

# A spread of bling

The mother-in-law and daughter-in-law team behind fashion label Twenty Nine is blending traditional weaves with contemporary cuts

• PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

When Sangita Gupta says she was 52 when she enrolled herself at Central St Martins, London to study fashion, the response she gets is 'wow'. And when she adds that she attended that college with her daughter-in-law Rhea, the look of surprise on most faces always makes her smile. She has begun to enjoy those reactions now, admits the entrepreneur on a recent visit to Chennai as part of the Armoire pop-up.

Sangita and Rhea are co-creators of the Delhi-based designer label Twenty Nine, that was launched in October 2017. Back then, they had no formal training in fashion – the label was born out of their sheer love for good clothes and crafts. "To keep up with the market, we went to London to study earlier this year," says Sangita. Even though they signed up for different courses, they would head to university together in the morning. After class, they would go to different stores, looking at materials, cuts and patterns that they had learned about during the course of the day. "It was such a pleasure to interact and exchange ideas with young minds. And all of them called me by my name," smiles Sangita.

The Guptas knew that they wanted to offer traditional weaves in contemporary cuts. The result: asymmetrical tunics, backless jackets, palazzos, *shararas*, dhoti pants, shirts and capes in resplendent *bandhini*. "We initially started only with *bandhini*. Now, we



work with *ajrakh*, *patola* and mirror-work, with the latest being pleated *bandhini*," says Sangita.

One look at Twenty Nine's mirror-work collection is proof enough that despite being new entrants, this duo knows a thing or two about understated bling. On canvases of solid black, beige and white, mirrors recreate the aura of, say, a Sheesh Mahal. From an opulent black bell-sleeved jacket that can double up as sari blouse, to white georgette palazzos that are a trusty companion with kurtas, tunics and tops, each of these pieces can be styled in multiple ways.

"We specifically tell our clients not



to wear the clothes just one way. Wear them in at least four different styles."

Most of the other collections is for now dominated by *bandhini* in stunning colour combinations, some specially created for Twenty Nine, like the grey and red shirt with diagonal button detail, the anti-fit capes in white and red and black and blue... They also work a lot with *rai dana* crushed *bandhunis* in silk. Their latest addition sees a fusion of two types of *bandhini* – a single fabric plucked into small and large bindings – in the form of fitted tops in primarily black with small white dots and large red spots. Most of the garments have little detailing in the form

**Tied to tradition** (Below) Rhea and Sangita and (left) a model in their creations  
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of tiny beads along the neck and the sleeves.

## Credit where due

Though Sangita and Rhea have a penchant for the crafts and are quick learners, Sangita is quick and lavish in her praise for the craftsmen they work with. The search for master craftsmen took them to Gujarat. "We did a road trip to a few clusters and saw artisans making lovely stuff. But they were getting ripped off by the middlemen. At that point our idea was to help them sustain their art and craft," she says. Eventually, they want to incorporate craft forms from all the states in the country.

Their garments, for the most part, are anti-fit, so they can compliment most body types and cater to wearers across all age groups. Sometimes, their greatest joy is to see three generations of a family shopping from them. She shows a photograph, sent to her by a client, in which the grandmother, daughter and granddaughter are all in the same outfit but in different colours. Meanwhile there have been numerous enquiries from men as well. "For now, it is only *patola* pocket squares for them," she smiles.

Twenty Nine is stocked at Aza, Ogaan, Taj Khazana and is available online on its website [TwentyNine.co](http://TwentyNine.co)

## FOLLOW THE DOTS

A metre-long *bandhini* cloth can have thousands of tiny knots. Natural colours used include yellow, red, blue, green and black.



#DELHIMOVES

# The tricky business of organising a race

Race directors reveal the work that goes in long before you've crossed the finish line



**Running ecosystems** Policing and road closures can deter troublemakers during a run  
• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

GAGAN DHILLON KULLAR

Organising a run, a cycling event, or a triathlon takes skill, plenty of smarts and the knack of 'getting things done'. As Chiro Mitra, a veterinarian surgeon and the founder of Let's Run Gurgaon puts it, "You've got to be the engine that pulls the train."

A decade or so ago, Delhi-NCR didn't have many outdoor, sporty events for leisure athletes. Regular runners like Rahul Verghese, the founder of Running and Living in Gurugram, brought the athletic culture to the city. "Back then we wanted to build a community and making running fun. Running groups sprung up because it

wasn't safe to run alone, especially for women. Gradually, the network spread, growing into a whole ecosystem of running—training, recovery and competition," says Rahul.

Today, social media makes it easy to spread the word but for many organisers the biggest worry is gaining the break-even number of participants. Organisers need to recover the costs of medals, T-shirts, hydration and recovery aids besides that of securing necessary permission. The registration cost takes all these expenses into account. Sponsorship and the scale of the event decide this cost.

Volunteers are the backbone. They help manage traf-

fic, hydration, and recovery stations. They do the legwork of bib and T-shirt distribution pre-event and later they help tabulate race results and organise medal distribution.

A major concern for an organiser is safety. Chiro himself has had a close call while on a run aboard. A hit-and-run cost him an eye and an injured leg that had to be operated upon. "Setting a safe route is essential. Also 40% of our participants are women. Policing and road closures along the route can go a long way in deterring troublemakers," he says.

Getting sufficient support is not easy. Organisers have to jump hoops for permission and clearance. "Securing in-

frastructural support for security and traffic management is challenging especially for small-scale events," says Rahul.

Organisers also wish that the sporting culture would spread through society, so people at all levels understand what it means to have a race begin or end, at, say India Gate. "Abroad organisers utilize their iconic landmarks. The London Marathon ends at Tower Bridge with a runner's greet at Horse Guards in Westminster. The New York Marathon ends at Central Park. It would be nice to see that happen at here," says Adil Nargolwala, Gurugram-based Ironman.

After all that, sometimes

## BEHIND THE SCENES

**STEP 1:** Organisers identify a date in accordance with the kind of race and terrain, local festivals, national holidays, weather, travel distances, at least four months before the event

**STEP 2:** They create a core team and distribute responsibilities

**STEP 3:** They identify a venue

**STEP 4:** They chalk out the route and measure the distances

**STEP 5:** They involve local administration and police

**STEP 6:** They tie-up with a local hospital

**STEP 7:** They introduce the race by way of a write-up

**STEP 8:** They sell tickets

**STEP 9:** They arrange for volunteers, preferably young people from local schools and colleges with an interest in sports

**STEP 10:** They arrange for medals and certificates, and keep in mind a feel good factor for the participants post event, such as a foot massage, and plan for them

**STEP 11:** They strategise the race day: where to and how far to put water stations and signage

**STEP 12:** They make sure there's a clean-up at the venue and on the race route post event

**STEP 13:** They tabulate results

they deal with people who cheat. "People get impersonators. They may take a short cut. Or ask a friend to close to the finish," says Adil. So timing mats also function as check points. Disqualification is guaranteed if an athlete skips a timing mat. And if an odd discrepancy in time and distance is discovered, that too is flagged. At a duathlon organised by Chiro, a participant who had won a podium spot in her category was

banned for life following a complaint. "When we compared the event pictures of the athlete. We saw that instead of a woman, a man was running with that bib," he recalls.

To have a safe, fun, and memorable experience, these professionals strongly recommend that prospective participants research the organiser thoroughly. Speak to fellow athletes when you sign up for a race.

## PEOPLE

### Nobel Prize tales

In India for the Nobel Prize Series 2019, Laura Sprechmann, Nobel Media AB CEO, hopes to inspire a generation of bright minds



• ALEXANDER MAHMOUD

A three-day event by the Nobel Prize organisation that travelled to three cities including Mohali and Ludhiana ended last week in New Delhi on Friday, after Nobel Peace Prize recipient Kailash Satyarthi visited St. Thomas School in the city, to interact with middle school students, largely delivering what Laura Sprechmann, CEO for Nobel Media AB, called an "inspirational" talk. Before wrapping up their India outreach in 2019 – it comes as a lead up to the Nobel announcements, which will be made starting October 7th – Sprechmann talked about this year's outreach, its purpose, and the point of the Nobel Prize Museum's new exhibition in Punjab that's come up as part of this series. Edited excerpts.

### Can you talk about Kailash Satyarthi's participation in Nobel Prize Series 2019 in India?

The first day in Mohali, his interactions were about awakening the interest and passion for learning. I liked very much when he talked about the three D's: Dream, Discover, and Do. You have to be able to think big, you have to have the curiosity to learn, to seek knowledge for following your interest, and also put a lot of work into it by taking action. Another thing that is important is what Kailash Satyarthi said, was the human element to education – learning compassion. Learning is not only about reading, math, or geography. It's also about human rights, about how to treat others, about being a person in society that respects other human being. That wholeness in learning is also one of the important messages he conveyed.

### Take us through what you did in Mohali and Ludhiana

What we did in Mohali was mainly an interaction with teachers. At the same time, we inaugurated an exhibition as well, called 'For The Greatest Benefit To Humankind', which looks into thematic areas representing four of humanity's biggest challenges: saving lives, feeding the world, protecting the planet, interacting in a digital world. The idea is to see how we have coped with these challenges, and how have Nobel Prize awarded discoveries have helped us move forward. What happens then is that the students see that the Nobel Prize is not an abstraction and these people are no superheroes, that many of their basic discoveries have led to big breakthroughs that enable us to live longer. Then, in Ludhiana, we were at the Punjab Agricultural University, where Juleen Zeerat – a [Swedish American] professor in Clinical Integrative Physiology and member of the Nobel Committee at the Karolinska Institute – had a lecture and roundtable [discussions] with university faculty and students as well.

### Tell us a little more about the museum in Mohali and its curators

It was curated by a team at the Nobel Prize Museum in Stockholm. We will be inaugurating a similar exhibit in Stockholm in early October (perhaps by the 4th of the month). The one in Mohali is actually the world premiere of the travelling exhibition.

The exhibition will be open till October 11th, at the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Sector 81, Mohali

## PRODUCT

### Made-to-order mylks

Nut & Bowls, Delhi's first vegan cafe, has introduced Almond Mylk on their menu. Produced in-house, it is a raw and plant-based alternative to milk, in glass bottles of 300 ml each. It is available in flavours of hazelnut, cinnamon, pistachio and coconut. The cafe also has Vegan Gluten-free cookies, Almond-quinoa and coconut-oatmeal breads, and Rawtella, which is a vegan Nutella infused with organic Cacao.



Available at their cafe M-70, Ground Floor, M Block, Greater Kailash 2; upwards of ₹180

Contact us at [delhimetro@thehindu.co.in](mailto:delhimetro@thehindu.co.in)

## 5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



### LECTURE

**Literature**  
Former Vice-Chancellor of Ashoka University, Dr. Pratap Bhanu Mehta will deliver a lecture titled 'The Self Not Taken: Identity, Tradition and Ethics in the work of Kunwar Narain'. This is part of 'Remembering Kunwar Narain', a series of programmes to remember the well-known poet, writer and thinker, organised by the IIC.  
**VENUE:** C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



### FOOD

**New menu**  
Guppy, a restaurant that specialises in Japanese cuisine, has introduced a new set-lunch menu. This menu comes with a choice of a main dishes accompanied by soup, salad, sushi, rice or noodles with matcha tea. The offerings include Grilled Tofu Steak with Asparagus set; Grilled Tomato and Scamorza set; and more.  
**VENUE:** 28 Lodhi Colony, Main Market,  
**TIME:** 12 noon - 3:30 pm



### EXHIBITION

**Mixed-media**  
National Institute of Fine Arts has organised its 14th annual art exhibition titled Urge at AIFACS. Curated by artist Renu Khera, the collection of paintings showcases more than 120 artworks in various mediums by 55 upcoming artists and diploma students. The works depict Indian mythology, religious thoughts and culture.  
**VENUE:** AIFACS, 1, Rafi Marg  
**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



### GOURMET

**Special dish**  
Gravity Space Bar, multi-cuisine restaurant, has recently added a new dish in its menu called Palak Patta Mille Feuilles, which is essentially a rich cake consisting of thin layers of spinach, filled with Greek yogurt, and topped with dollops of *aloo bhurji*. The item is served with mint sauce and *imli* chutney.  
**VENUE:** Plot 6 & 7, Sector 29, Gurugram  
**TIME:** 12 noon - 12 midnight



### WORKSHOP

**Organic tea making**  
Chef Vanshika Bhatia of Together At 12th and the store Jaypore, are jointly conducting a workshop to create delectable high-tea menu, with healthy and organic ingredients. The activities include making quick pickles, mini sandwiches using seed bread, delicious salted berry yogurt, muesli tart, and more.  
**VENUE:** Jaypore Store, Greater Kailash-I  
**TIME:** 12 noon-2 p.m and 2:30-4:30 p.m.