



THE NEW
INDIAN
EXPRESS

INDULGE



Fashion designer
Ridhi Mehra completes
a glorious decade in the
luxury womenswear
segment. The high-end
designer talks to us
about crafting her first
extravagant bridal wear
edit *Nooreza*,
inspirations in a
globalised world and
how India has stepped up
its game in luxury
lifestyle | P12



A decade of
LUXURY

things
to do

pick of the week

INDULGE
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023 | HYDERABAD

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INDULGE

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Reader,

This week, we celebrate India's noteworthy presence in the niche luxury segment with our cover story on Ridhi Mehra. The Delhi-based designer, who marks an impressive decade in the luxury womenswear segment, reflects on crafting her first extravagant bridal wear edit *Nooreza*. On her label's 10th anniversary, Ridhi speaks to us about India upping its game in luxury lifestyle, new-age challenges and why goodwill is what it takes to climb up the ladder. She recalls good times spent with friend Lisa Haydon, who graces our cover in a resplendent ensemble from Ridhi's latest drop.



For more trendy inspirations, head to our fashion pages where we speak to Hyderabad designer Kavitha Gutta on her latest ethnic wear drop *Veda*. The edit is a tribute to divine feminine power. Kavitha tells us about the heritage weaves of India such as Benarasi, Jamdani and Kanjeevaram that were woven into opulent saris making this collection a suitable occasion wear. On our buy page, we have Hyderabad-based brand *The Intimogala* which is making the art of table-scaping a flattering aspect of close-knit celebrations. With Valentine's week almost here, *The Intimogala* has the perfect table décor to make your date night memorable.

For our food section, we headed to Xora Bar and Kitchen to check out their new menu. We sampled a few of their delectables like Cheese *Kulchepam* and Gunpowder with Baby Potato. It took us on a joyride over fusion flavours where Telugu spices were infused with continental taste. We also speak to city-based chef, Samira Ruheen, who shares her expertise in *Nizam* dishes and Arabian cuisine. Ruheen, who has plated dinners for several Tollywood celebrities, flips through her cookbook pages to share a Haleem recipe peppered with some tips to fine-tune the delicacy.

For those looking for events in the city, we throw the spotlight on some theatrical performances. Ahead of her original Hindi play *Mad House*, city-based theatre artiste Rafia Sultana opens up about Broadway shows and how their styles inspired her work. We catch up with actor-director Jay Jha, also the co-founder of Rangbhoomi Spaces as he marks a decade in theatre. We then have *Under The Chevella Banyan* — an exhibition of paintings, installations and photographs by 35 artists and photographers — that aims to raise awareness for century-old banyan trees on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

And finally, cine buffs! We have a slew of special interviews for you. To begin with, Anshuman Jha gets candid about his latest release *Lakadbagha* based on animal vigilantism which won him the Best Actor Award at the South Asian International Film Festival at New York. He talks to us about the power of being ordinary, his love for dogs and why a humble social media following does not bother him. We also interview the cast of the crime thriller series *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke* — Regina Cassandra, Barun Sobti and Chandan Roy, who tell us about the relevance of the show that revolves around a woman in the police force.

Enjoy and have a fun weekend ahead!
Cheers!!

Edison Thomas
Editor, Indulge



At the movies

Now streaming | OTT

Srijit Mukherji's cop thriller show *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke* is out now. The story centres around a woman IPS officer Kavya Iyer who battles insurgencies. Ahead of its release, we spoke to Regina Cassandra, Barun Sobti and Chandan Roy who tell us more about their roles in the show. Watch it on ZEE5. Details: Online.



Back to college

January 29 | Jubilee Hills

Mumbai-based stand-up comedian, Mohd Suhel presents *Memories* — a funny throwback take on college life, fights over newfangled romances and more. ₹399 upwards. At Heart Cup Coffee. Details: 9618733155.



Dark comedy

January 28 | Film Nagar

Stand-up comedian Jaish Maheshwari from Jaipur will comfort your socially awkward self through his self-deprecating and dark humour. His upcoming set *Self-doubt* will assure you that you're not alone. ₹299 upwards. At Aaromalé — Café & Creative Community. Details: 9573401750.



Beat dropper!

January 28 | Hitech city

City-based musician and DJ, Novlik's latest pieces like *Oudible* and *Middle Eastern Spice* will make you groove while the artiste also drops his unreleased rhythms. Have a bash as he keeps you entertained all night. ₹29 upwards. At E-Galleria Mall. Details: 040 45465437.

Soulful melodies

January 27 | Jubilee Hills

City-based play-back singer Sravana Bhargavi will capture your heart, singing her tracks from Telugu films like *Simha*, *Khaleja* and others. If you've marked the event on your calendar, head over to our food page where we also review the lounge bar's (where Sravana will be performing) new fusion menu. ₹750 upwards. At Xora Bar and Kitchen. Details: 8341478222.



Laugh out loud

January 28 | Jubilee Hills

Based in Gurgaon, stand-up comedian Rakesh Addlakha is touring multiple cities with his solo show *Hindi Medium*. Catch the comedian in Hyderabad tickling your funny bones through the mirthful Hindi stand-up act centred around his school life. ₹299 upwards. At Garage Moto Cafe. Details: 8008499983.



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For Pink Floyd

January 28 | Banjara Hills

If your love for experimental rock music started to blossom through Pink Floyd's *Lost For Words* or *Another Brick In The Wall*, you will also love it when the 5-piece music outfit *Dark Light* takes the stage as they cover your childhood favourite progressive rock band. ₹1,000 upwards. At Hard Rock Cafe. Details: 08451907801.

GET IN TOUCH

Send your queries and feedback to: Indulge, The New Indian Express, H.No.6-3-1113/1, B.S.Makta Lane, Somajiguda, Near Grand Kakatiya Hotel, Punjagutta, Hyderabad - 500 016. Ph: 040 23413909 Email: indulge-hyd@newindianexpress.com

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the
it-list

trends

Building block

Fashioned from lustrous green satin, the Bulla Jones 85 sandals from Nodaletto sport chunky block heels and slingback straps. The leather-lined sandals also feature squared toes and platform soles. ₹52,178 approximately



Braid winner

Detailed with braids at the bottom, these camel brown Teresia sandals from Paloma Barceló are perched on high wedge heels. Lined with calf leather, this slip-on pair features an open toe. ₹44,042 approximately



Satin shoes make a comeback with labels like Jimmy Choo and Khaite

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Satin footwear is picking up steam in 2023. Be it satin-covered ankle boots, ballet flats or wedge sandals, these shoes will instantly give you a luxe and sophisticated look. Dip your feet into the trend with these statement pieces from designers like Christian Louboutin and Amina Muaddi.

Text: Srushti Kulkarni

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On point

Set on 80mm crystal embellished stiletto heels, the Bella boots from Le Silla have pointed toes, ruched detailing and a satin finish. Crafted in Italy, the rose-red ankle-length boots are lined with calf leather. ₹1,62,276 approximately



Pearl princess

Designed from pale gold glitter satin, the Ade square toe ballet flats from Jimmy Choo sport faux pearls and small crystal beads embellished along the arch strap. The leather-lined shoes crafted in Italy are a modern take on classic ballet flats. ₹52,178



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Camaraderie



Kavitha Reddy, Kavitha Gulecha, Vineeta Chainani, Amrit Singh

THE WEEK THAT WAS

fun and frolic



Dressed to the nines at Marriott



Suparna and Sarita Handa

The good guest



Neelu Bagga and Priya Rajiv

THE CITY LOOKS JOYFUL, illuminated and magical around this time. So, let us pursue some fervour and bring you events from around town which illustrate quite a happening calendar.

For one, well-known socialite Sushila Bokadia celebrated her birthday with her friends. With an extensive guest list, non-stop DJ beats, and cocktail lineups coupled with lip-smacking Thai and Continental food, this was a party to remember. Dressed in tones of golden and black, the Bokadia family looked elegant while the birthday girl, Sushila made an amicable host. We spotted Amrit Singh, Shanoor Sana and Shalini Modani among other guests. The city also recently witnessed the grand launch of the Tata-owned Zoya Jewellery Flagship store. Philanthropist and city-based fashion enthusiast, Sudha Reddy inaugurated by lighting a lamp, following which the crème de la crème of Hyderabad were seen catching up over exotic cocktails. To add more opulence to the evening, a saxophonist elevated the set through soulful melodies.

Sarita Handa, globally synonymous with sophisticated luxury for homes, opened doors of a new store in our city. Located in Banjara Hills, the store exudes grandeur with a touch of understated luxury. New juxtapositions of colours, shapes, textures and finishes that mirror their artisanal approach are expressed across sumptuous ranges of bed and bath linen, an exhibition of objects d'art, lighting, rugs, furniture and décor collectables. While guests from the interior design and architecture fraternity kept flowing in, influencers and socialites also hopped in for a memorable time. Some of the guests included Sona Reddy, Supraja Rao, Twinkle Hanspa, Divus Boppana, and Anam Mirza. With that, let's await another festive week of birthday fetes and new adventures!

Hola Hyderabad is a fortnightly column on our happening city by our very own celebrity writer Esha Hindocha.

(The writer is a fashion and lifestyle influencer and a committee member of the Telangana Artist's Association.)



Keep smiling!

At the gala Marriott event

Hola Hyderabad
ESHA HINDOCHA

Weaves for the goddess in you

Hyderabadi designer Kavitha Gutta's latest collection *Veda* is a tribute to the divine feminine power



Ensembles from *Veda*

Indian wear



Fine weaves



Saris from the edit



Embroidery on sari

BE UNAPOLOGETICALLY YOU'. That is the message from the latest campaign shoot of Hyderabadi designer Kavitha Gutta's new collection *Veda — The Dance of the Weaves*. Known for working with heritage weaves of India, the designer has culminated her passion for crafts into this latest drop that comprises elegant saris crafted from age-old weaves like *Benarasi*, *Jamdani*, *Kanjevaram* and more. The simple yet regal bridal wear collection channels the inner goddess of the woman. Telling us about the inspiration behind the collection, she shares, "The idea behind this collection is to evoke the power that makes a woman feel majestic and beautiful, inside out. The edit is inspired by simple things — gentle breeze at the river bed, fragrance of flowers at a wedding and the simplicity of age-old weaves. It represents grace in plainness and in being you. It also

denotes knowledge and wisdom. Our hand-woven saris are made to be loved and passed on over generations as an heirloom!" The collection presents a wide array of weaves in resplendent shades of baby pink, Indian red, yellow, tangerine, maroon and more. Telling us about the exuberant colour scheme, Kavitha shares, "As we are into bridal wear, we wanted to make it eye-catching and opted for a bright and unique combination of colours. Red has been the colour that's adorned for generations by Indian brides as it symbolises love, passion and strength. We have saris in pink too that symbolises love, devotion and elegance. Similarly, different shades allude to different meanings in the edit." The collection's saris are adorned with embroideries like *zari* and ornate motifs like *laksha buttis*. Some, such as a *mehendi* colour *Ektara* weave sari are embellished with *meenakari* work and breathe a vintage elegance, while other pieces such as a hand-woven *Benarasi zari jamdani* sari are loved for their heirloom value. Sharing about her design process, Kavitha says, "The designs and motifs depicted on saris serve dual purpose of adding aesthetic appeal and complimenting functionality. They are inspired by

the Chola temples and their architectural allure that represent the incredible cultural heritage of India." Speaking of heritage, Kavitha chose an intriguing location for the shoot — Sri Seetha Rama Chandra Swamy Temple in Ammapally Narkhoda of Shamshabad. The temple's medieval-era architecture with a stone-carved *gopuram* honouring the Hindu deity Vishnu goes seamlessly well with the theme of the collection that adulates innate feminine power. Kavitha's love for antiques, heritage structures and age-old crafts truly made *Veda* a canvas of art and design. She tells us how the edit accentuates the attractiveness of a woman, "Our design core is to show the beauty of modern women that comes out best in hand-made weaves, embroideries and contrasting colours. *Veda* is all about that. Thematically, it is like a strong force that holds things in place. At the same time, it's a gentle soul that comforts her (the wearer)! It captures a woman's fierce yet soft demeanour." Price on request. Available online and in-store. — Priyamvada Rana priyamvada@newindianexpress.com @RanaPriyamvada

Table-scape

Table-talk

Hyderabad-based brand The Intimogala is making the art of table-scaping a flattering aspect of close-knit celebrations



Art of table dressing

THERE WAS A TIME when table dressing used to be functional with just the salt cellar, plates and table mats bedecking the surface. However, it became a more elaborate term by the 1700's when the Western World dominated by aristocracy used it as an expression of their class. The concept became a part of pop culture with *Pinterest* and now *Instagram* flooding our feeds with posts of lavish tablescapes done as per a theme, with exquisite centerpieces, delicate cutlery and gorgeous table-cloths. With the preference for intimate gatherings on an all-time high, city-based labels like The Intimogala are making table-scaping an endearing aspect of celebrations. "We wanted



Decor by The Intimogala

to bring people together. The most fun way for them to come closer to one another is when they're around a table. We wanted to make their special days like birthdays, date nights, anniversaries or wedding dinners all the more memorable," says Kirtana Gollamudi, architect-designer and founder of the brand at the start of our conversation. Kirtana's inspirations for tablescapes vary from paintings and history to travels. She sometimes collects objects from her expeditions

and includes them in the settings for a personalised touch. "Some decorative objects we use are collectables, some sourced online while some we create on our own. My husband and I are into pottery, so we sometimes include our pieces as well!" We asked Kirtana about her latest table décor which was for a date night. "It was more like some personal time for the couple to revel in before the marriage celebrations kick in. I appreciate paintings that depict domesticity in interior

spaces. I stumbled upon this British painter Susan Ryder's work that features dining rooms which makes the recreation more relatable." Kirtana has joined forces with photographers, natural dye experts and venue partners to create a dreamy ambience for people. "Our photographer, Teja Srinivas who also works in the IT sector in Hyderabad, brings various storytelling elements alive with images. From developing a pictorial narrative for the theme to making sure the content is fresh and consistent — he does it all. At the end of the day, no matter how much work I put in, if it's not documented well to convey that experience, then it will be hard for people to appreciate it." She has also collaborated with her friend Ramya Nandyala, a city-based designer of a natural dye clothing label who makes most of the table linen for The Intimogala, and Kerala-based architect Hannah Elizabeth who designs menus and invitations for tablescapes. "It might seem like just a simple table setting, but a lot of team effort goes into putting it together," she tells us. — PR

fashion

new edits

DOUBLE DELIGHT

Label Charkhee is back in Chennai with two seasonal edits, *Aasmaa* and *Dhanak*, and the two collections promise minimalist couture with a twist



(L) Ice blue pathani kurta with black cotton salwar & (R) midnight black organza sari set, from Dhanak

(L) Block print zipper jacket with elephant motif, yellow short kurta with white cotton pants & (R) pearl white flared anarkali set, from Dhanak



Ice blue short kurta with white salwar set from Dhanak

KNOwn FOR THEIR unique take on minimalism and popular with quite a few celebrities including Neetu Singh, Gurugram-based Charkhee is back in town with two new collections — *Aasmaa* and *Dhanak*. Founded in 2017 and seeking inspiration in the classics while honouring minimalistic opulence, the label helmed by Shilpa Aggarwal and Sarang Singla sources all-natural fabrics and crafts them through intricate hand work processes. The name Charkhee, though bearing resemblance to *charkha* (spinning wheel) is actually inspired from the Hindi word *phirki* (pinwheel) and the label promises fresh designs, craftsmanship and rich textiles in the form of statement ensembles season after season. Primarily known as an occasion wear brand, the label also sometimes branches out into resort-inspired themes and bohemian themes and the likes, depending on the season and what they take inspiration from. We catch up with Shilpa to find out more about these two edits and lots more.

“Going with the philosophy of the brand — we’re known for our minimalistic approach and we choose to focus on minute details, rather than making the whole garment OTT. So, our summer collection *Aasmaa* was also made with the same sensibilities in mind. We stuck to a pastel colour palette and we used mostly colour-on-colour sequin work, because we believe in more contemporary design. You’ll see geometric patterns with lines in the sequin work and we use this to highlight the silhouette. *Dhanak*, on the other hand, is a festive mirror work collection and it’s all about a play of colours. This collection is doing really well and we’re so happy that it has been received with such a positive response,” begins Shilpa Aggarwal, who is from a business background and began the label as a passion project with Sarang Singla, a *NIFT* Mumbai graduate.

“With *Aasmaa*, we stuck to these light powdery pastels because we were trying to emulate colours of the evening sky — powder blues, powder yellows, lavenders and whites. Also, the collection has a resort feel to it as it



Dusky pink panelled kurta set from Dhanak



fashion

couture/buy

was placed in a beach — when we imagined it — and we stuck to water-based shades and hues as much as we could. While *Dhanak* — true to the festive season and the mood of occasion wear — has bright yellows, turquoises, pinks, whites, blacks and the mirror work and thread work is also coloured to complement each silhouette,” adds Shilpa.

Aasmaa features flowy *anarkalis* and dresses to contemporary silhouettes like a wrap dress and other loose flowy easy-to-carry garments in *chanderi*; and comprises *kurta* sets with a few dresses thrown in, all in ensembles, while *Dhanak*, however, is restricted to *chanderi kurta* sets and *organza saris*.

“We also feature a very unique narrow *dupatta* in organza in the *Aasmaa* edit and it’s studded with sequin work and doubles up as a scarf, when required. While in *Dhanak*, we use foil mirrors to keep the garment light and flowy,” concludes Shilpa. The label’s next collection will also feature pastel shades and will take their aesthetic into an experimental bohemian space.

₹8,000 onwards. Available online.

— Romal Laisram

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(L) Ink blue pathani kurta with white salwar set & (R) chanderi kaftan with mirror work set, from Dhanak



Multicoloured lehenga with jacket blouse set from Dhanak



Sequin kurta with flared palazzo and dupatta from Aasmaa



Sequin pearl white anarkali set from Aasmaa



Sequin front slit kurta set from Aasmaa



Sunflower yellow keyhole kurta set from Dhanak

first look

Finding Voyce

Art gallerist Vaishnavi Murali's jewellery label prides itself on minimalism with a luxe touch

A GALLERIST AND artist herself, Gurgaon-based Vaishnavi Murali, felt the need to increase the reach of art and to make it more functional. Having launched her gallery, Eikowa, dedicated to contemporary Indian art, in 2015, she was also looking for a new challenge. That's when she thought about exploring the craft of jewellery making. Voyce Jewellery was born out of this need. "Working with artists and artisans, I have seen many of them explore new mediums, forms and materials. I have worked with multiple materials and mediums myself too, as part of Eikowa Studio. This got me thinking about how I could take this to a wider number of people. So I thought it would be nice to make wearable art and jewellery seemed to be the perfect way to explore the same. That's how Voyce came into being," she begins.

Vaishnavi says that the lack of contemporary jewellery labels with a focus on everyday luxury, was what steered her towards an aesthetic that is a balance between minimal and statement-making. "The way we approach design is influenced greatly by past experiences and our design language is very geometric, with lots of straight lines. It's non-fussy and no-non-

sense," explains Vaishnavi. She primarily uses 18k gold-plated brass and crystals to create her elegant collection of rings, earrings and necklaces.

The label's debut collection, *Ethereal*, is inspired by celestial bodies, from meteorites and planets to stars and asteroids. It features precision-cut coloured crystals with multiple facets, apart from tassel details, geometric shapes and vibrant hues such as fern, rose, lavender and burgundy in addition to black and white. Talking about the most popular pieces from the line, the designer shares that the tassel earrings are quite special. "They are fun for an evening out. They flow so beautifully against your skin and are classy and versatile," she says, adding, "The Radiance earrings and rings are also gorgeous — each piece boasts one big stone, which makes a statement effortlessly."

Next, Vaishnavi is looking forward to introducing a fun and colourful crystal-free line, with the aim to showcase the brand's versatility and hopes to launch another line with pearls and crystals later in the year.

₹3,900 upwards.

Available online

— Rashmi Rajagopal

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[@rushmee](https://twitter.com/rushmee)



Jewellery from the collection



Vaishnavi Murali

Bold and natural

House of Varada's latest resort wear collection is all about nature-inspired bold and abstract designs. Carefully curated for strong women, this beautiful collection by Kinjal Singh, resonates with every free-spirited woman. An expert in fabric prints as well as patterns, Kinjal has brought to life customisable resort-wear pieces that are sustainable and inspired by nature, crafted from natural, sustainable sources. The edit features vibrant prints and flowing silhouettes that celebrate the beauty of nature. Hence from tropical palm leaves and seashell embellishments to intricate floral patterns, these gorgeous pieces have all the motifs that will transport you straight to the beach. With a focus on sustainability, each piece is crafted from soft, organic fabrics that are inspired by the breathtaking landscapes of the earth.

You can choose from the wide range of beach cover-ups to dramatic and ethereal dresses to make a statement while holidaying. Price on request.

Available online



on the shelves



Floral wonders

Couturier Poonam Mittal's latest collection of attractive hand-painted and floral-printed outfits is sublime and beautiful. "My aim behind creating these pieces was my love for lotuses and floral motifs. The entire collection displays a range of delicately embroidered silhouettes like flares and artsy modern fits," says the designer, who draws massive inspiration from colours and emotions. Naturally, Poonam's signature style includes emotive embroidery, heritage handcrafting techniques and celebratory colours. You can stand out from the rest, in any of these beautifully handcrafted outfits if minimalism is your style. We loved Tishya, a simple flowing lehenga in moss green with a braided cord and ruffles to match. The ensemble is further enhanced by the delicate gold embroidery highlighting the painted florals and vines on the blouse and sheer organza dupatta. Price on request. Available online

TRADITIONAL TALES

Raikishori Collections' latest wedding edit *Rituals* has great options for men

TURNING MENSWEAR FASHIONABLE yet rooted in culture has always been something close to designer Shyamsundar Basu's heart. This 31-year-old designer's eight-year-old brand Raikishori Collections which offers ethnic and Indo-Western choices both for men and women has come up with a very gorgeous and vibrant collection of wedding wear for men, called *Rituals*.

The main highlight of this beautiful line of groomswear is that Shyamsundar has presented the quintessential classic *dhoti* in a very vibrant and modern silhouette. "Whenever it comes to *dhotis*, we can only imagine them paired with a *kurta* or a *panjabi*. This time, I have created very unusual pairs comprising *dhoti* and jackets or *dhotis* and fusion *kurtas*. *Dhoti* is classic clothing and I plan to revive its lost glory by contemporising the look," explains Shyamsundar.

Rituals has a very vivid and rich palette of blue, white, black, red, yellow and other jewel tones set on natural fabrics like *khadi*, linen, raw silk,

dhakai cotton, *pashmina* and *matka*. There are elaborate and exquisite handworks including hand stitched motifs related to auspicious rituals like holy scripts and fish. "Among the various silhouettes, there are very quirky and interesting light shawls, shrugs and jackets with crochet work or fabric paintings and block prints besides *faux* fur and *faux* feather jackets and hand printed *dhotis*. There's also an interesting range of light *pashmina* shawls in both pastel and bright shades," adds Shyamsundar.

A postgraduate in fine arts from *Rabindra Bharati*, Shyamsundar, who hails from the coastal district of Midnapore, always wanted to do something in the world of fashion with traditional and heritage weaves from rural Bengal. "I love working with *jamdani* and *dhakai* weaves and *banarasi* a lot and I believe equally stunning pieces of festive and wedding wear can be created for men too in *banarasi* and *dhakai* weaves," he says. Though the main focus in this collection is on men, the designer also has some very

beautiful silhouettes for women on offer that include *saris* in *korial banarasi* and a bespoke piece of *dhakai banarasi* apart from the classic designs he is known for.

Currently, the designer is working on his special *banarasi* collection for men comprising *banarasi katan* jackets, coats and *panjabis* which he plans to launch in February. There will also be a different variation of *banarasi saris* for women that will have a mix of *hakoba* with *banarasi* and original *chikankari* work with *banarasi*. "You don't always have to combine jackets with jeans or *dhoti* with *panjabis* and *kurtas*. Choose to wear your very western jackets with *dhotis* for a change to stand out in the crowd. My upcoming summer collection will see a range of silhouettes in traditional *gamcha* fabric combined with *tant*," signs off the designer.

Price on request.
Available online.

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Ensembles from the collection

on the shelves

Bold & natural

House of Varada's latest resort wear collection is all about nature-inspired bold and abstract designs. Carefully curated for strong women, this beautiful collection by Kinjal Singh, resonates with every free-spirited woman. An expert in fabric prints as well as patterns, Kinjal has brought to life customisable resort-wear pieces that are sustainable and inspired by nature, crafted from natural, sustainable sources. The edit features vibrant prints and flowing silhouettes that celebrate the beauty of nature. Hence from tropical palm leaves, seashell embellishments to intricate floral patterns, these gorgeous pieces have all the motifs that will transport you straight to the beach. With a focus on sustainability and eco-friendliness, each piece is crafted from soft, organic fabrics that are inspired by the breathtaking landscapes of the earth. You can choose from the wide range of sun-drenched beach cover-ups to dramatic, ethereal dresses to make a very fashionable statement while holidaying. Price on request. houseofvarada.com

Floral wonders

Couturier Poonam Mittal's latest collection of attractive hand-painted and floral printed outfits is sublime and beautiful. "My aim behind creating these pieces was my love for lotuses and floral motifs. The entire collection displays a range of delicately embroidered silhouettes like flares and artsy modern fits. We not only aim at being a part of an emerging trend but be the trend as well," says the designer, who draws massive inspiration from joy in form of colours and emotion. Naturally, Poonam's signature style includes emotive embroidery, heritage handcrafting techniques and celebratory colours. You can stand out from the rest, in any of these beautifully handcrafted pretty outfits if minimalism is your style. We loved *Tishya*, a simple flowy *lehenga* in moss green with a braided cord and ruffles to match. The ensemble is further enhanced by the delicate gold embroidery highlighting the painted florals and vines on the blouse and sheer organza *dupatta*. Price on request. Instagram: @poonammittalofficial





new edit

Designer Writuparna Kar unveils her stunning spring-summer collection *Bahar* exclusively with *Indulge*

COLOURS OF SPRING

A NIFT GRADUATE in textile design, young designer Writuparna Kar's label Wrii Studio is all about slow fashion. The ethnic wear label offers a vast range of handwoven saris in unique designs was started by her in 2020 with a goal to bring contemporary designs to life using the traditional technique of *jamdani*.

"The idea is to preserve Indian traditional craftsmanship and build a self-sufficient and sustainable brand that showcases the technique of intricate detailing and textures. Each of our saris tells a story and the collection as a whole is built around a theme. Her upcoming collection *Bahar* too represents the vibrant colours of spring.

A pure silk muslin collection, the summer edit is Writuparna's first step towards introducing sustainability in luxury. *Bahar* focuses on natural elements like branches, leaf, vines, psychedelic mushrooms and shimmering flowers. Always eager to play with delicate textures, she has tried delicate transparent looks using fine muslin with decorative motifs. "To achieve the finest intricacy and geometry of the motif, we have chosen a mix of psychedelic colours and asymmetric placement to bring designs to life. To capture the essence of nature, multiple colours have been used and every additional colour change brings another layer of complexity for the weaver. Hence each sari took half a month to weave," she adds.

The budding designer feels *saris* have evolved from a garment worn as a daily wear to something that one wears on special occasions. And with this



Ensembles from the collection

the draping styles have also changed to reflect the modern woman who pairs it with tops, sneakers and unique jewellery. As a young brand, reaching the desired customers is a big challenge. "But when a design I have imagined comes to life, that's the biggest inspiration," she tells us.

Currently, Writuparna is working on a *jamdani* collection that will reflect the role of a woman in the society through values, morals and education. "It will be presented through a story-based theme. And of course, this will be a *puja* edit with a twist," signs off the designer.

Price on request.
Available online.
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indigenous

Out of Africa

Couturier Ankita Khurana's label Coeur has come up with a vibrant SS edit that takes inspiration from tribal colours

FAMOUS FOR ITS aesthetic weightless festive outfits Coeur by Ankita's Spring-Summer *African Tribe* collection is a carousel of colours, vibrant prints and smart silhouettes. "*African Tribe* is an impactful bold and boisterous collection inspired by the culture of African tribes — their paintings and dance forms. It's best suited for the savage boss ladies who might fall down, slow down but never stop. The bold quirky colours represent the women of today who think out of the box and are not afraid to go out there and achieve their dreams," says Ankita Khurana, the couturier behind the label known for its out-of-the-box silhouettes that are effortlessly minimal.

The latest range of summer outfits represents tribes from Africa and hence the colours used are very quirky, strong and bold like cyan green, black, hot pink, orange, lime green and various tones of red. The silhouettes are bold and include bomber sets, off-shoulder drapes, drape structured skirts along with simple tunic pants, shirts and *dhotis*.

Ankita has offered a buffet of interesting designs in this edit. "We have Indian tunics, pants, dhotis which can be worn anywhere, right from a small ritual at home to small dinner gatherings to kitty parties. We also have some structured drape skirts and shirts which can be included in your party, brunch and lunch wardrobes," she says.

As a designer, just being around new fabrics and designs keeps Ankita motivated each and every day and she loves playing with prints, fabrics and embroideries. And Ankita feels that when it comes to millennials, they cannot be generalised. "There are a few who are very fashionable and believe in fast fashion that's also cost-effective. And there is another section of millennials, that makes more aware and conscious choices and believes in repeating their outfits by styling them differently each time," she observes.

This summer Ankita feels will be all about a lot of easy breezy silhouettes, oversized *kaftans*, shirts and tunics. Bold colours will be around for at least a year more. Currently, Ankita is busy working on a new collection which will feature more subtle and soothing prints.

Price on request.
Available online.
— SG



Silhouettes from the collection

served warm

Fresh from the Nawabs

Samira Ruheen picks fresh lamb meat and tosses it with black peppercorns and *garam masala* for this South Asian delicacy

Specialising in *Nizami* cuisine, city-based culinarian, Chef Ruheen (Samira Ruheen), started as an aesthete and hobbyist from as early as a 10-year-old. Soon, her culinary expedition became a lifestyle. Ruheen has been cooking for private orders in Jubilee Hills for almost five years now. Following her grandmother's recipes and picking up from her succulent artistry, the chef has also hosted *Nizami* food festivals across Delhi, Gurgaon, and Gwalior. She shares with us one of her *Haleem* recipes in four easy steps so you can keep winters at bay. Packed with nostalgia and care, the delectable wraps you in profound comfort.

— **Chokita Paul**

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📱 @PaulChokita



Haleem

Make ahead:

Take 4-5 thinly sliced onions | Deep fry them into a crisp golden brown colour | Take 200 gms of cashews, and fry them until they turn golden brown. You can do this a day before | Coming to the main recipe of *haleem*, always choose fresh lamb meat, a good *haleem* is always a result of good quality meat.

Step 1:

For cooking mutton

750 gms boneless mutton/meat cleaned and washed well | 5 tbsp oil | 8 green chillies | Small bunch of mint | Small bunch of coriander | 2 tbsp ginger garlic paste | 2 tsp turmeric powder | 3-4 small cinnamon sticks | 4 cloves | 2-3 green cardamoms | 1 teaspoon caraway seeds | 1 tablespoon black peppercorns | Salt — to taste | 2 cups water

Method:

- In a pressure cooker, heat oil, and add *garam masala*. Then add ginger and garlic paste.
- Fry till the paste starts to give its aroma, then add mint leaves, coriander and green chillies.
- Add water and close the lid. Let it whistle five to six times.
- Check if the meat is tenderised; if not, repeat a couple of more whistles.

Step 2:

For cooking daal

½ cup *daliya* | ½ cup *mash ki daal* | ½ cup *toor daal* | ½ cup *chana daal* | Salt — to taste | 3 cups water

Method:

- In an open pan, mix all *daals*, and put some salt and water. Keep stirring, and let it cook till *daal* gets tenderised.

Step 3:

- Grind the *daals* and keep them aside.
- Mash the mutton pieces and keep them

aside. Keep the mutton stock for step 4.

Step 4:

4 tbsp oil | 4 medium size onions finely sliced | ½ cup almonds paste | ½ cup cashew paste | 2 tbsp ginger garlic paste | 4 green chillies | 2 tsp black pepper powder | 1 tsp turmeric powder | 1 ½ cups beaten yoghurt 200 ml approx | 5-6 tbsp pure *ghee* | Freshly chopped coriander leaves | Freshly chopped mint leaves | 4 lemons juice

Method:

- In a cooking pot, add oil, add four medium size sliced onions and fry until golden brown.
- Add ginger garlic paste and sauté well.
- Add fresh coriander leaves, mint leaves, and green chillies, and mix well.
- Add black peppercorn powder, and turmeric powder and mix well.
- Add cashew and almond pastes. Mix well and let it cook for 8-10 minutes, keep stirring.
- Add beaten yoghurt, mix and cook for six to seven minutes.
- Add the blended paste of *daals* and also mutton into it.
- Mix it well and keep stirring, until the mutton and *daals* get mixed.
- Add the mutton stock and mix well.
- Add pure *ghee* all over and mix.
- Add lemon juice.
- Cover the lid and cook it for about 30 minutes on low flame.
- Remove the lid and give a mix.
- Keep cooking, stirring nonstop for an hour or more. *Haleem* must be paste-like, check the taste, and add black pepper salt and lemon juice as per your taste.
- Garnish the *haleem* with a spoonful of *desi ghee*, some fried cashews, and fried onions and side with lemon and mint/coriander leaves.
- Serve it immediately or heat the *haleem* before serving. To be consumed hot.



Samira Ruheen (Chef Ruheen)



Green Peas Kashmiri Morel Sabji Lacha Paratha

lounge bar

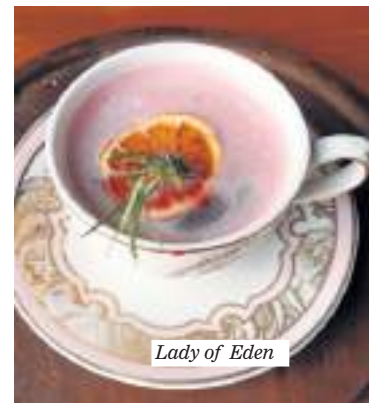
Delectably glocal!

Head to Xora Bar and Kitchen to check out their fusion menu for an affluent hint of continental escapade mingled with Telugu savours

INVITING A NICHE CROWD of business people and celebrities from across the city, Xora Bar and Kitchen dazzles with a DJ spin towards the weekend. The lounge bar's palliative aura brings us to its drinking space: hedonists smell whiskey through the narrow rims of Glencairn glasses — as though a cologne. The sun never sets in the arena. Their novel fusion menu whose Telugu savours juxtapose a colonial twist became a localite's muse, and we wonder how.

Before ordering in, we chatted with the alehouse's Executive Chef, Harinder Singh, who told us that they have taken one step forward in food. Inside, the interplay of pervading twilight captured early evening shadows, while the tones of blue and maroon encircling us softly blended into each other. Xora's setting, which adheres to European impressionism, also lets loose the chef's Telugu undertones to the dishes. Figuratively, guests can have an artsy time in the French countryside from within the City of *Nizams*. As we note these epicurean keepsakes, Harinder adds, "Our reason is simple — to please the city's *creme de la creme* through the food and ambience we offer."

We sampled a Cheese *Kulchapam* next to *Gunpowder* with *Baby Potato*. A few bites of the former delectable and our appetite registered how it solely took stimulus from France, or what chowhounds would call 'the land of croissants'. We relished the Andhra *gunpowder* seasoning and dipped the crispy potato balls in Thai *Sriracha* sauce. While we longed for a quaint tavern experience, the mixologist's special, *Lady of Eden* — a vodka-based cocktail was served in teacups. We picked up our drink from an ivory saucer — the sight of martini glasses had already become monotonous. And rightly so — our brew's extract of hibiscus tea, rosemary water and orange



Lady of Eden

bitters attracted us like a hummingbird. It was a bemusing way for an intoxicant to fool teetotalers through the liquor's eccentric, yet in-a-class-by-itself exhibit.

Later, for a bowl of Green Peas Kashmiri Morel *Sabji Lacha Paratha*, the chef tossed white button mushrooms with ground cumin, cinnamon, peppercorns and nutmeg. It had more to its taste than what met our mouths. The curry's milky-sweet *ghee* was about to dissolve in thin air. But the layers of indulging *parathas* that resurrected its eminence took us to Rajapuri, the land of kings. "Our new menu doesn't have a theme. Its primary impetus is to satisfy the taste buds of a Hyderabadite. The food is local and the presentation is continental," he adds.

₹2,000 for two. At Jubilee Hills.

— CP



Cheese Kulchapam

Pics: Sahithi Srikonda



Muse Lisa Haydon



Ridhi Mehra

bridal wear

DEFINING CONTOURS OF LUXURY

Ridhi Mehra marks 10 years of her label with her first bridal wear collection *Nooreza*. In our candid chat, she speaks about pushing boundaries of luxury lifestyle, dabbling in prêt wear and meeting challenges of ever-evolving preferences of people
| By Priyamvada Rana

A DECADE BACK, AROUND this time, Delhi-based designer Ridhi Mehra started her eponymous label, at just 23. Since then it has redefined Indian dressing by elevating it with European influences. In her decadent world, a traditional *sari* becomes a *sari*-skirt paired with an embroidered *dupatta*, *lehengas* come in cascading tulle skirts tracing Parisian couture trends, and fusion-wear dresses are met with flouncy drapes and fine cuts reminding one of a French *soirée* ensemble. With that, Ridhi does a reimagining of Indian wear with a global appeal that caught the attention of celebrities like Madhuri Dixit, Esha Gupta, Alia Bhatt, Mrunal Thakur among others.

Over the years, the designer has dropped over 20 couture collections — a feat to remember for a label which has established her as a high-end luxury womenswear designer in India's ever-evolving fashion landscape. Each of her past couture edits like *Beginnings*, *Echoes*, *Raeza*, *Reflections* and more vary thematically but bear her penchant for elegant details, minimalism and a fine balance of 'traditional meets contemporary' approach. While all of her previous collections were a vivid expression of her creativity, Ridhi wanted to be more elaborate this time to mark the 10th year anniversary of her label. The result, she came up with the most magnificent bridal couture collection of her design career with her 21st drop titled *Nooreza*. Telling us about the edit and how it's a recollection of the past, the designer tells us, "When we were marking this collection on our calendar, we wanted to do something different that we haven't done before. And couture is one thing that I have always wanted to explore more. I was pretty much designing it in my past collections as well, but on a smaller scale. With our anniversary, as we complete a milestone, I wanted to dedicate one collection entirely to crafting haute couture to mark the occasion. *Nooreza* is like a stroll down memory lane that lets me look back at the most spectacular styles from my journey, reimagined with a contemporary approach."

Expect *Nooreza* to have show-stopping elements of Ridhi's last decade — fringes, ruffles, feathers and more — adorning rich fabrics like tulle, organza, georgette, chiffon and tailored into an array of outfits like *saris*, *lehengas*, *sari*-skirts and co-ords. Telling us about the design process, Ridhi shares, "We have done a lot of floral motifs. Floral is our signature but it's not exclusive to us and everyone has their own way of interpreting it. We have revisited a lot of elements that worked for us in the past like fringes, feathers and more. The collection is meshed with jewelled enhancements, monotone pastel hand embroidery, organza embroidered 3-D detailing, and appliqué thread work. We have also used pearls, crystals, sequins and embroideries like *zari*, *katdana*, *resham* and *dori* to lend a superlative degree of finesse. It turned out to be a collection that encapsulates all our best memories."

Speaking of memories, the designer collaborated with good old friend actress and model Lisa Haydon to be the muse for *Nooreza*. "I asked myself what I wanted to do differently with this collection and the answer was to revisit old memories. Lisa is a good friend and was a showstopper for our first show at the *Lakmé Fashion Week* decades ago. She is flawless and seamless with her work and the way she handles her personal life. She represents a modern woman — a great example of a dotting mother, loving partner and a strong woman who is a true fashionista," Ridhi says.

Exploring new horizons

Raised in a business family, the Delhi-based designer thought business is her calling given the family's lineage. She went on to pursue graduation in Business Management from the University of Nottingham in England but when she returned, her mother and aunt's fashion enterprise led her to have a change of heart. "I never imagined being a designer. I come from a business family and used to look up to my father thinking I am going to follow a similar path. When I came back from studying at Nottingham, my mother and Masi (aunt) were into a fashion venture and I joined them on the business aspect. That grasped my interest in fashion. But I had to understand the technical side of designing, so I enrolled myself into NIFT to study fashion designing."

While being in Nottingham did not largely influence her design sensibilities, it inadvertently led



Ensembles from Nooreza

her to push the boundaries of traditional Indian wear. A reflection of it can be seen in her prêt wear collections like *Wildflower*, *All My Heart* and *Yours Truly* where she has transformed the way we look at Indian silhouettes. She tailored them into suave casual wear where a *chanderi* sees a modern spin in a bustier paired with pants, ombre silk is tailored into a beguiling kaftan, jewel-embellished organza shirts are strutted on ramps with *chanderi* pants and many such re-imaginings. The designer believes that using the same elements innovatively is what makes the difference. Telling us how India has pushed the boundaries and made inroads into the luxury lifestyle, she shares, "Prêt has come up big in India and there is a huge scope for it which was not the case earlier where we would probably go for a Zara or H&M for casual wear. But now we have a lot of homegrown talent who are ready to experiment and tap on new markets in lifestyle. Be it fashion, food or cinema, we have a presence in every field now. I think what Indian designers are doing here is of international standards. While fashion has come up globally, India specifically has stepped up its game in luxury lifestyle."

Ridhi reflects on how the coming generations have opened the horizon of imagination for designers, "When I started, the industry was very different. People would go to a limited number of designers they were loyal to. But when I embarked on my journey, the industry was on the cusp of change. People were exploring new designers and design concepts. Over time, their desire for newness was exponentially expanded. For instance, back at that time, lighter silhouettes would work well, but now people are ready to experiment with vibrant colours. They are experimenting with fusion wear like a *sari* with a ruffled blouse, skirt with a jacket etc. They are also open to tone down colour palettes of neutral shades like ivory and champagne. In fact, in the last one year, I've observed a lot of liking for these muted colours."

Owing to the change in preferences of people, Ridhi's label which was initially into traditional wear with *saris* and *lehengas* at the core has now gravitated towards this modern interpretation of Indian aesthetics. "For instance, initially we would design a *lehenga* with a blouse and *dupatta* but later, we felt it is not adding to the spice. So we went ahead and added a jacket to the ensemble to give it a modish look," she elaborates on one of the pieces from *Nooreza*.

Inspirations in a globalised world

The designer started her label in 2012 when a label's success was not just dependent on design creativity and innovation but also on social media impressions, collaborations, fashion shows and more. The influencer culture was on a rise with international ones even gracing the front seats at Dolce Gabbana's Spring 2010 show! Social media made it easier for people to access content, trends and influences from other countries and cultures. At such a juncture, Ridhi tells



us anything and everything could act as an inspiration as the world became globalised with the power of the internet. "With social media, the world has become so small that the moment of revelation is almost negligible. For example, if you go to Paris or any foreign destination, you must have already seen a glimpse of it on social media or in movies or videos. So when I got back from the UK, social media and the exposure it lends was a big window to seek inspiration. You never know where the inspiration could come from. It could be a book, travel, something you saw on social media or just stepping out in nature. Creating something every season is a daunting task which requires taking creative stimulation from everywhere, not just from one source."

While every day opens vistas for new inspiration, womanhood is one theme that has consistently absorbed Ridhi. With every collection, the designer hopes to make a woman feel powerful and confident about themselves. Her collections shine on the various facets of a woman's allure — her dreams, hopes, struggles, milestones, and perseverance. From prêt-wear collection *Yours Truly* which is a love letter to neo-Indian women and *Wildflower* which celebrates her flamboyance to couture edit *Echoes* that spotlights her strength and ingenuity, and *Nooreza* that exudes her *noor* (beauty) — each of them is inspired by an aspect of womanhood. "They should feel lively and comfortable when they wear it. For me, comfort in fashion is the most important thing," Ridhi tells us.

However, creating collections that are timeless yet are a breath of fresh air is an uphill task and the designer admits that. "The constant challenge that we face is innovation in design. It's hard to keep bringing out something unique and to meet the expectations of people. But over the years, I have learnt that growth is gradual. Every day is a new experience where you keep learning." On that note, we asked her about her biggest learnings and she tells us, "It is very important to build trust in your team as they are your core. Maintaining goodwill is something that will always take you forward."

Nooreza is ₹90,000 upwards. Available online and in-store.
@priyamvada@newindianexpress.com @RanaPriyamvada

Lisa Haydon in Nooreza

Fire it!

Your style statement on a usual day It will be any comfortable wear

One fashion mistake people make Being over-dressed (laughs)

What do you do when not designing No time for hobbies (laughs)

Three must-keeps in your bag Phone, lipstick, hair brush

Sum up Indian fashion in three words Talent-driven, fast-growing, challenging

Last place you have travelled Dubai

MENOPAUSE MYTHS

Here is everything you need to know about menopause and how to slow it down naturally

THE MOST UNTOUCHED topic is menopause; it's a phase where the reproductive hormones start declining naturally in a woman's body. This usually happens when a woman reaches age group of 45-50 and slowly, their period cycle comes to a halt. Menopause will happen at later stages naturally, unless you have gone through surgery earlier in life or had the removal of the reproductive organ which affects the menstrual cycle at an early age. Around the menopause phase, women start facing symptoms like irregular period cycle as well as flow, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, severe mood swings, weight gain, abdominal fat gain etc.

We need to understand how decades ago menopause was not even a problem. Most women were



Yoga and pranayama can alleviate symptoms of menopause

not even aware about the onset of menopause. One day they would realise they didn't have a period cycle for six months or a year and they had hit menopause having gone through it beautifully with none of the complications that most women have today. But nowadays, we see traumatised women who are always under fear of hitting menopause, and this fear further increases the symptoms as well as issues attached to it. We have to understand that rather than fear-

ing the natural body process, jumping on supplements, new foods and new exercise programmes etc, we need to embrace the natural changes in the body.

But what has changed? Why are women going through more difficult menopause issues today compared to a few decades ago? It is the lifestyle that has changed and that has made menopause aggressive and has also brought on menopause way earlier. Like in past few years, we

have seen women in their early 40s having menopause, like around 41, 42 etc but this is not a great thing; this means your entire cycle is out of whack and that gives you so much to think about in terms of what else is going wrong in your body and the entire hormonal balance. When a girl hits puberty, her hormones are changing and fluctuating, the same happens around menopause as well. You see a drop in estrogen, changes in your progesterone and all your hormones. It's very important for a girl or woman to accept these changes happening in her body, as mentioned above, as a natural process that is going to happen. All the fears you have and particularly the ones you start talking about will bring on menopause and its side effects way earlier. What we focus on and put all are attention on, grows, and if we keep talking about fear and disease, we manifest it.

Then why not change it, keep talking about positive things and this will create positive things in our life. Accept the changes in your body because the more stress you have, the faster you are going to go into menopause. In a woman's body, pregnanolone is a master hormone. When more cortisol is produced, the pregnanolone starts to function in a different way. There is a hormonal imbalance in the body as it is busy making cortisol. When one has depletion of pregnanolone, progesterone and estrogen fluctuates, creating a hormonal imbalance and painful menopause. Let's look at certain changes that one can make in their life to improve the symptoms of menopause:

• If you have more fat percentage, you'll get into menopause quicker. Work at reducing fat percentage and inch loss by building healthy muscle mass and get-

ting into gradual weight training. • Vitamin D3 is a precursor for hormonal health and low D3 levels can fluctuate the hormones. Try to get your D3 checked every six months and start supplementation if required after checking with your healthcare provider. Try to get sunlight for at least 15 minutes during the day because it's good for bones, setting circadian rhythm and working on hormones

• Try to cut down on caffeine, alcohol, and sugar (better to avoid white processed sugar) as these keep the body acidic and delay healing. Alcohol slows down the liver, metabolism, wipes out the gut microbiome etc. So stopping or reducing these three things will be helpful.

• Movement, exercise and yoga are very important for releasing feel good hormones that work on making the body feel better. Activity, pranayama and deep breathing are a must because oxygen helps in healing the body.

• Sleep is important because most of the healing, repair, recovery, detoxification, growth, hormonal balance etc happens when the body is getting a good quality as well as quantity of sleep. Try to take a pinch of nutmeg in a cup of water at bed time to help improve your sleep cycle.

Gradually allow the body to settle in the natural changes and follow these tips to feel better.

HEALTHY LIVING DEEPIKA RATHOD

Chief Nutrition Officer, Luke Coutinho Holistic Healing Systems. The writer is a clinical nutritionist with a focus on healthy lifestyle choices.



off the shelf

These newly launched products will take care of all your bare-face needs

Gaga for the glow

OUR SKIN REQUIRES attention all around the year and who doesn't like updating their skincare products from time to time? This week, we take a look at five newly launched products that will not only tend to your skin needs but also nourish it from within.

Serum love

Serein by Dr Ayesha is a curated skin care brand that crafts products with medical aesthetics and cosmetic components tailored to the demands of Indian skin types. Their Niacinamide 10% serum with tranexamic acid is almost an elixir for your skin as it protects the skin from harmful chemicals and elements. It treats dark spots, acne, inflammation and fine lines and a tiny amount works wonders on the skin. •Price: ₹1,200 •Where: serein.in



Primer time

Plum needs no introduction when it comes to skin care and makeup products. If you are a big fan of minimalism and like to do prep before applying any makeup on your skin, we suggest you try their weightless, pore minimising primer that gives you the perfect canvas to start your makeup. It also helps your makeup stay put throughout the day.

•Price: ₹525 for 30 ml •Where: plum-goodness.com



Look luminous

Internationally revered beauty and wellness brand Anastasia Beverly Hills has introduced a Magic Touch Concealer that corrects, brightens and blurs while concealing dark spots simultaneously. The end finish is luminous due to its light-reflecting components that neutralise imperfections. It also creates a soft-focus effect with a natural finish.

•Price: ₹3,200 •Available on: Sephora, Nykaa, Boddess and Anastasia Beverly Hills stores



Berry good

Faces Canada is widely known for its pocket-friendly yet quality makeup products and now they have introduced a host of beneficial serums for everyone looking to take care of their skin without burning a hole in their pocket. Their Youthful Radiance Serum Blueberry is a magical biphasic serum that intensifies the skin's natural glow and elasticity.

•Price: ₹549 •Where: facescanada.com



Avo good day!

Face masks are a go-to product in almost everyone's skincare routine. Elinor has introduced an Avocado Face Mask that is nourishing and anti-acne at the same time. It moisturises the skin while simultaneously keeping it oil-free all day. The key element in this mask without any doubt is the avocado which improves elasticity and reduces roughness while aqua provides hydration. It is also enriched with almond oil that helps heal sun-damaged skin.

•Price: ₹1,148 for 100gm •Where: buuyelinor.com



HOUSE OF TALES

stage shows

Theatricals from the city discuss their upcoming productions while also advancing their talent in a variety of genres, from comedy to monologue



Jay Jha

AFTER CITY-BASED THEATRE company, Raffu Chakkar Entertainers' first curtain call in Hyderabad's Rangbhoomi Spaces a couple of weeks earlier, they are staging their Hindi play, *Mad House*, another time at the venue. A former IT professional working Downtown, aka, Lower Manhattan, Rafia Sultana was in awe of Broadway theatre shows amped up by live-action, oomph factor, and light-hearted themes. Moving to Hyderabad in 2010 and forming the aforesaid theatre ensemble in 2012, she shares that the art form has been her 'first love' for as long as she can recall. She has completed a decade in theatre and now helms the hour-and-a-half stage show, a slapstick comedy revolving around shared office spaces. At Rangbhoomi's open stage, the characters of the play — an influencer, a dentist, a patient and others — will share an even more



Rafia Sultana (centre, standing) with the cast

organic intimacy with the beholders.

"The audience can expect lots of laughter and entertainment. It has music, and comedy while promising everyone to return to their homes with good memories," says Rafia. With the orchestration of *Mad House*, she also takes an about-turn from erstwhile romantic comedies like the Broadway-style *Parallel Pyar*, and socio-political plays like *Qeemat*, which underscored cybercrimes.

Hyderabad's Rangbhoomi continues to echo a host of novel cultural activities engendered by all performing artists across the city and at large, India. The co-founder of the space and himself an actor-director, Jay Jha is set to get on stage after a year. Now, Rangbhoomi promises to do twice as much to enliven theatre as an art. Jay who has also been in the profession for more than a decade was last seen as the rude, aggressive yet soft and loving Sakharam, the protagonist in the stage adaptation of Indian playwright Vijay Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder*. Not getting much time to devote to the stage, he decided to quit his job at an MNC earlier this month

and now looks forward to engaging in theatre full-time.

"I was not getting the time to work as an actor as I was also managing Rangbhoomi. My first love is acting, and I was missing out on a lot," he adds. Jay is also the co-founder of Hyderabad's theatre troupe, Kissago, and will be seen as the monologist in its theatrical reinterpretation of Manav Kaul's *Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane* (Five grains of sugar). In the feel-good Hindi narrative, Jay depicts an underdog villager in the character of Raj Kumar, whose belittled life grips you by the heart. "I am not revising much from the original script, but only making directional changes and altering the style of performance. The play opens with a poem about finding ourselves and I am making my audience read it to me," he shares. In this show, Jay will be involving the audience in the frame to make his piece more engrossing as he feels that monologues can get tedious.

Mad House and Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane will take place on January 28 and 29 respectively in Gachibowli.

— Chokita Paul

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exhibition

Saving Chevella's banyans

A new art exhibition in the city is raising awareness for century-old banyan trees around Chevella road

Nature inspired artworks



WITNESS UNDER THE Chevella Banyan — an exhibition of paintings, installations and photographs by 35 artists and photographers is being curated by Dr Avani Rao Gandra this week at Hyderabad Literature Festival and later displayed at ICONART Gallery. The exhibition is an open call to all nature enthusiasts to protect 900 banyan trees planted on the outskirts of Hyderabad on the road to Chevella. Dr Avani, founder, ICONART and curator of the exhibition believes that the trees are an integral part of ecology, and heritage and bears spiritual significance. Giving us a preview ahead of the show, she says, "The exhibition has a cause attached to it — to save the environment and ecology. The government has plans to cut those trees to widen the road, but there is a huge movement among the citizens to protect them. People should be proud of such heritage and be aware that it is on the verge of destruction. If we cut these trees and try to transplant them, it's not going to work because Hyderabad's topography does not support trans-



Artwork at the exhibition

plantation as it's situated on Deccan Plateau. I wanted to curate this show to generate consciousness among the masses."

She elaborates on how the green belt of trees can act as a spot for recreation. "It can be revamped as a picnic spot or a driveway from the city and can attract tourism. The area is so beautiful that its aerial view gives an impression of a meandering green river."

Avani belongs to a farming

community. Her conditioning in the agrarian region of Telangana has made her empathetic towards nature in all its manifestations. She tells us about the artworks on display, "I invited artists, photographers, nature lovers, and activists where 45 of us went to the site and conducted an eco-walk and talk to raise awareness about the issue ahead of the show. Later, all the artists came up with outstanding works. For one, an artist portrayed

the mythological depiction of the banyan tree as a Tree of Life and wisdom. Another artist created a sonic installation of a heart made from the roots of the trees which beats as the viewer approaches the artwork. Another is an 80 feet artwork made of cloth where the artist has taken imprints of fallen trees on the silhouette. Spectators will also find artwork on the Panchatatva that symbolises the symbiotic relationship between man and nature."

This is not the first time that Avani has picked a stimulating topic. She has previously curated shows on girl child awareness, women's issues and the environment. "I try to use subjects that convey art beyond pleasure, issues that can move people with their visual prowess." Avani aims to display it at HLF as the event attracts knowledge seekers who would be willing to know about pivotal issues.

January 27-29. At Vidyaranya High School (HLF). Till 20th February at ICONART.

— Priyamvada Rana

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out
of the
box

thriller/show

INDULGE

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023 | HYDERABAD

web-series

Daredevils at work

Centered around a woman IPS officer, this action-packed cop thriller infuses reality into refined storytelling, while also encapsulating the vigilance and valour in women officers of today



Regina Cassandra



Chandan while filming



Barun Sobti

RESISTING INSURGENTS THAT ravage northeast India, strong-headed IPS officer and mother of a six-year-old, Kavya Iyer, escapes unhurt from gunfire and the peril. She fights her fears and finally, comes home to her family. “My character in this show goes to work, but doesn’t know that she might be killing a militant that day,” begins the avant-garde, Regina Cassandra (who plays Kavya Iyer). “Emoting the character of a tough IPS officer, which I’m playing for the first time, getting the body language correct as a mother and daughter was demanding, but also quite exciting,” she adds. Ahead of the ongoing Srijit Mukherji-helmed thriller series, *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke*, we also catch up with the other cast members, Barun Sobti and Chandan Roy who tell us how they drew parallels between themselves and the characters that they are portraying in the eight-episode show.

Chandan made his screen debut as Vikas Shukla in Amazon Prime’s comedy-drama series, *Panchayat*. He tells us how his roots in the rural setup of his township in Mahnar, Bihar have lent him the prowess to mirror an organic personality in Chandan Jha, the character he is playing in this show. We know that ever since his breakthrough in *Panchayat* in 2020, he gained a foothold in the entertainment industry. Talking about his television encounters, he tells us, “As an actor, I became friendly towards the camera after that hit. Maybe I was called to play a part here because the previous project was a huge success. But for me, all projects are equally important. I believe the better I work, the better opportunities I get.”

In *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke*, Chandan depicts a hacker who uses his brain, agility and talent in cyberspace to defend the nation from invaders. He also mentions to us that the creators did not want to cast anyone hailing from big cities who would ‘look like a hacker’. But someone like Chandan was a perfect fit since he sticks to his bona fide roots in a so-called ‘small town’ while disseminating his character’s vehemence and true-to-life sensibilities on screen.

Interestingly, he shares, “Before playing my character, I did not know anything about technology — I had no idea what we meant by VPN. Well, I didn’t really need to know it because all I wanted to know about was acting. As this character was completely new to me, the learning curve in portraying and getting into the shoes of a hacker made me push the limits.”

Regina tells us that reading up articles on the lives of women at the forefront of preserving public peace helped her understand the nuances of her character to epitomise a true warrior in Kavya’s ‘empowering spirit’ and ‘humanitarian’ facets. In the throes of regular sexism and backlash for being a woman in the forces, Regina’s character still manages to make calculative and proactive decisions as an IPS officer. We get a closer glimpse of how she gets into the skin of Kavya. “Sanjukta Parashar was

one of the IPS officers who became a part of my conversations with the writers and the creative directors on the set. A lot of her life and that of Swati Lakra, Additional DGP of Telangana was brought into our process. I read about what women go through as officers and in their families,” she shares, adding that she loved to explore action and dynamism by playing Kavya.

We then speak to Barun who made his cinematic debut in the 2014 romantic comedy *Main Aur Mr Right* and went on to star in movies like *Tu Hai Mera Sunday* (2017), *22 Yards* (2019), *Halahal* (2020), and *200 Halla Ho* (2021). As an IAS officer in *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke*, he will appear in a couple of episodes. Referring to Srijit, the actor tells us, “He loves to banter about the character and talk about what all of us go through. Both of us spoke at great lengths about my character and his acting workshops helped me develop the small part that I’m playing as Kavya’s husband, Sameer. I don’t limit myself to outside references as I feel that tapers with my creativity. To me, script in itself is a whole universe.” But it is interesting to learn how he echoes his character’s occupation and constructs it as relatable to the audience. Talking more about his enactment, he says, “I connected myself with Sameer as a human being. I also drew from news and real-life incidents, for example, troubles caused by terrorist activities in a country and how the common people are affected by it.”

Streaming now on ZEE5.

— Chokita Paul

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ACTOR ANSHUMAN JHA might be called a fairly young actor but he has been around for a while. The 36-year-old embarked on an acting career at the age of 14 with Prithvi Theatre's productions. By 17, he learnt the ropes of acting under the aegis of theatre personalities like Barry John and Quasar Thakore-Padamsee. From being part of Barry's plays like *It's All About Money Honey* to shifting his base to Mumbai and finding luck in movies like *Love Sex Aur Dhokha* (2010), *Fugly* (2014), *No Fathers in Kashmir* (2019) and *Hum Bhi Akele Tum Bhi Akele* (2021) and more — he has over 12 films and 13 prolific brand endorsements under his belt.

His latest action-thriller *Lakadbaggha* is earning rave reviews. It garnered an 8.9 rating on IMDB, fetched him the Best Actor Award at the South Asian International Film Festival held at New York and a standing ovation for the film at Kolkata International Film Festival. Anshuman plays an animal rights vigilante in the movie that is based on investigating a surreptitious animal trading cell. Helmed by Victor Mukherjee, the film also stars Ridhi Dogra, Milind Soman, Paresh Pahuja, Eksha Kerung and Kharaj Mukherjee who play consequential roles. We dial Anshuman, a week after his latest release to get him talking about films and more.

What made you take up *Lakadbaggha*?

This film is a mix of two of my biggest passions — action and animals. I love dogs and have two adopted ones at home. In fact, one of the dogs in the poster and the hoardings that we used for the promotions was my adopted one Casper. On a creative level, I want to tell an ordinary story of a simple guy. I believe being ordinary is a superpower. It makes characters like Arjun Bakshi believable. Also, I wanted to do this movie as I love action genre. I knew nobody is going to give me an action film in Bollywood because there is a certain prototype to action heroes and society likes to follow those 'types'.

Since you love dogs, did the topic of the film impact you emotionally?

Yes, some things did affect me. One was the revelation of a 'dog biryani' racket in Kolkata. I find it sickening to think of people using dog meat to get money! I also got to know about the illegal animal trade of butterflies, turtles and other exotic animals in Sundarbans. Animals can't speak for themselves, so the whole idea of making this movie was to become the voice of the voiceless.

Speaking of impactful issues, what kind of movies do you like doing?

I want to be part of stories where someone who sees the film 20 years from now says, 'wow they made a film on animal vigilantes in 2023'. I

feel any kind of cinema should have a life. I don't want to do movies that only entertain, it needs to have a voice; otherwise, it's a miserable proposition. That's why even if you see my past films such as *HBATBA*, there was a conscious effort to show the LGBTQIA++ community in a positive light and it did make an impact. When the movie was doing the rounds at a film festival in New York, a homosexual man came up to me and said that the film was a reflection of his life. For me, that is a victory! After watching *Lakadbaggha*, many NGOs have told us that the dogs at their care facility are being adopted at a higher rate.

Your movies have strong female characters. Is that a conscious choice you make?

In my view, women are the superior species amongst us. I have been brought up by my mom and my sister, so I come from a school of thought where whatever I am is because of these two women, and now my wife. I like stories where female characters are shown in a powerful light. In this movie too, we have Ridhi's character, who plays a cop, integral to the plot.

In times when social media impressions determine an actor's influence, you have a humble following. Does the number game bother you?

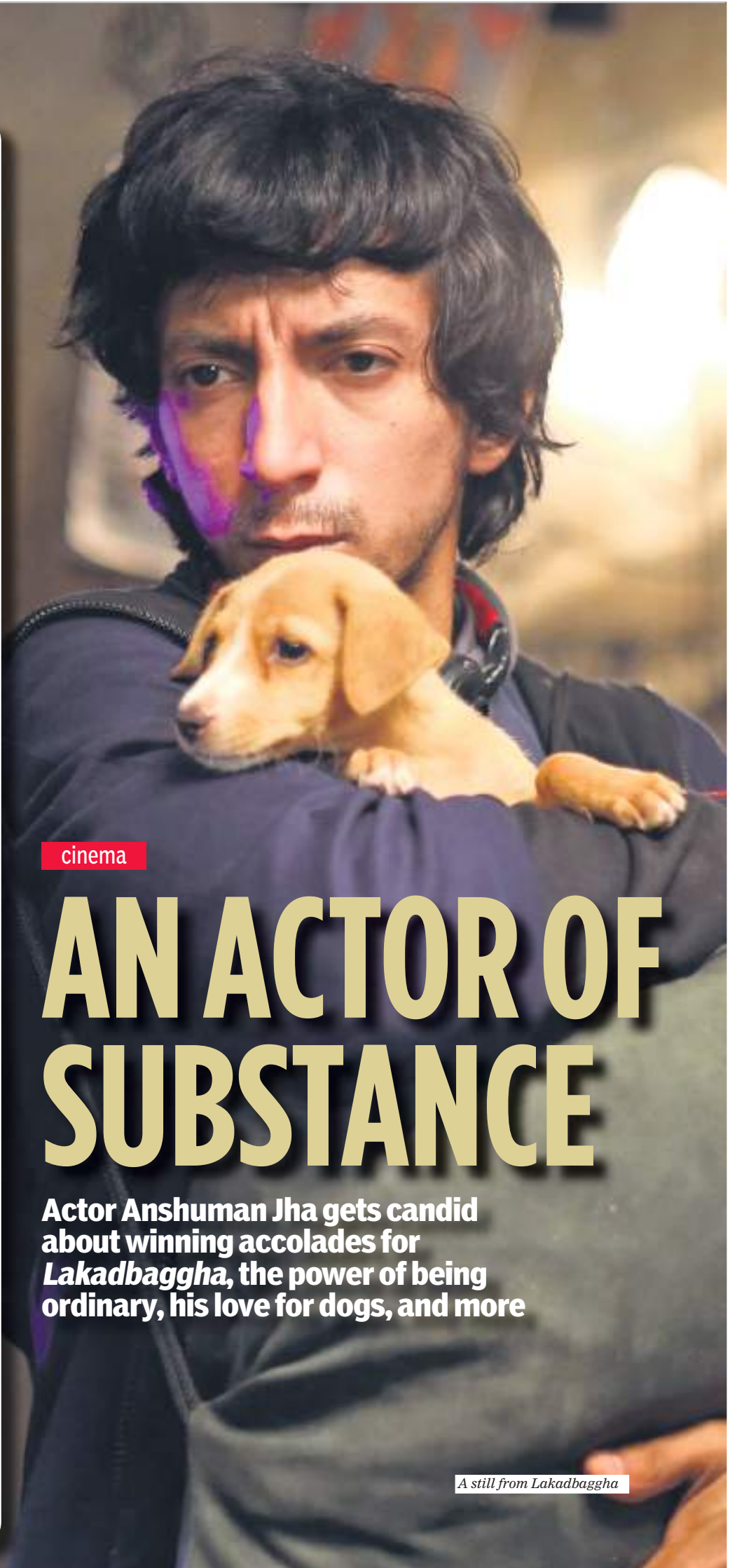
Most actors buy followers! It is an inside truth. I feel that people like them will be forgotten very soon as it's the craft that stays, not the numbers. The truth is time will eventually eat an artist's existence even if it's one of the greatest entertainers of all time like *Charlie Chaplin*. But, if you are able to make an impact on human consciousness with your work, that is sure to last. That's why people miss actors like Irrfan Khan. I don't know how many young actors have that impact in today's time. Today, we have a bunch of people who are not convincing as artists and are being roped into projects. It's unfair to the business, to the art and to the audience. If they're not good, they can work on themselves and get better. But they're more concerned about superficial aspects like their hair, body and skin than real work. An artist needs to be very cognizant of things.

What are some lifestyle choices that you've made as an adult that proved to be worthwhile?

I practice little habits like sleeping and waking up early, eating healthy, not drinking and smoking and being dedicated to my craft. I sometimes go back to our texts like the *Vedas* and *Bhagavad Gita* to seek answers to life's questions. And one important learning I have had, is to think good, speak good and do good to yourself and others. I do not compare myself to anyone and believe that everyone's journey is different.

— Priyamvada Rana

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cinema

AN ACTOR OF SUBSTANCE

Actor Anshuman Jha gets candid about winning accolades for *Lakadbaggha*, the power of being ordinary, his love for dogs, and more

A still from *Lakadbaggha*

out of the box

new season

The new season of *It Happens Only in India* on National Geographic Channel promises to bring audiences closer to India's culture and rich heritage

CELEBRATING INDIA!



Cyrus Sahukar

WE'VE SEEN HIM on MTV and he's always been one of the country's most-adored VJs and then he began appearing in movies and on TV and soon became a household name. From films like *Om Jai Jagadish* (2020) — his debut, to films like *Rang De Basanti* (2006), *Delhi 6* (2009), *Aisha* (2010) and *Khoobsurat* (2014), we've also seen him playing popular roles on web-series like *Mind The Malhotras* on Amazon Prime Video. Cyrus Sahukar is no new name and he's now back on the brand-new season of *It Happens Only in India* on the National Geographic Channel. We caught up with the entertainer to find out more about the show.

"We've travelled the length and breadth of India, trying to find stories of inspiration — culture, architecture, art, quirky or bizarre people, mystical conversations and stories — and tried to curate them into an explosive season where we present things that truly amaze and inspire our audience," begins the actor and comedian who has also hosted the travel show *The Great Escape* on Fox Life with actor and theatre artiste Kunal Kapoor.

The show hopes to bring forth amusing, unconventional stories around the mysteries of ancient India; innovations from the world of science and technology; and nature and fine craftsmanship. The series also hopes to introduce viewers to some of India's most wondrous places, most unique local cuisines, most astounding megastructures and the most mesmerising art forms, from across the coun-

try. "Our country is full of surprises and I have always been intrigued by the many fascinating tales India has to offer. *It Happens Only in India* has been a wonderful experience and gave me an opportunity to be a part of the beautiful, unique stories of our country and share them with viewers in my own style," adds Cyrus, who was last seen in *Kaun Banega Shikarwati* on Zee5.

The show will also see Shenaz Treasury as a co-host and will also showcase inspiring stories of talented innovators like the Mangoman of India, the Plogman of India and the famous Mumbra girls, amongst others.

"This show, blew my mind, because I got to realise that we, living in cities, have got this one way of living — and, it's not our fault, we have to pay bills, we have ambitions; some our ours, some are forced upon us — and then I travel across India and meet such quirky and fascinating people and you come to realise that life can be lived in all sorts of ways. The level of happiness drawn from it is the same. Somebody sitting

under a tree, eating a banana, can be as joyful as someone who bought a seven lakh rupee bag. It helped me realise that I don't have to live by a prototype of existence. This show has taught me a lot," concludes Cyrus.



Poster

Every Sunday,
8pm onwards,

on National Geographic Channel.

— Romal Laisram

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in focus

On a different note

Composer Parag Chhabra talks about his music and more...



EVEN THOUGH HE started off as a vocalist, it was during his college days in Pune that Indore-born musician Parag Chhabra started looking for opportunities beyond just vocal expertise. Trained in *hindustani* classical music, he soon joined AR Rahman's *KM Music Conservatory*, where he was eventually discovered by the legendary composer. His shift to Mumbai in 2018 got him his first break as a composer in the film *Waah Zindagi* starring Naveen Kasturia, Sanjay Mishra and Vijay Raaz. Currently, he has worked as an independent music director with films like *Good Luck Jerry*, *Jai Mummy Di*, *An Action Hero* and the National award-winning film *Turtle*. We speak to him to learn more about his musical style ahead of the digital debut of *An Action Hero*.

How would you describe your music philosophy?

This journey requires me to seek out knowledge; hence I can't remain fixated on ideas. I truly believe music should soothe and heal people, especially in today's times. I would say healing people through music is one of my major callings.

How would you describe your musical stint in *An Action Hero*?

This is my second film with Anand L Rai as my first film with him was *Good Luck Jerry*. For *An Action Hero*, the theme was the first thing we cracked and it did quite well after the track's initial release. It was then that we thought of turning it into a full-fledged song. The song mainly focused on a rap battle so as to bring out the concept of conflict through it, with the theme music interplaying in between. There's another song called *Ghere* that explores the hip hop space with lots of melody in it. It has been sung by Vivek Hariharan and that rap part was executed by D'Evil of *Gully Gang Cypher* fame. The film is extremely urban with strong doses of dark humour in it, so, we tried to keep the music as urban as we could, bringing in western elements, as well. We have used uncommon instruments like the *dotara* from Bengal and the *pipa* from China. There are a total of fourteen instrumental layerings used in the songs.

An Action Hero will stream on Netflix from January 27.

— Raima Ganguly

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Parag Chhabra

I truly believe music should soothe and heal people, especially in today's times. I would say healing people through music is one of my major callings...

cinema



spotlight

TWO SIDES OF A STORY

RENOWNED DIRECTOR RAJKUMAR Santoshi is back with another patriotic film *Gandhi Godse Ek Yudh*, years after *The Legend of Bhagat Singh*, which was a huge success at the box office. This time, Santoshi takes a controversial topic to play up on without caring much about the backlashes. We had a quick chat with him on the same.

conversation they have in the film constitutes facts, their thought and their words.

Because it's a sensitive topic, weren't you afraid of a backlash?

I have been very honest and fair to both Gandhi and Godse in this film. And when both these characters have been so fearless and bold, how can I be scared of backlashes? I got a 'U' certificate from the censor board which said that such films should be shown in educational institutions.

How easy or difficult was the casting for this film?

It was a little difficult since I decided from the very beginning that I will not cast any stars in this film, and wanted a Gujarati actor to play Gandhi, and a Marathi actor to play Godse. I also wanted the actors to resemble both of them. There were no prosthetics involved. Deepak Antani plays Gandhi, and Chinmay Mandlekar plays Godse, both seasoned theatre actors.

Your daughter, Tanisha Santoshi, is making her debut in this film?

My daughter has done a course in direction and wanted to pursue that. In the film, there's a small love story and I needed a young boy and a girl. My casting director suggested Anuj Saini and I was looking for a girl who would play his love interest. Tanisha asked me to take her audition. She has been just like any other actor and has been very sincere.

What's up next?

I have 2-3 films lined up. I plan to release my next on *The Partition*, on January 26, 2024.

In theatres now.
—Dharitri Ganguly

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Filmmaker Rajkumar Santoshi talks about his new film *Gandhi Godse* and what kept him away from filmmaking all these nine years

Stills from the film



Rajkumar Santoshi

Tanisha Santoshi

homing in

Divya diaries

Actor-turned-author Divya Dutta speaks about the diverse roles she played last year



THE BEAUTIFUL AND versatile actress-turned-author Divya Dutta, who was in Kolkata to launch her second book *The Stars in my Sky* at the *Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival*, talks about her upcoming projects.

You have had four film/OTT releases last year. All the characters are very different from each other. How do you mould into these characters?

I get into a role very nervously, and I keep holding the director's hand tight to sail me through. It takes me 2-3 days to get into the role, and once I am into it, I let the role take over. In *Dhaakad*, I was supposed to kill someone and it sounded menacing to me. After the shot, my director started laughing, and all he had to say was where did you get all this meanness from? This is surely not you. So, this is what happens when you let the character decide. Contrarily, *Nazarandaaz* was very light and emotional. So, it feels great to play someone who is like you and someone who is totally not you.

How do you choose a film?

It's instinctive. My gut feeling knows it all. I am one of the very few actresses in the industry, who says an immediate yes, or an immediate no!

Tell us a little about your latest book...

It is a tribute to each one of those I have looked up to, got to work with and finally how I bond with them. Life comes full circle with each of them — be it Amitabh Bachchan, Gulzar, Javed Akhtar, Shabana Azmi, Shah Rukh or Salman Khan — each chapter is dedicated to a person. This book can also be called the book of gratitude. It is my experiential journey, but very personalised.

What is in the pipeline this year?

I have a film with Dibakar Banerjee, Tahira Kashyap's *Sharmajee Ki Beti*, there is one with Anubhav Sinha, there's an action film with Suniel Shetty and Anurag Kashyap, in which I am playing a cop, and there are two web shows. And there is also an English film releasing this year.

Divya Dutta

— DG

SINGING HER OWN TUNE

Chanteuse Anwesshaa is debuting as a composer in the Marathi film industry with *Pahije Jaatichhe*

DEBUTING AS A Bollywood playback singer at the age of 14 with *Golmaal Returns*, Anwesshaa has come a long way, firmly establishing her name among the top league playback singers in the current Hindi film music scene. That aside, Anwesshaa's latest non-film duet *Wo Kashish* with Javed Ali has already hit more than two million views on *YouTube* within three days of its release. And the singer is currently busy composing for a Marathi film based on Vijay Tendulkar's play and she is really excited about her Marathi debut. We speak with the crooner about her music and her plans to come up with a complete album soon.



Your song *Wo Kashish* has really clicked well with the young audience.

Abhishek Thakur productions got in touch with me and once they shared the song, I loved the simplicity of it. Growing up, I used to listen to such music back in the '90s. And I feel that these songs still have their appeal to young Indian listeners. I love co-singing with Javed and I have beautiful duets with him in Hindi and Bengali. Our last duet in Bollywood came last year in the movie *Dhoop Chhaav* and I thoroughly enjoyed recording *Wo Kashish* with him.

Tell us what's keeping you busy nowadays?

I'm singing in Hindi films and non-film projects in South India, Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujarat. I'm also composing music for the Marathi film *Pahije Jaatichhe* which is an adaptation of Vijay Tendulkar's play of the same name. Apart from studio work, gigs take up a lot of time during this time of the year.

How did you plan the composition for *Pahije Jaatichhe's* tracks?

The film's story focuses on how social standards and conditionings can affect a person's life adversely despite talent, efforts and merit. But the film has different moods at different points and I had scope to create cheerful, romantic and sad songs. Musically, it has elements of western classical (symphony orchestra), Indian classical (carnatic violin, harmonium, etc), drum and bass and Marathi folk elements. I tried to cater to director Narendra Babu's (a popular Kannada filmmaker) vision and he wanted soulful Indian melodies. I tried to deliver exactly that.

Do you feel the indie music genre is changing over the years?

Some artistes and songwriters occupied the indie space earlier but it was dormant after that for a long time. Nowadays, it has become a culture in the fraternity and the ones who never thought about anything beyond film music are dabbling into non-film singles too. There is a major shift in the audiences' taste as well. This is an industry where the consumer controls the trends largely.

What kind of music are you listening to currently?

I'm absorbing the sounds of nature as much as I can as there are very few breathers in my current schedule.

Composing music and listening to music simultaneously will drive me crazy. While creating new music, I prefer silence because listening to anything else that is already done prevents originality from being born.

Who's your favourite western singer and why?

Celine Dion, because having an extremely trained voice sometimes makes a singer too technical. But I feel that she manages to have just the right proportions of emotion and grammar in all her renditions.

What are your upcoming Bollywood and Tollywood projects?

I have recorded a Hindi song for Himesh Reshammiya besides a song for the film *Malhar* composed by Satish Chakraborty. I also recorded

for Javed-Mohsin and Rashmi Virag and down South there are a few Telugu releases lined up.

Any album or EP we can look forward to?

I've written an album after one of my forest vacations. Creatively, I'm ready to work on it but I'll let it bake for a while as there are too many things going on right now. I'm not in a hurry to release it. But I will make songs that you'll hear on my official *YouTube* channel. That is something I'm enjoying doing the most lately.

Streaming on all major platforms and *YouTube*.

— Sharmistha Ghosal

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[@sharmidas](https://www.instagram.com/sharmidas)



Anwesshaa

telewatch



Action:
Shotgun Wedding

In this action comedy film directed by Jason Moore, the destination wedding ceremony of the couple, Darcy (Jennifer Lopez) and Tom (Josh Duhamel), takes a dark turn when their families are held hostage by gunmen. While trying to save everyone they love, Tom and Darcy are reminded of why they fell in love with each other. *January 27. On Amazon Prime Video*

Documentary:
Pamela, A Love Story

About 27 years after her sex tape with Tommy Lee was leaked online, actress Pamela Anderson sits down to tell her story. The *Netflix* documentary chronicles the personal life and career of the *Baywatch* star over the last 30 years. Directed by Ryan White, the film uses interviews, and unseen footage to present viewers with an accurate picture of Pamela's life. *January 27. On Netflix*



Sports: Manchester City vs Arsenal

Current *Premier League* leaders Arsenal take on the blue team from Manchester in the fourth round of the 2022-23 *FA Cup*. Arsenal defeated Oxford United in the last round while Manchester City thrashed Chelsea 4-0. The Citizens clearly have the upper hand against Arsenal, winning all their previous five meetings against them. *January 28. On SonyLiv*

Horror:
Lockwood & Co.

Starring Ruby Stokes in the lead role, this upcoming supernatural series follows the life of Lucy Carlyle who escapes to London after a paranormal investigation she was part of, killed several children. In London, she joins Lockwood & Co., a paranormal investigation agency, run by Anthony Lockwood. Together they have to fight the ghosts who are taking over the city. *January 27. On Netflix*



Music:
Billie Eilish Live At The O2

Directed by Sam Wrench, this film is an extended cut of American pop singer-songwriter Billie Eilish's *Happier Than Ever* world tour. *Happier Than Ever* is the musician's sixth concert tour that was held to promote her second studio album of the same name. The film will feature six of her performances that have never been aired before. *January 27. On BookMyShowStream*

Comedy: Shrinking

Starring Harrison Ford, Jason Segel and Jessica Williams in the lead roles, this comedy series follows Jimmy, a therapist who has just lost his wife. The grieving shrink begins to let his personal loss affect his work when he breaks the rules and discloses to his patients his honest take on their issues. *January 27. On Apple TV+*

Romcom:
You People

Kenya Barris, creator of the Emmy Award-winning series *Black-ish* and its two spin-offs (*Grown-ish* and *Mixed-ish*), directs this film which features the legendary Eddie Murphy and Jonah Hill. When Ezra falls deeply in love with Amira (whom he mistakes for an Uber driver), it feels like he has finally found 'the one.' But things don't go to plan after their families express their disapproval. The narrative is a commentary on the cultural and racial differences that come to the forefront when love is thrown into the mix. *January 27. On Netflix*



hot
stuff

Apple HomePod 2

Apple's 2nd Gen HomePod provides fully immersive high-fidelity sound as well as control for your smart home. It also works with all Apple devices seamlessly and comes with SIRI built in. With spatial audio tracks, you'll experience music like never before. apple.com



₹32,900

Gadget Review

pTron Force X12S

pTron has a variety of smartwatches for your needs, the latest Force X12S is a BT calling smartwatch with excellent battery life and good looks. The watch is easy to set up and sits well on the wrist. It measures a whole range of parameters with relative accuracy (heart rate, SpO2, blood pressure, sleep, steps, sports and also provides notifications from your phone. At this excellent price point, it's tough to get any better. amazon.in/ptron.in



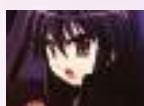
₹1,499

Blaupunkt BTW 300

Blaupunkt's BTW 300 is a wonderful pair of TWS which ticks all the boxes. First off, the 300s look great on the ear with visible branding, they also charge up mighty quick (upto 40 hrs playtime). Then there's the excellent audio – solid bass, good call clarity (with active ENC) and voice assistants to aid. IPX 5 resistance also helps when I go for a run or at the gym. amazon.in/blaupunkt.com



₹1,799



GADGET BOY

Is there a shiny new gadget you'd like to tell us about?
Mail ashokpandian@gmail.com



₹3,299

Compaq Q watch Balance

Compaq recently launched a new range of smartwatches with exclusive features. The QWatch range comprises of X-Breed, Dimension and Balance. The range comes with high def displays, BT calling, metal body, wireless charging and voice assistance. Other features include blood oxygen/pressure measurements, heart rate monitoring as well as fitness/sleep tracking and IP 67 rating. amazon.in

₹81,000

Acer eKinect BD 3

The eKinect BD 3 Bike Desk acts as a work desk as well as an exercise cycle. The rider's pedal power provides charge for laptops and small devices. Work and sport mode enable a seamless transition between cycling and work. A companion smartphone app also provides metrics such as calories, watts etc. Available soon. acer.com



CCA - PLA13

These IEMs (In Ear Modules) come with planar magnetic drivers which provide expert acoustics and construction. You get accurate sound reproduction with clarity across the range. It also comes with an HD microphone for a great calling experience. headphonezone.in



₹6,499

Ashok Pandian
[@ashokpandian](https://twitter.com/ashokpandian)

LG - SBS Refrigerators

LG makes some of the best refrigerators and the B257EMCX here is a Side-by-Side refrigerator manufactured in India in LG's own plant. Equipped with LG ThinQ tech, users can access and control key features even remotely. Powered by AI, Smart Learner helps optimise cooling by analysing usage patterns. You get longer lasting freshness as well as higher energy efficiency. Other features that SBS refrigerators come with include Bigger Instaview windows, UVnano™ to reduce bacteria from water nozzle and a powerful Hygiene Fresh air filter. Do check out LG's 2023 range of SBS at leading electronic stores and online. lg.com



₹1.36 lakh

car
&
bike

auto/innovation

INDULGE
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023 | HYDERABAD

bigger & better

Zero to 100
in 4.6 secs!

Bentley has launched the extended wheelbase version of its ultra-luxurious SUV, namely the Bentayga, in India



THE BENTAYGA EXTENDED wheelbase builds on the latest second-generation Bentayga, extending the wheelbase and rear cabin space by an extra 180 mm. The end result is a behemoth of an SUV that matches the Mulsanne in terms of absolute comfort on board.

From a design standpoint, there are four major exterior changes that make it stand out from the regular Bentayga. These elements include the longer profile, new front grille; polished 22-inch end spoke wheel alloys, and a repositioned sunroof. Apart from that, the lines and overall design match that of the second generation Bentayga.

The increase in overall dimensions has given way to a spacious cabin that is equipped with the latest technology and boasts of high-level craftsmanship. Not only is the cabin designed to pamper your every sense, the technology on board ensures that you are not left wanting when it comes to features. The Bentley Bentayga EWD boasts of an airline seat specification which is the most advanced seat ever fitted to a car, with 22 ways of adjusting a new auto climate sensing system and postural adjusting technology.

The Bentayga EWB is powered by Bentley's proven 4.0-litre, 32-valve dual twin-scroll turbocharged V8 petrol engine. Mated to an 8-speed automatic gearbox, the V8 delivers 550 PS of power and 770 Nm of torque, which allows it to travel at a top speed of 290 km/h and go from 0-100km/h in just 4.6 seconds.

Bentley Bentayga EWD Prices start from ₹6 crore onwards.
— Praveen Raja

feature loaded

GOING GRAND!

Hyundai Motor India has launched the all-new Grand i10 NIOS in India and it is touted to be the perfect new-age hatchback!

THE GRAND I10 NIOS has received a significant redesign in terms of exterior styling with a bold new façade that lends it a younger appeal. This has been brought about by the painted black radiator grille, LED daytime running lights and a sport body coloured front bumper. The large hatchback also gets projector headlamps. The overall design continues with that sweptback look that the original version came with. However, it has been modernised to suit current design elements of the Hyundai brand. The car rides on 15-inch diamond cut alloys and also gets a new LED tail lamp cluster.

Interior

Being a large premium hatchback, the Grand i10 NIOS has always been good on passenger space. There is ample room for two passengers in the front,

while the rear bench easily seat three adults. Keeping with the need to offer more tech on board, Hyundai has kitted this car out with a myriad of cutting-edge smart technologies that include an 8-inch touchscreen display with smartphone navigation, wireless phone charger, fully automatic temperature control, voice recognition, cruise control and a fast USB charger. Rear passengers benefit from AC vents as well.

Safety

Hyundai is taking safety rather seriously and the new Grand i10 NIOS is a prime example. The first-in-segment standard safety features on board include 4-Airbags as standard, while the top end variant gets 6-Airbags. It is also equipped with Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Vehicle Stability Management (VSM), HillStart Assist Control

(HAC) and Parking Assist with Rear Parking Sensors and Rear camera.

Performance

To ensure that the new Grand i10 NIOS delivers in terms of efficiency, Hyundai is offering it with a powerful yet frugal 1.2 litre Kappa Petrol engine that delivers 83 PS of power and 114 Nm of torque. It is also compliant to run on flexi-fuel that has a 20 percent ethanol mix. The petrol engine is paired with either a 5-speed manual or an AMT unit. Hyundai also has a CNG version on offer and it uses the same 1.2 litre Kappa

engine. However, on CNG the output is 69 PS of power and 95 Nm of torque. The CNG version will only be offered with a 5-speed manual transmission.

Value

As a large hatchback that is feature loaded and built for exceptional ride quality, the new Grand i10 NIOS is a heady mix for those who are looking for their first set of wheels and do not want to settle on an entry level hatchback. Ideal for nuclear families and young owners, the Grand i10 NIOS is available in a range of variants to suit your budget and regardless of which one you opt for, they all offer incredible value for money.

Grand i10 NIOS prices start from ₹5.68 lakh.
— Vikram Gour

MOTORSCRIBES

(A pitstop for modern-day car and bike enthusiasts, this column features the latest machines, reviews, roadtrips and more. By a team of automotive insiders who call themselves MotorScribes)

fuel efficient

Advanced Activa

FROM A DESIGN standpoint, the Activa is immediately recognisable; however it now gets new alloy wheels, new premium colour offerings and a 3D emblem. The Activa boasts of edgy chrome elements that do their bit to enhance its overall style. Built on a full metal body, the Activa is also extremely reliable and to help with rider safety, it gets the class-leading combi-brake system and telescopic suspension for better control as well as improved riding comfort.

The Activa is powered by Honda's tried and tested 110 PGM-Fi engine that offers an enhanced power output and a higher level of refinement. It is touted to be more fuel efficient as well. Key features of the engine include the Honda ACG

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India has launched the all-new Activa and it comes with a slew of new features including a smart key system

Starter which allows a jolt free start; the world's first Tumble Flow technology which optimises the inlet port shape and leads to improved combustion and an offset cylinder that helps reduce overall engine friction and results in improved

efficiency.

The new Activa also has a side stand engine inhibitor that doesn't allow the scooter to start if the side stand is down. Last but not least, the new Activa comes with the Honda Smart Key. This new key has four interesting features, namely, Smart Find, Smart Unlock, Smart Start and Smart Safe. Smart Find allows for easy location of the vehicle, Smart Unlock lets the owner lock the scooter without a physical key, Smart Start allows for the scooter to start if the key is within two metres of the vehicle and Smart Safe matches the key with the ECU to prevent vehicle theft.

Price: ₹74,536 onwards.
— Vikram Gour



Must have Products in your Child's Bath Routine

A Guide to Choosing the Right Kid Care Products



ShuShu Babies' Pinky Promise:

Every time you opt for a ShuShu Babies product, you can be sure of the following promises:

- Safe and Gentle on Skin
- PETA Approved Cruelty-Free and Vegan
- Eco-friendly/Sustainable
- Power of Natural Ingredients
- Goodness of Ayurveda
- Nurture & Caring

Shop for ShuShu Babies Naturals at a 25% discount directly from their website www.shushubabies.com. Use code 'Indulge25' to save 25% at checkout. You can also find them online at Amazon, Flipkart, FirstCry, Meesho, BigBasket, and many more trusted E-commerce platforms to get them delivered to your doorstep.



Every baby enjoys a warm bath, especially when it is shared with their parent. It is an excellent opportunity for you and your child to make happy memories. But are you aware of the right skincare products required for a fun bath time?

Of course, one of the many things that make baths so exciting is the soothing soaps, cleansing shampoo, and skin-nourishing moisturizers. The right items make bath time enjoyable and memorable for your child.

Choosing the right bathing products for your child can be tricky as we are not well aware of what to look for when it comes to bath products. Moreover, with more and more options, it's hard to pick one right product.

You can start by looking at the basic qualities that are essential for your child's good bath routine. While shopping for skincare products make sure to read the back of the product very carefully. No product must contain parabens, sulphates, dyes, perfumes or any other harmful chemicals that could be toxic.

Skincare products need to be gentle on their delicate and sensitive skin. So, after having long discussions with the paediatricians and a thorough research we have come up with a mini list of essential products needed for a natural care of your child.

If you're someone looking to find the right products for your little one, this article could help you deeply.

Soft and Gentle Washcloth

A quality washcloth should be thick, soft, and machine washable. They will be used frequently as your child grows, and you will not have the time or energy to hand wash after each bath. You should also make certain that the washcloth or sponge is soft.

Babies skin is extremely soft and delicate. Harsh materials can cause irritation to the skin. Note that it is long-lasting, well-stitched, and free of toxic dyes. Washcloths made of cotton, bamboo, flannel, nylon, or muslin are ideal.

Mild and pH Balanced Soaps

You should be extra cautious with the soaps you use, believe it or not. Babies have a habit of licking everything they come across. Furthermore, they are easily irritated if the smell or texture is not soft and gentle on their skin.

When soap and water are involved, choose soaps that have been specially formulated for your kid. Look for labels that say "hypoallergenic," "non-toxic," and "Ayush-approved" just as ShuShu Babies Baby Bath Soap.

Don't use a foamy soap because the little bubbles strip the skin of its natural oils, causing dryness or irritation. This means you should avoid products containing harmful chemicals, which are frequently used as foaming agents in soaps.

Shampoo: A tear-free formula

A tear-free formula is necessary to protect the baby from irritation. To avoid soapy eyes and lots of crying, look for brands that say "tear-free". It is important to choose a shampoo with natural ingredients to preserve the hair and scalp's natural oils.

Opt for ShuShu babies Shampoo and Body



wash which is designed for sensitive skin and contains natural cleansing ingredients like coconut cleanser.

Soft and Hydrating moisturizer

Especially new-borns do not require lotion unless their skin is extremely dry, but a nice massage can be beneficial to your baby. The light pressure stimulates blood flow to the skin, delivering vital nutrients, and the physical contact strengthens your bond with your baby.

Choose ShuShu Babies face and body lotion with natural, moisturizing ingredients such as cocoa butter, shea butter, or sweet almond oil are ideal.

Where to find the most gentle bath care for your child?

Child care indeed plays a serious role in providing natural care. Harmful or toxic ingredients are bound to cause severe damage & slow down the development of children. Whereas using naturally curated child-care would instantly boost the child development. ShuShu Babies is an Ayurvedic, Ayush Approved baby and kid-care brand that provides naturally curated Ayurvedic products procured from the goodness of nature. These ingredients are natural, free from harmful synthetic chemicals, and are used for babies for ages. The ayurvedic properties of those ingredients have made them a permanent guest in every Indian home.

Natural ingredients are the driving force behind every medical miracle. Enticing them with harmful chemicals shall cost adversely in the long run. It's vital to give the best possible care to all the kids.

Sulakshana Reddy the founder of ShuShu Babies, says, "Since the inception of this idea, it

ShuShu Babies' story:

ShuShu Babies is a baby and kids care brand founded and led by Sulakshana Reddy, a mother who is also a pharmacist. Sulakshana Reddy, Founder of ShuShu Babies, says, "Since the inception of this idea, it has been my goal to build an inclusive, affordable and ethical company based on values of trust, transparency, sustainability and a sense of purpose in what we offer. We make products that work. I am a mother first and an entrepreneur next. That gives us the credibility to not only look at the company from a business perspective but from a mother's point of view. I am a mompreneur/pharmacist. I am a gold medalist from Osmania University and that gives me a complete understanding of what I am doing and what my products are made of and as a mother what I definitely don't want in the products" ShuShu Babies believes in providing natural, safe and effective products as an eco-friendly brand that safeguards the planet and its future generations. The driving force comes from the faith of their valuable consumers and partners in their high-quality products, along with a passionate team about ShuShu Babies and its mission.

