-ageing procedures should be done every month or quarterly. They also feel that once anti-ageing treatments are stopped, withdrawal symptoms come up and ageing occurs faster. This trend is thought to have started with Botox.

Fact: Botox produces lasting effects on the skin and slows down ageing. If you stop taking Botox, you will not start to age suddenly, as the ageing process has already slowed down. Chances are you will look younger than your contemporaries.

Myth: Face will look artificial, odd and frozen after the use of fillers.

Fact: Overdoing fillers can cause a distorted or artificial look. Here the experience of the doctor and the expectation of the client need to be considered. It is not the filler at fault here, but the amount used to create the effect. Many people have natural-looking plump lips, and a toned face even after using fillers.

Myth: Deaths due to Botox!!-

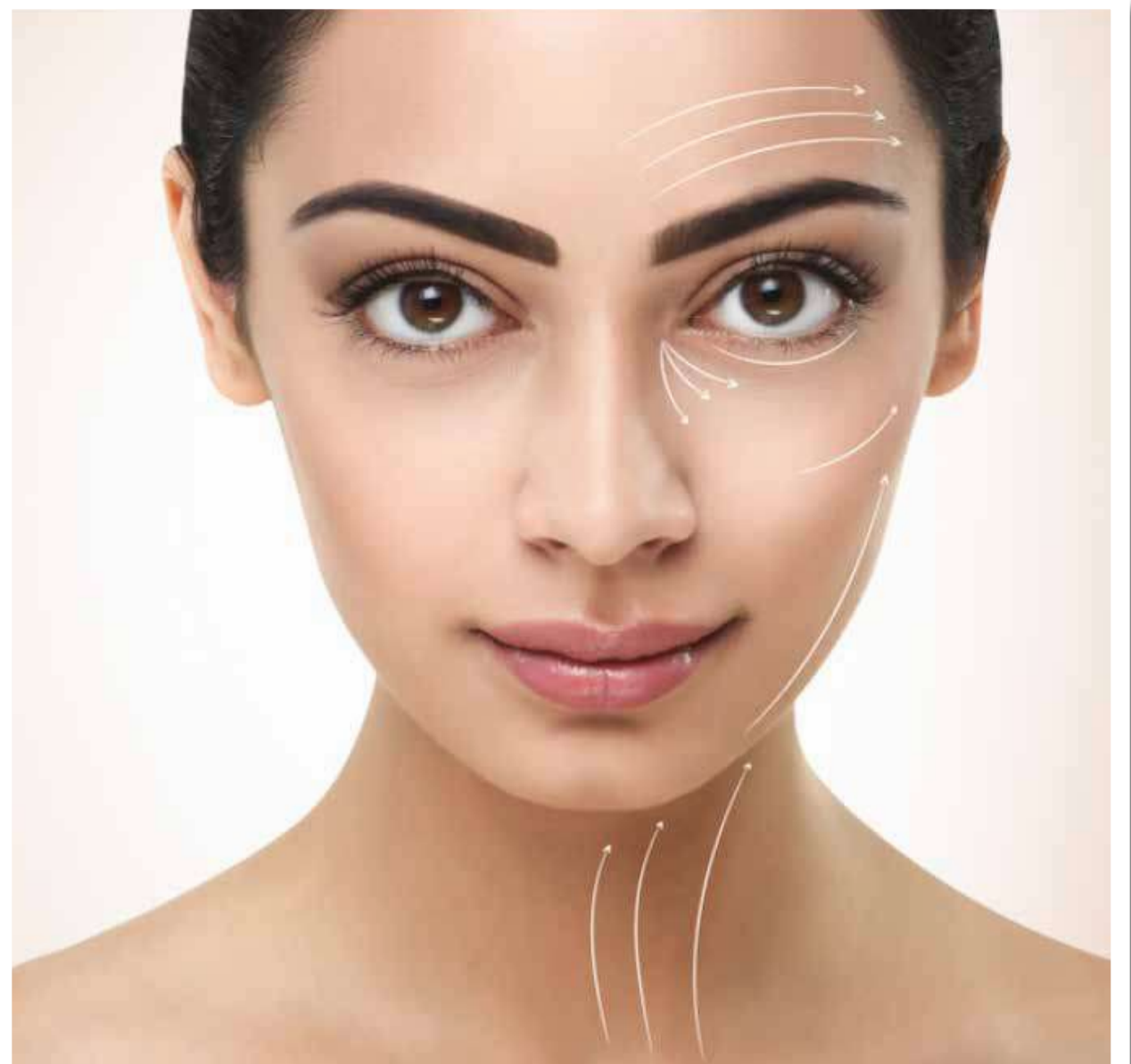
Fact: This is untrue. Botox is used to treat cerebral palsy and squint-eyes in children. It is absolutely safe to use Botox irrespective of years of use.

Myth: Non surgical treatments give the same result as surgical treatment.

Fact: Non surgical cosmetic treatments can compete with surgical cosmetic treatments, but only to an extent. The effects or results vary between the two. Facelift and Bodylift are surgical procedures that have excellent effects on fine lines and ageing. Expecting the same from fillers and Botox is not fair, and these nonsurgical treatments are only for superficial skin concerns. Same sounds true for minimally invasive procedures. One cannot expect similar results as the surgical procedures have, as the involved layers of skin are different.

Staying Safe:

1. Start early by around 30 years of age and start small.
2. Select your beauty providers based on qualification, experience, the technology used and reviews.
3. Do not rely on cost comparisons alone to decide who the treatment provider will be. The cosmetic industry is flooded with cheap and fake alternatives who do no good but have the potential for more damage.
4. Actively participate in discussions and ask for sample pictures.
5. Maintain good overall health with a good diet. Women nearing menopause or in menopause will need extra care when it comes to cosmetic treatments as hormonal changes influence the health of the skin.



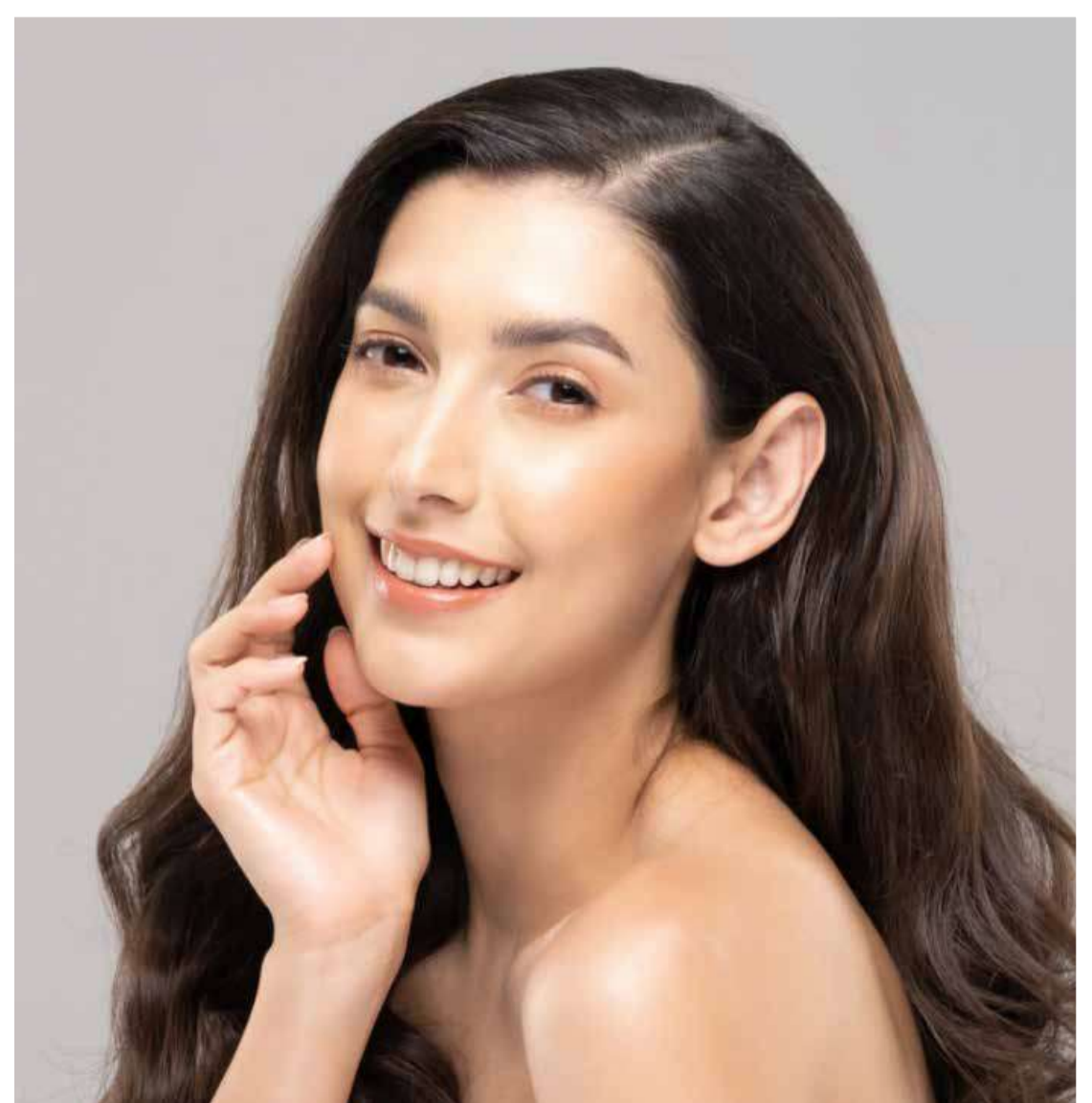
Do's, Don'ts and downtime for the procedures:

A few of the above mentioned anti-ageing treatments have no downtime. These procedures should be done in a doctor's clinic and take about 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

Therapies like laser, Ultherapy, and peels have slight burning and tingling sensations, but counter-productive measures like anaesthesia cream, numbing gels, and cooling creams are applied before the procedure.

Trained and experienced professionals like plastic surgeons and cosmetologists have several pain control techniques that improve comfort during the treatment. The type of fillers and experience of the doctor matters significantly when it comes to skincare and anti-ageing treatment.

Also, one should not forget to inform the doctor about previous beauty or surgical treatments, blood thinning agents or supplements. The entire medical history should be mentioned to avoid interaction or allergic reactions. If you undertook any previous face treatments or tummy tucks, let the doctor know about it. All this is for your safety and success of the latest treatment.



COUNT YOUR CALORIES

-Food Darzee Delivers Nutrition at Your Doorstep

Food Darzee is a firm that provides controlled diet plans customised for the requirements of each individual. **Juveria Tabassum** tries the specially delivered packaged meals for breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner from the startup that claims to account for every calorie that you are consuming.



Founded in June 2017 by Anik Bhandari, Dr. Siddhant Bhargava, Anirudh Ganeriwal, and Devaj Jhunjunwala, with the idea of providing healthy meals according to a specialised diet plan to people who wish to control their calories and still take care of their cravings, Food Darzee began operations in Delhi, and has since diversified to cities such as Mumbai, Pune, and Bengaluru with their Hyderabad offering kick starting in January this year. “While planning the diet, we consider all physiological parameters such as height, weight, body-fat percentage, and previous and current dieting history,” informs Siddhant, adding that food is also customised based on taste and palate preferences, including choice of meat.

Behind Tailor Made Nutrition: “There is a huge gap in the market in terms of correct information, correct diet, and accountability for people who had a clear health goal. We wanted to become a one-stop solution for any health goal, be it weight loss, muscle gain, or boosting immunity. Every single body has different requirements and we wanted to provide them in the most convenient way possible.”



Coach Darzee: An ancillary to Food Darze, it is a mentorship programme that provides recipes with exact quantities and ingredients for clients, who are also assigned a personal nutritionist, to cook for themselves.

A personal nutritionist, assigned to every client, takes a detailed diet history and plan, and stays in constant touch with the client throughout their term. "The idea was to provide a service where the person doesn't really feel like they're on a diet; you will get stuff like pizzas and butter chicken, controlled calorie-wise by the personal nutritionist," says Siddhant.

We tried a day's worth of diet-controlled meals from Food Darzee. The process is systematic, and requires one to furnish physiological details and diet method preferences, such as low cal, high cal, or keto, and also mention one's diet goal.



The meals are delivered twice a day, with breakfast and lunch arriving at 9.30am, and snacks and dinner at 5.00pm. Breakfast consisted of a decidedly healthy, yet delicious mushroom cheese omelette with a side of some good baked beans. Lunch was keto—rice vermicelli and roasted chicken. The portion sizes for all meals were perfect for one person, and the Italian chicken calzone and a tempting oatmeal cookie snack was fulfilling. For dinner was a simple, low cal, high protein chicken falafel bowl. The meals are quite easy to digest in terms of taste, even if you are used to elaborate home-cooked affairs.

The setup is ideal for working professionals who stay alone, and do not have the time to dedicate to their health and diet. Apart from the food, the nutritionist also compiles a diet chart and action plan, directing clients to exercise and suggests possible snacks you can munch on in case your stomach does rumble.

Meals are blast chilled immediately after preparation to keep them free from microbial growth, and with people being cynical about hygiene in the COVID-era, it makes for a safe option.



A Cafe

WITH SOME QUIRKS FOR YOUR RISHIKESH WORKATION

Karma has no menu; you get served what you deserve. However, surrounded by lush green trees, and located on the Badrinath Highway, **Cafe Karma** sure offers an exhaustive menu and some captivating sights. **Nikita Biswas** and **Abhishek Dubey** stop by for a quick bite...



It was a chilly afternoon in December when we stopped outside a cosy looking cafe on the Badrinath Highway. The artsy facade garnered our attention; the place greeted us with painted tires stuck on the wall adorned with a splash of colourful designs.

Once inside, Cafe Karma is a burst of nostalgia. The old school benches, carom set up, plants, artifacts, dummy telephones, spearheads, a small *almirah* comprising different novels, the items seemed to pay homage to different parts of the country, spread across different eras. There was much to look at but we were also ravenous.

We sat on a bench, and observed the outdoor seating, but the cafe's quirky interiors kept catching our eye. Peep: A scooter with plants spurting out of the seat. The music was neither Hindi nor English, but a hit *Garhwali* song with thumping beats and peppy lyrics, that complimented the ambience well enough.



Hosts, siblings Ankur and Vandana Sharma, seemed amused that we were so taken by the interiors, as they offered us the menu. "We have worked hard to create a positive environment with the interiors," they share. It is a vegetarian-only place, and we ordered a Nutella Banana Pancake. The crowd seemed to include teens and families alike. The pancake, when it arrived, looked delicious, with golden honey streaming throughout. It tasted fresh and perfect. We then went for a Mushroom cheese toastie, which promised oodles of cheese, and delivered it between bites of crunchy bread.

It was dark outside by the time we finished, and under lights, the cafe looked stunning. The aquarium, which was placed inside an old TV set, particularly stood out. The place was definitely value for money, and an extremely refreshing stop if you're out on a long journey. Ankur and Vandana believe that Cafe Karma evolved on the premise of repurposing, recycling and harmonising with nature. "Thanks to the support of loyal customers, we have managed to grow well," adds the duo. If you're on a workation in Rishikesh, looking for a cool place and a good hot cup of coffee to help you work, then this is one of the best spots to hangout at.

Address - Badrinath Highway, Opposite Green Hills, Tapovan, Rishikesh

Timings - 8.00 to 11.00pm

Cost for two - Rs. 600(approx.)



How to get there –

Bus – Take the interstate bus to Natraj Chowk. Take an auto to Green Hills, or ask for Tripti Guest House. If you are taking a shared auto it will drop you at Tapovan auto stand from where you have to walk for about 5 minutes to reach Café Karma.

Train – Get off at Haridwar railway station from where you can opt for an auto or a private car directly to the location

Flight – Nearest airport is at Dehradun (the Jolly Grant Airport), 35 km from Rishikesh. Take a private car service directly to the location from the airport.

Ekta Agarwal takes you on a journey of few mouth-watering, sumptuous and delectable authentic and traditional cuisine of Kashmiri Pandits:

The Unexplored Taste of the *Kashmir Valley*

India is a vast and diverse country. There are 29 states and every state has different cultural and food habits. In Kashmiri Cuisine there are two types of cuisines. One being food prepared in traditional Kashmiri Muslim household and second being food prepared in traditional Kashmiri Pandit household. Kashmiri pandits are the oldest inhabitants of Kashmir Valley and introduced turmeric, yoghurt and asafoetida (*hing*) to Indian cuisine. Kashmiri Pandit food doesn't include onion, garlic, eggs, tomato, and chicken among other things. Some of the main ingredients used in Kashmiri Pandit cuisine are asafoetida, dry ginger powder, mustard oil, Kashmiri red chilli powder, yoghurt, and whole spices to name a few. Most of the dishes are cooked on low heat and are eaten with steamed rice as it is the staple food of Kashmir Valley. Authentic and traditional, here are six dishes that are a part of the cuisine of Kashmiri Pandits

Rogan Josh – This dish gets its name from Persian words *Rogan* which means "oil" and *Josh* means "intense heat". Mutton is cooked in aromatic Kashmiri red chilli powder along with other herbs and spices such as cinnamon, cloves, cardamom mace (*javitri*) and bay leaves. Mutton leg pieces are mixed with curd and fried in mustard oil. Once the curd dries, it is cooked on low flame with addition of asafoetida, cumin and cloves till brown. The gravy is with addition of water, dry ginger powder, aniseed powder, asafoetida and Kashmiri red chilli powder. Mutton is added to the same and cooked on low flame till tender.

Kaliya – This healthy, nutritious yet mouth-watering dish has unique combination. Mutton is cooked in turmeric based gravy with aromatic spices and herbs. Then it is shallow fried in mustard oil with the addition of asafoetida and



Palak Nadur – A mouth-watering vegetarian dish, Palak Nadur is a unique mix of fresh spinach and lotus stem. They are cooked with spices and herbs. Boiled and mashed spinach is cooked in mustard oil with addition of cumin and asafoetida. The spinach is blended, and fried pieces of lotus stem are added and cooked for a minute on a low flame. It is garnished with *Vaer* masala. *Vaer* masala is authentic Kashmiri masala mix which has all the seven spices including Kashmiri red chilli powder.

cloves. Once it's done, water, asafoetida, turmeric powder, bay leaves, cumin seeds, fennel and cinnamon is added and cooked till tender. Milk, *garam masala* and cardamom are added and boiled at the end.

Kabargah – This yummy starter is mutton ribs pressure-cooked in raw milk and spices and then drained out. Meat is added to a boiled mix of milk and water with spices such as asafoetida, garam masala, fennel powder. The mix is cooked on low flame till tender and drained out. The ribs are dipped in a yoghurt mix seasoned with salt and garam masala. Then the ribs are fried in mustard oil/*ghee* till they are crisp and brown.



Chok Wangun – A tamarind based brinjal delicacy cooked in sour and spicy gravy, this is a real kicker to the taste buds. The brinjals are cut lengthwise, fried and then cooked in mustard oil with tamarind pulp, Kashmiri chilli powder, cloves, asafoetida and dry ginger powder.

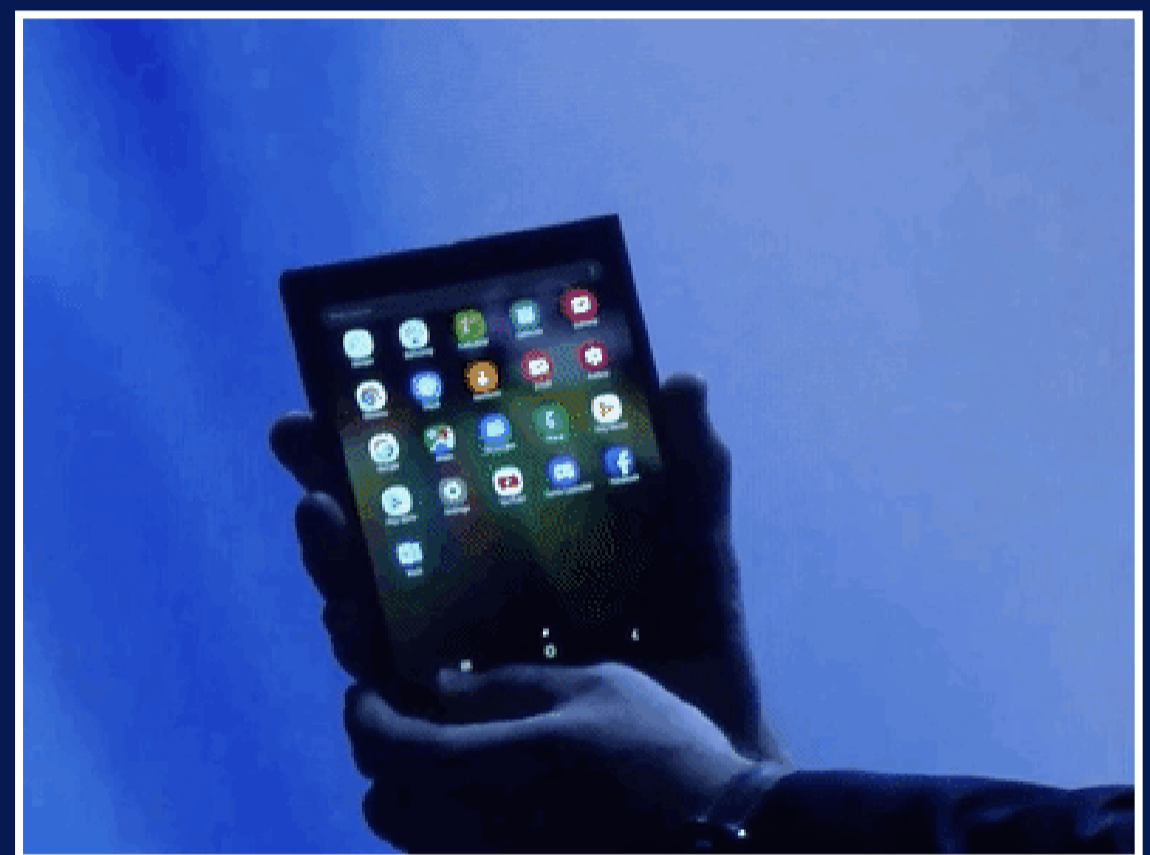
Dum Aaloo – This authentic dish is named so because the baby potatoes are cooked under *Dum* or pressure. In this cooking method, the food is cooked under pressure in its juices. Boiled and peeled potatoes are poked all over with toothpicks so that holes are visible. Once done, they are deep fried till crisp and light. The gravy is a mashup of dry ginger powder, aniseed powder, asafoetida and Kashmiri red chilli powder and water. Potatoes are added to gravy and cooked on low flame till done.

Upcoming innovations in Smartphones

Smartphone technology has come up with one mind blowing innovation after another year after year. While some of it is just fancy quirks, most work towards optimising your experience of using this device that has effectively and irrevocably transformed our lives. Tech guru **Aniket Pandey** demystifies some of the innovations that are doing the rounds in the pipeline, and will soon hit our stores too.

Folding/Rollable Display in Smartphones

The display of a smartphone is something we interact with the most, and we have seen smartphone display technology improving leaps and bounds over time. From those old low resolution TFT displays to high resolution Quad HD and 4k AMOLED displays with a faster refresh rate of 120-144 Hz, the experience has become a lot smoother. And it seems that flat and curved displays are soon going to be passe too. In 2018 smartphone OEM's started showcasing their foldable display technology in which you can actually fold your smartphone to use it in a compact form and unfold it to use it as a mini tablet. The first smartphone launched with a folding display was the Royole Flexpai in October 2018.



Source: samsung.com

Later in February 2019, Samsung launched their first folding smartphone which was the Samsung Galaxy Fold.

Since the technology was new and manufacturers were using a plastic display the phones lacked durability, and had some serious issues with the hinge mechanisms. Over time Samsung, Motorola and Huawei, have started coming up with good quality foldable phones, albeit on the expensive side, costing over a lakh. Brands like Xiaomi and OPPO will also be coming up with their folding smartphones soon and in coming years we are going to see this technology getting more affordable.

Apart from folding smartphones recently OPPO showcased their rollable display concept smartphone OPPO X 2021. The smartphone has a motorized slider on the edge and the display can be expanded from 6.7 inches to 7.4 inches. OPPO calls it their continuous variable OLED display. It seems like a development other brands are sure to tap into in the near future.



Source: spickandroid.com

Under Display Front Camera

Over the last few years, the most popular trend in smartphones has been the bezel-less design in order to achieve that higher screen to body ratio. In trying to manufacture an edge-to-edge design, the front camera cannot be ignored. And to accommodate that, design choices such as Big Notch, Small notch, Punch holes and even motorized pop up cameras have been adopted.



Source: gsmarena.com



Source: The Verge

The biggest technology leap after this is going to be the Under Display Front Camera.

Xiaomi, Oppo and other OEM's have been exploring this technology since last year, and currently Xiaomi is working on its 3rd generation under display camera technology for mass production. A working camera under a lit up display might sound impossible, but in current generation technology, the small display layer above the front camera uses self developed pixel arrangement which allows the light to pass through the gap of sub pixels allowing every pixel to retain a complete RGB subpixel layout which would eventually produce equally good pictures as a normal front camera.

Xiaomi also recently showcased their first Quad-curved Waterfall display in their concept smartphone in which the display curves to all four sides with an 88 degree curvature and there are literally no buttons or ports on the smartphone. The design is not very practical but something really unique.



Source: Xiaomi



Source: Android Authority

Recently ZTE launched the world's first under display front camera smartphone, the Axon 20 5G. The smartphone does feel like a first generation product as it uses the older generation technology and due to this the front facing camera performance is mediocre. But since this technology is still evolving and getting better over time we might get to see more such under display camera smartphones by the end of this year or in 2022.

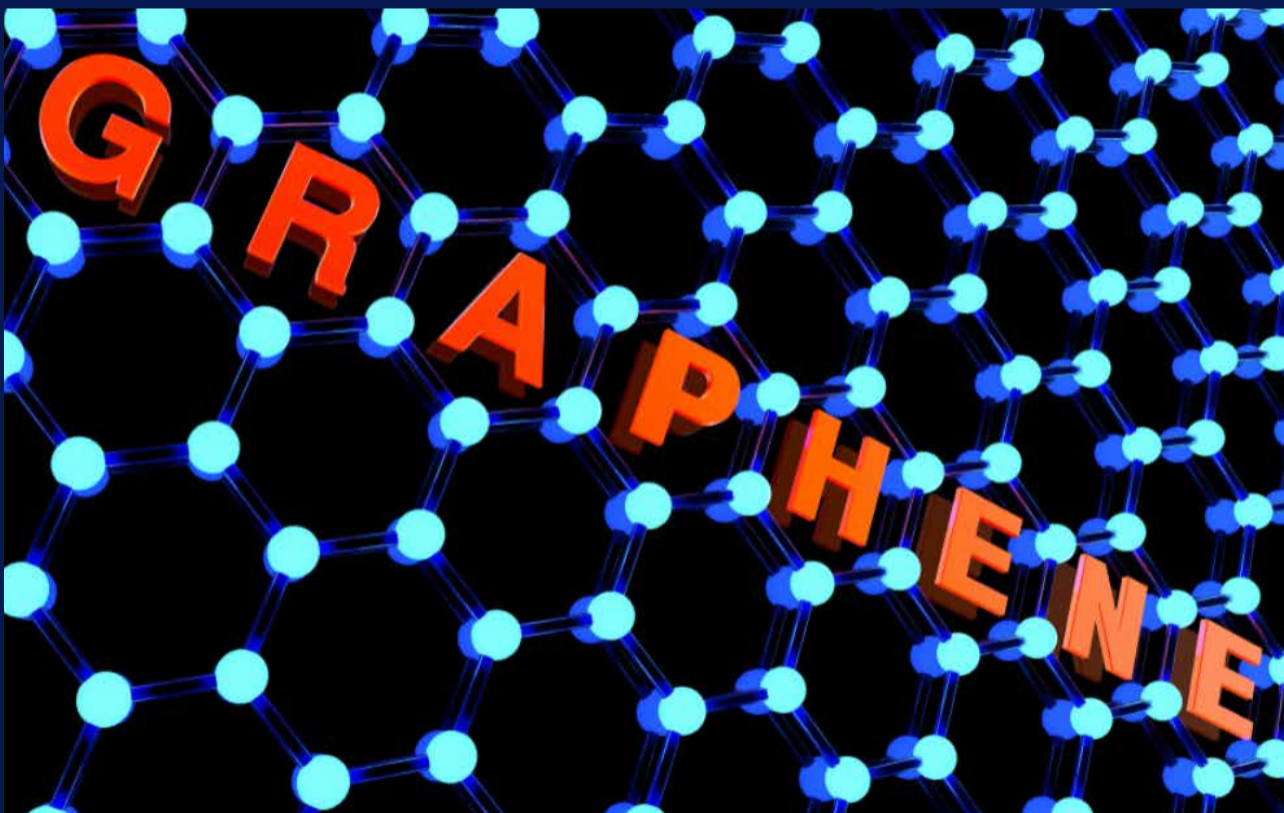
True Wireless Charging

Over the last few years the charging solutions in smartphones have also evolved a lot. Qualcomm introduced its improved Quick Charge Technology, and OPPO has always been ahead in this race thanks to its super fast VOOC charge technology, which can also be seen in OnePlus smartphones where it is called Warp Charge. Current generation smartphones support charging from 65W to a steep 120W. Wireless charging has been in the market for a while now, and has grown faster over the years, making 65W of wireless charging 0 to 100% a half an hour process. Xiaomi recently announced something really futuristic with their Mi Air Charge Technology.

Xiaomi said they are currently working on this technology and with Mi Air Charge you can wirelessly charge multiple smartphones at a time through air without attaching any cable. This is something we all have been waiting for since ages. The tech supports 5W charging, and uses space positioning and energy transmission. There are multiple antennas involved in this process where the main charging station composed of 144 antennas will transmit mmWave (used in 5G technology) and the receiving 14 antennas on the smartphone will convert that mmWave signal into electric energy through the rectifier circuit. The whole process and technology seems very futuristic and fascinating but still there are few health concerns since a lot of radiation is involved.



Source: Xiaomi



Graphene Batteries

A battery is one of the most important components in our smartphones with Lithium Ion and Lithium Polymer being the most common ones. Over the years, we have seen manufacturers trying to add higher capacity batteries upto 6000-7000 mAh to achieve at least two days of battery life on a single charge. The biggest problem with these current generation batteries is that they degrade over time and your two year old smartphone won't give the same good battery life as it used to give when it was new. The biggest innovation and improvement in battery technology is going to be the graphene batteries.

Graphene is the thinnest and strongest material on the earth. It contains an ultra thin layer of carbon atoms and it is known to be the best conductor of heat and electricity. A graphene battery will be able to hold 5 times more charge compared to a regular Lithium Ion battery, which means your smartphone could last a week on a single charge, while ensuring extremely fast charging, and minimum degrading over time. Various players are working on developing graphene batteries, and we might see them in action soon.



Source: wccftech.com



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LATCHING ON TO A MUSE



Doors are the route to the lives beyond them. Doors with colors smeared on them on festivals, sandalwood and turmeric paste and decorated with dots of vermilion...

Santhanam Krishnan grew up with such memories. The doors in his childhood hometown seemed to vanish as he moved to the city and he decided to stay with them through his art. It has been 21 years now, and Santhanam's paintings have been on display in art shows across the globe. In our fast-moving world, these paintings are like a reminder to slow down and smell the roses. He chats with **Nivedita Rao** on his preferred muse, and how he sees it as a piece of story that everyone wants to carry.



What moves you so much about doors that you decided to choose them as your muse?

In my hometown Kumbakonam, the doors are colorful and they have stories too. They depict the lives of the people behind them. That is how I started doing paintings with doors as my muse. Some doors open to a Tulasi plant. Some doors have a movie poster behind them. Some older doors have numbers such as P87 depicting the Polio drop immunization. It is also a journey to simpler times when copper vessels were used to boil water. The current era we are again drinking water

from copper bottles. So it is a commentary on our lives. And when they see my paintings with boilers—copper vessels or glasses, it connects a person to a story from their childhood, like it did for me. I registered everything from my childhood. Also, I believe that a painting is not a decorative piece, or a piece of furniture. You want to connect it with something.

Doors are a very evocative subject. What kind of a response do you get when people own your paintings?

Everyone has some story associated with an element of my painting. It could be anyone from any strata of the society. I have buyers in India and Germany too. A German recognised MGR from my painting and wanted to purchase it. He liked the cooling glasses and the cap. Even my driver goes back to his childhood when he sees my painting. Another interesting incident is when an Indian hotel owner in Berlin bought my painting to help calm down anxious customers waiting for their seats.

Has the pandemic affected your work in any way?

The pandemic has in fact increased my work by four times and people who are sitting in their houses, especially abroad, plan their interiors and reach out to me. Though I miss travelling, I feel art is therapeutic and has kept me going.

Santhanam hopes to reach out to more people with his paintings and also started a homestay in Kumbakonam to invite people to the temple town and explore the various flavours of the town and relax and paint.





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

Remnants of an Era:

THE KRIMCHI TEMPLES OF KASHMIR

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

Destination Krimchi

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

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

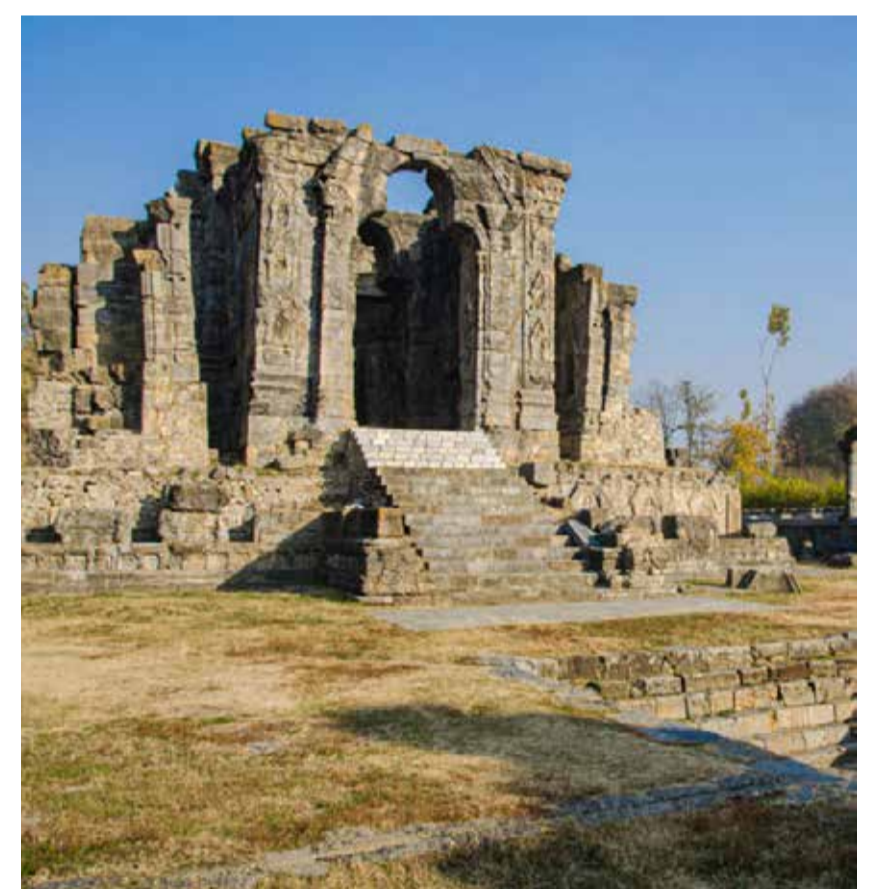
A history of grandiose

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

Temple architecture

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

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



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

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

Timings: 6.00 am – 6.00 pm.



Visit the Offbeat and Stunning Architectural Marvels - Stepwells Of Gujarat

There is more to Gujarat other than the White Rann, the temples, the festivals and the mouthwatering delicacies. Stepwells have served their purpose in the yesteryears and now are one of the most important symbols of Gujarat's architecture. Ketki Gadre helps you catch a glimpse of the traditional architecture and explore a different side of Gujarat with the stepwells of Gujarat.

Gujarat boasts of over a 100 stepwells in different cities, dating as far back as 300 AD to 400 AD. Stepwells, locally known as 'Vav' have been mentioned in the Vedas and early examples can be found in the Indus Valley Civilization. It is believed that wells were constructed by the rulers from 500 AD to 1100 AD as a source of water for local people.

Stepwells traditionally served the purpose of storing water in the times of drought. Locals had to go down the steps to reach a water reservoir which was usually two to seven storeys deep. The depth made sure there was negligible evaporation and the water remained cold and fresh. Earlier there were only steps but they evolved into timeless architectural marvels with intricate carvings on each storey. Most stepwells are so technologically sound that they can withstand an earthquake of upto 7.5 Richter scale.

The architecture of the stepwells is so stunning that many are preserved by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites.



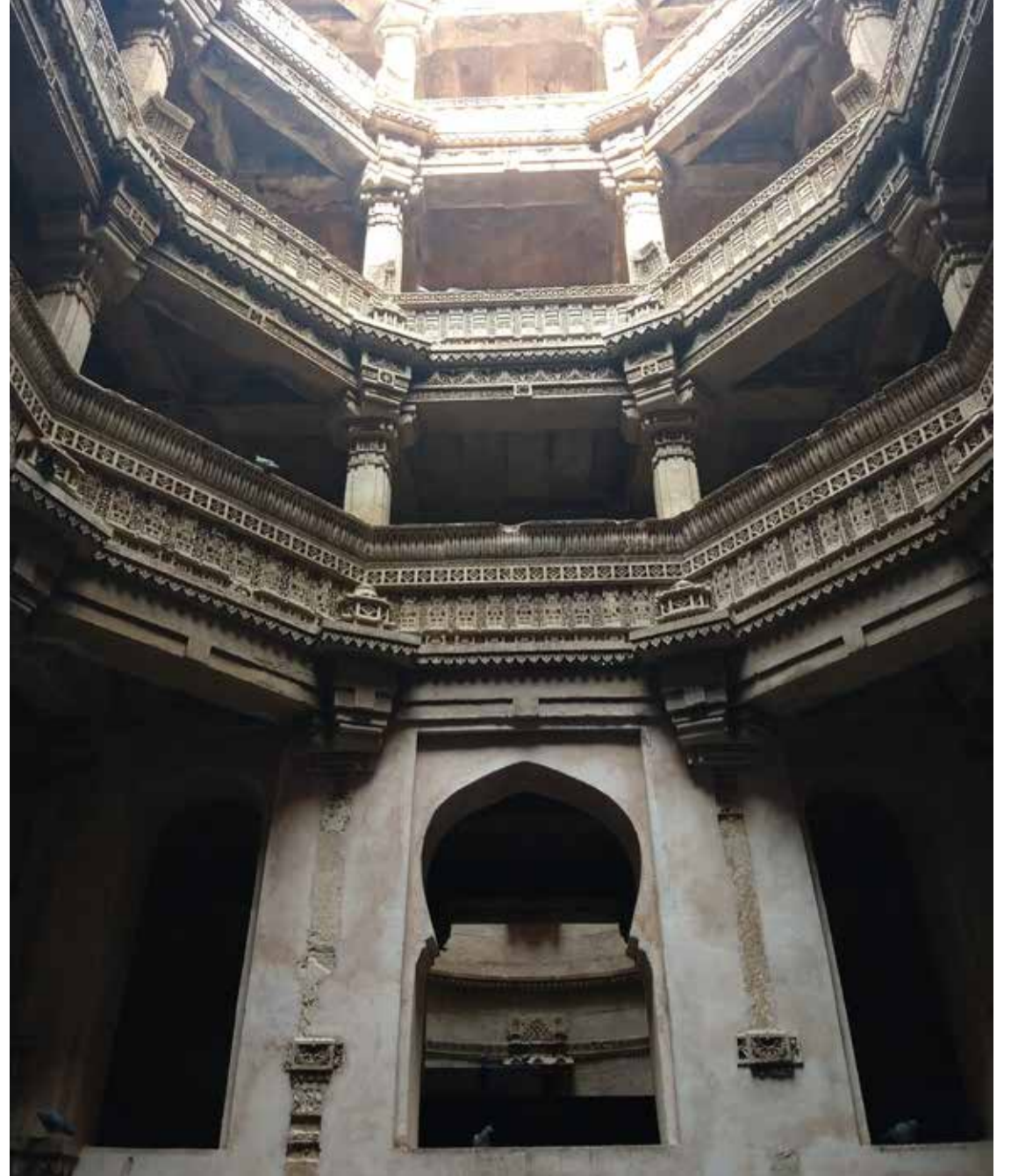
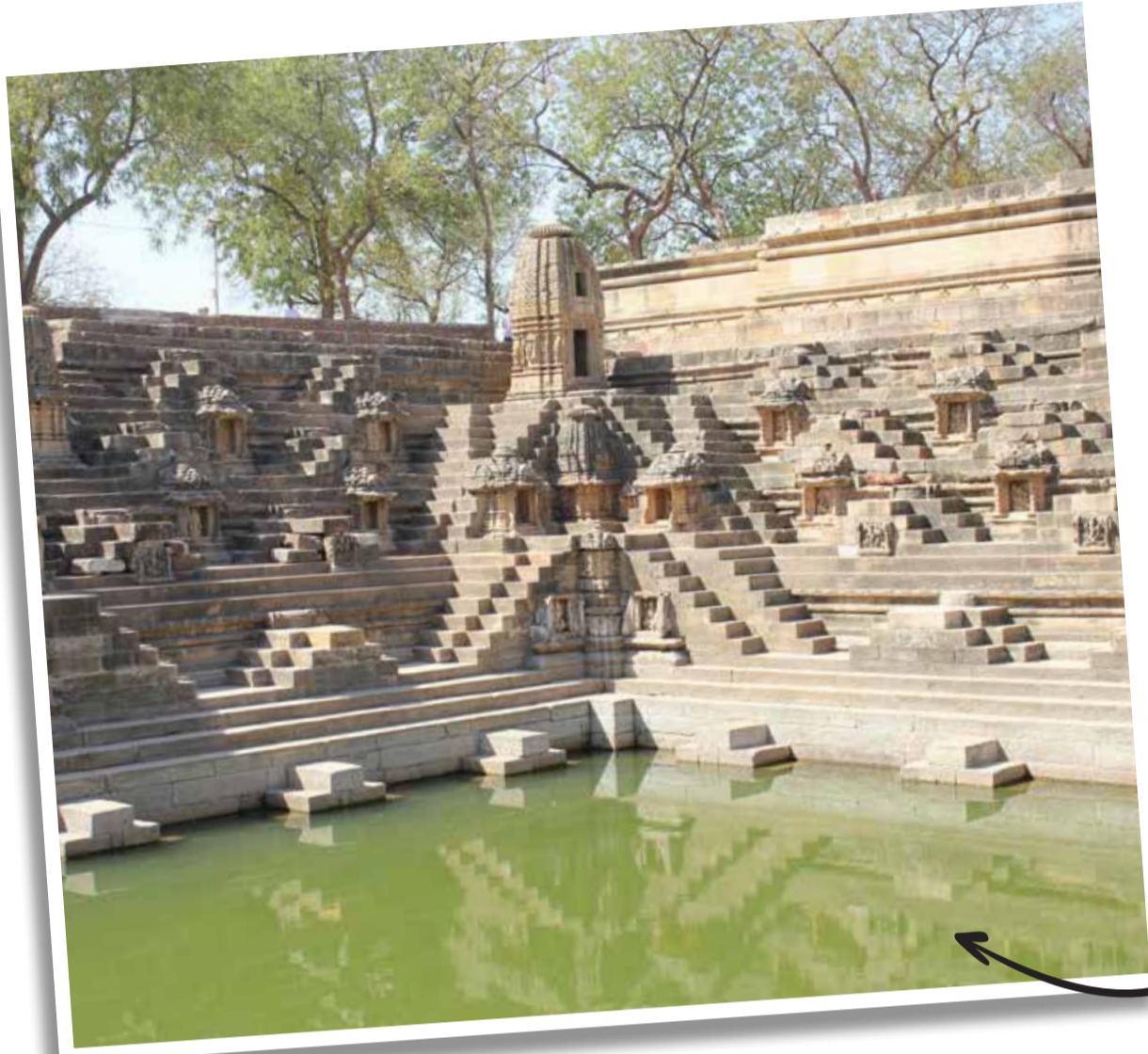
Rani Ki Vav, Patan

The Rani Ki Vav, a UNESCO world heritage site, was built in the early 11th century, by Queen Udayamati, in memory of her husband. The stepwell was flooded by the nearby Saraswati River, in the 15th century, and got completely silted. It was rediscovered in the 1980s by the Archaeological Survey of India upon excavation with the carvings in pristine condition.

This multi-storied stepwell has ornately carved walls, columns and steps with various forms of gods and goddesses. Every inch of this stepwell has carvings related to Lord Vishnu, Vishkanyas and Apsaras and has a spiritual significance. The stepwell is known to house over 800 sculptures.

Adalaj ni Vav, Adalaj-Gandhinagar

Located in Adalaj Village near Gandhinagar, the stepwell was built in the 15th century by Queen Rudabai. The five storeyed stepwell is designed in Indo-Islamic architecture, with intricate floral carvings on the pillars and walls demonstrating Jain and Hindu symbolism. The stepwell is octagonal in shape and follows the Solanki style of architecture. The entrance and steps going down five floors have beautifully carved pillars.



Modhera Surya Kund, Modhera

The Modhera stepwell is part of the larger Sun temple complex. The Modhera Sun Temple is a unique temple in Gujarat dedicated to the God Sun. Adjacent to the temple is a huge stepwell called the Surya Kund. This stepwell characterises not only the storage of water but also has religious rituals wherein worshippers could take a bath before entering the temple premises for praying. The stepwell consists of 108 miniature shrines carved on the steps and makes for an astounding architecture and backdrop.

Dada Harir Vav, Ahmedabad

One of the better-kept stepwells in the city of Ahmedabad is the 500-year-old Dada Harir Vav. The seven storeyed octagonal stepwell has intricately carved walls and columns with floral sculptures and scriptures in Arabic and Sanskrit. The stepwell, with its Indo-Islamic architecture, had a huge significance in the history of the area as it provided relief to the locals and travelers in hot months with water and shade.



Adi-Kadi Vav, Junagadh

Unlike the other stepwells in Gujarat, this stepwell does not feature extensive carvings. Instead Adi-Kadi Vav was entirely carved out of the hard rock. A lean path of 120 stairs goes down through the stone to reach a small water reservoir.

Sevasi Vav, Vadodara

The seven storeyed Sevasi Vav is on the outskirts of Vadodara town with amazing architecture and carvings. The stepwell is constructed in the combination of brick masonry and stone and known to be constructed 500 years ago. It is laid out in the east-west direction and has intricate carvings on the walls and pillars such as motifs, floral prints, bells, and animals. The stepwell has a residing deity and the locals visit here to pay their respects which also helps in maintaining the structure.





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CERAMIC IN HOME DÉCOR: Classic and Chic

Aesthetic and eco-friendly, ceramic is one of the most versatile materials that is popularly being used to accentuate homes and interiors. Whether in the form of earthenware, porcelain, stoneware, terracotta, bone china or even brick, ceramics lend a rustic vibe and natural charm to any space. Tough, heat resistant and electrically insulant, ceramics are durable, resilient and perfectly suited for homes. **Rashmi Gopal Rao** speaks to interior design experts and gets you some cues on refurbishing your home with this natural material...



"Ceramic is easy to source and also inexpensive when compared to other materials," says Vandana Sarawgi, CEO and Head Designer, SR Artefacts, adding that since they are harder than other conventional metals, they do not get damaged easily due to their low coefficient friction. Ceramics also have high heat and chemical resistance. "Since glazed ceramic products do not stain easily, they are a perfect fit for multi-purpose use," she says. Ceramic also does not react very quickly with the elements in the atmosphere and hence remains free of discolouration.

Myriad uses

Whether it is flooring tiles, wall installations, light fixtures, lamps, cookware or artefacts like planters, vases and wall plates, ceramic can be used in innumerable ways. "Colourful ceramics are a fun way of adding a pop of colour and infuses life to spaces like the living room, kitchen and even bedroom," says Aashini Shah, Creative Director, Baro Market. When used in flooring, ceramic tiles are not only easy to maintain and clean but also do not attract allergens like pollen and dust. Ceramic tiles are made in natural wooden tones, contemporary colour palettes and even in speckled patterns. Chic and contemporary, they add a sense of sophistication to living rooms, kitchens, hallways and balconies. Ceramic murals and wall installations are wonderful ideas for a statement or accent wall. They not only make the space attractive but also add texture and form for a great conversation starter.

Ceramic as a lighting option is also extremely popular. Available in a plethora of shapes and sizes, they are a perfect material for table lamps, pendant lamps, floor lamps and wall lights. You can choose between a matte finish which lends more depth, while a glossy finish can add a wee bit of oomph and glitter to your space. Then there are ceramic lights crafted with an industrial finish which is ideal if you are looking for a boho chic or quirky vibe.

Ceramic artefacts

There is nothing like ceramic to add some character to your interiors. Whether it is ceramic pots, planters, an abstract centerpiece or bowls, it is sure to enhance the beauty of the space and elevate its visual appeal. Vases that come in different sizes are perfect to host those pretty fresh bouquets or even the ever-attractive dry flowers. Place them in corners and you have your Instagram worthy spot ready! Ceramic planters make greens look more appealing and presentable especially if you are looking to have some large sized plants indoors. Available in myriad colours, they add an earthy appeal to your space. Colourful wall plates and hand-painted tiles add style and panache to otherwise dull and bare walls.

No mention of ceramic is complete without the quintessential kitchenware, be it bowls, mugs, jugs, tea pots or just plates. Apart from being functional and oven-safe, they serve as great display pieces and can elevate the look of your kitchen by several notches. Consider displaying some aesthetic pieces on an open shelf in your kitchen. Throw in some plants and books and you have a wonderful vignette ready! Earthy palettes and warm tones are apt choices if you are looking to curate an elegant look.



Trends and cues

Artisanal hand painted designs, unconventional hues, silver inlays and geometric designs are just some trends in ceramics. "A solid monocoloured piece with a chiselled exterior would occupy a place of pride on your centre table, while a glazed noir-blanc piece with a fine metallic outline would make a statement of luxury and opulence," says Punam Kalra, Creative Director at Centre for Applied Arts. Ceramic as a material is also great to work with in terms of getting creative and crafting DIYs. Hence it is no surprise that it figures in the mood boards of artists, designers and architects alike.

Ceramic is easy to maintain but one must keep in mind that acidic cleaning liquids must be avoided while wiping its surface. Also, since it is vulnerable to breaking and damage one needs to handle ceramic with care. Since it is a natural material, ceramic is best paired with other artefacts that have an earthy appeal like dried flowers and fresh blossoms. Artificial flowers, plastic and other synthetic materials are best avoided with ceramic.



STREAMING
NOW



TOP 5 TAMIL MOVIES STREAMING ON OTT

OTT is the place we “visit” the most these days. The usage of these platforms has grown multifold since the pandemic. Prime Video, Netflix, Disney Hotstar, SunNxt, Voot all promise a vast array of entertainment to keep you glued to your screens. Well, if you don't have any other plans, here's **Divya Soman's** list of top 5 Tamil movies to binge-watch over the weekend.

1. ► Soorai Pottru (2020)

IMDb rating: 9/10

Cast: Suriya, Aparna Balamurali, Kavitha Ranjini, Krishna Kumar

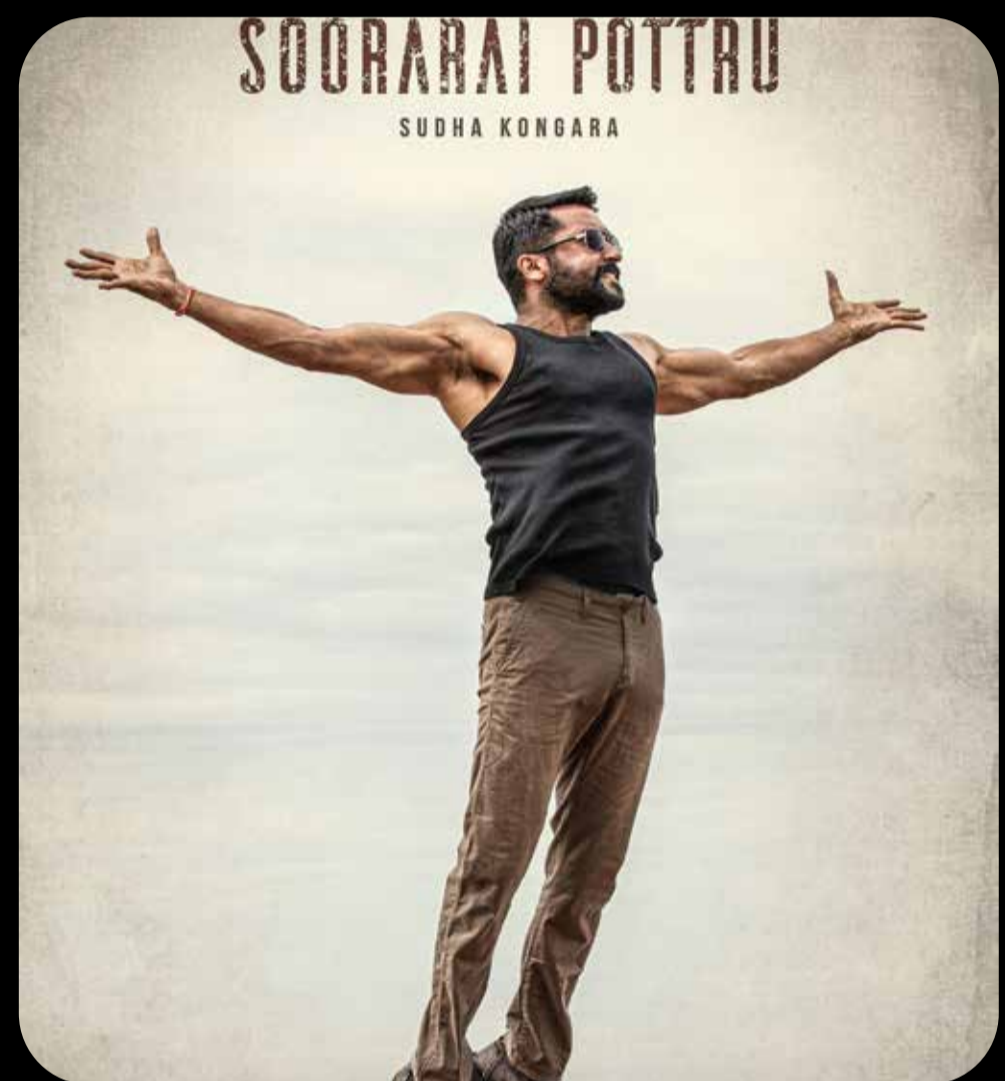
Director: Sudha Kongara Prasad

Music: G.V. Prakash Kumar

Available On: Amazon Prime Video

The film takes inspiration from GR Gopinath's book *Simply fly*. It revolves around the dream of a common man from Madurai, Nedumaaran (Suriya) who wishes to bring a change in the life of the poor by realising his dream of low-cost airlines. The movie talks about the struggles he overcomes to finally see his dreams come true. The film conveys many subtle social messages including equality in a marriage. While it can be considered among one of Suriya's best performances, the other supporting stars including Aparna Balamurali (Bommi), Kavitha Ranjini (Pechi), Krishna Kumar (Chaitanya), Paresh Rawal (Ravindra Subramanyam) have done their parts with perfection.

The movie has received rave reviews from different quarters. GR Gopinath took to Twitter to appreciate the entire team. He tweeted ***“Sorarai potru ..Heavily fictionalised but outstanding in capturing the true essence of the story of my book. A real roller coaster. Dramatised but true to the undying spirit of the triumph of hope against struggles and tribulations of an entrepreneur with disadvantaged rural background over overwhelming odds.”*** A must-watch movie for all Suriya fans.



2. ► Mookuthi Amman (2020)

IMDb rating: 6.8/10

Cast: Nayanthara, R J Balaji, Yogi Babu, Kavitha Ranjini, Mayilsamy

Director: R J Balaji, N J Saravanan

Music: Girishh G

Available On: Disney Hotstar

Mookuthi Amman marks the directorial debut for R J Balaji, who also plays an important role in the film. The movie reminds you of the Aamir Khan starrer PK at many levels. It revolves around Engels Ramasamy (R J Balaji) who is a news anchor in a small television channel. He and his family need to visit their family deity Mookuthi Amman's temple to seek her blessings. It is here that Mookuthi Amman (Nayanthara) emerges in human form to help Engels who in turn needs to help her make the temple popular.

The movie takes a turn where they both decide to take on the godman Bhagavathi Baba (Ajay Ghosh). The movie then unfolds with Engels joining a bigger news channel and conducting shows with the Godman to bring out his true colours in front of the local people. It is a comedy movie with a good screenplay. A stress buster and a one-time watch.



3. ▶ Ponmagal Vandhal (2020)

IMDb rating: 6.8/10

Cast: Jyothika, K. Bhagyaraj, Pratap Pothen, Jeeva Ravi, R. Parthiepan

Director: J J Fredrick

Music: Govind Menon

Available On: Amazon Prime Video

Ponmagal Vandhal is the directorial debut for J J Fredrick and produced by actor Suriya. This legal drama is the first Tamil movie to skip a theatre release and have a world premiere on OTT. The story is about a woman named "Psycho" Jothi, who was arrested for the serial killing of innocent girls and who was killed in an encounter while trying to escape. The protagonist Venba (Jyothika) is a lawyer whose first lawsuit is to re-open the Jothi case, and the movie revolves around the allegations, and falsification of information related to the case.

A legal thriller with a power-packed performance by Jyothika, and the supporting actors, this is a woman-centric film, well-accepted by audiences and critics alike.



4. ▶ Kannum Kannum Kollaiyadithaal (2020)

IMDb rating: 7.7/10

Cast: Dulquer Salmaan, Ritu Varma, Rakshan, Niranjini Ahathian

Director: Desingh Periyasamy

Music: Masala Coffee, Harshavardhan Rameshwar

Available On: Netflix

The film takes inspiration from the American television series Imposters. It is about two young men Siddharth (Dulquer Salmaan) and Kaliswaran Moorthy (Rakshan) living a stylish life in Chennai. They project themselves as techies working freelance. Siddharth falls for a simple beautician Meera (Ritu Varma). The boys then run short of money and their true colours are revealed. They are online scamsters, who order random high-value items online to dummy addresses, replace the parts and return it. They get the product refund and also get money by selling the original spare parts in the local markets.

As the story unfolds they decide to quit the wrongdoings and settle down with girls of their choice. Meanwhile, DCP Pratap Chakravarthy (Gautham Menon) also starts investigating the online scam. The story takes yet another turn as the true intentions of the girls Meera and her friend Shreya (Niranjini Ahathian) are revealed.

It has all the elements of a good movie including romance, comedy, suspense and a good storyline. The movie was a success and has been translated in other languages as well.



5. ▶ Ka Pae Ranasingam (2020)

IMDb rating: 7.2/10

Cast: Vijay Sethupathi, Aishwarya Rajesh, Yogi Babu, Sana

Director: P Virumandi

Music: M Ghibran

Available On: Zee5

Based on true incidents, the story is about *Ariyanachi* (Aishwarya Rajesh) whose husband *Ranasingam* (Vijay Sethupathi) works in Dubai. Unfortunately, *Ranasingam* dies during protests in Dubai. What ensues, is the battle between a widow and the system to get the husband's body to do the final rites. *Ariyanachi* walks from door to door requesting everyone to help bring back her husband's mortal remains, but fails. After 10 months of unsuccessful tries, she decides to commit suicide and that is when she gets noticed by the PM.

An emotional drama, it brings forth a powerful social message about Indians working abroad and their families back home.



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Hyperreal Bites

“While eating Idli, I never realized it had so many details and hundreds of tiny holes.” Artist **TK Sarasvathy** is known for her hyper-realistic portraits of south Indian food. Settled in the US, she talks to **Mallik Thatipalli** about her art, her deep connect with India and how she creates art which is good enough to eat!

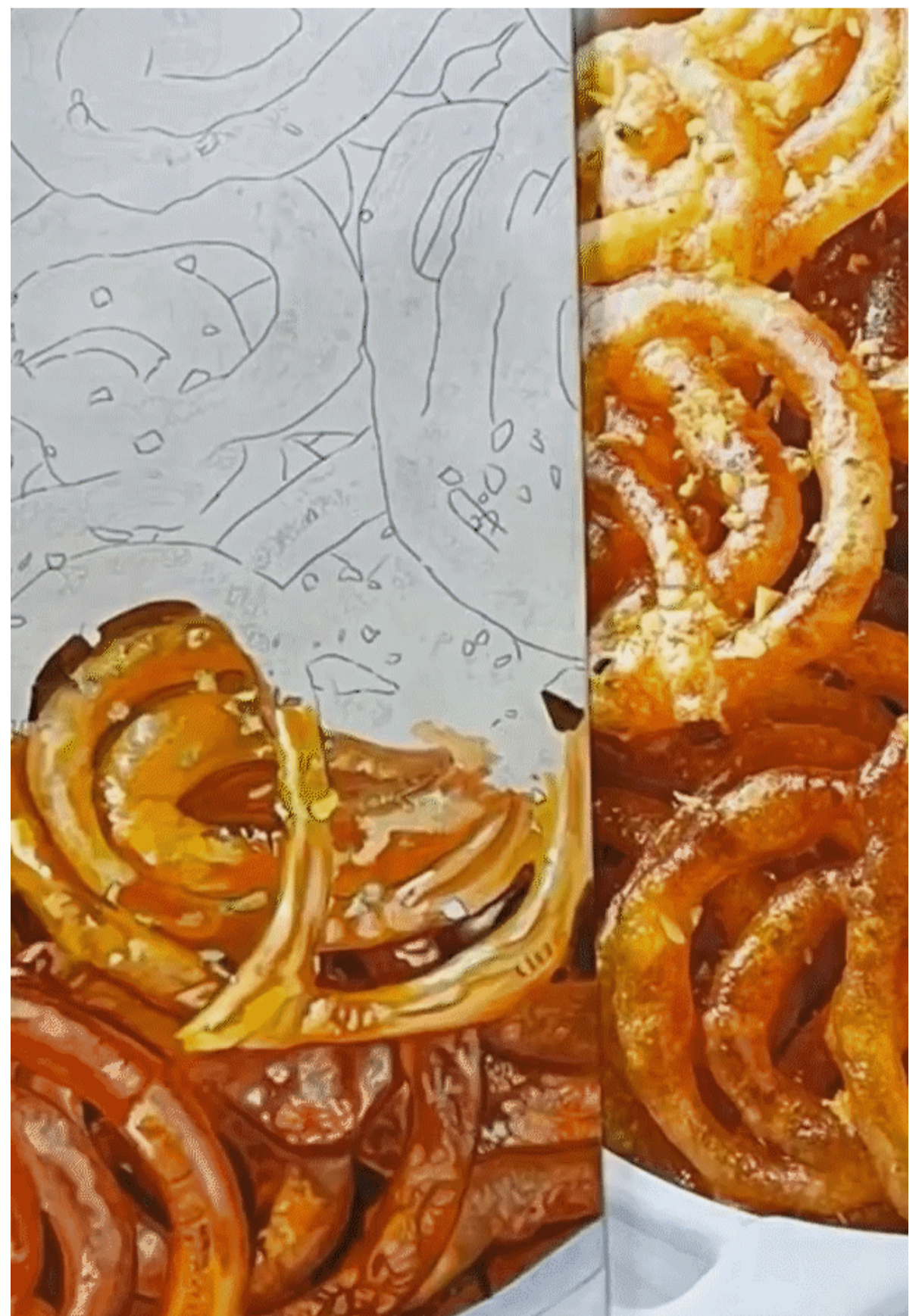
Tell us a little bit about yourself...

I was born in Puducherry and spent my initial years in Chennai and then moved back to Puducherry where I did my Engineering in Computer Science. After my graduation, I moved to UAE where I worked till my marriage. We then moved to Singapore until the last quarter of 2017 and it's where I have done my arangetram into art.

On one of my trips to the Louvre museum in Paris and a visit to an art gallery, the thought of painting struck my mind and I started working on it. That small spark has transformed into today's passion has carried me for more than 12 years now. There are lots of ups and downs in this journey like rejections and transformation from one genre to another. Around 2015-2016, I started dabbling only in hyper-realistic art and depicted still life.

When did you move to the US and can you tell us what you do there?

I moved to the US in late 2017 when my husband was transferred there. I am proud of this move as it has been an excellent platform for my artwork. People in the US are very welcoming of new art forms. Within a short span of time, I was able to participate in various art competitions and my artwork was selected for prestigious galleries such as Monmouth Museum, Salmagundi, International Guild of Realism, American Women Artists Association, Indo-American Art Council & West Windsor Art Council, amongst others.



Why art? What is about it that attracted it to you?

It's a good question. I don't have a straight answer, and I haven't thought in-depth about it before. I think it's my passion and gives me immense satisfaction of achieving something. It's an inspiration looking at great hyper-realistic artworks like photography, and depicting a real-life image on canvas by filling colours and giving life to an object. We all have a reflection of the outside world within our eyes and I love to have the same image over a canvas for a longer time.

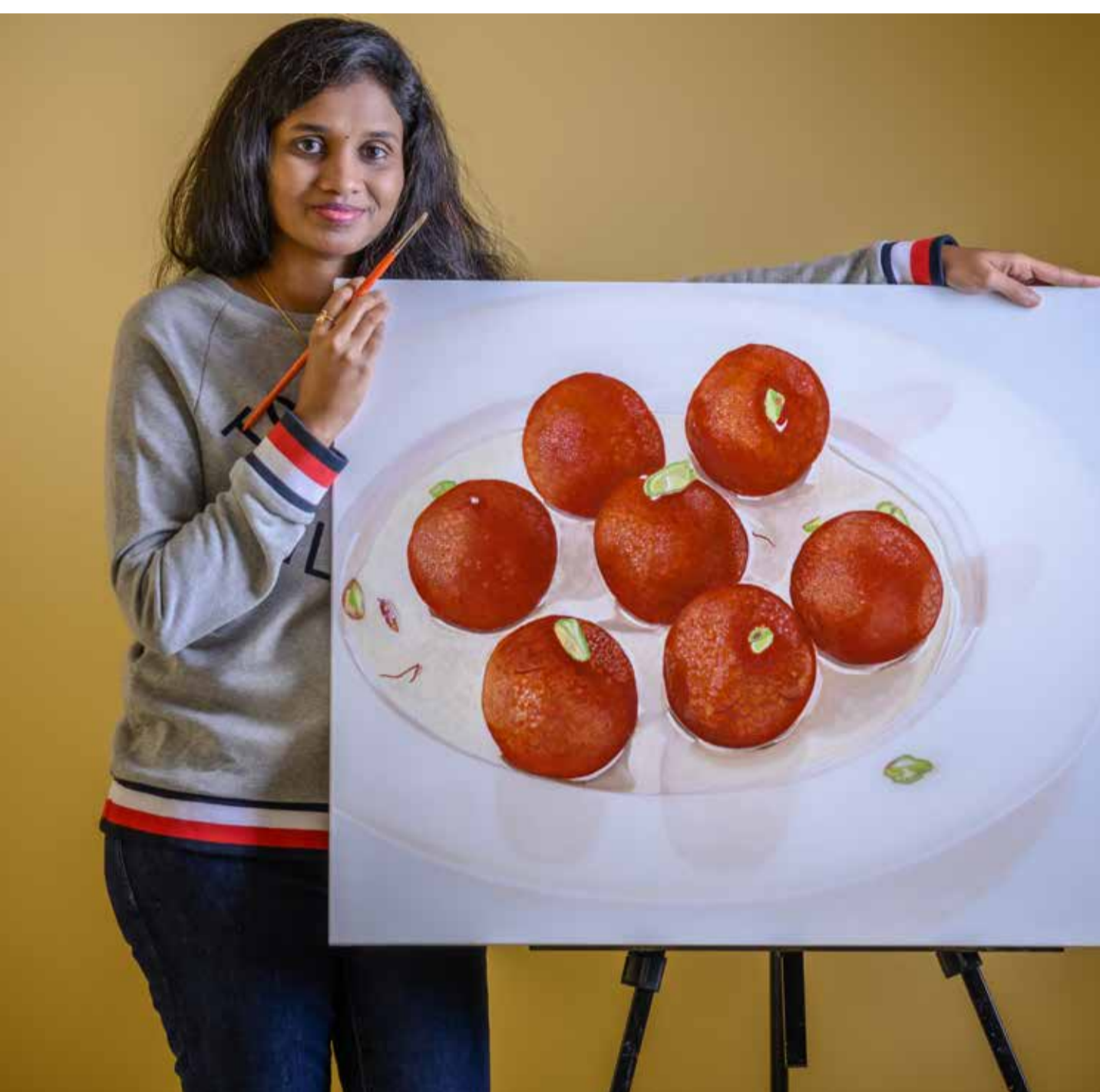
I started loving painting which couldn't stop at any cause. After I started hyperrealism the thirst to achieve the accuracy/realism of the objects around me keeps me motivated to improve and paint every day.

What is the inspiration for your work?

Renowned artists within the hyperrealism world, Tjalf Sparnasy and Mary Ellen Johnson are my inspiration. I love their creations which have influenced me a lot. This is due to the minutely detailed work depicting the colour and texture of food over oil.

What items or dishes form your oeuvre? I've seen chutneys and idlis that you created but how do you choose which dishes to paint? Is there a checklist?

Yes, I do have a checklist and I started with 'Idli, sambar and coconut chutney'. Till now, I completed *Samosa, Naan, Dosa, Gulab Jamun, Mango Lassi* and *Chola Bathura*.



Since you dabble in hyper-realism, how easy or difficult is it for you?

It's not an easy one for sure but, as the saying goes, "no pain no gain". The amount of time you spend and the intricacies you take into consideration to paint do pay off when you view what you create. For example, the "Papad" painting that I am currently working on has almost 1400 big circles and smaller ones are numerous. I have to make all these circles look like a puffed portion, it is very time-consuming, but it gives me immense pleasure to create artworks intricately hand-painted and capturing every detail. It's like you have achieved a massive victory and this feeling is what makes me move forward with each painting. More than anything, the satisfaction of achievement and the peace during every stage of that painting is the crown to an artist.



What is the challenge in painting food? Tell us about the most challenging works?

This is an excellent question. Every single painting is a challenge. This challenge is not with the dimensions of the food or dish or even colour, the challenge lies in bringing those intricacies of details at every centimetre of the canvas. For example, it took me close to six months to paint 'Idli, Sambar and Chutney' and this was due to complexity of *Idli* texture with tiny holes around and being the first painting to be painted in this genre. While eating *idli* all my life, I never realized it has so many details and hundreds of tiny holes. Now, I cherish eating *idli* more, knowing its value, on a lighter note. *Dosa* had 5000+ circles and with *Gulab Jamun*, I had to paint 1000+ tiny circles on 7 *Gulab Jamuns* which took maximum time. Every painting takes 2 1/2 to 3 months. To conclude, yes, it's indeed very challenging painting food as we must give a very detailed output covering colour, texture, shape of the dish, condiments, magnitude and depth of vegetables.

As a young mother, how do you balance work and life?

It is indeed a difficult task with kids at home, and especially during the pandemic, creating a balance between home and kids was challenging. Having said that, I must admit that my kids are very cooperative and encouraging. I used to paint with my kid on my lap most of the times along with educating and entertaining her. Most days of my studio are filled with their homework, toys and artworks but it brings me joy to include them in the process for a good balance between a mother and an artist. Occasionally much painting can't be done, but I wouldn't have it any other way. It's not easy but not impossible as well.

Future plans?

I am currently working on a project **Bhojan**, a limited-edition hyperreal artwork capturing the mystical flavours of India. It comprises 12 Indian food's hyper-realistic artworks intricately hand-painted. Most of the work for the exhibit is done and it is completed, I'm planning a solo exhibition in New York this year. It's a one-of-its-kind show as there aren't any Indian food paintings in a hyperrealism form presented on such a platform before.



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

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Myprotein's High Protein Bar

Price: Rs 299

A great post-workout refuel, this snack eliminates the need for any meal prep, while delivering a perfect punch of health and taste! My protein has been crafted to combine 30g of high-quality protein and 23g of carbs; every serving is high in fibre and low in sugar. Its unique blend of fast- and slow-release proteins deliver a sustained supply throughout the day and night supporting muscle growth and maintenance, even through sleep. Nutritious and easy to carry around, this is one bar you can always keep handy.



Dyson V11 Absolutepro

Price: Rs 59,900

If you are tired of manually cleaning the floors, carpets, and the dusty upholstery furniture of your house, then save yourself from these tasks and get this Dyson vacuum cleaner. Its cordless design makes it easy to clean overhead areas and crevices. It is equipped with the Dyson digital motor V11 which ensures fade-free and effective suction. It also comes with the Dyson DLS System, which changes the speed automatically depending on the type of floor which requires cleaning. What's more, it comes with an LCD screen too, which delivers real-time data.

Engineered for a whole home, this vacuum is designed to deep clean every part of your house.

Pet Comfort Seat Pawtector

Price: Rs 3,799

There's nothing better than travelling or going on a long drive with your four-legged best friend. But any pet owner knows that that comes with a price and having your pet's hair all over the car is not every pet parent's fantasy nor is having to spend endless hours cleaning up after. We've got a quick fix solution for that - Pet Comfort Seat Pawtector! It's portable, easy to fix and detach, and the best thing about it is that it's lightweight (2.5KG). This seat is heavy-duty scratch-proof and side flaps protect your doors and seats when your dog gets in or out of your vehicle.



Bhuva Spiritual Black Salt crystals

Price: Rs 399

Salt has energy and the process of swirling salt to remove bad energy is an ancient practise in India. If you are looking to remove any negativity, Bhuva Spiritual Black Salt does just that for you. Made out of special ingredients, herbs, essential oils, spiritually powered crystal salts and enchanted with positive vibrations it dissolves negative emotions.

It also relieves muscle and mental tension, stress and increases your overall health and well-being. For maximum results, you need to soak your feet in this salt for 21 days, for 21 minutes a day.